

LYNNE PLOWMAN BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

- Lynne Plowman was born in 1969 and lives and works in Wales. As a child she learnt the flute and piano as well as beginning to make up her own music which she would play herself.
- She attended the, then, Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cardiff where she studied the flute but also had composition lessons with Andrew Wilson-Dickson and Gary Carpenter. “I thought I’d need to decide whether to become a performer or a composer, but by the end of it, realised I could make the two things happen together.”
- After leaving college, Lynne made a living by playing the flute and working on educational projects with Opera North. Gradually she began to receive her first commissions to write music.
- Lynne had always had an interest in drama and theatre, and whilst working at Opera North she met the writer Martin Riley with whom she has written four operas. Her first, *Gwyneth and the Green Knight*, was premiered by Music Theatre Wales in 2002 and this led to a commission for her second opera from the same company: *House of the Gods*. Since then she has completed two further operas – *The Face in the Mirror* for Welsh National Opera’s MAX department and *Captain Blood’s Revenge* for Glyndebourne Opera.

- In addition to opera Lynne Plowman has also written a wide variety of music ranging from songs to chamber music and dramatic large-scale vocal and orchestral works. Her first orchestral piece, *Blue*, won the BBC National Orchestra of Wales's Young Composers' Competition in 1995 and her recent orchestral piece, *Catching Shadows*, was premiered by the same orchestra in March 2016.
- Lynne also teaches composition at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. In the last few years, her music has developed radically with the help of a special grant from the Arts Council of Wales allowing her to receive guidance from the composer Sir Harrison Birtwistle.
- As a busy professional composer with a family, Lynne's working habits are regular and organised. She composes at her home in Cowbridge in South Wales.

LYNNE PLOWMAN AND MUSIC IN WALES

Welsh music began to gain an international reputation in the 1950s with composers such as David Wynne (1900–83), Grace Williams (1906–77), Daniel Jones (1912–93), Alun Hoddinott (1929–2008) and William Mathias (1934–92). These composers brought influences from London and the continent to a country that had only had a limited history of professional classical composition up to that point. They emerged at a time when classical music in Wales was undergoing an explosion of growth with the formation of the Welsh National Opera, its many festivals, the development of Welsh television and the expansion of the music departments at the university colleges of Bangor and Cardiff and the Welsh College of Music and Drama.

Lynne Plowman was born in Dorking, Surrey, but like many other composers she has made her home in Wales and is now one of its most significant composers. Like many composers who emerged in the 1990s, she draws her ideas and influences from a wide variety of music. Her most immediate contemporaries include Pwyll ap Siôn (1968), Guto Puw (1971), Paul Mealor (1975) and Huw Watkins (1976).

NIGHT DANCES BACKGROUND NOTES

- *Night Dances* was commissioned by the Stratford English Music Festival with funds provided through the Regional Arts Lottery Programme by West Midlands Arts. It was first performed by Gareth Hanson and Charles Matthews on 12 October 2002 at Stratford-upon-Avon.
- The work is in three movements. The wildness of the flute was its starting point and the overall shape suggests a wild, intoxicating night-time dance, followed by a gradual uncoiling of energy, as the night is gradually overwhelmed by sleep. The composer has written, “The first [dance] is wild, rhythmic and primitive, the second is slower, bluesy and bittersweet, and the last dance is very simple and still.”
- The composer often played the flute part of this work herself during the piece’s early performances.

CONCEPT

- Lynne Plowman's *Night Dances* reference and draw on a number of different styles and techniques from other music and composers, whilst still retaining its own very strong character and identity. This is very typical of composers working in the twenty-first century who now have access to a very wide range of different musical styles. Some of the music and techniques used are discussed in more detail below.
- The rhythmic ostinati used in the first movement of *Night Dances* have strong overtones of both Latin-American and Eastern European dance, without ever drawing on specific models. The composer writes, "I wanted a rhythmic and dance-like ostinato figure to give the opening of the piece some rhythmic energy. Subconsciously, I think I'm probably influenced quite a lot by the music I studied and performed when I was younger – both Bartók's 'Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm' for piano and Astor Piazzolla's tango repertoire for flute spring to mind. In this respect both the South American and Eastern European folk influences are probably in the music somewhere."
- The opening of the first movement also draws on techniques found in the music of the Hungarian composer György Ligeti (1923–2006), particularly the first piece in his *Musica Ricercata* for piano (1951–53) where a simple rhythmic pattern is built up on one note.
- Much of the melodic material in the flute part of the first movement is based on serial techniques, particularly bars 18–50 and 112–139. The rows used for these sections also play an important part in the final movement. In addition, flute figurations are derived from the flute writing of the Indian composer and performer Ravi Shankar (1920–2012), particularly *L'Aube Enchantée* (1990) for flute and guitar (see bars 52–54 and 81–82).

- The second movement draws on a number of different musical ideas, including blues, Indian music and Bach. Much of the melodic writing in the first sections (bars 1–25 / 34–45) uses a blues scale. The use of slow harmonic change within an arpeggiated piano part was also derived from the first prelude of Bach’s 48 Preludes and Fugues.
- Although on the surface, much of *Night Dances* uses traditional material, it gently subverts many of our usual musical expectations:
 - Its overall shape reverses our usual expectation of what a three-movement piece might do, by letting the work’s energy gradually dissipate, concluding with a very short and slow last movement.
 - The flute and piano often change roles, as at the close of the second movement when the flute recedes into the background and ceases to play at all for the last 34 bars.
 - Despite the different moods of the three movements, material is often carried across from one to another. In the first movement the small ‘playful’ flute idea first heard in bar 51 is also heard in bars 51, 60–62, 84–86, 98 and 102. This idea is often coupled with the one at bar 80. It is then transformed into a new and rather ‘cheeky’ idea at the end of the movement (bars 143–150). It then appears almost immediately again at the start of the second movement (bar 3) in the flute as the beginning of the seductive new theme.
 - Much of the piece is based around the pitch C, yet at the close the music moves to a pitch (or key) that has played very little part in the work as a whole – B flat.

QUESTIONS:

- * What types of traditional dance music can be found in *Night Dances*?
- * How strictly does the composer use these and from what sources are they derived?
- * Which of the two instruments uses serial techniques and in which movements does this appear?
- * Attempt a definition of Serialism. How strictly is the technique applied in *Night Dances*?
- * What composers have influenced the work?
- * What is unusual about the overall form and shape of *Night Dances*? How might it differ from a standard three-movement piece?
- * Which pitches dominate the overall tonality of the work?

MOVEMENT 1:

FAST, DARK, PLAYFUL. CROCHET = 160. VARYING METRES

The different sections of the first movement may be shown as follows:

1 – 50	DANCE 1A
51 – 62	INTERLUDE 1A
63 – 86	DANCE 1B
87 – 142	DANCE 1C
143 – 150	INTERLUDE 1B
151 – 154	CODA

The movement is mainly concentrated on three statements of a dance, with two short contrasting interludes and a brief *coda*.

DETAILED RÉSUMÉ OF STRUCTURE

Dance 1a (*Bars 1 - 50*)

This section introduces the dance material.


1 – 16	Introduction: piano alone.
1 – 8	Introduction for piano left hand alone (bars 1–7). An alternating 2-bar phrase is repeated 4 times, made up of 4/4 + 3/8 with beats subdivided in 3+3+2+3 quavers. Pitches are confined to C and E flat alone (Key: C minor). A quaver pattern is introduced in the right hand in the final bar, anticipating the next 8-bar sequence.
9 – 16	A repeat of bars 1–8 with the addition of a quaver pattern in the right hand (in the form of a repeated C), producing a continuous series of quavers between the right and left hands.
17 – 28	Introduction of flute, heard against alternating 4/4 + 3/8 in piano as before (repeated 5 times). In contrast to the rhythmic piano part, the flute part is irregular and rhythmically free; it also is unpredictable and chromatic in its use of pitches by comparison to the piano.

17 – 28

The bass line continues to outline C–E flat with the addition of F# (bar 23) against an E flat seventh chord in the RH. The flute line descends to G via an F#, outlining the first 5 notes of the first of two note rows (Row No. 1). NB. the G is not included in the row. See Example 1 for the full row.

Ex. 1

Row 1



bars
18 - 32
Flute

29 – 50

A development of previous idea presented in a 3-part form. The alternating 4/4 + 3/8 is maintained throughout with C–E flat in the LH (plus F# also introduced at bars 33, 39, 43 and 49). The RH harmony mainly alternates an E flat seventh (as before) and chord of C–F#–G. (see Example 6).

Ex. 6

RH piano
harmony
b. 18-44



29 – 50

29–32: A 4-bar melody in the flute now adds the final 6 notes to a 10-note row (Row No. 1 – see Example 1 again).

Ex. 1

Row 1



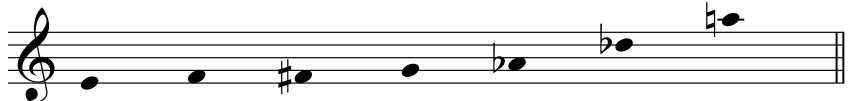
bars
18 - 32
Flute

29 – 50

33–40: A 6-bar melody high in the flute outlines the inversion of notes 4–10 of Row 1 transposed to E (from F#–I–10) (see Example 3).

Ex. 3

Inversion on E



bars
34 - 40
(Flute)

29 – 50

41–50: An 8-bar melody in the flute now outlines a new secondary row of 7 notes (Row No. 2 – see Example 2).

Ex. 2

Row 2



bars
43 - 50
(Flute)

QUESTIONS:

- * What is unusual about the register in which the piano is used in bars 1–16?
- * The pitches in this passage are mainly confined to one pitch (C): which composer and piece influenced this?
- * In what way does the underlying pulse change throughout this whole section?
- * What is the difference both rhythmically and melodically in the flute part to that in the piano?
- * How many note rows are used in this section?
- * Between which bars is the complete first note row heard in the flute? Where does the second row appear?
- * Are the rows always used in their entirety or are segments of them used? Please give an example to support your answer.
- * In which bar is harmony used for the first time?
- * Does the underlying bass pattern change in this opening section?

Interlude 1a (Bars 51 – 62)

This brief section is an interlude before the return of the main ‘dance’ idea. It consists of two new ideas presented in an ABA form. Note the importance of the notes G flat and E flat to the section (see the section on Tonality for more details).

51 – 55

A 5-bar flute melody is asymmetrically phrased through a series of changing time signatures over a series of harmonic progressions rising and falling through a major 3rd (G flat–B flat) in the piano LH. (See the sections on Rhythm and on Harmony for more detail.)

The 2-beat melodic figure repeated once in the flute in bar 51 (Example 7)

Ex. 7

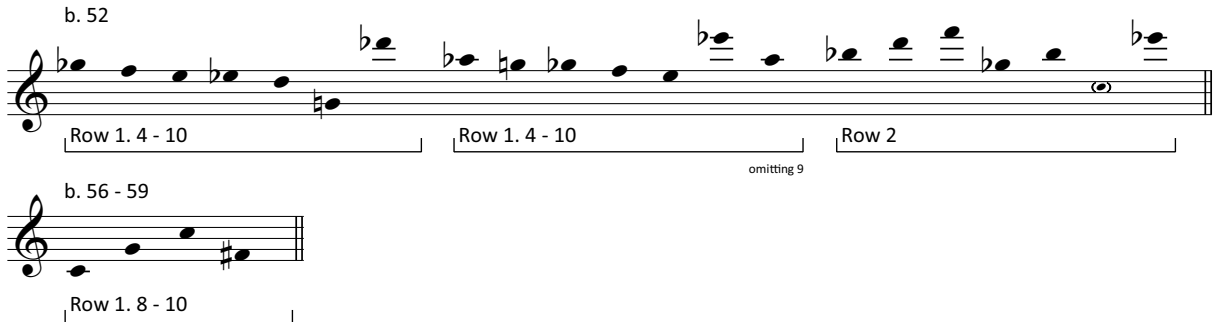
Flute
(bar 51)



51 – 55

later takes on a particular importance (see bars 143–50 and the opening of the second movement). It is not derived from the two rows, but the passage from bars 52–55 is loosely derived from them, starting with the penultimate top G flat at the end of bar 52 (see Example 4).

Ex. 4



b. 52

Row 1. 4 - 10 Row 1. 4 - 10 Row 2

omitting 9

b. 56 - 59

Row 1. 8 - 10

56 – 59

A 1-bar pattern in quavers is repeated four times. In the piano the pattern rises up in E flat minor (E flat–B flat) in the LH. The flute outlines a pattern derived from notes 8–10 of the first row (C–G–C–F#).

60 – 62

A return to the material of bar 51 over the same harmony in the piano as before. The flute repeats a 2-beat figure three times, rising an octave each time.

QUESTIONS:

- * Are any of the note rows used in this passage? If so, where can they be found?
- * Which short melodic figure found in this section later takes on a more significant role?
- * How many subsections make up this short section and what are they?

Dance 1b (Bars 63 – 86)

This second dance section develops aspects of the material from the first combined with elements from Section 2.

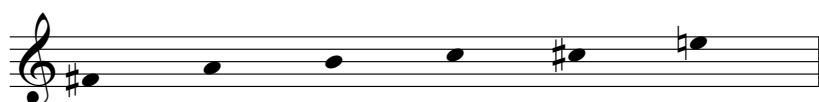
63 - 72

This is a varied repeat of bars 1–16 for piano alone. A 10-bar section maintains the alternating 4/4 + 3/8 metre of the opening section, (in C minor with occasional F#s). During the passage all the quaver rests in the RH are filled, leading at the close to a continuous quaver pattern.

The pitches used expand from just 2 at the outset to 7 at the close (C–D–E–flat–E natural–F#–G–B flat). These outline a minor blues scale that will assume more importance as the work progresses, especially in the second movement (see Example 5). The overall tonality remains rooted in C.

Ex. 5

Minor
Blues Scale
on F#



73 - 79

An extension of the previous passage for piano alone, with a rhythmic development of the pattern now in continuous quavers. The LH now expands to a 5-note pattern moving from C-F# against a 3-note pattern (G-B flat-C) in the RH.

80 - 88

The pattern established in the piano at 76–77 and 78–79 is repeated 3 times followed by a 3-bar reduction of it at bars 84–86 (in 3/4). A descending flute line is introduced at bar 80, derived from Section 2 (see bars 51–55). As before this includes parts of row 1 with aspects of the minor blues scale.

QUESTIONS:

- * How does the passage for piano alone heard at bars 63–79 differ from its first appearance at bars 1–16? What process does it go through?
- * How does the underlying pulse in bars 76, 78, 80 and 82 differ from previous 4/4 bars in this section?
- * Does the flute part from bar 80–86 also come from Dance 1a or Interlude 1a? Where does it originally appear and is it varied at all when it appears here?

Dance 1c (Bars 87 – 142)

This returns to the initial idea but with a considerably extended recapitulation of Dance 1a (at bar 104) where several elements are ‘fused’ together for the first time.

87 - 103

A repeat of bars 18–25 (bars 87–93) with the piano part reduced. At bars 94–103 the flute part is an extension and development of the figure first heard in the flute at bar 51, now extended as a transition to the next section. The piano part is made up of an extension of the material from the previous section (87–93). Key C minor.

104 - 142

This section fuses together all the melodic and harmonic aspects of Dance 1a previously heard in bars 1–50 into a continuous melodic line. The underlying tonality now changes to A minor for the first time.

104 - 142

- 104–111: Piano alone. 4/4 + 3/8 repeated three times. The bass line is now expanded from single notes to pairs of 5ths rising up through the tritone (A–C–E flat) against a seventh chord on C in 6/5 position in the RH.
- 112–142: (piano) A–C–E flat bass continues. The harmony is predominant confined to C major 7 and E flat major 7 (also in 6/5 position). The rhythmically alternating 4/4 + 3/8 is maintained throughout with a brief change at the transitional bars at 140–142.
- 112–142: (flute). The flute line is now brought together as a fully formed 28-bar statement for the first time. The pitch remains as in Dance 1a despite the underlying change of tonality in the piano. It falls into 4 segments:
 - bars 112–115 repeat 29–32 with an identical flute part;
 - bars 116–122 are an elaboration of bars 34–40 with melismatic figuration added to the original flute part. (120–121 is a virtual repeat of 37–38.) Some of the melismatic figuration (see bar 116) is drawn from row 1 – note the adjacent semitones and the falling 5th and tritone;
 - bars 122–134 are a development and extension of bars 43–50 with melismatic material (126–132 are a virtual repeat of 43–50);
 - bars 136–139 represent new *codetta* material.

QUESTIONS:

- * How does the passage at bars 87–93 differ from its initial appearance at bars 18–25?
- * In which bars between bars 95 to 103 can the small flute figure from bar 51 be found?
- * At which bar is there a dramatic change in the tonality from what has gone before?
- * Although the material in the bass of the piano is similar to its previous appearances from bar 104, it is now harmonised – what interval has been added?
- * The flute part from bars 112–39 recapitulates an earlier appearance at bars 17–50. Explain two ways in which it is now different.
- * The piano part from bar 104–139 is now in a different tonality to its earlier appearances (A rather than C). Is the flute part also transposed?

Interlude 1b (Bars 143 – 150)

87 - 103

A transformation of the flute part from bar 51 into a small march-like theme. Bars 143–44 presents the original flute theme in augmentation in the piano RH, harmonised with notes taken from the second chord of bar 51. Bars 145–46 is a repeat of bar 143. Bars 147–150 are a repeat of the previous 4 bars with the addition of the flute doubling the RH two octaves higher. Key: implied E flat major.

QUESTIONS:

- * Where does the main melodic material for this passage originally first appear?
- * What is different about the idea's rhythm in the piano at bar 143 and thereafter from its original appearance?
- * Does the idea now have a different character to before? How might this be described?
- * What is the relationship of the flute to the piano's RH from bars 147–150?

CODA (Bars 151 – 154)**151 – 154**

A brief fragment of the piano part of Section 1, now in a higher register (151); a fragment of section 2 in the flute (see bar 80) heard over the accompaniment figure from bar 151 (153). A low C at bar 155 establishes the tonic.

MOVEMENT 2:

STEADY, SEDUCTIVE, PLAYFUL. CROCHET = 84. LARGELY 4/4

The different sections of the second movement may be shown as follows:

1 – 25	Dance 1a
26 - 33	Dance 2a
34 - 45	Dance 1b
46 - 114	Dance 2b

Dance 1a (Bars 1 – 25)

The first section has a long melodic line for the flute, essentially unbroken, but falling into three sections. The tonality shadows that of the initial movement moving between A and C. The flute melody starts from the motif formed in bar 51 of the first movement, last heard at bars 143 – 150.

1 - 8

Eight bars of 4/4 over an unchanging rising Aeolian bass in crochets. A flute melody from bars 3–8 tracing a line in A with major/minor ambiguity around the third. With the exception of the opening figure on the first beat of bar 3 in the flute, the remainder of the line uses a minor form of the blues scale on F#, but also with other transpositions.

9 - 16

A continuation of the melody, still in the same tonality and using the blues scale. The rising bass figure changes to C as its root, falling back to A at bar 14. The metre now changes between 4/4 and 3/8 in the manner of the first movement, but not with the same regularity.

17 - 25

A concluding section to the melody, against an unstable harmonic background. The rising bass figure moves through A–A flat–D–E flat.

QUESTIONS:

- * Where does the main melodic material for this passage originally first appear?
- * What is different about the idea's rhythm in the piano at bar 143 and thereafter from its original appearance?
- * Does the idea now have a different character to before? How might this be described?
- * What is the relationship of the flute to the piano's RH from bars 147–150?

Dance 2a (Bars 26 – 33)

At its first appearance, this section (for piano alone) gives the impression of a bridge passage or interlude, but on its reappearance at bar 46 it comes to dominate the movement.

26 - 33

This passage is for piano alone and consists of a series of accelerating arpeggiated figurations around an open 5th on F# through which a series of descending notes are traced bar-by-bar (see “Harmony”).

QUESTIONS:

- * What is the main tonal centre of this passage?
- * What particular piano figuration dominates this section?

Dance 1b (Bars 34 – 45)**33 - 45**

A return to the ascending bass figure of the first section, now rooted on a pedal note of F# throughout the section.

A 6-bar flute melody (bars 34–39) is derived from the phrase starting at bar 17, heard in counterpoint with the figure first heard in the flute at bar 3, now in the piano RH.

At bars 40–42, a new idea is heard on the flute which will dominate the following section: a melodic idea outlining a minor 3rd (G#–B), featuring grace notes and culminating in a trill at bars 43–44.

Bars 40–45 form a transition to the next section, maintaining the F# ascending figure in the piano LH and introducing a decorated G# in the flute.

QUESTIONS:

- * What is the relationship of the tonality of this passage to that of Dance 1a?
- * Does the sense of tonality change?
- * What term would you use to describe the continuous F# bass note throughout this section?

Dance 2b (Bars 46 – 114)

A reprise of the arpeggiated figuration from the first appearance of Dance 2a. Following a passage for both flute and piano, the flute is silent for the last 34 bars of the movement, during which the same piano figuration persists.

46 – 49

The arpeggiated piano figuration from bars 26–33 returns once again over the tonality of F#. This 4-bar passage accelerates to the new tempo of $\text{crotchet} = 126$, established at bar 49.

50 - 80

A long continuous flute melody is sustained over the previous piano figuration.

Rhythmically, the piano figuration is largely made up of groups of four semiquavers, occasionally changing to groups of quintuplets.

The slow underlying harmonic rhythm moves through a number of different pedal points starting with F#, then alternating between A and E (57–69), C# to F# (70–80).

The melodic line for the flute falls into three sections: the first two mirroring one another (bars 53–61 and 62–69) and the third (bars 70–80) being a more elaborate version of the first two.

50 - 80

- The first section (bars 53–61) consists of a two-part melodic line: the first covering a minor third (E–G) and the second covering a major 3rd (G–B) based on the passage from bars 40–42. 4+4; tonal centres F# and E major.
- The second section (bars 62–69) consists of a similar two-part melodic line in a tessitura an octave or so higher: the first covering a minor third (A–C) and the second opening out to cover two minor thirds (A–C and C–E flat). 4+4; tonal centres A major and E major (at bar 68).
- The third section (bars 70–80) consists of an elaboration of the previous two in the same octave: the first (bars 70–75) covering a minor third (F#–A) and based on the passage first heard at bars 40–42 and the second covering the minor third C#–E. 5+5; tonal centres C# minor and F# at the close.

81 - 114

A passage for the piano alone consisting entirely of the already established figuration.

The figuration passes through three different registers of the keyboard: bass and LH (81–83), treble stave range (84–97) and centre of treble range and ledger lines (98 to 114).

Dynamic markings form an important part of the texture, reaching their greatest intensity at bars 88 and 96 and thereafter forming a *diminuendo* to the close.

The harmony moves from F# at the outset (82) through C# (from around 90) eventually settling in G at bar 98 and then gradually moving to C at the close.

QUESTIONS:

- * What is the most unusual feature of this section?
- * What music from the past inspired the composer in this section?
- * In what key does the section at bar 46 commence and in what key does the music conclude? What is the interval between the start and conclusion?
- * How does the use of the piano register change throughout the passage?
- * Where are the moments of the greatest dynamic intensity in this section?

MOVEMENT 3:

STILL. DOTTED CROCHET = 56. 6/8 TIME

The final movement is brief (32 bars) and consists of one long statement of the flute melody already featured in the previous two movements

1 - 12

A statement of row 1 for the flute (bars 2–8) is preceded by the pitches E and D#, together with a repeat of bars 1–4 of the flute in the piano (bars 4–8) followed by a bar's rest. A low pedal of C is maintained in the piano to bar 8 and thereafter, G. The statement of row 1 includes the G, found at its first appearance (bar 24–25 of the first movement).

13 - 20

A statement in the flute of a motif built around C#–F (bars 13–16) followed by an inversion of notes 4–10 of row 1 (bars 17–20) (4+4) over a pedal point of C to bar 16.

21 - 32

Three decorated As in the flute (as previously encountered in bars 40–42 of the 2nd movement) followed by a statement of row 2 (with an added penultimate C) from bars 25–28. The music comes to rest in B flat major (29 to end).

TONALITY

At the most fundamental level, the use of tonal centres in *Night Dances* is centred around C and F#. The music shifts around different tonal centres, but there is no traditional sense of modulation between them.

The key centres across all three movements might be shown thus:

MOVEMENT 1

Dance 1a	Interlude 1a	Dance 1b	Dance 1c	Interlude 1b & Coda
C minor	Uncertain: melody around G, and piano around G flat / E flat	Initially C minor but also E flat / F#	A minor but also C / E flat	E flat but closing in C

MOVEMENT 2

Dance 1a	Dance 2a / Dance 1b	Dance 2b
A minor but also C / E flat	F#	F# (via E / A) to C# to G closing in C

MOVEMENT 3

C pedal moving to B flat
for the last 4 bars

- As can be seen above, the main centre for the work is C. The first movement's bass often moves up from C to F# (the tritone). However, between this, two other pitches play an important part: E flat and A, which create another interlocking tritone.
- These four pitches make up most of the tonal centres given above. All the remaining tonal centres (C#–G and E–B flat) are mainly confined to the second movement and the end of the third. They make up another pair of interlocking tritones. They form a dominant axis to the initial pair of tritones, on the basis laid down in Ernő Lendvai's book on Bartók (see 'Resources').
- Tonal centres at any one time are usually dependent on the predominance of whatever note forms the bass, especially given the work's tendency to make considerable use of pedal points.
- The relationship of minor thirds is also expressed in the bass part throughout the first movement, where although C remains the main pitch, it alternates with both E flat and F# (see particularly bars 1–50). When Dance 1a entirely returns at bar 104, the tonal centre now becomes A, moving upwards (as before) to C and E flat. This avoids any kind of traditional movement associated with the dominant and sub dominant.

QUESTIONS:

- * What two intervals dominate the relationship between the various tonal centres in *Night Dances*?
- * What is unusual about the key in which the last movement of *Night Dances* ends?
- * The tritone CF# plays an important part in *Night Dances*. What other tritone can also be frequently found?
- * Describe one method by which tonal centres are frequently established.

TEXTURE AND SONORITY

The combination of flute and piano is a traditional pairing, and a quick glance at the score suggests that most of the textures and figuration remains within that orbit. However, there are many subtle adjustments to the texture that open up new or unusual sonorities.

- Much of the bass in the first movement lies in the lowest register of the keyboard, which at the outset (from bar 9) is contrasted with repeated Cs in the instrument's highest register.
- Later in the same movement, this is contrasted with very closely voiced harmonised textures confined to just one octave (see bars 50–62).
- Nearly all the piano writing in the first movement (apart from the passage from bars 8–15) lies relatively low in the instrument's register, very rarely rising much above the G above middle C. This creates a sympathetic balance with the flute, the tessitura of whose line in this movement is for the most part pitched in the octaves beyond C, an octave above middle C.
- It is interesting to note that the dark colouring of the piano part persists into much of the second movement, only rising into the upper octaves in the latter part of the final section (bars 84–114), once the flute has ceased playing. The same observations apply to the final movement.

- The tessitura of the flute part very subtly shifts over the span of the whole work from a high to low tessitura. It has already been noted how it is pitched relatively high in the first movement; much of the activity in the second movement has shifted down (in general) by about an octave, matching the more seductive character of the music. In the final movement, much of the activity is confined to the first 1½ octaves of the instrument, reaching down for (nearly) the first time, the instrument's lowest notes. This is a function of the work's programme, where "the night is~ gradually overwhelmed by sleep".
- Texturally the work moves through three main different states: sharply defined rhythmic textures in the opening movement; densely sensual textures in the second; and very spare textures (no more than one line usually) in the third.

QUESTIONS:

- * How does the tessitura of the flute part change over the three movements of *Night Dances*?
- * What relationship does this have to the programmatic ideas behind the work?
- * How do the piano and flute textures in *Night Dances* change from movement to movement?
- * What is particularly notable about the range of the piano part in *Night Dances*, once the initial opening 16 bars have been heard?

HARMONIC LANGUAGE

This section describes the use of harmony in *Night Dances*.

- The harmonic language changes from movement to movement and within movements as well. Although it can broadly be described as tonal, it is not functional in any way (for instance, the harmonic progressions do not have any traditional relationships with one another and there is no sense of modulation). The harmony found in the work might consist of easily identifiable traditional chords, bitonal, 'white note' harmony or even 'atonal' chords. In this respect the work is very typical of the way present-day composers draw on many different types of harmony in just one work. Different styles of harmony within the work are discussed below.
- In the first movement, much of the harmony is very static in the sense that the bass line remains largely the same and there are often no more than two or three alternating chords above it. This can be seen most clearly in the first movement from bars 18–50: the left hand repeats C throughout, alternating it with E flat and sometimes F#. Over this are heard two chords in the right hand: a seventh on E flat and (from bar 34) also an open 5th on C–G with an unresolved appoggiatura on the augmented 4th (F#). This might be described as bitonal harmony because the chords seem to be in a different tonality to the bass. A similar type of harmonic writing can also be found between bars 104–141, transposed now down a minor 3rd (to A).

- A different kind of harmony can be found at bars 51–55 and 56–62. This is also static insofar as, once established, it does not move. It consists of two outer parts moving up and down in major 6^{ths} (i.e. in the bass G flat–A flat–B flat etc) against an unchanging E flat / D flat in the middle part. This also returns at bars 60–62.
- The second movement commences with a first section built around ‘white note’ harmony (see “White Note Harmony” for a definition). The harmonic writing for the flute and piano in this passage is largely contrapuntal, in four parts. The bass sustains an upward-rising arpeggiated figure centred on the Aeolian scale on A (with a flattened 7th), moving briefly to C (bars 7–13). The upper parts sustain freely moving lines in the same tonality that make up common chords, sevenths or unresolved appoggiatura harmonic patterns. The lines occasionally move out of the white notes on A, introducing F#, C# and G#, but the fundamental tonality remains rooted in A / C (i.e. minor and relative major).
- A substantial passage from bar 46 to the end of the second movement (anticipated at bars 26–33) is also rooted around traditional harmony, but without its functionality. See, for instance bars 26–33 which is based around a chord on F#–C#. These notes remain constant throughout, but a further note (or pair of notes) change from bar to bar. The composer compares it to the experience of playing the first of Bach’s 48 Preludes and Fugues (the prelude in C) in its effect. This very gradual shifting allows the music to move imperceptibly through several tonal centres in the final section of the movement, all the way from F# to C major.
- Pedal points in one form or another play a large part in *Night Dances*. They often form the bass note of a repeated arpeggiated figure (as in much of the first two movements) or in the final movement are simply static notes in the bass (much of the first half of the third movement is over a pedal of C or G).

QUESTIONS:

- * Describe some of the different harmonic styles found in *Night Dances*.
- * Is traditional modulation a feature of the work as a whole?
- * How might the use of harmony be described in the first movement? Do the harmony and tonal centres change frequently?
- * What is “white note” harmony?

TEMPO, METRE AND RHYTHM

TEMPO

The tempi for the three movements of *Night Dances* gradually slow down (as the work’s programmatic idea suggests) from *crescendo* = 120 (movement 1), *crescendo* = 84 (movement 2) to *crescendo* = 56 (movement 3).

METRE

The use of metre has different purposes in each of the three movements.

- As has already been noted, the first shifts constantly between 4/4 and 3/8 with some less significant shifts to other metres such as 3/4 or 2/4 (see “Concept” for the relationship of metre in this movement to dance).
- The division of the 4/4 bar in the first movement is nearly always 3+3+2 quavers. This has been derived from various forms of jazz and dance music that often divide the bar unequally. The addition of an extra bar of 3/8 gives the music a quasi-11/8 metre.
- A different way of dividing the beat can be seen at bars 51–55 where 4/4 and 2/4 bars are used to accommodate a different series of syncopations in the piano part. These could be seen as alternating 5/8 (2+2+1 quavers) and 7/8 (2+2+2+1) bars (ending with a 1/8).
- An additive rhythmic device is used from bars 63–85. Starting with the previous 4/4 + 3/8 metre, notes are gradually added into the pattern until it becomes a series of continuous quavers. The metre is then changed to 4/4 (2+2+2+2) plus 3/8.
- Despite the very strong sense of metre in the piano part, the flute line often moves irregularly in long notes (occasionally decorated with connecting melismatic flourishes), often rhythmically independent of the piano. This trait is also carried over into the second movement (see “Phrasing” below).
- The second movement is in 4/4 throughout, though its regularity here allows for considerable fluidity of movement (expand!)
- The final movement is in 6/8, though to the listener this is probably not apparent.

BAR / PHRASE STRUCTURE

The phrase structure in *Night Dances* varies throughout movements. More detailed notes on individual movements are given below.

- In the first movement, the phrase structure in the piano part is very regular (despite the inherent irregularity of the 4/4 + 3/8 division), often falling into simple repetitions of the two-bar pattern or the other rhythmic patterns described above. The flute phrasing over these bars though is irregular and only occasionally accords with the piano part. For instance, the phrase (starting at bar 18) is eight bars long, followed by a 3-bar rest, followed by a 4-bar phrase, a 1-bar rest, a 7-bar phrase, a 2-bar rest and then an 8-bar phrase (bars 18–50). The rhythmic structure within the phrases is very irregular.
- The second movement also mixes regular phrasing in the piano with irregular phrasing in the flute. Once again, the rhythmic structure of the flute line is often independent of the piano.

QUESTIONS:

- * Give an example of the way in which the 4/4 bars in the first movement are rhythmically divided? From what musical styles is this derived?
- * What is additive rhythm and where can its use be found in *Night Dances*?
- * In what way is the flute part rhythmically different to the piano in the first movement?
- * Does the piano have a predominantly regular or irregular phrase structure in the first movement?
- * In general, does the flute part of the first two movements display a regular or irregular sense of phrasing?

SERIALISM

Some of the melodic lines in *Night Dances* have been written using serial technique – mainly in the first and final movements. There are two rows used: one 10-note row (see Example 1)

Ex. 1

Row 1




bars
18 - 32
Flute

and one 7-note row (see Example 2).

Ex. 2

Row 2



bars
43 - 50
(Flute)

These have very marked characteristics.

- The first row is made up of two unequal halves outlining two tritones: the first (notes 1–4) descend from C to F# and the second (notes 5–10) start on an F and end on a C#. The second segment encompasses four adjacent semitones and a 5th (or 4th) and a tritone.
- The second row is 7 notes long and consists of two rising major 3rds, a semitone, tritone and a closing major third. It will be seen that its intervallic content is quite different from the first row.
- In studying Serialism, it is important to remember that the interval between two notes can often be expressed differently – for instance, a rising minor 2nd and falling major 7th (and vice versa) are the same, as are a rising major 3rd and falling minor 6th, and so forth.

QUESTIONS:

- * What is serial technique?
- * Which movements in *Night Dances* use Serialism? Is it mainly found in the flute or piano writing?
- * Do all serial note rows have 12 notes? Describe the rows used in *Night Dances*.
- * What intervals characterise the rows used in *Night Dances*.

WHITE NOTE HARMONY

This is sometimes also called ‘Pandiatonicism’. It consists of all the notes of any major or minor scale being used and combined freely without the usual conventional resolutions or chord progressions, but still retaining a strong sense of tonality due to the absence of any chromatic notes.

DYNAMICS

The overall dynamics in *Night Dances* are significant for the way in which they are used to create a long-term structure that mirrors the overall concept of the work (“a wild, intoxicating night-time dance, followed by a gradual uncoiling of energy, as the night is gradually overwhelmed by sleep”). Much of the first movement creates dramatic contrasts between soft and loud; the second movement is more complex with a series of gradual crescendos culminating in the loudest bars of the whole work (bars 80–83) and thereafter a *gradual diminuendo* to the movement’s *ppp* close. This sets the scene for the final movement, the first half of which is *p* followed by a final crescendo and diminuendo.

QUESTIONS:

- * How might the use of dynamics in *Night Dances* be described overall? How does their use reflect the work’s programmatic aspect?
- * What is a particular feature of the use of dynamics in the first movement.

RESOURCES

CD:	Catherine Handley / Andrew Wilson-Dickson. HAL 004
WEBSITE:	www.lynnelowman.co.uk
Ernő Lendvai: Béla Bartók. An Analysis of his Music. Kahn & Averill, 1971	