



# The structural fragmentation in Zwilich's *Millennium Fantasy*

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## Abstract

This study explores Zwilich's *Millennium Fantasy* (2000), which not only exemplifies the nature of Zwilich's personal creativity, but also reveals different musical influences on the composer. In her music Zwilich employs a variety of techniques to promote different playful impressions and surprises. The continuous playing of tricks on listeners throughout the two movements is one of the musical characters of the piece. In most cases, the sense of fragmentation created in the composition also results from Zwilich's playful musical construction. In addition, jazz, popular and traditional idioms are nicely and evenly treated in the composition; the composition is not confined to one musical style. This piece might serve as a model of the perfect balance which Zwilich strikes between traditional and popular styles.

## Keywords

20<sup>th</sup> century – American music – woman composer – contemporary music – musical analysis – musical style.

## Resumo

Este estudo aborda a *Fantasia Milênio* (2000), de Zwilich, obra que exemplifica a natureza da criatividade pessoal da compositora e revela diversas influências musicais. Na sua música Zwilich emprega uma variedade de técnicas para promover diferentes impressões lúdicas e surpresas. O jogo contínuo de truques sobre ouvintes ao longo dos dois movimentos é uma das características da peça musical. Na maioria dos casos, o sentido de fragmentação criado na composição também resulta da construção de musical lúdica de Zwilich. Além disso, o jazz, idiomas populares e tradicionais são tratados com destreza na composição, que não se confina em um estilo musical. Essa peça pode servir como um modelo do equilíbrio com que Zwilich maneja estilos tradicionais e populares.

## Palavras-chave

Século XX – música americana – compositoras – música contemporânea – análise musical – estilo musical

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (Miami, Florida, 30 April 1939 –) is perhaps best known for her Pulitzer Prize of 1983 for *Symphony No. 1* (1982), and also for her *Concerto Grosso* (1985), a piece that draws from the materials and structures of the past. Since the 1980s she has generated a reputation both in the United States and Europe. Today her compositions enjoy worldwide recognition. She has continuously received commission works from different organizations and much of her music has been re-

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corded. Indeed, beginning in the 1980s, Zwilich has produced a substantial body of work that demonstrates her originality. She has the ability to engage the listener in what she is doing and saying. Her music never lacks character and individuality. Zwilich has certainly made significant contributions to the development of American music.

This study, therefore, explores Zwilich's *Millennium Fantasy* (2000), which not only exemplifies the nature of Zwilich's personal creativity, but also reveals different musical influences on the composer. The composition was commissioned by a pianist, Jeffery Biegel, and a consortium of 27 orchestras, and was premiered on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September, 2000 by Biegel and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under Jesús López-Cobos. What is offered here in the *Millennium Fantasy* is what Zwilich left behind in her previous compositional styles that uses Bartók and Shostakovich-like musical idioms in favor of folk-like, jazz, popular and "classical" styles that provide a sense of freshness. Biegel describes the *Millennium Fantasy* as "classical-romantic in feeling" coupled with a "jazzy side" (Millennium Consortium, Sep. 1, 2000). The composition has been honorably grouped together with the music of Aaron Copland, Morton Gould and William Schumann.

The primary purpose of this paper is to examine some musical treatments and ideas that particularly appeal to Zwilich in her music. This includes a variety of her playful idioms that create humor and jokes in the composition. That is, the created musical events are different from one's expectations. Her playfulness in the music can certainly compare to that of Haydn. The manner of constructing certain musical events in Haydn's works often lay both inside and outside the framework of typical tradition and expectations. In most cases, the sense of fragmentation created in the *Millennium Fantasy* also results from Zwilich's playful musical construction. Thus, I shall also explore how the playful techniques shape the structure of the music in the composition, and examine how old/traditional ideas are incorporated into a new context.

The significance of the composition also lies in Zwilich's strategies in manipulating musical texture. She explores different combinations of musical styles and characters in the piece. Throughout the composition the music alludes to the style of jazz and popular music. At times, one is reminded of minimalist repetitive gesture. The music is written in a way that it gives a sense of past and present coming into one complete whole. To some extent, contrast of texture and timbre also shape the structure of the music. In this composition a folk theme is employed to serve as a nucleus for the music. Despite different musical styles found in the composition, the music is closely connected through thematic and motivic development.

On the other hand, to some extent, Zwilich also demonstrates that cohesion in music is not necessarily based on the use of themes and motive. Continuously em-



playing a particular musical mode of behavior and character in the composition is essential as well. Thus the creativity in the music is certainly evident.

Zwilich's music never goes against the conventional notions of contemporary music. In fact, she tries to discover new ways of treating them. Much of her music has been associated with the musical styles of Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Bartók. These composers' music has not only influenced many other composers in the twentieth century, but their compositions are also listed as standard music repertoire for both performances and academic study. Most listeners surely know about or have heard their music. For example, Zwilich herself also played Bartók's string quartets when she was in college. Not surprisingly, then, the listener is familiar with her music through her employment of past musical styles and sonic experiences. As a result, she consistently receives praise for her ability to compose music of high quality that has an immediate appeal to audiences.

Zdenek Macal, who conducted several of Zwilich's music compositions such as her Triple Concerto (1995), Third Symphony (1992) and *Celebration for Orchestra* (1984), asserts that "Ms. Zwilich always has new ideas or combinations. It's oriented on 20th-century development of music – Shostakovich and Prokofiev. She paints..." (apud Kandell, Mar. 10, 1996). In a music review, Rhian Samuel writes that

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's swift rise to popularity, with a host of American commissions following her 1983 Pulitzer Prize, provides a significant comment on the direction of American symphonic music, for she relies heavily on the language and gestures of neo-Classicism, exploiting the orchestra traditionally with the exception, perhaps, of instrumental range. (Samuel, 1989, p. 311)

Indeed, much of Zwilich's music is perceived as "tonal" and "neo-Classicism." On the other hand, Zwilich's compositional output also demonstrates a wide range of musical styles; she is always searching for new ideas in her compositions. Zwilich once commented that

people try to decide what I'm supposed to do. It's hard enough for me. I don't want them to decide what I should be doing... There were people from each of those places [classical or jazz realms] who kind of looked askance at the other side. But that didn't make any sense to me; I wanted everything. (Oteri, Jun. 1, 2011)

What Zwilich is trying to do, as she says, "is to do something a little different with each piece so you have continuity with your own past and with music's past



while also taking off on a slightly new direction each time” (DeLorenzo and Zwilich, 1992, p. 47).

Since the last decade many of her compositions reveal Zwilich's penchant for American vernacular music. Examples can be seen in her *Clarinet Concerto* for Solo Clarinet and Large Chamber Ensemble or Orchestra (2002) and her Quintet for violin, viola, cello, contrabass and piano (2010). In the *Millennium Fantasy*, the music also never fails to keep the expressiveness of the folk theme. At the same time, she remarkably fuses 20<sup>th</sup> century musical idioms, including jazz and pop, in the composition. Zwilich seems to have opened a way to renew the melody and provide a new context for it. This is unlike her other orchestral compositions written in the 1980s and '90s such as *Concerto for Trumpet and Five Players* (1984), *Concerto for piano and orchestra* (1986), *Symbolon for orchestra* (1988), *Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra* (1992), *Triple Concerto for violin, violoncello, piano, and orchestra* (1995), in which the music demonstrates a strong neo-classicism, a Bartokian and Shostakovich-like musical language with only slight traces of jazz elements. I shall now turn to the discussion of her *Millennium Fantasy*.

The music of *Millennium Fantasy* is based on an American spiritual/folk song, “I am a Poor Wayfaring Stranger,” that Zwilich's grandmother would sing to her as a child. “I can still remember her voice when I remember this, so it was a special pleasure to create a musical fantasy based on it,” said Zwilich (apud Naxos 8.559656). She also calls this piece as a “reflection” of the turn of the last century (Gelfand, Sep. 24, 2000). The composition has been well received since its premiere. The folk song also has been used by other composers such as Ernó Dohnányi in his *American Rhapsody* (1953) and George Crumb's *Unto the Hills* (2001) and in motion pictures such as *Cold Mountain* (2003) and *Romeos* (2011).

*Millennium Fantasy* is divided into two movements of unequal length, with the second movement longer than the first. Since it is a piece for piano and orchestra, Zwilich inserts a written-out cadenza-like passage for piano towards the end of the second movement, modeling the classical tradition of instrumental concertos. However, the theme is first introduced in flute, instead of the piano. Throughout the composition, the lyrical folk theme is most apparent at the opening and ending of the first movement and at the ending of the second movement. Like many concertos and orchestral pieces, Zwilich carefully creates a dialogue between piano and orchestra. The interplay of material and ideas are thrown from one instrument to the next to create musical flow. However, there are moments when contrasting moods are created in the music. For example, the peaceful mood in the folk theme in flute sings against the jazz and pop-like style of the piano. Nevertheless, the continuity among movements is evident; musical ideas are drawn from the folk theme and the music is connected through her use of motives and theme.



The piece begins with a most common element of Zwilich's musical style, that is, a long sustained note presented in crescendo, before introducing the folk song beginning at measure 8 in flute. Such a musical characteristic can be found in many of her compositions in the 1980s, for example, *Symbolo* (1988), Piano Trio (1987), Concerto for Trumpet and Five Players (1984) and Double Quartet for Strings (1984).

Unlike many modernist compositional writings where quoted folk themes and melodies tend to be brutally fragmented, deconstructed and transformed, here, the theme and melodic motives used in the music are straightforward and easy to detect. They are presented in rhythmic augmentation and diminution, different transpositions, fragmentation and occasionally with a slight change of intervals in the theme. Her willingness to communicate with the audience is evident. Generally, a three-note motive (eg. F#4-F#4-C#5 at measure 55 in the violins, based on the octave range where middle C is C4) taken from the melodic gesture of the opening theme is extensively used throughout the music. In addition, it is not difficult to notice that the music tends to emphasize at interval thirds, especially descending thirds. The interval is derived from the folk melody which is constructed basically in stepwise motions and with a few leaps in fifths and thirds.

Both theme and motive are also used as building materials to expand new musical ideas. For example, at measure 156 in the second movement in flute, the second half of the folk theme becomes a solo melodic line in a new form with altering pitches, intervals and new material added to it. Nevertheless, all these musical treatments are something to which ears are accustomed. Perhaps this is one reason why Zwilich's music is approachable. As she once pointed out, "the whole history of music, of all different kinds of music, shows that music is meant to be heard, it's meant to touch people" (apud Costa, Apr. 23, 2009).

In addition, the composition illustrates moments of repeated notes in small groups. The reiterated groups of notes are written in such a way that they remind one of minimalist repetition, though not without energy and vitality. The notion of classic minimalism is often explained as a repetitive element with only a slight change of rhythm and pitch. The music generally lacks rhythmic impetus and a goal-directed motion. The incorporation of "minimalist" repetitive texture in the *Millennium Fantasy* is not surprising, for Zwilich tends to incorporate diverse elements and styles of music of the past into her work, and at the same time uses elements of the musical language of her own time. Zwilich once remarked: "I want my music to integrate all of my past, all of my influences. I want people to hear where I came from, what was in my surroundings" (Dreier, Sep. 1983). Indeed, she has strong personal reactions toward the very wide range of music she has heard. Zwilich also claims that: "I consider myself an individual. I feel free to use whatever sources appeal to me: Balinese, 19th-Century, even the so-called avant-garde. Writing music



is a constant discovery process. I try to let the music take me someplace I've never been" (Shulgold, Oct. 6, 1985). To Zwilich, her music emphasizes musical values of "inspiration." She is committed to the belief that "inspiration engenders product, which, in turn, engenders more inspiration..." (Page, Jul. 14, 1985, p. 29).

Here, the "minimalist" texture that uses elements and ideas derived from the theme is presented in fragmentations. Zwilich employs it for several functions. For example, in the second movement, beginning at measure 44, a small group of the same pitches in a rhythmic pattern are repeated obsessively for a short period of time in horn to accompany the folk melody that occurs in trumpet. There are also moments where Zwilich creates a sense of textural layering through a minimalist technique. For instance, beginning at measure 116 in the second movement, the folk theme is fragmented into smaller units of pitches scattered among different instruments in a continuous, repeating manner, creating a sense of layering. The texture makes an obvious contrast with the previous event, and to some extent, it creates a sense of interruption. Despite her use of "minimalist" technique, the music never stays in stasis; rather, it gives a sense of forward-looking. Such musical handlings are not new in Zwilich's music; suffice to mention her *Double Quartet for Strings*. In that piece each "minimalist" texture varies according to different musical ideas. This in turn creates a sense of moment-by-moment, or fragmentation, while the music nevertheless progresses.

The approachability of Zwilich's music also lies on the fact that her music is "tonal" in a non-traditional sense. The folk theme could be in the key of either D dorian (with B-flat as a passing tone) or D minor with flattened seventh note (subtonic). Throughout the composition, D is served as the tonal pitch center. The pitch is used not only to introduce the first complete appearance of the folk theme and its subsequent reappearances, but is also employed to emphasize both the beginning and ending of the piece and important sections. Although the music may have a tonal center, generally, traditional functional harmony is absent. Chords with added notes, cluster tones and constant change of meter are frequently used. Her musical language is 20<sup>th</sup> century. As John von Rhein writes, Zwilich's "music has been identified with the 19<sup>th</sup> Century romantic tradition, but, in fact, its melodic and tonal orientation is informed by a broad range of influences that could have been born only in this century" (Rhein, Apr. 28, 1991).

Rhythmic vitality is also exhibited in this composition. Stresses on weak beats, off-beat rhythmic patterns and syncopations are commonly employed in the music. Indeed, there are moments when the music sounds jazzy. Jazz sound colors are usually produced by such as hi-hat, cup mutes, medium suspended cymbal sticks around rim, sizzle cymbal, pedal bass drum and others. Placing a somewhat slow-moving, peaceful mood, folk melody in a rhythmic vitality context certainly creates



a unique sense of combination; nevertheless, they blend well into one another. Indeed, her penchant for popular idioms is evident. Zwilich's jazz experience comes from her playing trumpet in a jazz band while studying at Florida State University. In an interview with Frank J. Oteri, Zwilich recalls that "we had a jam session every Sunday. And there were some really, really knowledgeable people and good jazz players" (Oteri, Jun. 1, 2011).

Evidence of Zwilich's pleasure in exploring new creative compositional writings is witnessed in this composition, as well. Her approach to the ending of the first movement reminds one of Haydn's playfulness in his music. According to Wheelock, a playful impulse could create different accomplishments in musical events:

A jest in music challenges the listener not simply as a local event but also in its influence on subsequent events and on the interpretation of prior events...a jest is not different from some other surprising disturbance that commands the listener's attention. The difference emerges...in a self consciousness of play with alternatives – with ambiguity, seeming contradictions, discontinuities, delays, and the like – that a jest invites in rehearsing the composer's own play with the materials of his art. (Wheelock, 1992, p. 6)

Nevertheless, the creation of playfulness and humour in music is not merely limited to the irregular handling of the principle structure and harmonic progression; it can be accomplished through a particular application of musical gesture, rhythmic patterns, dynamic levels and other musical characters. In other words, a play is created when an event differs from and is contrary to the understandable local syntax, habits of listening, or the public familiarity of characteristics, objects and patterns of style. Indeed, the techniques that show playfulness in music are successfully demonstrated in Haydn's music. Charles Rosen once wrote that the comic becomes "not only the characteristic mood of a work but often, particularly with Haydn, an essential technique" (Rosen, 1997, p. 97). Karl Ludwig Junker claimed that the music of Haydn contains humor: "Can anyone tell me one single work of Haydn in which humor would not always be a marked trait? One will find none" (apud Wheelock, 1992, p. 46).

What is interesting here in the *Millennium Fantasy* is that Zwilich creates a sense of ambiguity. The composer carefully prepares the ending by gradual moves back to its tonal pitch center D with less musical activity, thin texture and long sustaining notes beginning at measure 262, and so one would assume that the music is coming to a closure with most probably a fading ending. However, when the moment finally arrives at measure 288, and where a halt is inserted, Zwilich makes a twist, and



turns the music into a comic effect. The repeated D is then restated before preparing for a second *real* ending at measure 294 (Example 1). The fact is that the ear and mind had already become so accustomed to the traditional music structure, and had learned to make a semi-identification of the structural frame of a musical form. Thus, such musical handling, as Zwilich does, takes one by surprise. A similar type of playful impulse can also be found in her earlier work, *Double Quartet for Strings*. Such musical humor also brings to mind Haydn's music, notably his *String Quartet No. 2, op 33* ('The Joke').

That playful impulse occurs in music is not new. The manner of using amusement elements and characters can be traced back to the works of composers and artists from the 18<sup>th</sup> century arts. The Enlightenment ideal of that time found in arts a force for improving the human condition; artists should enlighten their audience through creative activity, invention and imagination. Suffice to mention not only the music of Haydn (1732-1809), as already noted, but also some paintings of Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806). Scholars such as J. Huizinga, Claudia Maurer Zenck, Mark Evan Bonds and Paul Cobley suggest that, at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century "humour became a frequent topic of discussion in European musical circles" (Cobley, 2008, p. 20; see also Bonds, 2008, p. 35, and Zenck, 2008, p. 55). In his *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, J. Huizinga discusses the significance of play in regard to different realms such as philosophy, language, art, and cultural aspects. He points out that the 18<sup>th</sup> century was "an age full of play-elements and playfulness" (Huizinga, 1949, p. 173), and further questions that, "in the very idea of 'style' in art, is there not a tacit admission of a certain play-element? Is not the birth of a style itself a playing of the mind in its search for new forms?" (Huizinga, 1949, p. 186). Indeed, this was the period during which artists placed the highest possible emphasis on one aspect of moral ideas that included pleasing and teaching their audience and readers.

In *Millennium Fantasy* Zwilich carefully organizes another humorous musical handling at the second movement at measure 153 where the music projects a sense of ending, but a long pause is employed. Fermatas and grand pauses are also a frequent means by which Haydn dramatized his music.

Again, like the previous ending in the first movement of Zwilich's *Millennium Fantasy*, listeners would assume that the music is coming to an end (Example 2). What is intriguing here is that the passage occurs in the middle of the second movement, long before it reaches the real conclusion of the piece. Indeed, it is a musical event that was ambiguous and contradictory to the traditional syntax and expectations associated with the conventions. After a long halt (about eight measures) the music starts again and introduces a new melody at measure 156 in the flute. It is as if the music suggests a new beginning after the long pause; there





Example 1



The image displays a page of a musical score for an orchestra. The score is arranged in systems, with each system containing staves for different instruments. The instruments listed are Piccolo, Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), English Horn (Eng. Hn.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Contrabassoon (Cbsn.), Horn (Ha.), Trumpet (Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Piano (Pno.), Violin I (Vin. I), Violin II (Vin. II), Viola (Via.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.).

Key features of the score include:

- Dynamic markings:** *ff* (fortissimo), *mp* (mezzo-piano), *sfz* (sforzando), and *p* (piano).
- Performance instructions:** *molto lunga* (very long) is written above several staves, indicating sustained notes. *div. con sord.* (divisi con sordina) is written above the Violin I and II staves.
- Rehearsal mark:** A box containing the number '15' is placed above the Piccolo staff.
- Percussion details:** The Percussion staff includes instructions like *sm. susp. cymb. : b.d.*, *f*, *l.v.*, and *sizzle cymb. sempre l.v.*.
- Piano part:** The Piano part shows a transition from *mp* to *sfz* and includes a *sc. j.* (scordatura) instruction.



is nothing that prepares the listener for the next musical event that follows. Indeed, the use of jokes is a common musical character and behavior in the composition. Zwilich's continuing playing of jokes in the music leads to listeners beginning to adapt and wonder when will be another occurrence of a humorous joke as the music progresses. The effect is parallel to one wondering when the next reoccurrence of a theme will eventuate in a piece of music.

Such a structural arrangement in the second movement can also be seen as a "sonata" form in a not-so conventional sense: 1-153 as an exposition, and 154-281 as a development (a cadenza-like passage from measures 216-279), with a recapitulation beginning at measure 282-357 where the melody returns in the flute and oboe. As in traditional compositions, the theme and motives here exist to serve the structure of the music. Within measures 154 and 281, Zwilich introduces the folk melody in a series of variations and fragmentations.

Nevertheless, like many unconventional compositions, structural ambiguity here also appears at the beginning of the second movement where there is nothing indicative that marks the beginning of the composition nor a sense of opening. The music begins with hectic exuberance in manner; it creates an effect that the piece has already been in progress sometime before the listener arrives. Such an opening reminds one of the music of modernists such as Stockhausen and his moment form. The structure is primarily an "individual event" and "moment-to-moment" continuity (Griffith, 1995, p. 207). Generally, in moment form structure there is no logic to the overall form nor sense of direction at every moment of the music; the music is written in such a way that it does not have a recognizable beginning.

Surprisingly, one would expect another joke at the conclusion of the second movement, as Zwilich presented in the previous movement, waiting and wondering when will be the true ending of the piece. However, this time Zwilich gives only one time ending; no joke is attached to it. Indeed, the false impressions she gave in the music previously – here I am referring to the unexpected repeat at the end of the first movement and the sudden ending in the middle of the second movement – makes one believe that there would be another joke before the real ending of the entire composition. Zwilich certainly has the ability to play jokes with her listeners.

Apart from the musical humor that occurs in the composition, there are moments when the music provides a sense of fragmentation. The flow of the music is often cut off by a sudden change of textures and musical ideas. There are also times when the music gradually builds up the intensity to reach a point where one would expect a climax, but that never happens. An example can be seen at measure 22 in the second movement where the musical tension is building up gradually through an increase of dynamics and a full texture, then the orchestra is abruptly cut off and



The musical score for Example 3 is arranged in a standard orchestral format. It includes parts for the following instruments: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), English Horn (Eng. Hn.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Contrabassoon (Cbsn.), Horn (Hn.), Trumpet (Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Piano (Pno.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 4, and the second system covers measures 5 through 8. Key performance markings include dynamics such as *p sub.*, *cresc. poco a poco*, *f*, *mf*, and *ff*. Specific instructions like *(a2)*, *2*, and *div.* are present. The piano part is particularly detailed, showing complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and sixteenth notes.



replaced by the piano part, in triplets, in a descending motion at measure 23 (Example 3). Similar treatments are also found at places such as measures 29 and 30, and 80 and 81 in the second movement.

Zwilich's approach to fragmentation in the music can be found in her other compositions. For example, in her Double Quartet for Strings, Zwilich tends to juxtapose both traditional and contemporary musical styles. In this piece, the imitative texture that reflects familiarity with a counterpoint musical style is preceded by minimalist static musical texture, showing the composer's eclectic taste in styles.

To some extent, the somewhat psychedelic piano cadenza-like passage here can be comparable to John Adams' *Century Rolls* (1996), a piece that not only captures the vitality as in Conlon Nancarrow's Studies for player piano, but also demonstrates the possibilities afforded by the minimalist musical process and combines it with popular vocabulary and traditional European art. The cadenza in the *Millennium Fantasy* is technically demanding and idiomatic for the keyboard. This passage gathers almost all the piano events and materials that are scattered in the first movement. Similarly, the music also shows somewhat repetitive mechanistic characters and exciting pulses of rhythms in fast pace. It is certainly a challenging piece for the pianist; it makes great demands, especially on the player's agility, and accuracy.

In her music Zwilich employs a variety of techniques to promote different playful impressions and surprises. The unexpected that take one by surprise constantly intrude into the composition. Yet, there is nothing uncompromising in her music. Jazz, popular and traditional idioms are nicely and evenly treated in the composition; the composition is not confined to one musical style. Not only does her music display a synthesis of styles and ideas from the past and present, which creates her musical identity, but also it is from such a synthesis that Zwilich creates musical familiarity in hearing. Indeed, there is no "avant-garde" musical idioms used in the composition. This is only because Zwilich is aware of and keenly in communication with her listeners. It is thus not surprising that her music is perceived as "accessible" and "approachable."

Indeed, Zwilich has created a musical syntax as rich in expressive as in musical style, diversity and ideas. Her music certainly demonstrates a variety of expression. There is, for example, the expressive but peaceful folk theme, and the energetic and lively pop and jazz rhythms, and yet also the repetitive "minimalist" texture. In the composition she is trying to discover new ways of treating the musical past and present, and the music with which she is familiar. She tends to create music that players find challenging to perform and audiences find stimulating to hear. Despite the fragmentation in texture, the playful techniques certainly play a trick on the listener, showing her creativity in the music. Zwilich's music certainly has her stamp



of originality and character, which simply do not conform to the expectations that have been related to the musical styles of Bartók, Shostakovich or Prokofiev. Indeed, this piece might serve as a model of the perfect balance that Zwilich strikes between traditional and popular styles.

Musically, unity is achieved in a way such that the theme never undergoes extensive development that leads to an unrecognizable new form. The motives and other musical materials such as interval thirds can be traced directly back to the folk theme. In addition, the continuous playing of tricks on listeners throughout the two movements is one of the musical characters of the piece.

In general, tonality is present only in the form of the folk theme. Although traditional harmonic progression is absent, the music sounds tonal and approachable; Zwilich employs D as tonal center in the music. Her use of a cadenza-like passage and the “sonata” form in the music reveals clear sources from the classical period. Indeed, Zwilich has incorporated tradition into her own contemporary idiom with exceptional imaginative power.

To some extent, her playfulness creates fragmentations and unpredictable musical direction. An abrupt change of texture and sudden cut-off of tension towards the climax in the music also provide a sense of fragmentation. Throughout the composition Zwilich has successfully drawn on past musical ideas and applied them to the music world of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Her compositional ideas are distinctive. By incorporating a wide disparity of styles in her composition, Zwilich gives the theme and the music a fresh way of presentation.



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