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ANALYSIS OF NOCTURNAL OP. 70

BY BENJAMIN BRITTEN

THESIS

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By

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Nocturnal op. 70 is one of the most important large-scale works written for guitar in the twentieth century. Brief biographical data and some background information on Nocturnal show how it exemplifies Britten's compositional approach.

The focus of the analysis is on three structural aspects: the rhythmic, the intervallic, and the aspect of underlying pitch patterns. The rhythmic analysis discusses the distortion of rhythmic patterns by the use of compression, expansion, elisions, syncopation, and rhythmic dissonance. The pitch set analysis discusses the intervallic character of the work, identifying and correlating set types as they form networks of relationship. The reductive analysis discusses the underlying connections of focal pitches in the linear material of Nocturnal.

The conclusion then correlates the results of the preceding analyses, discussing the large-scale unfolding of the form in Nocturnal.

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CHAPTER I

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Short Biography of Britten

Edward Benjamin Britten was born at Lowestoft, Suffolk on November 22, 1913. His interest in music began at a young age. "Music formed an important part of his early experience, his mother was an amateur singer, and he was encouraged to explore and even compose before formal tuition on piano and viola began."¹

Britten started to study composition with Frank Bridge after the two were introduced at the Norwich Festival of 1924.

While still in his mid-teens, Britten was required to develop a professional control of his musical material, yet he was encouraged to approach the task less through traditional academic disciplines than through the refining of his inner and outer ear, and the exploration of some of the most adventurous music being written at the time.²

In 1930 he entered the Royal College of Music. There he studied piano under Harold Samuel and Arthur Benjamin and composition under John Ireland. Britten was not altogether

1. Peter Evans, The Music of Benjamin Britten (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 7.

2. Ibid., 8.

happy at the college because, among other things, he had trouble getting his works performed.

In 1935 he got a job writing music for a number of documentary films made by the General Post Office. This experience proved valuable, since each film required different treatment and Britten had a limited number of instruments with which to work. These strict requirements taught him to use economy in his compositional style.

In 1937 Britten had his first major success, the Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge for string orchestra, thus showing an early use of what was to become one of his favorite forms.

While working for the G.P.O., Britten collaborated with W.H. Auden, a fellow employee on the film unit. This collaboration led to social and political commentaries such as Our Hunting Fathers, a song cycle with orchestra (1936). Because of political discontent, in 1939 he left England for North America. He produced some major works in the United States, such as Les Illuminations (1939), a song cycle, and Diversion on a Theme for piano and orchestra (1940). However, Britten began to feel homesick for his native country, and in 1942 he returned to England.

He composed a number of works during World War II, one of them the opera Peter Grimes. Its premier performance was given on June 7, 1945, at the reopening of the Sadler's

Wells Theater. "Its emphatic success stamped Britten as the most gifted dramatist England had produced since Purcell, and its eager acceptance by foreign houses showed the judgement to be more than parochial."³

Peter Grimes and other operas by Britten, including Albert Herring and The Little Sweep are based on texts from English literature. These, and other projects reveal Britten's love for his native country and its literary (and musical) treasures.

In 1947 he founded the English Opera Group and in 1948 the Aldeburgh Festival, which has been held annually since. "Despite his occasional acceptance of commissions from elsewhere, the production of music to be included in the festival's programmes was the composer's principal activity for the rest of his life"⁴ With these projects Britten showed that he was firmly committed and rooted to his country's musical growth.

Britten's style can be characterized as lyrical. Even when not written for voice, his music has a poetic, vocal substance to it. He was fond of applying this style to forms that had a number of movements or songs that add up to a large scale work: theme and variation, suite, song cycle,

3. Peter Evans, "Britten Benjamin," The New Grove, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), III, 293-4.

4. Ibid., 294.

and opera. Perhaps the structure of these forms helped him to set limits on his prodigious musical imagination.

Britten's instrumental output was imaginative and original. His first important instrumental work was Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge (1937) for string orchestra. In 1940-41 he produced the Sinfonia da Requiem for orchestra, and the First Quartet. After the success of Peter Grimes, his output of instrumental music diminished somewhat. In 1945-46 he wrote the Second Quartet in honor of Henry Purcell, and The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, a set of variations and a fugue based on a theme by Purcell. In 1950-51 he produced two smaller works: Lachrymae, a set of variations for viola and piano, and Metamorphoses after Ovid, for solo oboe. For the next ten years Britten did not produce an instrumental work. In 1961 he wrote the Cello Sonata for Mstislav Rostropovich, and later wrote four more works for the Soviet cellist. His last instrumental work was String Quartet no. 3 (1975).

After Peter Grimes, Britten wrote several other large-scale operas, including Billy Budd (1951), The Turn of the Screw (1954), and A Midsummer Night's Dream (1960). In 1961 he completed one of his most important works, the War Requiem. Written for chorus and orchestra, the work is a personal statement denouncing the terrible effects of war. Britten alternated war poems by Wilfred Owen with the text

of the Requiem Mass to achieve an affecting quality in this work.

The last large-scale work Britten was to complete was Death in Venice, written for the 1973 Aldeburgh Festival. Taken ill soon after completing this work, Britten died on December 4, 1976. Known best for his vocal and dramatic works, his instrumental works are also important and imaginative. His contributions to England's musical life and growth make him one of the most important English composers in the twentieth century.

Background of Nocturnal op. 70

Nocturnal After John Dowland op. 70 was completed in 1963. The work was written for Julian Bream, who helped Britten with some of the details involved in writing for the guitar. Bream gave the premier performance of Nocturnal on June 12, 1964, at the Aldeburgh Festival.

Although not labeled as such, Nocturnal is a set of eight variations based on the song, "Come, heavy sleep," by John Dowland. In a unique application of variation technique, the song, with original accompaniment, is not heard until the close of the piece, making the piece like a theme and variations in reverse.

John Dowland (1563-1626) was an English composer and

lutenist. Although very successful during his lifetime, he had, a great deal of the time, a rather morbid outlook on life. His temperament is described by Diana Poulton:

. . . as complex and as full of contradictions as the age in which he lived. Immensely self-centered and highly emotional, with a just appreciation of his own powers, but with an almost childish irritability reaction to criticism; subject from time to time to attacks of melancholy⁵

Many of Dowland's greatest works were inspired by this melancholy disposition. The words to these songs often deal with the subjects of darkness and death, and these, along with sleep and dreams, comprise one of Britten's favorite themes.

"Come, heavy sleep" is number twenty in the The First Booke of Songs or Ayres of Four Parts, a collection of 21 songs for voice and lute by John Dowland. This collection was first published in 1597. All songs in The First Booke are strophic. "Most of the melodies are of memorable beauty, but harmonically they keep mostly within the diatonic conventions of the time. Only one, "Come, heavy sleep," shows something of the haunting melancholic quality that was to characterize many of his later works."⁶ Britten

5. Diana Poulton, John Dowland, revised edition, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 43-44.

6. Diana Poulton, "Dowland, John," The New Grove, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), V, 593.

uses fragments from both the melody and the accompaniment of this song throughout Nocturnal. Originally in G, "Come, heavy sleep" was transposed by Britten to E (suitable for the guitar's tuning) for Nocturnal.

The words of "Come, heavy sleep" are very expressive, and (as mentioned above) imply one of Britten's favorite themes: the theme of night, sleep, and dreams. The following is the first verse of "Come, heavy sleep" as included in the published edition of Nocturnal:

Come, heavy Sleep, the image of true Death,
And close up these my weary weeping eyes,
Whose spring of tears doth stop my vital breath,
And tears my heart with Sorrow's sigh-swoll'n cries.
Come and possess my tired thought-worn soul,
That living dies, till thou on me be stole.⁷

The titles of the variations in Nocturnal imply that a quasi-programmatic interpretation of this work may be possible. The following are the titles: "Musingly," "Very agitated," "Restless", "Uneasy," "March-like," "Dreaming," "Gently rocking," "Passacaglia," and "Slow and quiet" (the Dowland song).

In Nocturnal one can see, besides the thematic material mentioned above, a number of Britten's favorite devices and compositional techniques: the use of theme and variation as

7. John Dowland, "Come, heavy sleep," The First Booke of Songs 1613, ed. Diana Poulton (Menston, England: The Scholar Press Limited), 1973, XX.

a form, the use of a passacaglia as the climax of a work, the use of an earlier composer's music as the basis for a work, and the writing of a work with a specific artist in mind.

Britten enjoyed, and was adept at producing many contrasting textures and characteristics in his variations from a restricted motivic source. The following are just a few of his works that use the form of theme and variation:

Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge op. 10 (1937), The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra op. 34 (1945), Lachrymae op. 48 (1950), and the Gemini Variations op. 73 (1965).

The following are some of Britten's works that use the theme of night, sleep, and dreams as subject matter:

Diversions op. 21 (1940), Serenade op. 31 (1943), Nocturne op. 60 (1958), and A Midsummer Night's Dream op. 64 (1960).

Britten used the passacaglia form in a number of his works, often as the finale or climax of the piece. The appeal of this form to Britten seems obvious since a passacaglia is like a continuous variation. The following are some of Britten's works that use the form of a passacaglia in one of their movements: Violin Concerto op. 15 (1939), Piano Concerto op. 13 (1939), Peter Grimes (1945), The Turn of The Screw (1954), and War Requiem (1961).

A favorite stylistic trait of Britten's was the use of

earlier composers' music. Lachrymae op. 48 (1950) is also based on a John Dowland song. His famous The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra op. 34 (1945), is a set of variations and a fugue on a theme by Purcell. These works show that Britten drew upon his country's musical as well as literary treasures.

Britten wrote many works for friends. He wrote a number of solo songs for the English tenor Peter Pears. For the Soviet cellist Mstislav Rostropovich he wrote five works. For Julian Bream he wrote, besides Nocturnal, Chinese Songs for guitar and voice.

Besides Nocturnal, Britten employed the idea of having the theme emerge at the end of a series of variations in two other works: Lachrymae op. 48, and The Third Cello Suite op. 87. Lachrymae is titled "reflections on a song of Dowland." At the end of this work the second half of the Dowland song "Flow my tears" emerges, with original harmonies after ten variations that are based on the first strain of this song. The Third Cello Suite, written in 1971 for Mstislav Rostropovich, consists of nine movements. After these nine movements, their thematic sources are heard, in this case four melodies: three Russian folksongs from Tchaikovsky's arrangements, and the Kontakion, a hymn from the Orthodox Church.

Nocturnal has a very dreamlike and sometimes distorted

quality about it. Britten talked about the work with Donald Mitchell:

And of course the Nocturnal, which I wrote for Julian Bream also has some very, to me, disturbing images in it, linked, of course, inspired by this- the Dowland song, which of course itself has very strange undertones in it. Dowland was a person who perhaps even consciously realized the importance of dreams.⁸

A work of the stature of Nocturnal has done much to enrich the limited repertoire of the classical guitarist. It has been called (by Bream himself) the most important work written for guitar in the twentieth century.

In addition to contributions from Spanish and South American composers, European composers have done much to add to the repertory for guitar. Composers such as Frank Martin, Richard Rodney Bennett, Alexander Tansman, Benjamin Britten and many others have given the classical guitar a new avenue of expression.

One of the most interesting aspects of the history of the guitar in the twentieth century is the extent to which its literature has been vitalized in the transition from music composed by guitarists (or written to the restrictions of a guitarist) to compositions not determined by a conventional conception of the instrument's possibilities. This has led to the appearance of works of considerable stature and the growth of an artistic compositional tradition such has eluded the guitar until the 20th century.⁹

8. Donald Mitchell, "In conversation with Benjamin Britten," The Britten Companion, ed. Christopher Palmer (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 93.

Twentieth-century works for guitar such as Nocturnal will undoubtedly encourage more composers to write for this versatile and expressive instrument.

9. Harvey Turnbull, "Guitar," The New Grove, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), VII, 840.

CHAPTER II

RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to show how rhythmic patterns found in Nocturnal are distorted with the use of compression, expansion, syncopation, rhythmic dissonance, and metric and/or rhythmic elisions.

The eight variations each have one of two characteristics: a fluctuating, free meter, or a more marked, steady meter. Each has within its structure certain rhythmic motives or patterns. These patterns are subject to many distortions and inflections, and this aspect will be the focus of discussion.

Variation I "Musingly"

This variation, as the title implies, has a freely unfolding form. The phrases, marked by the composer, contain rhythmic patterns that are inflected as the variation proceeds.

Phrases one and two, bars 1-4, are closely related. Phrase two is based on a development of phrase one. Figure 1 shows how the triplet in phrase one is expanded in phrase two. Also, the ending of two is shortened as compared to

phrase one. An upward or downward arrow will designate either high or low registral stress.

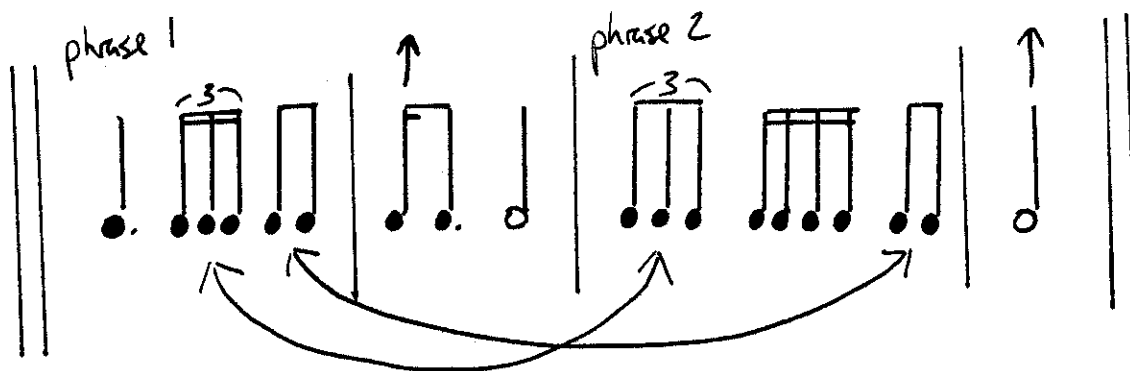


Fig. 1--The Relationship between Phrases One and Two in mm. 1-4.

Phrase three, bars 5-9, contains a series of repetitions of a common pattern. The end of this pattern resembles the end of phrase two, with two eighth notes followed by a note emphasized by contour and durational stresses. This pattern becomes inflected with each repetition. Figure 2 shows these inflections, with the patterns measured in eighth notes.

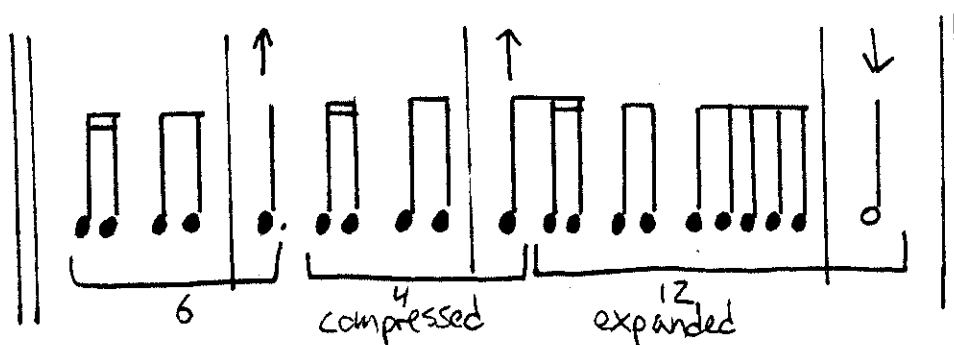


Fig. 2--Inflections on Repeated Pattern in mm. 5-9

Phrase four, bars 10-12, is related to the last repetition of the pattern in phrase three. The beginning and ending of phrase four are related to this pattern. Figure 3 will demonstrate this.

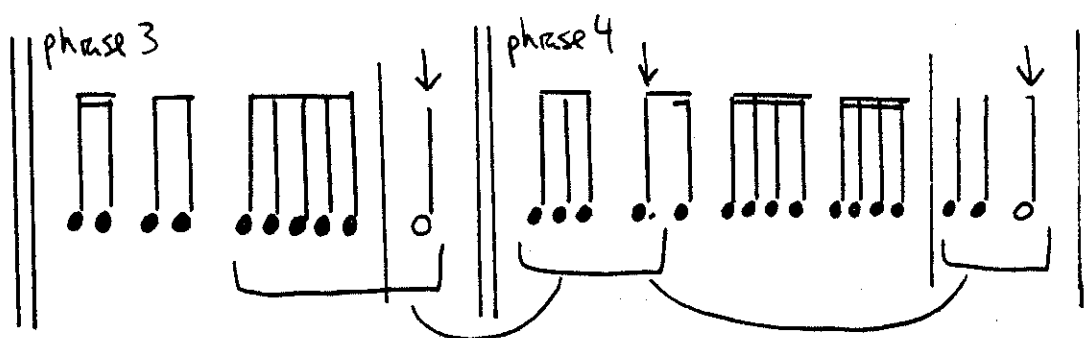


Fig. 3--Relationship between Phrases Three and Four in mm. 8-12.

In phrase five, measures 13-15, a new, shorter pattern is introduced. Measure 13 contains a burst of sixteenth notes leading up to the widest registral stress to occur so far in the variation. In measure 14 a repetition of a pattern starts and is inflected as in phrase three. Figure 4 shows how both the beginning and the ending are expanded.

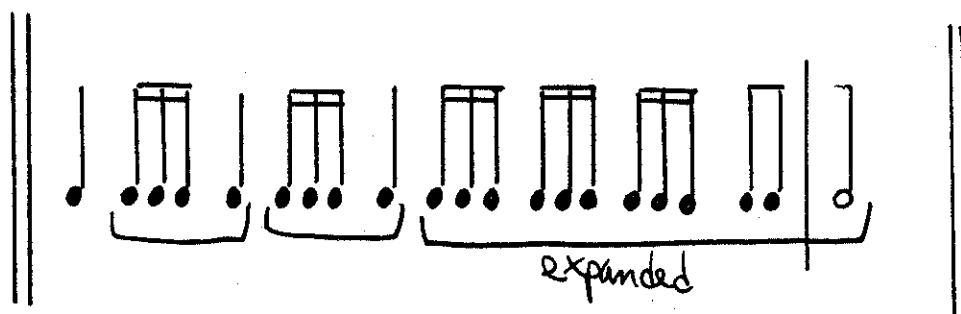


Fig. 4--Expansion and Extension of Pattern in Phrase Five, mm. 14-15.

Phrase six, measures 16-18, has a two part texture. The composite rhythm of this phrase yields some interesting shifting of registral stresses and rhythmic groupings. Figure 5 shows the composite rhythm of this phrase, and displays the groupings. Again registral stress is designated by an arrow.

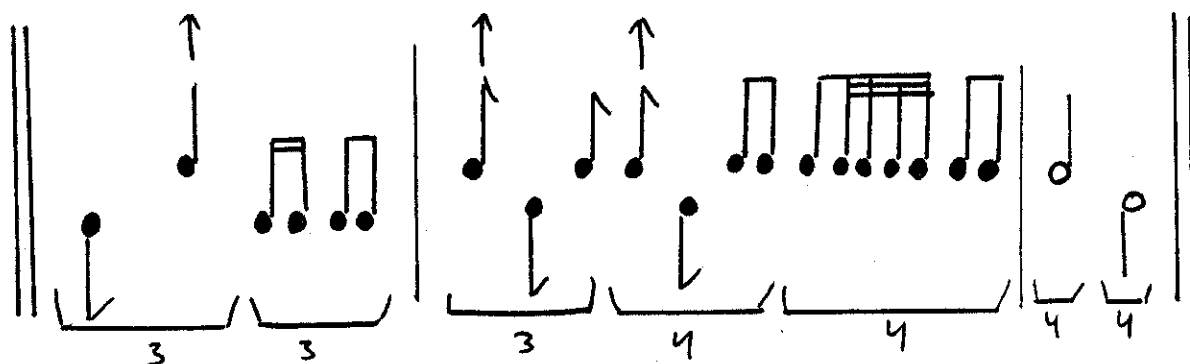


Fig. 5-- The Shifting Registral Stress and Expansion of Groupings in Phrase Six, mm. 16-18.

Phrases seven through eleven, measures 19-26, contain a series of repetitions of a common pattern. Again, some of these repetitions are inflected through expansion. Figure 6 shows the repetitions and labels the expansions.







measure	rhythmic pattern
19	 normal
20	 normal
21	 expanded in middle
22	 normal
23	 expanded in middle
25	 expanded in middle

Fig. 6--Inflections of Pattern in mm. 19-26

Phrase twelve, measures 27-29, is a repeat of phrase six, with the grouping staying in three eighth notes until the end.

The constant alterations of basic rhythmic patterns in "Musically" create a precedent for the rest of the work.

Variation II "Very agitated"

This variation is in stark contrast to the first variation. The phrases consist of strings of eighth note triplets, each being marked by a chord of a half-note value. The pulse of this variation is much more steady than the first. The phrases contain many subgroups of different, shifting lengths. These patterns can be segmented by considering contour and registral stresses, and repetition. The primary grouping criterion is the continuation of groups whose beginnings are contour stressed. Figure 7 shows a grouping of patterns in measure 3, measured in eighth notes.

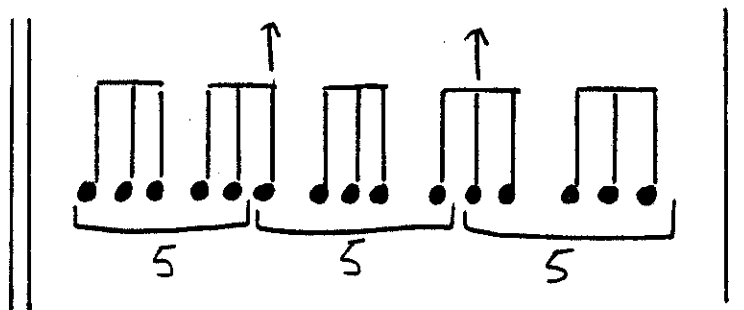


Fig. 7--The Subgroupings Found in Phrase Two, m. 3

Figure 8 shows one possible set of groupings and lengths for each phrase. Again, the groupings are primarily segmented by contour stress at the beginning. The phrases are measured in quarter notes, the groupings in eighth note triplets. One pattern revealed by the table is that the last grouping of each phrase is the longest in duration. There is no detectable pattern to the length of groupings, and this adds to the distorted nature of this variation.




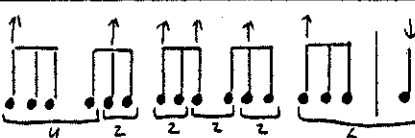


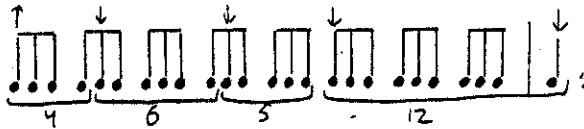

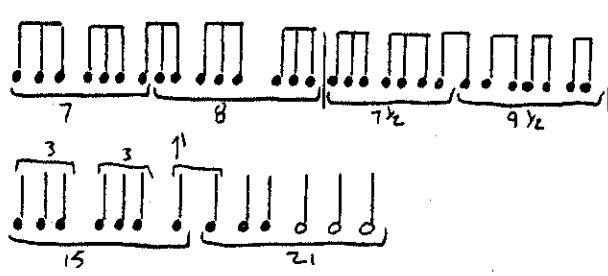
measure	Groupings	length
1		5½
3		6
5		8
7		6
9		9
11-14		17
15		9
17		11
19-21		23

Fig. 8--Subgroups within the Phrases of "Very agitated"

There is a general lengthening of the phrases leading up to measure 11, where the longest phrase and perhaps the climax of the variation occurs. This phrase has one of the widest margins of registral usage, a trend which continues in the following two phrases. This gradual increase of phrase lengths is a kind of unfolding.

The phrases themselves each have a fairly distinct character. The absence of any clear pattern to the rhythmic groupings of each phrase is a contributing factor to the theme of distortion that was started in Variation I.

Variation III "Restless"

This variation has a two-voice texture; the meter given is three-four. Maury Yeston, in his book, The Stratification of Musical Rhythm, presents an idea that is useful in describing this variation:

The rate of any level of motion in a piece can be expressed as a simple multiplication or division of the rate of any other level of motion in the piece. The resulting structure of interaction of levels like these may be characterized, metaphorically, as rhythmic consonance.¹

1. Maury Yeston, The Stratification of Musical Rhythm (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 77-78.

Yeston goes on to describe rhythmic dissonance, when two levels ". . . cannot be expressed as a simple multiplication or division of each other."² Variation III has two levels, and the rhythmic relationship between the two may best be described as rhythmic dissonance. Figure 9 shows an example of the rhythmic dissonance found in this variation.

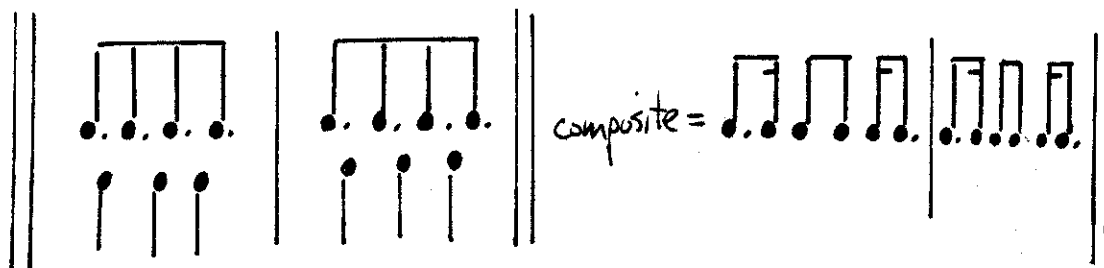


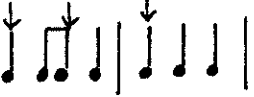

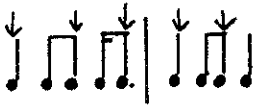


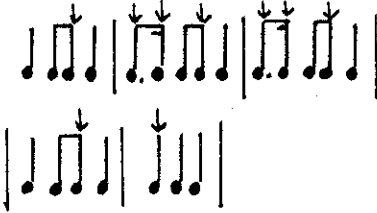


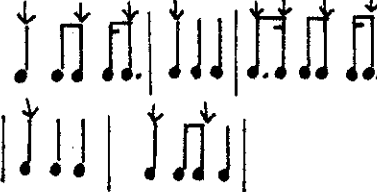


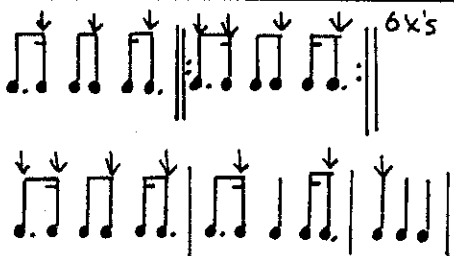



Fig. 9--Rhythmic Dissonance in mm. 22-23

The whole variation is based on this conflict of three-against-four, the accompaniment being in triple meter, and the solo being in duple.

Figure 10 shows the varying degrees of rhythmic dissonance throughout this variation. The degree of rhythmic dissonance will be expressed by the largest perceptible sub-pulse relating the two strata.

2. Ibid., 78.

measure	composite rhythm	degree of dissonance
2-3		
5-6		
8-9		m. 8:  m. 9: 
10-14		m. 10, 13, 14:  m. 11, 12: 
16-20		m. 16, 18:  m. 17, 19, 20: 
21-30		21-29:  30: 0

↓ = solo voice

Fig. 10--Rhythmic Dissonance in "Restless"




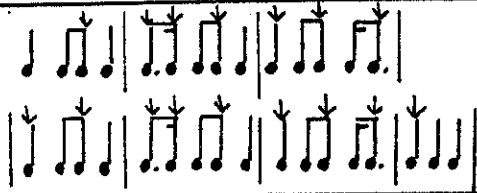


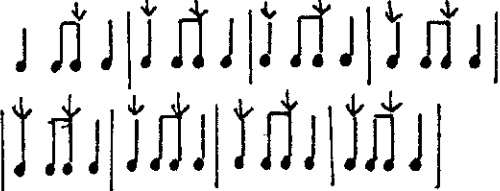









32-33		32:  33: 
34-40		35,36,38,39:  34,37:  40: o
41-48		
50-54		
59-60		59:  60: 
61-69		61,63,64,69:  62,65-67: 

Fig. 10--Continued

The solo phrases throughout generally follow an alternating pattern of placement in the measure. One will enter on the first beat of the measure, and the next will enter at the halfway point of the measure. Only one section, measures 41-48, establishes a pattern of each phrase entering the same place of the measure, and this pattern is broken at the end of the section when the answering phrase overlaps with the end of the preceding one. This constant shifting of the metric placement of phrases coupled with the already mentioned three-against-four conflict between solo voice and accompaniment, creates a very distorted perception of any metric or rhythmic stability. Figure 11 shows where each phrase enters the measure, and also its respective duration.

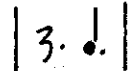


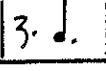


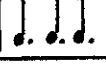


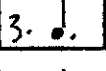
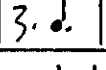


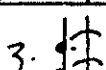

measure	placement	solo above or below	Duration in measures
2		below	2 1/2
5		above	3
8		below	2 1/2
10		above	5 1/2
16		below	5
21		above	10 3/4
32		below	2 1/2
34		above	2
36		below	2
37		above	4
41		below	2
43		above	2
45		below	2
47		above	3 1/2
50		Both above and below	4 2/3

Fig. 11--Metric Placement of Solo Phrases in "Restless"


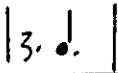

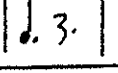

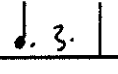
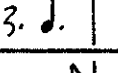
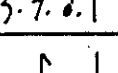



59		above	$2\frac{1}{2}$
61		below	2
63		above	$1\frac{1}{2}$
65		below	$\frac{1}{2}$
65		above	$\frac{1}{2}$
66		below	$\frac{1}{2}$
66		above	$\frac{1}{2}$
66		below	$\frac{1}{3}$
67		below	$\frac{1}{4}$
67		above	1
68		both above and below	$1\frac{1}{3}$

Fig. 11--Continued

The phrase lengths of the solo change throughout the variation. In the first section of the variation, measures 1-31, there is a gradual expansion of phrase lengths, unfolding to the most rhythmically dissonant phrase, which starts at measure 21. In the second section, measures 32-58, the phrases are of relatively equal length. The last section, measures 59-69, starts as a repeat of the second section, but soon disintegrates, with each solo voice becoming fragmented.

In section two, measures 31-54, there are some instances of elisions. At measure 36 the phrases overlap, with the lower voice starting on the same beat as the upper voice ends. This is reversed in measure 37. In measure 47, the upper phrase starts where the lower one ends. Figure 12 demonstrates the elisions in measures 34-38.

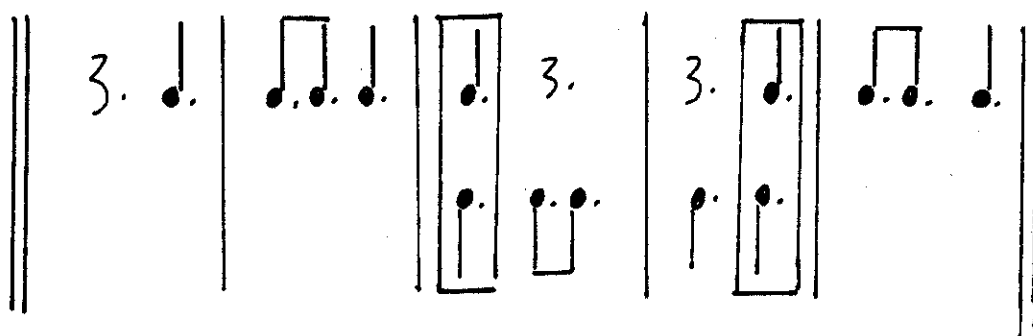


Fig. 12--Elisions in mm. 34-38

In measures 54-58 the solo voices drop out. The accompaniment pattern here takes on a more linear role. The repeated notes and the contour of each voice of the dyads create shifting groupings, and the perception of the meter is briefly lost. Figure 13 shows these groupings. The two voices both start with a five note group, and then break into opposing groupings until measure 58.

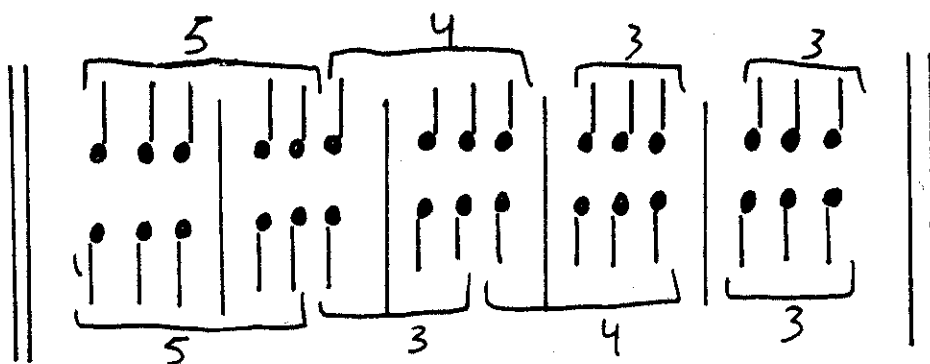


Fig. 13--Shifting Groupings in the Accompaniment in mm. 54-58.

Variation IV "Uneasy"

Marked "slow" by the composer, this variation has four phrases, three of which contain a series of short fragments. Each phrase is punctuated by a chord and a rapid burst of repeated notes, which gradually ritards.

The first and second phrases, measures 1-4, are closely related, the second one expanding in length by a quarter

note. Both are based on groups of thirty-second notes a half beat in duration. In addition to the expansion in the second phrase, there is a shift of registral and contour stress from the first and third note in measure 1, to the first and last note in measure 3. Figure 14 displays these motives, labeling the stresses.

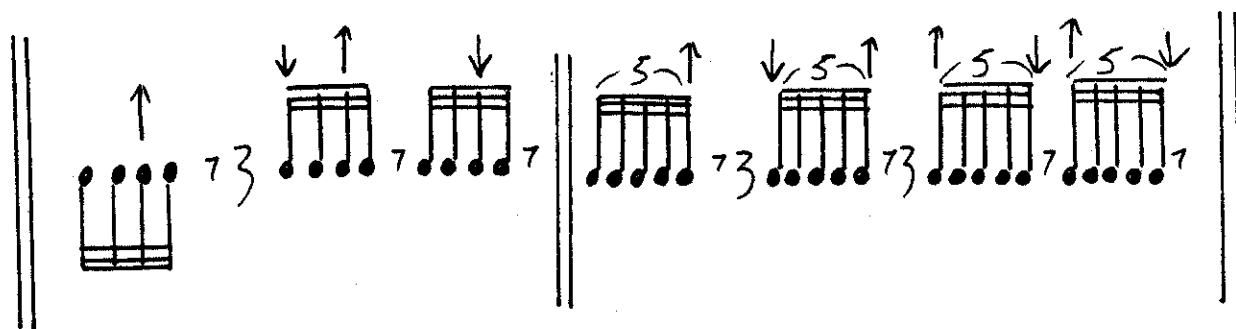


Fig. 14--Shifting Stresses in Phrases One and Two

The third phrase, in measure 5, a long, rising and falling linear excursion, is in marked contrast to the rest of the variation. Interspersed within this phrase are accented and slurred pairs of notes. By using these to determine subgroups within this phrase, it is possible to see a gradual expansion, then compression of group lengths. Figure 15 shows phrase three with the subgroups measured in sixteenth notes.

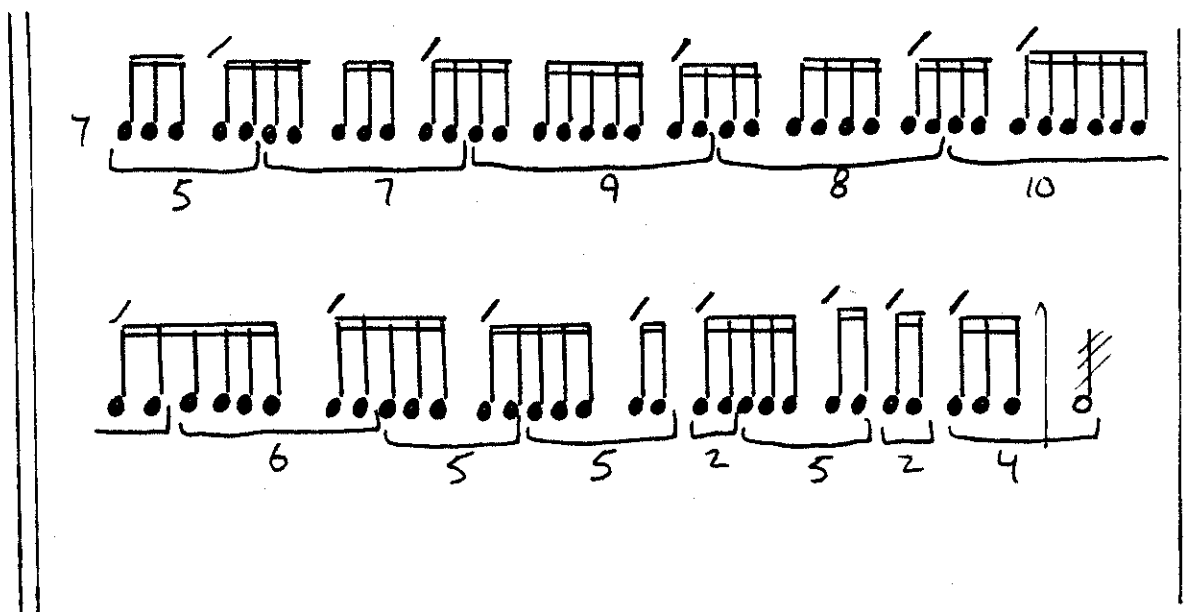





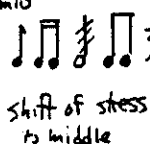


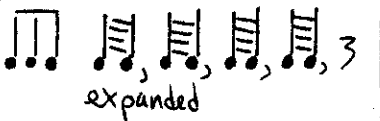
Fig. 15--Expansion and Compression of Groupings in m. 5

In the fourth phrase, measures 7-12, a new rhythmic motive is introduced. This is briefly interrupted by the motive from phrase two. The new motive is then expanded. This phrase is once again punctuated by a chord and repeated note, but the rhythm of this is altered.

In Table I, all the rhythmic ideas that are inflected in this variation are shown as they first appear, and then in their altered state.

TABLE I

INFLECTIONS OF RHYTHMIC IDEAS IN "UNEASY"

original rhythmic idea	inflection
m.1 	m.3 
m.2 	m.10  m.12 
m.7 	m.9 

The rhythmic texture of "Uneasy" is the most sparse and fragmented to this point of the work.

Variation V "March-like"

"March-like" features a two-voice texture in which the accompaniment and the solo are taken through various transformations. The perception the listener may get is of a warped, twisted march. The following analysis will attempt to show how the patterns perceived are inflected through the use of elisions and syncopation between the two levels.

No meter signature is given, but the variation has a steady pulse to it. The accompaniment pattern at the beginning can be heard as a pulse of three eighth-notes in length. Figure 16 shows this grouping in measures 1-3.

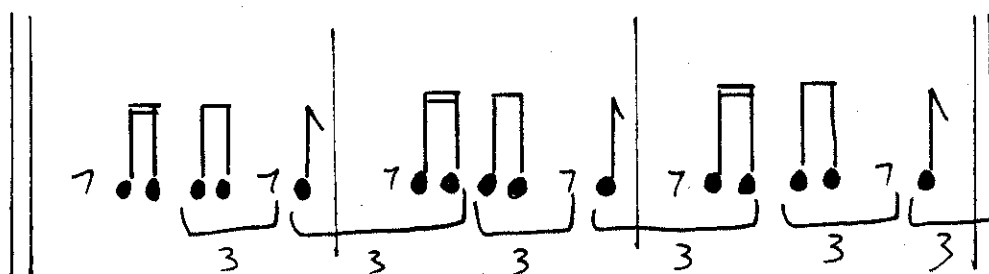


Fig. 16-- The Accompaniment Pattern of mm. 1-3

When the solo voice enters, it conflicts with or interrupts the accompaniment pattern. Figure 17 shows this syncopation, since "... either of the two constituent levels

could be perceived as the metric indicator."³ (although the bar lines favor the melody)

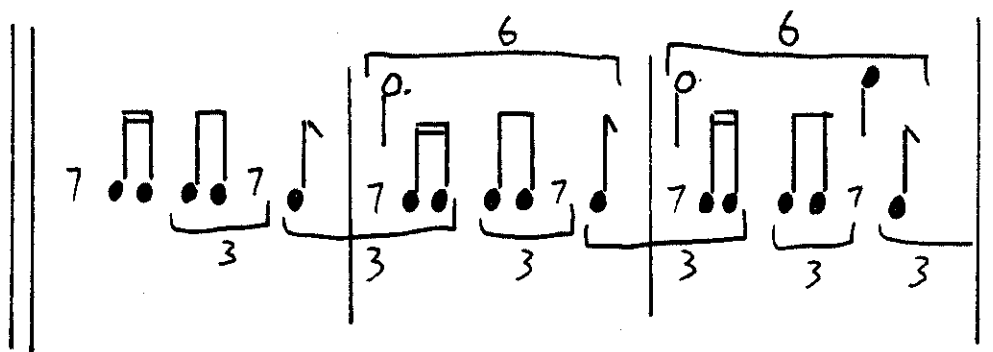


Fig. 17-- Syncopation between the Two Levels in mm. 1-3

The solo voice gradually begins to develop in measures 1-9. As it develops, it interrupts the accompaniment more frequently and for greater durations. The result is that the accompaniment pattern is subject to inflections such as expansion and rhythmic elisions. Figure 18 will show the transformations of the accompaniment in measures 1-10.

3. Yeston, op. cit., 113

measure	accompaniment pattern	normal	elision	expansion
1-3		X		
4-5			X	X
6-7			X	X
8-9			X	X
9-10			X	X

Fig. 18--Transformations of the Accompaniment in mm. 1-10

The two levels in measure 9 begin to become more rhythmically interactive, and this is indicative of the texture for the second half of the variation, measures 11-26.

By observing the composite rhythm of the second section of "March-like," it is possible to detect a number of elisions. Figure 19 shows these occurrences.

measure	composite rhythm
10-12	
12-13	
15-17	
17-19	
19-21	
22-24	

Fig. 19--Elisions in "March-like" in mm. 11-26

At measure 22 there starts a written repeat of measures 15-17. This evolves into a gradual rhythmic deceleration with the accompaniment pattern from the beginning of the piece emerging and fading off.

Variation VI "Dreaming"

"Dreaming" has two contrasting textures that alternate throughout. One is a slow quarter-note pulse in a chorale-like texture. The other is a faster sixteenth-note pulse, with a linear texture.

There are no meter signs given for the two ideas. The appearances of the first, slow idea become increasingly more rhythmically complex. This idea, although it is to be played slowly, can be felt to be in three-four time in a number of places, especially after its first occurrence. Figure 20 shows the second appearance of this idea and its groupings.

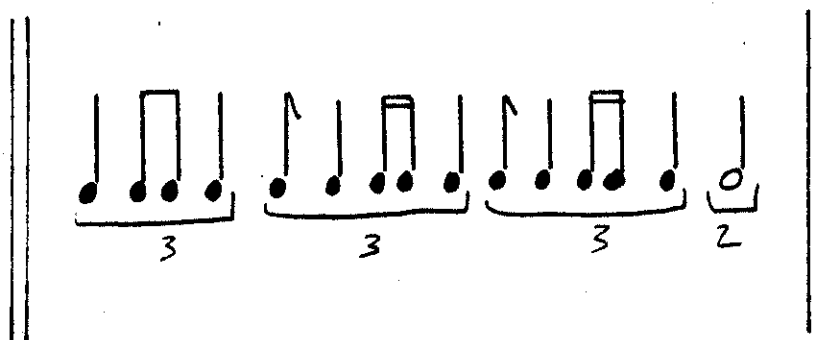


Fig. 20--Groupings in m. 3 of "Dreaming"

There is an implied three-against-two conflict in two of these three beat groupings in measure 7. Figure 21 shows this mild form of rhythmic dissonance.

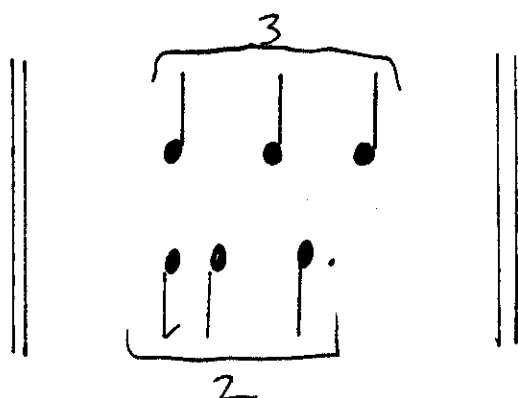


Fig. 21--Rhythmic Dissonance in m. 7

The second, linear idea is expanded as well in the course of the variation. By using metric and registral stress markings, rhythmic patterns emerge from these strings of sixteenth notes. Figure 22 demonstrates this technique with measure 2 and shows the resulting pattern.

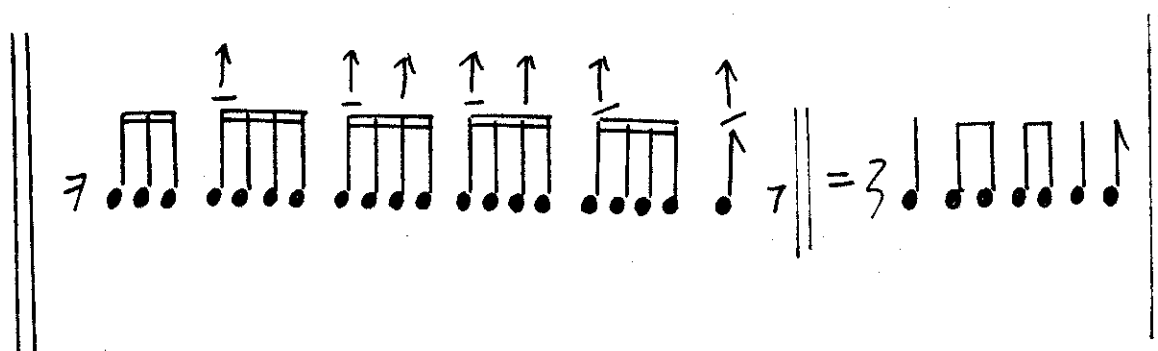


Fig. 22--Rhythmic Pattern from m. 2

Figure 23 shows the five appearances of this idea and the patterns resulting from the technique used above. In measure 4, the pattern from measure 2 is expanded. In measure 6 the pattern revealed shows a compression, with each repetition of the pattern starting one eighth note sooner. The pattern is fragmented in measures 8 and 10.

measure	Rhythmic Patterns
2	
4	
6	
8	
10	

Fig. 23--Patterns in Linear Material of "Dreaming"

Variation VII "Gently rocking"

This variation is in six-eight meter almost exclusively throughout. It has a two-voice texture, both voices being linear. The top part is a non-stop tremolo in thirty-second notes. The lower part is in much slower durations, mostly dotted quarter notes.

By observing repetition and contour and registral stresses, different groupings can be observed in the tremolo part. These groupings frequently extend across the bar line, making the given meter difficult to perceive. Figure 24 demonstrates these groupings in measures 1-4.

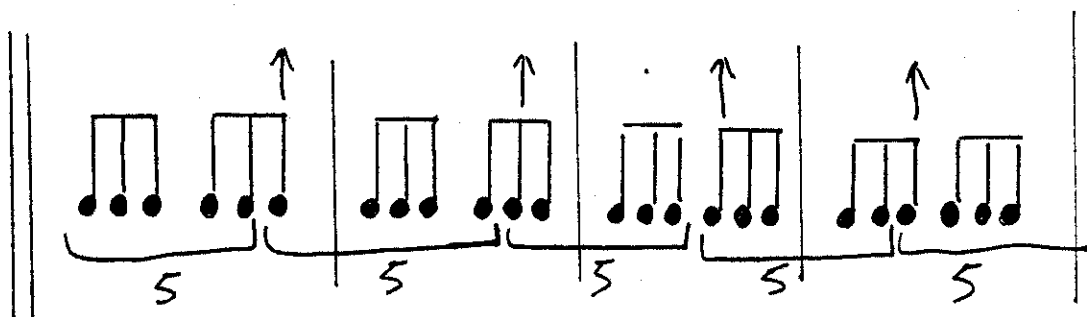


Fig. 24--Groupings in mm. 1-4

The lower part interrupts these phrases in the tremolo by entering at either the first or second half of the measure. The two parts rarely coincide, creating a rhythmic dissonance between the metrically simple lower part and the

syncopated upper part. Figure 25 shows both parts, in measures 1-4, with the groupings shown in the tremolo part.

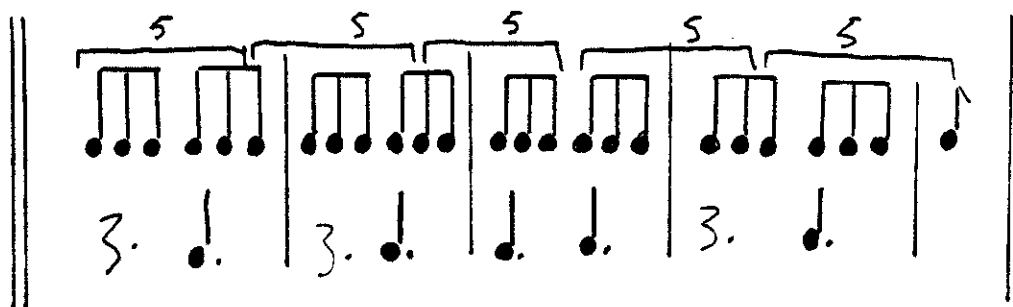


Fig. 25--Rhythmic Dissonance in "Gently rocking"

The groupings in the tremolo part start with an average length of five eighth notes, and gradually diminish in length until measure 15, where they are grouped in three and hence coincide with the other part. This signifies a brief progression to rhythmic consonance. From measure 20 to the end, the two parts trade off.

Variation VIII "Passacaglia"

This is the last and most extended of the variations, and the focal point of the work. For ease of discussion, the work will be divided into the following five sections: measures 1-16, measures 17-26, measures 27-29, measures 30-35, and measures 36-42.

"Passacaglia" features a developing dialogue between the bass ostinato and the material written above it. There is an alteration between the two parts almost throughout.

Section One

Section One of "Passacaglia" can be divided into three sub-sections which all follow the same formal tendency: a gradual increase and then decrease in rhythmic activity. to develop more rhythmic activity and then taper off. This is done through expanding the durations of each interlude between the ostinato. The subsections are as follows: measures 1-5, 6-9, and 10-16.

Throughout Section One a sense of overall progress of rhythmic drive is achieved by overlapping the beginning and end of both the ostinato and the phrases. Figure 26 shows an example of this in measures 6-7.

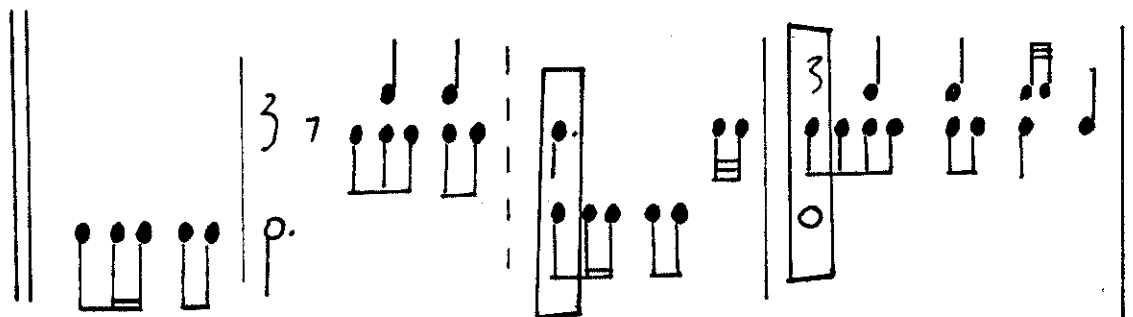


Fig. 26--Elisions of Phrases at the Beginning and the End of the Ostinato in mm. 6-7.

All three sub-sections start with a quarter-note pattern and develop from there. The second sub-section, starting at measure 6, introduces a two part texture, which is very rhythmically consonant. The predominant pulse of this first section of "Passacaglia" is the quarter note.

Section Two

Section Two features a faster rhythmic pace. After the first three beats of measure 17, all the motion (save for the ostinato) is in sixteenth-notes. This section, like Section One, has a general unfolding or lengthening of phrase durations until it tapers off. The following (minus the ostinato) is a list of the durations of the phrases in Section Two: 6, 3, 6, 6, 8, 12, 3, 2, 1 .

Although the motion of the phrases is in sixteenth notes, registral and contour stresses define some discrete rhythmic patterns, many of which are distorted by the use of syncopation. Figure 27 shows the patterns defined by the registral and contour stresses.











measure	Pattern
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	
26	

Fig. 27--Rhythmic Patterns in Section Two

After measure 22 the phrases begin a disintegration, each phrase increasing in size by a quarter-note until merging with the ostinato. In measure 26 the ostinato is altered for the first time in the variation. It is slowed down and fragmented, leading into Section Three.

Section Three

This section features a slower rhythmic pacing, with the phrases between the ostinato based on widely skipping lines of eighth notes. The lines are marked to be played pizzicato,⁴ and every note is marked with an accent. Similar to the first two sections, the third section features an expansion or unfolding of phrases.

Dispersed within these phrases are slurred grace notes leading up or down to the accented eighth notes. Since all the eighth notes are accented, the slurs will provide a criterion for determining any discernable patterns. Figure 28 shows these phrases with the ornamented notes marked above, and the resulting groupings shown below. There is a fairly constant shift of grouping lengths. This adds to the distinct rhythmic contrast of Section Three.

4. The technique of muffling the strings with the palm of the right hand.

measure	Rhythmic Pattern
27	
28	
29	

Fig. 28--Rhythmic Patterns in Section Three

The ostinato is altered throughout this section. Figure 29 will show the different inflections imposed on the ostinato in measures 26-29.

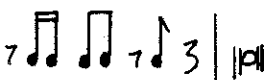

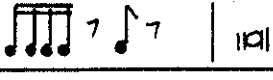
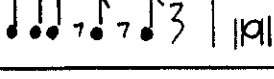
measure	ostinato pattern
26	 7 7 7 3 1011 fragmented
27	 7 7 7 7 1011 Fragmented
28	 7 7 7 7 1011 Fragmented
29	 7 7 7 3 1011 Fragmented

Fig. 29--Inflections on Ostinato in mm. 26-29

Section Four

Section Four has six phrases, which have the following respective lengths (in quarter notes): 7, 7, 7, 6, 6, and 4 and one half. This shows a compression of phrase lengths leading into the final section. The rhythm for each phrase is the same (except for the final chord of each phrase), giving this section a much more stable rhythmic identity as compared with the previous sections.

The rhythmic interest in this section lies in the inflections of the ostinato. Figure 30 will show the different inflections on the ostinato in this section of "Passacaglia."

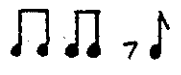



measure	ostinato pattern
30-31	 fragmented
32	 shift of stress, fragmented
33	 compression of m. 32
34	 compression of m. 30+31

Fig. 30--Inflection of Ostinato in Section Four

Section Five

Section five is linear in texture and much faster in rhythmic pacing. Almost all the motion is in sixteenth notes until the rhythmic deceleration that starts in measure 39.

In measures 36-40 a series of rhythmic elisions takes place. Figure 31 will show these elisions and the length of the groupings. This whole section is based on a pattern (the ostinato) six notes in length.

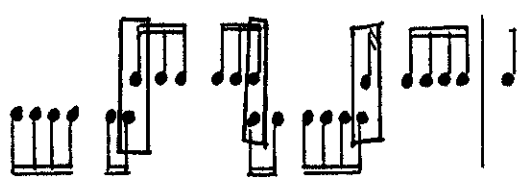
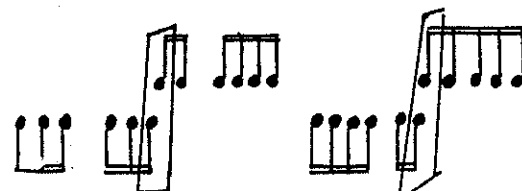
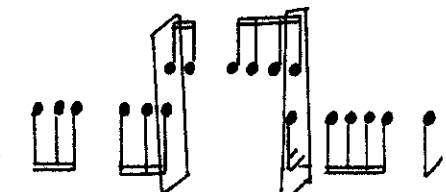
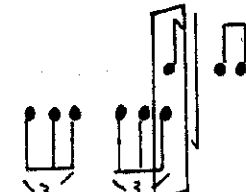
measure	elisions
36	
37	
38	
40	

Fig. 31--Rhythmic Elisions in Section Five

"Passacaglia" has five contrasting sections. However, an unfolding of rhythmic development does take place. The ostinato remains the same up until section two, where it starts to become inflected. This process is continued until Section Five, where all the material is based on the ostinato. This signifies an unfolding from material which has a static ostinato pattern to material which is based entirely on this pattern.

The rhythmic characteristics described in this chapter are an integral part of the overall effect of Nocturnal.

CHAPTER III

PITCH SET ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to identify the intervallic structural characteristics of Nocturnal, and to correlate them when applicable.

There are two techniques that are useful in analyzing this aspect of the work: local set connections and focused set networks. The local connections identify and label the pitch sets that fall in succession in a local context. Relationships between the sets will be indicated by a connecting line. Focused set networks reveal the interconnections of the predominant intervallic structures of a variation or the piece as a whole. The criteria for determining set types to be included in a network are as follows: frequency of occurrence, significance of context, and relatedness to other set types in the network. There are two types of relationships used to identify correlations between set types: one is the similarity of interval class configuration between two set types of the same size. Each set type has six interval class vector entries or "multiplicities"¹ and if four out of six of these entries match there

1. John Rahn, Basic Atonal Theory, (New York: Longman, 1980).

is an intervallic relationship between the two set types (of the same size). This is a simplification of Allen Forte's various similarity relationships.² The other relationship is the inclusion relationship between two set types of different sizes, when a smaller set type's interval class characteristics are contained in the larger set type's interval class characteristics. The following technique is helpful for determining this relationship: using successive-interval arrays for each set type of different size and reducing the larger set by adding adjacent intervals so that it eventually equals the smaller set type's interval array.³ The focal set chosen must be related to all other sets in the network. There can be, in some instances, two focal sets of the same size, but they must be related. The resulting focused network is similar to a "set complex,"⁴ which Allen Forte devised to show the characteristic intervallic structure of a musical work.

The criteria used for the segmentation of sets are registral and temporal proximity. Figure 32 shows an example of segmentation in measures 5-9 of "Musingly."

2. Allen Forte, The Structure of Atonal Music (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973).

3. Richard Chrisman, "Identification and Correlation of Pitch-Sets," Journal of Music Theory XV (1971), 58-83.

4. Forte, op. cit.

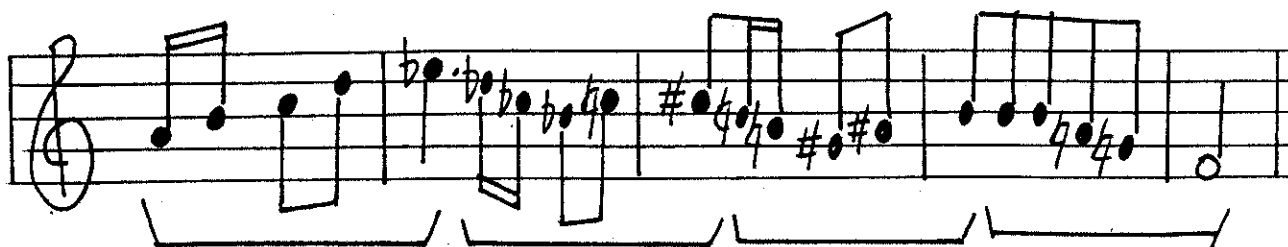
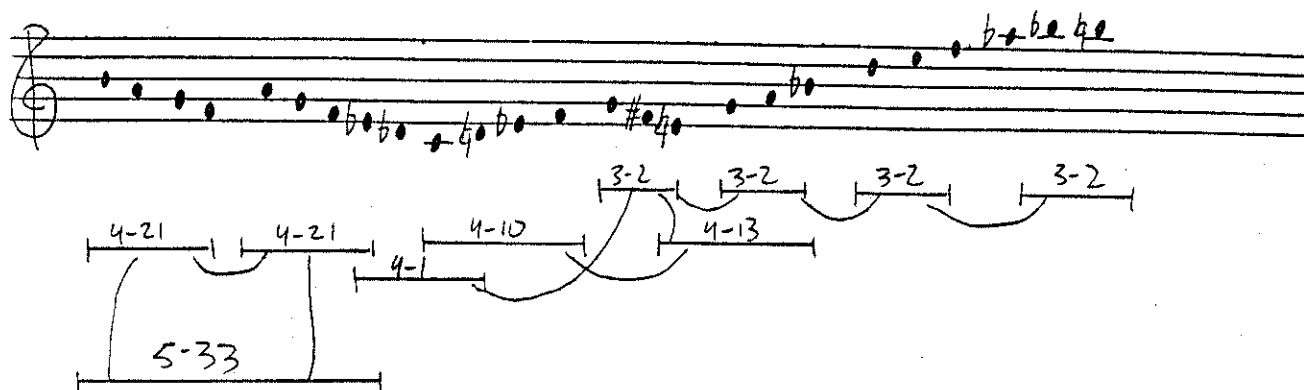


Fig. 32--Segmentation of Sets in mm. 5-9 of "Musingly"

Variation I "Musingly"

An examination of the local connections in Figure 33 reveals an unfolding, through-composed nature to the variation. The structure is most focused in measures 16-27, where the predominant set type is 5-10, and all other set types are related to it. In the material preceding this section of the piece there is a greater variety of set types, which gradually become more focused. An example of this occurs in measures 13-15, where a succession of the set type 3-2 is found. The local connections for the material preceding measures 16-27 reveal many correlations. Set type 5-10 and other related sets are present and perhaps allude to the more focused section that is to come. This signifies an unfolding from a more diffuse intervallic structure into a more focused one.

m 8-13



13-15

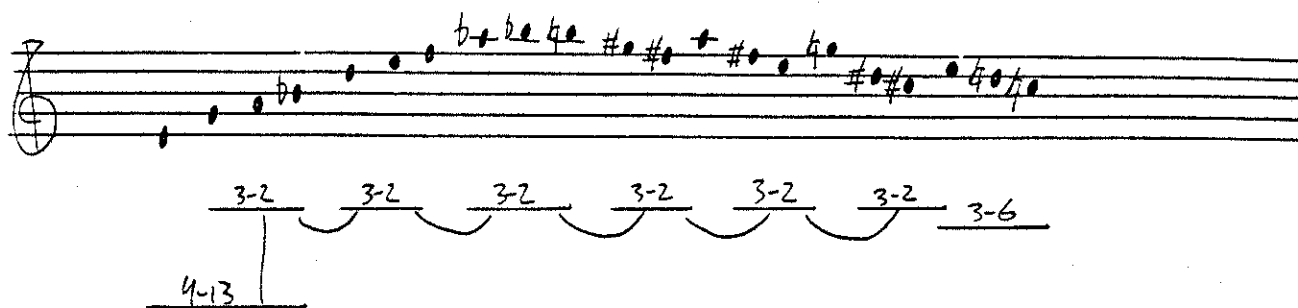


Fig. 33--Continued

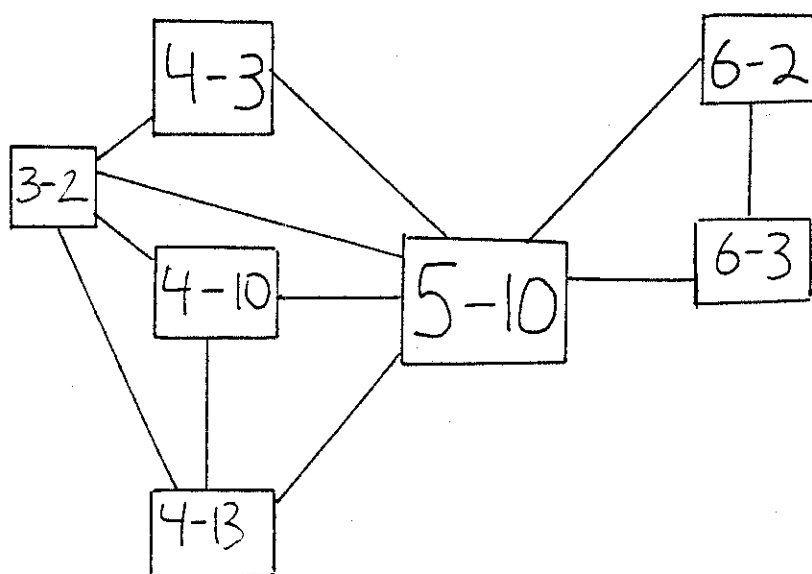


Fig. 34--Focused Network for "Musingly"

Variation II "Very agitated"

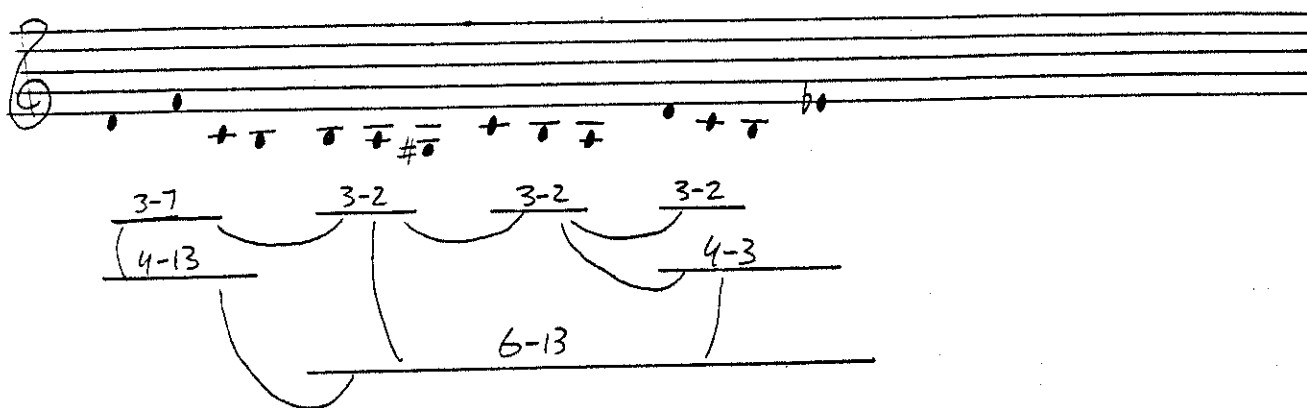
Examination of the local connections for "Very agitated" in Figure 35 reveals a complex structure. The idea of an unfolding continues in this variation. In measures 1-10 the set types are scalar in nature; many are chromatic. This could signify not only an unfolding into a more clearly focused section, as in variation I, but also an opening up of intervals from scalar sets to triadic sets. Measures 11-14 contain a sequence of the same set type: 3-11. This set type has no correlations with the material preceding it

and the material in measures 15-16. This section, measures 15-16, is the most complex of the variation, having few successive correlations. It is followed by a return to the triadic material that precedes it. This signifies another transition, from complex to simple.

The focused network in Figure 36 has set type 5-10 for the focal set. The resulting network reveals a fairly cohesive structure centering around set type 5-10.

The interjecting chords that punctuate each phrase of "Very agitated" are based on the open strings of the guitar: e, a, d, g, b, and e. the five-note set type for these pitches is 5-35. Most of the chords consist of three notes. There are two instances where the chords are related intervally to the phrase they punctuate: measures 2 and 10. In both instances the chords are set type 3-7. This relationship is deceiving, however, since there is little aural correspondence between the two facets of this variation. Figure 37 shows the chords and their set types for "Very agitated."

1-4



5-8

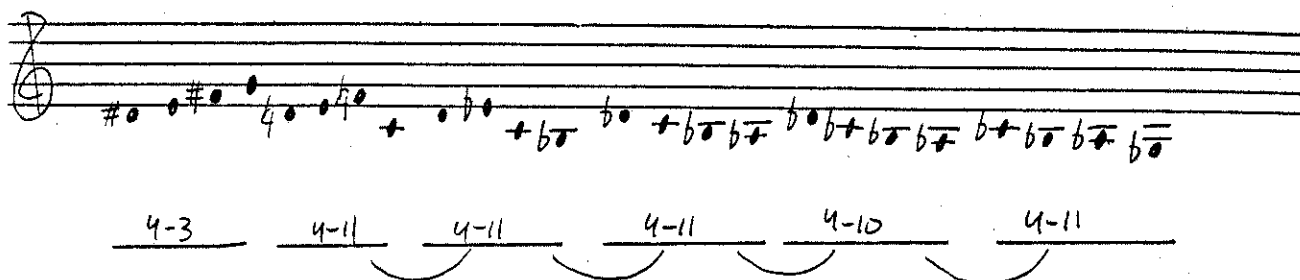
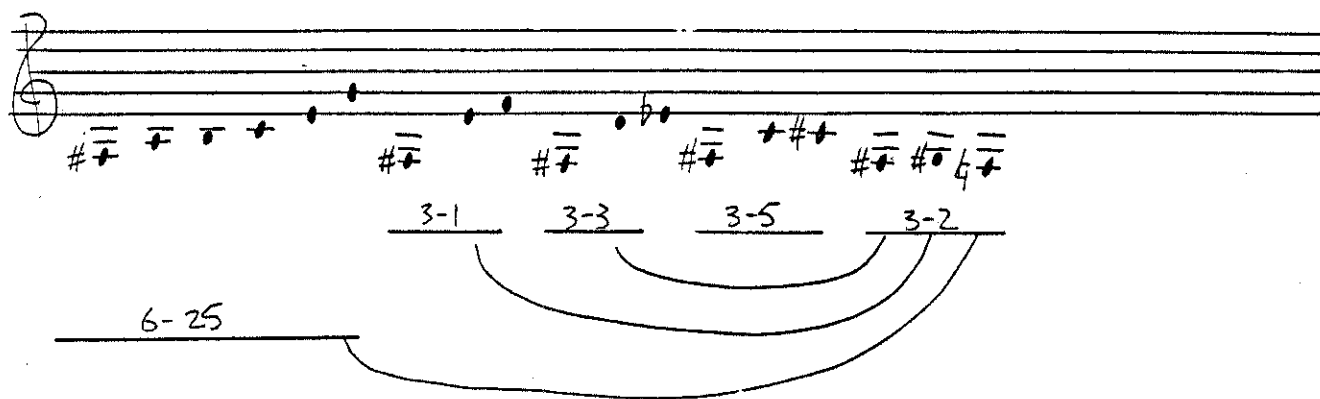


Fig. 35--Local Connections for "Very agitated"

9-10



11-14

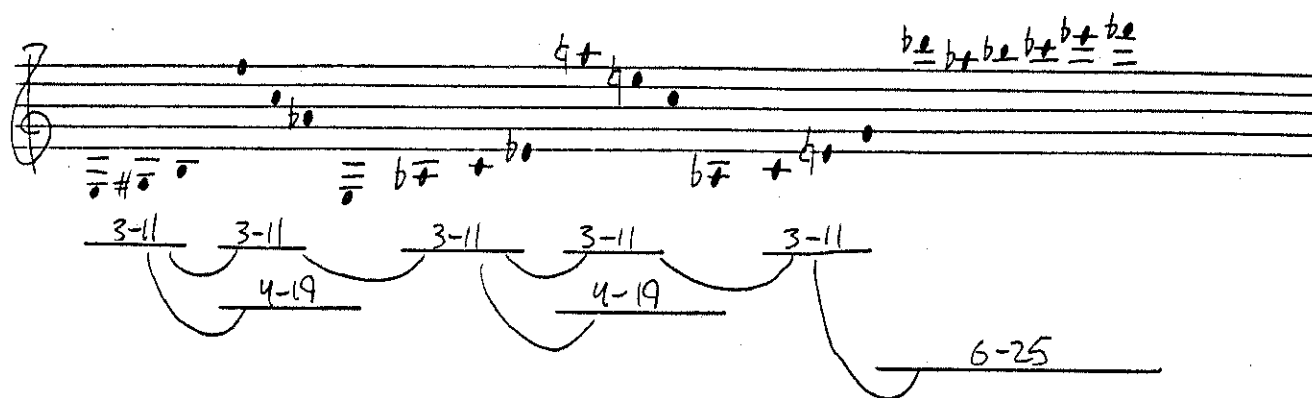


Fig. 35--Continued

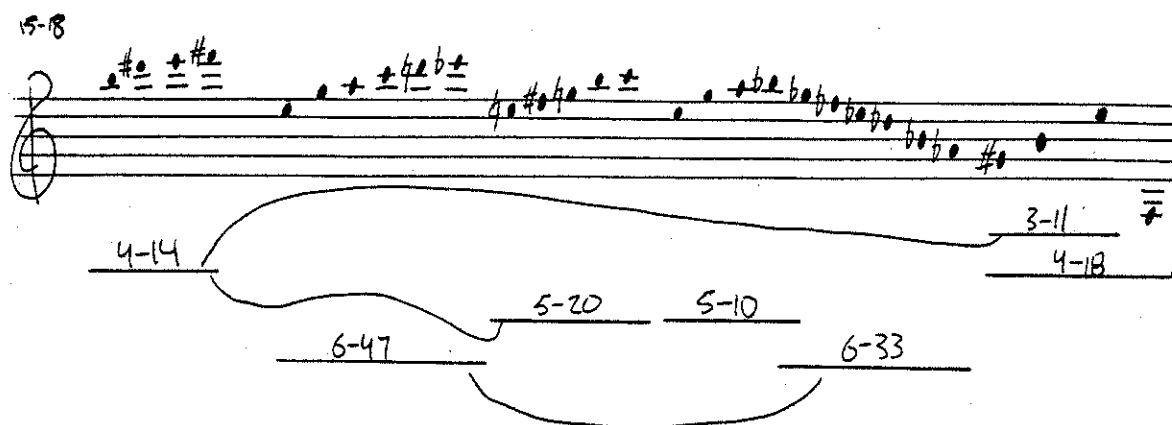


Fig. 35--Continued

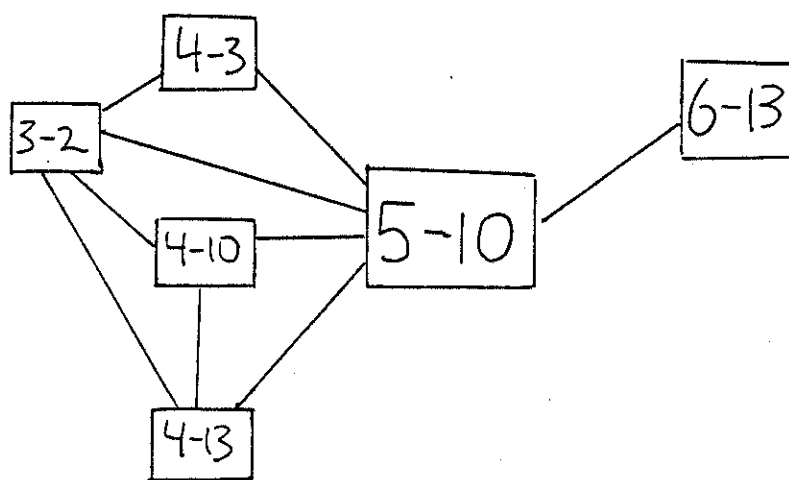


Fig. 36--Focused Network for "Very agitated"

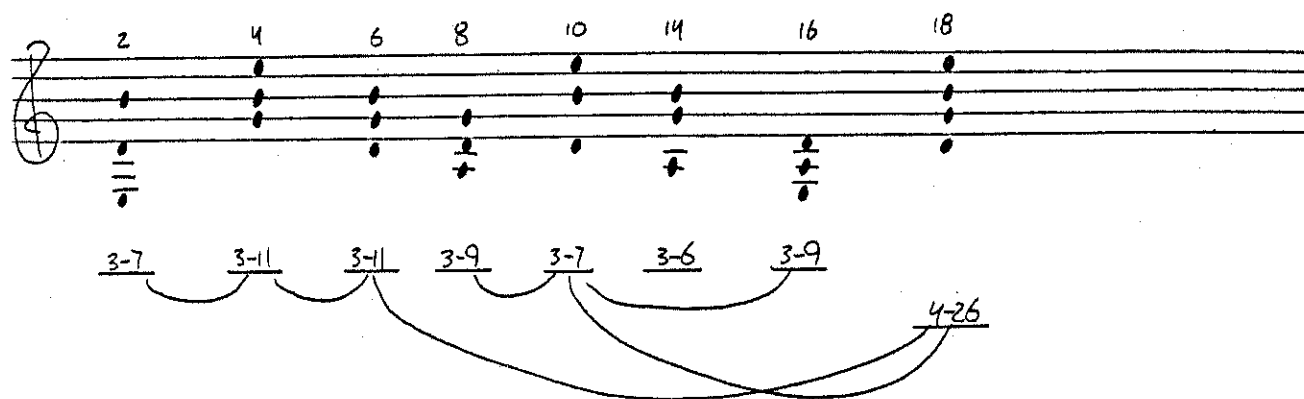


Fig. 37--Chords for "Very agitated"

Variation III "Restless"

Examination of the local connections for "Restless" in Figure 38 reveals two main sections: measures 1-29 and 30-55. Within measures 1-29 there is an unfolding from smaller, three-note set types that are related to larger, unrelated set types. This signifies a progression from simple to complex, the opposite of the trend in the preceding two variations. In measures 30-55 another unfolding occurs. In this case, a progression from dyads to four-note set types and finally a six-note set type in measures 50-54. This section differs from the preceding section in that,

excluding the six-note set, the set types are smaller, and all of them correlate. This signifies a progression to a more focused intervallic structure.

The focused network for "Restless" is shown in Figure 39, with set type 5-25 being the focal set. This network is similar to the one for variation I, revealing a structure based on the octatonic scale. Set type 5-25 is also related to the focal set for variation I: 5-10.

Throughout the variation the accompaniment is based on dyads ranging from a minor second to a minor seventh. In measures 54-58 the solo voice drops out and the accompaniment takes on a more linear role. Each voice of the dyad moves independently of the other, creating different intervallic sets. Figure 40 shows that these sets are related. Interestingly, they do not occur at the same time. This creates a distorted perception of the previously consistent character of the accompaniment.

1-20

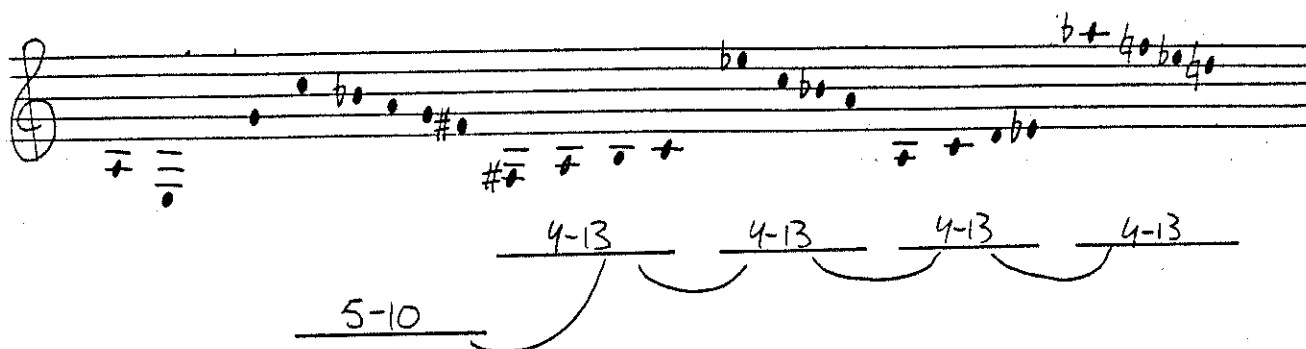
Handwritten musical notation for measures 1-20. The notation is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The melody in the treble clef consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, some with accidentals (sharps and naturals). The bass clef has fewer notes, mostly in the lower register. Below the staff, there are several horizontal lines with numbers and brackets indicating local connections. The connections are: 3-3, 3-2, 3-2, 3-2, 3-2, 3-4, 3-2, and 4-10. Curved lines connect these numbers to specific notes on the staff, showing the sequence of local connections.

21-30

Handwritten musical notation for measures 21-30. The notation is on a grand staff. The melody in the treble clef continues with various notes and accidentals. The bass clef has notes in the lower register. Below the staff, there are horizontal lines with numbers and brackets indicating local connections. The connections are: 5-25, 5-34, 3-2, 3-2, 4-10, 4-10, and 3-9. Curved lines connect these numbers to specific notes on the staff, showing the sequence of local connections.

Fig. 38--Local Connections for "Restless"

32-48



50-55

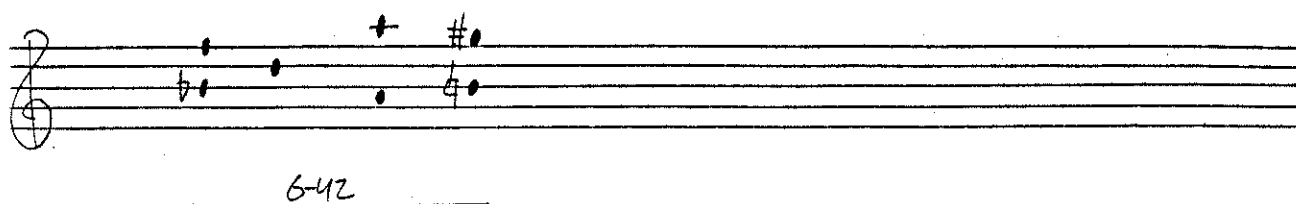


Fig. 38--Continued

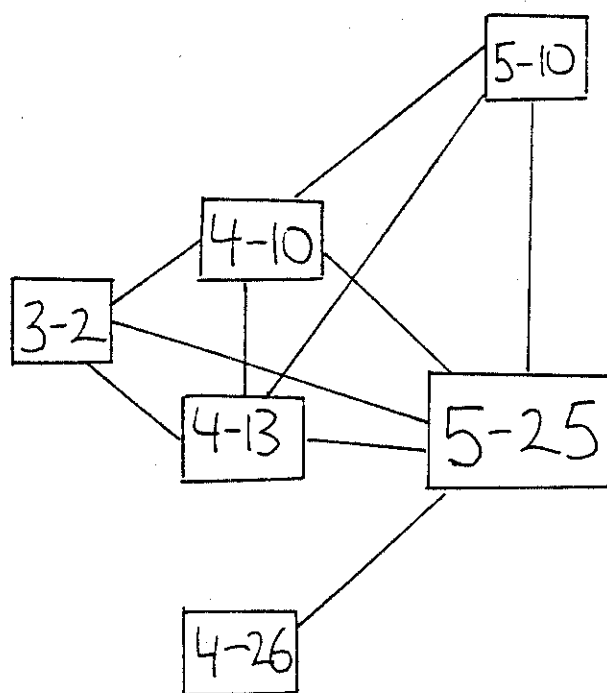


Fig. 39--Focused Network for "Restless"

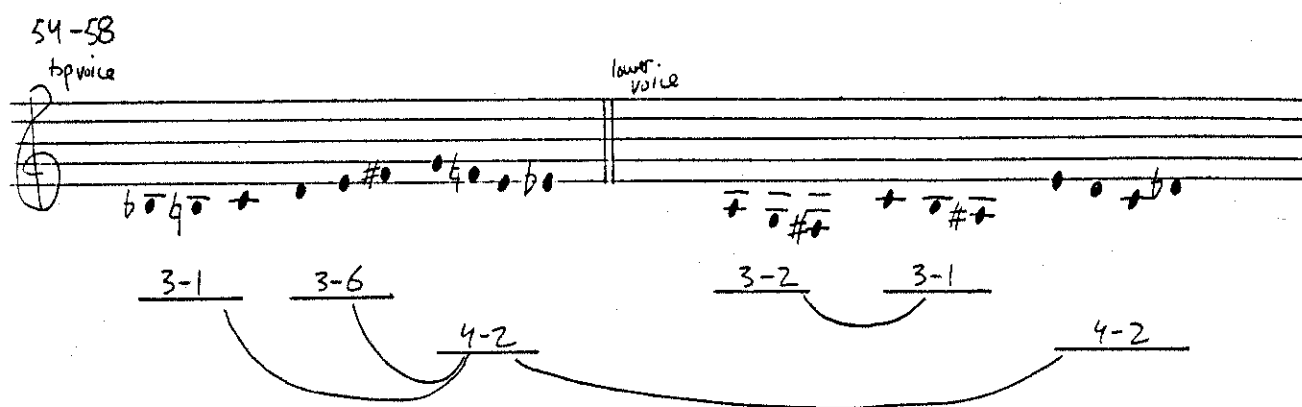


Fig. 40--Set Types for Each Voice of the Accompaniment in mm. 54-58.

Variation IV "Uneasy"

Examination of the local connections in Figure 41 reveals a constantly changing intervallic structure which seems to mirror the sparse, fragmented character of "Uneasy."

Revealed in measures 1-4 is a shift from the set type 3-7 to set types 4-2 and 3-5. In measures 1 and 2 both the linear material and the following chord have the same set type:

3-7. This is the only instance where the linear and chord materials are related intervallically. The connections for measure 5 reveal a symmetrical form, starting with short chromatic sets which progress to larger scalar sets, then back to shorter chromatic sets. This signifies an unfolding, then compression within this measure. In measures 7-9, set types 5-10 and 5-16, among others, emerge, briefly interrupted by set type 4-2. The variation closes with a chord that has a set type 6-26. This constant shifting of intervallic structure does much to distort any perception of consistency or focus in "Uneasy."

The network for "Uneasy," shown in Figure 42, has set types 4-1 and 4-2 for its focal sets. This network reveals that although the intervallic structure of this variation is constantly shifting, its predominant character is chromatic.

Although the chords in "Uneasy" have little correlation with the linear material, they do have much in common with

each other. Figure 43 shows these chords and their set types, with the resulting correlations.

1-4

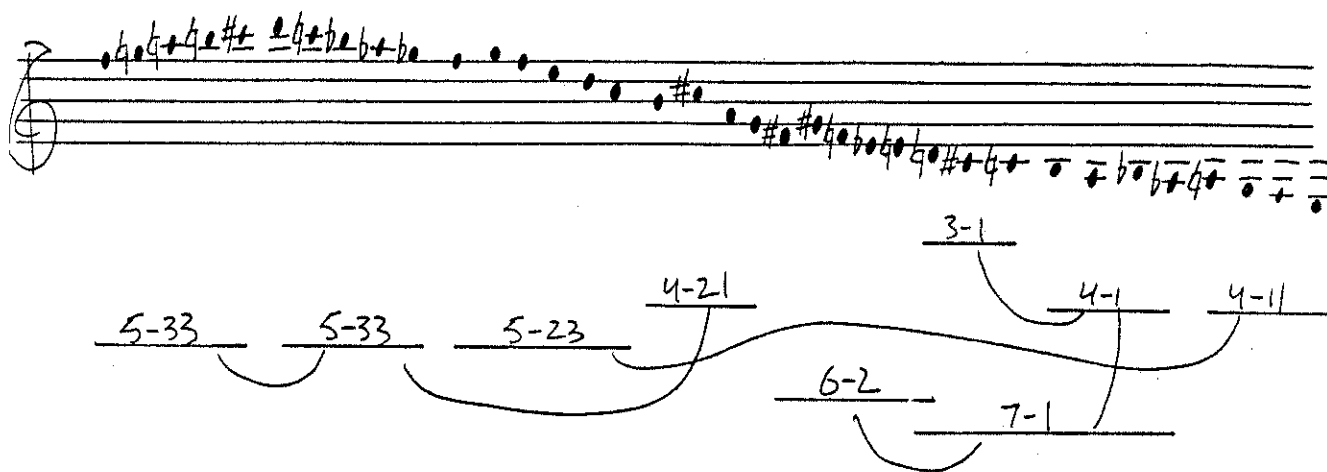
3-7 3-7 3-7 3-7 4-2 4-2 4-2 3-5

m5

3-2 3-2 3-2 3-1 4-1 4-2 4-2 5-1

Fig. 41--Local Connections for "Uneasy"

m5



6-10

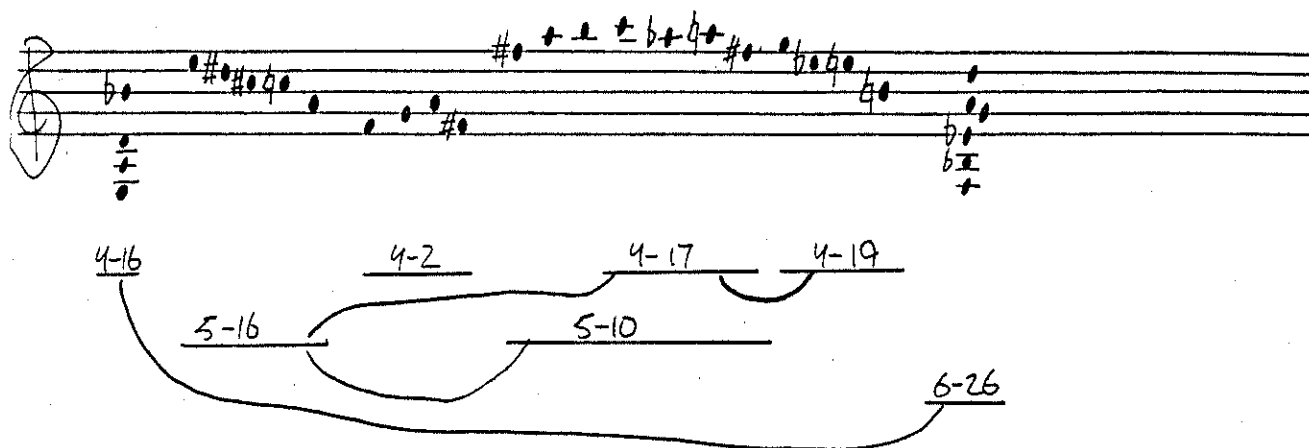


Fig. 41--Continued

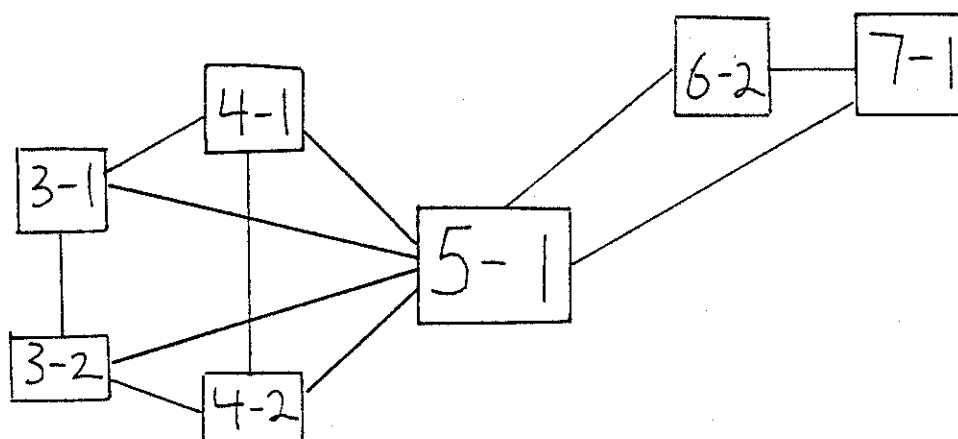


Fig. 42--Focused Network for "Uneasy"

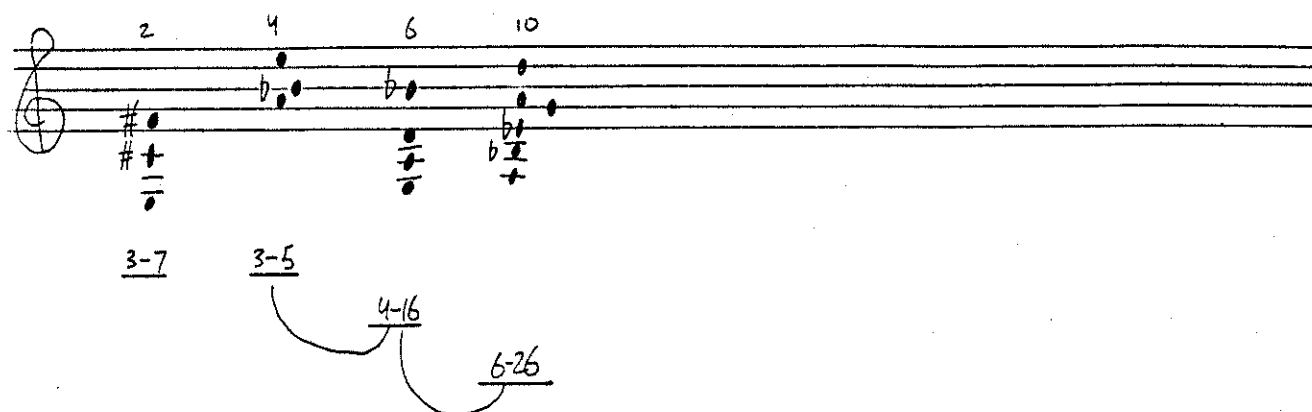


Fig. 43--Chords in "Uneasy"

Variation V "March-like"

Examination of the local connections for "March-like" in Figure 44 reveals a fairly clear picture of unfolding from a more diverse to more focused intervallic context. The connections for measures 1-10 reveal a chromatic nature to this section. In measures 10-15 the intervallic content becomes more diverse. In measures 15-26 the intervallic content is made up entirely of set types 5-10 and 4-13, which are related. This signifies an unfolding from a varied structure to a more clear-cut section based on two common set types.

Figure 45 shows the network for "March-like." The focal set is 4-13, which emerges in measure 12 and is used throughout measures 15-26. The network reveals the structure that is alluded to before measure 15, and is realized in measures 15-26.

The accompaniment is based predominantly on set types 4-22 and 4-26, both related. In addition to being on a different pitch plane than the solo voice, the accompaniment is also on a different intervallic plane; this adds to the distortion of tonal focus. Figure 46 shows the set types of chords, which are constructed from the open strings of the guitar.

1-10

Handwritten interval labels for measures 1-10:

- Measure 1: 3-2
- Measure 2: 4-1
- Measure 3: 3-2
- Measure 4: 3-2
- Measure 5: 4-3
- Measure 6: 3-6
- Measure 7: 3-6
- Measure 8: 6-2
- Measure 9: 6-1
- Measure 10: 6-1

10-15

Handwritten interval labels for measures 10-15:

- Measure 10: 3-6
- Measure 11: 3-6
- Measure 12: 5-34
- Measure 13: 4-13
- Measure 14: 3-4
- Measure 15: 3-2

Fig. 44--Local Connections for "March-like"

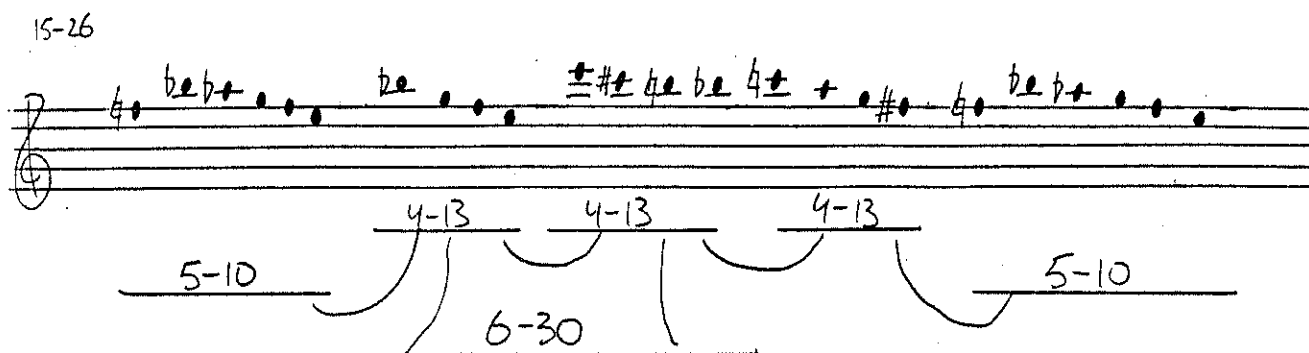


Fig. 44--Continued

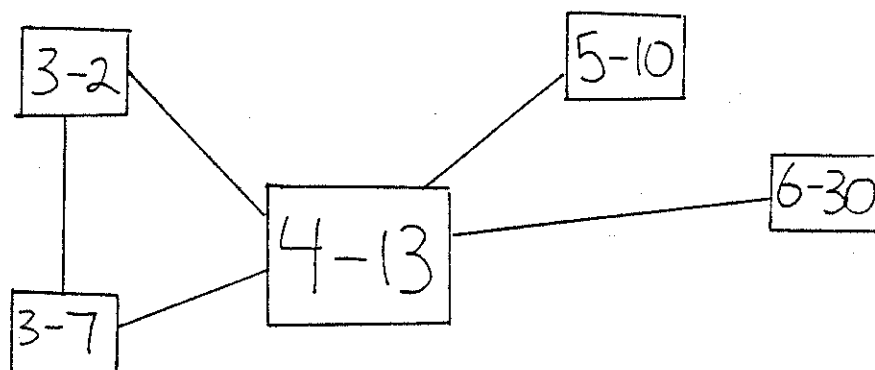


Fig. 45--Focused Network for "March-like"

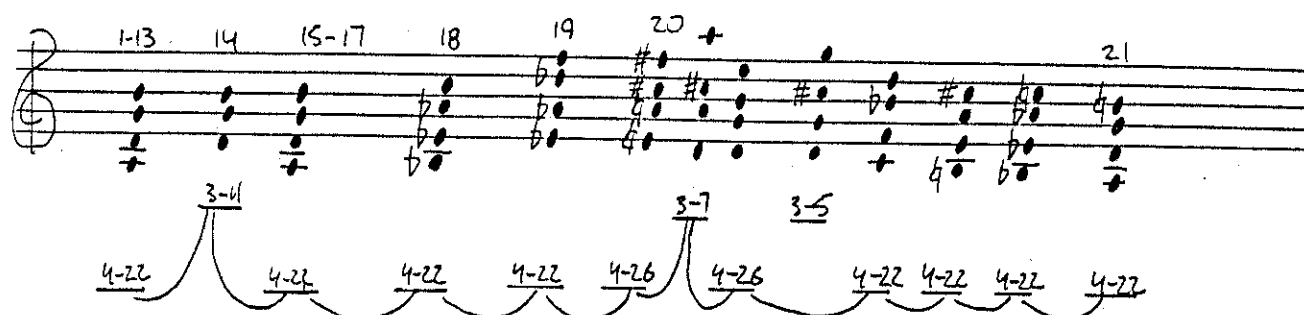


Fig. 46--Chords for "March-like"

Variation VI "Dreaming"

"Dreaming" has two contrasting textures that alternate throughout the variation. Examination of the local connections for this variation in Figure 47 reveals some interesting similarities between these two ideas, which on the surface seem unrelated. Again, an unfolding occurs in both ideas. In measures 1-4 both ideas start and end with their own respective set type. The material between these common sets does not correlate, designating the beginning and ending sets as bookends, which encloses a complex and unrelated intervallic structure. This complexity diminishes in

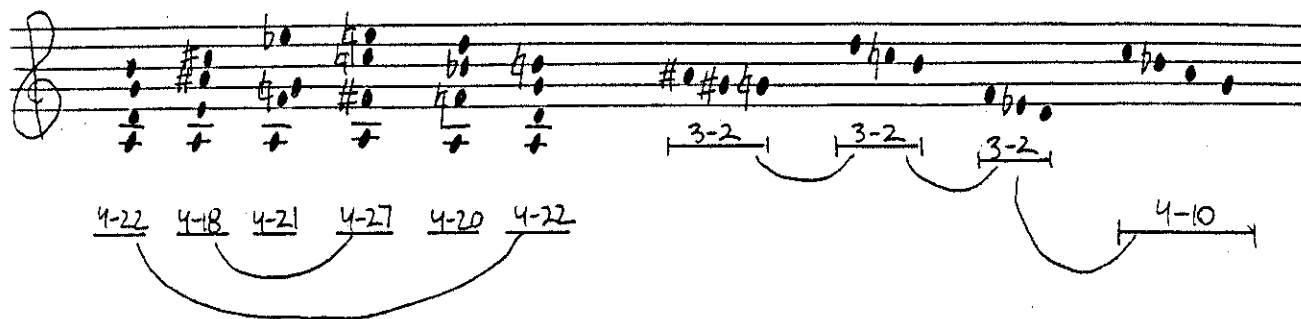
measures 5-7, where more correlations occur between sets, signifying a more related and simplified structure. Hence the idea of unfolding from a diverse to a more unified structure is displayed.

In measures 1, 3, 5, and 7, along with the vertical sonorities, there is linear material which more often than not bears no relationship to the set types from the chords. The one exception occurs in measure 1. These linear sets are displayed in the local connections graphs for these measures in Figure 48.

Figure 49 shows a network for each of the three facets of "Dreaming": the vertical sonorities in measures 1, 3, 5, 7, and 8, the linear material from these measures, and the linear material from measures 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. Also presented is an attempt to combine all three of these facets into a central network. The networks for both measures 1, 3, 5, 7, and 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 both have diatonic set types for focal sets. The linear material from measures 1, 3, 5, and 7 is more chromatic in nature. The resulting network from combining these three facets reveals a network almost completely derived from the diatonic set 7-35. Related to this, the variation is based on sets from combinations of open strings on the guitar, a device that up to now Britten has relegated to the accompaniment of some of the preceding variations. The open strings together compromise a nearly

3

Linear



5

Linear

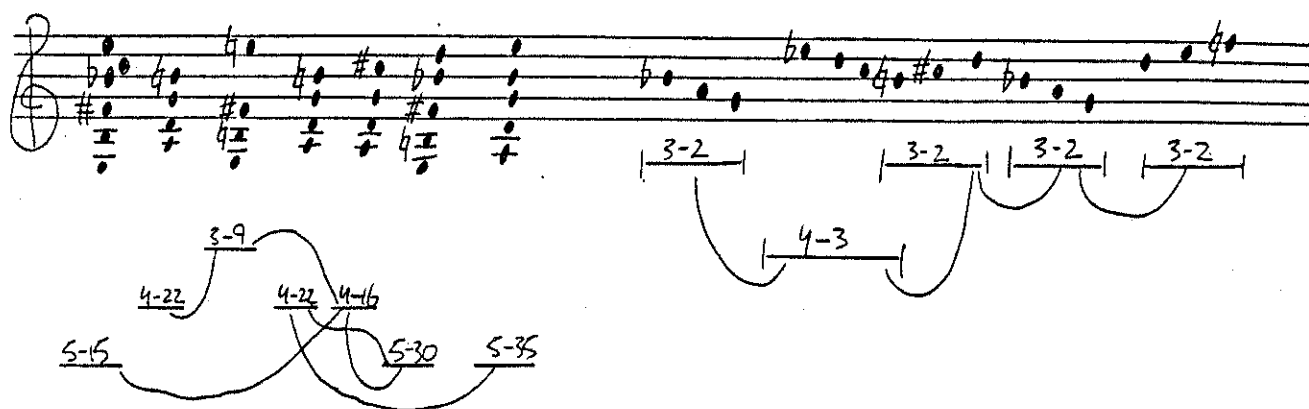


Fig. 47--Continued

6

Staff 6: A musical staff with a treble clef. It contains several notes with accidentals (sharps and naturals). Below the staff, there are interval markings: 5-27, 4-29, 4-14, 3-2, 4-26, 4-26, and 4-3. Curved lines connect these interval markings to specific notes on the staff.

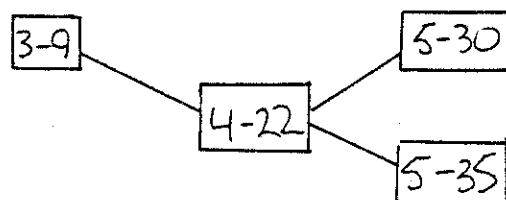
7

Linear

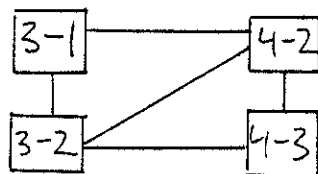
Staff 7: A musical staff with a treble clef. It contains several notes with accidentals (flats and naturals). Below the staff, there are interval markings: 4-22, 4-18, 4-12, 4-22, 4-2, 3-1, and 4-3. Curved lines connect these interval markings to specific notes on the staff.

Fig. 47--Continued

m. 1, 3, 5, 7



Linear from m. 1, 3, 5, 7



m. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10

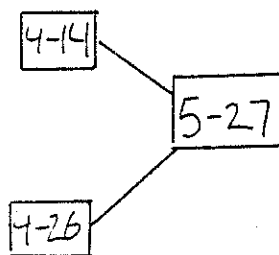


Fig. 48--Networks for "Dreaming"

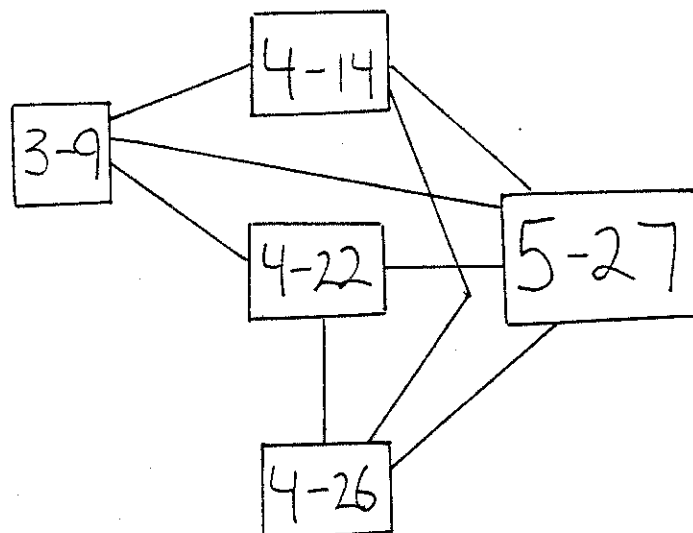


Fig. 48--Continued

Variation VII "Gently rocking"

An examination of the local connections for "gently rocking" in Figure 49, reveals the unfolding trend once again. A passage from a complex and unrelated to a more simple and unified intervallic structure occurs in this variation. The connections for the solo voice reveal this unfolding very clearly. In measures 1-7 there is only one correlation out of seven sets. This implies a very complex and through-composed structure. In measures 8-14 more correlations occur along with a sequence. This leads into the most focused

section of the piece, measures 15-19. Here, the intervallic structure contains many correlations, starting with three-note, then four-note, then five-note set types, all related (a small scale unfolding in itself). In measures 20-23 a different but related intervallic structure occurs as the solo voice seems to take on a secondary role in relationship to the accompaniment.

The network for "Gently rocking," shown in Figure 50, shows a structure based on measures 15-19. Set type 4-19 is the focal set. There are six different four-note set types in this variation and none of them are related. This points again to the relative unrelatedness of the first two thirds of this variation.

The accompaniment is based on the open strings of the guitar (except for measure 22) and is sounded one note at a time.

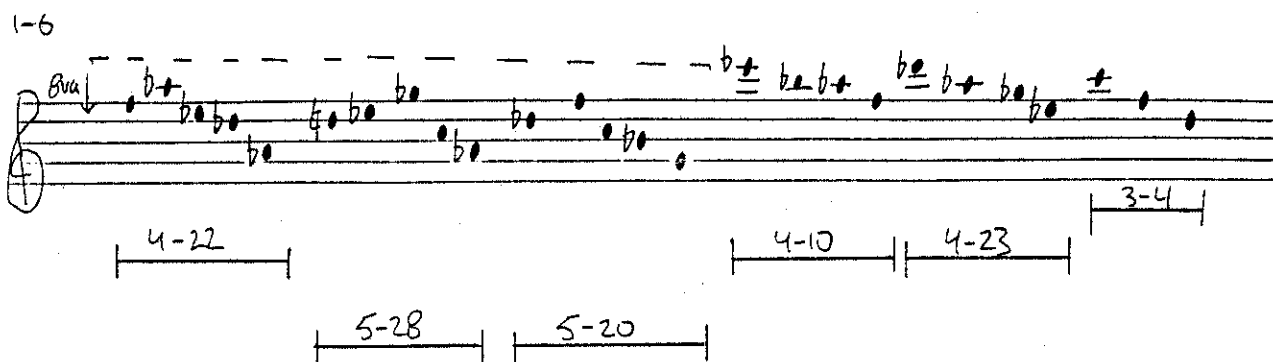
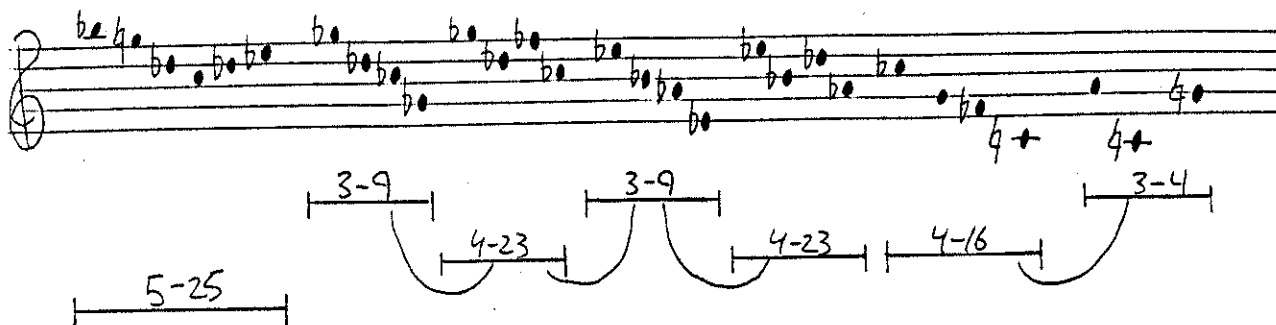


Fig. 49--Local Connections for "Gently rocking"

7-14



15-19

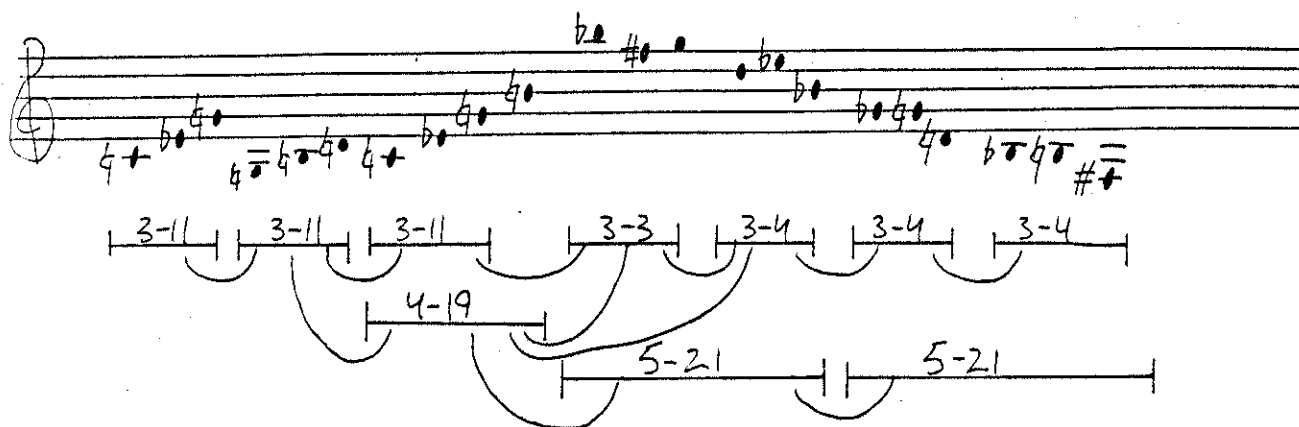


Fig. 49--Continued

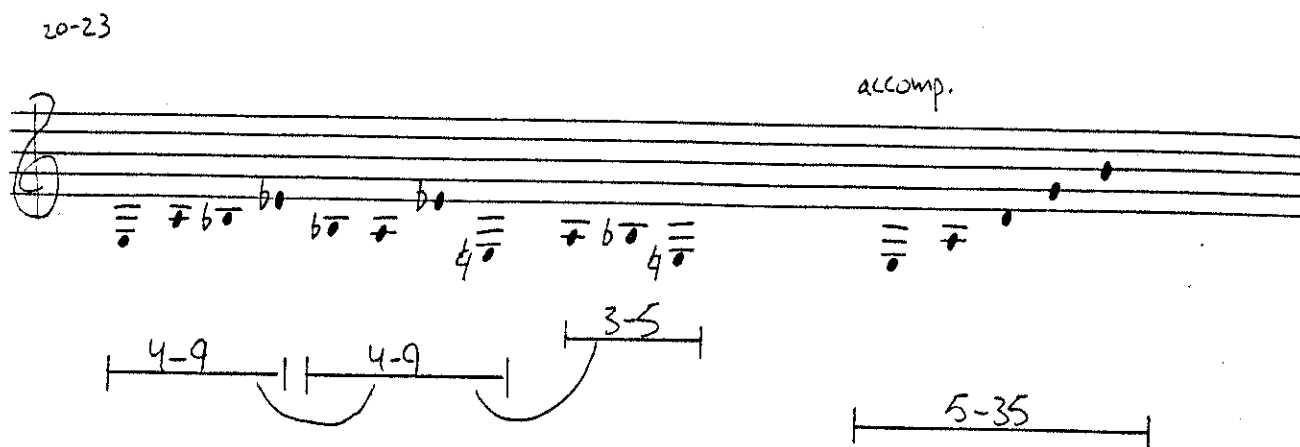


Fig. 49--Continued

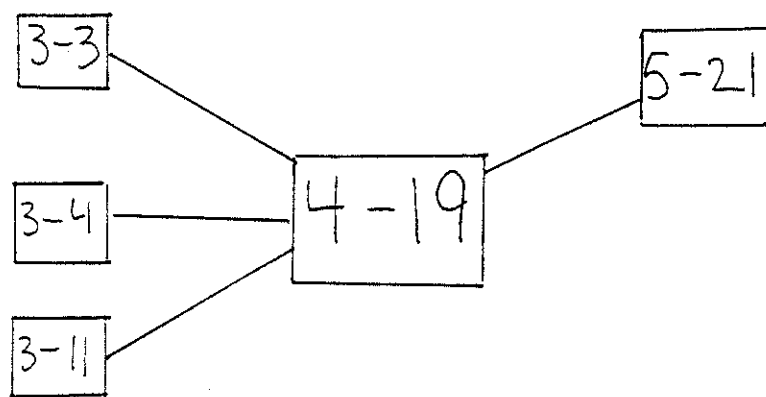


Fig. 50--Focused Network for "Gently rocking"

Variation VIII "Passacaglia"

As mentioned previously, this variation is the focal point of the work, and also is of the greatest scope. For ease of discussion and analysis, it will be divided into five sections: measures 1-16, 17-26, 27-29, 30-35, and 36-42. The local connections and a focal network will be shown for each section. Also shown will be a focal network for the entire variation. Throughout the variation the ostinato, set type 6-26, alternates with the other material.

Section One

The local connections for section one, shown in Figure 51, reveal an unfolding. The unfolding occurs in measures 1-12, where out of a series of mostly unrelated linear sets there emerges a section of chords whose set types show many correlations. After this, section one ends with a number of linear sets which have a gradual decrease in relatedness. This signifies an unfolding of and then disintegration of unity.

The network for this section, shown in Figure 52, reveals a diatonic intervallic structure. Within section one there are periodic instances where the ostinato set type (6-26) and the developing material set types correlate. The

focal set correlates with set type 6-26.

1-5

1-5

6-26 4-5 6-8 6-1 3-6 3-6 3-6 3-6 4-2

6-8

6-8

3-11 3-2 4-5 5-5 5-23 6-39 6-26

Fig. 51--Local Connections for Section One

12 Linear

5-10

5-1

5-24

6-26

13-16

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a melody consisting of quarter and eighth notes. Below the staff, there are several bracketed intervals with numbers: 3-2, 3-4, 3-7, 3-7, 4-1, 5-12, 6-26, 5-23, 4-11, and 5-10. These intervals are connected by curved lines, suggesting a sequence of intervals. There is also a small diagram of a scale with a plus sign and a minus sign.

Fig. 51--Continued

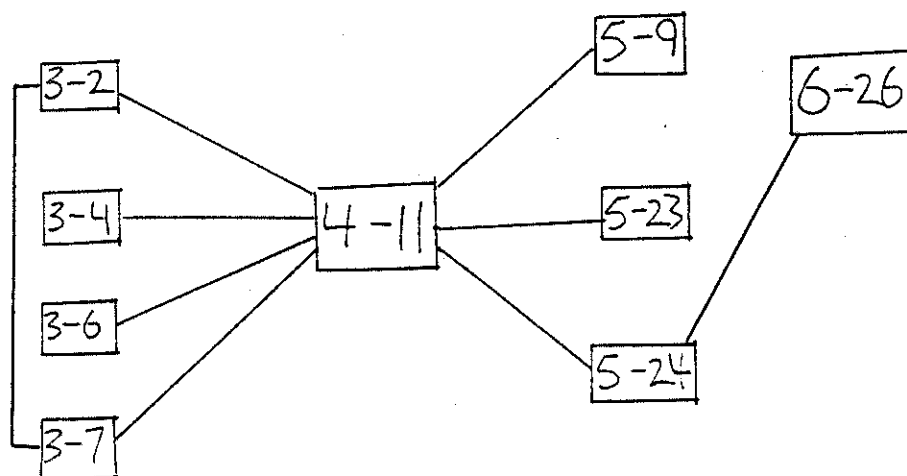


Fig. 52--Focused Network for Section One

Section Two

The local connections for section two, shown in Figure 53, reveal a form that is similar to section one's. Like section one, section two, although complex, gradually settles into a more correlated structure. After this unification of sorts, there is a gradual disintegration of structural relatedness, which leads into the next section.

The focal network for section two, shown in Figure 54, reveals a structure, like section one, that is based on the diatonic set type 7-35. In this section there are, as com-

pared with section one, more instances of correlations with the ostinato set type 6-26. Again the focal set type correlates with the ostinato set type.

17-19

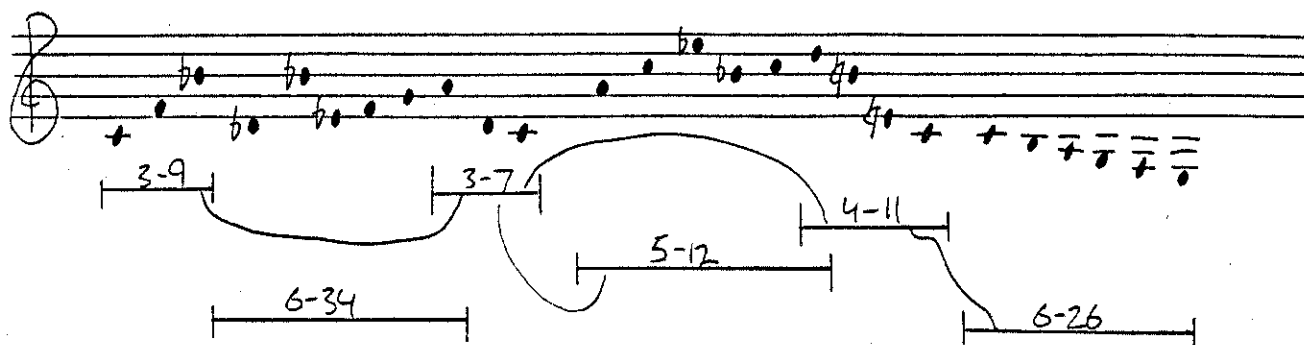
Handwritten musical notation for measures 17-19. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. The notes are: 17: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5; 18: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5; 19: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5. Below the staff, brackets indicate set types: 4-20 (measures 17-18), 4-26 (measures 18-19), 4-22 (measure 19), 4-23 (measure 19), 6-1 (measure 19), and 6-26 (measure 19). A large curved line connects the 4-26 bracket to the 6-26 bracket.

20

Handwritten musical notation for measures 20-21. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. The notes are: 20: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5; 21: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5. Above the staff, the words "top", "bottom", and "last beat" are written. Below the staff, brackets indicate set types: 3-3 (measures 20-21), 5-23 (measures 20-21), 3-9 (measures 20-21), 4-29 (measures 20-21), 4-29 (measures 20-21), 5-33 (measures 20-21), and 6-2 (measures 20-21). A curved line connects the 5-23 bracket to the 3-9 bracket.

Fig. 53--Local Connections for Section Two

23-24



24-26

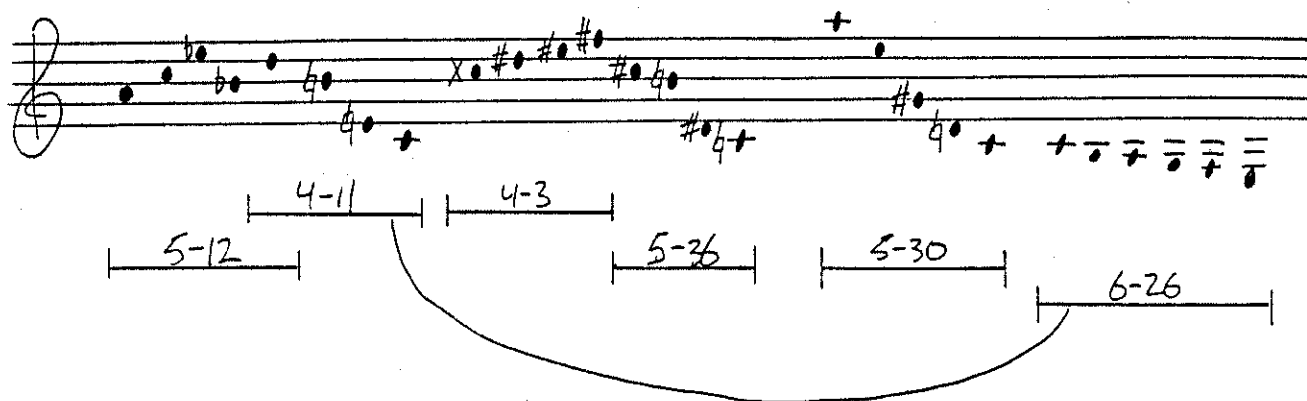


Fig. 53--Continued

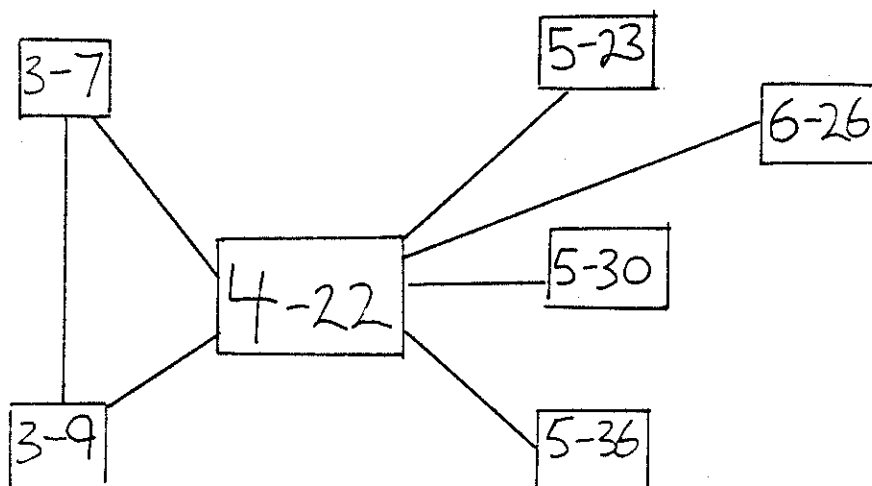


Fig. 54--Focused Network for Section Two

Section Three

The local connections for section three, shown in Figure 55, reveal an unfolding on a smaller scale. Each measure has a similar sequence of set types. Each measure has in common a disintegration at the end, usually with a set type that is more chromatic than the previous set types. The structure as a whole in this section is simpler because of less variety of set types.

The focal network for section three, shown in Figure 56, reveals the much simpler intervallic structure that is

mentioned above. The focal set is 4-29, and besides this set only two other set types are in the network: 6-26 and 3-8. All the sets in this network are diatonic in nature. Again, the focal set type correlates with the ostinato set type.

27-28

Handwritten musical notation for measures 27-28 on a single staff. The notation includes various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and set theory labels (4-29, 4-23, 5-15, 3-8, 4-29, 4-23, 6-41) connected by curved lines indicating relationships between different segments of the melody.

29

Handwritten musical notation for measure 29 on a single staff. The notation includes various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and set theory labels (4-29, 3-8, 4-29, 4-29, 7-1, 6-26) connected by curved lines indicating relationships between different segments of the melody.

Fig. 55--Local Connections for Section Three

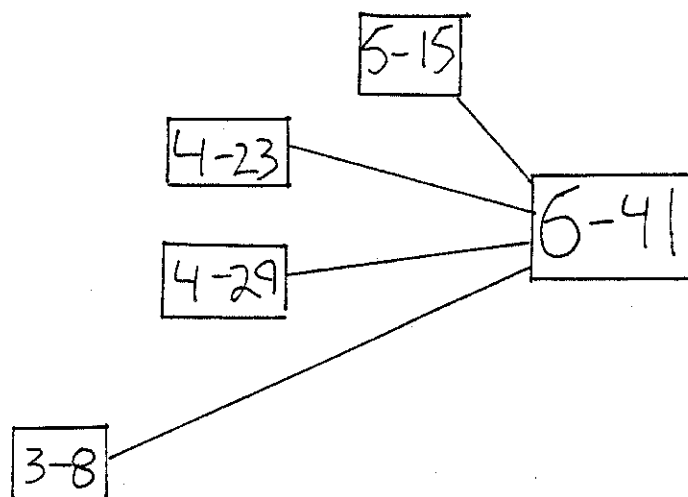


Fig. 56--Focused Network for Section Three

Section Four

This section, chordal in nature, has a greater variety of set types than section three. The local connections for it, shown in Figure 57, reveal a fairly uniform, related structure with many correlations. There is a gradual shift from chords with three-note set types to chords with four-note and five-note set types.

The focused network for section four, shown in Figure 58, reveals a diatonic structure, with many correlations. In this case the focal set is 6-26, the ostinato set type.

The correlation between 6-26 and other sets seems to increase as the section progresses.

30-32



33-35

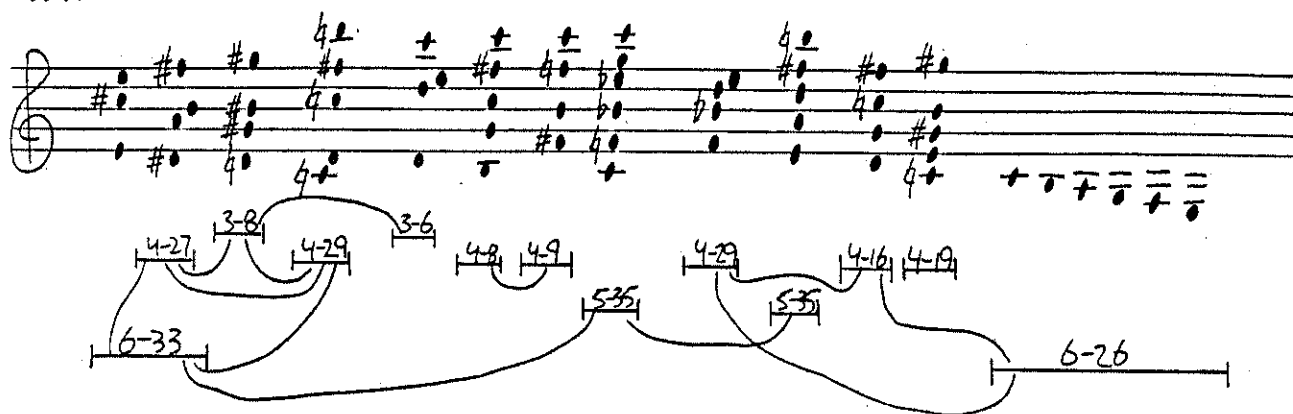


Fig. 57--Local Connections for Section Four

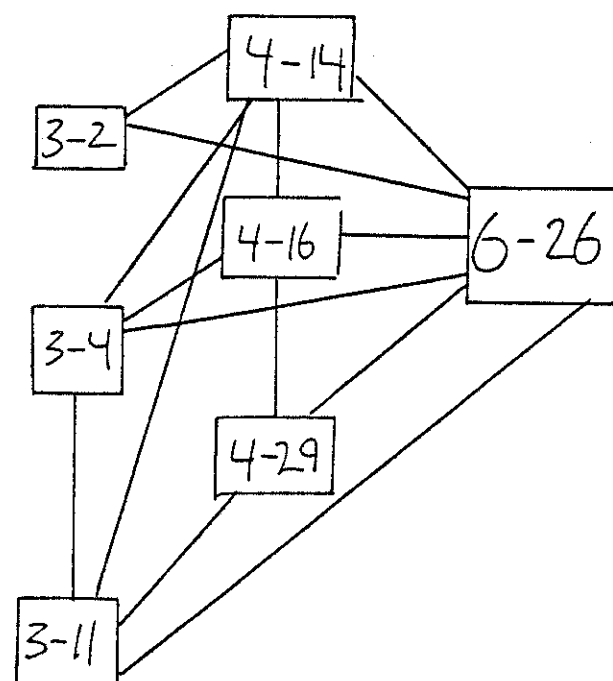
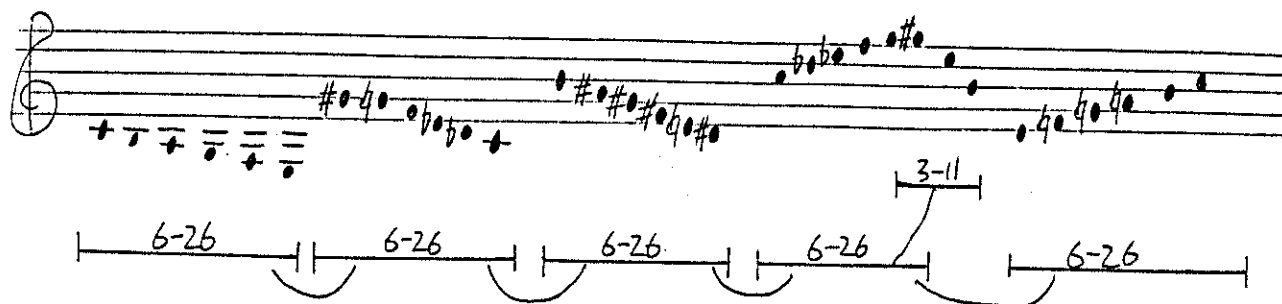


Fig. 58--Focused Network for Section Four

Section Five

The local connections for this section, shown in Figure 59, show that it is based almost exclusively on set type 6-26. The only other set type is 3-11, the major triad set type. This is an E-major triad, which alludes to the key of the Dowland song. This, obviously, is the most uniform of all the sections of this variation. There is, then, a large scale unfolding from complex to simple in this variation.

36-37



37-38

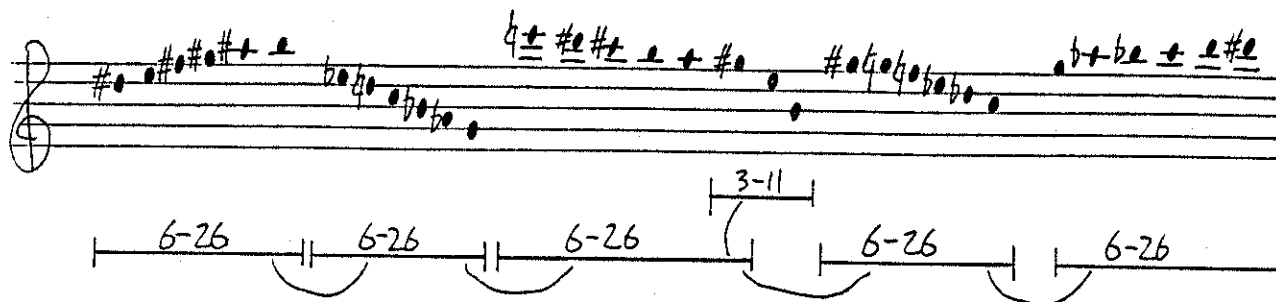


Fig. 59--Local Connections for Section Five

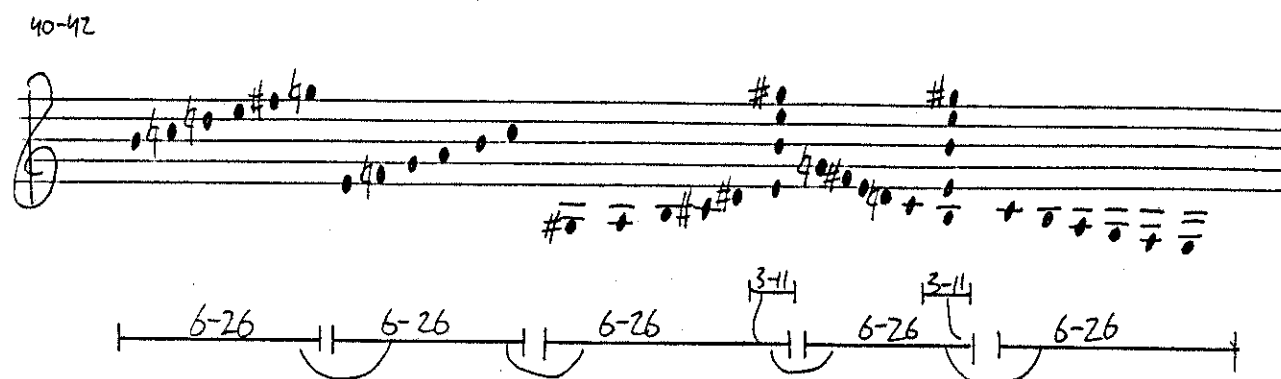
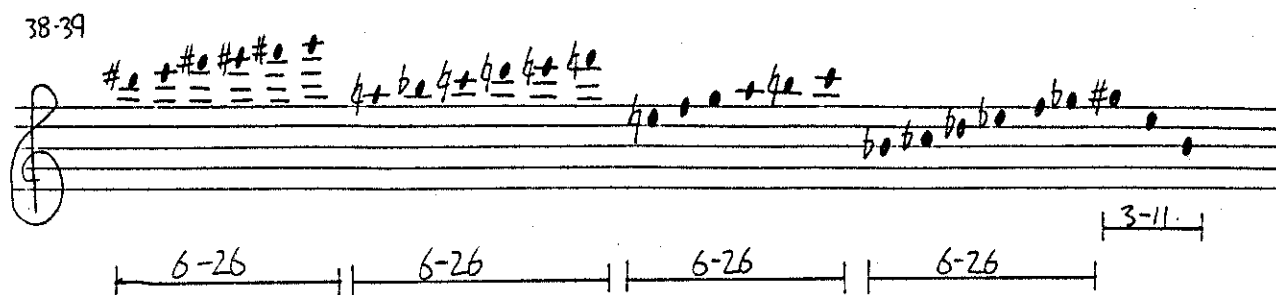


Fig. 59--Continued

The focused network for "Passacaglia," shown in Figure 60, reveals a very clear diatonic structure centering around set type 5-24.

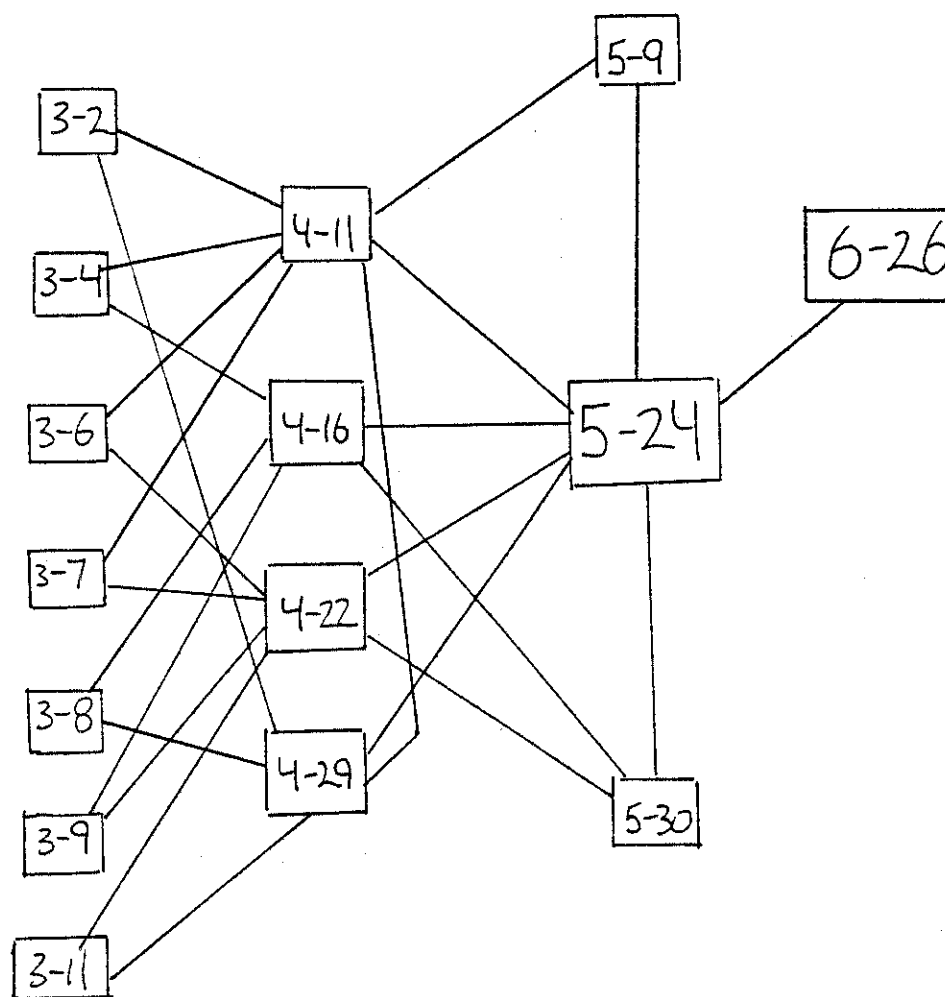


Fig. 60--Focused Network for "Passacaglia"

CHAPTER IV

REDUCTIVE ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to reveal the underlying connections of focal pitches within the linear material of Nocturnal.

The criteria used to determine a focal or prominent pitch (in order of importance) are as follows: registral prominence of the highest or lowest pitch in surrounding material; agogic stress of a note greater in duration than preceding notes; metric stress of a note falling on a strong beat in a perceptible meter; prominence of a new pitch class; and the repetition of a perceptible pattern in a local context. These prominent pitches will be graphed, and any patterns or connections suggested by these will be shown on the graph.

Variation I "Musingly"

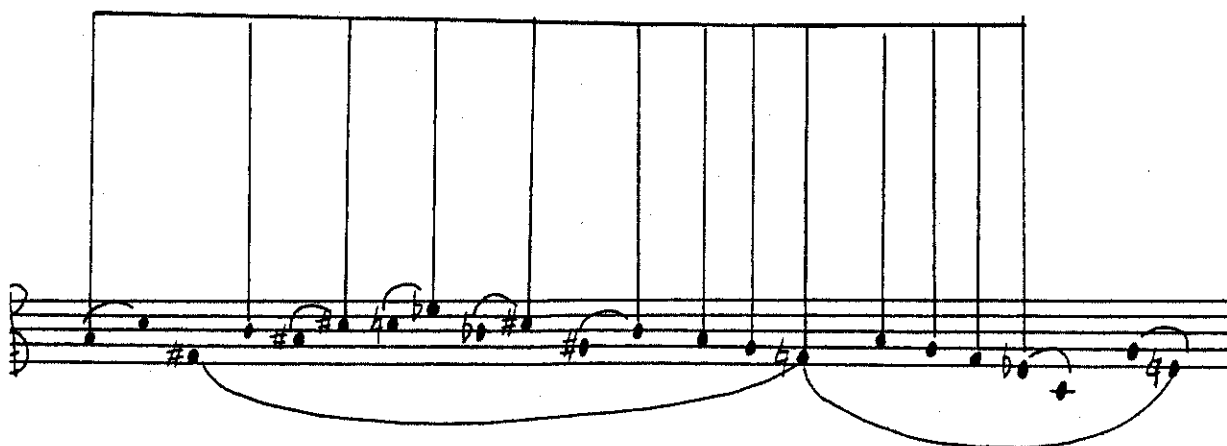
By observing the prominent pitch graph for "Musingly," shown in Figure 61, it is possible to detect three patterns: a series of minor thirds that occur on a surface level; an ascending or descending fragment from a whole-tone scale that occurs on a broader level; and an interval of a perfect

fourth between two pitches. By themselves, these patterns seem insignificant, but throughout the course of the ensuing analysis it will become apparent that a great deal of the surface material is made up of either series of minor thirds or series of perfect fourths. The movement of these series of fourths and thirds many times outlines a prominent whole-tone scale.

In measures 1-9 a series of minor thirds is noticeable on a surface level. Apparent on a wider ranging level is a whole-tone scale which starts on the pitch a in measure 1, ascends to the pitch E-flat in measure 6, and then descends an octave to E-flat in measure 10. The series of minor thirds in a sense create the whole tone scale by moving up or down by whole-steps. In measures 11-15, a similar layering of these two patterns is apparent, with a whole-tone scale descending from B to G in measure 14. The whole-tone scale stops at G, but a short time later F is a prominent pitch (in measure 16). The whole-tone scale in this case is interrupted, then completed, an idea that is used often in this work. In measure 16 a perfect fourth is outlined by the prominent pitches F and C. These pitches are played over an accompaniment in the key of E major, creating a bi-tonal effect. In measure 17 a series of minor thirds interrupts the perfect fourth pattern and a diminished triad is outlined. In measures 17-25 all the linear material is

based on series of minor thirds, with a number of diminished triads being outlined. An unfolding from layering and alternation of the above mentioned patterns to the sole use of one pattern (the series of minor thirds) occurs in this variation. The variation closes with a repeat of measure 16 (the bi-tonal conflict between E and F). The last pitches to be introduced into the linear activity are F in measure 9 and E in measure 12. These allude to the tonal conflict that follows.

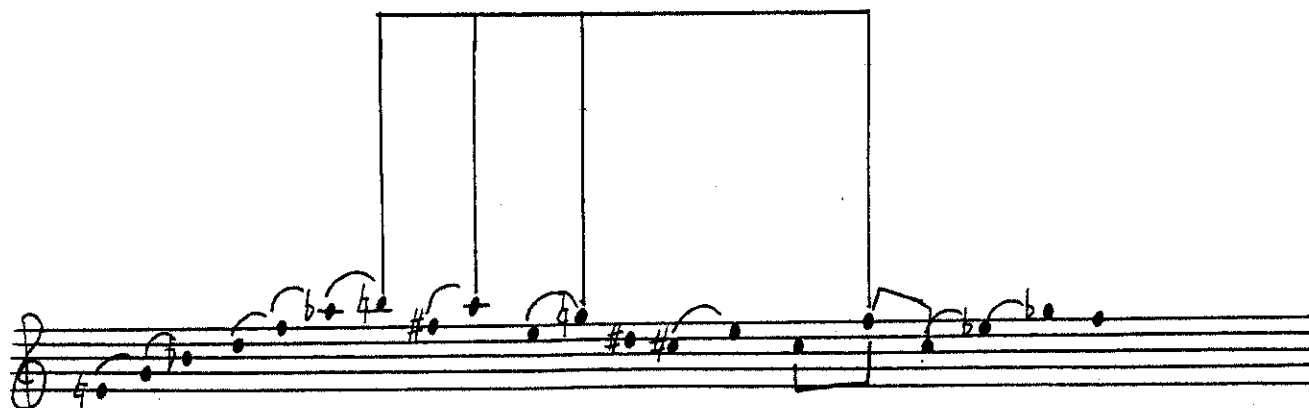
m 1-12



— = $\frac{1}{2}$ step
 ∩ = minor third
 — = whole tone
 ▭ = perfect 4th

Fig. 61--Prominent Pitches for "Musingly"

m 13-16



m 17-28

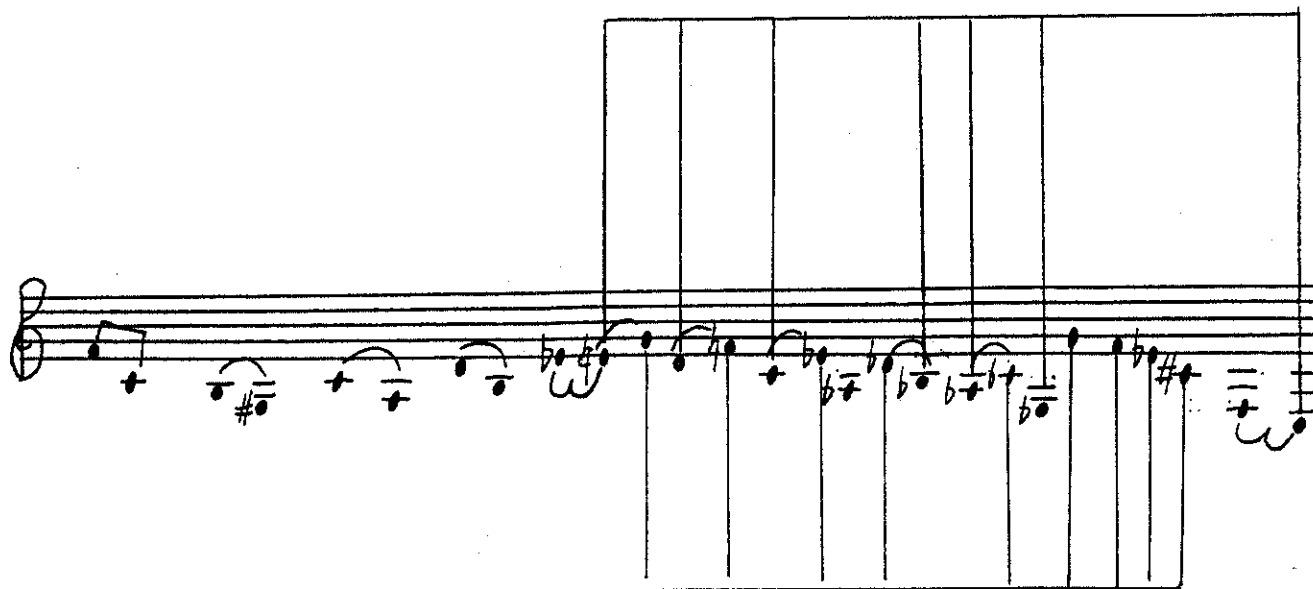


Fig. 61--Continued

Variation II "Very agitated"

Examination of Figure 62 reveals that the patterns or building blocks discovered in variation I are apparent in "Very agitated" as well. The surface construction of measure 1 is a perfect fourth on the pitches F and C. This shows some continuity between variations I and II. In measure 3 a series of minor thirds is outlined by prominent pitches. Starting in measure 5 there is a series of minor thirds that descend by a whole-step, outlining two whole-tone scales. One of these starts on E in measure 5 and descends to low E (the sixth and lowest string of the guitar) in measure 11. This descending scale leads into a very structurally contrasting section. Starting in measure 11 there is a tonal conflict between the following keys: E major/F minor, A-flat major/A minor, and C major/D-flat minor. In measure 15 a diminished triad is outlined by registrally prominent pitches. In measure 17 the tonality of E major is obvious. The variation closes with a conflict between the keys of E major and F minor. The pitch F is has an important function in this variation as it foreshadows the E major/F minor tonal conflict twice: in measures 10 and 17. The last pitches to be introduced into the linear activity are B-flat and D-flat in measure 5. They are part of the descending series of minor thirds discussed earlier.

m 1-11



m 11-15

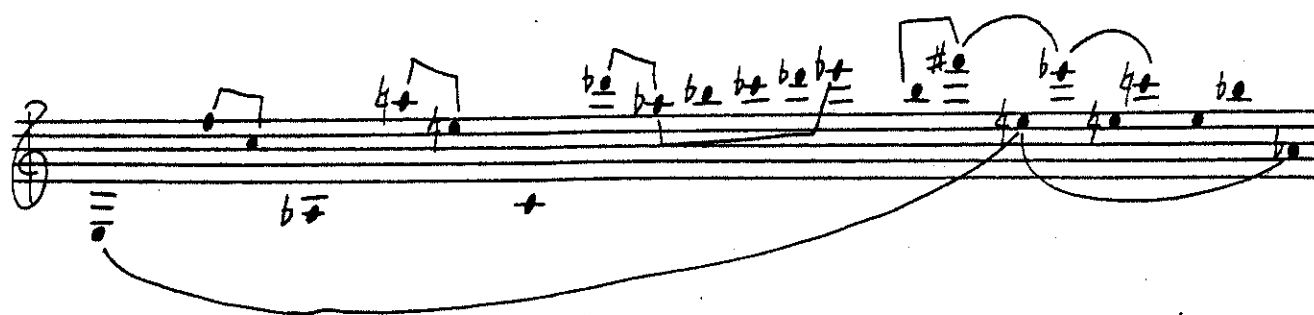

 $m = \frac{1}{2} \text{ step}$

Fig. 62--Prominent Pitches for "Very agitated"

m 17-22



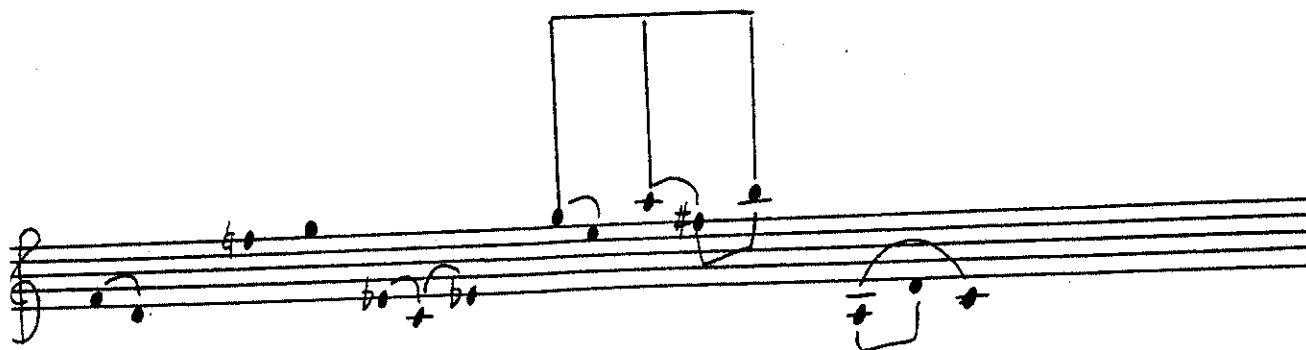
Fig. 62--Continued

Variation III "Restless"

Examination of Figure 63 reveals, in measures 1-30, a gradual progression from short patterns that outline both the minor third motive and briefly an ascending whole-tone scale fragment (in measures 10-13), to a longer pattern that is constructed of a series of minor thirds that descend by whole-steps, creating a descending whole-tone scale that is prominent because of registral and metric stress. This whole-tone scale in measures 26-28 is an extension of the whole-tone fragment that occurs in measures 10-13. The

highest note from the fragment in 10-13 is b above the staff, and the highest note from the scale in measures 26-28 is E-flat above the staff. These pitches suggest a dominant function in E. In measures 32-38 a series of perfect fourths is used in each solo voice: in the lower voice between A and E, and in the higher voice between G and C. These create a tonal conflict between the implied keys of A major and C major. In measures 38-48 a series of minor thirds create fragments from an octatonic scale. Measures 38-46 are all related to the same octatonic scale, but the pattern is broken in measure 47 when a different octatonic scale is outlined. In measure 50-54 both solo voices combine to form dyads, the top voice outlining a D-minor triad. This could be related to the last octatonic fragment (in measures 47-48) since this fragment descends using the following pitches: A-flat, F, E-flat, and D. In measures 59-69 there is a repeat of measures 31-37 with an extension. The last pitches introduced into the linear activity are B and A-sharp in measures 12-13. They are given added prominence since they are the highest pitches used to this point. In this variation prominent pitches seem to shift according to the accompaniment pattern. If the accompaniment is based on open strings, the prominent pitches are more chromatic, and vice versa.

m. 1-20



m. 21-30

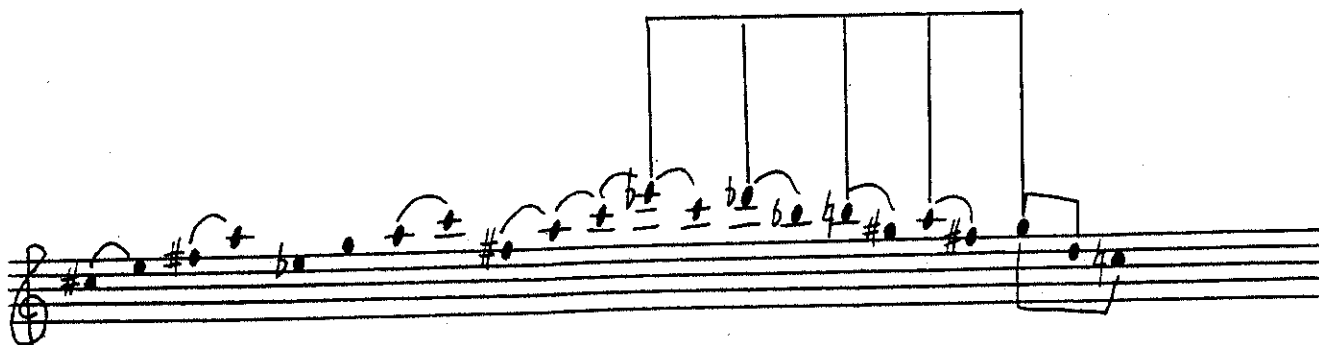


Fig. 63--Prominent Pitches for "Restless"

m 31-69

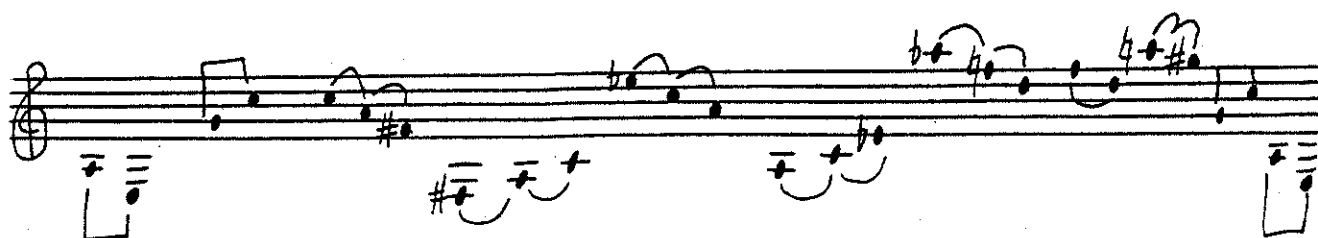


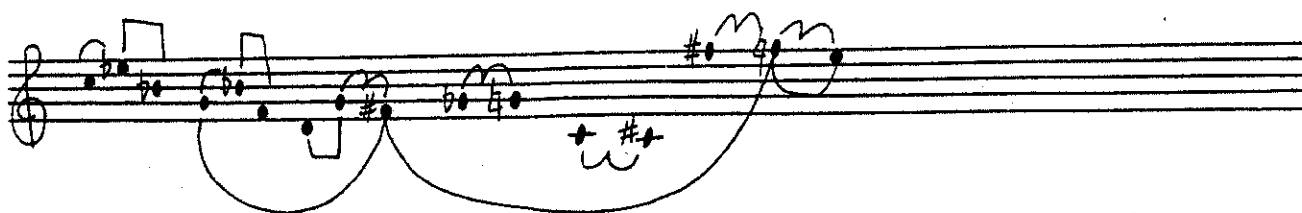
Fig. 63--Continued

Variation IV "Uneasy"

Examination of Figure 64 reveals a fragmented structure, with many alternations of patterns that are outlined by prominent pitches. In measure 1 the linear motive outlines both a minor third and a perfect fourth (although the fourth has a stronger prominence). In measures 1-4 there are a series of prominent pitches that descend from G to E by half-step. This gives this variation a more chromatic nature than the previous ones. The tonal conflict between E and F is alluded to in measures 3-4, where F, then E are registrally prominent. In measure 5 there is a contrasting continuous line that reveals a surface construction

of minor thirds. This series of minor thirds is interrupted in the middle of this measure, where a series of whole-tone scales are given prominence because of register and length. The last portion of this measure contains a line that descends from C-sharp to A by half-steps. This shows an interruption of the minor thirds series by a chromatic line. In measures 7-9 the surface construction is composed of a series of minor thirds (except for measure 8 where the chromatic pattern from measure 3 appears). In measure 9 there is an inflection of a pattern that has been used in each variation: the series of minor thirds descending by whole-steps. In this case the pattern is as follows: a major third descending followed by a minor third a minor third away, then a major third down a whole-step and finally a perfect fourth a minor third away. The original pattern is expanded, opened up intervallically. The variation closes with a perfect fifth between D and G outlined by prominent pitches. The rapid repeated notes in this variation often have little in common with the surrounding material. Three out of the four pitches that are repeated this way are open string pitches, which throughout much of this work are pitted against chromatic material.

m1-4



m5

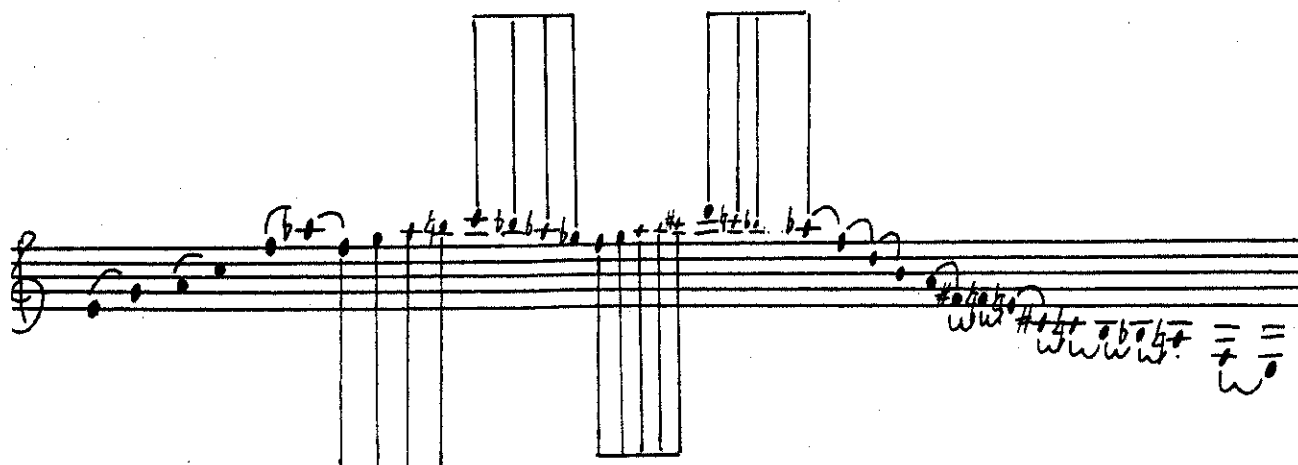


Fig. 64--Prominent Pitches for "Uneasy"

m. 6-12

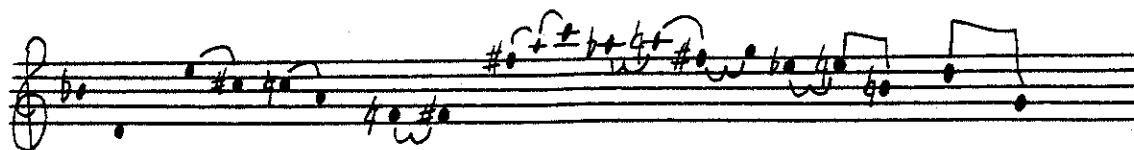


Fig. 64--Continued

Variation V "March-like"

Examination of Figure 65 reveals a very clear unfolding in "March-like." There is an alternation of surface material constructed of either minor thirds or whole-tone fragments in measure 1-13. After this, in measures 15-25, prominent pitches outline both a perfect fourth between F and B-flat, and series of minor thirds that outline diminished triads. This constitutes a progression from a fragmented surface construction of minor thirds and whole-tone scale fragments to a more continuous section based on perfect fourths and minor thirds that outline diminished triads. On a wider ranging level there is a progression

from the pitch G in measure 2, to G-sharp in measure 6, to A in measure 10, and finally to A-sharp in measure 13. This pitch, A-sharp, foreshadows the upcoming use of B-flat in measures 15-25. The pitch F is not introduced into the linear activity until measure 13, and this gives it added prominence. This prominence of the pitch F in measure 13 also foreshadows the upcoming material which revolves around the perfect fourth between F and B-flat. Throughout this variation there is a tonal conflict between the chromatic solo material and the accompaniment based on open strings.

m 1-10

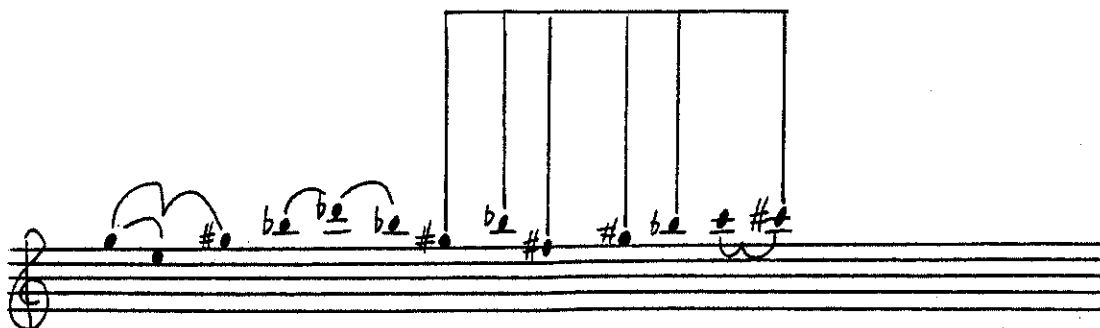


Fig. 65--Prominent Pitches for "March-like"

m. 10-25

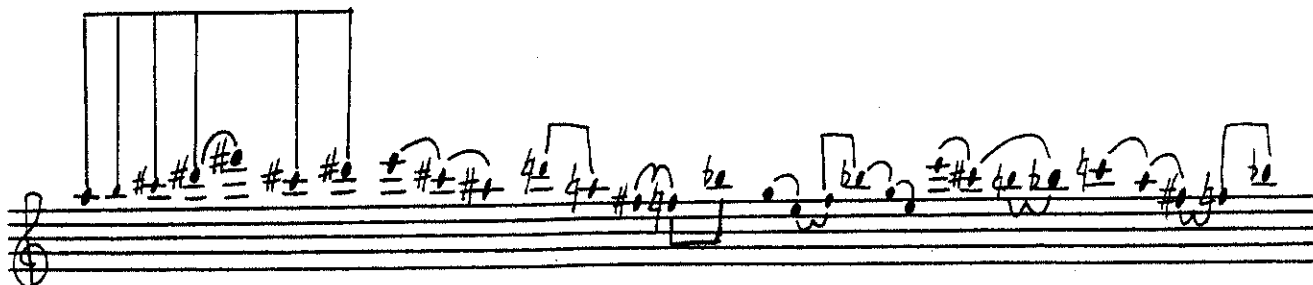


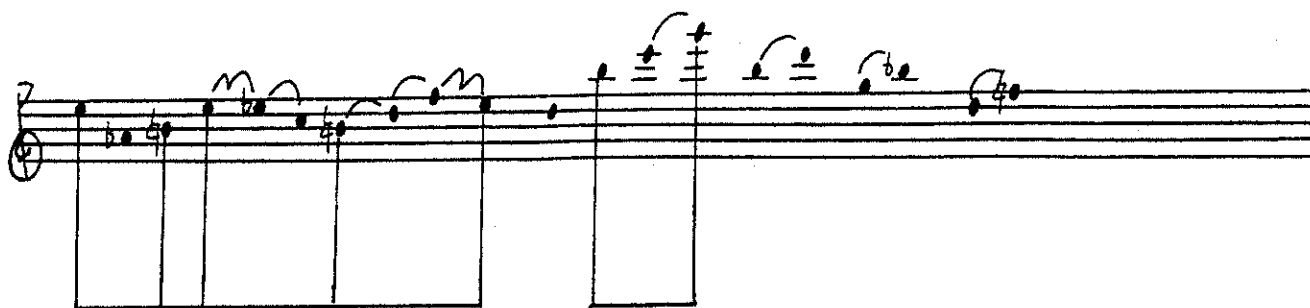
Fig. 65--Continued

Variation VI "Dreaming"

Examination of Figure 66 reveals some allusions, although distorted, to the tonality of E major (the key of the Dowland song). Although the harmony of the chords in measures 1, 3, 5, and 7 does little to back up any reference to E, the top notes of these chords have some significance. Their references to an E tonality, coupled with the contrasting harmony underneath, create a very distorted aural perception of "Dreaming." In measure 1 the dominant of E is defined. In measure 2, which is based on open strings and artificial harmonics, there is a line from E to G-sharp, then back to E. This defines an E tonal center. In measure 3 the line B to C-sharp to E-flat briefly tonicizes E major,

but then soon disintegrates into a series of minor thirds. In measure 4 an E-major triad is outlined, but the feeling for E major soon disintegrates into a skipping whole-tone scale fragment. Measure 5 starts with the line E-B-B-E, the perfect fourth motive that has been used prominently in the earlier variations. This temporary feel for E major is soon distorted. Measure 6 features a series of minor thirds, each starting on an open string pitch: E, B, G, and D. in measure 7 the line does little to define E major. An unfolding of references to E-major tonality occurs in measures 1-5, and after that there is a fade-out of E-major tonality until measures 8 and 10. The pitches E and B are the most prominent in this variation. They imply E-major tonality and are also open-string pitches. This variation is the first to this point of the work to have its linear as well as accompaniment material based on open-string pitches.

m. 5-6



m. 7-10

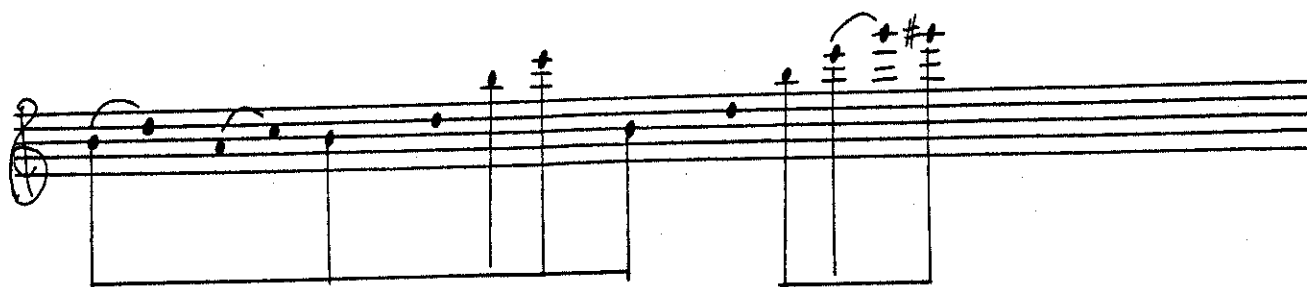


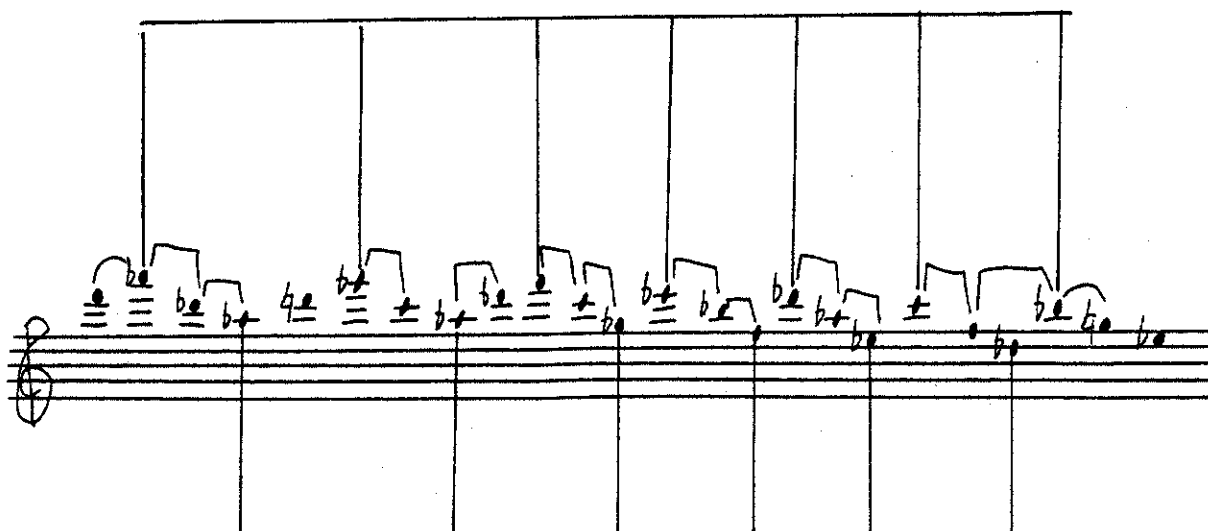
Fig. 66--Continued

Variation VII "Gently rocking"

Examination of Figure 67 reveals that the surface material of the solo is predominantly constructed of perfect fourths. The accompaniment is based on the open strings of the guitar (which is tuned in perfect fourths between five out of six strings). The solo and accompaniment, although based on perfect fourths, are tonally conflicting. The solo voice graph reveals, besides the surface material based on fourths, a number of descending scales that are outlined by some of the higher prominent pitches. In measures 1-7 a diatonic (B-flat minor) scale is seen descending from A-flat to B-flat. In measures 11-14 there are two instances of a whole-tone scale descending. The longest is from E-flat to G. The other is from B-flat to F-flat. This second pattern is completed in measure 15 with the pitch D. This represents a delaying of the pattern's completion. In measures 15-17 a series of triads is used, briefly defining C minor, while the accompaniment is defining E-major tonality. In measure 18 an E-flat major triad is outlined. This is important since E-flat has prominence throughout the first half of this variation, and here comes back to clash with the E-major tonality of the accompaniment. This represents a semi-tone difference between keys, an idea that has shown up before with E major against F major. The most signif-

icant feature which the focal pitches reveal in the solo voice is a gradual descending line from a high A-flat all the way down to low E. The accompaniment follows an opposite course, ascending from the lower open strings up to harmonics.

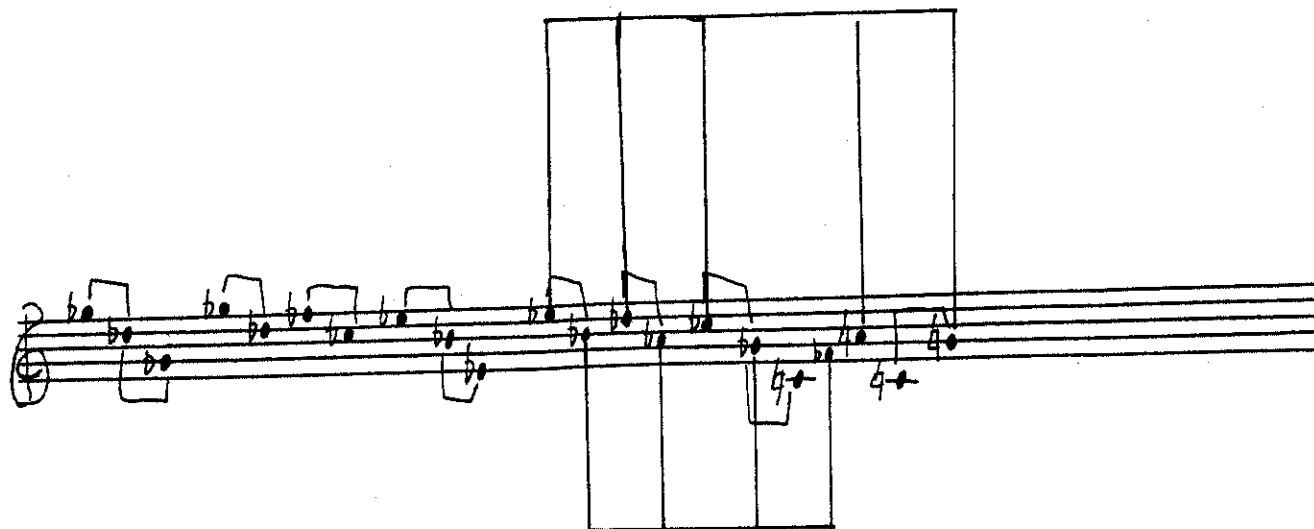
m. 1-8



— = scalar material

Fig. 67--Prominent pitches for "Gently rocking"

m. 9-14



m. 15-23

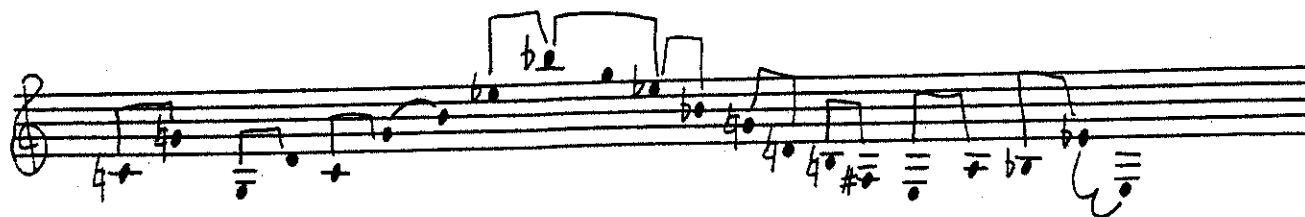


Fig. 67--Continued

Variation VIII "Passacaglia"

As in the preceding chapters, this variation will be divided into five sections: measures 1-16, 17-26, 27-29, 30-35, and 36-42. Each section has its own character and hence will receive a separate treatment. Finally, a prominent pitch graph for the entire variation will be done.

Section One

Examination of Figure 68 reveals three stages of development for section one: measures 1-5, 6-9, and 10-16. The first two stages follow a similar pattern: the use of a series of perfect fourths ascending by whole-steps. These series of ascending perfect fourths create, on a broader level, ascending whole-tone scales. This pattern was seen in earlier variations with minor thirds moving up or down by whole-steps. A whole-tone scale descending from D to G-flat is revealed in measure 4. This is important because G-flat, or F-sharp, has great prominence in section 1. In measure 8 there is a descending diatonic scale from F to B-flat outlined by prominent pitches. In measure 9 there is an ascending whole-tone scale from C to F-sharp, again giving F-sharp prominence. In measure 10-12 there is a change from surface construction comprised of perfect fourths to surface

material based on a series of minor thirds. The pitch C-sharp is prominent in measure 12, and it has a strong relationship to F-sharp, the prominent pitch discussed earlier. Measures 13-16 reveal a series of descending scales, with an outlining interval of a perfect fifth. Important here is a descending half step pattern from E-flat to C-sharp. Section one ends on a D-sharp, further reinforcing a bi-tonal conflict between the ostinato and the other material.

m. 1-5

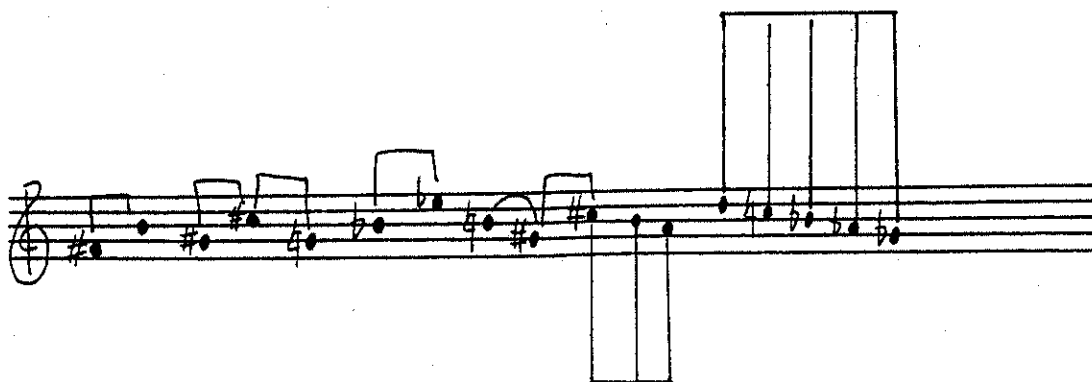
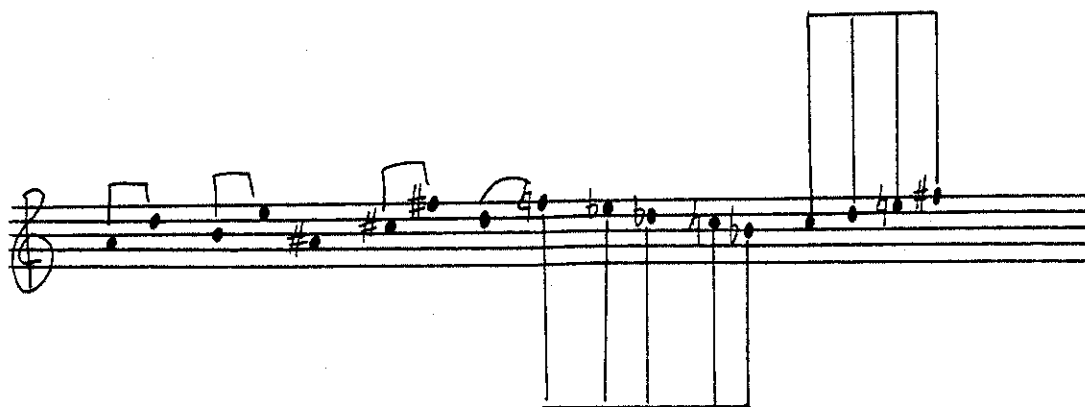


Fig. 68--Prominent Pitches for Section One

m. 6-9



m. 10-12



Fig. 68--Continued

m. 13-16



Fig. 68--Continued

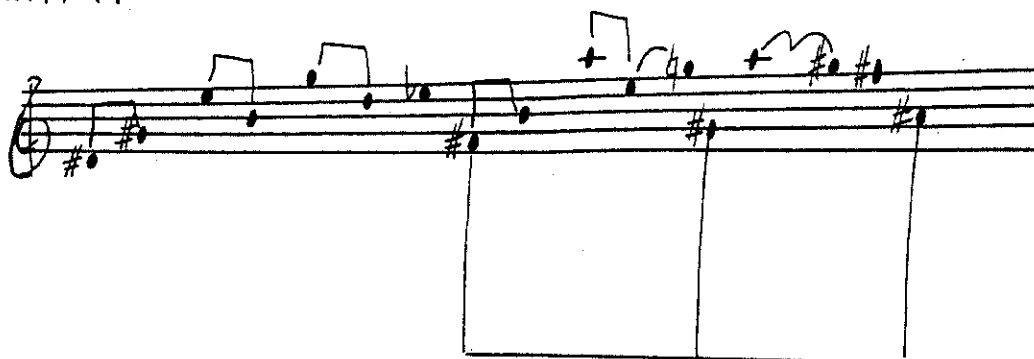
Section Two

Examination of Figure 69 reveals that the surface material of section two is based on perfect fourths. In measures 17-19 many of the prominent pitches are open string pitches. The pitch F-sharp appears in two structurally important places in these measures: in the lower voice starting an ascending whole-tone scale; and in the top voice ending the phrase. In measure 20 there appears in the top voice a descending diatonic scale from C-sharp to F-sharp.

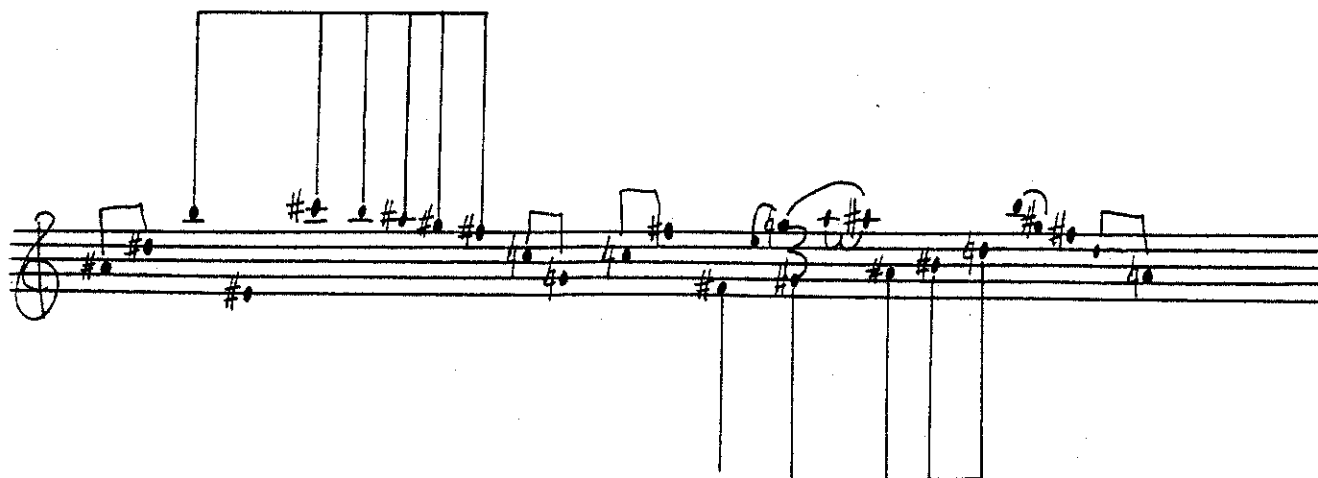
C-sharp has added prominence since it is the highest pitch of section two. Measure 21 reveals a series of minor thirds that outline a diminished triad: E, G, A-sharp. In the

lower voice of this measure the pitch F-sharp starts an ascending whole-tone scale up to the pitch D. Measure 22 reveals a surface construction of perfect fourths. An ascending octatonic scale from G to E is outlined in the latter half of this measure. The most prominent pitches of this measure are F-sharp and B. In measures 23-25 the material is fragmented, revealing short series of minor thirds and fragments from whole-tone scales. The most prominent pitches for section two are F-sharp and C-sharp, as well as a number of open string pitches. This implies a tonal conflict within the solo voice as well as with the ostinato.

m 17-19



m. 20-21



m. 22

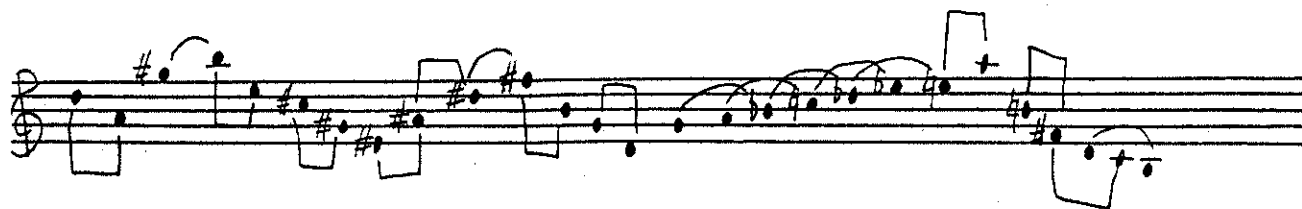


Fig. 69--Continued

m.23-25

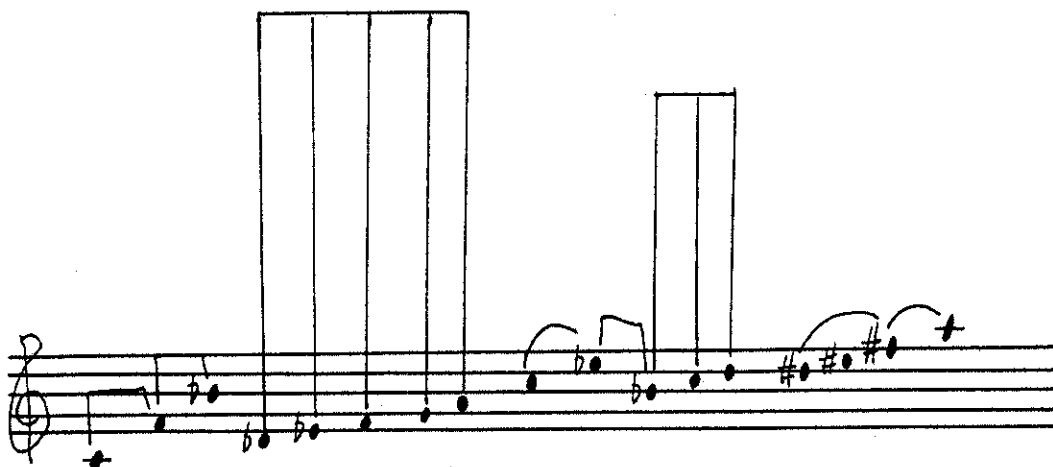
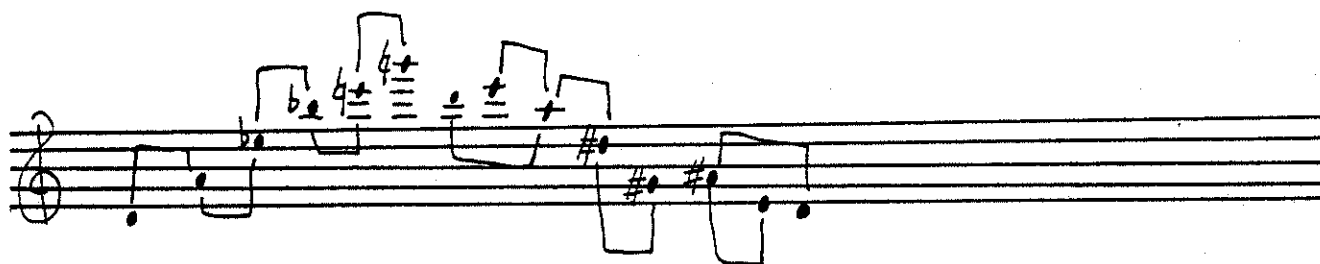


Fig. 69--Continued

Section Three

Examination of figure 70 reveals that the surface material for section three is based on perfect fourths. There are longer connections of perfect fourth and fifth patterns in this section. Measures 27 and 28 are very similar, with 28 being an expansion of 27. The middle of each measure features a series of open string pitches: A, B, and E in measure 27, and E, B, D, E, and A in measure 28. Each measure also ends on the pitch D. The highest pitches from these two measures are F-sharp and B. A chromatic

m. 28



m. 29

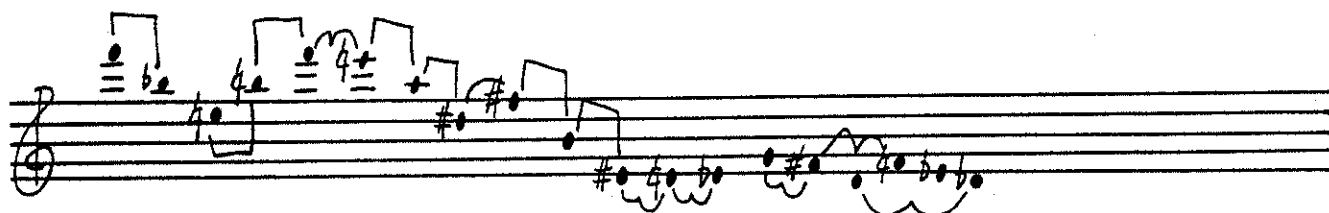


Fig. 70--Continued

Section Four

Examination of Figure 71 reveals some interesting allusions to the tonality of E, which is the final destination of "Passacaglia." In measures 30 and 31 the dominant in the key of E is outlined (although the harmony underneath does not reinforce this). In measures 33-35 the pitches for the top note of each chord are as follows: E, G-sharp, and B for measure 33; C for measure 34; and E, B, F-sharp, and G-sharp for measure 35. These measures seem to prepare for the final emergence of the key of E major.

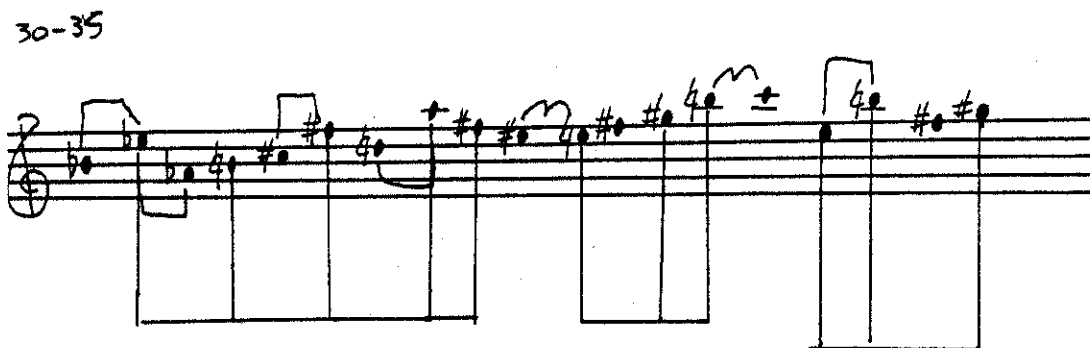


Fig. 71--Prominent Pitches for Section Four

Section Five

Figure 72 is based on the starting and ending notes of the transposed ostinato pattern. This graph reveals that in measures 36-37 prominent pitches fall into 3 categories: an E major triad, a B major triad, and the pitches C and G. The relationship between the first two categories is obvious. The pitches C and G have importance since they have been part of the recurring ostinato pattern. These categories also pertain to measures 38-42. From measure 38-40 there is a progression towards E major. In measure 40 there starts a chain of the ostinato, each occurrence starting on a note from an E-major triad.

36-37

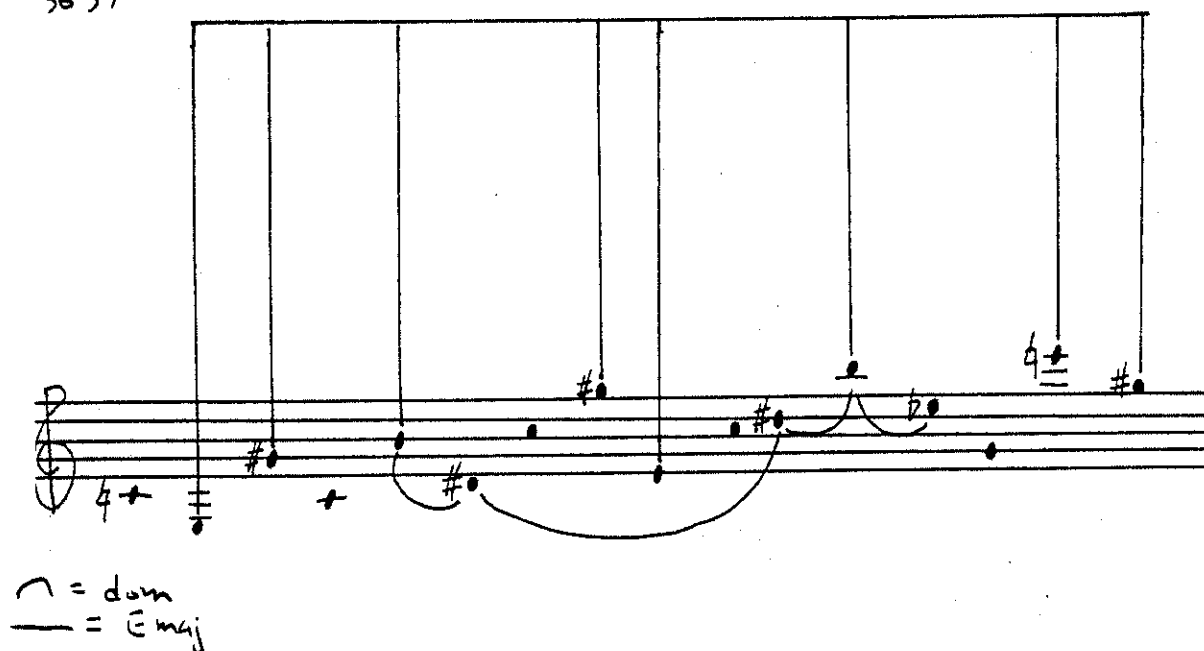


Fig. 72--Prominent Pitches for Section Five

m. 38-42

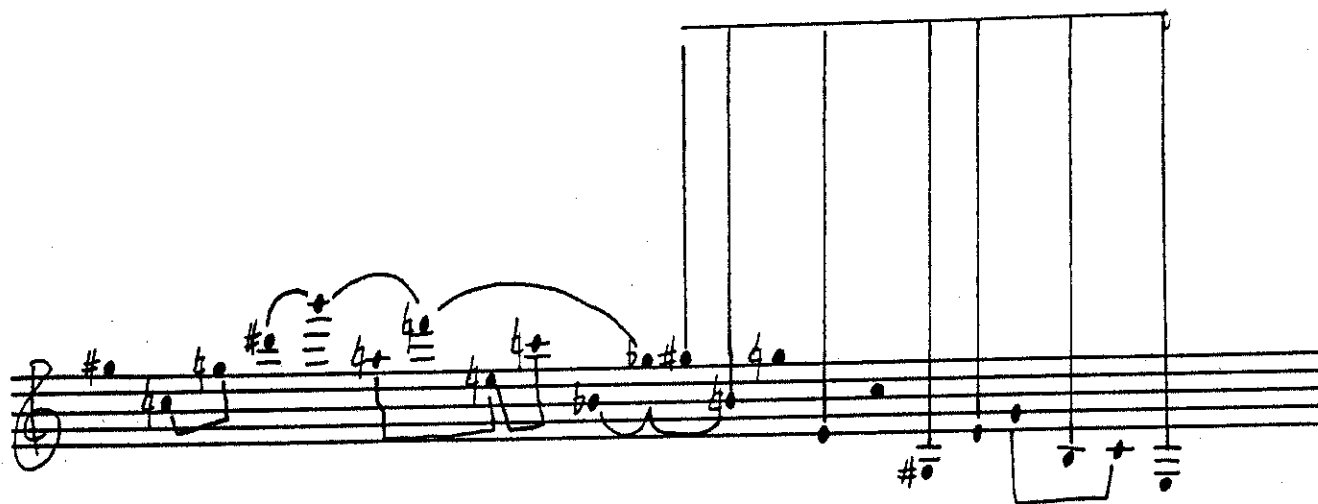




Fig. 73--Prominent Pitches for "Passacaglia"

CHAPTER V

CORRELATIONS, CONTINUITY, CONCLUSION

Correlations

This section of chapter V will attempt to correlate the results of chapters II, III, and IV and show the interaction of parameters at critical structural points of Nocturnal. The following are the criteria used to determine an important or critical structural point in this work: the peak or climax of an important trend; and the start of a new trend that contrasts with previous material.

In variation I, measures 16-18 constitute a critical point within this variation. The rhythmic texture of this consists of two distinct parts, with shifting registral and metric stresses. In this section there appear pitch sets that are most characteristic of the intervallic structure of this variation as a whole and of the focused section which follows in measures 19-25. A motive of a perfect fourth is outlined by prominent pitches in this section. Also there is a tonal conflict between E major and F major.

In variation II, measures 11-14 constitute a contrasting section when compared to the preceding material. The rhythmic groupings here are more consistent, with a

sequence occurring. The intervallic content of this section is an exception to the predominant intervallic structure of this variation. The first note of this section marks the close of a descending whole-tone scale that begins in measure 6. There are also the following tonal conflicts: E major/F minor, A-flat major/A minor, and C major/D-flat minor.

In variation III, measures 21-30 contain the most climactic material in this variation. The rhythmic dissonance between the two strata is the strongest in this section. The focal pitch-set and related sets emerge in this section. In measure 26 a descending whole-tone scale is outlined by prominent pitches. This scale starts on the highest pitch of the variation.

In variation IV, measure 5 is exceptional. The rhythmic groupings here are more connected, and there is a gradual expansion, then compression of grouping lengths. The focal set and related sets occur in this measure. Whole-tone scales are registrally stressed in the middle of this measure.

In variation V, measures 10-13 constitute the start of a trend that becomes the focus of this variation. Rhythmically there is more interaction between the two strata. The composite rhythm of this section reveals some significant group shifting elisions. The focal set of this

variation appears and foreshadows the more focused section that follows. The pitches F and B-flat are prominent in this section, and they foreshadow the following section's motivic base.

In variation VI, measure 5 is the climactic point in the development of the chordal material in this variation. The rhythm here is fairly complex, with an implied $3/2$ rhythmic dissonance occurring. This measure has the most unified intervallic structure when compared with the other developments of this chordal idea. The tonality of E major is alluded to by the line created by the top voice of each chord. This line also briefly outlines the perfect fourth motive. In measure 6 of this variation the linear idea undergoes a rhythmic compression. The focal pitch set for the entire variation occurs here. A series of minor thirds each starting on an open string pitch (E,B,G,D) are outlined by prominent pitches.

In variation VII, measures 15-18 contain material that contrasts with preceding material. This section is rhythmically consonant as compared with the preceding material. The intervallic structure of this section is also in contrast with the preceding material. The prominent pitches for this section are more closely related to the accompaniment (the open strings of the guitar) than the preceding material.

Variation VIII has five subsections: measures 1-16, 17-26, 27-29, 30-35, and 36-42. Each section will be examined for correlations at critical structural points.

In section one of variation VIII the most critical point is in measure 12. The rhythm here is consistent. The texture is chordal, which contrasts with the majority of this section. An instance of the pitch set 5-10 occurs in this measure. (This set type is important in the intervallic structure of some of the earlier variations.) The prominent pitches here reveal a series of minor thirds, the first time this motive has been heard since variation VI.

The most critical point of section two occurs in measure 22. The rhythm of the groupings is complex, with many syncopated patterns. This measure has many pitch sets that correlate with the ostinato set type, implying a diatonic intervallic structure. Prominent pitches reveal a series of minor thirds in this measure. There is also an octatonic scale fragment outlined that is seven notes in length. This scale ends on the pitch e which might allude to E-major tonality.

Section three is short as compared to the other sections but one measure, 29, breaks a trend that is started in measures 27-28. In measure 29 the contour pattern that was established in the previous two measures is broken. A chromatic pitch set (7-1) occurs at the end of this measure,

contrasting the endings of measures 27-28. The prominent pitches of measure 29 reveal less correlations with the open string pitches than the previous two measures. The ostinato pattern is fragmented throughout this section.

In section four, measures 33-35 are critical. The rhythm of the ostinato is compressed here after being fragmented for the previous seven measures. The intervallic structure of these measures is almost exclusively diatonic, and this alludes to the upcoming section of variation VIII. The prominent pitches outline E-major tonality, which also alludes to the upcoming material in section five.

Section five of variation VIII is the critical point of the variation as a whole. A number of elisions occur in this section as the ostinato pattern is overlapped. The intervallic content is the most focused of the variation (only two set types occur: 6-26 and its subset 3-11). The prominent pitches of this section outline the key of E major (the tonal destination of this variation).

Continuity

"Come, heavy sleep," by John Dowland, serves as Britten's source for a number of motivic exploits. By the time the song emerges, it is perceived more as coda than a theme after the restless and distorted material that pre-

cedes it. The key of the song is E major, a tonality that was hinted at a number of times in the work. Besides containing some secondary leading tones, the song itself is diatonic in nature. This diatonic structure is hinted at in the variations, especially in the accompaniments of III, V, and VII. These accompaniments are based on the open strings of the guitar (which comprise a diatonic structure).

Through a process of continuity, the variations foreshadow and gradually unfold into the Dowland song. The various unfoldings within most of the variations have been discussed in the previous chapters, but there is a broader scale of unfolding which occurs in Nocturnal. This unfolding can be seen by observing the results from chapters II, III, and IV.

The use of rhythmic devices such as compression, expansion, elisions, syncopation and rhythmic dissonance create a distorted but driving force that eventually is quenched when the coda-like Dowland song emerges. This constitutes a large-scale progression from rhythmic complexity or dissonance to rhythmic simplicity or consonance.

By observing the focused set network for each variation, it is possible to see a progression from a more complex intervallic structure, with many focal sets based on the octatonic scale, to a more diatonic intervallic structure based on open string pitches. This constitutes a

progression to a diatonic structure that obviously culminates with the emergence of the Dowland song.

By observing the prominent pitch graphs for each variation, it is possible to see a progression from surface material and patterns based on series of minor thirds to surface material based on perfect fourths. This signifies a transformation to a structure which mirrors the tuning of the guitar. Throughout the work the open strings of the guitar are pitted against more chromatic material, creating a bi-tonal effect. The open strings in this instance might represent the diatonic nature of the Dowland song, which is in the key of E (the pitch of the guitar's lowest and highest strings).

Britten changes the form of "Come, heavy sleep" by adding a brief coda in measures 17-20. This is based on measures 11-12, a section of the song that temporarily is in G-sharp major. Thus, even in the restful closing material of Nocturnal, Britten does not allow a final cadence in E major, but instead lets the work fade off in a fairly distant key. This continues the trend that is seen throughout the work: the lack of consistent stability for any length of time.

Another type of unfolding that occurs throughout Nocturnal is the opening up, in the variations and to a degree through the work as a whole, of registral width.

registral usage. On a large scale, continuity is reinforced by these registral expansions. There are three stages of registral expansion throughout Nocturnal: from variation I to II where the registral width goes from 19 to 43 semi-tones; from variation III to V where the width expands from 15 to 37 semi-tones; and from variation VI to VIII where the width expands from 21 to 43 semi-tones. On the classical guitar, 43 semi-tones constitutes the largest possible range--from the low e string to the fifth line b on the high e string. The two occurrences of the largest registral width reinforce the role of E tonality in this work.

Variation I

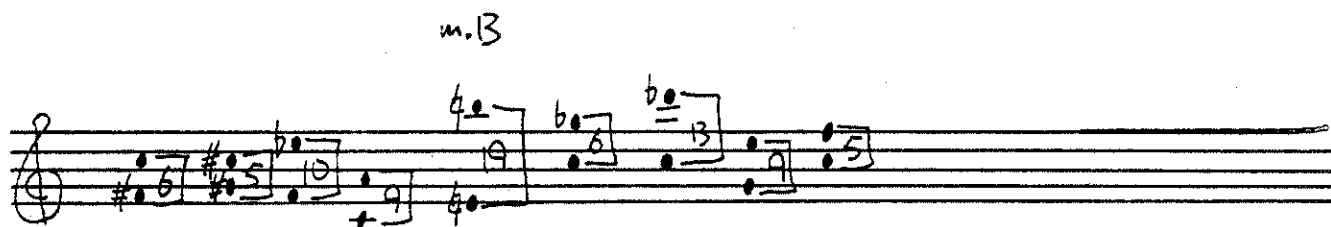


Fig. 74--Registral Width in Each Variation

Variation II



Variation III.

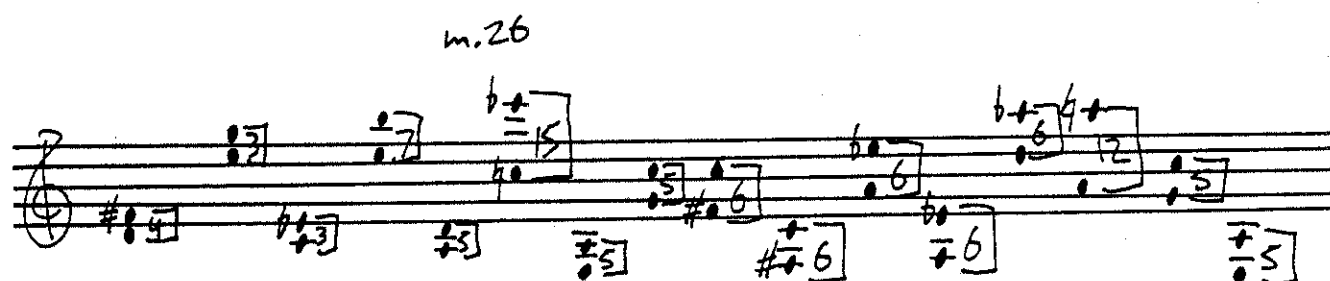
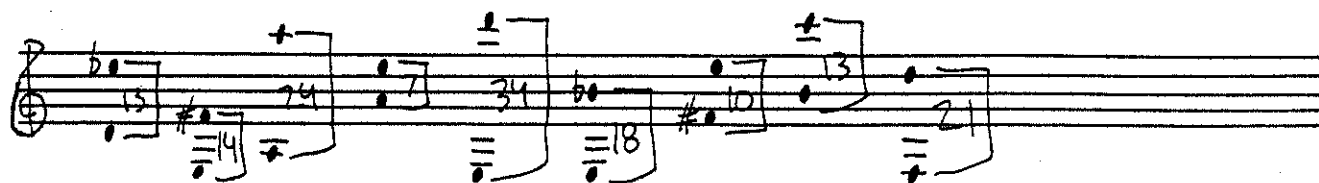


Fig. 74--Continued

Variation IV.



Variation V.

m. 13

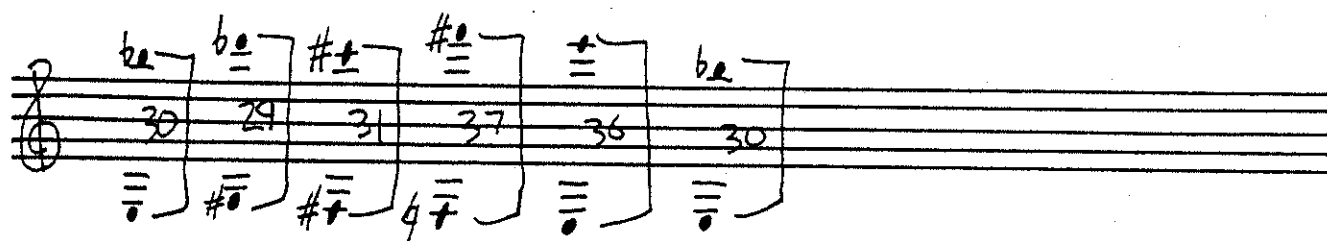
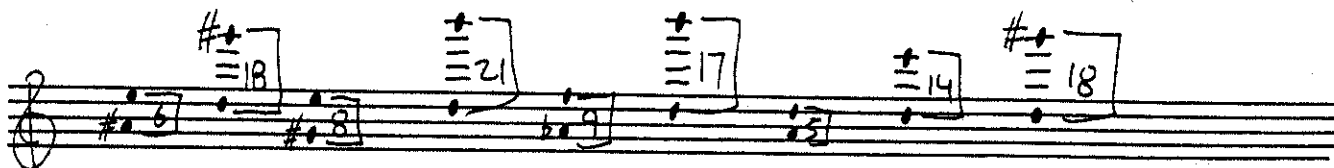


Fig. 74--Continued

Variation VI.

m. 4



Variation VII.

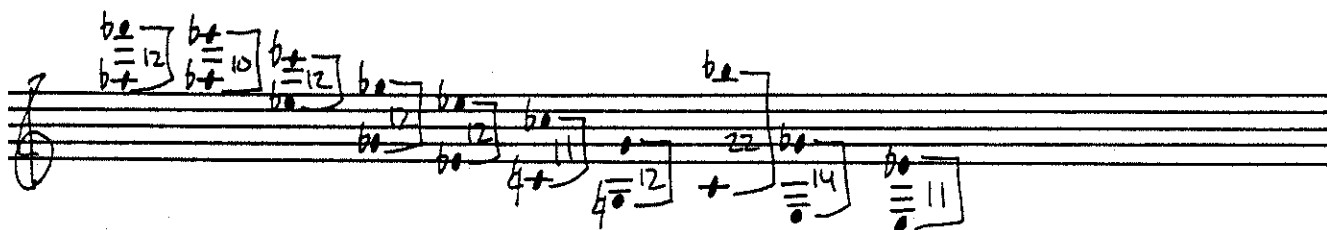
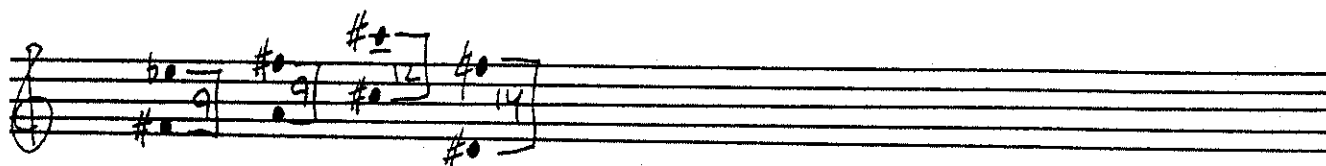
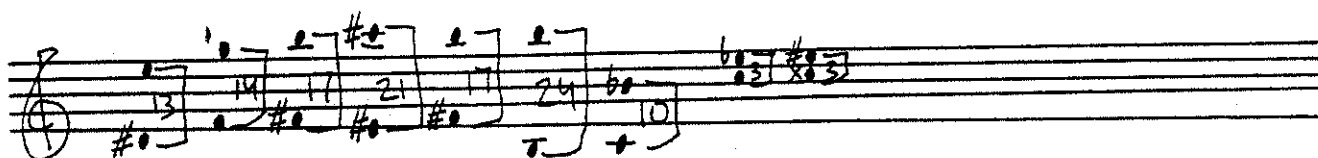


Fig. 74--Continued

Variation VIII
sec. 1



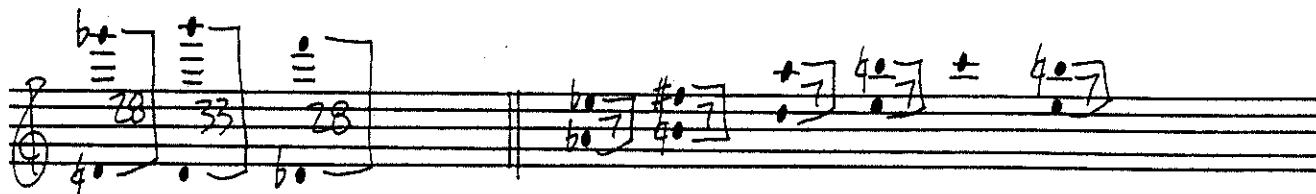
Variation VIII
sec. 2



Variation VIII.

sec. 3

sec. 4



sec. 5

m. 38



Fig. 74--Continued

Conclusion

The constantly shifting moods and characters of this work give it a quality that reinforces its programmatic implications, as discussed in Chapter I. The trends and patterns, and their relationships, revealed by this analysis will aid the performer as he faces the challenging task of interpreting this work.

This work, although not his most famous, is definitely in the mainstream of Britten's style. Its scope is such that, for the guitarist, it is the most important large-scale work written for guitar in the twentieth century. It is hoped that the results from the analyses undertaken in the previous chapters reveal the qualities that make this a truly unique work.

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