AN INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF GEORGE ANTHEIL’S
SONATA FOR TRUMPET AND PIANO

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American composer George Antheil’s *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* was written in 1951. This dissertation provides historical and theoretical information that gives insight into the interpretation of this sonata. Reasons why the piece deserves greater attention with respect to the standard twentieth century trumpet literature are also given. Antheil’s music was influential in the development of classical music in the first half of the 20th century and, more specifically, contributed to the establishment of an American style of classical music. Composed near the end of his life, this sonata has its roots in this heritage. The understanding of Antheil’s history, motivations, and compositional techniques is intended to help bring a performance of this sonata to its full potential.
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# LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation provides historical and theoretical information that gives insight into the interpretation and performance of this sonata. Reasons why the piece deserves greater attention with respect to the standard twentieth century trumpet literature are also given. An understanding of Antheil’s history, motivations, and compositional techniques will bring a performance of this sonata to its full potential.

Antheil was always aware of how his music fit into the heritage of the works of the masters, and he hoped to contribute to that body of work. His music was influential in the development of classical music in the first half of the 20th century and also contributed to the establishment of an American style of classical music. Composed near the end of his life, this sonata has its roots in this heritage.

George Antheil [An-tile] was born in 1900 and died in 1959. His career began with a rise to musical and commercial success in the 1920s; saw a decline in popularity in the 1930s; financial and professional struggles, soul-searching, rededication and a return to artistic success in the 1940s, a success that continued to grow throughout the 1950s. The Sonata for Trumpet and Piano was written in this final phase of his life, in 1951.

The first part of this interpretative analysis will look at Antheil the man; his thoughts and ambitions, his history and his accomplishments. This biographical overview will determine Antheil’s reasons for composing and place his technique and work into an historical and stylistic context.

It is the purpose of this dissertation to bring this sonata into the mainstream of American trumpet literature by providing information both historical and technical that will tell the story of the piece, define its specific and unique character, and thus make its performance one of interest.
In doing so this dissertation also aims to increase the awareness of, and appreciation for, all of Antheil’s music.
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

George Antheil was a contemporary of Aaron Copland, Virgil Thompson, Roger Sessions and other American composers of the day who were concerned with writing music in a uniquely American style. “Georg Carl Johann Antheil, in the view of many, was the most notorious American composer of the 1920s.” In 1926 he was regarded by Aaron Copland as the most promising of a trio of radical composers which included Roger Sessions and Henry Cowell: “one needn’t be particularly astute to realize that he possesses the greatest gift of any young American now writing.” Antheil’s prime motivation in his early 20s was to be radical, shocking and controversial, intent on forging new ground. Antheil himself coined the phrase the “bad boy of music”, a moniker that would become the title of his autobiography.

Compositionally, he spent his life pursuing what he referred to as “the mad, outwardly illogical, but inwardly necessary pursuing of a dream music.”

As with another prominent figure of American classical music, Aaron Copland, George Antheil was born in 1900. He was raised in the industrial section of Trenton, NJ and this physical setting had an affect on him that manifested itself in the mechanistic music that made him the enfant terrible of Europe, Paris specifically, in the 1920s.

Antheil started piano and violin at age 6 and at 16 traveled to Philadelphia to study theory and composition with Constantin von Sternberg, a pupil of Franz Liszt, from whom Antheil received a strict, traditional foundation. By 19 he was studying in New York with Ernest Bloch. It was under Bloch that he started composing his first major work, a symphony portraying the Trenton of his youth.

In need of financial support, he was taken in by Margaret Anderson, editor and founder of the arts publication Little Review. In addition to his musical abilities she saw literary talent in him based on the poetry and short stories he wrote in high school, and his editing of the school’s
literary magazine. It was Anderson who introduced him to the contemporary art world of London and Paris. His strong interest in the new and the avant-garde would inspire him to compose works that would take Paris by storm in the early 1920s.

In 1920 his first teacher, von Sternberg, helped him procure a patron, Mrs. Edward Bok (Mary Louise Curtis Bok; 1876-1970). Mrs. Bok was a supporter of the arts who in 1924 founded the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Her patronage of Antheil lasted 19 years. Antheil later expressed regret at having received her support for so long, stating that he might have grown more as an artist and as a person had he needed to find the strength to support himself on his own.5

In 1922 Antheil moved to Europe where he felt audiences and critics would be more accepting of his new ideas. His plan was to become the “enfant terrible of the period, noted and notorious… as a new ultramodern pianist composer.”6 He settled in Berlin, and from there he concertized across Europe as a pianist, playing programs that consisted of Chopin, Debussy, Stravinsky and his own ultramodern works. These programs were known for the strong reactions of the audience, reactions that included stomping and yelling and requests to repeat things, such as the first movement of his *Sonata Sauvage*. Antheil promoted himself in as colorful a manner as possible: fabricating stories about being from a notorious Mafia family; having friends plant stories in the newspapers about him being lost or eaten by lions in Africa; placing a handgun on the piano in Budapest to help quell a rowdy crowd. In addition to playing concerts he was composing and sending scores to conductors in hopes of getting his music played.

This tact was successful and in November of 1922 his first symphony was premiered by the Berlin Philharmonic. It received very good reviews, and Antheil was especially pleased by a reference made to “an extremely delicate and ever-varying rhythmic sense.”7 Despite being
pleased, he “felt a little sad as I again saw the 19 and 20 year old boy who wrote it.”

This illustrates the restless searching nature of Antheil that drove him his entire life.

In 1923 he moved to Paris at the invitation of his idol Igor Stravinsky, and they became friends and confidants. They spent two solid months talking about music and composition, both at that time embracing the machine-like, rhythmically propulsive style that appears in Stravinsky’s Ragtime for Chamber Orchestra and Antheil’s piano works Airplane Sonata and Mechanisms. Antheil himself described his music of this period thusly: “I represented the anti-expressive, anti-romantic, coldly mechanistic aesthetic of the early twenties.”

H.H. Stuckenschmidt, a leading Berlin critic, wrote that “the composers Auric, Poulenc, Milhaud, Cassela and Hindemith were following Stravinsky without reaching him but that Antheil had succeeded in surpassing him.”

The influence of jazz on Antheil was a factor at this point in his life, but only in so far as he sought to include its elements of rhythmic, harmonic and melodic innovations into his own mechanistic style. These elements of jazz would continue to be an influence on him throughout his career, even though he was not a fan of improvisation, being instead more interested and influenced by the new formal and structural elements that jazz provided.

His fame in Europe continued to grow and reached its apex with the work that Antheil is perhaps best known for, the Ballet Mecanique, first performed in 1926 in Paris. This landmark work was originally intended to be the musical score for a movie of the same name and celebrates machines as music makers. Due to production problems the movie was released only as a silent movie, but the piece by itself was a huge success, being received with riotous behavior equal to that created by Stravinsky’s Le sacre du printemps. It was described by Sylvia Beach (owner of Shakespeare and Company, the Parisian bookstore at the center of artist activity in Paris at the time, and where Antheil lived in an upstairs apartment and associated with Pablo
Picasso, James Joyce, Erik Satie and Ernest Hemingway among others) as “one of the most significant artistic events of the 1920s” and by Aaron Copland as “out-sacking the Sacre.”

It used a number of then modern compositional techniques such as multiple ostinato layers where rhythm is the predominant element, changing meters, bitonality and polytonality, and the constant use of syncopation. The textures and effects in this work are, in the mind of this author, direct predecessors to those used in the music of John Cage, Terry Riley, Philip Glass and John Adams.

Unfortunately for Antheil, the piece would have short and long term negative consequences for him. Short term, a much publicized 1927 Carnegie Hall gala premiere was a comically tragic disaster. Backdrops hung to set the mood only elicited laughter; the hype that there would be riots was way overplayed for an intelligent New York audience (there were none); the large fans used to create the propeller sounds were faced towards the audience with obvious disastrous results; lastly, this fiasco ended when the siren which was to sound at a key point near the end did not, only to warm up and shriek seconds after the piece ended, drawing even more laughter. More importantly, long term the piece and this disaster associated with it would follow him the rest of his life, and as is often the case, became an unfair characterization of the man and his life’s work. For example, even though his Jazz Symphony (commissioned by Paul Whiteman) received its American premiere that night as well, and was well received critically, it would get lost in the negativity surrounding the Ballet Mecanique debacle.

Antheil returned to Europe and rode the wave of success the Ballet Mecanique had generated there, but this wave was short lived. Compositionally he had quickly moved beyond it, feeling that the work had been a final statement within that concept. In 1927 his Piano Concerto, consciously written in a neo-classical style, was not well received either critically or publicly. Critics felt the piece was an imitation of Stravinsky’s neo-classical work, and the
Parisian public was upset because he had abandoned the iconoclastic mechanistic style that had created such an uproar. Always on the lookout for new artistic and business opportunities, Antheil moved to Vienna, Austria to be closer to the operatic renaissance taking place in Germany.

In 1928 he wrote his opera *Transatlantic*, a work which contains jazz-inspired rhythms, parodies of popular tunes and modular structures. Although the opera met with success it was not repeated anywhere else due to the high production cost (it was not done in the U.S. until 1981, in his home town of Trenton). In 1929 he worked on a second opera, collaborating with the president of the Juilliard School, John Erskine, as the librettist. A letter from Antheil to his patron Mrs. Bok stated: “…my dream day and night is vindication in my own country. European triumphs mean, at present, nothing to me unless America claims me as her own.”¹² This second opera, *Helen Retires*, did not fulfill this hope, however, receiving generally good reviews in Europe, but not doing well in America. It was to have premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York but ended up being done only at the Juilliard School, and was, in Antheil’s words “a big flop.”¹³ These rejections combined with the political and social darkness looming over Europe led him to return to the United States permanently in 1933 to try and start anew.

The 1930s in America saw artistic endeavors moving away from the avant-garde experimentalism of the 1920s towards a more realistic approach, one that sought to define America as a culture. Many composers saw the new forms of media such as radio, recordings, and films as good opportunities to reach new audiences. Neoclassicism and *Gebrauchsmusik* were trends that developed as composers tried to reach wider, more accepting audiences, and to make their music a part of the everyday culture rather than existing as art for arts sake. “Working within tonal constructs, American composers became almost obsessed with writing the The Great America Symphony.”¹⁴ Virgil Thompson has called the 1930s “the definitive decade
for American music illustrated by the expanding music scene: approximately 30,000 orchestras by 1937 in new cities, towns and colleges and high schools playing American music; the preoccupation with the America stage which promised a new era in musical theatre; the turn by many composers to film as a means of reaching a mass audience; and the devotion of countless composers to the ballet.”15

It was in this environment that Antheil now found himself. Living first in New York upon his return, Antheil immediately became part of what he called “a new theatre movement – musical ballet-opera theatre”16, writing a series of ballets for George Balanchine and Martha Graham. While still in New York he received his first offers to score films in 1934 (Once in a Blue Moon and The Scoundrel). This would lead him to move to Hollywood in August of 1936 where he would live for the rest of his life. Despite the new opportunities in America he still was not financially solvent, and this situation came to a head when Mrs. Bok’s patronage came to end in 1939. She told him that she felt that he had never lived up to his potential and that, referring to Helen Retires, wrote: “I know no one at the Juilliard that has either pleasure, interest or respect for your score.”17

To compensate for the loss of income Antheil tried a number of ventures. He invented a radio controlled torpedo in collaboration with the actress Heddy Lamar; he published several articles and a book on endocrinology; he published two other books under pseudonyms, a detective novel and a book making predictions about the looming world war; he published articles on music and other subjects in leading magazines; he tried to become a radio personality; he and his wife wrote a lonely-hearts column and he tried to market a learn-to-read-music system. None of these ventures proved to be financially successful long term and combined with the aforementioned rejections he was at the lowest point in his life, writing “here in early 1941 I could at last label myself a complete failure.”18
Attesting to his great internal strength, vision, character and motivation, and for the purposes of this dissertation, the music that resulted, George Antheil regrouped, refocused, persevered and ended up rising to the greatest heights of his life, both professionally and personally.

He moved to a small house overlooking the Pacific, left film scoring and resumed composing in a manner that continued the search for a distinctive American music. He would find the inspiration for this music in America’s trials and triumphs during World War II and return to success and critical acclaim with his resulting programmatic Fourth Symphony (1942). When Leopold Stokowski premiered the work with the NBC Symphony Orchestra in 1944 one critic wrote “the symphony proved to be the most interesting American work that has yet to come out of the war.” Antheil’s wife Boski recalled in 1970 that with the Fourth Symphony he experienced a rebirth of compositional energies and embarked on the most creative period of his artistic career.

This final period includes the success of his fourth, fifth and sixth symphonies and his best motion picture score, The Pride and the Passion (in 1946 he returned to scoring films, both as a means of support and as a way of exposing people to great music. He ultimately scored a total of 33 films). Most importantly, he had achieved the stature of a major American composer and by 1947 was among the four most performed American composers along with Copland, Gershwin and Barber.

His Sonata for Trumpet and Piano was written during this period, in 1951, at the same time he was working on the ballet Capital of the World, which is based on a short story by Ernest Hemingway, and his opera Volpone, A Satire in Music, In Three Acts. Capital of the World was described by Virgil Thompson thusly: “Rarely have I heard music with so much real energy in it…its tunes are bright and strong…picturesque, emphatic,…everything about the music is
boldly conceived and completely effective…the most original, striking and powerful American Ballet score with which I am acquainted.”

The music for *Volpone* has many characteristics of great film music, it is vivid and energetic, tender and lush, full of rapid juxtapositions, exquisite melodies and rhythmic drive. The trumpet sonata shares many of the same qualities, elements and techniques, and in fact there is thematic material from the first movement of *Volpone* that is very similar to that used in both the first and fourth movements of the trumpet sonata. (see Example 1)

Antheil had not written any chamber music since Paris, but in this important final phase of his life he did again, including solo works that include the *Second Violin Sonata* (1948), the *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (1951) and the *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* (1951). “The trumpet sonata, especially, presents Antheil at his very best – infectious tunes over driving accompaniments tinged with acerbic dissonances and expressive, harmonically rich, cantabile melodies, both within his common statement-digression return formula.” The sonata also contains elements of composers he admired: the developmental depth of Beethoven; the drive, rhythmic vitality and harmonic adventurousness of Prokofiev and Shostakovich; the American connection and dance-like qualities of Copland, and a direct homage to a man he greatly admired, Benjamin Britten.

According to the curator of the Antheil estate, Charles Amirkhanian, Antheil wrote the piece in 1951 inspired by the trumpeter Edna White whom he met on one of his many trips to New York from Hollywood to work on the music for Walter Cronkite’s CBS program *The Twentieth Century*. The piece was premiered in the summer of 1953 at the Yaddo Arts and Music Festival in Saratoga Springs, New York by trumpeter Harry Herfurth. Mr. Herfurth was at that time a member of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra and former member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The Yaddo Festival specialized in contemporary music and the piece was
played on a recital attended by about 30 people. Mr. Herfurth recalls that the piece received “warm but polite response.”\textsuperscript{25} He said that the piece reminded him of the music of George Gershwin. Mr. Herfurth also noted that while he enjoyed premiering the piece he never played it again the rest of his distinguished career as a performer and professor of trumpet at Kent State University in Ohio.
THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

The following overviews are a framework for the outline that follows.

Antheil’s compositional technique of modular construction is pervasive in every movement of this sonata. Clearly defined sections, each having a singular musical construction, abut each other without the aid of transitional material that either blends the sections together or elides them. Transitions exist as short contrasting sections inserted between larger sections. The compositional technique Antheil used in this sonata is a study in variation and development. This variation and development occurs within modular sections. This construction is used throughout the sonata. Constant rhythmic drive is a consistent element throughout, with occasional cessations of the constant pulse used as contrast. A core motive is utilized in the melodic construction of each theme. (see Example 2) Dissonant harmonic events are used as important contrasting elements to what is usually a major-minor harmonic language.

There are a number of errors in the Bb trumpet part that have been corrected by Jeff Work, principal trumpet of the Portland (Oregon) Symphony. This author cross-referenced the corrected part he provided against the piano score as corroboration of the corrections. The errata for the part are on page 40 of this document.

The first movement is in sonata-allegro form and in the exposition has themes that are simple and direct melodically, and folk-like in nature. The harmonic language is more complex than the folk-like melodies belie, however. An ever present rhythmic drive gives the music a lilting dance-like quality. In the development, cells taken from the opening theme are used to create related sections that stylistically contrast the character of the exposition. Contrasting themes provide sudden surprises. Rhythmically, the first movement has a continuous eighth note pulse. In the exposition this pulse is in triple groupings, the development contains duple groupings as contrast before returning to the original triple subdivision. Melodically, there is
thematic melodic development drawn from a three note core motive (see Example 3) that appears in the first theme of the piece. All other melodic material is based on cells taken from the first theme as well. Harmonically, the movement contains mostly major and minor triads with the bass line containing a preponderance of fourths throughout. More complex harmonic material is used for short periods of contrast. Texturally, the movement is relatively transparent with the trumpet melody mostly in the middle register, a distinct bass line, and a propulsive inner voice as accompaniment. Thicker, more dissonant structures are used for contrast. There are 32 modules in this movement, 24 of which are grouped into 6 larger sections and 8 of which are combined to create 5 transitions.

The second movement is in ABA song form and starts with a simple folksy charm, as if one is looking back towards the innocent days of youth with great fondness. Antheil never allows the mood to become saccharine and overly sentimental however, choosing instead to introduce more adventurous harmonic material for contrast as the movement develops. Rhythmically, the second movement has a constant eighth note pulse in the piano. This constant pulse is interrupted only once, in the middle of the movement, for a four measure cadenza-like statement in the trumpet that occurs over a pedal point in the piano. The trumpet themes in both the A and B sections are rhythmically based on a dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm. Melodically, the core motive can be seen in both the A and B themes. (see Example 4) Both themes are descending in contour, but the second half of the A theme is ascending. Harmonically, in the A theme major triads predominate, arpeggiated in a way that emphasizes open fifths, as opposed to the fourths of the first movement. In the B theme, major and minor harmonies are used, moving in step-wise motion. Sudden shifts to dissonances and polychords are used for contrast in the B section. Texturally, the interplay between the simpler folk-like elements and the more dissonant contrasting sections are further emphasized by the use of thicker scoring during the dissonant
sections. There are 18 modules in this movement, 14 of which are grouped into 4 larger sections and 4 of which are combined to create 2 transitions.

The third movement is a scherzo in a loose rondo form. It evokes the spirit of modern post-war American life with its continual drive, great wit and optimism, and strong, bold, uplifting ending. Rhythmically, it is in 4/4 time rather than the 3/4 most often used in a scherzo. A steady sixteenth note pulse is maintained in the piano throughout the movement except for four two bar modules that occur in pairs near the start and end of the movement. The trumpet participates in this pulsation and also plays thematic material utilizing longer note values. Melodically, the main theme contains the core motive. (see Example 5) Other melodic elements are again created from cells taken from the first movement. There are 16 modules in this movement, 13 of which are grouped into 7 larger sections and 3 of which are used to create 3 transitions.

The fourth movement returns to the folk and dance-like elements of the first, and can be viewed as being a hybrid form, containing elements of sonata form (themes stated, developed and the initial theme returned to), rondo form (a thematic statement is returned to several times with contrasting material interspersed) and ABA song form (the opening 9/8 section gives way to a Coplandesque American wild west feeling 4/4 section before concluding as it began). It is based on the same thematic material as the first movement, providing both continuity and closure to the sonata. Rhythmically, there is a return to the triple subdivision pulse used in the first movement, now in a more percussive version created by making the second and third pulses the same pitch, rather than each note being of a different pitch, as in the first movement. The B section switches to a duple subdivision, in the form of a continual sixteenth pulse in the piano. This continuous drive is maintained when the A section returns with its triple subdivision. Melodically, the fourth movement theme is the same as the third thematic statement of the first
movement. All melodic material is related to the core motive and melodic cells taken from previously stated material. (see Example 6) Harmonically, elements of the first movement bass line and major-minor triad scheme used in this movement. Dissonant modules are used sparingly and again as elements of sudden contrast. There are 24 modules in this movement, 15 of which are grouped into 12 larger sections and 9 of which are combined to create 9 transitions.

Continuous development of material occurs on both the macro and micro levels. In terms of the macro, Example 2 (see p. 36) illustrates how a three note motive is used in the principle theme of each movement. Elements of the motive can be seen in every theme, transition, and period in the entire work.

On the micro level, Example 3 (see p. 37) shows how Antheil develops the themes used in the first movement from small motives taken from the first theme of the first movement. Examples 4, 5, and 6 (see p. 38-39) further illustrate the related development of this material throughout the sonata.

The following outlines of each movement are to be referenced against the score. The score is published by Weintraub Publishing of New York.
OUTLINE OF THE FIRST MOVEMENT

Exposition

Period I: mm. 1-15

mm. 1-3 Theme 1 in the trumpet contains the 3 note core, Motive A. Piano moving in major triads with root movement predominantly by fourths.

mm. 4-7 Theme 2 statement in the trumpet, contains Motive A in mm. 4-5 and Motive C in mm. 6-7.

mm. 8-11 Theme 2 statement in piano, a sixth higher, with an expansion of the first interval in m. 8 and m. 9.

mm. 12-15 Theme 2 statement in the trumpet, a half-step higher than mm. 1-3.

Important features of this period are:

1.) Theme 1 and Theme 2 are written over the same bass line and accompaniment.

2.) The use of development right from the start: first interval in m. 4 = P4, m. 8 = M6, m. 13 = M7).

3.) All the triads used are major.

4.) The core motive for the whole sonata, Motive A, appears in m. 1, beat 3.

Transition: mm. 16-21

mm. 16-18 Piano alone rapidly falls off c2 followed by 4 staccato eighth notes.

mm. 19-21 Piano alone falls rapidly off f#2 followed by 4 staccato eighth notes.

Striking contrast to Period I is created with:

1.) A faster tempo.

2.) The switch from triple to duple subdivision.

3.) Staccato rather than legato articulation.
4.) The use of minor triads instead of major.

5.) The prominent tones c and f# in m.16 and 19 are the 7th and 3rd of an implied D7 (V7). Period II starts with a G major triad.

6.) The expectation is that this new intensity will lead to a more aggressive section but in fact it leads to one of less intensity than Period I.

Period II: mm. 22-32

mm. 22  Return to the original time signature and tempo. Piano returns to major triads, now moving chromatically.

mm. 23-24  Theme 3 is presented by the trumpet.

mm. 25  Transition into Theme 4.

mm. 26-32  Theme 4 is presented by the trumpet.

mm. 33-35  Codetta like tag to the period serves as a “transition to the transition.” Trumpet states an inversion of Theme 3 as the rhythmic propulsion slows.

Important features of this period are:

1.) Important Theme 4 (which will be used extensively in the rest of this movement as well as in the fourth movement) is made up of Motive D and the outline of Motive A.

2.) The first counterpoint of the piece is seen in mm. 34-35 as all rhythmic propulsion in the accompaniment ceases.

Transition: mm. 36-41

mm. 36-38  Same as mm. 16-18.

mm. 39-41  Same as mm. 19-21 except the sustained f# changes to f natural.

Important features are:

1.) This transition is identical the one in mm. 16-21 with the important exception that the f# in m. 19 is now an f natural. This f serves as the fifth of the Bb chord which starts Period III.
Development

Period III: mm. 42-60

- mm. 42-45: m. 42 based on the quarter – eighth rhythmic motive from m. 26. m. 43-45 are a variation of Motive C1.
- mm. 46-51: Altered 6 bar version of mm. 42-45.
- mm. 52-59: Altered 8 bar version of mm. 42-45.
- mm. 60: Silence!

Important features of this period are:

1.) Theme 5 is constructed with Motive A1 and a rhythmic variant of Motive C1.
2.) This period begins and ends with the quarter – eighth rhythm, although m. 59 is made to sound final by moving into the bar without the usual preceding rest and by following the bar with a bar of silence.
3.) This period is reminiscent of the trumpet section “demonstration” in Britten’s Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra.
4.) New, jazz oriented harmonic material is now used: A flat 9 chord (m. 45), the outline of a minor 7 b5 chord (mm. 45-45, the trumpet downbeats), polychord-like constructions such as the F# triad with a B in the bass (m. 46), and the outlines of three diminished chords (trumpet downbeats in mm. 47-51 and mm. 54-55).

Period IV: mm. 61-80

- mm. 61-64: Piano states this 4 bar theme which is a combination of Motive D1 which figured prominently in new developments in m. 26 (period II) and m. 45 (period III) and Theme 1 (period I).
- mm. 65-69: The trumpet states this theme in a 5 bar version while the piano has counterpoint.
- mm. 70-75: Theme 1 in the piano is set against Theme 2 in the trumpet; the original bass line rhythm returns.
mm. 76-80  Truncated parts of the theme in the trumpet and bass line are set against the contrapuntal running eighths first presented in m. 67-68.

Important features of this period are:

1.) The development in this movement begins to take on the qualities of a theme and variations format as material already presented is given a new style and treatment.

2.) The first extended use of counterpoint appears.

3.) The style in this period is reflective of Shostakovich.

Period V: mm. 81-93

mm. 81-83  Running sixteenths use Motive A and the diminished patterns introduced in Period III.

mm. 84-85  The trumpet takes up the running sixteenths as an obligato over a truncated piano statement of Theme 2.

mm. 86-88  Trumpet and piano equally participate in running sixteenths. Each trumpet group outlines Motive A while the piano uses mostly diminished structures.

mm. 89-90  The trumpet now plays the eighth- 2 sixteenth rhythm from Period III over another truncated piano statement of Theme 2.

mm. 91-93  Contrapuntal dialogue over a C/G pedal (foreshadowing the final cadence of the movement, the last movement, and the key of the entire work: C major).

Important features of this period are:

1.) Rhythmic development is carried to the next subdivision level following this progression: triple in Period I and II, eighth- sixteenth in Period III, triple again in Period IV, now all sixteenths in Period V.

2.) The conclusion of this period is the same as that of the first period: contrapuntal activity over a pedal point (this pedal is C, the first is the relative minor, a).
Transition: mm. 94-98

mm. 94-95  piano alone; long note values, a much slower tempo and a marking of *molto allargando* provide stark contrast to the previous period.

mm. 96-98  piano alone; fragments from theme 1 lead to the final period, a restatement of Theme 3

Important features are:

1.) Antheil again uses primarily changes in time (referring back to his 1920’s sense of time-space interplay) as transitional material

Recapitulation

Period VI: mm. 99-110

mm. 99-100  Theme 3 over the original bass line and accompaniment of Theme 1.

mm. 100-106  Theme 4 presented, but a whole step higher than the original.

mm. 107-110  Theme 3 now over the original accompaniment used, but now, according to true sonata form, it appears a fourth higher.

Important features of this period are:

1.) Just as Themes 1 and 2 were written over the same bass line and accompaniment, in a master stroke of variation and development he now presents Theme 3 over the same original bass line and accompaniment.

2.) Adherence to sonata form harmonically occurs at the very end (m. 107-110), but is varied/developed by using Theme 3 rather than Theme 1.
OUTLINE OF THE SECOND MOVEMENT

Section A

Period I: mm. 1-29

mm. 1-4  Trumpet states Theme 1, melodically ambiguously: in a minor (in reference to C major of the first movement), or in F major as reflected by the accompaniment. Either way the phrase ends with a surprise resolution, B major). The core motive, Motive A is used.

mm. 5-13  Piano states the second theme for the movement, in contrast to the Theme 1 it is ascending rather than descending. It does retain the dotted eighth-sixteenths on beat 3, but is much more complex harmonically.

mm. 14-29  Theme 1 is repeated four times, each a varied version of the original.

Important features of this theme are:

1.) The core motive, Motive A is seen in m. 1, beat 3 – m. 2, beat 1.

2.) The same undulating rhythmic pulsation used under Movement I, Theme 1, is employed in this movement as well, now as a duple feel rather than a triple.

Transition: mm. 30-37

mm. 30-32  A subtle transition is created by again changing time signature, but not in as jarring a manner as in the first movement. The eighth note pulse is retained. There is a strong similarity to the first movement transition in mm. 16-21 with a long tone followed by a very rapid fall using several notes all within one beat.

mm. 33-34  The rapid falls on beats 3 and 4 are replaced with pairs of eighth notes.

mm. 35-37  The dotted quarter – eighth rhythm on beats 1 and 2 is a variation of the quarter – eighth pattern (motive d) from the first movement.
Important features of this transition are:

1.) It is developed from the transition used in the first movement, mm. 16-21.

Section B

Period II: mm. 38-53

mm. 38-41  Theme 3 in the trumpet is introduced over a very simple folk-like background. This theme is a combination of another variation of the quarter – eight Motive D from movement I (now half – dotted eighth) and Theme 1 of this movement.

mm. 42-43  A strong change of character is achieved with a change of tonality (C major to complex polychords).

mm. 44  This measure combines Theme 3 with the transitional material in the piano from m. 32.

mm. 45-46  Phrase extension of mm.42-48, setting up the return to the original character of this period established in mm. 38-41.

mm. 47-48  Phrase extension of mm.42-48, setting up the return to the original character of this period established in mm. 38-41.

mm. 49  The piano alone re-states Theme 3 over a pedal point, but this pedal (again, an a) gives way to a C pedal one measure later.

mm. 50-53  A cadenza-like statement in the trumpet over the C pedal.

Important features of this theme are:

1.) The core Motive A is seen in m. 1, beat 3 – m. 2, beat 1.

2.) The contrast between mm.38-41 and 42-43 is a perfect example of Antheil’s ability to create great variety from like material. We are taken instantly from the simple, folk-like simplicity to a more dissonant, tense feeling of dementia and/or turmoil.
Section A1

Period III: mm. 54-66

mm. 54-66  A repeat of mm.1-13 but the trumpet now plays the second theme that was originally piano solo.

Important features of this theme are:

1.) This is a recapitulation section.

Transition: mm. 67-69

mm. 67-69  An exact repeat of mm. 32-34 of the full transition in mm. 30-37.

Important features of this transition are:

1.) The same transition is used to arrive at a new destination, the coda.

Coda

Period IV: mm. 70-77

mm. 70-73  Theme 1 now in F# and without the “surprise” last note.

mm. 74-77  An ambiguous ending harmonically that sets up the next movement.

Important features of this period are:

1.) The way the movement ends predictably formally, yet ambiguously harmonically, providing closure as well as suspense to lead the sonata forward.
OUTLINE OF THE THIRD MOVEMENT

Period I: mm. 1-10

mm. 1-4  Theme 1: constructed with Motive D and a variation of Motive A. The accompaniment has the same elements of the first movement’s continuous rhythmic pulse (duple, now steady sixteenths vs. triple).

mm. 5-10  Transition to Theme 2, using the eighth note upbeat accompaniment pattern seen in the second movement in mm. 38-41. The piano melodic line is a variation of m. 46 in the trumpet part of the first movement.

Important features of this period are:

1.) Use of the same elements as the first movement: continuous rhythmic pulse (duple, steady sixteenths vs. triple), the quarter-eighth Motive D and a variation of Motive A. Another variation from the first movement is that the triads in the piano are now a mix of major and minor rather than all major.

2.) Use of material from the second movement: the off beat eight note accompaniment from mm. 38-41.

3.) The steady sixteenth note pulse from the first four bars in the piano part will continue until the end of the movement except for two brief transitions/interludes: mm. 5-10 and mm. 50-55.

Period II: mm. 11-17

mm. 11-14  Theme 2, containing outlines of the core Motive A (m. 11 beats 3 and 4 – m. 12 beat 1). Three variants of the motive also occur: m. 12 a-g-f#, m. 14 c-b flat-a and f#-g-a.

mm. 15-17  A variation of Theme 1 in the piano with one beat trumpet interjections.

Important features of this period are:

1.) The use of the core motive A in the second theme as well as three variants of it.

Period III: mm. 18-27

mm. 18-21  Same as mm. 1-4 except a whole step higher.
mm. 22-24  Same as mm. 15-17 except a whole step lower. The trumpet interjections are now in every bar and twice per bar rather than just once. (m. 17 is a 2/4 bar rather than 4/4).

mm. 25-27  This transitional section contains the same diminished based patterns used in Period V, mm. 82-84 of the first movement, in the piano. The trumpet melody is based on Motive A and uses the same rhythm as beats 3 and 4 of theme two, but now placed on beats one and two.

Important features of this period are:

1.) This period is an excellent example of multiple developmental techniques employed simultaneously: key change, elaboration of the trumpet part (mm. 22-24), change of meter (m. 24), a new version of the core motive (trumpet mm. 25-27), use of material from a previous movement (piano, top voice, mm. 25-27).

Period IV: mm. 28-35

mm. 28-30  A new variation of Theme 1 in the trumpet is set against a repeat of the Theme 1 variation in the piano from mm. 15-17.

mm. 31-35  mm. 31-32 are a direct restatement of Theme 1, a third higher. Mm. 33-35 start as a continuation of Theme 1 but the extension leads to the next period by leaving the pedal with rhythmic diminution, sending the phrase into the next period with the descending tritone quarter notes in the bass.

Important features of this period are:

1.) The use of Theme 1 with extension.

2.) The use of the pedal technique again.

Period V: mm. 36-45

mm. 36-39  New material in the trumpet over a boogie-woogie-like bass line that has a repeated G. The upper two voices (trumpet and the right hand) are moving in contrary chromatic motion. This is the most remotely related material in the movement, and occurs almost exactly 50% of the way into the movement.
Another variation of Theme 1 in the trumpet is accompanied by a quarter note bass line that uses fourths, tritones and fifths as it works its way back to the recapitulation in m. 46.

Important features of this period are:

1.) The final period before the recapitulation contains the most diversely developed material of the movement.

Period VI: mm. 46-55

mm. 46-49  Same as mm. 1-4 with the slightest of alteration (beat 1 quarter note is now 4 sixteenths).

mm. 50-55  Same as mm. 5-10 but with the addition of the trumpet trills in mm. 50-51.

Important features of this period are:

1.) This is a recapitulation, the repeat of the first period (mm. 1-10).

Period VII: mm. 56-67

mm. 56-59  Exact recapitulation of Theme 2 with a “surprise” resolution, ending on Bb (the final tonality) rather than A (in m. 60).

mm. 60-63  The “surprise” resolution is the beginning of a legato version of theme 1 in these four bars. The pedal technique seen in the transitions is now used as support for the legato version of Theme 1.

mm. 64-67  An extended V – I conclusion: two bars of F, two bars of Bb in the trumpet.

Important features of this period are:

1.) The strength of the ending is achieved by the use of simpler rhythmic material in the accompaniment (the pedal in mm. 60-63 and the V-I feeling Beethovenesque cadential driving quarter notes in mm. 64-67) combined with more sustained and rhythmically augmented material (two bars of f then two bars of b flat) in the trumpet.
OUTLINE OF THE FOURTH MOVEMENT

Period I: mm. 1-76

mm. 1-6  The trumpet has a 9/8 version of Theme 4 from the first movement (which was in 12/8), which is Theme 1 of this movement. The bass line starts the same as the bass line of Movement I, Theme 1 (C-F-Eb) and remains a variant of it. The triple pulse is still present, but it is now a more spirited dance feel with its repeated pitches on pulses 2 and 3, as opposed to the flowing legato arpeggios.

mm. 7-22

mm. 7-10  Piano states the inversion of Theme 3 used in the transition at m. 33 of the first movement. This will be Theme 2 of this movement.

mm. 11-22  A mixed meter section (9/8, 5/8, 6/8) using Theme 2. Changes in dynamics and articulations add to the interest. Very dance-like in character.

mm. 23-29  A return to Theme 1, now using the relative minor (a) as the bass starting point (A-D-C).

mm. 30-44

mm. 30-38  A variation of Theme 2 is used as a five bar transition to a statement of Theme 3 (which is Theme 3 from the first movement). Mm. 33-35 elide with mm. 35-38 and are unified by the use of a Bb pedal.

mm. 39-40  Transition to a return of Theme 1, the same transition used in m. 25 of the first movement.

mm. 41-44  Theme 1, in G, but for only two bars, then two bars of static transition (the same measure is repeated).

mm. 45-48  Theme 2 again, this time softer and more legato than ever, with a light open, static accompaniment. This is another transition using a pedal-like technique, but with added rhythmic pulse as seen in mm. 35-38.

mm. 49-54  Two three bar phrases are variants of Theme 2. The bass line morphs from the static pattern back to the original pattern.
mm. 55-76

mm. 55-61  Theme 1 returns but:

1.) the melody is in the piano, the trumpet has a harmony part above the melody.

2.) The original bass line from the first movement Theme 1 now is used exactly, with the accompaniment hinting at the arpeggiated figures from the first movement version as well.

3.) At m. 57 the arpeggios return to the repeated note figures.

4.) At m. 58 the trumpet takes over the melody.

5.) The phrase ends differently, the last two bars being different.

mm. 62-63  A brief transition, using Theme 2 material.

mm. 64-71  Theme 1 now in Bb. Mm. 64-66 start to morph into the arpeggiated pattern used in the first movement, and in mm. 67-70 uses the pattern exactly.

mm. 71-76  A rhythmic transition to the next period.

Important features of this period are:

1.) The use of the Theme 4 of the first movement as the Theme 1 of this movement, providing a rounded element to the sonata as a whole. Other elements from the first movement are: continuous triple rhythmic pulse, the quarter-eighth Motive D and a variation of Motive A. Another variation from the first movement is that the triads in the piano are now a mix of major and minor rather than all major.

2.) As with the previous movements, matters of dynamics and articulations play major roles in defining interpretation and nuance.

3.) The heavy use of dissonance, creating a totally new presentation of Theme 1 in mm.64-71.

Period II: mm. 77-105

mm. 77-82  1.) Theme 3 is presented by the trumpet in m. 77.

2.) The intensity is increased by the use of duple subdivision in the form of sixteenth notes.
3.) The bass line again starts with C – F (a fragment of the original bass line that has been used in every movement).

4.) The variation/development of this theme happens immediately: the theme measure is repeated six times, but each time is different. Each one starts the same melodically (trumpet voice) for the first two beats and then changes (the sixth time only has the first beat the same). The bass line switches from the C-F start in mm.77-80 to F-Bb in mm.81-82. (mm. 81 and 82 are the same thing).

mm. 83-84 Two bars of scale material, up a half step to B, serve as a transition to mm.85-89.

mm. 85-89 Five more bars of Theme 3 variation (mm. 86 and 87 are the same thing, which relates to mm. 81-82).

mm. 90-93 Four measures of transition to the last statement of Theme 3. The first two bars are the piano playing rhythm only, then two measures of slurred scales in the trumpet are added over that as in mm. 83-84.

mm. 94-95 The conclusion of Theme 3, the first bar forte in B, the second returns to the original C major verbatim.

mm. 96-105 1.) The repeating piano rhythm that is in every measure of this period now is the predominant factor.

2.) In mm. 95-99 the trumpet has 3 clarion call interjections. In mm.100-105 the trumpet plays only punches on beat one, while the piano rhythm takes on a little more intensity with the introduction of an eighth note rest on the second half of beat one. The omission of the pick-up creates more finality and drive to the sixteenths now occurring on beats 2 and 3 only.

3.) The resulting drama and tension concludes with a return to theme 1, in the original key of C major in m. 106.

Important features of this period are:

1.) The Coplandesque qualities of the Wild West feel, the rhythmic patterns, and the use of 4ths in the trumpet part in mm. 85-89.

2.) The use of further developed rhythmic pulse by moving to the sixteenth note subdivision.
Period III: mm. 106-121

mm. 106-111  Theme 1 returns.

mm. 112-114  Additional running eighths includes the core motive in each measure (F-G-A in m. 112, F-G-Ab in 113, Ab-Bb-C in 114).

mm. 115-118  Uses the quarter-eighth motive only to the end.

mm. 119  One bar of piano only as transition to the final statement.

mm. 120-121  This final statement is a combination of the quarter-eighth motive and Theme 2. This is the only time he uses this variation….it has elements of the ending of the first movement as well as a variation of the core motive.

Important features of this period are:

1.) It is a final recapitulation on two levels: it concludes the movement the way it began and also concludes the entire sonata the way it began.
SURVEY OF RECORDINGS

Six recordings by the following artists were compared for the purposes of this dissertation.

Ned Gardner: attended the North Carolina School for the Arts.

David Kuehn: former principal trumpet of the Buffalo Philharmonic.

Currently living in Ann Arbor, MI and trumpet with the Michigan Opera Theatre.

Juoko Harjanne: Finnish trumpet virtuoso.

He believes the work is one of the masterpieces for trumpet, that it is full of romantic and American aspects, and that he still programs it and enjoys playing it. He mentioned he enjoys the long lines in the piece. 24

Scott Thornburg: professor of trumpet at Western Michigan University.

He believes the piece should be played with great character, wit and charm. He enjoys a refreshingly irreverent feel to the music in certain places and admires it as true chamber music, stressing the need for a great pianist. 24

Thomas Stevens: former principal trumpet of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

He states in the liner notes to his recording Thomas Stevens, Trumpet that after comparing a section of the first movement to Benjamin Britten’s Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra: “In the Britten segment the tempo taken in this recording slightly faster than marked to represent a more accurate reference to the Young Person’s Guide which is also commonly played at a faster tempo than marked. This set up the faster tempo of the subsequent material in the development section.”26

Jeff Work: Principal trumpet of the Portland (Oregon) Symphony.

He provided a recording from one of his Artist Diploma recitals at New England Conservatory and, as a great service to this author, a corrected trumpet part that
contains many corrections that he found were needed when the original part was compared to the piano part. Musically, he admires the piece as absolute music, i.e., the piece could be played by any instrument, not just the trumpet. He also pointed out that the melodies sound distinctly American to him.  

Tempos taken in Antheil’s Sonata for Trumpet and Piano

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CONCLUSION

George Antheil’s life and music was defined by the exuberance of the Roaring Twenties, the heritage of great European art music, the 1930s search for an American musical identity, the trials of World War II and the resulting seemingly endless possibilities of postwar America. He associated with the great musical, visual and literary artists of the day, seeking to create work himself that would stand the test of time. He embraced and unified these influences into a spirit that played an integral role in the development of classical music in the first half of the 20th century and helped determine the course of development of American music, and it is from this strong musical character, found at the apex of his career, that this trumpet sonata originates. This character and Antheil’s quest for formal and developmental perfection within his modular compositional technique are the key elements of this sonata.

Given this perspective, it is the conclusion of this dissertation that the piece is not a work built of trumpet clichés, but rather one of high art that contains a complex myriad of influences. It therefore must be played with great intensity and a deep sense of purpose.

To achieve this strict attention must be paid to the intricate and specific markings in the score. Antheil was extremely detailed in his use of dynamics and articulations. In addition to these details, tempos must be chosen carefully in order create a distinctive character to each module, as if it were a specific scene in a movie or opera. Finally, the performers must be keenly aware of the nature of the piano part in each module, and take care to achieve the proper balance and style necessary to bring the intended character to life. This is one of the biggest challenges in the interpretation of this sonata, but is a challenge that when met will make this work a meaningful and rewarding experience for both players and listeners.

George Antheil felt that chamber music allowed him to present the most accurate picture of his compositional objectives, a fact which serves to further elevate the significance of this
sonata as both an extremely important part of the trumpet repertoire, and as a representative work of one of America’s most underappreciated, yet significant composers.
Example 1. Similarities between *Volpone* and the *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano*

Excerpt from *Volpone*, First Movement

Excerpt from *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano*, First Movement
Example 2. Examples of the Core Motive in Each Movement

I. Allegretto

Melodic Motive = two descending major seconds.

II. Dolce - espressivo

Melodic Motive = two descending major seconds, rhythmically altered.

III. Scherzo

Melodic Motive = changed to a descending major second and a minor second, with escape tones, and rhythmically altered. This creates surprise and gives life to the intended scherzo nature.

IV. Allegretto

Melodic Motive = two descending major thirds, exactly as stated in the first movement.
Example 3. Thematic and Motivic Development in the First Movement

Theme 1

Theme 2

Outlined by A

Theme 3

A

D1

Theme 4

D

Outlined by A1

Theme 5

B1

C2
Example 4. Thematic and Motivic Development in the Second Movement

Theme 1

Example 5. Thematic and Motivic Development in the Third Movement

First Theme

Second Theme

Transition
Example 6. Thematic and Motivic Development in the Fourth Movement

Theme 1

Theme 2

Theme 3

Theme 4

Outline of A1

Outline of A1
ERRATA IN THE TRUMPET PART

(This list was made by cross-referencing the trumpet part provided by Jeff Work with the piano score. The part is in Bb, and thus the pitches listed are not in concert pitch)

First Movement

1.) m. 13, beat 1 should be a Gb, not F natural

2.) m. 16, beat 1 should be a D, not C

3.) m. 21, slur 4 eighths, then 7 (not 5 then 6)

4.) mm. 31-33 should be one contiguous crescendo, not two separate ones

5.) m. 89, the and of beat 4 should be an A natural, not Ab

6.) m. 91, the last sixteenth of beat 4 should be a C natural, not C#

7.) m. 102, beat 12 should be D#, not D natural

Second Movement

1.) m. 16, beat 3. There is a dot missing on the dotted eighth-sixteenth rhythm

2.) m. 59, beats 1 and 2 are a half note, not a dotted quarter

3.) m. 70, beat 3 is Fx, not F#

4.) m.71, the last sixteenth of beat 3 is C#, not C natural

Third Movement

1.) m. 45, beat 1 should be G natural, not A natural

2.) m. 49, the and of 3 should be B natural, not A natural

Fourth Movement

There are no wrong pitches, but there are, as is the case with the three preceding movements as well, a number of unnecessary accidentals written in. Some are to remove any doubt regarding octave carry-over of an accidental, but most are serving as courtesy accidentals, and should be in parentheses, which they are not.
ENDNOTES

1 Phone conversation with Charles Amirkhanian, March 10, 2008


3 LMGA, p. xvii

4 George Antheil, *Bad Boy of Music*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Doran and Co., Inc., 1945) p. 47. All subsequent references to *Bad Boy of Music* will be abbreviated: BBM

5 BBM, p. 317

6 Ibid, p.7

7 Ibid, p.7

8 Ibid, p.8

9 Ibid, p.12

10 Ibid. p.23


12 LMGA, p.45

13 BBM, p. 270

14 LMGA, p.50


16 BBM, p.301

17 LMGA, p. 52

18 BBM, p. 334

19 LMGA, p. 62

20 LMGA, p. 57

21 LMGA, p. 62

22 LMGA, p. 182
23 LMGA, p.169.

24 Phone conversation with Charles Amirkhanian, March 10, 2008.


26 Liner notes from *Thomas Stevens, Trumpet*. Crystal Records CD665. 1988

27 Phone conversations and emails with Harjanne, Thornburg and Work, March 2008

28 LMGA, p.165
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