

THREE NOCTURNES FOR PIANO BY JACKSON BERKEY: AN ANALYSIS AND A
STUDY IN PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

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DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores three nocturnes for piano composed by Jackson Berkey. Chapter one and two present a biography of Jackson Berkey and his thoughts about music. Only limited information is available concerning Mr. Berkey's musical career and his piano music in written form or on the internet, but two one-on-one interviews with the composer provided valuable supplementary information for this study. In order to view Berkey's nocturnes within the historical context of the nocturne genre over the past 200 years, chapter three provides a brief historical overview of the nocturne. Chapter four is an analytical discussion of three of Berkey's 24 nocturnes: *No. 13 in F-sharp Major: Homage to Robert Schumann*; *No. 20 in C Minor: Music in the Night*; and *No. 22 in G Minor* (no subtitle). Analytical considerations are melodic, motivic, harmonic, and structural. After grouping Berkey's 24 Nocturnes into three title-based categories, I selected one nocturne from each list for analysis. The three categories are grouped according to three title formats: homages to composers and poets identified by subtitles; those with descriptive titles; and those simply titled "nocturne." Chapter five examines Berkey's interpretive indications regarding pedaling, dynamics, and tempo. Final conclusions and closing remarks comprise chapter six.

These three Nocturnes will provide a broad-based introduction to Berkey's compositional techniques and to his unique musical language, all of which serve to broaden the stylistic traditions of the nocturne genre. Another goal of this study is to demonstrate compositional and pianist validity within Jackson Berkey's 24 nocturnes as new pedagogical and performance alternatives to traditional nocturne repertoire.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and my piano professor Dr. Robert Groves who supported me during my four years studying at North Dakota State University.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

When selecting music for my lecture recital, I wanted to feature recently published music that would hold meaning for me, and that I could share with the piano community at large. With these in mind, I selected Jackson Berkey's *24 Nocturnes for piano*. I recall first meeting the composer in 2009 in Heath Recital Hall at Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas, as a participant in a master class for the University piano students presented by Berkey. In retrospect, is it now clear to the writer that Mr. Berkey demonstrated ideas about teaching and performance that also offered insights into his compositional approach. His performance advice was to play naturally with relaxed hand positioning to avoid unnecessary and sometimes debilitating strain. Furthermore, Mr. Berkey emphasized the value of alternative fingerings that make use of both hands in performing some technically difficult passages originally scored for one hand. It became apparent to all in attendance that he is a highly-accomplished concert artist, and that his health-conscious views regarding the physicality of piano playing are embedded in his own compositions, just as many other composers have infused into their works their own unique perspectives on technical execution.

In 2014, while preparing for my first of three doctoral recitals, Mr. Berkey consented to a private lesson at his home in Omaha, Nebraska. After the lesson, he played segments of three or four of his own nocturnes from his recently published complete catalogue of 24 nocturnes (*24 Nocturnes for Piano*). A few of them had been published separately before the new collected edition appeared. This initial introduction led to exploring more of these works through Berkey's own performances available on a small number of internet sites. Further explorations of them at the keyboard evoked surprisingly deep, expressive reactions. This experience may be likened to studying twenty-four different paintings, each offering to the viewer distinct senses of color

palette and expressive beauty. It also was soon apparent that while Berkey's rich and varied harmonic language fluctuates easily between those of the post-romantic era and subsequent 20th century trends, his overall soundscape remains accessible and surprisingly undemanding for the average listener.

The driving force behind Berkey's creation of listener-friendly compositions may be the environment in which he creates. Mr. Berkey explained that he composed most of his nocturnes in the early morning hours – for him, a hushed, introspective setting. His process was to rise before the sun and walk to his studio while the moon and stars were still visible. According to Berkey, he utilized this time while moving through the pre-dawn darkness to conceive his nocturnes. This setting may explain the quiet beginnings of his pieces and their commonly peaceful mood as they end. Like this study, attaining an understanding of a composer's environment and mindset when writing music can suggest creative choices to the performer. Just as Chopin's nocturnes may embody nostalgia for his homeland and Debussy's Impressionistic compositions may hearken to paintings of the same style, Berkey's nocturnes also seem to derive from and build upon his own creative setting and experiences.

The decision to study Jackson Berkey's 24 Nocturnes for this document and related lecture recital was based on three primary factors: first, Berkey's techniques in composing his 24 Nocturnes to some extent appear to follow those of enduring pianist-composers such as Frederic Chopin (1810-49), Sergei Rachmaninov, and Berkey's teacher Josef Raieff (1906- 2002) — natural pianistic hand positioning. This same aspect of Berkey's nocturnes make them valuable pedagogical tools. Second, Mr. Berkey's 24 Nocturnes do not pose arduous auditory experiences for audiences, which aligns with the author's belief that the best piano music is may be difficult for the performer but not for the audience. Third, this topic would allow face-to-face

communication with a living composer. Berkey, himself turned out to be the most fruitful resource in researching his compositions. His explanations provided unique insights into his creative decisions and interpretive expectations.

Twelve months were spent researching and practicing Berkey nocturnes. There also were relevant conversations with other pianists, listened to recorded performances and Sight-reading much of Berkey's other piano repertoire, all of which preceded this focused analysis of three of his nocturnes. Especially pleasing was the opportunity to interview Mr. Berkey in the spring of 2017. The following eight interview questions were formulated to provide a more complete understanding of Mr. Berkey's piano works through learning more of his professional life and first-hand insights into his compositional approaches and intentions, the answers of which provide insightful glimpses into the creative mind of the composer.

HJ: When did you start composing, and what were your early passions and influences?

JB: I started composing fourteen years after completing my advanced degree program (Master of Music in Piano Performance) at the Juilliard School in New York City, 1960. My Wife, Almeda Berkey, is a gifted choral conductor and singer. Following our marriage in 1974, she was working as a minister of music at a church in Omaha, Nebraska and was searching for Christmas and Easter choral cantatas to present in seasonal celebration services. It was during those early years in our marriage that I began composing.

HJ: What are your main compositional challenges?

JB: Knowledge, daily practice of writing, time frame for commissions, achieving balance between detail and simplicity on the page, juxtaposing composition work flow with engraving, editing, publishing, and recording.

HJ: How do you see the relationship between pianist and composer?

JB: In piano music, the pianist is the human vessel through which the mind and soul of the composer flows. That human vessel is completely unique in that it has capacity to recognize and realize all marks of license and editorial specificity provided by the composer. It is the pianist's interpretation that breathes new life into every performance of a composer's work. That is why hearing other musicians performing my music is so important to me. As the composer of a work, the perfect balance of license and specificity is one of the most difficult and necessary tasks to achieve. Each pianist's realization of my score tells me how accurately my notation and detailing guides the performer in bringing my music to life.

HJ: Do you think composing will strengthen a pianist's performance?

JB: It must be understood that composing and performing are two completely different disciplines. Personally, I can say that I have grown as a pianist through my composing because of the many pianistic and technical decisions that I consider while writing. However, there are too many instances in my composing that I know will require diligent practice in order to put my musical ideas on the page. That said, the practice and preparation of my works is purely a pianistic responsibility, and a responsibility that I must accept when performing my works. It is the pianist's responsibility to practice and perfect performing the score. It is the composer's responsibility to carefully choose the notes, patterns, techniques, marks of license and expression that will provide the impetus to a beautiful reading. Every note that I put on the page is chosen with consideration given to pianistic execution and sonorous beauty.

HJ: Do you feel there were any remarkable things that happened during the composition of your twenty-four piano nocturnes?

JB: The 24 nocturnes were written over an extended period of time. Very early in the writing journey, I organized folders and templates for each key. Two of the nocturnes were written

almost like “dictation” in one day (F-sharp minor and C-sharp minor). Others were written over time in short writing periods and kept “on file” in their folders. In many instances, I would not have been working on a nocturne for several months, sometimes several years. Often, when beginning my writing for the day, I would open one of those folders, play sections of a nocturne in progress, and continue writing, as if I had been working on it the day before. On almost all occasions, when returning to a piece in this manner, I would experience a sudden rush of ideas with an immediate flow of compositional material. I am convinced that my mind had been writing on many of these works subconsciously.

HJ: How would you characterize your compositional language?

JB: Intentionally, yet sometimes subliminally eclectic, twenty-first century romantic with classical pianistic and harmonic influences throughout. Among many, Debussy, Sibelius, Rachmaninoff, Chopin are strong influences often resulting in frequent and obvious modal shifts.

HJ: What do you consider to be the most important ideas and concepts to impart to aspiring musicians?

JB: Understand completely what you are doing. Know that you are working amidst one of life’s mysterious wonders. Music has the capacity to touch the human heart in ways that are unimaginable.

HJ: Are there any upcoming works?

JB: I am currently working on a set of piano preludes, and a commission for chorus and orchestra with a premiere this coming December, 2017.

CHAPTER 2. JACKSON BERKEY'S MUSICAL LIFE AND WORKS

Jackson Berkey is an accomplished American composer and pianist. He is the best known for his work with Mannheim Steamroller, which he co-founded with Chip Davis in 1974. Berkey's published compositions number over 400 titles that include works for piano, chorus, chorus and orchestra, vocal and instrumental solo, chamber ensemble, band, orchestra, and soloist and orchestra. His Piano Concerto was published in 2015 and premiered by pianist Anne Madison with the Omaha Symphony Orchestra. These compositions together with his work with Mannheim Steamroller clearly demonstrate his versatility as a composer and recording artist. In contrast to his more traditional compositions, he shows inventiveness by creating new pianistic sonorities and new-age styles in his *Fresh Aire Interludes* that he recorded with Chip Davis and Mannheim Steamroller.

In the classical piano realm, Berkey's recordings for American Gramophone and SDG Records continue to elicit rave reviews.¹ His recording entitled *21st Century Romantic* (SDG CD091-2) received the following review by Classical Net critic Gerald Fenech: "I can safely say I'm quite a big fan already and pretty eager to learn more about his music which seems to be substantial, full of romantic color and technical accomplishment."² Classical Music announcer John Ray Jordon stated the following regarding Berkey's piano solo recording *Atlantic Fantasy* (SDG CD041): "Jackson Berkey's *Atlantic Fantasy* is an excellent addition. All of the compositions are quite modern in their mood, but very easy on the ear."³

¹ "Biography," The Publications, Performance and Recordings of Almeda and Jackson Berkey, accessed November 3, 2015. <http://www.berkey.com>.

² Gerald Fenech, "CD Review," Classical Net, accessed November 3, 2015, <http://www.classical.net/music/recs/reviews/s/sdg00091a.php>.

³ "Reviews," The Publication, Performance and Recordings of Almeda and Jackson Berkey, accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.berkey.com>.

Jackson Berkey was born in Huntington, PA on May 24, 1942. He began his piano studies at age five. While his mother learned to play the piano only by ear, she insisted that Jackson receive the formal training she had not. An accomplished pianist by the time he entered high school, Berkey received a scholarship from the Huntingdon Music Club to attend the Chautauqua Music Festival in western New York, where in addition to his pianistic studies he attended daily orchestra rehearsals of the Chautauqua Symphony.⁴

Berkey earned a bachelor's degree in piano performance at Wilkes College in Wilkes-Barre, PA. Soon thereafter he was accepted into the graduate program at the Julliard School of Music, where, after several years of study with Russian pianist Josef Raiff (1906-2002), as well as sessions with Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987) and William Schuman (1910-1992), he completed his master's degree in piano performance in 1968. Because Berkey's theoretical and pedagogical studies with Raiff were of such significance to him during this time, Berkey dedicated *24 Nocturnes* to him.⁵ He made his professional concert debut as pianist in 1971 in New York City's Town Hall, about which Allen Hughes of *the New York Times* said, "Mr. Berkey is an accomplished performer and more often than not a persuasive one. His interpretation of the Beethoven Sonata in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 was expertly and sensitively shaped."⁶ After this recital, Berkey held several jobs as pianist, including pianist for the touring Norman Luboff Choir. There he met his future wife, Almeda as well as Chip Davis, the eventual founder and leader of the new-age music group Mannheim Steamroller.

⁴ "Jackson Berkey," Wikipedia, accessed November 4, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jackson_Berkey#cite_ref-omaha_1-2

⁵ Raieff himself had studied with Theodor Leschetitzky (1830-1915), a pupil of Arthur Schnable.

⁶ Allen Hughes, "*Jackson Berkey Plays 20th Century Pieces*," *New York Times*, May 10, 1971, accessed November 4, 2015, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html>

Berkey's earliest compositions were original choral works and arrangements for Almeda's choirs, which they performed and recorded together. His early work for choir, *Anniversary Carols* (1998), contains surprises in rhythm, meter, voicing, instrumentation, and harmonies. He brings a refreshing sparkle to familiar melodies, presenting audiences with songs that are both traditional and yet delightfully new again. British composer and conductor John Rutter wrote the following about Berkey's choral music: "With consummate skill, craftsmanship and imagination he has taken a wassail cup full of well-loved carols and miraculously made them new."⁷ Many of Berkey's earlier compositions are songs, service cantatas, and other works for vocal ensembles of men, women, and mixed choirs. Since 1980, Jackson has been writing in additional genres, including works for chorus and orchestra, an Organ Concerto (2004), a Harp Concerto (2005), and many works for small chamber ensemble. According to Berkey, he was greatly inspired as a composer by the work of Phillip Erklen and his International Music Syndicate. The total output of Berkey's keyboard music is listed in Table 2.1, most of which he composed in the coastal locations of Cape May, NJ and Washington's Olympic Peninsula. The majority of his nocturnes were composed at these two locations.⁸

⁷ "Reviews," The Publications, Performance and Recording of Almeda and Jackson Berkey.

⁸ "Jackson Berkey," Wikipedia.

Table 2.1. Berkey’s Keyboard music for solo piano, harpsichord, and organ.

Piano:
Atlantic Fantasy
Cape May Preludes collection
Cape May Solitudes collection
Facets Collection
Jackson Berkey’s Keyboard Carols, Book I & II
The Phillip Erklen Series
Piano Concerto
Piano Derivations, Vol. I & II
Piano Sonata
Rainydark & Firelight
Reverie: original Debussy with choral orchestration
Sakura
Time Twisters collection
24 Nocturnes for Piano
Vivadi’s Winter
Piano Four-Hands:
Six Pence
Homage to Emily Dickson
Homage to Antonin Dvorak
Homage to Thomas Campion
Hosanna Down! Major & Modal
Jackson Cove Moonrise
Midnight Berceuse (It Came Upon a Midnight Clear)
Two-Piano Ensemble:
Suite for Two Pianos
Harpsichord Solo:
Jackson Berkey’s Keyboard Carols, Book I & II
Organ:
Anniversary Carols Organ Book Collection
Concerto for Organ, Winds, Percussion, Strings
“Crucifixus” Meditation from The Towers of Sagrada Familia
Jackson Berkey’s Organ Carols collection

Berkey composed his 24 nocturnes by setting them in each major and minor key following the tonal models of keyboard collections by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) and Dimitri Shostakovich (1906-1975). Some are dedicated to renowned composers that include Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), Claude Debussy (1862-1918), Samuel Barber (1910-1981), and Aaron Copland (1900-1990). Berkey creates a unique sound in his nocturnes by combining both neo-romantic and 21st century tonal and structural strategies. He features melodies that are lyrical and sometimes soaring along with typically driving rhythms and inventive, lush vertical sonorities.⁹ Berkey describes some of his compositional ideas and reasons in choosing the nocturne genre:

I chose the ‘episodic’ Nocturne form because it suits my writing temperament so well. I am most often given to ending my works very quietly, but in each piece, I also strive to achieve a contrast of character. That contrast can sometimes be very subtle, but it is always given consideration in all of the Nocturnes.

The ‘episode’ frequently served that aspect in my Nocturnes and gave me great freedom when composing them. The idea of following the circle of fifths came to me very early in my 6 or 7-year writing journey and, almost immediately, I established a computer writing folder which included a template for each key. Often I had subfolders for some Nocturnes, with multiple ideas being developed simultaneously.

Many of those ideas not used as Nocturnes are now being given consideration for my book of Piano Preludes.¹⁰

Berkey has plans to arrange three or four of his 24 Nocturnes for orchestra, under the title *Night Pieces for Orchestra*.

Before examining Berkey’s nocturnes, it may be helpful to provide a historical and stylistic context by briefly tracing the development of the nocturne in Western music history.

Viewing Berkey’s compositional process within the nocturne genre in relation to that of previous

⁹ Almeda Berkey, *Introduction to Jackson Berkey 24 Nocturnes for Piano* (Omaha, NE: SDG Press, 2015), ii.

¹⁰ Jackson Berkey, e-mail to author, October 19, 2015.

composers will show the uniqueness in sound and structure exhibited by his works. Particularly apparent will be his inventive expansions upon the use of meter, rhythm, harmony, and texture.

CHAPTER 3. HISTORY OF THE NOCTURNE AND OVERVIEW OF JACKSON BERKEY'S 24 NOCTURNES

Nocturne is a French term loosely translated as “of the night.” Its German equivalent is *Nachtstück*, and its Italian equivalent is *notturmo*, which originally was an 18th century title of a work or movement to be performed outdoors during the night.¹¹ Nocturne as a title appears most commonly as a specific category of 19th century character pieces for solo piano.

Irish pianist and composer John Field (1782-1837) was the first to compose commercially published nocturnes. Over a 20-year timespan beginning in 1812, he composed a total of 21 works titled *Nocturne* as relatively short, one-movement character pieces in three-part form (ABA). Field employed several other characteristic titles as well such as *Romance*, *Serenade*, *Pastoral*, and *Fantasia*, some of which he later re-titled *Nocturne*. *Nocturne* was by far the most prevalent of his characteristic titles. Field's nocturnes are earliest manifestations of the single-movement “characteristic” or “character” works for solo piano compositions that typified 19th-century piano composition. Before Field adopted the nocturne as a new genre of piano music, other composers were writing what was considered “night music” in the form of serenades often scored for a group of wind instruments or a small orchestra most and likely intended for outdoor evening performance settings.¹² A characteristic spirit common to Field's nocturnes is introspective lyricism. Field's lyrical melodies are supported by gently arpeggiated left-hand patterns soon to become a standard characteristic of nocturnes composed by Frederic Chopin (1810-1849).

¹¹ Jessical, L. Murdock, “*Night Music: The Twentieth Century in Piano Teaching*” (D.M.A. Diss., University of Northern Colorado, 2012), 2.

¹² *Ibid.*

Fifteen years after Field “created” the nocturne for piano, Frederic Chopin expanded upon Field’s concepts almost from his initial exploration of the genre. He composed his two earliest nocturnes between 1827 and 1830, both of which were published posthumously. During his career in Paris (1831-1849), Chopin composed a number of additional nocturnes probably intended for his own salon performances. After his Nocturne, op. 9 was published in 1833, Chopin began enriching his nocturne style with a middle section featuring a more dramatic stylistic contrasting with the outer sections.¹³ Furthermore, Chopin later increased the scope of the middle section as well.¹⁴ Chopin composed twenty-one nocturnes over the course of his career. Many of his later nocturnes were increasingly complex with regard to greater elaboration in structure, tonal variety and the presence of chromaticisms and melodic embellishment. Jonathan Bellman contends that Chopin’s later nocturnes moved away from a largely *bel canto* style toward more tonal and chromatic ambiguity in keeping with the late 19th-century impressionistic language of Claude Debussy (1862-1918).¹⁵ The three characteristic features most common to all of Chopin’s nocturnes are ternary structure with contrasting middle sections, lyricism, and melodic ornamentation, all of which became cemented in the nocturne genre.

20th-century composers began employing new post World War I tonal techniques even within the traditional nocturne genre. Among those who composed twentieth century nocturnes are Samuel Barber (1910-1981), Aaron Copland (1900-1990) and Lowell Liebermann (b. 1961). Finally, after two hundred years of stylistic evolution, Jackson Berkey composed his *24 nocturnes for piano* over a fourteen-year period from 2000 to 2014. As a group Berkey’s

¹³ Stewart Gordon, *A History of Keyboard Literature Music for the Piano and Its Forerunners* (Belmont, CA: Schirmer Press, 1996), 295.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Jonathan Bellman, *Improvisation on Chopin’s Nocturnes* (D.M.A. Diss., Stanford University, 1990), 42.

nocturnes follow a tonal organization inclusive of all twelve major keys of the chromatic scale together with their relative minors as previously seen in J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Chopin's *Preludes, op. 28* and Dimitri Shostakovich's *24 Preludes and Fugues*. Like Chopin and Shostakovich, Berkey ordered his set according to the circle of fifths having each paired with its corresponding relative minor.

For the purpose of this study, the variety of titles Berkey assigned to each of his nocturnes suggests that they fall into three distinct categories or groupings. With that in mind, the author opted to group them as follows: Group A - nine nocturnes with homages to composers and poets as subtitles; Group B - six nocturnes each with their own unique descriptive subtitle; and Group C - nine nocturnes simply titled "nocturne." The following listings show the placement of all 24 nocturnes within these three headings accompanied by their numerical ordering in the collected edition:

Group A, Berkey's homages to composers and poets:

- Nocturne in C Major: *Remembering Serge Prokofieff* (no. 1)
- Nocturne in G Major: *Homage to Claude Debussy* (no. 3)
- Nocturne in B Minor: *Homage to Fryderyk Chopin* (no. 6)
- Nocturne in F-sharp Minor: *Homage to Johann Sebastian Bach* (no. 8)
- Nocturne in E Major: *Homage to Thomas Campion* (no. 9)
- Nocturne in G-sharp Minor: *Homage to Sergei Rachmaninoff* (no. 12)
- Nocturne in F-sharp Major: *Homage to Robert Schumann* (no. 13)
- Nocturne in F Minor: *Remembering Wittgenstein and Ravel* (no. 18)
- Nocturne in E-flat Major: *Homage to Emily Dickinson* (no. 19)

These nine works pay tribute to composers and poets from various time periods in Western music history ranging from the early 17th-century (Thomas Campion, 1567-1729) to the mid-20th century (Sergei Prokofiev, 1891- 1953). In light of their artistic influences on his own musical life, Berkey composed these nocturnes mindful of the artisans to whom he wished to pay homage. For example, in the introductory phrase of his *Nocturne no. 1 in C major*, the texture and articulate character are similar to that of Prokofiev's *Prelude in C major*, whom Berkey acknowledges with the subtitle, *Remembering Serge Prokofiev*.

In addition to being inspired by the technical shaping and flow of works by earlier composers, Berkey's nocturnes show that he was influenced by their harmonic language as well, as evidenced in his *Nocturne in F-sharp major: Homage to Robert Schumann* and the *Nocturne in F-sharp minor: Homage to Johann Sebastian Bach*. Harmonic progressions and musical textures in these two works clearly reflect those of the composers honored in the titles. Berkey creates spiritual links between himself and those identified in the titles by also incorporating elements of his own musical identity—especially with regard to expansive harmonic language, a tendency to function melodically through the use brief motives, pedaling techniques and structural variety.

Group B, Nocturne under special titles:

- Nocturne in A Minor: *Heartbeat* (no. 2)
- Nocturne in D Major: *Sunny Blues* (no. 5)
- Nocturne in E-flat Minor: *Mourning the Loss of A Friend* (no. 14)
- Nocturne in A-flat Major: *Liebeslied Ohne Worte* (no. 17)
- Nocturne in C Minor: *Music of the Night* (no. 20)
- Nocturne in B-flat Major: *Nobility* (no. 21)

The author created the second group of titles to include those that were descriptive or illustrative in nature. These six nocturnes were designed by Berkey to reflect his completely original titling. Within this group, Berkey has infused warm harmonies and inviting, listener-friendly soundscapes that draw audiences into their musical narratives.

Group C, Piano music titled the nocturne:

- Nocturne in E Minor (no. 4)
- Nocturne in A Major (no. 7)
- Nocturne in C-sharp Minor (no. 10)
- Nocturne in B Major (no. 11)
- Nocturne in D-flat Major (no. 15)
- Nocturne in B-flat Major (no. 16)
- Nocturne in G Minor (no. 22)
- Nocturne in F Major (no. 23)
- Nocturne in D Minor (no. 24)

These nine works were all given the generic title *Nocturne* and not illustrative of a specific title or stylistic homage. The implication is that they were composed solely from Berkey's own creative imagination and compositional approach. Four of them are inscribed to friends: *Nocturnes in E minor* (no. 4) — to Jerelen Bartone); *Nocturne in B major* (no. 11) — to KathyBundock Moore; *Nocturne in D-flat major* (no. 15) — to Marilynch; and *Nocturne in F major* (no. 23) — to Dordy Freeman and Lady Betsy. Even in this group of stylistically unattributed works, into two of them Berkey interjects a musical characteristic related to his musician friends to whom the works are dedicated. Nos. 11 and 23 feature characteristic sounds indicative of other instruments (harp and harpsichord respectively) as nods to the musicians to

whom the pieces were inscribed. Perhaps it should be noted at this juncture that Berkey's homages are to historic individuals that are no longer living; whereas the attributed works are dedicated to living individuals.

Jackson Berkey's three groups of nocturnes collectively represent a continuation of the traditional, characteristic nocturne genre on a spiritual level, while simultaneously serving as outlets for Berkey's own compositional identity and language within the world of new-age contemporary piano music in America. In the next chapter, one representative nocturne from each group will be analyzed in order to provide performers and listeners with a more in-depth understanding of Berkey's approaches to musical form, language, and expression.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF NOCTURNES IN F-SHARP MAJOR, C MINOR AND G MINOR

The *Nocturne in F-sharp Major: Homage to Robert Schumann* is an excellent representation of Berkey's unique compositional contributions to the nocturne genre. This nocturne belongs to the first grouping: Berkey's homages to composers and poets. He borrowed one melodic element from Schumann's *Romance* by transforming its rhythmic character and pitch content into his own new melody colored by his own harmonization and surrounding texture of fast broken chords played simultaneously by both hands. Berkey created in his own way a personal connection to the musical spirit of Robert Schumann. The Schumann quote is not easily detected by the average listener because it is surrounded by compositional techniques in keeping with Berkey's own musical language such as minimalistic elements and waves of repeated broken harmonies above or below a simple melody.

Table 4.1. Formal structure of Nocturne in F-sharp Major

Section	Measure	Tempo Designation
Introduction	1 to 12	<i>introduzione</i>
Part A	13 to 46	<i>a tempo espressive quasi una romanza</i>
Part B	47 to 118	<i>a tempo, "schumannesque"</i>
Coda	119 to 122	<i>subito espressivo e quasi recitativo & a tempo I</i>

The structural analysis of Berkey's *Nocturne in F-sharp major* (see Table 4.1) is derived largely from the composer's placement of tempo indications and changes in texture and harmonic content. The work can be described as binary in structure (AB) with an added twelve-measure introduction and a brief four-measure coda. Berkey establishes a slow-moving tempo for the introduction with a metronome indication of the quarter note equaling 54. Indications of *poco accel.* and *poco rit.* in mm. 11 and 12 respectively signal both the ending of the

introduction and the transition into Part A. Most of Berkey's piano nocturnes at some point delineate in the notation three or four distinct melodic and harmonic lines, and his works also feature frequent use of repetitive patterns of broken harmonies, perhaps stylistically indicative of his new-age roots as co-founder of Mannheim Steamroller. His F-sharp major nocturne is no exception. There are four voice lines in the opening four measures of the introduction, as shown in Example 4.1, where the performer plays a split bass line with the middle and top lines played by the right hand. The bass line is comprised entirely of F-sharp broken octaves, which repeat throughout the introduction, firmly establishing the F-sharp major tonality.

The image shows a musical score for the introduction of Jackson Berkey's Nocturne in F-sharp Major, measures 1-12. The score is in 3/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = ca. 54. It features a split bass line with the right hand playing the middle and top lines. The bass line consists of F-sharp broken octaves. The score includes dynamic markings (p), articulation (accents), and performance directions (poco accel., poco rit.).

Example 4.1. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in F-sharp Major, mm. 1-12.

Part A is comprised of three distinct segments, each of which begins with its own tempo and expressive indications. The first segment is marked *a tempo espressivo, quasi una romanza*, (beginning m. 13) which harkens back to Schumann's title, *Romance*. The broken chord accompaniment pattern is taken from Schumann. The second segment of Part A (see. Example 4.2) begins in measure 36 with the new tempo and expressive indication, *più lento ed espressivo*,

quasi cadenza, which continues with motivic material from the first segment but in a slower tempo and played with cadenza-like rubato. *Tempo I* indicates the beginning of the third segment, which is a brief, eight-measure return to the opening measures of the first segment. Each of the three segments closes with a *poco ritardando* indication serving as connective tissue between the sections while at the same time affording a gentle closure to each.

Example 4.2. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in F-sharp Major, mm. 36-38.

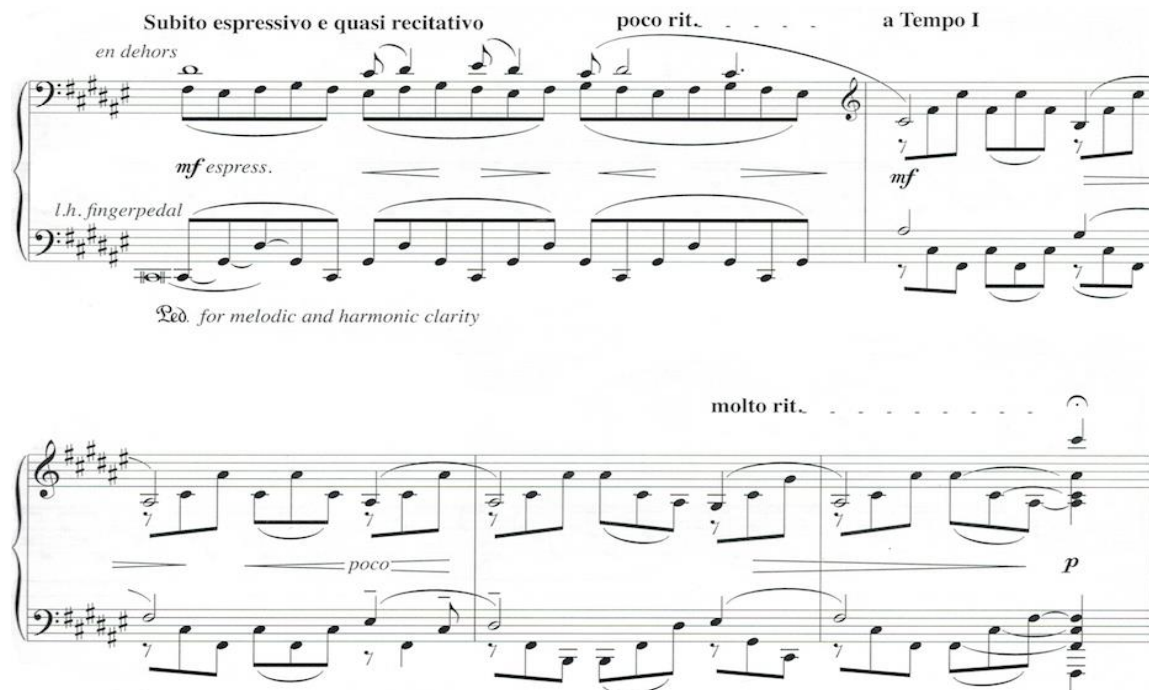
Part B (mm. 47-118) is more aligned with the motivic feature in Schumann’s *Romance* than Part A and is marked *A tempo*, “*Schumannesque*”. It opens with an alto-level melody line that is clearly tied to Schumann’s *Romance* by the use of a rhythmic pattern and melodic contour used by Schumann. Unlike Part A, Part B does not have a clear sectional design and is best described as through-composed. As with many of Berkey’s piano works, Part B consists of a number of short “sub-segments,” that create frequent changes in repetitive textures while

remaining in the F-Sharp Major tonality, all of which is in keeping with Berkey's ties to new-age styles and minimalist repetition. The transition from Part B into the five-measure coda (mm. 118-22) suggests a slowing effect (see Example 4.3).



Example 4.3. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in F-sharp Major, mm. 114-117.

The first two measures of the coda are marked *Subito espressivo e quasi recitativo* before a sudden *A tempo* sets the stage for the final four measures (see Example 4.4). This *A tempo* has the effect of rounding out the entire work by quoting exactly the opening four measures of Part A.



Example 4.4. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in F-sharp Major, mm. 118-122.

Based on Berkey's expressive instructions and sectional content that divide the work into the formal components listed above, it is clear that the overarching form of his *Nocturne in F-sharp major* is binary with an introduction and coda. This structural approach appears contrary to the ABA tradition in nocturne composition dating back to John Field. The structural elements that comprise this binary structure show that Berkey's formal concepts not only work musically, but they also imply a broadening view of "nocturnal" music within his world of new-age musical innovation. Perhaps his concept of a "nocturne" as seen through the eyes of a hallmark of new-age inventiveness will focus more on the mood and character of night music rather than the perpetuation of a characteristic concept in musical expression as seen from the perspective of one living in the musical world of 19th-century romanticism. Perhaps Berkey's nocturnes should be regarded as breathing life into a long-standing genre that has lost its relevance to composers creating music relevant to the musical world of the 21st century.

A brief overview of the various textures Berkey features in this nocturne will provide additional insights into his compositional process. For example, with few, relatively brief exceptions, Berkey distributes four-levels of sound through most of this nocturne, two of which generally occur on the treble clef line with the other two occurring on the bass clef line. Therefore, it may be no coincidence that Berkey chose to emulate a work by Schumann that features a similar four-voice texture. Two of the four flow in continuous triplet eighth-note patterns of broken harmonies played by both hands; whereas the other two, which also are played by the two hands, are more melodic in nature, flowing mostly as quarter notes and half notes moving in parallel rhythm. The minimalist character of repeated harmonic patterns centering on an unchanging tonal center is a characteristic texture that occurs throughout this nocturne.

The texture of a slower-moving melody within a broken harmony background occurs in Part B as well. However, in Part B the triplet groupings shift from a quarter-note length equaling the one eighth-note triplet to a quarter note equaling two sixteenth-note triplets, effectively doubling the rate of the broken chord accompaniment and infusing more energy to the overall texture. The two lines, again comprised mostly of quarter notes and half notes moving in parallel rhythm, quote exactly the melody taken from Schumann's *Romance*. In Example 4.5, the circled notes identify Schumann's melody within the context of Berkey's nocturne. The circled notes in Example 4.6 in turn identify Schumann's use of the same melody in its original context.

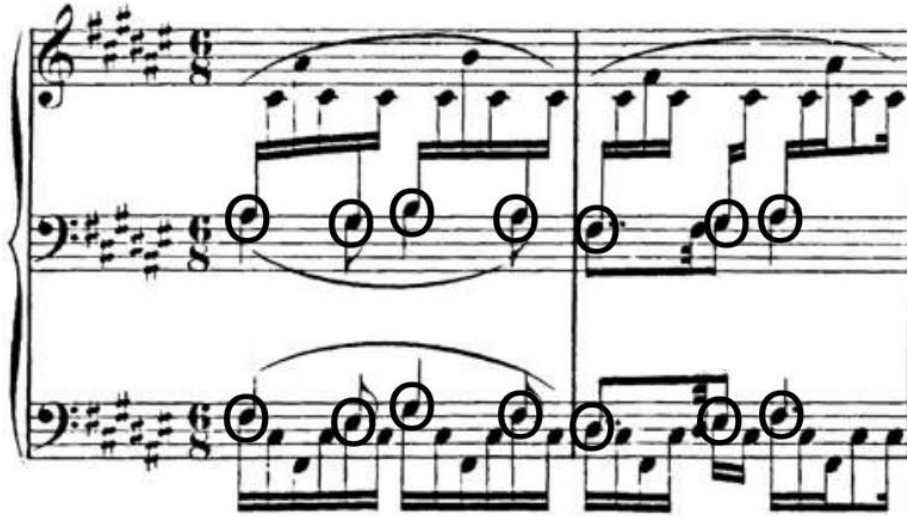
A tempo, "Schumannesque"

-- triplet ♩ = ♩ --

f la melodia espressivo

Red.

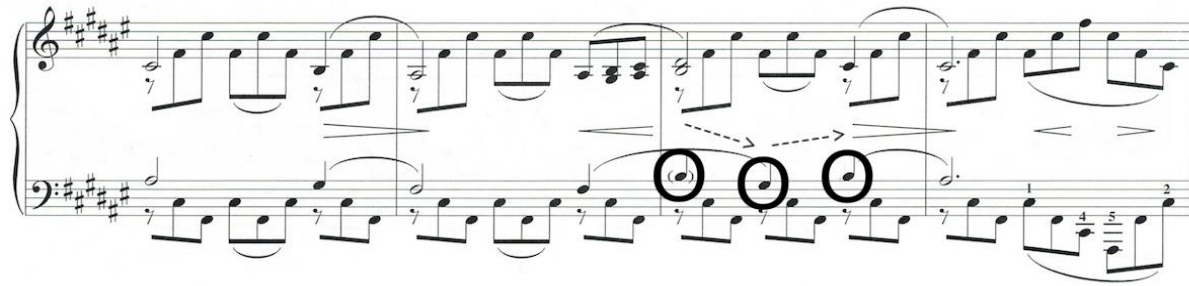
Example 4.5. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in F-sharp Major, mm. 47-50.



Example 4.6. Robert Schumann, Romance in F-sharp Major, mm. 1-2.

In the coda, Berkey provides one measure of harmonic transition into its last four measures, which, as pointed out previously, is an exact re-statement of the opening bars of Part A. This measure of harmonic transition serves as an uncommon instance in which Berkey straying from F-sharp major, the work's primary tonality. Berkey strays harmonically away from the F-sharp harmonic focus of the work with a broken V chord in the slower-moving measure leading into the final four measures.

The parallel flow of two lines mostly moving in quarter-note and half-note lengths is a compositional feature in Schumann's Romance borrowed by Berkey for use in this nocturne. Schumann's dual melodic line moves in parallel thirds and in a largely diatonic fashion. His *Romance* opens with a stable first phrase containing a duet melody within an eight-measure, symmetrical, modulating, parallel period that is repeated. Berkey's duet follows Schumann's lead, but rather than cross voices in the middle part, he employs voice leading in the left hand when the right hand does not have the melodic line, as illustrated by the circled notes in example 4.7.



Example 4.7. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in F-sharp Major, mm 13-16.

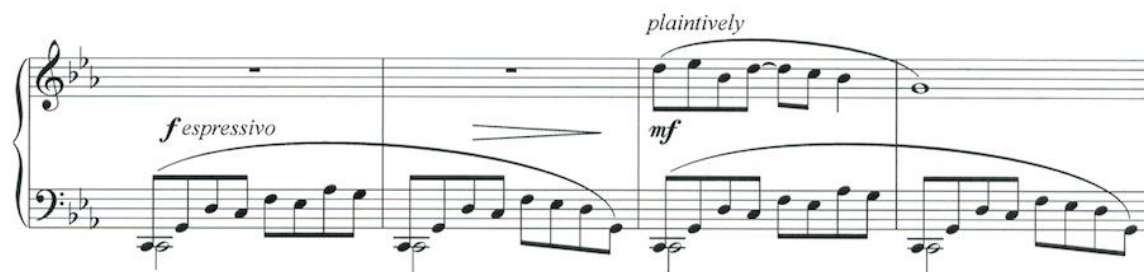
The F-sharp major nocturne follows the basic three-chord harmonic progression involving only the I, IV and V chords, which in turn allows audiences to easily access and absorb his music. The opening nine measures of the introduction is comprised of a I-IV-I-IV-V-I harmonic progression in F-sharp major. Berkey does not stray from the key of F-sharp major throughout the work. The first segment of Part A follows a repeated harmonic pattern of I-IV-V-I. The harmonic flow of second segment of Part A uses the same three basic chords, but lingers on alternating IV and V chords for up to four measures at a time. In Part B, the F-sharp tonality is celebrated by three more basic progressions of harmonies: I-IV-I, I-V-I and I-IV-V-I. These progressions are interspersed between repetitions the F-sharp major chord such as in mm. 88-97., in effect, hammering home the key of the work. The harmonic progression of the coda is I-IV-V-I. Berkey employs on a few changes in voicings and inversions throughout the work, which when present can add variety to the sound of the repeated harmonies. Example 4.8 shows all the changes Berkey utilizes in this nocturne.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in F-sharp Major. The top staff is labeled 'I' and 'F#', the middle staff is labeled 'IV' and 'B', and the bottom staff is labeled 'V' and 'C#'. The bottom staff also includes 'V9' and 'V7' labels under the second and third measures respectively. The music consists of ascending and descending eighth-note patterns.

Example 4.8. Nocturne in F-sharp Major, tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant chords played by both hands.

Berkey’s pedal indications offer unique insights into his piano sound. In the F-sharp major nocturne, there are two types of pedal instructions that may be unique among standard pedal indications in published piano music. First, throughout Part A, Berkey indicates “pedaling for clarity” without suggesting either when to engage the damper pedal or when to release it. Berkey’s pedal indications are extensive, but only regarding the use of the damper pedal. The implication is that the damper pedal should be in constant use, but how to use it is solely dependent on the musical sensibilities of the performer. Second, Berkey indicates a half pedal in Part B, which must be a rare occurrence in published music. Without a doubt, the prevalence of multiple damper pedal techniques is paramount to the sonic landscape provided by this nocturne. Berkey employs a continually changing spectrum of dynamics ranging from *p* to *fffz*. that are intended to arouse audience responses while also providing a worthy challenge for the performing pianist.

Nocturne in C minor “*Music of the Night*” falls into the second nocturne group, all of which have descriptive subtitles. Almeda Berkey, wife of the composer, eloquently speculates about this nocturne: “Although the writing order of the nocturnes was not dictated by the circle of fifths, the finality of C minor gently closes this door of exported beauty, begging the question: Where will the Muse now lead?” This message suggests that the *Nocturne in C Minor* is the last tonal link in Berkey’s cycle of nocturnes. The *Nocturne in C Minor* provides the listener with an amalgamation of historic musical styles from three eras: neo-romanticism, impressionism and minimalism. Stylistic influences include the works of Frederic Chopin, Claude Debussy, and Phillip Glass (b. 1937). For instance, the left-hand accompaniment echoes arpeggiated left-hand patterns common to Chopin’s nocturnes (see Example 4.9) even to the point of emulating Chopin’s *appoggiatura*-like non-harmonic tones occurring on beats two, three, and four.



Example 4.9. Nocturne in C Minor, mm. 1-4, in the Chopin’s left hand accompaniment style.

In four of the measures of the nocturne Berkey explores the color of whole-tone clusters reminiscent of French musical impressionism and the music of Claude Debussy. The harmonic context of Part B as expressed by continuous repetitions of two alternating chord patterns appears to be rooted in the minimalism of Philip Glass. Berkey draws upon the classical nocturne structure (ABA) perpetuated by John Field and Frederic Chopin for less than half of his nocturnes. The structural balance inherent to standard ABA structure is altered to a certain extent in the C minor nocturne by the composer.

Its structure is a modified version of ternary form: A B A' + coda. Its Part A extends from mm. 1-38, Part B from mm. 39-61, and Part A' from mm. 62-83, which is followed by a brief coda in mm. 84-86. Berkey composed a second segment to Part A that contains a contrasting melody (mm. 25-38) which does not return in Part A'. This is a structural departure from the nocturne's traditional ABA form. The melodic material in the second segment of A' (mm. 73-83) is in fact an expansion of Part A's opening melody above an alternate harmonic context and a new repeated left-hand motive.

The second segment of Part A features a subtle homage to Chopin's E minor piano concerto by quoting a melody from the concerto's second movement, which Berkey re-harmonizes in mm. 25-33, as shown in example 4.10. The circled notes identify the placement of melody by Berkey. Example 4.11 shows Chopin's setting of the melody in his E minor piano concerto.

rubato

p sotto voce e calmo

use long pedals

subito più

rall. - - - movendo ad libitum Chopin's concerto cadenza style

f marcato

Ped. flutter Ped.

Example 4.10. Nocturne in C Minor, mm. 25-33.

Chopin's main melody in his piano concerto No. 1

Ped.

Example 4.11. Chopin, Piano Concerto No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 11.

Part A concludes with a smooth, accelerating two-measure transition (mm. 35-38) to Part B. Berkey quickens the tempo and changes the texture and harmonic context with continuous alternating block harmonies as coloristic background to a heavily accented melody set in whole notes and dotted whole notes. An unusual structural event concludes Part B with Berkey's inclusion of a technically challenging and cadenza-like passage of free-flowing sequential patterns of four against six (marked *Subito movendo, quasi Cadenza*) that gradually slow to the *a tempo* beginning of Part A'. (see Example 4.12).

Example 4.12. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in C Minor, mm 58-59.

Berkey stated to the author that influences of Chopin and Debussy appear in this nocturne. A melodic/harmonic texture common to Chopin's compositions appears in Part A (mm. 1-6) and Part A' (mm. 62-71) of Berkey's nocturne, where a lyrical melody is played by the right hand over melodic-like broken harmonies in the left hand. For example, Chopin's *Nocturne in E minor op. 72, no. 1*, and his *Berceuse, op. 57* feature similar left-hand harmonic support for the lyrical right-hand melodies. Example 4.13 compares the left-hand accompaniment styles of Chopin and Berkey. Berkey's left hand accompaniment follows

directional contours strikingly similar to the Chopin example. Moreover, the pitch range of Berkey's left-hand patterns extend from C to A, which is the sixth pitch above the root of C minor, matches Chopin's pitch range of E to C--the sixth pitch above the root of E minor. The pedaled sound of both result in the same harmonic voicing and coloring.



Chopin op.72, no.1, left hand



Example 4.13. Comparison of Nocturne in C Minor, mm. 1-4, left hand accompaniment style with Chopin's Nocturne in E Minor, Op. 71. No. 1, mm. 1-4

Two of the three musical textures found in the *Nocturne in C minor* appear to be derived from piano works by Claude Debussy. In part B (mm. 39-57), Berkey employs harmonic parallelism, in which both hands execute a series of alternating parallel chords with the same intervallic structure, as shown in example 4.14.

6/4 **Più mosso** {♩ = ca. 96}

p vellutato e legato

la melodia con forza

(keep Ped.) Ped. and hold

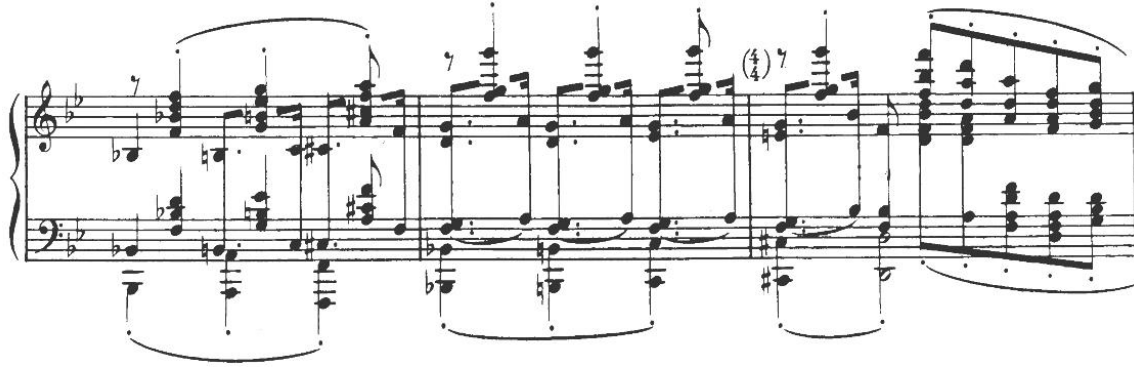
poco rilassare

f

(keep Ped.)

Example 4.14. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in C Minor, mm. 38-43.

The second texture similarity to music of Debussy is found in *La cathédrale engloutie* (*Preludes*, Book I). This famous prelude embodies three-tiered voicing, with pedaled bass notes beneath parallel harmonies sounded by both hands (Example 4.15). Berkey employs a similar three-tiered texture as shown in example 4.16. As pointed out earlier, Berkey's use of whole-tones clusters is another indication of Debussy's influence.



Example 4.15. Claude Debussy, Prelude “La cathédrale engloutie,” mm.10-12

Example 4.16. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in C Minor, mm. 74-76.

On the surface, Berkey’s harmonic landscape in the *Nocturne in C minor* upholds the expectation that his compositions will reflect traditional Western harmonic language. However, this nocturne also serves to exemplify Berkey’s lush harmonies by his signature use of repeated or sequential harmonic patterns, which most often include changing non-harmonic notes that add coloristic complexity to his new-age treatment of the I-IV-V-I progression. The only modulation is a move from C minor to E-flat major, the tonal center of Part B, only to return to a reestablished C minor tonality at the beginning of Part A’. The first suggestion of impending modulation occurs mid-way through Part A in m. 24 with the introduction of a sustained A-flat in the pedal point-like bass line, that gradually moves to B-flat and then E-flat--the basic IV-V-I

progression of E-flat major. A brief, similarly positioned move to E-flat occurs in Part A', but returns to C Minor from m. 77 to the end. Sudden harmonic changes occur in the final three measures (mm. 84-86) that are both unusual and striking. (Example 4.17) Berkey clouds the issue of C minor in m. 83 by inserting a B major chord moving to a D minor chord with an added ninth, then back to B major and finally a to second inversion G minor to root position minor to end the work.

The image shows a musical score for three measures of a nocturne. The time signature is 3/4. Above the first measure, there is a tempo marking 'morendo al fine' with a dashed line extending to the right. The music is marked with a forte 'f' dynamic. The bass line has three 'Ped.' (pedaling) markings under the first three measures. The key signature is C minor, indicated by two flats. The score shows a complex harmonic progression in the final three measures, including a B major chord, a D minor chord with an added ninth, and a second inversion G minor chord.

Example 4.17. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in C Minor, mm. 84-86.

The overarching tonal effect of the *Nocturne in C Minor* is created through Berkey's use of simplistic, prolonged harmonic progressions, an expressive feature common to all 24 nocturnes. These slow-moving harmonies foster impressions of extension and patience, as though long breaths are being drawn and released through the music. Berkey's pedaling instructions in the C minor nocturne largely mirror those in his F-sharp major nocturne including the use of finger pedaling. The C minor nocturne begins with the unique tempo indication, "Music of the Night," which also serves as the title of the work. This is the only instance in which Berkey uses an English phrase to describe the tempo of one of his nocturnes. Its purpose is to provide only abstract interpretive guidance so that a performer will rely more on his/her expressive instincts and interpretive imagination.

Among the third group of Berkey's nocturnes simply titled *Nocturne*, the *Nocturne in G minor* can be set apart stylistically from the others by its technical difficulty it on the performer—very rapid, hand-crossing figurations in which the melody consisting of only the peak notes note in waves of broken harmonies. Berkey indicates that the melody should be played with “free hands,” referring to the choreographic motion of hands crossing on the piano (see Example 4.18).

The image shows a musical score for Jackson Berkey's *Nocturne in G Minor*, measures 3-5. The score is in G minor (one flat) and 6/4 time. It features a complex, rapid melody with hand-crossing figures. The right hand is marked "free hands" and "mf en dehors", while the left hand is marked "mp". The score includes fingering numbers (6, 7) and dynamic markings like "m.s." and "keep Ped.". A section starting at measure 5 is marked "play with both hands".

Example 4.18. Jackson Berkey, *Nocturne in G Minor*, mm. 3-5.

Berkey's nocturnes demonstrate his penchant for stringing together short rhythmic or melodic motives that together often serve as structural indicators of the works overall structure. The G minor Nocturne is an excellent example of this compositional trait. Unlike the two structures just examined, the G minor is structurally through composed. Its organic structure is derived from Berkey fitting together four segments of varying length each of which appears only once in the work. Each develops its own motivic texture either sequentially or in repetitive fashion.

In Part A of this nocturne (mm. 1-39), G minor is firmly established at the work's tonal center. The principal motive in this segment is a repeated five-note pattern ascending diatonically from F to C. The motive consists of the highest pitch in each wave-like broken G minor harmony flowing in ligatured groupings of six or seven sixteenth notes. (See Example 4.19)

Part B (mm. 40-52) takes place in B-flat major, and the ascending and descending harmonic flow slows from sixteenth notes to eighth notes that now outline a first inversion B-flat chord played according to three slightly varied rhythmic schemes as shown in example 4.19. In new-age minimalist fashion, the example also shows how the repetitious B-flat chord is colored by the addition of non-harmonic notes.

Example 4.19. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in G Minor, mm. 40-44.

Another four-measure phrase as shown in Example 4.20 contains ascending perfect fifths added above the repeated B-flat pattern (mm. 48-51) at intervals that suggest a non-harmonic C major chord in root position.

motive from main melody

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with a highlighted section of four measures. This section contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Above this sequence are fingering numbers: 1, 2, 3, 2, 1. The left hand (bass clef) plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamic markings include *p* and *poco cresc. e dim. colla melodia*.

Example 4.20. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in G Minor, mm. 48-51.

The musical texture of wave-like broken harmonies in Part A returns for the first four measures of a very brief Part C (mm. 53-59) set initially in E-flat minor. These four measures are followed by two measures of new sixteenth note patterns that Berkey labels “Cadenza” (see Example 4.21) The two measures of Cadenza accelerate in tempo into the very rapid paced Part D labeled *Piu mosso e strettamente* (mm. 60-67) that concludes the work.

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, specifically a section labeled "Cadenza". The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line with sixteenth-note patterns, including slurs and accents. The left hand (bass clef) plays a complex accompaniment with sixteenth-note patterns and chords. Dynamic markings include *cresc.* and *p*. The score is in E-flat minor.

Example 4.21. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in G Minor, mm. 58-61.

The melodic content of Part C is positioned and performed in similar fashion to Part A but as a transformed group of extended pitches that appear to serve only as non-harmonic coloration of the broken E-flat minor harmony: in the third segment, amidst the busy left-hand sixteenth notes, the main melody is played by both hands in octaves, as depicted by Example 4.22.

Example 4.22. Jackson Berkey, Nocturne in G Minor, mm. 53-56.

On page 174 of the complete edition of his 24 nocturnes, Berkey identifies the hand positioning of what he calls the six fundamental harmonic underpinnings or home positions of the broken harmonies used in the G minor nocturne. (Example 4.23) The intention of these “positions” apparently is not to identify specific harmonies or chord types, but to show performers the hand positioning of broken patterns that he has formulated as an empathetic performer as well as composer. They also can imply the presence of a specific tonality and chords within that tonality.

Another compositional decision that distinguishes Berkey's nocturnes is the pedaling technique, which is extensive, often employing lengthy pedals, and is finely detailed to offer the pianist a thorough understanding of the technique. Berkey informed the author that his pedaling marks are significant instructional signs; indeed, he is specific enough to employ clarifying finger-pedal marks, which most composers do not indicate in their scores.

Berkey's innovation has given the genre license to blossom into a freer musical form. In the F-sharp major and C minor nocturnes, Berkey employs compound music form interspersed with episodic variations written into each main section of the overall structure. These formal liberties provide examples for other composers who wish to explore the nocturne genre while executing unique musical ideas.

Finally, Berkey's harmonization actually treads the line between simple, traditional Western harmonies and today's non-traditional uses of harmonies. He relies upon functional harmony and whole-tone chordal planing in the same piece; utilizes parallel perfect intervals in addition to traditional triads; and writes leading-tone modulations without common tones, affording his seemingly straightforward works a sense of mysticism.

Exploring Berkey's 20th-century exceptions to the harmonic language basic to 19th-century nocturnes dominating language harmonic together with a sense of his compositional sources of inspiration should aid pianists who intend to perform these nocturnes with requisite attention to detail and accuracy of style. It is the author's hope that the theoretical, structural, and expressive analyses together with historical context covered in this document will serve pianists who wish to delve into the delightful cycle of nocturnes by Jackson Berkey.

CHAPTER 5. PEDALING, DYNAMICS AND TEMPO

Pianists who perform these three nocturnes are expected to follow the composer's specific pedaling directions in the score. Berkey indicates pedaling directions in all twenty-four nocturnes. In his F-sharp major nocturne he writes directions for five different uses of the damper pedal: segments of extended pedal engagement without regard to harmonic changes; change to 1/2 pedal during extended pedal engagements; change to 1/4 pedal during extended pedal engagements; finger pedaling; and pedaling for melodic and harmonic clarity.

The C minor nocturne contains four damper pedal directions: segments of extended pedal duration without regard to harmonic changes; finger pedal; pedal *quasi primo* (suggesting that be the same as done earlier in a similar passage); and flutter pedaling. The flutter pedaling direction in m. 33 creates a gradual clearing of the sound of the full pedal during the transition from Part A to Part B.

In the G minor nocturne, the pianist is given only two pedaling directions. one of which is presented four different ways. For long pedals without regard to harmonic or melodic changes he indicates: pedal and hold, pedal *al fine*, keep pedal, and long unbroken lines placed below the bass clef. The second direction (m. 41) is simply to engage the sostenuto pedal in order to extend two pitches through to m. 52.

Berkey indicated to the author that he composed these nocturnes ideally for performance on a Steinway concert grand. Therefore, one can surmise that he feels the damper and sostenuto pedal effects generated by a nine-foot Steinway will best represent the variety of colors, textures, and dynamic ranges he expects his nocturnes will produce, especially in large performance spaces. This further suggests that, comparatively speaking, these same colors, textures, and dynamic ranges cannot be achieved at the concert grand level from performances on studio

upright pianos with inherently thinner sound. These three nocturnes call for a wide range of dynamic levels from *ppp* to *fff*. Figure 5.1 provides a visual representation of the range and variety of Berkey’s dynamic indications in these three nocturnes together with a table indicating the combined number of times times each dynamic level occurs.

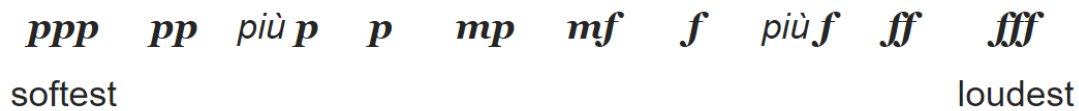


Figure 5.1. Dynamic levels in the three piano nocturnes.

The F-sharp major nocturne contains the widest variety of dynamic indications of the three. While it contains instances of dynamic marks ranging from *ppp* to *ff* the *mf* indication appears the most often. The Nocturne in C Minor contains a slightly narrower dynamic spectrum, ranging from *pp* to *ff* with *f* appearing the most often. Of the three, the C minor nocturne maintains levels of *f* and above to the greatest extent. In other words, it is the loudest of the three. The Nocturne in G Minor offers the biggest dynamic challenge to the performer, in that this nocturne is the only one of the three that contains both the entire range and the entire number of dynamics levels shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Berkey's three nocturnes entire range and the entire number of dynamics levels

mark Dynamic	ppp	pp	piu p	p	mp	mf	f	piu f	ff	fff
Nocturne in F-sharp Major	1	1	0	6	6	8	8	6	3	0
Nocturne in C Minor	0	1	0	4	1	4	13	2	2	0
Nocturne in G Minor	1	4		6	5	5	5	1	2	1

Small crescendo and diminuendo signs occur in all three nocturnes that may shape repeated patterns or motives either with crescendo-diminuendo effects in minimalistic fashion, or as single signs calling for brief, one-way dynamic inflections. None of Berkey's directions for gradual dynamic change entail more than one or two full measures of music, but most often call for gradual dynamic change within single measures.

A performer's decisions regarding tempo are clearly answered in the score by Berkey's consistent inclusions of specific metronome settings. He also introduces in his nocturnes relatively frequent changes in tempo to a greater extent than did Chopin and often supplemented by terms indicating expressive character. The frequency and placement of his tempo are indicative of structural inconsistency among the 24 nocturnes as demonstrated by the three nocturnes in question. As pointed out earlier, their structures range from binary (*Nocturne in F-sharp major*) to ternary (*Nocturne in C minor*) to through composed (*Nocturne in G minor*). In the F-sharp major nocturne, Berkey includes four principal tempo instructions: *Introduzione* (m.

1); *A tempo espressivo, quasi una romanza* (m. 13); *Piu lento ed espressivo, quasi cadenza* (m. 36); *A tempo*, “Schumannesque” triplet ♩ = ♩ (m. 47). The first two tempos comprise Part A and the last two Part B.

In the *Nocturne in C minor*, also contains four principal tempo indications: *Music of the Night*, (m. 1, Part A), which includes a cadenza-like segment (*Movendo ad libitum*, m. 32); *Piu Mosso* (m. 39, Part B) which also includes a cadenza-like segment (*Subito movendo, quasi cadenza*, m. 58); *Tempo I* (m. 63, Part A’) which includes the Coda beginning with *Morendo al fine*, m. 84).

The *Nocturne in G minor* contains the following four principal tempo indications: *Agitato ma flebile* (m. 1, Part A); *A tempo* (m. 40, Part B which includes a segment labeled, *Cadenza*, m. 58); *Piu mosso e stettamente* (m. 60, Part C). Each of the three nocturnes contains at least one cadenza-like segment, which is a structurally novel implementation by Berkey within in the nocturne genre. By calling most of these *cadenzas*, Berkey seems to imply that their improvisatory character may signal to the performer the freedom to include individual applications of tempo modifications or *rubato* as their musical imagination directs.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

Simply by titling these works, *Nocturne*, Berkey as a 21st-century composer is giving at least tacit consideration to the foundational characteristics of the nocturne genre dating back to the early 19th century. As shown in chapter three, his nocturnes can reflect the texture, structure, or harmonic functions of past composers of nocturnes such as John Field and Frederic Chopin. However, at the same time Berkey has developed and incorporated new stylistic and structural elements that serve only to enhance and invigorate the genre within the modern musical contexts of the 21st century

For example, Berkey's innovative approaches to structure not only work musically, but also imply a broadening view of "nocturnal" music within his world of new age musical innovation. Perhaps the concept of a "nocturne" as seen through the eyes of a hallmark figure of new-age inventiveness focuses more on the mood and character of night music than the perpetuation of a characteristic concept in musical expression from the perspective of one living in the pre-twentieth century musical world of 19th-century romanticism.

It is not possible for modern composers such as Jackson Berkey to see romantic innovation in music from the standpoint of a composer such as Chopin, who composed without the stylistic perspectives gained from hearing the music of future composers such as Brahms, Dvorak, Wagner, and Debussy. Perhaps Berkey's nocturnes should be regarded as breathing new life into a long-standing genre that perhaps has lost its relevance to composers creating music within the variety of artistic viewpoints that exist today. After exploring these innovative works, musicians may better understand and accept the inevitability of the waning relevance that centuries old compositional genres such as the nocturne have to today's music consumers and composers.

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