

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:                   ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE: AN ANALYSIS  
AND DISCUSSION OF PERFORMANCE  
CONSIDERATIONS FOR MICHAEL  
GILBERTSON'S *USONIAN DWELLINGS*

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2021

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Modern wind conductors face the perennial problem of searching for quality repertoire to perform with their ensembles. The comparison is often made between the quality of repertoire available to bands versus orchestras, and bands have always fallen short. Efforts are being made to add quality works to the wind band repertoire through commissions and advocacy for contemporary composers.

*Usonian Dwellings* is a new work that deserves a lasting place in the wind band repertoire, and its composer, Michael Gilbertson, has the potential to become a significant voice in the wind band repertoire. Though he is relatively young, his work has already earned him significant recognition. Most notably, he was a finalist for the 2018 Pulitzer Prize in Music.

Commissioned by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band,  
*Usonian Dwellings* was premiered on their tour of Japan in 2019. As a member of

“The President’s Own” I am in a unique position to document the development and premiere of this new work through a combination of primary source documents and personal accounts.

*Usonian Dwellings* is a work heavily influenced by the aesthetic of Frank Lloyd Wright, whose buildings serve as inspiration for this work. In particular, Wright’s concept of “organic architecture” is demonstrated throughout the work, most notably through Gilbertson’s treatment of main motivic and thematic ideas. While this dissertation is not an exhaustive analysis of the work, it presents a large-scale formal analysis and describes how important themes and motives operate within this organic framework.

ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE: AN ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF  
PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS FOR MICHAEL GILBERTSON'S  
*USONIAN DWELLINGS*

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts  
2021

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wonderful husband, Rick McGrath. His unwavering support makes all things possible.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to take a moment to thank the small army of people who made this dissertation possible. First and foremost, thank you to Michael Gilbertson for trusting me with his work. I would also like to acknowledge Colonel Jason K. Fettig for encouraging me to pursue this topic and supporting the project throughout the twists and turns brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. To the musicians of “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, thank you for being wonderful colleagues and using your awesome musical talent to bring *Usonian Dwellings* to life on our memorable tour of Japan. Thank you also to General Akira Takeda and Mr. Toshio Akiyama for your generous participation in this project. Finally, thank you to my committee members, and especially to my wonderful teacher and mentor Dr. Michael Votta, for guiding this project to fruition.

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## Chapter 1: The Rationale Behind This Project

Modern wind conductors face the perennial problem of searching for quality repertoire to perform with their ensembles. The comparison is often made between the quality of repertoire available to bands versus orchestras, and bands have always fallen short. Efforts are being made to add quality works to the wind band repertoire through commissions. Still, the orchestral repertoire has the benefit of a several-centuries head start. There is simply more repertoire available from which quality works can be filtered out. It is therefore incumbent upon contemporary wind band directors to continually elevate the repertoire for the medium.

*Usonian Dwellings* is a new work that deserves a lasting place in the wind band repertoire, and its composer, Michael Gilbertson, has the potential to become a significant voice in the wind band repertoire. One might argue that because this work was commissioned and performed by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band it should need no further advocacy. Certainly, it should not lack for visibility, and I believe that the quality of the work is apparent to trained listeners.

My purpose in writing this dissertation is three-fold. First, I believe this work will find a lasting place in the repertoire and therefore want to document its development process from commission to premiere. I am in a unique position to do this because I personally participated in the first rehearsals and the first performances of this work during the Marine Band’s tour of Japan.

Second, because the work is challenging, I hope that this dissertation will serve as a resource for conductors and will make it more accessible to both conductors and players.

Finally, the high level of compositional craftsmanship and depth of artistic vision present in *Usonian Dwellings* merits more in-depth study. While this dissertation is not an exhaustive analysis of the work, it presents a large-scale formal analysis and describes how important themes and motives operate within the work.

This project continues an almost century-long tradition of wind conductors championing works in an effort to elevate the repertoire. Many wind band directors have contributed to expanding the repertoire since the second half of the 20th century. Perhaps the most prominent of these figures is Frederick Fennell. Fennell is credited with “ignit[ing] a mid-twentieth-century ‘American Wind Band/Ensemble Revolution,’” inspiring a new wave of young wind band directors to champion higher artistic standards and to seek commissions from both rising composers and well-established composers.

The coronavirus pandemic has forced the delay or cancellation of more than an entire season’s worth of concerts, resulting in a backlog of newly commissioned works, which will be premiered nearly simultaneously. It is my hope that this dissertation will help bring attention to *Usonian Dwellings* among this flood of new works, thus building on the foundation laid by 20th century wind conductors through research, advocacy, and the commissioning of the most talented composers of our era.

## Chapter 2: Michael Gilbertson

### *Biography of Michael Gilbertson*

Michael Gilbertson, born in Dubuque, Iowa in 1987, holds composition degrees from both The Juilliard School (BM 2010) and Yale University (MM 2011). He will also graduate from Yale with a doctoral degree in composition in 2021. His major teachers include John Corigliano, Christopher Rouse, and Aaron Jay Kernis.<sup>1</sup> To date, his compositions have earned him acclaim from the New York Times, The Washington Post, The Baltimore Sun, and The Philadelphia Inquirer.<sup>2</sup> His works have been performed by well-respected musical organizations throughout the United States, including “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, Minnesota Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Washington National Opera, Albany Symphony, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, Grand Rapids Symphony, Santa Barbara Symphony, Virginia Opera, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, Symphony in C, New England Philharmonic, Cheyenne Symphony, Musica Sacra, The Crossing, Conspirare, The Esoterics, Verona Quartet, Akropolis Quintet, Sybarite5, SOLI Chamber Ensemble, the Copland House Ensemble, and Aspen Contemporary Ensemble.<sup>3</sup> He has also served as the composer-in-residence for the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra.<sup>4</sup> In 2009 he founded ChamberFest Dubuque, a festival bringing

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<sup>1</sup> N.a., “Michael Gilbertson: Music Theory and Musicianship,” <https://sfc.edu/faculty/michael-gilbertson> (2020), accessed 23 November 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Gilbertson, “Bio,” <https://michael-gilbertson.net/bio/> (2020), accessed 20 November 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

classical concerts to his hometown of Dubuque, Iowa. He currently serves as artistic director for that festival.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to composing, Gilbertson currently teaches courses in music theory, musicianship, and music history at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He also teaches composition and orchestration at San Francisco State University.

Gilbertson is best known for his 2017 string quartet, simply titled *Quartet*, which was commissioned by the Verona Quartet, Concert Artists Guild, and BMI Foundation.<sup>6</sup> This work earned him a nomination as a finalist for the 2018 Pulitzer Prize in Music.<sup>7</sup> His compositions include numerous works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, and chorus, but *Usonian Dwellings* is his first original work for band. His sole prior band work, *Vigil*, is a wind transcription of a work originally for orchestra.

### Michael Gilbertson's Compositional Aesthetic

As Michael Gilbertson's first work for wind band, *Usonian Dwellings* marks the beginning of a potentially significant new phase in his composing career, but it is not a dramatic departure from his previous work.

Like *Usonian Dwellings*, many of his other works lean on conceptual ideas as a vehicle for accessibility. Even his Pulitzer-nominated string quartet, simply titled *Quartet*, was written as a reaction to the 2016 election, and begins with sonic evocations of the "glass ceiling" which was much-discussed during that election

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<sup>5</sup> N.a., "Finalist: *Quartet* by Michael Gilbertson," <https://www.pulitzer.org/finalists/michael-gilbertson> (2020), accessed 20 November 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Gilbertson, "Chamber," <https://michaelgilbertson.net/chamber/> (2020), accessed 20 November 2020.

<sup>7</sup> N.a., "Finalist: *Quartet* by Michael Gilbertson."

cycle. Gilbertson feels that these concepts can be useful for audiences as a frame of reference, allowing his works to be comprehensible even to people without a deep knowledge of classical music.

A striking feature of Gilbertson's compositional style is his impeccable sense of timing. He uses a varied harmonic and timbral palette and knows precisely when to shift from harmonic ambiguity to clarity or from textural complexity to simplicity in order to create interesting and engaging works. He blends familiarity with unconventionality, achieving a style that is original while remaining accessible to a wide range of listeners.

This approach of playing with the tension between accessibility and originality extends to his melodic writing which, Gilbertson acknowledges, is inspired by the melodic writing of Sergei Prokofiev.<sup>8</sup> Gilbertson's themes often modulate by design, and not merely in transitional moments. He uses this technique in pursuit of what Prokofiev called, "the composer's most difficult task," which is, "to find a melody that is intelligible to an inexpert listener and at the same time original."<sup>9</sup>

While there are influences of Prokofiev in Gilbertson's melodic writing, and of Stravinsky in his orchestration, Gilbertson has sought to cultivate a unique voice. To that end, he has sought a wide variety of perspectives in his musical education and has been careful not to linger in one compositional school of thought.

Gilbertson views spending his youth in the Midwest as an advantage in this regard, saying, "I think if I'd grown up in a place with more composers, where things

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Gilbertson, personal interview (27 February 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Sergei Prokofiev, "A Composer on Trial", in *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, ed. Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin (New York: Schirmer Books, 1984), 501.

were more competitive, I might not have been able to develop a distinctive style so easily. I wasn't surrounded by various schools of composition, either on the East Coast or in California. I was right in the middle, so I was able to soak up whatever I wanted."<sup>10</sup> While writing *Usonian Dwellings*, he deliberately avoided listening to other band works, lest he be influenced by their compositional style.<sup>11</sup> However, he did visit rehearsals of "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in July of 2018, prior to writing *Usonian Dwellings*, to develop a sense of the ensemble for which he was writing.<sup>12</sup>

In 2018, The Pulitzer Prize Board described his nominated work, *Quartet*, as "unconstrained by convention or musical vogues and possess[ing] a rare capacity to stir the heart."<sup>13</sup> It is noteworthy that these are similar to the characteristics that architect Frank Lloyd Wright sought to display in his own work. Like *Quartet*, *Usonian Dwellings* is also "unconstrained by convention" and it is a stunning, emotionally rich work. These characteristics, however, are inherent to Gilbertson's musical vision and are not merely a result of his emulating Frank Lloyd Wright's aesthetic for this particular piece.

One of the most important features of *Usonian Dwellings* is Gilbertson's skillful integration of coloristic ideas with more concrete music. The term "coloristic" is how Gilbertson refers to elements which are gestural and are generally characterized by tonal ambiguity and a lack of melody while "concrete" refers to

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<sup>10</sup> Joshua Kosman, "Kendrick Lamar's Pulitzer a win for runner-up SF composer Michael Gilbertson," <https://datebook.sfchronicle.com/music/kendrick-lamars-pulitzer-a-win-for-runner-up-sf-composer-michael-gilbertson> (2019), accessed 3 March 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Gilbertson, personal interview (27 February 2021).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> N.a., "Finalist: *Quartet* by Michael Gilbertson."

music with clear harmony or melodic line. In this piece, coloristic and concrete elements coexist, interact and build upon one another. This is a technique which Gilbertson has also explored in previous works, but his use of this technique is particularly successful in *Usonian Dwellings*.

Gilbertson's orchestrational style in *Usonian Dwellings* is best described as orchestral, favoring distinctive instrumental colors over massed sonorities. Consequently, he avoids large choirs of doubled instruments, preferring to revel in the unique colors available from different sections of the ensemble, and leans heavily toward using instruments in soli groups or, less commonly, in small choirs.

Gilbertson has said this was a deliberate attempt to avoid what he terms "typical" band writing, which likely refers to works intended for public school music education settings.<sup>14</sup> Instead, his orchestrational style is more reminiscent of Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* or Joseph Schwantner's *...and the mountains rising nowhere*.

Though he occasionally writes for instruments in atypical registers and incorporates extended techniques, Gilbertson has not tried to rewrite the rules of wind band orchestration in this work. Rather, he focuses on expressing his unique musical vision through idiomatic writing which explores the rich timbral palette of the wind band.

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Gilbertson, personal interview (27 February 2021).

## Chapter 3: Frank Lloyd Wright and the Organic Aesthetic

### Frank Lloyd Wright

The compositional style of *Usonian Dwellings* is heavily influenced by the aesthetic of both the architect and the two buildings which serve as its inspiration. Any discussion of the piece must therefore begin by considering the aesthetic philosophy of Frank Lloyd Wright, who, among many other accolades, was named “The Greatest American Architect of All Time” by the American Institute of Architects.<sup>15</sup> His works include houses, offices, churches, schools, skyscrapers, hotels, and museums.<sup>16</sup>

Several of his buildings, including both Taliesin West and Fallingwater, the buildings which inspired Gilbertson’s *Usonian Dwellings*, are on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and he is often credited with developing the first uniquely American style of architecture.<sup>17</sup> His unique approach to design has inspired architects around the world, and his legacy lives on through his hundreds of completed buildings and through the fellows who studied with him through apprenticeships at Taliesin and Taliesin West.

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<sup>15</sup> N.a., “1949 – Frank Lloyd Wright,” <https://store.aia.org/collections/1949-frank-lloyd-wright> (2021), accessed 7 March 2021.

<sup>16</sup> N.a., “Frank Lloyd Wright’s Work,” <https://franklloydwright.org/work/> (2021), accessed 10 March 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Frank Lloyd Wright Heritage Foundation, “Eight Frank Lloyd Wright Sites Inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List,” <https://franklloydwright.org/eight-frank-lloyd-wright-sites-inscribed-on-unesco-world-heritage-list/> (2019), accessed March 7 2021.

## Origins of “Organic Architecture”

The aspect of Wright’s style most relevant to *Usonian Dwellings* is the concept of “organic architecture.” This term, coined by Wright, does not lend itself to succinct explanation. Wright’s definition of “organic architecture” evolved throughout his lifetime, but as Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer explains,

“...one basic principle remained the same - it was an architecture that grew outward from within, in which all the parts were related to the whole as the whole was related to the parts. He saw organic architecture as integrated entity. In this respect, he saw architecture as following the principles that govern nature. For Wright the study of nature was never the looking at but rather, and far more profound, the looking in.”<sup>18</sup>

In 1952, Wright clarified what he meant by “organic architecture” in “The Language of an Organic Architecture.” In this essay he explains, “Nature means not just the ‘out-of-doors,’ clouds, trees, storms, the terrain and animal life, but refers to their nature as to the nature of materials or the ‘nature’ of a plan, a sentiment or a tool,” and “Organic” does not simply refer to, “what may hang in a butcher shop, get about on two feet or be cultivated in a field,” but rather, “organic means *part-to-whole-as-whole-is-to-part*. So *entity as integral* is what is really meant by the word organic.”<sup>19</sup> Wright was driven by the idea that an ideal architecture would create an

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<sup>18</sup> Frank Lloyd Wright, “Organic Architecture Looks at Modern Architecture”, in *Frank Lloyd Wright Collected Writings*, ed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), Vol. 5, 45.

<sup>19</sup> Frank Lloyd Wright, “The Language of an Organic Architecture”, in *Frank Lloyd Wright Collected Writings*, ed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), Vol. 5, 60-61.

ecosystem where the environment, the building, and its inhabitants all form a synergistic, inseparable whole.

The concepts behind organic architecture are not original to Wright. Some of them can be found documented as early as 400 BC, but Wright saw their timelessness as evidence of their veracity. In fact, he had a paraphrase of Chinese philosopher Lao Tsu, “The reality of the building does not consist of the four walls and roof, but in the space within to be lived in,” carved over the fireplace at his family home, Taliesin.<sup>20</sup> While elements of this organic philosophy were evident centuries before Wright’s lifetime, he believed himself to be the first to bring these principles into physical manifestation and to codify them through his unique style of architecture.<sup>21</sup>

According to Robert McCarter, Frank Lloyd Wright’s search for an aesthetic based on universal principles of nature can be explained largely by two major influences in his life.<sup>22</sup> While cultural beliefs that align with an organic aesthetic can be found long before the 19th century, particularly in Asia, the origins of Wright’s personal philosophy lie in the American Transcendentalist movement, which arose in 19th century New England. The writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, coupled with the Froebel kindergarten training he received as a child were particularly strong influences. These influences emphasize individual creativity and harmony with the natural world. Wright viewed his architecture as an important - and lasting - expression of these principles and abhorred any style of architecture that he

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<sup>20</sup> Robert McCarter, “Drawing Wright from the Obvious,” in *On and By Frank Lloyd Wright: A Primer of Architectural Principles*, ed. Robert McCarter (London and New York: Phaidon Press Inc., 2005), 17-18.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 11-13.

viewed as out of sync with either its natural environment or the needs of its inhabitants.<sup>23</sup>

The fundamentals of Wright's design philosophy came to him at an early age through the Froebel Kindergarten training provided by his mother.<sup>24</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel, an architect himself, designed the kindergarten training as an expression of his belief in the unity and constancy of the laws of nature.<sup>25</sup> He is quoted as saying, "...human education cannot do anything better than imitate the logic of nature."<sup>26</sup>

Froebel training consists of a series of "gifts," several of which are wooden blocks of various rectangular shapes which together form a cube.<sup>27</sup> These are presented to a child in a specific order and are designed to be manipulated into different "forms" by the child through very specific instructions.<sup>28</sup> Froebel explains, "In life we find no isolation. One part of the cube, therefore, must never be left apart from or without relation to the whole. The child will thus become accustomed to treat all things in life as bearing a certain relation to one another."<sup>29</sup> In these instructions, it is easy to see the early origins of Wright's organic aesthetic.

Many of these same views were shared by Emerson and the other 19th century Transcendentalists, Wright's other major philosophical influence. As Naomi Tanabe

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<sup>23</sup> Frank Lloyd Wright, "Organic Architecture Looks at Modern Architecture," 45-50.

<sup>24</sup> Robert McCarter, "Drawing Wright from the Obvious," 11.

<sup>25</sup> Richard MacCormac, "Froebel's Kindergarten Training and Wright's Early Work," in *On and By Frank Lloyd Wright: A Primer of Architectural Principles*, ed. Robert McCarter (London and New York: Phaidon Press Inc., 2005), 124-126.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 126.

<sup>27</sup> The Froebel "gifts" are a series of increasingly complex educational toys designed to promote a child's intellectual development.

<sup>28</sup> Richard MacCormac, "Froebel's Kindergarten Training and Wright's Early Work," 127.

<sup>29</sup> Richard MacCormac, "Froebel's Kindergarten Training and Wright's Early Work," 128.

Uechi explains, “New England Transcendentalists valued three concepts: self-reliance, individualism, and the sanctity of nature.”<sup>30</sup> Emerson in particular mirrored Froebel’s belief that there were fundamental governing principles of nature which could be applied universally.<sup>31</sup> He also placed particular emphasis on the ability of the individual to interpret these fundamental principles. In his words, “truth was in us before it was reflected to us from natural objects.”<sup>32</sup> Wright shared the Transcendentalist belief that through democracy America could form an organic unity between the individual, society, and nature.<sup>33</sup> He held these ideals so highly in esteem that he often quoted Transcendentalist writers in his own writing, and he even carried around with him a copy of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. Where Wright had the words of Lao Tsu inscribed at his family home in Taliesin, he had a stanza of Whitman’s “Song of the Universal” from *Leaves of Grass* inscribed in a concrete slab at his winter retreat, Taliesin West.<sup>34</sup>

### Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan

Wright’s passionate belief in these aspects of transcendentalist philosophy helps to explain his fascination with Japanese culture and design. Wright saw parallels between the Transcendentalist “universal principles” of nature and the design aesthetic found in Japanese wood block prints.

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<sup>30</sup> Naomi Tanabe Uechi, “Frank Lloyd Wright, Transcendentalism, and Organic Architecture,” <https://wrighttaliesin.info/frank-lloyd-wright-transcendentalism-and-organic-architecture/> (n.d.), accessed 23 April 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Robert McCarter, “Drawing Wright from the Obvious,” 12.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Naomi Tanabe Uechi, “For You O Democracy,” <https://franklloydwright.org/for-you-o-democracy/> (2017), accessed 23 April 2021.

Ernest Fellonosa was an American art historian who studied Japanese art, and who was heavily influenced by the philosophical trends of late nineteenth century New England. Fellonosa explains the parallels between these two worlds stating, “The mere representation of an external fact, the mechanical copying of nature, has nothing whatever to do with art. This proposition is asserted by all oriental critics, and is a fundamental canon with all Japanese painters...”<sup>35</sup>

Fellonosa’s assessment may be a Westernized interpretation of Japanese culture more than a true reflection of Japanese aesthetics. In any case, it is an accurate representation of Wright’s perception of the Japanese design aesthetic.

Wright himself was so inspired by Japanese wood block prints, that he travelled to Japan specifically to purchase them at the source. (There may have been other motives for this trip as well, but this was the “official” purpose of the journey.)<sup>36</sup> Wright saw the aesthetic of Japanese wood block prints as, “A lesson in elimination of the insignificant and in the beauty of the natural use of materials.”<sup>37</sup>

Much has been written about the influence of Japanese architecture on Wright’s work, but the architect vehemently denied drawing any formal inspiration from Japanese architecture or wood block prints. Rather, he insisted that the influence was philosophical in nature, and that the ideals of Japanese design served as confirmation of the validity of his organic philosophy.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan: the role of traditional Japanese art and architecture in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), 76.

<sup>36</sup> N.a., “What is Fallingwater?” <https://fallingwater.org/what-is-fallingwater/> (N.a.), accessed 10 March 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

An illustrative example of the genius of Wright's organic approach can be found in the story of his Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, Japan, completed in 1923 and demolished in 1968.<sup>39</sup> This story is also the most likely route by which Japanese people would be familiar with Wright. In Wright's own words, "While the New Imperial only partially realized the ideal of an organic architecture, the pursuit of that ideal made the building what it really was, and enabled it to do what it did do."<sup>40</sup>

In some ways, Wright looked to Japanese design when creating the hotel, stating, "The Japanese, centuries ago, had come nearer the ideal of an organic architecture in their dwellings than any civilized race on earth," but he bemoaned the fact that the Japanese were falling prey to the same modern design flaws as Westerners, particularly the sloppy integration of systems like plumbing and air conditioning.<sup>41</sup> In his new hotel, he, "...intended to make all these appurtenance systems a practical and aesthetic part of the building itself. It was to be given a new simplicity by making it a complete whole within itself. Mechanical systems should be an asset to life and so an asset to architecture. They should be no detriment to either."<sup>42</sup>

Wright also saw one major flaw within Japanese architecture that he endeavored to correct. The city of Tokyo was subject to regular earthquakes, which often leveled buildings and caused fires on a massive scale. He determined to design

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<sup>39</sup> N.a., "1917-1923 - Wright Designs The Imperial Hotel, Tokyo," <https://www.wrightsjapan1905.org/timeline/the-imperial-hotel/> (2017, accessed 23 April 2021).

<sup>40</sup> Frank Lloyd Wright, "The Imperial Hotel", in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings*, ed. Edgar Kaufmann and Ben Raeburn. (New York: Horizon Press, 1960), 206-207.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 199-200.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

the Imperial to be able to withstand these ravages, crafting the building to be coherent with its environment - a fundamental expression of organicity. In 1923, shortly after the hotel's completion, his design faced its first test. According to Wright,

“...news was shouted in the streets of awful disaster. Tokyo and nearby Yokohama were wiped out by the most terrific temblor in history. Appalling details came in day after day after the first silence when no details could be had. As the news began to add up it seemed that nothing human could have withstood the cataclysm... Then - a cablegram.

‘FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, OLIVE HILL RESIDENCE,  
HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA. FOLLOWING WIRELESS  
RECEIVED TODAY FROM TOKYO, HOTEL STANDS  
UNDAMAGED AS MONUMENT TO YOUR GENIUS HUNDREDS  
OF HOMELESS PROVIDED BY PERFECTLY MAINTAINED  
SERVICE. CONGRATULATIONS.

OKURA.’<sup>43</sup>

In the days that followed, the hotel would serve as a refuge for the displaced, and the pool in the entrance court was used to provide water to stifle fires surrounding the hotel, where municipal water had failed.<sup>44</sup> Wright's organic design had worked precisely as he intended.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 204-205.

<sup>44</sup> Frank Lloyd Wright, “In the Cause of Architecture”, in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings*, ed. Edgar Kaufmann and Ben Raeburn. (New York: Horizon Press, 1960), 195.

## Usonia

Gilbertson's use of the term "Usonian" requires discussion, since neither Fallingwater nor Taliesin West belong to Wright's portfolio of Usonian homes. "Usonian" is a term used by Wright to describe the affordable, democratic style of homes he created in response to the crash of 1929 and subsequent Great Depression.<sup>45</sup> These homes, built in the later years of his career, were intended to be affordable to everyday people while possessing the same level of artistry and practical organicity as his homes for the wealthy.

The origin of the term "Usonia" is unclear. Some have speculated that it is an abbreviation for "United States of North America."<sup>46</sup> Wright erroneously credited Samuel Butler with coining the term in his novel *Erewhon*, stating, "[Samuel Butler] called us Usonians and our Nation of combined States, Usonia." Regardless of the term's provenance, Wright intended it to represent the people of the United States.<sup>47</sup> According to John Sergeant, "'Usonia' was his name for the reformed American society that he tried for the last 25 years of his life to bring about. 'Organic' referred to the way in which this change was going to occur. Ultimately, both spring from Wright's deep conviction that a culture or an individual should proceed integrally from its core or roots..."<sup>48</sup>

"Usonian" homes are, therefore, simply a different manifestation of the organic philosophy Wright applied over his entire career. Gilbertson's use of

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<sup>45</sup> Jackie Craven, "What is a Usonian House?" <https://www.thoughtco.com/usonian-style-home-frank-lloyd-wright-177787> (2019), accessed 9 March 2021.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> John Sergeant, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses: The Case for Organic Architecture* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1976), 16.

“Usonian” in his title refers to a philosophy rather than to literal buildings, and it therefore serves as an elegant way to evoke Frank Lloyd Wright in the title of this work.

## Chapter 4: The Development of *Usonian Dwellings*

### Michael Gilbertson and “The President’s Own”

Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director of “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, became aware of Michael Gilbertson through a mutual connection to composer James Stephenson. Stephenson had served as a composer-mentor to Gilbertson at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, and Colonel Fettig and the Marine Band had commissioned and premiered Stephenson’s Symphony no. 2 at The Midwest Clinic on December 14, 2016.<sup>49</sup> <sup>50</sup> At the same conference the following year, Gilbertson and Colonel Fettig were introduced in what Colonel Fettig describes as “a chance encounter.”<sup>51</sup> After that meeting, Colonel Fettig acquainted himself with Gilbertson’s previous work and felt that his compositional style and language spoke to the potential for Gilbertson to write a piece that could stand apart as a unique contribution to the band repertoire, so he reached out to Gilbertson to offer him a commission.<sup>52</sup>

When the commission was initially agreed, Colonel Fettig was not necessarily seeking a work to perform on the Marine Band’s tour of Japan. However, Gilbertson was aware that premiering his new work in Japan was one of several options under consideration and felt that the conceptual ties between Frank Lloyd Wright and

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<sup>49</sup> N.a., “Symphony no. 2, Voices,” <https://www.windsymphonies.org/composition/symphony-no-2-voices/> (2018), Accessed 17 March 2021.

<sup>50</sup> Colonel Jason K. Fettig, personal interview (Washington, DC: 3 March 2021).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Japanese design and culture might make the work a good fit for this tour.<sup>53</sup>

The only constraint Fettig placed on the commission was that he wanted a work of about fifteen minutes in length. Fettig often employs this strategy of giving composers he commissions as much creative freedom as possible:

“When composers write for orchestra or other ensembles and they come to band, I’m really fascinated at the choices that they make... I’m interested in having my eyes opened by a new approach and a fresh take on what we do... What I was hoping for was an original piece that really felt like it was a substantial addition to our repertoire, and a unique addition.”

Fettig puts a length constraint on commissions to ensure that works fit comfortably into concert programs. Regardless of a work’s length however, he encourages the development of new works for band that have “a craftsmanship that speaks to the composer’s identity.”<sup>54</sup>

### *Commission and Development*

Gilbertson has always had an interest in architecture and had known for years that he wanted to write a work inspired by the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Marine Band commission provided him with an opportunity to bring this idea to fruition.

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<sup>53</sup> Michael Gilbertson, personal interview (27 February 2021).

<sup>54</sup> Colonel Jason K. Fettig, personal interview (Washington, DC: 3 March 2021).

Gilbertson initially conceived a three-movement work, with each movement inspired by one of three different Wright buildings: Wingspread, Taliesin West, and Fallingwater, but two major developments occurred as the compositional process unfolded.<sup>55</sup> First, Fetting decided that the work should have a place on the Marine Band's upcoming tour of Japan. Secondly, the first two movements Gilbertson completed, *Taliesin West* and *Fallingwater*, grew far larger in scale than originally intended, with a performance of the two movements lasting about seventeen minutes. It was agreed that, for programming purposes, the two existing movements would be premiered in Japan as a partial work with a third movement to be added at a later date. In fact, the programs from the Marine Band's tour of Japan list *Taliesin West* as the second movement and *Fallingwater* as the third, with no first movement.<sup>56</sup>

Fetting's commitment to performing this piece in Japan before hearing it invites the question: Why, for such an important, high-profile set of performances where such careful consideration was given to programming, did Fetting feel it was important to perform a new work by a composer new to the medium?

From his study of Gilbertson's previous work, Fetting felt confident that he would deliver a quality work and believed that taking this minor leap of faith was also congruent with the Marine Band's identity. He explained, "I really wanted to represent what has become a very important part of [the Marine Band's] identity which is to support living composers - especially American composers." By premiering this new commission on a high-profile tour, he was making a statement that the Marine Band values the contribution that contemporary American composers

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<sup>55</sup> Michael Gilbertson, personal interview (27 February 2021).

<sup>56</sup> See Appendices.

have been making to the band repertoire, a statement made even more powerful by the fact that we, as Americans, chose to give the first ever performances of this piece for the people of Japan.<sup>57</sup>

After the Japanese premieres, there was still some discussion between Gilbertson and Fettig about how a third movement could fit with the two existing movements.<sup>58</sup> I recall a backstage conversation with Gilbertson at one of our Japanese performances where we discussed, among other things, the potential for a third movement. Even then he felt the piece was complete as a two-movement work. I agreed but told him I hoped he would write a third movement anyway because I wanted to have more of his music to play.

The original plan had been for *Wingspread* to be the first movement of the three-movement work, but the effectiveness of the dramatic percussion opening of *Taliesin West* shifted that conversation. For a time, Gilbertson considered writing an additional movement between the two existing movements, but in the end, it was decided that the two-movement version of the work was in fact complete.<sup>59</sup>

### *Japanese Premiere and Reception*

To date, the only performances of *Usonian Dwellings* have been those given by the Marine Band as part of its tour of Japan in May of 2019. The planned US

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<sup>57</sup> Colonel Jason K. Fettig, personal interview (Washington, DC: 3 March 2021).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

premiere and two potential recording sessions were cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>60</sup> There were three performances in Japan:

May 16, 2019 - Hondanomori Concert Hall, Kanazawa, Japan (premiere)

May 17, 2019 - Act City Hamamatsu Concert Hall, Hamamatsu, (premiere)

May 19, 2019 - Sinfonia Iwakuni Concert Hall, Iwakuni, Japan.

Though chronologically the first performance of the piece took place in Kanazawa, the programs from both the concert in Kanazawa and the concert in Hamamatsu list the performance of *Usonian Dwellings* as a premiere. Fettig viewed all of the tour performances of this piece as one long premiere, which accounts for why it was listed as such in the programs for both the Kanazawa and Hamamatsu performances. The omission of this designation in the Iwakuni program was unintentional.

It is not uncommon for a piece to have multiple premieres. This can be because it is performed in multiple countries, where the piece might be listed as a “premiere” the first time it is performed in a new country or on a new continent. It is also common for works commissioned by consortia to be given multiple premieres to acknowledge the financial contribution of multiple organizations.<sup>61</sup> In the case of

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<sup>60</sup> The original US premiere was scheduled for March 22, 2020. The piece was also scheduled to be recorded for the Marine Band’s annual recording project twice - once in March 2020 and again in April 2021. These also had to be canceled.

<sup>61</sup> For example, band composer John Mackey currently has a page on his website ([www.johnmackey.com/music/commission](http://www.johnmackey.com/music/commission)) where bands can contribute to a consortium for a new piece called “Let Me Be Frank With You.” On this page it states, “The official world premiere will be at the Midwest Clinic with the Vandegrift High School Wind Ensemble, but

*Usonian Dwellings*, it seems that the title of “premiere” at the Japanese performances was significant to Fetting’s larger narrative of offering a tribute to the people of Japan while making a statement of advocacy for contemporary American composers.

For purposes of this paper, the term “premiere” will refer to the concert at the Japan Band Clinic in Hamamatsu (which was the second time the work was performed publicly). This performance was presented for a large contingent of the professional band community of Japan and is the performance from which I was able to find feedback from audience members who are familiar with band music on a professional level.

From my own memory, I recall that the piece received a warm reception at the premiere, though from my vantage point in the ensemble it was somewhat difficult to tell. The Japanese audiences I recall from that tour were all very generous with applause, but also very proper. We received only one standing ovation during the entire tour, and that happened at the end of this concert.

One expects boisterous reactions from enthusiastic American audiences, but this is apparently not always the case in Japan. Enthusiasm from Japanese audiences seemed to be expressed simply with louder, faster applause and, on occasion, by audience members clapping their hands above their heads while still remaining firmly planted in their seats.

The one exception was at the concert in Hamamatsu. At the end of the concert, between two of the encores, the audience broke into gasps and excited murmurs upon realizing that the band was about to play another encore. They also

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**all** consortium performances are considered premieres and should be indicated that way in programs and concert announcements.”

gave the band a standing ovation, which seemed to be a rare occurrence among Japanese audiences and to me indicated a particularly high level of enthusiasm for this performance. The Marine Band's Japanese guide on this tour, Motonobu Ogawa, explained that all of the audiences on this tour were very enthusiastic, and that their differences in behavior could be explained by their level of familiarity with the social norms of classical music concerts.<sup>62</sup> He believed that the audience members at the Japan Band Clinic in Hamamatsu were more outgoing because they were all regular concert-goers, while some of the other audiences were more reserved because they thought that standing or cheering would be considered impolite.

Still, my own memory is hardly an objective indication of the piece's reception, so I contacted two esteemed members of the Japanese band community who were in attendance at the concert in Hamamatsu: retired General Akira Takeda, formerly the leader of The Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Central Band, Japan's premiere military band, and Toshio Akiyama, a world-renowned composer, conductor, and advocate for Japanese wind band music, who has been called the "godfather of the Japanese wind music movement."<sup>63</sup> In our correspondence, I was particularly interested in three questions:

1. How was the piece received?
2. What is the likelihood that this piece will find its way into the Japanese wind band repertoire?
3. Did the audience perceive any references to Japanese music in this piece?

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<sup>62</sup> Motonobu Ogawa, personal correspondence (14 April 2021).

<sup>63</sup> N.a., "World Projects Faculty Member: Toshio Akiyama," <https://www.world-projects.net/faculty/toshio-akiyama/> (2021), accessed 24 February 2021.

On the subject of the audience's initial reaction to the piece, both Takeda and Akiyama confirmed my recollection that the piece received a warm reception. Takeda emphasized the audience's enthusiasm for the sound of "The President's Own" throughout the concert, regardless of the repertoire, but he thought the style of *Usonian Dwellings* was outside of what Japanese wind band audiences would be accustomed to.<sup>64</sup> It is worth noting that according to Akiyama, though Wright has been a well-respected name in Japan, he is not as well-known with younger generations who are not familiar with the Wright's storied Imperial Hotel. He doubts that many of the younger members of the audience would have been aware of this historical connection.<sup>65</sup> Not wanting to ignore the complicated history between the United States and Japan that a military band performance might evoke, I sought other reactions to this performance online. My search confirmed that recorded broadcasts of the Marine Band's performance in Kanazawa were also met with positive reactions.

Both Akiyama and Takeda perceived some oblique sonic references to traditional Japanese music, but nothing overt enough to be noticed by an untrained listener. Takeda pointed out a few sounds in particular that may have been familiar to Japanese listeners. A notable example occurs at the beginning of the first movement. The movement begins with dramatic percussion gestures separated by irregular numbers of rests. The effect is that this section sounds non-rhythmic, a characteristic of some traditional Japanese music. Though some of Gilbertson's compositional

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<sup>64</sup> General Akira Takeda, personal emails, 6 February 2021 and 1 April 2021. All statements attributed to Gen. Takeda in this section come from these email, which are reproduced in Appendix 2.

<sup>65</sup> Mr. Toshio Akiyama, personal email, 2 February 2021. All statements attributed to Mr. Toshio Akiyama in this section come from this email, which is reproduced in Appendix 2.

strategies result in sounds that would be familiar to Japanese audiences, Gilbertson did not make any intentional references to Japanese music: doing so would be inconsistent with Frank Lloyd Wright's aesthetic.

Throughout his career, Wright vehemently denied drawing any direct influence from Japanese architecture, insisting, for example, that the inspiration he drew from Japanese wood block prints was strictly philosophical.<sup>66</sup> Yet throughout his life, architects and scholars insisted upon drawing comparisons between his buildings and Japanese architecture.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Gilbertson denies any intentional formal associations with Japanese music in *Usonian Dwellings*, but the influence of Japanese design culture as perceived by Frank Lloyd Wright is pervasive.

Regarding whether the piece might find a place in the Japanese wind band repertoire, the reviews were mixed. Takeda thought that the piece seemed too difficult for many Japanese bands, the majority of whom are school level bands. Additionally, the repertoire choices for these ensembles seem to be driven largely by competitions, where groups perform for roughly 7-8 minutes. However, he felt that the piece would be a suitable challenge for university-level and professional bands, and that university-level musicians would benefit from the challenges posed by learning the piece. Akiyama agreed, suspecting that only the best high-school age bands in Japan could attempt the piece. He felt that the style of *Taliesin West* would be widely acceptable to Japanese audiences, but the more "philosophical" nature of the second movement would be less readily accepted.

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<sup>66</sup> Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

Takeda thought that the challenges posed by *Usonian Dwellings* would be appropriate for a university-level ensemble. He asked to be put in touch with the composer, since he was considering programming *Usonian Dwellings* with a university-level ensemble in December of 2021. This level of interest from a leading Japanese wind conductor bodes well for the future of this work with both Japanese and American wind bands.

## Chapter 5: Analysis of *Usonian Dwellings*

*Usonian Dwellings* is in two movements, *Taliesin West* and *Fallingwater*, each of which is named for a building designed by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Though the piece is not specifically programmatic, it incorporates elements of both the buildings and of the organic aesthetic of Frank Lloyd Wright. *Usonian Dwellings* is Gilbertson's first original work for band. The piece is scored for a typical 21st century wind band:

(Transposed Score)

3 Flutes (flute 1 div. and doubling piccolo, flute 2 doubling on alto flute and piccolo, piccolo)  
2 Oboes  
English Horn  
2 Bassoons  
Contrabassoon  
Eb Clarinet  
3 Bb Clarinets  
Bb Bass Clarinet  
Eb Contralto Clarinet  
4 Saxophones (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone)  
3 Trumpets in C (div.)  
4 Horns in F  
2 Trombones  
Bass Trombone  
Euphonium (div.)  
Tuba (div.)  
Double Bass  
Timpani  
Percussion 1 (guiro, marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, crash cymbals, maracas)  
Percussion 2 (wood blocks, marimba, egg shakers, crash cymbals, glockenspiel, thunder sheet)  
Percussion 3 (temple blocks, maracas, crotales, wind chimes, bell tree, triangle)  
Percussion 4 (three tom-toms, two bongos, two suspended cymbals [of different sizes], gong, tam-tam, three triangles [of different sizes], bell tree, china cymbal, splash cymbal)

Percussion 5 (ratchet, vibraslap, tam-tam, gong, large slapstick, suspended cymbal, chimes, cuica, claves)  
Percussion 6 (bass drum)  
Timpani  
Harp  
Piano  
Celesta

Gilbertson gives no specific instructions for numbers of players per part, and at the Japanese premiere several parts were doubled (in some cases doublings were necessitated by divisi parts): Flute 1, Bb Clarinet (five Clarinet 1, four Clarinet 2, four Clarinet 3), Trumpet (two players per part), Horn (assistant), Tuba (three players), Euphonium, and Trombone 1. The decision to use these forces in the Marine Band performances was a collaborative effort between Gilbertson and Fetting, though Gilbertson largely deferred to Fetting's judgement in regard to how the parts were doubled in these performances. Gilbertson does not prescribe a specific number of players per section, but rather trusts the judgement of directors to know precisely what kinds of doubling would be most successful with their particular ensemble.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, only five percussionists plus timpanist performed in Japan, so the six percussion parts were redistributed among five players. Two trumpet players were enlisted to play the jawbone (quijada) and vibraslap when it was not possible for five players to cover all six parts, and for the premiere performances these incidental percussion parts were printed in the trumpet parts.<sup>68</sup>

Because the decision to premiere the piece in Japan was made before the work was complete, practicalities of the trip influenced the instrumentation. The lowest clarinet part is written for contralto rather than contrabass due to the challenge and

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<sup>68</sup> US Marine Band parts for *Usonian Dwellings*, US Marine Band Library.

expense of transporting the larger instrument.<sup>69</sup> There are some occasions, particularly in the second movement, where the composer would have used the lower notes of the contrabass had they been available to him.<sup>70</sup>

There have been a few revisions since the three initial performances. The jawbone has been replaced by ratchet. The original first saxophone part was played on a combination of soprano and alto saxophones at the premiere but is now written for soprano alone. Gilbertson also made a more substantial change in the flute part of the first movement, removing the passage in mm. 37-47. In the original version, the flutes played the Rattlesnake Motive<sup>71</sup> during this first statement of the Arizona Theme.<sup>72</sup> Gilbertson subsequently decided to remove the harmony in order to continue the starkness of the percussion introduction into this section.

### Form

The two buildings that inspired *Usonian Dwellings* exist in very different environments: one is in a desert while the other sits atop a waterfall. Although these buildings may appear to be of different styles - at least to the untrained eye - the underlying philosophy behind these buildings is the same. They are both steeped in Wright's organic philosophy, which necessarily produces different results depending on the surroundings.

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<sup>69</sup> Colonel Jason K. Fetting, personal interview (Washington, DC: 3 March 2021).

<sup>70</sup> Michael Gilbertson, personal correspondence (10 April 2021).

<sup>71</sup> The Rattlesnake Motive is a fundamental building block of *Taliesin West*, presented most literally in mm. 25-34. See analysis.

<sup>72</sup> The Arizona Theme is the First Theme of *Taliesin West*. It is first presented in clarinets in mm. 37-47. See analysis.

In Gilbertson's work, primary motivic and thematic ideas are not shared between movements, though some secondary motivic ideas help unify the two. For example, an octave leap in the melody unites the end of the first movement with the beginning of the second. The primary motivic and thematic elements are contained within their respective movements because Gilbertson's musical ideas are closely linked to the particular building and natural environment which inspired them. For example, The Rattlesnake Motive would be out of place in *Fallingwater*, because it is an inextricable part of the larger environment of *Taliesin West*.

These two movements, like Wright's buildings, are unified by an organic approach to their design. Even though that approach manifests itself differently in each movement, the contrasting ideas which dominate these two movements counterbalance each other beautifully. This tension - between the austere, driving first movement and the lush, flowing second movement - allows the work to function as a cohesive whole without disturbing the organic integrity of each individual movement. Additionally, this balanced juxtaposition makes *Usonian Dwellings* more effective as a binary work than it might have been as a work in three movements.

There is a risk, I think, inherent to the study and performance of *Usonian Dwellings*, that interpreters might over-simplify Gilbertson's musical associations with nature as mere imitations of nature, as sometimes happened with Wright's work. While there are seemingly overt references to nature in *Usonian Dwellings*, these references are never treated as mere surface ornamentation. They are always an integral part of the larger structure of the piece. In this way, each movement beautifully illustrates the part-to-whole relationship that is integral to Wright's

concept of organicity. In *Taliesin West*, a tiny motive influences and shapes the larger sound environment, while in *Fallingwater* two disparate ideas, initially presented separately, coalesce into a grand apotheosis.

Because of the nature of the buildings which inspired them, the two movements are polar opposites. *Taliesin West* is stark and dry, while flowing, resonant sounds dominate *Fallingwater*. This polarity, however, elevates the metaphor and highlights the fact that the organic aesthetic can be an effective design strategy in any environment.

### *Harmonic Language*

Gilbertson uses a varied palette of harmonic color in this piece, ranging from coloristic sections with unspecified pitch to tertian and occasionally quartal and quintal harmonies. By juxtaposing music based on these techniques, Gilbertson contrasts varying degrees of harmonic ambiguity with clear tonal anchor points as a means of creating tension and release. These anchor points form a cohesive harmonic underpinning, while the harmonic ambiguity within each section, particularly in *Taliesin West*, provides drama and contrast.

In *Fallingwater*, natural elements are represented through gestural, coloristic music, while the main Kaufmann House Theme<sup>73</sup> is built on a non-tonal tertian progression. In *Taliesin West*, formal sections are differentiated by their approach to harmony, including tertian harmony, quartal/quintal harmony, or free atonality. In addition to the motivic and thematic ties which are discussed later, these larger

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<sup>73</sup> The Kauffman House Theme is the Second Theme of *Fallingwater*. It is first presented by clarinets in mm. 36-44. See analysis.

sections are linked together by the relationship between the tonal anchor points within them.

There are relatively few moments in either movement where the piece settles into a definite key. The music touches on tonal areas but tends to move on before these tonalities can become clearly established. However, even though the work has a sense of continual evolution, the relationship between these tonal anchor points grounds the work in Bb.

Themes are often supported by tertian harmony. They typically begin with a clear sense of tonic, but soon modulate, even when they are not serving transitional or developmental functions. This harmonic instability conveys a sense of continual development throughout the work. In the case of *Taliesin West*, this contributes to a sense that the movement is constantly striving onward, and in *Fallingwater* it supports the flowing nature of the movement.

Most often, the themes in *Usonian Dwellings* use tertian harmony, but not traditional tonal procedures. Combining familiar sonorities in non-tonal patterns contributes to Gilbertson's vision of being understandable to untrained listeners while still sounding fresh. The voices in Gilbertson's harmonies often move either obliquely or by half and whole steps, and the harmony usually moves between chords with one or more common tones. This technique can be seen in the large-scale harmonic arc of *Taliesin West*.

Figure 4-1, Implied tonal anchor points in *Taliesin West*

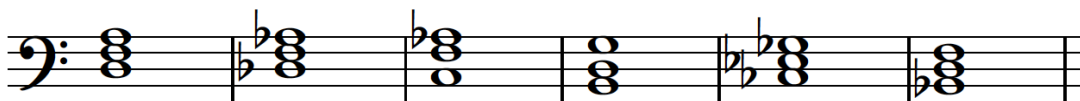
Measure	23	37	59	70	82	111	129	144	155	157
Tonal Anchor	(Bb)	Fm	Dm	BbM	Dm	Dm	FM	Em	CM	C#D#F#G# (quintal)

Measure	189	224	235	244	258	266	291	298	311
Tonal Anchor	EbM7	Cm	Fm	Dm	C#D#F#G# (quintal)	Dm	Gm	Bbm	Bbm

Gilbertson uses these same common-tone relationships, relative major/minor relationships, and stepwise motion to provide coherence to the harmonic progressions on a smaller scale. It is particularly easy to see in the third statement of the Arizona Theme in mm. (59-70). In this statement, the theme is presented in the trumpets while the harmony is carried by staccato interjections from several other voices. Figure 4-2 shows a harmonic reduction, with some triads manipulated to different inversions to show the chromatic descent that unifies this progression. Note that the two intermediary chords from the first harmonized statement are omitted in this statement (See Fig. 4-3).

Figure 4-2, Arizona Theme Harmonic Reduction, mm. 59-70



This theme is first presented as an unaccompanied melody at m. 37 and again with harmonic accompaniment at m. 48. The progression at m. 48 begins with an F minor chord, then immediately moves down a half step to E major, keeping the third of both chords (Ab/G#) as a common tone. This common-third movement from minor to major (and the reverse) is used throughout *Usonian Dwellings*, most often in the Arizona Theme throughout the first movement. A few measures later, the opposite movement occurs, with a Bb major chord moving to B minor, using D as the common third. The harmony briefly passes through F# minor in between, however this intermediary chord is omitted in other statements of the Arizona Theme.

Figure 4-3, Arizona Harmony Reduction (concert pitch; some enharmonic spellings changed for clarity), mm. 48-57

( ) Intermediary chords not present in all statements

Another technique Gilbertson employs throughout *Usonian Dwellings* is withholding certain notes, instruments, or ranges to create a sense of tension leading to an arrival. In the case of withholding pitches, Gilbertson uses a technique similar to atonal aggregate completion in quasi-tonal contexts. Whereas aggregate completion implies the withholding of one note out of 12, Gilbertson often withholds

one note out of a diatonic scale or, as is the case in the following example, avoids a tonic to varying degrees in order to build tension.

In mm. 62-71 of *Fallingwater*, the majority of voices play first Bb octaves and then a Bb major triad. The exceptions to this are the vibraphone, saxophones and trumpets, who present a melodic idea that is repeated three times. The tension and resolution in this section is created largely through an avoidance of the Bb major triad in the melodic line. After the brass establish an arrival on Bb in m. 62, the first statement of the melodic line begins on D, hinting at Bb major. This melody leaps up and down at irregular and increasingly wide intervals. In this statement there is also an F natural (m. 64), so this melody contains 2/3rds of the triad. Still, since they are interspersed with six other notes, most of which are not diatonic to Bb, we feel a degree of tension which is resolved when there is an expansively orchestrated ensemble Bb major chord at m. 65.

The second statement of this melody begins on the fifth of the triad, F natural, and once again jumps around at irregular intervals, avoiding the Bb major triad entirely after that first note. The tension in this section is aided by a cluster in the horn section (D# E F# G#) in m. 67 which begins pianissimo and then crescendos to forte. This is met once again by an insistent Bb major chord.

Figure 4-4, mm. 62-70, reduction (concert pitch)

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system features a single melodic line in the upper voice and a piano accompaniment in the lower voices. The second system continues the melodic line and piano accompaniment. The third system shows the melodic line ending with a triplet of notes and the piano accompaniment with a dissonant cluster.

In the final statement, the pull back to Bb is the strongest yet. The melodic line in this statement begins on A and avoids the Bb triad altogether until the very last note, a D natural. This D natural however, is reinterpreted as the third of a B minor triad formed with the last three notes of the melody. While each of the eight notes from this melody is sustained after it is originally presented, gradual diminuendos coupled with the high tessitura of the last three notes causes the B minor triad to stand out from the texture. The harmonic tension is heightened by a dissonant cluster at m. 71 which resolves to another presentation of Bb by the trumpet section in 72. This movement from B minor to Bb is another illustration of the common-third relationship Gilbertson often employs.

### Texture

On other occasions, Gilbertson creates tension and excitement through textural contrasts, dramatically juxtaposing dense textures with moments of clarity. The most straightforward rendering of this technique occurs in mm. 16-23 of *Taliesin West*. Percussion accents lead to a solo B-natural roll in the xylophone. This becomes a Bb to B-natural tremolo, followed two beats later by G to Ab and F to Gb tremolos in the marimba. With the piano entrance in measure 20, the cluster builds to encompass all 12 chromatic pitches. In measure 21, trumpets join with sustained muted notes which crescendo to forte over six beats. The first trumpet becomes the most prominent voice, gradually returning B-natural to the foreground. Gilbertson then resolves B-natural down to Bb as the tremolos in piano and percussion suddenly give way to accented Eb minor 11<sup>th</sup> chords in the brass separated by four beats of silence.

Figure 4-5, *Taliesin West* score, mm. 16-25<sup>74</sup>

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (left) covers measures 16 through 19. It includes parts for Timp., Perc. 1-6, and strings. Percussion parts are specifically labeled: Perc. 1 (Xylophone), Perc. 2 (Marimba), Perc. 3 (Vibraphone), Perc. 4 (Vibraphone), Perc. 5 (Vibraphone), and Perc. 6 (Tam-tam). The second system (right) covers measures 20 through 25. It includes parts for Bar. Sax., C. Tipt. 1-3, Hrn. 1&3, Hrn. 2&4, Trbn. 1&2, B. Trbn., Euph., Tuba, Bass, Timp., Perc. 1-6, and Pno./Cel. Percussion parts in the second system are labeled: Perc. 1 (Xylophone), Perc. 2 (Marimba), Perc. 3 (Vibraphone), Perc. 4 (Vibraphone), Perc. 5 (Vibraphone), and Perc. 6 (Tam-tam). The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (pp, f, ff), articulation (accents), and performance instructions like 'key clicks' and 'large claystick'.

<sup>74</sup> All reproductions from the score used by permission of the composer.

Another example of this technique is found in the opening section of *Fallingwater*. This section of the movement gradually builds in intensity, with the Cascade Motive (Fig. 4-6) presented in more and more voices followed by an active and powerful aleatoric section, the Turbulence Gesture (Fig. 4-7).

Figure 4-6, *Fallingwater* score, Cascade Motive, mm.1-3

The musical score for the Cascade Motive (mm. 1-3) is arranged for Percussion 1-6, Piano/Celesta, and Harp. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a variety of percussion instruments and dynamic markings.

- Percussion 1:** Vibes motor on (p), cresc., mp, dim.
- Percussion 2:** Glock. (pp), cresc., mp, dim., pp.
- Percussion 3:** Crotales bowed (mp), sim., all l.v.
- Percussion 4:** Bell Tree (pp), cresc., overlap strokes, p, l.v.
- Percussion 5:** Sus. Cym. (n), p, l.v., Tam-tam (n).
- Percussion 6:** (n), p, l.v., n.
- Piano/Celesta:** IS<sup>ma</sup> (p), all l.v., cresc., mp, dim., all l.v.
- Harp:** (p), cresc., mf.

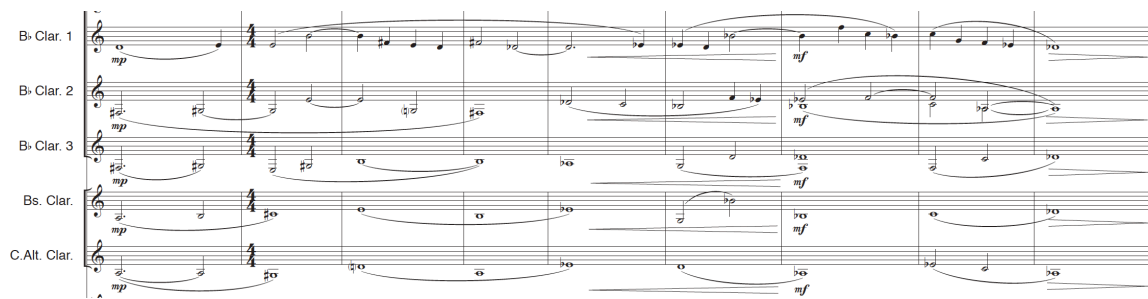
The score includes various performance instructions such as *cresc.*, *mp*, *dim.*, *pp*, *mf*, *all l.v.*, *sim.*, *overlap strokes*, and *sustain through m. 32*. The instruments are arranged in a vertical stack, with Percussion 1-6 at the top, Piano/Celesta in the middle, and Harp at the bottom.

Figure 4-7, *Fallingwater* score, Turbulence Gesture, mm. 27-30

The image displays a page of a musical score for the piece "Fallingwater," specifically the "Turbulence Gesture" section from measures 27 to 30. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves for each instrument family. The instruments listed on the left include Piccolo, Flutes 1 and 2, Oboe 1&2, English Horn, Bassoon 1&2, Contrabassoon, Clarinets in E, Bb, and Bb, Bass Clarinet, Alto Clarinet, Saxophones (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone), Trumpets 1, 2, and 3, Horns 1&3 and 2&4, Trombones 1&2, Bass Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, Basses, Timpani, Percussion 1-6, Piano/Celesta, and Harp. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and dynamic markings such as *p*, *f*, *ff*, *mf*, *mp*, and *sfz*. A prominent instruction, "ad lib on these pitches, play as quickly as possible," is repeated across many of the woodwind and string staves. The percussion section includes parts for snare drum, tom-toms, cymbals, and a bell tree. The piano and harp parts are also visible at the bottom of the page. The measures are numbered 27, 28, 29, and 30 at the top of their respective staves.

In m. 36 this section suddenly stops, revealing the unornamented Kaufmann House Theme with its more familiar tertian harmony and steady harmonic rhythm. Taken in isolation, this would be a pleasant-sounding theme, but juxtaposed with the material which precedes it, it becomes a powerful moment of warmth and comfort.

Figure 4-8, *Fallingwater* score, Kaufmann House Theme, mm. 36-44



Gilbertson also uses a technique he calls “sublimation” throughout the work. This is a term from chemistry that refers to a substance changing from a solid to a gas without first becoming a liquid.<sup>75</sup> In Gilbertson’s writing, it refers to a sudden transfer of energy from one instrument or sound color to another.

An example of this is found between mm. 129 and 133 of *Taliesin West*. There, intense energy created by a tutti fortissimo F major chord and percussion accents drives forward from mm. 129-132. In measure 133, all voices stop immediately after the downbeat, as the harmony shifts down by half step to a fortissimo E minor triad presented by soli horns.

<sup>75</sup> N.a., “Sublimate,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sublimate> (n.d.), accessed 23 April 2021.

*First Movement: Taliesin West*

Wright's Taliesin West

Established in 1937, Taliesin West was established outside Scottsdale, Arizona as Wright's winter retreat, far from the harsh winters of his family home and 800-acre estate, Taliesin, in southwestern Wisconsin.<sup>76</sup> The sprawling campus has grown over the years as buildings were gradually added, built largely by Wright and his apprentices. It now includes a drafting studio, dining facilities, three theaters, a private apartment for Wright, living quarters for his apprentices, and more.<sup>77</sup>

Wright's concept for this campus was organic. As such, he designed the buildings to suit the existing environment. On the aesthetic of Taliesin West, Wright commented, "Arizona needs its own architecture... Arizona's long, low, sweeping lines, uptilting planes. Surface patterned after such abstraction in line and color as find 'realism' in the patterns of the rattlesnake, the Gila monster, and the saguaro, cholla or staghorn – or is it the other way around—are inspiration enough."<sup>78</sup>

Even an eye untrained for architecture can see this description brought to life in Taliesin West. From the correct angle, the arrangement of the redwood beams supporting the drafting room is reminiscent of the repeated pattern on a rattlesnake

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<sup>76</sup> N.a., "Taliesin Wisconsin," <https://www.taliesinpreservation.org> (2021), accessed 10 March 2021.

<sup>77</sup> N.a., "Taliesin West," <https://franklloydwright.org/site/taliesin-west/> (2021), accessed 9 March 2021.

<sup>78</sup> Olgivanna Lloyd Wright, *Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life, His Work, His Words* (New York: Horizon Press, 1966), 103.

skin and it reaches toward the heavens like a mountain peak. The buildings themselves are slung low and wide. True to form, Wright welcomes the desert environment into his creation at every opportunity. The original roofing material was canvas, stretched across the angled roofs to let in the natural light of the desert,<sup>79</sup> and the campus is filled with native desert flora.

Most importantly in relation to Gilbertson's work, however, the buildings themselves are made largely of what Wright termed, "desert masonry," in which rock and sand from the desert itself were mixed with concrete and cured in wooden forms.<sup>80</sup> The larger stones in this masonry, in shades of grey, tan, and ochre, tie the building inextricably with the land which surrounds it. This building is not simply in the desert, it is *of* the desert.

#### Motivic Construction: Desert Masonry and the Rattlesnake Motive

The Rattlesnake Motive is simply four articulated sixteenth notes, presented on any pitch or combination of pitches, typically with a staccato articulation style. It occurs both in isolation and repeated in a running sixteenth note pattern. It is used in both melodic and harmonic contexts to emphasize or counterbalance thematic and motivic material.

This versatility is part of what allows Gilbertson to use it throughout the movement without it becoming stale or overly repetitive. In doing so it serves as a

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<sup>79</sup> N.a., "Taliesin West."

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

unifying idea for the movement, keeping the movement cohesive even as it moves through a variety of styles, thus weaving Wright's concept of organicity into the musical fabric of the movement.

Where Wright drew visual inspiration from the patterns on a rattlesnake's skin, Gilbertson has drawn aural inspiration from the snake's sounds. The Rattlesnake Motive is thus a perfect "organic" representation of Taliesin West's desert surroundings. A stereotypical imitation of rattlesnake sounds might be produced by a ratchet or perhaps even a rain stick. Gilbertson eschews an obvious imitation in favor of this more esoteric reference, the rhythmic sound that a rattlesnake sometimes produces as a precursor to the more familiar constant rattle. This sound can be woven much more elegantly into the fabric of a vibrantly energetic movement.

As Ernest Fellonosa said in his description of influences on Frank Lloyd Wright, "the mere representation of an external fact, the mechanical copying of nature, has nothing whatever to do with art..."<sup>81</sup> Thus we see the roots of Wright's artistic philosophy deeply embedded in Gilbertson's work. Even the most literal imitation of this sound, in mm. 25 to 34, would likely not be recognized as derivative by most listeners. Here Gilbertson uses key clicks in the woodwinds to imitate the dry, rhythmic sound of the rattle (See Fig. 4-9).

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<sup>81</sup> Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 76.

Figure 4-9, *Taliesin West* score, Rattlesnake Motive in woodwind parts, mm. 25-27



Gilbertson uses the Rattlesnake Motive throughout the movement, yet this simple motive always sounds fresh. It appears in a variety of contexts, encompassing different articulations, pitches, and functions. Additionally, Gilbertson has paired it with contrasting material allowing for greater aesthetic scope.

Gilbertson's treatment of the Rattlesnake Motive is analogous to Wright's use of Desert Masonry in *Taliesin West*. The buildings on that campus are made of sand and stone from the desert that surrounds them, but the buildings are not made *entirely* of sand and stone. The patchwork of organic shapes made by the stones is balanced with the repeated hard angles of redwood beams. The natural tones of the masonry are balanced with those same red beams, green desert plants, and bright blue water features. In this same way, Gilbertson uses contrasting material in Section B to balance the starkness of both the Introduction and Section A.

The Rattlesnake Motive most notably forms an integral part of the first theme that recurs throughout this movement. I have called this theme the "Arizona Theme" because it is a musical representation of Wright's statement about Arizona needing its own style of architecture and thereby it is naturally emblematic of the organicity of *Taliesin West*. Through its long, held notes, this theme embodies Wright's "long, low, sweeping lines," and by incorporating the Rattlesnake Motive into the melodic

line, Gilbertson also imitates the patterns of desert fauna in the same manner espoused by Wright.<sup>82</sup>

Figure 4-10, Arizona Theme reduction (concert pitch), mm. 37-47



The long lines of the held notes are interrupted only when the melody moves to a new pitch through statements of the Rattlesnake Motive. This motive, like the sand used in Wright's *Desert Masonry*, is representative of the larger desert surroundings.

The relationship between different statements of the Arizona Theme also evokes Wright's desert masonry. The eight presentations of this theme all follow a generally similar harmonic and melodic scheme, but no two statements are identical. Notably, there is significant variation in the length of the sustained notes between each iteration of the Rattlesnake Motive. For example, the duration of the first note of the theme varies from three to seven beats in different statements. Gilbertson thus constructs this theme with organic building blocks: similar, but not identical, they are like the stones in the facade of *Taliesin West*.

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<sup>82</sup> Olgivanna Lloyd Wright, *Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life, His Work, His Words*, 103.

In addition to Gilbertson’s use of the Rattlesnake Motive in the Arizona Theme, he uses it throughout this movement as a versatile “punctuation mark” that serves at different moments as a musical comma, period, exclamation point, or ellipse. Almost all statements of the Arizona Theme are accompanied by the Rattlesnake Motive. Sometimes these statements elaborate the harmonic context, as the horn section at mm. 59-69 does.

Figure 4-11, *Taliesin West* score, Rattlesnake Motive, mm. 59-65



The Rattlesnake Motive is a nearly omnipresent unifying device. Even though lyrical sections of the movement explore a different mood, this motive serves as a reminder that they are related to the same desert aesthetic. The passage in mm. 157-189 is the greatest departure from the stark, vertical nature of the opening section. Even here however, Gilbertson does not entirely abandon the ubiquitous Rattlesnake Motive. Soft interjections of the Rattlesnake Motive are peppered throughout this section in the percussion, evoking perhaps the sound of desert creatures skittering around under cover of darkness. At m. 175, as this passage concludes, a muted trumpet plays a distant-sounding statement of the Arizona Theme, heralding the upcoming development of material drawn from Section A (See Fig. 4-12).

Figure 4-12, *Taliesin West* score, Arizona Theme material juxtaposed with Third Theme, mm. 180-190

The image shows a page of a musical score for the piece *Taliesin West*, specifically measures 180 through 190. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are B♭ Clarinet 1, B♭ Clarinet 2, B♭ Clarinet 3, Bass Clarinet, Contralto Clarinet, Soprano Saxophone, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, Trumpet 1, and Trumpet 2. Measures 180 and 181 are marked with a box containing the number and the instruction "soli con sord." for the trumpets. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mf* and *p*. The bottom of the page shows measure numbers 180 through 190 in boxes.

### Formal Analysis

*Taliesin West* does not fit neatly into traditional formal designations, exhibiting elements of both arch and rondo forms. It differs from rondo form in that the refrain is developed each time it recurs, and it is not always presented independently of contrasting material.



rests at irregular intervals, and in spite of the sparse use of pitched instruments in this section, Gilbertson utilizes nearly every member of the ensemble. The entire woodwind section joins the percussion through percussive key clicks in mm. 25-34, which constitute the most overt presentation of the Rattlesnake Motive.

Section A begins with the Arizona Theme presented by the clarinet section at m. 37 accompanied only by unpitched percussion. Originally, this was accompanied by flutes, but the composer removed the harmony to make the passage more similar to the beginning of the movement.)

The Arizona Theme is presented in first and second clarinets a second time at m. 48 with the third clarinets echoing them a beat later. This time the theme is accompanied by bassoon and low clarinets. The melody starts and ends on the same note, but this added harmony recontextualizes the melody as modulating from F minor to Db major.

The Arizona Theme is presented a third time in m. 59. This time it is presented by trumpets starting on D minor, and it is supported harmonically with staccato interjections of the Rattlesnake Motive in the horns and staccato quarter notes in several other voices.

Measures 70-81 mark the beginning of Section B and introduce the contrasting ideas that permeate this section. Where the sounds of this movement thus far have been stark and dry, m. 70 is suddenly more fluid and resonant. Though the composer asserts that this passage is not specifically representational, it does reflect the facade of Taliesin West, particularly the juxtaposition of the angular staircase and the reflecting pool which sits just outside the Boardroom.

Though this section is a clear contrast to the introduction, Gilbertson does not abandon all associations with Taliesin West. In addition to the introduction of more resonant sounds like the vibraphone, these measures also introduce the main motivic material of Section B, namely composite melodies created through hocketed slurred eighth note patterns, which often appear in individual voices as a slurred eighth note leap followed by a quarter note repeat of the second pitch. These repeated patterns are hocketed from instrument to instrument, creating both pyramid chords and composite melodies, while avoiding the D minor triad. While this section serves as a contrast to the stark desert motif established in the Introduction and Section A, it retains a reference to the repetitive geometry of Taliesin West, and thereby the repeated patterns of the rattlesnake and other fauna that inspired Wright.

Figure 4-14, Taliesin West score, Section B motivic ideas (transposed score), mm. 75-78

The image displays a transposed musical score for five woodwind instruments: Eb Clarinet, Bb Clarinet 1, Bb Clarinet 2, Bb Clarinet 3, and Bass Clarinet. The music is in 4/4 time and features a hocketed eighth-note pattern. The Eb Clarinet part begins in measure 76 with a slurred eighth-note leap followed by a quarter note, marked *mf*, and then *p* in measure 77. The Bb Clarinet 1 part starts in measure 75 with a slurred eighth-note leap followed by a quarter note, marked *f*, and then *p* in measure 77. The Bb Clarinet 2 part starts in measure 75 with a slurred eighth-note leap followed by a quarter note, marked *f*, and then *p* in measure 77. The Bb Clarinet 3 part starts in measure 76 with a slurred eighth-note leap followed by a quarter note, marked *f*, and then *p* in measure 77. The Bass Clarinet part starts in measure 75 with a slurred eighth-note leap followed by a quarter note, marked *f*, and then *p* in measure 77. The score is written in treble clef for all instruments.

After the homophonic tertian harmony that accompanies the Arizona Theme, this section is, by contrast, heavily chromatic with voices that move much more independently. At m. 82, Gilbertson's writing initially suggests D minor, filling in the pitches he avoided in the previous section, with a forceful D pedal in the bass trombone, followed by a descending D minor pattern in the vibraphone and percussion. This quickly develops, however, into a disjunct composite melody that uses all 12 pitches.

Between mm. 99-100 there is another example of Gilbertson creating tension and a sense of arrival through changes in texture. In mm. 82-95, the melody hockets in the manner just described for several bars. Then, beginning at m. 96, the pattern created with these hockets repeats at the bar line for four measures with a crescendo to fortissimo.

The tension created by this disjointed repetition coupled with the metric ambiguity which it creates resolves to a more unified texture which feels clearly in  $\frac{3}{4}$  at m. 100. Here almost every instrument moves together in one of two groups. Half of the ensemble holds dotted half note chords, and the other half moves in pairs of slurred eighth notes in descending patterns. The piano and some percussion move in quarter notes emphasizing the metric clarity and following the same descending pattern as those instruments with the slurred eighth note pairs (See Fig. 4-15).

Figure 4-15, *Taliesin West* score, mm. 95-102

The image displays two systems of a musical score for the piece *Taliesin West*. The left system covers measures 95-102, featuring piano and percussion parts with descending triads and eighth-note patterns. The right system covers measures 100-102, featuring a woodwind section. The woodwind parts include Piccolo (Picc.), Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1&2, English Horn, Bassoon 1&2, Clarinet in C, Clarinet in E, Clarinet in Bb (1, 2, 3), Bass Clarinet, and Clarinet in A. The score is marked with dynamics such as *mf* and *f*.

The passage from mm. 100-110 is a chromatic modulation that progresses downward, transitioning to the Second Theme at m. 111. The downward progression is achieved with descending triads in the piano and percussion - a return to chromatic tertian harmony – and combined with a descending pattern of eighth notes in the

winds and brass, some of which move in a scale-in-thirds pattern while others follow a literal chromatic descent.

The chromatic tutti sonority gives way at m. 111 to reveal the Second Theme, presented by the horn section in unison, and accompanied only by punctuation in the bass drum and timpani until the trombones and euphonium enter with a counter melody at m. 113.

Figure 4-16, *Taliesin West* score, second theme in unison horns joined by trombone counter melody, mm. 108-117

The image displays a musical score for measures 108 through 117. The score is arranged in a system with eight staves. The instruments are: C Trpt. 1, C Trpt. 2, C Trpt. 3, Hm. 1&3, Hm. 2&4, Trbn. 1&2, B. Trbn., and Euph. Measures 108-110 show the horns playing a chromatic descent. At measure 111, the horns play the second theme in unison. At measure 113, the trombones and euphonium enter with a counter melody. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *mf*, and *ff*, and articulation like slurs and accents.

This section, from mm. 111-128, is in D minor and contains only the pitches from a D natural minor scale (or the relative F Major) minus a C natural. This repetition of the slurred eighth note figures in this section sounds canonic but is not

an exact canon, except for material in the trumpets in mm. 119-123 which is literally canonic.

As this section spins out, the pitch content is focused on the first five pitches of D minor (D-E-F-G-A), with just two instances of B $\flat$  in the trombone and euphonium at m. 118 and m. 122. These five pitches also form the woodwind chord which joins in m. 125. Importantly, C is avoided between mm. 111-128, providing another instance where Gilbertson's withholding of a crucial note is functionally similar to atonal aggregate completion.

From mm.125-128, the kaleidoscopic pattern of brass sounds is repeated at the bar line – similar to the tension-building technique Gilbertson used in mm. 96-99- while the woodwinds crescendo leading up to the climax of this section.

At m. 129 this section arrives at a tutti F major triad, D minor's relative major, held for four full measures in tied dotted half notes. This moment feels triumphant and resolved in part because of its stability after the busy nature of the canon, in part because it is a shift to the relative major, but additionally because it supplies the C that has been withheld for the previous eighteen measures.

After four measures, the harmony shifts down a half-step to E minor in the horns as the rest of the band presents a new, aggressive version of the slurred eighth note motive, which once again encompasses all 12 pitches. This eighth-note motive gradually becomes less aggressive leading into the next section at m. 144.

At m. 144, the Arizona Theme is presented once again, this time by the oboe section in a very different style. The oboe part is marked "delicate," a striking contrast to the gruff, more aggressive sound when it is first played by clarinets in m.

37. This is aided by Gilbertson's choice of register for both instruments. Where the first statement of the Arizona Theme occurs in the clarinet's chalumeau register, which lends itself to a sort of gruff sound, here it is written in the oboe's high register, which sounds lighter and more covered.

This statement leads into Section C and the Third Theme, a contrast to the Arizona Theme and Second Theme in several ways, most importantly in its lyrical nature.

Figure 4-17, *Taliesin West* score, Third Theme, mm. 157-168

The image displays a page of a musical score for the Third Theme, measures 157-168. The score is arranged in a system with eight staves. From top to bottom, the staves are labeled: B♭ Clar. 1, B♭ Clar. 2, B♭ Clar. 3, Bs. Clar., C. Alt. Clar., Sop. Sax., Alt. Sax., Ten. Sax., and Bar. Sax. The music is written in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The dynamics range from *mp* (mezzo-piano) to *mf* (mezzo-forte). The woodwind parts (clarinets and saxophones) play a melodic line with long, flowing phrases, while the bassoon and alto clarinet parts provide harmonic support with sustained notes and occasional articulation. The overall texture is lyrical and homorhythmic.

The first two themes are somewhat disjunct, either moving through perpetually large leaps or, in the case of the Arizona Theme, with longer lines that are interrupted by the insistent articulation of the Rattlesnake Motive. Because it is built on quartal and quintal harmony, the Third Theme includes several large intervals, but the overall impact of this homo-rhythmic section is much more lyrical. The clarinets

and saxophones blend to create a long, uninterrupted melodic line. At m. 175 this theme is repeated, supported by a transformation of the Arizona Theme, played by muted trumpets, that provides a transition into the development.

Figure 4-18, Section C harmony reduction, mm. 157-162



Measure 190 marks the beginning of the development, Section D. This section actually contains two different developmental sections divided by a full statement of the Arizona Theme. Rather than the fragmentation and modulation typical of a traditional development, here Gilbertson takes motives and chords from the previous sections and spins them out into new material.

The first half of the development is pointillistic: The Rattlesnake Motive hockets through the ensemble a beat, or sometimes as little as an eighth note, at a time, coalescing into the larger fabric of this section. This first half of the development section can be further subdivided into two sections, the first of which is piano and marked by very dry articulations, while the second is fortissimo with more resonant sounds.

The harmonic content of this section is familiar, being composed of harmonic fragments from the first harmonized statement of the Arizona Theme at m.48, or the statement in the oboes at mm. 146-156. Instrumental sections are separated, with each instrument group assigned to one or two chords and playing only when those chords are repeated. For example, the trombones and euphoniums, occasionally joined by bassoons, always play the E minor chord at the beginning of the Arizona progression fragments, and that harmony is not played by any other instrument grouping in this section.

Figure 4-19, Development Section reduction (concert pitch), mm. 192-194

The image shows a musical score reduction for five instruments: Trumpet, Horn, Bassoon, Trombone, and Euphonium. The music is in 3/4 time. The Trumpet part is mostly silent, with some chords in measures 193 and 194. The Horn part plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in measures 192 and 193, followed by chords in measure 194. The Bassoon, Trombone, and Euphonium parts play a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in measures 192 and 193, followed by chords in measure 194. The chords in measure 194 are E minor for the Trombone and Euphonium, and E minor with a sharp (F#) for the Bassoon.

While much of the material from this section – namely the dry articulation style and most of the harmony - comes from Section A, the woodwinds occasionally interject harmonies that are related to the quartal and quintal harmony from Section C.

The second, louder, part of this first developmental section begins at m. 208, where the Rattlesnake Motive in the winds is much more extroverted. The brass are

marked fortissimo, and the Rattlesnake Motives are accompanied by sustained crotales, vibraphone, chimes, and piano. The effect is a sudden splash of sound, with chords ringing over into one another like celebratory bells. The tonal palette changes in this section as well, with the pitches of both the Rattlesnake Motive and its accompaniment belonging to a Gb major scale, as Gilbertson continues to develop the Rattlesnake Motive.

Before the second half of the development there is another full statement of the Arizona Theme in the horn section in mm. 224-234. This serves as a point of clarity which grounds the listener in the middle of so much unfamiliar material. It is also the central pivot point, after which the material introduced thus far is presented again in reverse order.

In this statement of the Arizona Theme, the main melody notes are decorated with scales in the woodwinds, which sustain out of each melody note to form pyramid chords in a sort of prism effect (See Fig. 4-20).

Figure 4-20, *Taliesin West* score, Arizona Theme pyramid chords, mm. 224-230

The image shows a page of a musical score for the Arizona Theme pyramid chords, measures 224-230. The score is for a woodwind section and includes parts for Piccolo (Picc.), Flute 1 (Flt. 1), Flute 2 (Flt. 2), Oboe 1 & 2 (Oboe 1&2), English Horn (Eng. Hrn.), Bassoon 1 & 2 (Bssn. 1&2), Contrabassoon (C. Bssn.), E-flat Clarinet (E♭ Clar.), Bass Clarinet 1 (B♭ Clar. 1), Bass Clarinet 2 (B♭ Clar. 2), Bass Clarinet 3 (B♭ Clar. 3), Bass Clarinet (Bs. Clar.), and Contralto Clarinet (C. Alt. Clar.). The score is in 4/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *mp* (mezzo-piano). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or E-flat minor). The score is marked with a box containing the number 224 at the beginning of the first measure.

The theme's modulation to Ab major in the last two measures of this section is obscured by these woodwind scales, clustered in an Eb melodic minor pattern. Instead of a feeling like an arrival, this cluster creates more tension leading into the second half of the development. Once again, Gilbertson creates and resolves tension

with a textural shift as this cluster clears away to reveal unison F octave leaps in the trumpets, decorated only by rumbling C octaves in the lower range of piano and harp.

At m. 235, the beginning of the second developmental section, the Fourth Theme is introduced. While this is a new theme, it actually incorporates elements from earlier sections directly into the theme itself, and therefore constitutes a continuation of the development. Characteristics borrowed from the Arizona Theme include several held notes interrupted by the Rattlesnake Motive. The Fourth Theme also incorporates the repeated slurred eighth note motive which is found throughout Section B, and the first repeated eighth note motive in the Fourth Theme follows the exact same pitch pattern found in the first statement of the eighth note motive at the beginning of Section B in m. 70. This section is also heavily punctuated with fortissimo Rattlesnake Motive interjections in the winds and low brass such that, while the theme itself feels original, it is strongly linked to the material which precedes it.

Figure 4-21, Melodic line reduced (concert pitch), mm. 70-72

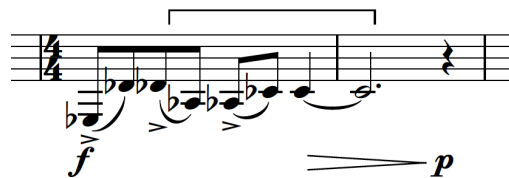
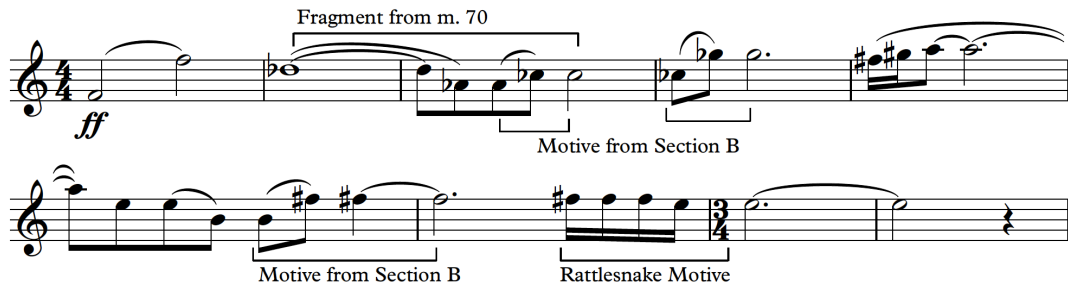


Figure 4-22, Fourth Theme reduction, mm. 235-243



In m. 258-266 there is an extremely truncated repeat of Section C presented once again by clarinets and saxes. These nine measures are an almost literal repeat of mm. 157-159 followed immediately by mm. 167-172, with the measures in between omitted. This brief restatement of section C serves as a short repose before the energetic material which leads towards the climax of the movement at m. 300. In a movement which is dominated by energetic forward motion, hearing the less-frenetic material from Section C balances the driving nature of the material which dominates the final third of the piece.

Heightened rhythmic activity and abrupt changes in articulation contribute toward the frenetic energy which leads toward m. 300, along with a progressively accelerated restatement of themes and motives from the A and B sections. Beginning in m. 267, there is a near-literal repeat of the B section, but at m. 291, instead of the chromatic modulation from Section B leading to the Second Theme, it skips straight to a statement of the Arizona Theme in horns. This statement is interrupted by the final statement of the Arizona Theme in trumpets.

In m. 298, the trumpets present the final statement of the Arizona Theme in Bb minor. The final few measures are punctuated by aggressive interjections of the

Rattlesnake Motive in the rest of the band. The constant development of thematic and motivic material in this movement continues to the very end, and the trumpets' octave leap in the final bars creates a sense of forward momentum rather than closure. While this is the end of the movement, it is clearly not the end of the story.

Bb	Coloristic music Rattlesnake motive introduced (m. 25)	1	Intro.
Fm	Arizona Theme introduced Tertian harmony	37	A
Dm BbM Dm	Slurred eighth note motive Contrasting resonant sounds Composite melodies Several sections utilize all 12 pitches	70	B
Dm	Chromatic modulation Second Theme Introduced (m. 111)	111	
Fm Em	Arizona Theme presented in a more lyrical style	144	A
(C#D#F#G#)	Quartal/Quintal Harmony Homophonic Third Theme	157	C
Ebm <sup>7</sup> Ab	(Arizona Theme) (Combines material from A/C)	190	(A) Development
	Dry Resonant	224	(A)
Cm	Arizona Theme with pyramid chords	235	
Fm	Fourth Theme (Combines material from A/B)	258	C
(C#D# F#G#)	Abbreviated return of C	266	B
Dm	Abbreviated return of B	291	A
Gm Bbm	Chromatic Modulation Arizona Theme	300 311	

Figure 4-23, Formal Diagram of *Tales in West*

## Second Movement: Fallingwater

### Wright's Fallingwater

Built in 1935, Fallingwater is one of the most recognizable homes the world over and, according to the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, “Wright’s crowning achievement in organic architecture.”<sup>83</sup> Of all Wright’s works, Fallingwater’s power to capture the imagination is unique. The impact of it is stunning, even for highly trained architectural scholars. In the words of Pulitzer Prize-winning architectural critic, Paul Goldberger, “Great architecture, like any great art, ultimately takes you somewhere that words cannot take you at all. Fallingwater does that the way Chartres Cathedral does that. There’s some experience that gets you in your gut and you just feel it, and you can’t quite even say it. My whole life is dealing with architecture and words, and at the end of the day, there is something that I can’t entirely say when it comes to what Fallingwater feels like.”<sup>84</sup>

Wright was commissioned to create a summer home for the Kaufmann family at their favorite retreat in Mill Run, PA. The Kaufmanns, a prominent family in Pittsburgh and owners of Kaufmann’s Department Store in Pittsburgh, commissioned Wright to build the home after their son, Edgar Jr., studied with Wright through the Taliesin Fellowship.<sup>85</sup> According to Robert McCarter, “The family’s favorite spot was buried deep in a wooded glen and was characterized by large sandstone outcroppings, which exhibited a rustic, even ancient, appearance. The stream

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<sup>83</sup> N.a., “Fallingwater,” <https://franklloydwright.org/site/fallingwater/> (N.a.), accessed 10 March 2021.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

contained two waterfalls... but they crossed the stream on the diagonal... providing greater potential for a dynamic spatial composition. The falls were not uniform; one fell to a drop of almost twenty-five feet, the other almost ten.”<sup>86</sup>

It is important to note that in three decades prior to the construction of Fallingwater, Wright had developed a particular fascination with incorporating waterfalls and other natural water features into his designs. Beginning in the early years of the 20th century, Wright had begun to read books on Japanese garden design and on a 1905 trip to Japan with his wife, Catherine, collected photos of waterfall gardens from all over Japan.<sup>87</sup> In his design of Fallingwater, Wright continued to use organic methods of building, incorporating native sandstone and other on-site materials into the structure, but the real genius in the organicity of Fallingwater lies in how totally the building works in harmony with its surroundings, and with the waterfall in particular.<sup>88</sup>

The structure itself is not imposing, and the scale of the living space is modest. The ceilings are low and many of the exterior walls are floor-to-ceiling windows which allow in the natural light. The color palette features natural tones accented with Wright’s signature redwood beams (a departure from organicity in favor of his personal style).

However, the impact of the structure is magnified by the way it folds into its surroundings. Wright did not simply create a home near a waterfall or with a view of

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<sup>86</sup> Kathryn Smith, “Wright’s Waterfall Buildings,” in *On and By Frank Lloyd Wright: A Primer of Architectural Principles*, ed. Robert McCarter (London and New York: Phaidon Press Inc., 2005), 228.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>88</sup> N.a., “What is Fallingwater?” <https://fallingwater.org/what-is-fallingwater/> (N.a.), accessed 10 March 2021.

one. He built the house as an inextricable part of the waterfall itself. The cantilevered planes of the home's rooms and balconies hang directly over the stream. There is a glass portal in the living room which can be opened to allow the sounds of water into the living space or to allow the inhabitants to descend to a platform at water level.

The rigid lines of the masonry are a striking contrast to the organic shapes which surround them, but they serve as a perfect balance rather than seeming out of place. The effect is reminiscent of Japanese gardens. In these two gardens every element - manmade or natural - seems to be combined in perfect harmony, with nothing out of place. Each new angle offers a different but equally beautiful vista, and the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces are often blurred. The combined effect creates a profound visual impact which gives the impression that these gardens are far larger than their actual acreage. In this same way, by combining the Kaufmann's home and the waterfall into one organic whole, the emotional impact of seeing Fallingwater through the trees as you approach it through the woods is far more dramatic in scale than the building's physical footprint would suggest.

#### Water as a Rhetorical Device

One of the most striking features of Gilbertson's depiction of Fallingwater is the number and variety of the musical allusions to water, several of which may not be immediately apparent. These references are pervasive, but Gilbertson presents them in varied and sophisticated ways, again reflecting Wright's organic philosophy.

This movement is a meditation on the nature of water, rather than a programmatic illustration of the property at Bear Run. Water has many moods that differ dramatically depending on its environment. It can be still and placid, or it can be violent. Water is almost always flowing, but in doing so it sparks a wide range of emotions. It can make us feel peaceful, afraid, or inspired, and it serves as an elegant metaphor for many facets of human life. Gilbertson exploits this versatility, using musical allusions to water to drive the emotional arc of the movement.

In addition to gestural depictions of flowing water, this metaphor is folded into the harmonic underpinning of the movement's main theme, the Kaufmann House Theme. First presented by the clarinets in mm. 36-45, the main theme modulates from C down to Cb, and the last measure of this statement elides with the first measure of a second statement in the trumpets. The effect of repeating this theme several times in a row is that the modulation causes it to gradually "flow" downwards.

Figure 4-24, *Fallingwater* score, Kauffman House Theme, mm. 36-44

Perhaps the most obvious depictions of water are the descending scalar gestures which begin this movement - literally an imitation of falling water - but if we look deeper, there is more here than the most obvious surface layer. Like the surface of moving water, the patterns in these cascading gestures which form this Cascade Motive are always shifting (See Fig. 4-6). The movement begins with harp and percussion tracing an A melodic minor pattern, which is quickly interwoven with other scales (F major in the piano at m. 3, for example). By m. 8 the percussion has shifted to an octatonic pattern, continued in m. 17 by flutes, against the harp's A melodic minor. This section gradually becomes both more active and more dissonant, eventually having three different scale patterns - A minor, G minor, and octatonic - all competing against one another (mm. 18-21).

A few measures later, in m. 26, the Cascade Motive is replaced by a loud, aggressive-sounding section with aleatoric elements, the "Turbulence Gesture" (See Fig. 4-7). Buried among the harmonic turbulence of the aleatoric patterns in the winds are brass chords which quickly peak at a fortissimo and just as quickly subside, suggesting waves or rapids, where water moves more aggressively and in less predictable ways.

Contrasting passages provide balance without relinquishing the allusions to water. Mm. 62-80 are suddenly still, grounded firmly by expansively orchestrated Bb octaves and Bb major triads that persist, until m. 77 when they are replaced by octave

E♭. The most significant motion in this section is a single melodic line, which is repeated and varied twice, but each time returns to B♭.

Here, Gilbertson has created an elegant depiction of the clear surface of placid water, disturbed only by a few water droplets that then ripple out from their point of origin. This is perhaps an oblique reference, but the repeated trumpet notes suggest a ripple effect from the melody presented by vibraphone and saxophones. From mm. 80-85 the reintroduction of cascading scales and fragments of the Kaufmann House Theme leads to a restatement of the full Kaufmann House Theme in the original key at 86.

Figure 4-25, *Fallingwater* score, mm. 62-64

The image shows a musical score for measures 62-64 of the piece *Fallingwater*. The score is arranged in a system with seven staves. The top four staves are for saxophones: Soprano Saxophone (Sop. Sax.), Alto Saxophone (Alt. Sax.), Tenor Saxophone (Ten. Sax.), and Baritone Saxophone (Bar. Sax.). The bottom three staves are for trumpets: C Trumpet 1 (C Trpt. 1), C Trumpet 2 (C Trpt. 2), and C Trumpet 3 (C Trpt. 3). Measure 62 is marked with a box containing the number 62 and the tempo instruction *Meno Mosso* with a quarter note equal to 68-72. Measure 64 is marked with a box containing the number 64. Measure 65 is marked with a box containing the number 65. The saxophone parts feature melodic lines with dynamic markings such as *mf*, *fp*, and *f*. The trumpet parts include sustained notes and rhythmic patterns, with dynamic markings like *p*, *pp*, *mp*, and *mf*. The C Trpt. 3 part includes the instruction *con sord.* and features triplet patterns. The overall texture is characterized by sustained saxophone tones and rhythmic trumpet accompaniment.

## Formal Analysis

This movement is divided into three main sections, A - B - A<sup>1</sup>, defined largely by a contrast between movement and stability. Like the first movement, Fallingwater has some characteristics of arch form. The overall emotional arc of the movement is a gradual ascent which, after a brief respite in the middle of the movement, builds to a grand apotheosis. The movement's three principal sections are unified through musical allusions to water that define the emotional arc of the piece as they propel it forward. In an elegant illustration of organicity, the main gestural elements in this movement and the Kauffman House Theme are presented separately in Section A. Then in Section A<sup>1</sup> these elements return, this time intertwined in a grand apotheosis.

Section A introduces four of the main musical ideas that dominate this movement: The First Theme, Kaufmann House Theme, Cascade Motive and Turbulence Gesture. Section A is further divided into two main sections with the Kaufmann House Theme presented in the second section, in isolation from the gestural elements.

The movement begins with the Cascade Motive, consisting of slowly descending scalar patterns, in the harp, piano, and percussion. Each instrument enters gradually following a different rhythmic pattern and starting on a different note of their A melodic minor pattern (with raised scale degrees six and seven). After a brief, four measure introduction of this motive and the gradual addition of light, fluttering trills in the woodwinds, the First Theme is presented in the first and second horns.

This theme begins with an octave leap followed by a gradual, meandering descent. This octave leap mirrors the final octave leap of the first movement and is just a half step lower. Though the main motivic material within these two movements is largely self-contained, opening the second movement with this motive helps to link the two together.

The overall shape of the first eight measures is repeated, with the Cascade Motive starting again in A minor this time with the addition of octatonic and g melodic minor patterns occurring simultaneously. A more dissonant, almost otherworldly version of the First Theme is presented in oboes and English horn, often moving in parallel fifths. At m. 16 the Cascade Motive begins a third time, now with A melodic minor, G melodic minor, and octatonic patterns occurring simultaneously. These build in intensity with the gradual addition of instrument groups and an increase in dynamic until m. 26 when they are abruptly replaced by the Turbulence Gesture. This is characterized by aleatoric repeated scalar patterns in the winds, punctuated by dynamic waves in both percussion and brass which at their peak rise out of the texture like waves cresting in turbulent water. This motive builds until m. 36, when it is abruptly cut off and replaced by the Kaufmann House Theme, as suddenly as though a door has been shut.

The second half of A, mm. 36-61, is composed of three statements of the Kaufmann House Theme. In some ways, the Kaufmann House Theme is a striking contrast to the gestural material presented before it, which has an organic feel. While there is very little mixed meter in the first half of A, the material presented doesn't often give a sense of regular rhythm or much at all for the listener to grasp on to. It is

a feeling of constant motion. The introduction of the Kaufmann House Theme creates a very grounded, homey feeling, with a regular harmonic rhythm of one chord change per bar.

This theme was perhaps intended to represent the mood created by the interior living spaces at Fallingwater which, in true Frank Lloyd Wright style are functional rather than grandiose or overstated. The ceilings are low, and the rooms are inviting, with Wright's signature orange hues warming up the interior color palette. The first statement of the Kaufmann House Theme begins in m. 36. While this statement technically starts with a measure of 5/4, the Turbulence Gesture ringing over from the previous bar covers the first beat of this measure, resulting in what actually sounds like 4/4 measure, and the theme continues in 4/4 thereafter. The Kaufmann House Theme is a nine-measure phrase. It is often presented several times in a row, in which case the ninth bar elides with the first bar of the next statement.

While this theme stands apart from the aural complexity of the Cascade Motive and Turbulence Gesture, it still subtly imitates the downward\* flow of water: The theme itself modulates downward. It is first presented in C major by the clarinets and modulates to Cb, where the second statement begins. By the end of the A section, the tonal center has "flowed" from C down to Bb.

Section B provides contrast to the flow of Section A. At m. 62 a new motive is presented over Bb octaves in the low brass and double bass. This Bb is repeated five times over 15 measures, either in octaves or in tutti Bb major chords. The motive in vibraphone, harp, and trumpet is repeated several times, each time meandering

further and further from Bb, but the towering chords return to Bb after each occurrence of that motive.

After 61 measures of constant movement, the powerful stability of this section creates a stunning effect. One is reminded of the balance created in the composition of Wright's Fallingwater between the constantly moving waterfall and the rigid, powerful lines of his cantilevered rooms and balconies. These two ideas seem directly opposed to one another, and yet by juxtaposing them Wright created something far more visually stunning than he would have if he had built something that merely blended in with and imitated its environment.

The technique of achieving balance through contrast is just as important to Gilbertson's rendering of *Fallingwater* as it is to Wright's. Where Wright achieved this balance by juxtaposing a rigid, linear structure with the natural surroundings of Fallingwater, Gilbertson has balanced the tonal clarity of these towering Bb chords with the ambiguity of the delicate rippling motive. In doing so he also evokes an image of still water, a striking contrast to the A section. This motif is continued, with a restatement of the First Theme and m. 74 accompanied by Eb over several octaves in m. 77, which gradually fades in dynamic and leads down a half step to D.

From mm. 80-85, the Cascade Motive in A melodic minor from the beginning of the piece returns, signaling a transition into the final section of the movement. After a slightly modified fragment of the Kauffman House Theme melody is presented by the saxophone section, the Kaufmann House Theme returns in the original key of C major. Gilbertson has cleverly reintroduced this idea of flow in a subtle way, moving in a descending scalar pattern (Eb - D - C), first with the motion

between the harmonic pillars, then through the descending pattern of the Kaufmann House Theme fragment.

Measure 86 marks the beginning of A<sup>1</sup> and movement toward the climax of the piece. From mm. 86-109 The Kaufmann House Theme is presented three times in full, juxtaposed with the Cascade Motive for the first time. The intensity of this section builds the melodic line climbs in tessitura and more voices take up the Cascade Motive. At mm. 100-113 the Cascade Motive stops, and a dramatic tutti chorale leads into the climax of the movement.

At the climax, fragments of the Kaufmann House Theme are traded among first clarinets, trumpets and horns, interwoven with first the Turbulence Gesture in m. 115 and then the Cascade Motive in m. 119 in a triumphant synergy. This seamless integration of concrete and coloristic elements is the apotheosis of this work. Like Wright's Fallingwater, Usonian Dwellings combines seemingly disparate elements to achieve an aesthetic impact greater than the sum of its parts.

Beginning in m. 121, the intensity slowly subsides, the Cascade Motive slowly drops away and Kaufmann House Theme fragments lead to the final cadence of the piece, the Bb chord in m. 130. This time, the stability of the Bb octaves is decorated with the flowing Cascade Motive and arrives on a Bb major chord which diminuendos to niente over two measures.

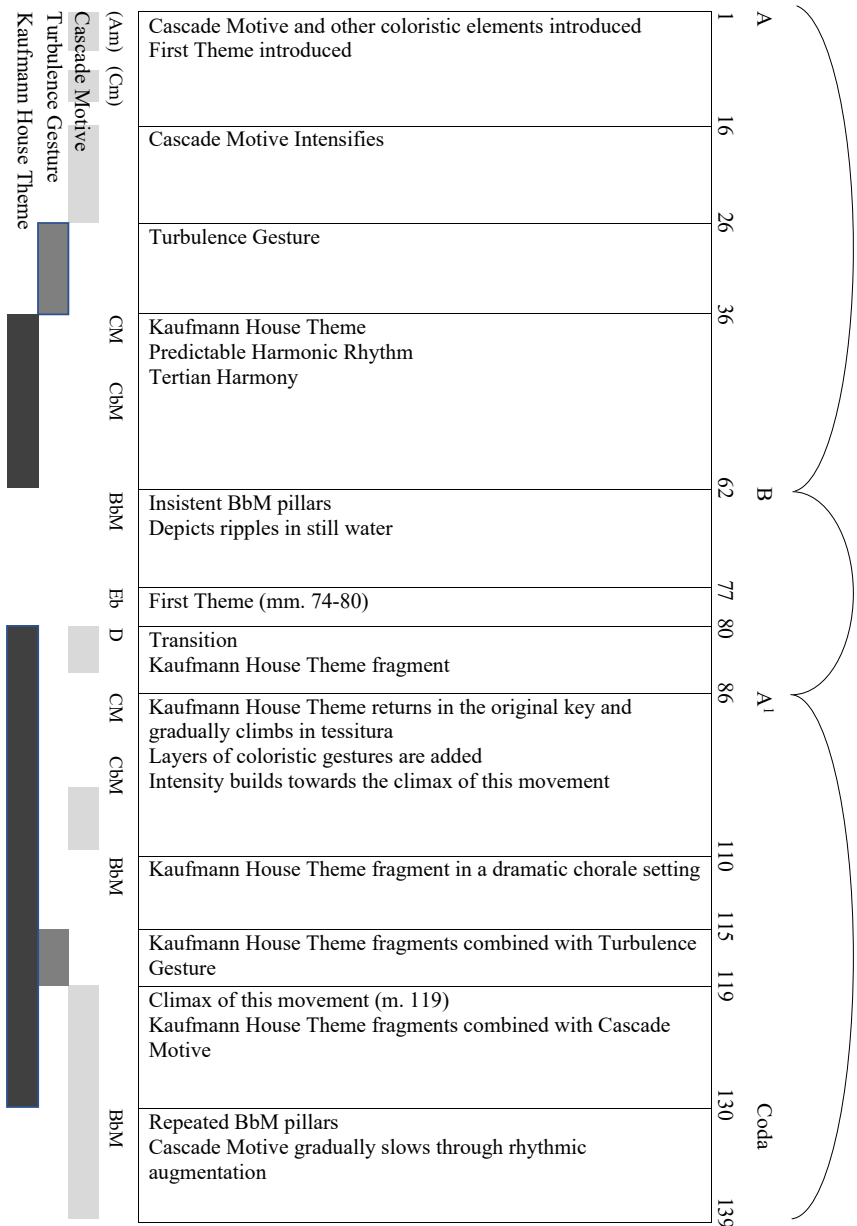


Figure 4-26, Formal Diagram of *Fallingwater*.

## Chapter 6: Performance Considerations

1. This piece is particularly taxing on the brass instruments throughout, and after more than fifteen minutes of demanding music it ends with a chorale in a relatively high tessitura. For this reason, *Usonaian Dwellings* would work best programmed with pieces that are less demanding of the brass section.
2. The percussion parts are extensive, involving a large number of instruments. The Marine Band performed the premiere with only six percussionists with jawbone, vibraslap, and claves played by Trumpet 3.<sup>89</sup> However, Colonel Fettig believes the logistics of these parts ultimately require the full seven players.<sup>90</sup> The percussion parts are divided into parts 1-6.
3. This work is musically demanding across the ensemble. Because of the number of solo or soli sections and the fact that the melodic line often passes rapidly through a mosaic of different voices, the musical maturity of the entire ensemble is important.
4. At mm. 25-34 in *Taliesin West*, the Rattlesnake Motive is introduced by woodwind key clicks, this time as a literal imitation of a rattlesnake warning call. For this reason, it is imperative that these key clicks be as precise and rhythmic as possible, without any extra sounds before or after entrances. The easiest way to achieve this is to divide the movement into the left and right hands (L-R-L-R etc.) and to freeze in position during the rests between statements of this motive (See Fig. 4-9).

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<sup>89</sup> Mark Latimer, personal correspondence (25 April 2021).

<sup>90</sup> Jason K. Fettig, personal interview, (20 April 2021).

Figure 4-9, *Taliesin West* score, Rattlesnake Motive in woodwind parts, mm. 25-27



5. Because the Rattlesnake Motive imitates a real sound found in nature, this need for precision and clarity extends to each statement of the motive. It can be particularly easy to lose the definition of this motive when it is presented by horns. A prime example of this is mm. 59-69, where accompanying chords are written primarily as staccato quarter notes, and the horns are the only member of the accompaniment playing the Rattlesnake Motive in these interjections. It should be emphasized to the horn section that these, as well as all other statements of the Rattlesnake Motive, should be performed with an articulation which is as clear and well-defined as players can manage.
6. In the Arizona Theme statement at mm. 48-58, third clarinets echo the firsts and seconds. This has a tendency to be buried, so thirds should be instructed to play louder to match the firsts and seconds.
7. Ensure that first and second trumpets from mm. 175-189 are not covered by clarinets and saxophones. This material, drawn from the Arizona Theme, serves as a transition into the developmental section which begins at m. 190 (See Fig. 6-1).

Figure 6-1, *Taliesin West* score, Arizona Theme material in first and second trumpets, mm. 180-189

8. The composite melodies which occur throughout the work are particularly challenging. The most prominent example occurs in the section beginning at m. 190. Here the composite melody is traded among four different groups of instruments: Horns; bassoons, trombones, and euphoniums; trumpets; and flutes, oboes, English horn, clarinets, bassoons, and sometimes saxophones. These entrances, which sometime occur on unexpected beats, must be perfectly in time and blended with the preceding entrances in both style and dynamic. Otherwise, this section risks sounding disjointed, contrary to the unified tapestry of sound which was clearly Gilbertson's intention.

Figure 4-19, Development Section reduction (concert pitch), mm. 192-194

9. Similarly, Measures 208-222 provide the trumpet players an almost etude-like exercise in matching their sounds throughout different registers, as the composite melody here - played by the trumpet section alone - spans an octave plus a fifth in only six beats, traded among the three divisi parts.

Figure 6-2, *Taliesin West* score, composite melody in trumpets, mm. 208-212

The image shows a musical score for three trumpet parts (C Trpt. 1, 2, 3) from measures 208 to 212. The score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. Measure 208 begins with a forte (ff) dynamic. The melody is divided among the three parts, with each part playing a different register of the same melodic line. Measure 212 ends with a repeat sign.

10. In mm. 259 and 311 of *Taliesin West*, the maracas should be played as marked, “roll smoothly in a circular motion,” while as much as possible avoiding the creation of any rhythmic pattern. This is difficult to achieve but will be aided by the selection of a maraca with a wider diameter and which is filled sparsely.
11. The second movement presents a particular challenge for the conductor, who needs to toe a fine line between minor expressive tempo fluctuations and providing a steady underpinning for the constantly shifting scalar patterns. It is important that the conductor never allows the ends of phrases to stagnate. This is particularly important at the ends of the Kaufmann House Theme,

which should always flow and elide into the next statement, rather than slowing down.

12. In the scales of the Cascade motive, accidentals do not translate to other octaves. All of these notes are played as they are marked. The entrances of these scales should not be accented or otherwise pop out of the texture, nor should there be any rhythmic pulses on beats. They should sound light and effortless.
13. If performing the piece with one bass clarinet player, the bass clarinetist should play the D# in m. 129 of *Fallingwater* as the B# is covered by the contra alto.

## Chapter 7: Concluding Thoughts

Although he has already earned significant accolades for his work, Gilbertson's career as a composer is just beginning. *Usonian Dwellings* presents wind band directors with the rare opportunity to perform a fine work for winds written by a composer who will likely grow in importance over the course of his career. Gilbertson's integration of Wright's ideas into such a coherent and moving work along with his skillful approach to orchestration speaks to his potential to become a major composer. He has a compelling musical vision and the craft to support it.

*Usonian Dwellings* would be a compelling work on its own, without any programmatic elements. However, it is made all the more interesting because it explores Wright's aesthetic with such integrity and invites us to consider the parallels between architecture and music. Wright himself talked about the similarities between the composer and the architect, saying, "My father taught me that a symphony was an edifice of sound. And I learned pretty soon that it was built by the same kind of mind in much the same way that a building is built. And when that came to me I used to sit and listen to Beethoven. He was a great architect. The two minds are quite similar because they arrange and build, plot and plan in very much the same way."<sup>91</sup>

Certainly, a parallel could be drawn between Beethoven's own motivic writing and the way that Wright took natural motifs and spun them out into many different forms and iterations in his buildings. Because of this parallel, many of the construction techniques which Gilbertson uses in *Usonian Dwellings* are similar to

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<sup>91</sup> Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, *Frank Lloyd Wright [1997]*, DVD, Florentine Films (1998).

those found in traditional symphonic music. Indeed, the organicity of *Usonian Dwellings* is borne out largely through sophisticated motivic development. In this way, Gilbertson's piece is undeniably influenced by the composers and musical styles that precede him, but that influence is filtered through the mind of America's greatest architect.

Architect Walter Behrendt, in comparing Wright's architectural style to Japanese houses, described it as being, "...so fitted into the landscape that the building almost imperceptibly blends with the surrounding nature. The Japanese house manifests the same spirit of nature, the same tendency toward an organic structure. It also shows this intimate connection with the scene it is set in..."<sup>92</sup>. This "spirit of nature" is precisely what Gilbertson has captured in *Usonian Dwellings*, where harmonic and melodic material blends and interacts with the larger ecosystem of the piece, and where many voices work together systematically to create a coherent mosaic of sound. This connection to Japanese aesthetics is what made the premiere performances of *Usonian Dwellings* such a fitting tribute to the people of Japan. Simultaneously, the work is a perpetuation of uniquely American artistic ideals, and a fresh take on an American art aesthetic which was developed by transcendentalist writers nearly two centuries ago.

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<sup>92</sup> Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, 4.

# Appendices

## *Appendix 1. Usonian Dwellings Programs and Program Notes*



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND  
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 1900  
Hondanomori Concert Hall  
Kanazawa, Japan  
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

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	Japanese National Anthem, “Kimigayo”
	U.S. National Anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner”
John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)	March, “Hands Across the Sea”
Robert Jager (b. 1939)	“Esprit de Corps”
Kevin Walczyk (b. 1964)	<i>Eloi, Eloi</i> (2015)
arranged by Stephen Bulla* (b. 1953)	<i>Tribute to Louis Armstrong</i> <i>MSgt Daniel Orban, trumpet soloist</i>
Chang Su Koh (b. 1970)	Humoresque (2010)
	<b>INTERMISSION</b>
Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–75) transcribed by Donald Hunsberger*	Festive Overture, Opus 96 <i>Captain Ryan J. Nowlin, conducting</i>
Michael Gilbertson (b. 1987)	<i>Usonian Dwellings</i> (2019) II. Taliesin West III. Fallingwater <i>world première</i>
Luigi Arditi (1822–1903) transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*	“Il Bacio” <i>GySgt Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano</i>
Aaron Copland (1900–90) transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*	Finale from Symphony No. 3

\*Member, U.S. Marine Band

[www.marineband.marines.mil](http://www.marineband.marines.mil) | 010-1-202-433-5809 | [www.facebook.com/marineband](https://www.facebook.com/marineband) | [www.twitter.com/marineband](https://www.twitter.com/marineband)

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Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND  
Friday, May 17, 2019 at 1800  
Act City Hamamatsu Concert Hall  
Hamamatsu, Japan  
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

Japanese National Anthem, “Kimigayo”

U.S. National Anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner”

John Philip Sousa\* (1854–1932)

March, “Golden Jubilee”

John Williams (b. 1932)

Fanfare, “For ‘The President’s Own’”

Kevin Walczyk (b. 1964)

*Eloi, Eloi* (2015)

Simone Mantia (1873–1951)  
revised by Henry Howey

“Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms”  
*MGySgt Mark Jenkins, euphonium soloist*

Yasuhide Ito (b. 1960)

“Dies Festus” from *Gloriosa*

#### INTERMISSION

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–75)  
transcribed by Donald Hunsberger\*

Festive Overture, Opus 96  
*Captain Ryan J. Nowlin, conducting*

Michael Gilbertson (b. 1987)

*Usonian Dwellings* (2019)

II. Taliesin West  
III. Fallingwater

*world première*

George Gershwin (1898–1937)  
lyrics by Ira Gershwin  
arranged by SSgt Scott Nimmer\*

“I Got Rhythm” from *Girl Crazy*  
*GySgt Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano*

John Philip Sousa\* (1854–1932)

March, “Hands Across the Sea”  
*Mr. Ozawa, conducting*

Aaron Copland (1900–90)  
transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson\*

Finale from Symphony No. 3

\*Member, U.S. Marine Band

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Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND  
Sunday, May 19, 2019 at 1400  
Sinfonia Iwakuni Concert Hall  
Iwakuni, Japan  
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

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	Japanese National Anthem, “Kimigayo”
	U.S. National Anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner”
John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)	March, “Hands Across the Sea”
Robert Jager (b. 1939)	“Esprit de Corps”
Kevin Walczyk (b. 1964)	<i>Eloi, Eloi</i> (2015)
arranged by Stephen Bulla* (b. 1953)	<i>Tribute to Louis Armstrong</i> <i>MSgt Daniel Orban, trumpet soloist</i>
Chang Su Koh (b. 1970)	Humoresque (2010)
<b>INTERMISSION</b>	
Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–75) transcribed by Donald Hunsberger*	Festive Overture, Opus 96 <i>Captain Ryan J. Nowlin, conducting</i>
Michael Gilbertson (b. 1987)	<i>Usonian Dwellings</i> (2019) II. Taliesin West III. Fallingwater
Luigi Arditi (1822–1903) transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*	“Il Bacio” <i>GySgt Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano</i>
Aaron Copland (1900–90) transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*	Finale from Symphony No. 3

\*Member, U.S. Marine Band

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Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND  
Sunday, March 22, 2020 at 2:00 P.M.  
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center  
Northern Virginia Community College  
Alexandria Campus  
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

**Sojourn**

Sir William Walton (1902-83)  
transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson\*

**Partita**

Toccata: Briosio  
Pastorale siciliana: Andante comodo  
Giga burlesca: Allegro gioviale

Percy Grainger (1882-1961)  
edited by R. Mark Rogers

**Colonial Song**

Michael Gilbertson (b. 1987)

**Usonian Dwellings (2019)**

Taliesin West  
Fallingwater

**INTERMISSION**

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)  
transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson\*

**Lemminkäinen's Return from *Lemminkäinen Suite*, Opus 22**

George Butterworth (1885-1916)  
arranged by MGySgt Donald Patterson\*

**"The Lads in Their Hundreds"**

GySgt Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano

Michael Colgrass (1932-2019)

**Winds of Nagual**

The desert: don Juan emerges from the mountains  
Carlos meets don Juan: first conversation  
Don Genaro appears; Genaro satirizes Carlos  
Carlos stares at the water and becomes a bubble  
The gait of power  
Asking twilight for calmness and power  
Juan clowns for Carlos  
Last conversation and farewell: Carlos leaps into the unknown and explodes  
into a thousand views of the world

\*Member, U.S. Marine Band

The Marine Chamber Orchestra will perform Sunday, March 29 at 2:00 P.M. in the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center at Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria Campus. The program will include works by Bach, Bottesini, and Beethoven.

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***Usonian Dwellings (2019)***

Michael Gilbertson (b. 1987)

*world première*

The works of Michael Gilbertson have been described as “elegant” and “particularly beautiful” by *The New York Times*, “vivid, tightly woven” and “delectably subtle” by the *Baltimore Sun*, “genuinely moving” by the *Washington Post*, and “a compelling fusion of new and ancient” by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Gilbertson holds degrees from The Juilliard School in New York and Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. He is currently the composer-in-residence with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra and is a professor at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. His music has earned five Morton Gould Awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a Broadcast Music Incorporated Student Composer Award. In March 2016, he was *Musical America* magazine’s featured New Artist of the Month. Additionally, he was one of three finalists, for the 2018 Pulitzer Prize in music for his composition *Quartet*. Gilbertson’s works have been programmed by several major orchestras, including the Minnesota Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Washington National Opera, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and the Grand Rapids Symphony; wind ensembles such as “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band; and professional choirs, including *Musica Sacra*, *The Crossing*, and *The Esoterics*. His chamber works have been performed by the Verona Quartet, Akropolis Quintet, Sybarite5, SOLI Chamber Ensemble, the Copland House Ensemble, and the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble.

*Usonian Dwellings* was composed on a commission from the United States Marine Band and is among Gilbertson’s first major works for winds and percussion. The two movements presented during the band’s performances in Japan, “Taliesin West” and “Fallingwater,” represent the world première of this exciting new addition to the repertoire.

The composer offers the following insights behind the inspiration for the work:

The movements of *Usonian Dwellings* are inspired by the work of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright used the term “usonian” to describe not only the aesthetic but also the values behind some of his later homes. His designs draw inspiration from the landscapes that surround them—evoking an America that is both forward thinking and conscious of the natural world. Each movement of *Usonian Dwellings* is inspired by one of his iconic designs. “Taliesin West” reflects the stark, desert landscape that surrounds his home and studio in Scottsdale, Arizona. “Fallingwater,” perhaps Wright’s most famous residential design in Mill Run, Pennsylvania, appears to hover majestically over the rushing falls on which it was built.

Although Wright was one of the quintessential American architects of the twentieth century, his aesthetic was actually deeply influenced by Japanese art and culture. Wright was never formally trained as an architect; however, he had a keen artistic eye, and during his formative years, he was introduced to traditional Japanese wood prints from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He was mesmerized by these unique images, most notably their specific lines, textures, and treatment of space. Wright’s artistic focus on overlapping shapes and blurring of the boundaries between inside and outside spaces was clearly influenced by these prints. “The print,” he once said, “is more autobiographical than may be imagined. If Japanese prints were to be deducted from my education, I don’t know what direction the whole might have taken.” Once the connection is made between these images and Wright’s designs, the influence emerges throughout and represents an incredibly beautiful melding of Eastern and Western ideas in his iconic buildings.

## Appendix 2. Correspondence with General Akira Takeda



Luci Disano <lucidisano@gmail.com>

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### Usonian Dwellings Dissertation Project

13 messages

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Luci Disano <lucidisano@gmail.com>

Thu, Jan 28, 2021 at 1:43 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Dear General Takeda,

Good afternoon, and first let me thank you for taking the time to read my letter when I am sure that you keep a very busy schedule. As Colonel Fettig mentioned in his email, I am writing my dissertation on the Michael Gilbertson piece, *Usonian Dwellings*. As a part of this project, I would like to make a historical document of the origin and first performances of the piece. If you have the time, I would love to hear your impressions of the piece and what you remember of discussions you may have had about the piece with others. However, I realize that this performance was a long time ago now, so I completely understand if you don't recall how people responded to the premiere.

I have included a list of questions below this email. I do not presume to ask you to answer a long list of questions, but rather I am including these to show you what I am curious about. Obviously, any impressions from a renowned figure like yourself would be extremely valuable to this project, even if I did not think to specifically ask about them.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude for your role in helping to welcome the Marine Band to Japan. I performed in the clarinet section on that trip, and the experience is something that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I hope this email finds you in good health, and thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,  
Luci Disano

#### Questions

1. How was the piece received by the audience? I will always remember the enthusiasm and kindness of the audiences at our Japanese performances, but I wonder how this piece was received in the context of Japanese wind music. Do you think the audience found it accessible? Unusual or different? Were they moved by the performance? Were conductors excited to play it with their wind ensembles?
2. I believe this piece will become very popular in the American band repertoire, based on what American wind ensembles typically play. I am unfortunately not very familiar with what would be considered typical Japanese band repertoire (except for Yasuhide Ito's *Gloriosa*, which I think is a wonderful piece). Because of this, I am not sure how *Usonian Dwellings* compares to the style of works typically played by Japanese wind ensembles. Do you think it is the sort of piece that can find a place in the repertoire of Japanese wind ensembles?
3. In my research, I have discovered that the two movements of this piece are inspired by two Frank Lloyd Wright buildings, and that many of Wright's designs were inspired by Japanese art and architecture. Do you think this connection was meaningful to the Japanese audience? Did you notice anything in the music, perhaps structurally or harmonically, that might have been inspired by Japanese music? (I have not had a chance to ask the composer whether he may have done this, but I am curious whether ears attuned to the conventions of the Japanese repertoire may have noticed something that my American ears could not.)
4. What was your personal impression of the piece as a conductor?



Luci Disano <lucidisano@gmail.com>

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## Usonian Dwellings Dissertation Project

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武田 晃 [REDACTED]  
To: Luci Disano <lucidisano@gmail.com>  
Cc: Jason Fettig [REDACTED]

Sat, Feb 6, 2021 at 12:20 AM

Dear Luci,

I will send you the answers to your questions.  
I wish you could understand my poor English.  
Please do not hesitate to send me additional questions if needed. Thank you.

Best Regards,

Akira

Akira Takeda  
Conductor,  
Musashino Academia Musicae

Answers;

1

Japanese audience tends to accept the music with clear melodies, because there is no harmony in traditional Japanese music. Therefore, this work would not be accepted normally, but I think that many people enjoyed the colorful colors of this work because of the beautiful tone of the Marine Band.

I think that band directors and musicians naturally enjoyed very much. They were impressed with the beautiful tone and the fineness ensemble.

School band directors would have felt that this work was hard to play by their school band. They are interested in whether they can play in their own band.

2

Most of bands of Japan are amateur school bands, and their main activity is to participate in the annual band competition. Therefore, they choose the work that is suitable for the competition as their repertoire. Specifically, a work that is about 7 to 8 minutes long and that students like. However, a few professional bands and special military bands, some bands of music college may be interested in this work.

3

Many Japanese people know Frank Lloyd Wright as an architect and they can find Japanese influence on his architectural and interior design. However, few people felt traces of Japanese art or tradition from this work at the concert in 2019.

When I listen the recording carefully now, I can also find something Japanese traces from some phrases of percussion without uniform rhythm and some scales of wind instruments. They sound both Japanese and Asian.

Did Gilbertson use the modes and rhythms of traditional Japanese music in this work?

4

I'm currently teaching bands of music college, so I'd love to get them to play this work. Because, it has a new style of wind music by 21<sup>st</sup> century composer. In addition, works that require delicate ensemble ability are suitable as teaching materials for advanced musical education.

I am considering adding this work to the December concert program. But I couldn't find the information about this work in Mr. Gilbertson's H.P. If you have some idea, could you tell me how to get the score and parts.



Luci Disano <lucidisano@gmail.com>

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## Impressions of the Usonian Dwellings

4 messages

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武田 晃 [REDACTED]  
To: Luci Disano <lucidisano@gmail.com>

Thu, Apr 1, 2021 at 4:26 AM

Dear Luci,

I'm sorry for the late reply about the Usonian Dwellings.  
I listened to the performance of The President's Own many times while watching the score.  
Attached document is summarized my thoughts.  
I hope these impressions of mine will help you write your treatise.

Best Regards,

Akira TAKEDA

## Impressions of the Usonian Dwellings / Michael Gilbertson

MG ret. Akira Takeda

Former Commander and Conductor of the Central Band, Japan GSDF  
Conductor, Musashino Academia Musicae

Mr. Gilbertson says he doesn't incorporate Japanese music into the Usonian Dwellings, but I could find some features similar to traditional Japanese music in this tune.

### I Taliesin West

The time changes frequently, and no regular rhythm in the first part of this movement. Traditional Japanese music also have no regular rhythm. When Japanese people listen to traditional music, they enjoy the space between note and note, not the rhythm. The audience may have felt characteristic of Japanese music here.

There are Japanese instruments with similar tones to Temple Block, Tom-tom and Tam-tam. Audience feels the Japanese musical characteristics when those instruments often appear in this movement.

Reference: YouTube "Kabuki & Noh Percussion"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o36ykVEOYxs>

There are little spaces between notes (each notes are separated) in the tremolo of Xylophone, Marimba, Tom-tom in number 16 to 22. It's like a dribble notes of Japanese *Hyoshigi*

Reference: YouTube "Kabuki Yoooo Sound Effect"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBVHEfZYzb0>

Theme played by clarinets from number 37 has a feeling like "ask questions one after another" "shoot fire questions" "shower questions" by making time change, quadruple → triple → duple. This expression is often used in Japanese music that has no time.

### II Fallingwater

In the beginning of the movement and after No.16, Gilbertson suggests flowing water with descending phrase of Keyboard percussion, piano, harp, and flutes, clarinets. Many Japanese people like these phrases especially harp playing. Because, Koto (Japanese instrument) often plays such phrase.

Oboe and English Horn from No.12 are reminiscent of the tone of *Sho* in *Gagaku*.

*Sho* is an instrument that can be layered (play chords), which is rare for traditional Japanese instruments, but I feel that the unique chords and the sound of this part have something in common. If you don't know *Sho*, this video will be helpful.

YouTube "Naomi Sato demonstrates the sho"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUpr1F1dZt0>

### Appendix 3. Correspondence with Mr. Toshio Akiyama



Luci Disano <lucidisano@gmail.com>

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## Usonian Dwellings Dissertation Project

12 messages

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Luci Disano <lucidisano@gmail.com>

Thu, Jan 28, 2021 at 1:40 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Dear Akiyama-Sensei,

Good afternoon, and first let me thank you for taking the time to read my letter when I am sure that you keep a very busy schedule. As Colonel Fettig mentioned in his email, I am writing my dissertation on the Michael Gilbertson piece, *Usonian Dwellings*. As a part of this project, I would like to make a historical document of the origin and first performances of the piece. If you have the time, I would love to hear your impressions of the piece and what you remember of discussions you may have had about the piece with others. However, I realize that this performance was a long time ago now, so I completely understand if you don't recall how people responded to the premiere.

I have included a list of questions below this email. I do not presume to ask you to answer a long list of questions, but rather I am including these to show you what I am curious about. Obviously, any impressions from a renowned figure like yourself would be extremely valuable to this project, even if I did not think to specifically ask about them.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude for your role in helping to welcome the Marine Band to Japan. I performed in the clarinet section on that trip, and the experience is something that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I hope this email finds you in good health, and thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,  
Luci Disano

#### Questions

1. How was the piece received by the audience? I will always remember the enthusiasm and kindness of the audiences at our Japanese performances, but I wonder how this piece was received in the context of Japanese wind music. Do you think the audience found it accessible? Unusual or different? Were they moved by the performance? Were conductors excited to play it with their wind ensembles?
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3. In my research, I have discovered that the two movements of this piece are inspired by two Frank Lloyd Wright buildings, and that many of Wright's designs were inspired by Japanese art and architecture. Do you think this connection was meaningful to the Japanese audience? Did you notice anything in the music, perhaps structurally or harmonically, that might have been inspired by Japanese music? (I have not had a chance to ask the composer whether he may have done this, but I am curious whether ears attuned to the conventions of the Japanese repertoire may have noticed something that my American ears could not.)
4. What was your personal impression of the piece as both a conductor and a composer?

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**Usonian Dwellings Dissertation Project**

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To: Luci Disano &lt;lucidisano@gmail.com&gt;

Tue, Feb 2, 2021 at 1:52 AM

Dear Luci; I just came back home late evening on Sunday 31, but sad news was waiting. Because Sony Concert Band Manager who worked for me over 20years fine Tuba player passed away on January 29 by cancer and I spent all day on Monday to visit his home to Yokohama City. And now I can sit on my desk today. Please find my thought as follows which will be only as at random.

1, Name of Architect, Frank Lloyd Wright was respected by only old Japanese people who built Imperial Hotel in central part of Tokyo near Emperor Palace. However young Japanese knows his name very few.

At the Concert in Hamamatu, , there were very few people knows his name but other were not thinking “ Usonian Dwellings “ has composed related to Architect who left big influence in Japan. If they all new this situation , may be their manner was be different.

2, Regarding music itself;

II Taliesin: Only played by percussion at introduction,, if Japanese know background of music, they felt Japanese test or feeling by this section.

Main body section is also we can feel Japanese taste or feeling, too.

Slow part at final section will be little bit different feeling and may be difficult to perform. Because sound by each parts were complicated.

In total , I think Japanese conductor and performers will love to perform this movement. May be it will be possible that best HS Band will be able to try to

perform. I think this movement will be acceptable for Japanese both audiences and band.

III This movement will be something difficult to accept and perform for Japanese because music was more complicated in style and structure including Harp solo, difficult Horn solo and many W.W. solo parts etc. May be I need to look over full score, if possible. Music was not much to activity and more philosophical.

I only have very short observation which will not be enough for you without scores.

I will try to ask Mr. Yasuhide Ito, fine composer who were at the Hamamatu concert and I hope he will have more correct judgment for you.

I only had time to write something like this. I hope Composer Mr. Gilbertson felt some feeling by audiences reaction at the concert.

Please send my congratulation to Composer Mr. Gilbertson for World Premiere in Japan and successful in the USA this music now.

Toshio AKIYAMA

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