

THOUGHTFUL WANDERINGS:  
A STUDY OF THE COLLECTED COMPOSITIONS OF  
DOUGLAS HILL

by

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## Introduction

Classically trained musicians spend much of their studies learning to balance standard repertoire with an ever-expanding collection of new music. While researching and studying new works, musicians typically encounter certain composers who speak to their musical tastes and satisfy their desire for musically stimulating performances. Many open-minded and musically adventurous teachers have encouraged the expansion of my repertoire to include works by lesser known twentieth and twenty-first century composers. This musical growth has opened my eyes and ears to the horn's myriad musical possibilities.

There is an extensive collection of undiscovered and under performed music available to horn players. It is my strong belief that this music is not programmed or studied as often as it should be, simply because it is not known. Teachers seldom research or perform this music, and consequently do not expose their students to it, while professional horn players only expose audiences to this music on a limited basis. Students often have a difficult time finding this music for performance because it is rarely on conservatory and university library shelves, or on readily accessible recordings.

While working on balancing standard repertoire with new and lesser-known works for the horn in my own practice room, I was introduced to the music of Douglas Hill. As a composer, Hill has made a major contribution to horn literature, yet many students and professionals do not know his music because his reputation as a composer is secondary to his reputation as a pedagogue and performer. It is my hope, through the course of this dissertation, to expose horn players and pedagogues alike to the ever-growing collection of horn repertoire by Douglas Hill. This music is not only a valuable addition to the standard performance repertoire, but also highly effective and appropriate for use in a pedagogical setting.

In order to cultivate an environment of growth and acceptance of new music in my students, I insist upon teaching and performing works that are musically satisfying and will provide my students with challenges that support their growth as musicians. Pieces that satisfy both of my pedagogical requirements are easy to find within the standard horn repertoire, but I desire to open my students' ears and minds to new possibilities for the horn. It is my hope for them to be comfortable performing anything, limited only by their mind's ability to accept and dream. I often ask my students to pair one piece from the standard repertoire with a new piece that they discover on their own. Through this process, I am also exposed to new repertoire, thus this repertoire often becomes something we study together.

Several years ago, Douglas Hill's *Elegy for Horn Alone* drew my attention to his compositional style, and I was compelled to find more of his works. Years later, shortly before his retirement, I became one of his graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Hill's music was so interesting to me that I made a point of studying it with him. This opportunity provided me with an introduction to many of his compositions from a unique perspective. The ability to study a work with the one who composed it allows the performer to ask questions and make musical decisions that would not be possible without the composer's input. The study of Hill's music also broadened my knowledge of the extended techniques and sounds that are possible on the horn.

After studying Hill's music, I recall being particularly taken by his intimate, reflective sounds and the vocal quality of his melodic writing. As a composer, Hill conveys human emotion through the use of various timbres and colors on the horn. The way he is able to capture these feelings reflects his creativity and ability to utilize the horn as a tool of expression while writing melodically compelling pieces. My dissertation will explore the inspiration behind Hill's

compositions, his compositional process and training, and the musical influences heard in his music. My research consists of compositional observations and score study, extensive interviews with the composer, theoretical analysis, and an overview of dissertations and reviews that discuss Hill's compositions.

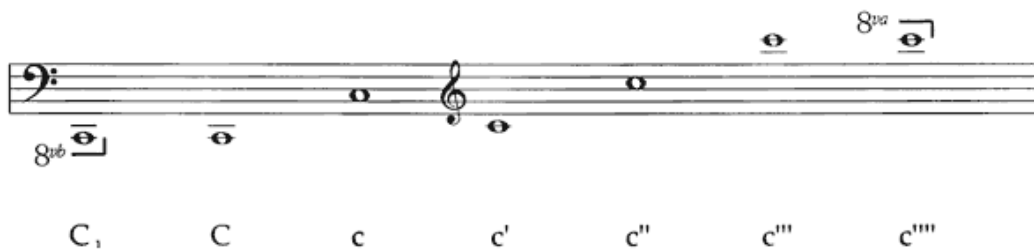
## Process

As a way of studying, organizing, and discussing Hill's compositions, I have divided his works into five categories: academic, multi-movement jazz influenced works, historical, reflective, and environmental. Encompassed in the academic category are pieces that make use of extended techniques as well as works based on numbers and intervals. Hill's multi-movement jazz works are all based on harmonic progressions, improvisations, and styles reminiscent of jazz. The historical category contains works that are strongly influenced by Native American themes and American history. All pieces in the reflective category reflect in some way on a person, place or time in Hill's life. Finally, works influenced by nature comprise the environmental category.

While Hill's works can be grouped into the above categories, common themes, techniques and musical threads also unify his compositions. These similarities have more to do with the life experience of this composer than the formal compositional training he received as a student. His works reflect his personal interests and influences rather than the styles of composition that were popular while he was composing. Many of Hill's compositional choices, including instrumentation, genre and style, derive from Hill's career as a performer. A true example of the artist-composer, Hill's writing for the horn is very idiomatic and could only have been composed by one who intimately knows the instrument. In the chapters that follow, I will study and catalogue Hill's music to determine what musical threads and techniques unify his compositions. I have chosen representative pieces from each category to study and discuss in greater detail as a way of explaining the value of this collection of music to performers and teachers. As a way of collecting the titles and stories of Hill's music, I have compiled an annotated catalogue of Hill's published compositions that include horn in Appendix A. It is my

hope that this catalogue will be useful to students, teachers, amateur enthusiasts and professional players alike.

All pitches described in this dissertation refer to notated pitch. The octave designation system used in this dissertation is taken from *The Horn Call*, The Journal of the International Horn Society.



## Chapter 1

### Hill's Early Development as a Composer

As a young child, Douglas D. Hill (b. 1946) never imagined that his early musical experiences would establish the foundation for an exceptional career of playing, teaching, and composing for the horn. Today one can easily see that his contributions to the standard of playing, pedagogy, and repertoire for horn have altered the way that many contemporary horn players think about playing and teaching the instrument. However, there is one facet of Hill's career that is often overlooked, not due to a lack of quality or quantity, but rather because it is overshadowed by the magnitude of his reputation as a teacher and performer. Hill's prolific contributions to solo and chamber repertoire for the horn are significant and deeply deserving of attention.

Douglas Hill's musical training began in his hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska. During his childhood, Hill encountered several music educators who instilled the importance of listening and creating from an early age. These initial experiences set the foundation for his life-long commitment to teaching, playing and composing for horn.

Hill's mother and father first introduced him to music. Although they were not professional musicians, Hill's parents had great respect for music, which played a role in the families daily life. At the request of his mother, Hill and his three brothers were enrolled in piano lessons at an early age. Hill studied piano for two years during elementary school. He reminisced that the most he remembered of those lessons was his teacher's black cocker spaniel curled up at his feet during piano lessons and of course, the sweet treat from the candy jar that ended each of his lessons. Recognizing their son's lack of interest in piano, Hill's parents allowed him to stop taking piano lessons if he would chose another instrument to play. This deal

between parents and their son would prove to be the first steps on Hill's journey into the world of horn.

At this time, near the end of fourth grade, his two older brothers already played the trumpet and trombone. Likely due to his brothers' example and the fact that he had consequently learned to buzz his lips, Hill leaned heavily toward playing a brass instrument. He recalls not wanting to play either instrument that his brothers played, and at the time he felt "the tuba just didn't seem like it was for him,"<sup>1</sup> so he decided to study the horn.

All of these events individually may not have had as great an impact on Hill's musical life if it were not for Mr. Kenneth Freese, his junior high school band director. Hill frequently credits Freese as being his "most important musical influence."<sup>2</sup> Freese provided positive encouragement and showed creativity through example. Hill picked up on this immediately and was reminded of it often during this time of his life.

Hill recalls many trips to the junior high band room after school where he would frequently observe Mr. Freese playing piano or string bass. It didn't take long before he wanted to learn to play chords at the piano and play the string bass, just like his teacher. Freese subsequently spent many afternoons patiently teaching Douglas the string bass and basic music theory. He also provided an opportunity for Hill to play in the student jazz combo. Playing in the combo helped him to understand chord symbols and learn basic improvisation. This was of great importance, since many of Hill's future compositions were created from melodic germs and standard chord progressions that came to Hill through improvisations. Freese also taught Hill about basic harmonic progressions and how to notate the melodies that he heard in his head.

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, October 10, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Eventually, Freese began sharing his own short compositions with Hill. This creative exchange sparked Hill's interest in creating more complicated works. Freese's encouragement of Douglas came not only through verbal support. Freese also encouraged Hill to program his original compositions on variety shows at his school. As most dedicated educators do, Freese presented opportunities for Hill to both create music and share that music with the public. In response to this encouragement, Hill gained a sense of comfort and self-assuredness in his own creative abilities, which have remained with him throughout his career.

Freese's teaching technique was also important. Rather than providing Hill with answers, Freese encouraged him to figure problems out on his own. Having a role model who shared the journey but refused to navigate the course certainly provided the foundation of encouragement that Hill needed to continue his creative pursuits, including performing, teaching and composing.

Hill said the most important lesson that Freese taught was, "in order to compose, you had to learn to truly listen."<sup>3</sup> Because of this, Hill was inspired to listen to music of all different genres. This awareness of musical sounds and structures can be heard in the stylistic range of compositions spanning his career.

The next musical influence that Hill can remember was Duane Schulz, Hill's high school band director. After becoming proficient at playing jazz on the string bass, Hill was invited to participate in a jazz combo that Schulz had started with his family. Hill was able to improve his improvisation and harmonization skills through performing with this group. The opportunity to solidify and grow more comfortable with these skills would prove very important to his ability to compose. Although Schulz did not necessarily help Hill with his compositions, he enthusiastically supported him and strengthened his confidence in composition. When Hill

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<sup>3</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, October 6, 2011.

completed a composition or arrangement, Schulz made sure there was an opportunity for it to be performed.

A largely self-taught composer to this point, Hill received his first formal training in composition during the summer of 1963, the summer before his senior year in high school. He was studying horn at the Rocky Ridge Music Center in Estes Park, Colorado, that summer. Roger Johnson was a composer-in-residence at this music festival. He spent time looking over Hill's compositions and made suggestions for him to improve the works. While at this festival, Hill completed his first classical chamber piece, a woodwind quintet. Through his work with Johnson, Hill was able to gain insights and have his compositions vetted by a professional composer. He still remembers this process as being a source of encouragement to him.

The next musician that Hill showed his music to was the American composer Robert Beadell, who served as professor of composition at the University of Nebraska. Hill met Beadell and began showing him his compositions during Hill's first semester as a student at the University of Nebraska. This was also the first semester that Hill took a formal music theory class. Hill maintains that once he began music theory courses, he began noticing that his compositions did not always follow the rules of common practice theory. He consequently stopped composing for fear of not writing "correctly." It was during this period that he chose to focus all of his energies on horn performance and made the decision to switch from a music education major to a horn performance major. Shortly thereafter, Hill transferred from the University of Nebraska to Indiana University where he dedicated the majority of his time to studying horn with Phillip Farkas. No works were composed during these years; however the foundations were placed for his next phase of composing. Hill was not only taking music theory courses as a student at Indiana University, but he was also playing a great deal of contemporary

music. This genre of music proved to be of great interest to Hill and without realizing it he was internalizing the twentieth-century musical language that would be prominently featured in his compositions for horn.

Following Hill's graduation from Indiana University, he won the position of Principal Horn in the Rochester Philharmonic. This job provided Hill with more free time than he was used to during his undergraduate years. Hill filled some of this extra time with composition. It was during this period that he completed what would become his first published works, *Ten Pieces for Two Horns* and *Five Pieces for Three Horns*. These compositions were created as recreational chamber music to be played with local friends and colleagues from the horn section of the Rochester Philharmonic.

Following his time in Rochester, Hill accepted a position teaching horn and trumpet at Wilkes College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Hill composed during these years out of necessity for his students. He recalls having some very talented students at this time and he wanted to provide them with music that they would find challenging. The works composed during these years were not published after their composition, but only recently through Really Good Music, of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

After teaching at Wilkes College, Hill enrolled at Yale University to earn a Master of Music degree in horn performance. While at Yale, Hill completed a one-semester independent study with the American composer Yehudi Wyner. It was during this course that Hill composed *Trio Set for Horns*, *Dreams and Variations* for brass trio, *Trauma for Five Horns* and *Designs for Seven Horns*. The latter two works are still unpublished.

Hill often feels he is in an unusual position as a performer-composer because he lacks formal compositional training, but has the intimate knowledge of his own instrument that one

can only gain from extensive performance. While he has been a relatively active composer, he views that aspect of his musical life as an avocation. This may have provided Hill with a certain freedom from the pressures that many trained composers feel to succeed and produce. Although his compositional output and the amount of time he allotted to his composing ebbed and flowed during his career, Hill maintained his sense of creative discovery, which always included the creation of original compositions. While on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Hill was only able to compose over the summer months. In recent years, Hill has been commissioned more frequently, but composition itself has been primarily recreational throughout his life.

Perhaps unexpectedly, given the extent to which his music is idiomatic for the horn, Hill composes only at the piano. He has found that the piano can be a type of “search engine” for him. If he can hear something in his head, he is more likely to be able to find it through the piano than on the horn. Although his musical knowledge and abilities have matured and grown over the decades, Hill’s compositional process has not changed from the time he composed his first piece until present day. He often describes his compositional process as a stream-of-consciousness experience, because as he gets involved with a composition, the music just begins to flow.

## Chapter 2

### *Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns*

Composed in 1980

Published by Really Good Music

Recorded on *The Modern Horn* by Douglas Hill, soloist  
and the University of Wisconsin-Madison horn choir, conducted by Eugene Young

Douglas Hill's *Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns* was composed in 1980 at the request of the German hornist Michael Hölzel. The work was commissioned for performance at the first European Horn Workshop in Trossingen, West Germany, and was recorded by Douglas Hill and the University of Wisconsin-Madison horn choir, with Eugene Young conducting, on the 1984 Crystal Records LP recording, *The Modern Horn* and later reissued on CD.

*Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns* is representative of Hill's academic genre of composition because of its musical form and content. This category of Hill's compositional style is classified by the strong use of extended techniques, multi-metered sections, and complex rhythmic notation. The compositional style of *Abstraction* appears to be unique within Hill's compositional output; however, the style actually mimics that of two of Hill's previous compositions that to date have been unpublished. While a student at Yale University (1971-1973), Hill composed two works titled *Trauma for Five Horns* and *Designs for Seven Horns*. These works were precursors to *Abstraction* in that they utilized much of the same textural and rhythmic compositional techniques that are found in *Abstraction* and helped Hill determine how to most effectively construct this type of composition.

*Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns* is ironically one of Hill's most programmatic works. He has described it as a type of "theatrical tone poem."<sup>4</sup> The work as a whole is

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<sup>4</sup> Douglas Hill, *Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns* (Eau Claire, WI: Really Good Music, 1999).

representative of a style of composition in which Hill intentionally makes use of extended techniques as textural, gestural, and melodic material, not just as periodic embellishments. *Abstraction* was composed during the years that Hill was researching, formulating, and publishing his book, *Extended Techniques for the Horn: A Practical Handbook for Students, Performers, and Composers* (1981).

Hill describes *Abstraction* as an “evolving continuum of emotional interactions.”<sup>5</sup> In *Abstraction*, Hill creates motion and development through rhythmic interaction and programmatic episodes. The work is harmonically limited in that it is rooted in the octatonic scale, an eight-note scale consisting of alternating half-step and whole-step relationships. Due to this harmonic framework, the pitches of D, B, G-sharp and F are never notated in this work. Within the octatonic scale, the natural inclination towards stasis becomes a challenge to overcome.

The harmonic limitations of the octatonic scale lend this work to the layering of extended techniques to achieve musical motion, an innovation in the composition of homogeneous horn ensemble repertoire. When asked about the limiting factors of the octatonic scale, Hill spoke to the contrary, commenting that he believed the lack of a typical harmonic progression freed him to compose what he heard without requiring him to adhere to any customary harmonic expectations.<sup>6</sup> Hill intentionally used two important harmonic relationships throughout this piece. The first is the relationship of the two fully diminished arpeggios heard in the first chord. The second is the relationship between F-sharp and C major triads. These harmonic relationships are a direct result of the choice to root the composition in the octatonic scale.

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<sup>5</sup> Douglas Hill, *Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns*.

<sup>6</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, November 2, 2011.

The musical program of this work is largely dependent on the structure of the ensemble. Following the initial request by Höltzel, Hill decided to feature a soloist within the context of a traditional horn octet. This instrumentation lends itself to the representation of a leader and followers, creating the musical program of the work. In the score, Hill describes the soloist as “an intruder, a leader, and soon an outcast.”<sup>7</sup> Hill has included a seating chart with the score, which serves to support the program of the work. The prescribed seating divides the ensemble into two quartets flanking the soloist, emphasizing Hill’s tendency to harmonically treat the horn octet as two separate quartets. Due to the specific antiphonal intent of the composer, a horn ensemble performing this work should do everything possible to follow the composer’s suggested seating arrangement.

*Abstraction* begins with the horn octet stating a rhythmic motive comprising all the pitches in the octatonic scale. In measure 8, Hill returns to his statement of eight pitches in the octatonic scale; however, he uses sudden undulations in the horn ensemble to create rhythmic motion without any harmonic motion. The dynamics introduced in this section create a sound not unlike that of breathing and for this reason, I will refer to this section as the “breathing motive.” Here in its first iteration, it represents a group mentality in the negative sense.

In measure 14, the group mentality breaks down. The chaos of this section is created by a succession of descending glissandi in each horn part. Bar 15 then begins a slow return to unity begun by a version of the breathing motive in the third horn. The breathing motive is soon interrupted by short bursts of new melodic material delivered by the second horn. This voice maintains a peculiar shyness or discomfort, the type of shyness one may feel when sharing a new idea contrary to the group’s mentality. Horns 6 and 7 then enter to establish an ostinato bass line that infuses rhythmic stability under the second horn player’s meek interjections. It is at this

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<sup>7</sup> Douglas Hill, *Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns*.

point that the solo horn enters representing the outsider. The musical material presented is a gradual elaboration of the melodic fragment introduced by the second horn, as if the solo player overheard this material, and in order to enter the group, has appropriated it in hopes of finding favor with the group. Under the solo line, the second horn player inserts the “breathing” motive, symbolizing the second horn players comfort with the soloists leadership. Short bursts of aleatoric, boxed interjections and stopped horn tremolos from within the ensemble symbolize excitement at the prospect of new leadership. Slowly, over the course of the next ten bars, the ensemble unifies under the leadership of the solo horn. The unification is strengthened when the first and fifth horns, functioning as leaders of two ensemble quartets, participate in a trio with the soloist, signifying acceptance of this new leader.

In bar 38, the introductory section culminates in a strong six-note motive in the solo horn that Hill has marked “deliberate.” All players in the octet repeat the “deliberate” motive in a quasi-canonic, follow-the-leader fashion. The two quartets, as a symbol of unity, take the “deliberate” motive and develop it into a playful dance in 3/8. Short, accompanimental punctuations are interspersed with driving melodic material. At first, these punctuations are arrhythmic, but soon become more rhythmic and function as a part of the dance. Following the highest and most powerful statement by the solo horn, the ensemble quickly falls into a frenzy of melodic canons, punctuated by short bursts of sound. These eighth-note punctuations become stronger and more rhythmic, resembling a heartbeat. Ironically, as the heartbeat regulates, the ensemble frenzy becomes more and more chaotic. As the ensemble is completely involved in its frenzied dance, the heartbeat is maintained only by the solo voice. The ensemble resembles a mass crowd that has been so entranced by a leader’s rhetoric that they have lost control of all

logical thought. In bar 107, it is clear the leader's indoctrination is final as all nine players strike a heartbeat in unison.

The ritualistic frenzy continues as the leader perpetuates complete control of the group. The melodic fragments in the solo horn are mimicked in various horn parts, as if the horns are parroting rhetoric. Beginning in measure 119, the solo horn, horn 1, and horn 5 begin a canon in a tritone relationship. Under this canon, the ensemble continues the breathing motive in 16<sup>th</sup> notes while using the technique of  $\frac{3}{4}$  stopped horn and the "heartbeat" motive in eighth notes. It is in measure 124 that horns 2 and 3 follow Hill's notation to, "accelerate together, disregard pulse, diminuendo to nothing."<sup>8</sup> Horns 6 and 7 fulfill this same request at bar 127. In measure 130, horns 2, 3, 4, and 8 begin to regain control of their senses. These horns, joined in measure 135 by horns 6 and 7 gradually slow down the rhythmic pulse of the eighth note "heartbeat" in the midst of the loose three part canon in the solo horn, first horn and fifth horns. This coordinated rallentando begins in a  $\frac{3}{8}$  meter, but soon shifts to an insistent  $\frac{5}{8}$  pattern. This rhythmic shift, a trend that is characteristic of Hill's compositions, signals an attempt to regain group logic. The first and fifth horns stagger to the end of their canonic passage, leaving the solo horn to complete the playful melody. The rest of the ensemble slows to a stop in bar 141, ending the group frenzy with a cadenza in the solo horn. This cadenza is somewhat frantic and disjunct, sounded with a mixture of nervous energy, anger, and feebleness. In this cadenza, Hill has notated many extended techniques, including stopped horn,  $\frac{3}{4}$  stopped fluctuations, glissandi, trills, and valve flutters. The cadenza is punctuated by long, undulating clusters in the accompaniment, similar to the "breathing" motive and bursts of air, perhaps representing exasperation, from the horn ensemble. In bar 144 the breathing motive returns as the group continues to regain control. It is at this pivotal point in the piece that the solo horn is slowly

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<sup>8</sup> Douglas Hill, *Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns*.

pushed from the position of leadership to outcast. Frantic outbursts of material filled with non-traditional culminate in a scream to the highest note the solo horn can play, followed by a pathetic resignation of his power; a realization that once again he is outside the group.

Calm returns to the mass as the horn ensemble repeats the “breathing” motive. In bar 154, the solo horn player displays a final, valiant effort at controlling the group, signaled by reiterated glissandi, though this time, the group mocks the soloist with similar glissandi, apparently less willing to follow. A final shout from the solo horn player in bar 162 resolves with a return to unity in the ensemble as all horn players hold a unison f-sharp”. The solo horn then, utilizing the Doppler effect by sweeping the bell in a semi-circle while playing, makes an effective statement of disgust, turns his back and leaves the group. At the exit of the old leadership, the ensemble begins a soft variation on the breathing motive. The final statement of the solo horn player, beginning in the penultimate bar, is a double forte, two and a half octave, descending glissando, ending on an f-sharp. The exile of the leader is sealed with a final fortissimo punctuation of F-sharps and C-sharps in various octaves, in all nine horns.

The theatrics of this piece alone make it an interesting study in musicality and the communication of a musical voice or story. These musical requirements also make this work appropriate for use in a pedagogical setting. Hill shared the following thoughts in a discussion about issues that may arise when performing this work in an educational setting. In order for students to successfully perform this work, they must clearly understand the extended techniques that are requested. Consideration also needs to be given to the issue of endurance and stamina. If the students do not have the stamina needed to get through the entire work, perhaps the rehearsals should be scheduled in a way that the students can use them to build the needed stamina.

Balance can also pose a potential problem and must be addressed. Balancing a homogeneous ensemble with a soloist of the same instrument can be difficult. The last challenge that Hill mentioned was achieving comfort with ensemble pacing heading into the solo horn cadenza as the section around measure 130 requires some players to engage in a *rallentando* while others begin an *accelerando*. This piece will require an ensemble of players with musical sophistication. With thoughtful attention to detail and a group of horn players who are interested in stretching the traditional sounds of the homogeneous horn ensemble, Douglas Hill's *Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns* proves a worthwhile challenge.

### Chapter 3

#### *A Set of Songs and Dances*

Composed in 2006

Published by Really Good Music

Recorded by Gail Williams, Larry Combs, She-e Wu, and Peter Lloyd on *Horn Muse*

In 2006, Gail Williams, Professor of Horn at Northwestern University, commissioned Douglas Hill for the five-movement chamber work, *A Set of Songs and Dances*. Scored for clarinet, horn, vibraphone, and double bass, *A Set of Songs and Dances* was part of a series of commissions made possible through the Charles Deering McCormick Teaching Award, of which Professor Williams was a recipient. The premiere performance of *A Set of Songs and Dances* was given on April 25, 2007, at Northwestern University. Following the premiere, a live performance was presented at the Chicago Cultural Center and was also broadcast on WFMT, Chicago's classical radio station, on June 1, 2009. Ms. Williams recorded this chamber work on her CD, *Horn Muse*, with her husband, Larry Combs, clarinet, and colleagues She-e Wu, percussion, and Peter Lloyd, double bass.

*A Set of Songs and Dances* is representative of Hill's multi-movement jazz genre. Although not strictly a jazz work, this composition draws directly from the jazz genre, most specifically jazz rhythms, melodic patterns, jazz harmonies and walking bass lines. Hill comments that the jazz genre is perhaps the most comfortable and natural genre for him to compose in because "the jazz genre is where my soul lives."<sup>9</sup> Hill has gained a broad knowledge of jazz styles over the course of his career through active performance on both the horn and the string bass and through extensive listening.

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<sup>9</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, November 10, 2011.

Hill's knowledge and successful use of the jazz style in his previous compositions was very important to Ms. Williams' decision to commission a work from him. She knew that he was capable of writing effectively for horn within the jazz genre and also felt very confident in his ability to write well for all the instruments that would be involved in this chamber work.<sup>10</sup>

Professor Williams and I discussed the origins of *A Set of Songs and Dances* in an interview. In her initial discussions with Hill, she provided no limitations on what the instrumentation of the piece should be, but she recalled specifically wanting a chamber work that had a unique instrumentation, would be accessible to students and professionals, and was oriented towards the jazz genre. Hill and Ms. Williams initially decided that the chamber work would include horn and clarinet, and the inclusion of double bass and percussion evolved over time.

The five movements of *A Set of Songs and Dances* lean towards diverse jazz styles, ranging from bebop to a Latin groove. Other aspects of this work resemble traditional dance styles, such as the waltz and the quadrille. The five movements of this piece gradually evolve from a calm, amorphous first movement to a heavy, active Latin beat in the final movement, creating rhythmic and emotional development across the movements of the work. The first movement, *Introit/Intrada* begins with an atmospheric and ethereal quality that does not derive from the jazz style. This movement consists of a musical dialogue between the horn and clarinet, which takes place in large sections of unmeasured music, harmonically supported by arco bass writing. The string bass becomes important to the musical motion of this piece as the initial arco passages merge into pizzicato bass lines, drawing the musical idiom of the movement in and out of a jazz style

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<sup>10</sup> Gail Williams, phone interview by author, March 6, 2012.

The second movement, *Quadrille with Bebop*, is a jazz influenced version of the French dance in 6/8. As the title suggests, this movement develops into the bebop style, while utilizing the same contrast between pizzicato and arco bass to draw the movement into a jazz idiom.

The third movement is simply titled *Ballad*. Hill told me, “the melody of this movement is just as successful as any I have ever written.”<sup>11</sup> In this movement, Hill specifically recalled composing with simplicity in mind. The beauty of this movement is a strong example of Hill’s ability to write long, lyrical melodies.

The fourth movement, *Whimsical Waltz*, is a cheerful movement that was intended to add buoyancy and lightness to this work after the deeply felt third movement. The heavy use of pizzicato string bass is influenced by the composer’s experience playing jazz bass. This movement not only uses the string bass to establish tempo and pulse, but as a solo instrument as well.

The final movement of this composition is called *Romp with Rumba*. This movement completes *A Set of Songs and Dances* with a strong Latin groove and an asymmetric melody. Hill recalls the transitions in this movement being difficult to write. In spite of these difficulties the perception of the listener is one of easy flow.

Following the composition of *A Set of Songs and Dances*, Hill created an unaccompanied version, *Five Little Songs and Dances for Horn Solo*. This set of short unaccompanied works is not a literal transcription of the melodic material from the chamber work, but is derived from the larger work and modified to work for solo horn. Hill made this version in 2006 to ensure that even if horn players could not gather the musicians to play the chamber piece, they would be able to play the tunes through the unaccompanied version.

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<sup>11</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, November 19, 2011.

## Chapter 4

### *Americana Variations for Four Horns*

Composed in 1998

Published by Really Good Music

Recorded by the Artemis Horn Quartet on *Thoughtful Wanderings*

In the time surrounding the composition of *Americana Variations*, Douglas Hill immersed himself in the study of regional traditions and folk music. Having recently returned to Wisconsin from a year of teaching at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, Hill was feeling somewhat homesick for Wisconsin and he began a study of various aspects of the history and sociology of the state. A facet of his reading and research was the history of eighteenth and early nineteenth century folk music in Wisconsin. This pursuit led him to discover the writings and extensive recordings of Helene Stratman-Thomas that are housed in Mills Music Library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Helene Stratman-Thomas was a Wisconsin native who became a field worker for the Wisconsin Folk Music Recording Project, a program sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Library of Congress. Stratman-Thomas was also a professor of music at the University of Wisconsin-Madison during the 1940s; however, she is perhaps best known for her ethnographic studies of regional folk music from the state of Wisconsin. As Hill read about Stratman-Thomas and researched her recordings, he was also indulging in another passion, reading historical non-fiction, especially regarding nineteenth century pioneer life in Wisconsin. With this in mind, he made the decision to write a piece that would involve American folk songs. Hill's compositions often reflect the interests of his personal life surrounding the time of composition.

The decision to write a new composition involving American folk songs was fortuitous as Hill was soon asked to compose a piece for the Artemis Horn Quartet of Madison, Wisconsin. Hill's personal studies combined with the request by Artemis and the celebration of the Wisconsin Sesquicentennial in 1998, all led directly to the composition of *Americana Variations*. The Artemis Horn Quartet premiered the work on December 5, 1998, at the Elvehjem Museum of Art in Madison, Wisconsin.

Although he originally intended to compose a work which utilized melodies from American folk songs, *Americana Variations* transformed into an original composition in the style of American folk songs from the mid-nineteenth century. *Americana Variations* was composed in theme and variation form. This is the first traditionally structured theme and variations Hill composed and is one of very few found in his collected works. Hill explained that he has intentionally avoided the theme and variations form because it is not one he often enjoys listening to and it is a difficult structural design for him. However, he found that the composition of *Americana Variations* provided him with a challenge to make such a developmental structure work within his programmatic design.<sup>12</sup>

*Americana Variations* is somewhat cyclical in its arching, programmatic design, musically portraying a day in the life of a pioneer family, or in the broader sense, the lifecycle of a pioneer – birth to death. *Americana Variations* consists of seven sections, each detailing an aspect of an individual's life. The seven sections, *Daybreak*, *Lullaby*, *Kid's Game*, *Ballad*, *Country Dance*, *Hymn*, and *Sundown*, are performed continuously.

*Americana Variations* begins with a section of music labeled *Daybreak*. This section begins with a solitary c' in the second horn, creating the mood of the last few minutes before the

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<sup>12</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, October 15, 2011.

sun starts to rise, the time of day when night melds to morning. Gradually, the second horn is joined by the others adding rich harmonic activity as the music slowly builds. Throughout this section, Hill has composed a continuous *accelerando*, increasing the liveliness and intensity of this musically depicted sunrise. Hill's frequent use of the continuous *accelerando* as a compositional technique can be observed in his horn quartet *Shared Reflections*, as well as his large ensemble work, *Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns*. *Daybreak* gently settles into a section labeled *Lullaby*.

*Lullaby* begins with an eight bar solo by the first horn which introduces the first half of the theme. This intimate introduction to the theme is followed by the addition of the second, third and fourth horns. The section is filled with rich tonal harmonies, characteristic of Hill's lush writing for horn ensembles. The continuous *accelerando* playfully drives the music into the first variation, *Kid's Game*. Hill employs another of his frequently used compositional techniques by writing short fragments of melodic and rhythmic material in each of the horn parts, similar to the medieval *hocket*. The fragments create a continuous line of melody and musical activity. This type of melodic construction is seen in many, if not most of Hill's compositions. *Kid's Game* depicts the fully awakened child, when energy and excitement are high; more broadly, this section represents youthful frivolity. *Kid's Game*, reaching a peak in musical excitement, gradually grows calmer both rhythmically and thematically as it modulates into the second variation.

*Ballad*, which Hill has described as a song of "love and devotion,"<sup>13</sup> introduces the theme in its entirety for the first time through a rich presentation of duet, trio, and quartet harmonic writing. The activity in the third horn increases as the *Ballad* grows ever more

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<sup>13</sup> Douglas Hill, *Americana Variations for Four Horns* (Eau Claire, WI: Really Good Music, 1998).

passionate. A sudden drop in dynamics and rhythmic motion brings this section of the work to a suspended halt. The brief silence is soon interrupted by a *Country Dance*.

*Country Dance* is a lively variation in 6/8, requiring flexibility and facility from all four horn players. Hill creates an introduction simulating the tuning of fiddles. He also incorporates brief instances of echo horn used to “scoop-up” into an open fifth between two horns to simulate the sound of bagpipes, adding an inflection of “old world” character. As the *Country Dance* begins to die down, moving from playful, active melodic lines to quiet, contemplative musical material, the third variation gently flows into the fourth, *Hymn*.

This variation is a chorale heard in all four horns, composed much like a traditional hymn tune. Hill has described this section by saying “as the day (or life) nears its completion, deep spiritual emotions take on a greater significance as we hear the *Ballad* transformed into a *Hymn* of gratitude or, perhaps arrival.”<sup>14</sup> The final section, *Sundown*, depicts the final moments of the day, or life. As the sun sets, melodic material from the opening section returns. The end of the day is signaled by a gradual calming to two final voices, arriving at an f in the fourth horn alone, as a final cadence just before complete silence. The opening of the piece on a solitary c’ and the conclusion on an f creates a large scale V-I cadence.

Hill transcribed this quartet in 2004 for brass quintet, which he considers to be equally effective, allowing for a greater range of pitches and mix of timbres.

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<sup>14</sup> Douglas Hill, *Americana Variations for Four Horns* (Eau Claire, WI: Really Good Music, 1998).

## Chapter 5

### *Elegy for Horn Alone*

Composed in 1998  
Published by Really Good Music  
Recorded by John Zirbel on *Thoughtful Wanderings*

*Elegy for Violin and Horn* recorded by  
David Perry, violin and Patrick Hughes, horn on *Thoughtful Wanderings*

*Elegy for Horn Alone* was composed in the summer of 1998 following the death of Douglas Hill's mother, C. Norene Hill (1914-1998). For me, the work has special significance within Hill's collected compositional output. This was the first of Hill's compositions that I heard and subsequently performed. Over the years, this work has been one that I have performed often and it eventually led to the topic of this dissertation.

*Elegy for Horn Alone* is Hill's heart-felt musical reaction to the loss of his mother; it was a way for him to explore his feelings of grief. Hill described the melodic content of *Elegy* as "coming directly from my grief."<sup>15</sup> It is for this reason that *Elegy for Horn Alone* so effectively represents works from Hill's reflective genre. According to the composer, this work, along with its expanded version *Elegy for Violin and Horn*, reflects deeply on the bond between a mother and son.

Although composed using Hill's typical compositional process, which he describes as stream-of-consciousness writing, Hill's *Elegy for Horn Alone* represents a significant departure from his typical compositional style, likely due to the personal nature of the emotions Hill was experiencing. The work focuses on the topic of grief, which speaks to performers and audience members. Audiences and performers have historically identified with elegies, eulogies, and

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<sup>15</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, December 3, 2011.

requiems as they offer a musical way to share and reflect on their stories of grief. The title of Hill's *Elegy for Horn Alone* is significant because he has intentionally used the word "alone" as a way of conveying his feelings at the time of composition. As a way of introducing performers to his uncharacteristic use of phrasing and silence, he describes this piece as "rising and falling, searching without resolution."<sup>16</sup>

Sherry Holbrook Baker discusses Hill's *Elegy for Horn Alone* in her 2010 DMA dissertation, *In Memoriam: Nine Elegiac Works for Horn, 1943-2004*. She suggests that the performer-composer uses the composition of an elegy as a cathartic activity and has used Hill's *Elegy for Horn Alone* as an example. She also alludes to the idea that Hill's *Elegy for Horn Alone* appears to mirror some of the stages of grief.<sup>17</sup> After interviewing Hill and studying the score of this work, I believe his *Elegy* does lend itself to this observation.

*Elegy for Horn Alone* develops from emotional energy and direction. The melodic writing throughout the piece mimics the human vocalizations of grief: sighing, crying, and even screaming. In this work, Hill makes use of minimal extended techniques for the horn. The extended technique that is used most often is that of  $\frac{3}{4}$  stopping. This technique, used to end many phrases in *Elegy for Horn Alone*, is meant to portray feelings of insecurity, sighing or crying. The use of this technique adds to the intimate, emotional nature of this piece. For a composer who utilizes so many extended techniques in his compositions, the lack of extended techniques in *Elegy for Horn Alone* seems to point to the fact that Hill wanted to highlight the specific emotional impact of the few techniques that are used.

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<sup>16</sup> Douglas Hill, *Elegy for Horn Alone* (Eau Claire, WI: Really Good Music, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> Sherry Holbrook Baker, "In Memoriam: Nine Elegiac Works for Horn, 1943–2004" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2010), 46-51.

Hill makes use of a long descending glissando in measures 46 and 47, the emotional climax of the piece. This is a moment of extreme focus, a moment where loss becomes stunningly real. Hill begins to build to this climax through a restatement of the initial theme of the piece. The theme intensifies upward until the horn reaches what seems to be a scream to a b-flat'' and a'', then falls rapidly through a sustained glissando downward an octave and a half to a d'. The descending glissando, followed by a gradual diminuendo to silence, signals resignation. The extreme output of musical and emotional energy dissipates during this moment of silence. The work ends as the theme is again repeated, finishing with wavering  $\frac{3}{4}$  stopped motion that never allows for resolution.

The intentional use of silence in Hill's *Elegy* creates a subdued and disjunct feeling. Each silence, with the exception of the silence leading into the "Agitated" section, leads to the restatement and gradual development of the opening motive of the work, as if the music wants to move on but cannot, continually returning to the grief heard in the recurring theme. Silence plays an integral role in the music of this piece. It allows time for the audience to comprehend each phrase. Silence mirrors the quiet, deeply introspective periods that accompany grief.

Repetitious phrase construction is important in this work as each phrase ends with descending intervals, with the exception of one. The descending shape of each musical phrase subconsciously leaves the listener with a feeling of weight, like the burden of sadness and grief. The final phrase of the "agitated" section, however, ends with a poignantly hopeful ascending interval of a half step, which is never allowed to develop, dissipating to silence. This silence is followed by a restatement of the grief-stricken opening theme, representing emotional undulations among the stages of grief.

The intervallic content of this work also functions in response to the intensity of the emotions being musically portrayed. As the emotional content of the line intensifies, Hill writes larger intervals in quicker rhythmic progression. The intervallic relationships in this piece vary from a half step to a perfect 12<sup>th</sup>. For that reason alone, this work, like many of Hill's compositions, requires significant flexibility from the performer. Although demanding, the musical gestures in this work are idiomatic to the horn and serve the emotional content of the music.

Hill followed the composition of his *Elegy for Horn Alone* with a second version, *Elegy for Violin and Horn*. This chamber version makes use of the melodic material from the original work, but presents it in a way that is reminiscent of the *Adagio Mesto* from Brahms' *Trio for Piano, Violin, and Horn Op. 40*, which Brahms wrote following the death of his own mother. While he was preparing for a performance of the Brahms Trio, Hill decided to add violin to the *Elegy*. In this version, the violin takes over the majority of the melodic material and the horn becomes a supporting voice and a melodic partner. The *Elegy for Violin and Horn* was premiered at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on February 5, 1999, one year to the day after Hill's mother died. Hill was joined by David Perry, his colleague at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for the premiere in a recital that included a performance of the Brahms Trio. *Elegy for Violin and Horn* was later recorded by David Perry with Patrick Hughes on horn for the CD, *Thoughtful Wanderings, Compositions by Douglas Hill*.

## Chapter 6

### ***Scenes from Sand County for Mixed Nonet and Narrator***

Composed in 1998-1999  
Published by Really Good Music  
Recorded by the Oakwood Chamber Players on *Scenes*

In his chamber work, *Scenes from Sand County*, Hill weaves simple melodies and conservative harmonic language around well-known excerpts from Aldo Leopold's collection of essays, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches from Here and There*. This composition was commissioned by the Oakwood Chamber Players of Madison, Wisconsin, and recorded by them in 2000 on their CD, *Scenes*.

*Scenes from Sand County* serves as a representative work from Hill's environmental genre because the text of the work so strongly reflects the theme of nature. The composer has used timbral techniques, combining various instruments to mimic sounds heard in nature, as a way of highlighting the text. This particular composition is also significant in that it has received a positive reception by audiences and musicians associated with environmental groups in Wisconsin.

*Scenes from Sand County* has an interesting history. The initial commission by the Oakwood Chamber Players, in combination with a Graduate School Grant from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was for a single, eight-minute work titled *If I Were the Wind*. The premiere of *If I Were the Wind* took place in November of 1998 and received such a warm reception that the Oakwood Chamber Players commissioned Hill to compose more music for them. Hill decided to continue working with the inspiring texts of Aldo Leopold. He composed the second and third movements, *January Thaw* and *Marshland*, from Leopold's *Marshland Elegy*, which joined *If I Were The Wind* to create the three-movement work that is published today. In its

entirety, the work is cyclical by nature, detailing the “seasonal progression beginning with the southern migration of the geese in the fall, through the brief mid-winter thaw, followed by the return of the cranes to the marsh.”<sup>18</sup> This cyclical writing is similar to that of *Americana Variations*, showing that the themes and compositional structures found in Hill’s music bridge all compositional styles.

Hill’s father, Professor of Entomology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and an avid naturalist, introduced him to Aldo Leopold’s writings. This personal bond to the literature provides some insight into why the texts from *A Sand County Almanac* are so meaningful to Hill. His decision to use texts from Aldo Leopold’s writings is also significant considering Hill’s trend toward Wisconsin regionalism. The environmentalist movement in Wisconsin is frequently tied to the writings and teachings of Aldo Leopold, whose influence remains a major force in environmental education today.

Initially moving to Madison, Wisconsin in 1924, Aldo Leopold (1887-1949) began a legacy of conservation and environmentalism that still continues. Leopold was later named the first head and creator of the wildlife management curriculum at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Leopold and his wife purchased a plot of unproductive farmland northeast of Baraboo, Wisconsin, an area of the state he named “Sand County” for the sandy soil surrounding the farm. The Leopold family, including his wife and their five children, all of whom became noted scientists, worked to restore the farm to its natural form. Leopold meticulously recorded the changes that occurred at their farm and painstakingly documented them in a literary, poetic way that would be approachable and appreciated by the general public. Published posthumously in 1949, *A Sand County Almanac* has become a significant work in the fields of conservation and

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<sup>18</sup> Douglas Hill, *Scenes from Sand County* (Eau Claire, WI: Really Good Music, 1998).

environmental studies. Consisting of multiple chapters, including one for each month of the year, this collection of essays details the phenological cycle of the seasons. The work is written in a poetic, literary style that has drawn frequent comparison to Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*.

Hill, being so taken by Leopold's language, the strong visual imagery, and the poetic nature of Leopold's text, decided he would give it a central role in the commission for the Oakwood Chamber Players. Because Hill found the text so vivid and in some ways "complete,"<sup>19</sup> he chose not to set the words to a melody, but instead chose to have the text narrated so the words could stand on the strength of their content and linguistic rhythms. Through his music, Hill attempted to bring his audience to the time and place that Leopold was experiencing and to give them a tangible feeling of the change of seasons and the specific events that Leopold describes in the selected passages.

Using Leopold's poetic language to inspire his music, Hill's *Scenes from Sand County* is a highly programmatic work. Through traditional melodic and harmonic writing and the use of subtle extended techniques for the various instruments, Hill attempts to balance the power of the music with the substance of Leopold's texts. The instrumentation of this piece includes violin, viola, cello, bass and the traditional woodwind quintet of flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon. The overall plan of *Scenes from Sand County* is similar to the natural cycle of the seasons from fall to spring – leaving summer out of this composition. Hill begins the work with an excerpt from the November essay, lending its name to the first movement, *If I Were the Wind*. On the surface, this excerpt describes the autumnal winds and the southern migration of the geese in the fall, but on a deeper level, conveys the observer's thoughts on his relationship to the geese and his sadness at their departure.

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<sup>19</sup> Douglas Hill, interview with author, Madison, WI, October 22, 2011.

Following is winter, and the *January Thaw*. The text for this movement describes how the winter thaw affects a worried meadow mouse and a hungry rough-legged hawk. Completing the set of excerpts is *Marshland*, which describes the coming of spring and the long awaited return of the majestic sand hill crane to the marsh. Hill has created music that complements Leopold's text and creates a musically colorful listening experience by simulating the movement of the wind through the dried corn stalks, the flight patterns and frantic honking of the migrating geese, the quiet of the winter snow, the frenetic movements of the cold and busy mouse, the cry of the hawk as it soars downward towards its food, the waiting for spring to return on the silent marsh, the distant sounds of the cranes, and the triumphant return of the flocks to their mating grounds.

As is common for him, Hill composed this work in what he describes as a stream-of-consciousness state. He makes conservative use of extended techniques to highlight the text between episodes of narration, in an effort to complement but never overpower the words. The work evolves through extreme contrasts including episodes of musical exuberance and intentional calm, which accommodate and support the narration.

Hill composed *Scenes from Sand County* in three movements, dividing each movement into three subsections. These sections make use of open harmonies characteristic of Copland's American style, reflective of the nature and emotional content of the spoken text. *Scenes from Sand County* consists of the pairing of simple melodies and richly poetic texts to create a satisfying musical experience, which is accessible to audiences of all backgrounds.

The combination of Hill's successful composition, paired with the universal respect for Aldo Leopold's writings, have led to an extremely positive reception of this work. Specifically, Aldo Leopold's daughter, Nina Leopold Bradley (1917-2011), attended the premiere and was a

staunch advocate for this work. Environmental groups across the state have requested performances, and the work is frequently presented at annual, “Wisconsin Reads Leopold” events.

## The Performer's Perspective and Conclusion

Over several decades of composition, Douglas Hill composed many works that fall into the different genres and categories of music described earlier. These categories reflect his varied performing experience, numerous sources of inspiration, as well as the various musical and non-musical interests in his personal life. Although his collected compositions are varied, his musical tastes and styles continue to lead him to the creation of music that, in the words of Jeffery Snedeker, Professor of Horn at Central Washington University, “has heart.”<sup>20</sup> Bernhard Scully, Professor of Horn at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, echoed this response when he was asked what drew him to perform Hill’s works. Scully said, “I was drawn in initially by the genuineness of his music. He was not afraid to write what he was feeling and it really comes across. I struck me, as I got to know him personally, that his music truly resembled who he is.”<sup>21</sup> Responses gathered from professional horn players and teachers that have performed Hill’s works point to the genuine spirit of his music as being the unifying factor of Hill’s compositions.

Professor Gail Williams shared a related story with me in an interview. She recalled that following a recording session of Hill’s *A Set of Songs and Dances*, the recording engineer, Judith Sherman, commented to her that while the work was being recorded, she found herself sitting in the office, listening to the work and just smiling.<sup>22</sup> Having the ability to communicate with audiences and performers through his music may be the most important aspect of Hill’s compositional style.

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<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey Snedeker, e-mail interview by author, March 2, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Bernhard Scully, e-mail interview by author, March 2, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Gail Williams, phone interview by author, March 6, 2012.

Hill's position in academia has played a role in the prevalence of his compositions as well as the many styles that are found in his music. As a long-time professor of horn at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Hill has had the opportunity to compose within an institution that is filled with actively performing students and faculty as well as numerous performance opportunities and venues. Having these possibilities available to him in a thriving academic and artistic environment made a significant impact on the volume of music he was inspired to compose.

Hill's experience as a performing artist has also heavily influenced his compositions. Ms. Williams made the observation that Hill composes with the instrument and the player in mind. She said, "he stretches you, but he knows where you can push and where you have to give a little. He knows the player, which makes playing his music very comfortable. He makes use of range, mutes, etc. in a way that is very idiomatic to the instrument. This makes it so fun to play."<sup>23</sup> Hill's unique perspective on the horn and horn players could only have been realized by one who knows the instrument intimately as a player and has interacted extensively with many other horn players through forty years of studio teaching and over fifty years as an active performing artist.

The fact that academia was supportive of Hill's compositional projects, and flexible enough to allow him to experiment with new ways of composing, may also have hindered the dissemination of his music into larger performing venues and more varied groups of performers. Hill's music has, until now, been largely performed by his professional colleagues, friends, and past students, but is not well known by horn performers outside this rather tightly knit circle. It is my sincere hope that the information I have provided in this dissertation will acquaint teachers with his music, and inspire performers to study and play the compositions of Douglas Hill.

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<sup>23</sup> Gail Williams, phone interview by author, March 6, 2012.

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## ***Dialogues for Six Horns***

Composed in 1964  
Published by Really Good Music

Although this is one of Hill's earliest compositions, *Dialogues* for six horns has only recently been published. Hill composed this work, his second full-length composition, for his friends in the Lincoln Youth Symphony. He was a senior in high school at the time. This single-movement, motive-oriented composition, contrasts lively and calm sections of music. This piece maintains very clear, effective melodic writing, which is telling of Hill's compositional abilities, even as a young man.

Rehearsing and performing such an early composition seems like more of a novelty than a serious musical endeavor. However, *Dialogues* for six horns would provide any ensemble coach with a valuable resource in the teaching studio and on the recital stage. This piece brings unique challenges to each performer, as it requires that all players read bass clef, use stopped horn technique, and play into the upper register of the instrument. Hill's willingness to stray from traditional musical roles so often found in typical horn ensemble writing helped him to compose a piece that is well suited to both pedagogical and performing environments.

## ***Brass Quartet No. 1 for Two Trumpets, Horn and Trombone***

Composed in 1964  
Published by Really Good Music

Composed in 1964, during Hill's first semester at the University of Nebraska, *Brass Quartet No. 1* is an example of his early academic style. This piece was written in consultation with the American composer Robert Beadel, who was then professor of composition at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Like many of his early works, this quartet is a study in quartal and tertian harmonies and includes some interesting metric modulations.

*Brass Quartet No. 1* was premiered in August of 1967 at Indiana University, several years after its composition. The quartet was premiered on a student recital with Hill's colleagues, Susan Slaughter and Elmer Kudo on trumpet, Verne Kagarice on trombone, and Hill on horn.

Hill described this composition as a "sound piece."<sup>24</sup> He feels that this period of time in his compositional process was time spent dealing largely with harmony. Reflecting on the work over forty years later, Hill was surprised to observe that the piece was "unexpectedly poignant."<sup>25</sup> This was the final work that Hill composed before starting formal theory classes. His study of theory was, as he looked back on that time, intimidating, which led him to stop composing original works all together until he was out of school and had won his first orchestra job.

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<sup>24</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, February 3, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

## *Ten Pieces for Two Horns*

Composed in 1969

Published by The Hornists' Nest

Recorded by Jesse McCormick and Susan McCullough on *It's All Relative*

Composed in 1969, while Hill was principal horn of the Rochester Philharmonic, his *Ten Pieces for Two Horns* were created to be a set of recreational pieces, to be played with George Nemeth, the third horn player in the orchestra. Hill used the composition of these pieces as a way to occupy his free time between orchestra rehearsals and concerts.

*Ten Pieces for Two Horns* is the first work of Hill's to be published. Lowell Shaw, at The Hornists' Nest, accepted them in 1971. The method of composition was largely stream-of-consciousness writing, however Hill did intend for the "horn fifth" motive to be represented in each movement and he decided that this work would contain, "no high C's (c''')."26 The duets range in feeling and theme from a thoughtful *Lament* to a lively *Folk Dance*. The titles were added after the pieces were written, with the exception of *Dialogue*, the design of which was decided prior to being composed.

Although simple in nature, this set of ten duets is a significant resource for horn pedagogues. The duets provide a significant range of musical styles as well as ample opportunity for rhythmic study, intervallic study and musical interpretation. Throughout his career, Hill used this set of ten duets with his private horn students. These duets are also important to this study because they fall early in his compositional output and demonstrate many trends used throughout his compositional career, notably being Hill's propensity toward rapid meter changes, which provide yet another important pedagogical tool for teachers and students.

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<sup>26</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, October 2, 2011.

## ***Five Pieces for Three Horns***

Composed in 1969  
Published by The Hornists' Nest

Composed shortly after the creation of his duets, *Five Pieces for Three Horns* was also published by Lowell Shaw in 1972. This set of trios was similarly composed as recreational music to be shared with George Nemeth, third horn in the Rochester Philharmonic, and Linda Nemeth, George's wife and an occasional student of Hill's. These trios were composed in a similar style to the duets and maintain much of the same pedagogical value. However, this set is organized more like a larger multi-movement work, and has been performed more often as a unified composition than the more individualized duet pieces.

## *Quintet for Horns*

Composed in 1970  
Published by Really Good Music

*Quintet for Horns* was composed during Hill's second year of full time teaching at Wilkes College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Composed for the study and performance needs of Hill's students, *Quintet for Horns* challenges each player with range issues and multi-meter passages. Hill described the piece as a "study in quartal harmonies, including many accessible melodies."<sup>27</sup> This very early work in Hill's collection of compositions has only recently been edited and published by Really Good Music.

The nature of this composition makes it especially useful for its inclusion in a pedagogical setting, as was originally intended. This work provides a musical outlet for students to practice and improve ensemble playing, musical communication, intonation, range and facility development, section blending, as well as rhythmic stability and independence.

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<sup>27</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, February 3, 2012.

## ***Dreams and Variations for Brass Trio***

Composed in 1972  
Published by Really Good Music

Although it has only recently been published, *Dreams and Variations* for brass trio was composed while Hill was a student at Yale University. This high brass trio, scored for trumpet, horn and trombone, was composed while Hill was working with the American composer, Yehudi Wyner. Written during the same year that he was composing his *Trio Set for Horns*, this work is more conservative in nature, featuring tertian and quartal harmonies. Although this work employs extensive mixed meters and metric modulations, the basic design is rhythmically more conservative than Hill's other works composed at this time. This two-movement chamber piece employs some rhythmic relationships that tie the movements together, while allowing the melodic material to musically contrast. Prior to the work's publication, *Dreams and Variations* was performed in 1999 by members of the Wisconsin Brass Quintet, the faculty brass quintet at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, under the title *Elegies and Variations*. After a few significant modifications, the title was changed and the work was accepted for publication.

## *Trio Set for Horns*

Composed in 1972  
Published by Really Good Music

*Trio Set for Horns* was composed during Hill's student years at Yale University under the direction of American composer, Yehudi Wyner. Hill describes the work as the "use and abuse of conventional formal structure with somewhat greater than conventional rhythmic and ensemble demands while juxtaposing extreme textural contrasts. The actual result is an overall celebratory effect during which each performer is required to lead and to follow, to hum and to yell, to dance and to sing."<sup>28</sup> This four-movement work is loosely modeled after the traditional symphony structure.

The first movement, *Fanfare*, is framed by an aggressive, homophonic fanfare motive. This is contrasted with slow amorphous harmonic material. It develops into a quirky section that alludes to traditional hunting horn patterns, followed by a return to the opening fanfare. The next movement, *Landscape*, develops amorphous harmonic materials similar to the first movement, but never develops melodically, while demanding the most complex rhythmic relationships in the entire trio. Short sections of half-step undulations are slightly offset from one another, intentionally obscuring the sense of pulse. *Scherzo*, movement three, begins and continues with very complex rhythmic relationships. This movement in particular requires all players to slur and articulate large intervals, demanding great flexibility. The trio section of the work, contrasting with the gentler melodic material in the B section, is marked *marcato* and maintains a loud, angry feel through punctuated rhythms, aggressive flutter tonguing, and sections of stopped horn. The final movement, *Festival*, begins with sharply punctuated rhythms, reminiscent of

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<sup>28</sup> Douglas Hill, *Trio Set for Horns* (Eau Claire, WI: Really Good Music, 1999).

Stravinsky. The movement ebbs and flows between calmer sections and joyous, dance-like festivities, finishing with a short fanfare in all three parts.

A challenging piece, but strongly representative of Hill's early writing, this work displays his propensity toward complex meter changes. Interestingly, this work utilizes structured form more than most of Hill's later works, but the melodic material contains much of the sincerity and floating quality heard in melodies that Hill composed decades later. Likely due to its' difficulty, the work is rarely performed and to date has not been recorded.

## ***Character Pieces for Solo Horn***

Composed in 1973-1974  
Published by Really Good Music  
Recorded by Douglas Hill on *The Modern Horn*

This set of four short pieces was composed between 1973 and 1974, during Hill's final months at Yale and the beginning of his one-year term teaching horn at the University of South Florida-Tampa. Hill composed these pieces specifically for his own performances. In the years following their composition, these four movements went through many title modifications as well as changes in performance order. In 1978, Hill finally settled on the following order: *Whimsical, Restless, Quarrelsome, Foolish*. Hill premiered an early version of this work in 1976 at the International Brass Conference in Geneva, Switzerland and recorded the final version for the 1994 re-release of his Crystal Records recording, *The Modern Horn*.

Hill has described this work as a set of “theatrical soliloquies”<sup>29</sup> that are meant to represent certain character traits. These short works are filled with complex meter changes and extended techniques, including stopped horn,  $\frac{3}{4}$  stopped horn, intentionally marked vibrato, flutter tonguing and various glissandi. These four movements each characterize the emotions Hill intended to display through their disjunct melodic content, complex rhythms, and extended techniques and descriptive tempo markings, such as *nervously jerky, anxiously, lively, silly* and *jokingly*.

Hill described this set of pieces, as “maybe one of the most demanding pieces I have ever written, unless you are very flexible,”<sup>30</sup> and remembered this work as being a growing

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<sup>29</sup> Douglas Hill, *Character Pieces for Solo Horn* (Eau Claire, WI: Really Good Music, 1999).

<sup>30</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, November 3, 2011.

experience for him. Practicing this work, which required such extreme flexibility in and out of the middle and low registers, helped him to develop his own skills and advance as a player.

## ***Jazz Soliloquies for Horn***

Composed in 1978-1980

Published by Really Good Music

Recorded by Douglas Hill on *The Modern Horn* (third movement only)

Steven Becknell on *Thoughtful Wanderings* (all movements)

This demanding unaccompanied work for horn was composed while Hill was serving as President of the International Horn Society and working on his book, *Extended Techniques for the Horn: A Practical Handbook for Students, Performers and Composers*. This piece was the first of his jazz oriented works and was composed with the intent to utilize many of the techniques that he was including in his book. Hill composed the work with the intention that the three movements could be performed as a set or as individual pieces. Hill recorded the work, in its entirety, for Crystal Records but unfortunately the master tape was lost. The final movement, *Laid Back*, was included on Hill's Crystal Records recording, *The Modern Horn*.

This work was composed to stretch the technique of modern horn players to include advanced jazz-like gestures. As is often the case with Hill's multi-movement pieces, the movements were not composed in the order in which they are published. *Laid Back* was composed in May of 1978, *Blues Like* in August of 1978, and *Mixin'* was composed much later, in June of 1980. All three movements of this work contain a description of the extended technique notations used with directions on how to perform each technique. Each movement of this set of pieces emphasizes a unique characteristic of the jazz genre from the mimicking of a string bass to a melodic line replicating the sound of a solo jazz improvisation. These pieces provide a great challenge for any players who wish to stretch themselves technically within the jazz style.

***Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns***

Composed in 1980  
Published by Really Good Music  
Recorded on *The Modern Horn*

See Chapter 2

## ***Jazz Set for Solo Horn***

Composed in 1982-1984  
Published by Margun Music  
Recorded by Douglas Hill on the LP *A Solo Voice*  
Adam Unsworth on *Thoughtful Wanderings*

Perhaps one of Hill's most popular pieces, *Jazz Set* for solo horn is often performed by students and professionals. A popular piece for advanced students and professionals, this work requires flexibility, facility and a lot of attitude. The work sounds much like a jazz improvisation, yet has been fully composed and notated. This work was composed just as Hill's book, *Extended Techniques for the Horn* was being published and includes many well-placed extended techniques aiding in the creation of the illusion of a jazz improvisation.

The first two movements, *Lost and Found* and *Cute 'n Sassy* were composed as a set in 1982 and were premiered by Hill at the International Horn Society Workshop in Avignon, France. The first movement, *Lost and Found* musically depicts deep sadness, extreme aggression and anxiety; a reaction to "thinking about something out there that doesn't belong to anyone anymore."<sup>31</sup> The second movement, *Cute 'n Sassy*, is emotionally contrasting in that it musically depicts memories of good times, energy, and life.

The final movements, *Lullaby Waltz* and *Fussin' for Emily*, were composed in 1984. Hill premiered the final movement at the Second International Brass Congress at Indiana University in 1984. Hill then premiered the entire four-movement work in 1987 at the Nineteenth International Horn Workshop in Provo, Utah.

The fourth movement, *Fussin' for Emily*, was composed prior to the third, *Lullaby Waltz*. The "Emily" that the movement refers to is Hill's daughter. These final movements are based on

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<sup>31</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, December 10, 2011.

the thoughts and feelings that Hill felt after Emily was born. *Fussin' for Emily* is based on a tune that Hill sang to Emily when she was a baby. The *Lullaby Waltz*, using the fewest extended techniques, was inspired by an original, lullaby-like melody that gradually evolves into a playful waltz.

Each emotion or memory shared in this work is thoughtfully approached and supported by the use of specific extended techniques. Hill has masterfully included dozens of extended techniques in this work including, quarter tones, throbbing tones, vibrato, glissandos, valve flutters, ghost tones, tremolos, flips, pitch bends, spit-tongue attacks, half-valve effects, doinks, plops, stopped horn effects, and multiphonics. The mastery is clear when one observes how Hill added so many techniques without making the work sound cluttered or forced.

***Haiku Readings  
On Poems by Robert Spiess  
Horn and Piano***

Composed in 1988  
Published by Really Good Music

*Haiku Readings* is a set of seven short movements featuring the haiku poems of Madison poet, Robert Spiess (1921-2002). Hill and his wife, Karen, to whom the piece is dedicated, premiered this piece on September 11, 1988 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Hill chose haiku poems for this work because he appreciated their simplicity; a fleeting essence of the subjects being described. The syllabic rhythms of the haiku poems lend themselves well to musical setting. The poems that Hill chose to use do not have a specific relationship to one another, but they all convey elements of nature.

This set of short pieces requires the performer to make use of several extended techniques in addition to significant rhythmic and flexibility requirements. With that in mind, this set of short works is very well suited for study and performance by advanced students. In his program notes to the publication, Hill has asked specifically that the poems be read by the performers and printed in the program, because he wants the audience to be fully aware of the text. His construction of the music in relationship to the text is similar to that of his large chamber work, *Scenes from Sand County*.

## ***Thoughtful Wanderings for Natural Horn and Percussion***

Composed in 1988-1990

Published by IHS Manuscript Press

Recorded by Kristin Thelander and Anthony Di Sanza on *Thoughtful Wanderings*

Jeffrey Snedeker and Mark Goodenberger on *The Contemporary Natural Horn*

This work was composed during the years that Hill was deeply involved in the study of Native American music. During these years, Hill acquired and played several Native American flutes, rattles and drums. A redheaded woodpecker flute that was very special to Hill, and a drum specifically made for him, inspired the creation of this piece. It was the playing of these two instruments that developed into the motives heard in this work. Hill based *Thoughtful Wanderings* on the natural harmonic series because of its close association with the scale of the six-holed Native American flute. Hill's desire was to take the natural scale and create some "space in nature"<sup>32</sup> based on the scale of the natural horn.

This work includes Native American symbolism. One example of great spiritual importance is the number four, found often within the piece. Musical gestures reminiscent of Native American flute playing, such as the chirps at the ends of phrases, specifically notated treatments of long tones, and rhythmic idiosyncrasies of traditional pow-wow drumming are included.

Hill intended that the "out of tune" natural harmonics be used in performance. He also specifically intended for the sound of traditional Native American percussion, rattles and drums to be used. Hill has requested that no correction be made for natural harmonics and no substitutions should be made with instruments from the western tradition. A recording is included in the publication with percussion accompanied by sounds of nature.

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<sup>32</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, November 12, 2011.

## ***Song Suite in Jazz Style for Horn and Piano***

Composed in 1993

Published by Manduca Music Publications

Recorded by Jeffrey Snedeker and Marilyn Wilbanks on *Thoughtful Wanderings*

*Song Suite in Jazz Style* is an important piece in Hill's repertoire as it is a significant turning point in his style of composition. Around 1988, Hill took several years away from composition of traditional music for horn. During this time, he embarked on a very thorough and personal study of Native American music. Being immersed in the music of another culture opened Hill's ears to different styles and uses for music. It also caused him to think about and compare musical construction in the western and non-western traditions. He specifically noted that all Native American music was constructed of a single line melody with percussive rhythmic accompaniment. As the first piece that Hill composed after this break, *Song Suite in Jazz Style* was, in a way, a reaction toward primarily melodic construction. This suite consists of melodies over various rhythmic foundations, which are tied together with the jazz underpinnings that are such a natural part of Hill's compositional style. Coming back to composition in the western tradition after his intense study of Native American music, Hill says was both a "regression and progression"<sup>33</sup> in his compositional style.

Hill has provided two versions of each of these five songs in the publication, a lead sheet that requires the performers to actually improvise, and a version that has been fully written out to sound like a jazz improvisation. *Song Suite* was composed as Hill was returning to Madison after a year of teaching horn at Oberlin College in Ohio. The movements of this work, *Easy Going*, *Quiet Tears*, *Dream Scene*, *All Alone*, and *Blackened Blues*, become somewhat autobiographical in that they infer the ups and downs of Hill's year away from his home in Madison, Wisconsin.

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<sup>33</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, December 10, 2011.

## ***Shared Reflections for Four Horns***

Composed in 1994

Published by Manduca Music Publications

Recorded by Douglas Hill, Randy Gardner, David Krehbiel and Michael Hatfield  
on *Shared Reflections: The Legacy of Philip Farkas*

*Shared Reflections for Four Horns* was premiered at the International Horn Workshop in June of 1994 in Kansas City, Missouri. This work is dedicated to the memory of Philip Farkas and was “composed for those who reflect on those who are gone and were loved.”<sup>34</sup> The work was premiered by twelve of Farkas’ colleagues, using optional stage directions by Hill at the event. This work succeeds well as an ensemble of eight, twelve, or sixteen, by placing multiple players on each part.

The basic concept of the work begins with the players located in four different spaces in the room. In each space, a different story or memory is being told. After a few moments, the players gradually come together on stage, sharing their memories. Hill allows each horn player to then retell and develop their stories as a solo played over an ostinato created by a compound of the other three parts. After these “reflective” periods of melodic sharing, the ensemble comes together in a unified, powerful set of chords that dissipate to a solemn, quiet statement of the opening motive, ending on the sustained C, unresolved.

The duplet/triplet motive introduced at the beginning is a variation on a repeated rhythm from Anton Bruckner’s Fourth Symphony, which Hill recalls as being one of Farkas’ favorite orchestral compositions. Although it requires coordination, endurance, and much musical sensitivity, this work would be an excellent work for students as well as professionals.

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<sup>34</sup> Douglas Hill, *Shared Reflections for Four Horns* (Portland, ME: Manduca Music Publications, 1995).

## *Reflections for Horn Alone*

Composed in 1994

Published by Manduca Music Publications

Recorded by Nancy Billmann on *Thoughtful Wanderings*

*Reflections for Horn Alone* was created from the melodic material contained in Douglas Hill's *Shared Reflections*. The creation of this solo broadened the life of the quartet and made the musical content available to a solo performer. *Reflections for Horn Alone* is "meant as a rather theatrical soliloquy upon memories of (a) lost relationship(s)." <sup>35</sup>

Hill recalled that the creation of *Reflections* was more difficult than other solo horn versions derived from his larger ensemble works. The difficulty came largely from attempting to reduce the rich harmonies of the four horn parts into a solo voice. Hill also attempted to keep the communicative quality of the quartet by creating a dialogue between open and stopped horn colors. This adds to the theatrical quality while maintaining the reflective mood intended. In an interview, Hill mentioned that the stopped horn notes are meant to represent thought and the open horn notes were to sound as if they were being sung. <sup>36</sup>

The challenges of performing *Reflections for Horn Alone* come when one considers the physical and musical endurance and the technical flexibility that are required of the performer. These challenges are common to Hill's music, but seem to be reduced after one studies his compositions and compositional style.

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<sup>35</sup> Douglas Hill, *Reflections for Horn Alone* (Portland, ME: Manduca Music Publications, 1995).

<sup>36</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, November 15, 2011.

## ***Intrada for Large Brass Ensemble***

Composed in 1995

Published by Manduca Music Publications

Recorded by faculty and students of the University of Wisconsin-Madison on

*Thoughtful Wanderings*

*Intrada* for large brass ensemble was composed in 1995 for the students of the Asian Youth Orchestra. Hill was a coach for the horn players of the Asian Youth Orchestra and the *Intrada* was composed in a year that the orchestra was touring the world, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The tour took the students to several Asian countries and the United States, with performances at both the White House and the United Nations. During the preparations for these performances, the need for a fanfare to be played before the concerts arose, which is a tradition in many Asian countries. The work is loosely based on the opening motive from *Variation IX, Nimrod* of the *Enigma Variations* by Edward Elgar, which was the signature piece of the Asian Youth Orchestra. Hill wrote this work in less than a 24-hour period for the brass instruments required for Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which was the featured piece for the orchestra's tour. After a brief statement of the motive, this short fanfare gradually builds in energy as it accumulates instruments moving steadily toward a striking climax.

In 1996, Hill arranged this large brass ensemble work for a brass quintet. The quintet version was premiered by the Wisconsin Brass Quintet, in which Douglas Hill was the hornist, on February 23, 1996 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and recorded by them on their CD, *Images*.

## ***A Place for Hawks* for Mezzo Soprano, Horn and String Orchestra**

Composed in 1996  
 Published by Really Good Music  
 Recorded by Ilona Kombrink, Douglas Hill,  
 with David Becker conducting the University of Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra on  
*Thoughtful Wanderings*

*A Place for Hawks* was premiered on March 2, 1996. The performance given by Mezzo Soprano, Ilona Kombrink, the composer on horn, and University Of Wisconsin-Madison Chamber Orchestra, conducted by David Becker, received very high praise in reviews. Kevin Lynch of *The Capitol Times* said, “this lyrical work had an American grandiosity of vision that managed to also be humble, and for that it warmed the heart and lit the imagination.”<sup>37</sup> This work was composed for the Mezzo Soprano, Ilona Kombrink, a famous artist-teacher from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

*A Place for Hawks* was inspired by the writings of the Wisconsin author, August Derleth, making this work another example of Hill’s interest in working with the poetry and essays of regional writers. Each movement of this work, *All earth is still*, *Suddenly the great bird*, *Hawk on the Wind* and *When in April* is based on a different poem by Derleth. The four poems depict different aspects of the poet’s interaction with nature and his observation of a hawk. The poetry that Hill chose to use for this work allowed him to create long, fluid lines of lyrical melodies. This work is a stunning example of Hill’s ability to meld text and musical line. From the icy darkness and solitude of a winter night, to the hopeful dreams of the spring thaw, Hill’s orchestral score elegantly depicts the emotional content of Derleth’s poetry.

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<sup>37</sup> Kevin Lynch, review of *A Place for Hawks*, by Douglas Hill, Mills Concert Hall, Madison, WI, *Capitol Times*, March 4, 1996

## ***Timepieces for Brass Quintet***

Composed in 1997  
 Published by Really Good Music  
 Recorded by the Wisconsin Brass Quintet on *The Feast Awaits*  
 and *Thoughtful Wanderings*

Douglas Hill composed *Timepieces for Brass Quintet* during the summer of 1997 to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wisconsin Brass Quintet and his 10<sup>th</sup> year with the group. While Hill transcribed many works for brass quintet, this five-movement, jazz inspired work is his only original work for this instrumentation. It was composed not only to celebrate the anniversary of the Wisconsin Brass Quintet, but also specifically for the members of the quintet at that time. *Timepieces* was premiered by the Wisconsin Brass Quintet on October 18, 1997 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

*Timepieces* includes seven original melodies within its five movements; *Good Times*, *Upon a Time*, *Another Time*, *Simpler Times*, and *Party Time!* This work is very similar in its structural characteristics to Hill's other five-movement jazz oriented work, *Song Suite in Jazz Style*. Although Hill does not attempt to detail any specific "times", the original melodies, their descriptive titles, and how they have been orchestrated suggest a rather broad range of emotions, events, and jazz oriented styles.<sup>38</sup>

The performers are required to have significant knowledge of melodic and rhythmic jazz idioms and to be comfortable with multi-metric transitions. In two movements, Hill has also used periods of unmetered, free sections to create, first, the effect of musical chaos, and second, moments of contemplation. The fifth movement of *Timepieces*, titled, *Party Time!* requires detailed rhythmic clapping from four of the members of the quintet. This initially proved to be a

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<sup>38</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, November 3, 2011.

greater challenge than Hill had anticipated, however, when executed well, the clapping adds much enthusiasm to the “party” theme. This advanced work for brass quintet makes use of many timbral additions, including piccolo trumpet, flugelhorn, and a euphonium option (for the tuba player) in the last movement, as well as varied mutes for all of the players. Drawing on extensive jazz idioms, rhythmic complexities, and melodic passagework for all five players, *Timepieces for Brass Quintet* would be a worthwhile addition to the repertoire of any advanced brass quintet looking for a fun challenge.

***Americana Variations for Four Horns***

Composed in 1998

Published by Really Good Music

Recorded by The Artemis Horn Quartet on *Thoughtful Wanderings*

See Chapter 4

***Elegy for Horn Alone***

Composed in 1998

Published by Really Good Music

Recorded by John Zirbel on *Thoughtful Wanderings*

*Elegy for Violin and Horn* recorded by  
David Perry, violin and Patrick Hughes, horn on *Thoughtful Wanderings*

See Chapter 5

*Scenes from Sand County*

Composed in 1999

Published by Really Good Music

Recorded by the Oakwood Chamber Players on *Scenes*

See Chapter 6

## ***Tribal Images for Brass Quintet and Percussion***

Composed in 2000

Published by Really Good Music

Recorded by the Wisconsin Brass Quintet on *The Feast Awaits*

*Tribal Images for Brass Quintet and Percussion* was composed as a second version of Hill's unpublished work *Ceremonial Images for American Indian Drum and Large Ensemble* (1991-1992). It was composed as a way of extending the life of *Ceremonial Images*. This large ensemble work including the flute, brass, bass and percussion sections of the Omaha Symphony, is based on the *Helushka* "warrior" Ceremony of the Omaha Indians and was composed to feature drummers of the Omaha tribe from the Macy Reservation in Nebraska. The work was commissioned by the Omaha Symphony and was premiered by them on March 1, 1992 at the Lied Center for the Performing Arts in Lincoln, Nebraska, celebrating the Nebraska Sesquicentennial. After the premiere of *Ceremonial Images*, Bruce Hangen, the music director of the Omaha Symphony wrote the following:

While pursuing...possible repertoire, I received a call suggesting that Douglas Hill might be just the right composer for our commission. Not only had he already composed some works centered around Native American themes, but he happened to have been born in Lincoln. After just one phone call with him and a hearing of his other works, I was convinced that Hill had the creativity, sensitivity, and integrity to write the piece we needed.”<sup>39</sup>

The tribally specific music and drumming required for *Ceremonial Images* made it difficult to publish for performance by other tribes and orchestras, so Hill arranged the work for quintet and three percussionists, utilizing nineteenth century melodic materials and the documented design of the traditional warrior ceremony, removing the contemporary *Helushka*

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<sup>39</sup> Bruce Hangen, review of *Ceremonial Images*, by Douglas Hill, Lied Center for the Performing Arts, Lincoln, Nebraska, *Symphony Magazine*, March 1, 1992.

melodies and drums. Hill stated that *Tribal Images for Brass Quintet and Percussion* then became, “just the essence of the music and the ritual.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, November 15, 2011.

## ***The Glorious Privilege of Being for Horn Quartet***

Composed in 2000  
Published by Really Good Music

Douglas Hill's *The Glorious Privilege of Being* exists in many different forms, which all add to the life of the work. In its original form, this work did not include horn. Hill composed *The Glorious Privilege of Being* as an SATB choral work for the Unitarian Society Choir in Madison, and specifically their loved conductor, Elsworth Snyder. After the premiere on April 23, 2000, Hill recomposed the work for solo voice and piano. Professors James Doing and Martha Fischer recorded this version on the recording, *Thoughtful Wanderings*. The piece remained in that form for many years, until 2010 when Hill reconsidered the piece and chose to add a horn obbligato to the solo voice and piano version.

Hill found the inspiration for *The Glorious Privilege of Being* in poetry by the Nebraska Poet Laureate, John G. Neihardt. Hill was introduced to the author through his mother, who worked for Neihardt in his later years. The poem, *April Theology*, was one of Neihardt's favorites. The poem's extraordinarily positive language and depiction of life drew Hill in and reminded him of the characteristically sunny disposition of Elsworth Snyder. Hill has described this piece as possibly his "most blatant example of composing for the text, just allowing the melodies to happen."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, December 3, 2011.

## *Oddities for Horns*

Composed in 2004  
Published by Really Good Music

*Oddities for Horns* was composed simply for the fun of working with numbers. The five movements are loosely based on the numbers of their titles, *Ones*, *Fives*, *Threes*, *Nines*, and *Sevens/Elevens*, with each movement being composed in a relaxed jazz style. Originally written for horn quartet, this piece can be doubled to accommodate an advanced octet. Each movement was composed to stand on its own, as they were intentionally composed in a way that no thematic material is shared between movements and no musical relationships exist between movements aside from the instrumentation. These challenging pieces for horn quartet require that all players be comfortable with significant metric complexities and rhythmic challenges, as well as feel comfortable gliding in and out of different jazz styles.

In Hill's experience, the first movement, *Ones*, has proved to be the most difficult for performers to grasp. Hill says playing a piece in 1/4 time is very challenging for many people. This piece also requires much rhythmic precision as the melody is formed out of a compound of all four horn parts.

*Fives* are prevalent throughout the second movement of this quartet. For instance, the movement is largely in 5/4, is made up of five sections that transition between a heavy Latin feel and a smooth melodic section, and the two key centers are a diminished fifth apart. This movement requires extreme flexibility and extensive practice to smoothly navigate the transitions between sections.

The third movement, *Threes*, is a beautiful and spacious ballad in 3/4 over three sections. This movement has the lush harmonies and beautiful homogeneous ensemble writing that

characterize Hill's music. The long, expansive lines in this movement require sensitive playing and flexibility over large intervals.

*Nines*, was composed with the phrase, "dressed to the nines" in mind. This 9/8 movement requires rapid flexibility over awkward patterns and some conservative extended techniques. The second theme labeled, "cool", requires both attitude and knowledge of jazz style.

Hill called *Sevens/Elevens* a novelty movement. This movement, marked "playfully", begins and ends with a feeling of perpetual motion, complex rhythmic relationships, and a mix of odd meters. It also periodically reverts to "dirty" blues style, which reminds Hill of a smoky nightclub.

Shortly after the quartet version was published, Hill wrote out the literal melodic content for solo horn in *Oddities for Solo Horn* and in 2007, published a transcription of *Oddities for Brass Quintet*. Hill felt the brass quintet version was successful as it allowed for more contrasts of colors and ranges than the horn quartet version. The brass quintet version was premiered by the Wisconsin Brass Quintet, the faculty brass quintet at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

## ***Greens/Blues/Reds* for Horn and String Quartet**

Composed in 2005  
Published by Really Good Music

*Greens/Blues/Reds* for horn and string quartet was composed as a reaction to the political and environmental crisis that was so pressing in the United States during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Hill was also intrigued by the idea of writing a multi-movement work that would use colors to portray contrasting emotions relating to this subject. The first movement, *Greens*, represents the joy that Hill felt when observing the beauty of the natural world. He then composed, *Blues*, which represents sorrow at the destruction of that beauty. This movement is followed by, *Reds*, which portrays his anger and aggravation at this desperate situation. The theme of *Greens* cycles throughout the work.

This work was composed in a strong jazz style, with rhythms and extended techniques that are reminiscent of jazz improvisation, which is seen in many of Hill's compositions. This work proved to be a challenge for string players and the solo horn player, due to its rhythmic complexities and the endurance requirements. As with many of Hill's large-scale works, a solo horn version was created from the melodic content of this piece. *Greens/Blues/Reds for Solo Horn* was composed to broaden the life of this music using much of the overall melodic content, though it is not a transcription of the solo horn part.

Hill later transcribed the work for woodwind quintet with horn feature, as he felt that the rhythmic complexities, articulations and jazz styles would be more appropriate for woodwinds. As the environmental and political situation began to change, Hill felt that the original inspiration was less relevant. The new version is titled *Three Moods for Woodwind Quintet (2008)*, which focuses attention on the contrast of moods rather than politics. *Three*

*Moods for Woodwind Quintet* was premiered in 2010 by the Wingra Woodwind Quintet, the faculty ensemble of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and featured Linda Kimball on horn.

***A Set of Songs and Dances***

Composed in 2008

Published by Really Good Music

Recorded by Gail Williams, Larry Combs, She-e Wu and Peter Lloyd on *Horn Muse*

See Chapter 3

## ***Recollections for Horn Octet***

Composed in 2007  
Published by Really Good Music

*Recollections* for horn octet was commissioned by Michael Ozment, a graduate of James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia and an MM-Horn student at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, in memory of his father. Ozment is quoted in the publication as saying:

My father, Dwight Wesley Ozment, was a lifelong lover of music, history and above all else, family. He came from a musical family and inspired his own sons to pursue music to the fullest extent. He spent thirty-five years serving others as a Virginia state trooper and a state fire marshal. In his leisure time, he took every chance to be around water: boating, diving, fishing, and swimming. It is my hope that “*Recollections for Horn Octet*”, with its depiction of his favorite era in history – the American Civil War, will live on through time, as will my fond recollections of him.<sup>42</sup>

The aspects of the titles of this four-movement work have a lot to do with, “guys and their dads.”<sup>43</sup> The first movement, *Antics*, details the fun and frivolity of the father and son relationship in a lively movement created with two contrasting melodies, eventually leading to a six-part canon, as the players chase each other. The second movement, *Relics*, is the movement that recalls Dwight Ozment’s love of the American Civil War. This was an interesting movement for Hill to create, because he too has a deep interest in the history of the American Civil War. This movement used the fragments of fifteen melodies popular during the Civil War era. Hill says, “Beginning in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, we hear bits of music from both the North and the South: calls to battle, songs of sadness, patriotism, loss, and joy.”<sup>44</sup> The third movement, *Gratitude*, is a lush, warm melody that expresses the gratitude that Ozment felt

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<sup>42</sup> Douglas Hill, *Recollections for Horn Octet* (Eau Claire, WI: Really Good Music, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> Douglas Hill, interview by author, Madison, WI, November 15, 2011.

<sup>44</sup> Douglas Hill, *Recollections for Horn Octet*.

for his father. Contained in this movement is a section where Hill has requested that each player, “Tell your story.”<sup>45</sup> This section is very much like the “memory sharing” sections that Hill composed in his horn quartet, *Shared Reflections*. The final movement, *Jubilee*, is a cheerful celebration, a happy remembrance of Ozment’s life. This movement ends with a brief quotation of the James Madison University fight song, bringing the work to an energetic end. The work was premiered at James Madison University by the JMU horn choir, under the direction of Dr. Abigail Pack, on March 20, 2008.

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<sup>45</sup> Douglas Hill, *Recollections for Horn Octet*.

## ***Recollections Revisited for Double Brass Quintet***

Composed in 2009  
Published by Really Good Music

Two years following the premiere of *Recollections* for horn octet, Hill was struck with the idea of separating the four movements of the octet. He felt that the second movement of the set, *Relics*, mainly a transcription of historic melodies, should stand on its own, while the other three movements, which were original compositions by Hill, made a logical three movement collection. This decision led Hill to create two new works using the melodic material found in *Recollections*. *Recollections Revisited* for double brass quintet was created at a time when the Wisconsin Brass Quintet was collaborating with the University of Iowa Brass Quintet. This collaboration gave Hill the idea of reworking the piece for a double brass quintet. Michael Ozment, the man who originally commissioned *Recollections* for horn octet, was a big proponent of the creation of this new work. This would allow a longer performing life for the work that he commissioned in his father's memory.

The resultant transcription became an antiphonal work for two brass quintets, one with tuba and the other with bass trombone. The work includes: *Antics*, *Gratitude*, and *Jubilee*. These movements contain the same melodic material that was heard in the horn octet version but allows for a wider range of pitches, a greater use of timbres, and a much wider dynamic range. Also, it is requested that the two quintets be seated facing one another, which allows for greater antiphonal possibilities written into the structure of the work.

## ***Civil War Relics* for Double Brass Quintet**

Composed in 2009  
Published by Really Good Music

This single-movement work for double brass quintet is a revision and transcription of the second movement of Hill's *Recollections* for horn octet. The construction of this piece is scored for two separate quintets, one with tuba and the other with bass trombone. One loosely represents the North and the other represents the South. The brass quintets engage in many antiphonal relationships from unity to separation to conflict to reconciliation, and are asked to seat themselves on the opposite sides of the stage. The tunes however have some crossover, because a few of the fifteen selected melodies used in this work were common to both the North and the South. Within the span of approximately six minutes, the progression of the melodic materials follow the progression of the American Civil War, from *Shenandoah*, through *Yankee Doodle*, *Bonnie Blue Flag*, *Dixie's Land*, to *Home Sweet Home* and *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

## ***Horizons* for Tenor, Clarinet, Horn, Cello and Piano**

Composed in 2009

Published by Pelican Music Publishing

*Horizons*, like many of Hill's chamber works, was composed using the musical material from the larger symphonic work, *Open Horizons*, that to date is unpublished. *Open Horizons* was composed in 2000 and features the writings of conservationist, Sigurd F. Olson (1899-1982). The title of the original composition for narrator/singer, chorus, and chamber orchestra comes directly from Sigurd F. Olson's book of autobiographical essays titled *Open Horizons*.

Olson, originally from Chicago, Illinois, but later moving to northern Wisconsin and eventually to Ely, Minnesota, spent a large part of his life fighting for the preservation of the Quetico Provincial Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness of Ontario, Canada, and northern Minnesota. Olson served as a guide through these waters for many years and wrote prolifically about this area of the country.

*Open Horizons*, was composed when Hill's daughter, Emily, began college. The language that Hill chose to highlight in his piece gives much insight to the journey of life and growing up. *Open Horizons* was premiered in 2001, with baritone Paul Rowe, Professor of Voice at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Concert Choir and Chamber Orchestra with Hill conducting. Following the premiere, he reconsidered the intimate nature of the text as it related to the large ensemble. Hill then decided to transcribe the piece for a much smaller chamber ensemble; narrator/tenor, clarinet, horn, cello and piano. The new quintet version was renamed *Horizons*. *Horizons*, was premiered at a concert celebrating Earth Day in 2009 at the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison, Wisconsin. Much like his other works that utilize text, Hill has gracefully woven music around

the words in a way that highlights the language and meaning when necessary, while allowing the text to stand on its own.

## Appendix B

### Compositional Category Listing

#### Academic

Dialogues for Six Horns (1964).....	Really Good Music
Brass Quartet No. 1 (1964).....	Really Good Music
Ten Pieces for Two Horns (1969).....	Hornist's Nest
Five Pieces for Three Horns (1969).....	Hornist's Nest
Quintet for Horns (1970).....	Really Good Music
Dreams and Variations for Brass Trio (1972).....	Really Good Music
Trio Set for Horns (1972).....	Really Good Music
Character Pieces for Solo Horn (1973-1974).....	Really Good Music
Abstraction for Solo and Eight Horns (1980).....	Really Good Music
Intrada for Large Brass Ensemble (1995).....	Manduca Music
Intrada for Brass Quintet (1996).....	Manduca Music

#### Multi-Movement Jazz Influenced Works

Jazz Soliloquies for Horn (1978).....	Really Good Music
Jazz Set for Solo Horn (1985).....	Margun Music
Song Suite in Jazz Style (1993).....	Manduca Music
Timepieces for Brass Quintet (1997).....	Really Good Music
Oddities for Horns (2004).....	Really Good Music
Oddities for Solo Horn (2004).....	Really Good Music
Greens/Blues/Reds for Horn and String Quartet (2005).....	Really Good Music
Greens/Blues/Reads for Solo Horn (2005).....	Really Good Music
Three Moods for Woodwind Quintet (2005/2008).....	Really Good Music
A Set of Songs and Dances (2006).....	Really Good Music
Five Little Songs and Dances for Horn Solo (2006).....	Really Good Music
Oddities for Brass Quintet (2007).....	Really Good Music

#### Historical

Americana Variations for Four Horns (1998).....	Really Good Music
Tribal Images for Brass Quintet and Percussion (2000).....	Really Good Music
Americana Variations for Brass Quintet (2004).....	Really Good Music
Recollections for Horn Octet (2007).....	Really Good Music
Recollections Revisited for Double Brass Quintet (2009).....	Really Good Music
Civil War Relics for Double Brass Quintet (2009).....	Really Good Music

**Reflective**

Shared Reflections for Four Horns (1994).....Manduca Music  
 Reflections for Horn Alone (1994).....Manduca Music  
 Elegy for Horn Alone (1998).....Really Good Music  
 Elegy for Horn and Violin (1998).....Really Good Music  
 The Glorious Privilege of Being for Horn Quartet (2000).....Really Good Music  
 The Glorious Privilege of Being for Voice, Horn and Piano (2010).....Really Good Music

**Natural**

Haiku Readings for Horn and Piano (1988).....Really Good Music  
 Thoughtful Wanderings for Natural Horn and Percussion (1988-1990).....IHS Manuscript Press  
 A Place For Hawks for Mezzo Soprano, Horn and Strings (1996).....Really Good Music  
 Scenes from Sand County for Mixed Nonet and Narrator (1999).....Really Good Music  
 Horizons for Tenor, Clarinet, Horn, Cello, and Piano (2009).....Pelican Music Publishing

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