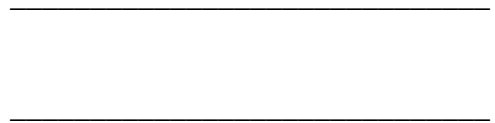


ABSTRACT OF THESIS

GRYPHON: ORIGINS, INFLUENCES, AND STYLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Progressive rock during the late 1960's and throughout the 1970's contained an eclectic mix of musical genres whose inspirations range from Western classical music to Indian ragas. This thesis focuses on the predominantly folk-inspired band Gryphon and its stylistic development from 1973-1975. One song from each of Gryphon's first four albums is analyzed to show the band's progression from its folk roots to an ensemble that combined rock, classical, folk, and jazz styles. The compositions analyzed are "Juniper Suite" from *Gryphon*, "Midnight Mushrumps" from *Midnight Mushrumps*, "Checkmate" from *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*, and "(Ein Klein) Heldenleben" from *Raindance*.

KEYWORDS: Progressive Rock, Gryphon, English Folk-Rock, Juniper Suite, Midnight Mushrumps



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THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the College of Fine Arts at the University of Kentucky.

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2007

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CHAPTER 1: ORIGINS AND A METHODOLOGY

Progressive Rock – The Emergence

In the 1960's, popular music began a metamorphosis from the short, strophic (and increasingly blues-influenced), "bubble-gum" pop of the 1950's toward a more eclectic and expansive style that would see fruition as progressive rock in the early and middle 1970's.¹ *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, released by the Beatles in 1967, is a prime example of the shift toward the eclectic. The combination of rock, jazz, classical, folk, and Indian styles² present in *Sgt. Pepper's* reflected the growing trend of musicians who believed that diverse styles could be combined in a new, quasi-utopian manner, the amalgam of which could be a new style of music in and of itself. The most apparent underlying stimulus for this stylistic shift is the emergence of a counterculture that sought to break away from social norms and barriers and expand beyond the status-quo.

Members of the 1960's counterculture are commonly referred to as hippies, and the music associated with them as psychedelic (a sub-style of rock).³ This counterculture desired societal changes and, subsequently, the music they produced ran a parallel course. While the psychedelic music movement gained notoriety for its expansive qualities, certain jazz musicians had already begun to broaden their boundaries, creating compositions which sometimes border on the existential. Beginning in the late 1950's,

¹ This is not to say that the short, verse-chorus-verse style of popular music disappeared. Popular music actually reverted back to more basic forms and short song lengths in the 1980's and these are still the standard at the beginning of the 21st century.

² Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 15.

³ The term psychedelic comes from British psychiatrist Humphry Osmond as a description of the effect of LSD on the mind. In a rhyming couplet correspondence between Osmond and novelist Aldous Huxley, the latter chose the word "phanerothyme" to describe the effect, taken from the Greek words meaning "to show" and "spirit." Osmond chose the word "psychedelic," taken from the Greek words "psyche" (mind or soul) and "deloun" (show). Taken from Janice Tanne, "Obituary: Humphry Osmond," *British Medical Journal* 7441 (March 20, 2004): 713.

artists such as John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman extended their stylistic and melodic and harmonic lexicon beyond the status-quo into what is now termed “jazz avant-garde.” This stylistic shift also expanded the jazz listening audience, as the new “intellectual” style became popular among white, male, middle-class crowds⁴ (the same socio-economic group which would later form the core audience of progressive rock).

The eclectic psychedelic music produced by, and in response to, the hippie counterculture was prevalent in both the United States and Great Britain. The blues and jazz styles originated in the United States and were therefore more accessible to American musicians and audiences. British musicians and audiences experienced an increased diversification of these styles during the British blues revival of the early 1960’s. This blues revival exposed young British musicians to the electric blues styles of American artists and influenced the older British blues and jazz artists who already had an extensive skill base.⁵ The improvisatory skills exemplified by these older blues and jazz artists factored heavily in the psychedelic musical genre (later to be adapted by progressive rock musicians). The incorporation of jazz improvisation enabled the creation of larger, more virtuosic solo sections. Due in part to the saturation of psychedelic music by electronic instruments, soloists began to experiment with the different timbres that were now available to them. Thus, timbre became a more integral part of rock music in the new, eclectic style.

By the late 1960’s, British psychedelic music had produced its own subgenres. Edward Macan, a musicologist who wrote one of the seminal progressive rock histories, Rocking the Classics (see full citation in note 2), separates British psychedelic music into

⁴ Bill Martin, *Listening to the Future: The Time of Progressive Rock, 1968-1978* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998), 3.

⁵ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 17.

three “wings.” The first is a wing influenced mostly by blues and rock, with bands such as Cream and the Yardbirds, and artists such as Jimi Hendrix. The first-wing subgenre would later become what is commonly referred to as “hard rock” or, using a more biased term, “pure rock.” The second wing is influenced by rock and jazz, with bands such as Traffic, Soft Machine, and Caravan. This subgenre would come to fruition as the “Canterbury style”⁶ of progressive rock and more generally as jazz-fusion. The third wing is influenced by rock and classical music. The major proponents of the third wing are The Moody Blues, Procol Harum, Nice, and Pink Floyd. The third wing is the category of late 1960’s psychedelic music that is most closely linked with the core of progressive rock.⁷

It is helpful at this juncture to describe more closely the elements that separate progressive rock from the other forms of rock. The following excerpt, taken from Macan’s text, lists the quintessential aspects that define progressive rock:

The systematic juxtaposition of acoustic and electric passages, sections, and movements... a persistent use of classically derived tone colors produced on the Mellotron, Hammond organ, and assorted acoustic instruments; rich vocal arrangements; lengthy pieces consisting of clearly articulated sections or movements; long instrumental passages; and a tendency to experiment with electronic effects and new recording techniques.⁸

Although all of these aspects are not unique to progressive rock, their combination is unique to the style. A time frame for the use of these stylistic features that comprise the core of progressive rock music has been suggested by a number of rock music historians

⁶ A solid definition of the “Canterbury style” has still never been fully established, although the term is generally used to signify a collaboration of rock and jazz elements which originated around the Canterbury area in England. In a recent publication by Andy Bennett and Richard Peterson, *Music Scenes: Local, Transitional, and Virtual*, Bennett discusses the ambiguity of the “Canterbury Sound” and even calls the use of the term into question.

⁷ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 19-20.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

(although a firm date-span has yet to be established). While the time frame of any stylistic period can never be precise, the consensus for the mature stage, and the most popular reception, of progressive rock is the early and middle 1970's, with a developmental stage at the end of the 1960's. Nearly all of the major, fundamental progressive rock bands released their first albums between 1968 and 1970, including King Crimson, Jethro Tull, Yes, Genesis, and ELP (Emerson, Lake, and Palmer).⁹

Out of the eclectic nature of psychedelic music (and the counterculture movement), the birth of electronic instruments, and the development of new recording techniques, progressive rock was formed. Bill Martin uses the term “popular avant-garde”¹⁰ to better describe progressive rock music. While the term itself is an oxymoron, it does describe a musical style that is “high brow” and experimental, while still commanding a popular following. It is in this rapidly developing setting that the band Gryphon was formed.

Gryphon – The Albums

During the time following the British and American folk revivals (c. 1955-1975)¹¹ and at the height of the progressive rock movement (early and mid-1970's), Gryphon entered the musical scene with its self-titled debut album, *Gryphon* (1973). The freshman album contained folk songs and arrangements of traditional tunes that highlight the early music influences of the founding band members. In 1974, Gryphon released its second and third albums, *Midnight Mushrumps* and *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*. While *Midnight Mushrumps* is still a showcase of the band's early music influence, the addition

⁹ Ibid., 23.

¹⁰ Martin, *Listening to the Future*, 2.

¹¹ This twenty-year time period is a generalized amalgamation of the two folk revivals, created to better facilitate an overview of the two country's folk revivals. A more specific date span for both revivals will be discussed later in this chapter.

of electric bass and use of studio recording effects began to push the band in a more progressive direction. *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*, with its heavier synthesizer use and electronic processing, is admittedly aimed more at an American audience (with some pressure coming from the record company and management)¹² and was released during a major American tour with one of progressive rock's most successful bands, Yes. *Red Queen to Gryphon Three* further increased the use of studio recording effects and introduced more electric instruments.

A slight shift in band members set the tone for Gryphon's fourth album, *Raindance*, released in 1975. *Raindance* is heavily influenced by electronic instrumentation and the "rock" influence of the progressive rock scene at the time. By the release of Gryphon's fifth album, *Treason*, the original band lineup had been irrevocably altered. The guitar and bass players had been replaced, an additional percussionist was added, and the band had signed to a new record label and had been given a new producer. All of these changes produced an album unlike any of Gryphon's first four albums.

Gryphon – The Members

Gryphon began as a trio, with members Richard Harvey, Brian Gulland, and Graeme Taylor.¹³ The diverse background of these three founding members is an important precursor to the music that they produced in the 1970's. Richard Harvey was trained in clarinet, theory, harmony, and choral singing at Tiffins Grammar School and

¹² David Oberle, interview by Eduardo Mota, January 1999, <http://www.gaudela.net>. It is still unspecified exactly what type of influence was exerted upon the members of Gryphon.

¹³ Chris Welch, "Gryphon: the 13th Century Slade," *Melody Maker*, (August 4, 1973): 45. Other names by which Gryphon was called were Willowbasket, featuring Harvey and Taylor (Gryphon: the Complete Hybrid), Spell Thorn, featuring the original quartet, and Cod Piece, which was suggested by the band manager and rejected by the band.

studied clarinet, on a scholarship,¹⁴ at the Royal College of Music.¹⁵ Through recorded broadcasts of songs by David Munrow,¹⁶ Harvey became reacquainted with the recorder and, from there, other early instruments (namely the crumhorn). In 1969, before forming Gryphon, Harvey was involved with a folk band named Cherry Wood, which was influenced by the Incredible String Band (a British folk-rock ensemble that was formed in the 1960's). In addition to playing with Gryphon, Richard Harvey played recorder and crumhorn¹⁷ with the group Musica Reservata, an early music ensemble that featured both instrumental and vocal performances. Musica Reservata was founded by Michael Murrow in the 1950's and by the 1960's was focused on creating a more historically accurate manner of performing early music.¹⁸

Brian Gulland studied bassoon, singing, and piano both privately and at the Royal College of Music. Although trained as a classical musician, Gulland is quoted as saying that he became disinterested in the career path due to the “extremely narrow lives that so many classical musicians live, both socially and musically.”¹⁹ Karl Dallas writes that it was during Brian's first year at college that he began to entertain the thought of joining a rock band.²⁰ These statements reinforce an opinion of Graeme Taylor that, “Richard was more classically [driven], while I was more into the rock side, and Brian was somewhere in the middle.”²¹

¹⁴ Karl Dallas, “Gryphon: The Complete Hybrid,” *Melody Maker*, (January 6, 1973): 17.

¹⁵ “The Gryphon File,” *Melody Maker*, (October 6, 1973): 24.

¹⁶ David Munrow was a performer with an interest in renaissance and baroque instruments. In 1976 he also published *Instruments of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976).

¹⁷ Dallas, “Gryphon: The Complete Hybrid,” 17.

¹⁸ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Musica Reservata (ii),” (by David Fallows), <http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed 1/30/07).

¹⁹ Dallas, “Gryphon: The Complete Hybrid,” 17.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Graeme Taylor, telephone discussion with the author, May 2, 2007.

The only member of the original trio not to attend the Royal College of Music is guitarist Graeme Taylor. Taylor studied piano for two years at Tiffins Grammar School but is self taught on guitar.²² In an article by Chris Welch, Taylor is also credited with “Form[ing] one third of the Gryphon recorder ‘choir’ when featured.”²³ From this look at educational backgrounds, there appears a definite connection of the members with both the Royal College of Music and Tiffins Grammar School. There also appears a mix of professional training and self-teaching. The background of the original trio will serve a later purpose in the description of stylistic progression throughout Gryphon’s four main albums.

David Oberle, an important addition to the band, joined prior to the recording of its first album *Gryphon*. From the age of 14, Oberle played in pop/rock bands, beginning with Barbarian. He later joined the band Powerloom, which eventually changed its name to Juggernaut.²⁴ In an interview with *Melody Maker*,²⁵ Oberle mentions the latter band’s connection to another progressive rock band, Egg.²⁶ Oberle also mentions that he met Richard and Brian at a Juggernaut concert in Surrey while opening for Egg (here Oberle mentions that Richard, Brian, and Graeme were still performing under the name Spellthorne [sic]).²⁷ Although his rock background is less influential in the first album, subsequent releases enabled him to tap into it more substantially.

²² “The Gryphon File,” *Melody Maker*, (October 6, 1973), 24.

²³ Welch, “Gryphon: the 13th Century Slade,” 45.

²⁴ Dallas, “Gryphon: The Complete Hybrid,” 17. It is interesting to note here that exactly nine months later, “The Gryphon File” was published and contains conflicting information. In the latter publication, it is stated that Oberle began at age 11 in Powerloom, which later changed its name to Juggernaut and finally to Barbarian. Since the information in “Gryphon: The Complete Hybrid” is directly drawn from Oberle, it will be used until more research can prove that it is inaccurate.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Egg was an influential progressive rock band in the Canterbury subgenre of progressive rock.

²⁷ David Oberle, interview by Eduardo Mota, January 1999.

The last addition to the original band lineup was bassist Phillip Nestor, who joined the group prior to its second release, *Midnight Mushrumps*. Creating one more link to the lineage of rock bands,²⁸ Nestor joined Gryphon after leaving Juggernaut (during which time he was a member with David Oberle).²⁹ Although Juggernaut did not succeed, it did supply Gryphon with two members and a bass/drum rhythm section that would later push Gryphon past its medieval- and renaissance-inspired first album. The final addition to the band for the time period under discussion is Malcolm Bennett, who replaced Phillip Nestor on bass for Gryphon's fourth and fifth releases, *Raindance* and *Treason*. The inclusion of Bennett added a flute player to the roster, as well as a new musical influence to the band's developing style.

Influence of the Folk Revival

The folk revivals of both the United States and Britain played a role in the development and acceptance of progressive rock groups (and slightly earlier groups, with the Beatles as a prime example) who blended folk, rock, and classical styles. A brief discussion of these influences will better facilitate a direct line of their impact on Gryphon.

Robert Cantwell places the American folksong revival between 1958, with the Kingston Trio's recording of "Tom Dooley," and 1964, with the importation of British groups, the most popular being the Beatles.³⁰ The American folk revival led its followers to try to think and act in ways that simulated the time and culture from which these folk

²⁸ There are many instances in which musicians are members of several bands over their career, creating links that enable a more accurate view of their individual stylistic development. The "rock family trees" created by Pete Frame have appeared in both *Melody Maker* and *Rolling Stone Magazine*, as well as being published in book form as *Rock Family Trees* (New York: Quick Fox, 1979).

²⁹ David Oberle, interview by Eduardo Mota, January 1999.

³⁰ Robert Cantwell, "When We Were Good: Class and Culture in the Folk Revival," in *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined*, ed. Neil Rosenberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 35-36.

songs arose. Cantwell also goes on to state that, “In this process, many kinds of music that at other periods had been commercially performed and recorded, such as blues, old-time, and bluegrass music ... came to be regarded as folk music and enjoyed a revival on that basis.”³¹ It was during the end of this revival (using Cantwell’s time span) that Bob Dylan, a major player in the American folksong revival, began to implement the use of electric guitar in his music.³² Although Dylan was not the only folk artist to use the electric guitar, his crossover did produce the most controversy among followers. Some saw the use of the electric guitar as a bastardization of the folk revival, but it could also be seen as the next step toward the future of popular music, one that began to blend and juxtapose styles not normally used in close proximity. (It is from these electric folk roots that the blues revival gained solid footing and eventually drifted across the Atlantic to influence the next breed of musicians from Britain.)

In Rocking the Classics, Edward Macan discusses the influence of Bob Dylan in the mid-1960’s. He states that the folk revival of the 1960’s paralleled the development of rock, but focused more on the use of acoustic instruments and contained rich vocal arrangements. In the mid-1960’s, however, Bob Dylan began to intermingle the music of the American folk tradition and that of the Beatles themselves. Macan uses this early example of the juxtaposition of acoustic and electric passages as an example of one of the most characteristic qualities of progressive rock as a genre.³³ While the music of Bob Dylan may not have directly influenced the members of Gryphon, it did set the atmosphere for crossover groups utilizing multiple genres and a mix of acoustic folk instruments with modern electronic instruments.

³¹ Ibid., 36.

³² Ibid., 35-36.

³³ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 22.

In discussing revival as transformation, Burt Feintuch links the American folk revival with that of the British “old-time” music revival. Americans played the role of advocate in these revivals by being, “[S]cholars and collectors ... making repertoire available, ... presenting performers, and themselves performing.”³⁴ While the United States did play a role in the British folksong revival, Feintuch states that “A.L. Lloyd, one of the driving forces behind the post-1950’s burgeoning revivalist interest in English folksong ... desired to see a genuinely British – as opposed to American-derived – revival, and as artistic director of Topic Records, the mainstay record label of the British revival, he was able to translate that conviction into action.”³⁵ This British take on the folk revival influenced the types of music that would be available for the mass British audience, and that would, therefore, have an effect on the members of Gryphon. Due to the relatively small amount of published information on Gryphon, additional contact with band members could possibly address the aspect of the British folk influence more directly.

Peter Narváez, a folk musician and ethnomusicologist, lays out four prerequisites of folk revivals that better aid in relating the concept of revival in general with the revivals occurring in the 1950’s and 1960’s. They are:

1. A perceived need for cultural alternatives.
2. The availability and authentication of a defined body of culture in the past, which is judged to be more aesthetically pleasing and beneficial than a comparative portion of contemporary culture.
3. A means whereby to revivify and reify such elements of past culture.

³⁴ Burt Feintuch, “Music Revival as Musical Transformation,” in Rosenberg, *Transforming Tradition*, 186.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 188.

4. If a given folk revival is more than an exercise in nostalgia, that is, a bittersweet experience of reliving a remembered past, then folk revival requires a faith that in the future, new and equally vibrant forms will emerge from the selected past forms that have been rekindled in the present.³⁶

These prerequisites apply directly to the hippie vision of a utopian society, which spurred the eclectic mix of styles that would create favorable conditions for the acceptance of progressive rock. They also facilitate a view into the environment which would accept a medieval- and renaissance-inspired ensemble in the time of electronic instruments.

The British folk revival played an important foundational role in the development of two of Gryphon's founding members. British guitarist John Renbourn, an active member of the British folk revival and member of Pentangle, is cited by Richard Harvey as an influence that led Harvey's interest back to the recorder.³⁷ Renbourn served as an influence to both Harvey and Graeme Taylor. Harvey states that, "I started playing with Graeme Taylor ... and we worked out quite a lot of Renbourn things for guitar and recorder."³⁸ Here, Gryphon's debt to the folk revival is the familiarity with artists such as John Renbourn and an increased acceptance of its non-standard instrumentation, effectively fueling the symbiotic relationship between the listener and the recording industry. In a recent interview, Taylor also mentioned that the influence of artists like Renbourn and groups like Pentangle inspired his prevalent use of acoustic guitar early on.³⁹ The Renbourn album that Harvey states as responsible for leading his interest back

³⁶ Peter Narváez, "Living Blues Journal : The Paradoxical Aesthetics of the Blues Revival," in Rosenberg, *Transforming Tradition*, 244.

³⁷ Karl Dallas, "Gryphon: Blowing through the Ages," *Melody Maker*, (November 17, 1973): 43.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Graeme Taylor, in-person discussion with the author, June 7, 2007. During this interview Taylor stated that during the recording of *Gryphon* he did not even own an electric guitar.

to the recorder, *Sir John Alot of*,⁴⁰ was released by Transatlantic Records, the same label that would later release *Gryphon* and *Midnight Mushrumps*.

What begins to set Gryphon apart from other major progressive rock bands like Yes, Genesis, and ELP is its origin as a groups inspired by early music. While the folk revival did influence the band stylistically, its most important function was to set the tone for less traditional groups (i.e. outside of the pop/rock sphere) to receive more widespread exposure. Edward Macan groups Gryphon under the heading “English Folk-rock,” a style related to progressive rock. Two of the bands mentioned thus far as influences to Gryphon, the Incredible String Band and Pentangle, are listed as major proponents of this style.⁴¹ Macan sums up the principles of the “English Folk-rock” subgenre as follows, also reinforcing Narváez’s four prerequisites for a folk revival:

English folk-rock of the late 1960’s and 1970’s grew directly out of the folk music revival of the 1950’s and 1960’s. The guiding principles of the genre were twofold: to introduce electric instruments into the framework of traditional English folk music and (more rarely) other types of early music such as medieval and renaissance art music, and to produce a body of original music that reflected the heritage of folk song while drawing on contemporary instrumentation.⁴²

It is in these origins and with these influences that Gryphon sets itself apart from the majority of other progressive rock bands. While folk music has been shown as an essential element to Gryphon’s acceptance, its members’ skills and familiarity with renaissance and medieval music lent a unique sound to the band. As the band progressed stylistically through the albums *Gryphon*, *Midnight Mushrumps*, *Red Queen to Gryphon*

⁴⁰ The full title of the album is *Sir John Alot of Merrie Englandes Musyk Thyng & ye Grene Knyghte*. The shortened title *Sir John Alot of* stems from the inclusion of only this shortened form on the album cover. Depending on the source, both titles are used, sometimes including a separation of the word “Alot” into two separate words “A lot.”

⁴¹ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 134.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Three, and *Raindance*, it moved away from this clearly defined “English Folk-rock” genre in which Macan places it toward the more blues- and rock-influenced “progressive rock” category.

The Recording Studio and Compositional Style

As the band progressed, a stylistic shift occurred. One notable area of evolution is an increasing track length, holding possible ties to progressive rock’s penchant for the “concept album” (which will be investigated in chapter 3). A parallel development to the increasing track length is the implementation of electronic instruments and recording studio techniques tied to the use of large mixing boards. Bill Martin addresses the topic of technological innovations in regards to progressive rock in general:

To return to the question of technology, I think the way this played its biggest role in progressive rock – and in a way that has continued to have a great deal of influence on the way that experimental rock music is made – has less to do with the development of electronic instruments (especially the synthesizer) and more to do with multitrack recording and relatively sophisticated mixing boards... These developments allowed musicians who were not “schooled” in the classical sense to create extended and complex compositions. Indeed, recording was and is “composition” for many rock musicians... The utopian sensibility was also reflected in the group composition process that bands would then carry out in the studio, each member bringing ideas and working on the ideas of their mates.⁴³

While the original trio that formed Gryphon were trained in the “classical” sense, the concept of recording as a form of “composition” (which originated in the 1960’s and 1970’s and is still an influence in today’s recording environment) applies to Gryphon, and most certainly after the first album, *Gryphon*. The panning of channels, the blending of instrumental timbres far beyond the performing capability of five members, and the expansive perceived sound

⁴³ Bill Martin, *Avant Rock: Experimental Music from the Beatles to Bjork* (Chicago: Open Court Press, 2002), 75-76.

environments that are capable only through new recording techniques began to play a role in “Midnight Mushrumps” and continued through to “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben.”

Bill Martin’s mention of collective group composition also applies to Gryphon’s compositional process. In an interview, Graeme Taylor described the band’s compositional process as a culmination of ideas. He stated that, “[The members of the band] never prepared proper scores. We would write down ideas on scraps of paper and on the backs of envelopes, sort of like John Lennon.”⁴⁴ To this day, there are no published scores of Gryphon’s music. This type of composition is compatible with the studio environment which Martin describes. More recently, in the insert of the *Red Queen to Gryphon Three* re-release,⁴⁵ Taylor describes the compositional process as Brian Gulland and he sitting in the attic of the recording studio with a [synthesizer]⁴⁶ and Richard Harvey composing elsewhere. Here, new instrumental technology aided in the compositional process, which took place inside the recording studio.

Connections with Yes

During the early years of Gryphon’s existence, the band spoke about its admiration of Yes. In 1973, Gulland said that Rick Wakeman, the keyboard player for Yes, was “something of an inspiration to us.”⁴⁷ In a band bio from *Melody Maker* in the same year, Yes is mentioned eight times under the article’s categories of musical

⁴⁴ Graeme Taylor, telephone discussion with the author, May 2, 2007.

⁴⁵ Gryphon. *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*. Talking Elephant TECD 112, 2007.

⁴⁶ Taylor’s reference to the synthesizer was more specifically to a “new Yamaha DX-7.” However, his reference presents the reader with conflicting information. *Red Queen to Gryphon Three* was recorded in the fall of 1974; however, the Yamaha DX-7 was not released until 1983. It is unclear whether the information in this re-release insert is an error or possibly refers to later use of the DX-7 for a re-release.

⁴⁷ Dallas, “Gryphon: The Complete Hybrid,” 17.

influence, favorite album, favorite musician, and favorite singer.⁴⁸ The most complete statement published from any of Gryphon's band members on the subject is from Richard Harvey. In an interview with *Melody Maker* he says:

I used to be receptive to folk music, but I thought rock was a bit of a joke. I was completely out of touch with rock. Then one day I went round to Brian's flat and he put some headphones on me, and told me to listen. It was the first side of 'The Yes Album'. I heard Yes for the first time and no piece of music has ever had such a drastic effect on me. It changed my whole life. It was not only proved to me that pop musicians were capable of writing incredibly good music, but they had incredibly good technique as well. All my bad impressions were totally swept away. It was a real revelation.⁴⁹

Harvey's statement makes it clear that Gryphon's debt to the band Yes is not to be marginalized. In fact, Gryphon's ties to Yes go back further than Harvey's comments imply, beginning before the band was even formed. While attending the Royal College of Music, Richard and Brian met Rick Wakeman. In an interview by Eduardo Mota, David Oberle clarifies Wakeman's role in bringing the two bands closer together.⁵⁰ Wakeman opened the door for Gryphon to be the opening act during Yes's autumn tour of 1974, dubbed the Relayer tour (named after Yes's release of the *Relayer* album). Oberle even states that by the end of the tour they would play with Yes during their encore songs.⁵¹ These interactions undoubtedly influenced the stylistic shift that Gryphon underwent, beginning with *Red Queen to Gryphon Three* and becoming unmistakable in *Raindance*.

⁴⁸ "The Gryphon File," 24.

⁴⁹ Welch, "Gryphon: The 13th Century Slade," 57.

⁵⁰ David Oberle, interview by Eduardo Mota, January 1999.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Summary of Gryphon's Development and Influences

The internal and external factors that impacted Gryphon through its first four albums (1973-1975) are extensive for such a short span of time. The influences present in the original trio were sufficient to create a diverse folk/rock sound, which was only enhanced with the addition of a percussionist and bass player. The addition and replacement of band members throughout the first four albums supplied Gryphon with a greater diversity of stylistic influences. The recording studio environment enabled the band to produce songs of greater length and increasing intricacy. The personal connection with Yes and the subsequent touring experience in the United States in large venues also provided the members of Gryphon with the opportunities to expand beyond their initial influences.

Review of the Literature

Now that Gryphon's historical foundations have been exposed, it is useful to explore where the information on the band can be found. Most of the literature specific to Gryphon is found in popular music magazines from Britain during the 1970's and from concert reviews during the same decade. *Melody Maker*, a British popular music magazine, contains the most information, with band member interviews, concert and album reviews, and opinion articles. More recently, internet sites have become sources for information on progressive rock music. A Gryphon website by Eduardo Mota has archived several articles on the band and has conducted interviews with the band members that cannot be found in any other source.⁵² Less specific to Gryphon, a variety of sources are available concerning the English folk revival. These include articles from

⁵² <http://www.gaudela.net/gryphon/index.html>

History Workshop Journal, *Popular Music and Society*, and books such as *Electric Children* and *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined*.

A large wealth of resources available that pertain to the culture during the 1970's can be found in progressive rock research. These include articles and books by John Covach, Kevin Holm-Hudson, Edward Macan, Bill Martin, Bradley Smith, and Paul Stump. While some of these authors address specific bands, there are several books on the history and culture of the progressive rock movement. One article specific to the influence of classical music on progressive rock is *Bach Meets Liszt: Traditional Formal Structures and Performance Practices in Progressive Rock* by Nors Josephson. A different stand on classic music versus popular music is *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* by Theodor Adorno.

While there have been various methods of approaching progressive rock, the influence of classical music on progressive rock, and the band Gryphon, no one publication has combined the three in a concise manner. The material written on Gryphon specifically has been by popular music journalists who do not address any analysis of the band's music. General progressive rock publications either do not include Gryphon or attribute only a few sentences in passing. This thesis will contribute a detailed examination of the crossover between a folk-inspired band utilizing early music influences and the progressive rock movement. It will also create exposure for Gryphon that was limited in comparison to its more popular counterparts (i.e. Yes, Jethro Tull, ELP, Genesis, and King Crimson).

Toward a Methodology

The focus of the next four chapters is a survey of the band's musical development (from early music cover band to a more mainstream progressive rock sound) through analysis of selected tracks from the band's four main albums released from 1973 to 1975 ("Juniper Suite" from *Gryphon*, "Midnight Mushrumps" from their album of the same name, "Checkmate" from *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*, and "[Ein Klein] Heldenleben" from *Raindance*). While the specific reasons for choosing these four compositions will be developed in each individual chapter, one general reason for doing so is related to form.

One of the hallmarks of a well-developed progressive rock group is the use of large-scale forms and increased length of album tracks. Edward Macan compares the form of progressive rock music to that of the Romantic era, specifically pointing out similarities of some progressive rock songs to the symphonic poem and multi-movement suite. Length is his determining factor for the form, as suggested in Macan's description:

Progressive rock pieces between six and twelve minutes in length usually adopt the contours of the single-movement sectionalized forms – [they] create the impression of a song that has been expanded to enormous proportions by the inclusion of lengthy instrumental preludes, interludes, and postludes, as well as one or more contrasting bridge sections.

On the other hand, most of progressive rock's multi-movement suites occupy at least one side of an album and are twenty minutes long at the minimum, far too long to be perceived of as 'mere' songs.⁵³

Of the four pieces being discussed in this project on Gryphon, only "Juniper Suite" falls below the six-minute demarcation set by Macan for a single-movement sectionalized form, with a track time of 4:49. Although "Juniper Suite" falls out of the generalized time constraints set by Macan, it is this author's belief that his length

⁵³ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 42.

criterion is a *generalized* time frame. “Checkmate” falls cleanly into the time frame with a track time of 9:50. The other two tracks fall within the dimensions of the multi-movement suite, with “Midnight Mushrumps” at 18:58 and “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben” at 16:03. Only “Midnight Mushrumps” was given an entire album side, although “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben” appropriates 78.4% of the album side.⁵⁴ Due to the large number of additional internal and external influences inherent in Gryphon’s fifth album *Treason*, it will be excluded from the analysis of Gryphon’s core works.

Since the focus of this thesis is on the stylistic development of Gryphon, some musical parameters must be established to better focus the analysis. The first parameter is form. Form plays an important role, especially in regards to large scale organization of these lengthy pieces. Form will be examined by length of overall sections, dovetailing and timbral elisions between sections, long-range tonal planning and pitch centricity of adjoining sections, and the comparison of new material versus recycling of phrases and motives.

The second methodological factor is pitch material. “Juniper Suite” strays little from the aeolian, ionian, and mixolydian modes. Subsequent albums become more chromatic, and an examination of just how this chromaticism affects form, transitions, and stylistic borrowing will help to show how the band developed musically. The treatment of consonance and dissonance will also be affected by the increased chromaticism, as well as harmonic language. The increased chromaticism and approach to the treatment of consonance and dissonance will demonstrate Gryphon’s move away

⁵⁴ Again, the concepts of expanded forms and increased track length are only some of the reasons that the four songs analyzed in this thesis were chosen. Also, while not strictly adhering to Macan’s time limitations, it is this author’s belief that his limitations do provide a good basis for discussion.

from sixteenth-century melodic and harmonic language toward a more expansive, twentieth-century musical language.

Timbre is the last main feature that will be useful in describing Gryphon's rapid development from 1973 to 1975, the time span of the four main albums under discussion. Instrumentation, orchestration, and the processing of electrical effects will all alter the timbre used throughout these four songs. Although later works still implement acoustic instrumentation, studio processing and the integration of more percussion and electric instruments affect the transition in Gryphon's sound.

The materials of this thesis are arranged into six chapters. The first chapter has focused on the historical background of the band and its members, including the origins of progressive rock and cultural aspects of the 1960's and 1970's. Each of the next four chapters is dedicated to the analysis of the four songs under discussion, beginning chronologically with "Juniper Suite" and ending with "(Ein Klein) Heldenleben." Each analysis chapter begins with a history of the album to aid in framing the discussion as separate but interconnected with the other albums. After that, a topical approach for each composition is adopted to better facilitate discussion of stylistic development.

CHAPTER 2: AN ANALYSIS OF “JUNIPER SUITE”

Gryphon – Album Overview

Gryphon’s self-titled first album is an eclectic mix of traditional folk music and individual and band compositions in the early music style (early music here meaning medieval and renaissance music). This stylistic choice set Gryphon apart from many other then current progressive rock bands. Although most of the album *Gryphon* is lacking in the “rock” elements characteristic of progressive rock, it is nevertheless an important foundation upon which Gryphon builds in future albums. Later albums are influenced primarily by this album’s choice in instrumentation, timbre, approach to and departure from consonance and dissonance, scale choice, and harmonic function and progressions.

Of the twelve songs contained on *Gryphon*, six are listed as “traditional” (in this instance meaning traditional folk songs), two are listed as by an anonymous composer (both being dance forms, a jig and an estampie), one is attributed to King Henry VIII (who reigned from 1509 to 1547), one by Graeme Taylor and Richard Harvey, one attributed to Taylor alone, and only one song is listed as being composed by Gryphon as a group. This list shows not only the importance of traditional folk and early music, but also the fruition of the early collaboration of Harvey and Taylor. Another important aspect of compositional attribution is that only “Juniper Suite” is attributed to Gryphon collectively. As a result of there being only one song listed as a group composition, a majority of the focus of the album *Gryphon* will be on “Juniper Suite.”

Transatlantic, the record label to which Gryphon was signed for its first two albums, provides a link to the band’s past and Gryphon’s unique place in the progressive

rock genre. Transatlantic Records, founded by Nathan Joseph in 1961,⁵⁵ was an independent label that signed an eclectic mix of artists. The label provides a link to Gryphon's past in that Transatlantic's roster included John Renbourn, from 1965 to 1980 and Pentangle, from 1968 to 1971. Both Renbourn and Pentangle were shown in the first chapter to have been an influence on Harvey and Taylor. Gryphon's unique place in the progressive rock genre is further revealed due to the fact that Transatlantic Records is not a progressive rock label. A majority of the artists signed to the label were folk artists, and even included British blues artist Alexis Korner. Transatlantic's eclecticism and folk emphasis provided an environment conducive to Gryphon's folk background and initial non-rock style.

Instrumentation, Timbre, and Texture

To frame the album as a whole, instrumentation and timbre are most useful for later discussion of Gryphon's evolution into a full-fledged progressive rock band. While the band did expand upon the strophic, medieval, and traditional sixteenth-century song forms (most notably the expanded middle section of "Estampie" and the extended bassoon solo of "The Unquiet Grave"), the songs are mostly sectional or strophic. Instrumentation is unique on *Gryphon* when compared to the majority of progressive rock albums released around the same time (1973). The inside of the album cover lists the following instruments: recorders, crumhorns, bassoon, harmonium, keyboard, glockenspiel, mandolin, classical guitar (i.e. nylon-string guitar), steel-string guitar, harpsichord, floor toms, bongos, and talking drum.⁵⁶ Although the instruments listed are

⁵⁵ Transatlantic Records was sold in 1975 to Grenada Media, in 1977 to Logo Records, and later was absorbed by Castle Media, now named Sanctuary Records.

⁵⁶ This list is a combination of the album cover sections designated "Our Instruments" and from individual song instrumentation given for clarification.

not electric, some have been processed through electronic effects. Due to the relative brevity of electric use, the emphasis is on acoustic (or non-electric) instrumentation, placing this album more in the folk vein than rock.

Referencing the list of instrumentation more easily facilitates a discussion of timbre, since the type of instrument used and the way in which the instrument is played directly influence the quality of timbre produced. For the discussion of timbre in this thesis, it would be useful to separate instrumental timbres into two categories; however, what label to apply to these two categories presents a problem, in part because a solid boundary is vital for a clear understanding of the timbral duality. The concept of duality can be found in nearly all aspects of life, and music is no exception. Theoretical ideas such as major vs. minor, consonant vs. dissonant, conjunct vs. disjunct, and bright vs. dark are only a few of the dualities present in music. While it is an intrinsic factor of any duality to contain a spectrum of gradations within its outer boundaries, defining the general classifications of each part of the duality is useful in differentiating the two ideas or concepts.

One such classification for timbral duality has been proposed by Edward Macan. He writes about progressive rock's duality of feminine and masculine sounds and their juxtaposition in progressive rock music.⁵⁷ The following excerpt from Macan's text further clarifies the importance he gives to this juxtaposition and how it is tied to social aspects of the counterculture:

If ... timbre conveys gender messages more thoroughly than any other element ... then [progressive rock's] electric/acoustic dichotomy is of importance for at least two reasons. [Its] systematic contrasts of harsh, closed, "masculine" timbres ... with more open, relaxed, "feminine" timbres ... is almost unique ... Progressive rock's contrasts of

⁵⁷ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 37-38.

“masculine” and “feminine” sections contribute directly to the structure of many lengthy progressive rock pieces, and mirror the conflicts between patriarchal and matriarchal modes of social organization that were of great significance to the counterculture.⁵⁸

Macan’s sectioning of progressive rock’s timbre usage into masculine vs. feminine is fraught with complications.⁵⁹ The terms masculine and feminine, when used to contrast each other, carry their own inherent ambiguities. These terms only work well to generally define the sex of an organism, but are unable to clearly define any other characteristics of that organism. Although Macan links the use of these two terms to the societal conflicts that were significant to the counterculture,⁶⁰ in an analytical sense, they do not work. While the terms masculine and feminine will not be used to describe timbral duality in this thesis, it is still helpful to understand the ideology behind Macan’s statement, in that other progressive rock analysis may use the same terminology.

For the purposes of this thesis, the timbral duality of progressive rock music will be sectioned into “soft” timbres and “hard” timbres. There are several reasons for choosing these two terms. First, the general concepts of soft and hard are more universal and are easier to visualize. Second, the terms soft and hard are used in music literature not only to describe timbre, but also the attack of a sound, which can alter the timbre (and will be developed later in the chapter). Finally, the terms soft and hard are the universal terms adopted to describe the duality of rock music after the breaking apart of the core of progressive rock music. In today’s music stores, music publications, and even on radio

⁵⁸ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁹ Macan does include a disclaimer in his text that these terms are used as archetypes, and that he does not attempt to judge the biological grounding or social construction of these terms.

⁶⁰ The social conflict that Macan discusses is centered on the conflict present in the late sixties between male and female modes of social organization, brought to the forefront by the feminist movement.

stations, rock is classified broadly as either “soft rock” or “hard rock.” It is for these reasons that timbres in this thesis will be classified as either soft or hard timbres.

Most rock music of the early 1970’s (what is now referred to as “classic rock” and “hard rock”) focused primarily on timbres that produced hard sounds, such as electric guitar (usually distorted through amplifier gain), electric bass (occasionally played with a pick to produce a harsher attack), and drum set. Woodwind instruments typically fall under the soft category, although the saxophone does not (the soprano saxophone’s timbre, however, could fall somewhere in between the two categories). In rock and jazz music, the saxophone is used for its ability to produce a smooth but cutting sound or to be played aggressively to dominate even an electric guitar.

A look at the instrumentation of Gryphon’s self-titled album tells a different story. While progressive rock bands typically used a mix of soft and hard timbres, *Gryphon* is dominated by the soft category. Macan lists the harpsichord, lute, recorder, flute, and crumhorn as feminine sounds which are often used in conjunction with acoustic guitars to introduce a bittersweet or pastoral ambience in more overtly ‘feminine’ sections.⁶¹ For this thesis, the instruments listed above will fall under the soft timbre category. All of these instruments play a prominent role in “Juniper Suite.” While the album *Gryphon* does not contain a lute, the mandolin is equivalent.

Progressive rock bands used contrasting sections of hard and soft timbres to create tension and release. “Juniper Suite,” a song that focuses primarily on soft timbres, creates the same contrast by using smaller gradations within one side of the duality. To further clarify the altered balance of the timbral duality, one must look at Gryphon’s use of form and its correlation with instrumentation and instrumental timbres. A diagram of

⁶¹ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 37.

the sectionalized form of “Juniper Suite” (Fig. 2.7, page 47) reveals that the song is organized in an overall ternary form, with the use of multiple themes and their development in each section. (For the purpose of this chapter only, the overall ternary form is signified by capital letter designations. The individual theme-based sections within are signified by bolded, lower-case letter designations.) It is changes in instrumentation that help to clarify the sectional divisions. Instead of contrasting sections of hard and soft timbres, the soft timbres are further subdivided to create the contrast. For the following discussion, it will be useful to refer to the formal diagram (Fig 2.7). To help eliminate any possible ambiguity in referencing the formal diagram, CD track times are also given in the text.

The exposition of section **a** utilizes the organ (using a stop with a soft attack) and crumhorns. The organ here is not articulated in a legato fashion, but has a slight space in between the chords⁶², even more-so during the odd-beat measures. The crumhorn is unable to produce a legato articulation by its nature as a capped double reed instrument. In addition, the crumhorns are being tongued, creating a more staccato attack. When combined with the percussive cymbal hits at the beginning of each phrase, these timbres that might traditionally be thought of as soft become harsher, or hard.

The restatement of section **a** and its subsequent development, labeled **a**¹ (0:22 and 0:38), are produced on recorders, bassoon, and harpsichord. Here the same theme is expanded upon and the timbre changes to become softer (the change to a higher register may be viewed in conjunction with a softer timbre). Although the recorder is not able to produce a very legato articulation, the transition between notes is smoother than the

⁶² The most accurate articulation marking would be a mezzo staccato, a tenuto marking with a staccato dot placed either directly above or below the tenuto. This usually indicates a solid attack and a slight space in between notes while making sure to not cut the rhythmic duration short.

crumhorn. The light attack of the harpsichord provides a more open quality to the texture when compared to the organ in the previous statement of **a**. The increased tempo here serves this timbral change, leaving less time for the listener to hear the resonance and decay between notes. While the restatement of section **a** and the developmental section **a**¹ are smoother than the opening statement, the percussive rhythmic accompaniment gives it a dance quality rather than a flowing pastoral quality.

The texture of this section (0:22-0:52) is not purely polyphonic, although the voices gain independence as the texture changes from solo with organ accompaniment to a melody/counter-melody duet with harpsichord hits. The counter-melody in the bassoon produces a contrast in voicing that helps to distinguish it from the melody. What keeps this section from becoming truly polyphonic is the unison rhythmic pattern of the 5/8 measures and parallel motion between the voices. The constant negation of polyphony by a homorhythmic pattern could be interpreted as a quick move to the “familiar style” used in sixteenth-century motets, with an origin in medieval conductus.⁶³ Although this link to early music may be viewed by some as a stretch, Harvey’s university training and membership in Murrow’s *Musica Reservata* ensemble would have provided him knowledge of and exposure to early music.

Section **b** (Fig. 2.3, 0:52) changes timbre and texture as there is no high-register wind instrument present (the crumhorn and recorder both having a “nasal” penetrating timbre). The bassoon weaves melodically in and out of the guitar lines (performed by two nylon-string guitars).⁶⁴ The rhythmic complexity also subsides, adding to the more

⁶³ Robert Gauldin, *A Practical Approach to Sixteenth-Century Counterpoint* (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 1995), 140.

⁶⁴ For the discussion of timbre, a distinction must be made between the nylon-string “classical” guitar and the steel-string guitar. Both are acoustic instruments, however the material of the string dictates either a

relaxed mood of section **b**. The continuation of the light harpsichord in the background adds to the “smoothness” without interfering with the guitars and bassoon. This **b** section continues the alternation between polyphony and homophony. The first four-measure phrase (Fig. 2.3, mm. 1-4) of two guitars and bassoon is undeniably polyphonic. Just as in **a**¹, however, the polyphony is negated by a homorhythmic event (mm. 5-6), here two bars of an open fifth (G-D, the tonic of the pitch center) in unison rhythm (half, quarter, half, quarter). While the drone line ostinato is the tonal goal of **b**, it does not change chords as in the previous section, and can thus be seen as an alternation between polyphony and homophony.

The transition section **b**¹ (Fig. 2.4, 1:06) adds a recorder that doubles the nylon-string guitar’s melodic line, but the recorder is lightly articulated, therefore keeping with the smooth articulation of the guitar. While the bassoon does play less legato than the guitars, its low register keeps it from becoming a penetrating sound (unlike the crumhorn, the other double reed previously featured). The transitional section **b**¹ also continues the idea of alternating polyphony and homophony, this time in a four-measure grouping (three measures of polyphony and one measure of unison rhythm). In the first four-measure phrase the bassoon and first guitar alternately transfer motion, as is normal in polyphony. The textural independence changes only two measures later as the bassoon and guitar begin moving in eighth notes, changing to a unison rhythmic pattern. The unison rhythm, unlike in **b**, contains melodic movement. The repeat of **b**¹ contains almost constant eighth-note movement in the guitar while the bassoon again restates the

soft timbre for the nylon-string guitar or a hard timbre for the steel-string guitar. Both the initial attack (onset) of the sound and the subsequent resonance are affected by the physical composition of the strings.

previous phrase. A short transition (1:18) occurs with bassoon, guitar, and alto recorder, this time in a five-measure phrase with one measure of unison rhythm (4+1).

The initial A section of “Juniper Suite’s” ternary form ends here and the B section begins with another contrasting shift in timbre. Section **c** (1:39) utilizes the bassoon for the first time as the dominant melodic instrument over a ground of organ and harpsichord. The harpsichord adds a *sotto voce* timbral attack to the organ, giving a distinctly contrasting sound to the organ found in the first exposition of section **a**. (This type of instrumental pairing, in which one voice adds to the articulation without overpowering the other, is a timbral resource that Gryphon will be shown to exploit more thoroughly in later albums.) The articulation of the bassoon begins staccato or marcato in conjunction with the organ but becomes connected (legato) during the development of the **c** section (1:51). During the development the organ changes from block chords to an Alberti bass arpeggiation, except for the cadences at the end of each phrase. The change in the organ and bassoon increases the momentum toward the restatement of section **c** (2:16). Due to the lower range of the bassoon and organ and the heavier articulation in the opening and closing, the section **c** material lends itself to a heavier, more rock feel than any section thus far (however it is still far from the heavy, rock sounds produced by progressive rock and classic rock bands around the same time).

There is a percussive transition (2:29) and the instrumentation shifts to bassoon and two guitars (2:31), a return to the softer timbre grouping. This time the instruments have less of an equal distribution in the texture (as compared to the **b** section) and act more as solos over a bass line and chordal accompaniment. Each section lasts approximately 10 seconds. The guitar begins (2:31), followed by the bassoon moving to

the foreground and repeating the same material of section **d** (2:42). Section **e** (2:53), closely related to section **d**, is a solo/arpeggiated accompaniment feature between the two nylon-string guitars. The finger-picking arpeggiation of the second guitar lightens its attack and, in combination with the repeated rhythmic figure in the first guitar, thins out the textural density of this section.

Upon the repeat of section **e** (3:01), the bassoon enters in a supporting, bass instrument role. The bassoon's light articulation and disjunct movement keep the "open" density of this section. The final phrase returns to section **d** (3:10), with all three voices in the foreground and the first guitar replaced by mandolin. The mandolin, by its nature as a steel-string instrument with doubled strings, produces a bright and penetrating sound. Section **d** is the culmination of the solo phrases converging into one texture, building in density toward a timbrally harder section (remember here that the hard sections under discussion still fall into the overall soft timbre category).

Section **f** (3:22) breaks the structure by reintroducing a previous timbre, however this time in larger quantity. The crumhorn reenters, but here in the form of a crumhorn trio. The timbre is very piercing and completely out of context to the previous section of bassoon and two guitars (or guitar and mandolin). The rhythmic complexity also returns as the meter seems to change every bar because of the irregular rhythmic groupings. Due to the connotations of adherence to sixteenth-century contrapuntal procedures that section **f** contains, the polyphonic texture will be further examined in the section of this chapter subtitled "Questions of Sixteenth-Century Contrapuntal Procedures."

After approximately 25 seconds of section **f**, section **a** (3:47) returns in its original instrumentation, only this time at half tempo. The texture is less dense than the crumhorn

trio, the open quality is aided by a decrease in the rhythmic complexity. When the instrumentation moves to the recorder, bassoon and nylon-string guitar (as heard in the beginning second exposition) the original tempo resumes and is used until the end of the song, where there is a held chord with a quick recorder ornamentation.

Even though the harder timbral sections of “Juniper Suite” are still soft in contrast to the majority of progressive rock and classic rock bands of the time, the slight timbral variations create the contrast needed to produce the variance necessary in a song of this time span. “Juniper Suite” is not strophic like the pop/folk songs of the 50’s and 60’s, so these timbral changes, as well as contrasting thematic material, are key to the sectional delineation of the overall form. The fact that all of this contrast comes from non-electric instruments in a time of widespread amplification (electric guitar, electric bass, synthesizers) helps to set Gryphon apart from other major progressive rock bands in England at the time (such as Yes, Genesis, and ELP).

Modal Inflections and Borrowing

An examination of scale choice and pitch inventories in “Juniper Suite” will prove useful to understanding future developments in Gryphon’s style. The first section of “Juniper Suite” (Fig. 2.1) moves frequently between modalities of the same pitch center, creating pitch centricity but weakening the tendencies of traditional popular music harmony. The melody of the opening section **a** is centered around the tonic of G. Both phrases of the melody begin on the mediant of G major and end on the tonic pitch. The inner workings of these phrases, in combination with the organ-supplied harmony, begin to shift between modalities of G. The organ here is mostly restricted to dyads and triads, leaving the melody to fill in some of the chord sonorities.

Figure 2.1 (Section a, 0:00)⁶⁵

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Crumhorn and Organ. The Crumhorn part is in treble clef and features a melodic line with lyrics: "Majorino Majorino" and "Majorino Majorino". The Organ part is also in treble clef and provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords. The chord progression is indicated by symbols: G, Bb, C, cm7, F, C, Eb, F, C. The mode is identified as Mixolydian in several places. In the second system, Roman numerals IV, bVI, and I are shown below the organ part, corresponding to the chords G, Eb, and C respectively.

The first chord is G major (the unprepared seventh over G major possibly implying G mixolydian), but by the third beat, the harmony moves to a Bb-major chord. This could imply a move to the natural minor; however, beat four contains an E natural in both the melody and harmony. In the same measure, beat five is a cm⁷ (c minor-minor seventh) chord containing an Eb in the harmony and a Bb in the melody. While this could feel like a solid move to the natural minor mode, the next two beats change chords from F to C, residing more in the mode of G mixolydian.

One other possible explanation for the mixolydian section (C, Eb, F) is that it is a transposition of the opening chord progression (G, Bb, C) at the fourth. This interchange of modalities continues up to the final cadence at measure eight. Beat one of measure eight contains a C-major chord in the organ while the melody has landed on the tonic

⁶⁵ All printed excerpts of Gryphon’s works contained in this thesis were transcribed by the author and are used here with Gryphon’s permission.

pitch, setting up the expectation for a plagal cadence. This expectation is negated by the following movement from the pitches Bb to Eb, outlining an Eb-major chord in combination with the melody. While this movement does create two semitone voice-leading pitches to the subsequent G-major chord, completing the cadence, the IV-bVI-I progression of measure eight is the last gesture of the opening theme to use these interchanging modalities.⁶⁶

It is of some interest to examine the bVI chord at the cadence more closely. This chord is a result of the modal mixing of the exposition of section a. One possible explanation for this modal mixture comes once again from Edward Macan. In Rocking the Classics, Macan focuses his discussion on the influence of modal harmony as stemming from the folk revival of the 1960's and, to a lesser degree, the classical music of North India.⁶⁷ His discussion on modal usage goes on to say, "Progressive rock musicians often choose to accent this sense of unpredictability even further by using ... chromatic variants of a note which occur at or near the same time in different parts. The three most common major modes are the mixolydian mode, the ionian mode, and the hybrid mode that contains a lowered seventh and alternately raised and lowered third and sixth degrees."⁶⁸

Figure 2.2 (Hybrid Scale)



⁶⁶ The bassoon and second recorder in a¹ take their pitch material from the previous organ part, specifically the descending tendency tone Db used in the 5/8 measures.

⁶⁷ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 51-52.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

This hybrid mode would explain the Bb, Eb, and F-natural that appear in a section with a G pitch center. If this explanation is correct, the bIII, bVI, and bVII would be part of the hybrid mode.

A second possible explanation comes from a look at other popular British rock bands, who in turn may have had inspiration from British classical composers. This chromatic mediant movement and modal borrowing appears in the music of other popular British bands of the 1960's and 70's including the Beatles, Genesis,⁶⁹ Yes, and ELP (Emerson, Lake, and Palmer).⁷⁰ Edward Macan's dissertation on the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst includes a section on the English folk revival's influence on the four previously mentioned bands.⁷¹ This influence is found in the use of modality and modal borrowing, prosaic rhythm, bitonality, and quartal and quintal sonorities. While the latter concepts did not influence "Juniper Suite," the first two concepts do influence the composition, even in the first phrase currently under discussion. Two statements from Macan's dissertation help to explain a possible link between the folk revival in which Vaughan Williams and Holst participated and progressive rock music. The first is a quote from Vaughan Williams:

The [English folk-song] movement is now fifty years old, the tunes are again common property, and every English child must know them as well as he knows his own language, whether he likes it or not. Composers of

⁶⁹ A more in-depth look at the music of Genesis, including the use of the bVI chord, can be found in Kevin Holm-Hudson, "A Study of Maximally Smooth Voice Leading in the Mid-1970's Music of Genesis" forthcoming in, John Covach and Mark Spicer, eds., *Understanding Rock 2* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).

⁷⁰ Much of the focus of early research pertaining to progressive rock focused on three of these bands, Genesis, Yes, and ELP. These three bands seem to form the core of the progressive rock genre. The Beatles are an important precursor to progressive rock, coming out of the folk revival and psychedelic era and acting as a sort of bridge to progressive rock. The Beatles' album "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" is seen by many popular music enthusiasts as the first *concept album*, an important feature of the progressive rock genre.

⁷¹ Edward Macan, *An Analytical Survey and Comparative Study of the Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst, c. 1910-1935* (Ph. D. Dissertation - Claremont Graduate School, 1991), 383-399.

the younger generation emphatically do not like it, but they cannot help being influenced by these beautiful tunes. As Gilbert Murray says, “The original genius is at once the child of tradition and a rebel against it.”⁷²

Macan follows this statement with his own observation, which connects with his discussion of progressive rock (and the Beatles).

Perhaps the key phrase of this quote is Vaughan Williams’ assertion that English folk-song had become the common property of every English child. For at the same time that the harmonic and melodic modality of Vaughan Williams and Holst disappeared from English art music, it reappeared in English popular music...⁷³

In the case of Gryphon, it may be that the use of modality is both influenced by an inherent knowledge of English folk music indebted to the folk revival and by first-hand experience of playing early music (from which these folk songs originate).⁷⁴ While both the “inherent knowledge” of modality and Macan’s idea of a “hybrid mode” could explain the changing modal inflections of “Juniper Suite’s” expository phrase, the best explanation might be a combination of both ideas. In the absence of a clear answer, Gryphon’s IV – bVI – I cadence is a link to their English heritage and other progressive rock bands.

The harmonic language in section **b** (Fig. 2.3, 0:52) can be viewed in two ways. The first is a move away from the hybrid mode toward a sort of Phrygian hybrid mode (adding the flat second scale degree to the hybrid mode) or as coloristic *musica ficta*.⁷⁵ The repetition of an Ab in the bassoon and second guitar sets up an expectation for Phrygian; however, they only occur in the first and third measures of the phrase.

⁷² Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The Making of Music* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1955), 52.

⁷³ Macan, *An Analytical Survey and Comparative Study*, 383.

⁷⁴ The bVI chord was used extensively in classical music of the Romantic period, and is not limited to the time periods previously discussed. Taking the background of the band members into account, it seems that they would be less influenced by “common practice” classical music and more by pre-common practice music. The classical influence is best attributed to the “inherent” knowledge of British composers such as Holst and Vaughan Williams, as previously stated.

⁷⁵ The explanation of *musica ficta* could be tied to Harvey’s knowledge of medieval and renaissance music.

Measures two and four of the phrase contain A-natural. Since both explanations for the use of Ab are valid, the best conclusion is that modal borrowing, whether through *musica ficta* or alteration of the hybrid mode, is still a tool that Gryphon implements in “Juniper Suite.”

Figure 2.3 (Section b, 0:52)

Figure 2.3 shows a musical score for three instruments: Gtr. 1, Gtr. 2, and Bsn. The score is in common time (C) and consists of eight measures. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The first four measures are in a 3/4 time signature, and the last four measures are in a 3/4 time signature. The Gtr. 1 part features a melodic line with various accidentals, including a Bb in the first measure. The Gtr. 2 part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The Bsn. part plays a bass line with a mix of eighth and quarter notes.

Figure 2.4 (Section b¹, 1:06)

Figure 2.4 shows a musical score for two instruments: Gtr. and Bsn. The score is in common time (C) and consists of eight measures. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The Gtr. part features a melodic line with various accidentals, including a Bb in the first measure. The Bsn. part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system containing measures 1-4 and the second system containing measures 5-8. The Gtr. part has a '5' above the first measure of the second system, and the Bsn. part has a '5' below the first measure of the second system.

Section b¹ (Fig. 2.4, 1:06) functions a majority of the time in the context of G mixolydian, with the exception of the Eb chord on the downbeat of the fourth and eighth measures. In this case, the accidentals function as coloristic *musica ficta*, not alteration of the hybrid mode. The Bb in the first guitar acts as an upper neighbor tone in a linear

analysis. In response, the Eb is used to avoid the tritone and create a perfect fifth. This is typical of modal use in sixteenth-century contrapuntal writing.⁷⁶ To conclude the section, **b**¹ returns with a cadence on a G half-note.

Section **c** (Fig. 2.5, 1:39) continues the interchange of modalities with a pitch centrality of G (although the compositional and performance style does not fit well into the sixteenth-century idiom). The section begins with a g-minor chord moving to an F#-major chord, which is then repeated. The common tonal expectation would be for a i-vii^o progression, but the listener here is presented with a i-#VII. Measures 4-7 begin to shift toward b minor, the sonority made more firm by the melody's use of the B-C#-D movement that was previously Bb-C-D. Measure 8 creates a firm cadence in b minor, V-i, enhanced by the slowing of the rhythm. The development section of **c** takes this move to b minor and returns the tonality, over 16 measures, back to G major. In measure 9 the organ begins the process through a change of texture from block chords to arpeggiated figures. Until measure 13 the functional key is still b minor. Measures 13-15 feature chromatic and diatonic voice leading toward measure 16. A melodic sequence begins in measure 16 over harmonic movement of fifths and secondary dominants until measure 21, where the secondary dominant movement A⁷-D establishes the dominant of this movement toward G major. The G-major chord on the downbeat of measure 22 is the confirmation of the V-I in G that is the goal of this development section. The progression that follows up to the cadence is a reaffirmation of this goal: G-b-C-D-G or I-iii-IV-V-I.

⁷⁶ Gauldin, *Sixteenth-Century Counterpoint*, 19.

Figure 2.5 (Section c and c development, 1:39 and 1:51)

The musical score is presented in six systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system is for the Bsn. (Bassoon) in the bass clef, and the bottom staff is for the Organ in the treble clef. The time signature is 2/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The Organ part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many beamed notes and rests. The Bsn. part has a more melodic line with some rests. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21 indicated at the beginning of their respective systems.

Section **d** (2:31) appears to shift the key center to D major. Harmonic rhythm speeds up with more accelerated chord changes in the second guitar. The repeating three-measure phrase establishes D as a tonal center through the rapid reaffirmation of the tonic and dominant relationship: I-V-I-vi-ii-V-I-vi-IV-I. However, an examination beyond the chordal guitar accompaniment begins to call D major as a key center into question. A pitch inventory of the melody in the first guitar reveals the use of every pitch in D major with the exception of the leading tone. In fact, any form of the pitch C (C#, Cb, or C-natural) is omitted. While the appearance of the pitches would not necessarily call the key center of D major into question, an examination of the bassoon line adds to the uncertainty. The repeating three-measure pattern in the bassoon appears to be centered in G major. With the exception of the first note, the bassoon plays the root note of the guitar's chord progression. However, the bassoon begins on a G, creating a D/G or so-called "slash chord" (2:31). In addition, the bassoon part lacks any form of C.

Once again the ambiguity of tonal center appears to be a case of modal borrowing. The "slash chord" on the downbeat of the phrase, the bassoon line focusing around G, and the omission of C can be seen as an extension of the previous struggle between modes of G. The pitch inventory here could function in both G major and D mixolydian. This argument becomes less stable when the melody of section **d** is taken up by the bassoon (2:42). The possibility here of a G pitch center is lost as no other instrument takes up the previous bassoon line. While the melody still lacks any form of C, there is no question that the key center here is D major. Although the restatement of **d** answers the question of key center, the modal ambiguity in its initial presentation is a continuation of the modal ambiguity found throughout "Juniper Suite."

Modal ambiguity continues with the introduction of section **e** (2:53). The two finger-picked guitars here play a repeated rhythmic motive outlining the third and fifth, a I-IV-V-I (G-C-D-G) progression in G major. The bassoon outlines these triads upon entering in the repeat of **e**. It is interesting to note that while this is the shortest section of the song, it is the most explicit as to the tonal center and modality. Each repetition of **e** contains nothing but a four-measure phrase ending in a perfect authentic cadence in G major. The tonal clarity of the section is aided by the slowdown in harmonic rhythm to one chord per measure. This tonal clarity transfers to the restatement of **d** that follows.

The return of section **d** as **d**¹ (3:10) can be seen as a resolution of the tonal ambiguity of the previous statements of **d**. The melody this time begins on G; however, it is played above a C-major chord. This C-major chord on the downbeat of the section is the answer to the complete omission of any form of C within section **d**. The question of modality is thus answered through the IV-V-I authentic cadence in G major that opens **d**¹. The melody here remains mostly in the G-D tetrachord, adding emphasis to the reappearance of the pitch C. The first appearance of the mandolin as the melodic instrument here also adds emphasis to the importance of **d**¹. This section reiterates a solid tonal center of G through the repeated harmonic progression IV-V-I-vi-ii-V-I-vi-ii-I (C-D-G-e-a-D-G-e-a-G). A half cadence I-V closes this section.

While **d**¹ can be viewed as the resolution of the D-modal (possibly G mixolydian) versus G-major conflict, the crumhorn trio that comprises section **f** can be viewed as the culmination of this conflict. The section begins in G major with a I-V-I progression. This progression, however, moves directly to a V7-I-ii6-I64-V-I in D major.⁷⁷ The pitch center then moves back to G and continues in G major until the penultimate chord.

⁷⁷ The secondary dominants previously discussed are represented here as V in the dominant key.

Instead of the expected I-V-I, there is a cadence of I-v-I. This modal cadence lends itself back to the initial debate in section **a** over the modality of G major, g minor or G mixolydian. The cadence is a move back to G mixolydian and is a set up of the return of section **a**. Although the tempo of section **a** is slightly slower here than in its initial exposition, the A section is melodically and harmonically identical with the exception of a recorder ornamentation on the penultimate note.

Questions of Sixteenth-Century Contrapuntal Procedures

The contrapuntal nature of certain sections of “Juniper Suite” requires further clarification. Currently, it is unknown whether or not any of the members of Gryphon specifically studied sixteenth-century counterpoint.⁷⁸ Due to the classical training of Richard Harvey and Brian Gulland, the earlier collaborations of Harvey and Graeme Taylor, and the band’s early focus on medieval and renaissance music it can be assumed that the members of Gryphon were influence by sixteenth-century contrapuntal practices. Harvey’s participation in the group Musica Reservata (as discussed in chapter 1) would have provided him an intensive hands-on experience with contrapuntal procedures. Therefore, regardless of the specific study of counterpoint, the members of Gryphon would have the capabilities of writing in the general style of a sixteenth-century contrapuntal idiom.

The first four-measure phrase of section **b** (Fig. 2.3, 0:52) is written according to the sixteenth-century rules of counterpoint (including rules of consonance, the approach to and departure from dissonance, and independence of motion and rhythm between

⁷⁸ In future studies of Gryphon, this question could be answered by continued contact with band members or by procuring enrollment rosters from the Royal College of Music.

voices).⁷⁹ The guitars remain within a twelfth of each other and voice crossing occurs in the middle of the phrase. The bassoon begins in parallel double octaves with the second guitar, but separates into its own voice as the guitars cross voices. During this separation the bassoon repeats the previous two-bar bass line. All strong beats in this section are consonant intervals (octave, fifth, third, and unison); however, there is one instance of parallel octaves between the guitars (m. 26). As for non-harmonic tones, there are five passing tones.

The intervallic relationship between voices in **b**¹ (Fig. 2.4, 1:06) begins to bend the rules of sixteenth-century counterpoint, although the rules are an undeniable influence in the writing style. Most strong beats contain consonant intervals while passing motion is relegated to the weak beats. Parallel motion begins to bend the rules in the third measure of the phrase, which contains four parallel sixths moving directly to three parallel fifths. While a string of parallel motion in sixths does not break any rules of sixteenth-century counterpoint, too many in a succession begins to create a sense of *fauxbourdon*. The parallel fifths that follow do break the rules. When combined with the occasional accented fourths or sevenths approached by a skip instead of a step, the rules become more like loose guidelines.

Harmonic movement in section **b**¹ does fit more closely into sixteenth-century contrapuntal style. The succession of chords for the first four-bar phrase of **b**¹ is as follows: G → G6 → a6 → F → F6 → G6 → C → C6 → D → Eb → F → C. All of the chords present are in either root position or first inversion. While this seems limiting in the style of progressive rock, or rock in general, second-inversion chords would be

⁷⁹ Although this section does contain a harpsichord accompaniment, it is usually too light and buried in the mix (studio mix, not texture) to interfere with the contrapuntal guitars and bassoon.

avoided due to the sixteenth-century contrapuntal approach to dissonance. A second-inversion chord contains the intervals of a sixth above the bass, considered consonant, and a fourth above the bass, considered dissonant. The chord progression also fits well into the sixteenth-century familiar style. Although the root movement is obscured by arpeggiation of the bassoon, when referenced against the chord progression supplied above, the root movement between chords is limited to M2, M3, and P5 and their inversions. In the familiar style, Gauldin states that the most frequent root movement between chords is by perfect fifth and major second, either descending or ascending. Some motion by falling thirds may be observed.⁸⁰ The melodic and harmonic language of this section demonstrates that although the band was influenced by music of the Renaissance, the band's members are by no means attempting to masquerade as purists.

The Alberti bass figuration used in the development of section c (Fig. 2.5, 1:51) functions outside of the sixteenth-century style and moves into a style that pervaded western "common practice" music (a term that usually includes from the Baroque period up to and including some of the twentieth century). During the late Baroque period, Domenico Alberti (1710-40) began to use an arpeggiated figure as a way to enliven sections of slower harmonic movement.⁸¹ During the melodic sequence that follows (as discussed on page 37), the movement of secondary dominants and seventh chords is also out of the sixteenth-century contrapuntal style. During the sixteenth-century, seventh chords were rare and grew out of dissonant passing motion often at cadences or with

⁸⁰ Gauldin, *Sixteenth-Century Counterpoint*, 142.

⁸¹ K. Marie Stolba, *The Development of Western Music, 3rd ed.* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 1998), 331.

suspensions, a precursor to seventh chord preparation in the Baroque.⁸² Once again, the development of section **c** exhibits a baroque characteristic.

The transition back to the recapitulation of A (the third section of the overall ternary form) is a crumhorn trio, which I have labeled **f** (Fig. 2.6, 3:22). Section **f** retains the previous tactus but doubles the rhythmic values. This section also intensifies in rhythmic grouping and meter. While by the third and fourth measures it is obvious that the meter is shifting, it might appear at first that the groupings will realign at the end and could still work in a 4/4 time signature. Upon further investigation, however, the overall number of subdivisions is odd (47 quarter notes).⁸³ This number negates any possibility of the section functioning in a shifting grouping pattern within an overall 4/4 meter.

The three voices of section **f** function polyphonically and more in the style of early music than the other sections of “Juniper Suite.” At first encounter, this section even sounds more like a renaissance consort than previous sections. The voices have more equal weight in the texture and move more independently of each other. In regards to sixteenth-century contrapuntal rules of consonance and dissonance, section **f** remains in the vicinity of the rules but does break them. Octaves and fifths are usually approached by contrary or oblique motion, with some exceptions between the bass and alto voice (Fig. 2.6, mm. 3-4). There is an unprepared seventh in the soprano voice (m. 2) and a fourth between the bass and the alto voice (m. 6). Non-harmonic movement begins to break rules, especially between the bass and alto voice in measures 7-8. Parallel movement to a fourth negates the possibility of a properly functioning passing tone. The following parallel fourth with the second occurrence on the first beat (the

⁸² Gauldin, *Sixteenth-Century Counterpoint*, 138.

⁸³ While the half note can be seen as receiving the pulse, this section functions in the subdivision of a quarter note.

strongest beat) creates parallel second-inversion chords, which is unacceptable according to the rules of sixteenth-century counterpoint.⁸⁴

Figure 2.6 (Section **f** – Crumhorn Trio, 3:22)

The musical score for Section **f** of the Crumhorn Trio, measures 3:22-3:30, is presented in two systems. Each system contains three staves: a top staff in treble clef, a middle staff in treble clef, and a bottom staff in bass clef. The first system includes Roman numeral chord symbols below the bass staff: G: I, V, V7 I, I, V7/V, D:V7, I, ii6 I64, V, G: V, I. The second system includes Roman numeral chord symbols below the bass staff: I, IV I, vi IV ii64 iii64 I, ii, I, v, I.

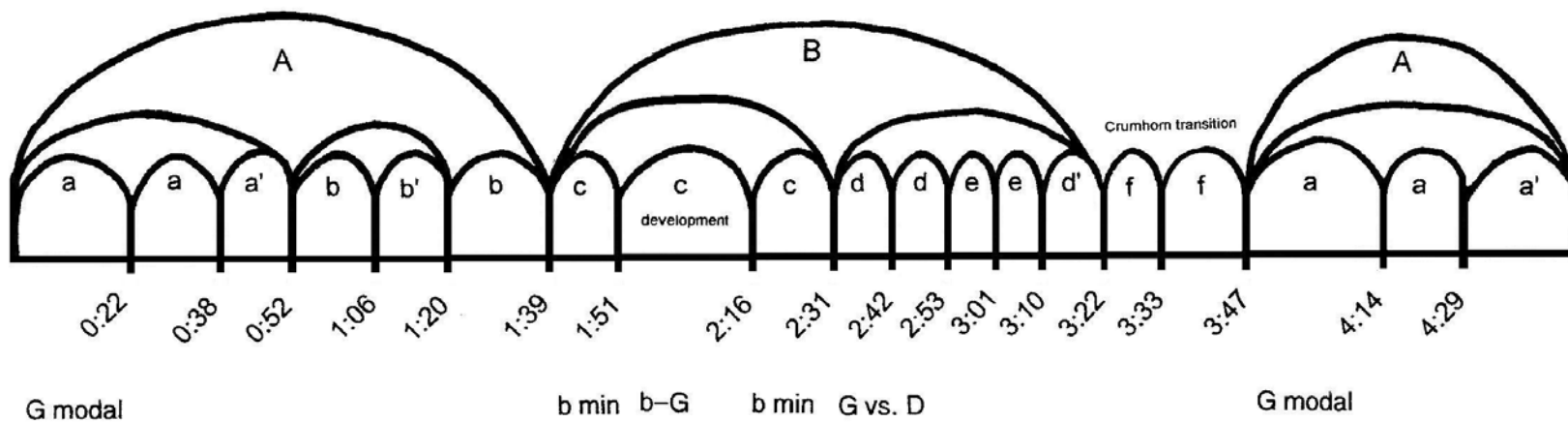
The application here of *musica ficta* fits with acceptable accidentals in traditional early music practice. While the pitch centrality of this section is G, once again the modality is in question. The *musica ficta* used in section **f** are F# and C# (some of the same pitches that were in question earlier). F# functions as leading tone in G and is used here in this manner. The C# is used to break the rules and create a secondary dominant (V/V) twice within the first four measures.

Conclusion

⁸⁴ The fact that one of the second-inversion chords is on the most metrically strong position makes this violation even more out of context to sixteenth-century counterpoint.

“Juniper Suite” is the only song on Gryphon’s debut self-titled album that contains the level of intricacy discussed here. The question of modality is constantly raised throughout this work. The form is sectional and these sections are relatively short in length; however, long-range tonal planning is involved to bring the listener back to the same questions of modality. Timbre plays an important role in delineating the sectionalized form, although the range in contrast of timbre is much smaller than in future albums. Instrumentation, harmonic language, texture, and approach to and departure from consonance and dissonance have distinct ties to early music, but these ties are stretched and broken in each section. Overall, “Juniper Suite” contains a large amount of musical material in a small amount of time. It will be shown that, as the band progresses through the next three albums, the amount of material does not necessarily increase, but the length of each song most certainly does.

Figure 2.7 (Juniper Suite - Formal Diagram)



CHAPTER 3: AN ANALYSIS OF “MIDNIGHT MUSHRUMPS”

Midnight Mushrumps – Album Overview

Midnight Mushrumps is Gryphon’s sophomore album and contains only six songs for a total play time of approximately 42 minutes. In contrast to the self-titled album *Gryphon*, only one song is listed as a traditional composition. The composer list for this album lists two compositions by Graeme Taylor, one by Richard Harvey, one by Brian Gulland, and once again only one track designated as being a band collaboration by Gryphon. *Midnight Mushrumps* is also a change from the album *Gryphon* in that only one song (“A Ploughboy’s Dream,” which is listed as the traditional song) contains lyrics. The shift to a mostly instrumental album is one way in which Gryphon shows a stylistic maturation. A move away from traditional strophic songs requires a greater sophistication in song construction to promote diversity of form. This shift in form is a progression away from the founding members’ roots in medieval and renaissance music, although the sectional design of the songs still holds true on *Midnight Mushrumps*.

Since only one song contains lyrics, instrumentation is of great importance on this album. In contrast to *Gryphon*, the only electrical effects processing on *Midnight Mushrumps* is a slightly distorted bass guitar in “A Ploughboy’s Dream” (whose sound is altered less through a studio processing technique and more through an overdriven amplifier effect). All other instrumentation is either acoustic or an electric version of an acoustic instrument (i.e. electric guitar and electric keyboard). When these electric instruments are used, the timbre chosen is a close match to the acoustic version.⁸⁵ The reliance on crumhorns, recorders, guitar, organ, and basic membranophone percussion is

⁸⁵ This is in contrast to other progressive rock bands whose choice of electric timbre is clearly for an electronic sounding effect (most notably Keith Emerson from Emerson, Lake, and Palmer).

an affirmation of the band's influence from its origin in early music.⁸⁶ The instrumentation of this album is also a parallel with *Gryphon* in that it is almost entirely from the soft timbre category.⁸⁷

Although "Juniper Suite" from the first album was analyzed in chapter 2 because it is the only track listed as a group composition, for this album the criterion for analysis differs. "Midnight Mushrumps" was chosen for consideration due to two factors: it is the title track of the album and the track length is 18:58 (nearly four times longer than the other songs on the album), which implies a maturation in the song-writing process for creation of new materials and the long-term planning of the form. Although "Midnight Mushrumps" is four times the length of "Juniper Suite," the amount of original material does not necessarily increase with an expanded track time, as will be explored in this chapter.

The origin of "Midnight Mushrumps" reveals possible information as to the reasons for the length of the song and the lack of vocals. "Midnight Mushrumps" was commissioned for use in a production of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.⁸⁸ The play was performed in 1974 by the Royal National Theatre in London (under the direction of Peter Hall).⁸⁹ The title "Midnight Mushrumps" comes from a line in *The Tempest*, spoken by the story's protagonist Prospero, "And you, whose pastime is to make midnight mushrumps, that rejoice to hear the solemn curfew..."⁹⁰ It is unclear at this time whether the title of the song or the composition itself came first.

⁸⁶ The bassoon and harpsichord are from the Baroque period, although once again the bassoon might be thought of as a good substitute for the racket (which is actually the precursor to the bassoon).

⁸⁷ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 37.

⁸⁸ From the liner notes of Gryphon. *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*. Talking Elephant TECD 112, 2007.

⁸⁹ More information can be found at www.nt-online.org. There is also reference to this performance in David Oberle, interview by Eduardo Mota, January 1999.

⁹⁰ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, act V, scene i, lines 38-40.

The aspect of track length is one that is essential in the discussion of progressive rock and which is first raised in Gryphon through “Midnight Mushrumps.” During the 1950’s and early 1960’s popular music was typically written in an AABA form and was less than three minutes in length. This short track length can be partially attributed to radio broadcasting formats which favored shorter lengths in popular songs.⁹¹ The introduction of jazz and improvisatory sections in the 1960’s caused longer track lengths. The idea of the concept album,⁹² facilitated by generous recording company budgets, introduced songs that could span the entire side of an LP.⁹³ One influence on these lengthier progressive rock songs is Western classical music, in which songs of these lengths or much greater are common. These influences culminate in Gryphon with the track “Midnight Mushrumps,” which does encompass an entire album side.

The majority of this chapter will focus on the effects of timbre and textural density as they pertain to form and cadence. The sectional form of “Juniper Suite” allows for clear cadences and breaks between sections. The increased length of sections in “Midnight Mushrumps,” as well as the increased total duration of the song, creates the need for continuity. Gryphon begins to execute transitions between sections more smoothly through elided cadences, both harmonically and melodically and also timbrally. The closely related timbres, as well as early introductions of new timbres before a

⁹¹ It is interesting to note here that radio stations still desire short song lengths. Artists with longer songs will usually create a “radio-format-friendly” version of the song to release to radio stations. This practice may be influenced by the desire for more frequent advertisement insertion. It may also be a reaction to the decreased attention span of listeners who are used to frequent song changes due in part to the introduction of MP3 players. It will be interesting to see how satellite radio will affect this radio format, since there is such a diversity of stations and there are no commercials.

⁹² For a more in-depth discussion of the concept album see *The Music’s All That Matters: A History of Progressive Rock* by Paul Stump (London: Quartet Books, 1998). Chapter 5 focuses on the concept album and is titled “You Want to Record What?”.

⁹³ Bands such as ELP, Yes, Genesis, Jethro Tull, King Crimson, and Pink Floyd are noted for tracks that spanned an entire album side.

cadence, aid in the stylistic development of Gryphon. In addition to timbral and textural elements, Gryphon continues to develop the ideas of modal alteration and tonal ambiguity that began in “Juniper Suite.”

Timbre and Textural Density as Pertaining to Form and Cadence

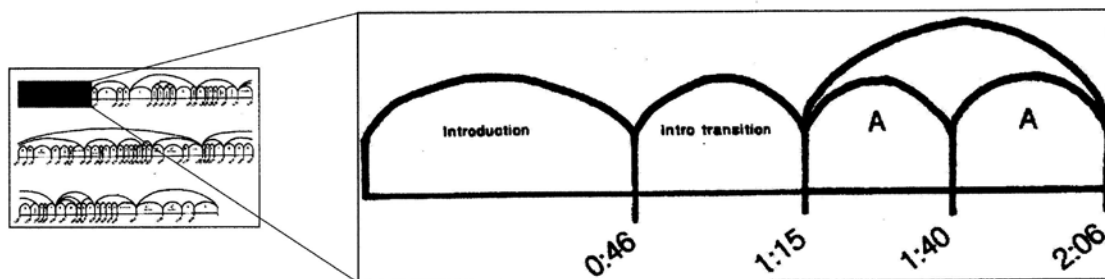
It was shown in the last chapter that timbre and texture were important factors in delineating the sectional form of “Juniper Suite.” While “Midnight Mushrumps” is nearly four times longer than the prior song, timbre and texture are once again relevant for revealing the form. In regards to form, there are eight main melodic ideas to this piece, which include some transitional sections utilizing either timbre, texture, tonality, or thematic and/or motivic alteration. Due to the extended length of this song and the inclusion of eight themes, a thematic table is provided at the end of the chapter (see Figure 3.19 on page 75).

“Midnight Mushrumps” begins with a harmonium introduction at a subdued dynamic, either *p* or *mp*. On the third repeat, the bassoon enters in a high register and with a light attack, blending its melody with the organ to the point that it is indistinguishable at times. The blend of organ and bassoon continues through the first transition, creating less of a solo-accompaniment texture and more of a blended chordal homophony with subtle movement in both voices.

Theme A (1:15) appears as the bassoon increases in dynamic and exerts its dominance over the harmonium and newly added piano, both timbrally and texturally. (While the bassoon here is the solo instrument, there is no major change in articulation and register.) The cessation of constant movement in the organ facilitates the textural transition from chordal homophony to a solo-accompaniment homophonic texture (the

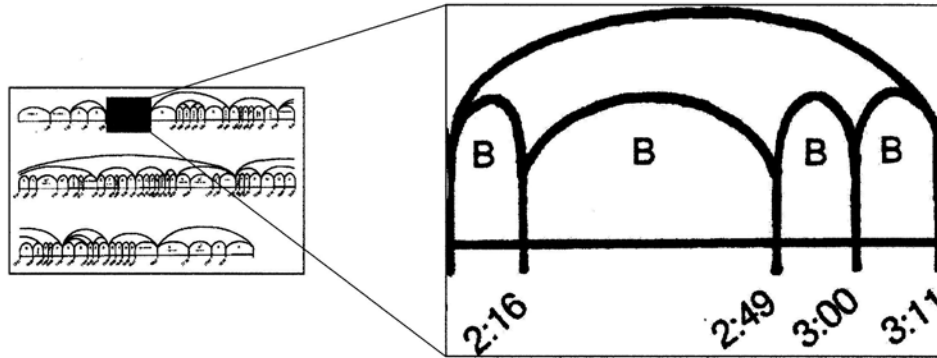
fruition of the introductory transition's use of the bassoon). A transfer in motion occurs as the harmonium plays block chords and the piano creates an increase in forward motion through constant arpeggiation. The piano timbre blends into the harmonium, helping to smooth out this textural transition and transfer in motion.

Figure 3.1 (Formal Diagram, 0:00-2:06)



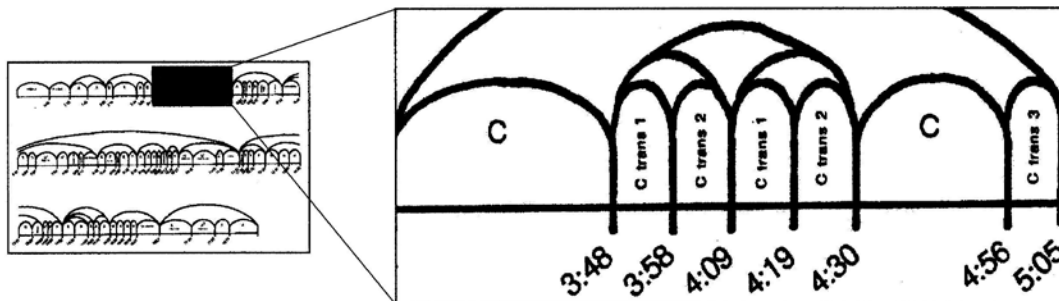
The B theme (2:06) is introduced by the harmonium in a lower register than used previously, after which the theme is taken up by two acoustic guitars. The introduction of steel-string acoustic guitars provides the first penetrating articulation of “Midnight Mushrumps.” The addition of the bassoon increases the textural density without any drastic change to articulation and timbre. The culmination of this B section is the appearance of the church organ and the subsequent disappearance of the guitars. The performance style and texture change as the bassoon and organ play a unison rhythm with a staccato articulation, accompanied by bass guitar and percussive hits during the first note of the pattern and highest note of each descending triad. The percussive attacks serve to accentuate the shifting meter and groupings of the B theme.

Figure 3.2 (Formal Diagram, 2:06-3:11)



In theme C (3:11), the church organ is eliminated and the texture shifts to a bassoon duet with bass guitar and harmonium accompaniment. The steel-string acoustic guitar is added during the consequent phrase of theme C, although this time with much reverb added to the sound (it sounds as though it was either recorded in a very large, acoustically live room or could have been added later through electronic effects processing). This section reverts back to a smooth, legato articulation. Also present is a simple higher-pitched membranophone percussive accompaniment, most likely a small bongo.

Figure 3.3 (Formal Diagram, 3:11-5:05)



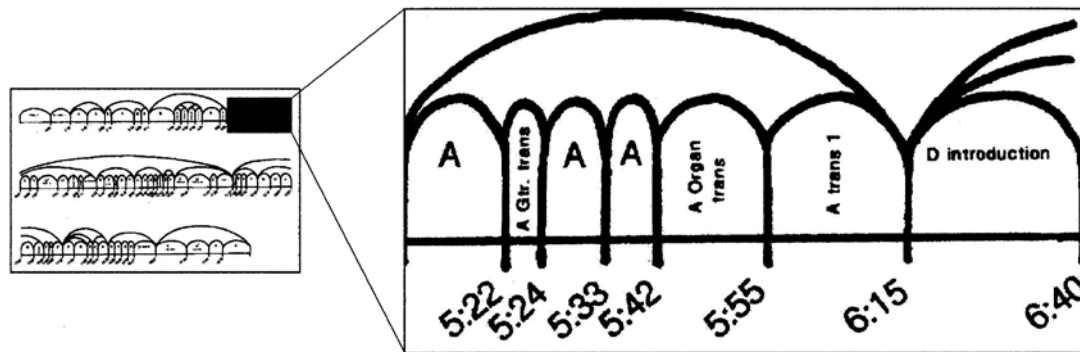
The transitional sections, here labeled as “Ctrans1” and “Ctrans2” (3:48), serve as contrasting sections between recurrences of the C theme. Section Ctrans1 marks the first entrance of the recorder, which played an important role in “Juniper Suite.” In Ctrans1 the instrumentation shifts to recorder with steel-string guitar accompaniment. Ctrans2 contains the return of the harmonium along with a bass guitar and snare accompaniment. The introduction of the snare drum into the texture creates a penetrating membranophone accompaniment that has not been found in either song examined thus far. The restatement of these transitional sections of C keeps the bass guitar in both sections and introduces a bassoon melody/counter-melody that increases the textural density. Along with the snare, the second recurrence of Ctrans2 is the most intense section thus far both in regards to texture and timbre.

The return to theme C (4:30) this time is more diverse in instrumentation and increases in textural density throughout the section. While the bassoons still carry the melody, the steel-string guitar is included in the antecedent phrase and recorders are added this time during the consequent phrase. The recorders double the melody during the restatement and then take over the melody during the Ctrans3, utilizing the rhythmic motive from C.

After the culmination of section C’s textural increase, theme A returns (5:05). Here, the melody is played on recorder while accompanied by sleigh bells and organ doubled by unison piano. This doubling creates a timbral blending in which the piano does not overpower the organ, but adds a sharper attack to the chords. Timbral blending through instrumental pairing is a technique that Gryphon is still developing in “Midnight

Mushrumps” and is increasingly implemented in “Checkmate.” (This concept was first discussed in regards to an organ and harpsichord doubling in “Juniper Suite.”⁹⁴)

Figure 3.4 (Formal Diagram, 5:05-6:40)



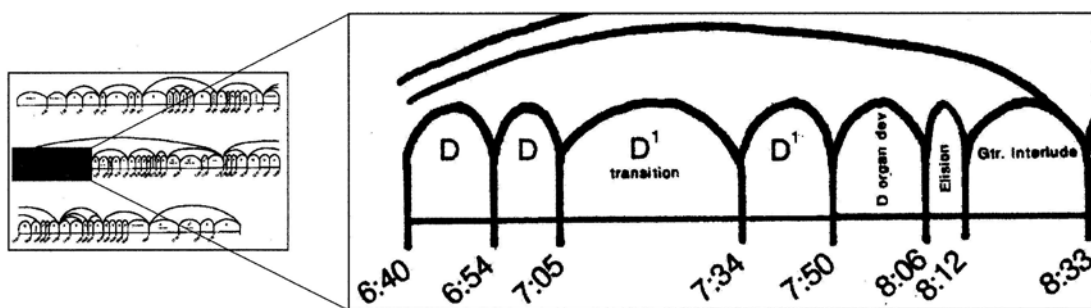
After a guitar transition, theme A is repeated on the harpsichord and then organ with harpsichord accompaniment (5:24 and 5:33). What follows next is a rapid alternation of instrumentation during an approximately 30-second transition into the D material. The first transitional section (labeled “A Organ trans”) alternates between sections of recorder melody with staccato organ and piano chords and sleigh bell and timpani accompaniment, and sections of harpsichord and bass accompaniment. This transitional section is an alternating culmination of most of the instrumentation and timbres used thus far (with the most important omission being the bassoon). Almost as soon as these rapidly alternating sections have asserted themselves, the intensity begins to decrease as a result of timbre and textural density. The organ and bass begin, followed by the addition of the acoustic guitar and then piano. Near the end of this short transition the organ and guitar drop out and the piano and bass end the section. In terms of overall

⁹⁴ Refer to chapter 2, page 29.

song structure, this is the first instance of a release in response to the constant increase in textural density for the first six minutes and 15 seconds of “Midnight Mushrumps.”

The introduction to theme D (6:15) changes to an organ solo in free time, a clear change in texture and style from the previous section. Theme D also utilized the organ, but the stop changes and subsequently so does the timbre. Theme D (6:40) is played as a solo voice over a single block chord. The stylistic reference here may be to a type of organum, with a melismatic right-hand voice over a sustained, unmoving tenor.⁹⁵ The D transition section brings in the bass, with a much sharper attack than the organ can produce. The block chords in the organ move to the upper register of the texture here and move more frequently over the lower bass melody. D¹ (7:34) once again is played entirely on organ with the same timbre as D. This time the melody contains parallel thirds over a block-chord accompaniment. Here the block-chord accompaniment moves more rapidly with the new material. The melody continues to develop until, at 8:06, the steel-string guitar joins in the repeat of a short melodic motive. Once again, the attack from a stringed instrument adds a sharper attack than the organ can produce alone (one made particularly sharp by the steel, rather than nylon, strings of the guitar).

Figure 3.5 (Formal Diagram, 6:40-8:33)

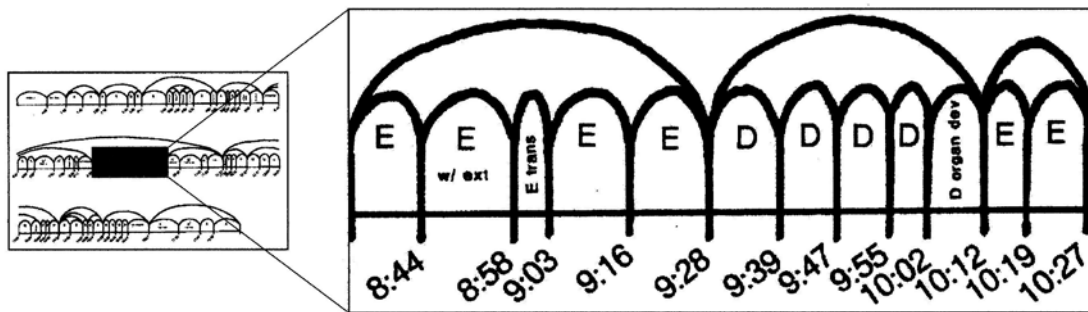


⁹⁵ Although in organum the tenor would change pitches, this section can be seen as reflective of that style, although the writing suggests loose stylistic borrowing rather than strict imitation.

After this short motive, the guitar takes over and repeats the D section. Here the transition is softened by the guitar's introduction in the previous motive, creating a type of timbral elision. With only a low, *sotto voce*, sustained organ accompaniment, the guitar timbre seems as if it were being played in a large, empty room.

For theme E (8:33), the organ drops out leaving only the solo guitar. As before, the textural and timbral change from organ to guitar creates the impression of a larger performance space (i.e. a large empty room). The heavily picked attack⁹⁶ of the guitar enhances the timbral change. After an extension of the E material, the organ enters in sustained arpeggios, with the guitar arpeggios almost covered up except for the sharp attack. At 9:03, the bassoon enters as the solo voice (on theme E) over the organ and guitar arpeggios, followed by the recorder melody at 9:16.

Figure 3.6 (Formal Diagram, 8:33-10:27)



At 9:28, the timbre shifts slightly without completely changing the texture. The bass guitar enters with a counter-melody while the piano takes over the organ arpeggiation (while the guitar continues to blend into the texture); however, the arpeggiation quickly transitions into theme D. Here is a clear example of a stylistic development on the part of Gryphon. When compared to the sectional form of “Juniper

⁹⁶ Here “heavily picked” means a qualitative description of the pick striking the guitar string, as compared to the lighter use of a pick or the use of fingers.

Suite” with clear transitions between sections, Gryphon uses a quasi-timbral and textural elision to transition from theme E back to theme D seamlessly. During the fourth repetition of theme D (9:56), the bassoon reenters the texture as the melodic instrument and is doubled by glockenspiel, adding a metallic timbre to the melody.⁹⁷ The bassoon continues as the melodic instrument over basic membranophone accompaniment. It is at this point that all three of the dominant melodic instruments (organ, guitar, bassoon) have been used as transitional material between D and E material. This section is the most striking thus far because of the dynamic and intensity of the percussive accompaniment.

The bass as a melody instrument is one facet of progressive rock that broke the mold of 1950’s and 1960’s popular rock music. The traditional role of the rhythm and bass section of a pop/rock band was to supply the basic tempo (beat) and support the functional harmony. At times the bass guitar moved beyond a supporting role, as in the bass melody of theme E. Macan discusses the changing role of the bass guitar in Rocking the Classics: “The progressive rock bassist frequently enters into the melodic discourse, and the bass guitar of choice is often a Rickenbacker or some other instrument with a thick, trebly sound. Chris Squire of Yes was especially influential in this regard...”⁹⁸ A possible connection between Gryphon and Yes is present in this new melodic approach to the bass guitar, as Phil Nestor’s bass lines in section E (10:12) become increasingly part of the melody and more than just harmonic support. In addition, while the band’s original trio may have initially been influenced by medieval and renaissance music, Phil Nestor joined Gryphon later and came from a more “rock”

⁹⁷ On the back of the album cover, credit is given to Richard Harvey for playing the glockenspiel, not the percussionist David Oberle. This could be explained in regards to performance, since the tom-tom enters the texture at the end of this phrase, making it impossible for David Oberle to simultaneously perform the glockenspiel part.

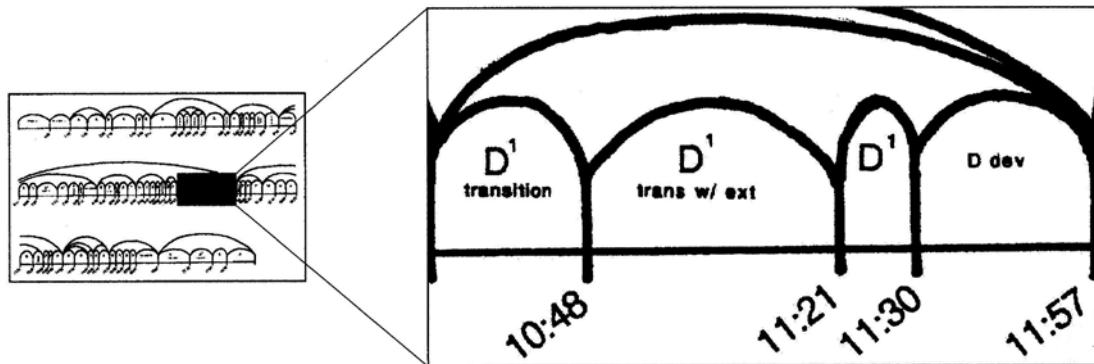
⁹⁸ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 38.

background as discussed in the first chapter. Theme E returns at 10:12 with staccato organ chords and with the bass playing the melody. The bass' articulation changes as it appears to be played with a pick, making the attack much more penetrating, and therefore bringing the bass' timbre to the foreground.

The D¹ transition returns at 10:27 with a bassoon melody and bass accompaniment.⁹⁹ As the bass exits and the organ reappears there is a decrease in intensity, moving toward a restatement of the D¹ transition section. Once again the solo guitar, with long, sustained organ chord accompaniment, slows the tempo and acts as a transition into new material just as it did at 8:12 (Guitar Interlude). This time, however, a nylon-string guitar is used, as compared to the previous steel-string guitar. The use of nylon-string guitar creates a softer attack and warmer sustained ambiance that blends into the organ timbre. In this presentation of the D transition material the bass also remains in the texture for harmonic support. Here the bass attack is soft and subdued to blend with the guitar and organ (as compared to the picked bass attack in the last E section). From 11:21 to 11:57 the D section material is presented on organ with varying stops. The section at 11:21 begins with D¹ and once again moves to the D organ development material. The organ development material adds a higher flute-like stop and presents the elision material for a transition to the new F section.

⁹⁹ In this instance the D¹ transition material does not serve its previous purpose of a transition to D¹, but as a transition to the new F section at 11:59.

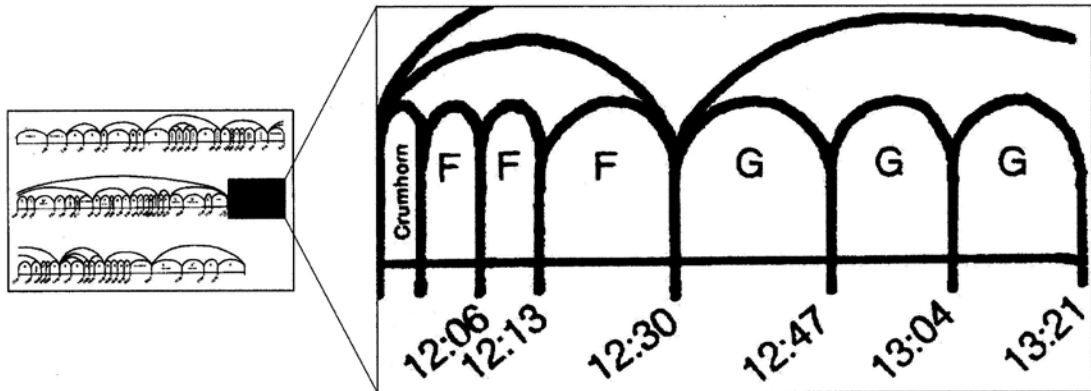
Figure 3.7 (Formal Diagram, 10:27-11:57)



Immediately prior to section F, there is a one-measure introduction of crumhorns in unison rhythm and doubled at an octave. While the timbre changes drastically from flute-stop organ to crumhorn (discussed previously for its penetrating double reed timbre), the elision smoothes out the textural transition, unlike the transitions in “Juniper Suite.” The quick crumhorn feature is also an important structural event which is tied to timbre. The crumhorn transition is timbrally distinct from all other sections of “Midnight Mushrumps,” and is only 14 seconds past the golden section. The golden ratio of .618 is a significant ratio in music, art, and architecture. In music, this ratio is exhibited as a percentage relating to the overall time of the work, the number of measures, the number of beats, etc. In this thesis, since the music was never written out, the overall track length will be used to determine the golden section. The close proximity of the crumhorn transition to the golden section, with only a small deviation, argues the case that, whether intentional or not, it is indeed a structurally significant event at approximately 61.8% of the way through the song.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ This can be viewed as a possible connection with classical music, in that some twentieth-century composers (Bartok being possibly the best example) purposefully used the golden section as a structurally important location in their compositions. It is likely that Harvey would have encountered works using the golden section during his musical training.

Figure 3.8 (Formal Diagram, 11:57-13:21)

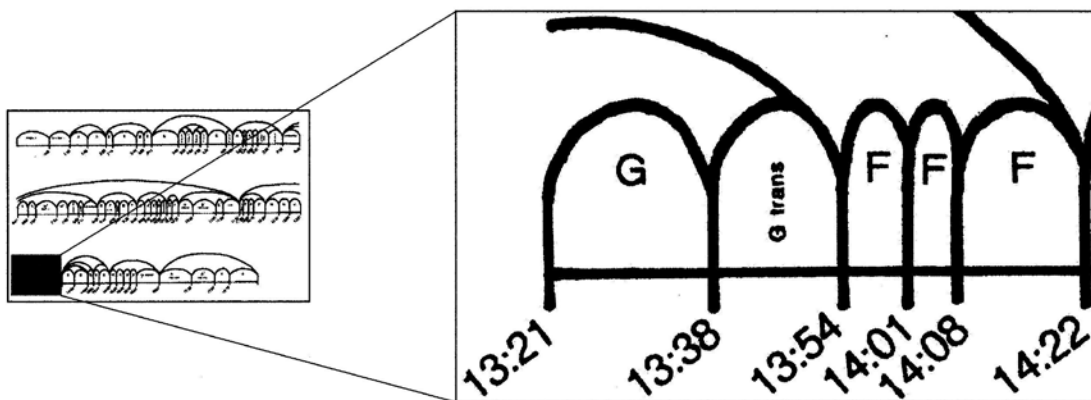


Section F begins with bass, organ, and a snare drum with what sounds like only one or two strings of snares. What is unique here is that the organ shifts from the right track to the left track and back during the arpeggiated chord. The alternating location within the stereo sound-field is where studio processing comes into play for “Midnight Mushrooms.” This alternating effect would have previously required either two organs on opposite sides of the performance area or the use of two microphones at registral extremes. Movement within the stereo sound-field could now be accomplished after the recording processing by changing the left and right spatial panning on the mixing board while mixing down the tracks.

At 12:13, the bassoon, recorder, and organ play the melody with a bass accompaniment. The textural and timbral changes do so without any silence or rest in between. The instrumentation and texture here resemble that of “Juniper Suite,” in addition to the rhythmic asymmetry. While the F material is presented only for roughly 30 seconds and acts as more of a transition, its unique contrast in texture and timbre to what surrounds it qualifies its designation as a separate section.

Theme G is repeated four times (12:30 – 13:38), and here the thickening instrumentation and timbral variations create the diversity that drives the section. It begins with a tom-tom percussive entrance and adds the bassoon melody and bass. Although the bass movement is very active, it is not independent enough to consider it a counter-melody and should therefore be considered harmonic accompaniment. On the second statement, the recorder enters and doubles the bassoon while the steel-string guitar plays a counter-melody, sometimes in unison with the bassoon and recorder melody, and the organ reenters mid-phrase as harmonic accompaniment. The third statement adds a snare drum and a left- and right-panned soprano recorder, which emphasize the call and response nature of section G's melody. This third statement of theme G contains every melodic instrument used thus far with the exception of the harpsichord and crumhorn. The fourth statement keeps the same instrumentation, but the soprano recorders become more ornamental, weaving in and out of melody and counter-melody. While still homophonic, the use of counter-melody and call and response in section G creates a sense of greater independence among the instrumental voices.

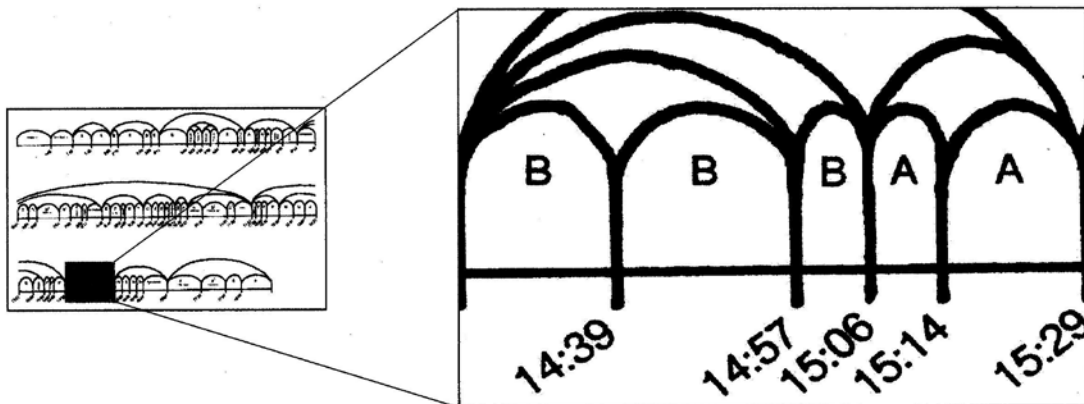
Figure 3.9 (Formal Diagram, 13:21-14:22)



The G transition (13:38) is a unison rhythm melody that keeps most of the pitched instrumentation (the guitar drops out and the snare switches to tom-tom) but changes texture from the previous polyphony. Here is another textural and timbral progression by Gryphon, in that the texture changes drastically but the culmination of timbres softens the transition between sections. The return of the F material (13:54) drops the bassoon, but the recorders (still left- and right-panned) double the organ arpeggiation from before. This is the convergence of the left- and right-panned instrumentation. The F material proceeds as before until the reentrance of the bassoon at the end that creates a timbral elision back to the B material, the bassoon carrying over as a sustained drone in unison with the bass.

The B section at 14:22 begins with an organ, but in a higher register than the first exposition of theme B. On the second restatement, the acoustic guitar, bass, and harpsichord add accented chords to emphasize the asymmetric rhythm of the theme. While these accented chords are short and contrasting in timbre (string versus organ), they function in the soft timbre category and are more subdued. Here, the texture receives these accents while still remaining in the soft timbral realm. While the bass is considered a deep, harder timbre instrument, the timbre here very closely matches that of Chris Squire of Yes. The treble-dominant timbre detracts from the thick bass sound capable on the electric bass. In this instance, the bass blends into the softer timbres. On the third restatement, a higher register of the organ is added to these accented chords, closely matching the previously added timbres. The density of this section, like others in “Midnight Mushrumps,” continues to thicken through added instrumentation without a significant change in timbre.

Figure 3.10 (Formal Diagram, 14:22-15:29)

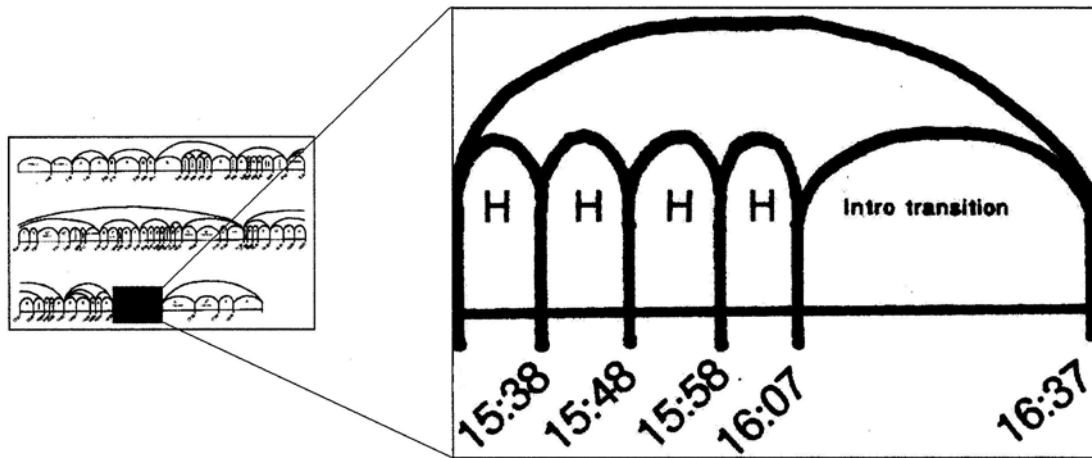


Theme A returns (15:06) with a synthesized harpsichord (on this album the acoustic harpsichord is not listed), bass, and an active percussion accompaniment. This time the A theme is only repeated twice, the second time adding organ to the melody. The guitar appears during the extension of the second repeat in what is best described as the most dissonant and dense section of “Midnight Mushrumps.” The guitar enters as a consonant timbre, but quickly begins a chromatic ascent toward the cadence while becoming increasingly harsher in attack. Studio processing also comes into play here as the guitar begins in the left track, is panned to both tracks at the beginning of the chromatic ascent, and is then shifted steadily back to the left track at the peak.

What comes next is new material (15:29) that once again states a simple theme and proceeds to build texture and density. The studio chorus added to the previous section’s guitar ascent creates an overlap that smooths out the timbral and textural change. The bassoon and piano, along with percussive accompaniment, first state theme H. The guitar is added on the repeat and, through increased volume and the heavy attack of the steel strings, is brought to the front of the texture (almost to the point of covering up the previous timbres). A nylon-string guitar is added for the third statement of H and

brings back a warm timbre to help subdue the steel-string guitar. The last repeat (15:58) adds organ to the melody, which sets up the next timbral elision.

Figure 3.11 (Formal Diagram, 15:29-16:37)

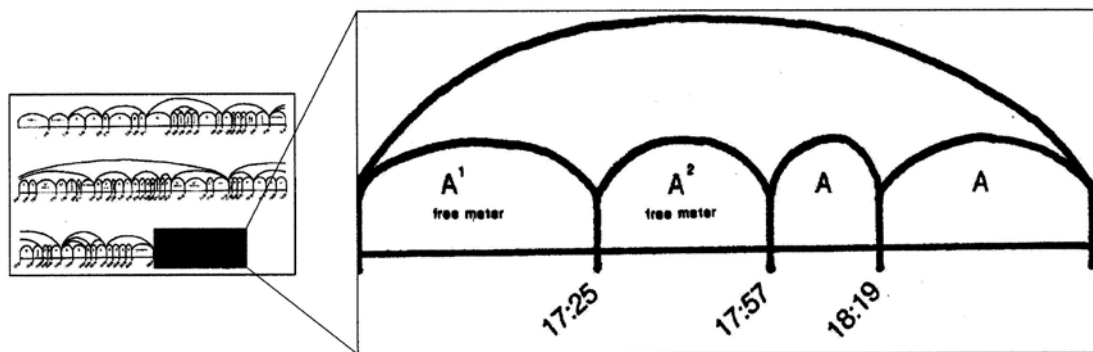


At 16:07, the material from the introductory transition (originally at 0:46) returns, the transition elided timbrally from the organ of the last statement of H. The bass and cymbal hits, along with an increased dynamic, create an attack heavier than in previous sections. Once again this dramatic textural change closely coincides with a golden section. The secondary golden section (that from the crumhorn section to the end of the song) occurs at 16:17, only 10 seconds away from the beginning of this secondary section. It occurs only one second after the beginning of the dynamically dramatic organ and piano call and response that is the peak of the return to the introductory transition material. At the close of this section, the organ overpowers all other instrumentation and finishes as the only remaining instrument.

Section A¹ (16:37) serves as a clearing out of the density that has been building thus far in “Midnight Mushrumps.” The alternating, somewhat call-and-response, quality of the recorders, using a limited pitch inventory, creates an open quality, in addition to

the cymbal rolls and glockenspiel percussive accompaniment. The return to theme A material (17:57) remains timbrally and texturally the same as section A¹. Here there is no need for the introduction of a new instrument to help smooth out the transition between sections.

Figure 3.12 (Formal Diagram, 16:37-18:58)



After viewing the timbral and textural changes throughout “Midnight Mushrumps,” it is clear that timbral elisions, the thickening of texture through added instrumentation without drastic timbral change, and the repetition of material with small instrumental variants create diversity through 18 ½ minutes of music with little more original thematic material than in “Juniper Suite,” a song of only 4 ½ minutes. In addition, the disappearance of purely contrapuntal sections and the new reliance on homophonic and solo sections shows a departure from early music and an influence of the progressive rock movement of the time.

Some studio effects are used, but they do not drastically change the texture or timbre. They merely add to the performance setting without having to have a large ensemble to do so, as would have previously been necessary. Also, the constant build-up and release, only to build up and release again, can be connected to Macan’s discussion of the expanding form in progressive rock music. Macan states that:

Progressive rock was able to solve yet another challenge posed by the psychedelic jam – how to create a sense of direction – by drawing on nineteenth-century symphonic music’s fondness for building up tension until a shattering climax is reached, abruptly tapering off, and then starting the whole process anew. In progressive rock, this process is most frequently achieved by beginning with a quiet (often acoustic) passage, usually without the rhythm section, and then gradually layering in electric/electronic instruments, and ultimately the bass and drum, until a powerful climax is achieved.¹⁰¹

While it is not until the second album that the use of electronic instruments is used to this end, the beginning of the trend is found in the cycle of climaxes contained in “Midnight Mushrumps.”

The Development of Tonal Planning

Just as is the case with “Juniper Suite,” “Midnight Mushrumps” opens with an ambiguous modality and tonal center. The piece begins with an organ on an E-major chord with upper movement between pitches A and B in alternating eighth notes (Fig. 3.13). What follows is an F-major chord in second inversion to a C-major chord, finally ending the short progression on a G-major chord, with alternation in the upper sonority between C and B: E, F64, C, G. While this may be seen as the solidification of a G-centered key, the transition leads the listener toward a different tonal center.

The introductory transition (Fig. 3.13) begins with a progression focused on mediant movement – F major, a minor, C major – outlined in both the left hand of the organ and the bassoon melody. The following alternation between g-minor and A-major chords (containing C#) in combination with the introductory E-major chord (containing G#) begin to cancel out the possibility for a G-centered tonality (containing the sharp tonic and sharp subdominant scale degrees). It also is too far removed to be contained by the G-hybrid mode of “Juniper Suite.”

¹⁰¹ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 44.

Figure 3.13 (Introduction and transition, 0:00-1:15)

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the Organ and Bassoon parts for measures 1-3. The Organ part features a melodic line in the right hand and a sustained bass line in the left hand. The Bassoon part has a melodic line starting in measure 3, with the annotation "3rd and 4th times only" above it. The second system, starting at measure 4, is labeled "Modal Conflict Intensifies" and shows the Organ playing chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The Bassoon part continues with a melodic line. The third system, starting at measure 9, shows the Organ part with a more complex chordal texture in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The score ends with the annotation "Transition to Section A".

As the end of the introductory transition is approached, the alternation of chords becomes exclusively g minor, A major, and D major (Fig. 3.13, mm. 12-17). Here, the tonality finally emerges as centered in D, or better yet, the pitch-inventory can be seen as being contained within the D-hybrid mode. This final establishment of a D-centered tonality is also a setup for section A, which is undeniably in D major. Contained within

the introductory material, “Midnight Mushrumps” again tackles the G vs. D tonal ambiguity present in “Juniper Suite,” although this time in a different manner. Section B, while being tonally centered in D, moves away from D major toward the previously suggested D hybrid mode (from the introductory transition). The bass guitar in measures 1-4 outlines a d-minor chord (Fig. 3.14). In the following four measures the bass repeats a c-natural. Both the flat third and flat seventh scale degrees used here work in the D hybrid mode. These modal inflections can be viewed as a connection to the tonal ambiguity from “Juniper Suite” and the introductory transition of “Midnight Mushrumps.”

Figure 3.14 (Section B, 2:49)

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: Guitar, Bassoon, and Bass. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4. The second system contains measures 5 through 8. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 6/8. The guitar part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bassoon part plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The bass part plays a simple harmonic line, primarily consisting of quarter notes and half notes. The notation includes various musical symbols such as stems, beams, and rests.

Section C (Fig. 3.15) provides a clue as to the working out of the tonal G vs. D ambiguity. The first two measures are a repeated motive in thirds, with all three voices cadencing on octaves of D. The harmonic progression is a basic tonic-predominant-

dominant half cadence, I-ii-V, with an added secondary dominant of ii, creating the progression of I-V/ii-ii-V in G major. The V/ii also may shed some light on the E-major chord that opens “Midnight Mushrumps”; however, it does not function as a secondary dominant in the introduction. Another possible connection between section C and the first chord of “Midnight Mushrumps” is the A/G# resolving to B/G# in the bassoons (Fig. 3.15, mm. 1-2). Measures 3-4 become a repeated phrase that is best understood as tonally centered in G. In G, the progression is as follows: I-bVI-bIII-bVII-bIII-bVII-I-V, ending once again on a half cadence. While this may not be as standard a progression as measures 1-2, it can still be explained by the G-hybrid scale. Just as in “Juniper Suite,” the playing out of tonal ambiguity is most certainly a powerful tool in Gryphon’s compositional repertoire.

Figure 3.15 (Section C, 3:11)

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Bassoon 1, Bassoon 2, and Bass. The first system covers measures 1-2, and the second system covers measures 3-4. The notation includes clefs, time signatures, and various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. Below the notation, chord progressions are indicated in Roman numerals.

System 1 (Measures 1-2):

- Bassoon 1:** Features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a half note.
- Bassoon 2:** Features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a half note.
- Bass:** Features a melodic line with quarter notes and a half note.
- Chord Progression:** G hybrid: I V/ii ii V I V/ii ii V I bVI bIII bVII

System 2 (Measures 3-4):

- Bsn. 1:** Features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a half note.
- Bsn. 2:** Features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a half note.
- Bass:** Features a melodic line with quarter notes and a half note.
- Chord Progression:** bIII bVII i V

The first transitional section of C (Fig. 3.16, 3:48) begins and remains in G major; however, this changes on the second presentation (4:09). The first occurrence cadences on an arpeggiated e-minor chord in the recorder. The second occurrence cadences on an E-major chord, supported in the guitar and, this time, by the bassoon. Once again the E-major chord reappears in context with a G-centered tonality. Here, as in the introduction, the E-major chord is not acting as a secondary dominant, due to the fact that the second C transition section (Fig. 3.17, 3:58) remains unaltered in G major (containing several e-minor chords). Here, the E-major chord is simply acting as a major submediant, VI.

Figure 3.16 (Section Ctrans1, 3:48 and 4:09)

1st Time (3:48)

Sop. Recorder

Guitar

Bassoon

e minor

2nd Time (4:09)

S. Rec.

Gtr.

Bsn.

E Major

Figure 3.17 (Section Ctrans2, 3:58 and 4:19)

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is for Guitar, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Above the staff, chord symbols C, G, D, G, and notes c, a, c, a, c are written. The second staff is for Organ, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The third staff is for Bassoon, with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The bottom staff is for Bass, with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The time signature is 3/4.

By the time the third transition of C appears, G has been established firmly as the tonal center, whether major or hybrid mode. The last transition out of C (Fig. 3.18) focuses on the recorder arpeggiation of D major, G major, and A major, while keeping the same rhythmic motive in the bass as theme C. This sets up a I-IV-V progression in D major, leading directly to the return of theme A. Theme A is in D major and remains so for over a minute. At this point, Gryphon has used the tonal centers of G and D (whether major or hybrid) and the conflict between the two to guide a period of time greater than the entirety of “Juniper Suite.” Taking harmonic ideas from “Juniper Suite,” this work expands these ideas to new lengths for the first quarter of the song. It is in this ability to direct longer periods of time (here using only three thematic ideas) in a coherent manner that never becomes stale.

While the idea of tonal ambiguity returns with the recurrences of these three main thematic ideas, the remaining thematic material is tonally unambiguous. Tonal centers change with each new thematic idea, not conflicting with what comes before and after. When the A, B, or C sections return, the listener is already familiar with the ambiguity, as

it has already been played out. This concept of tonal ambiguity is developed in “Midnight Mushrumps,” and becomes transformed in the song “Checkmate,” on which the next chapter focuses.

Figure 3.18 (Section Ctrans3, 4:56)

The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes Sop. Recorder, Alto Recorder, Bassoon, and Bass. The second system includes S. Rec., A. Rec., Bsn., and Bass. A section of the score is marked with a '7' and the text 'Timbral interjection for smooth transition'. Below the A. Rec. staff, the chord progression is indicated as 'D Maj: I IV V I IV V I'.

Conclusion

As was stated at the beginning of the chapter, the increasing length of sections in “Midnight Mushrumps,” as well as the increased total duration of the song, creates the need for continuity. Through cadences that are elided (harmonically, melodically, and timbrally), Gryphon’s developing style shows a more mature execution of transitions.

The closely related timbres, as well as early introductions of new timbres before a cadence, aid in this stylistic development. The loss of purely contrapuntal sections and the increasing reliance on homophonic and solo sections show the effect of Gryphon's slow departure from its early musical roots toward the more popular trends in music during the 1970's. The band's continued development of the G-hybrid mode and the G vs. D conflict extend to lengths greater than the entirety of "Juniper Suite." While they do not govern the tonal direction of the entire song, this idea of long-term tonal conflict is one that will be increasingly important in "Checkmate."

Figure 3.19 (Midnight Mushrumps – Table of Themes)

Theme A

Theme B

Theme C

Theme D

Theme E

Theme F

Theme G

Theme H

CHAPTER 4: AN ANALYSIS OF “CHECKMATE”

Red Queen to Gryphon Three – Album Overview

As discussed in chapter 3, Gryphon introduced the idea of the concept album through its use of an entire album side for a single composition. Not surprisingly, Gryphon would more fully realize the concept album with the creation of its third album, *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*, which was released in 1974, the same year as *Midnight Mushrooms*. *Red Queen to Gryphon Three* is literally a chess reference.¹⁰² The album cover art is a play on this theme and on the band’s earlier adoption of medieval and renaissance stylistic elements. An old man is featured prominently in the forefront playing a game of chess in which the pieces are all gryphons. In the distance lies a sprawling castle-like city on a river containing two large ships with sails. In the middle ground, on an open green pasture, the symbolic gryphon from the cover of the band’s first album is engaged in battle with a lance-wielding armored knight.

The conceptual unification of ideas on this album cover (i.e. medieval and renaissance inspired iconography, the use of the band logo in multiple roles, and the visual reference to a chess game which is used programmatically for the music of the album) is in the same line as many other progressive rock bands of the time. Macan devotes a chapter in his progressive rock text to album cover art, in which he relates the Wagnerian idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or complete art work, to albums by such bands as the Beatles, ELP, Genesis, Pink Floyd, and Yes.¹⁰³ It must be clarified here that his comparison is a relation and not a strict correlation. Wagner’s idea of the

¹⁰² There may be a link here between the album and “Your Move” by Yes, released in 1971 on the album *The Yes Album*. This is made more plausible when considering the information from chapter 1 in regards to the influence of Yes on the members of Gryphon.

¹⁰³ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 58.

Gesamtkunstwerk refers to a unified work of art in which music, poetry, song, and paintings would be united into a new and complete art work.¹⁰⁴ In relation to this, some albums of the progressive rock bands mentioned above combined programmatic music, lyrics, album cover art, and even stage props and scenery to directly reflect one unifying idea or concept. Although the scale may be different, this relation to a concept taken from romantic-era music is not a misnomer.

On the cover of *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*, Gryphon is utilizing the cover art and title, in addition to song titles such as “First Move” and “Checkmate,” to aid in the idea of this concept album. The track lengths are also longer, on average, than the songs of previous albums (with the exception of “Midnight Mushrumps”). While this chapter will focus specifically on “Checkmate,” future work should investigate further the possible borrowing of motives and unification of concepts that might occur throughout the entire album, if any exist.

The main points of interest in the analysis of “Checkmate” will be: 1) timbre, instrumentation, and the elided transition, 2) long-term tonal planning, and 3) blues and rock influence. The first topic focuses on the continuation of the texturally and/or timbrally elided cadences that create continuity between sections in tracks of steadily increasing length. The second topic relates “Checkmate” back to some of the same tonal ideas as “Juniper Suite” while introducing a long-term tritone conflict that drives the piece. The final topic briefly covers the influences of rock and the blues that, by this point, have made their way into the music of Gryphon.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Kennedy, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*. New York: Oxford, 1994. s.v. “Gesamtkunstwerk”

Timbre, Instrumentation, and the Elided Transition

“Checkmate” represents a more drastic shift in timbre and instrumentation than the shift in these stylistic elements from “Juniper Suite” to “Midnight Mushrumps.” Although some basic auxiliary percussion is still employed, the heavier implementation of drum set in “Checkmate” orients the use of percussion more toward the rock idiom. While Gryphon includes the bassoon, recorder, and piano as in earlier albums, the harpsichord is either filtered through electrical effects processing or is a synthesizer rendition of a harpsichord sound.¹⁰⁵ In that same vein, the synthesizer is used more prevalently than the piano or organ, and is used both melodically and harmonically. During some sections, two different synthesizer sounds are used in combination for melody and harmony. The studio recording process of panning instruments to left and right channels, which results in differing perceived spatial locations for each instrument, is also implemented in “Checkmate.” At certain points, select instruments sound as though they were recorded in a large, acoustically live or resonant room; however, it is more likely that reverb and chorus were added later to produce this effect, a practice made available by recording technology. The guitar is used throughout “Checkmate,” primarily the non-distorted electric guitar.

Texturally, “Checkmate” is entirely homophonic. The majority of sections are solo with accompaniment. Counter-melodies create some independence of line, but the textural fabric is still homophonic. Gryphon’s use of polyphony, present in “Juniper

¹⁰⁵ In the latter, this choice may be related to the effects of touring and the need to be portable, in addition to the fragile state of most harpsichords. At present, it is unclear exactly which choice is correct on this recording. Both the harpsichord and the synthesizer were utilized on *Checkmate*, as taken from the album cover notes (see Figure 6.2).

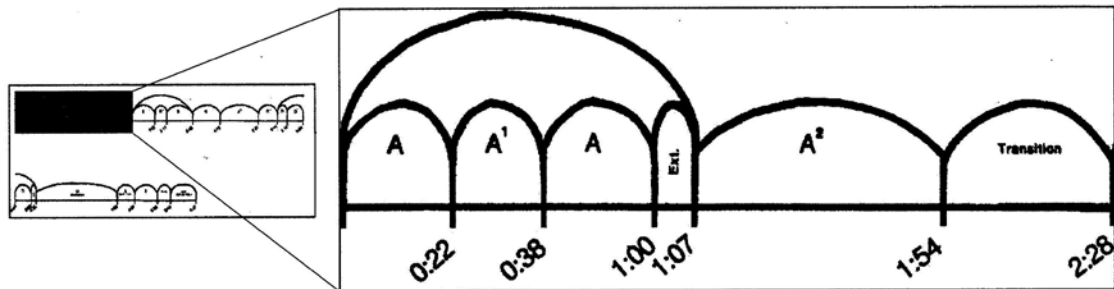
Suite,” appears to have the most influence in these counter-melodies while never becoming truly polyphonic.

In “Checkmate” there are four overall themes, developed throughout sections that are also delineated by changes in timbre and instrumentation. The first presentation of theme A (0:00-0:22) is played in unison by the electric guitar and synthesizer, with punchy drum set, organ, and bass guitar accents in between the syncopated guitar and/or synthesizer phrases. From the song’s initial moments, the synthesizer is active in the texture. The synthesizer patch chosen here creates a light, but penetrating timbre with a percussive attack. While “Juniper Suite” began with a cymbal strike and the nasal, penetrating crumhorn, this sudden attack at a high dynamic sets a tone distant from that of the previous two albums. As with the recorders in “Midnight Mushrumps,” the two instruments here are separated into left and right tracks, the synthesizer in the former and the guitar in the latter.

The drum, organ, and bass hits serve next as a transition to section A¹ (0:22-0:38). The piano enters, outlining the harmonic changes through fast and constant arpeggios. The bass guitar serves here as the functional bass with respect to harmony. Due to the mixed meter of section A¹, the drum set (here without organ) accents the downbeats of the pattern. The guitar continues from before as the melodic instrument, but the attack appears to be softer due to the omission of the percussively attacked synthesizer timbre. The fast tempo and quick piano arpeggiation keep the intensity level up for the return to A (0:38-1:00). The transitional extension (1:00-1:07) to section A² is a unison motivic excerpt from theme A, again combining a real instrument with a synthesizer. The bassoon is doubled by a synthesizer patch closely resembling the timbre of the bassoon,

but with an abrupt gate (instant onset and offset of sound) that adds an unnatural quality to the bassoon. Cymbal taps (which sound as though they are played on the dome of a cymbal) clear the textural density at the end of this transition section.

Figure 4.1 (Formal Diagram, 0:00-2:28)



Bassoon and guitar take over the melody for section A^2 (1:07-1:54). The guitar is panned to the left, this time assuming the more percussive attack to accompany the bassoon timbre. At this point in “Checkmate,” it is clear that the pairing of an instrument with another producing a more percussive attack is an important timbral device that helps to delineate structure. The drum set in section A^2 gives percussive hits that accentuate the irregular metric patterns of the melody. The percussion changes during a transitional section (1:54-2:28) to a loose snare drum playing an ostinato behind a fast soprano recorder solo. The texture here is the least dense thus far in “Checkmate.” The recorder solo in this section does not attempt to emulate a renaissance sound in performance style or harmonic language.

The most jarring moment of the transitional section is at approximately 2:21 when the recorder bends (slides) through a major third and then flutter tongues a short melodic idea. In this instance, Richard Harvey plays the recorder in a non-traditional manner by means of human manipulation, not studio effects. The bend (slide) and altered

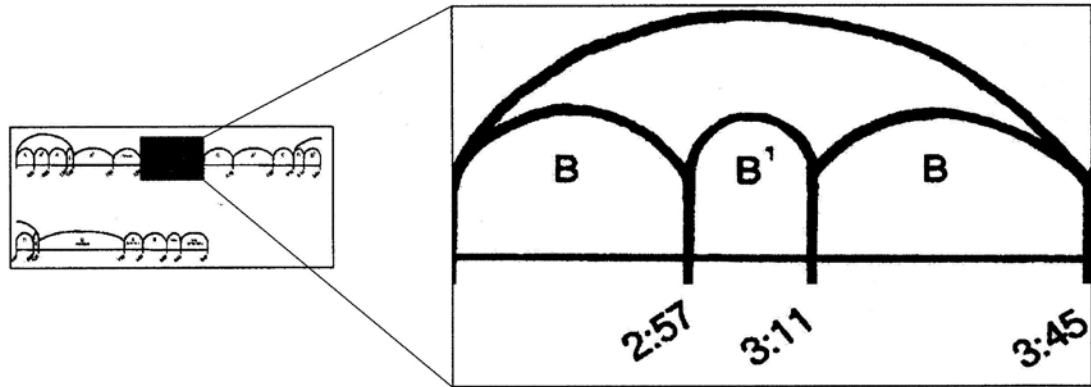
articulation closely resemble features of improvisation used by jazz musicians, which will be discussed later.

The soprano recorder remains the solo instrument for section B (2:28-2:57). Here, timbre and instrumentation are used to smooth out the transition between thematic material. The recorder here is accompanied by bass and drum set, in addition to the first appearance of the acoustic guitar. The bass line provides harmonic support while the guitar is a mix of accompaniment and secondary melody (which is not quite independent enough to be considered a counter-melody). The guitar plays in unison with a majority of the bass pitches, but, through arpeggiation and independent lines in the upper strings, creates a sense of playing double duty in the homophonic texture. The percussion in section B, although still played on drum set, acts as auxiliary percussion rather than as the central rhythmic force of the rock drum set. Through the varied use of snare, toms, bass, and cymbal taps,¹⁰⁶ in addition to accentuating shifting meter patterns, this section is reminiscent of percussive uses in previous albums.

In section B¹ (2:57-3:11) the recorder drops out of the texture and the organ assumes the melody. The organ appearance in B¹ utilizes the same organ timbre that was used on the first two albums, due in part to the fact that *Red Queen to Gryphon Three* concentrates on synthesizer timbres more prominently.

¹⁰⁶ These cymbal taps may be played either on a ride cymbal or the dome of a crash cymbal. The quick decay and lack of distortion in the ring lead the author to lean toward a ride cymbal.

Figure 4.2 (Formal Diagram, 2:28-3:45)



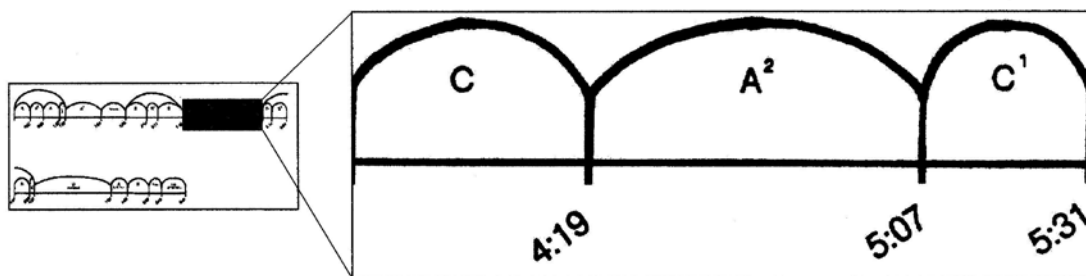
All other instrumentation remains the same, creating a consistency between E related sections. The bass and guitar transition back to a repeat of the B section (3:11-3:45) and the return of the melody played by the recorder. The transition to C closely resembles the guitar and bass transition out of B¹; however, the recorder is held out in long notes over this cadence. Unlike other transitional sections, the transition into C retains the guitar and recorder in similar range and voicing, but it is the first time thus far in “Checkmate” that there is a silent pause after a cadence while moving to a new section. Gryphon also paused abruptly in between sections of “Juniper Suite,” but it began to smooth sectional divisions in “Midnight Mushrumps” through timbral elisions and elided cadences. The silence present in this transition ($\approx 3:45$, only 3 seconds before the negative golden section)¹⁰⁷ signifies a break in the song structure more definitively than previous structural changes.

The high-register soprano recorder (processed with a reverb effect) is supported in section C (3:45-4:19) by rolled acoustic guitar chords with clean electric guitar chords. Both guitars are processed with an electronic delay effect, creating the sense of an

¹⁰⁷ The negative golden section can be found by multiplying total track length by the negative golden mean.

expansive performance space. The delay effect is more altering to the acoustic guitar, which creates a pulsing effect throughout the sustain and decay of the rolled chords. When these timbral qualities are added to the deceleration in harmonic rhythm (propagated by the free tempo), section C is a dramatic change in texture and timbre from the first one third of “Checkmate.”

Figure 4.3 (Formal Diagram, 3:45-5:31)



The shift from section C to A² is texturally elided as the previous recorder and guitars play an eb-minor chord on the downbeat of the new section. Section A² (4:19-5:07) is defined by a change in timbre and instrumentation that accentuates the change in modality. This section shifts to eb minor and the bright timbres of the soprano recorder while the chorused guitars disappear. They are replaced by the warm, dark timbres of a piano and a low-register bassoon, enhancing the dramatic quality of the change from major to minor. The disappearance of the electronic delay effect alters the perceptual size of the performance space from expansive to confined, further enhancing the dramatic change of sections.

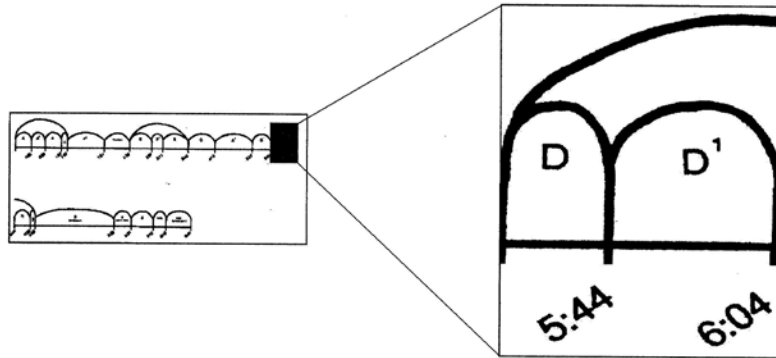
The bassoon’s C# pitch held at the end of A² is resolved on the downbeat of C¹, once again with an elision to the new tonal center and modality. In this instance the tendency of the C# resolution to D creates an even more strongly elided transition than

before. The increase in the number of elided transitions, and the aurally dramatic effects produced when elisions are not present, shows a maturity in the cohesion of Gryphon's song structure. Longer strands of sections are woven together without breaking the flow of the song or becoming stagnant.

Section C¹ (5:07-5:31) is repeated twice with differing instrumentation. The first phrase (5:07-5:18) is played on glockenspiel (which has a naturally long decay and no need of a chorus effect) and a synthesizer. Once again, the perceived performance space is very large. The slow harmonic movement aids in the open quality. The repeat of the C¹ phrase (5:18-5:31) provides contrast as it reverts back to the bassoon and piano in their previous dark timbres. As was the case with the transition from A² to C¹, the bassoon provides the elision to the next section, section D. The bassoon's pitch F serves as the transition, dissonant in D major (section C¹) but the mediant of D dorian (section D).

Section D (5:31-5:44) retains the bassoon and piano and adds the bass guitar. These three voices trade moments of unison rhythms and unison pitches to create a sense of two independent lines shifting timbre from the different combinations of three voices. The bassoon and bass begin in unison rhythm while the piano arpeggiates to fill in the harmony. In the next measure, the bass becomes independent while the piano moves toward a unison melody with the bassoon. While the independence of voices may lead to a more contrapuntal texture, the three-measure phrase is almost entirely in similar motion.

Figure 4.4 (Formal Diagram, 5:31-6:04)



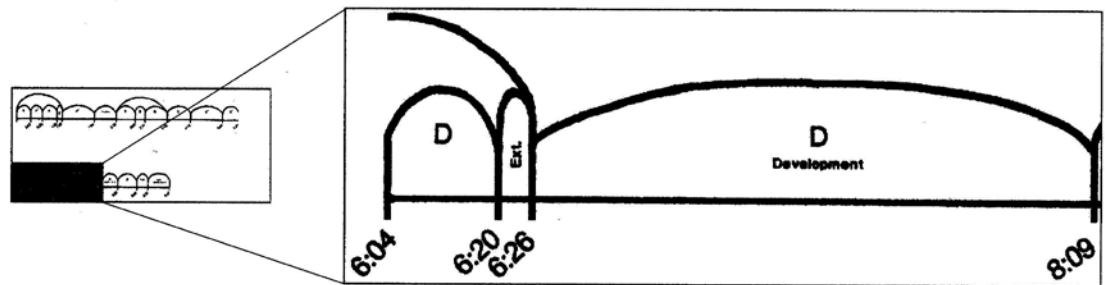
In section D¹ (5:44-6:04), instrumentation changes to the organ playing block chords, but the timbral contrast is not jarring. While in “Juniper Suite” this type of change would have seemed more contrasting, by this point in “Checkmate” the change from light acoustic instruments to organ seems smoother when compared to previous timbral changes. The deceleration of harmonic rhythm is counteracted by the snare drum ostinatos played throughout all of D¹.

Section D returns in its original instrumentation in 6:04-6:20. What follows is an extension of D (6:20-6:26) on piano, bassoon, and either a slightly distorted guitar or a synthesizer of relatively the same timbre. The distorted timbre is set above the other voices in sound level and is a drastic change in attack from the previous section. As with the crumhorn transition into section F of “Midnight Mushrumps,” this brief melodic idea is in a highly contrasting timbre that is not contained at any other point in the song and is located close to the golden section. Using track length as the determining factor, the golden section for “Checkmate” is at 6:03.¹⁰⁸ The golden section is 17 seconds prior to the D-extension under observation, but is undeniably close in proximity. Taking into

¹⁰⁸ The total track time used to calculate this golden section is 9:47, taken from *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*, Arcángelo ARC 7031, 2003. There may be a slight variance in this time if another release is used.

account the number of unique melodic ideas thus far and the close proximity of the G-extension to the golden section, Gryphon has either specifically designed for this event to happen close to the golden section or has created a short, dramatic timbral change at roughly this point to maintain interest in songs of a longer duration. Regardless of the band's intention, the D-extension creates a definitive cadence (as compared to previous smooth transitions) that leads to the most rapidly changing section with regard to timbre.

Figure 4.5 (Formal Diagram, 6:04-8:09)



The development of the D theme runs from 6:26 to 8:09 and contains no less than 14 changes in instrumentation and/or timbre. It also contains performance devices more characteristic of rock and jazz than of any classical style. The piano introduces a 10-beat long phrase arpeggiating a-minor and g#-diminished chords. The symmetry beginning on beat 8 of the pattern lays the groundwork for the layered and staggered ostinato patterns of this development section. The layers and subsequent instrumental introductions proceed as follows:

- 6:26 – Piano
- 6:31 – Piano/Guitar
- 6:39 – Synthesizer/Guitar
- 6:48 – Synthesizer/Guitar/Bassoon/Harpsichord Synthesizer

- 6:53 – Synthesizer/Guitar/Bassoon/Harpsichord Synthesizer/Bass/Drums
- 6:57 – Synthesizer/Guitar/Bassoon/Harpsichord Synthesizer/Bass/Drums/Organ
- 7:04 – Synthesizer/Guitar/Bassoon/Bass/Drums
- 7:09 – (No additions, but the bass becomes more melodic)
- 7:13 – (No instrumental additions, but the performance style of the guitar solo changes to the blues)
- 7:22 – Synthesizer/Synthesizer with Delay Effect/Bassoon/Bass/Drums
- 7:32 – Synthesizer/Bassoon Solo/Bass/Drums
- 7:39 – Synthesizer/Lead Synthesizer/Guitar/Bassoon Solo/Bass/Drums
- 7:43 – Guitar (either buried in texture or not present); Voices are becoming more aligned with patterns)
- 7:49 – Synthesizer/Lead Synthesizer/Guitar/Bassoon Solo/Distorted Bass/Drums
- 8:05 – (Voices are unison in preparation for transition)

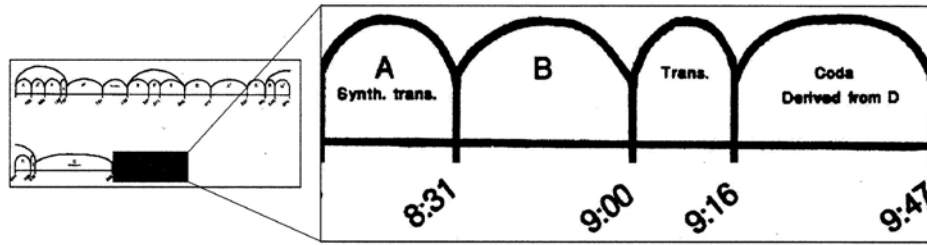
The development section (D-Development) provides more timbral and/or instrumental shifts within a short span of time (1:42) than the entirety of “Juniper Suite” or the 18 ½ minutes of “Midnight Mushrumps.” The distortion of the bass at 7:49, the blues melody and pitch bends of the guitar at 7:13, the reliance on synthesizer timbres throughout, and the repeated electronic effect of the synthesizer at 7:22 make “Checkmate” lean more toward the “rock” characteristics of progressive rock than either “Juniper Suite” or “Midnight Mushrumps.” One other important feature of this development section is the drum set’s transition from auxiliary percussion at 6:53 to the rhythm and blues set playing at 7:22. The percussive change of approach could be seen as the reaction to the blues guitar solo immediately preceding it. As a result of the rapid speed of timbral and textural changes (solo vs. homophonic sequencing) and rock

influences present in the D-Development, Gryphon does not need to employ the timbral elisions that have been increasingly important to its stylistic maturation.

The offset sequencing, timbral changes, and changes in textural density of the D-Development are also characteristic of John Adams' "Short Ride in a Fast Machine" (written twelve years later in 1986). A glance back at the timbral map on the previous page shows that there are two significant times (7:04 and 7:32) when the textural density builds and then quickly diminishes, only to rebuild and repeat the pattern (of textural density, not the sequenced pattern). John Adams later uses the same technique of the buildup and release of density, creating a drive possibly stronger than staggered sequence and/or ostinato patterns. While "Short Ride in a Fast Machine" encompasses a longer span of time, the concept of a repeated pattern that shifts the listener's concept of the downbeat applies equally to both Adams' work and "Checkmate." The duration of time in which the listener's concept of downbeat is offset is where these two compositions differ. The short sectional durations of the D development of "Checkmate" quickly break the illusion of shifting meters nearly every 5 to 10 seconds. John Adams is able to extend this illusion through longer buildups encompassing time spans of over a minute.

Although the two compositions are different in many ways, these organizational factors are a link between a composition by a progressive rock band and an orchestral work by a more academically accepted composer, a comparison made even more interesting by the fact that "Checkmate" was written 12 years prior to "Short Ride in a Fast Machine."

Figure 4.6 (Formal Diagram, 8:09-9:47)



After the development section (D-Development) is a synthesizer transition (8:09-8:31) that marks a clear departure from the reliance on acoustic instrumentation of the previous two albums. The arpeggiated chords are reminiscent of the modulating ternary form of the opening section A. The following return of B (8:31-9:00) is extended this time by a transition based on theme D. In this instance, the transition is drawn out in the style of the baroque “Fortspinnung” which descends into the final section, also based on theme D. The coda utilizes synthesizer, guitar, and bass guitar in a repeated pattern based on theme D over thickly voiced fortissimo chords, creating a powerful, rock-esque ending that is once again a clear departure from the songs of the previous two albums.

Long-Term Tonal Planning

Section A of “Checkmate” (Fig. 4.7) begins with a tonal ambiguity evocative of the intro to “Juniper Suite.” The first five repeated measures begin in a linear, conjunct fashion outlining what appears at first to be a D-major scale. The second half of this phrase, however, becomes more harmonically oriented through the arpeggiation of sequenced major chords, D – C – Eb – F, cadencing on G. The addition of the Eb-major chord introduces Eb and Bb into the pitch inventory. When the melody of the entire phrase is taken into account, every pitch has been used, with the exception of Ab. The hybrid mode cannot be used to explain this tonal ambiguity, however, as was the case

with “Juniper Suite.” The first phrase of section A is best categorized as modal borrowing. The vertical placement of the A in the bass, in combination with its duration of the entire first phrase, sets up the expectation for an A-centric tonality. The rest of this first phrase can be explained as modal borrowing from the mixolydian, dorian, and locrian modes.

In measures 6-10 (Fig. 4.7) a melodic mirror inversion of the melody from measures 1-5 occurs. Although not a perfect mirror inversion (since the quality of some major intervals become minor), the intervallic size of the inversions is a mirror. The result of the mirror’s imperfection is that the second phrase contains every pitch except Ab (b2). While the melody utilizes the same pitch inventory as the first phrase, the bass here moves up a tritone to Eb. It is this tritone movement, A-Eb, which plays itself out through the course of “Checkmate.” The initial presentation of the tritone is also tied to the pitch inventory of the melody throughout the entire A section. The omission of Ab negates one of the possible resolutions of the A-Eb tritone. Although there are harmonic instances of A-E in the first phrase, it is not a resolution of the tritone, merely a harmonic event separate from the tritone.

Figure 4.7 (Section A, 0:00)

Figure 4.8 (Section A¹, 0:22)

The musical score for Figure 4.8, Section A¹, 0:22, is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a Guitar (Gtr.) and Piano (Pno.) part. The first system (measures 1-7) shows the Guitar playing chords A, B, C, and D, while the Piano plays a complex arpeggiated pattern. The second system (measures 8-14) shows the Guitar playing chords D, Eb, Eb, and F, while the Piano continues its arpeggiated pattern. The third system (measures 15-21) shows the Guitar playing chords F, G, G, and A, while the Piano continues its arpeggiated pattern. The score includes annotations such as 'Linear Progression - Chromatic Mediant' and 'A — m3 — C'.

Section A¹ (Fig. 4.8) moves away from the G-hybrid (or G-Centered) material and begins to expand on the A-Eb tritone conflict. Section A¹ is tonally centered in A, although pitch center (to C) and modality shift throughout this section. The rapid movement in the piano contains the pattern of an ascending arpeggio followed by a descending three-note motive, broken only by the 3/8 measures, which create two sequential ascending arpeggios. Contained in this pattern is a descending chromatic scale from tonic to dominant (Fig. 4.8, mm. 1-7 and 18-21) or from the chromatic mediant to tonic (Fig. 4.8, mm. 8-14). Movement by a chromatic mediant is an overriding factor in

section A¹, and may aid in the resolution of the A-Eb tritone, which can be created through chromatic mediant movement.

During the breaking of the pattern in the 3/8 measures, there are two different movements: one from A-C (chromatic mediant from I – bIII) and another from C-Eb (I – bIII in C major). Since the second phrase (Fig. 4.2, measures 8-14) functions in C-modal, the A-Eb outline is achieved through two chromatic mediant movements. The second phrase of A¹ also utilizes the hybrid mode, this time in C-hybrid. One glaring omission to the pitch inventory here is the continuing lack of the pitch Ab, which in the key of C is bVI (an important chromatic third movement used previously by Gryphon). The omitted Ab is another development of the tritone conflict of “Checkmate.”

Section A² begins in the key of eb minor. Although the first phrase (Fig. 4.9, mm. 1-8) does contain the pitch Ab, its appearance does not represent the working out of the tritone. The second phrase of section A² (Fig. 4.9, mm. 9-13) modulates to the key of A. While this phrase is significantly shorter than the previous phrase, the meter changes less. The tonal centers in section A² are the result of the A-Eb tritone conflict, but here the more metrically clear section is in A. The second phrase also acts as a dominant to the next section. The transitional section (1:54-2:28) is tonally centered in D major, but as the solo progresses it embellishes the possible modal alterations of a D-centric key.

Figure 4.9 (Section A², 1:07)

Sections B and B¹ contain the most standard modulation of the piece. These sections combine in a ternary form (B – B¹ – B) in which B¹ modulates to the relative minor. Thus far, most modulation has focused on the A-Eb tritone. The recorder solo of the previous transitional section slightly alters this relationship as it emphasized a tonic-dominant relationship (D-A) in which A is the dominant. In contrast, the overall B themed section (2:28-3:45) gives the impression of those harmonic choices typical of a sonata form.¹⁰⁹

Section C (Fig. 4.10) once again recalls “Juniper Suite” in pitch material. While it at first appears to be in D major, just as in theme D of “Juniper Suite,” the omission of any form of C (C, C#, Cb) in the melody creates the possibility of a G tonal center. The linear progression in the bass outlines the G-major scale from dominant down to tonic. Here again is a recalling of “Juniper Suite.” What makes section C important to

¹⁰⁹ While this is clearly not a sonata form, the standard modulation to the dominant or relative minor in the development section of a classical sonata form has created an expectation in modern listeners for those modulations.

“Checkmate” is less the D vs. G tonal center, but what happens during the second phrase (Fig. 4.10, measures 4-7).

Figure 4.10 (Section C, 3:45)

Recorder

Guitar

Linear Progression

Rec.

Gtr.

A-eb tritone transition

Instead of a cadence on G major, the bass moves down a P4 for the progression e min, FMaj/A, a min, moving finally to an eb-minor chord. This transition to the A² material (4:19-5:07) in eb minor continues the tritone conflict. The next presentation of the C¹ material (5:07 – 5:31) cadences this time on d minor, setting up the D material presented in D dorian and Bb major (a look at the form chart shows this clearly).

Thus far, “Checkmate” has used the A-Eb tritone in tonal movement throughout the seven distinct themes and subsequent sectional repetition. The brief but distinct two measures of music from 6:20-6:26 are, as previously discussed, the most timbrally out of context, and occur extremely close to the golden section of the song. More importantly, they cadence on an open fifth of E and B, creating an E chord with the third omitted (Fig. 4.11). The ambiguous E chord, at this location and in this voicing, is both structurally and timbrally set up for an important event.

Figure 4.11 (Section D with extension, 6:04)

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system features three staves: Bassoon (bass clef), Piano (treble clef), and Bass (bass clef). The second system features three staves: Bsn. (bass clef), Pno. (treble clef), and Bass (bass clef). The second system includes a 'High Synthesizer' part in the piano staff. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 in the second system.

In this case, it is the resolution of the tritone conflict A-Eb. It can also be seen as a possible relationship to section A's pitch inventory containing every pitch except for the flat second scale degree. In D dorian, the D major to E (although the quality of major or minor is ambiguous) is another affirmation of the natural second scale degree. In addition to the resolution of the tritone conflict, this cadence also marks the departure point toward a long, rapidly changing section in which Gryphon's blues and rock influences are brought to the forefront.

Blues and Rock Influence

In chapter 1, the history of the band and the musical development of its individual members were discussed. When viewed as a whole, Gryphon contained an eclectic group

of members, each of whom had unique styles and backgrounds. Within the initial trio, Richard Harvey appears to have been the most influenced by early music, Graeme Taylor by rock and jazz, and Brian Gulland by an equal mix of early music, rock, and jazz.¹¹⁰ The early music influence was apparent on Gryphon's self titled debut album, and was still heavily used throughout "Midnight Mushrumps." "Checkmate" introduces the listener to a more rock-oriented Gryphon through certain performance techniques, melodic pitch material, and percussion usage. While these techniques are used throughout the song in various forms and combinations, the most heavily influenced section is the D-Development. This section has already been compared to "Short Ride in a Fast Machine" for its rapidly changing sections and technique of climax and release, but it can also be interpreted in a different way. The development section (D-Development) can be viewed as the "jam" portion of the song. The "jam," or extended solo section, comes primarily from jazz, in which the ensemble plays the main theme of the song (the "head") and the instruments then take turns soloing to the chord changes, regrouping at the end to play the head again. During the 1960's, an increased popular acceptance of lengthy instrumental passages occurred in correlation to the wide-spread use of drugs and its "mind-expanding" qualities. In addition, the extended improvisatory sections inherent in many jazz pieces of the time had conditioned listeners to longer sections of instrumental solo. This increased popular acceptance enabled performers to include improvisation during lengthy instrumental passages. Edward Macan addresses this topic in his chapter on the music of the progressive rock style:

When listening to the long instrumental jams of even the most gifted psychedelic bands...one is initially wowed...but after two or three

¹¹⁰ These theories were confirmed by statements made by Graeme Taylor in a telephone discussion with the author on May 2, 2007.

minutes a certain numbness sets in. For musicians of the late 1960's who wished to continue with instrumental music...the question became how to bring a sense of organization, variety, and climax to the music without completely destroying the spontaneity...which characterized the best psychedelic jams. The musicians who pioneered progressive rock found their answer in limiting the role of improvisation to one or two sections of a piece...¹¹¹

The development section (D-Development), with a possible inclusion of the section D recorder solo, is just such a section within a highly organized framework. While it begins in what could have become a contrapuntal fugue-like section, it quickly turns into an ostinato with alternating solos. These solos are short in comparison with other sections of "Checkmate," but the members of Gryphon are, nonetheless, trading solos in a jam-like fashion. At 7:04, the drum set comes to the forefront of rhythmic accompaniment and moves beyond the previous percussive use as an auxiliary. This lays the groundwork for the melodic solos, which are the most blues influenced in the guitar and bassoon. The guitar and bassoon both begin to play almost exclusively in the blues scale (which could possibly be seen as a subset of the G-hybrid mode used by Gryphon). The performance style also becomes more blues influenced as the guitar executes an abundance of bends, and the distortion present in the bassoon removes it from any classical setting. It is here that the blues and rock background of Gryphon's members is first brought undeniably to the forefront of the four songs under discussion. It is also interesting to note here that the two members who dominate the blues solo section are Graeme Taylor and Brian Gulland, the more rock-oriented members of the original trio. Graeme Taylor's interest in The Grateful Dead is a link here between Gryphon and the psychedelic jam band.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 47.

¹¹² Graeme Taylor, telephone discussion with the author, May 2, 2007.

Conclusion

While Gryphon still displays stylistic and harmonic characteristics from early music, the blues and rock influence of other contributing band members results in a more heterogeneous mix of styles and sounds. Sections are driven in “Checkmate” by the tritone conflict while containing smoother timbral transitions through the continued development of the textural and/or timbral elisions. In addition to these developments, the increased use of the synthesizer and other electronic instruments and effects (both in performance and recording) bring this album more toward the mainstream progressive rock style and away from the acoustically oriented early music and folk music origins of the band.

Figure 4.12 (Checkmate - Formal Diagram)



CHAPTER 5: AN ANALYSIS OF “(EIN KLEIN) HELDENLEBEN”

Raindance – Album Overview

In 1975, only two years after the release of its self-titled debut album, Gryphon released its fourth album, *Raindance*. The album cover itself signals the changes that had occurred in the band since its first album. Although five members are listed, the same number that had been maintained in the ensemble since *Midnight Mushrumps*, Malcolm Bennett’s name appears in lieu of Philip Nestor’s. Bennett¹¹³ is also credited with playing the flute, an instrumental addition to the band which plays an important role in the discussion of “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben.” Richard Harvey’s instrumental credits also signify a change in the band’s direction. On *Raindance*, the first eight instruments that Harvey is credited with playing are: “Grand piano; Rhodes, RMI, and Crumar electric pianos; Mini-[M]oog; Coperman Hart organ; Mellotron; (and) Clavinet.” Although he also remains credited with recorder and crumhorn, there is a substantial shift from the instrumentation of *Gryphon*, a change that will be discussed below.¹¹⁴

In addition to the band’s make-up and instrumentation, information regarding song authorship can also be gleaned from the album cover. In previous albums Richard Harvey is credited with a majority of the song-writing, due in part to collaborations with other band members. This predominance continues on *Raindance*, as he is the sole songwriter of five of the nine songs. Graeme Taylor is listed as the composer of three songs, one in cooperation with Malcolm Bennett. Throughout the first four albums that Gryphon released, a majority of song authorship is attributed to Harvey and Taylor. The

¹¹³ There is little information regarding the background of Malcolm Bennett. Another connection between Gryphon and Yes is that in 1976 Bennett is credited with bass and flute on Steve Howe’s album *Beginnings*.

¹¹⁴ As discussed in chapter 2, on the album *Gryphon* Harvey is credited with descant recorders, alto crumhorn, classical guitar, mandolin, and organ.

substantial change for *Raindance* is the lack of collaborative acknowledgment given to the compositions. It is notable here that Brian Gulland does not receive credit for any of the compositions listed on *Raindance*. In previous albums, he was either included under the blanket “Gryphon” attribution or as part of a collaboration between other band members (most significantly on *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*, on which he is listed for every song). The only song for which Brian Gulland receives full composer credit is “Gulland Rock” from the album *Midnight Mushrumps*.

The most outstanding inclusion in the composer list is “Mother Nature’s Son,” written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, which was released by the Beatles on *The White Album* in 1968. Up until this point, all of Gryphon’s cover songs were limited to arrangements of traditional English folk songs and renaissance and medieval folk songs. “Mother Nature’s Son” is the first appearance of a cover song that had been written recently, and was also written by a popular rock band in the folk style. While the folk influence of “Mother Nature’s Son” lends itself to Gryphon’s style of performance and composition, the cover of a Beatles’ song is a clear mark of the band’s departure from its renaissance and medieval inspirations that had been appearing since “Checkmate.” It may be that the inclusion of this track on the album was influenced by the nearly parallel recording of *Raindance* and touring as the opening act for Yes on the 1974/75 *Relayer* tour in the United States.¹¹⁵ Pressure from the record label for Gryphon to create a more mainstream progressive rock album is conceivable. In chapter 1, David Oberle was quoted as saying that the band received pressure from the record label during the

¹¹⁵ The recording of this album occurred in October of 1974, although it was not released until 1975. The most recent release before the tour was *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*, released in 1974.

recording of *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*.¹¹⁶ Although *Red Queen to Gryphon Three* was released by Bell in the United States and by Transatlantic (the same record label that produced Gryphon's first two albums) in the UK, *Raindance* was released only by Transatlantic.

The discussion of “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben” takes a slightly different approach than the previous three chapters. While discussions of timbre and instrumentation are still present, the approach will focus more on the effects of climax and release. Timbral elisions and instrumental grouping will still be examined, but only where pertinent to climax and release and their use in the extended track length. A section is also devoted to the continued influence of blues and rock, which takes a more prominent role on this album than any of the previous albums. Gryphon's use of counterpoint is concentrated primarily in one section of “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben” (although it does influence the inclusion of counter-melodies). There is also one section of the song devoted to a traditional English dance form, to which a section of this chapter is subsequently devoted. The final topic of discussion in this chapter is the introduction of jazz to Gryphon's stylistic vocabulary, most likely due to the addition of Malcolm Bennett on flute. These topics will guide the listener through the approximately 16 minutes of “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben.”

Climax and Release – Managing Extended Track Length

One concept involved in Gryphon's tracks of extended length is the idea of climax and release, as touched upon in relation to “Midnight Mushrumps.” “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben” opens with ambient noise and a low drum roll, slowly adding clarinet runs that accentuate the ambiguous and open quality of the introductory crescendo. At

¹¹⁶ David Oberle, interview by Eduardo Mota, January 1999.

0:35,¹¹⁷ the bassoon enters with theme A over organ accompaniment. The difference in register (the bassoon in a higher tessitura and the organ in a lower) emphasizes the solo/accompaniment texture. The harmonic rhythm is still slow at this point, once again accentuating the expansiveness of the performance space initiated by the introductory ambiance. The flute enters during the second presentation of A, coming to a cadence at 1:19 (which is held until 1:24).

Figure 5.1 (Section A – 0:35-1:07)

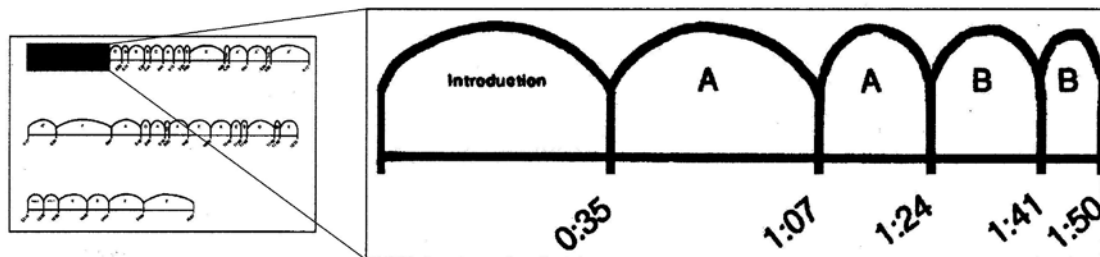
The musical score for Section A (0:35-1:07) consists of three systems of music for Bassoon and Organ. The first system (measures 1-6) shows the Bassoon playing a melodic line and the Organ providing a harmonic accompaniment with notes G, C, G, d, and Eb. The second system (measures 7-13) features the Bassoon playing a second presentation of the theme, with the Organ accompaniment changing to notes b, Eb, F, Bb, and C. A note "Time becomes more free" is written below the organ staff. The third system (measures 14-19) shows the Bassoon playing a melodic line and the Organ providing a harmonic accompaniment with notes C/Eb, Eb, and G.

In addition to timbre and texture, the harmonic ambiguity of section A contributes to the expansive quality and relative stasis. A look at section A reveals the possible use,

¹¹⁷ All times used from this point forward are taken from *Raindance*. Arcángelo ARC 7032, 2003. There may be a slight variance (up to ≈ 9 seconds) in times if another release is used.

once again, of the G-hybrid scale. The only pitch that is not explained by the G-hybrid scale is the F# in measure 9 (Fig. 5.1). Although the hybrid scale has been used by Gryphon in previous songs, it is used here in a more non-functional manner. The minor dominant chord (Fig. 5.1, m. 4) breaks down typical harmonic expectations early on, especially when paired with the bVI deceptive cadence that follows.¹¹⁸ The second phrase (mm. 9-21) continues to place emphasis on the flat-submediant chord, but also contains common tone movement. The c minor progression to Eb major (Fig. 5.1, mm. 13-19) contains two common tones – Eb and G. In traditional harmonic roles, this progression would be iv-bVI,¹¹⁹ but is better explained here as common tone movement in the G-hybrid scale. In section A, Gryphon utilizes the hybrid scale in a different manner than before to create a tonal phrase without strong forward tonal tendencies.

Figure 5.2 (Formal Diagram – 0:00-1:50)



The entrance of the synthesizer on theme B (1:24) is totally unprepared and is in contrast to the previous album's development of elided cadences and timbral elisions. After the statement of the theme, a second synthesizer enters, followed by the bass, drum set high hats, and finally the bass drum. The additional instrumentation increases the textural density of theme B; however, the section remains monophonic and

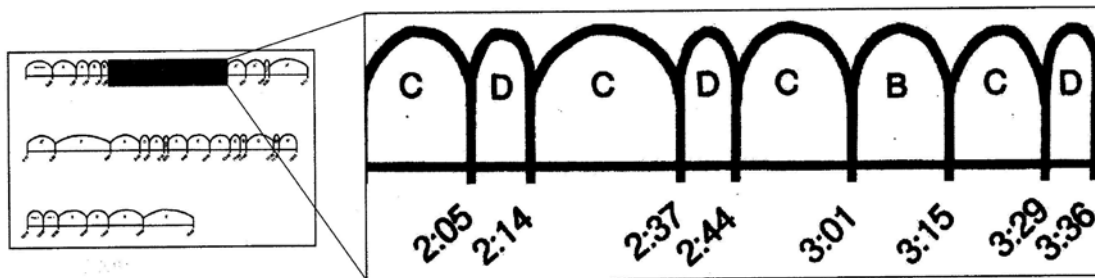
¹¹⁸ This chromatic submediant chord is one that Gryphon has employed in previous songs.

¹¹⁹ The Roman numeral bVI is used here instead of VI because, although this section is given in the key signature of g minor, it is functioning in the G-hybrid scale, which can contain both e minor and Eb major.

homorhythmic. The rapid increase in textural density builds up to 1:50, at the entrance of the distorted electric guitar.

Throughout the next nearly 2 ½ minutes, the distorted electric guitar is the dominant melodic instrument over bass, keyboard, and drum-set accompaniment (with the synthesizer interjecting with theme D). There are brief interjections by themes B and D, and the first appearance of theme E (which will not be fully developed until later in the piece).

Figure 5.3 (Formal Diagram – 1:50-3:36)

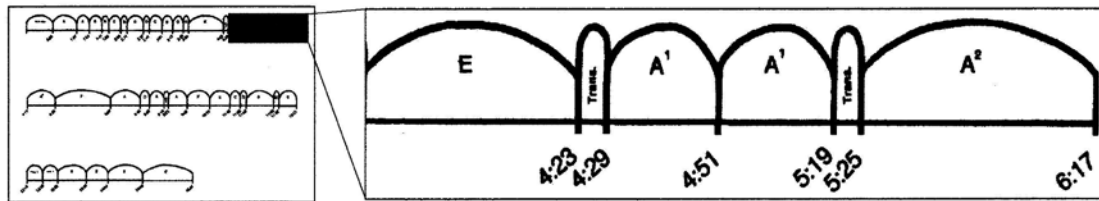


Again, during this span of music, Gryphon does not smooth out the transitions and timbral shifts with elisions. The transitions and interjections are abrupt, although they are not as shocking as the first appearance of C (1:50) since harsher rock timbres have now become the standard in this song. Thus far, the tension has only been building, with no real climax. The first climax occurs during the transition from 4:23 to 4:29. Here the guitar, synthesizer, and bass all ascend and rest on four repeated, staccato chords at a loud dynamic, emphasized by the additional snare drum hits.

This ascent creates another connection between the music of Gryphon and Yes. It was stated in chapter 1 that Richard Harvey’s first encounter with the music of Yes was with the album *The Yes Album*. The track “Starship Trooper” from *The Yes Album* utilizes the same type of ascent to large, marcato chords in two separate instances, once at

2:24 and again at 5:33. In its first use, the figure turns around and descends, creating more of a transition than a climax. The second occurrence (5:33, “Starship Trooper”) continues the ascent toward a chordal climax, which in turn releases the built-up tension of the song thus far, only to begin a repeated phrase which increases in intensity until the end of the song nearly four minutes later. The likeness of Gryphon’s use to that of Yes may not be an exact quotation, but is undoubtedly influenced by Gryphon’s exposure to the song “Starship Trooper.”

Figure 5.4 (Formal Diagram – 3:36-6:17)



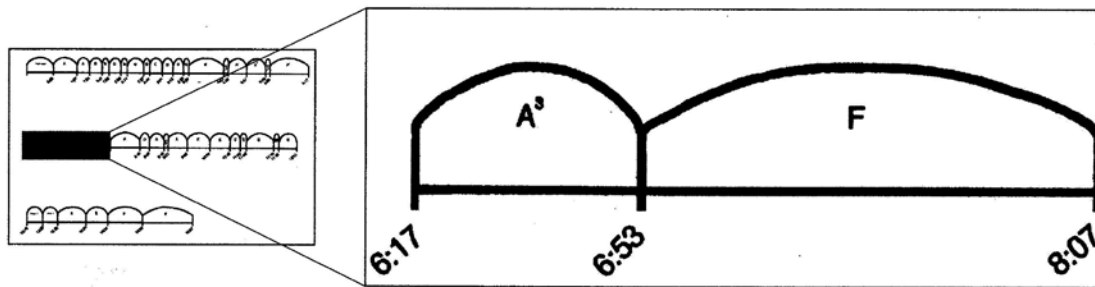
After these four accented chords, the piano enters on theme A (labeled A¹). The piano’s acoustic timbre, which in previous songs would be part of the norm, seems radical as it enters under the still resonating chords from electric instruments. A¹ is the first release of “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben.” Just prior to the reiteration of A¹ the flute and bassoon enter into the texture. At 4:51, the flute takes up the melody over a bassoon counter-melody and piano accompaniment. From here, the jazz flute section (A², 5:25 – 6:17) begins the build toward the next climax. The contrapuntal section (6:17 – 6:53) continues the buildup through its increasing textural density and intricacy as the voices contain imitation.¹²⁰ Once again, the transition from the jazz flute section to the contrapuntal section is void of elisions, textural or timbral. The omission of textural

¹²⁰ The contrapuntal texture is viewed more closely in a later section of this chapter subtitled *Contrapuntal Influences*.

and/or timbral elisions can be viewed as a return to the clearly delineated sectional form used in “Juniper Suite.”

What differentiates the reiteration of A^1 on flute (4:51-5:19) from the jazz flute section is a change in texture. In the reiteration of A^1 , there is interaction between the voices of the melody/counter-melody/accompaniment texture. As the flute solo becomes more intricate in section A^2 , the interaction between voices is diminished and the accompaniment regresses to simple block chords. The addition of the drum set in A^2 aids in the transition of the accompaniment to a more standard “rhythm section” role.

Figure 5.5 (Formal Diagram – 6:17-8:07)

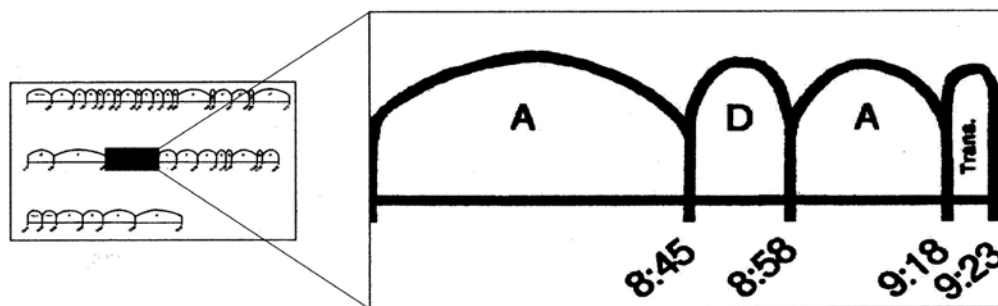


The textural shift from imitative polyphony to the solo/ostinato accompaniment of section F (6:53 – 8:07) is a slight release after the contrapuntal climax (only a slight release due to this section’s lively tempo and rhythms, and the intensity and intricacy of the recorder solo). In addition to a shift in texture, there is a return in section F to modal harmonic language, aiding in the release of tension. The transition from A^3 to F is the first smooth transition of the type that Gryphon has been developing throughout the last three songs discussed. The introduction of the recorder at the end of the contrapuntal

section (doubling the synthesizer)¹²¹ creates a timbral elision to the recorder solo of section F. The arpeggiated bass line enters beneath the sustained cadence, creating continuity without pause and also extending an already familiar timbre into the next section (section F).

The transitional section from 8:07 to 9:18 is the true release of the buildup that has been occurring since the previous climax immediately preceding 4:29. Here, studio processing is taken to the maximum found in any of the four songs under discussion. The guitars (one in each channel, left and right) are processed with a high amount of delay and reverb, over a slowly moving harmonic progression outlined by long bass notes and arpeggiated piano and Mellotron.¹²² The extreme processing creates an expansive depth to the perceived performance space unrivaled by the previous albums.¹²³ Studio processing continues through the transitional D material (8:45 – 8:58) and the recorder solo (8:58 – 9:18). Throughout this transitional section (8:07 – 9:18), instruments enter and exit, but there is no real sense of direction due to the studio processing and slow harmonic rhythm.

Figure 5.6 (Formal Diagram – 8:07-9:23)



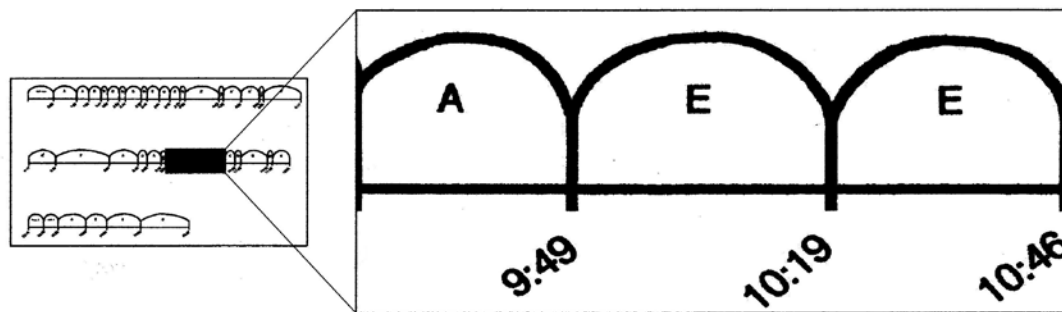
¹²¹ In addition to the transitional timbral elision that the recorder provides, the doubling of the recorder and the synthesizer can also be viewed as a timbrally strategic instrumental pairing as in “Checkmate.”

¹²² The soft attack and lack of decay produced on the Mellotron add to the expansive quality.

¹²³ This section evokes the same studio processing style of many Pink Floyd guitar solos. It is characteristic of a “spacey” sound that arose from the psychedelic era of the 1960’s.

Although there is a slight buildup during the clean electric guitar solo (9:23 – 9:49) due to increased melodic complexity, the “clean” guitar does not build intensity in the same way as the distorted guitar. At 9:49, theme E returns only 2 seconds before the golden section.¹²⁴ The bass and organ are continued over from the guitar solo, smoothing out the transition timbrally (although not a timbral elision of the type previously discussed). The bassoon enters as the solo instrument, giving more importance to the golden section occurrence since it was the first solo instrument. The expansiveness of the perceived performance space from 8:07 to 9:18 is present again in the return of section E. Cymbal rolls are electronically processed and panned between the left and right channels, creating an expansive quality. The restatement of theme E at 10:19 passes the melody to the recorder, while the bassoon creates a counter-melody. The drum set is also added, creating forward motion and beginning to build the texture. The addition of drum-set percussion intensifies the expansiveness of the section through a “slap-back” delay which is applied to the snare. The distorted organ begins a long ascending slide at the end of the second E section, and the flute holds over to the next section (≈10:46) creating a timbral elision more in the line of “Midnight Mushrumps” and “Checkmate.”

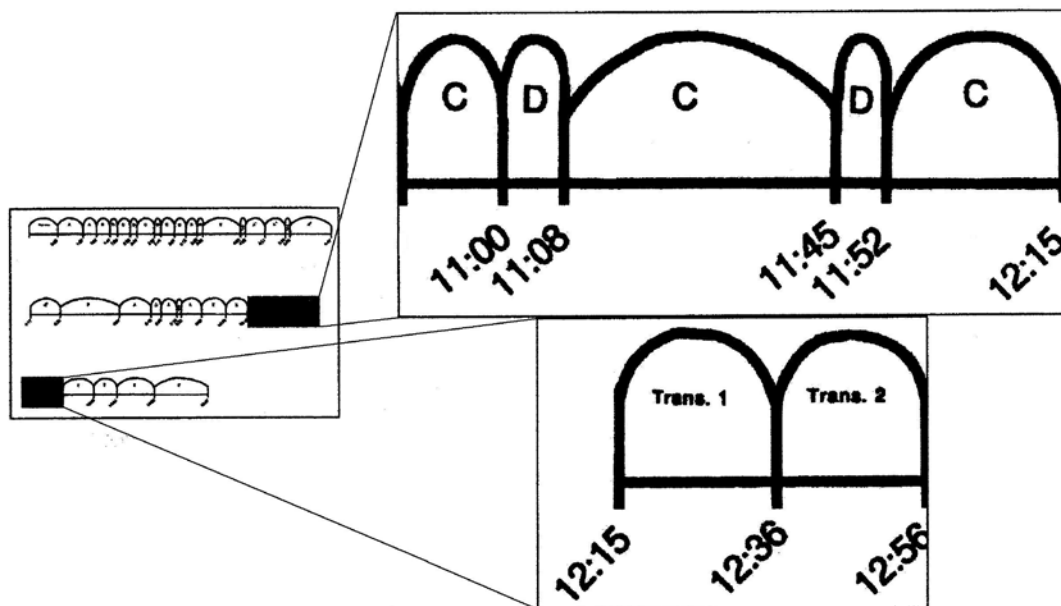
Figure 5.7 (Formal Diagram – 9:23-10:46)



¹²⁴ Although the total track time is listed as 16:03, the final E-major chord is fully faded out at 15:57. The remaining six seconds of silence are not included in the calculation for the golden section.

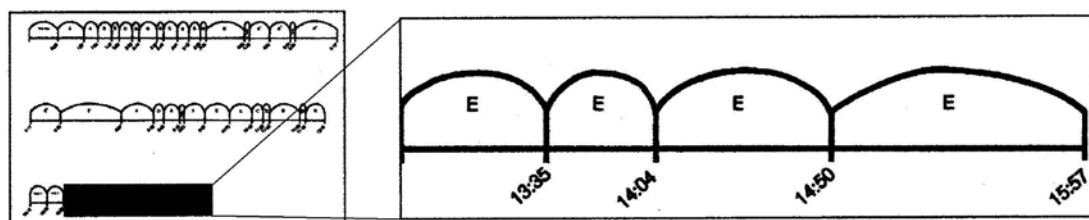
The return here of the C material once again begins a buildup toward a future climax. There is a transition from distorted organ to Mini-Moog at 11:34, adding a somewhat delayed attack but not drastically altering the timbre. The texture here, of solo and accompaniment, is the same as the previous occurrence of C (1:50). At the end of the synthesizer solo (12:15) the tempo rapidly increases as the bassoon (doubled by Mellotron), piano, bass, and drums take over for a transitional section. The sixteenth-note arpeggios in the piano, coupled with the nearly constant sixteenth notes from the drum set, create the rhythmic intensity behind the bassoon solo and bass accompaniment. The increase in intensity continues with the addition of the electric guitar and synthesizer at 12:36, creating a textural climax. Transition 2 (Trans. 2) culminates in unison ascending scales and staccato chords, in which the silence between chords enhances the climactic buildup.

Figure 5.8 (Formal Diagram – 10:46-12:56)



The release does not come yet, although the texture does clear out slightly with the return of theme E (12:56). The bassoon is again the melodic instrument, with the keyboard and snare drum ostinato at a rapid tempo (quarter note = 164) enhancing this build-up. The tempo decelerates rapidly at 13:31, setting up for a half-time restatement of theme E, this time with distorted electric guitar taking the melody. Once again, studio processing creates an expansive perceived performance space, enhanced by the drum set switching to the ride cymbal and the rhythmic complexity diminishing. The tempo slightly accelerates at 14:13 during the blues-inspired guitar solo, which begins at 14:02. The complexity of the guitar solo diminishes at 14:36, allowing time for the sustained reverb to clear out between guitar statements. At 14:50, the distorted guitar exits, allowing for the glockenspiel, synthesizer, bass, and drum set to release the tension of the guitar climax. Once the vamp has been established with this instrumentation, the clean electric guitar, flute, and bassoon continue to make brief interjections until 15:46. Here, the guitar begins two chromatic ascents, ending on four repeated E-major chords with bass and glockenspiel. The four E-major chords complete the release of the climax built up throughout the E thematic material. The chromatic ascent to the E-major tonic triad is a reprise of the transition from 4:23 to 4:29 (also following a section based on E thematic material).

Figure 5.9 (Formal Diagram – 12:56-15:57)



It appears as though, at this point in Gryphon's development, the band has moved away from the smooth transitions that characterize its folk- or early-music-influenced style toward more abrupt transitions, which coincide with the increased dominance of the distorted electric guitar and synthesizer as the primary melodic instruments and enhance the climactic nature of the rock- and blues-inspired sections. The smooth transitions that the band had been developing are still used in certain cases to extend the flow between sections utilizing more traditional (non-electric) instrumentation.

Continued Influence of Blues and Rock

In "Checkmate," Gryphon began to show the influence of blues in their traditionally medieval, renaissance, and folk style. The jam section in "Checkmate" (beginning at 6:26) introduced the blues style guitar and a highly processed synthesizer to the timbral and harmonic language of the band. Brief as it may have been in contrast to the overall song length, this section does change the listener's expectation as to what Gryphon may use in a song. "(Ein Klein) Heldenleben" expands this expectation to the point where, by the middle of the piece, the disappearance of the electric guitar solos is shocking to the listener. The transition between the four-piece rock band instrumentation and acoustic and woodwind instruments is much more jarring than the subtle timbral shifts that had been developing throughout much of "Midnight Mushrumps" and the culmination of instrumental pairing found in "Checkmate." As a stylistic development, the influence of the blues in "(Ein Klein) Heldenleben" is found more in performance style than in any specific melodic or harmonic language. The rock influence in this song is also dominated by timbre and texture, and the less ambiguous modality of section C is a direct result of rock's simplified harmonic language.

After a transition from the opening theme, the instrumentation at 1:50 is dramatically altered from any of the previously analyzed songs. Here the instrumentation is that of a four-piece rock band: electric guitar, electric bass, drum set, and keyboard (which is a substitute for a rhythm guitarist). This ensemble is also more rock oriented in that the guitar is processed with distortion. This “unclean” guitar sound is the backbone of the 1970’s rock genre (although it was used increasingly and gained popularity in the 1960’s). The bends and constant use of syncopation in the guitar solo are a display of the blues influence on rock music.

The treble-dominated electric bass that begins as an arpeggiated accompaniment frequently enters into the melodic discourse in section C. The bass’s stylistic change on *Raindance*, originating in the change from Philip Nestor to Malcolm Bennett, is a development toward the electric bass’s increased utilization in progressive rock music (as discussed in chapter 3, the bass became more involved in the melodic discourse).¹²⁵ While the bass does not receive equal soloistic consideration here, it does transcend the traditional popular music role of basic harmonic accompaniment.

Guitar solos continue to appear throughout “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben.” A notable musical reference from the then-present rock genre is the guitar solo at 8:07, which, as previously noted, closely resembles the processing and style of Pink Floyd. The composition of the ensemble (guitar, bass, drums, Mellotron, and Mini-Moog) during these blues/rock sections also closely resembles that of other major progressive rock bands such as ELP, Genesis, and Yes. The most striking difference between Gryphon and these other progressive rock bands is Gryphon’s lack of lyrics throughout these extended song forms.

¹²⁵ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 38.

Contrapuntal Influences

While “Juniper Suite” contained sections of strict sixteenth-century counterpoint, “Midnight Mushrumps” and “Checkmate” instead contained sections written in a contrapuntal style or with contrapuntal influence (quasi-fugal sections and counter-melodies). The same is true for “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben.” Most sections are solo instruments with accompaniment, with some sections containing counter-melodies, or duet-like dialogue between two instruments with an accompaniment. The fugato from 6:17 to 6:53 is most extensively contrapuntal.

The fugue-like section, A³, begins after staccato organ chords on each beat in a 4/4 meter, a radical change from the previous modal jazz flute section in 3/4. The bass enters as the melodic instrument, with a treble-dominated tone quality and clear, fast onset attack (once again a direct tie to the discussion on the use of the bass in progressive rock music and due to the influence of a new bass player). In section A³, theme A is accelerated to more than twice its original tempo, and is also executed as a diminution of the original theme. Theme A is also restated here in its original key, although the working out of the fugato moves the key center quickly.

Figure 5.10 (6:20-6:38) contains the first 17 measures of the fugato, beginning with the bass exposition (with the accented chords in the organ omitted due to their brief inclusion and transitional nature) and ending after the introduction of the synthesizer answer. As previously stated, the bass exposition is a diminution of theme A, which skips the repeated first phrase and cuts short the second phrase with a cadence Bb major – A major – d minor (Fig. 5.10, mm. 7-8). This begins the shifting tonal center as the bass exposition’s key center of g minor (modally altered) modulates to d minor for a real

Figure 5.10 (Fugato, Section A³ – 6:20-6:38)

Synthesizer

Guitar

Bassoon

Bass Guitar

7

Synth

Gtr.

Bsn.

Bass

Bb A d A g a Bb

13

Synth

Gtr.

Bsn.

Bass

f f# Bb f eb Bb f Ab Eb eb

answer by the guitar. This cadence utilizes the VI chord (used in Juniper suite as bVI, resulting from the hybrid scale) in measure 7 for the VI – V – i authentic cadence into the real answer. What follows the answer is an extended stretto section (6:29-6:53), interrupted briefly by homophony from 6:39 to 6:44.

During the stretto section, the key continues to be modally altered. A look at Figure 5.10 shows the persisting modal inflections that began with the transition to d minor in measures 7-8. After the guitar answer, the tonal center begins to shift toward Eb dorian. In measure 13, the bassoon and guitar are in unison rhythm, playing in fifths and thirds, which introduces the pitch Ab and Cb and reintroduces the pitch Eb. During this measure of modal ambiguity, it appears as though the modulation will be to eb natural minor with the chord progression, ii^{ø7} – V – ii – i. Beginning in measure 16, there is a definite Eb pitch centricity, a minor quality being confirmed by the Gb in the bass in measure 14. The disappearance of Cb and the recurring use of C-natural lead to the conclusion of Eb dorian (which creates the lack of the bVI chord that Gryphon tends to utilize in modal sections through the hybrid scale, as discussed in chapter 2).

The stretto section, and more specifically the modally fluctuating measures (beginning in measure 12 and ending in measure 16), can also be viewed as a sort of non-functional common tone triadic harmony, which is a product of the modally shifting counterpoint. The first common tone movement is from a Bb-major chord to an f^{ø7} (Fig. 5.10, mm. 12-13), with the common tone being F. The second beat of measure 13 moves back to Bb and then to an f-minor chord. Thus far, the common tone for these chords remains the pitch F. The eb-minor chord in measure 14 can be seen as a pivot from the previous f^{ø7}, the common tone being Eb. The move to Bb at the end of the measure (Fig.

5.10, m. 14) shares the pitch Bb with the previous chord. The move into measure 15 is once again a Bb to f minor common tone movement. The second beat of measure 15 contains an Ab-major chord, sharing the common tone of Ab with the previous chord. The final common tone movement is between Ab and Eb (mm. 15-16), with the common tone of Eb. It is important to note here that the four common tones used in this progression are embodied in the $f^{\phi 7}$ (m.13), a sonority that is rarely used by Gryphon.

By viewing these five measures as non-functional triadic harmony utilizing common tone movement, a tie is created between Gryphon's implementation of counterpoint and possible influences from twentieth-century music and other progressive rock bands. In either case, this type of harmonic language is a departure from the common-practice, hierarchical, and functional harmonies that Gryphon employed in previous albums. Also, while the fugato section is not the type of pure sixteenth-century counterpoint that Gryphon used in certain points of "Juniper Suite," it is a continued inclusion of the contrapuntal techniques which originate from the band's medieval and renaissance background.

Dance Section

The dance section from 6:53 to 8:07 begins with a clearing out of the texture from the previous contrapuntal section. The bass begins with an ostinato pattern in 6/8 in which the rhythm resembles that of a jig (or gigue). The use of percussion here moves away from the rock drum set and back into the role of a more traditional folk percussive accompaniment. The first four-measure phrase contains a fast membranophone accompaniment with a small bell and sleigh bells. Taps from the dome of two different cymbals enter during the second four-measure phrase, as does a rapid sixteenth-note

pattern on what sounds like spoons. At 7:16 alternating hand claps and wood block accents begin to outline a 3 over 2 polyrhythm. These layers of percussion add textural depth to the mostly diatonic recorder solo and bass ostinato.

The bass ostinato remains constant throughout the entire section, outlining a G chord with an open fifth. This ambiguous open fifth allows the recorder solo to fill in the harmony. In this instance, the recorder once again utilizes the G-hybrid scale, although here without altering the 6th scale degree.¹²⁶ Figure 5.11 shows the first phrase, which serves as the foundational melody upon which the other variant phrases are based. The first four measures of the phrase appear to employ a G mixolydian scale, the flat seventh negating a dominant voice-leading. The fifth measure introduces the flat third scale degree, adding a dorian quality, which only lasts for one measure. The only other alteration is during the fourth and fifth repeats, which alter the first four measures of the phrase. Figure 5.11 shows the first four measures of the fourth and fifth repeats (which are the same). Although the F# leading-tone is briefly used, it is quickly replaced with an F-natural. The second and third measures of these repeats also focus around the minor modal choice. This flows directly into the fifth measure which, as previously noted, also utilizes the flat third scale degree. The virtuosic recorder jig appears more out of context in *Raindance* than it might have on previous albums, but it is a solid display of Richard Harvey's skill on the recorder.

¹²⁶ It appears obvious that this G hybrid scale is a favorite choice of Richard Harvey, possibly due to the ease of performance using this scale. The simpler fingerings of this scale and its alterations would leave room for more virtuosity during live performances.

Figure 5.11 (Recorder Jig, Section F, 6:53-8:07)

The musical score for Recorder Jig, Section F, 6:53-8:07, is presented in three staves. The first staff, in bass clef, shows a 'Bass Ostinato' consisting of a repeating eighth-note pattern. Above it, the 'First Phrase' is written in treble clef, featuring a melodic line with a trill and a triplet. The second staff continues the melodic line in treble clef. The third staff, also in treble clef, is labeled 'Fourth and Fifth Phrase (first four measures)' and shows a melodic line with a key signature change to one sharp (F#).

The Influence of Jazz

One of the most innovative additions to Gryphon’s sound on *Raindance* comes from the band’s most recent addition, Malcolm Bennett. Bennett’s addition of the flute to Gryphon’s timbral collection is introduced in a more classical setting (here meaning Western “Common Practice” music). As the A theme is developed in the *fortspinnung* style (beginning at approximately 4:52), the flute begins to break away from its original classical role and becomes the focus of a jazz-inspired solo section. While Gryphon began to show an assimilation of the blues genre during the jam section of “Checkmate” and during the previous guitar solos of “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben,” the pitch choices and soft timbre of the flute solo are clearly inspired by jazz. The linear approach that the flute has previously taken now becomes saturated with arpeggios and extends the range of the instrument as a direct result of the jazz influence.

The harmonic language and rhythm of section A² also add to the contrast with previous Gryphon songs and albums. After the beginning development of the section, the harmonic accompaniment changes at 5:40 to a recurring two-chord accompaniment,

containing two measures of d minor and two measures of Eb major. This pattern repeats nearly seven full times (5:40 – 6:17), with the seventh (and last) occurrence becoming a transition to the next section. This repeated harmonic accompaniment with a predominantly diatonic solo appears to be taken from the modal jazz (cool jazz) style that was made popular by Miles Davis and some later works by John Coltrane. While in “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben” the upbeat tempo causes the harmonic rhythm to be more accelerated than many modal jazz pieces, the repetitive, basic two-chord accompaniment is something that is clearly a new addition to Gryphon’s repertoire. The modal jazz of the 1950-60’s is also the best-suited sub-genre of jazz for Gryphon’s style. The subtly changing harmony adapts itself more easily to Gryphon’s typical harmonic language than the more chromatic bebop or funk.

Figure 5.12 (Transition and Jazz Flute, Section A², 5:19-5:45)

The musical score for Flute is presented in four staves. The first staff (measures 1-5) is in 3/4 time, starting with an F major chord. The second staff (measures 6-10) shifts to 4/4 time, beginning with a g minor arpeggio. The third staff (measures 11-14) continues in 4/4 time with various chords and a triplet. The fourth staff (measures 15-18) concludes the section with a triplet and an Eb major chord.

The transition into the jazz section begins in F major in a moderate 3/4 time signature (Fig. 5.12, mm. 1-5). After five measures, the time shifts to 4/4 and begins on an ascending g-minor arpeggio that becomes syncopated, beginning the stylistic shift to

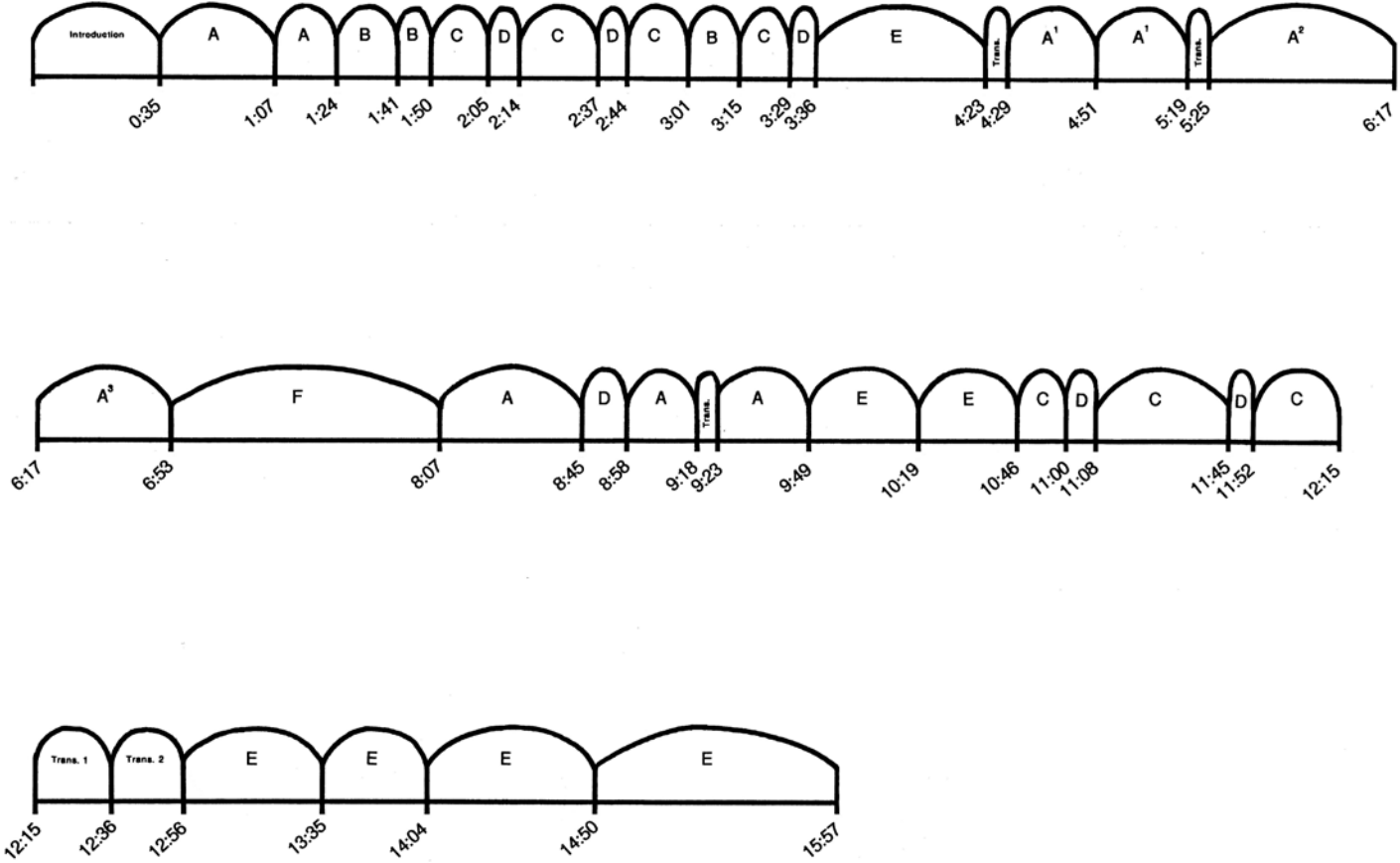
jazz. The appearance of a melodic Eb in measure 7 (Fig. 5.12) signifies a shift to G aeolian, the case for this mode made stronger by the lack of the pitch F#. As the transition to the d minor – Eb major changes unfolds, the melodic rhythms accelerate and, as previously mentioned, the melodic contour becomes arpeggiated. In measure 13 (Fig. 5.12) the meter shifts back to 3/4, and one measure later a g-minor^{add9} follows the Eb-major chord. The added ninth is best described as an anticipation to the d-minor chord that begins the d minor – Eb major modal repetition. What restricts the modal section from being analyzed as being in Eb major is constant use of the pitch A natural, contained in the d-minor chord, for the remainder of the section. This aids in the negation of leading-tone driven harmonic expectations that Gryphon previously avoided through the use of the hybrid scale.

Conclusion

Gryphon handles the extended track length of “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben” (16:03) in a different manner than in “Midnight Mushrumps.” Timbral elisions and instrumental grouping play a secondary role to the more abrupt sectional changes in this song. The diversity of styles present takes precedence over long-term tonal planning that was the focus of previous pieces. The use of blues and rock, which take a more prominent role on *Raindance*, influence the sectional form and transitions between sections in addition to creating a new sound environment of diverse timbres and styles of a still developing band. Gryphon’s contrapuntal use is concentrated primarily in one section, however, not in the strict sixteenth-century style of “Juniper Suite.” The use of counterpoint shows that, while Gryphon was expanding the diversity of styles in its repertoire, the original influences of the band were still present. The original band influence is also evident with

the inclusion of a traditional jig-like recorder section, utilizing the G-hybrid mode that has been used in previous Gryphon songs. The newest stylistic development present in Gryphon's growing pool of influences in this song is the addition of jazz elements, provided by Malcolm Bennett's flute solo. With all of these changes happening in such a short span of time, it is not hard to see why the band began to split after this album. The diversity that brought Gryphon together would also play a hand in separating members and causing its eventual disbanding.

Figure 5.13 ([Ein Klein] Heldenleben – Formal Diagram)



CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Looking Back

In the short span of time between 1973 and 1975, Gryphon developed from an all-acoustic ensemble predominantly inspired by medieval, renaissance, and folk music to an eclectic progressive rock band that continued to draw from early music styles and forms, as well as Western common practice musical idioms, rock, blues, and jazz. By examining “Juniper Suite,” “Midnight Mushrumps,” “Checkmate,” and “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben,” one sees a band expanding in instrumentation, timbre, harmonic and melodic content, form, and in genre and style. From early music and folk to rock and jazz, Gryphon grew organically from both internal influences (including both the founding trio and new additions) and external influences (new technology, recording techniques, and contact with other bands).

Figure 6.1 (Gryphon Members by Album)

| <i>Gryphon</i> | <i>Midnight Mushrumps</i> | <i>Red Queen to Gryphon Three</i> | <i>Raindance</i> | <i>Treason</i> |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Richard Harvey Brian Gulland Graeme Taylor David Oberle | Richard Harvey Brian Gulland Graeme Taylor David Oberle Phil Nestor | Richard Harvey Brian Gulland Graeme Taylor David Oberle Phil Nestor | Richard Harvey Brian Gulland Graeme Taylor David Oberle Malcolm Bennett | Richard Harvey Brian Gulland David Oberle Bob Foster Jonathan Davie Alex Baird |

By the time of the release of *Treason*, Gryphon’s roster had irrevocably changed and the pressures from the music industry created a band far from the Gryphon that composed “Juniper Suite.” A look back at some of the main features of Gryphon’s stylistic development will help assimilate the microscopic elements and create a macroscopic view.

Timbre and Instrumentation (and their Relation to Form)

The examination of Gryphon’s music has shown that the band adapted to the large-scale structure being employed by other progressive rock bands and shifted timbrally toward the more accepted “rock” sound of the progressive rock genre. The most obvious indicator of this expansive timbral inventory is instrumentation. The following graph shows the increasingly diverse pool of instrumental resources from which Gryphon was able to draw.

Figure 6.2 (Instrumentation by Album)

| <i>Gryphon</i> | <i>Midnight Mushrumps</i> | <i>Red Queen to Gryphon Three</i> | <i>Raindance</i> |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Recorder | 1. Recorder | 1. Recorder | 1. Recorder |
| 2. Crumhorn | 2. Crumhorn | 2. Crumhorn | 2. Crumhorn |
| 3. Bassoon | 3. Bassoon | 3. Bassoon | 3. Bassoon |
| 4. Harmonium | 4. Harmonium | 4. Harmonium | 4. Glockenspiel |
| 5. Glockenspiel | 5. Glockenspiel | 5. Glockenspiel | 5. Guitar |
| 6. Mandolin | 6. Mandolin | 6. Guitar | (Acoustic) |
| 7. Guitar | 7. Guitar | (Acoustic) | 6. Guitar |
| (Acoustic) | (Acoustic) | 7. Guitar | (Electric) |
| 8. Harpsichord | 8. Harpsichord | (Electric) | 7. Organ |
| 9. Organ | 9. Organ | 8. Harpsichord | 8. Clavinet |
| 10. Percussion | 10. Percussion | 9. Organ | 9. Percussion |
| (no set) | (no set) | 10. Percussion | (with set) |
| | 11. Timpani | (with set) | 10. Timpani |
| | 12. Piano | 11. Timpani | 11. Piano |
| | 13. Electric | 12. Piano | 12. Electric |
| | piano | 13. Electric | piano |
| | 14. Bass guitar | piano | 13. Synthesizer |
| | | 14. Bass guitar | 14. (Mini-moog) |
| | | 15. Synthesizer | 15. Bass guitar |
| | | | 16. Mellotron |
| | | | 17. Clarinet |
| | | | 18. Flute |

Through their expansive instrumental inventory and advances in recording, Gryphon was able to layer and blend instrumentation, creating a sort of timbral alchemy

that exceeded the limitations of a four- or five-piece ensemble. While the recording technique of layering is not readily present in “Juniper Suite,” it is developed in “Midnight Mushrumps” and becomes standard in “Checkmate.” The development of instrumental blending and layering is also tied to Gryphon’s implementation of timbral elisions that grew from the need for cohesion in large-scale form. Timbral elisions began in “Midnight Mushrumps,” a song nearly four times the duration of “Juniper Suite.” The timbral elisions are created through the early introduction of a melodic instrument near the end of one section that will be utilized in the following section, helping to smooth out the transition.

While the track length of “Midnight Mushrumps” was more inspired by the need to create incidental music for *The Tempest*, it gave the band the necessary tools for composing other songs of increased track length. Increased track length is one area in which the influence of Yes is found in the music of Gryphon. Gryphon’s move away from short, strophic song structures came from both an increasing knowledge in compositional techniques and influence from other progressive rock bands (whose songs could cover multiple sides of an album). The influence of Yes can also be seen in Gryphon’s move away from an all-acoustic album (*Gryphon*) toward songs such as “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben,” which employs both acoustic and electric instruments, with an emphasis on the latter. While it is presumptuous to assume that Yes was the only influence in this area, early familiarity with and admiration of Yes, combined with the experience of the *Relayer* tour, would have clearly influenced the members of Gryphon.

Advances in technology influenced Gryphon in both instrumentation and timbre and in perceived performance space. Instrumentally, the band’s shift from acoustic

instrumentation to the dominant use of Mellotron, synthesizers, electric keyboards, and electric guitar is steadily found throughout the four songs examined (refer back to Figure 6.2). The use of panning instruments throughout the right-left sound field and the use of reverb and chorus effects create a perceived performance space larger than would have previously been possible (a concept constantly used by Pink Floyd, a crossover progressive rock/psychedelic band). This added perceptual depth to Gryphon's sound became another tool to aid in both instrumental pairing and diversity throughout songs of increasing track length.

Musical Styles and Genres

“Juniper Suite” sets the groundwork for a band rooted in folk and early music. This is most evident in instrumentation and form and the inclusion of strict sixteenth-century counterpoint. As the band progressed, contrapuntal ideas still permeated the band's compositional style, however strict sixteenth-century counterpoint is not found in any of the other songs examined. A look at the fugato section of “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben” clearly shows a band still interested in intricate counterpoint, but no longer bound to the rules of the sixteenth-century.

Due to both inside and outside influences, Gryphon began including psychedelic-inspired jam sections reminiscent of the 1960's (“Checkmate”), the blues (“Checkmate” and “[Ein Klein] Heldenleben”), and jazz (“[Ein Klein] Heldenleben”), all in addition to early, common practice, and folk music styles. Gryphon's repertoire implemented newer musical styles while never abandoning its roots.

Pitch Content

“Juniper Suite” implemented the standard major and minor scales and/or keys in addition to the hybrid scale, an important element of Gryphon’s harmonic and melodic content. Through the hybrid scale, Gryphon was able to produce a modal ambiguity that governs tonal centers throughout songs of increasing track length (although not as important in “[Ein Klein] Heldenleben”). The hybrid scale also creates the opportunity for chromatic mediant movement (employed by many progressive rock bands). As the band progressed and began to incorporate more musical styles and genres, the use of the blues scale and modally non-functional harmony (“Checkmate” and “[Ein Klein] Heldenleben”) entered Gryphon’s musical lexicon. A comparison between the use of the hybrid scale in the introduction to “Juniper Suite” and in the opening theme of “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben” shows a maturity in the use of modal material. Both use the hybrid scale to create modal ambiguity, but in the latter work, it is used to convey a feeling of stasis (non-direction) drastically different from the busy, forward-moving opening theme of “Juniper Suite.”

Another maturity that Gryphon displays in regards to pitch content is the melodic mirror inversion and the extended playing out of the tritone in “Checkmate.” The opening theme of “Checkmate” moves beyond the hybrid scale and functional harmony (indeed even beyond the band’s later use of non-functional triadic harmony) and relies on the technique of melodic mirror inversion to create change and forward motion. Out of this inversion, Gryphon employs the present tritone (A/Eb) as an important harmonic event that is played out over the first 6 ½ minutes of the piece. Here, Gryphon displays its developing compositional maturity, especially in regards to melodic and harmonic pitch content.

Cadence in Large-Scale Form

As the band moved away from simple strophic song forms, so did its reliance on clear cadences to delineate sections. “Juniper Suite,” coming from an album reliant on simple song forms, contains clear cadences at the end of every major section. In “Midnight Mushrumps” the cadences become increasingly elided, both harmonically and timbrally. This smoothing out of the cadences creates an unbroken flow that aids in both the unfolding and transition of musical ideas and the expansion of tension and release in large-scale form. The concept of elided cadences continues through to “Checkmate,” although here it is not as heavily used. Smooth cadences are found in “(Ein Klein) Heldenleben,” but the dominant use of rock diminished the need for elided cadences.

Departure of a Style

The core members of Gryphon began to travel separate paths prior to the release of *Treason*.¹²⁷ Throughout the three years (1973-1975) and four albums discussed in this text, Gryphon expanded until it could no longer be held by its initial ties. Stylistically, the band arrived at a mature progressive rock style with the release of *Treason*. This type of rapid expansion to a breaking point for some members of the band can be seen as a microcosm of the progressive rock genre as a whole. By 1976, the foundations upon which progressive rock was built began to fall. The style had expanded to the point that the musical resources of rock were too far stretched to sustain songs of a commercially viable nature (one needs only to listen to Yes’ *Tales From Topographic Oceans* which spans nearly an hour and half). The crisis of progressive rock can be viewed as

¹²⁷ A look at the band line up of Figure 6.1 clearly shows this.

analogous, though comprising a shorter time span, with the expansion and breaking point of Western classical music which musicians experienced after World War I (leading to Schönberg's "Emancipation of Dissonance").¹²⁸

The rise of punk music also dealt a blow to progressive rock. While the progressive rock audience was typically middle-class, punk music was a predominantly working-class phenomenon. The punk generation viewed progressive rock, and the counterculture in general, as a failed concept that had spiraled upward toward a culture of elitists and hypocrites. To the punk generation, progressive rock had sold out and was no longer music for general consumption. Punk music was based upon a more pessimistic view than the love and peace spread by the counterculture, and was purposefully lacking in the intricacies of progressive rock.

Thus, the end of Gryphon is connected with the fall of progressive rock in general through internal factors of expansion, both musically and personally, and external factors such as the decline of progressive rock's viability, a general decline in the counterculture, and the subsequent retaliatory rise of punk.¹²⁹

Looking Forward

Although Gryphon has received relatively little attention during the recent rise of academic research in popular music, this text will hopefully inspire a new generation of listeners to investigate Gryphon's music. One of the most exciting aspects of working with progressive rock music is that the musicians who created it are still alive today.

These invaluable resources should not go unharvested. In regards to Gryphon, the

¹²⁸ Macan makes reference of this in *Rocking the Classics*, 182.

¹²⁹ Here again is a connection with progressive rock and Western classical music at the beginning of the twentieth century. The duality of internal and external factors (expansion and modification) applying pressure toward a breaking point is discussed in depth by Jim Samson in *Music in Transition: A Study of Tonal Expansion and Atonality, 1900-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

relatively small amount of literature present pleads the case even more urgently.

Although this text provides an overview of the band's history and stylistic development, its scope must inherently remain limited. It is this author's hope that this text will shine a light on one of the many lesser known, but equally worthy progressive rock bands and will inspire future theorists, musicologists, and sociologists to continue the investigation. Looking to the future, with a possible band reunion in the works,¹³⁰ listeners will have the chance to hear what sounds nearly 30 years of personal and musical growth will produce.

¹³⁰ Graeme Taylor, in-person discussion with the author, June 7, 2007.

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