

Gesture and Intention in the Art Songs of Harry Partch

Geste und Intention in den Kunstliedern von Harry Partch

Harry Partch fand durch Vertonungen für Intoning Voice und Adapted Viola – später auch für Intoning Voice und Adapted Guitar – zu seiner kompositorischen Sprache. Aus diesen intimen Anfängen entwickelten sich allmählich Ensembles und schließlich die großen theatralen Werke, für die Partch vor allem bekannt ist.

Obwohl er die später als *Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po* herausgegebenen Lieder viele Male umschrieb, da er sein Notationssystem verfeinerte, blieb die Musik selbst weitgehend unverändert. Dies im Gegensatz zu anderen Werken, kehrte Partch doch im Lauf seiner Karriere zu fast allen frühen Vertonungen zurück, wovon er einige für sein erweitertes Ensemble umarbeitete und andere komplett neu komponierte, einige davon mehrmals.

Der vorliegende Artikel untersucht eine Auswahl dieser Werke mit dem Schwerpunkt auf Gestus und Intervallstruktur, insbesondere in Bezug auf Partchs ›One-Footed Bride‹. Um die Bedeutung seiner Intervallkategorien zu verdeutlichen, werden frühe Vertonungen einiger Texte mit späteren Vertonungen derselben Texte verglichen. Es zeigt sich, dass Partch trotz zahlreicher Änderungen darauf achtete, den emotionalen Charakter der ursprünglichen Vertonung zu erhalten oder sogar zu verstärken.

Though best known for his large works of total theater, compositions for dance, and works for film, Harry Partch's early successes in composition came in the form of intimate settings for voice and one instrument, gradually growing to works for voice and small chamber ensemble. All of his works are intended to be performed on instruments of his own design, ranging from straightforward modifications of existing instruments as in the case of the Adapted Viola and Adapted Guitars to reconceptions of existing instruments like the Kitharas and Chromelodeons to completely one-of-a-kind sculptural instruments like the Gourd Tree and Cloud-Chamber Bowls. Yet despite the more than fifty instruments he built during his lifetime (a number that includes many small hand instruments used only in *Delusion of the Fury*), the most important instrument for Partch was the human voice.

Partch's early settings for voice and one instrument – *Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po*, *Two Psalms*, and *The Potion Scene* for Intoning Voice and Adapted Viola, and *Barstow*, December 1942, and a draft version of *U.S. Highball* for Intoning Voice and

Adapted Guitar¹ – are profoundly personal works that helped Partch find the compositional language that would last, almost unchanged, through his entire career. In fact, in an interview with Vivian Perlis just months before his death, Partch remarked: “[...] I thought that I was going nowhere. But then I knew, after I wrote ‘The Long-Departed Lover’ ... that I wasn’t going to destroy that, probably.”² Partch’s vocal works generally focus on presenting English texts in a relatively unembellished style, often following the natural inflections of the speaking voice.³ Partch’s term for this style was Intoning Voice, which refers to speaking on pitch, and allows for a range of expressivity. To make this style as natural as possible in performance, Partch often eschews rhythmic notation within these passages, leaving the timing up to the natural delivery of a given performer’s voice (and leaving the rest of the ensemble to follow that performer’s natural pacing).

The following pages will examine seven of Partch’s vocal works in the context of the ‘One-Footed Bride’, a chart in Partch’s book, *Genesis of a Music*, that he calls a graph of comparative consonance, and to which he dedicates an entire chapter.⁴ While discussing ways in which intervals are perceived and presenting physics studies that support his position, Partch also provides a series of useful examples that can be played on his Chromelodeon – a typical explanation from Partch that, while fundamentally sound, is also inaccessible to the majority of his audience – and even ties the issue of beating back to the process of tuning this instrument (again esoteric information for most people reading Partch’s book, though this is exactly the process this author follows today when tuning Partch’s Chromelodeons). The chapter leads to Partch’s presentation and explication of this One-Footed Bride, and the ultimate categorization of intervals into four groups: Intervals of Power, or perfect intervals; Intervals of Suspense, or the broadly-considered tritone – that is, anything between the pure $4/3$ perfect fourth and pure $3/2$ perfect fifth; Intervals of Emotion, or those which can be perceived as thirds or sixths; and Intervals of Approach, which are seconds and sevenths.⁵ (Partch does not place unisons into any of these four categories,

- 1 Note that these works are written for Partch’s original Adapted Guitar I, then just called the Adapted Guitar. This original configuration was tuned in three courses, each with two strings tuned an octave apart. The open tuning, from low to high, was $8/5$, $1/1$, $5/4$.
- 2 Bob Gilmore: *Harry Partch. A Biography*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, p. 78.
- 3 Exceptions to this include larger theatrical works including *The Bewitched* and *Delusion of the Fury* where there are few words, if any (the resulting vocal parts take on a different dramatic role: elaborate, expressive, but textless), and *Even Wild Horses* which sets brief passages from Arthur Rimbaud’s *A Season in Hell* in its original French (the text being of such unimportance here that Partch writes this line for “Tenor Saxophone and/or Baritone Voice”).
- 4 Chapter 9, “The One-Footed Bride.” Note that all references to the One-Footed Bride in this article refer to the chart (see Figure 1), not the corresponding chapter.
- 5 It is important to recognize that ratios function both as pitch names and as interval names – in this latter case, these ratios describe the difference in frequency of two given pitches. For example, we can identify the perfect fourth between $9/8$ and $3/2$ as the interval $4/3$. For the sake of clarity, in this article, all ratios indicating intervals are italicized.

but as they do not fit his qualifications for Intervals of Power, they are here considered to be a subcomponent of Intervals of Approach.)

Partch carefully and clearly states that this is only a general chart, more for illuminating certain aspects of perception than for making concrete statements about his own musical language. Several times in this chapter, he comments “small-number proportions = comparative consonance”,⁶ which is to say that simpler relationships between two frequencies tend to produce more consonant intervals. At first glance, it may seem that Partch has gone to great lengths to simply iterate his own

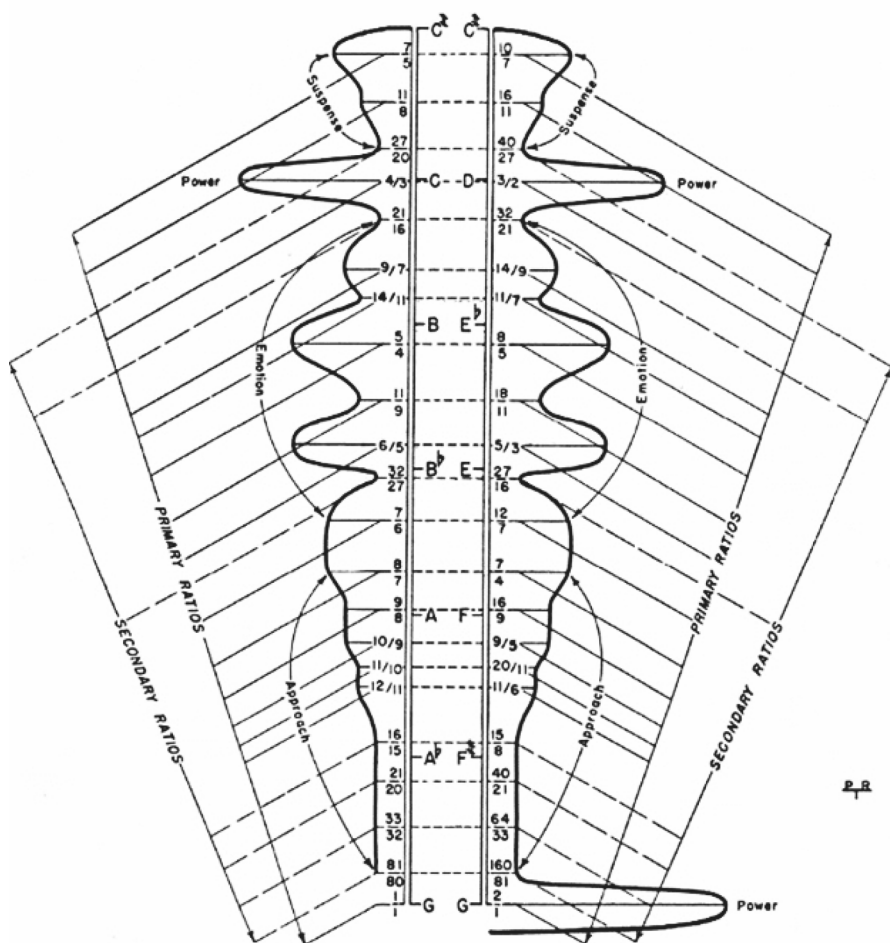


Fig. 1: Partch's One-Footed Bride, from Harry Partch: *Genesis Of A Music. An Account of A Creative Work, Its Roots and Its Fulfillments. Second Edition, Enlarged*, p. 155 (Copyright © 1979. Reprinted by permission of Da Capo Press, an imprint of Hachette Book Group, Inc.)

6 Harry Partch: *Genesis of a Music. An Account of a Creative Work, Its Roots and Its Fulfillments. Second Edition, Enlarged*, New York: Da Capo, 1974, p. 144.

version of the standard categorization of intervals. While this system, and the classifications therein, do not deviate much from a typical categorization, Partch's goal here is to expand the possibilities of these categories, and in so doing, to generate a degree of flexibility in the perception of certain passages, as we will see clearly in one section of *The Long-Departed Lover* below.

Partch concludes this chapter by stating:

The One-Footed Bride depicts the more important classifications and analyses thus far presented (exclusive of tonality): the fabric on an equal graph, its relation to twelve-tone Equal Temperament, the twenty-nine primary intervals [of Partch's forty-three tone Chromelodeon scale], the fourteen secondary intervals, the graph of comparative consonance, and the psychological classification.⁷

The One-Footed Bride serves to illustrate the ideas Partch was discussing and refuting in this chapter, yet also demonstrates something about the way he was thinking of melodic line, continuity, and the role of supporting voices in these early works. While it is certainly not a prescriptive element of Partch's compositional language, this chart does provide an insight into the way Partch shapes gestures within these pieces, and shows how he supports natural vocal inflections with lines that draw on these categories of intervals.

One last point regarding Partch's chapter before moving to short analyses of his work: This diagram only looks at a subset of possible intervals from within his system. The diagram shows the forty-three tones available on the Chromelodeon as reference points within this diagram of comparative consonance, but just within Partch's Chromelodeon scale there are three hundred forty distinct intervals, and Partch's system allows him to move to pitches outside of the Chromelodeon scale as well. The chart, as he notes, provides a general diagram into which other pitches could be fit. And since this system has the capacity for an infinite number of pitches and intervals, this diagram could likewise be altered to incorporate numerous additional pitches without much trouble – the only issue that arises is the specific point that distinguishes Intervals of Approach from Intervals of Emotion, which is somewhere around 250 cents but not stated explicitly by Partch. Moreover, while the diagram does include all of the pitches available on his Chromelodeon, the number forty-three is not particularly meaningful when describing Partch's work. Although the Chromelodeon, among other instruments, does have this source scale, we will find pitches and intervals outside of the diagram on many of his stringed instruments.⁸

As mentioned earlier, *The Long-Departed Lover* was the first work that Partch felt adequately represented his ideas, so we will begin our study of his work there. The diagrams that follow are generally unedited copies of Partch's scores with a few ratios

7 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

8 Even the earliest works for Adapted Viola and Intoning Voice include pitches outside of this set, though it is worth noting that Partch had yet to formalize his system when he was composing these works.

rewritten for clarity, and some spacing adjusted to leave room for arrows, added by this author, that illustrate the interval categories suggested by the One-Footed Bride. Straight lines accompany all passages comprised of Intervals of Approach (and do not show contour), diagonal lines identify Intervals of Emotion, curved lines identify Intervals of Suspense, and right angles are used to show Intervals of Power.

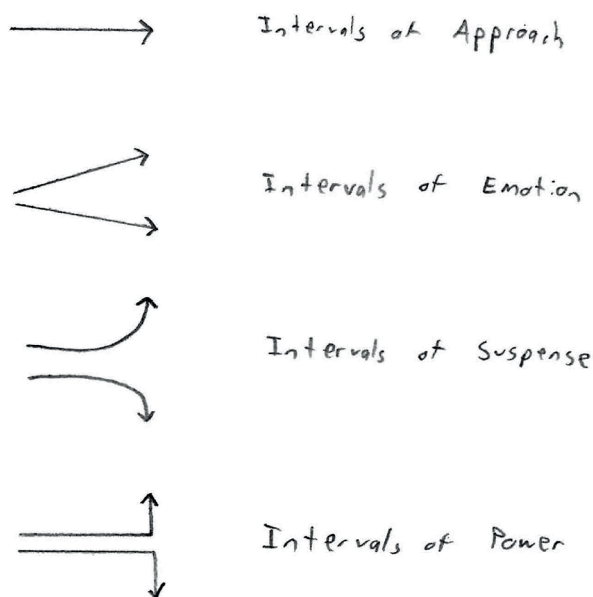


Fig. 2: Arrows used to demonstrate interval categories

As for the notation itself: ratios function as note names in Partch's system, indicating the frequency of that pitch as compared to the G below it. The ratios 1/1 and 2/1 signify a G in a lower and higher octave, respectively, and all other ratios will fall between those two boundaries. A line that follows the ratio indicates that this pitch should be sustained. In these early works for voice and Adapted Viola, the open circle (0) takes the place of a rest (wishing to follow natural phrasing and pacing, Partch didn't want to suggest durations by using traditional rhythmic notation, even for rests). As Partch's system developed, he eventually stopped using the open circle for this purpose, since it is easy enough to tell, by looking at the vertical alignment, where individual voices should cease sounding.

Partch places *The Long-Departed Lover* as the first setting of *Seventeen Lyrics* by *Li Po*, suggesting the importance of this piece long before he stated it in the interview with Perlis. As we will see with many of Partch's settings, the majority of the intervals in the work are Intervals of Approach. Comprising all qualities of second, seventh, ninth, and so on, it is not surprising that these are the primary intervals employed, especially considering the greatly expanded possibilities that exist within

The Long-Departed Lover

Mono. 2 II $\frac{7}{6} \frac{7}{5}$ —

Fair one, when you were here, I filled the house with flow-ers.

$\frac{2}{5} \frac{7}{6} \frac{14}{9} \frac{11}{9} \frac{7}{6}$

Fair one, now you are gone — only an empty couch is left.

$\frac{6}{5} \frac{7}{6} \frac{14}{9} \frac{7}{5} \frac{14}{11} \frac{4}{3} \frac{9}{7} \frac{5}{4} \frac{6}{5} \frac{6}{5}$

On the couch the embroidered quilt is rolled up;

$\frac{11}{9} \frac{5}{4} \frac{10}{7} \frac{7}{5} \frac{11}{8} \frac{11}{8} \frac{4}{3} \frac{9}{7} \frac{10}{7} \frac{16}{11}$

I can not sleep.

$\frac{16}{11} \frac{4}{3} \frac{11}{9} \frac{11}{8} \frac{9}{8} \frac{3}{2} \frac{16}{11} \frac{10}{7}$

It is three years since you went.

$\frac{5}{4} \frac{9}{7} \frac{14}{9} \frac{3}{2} \frac{4}{3} \frac{7}{6} \frac{4}{3} \frac{7}{6} \frac{8}{7} \frac{9}{8} \frac{11}{11}$

The per-fume you left be-hind haunts me still.

$\frac{6}{5} \frac{11}{8} \frac{7}{6} \frac{7}{5}$

Fig. 3a/b: *The Long-Departed Lover*, from: *Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po*, unpublished manuscript (1930–1933), pp. 1 f. Images from Harry Partch Estate Archive, 1918–1991 (series 12/5/45), Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The per-fume stays a-bout me for-er-er, but where

7/5 14/9 3/2 5/4 1/9 6/5 7/6 8/7 14/7

7/4 7/6 11/5 5/4 7/4 7/6 11/5 5/4 1 9/5 11/6 28/15 40/21 64/33 2 11/11 5/4 9/5 6/5

suddenly, are you, Balar-ad?

7/4 7/6 11/5 5/4 7/4 7/6 11/5 5/4 1 9/5 11/6 28/15 40/21 64/33 2 11/11 5/4 9/5 6/5

sigh — the yellow leaves fall from the branch

7/6 8/7 10/9 16/11 3/2 16/11 3/2 16/11 10/9 7/6

weep — the dew turns pale white on the green moss-es.

8/7 10/9 10/9 4/3 11/8 4/3 11/8 4/3 21/16 9/7

these interval classes and Partch's fascination with natural inflection. Yet to open the work, Partch begins with an Interval of Emotion – an exposed, ascending 6/5 from 7/6 to 7/5 in the Adapted Viola (under its earlier identification as the Monophone in this score), that invites the listener's attention.⁹

9 It bears mentioning that the Adapted Viola is an extremely personal instrument to Partch. Aside from being the first instrument he invented, and in some ways a progenitor of his creative work, it frequently takes on important dramatic roles like in *Oedipus*, and lends sensitivity to important melodic lines in works like *Windsong/Daphne of the Dunes*. Similarly, the *Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po* are notably personal works for Partch: the two other Adapted Viola works from this period were expanded and reorchestrated multiple times as Partch's Instrumentarium grew, but the Li Bai settings remained untouched. The only other work from Partch's art song period to remain untouched is the first setting from *December 1942, Come Away, Death*. The intimate, solo nature of these settings prevented Partch from labeling them as "Major Works" in his book, *Genesis of a Music*, but their importance was made clear in interviews like the one with Vivian Perlis mentioned above.

This gesture is mirrored by the voice at the end of the first line with a descending 14/11 into the word ‘flowers’ after an otherwise simple line containing only two tones. As the voice drops out, the Adapted Viola plays an ornamented version of its opening interval, replacing the simple ascending Interval of Emotion with an Interval of Power (4/3 or perfect fourth) that descends to the 7/5 via an Interval of Approach. The voice reenters, complementing the Viola gesture by gradually filling in the Interval of Emotion from the previous line with Intervals of Approach throughout the line “now you are gone – only an empty couch is left”.

Voice and Viola both continue with Intervals of Approach for the next two phrases until the Viola, after “I cannot sleep”, ornaments a simple ascent from 11/8 to 3/2 by first descending to 9/8, adding in a descending Interval of Emotion and ascending Interval of Power. This ornamentation invites a complementary gesture, and one follows almost immediately, with voice and Adapted Viola ascending a 98/81 Interval of Emotion in unison to ‘three’ (329.8 cents) before finishing the phrase with a long, stepwise descent. It is worth noting that the meaning of stepwise is slightly different in this case due to the increased quantity of possible intervals (stepwise motion is one possible way to employ Intervals of Approach, but since this category also includes sevenths, ninths, and so on, not all passages comprised of Intervals of Approach are necessarily employing stepwise motion).¹⁰

The following line, “The perfume you left behind”, begins with a pure 6/5 minor third between the voice and Adapted Viola – a clearly presented Interval of Emotion that marks only second point in this setting where the two lines diverge from unison (in the line “I cannot sleep”, there is one place where the voice moves while the Viola sustains, but there the two lines return to a unison on the following syllable). The harmonic 6/5 is then echoed by the Adapted Viola as it repeats its opening gesture from 7/6 to 7/5, which in turn anticipates the most dramatic gesture of the setting.

The voice joins the Viola at the start of the following phrase, but after the word ‘perfume’ drops by another 6/5 Interval of Emotion to ‘strays’ while the Viola holds its pitch. This is followed by a powerful descent of the vocal line, still highlighted by the static Viola which interjects with a small gesture before the voice ascends to ‘but where’ with the only Interval of Suspense in this setting – a small 49/36 tritone of 533.7 cents – that is soon resolved by a descending Interval of Power on ‘are you’ – the only 3/2 in *The Long-Departed Lover*.

From this point, the setting returns to its simpler content, though with more activity in the Adapted Viola. The remainder of the vocal part consists solely of Intervals of Approach, while the Viola has three ascending Intervals of Emotion among

10 On this point, there is a great variety of ways a passage can be constructed through Intervals of Approach – in Partch’s system, this category is broadened more than any other. A line comprised of Intervals of Approach could be an intensely microtonal line with intervals all even smaller than the tiniest shown on the One-Footed Bride, a seemingly standard scalar passage, a leap of a seventh that may or may not resolve, or a combination of all of these possibilities and more, moving in one or both directions.

its otherwise densely chromatic passage, the last two of which emphasize the despair of the final two lines of text where the voice, despondent, can only fall away.

Looking back to the middle of the most dramatic gesture of *The Long-Departed Lover* (“but where are you, beloved?”), we can see in Partch’s score that a $9/5$ has been crossed out and replaced with a $16/9$. These pitches are both types of F, with the $9/5$ slightly higher at 1017.6 cents and the $16/9$ at 996.1 cents – Partch chose to lower this tone by an $81/80$ (21.5 cents, the syntonic comma). The effect of this change is that the ascending interval, in both voice and Viola, is reduced from a $7/6$ – a small Interval of Emotion – to an $8/7$ – a large Interval of Approach. The change, though minor, emphasizes the relationship between the Interval of Suspense and the Interval of Power by removing the Interval of Emotion between them. Seeing this revision on the page gives clear insight into Partch’s focus on the perception of intervallic content in his early work.

One element of just intonation that Partch found particularly useful was that it allowed him to precisely notate the spoken inflections of others for use in his compositions. His setting of *The Lord is My Shepherd* (1931) is an excellent example of this, using a recitation by Reuben Rinder, Cantor at the Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco, as the basis of the composition.

While it is impossible to know how much Partch altered Rinder’s inflections, the flexibility of his system could have at least made it possible for Partch to leave the ‘spoken expression’ unchanged and still accompany the line in any way he chose with Adapted Viola. For this discussion, the assumption is that Partch made only minor changes to Rinder’s recitation, and none that would alter the categorization of the interval. After all, Partch stated that he wanted a “truly Hebraic interpretation”¹¹ of Psalm 23. The Adapted Viola line, entirely Partch’s contribution, serves to emphasize Rinder’s impassioned delivery.

The entire first page of this setting follows one basic gestural shape: an ascent to $22/15$, a passage of Intervals of Approach that lead to a descending Interval of Emotion, and a short tapering off via Intervals of Approach. The ascent in the first line (“The Lord”) is through three Intervals of Emotion – ascending, descending, and ascending again – each a $6/5$, while the ascent in the other two lines (“He maketh” and “he leadeth”) are Intervals of Suspense – large tritones of $22/15$ or 663 cents. Beneath this repeated gesture, both Adapted Viola lines undulate through a series of generally chromatic Intervals of Approach. The one exception comes at the end of the first line of text: after ‘shall not want’, a small $15/14$ descent (119.4 cents) in both voices of the Viola (from $3/2$ to $7/5$ and from $5/4$ to $7/6$) is interrupted by a downward leap, resulting in two consecutive Intervals of Emotion that highlight this point in the phrase.

11 Gilmore: *Harry Partch. A Biography*, p. 86.

(23RD PSALM)

- Spoken Expression by Cantor Reuben Rinder, of The Congregation Emanu-El,
San Francisco

(III & II strings throat)

mono. $2\frac{11}{15}$ _____
 $2\frac{11}{9}$ _____

The Lord is my sheep herder; I shall not want.

$\frac{11}{9}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{11}{9}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{4}{3}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{2}{7}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{9}$	$\frac{56}{55}$	$\frac{1}{1}$
$\frac{22}{15}$				$\frac{3}{2}$			$\frac{3}{2}$			
$\frac{11}{9}$				$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{9}{7}$		$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{9}$	$\frac{19}{11}$	$\frac{5}{4}$
									$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{7}{6}$

H_a : male-ath me to lie down in green pastures:

$\frac{22}{16}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	--	$\frac{18}{7}$	$\frac{22}{21}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	--	$\frac{9}{5}$	$\frac{18}{55}$	$\frac{1}{1}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	--	$\frac{18}{9}$	$\frac{32}{21}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	--	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{5}{3}$
$\frac{11}{9}$	$\frac{11}{9}$	$\frac{4}{3}$	$\frac{9}{7}$	$\frac{9}{7}$	$\frac{5}{4}$		$\frac{4}{9}$	$\frac{18}{11}$	$\frac{5}{3}$

(Note: The original image contains additional scribbles and arrows indicating further steps or corrections.)

He laid with me be-side the still wa-ters.

$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	-	-	-	-	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{11}{9}$	$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{8}{7}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{11}{9}$	$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{8}{7}$
$\frac{11}{9}$	$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{11}{9}$	$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{8}{7}$

Fig. 4a–c: *The Lord is My Shepherd*, from *Two Psalms*, unpublished manuscript (1931). Image from Harry Partch Estate Archive, 1918–1991 (series 12/5/45), Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

He re-stor-eth my soul: he guid-eth me in the paths of

$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{14}{11}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$
$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{4}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$

night-sou-mess for his names sake.

$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{14}{11}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$
$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{4}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$

Yea, tho I walk thru the val-ley of the shadow of death,

$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{14}{11}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$
$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{4}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$

I fear no ev-il: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy

$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{14}{11}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$
$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{4}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$

staff they can't hurt me.

$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{14}{11}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$
$\frac{7}{6}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{11}{4}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$
$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{14}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{7}{5}$	$\frac{22}{15}$	$\frac{8}{5}$	$\frac{14}{4}$

Thou pre- par- est a table be- fore me in the pre- sence of mine en- em- ies:

$\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} - \frac{8}{3} - \frac{12}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$
 $\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} - \frac{8}{3} - \frac{12}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$
 $\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} \frac{7}{5} - \frac{10}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$

Thou a- main- test my head with oil; my cup run- neth over.

$\frac{8}{5} \frac{5}{3} \frac{15}{8} \frac{15}{8} \frac{11}{6} \frac{2}{2} \frac{12}{7} \frac{13}{4} \frac{1}{1} \frac{11}{12} \frac{7}{7} \frac{11}{4} \frac{4}{7} \frac{4}{7}$
 $\frac{8}{5} \frac{5}{3} \frac{15}{8} \frac{15}{8} \frac{11}{6} \frac{2}{2} \frac{12}{7} \frac{13}{4} \frac{1}{1} \frac{11}{12} \frac{7}{7} \frac{11}{4} \frac{4}{7} \frac{4}{7}$
 $\frac{8}{5} \frac{5}{3} \frac{15}{8} \frac{15}{8} \frac{11}{6} \frac{2}{2} \frac{12}{7} \frac{13}{4} \frac{1}{1} \frac{11}{12} \frac{7}{7} \frac{11}{4} \frac{4}{7} \frac{4}{7}$

Sure- ly good- ness and lov- ing kind- ness shall fol- low me

$\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} \frac{7}{5} - \frac{10}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$
 $\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} \frac{7}{5} - \frac{10}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$
 $\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} \frac{7}{5} - \frac{10}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$

all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house

$\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} \frac{7}{5} - \frac{10}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$
 $\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} \frac{7}{5} - \frac{10}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$
 $\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} \frac{7}{5} - \frac{10}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$

of the Lord for- ever more.

$\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} \frac{7}{5} - \frac{10}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$
 $\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} \frac{7}{5} - \frac{10}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$
 $\frac{7}{2} \frac{10}{9} \frac{6}{11} \frac{2}{2} \frac{18}{7} \frac{8}{5} \frac{19}{11} \frac{15}{11} \frac{12}{11} \frac{10}{9} \frac{7}{5} - \frac{10}{7} - \frac{5}{3} \frac{18}{4} \frac{7}{7} \frac{5}{9} \frac{16}{12}$

The second page¹² proceeds largely in a similar way, including a lengthy passage comprised of Intervals of Approach in all voices on the text “Yea, tho I walk thru the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil.” It is only at the very end of this line that the lower Adapted Viola voice ascends via a 7/6 Interval of Emotion, triggering the voice to mirror the action with a descending 9/7. The balance of this line, “for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me”, contains a startling number of Intervals of Emotion – the Intoning Voice line contains a nearly equal quantity of Intervals of Approach and Emotion (eight and seven, respectively), and the Adapted Viola continues this gesture ultimately arriving at parallel ascending Intervals of Suspense. As though resolving this dramatic gesture, the full texture reverts to primarily Intervals of Approach on the third page.

From here on, there is almost no break in the text. Small inclusions of Adapted Viola dyads – or in one case a pair of dyads – punctuate the otherwise uninterrupted gesture, and with the exception of the pair of dyads, they are all Intervals of Approach that function as passing tones. As for the pair of dyads, which separates the two sentences on this page, it is introduced by a large ascent: the upper voice ascends via an Interval of Emotion, the lower via an Interval of Suspense – a gesture that resolves the wide 9/7 major third to a pure 6/5 minor third.

During the first sentence of page three (beginning “Thou preparest”), the vocal line shows an increase in emotional gesture, including several Intervals of Emotion and one Interval of Suspense, similar to the opening of the work. The final sentence sees a calming of the intervallic content: the most varied points occur with a dramatic inflection on ‘Surely’, an imitative variation of this same gesture on ‘all’, and then a dramatic descent via a 45/32 Interval of Suspense (590.2 cents) into the word ‘Lord’, itself followed by a simple stepwise descent. The Adapted Viola echoes all of this, following the dramatic gesture on ‘all’ with parallel descending Intervals of Suspense that perhaps resolve those that prepared this final page. After the text is finished, the Viola continues with a dramatic ascent via parallel 4/3 Intervals of Power that leads to a wavering mixture of Intervals of Approach and Emotion to conclude the setting.

Throughout *The Lord is My Shepherd*, Partch uses the Adapted Viola to emphasize the inflections in Rinder’s delivery of this Psalm, opting for a very dense and chromatic language in all voices to string together long chains of Intervals of Approach that allow the other interval categories to stand out, especially in moments where they are at the forefront of this gestural language.

Finally, we will look at Partch’s *December 1942*, a collection of short settings for Intoning Voice and Adapted Guitar (1942), and compare two of these to new settings of the same poems Partch completed in 1949 and 1950. Note that in these

12 Note occasional letters (a, b, or c) placed before or after ratios. In Partch’s earliest work with ratios, these suggested alterations to the given pitch: a letter before the ratio indicated a lowering of the pitch and a letter after indicated a raising of the pitch. The letters did not have a precise size, but c was the smallest deviation (4–6 cents), b was next (7–10 cents), and a was largest (14–18 cents). Letters could also be combined, with bc therefore between b and a, and other combinations of letters indicating still larger deviations.

works, the open circle no longer signifies a rest, but instead indicates open strings on the Adapted Guitar – from low to high: 8/5, 1/1, 5/4.

The first piece in this set, *Come Away, Death*, begins with an Adapted Guitar passage comprised mainly of Intervals of Approach that lead to the vocal entrance. The single Interval of Suspense leaps up by a 16/11 to 1/1, and is followed by a line that descends by step to 5/3 before ascending by smaller steps back to 1/1. The following line, or slight variations thereof, appears throughout *Come Away, Death*, and clarifies the relationship between the Adapted Guitar and the voice – here both begin with a long passage on a single pitch (1/1 in the Guitar and 8/5 in the voice) before expressing complementary gestures. The voice descends with a 4/3 Interval of Power (in this case on the word ‘death’), then ascends by a 6/5 Interval of Emotion while the Guitar ascends by a 6/5 Interval of Emotion before descending by a 2/1 Interval of Power. The Guitar rises through three Intervals of Emotion before it is rejoined by the voice – both parts continue on repeated tones.

The Adapted Guitar descends into the next phrase with two Intervals of Emotion before the same pattern of complementary gestures is repeated. To end this opening stanza, the Guitar proceeds solely by Intervals of Approach, all between 5/4 and 16/15, while the voice takes on a more expressive role, interrupting its passage of Intervals of Approach with a descending 4/3 Interval of Power on ‘prepare’ and later, underscoring the words “no one so true”, an extended passage of Intervals of Emotion that first ascends via a large major third (32/25 or 427.4 cents) before descending a full octave through three further Intervals of Emotion and one 15/14 Interval of Approach.

Similar relationships appear through the next page, leading to a departure from the text where voice (on ‘nah’) and Adapted Guitar both proceed through a dramatic passage of Intervals of Approach. Densely microtonal, these two lines sometimes move in parallel and sometimes are contrary, and near the end the voice leaps via a 7/6 Interval of Emotion to join the Guitar at a unison in the middle of the passage, from which point each line moves independently away from the other.

These Intervals of Approach continue through the return of the text and lead to the only Interval of Suspense in the vocal part: a descending 64/45 (609.8 cents) at the end of “Lay me O!” that disrupts the established relationship of Intervals of Power and Emotion between the voice and Adapted Guitar. From here, the voice descends via Intervals of Approach to the end, where the Guitar adds a simple codetta that reiterates its characteristic gestures with a descending 2/1 Interval of Power and a final pair of Intervals of Emotion.

The Heron is the shortest setting in *December 1942*, and includes a scordatura for the Guitar, retuning one of the two strings of the lowest course to 4/3, and leaving the other at 8/5. The 6/5 between these strings is heard any time this lowest course is sounded (the given ratio indicates the pitch of the higher note), creating a stirring color that carries this simple setting.

The Heron begins with one measure of Intervals of Approach in the Guitar followed by two that feature contrapuntal Intervals of Emotion between voice and Guitar that are shrunk down to Intervals of Approach in the final bar of the introduction.

DECEMBER, 1942

Three Settings for Guitar (Adapted) and Voice

1. Come Away, Death (Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night')
2. The Heron (Tsurayuki - Waley Trans.)
(13th century Japanese)
3. The Rose (Ella Young)

To Clara Shanafelt COME AWAY, DEATH

Voices

Guitar

trem. — $\frac{9}{7}$ — $\frac{4}{3}$ — $\frac{11}{8}$ + $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{12}{7}$ $\frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{30}{11}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ + $\frac{1}{1}$

Voices Come away, come away, death $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ and in sad cypress $\frac{3}{2}$ (free --)

Guitar trem. — $\frac{1}{0}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{1}{0}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ ($\frac{5}{4}$ slide high string over edge) $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{7}{4}$ trem. — $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{11}{6}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{4}{3}$

Fig. 5a-d: *Come Away, Death*, from *December 1942*, unpublished manuscript (1942), pp. 1-4. Images from Music and Performing Arts Library Harry Partch Collection, 1914-2007 (series 35/3/82), Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Voice let me be laid Fly away, fly away, breath, 3

8/5 5/5 5/4 3/2

Guitar 16/15 6/5 15/8 trem. 1 1 16/15 (5/4 did string over)

0 0 0 0 0 0

Voice am slain by a fair cruel maid. My shroud of white,

3/2 (free) 15/8

Guitar trem. trem. 1

3/2 7/4 16/15 14/12 6/5

0 0 0 0 0

11/6 16/15 4/3 5/4 15/8

0 0 0 0 0

Voice stuck all with yew, O prepare it My part

16/9 1/1 1/2 3/2 5/3

Guitar trem. 6/5 5/4 5/4 6/5 16/15

16/15 10/9 5/4 0 0 5/3

5/3 16/9 0 3/2 3/2 0

0 0 0 0 0 0

Voice of death, no one so true did share it.

6/5 15/8 15/8 8/5 7/4 6/5 6/5 10/9 16/15

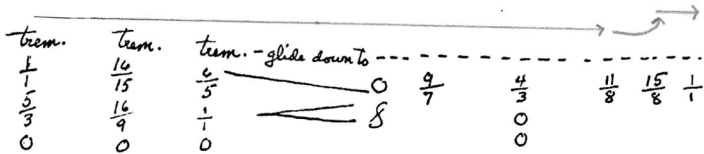
Guitar 10/9 6/5 6/5 6/5 10/9 16/15

15/8 15/8 0 15/8 16/9 5/3

0 0 0 0 0 0

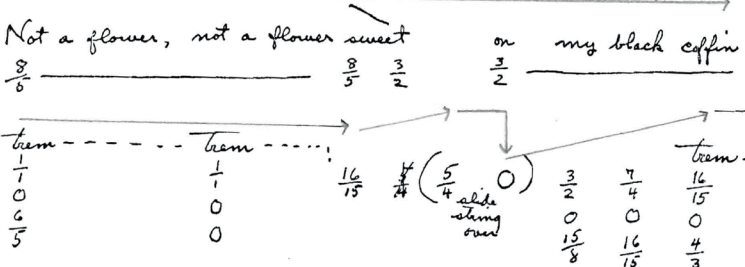
Voice!

Guitar



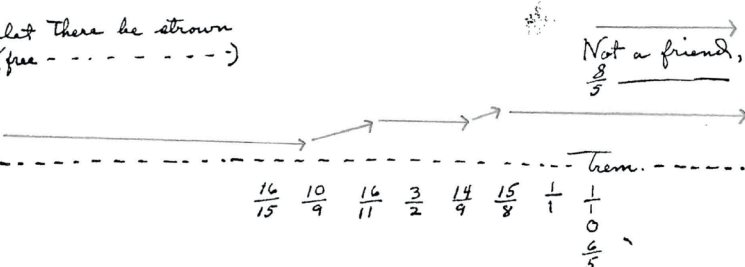
Voice

Guitar



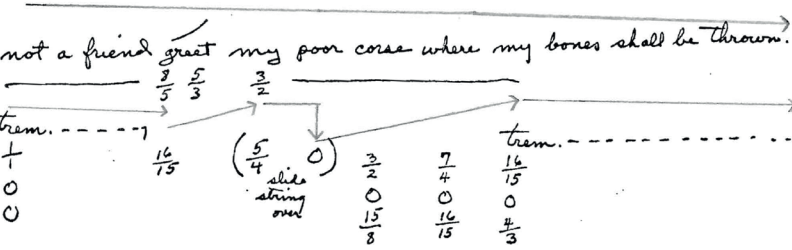
Voice

Guitar



Voice

Guitar



Voice

Nah

$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{64}{33}$	$\frac{40}{21}$	$\frac{15}{8}$	$\frac{20}{11}$	$\frac{9}{5}$	$\frac{15}{8}$	$\frac{40}{21}$	$\frac{1}{1}$
Nah	nah	nah	nah	Nah	nah	nah	nah	Nah

Gustav

$\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{6}{5}$

accel. ret.

$\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{4}{3}$ $\frac{11}{8}$ $\frac{7}{5}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{16}{11}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{14}{9}$ $\frac{8}{5}$ $\frac{5}{3}$

transp.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Voice

nah nah nah Nah — A thousand thousand sighs to save

$\frac{13}{7}$ $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{8}{5}$ $\frac{14}{9}$ $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{20}{11}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{1}{1}$

Gitar

Ans.

$\frac{12}{7}$	$\frac{7}{4}$	$\frac{20}{11}$	$\frac{15}{8}$	$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{16}{15}$	$\frac{10}{9}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{6}{5}$	$\frac{c}{5}$	$\frac{10}{9}$	$\frac{16}{15}$	$\frac{1}{1}$
			o					o				
			o					o				

Voice

Lay me O! where sad true lover never find my grave
 $\frac{1}{1} - \frac{16}{15} \frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{4}{3} \frac{5}{4}$

Günter

*f*rem. --- $\frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ $(\frac{5}{4} \text{ } 0)$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{16}{15}$

0 slide string over 0 0 0

0 $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{4}{3}$

Voice

to weep there
 $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{16}{15}$

Gustar

term. $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{15}{15}$ $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{4}{3}$
 $\frac{5}{5}$ $\frac{16}{9}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{14}{9}$
 $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{7}{9}$ $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{14}{9}$
 0 0 0 0

THE HERON

Voice

trm. $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{10}{4}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{10}{4}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{16}{9}$

Guitar
(Tune low 8/5 string down to 4/3)

$\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{10}{4}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{10}{4}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{16}{9}$

Voice

The heron - $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{1}{1}$

Its cry is mournful in the $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{8}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ - -

Guitar
(Tune low 8/5 string)

trm. (near next) $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{12}{11}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{9}{7}$ $\frac{7}{6}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{12}{11}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{9}{7}$ $\frac{7}{6}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{7}{2}$ $\frac{11}{7}$ 0 $\frac{12}{11}$ $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{12}{7}$

Voice

read plain, - -

As though it had called to mind something $\frac{6}{5}$ - - - - $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{1}{1}$

Guitar

trm. $\frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{9}{5}$ $\frac{11}{6}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{1}{1}$ 0 $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{12}{11}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{8}{7}$ $\frac{7}{6}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{7}{6}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ 0 $\frac{6}{5}$ 0

Voice

which it wanted to for - $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{10}{4}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

Guitar

trm. $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{10}{4}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

Voice

get $\frac{6}{5}$

Guitar

trm. $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{10}{4}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{16}{9}$

Fig. 6: *The Heron*, as set in *December 1942*, p. 5. Image from Music and Performing Arts Library Harry Partch Collection, 1914–2007 (series 35/3/82), Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The Guitar continues – now sounding the harmonic $6/5$ mentioned above – with an ascending $4/3$ Interval of Power and a passage of Intervals of Approach. Above this, with a descending $6/5$ Interval of Emotion, the title of the work is spoken. Returning via a descending Interval of Power, the Guitar repeats the previous gesture leaping up by a $5/4$ Interval of Emotion at the vocal entrance ('Its cry'), then continuing via Intervals of Approach (including a very large major seventh descent to the open string on the word 'mournful') while the voice leads to the word 'mournful' via Intervals of Approach, arriving with an ascending $128/105$ Interval of Emotion (342.9 cents) and a descending $4/3$ Interval of Power. This leaves the voice on a $6/5$ until the end of the word 'something', where it descends via an Interval of Emotion. Underneath this last line, the Guitar sounds a descending Interval of Emotion beneath the word 'as' before repeating its gesture for the final time. At the end, accompanying the word 'something', it descends a $4/3$, ascends a $3/2$, and descends by another $3/2$, sounding three consecutive Intervals of Power, all enhanced by the scordatura harmonic $6/5$.

The end of this setting is an imitation of the opening: voice and Guitar meet in unison to finish the text on a line nearly identical to the opening measure, and this is followed by a variation of the three subsequent bars that – through simplification – highlights the Intervals of Emotion and their transformation into Intervals of Approach.

December 1942 concludes with *The Rose*,¹³ which returns to the standard tuning of the Guitar and features a similarly simple setting. The incessant tapping on the body of the Guitar is an equal partner to the strummed chords, providing a building tension to the character of this setting. There is very little in the way of intervallic content in the voice: it uses unison Intervals of Approach for the entire first line and all but the final word of the following three lines. Lines two and three end with a descending $6/5$ Interval of Emotion on the last syllable ('eyes' and the end of 'compare', respectively), while the final line has a descending $16/15$ Interval of Approach at the start of the word 'despair' that leads into a descending $5/4$ Interval of Emotion placed, again, on the final syllable. The sung passage (on 'dah') that follows opens with an ascending Interval of Emotion that leads to continuous Intervals of Approach; the second presentation of this line follows mostly the same contour, highlighted by a pair of ascending $5/4$ Intervals of Emotion followed by descending $5/4$ Intervals of Emotion. The final gesture in the voice may be the strongest of this setting, entered via a descending $6/5$ Interval of Emotion and concluding with several Intervals of Approach.

As for the Adapted Guitar, a $1/1$ pedal continues throughout the work, and the two other voices move roughly in parallel: the quality of the interval between them shifts, but the general shape – and the interval categorization – is the same throughout.

13 After its completion, Partch cut two lines of music from this work – for the sake of space and clarity, they have not been reproduced here. As part of this revision, Partch also changed some of the chords in the first two systems, seen easily in Figure 7.

THE ROSE

Vicini

Gitar

$\frac{5}{4}$
0
11
7

thumb
↓

$\frac{5}{4}$
0
11
7

(5-finger exercise on belly)

$\frac{5}{4}$
0
2

$\frac{6}{5}$
0
2

$\frac{6}{5}$
0
2

Voice

Voice

The rose that blossoms in paradise

Guitar

Handwritten musical notation for guitar, showing fret numbers and string positions.

Voice

Voice

Guitar

Barua with an ecstasy too sweet for mortal eyes

$\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

$\frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{30}{11}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{12}{7}$ $\frac{18}{11}$

0 0 0 0 0 0 0

$\frac{11}{12}$ $\frac{8}{7}$ $\frac{7}{6}$ $\frac{7}{5}$ $\frac{4}{3}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{1}{1}$

Vorica

Voice $\frac{10}{2}$ lose it is to lose delight beyond compare $\frac{1}{2} \frac{5}{4}$
 Guitar $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ thumb p/p
 $\frac{0}{15}$ $\frac{0}{4}$ $\frac{0}{7}$
 $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{4}{3}$ $\frac{11}{7}$

Vaccin

Voice: $\overline{10 \frac{4}{3}}$ have it
 $\frac{12}{3}$ to $\frac{4}{3}$ same $\frac{4}{3}$
 Guitar: $\frac{4}{3} 0 \frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{8}{5} 0 \frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{14}{9} 0 \frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{3}{2} 0 \frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{16}{11} 0 \frac{1}{6}$ $\frac{10}{9} 0 \frac{9}{5}$ $\frac{7}{5} 0 \frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$

Fig. 7a/b: *The Rose*, as set in *December 1942*, pp. 6–8. Images from Music and Performing Arts Library Harry Partch Collection, 1914–2007 (series 35/3/82), Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Section 1:

Voice: $\text{des-} \frac{4}{3}$ $\text{pau} \frac{5}{4} \frac{1}{1}$

Guitar: $\frac{4}{3}$ 0 0 $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$
 0 0 0 $\frac{4}{3}$ $\frac{16}{11}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{16}{11}$

Voice: $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{3}{2}$

Guitar: $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$
 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
 $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{7}{5}$ $\frac{4}{3}$ $\frac{7}{5}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{16}{11}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{11}{7}$

Voice: $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$

Guitar: $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{10}{9}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$
 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
 $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{16}{11}$ $\frac{4}{3}$ $\frac{7}{5}$ $\frac{16}{11}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{4}{7}$ $\frac{3}{2}$

Voice: $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{15}{8}$ $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{11}{7}$ $\frac{1}{1}$

Guitar: $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{6}{5}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{16}{15}$ $\frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{6}{5}$
 0 0 0 0 0 0
 $\frac{11}{7}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{4}{3}$ $\frac{6}{5}$

thunder

New York City

A lengthy passage of Intervals of Approach precedes the initial vocal entrance, with a contrasting gesture of an ascending Interval of Emotion and descending Interval of Suspense (beneath ‘blooms in paradise’) countering the unchanging vocal line. This general shape is repeated, now comprised only of Intervals of Emotion, before an ascending Interval of Suspense at ‘To lose it’ responds to the return of the voice. Here, the Guitar pitches are removed for an extended passage of tapping before returning a seventh lower (this could be considered another Interval of Approach, but after such a long break from pitch material, it more likely will be heard as a new entrance absent of context) and ascending via Intervals of Emotion to a lengthy descent via Intervals of Approach alongside the text “to have it is to have”. A shorter break from the pitch material ensues, and when the Guitar tones return at ‘despair’, they quickly mirror the preceding line with an ascent via Interval of Emotion (now as two major sixths of $128/75$ and $5/3$) that leads to a long passage of Intervals of Approach in both directions and concludes with a fairly dramatic descent via an Interval of Emotion followed by an Interval of Approach. Partch leaves out entirely the sense of resolution that an Interval of Power might imply.

To demonstrate the importance Partch placed on these interval categories in his early work, we will conclude by looking at Partch’s second setting of *The Heron* and *The Rose* in his *Eleven Intrusions* (1949).¹⁴ Bearing no real relationship to the earlier works, these cannot be thought of as reorchestrations (which are fairly common in Partch’s work – *The Lord is My Shepherd*, for example, was rewritten for Intoning Voice and Chromelodeon in 1941, and Kithara was added to this score in 1943), but as new compositions that replace the previous. Scored for Intoning Voice, Adapted Guitar II, and Diamond Marimba, the instrumental possibilities are quite different, and were fairly new for Partch – in many ways *Eleven Intrusions* was Partch’s opportunity to explore composing for this expanded ensemble.

This version of *The Rose* replaces the percussive tapping with Diamond Marimba, offering a pulsating harmonic structure in place of the dry strikes of the earlier setting. Adapted Guitar II is more harmonically active than the Adapted Guitar of the first version, creating a simple, predictable counterpoint with the Diamond Marimba in some moments, and highlighting the voice in others.

The vocal line here¹⁵ is much more evocative, with lengthy descents in the opening (“The rose that blooms in Paradise Burns with an ecstasy too sweet for mortal eyes”) taking the place of the sustained $3/2$. However, though more active, it follows the intervallic categories of the first setting almost exactly, consisting entirely

14 As mentioned earlier, *Come Away Death* and the entirety of *Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po* are the only works from this period that Partch did not revisit later in his career.

15 This vocal part is written in Chromelodeon notation, showing which keys on the Chromelodeon would sound the desired pitches. This notation shows contour reasonably well, but visually implies much larger intervals than are intended.

Since the pitch material of Adapted Guitar II and Diamond Marimba is not part of this article, their notations are not discussed here. Information regarding these instruments can be found in *Genesis of a Music* on pages 203–207 and 259–267, respectively.

The Rose

(free)

The rose that blooms in Paradise

Burns with an ecstasy too-sweet for mortal eyes

But sometimes down the jasper walls A petal falls Toward

Earth and night

To lose it is to lose delight beyond

compare

To have it is to have despair

ratios: $\frac{11}{8}$, $\frac{4}{3}$, $\frac{9}{7}$, $\frac{14}{11}$, $\frac{5}{4}$, $\frac{11}{9}$, $\frac{6}{5}$, $\frac{7}{6}$, $\frac{5}{3}$, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{11}{9}$, $\frac{14}{11}$, $\frac{12}{11}$, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{32}{27}$, $\frac{11}{9}$, $\frac{1}{1}$

dynamics: pp , sf

Fig. 8: Intoning Voice part from *The Rose*, as set in *Eleven Intrusions*, with ratios added by the author

of Intervals of Approach where the former contained solely Intervals of Approach until the concluding Interval of Emotion. In this new setting, the descending Intervals of Emotion do not even encompass a third, totaling only a $55/48$ (235.7 cents). However, in the new setting, Partch also includes a passage of the poem that he left out of the previous: “But sometimes down the jasper walls A petal falls Toward Earth and night.” In this line, Partch continues the descent via Intervals of Approach – by the end, the total descent is an $11/9$ (347.4 cents), providing a much subtler introduction than in *December 1942* over nearly the same pitch space. From here, the interval categories match perfectly: Intervals of Approach head towards ‘compare’ and ‘despair’, and each of those words ends with a descending Interval of Emotion. The *Eleven Intrusions* setting concludes with a simple codetta making use of the primary Adapted Guitar II gesture instead of with a contrasting vocal melody – this serves to enhance the poignancy of the final line of text.

The last work to examine is Partch’s second setting of *The Heron*, titled *The Crane* (1950) in *Eleven Intrusions*. The Diamond Marimba provides an undulating background and Adapted Guitar II supports the voice with ornamentations of its line. Though completely different in character and content, the vocal line opens with a passage comprised of Intervals of Emotion and resolves it with a passage comprised of Intervals



Fig. 9: Intoning Voice part from *The Crane*, as set in *Eleven Intrusions*, with ratios added by the author

of Approach, just as in the earlier setting. An additional vocal gesture is added, again comprised solely of Intervals of Emotion, and serves to highlight the arrival of the text.

As for the text itself, this line follows a contour very similar to that of the first setting, replacing the Interval of Power at ‘mournful’ with a pair of Intervals of Emotion, and extending the line via descending Intervals of Approach. The text is interrupted by another call of Intervals of Emotion, and ends, on “as though it had called to mind something which it wanted to forget”, with a passage of Intervals of Approach that – as in the opening of *The Rose* – replace a straightforward descending Interval of Emotion with a series of descending Intervals of Approach. Since, unlike the original setting, this marks the end of the vocal part, the result is a more mournful closure to the work, leaving only the anticipation of resolution.

In each of these two instances where Partch revisited a work, he simplified the intervals used, drawing greater attention to the Intervals of Emotion that remained. This distillation of the original idea emphasizes the text in a way that the earlier settings only hinted at. His desire to draw out the character of the text in this way – aided by the increased possibilities provided by Diamond Marimba and Adapted Guitar II – must have been one of the determining factors in his decision to set these works a second time.

As mentioned above, the One-Footed Bride is not a prescriptive compositional tool for Partch, but rather a guideline that he utilized when considering a listener’s

perception of emotional content. In many ways, the recompositions in *Eleven Intrusions* highlight this best, demonstrating the elements he considered most critical to his settings. By replacing straightforward Intervals of Emotion with lengthy descents that outline such an interval and finding other, similar methods of preserving content while embellishing contour, Partch was able to highlight the emotional character of the vocal line and score in a way that emphasizes his treatment of the text.

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Der doppelte Po und die Musik

Rätoromanisch-chinesische Studien, besonders zu
Li Po, Harry Partch und Chasper Po

Herausgegeben von

Mathias Gredig, Marc Winter,

Rico Valär und Roman Brotbeck

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