

FROM EPIC NARRATIVE TO MUSIC

Tolkien's universe as inspiration for *The First Age of Middle-earth: a Symphony for Concert Band*



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Abstract: This paper traces the inspiration behind my composition *The First Age of Middle-earth: a Symphony for Concert Band*. The four movements of this work express in sound certain thematic elements that are woven throughout Tolkien's epic narrative. An analysis of each movement shows how the musical material is connected to specific themes found in his narrative. The analysis of this symphony shows the musical representation is fluid because it exists on a spectrum from literal to abstract representation in the context of the idioms of tonal and non-tonal Western art music.

Keywords: Tolkien – Music – Music and Literature – Epic narrative – Structure – Western Music

Music is the generative device used by Ilúvatar and the Valar to create the universe of Tolkien's legendarium in *The Silmarillion* (cf. TOLKIEN 1977: 15-22). Harmony, consonance, dissonance, and thematic development in intricate counterpoint are the elements of this divine music. As a composer this idea is profoundly moving and

inspiring. For Tolkien, divine inspiration, thought, and music are a single act of Ilúvatar's will. This act produces real things that have existence and form. Musical creativity for me is similar to this in that it is a combination of three strands of activity: imagination, improvisation, and inspiration—the mystical element. This activity produces real music that exists in time and has form. Over the course of my career art and literature have inspired dozens of compositions. This paper traces the inspiration behind my composition *The First Age of Middle-earth: a Symphony for Concert Band*. The four movements of this work express in sound certain thematic elements that are woven throughout Tolkien's epic narrative. An analysis of each movement demonstrates how the musical material and its presentation in form are connected to specific themes found in his narrative. This analysis is accompanied by recorded and written musical examples.¹ The analysis and discussion of this work shows that the musical representation of Tolkien's epic narrative is fluid because it exists on a spectrum from literal representation to intellectual abstraction in the context of the idioms of tonal and non-tonal Western art music.

The four movements of the symphony are titled "The Shadow Lengthens," "The Fall of Nargothrond," "Upon Hearing the Nightingale," and "The Morningtide of Númenor." Throughout Tolkien's universe the evil wrought by Morgoth and Sauron casts a dark, ever lengthening shadow over the hearts and minds of Men. In battling this evil, Elves, Dwarves, and Men suffered tremendously in loss of life, lands, and possessions. Tolkien's legendarium, though replete with epic wars between good and evil, also contains stories of hope, love, and faithfulness. The story of Beren and

¹ This paper includes the written musical examples. Recordings of the four movements can be heard at: <http://berniescherrcomposer.com/recordings/>. Accessed May 23, 2015. The presentation at the "Worlds Made of Heroes" conference included original artwork by Erin Izbrand. The artwork was shown during the playing of the musical examples. The complete presentation can be viewed at the same website as the recordings. This paper is an expansion of the presentation, which was shorter because of the time limitations of the conference sessions. Even the abbreviated presentation, however, required a longer session, which the conference organizers graciously accommodated.

Lúthien is the greatest of all these stories, and it is mirrored in the tale of Aragorn and Arwen. I believe hope and faithfulness are also central to the foundation of Númenor and the restoration of the Reunited Kingdom. The faithfulness of the Edain toward the Valar and the Elves was rewarded in the gift of Númenor. The Faithful of Númenor established the Realms in Exile and these lands are restored in the Reunited Kingdom under King Elessar and Lady Undómíel. It is in his kingdom that the wisdom of the Elves and the spirit of the Maiar continue to bless Middle-earth long after they have returned to the Undying Lands. Table 1 pairs the movements of the symphony with the corresponding sections and/or themes from *The Silmarillion*.

Table 1: The movements of *The First Age of Middle-earth: a Symphony for Concert Band* with the corresponding sections and/or themes from *The Silmarillion*.

Movement title	<i>The Silmarillion</i> section or theme
“The Shadow Lengthens”	Morgoth’s increasing influence over Middle-earth throughout the First Age
“The Fall of Nargothrond”	“Of Túrin Turambar” (198-226)
“Upon Hearing the Nightingale”	“Of Beren and Lúthien” (162-87)
“The Morningtide of Númenor”	“Of Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin” (238-45), “Of the Voyage of Eärendil and the War of Wrath” (246-55), and the opening of the “Akallabêth” (259-61)*

Source: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 1977

*These stories form the background of Elros, the first king of Númenor. Even though the history of the Númenoreans defines the Second Age of Middle-earth, this movement draws upon its pre-history and foundations to represent what I perceive as the ideal Númenor that became the honored memory of Westerness mentioned

in *The Lord of the Rings*. For more detailed information on Tuor and Túrin, see Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-Earth*, 19-60, and 61-170.

The musical material of the four movements is inspired by the themes described above. “The Shadow Lengthens” conveys a sense of anxiousness, darkness, and fear. “The Fall of Nargothrond” expresses the sadness of bitter memories of violence and death. In “Upon Hearing the Nightingale,” music of suffering is dispelled by the sound of beauty and love. Finally, in “The Morningtide of Númenor”, one hears music of creation and the nobility of King Elros and the first Númenoreans. The following analysis traces the musical elements used to express these ideas. In this symphony, like all of my music, compositional technique mingles with inspiration and there is no clearly delineated boundary between the two. In my opinion, discerning the difference is not important: the resultant work in its entirety was envisioned from the beginning even if certain details needed refinement and editing. The pitch material is derived from the equal tempered, chromatic pitch collection and the harmonic vocabulary is drawn from tonal and non-tonal idioms. The rhythmic material is non-aleatoric and lies within symmetrical and asymmetrical meters. The symphony is scored for piccolo, two flutes, oboe, bassoon, three B-flat clarinets, B-flat bass clarinet, two alto saxophones, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, three B-flat trumpets, two F horns, three trombones, euphonium, tuba, timpani, percussion, and mallets.²

There are five themes in “The Shadow Lengthens” and they are organized in a modified arch form: A (repeated)–B–C–D–E–D’–B’–A’. Themes A, D, and E are in B-flat minor, Theme B is non-tonal and B’ is in B-flat major. Theme C is a mixture of

² In this paper I also assume the reader has a basic understanding of musical notation and certain musical concepts, such as key, harmony, melody, rhythm, and meter. If a reader does not have this familiarity, however, I believe he or she will still be able to understand the connection between the music and Tolkien’s text.

C minor and non-tonal elements. The major and minor key areas are not used in a tonally functional manner. There is no tonic/dominant polarity and contrapuntal textures obscure triadic sonorities. In addition, Themes D and E are harmonized with minor triads that lie outside the key of B-flat minor, and as with Theme C, they contain instances of polychordal harmony. The metrical and thematic organization are closely related: Theme A is in 5/4 (divided 3+2), Theme B is in 7/4 (divided 4+3), Theme C is in 7/4 (divided 3+4), and Themes D and E are in 5/8 (divided 3+2). The tempo markings of the piece lie between 80 and 96 beats per minute, with the quarter note or dotted quarter note having the pulse.³ I use the asymmetrical construction of the meters to suggest the imbalance in nature that the evil of Morgoth wrecks upon Middle-earth.⁴

Example 1 shows that Theme A is a composite of four voices.⁵ The soprano voice is made of a single motive that is repeated at different pitch levels. The descending, stepwise motion has a sighing quality which is built into the motive of the alto voice. The tenor and alto voices are developed through pitch inversion and rhythmic augmentation. The upper voices avoid the root of the B-flat minor triad because it is,

³ To summarize, tonal music, or music of the common practice era—the music of J. S. Bach, W. A. Mozart, and L. van Beethoven, for example – has certain harmonic relationships that define keys. This movement (and the entire symphony), though using elements of tonal music, does not have the harmonic relationships of the common practice era. The same can be said about the use of meters. In most instances, tonal music uses the same meter for an entire movement. These meters are often 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 or their compound counterparts of 6/8, 9/8, and 12/8. The reader can see that the meters in this movement lie outside common practice metrical organization.

⁴ This asymmetry is seen in the uneven groupings of 2 and 3 beats in the meters.

⁵ The musical examples are piano reductions of the complete band score. The complete band scores are currently (May 29, 2015) unpublished and are in possession of the composer, Bernard Scherr. He can be contacted at Hardin-Simmons University, Box 16230, Abilene, Texas, 79698, or bscherr@hsutx.edu.

with the fifth of the triad, a pedal tone in the bass voice.⁶ It is my intention that the minor harmony and the sighing quality of the melody express the sense of fear Morgoth exerted over the hearts and minds of Elves and Men.

Example 1: Theme A of “The Shadow Lengthens”

The musical score for Example 1 is written in 5/4 time and B-flat minor. It consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a melodic line with various intervals and dynamics, while the lower staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a prominent pedal point. Labels 'a', 'b', 'a-exp.', 'b-inv.', and 'a-inv.' are used to identify specific intervals and inversions throughout the piece.

Theme B consists of a soprano voice harmonized in parallel motion above a pedal tone in the bass voice. In Example 2 the reader can see that the melody is related to Theme A because it is also built on stepwise motion. In addition, observe that the harmony of the soprano voice is foreign to the key of B-flat minor and the triad roots at the ends of the phrase segments are at variance with the pedal tone in the bass voice. These chromatic harmonies and intervals show an increase in the use of dissonance from Theme A to Theme B. The sense of anxiousness is now

⁶ The voice parts of a choir—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass—are commonly used to describe instrumental parts that occupy similar ranges as their vocal counterparts. They are also used to describe the positions of parts within like families of instruments or in chamber ensembles.

significantly increased from Theme A to Theme B through the use of dissonance, rhythmic diminution, and intervallic development.⁷

Example 2: Theme B of “The Shadow Lengthens”

Example 3 shows that Theme C is complex because it is a composite of three voices built on the first six tones of the soprano voice and motives of Theme A. Theme C also contains pedal tones, in this case a dyad taken from the first two tones of the theme. Chromatic elements from Theme B are used as well, which are seen in the E/E-flat, G-flat/G, and A/A-flat cross relations in bars 2, 3, and 9 of the example. These cross relations extend the sense of anxiety from Theme B. The first statement of this theme is lightly scored for B-flat clarinet 1 and B-flat bass clarinet. Example 3 shows how the melody passes from one instrument to the other. This process is meant to demonstrate the insidious influence of Morgoth, first upon the Elves and then on Men.

⁷ Rhythmic diminution is the concept of reducing the time between related rhythmic events. Intervallic development refers to modifying the distances between the tones of melodic fragments in following iterations of said fragments.

Example 3: Theme C of “The Shadow Lengthens”

The image displays a musical score for Theme C of "The Shadow Lengthens". It consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is divided into three measures, each with a different time signature: 3/4, 4/4, and 3/4. The top staff (treble clef) features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, while the bottom staff (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment. Brackets and labels identify specific musical elements: "Theme C-interval of the 1st two notes" in the first measure of the treble staff, "Theme C-inversion" in the second measure of the bass staff, and "Theme A-Soprano-inversion" in the third measure of the treble staff. The second system consists of five measures in a single 3/4 time signature. The treble staff continues the melodic development with various note values and rests, while the bass staff features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Labels "Theme A-Alto" and "Theme A-Soprano-inversion" are present in the first two measures of this system.

Heard in context, Theme D (shown in Example 4) has the aural effect of a bridge theme. This is because it is brief and juxtaposed with a portion of Theme B. In addition, its opening two bars are developed in the continuing passage through a steadily rising line in pitch level, scoring, and dynamic markings. Theme D thus builds in tension and segues to the arrival of Theme E.

Example 4: Theme D of "The Shadow Lengthens"

Theme B-Answer to Theme D

Example 5: Theme E of "The Shadow Lengthens"

B♭mi Gmi B♭mi Gmi F♯mi Dmi A♭mi Fmi

ff Theme C-fragment

F♯mi Fmi A♭mi Fmi B♭mi Gmi Fmi

Theme E, given in Example 5, is the climax of the movement. It is the longest passage with *tutti* scoring and *fortissimo* dynamic markings. It also brings together elements of the previous four themes. The soprano melody contains the perfect 5th (abbreviated P5) of the pedal interval of Theme A, the parallel harmonization of Theme B, fragments of Theme C as an inner voice, and the rising and falling stepwise motion of Theme D. The *tutti* scoring, *fortissimo* dynamics, and the synthesis of the thematic material bring the sense of anxiousness, darkness, and fear to its zenith in this passage. The music for Theme D' remains intense and does not subside until the end of Theme B'. The movement closes with a quiet, lightly scored statement of Theme A'.⁸

The form of "The Fall of Nargothrond" is a theme, 15 variations, and a coda drawn from the theme. A number of the variations are not traditional in the sense that they do not maintain the formal structure of the theme. Instead, these variations focus on a specific aspect of the theme before moving onto the next variation. In this movement, the technique of altering the length and character of the variations is used to reflect the ephemeral nature of memory. The overall outline approximates a slow-fast-slow arrangement: the Theme and Variations 1 and 2 are slow, Variations 3 through 11 are fast, and Variations 12 through 15 and the Coda are slow. Example 6 shows that the Theme is non-tonal and its motives are built on intervals no larger than a P4.⁹ The accompaniment uses these intervals and their inversions in subtle imitation of the Theme.¹⁰ The music's rhythmic ebb and flow, its gradual rise and fall,

⁸ I chose not to include a complete return of Theme C at this point in the movement because the intense momentum of Themes E, D', and B' propelled the music through the questioning and worried character of Theme C. That said, I included fragments of Theme C (the descending scale segment) in the statement of Theme B', which aided in easing tension as the music transitioned toward Theme A'.

⁹ The melody of the theme is the top voice of the upper staff.

¹⁰ For instance, the descending C-sharp/G-sharp in measure 1 is a P4, and it is answered in the accompaniment by a P5 (the inversion of a P4) with a descending E-flat/A-flat).

and the dissonance in the accompaniment collectively express the wistful recollections of the remnant of the Noldor in Middle-earth, such as Lady Galadriel, sister of Finrod Felagund, King and founder of Nargothrond.¹¹

Example 6: The Theme of “The Fall of Nargothrond”

The image displays a musical score for the theme of "The Fall of Nargothrond". It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The music is characterized by frequent changes in time signature, including 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4. The melody in the treble staff features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often with slurs and ties. The bass staff provides a steady accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes. The second system continues the theme, showing more complex rhythmic patterns and a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff. The third system concludes the theme with a cadence, featuring a final chord in the treble staff and a sustained note in the bass staff.

Following the cadence at the end of the theme, tension gradually intensifies from Variations 1 through 4 by means of an increase in volume, tempo, and rhythmic activity. These variations develop various elements of the theme and its accompaniment motives. Example 7 shows that Variation 3 is a study of the inversion of intervals and melodic contour. For instance, the intervals of the first six

¹¹ It should be noted that the uneven length of the variations are an extension of the uneven phrase lengths of the Theme. As with many themes in “The Shadow Lengthens”, the Theme in “The Fall of Nargothrond” also has a pedal tone in the bass voice which is at variance with the tones in the soprano voice.

tones of the upper voice are in reverse order of the first six tones of the theme, with a change in contour of the last three tones. In addition, the intervals of the accompaniment are also derived from the theme. Variation 4 is stated at *forte* in the trumpets and is accompanied by bursts of short, accented, and rhythmic phrase segments in the low brass that drive the music forward toward Variation 5.

The first recollection of fighting, Variation 5, is shown in Example 8. The shape of the line is derived from the opening accompaniment motive, but the rhythm, dynamic marking, and articulation literally represent the sweeping and thrusting motions of soldiers in close-quarter combat. For instance, one can easily visualize how the descending octave leap from G-sharp5 to G-sharp4, in sixteenth notes, to an accented, half step rebound traces violent sword strokes.¹² Sword thrusts can be imagined in the sequential motives that follow the rebound figures. These gestures are forcefully strengthened at *fortissimo* in the percussion section.

Example 7: Variation 3 of “The Fall of Nargothrond”

The image shows a musical score for Variation 3 of "The Fall of Nargothrond". It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and contains a melodic line with various rhythmic values and accidentals. The bass staff begins with a dynamic marking of *p* and contains a bass line with chords and rhythmic patterns. The score is divided into measures with changing time signatures: 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, and 4/4. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

This fierce moment is relatively short-lived because Variation 6 is a transition that rapidly eases the tension of Variation 5; but in Variations 7 through 10, the music intensifies toward Variation 11, the second fighting episode. This episode contains extensive motivic development of the melody of Variation 5. The rapid interchange

¹² The numbers after the notes represent octave placement: middle C on the grand staff is C4, and the octave above that is C5; thus, the pitches between these notes are the “fourth” (4) octave.

of melodic fragments and interjections of harshly accented percussion bursts vividly express the chaotic nature of hand-to-hand combat. The greater length of Variation 11 represents the full weight of the bitter memories of the horrible destruction wrought by the dragon, Glaurung, his spell upon Túrin Turambar, and the capture and later death of Finduilas, niece of Finrod Felagund and Lady Galadriel.¹³

Example 8: Variation 5 of “The Fall of Nargothrond”



Variations 12 through 14 gradually move away from the agonizing emotion of Variation 11. The elongation of this emotional descent reflects a necessary period of recovery following such a painful memory. The Coda closes the movement with fragments of the Theme’s opening. Scored from upper woodwinds to muted trumpets to low brass, the Coda evokes a sense of melancholy in which traces of sadness linger across the ages.

The form of “Upon Hearing the Nightingale” follows the narrative of the first interactions of Beren and Lúthien. Beren, long-suffering in the woods of Neldoreth, sees a young woman, beautiful beyond imagination, dancing. He instantly falls in love but is caught in a trance. She disappears from his sight and he returns to wandering and suffering alone in the forest. Sometime later, he hears music and espies her once more. This time he touches her arm and his trance is lifted. Lúthien falls in love with Beren and they begin their remarkable lives together. Reflecting

¹³ Variation 11 can be heard from 3:26-3:56 on the recording of “The Fall of Nargothrond” at <http://berniescherrcomposer.com/recordings/>. Accessed May 23, 2015.

this outline, the music is organized in a repeated binary structure: A–B–A–B. The A Sections have the “Suffering” Theme. The first B Section has the “Dancing” Theme. The second B Section has the “Dancing” Theme, but also the “Embracing” and “Love” Themes.

Example 9: The “Suffering” Theme of “Upon Hearing the Nightingale”

The musical score for Example 9 is presented in two systems. The first system features a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The vocal line is labeled "Primary component" and begins with a fermata on a whole note G4. The piano accompaniment is labeled "Secondary component" and starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature changes from 2/4 to 4/4 and back to 2/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and tenuto markings.

The “Suffering” Theme, shown in Example 9, is a composite theme in that it contains a primary and secondary component. The primary component is lyrical, but somewhat plodding. The line contains mostly stepwise motion and its pitches are almost entirely drawn from the underlying harmony. The secondary component has two elements, an arpeggiated upper voice, and lower voices that are homophonic and chordal. The harmony moves from an A half diminished seventh chord to an F-sharp minor seventh chord. The rhythm stresses the down beats, which is further emphasized with tenuto markings. The combined effect of these two components

evokes images of a lonely person, suffering, with stooped and tired shoulders, dragging heavy feet along an uncertain path.

Beren is transformed the moment he first sees Lúthien. Her music, the “Dancing” Theme (given in Example 10), is gentle, quiet, and graceful. In B-flat major and scored lightly in the woodwinds, the melody dances upward through a series of P4 skips. The major triads that harmonize this melody reflect both his renewed spirit and her pure heart. Unfortunately, he is also cast into a trance and can only call out to her in his mind. All too soon she vanishes from his sight and he returns to his harsh and lonely path. This sad turn of events is expressed in the return of the “Suffering” Theme.

Example 10: The “Dancing Theme of “Upon Hearing the Nightingale”

The musical score for Example 10 is presented in two systems. The first system contains four measures of music. The upper staff, in treble clef, shows a melodic line with dynamics *mp*, *mf*, *mf*, and *f*. The lower staff, in bass clef, provides accompaniment with dynamics *p* and *mp*. The second system contains two measures, continuing the melodic and accompanimental lines.

On a day unexpected, Beren is surprised by the sound of music, which he follows to its source. There he sees Lúthien but is now able to touch her which allows him to speak to her for the first time. In two-part counterpoint, the “Embracing” Theme is surrounded by a single, shimmering, and gentle P5. This theme, shown in Example 11, is scored for solo oboe, representing Lúthien, and solo B-flat clarinet,

representing Beren. Each part trades motivic elements and a shared contour. These elements express how their joy and happiness are now intertwined.

The “Embracing” Theme is soon followed by a restatement of the “Dancing” Theme, which is extended, and builds to the “Love” Theme, shown in Example 12. Slow, strong, steady, and certain in its purpose, this brief theme is a summation of their undying love. The downbeats are stressed with firmness, the major triads and major-major seventh chords are bright and sonorous, and the melody soars freely above the chorale-like texture. Following this moment the music subsides and transitions to the Coda. The Coda recalls the primary and secondary components of the “Suffering” Theme, but now they have been transformed through lighter scoring and major harmonies. Delicate fragments of the “Dancing” Theme are heard as the movement concludes. These thematic transformations represent the transformative love that Beren and Lúthien now share.

Example 11: The “Embracing” Theme of “Upon Hearing the Nightingale”

The musical score for Example 11 consists of three staves in 4/4 time. The top staff is a vocal line with dynamics *p* and *mf*. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment with dynamics *p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *<f*. The bottom staff is a bass line with dynamics *p* and *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 12: The “Love” Theme of “Upon Hearing the Nightingale”



Númenor was the Valar’s gift to the Edain for their valor in the War of Wrath. Arising from the depths of the Great Sea it was blessed with bounteous flora and fauna. Its first King, Elros, had the blood of elven princes and lordly men, and its people became learned seafarers and created a rich and beautiful culture. The form of “The Morningtide of Númenor” traces the foundation of this wondrous land. Theme A expresses the rising of the land from the Great Sea and is developed to represent the creation and growth of plant life. Theme B and its development represent the Valar populating the land with diverse animal life. Theme C is the noble theme of King Elros and the first Númenoreans.

Theme A, given in Example 13, is built on an A-flat major pentatonic scale. Its rhythmic energy comes from two sixteenth notes on upbeats that rush to a longer note on the beat. The theme traverses an octave, but its structural tones, E-flat3–A-flat3–B-flat3–E-flat4, form a symmetrical unit: P4–major 2nd (abbreviated M2)–P4. The background is based on a tetrachord, B-flat5–C6–D6–E-flat6. This closely spaced scale segment shimmers with light because of the fingered tremolos in the woodwinds and the medium-high tessitura. The upward motives of Theme A express the work of the Valar in raising an island from the depths of the Great Sea. Images of depth are also heard in its scoring for low brass and woodwinds. In addition, the symmetrical construction of the theme represents the good work of the Valar and is

contrasted with the asymmetrical elements used earlier in the symphony which represented the evil wrought by Morgoth.

Example 13: Theme A of “The Morningtide of Númenor”



Following a brief development, Theme A is transformed through rhythmic augmentation, scoring, and background support. This transformation represents the plant life as it springs forth from the newly formed earth. In subsequent statements new lines are woven around it in a contrapuntal texture, evoking images of growth and diversity. Example 14 shows the final statement of Theme A and its accompaniment of two other interconnected lines. This statement now uses all the tones of the A-flat major scale.

Following this passage, Theme A returns for a short time in a form similar to its initial presentation; but in this instance, it is modified through changes in pitch, rhythm, and interval content. Theme B follows the modified return of Theme A. Like Theme A, it also undergoes contrapuntal development in subsequent statements through the addition of new lines. Theme B oscillates between E-flat major and E-flat Mixolydian. The D5 and D-flat5 exchanges also reflect the difference between A-flat major and E-flat major, which are the primary key areas of the first half of the movement. Example 15 shows the final statement of Theme B and its accompaniment of three other interconnected lines. Following this passage, Theme A returns again, but is

now significantly developed. This development represents the completion of Númenor in its preparation for settlement.

Example 14: The final statement of Theme A of “The Morningtide of Númenor”¹⁴



Example 15: The final statement of Theme B of “The Morningtide of Númenor”¹⁵



¹⁴ The final statement of Theme A is in the soprano voice.

¹⁵ The final statement of Theme B is in the tenor voice.

Example 16: The final statement of Theme C of "The Morningtide of Númenor"¹⁶

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. Each system consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below it. The music is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and rests. The first system shows a complex melodic line in the upper treble staff and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the grand staff. The second system continues this pattern with similar melodic and accompanimental textures. The third system concludes the passage with a final melodic flourish in the upper treble staff and a sustained accompaniment in the grand staff.

¹⁶ The final statement of Theme C is in the tenor voice.

Following the Star of Eärendil, Elros led his people to Númenor. In him flows the blood of the three Houses of the Edain, the Three Kindreds, and Melian the Maiar. He embodies the noblest characteristics of the Children of Ilúvatar: faithfulness, bravery, and wisdom. He also embodies all that was good in the people of Númenor, all that was envisioned for them to be by Ilúvatar and the Valar. His theme, thus, is also the theme of the Númenoreans. Labelled Theme C, it is introduced with solo B-flat trumpet accompanied by a chorale in the brass. Certainly the soloist represents Elros, the trumpet represents his nobility, and the chorale expresses his sense of sacred duty to lead his people in taking possession of the Valar's miraculous gift. Following its introduction, Theme C is stated in the woodwinds and then is developed along lines similar to the development of Themes A and B.

Example 16 shows the final statement of Theme C. It is heard in the F horns, trombones, and euphonium. His theme is now joined by the hearty voices of the Númenoreans. In the mode of F Mixolydian, the stately melody rises confidently toward the end of the phrase. It is accompanied by a steadily rising bass line and two different contrapuntal lines in the upper woodwinds. This moment represents the ideal Númenor, the ideal that burned in the hearts of her people across the ages, through exile, wars, and finally in the restoration of the Reunited Kingdom. This statement is followed by several passages that see the return of portions of Themes A and B. Cast in a new light, the light of Númenor in its Morningtide, the statements sound confident and have a sense of emerging maturity.

The passages that follow Theme C lead to the closing theme, which is given in Example 17. This theme is composed of motives from Theme A, its accompaniment, and Theme C. Marked *forte* or *fortissimo*, sharply articulated, and excitedly rhythmic, it brings the movement and symphony to a rousing conclusion. By combining elements of Themes A and C, I intended to connect Númenor to her people. Even though Númenor was eventually destroyed by the Valar, the memory of the glory and beauty of Westerness still lingered long into the Third Age. In fact, Tolkien

writes in the *Return of the King* that Minas Tirith is the “last memory of Westernesse” in Middle-earth.¹⁷ I view the Reunited Kingdom of King Elessar and Lady Undómiel as the renewal of Númenor, but transferred to Middle-earth and ushering in the Fourth Age.

Example 17: the closing theme of “The Morningtide of Númenor”

The image shows a musical score for the closing theme of "The Morningtide of Númenor". It consists of three staves: a vocal line at the top, a piano right-hand part in the middle, and a piano left-hand part at the bottom. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line features a series of sustained chords, each marked with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *f*. The piano accompaniment is marked *ff* and features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and accents. The piece concludes with a final chord in the vocal line.

This analysis has demonstrated that the stories of the First Age of Middle-earth are the animating force of this symphony. They have inspired themes, determined form, and even informed scoring choices. Table 2 and Table 3 are given below in order to clarify how specific elements from this symphony are connected to the three categories that form the spectrum from literal to abstract representation. Table 2 shows, in general, how the spectrum is represented in the music. Table 3 shows how the spectrum is related to three literary categories and how these categories are manifested in the music.¹⁸ Literal musical representation is connected to imagery because literary imagery arises from the author’s depiction of physical objects,

¹⁷ J. R. R. TOLKIEN, *The Return of the King* (1984: 290). For extensive conversations between Frodo, Sam and Faramir about Westernesse, see TOLKIEN, *The Two Towers* (1984: 355-69).

¹⁸ For a concise definition of the terms “imagery”, “mood” and “symbol” as used in literature, see C. Hugh HOLMAN (1980: 224, 277, and 436).

places, persons, and actions. Of course, word painting in music has a long association with textual imagery in vocal literature, and instruments have played a *co-expressive* role in vocal word painting. Middle-ground musical representation is connected to symbols because literary symbols retain their physical properties as they suggest another, more abstract meaning. Abstract musical representation is connected to mood because mood is the emotional attitude of the author, and in my case, composer, toward the subject matter. Musical expression of mood and emotion is subjective, and, of the three topics used in this paper, is the most abstract because it exists beyond word painting and the use of symbols: it encompasses the expressive sense of the music as a whole. Discerning the specific expressive meaning of a given musical passage is a *learned intuitive-ness* that enculturated listeners of Western art music develop. Even so, this sense is oriented in the individual–author, composer, and listener—who will perhaps discern the general sense of a musical passage, but who will retain a unique emotional response.

Discussion concerning the musical expression of emotion has a long tradition within Western writings about music and is it not my intention to cite the numerous writers that have discussed the various aspects of musical aesthetics germane to this paper.¹⁹ The reader must understand that efforts to create definitive quantifications of the effect of music on human emotion will prove to be illusive, and because of its subjective nature will remain impossible to construct. Therefore, the spectrum developed for this analysis is not intended to be an empirical measure of musical representation; instead, it is a comprehensive categorization of my perceptions of the degree to which Tolkien's narrative inspired specific musical gestures. The use of literary topics in this process strengthens the connection between the literary and musical imagery.

¹⁹ For examples of writing about the representation of emotion in music, see Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, translated by Ernest C. Harriss (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1981), 104-11. See also Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History*, edited by Leo Treitler (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 698-703, 954-65, 967-69, and 971-80.

Table 2: General representation of the spectrum from literal to abstract representation.

<i>Literal</i>	The battle strokes of hand-to-hand combat of Elves and Orcs in “The Fall of Nargothrond” are mapped directly onto the shape of the angular, accented, and rhythmically punctuated phrases of Variations 5 and 11.
<i>Literal</i>	The thematic organization of “Upon Hearing the Nightingale” is identical to the progression of events from the time Beren enters the woods of Neldoreth to the love embrace of he and Lúthien.
<i>Middleground</i>	The use of intricate tonal counterpoint to represent diversity and growth (“The Morningtide of Númenor”).
<i>Middleground</i>	The technique of modifying the theme used for the creation of the island of Númenor for use as the theme for the creation of its plant life (“The Morningtide of Númenor”).
<i>Abstract</i>	Melancholy expressed through non-tonal pitch material and a languid melody (“The Fall of Nargothrond”).
<i>Abstract</i>	Spreading evil expressed through rhythmic diminution and minor chords that have been progressively obscured with an increasing use of chromatic counterpoint (“The Shadow Lengthens”).

Table 3. The spectrum in relation to three literary categories.

<p><i>Literal</i> representation –to draw– Imagery</p>	<p><i>Middleground</i> representation –to represent– Symbols</p>	<p><i>Abstract</i> representation –to express– Mood</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descending, stepwise motion to trace sighing • Descending octave leap to an accented, half step rebound to trace violent sword strokes • Sequential motives that follow the rebound figures to trace sword thrusts • Rapid interchange of melodic fragments and interjections of harshly accented percussion bursts to show the chaotic nature of hand-to-hand combat • Musical form parallels narrative events • Ascending interval skips to draw dance movements • Ascending, symmetrical, and rhythmic theme to show the creation of an island • Low instruments to show depth and low voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased dissonance, rhythmic diminution, and intervallic development to represent increased anxiousness • Asymmetrical meters to represent the imbalance of Morgoth's evil influence • Musical gestures to represent bodily disposition • Major chords to represent a renewed spirit and pure heart • Two parts sharing motivic elements and contour to represent intertwined joy and happiness • Theme for creation of land modified for creation of plants • Thematic transformations to represent transformative love • Symmetry to represent the goodness of the Valar • Contrapuntal development to represent growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor chords, rhythmic diminution, and increasingly chromatic counterpoint to express a spreading evil • Climax in scoring, dynamics, and thematic synthesis to express an emotional climax • Languid musical contour, rhythm, and dissonance to express melancholy • Altering length and character of variations to express the ephemeral nature of memory • Elongating a musical descent to express a period of emotional recovery • Character of melody and accompanying harmony to express undying love • Character of melody, scoring, and use of a chorale to express nobility and a sense of the sacred

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The “Music of the Ainur” must still resonate from the realm of fantasy to our world today.²⁰ Certainly, the analysis and discussion within this paper demonstrate that this symphony owes its existence to their imaginary music. In Tolkien’s legendarium music brought forth Eä and is heard across the ages of Arda. As a musician reading *The Silmarillion*, I often sense an operatic quality in Tolkien’s epic narrative. Opera is musical drama in which fantasy and reality occupy the same time and space. Opera’s artistic power arises from the interactive dynamic of imagery, symbolism, and emotion (mood) as expressed in music, art, and drama. This paper traces in detail how the fantastical universe of Tolkien’s legendarium inspired purely instrumental music. I believe that instrumental music lives in both fantasy and reality because real sounds exist in time, but they transcend time and space by moving the heart and stirring the imagination without the added dimension of sung text. I am convinced that as long as there are composers who read and are inspired by Tolkien’s deeply profound and captivating epic legends, the “Music of the Ainur” will be heard.

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²⁰ See note 1.

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