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Luigi Dallapiccola’s “Il Prigioniero”: A musico-dramatic analysis of Scene IV

Howard, Jessica Harrison, M.M.
Rice University, 1989

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LUIGI DALLAPICCOLA'S IL PRIGIONIERO:
A MUSICO-DRAMATIC ANALYSIS OF SCENE IV

by

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ABSTRACT

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A MUSICO-DRAMATIC ANALYSIS OF SCENE IV
JESSICA H. HOWARD

The purpose of this study is to illustrate several aspects of Dallapiccola's coherent expressionism in Il Prigioniero by focusing upon his approach to symmetrical formal structure in the drama; structural relationships in the twelve-tone sets themselves and in their usage in Scene IV; and specifically how these sets are arranged to form distinct, heirarchical tone-centers corresponding to those that characterize the tertian system. In particular, the arch-form defines the drama in Scene IV as well as the drama of the opera as a whole. Furthermore, the most fundamental level of a reductive level of analysis also suggests an A B C B A structure with regard to the primary tone centers.

Dallapiccola's attention to proportion and balance within such a form illustrates a clarity of objective, upon which this study also focuses. The importance of the moral and metaphysical issues proposed in his libretto leads to a greater understanding of the composer as well as his other works.
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INTRODUCTION

A remarkable consistency in style and approach characterizes the works of Luigi Dallapiccola, rendering his primary influences all-pervasive.

Specifically, Dallapiccola's incorporation of the lyrical bel canto style remained a compositional characteristic throughout his life. The consideration of melody in turn attracted him to the twelve-tone system of writing,\(^1\) in which a more rigorous sense of structure and precision defined the vocal line. By gradually absorbing the twelve-tone technique, Dallapiccola achieved a remarkable synthesis of deliberate, ordered construction and lyrical sensitivity. At the time of *Il Prigioniero* (1944 - 1948), Dallapiccola had completely adopted strict twelve-tone serialism into his style, in which his "skillful manipulation of materials in terms of [this] . . . technique [did] not preclude beauty of expression."\(^2\)

Dallapiccola incorporated the twelve-tone style of composition with interest and ease, enjoying the sense of ordered structure and proportion. His self-proclaimed "love of precision" and attention to macrostructure and microstructure illuminate his view of the aesthetic whole as one in which smaller gestures contain, in microcosm, aspects of larger

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gestures. The principle of interrelation contributes to the clear, coherent, and accessible nature of his compositions.

Furthermore, these gestures often contain within themselves "principles of symmetry and mirror imitation." A perfect example of such a pattern exists in Il Prigioniero: the arch-form (ABCBA). Defined as "the most symmetrical of all musical structures," this form contains one focal point (C) followed by a denouement, which corresponds to the material preceding the moment of climax and its usage. Dallapiccola incorporated this structure frequently, not only to coordinate set placement, the resulting "tone centers," and formal (sectional) ordering, but also to provide within each of these considerations a "reference to what had gone before."

In his operas Dallapiccola incorporated the dramatic element as well into his tightly controlled, coherent construction, seeking to "relate and connect" in every aspect. His frequent use of symbolism illuminates a sensitivity to the libretto and its complexities in which dramatic and philosophical concerns relate to musical considerations, and vice versa. As a result, formal analysis of the dramatic structure often corresponds directly to musical organization, in this case the arch-form.

Further, Dallapiccola believed collaboration with a librettist would compromise the composition's cohesiveness, and as such wrote the libretto himself. His "choice of texts

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4Ibid., 23.

5Basart, "The Twelve-tone Compositions of Luigi Dallapiccola," 5.

6Ibid., 5.


8Dallapiccola, Dallapiccola on Opera, 258.
was very personal" and deliberate, for he was an "autobiographical...[and] confessional writer."9 He considered the dramatic "message" all-important, and, like Ferruccio Busoni, "let each work constitute a principle."10 That principle inextricably involved deeply personal issues; in the case of Il Prigioniero, the quest for freedom.

In summary, it is likely that Dallapiccola's preoccupation with a sense of all-pervasive structure functions as a means of clarifying his extremely personal "message" in the drama. The greatest responsibility of this communication lies in the melodic line of the soloist.

The purpose of this study is to illuminate such musical structures and their relationships to the dramatic action in Dallapiccola's Il Prigioniero in the following manner: 1) examination of the dramatic action in the opera as a whole; 2) examination of the dramatic action of Scene IV in particular; 3) examination of the twelve-tone sets and their usage in Scene IV; and 4) assessment of the "tone centers" in Scene IV arising from those sets through a reductive approach on varying structural levels. Tonal as well as philosophical implications are considered as they pertain to the analysis in this important work.


CHAPTER I
IMPRISONMENT AND LIBERATION

"The central idea of all [Dallapiccola's] works for the musical theatre is always the same: the struggle of man against some force much stronger than he."\(^{11}\) *Volo di Notte* (1937-9) told of an ill-fated struggle against the natural elements, as well as a partial victory for the character Riviere. However, this "victory" does not change Riviere's sense of burden, and, by extension, one does not feel Dallapiccola is less burdened at the conclusion of this work. In *Marsia* (1942-3) the protagonist attempts a challenge against Apollo, and is consequently vanquished--another inconclusive ending. *Il Prigioniero* (1944-8) clearly defines Dallapiccola's sense of an unjust world, in which a prisoner struggles against the Spanish Inquisition and in doing so is doomed to die. This struggle is more intimately associated with religious issues in *Job* (1950); however, this work's last-minute repentance seems an inadequate answer to the overwhelming issues posed in the previous operas. Finally, *Ulisse* (1960-8) portrays the ultimate struggle of man against himself as he aspires to penetrate the mystery of the world.

Only in the final opera does Dallapiccola find a real sense of solution or conclusion, in which he combines a sense of dying (from *Il Prigioniero*) with a desire for God (from *Job*) to form a positive view of a new life: "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee."\(^{12}\) Dallapiccola best defined this restlessness and its source in *Il Prigioniero* by addressing political and social issues (which later formed the

\(^{11}\)Dallapiccola, *Dallapiccola on Opera*, 239.

\(^{12}\)A quotation from Saint Augustine: 'Fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te,' *Confessions*, Book I, Chapter I.
personal, private convictions in *Ulisse*). The issue of protest, though not identified as particularly positive, establishes itself in this work and arguably exemplifies the human spirit with greater verve than any of Dallapiccola's other works.

When asked "what the secret reasons [were] that had made [him] dwell for such a long period of time on prisons and prisoners," Dallapiccola answered: "psychology maintains that the experiences of childhood and adolescence . . . influence the formation of the personality, particularly the personality of the artist." Specifically, the fact that Dallapiccola's family was exiled for twenty months in Graz in 1917 left unmistakable scars on the thirteen-year-old boy. These feelings intensified with the political activities preceding and during the second World War, particularly Mussolini's fascist edicts in 1938, his Ethiopian campaign, the Spanish Civil War, and finally the German occupation of Florence. With each event Dallapiccola felt "the world of . . . carefree serenity clos[ing] . . . without the possibility of return . . . [He] had to [communicate his] growing concern about the predicaments of modern man" as determined by oppressive forces, and "only through music could [he] vent [his] indignation" with those forces.

In 1938 he began to work on *Canti di Prigionia* as a "realizable form of protest against the racist measures" posed in Mussolini's "Race Manifesto." Dallapiccola later expanded this idea in *Il Prigioniero* by using Victor Hugo's *La Rose de l'Infante* from *La Légende des Siècles* (1859). ("The idea of Philip II as a threat hovering over mankind [was] fixed

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13Dallapiccola, *Dallapiccola on Opera*, 36.
14Ibid., 37.
15Ibid., 157-9.
16Ibid., 45.
in [Dallapiccola's] mind"\textsuperscript{18} ever since it was related to him in his childhood.) Another primary source for this opera's plot, Comte de Villiers de L'Isle-Adam's \textit{La Torture par L'Espérance} (Torture through Hope) 1883, also provoked the image of Philip II, cruel and menacing, as did Charles de Coster's \textit{Légende d'Ulenspiegel et de Lamme Goedzak}. Due to the fact that this dictator became associated with Hitler in Dallapiccola's mind, he impersonalized and extended the characters (the Grand Inquisitor Pedro Arbuez d'Espila and the prisoner Rabbi Aser Abarbanel) in order that the opera would be contemporarily applicable.\textsuperscript{19} Further, Dallapiccola's sense of a singular, universal prisoner unjustly imprisoned, one "who . . . struggles and believes,"\textsuperscript{20} illuminates the fact that this opera was intended not only "as an act of homage to the resistance against the Nazi regime, [but also] as a denunciation of all dictatorships,"\textsuperscript{21} regardless of time or place.

\textsuperscript{18}Dallapiccola, \textit{Dallapiccola on Opera}, 44.

\textsuperscript{19}Basart, "The Twelve-tone Compositions of Luigi Dallapiccola," 2.

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., 46.

\textsuperscript{21}Mondadori, \textit{The Simons and Schuster Book of the Opera}, 457.
CHAPTER II
PLOT

The dramatic action in Il Prigioniero consists of a prologue and four scenes, each in
different surroundings and incorporating extreme emotional states of being.

The prologue is the only portion of the opera in which the Prisoner does not play a part.
Instead, his mother's white face appears against a black background, expressing her
forebodings by relating a recurring nightmare in which Phillip II of Saragossa approaches
her, gradually being transformed into a menacing symbol of death.

Scene I contains a choral intermezzo, at which time the Prisoner lies on his pallet with
his mother beside him in a cell in the dungeons of the Inquisition in Saragossa. After
relating some of his horrible tortures, he tells her how his Jailer has given him hope by
calling him "my brother." She departs upon the Jailer's entrance, marking the end of this
scene.

The Jailer dominates Scene II, the longest scene, by continuing to call the Prisoner "my
brother" and trying to convince him that his liberation is imminent due to the Beggar
Army's revolutionary activities, particularly a recent revolt in Flanders. With increasing
fervor, the Jailer predicts a recent end to the Inquisition, finally arousing in the deflated
Prisoner real, fresh hope. When the Jailer leaves, the Prisoner notices that the door has
been left slightly ajar, and escapes into a long corridor.

Scene III occurs beneath the dungeons, in which the Prisoner agonizingly drags
himself along the passageway. A Fra Redemptor (torturer) and two other priests pass by
and thankfully do not notice him. A second choral intermezzo occurs, this time with
incredible strength and vigor, as the Prisoner approaches liberation.
The Prisoner finally reaches his long-desired state of freedom at the start of Scene IV, in a big garden underneath a starry sky. In his elation at being in the open air the prisoner flings his arms out, only to have the embrace returned by the Great Inquisitor, his Jailer. The Prisoner then realizes that he has been subjected to the most terrible torture of all: that of false hope. He allows himself to be led to the pyre, murmuring the word "Liberty?", almost to himself.\textsuperscript{22}

The shape of the music is generally formed by the dramatic action. For example, the two choral intermezzi "are built from almost identical musical material,"\textsuperscript{23} and correspond to one another in framing Scene II, the turning point in which the Prisoner gains hope and acts upon it. Also, this scene is musically the most complex, as it requires a complex argument to arouse within the Prisoner enough hope to attempt the doomed escape. The Prologue corresponds to Scene IV in length and in satisfying a sense of overall balanced structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prologue</th>
<th>Scene I</th>
<th>Scene II</th>
<th>Scene III</th>
<th>Scene IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A\textsuperscript{24}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musically, however, Scene IV does not correspond closely to the Prologue, but instead contains elements from many sections of the opera, incorporating fragments from the choral intermezzi and primary motives distinctly associated with prior dramatic action. In fact, this scene's structure consists of the ABCBA arch-form, and as such it can be seen to represent the symmetry of the entire opera in microcosm. However, any further

\textsuperscript{22}Mondadori, \textit{The Simon and Schuster Book of the Opera}, 457.

\textsuperscript{23}Basart, "The Twelve-tone Compositions of Luigi Dallapiccola," 8-9.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid.
correspondence between the whole of *Il Prigioniero* and its Scene IV, while certainly possible, is not addressed within the scope of this study.

Scene IV contains sharp, distinct dramatic moments (similar to the individual scenes in the opera) which are strongly supported by the music. They are separated into sections and referred to in the following analysis as follows:

I. MEASURES: 860-64
   PLOT: The Prisoner rushes on stage, a garden.
   THE PRISONER: "Alleluja! Alleluja!"
   MUSIC: Più animato, *ffe*.

II. MEASURES: 865-76
    PLOT: He looks around amazed.
    THE PRISONER: "Such freshness and such beauty. At last I'm free!
                   My hope was not, then a vain one, my hope was not,
                   then, a vain one."
    MUSIC: Quasi lento; contemplativo, *ppp*. Chorus.\(^{25}\)

III. MEASURES: 877-83
     PLOT: \-----same-----
     THE PRISONER: "The starlight! The Heavens! This will be my
                    salvation... I'll flee across the meadows, and shall
                    be already at sunrise high in the mountains."

IV. MEASURES: 884-98
    PLOT: He approaches the cedar in the center of the stage,
          flings open his arms in his gesture of love for all
          humanity and in elation of his new-found liberty.
          "Ah, the fragrance of cedars. At last I'm free.
          Alleluja! Ah! Alleluja!"

\(^{25}\)Psalm 50.
V. MEASURES: 899-905  
PLOT: Two enormous arms, half-hidden by the lowest branches, reach out and clasp him: It is the Great Inquisitor, who gently reproves him for having tried to escape his just punishment.

GREAT INQ: "My brother, upon the threshold of your own salvation, why should you be ungrateful, and want to leave us?"

MUSIC: Rubato, \( ppp \).

VI. MEASURES: 906-930  
PLOT: The Great Inquisitor opens his arms. With realization the Prisoner moves suddenly. He understands that he has been subjected to the ultimate torture: the illusion of freedom. A ruddy light appears at the rear of the scene. The Prisoner turns, terrified, and realizes there is a stake for him.

THE PRISONER: "Ah, now the light dawns! Now I see! Now I see! It is hoping which is the final torture of all I have suffered, the most maddening - The stake!"

MUSIC: Movendo, \( \text{fff} \).

VII. MEASURES: 921-934  
PLOT: The Prisoner gazes upwards in questioning. The Inquisitor takes the Prisoner by the hand and moves him a few steps.

GREAT INQ: "Have courage. Come now."

THE PRISONER: "Liberty?"

MUSIC: Molto lento, dolcissimo. Double Chorus.

VIII. MEASURES: 935-940  
PLOT: The Inquisitor again takes the Prisoner by the hand, who allows himself to be led to the stake, laughing like a madman and repeatedly uttering the word "Liberty", questioningly.

GREAT INQ: "My brother. Do come now."

THE PRISONER: "Liberty?"

MUSIC: Poco a poco rallentando, \( pp \). Chorus.\(^{26}\)

CHAPTER III
TWELVE-TONE SETS

"Is the twelve-tone system a language or a technique? To my way of thinking, it is even a state of mind."27 Dallapiccola's words on Viennese dodecaphony reflect his ability to convey the "deepest personal experience by absorbing serialism unaffectedly into his style,"28 refuting the "widely held belief that the twelve-tone method of composing is an entirely mechanical and cerebral activity, incompatible with spontaneous feeling or inspiration."29 Although Il Prigioniero was written entirely within the twelve-tone system, Dallapiccola's sophisticated pitch relationships within that system illuminate aspects of tonality through music that reflects emotional qualities and incorporates leitmotifs: "I had dealt with . . . twelve-tone music, [and] I was able to write in regular tonality."30

It follows that Dallapiccola does not incorporate "Schoenberg's super-saturated or post-Wagnerian chromaticism," which implies completely non-tonal organization and the loss of tone center. Though his early works are primarily diatonic (a "dissonant modal style, influenced by the neo-classicism of his contemporaries,"), in the 1940s twelve-tone elements were added, resulting in "a rather curious juxtaposition of diatonic and chromatic

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27Baron, "The Composer as Poet: Meaning In the Music of Luigi Dallapiccola (1904-1975)," 40.


29Luigi Dallapiccola, Dallapiccola on Opera, 25.

30Ibid., 25.
musical ideas," in which details of personal style were revealed beyond the mere adoption of sets.

As in *Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera*, Dallapiccola uses one twelve-note set as a basis for *Il Prigioniero*. Being "the first sufficiently clear musical idea, [it] generated the aria in three stanzas... at the centre of the opera [Scene II], [in which Dallapiccola] immediately perceived many possibilities for transformation." The principal series is as follows:

*LIBERTY SET*

\[
C \quad D \quad F \quad A\flat \quad B\flat \quad D\flat \quad E\flat \quad G\flat \quad A \quad B \quad E \quad G
\]

\[
M2 \quad m3 \quad m3 \quad M2 \quad m3 \quad M2 \quad m3 \quad M2 \quad P4 \quad m3
\]

The set is composed essentially of thirds, and notes 5 - 9 are an exact transposition of notes 0 - 4, up a half step. The intervallic structure creates close-knit groups of notes, resulting in a series that "permits subtle tonal suggestions in vertical ordering."

Dallapiccola did not compose twelve-tone sets on an abstract musical level only, and studies have shown the likelihood of their symbolic function within the drama. In this case, the primary series is associated with the Prisoner's longing for freedom, and labelled "Liberty". As one would expect, it pervades Scene IV at crucial moments; for example,

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33 Dallapiccola, *Dallapiccola on Opera*, 55.


35 The scope of this study does not include a precise musical analysis of Scenes I-III of *Il Prigioniero*, which would be necessary in order to accurately determine symbolic references in the twelve-tone sets. For more information, consult Basart, "The Twelve-tone Compositions of Luigi Dallapiccola," 20.
Liberty statements in measures 860 and 890 serve to "frame" the Prisoner's only moments of freedom. (See Chapter V, Section IV.)

"Permutation of the [principal] set...[provides a] source of continuous variation"\textsuperscript{36} in the opera, resulting in two related sets of essentially the same importance: one associated with the Grand Inquisitor and one associated with the Prisoner as he prays. Labelled "Fratello" and "Prayer" respectively, each remains distinct and contains its own variant set(s).

FRATELLO SET

\begin{align*}
F & -- E -- C\# -- B -- D -- D\# -- F\# -- G -- A\# -- G\# -- A -- C
\end{align*}

The Fratello series is characterized by two minor triads (B - D - F\#, C - D\# - G) and two melodic motives (F - E - C\#, G\# - A - A\#). Due to the nature of the Grand Inquisitor, "the two minor triads' equivocal nature in this [dodecaphonic] context...admirably express the hypocritical gentleness of the Jailer, who turns out to be the Grand Inquisitor."\textsuperscript{37} The melodic motives are not only extremely distinctive, but provide for ample reference to this series with subtle fragment statements, as shown in the last few measures of the opera. (See Chapter V, Section VIII.)

HOPE SET

\begin{align*}
A & -- Bb -- B -- C -- Ab -- D -- Db -- G -- Eb -- E -- Gb -- F
\end{align*}


\textsuperscript{37}Roman Vlad, Luigi Dallapiccola (Milan: Suvini Zerboni, 1957), 37.
The Great Inquisitor's Fratello set generates a new set which can be associated with the Prisoner's hope (labelled "Hope"), therefore implying in its very construction the falseness of that hope. In other words, its connection with the set characterizing the hypocritical jailer suggests its inherent falseness. The Hope series exhibits strong voice-leading tendencies towards the final note in the series, and is the only set other than Liberty that is used in its entirety by both the Prisoner and the Great Inquisitor in Scene IV.

PRAYER SET

A# -- C# -- E -- A -- G -- C -- B -- F -- F# -- D -- D# -- G#

The most disjunct series in this piece, the Prayer set contains many leaps, including tritones and perfect fifths (or fourths) which are occasionally superimposed to form chords (measure 1). This set generates two additional variant rows: one used primarily by the chorus, labelled "Choral Material," and one associated with the Prisoner's escape, labelled "Escape," both of which are used extensively by the orchestra and chorus in this scene.

CHORAL MATERIAL

E -- G -- A -- Bb -- C -- Db -- Eb -- B -- Ab -- Gb -- F -- D

ESCAPE

C# -- E -- A -- G -- A# -- C -- B -- G# -- F# -- F -- D# -- D

The real similarities and differences between these sets become clear upon examination of their source sets, divided as hexachords and tetrachords. (See Graph 1.) Although only the Liberty source set contains both hexachords A and B, the Prayer, Escape, and Choral Material source sets incorporate hexachord B (following their own hexachord D);
furthermore, tetrachord x is used in all six sets, though in varying degrees: tetrachord x is used three times to form the Hope source set, whereas Prayer, Escape, and Choral Material all incorporate tetrachords y, x, and z, in that order.

Of all these sets, only the Fratello/Hope source set is semi-combinatorial. The intervals in the first hexachord (C) are duplicated exactly in the second hexachord at the tritone. The only variance between these two source sets is in the order of the two hexachords, one being the retrograde of the other (Fratello: C, Cr; Hope: Cr, C).

In short, then, the three source sets are all related to each other via one tetrachord, x: 1) Liberty; 2) Fratello/Hope; 3) Prayer/Choral Material/Escape.

Dallapiccola uses these sets in varying ways, but always exhibits the "Italian love for a lyrical vocal line." In Scene IV the Prisoner and the Great Inquisitor intensify the expressiveness of each fully stated set by alternating mainly between arioso and declamatory recitative with "a lyrical quality that is always close to the surface", and it seems the "rows . . . tend to accept the voice as an influence in forming it."39

The common principles of transposition, retrograde, inversion, and retrograde inversion are used rather frequently, though "the occurrence of a particular form of a set is always governed by such musical considerations as the shape of the melodic line, or the desired return to a certain pitch level."40 A good example would be the Great Inquisitor's entrance in Scene IV, in which his distinctive Fratello motive begins on B, corresponding directly to this motive's earlier pitch level in the opera. This reference heightens the dramatic effect of the Prisoner's capture, as the Grand Inquisitor acted as the "supportive" Jailer prior to Scene IV.

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The tonal aspect of Dallapiccola's twelve-tone style in this opera relates directly to the intervals he has chosen in these sets. For instance, the triads within sets often form tertian chords which are treated homophonically and which form a triadic and diatonic "layer" at moments of serenity or equilibrium. Also, perfect fourths and fifths are enhanced via rhythm or articulation in stable or directional passages. In contrast, moments of tension or intense drama contain heavily accented tetrachords containing major sevenths and major ninths.\(^{41}\)

The importance of structure in Dallapiccola's style becomes obvious when analyzing his choice and placement of sets in this scene. The symmetrical arrangements of the complete set statements illustrate once again his intrigue with the "principles of symmetry and mirror imitation."\(^{42}\) (See Appendix I.) This sense of order and form also influences his treatment of set fragments throughout this scene, causing partitioned adjacencies to function motivically. (See Chapter V.)

In conclusion, a distinctively pre-twentieth century concept of dissonance and consonance pervades Dallapiccola's twelve-tone composition in this opera, as well as an intense sensitivity to the bel canto singing style and an awareness of symmetrical form.

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\(^{42}\) Dallapiccola, *Dallapiccola on Opera*, 23.
GRAPH I

SOURCE SETS OF TWELVE-TONE SETS IN SCENE IV

LIBERTY:

SOURCES
HEXACHORDS

SOURCES
TETRACHORDS

FRATELLO:
GRAPH I (Continued)

PRAYER:

HOPE:
GRAPH I (Continued)

ESCAPE:

CHORAL MATERIAL:
CHAPTER IV
SCENE IV: ANALYSIS BY SECTION

Section I: First Exclamation

Measures 860 through 864 designate the first distinct "section" of Scene IV. The Prisoner, rushing out onto the stage (a large garden), having just escaped from the prison and overwhelmed by his newfound freedom, utters two cries of "Alleluja!" before contemplating this situation as a new reality. The delayed intellectual response clearly defines a new section in measure 865 (Section II), complete with radically different tempo markings, dynamic markings and accompaniment.

The first five measures, then, represent the prisoner's immediate emotional response to the joy of freedom, illustrated by the dramatic, expansive vocal line, in which the first "Alleluja!" spans the interval of a minor seventh, and the second a major ninth -- a total range of a major thirteenth. The vocal line begins on B-flat, arches upwards through A-flat and G, then descends rather quickly to F. The B-flat, A-flat, G and F indicate momentary "tone centers" and serve to emphasize the primary structure, in linear reductive terms, of the two vocal phrases in this section:

B-flat -- A-flat -- G -- F
Rhythmic characteristics of the vocal line support this interpretation. The voice's only triplet pattern in this section emphasizes the initial B-flat (m. 860), significant also as the prisoner's first note out of prison, which serves to gather momentum in a metrically undeterminable measure. Also, the dotted quarter note - eighth note - whole note pattern shared by the two statements of "Alleluja!" brings a sense of definition to the notes A-flat and F at the end of each phrase.

The accompaniment, another matter entirely, consists wholly of marcato, pounding chords juxtaposed against the prisoner's vocal line. Containing more strength but less direction, these chords convey a brutality for the dramatic action over which this line obliviously sails (stating in full the Liberty set). The chords present all six notes in the whole-tone scale, arranged in tetrachords (see graph 3):
The first three tetrachords comprise two statements of the same whole-tone grouping [C - D - E - F-sharp - G-sharp - A-sharp]; the second three tetrachords (and their succeeding repetitions in 864) comprise two statements of the remaining whole-tone grouping [C-sharp - D-sharp - F - G - A - B].

On the whole, the final, A/E-flat/B/F, due to its repetition, is perhaps the most significant chord in this section, particularly the B in its octave relationship to the initial notes of both "Alleluja!" statements in the vocal line.

Dallapiccola's utilization of the twelve chromatic tones arranged as two whole-tone groupings illuminates an intrinsic, recurring phenomenon throughout Scene IV: the
interval of the tritone. Tritones characterize the whole-tone scale, containing the three (pitch) dyads for all six notes, and the tetrachordal statements in this section present the whole-tone scale in three chords of two tritones each, those two tritones being a whole tone apart.

**GRAPH 5**

![Diagram of tritones](image)

Known as the *diabolus in musica*, the tritone alone is a very distinctive and perhaps dissonant interval, depending on the context, but the marcato statements of two simultaneous tritones at *fff* undoubtedly supports an important dramatic moment, in this case the prisoner's exultation at his long-awaited freedom. It is possible, however, that the intensity of this initial passage can be attributed more to the falseness (proven later) of this freedom than to the prisoner's celebration of freedom itself. While the accompaniment communicates the truth in tritones, the Prisoner, in delusion, simultaneously sings the set associated with liberty.

In summary, the orchestra in this section emphasizes the interval of the tritone within the orientation of the whole-tone scale, and the vocal line outlines the interval B-flat to F (a perfect fifth), or B to F (another tritone). The perfect fifth implies tertian harmony, and the tritone, particularly if in close proximity to the perfect fifth, can be associated with a
"resolution" to that perfect fifth.\textsuperscript{43} This concept of resolution, or lack thereof, is central to the opera in both the drama and music, and further exemplified in the following material.

\footnote{Due to Dallapiccola's obvious references to tertian harmony throughout Scene IV, it is beneficial to consider the repeated tritone and perfect fifth/fourth in "traditional" terms.}
Section II: Freedom (I)

This section begins Dallapiccola's more characteristic compositional techniques in the remaining sections in Scene IV. Divided into two subsections of approximately the same length, "A" from mm. 865 through 871 and "B" from mm. 872 through 876, this section overall portrays the Prisoner's sensitivity in breathless expressions of a quieter, more contemplative joy of liberty. Marked *lento, contemplativo, espressivo,* and *pp,* both subsections incorporate a small choir of six sopranos and six altos singing "Domine" softly in accompaniment. The Prisoner's vocal line, however, distinguishes the subsections: in subsection A he sings short, three- to four-note phrases characterized by tritone leaps and syncopation, whereas in subsection B his line becomes immediately more sustained, smooth, lyrical, and stepwise.

After Section I, the Prisoner's vocal line does not enter until almost three measures of an orchestral passage defining the new mood occur, at which time the voice enters on E and leaps a tritone to B-flat (repeated). As in the beginning of Section I, a triplet pattern of the same duration characterizes the opening line, as well as the consecutive motive (another tritone leap, from E-flat (repeated) to A). However, unlike Section I these two rhythmic motives are distinctly syncopated against the well-established quarter-note pulse in the orchestra and do not begin on the downbeat, resulting in a different note receiving the primary emphasis. The first tritone begins on the last third of the half-note pulse, placing the downbeat on the second note, B-flat, made even more significant in its repetition. The second tritone begins on the second third of the beat, placing beat one on the third note, A.

The third tritone leap, composed of two tritones spanning an octave (D (repeated) to A-flat to D), concludes this subsection in three eighth-notes followed by a quarter note, serving to drive the momentum of these short motives forward into subsection B, which begins on D.
This final motive not only propels subsection A into B rhythmically, but launches us towards D as a tone center. Thus, primary tonal center movement in subsection A can be expressed as:

B-flat -- A -- D --

with D serving a common tone function into subsection B.

The Prisoner's vocal line in subsection B (m. 872) changes character and, beginning on D, moves by half-steps to A, incorporating many innocuous repetitions and stepwise movements, with the exception of the leap from B to D-sharp immediately prior to landing on A. This leap makes the inevitable descent to A a more abrupt affair, particularly since there is no A-sharp in the otherwise perfect chromatic descent, and serves to call attention to the A despite the des crescendo and slowing of tempo. In retrospect, then, the D tonal center seems to be significant yet transitory in the travel from the B-flat (m. 868) -- A -- (D) -- A.

GRAPH 6

However, it is in the accompaniment (orchestra and choir) that one sees the importance of sequential patterns in Dallapiccola's twelve-tone imitative technique of composition, in which this polyphony acts as a texture wherein interesting relationships within the tertiary system of organization are explored. To begin, in each measure of subsection A quarter-
note patterns of six notes (equalling one measure in 3/2 time), each in alternating ascending and descending orders, establish the pulse and quiet turbulence that characterizes this section.

GRAPH 7

This subsection's six-note patterns are all fragments from the Escape set in this order:

\[ X^i \rightarrow X \rightarrow X^i \rightarrow X \rightarrow X^i \rightarrow X^i \]

I-10  P-9  I-10  P-9  I-10  I-7

i/I= Inversion  P = Prime  X= Escape Set

Obviously there is a distinct pattern as well as a breaking up of that pattern at the end of the subsection (m. 870), confirmed by the fact that in subsection B the two remaining Escape six-note fragments, P-6 and P-3, overlap rhythmically and are not distinctly ordered as far as the particular set.

In the higher register and more softly, the violins state sequences of dotted half-notes in octaves (two per measure), alternating between the intervals of a tritone and perfect fifth consecutively, at times doubling notes from the (six-note) fragment patterns in the middle register. The perfect fifths in close proximity to the tritones recur throughout this section.
and suggest a tension between one of the most traditionally consonant intervals and the most dissonant.

**GRAPH 8**

The structurally significant notes in the six-note sequences are those notes that initiate the patterns (on beat one) and those that end them. They are retained longer and overlap with the beginning note in the next measure (see graph 7). Further, the dotted half-note sequences (see graph 8) coincide with and therefore emphasize these notes on beat one of each measure (see graph 9).
At the start of this section the dotted half-note sequences in the higher register double the ending notes of the first two six-note fragments (B-flat and B, m. 866, 867), and at the end of this section the beginning note in the fifth fragment (C-sharp, m. 869) coincides for the only time with the sequences in the higher register. The simultaneously stated B-flats at the beginning (m. 866) and end (m. 870), particularly the latter, containing the only unison of a beginning and ending note from the six-note fragments, seem the most significant, suggesting starting and ending tone centers. Further, the initial note associated with subsection B doubles this ending B-flat, which connects the sections as does the corresponding transitory tonal center D discussed earlier. Therefore, subsection A, vocal line plus accompaniment sequences, can be reduced as follows (see graph 10):
Subsection B is more complicated in that six-note fragments from three different twelve-tone sets are overlapped:

- 2 Choral Material Fragments
- 2 Escape Fragments
- 2 Choral Material Fragments
- 2 Liberty Fragments

The significance of these statements and their overlapping lies in the fact that both the Choral Material and the Escape fragments emphasize the tritone/perfect fifth (or fourth) intervals (abbreviated TT/P5), as in subsection A's upper register sequences, on the stronger beats 1 and 4 (in 6/4 time) of the measure (see graph 11):
The Choral Material fragments outline a P4, then a TT, whereas the Escape fragments outline a TT first, then a P4. Further, the beginning note of both Escape fragments (m. 872, 873) is a tritone above the immediately ending note of the Choral Material fragment, as well as a perfect fifth above the initial note of that fragment.

Towards the end of this section, as the pace and emotional content begin to slightly diminish, the orchestra lightly states two Liberty sets in full, weaving through the final two statements of Choral Material set fragments and incorporating syncopated triplet figures somewhat reminiscent of the earlier vocal line. These serve to anticipate the prisoner's final expression of freedom (m. 890), which states in full the Liberty set. It is significant that the vocal line in subsection B is composed of an entire statement of the set associated with Hope.
Due to the many-voiced pp texture in the accompaniment of this section, the most significant notes are most likely those that begin entrances, particularly in the chorus, for they communicate text entrances.

**GRAPH 12**

This upward motion in graph 12 seems to be heading towards E and G, supported by the F-sharp towards G in the orchestra's two Liberty statements (measures 874, 875), serving to anticipate an immediate emphasis on the tone center of C in Section Three.

The entire graph, then, for this section incorporates the vocal line's oscillating emphasis on B-flat and A, as well as the accompaniment motion towards the tone center of C through G (see graph 13).
Section III: Freedom (II)

Measure 877 signals the beginning of a new section with the incorporation of a four-voice choir, a slower *lento* tempo indication, and a change in the accompanimental texture from the previous sequential polyphony to *ppp* repeated tertian chords in an essentially homophonic style. This section suggests traditional functional harmony with regard to these chords as well as bass movement. Also, the vocal line changes character drastically with a series of ever-increasing leaps, initiated by a tritone (m. 877), at *ppp*. The seamless chordal background causes this line to appear even more disjunct in contrast.

The Prisoner's train of thought develops from his earlier expressions of joy to an ecstatic focus upon the stars as symbols of his future, "The starlight! The Heavens!"44 (m. 877). The dramatic, expansive first phrase clearly reflects the emotional impact of the stars and their significance as a representation of his new-found salvation. It spans a perfect octave, beginning on B-flat and ending on F-sharp. The B-flat, significant as the starting pitch, connects with the ending A of the last section. The F-sharp functions as a clear arrival point, emphasized by an octave leap to F-sharp an octave lower, which is held for a full two beats (longer than any other note in this phrase). One cannot help but notice the similarity between the structure of this initial phrase and the vocal line of Section I (see graph 14).

44 Dallapiccola, *Il Prigioniero*. 
The voice then continues, similarly to Section II, with a complete statement of the Hope set (P-0) in an essentially smooth, stepwise motion incorporating many repeated notes, signaling the Prisoner's more intellectual (or practical) approach to his immediately preceding outburst regarding the stars. "This will be my salvation ... I'll flee across the meadows ... and shall be already at sunrise high in the mountains ..."\(^{45}\) (m. 879-883). Some extreme upward leaps are incorporated within this smooth line; however, their significance directs attention back down to the descending stepwise line that can be heard by relating the lowest notes in each measure to one another (see graph 15).
The chorus forms distinct tertian chords in accompaniment to the vocal line, occasionally supported by the orchestra, in this order:

- C major (mm. 877-8)
- C minor (m. 879)
- A minor (m. 880)
- B-flat minor (m. 881)
- D minor seventh (m. 882)
- G-sharp minor (m. 883)

It is obvious that the C chord (major or minor) is of importance in its insistence, though to what extent is hard to determine at this point. Although the chorus thus far does not appear to play a major role in the primary melodic direction of this piece, its transparent statements of tertian chords imply a "tonal" layer within the twelve-tone texture whose function may well enhance the dramatic action by eliciting the audience's subconscious response to traditional triadic structure. Further, movement in the contrabass and violoncello provides greater tangible proof that this twelve-tone piece incorporates traditional, functional harmony. The movement consists of a near-perfect sequence of tritones at approximately one per measure, where, if separated, each of the two notes in the
tritone plays a dominant (V) function to the corresponding note of the tritone in the next measure.\footnote{Although these tritones can also be heard as forming a descending line in half-steps, the descent is often broken by register, and thus the "leading" or "directional" effect of these sequences is perhaps more accurately described as a circle of fifths.}

**GRAPH 16**

![Graph 16](image)

Graph 16 is essentially a partial statement of the circle of fifths progression, one of the most traditional and most-used tonic-establishing devices. In this sense, the F in m. 883 is, perhaps, the essential arrival point at the end of this section. Not surprisingly, however, the F is somewhat cancelled out by an F-sharp in a clarinet statement of the familiar six-note grouping, which in itself forms a bridge to the next section.

**GRAPH 17**

![Graph 17](image)
Section IV: Freedom (III)

Measures 884-898 define this section, the ending of which is marked by the Great Inquisitor's capture of the Prisoner. Divided into two subsections, this section's part A (m. 884-890), indicated movendo, is characterized by further chordal homophony in the chorus combined with the frenetic, sequential six-note statements in the orchestra reminiscent of Section II. Part B (m. 890-898) marks the end of the choral homophony, incorporating ever-increasing polyphony, tempo, and graduating dynamics in all parts as the prisoner approaches the center of the stage and gestures his love for all humanity. This entire section grows consistently more suspenseful throughout, and arguably contains the most tension of any other section in this scene.

The vocal line in subsection A reflects the prisoner's increasing flexibility of expression; he finally begins to feel "natural" in his liberated state. The voice moves with more abandon and less cause, as when the first phrase in measure 885 hovers around A, leading then to the B-flat in measure 886. The A is not terribly significant, considering the wandering nature of the phrase and its accompanying text, "Ah, the fragrance of cedars...
"

The next phrase, however, moves to a definitive arrival point on E from the aforementioned B-flat, incorporating the three eighth notes - quarter note rhythmic pattern of Section II (m. 871) that proved to be a driving gesture towards a tone center. Further, the text, "At last I'm free"\textsuperscript{47}, as well as the interval leap of a tritone are identical to the earlier measure in Section II, giving the E in measure 886 greater importance (see graph 18).

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid.
The chorus once again is given C chords, initially without the third and in sprechstimme (m. 884-5) on "Domine, Domine," then with an E-flat (m. 888) on the words "Etos meum," and an E-natural (m. 889) on "annuntiabit." These chords are followed by an F-sharp major chord, a D minor chord and an E minor seventh chord (m. 890) on "laudem tuam," which bridges the two subsections. Significantly, the first statement of the vocal line in subsection B begins on A, suggesting that the E seventh chord serves a dominant function (in terms of the diatonic system), which in turn reinforces the E tone center in the vocal line from four measures earlier.

In the strings and piano, the modified (tritone) circle of fifths progression, introduced in Section III, reappears. Beginning measure 884 with B and F stated simultaneously, the sequence continues until B and F are stated again in measure 886, and then repeats itself again until B and F are stated in measure 890, the conclusion of subsection A, completing the cycle twice (see graph 19).
Another component in this section consists of the six-note Choral Material fragments in the winds as introduced in Section II. These fragments differ, however, in that they are not quarter notes; they are sextuplets equalling two beats, and therefore three statements can occur in each measure (6/4 time). Starting in measure 883 (of the previous section), the first and fourth notes of each six-note pattern (the interval of a tritone) are directly on the beat, and therefore somewhat emphasized.

Comparing each successive tritone, the circle of fifths movement (stated correspondingly in other parts of the orchestra in this section, mentioned above) becomes
apparent. The circle of fifths sequence, then, is intrinsic in this presentation of the Choral Material set.

GRAPH 21

At this point, after a completion of the cycle, the sequence splits; that is, one series of six-note patterns continues in the descending manner as above (labelled #1 in graph 22), and one reverses direction (labelled #2 in graph 22). In order to enhance the upcoming crescendo and accelerando towards recapture, Dallapiccola aggravates the accompaniment and the patterns are often overlapped and repeated. As a result, they do not directly correspond to the circle of fifths pattern elsewhere in the winds. Their first and fourth notes in order from the start of measure 886 are (see graph 22):
The tritone E-flat/A implied by these fragments in measure 888 corresponds at this point to the circle of fifths movement in the winds, from which the D and A-flat follow in the chord of measure 889. This chord also contains C and F-sharp from the two ending statements above. Together these two tritones, C and F-sharp/D and A-flat, form the chord found in the first measure of Scene IV (m. 860), anticipating the prisoner's "Alleluja!" in subsection B, which is identical in interval and rhythm to the first phrase in the scene.

The final graph for subsection A, including vocal line, bass movement, and fragment line is as follows (see graph 23):
Measure 890 begins subsection B with a distinctive return to the first moment of freedom in measure 860. The prisoner's "Alleluja!", beginning on A and soaring to G, repeats the very opening "Alleluja!" a half-step lower (P-0 instead of P-1, see Appendix II). This return is complete upon his second burst of "Alleluja!" (m. 893), with the notable exception of the note values of the last two notes on "-le-lu-ja!":

which points to the D-flat's greater significance than the E, and serves to connect nicely to Section V's beginning vocal note, F.

The chorus changes character in this subsection, primarily by fully stating in stretto the Choral Material set, whose six-note fragments have characterized the orchestral parts in this
section so far, and provided a twelve-tone origin for the circle of fifths movement in tritones. Beginning in measure 892, the statements are as follows:

S  P-5
A  P-5
T  P-6
B  P-7  P-3(6 notes only)

Because the initial six notes from every choral statement in this subsection are arranged in two triplets per measure (2/2 time), notes 1 and 4 fall on beats 1 and 3 of the measure, or the strong beats, as with the sextuplets in subsection A. The emphasized notes correspond directly to the underlying tritone movement in the violoncellos, contrabass and tuba, stopping one short in measure 896, creating a C major chord.

GRAPH 25
The next measure (m. 897) is of supreme importance, for it is the turning point in the dramatic action: "[The Great Inquisitor's] two enormous arms slowly move out to return the . . . [Prisoner's] gesture of love for all humanity. . . The Prisoner. . . utters an inarticulate sound, choked with fear." The orchestra pounds out the penultimate tritone in the circle of fifths sequence, C -- F-sharp, alone on beat one, followed by the final tritone, B -- F, altered, as B -- F-sharp, with an added D to form a B minor triad. However, this tertian chord is juxtaposed with a B-flat and A in the chorus, as well as the existing C from the penultimate tritone. This confuses, but does not undermine, the B-minor chord, for only the B-minor chord is retained beyond this measure. In fact, this chord lasts from measure 897-899, and uncannily provides the backdrop upon which the Great Inquisitor paints the reality of the prisoner's "liberty".

GRAPH 26

The significance of the essentially identical vocal "Alleluja!" motives at the end of this section compared to the very beginning measures of this scene implies that this "framed" portion of Scene IV can be thought of as one entity -- the only portion of the entire opera in which the Prisoner believes he is free. It can be argued that, although it is proved later that this freedom is false, this sense of freedom is just as "real" as the later truth is "real", for in these measures (m. 860 - 890) the Prisoner is completely happy. Though the

48 Ibid.
accompaniment repeatedly reminds us of his delusion, in this section he is, in fact, liberated.
Section V: Capture

The active excitement characterizing the Prisoner's sense of freedom prior to this point changes dramatically in Section V, measures 899 through 905, in which the Prisoner is captured. The Great Inquisitor, whose vocal style is different and, in this case, more exposed and stark against the barest of accompaniment, carries the vocal material in this section.

Rather than sounding like evil personified, the Great Inquisitor sings with a quiet sweetness (dolcissimo); a sickly-sweetness, in fact, which gives the impression of untrustworthiness or imbalance. He begins: "My brother"\textsuperscript{49} with the extremely familiar presentation of the Fratello set from Scenes I-III associated with the Jailer (his former identity). This statement incorporates repeated notes with chodal accompaniment in a less dramatic, recitative style. Combined with the fact that the note values are essentially even and the dynamics steady, the Jailer's placid nature at this moment of recapture is, at the least, disturbing.

The opening gesture begins on an F and ends on a C-sharp. This C-sharp is reinforced in measure 902, near the end of the Jailer's second motive, and in measure 903, the beginning of his next set statement -- ironically, that of Hope. This final phrase contains the only abruptness in this section's vocal line (m. 905), on the words "Why should you be ungrateful, and want to leave us?"\textsuperscript{50} in which large leaps span a major seventh. Additionally, the important rhythmic pattern: three eighth notes - quarter note once again drives the phrase across the barline, ending this section on an F and resulting in the following basic structure belonging to the vocal line of this section:

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{49}ibid.
\textsuperscript{50}ibid.
F -- C-sharp -- D-flat -- F

There is no chorus in this section, suggesting the Prisoner's inherent solitude in the struggle against his fellow man. (Although religion, or God, may support him and his desire for freedom, mankind in general supports the Great Inquisitor in the form of organized government upon earth.)

The orchestra states the Fratello set in retrograde at measure 900, ending on a C-minor chord (m. 902). The flutes, in rubato, state the Fratello set in prime form over this chord, which persists even as the Great Inquisitor sings the Hope set, (m. 903). The B-minor (ending Section IV) and C-minor chords frame this section, and though the Great Inquisitor creates a strong sense of the F, as in earlier sections, one cannot help but notice the increasingly active role of the C chord rather than the B. If F is the most important tone center for this entire scene, then B and C play perhaps "subdominant" and "dominant" functions in the traditional sense.
Section VI: Realization

Section VI spans measures 905 through 920, in which the Prisoner "moves rapidly as if struck by a sudden realization," reflected in the sudden increase in tempo (movendo), dynamics (fff), and orchestration. Two enormous realizations mark the end of this section: The Prisoner's false hope was the cruellest of all tortures, somewhat illustrated by a rallentando and decrescendo, (m. 915-7), and due to his escape attempt he is to die at the stake, reflected by abrupt extremes in the orchestra and voice.

The Prisoner's reaction to the reality of the situation communicates itself musically with repeated, short, fff marcato motives of three notes each:

GRAPH 29

These motives are fragments of the Fratello set and stated in near-perfect imitation, both in rhythmic ratio and interval, to measure 899 (see graph 30).

---

51Ibid.
This distinctive motive has previously been associated primarily with the Great Inquisitor, but here with the words "Ah, now the light dawns! Now I see! Now I see!" it is obvious that the Prisoner chooses to use the Jailer's language to express his true understanding of the Jailer (and, by extension, fellow man) as oppressor.

The F and D-flat from his statement of this motive (see graph 30) suggest that the E and C, followed by the D and B-flat (see graph 29), form the important descending pattern F (m. 905) - E - D. The following motive, on the word "hoping", breaks this sequence and leaps a major sixth to land on a high F in full expression of the bitterness of false hope, and again reasserting the F's importance. These initial measures following the Prisoner's capture undoubtedly emphasize an F-major chord throughout, aided by the suggestion of a C-major chord (the "dominant" in tertian harmony) at measure 909. The following phrase, composed of the same distinctive Fratello fragments, descends in thirds as in measures 908-911: B--G, A--F-sharp, B--G-sharp, C-sharp--A-sharp, F -- E-flat (graph 31), leading to the first arrival point in this pattern, the F-sharp (m. 916), followed by the final E-flat (m. 918), significant not only in its longer note value but in the fact that it is the lowest and last note arrived at in this sequence (see graph 31).

---

52 Ibid.
Following this, the Prisoner’s scream at the horrifying apparition of the stake leaps a major seventh from a brief F to an E, then slides downwards to an A submissively, but conclusively. A series of sprechstimme moans on C then follow, which would not be too significant were it not for the Great Inquisitor’s soothing "Have Courage. . ."\textsuperscript{53} which slides up to the C an octave above. At this point, his line trails off and begins the next section in which the "death walk" towards the stake begins.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid.
The vocal line(s), then, initially support the F (m. 908-914) concluding the previous section, then move to an E-flat (m. 918), followed by an E-natural, which in turn supports an A as a major arrival point in both the vocal line and the drama.

GRAPH 33

This relationship corresponds to the earlier F and B-flat, which recur as tone centers throughout the previous sections (graph 17), indicating that perhaps a new tone emphasis has been arrived at (E and A). However, the C, as from Section 5 onwards, does not change in its continued persistence.

Once again the chorus does not participate in this section. The orchestra, however, supports the vocal line through continued usage of the tritone and perfect fifth (fourth), though not in sequence, often resulting in the emphasis of another tone at the same time. To illustrate, in measure 905 an E in the contrabasses and an F in the violins consistently pound out the rhythm in octaves, beginning pppp and ending at fff (m. 907), combined with a tone cluster in the middle register. After the Prisoner's first exclamation (m. 908), this sonority as a whole responds energetically in sf chords, persistently emphasizing E and F in the midst of the cluster, concurrent with the voice's emphasis of E (see below). As the Prisoner's line is taken to D and B-flat, the notes B-flat and F are emphasized in the orchestra, and when he lands on the F, he is supported in the orchestra's upper octave (with the remainder of the chord consisting of TT/P5 intervals on top of one another), indicating the importance of the moment, and of the F (see graph 34).
Measure 914 sets up the important notes for the succeeding measures by emphasizing the TT/P5 chord G-flat -- C-flat -- F, which is repeated in the low strings, low winds, and timpani (without the C-flat) as the interval G-flat -- F, during the voice's arrival at F-sharp (m. 916, graph 31). Similarly, when the voice lands on the E-flat (m. 918, graph 31), the clarinets and strings simultaneously state E-flat and F. The accompaniment, then, supports the voice in a convoluted way: simultaneously stating E and F (m. 906-910), creating a chord of tritones upon which F sits (m. 913), simultaneously stating G-flat and F (m. 916-918), and trilling E-flat to F (m. 918-919) (see graph 35).
It could be that the continued conflicts involving one dominant tone center, as illustrated by the accompaniment in this climactic section, reflect the fact that in life there will be continued conflict with no resolution in man's search for power over other men. However, as the Prisoner nears this realization and his death, his own internal conflict appears to subside. The following sections demonstrate this possibility in an increased focus upon one note, F, (suggested here) as the primary tone center.
Section VII: Acceptance

Section VII marks the beginning of the Prisoner's slow walk towards the stake and, subsequently, his death. He questions the existence of liberty, and this is accompanied by another modified circle of fifths progression in the orchestra, many choral statements of six-note fragments (reminiscent of, but different from, the earlier statements during which the Prisoner was in delusion), and a second chorus. The emphasis returns primarily to the note F, with B and C as less significant tone centers, eliminating the possibility of new tone centers on E and A as suggested at the end of Section VI. The section ends with the return of the Great Inquisitor's distinctive Fratello motive following the conclusion of the chorus's canonic imitation.

Both the Great Inquisitor and the Prisoner each sing one motive in this section. The Inquisitor continues his ascent from B-flat (through C) in the earlier section to an E on "Come now"^{54} -- a tritone. The Prisoner continues this line by beginning on the E an octave below and ending on B-natural, a perfect fourth. Again, the possible tension caused by the tritone versus perfect fifth conflict persists, in this case with the B/B-flat. Due to the fact that the Prisoner's motive grows out of the Jailer's motive, the ending B-natural seems more significant, especially when considering the rhythmic drive towards this B-natural in the Prisoner's motive: three eighth notes - quarter note, (See sections II, IV, V), while the E seems transitory (see graph 36).

^{54}Ibid.
The chorus, as in earlier sections, sings six-note fragments of the Choral Material set, one per each vocal entry and supported in part by the orchestra, beginning at the end of measure 920. Unlike the previous sections, the six-note fragments are stated slightly differently due to repeated notes, and do not initially correspond to the modified circle of fifths movement in the orchestra. The beginning notes of each of the first four entries are as follows:

G-sharp -- C -- F -- C

in which the C acts as a returning point.

The next four entries are of the Prayer set, unique to Scene IV, and correspond directly to the orchestral circle of fifths, progressing towards C in measure 927. The final four entries again incorporate the Choral Material set (m. 930) in the same manner as in measure 920, those beginning notes being:

F-sharp -- B-flat -- D -- C (see graph 37)
Although these notes are not easy to hear in the midst of much musical activity at the \(p\) dynamic level, the initial note of each entry is most likely to be heard (as in Section II). It is clear from this analysis that the C is definitely significant in its persistence, anticipating its future "dominant" relationship to the F-sharp/F-natural tone center in the final section.

A second chorus is introduced in this section, (m. 925 - 929), stating tertian chords homophonically, beginning with B-flat major. Continuing this sonority for three full measures and emphasizing its importance in repetition, the second chorus then sings an A-flat minor triad (m. 928), followed by a C-major triad and an F-sharp minor triad (m. 929). The F-sharp chord serves to anticipate the downbeat of measure 930, in which the first chorus and orchestra continue with the F-sharp tone center. Essentially, then, B-flat moves to F-sharp via A-flat and C. Considering how long the B-flat is emphasized and the already established importance of the C in this section, the B-flat and C are the more significant notes (see graph 38).
The orchestra in this section often spells out tertian chords in arpeggiation, corresponding to the first chorus' use of the Choral Material set. As such, from measures 921 through 924 there is a repeated emphasis of an F-sharp diminished chord, over which the voices move towards B and the chorus towards C, creating again the TT/P5 relationship:

At measure 925, the circle of fifths sequence in tritones begins with A-flat -- D, concluding on A -- E-flat (m. 929), a near-complete cycle (see graph 40).
Further, the initial A-flat -- D at measure 925 contains an F in the chord, making the corresponding note in the final A -- E-flat chord an F-sharp (G-flat). This anticipates the F-sharp in the next bar, as does the corresponding F-sharp in the second chorus.

In measure 930 the harp and piano spell out an F-sharp diminished chord followed by a D-sharp diminished chord, a B diminished seventh chord, and a solitary D-sharp. The roots of these chords spell a B-major triad, suggesting a subdominant function to the F-sharp in Section VIII.

This section finally brings into focus the lingering C of the past few sections and its relationship to the B/B-flat by reinforcing the F/F-sharp as the primary tone center. The inherent TT/P5 conflict explains the two choruses' emphasis of the C and the Prisoner and orchestra's emphasis of the B (see graph 42).
Section VIII: Death

The final section of the opera begins with the Great Inquisitor's distinctive Fratello motive, exactly as we heard it in measure 899, the start of the climactic moment in which the Prisoner's freedom proves false. As if to further emphasize that reality, the Jailer sings the haunting three-note fragment twice in succession, beginning on B-flat and ending on B-natural.

**GRAPH 43**

![Graph 43](image)

The Prisoner ends the scene by questionning the concept of liberty in sprechstimme on an F, incorporating the three eighth notes - quarter note pattern which has so successfully propelled the music towards significant points throughout Scene IV. By ending the opera in this manner, the F implies the final tone center, particularly when considering the Great Inquisitor's emphasis of B-flat/B-natural, which satisfies the tritone/perfect fourth relationship, whose continued conflict has helped define tone centers throughout this piece (see graph 44).
The chorus, delaying its entry until after the Jailer has entered, sings the final "Etos meum annuntiabit laudem tuam" in a completely chordal, homophonic style, creating vertical sonorites in rapid succession. Two F-sharp minor and B-major chords alternate in measure 934, followed by D major, B-flat minor and C major in the next measure. The chorus sustains this C chord until all other parts have faded out. It is over this "major" sonority that the Prisoner utters his last question on F.

In a less orderly fashion, the orchestra states various set fragments, particularly the distinctive Fratello motive, in their familiar rhythmic and motivic presentations which characterize Scene IV. A miniature circle of fifths progression in tritones occurs in the contrabasses and piano (m. 935-6), modified by progressing backwards; i.e., a circle of fourths, impelling the music forward (see graph 46).
The ending E and B-flat, sustained until the Prisoner's entrance, create a C seventh chord with the C and G stated simultaneously in the chorus, once again suggesting the F as the primary tone center, or "tonic" in the traditional sense. If the circle of fourths sequence had continued, B and F would follow the E and B-flat; however, although the Prisoner ends on an F, the B-natural is absent.

Obviously the C is important. Not only has this been proven earlier by the chorus, but it is the final note to be heard (the rest of the C chord is subordinate), and its dominant function in the last few measures cannot be underestimated in view of Dallapicolla's continued reference to tertian harmony. Its relationship to F, as with the B-flat in the orchestra, is supportive, serving to reinforce the F as the primary tone center by acting as
"dominant". On the other hand, after the brief statement of B-major chords (m. 934) and closely following B-natural in the Great Inquisitor's vocal line, the B-natural is cancelled out, eliminating the TT/P5 conflict. This detail suggests that the Prisoner has subconsciously realized that liberty is only possible with death, at least in the sense that man then has no more opportunity to oppress his fellow man. In this light, the Great Inquisitor has in fact given the Prisoner the freedom he has so desired by tempting him to escape, thus ensuring his death and salvation upon his inevitable recapture. Unfortunately, however, the libretto and dramatic action do not indicate any resolution upon the Prisoner's death, ensuring an undeniably negative view of the human condition at the opera's conclusion.
CHAPTER V
PITCH CENTERS

The preceding analysis of the eight sections in Scene IV illuminates a first level of reduction; these notes further relate to each other across the sections' boundaries. (See graph 48.) To determine a second level of reduction, several concepts are worth considering.

First, if the 'golden mean' ratio \((1:618)\)\(^{55}\) is applied to these eighty measures, measure 909 should, theoretically, be the apex of the scene: the highest and most significant point musically and dramatically. Occurring precisely in the middle of Section V, the moment of apex shows the Prisoner, without accompaniment, landing definitively on a middle C with the words, "Ah, now the light dawns!"\(^{56}\), answered by pounding tone clusters in the orchestra (see Section V). This is without doubt the turning point for the protagonist, as he realizes the reality of the endless human condition. Due to the fact that this is the first time the C can be classified as "structural," its newness at this very dramatic moment emphasizes its importance further.

In Schenkerian terms the fact that this moment of extreme significance emphasizes a C, while the F-natural can be observed as the most recurrent tone center of the scene in general, implies a I - V - I harmonic progression, with the moment of V occurring in measure 909. However, it would be difficult to find any type of melodic descent over this progression, and further it does not explain the recurring F-sharp, nor the fact that at times the F-natural is not obviously the most significant pitch (see Section II).


\(^{56}\text{Dallapiccola, Il Prigioniero.}\)
Although the C clearly communicates a turning point in the drama (and remains important until the end), the tone centers of B (B/B-flat) and F (F/F-sharp) are also prevalent, and more accurately convey the formal design of this scene in their relationships to one another. (See graph 48.)

B-natural, B-flat, F-natural, F-sharp, and C-natural are initially established in that order, and their retention as primary notes differs significantly from one another as well. The B-natural is established in Section I and lasts through Section IV, then makes only one other major appearance -- in Section VII. The B-flat remains important throughout Sections II and III, then returns once again in Section VII also. The F-natural, although suggested in Section I is significant, fully establishes itself in Section IVa, recurring with comparable emphasis in Sections V - VI, and ending the drama in Section VIII. On the other hand, the F-sharp is important at two completely separate moments: Section IVb, and Section VII. The C-natural enters rather late, at the end of Section V, but perseveres throughout the whole of Section VII, concluding the piece in Section VIII.

In short, these tone centers need to be considered as five separate notes, not three pitch levels, each being distinctive in its presentation and duration. (See graph 48.) From this sketch a symmetrical pattern can be ascertained, where F acts as the most central, significant tone center and F-sharp as the secondary. The F-natural is the more "complete" tone center, as it creates the intervals perfect 5, tritone, and perfect 4 with the C-natural, B-natural, and B-flat consecutively. The F-sharp, on the other hand, creates a perfect 4 with the B-natural and a tritone with the C only, lacking the perfect 5. The entrances and durations of the B-flat, B-natural and C-natural also indicate their subordinance to the F-natural and F-sharp (see graph 49).
GRAPH 48

LEVELS OF REDUCTION -- LARGE SCALE

FROM SECTIONS:

PITCH LEVELS:

REduced:
The F, then, acts as a keystone (C) to this scene (ABCBA).

The question can be posed, however, as to how easily the primary tone centers can be heard in such an intense, densely written piece containing two soloists, two choirs, and full orchestra. Although with repeated hearings the arrival points should be easily ascertained and could arguably create an overall impression such as indicated in graph 49, the fact remains that Dallapiccola wrote each note with precision and deliberation, and therefore their linear connections become clear.

The idea of Scene IV existing as a microcosm of the opera as a whole is not limited to those dramatic considerations mentioned in Chapter II. The significance of the tonal implications in the relationship of the primary tone center, F, and its supporting tone centers, B/B-flat and C, should be considered with regard to all of Il Prigioniero; for the same twelve-tone sets are utilized, which, in their construction, demonstrate this tritone/perfect fourth (fifth) relationship. Further, the structure suggested by the tone center
relationships resembles the arch-form (see graph 49), corresponding to the organization characterizing the drama in both Scene IV and the entire opera.
CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to illustrate several aspects of Dallapiccola's coherent expressionism in *Il Prigioniero* by focusing upon his approach to symmetrical formal structure in the drama; structural relationships in the twelve-tone sets themselves and in their usage in Scene IV; and specifically how these sets are arranged to form distinct, heirarchical tone-centers corresponding to those that characterize the tertian system. In particular, the arch-form defines the drama in Scene IV (in which the Prisoner's moment of realization acts as the apex) as well as the drama of the opera as a whole. Furthermore, the most fundamental level of a reductive method of analysis also suggests an ABCBA structure with regard to the primary tone centers F, B and C.

The remarkable synthesis of music and drama illuminates Dallapiccola's own clarity of objective: "the libretto is already the music," for "musical theatre essentially [is] . . . a projection of moral and -- ultimately -- metaphysical issues."\(^{57}\) As a result, this opera is not accurately described as "twelve-tone" or "tonal"; rather, it is perhaps more correctly understood in terms of the libretto -- as an opera of carefully structured indignation. "These verses, centuries old, seemed to mirror a perennial human condition. . . . I saw the necessity of writing an opera that could be at once moving and contemporary. . . . that would depict the tragedy of our time -- the tragedy of the persecution felt and suffered by the millions and tens of millions."\(^{58}\)

\(^{57}\)Dallapiccola, *Dallapiccola on Opera*, 19, 23..

\(^{58}\)Ibid., 51-2.
In his later opera *Ulisse* (1960-8), Dallapiccola consciously arrives at the optimistic conclusion which he apparently does not consider in *Il Prigioniero*. "Stars, how many times I stood entranced as under different skies your pure and shimmering lustre passed... looking for wisdom in the glance you cast!"59 These stars "serve to point eloquently to the upward way of the journey from now on,"60 promising a victory over death. Perhaps it is due to the closeness with which Dallapiccola observed and experienced the political oppression of the 1930s and 40s that he was unable to suggest the Prisoner's death as anything but completely negative. If this were not the case, Dallapiccola may have altered the ending "Liberty?" to be "Liberty!", illuminating the Prisoner's death as an escape from the oppression of man.

These considerations, as well as the detailed observations regarding arch-form expounded upon in this study, imply a balanced structure: liberty as a function of death, and death as a function of life. This philosophy creates a sense of proportion through symmetry, constituting a tangible system in which "every thinking man, ... a torn and tormented being" can find direction.61

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59Ibid., 276-7.

60Ibid., 20.

APPENDIX I

COMPLETE LINEAR STATEMENTS OF TWELVE-TONE SETS IN
SCENE IV

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Total Number = 12 Sets: 6 - Solo Voices, 6 - Accompaniment

IP = Il Prigioniero (The Prisoner)
GI = Great Inquisitor
C = Chorus
O = Orchestra
APPENDIX II
TWELVE-TONE SET MATRICES

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**P** = Prime Sets  
**I** = Prime Sets Inverted

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Bottom to Top: Inverted Sets in Retrograde
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\[P = \text{Prime Sets}
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\[I = \text{Prime Sets Inverted}\]

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\text{Right to Left: Prime Sets in Retrograde}
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\text{Bottom to Top: Inverted Sets in Retrograde}
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ESCAPE SET MATRIX

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P = Prime Sets
I = Prime Sets Inverted

Right to Left:  Prime Sets in Retrograde

Bottom to Top:  Inverted Sets in Retrograde
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P = Prime Sets  
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**Right to Left:** Prime Sets in Retrograde

**Bottom to Top:** Inverted Sets in Retrograde
BIBLIOGRAPHY


