PRIMARY STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CINDY MCTEE'S MUSIC AS FOUND IN *TIMEPIECE*, *BALLET FOR BAND*, AND *FINISH LINE*

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Cindy McTee, Regents Professor of Composition in the College of Music at the University of North Texas, is one of America's leading composers. Her music is an eclectic blend of the "American" sound that is created by the use of a multiplicity of techniques. This document uses three of McTee's most recent (to date) works for wind band: *Timepiece, Ballet for Band* and *Finish Line*, to identify the primary stylistic characteristic's of the composer's music, which include: jazz influence; use of ostinati, pseudo-ostinati and machine-like rhythmic patterns and figures; creation of extended and angular melodic lines; progressive "walking" bass lines; and the use of octatonic and chromatic collections. Through the identification of stylistic characteristics, concise stylistic analysis of the works, interview transcript, list of composer's works to date, and selected discography, this document will add to the limited body of scholarly writing on the composer.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Cindy McTee has made an impact on the instrumental music ensemble scene in the United States and abroad. She has a musical voice and language that is unique. The uniqueness of her musical voice comes from a blend of rhythmic activity and memorable melodic lines. Conductors, composers and other performing musicians have praised her music for being both creative and innovative. Professor McTee's sound is often described as overtly American. Houston music critic Charles Ward has described McTee's music as a "charging, churning celebration of the musical and cultural energy of modern-day America. ... (It) aptly illustrated the electric, almost convulsive nature of American society near the start of the 21st century."[1]

Biographical Information

Cindy McTee, Regents Professor of Composition at the University of North Texas, was born February 20, 1953 in Tacoma, Washington, and grew up in the nearby town of Eatonville, Washington, located between Tacoma and Mt. Rainier National Park. Born into a musical family, she was constantly surrounded by music. Her mother was a clarinetist and also played tenor saxophone. Her father was a trumpet player. McTee began her piano studies at the age of six with a teacher (Mrs. Melvin) who encouraged improvisation. McTee credits Melvin with providing the encouragement to compose.

[1] Cindy McTee, composer Website, http://www.cindymctee.com/reviews.html, accessed 10 April 2008.

> Mrs. Melvin was not classically trained as far as I know, but a masterful performer of popular music from the 1940's. Her teaching method included requiring that I play a small number of pieces differently each time I returned for a lesson. I credit her with having given me my first opportunity to compose, although it wasn't until much later that I actually put notes on paper.[2]

McTee's musical foundation was a varied one. She found herself in the music environment on a regular basis; she reflects below about the beginning of her musical career:

> I was often taken to rehearsals [of her parents' dance band] in lieu of being left with a baby sitter, and I have fond memories of hearing tunes like "Night and Day", "Misty", and "Autumn Leaves". My mother gave me my first saxophone lessons. She taught me to transpose from sheet music, and when I attended my first band rehearsal in fifth grade, I continued to transpose. You can imagine the result.
>
> Actually, throughout my childhood, I thought I would grow up to be a visual artist. As a youngster, I spent much more time drawing and painting than practicing the piano. But looking back, I recognize early signs of my fascination with sound. I remember quite vividly some experiments that got me into trouble, for example, playing inside my grandmother's grand piano and improvising piano accompaniments during high school choir concerts. I wasn't considered to be an ideal music student because I found it very difficult to play exactly what other composers wrote. Improvising, that is, composing spontaneously, was much more interesting to me. [3]

McTee received a BACHELOR OF MUSIC DEGREE in theory and composition from Pacific Lutheran University in 1976, where her major professors were David Robbins and Thomas Clark.

While at Pacific Lutheran University, McTee met Krzysztof Penderecki, who was the featured guest composer at the Festival of Contemporary Music in 1974. Following a performance featuring the works of student composers (including McTee), Penderecki invited her to spend a year with his family in Cracow, Poland. The agreement included a

[2] McTee, materials.
[3] Ibid.

barter of composition lessons for McTee who would in turn teach Penderecki's children English. She describes the scenario of influence as follows.

> Lessons with Penderecki were conducted informally, generally at the family dining room table. I studied orchestration, twentieth-century techniques, and sixteenth and eighteenth-century counterpoint at the Cracow Academy of Music. Penderecki insisted I devote a large portion of my time to writing counterpoint exercises because, as he put it, "American schools don't require enough counterpoint." Most of my instruction was given in the form of private lessons and conducted in English, an arrangement that suited everyone since I spoke very little Polish and the Academy's professors were more than happy to practice their English. In those days, of course, there were relatively few foreigners behind the Iron Curtain.
>
> Penderecki taught me much more than music—he taught me a way of life. I learned about commitment, professionalism, and the benefits of hard work. I learned the value of having a supportive teacher—his frequent encouragement of my work did much to bolster my confidence. He also taught me an appreciation for old things: antique clocks, Renaissance painting, medieval architecture, and Gregorian chant.
>
> As far as specific musical influences are concerned, I can say that my current interest in expressing humor through music may be attributable to Penderecki. When thinking of Penderecki's music, most people probably recall *Threnody, the St. Luke Passion, the Dies Irae,* and other solemn works. However, there are also several capriccios and a comic opera. I think Penderecki may have given me the courage to break away from the notion that modern music needs always to express serious modes of thinking and feeling.
>
> Speaking of courage—I know of no one more musically courageous than Krzysztof Penderecki. He has always composed exactly what his muse dictates, writing with honesty, conviction, and integrity. I will be forever indebted to Mr. Penderecki for having provided me with the opportunity to witness his work firsthand. [4]

While in Poland, McTee also studied with Marek Stachowski and Krystyna Moszumanska-Nazar. After completing the undergraduate degree, she earned her MM degree in 1978 from the Yale School of Music, where she studied again with Krzysztof Penderecki, in addition to Jacob Druckman, and Bruce MacCombie. For one semester

[4] Ibid.

she studied in Tubingen, Germany, at the Eberhard-Karls Universitaet. In 1981, she completed her doctorate at the University of Iowa, where she was a student of Professor Richard Hervig.

Following the completion of her Doctorate, McTee returned to her alma mater to join the faculty. She remained there until 1984, when she joined the faculty at the University of North Texas. Since her arrival at UNT, she has been promoted to Regents Professor of Composition. In addition, the professor has served for several years as the chair of the division of composition studies. [5]

Compositions, Awards, Grants, Commissions and Presentations

Cindy McTee's music is highly regarded and often considered to be among the most creative new art music. Her body of work spans decades and includes compositions for wind band, orchestra, various chamber ensembles, electro-acoustic ensembles and chorus. Her published works are available through either Rondure Music Publishing or Lauren Keiser Music Publishing. Many of her pieces for large ensemble have been recorded on the Klavier Records, GIA Publications, GIA Publication WindWorks, Mark Records, Arizona University Recordings, Crystal Recordings, CAFUA Records, Encore Music, Centaur Compact Discs, and Equilibrium labels.

She has received countless awards and recognitions for her music that has been performed by leading orchestras, wind bands and chamber ensembles in Japan, South America, Europe, Australia, and the United States. A selected list of awards and

[5] Cindy McTee, composer website, http://www.cindymctee.com/awards.html, accessed 3 December 2008.

recognitions would include the following: a Creative Connections Award from Meet the Composer (2005); two awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2002, 1992); a Guggenheim Fellowship (2001); a Composers Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts (1994); and a Fulbright Fellowship (1990). She was also selected to participate with the National Symphony Orchestra in "Music Alive," a residency program sponsored by Meet the Composer and the American Symphony Orchestra League (2002). Both the University of North Texas and Pacific Lutheran University have spotlighted her work and talents with awards including the Outstanding Alumnus Award (PLU) and the Toulouse Scholars Award (UNT).[6]

Professor McTee has been commissioned to compose works by many of the country's top symphony orchestras and wind bands. Her most recent commissions include those from the Detroit Symphony (at present an unnamed piece to be premiered in 2010); Houston Symphony Orchestra—*Solstice for Trombone and Orchestra* (2007); a consortium of wind bands—*Finish Line* (2006) [wind version]; Amarillo Symphony Orchestra—*Finish Line* (2005); Dallas Symphony Orchestra—*Einstein's Dream* (2005) and *Timepiece* (2000); Bands of America—*Ballet for Band* (2004) [wind version of *Symphony No. 1: Ballet for Orchestra*]; National Symphony Orchestra—*Symphony No. 1: Ballet for Orchestra* (2002); and another consortium of wind bands—*Timepiece* (2001) [wind version].[7] In addition to these commissions, leading wind bands, orchestras and chamber ensembles in the United States, North and South America, Europe and Asia, as well as Australia have performed her music.[8]

[6] Cindy McTee, composer website, http://www.cindymctee.com/awards.html, accessed 10 April 2008.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

In addition to McTee's talent as a musician, she is often a featured guest speaker. Her recent ventures as a guest speaker include invitations from the Dallas Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology, Amarillo Symphony Orchestra Guild, Western Illinois New Music Festival, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Bands of America National Concert Band Festival, American Symphony Orchestra League, Seattle Symphony, the College Band Directors National Association, and the Society for American Music. Throughout her career, she has been on the campus of numerous colleges and universities sharing her musical thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and experiences. The list of institutions include: Indiana University of Pennsylvania; University of Michigan; University of Washington; Gustavus Adolphus College; Baylor University; Western Oregon University; Catholic University of America; Vanderbilt University; Arizona State University; and the Indiana State University.

State of Research and Significance

Currently, little scholarly writing exists on Professor McTee or her music. Among the recent research on the composer, there is one master's thesis by Jennifer L. Weaver ("Structural Octatonicism in Cindy McTee's *Symphony No. 1: Ballet For Orchestra"*) and one doctoral dissertation by David Charles Fullmer that uses McTee's writing as a portion of the document ("A Comparison of the Wind Band Writings of Three Contemporary Composers: Karel Husa, Timothy Broege, and Cindy McTee*"*). In addition to these two documents, there are three other published sources that reference McTee's music. Those include *The Evolution of Melodic Construction in Three Twentieth-Century Wind Band Works; A Composer's Insight: Thoughts, Analysis and*

Commentary on Contemporary Masterpieces for Wind Band; and *Recent Electro-Acoustic Music by Women: A Survey.*

There are six volumes of *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* volumes two through seven that have conductor study guides that reference Dr. McTee's music. These volumes include basic study guides for the composer's *Soundings, Circuits, Timepiece, Ballet for Band, California Counterpoint: The Twittering Machine* and *Finish Line*. The conductor study guides in these volumes give limited information about the composer, the composition, technical and stylistic considerations, the history surrounding the piece, musical elements, form and structure, suggested listening, additional references and resources.

This document, *Primary Stylistic Characteristics of Cindy McTee's Music,* will add to the limited body of literature available on the composer and will provide an insight into her music's voice, stylistic characteristics and compositional language. Her musical voice is a unique and captivating one; critic Charles Ward has written about McTee's work, "from repetitive ideas reminiscent of Steve Reich to walking bass lines straight from jazz, it [*Circuits*] refracted important American musical styles of this century."[9]

David Charles Fullmer notes, "McTee's compositional style includes humor, expectation denied, unexpected silences and rhythmic displacement, jazz textures, and post minimalism. She believes, as Stravinsky, that music either sings or dances."[10] Fullmer continues to describe McTee's compositional style by observing her strong desire to write in traditional forms. He notes that her music is "unified through

[9] McTee, materials.

[10] David Charles Fullmer, *A Composer's Insight: Thoughts, Analysis, and Commentary on Contemporary Masterpieces for Wind Band*, ed. Tim Salzman (Galesville, Maryland: Meredith Music Publications, 2003), 109.

unrelenting chains of ostinati which via clever asymmetrical variations, run counter to predictable strong beat/weak beat relationships."[11]

While Ward and Fullmer make valid assessments of McTee's musical voice, there are other elements that help to create her sound—those elements will be clearly defined in this document. The elements that combine to create her musical voice include a strong jazz influence; the use of ostinato and pseudo-ostinato; the composition of machine-like rhythmic patterns and figures; the creation of extended and angular melodic lines; the development of prevalent "walking" bass lines; and the use of octatonic and twelve-tone collections. The combination of these elements represents the primary stylistic characteristics of her musical voice. This document is the first to look at the microelements that create the macro-sound that Professor McTee has created in her music.

The selected repertoire used in this document to illustrate McTee's primary stylistic characteristics includes her most recent works for wind band. The works are: *Timepiece* (2001)*, Ballet for Band* (2004) and *Finish Line* (2006)*.*

It should be noted that while each of the three works has a genesis as a piece for symphony orchestra, the versions for wind band will be used as the primary sources for this document. In each case, McTee created the version for wind band. A version created by the composer gives the work immediate credibility as a worthy and equal substitute for the original. This concept of composer-created versions should not be confused with an arrangement created by (in many cases) another musician with little or no input from the composer.

[11] Ibid.

Upon close examination of the scores, one can see that the orchestral and wind band versions of *Timepiece* and *Finish Line* are structurally identical. The major differences between the versions are the obvious ones dictated by standard instrumentation for each respective ensemble. However, the *Ballet for Band* has one major difference than that of the original work, *Symphony No. 1: Ballet for Orchestra.* The *Symphony* was composed in four movements, whereas the *Ballet* is a three movement piece. The second movement of the *Symphony No. 1,* a hauntingly beautiful *Adagio*, based on McTee's *Agnus Dei* for organ [which borrows a melody from Penderecki's *Polish Requiem*] is composed for strings only. The composer decided to eliminate this portion of the work in the version for winds because the original does not include the use of woodwinds, brass, or percussion. Consequently, the absence of this slow movement in *Ballet for Band* is explainable and appropriate.

CHAPTER 2

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRIMARY STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS IN CINDY MCTEE'S MUSIC

Cindy McTee's music has been described as the "American style." Wayne Gay (*Fort Worth Star-Telegram*) called her music "eclectic and ear-catching." Richard Ginell (*Los Angeles Times*) coined McTee's *Timepiece* "…an engaging, pulsating, grooving mechanism." From the *New York Times,* Anne Midgette referred to *Timepiece* as "a fine program opener…it contrasts blocks of breathing, gentle string chords with episodes of industrious busyness. The recurring ticking gives the music an air both mechanical and funky, like a soundtrack for a film about a factory in the Jazz Age."[12]

In an email written to the author, the composer comments about her music and its inherent style qualities.

> Several have said, including you, Hans Graf [music director of the Houston Symphony], and Charles Ward [music critic for *The Houston Chronicle*], that my music, at least the pieces you're studying, says something about America. I would never have known that or thought much about it were it not pointed out by others. I think it's true though. It occurs to me that the use of the octatonic scale may be a hold over in my ear from my experience playing and listening to jazz. And the other influence would be that decidedly American invention we call minimalism. (But, I've always resisted the idea of repeating without small changes along the way.)
>
> Another "American" sort of thing might have to do with a multiplicity of approaches (something I owe Ives)…for example, the idea of both chromatic (twelve-tone) and octatonic structures living side by side. This idea is also found in how I approach rhythm…a steady, regular pulse in some voices (usually the accompaniment) while a much more flexibly-written tune is heard over top. I suppose this might come from jazz as well…the rhythm section chugs away "in

[12] David Charles Fullmer, *A Composer's Insight: Thoughts, Analysis, and Commentary on Contemporary Masterpieces for Wind Band*, ed. Tim Salzman (Galesville, Maryland: Meredith Music Publications, 2003), 109.

time" while solo players improvise more freely, creating a kind of rhythmic dissonance. [13]

When asked what or whom do you listen to, McTee has responded, "I listen to jazz. I listen to the repetitive sounds of finely crafted machinery. I listen to Stravinsky and Ravel and Sarah McLachlan. I listen to everything."[14] Clearly, the description of her listening preferences shows her musical influences.

McTee's musical voice, musical language, and style characteristics become obvious when viewed by specific stylistic elements. The primary stylistic characteristics of Cindy McTee's music include the following.

- Jazz influence
- Use of ostinato and pseudo-ostinato passages and machine-like rhythmic patterns and figures
- Creation of extended and angular melodic lines
- Prevalent "walking" bass line writing
- Use of octatonic and twelve-tone collections

Primary Stylistic Characteristic – Jazz Influence

McTee spent much of her youth being surrounded by the sounds of popular music of the 1940s and the 1950s. Her constant encouragement to improvise as a younger musician and her love of the music of the bebop era[15] can clearly be seen in the music of McTee since 1990, beginning with *Circuits.* She acknowledged that her practice and performance of jazz ended after graduate school and it was at that point

[13] Cindy McTee, personal e-mail, 27 September 2008.
[14] McTee, materials.
[15] Cindy McTee, interview by author, Denton, TX 8 April 2008.

that the jazz music entered her compositions. She commented, “I never really thought about this before, but when I stopped playing jazz and practicing it, that’s when it began to creep into my music…interestingly, you stop doing jazz in one place and it finds its way back into another area.”[16]

Several of America’s composers have allowed jazz to influence, directly or indirectly, their serious artistic music. One can look toward some of the music of America’s most beloved composers and see a direct connection of music for the concert hall and music of the jazz hall. Aaron Copland’s *Music for the Theatre, Clarinet Concerto,* and *Piano Concerto*; George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*; and Bernstein’s *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs* are examples. One of McTee’s major influences, Igor Stravinsky, has an obvious jazz influence; this influence can clearly be seen in Stravinsky’s *Ebony Concerto.*

McTee’s jazz influence can be seen in her use of rhythm, her choices of harmony, and at times her melodic writing. Fullmer describes her music.

> Her technically complex melodic fragments comprised of a step-wise chromaticism as well as disjunct leaps are clearly references to the bebop jazz era. Rhythmically, many of those melodic fragments conclude on an offbeat and are frequently broken up by brief, syncopated tutti statements. Driving bass lines, snare drum rim shots and the use of ride cymbal and hi-hat percussive effects are also hallmarks of her compositions jazz textures.[17]

McTee recognizes the contributions that jazz has made to her and her music. She comments, “the jazz influence of course is evident, not only in the pitch world that I’ve chosen to use most of the time, but also rhythmically.”[18]

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[16] Ibid.

[17] David Charles Fullmer, “A Comparison of the Wind Band Writings of Three Contemporary Composers: Karel Husa, Timothy Broege, and Cindy McTee,” (DMA diss., University of Washington, 2003), 161.

[18] McTee, interview.

Igor Stravinsky believed (as does McTee) that music either sings or dances. This bi-conceptual idea of music and its function make it easy to understand her fascination with dance. Her fascination led her to begin ballroom dance lessons. Regarding how we relate to music, she notes: "we can relate to music in various ways, on an intellectual level, an emotional level, a spiritual level, and a physical level. Mind, heart, soul, body. Dance helps me to get in touch with the physical aspects of music."[19] In much of her music, the listener can categorize any moment as music that is inspired by either song or dance.

McTee's Use of Ostinato and Pseudo-Ostinato

As with much music in our society and our history, repetition can create motion, sustainability of interest, and a host of other reactions and feelings. McTee uses repetition in several ways. Her use of repetition can be categorized as either strict ostinato or pseudo-ostinato. By definition ostinato is a repeated pattern and pseudo-ostinato is a pattern that will repeat but may also have subtle changes. The use of pseudo-ostinato is a very clear characteristic of McTee's music. She comments:

> About the ostinato, someone described my music as post-minimal because of the use of repetition and ostinato. But, it's almost always changing a little bit each time. You might have a couple of bars of something and the pattern will change slightly; a note will be left out, or instead of two eighths you'll have a dotted eighth-sixteenth or something will change—a note will be displaced by an octave. So, it's not repetition ad nauseum over and over as the same thing. There are tiny changes in the pattern.[20]

It is the slight variance in pattern or rhythm that provides a break from the monotony that basic ostinati can cause. In much of her "dance" music, she masterfully

[19] McTee, materials.
[20] McTee, interview.

links chains of ostinati together. The manner in which she does this linking is interesting in that these chains cause the listener to have an expectation of musical events. However, quite often these expectations are denied. The composer uses the displacement of a note or rest to create humor in her music as well as to deny the listener's expectation. This denied expectation in her use of repeated material create a subcategory of ostinato, the "pseudo-ostinato."

In Fullmer's comparison of three contemporary composers, he writes the following about McTee's music and her use of ostinati. "Structurally her music embraces traditional forms that are unified through unrelenting 'chains of ostinati' which, via clever asymmetrical variations, run counter to predictable strong beat/weak beat relationships."[21] Perhaps the intentional breaking of the chains, or rhythmic patterns, can be traced back to her upbringing and training in the jazz tradition and improvisation. Quite often in the improvisation world, performers repeat a motive or gesture that is often the basis for a holistic musical idea, but is varied only slightly upon each repetition. The macro musical moment is a constant variation based on a single idea.

Primary Stylistic Characteristic –
Creation of Machine-like Rhythmic Patterns and Figures

Relating to the concept of pseudo-ostinato, McTee is fascinated with machine-like rhythmic patterns and figures. In fact, outside of music, she is drawn to the repeated sounds of "gizmos" (the plural version of the title of one of the movements in her *Soundings*), cars, and other mechanical devices. The composer has often mentioned

[21] David Charles Fullmer, *A Composer's Insight: Thoughts, Analysis, and Commentary on Contemporary Masterpieces for Wind Band,* ed. Timothy Salzman, (Galesville, Maryland: Meredith Music Publications, 2003), 161.

her love of the sound of predictable things moving to a pulse in the background. An examination of the percussion writing in any of her most recent large ensemble works will show an obvious attraction to unusual and highly repetitive sounds. McTee realizes her machine-like writing can be viewed as a part of her "extroverted dance music," (as opposed to her "introspective song music").[22]

Perhaps this machine-like rhythmic writing in combination with McTee's pseudo-ostinato pallet creates clarity in her music. She offers the following thoughts to conductors about this idea. "Clarity is important to me. Sometimes exaggerated articulations can help. Rhythmic precision is also a must. I would rather the tempo be too slow than the texture cloudy from inaccurate placement of events."[23] Overall clarity and rhythmic precision are musical soul mates; one cannot live in McTee's musical world without the other. Clarity and rhythmic precision have a symbiotic relationship. This relationship of exactness can provide a workable and transparent musical canvas capable of creating the songs and dances that she has composed.

Primary Stylistic Characteristic –
Creation of Extended and Angular Melodic Lines

As an additional layer on top of the frequent and reoccurring groups of "circular music" (ostinati), a seemingly almost unrelated extended and angular melodic line can often be identified. One can compare McTee's use of these extended, floating lines to a concept of French composer, theorist, conductor and teacher Nadia Boulanger, whose belief of *la grande ligne* became a staple in the teaching of her students. *La grande*

[22] McTee, interview.
[23] McTee, materials.

ligne is the basic principle of the "long line" in music. Boulanger is noted as saying "music is made up of two essential elements—line and rhythm."[24] The extended melodic line that McTee uses is one of the most notable and noticeable characteristics of her music. McTee comments on this concept:

> The way I think about that [long lines of melodies on top of faster moving rhythmic ideas] is often there is something in the background that is likely moving in a predictable way, rhythmically, according to a pulse. There is a melodic line that is floating over top using rhythms that are more freely designed. So you get this tension from those things that are grounded and predictable and machine like against some things that are more fluid and lyrical.
>
> There are plenty of examples of that in my music. That is how I think about it—talking about this elongated line. For me it has a temporal component—something that is steady and controlled by a pulse and something that is fluid or aperiodic and less controlled, floating over top.[25]

McTee also considers this elongated line to be a musical personification of her "introspective"[26] or lyrical voice—that of her "song music." The simplicity of her introspective song voice adds to the overall clarity that she strives for in most of her large ensemble music. Quite often these elongated lines are very angular in nature. (This, too, can be traced back to her fascination with bebop jazz music.) She affirmed this in an email to the author. She wrote, "this idea is also found in how I approach rhythm…a steady, regular pulse in some voices (usually the accompaniment) while a much more flexibly-written tune is heard over top. I suppose this might come from jazz as well…the rhythm section chugs away 'in time' while solo players improvise more freely, creating a kind of rhythmic dissonance."[27]

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[24] Teresa Walters, "Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher: Her Life, Concepts, and Influences (Volume I)," (DMA diss., Peabody Institute of the John Hopkins University, 1981), 88.

[25] McTee, interview.

[26] Ibid.

[27] McTee, personal email.

The combination of musical voices, the voice of the song and the voice of the dance, or the presentation of her "rhythmic dissonance" can also be viewed as a "multiplicity of approaches,"[28] much like the music of Ives. However, McTee's use of multiplicity follows a much less poly-everything approach than Charles Ives. Her skillful use of elongated line over faster moving lines (often pseudo-ostinato) does in a sense contribute to the clarity of her music, as the listener's ear is often drawn to the *la grande ligne* and not to the fast moving and often changing "chains of ostinato." The listener's ear is musically directed to the contrasting elongated, angular melody.

Primary Stylistic Characteristic –

Prevalent "Walking" Bass Line Writing

The prevalent and overt bass line writing in the music of McTee is one of her most obvious stylistic elements and is a significant source of musical content. McTee uses the bass line for more than "harmonic" background. The bass line is also used as rhythmic support, "harmonic" supplement, and timbre creation and manipulation. As with the expected "walking" bass lines found in jazz, the composer uses these bass lines to create a constantly moving chain of pitches. In every case in the three pieces used in this document, McTee composes these bass lines using a twelve-tone or chromatic collection. To add another layer of complexity, she often creates ostinati with these chromatic or twelve-tone bass lines. The end result being a "walking" bass line that is chromatic in nature and through repetition becomes another ostinato or pseudo-ostinato. The multi-layered bass lines can be viewed as an element with multiple roles.

[28] Ibid.

In addition to the cleverly written bass line concept, McTee's scoring of the "walking" bass line should be analyzed. One characteristic of her music is the scoring of these bass lines, which typically include string bass, piano, tuba, bassoon, contra bassoon, E-flat baritone saxophone, B-flat contra bass clarinet, E-flat contra alto clarinet and B-flat bass clarinet. The various combinations of these voices in her scoring create a very commanding low timbre and compositional force.

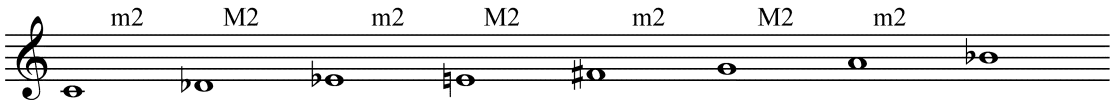
Primary Stylistic Characteristic –
Use of Octatonic and Twelve-tone Collections

A final primary stylistic characteristic is McTee's use of octatonic structures and chromatic structures that use all twelve tones. Her chromatic choices should not be confused with the strict serial techniques. In the pieces used in this document—*Timepiece, Ballet for Band*, and *Finish Line*—the composer's use of chromaticism does not always follow the serial techniques fostered by Schoenberg and his contemporaries.

As another example of McTee's "multiplicity of approaches," she often shares the line of "harmony" by teetering between the diatonic and nondiatonic, as well as the chromatic and the octatonic. In her use of octatonicism, she often combines the concepts of "intervallic octatonicism" and "triadic octatonicism".[29] As defined by Taruskin, "intervallic octatonicism" is melodic, and uses the structure to create melodic material. Whereas "triadic octatonicism" deals with the "harmonic" aspect, or perhaps more appropriately considered, the vertical structures.

[29] Richard Taruskin, "Chernomer to Kaschei: Harmonic Sorcery; or Stravinsky's 'Angle.'" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38, no. 1 (1985): 102.

The fundamental octatonic scale is a collection of eight notes that alternate half steps and whole steps. Example 2.1 shows the basic octatonic scale.

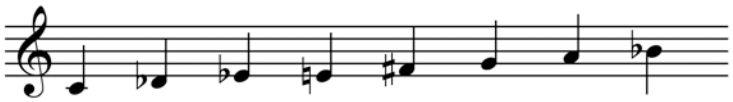


Example 2.1 – Octatonic Scale

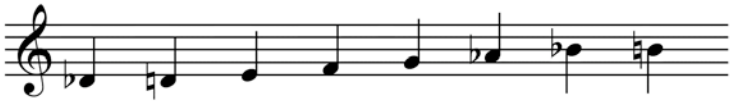
The octatonic scale is one that allows a composer much freedom in terms of melodic and "harmonic" content. This scale (and supporting vertical sound structures) has been used since at least the nineteenth century. Composers such as Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky, Ravel, Debussy, Mussorgsky, and Messiaen have found musical freedom because of the possibilities created by the octatonic scale and vertical structures. Oliver Messiaen was one of the first to write about the octatonic scale. In his book, *Technique de mon language musical* (published in 1956), Messiaen has described the octatonic scale as the second mode in his list of "Modes of Limited Transpositions."[30] Like the first and third modes (or scales) in Messian's list, no scale can be transposed more than three times before repetition of pitch occurs. The three unique transpositions of the octatonic scale will be labeled Collection I (CI), Collection II (CII), and Collection III (CIII), in accordance with the research of octatonic scholars Pieter C. van den Toorn and Allen Forte. Example 2.2 shows the three possible transpositions of the octatonic scale.

[30] Olivier Messiaen, *Technique de mon language musical* [The Technique of My Musical Language], Translated by John Scatterfield, (Paris: A. Leduc, 1956), 59.

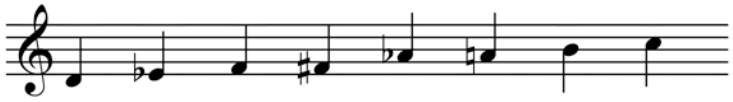
Octatonic Collection I (CI)



Octatonic Collection II (CII)



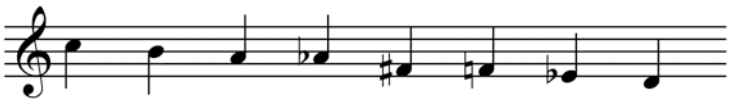
Octatonic Collection III (CIII)



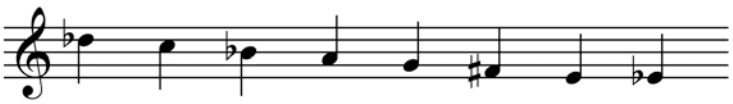
Example 2.2 – Three Possible Octatonic Collections (Three Transpositions)

As with much of the nontraditional tonal music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the concepts of transpositions, inversions, retrogrades and retrograde inversions are used, or at least considered. Along with the octatonic scale having limited transpositions, the inversions of each collection yields the same content as another transposed collection. The inversion of CI creates CIII; the inversion of CII creates CI; the inversion of CIII creates CII.

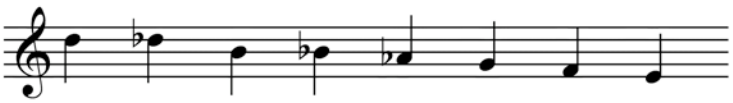
Inversion of CI (creating CIII)



Inversion of CII (creating CI)



Inversion of CIII (creating CII)



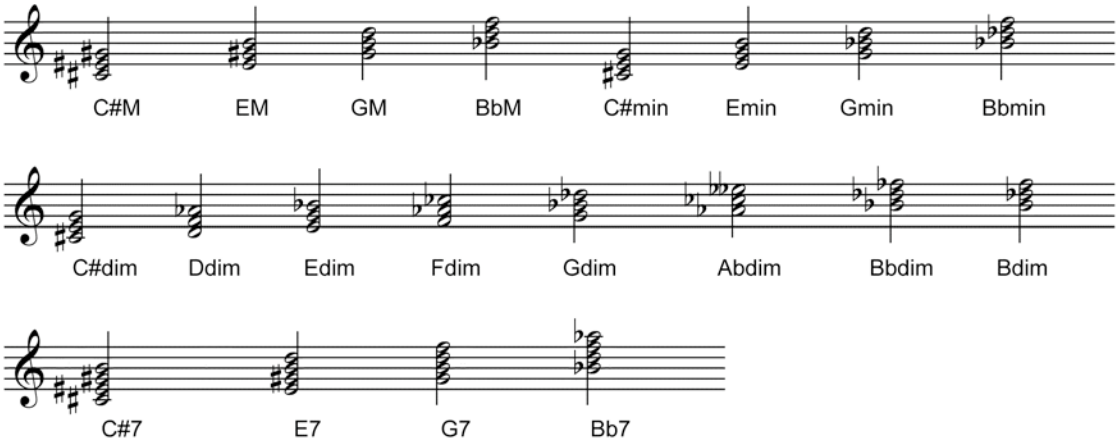
Example 2.3 – Inversions of Octatonic Collections

Rich in its collection of intervals, the octatonic scale is sometimes referred to as the "diminished scale," which refers to the fact that any two non-enharmonic diminished-seventh chords combined will produce an octatonic scale.[31] In other words, the octatonic scale can be viewed as two diminished seventh chords that exist a half step apart. This diminished scale is often studied by jazz musicians as one of the basic scales or modes necessary in the jazz idiom.

Octatonicism can create "tonal" ambiguity in that octatonic use can create a sense of tonality and can also create the sense of no tonal center. One of the reasons for this is that the octatonic collection contains every interval from minor second to major seventh. All of the tertian triads except for the augmented triad can be extracted from this scale, as can four seventh chords.[32] The triads and seventh chords include four major chords, four minor chords, eight diminished chords, four dominant seventh chords, two fully diminished chords, and several half diminished and major-minor seventh chords. Hence with so many tertian-based structures, using octatonic collections in certain ways can lead to or imply (or even demonstrate) tonal implications. However, using these structures without harmonic progression or implication leads to a much more non-tonal product. Example 2.4 shows the major, minor, diminished and dominant seventh chords that are possible (using CII octatonic structure).

[31] Stefan M. Kostka, *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-century Music,* second edition, (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), 31-32.

[32] Kostka, 32.



Example 2.4 – Major, Minor, Diminished and Dominant Seventh Chords Found in CII

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRIMARY STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS IN CINDY MCTEE'S *TIMEPIECE*

Background Information

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Litton, music director, commissioned *Timepiece* for its 100th anniversary season, 1999-2000. The work was premiered on February 17, 2000. McTee subsequently created a version for the wind band as a part of a commission by a consortium of seventeen colleges and universities affiliated with the College Band Directors National Association. The following institutions and conductors were involved in the consortium.

Arizona State University—Gary W. Hill, conductor
Baylor University—Michael Haithcock, conductor
California State University, Sacramento—Robert Halseth, conductor
Central Michigan University—John Williamson, conductor
Irvine Valley College—Stephen Rochford, conductor
Michigan State University—John Whitwell, conductor
Northern Arizona University—Patricia Hoy, conductor
Northwestern University—Mallory Thompson, conductor
Sam Houston State University—Matthew McInturf, conductor
University of California, Los Angeles—Tom Lee, conductor
University of Georgia—Dwight Satterwhite, conductor
University of Miami—Gary Green, conductor
University of Michigan—H. Robert Reynolds, conductor
University of New York, Fredonia—Paula Holcomb, conductor
University of North Texas—Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor
University of Tennessee—Gary Sousa, conductor
University of Washington—Tim Salzman, conductor[33]

The wind version of *Timepiece* was premiered on February 22, 2001, by the North Texas Wind Symphony, Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor. The premiere occurred at the National Conference of the College Band Directors National Association hosted

[33] Cindy McTee, program notes from *Timepiece*, (St. Louis: MMB Music, 2001).

by the University of North Texas. McTee chose to dedicate the wind version to colleague Martin Mailman, University of North Texas emeritus professor of composition.

About *Timepiece* McTee writes.

> I entitled the work, *Timepiece,* not only for its connection to the celebration of special events marking the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's 100th anniversary and the beginning of a new millennium, but also for the manner in which musical time shapes the work. The piece begins slowly, "before" time, in a womb-like, subjective, holding place. And then a clock-like pulse emerges, takes control, and provides the driving force behind a sustained, highly energized second section of about six minutes.
>
> Much of my recent thinking about music is informed by the writings of Carl G. Jung who, in the words of Anthony Storr, "felt that the whole energy of mental functioning" sprang from the tension between the oppositions of conscious and unconscious, of thought and feeling, of mind and body, of objectivity and subjectivity. So to have the integration and reconciliation of opposing elements become important aspects of my work: the frequent use of circular patterns, or ostinatos, offer both the possibility of suspended time and the opportunity for continuous forward movement; carefully controlled pitch systems and thematic manipulations provide a measure of objectivity and reason, while kinetic rhythmic structures inspire bodily motion; discipline yields to improvisation; and perhaps most importantly, humor takes its place comfortably along side the grave and earnest. I wish both to enlighten and to entertain, to communicate wholeness, and above all, to celebrate life![34]

Timothy Mangan of the *Orange County Register* describes *Timepiece*.

> Cindy McTee's "Timepiece" got the concert off to an enjoyable start. The work was written in 2000 for Litton and the Dallas Symphony on the occasion of the orchestra's centennial. In her spoken remarks, she mentioned her upbringing in jazz and that's what came through strongly in "Timepiece." Which is not to say that it is jazz but that it has that air. The flittering lines cavort like scat and the language is dissonant but in the decorative and cool way of jazz — it bites and sizzles. The brass and percussion get used a lot; dance is never far away (the woodblock keeps returning with a tick tock beat to restore order). All in all, it's one of the more successful fusions of the jazz and symphonic styles that I've

[34] Ibid.

heard and it could have gone on longer than its eight minutes as far as I was concerned.[35]

Timepiece is a concise example of McTee's compositional style. Her primary compositional style characteristics are obvious to the performers, listeners and studious observers. The use of ostinato and pseudo-ostinato (or "circular patterns" as the composer refers to them), octatonic collections, prominent (and often chromatic) bass lines, extended and angular melodic lines, and musical sounds and textures influenced by America's jazz are abundant and clear in the work.

Timepiece is scored for the following winds: piccolo, (2) flute, (2) oboe, E-flat soprano clarinet, (3) B-flat soprano clarinet, B-flat bass clarinet, E-flat contra alto clarinet, (2) bassoons, contra bassoon, B-flat soprano saxophone, E-flat alto saxophone, B-flat tenor saxophone, E-flat baritone saxophone, (4) horn, (3) B-flat trumpets [with optional piccolo trumpet], (2) trombone, euphonium, bass trombone and tuba. The work also includes a part for string bass.

McTee's fascination with percussion instruments is evident in the work. The percussion voice is ever-present, reiterating the importance of this section of the wind band. The percussion section is divided into four percussion parts and a part for timpani. The percussion one part includes the following instruments: metal shaker, wood block, suspended cymbal (large), splash cymbal, (2) cowbell and (4) concert toms. Percussion two requires: vibraslap, hi-hat, ratchet, (4) small drums [bongos and similar drums], (2) suspended cymbals (medium and large) and triangle. The third percussion part is written for: tambourine, xylophone, castanets and suspended cymbal

[35] McTee, composer website, http://cindymctee.com/timepiece_orchestra.html#prognotes, accessed 26 December 2008.

(medium). The fourth percussion part is scored for only three instruments: marimba, washboard and bass drum. In addition to the four percussion parts and timpani, the work also calls for piano.

Timepiece is structurally designed in two sections. The “A” section consists of two contrasting and alternating parts. These sections are clearly marked by either tempo indications or descriptive markings. The composer alternates between the designations of “strict time” or *espressivo*, with one use of *molto espressivo*. In the “strict time” parts of the “A” section one can find many “McTeeisms”, including machine-like rhythmic patterns in the woodwinds, percussion and piano. Along with these flurries of rhythmic activity, McTee accompanies two or three-note descending motives. The two parts of the “A” section, can be divided into seven subsections. Each subsection is clearly marked by one of the three above mentioned tempo indications or interpretive markings.

The second (and final) section (“B”) begins at m. 96 and continues to the end of the piece. Within the “B” section, there are five distinct parts. Each clearly defined part can be distinguished based on the “harmonic” device used. McTee alternates the use of octatonic structures and chromatic (twelve tone) structures. Example 3.1 shows the form of *Timepiece* in chart form.

“A” section	Section I	mm.1-32	initial tempo marking of MM=144
	Section II	mm. 33-38	“espressivo
	Section III	mm. 39-52	“strict time”
	Section IV	mm. 53-66	“espressivo” and “molto espressivo”
	Section V	mm. 67-69	tempo marking
	Section VI	mm. 70-73	“espressivo”
	Section VII	mm. 74-95	“strict time”

“B” section	Section I	mm. 96-150	octatonic collections
	Section II	mm. 151-172	chromatic (12 tones) collection
	Section III	mm. 173-231	octatonic collections
	Section IV	mm. 232-290	chromatic (12 tones) collection
	Section V	mm. 291-375	octatonic collections

Example 3.1 – *Timepiece* Form

While the chart shows the seven subsections of the “A” section, compared to the five subsections of the “B” section, the latter of the two is longer in both number of measures and duration of time. The “A” section’s ninety-five measures occupies about two minutes of time, whereas the “B” section’s almost 300 measures has a duration of approximately six minutes.

Primary Stylistic Characteristics –

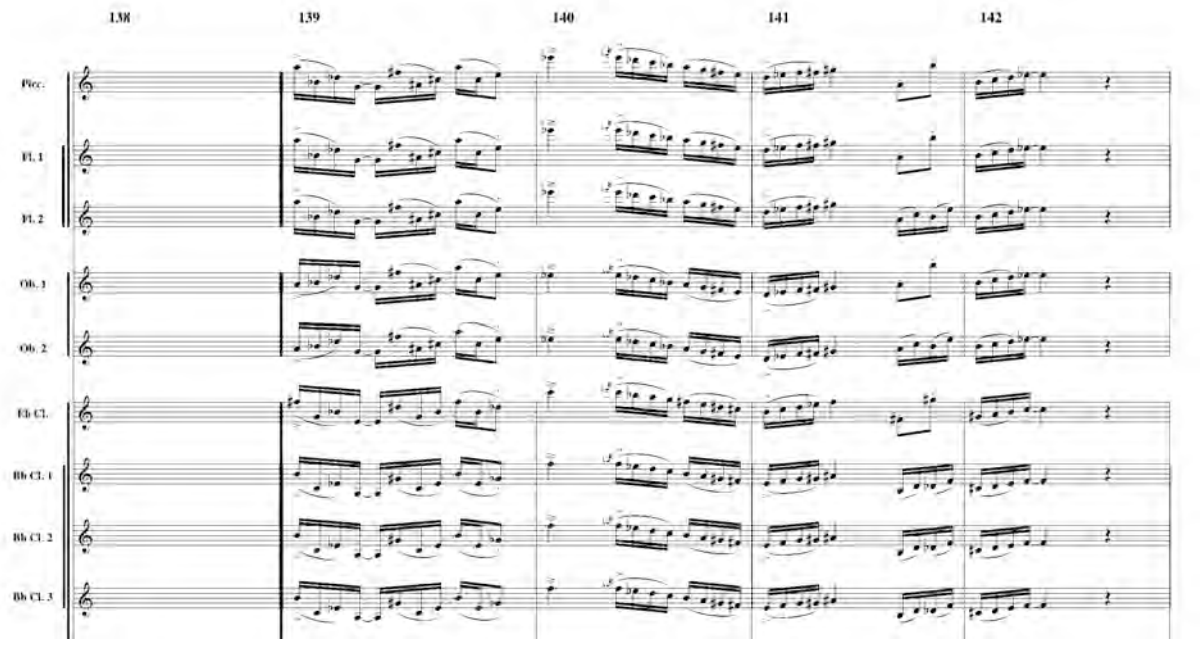
Jazz Influence in *Timepiece*

The jazz influence in McTee’s music can be seen and heard on many levels. While the extent of the jazz idiom is not always overt, the influence or the residual effects of her early years as a musician who was constantly surrounded by jazz, popular music and improvisation can be easily found. One of the primary and reoccurring elements that can be traced back to the jazz influence is McTee’s use of the hi-hat as a standard percussion instrument. She often uses the hi-hat instead of the snare drum. While either snare drum or hi-hat can provide the same rhythmic stability and percussive articulation, the use of the hi-hat clearly shows the impression that jazz and other popular music has made on the composer. McTee uses the (closed) hi-hat in two

sections of *Timepiece*. One of the two presentations can be found in the pseudo-ostinato one (PO1). See example 3.3.

The other elements that support the influence of jazz on her music include the rhythmic ideas and manipulations (including the use of syncopation) and jazz articulations, the bebop style—particularly the borrowing of large intervallic movement, and the use of the "walking" bass line. All of these elements are found numerous times throughout the work.

Example 3.2 shows an eleven beat syncopated melodic line that highlights McTee's jazz influence. The use of syncopation throughout this eleven beat phrase, and the intentional use of such angular melodic intervals show homage to the music of the bebop era. The articulation and note groupings are also a strong sign of jazz influence.



Example 3.2 – Eleven Beat Syncopated Melodic Line mm. 139-142

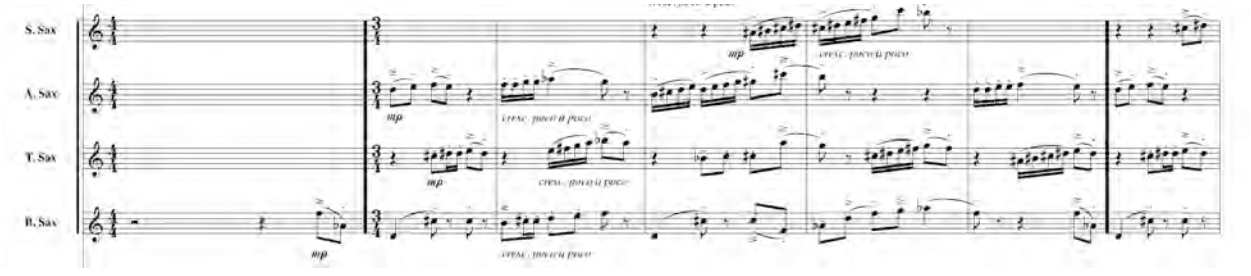
Another element that shows McTee's jazz influence includes the use of tutti (or almost tutti) "shout chorus" style interjections. These interjections, like the one in example 3.4 (mm. 149-150) can be traced back to quick instrumentation and "feel" changes customary in big band charts. While McTee's writing is not a pure clone of any specific type of "shout chorus", large jazz ensemble music, or straight-ahead jazz, the link between the idiom and the composer's music can be drawn.

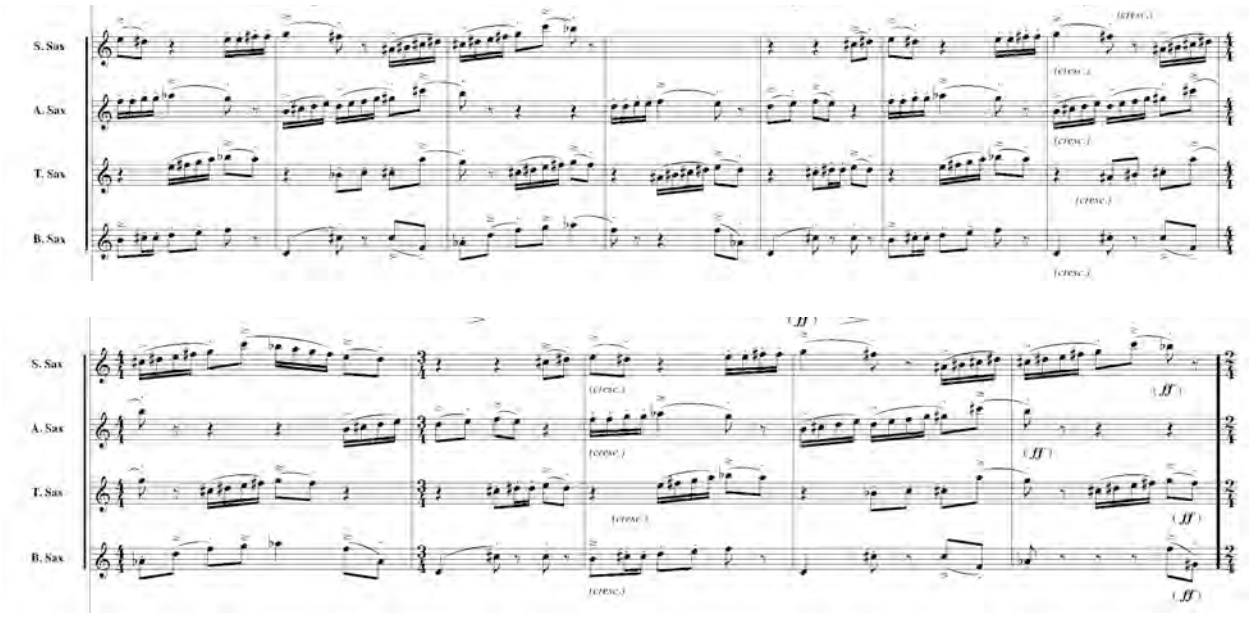
Primary Stylistic Characteristic –

Use of Ostinato and Pseudo-Ostinato Passages and

Machine-like Patterns and Figures

In *Timepiece,* there are three major pseudo-ostinato textures that are clearly defined. The rhythmic activity in the first pseudo-ostinato (PO1) is primarily scored for saxophone quartet and hi-hat. As an example of her clever understanding of "circular patterns" or ostinati, she overlaps the entrances of voices in the pseudo-ostinato, beginning with a weak-beat entrance in the hi-hat and E-flat baritone saxophone. Example 3.3 shows an excerpt from pseudo-ostinato one, beginning in m. 95.



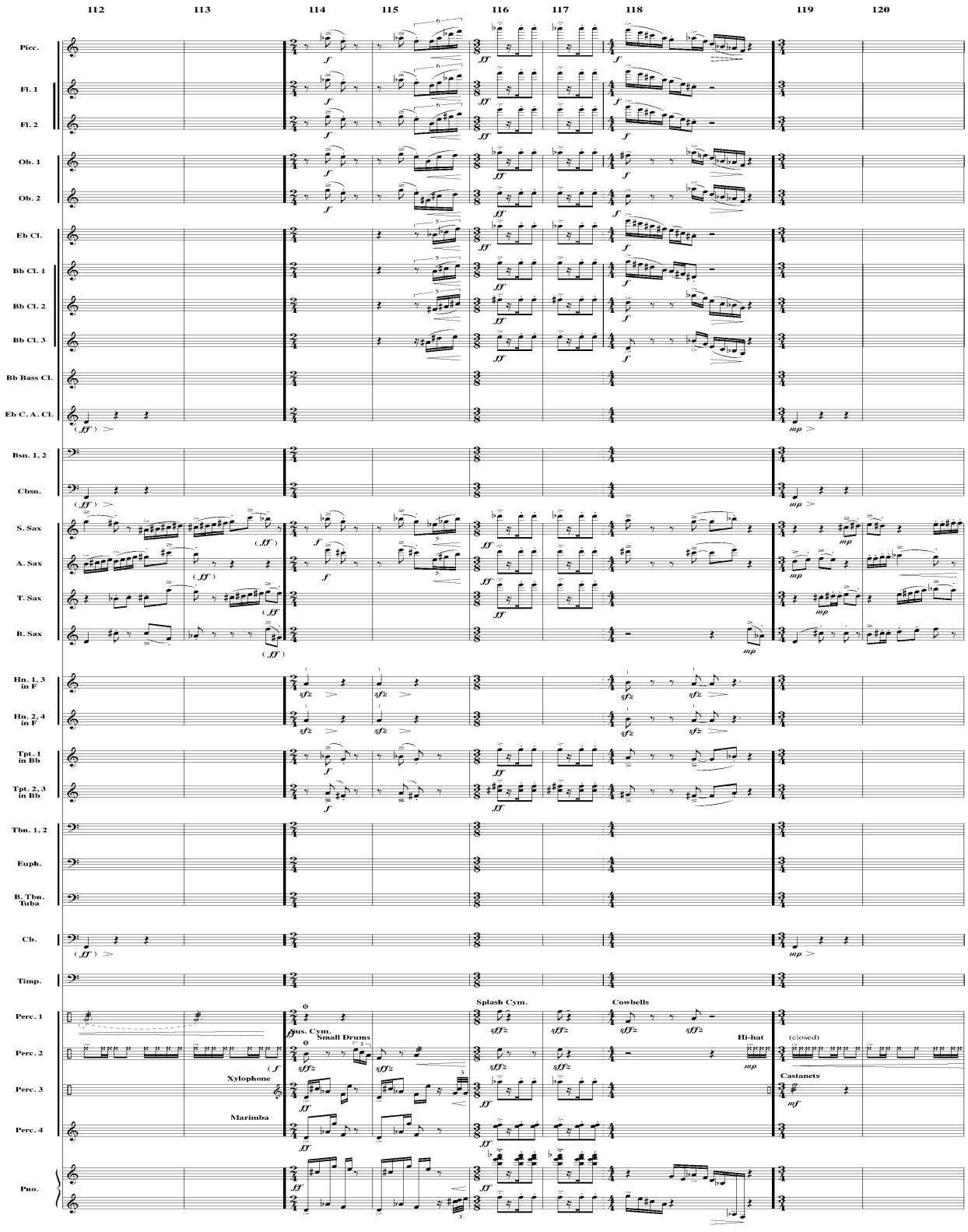


Example 3.3 – Opening of Pseudo-ostinato Texture 1 (PO1) mm. 95-113

The use of “circular patterns”, “repeated interlocking figures”, or pseudo-ostinato is ongoing in *Timepiece.* Throughout the work we find three unique examples of these kinds of repetition. The first pseudo-ostinato, mentioned earlier occurs at the beginning of the “B” section. The first presentation of pseudo-ostinato one lasts for eighteen measures. The fundamental ostinato unit is about five measures in length and is slightly varied in each repetition in the first presentation, as seen in the first five measures of example 3.3. In the initial presentation, the pattern is repeated in succession four times. Before the final repetition of the pattern, there is a one beat extension of the pseudo-ostinato. In m. 109, McTee adds an extra beat, creating a 4/4 measure in the long stream of measures written in 3/4 meter. (This is yet another example of the composer’s constant desire to create change in her patterns.)

The end of pseudo-ostinato one is announced by the momentary return of the falling minor third motive that began the piece. Following this two measure return of the

falling minor third motive (mm. 114-115), McTee creates another suspension of time by adding a two measure brief interruption with the 3/8 motive (mm. 116-117). Upon closer examination, the score shows (in example 3.4) that the 3/8 motive not only interrupts the falling minor third motive, it also interrupts (on a larger scale) the flow of pseudo-ostinato one, which returns only one measure later.

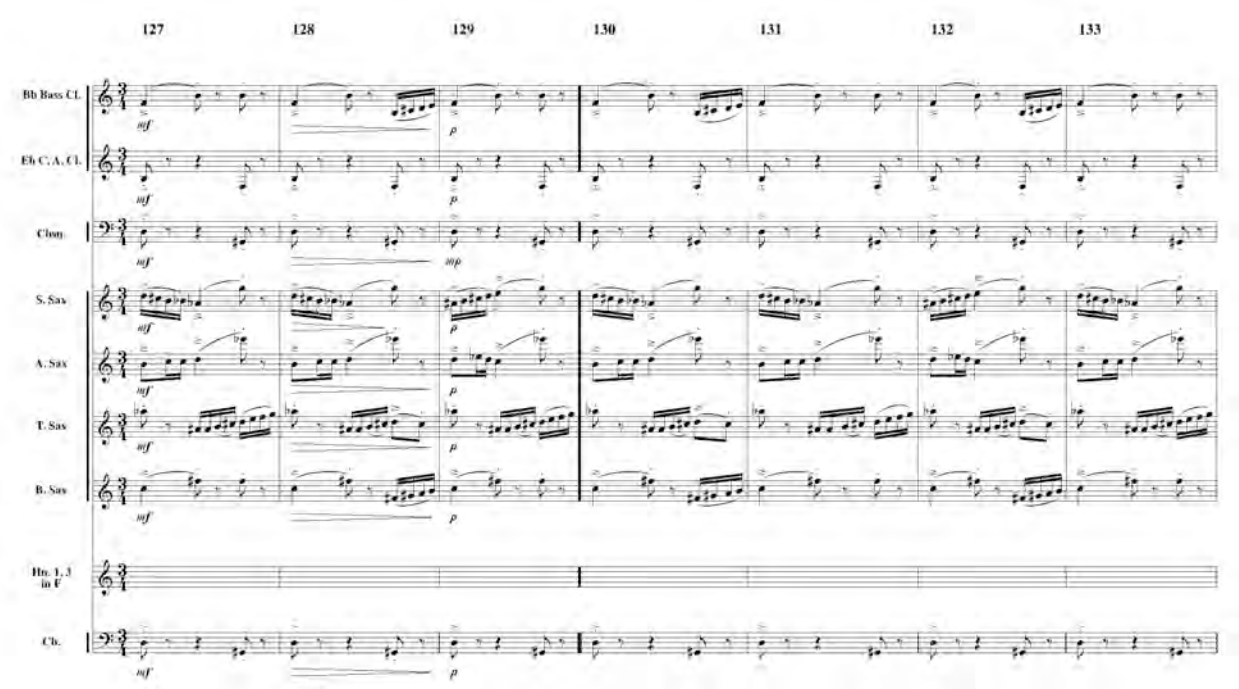


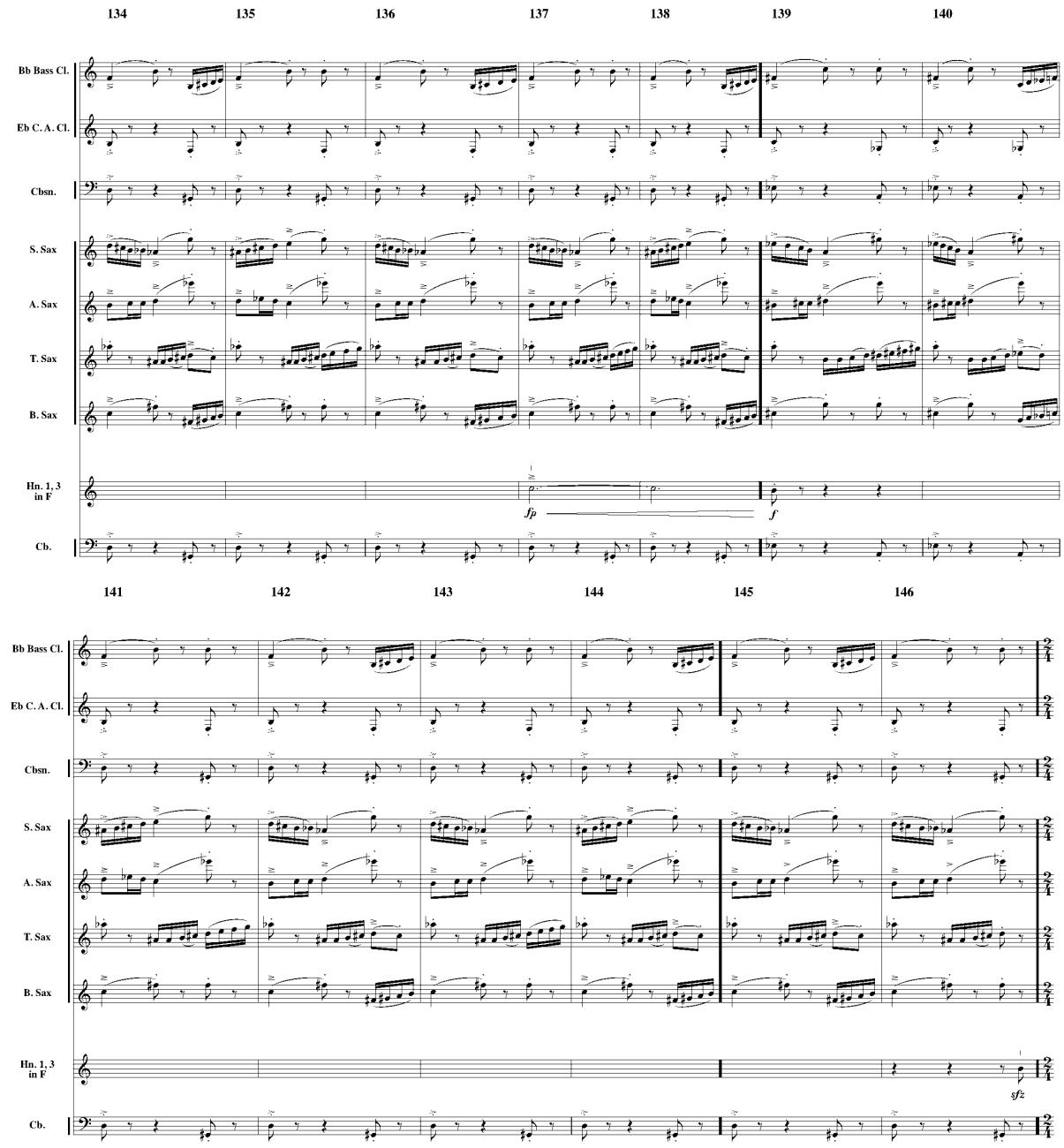
Example 3.4 – Interruption of Pseudo-ostinato Texture 1 (PO1)

The second pseudo-ostinato texture found in *Timepiece* begins in m. 127, and has an overall length of twenty measures. Unlike pseudo-ostinato one (PO1), there is no percussion voice as a part of the ostinato structure. The element that makes this section of music a pseudo-ostinato is not an addition or deletion of a beat (or more), but, as shown in PO1, it is the design of the circular pattern itself. McTee's interlocking pattern is two layered patterns. The first pattern regenerates itself every two measures. The second pattern repeats every three measures. So, within this twenty measure presentation, the two patterns only line up every six measures, for a total of four simultaneous beginnings.

More thickly scored than the first pseudo-ostinato, PO2 uses all voices in the saxophone choir. In addition to the saxophones, the composer adds to the texture the B-flat bass clarinet, E-flat contra alto clarinet, bassoons and contrabassoon. Along with these wind instruments, she adds the string bass to the texture.

Within the pitch collection of octatonic scale 3 used in the second pseudo-ostinato, we see the use of large intervals, including ascending major sevenths and minor ninths. McTee frequently uses the ascending tri-tone in pseudo-ostinato two. In fact, this entire ostinato section could be characterized as one of ascending motives, as every measure contains an ascending line as the bulk of the measure and melodic structure. Example 3.5 shows the reduction of pseudo-ostinato two.

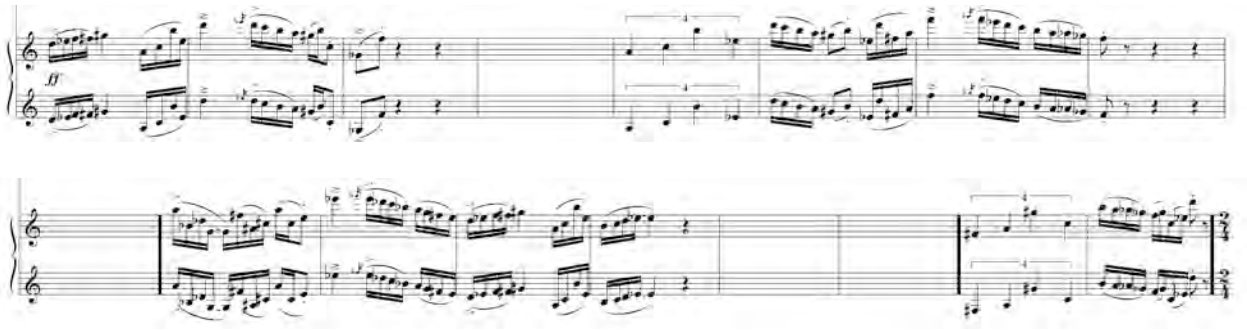

127
128
129
130
131
132
133
Bb Bass Cl.
Eb C.A. Cl.
Clsn.
S. Sax
A. Sax
T. Sax
B. Sax
Hn. 1, 3 in F
Cb.
mf
p
mp



Example 3.5 – Pseudo-ostinato Texture 2 (PO2) mm. 127-146

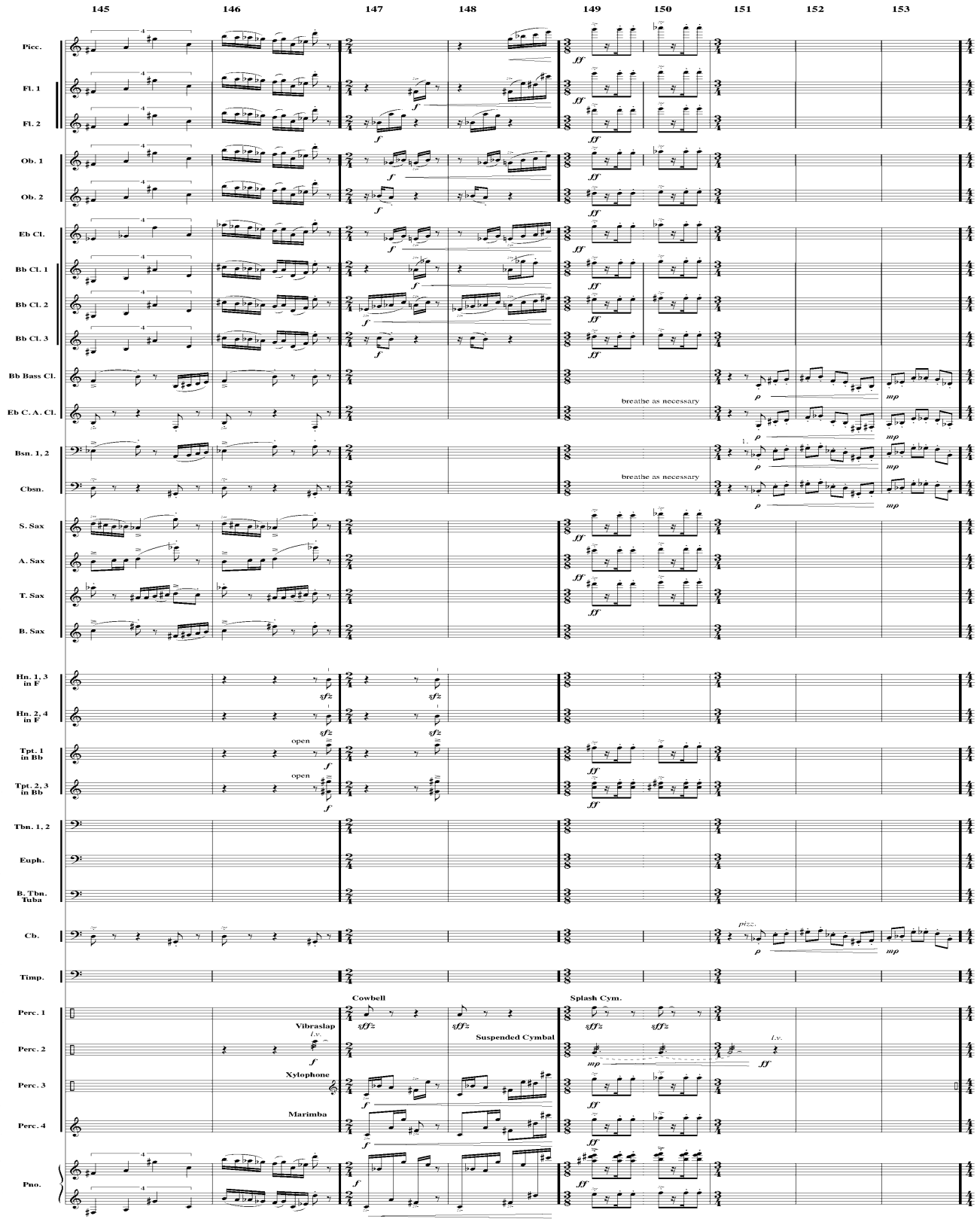
McTee uses pseudo-ostinato two as a rhythmic and “harmonic” background for the clearly scored melodic structure. Layered on top of these interlocking, machine-like figures we find the first presentation of the melodic material. The composer thickly

scores this melodic section for all of the high woodwinds not involved in the ostinato material. Along with flutes, oboes, and B-flat soprano clarinets, the composer scores the piano in octaves to support and add clarity to the mostly woodwind melodic line. Example 3.6 shows a reduction of the unison melodic line (mm. 130-146).



Example 3.6 – Reduction of Melodic Line Heard During PO2

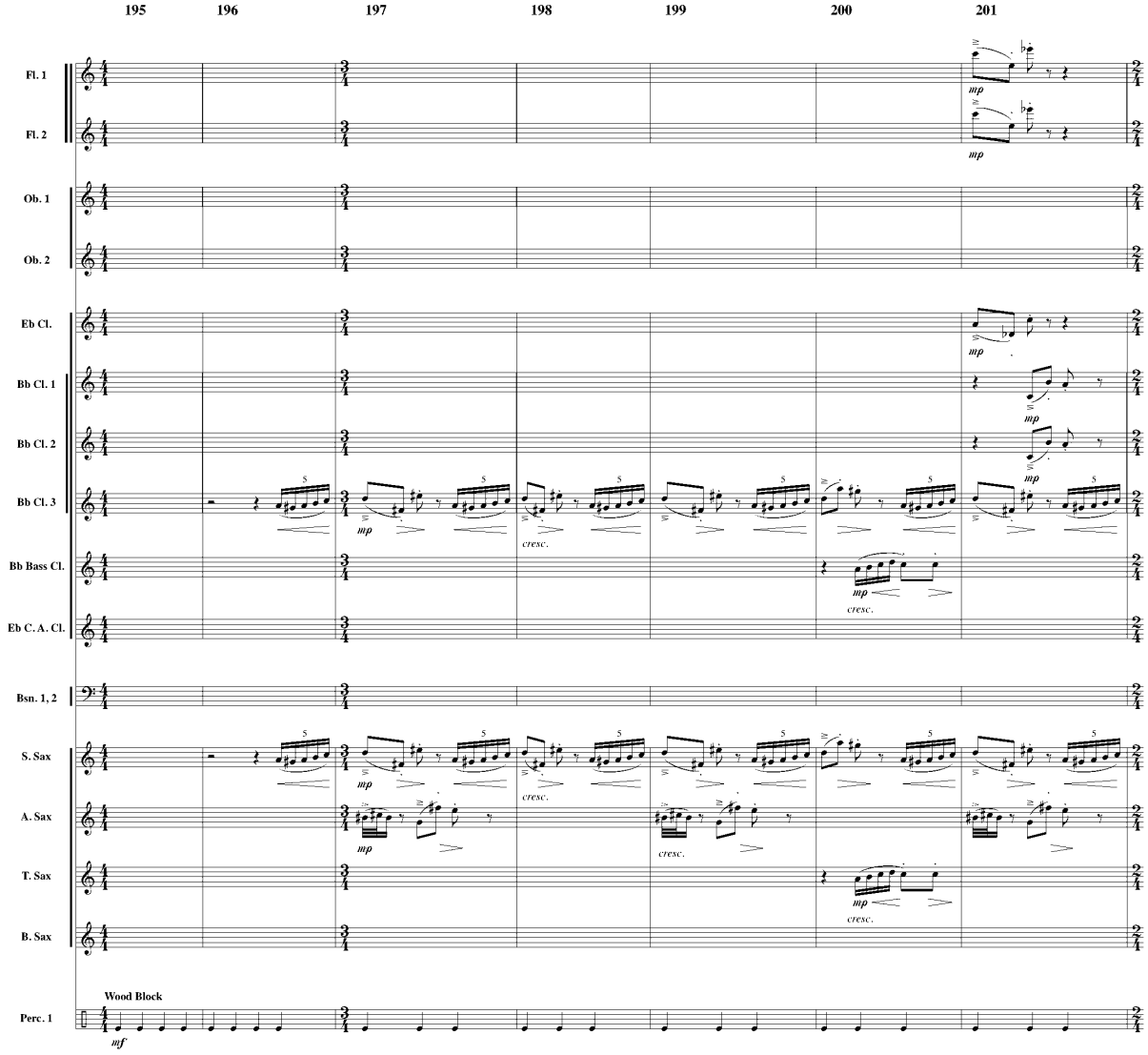
As with the previous pseudo-ostinato texture, the section ends with another brief interruption. The 3/8 meter interruption is once again presented twice in succession. The interruption is varied from its initial presentation. In mm. 149-150, the staccato interruption appears in a different “key” than the first presentations, and in m. 150, the entire vertical structure is transposed up a minor second. This presentation of the interruption motive also signals the beginning of the next section of *Timepiece*. Example 3.7 shows the interruption motifs.

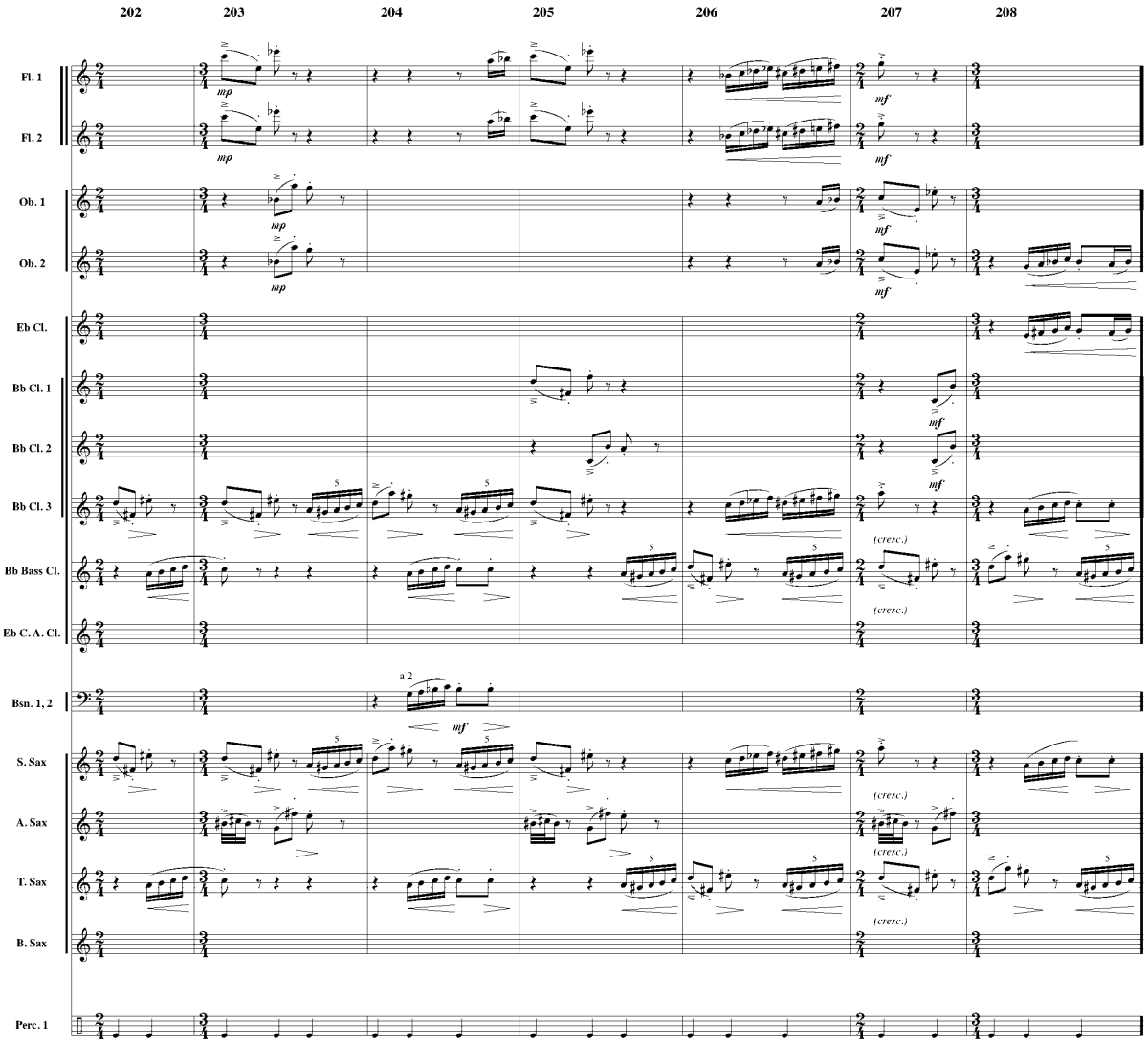


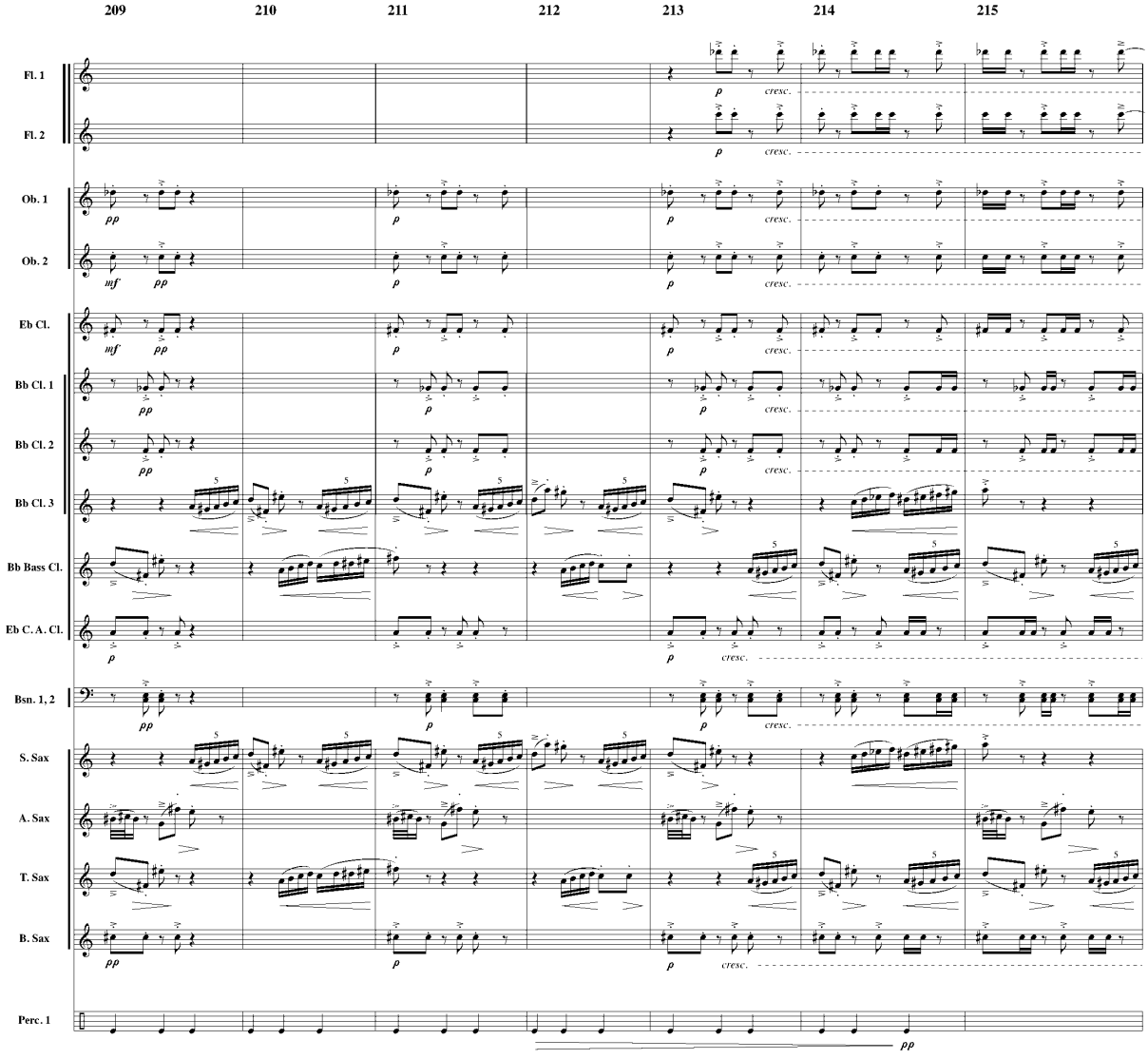
Example 3.7 – Interruption Motifs in PO2

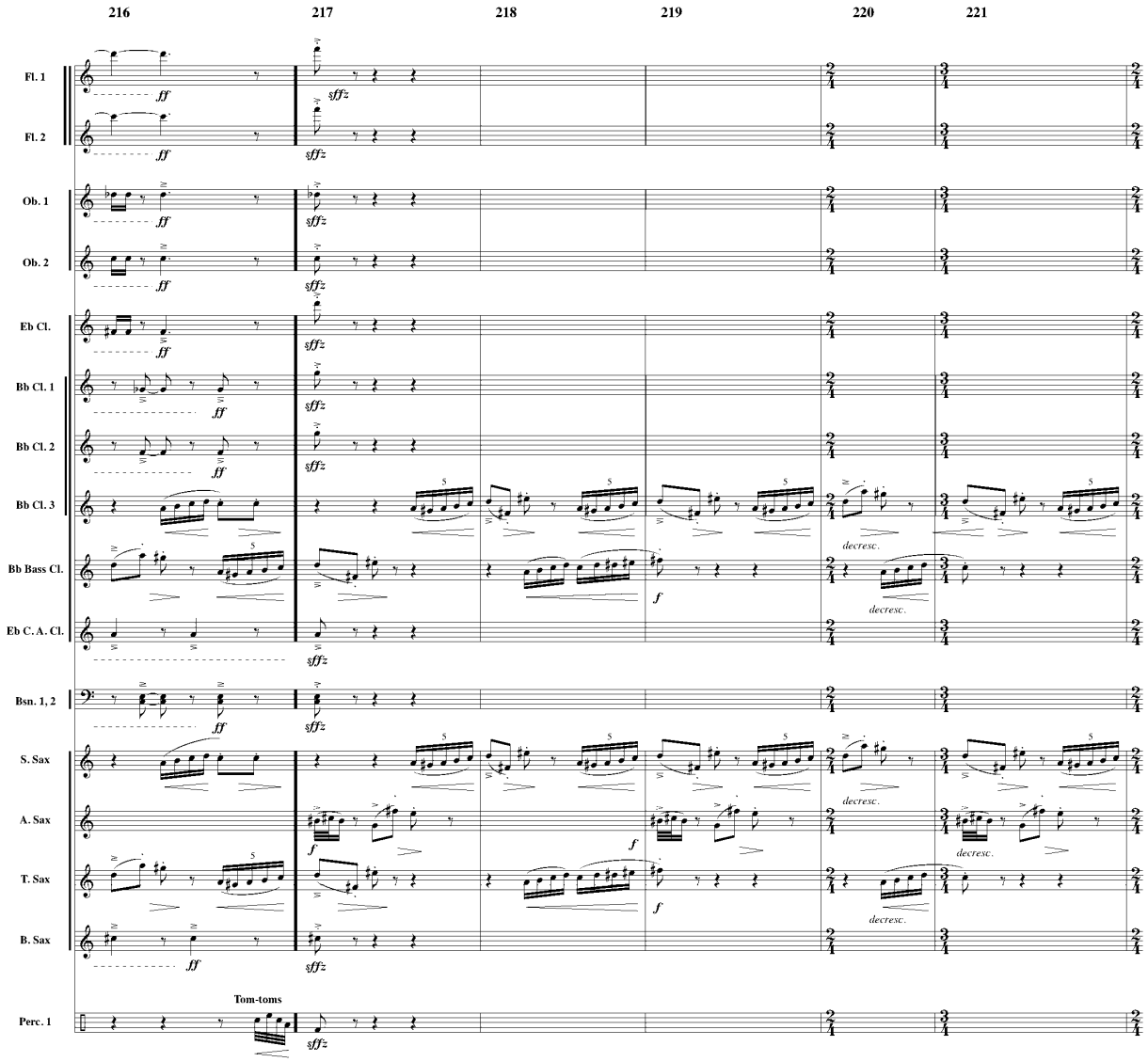
Before the third major pseudo-ostinato structure appears, we see a reappearance of the second ostinato structure. McTee inserts a six bar recapitulation, from mm. 177-182. In this short, seemingly transitory statement, the ostinato structure in its almost initial form is shown. This restatement is truncated and is presented without the percussion instruments that accompanied it the first time. Following the restatement of pseudo-ostinato two, McTee foreshadows the end by creating a tutti rhythmic section of growing pulsations that crescendo through the phrase.

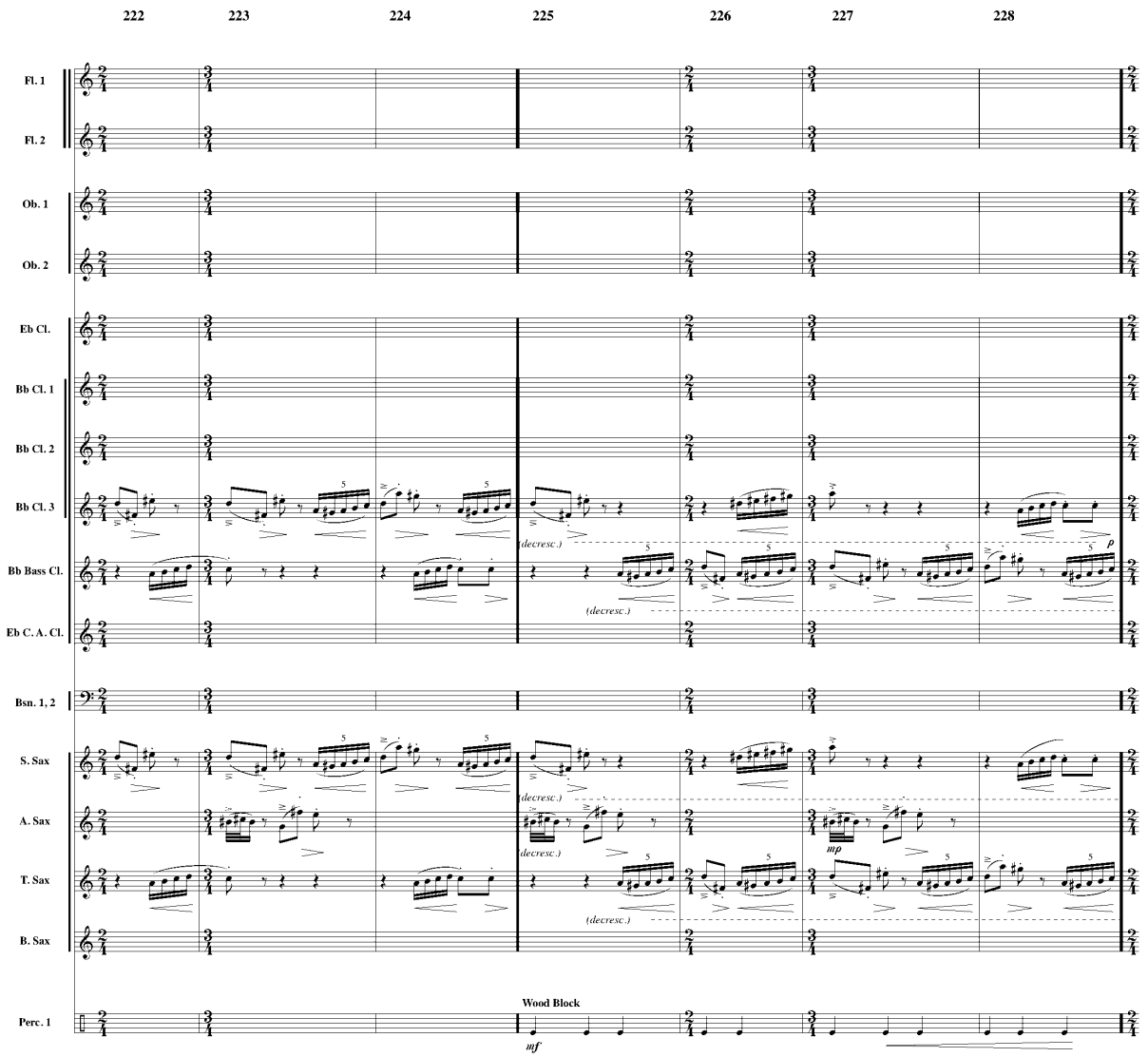
The third pseudo-ostinato (PO3) begins at m. 195 with a wood block demanding our attention and serving as the keeper of time. PO3 is the longest of all of the ostinato structures in the piece. With a length of thirty-two measures, it is also the least rhythmically active and weaves its way through several meter changes. Unlike the others, this ostinato texture is layered with other actively rhythmic ideas—the time-keeping wood block and the foreshadowing of the closing motif. Example 3.8 shows a reduction of the third pseudo-ostinato texture.


195
196
197
198
199
200
201
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Eb Cl.
Bb Cl. 1
Bb Cl. 2
Bb Cl. 3
Bb Bass Cl.
Eb C. A. Cl.
Bsn. 1, 2
S. Sax
A. Sax
T. Sax
B. Sax
Perc. 1
Wood Block
mf
mp
cresc.


202
203
204
205
206
207
208
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Eb Cl.
Bb Cl. 1
Bb Cl. 2
Bb Cl. 3
Bb Bass Cl.
Eb C. A. Cl.
Bsn. 1, 2
S. Sax
A. Sax
T. Sax
B. Sax
Perc. 1
mp
mf
a 2
(cresc.)


209
210
211
212
213
214
215
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Eb Cl.
Bb Cl. 1
Bb Cl. 2
Bb Cl. 3
Bb Bass Cl.
Eb C. A. Cl.
Bsn. 1, 2
S. Sax
A. Sax
T. Sax
B. Sax
Perc. 1
cresc.


216
217
218
219
220
221
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Eb Cl.
Bb Cl. 1
Bb Cl. 2
Bb Cl. 3
Bb Bass Cl.
Eb C. A. Cl.
Bsn. 1, 2
S. Sax
A. Sax
T. Sax
B. Sax
Perc. 1
Tom-toms
ff
sffz
f
decresc.



Example 3.8 – Reduction of Pseudo-ostinato Texture 3 (PO3) mm. 195-228

As example 3.8 shows, the contour of this ostinato structure is more varied than that of the second. Two of the main intervallic ideas are the descending major sixth followed by an ascending major seventh; and the ascending major seventh followed by a major second. The rest of the ostinato structure can be seen as variations of the above or as ornamentation. Through this economical approach to creating another conglomeration

of interlocking figures, McTee once again creates a long, continuous line of rhythmically energetic motion.

While the PO3 continues its pathway through time, the closing motive returns simultaneously. Both of these (seemingly different) ideas coexist in the same time and space—the ostinato continuing with its dynamic contour of rises and falls, while the closing motive grows in energy, the dynamic markings of piano with a crescendo to fortissimo. The closing motive appears to be overpowering the constant PO3. At m. 217 we see a powerful (yet temporary) end to the closing motive, while the ostinato structure continues to move for several additional measures, until it is interrupted like its two predecessors. The interruption motif returns in m. 231, with an identical vertical structure with m. 125 and m. 149. Like the other versions of this interruption, it ends one (octatonic) section and precedes a section (based on a collection of chromatic tones). However, unlike the other sections, this interruption motif is written in a 4/4 measure, creating more space (or an intentional bump in time).

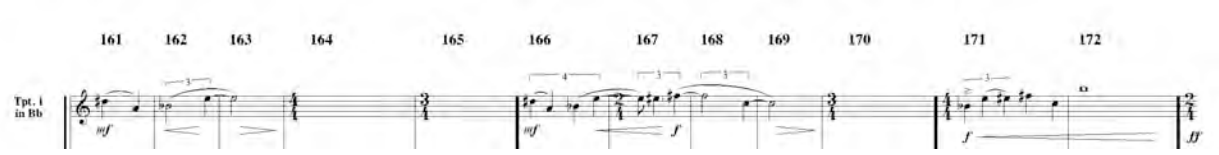
For the remainder of *Timepiece*, there are only two other presentations of pseudo-ostinati. Both are recapitulations of PO3 (found in mm. 291-318) and PO1 (found in mm. 344-352) respectively.

Primary Stylistic Characteristics –
Use of Extended and Angular Melodic Lines

One of McTee's primary stylistic characteristics that can easily be observed and heard is the use of extended and angular melodic lines. In these instances, the composer juxtaposes a long melodic phrase over a constantly moving (and often

changing) chain of machine-like music. While this concept can be partially traced to the composer's jazz influences, and can show McTee's pull towards multiplicity, the use of these long phrases is clearly a trait of the composer's musical voice. There are at least five specific moments in *Timepiece* that show rhythmically opposite lines coexisting. In three of the five, she scores these long lines in the trumpet voice(s), with the other two lines scored in the trombone voice.

The first example of the use of an extended and angular melodic line in *Timepiece* takes place in mm. 161-172. In the first trumpet part, McTee creates a soaring line that floats above the constantly moving machine-like music happening simultaneously. Example 3.9 shows the first presentation of an extended and angular melodic line. The melodic interval range is a major ninth. The largest melodic leap is the interval of a major seventh (one of her favorite intervals). The largest descending leap is an augmented fourth. While the angular nature of the line is clear, the line still has a buoyant and graceful melodic feel. Rhythmically this line is, at times, moving eight times slower than the ostinato and bass line accompaniment.

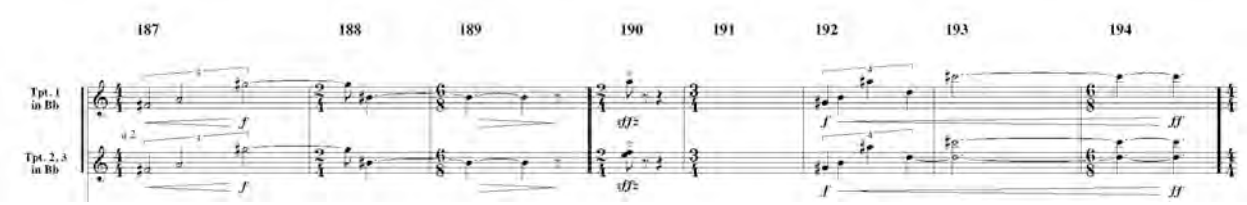


Example 3.9 – First Extended and Angular Melodic Line

The second presentation of an angular and extended melodic line can be found in mm. 187-194. While this excerpt does have a slight interruption in the fluidity of the line, it is clearly another example of McTee's "flexibly written tunes."[36] Again, McTee

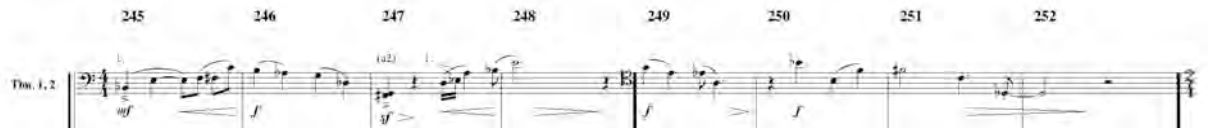
[36] McTee, email.

composes this melodic line for trumpet—in this case the trumpet section. Example 3.10 shows the long melody line that again includes a short segment of silence. Beginning on written first space F-sharp and ending on C-sharp above the staff, this example shows the greatest melodic interval range to this point—a major twelfth. In addition, there are several ascending major sevenths in this excerpt, and the largest descending interval is a sixth.



Example 3.10 – Second Extended and Angular Melodic Line

The third example of the composer's use of extended angular melodic lines can be found in the trombone voices in mm. 245-252. In this section, McTee overlays this melodic line (the fastest rhythmically moving melody of this type) on top of the chromatic bass line. As with many elements of her compositional style, the concrete concept of multiplicity is evident. In this excerpt, McTee for one beat interrupts the melodic line with a *sforzando* dyad that matches the uses of dissonant seconds in the chromatic bass lines. Example 3.11 shows the line in its entirety. Beyond the cross pollination of events, this melody in the trombone voice realizes our expectations of its purpose of being a flexibly written tune. It has a melodic contour and shape that rises and falls; the melody is marked with dynamic nuances that match the melodic line itself.

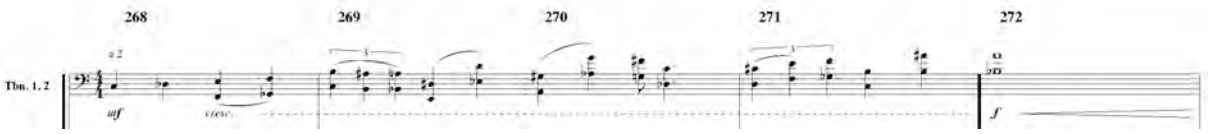


Example 3.11 – Third Extended and Angular Melodic Line

This example has the widest melodic interval range of more than two octaves. While the excerpt has the widest melodic interval range, the largest ascending melodic interval is only a diminished fifth. The largest descending interval is also a diminished fifth.

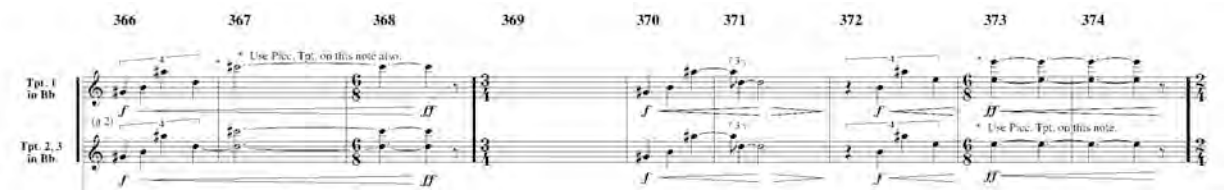
The penultimate use of a long and angular melodic line is seen in mm. 268-272, again in the trombone parts. This excerpt is accompanied by the eighth note chromatic bass line machine composed for several low voice instruments. While this long line does not have the contour of the previously described line, the line does fit the criteria of an extended and angular melodic line (shown by Example 3.12).

McTee creates several ascending melodic leaps of minor sevenths. However, the largest leap is that of a major seventh, found in m. 271. To add depth of sound and to create another level of interest in this line, the composer begins the segment with the trombones in unison. Eventually, this angular melodic line moves in parallel sevenths, and even ends in a simultaneous major seventh.



Example 3.12 – Fourth Extended and Angular Melodic Line

As *Timepiece* comes to a close, we find the final example of an angular and extended melodic line that helps to define McTee's compositional stylistic characteristics. Back in the trumpet voices, in mm. 366-374, the final long line (as shown by example 3.13) floats above a continuous pulsation of rhythm. She reinforces the use of this long line by repeating its incipit twice with small alterations of rhythm and dynamic assignments.



Example 3.13 – Fifth Extended and Angular Melodic Line

Primary Stylistic Characteristics –

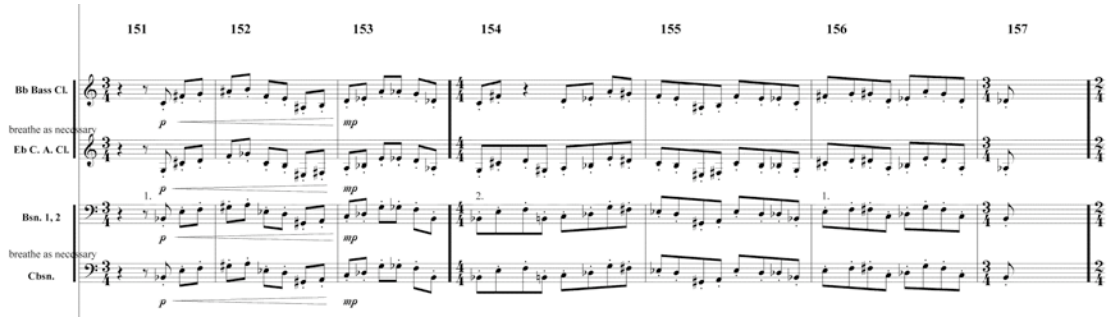
Use of Prevalent "Walking" Bass Lines

Equal in prominence to McTee's use of ostinato material or "circular patterns" is her creation of "walking" bass lines. The bass lines are often chromatic in the sense that the lines use a collection of twelve pitches. In some cases the bass lines have strong roots in the twelve-tone serial techniques developed by Arnold Schoenberg. In *Timepiece*, there are two major sections where the chromatic bass line can be found. The composer uses these two sections to separate the three portions of the second half of the piece where the harmonic environment is clearly octatonic.

The first chromatic bass line section begins in m. 151 and continues through m. 172. This twenty-two measure section of the piece is initially scored for the string bass,

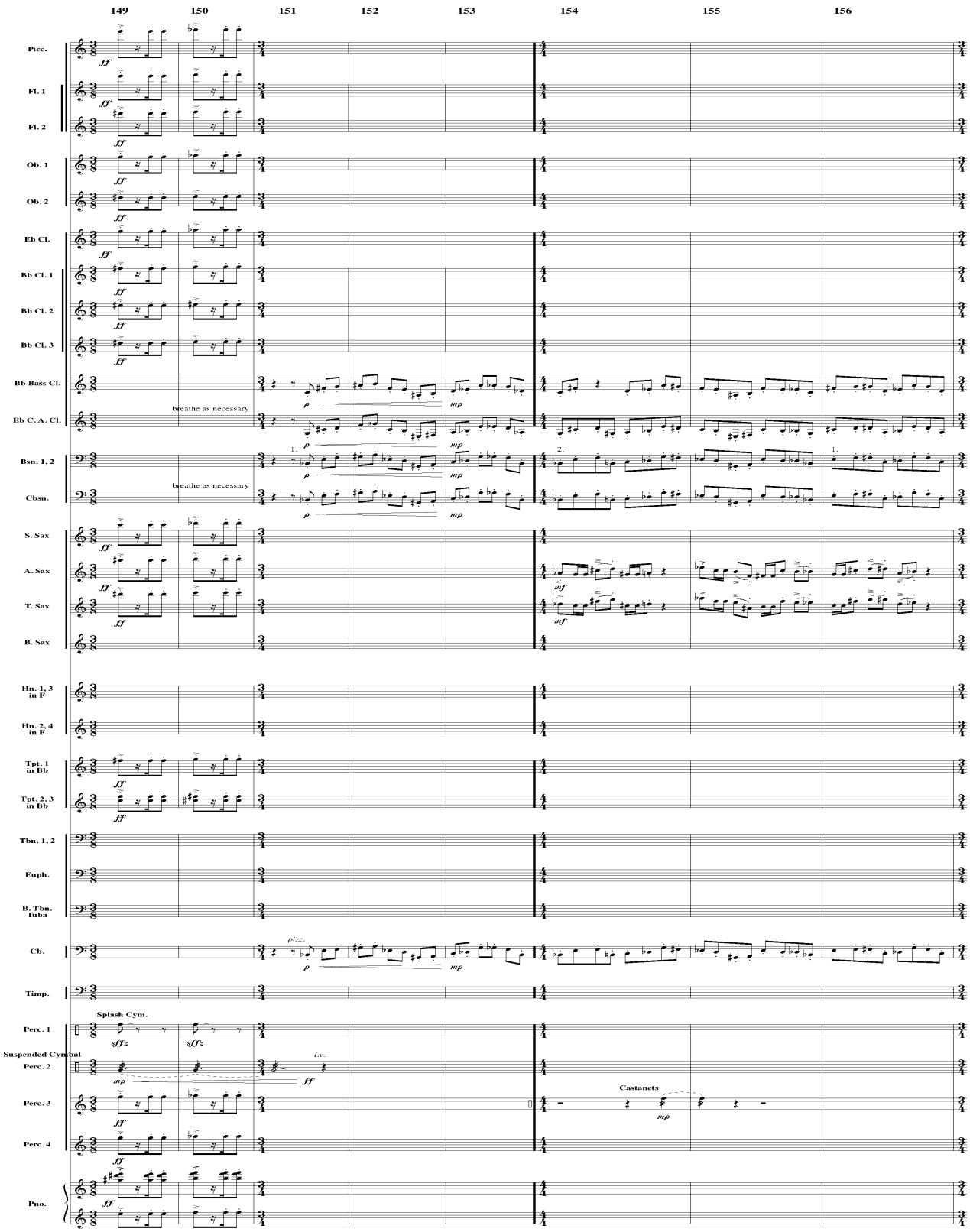
low clarinets, bassoon and contra bassoon. Typically McTee will also add the piano to strengthen the timbre of the bass line. In this case she does not. (Although the piano does add to the texture in the second chromatic bass line section of the work.)

The first chromatic bass line section (with strong roots in the twelve-tone system) uses the modified row in succession three times, creating in a sense another type of ostinato. Because of this duality, one can argue that this use of chromatic bass lines is another example of McTee's attraction to the concept of multiplicity. The full line chromatic bass line then is seen below in example 3.14.



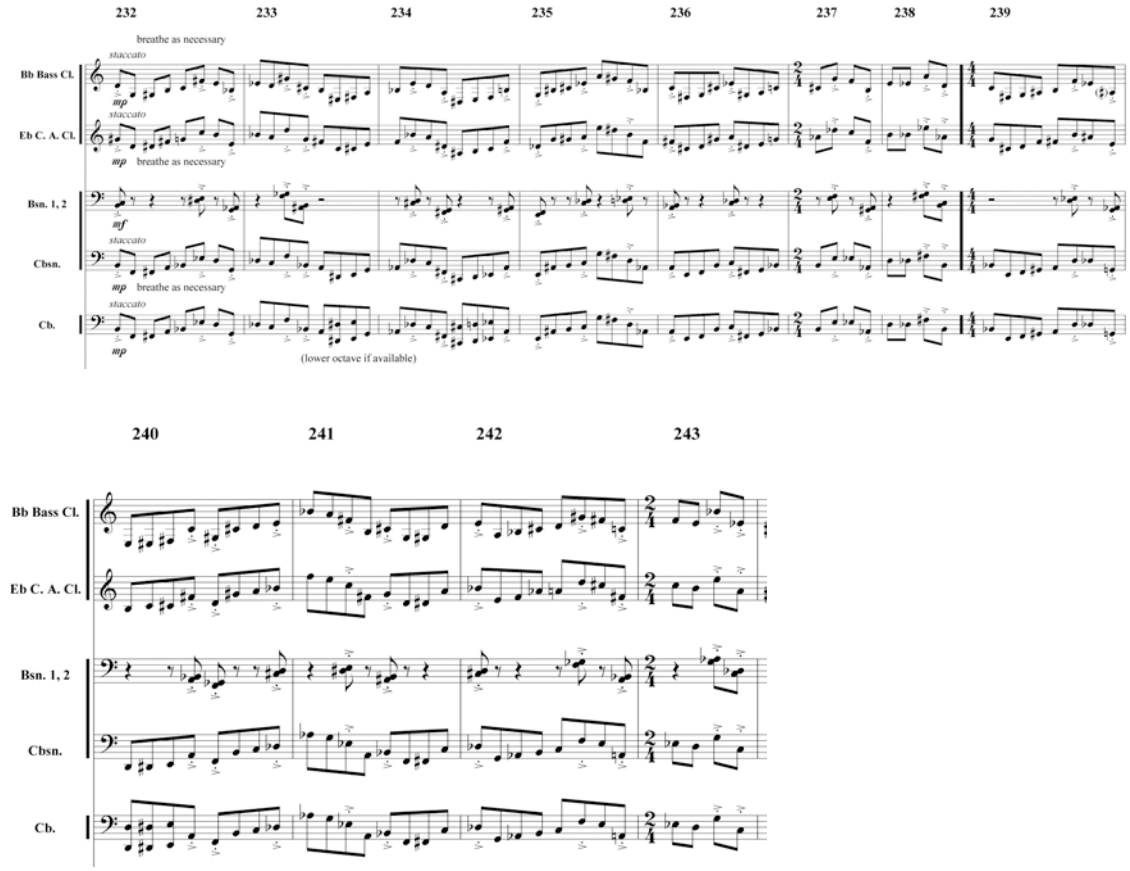
Example 3.14 – Reduction of the First Chromatic Bass Line (mm. 151-157)

As an introduction to both chromatic bass line sections of the work we find the following interruptive tutti interjection. The interjection can be found in mm. 149-150 as a prelude to the first bass line section, as well as in m. 231 as a starting signal for the second bass line section. Example 3.15 shows the basic tutti interjection in mm. 149-150.



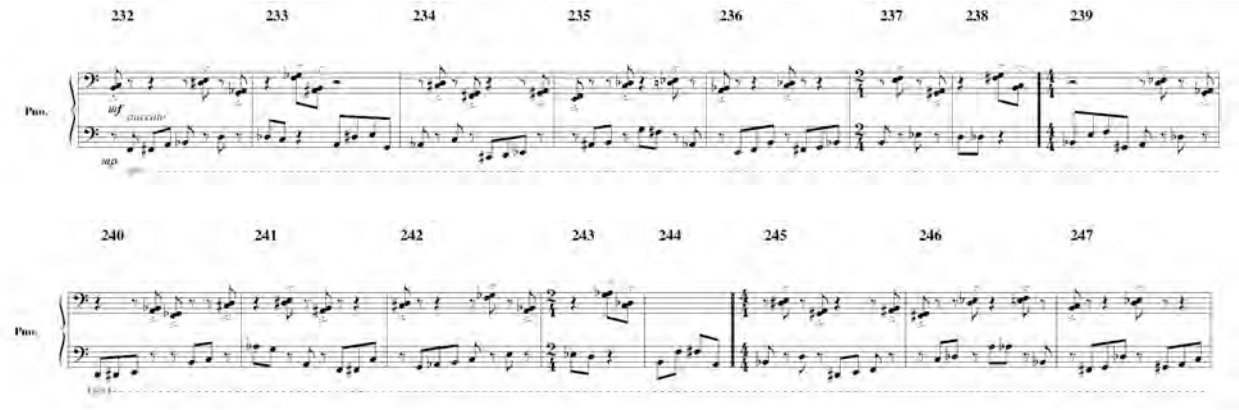
Example 3.15 – Interruption Motive before Chromatic Bass Line

The second chromatic “walking” bass line section (also the fourth section of part two of the work) can be found in mm. 232-290. Lengthwise, being a more substantial portion of the work than the first, this section’s use of the original bass line is more elaborate than that of the first chromatic bass line section (section two of the piece). Like the first bass line section, various versions and alterations of the original “twelve-tone row” are presented, including the original, inversion, retrograde, and retrograde inversion. The complete chromatic bass line is presented four times through this section of the work. Example 3.16 shows the complete (second) chromatic bass line of *Timepiece.* Like the other “walking” bass line sections, this line is repeated through the section, creating another type of ostinato.



Example 3.16 – Chromatic Bass Line 2 mm. 232-243

For the second chromatic bass line, the composer scores low clarinets, bassoons, contra bassoons and string bass. Unlike the first bass line, she adds the piano to the tone color pallet. The addition of the piano goes beyond a simple change of timbre. The composer uses the left hand of the piano to double the chromatic bass line, while the right hand is used to strengthen the addition of the dyads to the line. In addition to the piano, the bassoons add to the texture doubling the use of seconds. Example 3.17 shows an excerpt of the piano line from mm. 232-247. McTee highlights in her sketches that "all possible dyads within the chromatic scale are accented once in the sequence of four row presentations."[37]



Example 3.17 – Piano Part in Chromatic Bass Line 2

Primary Stylistic Characteristics –

Use of Octatonic and Twelve-tone Collections

One of the most audible (and visible) elements of McTee's stylistic characteristics is her perpetual use of octatonic structures—both "intervallic" and "triadic". The collection of pitches used in much of *Timepiece* is no different. For this work, the

[37] McTee, materials.

composer uses all three transpositions of the octatonic scale. Examples of the use of the second octatonic collection can be found in the interruptive material at mm. 116-117 (example 3.4). The interruptive material is also an example of “triadic octatonicism” as this vertical structure contains what could be called a B-diminished seventh chord with an added “E”—all tones from the octatonic scale 2 (C# D E F G G# A# B).

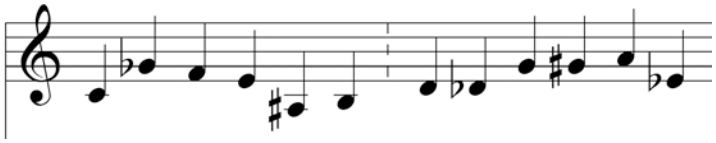
In *Timepiece*, all of the pseudo-ostinato sections use the octatonic collections as the source of their pitch content. PO1 uses mostly the octatonic scale 2 (C# D E F G G# A# B). McTee uses the third octatonic collection as the basis for PO2 (example 3.5). The pitch collection of this melodic material clearly comes from octatonic scale 3. In fact, the first six pitches of the melodic material are the first six notes of the octatonic scale 3—in order! (D Eb F F# G# A) See Example 3.5. McTee’s fascination with the octatonic scale is evident here; her constant desire to create humor in her music can also be seen here. Quite often in her music, she will use the octatonic scale and add a note, not in the collection. In this case, she obviously presents the octatonic scale in almost completely ascending “scale order.” However, on the next downbeat, the expected arrival on a strong beat is denied. Instead of hearing a “C”, the composer inserts a “D.” Is this a “D” for Dallas, a “D” for humor, or “just” a “D”?

PO3 is based on a collection of pitches from from the octatonic scale 1, which includes the following pitches (C Db Eb E F# G A Bb). Example 3.8 shows the reduction of PO3, which can be found in mm. 195-228.

The use of the twelve-tone (or chromatic) collection can be found exclusively in the “walking” bass line sections of the piece. As stated earlier, the composer’s use of the twelve-tone collection often follows the “rules” of serial technique, but at the same

time the composer chooses moments to freely use the pitches from the collection, rather than to be confined by the rules of serialism.

In the first bass line section of the piece, mm. 151-172, McTee uses twelve-tone row as shown in example 3.18. In her sketches and notes, the composer lists the "twelve-tone row" as follows.



Example 3.18

Although the composer has a clear row of pitches defined, we never actually find the row fully presented in its original form. The chromatic bass line uses various segments of the row. McTee's sketches note "various versions of the original row (generally rotated) are linked together by elision: the last interval of one row becomes the first of another."[38] See the reduction of the bass line in example 3.14.

[38] Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRIMARY STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS IN CINDY MCTEE'S *BALLET FOR BAND*

Background Information

Ballet for Band (a version for wind band adapted from McTee's *Symphony No. 1: Ballet for Orchestra*) is a three-movement work with a total duration of almost twenty minutes. The National Symphony Orchestra and music director Leonard Slatkin commissioned the original work, a four-movement symphony, with a dedication to Slatkin. The piece was premiered at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington DC, October 24, 2002, and was subsequently performed by the National Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall on October 30, 2002.

The Revelli Foundation and its affiliate, Bands of America, commissioned *Ballet for Band* for the first performance by the Honor Band of America Symphonic Band, Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor. The premiere of the piece took place on February 28, 2004, in Clowes Memorial Hall at Butler University. In the program notes, McTee writes the following about her music and the piece.

> Music is said to have come from dance—from the rhythmic impulses of men and women. Perhaps this explains my recent awareness of the inherent relationships between thought, emotion, and action—that the impulse to compose often begins as rhythmical stirring and leads to a physical response—tensing muscles, gesturing with hands and arms, or quite literally, dancing.
>
> My *Ballet for Band* emerged out of a similar kinesthetic /emotional awareness and a renewed interest in dance music. I first explored this approach to composition in a work entitled Circuits (1990) which reviewer Charles Ward described as follows:

Circuits…was a charging, churning celebration of the musical and cultural energy of modern-day America. From repetitive ideas reminiscent of Steve Reich to walking bass lines straight from jazz, *Circuits* refracted important American musical styles of this century. Similarly, the kaleidoscope of melodies, musical "licks" and fragmented form aptly illustrated the electric, almost convulsive nature of American society near the start of the 21st century.

Although I have never made a conscious attempt to create or reflect an "American" sound, I would agree that my musical style generally does reflect my American roots more than my European-based training…The frequent use of circular patterns, or ostinati, offers both the possibility of suspending time and the opportunity for continuous forward movement. Carefully controlled pitch systems and thematic manipulations provide a measure of objectivity and reason, while kinetic rhythmic structures inspire bodily motion. Discipline yields to improvisation, and perhaps most importantly, humor takes its place comfortably along side the grave and earnest. To quote Lord Byron: "On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined…"

1. *Introduction: On with the Dance*

On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.
-Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

Inspired by the opening theme of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*, a 3-note motif outlining the interval of a minor third (C, Eb, C) is developed and expanded to also include the interval of a major third (C, Eb, Cb). Following an excursion into a musical world informed by jazz rhythms and sounds, the movement concludes with a recapitulation of the opening material.

2. *Waltz: Light Fantastic*

Come & trip it as ye go
On the light fantastic toe.
-John Milton, *L'Allegro*

The second movement is a dance—in this case a quick waltz inspired by a memorable performance of Ravel's *La Valse* in 2000 by the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra under Larry Rachleff. A rising half-step motif in the basses lightens the effect of the falling half-step motif heard in the previous movement.

3. *Finale: Where Time Plays the Fiddle*

O, Love's but a dance,

Where Time plays the fiddle!
See the couples advance—
O, Love's but a dance!
A whisper, a glance,
"Shall we twirl down the middle?"
O, Love's but a dance,
Where Time plays the fiddle!
--Henry Austin Dobson, *Cupid's Alley*

> Motifs consisting of minor and major thirds as well as jazz elements continue to permeate through the textures of the final movement. References to Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* can be heard at several other points along the way. Material from the beginning of the piece returns, and a final statement of the opening motif (C-Eb-C) provides closure.[39]

Ballet for Band highlights McTee's compositional style and voice. In this three-movement work, the composer defines her stylistic characteristics and expands upon them. One can clearly see and hear the use of machine-like ostinati and pseudo-ostinati (or as the composer refers to them, "circular patterns"), a harmonic language that is equally proficient in the use of octatonic collections and the chromatic (twelve tones) collections, dominant and progressive bass line writing, extended and angular melodic lines, and an overall feeling that clearly reflects the composers upbringing in the American jazz and popular music scene.

McTee's *Ballet for Band* is scored for the following wind instruments: piccolo, (2) flute, (3) oboe, E-flat soprano clarinet, (3) B-flat soprano clarinet, B-flat bass clarinet, B-flat contra bass clarinet (optional), (2) bassoons, contra bassoon, B-flat soprano saxophone, E-flat alto saxophone, B-flat tenor saxophone, E-flat baritone saxophone, (4) horn, (3) B-flat trumpet, (2) tenor trombone, euphonium, bass trombone and tuba. In addition to the scoring for winds, the composer includes parts for harp, piano and string bass.

[39] Cindy McTee, program notes from *Ballet for Band*, (Denton, TX: BMI, 2003).

As is typical of McTee's works for large instrumental ensembles, her percussion pallet is extensive. The *Ballet's* percussion score includes four percussion parts and a timpani part. While all percussion parts could be covered by five players, the author recommends using at least six percussionists. The percussion one part uses the following instruments: (3) suspended cymbals (small, medium, large), triangle, ratchet, cowbell, flexatone (large), snare drum, hi-hat, and tambourine. The second percussion part is scored for bass drum, tambourine, cabasa, snare drum, and small ratchet. Percussion three uses the following instruments: vibraslap, triangle, (4) concert toms, cabasa, suspended cymbal (medium), cuica, tambourine and bongos. The fourth percussion part calls for marimba, suspended cymbal (medium), vibraphone and mark tree.

Ballet for Band can be viewed as a form of minimalism--of making the most of a little. McTee economically uses a relatively small amount of material to create the entire work. With many of her large ensemble pieces, there is repetition of material—sometimes identical repetition, sometimes slightly varied. The form of each movement is straightforward, and is shown in the chart below.

Movement 1: "Introduction: On with the Dance"

Section	Measures	
Introduction	mm. 1-6	Introduction of three note motive
"A"	mm. 7-120	
"B"	mm. 121-202	Chromatic "walking" bass line
"C"	mm. 203-263	Swing style bass line (octatonic in nature)
"A"	mm. 264-378	Return of three note motive
Coda	mm. 379-384	

Movement 2: "Waltz: Light Fantastic" (through composed)

Section	Measures
1	mm. 1-49
2	mm. 50-101
3	mm. 102-118

4	mm. 119-151	
5	mm. 152-187	

Movement 3: “Finale: Where Time Plays the Fiddle”

Section	Measures	
“A”	mm. 1-102	Intro and beginning of three note motive variation
“B”	mm. 103-173	Chromatic “walking” bass line
“C”	mm. 174-213	Return of bass line from mvmt. 1
“D”	mm. 214-277	Return of three note motive from mvmt. 1
“A”	mm. 278-361	Return of opening motive (mvmt. 3)
Coda	mm. 362-368	

Formally, *Ballet for Band* is clearly defined. *Ballet for Band* does not have stable “harmonic” centers, therefore, key centers can’t be used as a major or obvious signal for changes in formal structure. However, McTee’s music can be analyzed and organized by melodic content, motivic writing, or by pitch collection (that may serve as a type of “tonal center”). This particular work is no exception. Especially when looking at the first and third movements of the piece, there are clearly- defined sections that begin with one of the “interruption motives” or a change in pitch collection, either octatonic or chromatic.

McTee uses Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 5* as a loose model for the motivic concept in the opening of the *Ballet for Band.* In a presentation given about the *Ballet* she comments:

> there is almost nothing I believe in more than I believe in making the most out of the least. I’ve always been jealous of Beethoven’s ability to make so much out of so little. As you know the *Fifth Symphony* opens with four notes. They outline…the major third, then the minor third a step lower. I decided to open my piece using three notes instead of four, and like Beethoven, I used some repeated elements emphasizing thirds and the half step.[40]

[40] McTee, materials.

Primary Stylistic Characteristic –

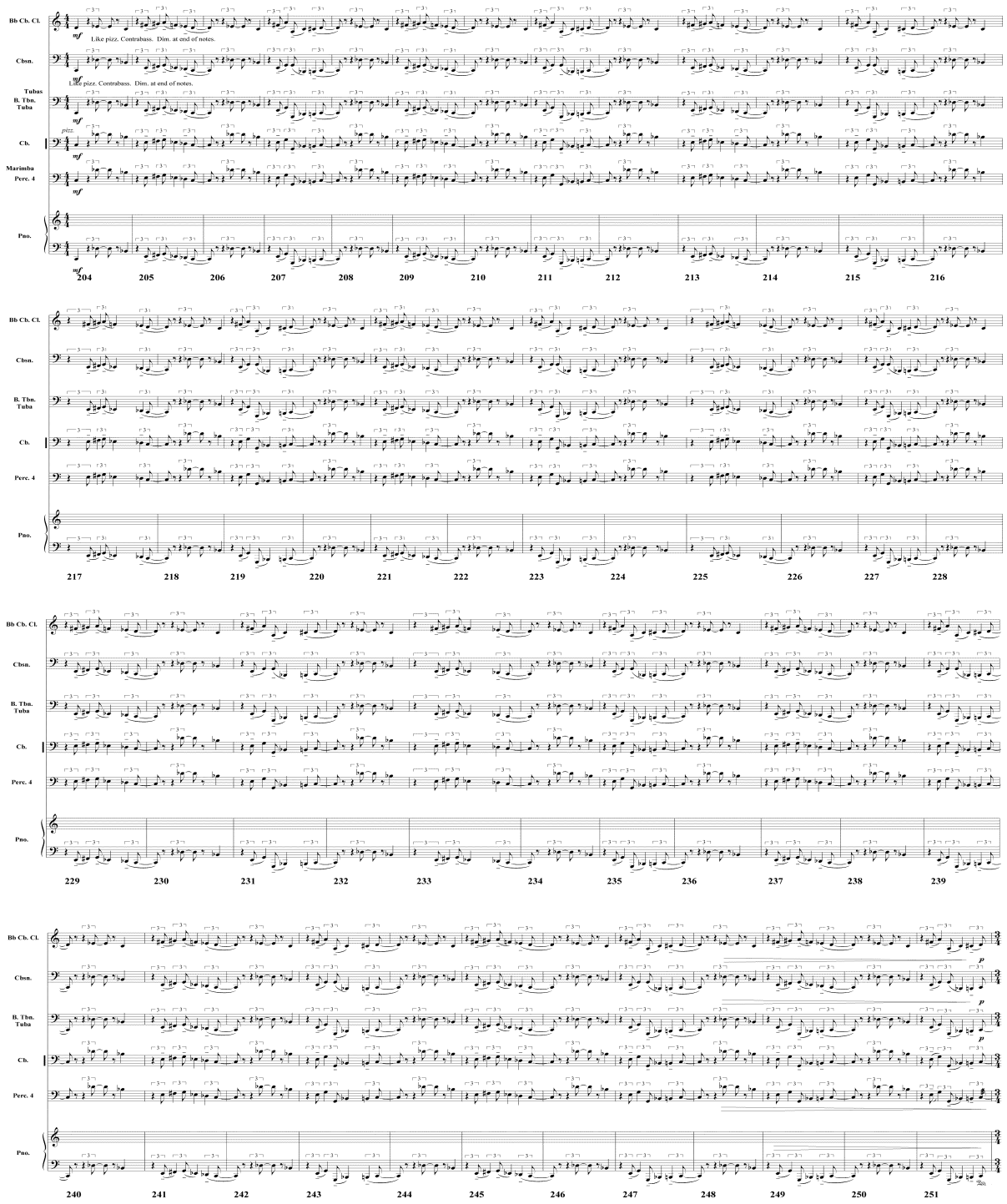
Jazz Influence in *Ballet for Band*

Another primary stylistic characteristic of Cindy McTee's music is the influence of jazz and popular idioms. While there is rarely a completely overt statement where one could say this is the "jazz moment", the infiltration of the jazz style and feel in her music is undeniable. Andrew Trachsel comments about this influence in McTee's music.

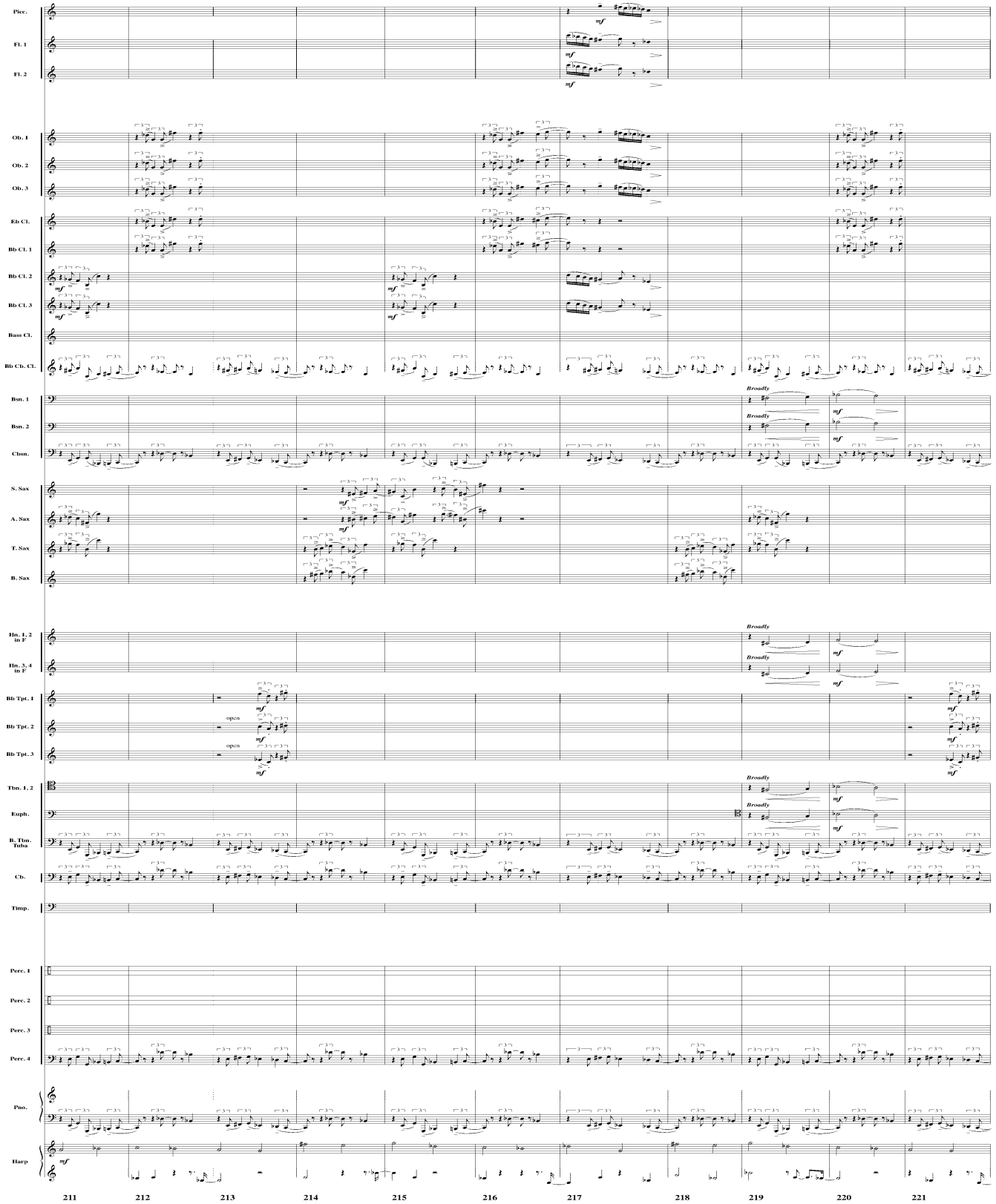
> There is a pervasive jazz influence in her music that's reflected rhythmically, harmonically, and melodically. McTee's technically complex melodic fragments comprised of stepwise chromaticism as well as disjunct leaps are clear references to the bebop jazz era. Rhythmically, many of those melodic fragments conclude on an offbeat and are frequently broken up by brief, syncopated tutti statements. Driving bass lines, snare drum rim shots, and the use of ride cymbal and hi-hat percussive effects are also hallmarks of her composition's jazz textures.[41]

A substantial example of McTee's jazz influence can be found in the "C" section of movement one (mm. 204-251). The string bass, tuba, piano, B-flat contra bass clarinet and the contra bassoon share a bass line that is notated to give the aural impression of swing. Example 4.1 shows the bass line that is also a foundation for what could be considered a quiet, laid back "jam session" with interjections from various sections of the ensemble (seen in Example 4.2).

[41] Andrew Trachsel, "Teacher Resource Guide: *Ballet for Band* by Cindy McTee," in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* volume 5, ed. Richard Miles (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2004), 697.



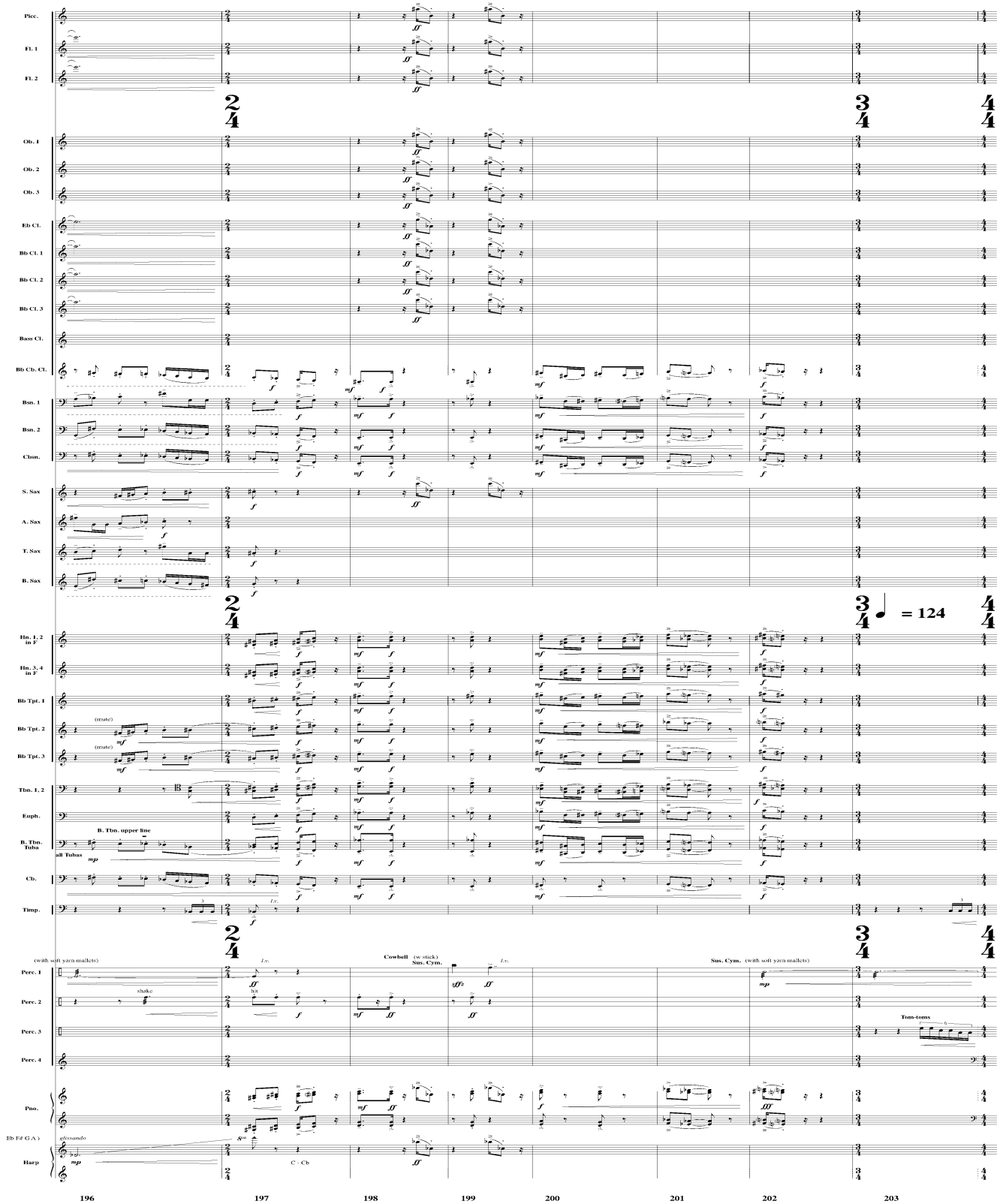
Example 4.1 – “Swing” Bass Line in Mvmt. 1 mm. 204-251



Example 4.2 – Soli Interjections over “Swing” Bass Line (mm. 211-221)

The previously mentioned chromatic “walking” bass lines serve as another reminder of the composer’s jazz influence. While the bass line element can be viewed on multiple levels of compositional style and intent, the “walking” bass line serves the same purpose in *Ballet for Band* as it would in a jazz ensemble. In the *Ballet*, the bass line serves as a rhythmic and “harmonic” background for the faster moving, improvisation-like, bebop-influenced passages in the winds.

McTee tends to use another jazz influenced element in her music—full ensemble “shout chorus” style interruptive gestures. Example 4.3 shows a “shout chorus” style interruptive moment (mm. 197-202 of movement one). This brief full ensemble moment is indicative of the jazz style from perspectives of style, articulation, and vertical structure (jazz “harmony”).



Example 4.3 – “Shout Chorus”-like Interruptive Motive (mm. 196-203)

Primary Stylistic Characteristics ï

Use of Ostinato and Pseudo-ostinato and

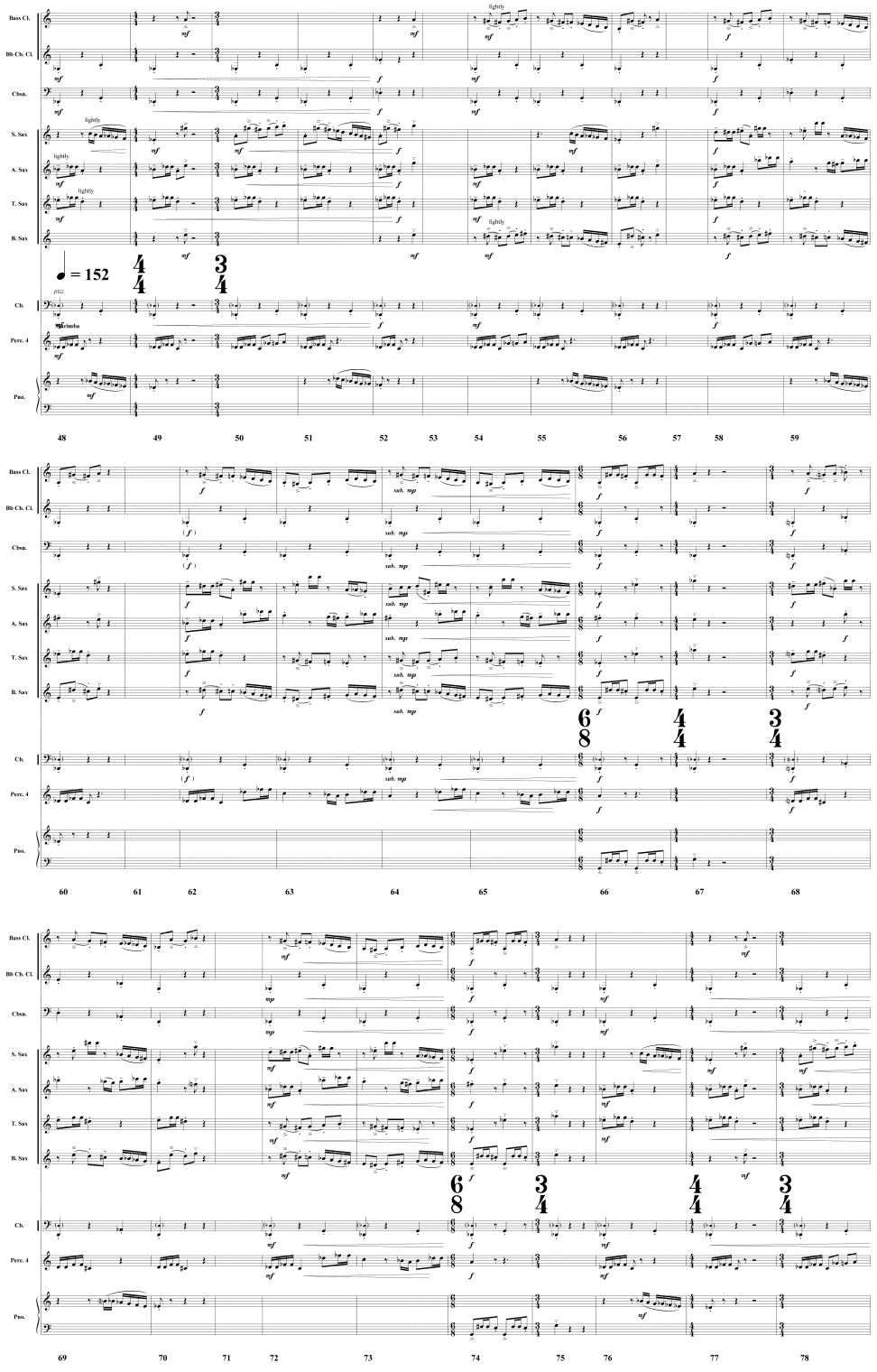
Machine-like Rhythmic Patterns and Figures

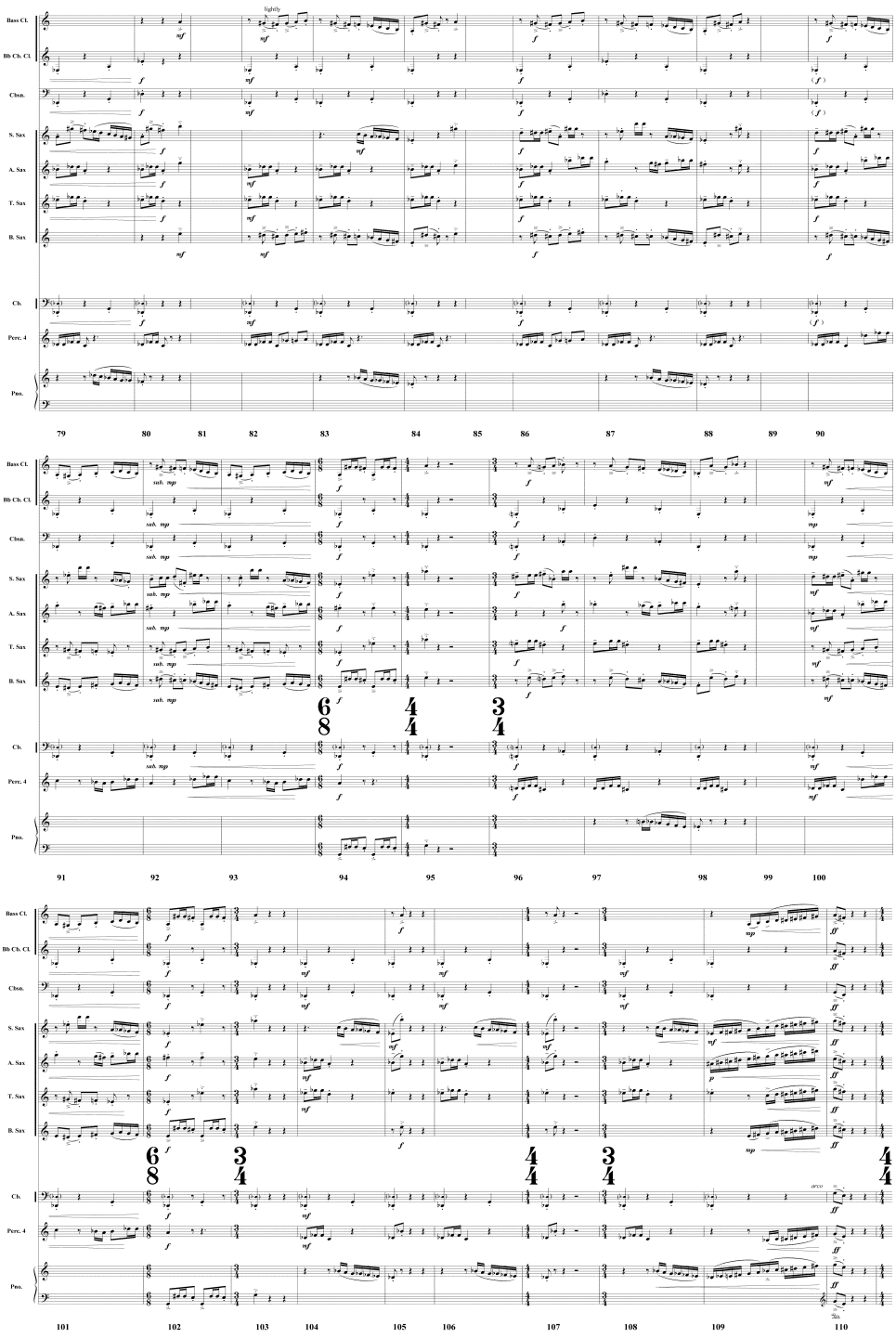
Undoubtedly one of the most easily noticeable characteristics of McTee's music is the machine-like quality in rhythmic passages. These characteristics often find themselves locked in ostinato or pseudo-ostinato patterns. The first substantial pseudo-ostinato texture (PO1) in the first movement of the work can be found in mm. 48-109. (The PO1 texture is recapitulated in mm. 279-312.) This pseudo-ostinato texture is longer than many of the similar textures found in *Timepiece* or *Finish Line.* Example 4.4 shows the reduction of the pseudo-ostinato texture.

As with many of the McTee "chains of ostinati" the pitches come from an octatonic collection (or collections). In this particular instance, we notice that the pattern begins using Octatonic Collection I (C Db Eb E F# G A Bb) and for two brief moments (mm. 68-70 and mm. 96-98), the pattern is transposed up a half step, causing an immediate transposition to Octatonic Collection II (C# D E F G Ab Bb B). The composer also changes the patterns just a bit so they are not completely strict ostinato. In the pseudo-ostinato textures we find manipulations of rhythm, meter, dynamics and placement of silences. Sometimes these subtle changes create interest (and a certain amount of surprise when expectations are denied).

The instrument selection for PO1 is also one that is typical of her writing. The composer uses three groups of sounds—saxophones; marimba and piano; and bass voices with percussion. Most of the rhythmic activity occurs in the full saxophone choir

(B-flat soprano saxophone through E-flat baritone saxophone). With the knowledge that McTee was a saxophonist as a young musician, it is not surprising that the majority of this pseudo-ostinato (as well as many of the other ones) rely heavily upon the saxophone family of instruments.


Bass Cl.
Bb Ch. Cl.
Cbsn.
S. Sax
A. Sax
T. Sax
B. Sax
Ch.
Perc. 4
Pno.
lightly
♩ = 152
48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68
69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78

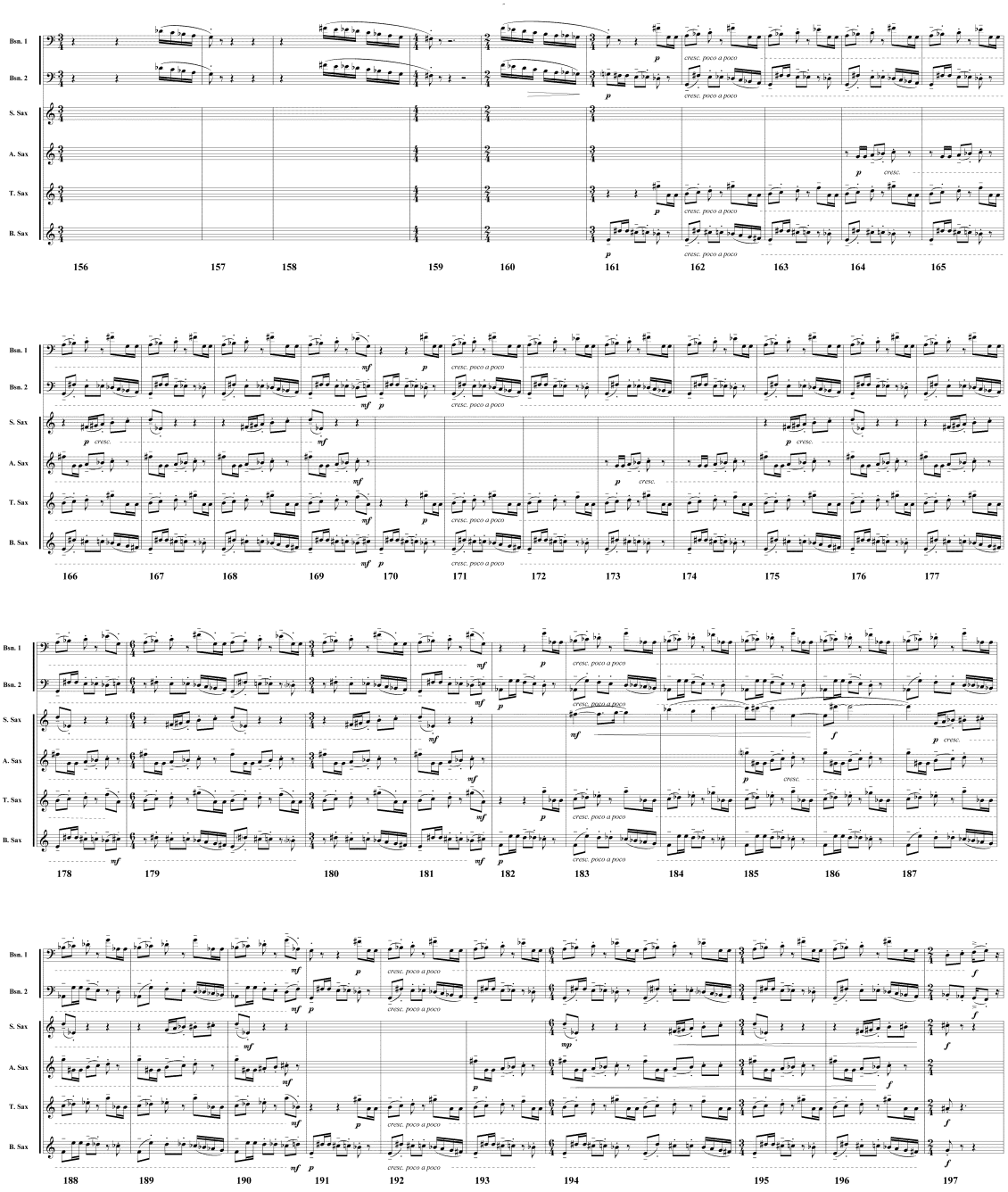


Example 4.4 – Reduction of Pseudo-Ostinato Texture 1 (PO1) mm. 48-109

The marimba and piano duo provide a foundation of almost constant running eighth notes and sixteenth notes. This motor-like repetition serves its own purpose of creating motion, but also at times, briefly interacts with (and doubles) the wind parts.

The final component of PO1 is the bass line and percussion unit. The composer scores the bass voices using B-flat contra bass clarinet, contra bassoon and string bass. The percussion voices include tambourine, timpani, suspended cymbals and triangle. The bass voice serves to create rhythmic drive through the constantly moving rhythm, as well as to create a “tonal” pedal point (in most cases B-flat, except when the entire section is transposed up a minor second).

The second pseudo-ostinato (PO2) can be found in mm. 161-196. Example 4.5 shows a reduction of the PO2 texture, which is preceded by falling sixteenth note patterns based in the Octatonic Collection I and is followed by a full ensemble shout chorus-like interruptive moment. PO2 does share several qualities with PO1. Both pseudo-ostinati have origin in the Octatonic Collection I; both have a short instant modulation up a half step to Octatonic Collection II.



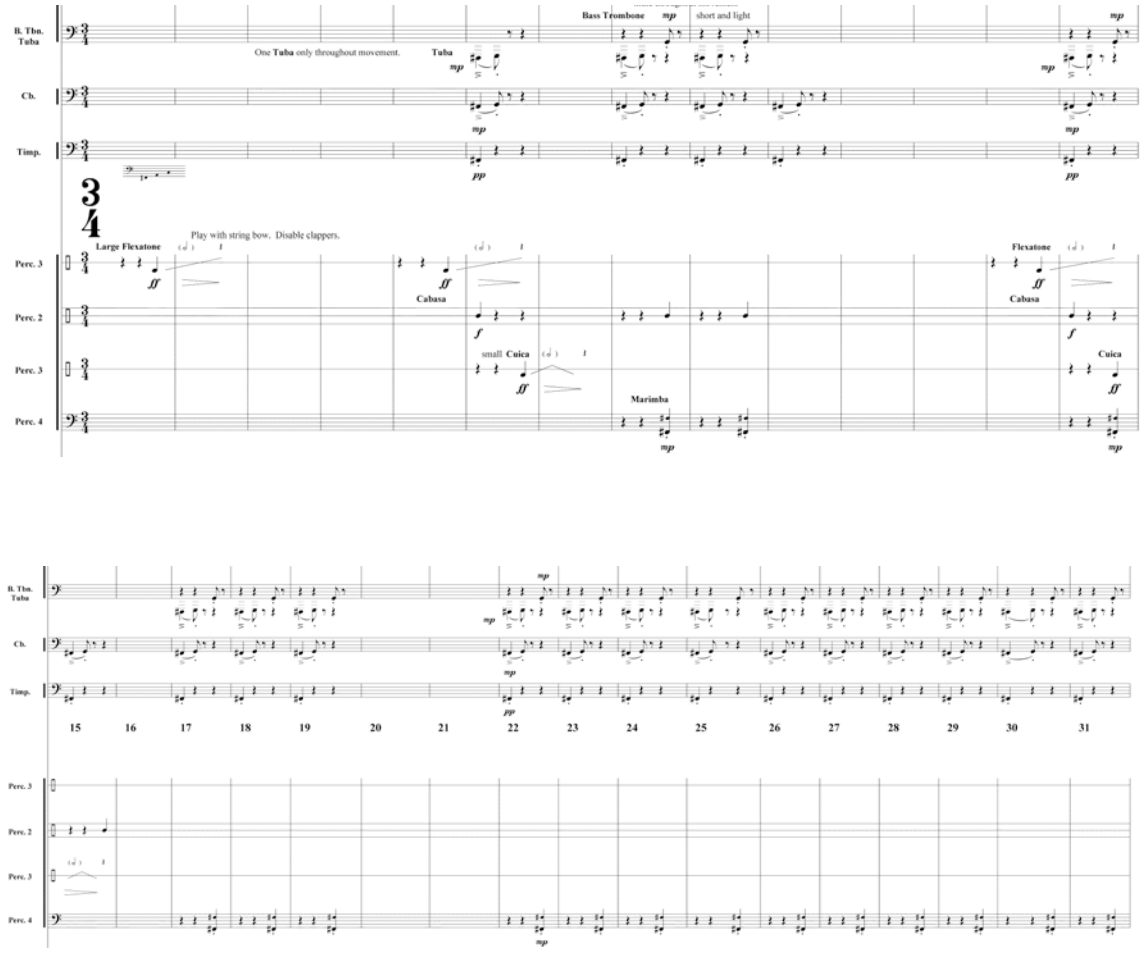
Example 4.5 – Reduction of Pseudo-Ostinato Texture 2 (PO2) mm. 161-196

The instrumental pallet for PO2 is quite different from that of PO1. Like PO1, the saxophone family is used as the main voices of the texture. However, PO2 uses the string bass, bassoons and contra bassoons to double the lines. PO2 can be reduced to

four unique parts. The texture begins with the E-flat baritone saxophone doubled with the bassoon 2 (with sporadic doubled entrances of the contra bassoon and string bass). The second layer in the texture uses the B-flat tenor saxophone and bassoon 1. Layer three is heard only in the E-flat alto saxophone voice. The final layer, scored for the B-flat soprano saxophone, is only a member of the texture a few times. (This soprano voice serves dual purpose throughout this section. The voice is used as a part of the ostinato texture as well as to double one of the extended and angular melodies.)

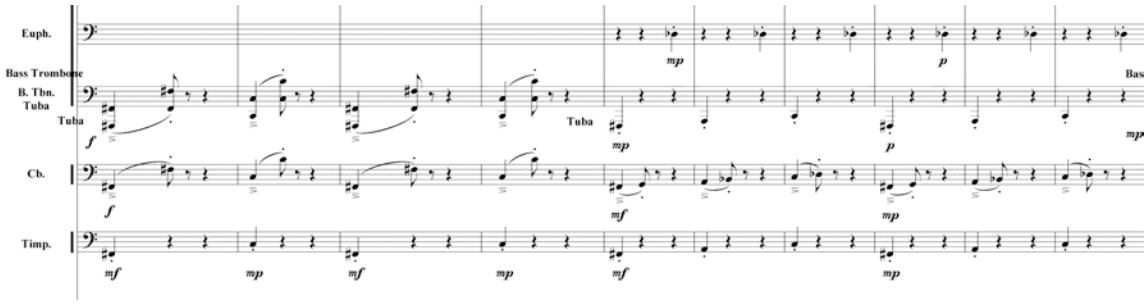
Upon closer look at the PO2 texture, one will notice that the length of each part of the texture contains links of various lengths. The bass voice (E-flat baritone saxophone and bassoon 2) has the longest line, although the four measure repetition contains a manipulation of itself. The length of the other voices is only three beats long, and repeats at a much faster rate, due to the length of its initial presentation.

The second movement of the *Ballet,* "Waltz: Light Fantastic" is the shortest movement of the work. Written in triple meter, the movement has only one waltz ostinato that occurs in some form (complete or incomplete) through all but seventeen of the movement's 187 measures. In m. 6, we find the first foreshadowing of the waltz ostinato pattern that will encompass the majority of the work. The three beat waltz ostinato occurs for the first time in its entirety in m. 8, and is repeated from mm. 22-165. As the piece begins to wind down in m. 166, the ostinato begins to break down and is presented in incomplete form as a two beat pattern rather than a three beat ostinato. Example 4.6 shows mm. 6-22, the beginning of the waltz ostinato.



Example 4.6 – Introduction of the Waltz Ostinato

The only deviation of the waltz ostinato pattern (other than the original in incomplete form) occurs in mm. 102-111 and is cloned in mm. 148-157. Example 4.7 shows the eight-measure deviation. Although the pitches change in this eight measure variation of the initial ostinato, the pitch collection is still based in the Octatonic Collection I. The second half of the eight-measure phrase seems to serve (in both cases) as transitory material out of a tutti interruptive moment back to the stability of the waltz ostinato.

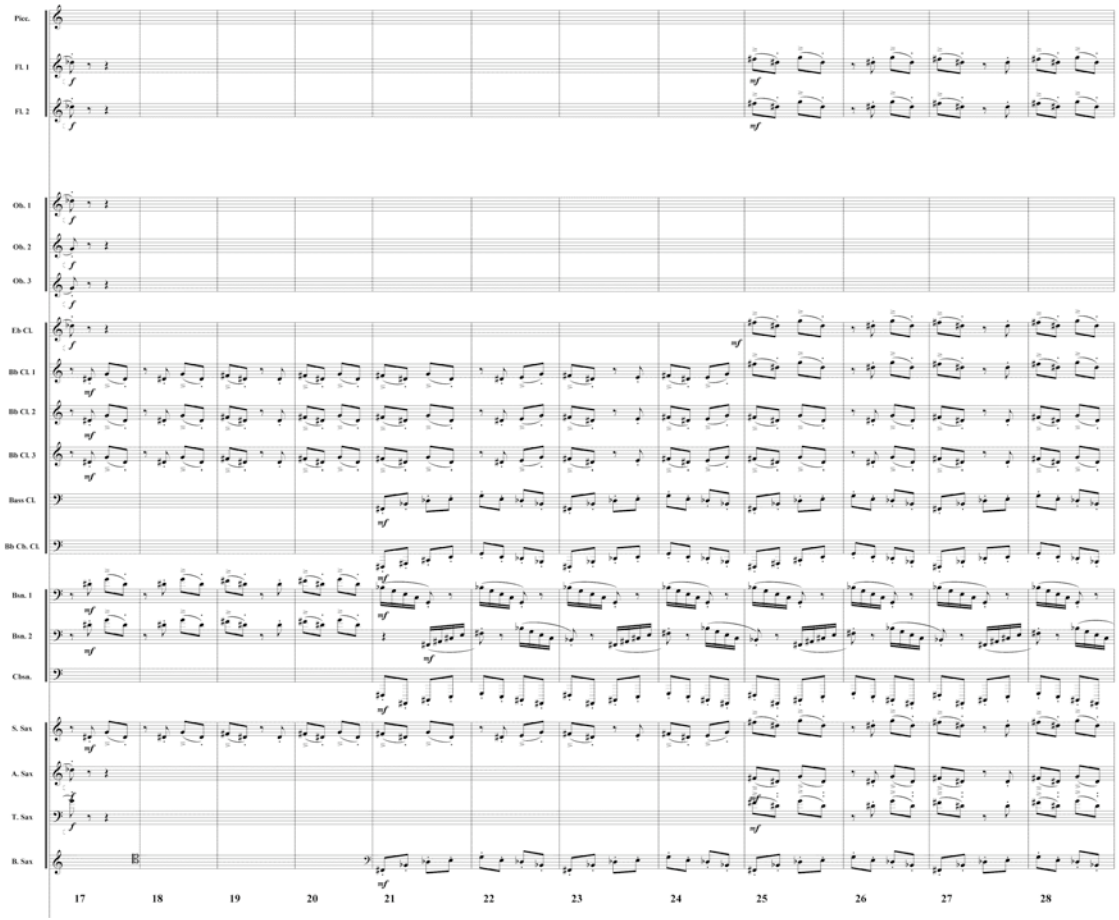


Example 4.7 – Change in Waltz Ostinato Pattern (mm. 102-111 and 148-157)

The final movement of the *Ballet*, “Finale: Where Time Plays the Fiddle”, displays new material, borrowed material from the first movement as well as a motive from Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*. The finale’s Stravinsky motive is used as an ostinato from the beginning of the movement.

The first pseudo-ostinato texture in the finale occurs in the beginning of the movement and is scored in the B-flat soprano clarinets, bassoons, and B-flat soprano saxophone. This pseudo-ostinato always accompanies or precedes the Stravinsky motive, shown in example 4.8. This specific pseudo-ostinato texture is representative of McTee’s compositional style characteristics in several ways. One element of the texture usually includes a recognizable motive that repeats and is typically altered in some way, either by change of rhythm or rhythmic displacement. A second element is the introduction of strategically placed silences.

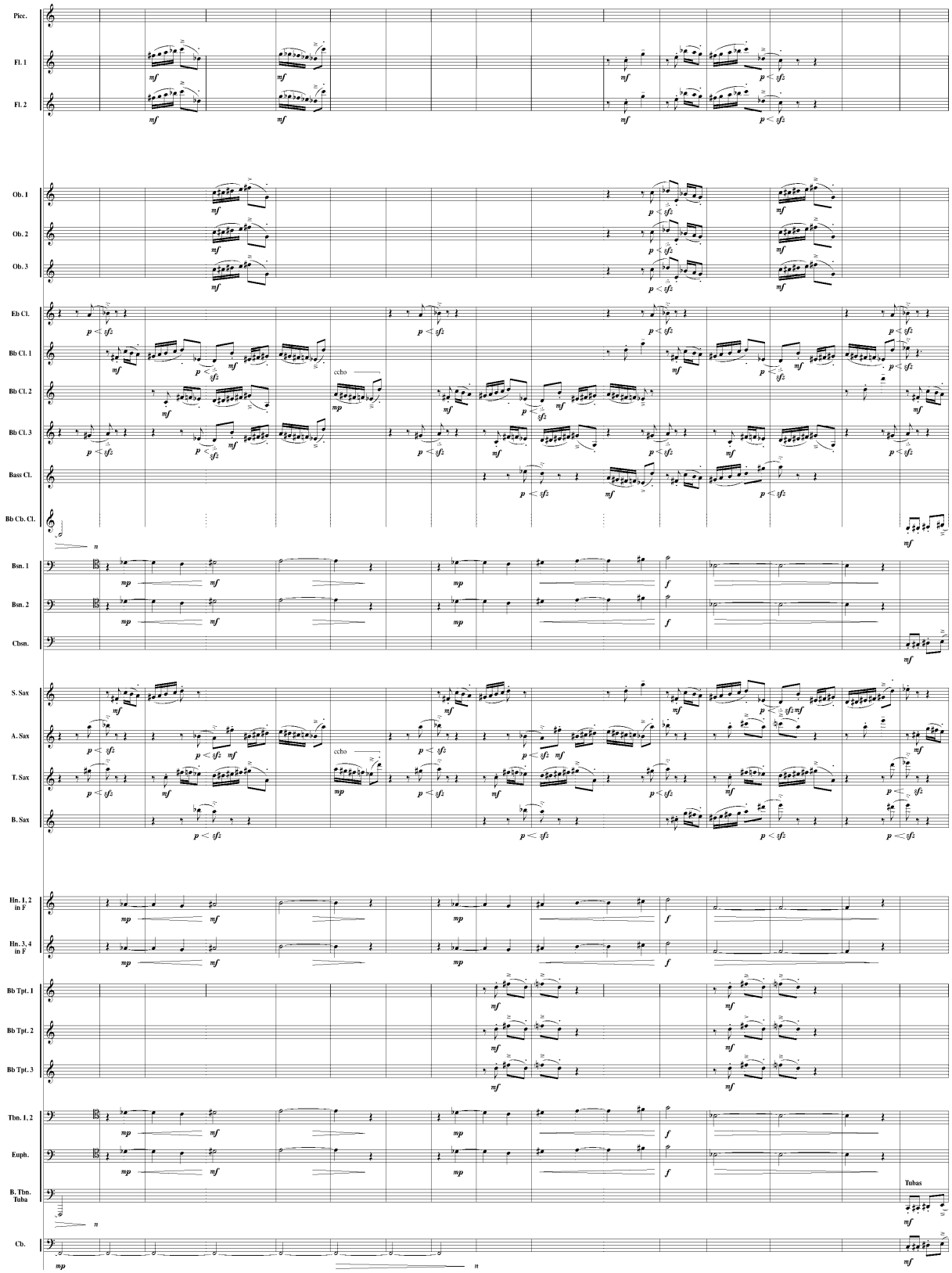
This first pseudo-ostinato texture makes two brief returns later in the piece, in mm. 286-293, and later in mm. 300-315.



Example 4.8 – PO1 and the Stravinsky Motive

The second pseudo-ostinato texture (PO2) occurs in mm. 67-88, and reappears in mm. 328-340. PO2 is scored for flutes, oboes, soprano clarinets, saxophones and trumpets, with the occasional addition of the marimba, doubling the oboe. This twenty-two measure texture is clearly marked with instructions about dynamic and articulation. These specific markings add clarity to a fast moving chain of machine-like rhythmic ideas. The individual links of the chain of ostinato each have to be structurally sound enough to sustain its repetition in the overall structure. In this second pseudo-ostinato there are six links to the chain. Example 4.9 shows PO2.

Link 1 is a two-note motive found in the saxophone and clarinet lines. Link 2 is a three beat link, (beginning on an off-beat) that occurs exclusively in the clarinet and B-flat soprano saxophone voices. Link 3 is a three and a half beat link that occurs in the B-flat tenor saxophone line with a doubling in the second clarinet line. Link 4 is found in the flute and oboe parts. Link 4 is an interesting one because it is the only link to be transposed throughout the texture. While both links clearly fit the Octatonic Collection I, the flute version always begins on F-sharp, while the oboe version begins only on “C”. Link 5 is scored primarily for B-flat soprano clarinet 1 and the E-flat alto saxophone. The final link, number 6, is placed exclusively in the B-flat trumpet voices, and can be traced back to the opening three note motive of movement one as well as the beginning of movement three.



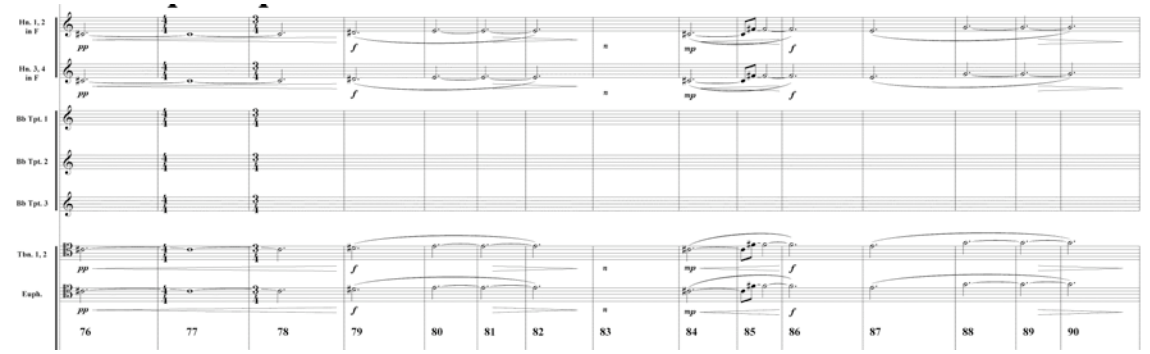
Example 4.9 – Beginning of PO2 (mm. 67-82)

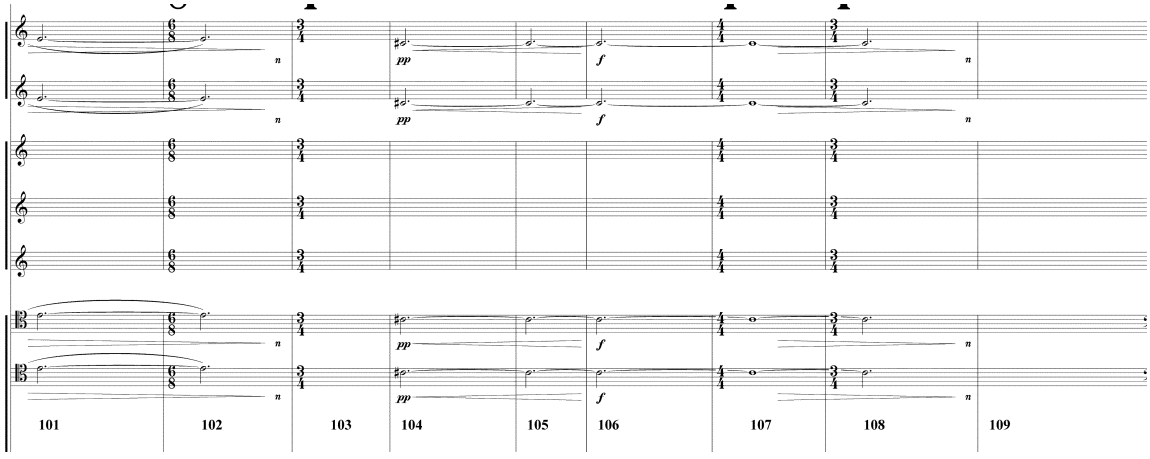
Primary Stylistic Characteristics –

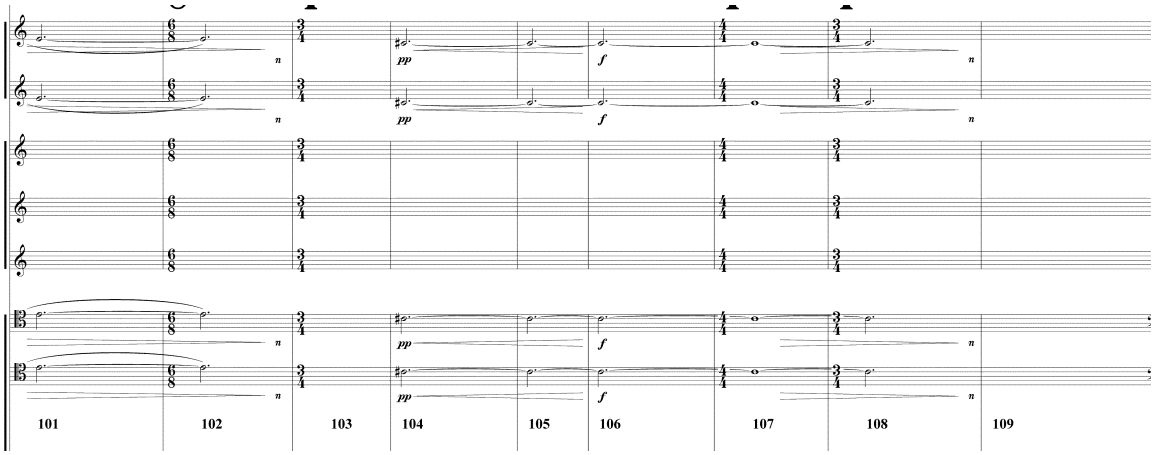
Creation of Extended and Angular Melodic Lines

The creation of extended and angular melodic lines in Cindy McTee's music, as seen in all of her pieces for large ensemble, is a significant stylistic characteristic. While there are numerous instances of this long-line idea in short segments, there are four points in the piece that stand out as high-level examples of this stylistic characteristic.

The first melodic line, as shown by example 4.10, is a thirty-three measure long phrase that seems to move as if in a different time, meter, and tempo from the music that it surrounds.



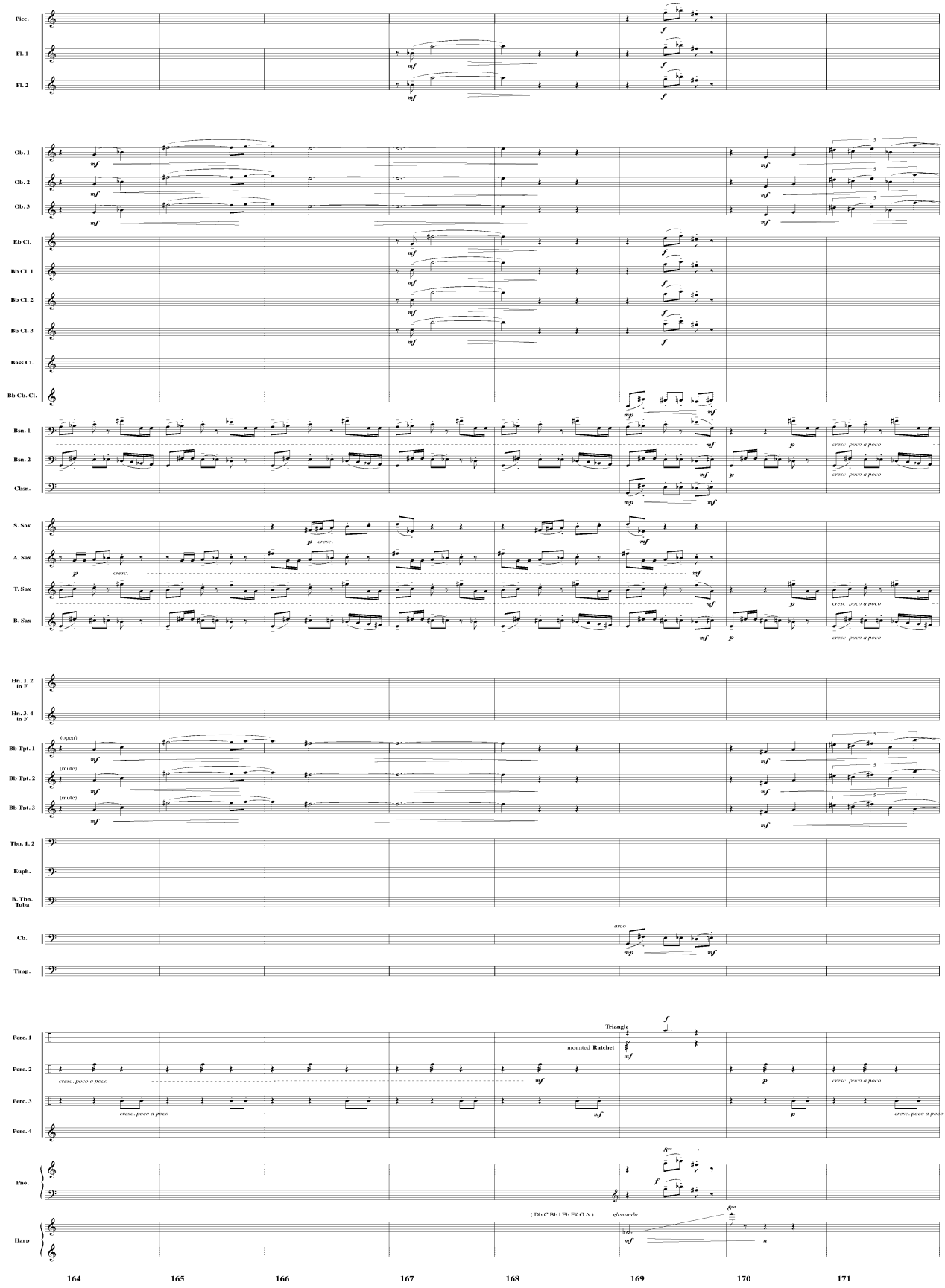


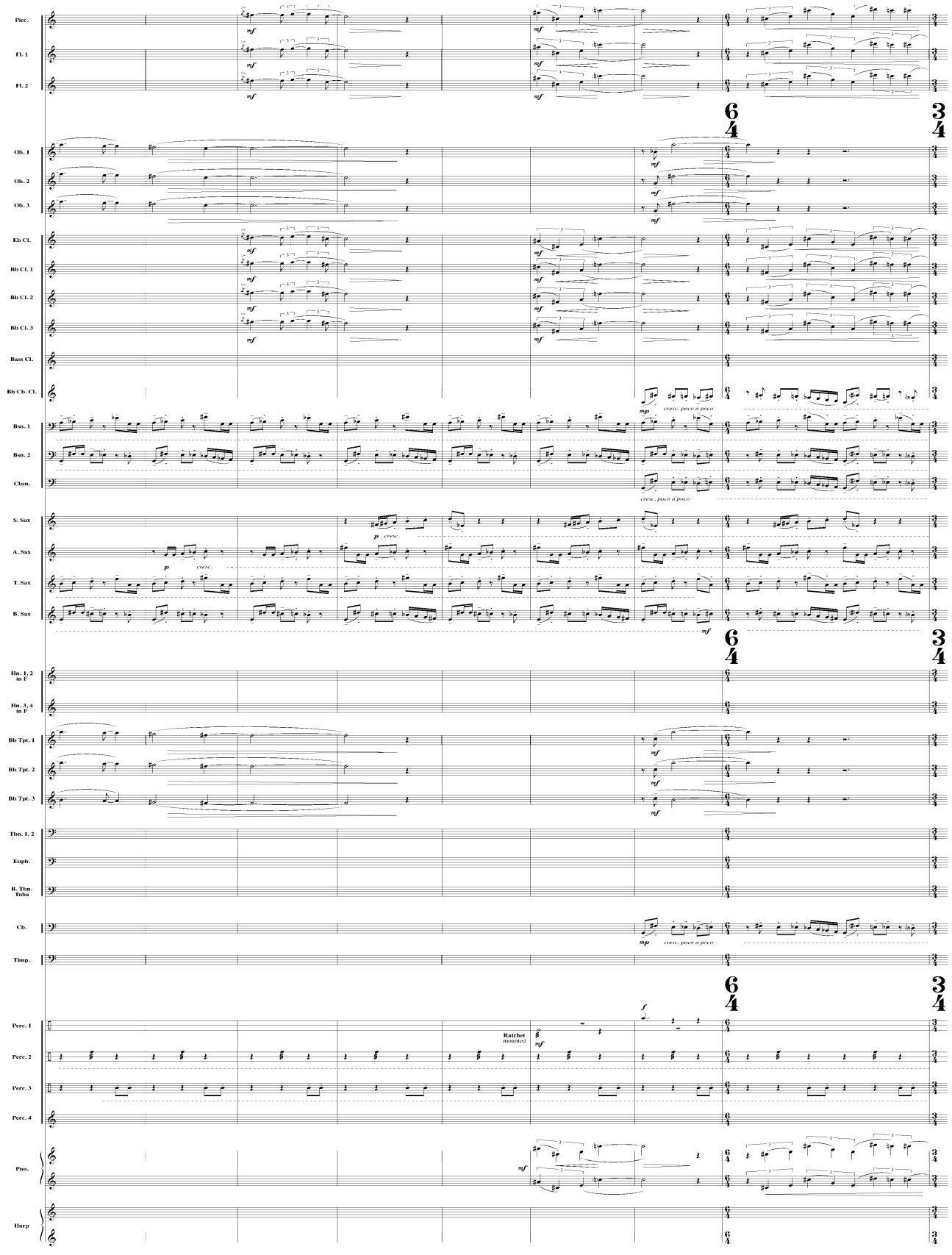


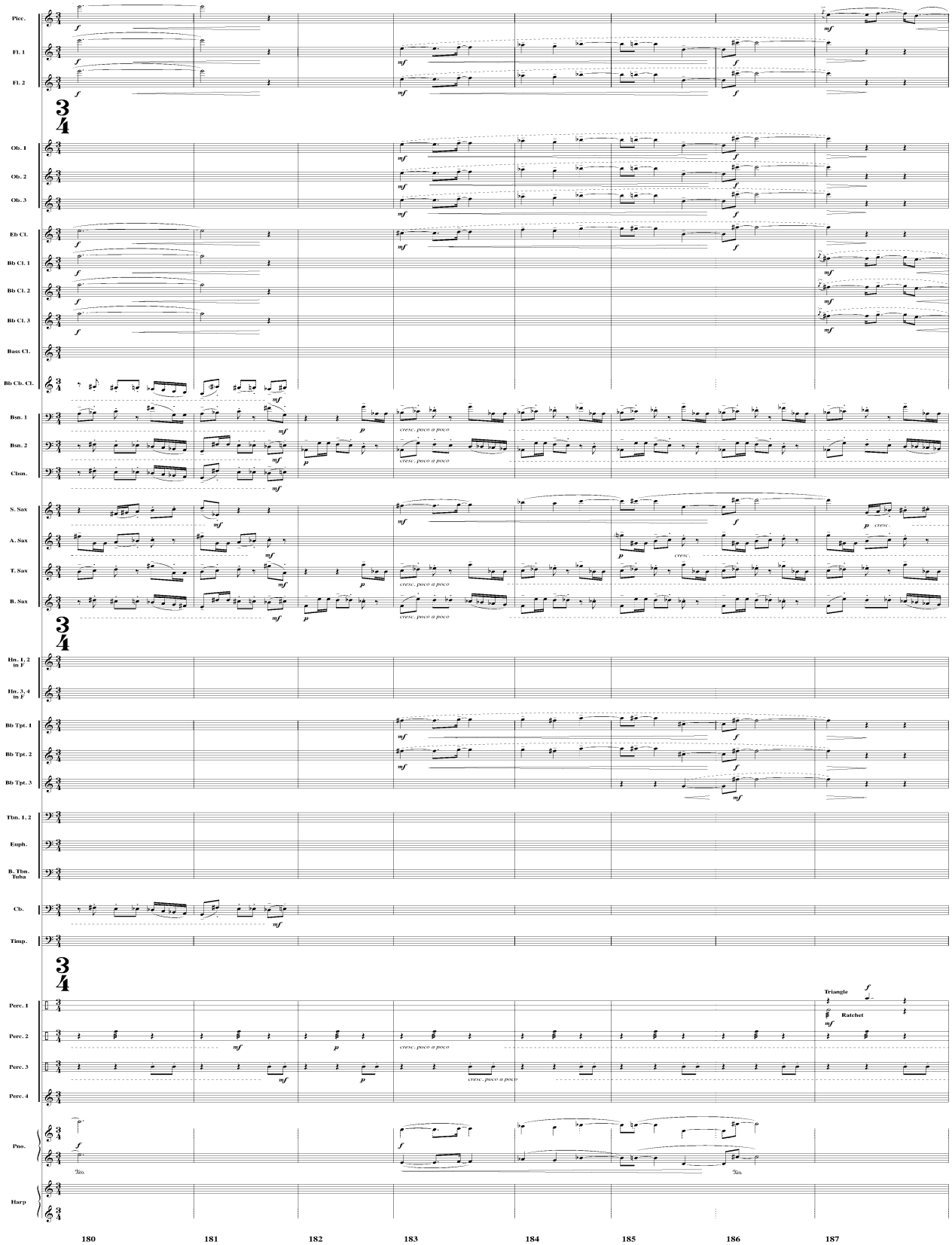
Example 4.10 – First Extended and Angular Melodic Line

McTee carefully sculpts the extended line to create music that floats above the faster accompaniment. In every case, the micro portions of the macro phrase are marked with a soft entrance that crescendos to a specific dynamic and pitch high point, with a subsequent decrescendo of volume and (descending) pitch to match the end of the phrase. The first example of the extended angular phrase occurs in movement one, mm. 76-108, with a recapitulation in movement one at mm. 279-311, and in the final movement, mm. 244-276. The composer scores this unison line for horn, trombone and euphonium.

The second instance of extended and an angular melodic line (as seen in Example 4.11), like the first, is also a thirty-three measure phrase and is found in mm. 164-196 of movement one. The scoring choices in the second presentation are more elaborate than in the first example. McTee uses piccolo, flutes, oboes, soprano clarinets, B-flat soprano saxophone, trumpets and piano to create this extended line.

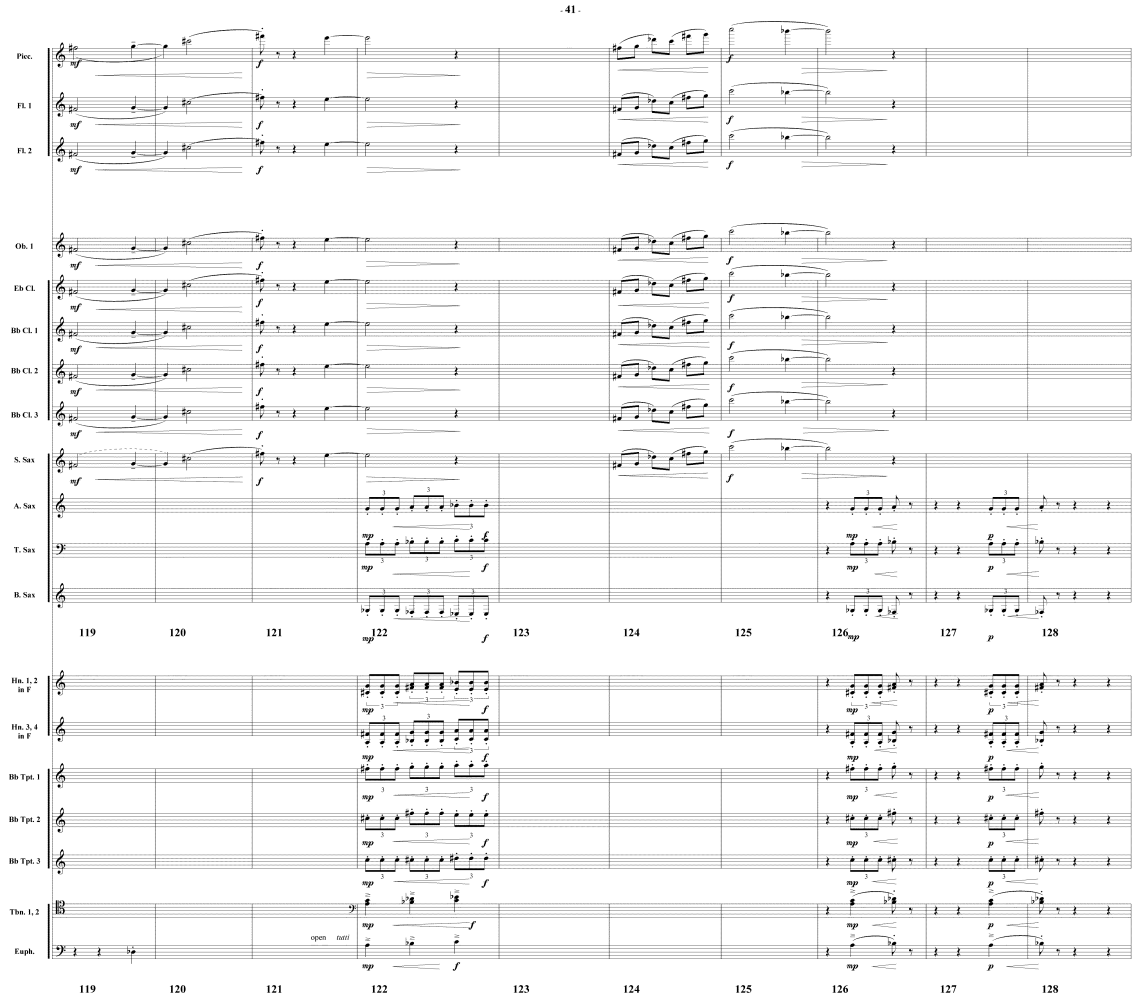

Picc.
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Ob. 3
Eb Cl.
Bb Cl. 1
Bb Cl. 2
Bb Cl. 3
Bass Cl.
Bb Cb. Cl.
Bsn. 1
Bsn. 2
Cbsn.
S. Sax
A. Sax
T. Sax
B. Sax
Hn. 1, 2 in F
Hn. 3, 4 in F
Bb Tpt. 1
Bb Tpt. 2
Bb Tpt. 3
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
B. Tbn. Tuba
Cb.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
Pno.
Harp
(open)
(mute)
(mute)
Triangle
mounted Ratchet
(Db C Bb I Eb F# G A)
glissando
cresc. poco a poco
164
165
166
167
168
169
170
171

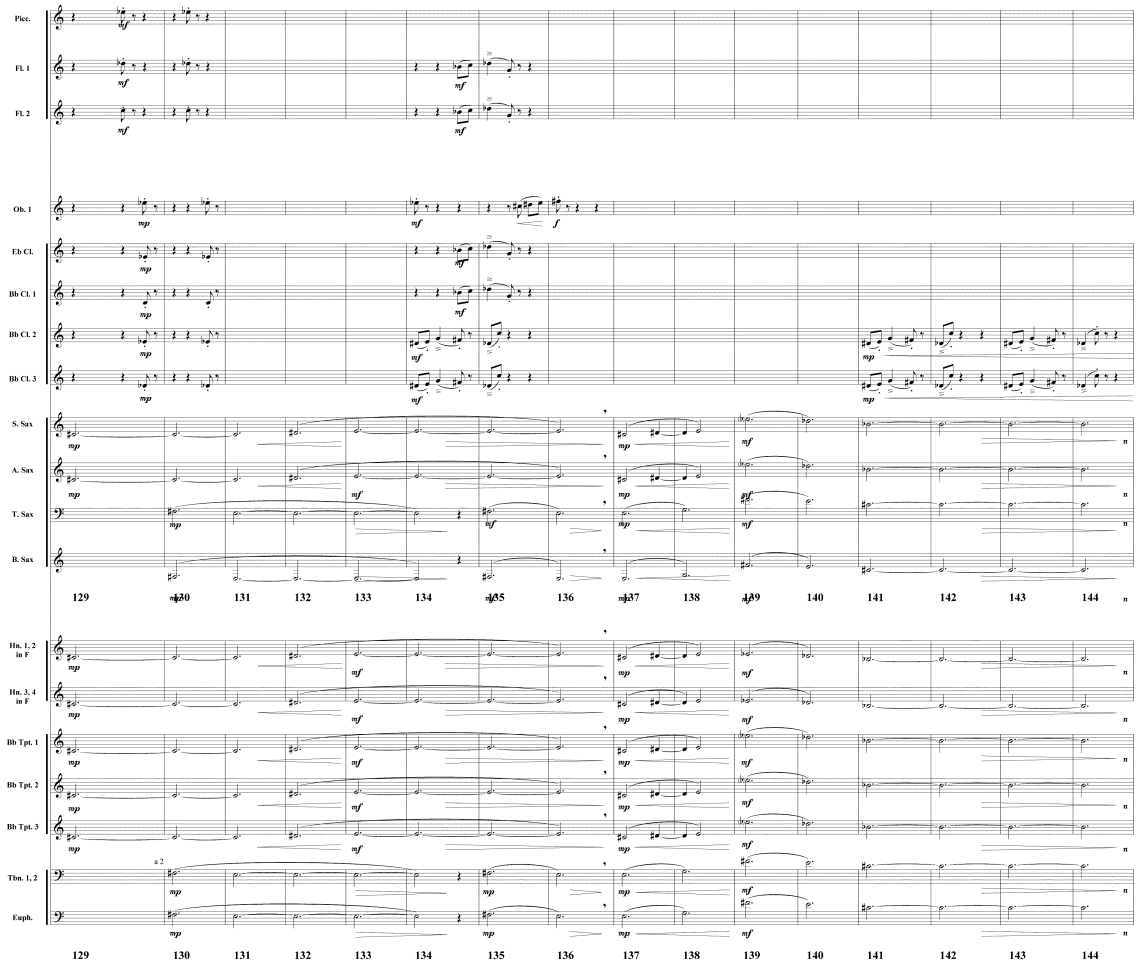

Picc.
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Ob. 3
Eb Cl.
Bb Cl. 1
Bb Cl. 2
Bb Cl. 3
Bass Cl.
Bb Cb. Cl.
Bsn. 1
Bsn. 2
Cbsn.
S. Sax
A. Sax
T. Sax
B. Sax
Hn. 1, 2 in F
Hn. 3, 4 in F
Bb Tpt. 1
Bb Tpt. 2
Bb Tpt. 3
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
B. Tbn. Tuba
Cb.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
Pno.
Harp
Ratchet
mounted
cresc. poco a poco
172
173
174
175
176
177
178
179



Example 4.11 – Second Extended and Angular Melodic Line mm. 164-186

The third of the extended and angular melodic lines present in the *Ballet* occurs in the waltz movement. Found in mm. 119-144, this line has a length of twenty-six measures, is scored for piccolo, flutes, oboe 1, soprano clarinets, saxophones, horns, trumpets, trombones and euphonium. Example 4.12 shows the reduction.

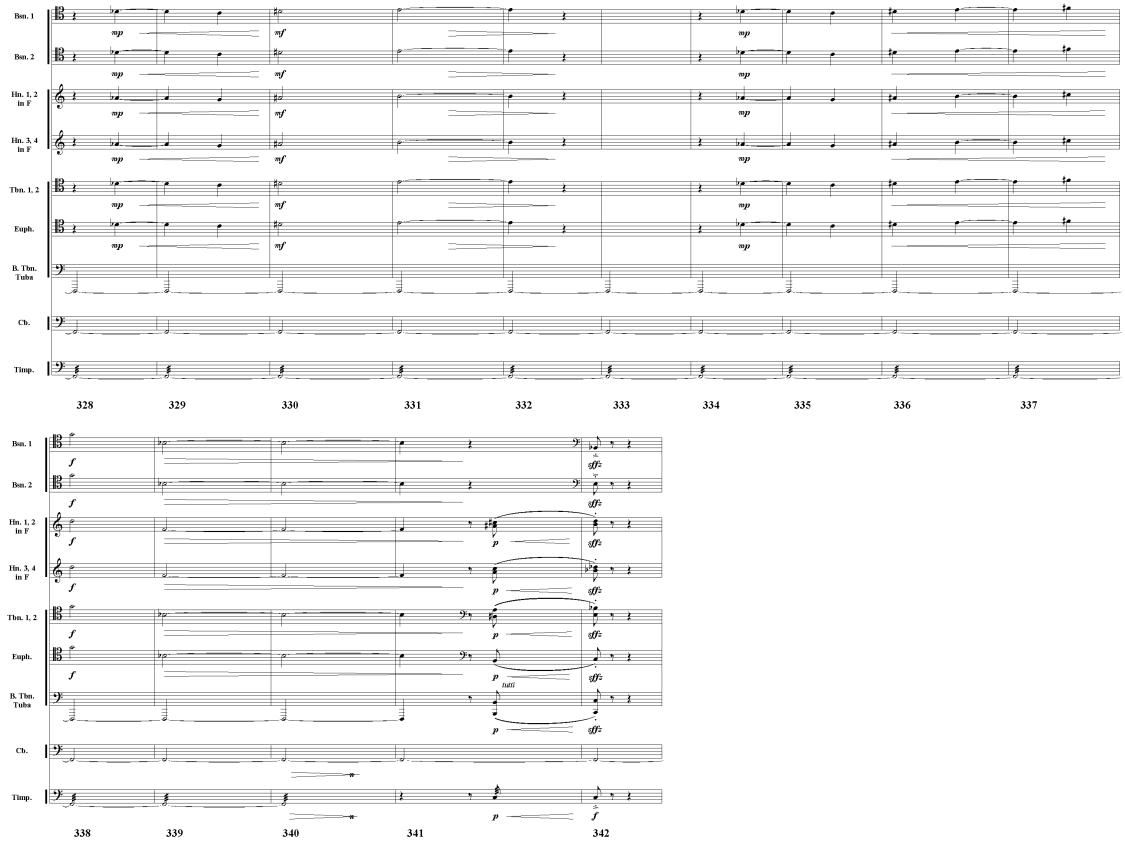




Example 4.12 – Third Example of an Extended and Angular Melodic Line

Before the coda of the *Ballet*, the fourth example of an extended angular melodic line can be found in mm. 328-341. The shortest in length of all four (fourteen measures), the characteristics are similar to the other three. Interestingly, the beginning of the fourth example is very similar (melodically) to that of the first, and shares the exact same pitches as extended line 3 (C C# D# E F# G Bb). The final statement of the long line is scored for the fewest voices of all four. The line is heard only in the bassoons, horns,

trombones and euphonium. Example 4.13 shows the reduction for the final presentation of the shortest extended and angular melodic line.

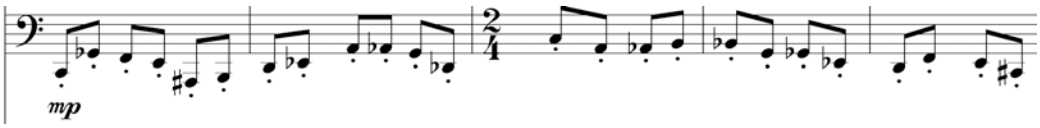


Example 4.13 – Fourth Extended and Angular Melodic Line

Returning to McTee's use of chromatic "walking" bass line writing, often strongly rooted in the twelve-tone system, we find this characteristic used three times in the *Ballet's* first and third movements.

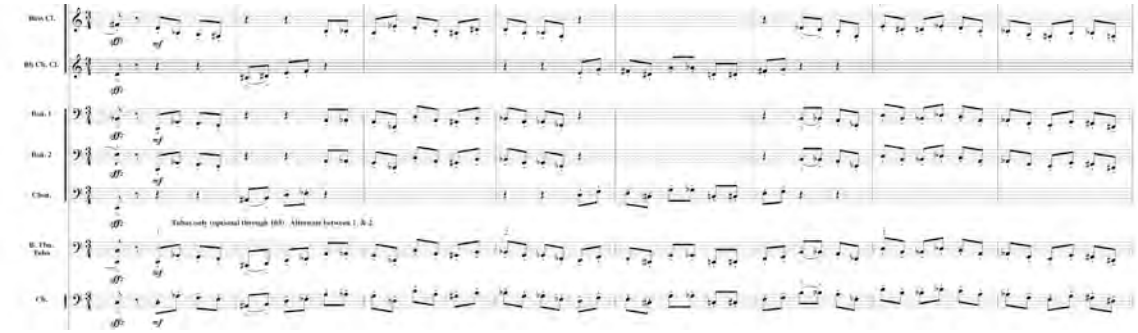
The first presentation of a chromatic "walking" bass line occurs in mm. 121-158 of movement one. A recapitulation of this bass line subsequently returns in the same movement in mm. 324-361. The last use of the rows and "walking" bass line can be

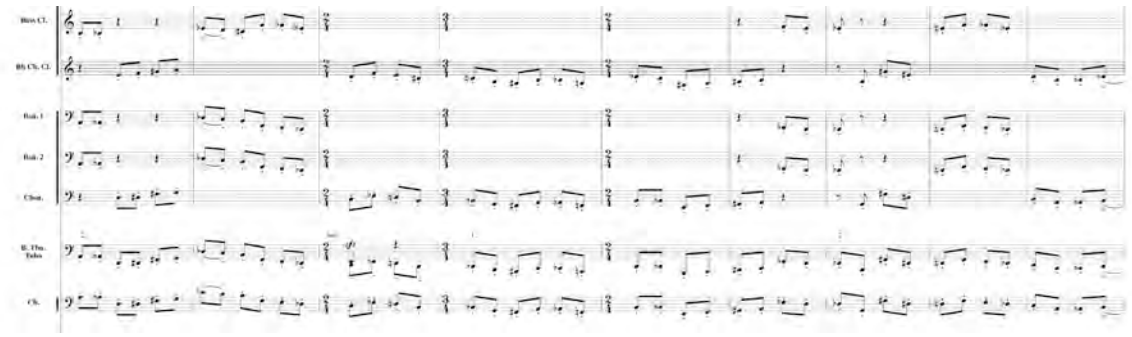
found in the third movement, mm. 103-164. Example 4.14 shows the partial reduction of the chromatic “walking” bass line.



Example 4.17 – Introduction of the “Walking” Bass Line mm. 121-125

McTee scores the first two “walking” bass line sections the same, using the B-flat contra bass clarinet, contra bassoon, tubas, string bass and piano. The final time the “walking” bass line is used, she uses more voices to strengthen the line, but fewer of the voices have the entire line. Like the first two presentations, the tuba, string bass and piano have the complete “walking” bass line. However, during the final sounding of the line (as seen in example 4.18), she breaks up the line between the B-flat bass clarinet, bassoons and contra bassoons.



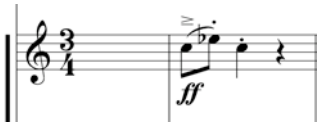


Example 4.18 – Third “Walking” Bass Line (mvmt. 3 mm. 103-119)

Primary Stylistic Characteristics –

Use of Octatonic and Twelve-tone Collections

The *Ballet* begins with a simple three-note motive that outlines and reinforces a minor third interval. Example 4.19 shows the three-note cell that creates the motivic structure for the piece. As the work continues, this three-note motive eventually develops into a clear use of the Octatonic Collection I (C Db Eb E F# G A Bb).



Example 4.19 – Three-note Opening Motive

Much of the *Ballet* uses the Octatonic Collection I. The first pseudo-ostinato texture is grounded in this octatonic collection. Example 4.4 shows PO1. The other pseudo-ostinati rely heavily upon the octatonic collection.

The pitches used for the first presentation of an extended and angular melodic line are derived from the Octatonic Collection I, with the exception of two notes, which

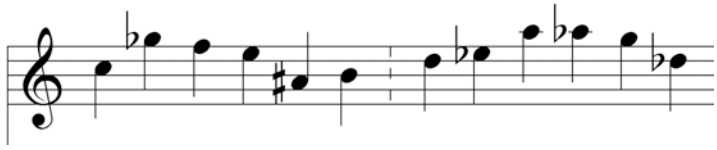
coincide with the half-step (upward) transposition of the pseudo-ostinato texture in the same measures. The pitches used in this first presentation include (C C# [D] D# E [F] F# and G), where the pitches listed in the brackets represent those in the brief half step transposition. (See example 4.10.)

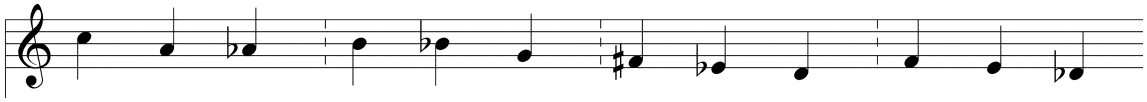
The pitch collection used in the second extended and angular melodic line is also the Octatonic Collection I, with the exception of mm. 183-190 (as example 4.11 shows), where we find a transposition to Octatonic Collection II (ascending half-step modulation) that occurs in all sounding voices. The pitch collection used in this presentation include (C C# Eb E [F] F# G [Ab] A Bb [B]), where the pitches listed in the bracket represent those in the transposition to Octatonic Collection II.

Perhaps one of the most interesting uses of the octatonic collection in the *Ballet for Band* occurs in mm. 204-251. The bass line writing in this passage shows McTee's masterful approach to multiplicity. Not only does she create a bass line that clearly shows her jazz influence. But also, this bass line can serve as an ostinato, as it is repeated numerous times throughout the section. Beyond those two elements of multiplicity there lies a third element of interest. Typically the composer's use of bass lines lies strictly in the twelve-tone (or chromatic) collections. In this instance, as shown in example 4.2, this bass line is created using pitches from the Octatonic Collection I with the addition of an added B-natural.

The second collection type that the composer often uses is that of the chromatic collection of twelve tones. McTee uses the chromatic collection almost exclusively in her "walking" bass line writing. She comments: "octatonic harmony, however, can get old very quickly—perhaps because the structures are characteristically symmetrical. So I do

break them up with sections of 12-tone music."[42] Interestingly, as we find in the composer's other pieces for large ensemble, often there isn't a presentation of the complete twelve-tone row. McTee continues to describe her methods: "I should also mention that I very rarely use all the pitches of a 12-tone row, preferring to let it too remain incomplete. Given the symmetry of this particular row, it feels right, from time to time, to use but a part of it, thereby introducing an element of asymmetry."[43] While one could argue that the composer doesn't always follow the strict rules of serialism, the composer does use the various versions of the twelve-tone technique including transposition, rotation, retrograde, inversion and retrograde inversion. In many cases the entire row is not presented in succession, but is presented in segments. Examples 4.20 and 4.21 show two of the complete tone rows that are used in the *Ballet*.





Example 4.20 and 4.21 – Two Twelve-Tone Rows used in *Ballet for Band*

To provide more chromatic interest, McTee creates two twelve-tone rows (both presented in full and in sequence) back to back. Notice mm. 122-125 of the first movement (as shown in Example 4.17). The composer's duality of pitch collections creates melodic, "harmonic", and motivic interest that allow the overall flow.

[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

In addition to using the tone rows in succession as originally conceived, the composer often creates a tone row and intentionally avoids using the row in its entirety, to create a sense of asymmetry.[44] The chromatic "walking" bass lines used in *Ballet for Band* realize both concepts of tone row presentation and tone row manipulation. With "traditional" manipulations and variations of a row, as well as the freedom to use only a predetermined portion of the row[45], the use of multiple tone rows gives the composer almost unlimited possibilities of chromatic choices and orders of pitches.

[44] McTee, materials.
[45] Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRIMARY STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS IN CINDY MCTEE'S *FINISH LINE*

Background Information

Finish Line is a seven-minute work that was commissioned by the Amarillo Symphony Orchestra in 2005; the following year, a consortium of fourteen wind band conductors from around the United States and Japan commissioned the version for wind band. McTee drafted the following notes about the piece.

> Centered in Italy at the beginning of the 20th century, the artistic movement known as *Futurism* embraced an aesthetic that glorified the speed and power of machines, especially automobiles. The *Futurist Manifesto* of 1909 by F.T. Marinetti proclaimed that "a racing automobile . . . is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*." Is it any wonder, then, that Italy has led the pack in producing finely crafted racing machines noted for their style and grace?
>
> I decided to use the work of futurist artist, Giacomo Balla, as a point of departure for the creation of *Finish Line* and chose several paintings suggesting the transformation of landscape by the passage of a speeding automobile. The title of one work in particular, *Abstract Speed + Sound,* suggests that Balla sought to render on canvas the whirling noise of the automobile itself.
>
> In *Finish Line*, the use of repeated fragments (ostinatos), a quickly-moving steady pulse, and a spirited tempo attempt to portray the swirling gestures and mechanized agitation of Balla's paintings. Multiple points of view (characteristic of Futurist art) are represented by the simultaneous presentation of two tempos at the beginning and end of the work, and also by a seamless, temporal transformation process analogous to gear shifting, where the speed, or RPM, of the engine modulates smoothly to a new frequency.[46]

Finish Line is influenced by three non-musical elements—automobiles, art, and racing. As a former amateur auto-racing fanatic, McTee loves the rush that racing

[46] Cindy McTee, program notes from *Finish Line*, (Dallas: Rondure Music Publisher, 2006).

provides. In fact, she has commented on some similarities between racing and composing.

Racing Rules	**Composing Rules**
Wear a helmet. Protect yourself.	Shield yourself by belonging to a community of like-minded creative people.
Prevent Injury.	Seek out those who can and will support you.
In a race, one is better off when entering a corner relatively slowly, turning in late, and then exiting as quickly as possible. Lengthen the straight-away.	Approach a creative project with some caution. Do your homework. Then, go for it.
Stay on the brakes or the accelerator pedal. Never coast.	Pursue knowledge as if there were no tomorrow.

> Racing is about taking risks—it is about testing one's limitations as well as the limitations of one's vehicle. Likewise, writing music requires concentration and the willingness to explore new territory.
>
> When I am poised at the start-finish line, the adrenaline is flowing. I might crash and burn. I might embarrass myself and run over a cone or miss a turn. I feel the same way before the first performance of a new piece. The piece could fall apart and there is always the possibility for embarrassment. But, ultimately, I become a better driver/composer.[47]

McTee feels a connection between futurists and postmodernists. In her extended notes about *Finish Line,* she writes the following.

> It is probably safe to say that futurist thought lay part of the groundwork for what we now call postmodernism, asset of ideas that blurs the distinction between high and low art, often a feature of my music with its genre mixing and reliance upon parody and humor. I make no apology for the inclusion of elements in my work which point to the vernacular (jazz, for example) or which reflects parts of my world not generally associated with "serious" art, such as sports cars![48]

[47] McTee, materials.
[48] Ibid.

After several years of driving schools and amateur autocross racing, McTee ended her high-powered automotive pursuits and "settled down" to just long distance performance driving. In fact, in 2005 (the year of the *Finish Line* commission and just before she began writing the piece) she drove on a 6,000 mile excursion from Denton to Los Angeles, up to Seattle, back through the Colorado Rockies, passing through Santa Fe, and returning back to the Dallas area.[49] Clearly, the composer has an affinity for the automobile and its ability to "transform time and space, with vast expanses of changing landscape playing like a movie on a windshield."[50]

Equal to the love of cars and racing is McTee's affection for visual art. Even throughout her childhood, McTee surrounded herself in the visual art world. She recalls as a young girl thinking she would be a visual artist, as she spent more time drawing and painting than she did practicing the piano.[51] Two of her pieces for wind band (and the original versions for symphony orchestra) are inspired by works of visual art—*California Counterpoint: The Twittering Machine* and *Finish Line.* The former inspired by Paul Klee's *The Twittering Machine* and the latter inspired by Giacomo Balla's *Velocità astratta + rumore [Abstract Speed + Sound].* Both pieces of art can be said to entertain the composer's fascination with machines.

Giacomo Bella, too, had a fascination with automobiles. Flint writes about the work *Velocità astratta + rumore [Abstract Speed + Sound].*

> In late 1912 to early 1913 Giacomo Balla turned from a depiction of the splintering of light to the exploration of movement and, more specifically, the speed of racing automobiles. This led to an important series of studies in 1913–14. The choice of automobile as symbol of abstract speed recalls Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's notorious statement in his first Futurist manifesto, published

[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

> on February 20, 1909, in Le Figaro in Paris, only a decade after the first Italian car was manufactured: "The world's splendor has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. . . . A roaring automobile . . . that seems to run on shrapnel, is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace."
>
> It has been proposed that Abstract Speed + Sound was the central section of a narrative triptych suggesting the alteration of landscape by the passage of a car through the atmosphere. The related Abstract Speed (present whereabouts unknown; formerly Collection Dr. W. Loeffler, Zurich) and Abstract Speed—The Car Has Passed (Collection Tate Gallery, London) would have been the flanking panels. Indications of sky and a single landscape are present in the three paintings; the interpretation of fragmented evocations of the car's speed varies from panel to panel. The Peggy Guggenheim work [*Velocità astratta + rumore (Abstract Speed + Sound)]* is distinguished by crisscross motifs, representing sound, and a multiplication of the number of lines and planes.
>
> The original frames of all three panels were painted with continuations of the forms and colors of the compositions, implying the overflow of the paintings' reality into the spectator's own space. Many other studies and variations by Balla on the theme of a moving automobile in the same landscape exist. [52]

The wind scoring for *Finish Line* includes: piccolo, (2) flute, (2) oboe, english horn, E-flat soprano clarinet, (3) B-flat soprano clarinet, bass clarinet, [optional] E-flat contra alto clarinet, B-flat contra bass clarinet, (2) bassoon, contra bassoon, (2) E-flat alto saxophone, B-flat tenor saxophone, E-flat baritone saxophone, (4) horn in F, (3) B-flat trumpet, (3) trombone, euphonium and tuba. The work also includes a part for string bass.

The composer divides the percussion music into four unique parts and an additional part for timpani. Percussion 1 includes the following instruments: (4) brake drums or metal plates, suspended cymbal, guiro, vibraphone, and shaker. Percussion 2 includes: orchestra bells, triangle, castanets, ratchet, and large suspended cymbal. Percussion 3 requires: vibraslap, tambourine, medium woodblock, bass drum, and tam-

[52] Lucy Flint, Giacomo Balla website, http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artist_work_md_11_1.html, accessed 9 December 2008.

tam. Percussion 4 requires only a marimba. In addition to these percussion parts, there is a part for piano.

Finish Line creates challenges for the performers that are typical of grade six pieces. Many parts have extended ranges; the instrumentation calls for more than the standard timbres—especially the use of the contra bassoon, B-flat contra bass clarinet, and string bass. The work is written mostly in traditional meters, including 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4. *Finish Line uses* both traditional notation and modern notation, including the use of extender boxes. Rhythmic demands are consistent with a piece of this grade level, as are dynamic, stylistic and articulation markings.

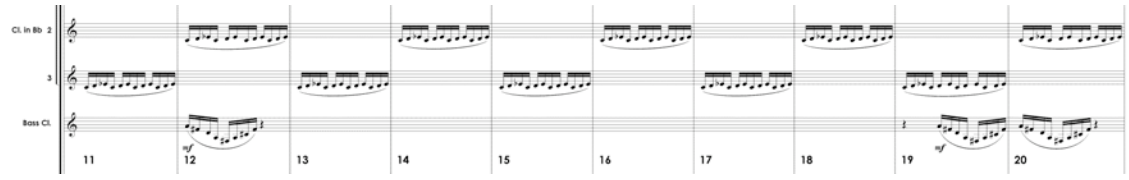
Finish Line has a basic ABA form. Within this traditional form, there are seven sections of the piece.

Introduction	Section I	m.1	
"A" section	Section II	m. 26	Octatonic collections
	Section III	m. 66	
"B" section	Section IV	m. 101	Chromatic (twelve tone) collection
	Section V	m. 177	
"A" section	Section VI	m. 269	Octatonic collections
Coda	Section VII	m. 303	

With an introduction of twenty-five measures (eight percent of the measures in the work), the first "A" section containing seventy-four measures (approximately twenty-three percent of the measures in the work), the "B" section of 167 measures (approximately fifty-one percent of the measures in the work), and the second "A" section containing sixty measures (approximately eighteen percent), the piece has a length of 329 measures with a performance duration of approximately seven minutes.

The introduction, “A” sections, and coda are octatonic based, and show the composer’s skillful ability to create ostinati and pseudo-ostinati; whereas the “B” section uses chromatic (twelve note) collections and focuses more on the prominent moving bass lines and the manipulations of the bass lines.

As a master of scoring, McTee uses only the instruments required to create the sound, mood, impression, and timbre that she envisions. Instrumental doublings, for the pure sake of doubling or participation, are rare. (The limited doublings is another supportive example of her desire for clarity in her music.) Even within the divisi-part instruments, doublings are uncommon. The composer will commonly break up the ostinati between multiple parts within an instrument to keep the clarity of timbre that she desires. For example, in mm. 7-23, (Example 5.1 shows an excerpt) McTee alternates the second and third clarinet parts to control (by scoring) the clarity of the work. One could argue that the separation of parts was an attempt to facilitate breathing amongst the players. However, if this were the case, the composer could have written both parts with the same line and notated both parts with “stagger breathe” as she has done in other works.



Example 5.1 – Scoring Excerpt

Primary Stylistic Characteristics –

Use of Jazz Influence in *Finish Line*

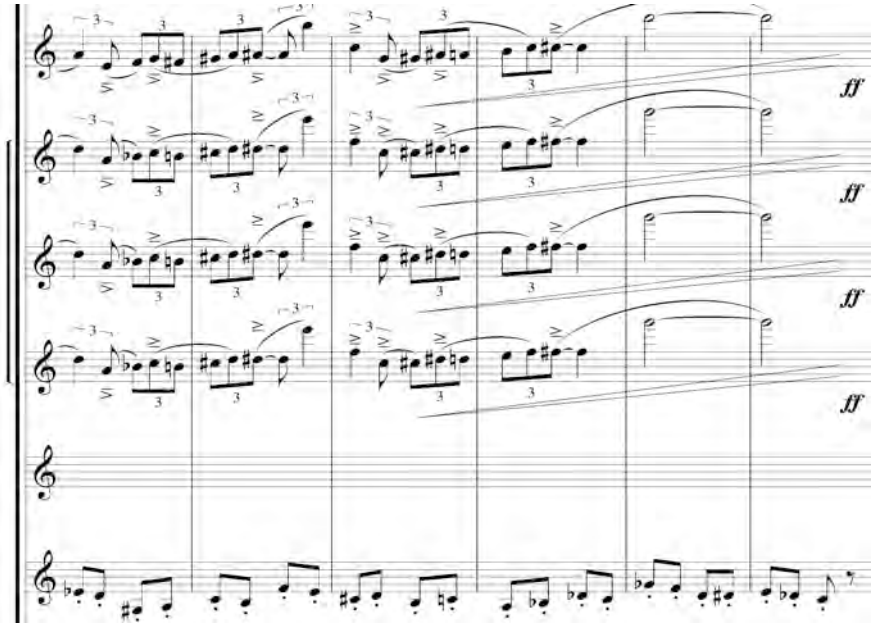
Like the other pieces discussed in this document, the jazz influence in *Finish Line* is multi-faceted. The moments that show the jazz influence, also show other stylistic characteristics. The three most obvious references to jazz music are the articulated syncopations found in the interruptive motives; the use of the walking bass line; and the bebop-inspired intervallic writing.

Example 5.7 shows one of the interruptive moments; m. 50 is a prime example of the jazz influence in McTee's writing. Not only does it stack up to provide a shout chorus-like moment. But also, the composer strongly emphasizes the syncopation with articulation markings that would be found in a jazz chart. The interruptive figure ends on an unaccented upbeat. This one measure serves many levels of "McTee-isms".

There are two moments of "walking" bass line activity. In the same ways that *Timepiece* and *Ballet for Band* use the chromatic "walking" bass, *Finish Line* follows the pattern. Looking beyond the pitch structure for the bass line, the composer clearly uses the bass voices to keep time (as the bass would as a part of the rhythm section), to create a "harmonic" environment and to perpetuate forward momentum through constant rhythm.

One additional reference to the jazz idiom is the bebop-inspired writing. The large leaps created in the melodic writing show traits of bebop music. In addition, to the intervallic melodic writing, McTee uses triplet-based rhythms often in *Finish Line*. While this rhythmic choice alone is not enough to imply jazz influence, when combined with the other elements that occur simultaneously, there is a strong argument for the

influence of jazz. As example 5.2 shows, most of the melodic (non-ostinato) eighth note triplet writing occurs on top of the “walking” bass lines. In this example, one will notice the jazz-inspired articulation markings, implying a jazz style.



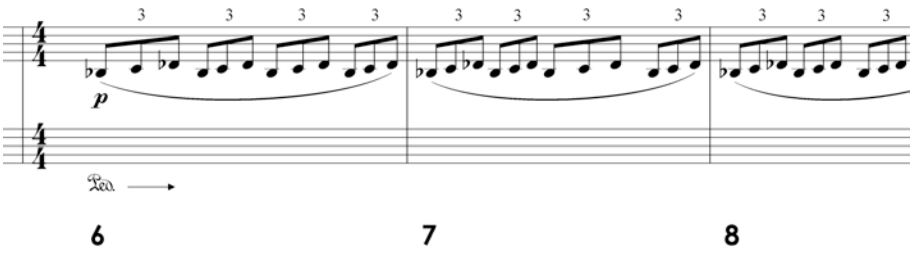
Example 5.2 – Jazz Influenced Melodic Writing mm. 126-131

Primary Stylistic Characteristics –

Use of Ostinato and Pseudo-ostinato and

Machine-like Rhythmic Patterns and Figures

The introduction and first “A” section of the piece uses various octatonic structures and their transpositions. From the onset of the melodic ostinato, the piano voice begins its pattern that can be found several times throughout the body of the piece.



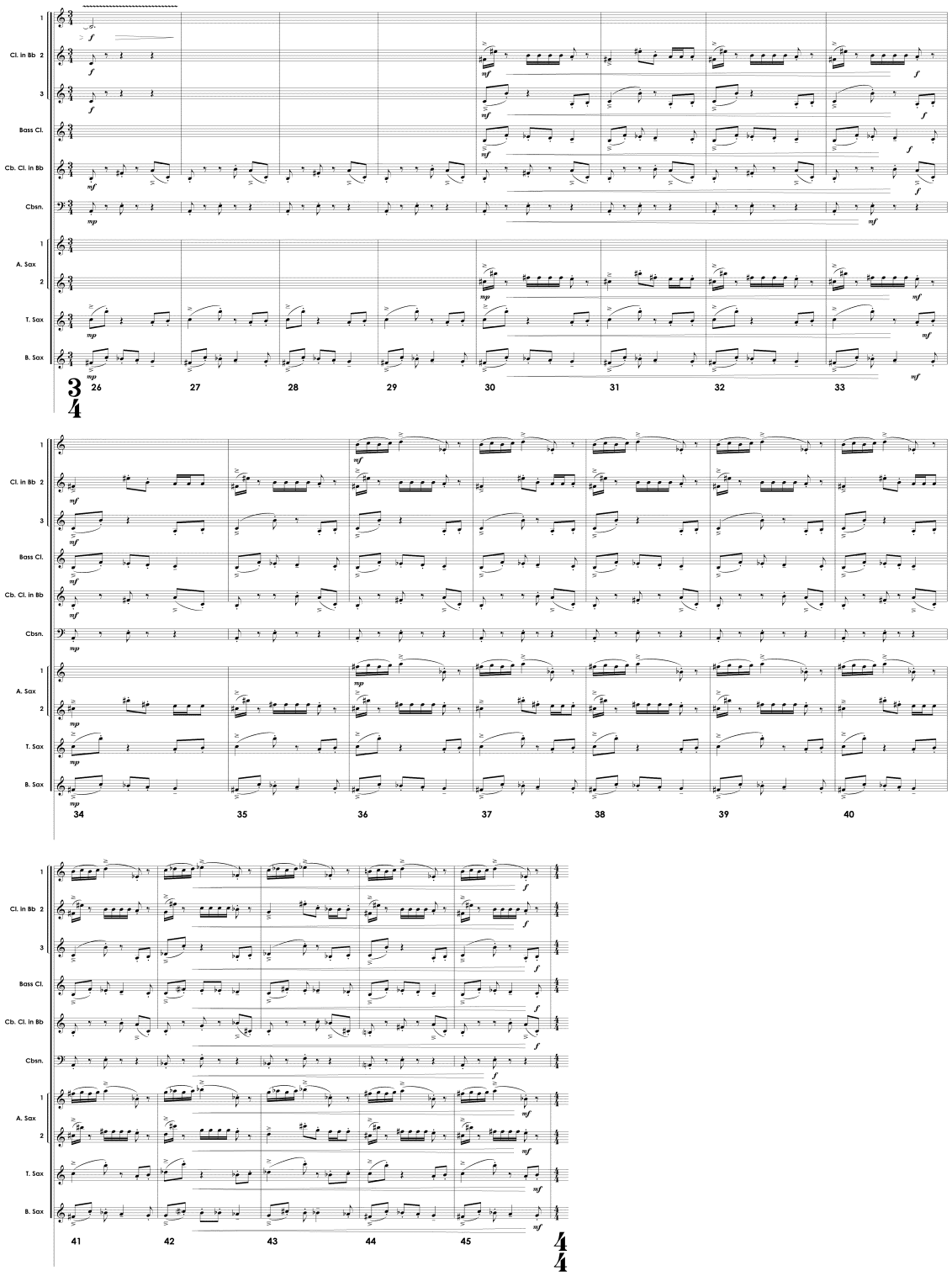
Example 5.3 Piano Ostinato

This piano ostinato, used extensively throughout the work, can be found in measures 1-25, 90-100, 158-176, and 293-317, and is shown in example 5.3. The piano ostinato is scored with the clarinets throughout the work. In every return of this ostinato, McTee uses the same clarinet voices to add color to the piano texture.

Ostinato two begins in m. 26 and ends in m. 45, as shown by example 5.4. This twenty bar ostinato texture includes the following voices: B-flat soprano clarinets, B-flat bass clarinet, B-flat contra bass clarinet, contra bassoon, E-flat alto saxophones, B-flat tenor saxophone, E-flat baritone saxophone, tuba and string bass. Throughout ostinato two, instruments are layered in, as the beginning of the ostinato commences with only string bass, tuba, E-flat baritone saxophone, B-flat tenor saxophone, contra bassoon and B-flat contra bass clarinet. The other voices are layered in within the first eleven bars of the texture. Within the ostinato texture, there are several layers.

Beginning from the bottom, we find the string bass that is the fundamental of the bass layer of the ostinato texture. The string bass is the only voice in the bass layer with all of the notes of the ostinato represented. (Yet another reference to her jazz influences.) With notes taken from octatonic scale one, the bass voice outlines an A-major chord with the added B-flat. While not implying tonal harmony or functional

progression, the A-major reference and repetition can clearly be labeled as another reference to “A for Amarillo.” (The first reference to this use of “A” is found in m. 6.) The tuba and contra bassoon outline the string bass part on beats one and two. These two instruments join the string bass as the bass layer. The tuba and contra bassoon continue this ostinato for sixteen measures without change. In the final four measures, we see a shift in pitch. For two measures (mm.42-43), the pattern is transposed up a minor second. The subtle change of a half step shift is yet another example of McTee’s small changes in the pattern that causes an ostinato to transform into a pseudo-ostinato. The next voice that contributes to the pseudo-ostinato in the bass layer is the B-flat contra bass clarinet. The part of the instrument is very similar to that of the tuba and contra bassoon part. The composer adds the final two notes of the measure to the B-flat contra bass clarinet part, making the part more active than the contra bassoon and tuba, yet less complicated than the string bass.



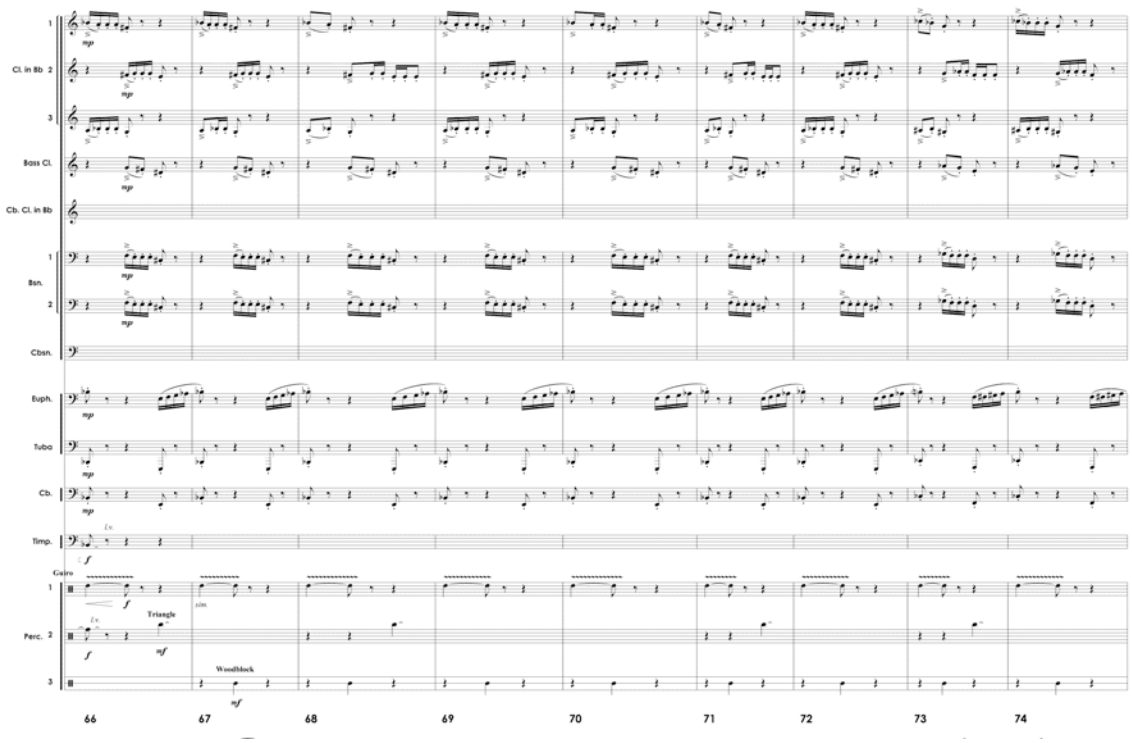
Example 5.4 – Reduction of Ostinato 2

The final voice to add to the bass layer is the E-flat baritone saxophone. Still based in Octatonic Collection I, this part is almost an aural conflict of the string bass part. In the other bass voices that contributed to the bass layer, the parts are in some way a derivation of the string bass part. The B-flat tenor saxophone voice enters at the beginning of the pseudo-ostinato texture, and also uses pitches taken from the Octatonic Collection I. Like the E-flat baritone saxophone part, the B-flat tenor saxophone music doesn't appear to be an extraction of the original string bass writing. However, what it does show is another example of a melodic use of the major seventh interval—one of McTee's favorite intervals. This pseudo-ostinato, like the others, continues from the beginning for sixteen measures; in the seventeenth bar a small change occurs up a minor second.

The E-flat alto saxophone parts create their own layer in ostinato two. This texture is rhythmically more complex and moves much quicker than the other parts of this ostinato. As with the others, the E-flat alto saxophone parts are clearly using pitches from the Octatonic Collection I. Both alto parts include a melodic use of the seventh interval. The second part begins with an ascending seventh; the first part ends with a descending seventh. To create more strength of sound and to create a different timbre, McTee uses the second B-flat soprano clarinet to double the second E-flat alto saxophone part, and the first B-flat soprano clarinet part to double the first E-flat alto clarinet part. Similarly, the composer chooses B-flat bass clarinet to double the E-flat baritone saxophone, and the third B-flat soprano clarinet to double the B-flat tenor saxophone part. Finally, the first B-flat soprano clarinet part will be doubled with the first E-flat alto saxophone. All twelve voices join to create the pseudo-ostinato. The other

brass, woodwind, and percussion parts surround this clever ostinato texture. In these non-ostinato parts we see very sparse writing for winds and less commonly used percussion instruments (vibraslap and multiple brake drums).

Pseudo-ostinato 3 begins in m. 66 and continues (with one suspension of the pattern) through m. 90 in all voices. Some voices do continue their part of the ostinato through m. 96. McTee begins a transition in m. 90 that introduces new material and begins to wipe out the pre-existing pseudo-ostinato. The third ostinato uses all clarinet voices, both bassoons, euphonium, tuba, string bass, and a very clever use of percussion instruments. For the first time in *Finish Line* the composer adds percussion to the ostinato. In this case we see the use of guiro, woodblock, and triangle. As previously noted, *Finish Line* is a work in ABA form. As is expected, upon the recapitulation, we find the same ostinati and pseudo-ostinati in the second “A” section. Beginning in m. 269 a repeat of the pseudo ostinato 3; it continues through m. 293. The transition that begins in m. 293 leads into the original ostinato pattern that we saw in the beginning of the piece.



Example 5.5 – Excerpt of PO3

The third pseudo-ostinato (PO3), as seen in example 5.5, is more rhythmically active than the previous one. On every beat, there is a sixteenth note figure being played. Throughout this section, we find beat one with sixteenths being played by the first and third B-flat soprano clarinets; beat two splits the sixteenth responsibilities among the second B-flat soprano clarinet and both bassoon parts. Finally, the euphoniums play their ascending sixteenth note passage on beat three. Throughout the passage, there is one moment when the pseudo ostinato is suspended. The pattern stops at m. 77 for one measure. During this suspension of time, the suspended cymbal is added to link the two halves together.

The composer's use of machine-like rhythmic patterns and figures can be tied closely to her use of pseudo-ostinato and true ostinato. Rhythmic interest is a key

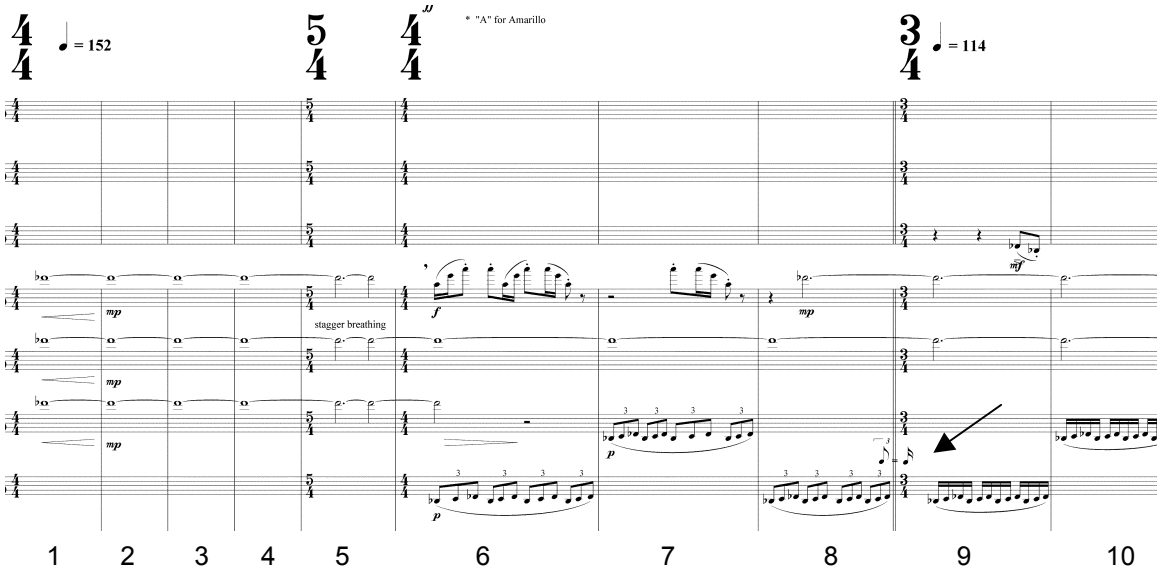
component of the McTee style. Upon looking up the definition of machine, two of the listings apply well to McTee's music. One definition of machine is "an apparatus consisting of interrelated parts with separate functions, used in the performance of some kind of work;" the other is "a device that transmits or modifies force or motion."[53] Pseudo-ostinato three is a great example of how the interrelated parts create the whole. PO3, with its constantly flowing sixteenth notes creates a constant motion of sound. The continuous sound is clear and can be easily seen by looking at the score or heard.

Another example of the machine-like writing is the music that leads up to ostinato three and includes it. From mm. 57-94 every beat contains four sixteenth notes. Truly this commitment to constant rhythm in this section shows McTee's intention to create forward motion through rhythm. In the "B" section of the work, the prominent moving bass line shows machine-like activity. While the rhythmic values are not as fast as in the pseudo-ostinato 3 section, the constancy of the eighth notes creates a machine-like rhythmic idea. In this same section, The composer skillfully inserts various divisions of the beat, the most commonly used consist of eighth notes, triplets, and sixteenth notes. The continuous shifting between these divisions could parallel the shifting gears of a rotary engine. From mm. 101-247 there is a nonstop motion of rhythm that lies as the foundation of McTee's other melodic and rhythmic devices.

Throughout *Finish Line*, McTee uses metric modulations to adjust the feel of the music, as well as the basic pulse. These metric modulations, like those of Elliott Carter, are used to create a seamless transition from one tempo to another using a subdivision of the old tempo to become a different subdivision in the new tempo. She uses this

[53] Machine, Dictionary.com, Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1), Random House, Inc. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/machine, accessed: 12 December 2008.

metric modulation in m. 9 to set up the slower tempo so that she can insert an Igor Stravinsky quote from the *Rite of Spring* (also based on the Octatonic Collection 1) in the same notation as the original work. She notes, “metric modulation to pit ‘engine music’ [piano ostinato] against the tempo of ‘Stravinsky music’ [*Rite of Spring* quote] and to make ‘Stravinsky music’ easier to play…if ‘engine music’ had remained written in triplets, then it would have been necessary to write ‘Stravinsky music’ in triplets too, [making it] more difficult and unnatural given the duple nature of the ‘Stravinsky music’”.[54] See the notated metric modulation in Example 5.6.



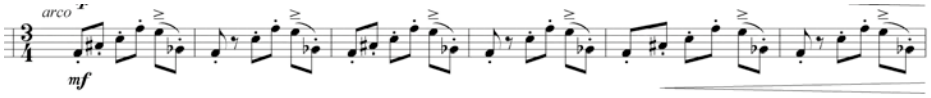
Example 5.6 Metric Modulation-eighth Note Triplet Becomes the Sixteenth Note

Considering McTee’s interest in automobiles and racing, one could make a comparison of this metric modulation with the shifting of gears. Her use of the phrase “engine music” supports this somewhat abstract idea of shifting meters symbolizing the shifting of

[54] McTee, materials.

gears. In her notes about the sketch, she even uses the term “double clutch”[55] in reference to the metric modulation.

Section II, the beginning of the “A” section, begins at m. 26. McTee uses the contrabasses to set up an unstable “A7” chord. This extends throughout Section II until the transition to Section III begins. See example 5.7 (m. 26).



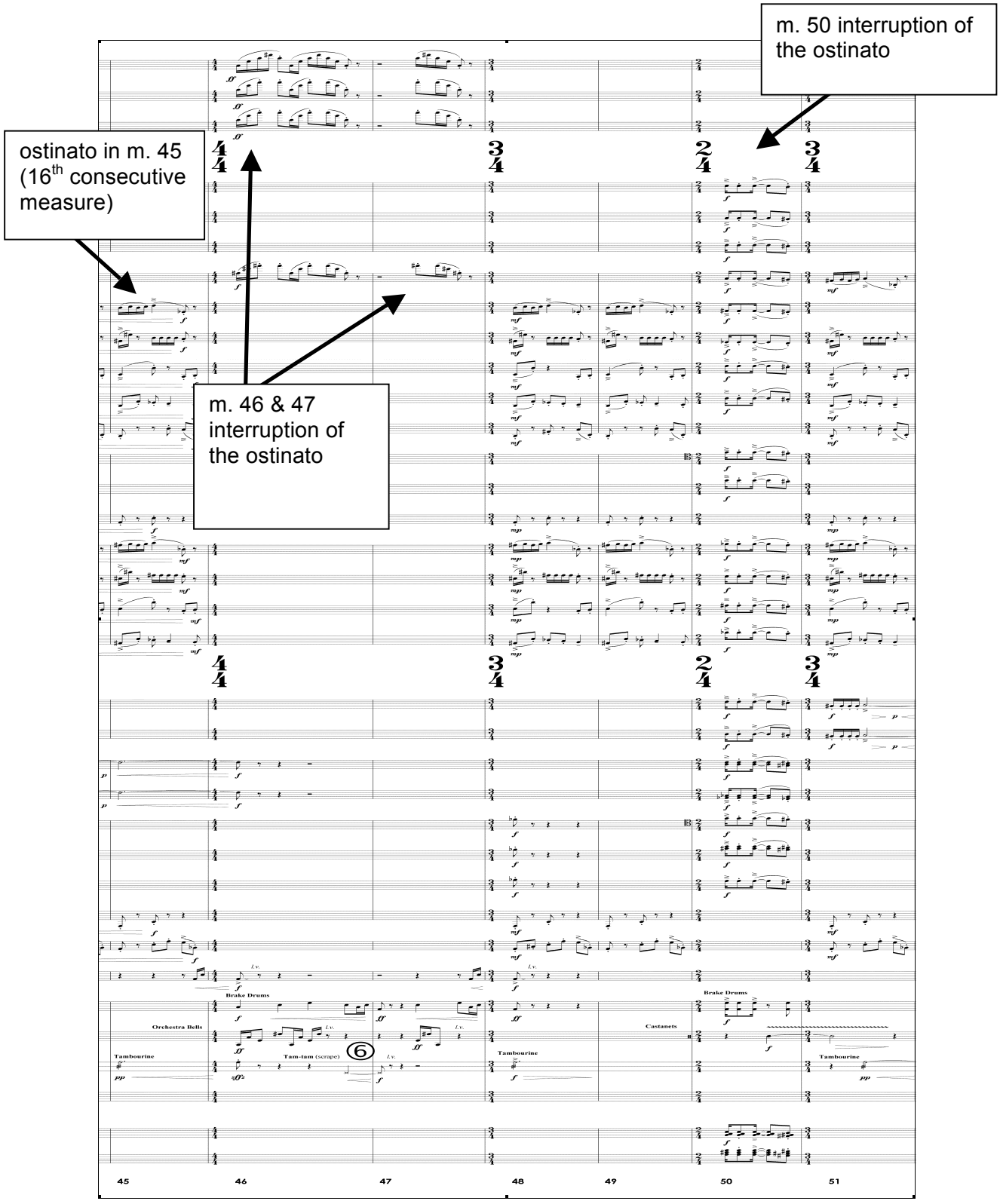
Example 5.7 – Excerpt from Contrabass Part, mm. 26-31

This bass line is colored with the timbres of the low reeds, specifically B-flat tenor saxophone, E-flat baritone saxophone, and B-flat contrabass clarinet. While none of the low reeds completely double the contrabasses, all notes in the bass line are covered by one or more of the low reed instruments.

Section II has many other “McTee-isms”, such as abrupt and unexpected silences, jazz-influenced music, the overlaying of extended and angular melodic lines over faster machine-like rhythmic structures, and the element of surprise (or humor in music). McTee uses abrupt changes to the ostinato patterns to create a moment of surprise, or as Fullmer defines it, “expectation denied.” These unexpected moments occur frequently in her pieces. *Finish Line* is no exception. Two clear examples of these momentary pauses that break from the repetition of the ostinato can be found in mm. 46-50. In these five measures, the composer breaks the ostinato twice with two

[55] Ibid.

separate elements, one old motive in m. 46 (which she calls the “starter music”) and the second, with new material in m. 50. Example 5.8 shows the two brief interruptions.



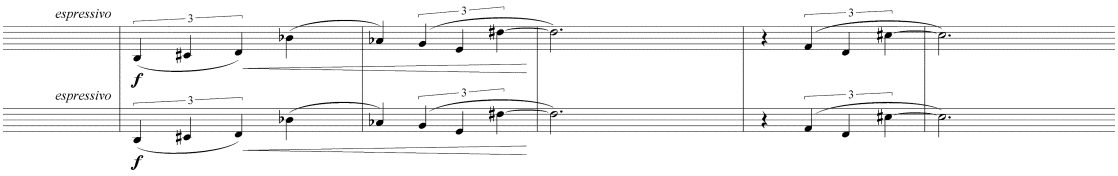
Example 5.8 – Interruption Moments

Primary Stylistic Characteristics –

Creation of Extended and Angular Melodic Lines

Another primary stylistic characteristic of McTee's music is her creation of extended and angular melodic lines. Section III, which begins at m. 66, is essentially the second half of the "A" section. The trumpet voice is used to express several of McTee's "flexibly written tunes."[56] Example 5.9 shows this trumpet line (transposed to concert pitch) at m. 70. McTee marks the phrase *espressivo* to reassert the lyrical nature of the line. Underneath this flowing melodic phrase is the McTee-esque rhythm machine moving along as if it were completely unrelated to the smooth line above in the trumpets.

Example 5.9 is one of seven instances in *Finish Line* where moments like this are created. In this example, the intervallic range is a tenth. There is melodic contour in both parts of this phrase, where the largest ascending leap is that of a major seventh (one of the composer's favorite intervals); the largest descending interval is a minor third.



Ex. 5.9 Trumpet Melody (Transposed to Concert Pitch) at m. 70

The trumpet is the only voice to perform McTee's melodic and angular floating lines in *Finish Line*. Typically she does not choose only one voice to display her ability to compose lyrical music. While the trumpet is the only instrument to show this element

[56] McTee, email.

of her stylistic characteristics, there are other voices throughout the work that have long lines written. Often these lines do create a floating feeling above very active writing. When considering this element of her style, we find other brass instruments that share in the presentation of long lines, as well as woodwinds, and even some percussion instruments.

The piece begins with an extended high concert D-flat in the soprano clarinet voices. McTee chooses to extend this pitch for the first twenty-three measures of the work. While this is not an example of an extended and angular melodic line, it does show the concept of a single unwavering sound that is passed around the group several times. The use of long single pitches or extended chords does add to the idea of McTee's desire to show long lines that are in direct contrast with the frenetic rhythmic activity for which she is known.

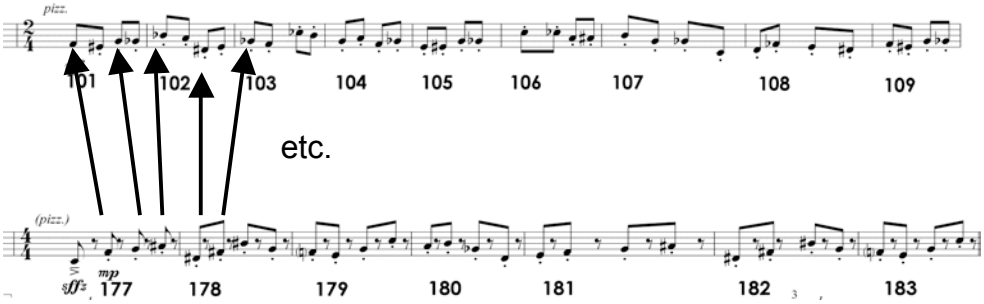
Primary Stylistic Characteristics –

Prevalent "Walking" Bass Line Writing

The "walking" bass line occurs in the "B" section of the piece. As with the other bass lines in *Timepiece* and the *Ballet for Band,* these bass lines are also connected to the characteristic of chromatic (or twelve-tone) collection use. McTee uses two "walking" bass lines in *Finish Line.* The first shows a more typical type of McTee's writing with constant eighth notes in the bass voices; the first "walking" bass line, which begins on "A" ("A" for Amarillo) occurs in mm. 101-157, and is scored for B-flat contra bass clarinet, contra bassoon, tuba, string bass and piano. There is a more active simultaneous variation that occurs in the B-flat bass clarinet, E-flat baritone saxophone

and trombone voices, where the composer substitutes two sixteenth notes for some of the eighth notes in the pattern.

The second “walking” bass line in *Finish Line* (mm. 177-247) is a variation of the first, using a technique of alternation. To create the second bass line, McTee takes the first bass line and replaces every other note with a rest of equal rhythmic value. The alternation technique in this form includes the alternating of sound and silence in a recurring pattern. (One could also view this version of the “walking” bass line as another example of McTee’s desire to create clarity in her music. Clarity, in this case, would be created by “simplifying” the line.) Example 5.10 compares the two twelve-tone bass lines.



Example 5.10 – Comparison of Twelve-tone Bass Lines

Primary Stylistic Characteristics –

Use of Octatonic and Twelve-tone Collections

The pitch materials used in *Finish Line* include both octatonic structures as well as twelve-tone collections. McTee uses all forms of the octatonic collection in *Finish Line,* and as with many of her other works, the octatonic use can be found exclusively in the non-bass line sections, more specifically in the ostinato and pseudo-ostinato

textures. The use of the octatonic structure also becomes the pitch collection used in her extended and angular melodic lines.

One example of McTee's use of the octatonic collection in her melodic line writing occurs in the extended melodic line that begins in m. 70. (See example 5.9). In the composer's sketches, she notes that these two lines are based on the Octatonic Collection II except for the last note of each phrase—concert D-sharp and concert C-sharp respectively.[57] This particular use of the octatonic collection could allow for speculation as to whether or not the passage is actually octatonic in nature, but McTee, in her sketches, clearly identifies this moment as octatonic. The final pitches that leave the collection (D-sharp and C-sharp respectively) can be explained as another moment where the composer denies expectation—in this case an aural expectation.

Professor McTee uses the twelve-tone collection in ways that one would expect from her music: through the creation of "walking" bass lines. In addition, she also the twelve-tone collection in vertical structures simultaneously sounding all twelve tones—which was not a technique used in *Timepiece* or *Ballet for Band*.

In *Finish Line, s*ection IV begins in m. 101, and presents the beginning of the "B" section. In this section of the piece, the composer presents the first statement of the twelve-tone collection. In m. 101, beat one, the composer writes a tutti staccato figure. This tutti staccato figure is a vertical twelve-tone structure that appears abruptly (and creates an element of surprise). The figure, or a slight variation, appears in all voices and is marked with either a *forte* or *sforzando* designation.

[57] McTee, materials.

Section V of *Finish Line* begins at m. 177 and is punctuated with the second appearance of the twelve-tone vertical structure that began Section IV. The writing that transitions into m. 177 is almost identical to what began the previous section (mm. 97-100).

As the piece begins to end, the final section, borrows material from Sections IV and V (the "B" section). The borrowed material is the twelve-tone vertical structure. The twelve-tone "chord" is identical to the other presentations with two exceptions. The first difference in m. 318 is one piano note in the left hand is missing. The second, and most important difference in the two structures is the bass note of this twelve-note vertical structure is the written pitch "E" (the initial presentation has an "A" as the bass note). The composer notes that in this version of the chord, the "E" acts as a dominant, which eventually resolves to the A-major triad (again, "A" for Amarillo) in m. 323.[58]

[58] McTee, materials.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

Cindy McTee is one of America's most imaginative composers, as her music transcends any one genre. As shown in this document, the primary stylistic characteristics of the composer's music include the following five concepts.

- Jazz influence
- Use of ostinato and pseudo-ostinato passages and machine-like rhythmic patterns and figures
- Creation of extended and angular melodic lines
- Prevalent "walking" bass line writing
- Use of octatonic and twelve-tone collections

The influence of jazz on McTee and her music is easy to hear and to see. The influence permeates all aspects of her compositional style, from rhythm and articulation to melody, and from "harmony" to choice of percussion instruments. Her upbringing as a musician who was encouraged to improvise and one who has a love of bebop jazz music certainly has made an impact on her compositions and creative mindset. The level of overt jazz music or jazz-influenced sounds vary in *Timepiece, Ballet for Band* and *Finish Line,* with some of the most easily identifiable jazz contexts being found in the *Ballet for Band.*

In the three pieces discussed in this document, the composer's writing of technically challenging rhythmic patterns and large intervallic leaps reference the music of the bebop jazz era.

Typically McTee will create an ostinato, pseudo-ostinato or “walking” bass line that will serve as the equivalent to the rhythm section of a jazz ensemble or big band. Simultaneous to this event of melodic (and sometimes “harmonic”) background created by the ostinato or bass line, we have a solo or soli section creating improvisation-like music on top. Quite often these melodic gestures end on an accented upbeat which also points to the composer’s jazz background.

Another undeniable jazz-related influence is McTee’s use of interruptive moments or gestures. These tutti moments are quite comparable to the “shout chorus” style events found in many jazz pieces. The vertical structures (often octatonic) of many of these tutti interruptive moments give an aural perception of “jazz harmony.” In addition, the triplet notation used (especially in *Ballet for Band)* shows a reflection of a swing feel that is characteristic of the jazz genre. In combination with the swing feel, accents and emphasis on weak beats and upbeats, syncopations, and the use of “walking” bass lines, the composer’s use of the jazz idiom and genre in her symphonic art music, as well as the other primary stylistic characteristics create the composer’s sound.

In addition to the jazz influence on McTee and her music, another primary stylistic characteristic is the use of ostinato and pseudo-ostinato textures. Through the use of strict ostinato and pseudo-ostinato textures, she creates a feeling of constant or forward movement or a suspension of time. Regardless of the effect of these textures, several concepts are characteristic of the composer’s voice. The first of these concepts is the use of the octatonic collection. Based on the alternation of half steps and whole steps, the octatonic collection allows for tonal implications without tonality, as well as

non-tonal applications with a sense of a tonal center. The octatonic collection (also known as the diminished scale used in jazz) allows the composer great flexibility and compositional freedom in melodic and “harmonic” senses. In *Timepiece, Ballet for Band* and *Finish Line,* McTee seems to favor the Octatonic Collection I. Many of her machine-like rhythmic figures live in this octatonic world. Clearly, two of her primary stylistic characteristics are closely related—the use of the octatonic collection and the use of machine-like rhythmic figures, which quite often are her ostinato and pseudo-ostinato textures.

While octatonic patterns and textures weave through McTee’s music, the manner in which the patterns link to each other create an expectation of musical events. Through these expectations, the composer can create a sense of surprise or musical humor through a denied expectation. Not only is this denied expectation a musically appropriate and acceptable concept, it also serves to limit potential musical boredom caused by a constantly spinning ostinato pattern. These ostinato and pseudo-ostinato textures can create a sense of minimalism or economically-devised musical pallet; the composer’s constant desire (or requirement) to alter small elements of the pattern provide the listener with a longer line of slightly altered music. (Not to mention that the composer’s ability to change constantly that which could stand on its own in infinite repetition can be traced back to her love of improvisation.)

In the same way that McTee’s ostinato and pseudo-ostinato textures serve as a moving background for other (often completely different) material, the composer’s use of chromatic “walking” bass lines is an important and identifiable primary stylistic characteristic of Cindy McTee’s compositions. These compositions have several

sections where the pitch collections employed are those in the chromatic or twelve-tone realm.

McTee's use of the twelve-tone collection is somewhat non-traditional if compared to the strict use and structure as defined by serial music's innovator, Arnold Schoenberg. McTee does start by creating a twelve-tone row (or multiple rows). She uses the expected manipulations of the row, including: inversion, retrograde and retrograde inversion. In addition to these techniques, McTee will use only a portion of a row, or elide the rows, even taking the original tone row and create a new one by using every other pitch.

What is most innovative about McTee's creation of these rows or pitch collections isn't the derivation itself, but the application. To take a pitch collection that is often associated with atonal masterpieces or art music that is often misunderstood and use it in an idiomatic way is inventive. The contemporary use of an old twentieth-century technique creates a newness in the music. The use of a chromatic collection (especially a twelve-tone row or its variation) in a "walking" bass line in American symphonic music is considered a trademark of McTee's sound.

The final primary stylistic characteristic found in McTee's music is the creation of extended and angular melodic lines. As a direct rhythmic opposite of the much faster ostinato and pseudo-ostinato textures, these long and angular melodic lines show the composer's ability to musically multi-task. McTee has said that these long lines are "freely designed" and "float" above the other music.[59] As shown in *Timepiece, Ballet for Band* and *Finish Line*, these extended and angular melodic lines also are accompanied by the faster-moving, machine-like and octatonic-based rhythmic ostinato and pseudo-

[59] McTee, interview.

ostinato textures. The combination of these two dissimilar events can be viewed as a perfect example of the combination of song and dance.

Through the use of all of the primary stylistic characteristics that Cindy McTee exposes in the works discussed in this document, it is clear that her musical voice is unique. McTee's musical voice combines her European-based training with her clearly American background. The combination of the European training and the American background creates McTee's unique and unified musical voice. The composer's combination, consolidation and manipulation of the primary stylistic characteristics create clarity in her music that is easy to find and define. In addition, the multiplicity of events, approaches and techniques show a high-level musical thought process that creates a macro-musical moment. This composite musical event, created with the manipulation of one or more of the primary stylistic characteristics and the multiplicity of events in McTee's music is a prime example of the twenty-first century American sound. In combination with her stylistic characteristics and her music's almost minimalistic nature, her musical voice is an important one in the wind band and orchestral worlds.

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McTee's music clearly fits in the category of serious artistic works in the wind band repertoire. Many of her pieces began their life as works for symphony orchestra. The structurally identical versions for wind band create an opportunity for either large ensemble genre—wind band or symphony orchestra—to be the musical medium that sounds the composer's voice. Her musical voice has been praised by performing musicians, music critics, wind conductors, orchestral conductors and composers around the world. The praise stems from the frenetic energy, constant motion, jazz and popular music inspired sounds, and long engaging melodic lines, in addition to the inherent "American" sound. The combination of these concepts and the stylistic characteristics of Cindy McTee's music create her unique musical voice—a voice that deserves its place along side the most respected works in the wind band repertoire.

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF WORKS TO DATE BY CINDY MCTEE

DATE	TITLE
2008	Bricolage (for flute and computer music on CD)
2007	Solstice for Trombone and Orchestra
2007	Fanfare for Trombones (two trombones or trombone ensemble)
2006	Finish Line (for wind symphony)
2005	Finish Line (for orchestra)
2004	Einstein's Dream (for string orchestra, percussion, and computer music on CD)
2004	Fanfare for Trumpets (two trumpets or trumpet ensemble)
2004	Ballet for Band
2003	Adagio (for string quartet)
2002	Adagio (for string orchestra)
2002	Symphony No. 1: Ballet for Orchestra
2001	Timepiece (for wind symphony)
2000	Timepiece (for orchestra)
1998	Agnus Dei (for organ)
1996	Einstein's Dream
1996	Changes (for cello and bass)
1995	Soundings (for band)
1993	Stepping Out (for flute and percussion)
1993	Capriccio per Krzysztof Penderecki (for violin)
1993	California Counterpoint: The Twittering Machine (wind ensemble)
1993	The Twittering Machine (for chamber orchestra)
1992	"M" Music (for computer music on CD)
1992	Études (for alto saxophone and computer music on CD)
1990	Circuits (for wind ensemble)
1990	Circuits (for orchestra)
1989	Metal Music (for computer music on CD)
1988	Circle Music IV (for horn and piano)
1988	Circle Music III (for bassoon and piano)
1988	Circle Music II (for flute and piano)
1988	Circle Music I (for viola and piano)
1987	Images (for horn and piano)
1984	Psalm 142: Threnody (for voice and organ)
1983	Songs of Spring and the Moon (for chamber ensemble)
1982	Psalm 100 (for choir)
1977	Chord (for flute)

APPENDIX B

CATEGORICAL LIST OF WORKS TO DATE BY CINDY MCTEE

ORCHESTRAL

2007 Solstice for Trombone and Orchestra
2005 Finish Line (for orchestra)
2004 Einstein's Dream (for string orchestra, percussion, and CD)
2002 Adagio (for string orchestra)
2002 Symphony No. 1: Ballet for Orchestra
2000 Timepiece (for orchestra)
1993 The Twittering Machine (for chamber orchestra)
1990 Circuits (for orchestra)

BAND

2006 Finish Line (for wind symphony)
2004 Ballet for Band
2001 Timepiece (for wind symphony)
1995 Soundings (for band)
1993 California Counterpoint: The Twittering Machine (for wind ensemble)
1990 Circuits (for wind ensemble)

CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

2008 Bricolage (for flute and computer music on CD)
2007 Fanfare for Trombones (two trombones or trombone ensemble)
2004 Fanfare for Trumpets (two trumpets or trumpet ensemble)
2003 Adagio (for string quartet)
1998 Agnus Dei (for organ)
1996 Changes (for cello and bass)
1996 Einstein's Dreams
1993 Capriccio per Krzysztof Penderecki (for violin)
1993 Stepping Out (for flute and percussion)
1993 The Twittering Machine (for chamber ensemble)
1992 Études (for alto saxophone and computer music on CD)
1988 Circle Music I (for viola and piano)
1988 Circle Music II (for flute and piano)
1988 Circle Music III (for bassoon and piano)
1988 Circle Music IV (for horn and piano)
1987 Images (for horn and piano)
1984 Psalm 142: Threnody (for voice and organ)

1983 Songs of Spring and the Moon (for chamber ensemble)
1977 Chord (for flute)

ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC

2008 Bricolage (for flute and computer music on CD)
2004 Einstein's Dream (for string orchestra, percussion, and computer music on CD)
1992 Études (for alto saxophone and computer music on CD)
1992 "M" Music (for computer music on CD)
1989 Metal Music (for computer music on CD)

CHORAL

1982 Psalm 100 (for choir)

APPENDIX C

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH CINDY MCTEE

April 8, 2008, 6:00 pm
University of North Texas College of Music

Nicholas Williams: Some of the characteristics of your music that I've found are the jazz-influenced writing, use of ostinato, octatonic structures, machine-like qualities, long-lines of melodies that you create on top of faster moving rhythmic ideas. What are your thoughts on any of these characteristics?

Cindy McTee: The way I think about that is often there is something in the background that is likely moving in a predicable way rhythmically, according to a pulse. There is a melodic line that is floating over top using rhythms that are more freely designed. So you get this tension from those things which are grounded and predictable and machine-like against some things that are more fluid and lyrical. There are plenty of examples of that in my music. That's how I think about it…talking about this elongated line. For me it has a temporal component…something that is steady and controlled by a pulse and something that is fluid or aperiodic and less controlled, floating over top.

About the ostinato, someone described my music as post-minimal because of the use of repetition and ostinato. But, it's almost always changing a little bit each time. You might have a couple bars of something and the pattern will change slightly…a note will be left out…or instead of two eights you'll have a dotted eighth sixteenth or something will change.. a note will displaced by an octave. So it's not repetition ad nauseum over and over as the same thing. There are tiny changes in the pattern.

Nicholas Williams: Can you talk a little about your jazz influence.

Cindy McTee: There are a couple of ideas. When I was younger, I couldn't study with a classical pianist because we lived in a small town and the person that I could take piano lessons with was a dance hall musician. I was encouraged to improvise. I was told to play the music differently every time I came back to a lesson. So, it encouraged me to think more spontaneously. The music I was improvising to was popular music. I was learning about chords and their structure and how you apply them in an improvised environment. So that led me to having a comfort level with jazz once I encountered it. Playing pop music and dealing with improvisation and sort of tonal harmony in the popular idiom. I grew up with these sorts of sounds. I started to play jazz in high school and played it all

the way through college. I played saxophone. Then when I went to Europe, I could only take one suitcase, so the saxophone stayed at home. When I went to Yale as a masters degree student I took a jazz composition class; David Mott was the instructor. I did a lot of listening I wrote a piece for jazz band. I became interested in the composers from the bebop era probably more than almost anybody…you know Cannonball Aderly…and I played jazz piano for my own amusement. You know the proud moment you have when you've finally worked up a Chopin etude. My proud moment in the world of jazz piano was playing *Giant Steps* up to tempo. I worked on it and worked on it. You know, it's pretty thorny; as an improviser it was a challenge for me. That's when I got out of school and didn't have much time for jazz performance much anymore…not that I really performed much, other than for my own amusement. I really let that go and then it started to creep into my music in about 1990. I never really thought about this before, but when I stopped playing jazz and practicing it, that's when it began to creep into my music. I don't think it was until 1990 when I wrote *Circuits*. Interestingly, you stop doing jazz in one place and it finds its way back into another area. If I go back, it's quite possibly the piece where I was first aware of it. It might have been there before, and I wasn't aware.

Nicholas Williams: How would you describe your instrumental music: orchestral, winds, etc. ?

Cindy McTee: I feel that I have two voices. I guess we can all speak various languages, maybe not fluently. The same can happen in the case of music composition. I feel that I have an introspective voice and an extroverted one. You can think of it as music that dances or music that sings. There is the extroverted dance music that's more machine-like. And when I slow it down I tend to be more lyrical or more introspective. You can hear it clearly in piece like S*oundings*, lets say…the slow movement, the lyrical movement.

I think there is an element of humor in my music. Not so much in the lyrical music but the dance music. There is an element of humor there. There is the jazz influence of course is evident, not only in the pitch world that I've chosen to use. most of the time, but also rhythmically. I think humor comes out in the rhythm. There are moments of expectation denied. Or the use of silence that creates surprise.

The label of post-minimalists seems apt in a way. I think the so-called minimalist had an effect. I don't write music that is quite as diatonic. I don't repeat quite as much without some change.

There is a piece that I wrote called *Solstice,* for trombone and orchestra. That piece has three movements. It has a fast dance introduction, and a slower, very songful music. It…could be sung if there were words. It ends with a faster, more extended dance section. It's hard to describe in less than a paragraph, that's for sure. I have some things that I can give to you that are thing that I've written over the years that may help you to answer your questions. Presentations that I've done. You'll find redundancies. You may find some analytical stuff.

There was a student, Jennifer Weaver, who wrote a masters thesis on my music. She wrote on octatonic structures. That may help you.

Nicholas Williams: When you listened to the Composer's Collection disc of your music, what were your first thoughts.

Cindy McTee: Wow….um…

Nicholas Williams. It was wow? <laughter>

Cindy McTee: Well…it was….wow. There was something about it that struck me. It was like a compression of time..from about 1990 to 2007 or 08. It

was this compression of time…I heard my entire life go by in 74 minutes. It was really weird. We in the music business…it's about time…things that happen in time. I was able to hear my entire life happen in the space of 74 minutes. It was like a journey that was very compressed and went by very quickly. But, I also felt a huge sense of gratitude that anyone would take the time and make the effort to rehearse and record all of my music.…and so beautifully. It was a very humbling experience.

Nicholas Williams: Will you talk about your compositional process? Are you a sketcher and fill in? Do you orchestrate as you go?

Cindy McTee: Some of this you'll see in the materials that I can give you. But, my…I like to think of a piece as having macro structure and micro structure. I am most comfortable starting with the small and the larger structures grow out of the small things. The small things suggest what the larger structure will look like.

I use the analogy of building a house. You might construct an object to build the house and you happen to have wood available and clay available ..so you make bricks. The architecture of the house builds based on the materials that you have available. Versus in an abstract level I'd like to have a house that has four rooms and a certain

roofline that gives it some shape maybe in 3 sections. I'm going to hang some details from the skeleton of the house or the roofline. The rest will be determined by the shape that I've designed overall. I don't work that way very well.

I'm going to make a sound object and I'll make another one…and another one….and another one. I'll then try to connect the dots. Because I made these sound objects in close proximity, they usually relate to each other in some way. Then I see If that suggests a two movement piece or a three movement piece or a five minute piece or a ten minute piece. Sometimes that perimeter is given if you're writing because you've been commissioned. But even within that you can structure it different ways. I usually leave the larger structure to some point around the middle. You have all of these little things that are growing and shaping. Then ok, I'll need to make this into a one movement piece….or something like that. The larger shapes come out of the smaller objects.

That's how I think about form, something organic that grows from something small. Some composers work different where they make a plan and hang the small details from the plan. I do that a little bit sometimes, but not very often.

Finding that sound object…how do I do that? That usually happens very spontaneously. It's about a gesture. It's about something fairly small. I usually use a keyboard…that's the instrument that I'm most comfortable playing. It might be a shape. It might be something physical…a shape on a piece of paper. There is usually something physical connected to the generation of the first idea. It starts as a rhythmic stirring. There is something dance like about the invention of the musical idea for me. So this "thing" becomes rather spontaneously created. Then I take a look at it with my analytical brain to see what's there. Then I spin more material from that germ. At that point it becomes more reasoning process than a spontaneous process. Then you have this subjective effort that gives way to a more objectivity and analysis. In the end, whatever happens, the decisions that I make are always subject. I must feel like it works, not just think that it works. It goes from subjective to objective to subjective. In the end, the subjective self is the judge of taste. There has to be an "ah-ha" moment. You have to feel, really feel that it's working. The whole process can be complicated. I've written quite a bit about that.

Nicholas Williams: Continuing on with your current topic, I assume you write mostly on the computer and not manuscript by hand…

Cindy McTee: I actually do a lot by hand in sketch form. I still do that. Then it goes through paper on to the computer….at least the important stuff…the initial stuff.

Nicholas Williams: The reason I ask is that if someone wanted to go back and create a sketchbook of your works….do you save your computer files by date and add files as you work or is there just one file by title? The "*Timepiece"* file…

Cindy McTee: I've been asked that before. It's a good question. It's really too bad that we can't follow a composer's work these days because so much of the sketching becomes computer information that then is probably erased. You get the final version and the rest is erased.

I have not documented my process at all. I'm kind of an obsessive-compulsive person. If I don't need something I get rid of it. I love to throw things away. I love the feeling of the purge. It comes back to bite me once in a while.

I just moved two years ago from a four-bedroom house to a two-bedroom apartment. I loved it. I loved getting rid of all of that stuff. I'm not a saver. I have some files and some sketches which I can provide you. But, I don't have it all. So you can't see the process

unfold, but I have some things that might be helpful to you. I have some charts and graphs and notes.

Nicholas Williams: I read in a review that you were a "composer in the American Style"…

Cindy McTee: Hans Graf made a big deal about that in Houston. He was so very generous and wonderful…what a great guy. He thought there was something quite American about the piece. But, he wasn't very explicit. Also the reviewer Charles Ward made a similar comment about *Circuits* several years earlier, when the Houston Symphony played it, probably around 2000….he said something about refracting certain aspects of urban America. The jazz influence would be a part of what's going on. Maybe that's why he said that. I'm not sure why else. Maybe it would be interesting for others to figure it out…someone who is more distant from my music than I am.

What does it mean to say that a piece sounds "American"? Does it mean that it owes something to jazz? I suppose that's a big thing. That it's somehow eclectic? We are an eclectic society…we're a mixture of so many things. Is that a part? What is European? That would be the other part of the question. So what sets it apart from the European orientation.

The other thing that people say about my music is that there is a kind of clarity to it. When I think about that idea and I think about American music and then European music…maybe there is more clarity to American music…maybe it's distilled. Maybe European music is more….this idea of modernism and postmodernism. With modernism being the music that came out of the post-Viennese periods, the highly organized complex…post –Schoenberg composers. Post-modernism being an American idea…we got away from modernist music…Terry Riley, Phil Glass, and John Adams were some of the first post-modernist composers. I'm thinking out loud here, I've never even thought these thoughts. Minimalism was an American invention. You could look at Gamelon music or west-African music and see the impact, but minimalist music was kind of an American invention. Something that Europe would never have done, I don't think. But there is a simplicity to that or clarity to that.

So maybe that's a part of the idea of Americanism. My music embraces the ideas of repetition. It embraces the idea of clarity. It embraces the idea of pulse. It embraces the ideas of jazz. It embraces the idea of eclecticism. As something opposed to something that is purely complex….that you might find in Ligetti or

Messiaen. I'm not in their group, but I'm trying to find examples of people that you know.

If you find contemporaries of mine you might look at 50-something year old composers in Europe and see what's going on and look at 50-something year old American composers and make a comparison. I'm sure you'll see some differences. I'm sure we are a product of where we live. Even in this society where global communication is possible, I think there are some differences.

Nicholas Williams: Thank you for your time. I'll be sure to share the transcript of the interview with you.

Cindy McTee: You're welcome, Nick. You are certainly welcome to ask any more questions in the future. Thanks for being interested in my music.

APPENDIX D

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY OF CINDY MCTEE'S WIND MUSIC

Ballet for Band. North Texas Wind Symphony. Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor. Klavier, K11144. 2004. Compact disc.

California Counterpoint: "The Twittering Machine". North Texas Wind Symphony. Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor. Klavier, KCD-11070. 1995. Compact disc.

Circuits. Cincinnati Wind Symphony. Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor. Klavier, K11042. 1992. Compact disc.

_____. University of Florida Wind Symphony. David A. Waybright, conductor. Mark Custom Records, MCD-2245. 1996. Compact disc.

_____. University of North Carolina Greensboro Wind Ensemble. John R. Locke, conductor. UNCG School of Music CD-102. 1996. Compact disc.

Fanfare for Trumpets. North Texas Wind Symphony Trumpet Section. Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor. GIA Publications, CD-746. 2008. Compact disc.

Finish Line. North Texas Wind Symphony. Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor. GIA Publications, CD-746. 2008. Compact disc.

Soundings. North Texas Wind Symphony. Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor. Klavier, KCD-11084. 1997. Compact disc.

_____. University of Georgia Wind Symphony. Dwight Satterwhite, conductor. Mark Custom Records, MCD-2871. 1998. Compact disc.

Timepiece. North Texas Wind Symphony. Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor. Klavier, K11122. Compact disc.

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Alber, Brian. “The Evolution of Melodic Construction in Three 20th-Century Wind Band Works.” *Journal of Band Research* 43/1 (Fall 2007): 63-78.

Forte, Allen. *The Atonal Music of Anton Webern.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998.

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