Large-Scale Strategy and Compositional Design in the Early Music of Genesis

MARK SPICER

The title of this chapter might remind some readers of an article by Andrew Mead that appeared in Perspectives of New Music more than two decades ago (Mead 1985), in which the author used sophisticated set-theoretic analytical techniques to dig beneath the surface of Arnold Schoenberg’s music, disclosing a “large-scale strategy” at work within several of the twelve-tone compositions. Mead had the advantage of writing for a scholarly community already well convinced of Schoenberg’s genius. I suspect the idea of placing the music of the British rock group Genesis in the same league as Schoenberg would be greeted with considerable skepticism—if not downright horror—by many musicologists, and this is certainly not my intent in the present essay. (Alas, it will probably require some drastic revolutions in taste before such early-Genesis classics as “The Return of the Giant Hogweed” are admitted into the canon of twentieth-century masterworks.) But I do hope to show that despite being several musical worlds removed from Schoenberg, Genesis’ music is rich, diverse, and equally worthy of our analytical attention.

One of the most influential and long-lasting of the so-called “progressive rock” bands that emerged in Britain around 1970 in the wake of the Beatles, Genesis is probably better known to most pop-rock fans as the supergroup who made frequent appearances on the Billboard charts during the 1980s and early 1990s, with a string of consecutive Top-Five singles in 1986–1987 including “Invisible Touch” (which reached number 1), “Throwing it All Away,” “Land of Confusion,” “Tonight, Tonight, Tonight,” and “In Too Deep.” Yet before they were to master the art of composing the four-minute pop song, the early Genesis—along with Yes; King Crimson; Emerson, Lake & Palmer; Jethro Tull; and other compatriots in British prog—were famous for crafting rock pieces of much greater scope and complexity, compositions in which the multiple shifts of texture, affect, and tonality echo those typically found in a nineteenth-century symphonic poem. Most progressive rock was not intended to be immediately catchy or danceable (or even commercially successful, though legions of fans ultimately proved otherwise); on the contrary, prog was “serious” music intended for serious listeners. Indeed, as John Covach (1997, 4)
has noted, “there was the perception [among progressive rock fans] that these musicians were attempting to shape a new kind of classical music—a body of music that would . . . be listened to (and perhaps even studied) . . . for years to come.”

The “serious” study of progressive rock offers at the very least a twofold challenge to the analyst. On the one hand, these big pieces share with their classical counterparts a concern for long-range coherence—both thematic and harmonic—and therefore lend themselves well to a formalist approach. With a little bending of our traditional analytical tools, we can probe the “music itself” for motivic connections and harmonic relationships, both on the surface and at deeper levels of the musical structure—much as we might, say, a symphonic piece by Liszt or Mahler. On the other hand, formalist analysis alone does not adequately address the issue of stylistic eclecticism in progressive rock, an issue that so often plays a crucial role in the composition of its large-scale pieces. To understand better why progressive rock is shaped as it is we must also approach the music from an intertextual standpoint, looking beyond the individual pieces themselves to the multiple musical traditions from which they spring and to the specific other works with which they may be in dialogue. I will attempt to reconcile these two analytical approaches—formalist and intertextual—in this study of Genesis’ early music.

Table 12.1 shows a chronology of Genesis albums released through 1975, when frontman and founding member Peter Gabriel left the group to embark on what has become a highly successful solo career of his own. The majority of my analysis in this chapter will focus on the 1972 track that Genesis aficionados often tout as the group’s masterpiece: the 23-minute epic “Supper’s Ready” from the album *Foxtrot*. This album (and the European tour that supported it) represented a major turning point in Genesis’ career, as Gabriel’s penchant for mime and onstage theatrics—complete with elaborate changes of costume to parallel the narrative of the songs—began to give their concerts a distinctive style that set them apart from other progressive rock groups. The cover of *Genesis Live* (recorded in February 1973, during the *Foxtrot* tour) offers us a glimpse of Genesis performing “Supper’s Ready” during this remarkable period. Gabriel stands center-stage decked out in one of his many costumes (that of “Magog”), while the remaining band members—guitarist Steve Hackett, bassist Mike Rutherford, drummer Phil Collins, and keyboardist Tony Banks—are removed from the spotlight, seemingly absorbed in their role of providing a musical accompaniment to Gabriel’s one-man opera. (Hackett and Rutherford are both seen performing sitting down, in a manner more characteristic of classical than rock guitarists.)

Although their frontman’s new-found flamboyance was undoubtedly a key factor in Genesis’ sudden rise to stardom, Peter Gabriel—looking back on this period—has insisted that “whatever else was going on in the visual department, our central interest was always . . . the writing, the composition of the music.”
He goes on to confirm that “‘Supper’s Ready’... was extremely important for the band, ... a sort of centerpiece for our ambitions in terms of writing, and [our] most adventurous piece to date.”7 Cast almost entirely in the first person, the seven interconnected tableaux of “Supper’s Ready” (see Figure 12.1) chronicle a young Englishman’s twisted vision of the apocalypse: the classic conflict of good against evil as seen through a decidedly British lens.8 Interspersed within the lyrics in Figure 12.1 are program notes (in square brackets) written by Gabriel himself as an aid to understanding the story, taken from a handbill customarily distributed to audience members at Genesis concerts (1972–1973). Gabriel’s intentions here were perhaps merely practical rather than historical, yet one cannot ignore the strong echoes of nineteenth-century program music. One is reminded, for example, of the program written by Berlioz to be distributed at performances of his *Fantastic Symphony* (1830).9

### Table 12.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Album Title</th>
<th>Year Released</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>From Genesis to Revelation</em></td>
<td>March 1969 [1974]</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Trespass</em></td>
<td>October 1970</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Nursery Cryme</em></td>
<td>November 1971</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Foxtrot</em></td>
<td>October 1972</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Genesis Live</em></td>
<td>June 1973 [1974]</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Selling England By the Pound</em></td>
<td>October 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway</em></td>
<td>November 1974</td>
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I. "Lover’s Leap"

[In which two lovers are lost in each other’s eyes, and found again transformed in the bodies of another male and female.]

Walking across the sitting room, I turn the television off.

Sitting beside you, I look into your eyes.

As the sound of motor cars fades in the night time,

I swear I saw your face change, it didn’t seem quite right.

... And it’s hello babe, with your guardian eyes so blue,

Hey my baby, don’t you know our love is true?

Coming closer with our eyes, a distance falls around our bodies.

Out in the garden, the moon seems very bright.
Six saintly shrouded men move across the lawn slowly,
The seventh walks in front with a cross held high in hand.
… And it’s hey babe, your supper’s waiting for you,
Hey my baby, don’t you know our love is true?

I’ve been so far from here,
Far from your warm arms.
It’s good to feel you again.
It’s been a long time. Hasn’t it?

II. “The Guaranteed Eternal Sanctuary Man”
[The lovers come across a town dominated by two characters: one a benevolent farmer and the other a head of a highly disciplined scientific religion. The latter likes to be known as “The Guaranteed Eternal Sanctuary Man” and claims to contain a secret new ingredient capable of fighting fire. This is a falsehood, an untruth, a whopper and a taradiddle; or to put it in clearer terms, a lie.]

I know a farmer who looks after the farm,
With water clear, he cares for all his harvest.
I know a fireman who looks after the fire.

You, can’t you see he’s fooled you all?
Yes, he’s here again, can’t you see he’s fooled you all?
    Share his peace,
    Sign the lease.
He’s a supersonic scientist,
He’s the Guaranteed Eternal Sanctuary Man.
Look, look into my mouth he cries.
And all the children lost down many paths,
I bet my life, you’ll walk inside
Hand in hand,
gland in gland,
With a spoonful of miracle,
He’s the Guaranteed Eternal Sanctuary Man.
    We will rock you, rock you little snake,
    We will keep you snug and warm.

III. “Ikhnaton and Istacon and Their Band of Merry Men”
[Who the lovers see clad in greys and purples, awaiting to be summoned out of the ground. At the G.E.S.M.’s command they put forth from the bowels of the earth, to attack all those without an up-to-date “Eternal Life Licence”, which were obtainable at the head office of the G.E.S.M.’s religion.]
Wearing feelings on our faces while our faces took a rest,  
We walked across the fields to see the children of the West,  
But we saw a host of dark skinned warriors  
standing still below the ground,  
Waiting for battle.  
The fight's begun, they've been released.  
Killing foe for peace . . . bang, bang, bang . . . bang, bang, bang . . .  
And they're giving me a wonderful potion,  
'Cos I cannot contain my emotion.  
And even though I'm feeling good,  
Something tells me I'd better activate my prayer capsule.  
Today's a day to celebrate, the foe have met their fate.  
The order for rejoicing and dancing has come from our warlord.

IV. "How Dare I Be So Beautiful?"  
[In which our intrepid heroes investigate the aftermath of the battle and discover a solitary figure, obsessed by his own image. They witness an unusual transmutation, and are pulled into their own reflections in the water.]

Wandering in the chaos the battle has left,  
We climb up the mountain of human flesh  
To a plateau of green grass, and green trees full of life.  
A young figure sits still by her pool,  
He's been stamped "Human Bacon" by some butchery tool.  
(He is you)  
Social Security took care of this lad,  
We watch in reverence as Narcissus is turned into a flower.  
A flower?

V. “Willow Farm”  
[Climbing out of the pool, they are once again in a different existence. They’re right in the middle of a myriad of bright colours, filled with all manner of objects, plants, animals, and humans. Life flows freely and everything is mindlessly busy. At random, a whistle blows and every single thing is instantly changed into another.]

If you go down to Willow Farm,  
to look for butterlies, flutterbies, gutterflies  
Open your eyes, it’s full of surprise, everyone lies,  
like the focks [sic] on the rocks,  
and the musical box.

Figure 12.1 (Continued)
Oh, there’s Mum & Dad, and good and bad,
and everyone’s happy to be here.

There’s Winston Churchill dressed in drag,
He used to be a British flag, plastic bag. What a drag.
The frog was a prince, the prince was a brick, the brick was an egg,
and the egg was a bird.
  Hadn’t you heard?
Yes, we’re happy as fish, and gorgeous as geese,
  and wonderfully clean in the morning.
We’ve got everything, we’re growing everything,
  We’ve got some in,
  We’ve got some out,
We’ve got some wild things floating about. …
Everyone, we’re changing everyone,
  You name them all,
  We’ve had them here,
And the real stars are still to appear.

ALL CHANGE!
Feel your body melt:
Mum to mud to mad to dad
Dad diddley office, Dad diddley office,
  You’re all full of ball.
Dad to dam to dum to mum
Mum diddley washing, Mum diddley washing,
  You’re all full of ball.
Let me hear your lies, we’re living this up to our eyes.
Oooe-ooee-ooee-oowaa
Momma I want you now.

And as you listen to my voice
To look for hidden doors, tidy floors, more applause.
You’ve been here all the time,
Like it or not, like what you got,
You’re under the soil,
Yes deep in the soil.
So we’ll end with a whistle and end with a bang
and all of us fit in our places.

Figure 12.1 (Continued)
VI. “Apocalypse in 9/8 (Co-Starring the Delicious Talents of Gabble Ratchet)”

[At one whistle the lovers become seeds in the soil, where they recognise other seeds to be people from the world in which they had originated. While they wait for Spring, they are returned to their old world to see the Apocalypse of St John in full progress. The seven trumpeteers cause a sensation, the fox keeps throwing sixes, and Pythagoras (a Greek extra) is deliriously happy as he manages to put exactly the right amount of milk and honey on his corn flakes.]

With the guards of Magog, swarming around,
The Pied Piper takes his children underground.
The Dragon's coming out of the sea,
With the shimmering silver head of wisdom looking at me.
He brings down the fire from the skies,
You can tell he's doing well by the look in human eyes.
You'd better not compromise.
It won't be easy.

666 is no longer alone,
He's getting out the marrow in your back bone.
And the seven trumpets blowing sweet rock and roll,
Gonna blow right down inside your soul.
Pythagoras with the looking-glass, reflecting the full moon,
In blood, he's writing the lyrics of a brand new tune.

And it's hey babe, with your guardian eyes so blue.
Hey my baby, don't you know our love is true?
I've been so far from here,
Far from your loving arms,
Now I'm back again, and baby it's going to work out fine.

VII. “As Sure as Eggs is Eggs (Aching Men's Feet)”

[Above all else an egg is an egg. "And did those feet …" making ends meet.]

Can't you feel our souls ignite,
Shedding ever changing colours, in the darkness of the fading night?
Like the river joins the ocean, as the germ in a seed grows,
We have finally been freed to get back home.

There's an angel standing in the sun, and he's crying with a loud voice, “This is the supper of the mighty one”.
Lord of Lord's,
King of King's,
Has returned to lead his children home,
To take them to the new Jerusalem.
[Jerusalem=place of peace.]
Before proceeding with my analysis of “Supper’s Ready,” it is necessary to make a few preliminary points about the nature of the musical examples. Genesis—like most rock groups—did not notate any of their compositions, preferring instead to use the recording studio as their canvas. Many rock analysts are content to dispense with written scores altogether, and I certainly agree that some of rock’s most interesting features (timbre, for example) are rendered neutral by conventional notation. Yet it is difficult to discuss other equally important details of this music (harmony, for example) without the aid of some kind of graphic representation. The musical examples in this chapter represent my own transcriptions of passages from the 1972 studio version of “Supper’s Ready,” which I consider the Urtext for this piece. I have rendered some excerpts more or less in full, while others have been condensed or otherwise simplified; I have also limited myself to three staves, so instruments are at times intentionally omitted for the sake of clarity. (Phil Collins’s drums have been given especially short shrift.) My goal has been to reproduce the vocal line as accurately as practical, while condensing other parts into a manageable short score. Measure numbers are provided for ease of reference within an individual tableau. I have used Roman numerals, figured-bass symbols, and (in one instance) pitch-class set names where I felt they were pertinent to my discussion of the harmonic language of a particular section.

The plan for presenting my analysis is this: First, I will examine “Supper’s Ready,” section by section, commenting on surface aspects of the compositional design and suggesting intertextual references to other styles or to specific other works; second, I will briefly consider the large-scale strategy, suggesting ways in which melodic and harmonic ideas introduced during the opening measures of “Supper’s Ready”—in the manner of a Grundgestalt—continue to shape the music of subsequent sections as the piece unfolds.

1. “Lover’s Leap”

Like most of the individual sections of “Supper’s Ready,” “Lover’s Leap” exhibits a self-contained miniature form of its own (see Example 12.1): An eight-bar verse in classical period form—a four-bar antecedent phrase followed by a four-bar modulating consequent—is answered by a four-bar refrain. The piece begins without introduction, the vocal and accompanying instruments all entering together on the downbeat, grabbing the listener’s attention at once. Peter Gabriel’s voice is overdubbed during the verses so as to sound both at pitch and an octave higher; not only is this a neat effect (called the “double voice” by Susan Fast in Chapter 6 of this volume), but it gives the singer’s persona a “split personality” in accordance with the message in the lyrics. Gabriel reveals the autobiographical source of the supernatural events described in the opening tableau, based on an experience with his wife, Jill:
I really felt that I was writing about myself in a lot of ways. The first sequence was about a scene that happened between me and Jill. … It was one night at Jill’s parents house in Kensington, when everyone had gone to bed. … We just stared at each other, and strange things began to happen. We saw other faces in each other, and … I was very frightened, in fact. … The curtain flew open, though there was no wind, and the room became ice cold. And I did feel that I saw figures [on the lawn] outside, figures in white cloaks (Gallo 1980, 49 [emphasis mine]).

Dominating the accompaniment is a continuous sixteenth-note arpeggiated figure played by two acoustic twelve-string guitars (only the lower part is transcribed here), a favorite instrumental texture in early Genesis.14 The “organic” nature of this accompaniment—in which a distinctive shape is established in the first measure and then maintained on a bar-by-bar basis

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as the harmony changes—is reminiscent of classical instrumental writing, recalling in particular the vivid piano accompaniments of many nineteenth-century Lieder.¹⁵

Yet similarities with nineteenth-century compositional practice are not confined to the realm of texture; from a harmonic standpoint, “Lover’s Leap” also features several of the characteristic quirks normally identified with composers of that era. The verse alone, for example, exhibits:

- A beginning reminiscent of Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* cycle in its tonal ambiguity: A short cadential progression (mm. 1–2) in E major is truncated before the arrival of the anticipated tonic in measure 3, instead moving abruptly to the tonal level of the dominant (mm. 3–4).
- Modal mixture: Several sonorities have been “borrowed” from the parallel minor into their respective major keys, including the half-diminished supertonic in measure 1, the minor tonic in measure 3, and the minor subdominant in measure 7.
• A modulation to the distant key of B♭ major (#IV) in measures 6–8, musically portraying the accompanying lyric, “I swear I saw your face change.”

What makes this convincing imitation of nineteenth-century style all the more remarkable is the fact that none of the members of Genesis had ever received any formal training in harmony or voice leading. Like the Beatles before them, Genesis possessed an uncanny natural ability to mimic and assimilate musical styles from outside of the pop-rock domain and transform them into something fresh and unique. We shall encounter further examples of this ability in the later sections of “Supper’s Ready.”

II. “The Guaranteed Eternal Sanctuary Man”

With the onset of the second tableau, we are drawn into a markedly different musical world; its opening is given as Example 12.2. Perhaps the most notable difference in texture between “Sanctuary Man” and the preceding music is the presence of the drums, which up until this point have remained tacet. Now the drums and bass work in tandem to create a driving ostinato that provides the harmonic and rhythmic foundation for the first seven measures. Steve Hackett’s electric guitar (not shown in the example) sidesteps its more usual role of lead instrument in this section and is instead limited to sliding figures that help paint an atmospheric background for Tony Banks’s fanfare-like organ part (notated in simplified form on the middle staff).

In stark contrast to the nineteenth-century harmony of “Lover’s Leap,” the chord vocabulary of “Sanctuary Man” falls squarely in the tradition of post-1960s rock. First and foremost, the harmonic language of this section should be understood as modal rather than tonal in the sense of common-practice function: Despite the key of A major, G♭—the lowered-seventh scale degree—is clearly given primacy over the leading-tone G♯, resulting in a predominantly Mixolydian environment. Notice also that there is no V–I progression to establish A major as the tonal center; in fact, dominant harmony is absent from this section altogether. We must remember that in mode-based rock, root motion by descending fourth often supersedes traditional root motion by descending fifth, yielding more of a contrapuntal than a harmonic value to chord succession and progression. This is especially apparent here in the cadential passage (m. 10), which employs the common Mixolydian progression bVII–IV–I as opposed to a more stereotypically tonal II–V–I.

Two other notable paradigms of rock harmony are featured in “Sanctuary Man.” First, the opening bass ostinato establishes A as the tonal center by virtue of its constant repetition, and creates an extended tonic pedal point for the oscillating progression I–bVII–I. By the late 1970s, textures dominated by pedal points such as this had become a well-worn hallmark of progressive rock
as they had of funk, and were already making frequent appearances in more commercial styles such as stadium rock and synth-pop. Despite the cliché, Genesis remain in my opinion the masters of the “pedal-point groove.” What experienced listener can forget, for example, the giant crescendo that precedes the entrance of the vocal in “Watcher of the Skies” (1972), or the sheer power of the booming bass pedals in “Back in NYC” (1974)?

A second harmonic paradigm appears after the pedal point is broken, with the rising progression II–III–IV (mm. 8–9). Such stepwise passing of root-position chords is infrequent in classical tonality because of the characteristic stability of the perfect consonances measured above the bass; when it does occur there it is usually in limited and isolated contexts, such as in the carefully voice-led deceptive progression V–VI. In rock harmony, on the other hand, it is relatively common to pass by step through root-position chords

The preceding analysis has demonstrated that the first and second tableaux are
markedly different from one another in compositional design, especially from
the standpoint of harmonic procedure. This also holds true when we compare
the third and fourth tableaux, both excerpted in Example 12.3. The majority
of the battle sequence in “Ikhnaton and Istacon” (Example 12.3a; Ikhnaton
was an Egyptian Pharaoh who ruled from 1379 to 1362 B.C.) is accompanied
by what is often described in rock parlance as a “one-chord jam”: in this case,
a single D-major chord reiterated over and over again, with the third above the
bass ornamented by its upper-neighbor fourth every other measure, a highly
idiomatic guitar figure. To compensate for this lack of harmonic motion, the
surface rhythm in the third tableau is very active. A militaristic snare-drum
figure in constant sixteenth notes suggests the chaos of battle, ultimately

Example 12.2 (Continued)

(e.g., the cadential progression ♭VI–♭VII–I, used at the climax of the sixth tab-
leau). Yet what betrays even more clearly this progression’s rock derivation as
opposed to any possible classical origins is its voice leading. As I have shown
in Example 12.2, not only do we have a succession of root-position triads, but
also a succession of exposed parallel fifths. These fifths are not surprising,
since Tony Banks originally came up with the “Sanctuary Man” progression
via barre chords on the guitar (see Gallo 1980, 15–16).

III. “Ikhnaton and Istacon and Their Band of Merry Men”

IV. “How Dare I Be So Beautiful?”

The preceding analysis has demonstrated that the first and second tableaux are

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Large-Scale Strategy and Compositional Design • 325

Example 12.3a (Continued)

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providing the rhythmic platform for a blistering Steve Hackett electric guitar solo (7:23+). This solo represents the only stereotypically "rock-sounding" electric guitar in the entire work.

The character of the fourth tableau could not be more different. For one, the rhythm section—which had been so prominent in "Ikhnaton and Istacon"—is now entirely absent. The accompaniment in "How Dare I Be So Beautiful?" consists solely of a series of rhythmically free sustained piano chords (given in Example 12.3b), above which Peter Gabriel sings in a declamatory style suggestive of recitative.23 As I have shown in my Roman-numeral analysis, the two pairs of underlying harmonies alternate between major-seventh and half-diminished chords. Although I have interpreted these chords in G major, the presence of C\(^\#\) in the half-diminished chord of the second pair renders this tonality ambiguous, suggesting instead a strong pull towards its dominant area. Once again, the musical language seems to make reference to a stylistic practice outside of the usual confines of rock and pop. The harmonic and rhythmic fluidity here reminds me of the impressionistic writing of Debussy, where seventh chords (especially half-diminished and dominant-sevenths) are often used coloristically for their sheer sonic value, irrespective of any definite functional implication.24
V. “Willow Farm”

For those Genesis fans lucky enough to have seen “Supper’s Ready” performed live in 1972 or 1973, one of the most memorable moments was no doubt Peter Gabriel’s sudden appearance in a bright orange flower mask (pictured on the back cover of Gallo 1980) to begin the fifth tableau, “Willow Farm” (see Example 12.4). Tony Banks sheds light on the origins of what is probably the most bizarre of all the sections of “Supper’s Ready”:

I thought . . . why don’t we do something really stupid and go straight into “Willow Farm.” Just bang . . . stop the song and instantly go into it. This was a little song that Peter had, lyrics and everything. And once we all got used to the idea and slotted “Willow Farm” in, it gave us great momentum to write the rest of the thing (Gallo 1980, 51).

“Willow Farm” is cast in a large ternary form (the reprise of its Part 1 is not shown in Example 12.4). Following Banks’s suggestion, Part 1 begins *attacca* after the half cadence that closes the fourth tableau. A descending Phrygian bass guitar figure (note the use of $\flat\sharp$) plunges us into a loping 12/8 musical landscape that is about as far removed as one could imagine from the ethereal calm of the music immediately preceding. In addition to the obvious differences in meter and rhythm, the governing tonality is $A\flat$ minor, which—with its dependence on seven flats—is a highly unusual key in classical music (although it did make several appearances in the nineteenth century), let alone rock.

The harmonic language again suggests a nineteenth-century chromatic style, although this time the voice leading is hardly impeccable (e.g., the overt and stylistically irrelevant parallel fifths and octaves in mm. 2–4). Certain features are reminiscent of the “freer” approach to harmony characteristic of later nineteenth-century composers, most notably Liszt. It would be difficult to explain, for example, the “function” of the D-major-seventh chord as it resolves locally into an apparent cadential $\flat$ in measure 13. Given the harmonic syntax of this passage, we would expect the chord of measure 12 to behave as a normal $V\flat$ and resolve to a first-inversion tonic; instead, the bass rises and upper voices move freely to $A\flat IV$ in measure 13. One might then expect the resulting chord to act as a first-inversion dominant or root-position diminished-seventh despite its major-seventh color. It is a chord, in short, that functions as an applied dominant or leading-tone seventh of $V$; while the bass complies, the upper voices refuse to resolve normally. Despite the oddball surface harmonies in this passage, there does seem to be an inner logic governing the overall harmonic design. One might hear the German augmented-sixth chord of measure 14 as having been prepared by the $V I$ chord of measure 9, embellished first in the bass by a local chromatic descent from $F\flat$ via $E\flat$ to $D\flat$ (mm. 9–10), and then by an expansion of this bass motive articulated on the downbeats of every other measure ($F\flat$ in m. 9, $E\flat$ in m. 11, $D\flat$ in m. 13), with
the vocal part moving in accented parallel fifths above. The overall effect of measures 9–14, then, is a large expanded German augmented-sixth sonority that appears in its full form in measure 14 and ultimately resolves to the dominant a bar later.

According to the program notes, after Part 1 “a whistle blows and every single thing is instantly changed into another.” With the onset of Part 2, this is depicted musically in an obvious fashion: the 12/8 meter becomes 4/4, the prevailing pulse of triplet eighth notes gives way to constant duple eighths, the organ is replaced with a piano, and the tonality moves to the parallel AΔ major.26 Adding to the humor, Gabriel’s voice has been sped up (as if on helium) and panned in the mix so as to bounce back and forth between the speakers on the lyric “mum to mud to mad to dad.”27 Overall, the style of the middle section of “Willow Farm” alludes to the pitter-patter quality of early twentieth-century British music hall songs, providing yet another example of Genesis’ remarkable stylistic eclecticism.

VI. “Apocalypse in 9/8”

VII. “As Sure as Eggs is Eggs (Aching Men’s Feet)”

We have come now to the climactic sixth tableau, in which we are made to witness “the Apocalypse of St John in full progress.”28 The music in this section is perhaps the most complex of all of “Supper’s Ready,” and so for the sake of practicality I have chosen to highlight just a few of the key passages. As its title informs us, the sixth tableau is cast entirely in a 9/8 meter; furthermore, the
meter is subdivided into constant eighth notes, grouped most of the time as 2 + 2 + 2 + 3. These pulsing eighth notes—and their accompanying repeated harmonies—at the beginning of the "Apocalypse in 9/8" (15:38+) have long reminded me of the famous incessant "Augurs of Spring" chord in Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring (1912). As I began to analyze this passage more closely, however, I soon realized that the resemblances between the two pieces were more than superficial.

As I have shown in Example 12.5a, the second of the two harmonies in the repeated passage at the beginning of "Apocalypse" is a complex six-note sonority, pitch-class set 6-Z25. When we compare this sonority to the "Augurs of Spring" chord, set 7-32 (Example 12.5b), we find that the smaller is a transposed subset of the larger superset; in addition, a comparison of the bass notes of the two chords reveals that they map directly onto one another. Putting set theory aside momentarily, what this means for our purposes here is that—with the exception of just one additional note in the "Augurs of Spring" chord—these two harmonies sound essentially the same.

Yet the striking similarities do not end here. At the heart of the "Apocalypse in 9/8" is an extended organ solo over an ostinato played by the bass and guitar. This ostinato figure consists of just three pitches—E, F♯, and B—all three of which were contained in the preceding larger chord 6-Z25. Likewise in The Rite of Spring, an ostinato figure consisting of three pitches—B♭, D♭, and E♭—is pervasive throughout the entirety of the “Dances of the Young Girls” section, and again these three pitches were all contained in the larger "Augurs of Spring" chord that had sounded immediately before. I should remind the reader that by making these comparisons, I am not insisting that Genesis consciously modeled the “Apocalypse in 9/8” on Stravinsky—in fact, I would be highly surprised if this were the case. Rather, I merely wish to provide further evidence of Genesis’ sheer stylistic diversity; by evoking Stravinsky, we are able to learn more about how this section of the piece is put together.

The beginning of the aforementioned organ solo is transcribed as Example 12.6a. Again, Tony Banks offers us insights as to how this music was composed:

The organ solo started off as a very tongue-in-cheek thing, I thought I’d play like Keith Emerson to see what it sounds like. There were little phrases in there that were supposed to be almost humorous in a way. The other idea on that was to just keep the notes simple, and I said [to Mike Rutherford], "If you can keep just to the three notes E, F sharp and B then I can do any chord I want on top of it." I could go major, minor, all sorts of things. It was great fun actually as I could go for the real dramatic stuff like a C major chord on top of that, which sounds very tense and that was how it was developed. I was very satisfied with the result of that.31
Though originally intended to be just "tongue-in-cheek," Banks creates in this section what must rank as one of the finest keyboard solos in all of progressive rock. The overall character of the solo is established in the opening measures: continuous elaborate passagework dominated by constant sixteenth notes, reminiscent of the high-Baroque instrumental style of *Fortspinnung*.

As in "Sanctuary Man," the tonal center is achieved during this section by virtue of the constant repetition of E as a tonic pedal point in the bass/guitar.

Example 12.5  A comparison of compositional strategies in Genesis and Stravinsky:


ostinato. As Banks has informed us, the limited pitch material of the ostinato accompaniment allowed him to take great liberties in the harmonic structure of his solo above ("I could go major, minor, all sorts of things"). Indeed, this harmonic freedom can be heard from the very onset of the solo: He begins squarely in E major, then quickly introduces A♯ (♯4), invoking a Lydian quality. The modality continues to fluctuate two bars later with the introduction of G♯ (♯3) and D♯ (♯7), effecting a brief excursion into the Dorian mode.

The organ solo continues for over two-and-a-half minutes, culminating in a melodic sequence that rises to a spectacular climax on a high C♯. At this point the vocal makes an impassioned return ("666 is no longer alone"), and here—for the first time in "Supper’s Ready"—we are bathed in the massive orchestral timbre of a Mellotron chordal accompaniment, an effect that seems to have been consciously saved for this climactic moment, shown in Example 12.6b. Following this passage, the tonality quickly modulates from E major to B♭ major, signaling a brief yet triumphant reprise of the refrain of the first tableau (20:11+). This "Lover’s Leap" refrain is densely orchestrated, complete with tubular bells, snare-drum rolls, and electric-guitar tremolos.

An immediate segue (20:47) takes us into the seventh and final tableau, where we are presented with nothing less than a full-fledged recapitulation—what Nors Josephson (1992, 84) describes as a "Lisztian, symphonic apotheosis"—of the A-major "Sanctuary Man" theme from the second tableau. In live performances, Peter Gabriel would typically sing this final section of "Supper's Ready" suspended like an angel above the stage, expressing visually the idea that the ordeal is over and that good has ultimately prevailed over evil. It is no accident that Gabriel’s lyrics for "As Sure as Eggs is Eggs (Aching Men's Feet)" contain the most explicit intertextual reference of the entire piece: a recasting of William Blake’s famous poem about building a "new Jerusalem".

on English soil, as immortalized in C. Hubert H. Parry’s rousing World War I hymn, “Jerusalem” (1916). One can hardly imagine a more fitting conclusion for this decidedly British retelling of the story of the apocalypse.

The Large-Scale View
Having examined surface aspects of the compositional design, section by section, I shall now turn as promised to a discussion of the large-scale strategy of “Supper’s Ready.” On the most basic of levels, Genesis and nineteenth-century composers of multi-movement programmatic pieces shared a similar dilemma: How does one maintain both a sense of variety and a sense of direction throughout the course of such a massive work? Concerning the issue of maintaining variety, Macan (1997, 43) suggests that the early progressive rockers achieved this primarily through “systematic juxtapositions” of “electronic and acoustic” sections in their music. Genesis employs such a technique throughout “Supper’s Ready,” as sections dominated by electric instruments and drums are followed by quieter, more contemplative sections in which the rhythm section is entirely absent (consider, for example, the stark “electric/acoustic” juxtaposition of the third and fourth tableaux). Concerning the issue of maintaining a sense of direction, Macan goes on to suggest that the early progressive rockers achieved this largely “by drawing on nineteenth-century symphonic music’s fondness for building up tension until a shattering climax is reached, abruptly tapering off, then starting the whole process anew” (1997, 44). Again, we encounter Genesis employing such a strategy in several places during “Supper’s Ready.” Consider the close of the second tableau (Example 12.2), where the majestic “Sanctuary Man” theme abruptly breaks off on the subdominant—avoiding a cadence altogether—at the second ending (5:29), followed quickly by a quiet reprise of the verse melody of “Lover’s Leap” that in turn initiates a gradual build-up towards the bombastic entrance of the third tableau.

Certainly each of these compositional techniques is an effective means of achieving both variety and continuity; to be sure, these are techniques that are likely to be perceived by most listeners as they experience the work, whether they are musically educated or not. Likewise, one does not need to know much about nineteenth-century musical forms to be aware of the cyclic thematic design of “Supper’s Ready,” made obvious by the full recapitulation of the “Sanctuary Man” theme in the final tableau. But what about those melodic and harmonic ideas that might affect deeper levels of the musical structure, levels that would not be so obvious in a cursory hearing? To begin to answer this question, let us return to Example 12.1 in order to examine the opening measures of the piece in greater detail.

In my earlier discussion of “Lover’s Leap,” I mentioned that its harmonic language has more in common with nineteenth-century practice than with the conventions of post-1960s rock. Indeed, a “nineteenth-century sound” is immediately suggested by the harmony of measure 1: an F# half-diminished
seventh—a transposed “Tristan chord”—borrowed into E major from the parallel E minor. As it turns out, this Tristan chord is consciously brought back at crucial moments throughout the piece, almost in the manner of a Wagnerian leitmotif.37 To catalog just a few of its structural appearances, the harmony (1) is isolated as the sustained organ chord that initiates the brief echo of “Lover’s Leap” at the close of the second tableau (Example 12.2), (2) is the second chord in the first pair of oscillating harmonies underpinning the fourth tableau (Example 12.3b), and (3) comprises the upper four pitches of the aforementioned 6-Z25 chord at the opening of the “Apocalypse in 9/8” (Example 12.5a). While a thorough analysis of the large-scale ramifications of this Tristan chord on the composition of “Supper’s Ready” lies beyond the scope of this present essay, it should suffice to say that its reappearance in altered guises from section to section contributes markedly to the overall coherence of the work, and suggests a considerable degree of sophistication—at least a strong ear for unity—on the part of Genesis as composers.38

Both the initial Tristan chord and other melodic ideas introduced during the opening measures are composed-out in subsequent sections of “Supper’s Ready.” The chromatic inner voice in measures 2–3 of the accompaniment (E–D♭–D♮), for example, is recast both in the small and in the large as the descending chromatic bass motive (F♭–E♭–D♮) in measures 9–13 of “Willow Farm” (see Example 12.4 and its accompanying discussion). And although the melodic correspondence is not exact, I hear strong resonances of the pitch content of the opening vocal melody (mm. 1–4) in the first few measures of the organ solo in the “Apocalypse in 9/8” (Example 12.6a). In short, one could argue that the first four measures of the piece serve as a kind of Grundgestalt, providing a source of basic materials to which the music of subsequent sections makes constant reference.

A discussion of the large-scale strategy of “Supper’s Ready” would not be complete without considering its overall key scheme. Most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tonal pieces—even those in multiple movements—are harmonically closed, i.e., they begin and end in the same key. But like turn-of-the-century symphonic works (as with Mahler) and many other progressive rock works, “Supper’s Ready” exhibits an open key scheme: It begins (albeit loosely) in E major and ends in A major. One might be tempted to interpret these framing keys as exhibiting a large-scale dominant-to-tonic relationship. Accordingly, the “Apocalypse in 9/8” could be viewed as a gigantic prolongation of the dominant that prepares for the arrival of A major as the home tonic in the final tableau.

An alternate interpretation, however, would be to hear these keys as manifesting a large-scale tonic-to-subdominant relationship, one which is played out on a number of levels as the piece unfolds. In my earlier discussion of the harmonic design of the “Sanctuary Man” theme, I mentioned that rock harmony is often driven by root motion in fourths rather than fifths, giving primacy to the subdominant-tonic axis over the traditional dominant-tonic relationship.
With this in mind, one could make a case such that the first tableau struggles to establish the tonic key of E major (undermined by a swerve to the tritone-related key of B<sup>b</sup> major), and that the second, third, and fourth tableaux are cast in tonalities that systematically move further away from the home tonic around a circle of fourths: A major, D major, and G major, respectively. After a digression to A<sup>b</sup> (enharmonically III) in the fifth tableau—breaking the series of fourth-related keys—the tonic E is regained as an extended pedal point for the “Apocalypse in 9/8,” and it is only at the end of the climactic Mellotron-soaked passage (19:30; see Example 12.6b) that we arrive triumphantly for the first time on a root-position tonic chord. Following this plan, when Christ finally does “return to lead his children home” in the seventh tableau, he is actually leading them to the sanctuary of the subdominant.

Unlike many nineteenth-century composers, Genesis did not leave us with a wealth of sketches that might help us to unravel their compositional process as they put this huge piece together. Despite the lack of such evidence, the preceding analysis has sought to demonstrate that Genesis was indeed concerned with achieving motivic and harmonic coherence at deeper levels of the musical structure, similar to what we would expect of large-scale pieces by their nineteenth-century predecessors. At the same time, the elaborate web of intertextual references in “Supper’s Ready” paints an overall picture of stunning stylistic diversity that surely Liszt or Mahler would have appreciated.

I would like to conclude on a personal note. Writing a “serious” essay about Genesis for this book has been especially significant for me. As I was growing up in the late 1970s and 1980s—and playing in as many rock and pop bands as I did orchestras—this group was one of the main reasons why I came to love music and to love thinking about music. This essay was originally given as a talk as part of an entire mini-conference on progressive rock, where the audience was primarily professional musicologists and music theorists. Judging by their enthusiastic response, I am sure that there are several others within our discipline who also care a great deal about this music, those whose formative years were similarly shaped by both a classical and a rock aesthetic. I hope then that my analytical methodology in this chapter may prove fruitful, and encourage others to draw upon the rich and varied body of work that is progressive rock for their own analyses. In any event, analyzing Genesis represents for me a homecoming of sorts, and as such I shall let Peter Gabriel have the last words: “Now I’m back again, and . . . it’s gonna work out fine.”

Notes
An earlier version of this essay was presented to the “Cross(over) Relations” conference, held at the Eastman School of Music in September 1996.

1. “Progressive rock” is the label adopted almost universally now by rock historians to refer to a style of popular music that has also been described variously as
“art rock,” “symphonic rock,” and “classical rock.” Continuing the trend toward stylistic eclecticism spearheaded by the mid-1960s British-invasion groups (and popularized especially by the Beatles on their later albums), the progressive rockers attempted to synthesize rock and pop with traditional elements of Western art music. There has been a considerable resurgence of interest in progressive rock among popular music scholars in the past decade or so. (See for example Covach 1997; Holm-Hudson 2002; Josephson 1992; Macan 1992 and 1997; Martin 1998; Moore 2001, 64–118; and Stump 1997). The most comprehensive account of the history and reception of the genre to date is Macan 1997, a book-length study noteworthy for the author’s attempts to address progressive rock from both a musicological and sociological perspective.

2. This enthusiasm was certainly not shared by many rock critics at the time. Genesis and other progressive rock groups were often branded as elitist, and their music—with its penchant for large-scale forms and frequent excursions into complex meters and non-tertian harmony—as entirely divorced from the “true” spirit of rock, which, according to the critics, should be grounded in the simple harmonies and dance rhythms of rhythm and blues. *Rolling Stone* and *Creem* have been particularly scathing in their criticisms of progressive rock over the years. For example, the neo-Marxist critic Lester Bangs accuses Emerson, Lake & Palmer (ELP) of no less than “the insidious befoulment of all that was gutter pure in rock” (Bangs 1974, 44; quoted in Macan 1997, 169).

Although most well-known progressive rockers enjoyed considerable album sales and ever-increasing concert audiences in the first half of the 1970s, their decision to avoid, for the most part, writing and releasing *singles* greatly limited their radio exposure and hence their mainstream commercial success. For example, it took almost a decade—and only after these three groups had each consciously decided to work within smaller and more commercial forms—for ELP, Yes, and Genesis to crack the Top Twenty in their native Britain: ELP with their rock arrangement of Aaron Copland’s “Fanfare for the Common Man” (which peaked at number 2 in July 1977); Yes with “Wonderous Stories” (number 7, October 1977); and Genesis with “Follow You Follow Me” (number 7, April 1978).

3. For models of a rigorous approach to rock analysis, see the work of Walter Everett (most recently 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2004a). Though he does not deal directly with progressive rock, Everett uses Schenkerian analytical techniques to examine the musical structure of songs by Paul Simon, the Beatles, Billy Joel, and Steely Dan.

4. Drawing on ideas in literary criticism, the central premise behind musical intertextuality is that compositions acquire a richness of meaning through their relationship to a potentially infinite universe of prior works (see Hatten 1985). For models of an intertextual approach to rock analysis, see Covach 1990 and 1995; see also Lacasse 2000.

5. Genesis had already attracted quite a cult following in Britain, but in 1972 they quickly found themselves major stars on the Continent, especially in Italy. Genesis biographer Armando Gallo (1980, 40) has aptly diagnosed this phenomenon, noting that “the Italians had never really identified with the twelve-bar syndrome of rock ‘n’ roll, and young fans and musicians who had grown up within Italy’s strong classical and operatic traditions suddenly responded en masse to the English ‘progressive’ scene.”
6. Hackett and Collins had joined the band for *Nursery Cryme*, following the 1970 departures of founding-member guitarist Anthony Phillips and drummer John Mayhew. For many fans this resulting quintet—Banks, Collins, Gabriel, Hackett, Rutherford—is fondly remembered as the consummate Genesis lineup. After Peter Gabriel left the group in 1975, Phil Collins added the role of lead singer to his job as drummer; likewise, Mike Rutherford assumed the dual role of guitarist/bassist in the studio when Steve Hackett left to pursue a solo career in 1977. Genesis has continued to record as a trio through their 1991 album *We Can’t Dance*, with the American session musicians Daryl Stuermer (guitar) and Chester Thompson (drums) regularly augmenting the group for their live performances. In 1996, Collins—who enjoyed even greater success as a solo artist during the 1980s and 1990s—officially left the group, and was replaced by singer Ray Wilson for the 1997 album *Calling All Stations*. Although reaching as high as number 2 in the U.K., *Stations* was met with disappointing sales in the U.S. and elsewhere, and consequently, as of this writing (July 2006), Genesis has yet to release another album of new material. Rumors of an impending reunion of the classic 1970s quintet continue to circulate voraciously among Genesis fans, despite the December 2005 statement to the contrary on the group’s official website, http://www.genesis-music.com. This seems all the more unlikely, at least in the immediate future, now that the 1980s lineup of Banks, Collins, and Rutherford have announced that they will be reuniting, without Gabriel and Hackett, for a 2007 world tour.

7. As with most of Genesis’ large-scale pieces, the composing of “Supper’s Ready” was a group effort. Banks, Collins, Gabriel, Hackett, and Rutherford are listed jointly as composers, although the individual contributions of each band member varied widely. The Gabriel quote is transcribed from an interview in the 1990 BBC film *Genesis: A History* (available on video). I highly recommend this film to the reader who wants a more detailed account of the group’s early history, including fascinating concert clips.

8. As Macan (1997, 1) has noted, one of the most memorable features of British progressive rock was “its fascination with epic subject matter drawn from science fiction, mythology, and fantasy literature”—not unlike the subject matter of many nineteenth-century operas. Indeed, during the course of “Supper’s Ready” we encounter several mythical and historical characters, including Narcissus, Pythagoras, The Pied Piper, and even “Winston Churchill dressed in drag.” Gabriel’s lyrics to “Supper’s Ready” are given in Figure 12.1 as they appear on the inner sleeve to *Foxtrot*.

9. Regarding the *Fantastic Symphony* program, see Cone 1971. Although he was later to change his mind, Berlioz originally felt that the program was “indispensable for a complete understanding of the dramatic outline of the work” (Cone’s translation, p. 21).

10. For a useful discussion of the pros and cons of using transcriptions in popular music analysis, see Brackett 2000, 27–29. Walter Everett also addresses this question in Chapter 5 of this volume.

11. Like most progressive rock groups, Genesis usually made an effort to reproduce the studio version as faithfully as possible in live performance. There was little room for improvisation; for example, Tony Banks always played his keyboard solos note-for-note off the record, as if each were an extended “melody” whose
original structure was essential to the work’s integrity. This performance aesthetic is in stark contrast to that of a rock group like the Grateful Dead, who used the “original,” studio-produced, versions of many of their songs as foils for extensive and elaborate improvisations that changed from one concert to the next, often rendering their sources almost unrecognizable (see Boone 1997 and Walter Everett’s essay in this volume). Also in this book, John Covach finds the concert reproduction of fixed parts to be a prog hallmark when practiced by jazz-rockers. Certain effects—the overdubbing of Peter Gabriel’s voice at the octave during “Lover’s Leap,” for example—were difficult or impossible to reproduce live and would be left out, often diluting the richness and meaning of the original, as in the loss of the “split personality” cited in my discussion of this passage below. All this I think points toward considering the original studio version as the standard against which subsequent live performances should be measured.

A live recording of “Supper’s Ready” has long been available as side three of the 1977 double live album *Seconds Out*, recorded in Paris during the *Wind and Wuthering* tour with Phil Collins on lead vocals. While Collins does an admirable job, his rendition for me simply does not measure up to the nuances of Gabriel’s impassioned delivery on the *Foxtrot* version. With the 1998 release of the CD boxed set, *Genesis Archive: 1967–75*, Genesis fans at long last had access to a 1973 live recording of “Supper’s Ready” with Gabriel at the helm.

12. I should make it clear from the outset that in making such comparisons, I am not necessarily suggesting that Genesis themselves were conscious of all the multiple intertextual references that I hear in their music (many of which, coincidentally enough, are to nineteenth-century techniques). I am adopting an intertextual approach simply because I believe it is the best way of showing how this multivalent music is shaped. The issue of “intentionality” in musical influence is a thorny one that space does not permit me to treat adequately here; for a detailed study that explores this issue in relation to nineteenth-century music, see Korsyn 1991.

The concept of a *Grundgestalt* ("basic shape") lies at the heart of Arnold Schoenberg’s theory of musical coherence. Schoenberg likened a composition’s *Grundgestalt* to a "musical seed": a distinctive melodic, harmonic, and/or rhythmic motive from which the entire *Gedanke* ("idea") of the work evolves. References to the concept are scattered throughout his theoretical writings; for the most thorough explication of his theory, including an excellent commentary by Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff, see Schoenberg 1995.

13. Following a brief instrumental retransition, not shown in Example 12.1, this verse/refrain pattern is repeated.

14. Compare, for example, the opening section to “The Musical Box” (*Nursery Cryme*).

15. I am reminded especially of Schubert’s organic piano accompaniments for his songs, for example, the “babbling brook” arpeggiated figure pervasive throughout “Wohin?” (*Die schöne Müllerin*, 1823).

16. As has been said of Schumann, one might say that “Supper’s Ready” “begins with an ending” (Agawu 1991, 51–79). As I will show later, the initial F# half-diminished seventh chord is referred to at crucial moments throughout “Supper’s Ready.” I have respelled the new key at m. 7 enharmonically, as B♭ major, to avoid the notational inconvenience of a key signature of ten sharps.
Although the modulation in mm. 6–7 looks abrupt on paper, the accompanying voice leading could not be smoother: D# and F# are retained as common tones (Eb and Gb), while the bass moves by semitone from B to Bb. The smoothness of this modulation is also due in part to the clever correspondence between the bass motives that punctuate both the antecedent and consequent phrases (marked ß and ß1 in Example 12.1). Notice that ß and ß1 share identical rhythm and contour, and, while their initial pitches are different, both motives arrive deliberately on the enharmonically equivalent pitches A# and Bb, respectively.

17. Aside from obvious features of instrumentation (e.g., the use of an electric bass), I would argue that the only elements sounding truly out of place in an otherwise very "nineteenth-century sounding" musical landscape are the speech-like syncopations in the vocal melody, which seem more typical of a rock singing style than a classical one. Regarding the musical backgrounds of group members, see Gallo 1980, passim. Tony Banks had received some formal training on the violin and piano as a boy, but was self-taught in composition and much preferred playing the piano by ear to working from notation (pp. 123–125).

18. It is evident from the lyrics that the "Guaranteed Eternal Sanctuary Man," a fireman who looks after the fire, is meant to represent Satan himself. The second tableau follows an extended folk-like instrumental transition, lasting more than two minutes, continually dominated by the opening arpeggiated twelve-string guitar texture.

19. Many of rock’s harmonic idioms owe an allegiance to blues traditions. The progression IV–IV–I, for example, can be understood as a variant of the progression V–IV–I that closes a typical twelve-bar blues, with IV substituting for V. For a more extended discussion of modal harmony in rock music—and the use of the lowered seventh in particular—see Moore 1995 and Everett 2004b. This volume’s essays by Lori Burns and Walter Everett also address modal harmonic and contrapuntal procedures in rock music.

20. One could cite hundreds of examples, but two standouts are Van Halen’s “Jump” and Frankie Goes to Hollywood’s "Relax" (both 1984).

21. The term "groove" has long been used by pop and rock musicians to describe the repetitive rhythmic foundation upon which a song was built. In an attempt to formalize the term for purposes of music analysis, I have elsewhere defined groove as "the tapestry of riffs—usually played by the drums, bass, rhythm guitar and/or keyboard in some combination—that work together to create the distinctive rhythmic/harmonic backdrop which identifies a song" (Spicer 2004, 30).

22. Although the harmonic language of "Sanctuary Man" is unmistakably in the rock tradition, its form is not unlike that of a classical "sentence": A four-bar basic idea (mm. 1–4) is immediately followed by a varied and shortened repetition of the basic idea (mm. 5–7), which together comprise the harmonically static and tonic-prolonging "presentation." A harmonically active and condensed "continuation" follows (mm. 8–10), culminating in an elided plagal cadence at the repeat. For useful summaries of the distinguishing formal characteristics of the classical period and sentence, see Schmalfeldt 1991 and Caplin 1998, 35–58.

23. Accordingly, the stripped-down accompaniment—with its rhythmically free sustained chords—suggests the role of a continuo. The eerie effect of the piano chords is the result of a series of "volume fade-ins," achieved in the studio by...
running the piano signal through a volume/tone control pedal so as to allow the removal of all attack points. I am grateful to the unidentified respondent who called my attention to this technique during the question/answer session following my paper delivery at the Eastman School of Music's "Cross(over) Relations" conference in 1996. This device was likely first used by George Harrison to manipulate the electric-guitar sound on a handful of his Beatles songs (e.g., "Yes It Is" and "I Need You") from February 1965 onward.

24. Compare, for example, the nonfunctional, oscillating half-diminished and dominant-seventh chords over a sustained bass A\(^\#\) (B\(^\flat\)) in the famous opening section of Debussy's Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun" (1892–1894).

25. In the film Genesis: A History, Gabriel informs us that his intention in "Willow Farm" was "to explore this unreal world of English subconscious." Indeed, his lyrics are loaded with cryptic allusions and wordplay in the tradition of English absurdist humor, continuing a precedent made popular by John Lennon in his later work with the Beatles. One is immediately reminded, for example, of the Lewis Carroll-inspired surrealism in "I Am the Walrus."

26. The use of the parallel major for the contrasting middle section was of course a favorite key scheme of nineteenth-century composers for their large-scale ternary pieces in minor keys. See, for example, the funeral march from Beethoven's Op. 26 piano sonata, one well-known piece in A\(^\flat\) minor.

27. Although he had the "tricks" of the recording studio available in this case, Gabriel was famous for his ability to adjust his vocal timbre and adopt different musical personae as the narratives of given songs demanded. In Part 1 of "Willow Farm," for example, he progresses from a talkative style reminiscent of Noel Coward all the way to a full-blown scream.


29. The set nomenclature follows the standard form as established in Forte 1973. Of course, even a rudimentary explanation of set theory lies well beyond the scope of the present essay, but it ought to be noted here that the set names refer to particular collections differentiated by interval content. The integers bracketed underneath Examples 12.5a and 12.5b label all constituent pitch classes as distant from some particular reference point (the supersets measured down from C in Example 12.5a and down from F\(^\#\) in Example 12.5b).

30. To my knowledge, none of the members of Genesis have specifically confirmed the influence of Stravinsky on their music. Yet Stravinsky clearly did have a profound impact on other British progressive rock bands. For example, Yes opened their concerts during the Close to the Edge tour (July 1972–May 1973) with a recording of the finale to The Firebird (1910), which as a result is heard as the opening track on their live album Yessongs (1973).

31. From a Banks interview by Alan Hewitt that originally appeared in The Waiting Room magazine (1994), the text of which is available online at http://www.genesis-path.net/art-tonyWR; see also Hewitt 2000, 34. Banks goes on in the interview to describe how the organ solo crystallized during an extended jam session in the studio involving a trio consisting of himself, Phil Collins, and Mike Rutherford. Interestingly, this foreshadows what was to become Genesis’ preferred method for composing new pieces beginning with the 1978 album … And Then There Were Three ..., when the group was in fact reduced to just these three members.
32. Although the virtuosic passagework here was perhaps simply a result of trying to “play like Keith Emerson,” such a Fortspinnung approach to crafting keyboard solos quickly became a hallmark of Banks’s style. Compare, for example, the extended synthesizer solo in the middle section of “In the Cage” (1974).

33. A sense of mounting intensity is conveyed during the organ solo not only by the organ itself, but also by the ever-increasing complexity of Phil Collins’s drumming, which engages in a rhythmic dialogue with the solo part that unfolds freely against the rigid 9/8 pulse of the ostinato. The drumming here suggests the complex polyrhythmic style of free jazz, a style that Collins was able to explore more fully in his work with the British fusion group Brand X during the late 1970s and 1980s.

34. A forerunner to modern samplers, the Mellotron uses a standard keyboard to engage selected banks of magnetic tapes, of actual sustaining orchestral instruments, voices, or effects, in between pinch rollers and an elongated capstan rod that pulls the tapes across heads: one tape, one head, and one pinch roller for each key. As each tape is only a few feet long, sounds can be sustained only for about ten seconds before a spring resets the tape with a snap. Mellotrons were notorious for malfunctioning on the road, as one might imagine, but they were the only practical way for early-1970s prog groups to simulate the sound of a full choir or orchestra in their live performances. For a detailed discussion of the Mellotron and the myriad other keyboard instruments used in prog, see Vail 2000.

35. Parry’s “Jerusalem” is perhaps the most famous and beloved of all Anglican hymns. In concert, Peter Gabriel made the reference to the hymn even more explicit through the bizarre story he told as a lead-in to “Supper’s Ready,” which culminated in his whistling an odd, jazzy reinvention of the tune he called “Jerusalem Boogie.” (One can hear Gabriel’s story on the live version of “Supper’s Ready” available on Genesis Archive: 1967–75.) Certainly Banks, Gabriel, and Rutherford would have known it from their boyhood years spent at the exclusive Charterhouse school, where they would have often been made to sing the hymn at morning assembly. ELP even went so far as to record a full-blown arrangement of “Jerusalem” for the opening track of their 1973 album, Brain Salad Surgery. For a discussion of the profound influence that Anglican church music seems to have had on many of the early progressive rockers, see Macan 1992, especially pp. 102–103.

36. Macan (1997) and others have tended to view full recapitulations of earlier themes in progressive rock pieces as evidence of a kind of “sonata form.” There is great danger, however, in mapping large-scale classical tonal forms too literally onto this repertoire: for instance, one might get the thematic scheme to line up loosely with the classical model, but then the harmonic scheme has no bearing at all. See, for example, Macan’s “sonata-form” reading of Yes’s “Close to the Edge” (pp. 95–105).

37. The “Tristan chord” reference is to the opening harmony of Richard Wagner’s opera Tristan und Isolde (1859), which sounds enharmonically like a half-diminished seventh. As Forte (1995, 340 n. 4) has noted, “in post-Wagnerian European music... the often-quoted chord assumes the attributes of an erotic symbol.” Although the resemblance to the Tristan chord is not as powerful when the
harmony is transposed and revoiced, as in this case, the fact that Genesis have chosen to open "Supper's Ready" with an unstable half-diminished seventh, coupled with their subsequent treatment of the harmony as a leitmotif, makes the connection with Wagner especially potent and appropriate.

38. For an attempt at such a large-scale view, see Josephson 1992, 84–85, in which the author reads the overall tonal plan of "Supper's Ready" against the half-diminished seventh backdrop of an "A-C-E-F# harmonic matrix."

References

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