

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF MUSIC

“SUBSTITUTING A NEW ORDER”:
DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT, HENRY COWELL,
AND THE NETWORK OF ULTRA-MODERN COMPOSERS

By

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For Amy Marie, my loving wife of nine years, who has encouraged me to pursue my dreams and supported me unconditionally through many moments of uncertainty and trial. Her sacrifice, dedication, and love have made this adventure possible, meaningful, and fun.

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ABSTRACT

Documents in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Library of Congress, and Fogelman Library at the New School for Social Research demonstrate Henry Cowell's tireless efforts on behalf of dissonant counterpoint, a systematic approach to using dissonance based on subverting the conventional rules of counterpoint that has heretofore been exclusively attributed to Charles Seeger. From the mid 1910s to the mid 1960s Cowell – who is better known for developing extended techniques for the piano, promoting and publishing ultra-modern music, and teaching world music courses – was actively involved in the development and dissemination of dissonant counterpoint through his composing, writing, and teaching.

During his studies at the University of California, Berkeley from 1914 to 1917, Cowell participated in the early development of the technique as evidenced by exercises written in his personal notebook. From the late 1910s to the mid 1950s he discussed the method in his book *New Musical Resources*, several published articles, and program notes for three 1926 concerts in the United States and Europe. Cowell also shared dissonant counterpoint with his colleagues, many of whom used the technique in their compositions and also advocated on its behalf, including John J. Becker, Johanna Beyer, John Cage, Ruth Crawford, Vivian Fine, Lou Harrison, Wallingford Riegger, and Carl Ruggles, to name only a few. Cowell's teaching not only included private lessons but also extended to his college classes, which reflects a much wider dissemination of the compositional method than scholars have previously thought. Jeanette B. Holland's class notes from Cowell's 1951 "Advanced Music Theory" course at the New School provide further insight into dissonant counterpoint and Cowell's classroom teaching. Finally, Cowell used the technique in compositions that span nearly fifty years of his career and encompass a variety of genres.

In contrast to characterizations of the composer as an undisciplined bohemian, the picture of Cowell that emerges from these newly discovered archival documents reveals a systematic and tenacious theorist and composer, who valued tradition and advocated the practical application of new theoretical ideas. Additionally, dissonant counterpoint, which is often eclipsed in historical surveys of twentieth-century music by better-known compositional techniques such as Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone method, was in fact an essential tool for

American composers during the first half of the twentieth century and used in a variety of musical works.

CHAPTER 1

“THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP”: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT FOR DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT

For centuries historians have paid special attention to innovation. Within the discipline of music recognition of styles that were considered to be “new” dates back to the Middle Ages. The compositional practice codified by Philippe de Vitry in the fourteenth century was known as the *ars nova*, or the new art.¹ During the fifteenth century Johannes Tinctoris described the conditions surrounding new music in his treatise *Proportionale musices*. He observed:

. . . the musical ability of our time has undergone such an increase that it seems to be a new art . . . the foundation and origin is considered to have been among the English, of whom Dunstable stands out as leader, and to whom there were contemporaries in France, Dufay and Binchois . . .²

In the introduction to the *Fifth Book of Madrigals*, published in 1605, Claudio Monteverdi justified his dissonant contrapuntal style as a “second practice,” that differed from the “first practice” associated with Zarlino.³ During the late eighteenth century Haydn referred to his opus 33 String Quartets as “written in a new and special way.”⁴

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the cultural movement known as modernism produced new modes of thinking in the arts, sciences, and philosophy. In music the idea of modernism begins with the composers of the New German School, notably Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner, who claimed that the “music of the future” represented the next step in the historical progression of music. In an article in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* Liszt advocated for music to participate in the flow of history by casting off old styles and embracing new ones:

¹ Leon Plantinga, “Philippe de Vitry’s *Ars Nova*: A Translation,” *Journal of Music Theory* 5/2 (Winter 1961), 204-23.

² Albert Seay, “The *Proportionale Musices* of Johannes Tinctoris,” *Journal of Music Theory* 1/1 (March 1957), 27.

³ Claude V. Palisca, “The Artusi-Monteverdi Controversy,” in *The New Monteverdi Companion*, ed. by Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 151-52.

⁴ H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works, II: Haydn at Eszterháza, 1766-1790* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 454-55.

. . . art cannot escape the inevitable change common to all that time begets. Coexistent with that of mankind, its life principle, like the life principle of nature, does not remain for long in possession of the same forms, going from one to another in an eternal cycle, and driving man to create new forms in the same measure as he leaves faded and antiquated ones behind.⁵

Liszt affirmed that the future would solve the present arguments about new styles of music that critics accuse of violating traditional rules:

To this future is alone reserved the complete or partial acceptance of those violations of certain rules of art . . . The representatives of the developments to come will entertain a quite special respect for works exhibiting such enormous powers of conception and thought and will find themselves obliged to study them intensively . . .⁶

Around 1915 a number of intellectuals in America used the term “new” to differentiate developments in a variety of fields: “the new politics,” “the new woman,” “the new psychology,” “the new art,” and “the new theater.”⁷ However, there was more to modernism than the identification of something “new” as opposed to something “old.” The substance of modernism involved the recognition of the historical wave of progress and the desire to develop something that would represent the leading edge of that trajectory. Modernism encouraged divergent styles in a variety of disciplines including, painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, theater, and music, and led to the creation of a new artistic medium, film. The intellectual movement was also a transatlantic phenomenon and reflected an exchange of ideas between America and Western European countries.⁸ A detailed discussion of the different manifestations of modernist thinking within various disciplines is beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, modernism was certainly influential upon the broader cultural milieu in which Henry Cowell was working as a composer and music theorist.

⁵ Franz Liszt and Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, “Berlioz and His Harold Symphony,” trans. by Oliver Strunk, in *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Ruth A. Solie, vol. 6 of *Source Readings in Music History*, ed. by Leo Treitler (New York: Norton, 1998), 121.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁷ Adele Heller and Lois Rudnick, *1915, The Cultural Moment: The New Politics, The New Woman, The New Psychology, The New Art, and The New Theatre in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 1.

⁸ Malcolm Bradbury, “The Nonhomemade World: European and American Modernism,” in *Modernist Culture in America*, ed. by Daniel Joseph Singal (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991), 28.

In America musical modernism was established around 1915 in New York City through the musical activities of Leo Ornstein and the efforts of a network of his supporters, including Paul Rosenfeld, Waldo Frank, Claire Reis, and A. Walter Kramer.⁹ Modernist music continued to flourish in New York during the 1920s and 1930s with the support of patrons and the activities of self-organized composer groups and concert series. Regarding the different manifestations of modernism in music Carol Oja has stated,

Given the plurality and mobility of American culture, New York was ideally suited to host the kaleidoscope of musical styles identified as modernist—or as “new music” or “ultra-modernist.” The beauty of modernism was that it encompassed no dominating center or clear line of authority. It embraced many styles. Yet it stood for one basic principle: iconoclastic, irreverent innovation, sometimes irreconcilable with the historic traditions that preceded it.¹⁰

Dissonance played a central role in a number of modernist musical styles, but perhaps never more intentionally than in the specific compositional technique known as dissonant counterpoint, which displayed irreverent innovation by reversing the rules of traditional counterpoint in order to present a systematized theory of dissonance.

New Ways of Thinking about Music

By the end of the nineteenth century the innovations of many composers had stretched the tonal system to its breaking point. German composers influenced by the developments of Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner employed chromatic voice leading and harmonies without the support of functional root progressions. Their free use of chromaticism undermined the sense of stability in a given key area. Impressionist composers in France employed continuous parallel successions of tertian seventh and ninth chords, known as streaming or planing, and non-tertian harmonies built from perfect fourths. These techniques provided a colorful, sensual sound experience that did not employ traditional tonal language. In Russia Aleksandr Skryabin used non-tertian sonorities in his compositions, most notably his “mystic” chord.

⁹ Denise Von Glahn and Michael Broyles, “Musical Modernism before It Began: Leo Ornstein and a Case for Revisionist History,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 1/1 (February 2007), 29-55.

¹⁰ Carol Oja, *Making Music Modern* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4.

New ways of thinking about music resulted in the breakdown of the tonal system among particular circles and a variety of new compositional approaches. These included highly organized, systematic methods and those that completely eschewed system. Dissonant counterpoint was one of many techniques developed during the first half of the twentieth century. In its strictest, most orthodox form, the theory as codified by Henry Cowell and Charles Seeger in the mid 1910s and later by Ruth Crawford and Seeger from 1929 to 1931 comprised systematic instructions for composition based on the idea of reversing the rules of tonal counterpoint. For Cowell, Crawford, and other composers, however, the idea of subverting traditional contrapuntal practice was a mere starting point that led to varied, flexible applications of the guidelines associated with dissonant counterpoint.

Systematic compositional approaches can be found in the works of Arnold Schoenberg, Henry Cowell, and Paul Hindemith, among others. During the 1920s Schoenberg created the twelve-tone method in order to organize the compositional process of dissonant, atonal music.¹¹ He had already been freely employing dissonant sonorities in his music without resolving them to consonant chords, and his technique assumed the emancipation of dissonance from its relationship to consonance.¹² While dissonant counterpoint also provides organizing principles for composing dissonant music, it does so while maintaining the distinction between dissonance and consonance. The method depends upon the careful handling of consonance within a dissonant harmonic framework.

In addition to his work with dissonant counterpoint, the experimental composer Henry Cowell devised organized theories for the use of rhythm.¹³ He developed a complex rhythmic system that he called “scales of rhythms” based on the ratios of the overtone series.¹⁴ Cowell

¹¹ Schoenberg’s twelve-tone method is described in Arnold Schoenberg, “Composition with Twelve Tones,” in *Style and Idea* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1975), 214-45.

¹² O. W. Neighbor, “Arnold Schoenberg,” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Laura Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, accessed February 5, 2008. Since beginning my research, *Grove Music Online* has undergone various changes, including being subsumed into the *Oxford Music Online* database and changing editorship from Laura Macy to Deane Root. In this dissertation each citation for an article in *Grove Music Online* will reflect the appropriate information for the database relative to when the article was initially accessed.

¹³ Cowell’s theories are discussed in Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, ed. by David Nicholls (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 98-108.

also designed a systematic rhythmic technique based on dividing and subdividing a basic durational unit into equal parts, which yielded the following categories of durations: third-notes, fifth-notes, seventh-notes, ninth-notes, eleventh-notes, thirteenth-notes, and fifteenth-notes.¹⁵ The use of triplets, quintuplets, septuplets, and so forth can be heard in Chopin's piano compositions and was, of course, not "new" in the twentieth-century. Cowell, however, used this technique as a starting point to create an entire system of rhythmic relationships based on these durations. For each category Cowell divided the basic note value (i.e., the third-note or fifth-note, etc.) and based on further subdivisions created an entire series of durations for each original note value. In order to distinguish these series of durations in musical notation, Cowell assigned a different shaped note-head for each category.¹⁶

Paul Hindemith provides a third example of a composer who worked out a highly organized compositional method, which in his case was informed by the study of acoustics and music theory.¹⁷ Hindemith criticized traditional theories of harmony and counterpoint as "theories of historical style" and devised a new theory of tonal musical materials based on acoustical principles associated with the overtone series and combination tones.¹⁸ His systematic approach provided rules for the relationship between melodic and harmonic pitches based on tonal hierarchy and the ratios of the overtone series.

The works of Aleksandr Skryabin, Ferruccio Busoni, Luigi Russolo, Leo Ornstein, Charles Ives, and Dane Rudhyar reflected beliefs that questioned established systems and resulted in some cases in anti-formalist methods of composition. Skryabin's works integrate systematic with anti-formalist approaches. His philosophical ideas about music were influenced by mysticism and theosophy. Skryabin believed that his music inhabited a space that was not

¹⁵ Ibid., 45-66. The system of division and the requisite notational symbols are arranged in a chart on p. 58 of *New Musical Resources*.

¹⁶ In some collections of early American hymnody composers used different shapes for the note-heads to assist the performers in learning to sight-sing the repertoire. Cowell's choice to use different shaped note-heads for his rhythmic notation system may have been influenced by this earlier shape-note notational practice.

¹⁷ Giselher Schubert, "Paul Hindemith," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Laura Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, accessed February 5, 2008.

¹⁸ Ibid. Hindemith's theories can be found in Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition* (New York: Associated Musical Publishers, 1941).

part of “human physical reality”; it could transport the listener to this transcendent place.¹⁹ The musical materials in his works include the whole-tone and octatonic scales, Russian modal scales, and modal constructions based on the theories of Boleslav Yavorsky.²⁰ In several works written after 1908 Skryabin utilized a non-triadic sonority that he called the “mystic chord,” a specific arrangement of augmented, diminished, and perfect fourths (spelled, for example, c, f#, b-flat, e’, a’, d”).²¹

The composer, pianist, editor, and aesthete Ferruccio Busoni challenged the established conventions of musical composition and investigated the possibility of new materials.²² In the 1907 treatise *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music* Busoni urged composers to move beyond traditional laws of composition and devise their own new rules for each individual work.²³ He asserted, “The function of the creative artist consists in making laws, not in following laws ready made. He who follows such laws, ceases to be a creator. Creative power may be the more readily recognized, the more it shakes itself loose from tradition.”²⁴ In an effort to broaden the musical resources available to composers, Busoni advocated the creation of “one hundred and thirteen different scales” based on different placements of half and whole steps in a seven-note scale comprising, for example, the notes c, d-flat, e-flat, f-flat, g-flat, a-flat, b-flat.²⁵ In addition Busoni investigated the possibilities of microtonal divisions of the octave in order to create a series of scales related by third tones and sixth tones.²⁶

¹⁹ Jonathan Powell, “Alexsandr Skryabin,” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Laura Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, accessed February 5, 2008.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Antony Beaumont, “Ferruccio Busoni,” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Laura Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, accessed March 25, 2008.

²³ Ferruccio Busoni, *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*, in *Three Classics in the Aesthetic of Music* (New York: Dover, 1962). Originally published as Ferruccio Busoni, *Entwurf einer neuen Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Leipzig: Insel, 1916).

²⁴ Busoni, *Sketch of a New Esthetic*, in *Three Classics in the Aesthetic of Music*, 88.

²⁵ Ibid., 92-93.

²⁶ Ibid., 93-94.

Luigi Russolo, a futurist painter and composer, criticized time-honored musical materials and suggested a drastic solution for composers: the use of noise. Inspired by Francesco Balilla Pratella's radical treatise *Musica futurista*, Russolo published his own essay about the futurist aesthetic in music, *The Art of Noises: Futurist Manifesto*.²⁷ He dispensed with the concept of definite pitches, because in his opinion they were no longer an effective means of composition.²⁸ Instead he encouraged composers to use noises based on or actually made by machinery and everyday sounds in the city, both pleasant and unpleasant.²⁹ In order to test his theories about noise in musical works, Russolo collaborated with Ugo Piatti to construct instruments that produced noise, collectively known as *intonarumori* (noise intoners), which were used in concerts given in Milan, Genoa, London, and Paris.³⁰

The pianist and composer Leo Ornstein wrote dissonant musical works, but he eschewed intellectualism; his compositional approach was informed instead by “intuition, spontaneity, and a wariness of compositional theory.”³¹ He was trained as a pianist at Petrograd Conservatory and the Institute of Musical Arts in New York City, and by spring 1913 his recitals in the United States had established his reputation as a piano virtuoso of traditional repertoire.³² In 1914 and 1915 Ornstein added his own modernist solo piano works to his concert programs and quickly earned a reputation for his wild, new musical style.³³ As Vivian Perlis notes, “audiences were appalled but spellbound by his performances” and people labeled his compositions as “futurist,” “radical,” and “ultramodern.”³⁴ Michael Broyles and Denise Von Glahn observe that by using

²⁷ Flora Dennis, “Luigi Russolo,” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Laura Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, accessed March 11, 2008.

²⁸ Luigi Russolo, *The Art of Noises*, translated by Barclay Brown (New York: Pendragon Press, 1986), 23-30. Originally published as Luigi Russolo, *L'arte dei rumori: manifesto futurista* (Milan: n.p., 1913).

²⁹ Russolo, *The Art of Noises*, 23-30.

³⁰ Dennis, “Luigi Russolo,” in *Grove Music Online*.

³¹ Michael Broyles and Denise Von Glahn, *Leo Ornstein: Modernist Dilemmas, Personal Choices* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 230.

³² *Ibid.*, 59.

³³ Von Glahn and Broyles, “Musical Modernism before It Began,” 32.

³⁴ Vivian Perlis, “The Futurist Music of Leo Ornstein,” *Notes* 31/4 (June 1975), 735.

his own modernist works in his concerts, Ornstein exerted “full control of both their conception and their sounding outcome.”³⁵ His experimental compositions of the 1910s feature chromatic tone clusters, irregular rhythms, changing meters, sharply contrasting tempi and dynamics, and episodic formal structures.³⁶ While many writers of the time compared his techniques to those of European composers such as Skryabin, Schoenberg, or Strauss, Ornstein maintained that his music was original and not influenced by other composers.³⁷

Charles Ives was another early twentieth-century composer who experimented with dissonance in his musical works without adhering to any specific system. He first learned harmony and counterpoint from his father, George Ives, who had studied both those subjects and orchestration with Carl Foeppel in New York.³⁸ George encouraged Charles to experiment with established musical systems, and several of Charles’s early compositions reflect the playful collaboration between father and son, including “bitonal harmonizations of *London Bridge*, polytonal canons and fugues, and experiments with whole-tone pieces, triads in parallel motion and chromatic lines moving in contrary motion to create expanding or contracting wedges.”³⁹ Although Charles did study traditional composition methods with Horatio Parker at Yale University, the unconventional training that he received from his father led him to continue searching for new musical ideas and methods.⁴⁰ Charles Ives’s musical works employ such materials and techniques as quarter-tones, polyrhythm, free atonality, quotation of existing music, experiments in the spatial arrangement of instruments, and multiple ensembles playing in different keys and meters.⁴¹ Through Ives’s generous financial support of Cowell’s journal *New Music Quarterly*, which was published from 1927 to 1958, the two composers became close

³⁵ Broyles and Von Glahn, *Leo Ornstein*, 229.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 69, 231.

³⁷ Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 18.

³⁸ J. Peter Burkholder, “Charles Ives” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Laura Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, accessed February 7, 2008.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ives’s theories about music can be found in Charles Ives, *Essays before a Sonata and Other Writings* (New York: Norton, 1962).

⁴¹ Burkholder, “Charles Ives” in *Grove Music Online*.

professional associates, and although Ives did not use dissonant counterpoint in his musical works, his ideas eschewing the strict adherence to any specific compositional method would have been influential upon Cowell's flexible conception of dissonant counterpoint.

Dane Rudhyar, a composer and philosopher, espoused an anti-formalist approach to composition and associated dissonance with spirituality and the human soul.⁴² He believed that dissonant music expressed freedom, brotherhood, and democracy.⁴³ Rudhyar's musical theories were largely influenced by Asian religious philosophies and the tenets of theosophy espoused by Helena Blavatsky.⁴⁴ He was also interested in the ideas of the French philosopher Henri Bergson, who emphasized "faith in the power of intuition, a tendency to use evolution as a model for creativity, and an openness to deeper psychic states."⁴⁵ While Rudhyar did not prescribe a specific method of composition, his philosophical approach to dissonance influenced many composers who utilized dissonant counterpoint, including Cowell, Crawford, and Carl Ruggles.⁴⁶

Dissonant Counterpoint

Cowell undertook formal studies in music at the University of California, Berkeley from 1914 to 1917, during which time he and Seeger developed dissonant counterpoint. Cowell's personal notebook devoted to "dissonant governed counterpoint" and a single loose-leaf sheet with the heading "Exercizes [sic] for Seeger," are the only known manuscript evidence that documents the early development of dissonant counterpoint.⁴⁷ In the 1933 book *American Composers on American Music* Cowell reported that Seeger had written "Studies in single,

⁴² Carol Oja, "Dane Rudhyar's Vision of American Dissonance," *American Music* 17/2 (Summer 1999), 129. The article contains a list of Rudhyar's writings on pp. 142-43.

⁴³ Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 105. Rudhyar's theories on dissonance can be found in Dane Rudhyar, *Art as Release of Power: A Series of Seven Essays on the Philosophy of Art* (Carmel, CA: HAMSA, 1930).

⁴⁴ Carol Oja, "Dane Rudhyar," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Laura Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, accessed March 11, 2008.

⁴⁵ Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 101.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 111-52.

⁴⁷ Henry Cowell, Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook, Henry Cowell Papers, box 31 folder 4, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; Henry Cowell, "Exercizes [sic] for Seeger," Henry Cowell Papers, box 31 folder 5, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

unaccompanied melody and in two-line dissonant counterpoint.”⁴⁸ However, my consultation of the Charles Seeger Estate at the Library of Congress did not produce of any manuscripts in Seeger’s hand related to the early development of dissonant counterpoint.⁴⁹ In *Reminiscences of an American Musicologist* Seeger referred to a syllabus he had written for his course in dissonant counterpoint that was destroyed in a fire:

I had a syllabus for this course, but unfortunately, all copies were burned up in the big fire in Berkeley, which burned up all my records of the Berkeley period, for I had left them in a small house down on Euclid Avenue and the flames burned everything within blocks of it. Later on, in his studies abroad, Henry Cowell swears that he saw a copy on the desks of both Schoenberg and Hindemith. I know I sent copies to them, but that they were on the piano or desk of Schoenberg of Hindemith we have to leave to Henry Cowell.⁵⁰

David Nicholls has speculated that Seeger’s manuscripts related to the early development of dissonant counterpoint may have perished in the Berkeley fire of 1926, although it is not clear why Seeger would have left any important belongings in California. He was essentially fired from his job at Berkeley due to his pacifist political beliefs and moved back east to New York in October 1918.⁵¹ From the evidence that remains, it appears that Seeger composed one polyphonic work that used the technique, *The Letter* (1931), and one monophonic piece, *Psalm 137* (1923), which explores his idea of writing dissonant melody.⁵²

⁴⁸ Henry Cowell, ed., *American Composers on American Music* (New York: Ungar Publishing Co., 1933), 215.

⁴⁹ The Seeger archive did contain documents unrelated to dissonant counterpoint that dated from his years at Berkeley, including musical scores, his harmony text written with E.G. Stricklen titled *Harmonic Structure and Elementary Composition*, and an announcement in the *Harvard University Gazette* of Seeger’s 1916 lectures at Harvard.

⁵⁰ Charles Seeger, *Reminiscences of an American Musicologist* (Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles Oral History Project, 1972), 107.

⁵¹ David Nicholls, *American Experimental Music, 1890-1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 92; Ann Pescatello, *Charles Seeger: A Life in American Music* (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburg Press, 1992), 77. Pescatello noted that by 1917 many of Seeger’s friends and colleagues at Berkeley shunned him due to his outspoken opposition to American involvement in WWI. See Pescatello, *Charles Seeger*, 74. Seeger left for a sabbatical and never returned. He noted, “I jolly well was fired by the acting President of UC, Gayley . . . a properly chauvinistic Britisher.” See Pescatello, *Charles Seeger*, 80.

⁵² Charles Seeger, *The Letter* and *Psalm 137*, in *New Music Quarterly* 26/3 (New York: New Music Edition, 1954).

The only other surviving source that discusses the early development of the compositional method is Cowell's book *New Musical Resources*, which he began in 1916, completed around 1919, two years after his work with Seeger had ended, and published in 1930.⁵³ It offers a prose description of the method on pages 35-42 and one musical example of dissonant counterpoint on page 119, in the section devoted to tone-clusters.⁵⁴ The first typescript draft for *New Musical Resources*, housed in the Cowell Papers, includes an additional musical exercise on page 13(b) titled "Ex. 4. Stretto in dissonant counterpoint," which was not included in the published version of the book.⁵⁵

As Judith Tick clarified in her biography of Ruth Crawford, Charles Seeger left UC Berkeley in 1918 and abandoned his work with dissonant counterpoint.⁵⁶ My research has established that during the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s, however, Cowell continued to work on the method and disseminated it to other composers. It was not until 1929 that Seeger revisited the technique with Ruth Crawford, and this was at the insistence of Cowell, who had taught it to Crawford during the mid 1920s.⁵⁷ Crawford likely shared with Seeger what she had learned about dissonant counterpoint from Cowell. The specific collaborative efforts of Crawford and Seeger resulted in two documents, although only Seeger's name appears on either one: a brief article published in 1930 in *Modern Music* titled "On Dissonant Counterpoint" and the larger "Manual of Dissonant Counterpoint," the second part of the book *Tradition and Experiment in (the New) Music*, which was not published until 1994 by Seeger's biographer Ann

⁵³ David Nicholls, "Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources*," in Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, ed. by David Nicholls (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 154-55. Since *New Musical Resources* was finished around 1919, after Cowell's studies with Seeger at Berkeley and not published until 1930, its contents relevant to dissonant counterpoint will be discussed in Chapter 3.

⁵⁴ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 35-42, 119.

⁵⁵ Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, Typescript Draft #1, 13b, Henry Cowell Papers, box 141 folder 11, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

⁵⁶ Judith Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 116.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 116-18.

Pescatello.⁵⁸ These sources describe the technique after this later stage of development involving Crawford and Seeger.

Dissonant counterpoint represents a distinct American offering to the many twentieth-century compositional techniques. At the time of its initial stage of development in the mid 1910s American composers were striving to free themselves from European compositional models and develop a distinct American musical identity. During the nineteenth century American composers depended largely upon European models, although there were some who sought to cultivate an American musical style, notably Anthony Heinrich, Henry Fry, and George Bristow.⁵⁹ However, the common practice was for American-born composers to study in Europe and learn to emulate their musical traditions, which allowed them to gain acceptance upon their return to the United States.⁶⁰ In fact, John Sullivan Dwight advocated for the supremacy of a musical style based on Handel, Haydn, and Mozart, and he promulgated his ideas in *Dwight's Journal of Music* (1852-81).⁶¹

During the late nineteenth century some critics and composers had called for the establishment of an American musical style. In 1885 Frederick Grant Gleason wrote a review of Calixa Lavalley's recital of American piano music and noted "the time is at hand when the native artist will be granted equal rights with his brother from over the sea."⁶² During a visit to the United States Antonín Dvořák observed in 1893 that America did not have its own distinct

⁵⁸ See Charles Seeger, "On Dissonant Counterpoint" *Modern Music* 7/4 (1930), 25-31; Charles Seeger, "Tradition and Experiment in (the New) Music," in *Studies in Musicology II: 1929-1979*, ed. by Ann M. Pescatello (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 39-273. In an interview with Adelaide Tusler and Ann Briegleb, Seeger mentioned his book *Tradition and Experiment* and noted, "[it] has never been published and I hope never will be unless as a historical curiosity." See Seeger, *Reminiscences of an American Musicologist*, 209.

⁵⁹ Michael Broyles, "Art Music from 1860 to 1920," in *The Cambridge History of American Music*, ed. by David Nicholls (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 235.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 235-36.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁶² Frederick Grant Gleason, "American Music and Native Composers," *American Art Journal* 47/18 (1887), 261, 273, qtd. in Broyles, "Art Music from 1860 to 1920," 250.

compositional voice. He suggested that composers should develop a nationalistic musical style by using African-American spirituals and Native American songs.⁶³

Influenced by Dvořák's challenge and the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, which showcased Native American culture among its display of ethnic villages, by the turn of the century several composers had initiated an "Indianist" movement. Arthur Farwell, Henry Gilbert, and Charles Wakefield Cadman used Native American melodies and subject matter in their compositions.⁶⁴ It was in this cultural milieu that Seeger and Cowell developed dissonant counterpoint in the mid 1910s in the far western reaches of the United States near San Francisco, and Cowell disseminated the technique as he traveled east on concert tours. What better way to assert musical independence from Europe than by developing a compositional method based on subverting the traditional rules of counterpoint, a historically European, and more specifically, German, technique? Ironically, it could also be observed, however, that this "anti-European" counterpoint relies quite heavily on the European model whose guidelines it seeks to negate.

Perhaps motivated by nationalistic tendencies Cowell and Seeger sought to distance dissonant counterpoint from the other techniques used by European composers at the time. In *New Musical Resources* (1930) Cowell discussed specific ways in which Schoenberg's compositional approach differed from dissonant counterpoint, and asserted

Schönberg in his system does not formulate new polyphonic materials, but takes from ancient counterpoint devices which had become almost obsolete . . . and applies them to a twelve-tone scale in which each tone is independent.⁶⁵

In his 1930 article "On Dissonant Counterpoint" Seeger implied that the method solved some of the problems inherent in Schoenberg's compositional technique. He noted that dissonant counterpoint permitted the use consonant intervals, which "had to be prepared and resolved," and asserted,

⁶³ Antonín Dvořák, "Real Value of Negro Melodies," *New York Herald*, May 21, 1893, 28.

⁶⁴ Broyles, "Art Music from 1860 to 1920," 252-53.

⁶⁵ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 41.

The chief fault of the Schönberg school, as of all the others, seemed to lie not in the handling of dissonance, but of consonance. All went well as long as a thoroughly dissonant structure was maintained, but upon the first introduction of consonance, a feeling of disappointment, of defeat, frequently occurred. It was as if there were holes in the fabric.⁶⁶

In his 1954 article “Contemporary Musical Creation in Education” Cowell distinguished dissonant counterpoint from Hindemith’s compositional methods. He observed, “Dissonant counterpoint is a strict counterpoint; however, a free modern counterpoint based on recent harmonic functions and covering both consonance and dissonance is now taught by Hindemith.”⁶⁷

A Product of The “Ultra-Modern” Network

While Cowell, Seeger, and Crawford participated in the theoretical development of dissonant counterpoint, other American composers used the method in their musical works. Throughout his career Cowell cultivated a network of “ultra-modern” composers, as they referred to themselves, many of whom used the technique in compositions that were presented in concerts to contemporary audiences (see Appendix A).⁶⁸ Notable among them were Carl Ruggles, Ruth Crawford, John J. Becker, Vivian Fine, Wallingford Riegger, Johanna Beyer, and Lou Harrison, to name only a handful. The composers in the ultra-modern network likely talked about dissonant counterpoint and shared the idea with other colleagues. Johanna Beyer discussed her use of the technique in program notes for the Composers’ Forum Laboratory concerts held in 1936 and 1937; these were followed by a discussion of the compositions with the audience members. Crawford taught the practice to students in composition lessons. In a letter to Vivian Fine, Crawford asked, “Would you be intrigued by the idea of writing counterpoint, not in an idiom which you will never use, but in an idiom which seems to be your

⁶⁶ Seeger, “On Dissonant Counterpoint,” 26.

⁶⁷ Henry Cowell, “Contemporary Musical Creation in Education,” *Etude* 72/9 (September 1954), 11.

⁶⁸ While scholars use both spellings “ultramodern” and “ultra-modern,” I have chosen “ultra-modern” because Cowell used it in *New Music Quarterly*. See *New Music Quarterly* 1/1 (San Francisco: The New Music Society of California, 1927). The inside of the front cover reads, “NEW MUSIC affords a means of publication of ultra-modern works, and also insures their distribution among its subscribers.”

spontaneous mode of expression?”⁶⁹ Her comment suggests that she felt free to employ the technique in a way that was distinctly her own. As various composers employed the method in their own manner, they participated in its development, and their works provided a life for dissonant counterpoint. An extensive discussion of their music and involvement with the technique is beyond the scope of this study but will be the subject of future research.

While the technique was the product of the entire ultra-modern network of composers, my dissertation concentrates on Cowell’s efforts on its behalf. Previous scholarship has focused upon Charles Seeger as the sole inventor of the compositional practice.⁷⁰ Ownership of the idea does not belong exclusively to Seeger, however, because he worked on it during the mid 1910s with Cowell and later from 1929 to the 1930s with Ruth Crawford, who had in the intervening years worked with Cowell.⁷¹ Judith Tick and Nancy Rao have clarified Crawford’s hand in the

⁶⁹ Letter from Ruth Crawford to Vivian Fine, Nov. 7, 1929, quoted in Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 118.

⁷⁰ Based on the information available Seeger was credited with dissonant counterpoint in the following scholarly works: Joscelyn Godwin, “Notes,” in Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, ed. by Joscelyn Godwin (New York: Something Else Press, 1969); Daniel Schuyler Augustine, “Four Theories of Music in the United States, 1900-1950: Cowell, Yasser, Partch, Schillinger,” Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1979; Mark D. Nelson, “In Pursuit of Charles Seeger’s Heterophonic Ideal: Three Palindromic Works by Ruth Crawford,” *The Musical Quarterly* 72/4 (1986), 458-75; Matilda Gaume, “Ruth Crawford: A Promising Young Composer in New York, 1929-1930,” *American Music* 5/1 (Spring 1987), 74-84; Christopher Kennedy, “Experiments in American Dissonance,” *The Sonneck Society for American Music Bulletin* 17/3 (Fall 1991), 107-110; Margaret E. Thomas, “The String Quartet of Ruth Crawford: Analysis with a View Toward Charles Seeger’s Theory of Dissonant Counterpoint,” M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1991; Pescatello, *Charles Seeger: A Life in American Music*; Pescatello, ed., *Studies in Musicology II: 1929-1979*; Taylor Greer, *A Question of Balance: Charles Seeger’s Philosophy of Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Taylor Greer, “The Dynamics of Dissonance in Seeger’s Treatise and Crawford’s Quartet,” in *Understanding Charles Seeger, Pioneer in American Musicology*, ed. by Bell Yung and Helen Rees, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 13-28; Lyn Ellen Thornbald Burkett, “Tensile Involvement: Counterpoint and Composition in the Work of Seeger, Hindemith, and Krenek,” Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2001; Michael Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

⁷¹ It is beyond the scope of this study to determine who originated the idea of dissonant counterpoint. I am not claiming that Cowell invented the method or that he should have sole proprietary claim upon it. Despite the challenges to proving the origins of the practice, it is clear that Seeger did not develop dissonant counterpoint alone.

cultivation of the technique, although little work has yet been done to understand Cowell’s role.⁷² Evidence in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Library of Congress, and Fogelman Library at the New School for Social Research documents Cowell’s efforts on behalf of the technique from the mid 1910s to the mid 1960s that extended to his composing, publishing, and teaching. Table 1.1 contains a list of works by Cowell that use the technique. He discussed the method in his book, numerous articles, and concert programs in the United States and Europe. Cowell’s teaching of dissonant counterpoint not only included private composition lessons but also extended to his college classes, which reflects a much wider dissemination than previously thought by scholars. The chronological investigation of Cowell’s compositions, writings, and teaching materials undertaken in this dissertation demonstrates that his theoretical ideas about dissonant counterpoint became broader and more accommodating throughout his career. Additionally, in his musical works Cowell was not beholden to the guidelines for the technique as if they were absolute rules, but rather he pursued varied flexible applications of the compositional method.

Table 1.1. Henry Cowell’s Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1916	<i>Quartett Pedantic (String Quartet No. 1)</i> , L. 197
1916	<i>Polyphonicas Nos. 1 and 2</i> , L. 953
no date (c. 1916)	<i>Exercizes [sic] for Seeger</i>
1917	<i>Quartet Romantic</i> , L. 223
1917	<i>Wafting</i> , L. 353/5
1917	<i>What’s This? (First Encore to Dynamic Motion)</i> , L. 213/2
1917	<i>Time Table (Fifth Encore to Dynamic Motion)</i> , L. 213/6

⁷² Regarding Crawford see Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger* and Nancy Yunhwa Rao, “Partnership in Modern Music: Charles Seeger and Ruth Crawford, 1929-1931,” *American Music* 15/3 (1997), 325-80. Bruce Saylor, David Nicholls, Elliott Antokoletz, Joseph N. Straus, Judith Tick, Nancy Yunhwa Rao, and Carol Oja have already suggested that dissonant counterpoint involved the efforts of more than just Charles Seeger. See Bruce Saylor, “The Tempering of Henry Cowell’s Dissonant Counterpoint,” in *Essays on Modern Music*, vol. 2, ed. by Martin Brody (Boston: League of Composers-International Society for Contemporary Music, 1985), 3-12; Nicholls, *American Experimental Music*; Elliott Antokoletz, *Twentieth Century Music* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.); Joseph N. Straus, *The Music of Ruth Crawford Seeger* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*; Rao, “Partnership in Modern Music”; and Oja, *Making Music Modern*.

Table 1.1. (continued) Henry Cowell's Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1919	<i>Quartet Euphometric</i> , L. 283
1920	<i>Vestiges</i> , L. 305
1921	<i>Episode No. 3</i> , L. 324
1922	<i>Some Music</i> , L. 221a
1924	<i>Ensemble for String Quintet and Thunder-sticks</i> , L. 380
1924	<i>Trio: Four Combinations for Three Instruments</i> , L. 383
1924	<i>Two Movements (Pièce pour piano avec cordes)</i> , L. 389
1924	"Where She Lies," L. 400
1925	<i>A Composition for String Piano with Ensemble</i> , L. 406
1925	<i>Seven Paragraphs</i> , L. 408
1926?	<i>Carl's Birthday</i> , L. 425
1926	<i>Maestoso for Piano</i> , L. 429
1928	<i>Four Little Solos for String Quartet</i> , L. 438
1928	<i>Sinfonietta</i> , L. 443
1928	<i>The Fairy Bells</i> , L. 447
1928	<i>Movement for String Quartet (String Quartet No. 2)</i> , L. 450
1928	<i>Two Woofs</i> , L. 451
1928	<i>Polyphonica</i> , L. 458
1930	<i>Orchesterstück: Synchrony</i> , L. 464
1933	<i>Six Casual Developments for Clarinet and Piano</i> , L. 491
1934	<i>Suite for Woodwind Quintet</i> , L. 491b
1934	<i>Suite for Small Orchestra</i> , L. 499
1935	<i>Mosaic Quartet (String Quartet No. 3)</i> , L. 518
1936	<i>String Quartet No. 4: United Quartet</i> , L. 522
1939	<i>Ritournelle</i> , L. 563/2
1947	<i>Hymn, Choral and Fuguing Tune No. 8, for String Quartet</i> , L. 713
1948	<i>Invention for Sidney</i> , L. 718
1952	<i>Invention</i> , L. 780
1952	<i>Symphony No. 7 for Small Orchestra</i> , L. 776
1955-56	<i>Symphony No. 12</i> , L. 830
1956	<i>String Quartet No. 5</i> , L. 832
1958	<i>Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 12</i> , L. 850
1960	<i>Variations on Thirds for Two Violas and String Orchestra</i> , L. 882
1960	<i>Symphony No. 15: "Thesis"</i> , L. 887
1965	<i>Trio in Nine Short Movements</i> , L. 941

CHAPTER 2

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT: COWELL AND SEEGER AT BERKELEY, 1914-1917

Henry Cowell contributed to the early development of dissonant counterpoint while he studied at the University of California, Berkeley. During his work with Seeger, Cowell wrote guidelines for the method in a personal notebook and explored the technique in didactic contrapuntal exercises. He also used the technique in several musical compositions, notably *Polyphonicas Nos. 1 and 2* (1916), “Exercizes [sic] for Seeger” (n.d.), String Quartet No. 1 (1916), *Quartet Romantic* (1915-17), *Quartet Euphometric* (1916-19), and *Wafting* (1917).

The idea of Cowell’s working together with Seeger in a collaborative relationship is a complex issue for several reasons. First, Cowell came to Berkeley as a student to receive formal training in music and composition. He had performed concerts of his own works in the San Francisco Bay area, and several of his supporters, including Samuel Seward and Lewis Terman, created a fund for Cowell’s formal musical education.¹ His father took him to meet Seeger, who was impressed with Cowell’s compositional prowess and arranged for him to have “special student status” at the university.² Second, there were significant differences in their ages and formal education. Seeger was ten years older than Cowell, who was seventeen at the time they met in 1914. Seeger’s educational pedigree included a degree from Harvard University in 1908; Cowell had no formal education beyond the third grade, although he was self-educated and had read an impressive list of books on a variety of topics from literature to botany.³

Third, Seeger claimed that Cowell stole ideas from him. In 1940 Seeger wrote an article about Henry Cowell for the *Magazine of Art*, in which he claimed, “[Cowell] himself swiped many of his best (and worst) ‘ideas’ from me, and occasionally acknowledges it.”⁴ Seeger was

¹ David Nicholls, “Henry Cowell,” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Deane L. Root, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed October 6, 2009.

² Hicks, *Henry Cowell: Bohemian*, 67-68.

³ A list of some of the books that Cowell studied can be found in Clarissa Dixon Cowell, “Material for Biography,” *American Music* 27/1 (Spring 2009), 1-59.

⁴ Charles Seeger, “Henry Cowell,” *Magazine of Art* 33 (1940), 288.

bothered for years by his belief that Cowell was reluctant to give him credit. In a 1931 letter to Ruth Crawford, Seeger revealed, “Naturally I feel badly when Henry almost goes out of his way to omit my name from the list of those to whom he owes much of his stuff . . .”⁵ Just one year prior, in 1930, Seeger made an effort to distance “his” idea of dissonant counterpoint from Cowell’s in *Modern Music*, the journal of the League of Composers. In the article “On Dissonant Counterpoint” Seeger asserted, “as designating a particular type of technical procedure it is probable that the term ‘Dissonant Counterpoint’ was used for the first time about 1913.”⁶ He thus predated the technique to a year before Cowell’s arrival at Berkeley in the fall of 1914.

Fourth, biographer Michael Hicks posits that Cowell refused to acknowledge the ideas of other people who influenced his thinking in order to promote himself as the sole originator of new modernist ideas.⁷ In the introduction to *Henry Cowell, Bohemian* Hicks asserts:

Cowell’s reluctance to dwell on the ideological influence of his parents is symptomatic of his frequent failure to acknowledge to any degree how others shaped his techniques and opinions.⁸

Hicks suggests that, like many other twentieth-century composers, Cowell promoted himself as the original innovator of new ideas by intentionally isolating his accomplishments from the influence of other people within his network of associates. The author proposes that “behind such behavior is the truth that Cowell was always utterly dependent on artistic communities, either ones he inherited (like Carmel) or ones he constructed (like the New Music Society).”⁹ Hicks also argues that Cowell manufactured a deceptive autobiographical narrative in order to preserve a carefully manicured image of himself throughout history. Hicks notes, “the only thing certain about [Cowell] is how he wished to be remembered. In the end, both genius and genie,

⁵ Letter from Charles Seeger to Ruth Crawford, February 7, 1931, quoted in Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 154.

⁶ Seeger, “On Dissonant Counterpoint,” 25. This date differs from Seeger’s account in 1940: “I was in [1916] giving my first rather tentative course in dissonant counterpoint . . .” See Seeger, “Henry Cowell,” 289.

⁷ Hicks, *Henry Cowell: Bohemian*, 2-3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

he showed himself clever and powerful enough to grant that wish.”¹⁰ Regarding what Hicks refers to as the “legend of Henry Cowell, American composer,” he concludes,

It was a legend in which the dissonance between truth and image could linger forever unresolved. The Henry Cowell he presented to the world was not the progressivist whose ideas were firmly planted in California’s mystic soil, but a free spirit, *sui generis*, uninfluenced, capable of imagining new musical resources with no prompting outside of himself This Henry Cowell was not exploitative, whether of Ives or teenage boys, but was rather without guile and altruistic in all of his relationships. . . . This Cowell was not the bohemian boy who never grew up, but a professor, a pioneer, a scholar, and a patriot.¹¹

Hicks’s biography remains to date the most recent scholarship on Cowell’s early years. The author characterizes the composer as an undisciplined “bohemian boy,” who deliberately concealed his influences (and misdeeds) throughout his career. This reading invites other scholars to view Cowell as a thief of other people’s ideas rather than as an innovative composer and theorist.

Fifth, it is tempting to view the early twentieth-century Seeger through the lens of his current historical position as a prominent figure in musicological and ethnomusicological scholarship with all the clout that accompanies his name. In 1914 Seeger was virtually unknown, however, embarking on his first job as a university teacher and living on the west coast of the United States. He was appointed at Berkeley in 1912 following an unsuccessful conducting apprenticeship at the Cologne Municipal Opera.¹² Twenty years later, in 1934, when other musicologists were aware of Seeger’s administrative and scholarly work with the New York Musicological Society, he was not accepted into their inner circles. Seeger’s organization was disbanded in favor of forming a national society for musicology, and according to Seeger it was stipulated that he must “take a back seat” in the new American Musicological Society.¹³

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Pescatello, *Charles Seeger: A Life in American Music*, 41-42.

¹³ Seeger, *Reminiscences of an American Musicologist*, 224. See also pp. 223-26.

Cowell's Studies at Berkeley

Cowell undertook studies in music at the UC Berkeley, from 1914 to 1917.¹⁴ While it is difficult to pin down a precise timeline of his activities during these years, the information available illuminates the various influences on Cowell during his early training. He studied counterpoint with Wallace Sabin and harmony with Edward Griffith Stricklen.¹⁵

Regarding Cowell's study of counterpoint Seeger recounted the following in an interview with Andrea Olmstead in 1977:

[Wallace Sabin] . . . took Henry over for just the strict counterpoint. I could teach the freer counterpoint and so could my assistant Stricklen, which was then in vogue in Harvard where I had studied and as far as I could find out pretty much throughout the country. They didn't begin to study strict counterpoint until some years afterwards in American universities.¹⁶

In addition, Cowell met weekly with Seeger "to discuss issues in contemporary music."¹⁷

According to Seeger, he and Cowell agreed on a course of study that involved the "concurrent but entirely separate pursuit of free composition and academic disciplines."¹⁸ To this end, Seeger reported,

I arranged special status at the University of California where [Cowell] took courses in harmony and counterpoint under E. G. Stricklen, then on my staff. One afternoon a week was given to exploring the resources of twentieth-century music with me.¹⁹

According to Seeger, he offered a course in dissonant counterpoint in 1916, in which Cowell was an active participant, going so far as to develop his own system of dissonant counterpoint.

¹⁴ There are some different reports as to the dates, but the most recent scholarship cites 1914-1917. Nicholls, "Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources*," 153. See also Hicks, 80. Hicks points out that Cowell commenced his studies at Berkeley on September 15, 1914. Hicks, 68.

¹⁵ Nicholls, "Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources*," 153; Hicks, 68-69.

¹⁶ Charles Seeger, interview with Andrea Olmstead, July 7, 1977, 5-6, Henry Cowell Papers, box 81 folder 26, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

¹⁷ Nicholls, "Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources*," 153.

¹⁸ Seeger, "Henry Cowell," 288.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

I was in [1916] giving my first rather tentative course in dissonant counterpoint to a senior class. It apparently impelled Glen Haydon into a life of almost ultra-conservatism. But Cowell outstripped us all in quantity of work and went off on a tangent to develop a system of his own which differed from mine.²⁰

Seeger provided a detailed description of his experience teaching Cowell in a 1940 article for the *Magazine of Art*, from which we learn something of their student/teacher relationship. Seeger observed that “. . . [Cowell] became, by sixteen the most self-sure autodidact I ever met.”²¹ Further down the page Seeger noted,

The confirmed autodidact won't take or give anything on authority. Nor anything which seems suggested from without. Collaboration is fine. So you speculate, plan, and in general improvise upon the potentialities in (and out of) sight. An idea may appear from anywhere. After it has been knocked around for a while it either disappears for good or turns into something interesting, and lord knows whose it was in the first place. . . . Before long, no one can tell which is learning the most, the autodidact or the autodidactor.²²

According to Seeger, their work was a collaborative act in which both teacher and student learned from one another as they investigated various ideas. In her biography of Seeger, Ann Pescatello observes, “despite his role as tutor, Seeger claimed that Cowell was an autodidact and that their relationship became more like one between colleagues.”²³ In addition, Pescatello notes, “Cowell's work with Seeger from 1914 to 1916 revolved around Seeger's making his first tentative approaches toward a systematic use of dissonance.”²⁴ Since Seeger was just beginning to work out a system of dissonant counterpoint, it would make sense that his collegial relationship with his student Cowell might have led to their both working together on the earliest thinking about the method.

In fact Seeger's recollections in the 1970s of his work with Cowell at Berkeley confirm once again that both he and Cowell were involved in the development of dissonant counterpoint,

²⁰ Seeger, “Henry Cowell,” 289, 322.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 288.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Pescatello, *Charles Seeger: A Life in American Music*, 66.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

and that Seeger's own work with the idea was in its very early stages. In a 1974 interview with Rita H. Mead, Seeger said,

You see, I'd had a class in dissonant counterpoint at the University of California in which you had to prepare consonance and resolve it. The first species didn't allow any consonance; the augmented fourths and diminished fifths took the place of the unison and the octave together. The octave was forbidden. And Henry had taken that and then worked out his own system, because my system was not really well-developed then.²⁵

Seeger made a similar observation in an interview with Andrea Olmstead in July 1977:

I had just evolved a theory of dissonant counterpoint and Henry just jumped on that. He went ahead and developed it faster than I did. I didn't get it fully developed until 1930 when I taught my wife Ruth. That combined with the musical logic made a composition which is since called serial composition. And I worked on that in a desultory way—I had so many other things to do—up to about 1918. Then I gave up composition. I didn't think about it anymore until '30 again when I gave it a rethinking and Ruth and I wrote a book which has never been published, but I still have it.²⁶

Despite the differences in their educational background and the fact that Cowell came to study with Seeger at Berkeley, Seeger's own recollections confirm that Cowell was actively involved with the early development of dissonant counterpoint. Additionally, archival sources corroborate Cowell's contribution.

Cowell's Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook

Sources anecdotally refer to Cowell's writing musical exercises in personal notebooks during his collaboration with Seeger. The introductory note to the 1965 publication of Cowell's String Quartet No. 1, which the composer completed in 1916, acknowledges his work with Seeger on dissonant counterpoint and states, "Cowell filled several notebooks with exercises he devised for himself and then attacked the present piece."²⁷ A document housed in the Seeger

²⁵ Charles Seeger, interview with Rita H. Mead, November 15, 1974, 22-23, Henry Cowell Papers, box 81 folder 23, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

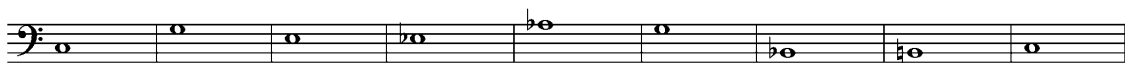
²⁶ Charles Seeger, interview with Andrea Olmstead, 10.

²⁷ Henry Cowell, *String Quartet No. 1* (New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1965), 2. See also Nicholls, *American Experimental Music*, 135.

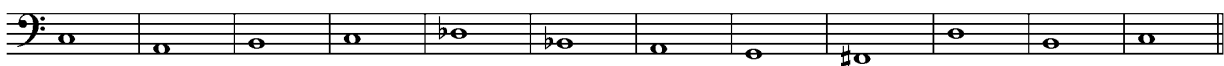
archive at the Library of Congress, labeled “A note for Charles Seeger’s biographer, set down by Sidney Cowell in 1966,” also refers to Cowell’s work at Berkeley with Seeger. Sidney Robertson Cowell recalled,

[Henry Cowell] had used a kind of chordal dissonant counterpoint in some of his compositions and had always been free of any preconceived notions about resolving dissonances. The suggestion of a theoretical “system” of dissonant counterpoint set him off into several notebooks of exercises, in the earliest of which he arrived at his “rules” by the literal opposite of those for sixteenth century counterpoint.²⁸

Ten of the eleven extant counterpoint notebooks in Box 31 of the Cowell archive are filled with exercises that employ traditional contrapuntal practices. The eleventh notebook, identified on the front cover only by “15,” contains instructions for using dissonant counterpoint, primarily on the inside of the front and back covers, and forty-three exercises exploring the method written on eight of the seventeen available pages; the other pages are blank. The exercises are written using one of three different *cantus firmi* (exx. 2.1-2.3) and employ the five species associated with Fuxian counterpoint pedagogy.



Ex. 2.1. Cowell’s Notebook, *Cantus Firmus* #1²⁹



Ex. 2.2. Cowell’s Notebook, *Cantus Firmus* #2



Ex. 2.3. Cowell’s Notebook, *Cantus Firmus* #3

²⁸ Sidney Robertson Cowell, “A Note for Charles Seeger’s Biographer set down by Sidney Cowell in 1966,” Charles Seeger Estate, box 5, Library of Congress, Music Division. Quoted in Pescatello, *Charles Seeger: A Life in American Music*, 65.

²⁹ All transcriptions from archival sources are by the author unless otherwise noted.

The notebook begins with twenty-six two-voice exercises that progress in order from the first through the fifth species. These are followed by seventeen three-voice exercises, which also follow the same systematic progression through the five species.

The significance of this source is threefold. It provides information about dissonant counterpoint during the earliest stage of its development. The notebook also documents Cowell's active involvement in developing a compositional practice that has heretofore been exclusively attributed to Charles Seeger. Finally, the document challenges existing biographical narratives of the composer; these points will be discussed below.

Guidelines for Dissonant Counterpoint

Cowell's handwritten discussion of dissonant counterpoint begins with a rationale for the technique, followed by guidelines addressing the use of intervals, motion from note to note, textures of three or more voices, and specific rules for the species exercises. Cowell justifies the compositional practice by asserting,

Dissonance is accepted for [the] foundation of counterpoint because it is emotionally stronger than consonance and because it is the next historical step. The first counterpoint was made in the most consonant intervals: perfect 8ths, 5ths, 4ths. Next these were used very sparingly in favor of more dissonant intervals: major and minor 3ds and 6ths.³⁰

Cowell continues by enumerating the appropriate use of intervals for the new method:

The next logical step in carrying out the principal [sic] already indicated is to use perfect intervals practically never, 3ds and 6ths only by careful preparation and use 9ths and 7ths as the foundation of to work upon.³¹

³⁰ Cowell's quotes regarding dissonant counterpoint were transcribed from Henry Cowell, *Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook*. This passage is found on the inside of the front cover.

³¹ Cowell, *Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook*, inside of front cover.

The major 7th minor 2nd and the minor 9th and their inversions are used as the foundation, as these are the strongest dissonances. The minor 7, and major 2 and 9th and the aug. 4 can be used as essential intervals when it [is] practical to use them for good voice leading or variety.³²

Aug. and dim. intervals enharmonically the same as consonances had better not be used as essential dissonances because although in reality dissonant, they are apt to be mistaken remind[ing] th[e] listener of their enharmonic equivalent, unless used in just the right surroundings to bring out their true character.³³

Cowell outlines different procedures concerning the proper motion from note to note, including voice leading, contrary motion, the consecutive use of intervals, and voice crossing.

The voice leading of strict counterpoint, which is based on vocal difficultys, [sic] is preferable only with the full addition of chrom. semitones and an occasional use of augmented intervals and minor 7ths if in good melodic curves.³⁴

Because it is a strong diss and the extreme compass of the chrom scale before a repition [sic] is started, the maj 7th is a very good interval to start on. The minor 9th is also a possibility.³⁵

Contrary motion is desirable.³⁶

Only 3 consecutives are allowed of any kind. Only 7ths and 9ths may be written consecutively, occasionally [sic] aug. 4. Consec. 2nds are muddy and blur the clarity of the parts.³⁷

³² Ibid. I believe that Cowell's use of the term "essential intervals" is related to Goetschius's decription of essential and unessential tones. One of Cowell's "traditional" counterpoint notebooks contains entries that are labeled "Goetschius p. __," which suggests that at some point Cowell studied counterpoint using Goetschius's book. In his discussion of two against one note counterpoint Goetschius identifies an essential tone as "the one which occupies the accented portion of the beat." See Percy Goetschius, *Exercises in Elementary Counterpoint* (New York: Schirmer, 1910), 29-30. Goetschius may have received the idea of essential and unessential tones from Johann Kimberger.

³³ Cowell, *Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook*, inside of back cover. With this statement about enharmonic equivalence Cowell seems to acknowledge that tonality offers greater context for apprehending interval quality than does the anti-tonality established by the guidelines of dissonant counterpoint.

³⁴ Cowell, *Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook*, inside of back cover.

³⁵ Ibid., 1 recto.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

For the sake of clarity crossed and overlapped parts are only used in emergencies.³⁸

Cowell provides additional guidelines for exercises with more than two voices as follows:

In three or more parts the aim is to have all parts in dissonance to each other. Between an inner and top part may be consonance if there is somewhere a diss. preferably from the bass. If weak dissonance only is used all parts should be dissonant to each other. Only intervals and melody are considered to the exclusion of Durch Harmonie principals [sic].³⁹

Biographical Implications

In addition to containing valuable information about dissonant counterpoint, Cowell's notebook provides evidence of his work habits. Cowell was a systematic and tenacious worker, who revered tradition as well as experimental techniques. He also placed a strong emphasis on the practical application of new ideas in addition to their theoretical development. These traits, which made Cowell the ideal disseminator of the compositional practice from the late 1910s through the mid 1960s, provide a stark contrast to depictions of the composer as an undisciplined bohemian.

³⁸ Ibid., 17 verso.

³⁹ Ibid., inside of back cover. I was unable to locate the term "Durch Harmonie" in *Grove Music Online*, *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, *Musikalische Lexicon*, or the *Cambridge History of Western Musical Theory*. It is likely that by using the term "Durch Harmonie" Cowell is referring to either functional harmony or principles of thoroughbass practice. In traditional species counterpoint exercises, only the intervals between the voices are considered. The conventions of typical root progressions are not applied to the sonorities produced by the linear simultaneities in all the voices.

The layout of the exercises in his notebook reveals a systematic approach to Cowell's investigation of the new idea.⁴⁰ Table 2.1 details the arrangement of the exercises in the notebook. I have assigned ordinal numbers to each exercise and also names to identify the three melodies used as *cantus firmi*. On page 1 recto Cowell created five two-voice first-species exercises, three with melodies written in dissonant intervals above *cantus firmus* 1, and two with melodies below the *cantus firmus*. On the reverse side of the first page he composed note-against-note dissonant counterpoint above and below a new *cantus firmus*, which I have labeled *cantus firmus* 2. On page 2 recto Cowell wrote four second-species exercises. For the third-species exercises on page 2 verso Cowell established a pattern that he continued to use with the fourth- and fifth-species exercises. They all employ *cantus firmi* 1 and 2 in both the top and bottom voices—further evidence of Cowell's using an orderly system to practice writing dissonant counterpoint.

Having completed two-voice exercises in all five species, on page 4 recto Cowell examined the application of dissonant counterpoint in three-voice writing. The three-voice exercises also demonstrate Cowell's organized use of the five species and include four exercises respectively in the first and second species and three respectively in the third, fourth, and fifth species. For every species Cowell placed a *cantus firmus* in each of the available voices and wrote a melody using the given species either above or below the *cantus firmus*. The remaining voice was always written in first-species dissonant counterpoint against the *cantus firmus*.

⁴⁰ In addition to the disciplined practices evident in the notebook, other sources point to the young Cowell as a systematic thinker. For example, Lewis Terman, a psychology professor at Stanford, had conducted an analysis of Cowell's intellect at age fourteen and included the case study in his book. Lewis Terman, *The Intelligence of School Children* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1919), 246-51. He noted the following: "As the result of many hours of conversation with the boy, over a period of many months, we are convinced that his ability in science was almost as great as in music. Before the age of 12 he had read university textbooks in botany. His knowledge of California wild flowers at this age was remarkable. He had studied seriously the principles of plant breeding, and for a time, when it seemed impossible to realize his musical ambitions, he considered botanical science for his life-work. . . . If he attains fame as a musician, his biographer is almost certain to describe his musical genius as natural and inevitable, and to ignore the scientist that he might have been." Terman, 250-51. Joel Sachs, who is currently writing a biography of Cowell, has corroborated Cowell's systematic classification of plant-life based upon documents he has consulted. Information provided by Joel Sachs in a personal meeting on July 8, 2008.

Table 2.1. Layout of Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook; Arrangement of the Exercises

PAGE NO.	EXERCISE NO.	VOICING	SPECIES	CF TYPE AND LOCATION
1 recto	1	2 vv.	1st	CF #1 in bottom voice
	2	2 vv.	1st	CF #1 in bottom voice
	3	2 vv.	1st	CF #1 in bottom voice
	4	2 vv.	1st	CF #1 in top voice
	5	2 vv.	1st	CF #1 in top voice
1 verso	6	2 vv.	1st	CF #2 in top voice
	7	2 vv.	1st	CF #2 in bottom voice
	8	2 vv.	1st	CF #2 in bottom voice
2 recto	9	2 vv.	2nd	CF #1 in bottom voice
	10	2 vv.	2nd	CF #1 in bottom voice
	11	2 vv.	2nd	CF #1 in top voice
	12	2 vv.	2nd	CF #2 in top voice
2 verso	13	2 vv.	3rd	CF #1 in top voice
	14	2 vv.	3rd	CF #1 in bottom voice
	15	2 vv.	3rd	CF #2 in top voice
	16	2 vv.	3rd	CF #2 in bottom voice
3 recto	17	2 vv.	4th	CF #1 in bottom voice
	18	2 vv.	4th	CF #1 in top voice
	19	2 vv.	4th	CF #2 in top voice
3 verso	20	2 vv.	4th	CF #2 in bottom voice
	21	2 vv.	5th	CF #1 in top voice
	22	2 vv.	5th	CF #1 in bottom voice
	23	2 vv.	5th	CF #2 in top voice
4 recto	24	2 vv.	5th	CF #2 in bottom voice
	25	3 vv.	1st	CF #2 in bottom voice
4 verso	26	3 vv.	1st	CF #1 in top voice
	27	3 vv.	1st	CF #1 in middle voice
	28	3 vv.	1st	CF #1 in bottom voice
5 recto	29	3 vv.	2nd (in middle voice)	CF #1 in top voice
	30	3 vv.	2nd (in bottom voice)	CF #1 in middle voice
	31	3 vv.	2nd (in top voice)	CF #1 in bottom voice
5 verso	32	3 vv.	2nd (in bottom voice)	CF #3 in middle voice
	33	3 vv.	3rd (in middle voice)	CF #3 in top voice
6 recto	34	3 vv.	3rd (in top voice)	CF #1 in middle voice
	35	3 vv.	3rd (in middle voice)	CF #1 in bottom voice
	36	3 vv.	4th (in bottom voice)	CF #1 in middle voice
6 verso	37	3 vv.	4th (in top voice)	CF #1 in bottom voice
	38	3 vv.	4th (in middle voice)	CF #3 in top voice
7 recto	39 (inc.)	3 vv.	5th (in middle voice)	CF #1 in top voice
	40	3 vv.	5th (in middle voice)	CF #1 in bottom voice
7 verso	41	3 vv.	5th (in bottom voice)	CF #3 in middle voice
**Pages 8 recto through 17 recto are blank.				
17 verso	42	2 vv.	2nd	CF #1 in top voice
	43	2 vv.	4th	CF #1 in bottom voice

An incomplete exercise on page 7 recto sheds light on the procedure that Cowell likely used for writing the three-voice exercises (see ex. 2.4).

The image shows a musical score for Exercise 39, page 7 recto. It consists of three staves: a top staff with a treble clef, a middle staff with a treble clef, and a bottom staff with a bass clef. The top staff contains a cantus firmus (C.F.) consisting of nine whole notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, and B4. The middle staff contains a fifth-species melody consisting of nine eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, and E4. The bottom staff is empty. The notes in the middle staff are written with stems pointing down, indicating they are below the cantus firmus.

Ex. 2.4. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 39, p. 7 recto

There is a *cantus firmus* in the top voice, a fifth-species melody in the middle voice, and the bottom voice is empty. It appears that after Cowell copied the *cantus firmus* into one of the voices, he first wrote a melody using the specific species either above or below it and then composed the remaining voice in first-species counterpoint.

Cowell's tenacious exploration of dissonant counterpoint resulted in multiple exercises for each species, totaling over forty. Another example of his focus and determination is found in the careful treatment of melody in nine two-voice first-species exercises. (Eight are written on both sides of page 1 and the ninth is found on page 17 verso.) Perhaps Cowell wrote so many more two-voice first-species exercises than any other type because they represented the beginning of his endeavor and the foundation for understanding how to use the technique. Exx. 2.5-2.9 are transcriptions of exercises 1-5 from page 1 recto. I have indicated the various intervals between the voices. Based on Cowell's identification and discussion of intervals in the description of dissonant counterpoint in his notebook, I have disregarded octave expansions beyond ninths.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7 7 7 +8 +4 7 7 m9 7

C.F.

Ex. 2.5. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 1 from p. 1 recto

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7 +4 7 +8 7 +8 7 m9 7

C.F.

Ex. 2.6. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 2, p. 1 recto

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

+8 7 m9 +8 +4 7 +6 #9 7

C.F.

Ex. 2.7. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 3, p. 1 recto

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7 +8 7 °5 m9 °8 m2 7 m9

C.F.

Ex. 2.8. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 4, p. 1 recto

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

m9 m7 7 °8 °5 m9 m9 m7 m9

C.F.

Ex. 2.9. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 5, p. 1 recto

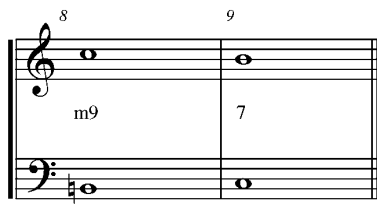
In exercises 1-3 (exx. 2.5-2.7) Cowell composes three distinct melodies above the same *cantus firmus*, presumably to examine the various shapes of melodies that could be written while still maintaining dissonant intervals against the *cantus firmus*. Upon closer examination, the upper voice in the second exercise appears to be a variant of the melody in the first one; only three of the pitch-classes in exercise 2 differ from those in exercise 1. In m. 2 of exercise 2 Cowell replaces the F-sharp from exercise 1 with C-sharp, which results in an augmented fourth between the two voices instead of a major seventh. In m. 5 Cowell writes a G instead of a D, which replaces the augmented fourth with a major seventh. Finally, in m. 6 Cowell changes the F-sharp, a major seventh above the bass note, to a G-sharp, an augmented octave above it. These changes result in a more conjunct melody in the upper voice of exercise 2. In addition, the alterations to the melody provide variety from the consecutive sevenths in mm. 1-3 and 6-7 of exercise 1. The upper voice in exercise 3 may also be a variant of the upper voice in exercise 1; Cowell maintains the same pitch-classes in mm. 2, 4-6, and 9. The upper voice in exercise 3 differs from the upper voices in the previous two exercises because the melody does not begin and end on the same pitch.

Cowell's regard for tradition can be seen in the use of counterpoint species, cadential formulas, the structure of *cantus firmus* 1, and the balanced melodic motion in the melodies he added to the *cantus firmi*. The picture of Cowell that emerges from these documents differs from characterizations that focus on him as a bold iconoclast with little use for musical tradition. Cowell uses the five species associated with Fuxian counterpoint pedagogy to guide his practical application of the principles laid out for dissonant counterpoint. Just as in Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, Cowell also begins by writing two-voice exercises and then moves on to compose three-voice exercises. Furthermore, the ten other counterpoint notebooks in box 31 of the Cowell archive are filled with exercises that demonstrate his dedication to mastering conventional compositional techniques.

In the course of writing the two-voice first-species exercises, Cowell explores the use of cadential formulas, a technique that is an essential part of traditional contrapuntal practice.⁴¹ There are two different cadences, each of which has a variant. The first cadential formula, which

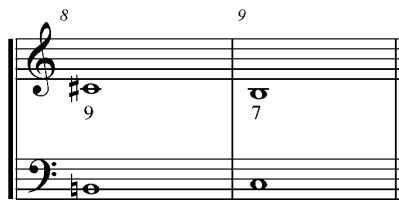
⁴¹ I am grateful to Jennifer Thomas of the University of Florida for having called my attention to the presence of cadential formulas in Cowell's exercises.

is used in exercises 1 and 2 (exx. 2.5 and 2.6), contracts from a minor ninth to a major seventh (see ex. 2.10).



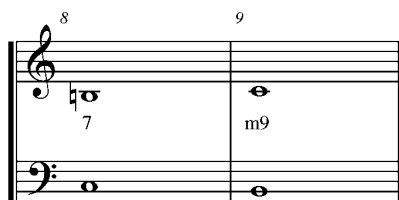
Ex. 2.10. Cowell's Notebook, Cadential Formula 1

A variant of this cadence is found in exercise 3 (ex. 2.7), in which C-sharp is substituted for C and the cadence begins on a major ninth and contracts to a major seventh (see ex. 2.11).



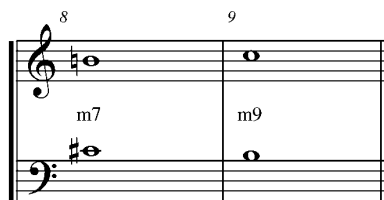
Ex. 2.11. Cowell's Notebook, Cadential Formula 1a

The second type of cadential formula, found in exercise 4 (ex. 2.8), involves the expansion of a major seventh to a minor ninth (see ex. 2.12).



Ex. 2.12. Cowell's Notebook, Cadential Formula 2

Cowell employs a variant of cadence 2 in exercise 5 (ex. 2.9). C-sharp is substituted for C, which results in a minor seventh expanding to a minor ninth (see ex. 2.13).



Ex. 2.13. Cowell's Notebook, Cadential Formula 2a

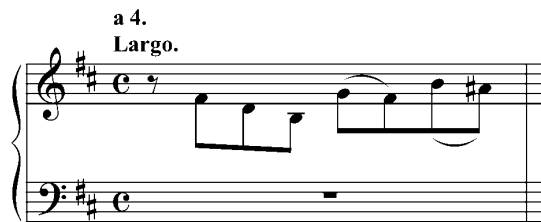
In the two-voice first-species exercises Cowell uses these cadences exclusively, but throughout the rest of the notebook he uses other cadential formulas along with these.

The melodic structure of *cantus firmus* 1 provides another example of Cowell's acknowledgement of tradition (see ex. 2.14).



Ex. 2.14. Cowell's Notebook, *Cantus Firmus* #1

The *cantus firmus* melody begins with a stock figure from traditional counterpoint, the leap of a perfect fifth, and then outlines prominent tones suggestive of both C major and C minor, including E, E-flat, A-flat, B-flat, and B. The leap to A-flat, followed by the stepwise descent to G, emphasizing scale degree 5, is a gesture reminiscent of eighteenth-century melodic structures, especially in contrapuntal subjects (see ex. 2.15-2.17). Melodic movement in Cowell's *cantus firmus* that is atypical of traditional contrapuntal practice includes the descending leap of a major sixth from G to B-flat (especially since it follows the descending motion from A-flat to G), and the ascending stepwise chromatic motion from B-flat to B to C.

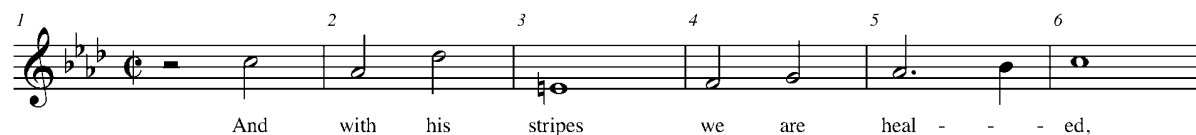


Ex. 2.15. J. S. Bach, *Well Tempered Clavier*, Book 1, Fugue in B Minor, m. 1



Ex. 2.16. J. S. Bach, *The Musical Offering*, opening of the theme, mm. 1-3

Alla breve. Moderato



Ex. 2.17. G. F. Handel, *The Messiah*, “And With His Stripes We Are Healed,” mm. 1-5

In traditional contrapuntal practice the melodic motion in each part is balanced. For example, an ascending leap would eventually be balanced by a leap or substantial stepwise motion in the opposite direction. The melodies written against the *cantus firmus* in the two-voice first-species exercises (exx. 2.5-2.9) demonstrate a similar balance in the overall motion of the part. Cowell confirmed his interest in the issue of balance within the melodies that he adds to the *cantus firmi*, when he stated, “a return is made to the same point for the sake of balance.”⁴²

The contents of Cowell’s notebook underscore the importance that he placed on developing new methods “in practice” as opposed to solely “in theory.” Rather than engaging exclusively in abstract musings about dissonant counterpoint, Cowell created musical exercises to examine the ways in which these principles actually work themselves out as one composes. This, in turn, allowed Cowell to refine the method further. For example, Cowell wrote several

⁴² Cowell, *Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook*, 1 recto.

suggestions in the margins of the two-voice fourth-species exercises on page 3 recto that appear to be the result of experience gleaned from writing fourth-species exercises in dissonant counterpoint. Cowell suggests:

Owing to [difficulty?] of getting this species the opening often must begin on a weak dissonance.

An enharmonic dissonance may be skipped from in cases of emergency.

Notes may be enharmonically changed over the bar if convenient so as to keep concord moving.

In preparing the tied over notes, try to get the strongest common dissonance.⁴³

The forty-three counterpoint exercises in Cowell's notebook provide examples of how Cowell realized the principles outlined in the prose description of "dissonant governed counterpoint" and occasional difficulties that arose during the process.

Cowell's Use of the Guidelines in Two-Voice Exercises

An examination of Cowell's two-voice exercises demonstrates his application of the guidelines to the five species. Cowell's marginalia provide additional instructions for a more precise execution of the technique. On page 1 recto, which contains first-species exercises, Cowell notes, "no consonance possible in first species, except rarely an enharmonic cons[onance]."⁴⁴ This information is vital for writing exercises in the first species. Exercise 7 (ex. 2.18), a two-voice first-species exercise, adheres to this guideline; all intervals between the *cantus firmus* and the added upper voice are dissonant. Cowell begins and ends the exercise on the interval of a major seventh. Contrary motion is used throughout the example, but it is mixed with parallel motion between the voices. Regarding consecutive intervals, Cowell stays within the parameters; there are only two consecutive minor ninths in mm. 10-11. There is no voice crossing in the exercise.

⁴³ Ibid., 3 recto. In the guidelines on the inside of the front cover Cowell stated, "The major 7th minor 2nd and the minor 9th and their inversions are used as the foundation, as these are the strongest dissonances. The minor 7, and major 2 and 9th and the aug. 4 can be used as essential intervals when it [is] practical to use them for good voice leading or variety." Based on this description, the term "weak dissonance" used on page 3 recto likely refers to the minor seventh, major second, major ninth, and the augmented fourth.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1 recto. Cowell uses the term "enharmonic consonance" to denote a dissonant interval that sounds as a consonant interval. For example, a diminished seventh sounds as a major sixth and would therefore be classified as an enharmonic consonance.

Ex. 2.18. Cowell’s Notebook, Exercise 7, p. 1 verso

The added melody in the upper voice of exercise 7 (ex. 2.18) conforms to the guidelines adopted for voice leading. The melodic motion is primarily stepwise, with the use of an occasional augmented interval or wide leap for melodic variety. In many of his added melodies Cowell uses primarily stepwise motion and incorporates wide leaps for variety in the melodic motion.

Cowell’s written instructions among the third-species exercises on page 2 verso provide insight about the technique as applied to the second through fifth species. He states, “skip to consonance justifiable as changing notes (see ex. 2.19).”⁴⁵

Ex. 2.19. Cowell’s Notebook, Exercise 16, p. 2 verso, mm. 6-7

Cowell’s rationalization of the melodic skip to an interval that is consonant above the bass note suggests that the “careful preparation of consonance” mentioned in his guidelines should

⁴⁵ Ibid, 2 verso.

otherwise involve stepwise motion, as is usual in traditional contrapuntal methods. In other two-voice exercises contained in the notebook, consonant intervals are approached and left by stepwise motion in the melody; melodic leaps usually occur when leading towards and away from dissonant intervals (see exx. 2.20-2.23). The exercises that follow also demonstrate Cowell’s observance of the guidelines adopted for voice leading in the added melody.

The image shows a musical score for Exercise 9, p. 2 recto. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melody of quarter notes across nine measures. The bass staff contains a single bass note per measure. Below the treble staff, interval markings are provided for each measure: m. 1 (+8), m. 2 (7 +8), m. 3 (+4 3), m. 4 (9 7), m. 5 (+8 7), m. 6 (+8 9), m. 7 (+8 +9), m. 8 (m9 °8), and m. 9 (m9). The notes in the treble staff are: m. 1: G#4; m. 2: A4, B4; m. 3: C5, B4; m. 4: D5, C5; m. 5: E5, D5; m. 6: F5, E5; m. 7: G5, F5; m. 8: A5, G5; m. 9: B5, A5.

Ex. 2.20. Cowell’s Notebook, Exercise 9, p. 2 recto

In exercise 9 (ex. 2.20), a two-voice second-species exercise, the consonant interval in m. 3 (a major third) is approached and left by stepwise melodic motion in the upper voice. All the leaps in the upper voice occur as the melody moves from one dissonant interval to another. For example, in m. 4 the melody leaps from F, a major ninth above the bass note E-flat, to D, a major seventh above the bass note, to A, an augmented octave above the new bass note A-flat.

The same observations hold true in exercise 19 (ex. 2.21), a two-voice fourth-species exercise. Stepwise melodic motion is used to resolve the consonant intervals in mm. 7-8, and melodic leaps occur in conjunction with dissonant intervals. Cowell’s additional guidelines in the margins on page 3 recto demonstrate his concern for the careful treatment of consonant and dissonant intervals in the fourth species exercises. He states, “Only a tied over dissonance may skip, but a consonance may be tied over enharmonically to make a dissonance in cases of need. The consonance should resolve by falling.”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ibid., 3 recto.

Ex. 2.21. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 19, p. 3 recto

Furthermore, in order to understand the C-sharp tied to D-flat in mm. 10-11, one must defer to another recommendation made by the composer, which is likely informed by his experience writing suspensions according to the guidelines of dissonant counterpoint. Cowell comments, “notes may be enharmonically changed over the bar if convenient so as to keep concord moving.”⁴⁷ It is not clear what Cowell means by “keep concord moving.” Perhaps he is saying that “notes may be enharmonically changed over the bar” to keep the exercise moving along.

A two-voice fifth-species exercise also demonstrates his careful handling of consonance. In exercise 22 (ex. 2.22) the occurrence of consonant intervals between the two voices in mm. 1, 2, and 6 is approached by step (or suspension) and resolved by stepwise melodic motion.

Ex. 2.22. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 22, p. 3 verso

⁴⁷ Ibid.

The melody in the upper voice comprises primarily conjunct motion, although there are two leaps, both of which coincide with dissonant intervals. Between mm. 4 and 5 the melody skips from D, a major seventh above the bass note E-flat, down to G, a major seventh above the new bass note A-flat. In m. 7 the A in the upper voice, a suspended note that forms a major seventh against the B-flat in the lower voice, leaps to a C, a major ninth above the bass note.

While the first-, second-, fourth-, and fifth-species exercises are more consistent in their adherence to the guidelines, the two-voice third-species exercises feature instances that both confirm and contradict the written guidelines for dissonant counterpoint. In exercise 15 (ex. 2.23) most occurrences of consonant intervals between the two voices are prepared and resolved by stepwise motion in the upper voice. An exception is found in m. 10, where the melody skips to an interval that is consonant with the *cantus firmus*, a minor third, and is then followed by another occurrence of a consonance, a perfect fourth.⁴⁸ This melodic gesture presents two problems: a melodic leap to a consonance, and the consecutive movement from one consonant interval to another (referred to hereafter as consecutive consonances) rather than the proper resolution to a dissonant interval. Since the idea of dissonant counterpoint is based on the reversal of traditional counterpoint, it follows that the careful preparation and resolution of a consonant interval should involve both stepwise motion in the added melody and the occurrence of a dissonant interval before and after the consonant interval. However, it is never directly stipulated in the notebook that consonant intervals should always be preceded and followed by dissonant intervals, suggesting that Cowell likely conceived of these ideas more as flexible guidelines rather than as fixed rules.

⁴⁸ In traditional two-voice part-writing a perfect fourth above the bass note would be treated as a dissonance. However, in his guidelines cited above, Cowell includes the perfect fourth among “the most consonant intervals.” See Cowell, *Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook*, inside of front cover.

1 2 3 4 5 6

7 8 9 10 11 12

Intervallic analysis for measures 1-12:

- M. 1: °8, m9
- M. 2: 7, +8, +4, 5
- M. 3: 7, +8, 7, 6
- M. 4: °8, m9, m3
- M. 5: °5, m6, °7, °8
- M. 6: m7, °8, m9, m3
- M. 7: +8, 7, +4, 3
- M. 8: m9, °8, m7, m6
- M. 9: +4, +8, 7, +4
- M. 10: +8, 7, m3, 4
- M. 11: +8, 7, 9, m9
- M. 12: m9

Ex. 2.23. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 15, p. 2 verso

While m. 10 of exercise 15 features the only occurrence among the third-species exercises of a melodic leap to a consonant interval, it is worth noting that all the two-voice third-species exercises feature instances of consecutive consonances. For example, in m. 8 of exercise 16 (ex. 2.24), the primarily stepwise melodic motion in the upper voice results in three adjacent consonant intervals (a major third, perfect fourth, and perfect fifth). Exercise 16 also features melodic movement inconsistent with Cowell's guidelines for the treatment of consonance, located between mm. 2-3 and in m. 7. He explains that the leap to a minor sixth in m. 7 is justified because of changing tones, yet Cowell does not address the gesture in the upper voice in m. 3.⁴⁹ The minor third in m. 3 is approached by stepwise melodic motion but it is not left by step; instead, the melody leaps down a major third. Also, the minor third is not preceded by a dissonant interval, but instead by a consonant interval in the previous measure.

⁴⁹ The changing tones are discussed above.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Exercise 16, p. 2 verso. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system covers measures 1 through 6, and the second system covers measures 7 through 12. Below the notes in each measure, there are intervallic symbols such as '+u', '+2', '3', '+4', '7', '+8', '9', 'm3', 'm7', 'm9', '°8', '°5', 'b', and 'm9'. Measure 7 is labeled 'changing notes'.

Ex. 2.24. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 16, p. 2 verso

Additionally, the occurrence of consonant intervals in strong metrical positions presents another deviation from a strict application of the guidelines among the two-voice third-species exercises. For example, in exercise 16 there is a major third on the third beat of m. 1, a minor third on the downbeat of m. 3, and a perfect fourth on the third beat of 8. Generally in traditional counterpoint dissonance is reserved for the metrically weak positions; therefore in dissonant counterpoint we would expect consonant intervals to be found on the second and fourth beats in third-species counterpoint.

Cowell's Use of the Guidelines in Three-Voice Exercises

The three-voice exercises also test Cowell's guidelines for dissonant counterpoint. He uses more dissonant intervals than consonant intervals, and uses perfect intervals "practically never," however there are inconsistencies within Cowell's handling of the guidelines, specifically those pertaining to voice leading and the careful treatment of consonant intervals. It also appears that some of Cowell's additional guidelines for three or more voices do not actually work in practice.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Cowell's additional guidelines for three or more voices are fully listed above.

Regarding voice leading in the three-voice exercises, the additional melody written in the specific species (first through fifth) is primarily conjunct, as in the two-voice exercises. The third voice, which is always written in note-against-note counterpoint, features many leaps, rather than stepwise motion; the primarily disjunct melody likely results from choosing tones that are dissonant against at least one of the other parts, if not both.

Intervallic relationships for Exercise 36:

°3	°7	°8	°5	4	+8	9	m6	°8	m6	m7	m9	m7	°3
m2	m6	m7	5	+4	4	°5	°8	°3	m9	m7	m2	9	7

Ex. 2.25. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 36, p. 6 recto⁵¹

In exercise 36 (ex. 2.25), a three-voice fourth-species exercise, the third melody, here in the top voice, which is written in note-against-note counterpoint against the *cantus firmus*, comprises mostly disjunct motion. Likewise, the middle voice in exercise 31 (ex. 2.26), a three-voice second-species exercise, features quite a few leaps in the melody.

Intervallic relationships for Exercise 31:

m9	4	7	m3	m9	+8	9	7	+5	m7	4	+8	7	7	9	7
7	+4	9	7	°5	7	+2	7	6	m7	4	7	9	7	+4	7

Ex. 2.26. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 31, p. 5 recto

⁵¹ The figures below the staves denotes the intervallic relationship between the bottom voice and each voice above it. This method is used in the other examples that include three or more voices.

Considering Cowell's guidelines for dissonant counterpoint, exercise 31 (ex. 2.26) exhibits both stringent adherence and elastic approaches to the suggested treatment of consonant intervals. Instances of Cowell's strict handling of consonances are found in mm. 3 and 7. There is a minor third between the top and bottom voices on the downbeat of measure 3. The melody moves by step from F-sharp in the preceding measure to G, a minor third above the bass note, E, to F-natural. Also the consonant interval between the two voices is preceded by a major seventh and followed by a minor ninth. In m. 7 the G in the middle voice is a major sixth above the B-flat in the bottom voice. The occurrence of a consonant interval between the two voices is preceded by a major seventh in m. 6 and followed by a minor seventh in m. 8; furthermore, the major sixth is accompanied by stepwise melodic motion in the middle voice.

Examples of Cowell's flexible approach to the guidelines for consonant intervals are found in mm. 2 and 6 of exercise 31. In m. 2 the C in the top voice is a perfect fourth above the G in the bottom voice. The C is approached by step from D-flat, but then the melody leaps from C down to F-sharp, instead of also leaving the consonant interval by conjunct motion. On the second beat of m. 6, the C in the top voice is a perfect fourth above the G in the bottom voice. The C, however, is approached by a leap from the F above it, rather than by stepwise motion.

C.F. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7 7 m7 m3 °8 °8 m7 7 7

+6 +5 +4 +4 3 9 3 6 7 3 +4 7 +8 +9 3 4 °5 m6 6 m9 °3 °4 3 +4 5 3 m7 6 5 4 4

Ex. 2.27. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 33, p. 5 verso

Exercise 33 (ex. 2.27), a three-voice third-species exercise, includes a number of instances that contradict the careful handling of consonance prescribed by Cowell's guidelines. First, in mm. 3, 5, 7, and 8 consonant intervals fall on the strong beats of the measures. Also, the primarily stepwise motion within the middle voice results in several instances where a consonant interval is followed by another consonant interval instead of a dissonant interval. For example,

in m. 4 the melody moves from A, a major third above the F in the bass, to B, a perfect fourth above the new bass note F-sharp. Also, in m. 5 the melodic progression from D to D-sharp in the middle voice results in a minor sixth followed by a major sixth against the bass note. In m. 7 not only are there two consecutive consonant intervals, but the melody in the middle voice leaps from one consonance to the other, in this case from C, a perfect fifth above the bass, to A, a major third above the bass note. Finally, in mm. 8-9 there are four consecutive consonances between the middle and bass voice, a minor sixth, a perfect fifth, and two perfect fourths, the last of which is part of the final cadence in m. 9.

As part of his additional guidelines for three or more voices Cowell notes, “the aim is to have all parts in dissonance to each other.”⁵² While there are exercises that feature some individual sonorities in which all parts are dissonant, there are no three-voice exercises in the notebook that actually achieve the goal of exclusively dissonant intervals throughout.⁵³ For example, in exercise 25 (ex. 2.28), a three-voice first-species exercise, seven measures (mm. 4, 6, and 8-12) feature sonorities with dissonant relationships between all three parts. The other five measures (1-3, 5, and 7) include a consonance somewhere in the vertical sonority.

C.F.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
+5	m6	6	9	4	m9	+4	+8	m7	°8	9	+6
6	m9	m7	+8	+8	9	7	9	°8	m9	m9	7
m9	9	m9	7	+5	+8	4	m9	m9	9	°8	m9

Ex. 2.28. Cowell’s Notebook, Exercise 25, p. 4 recto

⁵² Cowell, *Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook*, inside of the back cover.

⁵³ In a three-voice texture this would be an incredibly difficult goal to sustain, especially if any measure of stepwise motion is also desired. The idea of all the parts being dissonant to each other can only be the case when all three simultaneous pitch-classes are chromatically adjacent. Furthermore, the principle would be impossible to achieve in textures comprising four or more voices. For example, if all four simultaneous pitch-classes were chromatically adjacent (i.e., C, C-sharp, D, and E-flat), there still would be a minor third between C and E-flat.

Cowell's goal of complete dissonance undermines his initial allowance in the guidelines that state there can be consonant intervals, provided they are handled carefully. In his prose description of the technique Cowell stated,

The next logical step in carrying out the principal [sic] already indicated is to use perfect intervals practically never, 3ds and 6ths only by careful preparation and use 9ths and 7ths as the foundation of to work upon.⁵⁴

Therefore, in the two-voice exercises carefully prepared and resolved consonant intervals are allowed in the second through fifth species. It may have been truer to actual practice had Cowell stipulated that for three or more voices there should always be a dissonant interval between at least two of the voices in any given vertical sonority.

Perhaps in an effort to address the issue that consonant intervals are allowed in dissonant counterpoint, Cowell writes, "Between an inner and top part may be consonance if there is somewhere a diss. preferably from the bass."⁵⁵ However, this rule suggests that consonance is not allowed between the bass part and any other voice, and every three-voice exercise in the notebook contains at least one instance of a melody that has a tone that is consonant against the bass voice. Exercise 25 (ex. 2.28) begins with a major sixth between the top and bottom voices. The final sonority in exercise 33 (ex. 2.27) includes a perfect fourth between the bottom and middle voices.⁵⁶ There are even instances in which both the middle and upper voices simultaneously contain tones that are consonant with the bass voice, but these are dissonant with each other. This occurs in exercise 33 (ex. 2.27) on beat 4 of m. 4, where there are an A and A-flat in the upper voices against an F in the bottom voice, and in the final measure of exercise 29 (ex. 2.29), in which there are a C and C-sharp in the upper voices against the A in the bottom voice.

⁵⁴ Ibid., inside of the front cover.

⁵⁵ Ibid., inside of the back cover.

⁵⁶ In traditional three-voice part-writing the interval of a perfect fourth among the upper voices would be considered consonant, but against the bass voice it would be dissonant. In his guidelines cited above, however, Cowell includes the perfect fourth among "the most consonant intervals." See Cowell, *Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook*, inside of front cover.

C.F.

m9 m7 7 °8 °5 m9 °8 +8 m3
m7 7 6 +6 +5 m7 m9 4 5 °8 m7 m9 m7 +4 3 3

Ex. 2.29. Cowell's Notebook, Exercise 29, p. 5 recto

Cowell's Works

Beyond creating didactic exercises contained in the notebook, Cowell also used dissonant counterpoint in his compositions that date from his years at Berkeley, including *Polyphonicas Nos. 1 and 2* (1916), "Exercizes [sic] for Seeger" No. 1, String Quartet No. 1, *Quartet Romantic*, and *Wafting*. Even in these early musical works Cowell did not hold fast to the guidelines of dissonant counterpoint as if they were orthodox rules. Instead, his use of the technique encompassed both strict and flexible approaches to the principles he had developed.

Cowell wrote two short works dated "Xmas 1916" that resemble the three-voice exercises in his dissonant counterpoint notebook. While no instrumentation is specified, the pieces appear to be intended for keyboard, since the three melodies are written on the grand staff rather than three separate staves. *Polyphonica No. 1* (ex. 2.30) was written for Godmother Briggs, and *Polyphonica No. 2* (ex. 2.31) for Mrs. Dower.⁵⁷ Photocopies of Cowell's manuscript scores are housed in the Sidney Robertson Cowell collection at the Library of Congress.⁵⁸ The photocopied manuscripts of the *Polyphonicas* were a gift from the Temple of the People located in Halcyon, CA; it therefore seems likely that Godmother Briggs and Mrs. Dower were among Cowell's

⁵⁷ Henry Cowell, *Polyphonica No. 1* and *Polyphonica No. 2*, Sidney Robertson Cowell Collection, Library of Congress. There is no box or folder number, since the collection is not yet processed.

⁵⁸ Many thanks are owed to Caitlin Miller, a reference specialist in the Music Division at the Library of Congress, who located these items for me in the unprocessed Sidney Robertson Cowell collection.

associates at Halcyon during the mid 1910s.⁵⁹ In a letter sent to William Lichtenwanger, who completed a catalog of Cowell's works, Sidney describes these two pieces as exemplary of dissonant counterpoint.

The two Polyphonics illustrate the first form of dissonant counterpoint that Seeger mentions as having been devised by [Henry Cowell] for his 1915 counterpoint class at UC Berkeley. All is dissonance, except for a few passing tones that are briefly consonant with other parts but resolve immediately to a dissonance.⁶⁰

Chord symbols for measures 1-9:

Measure 1: $\circ 8$ $\circ 7$ $\circ 6$

Measure 2: $m7$ 6 $+5$ 7

Measure 3: 7 6 $+5$ $+4$ $+3$ 5

Measure 4: 6 5 4 $m7$

Measure 5: $m7$ $m6$ 5

Measure 6: 5 9 9 $m3$ $\circ 3$ $dd3$ $m3$ 5

Measure 7: $\circ 8$ $m7$ $\circ 5$ $m6$ $m7$ $m3$ $m2$ $+u$ $m2$ $+4$

Measure 8: 4 5 $m6$ 5 $+4$ $++8$

Measure 9: 7 $+8$ 9 $+8$ $+4$ $+8$

Ex. 2.30. Cowell, *Polyphonica No. 1*

Regarding his use of the technique, the melodies in *Polyphonica No. 1* (ex. 2.30) are mostly conjunct, while those of *Polyphonica No. 2* (ex. 2.31) feature some stepwise motion but many more leaps than in *Polyphonica No. 1*. In both works the counterpoint results in mostly dissonant intervals, although consonances are allowed. There are more than just a “few”

⁵⁹ William Lichtenwanger, *The Music of Henry Cowell: A Descriptive Catalog* (Brooklyn, NY: Institute for Studies in American Music, 1986), 318.

⁶⁰ Letter from Sidney Cowell to William Lichtenwanger, dated March 7, 1985. Housed in Sidney Robertson Cowell collection, Library of Congress.

consonances, and they are not exclusively restricted to the role of “passing” tones, as described by Sidney in the passage from her letter quoted above. While *Polyphonica No. 1* features more consonant intervals than *Polyphonica No. 2*, Cowell’s treatment of consonance in both works is somewhat flexible. There are instances of consecutive consonances between the upper voices and the bass voice. Additionally, consonant intervals are not always accompanied by conjunct melodic motion. For example, in *Polyphonica No. 2* (ex. 2.31) on beat 4 of m. 3, the D-flat in the top voice is a diminished seventh above E in the bass, which sounds as a major sixth. The consonance is followed by a dissonant interval, a diminished octave, which is the result of the upper voice’s leaping from D-flat up to G-flat as the bass voice skips from E up to G.

Interval labels for measures 1-11:

Measure 1: m7 m9 °5

Measure 2: °8 m7 +8 +4

Measure 3: °8 m7 m9 °7 °8 m9 m3 m9 °8

Measure 4: m7 m9 °5

Measure 5: m7 +8 7 3 m7 +8 7 5 °8 7 9 7 +4 4 4 m7 m3

Measure 6: 7 +2 +4 7 9 °5 +4 7 4 m9 +8 7 4 +8

Measure 7: °8

Measure 8: °8

Measure 9: +4 m7 +2 4 °8 m9 3 m9 m3 4 m3 m9 m9

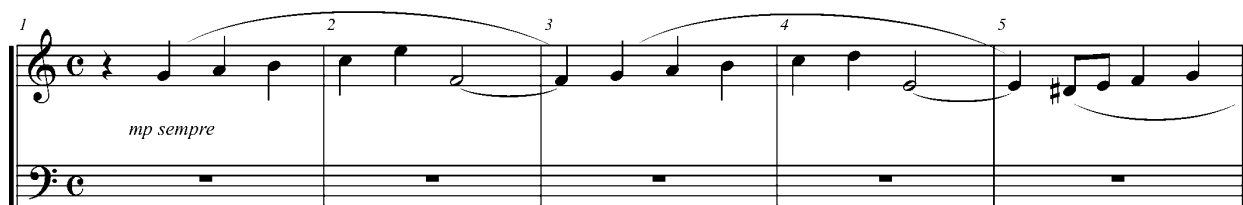
Measure 10: m9 m3 4 m3 m9 m9

Measure 11: m9 +4

Ex. 2.31. Cowell, *Polyphonica No. 2*

While the *Polyphonicas Nos. 1 and 2* seem like short exercises in dissonant counterpoint, Cowell also used the technique in more extended works for keyboard, such as “Exercizes [sic] for Seeger” No. 1. A single sheet of loose-leaf staff paper located in box 31 folder 5 of the Cowell archive bears the title “exercizes [sic] for Seeger.” The two-sided page contains four musical exercises. I have numbered these exercises in the order in which they occur. The recto side contains a three-voice imitative piece (no. 1) that totals thirty-eight measures, and the verso side of the page contains a seven-measure four-voice fragment (no. 2) and two brief three-voice exercises (nos. 3 and 4) comprising ten and eleven measures, respectively. While the page is not dated, the title and the use of dissonant counterpoint suggest that Cowell likely wrote these exercises during his work with Seeger at Berkeley. In addition, “Exercizes for Seeger” Nos. 3 and 4 are variants of *Polyphonicas Nos. 1 and 2*, respectively.⁶¹

The three-voice imitative piece opens with a complete statement of the main theme in all three voices, beginning in the soprano. The length of the subject is not immediately clear, because there appear to be two plausible endings (see ex. 2.32).



Ex. 2.32. Cowell, “Exercizes [sic] for Seeger” No. 1, mm. 1-6

The downbeat of m. 5 is a possible ending point; the restatement of the theme at the original pitch level toward the end of the piece (mm. 27-30) only includes the portion of the melody found in mm. 1-4. The subject could also be considered to end on the downbeat of m. 6, because this immediately precedes the beginning of the second statement in the bass voice, and because the three initial statements of the theme all include the portion of the melody from m. 1 through the downbeat of m. 6. Furthermore, while the ending of the subject on E at the

⁶¹ My transcriptions of *Polyphonicas Nos. 1 and 2* and the “Exercizes [sic] for Seeger” are located in Appendix E.

downbeat of m. 5 sounds more restful or cadence-like, the ending on A at the downbeat of m. 6 allows for a more balanced melody, because it is closer to the starting pitch, G. Additionally, the opening G in m. 1 might be understood as an anacrusis to the A that follows, and therefore the G – A at mm. 5-6 would constitute an exact return, suggesting a close quite strongly.

The voice-leading of the main theme is primarily made up of ascending stepwise motion punctuated by two large descending leaps. In the first phrase the stepwise ascent from G to C is followed by a skip of a major third to E, and this melodic motion is balanced by a descending leap of a major seventh to F. The second phrase begins with a stepwise ascent from F to D that is countered by the leap down a minor seventh to E. This is followed by a neighbor gesture and rising stepwise motion to A, a major second above G, the beginning pitch.

Intervallic analysis for measures 6-12:

- Measure 6: °8 °8 dd6
- Measure 7: °5 m9 °8 7 +8
- Measure 8: +8 m7 °5 °4
- Measure 9: m3 m9 m7 °8 °8 m2 °3 °4
- Measure 10: °5 °8 m7 m9 7 3 9
- Measure 11: 7 +8 7 7 +8 7 7
- Measure 12: 7

Ex. 2.33. Cowell, “Exercizes [sic] for Seeger” No. 1, mm. 6-12

During the second statement of the theme in the bass voice (m. 6) the soprano part comprises free counterpoint that results in primarily dissonant intervals with the melody in the bass. The two-voice passage in mm. 6-11 (ex. 2.33) features instances of both strict and flexible handling of consonant intervals. For example, there is a minor third on the downbeat of m. 8 created by D in the upper voice and B in the lower voice. The consonant interval is preceded by a suspension and the D resolves downward by step to C, a minor ninth above B. An instance of Cowell’s more flexible handling of consonance is found in m. 9. The major third that occurs on

beat 4 is preceded and followed by dissonant intervals, but the consonance is approached by a leap instead of stepwise melodic motion.

The third statement of the theme in the alto voice (beginning in m. 12) is initially accompanied by an imitative motive comprising four eighth-notes and a half-note that alternates between the bass and soprano voices in mm. 13 and 14, and reappears in mm. 17, 18, and 20. In the three-voice passage of mm. 12-21 (ex. 2.34) the melodic gestures that use eighth notes often coincide with consecutive consonances. This is reminiscent of the problems encountered in many of the third-species exercises in Cowell’s dissonant counterpoint notebook, although there is always a dissonant relationship between at least two of the voices in any given sonority.

Intervallic analysis for measures 12-21:

Measures 12-15:

+2	4	m9	m3	4	m6	°5	4	3	8	+4	+5	+6	+8	dd6	°5	4	m9	°8	m9	m3	m9	m7	m6	4	m3
3	3	+4	m3	4	7	9	m9			4	5	7	9	9	3			4	5	7	6	6	5	+4	3

Measures 16-19:

m9	m3	m9	4	7	+5	6	7	6	5	3	+8	5	5	m7	°8	°4	m3	°4	m9	7	6	5	6	m6	°7	°8	m9
2	3	4	°7	m3	+8	9	+8	7	°7	m6	4	m3	m9	°3	m9	4	7			+5				°8	dd8		

Measures 20-21:

°8	m9	°8	m3	7	+5	°8
°5	m6	m7	9	+8	7	

Ex. 2.34. Cowell, “Exercizes [sic] for Seeger” No. 1, mm. 12-21

The first section of the two-part work cadences on a diminished octave at the downbeat of m. 21, but it involves only two voices, the soprano and alto. The second section of the piece begins on beat 2 of m. 21 with a stretto-like passage of imitative counterpoint that uses a new subject. It is derived from the first phrase of the initial subject, which has been slightly altered and abbreviated. The new subject is shown in ex. 2.35 and the stretto passage follows in ex. 2.36.



Ex. 2.35. Cowell, “Exercizes [sic] for Seeger” No. 1, new subject, mm. 21-23

Interval markings for Ex. 2.36:

- Measures 21-24: 7 +8 7 +8 +9 +8 +9 +8 m7 °8 m7
- Measures 25-27: °8 +4 3 m7 +8 +4 m3

Ex. 2.36. Cowell, “Exercizes [sic] for Seeger” No. 1, stretto passage, mm. 21-27

The final section of the work (ex. 2.37) comprises three restatements of the initial subject. The first restatement occurs at the original pitch level in the alto voice in m. 27, and this dovetails into the second restatement of the subject, which is split between the bass and soprano voices. The first phrase of the subject is found in the bass voice (mm. 30-31) and the second phrase continues in the soprano voice (mm. 32-33). This overlaps with a final statement of the initial subject, which begins on beat 2 of m. 33 in the bass voice. While “Exercizes for Seeger” No. 1 is a substantially lengthier composition than the other three written on the page, it still resembles a didactic exercise influenced by Cowell’s work with dissonant counterpoint, more specifically a three-voice fugue, which is a typical advanced step in the process of learning how to use contrapuntal techniques.

Ex. 2.37. Cowell, “Exercizes [sic] for Seeger” No. 1, mm. 27-38

Cowell's First String Quartet presents a more in-depth and sustained application of the technique to a large, multi-movement chamber genre that traditionally served among composers as a means to demonstrate one's skill. He wrote the String Quartet No. 1, L. 197, in 1916 shortly after beginning his work on dissonant counterpoint. The introductory note to the published score discusses the relationship between the musical style, dissonant counterpoint, and Cowell's original name for the work.⁶²

Henry Cowell's First String Quartet was originally called the *Pedantic* because in 1916 dissonance and even counterpoint in contemporary composition were regarded with severity as "uninspired" and were relegated strictly to the world of academic theory.⁶³

In addition to recounting Cowell's work with Seeger on dissonant counterpoint, the note also provides a description of each movement in the piece.⁶⁴

The work is in two movements of which the first is the longest, and written in the first systematically dissonant style Cowell evolved, a style that was in rather literal contradiction to convention: consonance was reserved for passing tones and resolved into dissonance. The second movement is homophonic and comparatively short. Chords are usually in five parts; their basis is consonant but each includes one or two dissonant tones that are not resolved.⁶⁵

⁶² There is no information provided in the score for String Quartet No. 1 regarding the identity of the author of the introductory note; given the late publication date for this work, the notes may have been written by Sidney Cowell. Other scores such as the *Quartet Romantic* and *Quartet Euphometric* identify Henry Cowell as the author of the introduction. Also, the introduction to String Quartet No. 4 states, "this introductory note was written before Henry Cowell's death on December 10, 1965." See Henry Cowell, *String Quartet No. 4* (New York: C. F. Peters, 1966). Cowell had a habit of referring to himself in the third person in the introductory notes and commentary of his works; this held true among those instances in which Cowell was also identified as the author.

⁶³ Henry Cowell, *String Quartet No. 1, 2*.

⁶⁴ While String Quartet No. 1 was ultimately published in 1965 with two movements, a program from Tuesday, Feb. 2 (1926) lists a string quartet with three movements. Based on the description in the program notes, it seems that the two parts of the first movement from the 1965 publication were originally presented in concert as movements 1 and 2, and that the second movement would have been movement 3.

⁶⁵ Henry Cowell, *String Quartet No. 1, 2*.

Finally, the introduction provides a rough chronological distinction between the String Quartet No. 1 and the other two quartets that he was writing during (and shortly after) his time at Berkeley, the *Quartet Romantic* and *Quartet Euphometric*. It states, “after finishing this piece Cowell went to work, in the same year, on the two so-called “rhythm-harmony” quartets, the *Romantic* and the *Euphometric* . . .”⁶⁶

The first movement of the String Quartet No. 1 can be divided into two distinct sections, and in each one Cowell investigates the application of contrapuntal techniques within the framework of dissonant counterpoint. The A section (mm. 1-43) opens with free counterpoint in all four voices in mm. 1-2. In m. 3 a motive arises in the cello part from the sustained note E in m. 2 (ex. 2.38). It is accompanied by whole notes in the other three parts; the lack of rhythmic activity in the other parts calls attention to the cello motive.



Ex. 2.38. Cowell, String Quartet No. 1, mvmt. 1, m. 3, motive in the cello part
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The melodic motion is primarily disjunct; it begins on E, descends a minor second and then an octave, ascends by a leap of a major seventh, and skips down a minor third. This motive is repeated in m. 5 of the cello part on G and then imitated by the first violin in m. 6 on B-natural, and by the second violin beginning on the last beat of m. 6 on B-flat (ex. 2.39). As the motive is imitated in the different voices, Cowell uses free counterpoint in the remaining three voices to weave vertical dissonant intervals around the melody.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

3	+4	5	°8	°6	5	6	+6	7	m7	6	m7	°6	°5	3	5		
7	+9	3	°8	°9	+4	+++4	+5	7	m9	°3	m9	7	5	m6			
+9	3	4	m6	m6	m7	7	m7	4	3	+6	9	m3	°4	m3	+8	6	6

Ex. 2.39. Cowell, String Quartet No. 1, mvmt. 1, mm. 5-7
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The B section of the first movement (mm. 44-79) looks as if it could have been a separate movement; the beginning is preceded by three measures of rest in all the parts at the end of the A section, and it is labeled with a different tempo marking, quarter note = 112, and the instruction *Allegro non troppo*. In this section of the first movement imitation pervades all four voices (ex. 2.40). The opening motive in the viola part primarily comprises disjunct melodic motion in consonant intervals: a perfect fourth, followed by a minor third, a perfect fifth, and a minor third, after which the motive moves by a step, a major third, and two more steps. Despite the consonant intervals involved in the melodic motion of the motive, Cowell maintains a dissonant relationship between the voices by stating the motive in the viola on F-sharp, then on F in the cello, C-sharp in the second violin, and finally on B-flat in the first violin. The B section strongly resembles a canon, although it is not a pure example of the form; as each voice progresses there are several spots in which a melodic part departs from either the original durations or intervallic motion from note to note.

Ex. 2.40. Cowell, String Quartet No. 1, mvmt. 1, mm. 44-49
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The second movement of the String Quartet No. 1 features sustained dissonant sonorities moving primarily homorhythmically and melodic motion that is mostly conjunct. For these reasons, the second movement has the character of a five-voice study in first-species dissonant counterpoint, despite the description in the introduction cited above, which refers to these sonorities as consonant chords with unresolved dissonances. Example 2.41 shows the vertical sonorities from mm. 1-4 condensed onto a grand staff with figures below the staff that indicate the intervals above the bass voice.

Ex. 2.41. Cowell, String Quartet No. 1, mvmt. 2, sonorities from mm. 1-4
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Historically, composers had used the string quartet to demonstrate their skills.⁶⁷ Thus, perhaps in an effort to lend legitimacy and significance to the new compositional method, Cowell chose the traditional genre to explore an in-depth application of dissonant counterpoint over a sustained period of time, using various polyphonic textures and methods, including imitative and homorhythmic polyphony and the canon.

In the *Quartet Romantic* and *Quartet Euphometric*, Cowell melded dissonant counterpoint with his experiments in complex rhythmic relationships within in each melody and between the four polyphonic parts. Rather than using the homogenous ensemble of the string quartet, in the *Quartet Romantic* Cowell opted for a more heterogeneous scoring comprising two flutes, a violin, and viola. The *Quartet Romantic*, L. 223, and *Quartet Euphometric*, L. 283, were published together in 1974, nine years after Cowell's death. In the introduction, which is dated January 1964, Cowell stated,

The two quartets that I called "rhythm-harmony" pieces at the time were composed between 1915 and 1919, when I was stimulated by the relationship between harmonic and rhythmic ratios.⁶⁸

More specifically Cowell dates the *Quartet Romantic* from 1915-17 and the *Quartet Euphometric* from 1916-19. While both of these quartets showcase Cowell's experiments with rhythm, they also employ the method of dissonant counterpoint. The preface notes,

Both quartets are polyphonic, and each melodic strand has its own rhythm. Even the canon in the first movement of the "Romantic" has different note-lengths for each voice. The second movement relaxes into more conventional rhythm (hence the name "Romantic") but continues with dissonant counterpoint. The *Quartet Euphometric* ("euphonious meters") has a similar spare polyphonic structure, but there are accents which give a different rhythmic grouping.⁶⁹

In both quartets the tonal material is not based on modes or scales. Since I used all twelve tones freely, the pieces are atonal. But unlike the atonal styles then developing abroad . . . the melodic lines are more often conjunct than not, and the vertical combinations use consonance as well as dissonance in varying degrees, not, of course, conventionally resolved.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Cliff Eisen, Paul Griffiths, and Antonio Baldassarre, "String Quartet," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Deane Root, in *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed February 9, 2010.

⁶⁸ Henry Cowell, *Quartet Romantic* and *Quartet Euphometric* (New York: C. F. Peters, 1974).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

The first movement of the *Quartet Romantic* can be divided into two sections. The A section (mm. 1-56) comprises a four-voice contrapuntal texture with different complex rhythms in each voice. The B section, which is identified as a canon in the preface, is not a pure example of the technique but resembles the idea of the canon. It features imitative counterpoint in which a subject is presented in each of the four voices with some variations. It is played first by the second flute (mm. 57-72), and next by the violin (mm. 73-88), but in the second presentation the melody has been altered. The third statement is presented in diminution in the flute 1 part (mm. 89-104), and the fourth statement in augmented rhythmic values in the viola part (mm. 105-125). The alteration of the rhythmic values in the third and fourth statements results in stratified rhythmic activity among the four voices in the contrapuntal texture (ex. 2.42).

The image shows a musical score for four staves, likely representing different instruments in a quartet. The score is divided into two measures. The first measure contains rhythmic markings of 9, 6, 5 1/3, and 3 3/4. The second measure contains rhythmic markings of 9, 10 2/3, 6 2/3, and 3 3/4. The notation includes various note values, rests, and accidentals, illustrating complex rhythmic relationships between the voices.

Ex. 2.42. Cowell, *Quartet Romantic*, mvmt. 1, mm. 105-106
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As the melody is stated in each of the four parts, the remaining voices continue in non-imitative counterpoint. The second statement of the theme demonstrates the influence of dissonant counterpoint in a two-voice polyphonic texture (ex. 2.43); the main theme is featured in the violin and free counterpoint is found in the second flute. In addition to the complex rhythmic relationships between the two voices, most of the intervals are dissonant, with occasional intervening consonances. The counterpoint in the violin part is written in primarily stepwise motion. The consonant intervals in this passage (and throughout the first movement) are not usually preceded and followed by stepwise motion to and from dissonant intervals,

although Cowell alluded to this in the preface to the piece when he stated, “the vertical combinations use consonance as well as dissonance in varying degrees, not, of course, conventionally resolved.”⁷¹

Ex. 2.43. Cowell, *Quartet Romantic*, mvmt. 1, mm. 73-76
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⁷¹ Ibid.

The second movement of the *Quartet Romantic* also demonstrates Cowell's use of dissonant counterpoint. The opening presents a staggered entry of all four parts with related musical material in each part (ex. 2.44).

The musical score for Ex. 2.44 is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 6, and the second system covers measures 7 through 11. The instruments are Flute 1, Flute 2, Violin, and Viola. The tempo is marked 'Calmly'. The dynamics are *mp* (measures 1-4), *pp* (measures 7-8), and *p* (measures 8-11). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. Intervallic relationships are indicated by numbers and symbols: m3, 4, 5, +6, 7, +4, +8 in measure 5; +8, m7, +4, 2, +2 in measure 8; and 6, m7, 8, 9, 3, °8, °7, °6, dd5, °4, °6, °5, 3, °5, +9 in measure 11.

Ex. 2.44. Cowell, *Quartet Romantic*, mvmt. 2, mm. 1-11
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A theme is presented in the flute 1 part (mm. 1-4), and it recurs in various guises throughout the entire movement. The melody in the violin part (mm. 4-8) presents an inversion of the general contour of the theme from mm. 1-4. In m. 8 the theme is imitated in the viola part with some alterations to the rhythm, and it is accompanied in the flute 2 part by another statement of the theme, in which the melodic intervals have been altered slightly. If it was an exact imitation,

then in mm. 9-10 the melody in the flute 2 part should leap from F up to E-double-flat; however, the melody ascends an octave instead of a diminished seventh.

The passage in mm. 12-20 features four-voice imitative counterpoint, in which a new theme is presented in all four voices (ex. 2.45).

Intervallic analysis for mm. 12-20:

	+9	7	5	5	m9	+8	+4	4	9	5	3	+4	3	+4	4	7	m9						
m6	5		+5	7	9	+3	+4	+4	+4	+6		+8	+2	6	m6	5	m7						
4	3			4	m6	°5	+5	m7	m3	3	5	m3	7	+8	+5	9	+8	+4	3	+8	+9	7	m3

°8	9	m3	°5	m3	5	m7	7	7	4	°5	m9	9	7	m3	m9	m3	9					
m6	°4	8	9	m6	5	8	9	6	m3	°8	+9	+9	6	°8	°5	6	+4	5	5	3	+4	m3
m3		3	5	m3	3	+4	6	5	+5	5	4	°5	°6	m3	+4	+2	7	6	m6	5	+4	

Ex. 2.45. Cowell, *Quartet Romantic*, mvmt. 2, mm. 12-20

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The theme (marked by an asterisk in ex. 2.45) is initially stated in the first flute part (m. 12-14), and then imitated in the violin (mm. 14-16), second flute (mm. 17-19), and finally the viola (mm. 18-20), each time undergoing minor alterations. As the theme is presented in a given voice, the other voices comprise freely composed dissonant counterpoint. There are a variety of consonant intervals that exist between the viola part (the bottom voice) and the upper parts, although each sonority features at least one dissonant interval between two of the parts. As in other compositions, Cowell uses consecutive consonant intervals. In fact, there are two instances of parallel fifths: the first is found between the first flute and viola moving from beat 4 of m. 12 to the first beat of m. 13, and the second exists between the second flute and viola moving from beat 4 of m. 19 to the first beat of m. 20.

While Cowell achieved a sustained application of dissonant counterpoint in multi-movement instrumental chamber works such as the String Quartet No. 1, *Quartet Romantic*, and *Quartet Euphometric*, he also used the technique in keyboard works. *Wafting*, L. 353/5, a short character piece for piano, was written in 1917 and first published in 1922 in a collection titled *Six Ings*, which included: 1. Floating, 2. Frisking, 3. Fleeting, 4. Scooting, 5. Wafting, and 6. Seething.⁷² Cowell composed pieces 3-6 in 1917, and numbers 1 and 2 in 1922.⁷³ *Wafting*, which comprises thirty measures, demonstrates the influence of dissonant counterpoint in a five-voice texture (ex. 2.46). Regarding Cowell's use of the technique, this piece exhibits characteristics similar to other works discussed thus far. The melodic motion within each voice is primarily conjunct, and there are mostly dissonant intervallic relationships between the voices. Some voices in a given vertical sonority contain tones that are consonant with the bottom voice or other voices in the sonority, but there is always at least one dissonance between the other parts. For example, on the downbeat of m. 6 the C is a minor third above A in the lowest voice, the E is a perfect fifth above A, and the F is a minor sixth above the lowest note. The F and E are a major seventh apart from one another, however, and there is an A-flat in another voice, which is a diminished octave above the lowest note. As in the other compositions from this time period, the occurrence of consonant intervals is not always "carefully prepared and resolved," or in other words, preceded and followed by a dissonant interval and accompanied by stepwise melodic motion.

⁷² Henry Cowell, *Six Ings* (New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1922).

⁷³ David Nicholls, "Henry Cowell," in *Grove Music Online*.

6 5 m6 °8 +8 °4 m3 9 m9
+4 4 °5 m6 6 °8 (°8) 9 m7 m9
+9 3 7 9 9 3 4 5 °4 3 m3 m6 5 3 +4 m3 +8 9
+6 +5 6 m6 °7 °7 m7 °7 m6

Ex. 2.46. Cowell, *Wafting*, mm. 4-6
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Summary

As the preceding discussion demonstrates, Henry Cowell actively applied his evolving theories of dissonant counterpoint during his studies at Berkeley (1914-17). In his personal notebook he laid out principles for a compositional practice that subverted the rules of traditional counterpoint, and he systematically explored their application in forty-three didactic exercises. This practical experience revealed a number of problems and issues associated with the guidelines. Cowell also utilized dissonant counterpoint in several compositions that date from his years at Berkeley, notably *Polyphonics Nos. 1 and 2*, “Exercizes for Seeger,” String Quartet No. 1, the *Quartet Romantic* and *Quartet Euphometric*, and *Wafting*. Analysis of various portions of these works reveals that Cowell used the method with a certain degree of freedom, making compositional choices that appear to break the rules. However, Cowell’s flexible application of the guidelines for dissonant counterpoint in his musical works should come as no surprise, considering two statements he made in his book *New Musical Resources*. In the preface

Cowell asserted, “the aim of any technique is to perfect the means of expression. If a technique serves to dry up and inhibit the expression, it is useless as a technique.”⁷⁴

Recognizing the need for flexibility in the application of any rules Cowell added,

The detailed manner in which each material may be handled is hardly a matter to be decided beforehand and forced upon composers; each one has the right and desire to manage his own materials in such a fashion that they become the best vehicle for his own musical expression.⁷⁵

While *New Musical Resources* was not completed until 1919, Cowell’s Berkeley years certainly shaped the ideas presented in the book. In his use of dissonant counterpoint Cowell likely felt free to use the guidelines that he had helped to develop in a flexible manner that was informed by his own personal compositional aesthetic at the time.

⁷⁴ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, xii.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 138.

CHAPTER 3

“ARRESTED” DEVELOPMENT AND CONTRAPUNTAL PRACTICE: COWELL AND DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT, 1917-1929

During the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s, at a time when Charles Seeger had abandoned his work with dissonant counterpoint, Cowell developed and disseminated the technique through his composing, concert program notes, written publications, and professional contacts with other composers. Seeger noted in a 1977 interview with Andrea Olmstead that after 1918 he “didn’t think about it anymore” until he began working with Ruth Crawford in late 1929.¹ Meanwhile, subsequent to his work at Berkeley, Cowell continued to use dissonant counterpoint in many of his compositions from the 1920s, including *Vestiges* (1920), *Trio: Four Combinations for Three Instruments* (1924), *Ensemble for String Quintet with Thunder-sticks* (1924), *Seven Paragraphs* (1925), *Movement for String Quartet* (1928), *Two Woofs for Piano* (1928), and *Four Little Solos for String Quartet* (1928). He also discussed the compositional method in concert program notes from 1926, which became another forum to educate the public about the technique. Cowell wrote about dissonant counterpoint in several publications, thus disseminating the idea to a wider audience. Included among his writings were his book *New Musical Resources* and two articles from 1928, “New Terms for New Music” in *Modern Music* and “Carlos Chávez” in *Pro-Musica Quarterly*, the journal of the Pro-Musica Society. Beginning in 1917 Cowell established a network of composers who were interested in avant-garde ultra-modern music, and he shared the method with them. Among his professional contacts during this period were Carl Ruggles, Dane Rudhyar, Ruth Crawford, Henry Brant, John J. Becker, and Wallingford Riegger. With the exception of Rudhyar, all of these composers wrote works that used dissonant counterpoint.

¹ Charles Seeger, interview with Andrea Olmstead, 10. Seeger’s relevant comments from the interview are cited in Chapter 2.

Cowell's Works

Throughout the 1920s Cowell employed dissonant counterpoint in a variety of chamber genres. Among those discussed in this chapter are two solo works for piano, two pieces for string quartet, a string quintet with thunder-sticks, demonstrating the influence of Cowell's study of world music cultures, and two trios, one for violin, cello, and piano, and the other for violin, viola, and cello. Since in actual compositions Cowell did not feel bound to adhere to the principles of dissonant counterpoint as orthodox rules, there are many ways in which the technique could be adapted within his compositional approaches. The works discussed in this chapter demonstrate greater flexibility on Cowell's part in his use of the technique. However, he also continued earlier practices that were influenced by his work on dissonant counterpoint, notably 1) mostly conjunct melodies, 2) both dissonant and consonant intervals between the voices, though primarily dissonances, and 3) varying degrees of strict and flexible handling of consonant intervals, the strictest of which would entail its being preceded and followed by dissonant intervals accompanied by stepwise melodic motion leading toward and away from the consonance.

Vestiges, L. 305 (1920), is a short, through-composed piano work that comprises three discrete sections labeled, *Allegretto Maestoso*, *Calmato*, and *Meno mosso*. Cowell's use of dissonant counterpoint can be found at the beginning of the section marked "*Meno mosso*" (ex. 3.1). Beneath the staff I have marked the intervals above the bass. While this passage technically comprises three voices, the top voice doubles the first note of each triplet figure in the middle voice. Due to the metrical complexities and the absence of measure numbers in the original score, I will refer to each quarter-note in the upper voice as a beat.

The melody in the top part is primarily conjunct, while the melodies in the middle and bottom parts are characterized by mostly disjunct motion. A complex rhythmic relationship between the middle and bottom voices, three against four, provides a sense of rhythmic dissonance to underscore the dissonant intervallic relationships between all three voices.² Consonances are included, but Cowell does not usually handle them in a strict manner.

² Ideas of rhythmic and metrical dissonance figure more prominently in Seeger's writings on dissonant counterpoint than in those written by Cowell. Despite this, Cowell used these techniques in many of his works. The others included in this document are *Two Woofs*, discussed below, and *Suite for Woodwind Quintet* in Chapter 4.

Meno Mosso

p *legato*

+4 9 7 +4 7 9 6 m9 3 m7 5 7 3 5 7
 +4 9 2 7 3 7 7 9 2 5 9 m9 3 m7 m9 m7 7 3 5 7 +9

7 +3 +5 °8 m3 °7 +8 +4 5 7 m3 6
 7 +3 7 9 °8 m3 5 m9 +8 +4 m3 °4 7 m3 6 +9

Ex. 3.1. Cowell, *Vestiges*, opening of *meno mosso* section
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Many of the consonant intervals are preceded and followed by dissonances, but the consonance is usually approached and/or left by disjunct rather than stepwise motion, a consequence of the disjunct melodies in the middle and bottom voices. For example, in beat 1 the third sixteenth note in the bottom voice, G, is a major seventh below F-sharp in the middle voice, which leaps up to B, a major third above G. Additionally, the bottom voice leaps down to C, which is a major seventh below B. In several instances (at beats 4, 5, and 8) there are consecutive consonant intervals between the bottom and middle voices, which are not prepared or resolved by stepwise voice leading. For example, at beat 4 the bottom voice leaps from E, a major seventh below the middle and top voices, to B, a major third below the D-sharp. This is followed by a leap down to G-sharp, a perfect fifth below D-sharp.

Hence there is movement from a dissonance to a consonance, which does not resolve to a dissonant interval but proceeds to another consonance; this is accompanied by disjunct melodic motion in the bottom voice. Cowell's use of dissonant counterpoint in this short piano work centers on a free contrapuntal texture and manifests a rather flexible approach to the guidelines.

A multi-movement work for string quintet and thunder-sticks allowed him to investigate a more sustained use of the technique, while also drawing upon a variety of contrapuntal devices and textures. Cowell wrote *Ensemble for String Quintet and Thunder-sticks*, L. 380, in 1924 and dedicated it to Blanche Walton, an active patron of modern music in New York City. It comprises four movements, each with a different scoring. The first movement, labeled "Larghetto," is scored for string quintet (two violins, one viola, two cellos) and three thunder-sticks, which are instructed to improvise their parts throughout the movement. Cowell uses a string quartet for the second movement, "Prestissimo."³ The third movement, marked "Adagio legato" is for solo cello and solo thunder-stick. A string quintet is used for the fourth movement, labeled "Allegro." Throughout the first, second, and fourth movements Cowell uses dissonant counterpoint in a variety of contrapuntal textures, including homorhythmic, imitative, and non-imitative polyphony. Since it is not really possible to discuss consonance and dissonance in thunder-stick music, my analysis focuses on passages in the second and fourth movements.

The second movement is divided into two distinct parts, the second of which begins at m. 88 after a double bar and is labeled "Trio." The movement commences with a theme presented in the cello part (mm. 1-8), accompanied by dissonant counterpoint in the other three parts (ex. 3.2). This theme appears in various guises throughout the second movement.

³ The second movement, comprising 259 measures, is substantially larger than any other movement in the work. The first mvmt. is 112 mm., the third is 62 mm., and the fourth is 70 mm.

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello

p *p* *p* *mp* *pp*

+4	5	m9	9	°3	°5	m9	7	°7	m6	+8	m3	5	m3	°8	9	--	m7	°8	m9
4	°5	°7	--	4	7	6	5	4	7	7	3	+4	m3	9	4				°5
3	4	m7	+2	3	6	+4	+4	m9	6	5	7	6	+5	6	°4				

Ex. 3.2. Cowell, *Ensemble*, mvmt. 2, mm. 1-8

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In the trio section a slightly abbreviated version of the theme is featured in an imitative passage (mm. 199-218), where it is presented successively in each of the four parts (ex. 3.3). In m. 199 the cello states the theme, while the other parts are *tacit*. Next, it is presented in the viola in m. 204, while the cello plays a free melody in dissonant counterpoint. The third entrance of the theme is located in the first violin at m. 209 and is slightly varied. If it were an exact imitation of the theme, then between mm. 211 and 212 the E should leap down a major seventh (or an enharmonic equivalent), and ascend a tritone. Instead the melody leaps up a diminished octave and descends a minor sixth. The final statement of the theme occurs at m. 214 in the second violin.

199 200 201 202 203 204 205

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *p*

m9 °8 °5 9 m9 m6

206 207 208 209 210 211 212

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *p*

7 +8 9 m9 +4 7 6 +4 +2 3 m3 °8 4 m3 °4 °8 7 +5 +6 m9 7 9 4

213 214 215 216 217 218

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *mf*

m3 °8 m7 7 9 m7 m7 6 5 +8 7 +5 7 +8 °8 m7 m6 +4 m7 4 7 m7 m9 7 5 4 m3 4 +8 3 6 +3 3 +5 4 +6 +4 5

Ex. 3.3. Cowell, *Ensemble*, mvmt. 2, mm. 199-218
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The opening of the fourth movement of *Ensemble* demonstrates Cowell's use of dissonant counterpoint in a five-voice passage that comprises primarily homorhythmic polyphony with imitation between the two bottom voices (see ex. 3.4).

Allegro

°8	4	4	m7	°5	°6	°8	dd5	m9	m3	+8	+9	+4	7	--	°6	°5	°4				
5	m3	m9	°5	m9	°3	°7	m9	°8	m9	6	7	+9	+5	--	°3	m9	°8				
9	m9	m7	m3	m7	°8	m6	°7	°7	°8	4	5	4	4	--	°8	m7	m6				
--	+5	+4	3	--	4	5	m6	--	m7	m6	°5	--	2	3	+4	--	3	+2	+u	m3	m3

Ex. 3.4. Cowell, *Ensemble*, mvmt. 4, mm. 1-6
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The melodies in the first and second violin parts are mostly conjunct, and the melodies in the other three parts move in primarily disjunct motion. There is always at least one dissonant interval between one of the upper parts and the lowest voice, and often there are two or more dissonances. Each vertical sonority also features at least one consonant interval between one of the upper parts and the lowest voice. The consonances are not always prepared and/or resolved by stepwise voice leading in both parts. Instead some consonant intervals are preceded or followed by a leap in one or both of the parts involved. For example, in m. 3 the melody in the first cello begins on G-sharp, a minor seventh above A-sharp in the second cello part, and leaps up to B, while the second cello leaps up to D-sharp, a minor sixth below B. The minor sixth resolves to a diminished fifth by means of conjunct motion in the first cello part (from B down to A) against the stationary D-sharp in the second cello. There are also instances of consecutive

consonances in this passage that occur in m. 2 between the melodies in first and second cello, in mm. 4-5 between the second cello and viola, and in m. 6 between the melodies in the first and second cello. Beyond demonstrating Cowell's successful use of dissonant counterpoint in a larger multi-movement work for string quintet, *Ensemble for String Quintet and Thunder-sticks* also shows his interest in melding modernist compositional techniques with the materials from musical cultures outside the Western art music tradition, a practice that he used over a decade later in the 1936 work *String Quartet No. 4: United Quartet*.

Cowell continued to explore the application of dissonant counterpoint in other chamber genres such as the classic piano trio, scored for piano, violin, and cello. *Trio: Four Combination for Three Instruments*, L. 383 (1924), comprises four short movements, each with different scoring and a contrasting tempo. On an incomplete ink draft of the violin and cello parts for this work Cowell wrote, "Varities [sic] (Combinations), being a set of several little pieces in variegated style for different combinations of a piano trio set. Written Specially for N. Y. Trio."⁴ The first movement, "Allegretto," presents two-voice polyphony for the violin and cello. In the "Largo" second movement the violin is accompanied by the piano, which features octaves in the left hand and mostly secundal harmonies that are not written as tone-clusters in the right hand. The third movement, "Allegro," features a cello solo with a piano accompaniment that is primarily chordal. The full trio ensemble, comprising violin, cello, and piano, is used in the fourth movement, "Largo." Imitative melodies in the violin and cello are accompanied by sustained secundal harmonies (also not written as tone-clusters) and octave pedal tones in the piano part.

The first movement features two-voice counterpoint, but the ratio of consonant to dissonant intervals is much higher than in previous works that demonstrate the influence of dissonant counterpoint on Cowell's compositional style. Ex. 3.5 displays mm. 1-7, which are representative of the entire movement. There are nearly an equal number of dissonant and consonant intervals between the two voices. In addition, both melodies are quite distinct in their contour and rhythmic activity, and their voice leading is primarily disjunct, often including wide leaps. The larger number of consonances and the independent character of each melody suggest the "sonant" and "consonant" counterpoint described by Cowell in his 1926 programs from New

⁴ Lichtenwanger, *The Music of Henry Cowell*, 99.

York and Brno and also the new polyphonic practice discussed in his 1928 article “Carlos Chávez,” all of which are discussed below.⁵

Violin

Cello

Violin

Viola

Intervallic analysis for measures 1-4 (Violin/Cello):

m3 2 +4 6 4 7 3 9 m3 6 +5 m6 m3 2 m3 2 m3 °7 m2 m3 3 m6 +2

Intervallic analysis for measures 5-7 (Violin/Viola):

6 m6 2 +2 2 6 m7 2 m3 4 m7 m3 2 3 +4 3 +4 m9 m3 m7 +5 6 +5 6 m7 6

Ex. 3.5. Cowell, *Trio*, mvmt. 1, mm. 1-7.
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In accordance with Cowell’s descriptions of these related contrapuntal techniques, his rather flexible treatment of consonance in the first movement of *Trio* is likely the result of focusing on creating independent melodic lines rather than being concerned with the intervals that are produced by the counterpoint. Consonant intervals are seldom prepared or resolved by stepwise voice leading in each part. For example in m. 1, the melody moves by a descending leap from B-flat, an augmented fourth below E, to G, a major sixth below the upper voice, then by step to A, a perfect fourth beneath the top voice. Finally, this chain of consecutive consonances is resolved by a descending leap to F, a major seventh below E. In addition to the free resolution of consonances, there are many instances of consecutive consonant intervals. In mm. 1-6, a consecutive consonance occurs in each measure. Beginning on beat 2 of m. 4 there

⁵ Concert program, Feb. 2 (1926), Aeolian Hall, contained in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 66 folder 12, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; Concert Program, April 9, 1926, contained in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 66 folder 13, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; Henry Cowell, “Carlos Chávez,” *Pro-Musica Quarterly* 7/1 (June 1928), 19-23. The 1926 concert programs and Chávez article are discussed below.

are three consonances (a minor third, major third, and minor third), followed by an enharmonic dissonance (an augmented second), and two more consonances (a major sixth and minor sixth) at the beginning of m. 5. Cowell's *Trio* reflects not only his flexible application of the guidelines associated with dissonant counterpoint, but also his use of the technique in another traditional chamber genre besides the string quartet.

Cowell also used the method in a different type of chamber work for three players, a string trio. He wrote *Seven Paragraphs*, L. 408, in 1925 for violin, viola, and cello; all seven brief movements manifest polyphonic textures. This piece was featured on Cowell's 1926 concert in New York as "Chapter in Seven Paragraphs for Violin, Viola, and 'Cello.'"⁶ In the program notes the composer identifies the work as an example of "sonant counterpoint," about which Cowell explained,

Following the development of dissonant counterpoint, I began utilizing it with consonant counterpoint, welding them together in a new polyphony in which the consideration was no longer dissonance or consonance, either one being used according to the demand of the melodic outline.⁷

All seven movements present different approaches to writing three-voice counterpoint using this new polyphonic method derived from dissonant and consonant counterpoint. The opening of the fifth movement demonstrates Cowell's use of sonant counterpoint (see ex. 3.6). Most notable is the high ratio of consonant to dissonant intervals, which is similar to the first movement of Cowell's *Trio: Four Combination for Three Instruments*. However, as opposed to *Trio*, there are vertical sonorities in *Seven Paragraphs* that are entirely comprised of consonant intervals, including triads. For example, the vertical sonority on the downbeat of m. 2 is a first-inversion B-flat minor chord.

⁶ The composition was originally scored for two violins and a cello, and performed as such in a December 1928 Copland-Sessions Concert in New York. Cowell wrote "Violin 2 (or viola)" on an incomplete pencil draft of the piece. Lichtenwanger posits that the viola was "no doubt suggested because the ordinary string trio uses a viola and insistence on 2 violins might cause the work to be passed over." See Lichtenwanger, *The Music of Henry Cowell*, 108. The 1926 New York program is discussed below.

⁷ Concert program, Feb. 2 (1926), Aeolian Hall.

Andante

Violin

Viola

Cello

Violin

Viola

Vc.

m3 4 6 m3 m9 5 +4 m3 m3 2 +4 m3 m3 5

3 2 4 5 4 +2 m3 m3 2 m3 m3 2

4 5 9 4 5 +4 m6 m7 2 °8 5 m6

3 3 3 m3 3 3 m3 m3 m3 2 +2 3

Ex. 3.6. Cowell, *Seven Paragraphs*, mvmt. 5, mm. 1-8

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Despite the predominance of consonant intervals in this piece, including entirely consonant chords in some instances, there are also vertical sonorities that feature at least one dissonant interval. Since dissonant and consonant intervals are freely used according to the dictates of the melodic lines, it follows that there are no strict specifications for the preparation or resolution of consonant or dissonant intervals. Consonant intervals are no longer required to be preceded and followed by dissonant intervals using stepwise motion in both voices. Thus, it would not be uncommon to find a lengthy passage of consecutive consonances such as that in mm. 5-7, where there are eight consecutive thirds between the viola and cello parts. In this passage there are numerous dissonant relationships between the three voices, while there are only three purely consonant vertical sonorities: on the second beats of mm. 5 and 6 and the downbeat of m. 7. Cowell's relaxed application of the guidelines for dissonant counterpoint found in *Seven*

Paragraphs demonstrates one way that he used the technique. It should not, however, be mistaken for a consistent trend toward tempering the compositional method as posited by Bruce Saylor in his article “The Tempering of Henry Cowell’s Dissonant Counterpoint.”⁸

Three years later Cowell’s 1928 composition *Movement for String Quartet*, L. 450, which was later referred to as the String Quartet No. 2, presents a stricter adherence to the guidelines for dissonant counterpoint throughout the piece.⁹ Cowell wrote the piece “For Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge with deep appreciation of all her excellent work for all Contemporary Creative Music.”¹⁰ The work comprises a single movement in a modified arch form articulated as follows:

section:	A	B	C	B’	A’	B’’
measure #:	1	20	27	55	67	86

The A section begins with a theme presented in the first violin (mm. 1-4), and fragments of it are imitated through the duration of the A section: in the first violin (mm. 6-8), twice in the cello (mm. 8-10 and mm. 10-11), in the second violin (m. 11), viola (m. 12), and twice in the first violin (mm. 13-15 and mm. 16-17). The B sections are characterized by dissonant homorhythmic polyphony in common time, with the rhythmic pattern of three quarter-notes followed by a rest. The C section features a conversational texture, in which short rhythmic motives are passed around to the various parts, while the remaining voices play homorhythmic polyphony.

The presentation of the theme in mm. 1-4 of the A section demonstrates the influence of dissonant counterpoint (ex. 3.7). The melodies in the second violin, viola, and cello are primarily conjunct, while the melody in the first violin includes more disjunct motion than in the other parts. Each of the vertical sonorities features at least one dissonant relationship among the parts, including those in which all the upper parts are consonant against the lowest voice. For

⁸ Saylor, “The Tempering of Henry Cowell’s Dissonant Counterpoint,” 3-12

⁹ Recall that Cowell had also used the method in his First String Quartet dated 1916. The work is discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁰ Lichtenwanger, *The Music of Henry Cowell*, 123. This statement found in the copyist’s full score highlights the integral role of various patrons in supporting the cause of modernist music in the United States during the 1920s.

example, on beat 3 of m. 2, all the upper parts share a consonant relationship with the bass part, but the second violin and viola are a minor second apart. Also on beat 4 of m. 3, all the upper voices are consonant against the cello, but the first violin and viola are a major seventh apart from each other.

Moderato

°8	°7	m6	7	6	+4	+5	7	m6	5	4	5	+5	
m6	°5	°4	5	4	5	6	7	m9	m3	m9	m3	4	+2
m3			3	3	3	3		m7	m6	6	7	+8	7

Ex. 3.7. Cowell, *Movement for String Quartet*, mm. 1-4
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While Cowell's handling of consonance in the *Movement for String Quartet* is much stricter than in the "sonant counterpoint" of *Seven Paragraphs*, he still allows for flexibility. A number of consonant intervals are preceded and followed by dissonant intervals, and sometimes this is also accompanied by stepwise motion in both melodies. For example, on beat 4 of m. 1, the melody in the first violin steps down from B-flat, a diminished seventh above C-sharp, to A, a major sixth above C-sharp. The consonance is followed by stepwise motion in the cello melody, which moves down by step to B-flat, a major seventh below the sustained A in the first violin. Usually, however, consonant intervals are accompanied by disjunct motion in one of the parts. For example, on beat 2 of m. 2 the melody in the first violin moves from A, a major seventh above B-flat in the cello, down by step to G-sharp, a major sixth above B-natural, which was approached by step in the cello. The major sixth proceeds to an augmented fourth, but this is accomplished by an ascending leap in the first violin from G-sharp to D-sharp, while the

melody in the cello moves down by step from B to A. There are also examples in this excerpt of consecutive consonant intervals within a single part, such as the one occurring in the first violin from beat 3 of m. 3 to beat 2 of m. 4, and simultaneously occurring consecutive consonances. On beat 2 of m. 2, the melodies in the second violin and viola parts are both consonant against the cello part for four beats.

At the return of the A section (mm. 67-70) the theme is presented in the first violin with minor rhythmic alterations, and the polyphonic accompaniment differs slightly from the initial statement of the main theme in mm. 1-4 (see ex. 3.8).

Tempo I

4	°8	°8	°7	7	+5	7	+4	+5	m6	5	4	5	+5			
4	°5	m3		+4	3	3	5	+4	6	7	9	m3	m9	m3	4	3
°4	°4	m6	°5	5	m3	°4		3	4	m7	m6	6	7	7		

Ex. 3.8. Cowell, *Movement for String Quartet*, mm. 67-70
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Beyond Cowell's stricter application of dissonant counterpoint found in this string quartet, he continued to pursue other flexible approaches to the guidelines for the technique. These are found in another piece written for a string quartet and a solo piano work, both of which were composed in the same year as the *Movement for String Quartet*. Cowell's 1928 piece *Four Little Solos for String Quartet*, L. 438, includes four movements: I. Allegro, II. Adagio, III.

Presto, and IV. Allegro Moderato.¹¹ The first movement features a four-voice contrapuntal texture (see ex. 3.9). The cello part is marked “solo,” and the first six measures demonstrate the influence of dissonant counterpoint, after which the first and second violins and viola are tacit for three measures until the final chord, which is played by all four instruments. The melody in the cello part is primarily disjunct, and the melodies in the other three parts are mostly conjunct, with the exception of m. 3, in which the three upper voices feature three descending leaps in similar motion. The intervallic relationships between the parts are primarily dissonant. Each vertical sonority features at least one dissonant interval, and often multiple dissonances.

	9	4	+9	+8	+3	+5	6	°6	°3	m9	m6	°5	m9	9	m6	°3	°8	3	5	+3	+u	+3	++4
m6	7	7		6	+8	4	°5	°4	°8	°7	°4	m3	m7	7	4	°8	+4	+6	+8	+6	+4	+5	+6
4	+4			3	+5	7	m7	m6	m3	°4	°8		°5	m3	°7	°5	6	+8	3	+8	6	7	+8

Ex. 3.9. Cowell, *Four Little Solos for String Quartet*, I, mm. 1-4

The work also demonstrates Cowell’s flexible treatment of consonant intervals. For example, in m. 1 the occurrence of a perfect fourth between the cello and first violin is accompanied by an ascending leap in both parts instead of conjunct motion. The first violin begins on D, a major ninth above the C in the cello, and leaps up to F, which is a perfect fourth above the C in the cello. The melody in the cello part has simultaneously ascended an octave. The consonant interval is resolved not by stepwise motion, but by a descending leap. In m. 1

¹¹ Henry Cowell, *Four Little Solos for String Quartet*, Henry Cowell Papers, box 33 folder 17, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. My complete edition of *Four Little Solos for String Quartet* can be found in Appendix E.

there is an instance of consonance being approached by step, but left by a leap. The cello part ascends from C, which is a major seventh below the second violin and an augmented fourth below the viola, to D, a major sixth below the second violin and a major third below the cello. The melody in the cello then leaps from D down to B-flat.

Two Woofs for Piano, L. 451, which also dates from 1928, includes a pair of short piano solos that each apply dissonance in different way. Both pieces comprise a *da capo* form: the A section is followed by a B section, and the repeat of the A section leads to a coda. The first *Woof* includes a melody in the left hand accompanied by closed-spaced chords in the right hand. The second *Woof* (ex. 3.10), written in a two-voice texture, demonstrates the influence of dissonant counterpoint; furthermore, each melody is distinguished by a different meter. In the A section the melody in the left hand is a simple triple meter (3/4) and the melody in the right hand is compound duple (6/8). The meters switch between the two parts for the B section (i.e., 6/8 in the left hand and 3/4 in the right hand). The juxtaposition of separate meters in the different voices provides a metrical dissonance between the two parts that underscores the composer's use of dissonant counterpoint.

Allegro

f

1 2 3 4 5

m9 8 m6 m7 m9 °8 °3 °4 m3 m9 °7 m6 °5 7 9 m6 4 m7 °8 m9 9 3 +4 +4 3 +8 9 m7 6

Ex. 3.10. Cowell, *Two Woofs*, II, mm. 1-5
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The melody in the bass voice is characterized by mostly disjunct voice-leading with occasional eighth-note passages in conjunct motion. In the upper voice the melody is primarily conjunct with occasional skips and leaps. The intervals between the voices are largely dissonant, but also include consonances. Cowell's treatment of consonance is approached with flexibility

and guided by the melody in the bass voice. Due to the disjunct motion in the bass it is seldom possible for the consonant intervals to be approached or left by stepwise voice-leading in both parts.

There are also instances of consecutive consonant intervals. For example in m.1 the upper melody moves down by step from C, a minor ninth above the bass note, to B, an octave above the stationary bass note. This perfect consonance is followed by a minor sixth formed when the melody in the upper voice moves down by step to A, while the bass note leaps up to C-sharp. Another example is found in m. 3. The bass voice leaps from F down to B, a minor sixth below G in the top voice. The minor sixth is followed by a perfect fourth, which results from a descending leap in the top voice from G to E. It is likely that Cowell's flexible approach to consonance in this piece was also informed by the idea of a new polyphonic practice discussed in his 1926 concert programs and the Chávez article. The primary focus should be placed on writing independent melodies regardless of the intervals produced by the counterpoint. The second piece in *Two Woofs* demonstrates more of a focus on the individual melodies than the vertical intervals produced by their contrapuntal combination.

Three Concert Programs From 1926

Beyond using the technique in various genres of musical works written during the 1920s, Cowell also included a description of it in some of his concert programs. The program notes for three concerts in 1926 – one each in New York City, Brno (Czechoslovakia), and Los Angeles – mention dissonant counterpoint and therefore disseminate Cowell's ideas about the technique to an even larger audience. The program for February 2, 1926 at Aeolian Hall in New York City featured a picture of Cowell playing the strings inside a grand piano and bore the title “Program of Compositions by Henry Cowell.”¹² Cowell began the notes by carving out a place for his new

¹² Concert program, Feb. 2 (1926), Aeolian Hall. The program, which identified the event as Cowell's first performance in New York, included the following works by Cowell: *Suite for Violin and Piano*, *Composition for String Piano with Ensemble* (first performance anywhere), *Chapter in Seven Paragraphs for Violin, Viola, and Cello*, *Quartett [sic] for String Quartett [sic]* (first performance anywhere), *The Cauldron*, *Exuberance*, *Aeolian Harp*, *The Banshee*, and *The Harp of Life*.

ideas: “Modern music has so progressed that to write extreme dissonance is not necessarily to innovate: it is possible to innovate only unique handling.”¹³ He continued,

Not because of striving for originality, but on account of the compelling urge of the musical idea, I find necessary in certain compositions the use of new materials, which, upon analysis afterwards, prove to be new tone qualities, new cross meters, and rhythms, new extensions of melodic line, new types of harmony and counterpoint, and combinations which are in themselves new, of new and old styles.¹⁴

Cowell provided a list of some of the new techniques used in the compositions, notably String Piano, Diatonic Tone-Clusters, Extended Melodic Line, Cross Rhythms, Dissonant Counterpoint, and Sonant Counterpoint, and described the new developments with contrapuntal methods as follows:

DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT

In 1915, before modern music was being so widely composed, I conceived the idea of a counterpoint in which old principles of melodic handling were strictly observed, but in which the fundamental intervals would be sevenths and seconds instead of thirds and sixths. I wrote several books of exercises in this counterpoint, with strictest surveillance of detail. The quartet on this program was written in 1916, and was the first free composition to employ the new technique. The second movement is a strict canon in dissonant counterpoint.¹⁵

SONANT COUNTERPOINT

Following the development of dissonant counterpoint, I began utilizing it with consonant counterpoint, welding them together in a new polyphony in which the consideration was no longer dissonance or consonance, either one being used according to the demand of the melodic outline. The “Chapter in Seven Paragraphs” is an example of this “sonant” counterpoint.¹⁶

Cowell’s description of sonant counterpoint demonstrates that he had given further thought to a freer application of dissonant counterpoint in order to allow for more artistic flexibility. Rather than strictly adhering to the rules of dissonant counterpoint in any given composition, he allowed

¹³ Concert program, Feb. 2 (1926), Aeolian Hall.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid. The *Quartett* [sic] for *String Quartett* [sic] on the program refers to his First String Quartet; it is presented on the program as a three-movement work, “Moderato—Allegro—Andante.”

¹⁶ Concert program, Feb. 2 (1926), Aeolian Hall.

himself to write in a new polyphonic style that was not encumbered by any considerations regarding the intervals produced by the various melodies but allowed for a focus on the structure of the melodies themselves. His descriptions of “dissonant” and “sonant” counterpoint above are similar to those he associated with dissonant counterpoint and a new polyphonic style described in his Chávez article.¹⁷

A surviving typescript indicates that Cowell gave a lecture and concert of his works in Brno, Czechoslovakia on April 9, 1926 in the Great Hall of the Besedniho domu, under the auspices of “the Moravian Urania, a people’s cultural and educational association in Brno.”¹⁸ Following a biographical sketch, Cowell provided a description of “the central features and technical innovations of [his] music . . .” which included the same topics as the February 2 concert program from New York City with some slight alterations to the terminology: String Piano, Diatonic Tone-Clusters, A Broadened Melodic Line, Cross Rhythms, Dissonant Counterpoint, and Consonant Counterpoint.¹⁹ Regarding dissonant and consonant counterpoint, Cowell wrote,

DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT

In the year 1915 I conceived the idea of developing on the foundations of the old principles of melodic progression a counterpoint – the basic intervals of which would be a seventh and a second instead of a third and a sixth. I have written several books of exercises in this form of counterpoint. In the year 1916 I composed a quartet employing this technique.²⁰

CONSONANT COUNTERPOINT

Along with my efforts to develop the dissonant counterpoint I began to employ it along with the consonant counterpoint, joining the two in a new polyphony in

¹⁷ Cowell, “Carlos Chávez,” 21-22. Salient portions from Cowell’s descriptions of dissonant counterpoint and the new polyphony in the article are discussed below.

¹⁸ Concert Program Typescript, April 9, 1926, contained in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 66 folder 13, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. There are two documents pertaining to this concert: a Czech program and an English typescript version of it. The concert included the following works: *The Tides of Manaunaun*, *The Cauldron of Fire*, *Amiable Conversation*, *Advertisement*, Solo for Violin accompanied by Thunder-sticks, Solo for Violin and String Piano, *Exuberance*, *Aeolian Harp*, *The Banshee*, *The Harp of Life*, and *Suite for Violin and Piano*.

¹⁹ Concert Program Typescript, April 9, 1926.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

which regardless of dissonance or consonance, both forms are joined in accordance with the demands of the melodic thrust.²¹

Cowell's descriptions of dissonant and consonant counterpoint resemble those provided for dissonant and consonant counterpoint on the February 2 concert program, although the two pieces that he cited as examples of the techniques in the New York program, *String Quartet No. 1* and *Seven Paragraphs*, are not listed on the Brno program. Cowell's dissemination of his ideas in Europe supports Carol Oja's assessment of musical modernism as a transatlantic phenomenon involving exchanges between the United States and Europe.²²

Dane Rudhyar discussed dissonant counterpoint in a concert program for the "New Music Society of California (Affiliated with the 'International Composers' Guild' of New York, Inc.)" dated Saturday, November 20, 1926.²³ The concert was held at the Music Room of the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, California, and included works by American and European modernist composers including Alfredo Casella, Henry Cowell, Darius Milhaud, Carl Ruggles, Dane Rudhyar, and Arnold Schoenberg.²⁴ In his notes Rudhyar identified Cowell's *String Quartet* as an example of "dissonant counterpoint" and highlighted the novelty of Cowell's achievement.

This quartet was composed in 1915 at a time when the composer knew hardly anything of the so-called ultra-modern music, thus is a very remarkable spontaneous manifestation. Cowell was then living near San Francisco and had not yet reached his twenties. It is most probably the first example of "dissonant counterpoint" written in America. It is quite in the line of the latest works of Schoenberg, but was written eleven years ago! Thus, besides its musical value, it has a great historical importance. It was performed for the first time in New York last winter at a concert devoted to Henry Cowell's works.²⁵

²¹ Ibid.

²² See Oja, *Making Music Modern*.

²³ Concert Program, Nov. 20, 1926, contained in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 66 folder 13, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Concert Program, Nov. 20, 1926. The performance of the *String Quartet* cited as occurring "last winter" in New York "at a concert devoted to Henry Cowell's works" likely refers to the February 2 concert at Aeolian Hall. On this Nov. 20, 1926 program Cowell's *String Quartet* (1915) is listed as comprising two movements: "Andante and Allegro-Andante."

Rudhyar's description does not mention Cowell's systematic work developing the compositional technique, but rather lauded the composer for the "spontaneous manifestation" of his skills. This quote demonstrates that not even Rudhyar, one of Cowell's contemporaries, was aware of his systematic work habits. Rudhyar identified dissonant counterpoint as an American technique, and observed that it predated methods found in similar works by Schoenberg. Thus, Rudhyar's remarks not only ensured Cowell's primacy in writing musical compositions that used the technique, but also sought to establish America's leadership in modernist composition.

Cowell's Writings

In addition to including dissonant counterpoint in his concert programs, Cowell also discussed the method in a more scholarly venue, his written publications. Cowell began work on *New Musical Resources* in 1916 while he was still working with Seeger at Berkeley and studying "written English" with Samuel Seward, an English professor at Stanford University who would serve as Cowell's editor for the book.²⁶ Two typescript drafts of *New Musical Resources* are housed in the Henry Cowell Papers in the New York Public Library. The first dates from 1919 and the second from 1929; the second draft reflects the content of the 1930 published version of the book.²⁷ David Nicholls has acknowledged that the date of the first typescript is not certain and could range from 1919 to 1928, although he asserts that ". . . the *textual substance* of [1919T] places it firmly at the earlier end of the range . . ."²⁸ Nicholls also cites a recollection by Amy Seward, Samuel Seward's wife, who indicated that she spent her courtship with Samuel in 1919 in competition with the book.²⁹ Michael Hicks concurs with Nicholls, also referring to Amy Seward's comments.

²⁶ Nicholls, "Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources*," 154; Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 97.

²⁷ Nicholls, "Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources*," 162.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 162. Joscelyn Godwin suggested in the preface to the 1969 reprint of *New Musical Resources* that the first typescript should be dated 1928. See Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, ed. by Joscelyn Godwin (New York: Something Else Press, 1969). However, Nicholls has pointed out that there is no manuscript evidence to support a date of 1928 for the first manuscript. See Nicholls, "Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources*," 155.

²⁹ Nicholls, "Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources*," 155. This is also mentioned in Godwin, x. See also Michael Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 97.

For the rest of 1919, Cowell tried to set forth a new corpus of rules that could match and overtake the old “divine” ones. . . . By the end of the year [1919], Henry had typed and revised until he at last held in his hands a complete draft of the book manuscript entitled “New Musical Resources.”³⁰

In the introduction to the published version of *New Musical Resources* (1930) Cowell provided some background information about the development of dissonant counterpoint and other techniques included in the book. He noted,

. . . many materials . . . have since been developed to such an extent that it is difficult to realize with what suspicion they were regarded in 1919. For example, the chapter on dissonant counterpoint was at that time a proposal that such a counterpoint be formulated. Since then Ruggles and Hindemith have been heralded as apostles of dissonant counterpoint . . .³¹

In the chapter titled “Dissonant Counterpoint” Cowell discussed the relationship between harmony and counterpoint.³² He posited that harmony was incidental to the combination of different melodies. Therefore, as counterpoint became more complicated, so did the resulting harmonies, “and the problems of harmony arose and were solved.”³³ Cowell surveyed the history of contrapuntal practice focusing on the rules that determined which intervals were acceptable to use, and asserted that such rules had been modified over time based on the prevailing harmonic practices of a specific time period. Cowell stated, “Thus the so-called ‘free’ counterpoint taught today differs from the ‘strict’ counterpoint, as strict counterpoint differs from still earlier practice.”³⁴ Perhaps in an effort to establish authority and bolster his case for the validity of dissonant counterpoint, Cowell identified Johann Sebastian Bach as a historical model for dissonant counterpoint. He observed that Bach developed “a consistent and logical system” in order to accommodate the complex harmonies produced by his use of dissonance.³⁵ Cowell

³⁰ Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 97.

³¹ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, xvi-xvii.

³² The chapter about dissonant counterpoint is found on pp. 35-42 of *New Musical Resources*.

³³ Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 35-36.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 36. While it is not clear to what contrapuntal style Cowell is referring in the statement “still earlier practice,” it is likely some style of medieval counterpoint, perhaps either *Notre Dame organum* or *ars-nova* polyphony.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

noted that Bach's rules are based on the premise that dissonant intervals must resolve to consonant intervals.³⁶

Cowell established that throughout the course of history developments toward more complex harmonies and the use of counterpoint had occurred simultaneously.³⁷ While harmony continued to progress during the nineteenth century, Bach's rules of counterpoint remained the standard, which Cowell assessed as an "arrest in development."³⁸ This disjunction between harmonic and contrapuntal practices called attention to the need for further development in the rules of counterpoint, thus carving out a place for a new compositional method.

Cowell proposed that composers take the next step indicated by historical development and write "dissonant counterpoint," which should be based on a reversal of the rules of Bach.

Let us, however, meet the question of what would result if we were frankly to shift the centre of musical gravity from consonance, on the edge of which it has long been poised, to seeming dissonance, on the edge of which it now rests. The difference might not be, any more than in Bach's practice, a matter of numerical proportion between consonant and dissonant effects, but rather an essential dissonant basis, the consonance being felt to rely on the dissonance for resolution. An examination in fact would reveal that all the rules of Bach would seem to have been reversed, not with the result of substituting chaos, but with that of substituting a new order.³⁹

He provided general guidelines for the proper use of intervals in dissonant counterpoint as follows:

The first and last chords would be now not consonant, but dissonant; and although consonant chords were admitted, it would be found that conditions were in turn applied to them, on the basis of the essential legitimacy of dissonances as independent intervals. In this system major sevenths and minor seconds and ninths would be the foundation intervals; major seconds and ninths, diminished fifths, and minor sevenths might be used as alternatives; all thirds, fourths, fifths, and sixths would only be permitted as passing or auxiliary notes. Octaves would be so far removed from the fundamental intervals that they would probably sound inconsistent and might not be used except in the rarest circumstances.⁴⁰

³⁶ Ibid., 37.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 37-38.

³⁹ Ibid., 38-39.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 39.

In an effort to legitimize the new contrapuntal practice, Cowell situated dissonant counterpoint within a historical progression of composers using increasingly dissonant intervals, and urged that dissonant counterpoint should be considered “as a gradual [change] of degree, rather than a radical one of kind.”⁴¹ He noted that composers initially used perfect octaves, fifths, and fourths as acceptable intervals for contrapuntal writing.⁴² Later, they primarily favored thirds and sixths, while still allowing some use of perfect consonances. Cowell asserted,

In the same way in dissonant counterpoint all simpler consonant intervals would be permitted, if accompanied at the same time with a seventh, second, or ninth; thus thirds and sixths would not be cut out of music, but would merely have additional intervals added to them.⁴³

Cowell observed a potential similarity between dissonant counterpoint and some of the works by Schoenberg, Ruggles, Hindemith, and Webern, but then immediately established distance between their compositional methods and this new technique. He stated, “there is nothing . . . to indicate that they use the system consciously, as they have not made public any exposition of their counterpoint.”⁴⁴ He discussed the specific ways in which Schoenberg’s method was different from dissonant counterpoint, and also described Carl Ruggles’s compositional approach.⁴⁵ By distinguishing the technique from those used by other composers, perhaps Cowell was seeking to demonstrate his personal achievement via primacy. He may also have been motivated by nationalistic pride to establish the method as an American contribution to the many modern compositional approaches.

In the chapter on tone-clusters Cowell referred briefly to dissonant counterpoint and provided a musical example. He explained, “small clusters used only occasionally between chords of other systems may be desirable only if handled cautiously, particularly in dissonant

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 40. This is a crucially different kind of principle from the more rigid idea that thirds and sixths should simply be preceded and followed by a dissonant interval, although Cowell does not acknowledge that this is a change in his own thinking. Perhaps he considers the latter to be an additional concept to the former.

⁴³ Ibid., 39-40.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 40-41.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 40-42.

counterpoint. See example 31.⁴⁶ The brief excerpt is the only musical example of dissonant counterpoint available in the published version of *New Musical Resources* (see ex. 3.11). I have added the intervals below the staff. One other musical example that Cowell used to illustrate dissonant counterpoint can be found in the typescript draft, but it was omitted from the 1930 publication. It will be discussed later.

The image shows a musical score for two staves in common time. The top staff has a treble clef and the bottom staff has a bass clef. The music consists of two measures. Below the staves, intervals are labeled for each note in the sequence: 7, 3, °3, m2, °8, °5, °3, m2, m6, m2.

Ex. 3.11. Cowell, *New Musical Resources* (1930), Example 31

The passage presents three voices in note-against-note dissonant counterpoint. The tone-clusters on the second and fourth beats of the first measure are the result of the close spacing between the voices. Cowell’s handling of consonant intervals in this passage is not bound by stepwise voice leading. For example, on the downbeat on of m. 1, the middle voice moves by step from E, a major third above C in the bass, to F. Simultaneously the bass voice leaps from C to E, a minor second below the F in the middle voice. On the downbeat of m. 2 the minor sixth that occurs between the top and bottom voices is preceded by a dissonant interval, but it is approached by a leap in the top voice from E-flat to B-flat.

Elsewhere throughout *New Musical Resources* Cowell presented ideas related to dissonant counterpoint, including 1) definitions for consonance, dissonance, and discord, 2) counterchord, 3) secundal counterpoint, and 4) counterpoint using tone-clusters. In the introduction Cowell suggested, “the sense of consonance, dissonance, and discord is not fixed, so that it must be immovably applied to certain combinations, but is relative.”⁴⁷ In the chapter labeled “The Influence of Overtones in Music” Cowell provided a detailed explanation of the

⁴⁶ Ibid., 118-19.

⁴⁷ Ibid., xi.

relationship between the overtone series and consonance, dissonance, and discord, and asserted that there is only an arbitrary difference between them based on the prevailing ideas in a specific historical period.⁴⁸ For example, when thirds were first used in music, they were considered to be dissonant, but later they were accepted as consonant intervals. Cowell likely discussed the arbitrary nature of concord and discord in order to legitimize the use of primarily dissonant intervals in modern music. He also used the overtone series to justify the application and acceptance of dissonance.⁴⁹ Cowell observed that the intervals between the lowest tones in the overtone series – the perfect octave, perfect fifth, and perfect fourth – were those primarily used to create harmonies in the styles of “early ecclesiastical music.”⁵⁰ Thirds were the next intervals to be used by composers, and they are found between the tones as you continue to move up the overtone series.⁵¹ According to the trend established, modern music should primarily comprise harmonies built from seconds and semitones, because they are the intervals that occur between the higher tones in the overtone series.⁵²

In the chapter labeled “Polyharmony,” Cowell introduced the idea of “counterchord,” a type of counterpoint that uses chords instead of discrete pitches.

By a similar use of chords instead of single tones as units, a system of counterpoint of chords may be built up . . . By following this principle a complete system of counterpoint of chords may be formulated. . . . An appropriate name for counterpoint of chords might be counterchord, or chord against chord.⁵³

The idea of counterchord not only would result in polyharmonic sonorities but could also include a contrapuntal musical fabric that featured numerous instances of dissonant intervals between the voices.

In the chapter labeled “Building Chords from Different Intervals” Cowell identified three systems for generating chords: 1) those built from fifths, fourths, and diminished fifths; 2) chords

⁴⁸ Ibid., 9-11.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 12-13.

⁵¹ Ibid., 13.

⁵² Ibid., 13-18.

⁵³ Ibid., 31-32.

created from thirds; and 3) chords constructed from seconds and sevenths.⁵⁴ With regard to the use of secundal harmonies in a contrapuntal texture, Cowell argued for wider spacing afforded by sevenths and ninths as opposed to the use of seconds. He stated, “the wider spacing in sevenths and ninths is often desirable . . . particularly in counterpoint, as it gives the inner parts more space in which to move about.”⁵⁵ He also suggested that a system should be developed for using seconds in counterpoint.

It has probably been from a feeling . . . that the parts would be cramped in groups of tones spaced in seconds that more attention has not been given to the possibilities lying in such groups, in which the parts need not be cramped if a study is made of how to proceed with them.⁵⁶

In the chapter on tone-clusters Cowell proposed the creation of “a complete system of counterpoint in moving clusters.”⁵⁷ He identified two possible ways in which counterpoint could be used with tone-clusters.

One is to translate the familiar devices of tonal counterpoint into the new medium of tone-clusters, keeping the clusters of the same size throughout.⁵⁸

If tone-clusters of different sizes are used as the units of successive cluster chords, there is an effect of two melodies in each of the clusters, and this is a contrapuntal consideration.⁵⁹

The first typescript draft of *New Musical Resources* (c. 1919) contains additional information related to dissonant counterpoint that was not included in the 1930 publication. Cowell’s “personal introduction” specified Seeger’s involvement in the early development of dissonant counterpoint.

My researches in these fields have been aided by the sympathetic encouragement of my friend and former teacher, Mr. Charles Louis Seeger Jr., in association with whom the ideas regarding dissonant counterpoint have been worked out. While

⁵⁴ Ibid., 113-14.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 115.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 131.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 125.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 126.

not wishing to commit him to approval of all the conclusions drawn by me from my observations, it is a pleasure to refer to our cordial and to me fruitful companionship.⁶⁰

Seeger was not mentioned in the published version of *New Musical Resources*, a circumstance for which there could have been a variety of reasons. Nicholls has noted, “there is no obvious explanation for this, lest it be connected with the issue of historical precedence: either Cowell may have been attempting to cover his musical traces, or he and Seeger may have had a disagreement.”⁶¹ As the last sentence in Cowell’s statement quoted above suggests, perhaps he simply did not want to “commit” Seeger to any of the ideas he presented in the book. As discussed in Chapter 2, Seeger noted that Cowell “went off on a tangent to develop a system of his own which differed from mine.”⁶² So, perhaps it was understood by both men that Cowell should not feel obliged to acknowledge Seeger in the final version of the book, since each developed his own system. Seeger’s later complaint that Cowell edited him out of *New Musical Resources*, however, might challenge this reading. It is beyond the scope of this study to debate the reasons behind the omission. Instead, it is more salient that Cowell’s description in the personal introduction does in fact refer to their joint efforts in developing dissonant counterpoint.

In the original typescript draft the chapter titled “Dissonant counterpoint” comprised pages 10-13.⁶³ Cowell closed with a passage in defense of the new technique, which was not included in the final published version of *New Musical Resources*.

. . . two considerations seem to justify a sympathetic approach to the new system that is proposed. First, the general musical public, instinctively conservative, has a wholly natural tendency to reject that with which it is not familiar. . . . such conservatism may have its large and wholesome uses, but nevertheless, the experience of the past points to the danger of denying the possibility or the desirability of further development. This brings us to the second point. If a given

⁶⁰ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, typescript draft #1, 1. The typescript draft #1 is contained in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 141 folders 11-16, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. There is also a 29-page carbon typescript draft of *New Musical Resources* that begins with the “personal introduction” located in the Charles Seeger Estate, box 22 folder 17, Library of Congress, Music Division. This version does not contain any musical examples.

⁶¹ Nicholls, “Henry Cowell’s *New Musical Resources*,” 163.

⁶² Charles Seeger, “Henry Cowell,” 289, 322.

⁶³ Appendix C contains the full text on dissonant counterpoint found in typescript draft #1 of *New Musical Resources*.

step in musical change is in the same direction in which all previous change has led, logical analogy favors the thought that the future will justify the step. The analogy is not in itself a final justification, but it is certainly a warning against a too ready condemnation. Past progress in the practice of harmony has been uninterrupted in a given direction. Past progress in counterpoint has been in the same direction, but has been, and still stands, arrested. It seems a normal thing in theory, as it would be a natural one in practice, to carry counterpoint yet another step forward in the same direction.⁶⁴

Immediately following his justification for the compositional practice Cowell referred the reader to example 4, which is located on p. 13b in the typescript version and labeled “Stretto in dissonant counterpoint” (see ex. 3.12). I have added the intervals located below the staff.

The brief example presents an imitative passage in four-voice dissonant counterpoint with overlapping entrances of the theme occurring every two beats. The theme comprises both conjunct and disjunct melodic motion. The beginning of the melody is distinguished by a descending perfect fourth followed by an ascending minor second and a descending perfect fourth. The intervals between the voices are primarily dissonant, and while some vertical sonorities do feature consonant intervals, there is always at least one dissonance present.

1 2 3

+8 +4 +8 +8 +4 m6 m7 m3 °5 °8 m7 4 m6 °5 m9 m3 °6 7 3 7 m9

Ex. 3.12. Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, Typescript Draft #1, Ex. 4 “Stretto in Dissonant Counterpoint.”

Cowell’s treatment of consonance is not always limited to stepwise motion in both voices, but this is largely due to the disjunct melodic motion in the subject. For example, in m. 3 the melody in the bass voice leaps from D, a major seventh below C-sharp in the tenor, down

⁶⁴ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, typescript draft #1, 12-13.

to A, a major third below C-sharp. The major third is followed by a major seventh, which is created by the bass voice ascending by step to G and the tenor voice leaping up to F-sharp. Cowell's flexible treatment of consonance is also evidenced by three instances of consecutive consonant intervals that also involve disjunct voice leading in at least one of the parts when moving from the first consonant interval to the second. In m. 2 on beat 2 the G in the soprano, which is an octave above G in the tenor, leaps down to D, a fifth above the tenor part. In m. 2 just after beat 4 the C-sharp in the bass voice is a minor third below E in the alto voice. This consonance is followed by a minor sixth between the voices resulting from the bass's stepping up to D while the alto leaps from E down to B-flat. Finally, on beat 2 of m. 3 the soprano voice leaps from D, a perfect fourth above A in the bass, down to G, a minor sixth above B-natural in the bass. *New Musical Resources* provided a detailed discussion of dissonant counterpoint, although prior to its release in 1930 Cowell had already presented the technique in his two articles published in 1928.

According to Cowell the purpose of "New Terms for New Music" was "to survey the meaning of some of the most customary modern terms in order to point out a few possible misunderstandings that may attach to them."⁶⁵ At the outset Cowell noted that the article

. . . should prove of assistance even to those who have ceased to refer to "polytonality" and "dissonant counterpoint" as if these were special effects, like *tremolando* or *ponticello*, a sort of bag of tricks easily employed by nearly all modernists to cover their supposed lack of ability to handle older materials.⁶⁶

Cowell asserted, "modern composers usually intend a definite and specific meaning when they use a new term."⁶⁷ Therefore, in order to educate the public and mitigate any misconceptions, he provided descriptions for various new musical methods – harmonic polytonality, contrapuntal polytonality, counterchord, counterharmony, atonality, dissonant counterpoint, and several techniques associated with rhythm, including cross-time, cross-accent, cross-meter, cross-tempo, poly-time, poly-accent, poly-meter, and poly-tempo. Cowell acknowledged that his survey of

⁶⁵ Henry Cowell, "New Terms for New Music," *Modern Music* 5/4 (1928), 21. The entire article comprises pp. 21-27.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

modern techniques was by no means exhaustive, and advocated for a more complete study of modern music alongside traditional techniques.⁶⁸

Regarding dissonant counterpoint, Cowell distinguished it as a specific compositional method rather than a generic term.

“Dissonant counterpoint” is a self-explanatory term, but it has been loosely applied to polyphonic music of a general nature in which some dissonance occurs. All the composers who may be said to employ dissonant counterpoint make so specific a use of the dissonances that rules of procedure seem to have been evolved, as fixed as those applying to strict consonant counterpoint.⁶⁹

Cowell also claimed that examples of modern materials could be found in works from other historical periods in the Western art music tradition, and asserted, “dissonant counterpoint is suggested by the tenor aria from J. S. Bach’s cantata, *Jesus Sleeps*.”⁷⁰

In his article “Carlos Chávez” Cowell discussed some of the musical innovations in Chávez’s compositional style.⁷¹ While Cowell did not discuss specific works, he focused on Chávez’s use of contrast and his developments with counterpoint. He observed that composers have placed an emphasis on harmony when they write counterpoint, and asserted that “the paramount consideration” should be creating independent melodies.⁷² Cowell specified,

In the best counterpoint, the melodies are the most independent, and successions of simultaneous notes occur which would not be thought of nor explained as regular harmonic successions.⁷³

He provided a brief survey of contrapuntal practices from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, and also discussed the importance of dissonant counterpoint. Furthermore, Cowell

⁶⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 22. Cowell does not provide an analysis to demonstrate what he considers to be dissonant counterpoint in Bach’s cantata.

⁷¹ Cowell, “Carlos Chávez,” 19-23. Many thanks are due to Michael Hicks for his suggestion to read this article. Based on the title, I would not have thought to consult this source for information about dissonant counterpoint.

⁷² Cowell, “Carlos Chávez,” 20.

⁷³ Ibid., 20-21.

noted the limitations inherent in the method, notably that the focus is still placed on the intervals produced rather than the combination of independent melodies.

In very recent times the desire to bring counterpoint up to the same degree of progress as harmony has resulted in the development of “dissonant counterpoint,” in which the intervals used are again strictly limited, but to basic dissonance, instead of concords, as in the ancient system. This has been of incalculable value to many of the most important composers, and rounds out the knowledge of harmony as applied to counterpoint. It is also, however, a system built on the prime importance of the interval, rather than of the melody.⁷⁴

Just as Cowell recommended in *New Musical Resources* that dissonant counterpoint could be considered “the next logical step,” he suggested in this article that counterpoint could continue to develop in such a manner that privileges melody.

We have progressed far enough so that it would seem the next step in counterpoint should be a polyphony emancipated from certain interval obligations, for the sake of the entire independence of the parts.⁷⁵

Cowell credited Chávez with composing in a new contrapuntal style that is focused on the combination of independent melodies, regardless of the intervals that are produced. He observed,

. . . no interval is discarded, and no consecutive intervals are discarded; so Chávez gets away from various current notions—such as, for instance, that concords should be avoided, or that discords should be avoided, or that one should not have certain consecutive intervals. He had the piquancy of a good use of dissonance in his music, but he also has the audacity to use an unresolved concord!⁷⁶

Cowell had begun to think more broadly about various approaches to modern contrapuntal techniques. He was interested not only in using dissonant counterpoint, but also in moving beyond a compositional method that was strictly guided by the intervals produced when two or more voices were combined. This is reminiscent of his discussion of dissonant and sonant (or consonant) counterpoint described in the 1926 concert programs for New York and Brno.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ibid., 21.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁷ These concert programs are discussed above.

Cowell's Network

While Seeger had abandoned his work with dissonant counterpoint in the years between 1918 and 1929, Cowell disseminated the method to other composers that he met, all of whom became part of the ultra-modern group of composers. They were also affiliated with Cowell's *New Music Quarterly*, either by serving on the editorial board and/or by having their works published in the journal.⁷⁸ Cowell met Carl Ruggles (1876-1971) in 1917, and the composers acquainted themselves with each other's works.⁷⁹ Cowell would visit Ruggles weekly and considered him to be one of three musicians during the 1910s who were interested in exploring compositional methods based on the use of dissonance. (The other two were Charles Seeger and Leo Ornstein.)⁸⁰ Cowell noted,

Ruggles was then [c. 1917] in the process of evolving very fastidious and focussed [sic] standards for the way he wanted chords, melodic lines and polyphonic texture to be. . . . I had, from the very beginning a profound admiration for his fresh and glowing yet perfected use of dissonances, at a time when any use at all of free dissonance was very rare, and it was rarer yet to find anyone aiming at its thoughtful and exact employment.⁸¹

In 1920 Cowell brought Seeger to meet Ruggles, and the three men became close associates focused on writing and promoting ultra-modern music.⁸² In her biography of Ruggles, Marilyn Ziffrin has noted that Ruggles and Seeger worked together on ideas related to dissonant counterpoint.⁸³ An examination of Ruggles's oeuvre reveals that many of his compositions use dissonant counterpoint techniques (table 3.1). Cowell acknowledged Ruggles's work on behalf

⁷⁸ See Rita H. Mead, *Henry Cowell's New Music, 1935-1936: The Society, the Music Editions, and the Recordings* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981.)

⁷⁹ Henry Cowell, "Carl Ruggles: A Note by Henry Cowell," in Lou Harrison, *About Carl Ruggles* (Yonkers, NY: Oscar Baradinsky at the Alicat Bookshop, 1946), 1-3.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁸² Marilyn Ziffrin, *Carl Ruggles: Composer, Painter, and Storyteller* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 64, 71.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

of the method in two publications. In the 1927 article “The Impasse of Modern Music: Searching for new Avenues of Beauty” he observed,

Carl Ruggles, foremost of American composers, is devoting himself exclusively to the development of dissonant counterpoint. His theory is one of the conspicuous theories of present-day music. Since the time of Bach and Handel no composer has given counterpoint such exclusive attention.⁸⁴

He also described Ruggles’s development of the compositional practice in the chapter on dissonant counterpoint in *New Musical Resources*.⁸⁵ Their relationship was influential upon the development and dissemination of the technique.

Table 3.1. Carl Ruggles’s Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1920-21, (rev. 1938)	<i>Angels for six muted trumpets</i>
1923	<i>Vox Clamans in Deserto</i> 1. “Parting at Morning” 2. “Son of Mine” 3. “A Clear Midnight”
1924, (rev. 1936 and 1941)	<i>Men and Mountains</i> I. “Men” II. “Lilacs” III. “Marching Mountains”
1926, 1929	<i>Portals</i>
1926-31	<i>Sun-Treader</i>
1934-43 (rev. 1954)	<i>Evocations</i>
1946-47	<i>Organum for two pianos</i>

Cowell also benefitted from the ideas of Dane Rudhyar (1895-1985), whom he met around 1920 at Halcyon, a theosophist colony in California with which Cowell maintained strong

⁸⁴ Henry Cowell, “The Impasse of Modern Music: Searching for New Avenues of Beauty,” *The Century Magazine* 114/6 (October 1927), 675.

⁸⁵ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 40-42.

ties during his career.⁸⁶ Rudhyar became involved with the ultra-modern network of composers and several societies that advocated modernist music, including the International Composers' Guild, the New Music Society of California, and the Pan American Association of Composers.⁸⁷ He also had several works published in *New Music Quarterly*, including *Three Paeans* and *Granites*.⁸⁸ Influenced by theosophy and Asian philosophies, Rudhyar's writings about music focused on the relationship between dissonance, spirituality, and humanity.⁸⁹ For example, in *Dissonant Harmony* he asserted, "Dissonant music is thus the music of true and spiritual Democracy; the music of universal brotherhoods; music of Free Souls, not of personalities."⁹⁰ While Rudhyar eschewed systematic compositional techniques in his own works, many of his philosophical ideas were influential among the composers who used dissonant counterpoint, especially Ruth Crawford, Cowell, and Ruggles.⁹¹ In 1923 Rudhyar wrote about the technique in an article titled "Carl Ruggles and the Future of Dissonant Counterpoint."⁹² He discussed counterpoint and tuning systems, among other things, and concluded, "dissonant counterpoint, when it shall have found its proper materials, will probably become the basis of the music of the future and will repeat medieval music at a higher stage of evolution."⁹³ Rudhyar's interest in

⁸⁶ Dane Rudhyar, interview with Rita H. Mead, November 18, 1975, 1, Henry Cowell Papers, box 81 folder 20, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

⁸⁷ Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 111.

⁸⁸ Dane Rudhyar, *Paeans*, in *New Music Quarterly* 1/2 (San Francisco: New Music Society of California, 1928); Dane Rudhyar, *Granites* in *New Music Quarterly* 8/4 (San Francisco: New Music Society of California, 1935).

⁸⁹ Carol Oja, "Dane Rudhyar" in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Deane Root, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed November 10, 2009.

⁹⁰ Dane Rudhyar, *Dissonant Harmony: A New Principle of Musical and Social Organization* (Carmel, CA: HAMSA, 1928), 10-11, qtd. in Carol Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 105.

⁹¹ Oja, "Dane Rudhyar" in *Grove Music Online*. See Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 97-154.

⁹² Dane Rudhyar, "Carl Ruggles and the Future of Dissonant Counterpoint," *Eolian Review* 3/1 (November 1923), 13-16. Charles Seeger responded to this article in Charles Seeger, "Reviewing a Review," *Eolian Review* 3/1 (November 1923), 16-23. Rudhyar responded to Seeger in Dane Rudhyar, "A Reply to Charles L. Seeger's 'Reviewing a Review,'" *Eolian Review* 3/2 (February 1924): 29-31.

⁹³ Rudhyar, "Carl Ruggles and the Future of Dissonant Counterpoint," 16.

music and spirituality likely informed his choice of medieval music, which among its repertoire contains numerous examples of music written for spiritual purposes.

In addition to Rudhyar, Cowell introduced Ruth Crawford (1901-53) to the technique, which led to her extensive work on its behalf. They met in Chicago in 1925 while he was on a recital tour, and she was studying piano with Djane Lavoie Herz and composition with Alfred Weidig at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago; Cowell became an ardent supporter of her music.⁹⁴ Regarding their professional relationship Judith Tick has observed,

Cowell was so impressed by Crawford's music that within months of their first meeting, he invited her to join the non-resident Board of Outside Advisors for the New Music Society. . . . [In 1926] Cowell included her in his lecture series on modern music at San Francisco and Carmel, California.⁹⁵

While Cowell was in Chicago, he taught Crawford about dissonant counterpoint.⁹⁶ He also introduced her to the works of Ruggles, whose scores she studied and from whom she received "valuable hints on dissonant counterpoint" for her *Suite No. 2 for Four Strings and Piano*.⁹⁷ Cowell suggested that Crawford pursue further study on the subject with Charles Seeger in New York. Seeger was reluctant to teach a female composer, but Cowell insisted based on the quality of Crawford's work, and Seeger conceded to a probationary period of six lessons. Cowell arranged for room and board for Crawford at the home of Blanche Walton, a patron who used her home for concerts and meetings to support the cause of modern music.⁹⁸ On November 7, 1929, just one week prior to beginning her lessons with Seeger, Crawford mentioned dissonant counterpoint in a letter to Vivian Fine, one of her own composition students. She specified that

⁹⁴ Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 50-51.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 50. For more information about Cowell's course, see Dora Hagemeyer, "Modern Music Discussed by a Modern Composer," *Carmel Cymbal*, Nov. 17, 1926, 6. In addition to Crawford the course included works by Goossens, Honegger, Malipiero, Bartók, Ornstein, and Varèse, "and other important modern composers."

⁹⁶ Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 84, 118.

⁹⁷ Tick, 83-84, 111. Tick has noted that Crawford would have been aware of Ruggles's *Men and Mountains* and *Portals*.

⁹⁸ Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 114-18.

Cowell “told me bits about [the technique] in Chicago,” and then described her excitement about the possibilities for using it.⁹⁹

Would you not be intrigued by the idea of writing counterpoint, not in an idiom which you will never use, but in an idiom which seems to be your spontaneous mode of expression? The principal excuse for counterpoint is that of discipline. You will have even more of this in dissonant counterpoint than in old Modal counterpoint.¹⁰⁰

Based on what Cowell had explained to her, Crawford understood the technique to provide more discipline than traditional contrapuntal methods and yet to be flexible enough to suit an individual composer’s compositional aesthetic. Crawford worked with Seeger from 1929 to 1931 developing dissonant counterpoint and using the method in many of her compositions (table 3.2). Additionally, Crawford disseminated the idea to some of her composition students, including Vivian Fine, Johanna Beyer, who studied with her in the early 1930s, and Chuck Miller, who studied with her during the mid to late 1940s.¹⁰¹ Judith Tick has also established that Crawford shared the idea in her discussions with various composers she met while in Europe in 1931 on a Guggenheim Fellowship, including Josef Rufer, Alban Berg, Josef Hauer, Tibor Harsányi, and Imre Weisshaus.¹⁰² Thus, Crawford also became a strong proponent for dissonant counterpoint throughout her career.

⁹⁹ Letter from Ruth Crawford to Vivian Fine, November 7, 1929. Many thanks to Judith Tick for sharing this letter with me.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Ruth Crawford to Vivian Fine, November 7, 1929.

¹⁰¹ Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 118, 133, 227, 295.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 160, 162, 163, 174, 211.

Table 3.2. Ruth Crawford's Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1927 (rev. 1929)	<i>Suite for Five Wind Instruments and Piano</i>
1929	<i>Suite No. 2 for Four Strings and Piano</i>
1930	<i>Piano Study in Mixed Accents</i>
1930	<i>Diaphonic Suite No. 1 for Flute</i>
1930	<i>Diaphonic Suite No. 2 for Bassoon and Cello</i>
1930	<i>Diaphonic Suite No. 3 for Two B-flat Clarinets</i>
1930	<i>Diaphonic Suite No. 4 for Oboe and Cello</i>
1930	<i>Three Chants</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "To An Unkind God" 2. "To an Angel" 3. Untitled
1930-32	<i>Three Songs to Poems by Carl Sandburg</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Rat Riddles" 2. "Prayers of Steel" 3. "In Tall Grass"
1931	<i>String Quartet 1931</i>
1932	<i>Two Ricercari</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Sacco, Vanzetti" 2. "Chinaman, Laundryman"
1936-38	"Sweet Betsy from Pike" in <i>Twenty-two American Folk Tunes Arranged for Piano, Elementary Grades</i>
1939	<i>Rissolty, Rossolty</i>
1952	<i>Suite for Wind Quintet</i>

In addition to Crawford, the composer Henry Brant (1913-2008) became acquainted with Cowell while he was on a concert tour. They met around 1925 or 1926, while Cowell was giving a concert of his piano works at the McGill Conservatory in Montreal.¹⁰³ After three years of study at the McGill Conservatory from 1926 to 1929, Brant moved to New York where he studied at the Juilliard School (1929-34) and the Juilliard Graduate School (1932-34); he also studied composition privately with Wallingford Riegger.¹⁰⁴ By 1930 Cowell was familiar enough with Brant's works to discuss them in "Nuevos Polifonistas Norteamericanos." The article was published in Spanish; the excerpts cited in this dissertation were translated by

¹⁰³ Henry Brant, interview with Andrea Olmstead, August 8, 1977, 1, Henry Cowell Papers, box 80 folder 1, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

¹⁰⁴ Kyle Gann and Kurt Stone, "Henry Brant," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Deane Root, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed November 10, 2009.

Stephanie Stallings.¹⁰⁵ Regarding Brant's compositional style Cowell observed, "Brant possesses linear perfection and an almost absolute independence of parts. He has besides a marvelous intuition for constructing a well-balanced melodic curve."¹⁰⁶ Brant's contrapuntal predilection led him to write a quartet for any four instruments, *Variations for Four Instruments*, about which Cowell noted, "Brant wishes to maintain contrapuntal separation between the parts by means of using instruments that don't combine easily. The very idea of hearing the work played by a string quartet horrifies him, because he fears that the sounds combine too well!"¹⁰⁷ In 1931 Cowell published Brant's *Two Sarabandes* and *Variations for Four Instruments* in *New Music Quarterly*.¹⁰⁸ Two years later Cowell wrote an essay on Brant for the book *American Composers on American Music*, in which he lauded Brant's *Variations*: "No more perfect examples of modern counterpoint come from our best composers."¹⁰⁹ Cowell also discussed Brant's compositional technique "oblique harmony," and asserted, "the actual effect of this procedure . . . is polyphony. The polyphony which results is extremely good; but Brant wishes the oblique harmony to become evident to the persons to whom his work is presented."¹¹⁰ Given Cowell's description of the contrapuntal aspects of Brant's works that use "oblique harmony" Brant appears to have been influenced by dissonant counterpoint (table 3.3).

¹⁰⁵ Henry Cowell, "Nuevos Polifonistas Norteamericanos," *Musicalia* 12/3 (July-August 1930), 86-89. In addition to Henry Brant, Cowell also discusses John J. Becker, Wallingford Riegger, Vivian Fine, and Gerald Strang.

¹⁰⁶ Cowell, "Nuevos Polifonistas Norteamericanos," 88. The English translation was provided by Stephanie Stallings in an email to the author.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Henry Brant, *Two Sarabandes*, in *New Music Quarterly* 4/4 (San Francisco: The New Music Society of California, 1931); Henry Brant, *Variations for Four Instruments*, in *New Music Quarterly* 4/4 (San Francisco: The New Music Society of California, 1931).

¹⁰⁹ Henry Cowell, "Henry Brant," in *American Composers on American Music: A Symposium*, ed. by Henry Cowell (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1962), 93.

¹¹⁰ Cowell, "Henry Brant," in *American Composers on American Music*, 94-95.

Table 3.3. Henry Brant’s Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1931	<i>Two Sarabandes</i> (1931)
1931	<i>Variations for Four Instruments</i> (1931)
1931	<i>Angels and Devils</i> (1931)

While Brant came to New York City to be among the ultra-moderns, Cowell’s acquaintance with John J. Becker (1886-1961), another composer with whom he shared dissonant counterpoint, extended the ultra-modern network to the Midwest United States. Cowell and Becker met in 1928, and many of John J. Becker’s works dating from 1929 to 1959 used dissonant counterpoint (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. John J. Becker’s Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1929	<i>Sinfonia Brevis (Symphony No. 3)</i>
1930	<i>Concerto Arabesque</i>
1932	<i>Soundpiece No. 1</i>
1933	<i>Missa Symphonica</i>
1937	<i>Soundpiece No. 4 (String Quartet No. 2)</i>
1937	<i>Soundpiece No. 5</i>
1942	<i>Soundpiece No. 6</i>
1959	<i>Soundpiece No. 8 (String Quartet No. 3)</i>

Considering his rigorous training in counterpoint and his interest in writing modern music, it makes sense that Becker would have been receptive to the technique. As part of his early compositional training Becker studied counterpoint with Wilhelm Middelschulte, who was hailed along with Bernhard Ziehn in Ferruccio Busoni’s 1910 article “Die Gothiker von Chicago.”¹¹¹ Additionally, Becker noted that Middelschulte’s organ arrangement of Bach’s “Chaconne für Violine Allein . . . would teach [a musician] more modern counterpoint than all of

¹¹¹ See Ferruccio Busoni, “Die ‘Gothiker’ von Chicago, Illinois,” *Signale für die musikalische Welt* 68/5 (Feb. 2, 1910), 163-65. Many thanks to Kyle Gann for calling my attention to this article. While in Chicago, Busoni worked with Ziehn and Middelschulte. Ziehn was known for rigorous contrapuntal experiments such as writing canons at all intervals from unison to the major seventh.

the textbooks written on the subject.”¹¹² In 1927 Becker wrote to Cowell in response to an advertisement for the first issue of *New Musical Quarterly*, and they met in person in the spring of 1928.¹¹³ Cowell directly influenced Becker’s career and, according to Don Gillespie, “moved [Becker] eventually away from his isolated academic existence into the mainstream of contemporary American music.”¹¹⁴ Becker worked at Notre Dame University from 1927 to 1928, the College of Saint Mary’s of the Springs near Columbus, Ohio from 1928 to 1929, and in 1929 he relocated to St. Paul, Minnesota, to serve as the head of the department of fine arts at Saint Thomas College.¹¹⁵ In a letter dated March 25, 1928, Cowell suggested to Becker, “it would be splendid to establish about you a centre known to be the most progressive one for newer music through the middle of the country.”¹¹⁶ By conducting concerts that featured music by himself and his avant-garde colleagues, Becker became the Midwest region’s leading advocate for ultra-modern music. Becker’s efforts in St. Paul from 1929 to 1933 appear to be a direct response to Cowell’s advice.

In addition to Becker, Cowell also shared the technique with Wallingford Riegger (1885-1961), another composer whom he recruited to the ultra-modern cause. They met in spring 1928 during Cowell’s visit to the Ithaca Conservatory of Music, where Riegger was teaching at the time.¹¹⁷ He convinced Riegger to move to New York City and also introduced him to Edgard Varèse. Thereafter Riegger served on the boards of the Pan-American Association of Composers

¹¹² John J. Becker, “Wilhelm Middelschulte, Master of Counterpoint,” *Musical Quarterly* 14/2 (April 1928), 194.

¹¹³ Don Gillespie, “John Becker, Musical Crusader of Saint Paul,” *The Musical Quarterly* 52/2 (April 1976), 197.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 196-97, 200.

¹¹⁶ Letter from Henry Cowell to John J. Becker, March 25, 1928, quoted in Gillespie, “John Becker, Musical Crusader of Saint Paul,” 200.

¹¹⁷ Stephen Spackman, *Wallingford Riegger: Two Essays in Musical Biography* (Brooklyn, NY: Institute for Studies in American Music, 1982), 33. Ithaca College originated as the Ithaca Conservatory of Music in 1892; after expansion during the first decades of the twentieth century the institution was awarded a college charter in 1931. See <http://www.ithaca.edu/about/history/index.php> and <http://www.ithaca.edu/about/history/challenge.php>, accessed January 22, 2010.

and Cowell's *New Music Quarterly Recordings Series*.¹¹⁸ As he established himself as part of the New York circle of ultra-modern composers, Riegger received substantially more performances of his avant-garde works.¹¹⁹ Riegger's musical style during the late 1920s and 1930s includes the use of polyphonic textures, about which Stephen Spackman comments, "[Riegger] had absorbed counterpoint so thoroughly that it had become an instinctive vehicle for his musical thought."¹²⁰ Riegger studied composition at the Institute for Musical Art with Percy Goetschius, "the 'canon-hound' of Stuttgart."¹²¹ Goetschius's expertise in counterpoint is evidenced by two books on the topic.¹²² Given Riegger's rigorous contrapuntal training, predilection for polyphony, and avant-garde compositional aesthetic, it is natural that he would have used dissonant counterpoint in his works (Table 3.5). Riegger included a work titled "Dissonant Counterpoint" in his collection *New and Old: Twelve Pieces for Piano*, which was published in 1947. According to the composer, each piece focused on a specific modernist compositional method; the collection also sought to demonstrate the continuity between modern techniques and those of the past.¹²³ In the introduction to "Dissonant Counterpoint" Riegger drew a comparison between strict and free types of both "old counterpoint" and dissonant counterpoint. He also provided brief illustrative musical examples.¹²⁴

Dissonant counterpoint is likewise of two kinds, strict and free. In the strict, if there is skipping it must be from dissonance to dissonance, just as in the old strict counterpoint it was from consonance to consonance. In the free dissonant

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 35.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 37-38.

¹²¹ Ibid., 21. It appears that the term "canon-hound" was used by Riegger in an autobiographical draft, referred to by Spackman as "Memoir." See Spackman, *Wallingford Riegger: Two Essays*, 50, fn. 47 and 49, fn. 32.

¹²² See Percy Goetschius, *Counterpoint Applied in the Invention, Fugue, Canon, and Other Polyphonic Forms* (New York: Schirmer, 1902) and Goetschius, *Exercises in Elementary Counterpoint*.

¹²³ Wallingford Riegger, *New and Old: Twelve Pieces for Piano*, (New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1947), 2. The twelve pieces include: 1. The Augmented Triad, 2. The Major Second, 3. The Tritone, 4. The Twelve Tones, 5. Shifted Rhythm, 6. Twelve Upside Down, 7. Seven Times Seven, 8. Chromatics, 9. Dissonant Counterpoint, 10. Tone Clusters, 11. Polytonality, 12. Fourths and Fifths.

¹²⁴ Riegger, *New and Old*, 6-7.

counterpoint consonant intervals are allowed on the accent, provided they then become dissonated in some way—either by skipping a dissonant interval or by skipping to a dissonant interval.¹²⁵

Riegger mentioned Charles Seeger’s 1916 course on the technique offered at the University of California. Since Riegger was associated with both Cowell and Seeger, he could have learned aspects of the technique from either or both composers. Riegger’s description of “dissonating” a consonant interval in the passage quoted above recalls Seeger’s terminology used to discuss the method.¹²⁶ Riegger also asserted, “Dissonant counterpoint is almost implicit in the 12-tone system, though not necessarily so. It is often used independently of that system, especially by Carl Ruggles.”¹²⁷ Riegger used flexible compositional approaches based on the twelve-tone method in many of his pieces, so his statement may suggest that he melded his dodecaphonic techniques with dissonant counterpoint.

Table 3.5. Wallingford Riegger’s Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1931	<i>Three Canons for Woodwinds</i> , op. 9
1932	<i>Dichotomy</i> , op. 12
1938-39	<i>String Quartet No. 1</i> , op. 30
1943	<i>Duos for Three Woodwinds</i> , op. 35
1944	“Dissonant Counterpoint” in <i>New and Old: Twelve Pieces for Piano</i> , op. 38
1948	<i>String Quartet No. 2</i> , op. 43
1951	<i>Nonet for Brass</i> , op. 49
1952	<i>Woodwind Quintet</i> , op. 51
1956	<i>Symphony No. 4</i> , especially mvmt. III

¹²⁵ Ibid., 7.

¹²⁶ Seeger, “On Dissonant Counterpoint,” Seeger, “Manual of Dissonant Counterpoint,” in *Studies in Musicology II: 1929-1979*, ed. by Ann M. Pescatello.

¹²⁷ Riegger, *New and Old*, 7.

Summary

After spending time developing dissonant counterpoint at Berkeley (1914-17) and using it in his early compositions, Cowell continued his efforts on behalf of the technique during the late 1910s and 1920s. Cowell pursued a practical application of the technique in his compositions, which demonstrate a variety of both strict and flexible approaches to the guidelines he had laid out for the method. Descriptions of dissonant counterpoint in his concert programs and publications also disseminated the idea to the public and demonstrated Cowell's continued theoretical development of the technique. Furthermore, Cowell cultivated a professional network of the ultra-modern composers with whom he also shared the compositional practice. All of these activities during the 1920s created a strong momentum for Cowell's continued advocacy on behalf of dissonant counterpoint during the 1930s and 1940s. He accomplished this through the means already discussed in this chapter – composing, publishing, and networking – and also by teaching it to students in his college courses.

CHAPTER 4

CONTINUING THE MOMENTUM: COWELL AND DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT DURING THE 1930s AND 1940s

Historical surveys of American music tend to establish a dichotomy between the music written in the 1920s and the 1930s. The 1920s are typified by the experimental music of the ultra-modern composers, and the 1930s are defined by populist trends in art music.¹ Given this model, it would be reasonable to conclude that dissonant counterpoint came to an end during an era in which composers focused on writing music that was more accessible to their audience. During the 1930s and 1940s, however, Cowell continued to develop and disseminate dissonant counterpoint through his composing, writing, teaching, and networking.

Over the twenty-year period from 1930 to 1950 he used the technique in various compositions, notably *Orchesterstück: Synchrony* (1930), *Suite for Woodwind Quintet* (1934), *Mosaic Quartet* (1935), *String Quartet No. 4: United Quartet* (1936), *Ritournelle* (1939), and *Invention for Sidney* (1948). His application of the technique demonstrates both strict and flexible approaches to the guidelines outlined in his earlier writings. Cowell discussed the method in *New Musical Resources*, which was published in 1930, in *American Composers on American Music* (1933), and in his 1934 article “Music” written for *The Americana Annual*.

Additionally he shared the technique with composers he met during the 1930s and 1940s, many of whom used dissonant counterpoint in their works. Notable among Cowell’s professional contacts were Vivian Fine, Gerald Strang, John Cage, Johanna Beyer, Lou Harrison, and Frank Wigglesworth. Beyond teaching the method in private composition lessons, archival sources establish that Cowell included the technique in courses he offered at Stanford University, UC Berkeley, Columbia University, and the New School, evidence that speaks to a much wider dissemination of the technique than previously thought by scholars.

¹ See Gilbert Chase, *America’s Music, From the Pilgrims to the Present* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Kyle Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997); H. Wiley Hitchcock with Kyle Gann, *Music in the United States* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000); Crawford, Richard. *America’s Musical Life: A History* (New York: Norton, 2001).

Cowell's Works

Cowell's use of dissonant counterpoint transcended boundaries of time and genre: the technique is found in a variety of compositions that span the 1930s and 1940s, including an orchestral work intended to accompany a modern dance performance, two string quartets, a woodwind quintet, and two piano pieces, one of which also accompanied a dance performance. The discussion of Cowell's works that follows demonstrates that his use of the technique is marked by some similar characteristics, notably 1) mostly conjunct melodies, 2) both dissonant and consonant intervals between the voices, usually primarily dissonances, and 3) varying degrees of strict and flexible handling of the consonances. As with the other pieces discussed in this dissertation, each represents an example on a continuum that ranges from Cowell's strictest to most flexible application of the guidelines associated with dissonant counterpoint.

Cowell wrote *Synchrony for Dance, Music, and Light*, L. 464, in 1930, and it was published in 1931 with the title *Orchesterstück: Synchrony*.² As suggested by the original title, the music was supposed to be combined with modern dance – in this case a work choreographed by Martha Graham – and lighting effects, but this never occurred.³ While the single-movement work is written for full orchestra, a passage scored exclusively for strings (ex. 4.1) is exemplary of Cowell's use of dissonant counterpoint in this composition.

Each melody in the five-voice homorhythmic polyphonic texture comprises primarily stepwise motion balanced by occasional leaps. The counterpoint results in mostly dissonant intervals, but there are also consonances. Many of the vertical sonorities include multiple dissonances against the bass voice. For example on the third beat of m. 139 the intervals above the note in the contrabass include three dissonances, an augmented sixth (equivalent to a minor seventh), augmented fourth, augmented octave, and one consonance, a major third. The downbeat of m. 144 includes four dissonances above the contrabass: an augmented octave, augmented sixth, augmented fourth, and major ninth.

² Lichtenwanger, *The Music of Henry Cowell*, 128.

³ Ibid.

139 senza sord. 140 141 142

Vln. I *p* *poco a poco cresc.* *detached*

Vln. II *p* *poco a poco cresc.* *detached*

Vla. *p* *poco a poco cresc.* *detached*

Vc. *p* *poco a poco cresc.* *detached*

Cb. *p* *poco a poco cresc.* *detached*

+4	5	+6	6	+4	°5	+4	6	5	m6	7
m7		+4	+4	m6	m3	9	m3	°4	°4	4
6		+8	9	6	m7	6	m7	m6	°7	m3
m3		3	m3	4	°4	m3	°4	m3	dd5	m6

143 144 145

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

9	7	+9	+8	m3	6	+8	9	+9
m6	5	6	+6	7	+4	m7	7	7
m3	9	3	+4	5	9	5	4	3
°7	m6	m7	9	°4	m7	m3	7	+6

Ex. 4.1. Cowell, *Orchesterstück: Synchrony*, mm. 139-145
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Vertical sonorities that feature mostly consonant intervals against the bass voice usually include other dissonant relationships among the tones. For example, on the downbeat of m. 143 the intervals above the bass include one dissonance, a major ninth, and three consonances: a minor sixth, minor third, and diminished seventh. In addition to the major ninth between the first violin and contrabass, the G-sharp in the first violin is a major seventh above A in the viola, and the D in the second violin is a major seventh above E-flat in the cello. In m. 142 the downbeat comprises all consonant intervals: a perfect fifth, diminished fourth, minor sixth, and minor third, but the B in the first violin is a major seventh above C in the viola.

Regarding Cowell's treatment of consonant intervals in *Synchrony*, some are handled in the strictest possible manner. For example, in m. 139 the melody in the first violin moves in stepwise motion from C-sharp, an augmented fourth above G in the bass, to D, a perfect fifth above it. The consonant interval is followed by an augmented sixth, which sounds as a minor seventh, accompanied by stepwise motion in both voices: the melody in the first violin moves from D down to E, and the contrabass steps from G down to G-flat.

Elsewhere in the excerpt are examples of Cowell's more flexible approach to consonance. On beat 2 of the cello part in m. 144 the A-flat is a diminished fourth above E in the bass, which sounds as a major third. The consonance is preceded and followed by dissonant intervals, an augmented fourth and major ninth, respectively. While the diminished fourth is approached by stepwise motion, it is left by a skip from A-flat down to F. In m. 140 the F in the second violin is a minor sixth above A in the bass. The consonance is preceded by an augmented fourth and followed by a major ninth, but the melody in the second violin includes disjunct motion in both instances. It leaps from D-sharp up to F and then down to D natural. There are also examples of consecutive consonances in this passage. In the second violin the minor third on beat 3 of m. 141 initiates a chain of seven consonances in the melody, which coincides with the longest strand of consecutive consonances. In m. 139 the melody in the cello features thirteen consecutive consonant intervals against the melody in the bass. Thus, the cello and second violin together result in simultaneous consecutive consonances.

While *Synchrony* demonstrates Cowell's successful application of dissonant counterpoint to an orchestral work, a few years later he used the technique in a chamber work for woodwind instruments. The four movements of Cowell's *Suite for Woodwind Quintet*, L. 491b (1934), are arrangements of movements 2, 4, 5, and 6 from the original work *Six Casual Developments for*

Clarinet and Piano, written in 1933.⁴ In the introductory note to the published score for the *Suite for Woodwind Quintet*, Richard Franko Goldman referred to the third movement as a chorale characterized by “extended lines in slow, irregular meter, with a touching and sustained piquancy of harmony.”⁵ The discordant harmonic effect described by Goldman as “piquancy of harmony” results from the influence of dissonant counterpoint on Cowell’s compositional style. The irregular meter adds a sense of metrical dissonance to reinforce the counterpoint (ex. 4.2). Each measure in the third movement constitutes a phrase of the chorale, which is supported by the phrasing marks and each measure’s beginning and ending on a longer duration value. Within a given phrase, the melodic lines in all five parts are primarily conjunct with some disjunct motion for balance. The counterpoint results in primarily dissonant intervals, but there are a few consonances, as well. Regarding the vertical sonorities, in most cases the tones in the upper voices that are consonant against the lowest voice share a dissonant relationship among themselves. For example, on beat 2 of m. 1 the tones above the G in the bassoon include E-flat, A, E, and C-sharp. The E-flat in the flute and E in the clarinet are a minor sixth and major sixth respectively above G, but they are a diminished octave apart from each other. Also, the E-flat in the flute is a diminished fifth above A in the oboe.

Overall Cowell treats consonance more flexibly in the *Suite* than in *Synchrony*, although there are some examples of a stricter handling. For example, in m. 2 on beat 3 the flute melody moves down by step from G, a diminished octave above G-sharp in the bassoon, to G-flat, while the bassoon part ascends by step to A, forming a diminished seventh, which sounds as a major sixth. The consonant interval is followed by a diminished fifth, which results from the melody in the flute stepping down from G-flat to F while the melody in the bassoon ascends by step from A to B.

⁴ Lichtenwanger, *The Music of Henry Cowell*, 137-38. See also Henry Cowell, *Six Casual Developments for Clarinet and Piano* (Bryn Mawr, PA: Merion Music, 1971).

⁵ Henry Cowell, *Suite for Woodwind Quintet* (Bryn Mawr, PA: Merrymount Music Press, 1949), 2. Lichtenwanger notes that in a 1948 performance of the work, the four movements were given captions; the caption for movement three was “Chorale.” See Lichtenwanger, 138.

1 *Solo* *mp* *pp* 2

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in B \flat

Horn in F

Bassoon

m3	m6	4	m3	m9	m7	m9	\circ 5	\circ 7	m3	8	4	9	\circ 8	\circ 7	\circ 5	m3	
8	9		\circ 8	\circ 7	\circ 5	m3	dd5	\circ 8	3	+4		\circ 5	4	m9	\circ 3	\circ 8	
5	6	m7	\circ 6	\circ 5	5	m6	5	m6	\circ 4	m3	m6	4	dd4	m9	m7	m9	\circ 5
3	+4	\circ 5	4	m9	\circ 3	\circ 8	\circ 5	5	6	m7	5	+4	5	m6	5		

3 *p* *Solo* *mf* 4

Fl.

Ob.

B \flat Cl.

Hn.

Bsn.

\circ 8	m3	m9	7	m6	\circ 6	\circ 8	\circ 8	m3	m9	m7	\circ 8	m6	\circ 6	\circ 8	m9
\circ 5	\circ 6	4	\circ 4	\circ 3	\circ 4	\circ 5	\circ 5	4	m9	m3	\circ 8	\circ 8	\circ 3	4	
m3	\circ 5	\circ 4	9	\circ 8	\circ 8	\circ 3	m3	\circ 6	\circ 5	4	\circ 3	dd4	\circ 5	m3	
5	6	6	\circ 7	m6	5	\circ 8	m7	\circ 7	m6	5	m6	5	m7		

Ex. 4.2. Cowell, *Suite for Woodwind Quintet*, mvt. 3, mm. 1-4⁶
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⁶ The clarinet and horn parts have been transposed to reflect concert pitch.

Varying degrees of Cowell's flexible approach to consonance are also found in ex. 4.2. In m. 3 the melody in the flute skips from F, a diminished octave above F-sharp in the bassoon, up to A, a minor third above it. The consonance resolves by step down to G, a minor ninth above F-sharp. At the beginning of m. 1 Cowell accompanies consecutive consonant intervals with disjunct motion. The melody in the flute, which begins on C, a minor third above A in the bassoon, leaps up to E-flat as the bassoon part steps down to G forming a minor sixth. The flute leaps back down to C, a fourth above G, and both parts move in contrary stepwise motion to B and G-sharp respectively, which results in a minor third. Throughout the excerpt there are multiple instances of consecutive consonances between the upper parts and the melody in the bassoon.

Cowell's predilection for using dissonant counterpoint in chamber works is evidenced not only in the *Suite for Woodwind Quintet*, but also in two string quartets composed during the 1930s. In the *Mosaic Quartet for Two Violins, Viola, and Cello*, L. 518 (1935), or String Quartet No. 3, Cowell continued his tradition of employing dissonant counterpoint in this genre. He had previously used the technique in his first two string quartets, String Quartet No. 1 (1916) and *Movement for String Quartet* (1928). Unlike the two previous works the *Mosaic Quartet* comprises five movements, which the performers are free to arrange in any sequence, thus providing an example of mobile form. Cowell's performance note in the published score states:

The five movements of the *Mosaic Quartet* may be played in any desired order. One suggested way of performance is to alternate movements as follows:

I – II – I – III – IV – III – V – IV – V – I – II – III – IV – V

But any other succession is equally valid. Each movement must be understood as being a unit within the total mosaic pattern.⁷

The first and fifth movements provide examples of dissonant counterpoint applied to different contrapuntal textures.

In the first movement Cowell uses dissonant counterpoint in a four-voice homorhythmic polyphonic texture. The first two phrases of this movement are found in ex. 4.3. The melodic motion in the four parts is primarily conjunct, although a few leaps provide variety, and the intervals produced by the combination of the melodies include a balance of dissonance and consonance. Most of the vertical sonorities feature at least one dissonant interval, but there are

⁷ Henry Cowell, *Mosaic Quartet* (New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1962).

two instances of exclusively consonant sonorities. The downbeat of m. 1 includes a major third and perfect fifth above the cello part, the equivalent of an E major chord, and the last vertical sonority in m. 1 includes a major sixth, perfect fourth, and perfect octave, the equivalent of a dominant 6/4 chord in E major.

Largo

5	3	+8	7	6	+4	9	m9	9	3	3
3	+8	6	5	4	+9	7	m7	7	+9	4
5	+4	3	9	8	7	6	5	3	+4	+5 6 8

9	5	7	+5	+3	+9	7	6	7	m3	+8	+4	+4
7		+5	3	+8	7	+5	+4	+5	7	6	7	+8
4		+9	7	+5	+4	+9	+8		+4	+9	+9	m3

Ex. 4.3. Cowell, *Mosaic Quartet*, mvmt. 1, mm. 1-6
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The cadence of the first phrase (m. 3) features three consonant intervals above E in the cello: a major third, perfect fourth, and perfect octave, but the G-sharp in the first violin is a major seventh above A in the second violin.

Cowell's treatment of consonant intervals in the first movement is quite flexible. The melodies in the first and second violins and viola parts each feature at least two instances of consecutive consonances against the melody in the cello. One example of four consecutive consonances begins in m. 1 on beat 4. The second violin plays an E on beats 4 and 5 and moves down to D-sharp on the downbeat of m. 2; the cello ascends by step from G to A and B – a major sixth, perfect fifth, and perfect fourth below E – to C, an augmented ninth below the D-sharp, which sounds as a minor third. Since the melodies in all four parts are primarily conjunct, there are many instances in which the movement toward and away from a consonant interval is accomplished by stepwise motion, although this is not always the case. For example, in m. 4 the melody in the first violin leaps from F-sharp, a major ninth above E in the cello, to B, a perfect fifth above it, and then leaps down to E, a major seventh above the new bass note F, which was approached by step from below.

In the fifth movement of the *Mosaic Quartet* Cowell uses dissonant counterpoint in both imitative and homorhythmic polyphonic textures (ex. 4.4). It opens with a triplet motive passed among all four voices. The first four statements alternate between descending and ascending versions of an eighth-note triplet followed by a quarter-note or a half-note in the final statement. The imitation of the eighth-note triplet figure continues until the end of the third measure, in which the homorhythmic polyphony is characterized by longer note values in each part.

The melodies in all four voices feature a balance of conjunct and disjunct motion. There are, however, more leaps in each melody in movement V than in the first movement of the *Mosaic Quartet*. The counterpoint comprises dissonant intervals between the parts, balanced by consonances. While some vertical sonorities feature consonant intervals above the cello part, there is at least one dissonant relationship among the upper parts. For example, on beat 2 of m. 3 the intervals above the cello include a major third, major sixth, and augmented fifth, the latter of which sounds as a minor sixth. Among these three consonances is a dissonance: E in the second violin is a minor ninth above D-sharp in the viola. Additionally, beat 4 of m. 1 includes three consonances above the bass voice: a minor third, perfect fifth, and perfect fourth, but within this

sonority are two dissonant relationships: G in the first violin and B in the second violin are a minor seventh and major ninth respectively above A in the viola.

Allegro non troppo

9 8 7 9 4 m7 m3 m9 8 6 9 5 4 9 3 5 3 4 8
 5 6 m7 5 m3 m7 m7 5 9 6 m6 m7 m9 +8
 4 m3 9 7 8 m3 m9 m7 4 m9 7

+8 3 m7 3 +4 7 3 +4 +5 6 +6
 +9 3 m7 6 6 9 5 m7 7 +8 m9
 6 +5 +4 7 m3 m6 m2 m3 3 3 3

Ex. 4.4. Cowell, *Mosaic Quartet*, mvmt. 5, mm. 1-5
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Cowell's flexible approach to handling consonant intervals is also manifest in the fifth movement of the *Mosaic Quartet*. All three of the upper parts feature multiple instances of consecutive consonances against the cello part. In the opening excerpt (ex. 4.4) there are four consecutive consonances between the first violin and cello, three between the second violin and cello, and four between the viola and cello. The longest chain, which comprises five consonances, occurs in m. 2 between the first violin and cello. Just after the major ninth on beat 3, there follow a major third, perfect fifth, major third, perfect fourth, and perfect octave. There are few instances in which a consonant interval is preceded and followed by a dissonant interval, and the melodic motion toward and away from consonances is not usually conjunct. For example, in m. 3 the melody in the first violin skips from G-sharp, an augmented octave above G in the cello, to B, a major third above it. The consonance is followed by an augmented fourth, which results from the first violin's stepping down from B to A-sharp and the bass's leaping from G up to E.

Cowell's String Quartet No. 4: *United Quartet*, L. 522, written in 1936, also comprises five movements. The introductory note to the published score sheds light on the genesis of the work:

It was in part a response to the music-for-the-people movement that influenced most composers in the United States during the years of the Great Depression. Here Cowell was trying in his own way to widen the appeal of contemporary music, by finding his basic materials for the piece in types of musical behavior common to many people.⁸

To this end, Cowell combined musical elements that he referred to as "primitive," "Oriental", "classical" and "modern" styles.⁹ He remarked, "The United Quartet is an attempt toward a more universal musical style."¹⁰ Among the modern techniques used in the piece, the composer cited "unresolved discords" and "free intervals in two part counterpoint."¹¹ The use of counterpoint, irrespective of the intervals produced, is reminiscent of Cowell's description of "sonant counterpoint" in the program notes for the 1926 concert at Aeolian Hall and the new

⁸ Cowell, *String Quartet No. 4*.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

polyphonic practice in his 1928 Chávez article.¹² Cowell's hybrid compositional style in the first and fifth movements of the *United Quartet* features the influence of dissonant counterpoint combined with musical materials derived from other cultures, although the actual sounds that result do not necessarily meet Cowell's claims of being "primitive" or "oriental."

The first movement comprises two melodies in the viola and cello played over a drone of C and G in the violins (ex. 4.5). The melody in the viola begins along with the drone in m. 1, and the cello melody starts in m. 6. Both move almost exclusively in stepwise motion, and contain only a few leaps. Due to the drone, the consonant interval of the perfect fifth is omnipresent. The addition of the two melodies results in intervals that are primarily consonant against C in the drone, notably a major third, augmented second, and minor sixth. There is, however, a strong presence of the augmented fourth. Within the vertical sonorities in this excerpt there is usually at least one dissonant relationship. For example, on beat 3 of m. 7 the sonority comprises a perfect fifth, major third, and augmented second against the lowest tone, but the E in the viola is a minor second above D-sharp in the cello. Often there are vertical sonorities that feature multiple secundal relationships, resulting in tone-clusters. For example, beat 4 of m. 7 includes a major third, augmented fourth, and perfect fifth above C. The F-sharp in the viola is also a major second above E in the cello and a minor second below G in the violins forming the tone cluster E—F-sharp—G. Additionally, in m. 11 the sonority on the second beat comprises an augmented fourth, perfect fifth, and minor sixth above the lowest pitch, A-sharp, and the A-flat in the viola and the F-sharp in the cello are each a minor second above and below the G in the violins, which forms a more dissonant tone cluster than in the previous example, F-sharp—G—A-flat.

¹² Concert program, Feb. 2 (1926), Aeolian Hall; Cowell, "Carlos Chávez," 21-22. Both are discussed in Chapter 3.

ff dynamics independent for 'cello

5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
5	5	+4	+4	3	+2	+2	3	+4	3	5	+4	3	5	+4	+4	3	+4	+4	3
u	3		+4				3	+2	3	+4	5		+4	+4	3		+2		

5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
+4					m6	m6	5	5	+4	3	3	+4	+4	5	5	5	5	5	5
u	+2		3		+4	5	m6	m6	5	+4		3	5	+4	3		+u	+2	+u

Ex. 4.5. Cowell, String Quartet No. 4: *United Quartet*, mvmt. 1, mm. 6-13
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The conclusion of the fifth movement (ex. 4.6) features the influence of dissonant counterpoint in a primarily homorhythmic polyphonic texture, although occasionally the homogenous rhythmic motion in all four parts is offset by an eighth rest or half note in the first and second violins. The melody in the cello moves in stepwise motion with the exception of three leaps. The melodies in the first and second violins contain a few more leaps than the cello, but can also be characterized as moving in a mainly conjunct manner. The viola part plays a

drone on G. The counterpoint results in consonant and dissonant intervals, weighted more toward those that are consonant, and Cowell treats consonance freely. There are many instances of consecutive consonances in the upper voices against the bottom voice. For example, on beat 3 of m. 64 in the first violin there are ten consecutive tones in the melody that are consonant against the cello.

6	6	m7	5	m6	m6	6	m6	6	+4	6	3	m3	m3	m3	m3	5	m3	8	5	
4	4	5	3	m9	°4	+4	4	+4	9	9	4	8	m6	m6	m6	m6	8	8	m6	3
4	3	9	8	5	m6	7	8	9	3	4	8	5	m6	5	4	3	9	8	8	7

Ex. 4.6. Cowell, String Quartet No. 4: *United Quartet*, mvmt. 5, mm. 62-66
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Seven of the twenty vertical sonorities in ex. 4.6 feature exclusively consonant relationships between all the tones. For example, in m. 62 the downbeat comprises a major sixth and perfect fourth above D in the cello, the equivalent of a G major chord in second inversion. The other six consonant vertical sonorities are located in m. 62 on beat 4, m. 64 on beats 3 and 4, m. 65 on beat 2, and m. 66 on beats 1 and 3. Four of the vertical sonorities (m. 62 on beat 2 and m. 65 on beats 1, 3, and 4) feature tones that are all consonant against the cello part, but at least one dissonant relationship exists between the other parts. For example, on beat 2 of m. 62 the upper parts comprise a major sixth, perfect fourth, and major third above the cello part, but the A-flat in the second violin is a major second above the G in viola. The remaining nine vertical sonorities feature at least one tone that is dissonant against the bottom voice and usually one other dissonant relationship among the upper voices. For example, in m. 63 the downbeat

comprises a minor sixth, perfect fourth, minor ninth, and perfect fifth. In addition, the A-flat in the first violin and the F in the second violin are a minor ninth and minor seventh above G in the viola, respectively. The *Mosaic Quartet* and String Quartet No. 4: *United Quartet* demonstrate Cowell's sustained use of dissonant counterpoint within this chamber music genre.

Additionally, the influence of the technique is found in two piano works from the 1930s and 1940s. *Ritournelle*, L. 563/2 (1939), was the second of four movements written by Cowell as incidental music for Jean Cocteau's *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel*.¹³ John Cage performed the first two movements (*Hilarious Curtain Opener* and *Ritournelle*) at the Cornish School with the Bonnie Bird Dance Group.¹⁴ *Ritournelle* comprises two sections, *Larghetto cantabile* and *Trio*. In the score Cowell suggested several possible elastic or mobile forms for the performance of each section, and explained, "other elastic constructions may be made, rather than those suggested here. There are many other ways in which different measures may be fitted together plausibly."¹⁵ The *Trio* section of Cowell's *Ritournelle* demonstrates his application of dissonant counterpoint to a three-voice texture (ex. 4.7).

Each melody is fairly conjunct, though balanced by some leaps. As in the String Quartet No. 4, the combination of the melodies results in more consonant than dissonant intervals, and a few of the vertical sonorities feature exclusively consonant relationships among the tones in each voice. Cowell's treatment of consonance in this piece is free, which seems to manifest his ideas of "sonant counterpoint" in the 1926 Aeolian Hall concert program and the new polyphony described in the 1928 Chávez article. In both instances the composer focuses foremost on writing good melodic lines regardless of the intervals that result from the counterpoint.¹⁶ *Ritournelle* exhibits instances of consecutive consonances that are not necessarily preceded and/or followed by conjunct melodic motion.

¹³ Lichtenwanger, *The Music of Henry Cowell*, 167.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Henry Cowell, *Ritournelle*, in *New Music Quarterly* 19/1 (New York: American Music Center, 1945), 11.

¹⁶ Concert program, Feb. 2 (1926), Aeolian Hall; Cowell, "Carlos Chávez," 21-22.

m7 m3 m6 7 5 +4 6 3 5 m7 °5 m6 m6 4 5 m2 2 m6 m3 m3 6 5 5 6

m6 m3 m3 m7 7 m3 5 m2 5 m3 m7 m3 9 m6 m7 m6 4 m6 °5 °7 m6 m7 6 6 6 +5 °5

Ex. 4.7. Cowell, *Ritournelle*, *Trio* section, mm. 2-7
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A similar flexible approach to consonance can be observed in Cowell’s *Invention for Sidney*, L. 718 (1948), another keyboard piece that demonstrates the influence of dissonant counterpoint. Drawing upon eighteenth-century traditions associated with the inventions of J. S. Bach, Cowell’s *Invention* is a two-voice polyphonic work for keyboard that comprises forty-one measures.¹⁷ The piece was written for his wife Sidney’s birthday, which is evidenced by the date on the score, “June 2, 1948.”¹⁸ Excerpts from this work show Cowell’s use of dissonant counterpoint in a genre that traditionally uses strict imitation of an opening theme in two voices.

¹⁷ My complete transcription of this work is found in Appendix E.

¹⁸ Henry Cowell, *Invention for Sidney*, Henry Cowell Papers, box 34 folder 42, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Lichtenwanger points out that June 2 is Sidney’s birthday. See Lichtenwanger, 224. This work is one of eighty-five “anniversary pieces” that Cowell wrote for his wife beginning in 1941 to commemorate different events in their life. See David Nicholls, “Henry Cowell,” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Deane Root, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed August 31, 2009.

Throughout the piece Cowell only consistently imitates the motive found in the top voice in the second measure, a half-note tied to an eighth-note followed by another eighth note (ex. 4.8).

♩. = 60

1 2 3

m6 5 m6 m2 m3 2 +2 3 4 5 6

4 5 6

m3 4 5 4 8 9 m9 m6 5 4 m3 m3 m9 °8 °7 °8 m6 m6

7 8 9

m6 m7 6 5 4 3 m2 m3 3 3 m3 m3 3 7 6 3 m6 6

Ex. 4.8. Cowell, *Invention for Sidney*, mm. 1-9

Cowell does, however, recapitulate melodic material from the beginning of the work at its original pitch level about halfway through the piece. In mm. 23-31 (ex. 4.9) he restates the melody from the top voice in mm. 1-9, but now it is placed in the bass voice and accompanied by predominantly different counterpoint in the top voice.

23 24 25

°8 m7 m6 6 m3 m3 3 4 3 9 +8 7 m3 m9 °8 m7 m6 5

26 27 28

6 5 6 7 m3 m3 +2 3 +4 +5 6 6 6 +5 +4 +3 +2 m3

29 30 31

3 2 m3 4 5 m6 7 6 m6 m6 m6 6 m6 m2 m3 m6 3 m3

Ex. 4.9. Cowell, *Invention for Sidney*, mm. 23-31

Melodic motion in both voices is balanced between conjunct and disjunct movement, with more leaps present than in the previous works discussed. As in the *String Quartet No. 4* and *Ritournelle*, the intervals that result from Cowell's counterpoint in the *Invention for Sidney* are both consonant and dissonant, but more heavily weighted toward consonances. His treatment of consonance is flexible: there are many instances of consecutive consonances between the voices, and consonant intervals are not necessarily accompanied by conjunct melodic motion. This musical work demonstrates just how broad and accommodating Cowell's ideas were regarding the application of the guidelines associated with dissonant counterpoint.

Cowell's Writings

While many pieces written over a period of decades attest to Cowell's commitment to dissonant counterpoint, his compositions were not the only medium for his continued advocacy of the technique. He also wrote about the technique in documents that were published during the 1930s. Although completed in 1919, Cowell's book *New Musical Resources* was not published until 1930. It disseminated his ideas about dissonant counterpoint (among other things) to a broader public. The book contains a discussion of how the compositional method fit into the historical development of counterpoint, guidelines for realizing the method, and a discussion of composers who employ it. Cowell also addressed other concepts and compositional techniques that are related to dissonant counterpoint, notably "counterchord" and counterpoint using tone clusters.¹⁹

In 1933 Cowell published a collection of essays, *American Composers on American Music*, that discussed dissonant counterpoint in relation to several composers. The book contains articles by Cowell and numerous other authors, addressing general topics, issues, and trends in American music, and also specific composers and their works. In the introduction Cowell stated, ". . . I have initiated independently various new sorts of harmony, rhythm, counterpoint, and other musical mediums."²⁰ While he did not specifically mention dissonant counterpoint, it was certainly one of Cowell's new developments related to counterpoint. Cowell addressed the topic of "young composers who give promise of developing originality and becoming independently American," and discussed the compositional styles of Bernard Herrmann and J. Lehman Engel, for whom dissonant counterpoint was one of their methods.²¹ Nicolas Slonimsky wrote the essay on Cowell, and, in describing Cowell's focused work habits, referred to dissonant counterpoint among his other innovations. Slonimsky stated,

When Cowell is intent on one particular problem, say that of dissonant counterpoint, he deliberately dismisses the wealth of his new musical resources and, by doing so, achieves an unencumbered presentation of the main problem.²²

¹⁹ A detailed discussion of dissonant counterpoint and related topics in *New Musical Resources* is located in Chapter 3.

²⁰ Cowell, *American Composers on American Music*, 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

²² *Ibid.*, 61.

Cowell's essay on Charles Seeger, which had been previously published as the article "Charles Louis Seeger, Jr." in the January 15, 1932 issue of *Fortnightly*, identified Seeger's contributions to the development of dissonant counterpoint and the influence his ideas exerted on the music of European composers Hindemith and Schoenberg. Cowell stated,

Before Hindemith produced his works in dissonant counterpoint poured into a Bach mold, Seeger suggested this very idea, and created a system for such a counterpoint, worked out to the last detail of what the intervals should be and how they might move. Hindemith and Schoenberg both came out later with works embodying the principles of Seeger's suggestions."²³

In the biographical notes at the end of the book Cowell listed "studies in single, unaccompanied melody and in two-line dissonant counterpoint" (1915-32) among Seeger's "principal works."²⁴ My consultation of the Charles Seeger Estate at the Library of Congress did not produce any studies of this type.

In the essay on Nicolas Slonimsky, Cowell noted that Slonimsky's piece *Studies in Black and White* exclusively comprises consonant intervals; dissonances are not even allowed as passing tones.²⁵ Cowell asserted, however, that Slonimsky managed to cultivate an overall dissonant sound, despite the fact that the intervals between the contrapuntal parts were classified as consonant.

"[Slonimsky] makes the music sound dissonant through the modern use of cross-relations and atonality. . . . With this is combined the idea of a counterpoint in 'mutually exclusive tonal systems,' each part moving along its own scale (diatonic and pentatonic in this case)."²⁶

While Cowell did not identify the piece as representative of any specific compositional technique, there appears to be a relationship between Slonimsky's polyphony in *Studies in Black and White* and Cowell's descriptions of either dissonant or sonant counterpoint. Furthermore,

²³ Ibid., 122.

²⁴ Ibid., 215.

²⁵ Cowell, *American Composers on American Music*, 108. In 1929 Cowell published Slonimsky's *Studies in Black and White* in *New Music Quarterly*. Nicolas Slonimsky, *Studies in Black and White*, in *New Music Quarterly* 3/1 (San Francisco: The New Music Society of California, 1929).

²⁶ Cowell, *American Composers on American Music*, 108-9.

his discussion of *Studies in Black and White* demonstrates that Cowell embraced a broader conception of dissonance, which included not only intervals that are classified as dissonant (i.e., sevenths and seconds), but also the use of other means to create an overall dissonant sound in a composition.

Cowell surveyed the prominent musical activities in Europe and the United States during 1933 in the “Music” entry for the 1934 edition of *The Americana Annual*. Therein he cited a work by Vivian Fine as an example of dissonant counterpoint:

Vivian Fine wrote a sextette for wind instruments, percussion, and piano. It is serious and shows a tightening up of her tendency toward rigid dissonant counterpoint.²⁷

While Cowell only mentioned the technique in passing, the inclusion of dissonant counterpoint in a brief survey of musical activities in the United States and Europe demonstrates the extent to which he considered it a worthy compositional approach and the esteem with which he regarded Fine’s work.

Cowell’s Teaching

In addition to discussing the technique in his publications, Cowell taught dissonant counterpoint in private composition lessons. Recent archival research has also uncovered evidence that Cowell included dissonant counterpoint as part of the curriculum for the college classroom, information that suggests a much wider dissemination of the technique than scholars previously thought had occurred. Documents in the Henry Cowell Papers at the New York Public Library together with course catalogs in the Fogelman Library at the New School for Social Research confirm that Cowell included dissonant counterpoint in classes he taught at Stanford University and the New School. Since the method was taught from the west to east coasts, it was not the practice of an elite, exclusive coterie of composers located in just one city or region of the United States. Folders 3-6 in box 164 of the Cowell archive contain documents related to his “Appreciation of Modern Music” course (Music 120) offered at Stanford during the 1934 Summer session. A “General Outline” briefly summarizes the concepts taught in each

²⁷ Henry Cowell, “Music,” in *The Americana Annual: An Encyclopedia of Current Events*, ed. by A. H. McDannald (New York: Americana Corp., 1934), 392.

class session; the lecture notes, referred to as “syllabi,” provide more detail about each class meeting; the “suggested reading” list offers insight into the intellectual background for the ideas that Cowell presented; and the exams reveal other details covered in the class that may not have been mentioned in either the course outline or lecture notes.²⁸ For example, the exams confirm that dissonant counterpoint was part of Cowell’s curriculum, although the compositional method was not mentioned explicitly in the course outline or lecture notes.

The general outline for “The Appreciation of Modern Music” lists ten sessions, each of which was two hours in length.²⁹

1. The Historical Development of Modern Music
2. The Scientific Basis of New Music Materials
3. The Relation of New Music to Society
4. The Materials of New Music
5. Midterm Examination
6. The Composers of Modern Music
7. The European Fathers of Modern Music of Today
8. Other European Composers and Newer Trends
9. Modern American Composers
10. Final Examination³⁰

Cowell began the course with historical and scientific justifications for the techniques of modern music. In the first lecture he focused on “how the music of today developed from older musical practice,” and in the second lecture he demonstrated the relationship between music and the disciplines of “physics, mathematics, psychology, and physiology.”³¹ In session 3 Cowell explored the various functions of music for “primitive peoples” and in cultivated society. He distinguished between “rural and urban music,” and investigated the influence of modern society on musical style.³² The fourth lecture surveyed the elements of new music, which Cowell

²⁸ My transcriptions of these materials are found in Appendix F.

²⁹ Henry Cowell, “General Outline of Course on Music 120, Stanford University Summer Session 1934, Appreciation of Modern Music,” Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 5, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. A transcription of the General Outline is located in Appendix F. With the exception of the exams, each class session is also accompanied by a brief description.

³⁰ Henry Cowell, “General Outline of Course on Music 120.”

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

³² *Ibid.*

divided into “sound and rhythm.”³³ The category of sound encompassed developments related to “tone, noise, scales, chords, melody, harmony, tone-quality, concord, discord, counterpoint, polyharmony, tonality, atonality, polytonality, etc.”³⁴ As regards rhythm Cowell discussed new techniques associated with meter, duration, tempo, dynamics, “melody of rhythm,” and “counterpoint of rhythm.”³⁵

After the midterm the second part of the course focused on the trends and techniques manifest in specific composers’ works. For lecture 6, on the early modernist composers, Cowell discussed “Mussorgsky, Liszt, Wagner, Debussy, Strauss, Satie, Ravel, Scriabin, and Janacek,” and included an “analysis of some of their music.”³⁶ While it was not specified for the remaining three categories of composers, it is likely that Cowell also discussed their compositions to illustrate the relevant techniques and trends featured therein. In lecture 7 Cowell identified Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Bartok as the European patriarchs of modern music.³⁷ He covered other modernist European composers based on their geographical location in the eighth lecture, and additionally identified noteworthy young composers.³⁸ The syllabus for the eighth lecture concluded with the assertion, “In all Europe, no special new tendency of great strength may be noted.”³⁹ This statement positioned Cowell for the last lecture, in which he juxtaposed the achievements of the American modernist composers, whom he proclaimed to be “less polished but more virile than the European composers of today,” against the trends in Europe.⁴⁰

³³ Ibid., 2.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid. The syllabus (i.e., lecture notes) for the fourth session are lost.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Henry Cowell, “Syllabus: Music 120, Eighth session,” Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Henry Cowell, “Syllabus: Music 120, Ninth session,” Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Cowell’s use of gendered language is not completely unexpected, given his professional associations with Charles Ives and Carl Ruggles, who were known to use gendered terminology. It is noteworthy, however, that Cowell casts “virility” in a positive context in the quote above, since he would later be imprisoned in 1936 for homosexual activities.

Cowell identified three groups of American composers: 1) “the older composers”: Carl Ruggles, Charles Ives, Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, Wallingford Riegger, Adolph Weiss, and John Becker; 2) “the younger composers”: Henry Brant, Gerald Strang, Ray Green, Lohn Adohmyan, and 3) composers from Latin America, notably Hector Villa-Lobos, Carlos Chávez, Alejandro Caturla, and Amadeo Roldán.⁴¹ Given Cowell’s active involvement in the Pan American Association of Composers, it is not surprising that his idea of “American” encompassed the regions of North, Central, and South America.⁴²

“Appreciation of Modern Music” was taught at two different levels, elementary and advanced, and dissonant counterpoint was mentioned in the final exams for each group.⁴³ The true/false section for the “elementary group” contained the following statement, “In dissonant counterpoint, no particular rules of procedure are followed.”⁴⁴ (The answer is “false.”) This exam question confirms that Cowell taught the students that the technique required specific guidelines. He may have also shared some of those rules with the elementary group. The final exam for the “advanced group” demonstrates a more thorough training in the materials of modern music. Instructions for the question resemble those for a music theory or composition exam.

⁴¹ Henry Cowell, “General Outline of Course on Music 120,” 2.

⁴² See Stephanie N. Stallings, “Collective Difference: The Pan-American Association of Composers and Pan-American Ideology in Music, 1925-1945,” Ph.D. diss., The Florida State University, 2009.

⁴³ Henry Cowell, “Examination, Appreciation of Modern Music, Advanced Group,” Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 5, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; Henry Cowell, “Examination, Appreciation of Modern Music, Elementary Group,” Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 5, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. A similar version of the elementary group test is located in Box 164 folder 3, titled “Final Examination, Appreciation of Modern Music (120).” This version does not contain the heading “elementary group.” My transcriptions of these materials are located in Appendix F.

⁴⁴ Cowell, “Final Examination, Appreciation of Modern Music (120),” 1, and Cowell, “Examination, Appreciation of Modern Music, Elementary Group,” 1.

Write eight short musical passages illustrating the use of the following musical materials

1. atonality
2. polytonality
3. polyharmony
4. Dissonant counterpoint
5. counter-chord
6. melody of meter
7. harmony of rhythmic durations
8. chords built on intervals of
 - a. fifths
 - b. thirds
 - c. seconds⁴⁵

In order to complete the exam successfully, the advanced students would have needed to learn and practice using the specific rules for dissonant counterpoint and the other techniques.

Fortunately the exams survive, since this information is not reflected in the general outline for the course or the lecture notes. The situation at Stanford suggests that Cowell likely included the technique in other courses, where it was not expressly mentioned in the course description.

During the 1930s dissonant counterpoint may have been included in courses that Cowell offered at the New School for Social Research, University of California, Berkeley, and Columbia University. During the 1931 Winter term Cowell taught a course at the New School titled “What the Twentieth Century has Added to Music.”⁴⁶ The description of this class in the *New School Announcement* resembles that for Cowell’s 1934 Stanford course.

. . . modern music will be divided into its component materials and different scientific aspects. Six lectures will be devoted to the science, and six to the materials of new music. The composers and national schools of composition will be treated in reference to the materials which they have furthered.⁴⁷

It is likely that the New School course was a predecessor to “The Appreciation of Modern Music” at Stanford. On a separate typewritten document that also contains the course description for “What the Twentieth Century has Added to Music” Cowell listed titles for the twelve class sessions, information that was not included in the *New School Announcement*. In the ninth lecture, titled “Polyphony in modern music,” he would surely have mentioned

⁴⁵ Cowell, “Examination, Appreciation of Modern Music, Advanced Group.”

⁴⁶ *The New School for Social Research: Announcement Winter Term 1931*, 27-28, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

dissonant counterpoint among new techniques for writing contrapuntal music.⁴⁸ The method would also likely have been discussed in Cowell's 1932 "Appreciation of Modern Music" course at the New School in the lecture for January 27, titled "Carl Ruggles' *Portals* and compositions by other American polyphonists."⁴⁹

Cowell taught "The Appreciation of Modern Music X 126" from January to March 1935 and January to April 1936 at the University of California, Berkeley; only a course outline has survived.⁵⁰ He also drafted descriptions for "The Meaning of Modern Music I: How Musical Modernism Grew" and "The Meaning of Modern Music II: What Living Composers Offer" on a typewritten sheet housed in box 163 folder 6, which is labeled "Teaching Columbia University"; there is no date included on the page.⁵¹ Cowell's outline for the Berkeley class and descriptions of the companion courses offered at Columbia closely parallel the topics included in the 1934 "Appreciation of Modern Music" course at Stanford, and dissonant counterpoint, therefore, would have likely been presented in one or both of these courses.

⁴⁸ Henry Cowell, "New School of Social Research, New York; What the Twentieth Century has Added to Music," Henry Cowell Papers, box 163 folder 16, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. A transcription of the document is found in Appendix F.

⁴⁹ *The New School for Social Research Fall 1931*, 37, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research. The course description in the catalog states, "Mr. Cowell will consider each evening some well known contemporary work by a famous composer and attempt in simple terms to analyze it so that its elements will be made clear to the listener and student, and so that they may be able in the future to analyze other modern works of the same general type for themselves."

⁵⁰ Henry Cowell, "The Appreciation of Modern Music X 126," Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 5, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. My transcription of the document is found in Appendix F. The dates are found in miscellaneous documents in box 164 folder 8 of the Henry Cowell Papers. The box contains, among other things, correspondence from UC Berkeley and lists of students enrolled in courses that he taught there.

⁵¹ Henry Cowell, "The Meaning of Modern Music I . . . [and] II," Henry Cowell Papers, box 163 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. My transcription of the document is found in Appendix F. Cowell taught two courses with similar titles at the New School during the 1951-52 academic year: "The Meaning of Modern Music I: How Musical Modernism Developed" in fall 1951 and "The Meaning of Modern Music II: What Does Music Mean Now" in Spring 1952. See *New School Bulletin* 9/1 (September 3, 1951), 113-14, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research. Cowell also offered "The Meaning of Modern Music" in the fall 1950 and "Living Composers" in Spring 1951. See *New School Bulletin* 8/1 (September 4, 1950), 125, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research.

Evidence that Cowell included dissonant counterpoint in his classes at the New School is found in the course description for “Advanced Music Theory” in the *New School Bulletin* for the 1948-49 academic year. It states,

A comparison of contemporary systems of musical composition—as evolved by Schoenberg, Hindemith, Schillinger, Piston and others—by means of elementary exercises in the use of dissonant counterpoint, the 12-tone row, atonality, polytonality; chords built on 2nds (tone clusters), on 4ths; cross-rhythms and other modern materials.⁵²

Since Cowell was teaching dissonant counterpoint in “Appreciation of Modern Music” in the 1934 Summer session at Stanford and in “Advanced Music Theory” during the 1949 Spring term at the New School, it stands to reason that he would have also included the compositional method in related classes that he taught between 1935 and 1948. Prior to the 1948-49 school year, some of the course descriptions for “Advanced Music Theory” in the *New School Bulletin* were quite brief, which could explain why dissonant counterpoint was not expressly mentioned. For example, the description for Cowell’s “Advanced Music Theory” course in the 1947-48 *New School Bulletin* reads, “Theory underlying materials of modern composers from Debussy through Stravinsky, Schönberg, Gershwin to Cowell and Cage.”⁵³ The same description was offered for “Advanced Music Theory: The 20th century” in the 1946-47 school year.⁵⁴ For 1942-43 and 1943-44 the description is even more cursory: “the course comprises studies in harmony, melody writing, form and rhythm, analysis. It is also an introduction to composition.”⁵⁵ It is likely that Cowell taught dissonant counterpoint in the theory courses that he offered during the years prior to the 1948-49 academic year.

Jeanette B. Holland’s class notes from Cowell’s 1951 “Advanced Music Theory” course at the New School provide detailed information regarding Cowell’s methods for teaching

⁵² *New School Bulletin* 6/1 (September 6, 1948), 160-61, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research.

⁵³ *New School Bulletin* 5/1 (September 1, 1947), 111, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research.

⁵⁴ *New School Bulletin* 4/1 (September 2, 1946), 109, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research.

⁵⁵ *The New School For Social Research: Curriculum 1942-43*, 78, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research; *The New School For Social Research: Courses of Study 1943-44*, 83, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research.

dissonant counterpoint in a classroom setting.⁵⁶ Many of the compositional techniques listed in the exam from Cowell's 1934 course "Appreciation of Modern Music" also appear in her notes, which include descriptions and musical examples that provide insight into dissonant counterpoint in the 1950s and Cowell's dissemination of the technique. A detailed discussion of Holland's class notes is provided in Chapter 5.

Cowell's Network

Beyond teaching dissonant counterpoint in a formal institutional setting, however, Cowell also shared it and other ideas about new musical resources with his colleagues. Many composers who were among Cowell's professional circle during the 1930s and 1940s used dissonant counterpoint in their works, including Vivian Fine, Gerald Strang, John Cage, Johanna Beyer, Lou Harrison, and Frank Wigglesworth. Fine (1913-2000) studied composition with Ruth Crawford, who viewed dissonant counterpoint as adaptable to a composer's individual aesthetic. Thus, Crawford would have likely shared it with Fine.⁵⁷ Heidi von Gunden has noted that Fine sent her compositions to Henry Cowell, which would account for his familiarity with her compositional style.⁵⁸ It is not clear, however, precisely when Cowell first became acquainted with her work. By 1930 he included a discussion of Fine's polyphonic style in his article "Nuevos Polifonistas Norteamericanos."⁵⁹ Cowell observed, "Miss Fine shows an almost exclusive predilection for sharp dissonances, and she breaks the melodic line with frequent discordant jumps."⁶⁰ In a letter to Fine in 1931 Cowell suggested, based on his assessment of some of the pieces she sent him, that she study dissonant counterpoint:

⁵⁶ Jeanette B. Holland, "Spring Term 1951," February 7, 1951, Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 15, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

⁵⁷ Letter from Ruth Crawford to Vivian Fine dated Nov. 7, 1929, quoted in Judith Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 118.

⁵⁸ Heidi Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1999), 15.

⁵⁹ Cowell, "Nuevos Polifonistas Norteamericanos," 86-89. In addition to Vivian Fine, Cowell also discussed John J. Becker, Henry Brant, Wallingford Riegger, and Gerald Strang.

⁶⁰ Cowell, "Nuevos Polifonistas Nortemaericanos," 88. The English translation was provided by Stephanie Stallings in an email to the author.

These works which you have just sent, seem to be in your familiar style, but there is a distinct attempt to branch out, particularly in counterpoint. I think you should try to study dissonant counterpoint. The work shows a lack of apprehensions, I think, of the specific details of dissonant counterpoint. The tessitura of your work is too low, and there is not enough arrival at some particular point, in the form as a whole.⁶¹

In the introduction to the book *American Composers on American Music* (1933) Cowell identified Fine as an example of one of the young, influential composers in America:

Vivian Fine is vigorous and radical, with a bristlingly harsh and discordant style. Her technique is rapidly improving, and she has already produced works which have commanded a hearing in important organizations abroad.⁶²

In 1958 Wallingford Riegger wrote an article about Fine for the *Bulletin for the American Composers' Alliance*, in which he praised her mastery of dissonant counterpoint:

. . . her early contact with Ruth Crawford had awakened the desire to create, and at the age of seventeen she already showed her mastery of dissonant counterpoint in her charming *Four Pieces for Two Flutes*.⁶³

Riegger credited Crawford with Fine's use of dissonant counterpoint, which she employed in various types of compositions (see Table 4.1).

⁶¹ Letter from Henry Cowell to Vivian Fine dated August 30, 1931, quoted in Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 15.

⁶² Henry Cowell, ed., *American Composers on American Music*, 10.

⁶³ Wallingford Riegger, "The Music of Vivian Fine," *Bulletin of the American Composers Alliance* 8/1 (1958), 2.

Table 4.1. Vivian Fine’s Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1930	<i>Four Pieces for Two Flutes</i>
1930	<i>Trio for Strings</i>
1931	<i>Four Polyphonic Pieces</i>
1933	<i>Four Songs for Soprano and Strings</i> 1. “The Lover in Winter Plaineth for the Spring” 2. “Comfort to a Youth That Had Lost His Voice” 3. “She Weeps Over Ragoon” 4. “Tilly”
1933-39	<i>Four Lyric Songs</i> 1. “The Riddle” 2. “A Flower Given to my Daughter” 3. “Adios, Bilbadito” 4. “Sonnet”
1963	<i>Sinfonia & Fugato for Solo Piano</i>

Gerald Strang (1908-83) was another composer whom Cowell discussed in his 1930 article “Nuevos Polifonistas Norteamericanos.” He observed that Strang used principally diatonic melodies, to which he applied contrapuntal devices “such as the retrograde or crab form, melodic inversions, etc.”⁶⁴ Pinpointing when and how Strang met Cowell has been difficult, but perhaps their acquaintance was facilitated by Strang’s residence in the San Francisco Bay Area and his affinity for musical experimentation. He completed a B.A. in Philosophy at Stanford University in 1928 and by 1932 had “studied harmony, counterpoint, fugue, and composition with McCoy, Koechlin, and others.”⁶⁵ Despite his formal training, Strang “concluded in 1929 that more could be learned about composing by experiment than by being taught.”⁶⁶ In addition to his work on experimental compositional approaches, he also “occupied himself with

⁶⁴ Cowell, “Nuevos Polifonistas Norteamericanos,” 88. The English translation was provided by Stephanie Stallings in an email to the author.

⁶⁵ See Steven E. Gilbert, “Gerald Strang,” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Deane Root, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed October 16, 2009; Leonard Stein, “Gerald Strang,” *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 7 (1983), 255; and “Biographical Notes,” *New Music Quarterly* 5/4 (July 1932), 28. In 1948 Strang earned a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California, where he studied with Ernst Toch and Arnold Schoenberg. See Gilbert, “Gerald Strang” in *Grove Music Online*.

⁶⁶ “Biographical Notes,” *New Music Quarterly* 5/4 (July 1932), 28.

composing, writing, and . . . lecturing on contemporary music and other subjects.”⁶⁷ In the early 1930s Cowell published some of Strang’s works in *New Musical Quarterly*, and from 1935 to 1941 Strang served as the periodical’s managing editor.⁶⁸ Two of Strang’s compositions, *Mirrorrorrim* and *Eleven*, suggest the influence of dissonant counterpoint. *Eleven* (1931), which was dedicated to Cowell, uses tone clusters and dissonant counterpoint, techniques that Strang would likely have learned from Cowell.⁶⁹

In addition to his interactions with Strang, Cowell taught another experimental composer in California during the early 1930s, John Cage (1912-92). Cowell documented their first meeting in a 1952 “Current Chronicle” article for *The Musical Quarterly*. He recalled, “When I first met John Cage about 1932, he was writing strange little piano pieces with an unusual sense of the sound-interest created by odd tonal combinations.”⁷⁰ According to Cowell, “[Cage] studied dissonant counterpoint and composition with me for a season in California.”⁷¹ In 1934, at Cowell’s urging, Cage moved to New York to study composition with Adolph Weiss in preparation for further study with Schoenberg.⁷² Cage also took some of Cowell’s courses at the New School for Social Research, including “Primitive and Folk Origins of Music,” “Modern Harmony,” and “Survey of Contemporary Music.”⁷³ David Nicholls has noted that Cage learned ideas associated with ultra-modern experimentalism from Cowell and principles of serialism

⁶⁷ “Biographical Notes,” *New Music Quarterly* 7/4 (July 1934), 12.

⁶⁸ Gilbert, “Gerald Strang,” in *Grove Music Online*.

⁶⁹ Gerald Strang, “Eleven,” *New Music Quarterly* 7/4 (July 1934), 8-9.

⁷⁰ Henry Cowell, “Current Chronicle,” *The Musical Quarterly* 38/1 (January 1952), 123.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 124. Leta Miller notes that she was unable to locate documentary evidence that Cage studied with Cowell prior to coming to New York. Miller did suggest that perhaps Cage studied with Cowell in 1933, because his name appears in Cowell’s calendar on July 14 and August 31 of that year. See Leta Miller, “Henry Cowell and John Cage: Intersections and Influences, 1933-1941,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59/1 (Spring 2006), 52 fn. 17.

⁷² Nicholls, *American Experimental Music*, 182. In 1935 Cage moved to California to study with Schoenberg.

⁷³ See Nicholls, *American Experimental Music*, 182 and Miller, “Henry Cowell and John Cage: Intersections and Influences,” 53. Cage’s recollection about taking “Modern Harmony” and “Survey of Contemporary Music” is originally found in *For the Birds: John Cage in Conversation with Daniel Charles* (Boston and London: Marion Boyars, 1981), 70.

from Weiss and Schoenberg, and “. . . these polarized forces jostled for attention in Cage’s young, excited and susceptible mind.”⁷⁴ A cursory examination of some of Cage’s early works reveals his use of dissonant counterpoint (Table 4.2), occasionally in conjunction with adaptations of serial techniques.

Table 4.2. John Cage’s Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1933	<i>Sonata for Two Voices</i>
1933-34	<i>Six Inventions</i>
1938	<i>Metamorphosis</i>

In addition to Cage, Cowell was associated with Johanna Beyer (1888-1944), a less well-known avant-garde composer in New York, who not only used the technique but also advocated on its behalf. Beyer emigrated to the United States from Germany in November 1923, and during the mid to late 1920s she attended the Mannes School of Music.⁷⁵ According to her résumé, Beyer also studied composition with Dane Rudhyar, Henry Cowell, Ruth Crawford, and Charles Seeger. She likely learned about dissonant counterpoint from the latter three individuals.⁷⁶ Despite her active involvement during the 1930s with the ultra-modern network of composers in New York City, little scholarly work has focused on Beyer. Amy Beal has observed, “histories of twentieth-century music and American music have continued to overlook

⁷⁴ Nicholls, *American Experimental Music*, 182.

⁷⁵ Amy C. Beal, “‘Her Whimsy and Originality Really Amount to Genius’: New Biographical Research on Johanna Beyer,” *American Music Review* 38/1 (Fall 2008), 4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Beyer's contributions."⁷⁷ As a case in point, she was not included in Hicks's biography of Henry Cowell's early years, even though the two composers were close friends.⁷⁸ They met in October 1933, and during the 1934-35 academic year Beyer received a scholarship to attend the New School for Social Research, where Cowell taught.⁷⁹ In addition to studying with Cowell, Beyer corresponded with him between 1935 and 1941, during which time she provided musical and secretarial services for him.⁸⁰ In fact, their letters reveal a budding romantic relationship.⁸¹

Beyer's advocacy for dissonant counterpoint extended to her composing, writing, and teaching. She used dissonant counterpoint in many of her compositions (Table 4.3) and wrote about the technique in her program notes for two Composers' Forum Laboratory concerts presented under the aegis of the Works Progress Administration Federal Music Project. In the notes for a concert on May 20, 1936, Beyer discussed her use of the compositional method in *Excerpts from Piano Suites* (1930-35), *Suite for Soprano and Clarinet* (1934), and *String Quartet* (1933-34).⁸² Beyer's program notes for a concert held on May 19, 1937, describe her application of dissonant counterpoint in the *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* (1936), *Excerpts from*

⁷⁷ Ibid, 1. Scholarly studies on Johanna Beyer include Larry Polansky and John Kennedy, "Total Eclipse: The Music of Johanna Magdalena Beyer," *The Musical Quarterly* 80/4 (Winter 1996), 719-78; Melissa J. De Graaf, "Intersection of Gender and Modernism in the Music of Johanna Beyer," *Newsletter of the Institute for Studies in American Music* 33/2 (Spring 2004), 8-9; Marguerite Boland, "Experimentation and Process in the Music of Johanna Beyer," *Viva Voce* 76 (2007). <http://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/materialsammlung/material/BeyerBoland.pdf> (accessed December 15, 2009); Beal, "Her Whimsy and Originality Really Amount to Genius," and Kelly Hiser, "An Enduring Cycle: Revaluing the Life and Music of Johanna Beyer," Master's thesis, University of Miami, 2009. Larry Polansky also maintains a webpage with helpful information and sources related to Beyer at http://eamusic.dartmouth.edu/~larry/misc_writings/talks/beyer.index.html (accessed December 16, 2009).

⁷⁸ Beal, 1.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 4. Beal speculates that before Beyer emigrated to the United States she may have attended one of Cowell's concerts in Germany in 1923 during his first European tour.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁸¹ Ibid., 1, 5, 12-13.

⁸² Composer's Forum Laboratory concert program, May 20, 1936, contained in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 2 folder 1, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Many thanks to Melissa de Graaf for providing me with a photocopy of the transcript from the question-and-answer session that followed this concert. Larry Polansky and John Kennedy have suggested that the *Excerpts from Piano Suites* described in the 1936 program likely refer to various movements contained in *Dissonant Counterpoint* and *Gebrauchs-Musik*. See Polansky and Kennedy, "Total Eclipse," 740.

Piano Suites (1930-36), and *Quintet for Woodwinds* (1933).⁸³ In addition to composing, Beyer taught piano lessons, which provided her with another forum to disseminate the method.⁸⁴ She used it in two pieces that she included in her *Piano Book: Classic – Romantic – Modern* labeled “Lento” and “half note = 56.”⁸⁵ This not only demonstrates her affinity for the technique among other modern compositional methods but also confirms her intent to share it with her piano students.

Table 4.3. Johanna Beyer’s Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
early 1930s	<i>Dissonant Counterpoint</i>
1932	<i>Suite I for Clarinet</i>
1932	<i>Suite Ib for Clarinet</i>
1933	<i>Suite III for Clarinet and Bassoon</i>
1933	<i>Three Songs</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Stars, songs, faces” 2. “Summergrass” 3. “Timber moon”
	<i>Quintet for Woodwinds</i>
1934	<i>Ballad of the Star Eater</i>
1934	<i>Three Songs for Soprano and Clarinet</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Total Eclipse” 2. “Universal-Local” 3. “To be”
1934	<i>Gebrauchs-Musik</i>
1936	<i>Clusters</i>
1936	<i>Movement for Double Bass and Piano</i>
1936	String Quartet No. 2
1936	<i>Piano Book</i>
1936	<i>Sonata for Clarinet and Piano</i>
1936-37	<i>Have Faith</i>
1937	<i>Suite for Violin and Piano</i>

⁸³ Composer’s Forum Laboratory concert program, May 19 (1937). Melissa de Graaf provided me with a photocopy of concert program and the transcript from the question-and-answer session that followed this concert. Based on Beyer’s description of the *Excerpts from Piano Suites* played in the 1937 concert, Beal has posited that one of the “Excerpts” may have been Beyer’s “Original New York Waltz,” which later became the third movement of *Clusters*. See Beal, 5.

⁸⁴ Beal, 1, 4.

⁸⁵ Johanna Beyer, *Piano Book*, Johanna Beyer Scores, box 1 folder 20, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Lou Harrison (1917-2003) is another example among Cowell's students of a composer who used and also disseminated dissonant counterpoint. Upon the suggestion of friend and composer James Cleghorn, Harrison took the course "Music of the Peoples of the World" from Henry Cowell in Spring 1935 at the University of California Extension in San Francisco.⁸⁶ Prior to this Harrison had read *New Musical Resources* and *American Composers on American Music*, and thereafter he quickly approached Cowell for private composition lessons, which commenced in September 1935.⁸⁷ During Cowell's incarceration at San Quentin (1936-40) Harrison continued to receive instruction "through prison bars," and was one of several composers who assisted with various editorial responsibilities for *New Music Quarterly*.⁸⁸ In forging his own compositional style, Harrison was influenced by a variety of Cowell's ideas, including the use of instruments and compositional systems from non-Western musical cultures, extended techniques, the overtone series and its implications for experiments with tuning systems, complex rhythmic relationships, and dissonant counterpoint.⁸⁹ According to Leta Miller and Frederic Lieberman,

Cowell had a systematic approach to counterpoint as well: Lou's assignments included constructing various melodic lines in tertial or secunda counterpoint against a given *cantus firmus*. ("Tertial" and "secunda" in this context refer to the most prominent intervallic relationships on strong beats.)⁹⁰

In addition to studying with Cowell, Harrison had become acquainted with the works of Carl Ruggles through reading Charles Seeger's 1932 essay on the composer in *The Musical Quarterly*. Harrison also studied the scores of *Men and Mountains* and *Portals*, which had been

⁸⁶ Leta Miller and Frederic Lieberman, *Lou Harrison: Composing a World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 9.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 9, 319 fn. 27.

⁸⁸ Regarding the composition lessons in prison see Miller and Lieberman, 13. Regarding Harrison helping out at *New Music Quarterly* see Mead, *Henry Cowell's New Music*, 577. The other composers who assisted at *New Musical Quarterly* include Gerald Strang, Otto Leuning, Frank Wiggleworth, and Vladimir Ussachevsky. Harrison also served as the chairman of the editorial board from 1945-46. See Mead, *Henry Cowell's New Music*, 369.

⁸⁹ Miller and Lieberman, 10-11.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

published in *New Music Quarterly* in October 1927 and April 1930, respectively.⁹¹ According to Miller and Lieberman, “Ruggles’s music skillfully linked Harrison’s dual interests in contemporary experimental styles on the one hand and the intricate counterpoint of the Baroque on the other.”⁹² Harrison absorbed Ruggles’s musical style and then “tried his hand at this style, most successfully, [Harrison] feels” in the piano piece *Triphony*.⁹³ In 1946 Harrison published *About Carl Ruggles: Section Four of a Book on Ruggles*, in which he discussed dissonant counterpoint and Ruggles’s developments in the field of counterpoint.⁹⁴

A preliminary examination of Harrison’s works reveals that he used dissonant counterpoint in compositions that span his entire career (Table 4.4), even after he changed his compositional style to include more diatonicism.⁹⁵

Table 4.4. Lou Harrison’s Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1937	<i>Saraband</i>
1945	<i>Triphony</i>
1946	<i>Trio for Strings</i>
1946-47	<i>Praises for Michael the Archangel</i>
1948	<i>Suite No. 2 for Strings</i>
1948	<i>Alleluia for Small Orchestra</i>
1951	<i>Double Canon for Carl Ruggles</i>
1960	<i>Suite for Symphonic Strings</i>
1973	<i>Concerto for Organ with Percussion Orchestra</i>
1975	<i>Elegaic Symphony</i>

⁹¹ Miller and Lieberman, 28-29. Charles Seeger, “Carl Ruggles,” *The Musical Quarterly* 18/4 (October 1932), 578-92. While Harrison learned about Ruggles from Seeger’s article, it was Cowell who introduced Harrison to Ruggles.

⁹² Miller and Lieberman, 28.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

⁹⁴ Harrison, *About Carl Ruggles*.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

Miller has observed that Harrison borrowed musical material from his earlier works, often revising it, which also accounts for the presence of dissonant counterpoint in his later works.⁹⁶ Three examples are illustrative of this point. First, he transformed his 1945 piano piece *Triphony* into *Trio* (1946), a work for strings, and in 1960 he used a revised version of *Trio* for the fifth movement of the *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, titled *Lament*.⁹⁷ Second, for the fourth movement of the *Elegiac Symphony* (1975) Harrison orchestrated an organ solo that utilized dissonant counterpoint, *Praises for Michael the Archangel* (1946-47).⁹⁸ Third, the second movement of Harrison's *Concerto for Organ With Percussion Orchestra* (1973) is based on his earlier work *Double Canon for Carl Ruggles* (1951).⁹⁹ Beyond using the method in his compositions, Harrison also discussed it as "secundal counterpoint" in his book *Music Primer*.¹⁰⁰ He identified four categories of counterpoint – octaval, quintal, tertial, and secundal – and within each differentiated between diatonic and chromatic and also imitative and non-imitative types.¹⁰¹

In addition to teaching Lou Harrison in California, after his release from San Quentin Cowell also shared the technique with Frank Wigglesworth (1918-96), a less well-known composer in New York who studied composition with Cowell in 1940.¹⁰² Wigglesworth earned a bachelor's degree from Columbia University in the same year and later a master's degree from Converse College in 1942. His other composition teachers included Ernest White, Otto Leuning,

⁹⁶ Leta Miller, "Lou Harrison and the Aesthetics of Revision, Alteration, and Self-Borrowing," *Twentieth-Century Music* 2/1 (March 2005): 79-107.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 88, 91.

⁹⁸ Leta Miller, "Solemn Play: A Life of Cross-Cultural Synthesis," in *Recent Researches in American Music*, vol. 31, *Lou Harrison: Keyboard and Chamber Music, 1937-1994*, ed. by Leta Miller (Madison, WI: A-R, 1998), xxxvii.

⁹⁹ Miller and Lieberman, 215.

¹⁰⁰ Lou Harrison, *Music Primer, Various Items About Music to 1970* (New York: C. F. Peters, 1971), 11-13.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² I am grateful to Richard Taruskis of the University of California, Berkeley for suggesting that I investigate the possibility of Frank Wigglesworth's connection to Cowell and dissonant counterpoint.

and Edgard Varèse.¹⁰³ Beginning in 1946 Wigglesworth served as the chairman of the editorial board of Cowell’s *New Music Quarterly* and *New Music Recordings*, but he resigned in September 1951 after being awarded the Prix de Rome, which took him abroad.¹⁰⁴ Upon his return from the American Academy in Rome in 1954 Wigglesworth was appointed as an instructor at the New School for Social Research, where for three consecutive semesters, Spring 1956 through Spring 1957, he taught Cowell’s “Materials of Modern Music” class.¹⁰⁵ The description in the *New School Bulletin* lists dissonant counterpoint as one of the topics covered in the course.¹⁰⁶ Beyond teaching the technique, Wigglesworth also used it in his compositions. A cursory investigation of his manuscript scores in the Frank Wigglesworth Papers at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts has uncovered four works that appear to employ the method (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Frank Wigglesworth’s Works Employing Dissonant Counterpoint Techniques

DATE	WORK
1947	<i>Trio</i>
1949	<i>Three Movements for String Orchestra</i>
1950	<i>Duo for Oboe and Cello</i>
no date	<i>Canon for Woodwinds</i>

¹⁰³ Regarding the date of Wigglesworth’s lessons with Cowell see Mead, *Henry Cowell’s New Music*, 369 and Frank Wigglesworth, interview with Rita H. Mead April 15, 1975, 1, Henry Cowell Papers, box 82 folder 10, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Information on Wigglesworth’s education is found in Otto Leuning, “Frank Wigglesworth” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. by Deane Root, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed October 19, 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Mead, *Henry Cowell’s New Music*, 370-72.

¹⁰⁵ Wigglesworth’s return from Rome and appointment at the New School are discussed in Leuning, “Frank Wigglesworth” in *Grove Music Online*. Information about Wigglesworth teaching Cowell’s course is found in *New School Bulletin* 13/1 (September 5, 1955), 120, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research and *New School Bulletin* 14/1 (September 3, 1956), 121, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research. In previous years (1949-52) a course titled “Advanced Music Theory” bore the same course description as “Materials of Modern Music,” which was offered from 1952-57. A discussion of the contents of “Advanced Music Theory” offered in 1951 is found in Chapter 5.

¹⁰⁶ *New School Bulletin* 13/1 (September 5, 1955), 120; *New School Bulletin* 14/1 (September 3, 1956), 121.

Summary

Building on his work developing and disseminating dissonant counterpoint from the mid 1910s and through the 1920s, Cowell's efforts on behalf of the technique continued during the 1930s and 1940s through his composing, publishing, teaching, and networking. Various pieces written over the two-decade period demonstrate the influence of dissonant counterpoint, including *Orchesterstück: Synchrony* (1930), *Suite for Woodwind Quintet* (1934), *Mosaic Quartet* (1935), *String Quartet No. 4: United Quartet* (1936), *Ritournelle* (1939), and *Invention for Sidney* (1948). Cowell wrote about the technique in works that were published during the 1930s, notably *New Musical Resources*, *American Composers on American Music*, and an entry on "Music" in *The Americana Annual*. He included dissonant counterpoint in the curriculum of a course on the "Appreciation of Modern Music" at Stanford University, and he appears to have done so in courses taught at the University of California, Berkeley and the New School for Social Research. The classroom afforded Cowell a much wider forum for the dissemination of the technique than did private lessons. He continued to share the technique with his colleagues during the 1930s and 1940s, including Vivian Fine, Gerald Strang, John Cage, Johanna Beyer, Lou Harrison, and Frank Wigglesworth. The next chapter documents the extent to which Cowell continued to develop and disseminate the technique for the remainder of his career through similar activities in composing, publishing, and teaching.

CHAPTER 5

DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT AFTER IT ENDED: COWELL IN THE 1950s AND 1960s

Archival evidence establishes that dissonant counterpoint continued to be a touchstone for Henry Cowell during the 1950s and 1960s, well after the time that it was assumed to have fallen out of use among the ultra-modern composers. He taught the method in private lessons and as part of his course offerings at the New School for Social Research. Jeanette B. Holland's class notes from Cowell's 1951 "Advanced Music Theory" course at the New School provide guidelines and information about dissonant counterpoint along with exercises that use the technique. Her notes also confirm that the technique was an integral part of Cowell's course. Judith Tick interviewed Alan Stout, a composer who studied with Cowell at the Peabody Institute, and he confirmed learning the method from Cowell in private lessons. Stout recalled various principles for using the technique and wrote exercises that demonstrate the method as he remembered Cowell teaching it to him.

In 1954 Cowell published an article in *Etude* magazine titled "Contemporary Musical Creation in Education," in which he defined dissonant counterpoint and discussed it as one of many influential twentieth-century techniques that should be taught in a well-rounded course on modern compositional methods. In addition to his teaching and publishing, Cowell continued to use dissonant counterpoint in his late compositions, and many of his works from the 1950s and 1960s demonstrate his varied application of the guidelines associated with the method. The pieces discussed in this chapter include *Invention* (1952), *Symphony No. 12* (1955-56), *String Quartet No. 5* (1956), *Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 12* (1958), *Symphony No. 15: Thesis* (1960), and *Trio in Nine Short Movements* (1965).

The New School for Social Research

Henry Cowell taught at the New School for Social Research from the late 1920s until the early 1960s, during which time he offered a variety of courses in such topics as world music, music theory, and composition. In the *New School Bulletin*, a catalog of course offerings, dissonant counterpoint is mentioned in the descriptions for two courses offered by Cowell,

“Advanced Music Theory” (1949-52) and “Materials of Modern Music” (1952-57). The course description for “Advanced Music Theory” reads,

A comparison of contemporary systems of musical composition—as evolved by Schoenberg, Hindemith, Schillinger, Piston and others—by means of elementary exercises in the use of dissonant counterpoint, the 12-tone row, atonality, polytonality; chords built on 2nds (tone clusters), on 4ths; cross-rhythms and other modern materials.¹

The course was first offered in Spring 1949 and subsequently in Fall and Spring semesters through 1952. In Fall 1952 the *New School Bulletin* described Cowell’s similar course “Materials of Modern Music” as follows:

How to compose and analyze in various systems of handling 20th century musical materials: dissonant counterpoint, the twelve-tone row, neo-modal writing, the application of mathematics and physics. A comparison of modern techniques as advanced by Piston, Schoenberg, Hindemith, Stravinsky, Schillinger, etc.²

This class was offered from Fall 1952 through Spring 1957. Frank Wigglesworth, one of Cowell’s composition students, is listed as the instructor of this course for Spring 1956, Fall 1956, and Spring 1957 – further evidence of Cowell’s successfully having disseminated dissonant counterpoint, among other techniques.³

Jeanette B. Holland’s Class Notes

While the *New School Bulletin* confirms that Cowell shared the method in two courses, one student’s class notes from Cowell’s 1951 “Advanced Music Theory” course shed light on how this was accomplished. Among the teaching materials in the Henry Cowell Papers at the

¹ *New School Bulletin* 6/1 (September 6, 1948), 160-61. See also *New School Bulletin* 7/1 (September 5, 1949), 168; *New School Bulletin* 8/1 (September 4, 1950), 127; *New School Bulletin* 9/1 (September 3, 1951), 115.

² *New School Bulletin* 10/1 (September 1, 1952), 116, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research. See also *New School Bulletin* 11/1 (September 7, 1953), 119, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research; *New School Bulletin* 12/1 (September 6, 1954), 122, Fogelman Library, New School for Social Research; *New School Bulletin* 13/1 (September 5, 1955), 120; *New School Bulletin* 14/1 (September 3, 1956), 121.

³ Frank Wigglesworth, one of Cowell’s composition students, is listed as the instructor of this course for Spring 1956, Fall 1956, and Spring 1957. See *New School Bulletin* 14/1 (September 3, 1956), 121 and *New School Bulletin* 13/1 (September 5, 1955), 120.

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are Jeanette B. Holland's notes from Cowell's "Advanced Music Theory" course offered Spring term 1951 at the New School for Social Research. They are significant for three reasons. First, the information that she recorded illuminates the basic content of Cowell's course: musical exercises that use quartal harmony, dissonant harmony, dissonant counterpoint, and polychordal harmony along with instructions for creating the exercises, information about these techniques, and occasional references to representative composers and musical works, among other things. Second, the class notes contain guidelines for dissonant counterpoint and exercises that use the method, all of which date from thirty-five years after Cowell participated in its early development at the University of California, Berkeley. Third, in addition to Cowell's sharing the compositional practice with many people in a classroom setting, the document reveals an organized pedagogue and also corroborates his systematic thinking and presentation of ideas. This recently discovered archival source, which has not yet been discussed in scholarly literature, broadens our understanding of dissonant counterpoint and demonstrates Cowell's tireless efforts to propagate the method.

Jeanette (Hanna) Babette Holland née Liebrecht (1901-2001) attended the University of Heidelberg, where she majored in political science, from 1920-25. While there she also took courses in Harmonielehre from Prof. Pappen and musicology from Heinrich Bessler. She married Otto Holland in 1923, and they had three children: Heinrich (b. 1927), Hans (b. 1929), and Anne (b. 1935). The Hollands emigrated to the United States in 1940. From 1950 to 1959 Holland undertook graduate studies in musicology at New York University with Gustave Reese and Jan La Rue. She earned an M.A. in 1955 and an M. Phil. in 1983 from New York University.⁴ Jeanette published various articles in *The Gregorian Review*, *Acta Musicologica*, *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, and *Notes*. She also contributed five articles to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.⁵ In addition to pursuing her musicological research, which focused on early music topics, she was among the students in Cowell's 1951 Advanced Music Theory course.

⁴ Heinrich Holland, *Biographical Information about Jeannete (Hanna) Babette Liebrecht*, document sent to the author by Mr. Holland.

⁵ A list of Jeanette Holland's scholarly writings is located in Appendix H.

Holland's class notes comprise thirty-three photocopied pages joined by a paper clip. Attached is a letter dated February 12, 1976 that reads,

Dear Mrs. Cowell, Very hesitantly I am sending you these items, knowing that they can be only of little value for the big task that lies before you. Please take it as a small token of my thankfulness. Cordially yours, Jeanette B. Holland.⁶

Thus it appears from Holland's account that her class notes survive due to Sidney's efforts to collect materials from students who had once taken courses from Henry. A letter from Sidney to Jeanette, dated April 6, 1976, is located in Hans Holland's personal archive of his mother's materials. Sidney wrote,

Hea[r]tiest [sic] thanks, as Henry always said, for the copies of your term paper and notes. The notes on lectures are often absolutely what I am sure he said, very familiar to my ear, and I am so glad to have them, because what he said, exactly, when talking about music, has hardly been preserved at all. People occasionally taped his lectures informally; but who now knows who they were. So what you sent is invaluable, and I do thank you.⁷

Sidney's letter appears to be a response to receiving the photocopied notes that Jeanette sent in February 1976 with the accompanying note quoted above.

The first page of the notes is titled "Spring term 1951." Holland's name does not appear on the notes, but the handwriting matches her letter to Sidney. Page numbers have been added in green ink at the top of each page. Heinrich Holland confirmed that the handwriting in both the notes and the page numbers belongs to his mother.⁸ The course title, "Advanced Music Theory," does not appear in her notes, but the dates and contents correspond with the description of Cowell's "Advanced Music Theory" course found in the 1950-51 *New School Bulletin*.⁹

⁶ Letter from Jeanette B. Holland to Sidney Cowell, 12.II.76, Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 15, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

⁷ Letter from Sidney Cowell to Jeanette B. Holland, April 6, 1976, private collection of Hans Holland. Many thanks to Hans for sending me a copy of this letter.

⁸ Conversation with Heinrich Holland on November 13, 2009.

⁹ A complete edition of Jeanette Holland's notes is located in Appendix G.

The Content of Cowell's Course

Table 5.1 below contains an inventory of the topics, composers, musical works, and writings that are mentioned in Holland's notes. A citation of Cowell's book, *New Musical Resources*, appears near the top of the first page. Many of the topics included in Holland's notes are also covered in that book, suggesting that Cowell still valued the ideas over twenty years after it had been published.

Table 5.1. Inventory of Jeanette B. Holland's Class Notes

PAGE	DATE	TOPICS, COMPOSERS, WORKS
1	Feb. 7, 1951	Cowell, <i>New Musical Resources</i>
		Understanding a New Style in Music
		Transitory elements from free to dissonant counterpoint
		Development of Harmony: Chordal, Quartal, Secundal
		G. Fauré – Chords built on perfect fourths
1a	no date (n.d.)	Overtone Series
		Table of Partial Tones and Ratios
2	Feb. 14, 1951	Altered Tones – Richard Strauss, Schönberg Op. 1 (Musical Examples of altered tones)
		Chords numbered for their partials
		Chords built from perfect fourths: Duparc, Paul Dukas, d'Indy, Henry Russel, Debussy, Hindemith
There is no page labeled "2a."		
3 (recto)	n.d.	Schoenberg, Op. 11, Op. 19 – extends chords of perfect fourths to include augmented fourth
		Schoenberg, Op. 25 – 12-tone row
		EXERCISES (2): Harmonize in Fourths
3 (verso)	n.d.	Schoenberg, chords built from alternating P4 and A4 (Musical Examples)
		Julius Gold, musicologist, wrote a comprehensive dictionary of musical terms
		Bernhard Zicher, <i>Eine Neue Kompositions Technik</i> (1912)
		Dissonant Harmony
		A. Copland used polychords
		Resolution of 7th chords (Musical Examples)
4	n.d.	EXERCISE: Dissonant Harmony, Part 1
4a	n.d.	EXERCISE: Dissonant Harmony, Part 2
		Development of Counterpoint: Strict (16th-c.) – Palestrina, Lasso
		Free (18th-c.) – Handel, Bach
		Dissonant (20th-c.) – Schönberg, Berg, Hindemith, Cowell, Ives, Stravinsky
		Charles Seeger taught dissonant counterpoint in 1916; Hindemith in 1928
		J. S. Bach, D minor Prelude from Well Tempered Clavier (WTC), Book 1

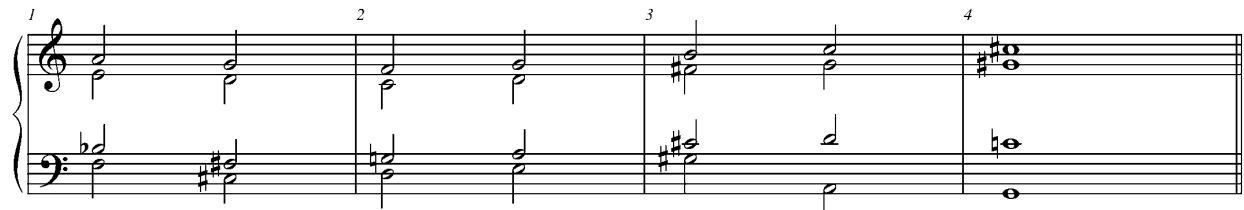
Table 5.1 (continued). Inventory of Jeanette B. Holland's Class Notes

PAGE	DATE	TOPICS, COMPOSERS, WORKS
5	n.d.	Dissonant Counterpoint EXERCISE: 13th chords
5a	n.d.	Beginnings of Dissonant Counterpoint: Bach, C minor Prelude, <i>WTC</i> Book 1, <i>Cantata No. 81</i> , "Jesus schläft;" "Stillung des Sturmes" Three Systems of Chordal Harmony: Chords built from 1) Thirds, 2) Fourths, 3) Seconds 9th, 11th, and 13th chords
6	n.d.	Rimsky Korsakoffe [sic]: <i>Coq d'or Suite</i> Prokofieff [sic]: <i>Alexander Nevski</i> [sic] Walton: <i>Music to Henry V</i>
There is no page labeled "6a."		
7	Feb. 21, 1951	Three-Voice Dissonant Counterpoint - Guidelines EXERCISES: 3vv. first-species dissonant counterpoint (6 total: 4 in 3vv., 1 in 2vv., 1 inc.)
7a	n.d.	Dissonant Counterpoint – Guidelines Schillinger System – Joseph Schillinger: <i>The Schillinger System of Musical Composition</i> , Schillinger, "Electricity, a Musical Liberator" <i>Modern Music</i> 8/3 (Mar. 1931): 26-31 Saminsky, <i>Music of Our Day</i> (1932) Henry Cowell, "Charles Ives" <i>Modern Music</i> 10/1 (Nov.-Dec. 1932): 24-33. Charles Ives, <i>Concord Sonata</i>
8	n.d.	Henry Cowell: <i>Epitaph, Where She Lies</i> Carl Ruggles: <i>Men and Angels, Men and Mountains</i> "Lilacs" Alban Berg N. Slonimsky: <i>Music Since 1900</i> (1938) Nicolas Slonimsky: <i>Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns</i> Dissonant Counterpoint – Guidelines
8a	Mar. 7, 1951	Use of Intervals in Strict and Dissonant Counterpoint Musical Examples (4): 3vv. first-species dissonant counterpoint
9	Mar. 7, 1951	Musical Examples (6): 3vv. first species dissonant counterpoint
9a	Mar. 7, 1951	Polychordal Writing – Guidelines A. Schönberg: <i>Harmonielehre</i> – a standard theory work <i>Pierrot lunaire</i> EXERCISE: Polychordal harmony, 6vv.
10	Mar. 14, 1951	EXERCISES (4): Polychordal Writing Instructions: 1. write 2vv. first species CP, 2. built triads on the two parts
10a	n.d.	Helmholtz: <i>On the Sensations of Tone</i> D. C. Miller: <i>Science of Musical Sounds</i> Charles Ives: <i>Psalm 67</i> Wallingford Riegger

Table 5.1 (continued). Inventory of Jeanette B. Holland’s Class Notes

PAGE	DATE	TOPICS, COMPOSERS, WORKS
11	Mar. 21, 1951	Overtone Chords and Undertone Chords (Musical Examples) EXERCISES (2): Polychordal harmonies built from overtone and undertone chords
11a	n.d.	Polychordal harmony based on second-species strict counterpoint – Guidelines (Musical Example)
12	n.d.	Musical Example: polyharmony using major, minor, diminished, and augmented chords EXERCISE: third-species strict counterpoint EXERCISE: polychordal harmony based on third-species strict counterpoint
12a	n.d.	EXERCISE: first-species dissonant counterpoint EXERCISE: second-species dissonant counterpoint EXERCISE: polychordal harmony based on second-species dissonant counterpoint
13	n.d.	History of passing tones: Middle Ages, Baroque, 19th century, 20th century Quarter tones: Alois Haba, Charles Ives
13a	Mar. 28, 1951	EXERCISE: Write a polyharmony using the four different kinds of chords: major, minor, augmented, diminished.
14	n.d.	EXERCISE: first-species dissonant counterpoint EXERCISES (2): Polyharmony based on first-species dissonant counterpoint w/ added passing tones.
14a	n.d.	Newspaper clipping: Peggy Glanville-Hicks and David Allen will be in Cowell’s “Living Composers” course Charles Ives: <i>Concord Sonata</i> Schönberg Webern Stravinsky: <i>Le Sacre du Printemps</i> , <i>L’histoire d’un [sic] soldat</i> Bartok: <i>12 Bagatelles</i> (1908), <i>Allegro Barbaro</i>
15	n.d.	Hindemith: <i>Piano Pieces</i> Op. 36, Op. 37 Hindemith’s use of dissonant and consonant counterpoint Carl Ruggles: <i>Angels</i> Definitions: Theme of a symphony, Subject of a fugue
15a	Apr. 4, 1951	Polychordal writing; dissonant counterpoint Teaching children how to compose Instructions: “write a fugue”
16	Apr. 11, 1951	Instructions for writing a prelude Discussion of counterpoint Examine mvmt. 1 of the C# minor sonata, <i>quasi una fantasia</i> (Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata)
There is no page labeled “16a.”		
17	n.d.	EXERCISE: Fugue a tier voci
17a	n.d.	EXERCISE: Fugue continued
18	n.d.	EXERCISE: Prelude
18a	n.d.	EXERCISE: Prelude continued

Other comments on the first page of Holland’s notes focus on understanding new styles in music. These are followed by information about the overtone series, including a “Table of Partial Tones and Ratios.”¹⁰ Cowell introduced three systems for creating chords, those built on thirds, those built on fourths, and those built on seconds, and he elaborated on the technique of building chords from fourths. Holland wrote that “Duparc, Dukas, d’Indy, Henry Russel . . . Debussy and Hindemith” used chords built from perfect fourths, and identified Schoenberg as a composer who extended this compositional method to include chords built on perfect and augmented fourths.¹¹ The first two musical exercises in her notes (exx. 5.1 and 5.2) were written using a bass melody provided by Cowell and the following instructions: “harmonize in 4ths. Use [sharps] and [flats] freely. Don’t have key consideration. Smooth progression, inversion to fifths allowed.”¹²



Ex. 5.1. Holland’s Notes, Quartal Harmony, Exercise 1, p. 3 recto



Ex. 5.2. Holland’s Notes, Quartal Harmony, Exercise 2, p. 3 recto

¹⁰ Jeanette B. Holland, “Spring Term 1951,” 1a.

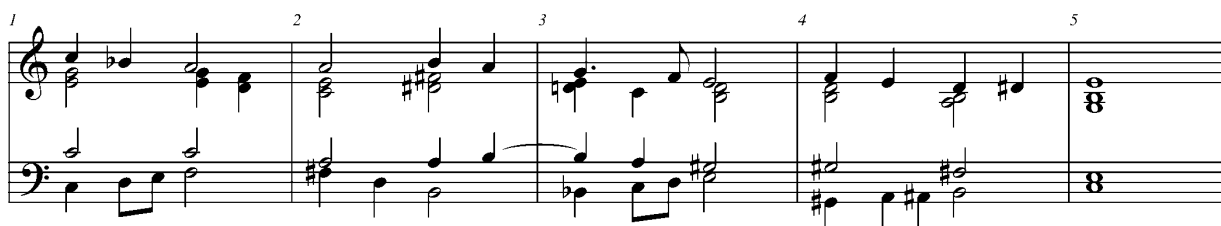
¹¹ Holland, “Spring Term 1951,” 2a-3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

According to Holland’s notes for the topic of “dissonant harmony” students were instructed to harmonize a bass melody in two ways. The instructions for the first exercise are in two parts: “Make a conventional harmony” (ex. 5.3) and “put in chromatic passing tones” (ex. 5.4).¹³

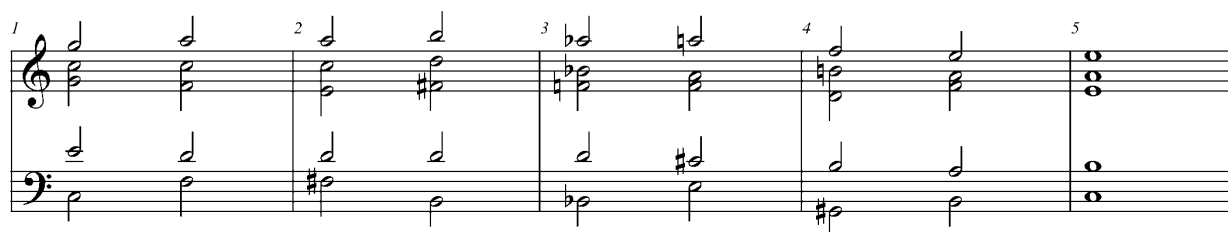


Ex. 5.3. Holland’s Notes, Dissonant Harmony, Exercise 1, part. 1, p. 4



Ex. 5.4. Holland’s Notes, Dissonant Harmony, Exercise 1, part 2, p. 4

The second exercise in dissonant harmony required students to “use 7, 9, 11, 13th with unusual sharps and flats, not based on a key” (ex. 5.5).¹⁴



Ex. 5.5. Holland’s Notes, Dissonant Harmony, Exercise 2, p. 4a

¹³ Ibid., 4.

¹⁴ Ibid., 4-4a.

The topics of dissonant counterpoint and polychordal harmony form the bulk of the musical exercises and information in Holland's notes. Cowell covered two- and three-voice first-species dissonant counterpoint and several methods for writing polychordal harmonies, including those based on strict and dissonant counterpoint, overtone and undertone chords, and the incorporation of passing tones. The class notes conclude with instructions for writing a prelude and three-voice fugue along with one musical example of each. Holland's prelude and fugue are both written in a fairly straightforward consonant style.

Information on Dissonant Counterpoint

The section of Holland's notes devoted to dissonant counterpoint begins with a list of three contrapuntal styles – strict, free, and dissonant counterpoint – each of which is accompanied by a time period and representative composers who use the method. Strict counterpoint dated from the sixteenth century and was found in the works of Palestrina and Lasso. Free counterpoint from the eighteenth century was defined by the “association of harmony and counterpoint” and its practitioners identified as Handel and Bach.¹⁵ Finally, dissonant counterpoint had begun in the twentieth century and was found in works by Ives, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Alban Berg, Hindemith, and Cowell.¹⁶ Regarding the history of the pedagogy of dissonant counterpoint Cowell identified Charles Seeger and Paul Hindemith, and Holland's notes record, “Charles Seeger began teaching Diss. cp in 1916. Hindemith began with it in 1928.”¹⁷

Beyond providing a historical context for the technique, Cowell offered further evidence in defense of its legitimacy. He pointed to the “beginnings” of dissonant counterpoint in the

¹⁵ Ibid., 4a.

¹⁶ According to Seeger Cowell claimed to find Seeger's syllabus for a class on dissonant counterpoint sitting on the desks of Schoenberg and Hindemith. See Seeger, *Reminiscences of an American Musicologist*, 107. This is discussed in Chapter 1. Crawford had discussed dissonant counterpoint with Berg in 1931 during her Guggenheim Fellowship in Europe. See Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 162. This is discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁷ Holland, “Spring Term 1951,” 4a. The date of 1916 matches Seeger's account from his 1940 article: “I was in [1916] giving my first rather tentative course in dissonant counterpoint . . .” See Seeger, “Henry Cowell,” 289. This is discussed in Chapter 2.

works of J. S. Bach. Holland listed as exemplars the “C minor prelude” from Book 1 of the *Well Tempered Clavier* and the tenor solo from Cantata No. 81, “Jesus schläft.”¹⁸ In *New Musical Resources* Cowell had identified J. S. Bach as a historical example of a composer who utilized dissonant complex sonorities in his contrapuntal works.¹⁹ In his 1928 article “New Terms for New Music” Cowell had also mentioned the tenor solo “Jesus sleeps” in conjunction with the technique.²⁰ The pieces listed in Holland’s notes demonstrate that Cowell had isolated another specific example among Bach’s oeuvre. Cowell additionally posited a cessation in the development of contrapuntal methods since the time of Bach. Holland wrote, “the principles of counterpoint did not change from Bach to Schönberg.”²¹ This statement recalls Cowell’s efforts in *New Musical Resources* to justify the need for dissonant counterpoint by asserting that there had been an “arrest” in the development of contrapuntal techniques.²² Cowell also discussed the transition from older methods of counterpoint to the new style of dissonant counterpoint. Holland wrote, “in order to understand a new style in music it is necessary to study and examine certain transitory elements.”²³ She cited two steps along the path from free counterpoint to dissonant counterpoint: first, “freeing dissonance from a solution” provided by elided cadences, and second, the “dissociation [sic] of resolution.”²⁴

Holland’s notes show that Cowell provided guidelines for the use of dissonant counterpoint pertaining to voice leading, the use of intervals, and additional considerations for three-voice textures. Concerning the motion from note to note Holland mentioned the use of contrary motion between the voices.²⁵ She also stated, “in Dissonant counterpoint the horizontal

¹⁸ Holland, “Spring Term 1951,” 5a and 8.

¹⁹ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 37-38.

²⁰ Cowell, “New Terms for New Music,” 22.

²¹ Holland, “Spring Term 1951,” 4a.

²² Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 37-38.

²³ Holland, “Spring Term 1951,” 1.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

line is to be considered tonal in spelling. The vertical line is atonal only.”²⁶ Regarding the use of intervals for two-voice dissonant counterpoint Holland distinguished between two categories of dissonant intervals. Primary dissonances included the major seventh, minor second, minor ninth, and augmented octave.²⁷ The augmented 4th may be substituted, but Holland noted, “augmented 4ths give the impression of stray dissonances.”²⁸ Secondary dissonances, which were to be used sparingly, included the minor seventh, major second, and major ninth. Holland’s notes show that Cowell also discussed the issue of enharmonically equivalent intervals, about which she said,

Remember everything is done enharmonically. dim. 3 is treated as major 2.
Beware of enharmonic concords: augm. 5th = major [sic] 6th!!²⁹
Be careful of the sound: some dissonances look like dissonances but sound very consonant.³⁰

For another example of enharmonic consonances Holland noted that an augmented ninth, while it is spelled as a dissonant interval, actually sounds consonant, a minor tenth.³¹

For three-voice textures Cowell apparently discussed additional guidelines pertaining to the use of intervals and the relationships between the voices. Most important was the role of the middle voice, which should be dissonant with at least one other part.³² Holland also wrote,

Augmented 4ths and diminished 5ths are included now.³³
If the outer parts form a primary dissonance the middle part doesn’t have a dissonance to both sides!³⁴
Avoid familiar chords like 7ths or 9th chords.³⁵

²⁶ Ibid., 15a.

²⁷ Ibid., 7a. The augmented octave is discussed on p. 8a.

²⁸ Ibid., 7a.

²⁹ Ibid., 8. The augmented fifth is actually enharmonically equivalent to a minor sixth, not a major sixth.

³⁰ Ibid., 7a.

³¹ Ibid.

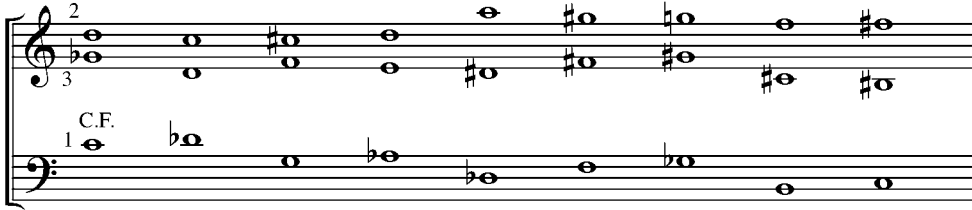
³² Ibid., 7, 8.

³³ Ibid., 7.

³⁴ Ibid., 8.

³⁵ Ibid.

Many of the three-voice exercises in Holland's notes include ordinal numbers written at the beginning of each part (see ex. 5.6).

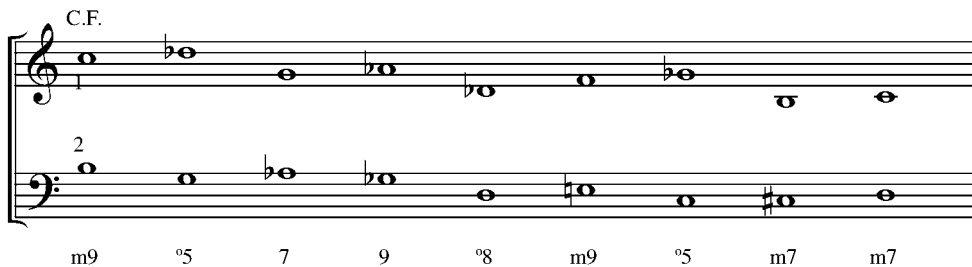


Ex. 5.6. Holland's Notes, Three-voice Dissonant Counterpoint, Exercise 4, p. 7

These numbers likely correspond to the order in which the voices are added to the *cantus firmus*, which is always labeled with the number 1. With the exception of exercise 5 on page 7 of Holland's notes, the other outer voice was written second, and the inner voice third.

Exercises in Dissonant Counterpoint

Holland's notes contain eighteen first-species dissonant counterpoint exercises, fifteen of which were written in a three-voice texture and three in a two-voice texture. Her application of the technique in the two-voice exercises illustrates a careful adherence to the guidelines (see ex. 5.7). I have added figures below the staff that indicate the intervallic relationship between the two melodic lines.



Ex. 5.7. Holland's Notes, Two-Voice Dissonant Counterpoint, Exercise 2, p. 7

The melody in the bass voice comprises tones that are all dissonant against the *cantus firmus*, and most of them are primary dissonances. There are six primary dissonances, including two diminished fifths, and three secondary dissonances. While there are some instances of parallel motion between the melodies, the second voice moves chiefly in contrary motion against the *cantus firmus*.

The three-voice exercises from Holland's notebook reveal both strict and flexible approaches to the guidelines (see ex. 5.8). The melodies in the top and middle voices primarily move in contrary motion against the *cantus firmus*, which means that there is considerable parallel motion between the two upper voices. The tones in the inner voice are always dissonant with at least one other part, and sometimes with both parts.

7	9	7	+5	7	m9	+4	7	9
m7	m2	+u	++6	+8	m3	7	m9	m9

Ex. 5.8. Holland's Notes, Three-Voice Dissonant Counterpoint, Exercise 3, p. 8a

There are also instances of consonant intervals between the inner voice and the other voices, but this is always accompanied by a dissonant relationship between the other voices. For example, on the sixth whole note the middle voice contains a D, which is a minor third above B in the *cantus firmus* but a minor seventh below C in the top voice. Also, the relationship between the outer voices at this point is a minor ninth, which is classified in Holland's notes as a primary dissonance. The melody in the top voice comprises mostly primary dissonances against the *cantus firmus*.³⁶ There are six primary dissonances, including one augmented fourth, two secondary dissonances, and an enharmonic consonance: the augmented fifth sounds as a minor sixth. Considering the order in which the parts are written in most of the three-voice exercises, the occurrence of an enharmonic consonance between the outer voices seems odd, because it

³⁶ Cowell's classification of intervals as recorded by Holland is discussed above.

would not be permitted if this were simply a two-voice exercise. Perhaps in a three-voice exercise the consonant relationship between the outer voices is considered to be ameliorated by a primary dissonance somewhere else in the sonority, in this case the double-augmented sixth between the *cantus firmus* and the inner voice, which sounds as a major seventh. It may have also been a mistake on Holland's part, although other three-voice exercises in Holland's notes also feature enharmonic consonances between the outer voices, a practice that demonstrates a flexible approach to the guidelines. Based on Cowell's use of dissonant counterpoint in his own compositions, it seems likely that he would have condoned a free application of the technique. Exercise 4 on page 7 (ex. 5.9) features two consecutive enharmonic consonances between the outer voices.

9	7	+4	+4	+5	+9	+8	°5	+4
°5	3	m7	+5	++8	+8	++8	9	+7

Ex. 5.9. Holland's Notes, Three-voice Dissonant Counterpoint, Exercise 4, p. 7

At the fifth whole note the A in the top voice is an augmented fifth above D-flat in the *cantus firmus*, which would sound as a minor sixth. This is followed by an augmented ninth between the G-sharp in the top voice and the F in the bottom voice, which would sound as a minor third. Both enharmonic consonances are accompanied by dissonant intervals between the *cantus firmus* and the inner voice. The augmented ninth (minor third) is balanced by an augmented octave, which would sound as a minor ninth, a primary dissonance. The augmented fifth (minor sixth) is accompanied by the equivalent of a secondary dissonance: the double-augmented octave would sound as a major ninth. The three instances of consonant or enharmonically consonant intervals between the inner voice and the *cantus firmus* (occurring on whole notes 2, 4, and 9) are all accompanied by primary dissonances between the outer voices.

Polychordal Harmony and Counterpoint

In addition to teaching dissonant counterpoint as a method in itself, Cowell explained it as a possible step toward writing polychordal harmony. In her notes Holland described two possible approaches to creating polychords. The first was polyphonic and the second harmonic. She stated,

Polychordal writing has two principles: 1) one polychord can be divided in 2 or more chords and treated in the way of counterpoint. 2) one polychord can be treated as one unit and harmonically.³⁷

In Cowell's contrapuntal approach to polychordal writing these harmonies were constructed from two-voice exercises in both strict and dissonant counterpoint. The students wrote counterpoint against a *cantus firmus* and then built triads on and/or around each tone in both voices according to guidelines presented by Cowell. Regarding the addition of triads to a counterpoint exercise, Holland wrote,

Don't alter either the note of the *cantus firmus* or counterpoint . . . use free inversions.

The *cantus firmus* or counterpoint is a member of the triad. Use all [sharps] and [flats].

Write in close position. If you get in trouble, open up in order to avoid parallel motion.³⁸

The exercises in Holland's notes offer context that serves to clarify her remarks. Based on her exercises and written prose, I have identified the following guidelines:

- 1) The original notes of the counterpoint exercise should not be altered.
- 2) The added triads may be written in root position or an inversion.
- 3) The original tones from both parts of the exercise (referred to as the "*cantus firmus*" and the "counterpoint" parts) can occupy any position in the triad, be it the top, middle, or bottom tone.
- 4) Sharps and flats may be used to alter any notes in the triad except those from the original counterpoint exercise.

³⁷ Holland, "Spring Term 1951," 9a.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11a.

5) Triads should be written in close position. One may, however, use open spacing to avoid parallel motion.

Using Holland's notes as a guide, it appears that Cowell systematically led students through writing polychordal harmonies based on counterpoint. He started with first-species strict counterpoint and progressed to second- and third-species strict counterpoint. Then he allowed students to use dissonant counterpoint as the basis for polychords. Holland recorded the following instructions for the first contrapuntal polychordal exercise, "Take a simple *cantus firmus* [and] write a strict 2 part counterpoint [in] first specimen. Build triads on the two parts and handle them as group units."³⁹ Holland's notes contain four polychordal exercises based on first-species strict counterpoint, two of which are featured in exx. 5.10 and 5.11.

Ex. 5.10. Holland's Notes, Polychordal Exercise Based on First-Species Strict Counterpoint, p. 10

Ex. 5.11. Holland's Notes, Polychordal Exercise Based on First-Species Strict Counterpoint, p. 10

Holland's notes also include one polychordal exercise based on second-species strict counterpoint (ex. 5.12), and another that uses third-species strict counterpoint (ex. 5.13).

³⁹ Ibid., 10.

Ex. 5.12. Holland's Notes, Polychordal Exercise Based on Second-Species Strict Counterpoint, p. 11a

Ex. 5.13. Holland's Notes, Polychordal Exercise Based on Third-Species Strict Counterpoint, p. 12

Prior to writing the polychordal exercise based on third-species counterpoint, Holland wrote the third-species strict counterpoint exercise on which it was based on a separate staff (ex. 5.14). She may have done this so that she could refer back to Cowell's process of creating a polychordal harmony based on a counterpoint exercise. This does not, however, explain the absence of the first- and second-species counterpoint exercises used to create the corresponding polychordal harmonies in exx. 5.10, 5.11, and 5.12. There could have been more practical considerations for the inclusion of the third-species counterpoint exercise. Perhaps there was not enough room for Holland to write the chords on top of the third-species counterpoint exercise, and thus she wrote out the separate polychordal exercise. An examination of the polychordal writing based on first- and second-species strict counterpoint (exx. 5.10-5.12) reveals that there was plenty of room for her to write the counterpoint exercise first and then fill in the chords on top of the same exercise.

Ex. 5.14. Holland's Notes, Exercise in Third-Species Strict Counterpoint, p. 12

The next polychordal exercise uses dissonant counterpoint as its foundation, and four separate items on page 12a of Holland's notes suggest the process involved in assembling it. First, the *cantus firmus* is composed (ex. 5.15). Second, a melody is written in first-species dissonant counterpoint against it (ex. 5.16).

Ex. 5.15. Holland's Notes, *cantus firmus*, p. 12a

Ex. 5.16. Holland's Notes, First-Species Dissonant Counterpoint, p. 12a

In the third step (ex. 5.17), the *cantus firmus* is placed in the bass clef, and in the upper voice the first-species melody from ex. 5.16 is transformed into a second-species melody in dissonant counterpoint. Also, triads are added to the *cantus firmus*. The fourth step presents the final version of the polychordal exercise, in which triads are fashioned around the upper voice (ex. 5.18).

Ex. 5.17. Holland's Notes, Second-Species Dissonant Counterpoint and *cantus firmus* with added triads, p. 12a

Ex. 5.18. Holland's Notes, Polychordal Harmony Based on Dissonant Counterpoint, p. 12a

The use of second-species dissonant counterpoint to create this polychordal harmony suggests that Cowell would have covered the principles associated with the proper handling of consonant intervals. Ex. 5.19 features the skeletal structure from ex. 5.17. The added triads have been removed from the *cantus firmus* in the bass voice, leaving a two-voice second-species exercise in dissonant counterpoint.

Ex. 5.19. Holland's Notes, Second-Species Dissonant Counterpoint Structure from ex. 5.17

There are three instances of consonant intervals in this exercise: a major sixth on beat 2 of m. 2, a minor third on beat 2 of m. 6, and a perfect octave on beat 2 of m. 7. All of the consonances

occur on weak beats and they are preceded and followed by dissonant intervals. In addition, consonant intervals are approached and left by stepwise melodic motion in the added voice.

The final example of a “dissonant counterpoint polyharmony” appears to incorporate the use of passing tones, although the instructions do not make this explicit. On page 13 of her notes Holland discussed the “History of passing tones.”⁴⁰ The following page, labeled 13a, includes Cowell’s instructions for a two-part exercise. Holland wrote:

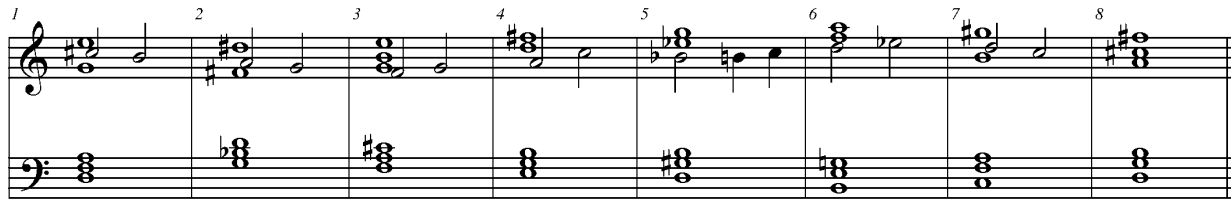
- I. Write a polyharmony using the 4 kinds of chords
major, minor, augm. + dim. + primary and secondary 7th chords
- II. Use the same cantus firmus in writing a dissonant c. p. polyharmony

The second part of the exercise, labeled “II. Diss. c.p.,” is found on page 14. Holland began with a two-voice first-species exercise in dissonant counterpoint that followed the guidelines (ex. 5.20).

Ex. 5.20. Holland’s Notes, Two-Voice Dissonant Counterpoint, p. 14

All of the intervals are dissonant, and the added melody in the top voice moves in primarily contrary motion against the *cantus firmus*. There are four primary dissonances, including a diminished fifth, and four secondary dissonances, although there should be more primary dissonances than secondary. The two-voice exercise is followed by the “dissonant counterpoint polyharmony” (ex. 5.21).

⁴⁰ Holland, “Spring Term 1951,” 13.



Ex. 5.21. Holland’s Notes, “Dissonant Counterpoint Polyharmony,” p. 14

Chords have been built around the tones in each part of the original counterpoint and then passing tones added to the exercise (with the exception of the changing tone figure in m. 4). Some of the notes from the original counterpoint exercise have been altered rhythmically in order to become part of the passing tone figures. For example, in the top voice of m. 1 the duration of C-sharp has been shortened to become part of the half-note passing tone figure that comprises C-sharp followed by B. In the top voice of m. 2 the A is no longer a whole-note, but has been changed to a half-note in order to become part of the passing note figure comprising A to G. On the other hand, in the top voice of m. 3 the original tone G has remained a whole note, and the passing notes were added on top of the whole-note chord. All of the passing tones originated as part of the tones in the chord with the exception of the F to G passing tone figure in m. 3.

Jeanette Holland’s class notes provide new information about dissonant counterpoint and its dissemination. The *New School Bulletin* corroborates that Cowell continued teaching the technique until the late 1950s. Thus, the newly discovered document allows us to construct a more complete view of the resonance of dissonant counterpoint during the first half of the twentieth century. Cowell’s institutionalization of this avant-garde technique demonstrates the high regard in which he held the method along with the other twentieth-century compositional approaches that he taught alongside it in the music theory classroom.

Cowell at the Peabody Conservatory: Judith Tick with Alan Stout

In addition to his teaching at the New School for Social Research, information about Cowell's activities at the Peabody Institute also provides insight into dissonant counterpoint. He taught at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University from 1951 to 1956, during which time Cowell offered various courses related to music history, music literature, music theory, and composition.⁴¹ Alan Stout, a composer and emeritus professor from Northwestern University, studied composition with Cowell at Peabody from 1951 to 1954.⁴² In an interview with Judith Tick, Stout reported that Cowell taught him a variety of modern compositional techniques "in private composition lessons, not general theory classes."⁴³ Stout learned dissonant counterpoint first, which was followed by other methods such as "a primitive 12-tone technique," "modality through tetrachordal construction," tone-clusters, modal chords, and systems based on "Indonesian and Japanese music constructions."⁴⁴

For his interview with Tick, Stout wrote five exercises in dissonant counterpoint according to the principles that he recalled being taught by Cowell.⁴⁵ All the exercises use the same *cantus firmus*, and there is one for each of the five species associated with traditional contrapuntal pedagogy.⁴⁶ Tick's notes from the interview contain various guidelines for

⁴¹ A list of courses taught by Cowell at Peabody during the 1951-52 school year is found in Edward Carwithen, "Henry Cowell: Composer and Educator," PhD diss., University of Florida, 1991. The information is reproduced in Hicks, *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 147. Carwithen notes that Cowell commenced teaching at Peabody in 1951. See Carwithen 115. The website for the Peabody Institute cites Cowell's tenure there as 1951-56. See <http://www.peabody.jhu.edu/1207>, accessed August 24, 2009. Hicks places Cowell teaching at Peabody from 1952-56. See Hicks, 146.

⁴² Alan Stout, interview with Judith Tick, November 19, 1985, typed notes on a single page. The document is in Judith Tick's possession. Many thanks to her for making this invaluable source available to me. The information that I have quoted is taken from Tick's notes of her conversation with Stout.

⁴³ Alan Stout, interview with Judith Tick, November 19, 1985.

⁴⁴ Alan Stout, interview with Judith Tick, November 17, 1985, nine pages of handwritten notes on paper that features a Northwestern University header. See pp. 3 recto to 3 verso.

⁴⁵ Alan Stout, Exercises in Dissonant Counterpoint, three untitled pages of staff paper. A reference to this source is found in Tick's typewritten notes from the November 19 interview, which state, "see sheets of dissonant counterpoint as Alan remembered Henry Cowell teaching him at Peabody Institute." The exercises also remain in the possession of Judith Tick. I am grateful to her for sharing them with me.

⁴⁶ Stout's dissonant counterpoint exercises are discussed below.

dissonant counterpoint described to her by Stout, and they presumably correspond with the exercises. Stout recalled that the compositional technique was also referred to as “secundal counterpoint.”⁴⁷ Regarding the issue of enharmonic intervals Stout stated, “always go with the sound, not the spelling. . . . diminished 7th is 6th because that’s what it sounds as.”⁴⁸

Stout also provided instructions needed to write exercises in the five species. He mentioned, “Henry taught [dissonant counterpoint] as species counterpoint with the rules reversed.”⁴⁹ For the first species Stout recalled, “. . . all dissonant, 2 part. Start with *cantus firmus*. Henry Cowell would make them up and then students copied. Avoid suggestions of triads, except possibly augmented triads.”⁵⁰ For the second-species exercises Stout noted, “1st half note dissonant, 2nd one can be free.”⁵¹ This likely means that the second half-note can either be consonant or dissonant. Regarding the third species Stout pointed out, “quarter notes 1 and 3 have to be dissonant; 2 and 4 can be free. All added lines have to conform to the rule of not repeating the tones.”⁵² The comment about repetition likely refers to Stout’s other observation that in a melody any given tone should not be repeated until seven to nine other tones have intervened.⁵³ Stout identified fourth-species dissonant counterpoint as the “exact reversal of original 4th species. Upper part uses suspensions. Suspensions are consonant on 1st beat, 2nd is dissonant. All half notes.”⁵⁴ Since it is a reversal of the original fourth species, then there should also be the option of a suspended tone being dissonant on both sides of the bar line, and if it is dissonant on the first beat of the measure, then it can either leap or step to a dissonant tone on the second beat. Stout described the fifth species as “free rhythm against CF,” and he

⁴⁷ Alan Stout, interview with Judith Tick, November 17, 1985, handwritten notes, 1 recto.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Alan Stout, phone interview with Judith Tick, March 31, 1985, typed notes, 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 1 verso.

⁵³ Ibid., 1 recto.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1 verso.

suggested that the “final step” in learning dissonant counterpoint is to write “two free rhythms.”⁵⁵ This, of course, refers to writing two melodies that have independent rhythms.

Stout’s exercises in first- through fifth-species dissonant counterpoint reveal further insight into the technique as it was taught by Cowell in the 1950s. In the first-species exercise (ex. 5.22) the upper melody features an even combination of conjunct and disjunct voice leading, including leaps as large as a diminished fifth. The *cantus firmus*, which Stout always places in the bass voice, also comprises conjunct and disjunct motion: the leaps are usually by a third, although one is a perfect fourth. The intervals produced by the two melodies are all dissonant; the augmented sixth sounds as a minor seventh. The added melody moves primarily in conjunct motion against the *cantus firmus*.

The musical score for Ex. 5.22 consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system contains measures 1 through 6. The second system contains measures 7 through 10. The upper staff is in treble clef, and the lower staff is in bass clef. The notes are as follows:

Measure	Upper Melody (Treble)	Cantus Firmus (Bass)	Interval
1	G4	F3	7
2	A4	C#3	°5
3	B4	D3	7
4	C5	F#3	°5
5	D5	G3	m9
6	E5	A3	+8
7	F5	B3	9
8	G5	C4	+6
9	A5	D4	+4
10	B5	F#3	m9

Ex. 5.22. Stout, First-Species Dissonant Counterpoint Exercise

The second-species exercise (ex. 5.23) comprises mostly dissonant intervals, although consonance is now permitted and occurs occasionally. In each measure the first half-notes are exclusively dissonant, and consonances may occur on the second half-note of a given measure. In every instance (mm. 1, 3, 5, 8 and 9) the consonant interval is preceded and followed by a dissonant interval and accompanied by stepwise motion in the top voice leading toward and away from the consonance.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Ex. 5.23. Stout, Second-Species Dissonant Counterpoint Exercise

Stout's third species exercise (ex. 5.24) demonstrates both strict and flexible approaches to the treatment of consonant intervals. Most fall on the second and fourth beats of the measure, the unaccented beats, as was prescribed, and usually the consonances are preceded and followed by a dissonant interval. In m. 5, however, there is an instance of consecutive consonant intervals. The upper voice steps from B-flat, a diminished fifth above E, down to A, a perfect fourth above the *cantus firmus*. This is followed by a leap in the upper voice to C-sharp, a major sixth above E. In addition to consecutive consonances, the major sixth falls on beat 3 in the measure, and is approached by a melodic leap rather than stepwise motion. In the previous second-species exercise all of the consonant intervals were approached and left by stepwise melodic motion. This strict handling of consonant intervals is only found in mm. 1, 2, and 7 of the third-species exercise. In m. 1 the melody steps from E, a major seventh above F, down to D, a major sixth above the bass note, to C, a diminished fifth above F-sharp, the new tone in the bass voice. In m. 2 on beat 3 the soprano melody moves from G up to A, which is a minor third above F-sharp, and down to A-flat, a diminished fifth above the new bass note D. In m. 7 the B in the upper voice that produces a minor third against the *cantus firmus* is part of a stepwise melodic motion from C-sharp to B and A.

Ex. 5.24. Stout, Third-Species Dissonant Counterpoint Exercise

All the other instances of consonant intervals in the third-species exercise involve disjunct melodic motion in either approaching and/or leaving the tone that is consonant against the *cantus firmus*. Increased flexibility in the treatment of consonant intervals was also a characteristic of the third-species exercises in Cowell’s dissonant counterpoint notebook.⁵⁶ It appears that the third species presents more difficulty than the first or second species for achieving strict adherence to the guidelines regarding the treatment of consonances. It is also plausible that the increased flexibility is indicative of Cowell’s accommodating view of the technique, which simply did not require doctrinaire adherence to the guidelines.

Stout used suspensions in the upper voice for the fourth-species exercise (ex. 5.25), but despite the suggestion that “suspensions are consonant on 1st beat, 2nd is dissonant,” it is not necessarily so in this exercise. In fact, this only occurs in mm. 3 and 6.⁵⁷ The suspended tones in mm. 3 and 6 are also dissonant against the *cantus firmus* on the second beat of the previous measure, although this is not stipulated in the guidelines enumerated by Stout. For example, on beat 2 of m. 2 the F in the upper voice is a diminished octave above F-sharp in the bass voice,

⁵⁶ The two-voice exercises contained in Cowell’s counterpoint notebook are discussed in Chapter 2.

⁵⁷ Alan Stout, phone interview with Judith Tick, March 31, 1985, typed notes, 1 verso.

which moves down to D on beat 1 of m. 3. At this point the suspended F is a minor third above the bass note, and the consonant interval is left by a step down to E-flat, a minor ninth above D.

Ex. 5.25. Stout, Fourth-Species Dissonant Counterpoint Exercise

Another prominent feature in Stout’s fourth species exercise, which he did not mention in the guidelines, is the option for a suspended tone to be dissonant against the *cantus firmus* on the first beat of the measure. When this is the case, the melody can either leap or step to a tone that is dissonant against the bass voice on the second beat. For example, on beat 2 of m. 6 the A in the upper voice is an augmented fourth above E-flat. When the bass voice moves to G on the first beat of m. 7, the suspended A is a major ninth above it, and the melody in the upper voice leaps down to F-sharp, a major seventh above the *cantus firmus*. Considering the emphasis on avoiding enharmonic consonances, there appears to be an error worth noting in m. 8, in which the suspended note is dissonant on the first beat and consonant on the second. This type of motion would be expected in a fourth-species exercise for traditional counterpoint. On beat 2 of m. 7 the F-sharp is a major seventh above G in the *cantus firmus*. When G in the bass voice moves up to A-flat, the suspended F-sharp is now an augmented sixth above the bass note, which would sound as a minor seventh. The melody in the upper voice steps down from F-sharp to E, an augmented fifth above A-flat, which would sound as a minor sixth. In Cowell’s counterpoint notebook he referred to the fourth-species exercises as difficult, and offered a few suggestions

for writing in that species.⁵⁸ The examples noted above in Stout's fourth-species exercise also point to a technique that allows for a flexible treatment of the guidelines rather than orthodox adherence to the rules.

For fifth-species dissonant counterpoint (ex. 5.26), the melody in the upper voice features a free rhythm and is characterized by primarily disjunct motion. The intervals between the two voices are mostly dissonant. Consonant intervals are handled freely: there are several instances in which a consonance is either approached or left by disjunct melodic motion in the upper voice. For example, in m. 7 the F-sharp in the upper voice leaps to C, a perfect fourth above G in the bass voice. Additionally, some consonances are not preceded and/or followed by a dissonant interval. In m. 5 the melody leaps from D, a minor seventh above the *cantus firmus*, to G, which results in a string of three consecutive consonant intervals against the bass note: a minor third, perfect fourth, and perfect fifth. Also, on beat 3 of m. 7 the melodic motion results in a perfect fourth followed by a perfect fifth, another instance of consecutive consonances. This exercise also features instances of consonant intervals occurring on the strong beats of the measure, beats 1 and 3, in mm. 7 and 9.

Ex. 5.26. Stout, Fifth-Species Dissonant Counterpoint Exercise

⁵⁸ Henry Cowell, *Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook*, 3 recto.

Alan Stout's interview with Tick and Jeanette Holland's class notes both demonstrate that dissonant counterpoint was an integral part of Cowell's teaching during the 1950s. Cowell had devised a systematic presentation of the method for private composition lessons and for the music theory classroom, venues that were associated with his collegiate teaching positions. His choice to include dissonant counterpoint alongside other twentieth-century techniques suggests the value that he placed upon it as an effective tool for his composition and theory students. Regarding the effectiveness of the technique, Ruth Crawford had proclaimed to Vivian Fine, "The principal excuse for counterpoint is that of discipline. You will have even more of this in dissonant counterpoint than in old Modal counterpoint."⁵⁹ Cowell also likely included the method in his college curriculum because of the abundant potential it offered to composers with diverse aesthetic goals. He would have seen the various uses of the method in the works of his colleagues, all of whom shared ultra-modern musical ideals while also cultivating their own individual compositional style. In her same letter to Fine, Crawford had also underscored the adaptability of dissonant counterpoint to an individual composer's aesthetic: "Would you not be intrigued by the idea of writing counterpoint, not in an idiom which you will never use, but in an idiom which seems to be your spontaneous mode of expression?"⁶⁰

Cowell's Article

Cowell's 1954 article "Contemporary Musical Creation in Education" contributes essential context for the information contained in Jeanette Holland's class notes from "Advanced Music Theory."⁶¹ Beyond providing information about dissonant counterpoint, the article sheds light on Cowell's approach to teaching so-called "modern" compositional methods. Cowell began by summarizing some of the issues faced by educators on the topic of twentieth-century music.

Music written in the twentieth century presents a problem to educators, particularly to teachers of composition. Just how detailed an approach to the

⁵⁹ Letter from Ruth Crawford to Vivian Fine, November 7, 1929.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Henry Cowell, "Contemporary Musical Creation in Education," 11, 49; reprinted in *Peabody Notes* 9/1 (Winter 1955), 1-2.

music is possible? Just what composers and which tendencies should be studied? Is there a real technique in the handling of new musical materials? If so, what is its relation to old rules of harmony and counterpoint?⁶²

Cowell asserted that teachers should present an unbiased approach to modern composition. His discussion focused on compositional approaches used by a variety of composers, including Arnold Schoenberg, Joseph Schillinger, Paul Hindemith, Nadia Boulanger, Béla Bartók, Walter Piston, and Charles Ives.

All contemporary music is not unified in a single philosophy or technique; consequently, several philosophical viewpoints and several techniques need to be examined. Since it is far too early to determine that any one system is “right” while another is “wrong,” all of those systems which have exerted wide and serious influence need to be studied and compared factually, without bias.⁶³

He defended “modern” compositional approaches against the misconceptions that they lack discipline and represent a radical break with tradition. Cowell emphasized the use of a systematic approach and the relationship to musical practices of the past.

“Modern” music at one time was thought of as breaking the rules of harmony and counterpoint, and most of it was considered chaotic. Now it is apparent that all modern music that shows signs of survival displays orderly musical processes. Most of these reflect a growth and development from older practices, usually by slow and understandable degrees.⁶⁴

Among the techniques discussed is dissonant counterpoint, which Cowell defined as “a study applying the same general rules and procedures to dissonance which are applied to concords in sixteenth century counterpoint.”⁶⁵ He emphasized that the technique had been “completely codified” and also pointed out that it enjoyed worldwide visibility.⁶⁶ Cowell noted, “[it] has been taught in such widely separated centers as the University of California, at the Hoch

⁶² Cowell, “Contemporary Musical Creation in Education,” 11.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Schule fuer Musik in Berlin (by Hindemith) and by Alban Berg in Vienna.”⁶⁷ Cowell does not mention the New School for Social Research, where he had been teaching it in his courses since at least 1949. Reminiscent of his comments in the 1928 article “New Terms for New Music,” Cowell distinguished between the technique and a general use of counterpoint that happens to be dissonant: “Dissonant counterpoint is a strict counterpoint; however, a free modern counterpoint based on recent harmonic functions and covering both consonance and dissonance is now taught by Hindemith.”⁶⁸ With this statement Cowell also distanced dissonant counterpoint from techniques that Hindemith had developed, an act that may have been motivated by nationalistic tendencies. Cowell likely viewed the technique as a distinctly American alternative to European methods. He concluded his discussion by advocating a flexible approach: “Both of these studies may be considered as an aid to compositional technic [sic], rather than as systems of composition.”⁶⁹

Cowell’s Works

In addition to teaching and writing, Cowell used dissonant counterpoint in his compositions throughout the remaining fifteen years of his career (1950-65), and as he had done in earlier works, Cowell continued to use varied approaches to the guidelines for the technique, which were featured in an assortment of genres, including a short keyboard invention, two symphonies, a hymn and fuguing tune for horn trio, a string quartet, and a piano trio. Cowell wrote *Invention*, L. 780, in 1952 as a Christmas gift for Sidney. It is one of eighty-five

⁶⁷ Ibid. According to Seeger, Cowell claimed to have found Seeger’s syllabus for a class on dissonant counterpoint sitting on the desks of Schoenberg and Hindemith. See Seeger, *Reminiscences of an American Musicologist*, 107. Crawford had discussed dissonant counterpoint with Berg in 1931 during her Guggenheim Fellowship in Europe. See Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 162. Both of these instances are discussed in Chapter 3.

⁶⁸ Cowell, “Contemporary Musical Creation in Education,” 11.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

“anniversary pieces,” which Cowell began writing in 1941 to commemorate various events.⁷⁰ As suggested by the title, which evokes the polyphonic compositional tradition of J. S. Bach, Cowell’s *Invention* is a short, two-voice polyphonic work for keyboard comprising twenty-four measures.

Measures 6-11 (ex. 5.27) are representative of the influence of dissonant counterpoint in this piece.

Ex. 5.27. Cowell, *Invention*, mm. 6-11

The texture comprises non-imitative polyphony, and the intervals between the two melodies are mostly dissonant. The melodic motion in both voices is primarily conjunct with occasional leaps, usually by a third, and in one instance by an octave. Cowell’s treatment of the consonant intervals indicates both strict and flexible approaches to the guidelines for the compositional method. Many consonances are preceded and followed by dissonant intervals. For example, in m. 10 all the minor thirds are preceded and followed by a dissonance. There are, however,

⁷⁰ The score bears the subtitle “Love to Sidney, Christmas 1952, from Henry.” See Henry Cowell, *Invention*, Henry Cowell Papers, box 35 folder 26, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. My complete edition of this work is located in Appendix E. Regarding Cowell’s works for Sidney see David Nicholls, “Henry Cowell,” in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed August 31, 2009.

instances of consecutive consonant intervals in the piece. In m. 11, for example, the minor ninth is followed by three consonances: an octave, a diminished seventh, which sounds as a major sixth, and a minor sixth. On beat 2 of m. 7 the major third is followed by an augmented second, which sounds as a minor third. Also, the major sixth on beat 4 of m. 7 is preceded by an augmented fifth, which sounds as a minor sixth. In m. 8 the minor sixth on beat 3 is followed by a diminished seventh, which sounds as a major sixth. On beat 4 of m. 9 there are two consecutive perfect consonances: a perfect fifth followed by a perfect fourth.

While there are places in which stepwise motion accompanies the movement towards and away from a consonant interval, the piece also features instances where consonant intervals are approached and/or left by disjunct melodic movement. In m. 10 Cowell strictly observes the handling of consonances via conjunct motion. The bottom voice moves from D, a minor second below E-flat, to C, a minor third below the upper voice. This consonance is followed by a minor second formed by the bass voice stepping up to C-sharp and the top voice moving down to D. Next, the melody in the bottom voice moves down by step to B, a minor third below D, which is also left by stepwise motion in both voices to form a major second. Examples of a more flexible approach to consonance are found in mm. 7 and 8. The major third on beat 2 of m. 7 is preceded by a descending skip in the melody from G to E. This is followed by stepwise motion to F, an augmented second below G-sharp, which sounds as a minor third. The melody in the lower voice leaps away from the enharmonic consonance down to D. In m. 8 on beat 3 the upper voice moves from E, a minor sixth above G-sharp, to F, a diminished seventh above G-sharp, which sounds as a major sixth. The enharmonic consonance is left by a leap in the melody from F down to D, a diminished fifth above G-sharp. Next the melody moves by step to E-flat, a diminished sixth above the bottom voice, which sounds as a perfect fifth. This consonance is followed by disjunct motion in both voices: the melody in the top voice leaps down to C at the same time as the bottom voice leaps up to B, which creates a minor ninth. The *Invention* demonstrates Cowell's strict and flexible approaches to the guidelines associated with dissonant counterpoint using a lean, two-voice texture in a keyboard genre that evokes the contrapuntal traditions of J. S. Bach.

Cowell also employed dissonant counterpoint in a multi-movement symphonic work that referenced America's musical heritage, notably eighteenth-century hymnody. He wrote

Symphony No. 12, L. 830 for Leopold Stokowski over a two-year period from 1955 to 1956.

Regarding the large-scale structure of the piece, a note in the published score states,

All four movements derive from a single 3-tone motive: a descending minor third followed by an ascending minor second, its first tone twice as long as the next two. . . . The first movement plays the role of the exposition section in classical sonata form, the development and recapitulation of the melodic and rhythmic themes being reserved for the three movements that follow.⁷¹

In the 1959 article “The Music of Henry Cowell,” Weisgall did not use the imagery of sonata form to describe the piece, but identified the first movement as a hymn and compared its style to Cowell’s *Movement for String Quartet* (1928). He also noted that the fourth movement is a hymn and fuguing tune, “remarkable for the chromatic character of its fuguing theme.”⁷² The early American fuguing tune, a genre most commonly associated with William Billings (1746-1800), has two distinct sections: the first is homorhythmic, and the second presents a theme that is imitated in all of the voices.⁷³ Referring to Cowell’s entire Twelfth Symphony Weisgall affirmed, “it solves faultlessly the problems of applying chromatic dissonance techniques to the hymn-and-fuguing-tune genre.”⁷⁴ Thus, the outer movements showcase Cowell’s use of dissonant counterpoint as he investigated melding the symphony with early American hymnody.

The first movement comprises a ternary form according to the following plan:

section :	A		B		A'
subsection:	a	a	b	b'	a'
measure:	1	16	31	46	61

The A section presents two identical statements of a fifteen-measure passage, labeled above as “subsection a,” which are played exclusively by the string section, including divisi first violins,

⁷¹ Henry Cowell, *Symphony No. 12* (New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1960), 2.

⁷² Hugo Weisgall, “The Music of Henry Cowell,” *The Musical Quarterly* 45/4 (October 1959), 497.

⁷³ When referring to his works Cowell used the spelling “fuguing” instead of “fuging.” I am therefore adopting the spelling of “fuguing” to refer to Cowell’s fuguing tunes and the spelling of “fuging” to refer to the fuging tunes from early American hymnody.

⁷⁴ Weisgall, “The Music of Henry Cowell,” 497.

second violins, viola, and cello. The bass enters in m. 12 and doubles the cello part an octave lower. In the repeat of “subsection a” (mm. 16-30) all parts are written one half-step lower than previously. The B section is written in triple meter, which contrasts with the quadruple meter of the A sections, and the orchestration also includes the woodwind and brass sections.

The A section, of which mm. 1-8 are a representative sample, demonstrates Cowell’s application of dissonant counterpoint to a five-voice non-imitative polyphonic texture (ex. 5.28). The melody in each part includes a balance of conjunct and disjunct motion, and the combination of all five parts results in dissonant and consonant relationships between the voices. Each vertical sonority features at least one tone that is dissonant against the bottom voice, and there are often other dissonant relationships within the sonority. For example, on the downbeat of m. 3, only the G in the viola is dissonant against A in the cello. The upper three parts include the tones C-sharp, C, and D, all of which are consonant against the bass note, a major third, minor third, and perfect fourth, respectively. However, the C-sharp in the second violin is an augmented fourth above G in the viola, the C in the first violin is a diminished octave above the C-sharp in the second violin, and the D in the first violin is a major second above C and a minor ninth above C-sharp.

There are a few instances in the first movement in which consonant intervals are handled with strictest adherence to the guidelines, i.e., they are preceded and followed by dissonant intervals and accompanied by stepwise melodic motion. For example, in m. 1 the lower first violin part begins on A, a minor sixth above C-sharp in the cello, and the consonance is followed by a diminished fifth, which is approached by step as the violin moves from A down to G. The melodies in both voices move down a half-step in parallel motion to G-flat and C, respectively, which creates a diminished fifth, and the melody in the lower first violin steps down to F, a perfect fourth above C. The consonance proceeds to a diminished fifth formed by F being suspended over the bar line, while the melody in the cello moves down by step to B.

Andante $\text{♩} = 72$

Violin 1 *div mp*

Violin 2 *mp*

Viola *mp*

Violoncello *mp*

m3	m6	°5	°8	m3	3	+2	m7	m6	°7	m7	5	m9	6
+8	°5	6	m6	5	3	+4	5	m3	m7	5	m9	°4	m3

m9	°5	m7	7	+5	7	+8	7	°4	°8	m7	7	6	+5	6	4	°8	m7	6	5	4		
3	5	7	7	7	7	7	7	+8	9	3	6	9	7	7	+8	3	+8	+9	3	3	+9	+8

Ex. 5.28. Cowell, Symphony No. 12, mvmt. 1, mm. 1-8
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Overall, Cowell's treatment of consonance in the first movement of Symphony No. 12 is flexible. Disjunct melodic motion is used to approach and/or leave a tone that is consonant against the bottom voice. For example, in m. 1 the melody in the upper first violin part begins on E, a minor third above C-sharp in the cello, and then leaps away from the consonant interval down to C-sharp, an augmented octave above the new tone in the cello, C. On beat 2 of m. 2 the

major seventh created by A in the upper first violin and B-flat in the cello leads to a consonant interval, but the melody in the first violin leaps from A up to D, a perfect fourth above the new bass note, A. There are many instances of consecutive consonant intervals that occur within one of the upper melodies in relationship to the bass voice, and they range in size from two to five consonances: in m. 4 the melody in the lower first violin part proceeds from a perfect fifth to a major third, a minor third, and a perfect fourth. The melody in the viola part in m. 5 moves in consecutive parallel minor thirds against the cello. This succession of five total consonances begins with a major sixth between the viola and cello parts on the last beat of m. 4. There are also instances of simultaneously occurring consecutive consonances. For example, the melody in the viola part in mm. 1-2 features four consonant intervals against the cello comprising alternating minor and major thirds. Overlapping this series of consecutive consonances is the melody in the second violin, which beginning on beat 3 of m. 1 includes three consecutive consonant intervals against the bass voice: a major sixth, minor sixth, and perfect fifth. The consecutive consonances and disjunct melodic motion accompanying the consonant intervals could likely be the result of Cowell's focusing primarily on writing independent melodic lines rather than the intervals that resulted between the voices and the voice-leading that coordinated with the intervals. These ideas are discussed in the 1926 Aeolian Hall concert program and the 1928 Chávez article.⁷⁵

Both strict and flexible approaches to the guidelines for dissonant counterpoint are also found in the fourth movement, which was referred to by Weisgall as a hymn and fugging tune. The large-scale structure is laid out as follows:

section:	A	B		C'	A'	B'	
subsection:		b1	b2			b1'	b2'
measure:	1	21	34	50	58	64	77

Each section is preceded by a double bar and includes different expressive instructions. The A section, marked *Maestoso*, presents the slow, polyphonic hymn in common time. The B section uses a much faster, contrasting tempo, indicated by *Allegro molto*, and comprises two separate subsections. The first, labeled "b1" above, presents the fugging theme, which is imitated in four voices in the manner of a fugging tune. The second subsection, designated as "b2" above, is a

⁷⁵ Concert program, Feb. 2 (1926), Aeolian Hall; Cowell, "Carlos Chávez," 21-22. Both are discussed in Chapter 3.

developmental section that draws upon material from the theme in “b1.” The C section, labeled *Più Mosso*, is transitional and draws upon rhythms from the fuguing theme in the B section. The returns of A’ and B’ feature variations of the musical material from each respective section.

The first part of the B section (mm. 21-33) demonstrates the influence of dissonant counterpoint in an imitative passage. The theme is presented in a total of four voices in the string section, each of which is doubled by woodwind and brass instruments. Ex. 5.29 displays only the string parts in which the theme appears: the first and second violin, viola, and cello. The theme is presented first in the cello part, which is doubled by the contrabass, two trombones, tuba, bass clarinet, and two bassoons. The second entry occurs in m. 24 in the first violins, and is doubled by three flutes and two oboes. The two statements in this pair begin on tones that are a fifth apart: the first on G and the second on D. The third appearance of the theme occurs at m. 27 in the second violin, which is doubled by three trumpets. The final statement, which is slightly altered, appears at m. 30 in the viola part doubled by four horns. In this pair the two statements are also a fifth apart: the third entry begins on A and the fourth on E. Measure 33 serves as a transition into the second part of the B section.

The chromatic theme comprises mostly stepwise melodic motion, with some leaps. Even though this is an example of dissonant counterpoint, many of the intervallic relationships between each upper voice and the bottom voice are consonant. In the three- and four-voice textures (mm. 27-32) there are some vertical sonorities in which all the upper voices are consonant against the bottom voice, but there is always at least one dissonant relationship among the other voices. For example, on the downbeat of m. 30, the notes above C in the cello include E, E-flat, and G, all of which are consonant against C, but E-flat in the second violin is a diminished octave above E in the viola.

Allegro molto (♩ = 168)

System 1 (mm. 21-25):

- Vln. 1: mm. 21-23 are rests; m. 24 starts with *f*; m. 25 continues.
- Vln. 2: mm. 21-25 are rests.
- Vla.: mm. 21-25 are rests.
- Vc.: *f* throughout; mm. 21-25 contain a complex melodic line.

System 2 (mm. 26-29):

- Vln. 1: m. 26 starts with *f*; m. 27 continues; m. 28 has a half note; m. 29 has a whole note.
- Vln. 2: m. 26 is rest; m. 27 starts with *f*; m. 28 continues; m. 29 continues.
- Vla.: mm. 26-29 are rests.
- Vc.: m. 26 has a half note; m. 27 has a half note; m. 28 has a half note; m. 29 has a half note.

System 3 (mm. 30-33):

- Vln. 1: mm. 30-32 have quarter notes; m. 33 has a sixteenth-note tremolo (*mp*).
- Vln. 2: mm. 30-32 have quarter notes; m. 33 has a sixteenth-note tremolo (*mp*).
- Vla.: *f* throughout; mm. 30-32 have eighth-note patterns; m. 33 has a sixteenth-note tremolo (*f*).
- Vc.: mm. 30-32 have quarter notes; m. 33 has a half note.

Fingerings and Bowings:

- System 1: 3 +4 7 6 +5 +6 7 m9 7 6 4 m9 °5 °4 °3 m9
- System 2: m9 °3 m9 °8 m9 m3 m3 °8 °5 °8 °7 m6 5 °8 m3 m3 °7 °6 °5 °8 m7 m6 5 °8 m7 m3 4 m3 5 m6 m7 m6 °4 °7 °6 °5 m6 m7 6 6 6 3 m3
- System 3: 5 6 +4 5 5 m7 °8 6 m3 m9 °8 m7 m3 4 m3 9 7 2 +5 7 m6 °4 °5 m6 °7 °8 3 +4 3 +2 3 +4 3 m3 3 2 4 3 4 m2 °3 4 °5 m6

Ex. 5.29. Cowell, Symphony No. 12, mvmt. 4, mm. 21-33
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Other sonorities feature more occurrences of dissonant relationships between the tones. For example, the sonority on the downbeat of m. 31 comprises three dissonances. G-sharp in the viola and C-sharp in the second violin are an augmented fourth and major seventh respectively above D in the cello. Also, A in the second violin is a minor ninth above G-sharp in the viola. As we have seen, the guidelines for the technique never stipulate how many dissonant or consonant relationships should exist among the voices.

As in previous excerpts, Cowell's handling of consonance demonstrates both strict and flexible applications of the guidelines for dissonant counterpoint. On beat 3 of m. 25 the melody in the first violin steps down from F, a diminished fifth above B in the cello, to E-flat, a diminished fourth above B, which sounds as a major third. The enharmonic consonance resolves to a dissonant interval by stepwise motion in the cello part from B to C-sharp, a diminished third below E-flat, which sounds as a major second. In contrast to this careful handling of consonance, there are also examples of consonant intervals that are not preceded and/or followed by conjunct melodic motion. For example, in m. 30 the last note in the viola part, E, is a major third above C in the cello. While this consonance is followed by a dissonant interval, it is accomplished by a leap in the viola part from E up to G-sharp, an augmented fourth above the new tone in the cello, D. There are also many instances of consecutive consonant intervals, the longest of which occurs in m. 29, where the melody in the second violin features a chain of six consecutive consonances against the cello part. Symphony No. 12 demonstrates Cowell's sustained application of dissonant counterpoint in a large-scale multi-movement orchestral work.

Cowell also continued to employ the technique in the string quartet, a multi-movement chamber genre in which he had consistently used dissonant counterpoint since 1916. He wrote the String Quartet No. 5, L. 832, in June 1956 for the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation's Twelfth Festival of Chamber Music.⁷⁶ It comprises five movements, distinguished by contrasting tempos: I. *Lento*, II. *Allegro*, III. *Andante*, IV. *Presto*, and V. *Largo-Allegro marcato*. In the introductory note to the published score Cowell discussed the contrapuntal style of the entire work as follows: "The counterpoint is harmonic, quartal or tertial in some places, secundal in others; it is sometimes dissonant and other times consonant."⁷⁷ As heard in the Twelfth

⁷⁶ Lichtenwanger, *The Music of Henry Cowell*, 269-70.

⁷⁷ Henry Cowell, *String Quartet No. 5* (New York: C. F. Peters Corp., 1962), 2.

Symphony, the String Quartet No. 5 also includes musical elements derived from genres of early American hymnody. Cowell acknowledged the influence of hymn and fuguing tune pieces as follows:

The Fifth Quartet is a comparatively elaborate development from the styles of eighteenth-century American hymnody that Cowell began about 1941 to build into the series of neo-Baroque hymns, paired with fuguing tunes, which are now widely associated with his name.⁷⁸

The introduction also clarified that Cowell's compositional approach in the hymn and fuguing tune pieces was motivated by his aesthetic goal of melding the old and new musical styles.

Cowell wondered what this fine old music might have become in the hands of American composers if nineteenth-century musical conventions had not taught them to consider it crude and strange. So, by way of answering the question, each of his hymns and fuguing tunes is a different experiment in carrying forward, into twentieth-century music, elements drawn from this early music.⁷⁹

The influence of Cowell's hymn and fuguing tune pieces is most readily found in the first movement, which was identified as "a much-modified hymn," and the fifth movement, which was described as being "in the manner of a hymn-and-fuguing tune."⁸⁰

The opening of the second movement (ex. 5.30) features Cowell's use of dissonant counterpoint, which persists throughout the entire movement. The introduction to the score explains, "the second movement, *Allegro*, is a rapid *stretto*, vigorous and definite in mood; it makes energetic use of secundal counterpoint."⁸¹ The opening eighth-note motive is imitated in all four voices in staggered entries that are offset by a half-note. Each melody moves primarily in conjunct motion with a few leaps of a third. The three upper voices mostly feature tones that are consonant against the bass voice, but the counterpoint comprises secundal relationships between the voices. Therefore, within many of the vertical sonorities the close-spaced secundal counterpoint among all four voices results in tone-clusters.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Allegro $\text{♩} = 88$

u m2 u m3 4 6 5 5 4 5 4 4 m3 m2 f

u 2 2 3 3 4 6 4 m6 m6 3 u 2 m3 m2 m3 m2 m2 ff

Ex. 5.30. Cowell, String Quartet No. 5, mvmt. 2, mm. 1-8

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Cowell had advocated for the development of a system for using secundal harmonies in counterpoint in *New Musical Resources*.

It has probably been from a feeling . . . that the parts would be cramped in groups of tones spaced in seconds that more attention has not been given to the possibilities lying in such groups, in which the parts need not be cramped if a study is made of how to proceed with them.⁸²

⁸² Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 115.

The second movement of String Quartet No. 5 is an example of Cowell's practical application of this idea. In the passage of secundal counterpoint Cowell handles consonant intervals with the same flexibility that we have seen in previous works. There are examples in which a consonant interval is either approached and/or left by disjunct rather than conjunct motion, and there are consecutive consonances within a given melody.

The fuguing tune in the fifth movement demonstrates the influence of dissonant counterpoint in a four-voice passage in which the melodies are primarily consonant against the bottom voice but dissonant against each other. This flexible approach to the intervals used in polyphonic passages is reminiscent of the "sonant counterpoint" described earlier, wherein he suggested that contrapuntal development should progress to the point where the primary focus is placed upon writing independent melodic lines, rather than being concerned with the intervals that are produced when the melodies are combined.⁸³ The fuguing tune enters in m. 92 and is presented in all four voices. During the first three statements (ex. 5.31), which begin at m. 92 in the second violin, m. 96 in the first violin, and m. 100 in the viola, the counterpoint is primarily consonant, with only a few intervening dissonances.

The cello presents the fourth statement of the fuguing tune in m. 104 (ex. 5.32), and the combination of all four melodies demonstrates the influence of dissonant counterpoint, albeit an unusual case of the technique, in which the melodies in the upper voices result in primarily consonant relationships with the melody in the bottom voice. This is a similar manifestation of the ideas associated with "sonant counterpoint." Furthermore, it underscores the extent to which Cowell is comfortable with such a flexible application of the guidelines for the technique. Within the vertical sonorities created by the simultaneous melodies there is usually one instance of a dissonant relationship between the other voices involved. For example, on the second beat of m. 104 (ex. 5.32) all the voices contain tones that are consonant against F-sharp in the bottom voice, but the A in the first violin is a major seventh above B-flat in the second violin.

⁸³ Concert program, Feb. 2 (1926), Aeolian Hall; See also Cowell, "Carlos Chávez," 21-22.

Allegro marcato (♩=108)

92 93 94 95

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

96 97 98 99

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

m3 4 6 3 4 5 3 m7 m6 5 4 m3 5 7 3 9 8 m6 5

100 101 102 103

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II

Vla. *f*

Vc.

3 7 6 5 m3 7 7 m3 9 6 m7 8 9 m3 9 8 6 3 m3 4 6
3 9 8 7 5 5 4 m3 5 3 m3 m3 4 m6 6 5 4 m7 6 5 6

Ex. 5.31. Cowell, String Quartet No. 5, mvmt. 5, mm. 92-103
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Other vertical sonorities feature more than one dissonant relationship, and in some cases they include a tone that is dissonant against the bottom voice. An example is found on the downbeat of m. 106. The melody in the viola sits on D, which is a major second above C in the cello, and a minor ninth below E-flat in the second violin. The String Quartet No. 5 showcases Cowell's flexible adaptation of the guidelines in order to fit his compositional aesthetic during the 1950s.

The image shows a musical score for four string instruments: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Vc.). The score covers measures 104 through 109. Below the staves, there is a detailed intervallic analysis of the sonorities. The analysis is organized into two rows of intervals, with the first row corresponding to measures 104-106 and the second row to measures 107-109. The intervals are listed as follows:

Row 1 (Measures 104-106): +4, 7, 6, m3, °4, m6, °7, 5, 8, m3, 4, 5, 3, m3, 3, m3, m3, m3, 8.

Row 2 (Measures 107-109): 6, m3, °5, 3, m6, m2, 3, 5, m6, m3, m3, m7, 6, °5, m6, °5, 4, m6, 5, °5, 4, 8, m3, 4, m6, 4, m3, m3, 5, m6, 8, 9, m3, 6, 6, m6, °5, m3, m3, m3.

Ex. 5.32. Cowell, String Quartet No. 5, mvmt. 5, mm. 104-109
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Beyond its inclusion in the String Quartet No. 5 Cowell also used dissonant counterpoint in a chamber work scored for three horns, the *Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 12*. Between 1944 and 1964 he wrote eighteen works that included a hymn paired with a fuguing tune.⁸⁴ The composer identified each piece as a *Hymn and Fuguing Tune* followed by an ordinal number. Cowell viewed the “hymn and fuguing tune” as an independent genre, but he also incorporated the idea into some of his larger works, including many of his symphonies written after 1944.⁸⁵ The composer described the genre as his own “modern” version of early American hymnody exemplified by the works of William Billings, and he noted that the melodies are not borrowed but newly composed according to his “modern” compositional aesthetic.⁸⁶

Cowell wrote the *Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 12*, L. 850, between October 1957 and January 1958. The work is scored for three horns in F, but horns in B-flat may also be used.⁸⁷ The hymn section, an excerpt of which is found in ex. 5.33, demonstrates the influence of dissonant counterpoint combined with musical gestures that suggest the presence of a tonal center. In this passage there are overlapping pedal tones on B-flat and F (mm. 13-17), and occasional tertian-based vertical sonorities resulting from the polyphony that emphasize B-flat major. For example, on beat 3 of m. 14 and beat 1 of m. 17 the vertical sonorities comprise B-flat, D, and F.

The counterpoint features a variety of dissonant relationships, some of which occur between an upper voice and the lowest voice. For example, on every beat in m. 18 there is one dissonant interval against one of the upper voices and the lowest voice. The first horn plays A-flat on beat 1, which is a minor seventh against B-flat, and the second horn plays C-flat on beat 2 and A-flat on beat 3, each of which are a minor ninth and minor seventh respectively against B-flat. There are also many consonant intervals that occur between one of the upper voices and the lowest voice, but there is often at least one dissonance somewhere within the vertical sonority,

⁸⁴ Wayne Shirley, “The Hymns and Fuguing Tunes,” in *The Whole World of Music: A Henry Cowell Symposium*, ed. by David Nicholls (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), 95.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Henry Cowell, *Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 1* (New York: Leeds Music Corporation, 1945), quoted in Shirley, “The Hymns and Fuguing Tunes,” 96.

⁸⁷ Lichtenwanger, *The Music of Henry Cowell*, 276-277.

usually occurring between the melodies in the upper voices. For example on beat 3 of m. 13 the F in the second horn is a perfect fifth above B-flat, and the G-flat in the third horn is a minor sixth above the B-flat. The F and G-flat in the second and third horns, however, create a minor second between the voices.

The image shows a musical score for three horns (Hn. I, Hn. II, Hn. III) from Cowell's *Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 12*, measures 10-23. The score is in 3/4 time and features complex harmonic textures with many consonances. The first system (measures 10-16) shows Hn. I starting on a whole note in measure 13, Hn. II with a half note in measure 10, and Hn. III with a half note in measure 10. The second system (measures 17-23) shows Hn. I with a half note in measure 17, Hn. II with a half note in measure 17, and Hn. III with a half note in measure 17. The score includes dynamic markings like 'p' and 'mf', and fingering numbers below the notes.

Ex. 5.33. Cowell, *Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 12*, hymn, mm. 10-23⁸⁸
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Cowell's treatment of the consonant intervals remains flexible. Within each melody there are many instances of consecutive consonances against the melody in the lowest voice. He also allows the use of disjunct rather than stepwise motion in either approaching or departing from consonances. For example, on beat 1 of m. 17 the third horn leaps down a diminished

⁸⁸ The musical example has been transposed to reflect concert pitch.

seventh from G-flat, a minor ninth above F in the second horn, to A, a major third above F. Also, on beat 3 of m. 17 the A in the first horn, which is a major third above F in the third horn, is approached by stepwise motion, but the consonance is left by disjunct motion as the melody in the first horn leaps up a diminished fifth to E-flat. In the *Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 12* Cowell adopts a flexible approach to the guidelines associated with dissonant counterpoint in order to accommodate his aesthetic for the genre.

For his Fifteenth Symphony Cowell deliberately hearkened back to his use of dissonant counterpoint from his earlier compositional style of the 1920s and 1930s. He wrote Symphony No. 15: *Thesis*, L. 887, in 1960 “for Carl Haverlin and Broadcast Music, Inc.” to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of BMI.⁸⁹ The work, which comprises six movements, draws heavily upon musical material from two of his earlier string quartets, the *Movement for String Quartet* (1928) and the *Mosaic Quartet* (1935), both of which employ dissonant counterpoint. Even though Cowell interpolated musical material from his older works, his choice to include music that uses dissonant counterpoint confirms the value that he placed upon the technique, even towards the end of his career, nearly forty-five years after he participated in its early development at the University of California, Berkeley.

Five of the six movements of Symphony No.15 include music from the two earlier works, and the large-scale structure of the work is arranged as follows:

- Movement I – *Mosaic Quartet*, mvmt. 1
- Movement II – *Mosaic Quartet*, mvmt. 3
- Movement III – *Mosaic Quartet*, mvmt. 4
- Movement IV – *Mosaic Quartet*, mvmt. 2
- Movement V – new material; Symphony No. 15, mvmts. I–IV
- Movement VI – *Movement for String Quartet*

The movements from the *Mosaic Quartet* are not situated in ascending numerical order in Symphony No. 15, which may be related to the elastic form of the *Mosaic Quartet*. In the original work Cowell had allowed the performers to choose the order that the movements would be presented. The chart above does not disclose Cowell’s alterations to the music and original scoring for string quartet. The first movement of Symphony No. 15 is a straightforward

⁸⁹ Henry Cowell, *Symphony No. 15* (New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1962), 3. Lichtenwanger, *The Music of Henry Cowell*, 290.

arrangement for full orchestra of the first movement from the *Mosaic Quartet*. For the second movement of the symphony Cowell uses the music from third movement of the *Mosaic Quartet*, which is orchestrated primarily for strings with some doubling in the woodwinds. The symphony's third movement comprises an orchestration of the fourth movement of the *Mosaic Quartet*, which is played twice, and the repetition features some slight variations. The fourth movement of the symphony presents an arrangement for full orchestra of the *Mosaic Quartet*'s second movement. The fifth movement contains new material along with a recapitulation of music from the previous four movements of the symphony. It is laid out in a ternary form as follows:

section:	A		B				A'	
subsection:	a1	a2	b1	b2	b3	b4	a1'	a2'
material:	new	new	I	IV	III	II		
mm.	1	35	84	105	113		168	188

The A section presents two different subsections of new musical material, and in the B section the subsections designated above as “b1,” “b2,” “b3,” and “b4” contain music from the previous four movements of the symphony – movements I, IV, III, and II, respectively.

An analysis of the original works from which movements I and VI of Symphony No. 15 derive has already been presented in Chapters 3 and 4. The fifth movement features passages of new musical material that demonstrate the influence of dissonant counterpoint. The opening of subsection “a2” (ex. 5.34) comprises five-voice non-imitative counterpoint, which is representative of the entire subsection. Ex. 5.34 displays the string parts, in which Cowell presented all five voices of the contrapuntal texture. These string parts are doubled in the woodwind and brass instruments as follows: the melody in the first violin is doubled by three oboes; the second violin part is doubled by the first clarinet, and the viola by the second and third clarinets; four horns double the melody presented in the cello, and the bass is doubled by two bassoons. Each melody comprises both conjunct and disjunct motion, and with the exception of those in the second violin and viola, the melodies are mostly independent of one another. The second violin and viola parts share identical rhythms and often move in similar motion to each other. For example in m. 37, the two melodies move in parallel thirds, and at the beginning of m. 36 they double each other at the unison.

35 36 37

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *p*

B. *p*

	7	+8	3	4	+5	3		+4	3	m6	5	+4	7			°4		
			+8	9	+3	5	+8	+9	7	+8	3	+9	6	5	+4	3	4	
			+8	6	7	5	+8	+9	7	+6	7	7	4	3	+2	+u	9	
+2		5	m6	°5	5	m3		4				5					m6	
																		m3

38 39

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

B.

°8	m9	°6	°5	m7	8	2
°7		m9		m6		6
°5		m7		4		+4
m3		3		2		+2

Ex. 5.34. Cowell, Symphony No. 15: *Thesis*, mvmt. 5, mm. 35-39
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The combination of the five melodies in this passage results in primarily dissonant intervals between the voices. Consonant intervals are also present, however, and Cowell handles them flexibly. While there are some instances in which a consonance is preceded and followed by a dissonant interval, there are also examples of consecutive consonances. For example, in the first violin in m. 35 the C-sharp and D in the melody are both consonant against A in the bass, which results in a major third followed by a perfect fourth. Also, at the end of m. 35 the E-flat in the cello initiates a chain of seven consecutive consonances against the melody in the bass.

Cowell's flexible treatment of consonant intervals also involves the use of disjunct melodic motion in approaching and/or leaving a consonance. For example, on the downbeat of m. 36 the melody in the second violin is on D, which is a perfect fifth above G in the bass voice. While the G is preceded and followed by stepwise motion in the bass melody, the D in the second violin is approached by a descending leap of a major seventh from C-sharp in the previous measure, and the melody leaves the consonant interval by leaping up an augmented fourth to G-sharp. Cowell's *Symphony No. 15* explores dissonant counterpoint applied to the medium of the orchestra, and includes music from previous works and new material, all of which use the technique.

During the 1960s Cowell also continued to employ the method in chamber genres, more specifically in a piano trio. He wrote *Trio in Nine Short Movements*, L. 941, in 1965 for the Hans J. Cohn Music Foundation.⁹⁰ Most of the movements include various approaches to dissonant counterpoint, demonstrating that even at the end of his life Cowell still valued the technique as a viable option to suit his compositional aesthetic. A passage from the first movement (ex. 5.35) features Cowell's flexible approach to the guidelines for the method in a four-voice texture: one voice is in the violin, two in the cello moving primarily in parallel fourths, and one in the piano, which is doubled at the octave. Each melody moves almost exclusively in stepwise motion. There are both dissonant and consonant intervals between the upper voices and the bottom voice. Within each vertical sonority there is usually at least one dissonant relationship between an upper voice and the bass voice, and commonly other dissonances exist between the voices. Exceptions are found in mm. 29-31, in which exclusively consonant sonorities occur on some of the weak beats. For example, in m. 29 beat 4 comprises a minor sixth and perfect fourth above A in the cello. Similar 6/4 sonorities are found on beat 2 of

⁹⁰ Henry Cowell, *Trio in Nine Short Movements* (New York: C. F. Peters, 1968), 2.

m. 30 and beat 2 of m. 31. Also, in m. 31 the fourth beat includes a perfect fifth and major third above D in the cello. Since dissonant counterpoint is a reversal of traditional methods of counterpoint, the weak beats would be an acceptable metrical position for consonance. Regarding Cowell's handling of consonance, he does not always use stepwise motion when approaching or leaving a consonant interval. There are also instances of consecutive consonances within the parts.

Interval analysis for the piano part (measures 27-32):

7	+8	m9	4	4	+4	6	+4	°8	m6	6	m6	m7	°5	6	m6	7	5	+9	7	3	7	
+4	+6	7	m7	+4	9	4	°5	4	°7	4	3	4	5	4	+4	4	+6	3	+++	+2	+8	+5
+2	+3	+4	4	m6	m9	°4	7	9	+8	+4	3	4										

Ex. 5.35. Cowell, *Trio in Nine Short Movements*, mvmt. 1, mm. 27-32
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An excerpt from the fifth movement (ex. 5.36) of *Trio in Nine Short Movements* features three- and four-voice counterpoint in the violin and cello parts, while the piano is tacit; the passage demonstrates the influence of dissonant counterpoint on Cowell's compositional style. Compared with the primarily conjunct melodies in the previous example, the melodies in ex. 5.36 comprise both conjunct and disjunct motion. The intervals between the voices include consonance and dissonance. There is usually at least one dissonant interval in each vertical sonority, although there are some exceptions. For example, in m. 19 the downbeat comprises a perfect octave and minor sixth above F in the cello, and beat 3 features a minor sixth and perfect

fourth above F. In m. 24 the downbeat includes a minor sixth and minor third above the bass note, A, and the second half of beat 3 features a perfect fifth and major third above F.

Intervallic analysis for measures 17-24:

m9	m3	m9	m6	5	+4	3	8	m7	m6	+4	+5	+6
m7			+4		+9	+8	m6	5	4	+2	+4	+5

m7	8	m9	7	+6	9	m3	m7	m6	m7	6	m6	7	5
m9	m3	4	+9		7		5	4	+4	6	m3	3	5
5	6	m7	+4		5		2		3				

Ex. 5.36. Cowell, *Trio in Nine Short Movements*, mvmt. 5, mm. 17-24
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There are instances in which consonant intervals are handled strictly: they are preceded and followed by dissonant intervals and accompanied by stepwise melodic motion. For example in m. 21, the top voice moves by step from B-flat a minor seventh above C, to C, a perfect octave above the bass note, to D-flat, a minor ninth above C. More often, though, consonances are not approached or left by conjunct motion, and there are also consecutive consonances within the

various parts. Such flexibility likely resulted from Cowell's focusing on writing independent melodies rather than the intervals and voice leading produced by the counterpoint.

Summary

During the 1950s and until his death in 1965 dissonant counterpoint continued to play a major role in Henry Cowell's creative work, which is evidenced by his efforts on behalf of the technique in his teaching, writing, and composing. The *New School Bulletin* confirms that Cowell taught dissonant counterpoint at the New School for Social Research from 1949 to 1957 in courses titled "Advanced Music Theory" and "Materials of Modern Music." Jeanette B. Holland's class notes from 1951 provide a detailed account of the extent to which Cowell integrated the technique into "Advanced Music Theory." Not only did he teach dissonant counterpoint as a method in and of itself, but he also used it as a step toward writing polychordal harmonies. At the Peabody Institute Cowell shared the technique with Alan Stout in private lessons, and he also probably taught it to his other composition students there. Judith Tick's notes from her interview with Stout provide information and exercises that use the technique as Stout recalls Cowell teaching it to him. In Cowell's 1954 article "Contemporary Musical Creation in Education" he argued for the inclusion of dissonant counterpoint as one of many twentieth-century compositional methods that should be taught to students. Finally, Cowell's use of the technique in his compositions from the 1950s and 1960s demonstrate his varied approaches to the guidelines for dissonant counterpoint.

CHAPTER 6

“THE FUTURE WILL JUSTIFY THE STEP”: CONCLUSIONS

In the first typescript draft for *New Musical Resources* (c. 1919) Cowell concluded his discussion of dissonant counterpoint with a justification for the new technique that was not included in the second typescript (1929) or the published version of the book (1930). He argued,

If a given step in musical change is in the same direction in which all previous change has led, logical analogy favors the thought that the future will justify the step. The analogy is not in itself a final justification, but it is certainly a warning against a too ready condemnation.¹

My investigation of dissonant counterpoint has confirmed that it did enjoy a bright future after 1919, thus justifying the step that Cowell felt the new technique represented at that time. Due to the efforts of Cowell and others associated with the ultra-modern network, the compositional method constituted a pervasive part of American musical culture from the 1910s to the mid 1960s, and it exerted an influence upon composers as late as the 1990s in the works of James Tenney (1934-2006), who also taught the technique in his courses at York University in Toronto and CalArts, the California Institute of the Arts.²

This study raises various issues related to historiography and points to the lacunae present in our current conceptualization of twentieth-century American musical culture. It challenges existing biographical narratives that portray Cowell as a simple, undisciplined bohemian, and demonstrates the shortcomings of essentializing a specific composer and his/her style and works. This investigation reveals Cowell to also be a systematic and tenacious theorist and composer, who valued tradition and advocated the practical application of new theoretical ideas. In addition to the many activities for which Cowell is well known – the development of extended techniques, the promotion and publication of ultra-modern music, and the study and dissemination of world music cultures – dissonant counterpoint was a vital part of his career; he

¹ Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, Typescript Draft #1, 12-13.

² Lauren Pratt, email to the author, March 5, 2009. Many thanks to Larry Polansky, who made me aware of Tenney's connection with dissonant counterpoint and referred me to Lauren Pratt, Tenney's wife, and Michael Winter, a former student of Tenney. Michael Winter said that Tenney taught Seeger's treatise on dissonant counterpoint in a course he took from him in 2003 at CalArts. Conversation with Michael Winter on March 10, 2009.

advocated on its behalf for nearly fifty years through his compositions, written publications, private lessons, and classroom teaching.

This study also calls into question the assumptions made about the musical works produced during a given decade of the twentieth century, an issue that is connected with problems of periodization. In historical surveys of American music the 1930s and early 1940s are often associated with musical compositions that were more accessible for the audience: the populist concert music tradition associated with Aaron Copland, the Composers' Collective and Charles Seeger's songs for the masses, and Ruth and Charles Seeger's collection, investigation, and publication of American folk songs. During this time, however, various composers continued to use dissonant counterpoint in avant-garde concert music as evidenced by the works listed in Appendix A. Additionally, Crawford, Cowell, and others associated with the Composers' Collective, such as Norman Cazden, integrated an avant-garde modernist compositional style into their new politically conscious music.³ The *Workers Song Book No. 1* (1934) and *No. 2* (1935) contain pieces with politically charged lyrics that use dissonant counterpoint techniques.⁴ This phenomenon is also found among Crawford's oeuvre, notably in her songs "Chinaman, Laundryman" and "Sacco, Vanzetti," both composed in 1932.⁵ Furthermore, Crawford's piano arrangements of folk tunes betray the influence of the technique, i.e., "Sweet Betsy from Pike" in *Twenty-two American Folk Tunes Arranged for Piano, Elementary Grades* (1936-38).⁶ Archival evidence also establishes that the compositional method continued to flourish during the 1950s and 1960s, long after it was supposed to have disappeared in favor of the more accessible musical styles of the 1930s and 1940s.

³ Maria Cristina Fava, "The Downfall of the Composers' Collective: Musical or Political Fiasco," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Philadelphia, PA, November 14, 2009; Melissa J. de Graaf, "Composers on the Grill: Marxism and Modernism in the Music of Ruth Crawford and Norman Cazden," Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society for American Music, San Antonio, TX, February 29, 2008. See also Melissa J. de Graaf, "The Reception of an Ultramodernist: Ruth Crawford in the Composers' Forum" in *Ruth Crawford Seeger's Worlds: Innovation and Tradition in Twentieth-Century American Music*, edited by Ray Allen and Ellie M. Hisama (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 94-109.

⁴ Fava, "The Downfall of the Composers' Collective: Musical or Political Fiasco."

⁵ Ellie M. Hisama, "In Pursuit of a Proletarian Music: Ruth Crawford's 'Sacco, Vanzetti,'" in *Ruth Crawford Seeger's Worlds: Innovation and Tradition in Twentieth-Century American Music*, edited by Ray Allen and Ellie M. Hisama (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 73-93.

⁶ Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 241-43.

And finally, this study demonstrates that the development of a compositional method is a complex process that involves the efforts of many people; thus, issues surrounding ownership are more complicated than assignment to a single inventor. Charles Seeger worked on developing the technique with Cowell in the mid 1910s and with Crawford from 1929-31, thus he is not solely responsible for the technique. Cowell and Crawford disseminated the idea to their students and colleagues, many of whom used it in their works; the adaptability of the technique to an individual composer's aesthetic is responsible for its continuing employment. Dissonant counterpoint is often eclipsed in historical surveys of twentieth-century music by better-known techniques such as Schoenberg's twelve-tone method or briefly mentioned as an isolated phenomenon of American music during the 1920s. This study, however, has confirmed that it was an essential tool for American composers during the first half of the twentieth century and used in a variety of compositions (see Appendix A). Henry Cowell, a composer who until recently has been relegated to the periphery of music scholarship, was actively involved in its development and dissemination.

APPENDIX A
WORKS EMPLOYING DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT TECHNIQUES
LISTED BY COMPOSER¹

¹ The composers are listed chronologically based on the date of his/her first work that uses dissonant counterpoint. This appendix comprises American composers who learned about the method from Cowell, Crawford, Ruggles, or Seeger and used it in their works. Therefore, not all composers associated with the ultra-modern network are represented. For example, while some of Ives's works may appear to use dissonant counterpoint, he was known for eschewing any specific compositional systems.

COMPOSER	DATE	WORK
Henry Cowell (1897-1965)	1916	String Quartet No. 1 (<i>Quartett</i> [sic] <i>Pedantic</i>), L. 197
	1916	<i>Polyphonicas Nos. 1 and 2</i> , L. 953
	no date (c. 1916)	<i>Exercizes</i> [sic] <i>for Seeger</i>
	1917	<i>Quartet Romantic</i> , L. 223
	1917	<i>Wafting</i> , L. 353/5
	1917	<i>What's This?</i> (First Encore to <i>Dynamic Motion</i>), L. 213/2
	1917	<i>Time Table</i> (Fifth Encore to <i>Dynamic Motion</i>), L. 213/6
	1919	<i>Quartet Euphometric</i> , L. 283
	1920	<i>Vestiges</i> , L. 305
	1921	<i>Episode No. 3</i> , L. 324
	1922	<i>Some Music</i> , L. 221a
	1924	<i>Ensemble for String Quintet and Thunder-sticks</i> , L. 380
	1924	<i>Trio: Four Combinations for Three Instruments</i> , L. 383
	1924	<i>Two Movements (Pièce pour piano avec cordes)</i> , L. 389
	1924	"Where She Lies," L. 400
	1925	<i>A Composition for String Piano with Ensemble</i> , L. 406
	1925	<i>Seven Paragraphs</i> , L. 408
	1926?	<i>Carl's Birthday</i> , L. 425
	1926	<i>Maestoso for Piano</i> , L. 429
	1928	<i>Four Little Solos for String Quartet</i> , L. 438
	1928	<i>Sinfonietta</i> , L. 443
	1928	<i>The Fairy Bells</i> , L. 447
	1928	<i>Movement for String Quartet</i> (String Quartet No. 2), L. 450
	1928	<i>Two Woofs</i> , L. 451
	1928	<i>Polyphonica</i> , L. 458
	1930	<i>Orchesterstück: Synchrony</i> , L. 464
	1933	<i>Six Casual Developments for Clarinet and Piano</i> , L. 491
	1934	<i>Suite for Woodwind Quintet</i> , L. 491b
	1934	<i>Suite for Small Orchestra</i> , L. 499
	1935	<i>Mosaic Quartet</i> (String Quartet No. 3), L. 518
	1936	String Quartet No. 4: <i>United Quartet</i> , L. 522
	1939	<i>Ritournelle</i> , L. 563/2
	1947	<i>Hymn, Choral and Fuguing Tune No. 8, for String Quartet</i> , L. 713
1948	<i>Invention for Sidney</i> , L. 718	

COMPOSER	DATE	WORK
Henry Cowell (continued)	1952	<i>Invention</i> , L. 780
	1952	Symphony No. 7 for Small Orchestra, L. 776
	1955-56	Symphony No. 12, L. 830
	1956	String Quartet No. 5, L. 832
	1958	<i>Hymn and Fuguing Tune No.12</i> , L. 850
	1960	<i>Variations on Thirds for Two Violas and String Orchestra</i> , L. 882
	1960	Symphony No. 15: <i>Thesis</i> , L. 887
	1965	<i>Trio in Nine Short Movements</i> , L. 941
Carl Ruggles (1876-1971)	1920-21, (rev. 1938)	<i>Angels for six muted trumpets</i>
	1923	<i>Vox Clamans in Deserto</i> 1. "Parting at Morning" 2. "Son of Mine" 3. "A Clear Midnight"
	1924, (rev. 1936 and 1941)	<i>Men and Mountains</i> I. "Men" II. "Lilacs" III. "Marching Mountains"
	1926, 1929	<i>Portals</i>
	1926-31	<i>Sun-Treader</i>
	1934-43 (rev. 1954)	<i>Evocations</i>
	1946-47	<i>Organum for two pianos</i>
	Ruth Crawford (1901-1953)	1927 (rev. 1929)
1929		<i>Suite No. 2 for Four Strings and Piano</i>
1930		<i>Piano Study in Mixed Accents</i>
1930		<i>Diaphonic Suite No. 1 for Flute</i>
1930		<i>Diaphonic Suite No. 2 for Bassoon and Cello</i>
1930		<i>Diaphonic Suite No. 3 for Two B-flat Clarinets</i>
1930		<i>Diaphonic Suite No. 4 for Oboe and Cello</i>
1930		<i>Three Chants</i> 1. "To An Unkind God" 2. "To an Angel" 3. [untitled]
1930-32		<i>Three Songs to Poems by Carl Sandburg</i> 1. "Rat Riddles" 2. "Prayers of Steel" 3. "In Tall Grass"

COMPOSER	DATE	WORK
Ruth Crawford (continued)	1931	<i>String Quartet 1931</i>
	1932	<i>Two Ricercari</i> 1. "Sacco, Vanzetti" 2. "Chinaman, Laundryman"
	1936-38	"Sweet Betsy from Pike" in <i>Twenty-two American Folk Tunes Arranged for Piano, Elementary Grades</i>
	1939	<i>Rissolty, Rossolty</i>
	1952	<i>Suite for Wind Quintet</i>
John J. Becker (1886-1961)	1929	<i>Sinfonia Brevis</i> (Symphony No. 3)
	1930	<i>Concerto Arabesque</i>
	1932	<i>Soundpiece No. 1</i>
	1933	<i>Missa Symphonica</i>
	1937	<i>Soundpiece No. 4</i> (String Quartet No. 2)
	1937	<i>Soundpiece No. 5</i>
	1942	<i>Soundpiece No. 6</i>
	1959	<i>Soundpiece No. 8</i> (String Quartet No. 3)
Vivian Fine (1913-2000)	1930	<i>Four Pieces for Two Flutes</i>
	1930	<i>Trio for Strings</i>
	1931	<i>Four Polyphonic Pieces</i>
	1933	<i>Four Songs for Soprano and Strings</i> 1. "The Lover in Winter Plaineth for the Spring" 2. "Comfort to a Youth That Had Lost His Voice" 3. "She Weeps Over Ragoon" 4. "Tilly"
	1933-39	<i>Four Lyric Songs</i> 1. "The Riddle" 2. "A Flower Given to my Daughter" 3. "Adios, Bilbadito" 4. "Sonnet"
	1963	<i>Sinfonia & Fugato for Solo Piano</i>
Henry Brant (1913-2008)	1931	<i>Two Sarabandes</i>
	1931	<i>Variations for Four Instruments</i>
	1931	<i>Angels and Devils</i>
Lehman Engel (1910-1982)	1931	<i>Four Excerpts from Job</i>

COMPOSER	DATE	WORK
Wallingford Riegger (1885-1961)	1931	<i>Three Canons for Woodwinds</i> , op. 9
	1932	<i>Dichotomy</i> , op. 12
	1938-39	String Quartet No. 1, op. 30
	1943	<i>Duos for Three Woodwinds</i> , op. 35
	1944	“Dissonant Counterpoint” in <i>New and Old: Twelve Pieces for Piano</i> , op. 38
	1948	String Quartet No. 2, op. 43
	1951	<i>Nonet for Brass</i> , op. 49
	1952	<i>Woodwind Quintet</i> , op. 51
	1956	Symphony No. 4, op. 63
Charles Seeger (1886-1979)	1931	<i>The Letter</i>
Gerald Strang (1908-1983)	1931	<i>Eleven</i>
	1932	<i>Mirrorrorrim</i>
Johanna Beyer (1888-1944)	early 1930s	<i>Dissonant Counterpoint</i>
	1932	<i>Suite I for Clarinet</i>
	1932	<i>Suite Ib for Clarinet</i>
	1933	<i>Suite III for Clarinet and Bassoon</i>
	1933	<i>Three Songs</i> 1. “Stars, songs, faces” 2. “Summergrass” 3. “Timber moon”
	1933	<i>Quintet for Woodwinds</i>
	1933-34	String Quartet No. 1
	1934	<i>Ballad of the Star Eater</i>
	1934	<i>Three Songs for Soprano and Clarinet</i> 1. “Total Eclipse” 2. “Universal-Local” 3. “To be”
	1934	<i>Gebrauchs-Musik</i>
	1936	<i>Clusters</i>
	1936	<i>Movement for Double Bass and Piano</i>
	1936	String Quartet No. 2
	1936	<i>Piano Book</i>
	1936	<i>Sonata for Clarinet and Piano</i>
	1936-37	<i>Have Faith</i>
1937	<i>Suite for Violin and Piano</i>	
John Cage (1912-1992)	1933	<i>Sonata for Two Voices</i>
	1933-34	<i>Six Inventions</i>
	1938	<i>Metamorphosis</i>

COMPOSER	DATE	WORK
Richard Donovan (1891-1970)	1933	<i>Suite for Piano</i>
Arthur E. Hardcastle	1933	<i>Prelude No. 4</i>
Jose Ardévol (1911-1981)	1934	<i>Sonatina</i>
Paul Creston (1906-1985)	1934	<i>Seven Theses for Piano</i>
Norman Cazden (1914-1980)	1935	<i>Sonatina, op. 7</i>
James Cleghorn (1914-?)	1937	<i>How Do You Like This?: Three Ironies for Piano</i>
Lou Harrison (1917-2003)	1937	<i>Saraband</i>
	1945	<i>Triphony</i>
	1946	<i>Trio for Strings</i>
	1946-47	<i>Praises for Michael the Archangel</i>
	1948	<i>Suite No. 2 for Strings</i>
	1948	<i>Alleluia for Small Orchestra</i>
	1951	<i>Double Canon for Carl Ruggles</i>
	1960	<i>Suite for Symphonic Strings</i>
	1973	<i>Concerto for Organ with Percussion Orchestra</i>
Merton Brown (1913-2001)	1946	<i>Cantabile for String Orchestra</i>
	1947	<i>Chorale for Strings</i>
	1949	<i>Arioso for Piano</i>
Frank Wigglesworth (1918-1996)	1947	<i>Trio</i>
	1949	<i>Three Movements for String Orchestra</i>
	1950	<i>Duo for Oboe and Cello</i>
	no date	<i>Canon for Woodwinds</i>
James Tenney ² (1934-2006)	1997	<i>Diaphonic Study: for String Quartet and Piano</i> ³
	1997	<i>Diaphonic Toccata: for Violin and Piano</i>
	1997	<i>Diaphonic Trio: for Violin and Piano</i>
	1999	<i>Seegersong #1: for Solo Clarinet or Bass Clarinet</i> ⁴
	1999	<i>Seegersong #2: for Solo Flute or Alto Flute</i>

² Michael Winter, a former student of James Tenney, suggested that these works were based on dissonant counterpoint techniques. Conversation with Michael Winter on March 10, 2009.

³ Based on their titles, the diaphonic pieces may be an homage to Ruth Crawford's *Diaphonic Suites*.

⁴ The titles of the Seegersongs suggest they are an homage to Charles and/or Ruth Crawford Seeger.

APPENDIX B

HENRY COWELL'S DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT NOTEBOOK

Inside of the Front Cover

Dissonant governed counterpoint¹

Dissonance is accepted for foundation of counterpoint because it is emotionally stronger than consonance and because it is the next historical step. the first counter point was made in the most consonant intervals perfect 8ths, 5ths, 4ths. Then² these were used very sparingly in favor of more dissonant intervals major and minor 3ds and 6ths. the next logical step in carrying out the principal [sic] already indicated is to use perfect intervals practically never, 3ds and 6ths only by careful preparation and use 9ths and 7ths as the foundation of to work upon the major 7th minor 2nd and the minor 9th and their inversions are used as the foundation, as these are the strongest dissonances. the minor 7, and major 2 and 9th and the aug. 4 can be used as essential intervals when it practical to use them for good voice leading or variety last page³

¹ These passages have been transcribed exactly as Cowell wrote them. I have not corrected punctuation or capitalized the first letter of a new sentence. Where possible I have maintained the original lines of the prose as written in the notebook.

² “Then” is written over the top of “next.”

³ Cowell presumably wrote “last page” to direct the reader’s attention to the inside of the back cover, where his discussion of dissonant counterpoint continues.

Page 1 recto

Ex. 1

Example 1 consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: G4 (with a sharp sign), A4 (with a sharp sign), B4, C5, B4 (with a flat sign), A4 (with a sharp sign), G4, F4, and E4. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, and D4. The label 'C.F.' is positioned to the left of the bass staff.

Ex. 2

Example 2 consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains notes: G4 (with a sharp sign), A4 (with a sharp sign), B4, C5, B4, A4 (with a sharp sign), G4, F4, and E4. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, and D4. The label 'C.F.' is positioned to the left of the bass staff.

Ex. 3

Example 3 consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains notes: G4 (with a sharp sign), A4 (with a sharp sign), B4, C5, B4, A4 (with a sharp sign), G4, F4, and E4. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, and D4.

Ex. 4

Example 4 consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains notes: G4 (with a sharp sign), A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, and E4. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, and D4. The label 'C.F.' is positioned above the first measure of the treble staff.

Ex. 5

Example 5 consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, and E4. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, and D4.

Page 1 verso

Ex. 6

C.F.

Ex. 7

Ex. 8

C.F.

Page 2 recto

Ex. 9

C.F.

Ex. 10

Ex. 11

C.F.

Ex. 12

Page 2 verso

Ex. 13

Exercise 13 consists of two staves. The treble staff contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass staff contains a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3.

Ex. 14

Exercise 14 consists of two staves. The treble staff contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass staff contains a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. An octave sign (8) is placed above the bass staff, indicating an octave shift.

Ex. 15

Exercise 15 consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system's treble staff contains notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The first system's bass staff contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The second system's treble staff contains notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The second system's bass staff contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3.

Ex. 16

Exercise 16 consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system's treble staff contains notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The first system's bass staff contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The second system's treble staff contains notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The second system's bass staff contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. A label 'changing notes' with an arrow points to the first note in the second system's bass staff.

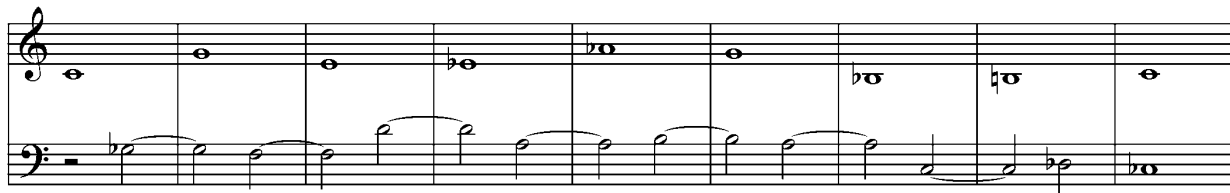
Page 3 recto

Ex. 17



Musical notation for Exercise 17. It consists of two staves, Treble and Bass. The Treble staff contains a sequence of notes: G#4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The Bass staff contains notes: C3, C3, C3, B2, B2, A2, G#2, G#2, C3.

Ex. 18



Musical notation for Exercise 18. It consists of two staves, Treble and Bass. The Treble staff contains notes: C5, B4, A4, G#4, G#4, F#4, F#4, E4, E4, D4, C4. The Bass staff contains notes: C3, B2, A2, G#2, G#2, F#2, F#2, E2, E2, D2, C2.

Ex. 19



Musical notation for Exercise 19, consisting of two systems of two staves each (Treble and Bass). In the first system, the Treble staff has notes: C5, B4, A4, G#4, G#4, F#4, F#4, E4, E4, D4, C4. The Bass staff has notes: C3, B2, A2, G#2, G#2, F#2, F#2, E2, E2, D2, C2. In the second system, the Treble staff has notes: C5, B4, A#4, G#4, G#4, F#4, F#4, E4, E4, D4, C4. The Bass staff has notes: C3, B2, A2, G#2, G#2, F#2, F#2, E2, E2, D2, C2.

Page 3 verso

Ex. 20

First system of musical notation for Ex. 20. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with a whole note rest in the first measure, followed by half notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5. The bass clef staff contains whole notes G2, A2, B2, C3, and D3.

Second system of musical notation for Ex. 20. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line with half notes E5, F5, G5, and A5. The bass clef staff continues with whole notes E2, F2, G2, and A2.

Ex. 21

Single system of musical notation for Ex. 21. The treble clef staff contains whole notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, and G5. The bass clef staff contains a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, starting with a quarter rest followed by eighth notes G2, A2, B2, C3, and D3.

Ex. 22

Single system of musical notation for Ex. 22. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in the fifth measure. The bass clef staff contains whole notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, and F3.

Ex. 23

First system of musical notation for Ex. 23. The treble clef staff contains whole notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5. The bass clef staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in the fifth measure.

Second system of musical notation for Ex. 23. The treble clef staff contains whole notes E5, F5, G5, and A5. The bass clef staff continues the melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Page 4 recto

Ex. 24

First system of musical notation for Ex. 24. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). The bass staff contains whole notes: C3, F2, B1, D2, F2, B1.

Second system of musical notation for Ex. 24. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). The bass staff contains whole notes: C3, F2, B1, D2, F2, B1.

Ex. 25

First system of musical notation for Ex. 25. It consists of three staves: two treble clef staves and one bass clef staff. The top treble staff contains whole notes: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3. The middle treble staff contains whole notes: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3. The bass staff contains whole notes: C3, F2, B1, D2, F2, B1. The label "C.F." is positioned to the left of the bass staff.

Second system of musical notation for Ex. 25. It consists of three staves: two treble clef staves and one bass clef staff. The top treble staff contains whole notes: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3. The middle treble staff contains whole notes: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3. The bass staff contains whole notes: C3, F2, B1, D2, F2, B1.

Page 4 verso

Ex. 26

C.F.

Ex. 27

Ex. 28

Page 5 recto

Ex. 29

C.F.

Musical score for Exercise 29, C.F. version. It consists of three staves: Treble, Middle, and Bass. The Treble staff has a whole rest in the first measure, followed by whole notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The Middle staff has a whole rest in the first measure, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5, quarter notes B4, A4, G4, F4, quarter notes E4, D4, C4, B3, quarter notes A3, G3, F3, E3. The Bass staff has whole notes G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F1, E1.

Ex. 30

Musical score for Exercise 30. It consists of three staves: Treble, Middle, and Bass. The Treble staff has whole notes Bb3, Ab3, Gb3, Fb3, Eb3, D3, C3, Bb2, Ab2, Gb2, Fb2. The Middle staff has whole notes G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F1, E1. The Bass staff has quarter notes G2, F2, E2, D2, quarter notes C2, B1, A1, G1, quarter notes F1, E1, D1, C1, quarter notes B0, A0, G0, F0.

Ex. 31

Musical score for Exercise 31. It consists of three staves: Treble, Middle, and Bass. The Treble staff has a whole rest in the first measure, followed by quarter notes Bb3, A3, G3, F3, quarter notes E3, D3, C3, B2, quarter notes A2, G2, F2, E2. The Middle staff has whole notes G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F1, E1. The Bass staff has whole notes G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F1, E1.

Page 5 verso

Ex. 32

Musical score for Exercise 32, consisting of a grand staff with two systems. The first system has a treble clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The second system has a bass clef on the bottom staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is marked "C.F." in the first measure of the first system. The notes are as follows:

Measure	Treble Clef	Bass Clef (System 1)	Bass Clef (System 2)
1	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
2	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
3	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
4	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
5	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
6	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
7	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
8	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
9	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹

Ex. 33

Musical score for Exercise 33, consisting of a grand staff with two systems. The first system has a treble clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The second system has a treble clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is marked "C.F." in the first measure of the first system. The notes are as follows:

Measure	Treble Clef (System 1)	Bass Clef (System 1)	Treble Clef (System 2)	Bass Clef (System 2)
1	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
2	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
3	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
4	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
5	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
6	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
7	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
8	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹
9	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹	B ¹

Page 6 recto

Ex. 34

Musical score for Exercise 34, consisting of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The middle staff is a treble clef with a common time signature, labeled "C.F." (Cantata Fugata), and contains a series of whole notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a common time signature and contains a series of whole notes.

Ex. 35

Musical score for Exercise 35, consisting of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature, containing whole notes. The middle staff is a treble clef with a common time signature, containing a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a common time signature, containing a series of whole notes. The label "C.F." is positioned below the bottom staff.

Ex. 36

Musical score for Exercise 36, consisting of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature, containing whole notes. The middle staff is a treble clef with a common time signature, labeled "C.F." (Cantata Fugata), and contains a series of whole notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a common time signature, containing a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, some of which are beamed together.

Page 6 verso

Ex. 37

Musical score for Ex. 37. The score is written for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, some beamed together, and a final half note. The two bottom staves are in bass clef and provide harmonic accompaniment with quarter and half notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Ex. 38

Musical score for Ex. 38. The score is written for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with quarter and eighth notes, some beamed together, and a final half note. The two bottom staves are in bass clef and provide harmonic accompaniment with quarter and half notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The first measure of the top staff is marked "C.F.". The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Page 7 recto

Ex. 39

Musical score for Exercise 39. The score consists of three staves: a treble staff, a middle staff, and a bass staff. The treble staff begins with a C.F. label and contains a sequence of whole notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The middle staff contains a melodic line starting with a whole rest, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass staff is empty.

Ex. 40

Musical score for Exercise 40. The score consists of three staves: a treble staff, a middle staff, and a bass staff. The treble staff begins with a C.F. label and contains a sequence of whole notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The middle staff contains a melodic line starting with a whole rest, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass staff contains a sequence of whole notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.

Page 7 verso

Ex. 41

The image shows a musical score for Exercise 41. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a sequence of chords: F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G#5, and A5. The second staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains a sequence of chords: Bb2, Cb3, Db3, Eb3, Fb3, Gb3, Ab3, Bb3, Cb4, and Db4. The third staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains a melodic line starting on Bb2, moving up stepwise to G#4, then down to F#4, and ending on E4. The notation includes various accidentals and ties.

Page 17 verso

Ex. 42

C.F.

Ex. 43

Inside of the Back Cover

aug. and dim. intervals enharmonically the same as
consonances had better not be used as essential dissonances
because although in reality dissonant, they are apt to
be mistaken remind[ing] th[e] listener of their enharmonic equivalent, unless
used in just the right surroundings to bring out their
true character. The chromatic scale is used because it is
the only scale in which _____⁴ has more varied possibility
than any other scale, and is one of the few scales in which
dissonant counterpoint is practical. Because the
voice is the foundation of all music, and the only
instrument which will inevitably last, we will
consider our work as being written for voices.
the voice leading of strict counterpoint, which is based on vocal
difficultys, [sic] is preferable only with the full addition of
chrom. semitones and an occasional⁵ use of augmented intervals
and minor 7ths if in good melodic curves, In three or more parts
the aim is to have all parts in dissonance to each other. between
an inner and top part may be consonance if there is somewhere a
diss. preferably from the bass. If weak dissonance only is used all parts
should be dissonant to each other. only intervals and melody are considered
to the exclusion of Durch Harmonie principals [sic].
for the sake of clarity crossed
and over lapped parts are only
used in
emergencies.⁶

⁴ The blank represents multiple crossed-out words that are indecipherable.

⁵ “Occasional” replaces two crossed-out words that are indecipherable.

⁶ The passage that begins “for the sake of clarity” is written on the left side of the inside cover perpendicular to the rest of Cowell’s discussion.

**Critical Apparatus for Henry Cowell's Dissonant Counterpoint Notebook
by John D. Spilker**

The source for the edition is a single notebook with writing in pencil; it is contained in box 31 folder 4 of the Henry Cowell Archive at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. In my report below all passages in quotes constitute marginalia written in Cowell's handwriting.

Page 1 recto

Above Ex. 1 –

“Because it is a strong diss and the extreme compass of the chrom. scale before a repetition is started, the maj 7th is a very good interval to start on. the minor 9th is also a possibility”

Ex. 1 – In m. 7, the upper voice, there is also E written a perfect fourth below the A, but it is crossed out.

Between the staves of Ex. 1 – “a return is made to the same point for the sake of balance.”

Down the right side of the margin that occupies the space after ex. 1 and ex. 2:

“contrary motion

is desirable

only 3 consecutive are allowed

of any kind

only 7ths and 9ths may

be written consecutively

occasionally [sic] aug. 4.,

consec. 2nds are muddy and

blur the clarity of the

parts

7ths in 2

moves

sometimes

7ths more

rarely

as the

smoothness is

_____ ”

The last two words are indecipherable.

Between Ex. 1 and Ex. 2 – “no consonance possible in first species, except rarely an enharmonic cons.”

Ex. 2 – In m. 1, the upper voice, there are a whole-note C-sharp and whole-note D written an octave and ninth respectively above the middle C-sharp. The two higher tones are both crossed out.

Ex. 2 and Ex. 3 are next to each other in the same system in the original source.

Ex. 4 and Ex. 5 are also next to each other in the same system in the original source.

Ex. 4 – In m. 8, the top voice, it appears that the whole-note B-natural is written over the top of a whole-note C-natural, a minor second above it; the B-natural note-head is darker.

Ex. 5 – In m. 7, the bottom voice, the whole-note A is written over the top of a whole-note B, a major second above it; the A note-head is larger and darker.

Page 1 verso

Ex. 7 – “C.F.” is written and then crossed out above the top staff. In m. 8, the bottom voice, a whole-note G is written over a whole-note F, a major second below it. In m. 12, the bottom voice, a whole-note C is written over a whole-note B, a minor second below it. The exercise does not conclude with a double bar line.

Page 2 recto

In the original source ex. 9 and ex. 10 are next to each other in the same system.

Page 2 verso

In the original source ex. 13 and ex. 14 are next to each other in the same system. Ex. 15 and ex. 16 each fit into their own single system in the original source.

Below Ex. 16 – “skip to consonance justifiable as changing notes”

Page 3 recto

Above ex. 17 and continuing along the right side of the exercise –
“owing to difficult[y] of getting this species the opening often must
begin on a weak dissonance - an enharmonic dissonance may be skipped
from in
cases of emergency
notes may be
enharmonically changed
over the bar if
convenient so as to
keep concord moving.”

Ex. 17 – In m. 7, the top voice, underneath the half-note D-flat was written a half-note C; the half-note C was erased.

Ex. 18 – In mm. 1-2, the bottom voice, underneath the half-note G-flat tied to a half-note G-flat was written half-note F tied to half-note F; both tied half-note Fs are erased. In m. 5, the upper voice, a whole-note A-flat is written over a whole-note B, an augmented second above it; the A-flat note-head is larger. In m. 8, the bottom voice, there are erased notes under the half-note C and half-note D-flat, but I cannot make out what was written there previously. In m. 9, the bottom voice, underneath the whole-note C-flat was written whole-note B-flat, a minor second below it; the B-flat was erased.

All measures of ex. 19 fit into a single system on the page.

Parallel to the right side of the page in the right margin after the systems that contain ex. 18 and ex. 19 –

“only a tied over dissonance may skip
but a consonance may be tied over enharmonically
to make a dissonance in cases of need.”

Below ex. 19 –

“the consonance should
resolve by
falling”

“in preparing the tied over notes, try to get the strongest common dissonance”

Page 3 verso

All measures of ex. 20 fit into a single system on the page.

In the original source ex. 21 and ex. 22 are next to each other in the same system.

All measures of ex. 23 fit into a single system on the page.

Page 4 recto

Ex. 25 – In m. 3, the middle voice, a whole-note C is written over a whole-note B, a minor second below it; the whole-note C is larger and darker. In m. 8, the middle voice, a whole-note A-flat is written over a whole-note G-sharp; the A-flat is larger and darker.

Page 4 verso

In the original source ex. 26 and ex. 27 are next to each other in the same system.

Ex. 27 – In. mm. 6-7 Cowell has drawn a line from F-sharp in the bottom voice to B in the top voice and from A in the bottom voice to C in the top voice. Above the top staff, “parallel conso.”

Ex. 28 – In. m. 1, the middle voice, a flat sign is written over the top of a sharp sign; the flat is larger and darker. In m. 2, the middle voice, a whole-note G-flat is written over a whole-note F, a minor second below it; the G-flat is larger and darker. In m. 4, the top voice, D-flat is written an octave below and crossed out. In m. 5, the top voice, E-flat is written an octave below and crossed out.

Page 5 recto

In the original source ex. 29 and ex. 30 are next to each other in the same system.

Ex. 29 – In m. 8, the middle voice, there is a half-note A-flat written an augmented fifth below the half-note E; the A-flat is crossed out.

Ex. 30 – In m. 8, the bottom voice, the half-note C is written over a half-note D-flat; the C note-head is larger and darker.

Ex. 31 – In m. 1, the middle voice, there is a whole-note B written an octave above the whole-note B; the higher whole-note B is crossed out. In m. 5, the top voice, a half-note G is written a minor third above a half-note E; the G is darker, but also appears to be crossed out with a single dark slash mark.

Page 5 verso

Ex. 33 – In m. 7, the top voice, the whole-note F-sharp is written over the top of a whole-note G, a minor second above it; the F-sharp is darker and larger.

Page 6 recto

In the original source ex. 34 and ex. 35 are next to each other in the same system.

Ex. 34 – In m. 1, the bottom voice, the whole-note C is written over a whole-note D; the C is slightly darker. Also, a sharp sign is written over a flat sign in the second space of the bass clef; the sharp sign is larger.

Ex. 35 – In m. 1, the top voice, there is a whole-note B-natural written a perfect fifth below the whole-note F-sharp; the B-natural is crossed out.

Ex. 36 – In m. 3, the top voice, there is a whole-note B-flat written a perfect fourth below the whole-note E-flat; the B-flat is crossed out. There is also a flat sign on the bottom line of the treble clef that has been crossed out; it suggests that Cowell considered writing an E-flat an octave below.

Page 6 verso

Ex. 37 – In m. 6, the middle voice, a whole-note A-flat is written over a whole-note G-sharp; the A-flat is larger and darker. In m. 7, the middle voice, a whole-note C is written a major seventh above the whole-note D-flat; the C is crossed out.

Ex. 38 – In m. 4, the bottom voice, a whole-note G and whole-note A are written a minor second and minor tenth above the whole-note F-sharp; both the G and A are crossed out. In m. 9, the bottom voice, a whole-note B is written a diminished third below the whole-note D-flat; the B is crossed out.

Page 7 recto

Ex. 39 – The bottom staff is empty.

Ex. 40 – In m. 3, the middle voice, a half-note D follows two quarter-notes: E-flat and F; the D is crossed out, and replaced with two more quarter-notes: G and A. In m. 6, the top voice, a whole-note B-flat is written over the top of a whole-note A-sharp; the B-flat is larger and darker.

Page 7 verso

Ex. 41 – In the middle voice, a bass clef is written over the treble clef. In m. 4, the top voice, a sharp sign is written over the top of a flat sign; the sharp sign is darker and larger. In m. 5, the middle voice, a whole-note F is written over the top of a whole-note G, a major second above it. The F is larger and slightly darker.

Page 8 recto through Page 17 recto of the original notebook are empty pages of staff paper.

Page 17 verso

Ex. 42 concludes with a double bar and is followed by a three-measure four-voice cadence pattern in F major.

Ex. 43 concludes with a double bar and is followed by a three-measure four-voice cadence pattern in D major.

The bottom stave includes two three-measure four-voice cadence patterns and two two-measure four-voice cadence patterns. The first is in A-flat major. The second appears to be in D minor with a Picardy third on the final chord, but the key signature contains two flats. The third doesn't make harmonic sense. The fourth cadences in F major, but the key signature contains two flats.

In the space around the bottom stave –
“Composers in strict counterpoint found a way to write suspensions [sic]
that consisted of adding
a note
which runs
consonant to both the
C. F. and the counterpoint
including the suspensions [sic].
C.F. won't always work
The first concord is 5th above bass”

APPENDIX C
DISSONANT COUNTERPOINT IN *NEW MUSICAL RESOURCES*,
A COMPARISON OF TYPESCRIPT DRAFT #1 (c. 1919)
WITH THE 1930 PUBLISHED VERSION¹

¹ Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, Typescript Draft #1, pp. 10-13, 13b. Housed in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 141, folders 11-16, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The passages in bold type were omitted from the 1930 version of the book; those in italics were added to the description of dissonant counterpoint contained in the 1930 publication.

Dissonant Counterpoint

All that has been said relative to the history of music has been considered exclusively from a single point of view, that of tones combined vertically, in musical chords. As a matter of fact, however, this harmonic conception of music has arisen comparatively recently in musical history. The simultaneous combination of different tones came about incidentally to the combining of two or more horizontal series of tones, or melodies, in the practice of counterpoint. As counterpoint became more complex the resulting simultaneous combinations became more complex, and the problems of harmony arose and were solved **in the manner stated**.

Turning now to the history of counterpoint as a distinct musical development, we can say that at every stage of increasing complexity of counterpoint, the rules governing **practice choice of intervals** grew out of the currently accepted, although unconscious, harmonic principles of the time. The rules were successively modified, therefore, with the developing progress of harmonic conceptions in successive epochs. *Thus the so-called "free" counterpoint taught today differs from "strict" counterpoint, as strict counterpoint differs from still earlier practice.*

If, **then**, we consider the actual practice of Bach in the matter of counterpoint, we find that he made a distinct contribution to the history of counterpoint by using **harmonic** material *which suggested harmony* of a complexity not accepted before his time. And in doing so he modified the rules of counterpoint so as to assimilate these complexities into a consistent and logical system. As was natural, the fact that he brought innovations into the practice of counterpoint carried his work beyond the comprehension of his contemporaries, who failed to accept fully what he wrote, *and took his organ playing more seriously than his composition*. It was only after a hundred years that Mendelssohn's admiration caused his work to be seriously studied as a significant contribution to the development of counterpoint.

The quality **of in** Bach's work that offended his contemporaries was undoubtedly the large infusion of dissonance into his compositions. **Considering his counterpoint as resulting in a succession of chords**, *If one considers each harmonic combination formed by his counterpoint, including each passing and auxiliary tone as harmonic elements*, the proportion of **dissonance [sic]** *dissonant* chords, varying in different works, is generally large, rising in some **cases works**, in fact, to about one half. Such a proportion might easily suggest the question whether the rules for his practice can really be said to be based on a system of consonant harmony. **Closer** study of Bach's principles, **however of course**, shows that his use of

dissonance is always subject to certain conditions, and that these conditions, by their very nature, establish consonant harmony as the basis of his **work counterpoint**. *The most significant of these conditions is that dissonance is felt to rely on consonance for resolution.*

The most significant of these conditions is that dissonances are accepted, not as absolutely permissible effects, on a par with consonant harmonies, but as unresolved harmonies giving promise of resolution in the next chord. This resolution is in reality rather a theoretical than a practical thing, for although the dissonant tone always takes the shift required by resolution, the other tone or tones of the succeeding chord may also shift at the same time, so that a new dissonance is the practical result. It is quite possible that in this way dissonant combinations may follow each other successively and without interruption. Yet, however high the proportion of dissonant combinations thus permitted, it remains true that the ear recognizes the essential consonant basis of the work, and accepts the dissonances as in no sense a contradictory or obscuring element.

Turning back now to the history of counterpoint, we notice a curious fact. It was counterpoint, as we have seen, that gave rise originally to the problems of harmony. From the time that harmony was recognized as an independent element in music, counterpoint and harmony went on developing side by side through successive **epochs periods**. And in both **cases** the progress was always one towards complexity, a reaching out to incorporate in the range of musical material ever higher members of the series of overtones. But the striking fact that remains to be noted is, that whereas progress in complexity has been, in **the case of** harmony, uninterrupted, in **the case of** counterpoint, practically all such development ceased with the completion of Bach's own work. The rules that arose from a study of his practice have remained stationary **since his time until the present time**. In apparent contradiction to this statement is the fact that certain *fairly* recent composers, such as Reger and **Schoenberg Franck**, introduced into their contrapuntal work passages of dissonant effect distinctly more radical than those of Bach. But closer observation makes it clear that these composers combined with their counterpoint harmonic material of markedly dissonant quality. That which can be analyzed as purely contrapuntal is found to follow largely the rules formulated and practiced by Bach.

Perhaps the reason for this arrest in development is **due to the fact** that Bach's practice was so poised between consonance as a basis and what was felt to be dissonance that it seemed **that as though** any further progress in the one inevitable direction would result in an actual

shifting, away from the base of consonant harmony, **onto** *on to* that of frank dissonance. And from the boldness of such a step musicians **have** instinctively held back.

Let us, however, meet the question of what would result if we were frankly to shift the center of musical gravity from consonance, on the edge of which it has long been poised, to seeming dissonance, on the edge of which it now rests. The difference might not be, any more than in Bach's practice, a matter of numerical proportion between consonant and dissonant effects, but rather an essential dissonant basis, the consonance being felt to rely on dissonance for resolution. An examination in fact, would reveal that all the rules of Bach would seem to have been reversed, not with the result of substituting chaos, but with that of substituting a new order. The first and last chords would be now not consonant, but dissonant. And although consonant chords were admitted, it would be found that conditions were in turn applied to them, on the basis of the essential legitimacy of dissonances *as independent intervals*. *In this system major sevenths and minor seconds and ninths would be the foundation intervals; major seconds and ninths, diminished fifths, and minor sevenths might be used as alternatives; all thirds, fourths, fifths, and sixths would only be permitted as passing or auxiliary notes. Octaves would be so far removed from the fundamental intervals in such a system that they would probably sound inconsistent and might not be used except in the rarest circumstances.*

Now whereas this *The statement about the reversing of rules might seem to imply that the result is a revolution in contrapuntal practice,; but it is perhaps **juster** more just to consider the change as a gradual one of degree, rather than a radical one of kind, and this for two reasons. First, the development of harmony has since the time of Bach gone so far in the direction of dissonance that effects that were in his time regarded as dissonant tend to be now accepted as essentially consonant. Second, Bach as well as even earlier composers, in their rules, tended to reject the more obvious consonant intervals **incidental to their contrapuntal work**, such as *open* octaves, fifths, and fourths; and so in effect cut away the simpler consonant material behind them at the same time that they were **occupying** *employing* the more dissonant material that lay before. *Therefore, if some contemporary composers are found to disfavor the use of thirds and sixths as banal, they are not proving themselves radicals who wish to throw over all that has previously been considered music, but are following the same principle employed in early contrapuntal days—that of prohibiting the use of open fifths, fourths, and octaves, because in a still earlier time these intervals had been overused.**

These early contrapuntists did not, of course, entirely reject fifths and fourths from their music; a fifth might, and in fact must, appear as an outer member of the major triad, but the presence of the third lying between was considered to remove the too open effect of the fifth alone. Similarly, the fourth appeared as part of the first or second inversion of the triad. In the same way in dissonant counterpoint all simpler consonant intervals would be permitted, if accompanied at the same time with a seventh, second, or ninth; thus thirds and sixths would not be cut out of music, but would merely have additional intervals added to them.

The ultimate test of this music, or of any music written on a new musical basis, is of course the practical one of ultimate acceptability, and that is obviously a question for the future. Meantime, two considerations seem to justify a sympathetic approach to the new system that is proposed. First, the general musical public, instinctively conservative, has a wholly natural tendency to reject that with which it is not familiar. In fact, the whole history of musical harmony is a record of gradual innovation by a series of radical leaders, against the instinctive resistance of the conservative musical public; such conservatism may have its large and wholesome uses, but nevertheless, the experience of the past points to the danger of denying the possibility or the desirability of further development.

This brings us to the second point. If a given step in musical change is in the same direction in which all previous change has led, logical analogy favors the thought that the future will justify the step. The analogy is not in itself a final justification, but it is certainly a warning against a too ready condemnation. Past progress in the practice of harmony has been uninterrupted in a given direction. Past progress in counterpoint has been in the same direction, but has been, and still stands, arrested. It seems a normal thing in theory, as it would be a natural one in practice, to carry counterpoint yet another step forward in the same direction. (See Example 4)²

² This ends the discussion of dissonant counterpoint in the typescript draft #1.

Ex. 4. Stretto in dissonant counterpoint³



Some of the music of Schönberg, Ruggles, Hindemith, and Webern seems to denote that they are working out some such procedure as that mentioned above. There is nothing, however, except occasional very good application in their music of the rules that would result from such a counterpoint, to indicate that they use the system consciously, as they have not made public any exposition of their counterpoint. Schönberg, though, has another quite different new system of counterpoint of his own which he has worked out with consistency, which he employs with straightforward logic in his later works, and which is formulated so that he teaches the method to his students.

It may be observed that changing the foundation intervals to be used in counterpoint is a matter of applying contemporary harmonic principles, rather than of adding to the purely contrapuntal possibilities. Schönberg in his system does not formulate new polyphonic materials, but takes from ancient counterpoint devices which had become almost obsolete, such as retrograde, inverse melodic line, etc., as well as better-known contrapuntal usages, and applies them to a twelve-tone scale in which each tone is independent. By an ingenious method of geometric diagram he is able to discover every possible variation of the themes and is therefore able to select the form of development which seems to him the most perfect.

Carl Ruggles has developed a process for himself in writing melodies for polyphonic purposes which embodies a new principle and is more purely contrapuntal than a consideration of harmonic intervals. He finds that if the same note is repeated in a melody before enough notes have intervened to remove the impression of the original note, there is a sense of tautology, because the melody should have proceeded to a fresh note instead of to a note already in the

³ There are three exercises each on pp. 13a and 13b. I have not transcribed the other five exercises since they are not referenced in this passage about dissonant counterpoint.

consciousness of the listener. Therefore Ruggles writes at least seven or eight different notes in a melody before allowing himself to repeat the same note, even in the octave.

Whether any of these processes will result in a system eventually accepted can hardly be predicted at the present time; nevertheless, it is interesting to observe that polyphonic progress is being resumed, after resting almost entirely since the time of Bach.

APPENDIX D
UNDATED NOTES ON THE TOPIC OF
DISSONANT DIATONIC COUNTERPOINT

Dissonant Diatonic Cpt.¹

The 1, 3, 4, and 7th steps in major, and all but the 4th step in minor, are capable of being strong dissonances within the key, against them [the?] C.F. should be arranged so that steps of the scale not capable of having strong dissonance, should be passing or other ornamental tones, or if a weak dissonance is used, it is best spaced as a close major 2nd, that being the most dissonant form of that interval. Each melody should be extremely perfect. In most cases the parts will be in different modes, so that each part can end on the 1, 3, or 5th of its particular mode. In more than 2 parts the steps not containing possibility of strong dissonance may be used freely, being supported by a dissonance somewhere in the texture. Care should be taken to avoid suggesting various 7th and 9th chords which sound consonant on account of music use. Needless to say, this is more difficult than Chromatic Dis. Cpt, and should only be tried by an accomplished student in that.

¹ Henry Cowell, "Dissonant Diatonic Counterpoint," (no date), Handwritten Notes, box 150 folder 17, Henry Cowell Papers, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The folder is labeled "Miscellaneous Notes: Dissonance, Melody, Counterpoint and Clusters."

APPENDIX E
EDITIONS AND TRANSCRIPTIONS OF SELECT
MANUSCRIPT SCORES BY COWELL¹

¹ The term “edition” is used here to refer to the scores that required editorial decisions to be made by the author; the term “transcription” denotes those works that were simply transcribed by the author.

Exercizes [sic] for Seeger

No. 1

Henry Cowell
Ed. by John D. Spilker

mp sempre

Musical notation for measures 1-6. The piece is in common time (C). The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some notes beamed together. The bass clef is mostly silent, with a few notes appearing at the end of the system.

Musical notation for measures 7-12. The melody continues with more complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth notes and eighth notes. The bass clef provides a steady accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 13-18. The melody features a series of sixteenth-note runs and eighth-note patterns. The bass clef continues with a consistent accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 19-24. The melody includes a prominent sixteenth-note run in measure 19. The bass clef accompaniment remains active throughout.

Musical notation for measures 25-30. The melody concludes with a final sixteenth-note run. The bass clef accompaniment ends with a few final notes.

31

36

Exercizes [sic] for Seeger

No. 2

Henry Cowell
Tr. by John D. Spilker

6

Exercizes [sic] for Seeger

No. 3

Henry Cowell
Tr. by John D. Spilker

Musical score for Exercise No. 3, consisting of two systems of two staves each. The first system contains five measures. The second system starts at measure 6 and contains four measures. The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and one flat (Bb), and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various note values, rests, and slurs.

Exercizes [sic] for Seeger

No. 4

Henry Cowell
Tr. by John D. Spilker

Musical score for Exercise No. 4, consisting of two systems of two staves each. The first system contains six measures. The second system starts at measure 7 and contains four measures. The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and one flat (Bb), and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various note values, rests, and slurs.

Polyphonica No. 1

Written for Godmother Briggs, Xmas 1916

Henry Cowell
Tr. by John D. Spilker

The musical score for Polyphonica No. 1 consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-5) is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody in the treble clef starts with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The bass clef accompaniment starts with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G3, A3, B3, and C4. The second system (measures 6-10) continues the piece, with the treble clef featuring a melodic line with slurs and the bass clef providing a steady accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Polyphonica No. 2

Written for Mrs. Dower for Xmas 1916

Henry Cowell
Tr. by John D. Spilker

The musical score for Polyphonica No. 2 consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-6) is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody in the treble clef is highly rhythmic, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs. The bass clef accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern. The second system (measures 7-11) continues the piece, with the treble clef featuring a melodic line with slurs and the bass clef providing a steady accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Four Little Solos for String Quartet

I

Henry Cowell
Tr. by John D. Spilker

Allegro

Violin I *ff*

Violin II *ff*

Viola *ff*

Cello *ff* solo *dim.*

Detailed description: This system contains the first six measures of the piece. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The Violin I, II, and Viola parts are marked *ff* (fortissimo). The Cello part is marked *ff* and includes a 'solo' instruction. The piece begins with a melodic line in the Violin I and II parts, while the Viola and Cello provide harmonic support. The Cello part features a descending eighth-note pattern in the final measure, which is marked *dim.* (diminuendo).

Vln. I *ppp*

Vln. II *ppp*

Vla. *ppp*

Vc. *ppp* rit.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 7 through 10. The Violin I, II, and Viola parts are marked *ppp* (pianississimo). The Cello part is also marked *ppp* and includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) instruction. The Violin I and II parts have rests for the first six measures, with their first notes appearing in measure 7. The Viola part has a rest for the first six measures, with its first note appearing in measure 7. The Cello part continues with its melodic line from the previous system. The piece concludes in measure 10 with a final chord in all parts.

Four Little Solos for String Quartet

II

Henry Cowell
Tr. by John D. Spilker

Adagio

Violin I: sord, *pp*

Violin II: sord solo

Viola: sord, slow slide

Cello: pizz., arco

Vln. I: 4

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.: pizz., arco

Vln. I: 8

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.: pizz., arco

* all harmonics sound where written

Four Little Solos for String Quartet

III

Henry Cowell
Ed. by John D. Spilker

Presto

G string G

G string G

solo
ff

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

5

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

9

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

13

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

rit.

rit.

rit.

rit.

Detailed description: This musical score consists of four staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The piece begins at measure 13, marked with a fermata. The first staff (Vln. I) starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G#4 in the second measure, and then a quarter-note melody in the third, fourth, and fifth measures. The second staff (Vln. II) has a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a sixteenth-note arpeggiated figure in the second measure, and then a quarter-note melody in the third, fourth, and fifth measures. The third staff (Vla.) features a continuous eighth-note arpeggiated pattern in the first measure, followed by a half note G3 in the second measure, and then a half-note melody in the third, fourth, and fifth measures. The fourth staff (Vc.) has a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a half note G2 in the second measure, and then a quarter-note melody in the third, fourth, and fifth measures. All four staves conclude with a fermata in the fifth measure, and each staff has a 'rit.' marking with a wedge-shaped deceleration symbol leading to the final note.

Four Little Solos for String Quartet

IV

Henry Cowell
Tr. by John D. Spilker

Allegro Moderato

Violin I *solo*
mp

Violin II *mp*

Viola *mp*

Cello *mp*

5

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

11

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

rit e cresc.

Invention for Sidney

June 2, 1948, Henry

Henry Cowell
Tr. by John D. Spilker

$\text{♩} = 60$

Measures 1-4 of the piece. The music is in 3/4 time. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4, quarter note G4. The second staff (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4, quarter note B3, quarter note A3, quarter note G3. The first measure of the second staff contains a whole rest.

Measures 5-8. Measure 5: Treble clef has a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4. Bass clef has a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4. Measure 6: Treble clef has a half note B4, quarter note C5, quarter note B4. Bass clef has a quarter note C4, quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4. Measure 7: Treble clef has a half note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4. Bass clef has a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4. Measure 8: Treble clef has a half note B4, quarter note A4, quarter note G4. Bass clef has a quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4.

Measures 9-12. Measure 9: Treble clef has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4. Measure 10: Treble clef has a quarter note B4, quarter note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4. Bass clef has a quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4. Measure 11: Treble clef has a quarter note A4, quarter note G4, quarter note F4, quarter note E4. Bass clef has a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4. Measure 12: Treble clef has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4.

Measures 13-16. Measure 13: Treble clef has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4. Measure 14: Treble clef has a quarter note B4, quarter note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4. Bass clef has a quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4. Measure 15: Treble clef has a quarter note A4, quarter note G4, quarter note F4, quarter note E4. Bass clef has a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4. Measure 16: Treble clef has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4.

Measures 17-20. Measure 17: Treble clef has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4. Measure 18: Treble clef has a quarter note B4, quarter note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4. Bass clef has a quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4. Measure 19: Treble clef has a quarter note A4, quarter note G4, quarter note F4, quarter note E4. Bass clef has a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4. Measure 20: Treble clef has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef has a quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4.

21

Musical notation for measures 21-24. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals. The lower staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern.

25

Musical notation for measures 25-28. The upper staff continues the melodic line with more complex intervals. The lower staff features a more active accompaniment with eighth-note runs.

29

Musical notation for measures 29-32. The upper staff has a melodic line with a prominent slur over the first two measures. The lower staff continues with a rhythmic accompaniment.

33

Musical notation for measures 33-36. The upper staff features a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The lower staff has a steady accompaniment. The instruction *rall. poco a poco* is written in the lower right of the system.

37

Musical notation for measures 37-40. The upper staff has a melodic line with a slur. The lower staff has a steady accompaniment. The system concludes with a double bar line.

Invention

Love to Sidney, Christmas 1952

Henry Cowell
Tr. by John D. Spiker

Measures 1-5 of the piano score. The right hand features whole notes and a triplet of eighth notes. The left hand has a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 5 includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a sixteenth-note triplet in the left hand.

Measures 6-10 of the piano score. The right hand contains a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth-note triplet. The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment and includes a sixteenth-note triplet in measure 10.

Measures 11-15 of the piano score. The right hand features a sixteenth-note triplet and a sixteenth-note triplet. The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment.

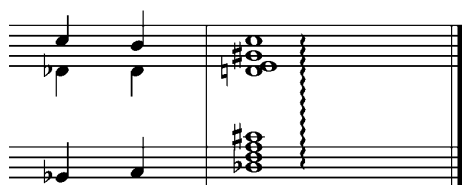
Measures 16-20 of the piano score. The right hand contains a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of eighth notes. The left hand includes a sixteenth-note triplet and a sixteenth-note triplet.

Measures 21-24 of the piano score. The right hand features a sixteenth-note triplet and a sixteenth-note triplet. The left hand includes a sixteenth-note triplet and a sixteenth-note triplet.

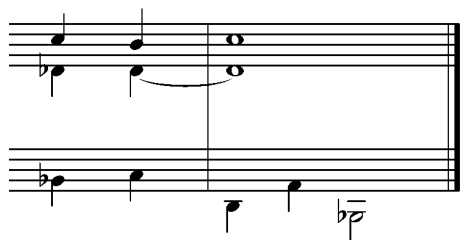
Critical Apparatus for Cowell's Scores
By John D. Spilker

Exercizes [sic] for Seeger, No. 1

The original score was written in ink; Cowell made three changes in pencil that are reflected in the edition. He added “exercizes [sic]” to the original title “for Seeger;” additionally he included a dynamic marking at the beginning, “mp sempre,” and composed a revised ending over the original ending in the final measure. For the original ending the final measure contained a chord with the instructions “arpeggiate downwards.” The C-sharp in the bass clef was crossed out in pen and therefore was not likely part of the original ending.



To create the revised ending, the D-flat, F, and A in the bass clef and G-sharp in the treble clef were crossed out in pencil. Cowell also wrote in pencil over the D-natural and E in the treble clef, replacing these tones with a D-flat whole-note tied to the D-flat quarter-note from the previous measure.



Four Little Solos for String Quartet, III

In m. 2 of the cello part no dynamics are indicated. Presumably the dynamic would be the same as marked in the other three parts, ff.

In m. 14 of the viola part the original source contains a dotted half note at the very beginning of the measure, which aligns with the eighth-note rests in the other parts. Since the dotted half-note is tied to the whole-note in the next measure, it appears that it should last the entire duration of the measure; thus, it should be tied to an eighth note so as to include all seven beats of the measure.

***Nota Bene:* I have added measure numbers to the other transcriptions.**

APPENDIX F
COWELL'S TEACHING MATERIALS

Introduction to Cowell's Teaching Materials by John D. Spilker

The transcriptions in this appendix correspond to Cowell's teaching career; they are arranged in chronological order. The original documents are located in boxes 163 and 164 of the Henry Cowell Archive at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; footnote citations for each transcription indicate the precise folder number for the source. I have preserved the structure of each line of text as it appears in the source and tried to maintain the original pagination and page layout, including spacing; any alterations to the pagination are indicated with footnotes.

The first document, from the New School for Social Research, provides a course description and lecture titles for "What the Twentieth Century has Added to Music." The *New School Bulletin* confirms that Cowell offered the class during Winter term 1931, which began in January.¹ While the *Bulletin* does have the course description, the lecture titles are not included; therefore this document provides further insight on the content of the class.

The next group of transcriptions includes a general outline, lecture notes or "syllabi," and exams for Cowell's 1934 "Appreciation of Modern Music" course at Stanford University. These materials reflect Cowell's musical thoughts and values, which can be seen in the topics he discussed for lectures 1 through 4 and the composers he chose for lectures 6 through 9. For example, the description of lecture 2 in the general outline confirms Cowell's scientific predilection when it came to music. Also, in the list of American composers for lecture 9 Cowell demonstrated a broad conception of the term "American" by including composers from North, Central, and South America. Additionally the way that he discussed certain composers, such as George Gershwin in the "syllabus" for the ninth session, betrays Cowell's musical biases and evaluation of the composer.

The last two transcriptions pertain to courses that Cowell offered at the University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University. The Berkeley course outline and Columbia course descriptions demonstrate a link with the content of his 1934 Stanford course. Regarding the companion courses from Columbia, Cowell also taught two courses with similar titles at the

¹ *The New School for Social Research: Announcement Winter Term 1931*, 27-28.

New School during the 1951-52 academic year: “The Meaning of Modern Music I: How Musical Modernism Developed” in Fall 1951 and “The Meaning of Modern Music II: What Does Music Mean Now” in Spring 1952.²

² *New School Bulletin* 9/1 (September 3, 1951), 113-14.

New School of Social Research, New York³

Henry Cowell, Director of musical activities

Lectures and concert series have been presented as follows, 1931-32

What the twentieth century has added to music. Henry Cowell.

A new method of formulating the subject matter of these lectures is proposed; namely: instead of treating from the standpoint of certain composers and their work or making divisions along lines of race and nationality, modern music will be divided into its component materials and different scientific aspects. Six lectures will be devoted to the science, and six to the materials of new music. The composers and national schools of composition will be treated in reference to the materials which they have furthered. The course will be illustrated at the piano.

1. History and philosophies of modern music
2. Physics of modern music
3. Psychological and physiological aspects of modern music
4. Modern musical ethnology
5. Modern musical instruments and notation
6. Melody in modern music
7. Harmony in modern music
8. Rhythm in modern music
9. Polyphony in modern music
10. Form in modern music
11. Tone quality and noise as elements of modern music
12. Modern music and modern society

³ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 163 folder 16, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

General Outline of Course on Music 120⁴
Stanford University Summer Session, 1934

Appreciation of Modern Music, Henry Cowell.

(Each session will be two hours in length).

1. The Historical Development of Modern Music.

A survey of the history of creative music from ancient to modern times, with special attention to the progress in use of different musical materials. Musical innovations of the composers of the eighth to sixteenth centuries. How new musical resources were developed by well known masters such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Chopin, etc., and an analysis of these resources. How the music of today developed from older musical practice.

2. The Scientific Basis of New Music Materials.

(a) Physics.

The physics of musical sound. The overtone series and its relation to modern music as a measuring stick of the exact relative simplicity and complexity of musical intervals. The relation of musical historical development to overtones. The relation of the theory of harmony and that of rhythm to overtones. Pythagorean, mean, pure, just, and some modern systems of tuning. Bent tones and their relation to discord and concord. Resonance.

(b) Mathematics.

Numerical basis of musical relationships.

(c) Psychology.

The psychological aspects of musical appreciation. Helmholtz, Stumpf, and other theories of consonance and dissonance. The relation of musical pleasure to unfamiliarity, familiarity, and over-familiarity with the means employed. The relation of musical pleasure to extra-musical association. A discussion of the musical-psychological findings of such contemporaries as Seashore, Metfessel, Farnsworth, Heinlein, etc.

(d) Physiology.

The physiology of the ear. The relation between physiology and emotional or intellectual reactions to sound and rhythm. Conditioned sound reflexes. (Pavlov and Webster).

3. The Relation of New Music to Society.

The function of music among primitive peoples, in religious, aristocratic,

⁴ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 3, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Another copy is contained in box 164 folder 5.

democratic and socialistic states of society. Differences between rural and urban music. The position of music in modern society. Evaluation of new music as an expression of modern society. How social conditions and surroundings may influence musical style.⁵

4. The Materials of New Music.

A discussion of the fundamentals of music, sound and rhythm, and how these are differentiated for use in modern music. Sound is divided into tone, noise, scales, chords, melody, harmony, tone-quality, concord, discord, counterpoint, polyharmony, tonality, atonality, polytonality, etc. Rhythm is divided into accent (meter), duration (time), rate of speed (tempo), successions of different rhythms (melody of rhythm), combinations of simultaneous rhythms (harmony of rhythm), combinations of rhythmical successions (counterpoint of rhythm), dynamics, etc. Each of these materials discussed in its application to modern music, and the differences between modern and classic use.

5. Mid-term Examination.

6. The Composers of Modern Music.

A discussion of the earlier modernists: Moussergsky [sic], Liszt, Wagner, Debussy, Strauss, Satie, Ravel, Scriabin, Janacek, etc. Analysis of some of their music.

7. The European Fathers of Modern Music of Today.

Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Bartok.

8. Other European Composers and Newer Trends.

Milhaud, Berg, Honegger, Webern, Malipierro [sic], Hindemith, etc. Soviet Russian Music: Mossolov, Schostakovitch [sic], Davidenko, etc. "Gebrauchsmusik": Kurt Weill, Ernst Krenek, etc. "Neoclassicists": The new Stravinsky, Casella, Markevitch. Younger composers of England, Hungary, Holland, etc.

9. Modern American Composers. The older composers:

Ruggles, Ives, Copland, Gershwin, Riegger, Weiss, Becker, etc. The younger composers: Henry Brant, Gerald Strang, Ray Green, Lohn Adohmyan, etc. The Latin-Americans: Villa-Lobos, Chavez, Caturla, Roldan, etc.

10. Final Examination.

⁵ In the source page 1 breaks after this paragraph.

Suggested reading for Music 120 (Appreciation of Modern Music)⁶

On the Sensations of Tone, by H. L. F. Helmholtz.
A Study of Modern Harmony, by R. Lenormand.
New Harmonic Devices, by H. A. Miller.
A Survey of Contemporary Music, by C. Gray
A New Aesthetic of Music, by F. Busoni
The Evolution of Harmony, C. H. Kitson (Oxford Press)
New Musical Resources, by Henry Cowell
American Composers on American Music, by Henry Cowell
The Science of Musical Sound, D. Miller
The Psychology of Musical Talent, C. E. Seashore
Studies in the Psychology of Tone and Music, P. Farnsworth
Hearing, R. M. Ogden
Critique of the Seashore Consonance Test, C. P. Heinlein
Studies in Motor Rhythm, by R. H. Seashore
On the Melodic Relativity of Tones, by Otto Ortmann
Modern Harmony, E. Hull
Our American Music, J. T. Howard
A Theory of Evolving Tonality, J. Yasser
Various recent issues of the "University of Iowa Studies
(in psychology)."
University of Iowa Studies in Psychology of Music, Vol. 1
Various issues of "Research Studies in Music",
Peabody Institute of the City of Baltimore

⁶ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 3, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Another copy is contained in box 164 folder 5.

Syllabus: Music 120 Cowell

First Session⁷

Modern music is not a breaking off from the past, but in the most important cases is a continuation of the same line of development that has always been observed in our musical history. The term modern is used to apply to music which contains new musical materials, particularly new harmonies. The term was used in exactly the same way in the time of Wagner, and was applied to his music, in the time of Beethoven, and was applied to his music, and in the time of Bach, and was applied to his music. All of these men, and also Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Mozart, Monteverdi, Palastrina [sic], and many others were moderns of their own time. Each of these composers developed an individual style, and used new materials in doing so. These materials were felt to be ugly, unmusical[,] discordant and meaningless by those who first heard them. Only with familiarity came the realization that the new materials were a genuine and valuable addition to musical resources. Usually the new materials, so called, were new only in the way they were used; that is, materials formerly used only in passing were emphasized and made more important in the musical scheme. The same process is going on in modern music today. The principles of counterpoint used by Schoenberg today have their roots in sixteenth century Netherlands composers; Stravinsky's rhythms are to be found in germ in Beethoven, and his polychords in Bach. Polytonality is suggested in Beethoven's Third Symphony. Gesualdo in the sixteenth century wrote a chromatic motet suggesting atonality.

⁷ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Syllabus: Music 120 Cowell

Second Session⁸

The overtone series is a series of tones sounded by a single sounding body such as a piano string, when its vibration is subdivided into parts. Unless inhibited in some way, a string will naturally subdivide itself into section[s] of vibrating parts. The string, when vibrating will vibrate first as a whole, producing a fundamental tone, then it will divide itself into halves, and each vibrating half will give forth a tone an octave higher than the fundamental. Then it will divide into thirds, then fourths, then fifths, etc. Each new subdivision gives out a new and higher tone. The order of these tones is fixed, and is the best guide possible for investigating the relationship of musical intervals, since all intervals may be found within the overtone series, and the vibration ratio of intervals may be calculated by using the figures of the number of subdivisions of the string. Thus, the tones produced by one-third of the string and those produced by one-fourth of the string have a vibration ratio of 4:3. The order of the overtones expressed as nearly as possible in musical terms is as follows, if the fundamental tone is C: C, C, G, C, E, G, B flat (this is lower than in the customary tuning), C, D, E, F# (lower than customary F#), G, A flat (higher than customary A flat), B flat (lower than customary B flat), B, C. The overtones continue indefinitely beyond this point, but these first sixteen string divisions are the most important for musical relationships. The history of harmony shows that the exact order of the overtones in their series is the exact order in which tones came to be recognised [sic] as harmonious when sounded together. The theory of conventional harmony is based on a consideration of two overtone relationships, viz. 5:4 (the major third) and 6:5 (the minor third). Chords built on these relationships are then related to each other with roots a fifth apart as a first step. The

⁸ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

fifth represents a 3:2 overtone relationship. Modern harmony utilises [sic] overtone relationships of 3:2 and 4:3 in chords built on fifths and fourths,⁹ accepts the conventional chords built on 5:4 and 6:5, and adds further chords based on 9:8 (major second) and 16:15 (minor second). The harmonic relation of rhythms to each other may also be determined by applying the overtone ratio measurements. Harmonies and intervals in which the vibrations interfere may produce “beat” tones. According to the theory of Helmholtz, these beat tones, if of certain rates of speed, are the cause of a feeling of discord. Since, however, it is found that all familiarly used chords contain audible beat tones, this theory has been largely abandoned in favor of one by Stumpf, who maintains [sic] that the feeling of discord is in proportion to the ability of the subject to fuse into a unit the material presented. Let us suppose that a certain group of tones is presented to a certain subject. If the subject can fuse the tones together psychologically, the result is concord. If he can make no fusion whatsoever, the result is discord. If he can make a partial fusion, the result is dissonance. Since the results with different subjects differs widely, this leaves the use of the terms concord, discord, and dissonance entirely relative. Familiarity with a certain group of sounds tends to make a concord of it, irrespective of what the group is; but if the relationship of the component [sic] parts of the group is more complex, then it may take a longer time for concordance to be attained psychologically. Musical pleasure is not based entirely on the relation of concord and discord, of course. Over-use of certain concords may lead to boredom and even irritation. Extra-musical association such as a program which the music follows, or the hearing of certain music under pleasant circumstances, may make intrinsically complex sounds musically pleasing. The border-line of possible reception by the ear physiologically has never been reached in any musical experiment [sic]. The relation of the ear and how sound is transported from the

⁹ This is the end of the first page in the source.

ear to the brain to musical pleasure is a matter which has been rather little investigated, but such experiments as the conditioned reflexes from sound by Pavlov, and the tapping of auditory nerves by electrical means by Webster may lead to a better understanding eventually.¹⁰

¹⁰ This is the end of the second page in the source.

Syllabus: Music 120 Cowell

Third Session¹¹

Aside from the aesthetic pleasure which may possibly be observed on the part of all the world's peoples in the practice and hearing of music, music has many utilitarian purposes among the peoples of different orders of society. Primitive peoples use music to invoke gods, drive away evil spirits, make seeds fertile, produce rain, placate angry animals, etc. Nearly all religious sects use music to produce a favorable psychology among their members, and often through association build up a very powerful emotion toward keeping potential backsliders in the fold! The use of music by the military for inducing a war spirit, for banding an army together through the brotherhood of singing together, and for the giving of actual orders as in bugle calls, is well known. Eighteenth century aristocrats supported music and composers who consequently made music of refined and graceful nature, suited to the court. Democracy in society produced music of greater freedom and strength, a music build [sic] on that of the whole people. Beethoven is a good example of this; he broke away from the pure court music of Haydn. In the Soviet Union, it would seem that a new order of music is appearing, based on the needs of larger groups of Russian workers singing together, based somewhat on folk music, but with some newer forms of cultivation. The contemporary modern life is much reflected in modern music, and as there are many aspects in modern society, modern music is correspondingly varied. New freedoms, new aesthetics, new mechanical developments are all shadowed in new music. New music is also often unfortunately influenced by the taste of wealthy patrons who subsidise [sic] composers. A cautious, mildly and politically emotional music neither too new nor too old is the usual result. The fact that there is no way in which a composer of serious music may obtain financial reward

¹¹ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

for his music is responsible for this condition.

Syllabus: Music 120 Cowell

Fourth Session [Missing]

Mid-term project, Music 120 (Cowell) fifth session.¹²

Write an article on a subject of your own choice, selected from subjects discussed during the previous sessions of this course, and illustrate the facts contained in your article with graphs or a chart.

¹² The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Syllabus: Music 120 Cowell
Sixth Session [Missing]

Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky and Bela Bartok are the European leaders in the development of the styles, materials and aesthetics of present-day modern music.

Arnold Schoenberg, born in Vienna, composed works in [a] more conventional style up to about 1909, at which time he began developing a style in which extreme dissonances are used in succession during a whole composition. His opus 11, “Drei Klavierstücke [sic]”, is his first work in which this is exemplified. A few years later he revived the idea of small chamber combinations in the work “Pierrot Lunaire”, a set of 21 little songs with seven instruments. In the 1920’s he began the huge task of setting absolute standards for himself in his use of the new materials of harmony, and established the “twelve-tone row” system of finding geometrically, all possibilities of development of a given theme. Thus his works were more technical during the 1920 to 1930 period. His latest development is to combine more musical and less technical ideas with the solid technique which he gained for himself. He deals in “pure” music.

Igor Stravinsky, born in Russia, developed a very colorful dissonant style by making realistic orchestral transcriptions of Russian peasant ceremonials for use in stage productions such as ballets. This led to a new use of discord for purposes of description, color, and for rhythmic emphasis. In the 1920’s Stravinsky made a sudden alteration of his style into the “neoclassic”, cutting out most of the unique features of his earlier style, and trying to write in the style of the seventeenth century.

Bela Bartok, born in Hungary, has been a profound student of Hungarian and other Balkan folk music. Beginning early in this century, he began developing an original style in setting folk music, or folk-like music, to harmonies and rhythms which were devised specially as being more adapted than conventional means.

¹³ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

After the advent of Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Bartok in Europe, many lesser modern composers of slighter strength sprang up in their wake. No modern composer has appeared who has not been influenced by one of these three men, however. In France, Darius Milhaud became known as a composer who develops “polytonality”, or music written in several keys simultaneously. Artur Honegger, born in Switzerland but living in France, became famous for transcribing the sounds of machines and games of sport into his orchestral works, such as “Pacific 231”. Maurice Ravel’s music is a synthetic combination of elements taken from Debussy, Faure, Satie, and Stravinsky. He is noted particularly for his deft and witty orchestration. In Austria Anton Webern takes the most abstruse ideas of Schoenberg and exaggerates them in works which are condensed in size and which utilize unusual instrumental tone effects and wide melodic skips. Alban Berg takes the Schoenberg technique and mixes it with older elements in his operatic works such as “Wozzeck”, using the Schoenbergesque dissonances for dramatic effects in the operas. In Russia there has been little of originality in composition since the revolution, but recently three composers have come forward as being perhaps the most representative: A. Mossolov, who creates orchestral works based on machine noises, as in his “machine music”; P. Davidenko, who has been successful in applying modern musical elements to workers’ choruses, and D. Schostakovitch [sic], who has come forward as a leading symphonist, using conventional forms with the addition of some few original materials. In Germany Paul Hindemith is a leader in the applying of a dissonant fabric to a Bachian technique; Kurt Weill writes rather ordinary musical shows of a popular order, and tries to make them be taken seriously by calling his style “gebrauchsmusik”. Ernst Krenek obtained note by writing “Jonny Spielt Auf”, an opera based on a misconception of American life and which has been the most performed of an new opera in Europe for the last ten years.

In Italy, there are no composers of world distinction. Francesco Malipierro [sic] writes well-ordered music after the style of Debussy; Alfredo Casella writes music harking back to the seventeenth century, with some modern chords interspersed. In England the very promising young group comprising Arnold Bax, John Ireland, Lord Berners, Eugene Goossens, Arthur Bliss, and others, have not lived up to early promises, and do no work of distinction. William Walton has arisen as a promising conventional symphonist, and Constant Lambert writes sophisticated amusement music. Strong schools of young composers have arisen in Holland and Hungary. In Holland, the leader is Daniel Ruyneman, who has modernised [sic] the approach to choral writing. In Hungary Isvan Szoleny and Pal Kadosa write music based on native folksong. Among the expatriated Russians in Paris, Serge Prokoffief [sic] and Ivor Markevitch are the most proficient, although both are very initiative of Stravinsky.

In all Europe, no special new tendency of great strength may be noted.

¹⁴ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

The leaders in the most typical American serious music are Charles Ives and Carl Ruggles. Ives is the most original composer we have, and developed a whole new palette of symphonic materials based on old American folk-practices in singing and playing. Ruggles, on the other hand, writes “pure” music, but invented many new kinds of musical materials and developed an original style making use of his own materials. His is a concentrated style, and very perfected in form. Aaron Copland is perhaps the leading exponent in America of a French-American combination of styles. Adolph Weiss and Wallingford Riegger use Teutonic technique[s] in writing music based on American subjects. George Gershwin tries to make jazz into a respectable musical medium with rather indifferent success. John Becker leads mid-western composers in experiments with new materials. A very strong group of younger men who have a good technique combined with gift and originality cause the feeling that America is more promising in creative music than Europe. It has less tradition, but is on that very account less bound. In Latin-America there has been a strong interest in creative music, and some of the world’s most colorful composers are men like Hector Villa-Lobos of Brazil, who uses native Indian themes; Amadeo Roldan and Alejandro Caturla of Cuba, who use Afro-Cuban themes; and Carlos Chavez of Mexico, who has found some written records of ancient Mayan music, and has utilized them in his music.

American composers as a class are less polished but more virile than the European composers of today.

¹⁵ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Final Examination.¹⁶
Appreciation of Modern Music (120) Henry Cowell

1. Write a free paragraph in answer to the following questions:
 - a. In what way is modern music related to old music?
 - b. In what way are new musical materials related to musical expression?
 - c. What are some of the philosophical principles of modern composers?
 - d. What are some of the relationships between the science of sound and the development of new musical resources?

2. Check the following statements as to whether true or false. Use – for false and + for true in space allotted:
 - a. The ancient Greeks used quarter-tones in their music.
 - b. Alois Haba of Czechoslovakia invented the quarter-tone system
 - c. J. S. Bach employed two dissonant passing tones together.
 - d. Two dissonant passing tones together were first employed by moderns of the twentieth century.
 - e. “Atonality” means absence of tone relationship.
 - f. A “polychord” is a combination of two or more chords together.
 - g. In dissonant counterpoint, no particular rules of procedure are followed.
 - h. Polyphony is more severe in rules than counterpoint.
 - i. “Tone-clusters” are based on upper overtone-series resonances.
 - j. Syncopation is a characteristic of jazz music only.
 - k. Noise is an important element of all vocal music.
 - l. Bela Bartok is a modern Bohemian composer.
 - m. Ivor [sic] Stravinsky bases some of his music on Russian peasant ceremonies.
 - n. Arnold Schoenberg uses ancient contrapuntal forms.
 - o. Paul Hindemith is a leader in the development of new rhythms.
 - p. Maurice Ravel is noted as a master of orchestration.
 - q. Alban Berg is a noted Viennese operatic composer.
 - r. Ernst Krenek is a noted Czechish operatic composer.
 - s. Charles Ives writes only abstract or “pure” music.
 - t. Carl Ruggles has developed a modern American piano music style.
 - u. Jazz has been a leading factor in the music of Aaron Copeland [sic].
 - v. “Neo-classical” music is written mainly in Soviet Russia.
 - w. “Modern” music represents a definite break with “classical” musical.
 - x. M. Moussorgsky was the father of modern Russian music.
 - y. Charles Ives uses rhythmic harmony in his music.
 - z. Beethoven broke a musical rule in the first chord of his first symphony.

¹⁶ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 3, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

(Modern music examination)¹⁷

Check the following statements as to whether true or false. Use – for false, and + for true.

- () aa The vibration ratio between the eight[h] and ninth overtone is 9:8.
- () bb The whole tone scale is based on overtones between the seventh and fourteenth.
- () cc A discord is not based on overtone relations.
- () dd Rhythmical combinations are not related in the same ratios as harmonic relations.
- () ee Pythagoras developed a system of measurement of the vibrations of musical sound.
- () ff According to Stumpf, the sense of discord is due to beat tones.
- () gg Helmholtz is responsible for the theory of concord and psychological fusion.
- () hh Prof. Metfessel upholds the accuracy of conventional musical notation in his book on phonophotography.
- () ii Musical dissonance is illegitimate because its unpleasant effect is due to unalterable psychological facts of the hearing apparatus.
- () jj Music is used almost exclusively for aesthetic purposes by primitive peoples.
- () kk The music of Beethoven is an expression of modern society.
- () ll Mussorgsky used dissonance as an aid in expressing his dissatisfaction with the society in which he lived.
- () mm Carlos Chavez is a leading modern Spanish composer.
- () nn Eric Satie composed light satirical music.
- () oo Kurt Weil is a leader in the field of “gebrauchsmusik”.
- () pp A. Scriabin used a chord based on the overtone series as his most frequent harmony.

Fill in the blank spaces in the following sentences:

1. Among the most promising young American composers are _____ and _____.
2. Two of the leading modern Russian composers are _____ and _____.
3. Among the terms used in modern music are _____, meaning a combination of two chords performed simultaneously, and _____ meaning two or more keys played at once.

¹⁷ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 3, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. This is the second page that follows the Final Examination on the previous page.

4. The vibration ratio from the first to the second overtone is _____.
5. Tone-clusters are a type of chord based on intervals of _____.¹⁸

¹⁸ This is the end of the second page in the source.

1. Write a free paragraph in answer to the following questions:
 - a. In what way is modern music related to old music?
 - b. In what way are new musical materials related to musical expression?
 - c. What are some of the philosophical principles of modern composers?
 - d. What are some of the relationships between the science of sound and the development of new musical resources?

2. Check the following statements as to whether true or false. Use – for false and + for true in space allotted:
 - () a. The ancient Greeks used quarter-tones in their music.
 - () b. Alois Haba of Czechoslovakia invented the quarter-tone system
 - () c. J. S. Bach employed two dissonant passing tones together.
 - () d. Two dissonant passing tones together were first employed by moderns of the twentieth century.
 - () e. “Atonality” means absence of tone relationship.
 - () f. A “polychord” is a combination of two or more chords together.
 - () g. In dissonant counterpoint, no particular rules of procedure are followed.
 - () h. Polyphony is more severe in rules than counterpoint.
 - () i. “Tone-clusters” are based on upper overtone-series resonances.
 - () j. Syncopation is a characteristic of jazz music only.
 - () k. Noise is an important element of all vocal music.
 - () l. Bela Bartok is a modern Bohemian composer.
 - () m. Ivor [sic] Stravinsky bases some of his music on Russian peasant ceremonies.
 - () n. Arnold Schoenberg uses ancient contrapuntal forms.
 - () o. Paul Hindemith is a leader in the development of new rhythms.
 - () p. Maurice Ravel is noted as a master of orchestration.
 - () q. Alban Berg is a noted Viennese operatic composer.
 - () r. Ernst Krenek is a noted Czechish operatic composer.
 - () s. Charles Ives writes only abstract or “pure” music.
 - () t. Carl Ruggles has developed a modern American piano music style.
 - () u. Jazz has been a leading factor in the music of Aaron Copeland [sic].
 - () v. “Neo-classical” music is written mainly in Soviet Russia.
 - () w. “Modern” music represents a definite break with “classical” musical.
 - () x. M. Moussorgsky was the father of modern Russian music.
 - () y. Charles Ives uses rhythmic harmony in his music.
 - () z. Beethoven broke a musical rule in the first chord of his first symphony.

¹⁹ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 5, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. This page is the same as the first page in box 164 folder 3, except that the first page in box 164 folder 3 does not contain the subheading “Elementary group.”

Examination.

Appreciation of Modern Music.

Henry Cowell.

(Advanced group)²⁰

Write eight short musical passages illustrating
the use of the following musical materials:

1. atonality
2. polytonality
3. polyharmony
4. Dissonant counterpoint
5. counter-chord
6. melody of meter
7. harmony of rhythmic duration
8. chords built from the intervals of
 - (a) fifths
 - (b) thirds
 - (c) seconds

²⁰ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 5, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

THE APPRECIATION OF MODERN MUSIC X 126²¹

Mr. Henry Cowell

1. "Modern" musical tendencies in classic and romantic music, showing the elements that were new to their time in the works of Palestrina, Monteverdi, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Chopin, Brahms, etc.
2. How twentieth century music developed from the older styles; showing the pathway of development without a break from the known masters of the nineteenth century to those of the early twentieth.
3. Modern music of the early twentieth century. Treating of the music of Debussy, Strauss, Satie, Scriabin, etc.
4. The music of Arnold Schoenberg, showing the relation of Schoenberg's work to the past, how it developed, what it is, its underlying theory and expression, and its influence on the musical world since.
5. The music of Igor Stravinsky, showing the influence leading up to Stravinsky and following him through his various phases of ballet, primitivity, "neo" classicism, etc.
6. How European music has developed since Schoenberg and Stravinsky, showing their influence on younger composers, and how this has branched off into different "schools", and describing what they are, and who belong to them.
7. Present tendencies and composers of Central Europe. Treating of "gebrauchsmusik", "neo" classicism, etc. and of Hindemith, Kurt Weill, and younger groups in Poland, Hungary, and Austria.
8. Present tendencies and composers of Latin Europe and England. Treating of "amusement" music, etc. and of Markevitch, Jacob, Walton, de Falla, and the younger men of France, England, Spain and Italy.
9. Art music in Soviet Russia. How art and politics are mixed in Russia, what is considered art music there, the principles by which it is written, and who is writing it. Treating of Shostakovitch, Mossolov, and others.
10. Modern American music. Showing the strong present American tendency to cut European apron-strings in many ways, and who the leaders are of our music, and why. Treating of Charles Ives, Carl Ruggles, and other important native composers.

²¹ The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 164 folder 5, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. This appears to be a course outline for a course offered at University of California at Berkeley Extension.

The Meaning of Modern Music I. How Musical Modernism Grew.²²
15 weeks, fall. (probably Wednesdays at 11:20A.M. – 1:00 P.M.)
Illustrated by recorded examples.

What constitutes meaning in music? What does music mean to the composer? How can the listener enter into the composer's world? How did modern music develop from classical music? Why did it develop? What is the meaning of modern materials, such as dissonance, neo-classicism (reversion to old forms), etc.? These and similar questions will be discussed in a step-by-step analysis of musical philosophies and materials from the time of Wagner and Brahms through Debussy, Satie and Richard Strauss to Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartok, Ives, etc.

This course is for laymen. No prerequisite.

The Meaning of Modern Music II. What Living Composers Offer
15 weeks, spring. (Probably Fridays 8:30-10:10 P.M.)

Composer guests, of various nationalities and shades of Modernism and conservatism, are invited to play and discuss their music informally with students. They often bring privately recorded examples of their larger works which are not otherwise available. There will be discussion of the works and meaning of such composers as Alban Berg, Anton Webern, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Varese, Cage, Virgil Thomson, Copland, Shostakovich, Peter Mennin, David Diamond, etc., and of such questions as: What has happened to experiment in modern music? Why is there a strong trend toward writing in the style of medieval church music? Why do many young composers abandon originality in favor of a style integrating old and new elements?

This course is for laymen. There is no prerequisite, but The Meaning of Modern Music I constitutes an advisable preparation.

²² The source is located in the Henry Cowell Papers, box 163 folder 6, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The folder is labeled "Teaching Columbia University."

APPENDIX G

JEANETTE B. HOLLAND'S CLASS NOTES

FROM THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

Springterm

1951

Februray 7, 51

Cowell: New Musical Resources
Alfred Knab [sic], 1930

In order to understand a new style in music, it is necessary to study and examine certain transitory elements.

How do the new styles come to existence?

We can say by means of changed taste in acoustics.

But where do the rules come from?

Transitory elements from “free c.p.” to “diss. c.p.” are found:

- 1.) Freeing dissonance from a solution.
 - a.) elided resolution (Examples: Grieg, Mc Dowell)
(Theory presumed: any person will hear the resolution without it being soloed really)
- 2.) Dissassociation [sic] of resolution.
“dissociate” separate or decompose by dissociation (chemistry)

Literature:

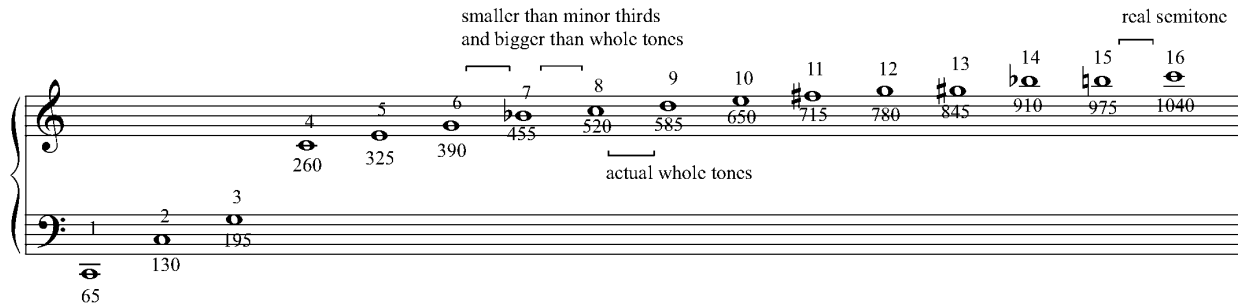
It is a scientific verity that overtones have all intervals:
Why are not the small ones as good as the great ones?

Development: chordal Harmony
quartal Harmony
secundal Harmony = tone cluster

France: 1890

G. Fauré:

Idea: what happens with chords built on perfect 4ths



lower figures: vibrations per second required to produce the indicated pitches.

Table of Partial Tones and Ratios

Partial	Ratio	Example	Vibration Length	Vibration number
1	1/1	C	192 in.	64
2	2/1	c	96 "	128
3	3/1	g	64	192
4	4:1	c'	48	256
5	5:1	e'	38,4	320
6	6:1	g'	32	384
7	7:1	- b-flat'	27,4	448
8	8:1	c''	24	512
9	9:1	d''	21,3	576
10	10:1	e''	19,2	640
11	11:1	f#''	17,5	704
12	12:1	g''	16	768
13	13:1	- a''	14,8	832
14	14:1	- b-flat''	13,7	896
15	15:1	b''	12,8	960
16	16:1	C'''	12	1024

et cetera

The Ratios of any two partials express:

- a.) The ratio of the vibration numbers of the two corresponding notes.
- b.) The inverse ratios of the two corresponding lengths of vibrating bodies. To come back to our example: the ratio of the fourth and the third partial, 4:3, expresses the ratio of two vibration numbers, say 256 and 192, and the inverse ratio of the two vibrating lengths involved, say 48 and 64 inches.

The partials above the fundamental, merging more or less in the fundamental, can be singled out with the exclusion of the fundamental or any other partial below. This is done on stringed instruments by helping the string, with a slight touch of the finger, to vibrate in halves, thirds, and fourths; it is done on

Febr. 14, 51

Richard Straus [sic] works mainly with altered tones. Schönberg also in his early examples. Op. 1 = altered notes

A musical score in 3/4 time, common time signature. The treble clef staff shows a sequence of chords. The first chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The second chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The third chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The fourth chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The fifth chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The sixth chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The seventh chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The eighth chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The ninth chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The tenth chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The bass clef staff shows a few notes, including a triplet of eighth notes labeled 'III'.

Next step: You think sometimes passing notes, but leave them out. Schönberg Opus 11.

Building of chords of thirds not considering the key:

Three chords built from thirds, not considering the key signature. The first chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The second chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5. The third chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5.

They come from 9, 11, 13 chords.

Chords numbered for their partials

Three chords numbered for their partials. The first chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5, numbered 6/5/4. The second chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5, numbered 9/6/4. The third chord is a triad with notes G4, B4, and D5, numbered 15/19.

t. Duparc: 1848-1933: pupil of César Frank
 Paul Dukas: 1865-1935 Paris
 Paul-Marie d'Indy 1851-1931. ”
 1871 “Société Nationale de Musique”
 continued the traditions of César Frank

(Henry Russel: 1871-1937 London)
 They started using chords built of perfect 4ths

So did Debussy and Hindemith

A chord built of perfect fourths, consisting of notes G4, C5, and F5.

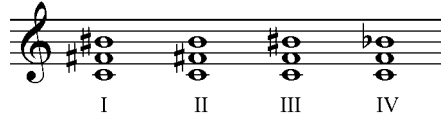
Arnold Schönberg: 1908

Started in 1908 to extend the perfect 4 to augmented ones.

See: early compositions op. 11, 19 (3 kleine Klavierstücke, 6 kleine Klavierstücke) Universal Edition. Written in chordal harmony

Op. 25 written in 12 tone row.

Pupils: Alban Berg, Anton Webern



continued next page →

14. II. 51

1.)



don't move
in same direction

2.)



harmonize in 4ths
use # and b freely

don't have key consideration
Smooth progression, inversion to fifths allowed.

No rules and principles were applied by Schönberg.

→

3 part chords

becomes 2 part chord

(be careful!)

4 part chords

Schoenberg is fond of these alternating chords (perfect 4 - augmented diminished!)

Julius Gold: musicologist and teacher

1884 (Missouri)

studied with Bernhard Zicher at the Chicago Musical College

living in San Francisco as lecturer on musicology.

wrote a comprehensive dictionary of musical terms

(whole system of chords!)

Bernhard Zicher: 1845 Erfurt (Germany)

died in 1912 in Chicago

was teacher of higher math + mus. theory at

the German Lutheran School in Chicago

1912 Eine neue Kompositions Technik

Dissonant harmony

A. Copland used polychords for the last 3 or 4 years.

Primary 7 chord is the easiest because of the simple

tone relation to overtones.

The resolution of a 7th chord
 may go up
 " down
 " stand

Dissonant Harmony

Harmonize 1.) make a conventional harmony, put in chromatic passing tones, write 5 parts, Sopr. Mezzo sopr., Alto, Tenor and Bass, double the notes, thirds, sevenths [leading tone – try not to resolve!]

2.) use 7, 9, 11, 13th with unusual sharps and flats, not based on a key.

keep voice parts smoothly with “some” wider leaps.

Resolution in Schönberg’s compositions is contrapuntal.

1.)

good

2.)

instrumental good

The principles of counterpoint did not change from Bach to Schönberg.

We distinguish: I. Strict Counterpoint: Palestrina – Lasso (16th century)

II. Free Counterpoint: Handel + Bach 18th century, (association of harmony + counterpoint.)

III. Dissonant Counterpoint: Schönberg, Alban Berg, Hindemith, Cowell (20 century beginning Ives, Stravinsky.)

Charles Seeger: began teaching Diss. cp in 1916

Hindemith: began with it in 1928

d minor prelude of the W. T. Cl. I

The upper voice of the 3 distinct voices! look below the sheet

Dissonant Counterpoint

Begins in 20th century.

major, minor thirds augmented diminished sevenths
went their own ways. Schönberg, Stravinsky, Ives, Hindemith
handled this. Counterpoint became applied to other
intervals than before: normal melodic principles
were applied. augmented 4 was of interest

Harmony then has gone in the atonal business:

same principles: when you make a wide leap, you go back

You have all the 12 tones to dispose on.

What happens, when you have 3 parts
major 7, minor 9, minor 2, augmented 4th

Find all (?) possibilities of a 13th chord.
Which don't suggest seconds and fourths

I. II. III. IV. I 12

II. 12

III. 6

IV. 6

Watch the keen ending of the prelude the row of diminished chords: how unusual and revolutionary this must have sounded at Bach's time!

Dissonant Counterpoint beginnings: c minor prelude of the W. T. Cl. I. cross relations

Look up: Bach's Kantata No. 81

Matthew 8, 23-28

“Stillung des Sturmes”

Tenor Solo: “Jesus schläft”

watch the dissonant counterpoint there and always when “Belzebug” [sic] appears.

All three systems of chordal harmony have been in use: the 13th chord

Thirds: g b d f a c e

fourths: c f b e a d g

seconds: c d e f g a b

When you use 9, 11, 13 (only in Soprano and Alto) so you write in the transitory state make very clear in your upper voice what you mean the V (3rd) resolves down to the second, so leave out this 13th tone, that the resolution is not taken in advance.

Find all 13th chords which are possible with major and minor thirds.

When you know the exhaustive material then you can go ahead to choose what you want for instance for melodic line, what you like in harmonious viewpoint: if you write a dramatical work you look in your material from this standpoint. creation, means, make a solution.

Die praktische Anwendung dieser Materialsammlung scheint mir darin zu liegen, daß ihre Anwendung die Tradition des musikalischen Denkens nachweisen kann. Die häufige Frage, wieso können wir sagen, dass manche Kompositionen mancher Komponisten klingen ähnlich. Das Material dessen was vorher war ist gesonßt, benutzt und transformiert in eigene Form.

Rimsky Korsakoffe: Coq d'or Suite

Prokofieff: Alexander Nevski

Walton: Music to Henry V

Febr. 21, 51

What happens if you have 3 parts in dissonant counterpoint?

Contrary motions, don't have a row of secondary dissonances melody good outlined in the beginning and end. The middle voice with a dissonant relation to one part. Augmented 4^{ths} and diminished 5^{ths} are included now.



Dissonant counterpoint a tier voces. (First spec)

1.) C.F. 2.) C.F.

parallel motion!

suggests V7

3.) C.F.

4.) C.F. 1 5.) C.F. 1

Febr. 28, 51

Diss C.p.

In two part D. counterpoint:

more primary dissonances

major 7

min 2

min 9

supplemented by augmented 4th

secondary: minor 7

major 2

major 9

try to use them sparingly

Augmented 4ths give the impression of stray dissonances

We use equal temperament: spelling is to be disregarded.

If the outer parts are strong dissonances (chaperoned)

so the middle parts may be no dissonance.

But: be careful of the sound: some dissonances

look like dissonances but sound very consonant:

watch the spelling of the augmented 9ths c d# not c e-flat

(but sounds as consonance!)

→

Schillinger System: if you have a certain form, what can y[ou]
do with it?

Joseph Schillinger b 1895 Kharkov + 1946 (2)

Author of Electricity, a liberator of music: Schillinger system
of Ernst Kurth

In "Modern Music" VIII. 3

Lit. Saminsky: Music of our day (1932)

Charles Ives: b. Danbury Conn., 1874

Lit. H Cowell: Ch. I. in "Modern Music" Nov.-Dec, 1932

2. Sonata: called Concord, Mass. I. Emerson; II. Hawthorne; III The Alcotts, IV Thore[au]

What has the modern music done in breaking
with the old one?

Study all the possibilities of spelling music

If you have to talk (musically) in Yugoslav language
you have to know the spelling of Yugoslavian (music!)

You may compose in “association”, for instance,
minor 7th was made as the expression of “love music”
by Wagner, but unless you know this you can’t associate

Music literature:

Henry Cowell: Epitaph: Where she lies poem Ernest Baker

Carl Ruggles:

b. in Marion, Mass. 1876: Men and Angels (192) Men and
Mountains (1924) Lilacs.

Alban Berg: Austrian composer, b. Vienna 1885 died there 1935

read in Baker, very good.

N. Slonimsky: Music since 1900 (1938) Where Berg’s radio talk
on atonality is printed in English.

Nicolas Slonimsky: The Source of Scales and melod. patterns
(Coleman Ross) (encyclopedic survey) 1937, 38 (Western music)
Sl. b. in Petersburg 1894. (active in promoting “ultra” modern
music.)

It lays out all the musical patterns. [referring to Source and Scales]

→

D[issonant] C[ounterpoint] Remember everything is done enharmonically.

dim. 3 is treated as major 2.

beware of enharmonic concords = augm. 5th = major 6th!!

When you add your 3rd part:

If the outer parts form a primary
dissonance the middle part does’nt [sic] have a dissonance
to both sides!

avoid familiar chords: like 7^{ths} or 9^{ths} chords.

March 7, 51

augmented 8ths primary dissonance

minor 7 has all possibilities between

you get familiar chords: the inner parts should not suggest a concordance, it happens, when you deal with secondary sevenths.

in strict c. p.

primary concords

octaves, fifths, unison: secondary conc.

primary diss.

in diss. c. p.

major 2 minor 7 major 9 secondary diss.

spelling could be done easier by changing L to #

C.F.

C.F.

here you better change to b spelling

C.F.

C.F.

3 part diss c. p.
March 7, 51

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. Both staves are marked with 'C.F.' above the first measure.

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. Both staves are marked with 'C.F.' above the first measure.

The third system of musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. Both staves are marked with 'C.F.' above the first measure. The text '* consonance!' is written above the upper staff between the two measures. The text 'in the outer voices' is written below the lower staff between the two measures. A '2' is written above the lower staff in the second measure.

very good!

A single line of musical notation in treble clef containing notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. It is marked with 'C.F.' above the first measure.

March 7, 1951

Polychordal Writing:
has 2 principles:

- 1.) one polychord can be divided in 2 or more chords and treated in the way of counterpoint.
- 2.) one polychord can be treated as one unit and harmonically.

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains five chords: a triad of G4, B4, D5; a dyad of G4, B4; a dyad of G4, B4; a triad of G4, B4, D5; and a dyad of G4, B4. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains five chords: a triad of G2, B2, D3; a dyad of G2, B2; a dyad of G2, B2; a triad of G2, B2, D3; and a dyad of G2, B2. The text 'strict 2 part counterpoint' is written above the top staff, and 'this is open position' is written above the bottom staff.

dissonant c. p = is written more vocal.

The standard theory work is:

A Schönberg: Harmonielehre.

Pierrot Lunaire: voice is Sprechstimme =
partly sung, partly spoken.

Pierrot Lunaire: is the last work before Schönberg wrote definitely in 12 tone row.

In polychordal writing we take chords up to 11th + 13th (only in the 3 upper parts). Write in root position 6 parts S. (M). A. T. (Baritone) B. Doubling of the roots.

Possibility	Possibility
Of doubling 3, 5, 7	of introducing 11 th and 13 th

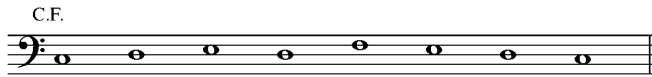
When you can avoid dim and augmented intervals
Do so, if not spell 4 and 2.

In the lower voices augmented or diminished thirds suggest psychologically fourth chords and second chords.

Polychordal writing

March 14, 51

Take a simple cantus firmus write a strict 2 part counterpoint first specimen. Build triads on the two parts and handle them as group units. Use also inversions. (In close position!)



1.

Two staves of music. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The lower staff contains the C.F. from the previous block. The upper staff contains a series of triads, each aligned with a note of the C.F. The triads are: C2-E2-G2, D2-F2-A2, E2-G2-B2, F2-A2-C3, G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, B2-D3-F3, C3-E3-G3. The first six triads are in close position, while the last two are in open position. The label "C.F." appears below the lower staff.

2.

Two staves of music. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The lower staff contains the C.F. from the previous block. The upper staff contains a series of triads, each aligned with a note of the C.F. The triads are: C2-E2-G2, D2-F2-A2, E2-G2-B2, F2-A2-C3, G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, B2-D3-F3, C3-E3-G3. The first six triads are in close position, while the last two are in open position. The label "C.F." appears below the lower staff.

2.

Two staves of music. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The lower staff contains the C.F. from the previous block. The upper staff contains a series of triads, each aligned with a note of the C.F. The triads are: C2-E2-G2, D2-F2-A2, E2-G2-B2, F2-A2-C3, G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, B2-D3-F3, C3-E3-G3. The first six triads are in close position, while the last two are in open position. The label "C.F." appears below the lower staff. The text "sounds different" is written to the right of the upper staff.

2a.

Two staves of music. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The lower staff contains the C.F. from the previous block. The upper staff contains a series of triads, each aligned with a note of the C.F. The triads are: C2-E2-G2, D2-F2-A2, E2-G2-B2, F2-A2-C3, G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, B2-D3-F3, C3-E3-G3. The first six triads are in close position, while the last two are in open position. The label "C.F." appears below the lower staff.

Helmholtz: "Sensation of tone"
study!

D. and C. Miller: Science of musical sound

Charles Ives: 67th Psalm:
Recording: Engel (Press published it)

Wallingford Riegger: 1885 born
Albany

Adviser on the board for New Music recordings and publ.
member of the Exec. Board of Pan Amer. Assoc. of Composers
and the American Composers Alliance
Has written music for the modern dance and the films.

Polychordal harmony
based on principles of strict counterpoint second species.



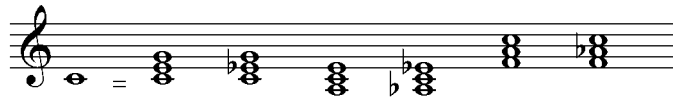
Don't use intervals which don't belong to the strict counterpoint

In writing Polychordal harmony based on principles of strict Counterpoint (second species):

Don't alter either the note of the cantus Firmus or counterpoint in major or minor: but use free inversions.

The cantus firmus or counterpoint is a member of the triad.
use all # and flats

Six chords are possible with
(major-minor) this note



Write in close position, if you get in trouble, open up
in order to avoid parallel motion

- 1.) Write one Polychordal harmony
based on consonant counterpoint
in 3rd species. make your own
C.F.
- 2.) Write a 2 part dissonant counterpoint
(use major, minor, dim, augmented triads)
use it polychordal

C.F. major minor dim. augm.

This block shows a chord progression exercise. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The bottom staff is a bass clef. The progression consists of eight chords: D major (C.F. major), D minor, D minor with a dynamic marking of 'dim.', D major with a dynamic marking of 'augm.', and D major. The notes in the chords are: D major (D, F#, A), D minor (D, F, A), D minor (D, F, A), D major (D, F#, A), D major (D, F#, A), D major (D, F#, A), D major (D, F#, A), and D major (D, F#, A).

Thus harmony gets polyphon

making the "a" utmost
"a" ish

making the "c" utmost
"c" ish

This block shows a musical exercise with lyrics. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (C minor). The lyrics are: "Thus harmony gets polyphon", "making the 'a' utmost", "a' ish", "making the 'c' utmost", and "c' ish".

1.) Strict c. p. 3rd species

C.F.

This block shows a counterpoint exercise. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (C minor). The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (C minor). The exercise is labeled "C.F." and consists of six measures of music.

good!

This block shows a polychordal harmony exercise. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (C minor). The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (C minor). The exercise is labeled "good!" and consists of seven measures of music.

This polychordal harmony is written polytonal, using different tonalities.

2.) Diss. c.p. 2nd species.

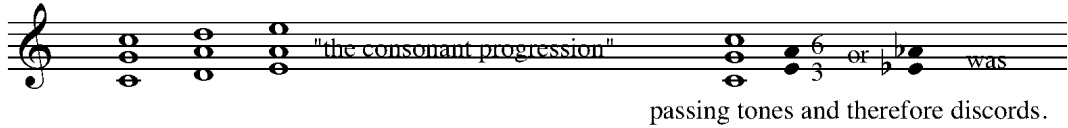


Charles Ives: Concord Sonata
Columbia recording: J. Kirkpatrick

250 W. 57 American Music Store

History of passing tones:

Middle Ages
Organum



Baroque: Bach these passing tones: major triads were
concord not minor (therefore discords)

19th century: Debussy made a major 2 concord.
minor 2: discord.

20th century: dissonant counterpoint is seen as a
legal concordance. 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th are
now principal tones.
1/4 tones dissonant.

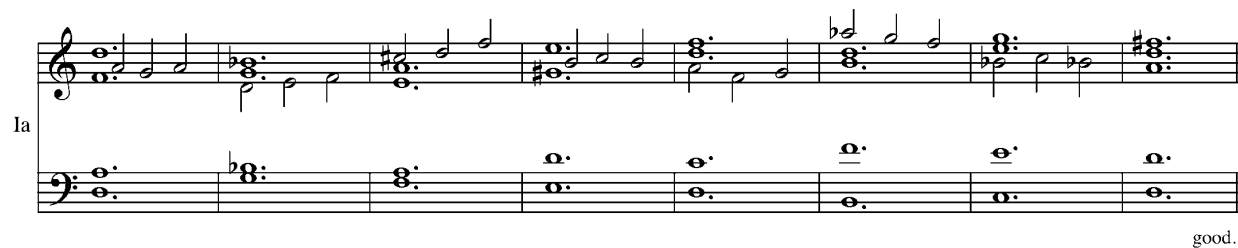
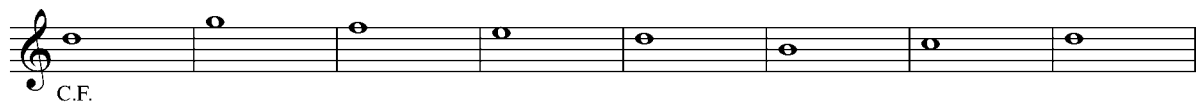
1864 was the first Quarter tone piano built.

later in 1920 (?) Alois Haba had some built which were played in
the Prague Conservatory. the 16th overtone =
quarter tone
Alois Haba: Psychology of a quarter tone.
Charles Ives: father constructed a 1/4 tone piano
in 1896 (Mildred Cooper write for 1/4 tone piano)

March 28, 51

In polytonal writing you may leave out 3rds and 5ths too;
open position is only dangerous in so far you polychords as
one chord.

- I. Write a polyharmony using the 4 kinds of chords
major, minor, augm. + dim. + primary and secondary
7th chords
- II. Use the same cantus firmus in writing a
dissonant c. p. polyharmony



Tierce (third) de Picardie (major)

II. Diss c. p.

The first system of music consists of two staves. The treble staff contains a sequence of whole notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The bass staff contains a sequence of whole notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3.

The second system of music consists of two staves. The treble staff contains a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, starting on G4 and moving through various intervals. The bass staff contains chords, primarily triads, corresponding to the notes in the treble staff.

I,

The third system of music consists of two staves. The treble staff contains a vocal line with eighth notes and quarter notes, including some slurs. The bass staff contains sustained notes (half notes) corresponding to the notes in the treble staff. Above the treble staff, there is a text annotation: "the upper sustained notes will [be?] heard when they are sung".

[A newspaper clipping is taped to the top of this page. It reads:]

Songs and piano music by Peggy
Glanville-Hicks will be performed
by Kathleen Parker and David
Allen tonight at 8:30 in Henry
Cowell's "Living Composers" course
at the New School for Social Re-
search, 66 West Twelfth Street.
The composer will discuss her
larger works which will be illus-
trated by recordings.

[Resume Holland's handwriting]

Literature:

Octave displacement; harmonic inversion.

Charles Ives, Concord Sonata

Schönberg, Webern.

Stravinsky, Le Sacre de [sic] Printemps
2 piano version, Edition Russe

Punctuation

- 1.) 12 Bagatelles by Bartók, 1908
(in 2 keys)
- 2.) Allegro Barbarole [sic] (Universal Edition)

Bartók and Stravinsky related: tunes are
different, not the approach

Stravinsky, L'histoire d'un [sic] soldat

Hybrids: Hindemith, Piano - pieces, op. 36, 37

He first made the brilliant combination of new and old, all the elements putting together, new and old he integrates; in op. 36, examples dissonant and neutral counterpoint. Suppose you do everything what you please, rules of dissonant and consonant c.p. used together, then you write in polyphonic (!)

diss. and cons. c. is fundamental.

Carl Ruggles: Angels

Difference of definitions

Theme of a symphony: a classical theme is a unified theme; all other themes develop out of it.

Subject of a Fugue: (scale and chordwise progression)
a baroque subject consists of contrasting motifs.

April 4th

In polychordal writing the base [sic?] chord has to be in root position. in Dissonant counterpoint the horizontal line is to be considered tonal in spelling. The vertical line is atonal only.

The beginning of teaching children how to compose goes the same way of playing with chords.

as we are used to let them play with blocks which may lead toward architecture.

Write a fugue!

April 11

Write a Prelude. (making free counterpoint of harm
Write a 5 part harmony: S. M. A. T. B. 4 take for
the melody. 1 only stays. X o it with any of the melodies
one part is sustained. Suspensions all interest.
(compare d minor Prel. Bach W. T. Cl. I.) or (Chopin C prelude)

added counterpoint

a.

b.

c.

d.

etc.

another additional counterpoint

you bring out every part as melody.
you can play two voices together and the other single.
Where ever in harmony you find an unusual
doubling of tones this is for counterpoint
or bringing out a special tone as melody.

Examine the first movement of the c# minor
Sonata quasi una fantasia: several melodies
are it. (Schubert examine!)

In writing your Prelude, don't cross the
Parts: use 7 and 9th chords.

Exercise I
(Fugue a tier voci)

The image displays a musical score for Exercise I, titled "Fugue a tier voci". The score is written for piano and consists of six systems of music. Each system contains a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex texture with multiple voices, including a prominent melodic line in the treble clef and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the bass clef. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings, typical of a fugue or contrapuntal exercise.

Exercise II
(Prelude)

The first system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a whole rest, followed by a sequence of notes: a half note G3, a quarter note A3, a half note B-flat3, a quarter note C4, a half note D4, a quarter note E-flat4, a half note F4, and a quarter note G4. The middle and bottom staves are grand staff notation (treble and bass clefs). The middle staff contains a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment with quarter and half notes.

The second system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff continues the melody from the first system, starting with a half note G4, a quarter note A4, a half note B-flat4, a quarter note C5, a half note D5, a quarter note E-flat5, a half note F5, and a quarter note G5. The middle and bottom staves continue the accompaniment patterns established in the first system.

The third system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff continues the melody, starting with a half note G5, a quarter note A5, a half note B-flat5, a quarter note C6, a half note D6, a quarter note E-flat6, a half note F6, and a quarter note G6. The middle and bottom staves continue the accompaniment patterns.

The fourth system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff continues the melody, starting with a half note G6, a quarter note A6, a half note B-flat6, a quarter note C7, a half note D7, a quarter note E-flat7, a half note F7, and a quarter note G7. The middle and bottom staves continue the accompaniment patterns.

A musical score for piano, consisting of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff. The middle and bottom staves are grouped together by a brace on the left, representing the piano accompaniment. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into three measures by vertical bar lines. In the first measure, the treble staff has a half note G4, a whole note A4, a half note B4, and a whole note C5. The piano accompaniment features a descending eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a sustained bass line in the left hand. The second measure continues this pattern with a chromatic descent in the right hand. The third measure concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained bass note in the left hand.

Critical Apparatus for Jeanette B. Holland's Class Notes
by John D. Spilker

The source is a photocopy of Holland's notes contained in box 164 folder 15 of the Henry Cowell Archive at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; the original notes have not been located; hence, I am working with only one source. The page numbers at the top of each page were added in green ink and are consistent with Holland's handwriting.¹ Therefore, she would have likely made the photocopies herself. Throughout the source some musical examples also contain remarks and marginalia, all of which are in Holland's handwriting. This edition duplicates the exact pagination and Holland's approximate spacing on each page of the source.

Page 1

Alfred Knab likely refers to Alfred Knopf, the original publisher of *New Musical Resources*.

In the phrase “. . . to study the and examine certain transitory elements” the word “the” has been crossed out.

Page 1a

Holland's table does not contain lines marking the columns and rows.

The bottom of the page ends with “it is done on.” There is no continuation of this discussion.

There is no page labeled “2a”

There are two pages labeled “3”

I have designated each as 3 recto and 3 verso.

Page 3 (recto)

The arrow presumably points to the discussion of Schoenberg and “3 part chords” etc. on the next page, also labeled “3”

¹ Conversation with Heinrich Holland, November 13, 2009.

Page 3 (verso)

The arrow at the top of the page presumably refers to the arrow on the previous page.

In the staff under “3 part chords,” m. 4, the C and B-sharp are circled.

In the staff under “4 part chords,” m. 2, the A-sharp is in parenthesis.

In the staff under “Dissonant harmony,” the “x” appears to be marking the three examples of resolution and not indicating a double-sharp.

Page 4

Exercise 1b. (labeled “good”) m. 2 – In the source the tenor part contains A half note followed by A half-note, followed by B quarter-note tied over the bar to B quarter-note. I changed the second A half-note to a quarter-note to fit the rhythm of the measure.

Page 5

The second stave, which begins with the label “II” – In the source, the sixth sonority originally comprised (from the bottom to the top): C, E-flat, G, B-flat, D, all of which were crossed out. Above these crossed-out tones are written D-sharp, A, C-sharp; these tones remain in the edition.

Page 5a

Where Holland has written “W. T. Cl. I. cross relations,” she also draws a wedge shape, like this:

<. Above the ascending slant she wrote “f# g#”. Below the descending slant, appears what looks like wrote “f s,” (i.e. f e-flat) or “F g.” This appears to be a shorthand illustration of simultaneous cross relations without the use of staff notation.

In the discussion of systems of chordal harmony, Holland has placed a bracket to the right of the notes that follow the thirds, fourths, and seconds. After the bracket Holland wrote “all seven letters.”

Also “the 13th chord” is circled.

Page 6

Since Holland was a native German speaker, it is likely that the German passage was written by her and reflects her own thoughts about something that was said by Cowell during the lecture. A translation of the German passage reads:

The practical use of this collection of materials seems to me to lie in the fact that its use can demonstrate the tradition of musical thought. The common question [is]: how can we say that many compositions of many composers sound similar. The material of that which came earlier was known, used, and transformed into its own [proper] form.²

² English translation was provided by Stephen Thursby in an email to the author.

Page 7

In the example labeled “1.)” – Chord 2 is circled and “suggests V7” is written below it. Chords 8 & 9 are together circled and “parallel motion” is written above them.

In the example labeled “5.)” – Chord 4 is circled. The G-flat in chord 7 is circled, and “V7!” written below it. The bass clef is redrawn, but not the soprano clef.

Page 7a

After the text, “(but sounds as consonance!)” on the right side of the page there is a diagonal arrow pointing down to the bottom portion of p. 8.

Page 8

In the discussion of Carl Ruggles, the final number is missing from the date provided for *Men and Angels*.

Under Alban Berg’s name is written “Impressionism?” and it is crossed out.

After “Nicolas Slonimsky” Holland writes, “The Source of Scales and melod. patterns” which presumably refers to *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns*.

There is an arrow pointing down from “The Source of Scales and melod. patterns” to “It lays out all the musical patterns.”

Before the text, “D.C. Remember everything is done enharmonically.” There is an arrow pointing to this discussion coming from the right side of the top half of 7a. It is likely that D.C. refers to dissonant counterpoint.

Page 9

System 1, m. 2 and System 2, m. 2 – Since the CF is in the top voice, the first note is D natural. I have added the natural sign in parenthesis to make this clear. In the middle voice, first note is D-flat on the same line as the D-natural in the CF.

System 3, m.1 – Referring to chord 7, there is a line connecting the G# in the bottom voice and F in the top voice, and Holland wrote “consonance! in the outer voices.”

Page 10

System 3, m. 11 – In the bottom voice, the G was preceded by a sharp sign, but it was crossed out.

System 4, m. 8 – In the top staff, the source also contains a middle C that is crossed out. Also, G in the top staff and C and E in the bottom staff are written as smaller note-heads.

Page 10a

Holland wrote “D. and C. Miller” in the source, a likely reference to D. C. Miller (Dayton Clarence Miller), who is the author of *Science of Musical Sound*.

Page 11

After the last overtone chord there is an arrow pointing up. After the last undertone chord there is an arrow pointing down.

In the third system of music the fifth and sixth chords are circled on both staves.

In the phrase “disjunct motion “ wide leaps” Holland had originally written “disjunct motion “ also leaps, but she crossed out “also” and wrote “wide.”

Page 11a

First system of music, m. 2 – In the treble clef both chords in the measure are circled.

Page 12

Third system of music – In the source, the downbeat of each measure in the treble clef contains a whole-note. There are no stems on the three other filled-in note-heads. Since the exercise is supposed to be modeled on third-species counterpoint, I made each note a quarter-note. Perhaps each downbeat is written as a whole note because Holland began by writing a first-species melody against the *cantus firmus*, and then filled in the other tones to make it a third-species melody.

Fourth system of music – In the source, the first chord of each measure in the treble clef comprises a whole-note. The other three chords comprise quarter-notes. Since the exercise is supposed to be modeled on third-species counterpoint, I made each chord a quarter-note with the exception of the last measure.

Page 12a

Third system of music – In the source each note in the treble clef is a whole-note, which leaves two whole notes in the top voice against a single whole note in the bass clef. Since the exercise is supposed to be modeled on second-species counterpoint, I made each note in the treble clef into a half-note, with the exception of the last measure.

After “Columbia recording” Holland originally wrote “R. Kirkpatrick,” but then crossed out the “R.” and wrote “J.”

Page 13a

Second system of music, treble clef – The half-notes in my transcription are notated in the source as quarter-notes; they are evenly spaced out in the measure and there are no rests. It appears they are intended to move as half-notes given that the four other voices in each measure are notated as a dotted whole-notes.

Second system of music – In the source “Tierce (third) de Picardie (major)” is written along the right side of the page following the double bar that concludes the exercise.

Page 14

Second system of music, treble clef – The half-notes in my transcription are notated in the source as quarter-notes; they are evenly spaced out in the measure and there are no rests. It appears they are intended to move as half-notes given that the other voices in each measure are notated as a whole-notes. Also, in m. 5 of the exercise, the b-natural and c-natural were originally notated as eighth notes. I changed them to quarter-notes for the same reason.

Third system of music, treble clef – The dotted whole notes are notated as such in the source. The half notes are written as quarter notes in the source. The quarter notes are written as eighth notes in the source.

Page 16

Near the top of the page in the section on writing a prelude Holland wrote, “X o it with any of the melodies . . .” It is not clear what this means.

Page 17

Fourth system of music, m. 1 – In the bass clef the last two notes are circled. Also, in between the staves Holland wrote what appears to be “com 51.” It is not clear what this means.

Fourth system of music, m. 4 – In the lower voice on the treble clef the second D is notated in the source as a quarter-note, which would not fit with the 4/4 time in the other parts. Based on the alignment of the parts, it appears the second D is missing a flag and is really an eighth-note.

Fifth system of music – In the source the third measure and first beat of the fourth measure are crossed out. There is a line in the top voice connecting G from the end of m. 2 to F on beat two of m. 4.

Page 17a

Second system of music: Above m. 2 is written “passing sme_____.” The second word is indecipherable.

Page 18

The top of "Exercise II" is cut off.

APPENDIX H

JEANETTE B. HOLLAND'S SCHOLARLY WRITINGS ¹

¹ "Bibliography." Heinrich Holland Private Archive. Many thanks to Mr. Holland for providing me with this document. I have corrected some minor typographical errors in the original document; otherwise it represents Holland's original formatting.

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9. [Jeanette B. Holland,] "A Newly Discovered Source for 17th-century Spanish Chant," 1996, unpublished MS.²

² This article is housed in Heinrich Holland's Private Archive of Jeanette Holland's materials.

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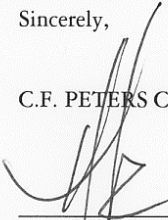
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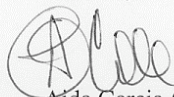
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John D. Spilker graduated from Brigham Young University with a Bachelor of Arts in Music (2004); his studies focused on music theory and choral conducting. At The Florida State University he earned a Master of Music in Historical Musicology (2006) and a Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology (2010). His master's thesis "The Context and Tradition of David's Lamentations," traces musical settings of King David's laments for Absalom and Jonathan from the ninth through the twenty-first centuries. His dissertation, "'Substituting a New Order': Dissonant Counterpoint, Henry Cowell, and the Ultramodern Network of Composers," focuses on Cowell's active contribution to the development and dissemination of the compositional method from the mid 1910s until his death in 1965. John's primary research interests focus on twentieth-century avant-garde art music in America and Europe. While at Florida State, he taught courses in music history, music literature, and music appreciation. He has presented papers at the International Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference, national meetings for the American Musicological Society, Society for American Music, and American Culture Association, and regional meetings for the Southern Chapter of the American Musicological Society. John and his wife Amy are the proud parents of one daughter, Lillian Blythe, and they also enjoy the companionship of their spritely dog, Roxie Hart.