

Continental Divide

(an American cantata)

Peter Bird
2010

DOUBLE-BASS Parts



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Program Notes on *Continental Divide*

1. Timberline.....6

This first number is celebratory and could be subtitled, “Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arrival in the country.” But, rather than sonata form, it has a loose Mahlerian structure where one main melody is developed while 3 others vie for expression. A certain Romantic instability of key symbolizes enthusiasm that escapes Classical restraint. A final repetition of the initial section makes this structurally a da-capo aria for chorus.

The other 7 numbers of the cantata progress in historical order, from Pleistocene times before humans arrived, through the Arapaho era, the fur trade, pioneer days, arrival of the first tourists, the gold/silver rush, and the modern age of national parks and interstate highways. The central numbers (#3~6) have texts from oral tradition or contemporary accounts; the framing numbers at the start and end incorporate my own attempts at poetry.

2. Yellowstone9

The strong mantle plume that created Yellowstone has a few peers in the world: Iceland, Afar, and Hawaii. But here alone the volcanic plateau was built on the back of the older Rocky Mountain chain, producing lodgepole forests and parklands at 8,000’ elevations and peaks that go much higher. This number depicts a summer dawn along one of the verdant high-altitude river valleys (*e.g.*, Lamar River, or Yellowstone River above the falls) where bison and elk are grazing, until interrupted by wolves. The text is a set of 6 haiku-like nature poems, with 5/7/5-syllable structure but no rhyme.

3. Vision quest11

The adults of the village sing one of the traditional Arapaho Eagle Songs, with its proud refrain, “My father gave me the song of the eagle.” (I did not alter this in any way, except to add some very light instrumental accompaniment.) A young man [or a group of young men; it may be performed either way] drifts off to follow the calls of a distant eagle. He is inspired to climb the mountain Neniisotoyou’u in search of other animal mentors. He is rebuffed by a bear, and then by a cougar, but high on the mountain shoulder he feels the presence and inspiration of Thunderbird. I based his (new) song on the text of a vision-quest song of Chief Yellow Calf: “[Thunder]bird walks about; the sky is turning yellow.” (That is: Soon he will fly; prepare for thunder.) Performed in the Arapaho language.

4. Osborne Russell15

Osborne Russell (1814-1892) was a largely self-taught man from Maine who entered the trapper’s life and the Rocky Mountain fur trade at the age of 20. (Later he was a miner, a farmer, a trader, and was elected judge and then triumvir in the provisional government of Oregon Territory.) He recorded his experiences in *Journal of a Trapper...* which was published posthumously. This solo aria takes its text from the book’s valedictory poem, *The Hunter’s Farewell*, which may be the only extant poem by anyone involved in this chapter of our history. His description of the impact of firearms on the flocks of the mountains and the herds of the plains is sensitive and moving.

5. South Pass.....17

The Sweetwater River route through South Pass is more lonely and barren than scenic, but topography dictated that here the California Trail, the Oregon Trail, and the Mormon Trail necessarily ran together for several days travel as they approached the Divide. I have merged 3 songs of the trail (each in its own meter and its own key) to represent the passage of these 3 distinct kinds of pioneers in the same year. *Ho! for California* represents the gold-miners; both text and tune are authentic, although reharmonized here. The Oregon-Trail text and tune are my own inventions. The text of the LDS hymn *Come, Come Ye Saints* was written by William Clayton (1814-1879) while traveling the trail in 1846; here, I have given it a new tune that better harmonizes with the others. Despite the cultural and musical contrasts, there is no actual dissonance; perhaps I may even suggest that a new kind of polymodal harmony emerges?

6. Isabella Bird19

Isabella Bird (1831-1904) was a very independent Englishwoman who toured the Sierra Nevada and the Colorado Rockies in 1873: arriving by train, renting a horse, and finding her own way through mountains and plains, come blizzard or sun. Her account, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, is well worth reading. This solo number uses a montage of her words to describe her ascent of Longs Peak (which was guided by the colorful and mysterious "Mountain Jim" Nugent). She may have been the first woman of European ancestry to make the ascent; it is certain that later she was the first woman inducted into the Royal Geographical Society, in London in 1892.

7. Silverton23

Saturday night in a mining town! This turbulent setting with its many conflicting personalities, subplots, and emotions is represented by the overlaying of up to 6 tunes at once. Traditional tunes *An Outlandish Knight* and *Shenandoah* represent the women's point of view, and some new tunes (in the "gaslight" style of the times) represent the men's. An opera-buffa version of the sextet from *Lucia* transported into *La fanciula del West*.

8. Logan Pass25

Approaching Glacier Park from the East, today's tourists can drive directly from the lonely and pristine rolling prairie of the Blackfoot lands to some of the most spectacular mountain scenery in the world. Chief Mountain, St. Mary Lake, Logan Pass, and the Garden Wall will not be forgotten by anyone who has made this trip, and of course the automobile makes it possible for most. But, travel by car is much too fast for the spirit.

Performance Notes

Continental Divide is scored for 9 instruments: flute, oboe, horn in F, pedal timpani (II, III, IV), violin I, violin II, cello, double-bass, and piano. (Piano parts occur only in numbers 6 & 7.) If the chorus is large, it may be best to amplify the instruments. I would not want to double them, as this would destroy the "rugged individualism" and lonesome timbre of solo performances. The total duration of this cantata is about 51 minutes.

Peter Bird, Los Angeles, 2010

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6 Continental Divide: 1. Timberline

Double Bass

Peter Bird

PETER BIRD

Allegro (♩=126)

6 *f*

7

13 **A**

20 *rit.* **B**

28 **Fine** A tempo: Allegro (♩=126)

36

45 **C**

54 *rall.* (-15%) **Moderato** (♩=108)

62 **C**

Continental Divide: 1. Timberline
Double Bass

72

Musical staff 72-80. Bass clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 3/4 time signature. Measure 72 contains a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 73 contains a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 74 contains a quarter note with an accent (>). Measure 75 contains a quarter note. Measure 76 contains a quarter note. Measure 77 contains a quarter rest. Measure 78 contains a quarter note. Measure 79 contains a quarter note. Measure 80 contains a quarter note. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below measure 79.

81

Musical staff 81-88. Bass clef, key signature of two sharps, 3/4 time signature. Measure 81 contains a quarter note. Measure 82 contains a quarter note. Measure 83 contains a quarter note. Measure 84 contains a quarter note. Measure 85 contains a quarter note. Measure 86 contains a quarter note. Measure 87 contains a quarter note. Measure 88 contains a quarter note.

89

Musical staff 89-97. Bass clef, key signature of two sharps, 3/4 time signature. Measure 89 contains a quarter rest. Measure 90 contains a quarter note. Measure 91 contains a quarter note. Measure 92 contains a quarter note. Measure 93 contains a quarter note. Measure 94 contains a quarter note. Measure 95 contains a quarter note. Measure 96 contains a quarter note. Measure 97 contains a quarter note. A boxed letter **D** is placed above measure 94. A bracket labeled **4** spans measures 94-97. The dynamic marking *mp* is placed below measure 96.

98

Musical staff 98-106. Bass clef, key signature of two sharps, 3/4 time signature. Measure 98 contains a quarter note. Measure 99 contains a quarter rest. Measure 100 contains a quarter rest. Measure 101 contains a quarter note. Measure 102 contains a quarter note. Measure 103 contains a quarter note. Measure 104 contains a quarter note. Measure 105 contains a quarter note. Measure 106 contains a quarter note. A bracket labeled **3** spans measures 101-103. A bracket labeled **6** spans measures 105-106. The dynamic marking *mp* is placed below measure 102.

111

Musical staff 111-118. Bass clef, key signature of two sharps, 3/4 time signature. Measure 111 contains a quarter note. Measure 112 contains a quarter note. Measure 113 contains a quarter note. Measure 114 contains a quarter note. Measure 115 contains a quarter note. Measure 116 contains a quarter note. Measure 117 contains a quarter note. Measure 118 contains a quarter note. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below measure 111. The dynamic marking *f* is placed below measure 112. Above the staff, the text *accel.* is followed by a dashed line, and *(+17%)* is written above the line.

119

Musical staff 119-124. Bass clef, key signature of two sharps, 3/4 time signature. Measure 119 contains a quarter note. Measure 120 contains a quarter note. Measure 121 contains a quarter note. Measure 122 contains a quarter note. Measure 123 contains a quarter note. Measure 124 contains a quarter note. The tempo marking **Allegro** ($\text{♩} = 126$) is placed above measure 119.

125

Musical staff 125-138. Bass clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. Measure 125 contains a quarter rest. Measure 126 contains a quarter rest. Measure 127 contains a quarter rest. Measure 128 contains a quarter rest. Measure 129 contains a quarter rest. Measure 130 contains a quarter rest. Measure 131 contains a quarter rest. Measure 132 contains a quarter rest. Measure 133 contains a quarter rest. Measure 134 contains a quarter rest. Measure 135 contains a quarter rest. Measure 136 contains a quarter rest. Measure 137 contains a quarter rest. Measure 138 contains a quarter rest. A boxed letter **E** is placed above measure 125. A bracket labeled **10** spans measures 125-134. Above the staff, the text *Cello* 8^{va} is followed by a dashed line.

139

Musical staff 139-146. Bass clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. Measure 139 contains a quarter rest. Measure 140 contains a quarter rest. Measure 141 contains a quarter note. Measure 142 contains a quarter note. Measure 143 contains a quarter note. Measure 144 contains a quarter note. Measure 145 contains a quarter note. Measure 146 contains a quarter note. Above the staff, the text *Basses* 8^{va} is followed by a dashed line. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below measure 144. The text **D.C. al Fine** is placed above measure 146. Below the staff, the lyrics *where snow can last un - til it's late Ju - ly.* are written.

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Continental Divide: 2. Yellowstone

Peter Bird

PETER BIRD

Largo (♩ = 60)

9 **A**

17

24 **B**

36 **C**

41

46 **Andante** (♩ = ♩; ♩ = 90)

52 **D**

62 **E**

Continental Divide: 2. Yellowstone
Double Bass

66 *8va*
Basses

As the herd parts a - round him, *mf* *f*

F

74 **Largo** (♩=♩; ♩.=60)

3 **13** *mp*

Continental Divide: 3. Vision quest

Traditional Arapaho (Eagle Song),
Peter Bird (seeker),
Chief Yellow Calf (Thunderbird Song)

Traditional Arapaho (Eagle Song),
PETER BIRD (seeker, Thunderbird Song)

Allegro (♩=132)

[N.B. Cues not transposed.]

14

Timp. Ob. Vc.

18

23

mp *mf* *mp*

29

mf

36

45

3 4

57

f

65

mf *mp* *mf*

73

3

Double Bass
Continental Divide: 3. Vision quest

12

82

A

mp

91

mp

98

7 **12**

B

118

(♩=♩; ♪=66)

15

mp

Ten.
8 Ne - nii - so - to - you' - u: hee - tyi - hoo - noo.

137

mp

accel. 2

C

144

Andante (♩=80)

28

mp

Ob. 3

175

pp

poco a poco rall. 10

195

Larghetto (♩=60)

rall. (-20%)

2

2

8

pp

D

207

Andante (♩=96)

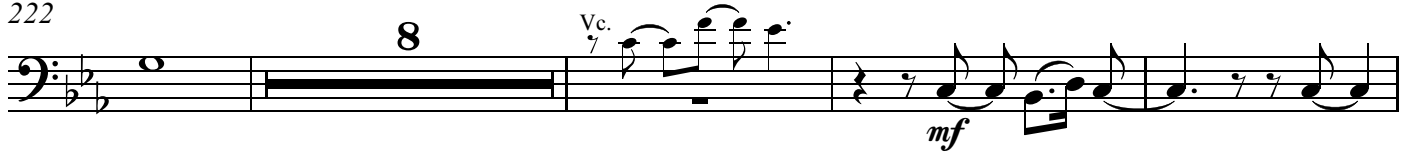
mp

Ten.
8 Nii' - éi - hii — noo' - u - seet — nii - hoo - ní - noo' óó' — hó - no. —

212



222



234



238



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Continental Divide: 4. Osborne Russell

Osborne Russell (1814-1892)

PETER BIRD

Allegro (♩=140)

A

play reel twice: [first #1] [play #2]

7

pizzicato

mf

13

repeat reel

B

19

(pizzicato)

mf

C

23

Andante (♩=70)

Verses #1 & #2:

(pizzicato)

mf

30

37

44

51

1.

2

4

(pizzicato)

D

62

2. rit.

(-25%)

Larghetto (♩=50)

2

3

12

Continental Divide: 4. Osborne Russell
Double Bass

16

79 **accel.** *Vc.* *arco*

E *p*

83 **Adagio** (♩=54)

mp

91

99

106

F

114 **Slightly faster** (♩=60)

mp

121

128

135

143

Continental Divide: 5. South Pass

Jesse Hutchinson, Jr. (1813-53: Ho! for California);
Peter Bird (Oregon);
William Clayton (1814-79: All is Well)

Nathan Barker (fl. 1849: Ho! for California);
PETER BIRD (Oregon, All is Well)

Allegretto (♩=120)

Fl. *8va* -----

6

mp

12

mf *mp*

18

A

32

53 B

15

Bar.&B.

rall.

C Dig - ging up the gold on the Fran - cis - co.

mp

71 (-12%) (bar = bar) **Andante moderato** (♩=102)

18

8va S.&A1

There the Saints will be bless -

95

2

mp *mf*

103

D

5

113 (bar = bar) **Adagio** (♩=68)

3

mp *mf*

120

Continental Divide: 5. South Pass
Double Bass

18

124 **E**

4



133

7 Bar.&B.



F

Dig - ging up the gold on the Fran - cis - co.

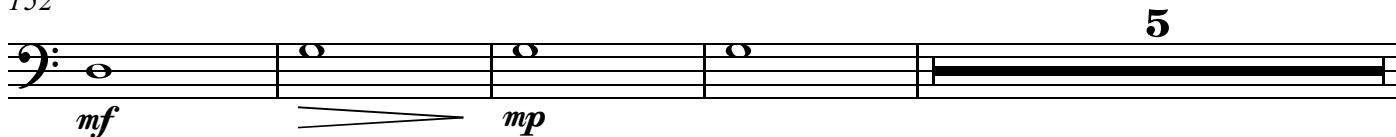
145

f



152

mf *mp* 5



161

Hn.
8va



Continental Divide: 6. Isabella Bird

Isabella Lucy Bird (1831-1904)

PETER BIRD

Moderato (♩=116)

accel.

6

9

Musical staff 1: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 1-6 and 7-9. The staff contains a solid black bar representing a rest.

16 Allegro moderato (♩=132)

A

2

2

7

Musical staff 2: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 16-17, 18-19, and 20-26. The staff contains a solid black bar representing a rest.

27

5

9

15^{ma}

S.

Musical staff 3: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 27-31, 32-36, and 37-43. The staff contains a solid black bar representing a rest.

of lone - li - ness more ex -

44

B

As $\text{♩} + \text{♩}$

15^{ma}

8

Musical staff 4: Bass clef, 5/4 time signature. Measures 44-45, 46-53, and 54-61. The staff contains a solid black bar representing a rest.

treme.

mp

54

7

15^{ma}

S.

3

Musical staff 5: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 54-60, 61-62, and 63-67. The staff contains a solid black bar representing a rest.

tains break - ing in - to pin - nac - les of cold gray

63

Musical staff 6: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 63-67. The staff contains a solid black bar representing a rest.

rock as they

mf

mp

68

2

Musical staff 7: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 68-71. The staff contains a solid black bar representing a rest.

72

Moderato (♩=100)

2

Musical staff 8: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 72-75. The staff contains a solid black bar representing a rest.

Continental Divide: 6. Isabella Bird
Double Bass

156 **cadenza (freely)** **a tempo** (♩=110)

157

166

173

4 **2** **rall.** **6**

E **F**

187 **Andante** (♩=92)

11 **4** **4** **S.** **15^{ma}**

drive of sev'ral hours o'er the

207 **(15)**

Plains brought us to Gree - ley, **mp**

212

5 **S.** **15^{ma}**

prai - rie sea. **mf**

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Peter Bird & traditional

PETER BIRD & traditional

Andante (♩=100)

strings *8^{va} gliss.*

mf **12**

A

15 *Timp. 8^{va}*

mf

20

B

25 **8**

mf

C

35 **4** *mp*

mf *mp*

D

E

44 **9** **9**

mf *mp*

F

64 *T. 15^{ma}* *poco a poco crescendo* **5** *poco a poco crescendo* **2**

mf *mp*

Oh, it's high times in the

Continental Divide: 7. Silverton

Double Bass

G

Adagio (♩=78)

73 Vc. *8^{va}*

f

79

84 *accel.*

H

88 *Poco adagio* (♩=84) *rit.* *Adagio* (♩=72)

S. *15^{ma}*

gold nug - gets dug from this old mor - tal

95 *Moderato* (♩=110)

(15)

clay!

f

Continental Divide: 8. Logan Pass

Peter Bird

PETER BIRD

Moderato (♩=120)

Timpani

Musical staff 1: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 1-7. Dynamics: *mf*, *f*. Includes a Timpani part with a wedge.

8

Musical staff 2: Bass clef. Measures 8-13. Dynamics: *f*. Includes a wedge.

14

Musical staff 3: Bass clef. Measures 14-19. Dynamics: *f*, *mf*. Includes a wedge.

20

Musical staff 4: Bass clef. Measures 20-27. Dynamics: *f*. Includes a triplet bracket over measures 20-22.

28

Musical staff 5: Bass clef. Measures 28-38. Dynamics: *mp*. Includes a quartet bracket over measures 28-31.

39

Musical staff 6: Bass clef. Measures 39-46. Dynamics: *mp*, *mf*, *f*. Includes a doublet bracket over measures 39-40, a "rall." marking, and a dashed line.

47

Musical staff 7: Bass clef. Measures 47-50. Dynamics: *mf*. Includes a "a tempo (♩=120)" marking.

51

Musical staff 8: Bass clef. Measures 51-58. Dynamics: *mf*. Includes an octet bracket over measures 51-58.

Continental Divide: 8. Logan Pass
Double Bass

61 Tenor
15^{ma}

Rey - nolds Moun - tain is an emp - ty throne. *mp*

65

mf

71 **B**

mp **6** *f > mp < mf*

83 **C**

16 Alto 8^{va} hides be - neath a ledge. *mf*

104

rall. *mf*

112

Andante (♩=88) *mp*

121 **E**

130

138 **F**

accel. *mf*

144

mp *mf*

Continental Divide: 8. Logan Pass
Double Bass

150

Musical staff for measure 150. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It begins with a half rest, followed by quarter notes G2, F2, and E2. A slur covers the next two measures, which contain quarter notes D2 and C2. A fermata is placed over the C2 note. The third measure contains a triplet of quarter notes B1, A1, and G1. The fourth measure contains a half note F1. The dynamic marking *mp* is placed below the staff.

159

Musical staff for measure 159. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It begins with a half rest, followed by a quarter note G2. A slur covers the next two measures, which contain quarter notes F2 and E2. A fermata is placed over the E2 note. The third measure contains a quintuplet of quarter notes D2, C2, B1, A1, and G1. The fourth measure contains a half note F1. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the staff.

170

Musical staff for measure 170. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It begins with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, and A1. A slur covers the next two measures, which contain quarter notes G1 and F1. A fermata is placed over the F1 note. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the staff. The tempo marking *rall.* is placed above the staff.

181

Musical staff for measure 181. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It begins with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, and A1. A slur covers the next two measures, which contain quarter notes G1 and F1. A fermata is placed over the F1 note. The dynamic marking *mp* is placed below the staff. The tempo marking *Adagio* (♩=72) is placed above the staff.

186

Musical staff for measure 186. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It begins with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, and A1. A slur covers the next two measures, which contain quarter notes G1 and F1. A fermata is placed over the F1 note. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the staff. A box containing the letter **H** is placed above the staff.

195

Musical staff for measure 195. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It begins with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, and A1. A slur covers the next two measures, which contain quarter notes G1 and F1. A fermata is placed over the F1 note. The dynamic marking *f* is placed below the staff.

203

Musical staff for measure 203. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It begins with a half rest, followed by a quarter note G2. A slur covers the next two measures, which contain quarter notes F2 and E2. A fermata is placed over the E2 note. The third measure contains a quintuplet of quarter notes D2, C2, B1, A1, and G1. The fourth measure contains a half note F1. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the staff.

211

Musical staff for measure 211. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It begins with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, and A1. A slur covers the next two measures, which contain quarter notes G1 and F1. A fermata is placed over the F1 note. The dynamic marking *p* is placed below the staff.

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