

Notes on Today's Music – 3/23/25

“**Revel-ation I**” is composed by Clif Hardin, a UU music director near Washington, D.C. His music is performed internationally, and his *Requiem* recently had its Carnegie Hall premiere.

“**Simple Gifts**” and “**Love is Little**” are both based on Shaker tunes. Simple Gifts was unknown outside Shaker communities until 1944, when Aaron Copland featured it in “Appalachian Spring.” In 1963, it was used for the hymn “Lord of the Dance.”

“Love is Little” was written around 1834, at South Union, Kentucky. According to the Shaker Historical Society, the Shakers may not have participated in marriage or in traditional families, but they believed in love for their siblings in faith and their neighbors. The composer is unknown. Shaker music scholar, Roger Hall transcribed the tune from a manuscript written in ‘alphabet music notation’ where lower case letters (a-g) represented the notes of the scale. Lines over or next to the letters indicated the note length (quarters, eighths, sixteenths or half-notes). No key signatures were used or needed.

“**Wichita Vortex Sutra**” was composed by Phillip Glass in 1966, to accompany Allen Ginsberg’s reading of his antiwar poem of the same name. According to scholar Robert Niemi, “The term “sutra,” derived from Sanskrit, suggests a connection or thread, paralleling [Ginsberg’s] bus ride from Lincoln, NE, to Wichita, KS. [the vortex]...a narrative journey through the American landscape and psyche. Through this work, Ginsberg invites readers to consider the power of language and its role in shaping societal consciousness.” Glass’s music, shaped by his studies with Nadia Boulanger and Ravi Shankar, was written in his signature “minimalist’ style with repeating fragments or “cells” of music.

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