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The purpose of this study is to provide background information, a conductor's analysis, and a performance guide for John Mackey's *Songs from the End of the World* (2015), a composition for soprano soloist, eleven winds, double bass, harp, piano, and percussion.

Background information for this study emerged from interviews with Abby Jaques, poet; John Mackey, composer; Lindsay Kesselman, premiering soprano vocalist; and Kevin M. Gerald, premiering conductor. The text, Mackey's compositional choices, the premiering vocalist's approach to characterization, and the conductor's interpretive decisions are presented to reveal the work's structure, construction, and dramatic elements. Insight into challenges and approaches for presentations of this work is provided in the performance guide.

A CONDUCTOR'S ANALYSIS AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE FOR JOHN
MACKEY'S *SONGS FROM THE END OF THE WORLD* (2015)

by

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To the glory of God,
in honor of my family, friends, mentors, teachers, and colleagues,
and in memory of William and Janice Lake, Sr.

APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Composer

John Mackey was born in New Philadelphia, Ohio, on October 1, 1973. His first introduction to music composition came at an early age with music software given to him by his grandfather. He studied with Donald Erb and John Corigliano at the Cleveland Institute of Music (B.F.A. 1995) and Juilliard School (M.M. 1997).¹ Mackey's *Redline Tango*, composed in 2003, served as a defining moment in his career with performances by the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Dallas Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Bergen Philharmonic, and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. Mackey re-orchestrated the work for wind ensemble in 2004. *Redline Tango* has since been performed more than 250 times worldwide and has received numerous accolades including the Walter Beeler Memorial Prize (2004) and the ABA/Ostwald Award from the American Bandmasters Association (2005). Mackey's *Aurora Awakes* also received the ABA/Ostwald Award (2009) and the National Band Association's William D. Revelli

¹ John C. Mackey, "Bio," Osti Music: The Website of Composer John Mackey, <http://ostimusic.com/Bio.php> Mackey (accessed October 17, 2017); Rebecca Phillips. "John Mackey: The Composer, His Compositional Style and a Conductor's Analysis of *Redline Tango* and *Turbine*," (DMA diss., Louisiana State University, 2007).

Award. Mackey is frequently a composer in residence at universities and conservatories around the world. Numerous groups at all levels play and enjoy his compositions.²

Compositional Style

Mackey's music combines sophisticated compositional ideas with contemporary harmonies and rhythms. His output for wind ensemble consists of 35 works,³ and he is known for an aggressive compositional style that features the strength and magnitude of the wind ensemble.⁴ In his blog, Mackey writes: "Band is loud. She's not quite as pretty as Orchestra, and she's a bit, shall we say, *bigger-boned*, but she has that truly "hot" aspect to her that Orchestra never had. And most importantly, Band *loves* what you do."⁵ In *Songs from the End of the World*, Mackey departs from his typical style by utilizing smaller instrumentation, featuring solo soprano voice. The instrumentation chosen for this work consists of an unusual, yet effective, blend of wind and percussion colors.

Mackey explains:

I was careful not to solicit too many instruments that are in the soloist's range. Saxophones would be too loud for the texture, and clarinets would work fine if they were scored in their lower registers with lower instruments from that family to add richness. Most chamber pieces do not utilize contrabass clarinet. I like that

² Mackey, "Bio."

³ Some of his major compositions for wind ensemble include *Redline Tango* (2004), *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band* (2014), *Aurora Awakes* (2009) and four concerti—*Concerto for Soprano Sax and Wind Ensemble* (2007), *Harvest: Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra-without-strings* (2009), *Drum Music: Concerto for Percussion and Wind Ensemble* (2011), and *Antique Voices: Concerto for Trumpet* (2017). Rebecca Phillips, "John Mackey: The Composer, His Compositional Style and a Conductor's Analysis of *Redline Tango* and *Turbine*" (DMA diss., Louisiana State University, 2007), 1.

⁴ Mackey, "Music," OSTI Music: The Website of Composer John Mackey, entry posted January 30, 2015, <http://www.ostimusic.com/Music.php> (accessed October 17, 2017).

⁵ Mackey, "Even Tanglewood has a Band," OSTI Music: The Website of Composer John Mackey, entry posted July 7, 2005, <http://ostimusic.com/blog/even-tanglewood-has-a-band/> (accessed October 17, 2017).

sound and thought that it would be a unique color for the ensemble. I considered putting the horn in the ensemble; however, I don't like the balance issues that occur with horn and chamber winds. I considered a more mellow brass instrument, euphonium, at first and after consulting with Kevin Gerald, premiering conductor, I decided not to use a brass instrument. The combination of harp, marimba, and vibraphone sound great together. It is a great timbre, and I use it often in my compositions.⁶

Mackey scores *Songs from the End of the World* for 18 players with the following instrumentation: flute, alto flute (doubling on C flute), oboe, English horn, two B-flat clarinets, two bass clarinets, B-flat contrabass clarinet, two bassoons, double bass, soprano voice, harp, piano, and three percussionists [marimba, vibraphone, bass drum, and suspended cymbal].⁷

This piece also represents a departure in his compositional process. Although Mackey and Abby E. Jaques, his wife, have collaborated on all his works, *Songs from the End of the World* is Mackey's first composition in which he sets her poetry. Mackey explains:

She titles nearly all of my pieces, a process that usually involves my writing the music, then playing it for her, after which she tells me what the piece is about. . . . Sometimes she'll hear a piece halfway through my writing process and tell me what the music invokes to her, and that can take the piece in a different (and better) direction than I had originally intended.⁸

⁶ Mackey, interview by author, Eagle Lake, FL, October 26, 2017.

⁷ Mackey, *Songs from the End of the World*, (Austin: Osti Music, 2015).

⁸ Mackey, "Wine-Dark Sea – The Program Note," OSTI Music: The Website of Composer John Mackey, entry posted January 30, 2015, <http://ostimusic.com/blog/wine-dark-sea-the-program-note/> (accessed October 17, 2017).

For the first two movements of *Songs from the End of the World*, Jaques wrote the poetry prior to the composition of the music. However, for Movement III she wrote the poetry to correspond to the pre-existing melodic themes originally played by the solo B-flat clarinet in the second movement of Mackey's *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band* (2014).

The Commission

The lead commissioner was the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Drs. John R. Locke and Kevin M. Gerald, directors. The other consortium partners were Arizona State University, Eastman School of Music, Florida State University, Metropolitan State University of Denver, The Ohio State University, Texas Tech University, University of California Los Angeles, University of Colorado - Boulder, University of Florida, University of New Mexico, University of Oregon, University of Texas at Austin, and Western Michigan University.⁹

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a conductor's analysis and performance guide for *Songs from the End of the World*. Personal interviews with Jaques (poet), Mackey (composer), Lindsay Kesselman (premiering soloist), and Kevin Gerald (premiering conductor) supplied valuable background information and informed performance suggestions offered by this study. Thus, the innovative and artistic insights of those involved with the creation of *Songs from the End of the World* are combined

⁹ Mackey, *Songs from the End of the World*, (Austin: OstiMusic, 2015).

with the researcher's performance suggestions. This introduction provides a context for the study, offering biographical information about Mackey, his compositional style, and the significance of *Songs from the End of the World* in his catalog. In Chapter II, the researcher chronicles how Mackey and Jaques conceived the work. Chapter III offers an analysis of the piece and Chapter IV provides suggestions for future performances based on the premiere performance rehearsal and reference recording. Lastly, Chapter V is a summary of the findings that make this piece a valuable artistic endeavor for collegiate and professional ensembles.

Method

The researcher used the score and the reference recording of *Songs from the End of the World* as a foundation for analyzing the structure, form, melodic themes, rhythm, harmony, orchestration, and text. Interviews with the poet, composer, and premiering performers support the researcher's observations and conclusions. The researcher recorded the interviews for transcription in this document. Mackey granted permission to use musical examples of the piano score in this document to aid analysis (see Appendix A).

Related Literature

The two pre-existing influences on this composition were the second movement of Mackey's *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band*, and Homer's *The Odyssey*. These two inspirations will be discussed in more detail in Chapter II.

Additionally, two dissertations and one thesis related to other works by Mackey have been written. In Rebecca Phillips' 2007 dissertation "John Mackey: The Composer,

His Compositional Style and a Conductor's Analysis of *Redline Tango* and *Turbine*," she wrote extensively about Mackey's life, musical background, and significant compositional influences.¹⁰ Another dissertation, "John Mackey's *Concerto for Soprano Sax and Wind Ensemble: An Analysis and Conductor's Guide to Performance*," was written by Jacob Wallace in 2007 and focused on Mackey's first concerto. This concerto is one of few pieces written for solo soprano saxophone with wind ensemble. In his study, Wallace presents a comprehensive musical analysis and pedagogical advice for performing the work.¹¹

Finally, in her 2011 thesis, "A Comparative Performance Analysis of *Undertow* and *Xerxes* by John Mackey," Jacqueline Townsend addresses the technical requirements and performance challenges of these two works for younger bands. Townsend concludes that even with the technical limitations imposed by the commissioning groups, Mackey composed works of respectable artistic merit.¹² This existing research was peripheral to the analysis of *Songs from the End of the World* because of the disparate nature of their content.

¹⁰ Phillips, "John Mackey."

¹¹ Jacob Wallace, "John Mackey's *Concerto for Soprano Sax and Wind Ensemble* (2007): An Analysis and Conductor's Guide to Performance" (DMA diss., University of Georgia, 2009).

¹² Jacqueline Townsend, "A Comparative Performance Analysis of *Undertow* and *Xerxes* by John Mackey" (MM thesis, Bowling Green State University, 2011).

CHAPTER II

AN OVERVIEW OF *SONGS FROM THE END OF THE WORLD*

Inspiration

Mackey derived inspiration for *Songs from the End of the World* from Homer's classic epic *The Odyssey*, written in the 8th century BC. Bernard Knox, in Robert Fagles's translation of *The Odyssey*, writes:

The Odyssey owes much of its power to enchant so many generations of readers to its elegant exploitation of something that war temporarily suppresses or corrupts—the infinite variety of the emotional traffic between male and female. In his treatment of these relationships, Homer displays an understanding of human psychology that many critics...have been reluctant to recognize.¹³

The relationship between Odysseus and Kalypso poignantly presents this juxtaposition.

Songs from the End of the World is a continuation of the narrative themes explored by Mackey in *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band* (2014) commissioned by Jerry Junkin and The University of Texas Wind Ensemble for the centennial celebration of the Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music. In collaboration with Jaques, Mackey chose *The Odyssey* as the programmatic narrative for this thirty-minute work.¹⁴ First, Jaques produced a shortened retelling of *The Odyssey* to delineate the three movements

¹³ Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin Books), bk. 4 lines 14-19.

¹⁴ Mackey, "Wine-Dark Sea – The Program Note."

of the symphony. Once completed, Mackey the summary influenced Mackey's composition. Regarding the second movement of *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band*, Jaques comments:

[The second] movement is the song of the beautiful and immortal nymph Kalypso, who finds Odysseus near death, washed up on the shore of the island where she lives all alone. She nurses him back to health, and sings as she moves back and forth with a golden shuttle at her loom. Odysseus shares her bed; seven years pass. The tapestry she began when she nursed him becomes a record of their love.

But one day Odysseus remembers his home. He tells Kalypso he wants to leave her, to return to his wife and son. He scoffs at all she has given him. Kalypso is heartbroken.

And yet, that night, Kalypso again paces at her loom. She unravels her tapestry and weaves it into a sail for Odysseus. In the morning, she shows Odysseus a raft, equipped with the sail she has made and stocked with bread and wine, and calls up a gentle and steady wind to carry him home. Shattered, she watches him go; he does not look back.¹⁵

From the beginning, Mackey knew that he would revisit the story of Kalypso and Odysseus later as a song cycle.¹⁶

Furthermore, Mackey heard Lindsay Kesselman sing for the first time during a residency with the Michigan State University Wind Symphony, directed by Dr. Kevin Sedatole. She performed *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan*, composed by Mackey's mentor John Corigliano on February 22, 2013. Mackey recalls:

¹⁵ Mackey, "Wine-Dark Sea – The Program Note."

¹⁶ Mackey, interview by author, Eagle Lake, FL, October 26, 2017.

[Before this performance] I had never heard of [Lindsay Kesselman] or heard her [perform] . . . after observing several rehearsals, the dress rehearsal, and the concert, I thought she was incredible. I loved the purity of her voice and thought she was a great actor. Her singing was very clear, which made the text very understandable; all of the things you want as a composer for voice. Her pitch was flawless—she was terrific.¹⁷

This concert inspired Mackey to want to write a song cycle for Kesselman, and she enthusiastically accepted the idea. Mackey initially considered The University of Michigan to lead the commissioning consortium, because Kesselman lived close to the school in Ann Arbor. This would have provided opportunities for Mackey to hear the piece as it was being composed, schedule rehearsals, and premiere the work. Just before beginning work on the composition, however, Kesselman moved to Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Therefore, a new lead university for the consortium was required. Since Locke and Geraldini, at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, commissioned and premiered Mackey's *The Frozen Cathedral* (2013), Geraldini was a logical choice to lead the consortium.¹⁸

Mackey collaborated with Jaques, and they decided that the song cycle would expand and elaborate on the second movement of *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band*. Mackey assumed that Jaques would arrange the original text of *The Odyssey* to serve as the libretto for the song cycle. Jaques, however, chose to compose original poetry based on Homer's epic in the voice of Kalypso.¹⁹ She explains:

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

I have always been struck by the way Homer treats the characters Odysseus encounters in *The Odyssey* as mere props, rather than people (or humanoid beings) with needs, feelings, thoughts, and, perspectives, of their own. Among those, I have always found it particularly striking with the women he meets and often is intimate with, especially Kalypso, the immortal nymph. I had always felt that there was a story to tell about how the events happened through her eyes. I imagine that she would tell you that she found and rescued him, and they fell in love. (He was there for seven years!) If you then think about the very strange particulars of her life—immortality, living in a paradise, stunning beauty, and unique gifts in many arts, however, always alone—it seemed to me that there was a powerful story there about what human connection means to us.²⁰

These two compositions present the story of Odysseus from differing perspectives. While *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band* relates Odysseus' ordeal, *Songs from the End of World* presents Kalypso's thoughts and emotions from a female perspective.

Initially, there were to be seven songs in the song cycle. Jaques and Mackey had not previously engaged in the process of setting poetry to music, so they did not have a preconceived concept of the amount of time a poem would take to be performed in song. The text of the first poem resulted in eight minutes of music. So, Mackey and Jaques abbreviated the structural idea of the piece. Thus, they composed a three-movement work for chamber winds, percussion, and soprano soloist approximately 21 minutes in length.²¹

Jaques describes the three movements, explaining:

[In the first movement, “A long time alone,” we are introduced to Kalypso's island home.] It is beautiful beyond imagining but remote beyond reach. Her immortality is thus an eternal solitude. The first song in the cycle, set before Odysseus' arrival, is her lament of this loneliness. Standing on her shore, she

²⁰ Abby E. Jaques, interview by author, Eagle Lake, FL, October 29, 2017.

²¹ Mackey, *Songs from the End of the World*.

remembers long-gone days when she could still delight in her paradise, and tells of the slow erosion of sensation and even sense after endless ages alone.

The second movement, [“Raveling”], begins after Odysseus has been with Kalypso for seven years. She sings as she moves back and forth with a golden shuttle at her loom, weaving a tapestry – the work of all that time – that tells their story. At one end, the luminous threads show the near-dead castaway washed ashore; nearby the nymph nurses him back to health. Flowers and fruit, ripe and radiant, tumble through images of love they found together. But the simple happiness of the scene and the song curdles: Odysseus wants to return to his home, leaving Kalypso to her solitude; nothing she has given or can give means anything to him anymore. She is shattered, but he is cold. So Kalypso, returns to her loom, singing again, but now unraveling the tapestry, unmaking the document of Love.

In the final song, [“At sea”], Kalypso watches Odysseus sail away on a boat she has given him, born by a breeze she has called up to fill a sail she has fashioned from the unmade tapestry. Waves carry him toward the horizon, and her loneliness washes in again.²²

The premiere performance of *Songs from the End of the World* occurred in Greensboro, North Carolina, on November 19, 2015, with Lindsay Kesselman as soloist and Kevin Geraldi conducting the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Wind Ensemble.

²² Jaques, “Program Note” in *Songs from the End of the World* (Osti Music, 2015).

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF *SONGS FROM THE END OF THE WORLD*

Mackey's *Songs from the End of the World* consists of three movements, each a setting of a poem by Jaques. Isolation and resistance to reality are the main literary themes of Movement I. Contentment and uncertainty are central ideas in Movement II, the apogee of the composition. Heartbreak gives way to disdain in Movement III as Odysseus abandons Kalypso. At the end of the movement, Kalypso grapples with and accepts her isolation. As a result, the poetic narrative of the entire piece is an ABA' form. Kalypso's resistance in the first poem (A) is balanced by her acceptance of her abandonment (A') in the third. Movement II contrasts these two sections and is labeled (B). Mackey does not compose the work musically in an arch form; the movements are structurally independent.

Table 1. *Songs from the End of the World*, Large Formal Structure

<i>Songs from the End of the World</i>				
Movement	Title	Total Measures	Musical Form	Poetic Form
I	"A long time alone"	110	ABC	A
II	"Raveling"	84	AB	B
III	"At sea"	134	ABCA'B'D Coda	A'

Movement I: “A long time alone”

Jaques imagined a soliloquy in verse based on the goddess Kalypso’s point of view in *The Odyssey*. Sensitive to Kalypso’s isolated existence on an island, Jaques’ story emphasizes themes of loneliness, love, and desire. Jaques uses vivid and romantic descriptions of nature, using free verse and structured prose. Her unique pairing of descriptive language and alliteration poignantly portray the visual and sonic intensity of Kalypso’s environment. The phrase “forever is a long time alone” appears three times as a haunting refrain, resembling Galway Kinnell’s use of the title *When One Has Lived a Long Time Alone*.²³ Jaques comments:

The first movement, “A long time alone,” was influenced by the poet Galway Kinnell, whose work I love. He has an extraordinary collection called “When One Has Lived a Long Time Alone.” As soon as I started thinking about Kalypso’s plight and [Galway’s] work, . . . that collection, specifically, was in my mind. I wrote “A long time alone” thinking about it *as a poem*, even though it was going to be a song; I wanted a poet’s approach to reflect on and capture the intimacies of an internal world.²⁴

In *The Odyssey*, Homer does not establish Kalypso’s character independent from the council of the gods, who condemn her for holding Odysseus captive.²⁵ Jaques’ reimagined story adds depth to Kalypso’s character. Jaques states:

I think one hears a lot from [Kalypso’s] own mouth about her state of mind in the beginning; that’s what the first movement is about. She talks about how there was a time when she struggled against her solitude, pretending the other living things

²³ Galway Kinnell, *When One Has Lived a Long Time Alone* (New York: Knopf, 2000).

²⁴ Jaques, interview.

²⁵ Homer, *The Odyssey*.

around her could stand in for company, trying to find ways of buffering her loneliness, but she has kind of given up, when we meet her.²⁶

Jaques' first poem presents Kalypso's desire for love, companionship, and human touch. For Mackey, the compositional process was uniquely easier and faster than other works previously composed. He attributed this to the masterful word choice and use of rhythm and phrase inherent in Jaques' poetry.²⁷

The connections between the poetry and the composer's musical decisions have been illustrated using a graphic representation of the text as shown in Table 2, including the musical form and accompanying melodic themes used throughout the first movement.

Addressing his compositional process for setting the lines of the poetry to themes,

Mackey expounds:

. . . I couldn't just set the poetry freely. Some ideas or motives had to be reoccurring resulting in forcing some lines differently than Abby probably intended as she had no idea of the way I would use the same thematic ideas for a certain line of text, in some instances, many lines later. Most of the process included reading the text and getting a tune in my head and then figuring out how it could come back structurally in the style of a song or aria. After setting a verse, I would move on to the next and decide if making certain lines more melismatic would be necessary to fit the tune. In some cases, while working backward, I would ask myself, "Maybe I should change the first stanza to this altered version, or allow the present iteration to remain different?"²⁸

²⁶ Jaques, interview.

²⁷ Mackey, interview.

²⁸ Ibid.

Mackey's altered syntax of the poetry is used in this analysis to demonstrate how his melodic themes relate to Jaques' original poetry. Bold typeface in the table indicated text added by the composer. Jaques' original text is included in this document as Appendix B.

Table 2. *Songs from the End of the World*, Movement I, Form and Melodic Theme Analysis

“ <i>A long time alone</i> ” by A. E. Jaques	Musical Form	Melodic Themes	Key Areas
Dawn draws her rose-red fingers soft across the sleeping sky. Another day unasked-for, light pinking flesh untouched.	A (mm. 1-16)	a b	G [#] minor
Long ago I loved to watch the water wake when first rays raced the waves. Morning warm-born in a moment.	A' (mm. 16-23)	a b	E major
But the sweetest second sours in solitude. Forever is a long time, forever is a long time, a long time alone, alone, alone, alone, alone.	Refrain (mm.24-38)	c d	A Major
Summer murmurs memory of seasons sweet with cypress. Seabirds basking idle as the fishes dare to doze.	B (mm. 38-41)	a a ¹	A Minor
I used to sing with the insects answering sleet sleet whirrups with trilling airs. But that was long ago before the buzzing buried cicada sounds inside to rattle in the cluttered attic of never-spoken thoughts. Even lovely liquid languor spoils	Transitional Bridge (mm. 42-51)	e f f ¹ e ¹ e ² e ³ e ⁴ c ₂	Chromatic

Table 2. Continued

“ <i>A long time alone</i> ” by A. E. Jaques	Musical Form	Melodic Themes	Key Areas
Forever is a long time forever is a long time, a long time, Forever is a long time alone	Refrain (mm. 53-68)	d ²	Whole-tone 0
Wade into the wine-dark sea and leave the lonely island; let salt swamp tears. Waters hold you for a while.	C (mm. 69-76)	a b	A Minor
Skin gleams warm. Long-fallow flesh awakens but the ocean’s kiss consumes. Soon there is no woman – only wave.	C’ (mm. 77-84)	a b	
So the body brought back rushes out again, tide and time-taken as all things are.	C’’’ (mm.85-91)	a a	
The sea is not a solace but a cell. Forever is a long time, forever is a long time along time alone, alone, alone, alone, alone.	Transition (mm. 92-96) Refrain (mm.97-110)	c ¹ d ²	F Major Chromatic

Mackey composed Movement I in verse-refrain song form. He opens the movement with a “rocking triplet” motive, featuring solo B-flat clarinet in the chalumeau register as shown in Figure 1. The B-flat clarinet interacts with the soprano, providing links between phrases, call and response effects, and internal reflections during points of repose.



Figure 1. *Songs from the End of the World*, Opening Motive
Movement I, m. 1.
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The syncopated and *rubato* nature of the opening motive blurs the natural accents of the meter, giving the first measure an unmeasured feel. This motive expands to function as the instrumental accompaniment in measures 3 through 5. Mackey uses this melodic theme as a *ritornello* between subsequent verses. The first five notes of the G-sharp minor scale are woven cyclically in this theme to symbolize Kalypso’s monotonous life; this is illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2. *Songs from the End of the World*, Instrumental Refrain
 Movement I, mm. 3-5.
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The first movement begins with Kalypso singing, “Dawn draws her rose red fingers across the sleeping sky.”²⁹ Jaques uses Homer’s personification of the sun signaling a new day through tactile qualities. The first A section contains two melodic themes labeled “a” and “b” as presented in Figures 3 and 4.



Figure 3. *Songs from the End of the World*, Theme “a,”
 Movement I, mm. 8-11.
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Figure 4. *Songs from the End of the World*, Theme “b,”
 Movement I, mm. 12-15.
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²⁹ Mackey, *Songs from the End of the World*.

The composer's use of stepwise diatonic melodies creatively juxtaposes the functional relationship of a scale to the interaction of elements in nature and the opening motive of the movement. Mackey uses melodic themes "a" and "b" in measures 69-76, with different text establishing a new verse.

The accompaniment of the first movement was inspired by Samuel Barber's work for soprano and orchestra, *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, op. 24 (1947).³⁰ Mackey shares:

The first movement is neo-romantic in style. The first movement of *Songs from the End of the World* would not exist without Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* (1947), one of the most performed works for solo soprano and orchestra and rightfully so. The "rocking-triplet" motive as accompaniment with a legato cantabile melody was very present in my thoughts as I composed this movement. That's why the movement is in 12/8 and 9/8 with lots of suggestions for rubato.³¹

In Benjamin Cleveland's 2014 dissertation, titled, "Samuel Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* from a Male Perspective," he comments that Barber's use of 12/8 allows for the poetry to possess a natural rhythm of speech.³² The first movement of *Songs for the End of the World* was composed with the same emphasis on text.

A four-bar transition beginning at measure 24 precedes the refrain "forever is a long time alone", labeled "c" and shown in Figure 5.

³⁰ Samuel Barber, *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* (New York, G. Schirmer, 1952).

³¹ Ibid.

³² Benjamin Cleveland, "Samuel Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* from a Male Perspective" (DMA diss., University of Kansas, 2014).

a little slower
p *mf* *mp* *a tempo*
 But the sweet-est sec-ond sours in sol - i - tude.
a little slower *a tempo*
pp *p*

Figure 5. *Songs from the End of the World*, Theme “c” and Composer’s use of Tone Painting, Movement I, mm. 24-26.
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Mackey’s ability to musically enrich the poetry is evident in this short passage. This phrase begins as a sequence starting on an E-major 11 chord. As expected, the second harmony, A-major 11, follows. On the word *sours*, Mackey disrupts the pattern with an F-major 7 chord instead of using F-sharp minor maj 7, an orthodox prolongation of the subdominant. Mackey’s choice is surprising to the ear due to the resulting deceptive cadence.

The refrain “forever is a long time alone” is presented in various rhythmic augmentations and is the only instance where the original poetry is altered. By doing so, Mackey creates a sense of hopelessness as Kalypso’s isolated reality saturates her thoughts, as illustrated in Figure 6.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line. The first system is in 4/4 time, marked 'very freely' and 'p'. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including two triplet markings. The lyrics are: 'For-ev-er is a long time For-ev-er is a long time a long time a lone'. The second system is in 3/4 time, continuing the melody with a long note for 'a lone' and then another triplet. The lyrics are: 'a lone a lone a lone a lone'.

Figure 6. *Songs from the End of the World*, Theme “d” with Rhythmic Augmentation, Movement I, mm. 28-36.
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Section B begins with the “a” theme. Mackey deviates from the thematic sequence established in the previous verses, presenting melodic theme “a” twice. The second iteration of this theme serves as a link to the climactic point of the movement. Themes “e” and “f,” presented in Figure 7, disrupt the natural flow of the poem at measure 42, creating poetic dissonance; the harsh words and explosive consonant sounds add audible intensity. Mackey found the poetry in the transitional bridge in measures 42-51 challenging to characterize. He comments:

I had a hard time figuring out how to set these lines of text. The issue is that there are words like “trilling” [that have musical connotations]. How “mickey-mousey” do I go with the accompaniment? In the case of the line “before the buzzing buried cicada sounds . . .,” there are so many great “Bs” and “Cs.” How do I make that sound pretty? The point is, it shouldn’t sound pretty. The word *cicada* isn’t a lovely word. At first, I expressed concerns with the text; however, Abby insisted that it was necessary to the poetry. I’m glad we didn’t water down the text, I just had to figure out how to make the line great.³³

³³ Mackey, interview.

Mackey’s choice of natural, speech-like rhythm contrasts the lyrical character of the opening three verses.

The image shows a musical score in 4/4 time. The first theme, labeled 'e.', starts with a forte 'f' dynamic and features two triplet markings over the notes 'sing' and 'in - sects'. The second theme, labeled 'f.', is also marked 'f' and shows a descending melodic line with a chromatic alteration from G# to G natural in the final measure. The lyrics are: 'I used to sing with the in - sects an - swer-ing slee slee whir-rups'.

Figure 7. *Songs from the End of the World*, Theme “e” and “f,”
 Movement I, mm. 42-44.
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The transitional bridge ends at measure 51 as Kalypso sings, “Even lovely liquid languor spoils.” Her time in isolation has tarnished her view of nature. Melodically, the phrase diatonically emphasizes the key of F-sharp major. As the theme descends from C-sharp, one would expect the phrase to end on the tonic, F-sharp. Instead, Mackey chooses G-natural. The treatment of the word *spoils* is reminiscent of the word *sours* in measure 25. The chromatic alteration emphasizes Kalypso’s growing despair for pleasantries that she once enjoyed as illustrated in see Figure 8.

Movement II: “Raveling”

Homer presents Odysseus as an imprisoned hero in *The Odyssey*. Jaques’ contrasting view highlights that Odysseus did not make any valiant attempt to return home to Ithaca to be with his wife. She shares:

While the myth says that Kalypso is keeping Odysseus prisoner and he wants to go home, there’s lots of evidence in the text that he’s not exactly hurrying even when he’s not having issues with enraging the gods and monsters. There is no question in the text that she takes him in when he is shipwrecked; she doesn’t capture him.³⁴

Jaques’ second poem, “Raveling,” presents the love affair between Kalypso and Odysseus as a mutual decision. The movement opens with Kalypso at her loom. During her seven years with Odysseus, she has been weaving a tapestry that symbolizes their story. In the program note, Jaques describes the tapestry, writing, “At one end, the luminous threads show the near-dead castaway washed ashore; nearby the nymph nurses him back to health. Flowers and fruit, ripe and radiant, tumble through images of the love they found together.”³⁵

“Raveling” is composed of two structural sections. Section A, spans measures 1-31 and dramatically presents a naive, hopeful, and love-struck Kalypso, retelling the story of her rescuing and falling in love with Odysseus. Section A is followed by a short interlude from measures 32 through 39. In Section B, measures 40-84, it becomes evident that Odysseus has expressed his desire to return home. The style and character of the

³⁴ Jaques, interview.

³⁵ Jaques, “Program Note.”

movement drastically turns to feelings of loss, regret, and anger. Mackey sets Jaques' second poem to music, using the line breaks, rhyme schemes, and parallelism—the use of similar grammatical conventions in independent clauses, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. *Songs from the End of the World*, Movement II, Form, Rhyme Scheme, and Melodic Theme Analysis

Line	" <i>Raveling</i> " by A. E. Jaques	Large-Scale Narrative Form	Musical Form	Rhyme Scheme	Melodic Themes
1	When I found you, or you found me, (8)	A	Verse 1 (mm.1-10)	a	a
2	both of us lost in the endless sea, (9)			a	b
3	then I healed you, and you healed me, (8)			a	a
4	two tattered souls stitched up lovingly. (9)			a	b
5	Seven summers of sun, (6)		Verse 2 (mm. 11-20)	a	a
6	seven winters of wanting, (7)			b	a ¹
7	seven springtimes as new as the dawn, (9)			c	a ²
8	seven autumns of falling (7)			b	a ³
9	deeper into your breath— (6)			d	c
10	seven years you are warp to my weft. (9)			d	a ⁴
11	Only now is this paradise paradise. (11)		Chorus (mm.21-30)	a	d
12	Only now is this living a life. (9)			a	d
13	Only now is there greenness and sweetness and air - (12)			b	d
14	lost and found ones, we two, what a pair. (9)			b	e

Table 3. Continued

15	As I lose you, and so lose me, (8)	B	Verse 3 (mm. 40-49)	a	a ⁵
16	finding I never had what I thought was			a	b ¹
17	free— (11)			b	a ⁶
18	how can you take what once you gave? (8)		b	b ²	
	I asked only love for the life I saved. (11)				
19	Seven years you were warp to my weft. (9)		Transitional Bridge (mm.50-68)	a	d
20	Seven years, yet you leave me bereft. (8)			a	d ¹
21	Seven years and I have nothing left. (9)			a	d ²
22	You and I, we were bound up together. (9)			b	e
23	You and I wove a heaven from scars. (9)	c		e ¹	
24	You and I turned the darkness and lostness and pain (12)	d		e ²	
25	into something worth living again. (9)	e	e ³		
26	Only you made this paradise paradise; (11)	Chorus (mm. 71-84)	a	d	
27	Only you made this living a life; (9)		a	d	
28	Only you gave me greenness and sweetness and air (12)		b	d	
29	All unraveling now, past repair. (9)		b	e	

In the two opening measures of Movement II, Mackey employs an eight-note theme that possesses an antecedent-consequent character to emphasize Jaques' use of parallelism, as illustrated in Figure 9.



Figure 9. *Songs from the End of the World*, Theme “a” Antecedent-Consequent Sub-Phrase
 Movement II, mm. 1-2.
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In these opening measures, Kalypso expresses her assumption that Odysseus' perspective parallels her own as she sings, “When I found you or you found me” The second half of the phrase, theme “b,” serves as the consequent phrase of theme “a,” as shown Figure 10.



Figure 10. *Songs from the End of the World*, Theme “b” Consequent Phrase
 Movement II, mm. 3-5.
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A sixteenth-note oscillating accompaniment supports both themes, as illustrated in Figure 11, that is reminiscent of Franz Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, Op. 2, D. 118 (1814). Like Schubert's use of the D-minor sixteenth-note motive at the beginning of his lied,

Mackey uses this motivic idea to mimic the repetitive motion of Kalypso working at her loom.



Figure 11. *Songs from the End of the World*, Spinning Wheel Accompaniment, Movement II, m. 1.

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There are two verses in Section A. The first verse spans measures 1-10. The second verse begins after a short, one-measure vocalise interlude in measure 12. Mackey characterizes this text with a metric variation of melodic theme “a,” incorporating 7/8 meter. In this verse, Kalypso sings:

Seven summers of sun,
Seven winters of wanting,
Seven springtimes as new as the dawn
Seven autumns of falling
Deeper into your breath—
Seven years you are warp to my weft.³⁶

The repetition in this verse emphasizes the significance to the drama of the seven-year affair. A sense of strength, assurance, and confidence can be heard for the first time in the character’s soliloquy as she sings a stately chorus at measure 22, bearing the words,

³⁶ Mackey, *Songs from the End of the World*.

“Only you made this paradise paradise.”³⁷ Mackey musically foreshadows the narrative elements of Section B through a progressively dissonant interlude in measures 30 through 39, signaling Odysseus’ desire to return home. The opening sixteenth-note accompaniment returns as an interlude to Section B. In measure 32, an abrupt modulation occurs as the piece regresses from F Lydian to E Lydian. This modulation occurs as the oboe sustains an E-natural and the flute moves from the E-natural, an octave above, to D-sharp, resulting in a major seventh. Though this interval is a primary sonority of the entire piece; in this tessitura, the dissonance is very prominent and striking, thus, emphasizing the mood.

The third verse begins at measure 40 with Kalypso confirming the change of mood introduced in the interlude, as she sings, “As I lose you, and so lose me, finding I never had what I thought was free.”³⁸ As Kalypso’s emotion heightens, the piece becomes more rhythmically active, harmonically unstable, and densely scored. Mackey orchestrates Section B with chromatic alterations and dissonant harmonies using thematic material from Section A. In the second section, the variations on themes support Kalypso’s spiraling emotions. Each phrase climbs chromatically, as resentment builds and Kalypso repeats the words *seven years*. At the climax of the movement, theme “e” is introduced at measure 58, bearing similar rhythmic and intervallic relationships to the chorus, as shown in Figure 12.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.



Figure 12. *Songs from the End of the World*, Theme "e,"
 Movement II, mm. 58-61.
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A dramatic pause occurs after Kalypso verbalizes her anguish as she sings, “You and I turned the darkness and lostness and pain.”³⁹ A personal lament follows this moment as the chorus is repeated over a sparse accompaniment at measure 71. The movement ends as the motoric energy from the loom, represented by the sixteenth-note motive from the movement’s opening slows to stasis. The tapestry, which was once a symbol of their love, has unraveled.

Movement III: “At sea”

To conclude the work, Mackey thought that it was essential to include his previously conceived music from the second movement of *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band*. Jaques wrote the third poem, “At sea,” in free verse with several lines using couplet rhyme scheme and repetition. Jaques created the text for this emotional end to the story in only three days. Jaques comments:

I was very aware of that movement as the climax for the drama, so I was thinking about opera and even musical theater, and the way that music is used to convey the heights of emotion in those forms. This last movement presents a unique emotional juxtaposition where loss is often the most powerful site of love. It is in

³⁹ Ibid.

this conclusion that I believe the story transcends a simple tale of immortal beings and mythic heroes and moves into the realm of fundamental truths of the human condition: love, longing, pain, and loss.⁴⁰

These major themes resonated with Jaques, and she explores them through Kalypso’s inner thoughts and emotions. Jaques continues:

Even though she has the power to force Odysseus to stay, Kalypso knows that doing that would still be the death of what she cares about and would in an important way be incompatible with the love that she so values. So she makes the choice that likewise costs her the hope of companionship, but in a way that proves the reality of her love.⁴¹

Jaques used the B-flat solo clarinet melody from *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band* as the foundation for the text of the third movement.

The third movement contains six large-scale formal sections and concludes with a coda, ABCABD (coda), as outlined in Table 4. The arrows in Table 4 indicate where Mackey altered stanzas to make longer melodic lines.

Table 4. *Songs from the End of the World*, Movement III, Form and Motivic Theme Analysis

Large-Scale Form	“At sea” by A. E. Jaques	Melodic Motives
A (mm. 1-10) Key: F major	Again, alone, Again forever. Solitude and I, once more together.	a a ¹ b
	And now – forget? Or yet remember? If I hold fast will I still surrender?	a a ¹ b

⁴⁰ Jaques, interview.

⁴¹ Ibid.

<p>B (mm. 11-30) Key: G-flat major</p>	<p>Shall I cling to memory, and polish thoughts like bright stones? But every touch erodes them; to love their light is to lose it. Remembering, Dismembering.</p> <p>Forget then. Forget him.</p>	<p>c, d c¹, d¹ e, e¹ e¹ e²</p>
<p>C (mm. 34-72) Key: E minor</p> <p>F minor</p> <p>Whole Tone 0</p> <p>G-flat major</p>	<p>Forget him. ← Forget, yes. →</p> <p>And cast away the empty oyster shell. Tide take him. But watch – who knows what waters wash home?</p> <p>Forget him? ← Forget, how? →</p> <p>This cruel moon brings ghosts in waves now, to haunt me. Too-cruel moon brings ghost to haunt me, to taunt me now. This tide that gives and takes and tolls the time, the time, the long and longing time alone.</p> <p>I can't forget; I can't remember. The loss remains, so hard, so tender.</p>	<p>f f¹ g f² h f f¹ g, f² g¹, h g i a¹ a b</p>
<p>A' (mm. 72-82) Key: A-flat major</p>	<p>And all my rhymes and ravings, my words the wailing of a lost one, storm-tossed one.</p>	<p>c₂ d³</p>
<p>B' (mm. 82-94) Key: E-flat minor</p>	<p>The sea won't hear. The sky won't care. No different to them, my silence or song.</p>	<p>j j¹ k k²</p>
<p>D (mm.98-111)</p> <p>Key: B-flat major</p>	<p>No words, so. Unheard, so.</p> <p>Why go on then? Why cry this this silence?</p> <p>Alone. Alone.</p> <p>All cast away now. Just ghost to stay now. Alone, all lost at sea.</p>	<p>e¹ e² l l¹ l³ l³ m m m¹</p>

The first motive, labeled “a,” begins as a recitative, with Kalypso singing, “Again, alone,” emerging from silence. Mackey slowly adds accompaniment, beginning with harp in measure 3 followed by all keyboard percussion in measure 5 with double bass. The two opening phrases end on the V chord of the relative minor of B-flat major, D-major. Instead of continuing in G-minor as expected, the singer leaps a major seventh, thus returning to the tonic, B-flat major, as illustrated in Figure 13.

♩ = 52, *rubato*

Soprano Solo

ppp *p* *pp* **b.**

A - gain, a - lone. A - gain, for - ev - er. Sol - i - tude and I, once more, to -

♩ = 52, *rubato* **a.** *Harp* **a¹.**

Piano

pp *p*

1/2 *Red.*

6

S. Solo

p *mp*

geth - er. And now for - get? Or yet re - mem - ber? If I hold fast will I still sur - ren - der? Shall

Pno.

pp

Red. norm. *Red.*

Figure 13. *Songs from the End of the World*, Opening Phrases, Movement III, mm. 1-10.

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Section B is signaled at measure 11 by an abrupt modulation to G-flat major; Kalypso uses a metaphor to compare her affair with Odysseus to precious stones, objects worth affection. Her want for touch returns, and she sings, “Shall I cling to memory, and polish thoughts like bright stones? But every touch erodes them; to love their light is to lose it. Remembering. Dismembering.”⁴² The highest pitch for the vocalist thus far in the piece occurs on the word “love,” as Kalypso emotes with a broken heart. The section ends with two declarations, “Forget then. Forget him.”⁴³ These two statements were sparsely accompanied as Kalypso considers again turning her back on her affair with Odysseus.

Section C emerges at measure 30. A syncopated accompaniment, reminiscent of the first movement, returns. Jaques uses chromatically dissonant motives labeled “f,” f^l, and “g” to portray Kalypso’s desire to forget what is behind and start anew. Theme “f” outlines the key of F-sharp major with sustained and syncopated accompaniment in E-minor. Theme “g” similarly creates dissonance as the melody includes B-flat over B major sonorities. Mackey’s use of chromaticism adds a sourness and bitterness to the melodic line via dissonant minor seconds, reminiscent of the opening motive in the first measure of Movement I, as shown in Figure 14.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

18

33

S. Solo

For - get him. For - get, yes. And

Pno.

(bass pizz)

pp

38

S. Solo

cast a - way the emp - ty oy - ster shell.

Pno.

p

pp

p

Figure 14. *Songs from the End of the World* Motives “f,” “f¹,” and “g,”
 Movement III, mm. 33-37.
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The whole tone accompaniment used in measure 52 of Movement I returns at measure 68 of Movement III as Kalypso sings, “The time, the time, the long and longing time alone,”⁴⁴ labeled motive “i” and shown in Figure 15.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

68
 takes and tolls the time, the time, the long and long - ing time a -

mf
p
pp

Figure 15. *Songs from the End of the World*, Motive "i,"
 Movement III, mm. 68-71.
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A variation of Section A returns metrically altered, creating a natural *rubato* using 7/8 meter. Mackey builds the momentum of the piece again, using the key of G-flat as the melody approaches the climax of the movement as Kalypso's sings, "And all my rhymes are ravings my words the wailing of a lost one, storm-tossed one."⁴⁵ The accompaniment swells similarly to measures 62 through 68 in the first movement.

The movement ends with a coda in G-flat major, at measure 112, as Kalypso asks herself the following statements: "Why go on then?"; "Why cry this silence"; "Alone."⁴⁶ The keyboard instruments are sparsely orchestrated to accompany these poignant thoughts. Trails of the opening "a" motive of Movement III can be heard as a countermelody over the soprano in measures 115-124. The movement ends as Kalypso, watching Odysseus sail off, sings these lines, "All cast away now. Just ghosts to stay now. Alone all at sea."

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The opening “a” motive of Movement III echoes several times in these final measures. As the themes trail off, the English horn plays the opening motive from Movement III in measure 122, followed by oboe and flute as a duet. The lilting accompaniment from Movement I appears on the word *sea*, slowing to a sustained G-flat major 13 chord that diminishes to silence and the end of the piece.

CHAPTER IV

PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Mackey's *Songs from the End of the World* presents unique challenges for the soloist, instrumentalists, and the conductor. This chapter presents a discussion of the implications for performance by the vocalist and conductor, with musical best practices interspersed.

Technical Considerations

Traditional *bel canto* singing is necessary for the efficient execution of the vocal requirements of this work. The soprano must have a range from C-sharp₄ to C₆. The soprano is most frequently scored in the middle register for clarity of the text. There are a few moments, such as measures 42 through 50 of Movement I, where the soloist sings in a considerably high range that requires negotiating articulation and pitch. One of the recurring musical challenges for the soloist is the ability to sing melodies with dissonant leaps or pitches that conflict with prominent instrumental voices in the accompaniment. *Bel canto* technique will provide the skill necessary to inform phrasing, diction, use of vibrato, and facility in all areas of the voice as required.

With very few periods of rest for the soprano, pacing for phrasing, swallowing, and the amount of breath support utilized will guide many performance decisions. *Bel canto* training will aid the musical and muscle memory required to comfortably sing

these intervals accurately. Different soloists will require different phrasing and pacing. Each soloist will have unique needs that will affect tempi and the amount of *rubato* included in the final performance.

As a result of the amount of *tutti* playing throughout the piece, Mackey and Geraldini decided that the soloist would be amplified to provide clarity and prominence of the vocal timbre against the wind forces. Much care was taken to preserve the wide range of dynamics required in the piece and to maintain the clarity of the vocalist's tone while using amplification.⁴⁷

The composer's use of octave unisons and dissonant intervals in the accompaniment presents challenges to the ensemble's ability to maintain the integrity of intonation. Such moments will require tuning out of time to aid the ensemble in the process of negotiating pitch. During the premiere performance rehearsals and the creation of the reference recording process, Geraldini decided to tune the harp to A=442 to compensate for the fixed A=442 intonation of the vibraphone. These two instruments often play together throughout the piece, thus requiring this unique adjustment. The rest of the ensemble remained at a standard tuning of A=440.

Stylistic Considerations

Songs from the End of the World presents a dramatic stylistic contrast between the sustained, lyrical outer movements and the first half of the middle movement. A *legato-cantabile* style is appropriate to support the soloist throughout the piece. In general, the

⁴⁷ Ibid.

accompaniment functions to support the vocalist, save a few moments where the accompaniment becomes pronounced dramatically. There are times that the melody and the accompaniment engage in dialogue with the soloist as in measures 10-11 in Movement I and the woodwind countermelodies in Movement II. In these moments, instrumentalists should play in a more *espressivo* style.

The second movement must be played with a lighter style. Mackey accommodates this need by scoring the accompaniment with few interjections by the upper winds in dialogue with the soprano. Throughout this song, the sixteenth-note ostinato should remain light with the keyboard percussion and harp supporting the melody.

For the soloist, theatrical experience benefits the characterization of Kalypso's emotions throughout the piece. For example, Kesselman suggests making clear decisions to use full vibrato at emotional heights or straight-tone singing to add tension and angst to the text. Concerning the first movement, Kesselman shares:

I put myself on an island, and I see the vastness around me, a picturesque metaphor for Kalypso herself. This piece places the audience in position to experience this journey with her, a truly vulnerable location in her psyche. The introduction establishes the repetition of her day to day life—beauty living in paradise that is emotionally insufficient. The minor seconds of the opening hint at conflict with this beauty, she wakes, and the song begins. You must know the critical landmarks of the piece. “Where is this character?” “What do they know?” “What do they not know?” You can't be in a place that the character doesn't know.⁴⁸

To portray Kalypso's emotional response to these affections, Kesselman states:

⁴⁸ Lindsay Kesselman, interview by author, Winston-Salem, NC, April 10, 2017.

My goal with this piece is to try to be as authentic, genuine, and vulnerable with the text. Through the poetry and the music, I strive to provide a cathartic experience as this character expresses deep emotions of love, loss, and even anger, resulting in feelings of empathy for the audience. Without this connection—this emotive investment, Kalypso is just a bland character for classical literature.⁴⁹

The change of emotional character between Movement I and II presents a difficult transition. In Movement I, Kalypso's loneliness is palpable. The *legato* style written by Mackey portrays the weight of her emotions. For Movement II, Mackey employs a buoyant articulation and style to convey Kalypso's excitement in contrast to the *legato* articulation of the first movement. The character of the piece changes, and, thus, the soloist's emotions must change also in the eight-bar interlude between measures 32 and 39. Slowly, Kalypso's emotions change as she processes Odysseus' desire to leave. Kalypso remembers the horror of being alone, leading to feelings of abandonment, anger, and hurt. These gradual changes must all be perceived by the audience through color, timbre, articulation, tempo, structural harmonic changes, and theatrical characterization by the soloist.⁵⁰

The vocalist and the conductor work together to characterize the delivery of the text musically. Mackey's recently published piano reduction of the piece allows for the soloist and conductor to experiment with different stylistic and performance decisions before rehearsing with the ensemble. The conductor must possess the versatility to follow

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

and simultaneously accompany the vocalist. Geraldini offers the following comment about his preparation:

When preparing for this piece, I tried to take in as much meaning from the words that I could and find ways to incorporate those thoughts in the accompaniment under the singer. Studying the story allowed for the “threads” of the accompaniment and text to gain more meaning to characterize the instrumental music with the soloist.⁵¹

For additional context, both vocalist and conductor might consider reading chapters four through six of Homer’s *The Odyssey*. This reference reading may serve to enhance the conductor’s and vocalist’s comprehension of Mackey’s work.

Musical Elements

The opening motive in the first measure of Movement I, “A long time alone,” informs the melodic material in Movement I, a chromatic half-step, scored for solo B-flat clarinet. This motive in the accompaniment is a common thread throughout the entire piece, portraying the monotony of Kalypso’s life. Mackey also uses this motive to melodically create moments of tension or to emphasize specific words of the text. Throughout the entire piece, the opening chromatic motive is used in the form of regressions and large-scale key juxtapositions. In Movement II, the principal thematic material emerges out of the intervals of the F-Lydian tonality established by the accompanying sixteenth-note motive in measure one. The use of this tonality makes the first half of this movement emotionally bright, personifying Kalypso’s happiness.

⁵¹ Kevin Geraldini, interview by author, Eagle Lake, FL, December 18, 2017.

Mackey's use of the dissonant minor second interval between the fourth and fifth-scale degree of the Lydian scale is used to strengthen the change in mood in measures 30-84. In points of intense anger, Mackey sustains this sonority to emphasize the text musically.

For the final movement, the four-note motive in measures 1-3 used on the words "Again, alone" provides the motivic basis for the melodic themes. The motive appears in various rhythmic variations, most importantly in augmentation as the movement concludes, connecting Kalypso's return to sustained unhappiness. As in the previous movement, the chromatic nature of this theme provides Mackey the tools to use dissonant intervals to add emphasis to specific words.

An important characteristic of Mackey's compositional style is the prevalence of diatonic harmonies, with added dissonances for color. In the earlier stages of rehearsal, it may be necessary to isolate chords by first tuning the major or minor diatonic harmony and then adding the non-harmonic tones back into the texture. Dedicating time to this will allow musicians to negotiate similar harmonies in the second and third movements. Geraldini, states, "This process will allow the ensemble to become familiar with the harmonic language early in the rehearsal process. After the ensemble has experienced the harmonies, they will likely grow accustomed to the texture and adjust as needed."⁵²

The most challenging movement rhythmically is the second movement, "Raveling." Evenness of the sixteenth-note motive throughout the various meter changes to achieve ensemble cohesiveness and line is important. There are many areas where the

⁵² Ibid.

composite sixteenth-note rhythm is passed between two or three instruments while the harp plays the complete idea. This requires a strong sense of ensemble rhythm. Mackey has created the illusion of *rubato* metrically by using 3/8 and 7/8 bars at the ends of phrases and should not be compounded with the performer's interpretation.

Mackey is adamant about several performance directives in Movement II. At measure 21, the tempo is marked at 66 beats per minute. The *ritardando* marked on the third beat of the measure should decelerate somewhere below the 60 beats per minute tempo marking of the next section. Thus, it will take about two to three beats into measure 22 to achieve the 60 beats per minute tempo. The composer intends that this section not return to the previous tempo but instead assume a slower and more stately affect; this is important to the sense of resolve expressed in the text. As the motoric energy slows as marked in the last three measures of Movement II, it is important that the sixteenth-note motive of the harp slows incrementally, as shown in Figure 16. As the other instruments play derivatives of the motives in various hyper meters, the ensemble should not be overly concerned with rhythmic accuracy but with gestural effect. These motives should sound like evaporating echoes not mechanical iterations. Mackey and Geraldini both agree that these are approximations and do not need to be overly rhythmically calculated.⁵³

⁵³ Ibid.

Figure 16. *Songs from the End of the World*, Slowing Accompaniment Motive, Movement II, mm. 82-84.

By John Mackey. Copyright © 2015 by Osti Music Company
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When considering the third movement, “At sea,” both Mackey and Geraldini emphasize the importance of not performing this movement as one would the second movement of *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band*.⁵⁴ With the addition of text, the movement possesses a different quality than the original version. Decisions about tempo will vary in comparison. A pace that is too slow will make the text incoherent, the emotional energy laborious, and the physical demands overly difficult for the solo. Overall, the technical issues are not too significant for the collegiate or professional ensemble. Mackey’s detailed compositional choices allow for easy navigation of *Songs from the End of the World*, leaving room for interpretative ideas.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Clifford Towner, in his dissertation “An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band According to Specific Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit: A Second Update,” reevaluates criteria for qualifying a piece of music through a set of ten principles:

- (1) The composition has form— not ‘a form’ but form—and reflects a proper balance between repetition and contrast.
- (2) The composition reflects shape and design, and creates the impression of conscious choice and judicious arrangement on the part of the composer.
- (3) The composition reflects craftsmanship in orchestra, demonstrating a proper balance between transparent and *tutti* scoring, and also between solo and group colors.
- (4) The composition is sufficiently unpredictable to preclude an immediate grasp of its musical meaning.
- (5) The route through which the composition travels in initiating its musical tendencies and probable musical goals is not completely direct and obvious.
- (6) The composition is consistent in its quality throughout its length and in its various sections.
- (7) The composition is consistent in its style, reflecting a complete grasp of technical details, clearly conceived ideas, and avoids lapses into trivial, futile, or unsuitable passages.
- (8) The composition reflects ingenuity in its development, given the stylistic context in which it exists.
- (9) The composition is genuine in idiom and is not pretentious.
- (10) The composition reflects a musical validity which transcends factors of historical importance or factors of pedagogical usefulness.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Clifford Towner, “An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band According to Specific Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit: A Second Update” (DMA diss., University of Nebraska, 2007). See Jay Warren Gilbert, “An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band According to Specific Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit; A Replication and Update” (DMA diss., Northwestern University, 1993); Acton Ostling, Jr., “An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band According to Specific Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Iowa, 1978).

Mackey's *Songs from the End of the World* satisfies these criteria.

This piece possesses a discernable form, with points of continuity and contrast. The composer's decisions regarding this balance are derived from the text written by Jaques. As sections are introduced, repeated, and varied, the flow of the work progresses musically, paralleling the poetic structure that was crafted with the same values in mind. It is structurally clear that both Mackey and Jaques planned the formal contour of the entire work. The construction of the piece follows the storyline of *The Odyssey* from Kalypso's perspective.

Mackey's use of orchestration varies with transparent textures and *tutti* sonorities that musically depict the drama and events that occur within the story. The balance of these textures provides sustained aural interest throughout the work. After evaluating the function of the orchestration, it is clear when the accompaniment characterizes the narrative or depicts the scene.

Mackey's use of motives and repetition complement Jaques' poetry and the overall continuity of *Songs from the End of the World*. Furthermore, the use of repeated motivic ideas, such as the opening minor second motive, appears throughout the work, creating cohesiveness between the three movements. Though the true emotional magnitude of the work is expressed in all three movements, the individual movements could stand alone.

Lastly, Mackey convincingly uses the color of this unique ensemble—chamber winds, percussion, and solo voice—to embellish the varied emotional qualities of Jaques' imaginative point of view. Through her poetry, she adds emotional depth to Kalypso

beyond what Homer explored in *The Odyssey*. Jaques' poetry reveals themes of relationship, love, social cohesion, isolation, and misogyny.⁵⁶ These themes are popular social issues in modern society connecting with today's audiences. Mackey shared that this piece is uniquely significant as an artistic partnership between him and Jaques. Every piece that he writes is an intimate outpouring of his musical voice. However, this work especially represents a special place in his catalog, as it came from a vulnerable space emotionally.⁵⁷

College and professional ensembles will find this piece technically accessible and emotionally rewarding. With the arrangement of a grade-three adaptation of the second movement of *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band*, the thematic material has been made accessible to developing bands. The published piano reduction of this work allows for recital or solo performance, making *Songs from the End of the World* part of the modern solo soprano repertoire. Mackey shared that the possibility of a future orchestral version is being explored.⁵⁸

This study addresses the compositional development from the creation of the poetry, the setting of the text to music, and the premiere performance of *Songs from the End of the World*. The compiled research and analysis serve as a starting point for future study of Mackey's compositions. As this piece is only two years from its premiere, it may be premature to comment on the long-term impact of the work; however, with four

⁵⁶ Jaques, interview.

⁵⁷ Mackey, interview.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

collegiate performances and two recordings to date, this unique and challenging work for chamber winds, percussion, and soprano soloist has been well received by performers and audiences alike.

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APPENDIX A

PERMISSION FROM JOHN C. MACKEY

John C. Mackey
Osti Music
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January 17, 2018

Dear William,

Pursuant to your request, as said use is solely for educational purposes as a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, *a gratis* use is hereby granted; said rights are solely applicable to usage of the excerpts obtained from the pieces below in your dissertation titled: A Conductor's Analysis and Performance Guide for John Mackey's *Songs from the End of the World* (2015).



Please retain a copy of this letter as validation of said rights granted. With kind regards,

John Mackey
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APPENDIX B

TEXT FROM SONGS FROM THE END OF THE WORLD BY ABBY JAQUES

Text by A. E. Jaques

I. A long time alone

*Dawn draws her rose-red fingers soft across the sleeping sky.
Another day unmasked-for, light pinking flesh untouched.*

*Long ago I loved to watch the water wake
when first rays raced the waves.
Morning warm-born in a moment.*

*But the sweetest second sours in solitude.
Forever is a long time alone.*

*Summer murmurs memory of seasons sweet with cypress.
Seabirds basking idle as the fishes dare to doze.*

*I used to sing with the insects
answering sleet whirrup with trilling airs.
But that was years ago,
before the buzzing buried cicada sounds inside
to rattle in the cluttered attic of never-spoken thoughts.*

*Even lovely liquid languor spoils.
Forever is a long time alone.*

*Wade into the wine-dark sea and leave the lonely island;
let salt swamp tears.
Waters hold you for a while.*

*Skin gleams warm. Long-fallow flesh awakens
but the ocean's kiss consumes.
Soon there is no woman—only wave.*

*So the body brought back rushes out again,
tide and time-taken as all things are.
The sea is not a solace but a cell.
Forever is a long time alone.*

II. Raveling

*When I found you, or you found me,
both of us lost in the endless sea,
then I healed you, and you healed me,
two tattered souls stitched up lovingly.*

*Seven summers of sun,
seven winters of wanting,
seven springtimes as new as the dawn,
seven autumns of falling
deeper into your breath—
seven years you are warp to my weft.*

*Only now is this paradise paradise.
Only now is this living a life.
Only now is there greenness and sweetness and air—
lost and found ones, we two, what a pair.*

*As I lose you, and so lose me,
finding I never had what I thought was free—
how can you take what once you gave?
I asked only love for the life I saved.*

*Seven years you were warp to my weft.
Seven years, yet you leave me bereft.
Seven years and I have nothing left.*

*You and I, we were bound up together.
You and I wove a heaven from scars.
You and I turned the darkness and lostness and pain into something worth living again.*

*Only you made this paradise paradise;
Only you made this living a life;
Only you gave me greenness and sweetness and air—*

All unraveling now, past repair.

III. At sea

Again, alone.

Again, forever.

Solitude and I, once more, together.

And now—forget?

Or yet remember?

If I hold fast will I still surrender?

*Shall I cling to memory, and polish thoughts
like bright stones?*

*But every touch erodes them; to love their
light is to lose it.*

Remembering. Dismembering.

Forget, then.

Forget him.

Forget him.

Forget, yes.

And cast away the empty oyster shell.

Tide take him.

*But watch—who knows what waters wash
home?*

Forget him?

Forget, how?

*This cruel moon brings ghosts in waves now,
to haunt me.*

*Too-cruel moon brings ghosts to haunt me, to
taunt me now.*

*This tide that gives and takes and tolls the
time,*

the time, the long and longing time alone.

I can't forget;

I can't remember.

The loss remains, so hard, so tender.

*And all my rhymes are ravings,
my words the wailing of a lost one,
storm-tossed one.*

The sea won't hear.

The sky won't care.

No different to them,

my silence or song.

No words, so.

Unheard, so.

Why go on then?

Why cry this silence?

Alone.

Alone.

All cast away now.

Just ghosts to stay now.

Alone, all lost at sea.