NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

STRING CHAMBER MUSIC OF ARNOLD ROSNER: A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO STYLE AND ANALYSIS

A MAJOR DOCUMENT

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for the degree
DOCTOR OF MUSIC

Field of Violin Performance

By
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To Sarah

Musical discourse is that wonderful language which permits anything to be said and virtually nothing to be communicated.

Babbitt, *The Structure and Function of Musical Theory*

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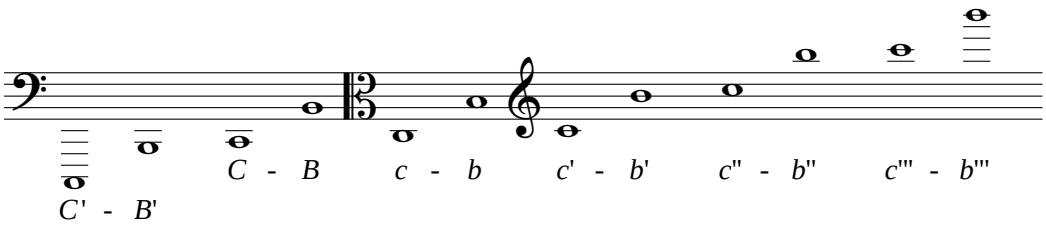
PITCH NOMENCLATURE

The following system is used when referring to specific notes, where clarification is necessary:



Where the discussion refers to a pitch in general, the letter name will appear in Roman face, rather than italics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are several people whose judicious combination of patience and support were invaluable to the process. I particularly want to thank my wife Sarah for her incredible dedication, my family for their constant encouragement, and Paul for helping me surmount the biggest obstacles.

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I remain indebted to my colleagues who have shared their musical talents with me in performing Rosner's chamber music over the past six years.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge Dr. Rosner for his continual willingness to provide scores, facts, and clarification during what must have been for him an agonizingly slow and lengthy process. When I first told him of my proposed topic, he advised me that a writer undertaking such a work often grows either completely enamored or utterly sick of the music being discussed. I'm happy to report that in my experience, it was the former which proved true.

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Arnold Rosner developed the foundations of his own musical style prior to receiving any formal instruction in composition. Born 8 November 1945 in New York City, he was a prodigious youth with a remarkable gift for music and mathematics, graduating from Bronx High School of Science at the age of fifteen. Although neither of his parents had any formal training in music, they enjoyed a casual appreciation of it, and encouraged him to undertake piano studies. He took private instruction in piano from the age of nine until he was thirteen.

His early musical experiences proved to be formative. Even before private study began, he was frequently experimenting with sound combinations on the piano in his home, finding himself drawn mostly to the familiar elements of vertical construction, and exploring the possible connections between various chords. In a 1991 interview he recalled, “During the second week of piano lessons, I discovered the fantastic sound of major/minor effects [e.g., E–C–E♭–C]. I showed my piano teacher and she reacted as if

they were something illicit or immoral. Of course that gave me all the more reason to fool around with them, and I'm still using them in my pieces."[1] Many of Rosner's earliest formal compositions are small keyboard works, of which he composed eight between the years 1956 and 1961. By the time he enrolled at New York University in 1961, he had also composed two symphonies, an orchestral tone poem, and an oratorio.

At the age of nineteen, Rosner graduated *cum laude* from New York University with the B.A. in Mathematics, where he also majored and earned highest honors in music. This pursuit of a dual major did not reflect indecision on the composer's part: He refers to the mathematics degree as "a lark right from the beginning. By the time I got to college…I knew [composition was] what I really wanted to do. But I was doubtful that academic musical training was going to do anything for me."[2] He received a National Science Foundation Fellowship in 1966/67, enrolling at the prestigious Belfer Graduate School of Science of Yeshiva University, where he undertook studies in Set Theory and Mathematical Logic. By the time he formally undertook music composition study at the age of twenty, in the graduate program at the State University of New York at Buffalo,

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[1] Walter Simmons, "An Interview with Arnold Rosner," *Fanfare* 14:5 (May/June 1991), 416. Bracketed text appears in the source.

[2] Ibid.

his output included four symphonies, two concertos, and two dozen chamber, choral and keyboard works.

It was at SUNY where Rosner first underwent a major stylistic change. In the composer's own words:

> My earliest compositions were most strongly influenced by the Romantics. In my 'teens I had already written four symphonies clearly in the Dvorak–Mahler–Shostakovich lineage. By 1967, two distinct forces brought about at least a temporary change. The first was the simple fact that virtually none of my works had been performed and that my full orchestral scores seemed relegated to permanent obscurity. The second was the study, at the graduate level, of Renaissance music in general and the works of Josquin des Pres in particular.[3]

While frustration over unperformed symphonies is universal to almost all young composers who have written them, certainly the New York scene in the 1960's was not an encouraging environment for a composer who had little inclination toward serialism, minimalism, or electronic music.[4] As Nicholas Tawa relates, "The novice was admitted to probationary membership in the avant-garde so long as he was willing to study 'the secret code of an exclusive fraternity,' as one outside observer expressed it. 'To gain acceptance

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[3] Arnold Rosner, liner notes to *Music by Arnold Rosner* (Laurel Records LR-849CD, 1989).

[4] In a correspondence to the author dated 4/29/97, Rosner remarked about awaiting feedback on scores he had sent to a conductor: "Do you realize how many man-hours of waiting time I have spent—and that any composer would have spent—just waiting for people to respond to things?" The statistics suggest that much of the waiting has not been in vain; eighty percent of Rosner's works have received public performances, and fifteen percent are currently available on CD.

in the rarified circles of the musical elite, he must claim to see the Emperor's new clothes.'"[5] That Rosner was more influenced by his own studies in music history than his private tutelage in composition is of no surprise to those who know his music. Liner and program notes often repeat Rosner's statement regarding his study with Leo Smit, Henri Pousseur, Allan Sapp, and Lejaren Hiller, calling them a group from whom "I learned practically nothing."[6]

Rosner's path through graduate music education remained rocky. His principal advisor in the doctoral program in composition, Lejaren Hiller, was a chemist and composer who had studied composition at Princeton University with Roger Sessions and Milton Babbitt. Hiller is best known for his *Illiac Suite*,[7] a computer-generated work for string quartet written during his graduate study at University of Illinois. For Rosner, the compositional philosophies of teacher and student clearly were on entirely different planes, and he found that his own work was frequently met with deliberate indifference. In 1970, after suffering his graduate committee's rejection of a substantial work for orchestra and chorus which he had composed as a doctoral thesis,[8] Rosner made the

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[5] Nicholas Tawa, *A Most Wondrous Babble* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Inc. 1987), 39. Tawa quotes Christine A. Murrow, "The 'New Music': A Reply," *American Music Teacher* (January 1983): 49.

[6] Arnold Rosner, liner notes to *Chamber Music of Arnold Rosner, Vol. II* (Albany Records Troy210, 1996).

[7] The peculiar spelling is correct. The word "Illiac" is a combined abbreviation of "Illinois

decision to switch to the doctoral theory program, retroactively collecting his M.A. in Composition. His doctoral dissertation was *An Analytical Survey of the Music of Alan Hovhaness,* and in 1972 Arnold Rosner received the first Ph.D. in Music awarded by SUNY Buffalo.[9]

Rosner's resistance against the forces of serial and avant-garde composition in the 1960's is even more curious in view of his remarkable mathematical and theoretical skills. A formidable duplicate bridge player, he is a former director and teacher at the Bridge Center of Brooklyn, a winner of several regional tournaments, and has received mention in *The New York Times* bridge column.[10] He also dabbles in the somewhat esoteric investment practice of selling covered stock options, and had a letter published in *Barron's Financial*. His unpublished article proposing a system of analysis for non-tonal and non-atonal music, based on measuring intervallic distances from a prescribed pitch center, is compelling.[11] Yet despite these skills, Rosner has never chosen to compose

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Accumulator," the name of the computer on which the piece was generated.

[8] Op. 45, *Perchance to Dream*.

[9] Rosner subsequently contributed the article on Hovhaness in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 6th ed.

[10] Alan Truscott, "Bridge," *The New York Times,* 16 September 1980.

[11] Arnold Rosner, "Valence Theory: A Methodology for Neo-Tonal Music" (paper submitted to Society for Music Theory, 1991), in the possession of the author. The approach assigns integer values, called "valences," according to the distance in perfect fifths from a central pitch. Chords are identified by the average of these valences, and observations of progressions are viewed according to the degree of "remoteness" between the chords. The Society has invited Rosner to submit an enlarged, in-depth discussion of this methodology.

music for non-traditional instruments, nor to work out a dodecaphonic matrix before setting pen to staff paper.[12]

Schwartz and Godfrey observe that "there was a growing feeling [in the 1960s] that the outer trappings of originality (dissonance, complexity, experimental instrumentation, etc.) had ironically become predictable."[13] The resurgence of musical conservativism which has taken place in the past few decades seems paradoxically to place composers such as Rosner in a vanguard of American musical style. Nonetheless, his devotion to his own style, coupled with a distinct aversion to playing the games of academic politics, has kept a prestigious university appointment beyond Rosner's grasp.

Rosner exemplifies the composite career of a diversely talented musician. He has taught at several colleges in the Northeast and Canada. He was Music Director of WNYU-FM radio during his entire four years at New York University, and from 1970 to 1972 he was an assistant Music Director of WNYC-FM, one of New York's top radio stations. A capable conductor and pianist, he has participated in both roles in performances of his own compositions. His miscellaneous credits also include arranging and conducting music for a 1989 documentary film, *Łodz Ghetto*; composing and

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[12] There are a few works in which Rosner uses a 12-note "row" (including op. 94, discussed below), but none of these employ serial procedures to generate further material beyond the melodic statement.

[13] Elliott Schwartz and Daniel Godfrey, *Music Since 1945: Materials, Issues, and Literature* (New York: Schirmer books, 1993), 263.

programming for educational multimedia materials; and articles published in *Music Educator's Journal* and the *Journal of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society*.

He currently resides in Brooklyn, New York, where he is an assistant professor of music at Kingsborough Community College, which is part of the City University of New York. He teaches courses in opera, world music, music appreciation, and theory, which allows him to share with students his outstanding musicological intellect, but neither school offers formal courses in the study of composition.

Despite receiving seven awards from the American Society of Composers And Publishers, and being a five-time recipient of Meet the Composer grants, Rosner readily admits frustration over his struggle to achieve higher visibility with the musical public. When he discusses the composer's experience or the state of art music in society today, Rosner's words betrays a certain weariness typical of the unjustly neglected composer of today. In a 1993 radio interview, when asked "Tell me the joys and sorrows of being a composer as we head out of the twentieth century," Rosner replied, "Well, I think that the sorrows outnumber the joys, probably."[14] When asked what advice he would give to an aspiring composition student, his response has been that he would discourage them from pursuing composition as a career path. Although such a realistic and pragmatic viewpoint

[14] Arnold Rosner, interview by Bruce Duffie, WNIB–FM, Chicago, 5 November 1995.

is understandable, it is fortunate that whatever negativity may exist in Rosner's outlook does not come across in his music.

During the height of Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone style, he wrote, "I believe that a real composer writes music for no other reason than that it pleases him. Those who compose because they want to please others, and have audiences in mind, are not real artists…They are merely more or less skilful entertainers who would renounce composing if they could not find listeners."[15] The notion of writing from the heart or from the brain has been one of the central issues dividing composers and consumers of music alike for most of the present century. Although his music reveals a commanding knowledge of musical history, theory, and compositional practice, Arnold Rosner stands nonetheless as a figure who has remained firmly committed to writing from his heart.

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[15] Arnold Schoenberg, "Heart and Brain in Music (1946)," in *Style and Idea: Selected writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1975; revised paperback edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 54.

CHAPTER II

ROSNER'S COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

Rosner writes in an individual and distinctive style, which finds favor with audiences and reviewers alike. *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* states that his music "shows affinities with the music of Hovhaness, Shostakovich, and the Renaissance polyphonists,"[1] while reviews published in recent years invoke such composers as Samuel Barber, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Roy Harris, Paul Hindemith, Ernst Bloch, and Arvo Pärt in describing Rosner's *milieu*. The most characteristic elements of Rosner's music are his harmonic syntax (including his use of modal systems, which in turn lend a distinctive flavor to his melodic materials) and his choice of forms.

The danger exists, with composers who are not widely known, of drawing conclusions based on the assumption that a few works are representative, and this has led to descriptions of Rosner's music which, while applicable in part, fall short of accurately summarizing his style. Walter Simmons refers to Rosner's style as "primitivist," and calls the emotional contrast surprising given the "limited context."[2] Tawa groups Rosner into

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[1] Walter G. Simmons, "Rosner, Arnold," in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 6th ed.

[2] Ibid. In a 1997 article (*Fanfare* 20:5 [May/June 1997], 228–30), Simmons defends his use of terms in the dictionary entry as follows:

the category of the "Musical Conservators" within the "Traditional Mainstream," writing that "Rosner invokes a ceremonial ambiance, as if the music was intended for a formal performance before the royal court.…For listeners who relish serenity and understatement, Rosner's music has much to offer."[3] While this description may fit Rosner's *A Gentle Musicke*, op. 44 (which Tawa mentions as a representative work), the serenity-seeker will have a rude awakening when encountering the dark and dramatic side of Rosner as heard in the Concerto Grosso No. 1, op. 60. Perhaps a more adequate, and less specific, account is found in *Baker's Biographical Dictionary*: "His music is couched formally in a neo-Classical idiom, but he freely admits melodic, harmonic, and contrapuntal methods of the modern school of composition."[4] While this statement avoids making generalizing assumptions about the style, it also says little to give the reader a sense of how the music actually sounds.

> I have been called to task in some quarters for using the word "primitivistic" in describing Rosner's music, as if I were criticizing his compositional technique as inadequate. But I am sure that, with a doctorate in music theory, Rosner was sufficiently exposed to advanced compositional techniques. What I meant to describe was a deliberate repudiation of much of that technical apparatus…The result is a direct, elemental type of expression, through which a wide range of emotions—including some very extreme states of mind—is presented without the dilution or distillation that often emerges from more complex elaboration. It is probably this directness—as well as the catchy melodies—that makes Rosner's music so accessible to so many general listeners.

[3] Tawa, *op. cit.*, 189.

[4] Nicolas Slonimsky, ed., *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, 8th ed.* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 1542.

In his 1994 radio interview with Bruce Duffie, Rosner offers a description of his own compositional style, along with his impression of the listeners who find his music perplexing:

> My style is in a netherworld between really modern and conservatively predictable. And if you look around the audience when a piece of mine is being played, there are some people there who just don't see what the connections are. They hear certain kinds of vocabulary, [and] therefore assume a certain general tonal syntax, which I avoid assiduously. And those who are looking to be impressed by the newness of something aren't getting off on my pieces, either. Generally, most good music requires more than one hearing, anyway.[5]

RHYTHMIC TRAITS

It is in the realm of rhythm that Rosner is most closely allied with styles from the past. The presence of rhythmic motives as unifying elements, regular periodic phrasing, and a relatively consistent hypermetric structure are all hallmarks of Rosner's style. While sections involving complicated cross-rhythms and compound meters appear with somewhat increasing frequency in his later works (such as *Of Numbers and of Bells,* op. 79, or his Piano Quintet No. 2, op. 103), their context within the familiar surroundings of these more traditional features offers the listener a grounding sense of orientation.

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[5] Arnold Rosner, interview by Bruce Duffie, WNIB–FM, Chicago, 5 November 1995.

Rosner prefers simple, uncomplicated rhythms that are easy to read and comprehend. His thematic materials have a traditional sense of rhythmic balance, invoking associations with Renaissance counterpoint. He favors even, dotted, dactyl, and anapest rhythmic units, with relatively few syncopations. This use of basic metric subdivisions creates at once a certain ease of playing, as well as an additional level of challenge to the performer. As any string quartet player who has been humbled by an early Haydn quartet knows, simplicity in music can be frightfully unforgiving, revealing every least flaw in performance. It is essential for each performer to be constantly scrutinizing the phrase structure, identifying when the music is leading toward a goal, and when it is in repose.

One peculiarity concerns Rosner's metronome markings. In most of his works, metronome markings accompany each new tempo indication, and many of these numbers lie between those of a standard metronome, particularly in his earlier works. For example, the first quartet, op. 10, includes the non-standard markings 97, 114, 150, 38, and 140; the second quartet, op. 19, calls for 64, 156, and 78 beats per minute. When I asked Rosner if he deliberately avoids standard markings, he responded that from his earliest composing days, he has always derived tempo markings in his mind, and that he has never owned a metronome. Furthermore, he explained that all of his tempos are indicated

with the mathematical symbol "≈", meaning "approximately equal."[6] Given this flexibility, and the ready availability today of metronomes which offer a full range of tempos (commonly from 35 to 250 beats per minute), these unusual metronomic indications should pose no difficulty for the performers.[7]

MELODIC STYLE

The truly distinctive hallmarks of a style are found in the rhythmic and harmonic realms, but the aspect of music to which most listeners pay conscious attention to is that of melody. Our mental catalogue of familiar works is generally indexed by melodic material, and musical recall is based upon the ability to recreate in the mind's ear various melodic lines.

Arnold Rosner writes melodies which are easily digestible, and generally memorable on a small number of hearings. The aspects of his melodic style which undoubtedly contribute most to any assumption that his music is primitive or simplistic are the use of uncomplicated rhythms, which generally lie within the divisions of the bar,

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[6] Telephone conversation with Rosner, 13 March 1999.

[7] Another feature of most new metronomes is a "sound out" jack, which permits an ensemble of any size to amplify the beat through a stereo. Metronomes which have offer a "click" or other non-pitched sound are to be desired over the ones that emit a "beep." Of course, the discipline of rehearsing quietly to hear an unamplified metronome is also a valuable practice, but that does not negate the benefits of using an amplified one.

and a sense of registral balance that suggests a conception of melodic content based upon vocal range. Furthermore, the four- and eight-bar phrase are frequent staples in Rosner's compositional diet. Metric ambiguity is not an integral aspect of his compositional style. It takes a certain amount of courage for a composer to be willing to communicate with the listener without the need to baffle them.

The intervallic content of Rosner's melodies follows basic rules of counterpoint, with his own avoidance of melodic triads imparting an individual flavor. The opening interval is more likely to be a second or a fourth than a third. Ascending fifths are common; descending fifths are not. Larger opening intervals are less common still. Where they exist, the rule of returning by contrary motion is generally observed. Rosner voluntarily accepts the basic rules of melodic style as the boundary against which he pushes with his harmonic creativity.

HARMONIC LANGUAGE

The overall accessibility that audiences find in Rosner's music is also due in large part to the prevalence of triadic materials and periodic harmonic rhythm. Such use of familiar elements can easily lead the listener to assume that the music is tonal. But understanding the distinction between "triadic" and "tonal" is essential in comprehending Rosner's style. By connecting chords without adhering to the hierarchical relationships

which comprise “functional” tonality, the music manages to preserve a sense of familiarity, without being predictable.

Rosner provides his own words on the distinction: “If you use the word [“tonal”] to mean non-serial, or not overly dissonant, or to suggest that chords have ‘roots,’ then it is applicable, but if you mean it to be an opposite to ‘modal’ or governed by tonic–dominant or related concepts of direction, then it’s not applicable—or at least less applicable.…Most authorities seem to think that there is an equivalence there, and that any music that uses rooted harmonies *must* perforce conform to certain progression expectations.”[8] He further states that not only does the “tonal” label not fit his style, but that he does not have a descriptive label that does: “I’ve tried a few, such as neo-tonal, pan-triadic, neomodal, [but] nothing really pleases me yet.”[9]

In order to discourage the automatic imposition of functional tonal schemes onto his music, Rosner greatly favors mediant-relationship movement from chord to chord. In common practice tonality, the motion of a fifth (ascending or descending) and, to a lesser extent, a second, are mainstays of tonal movement. A movement in the root by a third in traditional tonal music most often occurs with either a modality shift (to or from a

[8] Correspondence, 4 October 1997.

[9] Correspondence, 6 October 1997.

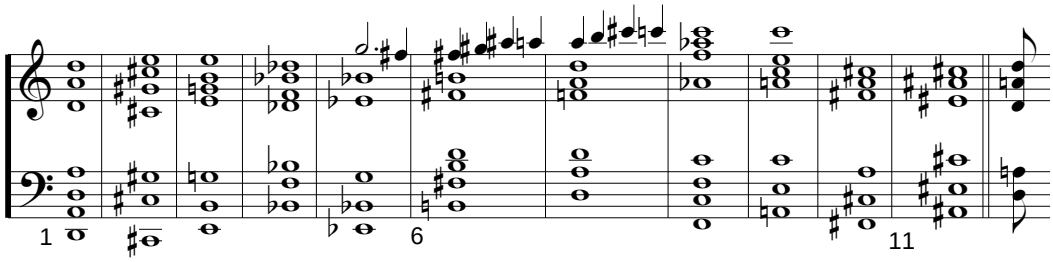
relative major or minor) or between dominant preparation chords, whose similar functions negate much of the feel of directed tonal motion. The increased use of mediant relationships in the Romantic era permitted new harmonic paths and an expanded harmonic palette, and heralded the beginning of the end of the dominant–tonic functional tonality of the Classical period. Rosner exploits this least loaded tonal shift by moving frequently between chords separated by a third, usually maintaining a common pitch between each pair of chords.

Consider the opening chord progression from his String Quartet No. 4, op. 56, of which a simplified version is shown in figure 2.1 (the original rhythm is written in a quadruply[!] overdotted French overture style). In the span of ten measures (2–11) he visits eight different triads, all in root position, and all minor with the exception of that in m. 5, which shifts from major to minor (note that the third of the E♭-minor chord, which appears on beat four of m. 5, is spelled as *f♯'*, placing ease of reading over harmonic spelling).[10] The entire progression contains no cadential V–I motion; only one motion by descending fifth occurs, from b♭ minor to E♭ major (mm. 4–5).[11] Rosner achieves a sense

[10] To avoid any confusion, the so-called Helmholtz notation will be used where specific notes are referenced. When pitch classes are mentioned, the letter name alone will be sufficient. A diagram of the Helmholtz nomenclature appears on page v above.

[11] Even this motion lacks cadential power. Because of the minor quality of the former chord, the progression sounds more like an ascending fourth. This begs the question of whether the composer would have used a low *B♭'* in m. 4, were it not below the range of the cello.

FIGURE 2.1. Quartet No. 4 in D minor, op. 56, i, mm. 1–12. Rhythmic simplification and two-staff reduction. All actual pitches are represented.



of continuity throughout this unpredictably wandering passage by connecting most pairs of chords by a common pitch; only the pairs in mm. 1–2, 3–4, and 11–12 lack such a sinewy connection. The return to the original open-fifth D chord in m. 12, which begins the *Allegro tempestuoso e marcato* section, is felt as an inevitable event only after it has actually occurred.

Rosner's youthful fascination with major-minor ambiguity, which predated his earliest piano studies, became a central feature of his mature compositional style. Part of the effect of this ambiguity is to emancipate minor chords from some sort of subservience to major. The accessibility of either raised or lower thirds permits the music to move freely about major, minor, or modal scales, as well as between chords that in functional harmonic hierarchy are considered mutually remote. Frequently, Rosner will involve both raised and lower thirds, without conveying any sense that one is leading to the other, or that either is predominant.

The prevalence of root position chords is another remarkable feature of Rosner's music. He uses great variety in his chord spacings, and will often reorchestrate recurrences of thematically and harmonically identical measures as a variation device, but even in such instances, the bass line will usually contain the root of the current chord. The degree to which this occurs can be seen in the third movement of his third quartet, op. 32; the first non-root note the cello plays (excluding non-accented passing tones) is the *a♭* in m. 46. This pitch mirrors that of the viola line from the previous measure, and is an accented dissonance which creates a major/minor clash in the context of an open-fifth F chord.

A happy result of this is considerable ease in harmonic analysis, which will be a great asset to an ensemble's intonation work. When building each chord, the group may look first to the bass for the root, and this will usually be fruitful. Rosner explains his penchant for uninverted chords: "Each chord or harmonic unit should be stated in the clearest way, even if this entails some parallels (to which I have no objection) or compromises in voice-leading. Of course, the idea is to write music where the harmonic strength and the linearity manage to fall happily together, [where] one doesn't sacrifice either one. But sometimes it can't be helped, and [then] I generally prefer harmony."[12]

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[12] Correspondence, 16 June 1999. Brackets and punctuation added by author.

Modal harmony plays a significant role in Rosner's music, particularly in the contrapuntally derived works. The Dorian mode appears most frequently, although Lydian and Aeolian modes also appear upon occasion. Another important harmonic device in Rosner's music is his frequent use of the octatonic modes. An octatonic scale is most simply defined as an ordered set of pitches which complements a diminished seventh chord. The result is an alternation of semitones and whole tones. Because none of the four pairs of semitones are a perfect fourth or fifth apart, melodies which are built upon these scales tend to be less susceptible to the automatic tonal associations which the Western ear so readily imposes.

Messiaen refers to this scale as the "Second Mode of Limited Transposition."[13] These modes comprise regular divisions of the twelve-note octave which yield duplicate sets of pitch classes in fewer than twelve chromatic transpositions. As with the diminished seventh chord, there exist only three distinct octatonic sets.[14] While chromatic scales, whole-tone scales, diminished seventh chords, and augmented triads are staples of

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[13] Olivier Messiaen, *Technique de mon langage musical* (Paris: Alphonse LeDuc, 1944), 52. The first mode of limited transposition is the whole-tone scale, of which only two distinct sets exist.

[14] While the theoretically possible spellings of such sets are copious (e.g., a diminished seventh chord including the pitch *A* can be spelled eight different ways without the use of double sharps or double flats), using pitch-class sets makes the limited transposition evident. Of the diminished seventh chords, only [0,3,6,9] and its transpositions, [1,4,7,10] and [2,5,8,11], are unique; the next transposition [3,6,9,0] duplicates the original set. The three octatonic sets are [0,1,3,4,6,7,9,10] (first transposition), [1,2,4,5,7,8,10,11] (second transposition), and [0,2,3,5,6,8,9,11] (third transposition).

the contemporary musical diet, the second through seventh modes defined by Messiaen present a considerable challenge to the tonally oriented musician.

STRUCTURE AND FORM

Musical structure serves as the container which holds the elements of rhythm, melody, and harmony. It encompasses vertical aspects of orchestration, as well as horizontal considerations such as single- and multi-movement form. Rosner's link to the past can be perhaps most clearly viewed in the structural realm. The number of movements in a work varies widely, with no particularly conservative slant, but the forms of the movements themselves are for the most part very traditional. Ternary forms, rondo-based forms, and sonata-form movements are common, as are older forms, such as passacaglia, motet, isorhythmic motet, fugue, variations, and various dances.

In recent years the titles of his works have become more fanciful and evocative, but the performing forces called for remain, for the most part, very traditional (see Appendix B, which lists his complete works). Rosner's catalog does include works for viols and for harpsichord, which are relatively uncommon among twentieth century compositions. Probably the most unusual combination in a modern sense is *La Vie Antériure,* scored for medium-high voice, string quartet, three trombones, and percussion.

No electronic instruments are called for in his works, nor prepared piano, nor other non-traditional methods of playing instruments.

PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

From a purely technical standpoint, most of Rosner's music is not unusually difficult to play. Aside from considerable demands on stamina in the bow arm, and the occasionally gnarly modal passages, the majority of his works are what performers would refer to as "kind." But as performers realize, there often exists an inverse relationship between the level of complication in a musical score and the ease of creating a convincing and satisfying performance. While rhythmic precision, expressive nuance, and interpretive insight separate a good performance from a great one, the one factor which acts as a litmus test for any ensemble's quality is intonation.

Because Rosner's music is not generated in accordance with the rules of functional tonality, the challenge to the performer whose background is built upon the common practice literature is to adopt a more strictly vertical approach to intonation. Rosner's choice of enharmonic spelling is often motivated more by the role of the note in its chordal context than by voice-leading considerations. He will also respell a note if the "correct" harmonic or melodic spelling makes the note awkward to play, either because of fingering or string crossings.

Rosner states his own priorities for enharmonic spelling in this manner: "*(a)* spell so that the melodic intervals look "normal"—e.g., major thirds rather than diminished fourths, etc.; *(b)* spell so that the harmonic intervals or chords look the way they normally sound; and *(c)* spell for the greatest possible comfort and ease of the player."[15] He further explains that his chosen ordering of these factors represents a loose generalization, and that "a small compromise of one is preferred over a big compromise of another."[16] This flexibility in spelling strongly argues against any type of subjectively altered approach to intonation.

Consequently, performing this music successfully requires not only that the performer develop an acute sense of tempered intonation, but also demands a higher expectation of familiarity with the score. Rosner composes at the keyboard, and the performer would do well to study his works in the same manner. Devices which are often useful in functionally tonal music, such as exaggerating the raised quality of leading tones, can create false suggestions in Rosner's music, and furthermore, can impart to the music a sense of unsatisfying intonation. Inaccuracies which might be overlooked in

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[15] Correspondence, 28 September 1998

[16] Correspondence, 1 October 1998

music of a familiar style can be quite unsettling in this music, where the progressions are often unpredictable.

This issue of intonational approach is one of the most longstanding and contentious ones in music performance, and somewhat of a Pandora's box which is scantily covered in the standard pedagogical literature.[17] In contemporary practice, the views can be divided into two "camps:" the proponents of "expressive" approach, and those favoring the equal temperament model. Arnold Steinhardt, first violinist with the Guarneri Quartet, describes the expressive approach to vertical intonation in a quartet:

> Among the "vertical" considerations there are anchor points: these are octaves, fourths, and fifths. When played simultaneously these intervals should be exact, [i.e., played with pure (or just) rather than equal-tempered intonation]. I make mental notes as to where they occur. I'll know that in bar 9 of a certain movement I play a B above the viola's F-sharp, and this therefore leaves me virtually no leeway for subjectivity in intonation. I say "virtually" because every rule can have an exception: a problem may arise, for instance, if I want my B to lead to a C that follows. Should I play the B high? That's a hard choice to make and shows how the linear and vertical demands sometimes conflict. On the other hand, seconds, thirds, sixths, and sevenths, whether major or minor, are up for

[17] In *The Art of Violin Playing* (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1939), Carl Flesch offers an excellent description of the process of playing with good intonation, stressing that it is largely a reactionary process, rather a matter of mechanical accuracy. Yet Flesch seems to contradict himself in temperament manners. He advocates equal intonation in his instruction to produce the tones "with the number of vibrations peculiar to them in accordance with the laws of acoustics, that is to say, purely, or in tune" (p. 19), but then later states "As is known, the pitch of a note, in spite of an identical appellation, differs according to its harmonic affiliations" (p. 22).

> grabs, as are augmented or diminished fourths and fifths; in all these cases there's considerably more flexibility than with perfect fourths and fifths.[18]

To an extent, these words offer invaluable advice to chamber players of any level and group, particularly by stressing the importance of acquiring familiarity with the entire texture, rather than merely one's own line. But caution must be exercised in applying "expressive" intonation for voice leading purposes in Rosner's music, in order to avoid imposing unintended suggestions of tonal motion upon a progression which is contrapuntally derived.

The application of equal temperament is crucial to successfully performing Rosner's music. Simmons, while justified in complaining about the intonation problems in a recording of Rosner's chamber music, is partly in error when he writes "Rosner's music requires impeccable intonation, his chromatically related triads requiring an attentiveness to enharmonic distinctions, e.g., the difference between C♯ and D♭. Approximations that would be tolerated in more conventionally tonal music—and in more dissonant music—can sound noticeably wrong in Rosner's peculiar syntax."[19] This exposes Simmons's presumption that Rosner chooses between available spellings based

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[18] David Blum, *The Art of Quartet Playing: The Guarneri Quartet in Conversation*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 28.

[19] Walter Simmons, *Fanfare* 20:5 (May/June 1997), 230.

upon voice-leading and harmonic direction, which contradicts his actual compositional practice.

Solid advice on intonation approach comes from the composer himself: "[Some think] one has to make a true distinction between C♯ and D♭, but in fact, it's trying for that that creates some of the out-of-tune quality in certain chords. Since I use consonant material in such chromatic connections, an equal-temperament approach works best."[20] Myron Kartman's assertion that "the performer should be more concerned with the sound of the sonority than with the spelling of the intervals which is of secondary importance in the preparation of any performance"[21] is as relevant to Rosner's music as to Bartók's.

In order to work toward developing such an approach, an ensemble should undertake slow intonation work on non-tonal material, separate from any repertoire being prepared for performance. An easily derived source is chromatic or whole-tone successions of major or minor chords, as well as combinations of these. More complex exercises involving inversions, seventh chords, and the like will be similarly beneficial, although these will need to be written out. A different, and certainly more enjoyable, approach is to read through volumes of Renaissance polyphonic compositions for viols,

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[20] Correspondence from Arnold Rosner, 20 May 1997.

[21] Myron Kartman, "Analysis and Performance Problems in the Second, Fourth, and Sixth String Quartets by Bela Bartók" (DMA diss., Boston University, 1970), 43.

recorders, or voices.

In actual rehearsal of a work, an effective procedure involves tuning chords individually, holding first all roots of the chord, then all fifths, then thirds, then sevenths (this is the order in which pitches appear in the overtone series). Suspensions should be tuned first with their resolution, then backing up to the suspended tone. This approach has both the benefit of developing an acute sense of triadic intonation and of reinforcing each players ability to rapidly determine the governing harmony of a chord, and the role of each note within that chord. Both for tonal music and for largely triadic music such as Rosner's, this will be an invaluable and expedient exercise.

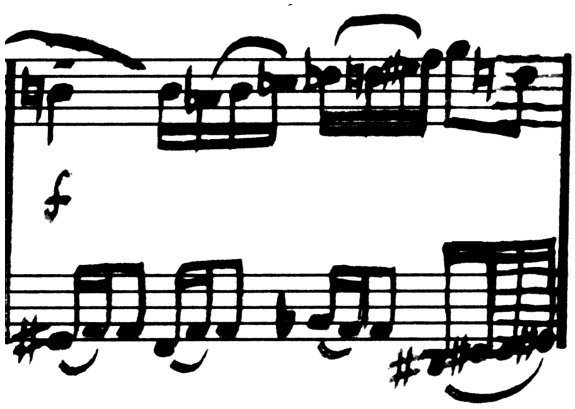
EXTRAMUSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Rosner's musical energies are directed inwardly toward the music itself, rather than to exterior innovations of context. All of his works are intended for the concert stage or church setting, with no unusual demands on equipment, placement, costumery, or lighting. While a great deal of post–World War II music seems to rely upon some extramusical elements such as stopwatches, household appliances, automobile parts, or livestock, Rosner is content to allow his notes to rest entirely upon their own merits.

Most of Rosner's music exists in fair copy in the composer's own hand. In the author's experience, very few note mistakes have been encountered, even in works

previously unperformed. The music is carefully notated and generally well spaced, aside from occasional horizontal compression at the end of a system. If necessary, Rosner will sooner extend staff lines into the right margin than divide a measure across two systems (see fig. 2.2). This spatial compression is generally the only instance where legibility is threatened.

FIGURE 2.2. Reproduction (actual size) of composer's autograph, op. 94, m. 123



It appears that Rosner uses a single pen for all notation. This sometimes results in overly heavy strokes, particularly on accidentals. Flat symbols tend to have squarish curves, which on occasion can appear like a natural sign when placed close to a downward stem. "Hairpin" crescendos and diminuendos are often so narrow as to look like accents; however, his accents are quite small, so the ambiguity is easily rectified.[22]

[22] Franz Schubert is also notorious for diminuendos that look like accents, and his manuscript is much more difficult to decipher overall.

Despite these details, it is clear in most cases what the composer intends. The benefit of a separately penned score can be a great asset, compared to the increasingly popular computer-printed counterparts. Computer generated scores and parts, when well-prepared by an adept user, can be very comfortable to read, but the very notion of extracting the individual parts from the score makes the score no more authoritative than the sum of the parts, and makes checking the score for verification a redundant and futile exercise.

Page turns are typically carefully thought out. On occasion, however, the logistics of page turning are unavoidably complicated. This is the case with *A Duet for Violas*, op. 94, where both players read from score and rests are scarce. Four options are available to the performers: 1) Spread the music across multiple stands (the parts are fanfold); 2) xerographically reduce the size of the pages; 3) engage page turners; 4) memorize the music.

Currently, there are approximately two dozen of Rosner's works published by a handful of publishers, the largest of which are MMB Music in St. Louis, Missouri, and Manhattan Beach Music in Brooklyn, New York. However, none of his string chamber music is commercially available at the present time. Inquiries regarding scores and parts may be directed to:

Dr. Arnold Rosner
Horizon Bay Music
3311 Shore Parkway, Suite 2A
Brooklyn, New York 11235
Phone: (718) 743-3839
E-mail: ARosnerPhD@aol.com

In order to examine Rosner's string chamber music style in more specific detail, three works will be examined, and each will be discussed in terms of rhythm, harmony, melody, and overall structure.[23] A certain degree of overlap must be expected among these categories. For example, an examination of a fugal piece is incomplete without addressing all of these elements, although the outstanding features of a given fugue might belong more in one area than another. Similarly, any thorough discussion of a melody necessarily includes aspects which are rhythmic and harmonic in nature. The Structure category includes primarily observations of form, but also addresses elements related to texture and growth. Overall, the aim of the discussion is not to provide a play-by-play

[23] These categorical divisions are closely based upon Jan LaRue's "SHMRG" model (Sound, Harmony, Melody, Rhythm, and Growth), as put forth in his excellent treatise, *Guidelines for Style Analysis* (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2d ed.). LaRue's first category has been omitted from the present discussion, with textural and timbral considerations absorbed into the other four where appropriate. Furthermore, Rhythm and Harmony have exchanged places in the present ordering of elements, reflecting my own analytic priorities.

analysis of each work, but rather to suggest to the interested performer ways of approaching the music to achieve an informed and intelligently developed rendition.

As Rosner's compositional style has matured, his forms have become more concise, his rhythms more comfortably developed, and his conception of ensemble sound more accurate. Meanwhile, his harmonic and rhythmic syntax have remained fairly consistent, which provides a musical "fingerprint." Rather than focus upon subtle chronological differences, the chosen ordering of the works being explored will investigate the adaptive response of Rosner's style to different ensemble sizes, namely, a duet, a quartet, and a sextet.

CHAPTER III

A DUET FOR VIOLAS, OP. 94

Perhaps no area of music repertoire has more enjoyed the liberation from functional tonality in this century than the solo and duet literature. With the notable exception of Bach's solo works for violin or cello, the works written in the Baroque, Classic, and Romantic styles for one or two melodic (as opposed to chordal) instruments generally relied upon implied or assumed harmony. Consequently, these works often sounded as if they might be improved by the addition of another voice. Such works generally fell into one of two categories: "consumable" music for enthusiasts, and pedagogical literature for the student.[1]

The present century has witnessed a renewed focus on the melodic, rhythmic, and contrapuntal aspects of music, and this has provided fertile ground for exploration in the solo and duo genres. Works for unaccompanied stringed instruments by Ysaÿe, Bartók, Hindemith, Badings, Bacewicz, Kodaly, Krenek, and Messiaen, as well as duos by Ravel,

[1] Even the works of J.S. Bach were not always distinguished from these categories. Schumann and Mendelssohn both supplied piano accompaniments for the Six Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin, BWV 1001–1006, and the publisher's preface to Leopold Auer's *Twelve Characteristic Preludes*, op. 9 (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1924) lists the Bach works alongside etudes of Kreutzer, Rode, Rovelli, Fiorillo, Gavinies, and Campagnoli as "instructive material" preceding the "admirable" works by Dont, Wieniawski, Ernst, and Paganini.

Kodaly, Prokofiev, and Martinů, represent only a handful of the important and serious works written in this century for these smallest of ensembles, works which have enriched the post-Romantic repertoire. Arnold Rosner (who has also added to the unaccompanied string repertoire with his *Danses a la Mode* for cello [and its subsequent arrangement for violin], op. 101) has made an important contribution to the non-tonal duet literature with his 1991 work *A Duet for Violas,* op. 94, as well as to the even sparser repertoire of works, from any stylistic period, for two violas.

Although this work is the most recent of the three being examined, it serves as a logical starting point for a specific discussion of these works, because it features the contrapuntal style which is the basis for much of Rosner's melodic and harmonic generativity. It was composed in 1991 for Jeffrey Irvine and Lynn Ramsey, professors of viola at Oberlin Conservatory, in appreciation for their assistance with the recording of Rosner's fourth quartet by the Alorian Quartet.[2]

A Duet for Violas received its premiere at the opening concert of the twenty-first International Viola Congress, held at Northwestern University in 1993, with the dedicatees performing. It was subsequently performed and recorded in 1994 by Diedre

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[2] This compact disc recording, titled "A Second Trio of Quartets," (Opus One CD 150) also includes Irwin Swack's fourth quartet played by the Ondine Quartet, and Lester Trimble's first quartet played by the Sierra Quartet.

Buckley and Mark Ottesen, respectively the incumbent and former violists of the Ad Hoc String Quartet. The recording was reviewed by Walter Simmons, who praised the work for "a tightness of focus and concentration of expressive intensity reflective of a greater compositional maturity. I find it a thoroughly consummated work…skeptical listeners are likely to be pleasantly surprised."[3]

The work is in two movements—*Adagio* and *Allegro*—which are to be played without an intermittent pause.[4] In addition to reflecting the duality of the ensemble in the large-scale form, this structure also invokes the familiar feel of the paired works of the Baroque, or perhaps the *Introduction and Allegro* of the Romantic period. The choice of this bipartite structure and the dedication to a married couple might be more than mere coincidence, especially considering the penchant for mathematical significance which is idiosyncratic of Rosner's compositional style.[5]

The discussion of this work is more technical in nature than that of the two which follow, and borrows more from the terminology and concepts of modern post-tonal

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[3] Walter Simmons, *Fanfare* 20:5 (May/June 1997), 230.

[4] The use of the term "movement" here merits clarification. It might be argued that the work is technically in a single movement of two contrasting sections, which are joined *attacca.* Furthermore, Rosner closes the *Adagio* with a single barline, and numbers the measures consecutively, with the *Allegro* section beginning in m. 69. Nonetheless, the term "movement" is appropriate here in its most literal sense, and less confusing than "section" in this context.

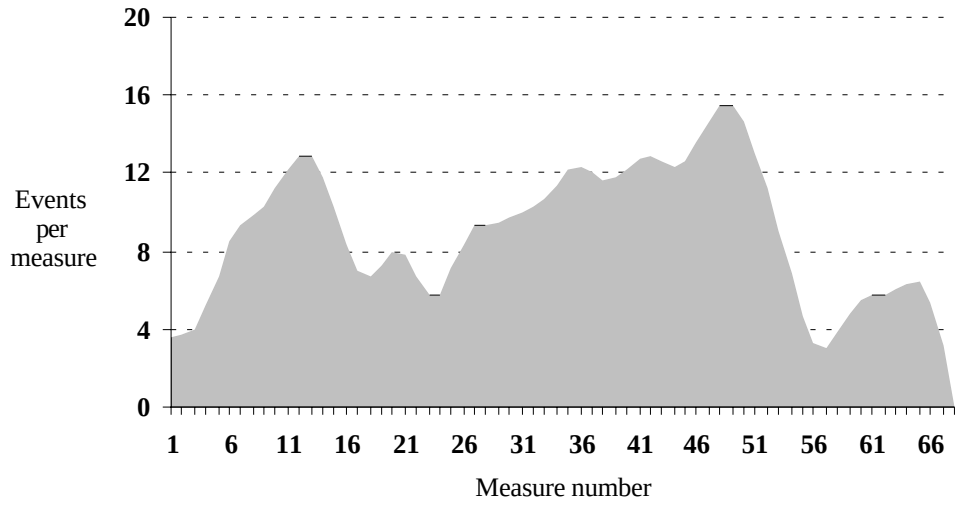
[5] Another two-movement string chamber work is the Sextet, op. 47, also dedicated to a musical husband and wife team.

analysis methods. This is largely due to the nature of the contrapuntal writing, as well as to the relative scarcity of triadic materials, which requires a reliance upon implied harmony; these factors combine to render some of the methods of traditional analytic observation less relevant.

FIRST MOVEMENT: *ADAGIO*

RHYTHM. The predominant feature governing the progress of the first movement is the pace of rhythmic activity. The interplay of the two voices, and the resulting aggregate rhythms, is of central prominence. Figure 3.1 shows the progress of rhythmic activity throughout the movement in a graphic representation. This was generated by tabulating the melodic events (appearances of new pitches) in each measure, and plotting a third-generation moving average at the three-measure level. The repetitive

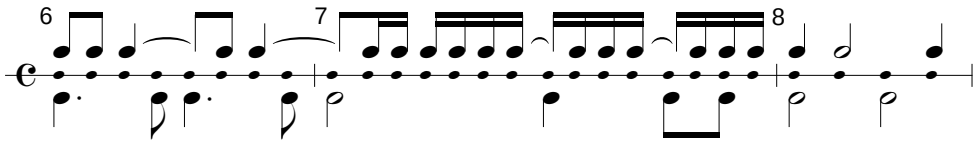
FIGURE 3.1. Op. 94, i, Surface rhythm topography.



averaging creates a smoother graph, emphasizing large-scale motion.[6] From this graph it can be seen that the overall pace of rhythmic activity is essentially three crescendos of varying degrees, the middle one occupying the majority of the movement.

The use of aggregate rhythms is important in both movements of the Duet. The first movement is entirely contrapuntal; virtually no homophonic motion exists. Rather, unity between the parts is achieved in places by assigning complementary rhythms, with

FIGURE 3.2. Aggregate rhythms, op. 94, mm. 6–8. Viola I is above the staff line, Viola II is below, and the surface rhythm is indicated by noteheads on the line.



the sum of attacks providing a regular and continuous rhythmic patter. Figure 3.2 shows how the overall pace in mm. 6–8 changes from eighth notes to sixteenth notes to quarter notes. Such passages must be rendered with a sensitivity toward the entire rhythmic

[6] This approach of averaging already averaged data is similar to calculating tertiary derivatives in calculus. While subsequent averages will progressively smooth the graph, asymptotically approaching a straight line, the method cannot create a contour opposite to what the original data support.

Calculating the pace of surface rhythmic events for measures of varying duration is somewhat problematic. For these data, 4/4 measures were considered the norm. The values of shorter measures were increased in proportion to the shortness of the measure, so that for example, a 3/4 measure with six events would receive a value of eight. A more sophisticated (and complicated) approach could be applied, calculating events on a shorter metric unit, but the overall shape of rhythmic activity would be similar, and little benefit would be realized.

fabric, with each player making their own attacks prominent, and relegating sustained material to a more subservient role.

MELODY. Before investigating specific melodic concerns, it will be useful to establish a level of familiarity with the octatonic scale, which figures prominently in op. 94. While the use of this modal set is seen in limited degree in the other two works under discussion, neither work employs this feature to the extent seen in the Duet. Familiarity will be aided by practicing three-octave octatonic scales and applying metrical, rhythmic, and articulative variations such as those accompanying the three-octave major and minor scale exercises suggested by Galamian.[7] Finding a comfortable fingering for passages which employ these scales can be deceptively difficult. Standard fingering theory considerations, such as shifting on semitones, preserving intervallic spacing in the fingers, avoiding excessive consecutive shifts (e.g., 1–2–1–2–1–2), and avoiding large shifts (spanning a range greater than three positions) become incompatible aims, often forcing the player to choose between two or more awkward fingerings.

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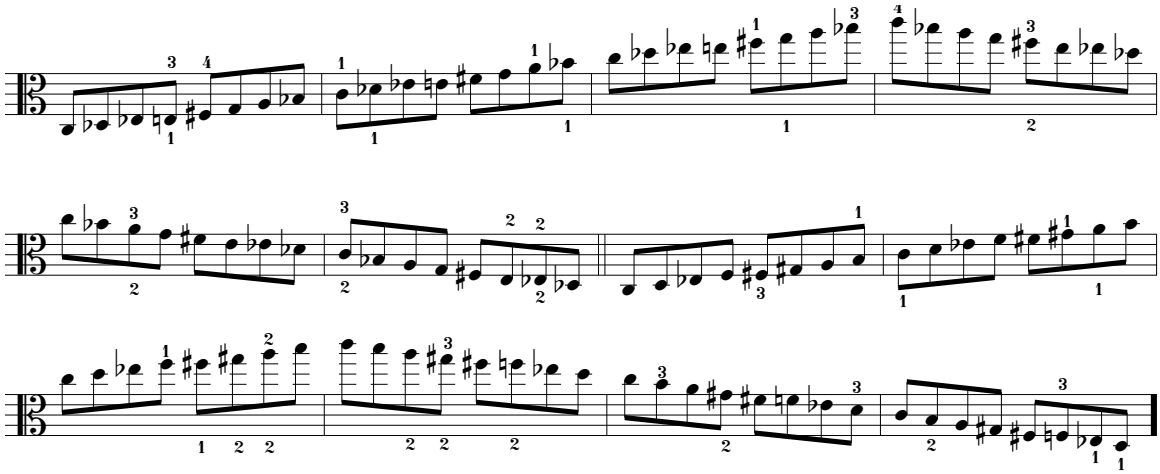
[7] See Ivan Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985), 96–8. Here Galamian offers several rhythmic variations to be applied to a 48-note scale. The more exhaustive variations presented in Galamian's and Frederick Neumann's *Contemporary Violin Technique*, Vol. I (New York: Galaxy Music Corp., 1966) offer little added practical advantage here, save for the written-out acceleration exercise on p. 5.

FIGURE 3.3. Three-octave octatonic scales, with fingerings suggested by the author



Two solutions are offered in Figure 3.3. In this example, the upper fingering maintains semitone spacing where possible between first and second fingers and between third and fourth fingers. The lower fingering places the semitones between second and third fingers. As in the diminished seventh chord, the fingers move one semitone lower when crossing to a higher string, and the one semitone higher when crossing to a lower one. The lower fingering, with a semitone between second and third fingers, is more familiar to the tonally trained hand, as this occurs frequently in major and minor scales. The spacing of the upper fingering, with semitones between first and second fingers and third and fourth fingers, only occurs diatonically in scale degrees 7^8–2^3 of the harmonic minor and ascending melodic minor scales. However, the relative comfort

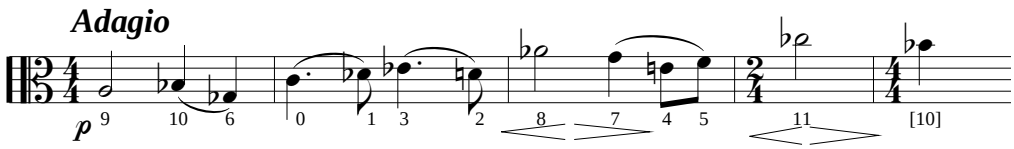
gained by using the 1–2^3–4 finger spacing is offset by the resulting extension (or half-step shift) encountered when crossing strings in either direction.[8] Other fingerings can and should be investigated, including coordinating shifting with the metric groupings, and fingerings which favor lower positions and open strings for greater security. Each individual should strive to find a fingering which uses their own fingering style to the best advantage.

In practicing these scales they should be transposed to all tonics, applying the various fingering principles to the transposed scales. The benefit of such work will become quickly evident. The scales will begin to sound more familiar, and the semitones will lose their directional force in the ear. Until this is achieved, it will be difficult to perform the music which uses these scales without added intonation problems.

As mentioned earlier, the work begins with a twelve-tone row (fig. 3.4). Examining this row closely offers insight into the composition as a whole. The construction of the row is such that the opening does not sound atonal (nor is it), and it would take an astute listener to discover the serial nature of this melodic line. Various properties of the row are worth examining. The melodic shape, taken without regard to specific pitch, could belong anywhere in the common practice era. There is an elegance

[8] The carat symbol (^) denotes half-steps.

FIGURE 3.4. *A Duet for Violas*, op. 94, mm. 1–4: Initial row statement with pitch-class numerals (PC0=C)



and simplicity in the balanced rhythms and overall gentle arching contour. The semitone motion between beats 1 and 3 of m. 1 (pitch classes 9–10), and the downbeat-to-downbeat motion of an ascending minor third in mm. 1 and 2 (PC9–6)[9], are answered by the notes in identical rhythmic positions in mm. 3 and 4, evoking a Classical sense of antecedent-consequent phrase. The entire line, rich with chromatic motion (including the resolution in m. 5, fully half of the first twelve melodic intervals are half-steps), imparts a variety of potential tonal suggestions, while the division of the four measures into four non-overlapping registers underscores the symmetry of the phrase.

[9] Throughout this chapter, the designation "PC" is used to precede numerals representing *individual* pitches. These pitch classes will be used when the focus is upon intervallic or chordal considerations where letter-based names would improperly emphasize or suggest tonal relationships which are not relevant. To further avoid confusion, a fixed pitch-class system has been adopted consistently here, even when a tonal center is present. Hence, PC0=C, PC1=C♯/D♭, PC2=D, and so forth.

When pitch-class *sets* are described, the customary notational practice of enclosing the numerals in braces will be observed (e.g., [0,3,6,9] in footnote 10 of the previous chapter). However, the permuting of the sets to determine prime forms, which is essential to analyzing atonal music, is of no practical value here. Hence, sets will tend to appear in "normal" order, but not inverted or transposed to achieve prime order. For more information on set orders, read Allen Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 3–13.

Mitigating these traditional "classical" elements, however, are a number of "modern" details. Each measure begins a tritone above the previous note, and the line contains no perfect fourths nor fifths. The semitone pairs (*a*—*b♭* in m.1, *a♭'*—*g'* in m. 3) which anchor the two halves of the phrase are followed both times by a note a third beneath, creating a sense of major/minor ambiguity from the very outset of the piece (PC9–10–6 in m. 1; PC8–7–4 in m. 3). And the melodic element which appears most prominent is the octatonic ascent in the first two measures (PC9–10–0–1–3, excluding the metrically and melodically disadvantaged *g♭*), followed by the octatonic collection PC8–7–4–5–11–10 beginning in m. 3.

While the performers obviously do not need to be experts in post-tonal analysis to play this Duet, examining the presence of these contradictory conservative and modern elements even in the initial statement sets the tone for an effective approach to the piece as a whole.[10] To assume that simplicity in gesture equates with simplicity in substance would indeed be selling the work, and the eventual performance, short.

The well-informed performer (or listener), upon discovering that the opening theme is a tone row, might instantly launch into an investigation of the ensuing material

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[10] Overall, the discussion of the op. 94 duet involves more of the terminology and concepts of twentieth-century music analysis than that of the other two works. This is largely because of the focus on the two-voice contrapuntal style, the use of the non-traditional (octatonic) scale, and the relative lack of tertiary harmony.

in search of inversions, retrograde forms, and the like. But only frustration awaits the dodecaphonic sleuth. As the composer states, “Listeners who know my music may find it hard to believe that the Duet begins with a twelve-note permutation, or row, but I assume they will be relieved to know that nothing in the continuation and development resembles serial treatment.”[11]

This movement is nearly devoid of rearticulated pitches, a fact which underscores the contrapuntal derivation of the melody. Of the nine occurrences of repeated pitches, eight appear in contexts where the repeating pitch is combined with a different one in the same voice (*g* in m. 13, *d* in mm. 20–1, *d*' in m. 27, *g* in m. 34, *a*' in m. 37, *f*♯'in mm. 38–9, *g* in m. 54, and *b*♭ in m. 66), so that the repetition does not have melodic significance. Only in m. 32 are pitches rearticulated for rhythmic impetus (*a*' and *d*'), and even here the chord changes after each sixteenth-note repetition.

HARMONY. In the usual sense, harmony is not a central force in the first movement. Rather, it is an incidental byproduct of the juxtaposition of the contrapuntal lines. Certainly, as is the case with any musical performance, careful attention to intonation is crucial to a successful rendition of this work, but here the vertical intervals

[11] Arnold Rosner, liner notes to *Chamber Music of Arnold Rosner, Volume II* (Albany 210), 2.

must be approached simply as vertical intervals, without falling into the usual tonal-harmonic methods of evaluating the music. Jan LaRue reminds us that counterpoint and harmony are at once opposing and related elements: "It is useful to place Harmony and Counterpoint at opposite poles, contrasting the horizontal, linear approach with the vertical, block-chordal approach.…[these] form the two ends of a single continuous spectrum, and we will quickly find that discussions of one aspect tend to overlap the other."[12]

Another particular challenge in successfully interpreting Rosner's music involves the issue of balance between parts. Because the harmony is contrapuntally derived, it is often far from obvious which line or lines should predominate. In the Duet, attention to balance becomes all the more essential. The dynamic indications are almost entirely in parallel,[13] but this does not release the performers from the necessity of making decisions regarding balance. The dynamics must be considered aggregate dynamics, achieved

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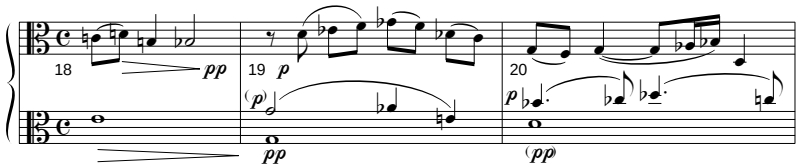
[12] Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis* (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 1992), 45–6.

[13] The only absence of parallel dynamics in the Duet is found in m. 19, where the second voice is marked ***pp*** against ***p*** in the first. This ***pp*** is clearly the end of the decrescendo in the second part. The performer should endeavor to play the open-string "drone" pitches in mm. 19–20 in ***pp***, while playing the melodic subject in ***p***, to avoid a strange and inconsistent increase in volume in m. 20, as shown below (dynamics in parentheses are added by the author).



through the combining of two often unequal voices. This consideration of combined sound brings to mind the terraced dynamics of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Only occasionally does the movement depart from the contrapuntal style, such as in mm. 13–8, mm. 37–41, and mm. 54–8, in which one part steps out of a melodic role to serve as accompaniment to the other.

The decision of which line to emphasize at a given point is often neither obvious nor subjective. Consider the opening subject in the first movement. Each time this subject reappears, it is coupled with a different countersubject. Should the subject be emphasized to underscore the fuguelike nature of the structure? Or should the transposed repetitions serve as a foil for the countersubjects, highlighting the variation technique at work? Such questions must be investigated thoroughly, and will lend an individual and distinctive interpretation in performance. Failure to adequately evaluate such balances creates a textural homogeneity that can result in a mellifluous sound, thereby rendering performances of the music heavy and lifeless.

STRUCTURE. Like the melody, the form of the first movement is similarly a mixture of conservative and progressive elements. The direct imitation of the opening unaccompanied subject by the second voice strongly suggests fugal procedure. Although the imitation is at the seventh, the disorienting effect of the tritone shifts in the opening

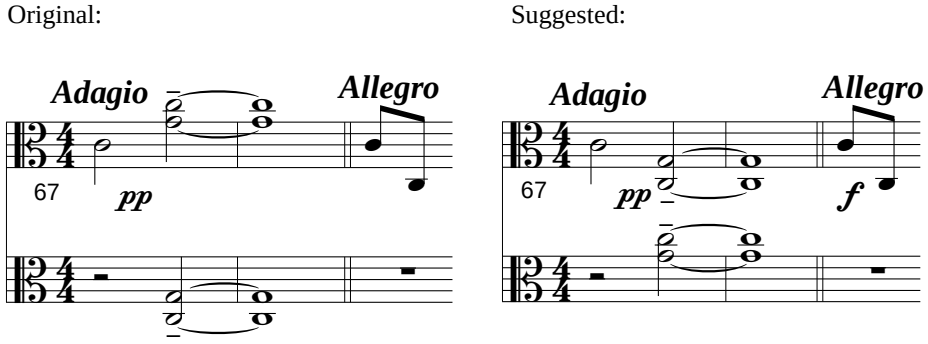
subject is such that the second voice sounds like a plausible real fugal answer. But when the first voice reappears in m. 9 (at the interval of a fourth above statement two, or a fifth above statement one), it is coupled with a countersubject entirely different from that of the second statement. In nine appearances of the subject, no two countersubjects are alike. The compositional procedure is best described as a hybrid of fugue-like imitation and variation form.

Meanwhile, the large-scale motion of the first movement is governed largely by rhythmic and dynamic trends. Four crescendos of increasing duration occupy 80% of the movement, with the last dozen measures taking on the role of epilogue. This closely mimics the surface rhythm topography on page 34 above. In general, Rosner is not overly specific regarding dynamics. The dynamic level and direction is typically indicated at the phrase level, but some degree of latitude and contour dynamics is expected, and many decisions need to be made and pencilled into the parts in the preparation stage. When Rosner discusses performances of his music, he rarely criticizes a performer's choice of dynamics. Absence of dynamic interest, however, is another matter entirely, and one which must not be tolerated. Sparsity in printed dynamics does not release a performer from the responsibility to continuously breathe life into the sound fabric by varying the amount and quality of sound. The unaccompanied string works of Bach provide a fitting example of this, with dynamics typically printed only for echo effects.

For example, the piece reaches ***fff*** in m. 45, with no other dynamic indicated until m. 56. Obviously, maintaining the ***fff***, especially on the long notes in mm. 51 and 55, is neither feasible nor desirable. The maxim to interpret dynamics as indications of intensity rather than simply volume is as vital to Rosner's music as any other. The intensity of a ***fff*** can be prolonged by strong articulation and a bright tone with the bow near the bridge, while allowing loudness to vary with melodic contour. Meanwhile, subtle transformations in the speed and amplitude of the vibrato should also contribute to the sense of growth throughout this long passage. In this way, the desired effect can be obtained.

Creating an effective transition between the two movements requires special attention. The somewhat awkward task of attacking the ***pp*** dyads in m. 67 can be avoided if the two players switch lines mid-measure (see fig. 3.5). This is advisable for two reasons: The higher part can be easily prepared by the second voice during its two-beat rest, and the first voice can better prepare for the sudden change of character while

FIGURE 3.5. Suggested voice exchange, op. 94, mm. 67–9



playing the easier chord. In my direct experiences with the composer, Rosner does not object to voice exchanging for facility's sake, as long as the integrity of the melodic line does not suffer, the instrumentation is not altered, and all material is accounted for. This is consistent with the keyboard-based compositional approach, which was discussed earlier in regards to intonation.

The second movement begins *attacca*, and the sense of continuity from the first movement is strong. Contributing to the strength of this connection, the first viola begins on middle C. This is the specific pitch which concludes the enigmatic first-movement coda section (downbeat of m. 67) and which is notably absent from the center of the final open-fifth chord.

SECOND MOVEMENT: *ALLEGRO*

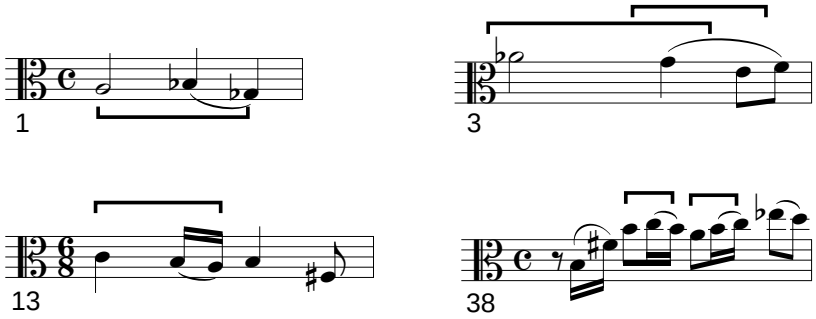
RHYTHM. The buoyant exuberance with which the second movement sets forth offers an immediate contrast to the more ponderous first movement. This exemplifies the Romantic notion of a work as a process, revealing the struggle ending in the attainment of a triumphant goal, a notion which appears frequently in Rosner's music.[14] Most striking,

[14] Rosner uses the phrase "durch Nacht zum Licht" in discussing his third string quartet in an interview with Bettina Ciechowski on 16 March 1997, quoted in her dissertation. In a similar vein, he uses the words "suffering and redemption" in describing the overall sense of the two movements in his Sextet, op. 47 (Pre-performance remarks, Northwestern University, 26 February 1998).

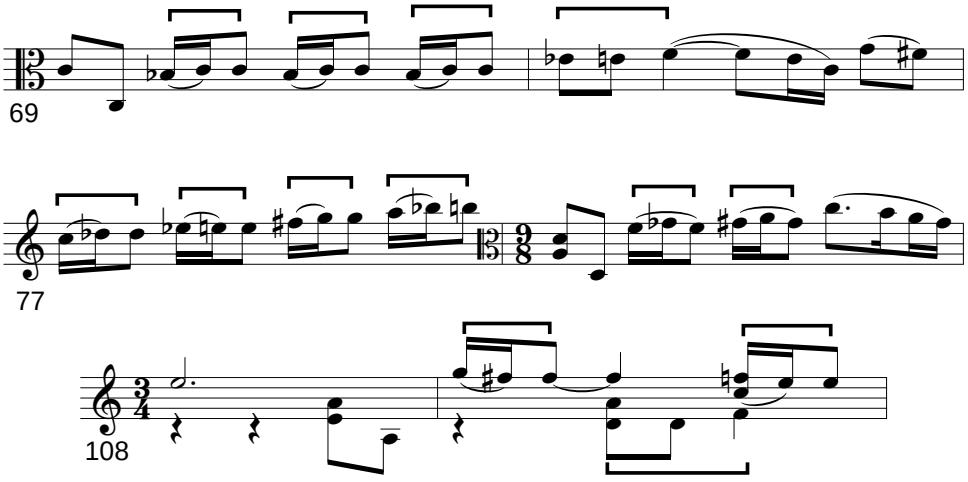
though, is the rhythmic opposition between the two movements. The rhythmic cell which pervades the first movement is the dactyl rhythm ("long-short-short"), while the prominent material of the second movement features the anapest rhythm ("short-short-long"). Figure 3.6 displays these rhythms as they appear in the melodic material of both sections, indicated by heavy brackets. There are, of course, numerous occurrences of each rhythm in both sections, but the melodic prominence of the material in these examples

FIGURE 3.6. Prominent rhythmic cell of op. 94

First movement:



Second movement:



sets them apart. This retrograde relationship unifies the two movements, and at the same time, situates the perceived axis of symmetry between them.

Repeated aggregate rhythms appear in the *Allegro* as well, but to a lesser extent and with less prominence than in the *Adagio*. Typically these are running sixteenth notes, created by combining the anapest pattern either with its retrograde, or with a dotted-eighth–sixteenth pattern. No lengthy sequences of these rhythms are present here. The energy of the front-loaded motive is sufficient to propel the music forward without the need for further intensifying the surface rhythm.

The prevalence of this driving rhythm, coupled with a regularity of meter that persists almost throughout the bulk of the movement, creates a feeling comparable to perpetual motion. The tactus remains largely undisturbed. The few exceptions to the four-beat-measure norm are summarized in table 3.1. In each of these instances, the continuation of the quarter-note beat, although challenged, can persist in the mind of the listener. In mm. 108–19, there is a certain level of metric ambiguity, which is increased with the divisibility by four of the two sections. It is important that the performer realize the implication that this strength of rhythmic drive has upon the performance of the work. Whereas the first movement will allow for, and even benefit from, a tastefully restrained degree of temporal flux, such liberties taken with the pacing of the second movement will only detract from the vitality inherent in the work. Only in mm. 137–41 should the metric

machinery be allowed to falter, and here the hesitation is written in, so that any additional variance in tempo must be subtle. The overall effect in these measures is a wonderfully humorous moment, where the parts almost sound as if both players are lost and groping around for each others' line; then suddenly, the last ten measures appear from the rubble. A certain amount of *piu mosso,* again subtle, will make this ending even more effective.

TABLE 3.1 Atypical meters in op. 94, ii

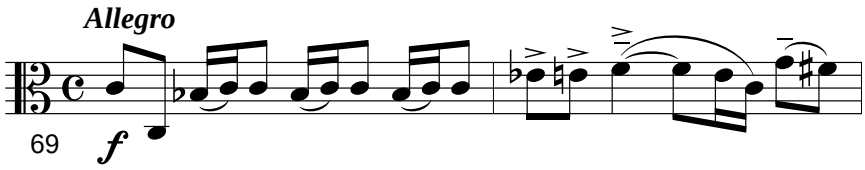
MEASURE[15]	METER	REMARKS
78 & 79	9/8 (3/4 + 3/8)	Metric "hiccup" created by expansion of fourth beat
108–111	3/4	Two-measure idea, repeated with exchanged voices. Textural accent in accompanying voice creates ambiguity of notated 3/4 + 3/4 vs. perceived 4/4 + 2/4
112–119	6/8	Further voice exchanges on two-measure ideas. Notated accents (in mm. 112, 114, and 116) create metric conflict between parts.
137–141	5/4	Five measures, with quarter rests on fifth beat of each. Creates feeling of hesitation prior to final closing.

MELODY. As in the first movement, imitation is prevalent here, but the associations with the fugue are less apparent. This is largely due to the canonic imitation at the outset of the *Allegro,* where the first two measures of the upper line are repeated at

[15] In the score, which is the only extant printed version, there is an error in measure numbering, causing all measure numbers after 76 to be numbered one less than the actual measure number. For simplicity's sake, the measure numbers in this discussion will correspond with the printed score.

identical pitch in the lower in mm. 3 and 4. The theme appears in m. 74 beginning on F♯, and is answered in m. 76 a minor third higher. A similar instance of imitation occurs in m. 98 where the opening theme begins on D, and is answered in m. 101 a major third lower.

FIGURE 3.7. Op. 94, ii, initial statement of theme



This distinctive opening theme, like that of the first movement, will reward the performer who takes the time to examine it closely. In contrast to the first movement theme, which avoided tonicization, here the presence of the repeated pitch *c*' firmly establishes a harmonic root. In m. 70, the first two notes combine with the *c*' to create a sense of major/minor ambiguity, while the overlapping four-note melodic groups E♭–E–F–E and E–F–G–F♯ , which are conspicuous because of their placement atop the melodic contour, invoke the memory of the second measure of the *Adagio.* The subsequent return to *c*' and following leap to *g*' reinforce the panmodal triad. The final semitone descent to *f* ♯' adds the suggestion of a diminished triad, and frames the entire subject within a tritone, the same interval which figures so prominently in the *Adagio* theme.

Like the harmony, the melody is also closely tied to the octatonic mode. Exercise caution with accidentals. The transpositions are exact, with trivial exceptions. The descending octave is raised an octave in m. 76; were this not the case, the lower octave *A´* would be below the range of the instrument. And the *d* which alternates with the lower octave *e♭* in the anapest rhythm in m. 120 is a semitone below, as opposed to the whole-tone alternation which appears everywhere else.

Literal voice exchanges occur in mm. 108–16. The performers must attempt to match not only articulation, but also dynamics, timbre, and phrasing. Whatever timbral difference lies between the two instruments will provide sufficient individuality to distinguish the lines; no attempt should be made to further differentiate them.

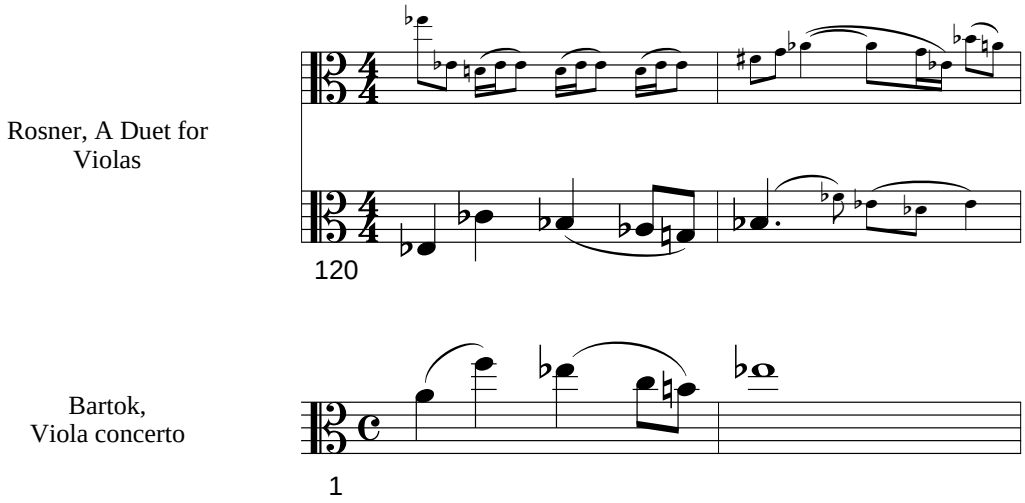
The pizzicato chords in the first viola (mm. 88–93) are cumbersome, and marked ***fff***. All of the three-note chords in this passage are root-position open-fifth trichords. Consequently, fingering them all with second and first fingers offers two advantages that outweigh the inconvenience of the extra shifts. First, the intervallic spacing of the hand is preserved. Second, the fifth is stopped with the second finger, which is the widest and least diagonal of the available choices. The chords will sound more loudly if struck in a broad, diagonal motion, extending the right index finger and moving the right arm from the shoulder.

The lengthy trill on the open *c* (second viola, mm. 142–7) is rather awkward, and difficult to execute cleanly. Any first-finger open-string trill is inherently weak, both because of the lack of security in the gripping the neck of the instrument, and the rarity of the task. Three considerations will assist in producing a clearer and stronger trill: (a) Adjust the speed of the trill. Too fast a trill sounds muddled, and consequently slower than one that is actually slower, but cleaner; (b) trill slightly sharp on the *d*♭ upper note, for greater distinction in pitch and to facilitate the string speaking quickly; (c) consider anchoring the first finger on the G string at the nut, and trilling the *d*♭ with the second finger.

A couple of interesting melodic items merit mention. In m. 80, there is a four-note motive, *b*"–*c*'"–*a*"–*g*♯", which is a transposition of the Shostakovich signature motive, D–S–C–H. The pitches appear ***ff*** in even quarter notes, in the highest register of the entire Duet, and the passage contains the greatest registral separation between the two parts. When asked about this, Rosner denied any conscious attribution, pointing out that the occurrence of these pitches is likely in music based upon octatonic scales.[16] Even more remarkable is the resemblance of the melodic line in the second viola part in m. 120 (following a significant rhythmic cadence, and marked *subito* ***mp***, from ***fff***) to the

[16] Correspondence from Arnold Rosner, 23 September 1998.

FIGURE 3.8. Comparison of op. 94, mm. 120–1, with Bartok, Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, op. posth., mm. 1–2 (© Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., used with permission)



opening of the Bartok concerto for the same instrument (see fig. 3.6). Regardless of whether these similarities are playful salutes to earlier masters, or the workings of the subconscious mind, such references in music provide an additional element of reward to the attentive and informed musician.

HARMONY. The importance of the octatonic scale, which lent a particular harmonic flavor to the first movement, is elevated to a central and integral role in the *Allegro*. Far beyond being a mere feature, the octatonic mode becomes the defining harmonic material, to an extent that virtually redefines consonance and dissonance by inclusion or exclusion from the modal collection. The use of the octatonic scale as

organizing material also appears in larger strata of the compositional process. The opening melody is stated nine times throughout the movement, transposed to start on various pitches.

TABLE 3.2. Op. 94, ii, transpositions of main theme

Measure:	69	71	74	76	80	98	101	120	149
Starting pitch:	C	C	F♯	A	G♯	D	B	E♭	C
PC:	0	0	6	9	8	2	11	3	0

These starting pitches, when arranged in normal order (pitches F♯, G♯, A, B, C, D, E♭, or in pitch-class notation [6,8,9,11,0,2,3], transposable to [0,2,3,5,6,8,9]), form seven consecutive notes of the mode 2 scale, third transposition, as defined by Messiaen.[17]

To understand how mode replaces key as an organizing feature, the criteria for evaluating the governing mode must first be established. In the Allegro, a remarkable majority of the notes can be assigned to one of two octatonic collections, namely, the first transposition [0,1,3,4,6,7,9,10] and the third [0,2,3,5,6,8,9,11]. The remaining

[17] Messiaen's nomenclature for describing the transposed modes is employed here, although the term "transposition" might seem to wrongly suggest that there exists an untransposed version. It is tempting to borrow the chordal terms "root, first, second," etc., but that would bestow an inherent elevated importance upon one mode over another.

transposition, the second [1,2,4,5,7,8,10,11], curiously only appears in m. 107, where it fits exactly. When a measure does not fit the incumbent transposition, it becomes readily apparent, because the level of dissonance suddenly jumps higher than the average of slightly more than one note per measure. In most of these cases, another transposition becomes obvious when placing the employed pitches in scale order.

TABLE 3.3 Transposition of governing octatonic modes in op. 94, ii

Measure numbers	Segment length[18]	Transposition	Remarks
69	10	1	
78	10	3	
88	6	various	Transposition by measure: 1–3–x–3–3–3
94	10	3	Two segments, 4+6 measures
104	3	1	
107	1	2	
108	18	1	Three segments, 4+8+6 measures
126	8	(1)	Chromatic, but closest to transposition 1
134	19	1	Two segments, 8+11 measures

In all, a search for notes outside of the governing mode reveals only 79 modally dissonant *notes* in 83 *measures*.[19] Disregarding the largely chromatic passage in mm. 126–33 improves the consonance factor to 63 pitches in 75 measures. Table 3.3 shows

[18] The original measure numbering is preserved; for an explanation, see footnote 14 above.

[19] Oddly, m. 90 is the single measure which fits no transposition of the octatonic mode. This measure is represented by an ‘x’ in the Remarks column for mm. 88ff.

the assignment of these modes to the music, and reveals medium-level structural segments, which interchange and balance much like the tonal key areas in a classical work.

STRUCTURE. The form of the *Allegro,* like that of the first movement, is loosely similar to, rather than tightly cast in, a standard form. As discussed above, the opening two-measure idea contains the genetic code for most of the material that follows. In a sense, this is a monothematic movement. The return of the theme, easily identifiable by the downward octave leap and distinctive anapest rhythm, provides structural anchor points invocative of rondo form, although the transposition of the theme to a fourth and tritone above the original defy the textbook definition for that form. If a formal label is helpful, the performer may think of this movement in terms of a four-part ritornello form.

This return occurs three times, in m. 98, m. 120, and m. 149. Each time, the rhythmic machinery is interrupted at these points, creating a rhythmic, if not harmonic, cadence point. The four-beat *d* in the upper part in mm. 97–8 (following two quarter-notes, an augmentation of the anapest motive), is the longest undisturbed note value in the movement thus far, and ties across the barline into the first return. The length of that note is surpassed in the movement only by the C-minor chord in mm. 118–9, which lasts three full beats in duration, and precedes the second return (the one with the

aforementioned Bartók reference). The final return is led into by the five-measure section (137–41) in 5/4 meter, in which each fifth beat is empty, as if the music is needing to catch its breath before the “sprint to the finish.” The return to a tonic pedal on the trill in mm. 142–8 serves as the start of the final ritornello, even though the theme itself is withheld until the last four measures of the work.

The performer would do well to pay attention to the places where the texture changes, as these places correspond either with mode shifts or ritornello passages (sometimes both). This will aid in achieving a grasp of both the inner and large-scale structure of this movement, and provide for a more directed sense of movement.

Imitative entrances of the opening material become less prevalent as the movement proceeds, as the measure numbers in Table 3.2 indicate. (this was the case in the first movement as well, although to a lesser degree. This scarcity makes the reappearance of the theme increasingly important, and particular prominence must be given to these lines in mm. 98 and 120, where they follow developmental passages. In both of these cases the theme is paired with contrasting lyrical material. The distinction should be present, but discreet; subtle emphasis of the melodic line by articulation is to be preferred over the more obvious method of simply playing the theme more loudly.

CHAPTER IV

STRING QUARTET NO. 3, OPUS 32

The five string quartets are products of Rosner's early and middle periods. The first three quartets (opp. 10, 19, and 32) were written between 1962 and 1965, and rapid advances in sophistication are apparent during this short span. These quartets represent Rosner's initial foray into music for small ensemble; all his works prior to op. 10 were either for keyboard or full orchestra. As the composer entered his twenties there followed a seven-year hiatus from string quartet writing, but not from chamber music entirely. During these interim years, 1965 to 1972, Rosner wrote sonatas for cello and for oboe, and produced a piano quintet and a string sextet (opp. 41, 54, 35, and 47, respectively).

The fourth quartet (op. 56, written in 1972) presents a darkly dramatic side previously unheard in Rosner's quartets, and the fifth quartet (op. 66, from 1977), with plaintive cantorial narrations and raga-like minimalism, is one of his more ethnic sounding compositions. In the years since the completion of the fifth quartet Rosner has undertaken revisions of varying degrees of some of the earlier quartets, but has produced

no further quartets to date. He began work on a sixth quartet in 1993, but abandoned it for fear of "repeating himself compositionally."[1]

These works have generally been well received. In reviewing a quartet recording, Walter Simmons writes of Rosner's five quartets, "observing what elements remain constant throughout and what elements have changed provides considerable insight into the fundamental aesthetic intentions and priorities of this remarkable figure, who has amassed one of the most unusual and idiosyncratic bodies of work of any American composer of his generation."[2] Dennis Moore says that these works "show an increase in fluency of expression but basically share the same world view—something that cannot be said of most composers of our time."[3] Huw Edwards calls Rosner "the American equivalent of the British composer Robert Simpson who, like Rosner, continues to produce quartets and symphonies in a proven musical language: if they have something worth saying they do not need tape-manipulation, or a nomenclature of performing instructions to say it!" (punctuation his).[4]

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[1] Bettina Ciechowski, "Arnold Rosner: Streichquartett Nr. 3" in *Die verspätete Unabhängigkeits-erklärung–Untersuchungen zum Streichquartettschaffen amerikanischer Komponisten nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg.* PhD Diss., Universität Mainz, 1998, 108-124.

[2] Walter Simmons, review in *Fanfare* 20:5 (May/June 1997), 228.

[3] Dennis Moore, review of a compact disc recording, "Chamber Music of Arnold Rosner, Vol. II" (Albany 210) in *American Record Guide*, July/August 1997.

[4] Huw Edwards, program notes for performance of Rosner's Quartet No. 2 in A minor, op. 19, by the Ad Hoc String Quartet, 1 February 1994. Unlike Rosner, Simpson does choose to write functionally tonal

Rosner's String Quartet No. 3 was written in 1965, and was revised in 1992 in anticipation of a recording by a quartet then at the University of Houston, a project which never came to fruition. The Ad Hoc String Quartet, based in Evanston, Illinois, took an interest in Rosner's quartets during that same time. In September 1993, they presented the world premiere of the third quartet, beginning a season which would include performances and a commercial recording of the second, third, and fifth quartets, as well as *A Duet for Violas*, op. 94. [5] The third quartet has also attracted the attention of Bettina Ciechowski, a doctoral candidate at Universität Mainz in Germany. Her dissertation (cited above, note 1 of this chapter) surveys sixteen string quartets of American composers in the latter half of the twentieth century, the earliest of which is Rosner's Quartet No. 3.

While Rosner embraces older forms and compositional practices, he eschews some of the exterior features which would most align a work with the traditional body of string quartet literature. None of his quartets are cast in the traditional four-movement mold (in fact, of all his chamber music, only the Wind Quartet, op. 26, fits such a

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music, but the relevant similarity alluded to in the remark is the use of traditional materials, forms, and methods.

[5] The recording mentioned is *Chamber Music of Arnold Rosner, Vol. II* (Albany Records Troy210, 1996). Rosner's third quartet received its premiere at the Unitarian Church in Madison, Wisconsin, on 13 September 1993.

description). When he uses sonata forms, they tend to be sufficiently veiled so as not to be heard as a prominent feature. The presence of a triple-meter dance in the third quartet (second movement) is the most overtly traditional large-scale structural aspect of his entire quartet cycle.

The third quartet is cast in three movements, which follow an overall slow–moderate–fast format. Tempering the predictability that such a format might suggest, Rosner embeds contrasting sections into each movement that follow the opposite trend. In his own words, "the middle section of the third movement is actually the slowest music in the whole work; the middle section of the first is among the fastest."[6] Ciechowski points out the palindromic nature of the work as a whole;[7] the approximate durations of the three movements in minutes are 10:4:10, and the exact lengths in measures are 272:146:271.[8] While mathematically remarkable, this symmetry has little direct bearing upon the listener's experience.

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[6] Rosner, *Chamber Music* liner notes, 1.

[7] Ciechowski, *op. cit.*, 109.

[8] A measure numbering error is found in the third movement, where m. 209 is numbered as 210, rendering all subsequent measure numbers one number higher than the actual count. As in the discussion of op. 94 above, the measure numbers mentioned in this discussion will correspond to those in the printed score (as do the numbers in the individual parts).

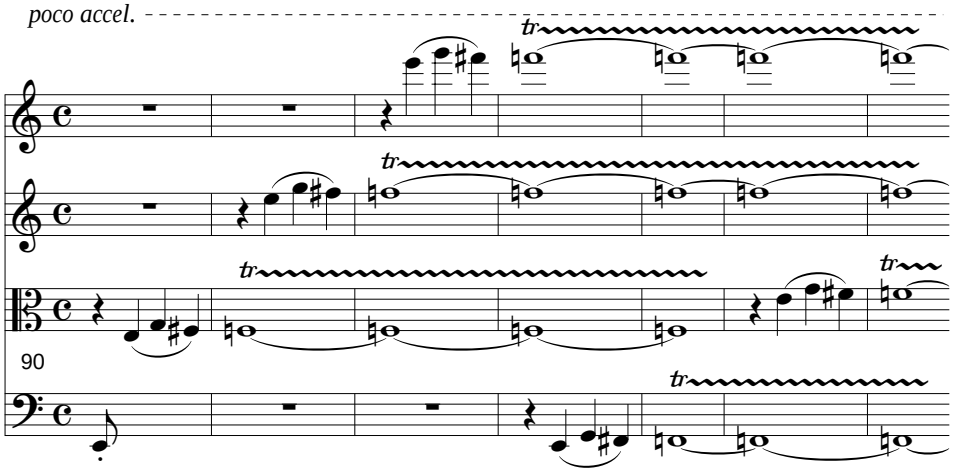
FIRST MOVEMENT: *MODERATO; ALLEGRO; MODERATO*

RHYTHM. From the outset, rhythm takes a subservient position, allowing the harmonic atmosphere to capture the attention of the listener. The entire opening section, or "A-section" in traditional sonata form nomenclature, has a surface rhythm entirely in quarter notes and half notes, with the former far outnumbering the latter. Throughout the exposition the quarter note surface rhythm persists, with triplet quarters appearing in mm. 61–77, and eighth notes appearing only for one measure in the first violin (m. 45) and four measures in the cello (mm. 82–5).

When the development begins in m. 90, the rhythms assume greater thematic importance. Comparing this section with the imitative material from the viola duet reveals in the quartet the mark of a more youthful and inexperienced composer. The same creative impulse is clearly present, but in certain passages the imitation is more academic and somewhat predictable. In figure 4.1, the opening measures of the development, the opening motive is iterated five times, each in a different octave transposition. The metric placement in each measure is identical; only the delay of one measure's trilled chord before the fifth statement (m. 94) creates any rhythmic variety.

Similarly, the fugato section which follows presents a subject which, while ingenious in its combining the two expository themes into one, proceeds with all four

FIGURE 4.1. Op. 32, i, mm. 90–6



voices stating the subject at metrically equivalent intervals (beginning with a pickup note into mm. 99, 102, 105, and 108). Once the fugal exposition is completed (m. 111) the proceeding developmental material unfolds much more naturally and spontaneously.[9] The onus falls upon the performers to find ways to express the sense of building excitement in these strictly imitative passages, and to conceal any predictability by drawing the listeners' attention instead to the growth of the music.

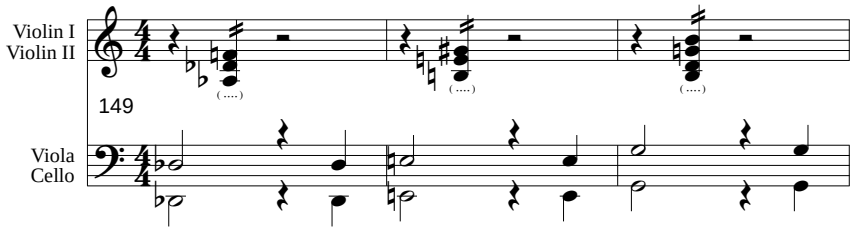
Following the imitative and dialogue sections, the development reaches a ***fff*** dynamic in m. 135, a level which is to be sustained for 30 measures (the softest level of the entire development is ***f***, which lasts for only five bars [mm.105–9]). Here the viola

[9] This is not a flaw particular to to Rosner; the very nature of the fugue has unavoidable academic associations. Even in the works of the great masters of the standard literature, the very presence of a fugue draws attention to itself, becoming increasing anachronistic with distance from the Baroque era.

and first violin respectively play the primary and secondary themes, accompanied by running sixteenth-note chords in the other two voices. In rehearsal, the melodic lines should be practiced together, as should the driving accompanimental figures. Each player must understand the complete texture, but the overall cacophony should be relished. No allowance should be made here to "leave room" for another part. Contrary to appearances, it takes considerable effort to achieve good ensemble while flailing furiously in such a passage.

A difficult rhythmic gesture appears in both violin parts in mm. 149–52 (see fig. 4.2). In order for the abrupt interruption to come across effectively, the groups of sixteenth-notes must be executed with equal bow usage on each note, and each player

FIGURE 4.2. Op. 32, i, mm. 149–151 (two-staff reduction)



must direct the motion of the four sixteenth notes toward the empty third beat. It is essential that the silence be emphasized in this manner. If the sixteenth notes taper off dynamically, the effect will be one of fizzling out, rather than being interrupted. The

viola and cello can assist by sustaining (or slightly increasing in volume) their half notes, and releasing together with precision.

At the close of the development (mm. 153–65), both the descending melodic line and the decrease in pace of rhythmic activity suggest a reduction in dynamic and temporal levels. This tendency must be consciously avoided, in order for the transformation to original tempo, dynamic, and character to take place during the single eight-beat chord (mm. 166–7) as intended. Resisting a deceleration in tempo in mm. 157–65 will also aid the players in maintaining the designated *"con tutta forza."*

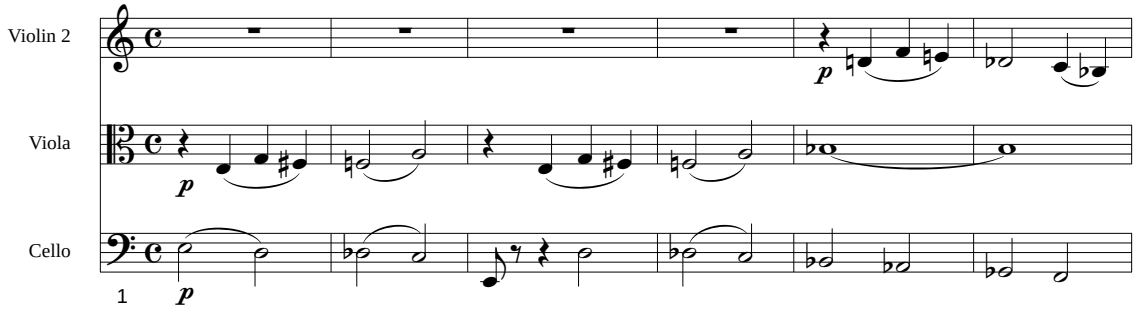
The coda begins in m. 257. Like the opening of the piece, the central features here are largely harmonic. The rhythm must be steady, with a *legato* bow, and it is important to note that there is a natural rallentando written into the ending by means of reduced rhythmic activity. Consequently, if the players wish any additional slowing of the tempo, it must be very subtle and not overdone.

MELODY. Careful score study is essential in preparing this movement, although the technical accessibility of the work might lull a player into a false sense of confidence. The placement of the melodically prominent line is sometimes veiled; other times, two equal melodies may coexist. Frequently in the outer movements of this quartet, Rosner employs chordal melodies, where no particular voice holds melodic superiority to

another. Without careful and thoughtful analysis of melodic content in this work, the performance will lack variety and interest.

At the beginning of the piece the melody, like the rhythm, is essentially a function of the harmony. A motivic idea is introduced in the viola at the very outset; an ascending minor third, retreating by two semitones, closing with an ascending major third. After immediate repetition, the second violin offers an altered version in mm. 5–6, emphasizing

FIGURE 4.3. Opening melodic statements, mm. 1–6



the vertical major and minor thirds created by the melodically accented *d*' and *d*♭' above the *b*♭ held in the viola (Fig. 4.3). Practically all the melodic material in the first section of the exposition (through m. 46) can be traced back to these brief opening motivic statements.

An example of a veiled melodic line is found in mm. 14ff. in the first movement. The first violin plays the pairs of descending semitone quarter notes in a higher register, while the rest of the instruments have half notes. While this may seem like melodic material, the primary melody is in the cello (and is so marked in the cello part and the

score). The descending semitone pairs in the first violin are respectively major and minor thirds over the tonic of each chord, which appears in the cello. Even though a louder dynamic ***(mf)*** than the inner two voices ***(mp)*** is indicated, the first violin must be aware that the cello (also ***mf***) has the more important line. Meanwhile, the inner voices will find that their pitch swapping and parallel fourths provide plenty of intonational challenge in these measures.

In contrast to the motivic nature of the opening, the second theme (mm. 47ff.) is a soaring *cantabile* melody of sixteen bars. In this passage, the nature of the accompanimental parts often shifts rapidly from purely chordal to melodic (or countermelodic), as seen in the cello line in mm. 47–62 (fig. 4.4). Again, conscientious score study (as well as judicious part marking) will help the players determine the prominence of each part at all times.[10]

An example of chordal melody is found in mm. 8–10. It may be argued that the first violin is melodically prominent in m. 7 and again in m. 11, but for these three measures, the entire texture *is* the melodic line. The ensemble must carefully match dynamics, articulation, and phrasing, to achieve the effect of a chordal instrument controlled by a single musical will.

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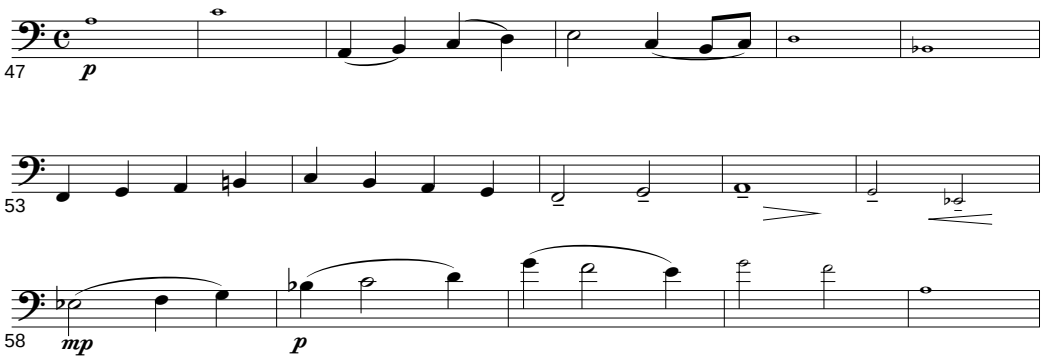
[10] Schoenberg's designations of *Hauptstimme* and *Nebenstimme* are invaluable additions to every musician's nomenclature for all types of music.

FIGURE 4.4. Cello line, mm. 47–62. Melodic material in large noteheads.

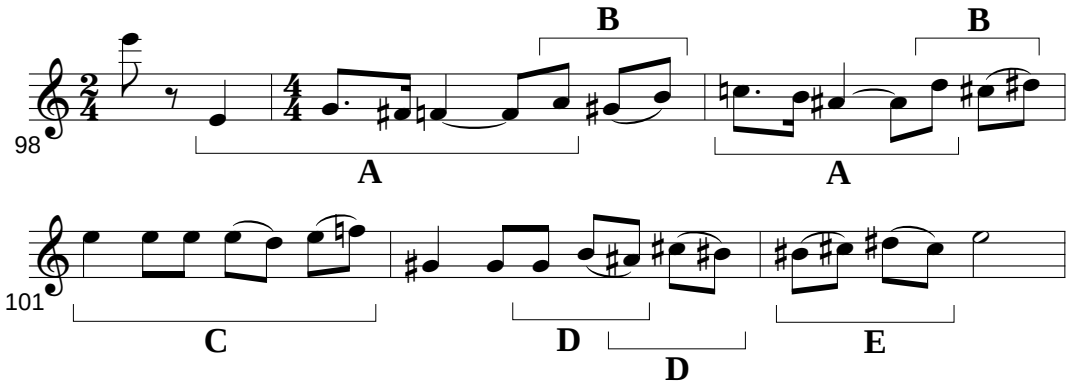


Careful attention to dynamic and articulative detail will reveal phrasing and melodic direction that may be counterinstinctive. In mm. 7ff., the melodically repeated bars (mm. 8, 9, and 10) might seem to be a three-bar group, in which case intuition would call for a crescendo between the ***mp*** in m. 7 to the ***f*** in m. 11. The printed dynamics, however, contradict this assumption, and give prominence to the downbeat of m. 9, which changes both the implied harmonic structure and the hypermeter as well.[11]

Rosner's contrapuntal prowess again shines in the construction of the *fugato* subject beginning in m. 98. Nearly every note of this subject can be traced to thematically important material drawn from the two main themes of the movement. Figure 4.5 traces and lists these thematic sources.

[11] Rosner is overall very fastidious in detail, and errors of omission are seldom, particularly with regards to expressive indications (articulation, dynamics, tempos, and so forth).

FIGURE 4.5. Op. 32, i, fugato subject and its derivations



A) Rhythmic variant of opening motive from mm. 1–2

B) Retrograde inversion of first three notes of opening motive

C) Rhythmic diminution of second theme from mm. 47–48

D) First three notes of opening motive

E) Retrograde inversion of second half of (C), m. 101

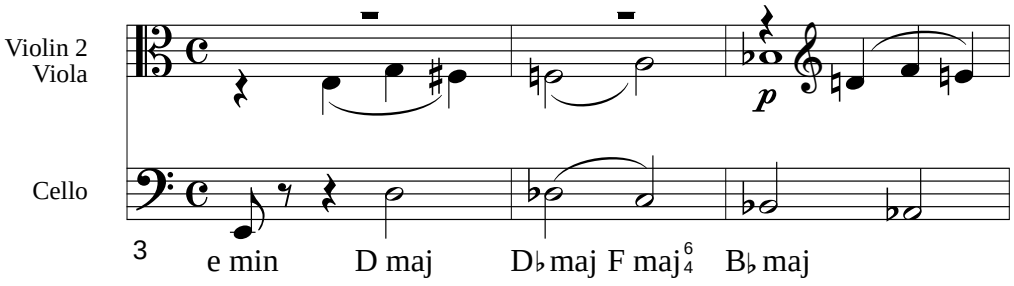
Two melodies share the spotlight in mm. 230–3. The return of the melody heard earlier in mm. 63ff. is now coupled with a new melodic line; not merely a countersubject, but a fully autonomous musical idea (Mahler employs this technique memorably in the second movement of his second symphony, where the piece returns to A♭ major). The second violin and cello should temper their ***f*** dynamics here to allow the melodic voices to enjoy their shared role as soloists.

HARMONY. From the outset, Rosner establishes three distinctive harmonic idioms that define the harmonic style for the entire work: a) extensive use of trichords,

usually in root position, with a marked sparsity of seventh or ninth chords; b) modal equality between major and minor, and c) narrow harmonic motions, involving root progressions usually of a second or third, or occasionally a fourth, but seldom larger.

The combination of the frequent mediant relationships and the modal parity allow the music to move freely about the tonal spectrum in a manner which sounds harmonically logical, if somewhat exotic, and to quickly reach areas which would be considered remote by traditional functional tonality standards. A prime example of this is found in the opening bars (fig. 4.6). Examining mm. 3–4 reveals the progression E (modeless, but retroactively experienced as minor)–D major (4–3 appoggiatura)–D♭ major–F major (second inversion)–B♭ major, the arrival at which transports the piece to the remote area of the tritone's parallel mode. The stepwise motion of the bass obscures the tonal cadential motion suggested by the chord names E…F–B♭, and the absence of a seventh in the F chord further averts such traditional associations. The chord reached on

FIGURE 4.6. Implied harmonies, op. 32, i, mm. 3–5



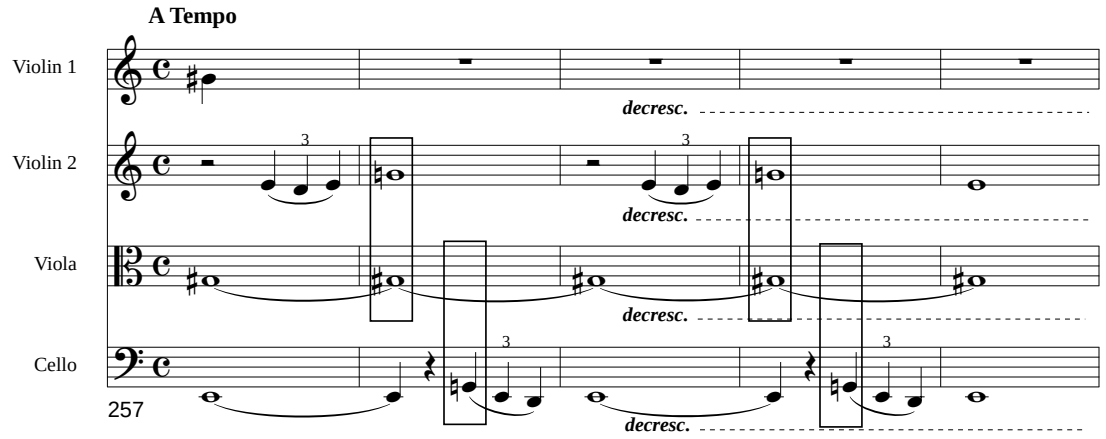
the third beat of m. 5 is actually an implied dominant seventh chord in third inversion, but the *f*'–*e*' motion negates this before it has any chance to be felt as such.

Rosner so seldom uses traditional dominant–tonic cadential motion in the bass that it becomes a striking feature when it does appear. The first such instance in the quartet occurs in m. 42, introducing the transition into the second theme. Even in this context, however, the effect is restrained; the cadential motion is inverted (an ascending fourth), and the dominant is minor and lacking a seventh.

The practical application of these observations to the performer mainly centers around intonation and voice-balancing issues. The approach, suggested earlier, of tuning chords individually in overtone order (roots first, then fifths, thirds, sevenths, etc.) will be indispensable throughout the work. Realizing that the cello typically plays the root, and that seventh chords are scarce, should make each player attentive to octave doublings. Furthermore, awareness of the infrequent cadences will help to shape the rendition of the piece, lending to a sense of coherence in the performance.

In the coda, the struggle between major and minor is not merely expressed through alternation, but also via direct clashes between G♯ and G♮ over an implied E pedal, as seen in mm. 257–60 (fig. 4.7). The ensuing alternation between E major and G major (mm. 261–6) is a curious example of an aural illusion; in the context of E major, the G major chord “feels” minor, because the root and fifth are flatted relative to the

FIGURE 4.7. Op. 32, i, mm. 257–61



diatonic III chord. It is remarkable that alternating major chords can create such a false sense of modal shift, and Rosner exploits this to great effect.

STRUCTURE. The form of the first movement is the typical first-movement sonata form, and as such is one of the more traditional elements of the work. The temporal flux indicated between the contrasting sections of the movement should be carefully observed. The tactus accelerates only the slightest degree between the first and second themes in the exposition. Only if the opening tempo is accurately retained can the *pocchissimo accelerando* designated in mm. 45–6 be effective. This subtle change from ♩≈90 to ♩≈110 should be experienced mostly as a brightening in character to support the lyrical second theme.

The *accelerando* which begins in m. 90 is more complicated than it first appears. Over the span of eight bars, the tempo must increase to twice the *original* tempo, but not double that of the second theme. Allowing a slight rallentando at the close of the exposition (e.g., mm. 87–9) to begin this transitional passage in the original tempo is advisable. Similarly, it seems that a tempo exactly twice that of *Tempo I* is ideal for the development section (the indicated tempo is 𝅗𝅥≈184 for the development, which is barely more than double the opening tempo of ♩≈90). This will allow the augmented return of the first theme, played by the viola in m. 135 ff., to appear in its native tempo, and will prepare the arrival of the recapitulation (in m. 168) without need for temporal adjustment. It is curious that Rosner places the double bar and *Tempo I* marking in m. 166, two measures before the recapitulation begins.

SECOND MOVEMENT: *ALLEGRETTO*

In the context of the two heavyweight outer movements, this quirky, four-minute piece typifies the juxtaposition of seemingly irreconcilable styles which is a hallmark of Rosner's structural style. In this movement he reaches far back, borrowing color and character from the instrumental tradition of Renaissance dance music.

RHYTHM. Whereas the first movement casts harmony in the supporting role alongside melody, in the second movement rhythm assumes that position of support. The whimsical, jaunty musical clock portrayed in the opening has no parallel in Rosner's other quartets. Ciechowski's use of the term "chordal pendulum" is especially apt here, as the entire texture seems to portray exactly that.[12] In order to execute this figure correctly, each player must be attuned to the eighth-note subdivisions of the bar, rather than merely the two accented beats. Metronome-aided practice, undertaken both by each individual and by the ensemble, is indispensable here. Even though the tactus will undergo some modification during the course of the movement, the eighth-note pulse should remain absolutely steady throughout, proceeding *senza rubato* through the final note.

The metronome marking is ♩≈80. This may seem slower than the character of the tune suggests, but the more relaxed tempo will permit the performers to attend to the wealth of articulative detail the piece demands. Comparing this movement to its neighbors reveals an abundance of accents, tenuto and staccato indications, as well as unequal dynamics.

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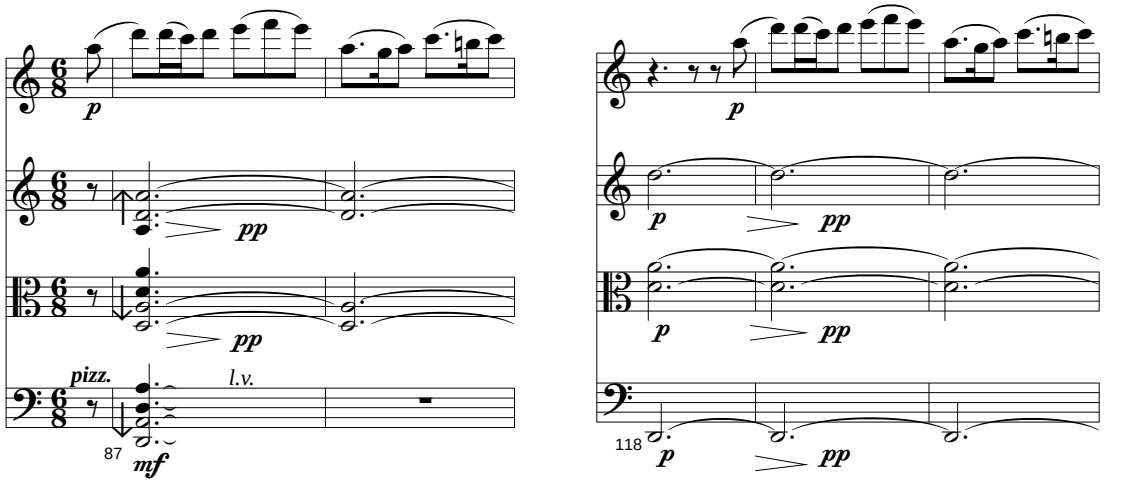
[12] "Zudern wird der Finalsatz über weite Passagen durch akkordische Pendel beherrscht." (Ciechowski, *op. cit.*, 6). While this remark refers to the repeated alternation of two chords in the last movement, the characterization fits the opening of the second movement especially well.

Subtle textural details also await the attentive observer. Note the color shift between the first four measures and the next four; the direct transposition (up a major second) is immediately obvious, but here the orchestration also changes from violin–viola–cello (mm. 1–4) to violin–violin–viola (mm. 5–8). Another example is found in the expanded voicing of the pedal chord in mm. 118ff, compared to its prototype

FIGURE 4.8. Op. 32, ii, selected transitional passages



in m. 87ff. (Figure 4.8). The ensemble should arrive at a decision regarding the wider spacing of the later passage, whether to allow the fuller texture to create a louder dynamic (both chords are indicated ***pp***), or to play the second passage ***ppp*** in order to match the volume of the first.

The contrapuntal approach that governed the first movement is scarce in the second; only the *fugato* section (mm. 39ff.) can truly be considered contrapuntal. The

passage is more imitative than fugal, with each successive entry accompanied by new countersubjects. Imitation continues after the four statements have been completed, but it becomes increasingly fragmented after m. 57, returning to the dance-like character of the opening.

The middle section of the movement (mm. 94–123) is entirely a product of the 1992 revision of the quartet. The outstanding feature of this section is the meter, set in 9/8 with divisions of 2+2+2+3. This corresponds with various Latin American and Eastern European rhythms, including the *aksak* rhythmic structure of Turkish folk music. According to *New Grove*, "*aksak* means 'limping' or 'stumbling,' a term which seems to indicate that this metre originated in a simple metre of four beats, the last of which is lengthened by half its value, thus effecting a characteristic stumbling movement."[13] If we remove the "stumbling" of the meter by condensing the three–eighth-note fourth beat into a single quarter beat (see fig. 4.9), the melodic shape becomes a believable *saltarello tedesco*, and the harmonic rhythm takes on a lopsided dotted-half–quarter rhythm, similar to that found at the close of the first-movement exposition (first mvmt., mm. 79–86).

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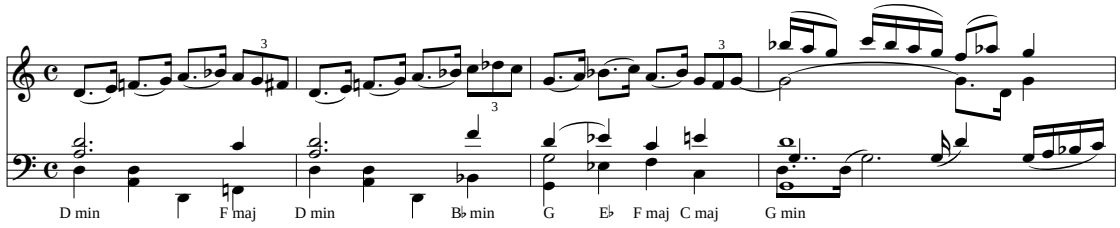
[13] Kurt Reinhard, "Turkey, §3: Folk music," in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 6th ed., xix/271. Rosner's suggestion that this rhythm evokes "ethnic music from such places as Yugoslavia or Brazil" (Liner notes, Troy210) is supported by Reinhard's remark that "it is possible that the Turks disseminated these metres throughout the Balkans, or at least encouraged musical tendencies of a similar nature that might already have been there" (Ibid).

FIGURE 4.9. Op. 32, ii, mm. 94–7, recomposed to fit into a 4/4 meter



This process of extracting a metrically balanced prototype from an unbalanced meter is a valuable tool for understanding the musical direction at the basic metrical level. It mirrors the process of analyzing and understanding phrase expansion (and contraction). As William Rothstein explains, "the point of reference from which an expansion departs is generally metric as well as tonal. Most basic phrases have a well-defined hypermeter, which usually matches the prevailing hypermeter of surrounding passages."[14] This applies to "measures" and "meter" as well as it does to "phrases" and "hypermeter."

The principal relevance of this emphasis on metric structure is to establish that the 9/8 in mm. 94ff. is not related to that of m. 93, nor of mm. 116–7, where the composer marks "9/8 ordinario." The first three beats should not suggest the metric dichotomy inherent in a typical hemiola pattern; on the contrary, any suggestion of emphasis on the

[14] William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythms in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), 65.

fourth eighth-note of these bars must be avoided. Understanding this *aksak*-like meter in this way will allow the performer to present it in a coherent, intelligent manner, without destroying the continuity of the dance.

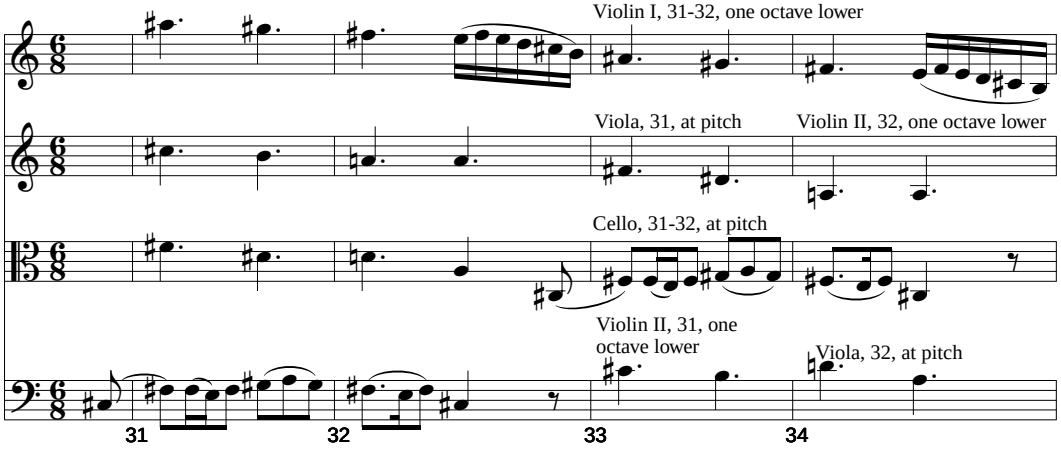
MELODY. The principal melody of this movement is a light-hearted old-style dance tune. The eight-bar melody divides into four two-bar phrases, of which the first three share identical first bars until the final note. The accompaniment is sometimes static, sometimes responding to and imitating the melody. The articulation and bowing are clearly indicated by the composer, and should be followed to convey the appropriate character. However, it would be a mistake to try to "read into" the melody more than is there. The repeated bars, such as mm. 15, 17 (despite the changed last note), and 19, should be phrased and articulated exactly alike. Here, attempting to think in terms of medium-level phrase direction (normally a valuable musical tool) will only lend an artificial degree of sophistication to a style which is deliberately avoiding it.

For each of these pairs of measures (e.g., 15–6, 17–8, 19–20), it is advisable to begin the subphrase (including the pickup note) on an up bow, to facilitate the lifting called for by the staccato eighth notes. However, the tenuto marking on the dotted eighth indicates an accent created by bow speed, rather than pressure, so care must be taken to ensure that this accent does not overpower that which occurs on the downbeat.

When the melody repeats in m. 23, it is an octave lower, and given to the second violin. This time it is accompanied by pizzicato figuration in the first violin and cello, an off-beat rhythm which comprises the rhythmic complement of the first measure of the movement. The playful interjections in the viola part are marked ***mf***, as compared to ***mp*** in the other parts, and should be accordingly prominent.

The melody begins in m. 31 in the cello, this time transposed down to F♯-dorian (as opposed to A-dorian in mm. 15ff. and 23ff.), but the ensuing eight-bar phrase proves to be a transitional section consisting of two sets of harmonically repeated two-bar phrases. Rosner achieves variety despite the repetition by clever rescoring techniques, as seen by comparing mm. 31–2 to mm. 33–4 (see fig. 4.10). Such altered repetitions of small subphrases are common in this movement. Awareness of these exchanges will enable the performers to carefully match articulation and intonation.

FIGURE 4.10. Op. 32, ii, mm. 31–4, showing reorchestration and source measures



The section featuring the *aksak* meter, which begins in m. 94, offers definite contrast with a new key, meter, character, and distinctly different melodic character. As discussed above, the division of 9/8 into 2+2+2+3 must be observed literally, without yielding to the dotted-quarter tactus which here falls in the middle of the second quarter-note beat. The melodic instrument (violin I in m. 94, viola in 111, violin II in 115) can fulfill a vital role in communicating the correct rhythm, by giving equivalent emphasis on the three quarter-note beats. Sustaining an even tone on the second and third beats is equally important as avoiding undue accents on the downbeat.

The metrically augmented fourth beat, which imparts to the *aksak* rhythm its "stumbling" character, must also be carefully executed. In most cases throughout this section, the first eighth-note of this beat is stressed, indicated with an accent or a tenuto marking. This expanded beat must serve two seemingly dichotomous functions simultaneously; it must provide a release of the tension created by the first three beats, and it must lead toward the following downbeat. This can be achieved by allowing a slight release in dynamic intensity (simply following the indicated articulation will achieve most of this) while preserving the rhythmic drive toward the next measure. Failure to propel the hesitated fourth beat forward in this manner can make the meter sound like a truncated 5/4, rather than an expanded 4/4.

HARMONY. The coordination of harmonic changes and tacti further increases the Renaissance character of this movement. Reminiscent of the early *saltarello* dance, the harmony moves in even phrases that align with the melodic phrases. The chords of the primary melody reveal the harmonic design:

a min	G maj	f♯ min	a min
a min	G maj	d min	a min
a min	G maj	f♯ min	B maj
e min	f♯ dim	g♯ min^{6}	a (no third)

Absence of dominant–tonic cadences and further strengthens the Renaissance associations of this dance melody. Rosner's use of traditional *musica ficta* voice-leading devices imparts to the final cadence a specific flavor which would not be mistaken for music from the common practice tonal era. Figure 4.11 excerpts the examples of chromatic alteration from the discussion of *musica ficta* in Grout and Palisca's *A History of Western Music,*[15] transposed to the key of the second movement. The fourth measure in figure 4.11 shows the actual pitches used in the cadence in m. 22.

Unexpected harmonic twists abound in the truncated recapitulation (mm. 126ff.). Preceded by material identical to that which precedes the *aksak* section, the recapitulation

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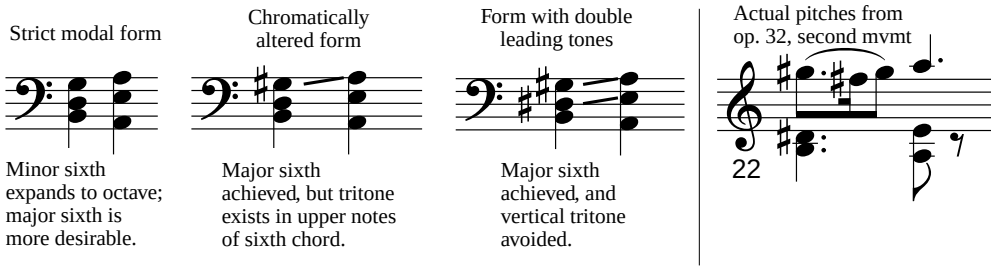
[15] Donald Jay Grout and Claude Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.,, 1988), 163.

FIGURE 4.11. Cadential alterations of *musica ficta*



begins in D-dorian, or the subdominant. Its repetition in m. 134 shifts to the original tonic (A-dorian), reversing the tonal motion of the cello entrance from the fugato section (from E-dorian to A-dorian). This time, the second phrase cadences in a manner identical to the first. The brief codetta (mm. 142–6) playfully repeats and reharmonizes the cadential goal (the *a*' in the first violin) from the root of an open-fifth A chord to the fifth of an open-fifth D chord. The final statement of the dance motive in the cello introduces the pitch *F*♯ as a possible completion of the D chord, but before a sense of arrival can be felt, the piece ends with a single flippant F♯-major chord.

This final F♯-major chord which ends the piece is a humorous moment for a variety of reasons. First, the statement of the final two bars sets up F♯ minor, continuing the major/minor interplay found throughout the work. Secondly, the entire movement is framed by staccato appearances of extremely remote chords; namely, G minor (opening) and F♯ major (closing), which pivot around the enharmonically identical third. Lastly, the

chord closes the movement a tritone away from the C major chord which opens the third movement.

STRUCTURE. This movement is cast in a form which resembles both ternary and rondo forms, but resists falling neatly into either category. Ciechowski's description of the movement as a "Rondoartiger Tanzsatz—auch Dreiteilige Liedform" (rondo-like dance movement, also three-part song form) accurately conveys this formal ambiguity.[16] The task of providing a more specific label for this form is neither necessary nor expedient for the performer wishing to comprehend the work.

The interaction of melody and form is a peculiar one in this movement. There exist clearly delineated sections, such as the *fugato* section which begins in m. 39, and the two-bar alterations of lower and upper voices beginning in m. 71. Thematically, however, these new sections are both so closely related to the main melodic section that the term "thematic transformation" might best describe them. The continuity of the work will be best served if the various sections flow smoothly without demarcation of tempo. Plenty of variety is already provided by the contrasting character of the melodic material from each section.

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[16] Ciechowski, *op. cit.*, 110.

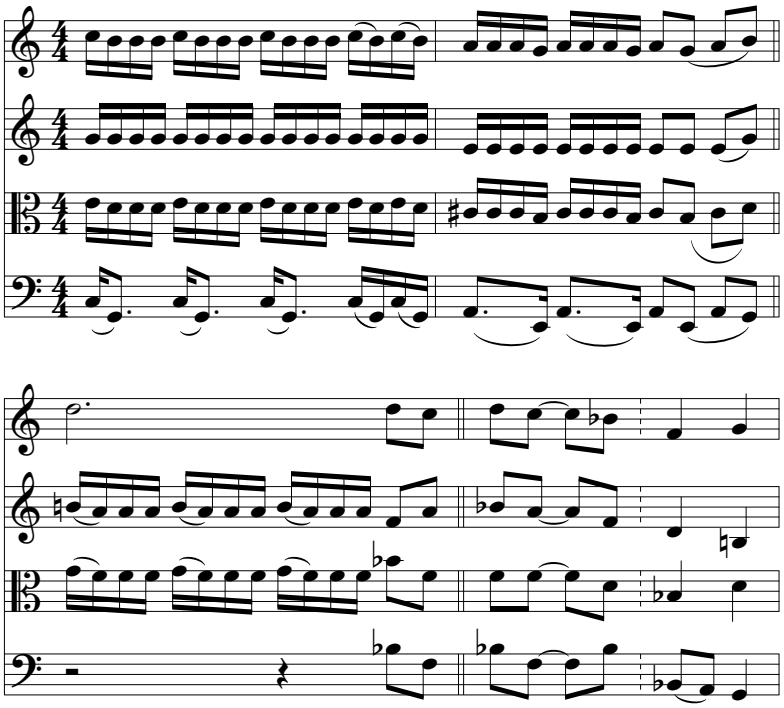
THIRD MOVEMENT: *Allegro con brio*

RHYTHM. Nowhere in the third quartet is the youthful ebullience of the twenty-year-old Rosner more evident than in the beginning of the third movement. From the very beginning, with its frenetic sixteenth-note patter, the movement proceeds with the energy of a perpetual motion piece. In performance, this burst of activity can be made even more effective if the third movement follows the second with only a brief *quasi attacca* pause.

The opening, while easy to read and play, is deceptively difficult to execute effectively. Issues of surface rhythm, harmonic rhythm, and phrase rhythm converge to present the performers with an array of challenges in the opening ten measures. Accordingly, a great deal of attention paid to these initial measures will be rewarded throughout the rest of the movement.

Phrase rhythm serves as an appropriate starting level for examining this opening statement. Repetitions abound; it could be argued that the first ten measures are essentially an expanded four-bar phrase, which is shown in figure 4.12. Measures 1–2 are repeated verbatim in mm. 3–4, m. 5 is melodically and harmonically repeated in m. 6 (with only trivial orchestrational differences between the fourth beats), and mm. 7 and 8

FIGURE 4.12. Four-bar phrase assembled from op. 32, iii, mm. 1 and 2, m. 5, first two beats of m. 7, and last two beats of m. 10



are identical. Measures 9–10 serve as a phrase extension which begins as a third iteration of the m. 7 material, and in purely functional harmonic terms, they are expendable.[17]

The prevalence of these repetitions demands that the performers make thoughtful decisions about the relative dynamics and direction of the repeated material. Pablo Casals said "it is a general rule that repeated notes or a repeated design must not be equal.

[17] This process of "decomposing" music, of stripping it of expansion devices to yield a bare-bones, unexpanded prototype, is informative in two rather diverse ways. It allows the observer to realize musical connections which may not be immediately evident in the unaltered version. Meanwhile, the removal of the devices that make a phrase or motive more interesting produces a comparatively unimaginative new version, thereby providing insight into a composer's creativity and method.

Something has to be done. Otherwise, you have monotony."[18] Equally as important as avoiding the monotony of identically reiterated material, is avoiding an automatic application of an "echo" effect whenever such material appears.

In the first four measures some changes must be made to accommodate bowings. The first violin and viola parts work out evenly in terms of bowings, but the players must travel from the frog toward the middle of the bow over the first six beats to allow sufficient bow for the three-note slur at the end of the two-bar subphrase. By adding slight accents to the first three beats of mm. 1 and 3, as well as the first two beats of mm. 2 and 4, the first violin and viola can solve their own bow distribution problems, while reinforcing the accents in the cello line. Note that the staccato eighth-note on beat 3 of mm. 2 and 4 should not be accented.

The second violin and cello need to alter the bowing with a pair of consecutive bow strokes. The obvious solution for the violin is to play two down-bows on the third beat of mm. 2 and 4. There are more potential solutions for the cello: beginning up-bow with a double-down in the seventh beat; bowing the two pairs of sixteenth-notes either up–up or down–up; perhaps even beginning up–bow and playing the entire four measures as printed. Figure 4.13 shows one solution to the bowing problems of the first two

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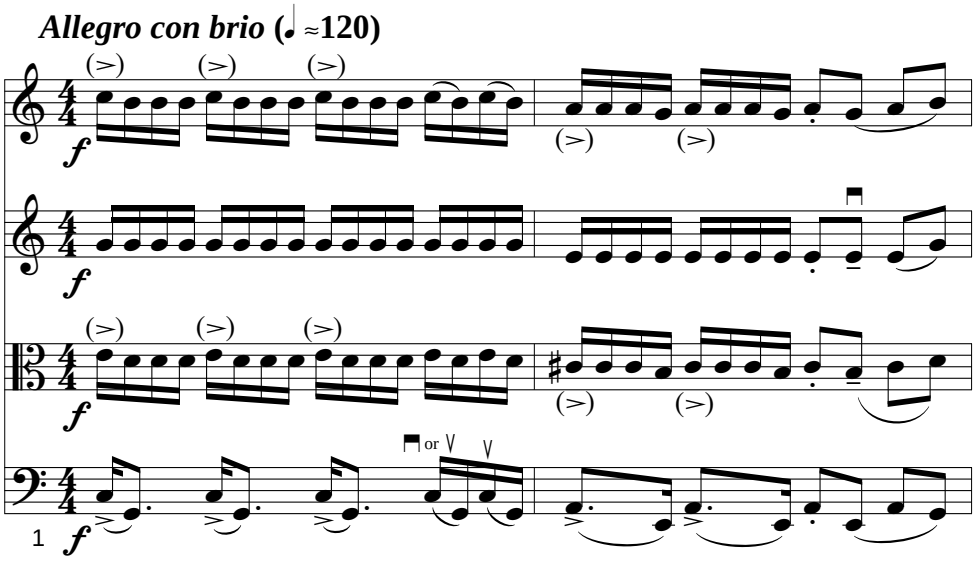
[18] Pablo Casals, quoted in David Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 29.

FIGURE 4.13. Op. 32, iii, mm. 1–2, with suggested bowings and parenthetically enclosed accents added by the author



measures, which could be applied to the following two measures as well. The bowing can proceed as printed in all parts in mm. 5–8. Taking an additional up-bow in all parts on the fourth eighth-note of m. 9 will enable the players to easily make the inherent accents of the 7/8 measure, as well as the explicit ones in m. 10.

It is important to maintain a strong sense of upbeat motion on the fourth beat of every measure throughout the first eight bars. The piece begins on the downbeat, and the surface rhythm is symmetrical (either four sixteenths or two eighths) on every beat. Without a sense of forward direction in the performance, the opening can sound rhythmically clumsy. Measures 9 and 10, which form essentially a single 17/8 bar, provide timely relief from this awkwardness.

Another problematic rhythmic gesture appears in mm. 20 through 28. Common rhythmic inaccuracies that threaten a motive such as this are overholding the syncopated eighth-note (notated here as tied sixteenths) and expending too much bow on the single sixteenth-note. Both of these can be addressed by repeating the rhythmic cell (individually and in group practice) with a metronome. The relative emphasis of the four chords is strong–medium–weak–medium. If the single sixteenth is temporarily omitted, the rhythmic proportions become 3+3+2; practicing this rhythm with a down–up–up bowing will secure the underlying rhythm. When the sixteenth-note is returned to the figure, the rhythmic accuracy will be improved.

The interruptions in mm. 56–9 create the same surprising rhythmic effect seen in mm. 149–51 of the first movement. Again, the repeated notes must lead into the sudden rest with no tapering of volume or energy.

A homophonic effect returns in mm. 81ff., with the alternation of chords producing an accordionlike effect. No dynamic indication occurs between the ***fff*** in m. 64 and the *con tutta forza* in m. 91. It is important to avoid fatiguing both performer and listener, however, and m. 81 affords the ensemble a good opportunity to reduce the dynamics somewhat, as long as the intensity remains high. This can be achieved by an absolutely steady tempo, well-coordinated bow changes, and a crescendo on every

moving figure with note values smaller than the half-note pulse. The return to ***fff*** in m. 91 will coincide with the *con tutta forza* marking.

Once again, issues of stamina are raised by the demands Rosner makes of the performers. The ***ff*** dynamic reached in m. 51 is followed by ***fff*** in m. 64, which in turn leads into the *con tutta forza* indication in mm. 91–101[19]. Even assuming that an ensemble could sustain top dynamics for fifty bars, following these instructions literally would be simply overwhelming.[20] The ensemble must make decisions regarding contour dynamics, preserving the articulative intensity of ***ff*** or ***fff***, but not necessarily the intensity of volume. At the end of the passage, the double whole note chord of mm. 100–1 is impossible to play as indicated without either taking multiple bows or relaxing the dynamic level in the previous measure. Playing the three quarter-note chords in m. 99 at only a ***f*** level, with increasing accents, will serve this purpose well (see fig. 4.14). If multiple bows are taken, the bow changes must be unnoticeable. In the correlating passage, mm. 247ff., the same remarks apply, although the duration of the long chord is only a single whole note.

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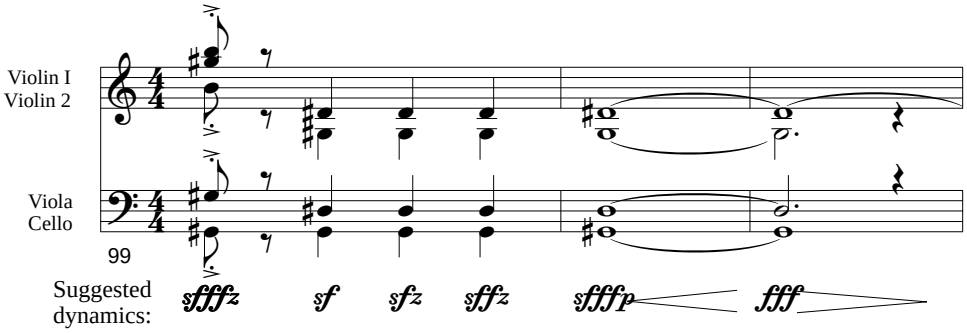
[19] In the parallel passage, 198–248, there is no ***fff*** marking in m. 212, which corresponds to m. 64; this is presumably an error of omission.

[20] There is an interesting correlation between this assertion and how we perceive physical motion. The sense of excitement felt when riding an accelerating vehicle is roughly proportional to the rate of change of speed. However, even airplane speeds cease to have any effect once cruising speed is maintained. The ability of the mind to adapt to present circumstances suggests that the effectiveness of an unchanged

FIGURE 4.14. Op. 32, iii, 99–101, with dynamics added by author



The transitions into and out of the *Andante* section (mm. 102–28) call for an exact tempo relationship which might be easily overlooked. Care must be taken to play mm. 99–101 strictly in tempo. This requires metric discipline from all players during the crescendo into m. 100, and demands of the inner two voices a close awareness of the tempo and communication with each other. The second violin and viola define the placement of the downbeat of m. 102. If the tempo is allowed to change during the previous two bars, the 𝅗𝅥=♩ connection between *Allegro* and *Andante* is lost. The transition out of the *Andante* section (mm. 123–9) should be similarly controlled.

New material appears in the reprise beginning in m. 175. Here the rhythmic motive of four sixteenth-notes followed by a rest appears once again, but unlike the two previous occurrences, the motive is "front loaded," i.e., moving away from its beginning,

dynamic, no matter how loud or soft, will quickly be dissipated.

rather than leading to the following rest. The violins and cello should play with a light detaché stroke near the tip of the bow, softly enough that the harmonics in the viola part can be heard. The bowing throughout the entire passage (mm. 175–86) works very nicely if every sixteenth-note rest is followed by a down-bow. The rhythmic and melodic kinship between mm. 187–90 and the second movement *aksak* section should not go unnoticed.

The final three measures of the piece are among the most awkward to execute. The first violin, viola, and cello can effect both an accented sense of arrival and the indicated crescendo in the penultimate bar by playing it with two bows, down–up, with subtle and asynchronous changes earlier rather than later in the measure. The second violin, because of the quarter rest, would better serve the texture by not changing bow, but rather playing a *crescendo possibile* on the down–bow, which will help to cover any bow change sounds from the three other parts. The four sixteenth-notes which comprise the last measure should lead toward the final barline, with no hint of *rallentando.*

MELODY. Much of the melodic material of the third movement is chordal melody, which depends for its success upon rhythmic and harmonic accuracy. The issue of relative balance between parts is comparatively unimportant in such passages, and the performers will do well to simply balance their voices evenly. Arguably, given the

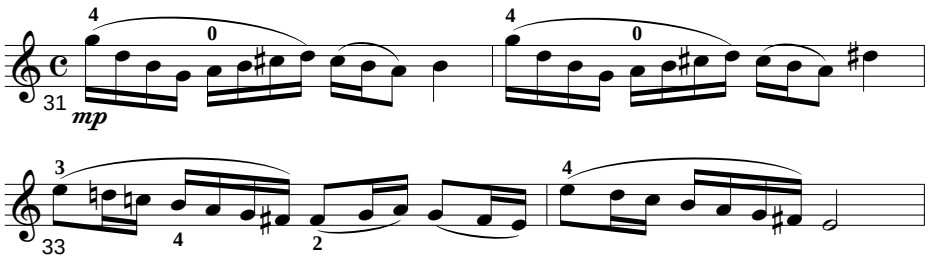
largely triadic harmony and four voices, one or more pitches will usually be doubled, thereby putting other pitches at a disadvantage in terms of loudness. However, the voice assignment of these doubled pitches changes so frequently that a systematic attempt to balance these passages would become mired in pointless minutiae.

The handoff of the sixteenth-note melodic line between viola and second violin in mm. 24–30 requires attention to matched strokes. During the first four measures, the four-note melodic cell is repeated at the interval of a tenth. In order to compensate for the considerable difference in string tension (the viola is low on the C string, while the violin is two positions higher on the much thinner D) the viola must endeavor to play with a brighter tone, and should use short bow strokes. Conversely, the second violin should play nearer the fingerboard and use slightly broader strokes. The two players must find the ideal sounding point and bow usage to created a matched timbre. This becomes much easier in mm. 28–30, when the ranges converge. It is also important in this and similar passages for both players to be aware of the aggregate line, with each one mentally playing the other's part during the rests.

In the second melody beginning in m. 31, the use of a descending major arpeggio deserves mention, as it is atypical not only of this work, but of Rosner's melodic style in general. Ciechowski observes that "Arnold Rosner always favors melodically small thematic structures, and therefore uses motives consisting of auxiliary tones, suspensions,

pendulums, or scales, which are largely free of triadic elements."[21] The dynamic contrast is important here. Although no *diminuendo* is indicated, the thinning of the texture seems to imply one in mm. 28–30, and an arrival at ***p*** on the downbeat of 31 is advisable. The fingering suggested in figure 4.15 will facilitate a clean coordination of string crossings and metric subdivisions for a more lyrical statement of the solo line.

FIGURE 4.15. Op. 32, iii, mm. 31–4, first violin part. Fingerings suggested by author.



The performers should be aware of melodic motives which have their derivation elsewhere in the work. The four-note melodic cell which opens the movement, consisting of a single note and three iterations of the note a semitone below in sixteenth-note values, appears in a quadruply augmented form in the viola in mm. 75–8. Here the presence of the reiterated ***fff*** marking (all parts are ***fff*** from m. 64) in only the viola part underscores the importance of this line. Recognizing the source of these measures will suggest a stronger downbeat, rather than hammering all four notes equally. The same is true for the

[21] Ciechowski, *op. cit.*, 111. "Arnold Rosner bevorzugt melodisch ausnahmslos kleinschrittige Themengebilde und bedient sich daher vorzugsweise einer Wechselnoten-, Vorhalts-, Pendel- oder Skalenmotivik, die weitgehend frei von Dreiklangelementen ist."

quarter notes which appear in the upper three voices in mm. 91–8 (these remarks pertain equally to mm. 223–46, the parallel passage in the reprise). Thinking of these measures with a sense of gravity toward each downbeat will help to propel the passage forward.

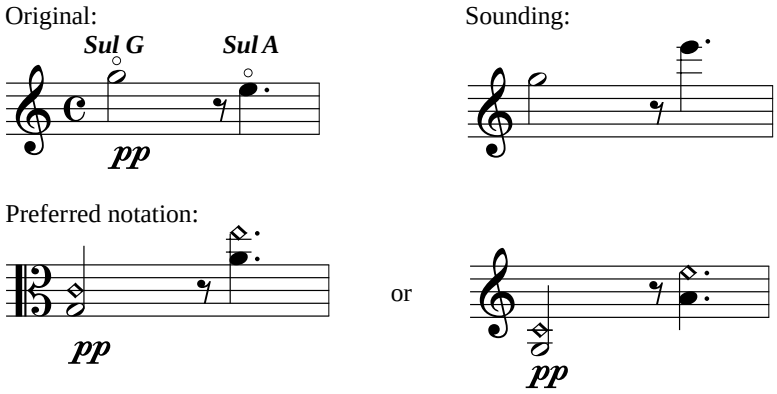
The melodic line atop the chordal melody in mm. 81ff. (also 229ff.) resembles the second measure of the cantabile melody from the first movement (first mvmt., m. 47). Whether this is intentional or a happy accident, the metric positioning strengthens the association, and the ensemble should balance the chord to allow this line to be heard.

Rosner returns to a more contrapuntal approach in the *Andante* section. In mm. 106–11 the first violin and cello engage in largely complementary lines which are separated by as much as three and a half octaves, with tremolo chords played by the second violin and viola in the middle of the range. This creates considerable intonation challenges, and the outer voices will find considerable value in practicing their lines without the inner voices. Reducing the span by octave transpositions (e.g., violin down an octave, cello up an octave) will aid both intonation and an understanding of how the lines interrelate.

The viola harmonics that appear at the start of the passage which interrupts the reprise (mm. 175–93) are without precedent in the work, and deserve special attention. In this instance, the first notated pitch is the sounding pitch, and the second is the touched

note.[22] Both notational systems are accepted, but the mixture here is potentially confusing. The sounding pitches and alternate notational approaches are shown in figure 4.16. Rosner specifies natural, or *flageolet*, harmonics. The rest of the ensemble needs to be aware of this, since natural harmonics cannot be adjusted, and therefore they must match their intonation to that of the viola harmonics.

FIGURE 4.16. Op. 32, iii, m. 175, viola harmonics



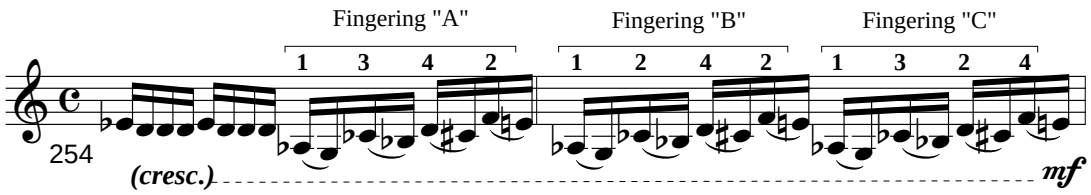
In the coda the first violin is presented with treacherously difficult passagework in mm. 252–5. The descending half-step motive which began the movement now becomes fragmented in a pattern of ascending minor thirds. While this motive could be viewed either as some version of a diminished seventh chord with neighbor tones, or as a usage

[22] It could be argued that both pitches represent touched notes, since the double-octave *g*" can be played by touching the string exactly one-quarter distance from either end. To play the passage with both touched notes, however, would require rapid shifting between eleventh position on the G string and fourth (or lower) position on the A string, an unrealistic and unnecessary difficulty which Rosner would never request of a player.

of the octatonic scale (discussed at length in Chapter 3 above) which becomes important in Rosner's later music, neither explanation satisfactorily describes this passage in its harmonic context. With the lower three voices sustaining an open-fifth G chord, the pairs of notes are heard as follows: A♭–G, upper neighbor–root; C♭–B♭, respelled major third–minor third; D–C♯, fifth–lower neighbor, and F–E, minor seventh–lower neighbor.

Finding a fingering for this pattern is a process of choosing the least cumbersome of several possibilities. Every conceivable practical fingering solution contains either a string crossing coupled with a finger slide, or awkward shifts coupled with interval respacing in the left hand. The diatonic fingering (figure 4.17, fingering "A") is perhaps the least awkward available. This distributes the fingers most evenly, and allows the second finger to function as a pivotal frame of reference. Using a 2–1 fingering (fingering "B") for the second pair would alleviate the three-semitone stretch between consecutive fingers, but the resulting use of first finger in three different positions negates that advantage. The impractical nature of the shifting pattern (fingering "C") will be readily apparent upon playing it.

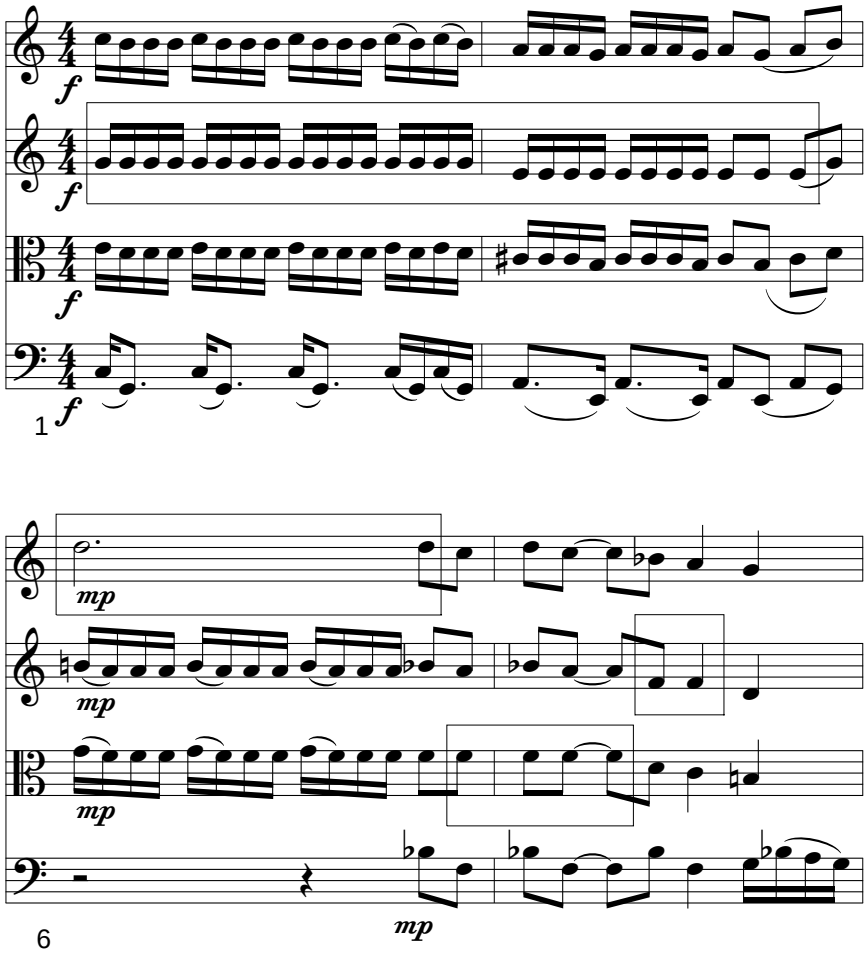
Figure 4.17. Op. 32, iii, mm. 254–5, first violin. Three fingering solutions.



HARMONY. Chordal pendulums, or the repeated alternation of two distinct harmonies, play a central role in the last movement. The opening of the movement features chord pairs in the relationship of a descending fourth, so that the dominant scale degree of one chord becomes the root of the next. Rosner places the pitch common to both chords in one voice, either reiterated or held. The practical implications of this for the performers are obvious; the intonation approach must identify and center around this "pivot" note (fig. 4.18 shows two examples of these chord pendulums, with the pivot notes indicated). The advantage of recognizing these common tones can be realized in two ways. In ensemble rehearsal, chords can be tuned individually with the pivot note being held, and in individual practice, the performer can tune each measure against a chromatic tuner/pitch generator set to the same.

From the outset of the movement, Rosner creates the expectation that the four-note motivic cell contains complete chord shifts. However, the motive is frequently used to revisit the major/minor ambiguity which was so prominent in the first movement. When the figure appears in the first violin part in m. 45, for example, the motive alternates between the major and (enharmonically spelled) minor third; the following bar the fifth and augmented fourth. Similar occurrences are found in the first violin part in m. 51, second beat, (major/minor third), m. 54 (minor sixth/fifth), m. 55 (enharmonic major/minor third), and mm. 60–62 (minor sixth/fifth). As a general rule, if the

FIGURE 4.18. Chord pendulums, op. 32, iii, mm. 1–2 and 6–7. Pivot notes are designated by the rectangles.



accompaniment to the principal motive consists of held notes rather than homophonic chord patter, then the musician playing the four-note motive should be attentive to its harmonic context.

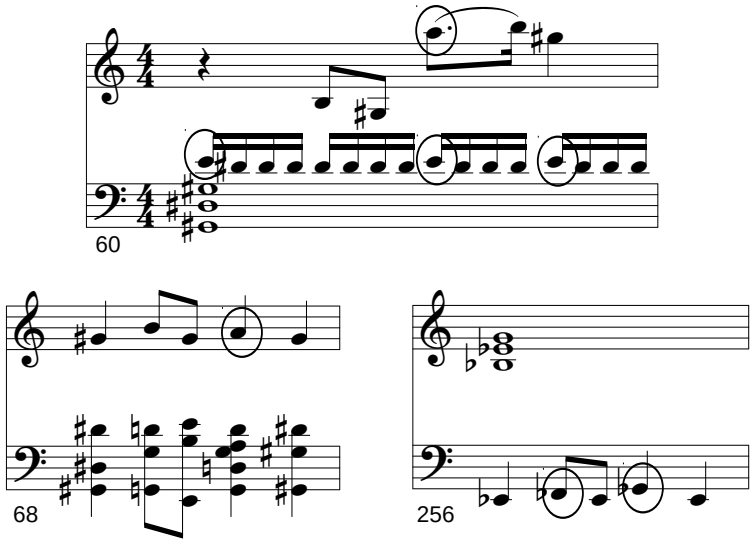
Rosner writes the most dissonant material of the entire quartet in the passage from mm. 60–100. The motive which first appears in m. 60 contains a strong dissonance on the

third beat, the *a*" in the second violin against G♯ octaves in viola and cello,. This dissonance is accented by metric position, a two-octave leap, and an augmentation dot. The following bar is similar, with the same dissonant *a*" now occurring on the fourth beat. Throughout all this, the first violin continues the main motive with the first note a dissonant minor sixth against the open-fifth G♯ chord in the lower strings. When this dissonance is eventually resolved on the downbeat of m. 63, the cello moves to an accented *D* on beat two, clashing with the *d*♯' whole note in the first violin.

The melodic motive of m. 60 appears in two transformations, both of which create harmonic clashes against the triadic harmony. Measure 68 removes the two-octave displacement and the sixteenth-note échappée tone; the first violin's *a*', which is doubled in the viola an octave lower, can be considered either as a double fifth or a major ninth above the bass. In mm. 258ff., the motive appears in the lower strings in retrograde order, but in the same rhythm as m. 68; here both upper pitches of the motive are dissonant against the chord held in measured tremolo in the upper two parts. Figure 4.19 shows the three versions of the motive and their harmonic context.

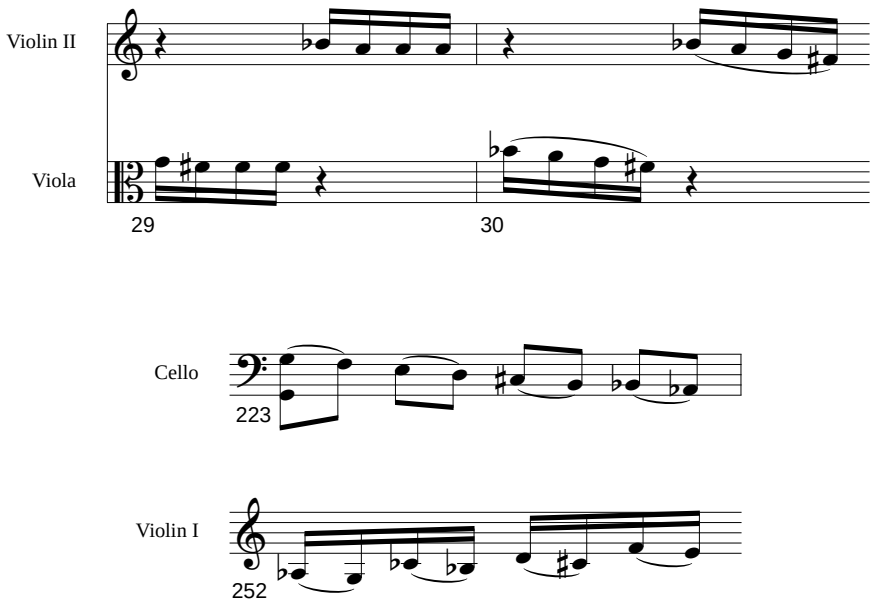
These dissonant notes generally occur in metrically prominent positions. Their relative scarcity makes them an interesting feature when they do occur. Consequently, they should be played strongly and deliberately, and the ensemble should adjust balances to avoid obscuring these pitches.

FIGURE 4.19 Variations of the motive from m. 60. Non-triadic notes are circled.



The octatonic scale appears in a complete form in two locations in the movement. In mm. 75–7, it appears in descending form in the cello. At the beginning of this passage, the scale is balanced symmetrically around the notes in the viola's augmentation of the primary motivic cell. In the coda, the rather treacherous passagework in the first violin in mm. 252–5 presents the same pitch collection in an overall descending order, but with each pair of notes inverted. The two patterns are shown in figure 4.20. This inverted-pair relationship between pitches is foreshadowed early in the movement, in the dialogue between second violin and viola in mm. 28–30.

FIGURE 4.20. Appearances of the octatonic scale collection, op. 32, iii



STRUCTURE. The third movement, like the second, resists categorization into any one structural description. Again, Ciechowski's assessment is illuminating, classifying this movement as a three-part song form with sonata form characteristics.[23] In addition to possessing structural characteristics of both forms, the occurrence of the opening motive and key in four points of the movement (mm. 1, 47, 129, and 194) imparts to the listener the feeling of a seven-part rondo form as well, although strict formal analysis resists this as well. It is because the movement is held together so

[23] Ciechowski, *op. cit.,* 110. *"Dreiteilige Liedform mit Sonatenhauptsatzcharakteristik."*

securely by motivic and key structure that the absence of a strict form does not create a sense of chaos. The performers need simply to pay attention to consistent tempos and to recognize the presence of the various transformations of the motivic ideas, and the coherence of the movement will be secure.

CHAPTER V

STRING SEXTET, OP. 47

In the standard instrumentation of two violins, two violas, and two cellos, only a half-dozen works for string sextet, all from the Romantic tradition, enjoy a place in the standard repertoire today. These are: the two sextets of Johannes Brahms, op. 18 in B♭ and op. 36 in G; Dvorak's Sextet in A, op. 48; and the program works of the Romantic era, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*, Tchaikowsky's *Souvenir di Florence*, and Richard Strauss's Prelude to *Capriccio.* The efforts by Vincent d'Indy and Joseph Joachim Raff, as well as a handful of their lesser-known contemporaries, have fallen into obscurity. In the post-Romantic era, contributions to the genre have come from Frank Bridge, Erich Korngold, Bohuslav Martinů, Darius Milhaud, Walter Piston, Quincy Porter, and Max Reger, along with a few dozen works from lesser-known composers.[1]

Part of the reason for this sparsity of repertoire can be attributed to the overwhelming popularity of the string quartet, which since Haydn's time has been the accepted proving ground for composers of chamber music. Another factor, in the post-

[1] Margaret K. Farish, *String Music in Print*, 2nd ed. (New York, R.R. Bowker & Co, 1973), 289–90; 1984 Supplement (Philadelphia: Musicdata, Inc., 1984), 99–101; 1998 Supplement (Philadelphia: Musicdata, Inc.), 101–4. This periodically updated catalog offers the most complete listing of string chamber music available in the last thirty years.

tonal era, is the exploration of new and atypical sound combinations, which has led to a great proliferation of untraditional mixed ensembles, including acoustic and electronic instruments. Furthermore, there are practical considerations which performances of string sextets less common. There are virtually no established ensembles which exist primarily to perform sextets, no doubt due in large part to the lack of repertoire, which in turn can be blamed on the lack of ensembles to perform the works. The commercially available recordings of the handful of popular sextets mentioned above are performed either by an established quartet supplemented with guest artists, or by chamber soloists drawn from a larger orchestral ensemble.

Given these circumstances, the musicians undertaking the preparation and performance of a string sextet must bear in mind that certain inherent characteristics will require an adapted approach. Octave doubling, which is a notable feature when it occurs in quartets, is commonplace in music for in larger ensembles, and ample time will need to be spent on intonation where these doublings occur. Softer dynamics will need to be exaggerated when the full group is playing, or the performance will suffer from a lack of dynamic variety. The larger forces demand more attentive listening and careful evaluation of the importance of one's own part in relation to the overall texture.

Even considerations as mundane as rehearsal space must be addressed in advance. A living room which offers ample space for a quartet may be quite cramped when

another violist and cellist are added. Finally, if the ensemble consists of a regular quartet and two guests, all parties involved should prepare for the elements of compromise and negotiation which are an integral part of the experience of chamber music making.

Rosner's String Sextet, op. 47, was written in 1970, significantly revised in 1997, and was first performed in 1998 at Northwestern University. Rosner's spoken remarks at the premiere offer insight into the revision process:

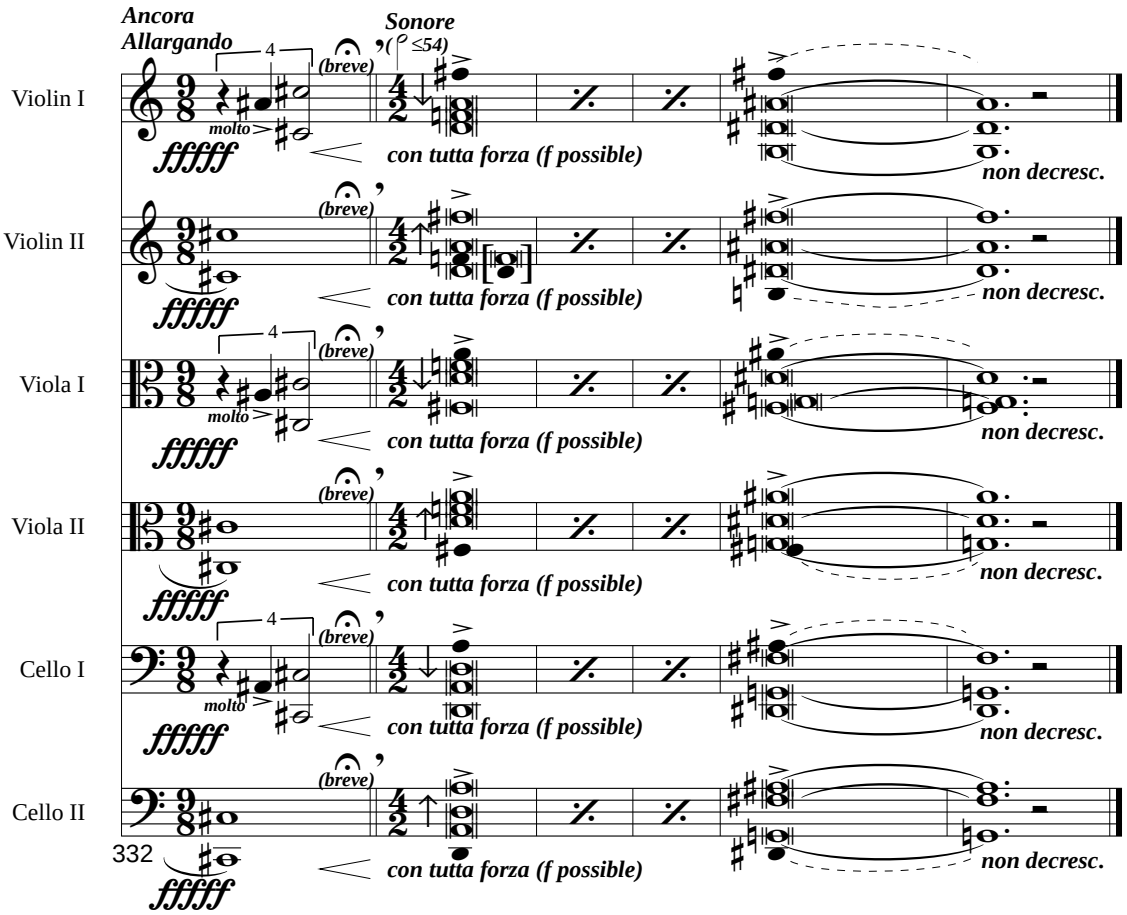
> I looked back at my string sextet of 1970, which had never been performed…and [I] decided two things: it's not a bad piece, but it needs a fix. Now you have to understand, when you're in your twenties and totally obscure (and in my twenties I was totally obscure), you write pieces awfully fast. Nobody's going to listen to them, so you just…[audience laughter]…the basic bottom line is: compose in haste, revise at leisure. And revisions always take me longer than the composition.
>
> Now, you may ask, when you revise a piece that's twenty-seven years old, how do you know what the heck you were thinking of, and who the heck you were at that time? Good question…I looked at the piece, and I decided that the themes were okay, and a lot of the big moments were okay; and I decided the overall structure…was equally as okay, emotionally and technically; but that the connecting stuff, from here to there, was sometimes a little bit workaday, a little bit mechanical. You can get from here to here and the structure can hold it, but I decided that stuff could be made better, so that's essentially what the fix was.[2]

[2] Rosner addressed the audience prior to the premiere of this work on 26 February 1998.

Briefly examining differences between the original and revised versions reveals two trends which point to the experience gained in the intervening years. Musically, the overall flow of the music is improved, sounding more spontaneous and less studied. Pragmatically, many of the changes indicate a more acute understanding by the composer of the instruments and of the instrumentalists. Frequent enharmonic respellings serve to make intervals easier to read, and the technical demands on the performers are much more realistic in the revision, particularly in regards to chordal playing.

When in his earlier chamber music compositions Rosner would make unrealistic requests of string players, it was generally not so much an issue of difficult technical demands on the individual player as it was a sound concept better suited to an orchestral ensemble than a small chamber one. In the original version of the Sextet, for example, he writes rapidly repeating four-note *pizzicato* chords, marked ***p***, throughout the fifth variation in the second violin and second viola. Here it seems he is aiming for a "rainfall" orchestral effect, an effect which is most successful with multiple players on each part. In the transition from the sixth variation into the seventh (fig. 5.1), he requests dynamics of a magnitude which are simply unattainable, especially considering the slow tempo indicated in m. 333. This is only slightly tempered by his footnote in the score which reads, "all parts hold as many strings as possible." The revised version of the Sextet

FIGURE 5.1. Excerpt from first version of Sextet, op. 47, i.



consistently reveals the hand of a composer with more direct experience with stringed instruments.

Performance instructions, such as indications of tempo and expression, are consistently less verbose in the revised edition, and often less dramatic, suggesting that the mature Rosner places more confidence in the musical judgment of the performer. For example, in the fifth variation, which features the first cellist as soloist throughout,

Rosner writes *molto appassionata, sempre legato e sostenuto* in the original version, whereas in the revision a mere *espressivo* suffices.

Certain aspects of the revision resulted in significant musical changes. The length and balance of movements remained similar, with the revision shortening the first movement to 338 measures from 352. Meanwhile, the theme and the second variation underwent substantial changes, and the revised seventh variation bears almost no resemblance to the original except in its *funebre* character. Where variations have been transposed, many of the transpositions are by only a semitone between original and revised versions. The second movement remains much closer to the original, the most notable change being the addition (in the revised version) of the three-measure chorale statement which closes the entire work.

The title page bears the subtitle “Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland,” which is a Lutheran chorale melody based upon the Gregorian Advent hymn “Veni redemptor gentium.” The chorale has been adapted numerous times throughout the past four hundred years; in addition to Bach’s well-known settings (two cantatas, BWV 60 and 61 and an organ prelude, BWV 699), Praetorius, Schütz, Schein, Buxtehüde, Telemann, and Pachelbel all used this chorale as the basis for compositions. The Sextet approaches, or aspires to, the theme gradually over the course of the work, reaching a fully prominent

statement of the chorale tune only a few minutes before the conclusion of its twenty-four-minute duration.

The Sextet is in two movements, titled “Variations” and “Motet.” Rosner’s remarks illuminate the overall structure:

> The design was: two movements of roughly equal length and weight, roughly twelve minutes each. The first one is variations, which is in principle an instrumental form; it happens throughout music history but it thrives in the classical period, and it's sort of based on development. The second movement [is a] motet, which is in principle a vocal form, and it thrives in the Renaissance period, and it relies on counterpoint. But the more important contrast is: I wanted the first movement to be tense, to be dark, to be searching…this one's *agitato*, this one's *funebre*, so that's sort of the searching side. And [I wanted] the second movement to be religious, spiritual, ecstatic here, tranquil there, and so forth.[3]

FIRST MOVEMENT: *VARIATIONS*

Because the formal structure of the first movement is both an overriding and a generating force, I will digress from the rhythm–melody–harmony–structure model of the previous (and following) movements, and discuss these elements in combined form on a section-by-section basis.

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[3] Ibid.

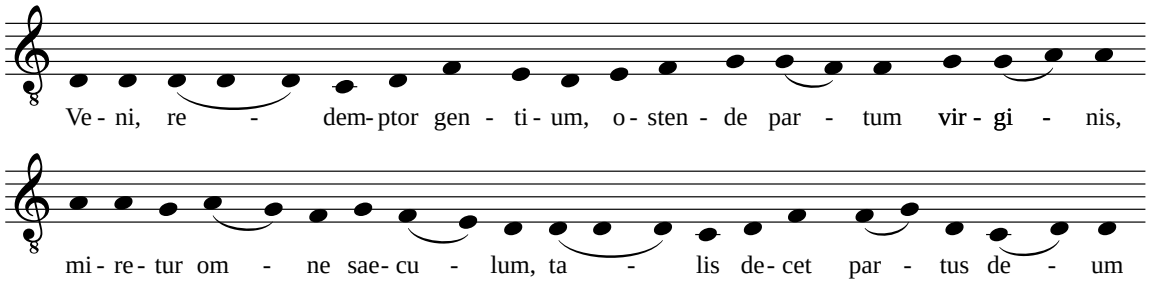
The tempo is different in each variation, and observing these indications is vital to the overall shape and flow of the movement (Table 5.1 outlines the tempos of the first movement). As always, Rosner provides these markings with a "≈" sign, but the basic temporal proportions between variations should be preserved. For example, Variation 6 is in 9/8 meter, and marked ♩.≈156; Variation 7 bears the indication ♩≈50. Whatever the actual tempo of Variation 6 is in performance, the final variation must have a tactus slightly slower than the bar-to-bar hypermeter of its predecessor. Many of the tempo changes cannot be so easily calculated by subdivisions in this manner. In rehearsal, it will be beneficial to rehearse the variations separately to develop a clear sense of tempo and character for each, before working on the transitions between variations.

Table 5.1. Op. 47, i, tempo indications

Section	Measure	Tempo	Metronome
Tema	1	***Adagio***	♩≈76
Var. 1	26	(no marking)	♩=♩
Var. 2	51	***Allegro molto***	♩≈144
Var. 3	107	***Maestoso***	♩≈84
Var.4	131	***Andante moderato***	♩≈110
Var.5	172	***Moderato con rubato***	♩≈72
Var. 6	208	***Allegro agitato***	♩.≈156
Var. 7	318	***Adagio funebre***	♩≈50

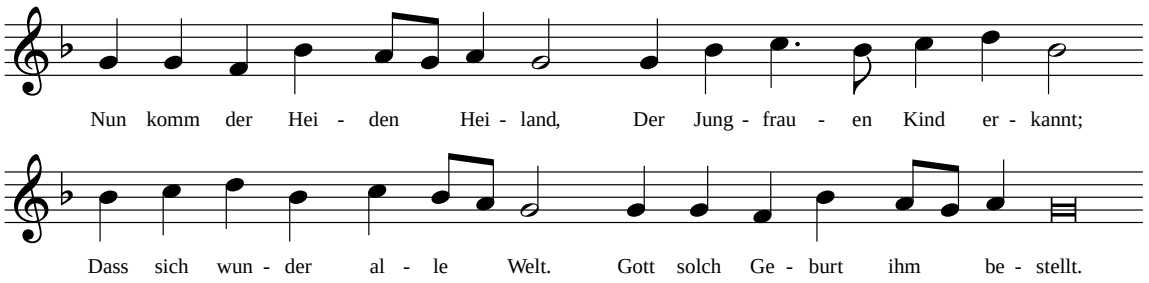
TEMA. Scholars and enthusiasts of the music of Edward Elgar perenially ponder the mystery of the source for his "Enigma Variations." In his Sextet, op. 47, Rosner divulges his source at the outset, but the connection between the chorale melody and the theme is obscure and elusive. Even attempting to identify the complete theme itself is a futile challenge, as it is continually transformed as the piece progresses. Only the opening two subphrases recur with enough consistency to be considered part of the "real" theme.

Figure 5.2. a) *Veni redemptor gentium*



Source: *Monumenta monodica medii aevi*, vol. 1, ed. Bruno Stäblein (Kassel: Bärenreiter–Verlag, 1956), pp. 273–4.

b) *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*

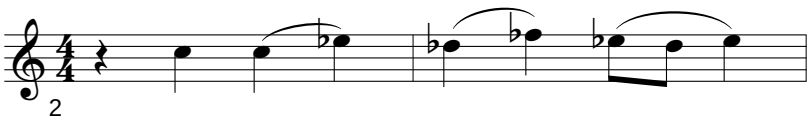


Source: Johannes Zahn, *Die Melodien der deutschen evangelischen Kirchenlieder*, vol. 1 (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1889), p. 314.

Before examining the theme of the Sextet, let us observe the relationship between the Lutheran chorale "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland" and the Gregorian Advent hymn "Veni redemptor gentium" upon which the chorale was based (fig. 5.2). The obvious similarities are the phrase balance, the melodic contour, and the melodic ambitus. Only the ranges of the first phrases are the same (a perfect fourth) in the two sources, yet the melodic position of the notes relative to the final of the dorian mode (D in the hymn, G in the chorale) makes it clear that the two are related.

In the same manner, there exist subtle yet distinct connections between the opening theme of the Sextet (fig. 5.3) and the chorale. Rosner's opening subphrase has the ambitus of a fourth, albeit a dimished one.[4] The chorale emphasizes the third degree of the dorian scale (which in the "Nun komm" example above is B♭) by placing it atop

FIGURE 5.3. Opening phrase of op. 47, ii, *Tema*



the melodic contour in the outer phrases, by approaching it with non-stepwise motion, and by repetition. Rosner exploits this relationship between tonic and minor mediant

[4] The alteration in no way diminishes the connection between Rosner's *Tema* and its chorale source. Bach makes an equivalent alteration in the initial continuo statement of the chorale in his cantata BWV 61: the bottom note of the first phrase is raised by a half-step, creating a melodic range of a tritone, from G♯ to C♮.

through repetition of the E♭, and reinforces it with the use of two ascending minor thirds. The second subphrase expands the melodic range to that of a minor sixth, which is the ambitus of the entire "Nun komm" chorale. Finally, the characteristic motivic figure from the outer phrases of the chorale, a descending and returning whole-step in anapest rhythm, becomes a motivic cell in the Sextet theme.

The piece begins with a soft, sustained open-fifth chord played by four of the six voices. The second viola and second cello play an open C string, which raises two important considerations. Obviously, intonation in this opening will be determined by the tuning of the instruments. Comparing individual C strings, which is always an advisable practice in string ensemble playing, becomes absolutely crucial in this context.[5] The other consideration is that of tone color in the second violin and first viola, which are both playing fingered notes (as opposed to open strings). Playing this opening chord *senza vibrato* will reinforce the organ-like character of this opening pedal chord. If vibrato is sparingly applied, it should be a very narrow vibrato, but not overly fast.

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[5] One must not let associations with grade-school orchestra tuning proceduresinterfere with this practice. Even the finest ensembles make this a regular part of their operation. Guarneri Quartet violist Michael Tree is quoted as saying, "I find that if I don't tune my C string to match perfectly with the cello's before the piece begins, there's a major risk of [an open-string] octave sounding out of tune." (Blum, *Art of Quartet Playing*, 27.)

Following the opening cue, the second cellist must make a smooth yet rapid transition from the (up-bow) whole note to a pizzicato note on the downbeat of the second measure. Counting this whole-note chord accurately and without distracting visual (or worse, aural) cues, will present a fascinating challenge for any group. There are many ways to address this facet of ensemble playing. One revealing exercise is as follows: Play two measures in slow common time (≈40–60 beats per minute) consisting of only a pizzicato note, played ***f***, on each downbeat. Choose a player to give the opening cue, and all players must close their eyes after plucking the first downbeat, and place the second downbeat where they feel is accurate. The initial results may be quite unsettling, and the absence of a metronome as arbitrator reveals much about the concept of individual perception of pulse.

The countermelody in the cellos (mm. 2–8), features the second cello reinforcing the first by pizzicato doubling an octave below. This can be rehearsed by both cellists playing pizzicato, then both arco, then pizzicato on the upper octave and arco below, and so forth, until the two players share a single musical conception of the line. As a general rule, such swapping of lines is a good method of practice whenever octave duplication exists, which in the Sextet is rather frequently.

There exists a strong presence of the octatonic scale collection in both the theme and the countermelody, although the melodic interest of the lines obscures this somewhat.

That the first four measures of the countermelody are drawn strictly from an octatonic scale is not musically significant at this point, but will become a prominenet feature in the second and sixth variations.[6]

Throughout the Sextet, Rosner achieves a constant variety of tonal colors by using different combinations of instruments. Care must be exercised to prevent an automatic correlation between scoring and dynamics. The first passage to use all six players together is found in mm. 19–27, an expansive scoring spanning over five octaves at its greatest breadth (*C*♯ to *e*''' in m. 20). Here, the melody is is given to the first viola, and is marked only ***mp***. All accompanimental dynamics are ***p*** or ***pp*** throughout this passage, and continue so through the seven-note chord pedal which begins the first variation. Unless the accompanimental parts are sensitive to the melody, it can be easily lost in the texture. Such non-equivalent dynamics are common throughout the work, and each players' score study should include attention to this matter.

Variation 1. The first variation begins with a vi–I cadence on an open-fifth B chord, although the D♯ from the previous chord imparts a major-triad flavor to the arrival. The symbolic *l'istesso tempo* marking must be strictly observed. Imitative counterpoint

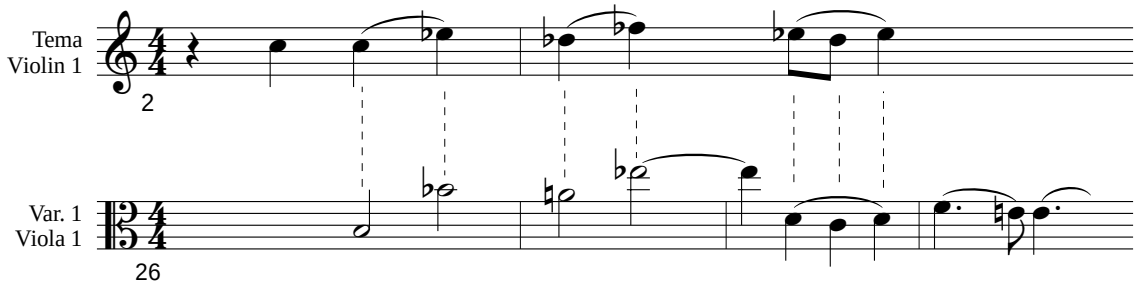
[6] The opening gesture of this countermelody, a five-note descending octatonic scale from a tonic pedal, is reminiscent of the beginning of the second movement of Brahms's Symphony No. 2 in D, op. 73.

makes its first appearance in this variation, with five of the six voices stating the varied theme in direct transpositions. The statements enter in progressively louder dynamic levels, staggered by four measures except the last entry, which is delayed one additional measure. While the description sounds like textbook fugato writing, the transposition scheme is anything but traditional, with the entries beginning on the pitches B, C♯, G♯, F♯, and E. This pentatonic collection, often called the "tonal pentatonic" scale because of the absence of semitones, is in this context merely a curious coincidence, as the mode has little or no influence upon the work as a whole.

The melodic connection between the first variation and the *Tema* is obscure. Only the first three measures seem thematically related. The two pairs of ascending half notes (mm. 26 and 27) correspond to the ascending pairs in the opening theme (fig. 5.4).[7] These ascending intervals, however, have transformed from the mundane (a pair of minor thirds) to the eccentric (diminished octave and diminished fifth). Following these pairs, the three slurred quarter notes proceed intervallically like the anapest grouping from m. 3, but with an octave displacement and rhythmic change as well.

[7] In the 1970 version the first note began a half-measure earlier and was double in length, thereby resembling the opening theme more obviously.

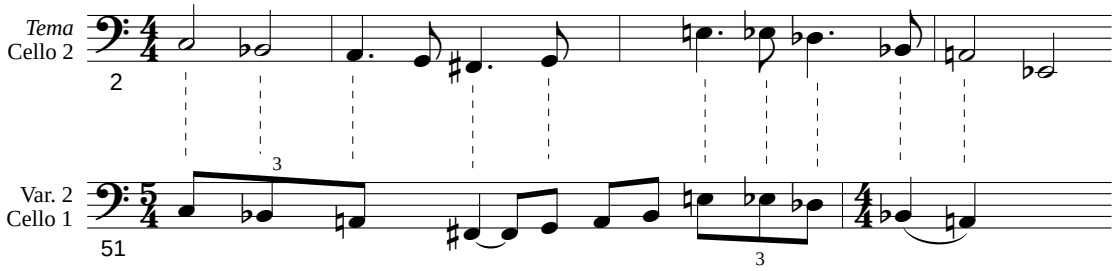
FIGURE 5.4. Melodic comparison, *Tema* and Variation 1



The first variation is unexpectedly brief, with its imitative style providing only a taste of the fugal passages which are to follow later. The dynamic outline is essentially one gradual crescendo over the twenty-five measures of the variation. The concluding cadential idea in measures 49–50 reinvokes the major/minor dichotomy which was such a present force in the op. 32 quartet, heard here in the descending augmented-octave motion from E to E♭ in second viola and second cello, coupled with a sustained pedal C in first viola and first cello.

Variation 2: ***Allegro molto.*** Both the beginning and end of this variation are delineated by brief pauses, which merits mention only because all of the of the other transitions between variations are *attacca*, and involve either an elided phrase or held notes, or both. This variation is based primarily upon the opening countermelody rather than the theme itself, as seen in figure 5.5. The opening eight bars of the variation are stylistically atypical for Rosner, with irregular rhythms (although within a clear and

FIGURE 5.5. Melodic comparison, *Tema* and Variation 2



regular tactus) and an angular contour. As difficult as this thorny line is to play, the octave doubling between first viola and first cello increases the challenge. The generally accepted rule in octave playing is to give slight dynamic prominence to the lower octave; certainly this is an advisable practice here. The parts diverge only slightly in mm. 5–7, and the balance between the lines should be adjusted accordingly when they are not in octave duplication.

The cascading triplet motive becomes the central melodic feature for the first half of this variation, through m. 85. When these figures are followed by rests (e.g., mm. 62–4 or 84–5), the phrasing should lead forward into the rest. In instances such as these, the ensuing beat completes the four-note gesture (from the beginning of the variation) with a longer note in a different voice.

Aside from brief and incomplete references in the accented quarter-notes of m. 3 and mm. 5–6, the *Tema* makes its first significant appearance more than halfway through the variation. Examining this variant, which appears initially in the first violin and first

viola in m. 86, reveals that the metric position of weak–strong notes is shifted so that the theme begins on a downbeat, and an extra note (another ascending minor third, although spelled here as an augmented second) restores the metric emphasis at the beginning of the triplet figure on the fourth beat.

Two rhythmic features are of particular interest. The ostinato figure in the upper three voices in mm. 88–94, a triplet eighth followed by a quarter note, is pitted in Shostakovich-like fashion against the lower voices, which join in triple unison (with the viola an octave above the cellos) to attempt to topple the discordant wall of sound. This divisive struggle, the first fifty/fifty split of instrumental forces in the work, will be more effective if the upper three voices allow the dynamic to taper the slightest amount on the triplets, and play a crescendo on the quarter notes. In addition to permitting more of the countermelodic theme to be heard, this will also improve bow distribution among the ostinato voices, thereby aiding a consistent reiteration of each repeated unit.

Finally, the syncopated tremolo chords (mm. 98–100) are potentially problematic, as this largely orchestral device is scarcely employed in chamber ensemble music, particularly in non-accompanimental fortissimo passages. It is essential that the group communicate the beat clearly, and make no attempt to emphasize the beginning of each new note. The right hand should execute the tremolo without regard for the notes changing, and the left hand must simply place each new note precisely in time (and tune).

Each player will have to make accomodations in the surrounding measures to allow for the proper place on the bow for a fast and smooth tremolo stroke.

Variation 3: *Maestoso*. For the first time, the *Nun komm* chorale melody appears, cloaked in what the composer has referred to as a "devil's harmonization."[8] The ensemble is split into two equal trios, and the phrases are assigned antiphonally; the first and third phrases are played by first violin, first viola, and first cello, with the second and fourth phrases played by their counterparts. At each phrase cadence (where fermatas would appear in a Bach harmonization), Rosner writes highly dissonant, accelerating, scalewise passages in the non-melodic voices.

Intonation in these chorale phrases is challenging, and the ensemble will make more efficient use of time by actually dividing into two groups and rehearsing these passages in separate rooms. The scoring is at times unwieldy, with each trio playing chords of up to six notes. Identifying the dissonant notes and rehearsing the chords first without them will also aid in solidifying intonation. For example, in the first chorale phrase, the dissonant pitches are all in the first violin part; the second E in m. 107, the G

[8] Remarks, 26 February 1998. The harmonization includes an abundance of minor and major seconds, and diminished and augmented fifths.

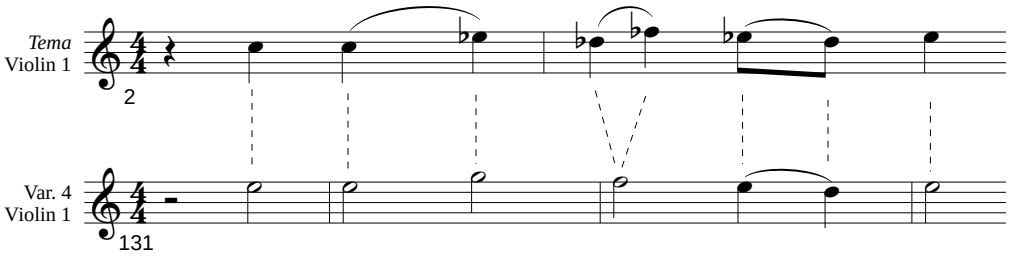
in m. 108, and the first F♯ in m. 109. The time spent identifying these pitches will be well invested.

The first three of the ascending fermata-like interjections are chromatic scales; the fourth (mm. 127–30) introduces the octatonic scale, which will play a more central role later in the work. This final chorale cadence further divides the group into three subgroups; the second violin and second cello sustain a four-note fermata chord, while the scalar interjections appear separately in dialogue between pairs of voices. The held chords are intended to lessen slightly in intensity to permit the scalar material to become prominent. These chords must remain *forte*, however, and bow changes need to be staggered and inaudible.

Variation 4: *Andante moderato*. This variation begins with the held chords sustained from the previous variation, and presents a challenging transition. Responsibility for determining the tempo falls entirely to the first violinist, and it is not a simple task. The final octatonic scale statement of the previous variation concluded with a rhythmic acceleration (the triplet, quadruplet, and quintuplet of m. 130) followed by two "empty" beats, save for the sustained chord. No musical event marks the downbeat of the fourth variation, and the first violinist must sense the change from ♩=84 to ♩ =110 during this hold in the musical action.

All six voices enter in fugal imitation, evocative of the sixteenth-century canzona. The melodic line is a truncated and rhythmically augmented version of the *Tema*, utilizing the first four notes and the anapest figure, as illustrated in figure 5.6. The note on the downbeat of m. 133 combines the functional roles of the first two notes of m. 3. This usage of the anapest motive, where the first of the three notes is metrically

FIGURE 5.6. Melodic comparison, *Tema* and Variation 4



emphasized, is new. Rosner introduces an unusual effect here: with each new entry, the overall dynamic indication *decreases*. This diminuendo must be somewhat exaggerated in each part, because too subtle a drop in dynamics will be negated by the addition of each new voice.

In m. 150, the *Tema* reappears in its unabridged form, but here the metric position is shifted by a half-bar, so that the melody begins on a downbeat, and the melodic intervals have been altered. This is followed immediately by a return to the *Tema* in original note values and positions, and here the texture switches to a largely homophonic one. This continual varying of revisited material provides another level of ongoing

variation, one perhaps best described by the term “diferencias,” a popular variation form in 16th-century Spanish instrumental music. Note that Rosner is also using the ancient device of achieving dynamic contrast by varying the number of instruments playing. The functional ensemble swells from a quartet in m. 154 to a quintet in m. 156 and a sextet in m. 158; then backs down to a quintet again in m. 161 and finally a quartet to conclude the movement, beginning in m. 165.

Variation 5: ***Moderato con rubato.*** This variation spotlights the first cello in what is essentially a fantasia on ideas drawn from the source materials. The upper four parts sustain bowed or fingered tremolo patterns throughout, creating a soft, restless accompanimental texture. The overall effect of the texture is reminiscent of that found in the slow movements of Bartók’s Sixth String Quartet, or Kodaly’s *Serenade*, op. 11, for two violins and viola.

Aside from the demanding solo line, the capricious nature of this variation presents a challenge to the accompanimental players as well. It is essential that all players become familiar with the solo line, at least to the extent that the melodic shape and rhythms are understood. Ideally, each part would have a second staff, preferably in miniature, providing the solo line. In lieu of this, copious pencilled cues will be a great aid to all. Most of the harmonic changes in the long, sustained tremolo chords coincide

with the second cello's downwardly arpeggiated pizzicato chords. In practical terms, this serves two important functions. First, the second cello can assume the primary responsibility for following the first cello's line, and cue the other players. Second, the pizzicato chord will serve as "mortar in the cracks" between the chords, hiding what slight imperfections might exist.

Variation 6: *Allegro agitato*. This extraordinary variation, the longest of the set at 110 measures and two-and-a-half minutes, stands as the centerpiece of the first movement. It is also the most demanding of player, ensemble, and audience, with an atypically (for Rosner's style) high level of technical difficulty, ensemble challenges, and dissonance.

Because this variation is so rhythmically and harmonically complex, the standard slow approach to intonation work will be inefficient. The nearly constant presence of scalewise passing tones, often in multiple voices simultaneously, would require hours of analysis to determine the non-chord tones. In such a context, the shortcomings of any individual will limit the quality of the ensemble's overall intonation. Individual preparation time is vital here; this simply cannot be learned "on the fly." The group rehearsal time on this variation, which will likely exceed that of any other, will be best spent on rhythmic and temporal work.

The tremolo *c*' in the first violin provides a bridge into the rollicking fugue. The subject combines elements from both the theme and the primary countersubject, and twists them into a lively 9/8 jig-like dance. The arch-shaped subject reaches its apex exactly midway, with a diminished-fourth leap across the barline to the third measure. The interval is a difficult one to hear in the mind's ear, and the performer may well find the high note of the subject more easily and securely by thinking of its enharmonic equivalent (in the 1970 version, the leap is sometimes spelled as a major third). When heard against the pitch C, which is made prominent by the tremolo pedal in the violin as well as by repetition in the melodic line, the *f♭*' and *e♭*' at the start of the measure invoke once again the major/minor dichotomy so common to Rosner's style (figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7. Op. 47, sixth variation, fugue subject in second cello

In order to play the rhythm of the fourth measure accurately, it is necessary to subdivide the beats into duple eighths rather than the triplets inherent in the time signature. The player may note a tendency to maintain the regular subdivision, and to play these two notes in a 5:4 ratio. While such an approximation will not be problematic,

nor even noticed, at the beginning of the variation, this cross-metric relationship assumes increasing importance as the variation progresses.

All six voices present the subject, entering at irregular intervals (four, five, six, six, and four measures, respectively). There is a humorous aspect regarding the entrance of the second viola in m. 217. At the end of m. 215, violin and cello lines merge, so that in m. 216 the cello line sounds like the continuation of the violin subject (compare mm. 211–2 in the cello part), and the violin line sounds like a new entrance of the subject. When the second viola enters in m. 217, the dynamic level is raised to ***mp***, perhaps suggesting that the player is a bit indignant to have been preceded in such fashion.[9]

The ternary meter provides for yet another metric placement of the *Tema*, and it appears in the first cello in mm. 235, 248, and 251. The same dotted augmentation later appears in multiple voices; first cello in m. 271, second viola in m. 274, and second violin in m. 277.

At this point, the variation has reached its most frenetic state yet, and cross rhythms suddenly make a continual presence beginning in m. 279, with dotted-eighth duples marked ***fff*** against a mere ***mf*** in the running triplets. This marks the beginning of a

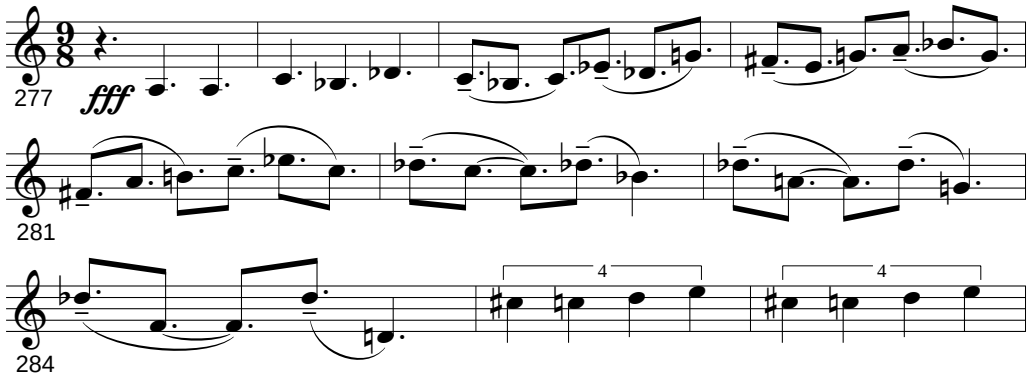
[9] This good-natured toying with listeners' expectations brings to mind the "early" entrance of the first horn, four measures before the recapitulation of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony, first movement.

metric transformation which is perhaps the most remarkable textural feature of the entire work.

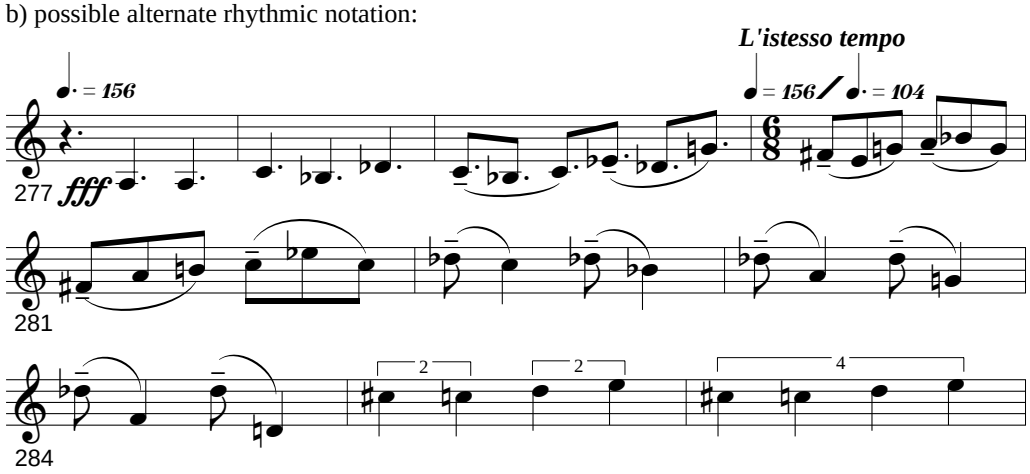
As figure 5.8 illustrates, a metric modulation occurs in these ten measures. The rhythm shown here begins in second violin and second cello, and by m. 285 four of the six voices are playing the quadruplets, while the first violin and first cello persist with the 9/8 jig. This cross-rhythm, nine against four, requires of all players a highly developed

Figure 5.8. Op. 47, i, second violin, mm. 277–86

a) as written:



b) possible alternate rhythmic notation:



rhythmic sense. If an ensemble is wishing to evaluate this work in terms of its level of difficulty relative to the players' abilities, this variation alone will suffice.

The crux of the challenge is this: in order to coordinate the nine-against-four rhythm, the faster rhythmic part should fit into the slower one. However, establishing the four quarter notes spaced across three beats is a challenge in any context, and when those three beats are trisected as is the case here, the potential for inaccuracy is considerable.

The alternate notation provided in figure 5.8(b) has the decided advantage of reducing the metric shifts to two against three, which is a skill in most every accomplished musician's arsenal. For example, m. 279 places two dotted eighths in the span of three eighths, and m. 285 places two quarters in the span of three eighths. The tradeoff for this ease of reading in the alternate notation is the complication of calculating the temporal shift at the time signature change, and the time signature change itself. Furthermore, this would require different time signatures in different voices, which is an atypical compositional technique for Rosner.

This passage, from m. 277 to the end of the variation, will be best rehearsed in two separate groups. The first violin and first cello double each other at one, then two octaves, playing a relentless frenzy of eighth-note triplets which conclude with octatonic scale descents, which are increasedly difficult when written in three-note groupings.

Plenty of slow intonation practice will be in order, as well as achieving a strict metronomic sense.

The other four players have a homophonic, largely homorhythmic (in mm. 285–308, nearly everything is in quarter notes) chorale, a succession of chords with unexpected harmonic twists at every turn. In typical Rosnerian fashion the large majority of these chords are in root position, but the presence of dissonant notes is higher than usual. Surprisingly, not a single seventh–chord, dominant or otherwise, appears in this passage. The four voices converge to play the opening *Tema* beginning in m. 302, in an unharmonized, three-parallel-octave statement. The upward glissando markings compound the intonational difficulties inherent in such octave replication.

Once both groups of players have achieved a relatively comfortable level of ease with their parts, the task of combining them awaits. For this, a loud metronome should be set to one beat per bar. It would be advisable to begin with the slowest setting (40 beats per minute, or 35 if available), and gradually work up to the indicated tempo, which equals approximately 52 beats per minute. Visual cues are also very important; fortunately, most downbeats correspond with a change of bow direction in all parts, and this will prove indispensable in keeping the ensemble together.

The transition into the seventh and final variation harbors an interesting effect. The final octatonic descent (mm. 314–5) is harmonized by a sustained dyadic dissonance,

widely spaced (*B*, *b*', and *b*" against *c*' and *c*"). This interval, heard as a major seventh because of the lowest note, is reminiscent of the first variation. When the first violin and first cello finish their octave scales, the dissonance persists, and the interruption of the scale points out that C and B were the next two expected pitches in the scale. The effect Rosner creates across the barline of m. 318 is dependent upon the second violin and second cello executing the indicated *crescendo possibile* to its fullest extent, which requires copious bow usage and inaudible bow changes, as well as a carefully coordinated release. The sound at the very beginning of the seventh variation should seem like a mere memory of the previous measure.

Variation 7: *Adagio funebre*. Because this variation begins with the tied-over dissonance, with only a negative event (the release of the second violin and cello) happening on the downbeat, establishing the tempo is an important task which should be shared by the first violin and first cello, who move together. An unexpected element needs to be factored into this seemingly simple task: the excitement and difficulty of the sixth variation tend to increase the players' adrenaline, making the *dolce* character of the seventh variation surprisingly elusive. Furthermore, the length of the sustained dissonant chord which concluded the sixth variation, compounded by the memory of the nine-against-four cross rhythms, makes it difficult to calculate any temporal relationship

between these two variations. Therefore, it is recommended that all players memorize the tempo and character of this variation.

This variation serves primarily as an epilogue to the movement, providing refuge from the turbulence of the previous variation. The *Tema* reappears, but is now truncated to its first eight notes, and the first note is now a pickup to the downbeat. The half-note descent in the first violin and cello recall the original countersubject. Only one reference to the earlier variations is obvious; the figure played by the first viola in mm. 324ff., and by the first cello in mm. 326ff., was originally heard in the lower three voices in the second variation in mm. 101ff.[10] Finally, a true sense of harmonic arrival is felt in the downbeat of m. 329, as the G♯-minor chord of the previous measure survives challenges from F-major and G-major triads in the violas, and yields easily to an E-major triadic chord, accompanied by a descending fifth motion in the lowest voice (first cello), which is seldom seen in Rosner's cadences.

The last ten measures, which never stray far enough for the tonic pitch E to be forgotten, present the main theme in yet one last permutation, triplets with the first note placed on the beat. Deceleration is written into the ending, and no additional slowing is necessary. In the penultimate measure, the harmonics in the violins must connect with,

[10] In the 1970 version, this figure was the principal subject of the second variation. The triplet-based material which predominates the variation in the revised version is entirely new.

but not overlap, the final pizzicato E in the four lower voices, concluding the movement with an unexpected definition.

SECOND MOVEMENT: *Motet*

In his remarks quoted above (see p. 2), Rosner credits "the study, at the graduate level, of Renaissance music in general and the works of Josquin des Pres in particular" with having a profound effect on his compositional approach, moving him away from a more traditional neo-Romantic style. The Sextet was originally composed during the same graduate year that Rosner received the M.A. in composition.

In Renaissance vocal music, the motet was second in importance only to the Mass. The practice of preparing arrangements of vocal works for instrumental ensembles, which became increasingly popular as the era progressed, was responsible for the vast majority of instrumental Renaissance music. The second movement of Rosner's sextet clearly displays the influence of the Renaissance era in all aspects, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and structural.

For the most part, the movement presents melodic ideas which are typical of Rosner's melodic style as previously discussed, and develops them through imitative counterpoint in a Renaissance fashion. This is similar to the manner in which Max Reger's *Preludes and Fugues,* op. 117 for solo violin offer Romantic melodic ideas

worked out in Baroque style. Accordingly, this movement is rather easy to play from a purely technical standpoint. Aside from a few measures requiring some slow, careful ensemble rehearsal, which will be discussed in detail below, the challenges of the last movement lie largely in the domains of intonation and large-scale motion.

RHYTHM. Because of the simplicity of the rhythm, it is all the more important that the ensemble be cognizant of larger-scale motion, such as subphrases, phrases, and sectional growth. The task of sustaining directed motion to a projected goal becomes a respectable challenge when note values are slower. Consider, for example, the opening of the movement. A subject is stated and imitated for a total of six iterations. Each of the six appearances of the subject is varied from the others in some way other than mere transposition; subtle dynamic and melodic differences exist as well. The entire passage, however, is unified by a gradual crescendo that ranges from ***pp*** at the beginning to ***ff***, which is reached in m. 27 and sustained until a *subito* ***pp*** at the end of m. 31. Despite the obvious partitioning of the section into six smaller units, and the use of terraced dynamics, the performers must hold the five-measure ***ff*** plateau as a common goal for the entire passage, and convey a sense of growth for the entire section.

There are interesting details surrounding tempo that require advance attention. Most of the movement progresses at the opening tempo (♩≈110). There are two

interruptions of this tempo in the third section, which extends from m. 85 to 108. These interruptions, beginning in m. 91 and again in m. 101, are both marked ♩≈90, and are four and eight bars in length, respectively. In both instances, Rosner marks *poco ritardando* two bars prior to the new tempo, and *poco meno mosso* at the change, stressing that this is more of a character shift than a real tempo change. The returns to the original tempo, in mm. 95 and 108, are both sudden returns on the downbeat.

At the beginning of the coda (m. 190), the new tempo can be difficult to ascertain, owing partly to the long G major chord, which is ten quarter-note beats in duration. The meter of the previous section can easily be felt as 3/2, or as 6/4. The meter at m. 190, however, is clearly 3/2. The tempo indication, *poco piu mosso grazioso,* assumes that the half-note tactus reigns prior to m. 190. This has far-reaching implications; to preserve continuity of flow, the half-note tactus needs to begin with the chorale harmonization in m. 159. If this is observed, then the tempo change at m. 190 increases from 𝅗𝅥≈55 to 𝅗𝅥≈80. For any player (or listener) still attuned to the quarter-note tactus, the new tempo at m. 190 creates a decided *meno mosso* feeling, as the pulse shifts from ♩≈110 to 𝅗𝅥≈80.

In mm. 235ff, the texture returns to a homophonic one, recalling the material that closed the fourth variation. Here the *tenuto* stresses delineate two and three-note units, and usurp the importance of the barlines in shaping the subphrases. The performers should mold these lines with an emphasis on phrasing over tempo; although the Tempo I

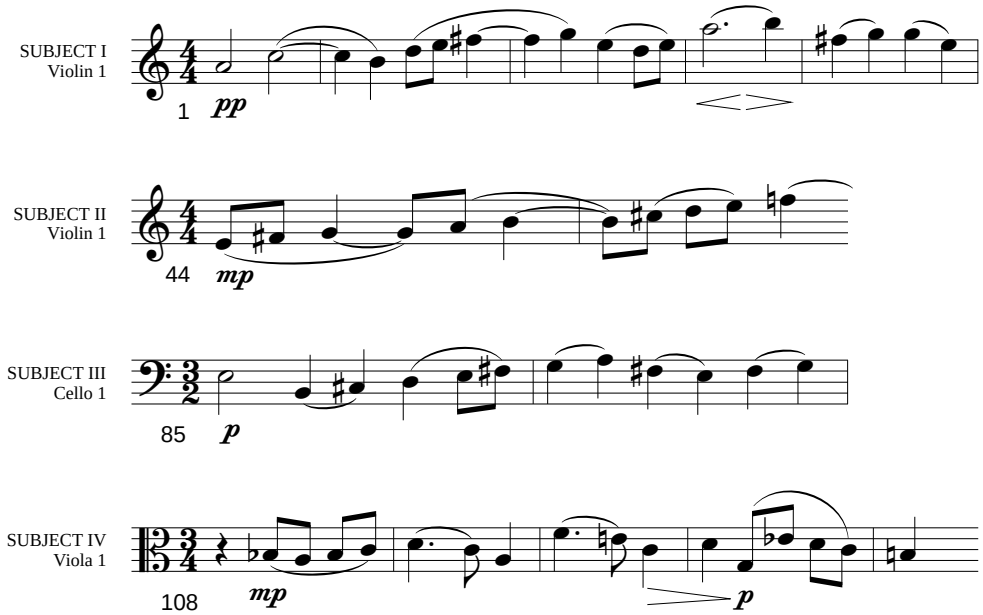
indication must be respected, this rhapsodic, retiring melody should not sound metronomic. Eventually, the three-note groupings become the norm, and 3/4 meter predominates for the remainder of the section (mm. 243–62).

MELODY. A typical Renaissance motet sets lines of text individually, developing each melodic idea in imitative counterpoint before continuing on to the next line of text, which is set to a new melodic idea. The text is generally delineated by cadential motion, textural changes, or rests.

Although no words are involved in Rosner's motet,[11] the movement follows the same general framework; one idea is presented and explored contrapuntally, followed by another (fig. 5.9 reproduces the initial appearance of each subject). The sections for each of the four main melodic subjects are separated by non-contrapuntal transitional passages, and at no point are the various subjects combined. There is little resemblance between these subjects and either the "Nun komm" chorale, or the first-movement *Tema*.

[11] Rosner once shared with me a silly phrase that lyrically fits the first subject: "I love asparagus, especially with an herbal mustard!" It was not until a year later that I recalled playing in the world premiere of Alan Hovhaness's Symphony No. 40, in 1982; in rehearsals for the performance, Hovhaness told the orchestra that the motive for the second movement theme occurred to him at a restaurant where he had ordered a bowl of clam chowder. Musical heritage is sometimes perpetuated in diverse and unexpected ways.

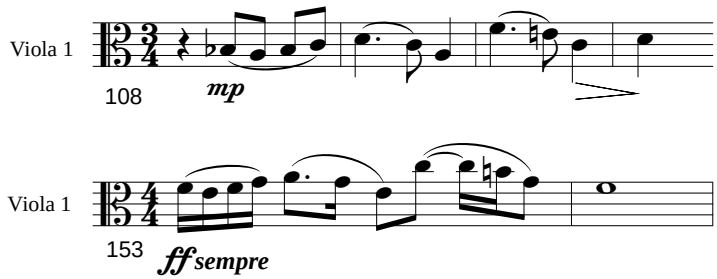
Figure 5.9. Initial appearance of motet subjects, op. 47, ii



Another Renaissance device which Rosner employs is the use of a preexisting melody as a *cantus firmus*, in this instance the complete "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland" chorale melody. Typically these melodies were not the focus of attention, but appeared in a lower voice in long note values. The chorale melody in the Sextet begins after the second subject is underway, with whole-note values in the first viola beginning with the *e*' in m. 50. The words "canto firmo"[sic] appear in the viola part and score at the start of the chorale, and the dynamic marking is ***f*** against ***mf*** in the other parts. Every note of the *cantus firmus* receives both an accent and tenuto marking. These devices serve to adjust for the inherent handicaps the chorale faces, by virtue of the long rhythmic values (whole notes and half notes, corresponding to the *longa* and *brevis* of mensural

notation), and the intentional harmonic and metric displacement of the chorale (i.e., the chorale phrases do not correspond with cadence points of the rest of the texture). The first viola should play with sufficient presence to keep the chorale from being hidden, but not to the extent that it becomes the principal musical feature of the passage.

FIGURE 5.10. Melodic comparison, mm. 108ff. and mm. 153f.

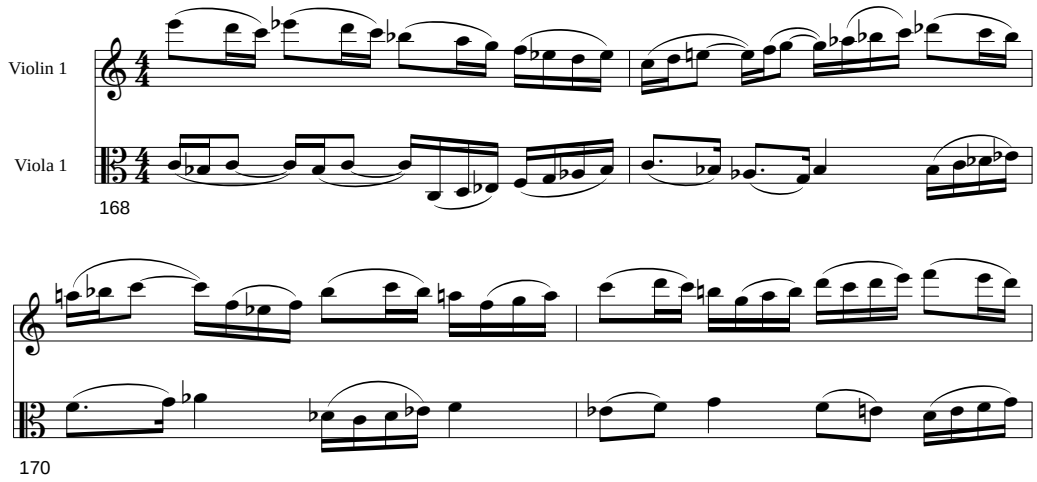


Rosner moves from the contrapuntal sections to a full chorale harmonization by use of thematic transformation. The melodic subject heard first in m. 108 undergoes rhythmic diminution and metric displacement in m. 153 (fig. 5.10) to form the basis for the elaborate melodic filigree that the first violin and first cello weave around the chorale. These lines, which Rosner described as "ribbons of decorative sound,"[12] are in widely spaced counterpoint to each other, at times exceeding a three-octave span, which makes the passage somewhat forgiving of intonational flaws. Coordination of the rhythms

[12] Remarks, 26 February 1998.

should be rehearsed at a slow tempo, especially in places where the rhythms interlock to form a running patter, such as mm. 168ff. (fig. 5.11).

FIGURE 5.11. Aggregate rhythms, op. 47, ii



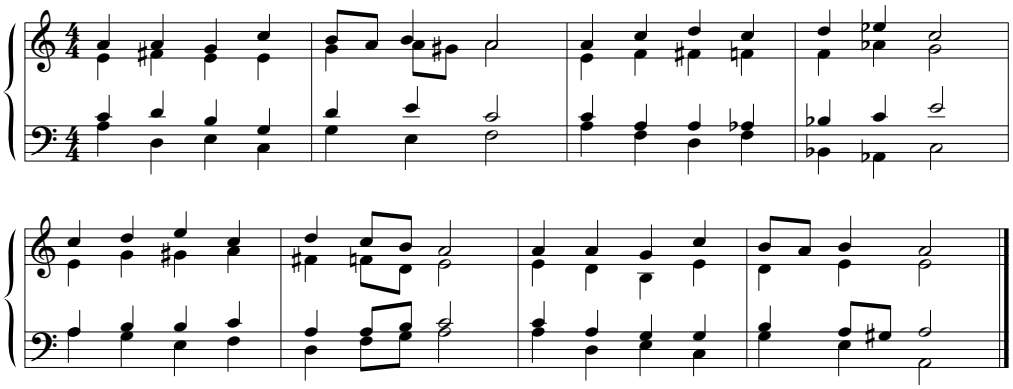
Reminiscent of the fifth variation, the first viola is given a plaintive, wistful melody in the coda, beginning in m. 207, marked ***mp*** over a sustained ***pp*** chord. The association with the cello's cadenza will be strengthened by a *liberamente* interpretation of the melodic line, which consists mostly of descending motivic figures. In the latter half of this section, however (mm. 220ff.), the sense of pulse is restored, with more frequent motion in the held chords, and clear references to Subject I (mm. 225–8) and the chorale (mm. 229–31). The violist must be aware of this and take fewer liberties with the tempo than in the beginning of the section.

HARMONY. Because of the highly contrapuntal nature of this movement, the overall harmonic character tends toward a higher level of dissonance than in the first movement. In a six-voice contrapuntal texture, various passing tones will create dissonant intervals with regularity. However, this is more an incidental byproduct of the compositional procedure than a deliberate attempt to create dissonant music. The propensity toward root-position chords remains as strong a force as in Rosner's other music, and his preference for triadic chords and the rarity of functional dominant-seventh chords similarly remain consistent.

Rosner uses brief homophonic passages to offset the contrapuntal sections, and these will require a different approach and attention to intonation. The three *subito* ***pp*** chords of mm. 31–3 are remote from each other; in the progression G minor–E major–C♯ major (spelled with an F♮), only the last pair share a common tone (G♯). Each chord must be carefully tuned against its root, without thought to voice leading or "expressive" intonation. Similar homophonic passages occur at structural divisions throughout the movement, such as in mm. 41–3, 91–4, 101–7, 152, and extensively in the coda.

The chorale makes three full appearances in the Sextet: the "devil's harmonization" of Variation 3, the *cantus firmus* played by the first viola in mm. 50–81 of the second movement, and the climactic harmonization which appears in mm. 159–83. After being harmonically obscured in the first appearance, and texturally hidden in the

FIGURE 5.12. Four-voice reduction showing Rosner's harmonization of "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland"



second, the impact of the third full statement is an exuberant and glorious declaration of the chorale. Figure 5.12 displays Rosner's harmonic progression in a Bach-like four-voice setting. Note that this is a reduction of the full orchestration, which has mostly six, and at times up to eight, voices, played by the four instruments. Preserving the bass line and the melody in the soprano creates in this example unavoidable parallel fifths and some awkward voice leading. Rosner's words on voice leading are worth repeating: "Each chord or harmonic unit should be stated in the clearest way, even if this entails some parallels (to which I have no objection) or compromises in voice leading."[13]

STRUCTURE. As is typical of text-based forms, the structure of this movement does not fall into any of the standard instrumental categories. The work falls roughly into

two parts. The first part features six-voice counterpoint on four different melodic subjects (see fig. 5.8 above), and the second consists of the fully harmonized chorale tune and a lengthy coda which serves to gradually dissipate the energy built up over the course of the work.

The movement begins and ends in A-dorian mode, dorian being the mode of "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland." As is typical of contrapuntally derived compositions, the first part (mm. 1–158) explores a wide range of harmonic regions. The four melodic subjects begin in A-dorian, E-dorian, E-dorian, and G-aeolian, respectively. These keys do not predominate for the entire sections, however, and to suggest that the first part utilizes tonic and dominant extensively would be misleading. The second part of the movement (mm. 159 to the end) largely confirms the A-dorian tonic.

The performers will find their search for motivic connections is well rewarded in this movement, as it is rich with references to itself, the first movement, and the chorale melody. Prior to the viola *cantus firmus* entry in m. 50, three short, asymmetrical phrases tease the listener with the rhythm of the chorale's first line; first in the second violin in mm. 34–7, then in the first viola in mm. 37–40, and finally in the second violin again,

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[13] Correspondence, 16 June 1999

mm. 41–4. During the first two of these, an interesting cello figuration distracts from the chorale-like lines, but the third is more prominent.

Following the final full chorale statement, several reminiscences occur. Measures 185–9 recall mm. 81–4, the expansive 3/2 theme that serves as connecting material between the second and third contrapuntal subjects. The similarity of the first viola solo in mm. 207ff. to Variation 5 has already been noted, but within this solo, mm. 225–31 foreshadow the final bars by invoking the Subject I melody and the chorale melody in succession. The only first movement variation to be directly quoted is Variation 4, from which the concluding material (mm. 158–71) returns at the Tempo I indication in m. 235 of the second movement.

The entire coda has a narrow dynamic range, from ***pp*** to ***mp***. All details, such as the tenuto stress markings, and the dolce and cantabile instructions, can be achieved without exceeding this range with great sensitivity from all players. The final chord will be most effective if the ensemble coordinates a *decrescendo a niente* with all notes disappearing together. This can be reliably achieved by designating a player to lead the final cutoff, with all players watching and matching bow usage.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF WORKS

DATE	OP.	TITLE	INSTRUMENTATION	FIRST PERFORMANCE
1956	11	Prelude in E minor	Pno	
	12	Minuet in C	Pno	
	13	Waltz in G minor	Pno	
1958	1	Improvisation in G minor	Pno	
	2	Improvisation in E minor	Pno	
1961	3	Symphony No. 1	Orch	
	4	*Adam and Eve*	Pno	
	5	*The Seven Days*	SATB, orch	
	6	Toccata in A major	Pno	
	7	*A Soldier's Prayer*	Orch	
	8	Symphony No. 2	Orch	
	9	*Grand Waltz*	Pno	
1962	10	String Quartet No. 1	2vn, va, vc	NY Univ., 1964
	14	Piano Concerto No. 1	Pno, orch	
	15	*Sacred Service*	SATB, orch	
	16	Sonata for Flute and Cello	Fl, vc	G. Mansfield, M. Neuman, Bronx Museum (WFUV broadcast), 1975

DATE	OP.	TITLE	INSTRUMENTATION	FIRST PERFORMANCE
	17	Violin Concerto	Vn, orch	
1963	18	Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano	Vl, pno	
	19	String Quartet No. 2	2vn, va, vc	CO Phil. Members, 1974
	20	Symphony No. 3	Orch	
	21	*Agnus Dei*	SATB	
	22	*Psalm XXIII*	Med voice, pno	F. Guterman, A. Rosner, NY Univ., 1965
	23	*Cycle of Spring*	Orch	NY Univ., 1965 (as incidental music to R. Tagore play)
	24	*Passacaglia for Orchestra*	Orch	
	25	Piano Sonata No. 1	Pno	J. Dzik, New York, 1965
1964	26	Woodwind Quintet (rev. 1997)	Fl, ob, cl, bsn, hn	Waverly Quintet, NY Univ., 1965
	27	*Toccata Concertante*	Orch	
	28	*Sanctus*	SATB	
	29	Symphony No. 4	Orch	
1965	30	Piano Concerto No. 2	Orch	
	31	*Fantasia quasi una Toccata*	4tpt, 4tbn, perc	CO Phil. Members/C. Topilow, 1974
	32	String Quartet No. 3	2vn, va, vc	Ad Hoc Quartet, Madison, WI, 1993
1966	33	*Partita for Orchestra*	Orch	

DATE	OP.	TITLE	INSTRUMENTATION	FIRST PERFORMANCE
1967	34	Missa *Greensleeves*	SATB	SUNY Buffalo Composer's Choir/D. Multer, 1968
	35	Piano Quintet No. 1	Pno, 2vn, va, vc	
	36	*Five Meditations*	Orch	Bay Ridge Music Fest./A. Rosner, 1981
1968	37	Nine Tagore Madrigals	5vv	SUNY Buffalo Madrigal Choir/ F. Boldt, 1968 (#8 only)
	38	*Canzona sopra un tema di Monteverdi*	3tpt, 2hn, 2trb, tb, va	CO Phil. Members/C. Topilow, 1974
	39	Concertino (rev. 1989)	Hp, hpschd, celeste, pno	
	40	Six Pastoral Dances	Orch	Bronx Sym.Orch./M. Spierman, 1969
	41	Sonata No. 1 for Cello and Piano	Vc, pno	M. Neuman, R. Elibay, Bronx Museum, 1978
	42	*Drei Lieder von Gedichten von Anton Webern*	Voice, orch	
	43	*O Vos Omnes*	SATB, 4 trb	
1969	44	A Gentle Musicke	Fl, str orch	M. Densmore, flute, CO Phil. Strings/ R. Schraeder-Hensen, 1975
1970	45	*Perchance to Dream*	Orch, SATB	
	46	*Christmas Frescoes* (rev. 1997)	Perc	

DATE	OP.	TITLE	INSTRUMENTATION	FIRST PERFORMANCE
	47	String Sextet (rev. 1997)	2vn, 2va, 2vc	P. Vanderwerf, S. Briggs-Cornelius, T. Vanvalkinburgh, C. Lasareff-Mironoff, P. Szczepanek, J. Zumsteg, Northwestern Univ., 1998
	48	Piano Sonata No. 2	Pno	
1971	49	*And He Sent Forth a Dove*	Pno	A. Rigai, Brooklyn Museum, 1975
	50	Missa *l'Homme Armé*	SATB	NY Motet Choir/S. Sturk, 1978
	51	A *MyLai* Elegy	Orch	CO Phil./C. Topilow, 1974
	52	*La Vie Antériure*	Med voice, str qt, 3 trb, perc	
	53	Wedding March	Pno/org	
1972	54	Sonata for Oboe and Piano/ Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano	Ob/vn, pno	M. Smith, oboe, M. Stern-Wolfe, Staten Island, NY, 1973
	55	*The Leaving Light*	Voice, pno	H. Williams, soprano, A. Rosner, Bronx Museum, 1975
	56	String Quartet No. 4	2vn, va, vc	Alorian Quartet, Oberlin College, 1990
1973	57	Symphony No. 5: Missa *sine Cantoribus super 'Salve Regina'*	Orch	CO Phil./A. Rosner, 1975
	58	*Three Elegaic Songs*	High voice, pno	H. Williams, soprano, A. Rosner, Bronx Museum, 1975
	59	*Requiem*	S, T, T, B, SATB, orch	

DATE	OP.	TITLE	INSTRUMENTATION	FIRST PERFORMANCE
1974	60	Concerto Grosso No. 1	Orch	CO Phil./C. Topilow, 1975
	61	*Musique de Clavecin*	Hpschd	B. Harbach, SUNY Buffalo, 1987
	62	Missa *In Nomine*	SATB	
1975	63	*Canzona Secundi Toni*	3tpt, 2hn, 3trb, tb	George Washington Univ. (St. Louis, MO) brass, /D. Presgrave, 1976
1976	64	Symphony No. 6	Orch	
	65	*Five Ko-ans*	Orch	
1977	66	String Quartet No. 5	2vn, va, vc	Wagner College (Staten Island, NY) Quartet, 1979
	67	*Responses, Hosanna, and Fugue*	Str orch	
1978	68	*Nocturne*	Orch	
	69	Piano Sonata No. 3: *Sonata Eterea*	Pno	E. Litsky, Staten Island, NY, 1980
	70	Brass Quintet	2tpt, hn, trb, tb	Univ. of Wisc., Oshkosh, 1995
1979	71	Sonata for Horn and Piano	Hn, pno	M. Spetalnik, A. Brewster, Garden City, NY, 1979
	72	*Magnificat*	SATB, brass	Richmond (NY) Choral Soc./J. Meyel, 1981
	73	*Nightstone*	Voice, pno	E. Lasar, A. Rosner, Staten Island, NY, 1980
	74	Concerto Grosso No. 2	Orch	Arapahoe Chamber Orch./ C. Topilow, 1981

DATE	OP.	TITLE	INSTRUMENTATION	FIRST PERFORMANCE
1980	75	*Consort Music*	5 va da gamba/orch	NY Consort of Viols, 1980
	76	Prelude and Fugue	Perc	Brooklyn College Perc. Ens., 1981
1982	77	*Minstrel to an Unquiet Lady*	T, pno	L. Robinson, A. Rosner, Kingsborough College, 1989
	78	*The Tragedy of Queen Jane*	Orch	Altoona Sym. Orch./N. Palmer, 1999
1983	79	*Of Numbers and of Bells*	2 pno	
1984	80	*Let them Praise*	SATB	
	81	*The Chronicle of Nine*	Opera	Libretto: Florence Stevenson
1986	82	*From the Diaries of Adam Czerniakow*	Narrator, orch	
1987	83	*Sonatine d'Amour*	Hpschd	B. Harbach (hpschd), Atlanta, GA, 1989
1988	84	*Trinity*	Concert Band	Kingsborough Comm. College Band/ S. Loring, 1990
1988	85	*A Plaintive Harmony*	Hn	L. Lovstad, Kingsborough College, 1988
1989	86	*Besos sin Cuento*	Contralto, fl, va, hp	S. Goodman (contralto) *et al*, New York City, 1998
1990	87	*Transformations*	Tpt, pno, str orch	
	88	*Lovely Joan: Rhapsody on an English Folk Song*	Concert Band	UC Fullerton band/M. Fennell, 1990
	89	Sonata No. 2 for Cello and Piano	Vc, pno	D. Lawson, E. Belli, New York, 1991

DATE	OP.	TITLE	INSTRUMENTATION	FIRST PERFORMANCE
	90	*Songs of Lightness and Angels*	Voice, hn, pf	J. Andrews, P. Schmalz, N. Schmalz, Oshkosh, WI, 1995
1991	91	*De Profundis*	Concert Band	
	92	*A Psalm of Mercy*	SATB	
	93	*Gematria*	Orch	JCC Orch. of San Diego/D. Amos, Tijuana, 1992
	94	*A Duet for Violas*	2 va	J. Irvine, L. Ramsey, XXI Int'l Viola Congress, Northwestern Univ., 1993
1992	95	*A Sephardic Rhapsody*	Orch	JCC Orch. of San Diego/D. Amos, 1994
1993	96	*Poseidon*	Voice, pno	B. Post, A. Rosner, Kingsborough Comm. College, 1994
	97	*The Parable of the Law*	Baritone, orch	E. Palay, JCC Orch. of San Diego/ D. Amos, 1994
	98	*Dances of Initiation*	Concert Band	UWisc., Eau Claire band/D. George, 1993
	99	*Etz Chaim*	Pno	
1994	100	*Eclipse*	Concert Band	Oshkosh West HS band/P. Schmalz, 1995
	101	*Danses a la Mode*	Vc/vn	D. Cowley (vc), Oshkosh, WI, 1995
	102	*Bontsche Schweig*	Chamber opera	Recital perf. (voices & piano), Kingsborough College, 1999
1995	103	Piano Quintet No. 2	Pno, 2vn, va, vc	R. Teh, Ad Hoc Quartet, Northbrook (IL), 1996

DATE	OP.	TITLE	INSTRUMENTATION	FIRST PERFORMANCE
	104	*RAGA!*	Concert Band	UMich Ann Arbor Band/ H. R. Reynolds, 1995
1996	105	*Variations on a Theme by Frank Martin*	Orch	
	106	Sonata in B-flat , trb, pf	Chamber	G. Erickson, A. Tarraj, Brooklyn, 1997
1997	107	Concerto for 2 Trumpets, Strings, and Timpani	Orchestra	E. McIrvine, Jr., B. McKinney, Kingsborough College Orch./A. Rosner, 1998
	108	*Of Songs and Sonnets*	Countertenor, hpschd	M. Coyd, N. Comparone, New York City, 1998
1998	109	*Tempus Perfectum*(concert overture)	Orch	
1999	110	*Serpentine,*	Cl, pf	
	111	*To the Keen Stars* (Text by Percy B. Shelley)	Voice, pno	

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