


The Ice Blink  
Composition and Quotational Thought

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Every quotation—whether musical or not—has two distinct perspectives apart from that of the original passage. There is the side of the composer that uses a quotation, and there is the audience interpretation of that quotation. Each perspective has its own benefits in conceptualizing how the functions of music work.<sup>1</sup> For the composer, quotation becomes a powerful method for invention and participation within a style or a tradition of music. It can even create dialogue between multiple styles and motifs. With a musical quotation, a composer can say something about past music without words. Most importantly, one can use quotation as a lens to help create an original composition.

For the second perspective, the audience, quotation morphs into something more abstract. Whether or not a person recognizes something as quotation drastically changes its interpretation. Similar to how quotation for a composer may elaborate on music practices, the unfathomable number of ways an audience can understand quotation helps one expand on the nature of how people discern meaning in music. The analyses of these perspectives depend on a central idea—that quotation unfolds in the way music unfolds. Once the nature of quotation and its relationship to music becomes clear, we can dive into how one might use a lens of quotation to approach problems in composition and in music interpretation.

### **Quotation and its Relationship to Music**

In his essay “Quotation,” Donald Davidson attempts to parse where quotations separate themselves from the content in and around them in order to better understand how they function linguistically. One of his key findings in this search is that quotations do not create their own

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<sup>1</sup> Not the physics of sound, but the choice of sounds and their interpretations.

meanings; rather, “In quotation, what allows us to refer to a certain expression, which we may take to be an abstract shape, is the fact that we have before us on the page or in the air something that has that shape—a token, written or spoken.”<sup>2</sup> Essentially, quotations refer to their surrounding contexts that make them possible. Rather than being ideas which solely express themselves, quotes find expression in places where that expression already exists, or the possibility of it exists. Therefore, a quotation always gains its meaning—a meaning that includes but is not limited to its content—in the context that it appears. The importance of a quote is not inherent to itself; it lies in the place where the quote appears. For instance, whether one inserts illegitimate whale science into a scientific paper or in a sprawling fictional epic—as Melville does in *Moby Dick*—changes the interpretation of the fabricated data.<sup>3</sup> One is malpractice, and the other is a legitimate tool to build a fictional narrative.

In music, the significance of a note depends on where that note lies in relation to other notes, rhythms, and even lyrics. In the western classical system, we associate the note C, as being the tonic in the scale of C major. However, in the relative minor key of A minor, that C is the mediant—as it lies a minor third above the note A. That the functions of notes change relative to other notes, spreads across every single key in the western classical tonal system. It is a fundamental aspect of western music theory, and it is the building block of scales within it. The nature of the note C changes depending on how it refers to its surroundings. When a pianist presses one key of the piano, that single key immediately constructs the context in which the next pressed key appears in. Then those two keys together recreate and expand that context into

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<sup>2</sup> Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Essay no. 6, “Quotation,” Location 1191, Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup> Olsen-Smith, Steven. 2011. Melville’s copy of Thomas Beale’s “The natural history of the sperm whale and the composition of Moby-Dick,” 14.

one that provides a lens for the third note to appear in. This process goes on indefinitely.

Therefore, in music there is a trend of presentation/interaction (where one plays or hears a note), contextualization (where the note lies), and elaboration (how the note affects the context and how the context affects the note). This is exactly how quotations function.

Return briefly to the example of fake whale science in *Moby Dick*. Imagine there is a research paper on whales. If the author inserts a passage of fabricated science from Melville as evidence, then when a reader comes across this quotation, the very same trend which appears in music occurs. The reader discovers a presentation of data, contextualizes it within the paper, and then elaborates on what the data might mean within the context of the paper. Here arises perhaps the most important aspect of quotation. If the reader is not familiar with *Moby Dick*, and knows nothing of real whale science, then they may not have the ability to recognize that the paper contains fabricated evidence. On the other hand, if the reader knows *Moby Dick* well, or has an extensive understanding of whale science, they come to conclusions separate from the first reader *and* to each other. The person who recognizes Melville's prose, likely arrives at two conclusions: the author of the article is spreading misinformation, or the article is an ironic satire of whale science. For a whale scientist with no knowledge of *Moby Dick*, the latter conclusion is the most likely. However, a brilliant whale scientist with an outstanding comprehension of both whales and *Moby Dick* may arrive at an even more complex elaboration where the false evidence lies in direct opposition to a specific finding on whale science and implicates that source in its parody. On the opposite end of the spectrum, if one sits down and reads this imaginary paper aloud to a baby, the baby likely understands nothing, and might even cry.

All this points towards an unimaginable complexity in the contextualization of anything. Each person brings their own context. How somebody contextualizes the note C, is resolutely

dependent on the context of their entire life up to the moment that the note C sounds. There is no single “true” interpretation of any music, nor of any quotation that may occur within music. This matter becomes even more complex when one considers that notes have different timbres on different instruments and even between two or more of the same instruments (a guitar with an E string tuned one cent off the E string of a second guitar creates two different sounding E’s on the same type of instrument). A single note has infinite interpretations in presentation and in interaction. Any attempt to discover the “correct” meaning in a piece of music with even just twenty different notes is inane. This also holds true for a quotation in music—as for a musical quotation to appear as such, it must have multiple notes.

The difference between a literary quote and a musical quote lies within quotation marks or citations. If a person reads a quotation and has no knowledge of where it is from and who wrote it, they still recognize the passage as a quote if there are quotation marks and they have the contextual background to recognize quotation marks or citations. The same does not hold true for music. There are no clear quotation marks in music. Because of this, musical quotations do not always appear as quotations. Whether or not someone interprets a passage of music as quotational or not depends on their cultural background in the same way that a person—unfamiliar with the social and cultural implications of an imaginary individual, who, having just finished their meal, might lean back in their chair, smack their lips and announce an exuberant “mmm mmm mmm—” may not interpret such an action as bearing the quotational significance that the food was tasty. To a person who does not recognize the central theme of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, its quotation in the conclusion of the third movement of Charles Ives’s

*Concord Sonata*, “The Alcotts” bears no relationship to the source.<sup>4</sup> The same is true for a quotation appearing without the intention of one. It is at this point that we must look further into the role of quotation for the composer compared to the role of quotation for a listener.

### **Quotation as Method for the Composer**

Charles Ives’s music is a rich example of quotational methods in the lineage of western classical composition—partly because he composed “almost two hundred pieces of movements that incorporate music by other composers, spanning his entire career and representing more than a third of his output.”<sup>5</sup> Alongside the sheer number of references in his music, Ives also remains a prominent figure in the analysis of quotational practice because of the numerous methods of quotation that he employed. In *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the uses of Musical Borrowing*, Burkholder lists fourteen distinct forms of “borrowings” in Ives’s compositions.<sup>6</sup> Many of the methods that Burkholder lays out are in fact staples of western classical music—a fact which he recognizes early on.<sup>7</sup> Of the fourteen techniques that Burkholder establishes, I want to focus on one of them: Modeling.

Modeling is a straightforward mode of referential practice. Burkholder describes modeling as composing, “a work or section on an existing piece, assuming its structure, incorporating part of its melodic material, imitating its form or procedures, or using it as a model

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<sup>4</sup> Ives, *Second Piano Sonata “Concord Mas., 1840-60,”* “The Alcotts,” End of the second to last system and into the last system at the bottom of 57. [Due to an inconsistency in the placement of measure lines throughout the piece, there are no measure numbers. Therefore, I refer to the page number which a passage occurs instead of the measure number.]

<sup>5</sup> Burkholder, *All made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the uses of Musical Borrowing*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

in some other way.”<sup>8</sup> Under this definition, a massive amount of music in the western classical tradition uses modeling as one of the most fundamental approaches to craft a piece. Sonata form, Minuets, Symphonies, Marches, and Theme and Variations—just to name a few—all function on a basis of modeling. It is essential to any songwriter or composer that wishes to participate in a specific lineage of music.

Ratner describes an analogous concept in the European tradition—music that contains what he calls ‘Topics’. He defines a topic as, “a subject to be incorporated in a discourse. A topic can be a style, a type, a figure, a process or a plan of action.”<sup>9</sup> Ratner gives an example of a topic at play in the first movement of Mozart’s K. 515 String Quintet. He states that one third of measures in the piece contain passages rooted in what he calls the “musette style.”<sup>10</sup> Ratner also claims that Beethoven’s String Quartet in F major, op. 59, no 1, is another example of a composition that contains a large amount of material based on the same style.<sup>11</sup> See figures 1 and 2 for a visual comparison of the two pieces.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ratner, “Topical Content in Mozart’s Keyboard Sonatas,” 615.

<sup>10</sup> Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression Form and Style*, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Allegro.

Violino I.

Violino II. *p*

Viola I. *p*

Viola II. *p*

Violoncello. *f* *p*

Fig. 1. Mozart, String quintet in C major, K. 515, 1<sup>st</sup> Movement, measures 1-3.

Allegro.

Violino I.

Violino II. *p*

Viola. *p*

Violoncello. *mf e dolce.*

Fig. 2 Beethoven, String Quartet in F major, Op. 59, no. 1, 1<sup>st</sup> Movement, measures 1-4.

The similarities between the openings of these two pieces are immediately apparent, both visually in the score, and audibly in a performance or recording. The most striking correlations are the repeated eighth note figures, instrumentation, an absence of an upper voice, the same tempo, and there is a melodic gesture in the cello. Whether or not Beethoven borrowed this form from Mozart is irrelevant. What is important is that these passages are modeled on a similar idea. They reference something. What they reference, however, is not necessarily as clear as Ratner



claims. While it is entirely possible that the musette style is the source that Beethoven and Mozart modeled these pieces on, it is also just as likely that the idiosyncrasies of stringed instruments influenced them. This speaks towards an unavoidable problem in the analysis of reference in music. Without an undeniable relationship between a musical subject and its source of origin, there are no ‘true’ conclusions that one can make about the importance of reference to a composition. For this reason, Modeling becomes a more useful tool for composition and analysis, because it is a process which includes, but is not limited to, specific quotation. In passages where a specific reference goes unnoticed, the presence of a model is still apparent. Topics, on the other hand, rely on the recognition of literal borrowings. Just because one passage sounds like an older one, does not mean that the composer borrowed it. The converse is also true. A composition can sound entirely different from a previous work that it is closely modeled on. Charles Ives’s rendition of *Ich Grolle Nicht* demonstrates this.

During his time in school, Ives frequently composed music to texts already present in the music of previous composers.<sup>12</sup> One of these pieces is an adaptation of Heinrich Heine’s poem, *Ich Grolle Nicht* in Schumann’s Lied of the same name. The links between Schumann and Ives’s versions are undeniable and far more likely than any between Ives and the original poem. Ives’s interpretation contains the exact same alterations to the text that Schumann’s does.<sup>13</sup> Burkholder also notes that there are numerous rhythmic, melodic, and dynamic resemblances.<sup>14</sup> Despite this closeness in structure, Ives’s adaptation does not sound like Schumann’s. Schumann’s is bombastic and swift with a constant eighth note pulse that drives the music forward. Ives’s on the other hand is quieter, more harmonically diverse, slower, and has a level of uncertainty at

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<sup>12</sup> Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*, 27.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*.

times that the driving eighth note repetition of Schumann's doesn't achieve. Figures 3 and 4 are taken from the first four measures of each. Apart from the immediate observation that Schumann includes vocals straight from the first measure and Ives does not, pay close attention to measure no. 3 in Ives's. The first chord is essentially a G sharp major chord with a flatted fifth that then moves downwards into an E major chord with a major seventh. This sudden and distant modulation, paired with open chord voicings and the introduction of a dotted eighth sixteenth note figure in contrast to the rhythmic contour of the previous two measures, creates the affect of opening a chasm.

Fig. 3 Schumann, *Ich Grolle Nicht*, Measures 1-4

Fig. 4 Ives, *Ich Grolle Nicht*, Measures 1-4

Ives's *Ich Grolle Nicht* is a perfect example of the flexibility that modeling gives a composer—even when one writes music that closely references an earlier source. This comparison is also an excellent example of the complexity that modeling can operate within. Ives's reference—the Schumann rendition—has a reference of its own. Burkholder points out that there is an irony that exists in how the first lyrics of Schumann's composition relate to the style that they are sung. The lyrics, "I bear no grudge, although my heart may break): [are] defiant and ultimately hollow in the Schumann, as if the speaker were trying to conceal his breaking heart and wounded pride behind a laugh of triumph."<sup>16</sup> This type of irony is only possible through a practice of modeling. There is of course the obvious impediment that, in order to understand this irony, one must understand the lyrics as they are in German and understand how the style of piano accompaniment interacts with the text. Nonetheless, for the appropriate listener there is a dialogue between two separate works in the same manner that exists between two identical melodies over different harmonies. Altering the affect associated with a melody is also a form of quotational modeling that does not require reference to an outside source other than the natural functions of music which people understand in their respective contexts. Therefore, the practice of modeling based on reference or literal quotation to an outside source is simply an extension of compositional practices that already existed in works without the explicit presence of extrinsic material. This means that, in contexts where musical allusions go unnoticed, they still exist in a framework that fits music. Here is where the importance of an audience's perspective of quotation becomes clear.

### **Audience Interpretation of Quotation**

Whether or not the source of a reference becomes apparent in a composition is resolutely dependent on the audience. Burkholder makes the distinction that as Ives's compositional

methods evolved, modeling became more than just a technique for beginning a composition or creating one in a specific style and transformed into a process for Ives to write music that is about music.<sup>15</sup> A passage like the section in, “The Alcotts,” (figure 5) that appears with the first time signature in the piece, is more than just a mesh of references that sound good together. The presence of, “four different familiar tunes, including *Loch Lomond* and the *Wedding March* from *Lohengrin*,” is significant because of the dialogue those tunes open together in the context of the piece.<sup>16</sup>



**Fig. 5** Ives, “*Second Piano Sonata “Concord Mas., 1840-60,”* p. 56.

This passage bears a special significance due to its incorporation of the first time signature and the only motive in the entire movement that Ives repeats in full. When combined with Burkholder’s observation that, “Ives uses familiar style as a rhetorical device, knowing that the style will bring with it a wealth of emotional associations and remembered experiences,” this passage gains a new interpretation.<sup>17</sup> This section marks a place of unity and serenity. It is a statement on how the quoted tunes and the people associated with them form a stability despite their differences. One can argue that this short passage of music expresses a vision of America through a lens of music. However, there is an equally justifiable argument that this passage

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 268.

<sup>16</sup> Cowell, *Charles Ives and his Music*, 198.

<sup>17</sup> Burkholder, *All made of Tunes*, 268.

represents nothing more than itself in its context. This is because an audience that has no knowledge of the quoted music, Ives's quotational practices, or of the significance of the time signature, experiences the excerpt as being entirely original. It's also just as likely, that an audience will interpret their own imagined quotations that Ives never intended. Burkholder calls these imagined quotations "Phantom Allusions."<sup>18</sup> Each individual who listens to music brings with them their own context for which they depend on to understand music. Because of this, music has the incredible ability to transcend the intentions of the composer.

I would like to conclude with an impression of the problems that quotation can lead one to fall into. First, quotation—much like western music theory—can never replace the effectiveness of intuition. Intuition should always be the primary mode of creation for a composer. Quotation becomes a useful lens for composition when one becomes stuck in a difficult passage or needs an inspiration. It is a method for solving problems more than anything else. There are of course the obvious issues of Copyright infringement. If a composer uses quotation in the ways outlined above, there should be no issue of copyright, if they incorporate the quotation as an organic appendage to a much larger whole. Further, quotation is far more practical as a lens for creation than an aspect to be placed in a piece because of the relationship between musical inference and quotational understanding. The final major concern in the practice of quotation is one of self-evaluation. Just because a composer loves a piece of music, does not mean that it is a useful source to quote. If a beginning composer decides to quote a passage of Beethoven, they will probably find themselves stuck. Quotation makes it easy for amateur composers, such as myself, to fall into a trap of suddenly attempting to compose around a quote that surpasses their comprehension. A quotation should never be composed around. It is

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 81.

not the quotation which gives meaning to a passage, but the passage which gives meaning to a quotation.

### **Self-Reflection and Analysis**

This project is the most difficult creative undertaking I've ever attempted. It took months of hard work for me to reach the current state that *The Ice Blink* is in. On top of the effort that went into composing the music, I also spent a huge chunk of time researching and deciphering quotation. In the end, the effort that I put into understanding quotation had massive benefits both for the expansion of my compositional vocabulary and in understanding my own music. Because of this relationship, the intentionality of my musical choices deepened. In the following analysis and reflection of my own composition, *The Ice Blink*, I aim to demonstrate the fundamental role that modeling fulfilled.

### **Movement I: Flanders**

I consciously modeled the first movement on five subjects. The first, is the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914-17. The second, is a Johnny Collins rendition of the *Farewell Shanty*.<sup>19</sup> The third, is styles of harmony that evoke different phases in the western lineage of music. The fourth, is a representation of the natural world. Finally, the fifth, is the

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<sup>19</sup> Collins, *Farewell Shanty*, 1998.

idiosyncrasies of a woodwind quintet. Each of these models are then part of a larger more complex model.

The Trans-Antarctic Expedition, more famously known as the Endurance Expedition served as the main model for the narrative in both movements of the composition. In the first movement, it became an analytical framework that I structured the narrative around. The notions that I find most intriguing in the expedition, are the dying age of Heroic Polar Exploration and the conflict present in the relationship between ideals of British hegemonic grandeur and the crew—who risked their lives in order to appease the appetites of ego that English Royal Navy officers held in the utmost importance. I decided that the best way to illustrate this conflict was through a use of classical harmony, near-atonal harmony, and polyharmony.

There are three places where each of these categories are present. In measure 36, the bassoon part plays an almost clownish descending melody which transitions into a section largely built on a classical modulation. In the score there is a note which instructs the bassoonist to play naively. In measures 78-82, I used rolling-near atonal arpeggios—which shift between contrary and similar motion between the flute and Bass clarinet—paired with dissonant pedal tones in the Bassoon and French Horn. To me, this passage represented the cruel and inaccessible ocean hurling the crew of the expedition towards unavoidable danger. Finally, from the last beat of 107 until the end of the piece I used polyharmonies in a triumphant rhythmic contrapuntal texture that dissolves into a dissonance of a minor 2<sup>nd</sup> between the flute and Oboe. Originally, I intended to have this final statement of the main theme in a clear C major sound. However, at the advice of Professor Ofer Ben-Amots—whose genius in composition and in teaching I will forever value—I muddied the harmony in this section up. Importantly, I modeled all the music on these harmonies without the employment of any music theory. I did everything

by ear one voice at a time. This process created the overall conflict which I placed the main theme within.

I decided to use a sea Shanty for the main subject because I felt it represented the crew well. The shanty has three main variations. The first is a direct transcription of the original recording in C major that does not resolve. This then modulates through different keys built on the same melodic contour. During this section I introduce a rhythmic figure in the Oboe and Flute a major second apart from each other. In both instruments there is a leap upwards of a fifth from a tenuto into staccato articulation. I modeled this off the calls of Emperor Penguins. While listening to videos of the penguins I started to hear this tenuto/staccato pattern in all of them. There were a few cases where it sounded like the penguin's pitch rose a fifth, so I added the figure into my score. It interrupts the shanty before it can resolve in measure 10, and then eventually morphs into a descending chromatic pattern that leads into the next section in measures 22-32.

The second appearance of the sea shanty appears in measure 33 as a syncopated melody in the flute. I changed the durations of some of the notes in order to increase the syncopation. This, paired with a drone in the French Horn and the penguin motif, gave me the impression of a hopeful feeling towards the beginning of a journey. However, I included the naïve classical style harmony in this section as a way of subverting the predominantly major tone of this section. It then modulates to g minor and an extremely contrapuntal minor variation of the main theme occurs. This passage is built around different instruments passing along repeated motifs of the shanty against a new counter melody. This passage spirals out of control and arrives in the rolling ocean-like figure that I described earlier. The shanty's final appearance is in the conclusion that starts in measure 107. This conclusion is meant to be both triumphant and



uncertain at the same time, as a manifestation of the crew's understanding of an impending disaster and their refusal to give into circumstance. The final measures from 119 on are modeled on an image I had of the ship disappearing into the mist. The bass clarinet mimics the final cadence that precedes this section as a representation of the natural world mocking the sailors.

The instruments in the wind quintet lend themselves towards contrapuntal texture. This is because the players need to be able to breathe, and counterpoint disguises any breaks in an instrument if placed properly. The timbres of the five instruments are also unique from one another, so the collage of sounds that one can paint with counterpoint in a wind quintet is incredible. One of my greatest sources of inspiration for learning how to compose for the woodwind quintet is Samuel Barber's *Summer Music for Woodwind Quintet*. I took this piece with me from the beginning to the end. Whenever I found myself stuck, I listened to this piece. It took me weeks to understand even just a little bit of it, but it always encouraged me to never give up. Finally, I named the movement "Flanders," because of the words that Earnest Shackleton uses to start his personal account of the *Endurance* expedition. He writes, "To my comrades who fell in the white warfare of the south and on the red fields of France and Flanders."<sup>20</sup> I chose to base it off this title because I felt the thematic content of the piece related to the tragic reality of WWI and its pointless causes. WWI and the *Endurance Expedition* began the same year.

## **Movement II: The Unseasoned Visitor**

My process for modeling in this movement was much more intuitive than it was for the first movement. Rather than modeling the music on historical views and ironies that exist in the

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<sup>20</sup> Shackleton, *South*, First page after the introduction.

expedition, I instead chose to base it on a synesthetic model. It is simply a musical portrait of a sunset. I wrote the following passage as an introduction for the players to understand the piece:

On May 1, just before 2:00 pm, 1915, of the crew of the *Endurance*—now sealed into the frozen Antarctic Ocean—watched the sun set.<sup>21</sup> It did not rise for another four months. This movement paints a portrait of that scene. The bass clarinet and the bassoon both share a relationship to text. Each note in their respective phrases represents a word or syllable in a phrase. The bassoon calls out to the sailors with a question: “Are you Listening?” Then it follows this question with its own response: “I am setting.” Meanwhile, the bass clarinet repeats the latter phrase incessantly. The two instruments in this situation represent two conflicting sides of the sun. In the bassoon is the sympathetic. The sun cries its question to the sailors as if checking in on them before it leaves. The bass clarinet is cruel. It is a cruelty specific to nature. Unlike how a person may be cruel, there is no maliciousness in the clarinet’s phrase. It is simply indifferent to the sailors. It is an unrelenting reminder that the sun will disappear without fail. Importantly, the bass clarinet enters first. The follow-up precedes the question. This implies that these two voices called out in this way before the first measure. The sailors, bound towards four months of darkness, accept their reality, and listen to the calls. It’s not that the music was not there before; it’s that the sailors were not listening to it yet.

What follows is a chromatic descent passed between the instruments that illustrates the falling motion of the sun and the sinking feeling in the sailors. There is an interruption marked by a pedal tone in the horn and triplet figures in the flute and bass clarinet. This interruption is like an imagination of the future in the sailors’ minds. The sun is not yet set but freezing gusts of wind give the crew hints of what awaits them in the darkness. The thought engulfs the sailors completely for a moment before it disappears, and the sun calls out sympathetically one last time. The final measures are the realization of the imagined future. It swirls downwards in a mass of anxiety and then drops out suddenly.

This movement is synesthetic in multiple ways. There is a primary image of the sunset and its shifting colors as the sun falls away beyond the horizon. However, the same motifs that paint the color, motion, and feeling of the sun, also demonstrate the feelings of the sailors in my mind. There is also a relationship between the music and text. The opening phrase of the music has a direct relationship to text. It is not that they reference each other. They are each other. The entirety of the composition also exists in written form as a poem.<sup>22</sup>

I chose the title of this passage from another phrase that Shackleton writes in his account. He refers to the sun as an, “unseasoned visitor.”<sup>23</sup> I included the poem which pairs with this movement below. As a final note, I want to thank the Music Department for giving me the

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<sup>21</sup> Shackleton, *South*, 48.

<sup>22</sup> Memo given to performers.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

opportunity and resources to chase this project. Working on this capstone was and still is one of the most rewarding experiences of my life thus far. I have many years to go before I consider myself a fully-fledged composer, but the ability to take a first step in that direction means the world to me.

*Are you listening?  
I am setting.  
The frozen currents  
Soon shall weep  
Their quiet mourning.  
And then when coldest  
Icy howls beckon swirls  
Of midnight dirges  
From the stiff fingers  
Of a cackling dead  
The darkness swallows all.  
I am setting.  
Are you Listening?*

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