

Dramatic Narrative in Three Works by Dan Yuhas

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The scores and recordings of the works under discussion can be found at <http://www.danyuhas.com/index.php?works>

1.

Karlheinz Stockhausen, in one of the interviews he gave Jonathan Cott, said that

There are three basic qualities of musical formation: the lyrical, which is the instant, the here and now; the dramatic, which is development, with precise beginning and ending, climaxes, high points and low points; and epic, which is the juxtaposition of different moments, as in a variation form or the traditional form of the suite - That's an epic form, you can always add a new section, a new chapter so to speak. There's no strong directionalism as in a dramatic form, but it's also not static; within a given moment it goes somewhere, it describes some event. And I want all the three (Cott, 35).

Indeed, we can identify all three among most composers, but a definite predilection for one of them is generally apparent. The preference often may be unconscious and involuntary, obviously deriving from the composer's personality, his aesthetic tendencies and the specific attributes of his musical talent. This article focuses on three works by Dan Yuhas, who seems to serve as a clear example of a composer for whom the dramatic form is most dominant in his compositions (as of this writing, at any rate).

Yuhas, born in 1947, is a prominent Israeli composer. His independent musical personality and creative integrity are readily evident in his work. He emerged as a fully mature artist with his triptych "Three Pieces for Piano" in 1974. Later in his career he favored the single-movement form (except for a three-movement string quartet and a David Vogel song cycle of four movements played without pauses). "Three Pieces for Piano" reveals the entire range of Yuhas' musical style: free atonal material, expressive and dynamic lines, heightened harmonic sensitivity, and – most important to our present discussion – a dramatic structure, encompassing a constant sense of formal directionality. In later works these fundamental traits underwent change and development, but not drastic stylistic turnabouts. Those interested in historical ascriptions can place Yuhas' compositions among the finest modernistic works composed at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Such compositions make unrestricted, imaginative use of everything possible to build the lingua franca of post-serialism:¹ free atonality, independent of any serial processes and not averse to ephemeral tonal allusions; intensive focus on timbre, sometimes preferred over other parameters and enriched by extensive instrumental techniques; and substantial attention to texture and its polyphonic and heterophonic possibilities. More than other composers of his generation, and despite the avoidance of any serial elements, Yuhas meticulously chooses pitches over precise rhythmic notation that is always performable despite inherent complexity. The need for flowing musical thought, based on spontaneous expression and unhindered by cerebral processes, might also be related to the composer's dramatic bent, to moving forward out of a clear feeling of directionality.

The mounting drama in an instrumental piece can either rely on a pre-musical program or be devoid of any descriptive or programmatic hint, but contrary to what was believed in the 19th century, there is no significant difference between the two, experientially speaking. Starting in the Baroque period, or more exactly Middle Baroque, a distinct genre of dramatic instrumental music began to become conspicuous – the concerto. In this genre, an instrument or group of instruments are given a part equivalent to that of a character in an opera or oratorio, which are, after all, the dramatic genres whose appearance signify the onset of Baroque. The drama in an instrumental genre such as the concerto is completely abstract, unless the piece is augmented by a programmatic or descriptive dimension; and it is driven by the development of a motif or several motifs, at times contradictory in nature, which intensifies the dramatic mood.² This process represents one layer of the drama. Further elements of dramatic development may include alternating tension and release, ebb and flow, forward movement and pauses or stops. These construct the composition's peak moments, followed by its denouement and resignation. In late

20th century music, the importance of thematic material as an agent of dramatic development decreases, while the importance of musical gestures increases.³

The first times we listen to a piece, the drama is perceived mainly as a sequence of gestures; only upon repeatedly hearing it, after the sounds are embedded in our ears, do we manage to discover some of the thematic associations that are building drama. Some assert that the unconscious absorption of motifs, starting with one's very first exposure to the piece, contributes to the sense of the dramatic narrative (this is actually Yuhas' view as well), but there is no hard evidence of this. In Yuhas' work we meet the personified representation of the abstract character through a certain instrument (in two of the pieces presented below). Perhaps it is just this author's personal impression, but almost all Yuhas' compositions seem to incorporate moments in which the polyphony comprises a conversation among humanlike voices, represented by specific instruments. (Perhaps one cause is the almost-speaking nature of the melodic lines, a kind of contemporary *musica parlanta*.) In 19th- and early 20th-century music, the instrument representing the character and the thematic identified with that character are interrelated (such is the case, for instance, in "Harold in Italy," "Don Quixote," "The Swan of Tuonela," "The Afternoon of a Faun," "The Miraculous Mandarin," and others). In later music, which is a thematic (only motif-based) and sometimes also aperiodic and amotivic, the instrument—with all its unique timbres—is itself the character. In some cases, when the musician's part leans towards the theatrical, he himself could even be considered a protagonist in the dramatic narrative.

Using the expression 'dramatic narrative' might be curious, as 'narrative' and 'drama' are often considered opposites (also in the above-cited passage by Stockhausen): a narrative 'tells about' whereas a drama 'presents.'⁴ Yet when it comes to music, it seems necessary to expand these concepts and use them in a way befitting music's unique traits. Of course, 'narrative' is perceived first and foremost as a literary term (and justifiably so, from a historical perspective), and the many differences between music and literature pose fundamental questions regarding its use – according to its original literary meaning – when describing and analyzing musical compositions. Expanding the concept's meaning, however, actually solves the problems raised by the comparison between music and literature. Furthermore, derivative terms such as 'narratography,' 'narrativizing' and 'narrativity' enable more precise distinctions in narratological analyses of musical compositions.⁵ A broader understanding of the term 'narrative' also eliminates the stylistic restrictions set by some narratologists, and applies it to diverse kinds of music in every possible style. Vera Micznik aptly expresses this thought: "The description of musical materials with all their multiple levels of meaning, including semantic level, offers a solution to the objection that music cannot be narrative because it does not have meaning as literature does" (in Pawlowska, 7). One prominent narratologist, Byron Almén, says in his book, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*: "Because narrative was first conceptualized in relation to literature, we have largely failed to recognize the distinction between narrative proper and narrative as manifested in literature" (Almén, 12).

It appears that the complex analytical methods proposed by Martha Garbócz, Eero Tarasti and others may be applied to a variety of styles, including modern and atonal works, such as Yuhas' compositions. But this article adopts a simpler way, turning directly to the material under discussion and eclectically integrating a formal analytical approach with the listener's experience of the narrative.⁶ One might add (in contrast to standard narratological approaches) that any verbal description of music, even the driest formal analysis, is actually a type of narrative (Hans Keller once tried to analyze music wordlessly – only through sounds, but was unsuccessful).⁷ Formal analysis hints at the way in which the composer built the narrative. The listener, who rebuilds the narrative each time he listens to the piece, hears a combination of different elements in music of this kind.⁸ Every listener is likely to tell the 'story' in his own way. Nevertheless, the deepest, or the highest, level of the musical narrative is one beyond words, the nonverbal narrative. That is the 'story' told by the listening experience, which verbal means lack the power to express.

2.

"Entities," composed by Yuhas in 1983, was written for instrumental ensemble with the clarinet playing a concertante part, although it is not defined as a real concerto and in some places does not sound like one. The concertante aspect of the clarinet's part is related to the piece's dramatic narrative, as the composer's accompanying notes explain (see below). "Entities" is a relatively early composition that may serve as a starting point when examining Yuhas' special approach to form. Incidentally, this is the only case in which the composer introduces the work's dramatic

concept in a semi-programmatic manner. However, despite the anthropomorphism of the program, it seems necessary to understand it as the metaphorical narrative of an abstract drama, the plot of which transpires entirely in the realm of sound. The composer explains:

An extroverted person, surrounded by a turbulent, noisy society, suddenly finds himself all alone. His behavior gradually changes and he increasingly turns inward. This is the basic idea of the piece. The work opens with 'noise,' in which all instruments partake and which introduces almost all of the piece's musical material. The listener might, perhaps, absorb it even unconsciously. Suddenly, the 'noise' ceases and the clarinet remains to play alone. This solo influences the structure of the work. The development of the musical ideas, which are not programmatic, stems from the material presented in the beginning. The instruments split into various and ever-changing groups, sometimes proceeding with no apparent dependence upon each other. The piece ends with the 'noise' heard at the outset, only this time its character is more tender. Starting with a very wide instrumental range, it decreases slowly, reaching a single note that eventually fades away.

The tension between the one and the many, demonstrated through the opposition between the thick heterophonic texture⁹ in the opening of the piece and the clarinet's monophonic solo, is typical of the concerto genre. Donald Tovey, who emphasizes the principle of argument and strife in the genre and etymology of 'concerto' (derived from 'certare' – 'to strive'), identifies in the concerto the same conflict of one against many that also lies at the foundation of the narrative in "Entities":

Nothing in human life and history is much more thrilling or of more ancient and universal experience than the antithesis of the individual and the crowd; an antithesis which is familiar in every degree, from flat opposition to harmonious reconciliation, and which has been of no less universal prominence in works of art than in life. Now the concerto form expresses this antithesis with all possible force and delicacy (Tovey, 7).

Joseph Kerman sees the concerto genre as a touchstone for studying musical narrative due to the same principle of engaging in a struggle to which Tovey refers: "There is a soloist and an orchestra and there is usually quite a sharp sense of character....The agents exist in some kind of relationship and what is traced in a concerto is the course of a relationship (Kerman, 97).

The tight structure of "Entities" makes it difficult to divide the piece into clear sections in a few places, despite fluctuations in atmosphere and character, in texture and timbre. Of course, distinguishing between the noisy tutti heterophony and the clarinet solo in the opening section is easy. After that, the following division may be made:

- B: 26-41
- C: 41-57
- D: 58-71
- E: 72-104
- F: 105-116
- G: 117-132
- H: 133-151
- I: 152-175
- J: 176-299

The clarinet's melodic line, with its strikingly expressive beauty, brings in the salient motifs of the piece:

Example 1

9

In bar 26, with the clarinet's trill in the background, C-sharp is heard in unison on the piano, cello and double bass. This marks the start of a new section and the beginning of the individual's process of introversion, which could also be understood as the process of reconciling with the many. The sounds of unison, usually prominent in the atonal environment, sometimes take over as momentary tonal centers. Both individual sounds and paired sounds may serve as pedal points – a delaying element, like anchor or support points in the narrative sequence. Examples in this section are b on the trombone (bars 27-30), b-flat² on the trumpet (bars 31-32), b² on the oboe (bars 35-36), and especially the unison of D on the piano, cello, double bass and bass-clarinet (bars 28-44). In the latter you can see the start of a new section that ends with F on the trombone (bar 52) and a kind of concise reprise, four bars long, of the noisy heterophony from the beginning of the piece. The note C in unison on the piano and bass-clarinet perhaps marks once again the start of a section. This section contains a short violin solo with a wide range that bridges into 11 muffled heterophonic bars that deconstruct the C–D–E-flat cluster as if absorbed into the general pause in bar 72. This could be considered the start of section E.

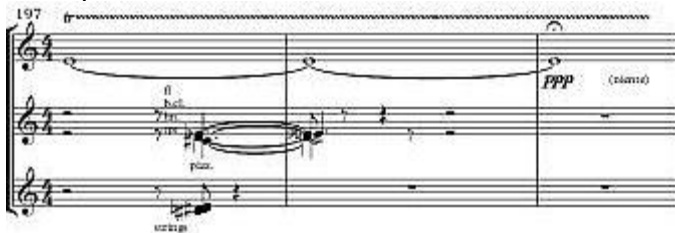
In these sections the clarinet is part of the ensemble; it conducts brief conversations with the other instruments, some of which are given short solos, like secondary characters in a story or play. A prominent trumpet solo stimulates high polyphonic activity (bars 80-104). The clarinet does not particularly stand out here either, and in bars 95-104 it joins its family, the woodwinds, to create a heterophonic texture through radiant high notes. The next section (F) – starting at bar 105 and ending at bar 116 – is marked 'scherzando.' (Mood instructions are fairly rare in Yuhas' compositions.) The pizzicato of the strings, the rapid figures of the piano and woodwinds, the staccato chords – all contribute to the somehow humoristic character of this section. The f³ on the violin (bar 116) and e¹ on the trombone denote the start of a new section (G). This is an adagio section, again with structural support points that create another major second interval, like the one that stood out in the clarinet solo. (The major second is also heard between the trombone's e and the flute's f-sharp.) In the mysterious adagio—which has a static quality—continuous, dense chromatic notes are heard (mainly e, f-sharp and f) scattered amongst the instruments and serving as background with tonal hints of short melodic lines, until they all accumulate into a thick cadential-like chord:

Example 2

A cluster on the piano (bar 133) begins section H (bars 132-140) with another reprise—this time a bit more continuous—of the very beginning. It is very quiet; only at the end do we hear a big crescendo, culminating in a piano chord followed by b^2 on the trumpet. Other instruments quickly respond with continuous points of sound. The trumpet brings the descending major second motif $b-a$ in bars 144-150. The piano part, which is prominent, is joined by the clarinet in a short personal statement (147-150). Everything stops for a moment in a hue resembling a dominant seventh chord, played twice in staccato on the piano and once as a prolonged chord on the wind instruments (bars 151-152) – the start of section I. From here on begins a very gradual process of relieving the dramatic tension, against the background of a heterophonic rustling from the violin, viola and cello (a modified repeat of bars 17-22). The other instruments play single notes, with the $d-e-flat-e-f$ cluster standing out. These are the same sounds that also dominated during the clarinet solo at the beginning of the piece. The clarinet plays two more ‘independent’ phrases (156-159) and leads into the last climax with the outburst of a rising line up to $b-flat^3$ and the woodwinds and percussion instruments joining in for a powerfully high cluster.

The motif of a recurring sound, d in four quarter notes, is played by the cello and double bass. Anyone who listens to the composition a few times might be able to recall the recurring f in the clarinet’s opening solo (see Ex. 1) and the recurring chord of the wind instruments in bar 49. The piano responds to the recurring sounds with four B_1 notes, and in bar 175 reverts to the same C -sharp that marked the start of section B in bar 26, this time doubling the octave. The note by which the narrative began to develop is the one that also indicates its end. C -sharp forms the background of the beginning of the clarinet’s last, brief monologue (bars 177-181). Now we witness the opposite process to the one at the beginning of the piece: there, the clarinet solo grew out of the clamor of many instruments; here, the clarinet invites the many to join it in a polyphonic-heterophonic texture similar to the one at the beginning but more relaxed (‘calmo,’ notes the composer above bar 189). All of this rustling gathers together in bar 193 in the sounds of the same cluster that appeared in section C, while expanding to c downward and to f -sharp upward. With a background trill of $e-e-flat$, the cluster patterns crumble and the piece ends in a c -sharp- $d-e-flat-e$ chord:

Example 3



Some sort of reconciliation seems to have been achieved between the one and the many, stemming from the process of change undergone by main character, and perhaps by its surrounding comrades as well, throughout the piece. As far as verbal means can describe it, that is probably the best way to sum up the dramatic narrative.

3.

“Coloured Lines” was composed in 2002 for chamber ensemble. The composer’s explanatory notes imply a semi-programmatic narrative here as well:

The piece starts with short harsh chords, which cut off melodic lines that try to emerge. These chords are present throughout the piece but in varying intensity and character. The relations between the melodic lines and the vertical chords are maintained in all the sections.

The drama that takes place in “Coloured Lines” derives from the tension between two opposing forces, two musical principles: melody and harmony, the horizontal dimension and the vertical dimension of the musical composition. The dynamics between the two have, in fact, preoccupied many generations of composers and theoreticians in European music. Incidentally, this is one of 20th century music’s most intricate problems, especially in the stylistic streams that abandoned the system of coordinating harmony with melody that had predominated in the “tonal” age – from the start of the Baroque period onward. The narrative of “Coloured Lines” illustrates the tension

between the two principles in an original, distinctive manner, presenting it as a dramatic struggle between two abstract entities. As for the structure of the composition, the composer states that “the changing moods give a somewhat kaleidoscopic nature, but unity is preserved by using the same motivic and harmonic material.” This one-movement piece may be divided into a number of sections; in some places the division is fairly clear whereas in others, especially towards the end, it is somewhat vague. The first section (A), bars 1-20, is quite distinct; it is the work's exposition, in which all its material appears and the contrast between the two conflicting elements is presented. After that, the following divisions could be made:

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| B: 21-52 | or B1: 21-39 | and B2: 40-52 |
| C: 53-104 | or C1: 53-65/70 | and C2: 71-104 |
| D: 105-167 | or D1: 105-138 | and D2: 139-167 |
| E: 168-217 | or E1: 168-180 | and E2: 181-217 |

At the start of the piece the wind instruments play the short chords referenced by the composer in his explanatory notes. The sounds are doubled and prolonged, accompanied by a heterophonic deconstruction by the strings. As will be apparent later in the piece, the harmony itself is also charged with oppositions: between sharp, aggressive shading and soft, gentle shading, between quartal-quintal chords and chords with a tertian hue. In bar 3, a short line tries to erupt from the clarinet but gets cut off by the beginning chord:

Example 4



The clarinet makes another attempt, this time assisted by the oboe (bar 5) and again on its own (bar 6), and then is joined by the other woodwinds in homo-rhythmic chordal motion – a kind of homophonic texture that will be heard quite a bit later in the piece (and when the rhythms differ, the texture becomes polyphonic). One could consider the chordal motion a compromise between the two dimensions, horizontal and vertical, but this possibility is blocked primarily by the melodic impulse:

Example 5



The brass section tries to disturb the melodic motion and then the piano follows suit with a recurring chord with a prominent quartal-quintal hue:

Example 6



The wind instruments return to the starting chord accompanied by strikes of the rototom (bar 8), but the melodic lines keep trying to make themselves heard: the violin and oboe simultaneously (9-10); the flute and vibraphone in unison (11); the oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn in a chordal motion (12); followed by the horn, flute and clarinet, each one with its own line (12-13). All this occurs against the background of obstinate chords on the piano and vibraphone, which do not manage to prevent the melodic sweep dominating all the other instruments and creating a polyphonic texture of expressive lines (14-20) – the first dramatic climax in the piece. The melodic activity subsides and ceases completely with quiet, prolonged chords of the string instruments, which dimly hint at the tonicity of F-sharp minor:

Example 7



Here as well as in Yuhás' other works, harmony plays a structural role, by marking the beginning of the second section. In this section, the texture is thinner: short lines on the clarinet, flute and then piano (accompanied by one of Yuhás' rare mood instructions: *grazioso*), and chords in pizzicato on the strings. In bars 22-30 the double bass plays a melodic line in pizzicato, while a chordal-polyphonic motion is heard in the woodwinds and horn at the same time. Next (bars 34-41), the piano with all its linearity becomes emphasized as if it were a stage character, with spotlights directed upon it for a short time, and the other instruments accompanying it by making short comments. In bar 40, the spotlights are redirected to the violin as it plays an expressive melodic line, while in the background, as counterpoint, short lines are played by the piano, flute and cello, as well as chords and chordal motion by the winds and strings. This melody on the violin leads to a brief but intense climax – the piece's second, in which the piano's role is again prominent. The latter brings the section to a close with a rapid descent into three bass notes that it plays in unison with the double bass and trombone (bars 52-54). The flute is heard playing against a background of a few chords of the wind instruments and soft polyphony, *sul ponticello* in the strings – a lyrical moment, the likes of which appears in all of Yuhás' compositions. The restrained expressiveness of the melodic line hints at the latent drama also in lyrical pauses of this type. In these bars, the harmony serves as a supportive backdrop, not an opposing force.

When the clarinet enters in bar 66, once more we feel the dramatic tension between harmony and melody (Bar 65 was marked above as one possible start of section or sub-section C2). The drama becomes more complex when the strings begin to play melodic patterns and chords in pizzicato (bars 68-79). These form the background to melodic phrases and short chords on the wind instruments with some point-like sounds on the percussion instruments. When the strings switch to arco (bar 80), the piano comes in with short chords, conveying a sense of rhythmic unquiet. The other instruments try to play melodic lines clearly expressing resistance to the piano – the horn (in bars 83-85) and other wind instruments in chords and chordal-homophonic motion, until the polyphonic complexity leads to another climax that sweeps the piano and strings along with it (bars 98-101). In bar 102, everything vanishes as if never there, leaving only three descending octaves on the piano in *p*, joined by a soft chord played by the entire ensemble except the percussions. Like the three notes in unison in bars 52-54, these octaves also stand out against the background of the piece's harmony, so they may also serve as a structural landmark (the octave is a rare interval for Yuhás but more so than unison; doubling octaves in chords is also infrequent for him):

Example 8



A kind of tertiary softness is felt in this chord as well, creating the impression of relaxed tension, a cadential pause. This, according to the above division, begins section D – a fleeting motif on the trumpet and then a short, truncated line on the flute. Woven into this is a continuous line of the violin (up to bar 119), accompanied by line fragments on other instruments. In bar 120 all the winds and strings join in for a compressed polyphonic texture, although with the dynamics of *p*, due to emotional restraint. A violin solo (122-128) followed by a short oboe solo (128-30) lead into the next subsection, D2. But now a clear sense of ending and beginning is lacking. Bars 130-138 could be defined as transitional. Most noticeable in them is the contrast between powerfully charged harmonies in staccato, and peaceful harmonies in prolonged notes. It is as if the entity representing the horizontal dimension is deliberating within itself whether to continue the struggle against the melodic lines or to give in and compromise.

Example 9



In bar 139, the melodic motion begins on the piano, immediately followed by the other instruments as well. At the end of bar 143, the trombone starts a solo and is joined by contrapuntal lines on the piano and line segments on other instruments. These are accompanied by a few hushed chords of the strings, powerless to disturb the melodic expressions. The accompaniment continues until bar 153, at which time a kind of wrestling match develops between the two main groups of instruments, winds and strings, with the piano in a mediating position. Dramatic textural density builds up, culminating in a clarinet solo (bars 165-180). In this section, marked E1, the harmonic dimension has very little presence, perhaps signifying the “victory” of linearity, since now for the first time in the piece, the melodic line is afforded a complete and full utterance with practically no harmonic “disturbances.”

A short flute solo (bars 181-184) leads into the closing section or subsection. As at the beginning of the piece, short, sharp chords contrast with prolonged, soft chords. The harmony, however, is in general quieter and exhibits almost no opposition to the delicate melodic motion. Five c^3 notes on the crotales and piano accompany the final chord, also played five times, in staccato and in *p*. It is heard once again for six beats in the last bar, with the addition of F_1 on the double bass and a tom-tom stroke in *pp*.

Example 10

 A musical score for Example 10, showing multiple staves for various instruments. The instruments listed are Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Trumpet (Trp.), Trombone (Tbn.), and Percussion (Perc.). The score is in a minor key and 4/4 time. It shows a complex texture with many overlapping lines and dynamic markings like *p* and *pp*.

This end, which exudes a sense of reconciliation, might also be like a catharsis. The staccato of the final chord adds an adornment, a kind of smile of resignation.

It is worthwhile to reemphasize that the description here scratches naught but the surface of the narrative “told” in the piece. It would be impossible to express in words what lies beneath the surface – the unconscious or nonverbal narrative. The connection between the music played and the music heard must be drawn by the listener, for each listener’s own private version of the narrative.

When building the narrative, the listener is assisted by recurring elements, the recurrences of which shape the auditory flow and lend ‘form’ to time: characteristic motifs, certain pitches, timbres, immediately identifiable musical gestures. Among the repeating elements in “Coloured Lines, we can distinguish patterns of pairs of notes, played twice, sometimes three times, drawing the listener’s attention against the background of the spreading aperiodic lines. The first patterns, appearing subtly in the first section, within the polyphonic texture of bars 14-20, are barely perceptible. In bar 26, conversely, the recurring pattern is clearly heard in the oboe part, in response to the clarinet:

Example 11

The recurring pattern appears in the piano part in bar 35; it is answered by the oboe and bassoon in bar 36.

Example 12

In bar 90, the trumpet and trombone repeat the minor second and minor third motifs that were heard previously:

Example 13

And in bar 178, the oboe repeats the motif of the minor second, again in response to the clarinet:

Example 14

These are just a few examples. Yuhás' art form relies on an unobtrusive technique that incorporates repetition and change, thereby creating structural unity and coherence of gestures through which the listener's imagination can weave the piece's narrative.

4.

"Repercussions," composed in 2015, is actually a concerto for horn and ensemble, in which the horn (or perhaps the horn player) is the central character. The dramatic narrative recounts the horn's relationship with the instruments in the ensemble, accompanied by quasi-subplots that reveal relationships among the other instruments. A "story" of the one and many is thus told here as well, similar to "Entities," except that the horn part is more concertante and the "plot" develops differently. The part is very demanding, not only technically but also due to the complex personality of the protagonist. The horn speaks in all its registers, each one with its own character and timbre. It uses different mutes that produce various colors and also change its identity. It swings between contrasting moods, from pseudo-jazzy humor and the grotesque up to bizarre utterances, reminiscent of hallucinatory facial expressions made by an eccentric Pierrot. The instrument's lyrical-romantic image is also represented, but on the whole the role presents a much more complex character, a kind of Dadaist clown whose utterances are surprising, amusing, somewhat irritating...

The composer writes:

The piece begins with a spirited dialogue between the horn and the ensemble. The liveliness shifts to soft playing that also slowly fades away. Later the atmosphere changes – from humorous to serious and occasionally melancholy as well. The horn part likewise varies: at times it performs as a soloist in front of the ensemble, sometimes it plays

completely alone and every so often it joins the ensemble as another member of the latter's ranks. Everything heard at the beginning of the composition has repercussions later on – in the sounds, rhythmicity and tones. These materials change, alter their shapes and create new sound entities, while still retaining their initial characteristics.

The repercussions that give the piece its name are one of its most important qualities. As mentioned above, the dialogue between the instruments is typical of Yuhas' polyphony in general, but this technique seems to reach its peak in "Repercussions." The entire piece is woven out of constant responses by instruments and groups of instruments to statements, while the dialogue between the horn and the instruments of the ensemble and its status in relation to them comprises a kind of overall structural skeleton. Through the technique of incessant repercussions, Yuhas constructs the formal sequence of the composition and shapes it texturally. The repercussions create a kind of extensive social network in which the members keep reacting to one another. Although changes of character and mood take place, as Yuhas mentions in his explanatory notes, the reciprocal responses appear in all the sections, at varying levels of density and not necessarily as immediate retorts or as imitations. Sometimes a quick figuration is actually the response to a chord, whether short or long, or the other way around. Already in the first bar the horn's entrance with an emphatic B-flat serves as a rapid response to a strong staccato chord on the piano, heard along with the strike of a whip. The same chord is also played by the strings, in *pp*, for five bars.

Example 15



And here is an example of a belated repercussion appearing five bars later: in bar 123 the strings respond to a short phrase played by the horn in bar 118. In the interval other instruments play additional responses.

Example 16



"Repercussions" is another one-movement composition in which a few sections may be distinguished. The boundaries between the sections are sometimes blurred here as well, and there are other possibilities besides the division suggested below:

- A: 1-29
 - B: 30-78
 - C: 78-140
 - D: 141-155 or 141-163
 - E: 155-190 or 163-190
 - F: 191-238
 - G: 239-273
 - H: (improvised cadenza)
 - I: 274-304
 - J: 305-340
 - K: coda 340-366
- or B1: 30-60 and B2: 61-78
or C1: 78-94 and C2: 94-140

The factors influencing the listener's formal, narrative sense are mainly the alterations in mood, the accumulation and dissolving of emotional tension, and the changing texture. The sections create a sequence of occurrences, a kind of journey taken by the protagonist inside shifting mindscapes. The first section, which the composer defines as energetic, contains dense elements that will

appear in other variants later on. Here as well, the listener will sense the coherence and formal continuity even without identifying the elements causing them. The horn's pitches in the opening phrase and the minor sixth recur throughout the piece, as do the minor third motif at the start of the piano part and the minor third g^1 - b -flat¹ created between the upper note of the opening chord and the horn's entrance note (see Ex. 15). The quintuplets in the piano part and the tom-tom in the first two bars are the dynamic rhythmic factor moving the music forward, sometimes in excitement. During the piece they often appear in scale-like combinations, ascending and descending. An identical role is fulfilled by patterns of regular and quintuplet sixteenth-notes.

Example 17

In the first section, the horn wages a frenetic dialogue with the ensemble instruments, which also conduct a restless dialogue amongst themselves, dominated by rapid sound patterns. One event follows the next, until a quiet chord sounds, built on an E_2 pedal point on the double bass. This chord marks the transition into the next section (bar 30). The horn tries to present its lyrical-singing aspect, but the frenzy of the rhythm does not let up and the horn joins the agitated patterns with short blasts. In bars 46-60 it plays a melodic line three phrases long. At first some of the instruments respond to it with long, quiet notes, but the flute, followed by the other woodwinds, repeats the quick patterns, as if resisting the horn's expression. The latter reacts by staying silent for 19 bars, during which the repercussions of the fast patterns continue, but in the form of momentary surges alongside slower patterns. From bar 65 the texture becomes more and more compressed, until bar 73 when the echoing retorts start to become more frequent. A kind of stretto is created, but with understated dynamics, and the section fades away in bar 78.

The third section begins as if from nothing – from a note on the horn that merges with the pitter-patter of a rainstick (bar 79). With some hesitation, and in response to a melodic line on the clarinet as well as short and long chords, the horn develops a melodic line of its own, large and expressive, spread over a wide range. At this point the horn is without a doubt the protagonist in the narrative. As many different events happen among the other instruments, the horn joins them at certain moments as a member of the ensemble, but most of the time it responds to them while showcasing its uniqueness as a soloist. When the horn finishes its statement in bar 134, the trumpet and the piano try to keep it going in a joint, two-part response (bars 134-137). And yet other instruments, without those two, are the ones that reach the dramatic climax in *ff*. At first in the fourth section the horn continues to play small phragments of phrases, met by quick responses (141-145), but then is silent again for 17 bars. During these bars, the piano part is prominent, playing fast melodic figures alternating with dense chords, against the background of a secondary line on the bass clarinet and other, more blurred, secondary lines on the percussion and woodwind instruments. All this fades into a cymbal tremolo (bars 156-159). Then, following a few leftover notes, with g^3 on the flute and the entrance of the horn with D , in unison with the cello, a new section begins.

A melodic line, lyrical in nature, develops on the horn, becoming progressively more dramatic. In the background are phrases on the string and woodwind instruments, and then the piano as well, in *p*, in a somewhat mysterious atmosphere. The use of a triplet is rhythmically prominent here. This polyphonic mesh is cut off for a short moment by three chords on the percussion instruments (bars 181-183) and then rewoven into six more bars, during which the first violin plays high notes, in a descending column, that seem to have arrived from another world (184-190). Characteristically, this violin line ends unexpectedly, with a quickly descending pattern and two pizzicato chords leading directly into the next section:

Example 18

At the beginning of section F, the horn joins in with its two 'natural' partners – the trumpet and the trombone, all three of them playing with wah-wah mutes (bars 191-194). The horn tries to be a soloist again, but the string and percussion instruments continue playing too. It comes back, in response to fast lines on the violin and flute, only in bar 204. In bar 215 it hooks up again with the trumpet and trombone, and along with some of the woodwind instruments they play choral-like chords against a background of fast figures on the piano. In bars 229-233 the horn plays a short phrase, to which the clarinet responds with minor third g^1 - b -flat¹:

Example 19

The minor third stands out here as a significant motif, which among other things helps the listener hear the narrative flow of the piece. Yet it is of secondary importance in comparison with the musical gestures that are expressed in the dynamics, texture, melodic contours and prevailing rhythmic motion. Repeated appearances of the motifs, which remind the listener of the narrative's 'past,' support the musical gestures. As stated, however, in this style of music they are incapable of fulfilling the gestures' function.

The clarinet's long b-flat serves as a transition to the next section – G. It opens with fast patterns, with the performance instruction *agitato*, on the first violin. Following is a short trombone solo (bars 242-245), to which the horn responds with a line climbing from E-flat to d^2 , while in the background the strings play rapid patterns and the piano plays ascending chords. With a fast pattern of four bass notes on the piano and the horn's response to it (bar 250), the path to the climax begins, gradually gathering energy (up to bar 271). Appearing in bar 273 is the horn's cadenza, which the horn player is instructed to either compose beforehand or improvise. The cadenza closes with a piano chord in which the notes of the dominant seventh chord f - a - c - e -flat are clearly heard (partly due to the doubling of e-flat!) – comprising another example of momentary tonal allusion at a structural junction. This harmonic impression is reinforced by a long chord on the wind and string instruments, including the notes of the dominant seventh among its sounds.

Section I also presents the lyrical aspect of the horn, in a phrase rather reminiscent of the beginning of the piece (bars 293-296). The minor third likewise returns here, continuing the horn's phrase, in the background roles of the strings and in the short homophonic phrase played by the three brass instruments:

Example 20

After a short break, the horn receives an energetic boost until the sounds of a jet whistle on the flute, sandpaper and the Tam-tam are heard in bars 313-314. An E-flat played on the horn with a

wah-wah mute marks the beginning of the next section. At first the two main groups play in even-rhythmed motion (the woodwinds in bars 355-356 and 320-330; with the strings responding in bars 327-328). Gradually, with encouragement from the piano and horn, the lines become individual and independent. The texture becomes thicker and more complex, until the horn stops in e-flat² and is joined at the same pitch by the chimes and the first violin in a quiet tremolo. The piano and double bass play C₁, creating a clearly-heard minor third with E-flat₂ at an interval of three octaves. This begins the coda: 27 bars in which the drama subsides. The minor third g¹– b-flat¹ that stood out, it will be recalled, in the clarinet part in bars 234-241, is heard in bars 363-366 as a repeated pattern on the first violin, while the viola repeats the minor third f–a-flat. The strings' motion stops on the same chord that opened the piece, like completing a circle. The clarinet responds laconically in bar 368 with the minor third f¹–d¹:

Example 21

The image shows a musical score for Example 21, consisting of four staves. The top staff is for the Glockenspiel, the second for the Flute, the third for the Clarinet, and the bottom for the Horn. The music is in a minor key and features various rhythmic patterns and dynamics. The Glockenspiel part has a 'mp' dynamic. The Flute part has a 'c3' marking. The Clarinet part has a 'mp' dynamic. The Horn part has a 'f' dynamic and a 'horn' marking. The score is written in a standard musical notation with notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Against the background of a continuing chord in the strings, another four quickly descending patterns are played on the glockenspiel (three notes), flute (four notes), clarinet (six notes) and in conclusion the horn (ten notes). This last is played in forte with a crescendo that sounds like rolling laughter, as if to say: he who laughs last laughs best... This final laughter brings the piece to a close; it is followed only by quiet pizzicato on the strings in unison – again in B-flat, a note that obviously enjoys a special status in this composition.

The three pieces reviewed here, from different periods in the composer's oeuvre, represent his artistic approach, his attitude toward form and other musical components, and his music's inherent potential for providing ever-increasing enhancement of the listening experience. At the same time, each of Yuhás' compositions possesses, besides some qualities in common, its own unique characteristics, so becoming familiar with all of them is highly recommended. Of course, one could continue delving into these three, and keep on analyzing them according to this or another method. Above all else, it is worthwhile to listen to them repeatedly for the multilayered, enriching musical experience they offer.

Translated from Hebrew by Margo Eyon

¹ Already by the 1970s, when Yuhás' style jelled, Reginald Smith Brindle saw in free atonality an idiomatcity it shared with many avant-garde compositions. He called it free twelve-note music: "This music, which for want of a better term is loosely called 'free twelve-note music', has proved to be durable, and has continued to form the hard core of much of the avant-garde production of the last fifteen years" (Brindle, 53).

² See, for instance, Anthony Newcomb's remark: "We do well to think of the thematic units partly as characters in a narrative" (Newcomb, 237).

³ "According to Edward Cone, "If music is a language at all, it is a language of gestures: of direct actions, of pauses, of starting and stopping, of rises and falls, of tenses and slackness" (Cone, 164) and for "instrumental utterance, lacking intrinsic verbal content," he suggests the definition of "a medium of pure symbolic gestures" (ibid). Denis Smalley specifies "gestural music" as "governed by a sense of forward motion, of linearity, of narrativity" (Smalley, 113). According to Robert Hatten, who deals with musical gestures at great length, they "are emergent gestalts that convey affective motion, emotion and agency by fusing otherwise separate elements into continuities of shape and force" (Hatten, 2004, 224).

⁴ Karol Berger narrowed the lyrical-dramatic-epic triad down to a narrative-lyricism dyad, with narrative also encompassing epos and drama (in Pawlowska, 4).

⁵ See, for instance, Lawrence Kramer's categorization and the definitions he gives on pages 143-146. Fred E. Maus argues that "events in music, when understood imaginatively as actions, have both specifically musical descriptions and more general descriptions using vocabulary shared with non-musical behavior" (Maus, 1988, 481, note 3).

⁶ See also Fred Maus' more practical approach: "To see why listeners and critics have been attracted to analogies between instrumental music and narrative genres, it is helpful to turn, not to the technical vocabulary or abstract formalization that preoccupy many theorists, but to relatively unambitious, blow-by-

blow description of individual pieces. Such descriptions – informal, ad hoc, and unforced – promise to reveal much about the intuitions of listeners” (Maus, 1991, 8).

⁷ This is also Robert Hatten’s opinion: “More formal accounts of musical structure, such as Schenkerian analysis, are also fundamentally narrative, in that they infer significance from the particular ordering or interruption of musical events” (Hatten, 1991, 96).

⁸ Some emphasize the role of the listener in constructing the musical narrative: “I would like to encourage the study of the proto-narrativity of the listening experience, which is fairly varied amongst listeners since it relies on the diverse listening modes/listening strategies”(Marty, 11-12). The listener’s experience of the non-verbal narrative is, in Christian Hauer’s words, “a non-conceptual phenomenon, something that does not represent in the linguistic sense” (Hauer, 21); but whether it is “rooted deeply in real life” is open to discussion.

⁹ The term ‘heterophony’ appears here and throughout in the broad sense given to it in 20th century music: multi-layered linearity, in which the lines are more blurred than in ‘polyphony,’ although the boundary between the two is not always clear.

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