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THE FLUTE AND PICCOLO MUSIC OF MARTIN AMLIN: AN INTRODUCTION, DISCUSSION, AND ANALYSES OF THE SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO; TRIO SONATINA FOR FLUTE, CLARINET, AND PIANO; AND SONATA FOR PICCOLO AND PIANO

by

LISA A. JELLE

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

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ABSTRACT

THE FLUTE AND PICCOLO MUSIC OF MARTIN AMLIN: AN INTRODUCTION, DISCUSSION, AND ANALYSES OF THE SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO; TRIO SONATINA FOR FLUTE, CLARINET, AND PIANO; AND SONATA FOR PICCOLO AND PIANO

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The compositional style of music for flute and piccolo by Martin Amlin is examined through formal and harmonic analyses and through interviews with the composer and the musicians most closely associated with the works, flutist Leone Buyse and piccoloist Zart Dombourian-Eby.

Amlin's compositional style as represented in these pieces may be described as combining characteristic twentieth-century American driving rhythms and perpetual motion, symmetry on multiple levels, and a unique blend of French use of color and phrasing. Complex rhythms and constantly-shifting meters and timbres give the music a kaleidoscopic effect.

The composer's fascination with symmetry is reflected both formally and harmonically, in both the often-used arch form and the frequent use of serialism based on symmetrical tone rows. Symmetrical division of meter often produces jazz rhythms, and major and minor 7th chords are featured due to their symmetrical sound.

Amlin's style of serialism appeals to many because of its unusual, almost-tonal sound. This effect is due to the structure of the rows, in which half of the intervals are perfect 4ths; many major and minor 7th chords are produced internally. This is intentional
on the part of the composer, who is not so much intent on abandoning all tonality as on producing music that finds favor with both the ear and the mind.

All three pieces exhibit use of the full range of the instruments, a quality that both Buyse and Dombourian-Eby mentioned as appealing to them. Yet, as in the style of the best sonatas of the repertoire, the parts are balanced; lines interweave, rise, and fall in a balanced whole.

As more flutists become aware of the quality of these works, they will become a strong and vibrant staple of the body of flute and piccolo literature.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Ray and Sandra Jelle, whose love and constant encouragement made everything in my life possible. I am especially grateful to my mother for sharing her love and belief in the value of music, and to my father for teaching me the importance of getting a good education. Also, in the last year I have especially appreciated the understanding and support of my brothers, Eric and Todd, and my "Aunt" Bettie Close.

For their interest and encouragement, I thank all my friends, relatives, teachers, and my colleagues in the Austin Symphony Orchestra and Breckenridge Music Institute Chamber Orchestra. This work would not have been possible without the input and advice of Martin Amlin, Leone Buyse, Zart Dombourian-Eby, and Tony Brandt. My heartfelt thanks to everyone.
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I. INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, the American flute community has taken a strong interest in the sonatas of Martin Amlin. His collaboration as composer/pianist with Leone Buyse, the Webster Trio, and Zart Dombourian-Eby has included performances at the last three conventions of the National Flute Association.

Amlin’s collaboration with Leone Buyse led to their production of the compact disc, The Sky’s the Limit, featuring the Sonata for Flute and Piano. Their work together with clarinetist Michael Webster led to the founding of the Webster Trio, which has toured extensively in the Northeast. Amlin composed Trio Sonatina for the Webster Trio to perform on recitals, and the group plans to perform it at the 2000 Convention of the National Flute Association in Columbus, Ohio.

The Seattle Symphony’s piccoloist, Zart Dombourian-Eby, began working with Amlin when she commissioned the Sonata for Piccolo and Piano for their performance at the 1997 NFA Convention in Chicago. The Piccolo Sonata was selected by the NFA Piccolo Committee as a required piece for the Piccolo Young Artist Competition for the 1998 Convention in Phoenix, at which Amlin was the collaborative pianist.

Ms. Dombourian-Eby subsequently asked him to compose a lighter piece for piccolo for the 1999 Convention in Atlanta; he was already working on a piccolo concerto commissioned by the NFA Piccolo Committee for that convention. They premiered Sonatina Piccola at the convention on August 20th, the following day Atlanta Symphony piccoloist Carl Hall premiered the Piccolo Concerto with members of the
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, the duo have recorded both the Piccolo Sonata and Sonatina Piccola; the recording is being readied for production.

The purpose of this study is to explore the compositional style of Martin Amlin through three of his works: the Sonata for Flute and Piano; Trio Sonatina for Flute, Clarinet, and Piano; and the Sonata for Piccolo and Piano. This is achieved through harmonic and formal analyses of the works, and through interviews with the composer and the two flutists he collaborated with on the works, Leone Buyse and Zart Dombourian-Eby.

The three analysis chapters examine the features that typify the strengths in Amlin’s music. Three main areas will be focused on; the primary subjects are the use of rhythm and meter, and the application of symmetrical principles on both broad and local levels. Specific rhythmic devices that will be examined include perpetual motion, syncopated and jazz rhythms, and odd-numbered and changing meters. Examples of symmetry as applied to form, rhythm, and row will be discussed. The third main point is the use of the full range of the instruments, and how this helps to fully exploit their melodic, harmonic, and timbral potential.

The three transcribed interviews show the genesis and development of each piece from the standpoint of the composer and his collaborators. All aspects of the creative art are discussed, from the inspiration for the pieces, to their “growing pains” as the collaborators rehearsed and made adjustments, and finally to the premieres and beyond. The respective positions of these three pieces, within the broad repertoire of music for flute and piccolo, are discussed. Some performance issues, including technical challenges in the parts, are also examined.
This study is supplemented by a List of Works. Musical examples are reproduced with the permission of Theodore Presser Company.
II. MARTIN AMLIN
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Martin Amlin was born in Dallas on June 12, 1953. He started piano studies with a neighborhood piano teacher at age 6, and began composing music four years later. His first composition teacher was David Ahlstrom, who assigned pieces that would emulate the *Mikrokosmos* of Bartók. Amlin later studied with Paul Velluci at Southern Methodist University from age 13 up through his undergraduate degree; this teacher sparked Amlin's interest in composition and helped him realize his calling. Amlin studied in 1972 and 1973 at the Ecoles d'Art Américaines in Fontainebleau with Nadia Boulanger, whom he credits as his major compositional influence.

After receiving a Bachelor's degree in piano and composition at Southern Methodist University, Amlin went to Eastman and in 1975 earned a Master's degree in composition and a performer's certificate in piano. In 1977 he earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano from Eastman, where he studied piano with Frank Glazer and composition with Joseph Schwantner, Samuel Adler, and Warren Benson. He was awarded fellowships to the Tanglewood Music Center for four consecutive summers (1977-1980) and was rehearsal pianist with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus and musicians in the Boston Symphony Orchestra, appearing as piano soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra on several occasions.

He is currently an Associate Professor of Music in Theory and Composition at Boston University's School for the Arts, where he has taught since 1983. Since moving to Boston in 1977, he has appeared with the Webster Trio (flute, clarinet, and piano), the
American Vocal Arts Quintet (vocal quartet and piano), the contemporary music groups ALEA III and Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble, the M.I.T. Experimental Music Studio, and the New England Ragtime Ensemble, as well as with members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Formerly an instructor at the Phillips Exeter Academy and an Affiliate Artist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he has recorded for the Hyperion, Koch International, Crystal, Titanic, Opus One, Folkways, and Wergo labels.

Amlin has received grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council; the National Endowment for the Arts; the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (1982 Grant to Young Composers and 1985-1999 Standard Awards); the Massachusetts Artists Foundation; the St. Botolph Club Foundation; and the Massachusetts Council for the Arts. He has been a resident at Yaddo, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and the MacDowell Colony, where he was named a Norlin Fellow. His compositions have been performed throughout the United States and are published by Theodore Presser Company.

Amlin’s compositional focus has thus far been concentrated primarily on chamber music, emphasizing piano, voice, flute, and strings. Seven Piano Sonatas and a Sonata for Viola and Piano, together with the Flute Sonata and Piccolo Sonata, show his strong interest in this form. In addition to Trio Sonatina for Flute, Clarinet, and Piano, other chamber works for flute are Israfel for Soprano, Flute, Violin, Cello, and Piano (1980); Morceau de Concours for Flute and Piano (1986); Atlantic Serenade for Flute, Clarinet, Cello, and Piano (1991); Variations for Piano and Woodwind Quintet (1994); and Two Songs on Poems by Anne Fessenden for Soprano, Alto Flute, and Piano (1997-1998). Amlin has recently written a Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra, and Sonatina Piccola
for Piccolo and Piano; these pieces will be mentioned later in this work. A complete
listing of Martin Amlin's works is found in the Appendix.¹

¹ Martin Amlin, interview by author, 26 December 1999, Dallas, minidisc recording.
III. ANALYSIS: SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO

The Sonata for Flute and Piano began as a one-movement work, *The Sky's the Limit*, written for and dedicated to Doug Worthen, a colleague of Amlin's at Phillips-Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. The single movement was composed at Yaddo, the artists' colony in Saratoga Springs, New York, in the summer of 1983. Three companion movements were composed in Boston from December 1986 to February 1987 using themes and motives from *The Sky's the Limit*, which became the final movement. The fact that materials from the last movement are the source for movements one through three makes the piece almost a "sonata in reverse."\(^2\)

Although Martin Amlin and Doug Worthen premiered the Sonata in May of 1987, it was not published or well known at that point; in 1988 Amlin asked Leone Buyse to listen to a recording of the Sonata. They were both at the Tanglewood Music Festival: he as accompanist for the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, she as assistant principal flutist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She was immediately taken with the piece; they made plans to record it. They did this in September of 1990, as part of Buyse's CD *The Sky's the Limit: A Celebration of 20th Century American Music for Flute.*

They worked together from the summer of 1988 on, playing recitals together both as soloists and in the Webster Trio with clarinetist Michael Webster (Buyse's husband). March of 1989 saw their first public performance of the Flute Sonata, in Needham, Massachusetts. In May of 1990 Maria Cole, the widow of Nat King Cole, hosted a Tanglewood Music Center recital in her Boston Ritz-Carlton apartment that featured

their performance of the Flute Sonata; among the guests was Hugh Downs, newscaster and aspiring composer. Amlin and Buyse performed the Sonata at the 1993 Convention of the National Flute Convention in Boston, and it has since been published by Theodore Presser Music.

Three main aspects of Amlin’s music will be examined in the Sonata for Flute and Piano. First rhythmic devices will be discussed; these include perpetual motion, jazz rhythms, and cross-rhythms. The use of symmetry on both broad and local levels is the second feature; last to be analyzed will be the achievement of desired effects and timbres through employment of the difficult-to-define quality of French color and the use of extreme registers. The drawing-together of these disparate elements into a unified whole is what makes this composer’s music unique.

Of all the defining characteristics of Martin Amlin’s music, perhaps rhythmic intensity is the most obvious. Examples of perpetual motion, jazz rhythms, and cross-rhythms unify the piece, occurring as they do throughout the work. The first thing one hears when listening to the Flute Sonata is a striking example of perpetual motion, which is the defining characteristic of the first movement. Of the Toccata’s 158 measures, only the last 4 break the line of articulated thirty-second notes. A slightly different use of perpetual motion is made in the third movement, measures 16 through 49; here a constant stream of thirty-seconds is broken occasionally by an eighth note. This brief interruption makes the return of motion even more compelling.

In addition to perpetual motion, the use of jazz rhythms is noticeable in the Flute Sonata. Measures 114-115 show the infusion of the jazz element into the first movement.
This same kind of overlapping, syncopated rhythm is used in measures 21-22 of the last movement; these two instances are shown in Example 1.

EXAMPLE 1. Jazz rhythm, mm. 114-115 of Toccata, compare to rhythm in mm. 21-22 of The Sky's the Limit.

FROM: SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO
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Another use of a jazz-like rhythm also occurs in the fourth movement; the symmetrical placement of thirty-second rests throughout the measure results in syncopation and a rhythm typical of jazz.
EXAMPLE 2. Symmetry creating jazz rhythm, mm. 89-90 of *The Sky’s the Limit*.

Although both Leone Buyse and Zart Dombourian-Eby have mentioned liking the jazz rhythms Amlin uses, the composer himself insists he has no special interest in jazz and that any “jazzy” effects are coincidental, simply the result of his use of symmetrical rhythms and chords. When asked about the fact that measure 25 of *The Sky’s the Limit* sounds jazzy, he explained, “It’s a mathematical symmetry thing there, that this bar looks the same, two 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes. It comes up with a jazz rhythm; it’s a coincidence.”\footnote{Martin Amlin, interview by author.}
EXAMPLE 3. Jazz rhythm, mm. 25-26 of The Sky's the Limit.

FROM: SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO
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When not using perpetual motion to create driving rhythmic intensity, Amlin uses
cross-rhythms to keep the lines moving. Measures 5-6 and 26 of Lyric Moments
demonstrate this use, which creates a lilt. Leone Buyse feels this creates “a wonderful,
almost watery quality: gently rocking.”

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4 Leone Buyse, interview by author, 17 January 2000, Houston, minidisc recording.
EXAMPLE 4. Cross-rhythms, lilt, French color, mm. 5-6 of _Lyric Moments_.

FROM: SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO
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A second, even more pointed use of cross-rhythms is made in the final movement. In measure 6, the piano right hand has eighth-note triplets against sporadic sixteenths in the left hand. This challenge to the pianist to subdivide simultaneously in triplets and sixteenths is a perfect example of the employment of cross-rhythms. The sense of unrest created through the use of this technique propels the music forward.
EXAMPLE 5: Duple vs. triple subdivision, use of octatonic scale, mm. 6-7 of The Sky’s the Limit.

FROM: SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO ©1997 Theodore Presser Company, Used By Permission

If rhythm is the most striking aspect of Amlin’s compositions, his use of symmetry on many levels is certainly another main, if less readily apparent, feature. On a large scale, all four movements reflect broad arch forms. An opening “A” section is followed by a contrasting “B” section; each movement ends with a return of “A”, which is transformed in some way. Sometimes the transformation is so extreme as to make the return almost unrecognizable. One such instance occurs in the third movement; the return of the “A” section is particularly notable, as the flute line is filled with octave displacements, some so awkward and quirky as to seem humorous. To complete the transformation, one intriguing motive actually grows into a full-fledged flute cadenza. The return of the original ‘A’ section, albeit transformed, helps to round out the movement’s arch form. Symmetry is also achieved on a broader level through the inclusion of this flute cadenza; it balances the finale’s piano cadenza.
EXAMPLE 6. Transformation of flute line, mm. 1-10, 90-98 of *Scherzo-Intermezzo*.

FROM: *SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO*  
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It has now been demonstrated how the composer’s application of symmetrical principles to rhythm produced jazz-like syncopations; when applied to form, arch forms and balanced cadenzas in two movements were the result. Now Amlin’s use of symmetry in conjunction with another basic element of music, pitch, will be examined. The traditional harmonic structures of Western music, major and minor scales, form few symmetrical sets. This composer makes consistent use of two such sets that are produced: major and minor 7th chords. The symmetrical construction of each is apparent;
the minor 7th chord consists of a major 3rd bracketed by two minor 3rds, and the major 7th chord is made up of two major 3rds surrounding a minor 3rd.

Another important symmetrical tool used is the octatonic scale, which consists of alternating half steps and whole steps. The symmetrical construction of the octatonic scale and the major and minor 7th chords yields all kinds of symmetrical outcomes when used in this music. Oblique use of the octatonic scale was demonstrated in Example 5. Although not easily noticed, upon closer examination it becomes apparent that every note in these two measures is part of the octatonic scale, C#-D-E-F-G-Ab-Bb-B. A final symmetrical use of pitch is made through employment of the tritone. This interval results from dividing an octave in half, and is the only interval that remains the same upon inversion; its mirror-like qualities make it an integral part of symmetrical pitch structures.

The following example shows the relationship between the first two of the three symmetrical pitch devices that have now been defined. Here the octatonic scale is broken down through creative voicing into another previously-mentioned symmetry: two minor 7th chords. The scale (C#-D-E-E#-G-G#-A#-B) is articulated in measure 85 first as the piano right hand’s E Minor 7th chord plus the left hand A# Minor 7th chord. This is revoiced in the next beat in the right hand’s G Minor 7th, plus C# Minor 7th in the left hand.
EXAMPLE 7. Articulation of octatonic scale in minor 7th chords, mm. 85-87 of *The Sky's the Limit.*

FROM: SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO  
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This is only one instance of the composer's use of major and minor 7th chords; they do, in fact, permeate all of his music. The symmetrical construction of these types of chords makes them a favorite of Amlin's. The entire third movement is based on the interplay between seventh chords based on Eb and A, in both their major and minor forms. This interplay is foreshadowed in the closing bars of the second movement. The
chords are separated; the right hand uses the Eb Major 7th chord, the left A Major 7th (for the penultimate chord).

EXAMPLE 8. Simultaneous use of Eb Major 7th and A Major 7th chords, mm. 76-78 of *Lyric Moments*.

![Music notation image]

FROM: SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO
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In *Scherzo-Intermezzo*'s opening bars, the Eb Major 7th is laid out in the first two beats, followed by A Major 7th for three beats. This sets up the harmonic change on beat three of every 3/8 bar, which together with the staccato eighths on beats two and three creates an effect not unlike the lilt of a Viennese Waltz. Leone Buyse comments on the rhythmic and harmonic atmosphere: “There’s a wonderfully delicate quality about the *Scherzo*, I find. There’s humor in it, and there’s also harmonically such a shift going on from time to time, that you’re never really sure where you are. You’re left ungrounded,
in a certain sense. At the same time, there's a wonderful direction to it; it's almost a little enigmatic.  

The composer himself feels that “…this movement…has a sort of polar thing between Eb and A, the major and minor 7th, which are very symmetrical chords, unlike a dominant 7th, which is not, to me, a symmetrical sound.”

EXAMPLE 9. Eb Major 7th chord vs. A Major 7th chord, mm.1-4 of Scherzo-Intermezzo.

FROM: SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO
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In addition to Amlin’s characteristic use of rhythm and symmetry, the third main feature of his music deals with the handling of instrumental lines: use of register, phrasing, and timbre. His training with Nadia Boulanger in France resulted in his style of creating French line and color, as earlier shown in Example 4. One aspect of French color, as exemplified in the works of Debussy and Ravel, is the use of extended vertical

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5 Leone Buyse, interview by author.
6 Martin Amlin, interview by author.
sonorities. Seventh, ninth and eleventh chords are used here in such a way that the
dissonant pitches do not resolve, but become part of the harmonic atmosphere. Another
characteristic technique involves texture; transparent lines are layered to create a muted,
kaleidoscopic effect. In Example 4 this is created through the descending interval’s
"sighing" motive; the flute voices the pair of notes in dotted eighths, while the piano has
straight eighth notes. This cross-rhythm, as mentioned earlier, produces a waterfall of the
sigh; the instruments are separated by a half beat, so it seems one or the other is always
starting anew. The cross-rhythm also ensures that the articulation of the alternating pairs
of notes is heard clearly. This typically French use of layering ensures the clarity of both
lines, despite the fact that the low register of the flute is surrounded by the piano’s more
extreme voicing.

The second and final way the composer creates the desired timbral effects is
through use of the extreme ranges. An extremely versatile pianist, Amlin does not
hesitate to use the full range of the instrument; his music likewise demands that the flutist
have absolute control in both the very low and very high registers. Toccata’s middle
section is very challenging in that the flutist must articulate thirty-second notes in the
very low register. Additionally, the movement ends with a sustained flutter-tongued low
D, marked "diminuendo, quasi niente".

The climax of the two inner movements is in their respective "B" sections, and
each is reached through a crescendo and through both instruments climbing higher in
pitch. The flute parts reach especially high, to the highest D and Db possible on the
instrument. This is demonstrated in the following example; the music builds in intensity
through fast, complex rhythms, rising to the highest notes on the flute. There is an arrival at measure 75, which the flute punctuates with an altissimo Db.

EXAMPLE 10. Minor 7th chords building to high Db, mm. 72-75 of Scherzo-Intermezzo.

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Each movement of the Flute Sonata concludes with the flute in an extreme range, giving memorable, impressive endings. As noted before, Toccata finishes with the flute flutter tonguing on a low D; quasi niente is indicated. A ppp low C# ends the second movement, and a high A marked pp possibile is the last note of Scherzo-Intermezzo. Perhaps the ending of The Sky's the Limit is intended to balance those of the prior movements; the flute lands on an altissimo D marked sempre più ff. "The Flute Sonata
ends on a high D; I like the idea of the extremes of the instrument.”
Certainly a fascination with the outer ranges of the possible is exhibited in the Sonata for Flute and Piano.

Amlin composed The Sky’s the Limit first and later created the other three movements from it; as mentioned before, this unusual genesis seems almost to be a “sonata-in-reverse.” Examining the other three movements for elements drawn from The Sky’s the Limit, we see that the Toccata uses both the octatonic scale and the same syncopated, or jazz rhythm. Lyric Moments and Scherzo-Intermezzo both make extensive use of 7th chords and end with an A Major 7th chord that the composer says acts loosely as a dominant to the first low D in The Sky’s the Limit. Additionally, the flute cadenza in Scherzo-Intermezzo balances the piano cadenza in The Sky’s the Limit.

Amlin had composed only one other work for flute and piano before the Flute Sonata was completed; in the summer of 1986 he wrote Morceau de Concours, a piece which was used for the Pappoutsakis Competition that year. The Sonata for Flute and Piano is amazingly varied in its use of rhythm, symmetry, and voicing; flutists can be grateful that this work was produced so early in Martin Amlin’s flute-writing career.

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7 Martin Amlin, interview by author.
IV. ANALYSIS: TRIO SONATINA FOR FLUTE, CLARINET, AND PIANO

*Trio Sonatina* is dedicated to Leone Buyse and Michael Webster and was written for them to play with Martin Amlin as the Webster Trio. This ensemble was formed in 1989 and toured the Northeast, playing recitals consisting of solo sonatas and trios. Amlin composed *Trio Sonatina* in order to develop more recital repertoire for the group. Shortly after its completion, the piece was premiered by the Webster Trio at Boston University's Tsai Center (March 1, 1991).

Many of the composer’s signature trademarks used in the Sonata for Flute and Piano are also apparent in this chamber work. Symmetries still abound in the use of arch forms and 7th chords. The employment of 7th chords was not as organized in the Flute Sonata as in *Trio Sonatina*. In the latter work, the 7th chord is embedded in a symmetrical row⁸ that is the melodic and harmonic basis for the inner movements of the work. The second important aspect, rhythmic intensity, continues to be evident through the employment of cross-rhythms, jazz-like syncopations, and meters that are odd-numbered and constantly changing. A new rhythmic device featured is that of canon.

In addition to symmetry and rhythm, the final compositional element drawing this piece together is the use of melodic motives in the outer movements. The specific intervals and ostinato patterns that typify these motives unify the entire work, from the outer, more tonal movements, to the inner, more serial-based ones.

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Symmetry is used in several ways in this piece. As does the Flute Sonata, *Trio Sonatina* employs symmetrical forms. Movements one, two, and four reflect broad arch forms in which the last "A" section is transformed.

It was observed in Example 6 that the return of the 'A' section in the third movement of the Flute Sonata was marked by a transformed flute line. This is mirrored in the Trio by the return of the opening section in the second movement. *Scherzo's* opening row is stated in straight eighth notes traded in a single line between the instruments, but its return is punctuated with rests. Each insertion of silence reflects a symmetrical change in balance between the dwindling counts of music and the growing counts of rest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>81</th>
<th>85</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>94</th>
<th>98</th>
<th>102</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts of Music</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts of Silence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 1:** Ratio of counts of music to counts of silence in *Scherzo*.

In addition to form, Amlin also applies symmetry to pitch. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the symmetrical properties of major and minor 7th chords make them a favorite of this composer. The use of these chords in the Trio is much more deliberate and far-reaching than in the Flute Sonata. The first four notes of the row shown in Table 2 form a Db Major 7th chord; the last four notes make a G Major 7th chord. Therefore, the composer’s manipulation of the row will produce many major 7th chords, both vertically and horizontally. Instances of the production and application of
the major and 7th chords resulting from row use will be discussed in more detail after
the following discussion of the row itself.

TABLE 2. Grid of row used in Scherzo and Interlude.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Ab</th>
<th>Db</th>
<th>Bb</th>
<th>Eb</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>F#</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>Ab</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>C#</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>Ab</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>F#</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<td>Bb</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>F#</td>
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<td>Ab</td>
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<tr>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>Bb</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>Ab</td>
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<tr>
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<td>A</td>
<td>F#</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>C#</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Bb</td>
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<td>Bb</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Ab</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C#</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>Ab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Ab</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>F#</td>
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<td>Ab</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the 7th chords that bracket the row, its construction has several other
notable features. Amlin made every other interval of this row a perfect 4th; the resulting
tonal structures are intentional on the composer’s part. The row is, of course,
symmetrical; the intervals are the same in the row’s primary form and its retrograde.

The other outstanding quality of the row regards the results of its division into 3-
and 4-note cells. When split into three-note cells, it produces a minor triad, followed by
two implied minor 7th chords, and a major triad. As touched upon earlier, division of
the row into four-note cells yields a major 7th chord, two pairs of minor 2nds a tritone
apart, and another major 7th chord. Note that these results are symmetrical in themselves:
grouping the row into three-note sets forms two implied 7th chords bracketed by triads.
Grouping by fours produces a middle set consisting of a pair of tritones a half step apart;
this contrasting set (the significance of which will be shown later) is surrounded by major
7th chords. The row in three-note cells is used in Scherzo, while use of the tetrachords is
evident in Interlude.

These two instances of the use of symmetrical structures resulting from division
of the row will now be further detailed. Measure 45 of the Scherzo uses division of the
row P-0 (primary form of row, C is the first pitch) into three-note cells. The following
example illustrates this; the first three pitches, C-F-Ab, form an F Minor triad. The
second set of three pitches, Db-Bb-Eb, implies one of the composer’s favorite minor 7th
chords, as does the following set, E-A-F#. The last set completes the symmetry by
mirroring the first set, with B-D-G forming a G Major triad. Incidentally, this production
and use of major and minor chords, along with the symmetrical 7th chords, is a likely
reason why Amlin’s use of serialism appeals to many performers and audiences who do
not generally appreciate the technique.
EXAMPLE 11. Minor triads and 7th chords resulting from
3-note grouping of P-0, mm. 45-47 of Scherzo.

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Use of the row as divided into four-note cells is likewise demonstrated in the
following movement, Interlude. Here the row is stated in tetrachords, voiced as note
pairs in perfect fourths in the winds and perfect fifths in the piano. The first tetrachord
forms a Db Major 7th chord (Db-F-Ab-C), the second a pair of minor 2nds separated by a
tritone (Eb-E-Bb), and the third forms another major 7th chord (G-B-D-F#).
EXAMPLE 12. Row in tetrachords, voiced in perfect 5th and 4th, mm.1-2 of Interlude.

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EXAMPLE 13. Row revoiced in tetrachords, forming two major 7th chords and a pair of minor 2nds separated by a tritone, derived from mm.1-2 of Interlude.

Many additional instances of the application of symmetrical principles through row use are found in the inner movements. Of particular interest are Examples 15 and 16, which demonstrate use of the row through canon.
Having observed varied uses of symmetry in this work, let us now turn to the second main characteristic: rhythm. The use of cross-rhythms, jazz and syncopated rhythms, odd-numbered and changing meters, and canon infuse this work with vitality. Cross-rhythms are found in the following example from the final movement, Aria; the piano left-hand ostinato is at odds with the rhythms of the upper three voices. These measures require subdivision of 3 against 2 and 4 against 3.

EXAMPLE 14. Left hand ostinato, jazz rhythm, 3:2, 4:3, mm. 79-81 of Aria.

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The example above also demonstrates the use of jazz, the second rhythmic device we will examine. These measures may remind one of the symmetrical syncopations examined in the Flute Sonata. The active jazz rhythm of the upper three voices is the composer’s intentional recollection of the spirit of Leonard Bernstein’s West Side Story. Of the many instances that seem jazz-like in all three of the pieces examined in this
study, the final movement of Trio Sonatina is the only case in which the composer
purposely chose to evoke a jazz feel. Although Amlin claims his other uses of
syncopations typical of jazz are merely the coincidental result of the use of symmetry
with rhythm, his use of jazz motives in this movement is quite intentional. Roland
Nadeau (professor at Boston’s Northeastern University) commissioned Amlin to write a
short piano piece to commemorate Leonard Bernstein, shortly after his death in 1990.
Amlin’s homage to Bernstein was to base the work on two motives from West Side Story.
Later the composer developed the work into this movement for flute, clarinet and piano.⁹
Even in this clearly jazz-inspired setting, Amlin disguises the origin of the motives by
using one inverted (upside-down) and the other retrograde (backwards). This motivic
development will be discussed more fully later.

The third technique Amlin employs to provide impetus to his musical lines is the
use of changing and odd-numbered meters. This deceptively simple device is so much a
part of all three works studied here that it is easily taken for granted; however, it is a very
important aspect of this music. For instance, the first movement uses, in order, 12/8, 9/8,
10/8, 11/8, 15/16, 10/16, 4/4, 3/8, 3/4, 8/16, 2/4, 6/16, 9/16, 6/8, 5/8 and 5/4. The fact
that all of this occurs in only 95 measures provides metric variety and inspires interest
from both the performers and the audience.

A final rhythmic technique used extensively in the Trio is canon. This is the only
main rhythmic device examined that was absent from the Flute Sonata. Three examples
will be analyzed here.

⁹ Martin Amlin, interview by author.
The first two examples combine canon with the row discussed earlier. A
Bachian sense of balance is achieved in the Scherzo through a multi-voiced canonic use
of the row. Each of the four voices has an independent row and rhythms which, however,
blend together to create a unified whole. At measure 49 the flute follows the inverted
form of the row, while the clarinet follows the primary form; both instruments begin on
the pitch ‘F’. These statements are set against the piano’s primary row form starting on
‘C’, similar to a Baroque canon at the fifth.

Rhythmically, the flute’s note values begin at 6 counts each and diminish down to
5 counts, then 4, and then 3. The note values of the clarinet move in the opposite
direction, beginning with 3 beats, increasing to 4, then 5, and finally 6. Against these
longer notes, the right and left hands of the piano carry on a quicker canon of their own,
in which the entries are separated by two beats. The last note of the first row determines
the first note of its next transposition.

EXAMPLE 15. Canon at the fifth in rhythmic augmentation, mm. 49-52 of Scherzo.

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Measure 61 marks the renewal and intensification of the canon, which now employs no less than five separate voices. The rhythmically augmented canon shifts registers dramatically, from the high wind tessitura to the lower part of the piano keyboard. A low ‘F’ begins two canonic statements at once; P-5 (primary form of row, F is the first pitch) stays in the lowest part of the keyboard (bass voice), starting with notes that are 6 beats long and gradually diminish to 5, 4, and finally 3 beats. The low ‘F’ at measure 61 also begins a statement of I-5 (inverted form of row, F is the first pitch) in the tenor voice which begins with notes of 3 counts, growing to 4, 5, and ultimately 6 counts. Clearly the bass voice has taken on the role that the flute held at measure 49; likewise, the tenor corresponds to that of the clarinet. Meanwhile the right hand of the piano, the clarinet, and the flute begin a canon with P-0; each entry is separated by one beat.

EXAMPLE 16. 5-voiced canon on P-0, P-5, and I-5, mm. 61-63 of Scherzo.

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A final instance of the use of canon is shown in Example 17. These measures show how canon is used in conjunction with melodic motives and their accompanying ostinato, which are the third main feature that will be analyzed.

As mentioned earlier, the final movement is based on two melodic motives taken from Leonard Bernstein’s West Side Story. Motive ‘A’ is the inversion of Somewhere, a descending minor 7th; motive ‘B’ is Maria backwards, a descending half-step followed by a descending tritone. The intervals of a tritone and perfect 5th will be shown later to have broader significance.

Example 17 illustrates the canonic statement of the Maria motive. The piano left hand and flute have eighth-note statements, separated by an eighth rest; the right hand and clarinet echo with a rhythmically diminished version, in sixteenth notes. Minor 7ths and tritones, the characteristic intervals of the two motives, are the vertical result of this collage of canonic lines.
Example 18 shows how the clarinet’s opening $3/4$ statement of the two Bernstein motives is compressed in the following $5/8$ measure; the rhythmic emphasis of $2 + 3$ combined with the melodic motives establishes an ostinato which permeates the entire movement.
EXAMPLE 18. Motives ‘A’ and ‘B’, ostinato, mm. 2-4 of *Aria*.

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Just as the finale uses motivic elements and transforms them into an ostinato element, so does the opening movement. The opening motive, shown in Example 19, uses three repeated pitches, a descending minor 6th, and a return to the original pitch, as shown in Example 19. This is rhythmically voiced in 12/8 as two eighths followed by two sixteenths, and then a final sustained note (a dotted quarter tied to an eighth). The two eighth-two sixteenth pattern is used as an ostinato throughout the movement, reaching a high point in measure 23. Here the opening minor 6th motive is voiced in perfect 5ths, the outer interval of the *Maria* motive. In measures 75-76, six of the seven possible pairs of perfect fifths are used sequentially as the ostinato entries overlap and pile up. Example 20 shows the perfect fifth pairs, starting with D-A in the right hand against C-G in the left hand, followed by left hand’s Ab-Eb and right hand’s F#-C#.
EXAMPLE 19. Minor 6th; ostinato pattern of two eighths, two sixteenths; major 7th chords; mm. 1-2 of Rhapsody.

EXAMPLE 20. Pairs of perfect 5ths in ostinato rhythm, mm. 76 of Rhapsody.
The most significant intervals in this work are those embodied in the finale’s Maria motive: the tritone and perfect 5th. These intervals are featured in key points not only in the finale, but in the other three movements as well. The previous example showed the use of perfect 5ths at a structural point in the first movement. Earlier in the same movement, the interval of the tritone is the goal of symmetrical pitch expansion from a single note, ‘A’, in the winds. A ‘D#/A’ tritone axis serves here as a boundary for the pitch expansion. The piano outlines this axis with a pedal ‘D#/A’ through three octaves during the two measures leading up to the arrival at measure 60.

EXAMPLE 21. Winds expand boundaries of line to D#; piano D#/A pedal, mm. 56-60 of Rhapsody.
The significance of the tritone and perfect 5th is shown in the previous two examples from the first movement, and now in the following discussion of the end of the third movement. Here the function of the final chord is to prepare the ear for the motives in the finale. The piano left hand has a minor 7th, the Somewhere interval; the Maria pitches are voiced simultaneously in the right hand, producing a tritone, perfect 5th, and half-step. Above this the winds have a tritone.

EXAMPLE 22. Somewhere and Maria intervals in piano, tritone in winds, mm. 49-52 of Interlude.

We have now analyzed several examples showing that the tritone and perfect 5th serve as unifying intervals in the Trio. Two of the examples were drawn from the first movement, and another example from the third movement; of course, the Maria motive is found throughout the finale. A final conclusive connection between the different movements' use of the intervals embodied in the Maria motive may be noted through the
division of the row into tetrachords in the second movement. Examples 12 and 13 demonstrated that dividing the row into 4-note cells produced two major seventh chords surrounding a different cell: two tritones separated by a half step. Whether purposely done or not, the intervals from Maria are hidden in the row in this symmetrical fashion, and bracketed by the symmetrical 7th chords that Amlin favors. Clearly, the use of the tritone and perfect 5th unify this piece, from the motivic elements of the outer movements to the row use of the inner.

The combination of old and new symmetrical structures with inventive use of serialism makes this a piece to enjoy on many levels. Additionally, it fills a need for quality repertoire for this chamber ensemble; the combination of flute, clarinet, and piano is one that has a dearth of outstanding literature. Amlin has used melodic motives and tone rows in combination with rhythmic vitality and fresh uses of symmetry to create a fascinating and worthwhile work.
V: ANALYSIS: SONATA FOR PICCOLO AND PIANO

The Sonata for Piccolo and Piano was commissioned by and dedicated to Zart Dombourian-Eby for the 25th Anniversary Convention of the National Flute Association, held in 1997 in Chicago. All funding was underwritten by The Brannen-Cooper Fund, with assistance from the Seattle Flute Society. Jan Gippo suggested the idea to Dombourian-Eby, who listened to Leone Buyse’s recording of the Amlin Flute Sonata and decided to make the commission. She and Amlin premiered the piece on August 15, 1997, at the Chicago Convention, and also recorded it in a studio that week. Two years later, at the 1999 Flute Convention in Atlanta, they would perform another work Amlin dedicated to Ms. Dombourian-Eby, Sonatina Piccola. Again they went to a recording studio, and the CD of both works is currently being readied for production.

Amlin’s first work featuring piccolo, the Piccolo Sonata is in many ways a continuation of the ideas already examined in both the Sonata for Flute and Piano and Trio Sonatina. Rhythmic devices such as perpetual motion, cross-rhythms, and jazz rhythms are found throughout the work. The concept of symmetry is further developed in the first three movements through the use of not only the row found in Trio Sonatina, but also a second symmetrical row. Additionally, the last movement uses a new symmetrical form. A final challenge that was also noted in the Sonata for Flute and Piano is the use of the extreme ranges of both instruments. Difficulties of blend and balance in works for piccolo and piano are one reason composers are hesitant to write for this combination; this piece demonstrates that the piccolo can be a beautiful and expressive voice throughout its entire range. Timbres of both instruments are explored in
this sonata; the fourth movement features the sympathetic vibration possibilities of the piano.

A commonly-found rhythmic device in the Sonata for Piccolo and Piano is perpetual motion; most of the first, third, and fifth movements are in this style. Constant motion is shown in the next two examples from the final movement of the Piccolo Sonata. Another instance is in the opening movement, in which the sixteenth-note motion established in measure 1 continues through virtually the entire movement.

EXAMPLE 23: Perpetual motion, jazz rhythm, ↑ perfect 5ths, mm. 1-3 of Pantoum.
EXAMPLE 24. Perpetual motion, use of Pantoum's rhythmic motive, 2 measures before to letter 'A' of Invention.

FROM: SONATA FOR PICCOLO AND PIANO

The second proof of rhythmic vitality is in the cross-rhythms employed in this piece. These complex rhythms are in as much evidence in this work as in the two previously examined. The next example requires duple subdivision in the piccolo against triple in the piano, followed by 5 against 6.
EXAMPLE 25. Cross-rhythms, 3 measures before to letter ‘C’ of Invention.

FROM: SONATA FOR PICCOLO AND PIANO

Another rhythmic use is that of jazz; Example 23 demonstrated a jazzy left-hand pattern of 3 + 3 + 4 that characterizes most of the movement. A very similar rhythmic pattern (3 + 3 + 2) with the same ascending perfect 5ths is also used several times in the first movement, as shown in Example 24. The outer movements’ use of a distinctive jazz motive provides unity; this technique was also used in the Flute Sonata.

A final notable use of rhythm occurs in the second movement, Variations. In order to provide rhythmic propulsion in one particular variation, the piano right hand and piccolo have sixteenth notes that do not coincide exactly with the chord changes outlined by the left hand. This kind of anticipation and suspension gives urgency to the lines, despite the very slow rate of harmonic change. In the following example, the left hand outlines the major 7th chords to be followed. The piccolo and right hand do not join the D Major 7th chord until halfway through the first measure, and anticipate the Ab Major 7th chord at letter ‘K’ by one count.
EXAMPLE 26. D, G, and Ab Major 7th chords delayed and anticipated, Row 1, P-4, 2 measures before to letter ‘K’ of Variations.

FROM: SONATA FOR PICCOLO AND PIANO

Having proved that Amlin’s characteristic use of perpetual motion, cross-rhythms, and jazz have extended into this piece, we will now examine his second obsession: symmetry. The pieces studied here reflect the composer’s increasing use of symmetrical rows. The earliest work, the Flute Sonata, did not use a row at all; instead it relied exclusively on 7th chords. The second piece, Trio Sonatina, used one symmetrical row, and the Piccolo Sonata uses two related symmetrical rows. The first three movements of the Piccolo Sonata use the same row from Trio Sonatina’s two inner movements, plus a new symmetrical row. The new row, here designated as “Row 2”, is constructed entirely of perfect 4ths and half steps, with the exception of the tritone that connects the two hexachords. Of primary importance is the fact that the three tetrachords that make up
Row 1 in its main form, P-0, are the same (but re-ordered) as the three tetrachords that
are Row 2 in its main form, P-5.

TABLE 3. Comparison of Row 1, P-0, with Row 2, P-5;
note identical but reordered tetrachords.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Ab</th>
<th>Db</th>
<th>Bb</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Row 2</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>Ab</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4. Grid of Row 2, used in Sonata for Piccolo and Piano.
As in the third movement of *Trio Sonatina*, extensive use is made of both rows grouped in 4-note cells. After the initial statements of Row 2, P-5, in the piccolo and then the piano, the third measure demonstrates a new use of the row. Here, compression of the row is achieved through omission of the middle tetrachord, Eb-E-Bb-A. As mentioned in *Trio Sonatina*, the middle tetrachord consists of two tritones separated by a half step. The outer tetrachords’ major 7th chords bracket this four-note cell; deleting the inner four pitches produces an undiluted series of major 7th chords. The tritone persists, however, in the relationship between Row 1’s outer tetrachords; they form, respectively, Db and G Major 7th chords. This interval continues to be significant, as was observed in *Trio Sonatina*.

EXAMPLE 27. Compression of Row 2 through deletion of inner tetrachord, mm. 1-3 of *Invention*.
This pattern of a statement of a row form followed by its compression is used throughout the first movement. As the movement nears its end, some sense of balance is achieved through extended use of the missing tetrachord. In the following example, the statement of Row 2, P-10 has become extremely compact, consisting of alternating major 7th chords on Gb and C. After the 13 measures of this, which begins at letter ‘L’, finally the missing inner tetrachord is expressed (Ab-A-Eb-D).

EXAMPLE 28. Outer tetrachords of Row 2, P-10, interrupted by the inner tetrachord, 2 measures before to 1 measure after letter ‘M’ of Invention.

FROM: SONATA FOR PICCOLO AND PIANO

Several sections of Variations use each pitch of the row as the root of a major 7th chord, which lasts an entire measure. This is a kind of rhythmic augmentation, extending the row out for twelve measures. Example 26 demonstrated this technique, which suspends each note in the row for at least a measure and allows the listener more time to
absorb it. More typical are row statements as shown in Example 27, in which the entire row passes by in one measure.

Further development of the symmetrical rows is made in the second and third movements' canonic, simultaneous use of Rows 1 and 2. The following example from the second movement demonstrates a rhythmic canon between the piccolo's statement of Row 1 at P-2 (primary form of row 1, D is the first pitch) and the piano left hand's Row 2 at P-5 (primary form of row 2, F is the first pitch).

EXAMPLE 29. Rows 1 & 2 together in rhythmic canon, low piccolo and high piano timbres, mm. 1-3 of Variations.

A final interesting use of symmetry is made in the last movement, which follows the unusual symmetrical form reflected in its title, Pantoum. This is defined as "a verse form of Malay origin, consisting of a series of quatrains in which the second and fourth lines of each quatrain recur as the first and third of the next, and in which the second and
fourth lines of the final quatrain repeat the 1st and 3rd lines of the first.⁠¹⁰ In other words, the rhyme scheme is ABA, BCB, CDC, etc. (Note that Amlin uses this form in groupings of three lines, not quatrains; the recurrence of the second line [B] as the first line of the next grouping means that each line only occurs three times.) The composer applied the form to this entire movement by assigning a particular key to each letter, and by making the first occurrence of the key 3 measures long, the second occurrence 2 measures, and the final instance 1 measure (with the exception of the opening ‘A’, which only occurs twice). The next table demonstrates the form’s application in the beginning of Pantoum.

The pattern is followed to the end, which reverses the order given in the chart above. This palindrome-like retrograde completes the symmetry that is such an important feature of Amlin's compositional style. Unifying the finale with the preceding movements is the fact that each new key in the cycle follows the order of Row 2, P-8 (primary form of row 2, Ab is the first pitch).

As it has become clear that the composer continued his pattern of rhythmic and symmetric application in this piece, let us now examine the final category. Tone color is featured in the Piccolo Sonata through several means, the first of which is the devotion of the entire fourth movement to a special piano timbre. Echo makes use of the sympathetic
vibration potential of the piano and features ghostly ringing sounds. These are achieved through silent depression of a key or keys on the piano, followed by the very loud striking of a different note, causing the strings of the silently depressed keys also to vibrate. Amlin calls attention to this effect by immediately dropping all other notes once the sympathetic vibration begins.

EXAMPLE 30. Sympathetic vibration, 5 and 6 measures before letter ‘C’ of Echo.

FROM: SONATA FOR PICCOLO AND PIANO

A second and final instance of the composer’s ability to manipulate registers deftly to best showcase both lines is shown in Example 29. The piccolo is in the low register, beginning on the lowest note possible on the instrument. Written an octave and a half above, the piano’s echoing canon neither covers nor is masked by the piccolo’s low tessitura. Thus each entry is made clear; the voicing of each line complements the other.
In comparing the Piccolo Sonata to the Flute Sonata and *Trio Sonatina*, one may observe that the addition of new symmetries of row and form give a pleasing freshness to this piece. Rhythmic complexity, the use of perpetual motion, and jazz rhythms have shown themselves to be a constant in all three of the pieces examined herein. These features plus the skillful handling of the issues of blend, balance, and timbre between the piccolo and piano make the Sonata for Piccolo and Piano a valuable and intriguing addition to the repertoire.
VI. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

Having analyzed the three sonatas for compositional style and points of interest, we now turn to the actual live experiences of the composer and performers to gain insight regarding the genesis, development, performance, and future of these respective pieces. The materials used here are summaries and quotations drawn from transcriptions of minidisc recordings of interviews by the author with Martin Amlin (December 26, 1999, Dallas), Leone Buyse (January 17, 2000, Houston) and a telephone interview with Zart Dombourian-Eby (January 30, 2000).

Leone Buyse is a native of Ithaca, New York and graduated with distinction from the Eastman School of Music, where she studied with Joseph Mariano. She then received a Fulbright Grant to study in France and Switzerland with Michel Deboest, Jean-Pierre Rampal, and Marcel Moyse. An accomplished pianist, she also served for two years as accompanist at Rampal’s summer master classes in Nice, France. Her orchestral career includes positions with the Rochester Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She now is Professor of Flute and Chamber Music at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University in Houston, previously having served as Professor of Flute at the University of Michigan. She also has taught at the New England Conservatory, Boston University, the Tanglewood Music Center, and Boston University’s Tanglewood Institute. The only American finalist in the 1969 Geneva International Flute Competition, Buyse has appeared as soloist with l’Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Boston Pops, the San Francisco Symphony, the Rochester Philharmonic, and the New Hampshire Music Festival. Recordings in addition to The
Sky's the Limit include Tour de France, also on the Crystal label, and Contrasts, released by Boston Records.

Zart Dombourian-Eby is the principal piccoloist (Robert and Clodagh Ash Chair) of the Seattle Symphony, and is regularly featured as both a flute and piccolo soloist with the orchestra. A native of New Orleans, she received her B.A. and M.M. degrees from Louisiana State University. After a year of study in Houston with Albert Tipton, she attended Northwestern University, where she earned a Doctor of Music degree under the tutelage of Walfrid Kujala, and also coached with Donald Peck. Her doctoral thesis, “The Piccolo in the Nineteenth Century,” represents the only extensive research ever undertaken on the piccolo in that era. Ms. Dombourian-Eby has been a member of the New Orleans Pops, the Baton Rouge Symphony, the Colorado Philharmonic, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, and has performed with the Chicago Symphony. She was the founding editor of Flute Talk and is on the Editorial Board for Flutist Quarterly, the journal of the National Flute Association.

Several areas of interest were focused on in the interviews. Subjects mentioned here are the composer’s use of serialism, the difficulty of the pieces, influences and elements of the music, the evolution of the parts through performance and editing, use of extreme registers, notation issues, and the question of how each work led to the next through the interrelationships between the collaborators and also the National Flute Association. Lastly, the questions of how these pieces compare to other pieces in the repertoire and their ultimate place in the body of flute literature will be addressed. These questions and the different points of view obtained from the three collaborators are of
interest both from a theoretical standpoint and from that of musicians interested in
performing these works.

First, the question of serialism and row use was put to all three interview subjects.
Amlin doesn’t feel he is a serial composer; he describes his style as using the row in a
free way, as one element among many. He also emphasizes the overlap between his use
of the row and symmetrical chords, in that he will sometimes use just the first four notes
of the row to make up a symmetrical sound. Amlin purposely uses rows built with many
perfect 4ths in order to give tonal implications. “I’m drawn to tonality; I think it’s partly
from playing a lot of pieces that I’ve really hated, that are so atonal and ugly, and seemed
to have no point. Maybe I go the other way in writing. To me the appeal of it is, it’s
something both to my mind and my ear. My ear likes the sound of this intellectual thing
that is a guide to me through writing pieces.”

Leone Buyse recalls not noticing the use of rows in Trio Sonatina until her
husband, Michael Webster, who is both a clarinetist and composer, pointed it out. When
she became aware of the rows, it didn’t affect her perception of the piece from a
performance standpoint. Dombourian-Eby, on the other hand, was immediately struck by
the use of rows in the Piccolo Sonata, in which the row is much more obvious; the very
first measure of the piccolo part is a twelve-tone row. When she commissioned the piece,
she didn’t realize that Amlin used serialism. At Jan Gippo’s suggestion, Ms.
Dombourian-Eby had listened to the Buyse-Amlin recording of the Flute Sonata (which
does not use tone rows). She was favorably impressed, commissioned the Piccolo Sonata
to perform at the Chicago National Flute Association Convention (1997), and then
discovered that much of the piece was based on rows. She remarks that she was
surprised when she realized it. "I've never been a real fan, particularly, of serial music, but it ends up not being an issue in this piece. Of course it's there, but I think the piece itself transcends just being some kind of exercise in tone rows."

Regarding the difficulty of the three pieces, Buyse and Dombourian-Eby both felt that a college graduate student or a strong undergraduate could perform the works with a very good pianist and plenty of rehearsal time. Buyse states that the fact that the Flute Sonata is so challenging was one of the things that first drew her to the piece. "It offered me particular technical and rhythmic challenges that would keep me interested, keep me working for a long time...Every time I play this, I hear a few more things. That's another wonderful statement to make about this music, because it shows that there is a great depth to it. I am sure that on an emotional and then on a subconscious level, I was drawn to that, to know that there were many more things: rhythmic displacements across bar lines, groupings, etc. that would really spur me to find more each time." Additionally, Ms. Buyse commented about the Flute Sonata, "Technically, it's a very challenging sonata, but if I were to compare it to Martinů, or Prokofiev, or Liebermann, each would have its own particular challenges. I think there are some rhythmic challenges here for the collaborative pianist that are really right up there in the hardest possible category."

The difficulty of another Amlin piano part was likewise lamented by Ms. Dombourian-Eby, who believes it keeps some people from performing the Piccolo Sonata. She specifically asked him to write an easier piano part when commissioning *Sonatina Piccola* for the Atlanta National Flute Association Convention (1999). Both parts are less technically complex, especially that of the piano; for that reason she thinks the piece could be performed by a good high school player.
Amlin’s style is very distinctive; he feels an affinity for certain composers but does not feel bound to reflect them in his own works. Studying with Boulanger in France was a major influence; he is most “at home” with Debussy, Ravel, and Fauré. He also credits Bach, Bartók, Barber, and Stravinsky with affecting his compositional style. Leone Buyse states that when she first heard the Flute Sonata, “I could hear a French influence, without a doubt... It was clear to me that he, like myself, was a Francophile, and had a love of that quixotic, colorful, impressionistic style. And then, of course, rhythmic complexity. I would say that’s a sort of twentieth-century American trait that comes from many different composers working today.” Ms. Dombourian-Eby concurs that the French influence is apparent, “…to the extent that I think he’s very interested in tone color and timbral effects, like the French are.”

Another noticeable element heard in Amlin’s music is jazz. While Dombourian-Eby’s “Let’s Talk Pico” column advises “…try to get into the groove of this jazzy accompaniment,”11 for the Finale of the Piccolo Sonata, the composer himself denies any intentional use of jazz rhythms. The syncopated rhythms in the finale of the Flute sonata, The Sky’s the Limit, were produced by the symmetrical placement of rests throughout the measure. “It’s a mathematical symmetry thing there... It comes up with a jazzy rhythm; it’s a coincidence,” the composer explains.

However, Leone Buyse reinforces the flutist’s point of view, mentioning that in The Sky’s the Limit, “…there’s almost a jazz feel, the piano interlude. There’s an

improvisatory quality about it.” She also suggests that regarding the subtle influence of jazz in this piece, “People pick that up. It could be something that’s underlying, that Martin isn’t even aware of.”

The collaborations between the three musicians have obviously been very fruitful. While Amlin generally does not request input during the compositional process, he is amenable to making a few changes during rehearsals for the pieces. Ms. Dombourian-Eby recalls of the third movement of the Piccolo Sonata, “Until we changed the articulations, this one was a little problematic to me, exactly what to do with it...Originally everything was slurred in big groups; each entry had one big slur over it, all the way to ‘E’. That was all tongued [to the end of the movement]...It was half slurred and half tongued, basically. That just wasn’t working really well, so we came upon the idea of what it is now, that basically the 2/2 sections are tongued, and the 6/8 sections are slurred.”

Another change in the Piccolo Sonata was made to the tempo markings of the second movement, Variations. This movement starts slowly, followed by several sections at increasingly faster tempi, and then several sections that are each marked slower than that preceding. Dombourian-Eby particularly appreciates, “…the whole metric modulation...the note values are getting faster, besides the fact that the metronome marking is getting faster. So it has this incredible flow to it, where it builds up to the fast sixteenth notes...Then you have this really flowing part at letter ‘J’, and then it just kind of dies back down again. That overall gesture of that whole movement is wonderful.” These respective sections each originally had metronome markings that were from twelve to six beats slower than the final version; the performers decided that
the movement as a whole needed to be somewhat faster in order to balance the other movements. This change is reflected in Presser’s current publication of the piece.

*Trio Sonatina* also underwent a small change from the original to the published version. During the Webster Trio’s rehearsals of this piece, Amlin decided to change the final chord; the flute originally had an ‘A’, producing a minor 3rd with the clarinet’s ‘F#’. Dissonance was provided in the original B Minor chord in the piano. The first and second movements both end on a perfect 4th between the flute and clarinet; the composer liked that consistency and chose to extend it to the last movement. The final version, as reflected in the score published by Presser, has a perfect 4th in the winds (B-F#) over the piano left hand octave B’s and right hand A Minor chord.

The use of extreme registers is readily apparent to anyone preparing or listening to the pieces. On this subject, Martin Amlin feels that he can write a piece for flute or piccolo without undue consideration of technical and registral difficulties. “Because flute is so versatile, if I don’t go out of the range, I think they probably can do it. I like the idea of using the lowest and the highest notes: the complete range. The Piccolo Sonata, movements one, three, and five, all end on the high C. All five movements of the Concerto have the high C in them. I’m not sure all five movements have the low D. The last movement of the Concerto ends with seventeen high C’s, in fact. I think if I had said to anyone, ‘This is what I’d like to do,’ they might have said, ‘Oh, I really can’t do that,’ or ‘You shouldn’t write seventeen high C’s in a row, it’s a risky note,’ or whatever. I didn’t want to hear that. I wanted to write the piece I wanted to write, and if we can’t do it, then I’ll adjust it later. The flute sonata ends on a high D; I like the idea of the extremes of the instrument.”
Ms. Dombourian-Eby agreed that Amlin uses the high register much more than most other piccolo composers. She suggested Amlin might consider ending one or two of his fast movements without high C’s, to avoid being too predictable. She values his use of the entire range of the instrument, and likewise, his ability to blend the piano and piccolo lines, regardless of registers. “I do appreciate the fact that there is a lot of high register writing, but there’s a lot of other register. He really spreads it out all over the instrument, which I’m really glad of, because I don’t like things that are just high, high, high all the time. Another thing that is wonderful is how he has the piano and the piccolo together. How he’s able to make it not sound like there’s the piano, and there way above it is the piccolo. He really blends the two instruments well when they should be...he does a great job of integrating the two instruments.”

A few notation issues arose in the Piccolo Sonata; the final movement, Pantoum, is written in 5/16, and the 32nd note is one of the most-used note values. The page is very black as a result; Ms. Dombourian-Eby commented that it is sometimes quite difficult to distinguish between the 16ths and the 32nds, especially in the rests. However, Amlin felt that notating this movement in 5/8 would change its character, at least in the mind of the pianist. “The person who was copying it for her [Dombourian-Eby] thought Pantoum would be easier for him to notate in the computer as 16th notes. Of course it would sound the same, but it doesn’t have the kind of fast, extreme look that I wanted that to have, that the 32nd notes have.”

The other notation difficulty can be dealt with through the piccoloist’s mental rebarraging of part of the first movement, from five to two measures before letter ‘D’. Here the indicated meter of 5/16 works well for the piano, which has straight sixteenth-note
chords that change on the downbeat of every measure. However, the piccolo part is grouped in sixteenth-note pairs, separated by a single sixteenth-rest. It would be impractical to give the piccolo part a different meter for these few bars; Ms. Dombourian-Eby suggests instead to think “…of the four measures of 5/16 as five measures of 4/16.” 12 This notation problem is best dealt with through changing one’s perception of the meter, rather than making any physical change to the published part.

A look at the connections between the works Amlin has written for flute and piccolo shows the way today’s flute community interacts and how this affected the timing and number of works he composed for the instruments. The history of the interaction between performers, concerts, recordings, and various activities of the National Flute Association shows that each successive work began as an outgrowth of its predecessors. This history includes all three piccolo pieces: the Sonata for Piccolo and Piano, which was examined earlier in this study; Sonatina Piccola; and the Piccolo Concerto.

It all began in 1988 when Martin Amlin asked Leone Buyse to listen to a recording he and Doug Worthen had made of the Flute Sonata. She was very impressed and they made plans to record it; simultaneously they started performing together as a duo and with Buyse’s husband, Michael Webster, as the Webster Trio. Through this group’s touring in the Northeast, Amlin had the inspiration to write Trio Sonatina for use on their recitals.

In 1990 the CD The Sky’s the Limit was recorded, featuring the Flute Sonata. The piece received its first real exposure to a large group of flutists when Buyse and Amlin performed it at the Boston National Flute Association Convention in 1993. In the

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audience was St. Louis Symphony piccoloist Jan Gippo, who would remember the performance later when he found that Zart Dombourian-Eby wanted to commission a piccolo work to perform at the 1997 Chicago 25th Anniversary NFA Convention. He suggested Amlin to Dombourian-Eby, who listened to the CD *The Sky's the Limit* and then asked Amlin to write the Piccolo Sonata. Ms. Dombourian-Eby feels strongly that the piccolo should be regarded as a real musical instrument in its own right, and that the piccolo can do things beyond what composers generally ask it to do. She therefore directed Amlin regarding the Sonata, “I don’t want any birdie piece.”

Gippo, a founding member of the NFA Piccolo Committee, also contacted Amlin with the committee’s requirements, that it be a multi-movement, serious work. Those not cognizant of the body of piccolo literature may not realize that this was, in effect, an historically significant request. Prior to Amlin’s Piccolo Sonata, there was no such sonata in the repertoire; most works for piccolo tend to be brief character pieces or impressively technical pieces of no great depth.

During the 1997 Chicago Convention, Amlin and Dombourian-Eby premiered the Piccolo Sonata and also met in a studio to make a commercial recording of it for future release. The piece was so well-received that the NFA Piccolo Committee chose it as a required work for the following year’s Piccolo Young Artist Competition. Martin Amlin was the collaborative pianist for this competition, held at the 1998 Phoenix NFA Convention.

Following the Phoenix Convention, the NFA Piccolo Committee commissioned Amlin to write a piccolo concerto, which was performed at the 1999 Atlanta Convention by Atlanta Symphony Orchestra piccoloist Carl Hall and members of the Atlanta
Symphony Orchestra. This performance was termed “the highlight of the convention for piccoloists” by one reviewer.13

Also that year, when Piccolo Committee Chairman Regina Helcher discovered that Robert Beaser was unable to complete his commission for the Piccolo Concert, she asked Dombourian-Eby to fill in with music of her choice. Ms. Dombourian-Eby asked Amlin to write a shorter, easier piece, especially in terms of the piano part; they premiered Sonatina Piccola on the Piccolo Concert at the Atlanta Convention the day before the premiere of the Piccolo Concerto. Additionally, another work of Amlin’s, Two Songs on Poems by Anne Fessenden, for alto flute, soprano, and piano was performed at this convention. These many commissions and performances of his music clearly show that the National Flute Association and its members value Martin Amlin’s music highly.

Looking toward the future, the flutists interviewed were asked to speculate on what respective places the Flute Sonata, Trio Sonatina, and the Piccolo Sonata will come to hold in the repertoire of flute and piccolo music. These pieces have all been written in the last fifteen years, and only time will tell if the qualities that today’s flutists appreciate will continue to be valued in ten, fifty, or one hundred years. The question was put to both flutists of what standing these works will eventually have, and in comparison with other existing works in the repertoire.

When asked to compare the Flute Sonata to other sonatas, Buyse replied, “This really stands out in my mind as being in its own league, somehow. I know a number of other twentieth-century sonatas like the Koechlin, or the Karg-Elert, or the Wilhelm Pijper, and this just seems very much in its own class. It has certain neoclassic

connections, I suppose, if you want to think of themes that come back, and recaps, and that kind of thing; that’s very traditional writing. But if I were to [try to] compare this to the Poulenc Sonata, it’s...totally different, except it has a similar lyricism. That and Martinů come to mind right away. Of course, both of those have French influences; even though Martinů was Czech, he’d been living in Paris for a long time."

Ms. Buyse believes very strongly that the Flute Sonata will find a permanent place in the literature. She compared its gradual integration into the standard repertoire to that of Robert Muczynski’s Flute Sonata, which was written in 1961 and is now a standard work. “It’s just taken 15, 20, or 30 years before it has become a major repertoire item. I think it’s probably going to be very similar with Martin’s piece...I feel certain [it] will become really standard repertoire. I think the Piccolo Sonata also; that is an extraordinary work, really a very special addition to the repertoire."

Ms. Dombourian-Eby also found it challenging to compare Amlin’s Piccolo Sonata to other piccolo sonatas, simply for the fact that very few serious piccolo pieces have ever been written. “The LaMontaine Sonata is an excellent piece, but definitely more of a high school piece. And there’s the Thea Musgrave Piccolo Play; that’s a set of character pieces. And there’s Il Fervore by Tsontakis, and there’s Steve Kujala’s Eurhythmionics. So I think Martin’s sonata really stands out on its own, as the premiere piccolo sonata that’s ever been written...for its seriousness, depth, difficulty, in being a real piece of music, and non-programmatic. There are a couple of others that are pretty good, but I do think that his is probably the one. And perhaps what the others should, or will be, measured by.”
Amlin has no current plans for additional works for flute or piccolo, though he
concedes, “A flute concerto would be fun.” Ms. Dombourian-Eby comments, “I would
like to see him do other things so his fame gets spread, throughout the music world, and
he’s not just pegged as a piccolo composer, or a flute and piccolo composer. I have a
great woodwind quintet right now...[I was thinking of getting] him to write a piece for
woodwind quintet.” She believes that Amlin’s expansion to other genres “...will
enhance the value of his music. To us, too.”
This study of Martin Amlin’s Sonata for Flute and Piano, *Trio Sonatina*, and the Sonata for Piccolo and Piano shows that the works are valuable additions to the repertoire. The first piece examined, the Flute Sonata, demonstrates the composer’s trademark techniques regarding rhythm, symmetry, and extreme registers. Perpetual motion and jazz figures are prominent in this work, as are the symmetrical harmonic structures of major and minor 7th chords. All of these characteristics are likewise noted later in both *Trio Sonatina* and the Piccolo Sonata.

Comparing the use of symmetrical rows in the three pieces, one sees that each piece progressively employs more serialism. The Flute Sonata does not use a row, while *Trio Sonatina* uses one row, and two are employed in the Piccolo Sonata. We may conclude from this that Amlin’s compositional style is developing in the direction of increasing use of symmetrical serial structures. Another recent extension of symmetrical properties is observed in the finale of the Piccolo Sonata, which follows a more complex symmetrical form than the arch form that dominates the two earlier pieces.

In contrast to Amlin’s increasing use of symmetry through more row use and new balanced forms, the characteristic rhythmic devices used in the pieces remain relatively constant. All the movements contain jazz rhythms; of particular interest is that fact that both the Flute Sonata and Piccolo Sonata use a particular jazz motive in their respective first and final movements. This provides unity and helps to link the outer movements in a manner similar to a song cycle. Perpetual motion, driving rhythms, and changing and odd-numbered meters are present in all three works as well. Audiences will likely
continue to enjoy the rhythmic vitality that is so much a part of Amlin’s compositional style.

Amlin’s use of register and timbre was the third main point studied. Comparing the use of extreme register in all three pieces, the Flute Sonata and Piccolo Sonata use a wider tessitura than does Trio Sonatina. A likely reason for this is the addition of the clarinet; perhaps Amlin felt the blend of these three particular instruments was not quite as conducive to the extreme ranges as were the two sonatas. The most use of timbral effects is made in the Piccolo Sonata, which devotes an entire movement to the sympathetic vibration potential of the piano. All three works are subtly infused with instances of the elusive quality of French line and color, with their characteristic harmonic vocabulary of non-functional extended chords and textural use of layering.

As analyzing the pieces gives one a theoretical appreciation of the concepts embedded therein, so does understanding the music from the point of view of the composer and his collaborators give a practical appreciation of the music. From the interviews knowledge of many different facets of this music was gained, including the relative difficulty of the works, their evolution through performances, and notation issues. Additionally, the way each work led to the next was traced through the relationships of the collaborators with each other and with the National Flute Association.

Future developments for these pieces include the release of Ms. Dombourian-Eby’s piccolo CD, which will include the Piccolo Sonata and Sonatina Piccola. The Webster Trio is scheduled to perform Trio Sonatina at the 2000 National Flute Association Convention in Columbus, Ohio; this will mark their sixteenth performance of the work. While Martin Amlin currently has no plans for additional flute or piccolo
compositions, he is interested in writing a flute concerto. Dombourian-Eby believes his next project should be for woodwind quintet, to extend his musical vision beyond the flute world.

If the immediate future of these pieces is simple to summarize, the distant future is much more challenging to predict. Ms. Buyse and Ms. Dombourian-Eby both estimate that these pieces will become standard literature. Clearly the works studied here have much importance placed on them by these flutists, since they have both gone to the effort of making commercial recordings of Amlin’s music. Ms. Buyse believes that more flutists will program these works as recordings become more available to guide would-be performers. As Buyse puts it, “…I’m so thrilled that the flute community at large has had an idea that Martin is really worth investing in. Martin’s music is so rewarding that even if it does take a little extra time, the payoffs are tremendous.”\textsuperscript{14} As more flutists become aware of the quality of Amlin’s pieces, they will become a strong and welcome addition to the body of flute and piccolo literature.

\textsuperscript{14} Leone Buyse, interview by author.
APPENDIX
MARTIN AMLIN: LIST OF WORKS

Israfel for soprano, flute, violin, cello, and piano (1980)

Endless Ways for two pianos (1981)

Lullaby for tenor and piano (1982)

Shadowdance for orchestra (1982)

Fifth Piano Sonata (1982)

Four Nocturnes for baritone and piano (1983)

Passions of Singleness for mezzo-soprano, viola, vibraphone, and harp (1983)

A Lasting Spring for soprano and piano (1985)

Morceau de Concours for flute and piano (1986)

Sonata for Viola and Piano (1987)

Sixth Piano Sonata (1987)

Sonata for Flute and Piano (1987)

Seven Songs for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano (1988)
Time's Caravan for mixed chorus and double string quintet (1989)
  Premiere: October 28, 1989. John Oliver Chorale and Orchestra. Jordan Hall,
  New England Conservatory.
  Recording: 20th Century Choral Music, John Oliver Chorale and Orchestra,
  Koch International 3-7178-2H1

Three Quintets for vocal quartet and piano (1990)

Trio Sonatina for flute, clarinet, and piano (1991)
  Premiere: March 1, 1991. The Webster Trio; Martin Amlin, piano. Tsai Center,
  Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.
  Publisher: Theodore Presser Company.

Atlantic Serenade for flute, clarinet, cello, and piano (1991)
  Premiere: February 1, 1992. Pacific Serenades; Martin Amlin, piano. Los
  Angeles, California.

Six Preludes for piano (1992)

The Heavenly Feast for soprano and piano (1993)
  Premiere: August 22, 1993. Misa Iwama, soprano; Dennis Helmrich, piano.
  Tanglewood Music Festival.

Evening Meditation in a Cathedral Town for mezzo-soprano and piano (1994)

The House of Falling Leaves for soprano and piano (1994)

Variations for piano and woodwind quintet (1994)

A Birthday Greeting (for Frank Glazer's 80th birthday) for piano (1995)

Prelude, Fugue, and Variations for piano and string quintet (1996-1997)
  Premiere: February 12, 1997. ALEA III; Martin Amlin, piano.
  Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.

Three Madrigals for chorus with piano accompaniment (1996-1997)
  Emanuel Church, Boston, Massachusetts.

Sonata for Piccolo and Piano (1997)
  Premiere: August 15, 1997. Zart Dombourian-Eby, piccolo; Martin Amlin,
  Publisher: Theodore Presser Company.
Two Songs on Poems by Anne Fessenden for soprano, alto flute, and piano (1997-1998)

Publisher: Theodore Presser Company.

Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra (1998-1999)

Premiere: August 21, 1999. Carl Hall, piccolo; members of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Steven Byess, conductor. National Flute Association Convention, Atlanta, Georgia.
Publisher: Theodore Presser Company.

Sonatina Piccola for piccolo and piano (1999)

Publisher: Theodore Presser Company.

Seventh Piano Sonata (1999)


