Stravinsky's 'Musick to heare': a study in union and singleness

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Stravinsky's 'Musick to heare': A Study in Union and Singleness

Three Songs from William Shakespeare (1953) is one of the first works in which Igor Stravinsky explored serial composition. However, he complied neither with Schönberg's or Webern's practice of dodecaphony, nor with the ways of the serial composers of his time. He rather engaged in a multiply hybrid approach, involving both diatonic and chromatic pitch collections as well as declamatory, modal, tonal and serial treatments of them. Moreover he practiced cross-over composition: he dealt with a chromatic row in a modal way and a diatonic row in an atonal way. This article offers an analysis of this multiple hybridity in relation to 'Musick to heare', the first of the *Shakespeare Songs*, and proceeds to assess the musical structures and procedures in connection with the polarity in the text between singleness and union/concord. It is suggested that Stravinsky conceived of 'union' as essentially multiple.

Introduction

'Musick to heare', the first of *Three Songs from William Shakespeare* (1953), reflects Stravinsky's interests of the time: serial music, the 'new' Medieval and Renaissance music practices, and English literature. It takes as its text Shakespeare's Sonnet 8, reputed to be addressed to the 'Fair Youth' (Figure 1). The sonnet is about concord in music, and, by means of music as a metaphor, about union in human relationships. Conversely, human relationships are used as a metaphor for multi-part music. Just as a melodic line becomes music only when attuned to other such lines, so man can only be human when playing 'the part that thou should'st beare', by uniting lovingly with others. The Fair Youth is admonished to engage in a relationship of love, specifically marriage and family life, and not to remain single. The theme of the text is the polarity between 'singleness' and 'oneness'.

This analysis explores how Stravinsky deals with this textual content, taking his interests at that time into account. A connection will be proposed between, on the one hand, the issue of concord above singleness, and, on the other hand, the multiple hybridization of modal, tonal and atonal methods of composition in relation to both diatonic and chromatic pitch collections in preference to serial purism.[1]

Formal Layout of the Composition

In the formal layout, Stravinsky follows a division of the sonnet into three quatrains and a couplet, and adds an instrumental prelude, arriving at a composition in five sections (Figure 2). In this way he continues his practice of sectional composition, with a strong interconnection between sections by means of shared melodic and harmonic patterns as well as an ongoing pitch-timbre process and a final accumulation (superposition of layers).

The music is written for four parts. However, since the instruments as a group usually present only one melodic statement at a time, or divide it between them, the composition is largely two-part, including the Introduction, which employs two instrumental lines but

1 For a detailed analysis of this composition, as well as a history of its reception in analytic literature, see David Carson Berry, 'The Roles of Invariance and Analogy in the Linear Design of Stravinsky's "Musick to Heare"', *Gamut* 1/1 (2008), 1-57.

no vocal part. By combining the instrumental Introduction with the vocal line, the music finishes three-part in the Couplet, with some four-part incidents involving unison and octave relationships.

Figure 1
'Musick to heare' by William Shakespeare as used by Igor Stravinsky.

Musick to heare, why hear'st thou musick sadly,
Sweets with sweets warre not, joy delights in joy:
Why lov'st thou that which thou receav'st not gladly
Or else receav'st with pleasure thine annoy?

If the true concord of well tuned sounds,
By Unions married do offend thine eare,
They do but sweetly chide thee who confounds
In singlenesse the part that thou should'st beare:

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sier, and child, and happy mother,
Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing:

Whose speechless song being many seeming one,
Sings this for thee thou single wilt prove none.

Figure 2
Formal layout of 'Musick to heare', *Three Songs from William Shakespeare*, Igor Stravinsky.

Instrumental introduction	m. 1-8
Quatrain 1	m. 9-21
Quatrain 2	m. 22-34
Quatrain 3	m. 35-43
Couplet (distichon)	m. 44-50

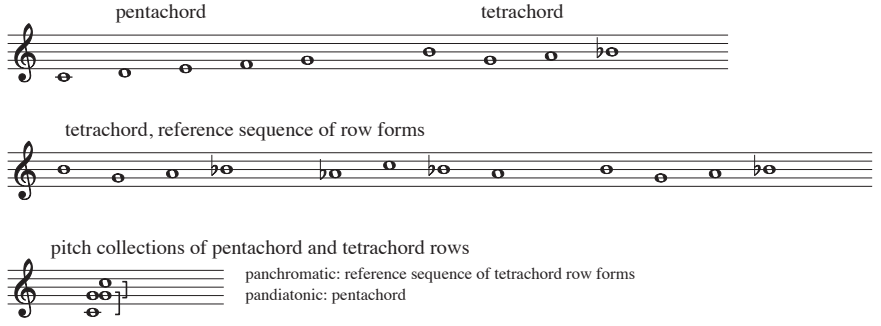
Serial Structures and Procedures

The first of the Shakespeare songs uses a rich array of musical settings. It draws on declamatory, modal, tonal and serial music traditions. The composition employs two rows (Figure 3), one diatonic and the other chromaticizing, that is, 'becoming' chromatic, with each row being treated differently, each in a multiply hybrid way.

1. A diatonic pentachord, with fixed pitches throughout, stepwise rising and falling between *C* and *G* (*C-D-E-F-G/G-F-E-D-C*).
2. A chromaticizing tetrachord, ordered according to a pitch process of interval diminution: a major third, followed, in the opposite direction, by a major second and a minor second, as in the prime form *B-G-A-B*♭. Its inversion may be called diatonicizing, resulting as it does from interval augmentation.

Both rows manifest Stravinsky's predilection for elementary forms. Moreover, the second row characteristically implies major and minor thirds. This had been a favourite feature in Stravinsky's work for decades, and it is also found in his other works of the period, e.g., *Cantata* ([1951-52], *E-C-D-E-F-E*♭*-D-E-C-D-B*), *In memoriam Dylan Thomas* ([1954], *E-E*♭*-C-C*♯*-D*) and *Agon* ([1953-54, 1956-57], *C-C*♯*-E-E*♭*-D-F-G*♭*-A-A*♭*-B-B*♭*-G*).

Figure 3
The two rows employed in 'Musick to heare', *Three Songs from William Shakespeare*, Igor Stravinsky.



This tetrachord row may be viewed as a musical motto derived from the meaning of the sonnet's first line, 'Musick to heare, why hear'st thou musick' (major third *B-G*, plus *A*) 'sadly' (minor second *A-B♭*, with the implication of changing the previous major third into a minor one).

In the combination of these two rows, Stravinsky continues his life-long exploration of relationships between the diatonic and the chromatic that had been evident since the *Firebird*, if not earlier. In the present composition it is not only a matter of interval material, but also of its treatment. Moreover, the first Shakespeare song emphasizes the continuity in Stravinsky's work, based as it is on a dual form of its basic interval patterns (here the two rows), which took the form of *complexes sonores* in his early ballets.

The two rows are complementary in several ways during their initial statements in the instrumental Introduction. The pentachord, in the clarinet and viola, presents the compass of the fifth *C-G*, pandiatonically, while the chromaticizing tetrachord, in the flute, employs the pitch compass from *G* upwards to *B* (all read as adjacent pitches). The Introduction states this tetrachord three times as P0, I9 and again P0. In this manner, the fourth *G-C* is filled in panchromatically (*B-G-A-B♭* + *A♭-C-B♭-A* + *B-G-A-B♭*). Together, the pentachord and the tetrachord sequence cover one octave, the former with diatonic completeness, the latter with chromatic completeness. The two rows are involved in a play of tension and resolution: the tension between the tetrachord's initial pitch *B* and the pentachord's initial *C*, already presented in the very first bar, becomes a characteristic feature of the composition as a whole. The *B-C* tension is resolved for the first time during the Introduction, when the first tetrachord sequence P0-I9-P0, opening with *B*, is followed by its inversion I0-P3-I0, ending with *C*.

The interval of the fifth (provided by the pentachord row), taken harmonically, is the marker of closure in all the sections of the composition. As a final harmonic interval, the fifth is used in this way (Figure 4).

Figure 4
The harmonic interval of the fifth as closure.

Introduction	*C-G*
Quatrain 1	*C-G*
Quatrain 2	*B-F♯*
Quatrain 3	*G-D*
Couplet 4	*C-G*

When the harmonic fifth occurs as closure for the first time, it is emphatically stated as an exceptional sonority by the viola: with harmonics. It resembles the flute in sound, and actually emphasizes the final pitch of the melodic line of that instrument (m. 8). In fact, the fifth belongs to the domain of both the diatonic pentachord and the chromaticizing tetrachord, thus connecting the two 'spheres'. By giving the fifth this conspicuous role, Stravinsky continues his interest in the Janus-character of that interval between the diatonic and the chromatic. In both domains it plays an elementary role, albeit a very different one: as the first interval in the harmonic series balancing consonance and dissonance, and as the basic link in the circle of fifths. In the present composition, both aspects are present: the concluding consonance of the fifth, as well as the chromatic tension between two different pitch positions, *C*-*G* at the end of the Introduction, Quatrain 1 and the end of the piece as a whole; and *B*-*F*♯ concluding Quatrain 2.

Use of Rows in the Actual Composition

In the actual composition, the tetrachord and pentachord are contrasted, both in their treatment and in their application. The diatonic row, the pentachord, is not transposed. There is no chromatic approach to this row. It is given in the two possible statements within the applied scale, those of the P/RI and R/I forms, alternating with each other. Moreover, its occurrence is confined to the Introduction and the final Couplet. At the same time, as was shown above, the pentachord's presence is nevertheless to be experienced throughout the composition, thanks to the role of its outer pitches *C*-*G* as the harmonic interval of a fifth and its transpositions, which are used to conclude sections.

The treatment of the tetrachord row varies according to the level of composition.

a. On the micro-level it is approached in a chromatic serial way, subjected to operations of transposition and (predominantly) inversion. For example, in the Introduction the compass of the major third of the P0 form is transposed up a minor second into I9.
b. On the meso-level the tetrachord is handled in a quasi-tonal way: in the Introduction, the original form P0 is reiterated after P0 and I9, so as to form a closed sequence. Pattern recapitulation, after stating an intervening alternative form, is a very common way to open a modal or tonal composition. P0-I9-P0 will reoccur as the most frequent sequence, and will therefore be called the reference sequence, in the same manner as when the term reference tone is used in the analysis of modal and tonal music. The hybrid treatment of the chromaticizing tetrachord in both serial and quasi-tonal ways is manifest in the fact that three times four tetrachord elements yields twelve pitches; however, these pitches do not come in the form of a panchromatic twelve-tone row, but are shaped as a reference sequence with reiteration of pitches and pitch groups. After the statement of P0-I9-P0 in the Introduction, an inverted form of that reference sequence is given, transposed in such a way that the pitch compass is a minor third higher than the original prime form: I0-P3-I0. The result is again a closed form, involving reiteration (*B*-*E*♭-*D*♭-*C* + *D*-*B*♭-*C*-*D*♭ + *B*-*E*♭-*D*♭-*C*). We can call this the inverted reference sequence. There is no immediate pivot pitch between row statements and their sequences P-I-P and I-P-I, in other words these statements are disjunct. At the same time, *B* functions as the most frequent initial pitch (four out of six times in the reference sequence and its inversion). It plays, and will play in the whole movement, the role of main reference tone.[2] With this ordering of row forms in relation to a reference tone rather than by conjunction, another modal/tonal concept is introduced in the composition.

2 On 'centricity' and 'tonal focus', see also Joseph N. Straus, *Stravinsky's Late Music*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 38, and passim respectively.

In the sequencing of row forms, apart from the modal/tonal orientation, there is also an aspect that derives from the chromatic serial tradition. The inter-row interval within the reference sequence and within its inversion is the major second; the minor second plays a role as the inter-sequence interval, and functions as the transposition interval between the row compasses within each sequence; and the major third is the transposition interval between the compasses of the final, respectively initial (that is, adjacent) row forms of these sequences. The very three intervals of which the tetrachord itself is composed thus regulate the relationships within and between the basic sequences of three tetrachord rows. In his usual consistent way of interval treatment, Stravinsky quite unexpectedly complies to Schönberg's method to work with 'nur aufeinander bezogene Töne' – 'tones related only to one another'.[3] This sequencing of rows exclusively in P and I forms will continue for the rest of the instrumental parts (with the exception of one R and RI form), as well as the vocal part (with one R form as an exception at the end).

c. On the macro-level we find chromatic treatment of the tetrachord. It is positioned on all chromatic pitches at least once. At the same time, however, we again encounter a modal/tonal approach expressed in multiple ways. There is no common, immediately pivotal pitch between adjacent rows in the (inverted) reference sequences. Also, during the composition as a whole, the great majority of tetrachord row statements is disjunct, that is, as far as the final and initial elements of consecutive row statements are concerned. The vocal part presents twenty-six statements, with only three cases of single pitch overlapping, and one case of double pitch pivoting. The instrumental parts, after the Introduction and before the final Couplet, show occasional pitch overlapping between consecutive row forms, within the first two quatrains, and pitch overlapping on a larger scale only in the third quatrain: in total, twenty-nine statements offer seven cases of single pitch pivoting. So in the sense of pivoting, Stravinsky's composition is *not* a matter of 'nur aufeinander bezogene Töne', and he has to draw on other considerations for ordering (the use of reference tones). He shows a marked preference here for certain pitches as row initials, and this connects this work with modal/tonal practices. As will be demonstrated in greater detail later (Figure 7), *B* is the most frequently used reference tone in the ordering of row sequences. The reference sequence starts with *B* and its adjacent inversion ends with *C*. This movement from *B* to *C* recurs several times after the Introduction: Quatrain 1 starts with *B* and ends with *C* (vocal part); similarly, Quatrain 2 and the Couplet open with *B*, while the composition as a whole finishes with *C*.

The entire planning, with its similarity to modal/tonal composition, is underpinned by the distribution of the two rows, the diatonic pentachord and the chromaticizing/diatonicizing tetrachord. The Introduction has both, while the Quatrains 1 through 3 only apply the tetrachord row. The Couplet again uses both rows. An increase in density through layering is achieved in the Couplet as it combines the music of the Introduction with the vocal part that was absent in the Introduction. The orientation of the pentachord row around *C* (plus its fifth *G*) thus initiates and ultimately reinforces the movement from *B* to *C* in the tetrachord sequences throughout the piece.

The overall planning of the composition shows a similarity to classical tonal practice in another way, by 'exposing' a 'theme' (Introduction, Quatrain 1), 'developing' it by transposition and fragmentation (Quatrain 2 and 3), and 'recapitulating' it (Couplet). In this case the 'theme' is the symmetrical reference tetrachord sequence P0-I9-P0 and its inversion I0-P3-I0. The reference sequence is a closed form, representing the 'harmony' of balance. In the middle sections, Quatrains 2 and 3, the reference sequence is broken into open P-I and I-P segments, while the P-I-P + I-P-I symmetry is reinstalled during the

3 Arnold Schönberg, *Stil und Gedanke*, Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1995, 75.

Figure 5
Statements of the tetrachord row.

I. Introduction, instrumental

bar	voice	row form	instruments	row form
1			P0, *B*	rs
2			I9, *A*♭	
3			P0, *B*	
4			I0, *B*	irs
5				
6			P3, *D*	
7			I0, *B*	
8				

II. Quatrain 1 (rehearsal number 1)

bar	voice	row form	instruments	row form
9	P0, *B*	rs	P4, *D*♯	rs,t
10				
11	I9, *A*♭		I1, *C*	
12				
13	P0, *B*			
14			P4, *D*♯	
15				
16	I0, *B*	irs	I3, *D*	irs,t
17			P6, *F*	
18	P3, *D*		I6, *F*	irs,t
19	I0, *B*		P9, *G*♯	
20				
21				

III. Quatrain 2 (rehearsal number 4)

bar	voice	row form	instruments	row form
22	P0, *B*	rs		
23	I9, *A*♭		RI5, *E*	
24			I7, *F*♯	
25	P0, *B*			
26	I0, *with interchange of initial and final pitches C and B*		P8, G	rs,t
27	P2, *C*		I5, *E*	
28	P1, *C*			
29			P8, *G*	
30	P0, *B*			
31			I7, *G*♭	
32	I9, *A*♭		P8, *G*	
33	P0, *B*			
34				

IV. Quatrain 3 (rehearsal number 7)

bar	voice	row form	instruments	row form
35		rs	P9, *G*♯	rs,t
36				
37	I9, *A*♭		I6, *F*	
38	P0, *B*		I7, *F*♯	irs,t
39				
40	I11, *B*♭		P10, *A*	
41	I2, *D*♭			
42			P9, *A*♭	
43			I3, *D*	

V. Couplet; combination with instrumental Introduction (rehearsal number 9)

bar	voice	row form	instruments	row form
44	P0, *B* ; I9, *A*♭	rs		
45	P0, *B*		P6, *F*	
46	I0, *B*	irs		
47	P3, *D*		R6, *F*	
48	R3, *D*			
49	I0, *B*		I7, *G*♭	
50				

irs,t

Legend**:** rs: reference sequence; irs: inverted reference sequence; (i)rs,t: (inverted) reference sequence, transposed.

Closed brackets denote complete sequences of three row forms; open-ended brackets denote partial sequences of two row forms.

concluding Couplet. Thus a symmetrical row structure is used here as the equivalent of a stable tonal entity, such as may be found in themes composed during the Classical period of Western music.

Projection of the Tetrachord Row

The distribution of the tetrachord row statements is given in Figure 5. Out of the five sections, three (I, II and V) offer the complete 'theme' of the reference sequence and its inversion P0-I9-P0 + I0-P3-I0. (At its re-establishment in the Couplet, R 3 is inserted.) The remaining sections (III, IV) open with the reference sequence in at least the vocal part (in Quatrain 3 the entrance of P0 has already started at the end of Quatrain 2). Apart from this, the middle sections only offer parts of the reference sequences, with sequences of, at most, two row forms. All this results in a hierarchy among row forms based on frequency of occurrence (see Figure 6), and a clear difference in prominence of initial tetrachord pitches (which are often stressed: Figure 7).

Figure 6
Frequency of occurrence of tetrachord row forms and pitch positions.

	Vocal part	Instrumental parts
P0, *B*	9	2
I0, *B*	5	2
I9, *A*♭	5	1
I7, *F*♯		4
P8, *G*		3
P9, *A*♭		3
P3, *D*	2	1
I3, *D*		2
P4, *D*♯		2
P6, F		2
I6, *F*		2
P1, *C*	1	
I1, *C*		1
P2, *C*♯	1	
I2, *C*♯	1	
R3, *D*	1	
I5, *E*		1
RI5, *E*		1
R6, *F*		1
P10, *A*		1
I11, *B*♭	1	

Figure 7
Differentiation in the use of pitches as tetrachord initials.

	Vocal part	Instrumental parts
B	14	4
A♭ / *G*♯	5	4
D	3	3
F		5
F♯		4
G		3
C♯	2	
D♯		2
E		2
C	1	1
A		1
B♭	1	

The four most favoured initials form a chain of minor thirds. Again, this may point to another hybridity in planning, as the concept of reference tone derives from modal/tonal traditions, while the constellation of their choice has its basis in chromaticism. In the case of Stravinsky this pitch preference may well be rooted in his lifelong involvement with octatonicism. The instrumental parts, after the Introduction, avoid the favoured reference pitch *B*, as initial, as they do *A*♭. In this case the tetrachord is transposed throughout, which results in a melodic, harmonic and timbral counterpoint to the vocal line. Yet, at the same time, along with this transposition, the reference sequence (of three tetrachord row forms) and its inversion are retained to a certain extent (Figure 8).

Figure 8
Transpositions of the (inverted) reference sequence of tetrachord rows in the instrumental parts.

Transpositions

Quatrain 1
P4-I1-P4 (closed sequence) + I3-P6 [tetrachord deleted] (open sequence) + I6-P9 [tetrachord deleted] (open sequence):
reference sequence, major third higher (*D*♯);
inverted reference sequence (twice, partly), minor third higher (*D*); tritone (*F*)

Quatrain 2
P8-I5-P8 (closed sequence):
reference sequence, major third lower (*G*).

Quatrain 3
P9-I6-[tetrachord deleted] (open sequence)
I7-P10-[tetrachord deleted] (open sequence):
reference sequence, minor third lower (*G*♯);
inverted reference sequence, fifth higher (*F*♯).

Couplet
I3-P6-[tetrachord deleted] (open sequence):
inverted reference sequence, minor third higher (*D*).

These transpositions are evidence of harmonic planning. Out of the seven sequence transpositions employed in the instruments, five involve thirds. As the original pitch position of the reference sequences is maintained in the voice, their transposition in the instruments results, in a number of cases, in harmonic intervals of major and minor thirds between voice and instruments, especially in the first Quatrain. This harmonic preference may be considered as an intrusion of tonal habits into serial writing. Equally, as we have seen a number of times above, Stravinsky maintains, in his own fashion, the serial point of departure as formulated by Schönberg of 'tones related only to one another', as the preferred intervals of the major and minor third are laid down in the tetrachord row itself, while the transposition *above* and *below* the reference tone *B* reflect serial spatiality.

Musical Elaboration: Styles
The two rows are stylistically elaborated in very different, contrasting manners, again exploring hybridity in multiple ways. The tetrachord row is shaped:
- in a declamatory way, employing pitch repetition. This occurs especially at the beginning of sections in the vocal part (Quatrain 1, and particularly Quatrain 3);

- in a modal way, using melodic patterns with small intervals, centering on a reference tone;
- in a tonal way, applying recurring stable pitch sequences, alternating with unstable ones. Moreover, there is a conspicuous use of consonant intervals, unison, octave, fifth and third. This seems to defy one of the composition's other sources of inspiration, the music of Schönberg and especially Webern with its 'emancipation of dissonance':
- in a serial way, engaging in the operations of inversion and retrograde, and chromatic transposition;
- in a Webernian pointillist style, with large intervals such as sevenths or even augmented octaves and ninths in the voice, and even larger intervals in the instruments up to the octave plus sixth;
- in Stravinsky's own style, using variable ostinato (the variable concatenation of recurring melodic/rhythmic patterns), and the accumulation technique (piling of layers).

The other row, the pentachord, confined to the clarinet and viola, is subject to constant register shifts within a single instrument, and, notably in the Introduction, to the division of the pentachord's pitches between different instruments, in a pointillist fashion (emphasized by staccato or pizzicato). Moreover, the row's presentation is interrupted several times. The use of a Webernian pointillist disruptive style is striking when applied to a diatonic pentachord. The 'atonal' rendering of diatonicism yields an especially challenging hybridity when combined with the modal shaping of the chromaticizing tetrachord, a double case of musical cross-dressing. In the Introduction this is further underlined by the contrast beteen *pizz./staccato/marcato* and *dolce cantabile*.

Textual Meanings

The meaning of the text may be characterized by a number of keywords and key phrases:

Quatrain 1 Contrast between the concord of music and the discordant hearing mode of the addressee, the 'thou', 'thine' (Fair Youth).

Quatrain 2 Again, contrast between the true concord of music ('well tuned sounds, By Unions married'), and the addressee's discordant hearing. Marriage is used as a metaphor for music. Conversely, the concord of music challenges the insistence by the addressee on singleness (the allegedly intentional bachelor status). Contrast between union and singleness.

Quatrain 3 The concord of music (mutual ordering of strings, uniting in singing one pleasing note) resembles a happy family. Music as a metaphor for marriage (the reversal of the metaphor of Quatrain 2).

Couplet The concord of music – as a metaphor for marriage – challenges the insistence on singleness by the addressee. The fundamental difference between 'oneness' ('many seeming one') and 'singleness' ('thou single wilt prove none').

Meaning of the Text in Relation to the Musical Setting

The composition may be viewed as a process. For example, during Quatrains 1 through 3, there is a marked increase in overlapping between the instruments, resulting in the abundance of mixed instrumental colors in Quatrain 3. This is accompanied by an increasing role of unison and octave in the latter Quatrain, first between the instruments, and later between instruments and voice. The octave even occurs as a melodic interval, within the vocal part. This is in marked contrast to the ethos of the original twelve-tone school of composition. Finally, the Couplet offers an increase in polyphony. We will focus now on this process in greater detail.

Introduction
This section offers some pitch overlapping between the instruments (octave, mm. 4 and 8; unison, m. 6, two times).

Quatrain 1
The voice overlaps with instruments several times.
Unison: with the flute, '[Musick to heare,] why [hear'st thou musick'] (this is in strong contrast to the absence of unison with the following text 'sadly' [mm. 9-11a]); with the viola, 'Sweets with sweets [warre not]' (mm. 11-12). Both instances seem to link unison with the notion of concord that is developed later on in the poem.
Octave: with the viola, '[which thou receav'st not] glad[ly]' (m. 17); shortly afterwards the clarinet is in unison with the voice; also the instruments involved overlap here. Moreover, the flute and viola present an octave between their statements (mm. 15-16). Possibly all this is to bring out 'gladly' (as different from: 'not gladly').

Quatrain 2
Unison: voice - clarinet, '[U]nions' (m. 25).
Octave, consecutively: clarinet - flute,'[By Un-]nions mar[-ried]' (mm. 25-26).
Octave: clarinet - viola, '[In] sin[-glenesse]' (m. 31).
Unison: voice - viola, '[In] sin[-glenesse]' (m. 31); clarinet - flute, '[the] part [that thou should'st beare]' (m. 32). Here the word 'Unions' (including the taking 'part' in it), but also 'singlenesse' receive emphasis due to these unisons and octaves.
It should be added that the only 'mistake' in row projection occurs at '[mar-]ried do offend [thine eare]' (mm. 26-27), when the original form I0 is disturbed into *C-D♯-C♯-B*, by interchanging initial and final. This may be taken as a response to the text's meaning of offense.

Quatrain 3
It is here that the role of unison and (double) octave greatly increases in importance, step by step, in an ever more far-reaching way. Process-wise we hear:
- interval repetition within instruments (clarinet, m. 35, flute, mm. 35-36);
- interval repetition between instruments, an octave apart (clarinet-flute, mm. 35-36); both instances relate to 'Mark how one string, sweet husband to another';
- multiple unisons and (double) octaves between instruments, creating new instrumental timbres, involving all three instruments (mm. 37-39; 42-43): '[strikes] each in each by mutual ordering', etc. As to the octave relationship, it may be seen as relevant to the meaning of '[Re-]sembling sier and child';
- octave and unison relationships between voice and instruments (mm. 38, 43), at 'Re[-sembling]' and '[one pleasing note do] sing'; see also the next point;
- melodic octaves in the vocal part (mm. 42-43), twice at '[one] pleasing note do sing'.

This whole process may be related to all of the textual meaning of Quatrain 3, stressing the theme of mutual ordering and oneness in music and marriage.

Couplet
Here as well, we find some use of the unison and octave intervals that may be deemed relevant in relation to textual meanings:
- [Whose speechless song being] ma[-ny seeming] one', m. 45, clarinet - viola, unison; m. 46, flute - viola, double octave;
- 'sings [this for] thee thou single wilt prove none', m. 46, clarinet - viola, octave; m. 48, voice-flute, unison; voice - viola, octave; mm. 49-50, voice - viola, unison; flute, internally, octave; flute - clarinet, octave.

Interestingly, 'none' receives more unison and octave emphasis than 'one'. Moreover, the word 'one' is sung on a melisma (m. 46), which may be heard as a contradiction of the text content, especially after the treatment of the word 'one' in Quatrain 3. Does Stravinsky turn the tables at the very end of the composition, to suit the character of the Couplet, which is typically the turning point towards a new insight? Here we would like to note that the Couplet of the composition is, musically, the moment of culmination, as for the first time since the instrumental Introduction the pentachord row is heard again. This leads to the most complex texture so far, three-part instead of two-part music. This is certainly in stark contrast to Quatrain 3, which converged towards the unison and octave, both harmonically and melodically. So ultimately, could it perhaps be the gist of Stravinsky's reading of Shakespeare's text that 'one' is fundamentally multiple as the melisma going with it seems to suggest? Is it primarily the polyphony of two rows instead of one and the hybridity of their treatment that eventually come to herald the meaning of 'true concord' of 'sounds by Unions married', 'by mutual ordering'?

Conclusion: A Playful Speculation

If Shakespeare uses the image of music to comment upon human relationships, why not read Stravinsky's text setting as a comment upon the state of music at the moment of its composition? Let us play with *Three Songs from William Shakespeare* as a metaphoric statement about the composer's position in relation to his predecessors and contemporaries. We will proceed from the end to the beginning.

Song 3, 'When daisies pied', from *Love's Labour's Lost*, was renamed 'Spring' by Stravinsky in a letter to Erwin Stein, dated November 27, 1953.[4] Indeed, following the composer's creative crisis, which came to a culmination during a trip to the Mojave Desert in 1952, the Shakespeare songs may be viewed as a new beginning. We may also hear a teasing note in the choice of the text. While the first song exalts the married state ('one pleasing note do sing'), here we encounter a sound 'unpleasing to the married ear'. It is the call of the cuckoo, that infamous bird with the habit to drop her eggs in the nest of other species. Does Stravinsky, tongue in cheek, portray himself here, as he so unexpectedly intrudes into the serial garden of others?

Song 2, 'Full fadom five', derived from *The Tempest*, commemorates the death of the father.

> Full fadom five thy Father lies,
> Of his bones are Corrall made
> Those are pearles that were his eies

Who is the father in this context, petrified, crystallized into precious matter? Whose music had become accessible to Stravinsky at this moment, as 'material' from the past? The image of the transformation into jewels reminds us of the composer's words in remembrance of Anton Webern, making him a likely patron of the present poem's musical setting:

> Doomed to a total failure in a deaf world of ignorance and indifference he inexorably kept on cutting out his diamonds, his dazzling diamonds, the mines of which he had such a perfect knowledge.[5]

4 Stravinsky: *Selected Correspondence*, Vol. 3, ed. Robert Craft, New York: Knopf, 1985, 379. Stein was an editor at the composer's publisher Boosey and Hawkes.

5 Igor Stravinsky, '[Foreword]', in: *Die Reihe* 2 (2nd revised English edition), 1959: vii.

Finally, song 1, 'Musick to heare', confronts the listeners with the ringing words 'Thou single wilt prove none'. May we conceive this phrase as a programmatic critical statement by Stravinsky in relation to Schönberg and later serialists, in the sense that the limitation to one pitch domain and as well as a purist attitude to composition will prove fruitless in the end – 'thou single wilt prove none'? Is he giving the admonishment not to confine oneself to chromaticism, but to include diatonicism as well? Does he mock singleness of mind, by treating a chromatic row modally and tonally, and a diatonic one serially and pointillistically, without losing concentration and discipline for a single moment? Is the song evidence of the conviction that 'the true concord of well tuned sounds' 'by Unions married' has to forego the 'singleness' of only one system, and celebrate the multiple heterogeneity and hybridity between the chromatic *and* the diatonic, between atonal/serial *and* tonal/modal? After all, 'Unions' is plural. By emphasizing, in the end, the *multifariousness of unity* through the layering of two different rows, Stravinsky professes a fundamentally *polyphonic* mentality in music as 'mutual ordering'.