

**STEPHEN LIAS (BORN 1966): HIS LIFE, WORKS,
AND ANALYTICAL DISCUSSIONS OF
*SONGS OF A SOURDOUGH***

THESIS

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF EXAMPLES	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
1. STEPHEN LIAS: A BIOGRAPHY	2
1.1. Biographical Notes.....	2
1.2. Musical Training and Career	3
2. OVERVIEW OF STEPHEN LIAS' COMPOSITIONAL WORK	7
2.1. Introduction.....	7
2.2. Tonality / Harmony.....	9
2.3. Melody	13
2.4. Rhythm / Meter	14
2.5. Form	14
2.6. Timbre / Texture	15
3. STYLISTIC TRAITS AND SELECTED ANALYTICAL OBSERVATIONS OF <i>SONGS OF A SOURDOUGH</i>	18
3.1. Background Information	18
3.2. The First Movement: "The Heart of the Sourdough".....	19
3.3. The Second Movement: "The Lure of the Little Voices"	23
3.4. The Third Movement: "Premonition"	26
3.5. The Fourth Movement: "Grin"	29
3.6. The Fifth Movement: "L'Envoi"	31

4. INTERVIEW WITH THE COMPOSER.....	35
5. COMPLETE WORKS LIST.....	58
5.1. List of Works by Genre.....	58
5.2. Chronological List of Works.....	90
CLOSING REMARKS.....	97
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	99

LIST OF EXAMPLES

Example	Page
1: <i>Sonata for Flute and Piano</i> , movement, mm. 103-105	10
2: <i>Tarantella</i> , mm. 1-11	11
3: <i>Pursued</i> , mm. 48-57.....	12
4: <i>Sonata for Flute and Piano</i> , movement 1, mm. 138-140	13
5: <i>Five Characters from David Copperfield</i> , movement 1, mm. 16-17	16
6: <i>Five Characters from David Copperfield</i> , movement 1, m. 61	16
7: <i>Five Characters from David Copperfield</i> , movement 1, m. 56.....	17
8: <i>Five Characters from David Copperfield</i> , movement 2, m. 11-12.....	17
9: <i>Five Characters from David Copperfield</i> , movement 3, mm. 1-3	17
10: <i>Five Characters from David Copperfield</i> , movement 4, mm. 45-46	17
11: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 1, mm. 1-4.....	21
12: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 1, mm. 27-29.....	22
13: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 1, mm. 112-114.....	22
14: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 1, mm. 117-119.....	23
15: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 2, mm. 70-71.....	25
16: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 2, mm. 74-77.....	26
17: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 2, mm. 1-4.....	26
18: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 3, mm. 2-4.....	28

19: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 3, mm. 31-34.....	28
20: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 4, mm. 4-10.....	30
21: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 4, mm. 76-77.....	31
22: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 5, mm. 8-12.....	33
23: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 5, mm. 49-51.....	33
24: <i>Songs of a Sourdough</i> , movement 5, mm. 53-55.....	34

INTRODUCTION

As I began the search for a thesis topic, I decided to focus my research on contemporary lesser-known composers. It is my personal belief that contemporary art music is neglected and deserves more recognition than it is currently given. For this reason, I have chosen to focus my thesis (and future research) on contemporary composers who show great achievements but have not been the subject of academic research.

In the Spring of 2007, I attended the College Music Society's South Central chapter's regional meeting in Jonesboro, Arkansas. It was at this meeting that I first became acquainted with Stephen Lias, a composer and professor at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. He presented a lecture-recital, at which two of his piano works, *Summer Diaries* (1999) and *White Water* (2005), were performed. I immediately began to consider Lias as the topic of my thesis. Then, in May 2007, I contacted Lias for the first time and he agreed to let me write about his life and works.

The following thesis will provide a brief biography of Lias, stylistic attributes of his compositions as well as a more specific analysis of his song cycle *Songs of a Sourdough* (2007), a personal interview, and a complete catalogue of his compositions organized chronologically and by genre.

CHAPTER 1

STEPHEN LIAS: A BIOGRAPHY

1.1. Biographical Notes

Stephen Lias, the younger of two children, was born in Suffern, New York, on March 18, 1966. Just one year later, the Lias family moved to Lakewood, New Jersey. Stephen lived in New Jersey until he was fourteen years old. He attended high school in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where he graduated in 1984¹.

Upon graduation, Lias left home for Grantham, Pennsylvania, where he attended Messiah College. In 1988, Lias received his Bachelor of Science in Music Education degree (with a vocal emphasis) and relocated to Lindale, Texas, to work for vocal coach Chris Beatty, nephew of the American composer Samuel Barber. After a year in Lindale, Lias moved to Tyler, Texas, and began his work as a freelance musician in 1990. It was also during this time that Lias worked on, and received, his Master of Arts in Music with an emphasis in Composition from Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

Upon completing his Masters in 1991, Stephen Lias married Roni Brown. The couple continued living in Tyler for two more years, while Lias taught at Tyler Junior College as an adjunct professor.

¹ Biographical information was provided by Stephen Lias in a series of personal email communications dating from July 30, 2007 – March 3, 2008.

In 1993, Lias moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he completed his coursework for his Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition at Louisiana State University. Teaching again at Tyler Junior College, Lias completed his dissertation and received his doctorate from Louisiana State University in 1997.

In 1997, Lias accepted a position on the faculty of Kilgore College in Kilgore, Texas, about thirty miles east of Tyler. Then, in 2000, Lias returned to Stephen F. Austin University as a faculty member. He and his wife continue to reside in Nacogdoches, Texas, at the time of this writing.

1.2. Musical Training and Career

As a child, Lias took piano lessons for a number of years. His natural ability to play by ear was an impediment to traditional learning, but his desire to play continued to increase even after the lessons ceased. His parents were very supportive of Lias' growth as a musician. In fact, when Lias made his first attempts at composition, it was his mother, an amateur pianist, who showed him how to write it down. Lias recalls much music in his home as a child, whether it be his mother playing music on the piano to put him to sleep or singing hymns with his father. There was also an early influence from Lias' church environment as well. Lias' church organist, Anita Greenlee, provided him with opportunity to have his works performed in the church setting. In high school, Lias began to study voice and chose this as his main instrument in his undergraduate education. While in high school, Lias participated in district and regional choruses on several occasions as well as in an all-state choir during his senior year. He also had the

opportunity to have some of his compositions performed, which increased his desire to compose.

Lias' first attempts at composition were encouraged by several individuals early in his life, including his mother, his high school choir director, Robert Stuart, and Dr. Richard Roberson, his composition teacher at Messiah College. When asked in an interview at what point Lias knew he wanted to be a composer, he responded:

“I have enjoyed writing music for nearly as long as I can remember, but I did not think of myself as a ‘composer’ until early in my graduate studies. In high school and early college, I was extremely diverse in my interests and pursuits – I wanted to be a singer – an actor – a composer – a conductor – a pianist – and other things. I was energetic and possessed enough natural ability to enable me to pursue all these interests simultaneously while never focusing fully on any single discipline. This approach had its benefits for me professionally, but probably also was a hindrance to my early growth as a composer.” (Stephen Lias in a personal email from June 20, 2007)

During the summer of 1992, Lias joined the Texas Shakespeare Festival as its “Composer in Residence.” His main role with the Shakespeare Festival was to write incidental music to the plays produced each summer. Lias remained in this position each summer until 2000.

During the past five years, Lias has taught undergraduate courses, including upper level music theory and aural skills, form and analysis, scoring and arranging, applied composition, and film music, as well as graduate courses, including advanced analysis, scoring and arranging, stylistic analysis, and music theory pedagogy. Lias' research interests include compositional techniques since 1950, the relationship between music and drama, the pedagogy of music composition, and film scoring.

Lias is active in several professional organizations, for example as the founder and director of the Center for the Promotion of Contemporary Composers (CPCC), as a board member of the Texas Chapter of the National Association of Composers U.S.A. (NACUSA), as a national board member of NACUSA, as well as a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), the Society of Composers Inc. (SCI), and the College Music Society (CMS). Lias has been selected for many awards, including nine consecutive ASCAPPlus awards. In addition, he was a finalist in the "Homage to Mozart" competition, sponsored by the Chamber Orchestra Kremlin in 2006, and was selected as the 2003 Commissioned Composer by the Texas Music Teachers Association.

Lias continues to grow as a composer and professor by attending lectures and workshops of varying topics. In May 2007, he attended the ASCAP/NYU Film Scoring Workshop, jointly sponsored by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers and New York University's Steinhardt School of Music. He has also attended several orchestration workshops at the Film Music Institute, conducted each year in Los Angeles, CA, by Stephen Scott Smalley, a noted film composer.

In addition to attending workshops and seminars for his own professional growth, Lias has had the opportunity to be a presenter and adjudicator for several conferences and competitions. In the Spring of 2003, Lias served as adjudicator for a composition contest sponsored by the Mid-South Chapter of NACUSA. Another opportunity for Lias to adjudicate came in 2004 at the Nacogdoches Music Teachers Association Student Composition Recital. Lias participated in a panel discussion on vocation and the transition to the professional life at Messiah College on April 18, 2005. On April 28, 2006, Lias presented a 30-minute review of the creation of his work "Pursued" and the events that surrounded its premiere at the "Bright Ideas" conference at Stephen F. Austin State University. The University of Houston invited Lias as a guest lecturer on his works, particularly his incidental music in February 2007. In March 2007, Lias co-presented with pianist Tracy Ward a session titled "Composer and Performer Viewpoints on Two New Works for Piano" at the South Central Chapter meeting of the College Music Society.

The most recent years of Lias' career have been very fruitful and filled with opportunities to write new and unique works. Looking toward the future, Lias has begun to make international contacts. In November 2007, Lias traveled to Hong Kong to attend the World Music Days of the International Society of Contemporary Music. In the summer of 2008, he will rejoin the Texas Shakespeare Festival once again as the director for the musical *1776*, and he is composing original music for *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, a play by Peter Shaffer.

CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW OF STEPHEN LIAS' COMPOSITIONAL WORK

2.1. Introduction

One cannot classify Stephen Lias' compositions as a specific style, such as minimalism or serialism. Rather, Lias' compositions, collectively, are eclectic and versatile. Since much of his works are commissioned, he has a tendency to compose what best suits the audience for each commissioned piece, rather than writing all his music in a specific style. This chapter will summarize the compositional tendencies in Stephen Lias' work to date, specifically with regard to harmony, melody, rhythm, form, and texture.

In a personal interview with Stephen Lias (October 13, 2007), Lias discussed two rationalities for writing music: One being for personal expression and the other communication. According to Lias:

If it's personal expression, not only doesn't it matter what language it's in but it doesn't matter if there's an audience because you're writing it as an expression of something going on inside you. Once it's on the paper, once it exists you're done. If it's communication, you're not done until someone has heard it and hopefully understood it. (October 13, 2007)

Lias tends to write with the purpose of communication in mind. He attempts to write music using a vocabulary that both the audience and performer can understand and enjoy.

When examining the works of Stephen Lias, one will find some programmatic works such as *Five Characters from David Copperfield*, a work for unaccompanied saxophone depicting characters from Charles Dickens' novel *David Copperfield* including "Uriah Heep," "Traddles," "Emily," "Mr. Micawber," and "Steerforth." *Central Park Suite*, a work for woodwind quintet based on childhood impressions of New York's Central Park. Although many of Lias' works are actually programmatic in nature, he also has many non-programmatic works with still colorful titles. The composer himself stated that, while he has works with generic titles such as *Sonata No. 1 in G Minor*, he feels giving a work a more descriptive title often makes it more memorable and perceptible (personal interview, October 13, 2007).

Lias has written sixteen instrumental works for a variety of ensembles. These works range from a traditional *Sonata for Flute and Piano* to an all-percussion ensemble work entitled *On the High Chisos*. Five of Lias' chamber works involve a brass instrument as one of the main players, while seven are primarily for woodwind instruments. Lias has also written nine piano compositions. His vocal works, choral and solo, include twelve compositions. Lias' greatest number of compositions are from his time spent with the Texas Shakespeare Festival as "Composer in Residence." This includes more than thirty theatrical incidental musical scores.

When asked in a personal email communication (January 26, 2008) what techniques he favors in his writing, Stephen Lias' answer was this:

... as a rule, I don't think I use any particular techniques specifically for a given type of work [i.e., piano piece, chamber ensemble piece, etc.] ...

Instead, I tend to focus on one of two things as I choose an approach for a piece: What materials or techniques will best serve the dramatic or emotional needs of this piece? And how can I use this composition as an opportunity to augment my knowledge or facility with some previously unexplored musical vocabulary?

The following sub-chapters will take a closer look at Lias' compositional style.

2.2. Tonality / Harmony

Although most of Stephen Lias' music can be considered tonal, with a tonal center, many of his compositions show a weak commitment to that tonic and have a tendency to shift to different tonalities throughout the piece.

Lias writes mostly diatonic material and looks for interesting harmonies to accompany it. He often finds himself leaning toward raised fourths and lowered sevenths in recent compositions, much like John Williams and Leonard Bernstein have done in past compositions. An example of this can be found in the middle movement of Lias' *Sonata for Flute and Piano*.

The musical score for Example 1 consists of three measures. The top staff (Flute) begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The middle staff (Piano, treble clef) begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bottom staff (Piano, bass clef) begins with a half note G3, followed by a quarter note A3, and a quarter note B3. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

Example 1: *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, movement, mm. 103-105

Also the main theme of Lias' most recent work, *Tarantella*, uses a raised fourth and lowered seventh. This work also utilizes the octatonic scale with the returning theme using one of three forms of the octatonic scale and the other two sections utilizing the remaining two forms of the scale.

The musical score for Example 2: *Tarantella*, mm. 1-11, is arranged for a woodwind and percussion ensemble. The instruments listed on the left are Bassoon 1, Bassoon 2, Clarinet in Bb 1, Clarinet in Bb 2, Clarinet in Bb 3, Bass Clarinet, Alto Sax 1, Alto Sax 2, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, and Marimba. The Marimba part is written in grand staff notation. The woodwind parts feature various dynamics such as *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. The score shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes across the measures.

Example 2: *Tarantella*, mm. 1-11¹

The tonality of Stephen Lias' theatrical works tends to vary greatly, depending on the dramatic needs of the production. For example, the musical score for the play *Abundance*, is mostly pentatonic, modal, or diatonic, imitating the simplicity of Western folk music. These tonalities are fitting for the production that requires extremely sparse

¹ This example excludes the non-pitched percussion parts and those parts that have rests in the measures indicated.

and colloquial sounds. The score for *Gaslight* uses mostly atonal and serial techniques in order to symbolize the mental dissolution that the heroine experiences. The middle section of *Pursued* was inspired by the works of Arnold Schoenberg and includes a quotation of a serial melody. Lias quoted a row from Schoenberg's *String Quartet No. 4* by placing the pitches in a new meter and rhythmic setting. He then placed a triadic harmonic and melodic structure above the newly written row. This is shown in the cello part in measure 50-57 of the *Pursued* score.

The image displays a musical score for five instruments: Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (D.B.). The score is written in a 4/4 time signature and consists of seven measures. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings are present throughout: *p* (piano) in measures 48, 49, and 50; *mp* (mezzo-piano) in measures 51 and 52; and *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measures 53, 54, and 55. The Vln. 1 part begins with a *p* dynamic and features a melodic line with various intervals. The Vln. 2 part has a *p* dynamic in measure 49 and an *mf* dynamic in measure 55. The Vla. part starts with an *mp* dynamic and has a melodic line with many slurs. The Vc. part has a *p* dynamic in measure 49 and a melodic line with many slurs. The D.B. part has a *mf* dynamic in measure 55 and a melodic line with many slurs.

Example 3: *Pursued*, mm. 48-57

In his *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, Lias employs polychords throughout the three movements. He stated, "While the sonority is somewhat incidental to the first movement,

it is much more fundamental to the second movement and helps establish the overall sound palette of the piece.”²

Example 4: *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, movement 1, mm. 138-140

2.3. Melody

When Lias begins the process of writing a melody, he first looks at what instrument for which he is writing. It is important to him that he writes a melody that works well on the given instrument. In Lias’ music, fast instrumental works are likely to be angular and agile, while slower melodies can usually be easily sung.

Lias’ process regarding voice leading is similar to the process used by many composers: he chooses the harmonic structure he wants, then makes voicing choices as needed to ensure that all the parts turn out to have musical lines. Though some composers may be more counterpoint-oriented than Lias, he does use contrary motion frequently in his works (e.g., *Ebullience* and *Songs of a Sourdough*). *Ebullience*, for eight-part trumpet choir, was described by a reviewer at its premier performance as a “homophonic

² This quote was taken from an application packet for a research award Lias was nominated for in Spring 2008.

treatment for the trumpets highlighting soaring melodies supported by energetic and beautiful harmonies.”³

When writing melodies in vocal music, Lias depends heavily on the flow and meaning of the text. The written melody must convey both the meaning of the text as well as the emotional response it is to evoke in the listener. The same concept goes for Lias’ incidental music. The plot of the play determines the feel of the music.

2.4. Rhythm / Meter

Stephen Lias’ concept of rhythm can probably be characterized as traditional, in that he has not experimented greatly with a lot of mixed meters and exotic rhythmic patterns. He stated (in a personal email correspondence on January 26, 2008) that he tends to get caught up in other aspects of his writing, such as harmony, form, and melody. When asked if he favored a specific meter, Lias was quick to state that if he were to write in any type of meter easily, it would be compound meter. He often finds it easier to compose a piece in a compound meter such as 12/8 than in any other.

2.5. Form

In general, Stephen Lias does favor a specific form over another in his writing. The form of his vocal music is molded by the text, and his theatrical music is driven by the dramatic effect needed.

When it comes to instrumental works, Lias tends to be somewhat of a traditionalist with regard to form. He has written many works in ternary form, including *Pursued*, *Ebullience*, *Restless*, and *White Water*. The basic design for *Pursued* includes

³ The source of this quote is unknown. It was taken from Lias’ personal website.

three sections; the outer sections are filled with fast, restless music and the middle section much slower. The last movement of his *Sonata in G Minor* as well as the first movement of the *Sonata for Flute and Piano* are composed in sonata form. *Tarantella*, Lias' most recent work, is written in a five-part rondo form.

Lias also has several character pieces, including the *Five Characters from David Copperfield*, based on characters from Charles Dickens' novel *David Copperfield*, and *Summer Diaries*, written while Lias was working at the Texas Shakespeare Festival, based on a significant event that happened each day over the course of a week. Each movement depicts a specific activity Lias participated in each day, the movements are: I. "Monday (A Movie)," II. "Tuesday (A Birthday)," III. "Wednesday (A Meeting)," IV. "Thursday (A Show)," and V. "Friday (A Lecture)."

Lias' works are typically short, not longer than six minutes. If a longer work is needed, Lias prefers to break the work into smaller movements, having several shorter ideas rather than one long idea over a span of time.

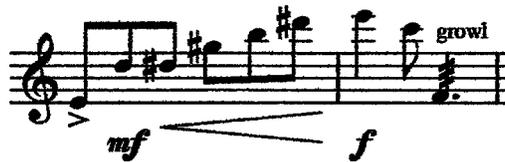
2.6. Timbre / Texture

Stephen Lias' music is mostly homophonic in nature. If he does use polyphony, there are generally no more than three lines moving at once. His preferences as a listener have molded this compositional tendency, as Lias believes more than three lines moving at once tends to confuse the listener, while two can add depth and nuance to a work.

Lias uses a variety of instrument combinations in his compositions from flute and piano to brass trios, and percussion ensembles. There is not a particular timbre that he has

a tendency to write for over and over. Like many composers, he continues to use different combinations in search of a new and interesting timbre.

There are a few compositions by Stephen Lias that require specific demands of the player in order to achieve a certain sound. For example, *Lecheuguilla* for flute and clarinet, combines traditional techniques with more difficult demands such as key clicks, air blown through the instrument, harmonics, and pitch bending. In his *Five Characters from David Copperfield*, Lias uses extended techniques such as: slap tongue (both pitched and unpitched), multiphonics, key clicks, altissimo register, “air” noises, and grunting. The following musical examples from this work for alto saxophone illustrate some of these techniques.



Example 5: *Five Characters from David Copperfield*, movement 1, mm. 16-17



Example 6: *Five Characters from David Copperfield*, movement 1, m. 61



Example 7: *Five Characters from David Copperfield*, movement 1, m. 56



Example 8: *Five Characters from David Copperfield*, movement 2, m. 11-12



Example 9: *Five Characters from David Copperfield*, movement 3, mm. 1-3



Example 10: *Five Characters from David Copperfield*, movement 4, mm. 45-46

CHAPTER 3

STYLISTIC TRAITS AND SELECTED ANALYTICAL OBSERVATIONS OF *SONGS OF A SOURDOUGH*

3.1. Background Information

Songs of a Sourdough was composed by Stephen Lias in 2007 for baritone Scott LaGraff, assistant professor of voice and diction at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. LaGraff is currently working on a CD to feature some of American composer Lee Hoiby's newer works. In addition to these works, LaGraff plans to include some other contemporary composers and commissioned Lias to write an original set to be included on the CD.

As Lias began looking for a text to set to music, he searched for the right set of poems. Then, one evening, while watching a documentary on the exploration of the Yukon Territory, Lias decided to do a quick search of poetry about life in the Yukon Territory. His search quickly turned up a set of poems by Robert Service (1874-1958) titled *Songs of a Sourdough*. Once Lias began to read this set, he quickly realized it would be the text of his next song cycle (personal email communication December 5, 2007).

Poet and writer Robert Service was born in Lancashire, England, on January 16, 1874 (Service 2006, 71). Service had a strong curiosity and sense for adventure stories and wanted to travel. The son of a banker, Service followed in his father's footsteps until 1895, when he left Glasgow, Scotland, to move to Western Canada (ibid.). Service lived in Canada only sixteen years, but wrote the majority of his most known works there (Stewart 2003).

Service began writing poetry, and once he collected enough poems for a book, he sent his poems and a one hundred dollar check to his father, Robert Sr., who had emigrated to Alberta. Robert Sr. sent the manuscript to the Methodist Book and Publishing House in Toronto. (Stewart 2003.)

The book titled *Songs of the Sourdough* was first published in January 1907 and was in its 15th printing by the end of that same year (Stewart 2003). These poems reflect the lives and times of the Sourdough, or prospectors and pioneers, in the Yukon. This book of poems contains thirty-three poems, all pertaining to the Yukon. Lias chose five poems from this collection to use in his song cycle for baritone and piano: "The Heart of Sourdough," "The Lure of Little Voices," "Premonition," "Grin," and "L'Envoi."

3.2. First Movement: "The Heart of the Sourdough"

The first movement of Stephen Lias' *Songs of a Sourdough* encompasses the sixth poem of Robert Service's collection of poetry entitled "The Heart of the Sourdough." "The Heart of the Sourdough" recalls the fierce, almost desperate call of the men to the wild, that is, the rough life of the men who explored and mined the Yukon Territory. Service describes a scene of the extreme conditions of living and working in the mountains, yet

the Sourdough, or pioneer, still feels compelled to live the life that he knows will eventually be his death. The verses of this poem are as follows (Service 1908, 38-40):

There where the mighty mountains bare their fangs unto the moon;
There where the sullen sun-dogs glare in the snow-bright, bitter, noon,
And the glacier-gutted streams sweep down at the clarion call of June:

There where the livid tundras keep their tryst with the tranquil snows;
There where the Silences are spawned, and the light of hell-fire flows
Into the bowl of the midnight sky, violet, amber and rose:

There where the rapids churn and roar, and the ice-floes bellowing run;
Where the tortured, twisted rivers of blood rush to the setting sun—
I've packed my kit and I'm going, boys, ere another day is done.
I knew it would call, or soon or late, as it calls the whirring wings;
It's the olden lure, it's the golden lure, it's the lure of the timeless things;
And to-night, O God of the trails untrod, how it whines in my heart-strings!

I'm sick to death of your well-groomed gods, your make-believe and your show;
I long for a whiff of bacon and beans, a snug shake-down in the snow,
A trail to break, and a life at stake, and another bout with the foe;

With the raw-ribbed Wild that abhors all life, the Wild that would crush and rend;
I have clinched and closed with the naked North, I have learned to defy and defend;
Shoulder to shoulder we've fought it out—yet the Wild must win in the end.

I have flouted the Wild, I have followed its lure, fearless, familiar, alone;
By all that the battle means and makes I claim that land for mine own;
Yet the Wild must win, and a day will come when I shall be overthrown.

Then as wolf-dogs fight we've fought, the lean wolf-land and I;
Fought and bled till the snows are red under the reeling sky;
Even as lean wolf-dog goes down will I go down and die.

This movement, in 2/4 time, is through-composed and begins with piano accompaniment using mainly fourths in the right hand, implying a quartal harmonic texture. The beginning of this movement also introduces a rhythmic motif that will occur

throughout the movement, two sixteenth notes and an eighth note. It also appears in its inversion.



Example 11: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 1, mm. 1-4

The baritone vocal part ranges from the A two octaves below middle C to the D directly above middle C. When Service's text begins a new phrase, Lias often changes the texture of the accompaniment to signify the change. For example, the first verse of text is portrayed in the music with loud, sharp rhythms with a sense of excitement. When Service starts a new verse, Lias' accompaniment changes to downward, cascading arpeggiations with a dynamic marking of *piano*.

mf

There where the li - vid tun - dras keep their tryst with the...

p

Example 12: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 1, mm. 27-29

One motive occurs throughout all five movements of this work. It is a three-chord motive of ascending triads, which is most commonly used at the point of climax of each movement, and the voice is singing a pedal tone on D. The first time it is stated in “The Heart of the Sourdough” is in measures 112-114.

Shoul - der to shoul - der we have fought it out.

B \flat C D

Example 13: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 1, mm. 112-114

This motive, or a variant of some kind, is often repeated several measures later in a softer, more introspective tone after the climax of the movement. An example of this occurs in measures 117-119 of the first movement of this song cycle.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in 2/4 time and has the lyrics "wild must win in the end." The piano accompaniment is in 2/4 time and features a bass line with a flat sign and a treble line with a flat sign. The piano accompaniment consists of a few chords and a single note in the bass line.

Example 14: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 1, mm. 117-119

3.3. Second Movement: “The Lure of Little Voices”

The next poem chosen by Lias is “The Lure of Little Voices.” In contrast to the previous text, this poem is quiet, almost whisper-like. The “Little Voices” in this poem is the wild, and it constantly calls him to leave his family to go back to nature and to the life of a sourdough. This poem is a man talking to someone, most likely a loved one, about the call to the wild. Service speaks of the grip that life as a sourdough has on a man – how he belonged to nature long before he had anything else. In this poem, the man seems torn between life with the woman he loves and the life of exploration in the Yukon. The poem ends with the man leaving his love in the middle of the night to avoid a “bitter leaving”

because “His Loneliness” is calling, and he must obey. The entire text of this poem is as follows (Service 1908, 50-52):

There’s a cry from out the Loneliness—Oh, listen, Honey, listen!
 Do you hear it, do you fear it, you’re a-holding of me so?
 You’re a-sobbing in your sleep, dear, and your lashes, how they glisten!
 Do you hear the Little Voices all a-begging me to go?

All a-begging me to leave you. Day and night they’re pleading, praying,
 On the North-wind, on the West-wind, from the peak and from the plain;
 Night and day they never leave me—do you know what they are saying?
 “He was ours before you got him, and we want him once again.”

Yes, they’re wanting me, they’re haunting me, the awful lonely places;
 They’re whining and they’re whimpering as if each had a soul;
 They’re calling from the wilderness, the vast and godlike spaces,
 The stark and sullen solitudes that sentinel the Pole.

They miss my little camp-fires, ever brightly, bravely gleaming
 In the womb of desolation where was never man before;
 As comradeless I sought them, lion-hearted, loving, dreaming;
 And they hailed me as a comrade, and they loved me evermore.

And now they’re all a-crying, and it’s no use me denying;
 The spell of them is on me and I’m helpless as a child;
 My heart is aching, aching, but I hear them sleeping, waking;
 It’s the Lure of Little Voices, it’s the mandate of the Wild.

I’m afraid to tell you, Honey, I can take no bitter leaving;
 But softly in the sleep-time from your love I’ll steal away.
 Oh, it’s cruel, dearie, cruel, and it’s God knows how I’m grieving;
 But His Loneliness is calling and He knows I must obey.

The second movement of *Songs of a Sourdough* starts in stark contrast to the first movement. “The Lure of Little Voices” begins with a soft, lilting piano introduction, immediately changing the tone of the cycle from a fast moving song to a slow, almost lullaby-like song. While the first movement is primarily *forte* throughout, “The Lure of Little Voices” is much softer, beginning and ending on *mezzo-piano*.

In 6/8 meter, this movement conveys a slower, more intimate set of texts. The tempo of the music speeds up and becomes increasingly more dissonant as the movement develops. The form of this movement is best described as ternary (aa – bc – aa). The three-chord motive that was first introduced in the first movement reappears in measures 70-71 of the second movement.

The musical score for Example 15 is presented in 6/8 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "vast and God - like spac - es." The piano accompaniment consists of three chords: a triad of G4, Bb4, and D5 in the first measure; a triad of G4, Bb4, and D5 in the second measure; and a triad of G4, Bb4, and D5 in the third measure, which is held over into the fourth measure. The vocal line consists of a single melodic line with a long note on "spac - es."

Example 15: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 2, mm. 70-71

This statement of the three-chord motive is rhythmically faster than its original statement in the first movement. Lias emphasizes the importance of this motive by stating it again a few measures later, in measures 74-77. This time, Lias gives it four ascending chords to make his statement.

stark and sul - len sol - i - tudes that sen - ti - nel the Pole.

Example 16: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 2, mm. 74-77

Lias employs a “music-box” like melodic figure in the piano with an ascending sixteenth-note motive throughout, shown in the example below.

mp

Example 17: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 2, mm. 1-4

3.4. Third Movement: “Premonition”

The third movement, “Premonition,” is the most serious of the five texts chosen by Stephen Lias. This poem is a somber look at a man who has a premonition that his love

dies. Then, one year later, he is sitting by her grave. Service's words are pensive and solemn (Service 1908, 112):

'Twas a year ago and the mood was bright
 (Oh, I remember so well, so well),
 I walked with my love in a sea of light,
 And the voice of my sweet was a silver bell.

And sudden the moon grew strangely dull,
 And sudden my love had taken wing;
 I looked on the face of a grinning skull,
 I strained to my heart a ghastly thing.
 'Twas but fantasy, for my love lay still

In my arms with her tender eyes aglow,
 And she wondered why my lips were chill,
 Why I was silent and kissed her so.

A year has gone and the moon is bright,
 A gibbous moon like a ghost of woe:
 I sit by a new-made grave to-night,
 And my heart is broken—it's strange, you know.

“Premonition,” written in 4/4 time, moves slowly and grows in intensity as the text changes to thoughts of death and mourning. Like the first movement, “Premonition” is through-composed. The end of the movement finishes the way it began with just the piano. The vocal line of this movement makes much use of an eighth-note triplet rhythm as well as many sixteenth notes followed by a dotted eighth and sixteenth note. The range of the vocal line extends from the C# below middle C up to the D above middle C.

Example 18 is a musical score for the third movement of *Songs of a Sourdough*. It features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major) and a common time signature. The lyrics are: "It was a year ago and the moon was bright". The piano accompaniment is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand and a more melodic line in the right hand. The dynamic marking is *mp* (mezzo-piano).

Example 18: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 3, mm. 2-4

The three-chord motive is slightly altered in this movement. Rather than using three or four ascending chords, Lias chose to invert this motive and write descending chords. This is, perhaps, due to the somber subject of death. It is also important to note these descending chords are not played under a D pedal tone, as in the two previous movements. Instead, there is an F pedal-tone to accompany these chords.

Example 19 is a musical score for the third movement of *Songs of a Sourdough*, measures 31-34. It features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major) and a common time signature. The lyrics are: "won-dered why my lips were chill, why I was si-lent and kissed her so.". The piano accompaniment is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps and a common time signature. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand and a more melodic line in the right hand. The dynamic marking is *pp* (pianissimo).

Example 19: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 3, mm. 31-34

If Fate should down you, just get up and take another cuff;
 You may bank on it that there is no philosophy like bluff—
 And grin.

In 6/8 time, this movement moves quickly. The vocal line ranges from the B one octave below middle C to the E above middle C. Every time the vocalist sings the word “grin,” the note is held for a minimum of two measures, emphasizing its significance to the poetry. In previous movements, the melody has a tendency to change based on the text and emotional content; in this movement, however the melody line in “Grin” has a tendency to stay the same. An example of this basic melody is shown below. The frequent return of this melody makes it easy to describe this movement as being in a strophic form.



Example 20: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 4, mm. 4-10¹

The form this movement could be interpreted as a modified strophic form because of its frequent return to this basic melody.

The statement of the three-chord motive is present, but is in the form of dotted-quarter notes and is not ‘accompanied’ by voice. Stating the three-chord motive using a faster harmonic rhythm suits the overall feeling and light-heartedness of the movement.

¹ This example is just the vocal line. The piano accompaniment has been excluded.



Example 21: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 4, mm. 76-77

3.6. The Fifth Movement: “L’Envoi”

The fifth movement, entitled “L’Envoi,” is the last movement of Stephen Lias’ song cycle. It is also the last poem in Robert Service’s book of poems. Service closes his collection of poetry from the outlook of a man reflecting on his time spent in the wilderness. The words are introspective as the man recounts his experiences and reflects on the pain that comes from the life of a Sourdough. In Service’s printed book of poetry, this poem is printed in italics. This is the only instance this occurs in the entire book. The text of this poem is as follows (Service 1908, 115-116):

*You who have lived in the Land,
 You who have trusted the trail,
 You who are strong to withstand,
 You who are swift to assail;
 Songs have I sung to beguile,
 Vintage of desperate years,
 Hard as a harlot’s smile,
 Bitter as unshed tears.*

*Little of joy or mirth,
 Little of ease, I sing;
 Songs of men of earth,*

*Humanly suffering,
Such as you all have done;
Savagely faring forth,
Sons of the Midnight Sun,—
Argonauts of the North.*

*Far in the land God forgot
Glimmers the lure of your trail;
Still in your lust are you taught
Even to win is to fail.
Still must you follow and fight
Under the vampire wing,
There in the long, long night
Hoping and vanquishing.*

*Husbandmen of the Wild,
Reaping a barren gain;
Scourged by desire, reconciled
Unto disaster and pain;
These my songs are for you,
You who are seared with the brand;
God knows I have tried to be true;
Please God you will understand.*

“L’Envoi,” also in 6/8 time, captures the introspective mood of the text with a slower tempo than the previous four movements. The form of this last movement is rounded binary, a form the composer has not yet utilized in this song cycle. The range of the voice extends from the C one octave below middle C to the F above middle C – with the highest focal point among all the movements. The final movement of Lias’ song cycle, marked *mezzo-piano*, gradually grows louder and louder until it reaches a *forte* marking before starting a gradual decrescendo back to *mezzo-piano* to end the movement. Another way Lias expresses the introspective mood of this movement is by using very lyrical ascending melodic figures in the vocal line, shown in the example below.

mf

Songs I have sung to be-guile, vin-tage of sep-prate years,

mp

Example 22: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 5, mm. 8-12

Lias states his three-chord motive in several ways throughout this movement. The first, in measures 33-34, is an inversion of the original motive, similar to the motive statement in “Premonition.” The main statement of the three-chord motive can be found in measures 49-50. Lias brings back the D pedal tone in the voice, and the three-chord motive is now ascending, as it was first stated in the first movement. The dynamic marking of *fortissimo* suggests that this is the climax of the movement.

ff

fol-low and fight un-der the vam-pire wing;

Example 23: *Songs of a Sourdough*, movement 5, mm. 49-51

CHAPTER 4

INTERVIEW WITH THE COMPOSER

This interview with Stephen Lias was conducted on October 13, 2007, in Nacogdoches, TX.

April Stephens: I'd like to start with some questions about you growing up and your musical influences. What were your most important influences as a child? And what was your musical environment?

Stephen Lias: I have important musical memories both from my school environment and at home ... some from the church environment as well. But I would say, certainly, my mother's influence was the strongest of any of those influences. As a pianist, she would play the piano to put us to sleep at night. My father also played piano, we would sing hymns at the piano with him. So, I have very vivid memories of those sorts of things, and I remember the first time I made some music up and my mother helped me write it down. I think a lot of her enthusiasm for the process of "Oh you made something up – that's wonderful, let's write it down!" I think that really set me off on a path that valued original writing.

The school environment provided me sort of a traditional musical experience. I got to sing in a choir, play some instruments, and things like that. It was, I would say, fairly generic and unremarkable compared with the level of excitement that was generated in the house.

April Stephens: Your mother helped you write down your first compositions, as you just said. Who else influenced you early in your compositional endeavors?

Stephen Lias: I would say, there were a couple of supportive piano teachers along the way, whose names I don't recall. But when I got into high school is when, I would say, the influence of teachers started making a big difference. And probably the two most important influences at that stage were a woman named Anita Mellow and Robert Stuart. Anita Greenlee was an organist at the church we attended. She now teaches organ at West Chester State University in Pennsylvania. She was really wonderful about guiding my early compositional attempts and giving me a sense of how chord progressions worked and how countermelody worked and things like that, so I owe a great deal to her. And then my high school choral director, Robert Stewart, was also wonderful about not only providing that sort of guidance, but finding opportunities where original works of mine could be performed in various venues – piano works or choral works. He also helped with some of the band arrangements that were performed in that early stage. Those were the people that really started me on firm footing.

April Stephens: At what point did you decide that composition was what you wanted to do?

Stephen Lias: Both in high school and in my undergraduate years, I was extremely creatively energetic, but unfocused. I didn't see any reason why I shouldn't pursue composing, acting, singing, conducting and piano playing ... all of them. They all interested me, and I tried to do as well as I could in many of them, probably not doing any of them really well. And it wasn't until I was in my Masters program that I finally realized that in order to excel in something I needed to refine my interests and leave some things out. So, I would say it was when I was in my Masters program that I finally started thinking of myself as a composer, rather than all these other things that I had been involved with.

April Stephens: Who of your composition professors were most influential and in what way?

Stephen Lias: If you are a receptive student, and I think I was, I think you can learn a lot from any composition teacher. If you go at it from the perspective of, "What do they know how to do that I wish I knew how to do?" And so it's very difficult for me to say these teachers did more for me than these other teachers, because I was always hungry for what they had to show me. I can think of specific things that I learned from specific people, so I will answer your question chronologically.

My first important composition teacher was at Messiah College; his name was Richard Roberson. At that stage, I think he taught me one of the most valuable lessons I could have learned, which was understanding what a cliché was. I think a lot of young composers tend to write in clichés, and he helped me understand what a cliché was, how to recognize it and, rather than me coming out of that feeling that they should be avoided, I understand what a cliché is and I know how to use them effectively when I need to, which served me well later when I was writing children's musicals and things like that. It was a useful skill. I learned lots of other things from him as well, but that sticks out in my mind; every time I write (or avoid) a cliché, I think of Richard Roberson.

In my masters program, I studied with two giants here at Stephen F. Austin University, where I teach now, whose shoes I have to daily attempt to fill. One of them was Dan Beatty, the other was Darrell Holt. I did different work with each of them, and they each took me in different directions. From Darrell, I learned a great deal of more practical matters, like how to get published, how to submit your works to competitions, and how to write and play jazz. Dan Beatty guided me through, I would say, the more intellectual esoteric side of composition. He was always interested in philosophy. If I would write something, he would always challenge me on why did I write it this way and compare it with other works of great masters. And so the sort of self-critical evaluation that a composer goes through when they write a work, those were some of the skills I learned from Dan Beatty.

At Louisiana State University I studied with two composition teachers as well. I studied primarily with Dinos Constantinides who, more than anything, I think showed me how to fill in the gaps in my technique. I think he did what a good teacher should do to a

more advanced student, which is figure out what he doesn't do well yet and help to fill in those holes. He did that extremely well. And he would frequently challenge me, in a healthy but frustrating way, when I thought a piece was finished, and he would challenge me to say "no you can really still refine this and make it better yet." And I would begrudgingly go back and rewrite and discover that he was correct. So that final polishing stage of rewriting I learned from Dinos.

I studied electronic music with Stephen David Beck at LSU and, of course, studying electronic music in many ways is a different sort of an enterprise. You are thinking not just about the artistic merits of what you're creating, but you are actually having to create the sounds themselves from scratch, and often those sounds are built out of equations and programming. I studied mostly working with a package called C-Sound which was a fascinating experience for me. I went on then, to write one of the scores for the Texas Shakespeare Festival a few years later entirely with C Sound, because of the work I did with him.

I feel, each of those teachers contributed some valuable angle to my understanding that no one else hadn't offered.

April Stephens: Along that same line, were there any specific compositions or composers that served as models for you in your writing?

Stephen Lias: Yes. There's a bit of a personal connection to Samuel Barber that I should mention. When I entered high school, we moved to West Chester, Pennsylvania, which is where Samuel Barber was from. And I went to a high school that had an alma mater

written by Samuel Barber. I went to a high school that had rules on the books that were instituted by Samuel Barber's father, who was a school board member fifty years prior that allowed music students to go to Philadelphia to hear concerts at the Curtis Institute. I thought this was normal. It never occurred to me until much later how unusual this was. I attended the church that Samuel Barber had played the organ at when he was twelve years old; that was right across the street from relatives of the Samuel Barber family, who were still living there. So all of that was coincidental and then, when I was in college, I met Samuel Barber's nephew, Chris Beatty, who was a voice teacher in Lindale area. So part of why I moved to Texas was to work for him. So there's been an ongoing affinity for Samuel Barber. I love Samuel Barber's music, and I feel a great deal of connection to the style he wrote in.

I would probably include in that circle of composers that influenced me Copland and Bernstein, who were also part of that similar American accessible style of writing at a time when other styles were considered more intellectual. And so those composers, all three of them, got a lot of pressure from the outside to write in a more dissonant, more abstract, less accessible style and they didn't. They chose to write for the audience, and that is something I feel has influenced my understanding of how I write and how I relate to an audience. Certainly, if you start talking about individual genres, there are composers who influence me a great deal. For example, when I write songs, vocal literature, or art songs, I can't divorce myself from what I've learned from studying the scores of Gerald Finzi. When I write incidental music for live theatre, it is impossible for me not to be influenced by all the movies that I saw as a child – dominated, of course, by John Williams. *Star Wars* was the first orchestral score I ever encountered. New composers

that are coming on the scene that are influential to me ... certainly Michael Torke is a composer who I admire very much right now. I have just recently become fully aware of some of the larger works by John Adams, and I find them fascinating and they've introduced new ideas into my vocabulary. So those are a few.

April Stephens: How did formal training influence your compositions?

Stephen Lias: I think there is, perhaps, a developmental arch that many composers go through. When you're a student studying composition, your teacher is rightly reminding you how many different types of musical expression there are available to you. They are trying to broaden your vocabulary, that's their job, and I think that's good. What the student tends to get from that, though, is an impression that writing conservatively is bad and writing in ways that are experimental or that push your technique into new territories is good. And although it is good to explore new territories and although it probably is bad to only write in the most conservative ways, I think most composers come to the end of their educational process, feeling a certain amount of guilt when they write something that's simple or very accessible or unpretentiously populist. I don't write exclusively in any of those voices, but there is a time period after you finish your studies when you go through a self-evaluative process and you ask yourself, "What is okay for me to do in my compositions? What things are fair game?" And I just mentioned Michael Torke ... I remember reading program notes of one of his pieces where he said he realized that if everything was fair game, which composers nowadays tend to think, then functionality is fair game and we can relieve ourselves of the sense of guilt we feel when we're tempted to write a very functional, traditional, accessible piece. So I think, rightly or wrongly, our

education tends to give us that bias, and then eventually after we've gone on past our educational years and into our free-creative years, we tend to re-evaluate that and question where we stand. Each composer may fall in a different place on that question. But I think it's an interesting journey you take and it has a lot to do with who your teachers were and what sorts of value judgments they either deliberately or inadvertently gave you with regards to the different styles of composition.

April Stephens: I would like to focus specifically on your use of text in your compositions. I know you have written several compositions with Biblical texts. Do your religious beliefs influence your compositions, and in what way?

Stephen Lias: I would say yes. However, it would be more accurate to say my religious beliefs have shaped my life in ways that have caused me to write sacred music. My faith is a very important thing to me and it always has been in my family. So, obviously, I ended up at a Christian liberal arts undergraduate school where if I were going to write works that the choir would perform it was only logical that they would be sacred works. Also, as I mentioned earlier, one of my great mentors early on was our church organist, and if she was going to help provide opportunities for me to have works performed, obviously, I would be writing sacred works in that context too. So, the fact that I wrote sacred works is less a result of any particular faith issue and more the result of simply that was the appropriate avenue for me to get works played. Certainly when I wrote works at the high school where I was going, they weren't sacred works most of the time. My faith is very fundamental and important to me; however, I don't see my

compositional career as necessarily an outlet for my faith. I see that my faith shapes my compositions sometimes, but I don't necessarily set out to write a new piece and feel that piece has to be an expression of some faith-based issue.

April Stephens: Let me ask you about the relationship between text and music in your approach to vocal music. When given a text, what is your approach to set it to music, and what is the starting point of the composition process?

Stephen Lias: I'm fairly methodical about this, rightly or wrongly. I have no idea whether it's the right approach, but what I do is I always start with a text that I feel I have something to contribute to. If you pick a perfect text, it's already music really, so I tend to not pick texts that I read and think is complete and perfect unto itself. I tend to pick texts that I think I can add some level of meaning to. Then I write out the texts and I go through, sometimes a few dozen times, circling important words, underlining syllables that will get emphasis. Then mulling that over for a few days and going back and starting fresh and circling other words, slowly the text will begin to take on a shape in my head where I know which words are going to be the prominent words in each phrase. I know where there will be breaks between phrases. Then I'll often, even on that piece of paper where the text is, start jotting in rhythms to get an idea of the declamation of how the text will be set rhythmically, maybe where it will go up and where it will go down. And then from there I move to staff paper and actually set that melodically, sometimes with actual notes, sometimes just with x's kind of generally going up and down in the right rhythm. Then I start asking myself: "What is it that the piano contributes to this? How will it

support the vocal line? Is it trying to illustrate something the singer is talking about, or is it simply supporting the emotional sense of the lyrics?" So from there, I usually come up with chord progression ideas, and at that point the next step would be to actually flesh it all out into actual notes for both singer and piano, but there's a whole lot of sketching that goes into that. For me it's all based on what the text is saying. It's the natural emphasis that our language gives text. The meaning that I add to the text by putting emphasis on certain words that the poet might not have originally put on and then the further level of meaning that the piano can provide.

April Stephens: Have you written any of your own text or poetry?

Stephen Lias: Yes, but none that I'm proud of. I'm not a lyricist, and I don't claim to be a lyricist. There have been certain situations where I've written novelty pieces for specific situations where my lyrics were fine. But, in general, I don't like to write music to my own texts, and I actually discourage my students from doing it, too mostly, because it tends to provide the composer with a cheap easy escape clause, if they can't figure out a way of setting these words to music and it's their words, they can change the words. By comparison, if you're working with a poet's text, you're stuck with the text and you have to solve the problems creatively.

April Stephens: I've noticed that even your instrumental compositions often have very descriptive titles (i.e., *Sassafras*, *Ebullience*). Do you consider your works programmatic in nature? And how do you find titles for these works?

Stephen Lias: It's a difficult issue, and it changes from work to work. And I do have some works that have very classically oriented titles: *Sonata No. 1* ... things like that. But there are a couple important things to consider. First of all, would we like "Flight of the Bumblebee" if it were called "Etude No. 3"? It's a difficult question, if all the notes are exactly as they are now and it's called "Etude No. 3," suddenly that piece becomes far less interesting. So, as a composer, your decision as to how to title a piece is often a very pragmatic decision about the life of the piece. You say to yourself: "Which is more marketable, which is more memorable, which is more evocative?" Is a pianist more likely to play a piece called "Frenzy" or a piece called "Etude"? And I think, generally, our tendency in society right now is to like titles that imply some extra-musical meaning. So that's one level of answer ... that I tend to title things in a way that I think will make them memorable or evoke a certain sense beyond the notes. That being said, there are some works that I know the title before I write the notes. I just finished a piece called *Glide*, in which that title was the inspiration for all the notes I wrote. However, the first movement of the flute sonata is called "Wide Blue Run," which is a description of a certain type of ski slope. I wasn't thinking of that at all when I wrote the piece. I finished the piece, and then I listened to it objectively and I asked: "What does this make me feel like?" It made me feel ideas of speed and exhilaration and coldness. So immediately skiing came to mind. In that case, a title that sounds programmatic got put on the piece afterwards. If anyone that comes along later and says "oh let me show exactly where the skier falls down in the music" ... that would be incorrect because, of course, I wasn't thinking of skiing when I wrote the notes. So each piece came to its title in a different

way, and some of them I like better than others. With *Ebullience*, I finished the piece and thought it sounded effervescent, but that word was too much like a soda pop commercial. So I looked it up in a thesaurus and one of the synonyms was ebullience. I think titling works is very difficult for me, because I know how much importance the title carries in what the future life of the piece will be. So each one's entirely different.

April Stephens: I would like to talk now a little bit about your musical style. How would you characterize your musical style? Do you see a development of musical style or styles throughout your growth as a composer?

Stephen Lias: Yes. I'm answering the last question first, yes I see a development. I think most composers are wired in a way that makes them resist any characterization of their style. It feels like an oversimplification if someone calls you "oh that minimal composer" or "oh that serial composer." It feels like you're being pigeon-holed in ways that composers tend not to like. That being said, I think that's why many composers, if there is a word they will agree to be called these days, it is 'eclectic.' And I would use that word to describe me. I think certainly a lot of my recent works have been very accessible and kind of "comfort food" sounding. But I'm itching to write a real crunchy, angry piece. I'm actually working on an octatonic piece right now and, you asked about whether I feel like I'm evolving, I think that the evolution of a composer's style that depends on them constantly wanting to try new voices, to try and incorporate new things into their style. And although I've incorporated little octatonic gestures in pieces before, I've never tried to write a piece that really focused on the octatonic scales in the way that

Petrushka does. So this piece is for wind ensemble, and I'm literally trying this on for the first time and feeling myself grow into it as the piece evolves. I'm developing more and more proficiency with that technique. One thing that I think lends credence to the eclecticism label is that you can see from my list of works that I've done so much work in professional theatre, and you simply can't have a style and successfully score play after play after play. If you're going to approach *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear* with the same style, you're going to write a fundamentally bad score for one or both of those shows. I think, as a composer, a certain amount of flexibility in your vocabulary lends itself to writing incidental music either for plays or for film, because the needs of the film outweigh whatever your personal stylistic tendencies are. I scored a production of the play *Angel Street*, which is also known as the film *Gaslight*, about a woman slowly being driven insane by an abusive husband. That demands a score that slowly falls apart that has really harsh dissonances and that confuses the audience. Whereas a play like *The Boys Next Door*, which I scored, is a comedy about mentally handicapped people living in a group home. Making it charming but somewhat clumsy would be an entirely different compositional style than something like *Gaslight* was.

April Stephens: Have you experimented much with electronic and computer music compositions?

Stephen Lias: Certainly I've used sampled sounds and sequencers and audio production techniques in a lot of situations. Some of the theatrical scores I've done have been done entirely that way. I've done work in recording studios and things like that. When I teach

my students, I also prepare them to do film scoring. We do sessions on how to use sampled sounds and how to sequence. So that's a fairly conventional use of electronics. Since my doctoral work, where I did some real electroacoustic composing, my career just hasn't taken me that direction. The sorts of commissions I'm getting, the sorts of opportunities that present themselves, haven't necessarily been that style, and so I haven't had the opportunity to pursue it. I'd be happy to if they arose, but as a composer you do whatever the next opportunity presents itself. Over the last few years that's been writing chamber music and incidental music, rather than electroacoustic works.

April Stephens: As far as analyzing music goes, many composers don't like their music to be analyzed, because they believe music is supposed to work by itself through listening. What is your stand on that?

Stephen Lias: I think it's silly to suggest that your music shouldn't be analyzed. An analysis doesn't imply necessarily that that's what I was thinking when I wrote the piece. So I'm not at all offended or surprised if someone analyzes a piece of music and finds things in it that had never occurred to me. I think that's wonderful, I think it's fascinating and illustrates, yet again, how much nuance and depth there is to this art we're working on. I don't compose with my theory hat on, but often, once I'm finished, or nearly finished with a piece, I'll often polish the piece with my theory hat on. I'll discover that my understanding of counterpoint reveals a weakness in something I've composed, so I can use my background in music theory and analysis to help refine or strengthen a piece of music. Then also, I'll finish a piece to discover I really like it and have no idea why,

and I'll wonder what did I do to make this piece work so well. So, I'll take off my composer hat and put on my theorist hat, and I'll sit there and go back through it and figure out what were the things I did in this piece that I'd like to understand and how can I recapture that for my next piece. I think analysis is, of course, a wonderful tool. Music is our language, and the more you understand the language in which you're writing, the more depth and nuance that your writing will have. I'm not one of those people that thinks that to pick it apart and analyze it will ruin the magic of that. I know a lot of people feel that way, but not me.

April Stephens: I know you've lived in various places, including New York, New Jersey, and Texas. For you personally as a composer, do you believe there is such a thing as regional or geographic identity that would be reflected in your music?

Stephen Lias: I agree that there can be a geographical identity for a composer. I'd be silly to deny that there are certain composers whose music does have its roots in a geographical area and certain stylistic traits that are used in that geographical area. Do I think it does to me? Probably not, although I feel that East Texas is home now, I don't draw on anything concrete from this region as my musical inspiration, nor do I draw on anything from the northeast where I was spending all my formative years. So I don't think that that's particularly true in my case the way it might have been in Charles Ives's case.

April Stephens: Do you see changes in your music that was composed at different places?

Stephen Lias: I think it's a natural evolution over time and not having to do with geography. Certainly when I go back and look at some of my earlier works, I'm very conscience of the fact that I'm not who I was then anymore. And in the rare situation where I've had to revise a work that I wrote many years earlier, I find that very difficult to incorporate material from my current brain into a piece that was written with previous brain. I think that's very challenging. I attended a lecture that Hilary Tann gave in Tyler, and she said, "All you can expect from a composition is that it be an honest reflection of who were when you wrote it." And I've taken that to heart, because there's a great temptation for a composer to pull out an old work and realize its flaws and how it isn't a reflection of who I am now and want to re-write it. And I always hear her voice asking "was it an honest reflection of who I was then?" And if the answer is 'yes,' then I should leave it alone. So I think just the natural evolution of time in my styles is what has caused changes, rather than the differences in geography.

April Stephens: Do you think, in general, that modern US-American music is established as such that it has its specific identity?

Stephen Lias: It's difficult to say ... I would have to, to answer it effectively, live abroad for a couple years to find out how American music is being perceived internationally. I know there are certain works and certain composers that I listen to that feel uniquely American to me, but I don't know if they feel that way to someone in the Ukraine or

someone in China. I don't really feel qualified to answer that question. Probably so, though, my guess would be that yes, there is a perception of what American music sounds like. But those lines have certainly been blurred from 50 to 75 years ago when American music was Jazz or American music was the Copland sound of the American West. I don't think we have as clear a model as we had back then.

April Stephens: What do you personally, but also in general, think is the role of the composer in our contemporary society? And how should the music reach the audience?

Stephen Lias: You asked me a hard one! I'm reluctant to say what my views are on behalf of composers everywhere. You said to answer for me in particular and in general, I am much more comfortable talking about me than I am in general, because I don't think there should be a single role that composers need to fill. For me, I often discuss with my students the question of whether a composition is a form of communication or a form of personal expression. It's an important distinction, because if it's communication, then it is vital that it be in a language that the audience understands. If it's personal expression, not only doesn't it matter what language it's in, but it doesn't matter if there's an audience, because you're writing it as an expression of something going on inside you. Once it's on the paper, once it exists, you're done. If it's communication, you're not done until someone has heard it and hopefully understood it. I tend to write as communication. Not every piece is that way, I've written pieces that were purely self-expression, but most of the time when I write, I think of music as a kind of communicating from a composer through a performer to an audience. So, as I figure out what my role in that is, I'm trying

to write something in a language that the audience will understand and using a vocabulary that the performer will enjoy and do well. I think that music as a communication method should feel that the full range of human experiences is fair game. I don't think that only beautiful music is good music. I don't think that the converse is true. Some people have come through the twentieth century into the twenty-first century feeling that if it's beautiful and accessible and easily understood, that's evidence of how bad it is. I don't believe that either. I think that looking at the full range of emotions – of grief and joy and serenity and terror – and all the things we go to the movies to find out about. I think exploring that full range of emotions in compositions is certainly fair game and that's one of the strengths of music is that it can accomplish all that. So I ask “what's my job as a composer?” Usually I think of it as selecting one of those emotional or dramatic contexts, creating a piece of music that encapsulates some element of that and writing it in a way that will communicate well to whoever is going to end up hearing it. I don't certainly suppose that that's what everybody should do, that's just what I think is my job as I'm sitting down to work.

April Stephens: I'm very interested in the shift that our society has made between the popular music of our day and the popular music of, let's say, Beethoven's time, which was, at least partially, 'art music'. I would love to hear your thoughts on why you think art music is no longer the 'popular' music as it was years ago.

Stephen Lias: Well ... I have a theory, and I'm not a musicologist, I'm not an expert in music history, and I'm not a sociologist, and part of my theory has to do with those sorts

of things. So I'll tell you my theory, and you may write it down, and we may get letters from people who are far more qualified than I am, explaining why I'm completely in error on this. However, it seems to me that, left to itself, the general masses of public out there like things that are short and easy to understand. I don't think that's a flaw, I think that's a natural tendency. Left to themselves, composers probably tend to value complexity and ingenuity and maybe length. We consider very impressive for someone to write a forty-minute work as opposed to only a three minute work. We, as composers, tend to value very different things than the general masses do. And if you go back a couple hundred years, I think the society was structured in such a way that in order for any regular person to experience music they either had to go to a concert or make it themselves. So, although they probably still had the tendencies toward simple, short, easy to understand, they had the additional requirement that they had to know how to make music, or they had to take the personal initiative to go to a concert. Likewise, composers, in one way or another, were deriving their income from what they were writing. So they needed the audiences, and the audiences needed the composers. I think there was a symbiotic relationship there. There still is to a certain extent, but certainly it was the case a couple hundred years ago – talking about Beethoven. I think that relationship broke down early in the twentieth century for a variety of reasons, one of them being technological advances.

The advent of pre-recorded music in the form of piano rolls and then eventually LP records made it possible for the general public to have a constant supply of short, easy to remember, easy to understand songs, and it freed them of the need of knowing how to play the piano or needing to go to a concert hall, they could turn on a radio now. So, I

think the general public had their needs supplied in a much easier, cheaper way. Whereas the composers, at that time, starting in the early twentieth century, began to be employed by universities. What is valued in a university? Experimentation, breaking new ground, trying new things, and not the most popular music – it is not what a university would value, it would be the most progressive, experimental music that would be valued highly. So I think that in that respect composers stopped looking to audiences for their income and started looking to universities, which were giving them raises, based on whether they were experimenting or not. So I think those two things – the advent of prerecorded music and the advent of the new kind of patronage system, where all the composers were working for universities, which we mostly still do – those allowed composers and audiences to drift apart. I don't think it's anyone's fault. I don't shake a finger at George Crumb and say if only you had written prettier music, this never would've happened, I don't think it's anyone's fault. I do think a lot of people have woken up to that gap and said, "Let's do something about it." There are certainly a lot of composers now who are making a real concerted effort to do sort of what Copland decided to do, which is to write in a self-consciously accessible style, but still maintain the artistic integrity of what they're writing. So we are seeing maybe a drift back together now. But that's my opinion of what caused the rift.

April Stephens: Do you think that, especially here in the US, there is a problem with contemporary music in terms of not having a large audience or the audience getting smaller (people who are interested in contemporary art music)?

Stephen Lias: I would describe it as a reality. Yes, the public that's sitting out there, itching for new contemporary music, is fairly small. I'm not sure if it's a problem or not. It's a reality that causes us to invent new solutions for how new compositions can make their way to the floor. We institute competitions now, rather than a new work automatically getting a premiere and then fifty people hearing it and wanting to perform it also. More often, it gets submitted to a competition, where its jury of other composers selects the best three and then the winning one gets selected for publication, then, because it's in print, finally the performers get it. I guess, I'm too optimistic to refer to it as a problem, it's a challenge, and it would be nice if, as those of us who are writing, find audiences, find people that are interested in the music that we're writing, it would be nice if that group grew, but I'm not counting on it.

April Stephens: If we would try to fix it, how could we fix it? Or is it possible? What could be done to raise awareness of contemporary art music today?

Stephen Lias: I honestly don't know. If it changes, it will change incrementally, because a few hundred people invite more friends to concerts. And the people who are putting on those concerts do good enough work and interesting enough work that those new people that came want to come back to another one. Then it will slowly, incrementally grow. I don't know of any alternative fix to that. Culturally, obviously, there are ways of introducing these concepts into education. I suppose, if we taught our children to value this kind of music, then it might grow up with a generation and have a difference. Most people on the street, though, don't know the names of living composers. So it's too big,

it's not something I know how to solve. It seems like too entrenched a way of thinking about things for there to be a quick fix of it.

April Stephens: Do you think that educational programs that developed after the Tanglewood Symposium, such as the "Composer-in-Residence" program, where schools were paying composers to come to schools and write music and interact with students, do you think programs like those are something we should push for again? Would that be a possible solution?

Stephen Lias: I think that sounds wonderful. It would probably spur more of those high school students to be interested in becoming composers, but I'm not sure about those that didn't want to become composers if it would spur them to go to more recitals. And we already have so many out-of-work composers, that I feel this great burden, when we admit composition majors here at the university, to make sure I'm not walking them toward a cliff. I don't know, I haven't thought a lot about how to remedy the sociological problems of the arts. So I feel like I have poor answers.

April Stephens: Looking toward the future, where would you like to go from here compositionally? What are your plans for the future?

Stephen Lias: I've got a few commissions I'm working on right now. I've got to finish a band piece, and after that I would like to write a trumpet and piano piece. After that, I am looking at a flute and marimba piece, and possibly an orchestra commission.

Professionally, what I'd like to see happen over the next three or four years, is for me to be able to build some bridges internationally. I've been very fortunate to have lots of pieces performed in the US over the last few years, certainly many conferences and recitals, new commissions, and so on. I've had just the beginnings of some international activity happen. So I'm trying to focus my energies in ways that will make that next step, so that things will start to happen overseas. I think that in terms of professional development, that would be the next big step for me. In terms of creative output, I continue to be happy to write whatever the next opportunity is. Every composer daydreams about the wildly successful new orchestral work that they write, but the fact of the matter is, you spend a year of your life writing a symphony that might get performed once or twice, and in that one year you could write five or six chamber works, that will get performed for decades. So I have tended recently to write chamber works just because they are easier to publish, easier to get performances of, but I'm certainly excited about the wind ensemble piece I'm working on and I hope there is another large work coming down the road.

CHAPTER 5

COMPLETE WORKS LIST

5.1. List of Works by Genre

Publishers

Conners Publications, Brassworks 4, Southern Music, Alry Publications, and The Sacred Music Press.

List of Abbreviations

Y – Year of composition

I – Instrumentation

S – Sections

T – Text / Lyrics

H – History

PB – Publisher

D – Duration

PE – Performances

1. Instrumental

- a. Chamber Works
- b. Concert Works
- c. Piano Works

2. Vocal

- a. Choral Works
- b. Vocal Works

3. Theatre

- a. Opera / Musical Theatre
- b. Theatre Incidental Music

4. Miscellaneous Works

- a. Electronic Music
- b. Broadcast Music

1. Instrumental

- a. Chamber Works

Burlesque

Y: 1995

I: Brass Trio (trumpet, horn, trombone)

PB: Connors Publications

D: Approximately three minutes

PE: October 26, 1995 – Louisiana State University (LSU) Composers’

Forum Concert; November 20, 1995 – Doctoral trombone recital

(Baton Rouge, LA); January 29, 1996 – LSU New Music Ensemble at Tulane University (New Orleans, LA); February 22, 1996 – Louisiana Sinfonietta American Music Series (Baton Rouge, LA); March 1, 1996 – Southeastern Composers League 1996 Conference at the University of Southwestern Louisiana (Lafayette, LA); various unspecified performances as reported by ASCAP statements.

*Capriccio*¹

Y: 1986
 I: Trumpet and Piano
 PB: Manuscript
 D: Approximately five minutes

Central Park Suite

Y: 1991, revised 2001
 I: Woodwind Quintet
 S: I. Romp of the Children, II. Lovers, III. The Fountain
 H: Based on childhood impressions of New York City's Central Park. Each movement functions as a sort of snapshot of different moods and locations as they exist in the composer's memory.
 PB: Connors Publications
 PE: July 23, 1996 – LSU New Music Ensemble; November 13, 1997 – Configuration Woodwind Quintet (Kilgore, TX); November 29, 1999 – Performed by the principle winds of the Shreveport Symphony on a faculty composition recital (Kilgore, TX); March

¹ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

22, 2001 – Stone Fort Quintet (Nacogdoches, TX); April 5, 2002 – Performed by the Stone Fort Wind Quintet at the 40th Annual Contemporary Music Festival at Sam Houston State University; April 17, 2002 – Performed on the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia American Music Recital by the Stone Fort Quintet (Nacogdoches, TX); February, 2003 – Performance by the Stone Fort Wind Quintet at TMEA Convention (San Antonio, TX); August 10, 2003 – Performance at the National Flute Association Conference by the Stone Fort Wind Quintet (Las Vegas, NV); September 30, 2003 – Performed on a faculty composition recital by the Stone Fort Wind Quintet (Nacogdoches, TX); March, 2004 – Performed on recital by King William Winds (San Antonio, TX); September 19, 2006 – Performed on a recital by the Capstone Quintet (Tuscaloosa, AL); February 27-28, 2007 – Eight performances at various locations in Alabama by the Capstone Quintet; numerous unspecified performances as reported in ASCAP statements.

Ebullience

- Y: 2003
I: Eight-part Trumpet Choir
H: Commissioned by Kappa Kappa Psi
PB: Brassworks 4
D: Approximately five minutes

PE: June, 2003 – International Trumpet Guild Conference performed by SFASU Trumpet Ensemble (Fort Worth, TX); September 30, 2003 – Performed by SFA Trumpet Ensemble on a faculty composition recital (Nacogdoches, TX); May 6, 2004 – Performed on Trumpet Ensemble Concert (Nacogdoches, TX); November 20, 2006 – Performed by the Trumpet Ensemble of the College Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati, OH; March 7, 2007 – Performed by student trumpet ensemble at SFASU (Nacogdoches, TX).

Five Characters from David Copperfield

Y: 2003

I: Saxophone (unaccompanied)

S: I. Uriah Heep, II. Traddles, III. Emily, IV. Mr. Micawber, V. Steerforth

H: Saxophonist Brian Utley commissioned this work. This work utilizes a variety of extended techniques including multiphonics and tongue-slaps.

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately twelve minutes

PE: July 9, 2003 – Performed by Brian Utley at the World Saxophone Congress (Minneapolis, MN); September 30, 2003 – Performed by Brian Utley on a faculty composition recital at SFASU Nacogdoches, TX); November 10, 2003 – Performed by Brian Utley in a Music in the Schools Program; September 28, 2004 – Performed

by Brian Utley on a recital at Panola College; February 17, 2006 –
 Performed by Brian Utley at the North American Saxophone
 Alliance Biennial Conference at the University of Iowa; April 11,
 2006 – Performed by Brian Utley at the University of New Mexico;
 February 7, 2008 – Performed by Brian Utley at the University of
 Alabama at Birmingham.

Glide (for nine winds)

Y: 2007

I: Flute, two oboes, two Bb clarinets, two horns in F, and two bassoons

H: Commissioned by Dinos Constantinides from Louisiana State
 University.

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately six minutes

PE: December 9, 2007 – Premiere performance by the Louisiana
 Sinfonietta under the direction of Dinos Constantinides in Baton
 Rouge, LA

Glide (for six winds)

Y: 2007

I: Flute, oboe, Bb clarinet, alto saxophone, horn in F, and bassoon

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately six minutes

PE: November 6th, 2007 – Premiered by the Stone Fort Quintet (and
 Brian Utley on the saxophone) in Nacogdoches, TX; November

30, 2007 – The Stone Fort Quintet in Houston, TX; February 3, 2008 – Performed by the Stone Fort Wind Quintet (with Brian Utley) on a faculty composition recital at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX.

Lecheuguilla

Y: 1995

I: Flute and Clarinet

H: Commissioned by the Louisiana Sinfonietta. This work explores the interrelationships between themes representing air, rock, and water and combines traditional techniques with extended demands on the players including key clicks, air blown through instrument, harmonics, and pitch bending.

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately five minutes

PE: October 9, 1995 – Louisiana Sinfonietta American Music Series (Baton Rouge, LA); October 12, 1995 – Included in the Louisiana Sinfonietta concert of Fanfare 1995 at Southeastern Louisiana University (Hammond, LA); February 9, 1996 – LSU 51st Festival of Contemporary Music (Baton Rouge, LA); October 7, 1996 – NYU New Music Ensemble Concert (New York, NY); April 16, 1999 – Louisiana Sinfonietta Concert (Baton Rouge, LA); September 30, 2003 – Performed by Diane Boyd Schultz and

Christopher Ayer on a faculty composition recital (Nacogdoches, TX)

On the High Chisos

Y: 2005

I: Percussion Ensemble

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately six minutes

PE: April 19, 2005 – SFASU Percussion Ensemble directed by Scott Harris (Nacogdoches, TX); June 24, 2005 – Performed at SFASU Percussion Camp (Nacogdoches, TX)

Palindrome²

Y: 1999

I: Trumpet, Baritone, Snare

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately two minutes

PE: April 1, 1999 – New music ensemble concert at Kilgore College

Restless

Y: 2001

I: Saxophone Quartet

PB: Southern Music

D: Approximately four minutes

PE: March 27, 2002 – SFASU Saxophone Quartet (Nacogdoches, TX); July 16, 2002 – Performed by the Red Stick Saxophone Quartet on

² This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

the Chamber Music in the Pines series (Nacogdoches, TX);
 September 30, 2003 – Performed by SFA students and faculty on a
 faculty composition recital (Nacogdoches, TX); November 21, 2005
 – Performed by SFA students on Saxophone Studio Recital
 (Nacogdoches, TX); Numerous performances as reported by ASCAP
 statements.

The Rock, the Prayer, and the Cross

Y: 2007
 I: Horn and Piano
 H: This is a sacred chamber work based on three traditional hymns
 PB: Manuscript
 D: Approximately four minutes
 PE: February 25, 2007 – Performed at a “Musicians for Habitat” benefit
 concert; February 3, 2008 – Performed by Charles Gavin (horn) and
 Ron Petti (piano) on a faculty composition recital at Stephen F.
 Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX.

Sassafras

Y: 2005
 I: Small Jazz Combo
 PB: Manuscript
 D: Approximately four minutes
 PE: February 7, 2006 at the Pi Kappa Lambda Faculty Recital at Stephen
 F. Austin University; February 3, 2008 – Performed by Gary Wirtz

(trumpet), Stephen Lias (piano), Josh High (bass), and Scott Harris (drums) on a faculty recital at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX.

Sonata for Flute and Piano

Y: 2003

I: Flute and Piano

S: I. Wide Blue Run, II. Memory Dance, III. Kludge March

H: Commissioned by the Texas Music Teachers Association

PB: Alry Publications

D: Approximately twenty minutes

PE: June 15, 2003 – Performed by Diane Boyd Schultz and James Pitts at the 2003 Conference of the Texas Music Teachers Association (Arlington, TX); September 25, 2003 – Performed by Diane Boyd Schultz and James Pitts on Pi Kappa Lambda Recital (Nacogdoches, TX); September 30, 2003 – Performed by Diane Boyd Schultz and James Pitts on a faculty composition recital (Nacogdoches, TX); January 31, 2004 – Performed at Twenty-Eighth Annual Florida Flute Fair (Daytona Beach, FL); March 23, 2005 – Performed by Diane Boyd Schultz and Michael Baron at Mesa State University (Colorado); April 11, 2005 – Performed by Diane Boyd Shultz and James Pitts in a faculty recital at Stephen F. Austin State University (Nacogdoches, TX); May 29, 2005 – Movement III performed by Keith Pettway and Shannon Hiebert at the Syrinx Flute Festival in

Winnipeg, Canada; June 26, 2005 – Performed by Denise Koncelik and Elaine Ross at the Kemp Center for the Arts in Wichita Falls, TX; March 24, 2006 – Movement III performed by Diane Boyd-Schultz and Jackson Henry at the 12th Annual Mid-South Flute Festival at Middle Tennessee State University; March 28, 2006 – Performed by Diane Boyd-Schultz on a faculty recital at The University of Alabama with pianist Konstantza Chernov; March 31, 2006 – Performed by Denise Koncelik and Elaine Ross at the Cameron University New Music Festival (Lawton, OK); April 1, 2006 – Performed by Denise Koncelik and Elaine Ross at Midwestern State University, Wichita Fall, TX; August 13, 2006 – Performed by Diane Boyd Schultz at the 2006 Convention of the National Flute Association in Pittsburgh, PA; February 10, 2007 – Performed by Diane Boyd Schultz and Anita Hutton at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

*String Quartet No. 1*³

Y: 1994

I: String Quartet

S: I. Andante, II. Largo, III. Andante

H: Composition project in serial music during Lias' doctoral studies at LSU.

PB: Manuscript

PE: May 5, 1994

³ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

b. Concert Works***Ebullience* (Band Transcription)**

Y: 2008

I: Wind Ensemble

H: This band transcription was done by David Campo.

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately five minutes

PE: April 2008 - The SFASU Wind Ensemble at Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX

Pursued

Y: 2005

I: String Orchestra

H: At its premiere performance on January 27, 2006, this work was selected as a finalist for the “Homage to Mozart” competition sponsored by the Chamber Orchestra Kremlin. It was also performed in Moscow, Russia with a live broadcast over Russian radio “Kultura.”

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately six minutes

PE: January 27, 2006 – “Homage to Mozart” competition sponsored by the Chamber Orchestra Kremlin; February 5, 2006 – Performed by the Louisiana Sinfonietta on the LSU 61st Festival of Contemporary Music (Baton Rouge, LA); October 28, 2006 – Performed by the

Chamber Orchestra Kremlin at Weill Recital Hall (New York, NY);
 November 11, 2006 – Performed by the University of Central
 Oklahoma Chamber Orchestra (Edmond, OK); March 8, 2007 –
 Performed by the SFASU Chamber Orchestra (Nacogdoches, TX)

Pursued (Band Transcription)

- Y: 2007
- I: Wind Ensemble
- H: This band transcription was done by Fred Allen at Stephen F. Austin
 University.
- PB: Manuscript
- D: Approximately six minutes
- PE: October 9, 2007 – Premiered by the Wind Ensemble at Stephen F.
 Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX; February 14, 2008 –
 Performed at the Texas Music Educator's Association conference in
 San Antonio, TX.

Symphony #1 (Music for Theater)

- Y: 1997
- I: 2 Flutes, Piccolo, 2 Oboes, English Horn, 3 B^b Clarinets, Bass
 Clarinet, 2 Bassoons, 4 Horns in F, 3 B^b Trumpets, 2 Trombones,
 Timpani, Percussion, Harp, Piano, and Strings
- S: I. Overture, II. Interlude, III. Entr'acte, IV. Bows and Chaser
- H: This symphony is part of Stephen Lias' doctoral dissertation.
- PB: Manuscript

c. Piano Works

*Expectations*⁴

Y: 1983

I: Piano

S: I. Pursuit (for Tara), II. Escapade (for Sam), III. Spring Fever (for Elaine), IV. Still Water Runs Deep (for Melanie), V. Moonlight Waltz (for Sophie), VI. Tone Poem (for Me)

H: This piece was written while Lias was a high school student. Each movement was written for a specific friend.

PB: Manuscript

PE: Various movements have been performed but this work has not been performed as a whole.

Fantasia and Chorale on "All Creatures"

Y: 1999

I: Keyboard Orchestra (8 keyboards)

H: Composed for a faculty recital at Kilgore College

PB: Manuscript

Friday Night at Home (Happy Mother's Day)

Y: 1985

I: Piano

PB: Manuscript

⁴ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

Sonata No. 1 in G Minor

- Y: 1998
- I: Piano
- S: I. Presto, II. Largo, III. Quickly and Humorously
- PB: Manuscript
- D: Approximately ten minutes
- PE: March, 1992 – Student recital at Tyler Junior College (Tyler, TX);
January 22, 1994 – Student recital at Messiah College (Grantham,
PA); April 11, 1994 – Composers Forum Concert at Louisiana State
University (Baton Rouge, LA); November 29, 1999 – Kilgore
College Faculty Concert of New Music (Kilgore, TX)

Summer Diaries

- Y: 1999
- I: Piano
- S: I. Monday (A Movie), II. Tuesday (A Birthday), III. Wednesday (A
Meeting), IV. Thursday (A Show), V. Friday (A Lecture)
- H: These five short pieces were composed in 1999 while Lias was
serving as Resident Composer at the Texas Shakespeare Festival.
Each movement was inspired by a specific activity that took place
that day.
- PB: Manuscript
- D: Approximately ten minutes

PE: November 29, 1999 – Performed by Sandra Siler on a Kilgore College Faculty Concert of New Music (Kilgore, TX); November, 1999 – Carson Cooman Piano Recital (Rochester, NY); March, 2007 – Performed by Tracy Ward at the College Music Society Regional Conference (Jonesboro, AR)

“The Boys Next Door” from *Summer Diaries (Friday)*

Y: 1999

I: Keyboard Orchestra (8 keyboards)

H: Composed for a faculty recital at Kilgore College

The Dancing Lawn

Y: 1986

I: Piano

PB: Manuscript

PE: Specific dates unavailable. This piece has been played at a variety of student recitals.

The Learned Ladies

Y: 1999

I: Keyboard Orchestra (8 keyboards)

H: Composed for a faculty recital at Kilgore College

White Water

Y: 2005

I: Piano

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately four minutes

PE: March 2007 – Premiere performance at College Music Society’s
South-Central Regional Meeting in Jonesboro, AR; February 3, 2008
– Performed by Tracy Ward on a faculty composition recital at
Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX.

2. Vocal Works

a. Choral Works

As the Hart Longs

Y: 1990

I: Chorus and Piano

T: Adapted from Psalm 42

H: This is an arrangement of a traditional Appalachian folk melody. It
was commissioned by The Messiah College Singers.

PB: Manuscript

PE: Performed by The Messiah College Singers on various occasion but
no record of dates.

Come Glorify the Lord

Y: 1987

I: Chorus and Piano

T: Adapted from Psalms

PB: Sacred Music Press (1995) – out of print

D: Approximately four minutes

Jeremiah

Y: 1992

I: Choir, tenor solo and piano

S: I. The Commission, II. To Whom Shall I Speak?, III. The Battle, IV. Lament, V. Call To Me, VI. O Lord, Thou Hast Deceived Me, VII. The Covenant

PE: November 29, 1999 - Only the last movement was performed at Kilgore College.

Live With Me and Be My Love

Y: 1993

I: Three-part Chorus

T: Text by William Shakespeare

H: Originally composed for a production of *Twelfth Night*

PB: Manuscript

PE: Various performances but no record of dates.

Psalm 23

Y: 1999

I: Unaccompanied SATB Choir

T: Psalm 23

H: Commissioned by Perry White for the Monmouth College Chorale

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately four minutes

PE: Performed by the Monmouth College Chorale but dates are unknown.

Sea Dreams

Y: 1998

I: Choir and Orchestra

S: I. The Sea Gypsy, II. A Leave-Taking, III. Out of the Sunset's Red, IV. The Buccaneers, V. Twilight Dreams

T: William Braithwaite, Richard Hovey, and Bliss Carmen

H: Commissioned by Kilgore College, this work is comprised of poems about the sea.

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately fifteen minutes

PE: April 28, 1998 – Premiered by the Kilgore College Chorale in Longview, TX.

Thank You for the Food

Y: 1994

I: Choir

T: Stephen Lias

H: Written for the Messiah College Singers for their first trip to England.

PB: Manuscript

PE: Various performances by Messiah College Singers throughout their travels.

*Where Can I Go From Your Spirit?*⁵

- Y: 1988
- I: SAATB with soprano solo
- T: Psalm 139
- PB: Manuscript
- PE: 1988 – Messiah College Singers Premiered and Performed (specific dates unknown)

b. Vocal Works

A Centurion of the Thirtieth

- Y: 1990
- I: Mezzo-Soprano and Piano
- T: Attributed to Rudyard Kipling
- PB: Manuscript
- D: Approximately four minutes
- PE: November 7, 1994 – Composer's Forum Concert at Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, LA); November 29, 1999 – Kilgore College Faculty Concert of New Music (Kilgore, TX)

From the Diaries of Adam and Eve

- Y: 1995
- I: Soprano, Baritone, and Chamber Orchestra
- S: I. The First Week, II. The Second Week, III. A Year Later, IV. Many Years Later
- T: Excerpted from Mark Twain

⁵ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

PB: Manuscript

PE: 1995 – Premiered by the Louisiana State University New Music Ensemble in Baton Rouge, LA.

Songs of a Sourdough

Y: 2007

I: Baritone and Piano

S: I. The Heart of the Sourdough, II. The Lure of Little Voices, III. Premonition, IV. Grin, V. L'Envoi

T: Robert Service

H: Commissioned by Scott LaGriff, this song cycle explores life in the Yukon.

PB: Manuscript

D: Approximately fifteen minutes

PE: October 13, 2007 – Premiere performance at Stephen F. Austin University by Scott LaGriff in Nacogdoches, TX; February 2008 – Faculty Recital at Stephen F. Austin University by Scott LaGriff in Nacogdoches, TX, February 23, 2008 – National Association of Composers, U.S.A. Modern Music Concert by Scott LaGriff at Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.

What Mirth, Thou Pretty Bird?

Y: 1991

I: Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

T: Rudyard Kipling

PB: Manuscript

PE: November 7, 1994 – Composer’s Forum Concert at Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, LA); November 29, 1999 – Kilgore College Faculty Concert of New Music (Kilgore, TX)

3. Theatre Works

a. Opera/Theatre Works

Forbidden Earth

Y: 1994

I: Clarinet, Flute, Viola, Trombone, Piano, 2 Synthesizers, 2 Percussion

T: Libretto by Karen Genzel

H: Commissioned by Messiah College; a full-length musical setting of a science-fiction story set in a post-apocalyptic society.

PB: Manuscript

PE: February 3-9, 1994 – Grantham, PA

*The Red Nose School of Hard Knocks*⁶

Y: 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

H: This project was the result of a collaboration between Lias, Tim and LaDonna Johnson, and Doug and Gina Anderson. A character musical presented to the elementary students from Tyler Independent School District (TISD), focused on staying drug-free and other positive life choices.

⁶ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

PE: Musical performed each year for the TISD in a school assembly setting.

b. Theatre Incidental Music

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare

Y: 1995

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 22-July 16, 1995 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(eight performances)

Abundance by Beth Henley

Y: 1992

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: October 15-24, 1992 – Auburn University at Montgomery,
Montgomery AL (six performances); November 4, 1992 – Troy
State University (one performance)

All's Well That Ends Well by William Shakespeare

Y: 2000

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 22 - July 23, 2000 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(nine performances)

Angel Street by Patrick Hamilton

Y: 1990

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: April-May, 1990 – Brick Street Playhouse, Tyler, TX

Antony and Cleopatra by William Shakespeare

Y: 1999

I: Flute, Piccolo, Alto Flute, Bass Flute (all one player), 1 percussion,
and additional percussion by cast.

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 26-July 24, 1999 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX

(nine performances)

Beauty and the Beast by Madame Leprince de Beaumont & Timothy Mason

Y: 1993

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: July 13-17, 1993 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX (ten
performances)

Cinderella by Charlotte B. Chorpenning

Y: 1994

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: July 11-16, 1994 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX (eleven performances)

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller

Y: 2004

I: Flute, Cello, Clarinet, Piano

PB: Manuscript

PE: November 9-21, 2004 – Auburn University at Montgomery, Montgomery, AL; July 26-July 31, 2005 – West Virginia Public Theatre, Morgantown, WV (seven performances)

Dracula adapted by Hamilton Deane and John Balderson from Stoker's novel

Y: 1993

I: Piano

PB: Manuscript

PE: January 7-17, 1993 – Auburn University at Montgomery, Montgomery, AL (seven performances)

Henry V by William Shakespeare

Y: 1997

I: Scripted songs sung by cast

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 28-July 26, 1997 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX (nine performances)

I Hate Hamlet by Paul Rudnick

Y: 1992

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: November-December, 1992 – Alabama Shakespeare Festival,
Montgomery, AL (over thirty performances)

King Lear by William Shakespeare

Y: 1994

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 24-July 16, 1994 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(eight performances)

King Richard II by William Shakespeare

Y: 1998

I: Electronic score composed entirely using C-Sound

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 27-July 26, 1998 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(nine performances)

King Richard III by William Shakespeare

Y: 1992

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 23-July 12, 1992 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(six performances)

Love's Labour's Lost by William Shakespeare

Y: 1994

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 23-July 17, 1994 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(eight performances)

Measure for Measure by William Shakespeare

Y: 1993

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 23-July 18, 1993 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(eight performances)

Medea by Euripides

Y: 1998

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: Premiered at Kilgore College in 1998 (specific date unknown)

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare

Y: 1995

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 20-July 15, 1995 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(eight performances)

Our Town by Thornton Wilder

Y: 1990

I: Sample-based electronic score combined with live improvisation

PB: Manuscript

PE: January 26-February 18, 1990 – Brick Street Playhouse, Tyler, TX
(twelve performances)

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Y: 1996

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 20-July 13, 1996 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(eight performances)

She Stoops to Conquer by Oliver Goldsmith

Y: 1992

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 25-July 10, 1992 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(six performances)

The Bourgeois Gentleman by Molière

Y: 1997

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 27-July 26, 1997 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(nine performances)

The Boys Next Door by Tom Griffin

Y: 1991

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: October, 1991 – Kilgore College Theater Department (five
performances)

The Foreigner by Larry Shue

Y: 1998

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: 1998 – Kilgore College

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

Y: 1998

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 25-July 24, 1998 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(nine performances)

The Last Titan by Gifford Wingate

Y: 1994

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 21-July 16, 1994 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(eight performances)

The Learned Ladies by Molière

Y: 1993

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 24-July 18, 1993 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(eight performances)

The Royal Hunt of the Sun by Peter Shaffer

Y: 2008

PB: Manuscript

PE: July 2008 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, August 2008 in Beijing,
China at the 2008 Summer Olympics.

The School for Wives by Molière

Y: 1996

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 18-July 14, 1996 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(eight performances)

The Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare

Y: 1996

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 19-July 14, 1996 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(eight performances)

The Tempest by William Shakespeare

Y: 2005

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: November 15-19, 2005 – Stephen F. Austin State University,
Nacogdoches, TX

The Winter's Tale by William Shakespeare

Y: 2000

I: Electronic score constructed entirely from dozens of recorded clips
of cast members singing (all vocal)

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 25-July 23, 2000 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX
(nine performances); July 25-July 30, 2000 – Shakespeare Festival
of Dallas, TX

Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare

Y: 1993

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: February 16-21, 1993 – Kilgore College, Kilgore, TX (five
performances)

Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare

Y: 1997

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 26, 1997 – Texas Shakespeare Festival; Subsequent performance dates were July 1, 5, 9, 12, 17, 20, 25, and 27, 1997 at the Texas Shakespeare Festival.

Two Gentlemen of Verona by William Shakespeare

Y: 1992

I: Sample-based pre-recorded music

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 24-July 11, 1992 – Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kilgore, TX (six performances)

Two Gentlemen of Verona by William Shakespeare

Y: 1999

I: Piano, Bass, Drums, Chanteuse (Jazz Combo)

PB: Manuscript

PE: June 25, 1999 – Texas Shakespeare Festival; Subsequent performances on June 30, July 3, 8, 11, 16, 18, 20, and 24, 1999 at the Texas Shakespeare Festival.

4. Miscellaneous Works

a. Electronic Music

The Land of Nod and Escape at Bedtime

Y: 1994
 I: Reader and Tape
 T: Robert Louis Stevenson
 H: Two short pieces with taped accompaniment created using C-sound
 PB: Manuscript

b. Broadcast Music

Theme Music for KTPB

Y: 1999
 H: Beginning and ending theme music for a weekly radio program
 airing on local public radio since 1999-2007.
 PB: Manuscript

5.2. Chronological List of Works

1983

*Expectations*⁷ for Piano

1985

Friday Night at Home (Happy Mother's Day) for Piano

1986

*Cappriccio*⁸ for Trumpet and Piano

The Dancing Lawn for Piano

1987

Come Glorify the Lord for Chorus and Piano

⁷ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

⁸ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

1988

*Where Can I Go From Your Spirit?*⁹ for SAATB with Soprano solo

1989

*The Red Nose School of Hard Knocks*¹⁰ for Sample-based pre-recorded music

1990

Angel Street (Patrick Hamilton) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

As the Hart Longs for Chorus and Piano

A Centurion of the Thirtieth for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

Our Town (Thornton Wilder) for sample-based electronic score combined with live improvisation.

*The Red Nose School of Hard Knocks*¹¹ for Sample-based pre-recorded music

1991

Central Park Suite for Woodwind Quartet

The Boys Next Door (Tom Griffin) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

*The Red Nose School of Hard Knocks*¹² for Sample-based pre-recorded music

What Mirth, Thou Pretty Bird? for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

1992

Abundance (Beth Henley) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

I Hate Hamlet (Paul Rudnick) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

Jeremiah for Choir, Tenor solo and Piano

King Richard III (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

⁹ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

¹⁰ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

¹¹ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

¹² This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

She Stoops to Conquer (Oliver Goldsmith) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

*The Red Nose School of Hard Knocks*¹³

Two Gentlemen of Verona (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

1993

Beauty and the Beast (Madame Leprince de Beaumont & Timothy Mason) for sample-based pre-recorded music

Dracula (adapted by Hamilton Deane and John Balderson from Stoker's novel) for Piano

Live With Me and Be My Love for Three-part Chorus

Measure for Measure (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

The Learned Ladies (Molière) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

Twelfth Night (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

1994

Cinderella (Charlotte B. Chorpenning) for Flute, Cello, Clarinet, and Piano

Forbidden Earth for Clarinet, Fluet, Viola, Trombone, Synthesizer, and Percussion

King Lear (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

Love's Labour's Lost (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

¹³ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

*String Quartet No. 1*¹⁴

Thank You for the Food for Chorus

The Land of Nod and *Escape at Bedtime* for Taped Accompaniment created
using C-sound

The Last Titan (Gifford Wingate) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

1995

A Midsummer Night's Dream (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-
recorded music

Burlesque for Brass Trio (Trumpet, Horn, Trombone)

From the Diaries of Adam and Eve for Soprano, Baritone, and Chamber
Orchestra

Lecheuguilla for Flute and Clarinet

Much Ado About Nothing (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-
recorded music

1996

Romeo and Juliet (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

The School for Wives (Molière) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

The Taming of the Shrew (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded
music

1997

Henry V (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

¹⁴ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

Symphony #1 "Music for Theater" for Flute, Piccolo, Oboe, English Horn,
Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn in F, Trumpet, Trombone,
Timpani, Percussion, Harp, Piano, Strings

The Bourgeois Gentleman (Molière) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

Twelfth Night (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

1998

King Richard II (William Shakespeare) for Electronic C-Sound score

Medea (Euripides) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

Sea Dreams for Choir and Orchestra

Sonata No. 1 in G Minor for Piano

The Foreigner (Larry Shue) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

The Importance of Being Earnest (Oscar Wilde) for Sample-based pre-recorded
music

Where Can I Go From Your Spirit? for SATB Chorus and Soprano solo

1999

Antony and Cleopatra (William Shakespeare) for Flute, Piccolo, Alto Flute,
Bass Flute, and Percussion

Fantasia and Chorale on "All Creatures" for Keyboard Orchestra (eight
keyboards)

*Palindrome*¹⁵ for Trumpet, Baritone, and Snare Drum

Psalm 23 for Unaccompanied SATB Chorus

Summer Diaries for Piano

¹⁵ This work has been withdrawn by Stephen Lias from his repertoire.

The Boys Next Door from “Summer Diaries (Friday) for Keyboard Orchestra
(eight keyboards)

The Learned Ladies (Molière) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

The Learned Ladies for Keyboard Orchestra (eight keyboards)

Theme Music for KTPB

Two Gentlemen of Verona (William Shakespeare) for Piano, Bass, Drums, and
Chanteuse

2000

All's Well That Ends Well (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-
recorded music

The Winter's Tale (William Shakespeare) for Electronic score constructed from
dozens of recorded clips of cast members singing (all vocal)

2001

Restless for Saxophone Quartet

2003

Ebullience for Eight-part Trumpet choir

Five Characters from David Copperfield for Saxophone (unaccompanied)

Sonata for Flute and Piano

2004

Death of a Salesman (Arthur Miller) for Flute, Cello, Clarinet, and Piano

2005

On the High Chisos for Percussion ensemble

Pursued for String orchestra

Sassafras for small jazz combo

The Tempest (William Shakespeare) for Sample-based pre-recorded music

White Water for piano

2007

Glide for six Winds

Glide for nine Winds

Pursued (Band Transcription) for Wind Ensemble

Songs of a Sourdough for Baritone and Piano

The Rock, the Prayer, and the Cross for horn and piano

2008

Ebullience (Band Transcription) for Wind Ensemble

The Royal Hunt of the Sun (Peter Shaffer)

CLOSING REMARKS

Stephen Lias has many achievements in his career, and there is still much more to come from him as a composer and teacher. The previous chapters show his past accomplishments as well as his goals for the future.

As I researched Lias and his music, I had the opportunity to communicate with several of his colleagues and past students as well as individuals who have commissioned compositions from Lias. Their statements regarding Lias and his work speak volumes about his character and professionalism as a composer. In a personal email communication with Scott LaGraff, who commissioned *Songs of a Sourdough*, on January 24, 2008, LaGraff stated:

Simply put, Steve is a terrific composer and colleague. The awards he has won are a testimony to his skill as a composer. ... He's also great to work with ... he always speaks with tact and humility, which is nice in someone as talented as he.

Diane Boyd Schultz, who commissioned Lias' *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (2003), wrote:

“He is a wonderful man, a dedicated and creative teacher, a positive force, and one who

writes music that people like to hear, perform, and explore more fully.” (From a personal email communication February 14, 2008.) These remarks lead to the conclusion that Lias is not only respected as a teacher and composer but also a man of integrity and strong character. Lias’ compositions are eclectic and interesting to listen to as none of them are alike. He employs tonality and dissonances with ease. His song cycle *Songs of a Sourdough* demonstrate what Lias is capable of as a composer, and it deserves a place in the standard baritone repertoire.

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VITA

April Heather Stephens was born in Denver, Colorado, on June 3, 1981, the son of Jesse and Peggy Stephens. After completing her diploma at South High School, Pueblo, Colorado, in 1999, she began her undergraduate degree at Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond, Oklahoma. In 2004, she completed her Bachelor of Music Education (vocal emphasis) degree. Upon graduation, Stephens moved to San Antonio, Texas, where she taught elementary and secondary general, vocal, and band music. In August 2006, she entered the Graduate College of Texas State University-San Marcos where she majored in Music History and Literature.

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