

There is Sweet Bitonality

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For this paper, I chose to analyze Edward Elgar's "There is Sweet Music," from his *Four Part-Songs* Op. 54, No. 1. Elgar utilizes specific compositional techniques that keep the piece streamlined and easy to listen to despite the conflicting key signatures of G and A \flat major. The aim of this paper is to evaluate those techniques and discuss how bitonality interacts in the piece.

To decide where in the piece to write about, I utilized Stanley Kleppinger's "Four Modes of Locating Pitch Centricity" as a starting point. I forced myself to mentally exist in mode three, "indirect engagement," before hearing the piece. Whenever my brain shifted into a different mode other than mode three, I notated that in my score with an asterisk. After writing in twenty-one asterisks, I decided that it would be appropriate to describe these moments as "events." For the sake of this paper, an event describes a musical instance where a bitonal interaction occurs away from my mode three, and therefore must be analyzed. In "There is Sweet Music Here," many of the bitonal interactions sound smooth and streamlined. Elgar utilizes enharmonic equivalence, a pivot chord, or a pivot interval in order to create this aurally seamless effect between the two tonal regions of G and A \flat major. Charts will serve as a visual analysis for each event and will contain information on the bitonal interactions including the measure(s) in which they occur, with their method of interaction (enharmonic equivalence, pivot interval, pivot chord, or unified). Evidence in the form of score analysis will also be provided as a visual reference. The following two pages are score analyses of the events in the A section.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson **There is sweet music** Edward Elgar

Andante $\text{♩} = 44$

Note: *iii often functions as I*

ppp There is sweet music here that softer falls Than petals from blown roses on the grass, Or night dews on still waters between

ppp There is sweet music here that softer falls Than petals from blown roses on the grass, Or night dews on still waters between

ppp legato ed. express. There is sweet music

ppp legato ed. express. There is sweet music

PI (LT relationship)

$\begin{matrix} \wedge \\ 1 = 7 \\ \wedge \\ G \quad A^b \end{matrix}$

ppp *p Mp* here that softer falls Than petals from blown roses on the grass;

ppp here that softer falls Than petals from blown roses on the grass;

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* = Event
 PI = Pivot Interval
 PC = Pivot Chord

EE = Enharmonic Equivalence

Figure 1. Score analysis for event one
 Source: Sims, *There is sweet music Op. 53, No. 1 (Edward Elgar)*, 1.

The image displays a musical score analysis for events two through six, featuring vocal and piano parts. The score is annotated with handwritten notes and symbols in blue and red ink.

Event 2 (Measures 12-14): The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Mu - sic that gent - lier on the spi - rit lies,". The piano accompaniment features a bass line with a pp dynamic. Handwritten annotations include a blue asterisk with "2 PC" and a red bracket labeled "1, 1, 1, 5 of C".

Event 3 (Measure 14): The vocal line continues with "Than tir'd eye - lids up-on tir'd eyes;". The piano accompaniment has a ppp dynamic. A blue asterisk with "3 EE" and a red "A6" are present.

Event 4 (Measures 14-15): The vocal line continues with "Mu - sic that gent-lier on the spi - rit lies,". The piano accompaniment has a pp dynamic. A blue asterisk with "4 EE" and a red "C: I6" are present.

Event 5 (Measures 15-16): The vocal line continues with "That gent - lier lies, Than tir'd". The piano accompaniment has a pp dynamic. A blue asterisk with "5 EE" and a red "E: I6" are present.

Event 6 (Measures 17-19): The vocal line continues with "eye - lids up - on tir'd eyes;". The piano accompaniment has a pp dynamic. A blue asterisk with "6" is present.

A large blue bracket underlines the piano part from measure 14 to 19, labeled "Unified Cm region".

Figure 1.1. Score analysis for events two through six

Source: Sims, *There is sweet music Op. 53, No. 1* (Edward Elgar), 2.

In event one, a pivot interval is used to transition from G major to A \flat major beginning at beat three of measure seven. Elgar writes an authentic cadence for the tenors and basses ending in octave G's. While the original intention is to serve as the tonic chord in G major, Elgar simultaneously intends for the octave G's to serve as the leading tone to A \flat major. By lengthening the rhythm to a half note tied to a whole note (the rhythms previously only include quarters, eighths, and dotted quarters), and by employing a *molto diminuendo*, Elgar resets the ear and mind in preparation for the shift from G major to A \flat major.

In event two, a pivot chord is used to transition from A \flat major to C major on beat four of measure twelve. In A \flat major, the treble's ii $^{\circ}$ 7—vii $^{\circ}$ 7/iii motion leads to a I6 chord in C major for the tenors and basses. Elgar's use of the pivoting leading-tone secondary dominant chord of C major is what creates a seamless transition into a new, yet temporary pitch center.

In events three through five, Elgar utilizes enharmonic equivalence as the method of interaction between the two pitch centers. In event three at measure fourteen, the tenors and basses land on an E major chord in measure fourteen, and the sopranos take the baritone's G \sharp in the E major chord as their starting A \flat pitch. In event four at measure fifteen, the soprano C \flat is taken by the basses as their starting B pitch as the second inversion of the tenor and bass E major chord. In event five at measure sixteen, the tenors and basses land on a root position E major chord, where the baritone's third of G \sharp is taken by the sopranos and altos as their starting octave A \flat pitches. In event six at measure seventeen, we experience a unified tonal region of C minor from all choral parts for the first time, set up by the tenors and basses singing an open fifth of C and G on the "and of beat two" in measure sixteen. This unified tonal region of C minor continues into measure eighteen, where we find event seven. In C minor, the pivot chord of a

iiib9/D \flat (functioning as a dominant V13 of D \flat) leads us into the tonic chord of D \flat major. The following chart summarizes the findings of the A section's bitonal interactions. The visual evidence for event seven, although a part of the A section, occurs on page three of this score and will be shown on the following page.

Event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Measure(s)	7-8	12-13	14	15	16	17	18-19
Method of Interaction	Pivot Interval	Pivot Chord	Enharmonic Equivalence	Enharmonic Equivalence	Enharmonic Equivalence	Unified with Pivot Chord	Unified with Pivot Chord

Table 1. Bitonal interactions from the events of the A section

The rest of this page will intentionally be left blank in order to more appropriately space the score analysis, summative chart, and explanations of the B section.

18 **7 PC* *D^bM*

Mu - sic that brings sweet sleep, Mu - sic

Mu - sic that brings sweet sleep,

Mu - sic that brings sweet sleep, that brings sweet sleep down from the
 sleep, that brings sweet sleep down from the
 eyes; Mu - sic that brings sweet sleep, that brings

20 **8 PC* *G^b G^m Harmonic* *C^m: iii^{b9}/b* *C[#]/b: I* **9 PC*

that brings sweet sleep down from the bliss ful skies.

that brings sweet sleep down from the bliss ful skies.

bliss ful skies, that brings sweet sleep down from the
 bliss ful skies, that brings sweet sleep down from the

sweet sleep, that brings sweet sleep down from the bliss - ful

22 **10 Parallel Trans.* **11 PC* *C^bM* *B^m Harmonic (i)*

Here are cool moss-es deep, And in the stream the long-leaved

Here are cool moss-es deep, And thro' the moss the i-vies creep, And in the stream the

bliss - ful, bliss - ful skies. Here are cool moss - es deep,
 bliss - ful, bliss - ful

skies, down from the bliss-ful skies, the bliss - ful skies.

A^b: V⁴/₂ *I⁶*

Figure 2. Score analysis for events seven through eleven

Source: Sims, *There is sweet music Op. 53, No. 1 (Edward Elgar)*, 3.

***12 conflict!** ***13 PC/Interval Handoff** ***14 EE**

25 *ppp* *p* *poco rit.*

flow - ers weep, And from the crag-gy ledge the pop-py hangs in

flow - ers weep, And from the crag-gy ledge the pop-py hangs in

And in the stream the long-leaved flow - ers weep, *F#m chord*

And in the stream the long-leaved flow - ers weep,

G: The long-leaved flow - ers weep,

28 *pp* *a tempo* *pp* ***15 EE** ***16 EE** *ppp*

sleep. Mu - sic that brings sweet sleep.

sleep. Mu - sic that brings sweet sleep.

and in the stream the long-leaved flow - ers weep, And from the crag-gy ledge the pop-py

F#m and in the stream the long-leaved flow - ers weep, *F#m* And from the crag-gy ledge the pop-py

31 ***17 EE** ***18 PI/EE**

down - from the bliss-ful skies.

down - from the bliss-ful skies.

hangs in sleep. There is sweet mu - sic here that soft - er falls Than pet-als.

hangs in sleep. There is sweet mu - sic here that soft - er falls Than pet-als.

b3 = 43
A^b G

Figure 2.1. Score analysis for events twelve through eighteen
 Source: Sims, *There is sweet music Op. 53, No. 1 (Edward Elgar)*, 4.

The beginning of the B section at measure nineteen features a circle of fourths motion for the next three measures. We begin on a unified C#/D \flat major region in measure nineteen, which leads us to event eight in measure twenty at an F#/G \flat harmonic minor region, and event nine in measure twenty-one in a B/C \flat harmonic minor region. Note in the visual evidence on the following page how the enharmonic variants listed above are simultaneously utilized in different choral parts, highlighted in lime green and light blue. In this circle of fourths motion in events eight through nine, Elgar uses the original key center's minor iv as the pivot chord to the new key center's minor i chord. From event nine in measure twenty-one, our B/C \flat harmonic minor region undergoes a Neo-Riemannian parallel transformation to become a B/C \flat major region. A pivot chord is used in event eleven at measures twenty-three through twenty-four. At measure twenty-three, the melody is featured in the alto line in E \flat major, and then featured in the soprano line at measure twenty-four in A \flat major. The other choral parts sing the underlying harmony of a V4/2 in A \flat major in measure twenty-three, resolving to a I6 in measure twenty-four.

For the first time in event twelve, a conflict occurs where any of the other methods of interaction do not exist in measure twenty-five. Labeled as such, the unison A \flat in the trebles is abruptly shifted by the tenors and basses in their respective tonal center of G major, making for a rare moment of aural disjunction. In event thirteen, another first-time phenomenon occurs where both a pivot interval and normal note-spelling interaction occurs. The downbeat of measure twenty-six features the bass two choral part in a pivot interval situation similar to that in the beginning of the piece while the tenor one, tenor two, and baritone choral parts do not have an enharmonic equivalence interaction, but rather hand the correct note-spelling of C right over to the trebles who continue singing in A \flat major.

In events fourteen through seventeen, all bitonal interactions occur via an enharmonic equivalence interaction. Event fourteen occurs on the “and of” beat three in measure twenty-seven, leading into the downbeat of measure twenty-eight. The trebles sing an F \flat major chord which serves as the enharmonic equivalent E major chord sung by the tenors and basses in measure twenty-eight. Similarly in event fifteen, the tenors and basses sing an E major chord, where the treble’s A \flat pitch is taken from the third of the E major chord, G \sharp , sung by the baritones. Event sixteen in measure thirty features a similar action, with the treble’s singing a C \flat , enharmonically equivalent to the fifth of the E major chord, B, sung by the basses. Event seventeen’s enharmonic equivalence interaction and approach is almost identical to that of event fifteen. The following chart summarizes the findings of the B section’s bitonal interactions. The score analysis on page seven previews the bitonal interaction in event eighteen, which is a part of the A’ section. This interaction which begins the A’ section will be explained on a later page.

Event	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Measure(s)	19-20	21	22	23-24	25	26	27-28	29	30	31
Method of Interaction	Pivot Chord	Pivot Chord	Parallel Trans.	Pivot Chord	N/A (Conflict)	Pivot Interval/Handoff	Enharmonic Equivalence	Enharmonic Equivalence	Enharmonic Equivalence	Enharmonic Equivalence

Table 2. Bitonal interactions from the events of the B section

The rest of this page will intentionally be left blank in order to more appropriately space the score analysis, summative chart, and explanations of the A’ section.

*19 PI (LT relationship) *20 Unified

35 *ppp* And in the stream the long-leaved flow-ers weep, *dim.*
ppp And in the stream the long-leaved flow-ers weep, *dim.*
dim. molto from blown ro-ses on the grass. *ppp* And in the
dim. molto from blown ro-ses on the grass.

39 *poco* And from the crag-gy ledge the pop-py hangs in sleep, *dim.*
poco And from the crag-gy ledge the pop-py hangs in sleep, *dim.*
pp the flow-ers weep, *div. pp* And from the crag
pp the pop-py hangs, *div. pp* And from the

42 *dim.* hangs in sleep, *rit. e dim. pp* sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep. *ppp*
dim. hangs in sleep, *pp* sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep. *ppp*
pp crag-gy ledge the pop-py hangs in sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep. *pppp*
pp the pop-py hangs, *unis.* the pop-py hangs in sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep. *pppp*

*21 Conflict!

A: I⁴ G: I I⁴ I I

Figure 3. Score analysis for events nineteen through twenty-one
 Source: Sims, *There is sweet music Op. 53, No. 1 (Edward Elgar)*, 5.

In event eighteen (evidence found at the bottom of page seven), a pivot interval and enharmonic equivalence interaction occurs between the trebles and tenor-bass choral parts. A pivot interval interaction occurs as the treble's octave C \flat serves as the $\flat 3$ scale degree in A \flat major and as the $\sharp 3$ scale degree in G major for the tenors and basses. An enharmonic equivalence interaction exists as well with the treble's C \flat serving as the B for the tenors in measure thirty-two. In event nineteen, a pivot interval interaction occurs identically to event one, with the tenor-bass choral parts singing a unison G, functioning both as tonic in G major and as the leading tone in A \flat major for the treble entrance at measure thirty-six.

Event twenty is incredibly similar to event six, as it seeks a unified C minor region. Although the tenors and basses are striving for unification from measures thirty-eight through forty, the trebles hold on to A \flat major from measures thirty-six through forty. The unification of all choral parts existing in the C minor region finally occurs at measures forty-one through beat three of measure forty-three. Event twenty-one features supreme tonal conflict, as the trebles and tenor-bass choral parts alternate between A \flat and G major chords. This breaks the seamless bitonality interactions that Elgar has been so intentional about throughout the piece. The grounding nature of the bass with less chord inversions comparatively overpower the treble's intention to stay in A \flat as the final G major chord from the tenors and basses is what prevails.

Event	18	19	20	21
Measure(s)	32	36	38-42	43-46
Method of Interaction	Pivot Interval & Enharmonic Equivalence	Pivot Interval	Unified with Common Tones	Conflict

Table 3. Bitonal interactions from the events of the A' section

While the compositional technique of bitonality was utilized by several composers in the 20th century classical canon, “There is Sweet Music” from Elgar’s *Four Part-Songs* Op. 54, No. 1 can confound the listener due to how seamless and smooth the bitonal pitch centers interact. When first looking at the score, it is clear that Elgar created a visual puzzle that somehow makes bitonality feel like the seamless vocal lines of the high and late Renaissance period. Through enharmonic equivalence, pivot chords, and pivot intervals, Elgar accomplishes that task, and it is through the two points of conflict where he creates contrast from the other harmonious events.