THE FLUTE MUSIC OF STEPHEN LIAS:
HIS MUSICAL INSPIRATION AND
COMPOSITIONAL PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

Stephen Lias is an accomplished composer and educator. His music spans a wide variety of styles and instrumentation, and his flute works are especially interesting because of this stylistic variety. He became popular in the flute world after publishing his Sonata for Flute and Piano and winning the National Flute Association’s Best New Published Work for *Mélange of Neumes*. The following discussion provides a comprehensive discussion of five works by Lias, chosen because they are his only works that feature the flute. The works are: *Central Park Suite*, *Lecheuguilla*, Sonata for Flute and Piano, *Glide*, and *Mélange of Neumes*. Each piece is composed in a different style and employs a variety of flute techniques, but they all contain aspects of Lias’ individual style. These aspects include repetitive rhythmic motives, memorable melodic themes, and unique forms with traditional roots.

This document includes information received through a personal interview with Lias, intended to afford the reader insight into his musical inspiration and compositional technique. Such information will help the performer gain an understanding of the work as a whole and present an interpretation more attuned to the composer’s intentions.
DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my incredibly loving and supportive family. I want to thank my wonderful husband, Eric, who endured the trials and tribulations of this journey with me. Thank you to my sister, Caitlin: my life-long singing partner and co-star through many imaginary musical productions. Finally, I must thank my parents, Jerry and Kathy Farris. They instilled my deeply rooted passion for music at a very early age and supported me financially, emotionally, and educationally through all these years. I love all of you!
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Dr. Stephen Lias composes in diverse styles and for various combinations of instruments. His works range from woodwind, brass, and percussion ensembles to jazz combo, chorus, and orchestra. His chamber works involving flute are especially intriguing because of their varied musical styles. One of these works, *Mélange of Neumes*, has recently won accolades in the flute community. In 2009, the National Flute Association Professional Flute Choir premiered Lias’ *Mélange of Neumes* at the national convention in New York City. The work became popular among flute choirs around the nation, and in 2011, Lias won the National Flute Association’s award for the Best New Published Work. His Sonata for Flute and Piano was selected as the audition piece for the 2009 Professional Flute Choir. These honors have established his popularity in the flute community and have led to a greater interest in his other works for flute.

Lias was born in 1966 and spent his childhood in New Jersey. He attributes his first musical experiences to his parents because they owned and listened to many records and his mother played piano. Symphonic music was the soundtrack of his childhood. He and his sister put *Danse Macabre* on the record player to accompany their dancing and spooky ghost plays. His mother often played Debussy, Ravel, or Beethoven on the piano to put them to sleep at night. When asked about his first memories of composing music, Lias replied that he does not remember a time when he did not compose music. His mother helped him understand that once he made up the music, he should write it down, so she showed him how to notate his music on
the staff. He compares his early compositional experiences to the way children think about coloring. Children just color a picture; they do not think about growing up and coloring for a living. Composing was just something Lias did. Though he took composition lessons as an undergraduate vocal music education major, he never considered it a career choice until he was in graduate school.¹

Lias took many years of piano lessons as a child but only considers himself a mediocre pianist. He enjoys playing jazz piano and reports that he can play Mozart in his class to show them how the music works, but he would never play Mozart on a recital. The melodies he composes began as an outgrowth of early piano lessons. According to Lias, children discover that when they slam their hands down on a piano, it makes a noise and it becomes a fun toy. He thinks he was finding melodies on the piano long before he was creating them in his head. As a beginner pianist, he tried to create familiar melodies on the keyboard, but eventually it was reversed and he made the melodies in his head before playing them on the piano.²

Lias has been influenced by a number of composers. He has a number of odd personal connections with Samuel Barber: they attended the same church and high school, and Samuel Barber wrote the school’s alma mater. Later, Lias completed his undergraduate degree and was hired by Barber’s nephew leading Lias to move to Texas. He was always familiar with Samuel Barber’s music, but these coincidences led to a greater interest.

Lias is also fond of Leonard Bernstein’s music. He says “I’m still discovering how much Leonard Bernstein is in the back of my head.” He was also greatly influenced by John Williams.

² This statement and all the following direct and summarized quotations in the document are from the interview on May 25, 2012.
Lias was eleven years old when Star Wars premiered, and he saw the movie twelve times in the theater. His parents immediately bought the two-album soundtrack. Lias says this was the first orchestra music he really paid attention to, trying to discover how it was put together and what instruments were used. Not many eleven-year-old boys pay attention to orchestral music, but Lias was very interested because of the movie and John Williams’ score. He still knows most of the score to the first Star Wars movie by heart. Lias also appreciates John William’s ability to understand the role that music plays in drama. “Williams is brilliant at finding the right music for that dramatic moment.” He hears this talent in both Williams and Bernstein. When asked if he has ever considered writing scores for movies or musicals, Lias replied that he teaches film scoring, but his own work on film scores is almost negligible. He would, however, love to write that type of music, but it would require a great collaborator. Lias suspects he would be successful because he knows the repertoire really well and has experience writing music for plays and directing musicals.

Since 1989, Lias has composed incidental music for more than thirty professional theatrical productions including I Hate Hamlet at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, The Tempest at Stephen F. Austin University, and Death of a Salesman at Auburn University at Montgomery. Lias also served as the Composer in Residence and Music Director at the Texas Shakespeare Festival for eleven years. He is currently Professor of Composition and Assistant Director for Graduate Studies at Stephen F. Austin University. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Music Education in 1988 from Messiah College. In 1991, he completed a Master of Arts in Music at Stephen F. Austin University, and by 1997 earned a Doctor of Musical Arts.

degree in Composition from Louisiana State University. His teachers include Dinos Constantinides, Dan Beatty, and Darrell Hot.\footnote{Stephen Lias, www.stephenlias.com (accessed December 16, 2011).}

Lias’ works have been performed throughout the United States and abroad by The Stone Fort Wind Quintet, The Monmouth College Chorale, The Louisiana Sinfonietta, The Red Stick Saxophone Quartet, The NYU New Music Ensemble, and the Chamber Orchestra Kremlin. His music is published by Southern Music Publishers, Conners Publications, ALRY Publications, Brassworks\textsuperscript{4}, and Cimarron Music Press.\footnote{Stephen Lias, www.music.sfasu.edu/faculty.php?id=27 (accessed April 16, 2012).} Lias was selected as the 2003 Commissioned Composer for the Texas Music Teachers Association. He has received the ASCAP Standard Awards each year since 1999. His piece “Pursued” was performed in Moscow and at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in 2006 when he was selected as a finalist in the Chamber Orchestra Kremlin’s “Homage to Mozart” composition contest. In 2008, his song cycle “Songs of a Sourdough” was a finalist in the NATS Art Song Competition.\footnote{Stephen Lias, www.stephenlias.com (accessed December 16, 2011).} Lias’ professional memberships include ASCAP, the College Music Society, the American Music Center, and the Society of Composers. He is the founder and director of The Composer’s Site, serves on the Texas and National Boards of the National Association of Composers, and holds a position on the editorial board of World New Music Magazine. Lias is the Texas delegate to the International Society of Contemporary Music.\footnote{Stephen Lias, www.music.sfasu.edu/faculty.php?id=27 (accessed April 16, 2012).}

Recently, Lias entered the field of adventure-composing. In his spare time, he enjoys backpacking, skiing, kayaking, and traveling. He combines this love of travel and the outdoors...
with visits around the United States to inspire compositions such as *On the High Chisos, Prince William Sound, River Runner,* and *White Water.* Lias is currently focusing on music about the National Parks of the U.S. He has completed residencies at Rocky Mountain National Park and Denali National Park. The resulting works were premiered at international conferences and festivals in Colorado, Texas, Sydney, and Taiwan. In the summer of 2012, he was the Artist-in-Residence for Gates of the Arctic National Park.  

This document will examine five works of Stephen Lias, chosen because they are his only works that feature the flute. The works are: *Central Park Suite, Lecheuguilla,* Sonata for Flute and Piano, *Glide,* and *Mélange of Neumes.* The works vary in style and technical difficulty for the flute, but they all contain elements of Lias’ compositional style: energetic melodic and rhythmic motives, a variety of formal structures, and equal opportunities for all instruments to function as melody and accompaniment. Lias’ exuberant personality streams from his music through the rhythmic patterns, syncopation, memorable melodic themes, and dynamic range he composes. He makes use of the full range of the flute and writes scale passages that flow well on the instrument. I will include a study of his writing for flute in these works; analytical sections will present information about harmonic, melodic, and formal structures as they pertain to the performance of these works. Comments from a personal interview with the composer will offer insight into his compositional process.

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CENTRAL PARK SUITE

*Central Park Suite*, the earliest work in this set of five pieces, was written for woodwind quintet in 1991 while Lias was completing his master’s degree. According to the program notes, “*Central Park Suite* is based on childhood impressions of New York City’s Central Park. Each movement functions as a sort of snapshot of different moods and locations as they exist in the composer’s memory.” The inspiration for the suite is different from that for the Sonata for Flute and Piano, *Glide*, and *Mélange of Neumes* because they were commissioned, but this work was originally a class assignment. Upon receiving the assignment from a composition professor, Lias, a native of New Jersey, turned to childhood impressions of Central Park as the subject matter for this work. *Central Park Suite* is a three-movement work composed of character pieces arranged in a fast-slow-fast format. Lias knew the titles of the movements before he wrote them, so, for example, he was thinking about children when he wrote the first movement, “Romp of the Children.” Each movement uses musical elements like tempo, rhythm, and articulation to describe the subject of the music.

The first movement is set at a quick tempo with a playful melody that is introduced by the oboe and passed to the flute. The numerous staccato markings and frequent eighth-notes maintain the child-like energy of the movement. This movement begins with an introduction of unison rhythms in all parts as seen in figure 1.1.

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This rhythmic unison introduction grabs the listener’s attention from the beginning before the voices separate into melody and accompaniment figures. This first movement contains two melodic themes which will be labeled $M^1$ and $M^2$; they are shown in figures 1.2 and 1.3 respectively.

The oboe introduces the first rhythmic phrase, $M^1$, in measure 5, while the clarinet, horn, and bassoon play an upbeat accompaniment. This theme is shown in figure 1.2. All five voices join the oboe in measure 10 for an eighth-note ascension in octaves through $G-A^b-B^b-C$, as seen in figure 1.4. Then the voices play an eighth note descent of $D-C-F-G$, but the figure begins in flute and cascades down through the voices one beat apart.
Lias used this cascading technique in several of his flute works in a variety of ways such as passing a musical motive between all the voices and gradually adding texture and dynamic intensity to an ascending scale. This technique requires rhythmic and technical accuracy from the instrumentalists in order for the correct effect to be achieved. In measure 13, the flute plays M¹ a fifth higher than the original presentation in oboe which is shown in figure 1.5. Lias added variety with the addition of downbeats in the accompaniment figures in oboe, clarinet, and horn. Also, the horn plays a series of descending whole notes that move chromatically from A-Aᵇ-G-Gᵇ-F.
The flutist should maintain the articulation style introduced by the oboe in the first appearance of M¹, but also play with a full sound to emphasize the change in tone color. In figure 1.6, oboe and clarinet present a new accompaniment pattern that is made of major thirds. This faster accompaniment rhythm contrasts the slower rhythm of the second melodic phrase, M², which the horn plays in measure 22.

![Figure 1.6 Measures 21-24](image)

The bassoon takes the clarinet pitch and rhythm pattern in mm. 23-25, but the clarinet returns with the Bᵇ pitch in measure 25. The flute joins the horn in octaves in measure 31 to complete the secondary melodic theme. The flutist should match the horn’s intonation and blend into the tone color.

The harmonic rhythm of the accompaniment drastically slows in mm. 35-36 as the flute, oboe, horn, and bassoon play two tied whole notes. This contrasts and emphasizes the clarinet’s moving eighth notes as seen in figure 1.7. The dynamic contrast of the sforzando crescendo in the accompaniment voices also provides emphasis for the clarinet line.
The whole-note accompaniment pauses briefly in mm. 39-40 while the flute, clarinet, and oboe join together with a playful melodic interjection. The flute, oboe, and clarinet lines shown in figure 1.8 exemplify the playful childlike mood of the piece through the fast rhythm figures and staccato articulations.

The following measures emphasize the contrasting legato and staccato articulations. The smooth melodic lines are joined by short quarter-note and eighth-note patterns. One example of these contrasting articulations is shown in Figure 1.9.
Measure 52 combine many of the melodic motives from the second section and alternate between eighth note and quarter note presentations of these patterns. This occurs in mm. 63-64 when the oboe plays a melodic fragment in eighth notes and the flute follows in measure 66 with similar pitches in quarter notes. This is shown in figure 1.10.

The introductory material from measure 1 begins to reappear in measure 74 and continues until the return of M\textsuperscript{1} in mm. 87 in clarinet. The flute takes M\textsuperscript{1} in measure 95 at the same pitch level as its original presentation in mm. 13. The persistent, playful eighth notes grow more intense with constant dynamic changes from measure 101 to the end of the movement. “Romp of the Children” concludes with all five voices contributing to a Bb triad.

The second movement, “Lovers,” is a canon that features a moderately paced, lyrical melody. Lias wanted this movement to capture the image of couples strolling and relaxing in Central Park. The movement is set in G minor, concludes on a G minor chord, and uses each of
the flute’s low, middle, and high registers. The flute introduces the canon theme, and the oboe follows sixteen measures later with the theme in the same register; entrances of the other instruments follow at sixteen-bar intervals. Each consecutive instrument entrance plays the same musical line but concludes sixteen, thirty-two, forty-eight, and sixty-four measures shorter than the flute’s full theme. Figure 1.11 shows the first four measures of the flute theme and the first four measures of the oboe theme directly below it.

Figure 1.11

Lias explained that there are several ways to compose a canon like the one he created for this movement. He does not find it difficult to write a canon, but notes that it takes patience to fit all the pieces together, like working a puzzle. Lias describes himself as a “relatively tonal” composer, so he chose a chord progression to use over the course of one statement of the melody, and then wrote a melody to fit the progression. He could, hypothetically, write three or four melodies that fit the chord progression, and they would fit together because they follow the same underlying harmony. This system does not guarantee that these melodies would not play the same note at the same time. In a round, each new added layer should fill in more of the harmony, so Lias wrote out the first melody and then created the second melody using the same chord progression but landing on a different chord tone at important places. This second melody usually works well, but the third melody is much more difficult. If he had already used the important landing notes in the first two melodies, he only had one note left in a three note chord
for the third melody. He had to create a melodic line that would hit the remaining note of each chord in the correct place. Lias explained that it takes some experimentation and compromise. In order for the third melody to fit correctly, another melody might need to be adjusted. He related this process to correcting parallel fifths in a four part chorale. A single note change in one voice leads to a note change in another voice, but eventually the voice leading works as a complete unit. After changing notes, Lias played different combinations of melody lines to ensure each line sounded good together. Lias said that he wanted to be clear in stating that he was not trying to follow any counterpoint rules. He was trying to write a melody that he liked and to make the canon align appropriately on the chord progression he envisioned.

The final movement, “The Fountain,” recalls images of the famous Bethesda Fountain in Central Park. Lias used steady eighth-note arpeggio figures and a fast tempo to bring the fountain to his music. These eighth-note figures begin in the first measure as shown in figure 1.12.

Figure 1.12 Measure 1

Lias notated the flute, oboe, and clarinet lines in 12/8 meter, but he wrote the horn and bassoon lines in 4/4 meter. This immediately draws attention to the simultaneous duple and triple rhythms that will occur throughout the movement. The horn announces its arrival with a regal fortissimo statement in measure 3. The first melodic theme of this movement, M₁, is presented
by bassoon and horn in octaves in mm. 5-13. The first 2 measures of M\textsuperscript{1} are shown in figure 1.13.

Figure 1.13 Measures 6-7

The arpeggio figures from the opening measure resume in flute, oboe, and clarinet in measure 6 and provide the first example of Lias’ simultaneous duple and triple rhythms. Measures 6-7 are shown in figure 1.14.

Figure 1.14 Measures 6-7

In measure 13, the flute and clarinet play new triplet figures on alternating beats; the flute plays on beats 1 and 3 and the clarinet plays on beats 2 and 4. This softens the accompaniment figures to prepare for the oboe’s presentation of the next melodic theme. The oboe line changes to 4/4 meter in measure 13 and begins the second melodic theme, M\textsuperscript{2}, in measure 14 with horn and bassoon playing supporting harmony. Figure 1.15 shows measures 14-15.
The oboe’s primary melody and the horn and bassoon’s supporting lines combine elements of duple and triple rhythms. A new fragment, seen in figure 1.16, begins in measure 23 in the clarinet and is played by every instrument except the bassoon over the following six measures. This is a unifying technique that Lias used in the first movement. The succession of motivic repetitions is not heard as quickly as before, but they create a similar cascading effect.

Measure 32 contains the first occurrence of the 12/8 meter designation in all voices. The flute begins a variation of the previous melodic fragment in measure 32. The first fragment involved the minor second, minor third, and major second intervals. This new fragment, shown in figure 1.17, is a retrograde version because it uses the major second, minor third, and minor second intervals with a few additional notes.
This is another technique Lias used in other flute compositions. He made slight alterations to a particular musical element in the motive to create variety while maintaining a sense of connection between appearances. These elements include rhythm, articulation, and interval pattern. Lias included a first ending that prepares the return to measure two; the high and low voices alternate triplet eighth-note figures before the high voices resume the arpeggio pattern. A new section begins in measure 39 in the second ending. The horn introduces a new melodic theme, M₃, in 4/4 meter in measure 41 that features the triplet quarter note rhythm that was prominently used in M². The M₃ theme is shown in figure 1.18.

Measure 56 begins a return of the material from mm. 5-13 at the same pitch level. The accompaniment triplets in measure 64 are the same as in measure 13, but Lias changed the orchestration of the melodic theme by placing it in the bassoon line. He also changed the orchestration of the supporting lines, as seen in figure 1.19, by moving the material previously heard in the bassoon to horn, and the horn music to oboe.
Lias made another change at measure 83 to draw the movement to a close. In figure 1.20, flute, oboe, and clarinet play repeated staccato triplets that create a G minor triad while the horn and bassoon play a unison G. The flute and oboe simultaneously play fast moving Bb scales starting on C and A respectively before beginning the repeated triplets again. These elements are repeated in mm. 85-87 until an abrupt trill interrupts the pattern. The movement comes to a close after two measures of frantic staccato triplets and ends with a G in octaves from all instruments.

Looking back at the piece, Lias said he would change some aspects of the flute line if he wrote the work today with his current knowledge of flute playing. He loves the flute’s low
register, but he wasn’t thinking about the sound of a low D on the flute as opposed to the oboe or clarinet when he wrote the piece. Now he considers how notes in different registers sound on the various instruments and adapts his orchestration according to the timbre he is trying to achieve. Lias considers the opening of the third movement of *Central Park Suite* an example of his improvement as a composer of flute music. He wrote the moving eighth notes in the low and middle register of the flute, but if he were scoring it now he would spread out the upper three voices by writing the clarinet slightly lower and the flute slightly higher. The notes are vibrant, but he now thinks the flute line was written in the wrong octave because it would sparkle more if it were at least a fifth higher. There are many aspects of *Central Park Suite* that Lias does not like, but it serves as a good reminder of his journey in his education as a composer. He also recalls that the original version of the first movement of the suite was written with the key signature of B major. He wrote it by beginning with a tune that he liked, wrote it in a key that he stumbled into, and scored it out among the five instruments. During this phase of his development, someone had to tell him these instruments cannot play in tune easily in B major. After his publisher suggested changing the key, Lias agreed to change the movement to B♭ major because it would only move the notes down a half-step.

When playing this piece, the flutist should study the score to understand how the flute line fits into the overall musical scheme of the piece. Lias gave equal opportunity for each voice to function as both a melodic instrument and an accompaniment instrument throughout the work. In the first movement, the flutist must pay close attention to the intonation between the instruments in the numerous unison and octave sections. The flutist should also be attentive to the dynamic contrast Lias wanted to establish. He wrote a wide variety of dynamic changes in each movement that are essential to the character and excitement of the various themes. Flutists
should listen carefully to the entrances of each instrument in the second movement. The flute establishes the theme in the opening, but each instrument should be heard as they enter the texture. Since the third movement opens with legato triplet figures in flute, the performer should work to have smooth finger movement that will create the fountain imagery. Flutists should also study the score in this movement to learn which instrument plays the melody. It would be easy for the flute to cover a bassoon melody because of the timbre of the instrument and the higher range of the flute. The instrumentalists should also practice the connection between the alternating triplet figures so there is no separation. Finally, flutists should learn to recognize scalar passages like the B\textsuperscript{b} passages in the third movement. A flutist who plays scales well will not need to read individual notes, but will recognize the shape of the line and play the memorized scale.
Lecheuguilla, composed in 1995, was written while Lias was working on his doctorate. The piece was inspired by a television documentary about the cave of the same name located in New Mexico. There is a discrepancy in the spelling of the title because the television special that provided the inspiration for the piece was titled Lecheuguilla. However, Lias later discovered that the cave was spelled like the vine Lechuguilla. He never went through the effort to change the spelling of the title since the piece has not been published. Lias imagined that the composition would contain musical representations of air, rock, and water, so he tried to create sounds that a listener would envision in this inaccessible, large, stark cavern. During his initial thought process, he began to consider using extended techniques as an effective illustration of the distant fluttering of bats’ wings and the echo of pebbles falling in water. He did not think traditional techniques would create these sounds, so he was led in the direction of extended techniques. Lias discovered flute extended techniques through his attendance at contemporary music concerts and by listening to Louisiana State University flute professor Katherine Kemler. She plays a wide variety of flute literature and Lias heard her perform while attending LSU. These experiences moved Lias to a greater understanding of flute writing. During this time, he conducted a new music ensemble which helped him gain a more intimate understanding of how instruments work. He listened carefully to each instrument and learned which musical figures made the players stumble and which figures came fluidly from their instruments. He recalled that he had the good fortune of collaborating with two doctoral flute and clarinet students that he knew well. Lias could write a line of flute music and the flutist
would give him feedback. They experimented with the music and extended techniques, and Lias now sees that collaboration in the final version of *Lecheuguilla*. Lias’ tendency is to write whatever sounds are demanded by the subject of his composition. When asked if *Lecheuguilla* was his first piece with extended techniques, he replied that it is certainly the earliest one he would claim. He thinks that he wrote previous composition assignments with extended techniques, but he does not remember them.

Each section in *Lecheuguilla* corresponds to an imaginary drama unfolding in Lias’ head. He envisioned *Lecheuguilla* as a piece where one section slowly morphs into the next. Figure 2.1 illustrates the five sections and connective material that form the structure of the work.

![Figure 2.1](image)

The pitches for flute are concentrated in the middle and high register, but the range is from F\textsubscript{1} to B\textsubscript{b3}. The extended techniques for the two instruments include key clicks, pitch bends, flutter tongue, and harmonics. The first section focuses on air, and he imagined the listener entering the cave, passing through a tunnel, and hearing wind. The wind sound was mixed with distant clicking and popping. The work opens with an air extended technique in flute and clarinet. The instrumentalists blow air through the instruments and change intensity and fingerings to match the dynamic and general register markings. Figure 2.2 shows the air technique notation in the score.
The wider part of the black zig-zag line indicates a louder dynamic which can be accomplished with a faster air stream and greater amount of air. The clarinet continues the air technique at a piano dynamic level while the flute begins key clicks as shown in figure 2.3.

Lias instructed the flutist to play the key clicks randomly, so a variety of fingerings and speeds can be utilized. In general, low register flute fingerings tend to make louder key clicks because more tone holes are covered. At the end of the first line, the first pitches are heard as the flute plays harmonics with flutter tongue technique. This notation is shown in figure 2.4.
This technique was created through Lias’ collaboration with a flutist. Lias originally wrote a
different technique, but the flutist played it incorrectly and accidentally played through the
overtones. Lias liked the effect and decided to use it instead of his original suggestion. Flutter
tongue is created when a flutist rolls their tongue, as in rolled R’s in the Spanish language, and
plays a pitch simultaneously. This is not possible for all flutists because not everyone can roll
their tongue. There is an alternate technique that will create a similar sound: vibration of the
uvula and throat. This creates a sort of growl that, when perfected, sounds similar to flutter
tongue.

The second line continues the air technique between flute and clarinet. When executed
correctly, this technique sounds remarkably similar to gusting wind. The clarinet introduces a
pitch bend technique before the flute plays a G# trill. Lias combined flutter tongue with a trill to
create another technique at the end of the second line, as seen in figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 Page 1 Line 2

![Flute]

Throughout the piece, Lias repeatedly utilized five rhythms, and these are labeled and shown in
the chart below.
The first appearance of these rhythmic motives occurs in the third line of the first page. The flutist introduces R\textsuperscript{1} after a section of air technique while the clarinet plays key clicks. Then the flutist takes over the key clicks before introducing R\textsuperscript{2}. Clarinet plays R\textsuperscript{1} followed a quick air technique and crescendo in both instruments to close the first page. Lias did not include any bar lines on the first page of *Lecheuguilla*, but the second page begins to incorporate bar lines. This page also serves as a transition into the next section of Lias’ story. The listener slowly becomes aware of the rocks as the musical gestures become large, solid, angular expressions of rock. The air and rock sounds gradually dissolve to mostly rock music. The extended techniques from the first page are heard with much less frequency. R\textsuperscript{3} occurs for the first time at the top of the
second page in clarinet, and following a unison eighth rest, the flute and clarinet play $R^2$ together at the interval of a minor third. This is shown in figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7 Page 2 Line 1

Flute and clarinet present $R^4$ together on the second line, and this rhythmic motive is also at the interval of a minor third. Next, the instruments come together in octaves to play $R^5$ at a pianissimo dynamic level, a stark contrast from the fortissimo crescendo that was completed after $R^4$. Lias’ dramatic dynamic changes help create the drama of this journey through the cave, so the performers should pay careful attention to the contrast between each dynamic level so that the audience can discern the changes. These last two rhythmic motives, $R^4$ and $R^5$, foreshadow the coming triplet section that represents water. The third line contains an occurrence of $R^3$, but this time the flute and clarinet combine to create the rhythmic motive shown in figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8 Page 2 Line 3

This forms a very interesting effect, but it requires concentrated listening and practiced coordination by the instrumentalists in order to avoid the simultaneous sounding of the pitches.

A double bar and new tempo marking on the third page signal a new slightly faster section that will transition from the rock portion of the journey to the water experience. Drops of
water become audible when the marked, angular music figures become mixed with flowing triplet figures. Lias also represented water with triplet rhythms in the third movement of *Central Park Suite*. One final air extended technique occurs in the flute part at the end of the first line before the extended techniques disappear for two pages. At the end of the second line, the clarinet plays an E$^7$ arpeggio in sixteenth notes, and then the flute takes over the sixteenth notes with a D$^7$ arpeggio. This is followed two measures later by the clarinet playing a D major scale and the flute following with an E major scale. These two measures are shown in figure 2.9. The major tonality of these scales is slightly obscured by their starting pitches, but the tonality contributes to the energy and character of the water scene.

Figure 2.9 Page 3 Line 2 and 3

The triplet R$^4$ and R$^5$ figures become more frequent as the piece continues to the fourth page and after a fermata over a high register G$^b$ in flute, a presto 6/8 section begins on the second line. The water slowly gathers to form a stream that becomes a flowing river. The clarinet begins the presto section alone with several triplet figures, but the flute soon joins five measures later. This begins 1 ½ lines of pattern where the two instruments play on alternate beats for two measures and then play unison rhythms for two measures. This pattern is shown in figure 2.10.
Lias used similar alternating triplets in the third movement of *Central Park Suite*. This technique allows the instrumentalists to take breaths, but maintain the constant flow of the water music. It also provides an interesting change in texture. The unison rhythms finally settle in the final measure of the fourth page before separating again in the seventh measure of the fifth page. This music signifies the moment when the stream becomes a river, but the water section eventually leads the listener to journey back out of the cave while revisiting rock and air in the tunnel. The water section ends dramatically at the end of the fifth page with forte and fortissimo dynamic markings, unison rhythms, accented pitches, and fermatas.

The rock themes return in the first line of the sixth page with $R^5$ played in octaves by flute and clarinet. The ad lib measure contains another example of notable dynamic contrast. Each instrument alternates with loud and soft pitches at their chosen pace. The pitched music continues to dissolve and become more intermittent as the extended techniques return. The listener is returned to the rock and air sections of the cave as the piece comes to a close. Each element of air, rock, and water is represented through the various extended techniques and rhythms. The work ends on the seventh page with combined key clicks and air technique before a final burst of air leads the listener out of the cave.

There are several performance methods that instrumentalists can try when playing *Lecheuguilla*. Lias has tried two performance methods for the piece but has not decided which...
he likes best. He asked for the music to be spread across eight or nine stands, and the flute and clarinet player stood beside each other and followed the music across. He thought this method worked well for unity among the duo. The second method involved the flutist standing on one side of the stage and the clarinetist standing on the other side. Lias like the separated effect that was similar to hearing the piece in stereo, but there were places in the music where the flute and clarinet were not able to interact as tightly as necessary. Lias liked both methods and considered both to be effective in presenting his musical intentions.
SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO

The Sonata for Flute and Piano, written in 2003, was commissioned by the Texas Music Teachers Association and premiered by Diane Boyd Schultz and James Pitts in the same year at the Texas Music Teachers Association Conference in Arlington, Texas. Lias had previously written pieces for both flute and piano, but he had never written for the two together. He chose the instrumentation for the commission and felt that he was provided with opportunities for structural development that he had not tried before with such a small number of instruments. Lias says in the program notes, “I feel that the resulting three movements are all very honest musical expressions for me.” The movement titles were created after the piece was completed, so the work is not programmatic but expresses the moods and ideas he wanted to convey. He wrote the first movement as an abstract piece of music, and after it was completed, he thought “what does this music make me think of or feel like?” The speed, exhilaration, and beauty of skiing came to his mind and reminded him of a wide blue run. Lias described the second movement, “Memory Dance,” as “a much more introspective and moody journey. The melodic figures seemed dance-like to me, but without the immediacy of the present.” The dances became a unifying device in the movement. The third movement, “Kludge March,” was loosely written in the form of a rag or march. Lias defined a “kludge” as “a system that is constituted of poorly


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matched elements or of elements originally intended for other applications: a clumsy or inelegant solution to a problem.”

Lias met Dr. Schultz at Stephen F. Austin University where she taught flute during the three years prior to his composition of the Sonata. She and Lias shared an office wall, so he could hear all the flute music coming through the wall. He says that “being forced to listen to an instrument day in and day out is literally the best thing that can happen to a composer writing for that instrument.” He was hearing the standard flute literature, but most importantly, he was listening to students play etudes and solos that included difficult phrases and techniques. He learned scale passages and articulation patterns that sound best on the flute. The Sonata was another collaborative piece because Lias was able to write phrases and explore them with Schultz. From that point on, he felt good about knowing how the flute behaves. By now, Lias had a lot of idiomatic flute motives flowing through his head, and he hopes that if a flutist were to compare the first page of the Sonata to Central Park Suite, they would find that he became more sophisticated in his understanding of the flute.

The first movement of the Sonata, “Wide Blue Run,” opens with piano chords in interval clusters of major and minor seconds which can be seen in figure 3.1. The flute enters in the second half of the first measure with the first melodic theme, $M^1$, as seen in figure 3.2.

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12 Lias, Sonata for Flute and Piano.
This opening theme contains F and A major scalar passages. The piano chord clusters continue until measure 9 when the meter changes from 4/4 to 5/8. The piano plays a directional pattern (up, down, down, up, down, up, up, down) in measure 14 that will be repeated and inverted several times throughout the movement. This pattern, P\textsuperscript{1}, is shown in figure 3.3 and is another example of Lias’ variation technique in which he alters a motive by rhythmic or melodic means.

The cluster chords return in piano in measure 21 while the flute plays a variation of the first melodic theme. The first two measures of this variation are shown in figure 3.4.
The ornamental triplet sixteenth-notes add variety to the repetition of the theme. Lias varied the return of the 5/8 section in measure 30 by writing the flute part from measure 9 in the piano. The flute, in turn, plays the piano melody from measure 11 but lowered a half step. In measure 35, the flute plays a new version of P¹ with added ornamental notes.

Piano introduces the second melodic theme, M², in measure 39 with an accompaniment that emphasizes the upbeats. Figure 3.5 shows the first two measures of M².

The flute connects in measure 46 with melodic fragments that combine the rhythms of the legato M² piano melody and the staccato feel of the opening section. This legato and staccato combination continues in measure 48 when flute and piano play in unison as shown in figure 3.6.
A short two measure sequence occurs in mm. 53-54 that leads to the flute’s presentation of $M^2$ which features triplet sixteenth notes and large interval leaps that create energy and interest in this second occurrence of the theme. Piano plays an inverted version of $P^1$ in mm. 62-63 before the section closes with a ritardando and rolled piano chord that brings a deceptive sense of calm and rest.

Lias wrote the second section of the first movement in canonic imitation. The right hand piano line presents the canon theme in mm. 71-85. Figure 3.7 includes the first two measures of this theme.

Figure 3.7 Measures 71-72

This melody features several recurring rhythms including eighth-sixteenth combinations and triplet sixteenths. The left hand piano line enters with the theme six measures later in m. 76, but it begins on E which is a fifth lower than the first occurrence on B when speaking in general terms of pitch and not specific registers. Figure 3.8 shows the first two measures of the left hand theme. This line continues for fourteen measures from mm. 76-89 and ends one measure short of completing the full canon theme.

Figure 3.8 Measures 76-77
Six measures after the piano’s second entrance, the flute begins the theme in measure 81 on A, which is a fifth lower than the left hand’s E. The flute entrance is shown in figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9 Measures 81-82

![Flute](image1)

The flute plays the full fifteen measures of the theme in mm. 81-95. The right hand piano line immediately begins the theme again on a D in measure 86 after completing the full theme in the previous measure. While the flute finishes the final six measures of the theme, the piano begins playing fragments of the theme in both hands in mm. 90-96. Canonic imitation ceases in measure 96 as the piano begins building the chord clusters from the first section. Measures 101-105 contain a sequence of the opening material that transitions to the third and final section of the movement and a repeat of the first melodic theme, M¹, in measure 106.

Lias adds variety to this final section by changing the rhythm of the piano accompaniment as seen in figure 3.10.

Figure 3.10 Measure 106

![Flute Piano](image2)

He also changed register, added ornamental notes, and moved flute melodies to piano and vice versa to ensure the closing section was not an exact repeat of the first section. Measure 113 contains an example of the change in octaves because the piano lines are placed down an octave
from their first appearance in measure 9. In measure 115, the two instruments trade parts as the flute plays a melody that the piano previously played in measure 11. The material from the first section concludes in measure 153 and the two instruments continue the quick rhythmic pace with sixteenth-note clusters in piano and sixteenth-note whole tone scales in flute. The first movement ends with a run up to high C⁴ in flute and an accented chord cluster in piano.¹³

The second movement, “Memory Dance,” is written in a slow 3/4 meter and begins with a beautiful melody in flute. The piano accompanies this melody with rolled dotted half note chords tied over two measures as shown in figure 3.11.

![Figure 3.11 Measures 1-4](image)

This slow harmonic rhythm contributes to the relaxed, contemplative feeling of the movement. The piano part consists of two different triads: one in the right hand and one in the left hand. The first two measures contain Dᵇ and Eᵇ triads which create dissonance between the pitches. This set of triads returns every two measures until measure 23, but the triad sets between these Dᵇ and Eᵇ chords vary each time. For example, measures 3-4 have a C minor and Bb major triad set, but mm. 7-8 have an A minor and E major triad set. The flute melody includes notes from both triads in each set and explores many rhythms. Throughout the next several measures, the flute and piano take turns playing thematic material and secondary supporting lines. This

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¹³ The octave designation C⁴ is based on a system in which C¹ is middle C.
melody passing continues as the flute smoothly picks up the melody again in measure 24 and continues until measure 33 when the piano returns to the opening melody as seen in figure 3.12.

Figure 3.12 Measures 33-37

This section from mm. 33-50 features the flute as a supporting instrument, and the piano carries the primary melody. The piano presents the final melodic phrase of the first section in mm. 51-54 and the flute imitates it at the same pitch level in mm. 55-58.

Measures 63-86 serve as transition material that moves to the second section of this movement. Lias changed both instruments to 6/8 meter and included rhythms that foreshadow the coming section. The tempo and dynamic level gradually increase until the start of the second section in measure 87. Figure 3.13 shows the first two measures of this section.

Figure 3.13 Measures 87-88

The flute line moves into the high register in this middle section and continues the joyous melody at a forte dynamic supported by a faster harmonic rhythm. This melody moves between flute and piano throughout this second section before the 4/4 meter returns in measure 147. The
third section begins in measure 153 with a return of Tempo I and a new melodic theme as seen in figure 3.14.

**Figure 3.14 Measure 153-155**

This theme continues to build in intensity to measure 174 with accented fortissimo high B₃ in flute and accented chords in piano. The soft dynamic level of the piano entrance in measure 174 is a stark contrast to the previous measure’s accented chords, and it draws attention to the return of the first melodic theme in measure 175. Measures 175-176 are included in figure 3.15.

**Figure 3.15 Measures 175-176**

The flute brings the movement to a close with a series of descending fifths and a long held C¹. This final flute note contrasts the fourth octave C that served as the final note of the first movement.

The third and final movement, “Kludge March,” is composed in an assortment of styles, including rag and march, but Lias also integrated some quotations from well known music of the
past. The piece begins with the flute and piano in unison and octaves throughout most of mm. 1-8. The first four measures are shown in figure 3.16.

![Figure 3.16 Measures 1-4](image)

This introduction shows many of the prominent rhythms that will recur throughout the movement like the dotted eighth sixteenth figure. The piano begins the first accompaniment pattern in mm. 9-12 as shown in figure 3.17.

![Figure 3.17 Measures 9-12](image)

The clusters in the right hand are reminiscent of the accompaniment in the first movement. The flute begins the first melodic theme in measure 13. This march section features the high register of the flute and ends in mm. 25-28 with a quotation of Reveille, the bugle call. This quotation is shown in figure 3.18.
The piano begins the rag section in measure 29 with a playful melody that recalls the ragtime music of composers like Scott Joplin. Measures 29-31 are shown in figure 3.19.

This section from mm. 29-44 is played exclusively by piano except for measure 36 when the flute interrupts with octave leaps on G. The flute returns with the march section and a new melodic theme at measure 45. The repeat of this second march theme occurs in measure 61 at the same pitch level, but this time Lias inserts a quotation of the Grieg Piano Concerto in A minor in mm. 65-68. These measures are included in figure 3.20.
A chromatic turnaround is added to the return of the first melodic theme in measure 77 that leads to a quotation of Bach’s Badinerie in mm. 92-93 as seen in figure 3.21.

Figure 3.21 Measures 92-93

The rag section returns in mm. 96-111 as an exact repeat of the previous occurrence, but Lias provides variety by writing the rag theme in the flute part. The flute and piano introduce a third march theme in octaves in mm. 168-174 as seen in figure 3.22.

Figure 3.22 Measures 168-171

This thematic presentation in octaves is reminiscent of the first theme’s unison introduction, but measures 184-198 bring a change to the theme. The piano plays the melody a whole step above the flute to create a new dissonance that adds even more character to the peppy melody. The march style becomes more stately and heavier in mm. 200 with thickly scored cluster chords in the piano accompaniment that recall the chords from the first movement. This march theme is written in the high register of the flute, and it gradually slows in mm. 212-215 to prepare for the return of the third march theme. This theme is marked *tempo di tango* in mm. 216 and includes a new accompaniment pattern in piano as shown in figure 3.23.
The theme continues in this style until measure 232 when it becomes lighter and faster. The theme is played in constant sixteenth notes, so any pitch that was originally longer than a sixteenth is repeated for the equivalent value. Figure 3.24 contains measures 232-233.

The rag theme and style return in measure 248 with the flute playing the melody. The flute and piano continue to race to the end with fragments of the rag melody and close in measure 271 with an F major scalar figure in flute and an F major chord in piano.

The flute moves quickly among the low, middle, and high registers in each movement of the sonata which creates challenging passages for the flutist’s fingering technique. The flutist should isolate the difficult passages and practice them with different rhythms and tempos to become more comfortable with the technique. The flutist must be comfortable playing in all registers of the flute range, so it would be helpful to move the difficult passage to different registers than it was originally written as a practice technique. There is a lot of interaction and
trading of melody between the flute and piano in this piece, so it would be helpful for the flutist to have ample practice time with the pianist whenever possible to match styles and articulations.
GLIDE

Glide, commissioned in 2007 by the Louisiana Sinfonietta, is a single movement work for nine winds: flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two horns, and two bassoons. Glide was titled after it was written because the melody came from a short musical riff that Lias could not get out of his head. As he was driving his car one day, he began singing the melody with syncopated rhythms and gradually formed the melodic idea for the piece. He felt that the requested instrumentation of a double woodwind quintet with only one flute was strange. During the time he was composing the piece, Diane Schultz send him a message asking him to write a piece for woodwind quintet and saxophone because she was tired of playing Milhaud’s Scaramouche. Lias began to think that the instrumentation of a woodwind quintet and saxophone would make a better combination for Glide, so within three days of finishing the nine wind version he wrote a transcription for six winds. He keeps the nine wind version in his catalogue because it was the original commission, but he considers the six wind version a better composition. The Louisiana Sinfonietta gave the only performance of the nine wind version as the premiere. The six wind version of Glide was recently published by ALRY Publications in March 2012. The following discussion refers only to the six wind version of Glide.

The piece opens with a solo clarinet presentation of the primary theme, M\(^1\), as seen in figure 4.1.
The bassoon enters with an accompaniment line that emphasizes the upbeat. The combination of these two lines, the syncopation, and the grace notes remind the listener of some aspects of jazz style. The mood and dynamic level soften in measure 17 with a legato secondary theme, $M^2$, introduced by the oboe. This theme is shown in figure 4.2.

In measure 25, the syncopated primary theme, $M^1$, is played by saxophone and supported with similar rhythms in horn and bassoon. The flute, oboe and clarinet contrast this style with a legato melody in octaves. Figure 3 includes mm. 25-26.
The next section begins in measure 33 and features a new melodic theme, $M^3$, introduced by the oboe. The downbeat begins to become obscured due to the lack of steady quarter notes or eighth notes and the continued emphasis on the upbeat. Figure 4.4 shows the $M^3$ theme in oboe.

Figure 4.4 Measures 33-38

All of the instrumental lines come together in unison rhythms in mm. 33-40 with the exception of two ornamental figures in oboe and saxophone. The $M^3$ theme from measure 33 returns in measure 49 in the clarinet part, but it begins on a different pitch and the rhythm is slightly varied. The oboe joins the clarinet in unison in measure 54, and the flute joins in measure 56 to complete the melodic phrase.

Flute, oboe, and clarinet become accompaniment in measure 59, and the bassoon enters with $M^1$ two measures later. Lias continues to change the orchestration of the melodic themes by beginning the theme in a single instrumental line and adding other instruments to this line. He also adds variety by writing the theme in groups of instruments and changing the grouping. Measure 65 contains an example of this technique; saxophone, horn, and bassoon start $M^1$ in measure 65, but flute, oboe, and clarinet take it one measure later. The flute glides up to the high register in measure 79 and plays a variation of $M^1$ that lasts six measures. This variation is shown in figure 4.5 below.
This section with the flute solo is an example of Lias’ improved understanding of writing for the flute. He used the bassoon line as the sole accompaniment for the flute melody which allows the flutist to play a comfortable mezzo forte dynamic level. The flute line can easily be heard above the timbre and pitch level of the bassoon.

Lias wrote two moments of complete silence in the music, and the first one occurs in measure 88 when the entire ensemble rests for a whole measure. There is stark contrast between the fortissimo notes of measure 87, the silence of measure 88, and the soft entrance of the solo clarinet line in measure 89. The contrast brings attention to the change of texture and upcoming thematic variation. The clarinet plays a separated version of the $M^1$ theme as shown in figure 4.6.

The next section from measures 94-118 contains another example of Lias’ technique of adding instruments to the thematic line. The saxophone, oboe, and flute are gradually added to the theme at six measure intervals. The horn and bassoon take over the separated version of $M^1$ in octaves in mm. 113-118 while the other accompanying instruments play fragments of the
melodic material previously heard throughout the piece. The six instruments come together in octaves at a forte dynamic level in mm. 121-122 before the second moment of silence on beat four of measure 122. This prepares the listener for another dynamically contrasting section because the next section begins at a piano dynamic.

The $M^3$ theme returns in measure 123 in clarinet, and the saxophone, horn, and bassoon play the same rhythm but different notes within the harmony. The flute and oboe play the eighth note accompaniment that was previously heard in horn. The flute, oboe, and clarinet lines play alternating descending motives in mm. 139-146. This cascading motion between the instrument lines is similar to the technique Lias used in *Central Park Suite* when he wrote descending motives that flowed down through the parts.

Figure 4.7 Measures 139-140

The six instruments play fragments of $M^1$ in mm. 149-158 before coming together in measure 159 for another full statement of the primary theme. Flute, oboe, and clarinet play the theme in octaves while the other three lines play unison accompaniment rhythms. The $M^2$ theme returns a final time in oboe in measure 167, and the contrasting legato and upbeat melodies are repeated exactly as before in mm. 175-178. The six parts continue to play fragments of $M^1$ until the final measure. The piece closes with scalar figures in flute, oboe, clarinet, and saxophone and a C major chord on accented eighth notes.
Lias had to make orchestration changes when he wrote the six wind version of \textit{Glide} and the following chart, figure 4.9, shows these changes. There was not a saxophone part in the nine wind version, so Lias used the saxophone to play many of the missing parts in the six wind version. The left column contains the measure number of the changes. The middle column gives the original instrument line of the nine wind version for each change. The right column gives the instrument that plays the change in the six wind version.

**Figure 4.9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>9 Wind Version</th>
<th>6 Wind Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Horn 1</td>
<td>Clarinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bassoon 2</td>
<td>Horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Oboe 1</td>
<td>Flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Horn 2</td>
<td>Clarinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Clarinet 2</td>
<td>Saxophone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Saxophone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Bassoon 1</td>
<td>Saxophone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Horn 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>67</td>
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Lias also combined two instrument lines from the nine wind version into one line in the six wind version. Measure 20 is an example of this technique; Lias combine Clarinet 1 and Clarinet 2 into a single clarinet line. The figure below shows the nine wind clarinet line on the left and the six wind clarinet line on the right.

### Figure 4.10 Measure 20

<table>
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<th>Measure</th>
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<th>Instrument 2</th>
<th>Instrument 3</th>
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<td>Clarinet</td>
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<td>113</td>
<td>Clarinet 2</td>
<td>Saxophone</td>
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<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>Horn 1</td>
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<td>Oboe 1</td>
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<td>137</td>
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Lias continued to learn more about writing for the flute while composing *Glide*. He wrote difficult technical passages that developed from his work in the Sonata and accompanied important flute lines with instrument timbres that would complement the flute tone. He employed all registers of the flute range but mainly wrote the flute lines in the middle and upper register so the flute would shine through the texture. The flutist performing this piece should be comfortable playing in all registers of the flute, especially since the piece ends on a high C⁴. It is essential that the instrumentalists strive to maintain the tempo and a sense of downbeat because rhythmic inaccuracy damages the syncopation. They should also accentuate the contrasting styles, dynamics, and texture of each section within the piece. This creates energy, excitement, and character in the music.
The fifth and final work to be examined in this document is *Mélange of Neumes*, composed in 2009. Neume, a term used in Medieval musical notation, simply means note shape. The titles of the four movements and their basic pitch organization are taken from the names given to neumes that indicate three notes meant to be grouped together (originally to be sung to one syllable). The title of the first movement, “Scandicus”, describes three pitches that ascend, whether by skip or step; the second, “Climacus”, groups three pitches that descend; the pitches of the third, “Torculus”, ascend and then descend; the fourth, “Porrectus”, descend and then ascend. Figure 5.1 gives examples in black square notation, in use since the 11th century and still used in modern chant books. Note that each label indicates only direction of motion and not size of interval.

Lias chose the title for this work because he liked the phrase. In the published notes of the piece, Lias wrote:

“A colleague of mine once used the phrase “mélange of neumes” as a pejorative term to describe a particularly poor student composition. It immediately struck me as a funny, yet elegant, turn of phrase and a potential title for a piece. When the commission came
for a flute ensemble piece, the term came to mind again, but this time I followed through with a little more research.”

He does not consider medieval music to be the inspiration for this piece because he only borrowed the note patterns. Lias did not remember the specific definition of the neumes before he chose the title, but he loved the names of the neumes and thought they sounded like characters out of the movie “Sparticus.” After researching the shapes and melodic movement of each neume, he was delighted to discover how well they fit into his concept for the work. Lias combined the neume melodic patterns with traditional forms including waltz and march to create a “mélange” which he defines as “a hodge-podge of different things mixed up together.”

Lias claims that if he could solve what he termed the “compositional puzzle” by using the title neume in each movement, he did so; otherwise, as he says, he “wrote what sounded good.” As a composer, Lias tries to think about what the listener can hear and focus on the immediately accessible elements of a piece. When asked if he used the neume patterns in the large scale structure of each movement, he replied that composers are often as delighted to discover large scale connections in their music as anyone else. He has found that the few times someone analyzed one of his pieces, they discovered musical aspects that are present but that were unintentional on his part. According to Lias, “spending four or five days composing each movement tended to encourage one musical shape to infect all your thinking. It comes out in deliberate ways but it also inevitably comes out in ways that you didn’t realize.” He compared this phenomenon with painting. If a painter has been using certain colors, he might continue to paint subconsciously with those colors.


Each neume type permeates its respective movement, combining to create motives as well as larger structural layers. In the following discussion, motives will be labeled with a letter and number for easier recognition. The chart below shows these motives and their labels which will help performers locate the motives within their voice lines.

**Figure 5.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive Label</th>
<th>Score Excerpt</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="M1 Score Excerpt" /></td>
<td>Piccolo, Flute 1, Flute 2 Measure 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="M2 Score Excerpt" /></td>
<td>Flute 3 Measure 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="M3 Score Excerpt" /></td>
<td>Flute 1 Measures 20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="H1 Score Excerpt" /></td>
<td>Flute 3 Measure 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="H2 Score Excerpt" /></td>
<td>Flute 4 Measure 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="H3 Score Excerpt" /></td>
<td>Flute 4 Measure 18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="H4 Score Excerpt" /></td>
<td>Flute 3 Measure 32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first measure of “Scandicus,” shown in figure 5.3, opens with a unison scandicus motive in all flute parts. This motive moves through C♯-D♯-E and outlines pitches that will be used in the first melodic motive in mm 5-6.

Figure 5.3 Measure 1

This motive is followed by an octatonic scale in piccolo, flute 1, flute 4, alto 1, and alto 2. This scale, shown in figure 5.4, recurs throughout the movement and is central to the melodic and harmonic focus of not only this movement, but the fourth movement as well.

Figure 5.4 Measure 2-3

The first harmonic accompaniment motive, shown in figure 5.5, occurs in mm. 3-4 and will be referred to as H1.

Figure 5.5

This motive is played by 3rd flute, 4th flute, 1st alto flute, 2nd alto flute, bass flute, and contra-bass flute. The score excerpt in figure 5.6 from mm. 5-6 is an example of Lias’ simultaneous inclusion of every neume shape. Each colored circle identifies the melodic motion of the previously described neume types.
This section of the first movement uses all four neumes in different rhythmic configurations, and the patterns that begin to form in these two measures are continued throughout the work. The scandicus motion is written over a single beat, but echoed in the following upbeat. These melodic and rhythmic patterns are combined in other movements and utilize techniques such as sequences to create diversity. With a better understanding of the neumes and their melodic motion, the high flutes and piccolo can emphasize the scandicus motion in this particular section while the low flutes support with the torculus, climacus, and porrectus accompaniment phrases.
that form \( H^1 \). In these measures, the upper three voices introduce the first melodic motive, \( M^1 \), in unison. This first melodic motive is formed from three scandicus motives put together. Measure 6 contains the second half of \( M^1 \) which is the same as the first half except the final \( C^#-D^#-E \) is played an octave lower than in measure 5. Figure 5.7 shows the \( M^1 \) melodic motive.

Figure 5.7 Measures 5-6

This octave displacement adds interest to the motive, and Lias uses this technique throughout the entire work. Flute 3 introduces the second melodic motive, \( M^2 \), which is created with two scandicus patterns. Flute 4 and alto 1 accompany this motive with the same rhythm but different notes before flute 1 and 2 join in measure 8.

The two prominent rhythmic figures in mm. 7-13 are shown in figure 5.8.

Figure 5.8 Measures 7-13 Prominent Rhythms

These rhythms make the scandicus pattern more obviously visible in the score, but when combined they also create the sound of constantly moving sixteenth notes. There is a large-scale appearance of the scandicus pattern in mm. 9-11 in piccolo, flute 1, and flute 2. These instruments play \( E^b \) on the downbeat of measure 9, \( E \) on the downbeat of measure 10, and \( F^# \) on the downbeat of measure 11 creating the ascending scandicus pattern over a larger period of time than previously heard. If the performers know about this large-scale scandicus, they could emphasize and lead the three important notes in a more effective way. The first section closes
with an insistent accented rhythm in unison through all the voices except bass and contra-bass flute. These two instruments play accented eighth notes, and players should concentrate on clear, short articulations that will match the higher instruments.

This movement’s form can be organized into ABA\(^1\), however, Lias generally does not adhere to strict formal designations when he writes music. As he begins composing, Lias makes preliminary decisions about the formal structure of the piece and its movements. This does not necessarily include formal structures like ternary or rondo because he thinks of a rough blue print that includes the number of sections and placement of musical climax moments. His thought process takes into consideration the best way to maintain the listener’s attention as well as the performer’s interest. He accomplishes this by composing a slightly different character, rhythm, or direction in each section. Lias said, “All music, because it is unfolding over time, is fundamentally a kind of drama. If you want the drama to stay interesting, things have to change.”

The second section of “Scandicus” begins in measure 16 and connects to the previous section through melodic material originally heard in measure 1. This occurrence of the scandicus motion is played by the 3\(^{rd}\) flute and 2\(^{nd}\) alto and built on the pitches D\(^\#\)-E-F\(^\#\). These pitches are enharmonically equivalent to the large-scale scandicus pitches from mm. 9-11. Flute 4, alto 1, and alto 2 present the next significant harmonic motive, H\(^2\), in measure 16. Figure 5.9 shows the H\(^2\) harmonic motive.
This motive is a single scandicus ascending note pattern, and it is repeated in measure 17. These same three voices present $H^3$ in mm. 18-19 and introduce the next prominent rhythmic figure as seen in figure 5.10.

The third melodic phrase, $M^3$, is played by flute 1 in mm. 20-23 while the low voices support the melody with $H^2$ and a $B^b$ drone. Figure 5.11 shows measures 20-23.

This $M^3$ melody is not composed of scandicus patterns but includes some torculus patterns.
Measures 28-31 serve as transitional material that leads to the third and final section of the movement. This connective material includes H² and an ascending version of the eight-sixteenth rhythm that was prominent in the second section. This final section features material from the A section including H⁴: an upbeat variation of H¹. Figure 5.12 shows H⁴.

Figure 5.12 Measure 32

This harmonic accompaniment is played by flute 3, flute 4, and alto 1 while the remaining low flute parts play H¹. The first two melodic motives, M¹ and M², also return in this final section throughout the piccolo, flute 1, and flute 2 parts. In the final three measures, the three highest voices play F♯-G-A three times to confirm the ascending scandinus note pattern.

The second movement “Climacus” opens with an emphasis on the lowest flutes of the choir. Lias thought this slow movement would be the perfect opportunity to feature the low flute family. The first melodic phrase of this movement, M¹, is introduced by Flute 4; it is made of four climacus note patterns. Figure 5.13 shows M¹.

Figure 5.13 Measures 1-4

Lias continued his utilization of octave displacement in this movement in measure 3. The descending line moves through D-C-B-A-G-F♯, but he wrote the A-G-F♯ an octave higher to create an unexpected change from the previous measures of descending pitches. The bass flute opens the movement with a long climacus pattern that plays F-E-D over four measures. One of the prominent rhythmic figures in “Climacus” is shown in figure 5.14.
Lias wrote this rhythmic figure throughout this movement with four different combinations of the major and minor second and seventh intervals. Lias also used this figure with the intervals of a second and fifth. The first of these rhythmic figures, shown in figure 5.15, occurs in measure 3 in flute 4 and will be referred to as R₁.

This rhythmic motive is composed of minor second and minor seventh intervals, and it is part of the M¹ melodic motive. R² occurs in measure 4 in the first alto line, and it involves the major second and perfect fifth intervals. R³ is also introduced in measure 4 in the bass flute voice, and it is composed of minor second and perfect fifth intervals.

The first alto flute part takes over the M¹ melody in measure 5 while flute 3, flute 4, and bass flute seamlessly pass F# over three measures. Lias composed the F# in third flute to hold four beats, and fourth flute enters with this pitch after two beats for a smooth transition before the bass joins in measure 6. Knowledge of this F# relationship between the three voices would enable the performers to focus on matched tone color and pitch. Lias composed a half beat silence in measure 8 that brings attention to the entrance of the highest three flute parts. Performers should be careful to strictly follow his rhythmic markings so no one plays over the silence. This rest is reminiscent of the silence Lias wrote in the music in Glide that drew attention to important musical moments. Measure 13 contains the first full flute choir texture as
piccolo joins flute 1 and 2 with a complete presentation of $M^1$. Lias continues his use of constant sixteenth note accompaniment, shown in figure 5.16, from the first movement into this movement.

Figure 5.16 Measure 13

Flute 3 begins this alternating two pitch sixteenth note accompaniment in measure 13, after which it passes between alto 1 and alto 2. Measures 14 and 15, as seen in figure 5.17, contain a good example of Lias’ consideration of breathing.

Figure 5.17 Measures 14-15

In the third and fourth flute parts, he composed a long ascending line of the pitches $E^b-F-G^b-A^b-B^b-B-C$, but enabled the phrase to remain unbroken by breathing because he placed eighth rests on different beats in the two parts. Flute 3 can take a breath on the upbeat of count four and Flute 4 can breathe on the upbeat of count one in the following measure. A new rhythmic motive, $R^5$, is played by the bass and contra-bass in measure 16; it is made of the major second and major seventh intervals. Piccolo, flute 1, flute 2, and flute 3 rest for the remainder of the movement, leaving the original opening low flute lines to close the movement. Each of the low flutes, except contra-bass, plays a climacus note pattern in succession filling the five measures before the final chord.
“Torculus,” the third movement, was composed in the style of a waltz. Lias stated that he likes to include recognizable styles in his music to make it accessible to the audience. He wrote this movement in ¾ time and included more major triad harmony than the previous movements. Each of these compositional elements supports his “light waltz” designation for this movement. The movement begins with the first accompaniment figure, $H^1$, in the Flute 4 and low flute parts as shown in figure 5.18.

![Figure 5.18 Measures 1-2](image_url)

Each voice plays a different pitch and rhythm pattern, but when combined they form a complete harmonic accompaniment that provides a four measure introduction to the melody. The first melodic theme of the movement, $M^1$, is played by Flute 1 and 2 and shown in figure 5.19.

![Figure 5.19 Measures 5-8](image_url)

This melody is composed of numerous torculus note patterns in succession with eighth-note and triplet rhythms. Lias varies the next occurrence of $M^1$ in measure 13 by splitting it between Flute 1 and 2 and Flute 3 and 4. The third and fourth flutes play the first two counts of $M^1$; first and second flute play the next two counts. $H^1$ accompanies the statement of $M^1$, but Lias made a
slight change by including Flute 4 in the melody. The bass and contra-bass parts add a note on beat 3 to keep the pattern of single beat entrances.

The B section begins in measure 21 with a new melodic theme played by all C flutes and both alto flute parts, but each voice plays different notes in the harmonic progression that begins with an E major chord. Lias made a slight change to M\textsuperscript{2}, as seen in figure 5.20, by adding a grace note in measure 29 and an arpeggiated F major chord in measure 30.

Figure 5.20 Measures 29-31

Performers should bring out these ornamental notes because they add interest to a repeated melody. The C section begins in measure 37 with a new melodic theme, M\textsuperscript{3}, played by piccolo. Figure 5.21 shows the first four measures of M\textsuperscript{3} in piccolo.

Figure 5.21 Measures 37-40

Alto 1, Alto 2, Bass, and Contra-bass accompany with H\textsuperscript{2}: a combination of quarter-note downbeat and two-note alternating eighth-notes. This accompaniment is shown in figure 5.22.
The sparse texture and contrast of these low and high pitch instruments allows each part to be clearly heard. The closing section begins in measure 53 and brings a return of $M^1$ material at the same pitch level as its original presentation. Flute 4 and both alto voices accompany $M^1$ with the $H^3$ motive. Lias used staccato eighth notes and fast crescendos to build the excitement to the end of the movement. The opening and closing chord progressions are another example of the tonal qualities of this movement. Lias opened “Torculus” with the bass line alternating between the pitches of $A^b$ and $E^b$, and he closed the movement with an $E^b7$ to $A^b$ chord progression. This emphasis on the tonic-dominant relationship of $A^b$ major gives the movement a sense of a central key.

“Porrectus” begins with a loud, energetic octatonic scale leading to 1½ measures of accented porrectus note patterns. Figure 5.23 shows mm. 1-2 in piccolo.
The octatonic scale is completed in measure 2 as it leads to the first melodic theme. $M^1$, shown in figure 5.24, is a combination of porrectus note patterns, an octatonic scale, and a long trill played by the piccolo and C flute parts.

![Figure 5.24 Measures 4-7](image)

This melody is accompanied by $H^1$ in the alto, bass, and contra-bass parts. Lias composed several conversation sections in which several voices group together and take turns either playing the same music or answering with different music. The first example, shown in figure 5.25, occurs in measure 7 and features Flutes 3 and 4 stepping up and down within the octatonic scale. The two alto voices answer with a different octatonic pattern. Flute 1 and 2 join the third and fourth flutes with the next statement of their octatonic pattern followed closely by the alto voices.

![Figure 5.25 Measures 7-8](image)

The subsequent three measures continue this technique; flute 1, 2, and 3 play a porrectus pattern and alto 2, bass, and contra-bass immediately echo the pattern. In mm. 21-22, Lias gradually adds each voice into the texture so they sound together on an E major chord on the downbeat of
measure 23. This movement features intricate connections between voices, so it is imperative that performers clearly articulate and accurately execute the rhythmic and scalar figures.

The E major chord in measure 23 begins the B section and the next melodic theme, M². Figure 5.26 shows mm. 23-26 in first flute.

Lias used dramatic dynamic changes and sforzando markings to lead to the second appearance of M² in measure 31. He began measure 37 with Flute 4 but added two voices on each beat to enhance his crescendo from piano to forte over a single measure. Figure 5.27 shows this technique in measures 37-38.

Following the repeat of this technique in measure 38, he wrote a two octave ascending octatonic scale that gradually involves all voices except bass and contra. The pattern for this scale is shown in figure 5.28 from the fourth flute part in mm. 39-40.
This dramatic increase in dynamic, texture, and range leads to the return of measure 1 material. The recurrence of M\textsuperscript{1} opens the final section of the work in measure 47, but this time Lias added ornamental notes in Flute3, Flute 4, and Alto 1. This first theme is changed one final time in m. 59 by the addition of eighth-notes on beats two and four, as shown in figure 5.29.

Lias utilized the repetitive porrectus note patterns from the beginning of the movement to lead to the important final two measures of the entire work. The second to last measure features all four neume patterns in succession in the order they were presented: scandicus, climacus, torculus, and porrectus. This pattern is shown in figure 5.30.

Lias wanted to play a mental game with himself and purposely included all of the neume shapes in a specific order. He closed the movement with an E major chord leading to an A in octaves by the full ensemble.
CONCLUSION

Lias composed two other flute centered works that influenced his use of the flute in his compositions, but they are not commercially available. Lias worked at the Texas Shakespeare Festival for eleven years, and in 1999 he was involved in a production of *Antony and Cleopatra*. The director emailed the people working on the show a few months before the production began and shared her vision of placing oil drums on stage to create the Egyptian setting. She wanted to make a statement on Egypt becoming the center of the oil industry, so she decided to create an Egyptian landscape with oil drums. Lias began to imagine Roman centurions and Egyptian guards drumming on the oil drums with large beaters, so he discussed his ideas with the director to create a design concept for the show. They decided that the sounds of Rome and Antony would be created with drums. The sounds of Cleopatra and Egypt needed to be sexual, and Lias felt that the flute could portray such emotions. They placed a flutist in the rafters above the audience, and she played the score with many different flutes including piccolo, alto, bass, and C flute. All of the music was live and very interactive in real time. The flutist had cues in her music to hold a note until a certain action took place on stage. During rehearsals, Lias wrote flute excerpts by hand and asked the flutist to play the new music. They ran the scene and decided on the fit of the music, but if it wasn’t working Lias could change it during rehearsal and try the scene again. This experience was interesting for Lias because he was able to work so
closely with the flutist and continue learning how the flute works. He was also able to use contemporary techniques in ways he had not previously explored.

In 2004, Lias wrote a flute and piano score for a production of *Death of a Salesman* in Alabama at Auburn University in Montgomery. The music was pre-recorded at Stephen F. Austin University with Lias playing the piano part and Diane Schultz playing the flute part. This provided yet another opportunity for him to weave his understanding of the flute into his feelings about how drama works.

Lias has recently become very involved in adventure composing. Three years ago, he was looking for a competition to enter, and the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship deadline was approaching. As he was trying to think of a proposal idea, he wondered what he would like to do if given a fellowship. Suddenly, he wondered what it would be like to be the resident composer for the national park service. He liked to ski, hike, backpack, and kayak among many other outdoor activities, so he wrote a proposal for a Guggenheim Fellowship. His proposal was turned down, but he eventually decided to travel and write the compositions on his own. He went to Big Bend National Park and wrote a trombone sonata about the park. Next, he traveled to King’s Canyon National Park and composed a trumpet piece. A trumpet sonata resulted from his first official residency at Rocky Mountain National Park. The residencies began to snowball and eventually the Carlsbad Caverns marimba composition became the seventh in his national parks series. In the summer of 2012, Lias was appointed artist-in-residence at three national parks in Alaska. He taught a class for composers in Denali National Park, and traveled to the Gates of the Arctic National Park in the Arctic Circle. There are no roads, buildings, or trails in the Gates of the Arctic, so the resident artist goes on a ten day back-country patrol with a park ranger. Lias was flown into the park on a brush plane to explore the tundra and witness the
migration of caribou, wolves, and bears. After returning, Lias will compose three large works about his experiences in the Alaskan national parks. During the interview, he described his excitement about the possible inspiration for the anticipated orchestral and wind band pieces.

The adventure composing began as a way to combine his love of the outdoors and music, but it has grown into a project with its own momentum and gained the national park service’s interest. Lias has a lot of fun in his residencies and hopes that the centennial of the national park service in 2016 will bring numerous performances of his works.

When asked if he is planning to write more flute centered music, Lias said he would love to write another piece. Five or six years have passed since he wrote something just for fun, but he considers himself lucky to be at a stage in his career where the music he writes is entirely dependent on the commissioner. He has been approached about the possibility of a flute duo commission, and it would be different from his other flute works because it would be part of his National Park series. He is going to call the piece *The Ghosts of Mesa Verde*, and it would be based on Mesa Verde National Park. The park contains cliff dwellings of a mysterious culture of Native American people. Archeologists have discovered flutes in the ruins of the cliff dwellings, and they know exactly what the flutes sounded like because of the placement of the finger holes. These particular flutes play a unique scale known as the anasazi scale. Lias will pick four or five images of Native American culture from 2000 years ago such as hunting and cooking. He will tell a basic story through the music with a short movement similar to *Mélange of Neumes*, but he will use the anasazi scale. The music will be woven between two unaccompanied flutes. Lias estimates that this piece could be written in 2012 or 2013, but he is waiting for the commissioner to decide on some details.
Stephen Lias composes in diverse styles and for various performing forces, but his music maintains several key characteristics that define his compositional style. He writes memorable themes and motives that he manipulates and varies throughout his works. These motives and themes create interest, energy, and emotional variety, but they also unite the work as a whole. He employs techniques like inverting the intervals in a motive or playing the intervals in retrograde to create the variations. He also does not adhere to strict formal designations, but creates unique forms with traditional roots. He strives to collaborate with performers and learn more about the instruments for which he composes. This has proven a successful technique as his continued collaboration with flutists has brought him awards, recognition, and acclaim in an unexpected venue.
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