THE FALLOW GROUND: A COMPOSITION FOR PIERROT ENSEMBLE

WITH PERCUSSION AND MALE VOICE

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The inspiration for *The Fallow Ground* is the time period of the Second Great Awakening (1790-1840s) and, in particular, the life and impact of one of the period's central figures: Charles Grandison Finney. Finney was a lawyer-turned-evangelist whose preaching style led to explosive and emotional conversions and helped spread the fire of revival throughout the state of New York and eventually throughout the country. In *The Fallow Ground* I have taken different events from Finney’s life and the revivalist culture to create musical analogs that examine and critique the events within a twenty-first century musical aesthetic.

Quotation and allusion of revival period hymns play a significant part in *The Fallow Ground*. Inspired by the works of Ives, Crumb, Ligeti, and Schnittke, quotation is used in this piece to develop or subvert the material, thus creating different contextual meanings from familiar material. In this way, the quotation not only alludes to an idea outside of the piece, but also casts a critical view of that idea by its placement in the context of the piece. Concerning the instrumentation, *The Fallow Ground* is written for what is commonly called the Pierrot ensemble (flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, and percussion) with male soloist. In my piece, the soprano has been replaced by a baritone soloist. The piece, approximately thirty minutes in length, has a chiastic five-movement structure with each of the movements depicting certain events or concepts that were prevalent during the time of Charles Finney and the Second Great Awakening.
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PART I

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *THE FALLOW GROUND*
Chapter 1
Introduction

The Life and Impact of Charles Grandison Finney

The inspiration for my composition *The Fallow Ground* is the time period of the Second Great Awakening (1790-1840s) and, in particular, the life and impact of one of the period's central figures: Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875). Finney was a lawyer-turned-evangelist whose theology went against the prevailing Calvinist belief of election\(^1\) and emphasized the free will of the congregant and his ability to choose either salvation or damnation. At his revivals, Finney's preaching style catered to the average man and diminished the role of intellectual rhetoric in favor of a more dramatic and theatrical way of preaching. This led to explosive and emotional conversions and helped spread the fire of revival throughout the state of New York and eventually throughout the country.

This time in American history interests me because rugged individualism, manifest destiny, and the importance of Christianity within the American consciousness were all cultivated within this culture of revival. Rather than being traced to the Gospels and writings of the early apostles of Christ, many of the practices and beliefs presumed sacred or essential in the conservative Christian church in America today were largely developed only a few hundred years ago in revivals across England and the United States. Multiculturalism, the ability to share information globally, and the shift from modern to post-modern thought has led some Christians to question their culturally inherited religion, and to examine critically the assumptions of this type of Christianity.

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\(^1\) One of the key doctrines of Calvinism is that God predestined before the beginning of time those who would be saved, making those people unconditionally elected since they were not chosen based on any earthly merit.
I consider myself to be one those Christians who over time have become increasingly aware of the disconnect between what Jesus actually taught and what the church chooses to affirm. Coming from a conservative Christian upbringing but having found myself leaning increasingly leftward as I try to live a Christ-like life, I feel that the revivalse movement of the 19th-century and Finney's effect, in particular, are still seen today in a variety of ways ranging from current trends in conservative evangelicalism to the way political rallies are conducted. The Fallow Ground is a musical exploration into the life of Finney that on one hand acknowledges his encounter with the divine and on the other hand, offers critiques of some of his evangelistic practices.

The Second Great Awakening occurred in the frontiers and outlying boundaries of the original thirteen colonies. While the First Great Awakening (1740s) was mainly contained in New England, this second awakening erupted in settlements along the country’s boundary. The two innovations that led to the rekindling of religious fervor were the itinerant preacher system and the camp meeting. The former was originally developed by Methodists to take advantage of the small number of clergy in comparison to the vast territory of far-flung settlers needing pastoral support. The itinerant system was designed so that one preacher would be in charge of numerous parishes rather than the traditional one-pastor-per-parish system used commonly in other Protestant denominations. Above all, this was a practical solution to the ever-growing frontier expanse where people were often located far from the confines of a local parish. These “circuit riders” would ride from village to village, fine-tuning and increasing their sermon’s

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dramatic effect with each stop. This Methodist and later Baptist system placed greater importance on dynamic preaching and individual piety over theological training.4

The second innovation of this period was the camp meeting. The first recorded camp meeting occurred along the Gasper River in Kentucky in July 1800. Because of the sparse human population of the American frontier, meetings at central junctions or river crossings were common so that the Christians could hear the preaching of the Word and take communion. The meeting at the Gasper River was unique in that “on the first night, after formal indoor services were over, discussion groups of ‘seriously exercised Christians’ spontaneously staged a revival of their own. The net result was that most of the ministers and several hundred worshippers remained at the meeting house all night.”5 In addition to the exhaustive scope of the event, a second characteristic of these meetings was the rapturous emotional and bodily responses of convicted congregants not dissimilar to the revivals of the First Great Awakening. A myriad of physical reactions, from shaking and rolling to weeping and screaming, where all attributed to manifestations of the Holy Spirit convicting a sinner for his wayward lifestyle. While these experiences varied from person to person, the affected person would “uniformly avowed that they felt no bodily pain; that they had the entire use of their reasons and reflection, and when recovered, they could relate everything that had been said or done near them.”6

As itinerant preachers rode across the frontier from camp meeting to camp meeting, the revival gradually grew into a social and religious movement from which it received the name awakening. Despite the spontaneous congregational responses of the early camp meetings, camp

4 Steve Bruce, Pray TV: Televangelism in America (New York: Routledge, 1990), 6.
6 Ibid., 58.
meetings became more formal and routine with a number of denominations turning the camp meeting into an annual event. Many early church leaders considered the uncontrollable manifestations of the Spirit to be potentially dangerous and condemned the common practice of both male and females meeting together in the evening, fearing that this could lead to licentious behavior. This concern was addressed by separating the men and women, lighting the grounds of the meeting, and only allowing more subdued expressions of the Spirit. By the second decade of the eighteenth century, camp meetings were coordinated and planned to go along with the equally organized nature of the growing towns and cities now populating the once sparse frontier.7

In addition to the camp meeting, a theological debate over man’s ability to turn from sin would play a vital role in shaping the second awakening and the message of its leading preacher: Charles Finney. The overriding Protestant view of the 18th century was Calvinism. Based on the teachings of the Protestant Reformation theologian John Calvin, two of the key tenants of Calvinism were: (1) that God has predestined before the beginning of time those who will go to heaven, “the elect”, and those who will go to hell; and (2) since the decision has already been made, man is totally incapable under his own volition to turn away from sin and subsequently avoid eternal judgment. According to this belief, the church member would have to wait passively for the Holy Spirit to descend upon him and thus provide the evidence for being among the elect.8

The conflicting view of Calvinism was Arminianism, the belief that man had free will to choose whether or not to turn from sin. This was the view of Methodists and Baptists along with

7 Bruce, 8-9.
8 Ibid., 3.
Charles Finney, a vehement opponent of Calvinism despite his membership in the Calvinistic Presbyterian church, who stated that the sinner’s “can not is his will not. The will is free and...sin and holiness are voluntary acts of mind [emphasis mine].” In other words, Finney considered man’s will to be free and thus to be capable of turning from sin by his own power of will. Since man’s final destination was no longer predestined by a Being beyond man’s reach, it was now up to the preacher to convince the sinner that if he did not choose to follow Christ, he would suffer the consequence of an eternity in hell.

Arminianism offered the ideal theology for a country only beginning to unearth its vast resources and potential. The American frontier was made-up of men and women who possessed within their own hands and hard work the ability to shape their own destiny here on earth. It only stood to reason that those same people should have the same resources and ability to determine their eternal destiny as well. It is within this context that Finney emerged, a man whose preaching and personality would transform the Christian message and how it would be delivered for years to come.

Charles Grandison Finney was born in 1792 in Litchfield County, Connecticut and moved with his family to Oneida County in western New York in 1794. Finney was not drawn to religion as a youth but studied law, passing the bar exam at the age of twenty-five, a career that took advantage of his sharp and logical intellect. Though he attended a Presbyterian church, he was not a firm believer in the overriding Calvinistic doctrine of predestination as presented at his local church. It was during his legal studies that he began to read the Bible and came to the conclusion that it was out of a man’s free will that one could choose to repent and follow God.

10 Bruce, 10.
Finney became convinced that salvation was not strictly a gift from God to the elect but was something that could be grasped by the individual. Finney was twenty-nine when he began to develop these ideas and it was just days later when he would have an encounter with the supernatural in his own law office.¹¹ Years later, Finney would write an account of that experience:

The Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love...I wept aloud with joy and love; and I do not know but I should say, I literally bellowed out the unutterable gushings of my heart. These waves came over me, and over me, and over me, one after the other, until I recollect I cried out, “I shall die if these waves continue to pass over me.” I said, “Lord, I cannot bear any more”; yet I had no fear of death.¹²

Finney was inextricably changed. He left his law firm immediately claiming that he now had a “retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead his cause” and began witnessing throughout the town to whoever would listen.¹³ Finney was a commanding presence whose tall stature, piercing blue eyes and ability to plead the cause of Christ was unlike any of his fellow clergymen. Rather than take the passive stance of waiting for the Spirit to descend, Finney argued that a person could claim repentance if the presentation of the Gospel was persuasive enough. This belief, as well as Finney’s background as a layman, marked a significant break from traditional protestant norms. Finney had no formal training from a seminary and later refused the offer to study at Princeton. Following Finney, no other upper-level seminarian would ever rise to become a popular evangelist.¹⁴ Along that same vein, Finney also held to the

¹¹ Weisberger, 89-91.
¹³ Weisberger, 93.
¹⁴ Ibid., 94.
supremacy of the Scriptures as his main source of knowledge and way of understanding God. Finney was a literal interpreter of the Bible and read the Bible like he “would have understood the same or like passages in a law book”\(^{15}\); and when confronted by difficult questions he could go “directly to the Bible, and to the philosophy and workings of my own mind, as revealed in consciousness.”\(^{16}\) With his legal training, Finney could build a logical argument for salvation to satisfy the intellectual but he was also a self-made man, a layman without academic training who could relate to the common man.

The clergy of the St. Lawrence Presbytery were concerned over Finney’s differences in doctrine and methods and yet could not deny the numerous converts Finney was accumulating. The clergy board reluctantly passed Finney and he headed out on his mission to save souls.\(^{17}\) In 1824, Finney began his ministry in the small farming villages of the Ontario frontier and soon garnered congregational responses similar to those in the early Kentucky camp meetings. Finney was a force of nature at the pulpit, bluntly telling his listeners to stand-up and decide to follow Christ, and if they remained seated he was recorded as saying, “Then you are committed. You have rejected Christ and his gospel; and ye are witnesses one against the other, and God is witness against you all.”\(^{18}\) The response to his preaching was profound and immediate. Finney’s message caused people to wail, groan, and convulse in the presence of the Almighty. Finney recounts that on one occasion people began falling to the ground so quickly in acts of contrition that “if I (Finney) had had a sword in my hand, I could not have cut them off...as fast as they

\(^{15}\) Finney, *Memoirs*, 42.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 51-60.

\(^{17}\) Weisberger, 95-96.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 96-97.
Finney’s notoriety spread as he travelled throughout western New York, leaving in his wake scores of “broken down” people who had succumbed to Finney’s message.

Finney’s ministry and influence steadily grew, reaching a new threshold in 1932 when Finney moved to New York City to begin work at the Chatham Street Chapel and later founding the Broadway Tabernacle. This new position allowed Finney the opportunity to preach to thousands of individuals, yet remain in a single location. Finney was also a staunch abolitionist and in 1935 became a professor at Oberlin College in Ohio which was at the time one of the leading institutions in promoting equal rights to African-Americans and women. Finney would go on to become president of Oberlin College from 1851-1866.

Overview of The Fallow Ground

In *The Fallow Ground* I have taken different events from Finney’s life and the revivalist culture to create musical analogs that examine and critique the events within a twenty-first century musical aesthetic. The title of the piece refers to a verse from the Bible Finney used in one of his lectures. The verse comes from Hosea 10:12 and reads: “Break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” The “fallow ground” of Finney’s period would have been the burgeoning American frontier, a land laying dormant and waiting for the plowshare of religious revival.

Quotation and allusion found in revival period hymns that develop or subvert the material of *The Fallow Ground* play a large role in creating different contextual meanings for familiar material. My attitude towards quotation and allusion differ slightly from the nostalgic affect

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19 Ibid., 97.


21 Ibid., 38.
conjured by the music of composers such as Charles Ives. While nostalgia and creating the sense of a different time and place are inherent in a given quote, my intent was to create a different sensibility by further fragmentation and abstraction of the material, similar to the method Alfred Schnittke used in borrowing materials in many of his pieces. In this way, the quotation not only alludes to an idea outside of the piece, but also casts a critical view of that idea by its placement in the context of the piece.

Concerning the instrumentation, *The Fallow Ground* is written for what is commonly called the Pierrot ensemble. This ensemble, which originally consisted of soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, was made famous in Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, composed in 1912. Since that time, percussion has been added to the standard Pierrot ensemble, while the vocalist’s part is occasionally omitted. In my piece, the soprano has been replaced by a baritone soloist whose primary role throughout the piece is reading excerpts from Finney’s own sermons. Thus, the baritone portrays Finney in the way he delivers the text and in how he interacts with audience and instrumentalists, who often take the role of a responsive congregation.

As in Schoenberg’s piece, *The Fallow Ground* requires a number of the instrumentalists to double on certain instruments within their family: the flutist doubles on the piccolo and alto flute, the clarinetist doubles on the E-flat clarinet and B-flat bass clarinet, and the pianist doubles on accordion. The piece, approximately thirty minutes in length, has a chiastic five-movement structure with each of the movements depicting certain events or concepts that were prevalent during the time of Charles Finney and the Second Great Awakening.
Chapter 2

The Use of Quotation and Allusion

Historical Precedents

While there are numerous examples in Western music history of composers borrowing preexisting musical materials, perhaps the composer most well known for his use of musical quotation is the American Charles Ives. Ives’s music is populated with hymns, patriotic tunes, and folk songs. Of particular interest is the fluidity by which quotations enter into and exit out of Ives’s music. This effect is achieved by using fragments of the full quotation as thematic material so that when the quotation finally appears, it does so in an organic fashion since its basic components of rhythm or melody have already been firmly established. A clear example is found in the second movement Ives’s Second Symphony where the rhythmic component of the hymn tune “Bringing in the Sheaves” is firmly established before the the melody actually appears. In response to Ives’s example, the use of quotation in *The Fallow Ground* is more than a surface layer feature. Rather, key elements of the quotations, whether they be melodic, rhythmic, or contour-based, saturate the material so that the quotations naturally and inevitably grow out of the music.

While George Crumb’s musical and notational styles are iconoclastic in comparison to other contemporary composers, Crumb’s work is still grounded within the larger context of Western music in large part because of his frequent use of quotation and allusion to older pieces and musical forms. Works by Mahler, particularly *Das Lied von der Erde*, are commonly quoted or alluded to in ways that vary from the obvious to the obscure. More specifically, Crumb’s

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quotation of a piece by J.S. Bach in *Ancient Voices of Children* serves as a model for how quotation is handled in *The Fallow Ground*.

In the fourth movement of *Ancient Voices of Children*, “Each afternoon in Granada, a child dies each afternoon,” Crumb quoted the song “Bist du bei mir” from Bach’s *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*. The melody and simple accompaniment is played on a toy piano and transposed a minor seventh up from the original key of E-flat. The marimbists underscores the toy piano by rolling a g minor chord while the melody gradually slows down, “like clockwork of toy running down,” and ends on an unresolved dominant sonority. Crumb’s use of quotation in this example along with the instrumentation and unfinished cadence achieves the effect of the child dying. The translated title of the Bach piece “You are with me” is fitting and ironic as the melodic fragment takes place amid the description of a mother losing her child. Similarly, *The Fallow Ground* makes use of quotation to create complex layers of meaning throughout the whole of the work.

In contrast to Crumb’s quietly ironic and often times subtle use of the quotation, György Ligeti’s anti-anti-opera *Le Grand Macabre* uses quotation and allusion in order to invite the listener into an absurd and subversive sound world. The most outlandish of all the quotations and allusions in the work is Ligeti’s incorporation of the passacaglia from the fourth movement of Beethoven’s “Eroica” Symphony as the basis for a processional by the opera’s antagonist. Ligeti takes the twelve-note passacaglia rhythm and overlays a twelve-tone row onto the rhythm. Since the twelve tone row is similar in contour to Beethoven’s original pitches, the borrowed material is recognizable despite different pitch content. As the passacaglia repeats, the scordatura violin plays a chromatic “ragtime two step,” parade drums play a mix-metered march, and screeching
woodwind parts are gradually layered in a musical collage that illustrates the actions on stage.

While *The Fallow Ground* avoids direct comic elements of quotation, the use of a borrowed rhythm laying the groundwork for a passacaglia is implemented in the third movement “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer.”

A further and more recent example of quotation is the work of Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998) and in particular his String Quartet No. 3 from 1984. This work is built around three diverse quotations: (1) a cadence from Orlando di Lasso’s *Stabat mater*, (2) the subject of Beethoven’s *Grosse fugue*, Op. 133, and (3) Shostakovich’s D-S-C-H signature. These three quotations are clearly presented at the beginning of the piece and are combined and transformed in the following two movements. In choosing these three pieces, Maria Bergamo states that Schnittke set out to “explore the inherent possibilities of this material, to discover its potential in a new context, to experiment with the correlations created by transplanting these vestiges of a bygone musical world and which can possibly imbue them with a new significance.” In using quotations from older hymns and religious songs, I have also sought to imbue new meaning on the quotations by its placement within the context of the larger work.

**Extramusical Allusion and Programmatic Elements in *The Fallow Ground***

In order to convey historical perspective and a sense of narrative, programmatic elements abound in *The Fallow Ground*. Historic events or practices are illustrated in all five of the movements and range from expressing abstract experiences such as spiritual conversion to depicting the sights and sounds of a Finney-led revival.

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The first movement depicts the moment Finney first experienced the power of God as described earlier in the paper. Finney would later liken the experience to “a wave of electricity” that took over his entire body and mind. His sudden and dramatic conversion led him to leave his law firm and immediately begin evangelizing those in his community. The “wave of electricity” is expressed through the music by the feverish woodwind gestures in the opening and the highly rhythmic pulsing of the percussion and piano. This energy culminates as the piano and strings scurry from their lower to higher registers while the woodwinds press forward in repetitive minimalistic rhythmic figures. The rhythmic energy eventually subsides as the texture thins, leaving but a soft vibraphone roll and *sul ponticello* string figures. This mimics Finney’s experience following the “wave of electricity” in which he was taken to an ethereal realm of light. A piccolo solo in the lower part of its range breaks the ethereal and static texture created by the piano, vibraphone, and strings. This evocative piccolo solo returns transformed in the final movement and can be seen as the faint voice of God.

The second movement depicts the energy and excitement of a Finney-led camp meeting in Oneida County, New York 1827. The movement includes many allusions to sounds of a rural community. The opening clarinet and flute duet along with a triangle roll usher in the festivities while the strings interrupt on double stops. The clarinetist plays most of the movement on an E-flat clarinet. With its higher, brighter, and squeakier tone, the E-flat clarinet adds an out-of-tuneness to the ensemble and helps simulate an amateur band. Adding to the color of the ensemble is the accordion played by the pianist or optionally played by a separate performer. The rhythmic double stops in the strings gradually gain momentum and, with the help of the
accordion, together they plunge into a highly syncopated mixed-meter melody that makes prominent use of open strings.

A section of call and response between the strings and woodwinds and the driving force of toms and woodblock in the percussion lead to a sudden return of the opening woodwind duet now played by the violin and accordion. The chimes interrupt the texture as if tolling from a church steeple, quelling the musical energy and signaling the transformation of the violin and accordion duet into the melody sung during the Christian doxology. Before the duet is able to properly cadence on the final resolution of the doxology, the chimes reappear playing a slightly unorthodox tolling of the Westminster chimes melody. The chiming accelerates until it is joined by the rest of the ensemble in the syncopated melody led by the strings and accordion.

The rhythmic double stop accents and fiddle-like gestures continue in the strings until the violin, cello and accordion all join into a canon supported by a barn dance accompaniment: the alto flute and bass clarinet provide a steady quarter-note bass line that alternates between tonic and dominant while the woodblock accents the up-beat. The barn dance gains momentum as the canon transforms into series of sixteenth notes, until a low F in the accordion signals for the dance to immediately come to a halt. The violin emerges above the drone of the accordion, making use of open string double stops as a reference to the woodwind duet from the beginning of the movement, as well as an imitation of fiddle playing. Beginning hesitantly, the violin slowly plays the doxology first in the low register but quickly jumps to the higher register, all the while growing more confident and reverent with each measure.

The climax of the melody is reached through a series of rapid gestures, leading to a recapitulation of the call and response section between the woodwinds and strings. The energy of
the call and response is momentarily suspended once again by the tolling of the chimes. This time, the percussionist plays the correct pitches of the beginning of the Westminster chimes in the key of A-flat but plays an E-natural rather than an E-flat on the last repetition, leaving the ending open for one last crescendo on the syncopated string rhythm. The ensemble reaches the final repetition of the rhythm, yet as the final note is sounded, a chime is struck and left to ring out into the silence. This single strike of the chime announces the arrival of Finney to the pulpit, and the music of the third movement is used to underscore the emotional impact of Finney’s words read by the narrator.

Following the emotional sermonizing and musical uproar of the third movement, the fourth movement opens with the clarinetist walking towards an empty chair on center stage while playing fleeting and tentative gestures based upon a symmetrically structured eight-pitch tone row. Thus begins “The Anxious Seat,” a movement named after the chair or bench Finney would place in front of the pulpit for congregants to come and sit in order to consider the state of their souls. The motive behind the “anxious seat” was to place a person in a position where the combination of theatrical up-close sermonizing and pressure from the onlooking congregation would guarantee the desired revivalist result: a dramatic conversion for all to see. The “anxious seat” was one of Finney’s numerous “means”\(^\text{24}\) for producing an effective and fruitful revival; and while this practice has long since vanished in evangelical churches, the still-practiced altar call, where a sinner responds to a preacher’s call to walk down the aisle and claim salvation, is a clear outgrowth of Finney’s innovation. Since the person sitting in the “anxious seat” was intended to serve as an example for the rest of the congregation, it seemed appropriate for the

\(^{24}\) Finney, *Lectures on Revivals*, 140.
agitated music played by the solo clarinet to spread gradually to the other instrumentalists until the entire ensemble erupts in collective groans and squeals of religious ecstasy.

The final movement “The Burnt-Over District” refers to the area in western New York where numerous revivals, including Finney’s, took place. By the end of the nineteenth century, this area of the country was regarded as “burnt-over” since it was the flashpoint of numerous evangelical movements both large and small.25 While some revivals, such as Finney’s, stretched beyond the borders of western New York, most revivals burned hot but died quickly, leaving the charred remains of religious fervor. Similar to many of these revivals, this movement begins assertively but gradually loses its boldness through a sequence of musical cycles, representing the wave after wave of religious movements, until the musical remnant is but a weak and distorted ghost of its former self.

Quotation

In addition to allusion and extra-musical meaning, quotation plays a prominent role in The Fallow Ground. In order to analyze and categorize the copious quotations found in Ives’s body of work, J. Peter Burkholder created a typology to systematize the different ways Ives borrowed musical materials.26 Some of Burkholder’s categories can additionally be used to describe how quotation is used in The Fallow Ground. These categories include 1) stylistic allusion — not alluding to a specific piece but a general type of music, 2) setting — a quotation is used with a different accompaniment, 3) programmatic quotation — a quote is used for extramusical effect, and 4) quodlibet — two quotations or more played simultaneously. A fifth

25 Weisberger, 109.

category used in *The Fallow Ground* and not described by Burkholder is fragmentation, the process of taking only a fragment of the quotation or a single element of it such as the rhythm or text. All of these methods add layers of meaning to the music that can then be developed as the piece progresses. These layers include establishing a given time period in history, contextualizing the meaning of the borrowed material within a larger narrative, and taking the listener’s expectation associated with the borrowed material and either reinforcing or subverting the expectation.

Three 19th-century hymns, “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me”, “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer”, and “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood”, are integrated into the piece through a variety of methods. All three hymns revolve around the doctrine of atonement\(^27\) and two of the hymns, “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” and “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood”, were in the top ten of most popular hymns in 1860 based on number of publications.\(^28\) While it is uncertain whether Finney sang these hymns during any of his revivals, the message of these hymns are consistent with the overall religious zeitgeist of the Second Great Awakening in that the atonement of one’s sins is manifested through a singular act of conversion.

\(^27\) The doctrine of atonement explains how the relationship between God and man has been reconciled though the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

In *The Fallow Ground*, “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” by Augustus Toplady is the most quoted and compositionally developed hymn of the three and is used as a motivic connection between movements, in addition to representing Finney and his transformation from lawyer to evangelist. The text of the hymn speaks of God as the “rock of ages” and that throughout life’s storms, the believer can count on the rock to keep him secure. The hymn’s melodic rhythm of dotted-eighths and sixteenths along with the ascending lines that begin each phrase also conveys a sense of assurance and confidence, two attributes Finney carried throughout his life.

The first movement “Like a Wave of Electricity” opens with a motive derived from the anacrusis of “Rock of Ages.” The rhythm of a dotted-eighth followed by a sixteenth note becomes one of the characteristic gestures of the entire piece (ex. 2). The “Rock of Ages” motive occurs throughout the first movement but is never developed beyond short outbursts until near the end of the movement. Following the static middle section, the frenetic energy of the first section is reinitiated by fluttering gestures in the woodwinds and a frantic ascent by the cello. Yet rather than returning to the waves of energy from the first section, a staunch dotted-rhythm ostinato grounded by resolute chords in the piano begins to emerge. Upon this foundation is placed a quotation of the hymn “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” played heroically by the cello.

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While the “Rock of Ages” motive was marked by its brevity, the cello line takes the motive and expands on it by holding certain pitches for considerably longer durations than in the original melody (ex. 3). This is the first instance of quotation in the piece and is also the first clearly pentatonic melody used in a largely pantonal environment.

Example. 2. “Rock of Ages” motive from the beginning of “Like a Wave of Electricity.”

While the swirling woodwind gestures return, they quickly join lock step with the piano and marimba as they all accompany the cello with varying permutations of the original dotted-rhythm motive. The ostinato figure is gradually lengthened until the crisp rhythm becomes a heavy and lumbering processional that crumbles under its own weight while resolving on an E-flat major sonority. The final line of the “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” melody is then played in hesitant fragments by the cello, clarinet and piano, as the E-flat major tonality becomes slightly warped with the insistent use of an E-natural in the piano harmony (mm. 108-9).
Example 3. “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” played by cello above ostinato.

In addition to these hymns, the melody from a common Protestant doxology is heard in the second movement “Oneida County, 1827.”\textsuperscript{30} The use of the doxology is strictly

\textsuperscript{30} This was the time and place in western New York where Finney began holding his highly successful camp meetings.
programmatic and adds extramusical meaning to the camp meeting festivities musically depicted in the movement. Only the last portion of the doxology melody is heard, the portion that praises the Holy Spirit, and its appearance in the music is spontaneous, sudden, and quickly vanishes before ever reaching a cadence. In its two appearances, the violin plays the doxology first as a duet with the accordion and second as a fiddle-like solo.

Example 4. Doxology quotations in “Oneida County, 1827.”

While the melodic contour and pitch material of “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” are used prevalently in the piece, the melody of the second hymn, “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer”, is not quoted or developed at all. Rather, the third movement makes use of just the hymn’s text and rhythm. Written by the poet William Cowper in the late 18th-century, “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer” is the least well known of the hymns used in The Fallow Ground. The text of the hymn speaks of the writer’s desire to be heard from God and for Him to heal all those who need His repair despite our inherent weakness of faith. The writer specifically recalls two stories found in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in which Jesus heals people based upon their faith in him. While Finney was never a faith-healer, his preaching style often caused listeners to experience sudden miraculous conversions and either indeed, part of the excitement
of these camp-meetings led by Finney and others of that period were the result of the expected emotional and dramatic outpouring of God’s power and healing upon the congregants. In this movement, the text is not sung but is spoken by the narrator as if he is invoking the power of God.

Example 5. “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer” by William Cowper (1779).31

Heal Us, Emmanuel, hear our prayer;  
we wait to feel thy touch;  
deep-wounded souls to thee repair,  
and Savior, we are such.

Our faith is feeble, we confess  
we faintly trust thy word;  
but wilt thou pity us the less?  
Be that far from thee, Lord!

Remember him, who once applied  
with trembling for relief;  
“Lord, I believe,” with tears he cried;  
“O help my unbelief!”

She, too, who touched thee in the press  
and healing virtue stole,  
was answered, “Daughter, go in peace:  
thy faith hath made thee whole!”

Like her, with hopes and fears we come  
to touch thee if we may;  
O send us not despairing home;  
send none unhealed away.

The rhythm from the hymn is also borrowed and abstracted so that it carries little evidence from of its original context. Example 6 shows the rhythm of the hymn’s opening three measures and the interpretation of that rhythm in the passacaglia found in the third movement.

Other than the final half-note, the passacaglia rhythm is an exact diminution by half of the original hymn rhythm.

Example 6. Rhythm from hymn (a) and diminution of rhythm in movement 3 (b).

The passacaglia builds towards the movement’s climax, an arrival at letter F (mm. 70) marked by the return of the “Rock of Ages” motive (ex. 7). By this time, the narrator has finished reading the text of “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer” and begins interjecting during the fermatas fragments from a sermon by Finney regarding the way a woman should and should not dress. The prevalent use of the dotted-eighth/sixteenth note rhythm alludes to Finney’s presence and anticipates his increasingly agitated remarks on fashion. The ensemble in turn represents a congregation who hushes at the fermatas to hear what the preacher says, yet breaks out into ever increasing uproars following each new comment. The narrator reaches the climactic statement, “GIVE ME DRESS, GIVE ME FASHION, GIVE ME FLATTERY, AND I AM HAPPY” while the ensemble strains under the declaration before cascading downward in a frenzy of pitches.

The “Rock of Ages” motive appears again in the fifth movement, “The Burnt-Over District,” but in contrast to its appearances in earlier movements, the proud and assertive motive becomes transformed and eventually superseded by another hymn tune. As in earlier movements, the “Rock of Ages” motive acts as an arrival point with its rhythmic retrograde found in the echoing chimes as shown in example 8.
Example 7. End of passacaglia leading to climax on the “Rock of Ages” motive.


The assertive proclamation is short-lived, however, as the instruments begin a cycle of descending gestures that eventual lead to the soft and unassuming entrance of the hymn “There is
a Fountain Filled with Blood.” This hymn’s text was also written by William Cowper and was highly popular during the 19th-century while it is similar to the previous hymns in that it speaks of the doctrine of atonement, the imagery and language Cowper used to express the suffering and death of Jesus is far more sombre and macabre.

Example 9. Original “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood” hymn tune and text.32

The hymn tune, which is first hummed at letter C (mm. 41) and eventually sung six measures later remains rooted in the key of C major while the accompanying instruments harmonize the melody in different keys such as G and A major. The particular harmonies played by the clarinet in m. 40 and the cello in m. 47 at times provide consonant support of the melody yet the occasional accidental subverts any clear sense of a single tonality. The lack of a clear foundation is amplified by the additional use of con sordino tremolos and artificial harmonics in the strings, and the use of the flute’s low register and throat tones in the clarinet.

The subdued polytonal texture is broken by the retrograde statement of the “Rock of Ages” motive first heard at the beginning of the movement and once again played loudly by the chimes. The texture soon transforms into an assertive, accented, and slightly unorthodox march akin to the robust sonorities and jaunty dotted-rhythms of the first movement. The narrator

continues to sing the hymn despite clashing with the dissonant accompanying harmony, yet it is
the harmony that eventually gives way, transforming yet again while the hymn tune presses on
unchanged. As the narrator sings the final two lines of the hymn, the accompaniment begins
subverting the melody, as well as the key, by overlaying in the woodwinds the tune of “Rock of
Ages, Cleft for Me.”

The counterpoint of the two melodies as well as the insistent chords in the piano
eventually lead to a reconciliation: the “Rock of Ages” rhythmic and melodic motive followed by
a plagal cadence, often used as the cadence for a sung “amen”, played squarely in the key of A.
Though this cadence would appear to resolve the conflict between keys and the two hymn tunes,
the cadence in A lasts only one measure before abruptly moving to B-flat in preparation for a
plagal resolution to an F chord in second inversion, as shown in mm. 67-70 in example 10.

Example 10. “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” and “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood.”
Following the establishment of the key of F major, the narrator begins a canon with the strings and woodwinds on the “Rock of Ages” hymn tune as shown in example 11. While the canon stays fixed in the key of F, the canon entrances vary, with only the clarinet entering on the expected third beat of the measure. The lyrics of this final variation of “Rock of Ages” are taken from the final verse of “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood” and imbue the melody with a sense of frailty and weakness:

Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I’ll sing thy power to save, when this poor lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave.

An open fifth built on D-flat serves as a dissonant pedal point for this last stanza, tolling the end of this revival. The narrator goes back to humming before finishing the last half of the text, and is joined in humming by the clarinetist, percussionist and pianist. A piccolo solo, similar to the one heard in the very first movement, appears in its weak lower register and hovers
plaintively above the soft humming and rolling of the vibraphone. The piece ends as the narrator
leads the ensemble in humming the first part of “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood”
underneath the soft texture of vibraphone and string harmonics. The instrumentalists are
instructed to follow the narrator in an aleatoric manner, freely humming the melody while slowly
fading away.

Example 11. Final canon with “Rock of Ages” melody and “There is a Fountain” text.
Chapter 3

Analysis of The Fallow Ground

In *The Fallow Ground*, numerous structures and compositional devices are employed that range from older elements such as chaconnes and passacaglias to twentieth-century systems such as pitch-class set theory. None of these systems work as an end in themselves but are used as ways to support the narrative of the piece. As a result, a balance between compositional techniques and human intuition is attained.

Much of the first movement’s pitch material is generated by the pitch-class set [0146]. In addition to being an all-interval tetrachord, the set also has the distinction of spelling the word AGES (pitches A-G-E-E-flat) in a certain transposition, creating an intertextual meaning between the pitch material and the hymn quotation “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me.” The [0146] set can be seen at the very beginning of the movement as the piano plays two transpositions of the set with the “Rock of Ages” rhythm (ex. 2).

One of three older techniques used in *The Fallow Ground* is an isorhythm found in the first movement. The piccolo’s accompaniment of vibraphone and piano is built off of an isorhythmic counterpoint based upon a four-note talea of different augmentations of the opening dotted-eighth-note rhythm. The isorhythm’s color is a five-note melody (G, B-flat, F, B, and B-flat) derived from the [0,1,4,6] set established at the outset of the movement. The clarinet and bottom staff of the piano part quickly follow the piccolo solo in their own isorhythm.
Example 12. Isorhythmic entrances in the piano and clarinet (beginning in mm. 58 and 65 respectively).

The third movement “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer” is the longest movement and is built around a repeated harmonic structure that is transformed in various ways as the movement progresses. The movement is in six sections with the first, third, and fifth sections containing spoken text and the second, fourth, and sixth being strictly instrumental. The first four sections alternate between soft and loud, static and rhythmic. The ensemble supports the narrator’s speech with softer music that references the playing of a church accompanist while the louder, more rhythmic sections contrast as an emotional response to what the narrator says.

The roles reverse in the final two sections as the loud and frenetic music of the fifth section sounds simultaneously with the fiery words of the narrator, while the sixth and final movement disperses the climactic energy with a drawn-out decrescendo performed by just the
instrumentalists. While the contrasting sections provide a sense of drama and unfolding tension, the main propelling force in the movement is the continuous and unrelenting chaconne upon which the movement is built.

The third movement’s chaconne is followed by five different methods of developing and deconstructing the chaconne’s harmonic progression. The original chaconne is presented in the opening six-bar piano introduction (ex. 13).

Example 13. First presentation of the chaconne in movement three.

Example 14. Symmetrical outer voices.

This presentation is voiced specifically to evoke a four-part hymn setting. The outer voices of the chaconne are individually symmetrical in arrangement and both rotate the symmetrical direction between the sixth and seventh note in the progression (ex. 14). The inner voices were not considered in the symmetrical structure and were selected based upon voice-leading and sonority. The chaconne is presented three more times with slight variations in voicing and instrumentation. At letter B (mm. 25), an aggressive piano solo based upon the chaconne harmonies interrupts the final presentation of the hymn-like chaconne and marks the
first significant transformation of the chaconne. While the earlier section steadily and predictably steps through the chord progression, here the piano proceeds through the progression with reckless abandon, at times dwelling on one chord for over two beats and at other times only spending a sixteenth note on a chord (ex. 15). The use of register and voicing is also much more extreme than in the first section, where each repetition was methodical in its movement. While the ordering of the chords never changes, the spasmodic rhythms and accents belie a sense of repetition and consistency.

Example 15. Reinterpretation of the chaconne harmony at letter B (mm. 25).

The third section begins by shifting the vertical alignment of the chaconne. In the first two sections, each chord sounded by itself regardless of its length. At letter C (mm. 36), the ensemble gradually coalesces on the final chord of the chaconne in a soft pulsing fashion (shown in ex. 16). After approximately three seconds, the flute begins repeating the two notes found in the first two chords of the chaconne yet the rest of the ensemble remains frozen on the previous sonority. Gradually the clarinet, violin, and cello join the flute in sounding two other notes from the first two chords of the chaconne but each individually enters and repeats in its own rhythm. This process reimagines the original four-voice texture as a floating mobile where the familiar chords merge and diverge, always eluding a precise arrival. The section proceeds with each instrument playing two-note fragments from the chaconne in sequence. The entrances in each
new segment of melodic fragments varies, further defying any sense of regularity. Over time the segments increase in duration and in the number of notes played. While each segment still consists of only two pitches, by the end of the section at letter E (mm. 50), the final segment contains eight notes and lasts for a duration of twenty seconds, allowing for the chaconne chords to become more pronounced and easier to distinguish.

Example 16. Third section, where chaconne becomes an aleotoric mobile.

The third transformation layers a passacaglia on top of the chaconne. The passacaglia begins in the piano and uses the chaconne’s bass line as the melodic pitch material. The march-like rhythm of the passacaglia is borrowed from the hymn “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer.” While the narrator reads the hymn text as a type of sermon, there is no other reference to
the musical elements of the hymn other than the inclusion of the rhythm at letter E (mm. 50) (ex. 17). The passacaglia/chaconne lasts for fourteen beats and is repeated four times. Instruments are added to the passacaglia with each repetition, gradually layering the harmonies of the chaconne like a scaffold. The treble voice in the piano uses an augmentation of the passacaglia beginning in mm. 54, though the rhythmic gestures in the woodwinds and strings are not tied to the bass line rhythm but were intended to direct the energy towards a climax at letter F (mm. 70). A counterpoint of the sustained tones in the upper piano is found in the tolling vibraphone chords that ring throughout the section. The vibraphone is the only instrument that does not have pitch material determined by the passacaglia’s rhythmic transformation of the chaconne. Rather, the vibraphone steps through the chaconne at a much slower pace than the rest of the ensemble.

Beginning on the anacrusis of mm. 51, the vibraphone sounds a tightly clustered voicing of the first chord of the chaconne and sounds each subsequent chord at regular intervals of four-and-a-half beats, in a manner similar to the piano at the very beginning of the movement. This temporal spacing allows for the vibraphone’s “meta chaconne” to last for the exact same duration as five iterations of the passacaglia/chaconne in the other instruments.

Example 17. Passacaglia built around the chaconne bass line and rhythm from “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer.”

The fourth development of the chaconne found at letter F (mm. 70) is similar in structure to the piano solo at letter B (mm. 25) in that the chord progression moves with a rhythmic unpredictability in the woodwinds and strings (shown in ex. 7). The duration of each of the three repetitions of the chaconne vary in large part due to the individual rhythmic gestures and the
periodic fermatas that sustain two to three of the chord tones. These fermatas freeze the musical texture to allow the narrator to interject fragments from a sermon by Finney regarding the way a woman should and should not dress. The prevalent use of the dotted-eighth/sixteenth note rhythm alludes to Finney’s presence and anticipates his increasingly agitated remarks on fashion. The ensemble in turn represents a congregation who hushes at the fermatas to hear what the preacher says, yet breaks out into ever increasing uproars following each new comment. The narrator reaches the climactic statement, “GIVE ME DRESS, GIVE ME FASHION, GIVE ME FLATTERY, AND I AM HAPPY” while the ensemble strains under the declaration before cascading downward in a frenzy of pitches.

The final transformation of the chaconne takes place at letter G (mm. 81) and is a development of the process found at letter C (mm. 36). Following the climax at mm. 79, the woodwinds and strings descend to the final chord of the chaconne. The pulsating chord is played as fast as possible with each instrument playing a slightly different rhythm. The flute begins the chaconne progression after approximately five-seconds and is gradually joined by the other instruments. This process continues as the durations and rhythmic values of the fragments grow longer. The overall texture remains muddled as the woodwinds and strings move from chord to chord in a constantly varying pattern while the vibraphone and piano gestures sporadically clarify, like a burst of light, the underlying chaconne harmony. As the texture slows and dissipates, the narrator returns with the close of his sermon.

The fourth movement “The Anxious Seat” contains a number of compositional techniques suggesting a sense of growing hysteria. In order to create the sense of exponential growth and excitement, a reverse ordering of the Fibonacci sequence was used to structure the
sections so that each section is shorter than the previous one. Unlike a structure built on multiples of two or four that can be perceived by the listener, the sections based on the Fibonacci sequence vary between odd and even numbers, creating the auditory effect of unpredictability although the ordering of the sections is highly structured. Written entirely in 3/4, except for the opening clarinet introduction, the movement begins with a fifty-five measure section and moves backwards through the sequence (55, 34, 21, 13, etc.) until the final sections are just one measure each (fig. 1).

![Figure 1. Length of sections in number of measures.](image)

Within the first section, a fifty-five measure clarinet solo is broken into smaller subsections also based on a reverse ordering of the Fibonacci sequence (fig. 2). The first subsection, twenty-one measures in length, consists entirely of the repeated pitches A-natural and A-flat. The next subsection begins with the arrival of an E-natural and lasts for thirteen measures. The process of adding individual pitches continues until the last of the eight-pitch tone row is added in mm. 57. During the clarinet solo, the vibraphone provides support with a constant eighth-note rhythm under the clarinet line. The vibraphone part mimics the additive process of the clarinet but begins with just one pitch, a D-natural, adding a new pitch at the same rate as the
clarinet. The vibraphone’s row is transposed six half-steps from the clarinet row and completes its row by mm. 59.

Figure 2. Dual phrase structures in opening clarinet solo.

In addition to this accumulation of pitches, a second process of additive rhythmic complexity occurs in the first main section of the piece as well. Rather than determining the rhythm by the Fibonacci sequence, an eleven-measure rhythmic pattern is established in measures 4-14. The rhythmic pattern is repeated four complete times in the fifty-five-measure section and each repetition gradually adds to the rhythmic complexity. The additive procedure maintains the original signature of the phrase by retaining the rests from the original rhythm but adds grace notes or divides eighth notes into two sixteenth notes (ex. 18).

Example 18. First presentation of eleven-measure rhythmic pattern (mm. 4-14).
Example 18 Continued. Final presentation in clarinet part (mm. 48-58).

The clarinet line ends by dovetailing with the piano entrance at letter B (mm. 58). As can be seen in figure 2, the eleven-measure rhythmic pattern continues beyond the Fibonacci-based sequence. The piano enters in the midst of the final rhythmic pattern as the clarinet line ends and continues to add rhythmic complexity to the rhythmic pattern until the passage is all but entirely a flurry of eighth notes. The pitch material is still extracted from the original eight-note row but the transposition of the row changes every three measures beginning in mm. 64. The first half of the piano solo moves through six transpositions of the row in break-neck fashion until the resulting pitch collection is B C G Bb F Ab Eb E (ex. 19). From that point, the piano moves through the rows in reverse order and eventually arrives back on the prime row in mm. 91. Only three full iterations of the rhythmic phrase occur since the section is 34 measures long and the fourth repetition is interrupted after only one measure.

Example 19. Transpositions used in letter B (mm 58).
The arrival of letter C (mm. 94) not only interrupts the rhythmic phrase of the piano but also breaks the repetitive eighth-notes of the wood block. While the eighth-note pulsing continues beyond letter C, the rhythm is now passed between instruments as if the anxiety once contained by the clarinet is being transferred to the other instruments in the ensemble. This contagious anxiety is exemplified in the wildly dramatic flute lines at letter D (mm. 115) that mimic earlier gestures made by the clarinet and piano.

As the movement comes to a close, the internal sections drastically become shorter until the final six sections constitute a total of only twenty measures (8, 5, 3, 2, 1, 1). Beginning at letter E (mm. 128) the ensemble crescendos above a martial snare drum rhythm for eight measures, which leads to five measures of searing clarinet multophonics. The driving eighth-note ostinato returns in the woodblock for three measures while the rest of the ensemble crescendos towards the final climax: a two measure long wail from the clarinet on its highest possible note. The rest of the ensemble joins in on their highest respective notes for one measure before a tumbling gesture in the final measure brings them all back down.

The final movement opens with two loud strikes of the chimes, the inverse rhythm of the main eighth/sixteenth note motive, as if to announce the beginning of a town meeting. The narrator, who has only spoken up to this point, begins striking a side drum in time with the percussionist’s rolls on a tom. The two crescendo towards an arrival with the remainder of the ensemble on the distinctive eighth- and sixteenth-note rhythm, while the percussionist echoes the rhythm on the chimes. However, the unison rhythm soon disintegrates into a cacophony of independent gestures.
What follows is a series of cycles, during which sonorities are transformed from dissonant to consonant, augments the rhythms, and registrally compresses. These cycles represent the numerous flames of revival that were sparked during the 19th-century; and while each revival held the promise of lasting transformation, most eventually died away. All the instruments other than percussion perform musical phrases of varying lengths that, over the course of the sixty-beat process, lead to a synchronized arrival on a minor third (ex. 20).

The final process used in the piece is perhaps the simplest: a simple canon on the “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” melody. Beginning in the vocal line, the melody is picked-up after three beats in the clarinet. The next entrance by the flute appears four bars later while the cello plays an augmentation of the rhythm. The violin’s entrance does not appear till nearly the end of the vocal line and helps transform the melody into the tune of “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood.”
Example 20. Cyclical process in the fifth movement.

5 cycles (12 beats per)

3 cycles (20 beats per)

4 cycles (15 beats per)

2 cycles (30 beats per)

8 cycles (expands by 3 beats every 2 cycles)

6 cycles (10 beats per)
Chapter 4

Conclusion

With its extensive use of quotation and musical allusion, *The Fallow Ground* positions itself within the long line of compositions by composers such as Ives, Crumb, and Schnittke. Allusions to earlier musical styles and quotations of familiar religious songs place the piece within a distinct historical context and yet the manipulation of the familiar sonorities associated with these songs create new relationships, casting a different light on the material. This is evidenced in the quotation and development of three primary hymn tunes. The hymn “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” undergoes a number of transformations from the first to the last movement while elements of the hymn’s rhythmic and melodic contour are used as motivic material and pitch material is derived from a word, “Ages,” from the hymn’s title.

The manipulation of the two other hymns are more subtle and less expansive. The text and rhythmic pattern of “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer” are used in the third movement though the melody and harmony of the hymn are unused. The only hymn sung in *The Fallow Ground* is “There is a Fountain, Filled with Blood.” This hymn is found solely in the final movement and is first used to contrast the character of the “Rock of Ages” melody before subverting it entirely in setting one of its verses to the melody of “Rock of Ages.”

Along with quotation, the five movements of *The Fallow Ground* make use of a variety of forms that aid in expressing the overarching musical narrative. A chaconne and passacaglia create a sense of ritual and maintain momentum throughout the long third movement while the fourth movement’s form based on the Fibonacci sequence creates the sense of growing energy associated with the “anxious seat.” Cyclical structures in the first and fifth movement, the first
being an isorhythm and the second being a intuitively-derived process, illustrate the repetitive pattern of revival during the early nineteenth century.

As the piece concludes with the ensemble softly humming the melody of “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood,” it is my hope that the work’s overall effect is greater than the sum of its quotations and compositional techniques. While *The Fallow Ground* begins with explosive gestures and staunch rhythms and ends in melodic whispers and hesitant rhythms, the work’s narrative is not a simple description of religious fanaticism and the possible consequences of such belief that may ultimately lead to rejection of belief. The piece’s subdued ending is seen not as a rejection of belief, but rather as an understanding of God’s presence remaining in the midst long after a revival has burned out. This sacred remnant or whisper of God is often overshadowed by the posturing of people who despite their best efforts, allow their individual aspirations to eclipse the message of the gospel. The life of Finney and the events that inspired *The Fallow Ground* are just a small part of the Judeo-Christian heritage; a story of the divine appearing to flawed individuals and the choices those individuals made in response.

Despite his flaws, Finney was one of the leading figures of the abolitionist movement and his work for social justice under the banner of Christianity cannot be ignored. *The Fallow Ground* is an attempt at recognizing the tension between affirming a good and just God and also acknowledging the short-comings of his followers past and present, myself included. This tension is inherent and unavoidable within the life of a believer, though this very tension is often ignored by the believer or considered by others as reason to dismiss belief all together. This work along with two other previous works of mine, *Ascension* (2005) and *Giving Sound to the Seeing* (2009), are evidence of an increased interest in exploring social and religious concepts within my
music and using the creative process of composition as a way of posing questions and formulating responses to these concepts. As in *The Fallow Ground*, the extra-musical issues are larger than what is possible to address in a single piece, but it is my hope that this work and others to come may serve as entry points into a larger discussion on the relationship between religion, history, and culture.
Reference List

Books and Journals


Scores


______. *Variations on a Theme by Haydn, op.56a*. New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1942.


Recordings


PART II

THE FALLOW GROUND
The Fallow Ground
for chamber ensemble
Paul David Thomas
2010
Program Note

"Break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." Hosea 10:12

The inspiration for *The Fallow Ground* is the time period of the Second Great Awakening (1790-1840’s) and, in particular, the life and impact of one of the period’s central figures: Charles Grandison Finney. Finney was a lawyer-turned-evangelist whose preaching style led to explosive and emotional conversions and helped spread the fire of revival throughout the state of New York and eventually throughout the country. In *The Fallow Ground* I have taken different events from Finney’s life and the revivalist culture to create musical analogs that examine and critique the events within a twenty-first century musical aesthetic. Quotation and allusion of revival period hymns are used in this piece to develop or subvert the material, creating different contextual meanings out of familiar material. In this way, the quotation not only alludes to an idea outside of the piece, but also casts a critical view of that idea by the way it is contextually placed within the piece.

In the end, the work's narrative is not a simple description of religious fanaticism and the possible negative consequences of such belief. Rather, *The Fallow Ground* conveys an understanding of God’s presence remaining in the midst long after a revival has burned out. This sacred remnant or whisper of God is often overshadowed by the posturing of people who despite their best efforts, allow their individual aspirations to eclipse the message of the gospel. Even with his flaws, Finney was one of the leading figures of the abolitionist movement and his work for social justice under the banner of Christianity cannot be ignored. *The Fallow Ground* is an attempt at recognizing the tension between affirming a good and just God and also acknowledging the short-comings of his followers past and present, myself included. This tension is inherent and unavoidable within a life of faith, though this very tension is often ignored by believers or considered by others as reason to dismiss belief all together. The life of Finney and the events that inspired *The Fallow Ground* are just a small part of a larger Judeo-Christian heritage, a story of the divine appearing to flawed individuals and the choices those individuals made in response.
Instruments

Flute (double on piccolo and alto flute)
B-flat Clarinet (double on bass clarinet and E-flat clarinet)
Violin
Violonecello
Percussion
  Suspended cymbal
  Triangle
  Brake drum
  Woodblock
  Temple blocks (5)
  Snare Drum
  Toms (2, high and low)
  Bass Drum
  Vibraphone
  Chimes
  Xylophone
  Marimba
Piano
Accordion (mvt. II only, may be played by separate performer)
Baritone (plays a side drum in mvt. V)
  The baritone only sings in mvt. V. At all other times the baritone acts as a narrator, playing the role of the charismatic preacher Charles Finney. The narrations, other than the text for "Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer," are taken directly from Finney's sermons and writings and should be read as if Finney were delivering the text.
Baritone narration between movements

Following Movement I
There is so little principle in the church, so little firmness and stability of purpose, that unless they are greatly excited, they will not obey God. They have so little knowledge, and their principles are so weak, that unless they are excited, they will go back from the path of duty, and do nothing to promote the glory of God. The state of the world is still such, and probably will be till the millennium is fully come, that religion must be mainly promoted by these excitements. How long and how often has the experiment been tried, to bring the church to act steadily for God, without these periodical excitements! Many good men have supposed, and still supposed, that the best way to promote religion, is to go along uniformly, and gather in the ungodly gradually, and without excitement. But however such reasoning may appear in the abstract, facts demonstrate its futility.

Following Movement II
Take up your individual sins one by one, and look at them. I do not mean that you should just cast a glance at your past life, and see that it has been full of sins, and then go to God and make a sort of general confession, and ask for pardon. That is not the way. You must take them up one by one. It will be a good thing to take a pen and paper, as you go over them, and write them down as they occur to you. Go over them as carefully as a merchant goes over his books; and as often as a sin comes before your memory, add it to the list. General confession of sin will never do. Your sins were committed one by one; and as far as you can come at them, they ought to be reviewed and repented of one by one.

Following Movement III
The world understands this testimony as you walk the streets. If you show pride, levity, bad temper, and the like, it is like tearing open the wounds of the Savior. How Christ might weep to see professors of religion going about hanging up his cause to contempt at the corners of the streets. Only “let the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but with good works;” only let them act consistently, and their conduct will tell the world, heaven will rejoice and hell groan at their influence. But O, let them display vanity, try to be pretty, bow down to the goddess of fashion, fill their ears with ornaments, and their fingers with rings. Let them put feathers in their hats, and clasps upon their arms, lace themselves up till they can hardly breathe. Let them put on their “hoop skirts and walk mincing as they go,” and their influence is reversed. Heaven puts on the robes of mourning, and hell may hold a jubilee.

Following Movement IV
If the church were far enough advanced in knowledge, and had stability of principle enough to keep awake, such a course would do; but the church is so little enlightened, and there are so many counteracting causes, that the church will not go steadily to work without a special excitement. As the millennium advances, it is probable that these periodical excitements will be unknown. Then the church will be enlightened, and the counteracting causes removed, and the entire church will be in a state of habitual and steady obedience to God. Children will be trained up in the way they should go, and there will be no such torrents of worldliness, and fashion, and covetousness, to bear away the piety of the church, as soon as the excitement of a revival is withdrawn. It is very desirable it should be so. It is very desirable that the church should go on steadily on a course of obedience without these excitements. If religion is ever to have a pervading influence in the world, it can’t be so; this spasmodic religion must be done away. Then it will be uncalled for. Christians will not sleep the greater part of the time, and once in a while wake up, and rub their eyes, and bluster about, and vociferate, a little while, and then go to sleep again. Then there will be no need that ministers should wear themselves out, and kill themselves, by their efforts to roll back the flood of worldly influence that sets in upon the church. But as yet the state of the Christian world is such, that to expect religion without excitements is illogical and absurd.
The Fallow Ground

1. Like a Wave of Electricity

With a Surging Energy

Paul David Thomas

Flute

Clarinet in B♭

Violin

Violoncello

Percussion

Piano

\( \frac{1}{2} \)
D Mysteriously

\( \frac{4=80}{4} \)
\begin{align*}
\text{Fl.} & \quad \text{Cl.} \\
\text{Vln.} & \quad \text{Vc.} \\
\text{Perc.} & \quad \text{Accord.}
\end{align*}

Fl. \\
Cl. \\
Vln. \\
Vc. \\
Perc. \\
Accord.
C $\frac{j}{=} = 78$

Fl.  

Cl.  

Vln.  

Vc.  

Perc.  

Chimes pedal down

Accord.  

45

accel.

Fl.  

Cl.  

Vln.  

Vc.  

Perc.  

(Chimes) freely

pedal down throughout

loco

acc.  

Accord.  

loco accel.
fl.

clarinet

violin

viola

percussion

accompaniment

\( \text{E} \) \( \frac{\text{d}}{\text{b}} = 92 \)
Emmanuel, hear our prayers; we wait to feel thy touch; deepwounded souls to thee repair, and Savior, we are such.

Our faith is feeble, we confess we faintly...
trust thy word; but wilt thou pity us the less? Be that far from thee, Lord!
Remember he who once applied with trembling for relief;

"Lord, I believe," with tears he cried; "O help my unbelief!"
She, too, who touched thee in the press and healing virtue stole, was answered, "Daughter, go
in peace: thy faith hath made you whole."

Like her, with hopes and fears we come to touch thee if we may; O send us not despairing home; send none unhealed away.

Heal us, Emmanuel, hear our prayers; we wait to feel thy touch
deepwounded souls to thee repair, and Savior, we are such.
Bold and rigid

Spoken: Are you going to walk in the street? Take care how you dress. What is that on your head?

What does that gaudy ribbon, and those ornaments upon your dress, say to everyone that meets you? It makes the impression that you wish to be thought pretty. Take care!
You might just as well write on your clothes, "NO TRUTH IN RELIGION." It says, "GIVE ME DRESS, GIVE ME FASHION, GIVE ME FLATTERY, AND I AM HAPPY."
Spoken: The world understands this testimony as you walk the streets...
iv. The Anxious Seat

Flute

agitated and feverish

Clarinet in B

Violin

Violoncello

Percussion

Piano

Vib. w/ pedal

Cl.

Perc.

Cl.

Perc.

Cl.

Perc.
highest note possible, shrieking
v. The Burnt-Over District

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Violin

Violoncello

Chimes (keep pedal down throughout)

Percussion

Baritone

Piano

accel...
Start very rhythmically/sporadically and gradually become sparcer and softer.

Play in any order (begin on chimes and gradually move to vibes).
There is a fountain filled with blood flowing from Em-man-u-el’s veins.
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose_

all their guilty stains. lose all their guilty stains lose
all their guilt stains and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilt stains.
Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I'll sing thy pow'r to save.
When this poor lisp-ing, stammer-ing tongue
lies silent in the grave,
when this poor lisp-ing stammer-ing tongue lies silent in the
ca. $\cdot = 80$

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. I

Vc.

Perc.

Bar.

Pno.

hmm

hmm

hmm

hmm

hmm

hmm

hmm

hmm

115