AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF ROBERT MUCZYNSKI’S *SECOND PIANO TRIO*

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The purpose of this study is to provide scholastic research on Robert Muczynski’s Second Piano Trio (1975) by presenting his biographical background, discussing influences and his musical style, and analyzing the work. Robert Muczynski (b.1929), a composer-pianist of Polish descent, studied with Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977). From traditional forms and techniques, he fashioned his own unique and innovative compositional style. The second piano trio, in particular, was deeper and more complex in its conception and affect than previous compositions. The first movement *Andante molto* opening leads to an *allegro* section, and the somber second movement builds to a heavy climax. The third movement is highly rhythmic and dramatically driven.

Chapter I outlines the purpose of the study and the composer’s biography. Chapter II describes Muczynski’s compositional influences and the evolution of his musical language. Emphasis in this respect will be placed on the pedagogical role of Alexander Tcherepnin, as well as the important connections between Prokofiev, Tcherepnin and Muczynski. An exploration of other elements that have informed Muczynski’s style is offered. Chapter III details the circumstances, general characteristics, and compositional technique of the Second Piano Trio. Detailed analysis of all three movements will be provided, with particular attention paid to aspects of theme, form, harmony, rhythm, meter, tempo, articulation, texture, and dynamic. The theoretical analysis is the main portion of this document, and after a discussion of treatment of the piano, concluding reflections are offered in Chapter IV.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Robert Muczynski’s compositions have become a significant part of the present-day repertoire; still, there is limited information available for those who wish to study and perform Muczynski’s works. While his works for piano have to some degree drawn scholarly attention, his chamber works, which form an important part of his output, have been in need of research and study.

Walter Simmons states: “As musicians continue to discover, perform, and record the fine music of Robert Muczynski, attention is directed to his three piano trios and a string trio, all of which are among his strongest works. They are most-needed candidates for recording.”¹ The present study thus aims to provide a thorough analysis of Robert Muczynski’s Second Piano Trio, as well as a discussion of his general musical language and compositional influences. In so doing, the author hopes to increase awareness of the work in question, to foster positive informed reception, and to encourage performers to play and record this work.

¹ Walter Simmons, “A Muczynski Retrospective,” Fanfare 24 (July/August 2001), 66.
Biography

According to Simmons “Robert Muczynski is one of America’s most distinguished traditionalist composers still active today, from the generation that came of age during the years following World War II. He is also one of the most widely performed.”

For the past half-century, Muczynski and his music have gradually drawn attention from scholars and performers, as well as listeners. His works for piano, including three sonatas and character pieces, have become a substantial part of recent piano literature. His unaccompanied works for solo instruments, orchestral works, choral pieces, music for documentary film, and chamber music have steadily gained in popularity.

Of Polish descent, Muczynski was born in Chicago on March 19, in 1929. While his family exhibited no musical proclivity, he nevertheless took piano lessons during his boyhood, and was an enthusiastic and talented pupil. After entering DePaul University in Chicago in 1947, Muczynski began studies as a piano major with Walter Knupfer; Knupfer proved to be highly influential on the young Muczynski. In 1949, Alexander Tcherepnin, a Russian-born theorist and composer, came to DePaul from Paris. Muczynski began studies with Tcherepnin, and his interest in composition grew instantly. Although composition would prove to be a crucial outlet for him, he remained a piano major, and received both a Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in piano performance. His talents both as a pianist and a composer were made evident when he performed his own sonata for his master’s recital, and also played his Divertimento for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 2, at his graduation concert in 1952. His career as a ‘composer-pianist’ was thus successfully launched.

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In 1953, shortly after graduating from DePaul University, Muczynski received his first commission from the Fromm Music Foundation for what would become Symphony No. 1, Op. 5. In the following year, for a commission from the Louisville Orchestra Commissioning Project, he wrote his first piano concerto, and premiered the piece with the Louisville Orchestra in 1955. Three years later, he performed the piano concerto again with Chicago Symphony Orchestra. From 1956 to 1958, he served as the chair of the Department of Piano at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa.\(^3\) In 1959, Muczynski was selected for the Ford Foundation’s Young Composer Project’s Fellowship Grant, which provided sponsorship for Muczynski for the next few years.

In 1958, Muczynski made his New York debut at Carnegie Hall, featuring an entire program of his own compositions. He served as a visiting lecturer for one year at Roosevelt University in Chicago in 1964. In the following year, he began to teach theory and piano as a part-time instructor at the University of Arizona; he eventually became a full-time professor. Muczynski served for more than twenty years at the University of Arizona as a professor of composition and composer-in-residence, until his retirement as Professor Emeritus in 1988.\(^4\)

Muczynski has been awarded numerous international honors, such as the Concours Internationale Prize, in 1961, in Nice, France, for his *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, a frequently performed piece in the twentieth century flute repertoire. He was also awarded the International Society for Contemporary Music Prize for his *Suite for Piano*. In addition to receiving such honors, his music has been required repertoire for international competitions. His piano composition, *Masks*, was commissioned for the Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition in 1982, and Muczynski’s *Piano Sonata No. 2* was unanimously voted “Best Contemporary Composition” at the Fifth International Piano Competition in Sydney, Australia in 1992. Above


\(^4\) Robert Muczynski Biographical Notes from Muczynski Archives at the University of Texas at Austin.
all, his *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Chamber Orchestra* was nominated for the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for Music.

Muczynski’s works were described by *The New Yorker* as “……original and outstanding……one of the few contemporary composers whose works are not merely technical exercises but have something to say…..”\(^5\)

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\(^5\) Ibid.
CHAPTER II

INFLUENCES AND MUSICAL LANGUAGE

Influences from the Tcherepnins and Prokofiev

Muczynski had only one composition teacher his entire life, Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977). Born in Russia, Tcherepnin spent twenty-eight years in Paris, France, before he came to DePaul University in 1949. According to Cisler:

Tcherepnin passed on a positive outlook to his students through his teaching style, a style that focused on potential rather than criticism, on developing musical intuition and individuality. He and Muczynski were ideally suited as teacher and student, as Muczynski is an exceptionally sensitive person, one who may not have flourished as a composer under different circumstances. 6

Tcherepnin’s Russian musical background was greatly influenced by his father, Nicolai Tcherepnin (1873-1945), a composer and conductor. Alexander was acquainted with Rimsky-Korsakov, who was his father’s teacher, and Prokofiev, who was a student of his father, as well as Glazunov and Stravinsky. 7 According to Arias, “Among his students was Prokofiev, whom he would always refer to as ‘my student, the composer Prokofiev’… without doubt, he greatly influenced Prokofiev’s development as a composer.” 8 Consequently, Prokofiev’s first piano concerto is dedicated to Nicolai Tcherepnin.

Young Alexander was acquainted with Prokofiev’s music and undoubtedly influenced by it - “Prokofiev, my father’s student, used to come to our house to play his works as soon as they were composed.” 9 This relationship between Nicolai and Alexander Tcherepnin and Prokofiev is important in order to better understand Muczynski’s music, whose works reflect some

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6 Cisler, 61.
9 Ibid., 207.
elements of Prokofiev’s style of percussive treatment of the piano, as well as Prokofiev’s use of thematic material, key centricity, harmonic vocabulary, ostinati, and wide spaced sonorities.

Robert Muczynski’s music was influenced not only by his teacher, but also by other predecessors and contemporaries. “His music exemplifies mid-20th-century American neoclassicism, tempered by a Romantic sense of mood and affect.” Muczynski’s rhythmic drive and the percussive treatment of the piano reveal the influence of Bartók, and the lyricism may be related to Barber’s style. Shostakovich’s wide-spaced texture also informs Muczynski’s music.

Musical Language

“Although Muczynski’s material is often treated in a manner similar to Prokofiev or Tcherepnin, the actual compositional ideas are unique to Muczynski.” Muczynski composed his music more based on sound, rather than as a result of any pre-determined, systematic technique. Cisler notes that “Muczynski’s approach to melody seems more intuitive and spontaneous, less contrived than Tcherepnin. And the fabric of his melodies comes from an inner intention to evoke a particular character, mood or emotional state.” Moreover, his compositional concept is more instrumental than vocal, with use of wide leaps and an extensive range.

Muczynski’s melody achieves dramatic effect with well-treated articulation, made manifest in many different ranges and shapes. Furthermore, melody reoccurrence in other movements reveals his cyclicism. His melodies are interwoven with thematic materials in small
segments, with a strong tendency towards accent on the weak beat. His melody often enters with an eighth rest, following the down beat of the accompanying part.

His harmonic treatment is a unique and an essential part of his music. Min-jung Cho writes:

Muczynski’s harmony is based on bitonality or polytonality, chromaticism, note clusters, and sometimes, modal effects. Muczynski claims the purpose of his harmonic use is not restricted to a set theory, despite the strong tendency toward increasingly advanced and distorted harmonies among contemporary composer, but serves as an idiom for his musical insight.  

Muczynski creates his unique sound by combining certain intervallic relationships, including major and minor 2nds, 3rds, and 7ths, and perfect 4ths. He consistently combines the 4th with either the major or minor 2nd, and this serves a principal unifying factor throughout his works. Such treatments can be found not only in thematic and motivic material, but also in accompanimental material, too. Muczynski also uses various pedal tones and ostinati.

An essential unifying element in terms of character exists between the music of Prokofiev, Tcherepnin, and Muczynski: the importance of rhythmic profile. David Brin describes it as follows: “Driving, vigorous rhythms are Robert Muczynski’s trademark. In his music meters may change frequently, but the rhythms are never contrived. While not easy to perform, there is something so natural about these rhythms that they create their own momentum, carrying the performers along, never leaving them grasping for the beat.” Most notable is Muczynski’s employment of a speech-like rhythmic quality, based on the inflection and nuances of the English language.

15 Cisler, 100.
17 Cisler, 83.
In terms of form, Muczynski errs on the side of tradition, using binary, ternary, sonata, and variation forms in his oeuvre. Hawkins writes, “He is … capable of writing effectively in more extended forms such as the sonata. His sonata movements are cohesive even though often consisting of groups of fragmented idea.” Through his repertoire, though in his sonatas especially, the recurrence of the motivic elements or opening materials in later parts or in other movements establishes cyclical unity.

His textural diversity invites the interchange of musical ideas and predicates form. In Muczynski’s music, use of a single texture or doubling the single line in a different register provides a prolongation of mood or the suspension of a unique character or effect. Muczynski provides a strong musical concept by using a unison melodic line with the simple setting of an accompaniment part, or an interesting intricate texture by employing a canonic technique. He is influenced by the rhythmic vigor of Prokofiev, as his texture and settings reveal. Unexpected leaps, unison octaves, and melodic distortion can be found throughout his musical setting, and form a unique textural cohesion. 

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19 Cisler, 113.
CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS OF MUCZYNSKI’S PIANO TRIO NO. 2

General Information

Commissioned by the Western Art Trio, Muczynski’s Second Piano Trio was composed in 1975. After completion of the work in June 1975, the piece was performed by the commissioning ensemble, the Western Art Trio, at the University of Wyoming in November of the same year.\(^{20}\)

Muczynski himself reminisced about this piece:

The earlier trio is primarily sassy, hard-driving, and playful. I was younger then. The Second Trio is far more dramatic and serious, with an intense brooding central movement that reaches a high climax, then tapers off. The third movement clears the air. When I was growing up in Chicago, we lived a block away from an amusement park called Riverview. My grandpa used to take me there when I was three, four, five years old. He would take me by the hand, and I was dazzled by the rides. All those roller coasters, and people screaming I could hear it in my heart, and some of that is in my music.\(^{21}\)

This piece has been performed throughout Europe, the United States, Asia, Australia, and Mexico. In 1977, the Western Art Trio recorded it for Laurel Recordings. Two years later, in 1979, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chamber Ensemble performed this piece at Orchestra Hall in Chicago. In 1983, the Rachmaninoff Piano Trio performed this Second Piano Trio in the Abraham Goodman Theatre in New York. Kostraba mentions that “Theodore Presser published a facsimile of the composer’s manuscript in 1982.”\(^{22}\) Muczynski wrote about the piece:

There is no ‘program’ for this work. The music is self-descriptive, I think, and I simply tried to compose a score containing rewarding parts for the respective performers with the hope that the listener, too, might enjoy the excursion. That is a tall order, of course,

\(^{20}\) Robert Muczynski Curriculum Vitae from Muczynski Archives at the University of Texas at Austin.


\(^{22}\) Kostraba, 62.
but that is the risk in being a composer: To please yourself, your performers and your audience. It is seldom ever realized but that is the nature of the pursuit.  

In 2003 the Centaur Records released a CD premiere of the work on an album entitled Robert Muczynski: Chamber Music. This recording features Adam Wodnicki on piano, Robert Davidovici on violin, and Carter Enyeart on cello.

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Thematic Materials and Form

The first movement features an unusual structure with a long slow introduction that constitutes more than half of the entire movement’s length. The movement can be understood as a sonata-allegro form, and the entire trio is constructed from thematic material revealed in the violin part from the outset of the first movement’s introduction.

Movement one, *Andante molto*, opens with piano chords over a C-sharp pedal tone, the opening theme in the violin part, and a cello *tacet*. The thematic material is comprised principally of two motivic elements, which in themselves are related, referred to in this study as motives X and Y (Ex. 1).

![Example 1](attachment:Example1.png)
Motives X and Y unify the entire trio, and are constructed by a perfect 4th and minor 2nd, consisting of pitch classes 015 and 0235, respectively. As discussed previously, Muczynski utilizes his own signature intervallic materials, which are combinations of the perfect 4th and minor 2nd, thereby establishing his hallmark sound.

After motives X and Y appear, Y is presented in transposition three half steps up. The right-hand piano part features pitch class 0147 in the first and second chords, over the left-hand perfect fourth dyad chord and C-sharp pedal point. The pitch class 0147 may be seen as a derivation of the octatonic scale, and this element pervades the entire trio. In particular, the 0147 chord reoccurs before the coda in every chord of the right-hand. The cello introduces thematic material in measure 7 with a minor third upper note. Motive Y, while varied, retains its original character. Another extrapolation of key motivic material occurs in the top voice of the piano in measure 7, with G—A—B-flat, which is derived from motive Y material F—E—D. This thematic material is a retrograde variation of motive Y, the reverse contour and augmented rhythm an evocative distortion of the original material (Ex. 2).
This instance contains pitch class 013, which also pervades the entire movement as well as pitch class 0147.

At rehearsal number 2, the violin and piano exhibit contrapuntal texture, and both parts contain the main thematic material. The piano part plays the varied thematic material of X and the violin part contains pitch class 013, suggesting the contour of key motivic elements in the context of C minor. After four measures, the string parts answer the piano by realizing the same material doubled at the octave. At rehearsal 3, the violin plays the melody at a transposition of T7. Beginning at measure 31, the piano realizes the melody in the lower register in unison octaves. Prolongation of the piano part signals the close of the introduction, however, before arrival at the Allegro section, at rehearsal 4, the thematic material reoccurs yet again in the string parts.

After this introduction, the thematic material reappears in increasing degrees of varied form. In the Allegro section (Ex. 3), not only do tempo changes occur but the character, texture,
meter, developmental techniques, and dynamic ranges are all also markedly different. By utilizing these dramatic and extreme changes, this section propels the movement to its conclusion. The violin and cello parts play a parallel passage in minor sixths, with ostinato underpinning in the left-hand of the piano.

Example 3) Second Piano Trio, 1st movement, mm. 42-48

This key motivic element reoccurs at measure 106, as a recapitulation in the same meter.

From rehearsal 8, pitch class 013 is treated with a great deal of developmental character.

Rehearsal 10 develops the two thematic units, X and Y, with the piano left-hand pedal point in 4+3/8 meter (Ex. 4).
This section propels the piece to a point of climactic arrival, and the fortissimo restatement contains heavy and thick textures in the piano part and marcato articulation in the strings. After this short restatement, Muczynski utilizes a contrapuntal texture, that, according to Kostraba, “is analogous to the caccia from the Ars Nova period.” This contour can be considered a reflection of thematic material X and it can be found also in measures 14-15, as well as in measures 46-47 (Ex. 5).

24 “A type of 14th-century Italian music….is presented as a two-voice canon, supported by a free tenor in longer note values” Willi Apel and Ralph T. Daniel, the Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music (New York, Pocket Books, 1960): s.v. “caccia.”, quoted in, Kostraba, 64.
Two measures before rehearsal 13, Muczynski utilizes a 0147 chord in the right-hand piano part. This foreshadows the piano’s concluding section. At rehearsal 13, he uses a similar technique of caccia, in which right-hand octaves and left-hand imitate each other.

A brilliant passage evocative of a glissando leads to the coda. The striking feature of this last section is Muczynski’s complete use of pitch class 0147 for the right-hand until the end. Moreover, pitch class 013 dominates string parts. Finally the movement ends with pitch class 0147 in the piano and the string part’s melody is 013. These pitch classes 013 and 0147 are clearly integral to the unity of the work.

The introduction, a ternary form itself, is intrinsically complete. After this long introduction, Muczynski employs G major for theme one and theme two. Table -1 illustrates the structure and the overall bass line progression with tempo changes.

Table -1. Structural Organization of The First Movement

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<th>Rehearsal number</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Thematic material</th>
<th>Bass-Line</th>
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<td>mm.1-6</td>
<td>Andante molto</td>
<td>X, Y</td>
<td>C-sharp</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>mm.7-13</td>
<td>frequent ritard,</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>B-flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A'</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>mm.14-24</td>
<td>stringendo, and a</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>mm.25-36</td>
<td>tempo</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mm.37-44</td>
<td></td>
<td>X, Y</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>Exposition T I</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>mm.45-57</td>
<td>Allegro</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>G</td>
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<tr>
<td>T II</td>
<td>5-6-7</td>
<td>mm.58-76</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y (013)</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>mm.77-88</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y (013)</td>
<td>F-C-sharp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>mm.89-96</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>mm.97-105</td>
<td></td>
<td>X, Y</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recapitulation T I</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>mm.106-</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the recapitulation, the cello and violin switch parts from those each played in the exposition. The violin plays a half step up, in B-flat major. The second thematic area of the recapitulation is unusual in its structural shape. The canonic (*caccia*-like) device is presented in the key of C major; it is of note that this technique reoccurs in the third movement in measure 100, before the recapitulation.

Harmony

The harmonic structure of movement one is articulated by its bass line motion, and characterized by frequent employment of pedal tone, octatonic scale and bitonality. In the entire trio, the composer uses imperfect octaves, often diminished; an example occurs in the opening, with the piano’s C# pitted against the violin’s C (Ex.1), and in measure 7, the piano part’s G# against G. (Ex. 2)

Bass Line: The bass line serves to dictate harmonic form and architectonic structure, as well as providing a source of harmonic stability for independent voice lines. The introduction begins with a C-sharp pedal point, which then moves up to C at rehearsal 2. C then moves to D, to B and, finally arrives at G at rehearsal 5.

C-centricity is foreshadowed by the C minor section beginning at measure 14, until it is at last confirmed at rehearsal 12, where the first theme appears in canon. The movement is led by a tonal progression outlining traditional tonal music progressions. (C; I-V-IV-I-V-I) The first
introduction is in the key area of C, the middle section in G and F, and the end section in G with a return to C. The common practice tonal implications of the sectional key areas are clear.

Pedal point: Throughout this movement, Muczynski uses pedal point technique to build a sense of key stability, through the use of a single suspended chord or of repeated rhythmic figures in a particular key (Ex. 6 mm.58-62, mm.97-100).

Particularly noteworthy is his use of long sustained notes with short neighbor note figures in the outer movements, a framing device and one of the many examples of cyclical unity in the piece. This may be seen in the first movement in measures 58-67, and in the third movement in measures 66-71, and measures 101-104.
Octatonic Scale: In this entire movement, both melody and harmony are crafted from the octatonic scale. Thus, the movement’s thematic material - Y 0235, a segment of Y - 013, and a chord - 0147 - are derived from the octatonic scale. Arias notes, regarding Tcherepnin:

His lifelong fascination with combining major and minor scales led him to develop the nine-step scale, which is closely related to other twentieth century synthetic scales, namely the Bartók scale, the Messiaen Mode of Limited Transposition and Rimsky Korsakov’s octatonic scale:

Bartók: C  C#  D#  E  F#  G  A  Bb  C
Messiaen: C  Db  Eb  E  F#  G  A  Bb  C
Rimsky-Korsakov: C  C#  D#  E  F#  G  A  A#  C
Tcherepnin: C  Db  Eb  E  F  G  Ab  A  B  C

Muczynski’s use of the octatonic scale reveals his background, his conflation of European traditions and Russian styles of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century. Joseph N. Strauss says of the octatonic scale:

It is highly symmetrical, both transpositionally and inversionally. It maps onto itself at four levels of transposition and four levels of inversion. As a result, it has only three distinct forms.

Octatonic I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C#</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Ab</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Octatonic II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>Ab</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Octatonic III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Bb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of combining two tetrachord scales is distinctly characteristic of Muczynski’s piano writing. These passages create an effective and unique sound, as well as being very pianistic.

The scales Muczynski uses most are the segmented octatonic scale, or a combination of two octatonic scales, which is shaped as two adjacent tetrachords (Ex 7. m.119, m.128).

Example 7-1) *Second Piano Trio*, 1st movement, mm. 119

Example 7-2) *Second Piano Trio*, 1st movement, mm. 128

The octatonic scale is not only made manifest chordally, but also melodically (Ex. 8 mm.129-133).
In this violin part, pitch class 013 dominates. Therefore, a combinatorial octatonic scale is utilized.

Bitonality: Muczynski creates instability by inserting a bitonal section between sections of harmonic stability. In this first movement, bitonality occurs at measure 45, with the violin part in the key of G major and the cello part in the key of B major (Ex. 3). At rehearsal 6, the violin part remains in G major, with the piano part sustaining a G pedal tone, while the cello plays in C minor. The key of G is firmly established by the pedal tone in the piano. Bitonality affords Muczynski the unique color of two different melodic tonal inflections, above a pedal point. Beginning at measure 89, the use of bitonality is pronounced.

At rehearsal 9, the violin is in the key of E-flat, and the cello is in the key of C with a piano pedal tone on the tonic of the key; strings keep playing in minor sixth intervals. This section is dramatically developed with trills in the string parts and sixteenth note figures in the piano, driving to rehearsal 10 with the violin in the key of A-flat, and the cello in the key of B-flat, with the piano’s fioratura sixteenth note realization of a D pedal tone. This bitonality anticipates the climax of the movement at rehearsal 11. With marcato chords in the piano, the
string part creates a wall of polytonality, with all playing in parallel motion. This short restatement results in an explosion of the violin part in the key of B-flat major, and the cello part in the key of G major, with changes of meter, dynamic development, and heavy chords in the piano part.

Rhythm, Meter, and Tempo

In the introduction, the thematic material opens with the displaced down beat, expressed by an initial eighth rest of rhythm pattern followed by a quarter on the “and” of one (♩♩♩♩♩♩♩♩♩♩♩♩♩♩). This displacement of the initial beat pervades the section. The meter changes from 3/4 to 4/4 and 2/4, with frequent ritardandi and stringendi. The end of the introduction is marked by a long rest in the string part, and the piano suspension of the lunga. Sudden tempo changes and the use of 5/8 and 4+3+5/8 meters create a great deal of rhythmic interest and complexity in this section.

Muczynski’s imaginative rhythms are developed until the caccia-like section. At the beginning of the Allegro section, Muczynski employs an ostinato alternating with mixed rhythmic groupings of 3+2, 4+3+2+3. This low register left-hand motion incites suspense in the listener by its suggestion of instability.

The Muczynski tetrachord ascending scale appears at the 2/4 meter in measure 52 (Ex. 9 m.52, m.119, m.128).
Example 9-1) *Second Piano Trio*, 1st movement, m. 52

Example 9-2) *Second Piano Trio*, 1st movement, m. 119

Example 9-3) *Second Piano Trio*, 1st movement, m. 128

Example 9-4) Desperate measures op.48 Var. 12, mm.19-20

23
In measure 128, right before the coda, digital dexterity is used to brilliant effect; consequently, a similar passage also occurs in his piece *Desperate Measures* (1994, Paganini Variation for piano), Op. 48 Var. 12, mm.19-20 (Ex. 9). After this rhythmic ostinato disappears, 2/4 meter dominates, and 3+3+2 (mm.53-54) sixteenth note figures reoccur several times in the right-hand; this rhythmic figure unifies the middle section of this movement (Ex.10 mm. 53-54, mm. 68-69, mm. 70-71).

Example 10-1) *Second Piano Trio*, 1st movement, mm. 53-54

Example 10-2) *Second Piano Trio*, 1st movement, mm. 68-69

Example 10-3) *Second Piano Trio*, 1st movement, mm. 70-71
The sixteenth note figure in the string part from measures 72-76 and the 3+2 rhythmic profile from measure 45 suggests the influence of Bartok upon the composer. In measures 94-96, the string’s trill and the piano’s volatile, forte accented sixteenth note motion effectively propel the piece to the next 4+3/8 and 4+3+5/8 section. The string’s use of the sixteenth note with accents, and the piano’s driving right-hand figure of ascension build to the explosive climax and the arrival at the grand chord section. During the string’s canon, 4/4 meter provides a moment of calm and peace. Muczynski inserts sharply contrasting bridges in measures 118-119, and this canonic section continues in the piano, while the violin plays triplet figures for the first time in the trio in measures 124-127. At the coda, the excitement and vigorous mood of the preceding section is revived by the use of lively 4/8 and 3/8 meters.

Texture and Dynamics

The four voices of violin, cello, piano right-hand, and piano left-hand create a colorful mixture by means of varied textures and dynamics. In the opening, the right-hand and left-hand in the piano provide suspenseful harmony with chordal progression, while the violin begins the melody in the high register sans cello. The cello then receives the melody line from the violin, while the piano top voice concomitantly projects another melody.

From rehearsal 2, the piano plays in unison octaves, which the string part then assumes after four measures. In rehearsal 3, both violin and cello play thematic material while the piano remains tacit, returning to play the melody in unison octaves later. At rehearsal 4, the piano plays chord progressions while both of the strings play thematic material one after another. From rehearsal 5, the texture and dynamic becomes much thicker and more dramatic. The strings and piano each have their own individual roles. Above the supporting piano part, the violin and cello
parts present melodic fragments with a unified rhythmic pulse. At rehearsal 6, the violin and cello play different melodies, while the piano plays either a pedal tone or sixteenth note figures in order to connect the movement section by section.

In the caccia section, the two strings play in canon with piano pedal point at the dynamic of forte, and in the next section, the right-hand and left-hand of the piano assume the roles of the strings and the strings play sustaining notes in the dynamic range of piano to forte. In the coda, all four voices have different roles, and this different mixture creates new color and texture. The violin plays an eighth note melody, the cello plays a contrasting melody, the piano right-hand play staccato chords, and piano left-hand plays high register trills.

The Second Movement

The character of the first movement’s slow introduction reappears in the beginning of the second movement, which might be regarded as another unifying factor in the Trio. The Adagio has a ternary form, with two different themes presented in the first section. In this movement, motive Y is primarily elaborated upon. Table-2 illustrates overall structure, thematic statements, tempo changes, and key areas.

Table-2 Structural Organization of The Second Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41 45 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Same motion of the theme II</td>
<td>II I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>G Bb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>Adagio</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tempo Primo (Adagio)</td>
<td>Lento</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26
The piano opens with an ostinato on widely spread intervals, and the string parts have a dialogic development of motive Y material in G centricity. From rehearsal 2, the string parts play theme two, which has the same contour as the last three notes of motive Y. According to Cisler, “It is also characteristic of Muczynski to base sonorities on the intervallic content of themes or motives.” At rehearsal 3, the top voice of the piano presents motives X and Y, and the violin and cello again present motive Y (Ex.11 mm.22-24, mm.27-28).

Example 11-1) Second Piano Trio, 2nd movement, mm. 22-24

Example 11-2) Second Piano Trio, 2nd movement, mm. 27-28

The striking feature of the B section is achieved in part by the absence of piano, with only string parts presenting thematic material in Quasi A Tempo. This part is a transformation of measures 29-36 of the first movement (Ex.12 mm.29-32 violin only).

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27 Cisler, 421.
Muczynski again utilizes canonic technique here by trading off the three notes of the motivic material. At rehearsal 4, pitch class 013 dominates. Through the accumulation of pitch class 013, the octatonic scale reoccurs, and two different octatonic scales are presented simultaneously (Ex. 13 mm.31-33). This motive has the same contour as the last three notes of motive Y, with different intervallic content.

In the closing return to part A, the piano reemerges, continuously playing previously heard thematic material in the top voice, smoothly transitioning to the theme two section (Ex. 13 mm.42-44). In this last section, theme two is presented first, with the exact same content, and subsequently, theme one occurs in the cello part. The return of theme one is the climax of this
movement, with the modulation of the key area from G to B-flat. The violin plays an ascending trill figure with crescendo, and the piano plays wide-spread chords in pedal point. After the strings play an ascending fortissimo scale, the piano arrives on the B-flat minor chord of the coda section, Lento. These piano chords recall measures 37-40 of the first movement. In the coda, the violin and cello play a distorted theme at the interval of a minor tenth. The second movement ends in B-flat minor with bass on the dominant.

The Third Movement

The final movement is marked Allegro con Spirito. The piano quietly opens the piece with a subdued but energetic rhythmic motion. The form of this movement combines aspects of rondo with those of sonata-allegro form. Several themes reoccur throughout the entire movement, and new themes are mixed with established themes, suggestive of a rondo; the material reoccurrence is not, however, as structured and balanced as one might expect in a true rondo. Likewise, though a strong recapitulation, at measure 110, adds the element of sonata-allegro form, as well as a coda, the lack of a true development and the balance of motivic material and harmonic presentation of this material denies this being a true sonata-allegro form. Traditional formal terminology fails to adequately address the processes of this movement, including sonata-rondo, and as Cisler noted about the composer, “In general, Muczynski tends to be far less ‘formal’ with structure in final movements.”

Table-3 illustrates the formal plan of the third movement.

28 Cisler, p.286, quoted also in Kostraba, p.107.
Table-3 Structural Organization of The Third Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A¹</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>B¹</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>C¹</th>
<th>A²</th>
<th>D¹</th>
<th>D²</th>
<th>A³</th>
<th>A⁴</th>
<th>Coda (D+A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key area</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>eb</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>eb</td>
<td>eb</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>eb</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>D-E-flat-E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The movement has a strong F minor centricity, but finally ends on an E minor triad with major 7th chord. Thematic materials X and Y are utilized throughout.

Form

The third movement has the most virtuosic character of the entire trio. By intervallic and rhythmic manipulation, the original thematic material is constructed into contrasting sections organized as a rondo with sonata-allegro elements. Varied shapes of thematic materials Y and X are embedded in the opening violin part in reverse order (Ex.14 mm.1-4).

Example 14) Second Piano Trio, 3rd movement, mm. 1-4
In this manner, the same thematic material is used for the entire trio. In the opening, over the accompaniment of the piano and cello, the violin presents the melodic line. At rehearsal 2, the piano presents thematic material in unison octaves, and a tetrachord scale leads to section B.

In section B, thematic materials X and Y reoccur, in terms of initial intervallic content, (Ex.15 mm.25-27) though motive X is utilized in inverted and varied form.

Example 15) Second Piano Trio, 3rd movement, mm. 25-27

In section A\(^1\), the violin and cello trade off melodic material as in previous movements. In section C, the melody is presented in the top voice of the piano with a meter change to 5/4. In measure 66, section D, caccia-like texture occurs in 5/4 meter. Sections C and D have a strong thematic relationship with section B (Ex.16 mm.25-27, m.48, m.66).\(^{29}\)

Example 16-1) Second Piano Trio, 3rd movement, mm. 25-27

Example 16-2) Second Piano Trio, 3rd movement, m. 48

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\(^{29}\) Kostraba, 67-68.
From these relationships, one may observe Muszynski’s compositional technique of thematic transformation.

In section A\textsuperscript{2}, the cello presents the melody line at the original pitch but with a change of G to G-flat, and the violin assumes the melody in measure 90. Rehearsal 10 (m. 94) is a variation of rehearsal 7 (m. 66); instead of using a caccia-like technique, here Muczynski utilizes a vertical form and, with the exception of the ostinato in the left-hand of the piano, the three voices move together in 5/4 and 3/4 meters. In section D\textsuperscript{2} (m.100) the cello line follows the contour of the top voice of the piano in measures 7-9 of the first movement. This ascending figure utilizes pitch class 013 (Ex.17 the third movement in mm.100-101 in cello, the first movement in mm.7-8 piano).

Example 16-3) *Second Piano Trio*, 3rd movement, m. 66

![Example 16-3](image)

Example 17-1) *Second Piano Trio*, 3rd movement, mm. 100-101

![Example 17-1](image)

Example 17-2) *Second Piano Trio*, 1st movement, mm. 7-8

![Example 17-2](image)

(CON PED.)
The contour of the melody in the violin part is similar to the violin part in section A (Ex.18 the third movement in m.100 violin part, mm.3-4 violin part).

Example 18-1) Second Piano Trio, 3rd movement, m. 100

Not only are thematic elements from other sections used, but the key of C major is also featured, a clear reflection of the first movement key, and the only C major section of the entire third movement. The section also uses a *caccia*-like texture, which appears throughout the entire trio to achieve cyclicism, further supported by the reappearance of the long and short-note bass pattern.

In terms of recapitulation, Muczynski eschews the second theme in favor only of the first theme; thus structural ambiguity again occurs here. In section A⁴, the violin plays the melody above the cello’s descending trills, and all three instruments enter on a *subito forte*. The sixteenth-note ascending scale figure in the violin and cello leads to a coda section marked *Marcato con Forza* (*Secco*). In the coda, the piano plays a sixteenth note ostinato figure in the low register, while strings play *fortissimo* sustained notes in unison, presenting section D and A materials. This extensive sixteenth-note gesture in the piano ascends through four octaves - low D to high E from measure 145 to 158- and this kind of motion heightens expectation of a big
explosion, which indeed arrives in measures 159-162 with a three octave ascending scale played by the piano with a crescendo, the strings playing the thematic motives of the movement subito fortissimo. The trio concludes with the E minor triad and major seventh tone in allargando.

Harmony

The third movement has F minor centricity. From the very beginning, in the left-hand piano part eighth note, the quartal harmonic motion that pervades this entire movement is presented; this element can also be found in Muczynski’s *Dream Cycle* (1983) No.4, mm.9-12 (Ex. 19 Second Piano Trio third movement mm.1-4, *Dream Cycle* No. 4, mm.9-10).

Example 19-1) *Second Piano Trio*, 3rd movement, mm. 1-4

Example 19-2) *Dream Cycle*, No.4, mm. 9-12
Varied shapes of motive X and Y are utilized in different manners of articulation (Ex. 16). Muczynski employs the technique of thematic transformation in this movement. Pitch class 013 is used as a cyclic element, as is Muczynski’s signature tetrachord scale (Ex. 20 m.47, mm.53-54).

Example 20-1) *Second Piano Trio*, 3rd movement, m. 47

Example 20-2) *Second Piano Trio*, 3rd movement, mm. 53-54

Bass Line: As Table-3 illustrates, in the third movement, the key area F frequently moves to its lower neighbor note of E-flat, and the bass line moves with its key area. At the arrival of the recapitulation, C moves to F to suggest dominant-tonic motion. Regardless of constant F minor centricity, the movement ends with a big surprise of E.

Ostinato: Ostinato patterns are much used in the third movement. From the opening, the ostinato is prominently featured in the left-hand piano part. Section B also utilizes ostinati in measures
25-32, and in this ostinato, the long and short rhythmic pattern appears in measure 27 (Ex. 21 mm.25-32).

Example 21) *Second Piano Trio*, 3rd movement, mm. 25-32

Section C reveals yet another ostinato in the left-hand piano part (Ex. 22 mm.48-51).

Example 22) *Second Piano Trio*, 3rd movement, mm. 48-51

Pedal point: In this movement, Muczynski develops his use of pedal point in various ways. The long and short shape is utilized in measures 66-69, and ostinato-like pedal points at the octave are used in measures 94-98. Another form is the use of sixteenth notes in ostinato figures in the coda, with pedal points sharply accented (Ex. 23).
Octatonic scale: The octatonic scale appears throughout the entire trio, and provides a general musical character (Ex.24).
Polytonality: In the first movement, Muczynski utilized bitonality (Ex. 2), but the third movement features areas of polytonality.

In section C, the bass left-hand piano part and the violin stay in E-flat pedal point, the tenor part in the piano plays an octatonic scale, the soprano part in the piano exhibits an F# dorian mode, while the cello remains in the “home key” of F minor (Ex. 25 mm.28-29).
Rhythm, Articulation, and Meter

The eighth rest and eighth note are important structural elements throughout the entire movement; this small motion provides a basic pulse and thereby articulates section changes. Section A and B share not only the same thematic material, but also share the same rhythmic motion.

They both begin with an eighth rest, and then three eighth notes plus two eighth notes. The pattern that follows in measure 4 in the violin part shows a four eighth notes figure, with the first two slurred and the last syncopated; additionally, within 3/4 meter, the piano part ostinato provides a duple underpinning.
There is a certain rhythmic connection between the B and D section, in which melodic lines end with a single eighth note on the down beat. The tension of the entire movement is heightened by incrementally diminished rhythmic values from eighth notes to sixteenth notes beginning at measure 137. Towards the end, a succession of chords feature builds up tension to the climax. A striking rhythmic feature of the coda is the use of accent. The lower register piano part features hemiolas in measures 145 and 151; accents frequently shift from 3/4 to 2/4, with additional syncopation in the violin part in measures 156-158 (Ex. 26).

Example 26-1) Second Piano Trio, 3rd movement, mm. 145-146
Articulation is varied between the instrumental parts and between different presentations of the material. In measures 38-41, the strings play in legato, the right-hand of the piano part plays staccato, and the left-hand of the piano part plays tenuto (Ex. 27 mm. 29-32, mm. 38-41). The piano part distinguishes between staccato (Ex. 19) and non legato (Ex. 28 mm.133-134). Variety of articulation occurs in the transition to the recapitulation in the left-hand of the piano part, and it also has different articulation from the exposition in measure 110, with a slur over the left-hand eighth notes (Ex. 27 mm. 105-111).
Example 27-1) *Second Piano Trio*, 3rd movement, mm. 29-32

Example 27-2) *Second Piano Trio*, 3rd movement, mm. 38-41
Texture and Dynamics

In this movement contrasts in texture delineate the structure in which the two string voices and the two piano voices are often put into two different roles. When the piano serves as accompaniment, both of the strings present thematic material in unison at rehearsals 1, 3, 6, 10, 13, 16 and 17. When the piano presents thematic material, the strings play an accompanying role at rehearsals 2 and 5. However, Muczynski utilizes other concepts of texture as well. For example, in rehearsal 15, the violin and middle voice in the piano part present the melody (Ex. 28 mm.133-134).
At rehearsal 10, the strings and the right-hand piano part realize the melody in vertical chords (Ex. 29 mm.94-95).
Texture also serves as a cyclic element. The *caccia*-like texture in section D (rehearsal 7) provides each movement a unifying factor. Frequently, it follows the dramatic development of the music or the outline of a musical phrase. However, one can find noteworthy examples of nuanced use of dynamics of crescendo and decrescendo in measure 1, (compare to measure 3 with piano only), in measures 92-95 (Ex. 30), and in measures 106-109 (Ex. 27). In the recapitulation, measures 110-111 have only forte with decrescendo (Ex. 27-3).

Example 30) *Second Piano Trio*, 3rd movement, mm.92-93
Treatment of the Piano

As a composer-pianist Muczynski makes full use of the instrument’s resources. Despite technical difficulties, his music remains always strongly and intensely pianistic. His signature adjacent tetrachord scales fit the hands comfortably, wherein consecutive fingerings of 4321 4321 or 1234 1234 are used. The piano is used to create varied sonorities and textures, from the impressionistic opening of the first movement to the abundance of lyrical and melodic writing and percussive treatments employed throughout the work.

All registers are used in numerous combinations. Muczynski demands varied use of pedal technique, and differentiates between marked changes of the written pedal in measures 1-6 and con ped from measure 7 in the first movement. Secco is used in measure 145 in the third movement, and the left-hand chords in measures 153-158 have pedal markings. Markings, like the one in measure 17 in the first movement, might seem superfluous, but they emphasize the composer’s concern for sustaining the tone fully where the hands change registers. There are a number of special pedal effects in this trio, usually creating a bell-like effect. In the second movement, in measures 49-56, the pedal aids in the exponential accumulation of a massive sonority (Ex. 31, second movement, mm.49-51).

Example 31) Second Piano Trio, 2nd movement, mm. 49-51
A twentieth-century composer, Robert Muczynski has undeniably crafted his own unique sound. Even though his contemporary music has been linked, justifiably, with atonal and avant-garde music, he clearly composed with an eye towards tradition, in a manner which encompassed multiple and varied aesthetics, including the Classical, the Romantic, and the Baroque.

In terms of harmony, he builds, from the basic tools of tonality a thoroughly organic microcosm of bitonality, polytonality, octatonicism, quartal harmonies, and his own signature tetrachord scale. He utilizes the ostinato and pedal point in a highly structured manner, and these elements mix in the various textural settings to imbue his unique mode of expression with power. His use of wide spread texture and extensive range of dynamics further enhance the colorful sonorities.

Influenced by Tcherepnin and Prokofiev, rhythmic character is a vital element of Muczynski’s style. He utilizes mixed meter and frequently changes meters with eighth notes as a basic pulse. In the Second Piano Trio in particular, variety of articulation assumes an important role including accent, tenuto, staccato, marcato, slur, glissando, pizzicato, and trill. The coda section of the third movement of the Second Piano Trio features excitement-building hemiolas.

The entire trio is composed from the same key thematic materials, and his use of thematic transformation creates large-scale cyclicism in the grand tradition of Western European composers such as Beethoven. The cyclism is carried even further through the cyclic use of compositional ideas of canon and long-short note pedal point. In the Second Piano Trio,
Muczynski uses the sonata-allegro form for the first movement, ternary form for the second movement, and rondo/sonata-allegro for the third movement.

His musical approach is far more instrumental than vocal, and his piano writing clearly reveals his concepts of the instrument’s idioms.

Muczynski’s Second Piano Trio offers a wealth of value, not only for the study of its compositional aspects, but also for its genuinely attractive sound. Through this music performers and audiences can truly share in the original intentions of the composer’s heart.
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