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INTUITION AND ANALYSIS: A Performer's Perspective on Joan Tower's *Fantasy* for Clarinet and Piano

by
ROBERT JANSSEN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts, The City University of New York

2000

This manuscript has been read and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

7/26/00
Date

Ellie Hisama
Chair of Examining Committee

8/14/00
Date

Executive Officer

Professor Joseph Straus
Professor Philip Rupprecht
Professor Philip Lambert
Professor Charles Neidich
Professor Joan Tower
Supervisory Committee

The Graduate Center of The City University of New York

Abstract

INTUITION AND ANALYSIS: A Performer's Perspective on Joan Tower's *Fantasy* for Clarinet and Piano

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ROBERT JANSSEN

Advisor: Professor Joseph Straus

This study examines the relationship between intuition and analysis and shows through example how to use them as tools in creating an interpretation of a work, in this case Joan Tower's *Fantasy* for Clarinet and Piano. The dissertation begins with a discussion of the terms intuition and analysis, followed by a discourse on how knowledge of the composer's style, personality, genre and background information on the piece will aid in improving performance. Through personal interviews with Joan Tower the composer's voice is heard.

The study of the *Fantasy* includes an exploration of several performing issues: form, themes, phrasing, texture and balance, rhythm and tempo, articulation, dynamics and timbre. The studies are not presented as traditional analyses but decidedly from the point of view of the performer preparing a piece.

In addition to the author's commentary, interviews with four prominent clarinetists (Laura Flax, Charles Neidich, David Shifrin and Robert Spring), as well as studies of recorded performances of the *Fantasy* by the interviewed clarinetists are shown to aid in the creative process. The dissertation includes a CD of the author's interpretation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the writing of this dissertation, I have been blessed with the help of many. My advisor, Joseph Straus, was continuously supportive of me and I am particularly thankful for his ability to know when to criticize and push and when to praise and step back. Philip Rupprecht must be thanked for his time and careful consideration in helping to edit final drafts as well as outlines of several of the chapters. These men helped immensely in forming and tightening the structure of this paper. I would like to thank Philip Lambert for his fine-tuning in the final editing process and Ellie Hisama for her thoughtful insights. Charles Neidich suggested I begin this doctoral journey so I owe him a special appreciation for starting me down this path. I am also indebted to him for his generosity of time with lessons, coachings, interviews, and comments on the dissertation. As a non-CUNY faculty member, Joan Tower joined this committee from the munificence of her heart and her love for performers. She was enthusiastic from the moment I contacted her and her interview and observations were of great service to me. I must also thank my dissertation angel, Meg Owens, who helped by tirelessly proofreading every chapter of the dissertation, drawing my attention to problems of both content and grammar.

A final word of thanks for the support and encouragement given by my mother, sister and friends. Your words of encouragement nourished me through many dry spells. To my partner, Enrique, goes a kind of gratitude that is difficult to put in words. For standing by me and being helpful throughout the dissertation process, I thank you.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Performer's Creative Process

Understanding that there is no single ideal performance of a work, the performing musician must convey an individual interpretation of a piece of music to the audience. A creative performer responds intuitively to music, even unfamiliar music, and makes a full range of interpretive decisions based on these intuitions. This dissertation explores the creative process by which performers create an interpretation. It will incorporate my process as well as that of four other clarinetists. In particular, this study will focus on the areas of intuition and analysis and much of this chapter will involve an investigation of these much-maligned terms.

Because of our cultural background and immersion in tonal music with its shared, communal practices, many analytical and musical aspects are second nature to a seasoned performer. This communality ensures that the rules of theory or "functional harmony" are the same in the music of Bach, Beethoven and "The Star Spangled Banner." Since we have been exposed to this common practice of tonal music all our lives, much of our understanding was acquired passively, programmed into us since childhood. An infant in its crib listens to the sounds of a music box playing a song while the mobile turns and is already learning the tonic-dominant relationship. In discussing the relationship of analysis and performance Janet Schmalfeldt states:

> When we performers begin to learn a score, performance decisions often seem so very obvious. To the Analyst's observations about the predominance of the initial neighbor motion 5-6-5 at the opening of the Second Bagatelle [by Beethoven], we

> are inclined to say, "But of course the contour of the opening naturally suggests that this should be projected!"[1]

We experience these "obvious" features when we hear phrase structures and melodic motion, when we "decide"—consciously or unconsciously—which notes to stress and which to release, where cadences occur, when a good time to breathe is and when a wrong note is played. This commonality is a result of a hierarchical organization of pitches with a range of stability, with tonality as its foundation. It is this foundation that allows us to develop the intuitive responses with which we create our interpretations.

Up until now we have been addressing tonal music—the music of Bach through Brahms—and the intuitions that performers have in regard to that music. The topic of this dissertation, however, is a post-tonal work. Because post-tonal music is less communal and more contextual, a performer approaches it with intuitions that are less developed, but still useful. Milton Babbitt addresses this phenomenon:

> The immediate and profound effect (of a revolution of musical thought) has been the necessity for the informed musician to reexamine and probe the very foundations of his art. He has been obliged to recognize the possibility, and actuality, of alternatives to what were once regarded as musical absolutes. He lives no longer in a unitary musical universe of "common practice," but in a variety of universes of diverse practice.[2]

Babbitt makes several significant points. "The very foundations of his art" refers to the diatonic major/minor tonal system, and the "musical absolutes" are the rules of functional

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[1]Janet Schmalfeldt, "On the Relation of Analysis to Performance: Beethoven's Bagatelles op. 126, nos. 2 and 5," Journal of Music Theory 29.1 (Spring 1985): 19.

[2]Milton Babbitt, "Who Cares if you Listen?," High Fidelity 8.2 (1958), reprinted in Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music, ed. Elliot Schwartz and Barney Childs (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967): 244.

harmony. The "universes of common practice" is the communality of tonal music to which I referred earlier, and the "universe of diverse practices" refers to the contexuality of post-tonal music. By "contextual" I mean that what is important in each piece, how a performer organizes it in regard to pitch, what is defined by each individual work. I borrow this conceptual opposition from Babbitt:

> Musical compositions of the kind under discussion possess a high degree of contextuality and autonomy. That is, the structural characteristics of a given work are less representative of a general class of characteristics than they are unique to the individual work itself. Particularly, principles of relatedness, upon which depends immediate coherence of continuity, are more likely to evolve in the course of the work than to be derived from generalized assumptions. [3]

Though these remarks are about serial music, they apply to post-tonal works as well. The understanding of consonance and dissonance in the traditional tonal sense is sometimes of little help. Forcing this system on the music, though sometimes called for, can lead to problems in making a piece work. Understandably, many composers in the twentieth century mark scores with extreme care, providing optimal guidance to the performer. Dynamic indications can tell us which lines of polyphonic texture are more or less important. Cadences can be indicated with fermatas, longer durations and breath marks, as evidenced by the commas in Stravinsky's scores. Phrase markings show the beginning and ending of a melodic line.

This kind of dependence upon the indications on the score brings up two important issues that relate to the topic of this dissertation. First, we must recognize that the performer of post-tonal music is not a mere player of notes, not a human computer ready

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[3]Babbitt 246.

to load with information software. Performers have—and must use—the capacity to understand the information and to make decisions of our own. Secondly, we must question the presumption that composers themselves know the best interpretation(s) of their music, and that there is only one proper interpretation. Certainly, to most performers and theorists, this is simply not true.

Like the composer, the performer is an artist, and the realization, or interpretation, of a musical work is as creative and intuitive as its composition. It is the performer who brings to life the music in the real-time of performance. Musical notation is not completely clear; there is no way for composers to convey unequivocally every detail of their intent to the performer. Therefore, the performer must interpret the meaning of the notation. Roy Howat puts it this way: "Since notation. . . . 'partitions' music, it cannot avoid distorting it, and our task is to 'read back through' the distortions on paper, employing aural and visual awareness, skill and sensitivity."[4] The symbols we read can be divided into two groups, those that indicate pitch and relative time such as C# and half-notes, and expressive markings that would include things like phrase markings, articulations, dynamics and so on. Of those in the first group, only pitch is absolute (excluding questions of "wrong" notes). Though we mark our rhythmic values in a seemingly exact manner, exact metronomic performance is normally not the goal.

Even more subjective are the symbols of the second group, the expressive markings. In a study of four pianists playing the same piece, Henry Shaffer found that

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[4]Roy Howat, "What Do We Perform?," The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 3.

when these markings were omitted from the score of one of the pianists, a significantly different interpretation emerged. His findings also showed that though the performances of the other three pianists were more similar, there was still room for differences.[5] It is these ambiguities in the reading of a score that allow for multiple interpretations of the same piece.

Performers are often told that we must be true to the score and to the composer's intentions. This topic has been covered in some detail by Taruskin, Cone, Sessions and Howat[6]. Howat sums up the situation when he writes:

> We should observe straight away the distinction between alert feeling, which is a state of awareness, and wilfulness, which is a state of deliberate ignorance. The performer who ignores or overrides a composer's indications simply because "I feel it this way" is often no better than the obedient dullard who merely shelters behind the notation: neither is truly exploring the feeling of what the composer committed to notation. [7]

It is a paradox: we must be faithful, but we must be individual. We must follow the composer, but we must follow our own feelings as well.

We take on the responsibility to "bring the music to life," and are more than just a medium for transmitting intentions. It is the performer that listeners depend on to bring

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[5]Henry Shaffer, "How to Interpret Music," Cognitive Bases of Musical Communication, ed. Mari Riess Jones and Susan Holleran (Washington, DC: American Psychological Assoc., 1991) 263-278.

[6]Richard Taruskin, "On Letting the Music Speak for Itself: Some Reflections on Musicology and Performance," Journal of Musicology 1.3 (July 1982) 338-349. Edward T. Cone, "The Pianist as Critic," The Practice of Performance, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 241-253. Roger Sessions, The Musical Experience (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1950).

[7]Howat 4.

them either a new piece or a new and novel approach to an old favorite that illuminates some other aspect of it. William Rothstein says:

> It is the performer who controls the way in which virtually every aspect of the work is conveyed to the listener. Which features are to be "brought out," which are concealed, which are allowed to speak for themselves—these are only some of the decisions the performer must make.[8]

The performer is responsible for creating an interpretation or narrative for a work. Aspects of structure, phrasing, timing, and balance as well as subtleties of dynamics, articulation and tone color are the domain of the performer and all go into creating the aural presentation of the written score that the player brings to the audience.

For a successful performance the performer must be entirely committed to the work S/he is playing and have a clear and complete understanding of it. S/he is not unlike an actor playing a character in a play. To be a success the audience must believe the actor is the character s/he is playing. If one merely recites the words written on the page, this will not happen. S/he must know the character fully, including aspects of the character's personality not found on the page. As Shaffer says about the performer and actor: "Both are involved in creating a persona or character that can add a depth of meaning to the 'literal' surface of the music or speech."[9]

While all performers must interpret, they do so in different ways and on different bases. For some performers, interpretation has to do with specifics of structure, phrasing,

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[8]William Rothstein, "Analysis and the Act of Performance," The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 237.

[9]Shaffer 265.

tempo, etc.. For others, it is thought of as a narrative. For still others, it is even more vague, mentioned as character, images, or moods. Caroline Palmer defines it as "the musician's molding of a piece according to their own choices of appropriate musical structure for emphasis, such as melody, phrasing, and dynamics."[10] In her study she discusses the importance of the performer's interpretation:

> Interpretive preferences affect listening to music, our primary method of exposure to music (rather than score reading). Therefore the performer's preferences are likely to influence the particular structural description a listener assigns to a musical piece, reinforcing the communication of musical constituents. The structural description underlying a musical piece may be one that is maximally coherent not in terms of compositional score, as suggested by some theories, but instead in terms of the performer's interpretive preferences.[11]

Some approaches to interpretation are primarily intuitive, some primarily analytical, and some a combination of the two. By definition, intuition means knowing something without reasoning or learned skill. My definition is richer and more nuanced. I think of intuition as subconscious thought or feeling. David Epstein addresses intuition and some of problems involved with its usage:

> Intuition is among the least defined, though much applied, terms in current parlance. Its usage largely implies knowledge arrived at by means other than "intellection," i.e. rational, possibly computational, modes of thought, thus knowledge acquired essentially through some affective mode. Other usages suggest that this knowledge indeed involves "ratiocination," but the thinking is executed so quickly as to happen "in a flash." Very likely both aspects of the term are applicable. Intuition does seem to resolve matters in a flash of "rightful recognition." so to speak. The judgement(s) that inform such recognition, however, would seem to involve an assay of data which must to some degree be

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[10]Caroline Palmer, "The Role of Interpretive Preferences in Music Performance," Cognitive Bases of Musical Communication, ed. Mari Riess Jones and Susan Holleran (Washington, DC: American Psychological Assoc., 1991) 250.

[11]Palmer 260.

analytical.[12]

Epstein's comments would seem to explain Leonard Meyer's statement, "The performance of a piece of music is, therefore, the actualization of an analytical act—even though such analysis may have been intuitive and unsystematic."[13]

The phenomenon of musical intuition is partially due to our early and constant exposure to tonal music and to some extent our cultural conditioning. Many behaviors are learned without necessarily being taught, like facial expressions. We learn how tonal music works by our familiarity with thousands of performances. It is a legacy of stylistic understanding, well documented in this century through recordings. But musicality is also taught. I have seen the musicality or intuition grow with my younger clarinet students. Through a combination of information such as "every beat doesn't need to be emphasized" and imitation of my playing, intellect and affect come together until these qualities become their own and they begin to bring in new material with their own interpretations.

Intuition is hard to study scientifically and hard to talk about. There is a relationship between these two problems because the language that we use when we do talk about intuition is also messy. Probably the most common phrase used by a performer to explain why he or she plays something a particular way is "because I feel it that way."

In addition to David Epstein, John Rink has written extensively on the subject of intuition and I take their writings as a point of departure. Both address the difficulties with

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[12]David Epstein, "A Curious Moment in Schumann's Fourth Symphony: Structure as the Fusion of Affect and Intuition," The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995)126.

[13]Leonard Meyer, Explaining Music (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1973) 29.

the meaning of the word intuition as well as its neglect or negative judgment by analysts. In a recent article Rink says:

> In broaching the topic of intuition I acknowledge the controversy surrounding it in recent literature, as well as the lack of understanding evinced by some authors who dismiss out of hand its relevance to "intelligent" performance. For instance, Howell treats intuition and analysis as mutually exclusive, failing to appreciate that any "intuition," whether the analyst's or performer's reflects a process of learning and of experiencing. In short, intuition is an "immediate apprehension or cognition," or "the power or faculty of attaining to direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference" (Webster), but deriving from past "rational thought and inference." My own term, "informed intuition," reflects a broad range of experience and the exploitation of theoretical and analytical knowledge, as well as historical understanding, at the "submerged levels of consciousness" described by Wallace Berry. I accept, however, that intuitions are not always "right": although the experienced, sensitive performer can usefully rely on them "automatically" when they have arisen through prolonged consideration of stylistic, historical, analytical and technical factors, some intuitions are misleading and would benefit from retrospective reassessment and refocusing. This is where analysis can be valuable, helping to fill those gaps where intuitions fail or prove inadequate.[14]

Epstein echoes Rink's comment on the analyst's discomfort with affect or intuition and explains that this is why studying—or valuing—these areas has been eschewed for the more accessible rational/structural/scientific/tangible aspects of music. Richard Taruskin also feels that scholars avoid dealing with intuition or affect because of the difficulty in evaluating artistic qualities and that, "to claim intuition as a guide...violates our scholarly principles of accountability."[15]

Joel Lester is another performer/analyst who respects the performer's intuition as a valid analysis:

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[14]John Rink, "Playing in Time: Rhythm, Metre and Tempo in Brahms's *Fantasien* Op. 116," The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 254.

[15]Taruskin 345.

> Is it right to assume that all those tens of thousands of hours that performers spend honing their skills are entirely mindless and that it is only when cognitively derived information is explained in words that performer's skills are able to create valid performance?[16]

Laura Flax, one of the clarinetists interviewed in this study, put it succinctly: "As far as intuition, I call on my knowledge of music, past and present."[17] Another of the clarinetists interviewed for this study, David Shifrin, said this when asked about the relationship between intuition and analysis, "I suppose that intuition and experience go hand in hand. There is no real intuition without experience. I think the interpretation of music has to be a certain amount analytical but the musical mind is analyzing even when it doesn't realize that it is, based on what our experience in sound is."[18] By "our experience in sound," I think Shifrin was referring, like Lester, to the performer's time spent practicing, rehearsing and performing.

My second point regarding the difficulty of studying intuition is with language. As said earlier, probably the most common response given by performers when asked why they play something a particular way is, "because I feel it that way." When pressed, the situation can become arduous. In my interview with Tower we discussed both intuition and analysis and she felt that at least a part of analysis was the ability to verbalize intuitions.

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[16]Joel Lester, "Performance and Analysis: Interaction and Interpretation, "The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 198.

[17]Laura Flax, personal interview, 16 June 1998, 162. (See Appendix A for interview transcripts.)

[18]David Shifrin, personal interview, 19 August 1999, 184.

> There are certain performers who have great instincts about what they are playing and they can talk about it. Then there are certain performers who have great instincts about what they're playing and can't talk about it. And then there are terrible performers who can talk about everything they're playing and they can't play it.[19]

Charles Neidich, another of the clarinetists interviewed for this study, said that music is a language of sound, not sight. He used as an example an appoggiatura. "Someone might say, 'that's an appoggiatura,' but if you don't play it as an appoggiatura then you haven't understood that it's an appoggiatura. And if you've played it as an appoggiatura, but you don't know the word appoggiatura, you've still analyzed it, because you've analyzed it in the language of music."[20]

Neidich stresses the need to hear or feel the relationships in a piece of music, not just to see them on the score. He was clearly comfortable with score study, as were Shifrin and Robert Spring, another clarinetist interviewed for this project. But they also stressed the need to hear the analysis. Spring said, "For me, if I can hear something, I'm a lot better off than just looking at it on the paper."[21] Like Rink, Shifrin stressed the need for both analysis and intuition. "You can't just analyze a piece and have that be the basis for a successful live interpretation. And you can't rely strictly on intuition to just wing it. So you need both."[22]

The word "analysis" is also problematic. Because of the previously mentioned view

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[19]Joan Tower, personal interview, 3 June 1998, 126.

[20]Charles Neidich, personal interview, 5 March 1999, 180.

[21]Robert Spring, personal interview, 10 June 1998, 154.

[22]Shifrin, interview 187.

performers have of hearing or feeling a sense of "rightness" in the world of sound, many performers have a problem with the word analysis. Tower said:

> See, what I'm fighting all throughout here is this idea that the analysis, and I hate to use that word because it's a loaded word, but the analysis becomes the guiding light for you—how you decide to do things—rather than the piece. In other words, you say, "oh this is theme A again and therefore because my chart says this is theme A again. . ." You're being pushed by the chart rather than by the music. That's what I'm always suspicious of.[23]

Flax mentioned a similar distrust of analysis which also exhibits the performer's frustration with the view that analysis is somehow superior to intuition.

> I think I'm probably one of the most unconscious players so that it's difficult for me to say, "well I'm taking time there because I think. . .," I won't do that. It is intuitive. I recall years ago in Da Capo Chamber Players when one of our members was a renowned theorist, and I would have violent arguments because he would have all these reasons why something had to be this way or that. He could write a paper on it. And I would say, "well I don't think it should go that way. I don't feel that it should." And I felt as justified, if not more, that that was a valid reason. I don't think that's what the music is doing.[24]

Theorists, by the nature of their field, tend to construct arguments supported by facts and evidence gleamed primarily through study of the score. This kind of approach from score to performance is foreign to most performers who tend to move in the opposite direction, from sound to score. Neidich is not uncomfortable with the word analysis: "For me, there's very little difference between intuition and conscious analysis. I perceive both simultaneously. What it can be is that when I first look at a piece, I hear it, and whether it's conscious or unconscious, I'm always analyzing the piece." And later he says, "you look at it [the score] and you think of it, but you have to feel it. In other words you have

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[23]Tower, interview 147.

[24]Laura Flax, interview 163.

to feel the analysis."[25]

Rink comments on the various uses of the word analysis:

> One is struck by serious discrepancies between what the principal writers on this subject mean when they refer to "analysis" in relation to performance. Throughout the literature this sort of analysis is defined in such disparate, often incompatible ways, that profound confusion can result for those interested in exploring the less than straightforward connection between the two activities.[26]

He goes on to say that most of the literature on performance analysis focuses on one of three areas: 1. Solving small scale difficult passages; 2. Building practice techniques and the confidence of the performer; and 3. Problems with notation. The procedure for most performance analysis literature is to intersperse copious analytical commentary with remarks on performance, tending to be more of a catalog of observations without sufficient consideration of musical processes. "That one can execute a 'serious analysis' of a piece, and then extract all the interpretive implications latent therein to formulate a meaningful basis for performance is a widespread assumption in the literature."[27] As an example of the problem with this approach Rink likens it to translating a book into another language word for word, without consideration of the inflections, idioms, grammar and syntax of the other language. A few sentences would survive, but the end result would be stilted and contrived. In this way, the approach of making a "serious analysis" of a piece and then extracting some of the information for performance seems more intellectually

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[25]Neidich, interview 171, 177.

[26]John Rink, Review of Musical Structure and Performance, by Wallace Berry, Music Analysis 9.3 (October 1990): 319.

[27]Rink, Review 320.

than musically determined.

Rink offers the following definition for analysis as it pertains to performance: "the consideration of the contextual functions inherent in a given pitch or passage and how to convey them in one's playing."[28] In an effort to make performance analysis more effective, he suggests a new approach, a switch in places if you will, using the performer's preparation of a work as the starting point:

> whereby the fundamental aims and approaches implicit in performing a piece were established as part of one's analytical premise in studying that work. I have in mind, for instance, a less exclusive reliance on "technique," which good analysts, like good performers, recognize as only a starting point in projecting a work; enhanced sensitivity to the so called "dramatic quality" and "active, diacronic experience" of performance; and greater attention to parameters which resist systematisation, such as colour and "timing," as well as to expression, emotion and meaning.[29]

Lester makes a similar comment in his review of Berry's book:

> Berry, like the few other theorists who proceed beyond the details of a piece to its overall impact and meaning, tends to begin with the technical aspects of musical structure and build toward a vision of the character of the piece. This may not be the most productive avenue if the goal is how to incorporate the details of a work into a successful performance of that work. Perhaps the image should precede and motivate understanding the details.[30]

I propose to take Rink's and Lester's comments as a point of departure for my study of Tower's *Fantasy* for Clarinet and Piano (1983). I will evaluate my own process in learning Tower's *Fantasy*, examining my own intuitions and using them as a starting point to form not *the* interpretation of this piece but *an* interpretation. In this portion of the

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[28]Rink, Review 320.

[29]Rink, Review 321.

[30]Joel Lester, Review, Music Theory Spectrum 14.1 (Spring 1992): 78.

study I will address formal structure, themes, and texture. To illuminate more performance-based aspects of analysis such as phrasing, balance, tempo, tone color, articulation and dynamics, I will study the recorded performances of other clarinetists in addition to discussing my own playing.

This performance-based analysis will aid in enhancing and fine-tuning the interpretation of the piece, as well as bringing in options for other interpretations. The performers' voices will be the ones heard in this study, one that is by a performer, for the performer, with an approach and a language that all can understand and identify with. Therefore along with my own voice and recorded performances of the work, I have also conducted interviews with the composer, Joan Tower, and four prominent clarinetists, Laura Flax, Charles Neidich, David Shifrin and Robert Spring. These are also the clarinetists whose performances I will be studying and each is well acquainted with the composer's music.

Creativity can come about through pure inspiration, but it can also come through careful thought processes. Both are valid approaches, and I will address both methods in my discussion. Therefore I propose in this thesis to take my intuitions, and the intuitions of other skilled performers, as a vantage point from which to examine this intuitive/analytical process through Tower's *Fantasy*. How does the performer approach a piece? On what bases are performance decisions made? How deeply do we know what is happening in the music? What are the contextual functions inherent in a given pitch or passage and how can this be conveyed in my playing? These are questions that I will ask of myself as well as the four clarinetists interviewed.

It is true that all performance requires some analytic process, whether conscious or unconscious. I think both are valuable but in this study one must not think of "analysis" as a laser-beamed dissection of the score according to scientifically provable systems, but as a considered study of the score. This considered study will include playing the *Fantasy*, listening to performances of it, "hearing" and "feeling" the music as well as looking at the score, to see the contextual functions, meaning, dramatic content, relationships and shape. The goal will be to project them in an effective performance. By examining first these "intuitive aspects," my approach will reverse the more common relationship between theory and performance, in which theory is seen as the guide to performance. Here, performance and intuition will guide analysis.

CHAPTER 2

Exploring Style, History and Genre

The performer's goal is the best performance possible and the examination of musical issues such as phrasing and texture will aid in that. The chapters that follow are concerned with these and other musical issues regarding Tower's *Fantasy* for Clarinet and Piano. In addition, knowing more about the composer's style, the genre and even the story behind the music can be helpful to the performer in building a more thoughtful and expressive interpretation. These issues will be of concern in this chapter. Using interviews with Tower and the four clarinetists, I will explore, through her works for clarinet, Tower's style, attitude toward performance, views on imagery, use of genre, and the history behind the subtitle, ". . . *those harbor lights*."

When I first heard Tower's *Fantasy* in recital, I liked the piece immediately. As Richard Stoltzman said about the piece, "It draws the listener into a private world."[1] Since I began studying the *Fantasy*, I have been drawn into its world and the musical world of the composer. Tower's writing is distinctive and unique. Each of the clarinetists interviewed commented that Tower has a clear style. Flax talked about "a composer's language," and the importance of finding that language, but she goes on to caution that even after finding that language the performer has the responsibility of "making that

[1]Quoted in Nancy Bond, "An Analysis of Joan Tower's 'Wings' for Solo Clarinet," D.M.A. diss., Arizona State U, 1992, 248.

language speak to someone else."[2] Neidich used the same metaphor, language, in speaking of the composer's style:

> From the beginning if you're going to play a piece of music, you have to discover the language. That language, as you're learning the piece, hopefully becomes clear. When you go on to the next piece you can build on it, you don't have to discover it anew. If you're going to play a piece convincingly at all, you have to understand what it's about. [3]

The first thing I discovered about Tower the composer was Tower the performer. In a newspaper interview Tower even refers to performers as "Gods." The fact that Tower was a performer was mentioned by each of the clarinetists interviewed. When asked if any intuitive decisions he made in preparing the *Fantasy* for a CD of Tower's clarinet works were changed by the composer, Spring said, "not in her music," He attributed this to the fact that Tower was a performer, saying, "her music made sense in terms of performance."[4] Neidich credits Tower's performing background for the inclusion of the piano and clarinet cadenzas in the *Fantasy*, saying she wants to keep the performers happy. He also points out a possible drawback to Tower's performing background:

> You have to understand that this has to do with the fact that she's a performer and she sometimes second-guesses piano and clarinet. I feel there's a danger in marking music to second-guess instruments because in the future people can take that as musical intention. [5]

What Neidich is referring to is intimate knowledge gained from years of rehearsal and

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[2]Laura Flax, personal interview, 16 June 1998, 161. (See Appendix A for interview transcripts.)

[3]Charles Neidich, personal interview, 5 March 1999, 170.

[4]Robert Spring, personal interview, 10 June 1998, 152.

[5]Neidich, interview 175.

performance of specific characteristics of instruments.[6] Yet Tower feels she is good with notation on the whole because she has that sensitivity to a performer's problem with notation.

Tower says she learned how to compose by performing many contemporary pieces with Da Capo Chamber players, from particular style characteristics, to the way certain pieces "jumped off the page, and certain pieces didn't."[7] Though she doesn't perform as much now, Tower still exhibits a respect for the performer. "The beauty of this business is to hand a piece to the players and have them fall in love with it. When I realize I've made the musicians feel excited about this vehicle the rewards are incredible."[8]

A hands-on approach towards music has led Tower down many paths, broadening her musical horizon to include teaching, coaching, lecturing and conducting, saying she just wants to feel useful musically. She is frequently found at performances of her new works speaking to the audience before the performance to help draw them into her work. She wrote new pieces for Flax, Neidich, and Shifrin, and worked closely with them in the process toward performance. Robert Spring also worked closely with Tower when recording her clarinet works.

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[6]Neidich was referring here to m. 12 (see p. 43). The dynamic for the clarinet is *ppp* and the dynamic for the piano is *pp*. He said the intention was for the clarinet to be part of the texture of the piano chord and that as the piano sound decayed the clarinet sound would emerge. Tower was "second guessing" that the clarinet would stick out unless it was marked at a lower, rather than equal, dynamic level.

[7]Tamara Bernstein, "Compositions of an Uncommon Woman," The Globe and Mail [Toronto] 9 June 1998: C3.

[8]Robert Croan, "Tower of Sound," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 8 May 1998: Weekend Magazine 22.

Tower credits her teaching with her ability to verbalize her thoughts and feeling so well to both audiences and performers alike.

> Verbalization takes it outside the realm of music. Because you are now going into the world of verbalization and rationalization. In order to communicate to someone you have to be rational and you have to be verbal. But music has its own rational and musical verbalization. So if you keep it in that domain it's a little truer to the art. I'm a lot more verbal because I teach, and because I'm a composer and you learn to fight with words.[9]

It is her performing background and hands-on mentality that brought Tower to the clarinet. She began to become more familiar with the instrument while playing with the Da Capo Chamber players. Like Mozart, Weber and Brahms, she is inspired by particular clarinetists. Her first clarinet work, *Breakfast Rhythms I and II* (1974-75) for clarinet and five instruments, was written on a commission by the National Endowment for the Arts and dedicated to Anand Devendra (now known as Allen Blustine). *Breakfast Rhythms* is an important work, as it "marks a major turning point in Tower's compositional style: her gradual abandonment of serialism in favor of a more fluid, organic technique." [10] *Wings* (1983) was written for Laura Flax.[11] It was Tower's close association with these clarinetists, both members of the Da Capo Chamber Players, that sparked her interest in the clarinet. While working with Laura Flax, she became more familiar with the clarinet's possibilities, in particular its dynamic range and its flexibility of tone color, from

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[9]Joan Tower personal interview, 3 June 1998, 128.

[10]Joan Tower (New York: Schirmer, 1996) 2.

[11]See Judy Lochhead's article, "Joan Tower's *Wings* and *Breakfast Rhythms I and II*: Some Thoughts on Form and Repetition," Perspectives of New Music 30/1 (1992): 132-157.

percussive to lyrical.[12] She had heard this range in Flax's performances of the solo movement from Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time.* Tower calls *Wings* tailor-made to Flax's playing style.[13]

Richard Stoltzman was the impetus for the *Fantasy*. He was looking for a new work to include on a program of fantasies and was led to Tower by word of mouth. Stoltzman premiered the piece on 4 November, 1983. Though they did not work as closely together as the collaboration on *Wings*, they did have contact while the piece was being written and the composer made several changes after hearing Stoltzman perform the work.

The next important clarinet work Tower wrote was her Clarinet Concerto (1988), written for Charles Neidich. Like the other clarinetists, Neidich worked closely with Tower during the composing of the Concerto and came to know her style well during this process. David Shifrin, with the Lincoln Center Chamber Players, commissioned Tower's next chamber work for clarinet and string quartet, *Turning Points* (1995). Elsa Ludwig-Verdehr, clarinetist of The Verdehr Trio, commissioned her most recent work for clarinet, violin and piano, *Rainwaves* (1997).

Some of the more important works in Tower's compositional development have been chamber works with clarinet. *Breakfast Rhythms* marked a pivotal change from her earlier serial style; *Wings* is one of her most performed works; and, according to her, both

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[12]Though percussive can also refer to attack and lyrical to style, Tower was referring in this case to the tone color of the attack and a type of tone color that adds to a lyrical style.

[13]Joan Tower (New York: Schirmer, 1996) 4.

the *Fantasy* and Clarinet Concerto exhibit a new musical assertiveness and risk-taking in compositional style. Tower says:

> Achieving an identity in music depends on risk. If you don't take any risks, your particular compositional talents never shine through. Of course, the word 'risk' is a very complicated and subjective one, and it can lead you to compose music that is alternately aggressive, lyrical, simple, or complex. Creating "high-energy" music is one of my special talents; I like to see just how high I can push a work's energy level without making it chaotic or incoherent.[14]

In addition to the high-energy level, Tower cites the boogie section of the *Fantasy* (mm. 319-328) and use of the song *Harbor Lights* as compositional risks.

In 1987, Tower gave a lecture to the Saint Louis Clarinet Society where she discussed her special relationship with the clarinet and the various players with whom she has worked. She described the relationship between the composer and performer as a two-way street, each needing the other. The composer also mentioned performance characteristics of the clarinet that she appreciates and exploits in her clarinet works including its range of expression in terms of attack, quality and dynamics. According to her, the clarinet, with its flexibility in going from an attack-like sound to one of lyrical sweetness, is perfectly suited to her forceful and "out-front" style.

Another characteristic of Tower that may come from her being a performer is her ability to "let her pieces go," and to rely on the performer to give them life. There are numerous examples of composers known for curbing the performer's interpretation. Stravinsky's desire to conduct and perform his own works might be construed as his way of gaining control over performers' interpretations. Another example of Stravinsky's

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[14]Joan Tower (New York: Schirmer, 1996) 6.

effort to curtail the performer can be seen in the score for the "Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo." He states, "The breath marks, accents and metronome marks indicated in the 3 Pieces should be strictly adhered to." Ravel is said to have remarked, "don't interpret my music, just play it!"[15] Tower, on the other hand, has spoken many times of her desire for her music to have a life of its own, for performers to "make it their own." To do so she feels it is important for performers to "get off the page," to listen to the music they are playing and make it work for them. She says:

> I think what happens to some players is they get so trapped in following directions exactly, because they have so much "respect for the composer." I don't think that's actually true. If you have real respect for the composer you go beyond the page because the piece has become meaningful enough to you that you want to make this tempo your own, or this dynamic your own. So you go against the page. A lot of performers would say that's not respectful; I disagree with that. Totally.[16]

As an example of this freedom for the composer, Tower always marks tempo indications with a "circa" marking. For her, the score is a medium and to make the piece come alive the performer had to "go beyond the page." She was in complete agreement that for a piece to work in performance, the performer must have his/her own interpretation.

It is important for the performer to become familiar with a composer's language, or as Flax put it, to learn to speak that language. Neidich added that one takes this knowledge along when studying another work by that composer. Since Tower has written so many works for the clarinet, it is helpful to look at the style characteristics of her music. I will examine these characteristics through my own findings, through those mentioned by

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[15]Roy Howat, "What do We Perform?," The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 3.

[16]Tower, interview 142.

the clarinetists interviewed, and comments made by the composer about her music.

Of her compositional method Tower says, "I work from note to note and I try to build an organic structure from note to note."[17] In another interview she expanded on this approach: "Then I start with a tiny, little something and build from that—slowly and painfully. The shape of the piece grows out of its details."[18] When asked what makes a good piece she said, "continuity, and strong motivated structure."[19] During our discussion about the formal structure of the *Fantasy*, Tower became much less forthcoming, saying that talking about its formal structure would be my story. She talked about the way performers parcel sections out like rooms and mentioned that she does not like to actually hear the major or minor seams, as she referred to them, but prefers a more seamless quality in her music. This interest in a seamless style of playing was very important to Tower when Spring was preparing a CD of her works for clarinet.

> One of the big concerns that she had about the *Fantasy* before I recorded it was the ability to play through something from beginning to end and make sense of it, so that there was musical sense from beginning to the end. The *Fantasy* is pretty fragmented in a lot of ways and she wanted me to be able to play it from beginning to end and make musical sense of it. One of the pieces that she wanted me to mail her a tape recording of me performing was the Debussy *Rhapsodie* to see if I could do something like that.[20]

Another aspect of Tower's compositional style regarding formal structure is that of motion. Flax referred to slow, unfolding sections that build up momentum and then

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[17]Bond 216.

[18]Wes Blomster, Bolder Camera 13 Feb. 1998: 6.

[19]Croan 22.

[20]Spring, interview 150.

either return to another unfolding section or end. Neidich referred to this as a wave-like motion. I found this as well in the *Fantasy* and this wave-like motion will be the basis of the study in the following chapter.

Other style characteristics of Tower's are important to the performer as well. Knowing Tower's compositional style, it will be helpful for me to recognize the small changes in the melody, seeing where they begin, grow and end. Neidich describes Tower's use of melody:

> Her music doesn't contain melodies in the traditional sense. It contains shapes, small motives, like waves, that sometimes can be in the form of a melody, but can also be a curve or like in a painting, a streak of green.[21]

Musical texture is important to Tower, both as a composer and performer. As a performer it is important to be aware of what kind of texture is used and where one is within the texture. This is an aspect of her composing that she learned directly from paying close attention to it in works she was performing, particularly Beethoven.

Both Neidich and Spring mentioned Tower's use of rhythm citing the flexibility, or lack of flexibility in the rhythms, the relationship of tempos from one section to another and the build up of tension with increasingly shorter rhythms.

Finally, Robert Spring specifically pointed to Tower's use of dynamics to build tension and create motion, and the need to pay careful attention as it is quite easy in Tower's music to lose the true motion of the piece—the way it builds slowly—unless the dynamics are studied.

The title of the piece presents two areas of interest to the performer. The first, and

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[21]Neidich, interview 181.

probably more important, is that it is a fantasy. The second is the subtitle, ". . .*those harbor lights*," which refers to a popular song from the 1930's, *Harbor Lights.*[22] As mentioned, Stoltzman commissioned Tower to write a fantasy for an all-fantasy program he was preparing. Tower said Stoltzman's request for a piece in the fantasy genre allowed her to take some risks in the composing of the work. That it was to be a fantasy was his only request regarding the work, and when she looked up the word in a dictionary, she recalls it said something about turning and twisting. According to Tower, this is what the piece is about, "organically turning the sound."[23]

> You talk about the power of words, because Richard Stoltzman had asked me specifically for a fantasy, because I was now given permission in some odd sort of way to just fantasize, this piece yielded some interesting new stuff for me. Like the boogie woogie thing. I was a closet boogie woogie player. I allowed that to come right out. It was a big risk. And the *Harbor Lights* tune came out as another risk. And other different gestures that I pushed the envelope on. [24]

The genre has an effect on the way the clarinetists in this study approach the piece. Flax said it caused her to have a freer approach, describing it as having a fantastic shape as opposed to geometric. The importance of the genre was echoed by Spring as well. He commented that the more he performed the piece the freer it became. As a fantasy, he wanted to make it sound almost improvisational. Neidich said that the title made him think of different colors, something that evolves and is not rigid. Shifrin added that he thought it was good for the audience in terms of imagery.

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[22]Jimmy Kennedy and Hugh Williams, *Harbor Lights* (London: Peter Maurice Music Co., Ltd. 1937).

[23]Bond 235.

[24]Tower, interview 148.

The subtitle, *"those harbor lights. . . ,"* is due both directly and indirectly to Stoltzman. The composer was familiar with Stoltzman's habit of playing familiar tunes, such as *Amazing Grace,* for encores. In addition, something about Stoltzman reminded the composer of an old boyfriend; *Harbor Lights* was "their song." This combination is what led to this song popping up in the *Fantasy* and becoming in many ways the foundation of the work. The melody is heard most clearly in the beginning of the clarinet cadenza. Because we have heard motives from it, particularly an ascending or descending minor third, this longer version of it played by the clarinet alone, is a striking moment in the piece. The subtitle and song that it comes from was less important to each of the performers when they began to play the piece, and became somewhat more important later on. Each one admitted to not being familiar with the song when they first performed it. When they did reflect on it, it was not to analyze in detail the melody or intervals, but the images that the song evokes: water, boats, buoys, and the night. After Neidich became familiar with the song, he saw how Tower had used it in disguised ways, but added that he thought it was something more private than public. In a lecture, Tower cautioned about this:

> I started thinking about *Harbor Lights* images and I got into all kinds of crazy things with boats sitting in the water and rocks and these kinds of actions. I can go into this in detail but it would bore you silly and then you would say, well what did that have to do with it? I didn't hear any of that. Composers use things like that for various reasons to inspire them or to give them an action of some kind to hold on to. [25]

After becoming familiar with the text of the song, and having been told it was popular

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[25]Bond 232.

during WW II, I began to have images of a love affair ended, of a soldier leaving and a girl left behind.[26] When I mentioned this to Tower she went into the story behind the song in more detail. The story did indeed involve a soldier and a girl, and the girl was Tower. Tower was living in Lima, Peru with her family at the time and was in love with a U.S. Marine. Perhaps knowing they would have to part, *Harbor Lights* was "their song." Tower said that Stoltzman reminded her of the soldier and the song just seemed to keep coming up when she was composing the *Fantasy*. She mentioned the images of leaving by boat in the night, her boyfriend left behind. This background knowledge is helpful to me in creating a mood when the song appears in the clarinet cadenza. The image of that night is something she uses when coaching the *Fantasy*. She says some pianists have a hard time with the introduction. Still not wanting to impose the image, she diplomatically says:

> Maybe this will help you and maybe it won't, some players it doesn't help, some players it does. Can you imagine a very large boat sitting in a harbor at night, and there are the lights of the city around it, and there's the lapping of the water, and this rocking very slowly back and forth. That's the image I give. [27]

It is an image which is beneficial to me and becomes an important component of the *Fantasy* as does the image of water and to some extent, that of romance lost.

In this chapter I have shown that knowing more about a composer, her style, the genre and origins of a piece are beneficial to the performer. Through my own insights and those of other clarinetists, the particular style characteristics of the composer have been examined. In addition, the genre and other related aspects of the piece have been explored

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[26]See Appendix C for complete transcript of the text.

[27]Tower, interview 139.

regarding their importance to the performer. In the chapters that follow, this knowledge and these insights will be studied in more detail through the eyes and experience of the performer.

CHAPTER 3

Formal Structure: An Overview

As performers it is important for us to be aware of where we are within the form of the piece to give meaning to our ideas. It is also our responsibility to understand the form and to guide the listener on this journey through musical time. In his book, *Musical Form and Musical Performance*, Edward Cone says,

> Valid performance depends primarily on the perception and communication of the rhythmic life of a composition. That is to say, we must first discover the rhythmic shape of a piece—which is what is meant by its form—and then try to make it as clear as possible to our listeners.[1]

Cone discusses form as basically rhythmic, rather than thematic and/or harmonic. This is particularly appropriate for a study of a work by Tower. As will be seen in the chapter on rhythmic issues, rhythmic energy (points of rest and points of motion) is intrinsic to her work. Tower says she thinks in terms of actions when composing and when asked what type of analysis she would recommend for the *Fantasy*, she said an "energy line analysis," one that would gauge levels of intensity that a graph could be made from.[2] Cone describes finding the moments of initial impulse, the middle and the end.

Formal structure is such an important aspect of music that almost all performers will spend some amount of time contemplating the shape of a piece. When asked about his

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[1]Edward T. Cone, Musical Form and Musical Performance (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968) 38-39.

[2]Nancy Bond, "An Analysis of Joan Tower's 'Wings' for Solo Clarinet," D.M.A. diss., Arizona State U, 1992, 209 and 211.

impression of the form of the *Fantasy,* Neidich gives a rhythmic analysis quite similar to one that both Tower and Cone describe.

> The way the piece works is it has this introduction that sets the stage and then it rhythmically becomes more excited and she goes to shorter rhythmic groups. It goes into this first wave. Her music has a sense of waves. You have this first wave of energy that then dissipates. Then the second wave comes working itself into this rhythmic crescendo. You have this wave that goes to the body of the piece and then builds before coming down momentarily before the final wave which goes to the cadenzas. So there's this building to these big moments in the piece and each wave is more developed and gets louder. And then you have this small coda where you go back to the beginning. [3]

Flax also mentioned this rhythmic aspect of Tower's work:

> Her pieces have a natural shape. There're usually wonderful, slow unfolding sections that build up with more and more momentum and they can either go back to that unfolding or resolution, or end with a bang.[4]

Flax says that she looked for this "natural"shape when learning Tower's works. When first playing the *Fantasy*, I felt both the wave-like motion mentioned by Neidich and the contrasting areas of stability and motion mentioned by Flax. These are areas of discussion that will come up again in later chapters on Themes, Texture, Rhythm and Dynamics.

Leon Stein says, "Neither description nor evaluation is the basis of analysis but rather a grasp of relationships."[5] This is certainly an important message for the performer and one upon which this chapter is based. Regarding the importance of the performer grasping the relationships between sections of the *Fantasy* Spring said,

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[3]Charles Neidich, personal interview, 5 March 1999, 172-173. (See Appendix A for interview transcripts.)

[4]Laura Flax, personal interview, 16 June 1998, 160.

[5]Leon Stein, Structure and Style (Princeton: Summy-Birchard Music, 1979) 239.

> In the beginning I was learning the notes and just seeing how it all worked. Then actually the first time we rehearsed it we realized how far off we were from the mark. I think we both sat down and looked at the formal structure and tried to figure out how to make it all go together. The first thing we looked for were the big sections and those are pretty obvious. Then trying to find a way that perhaps those sections related to sections around them or other sections within the piece. And trying to bring out those relationships. And probably the last thing was trying to find a way to put it all together where it didn't sound like each section was a different section. [6]

Spring said that this way of playing the *Fantasy* so that it did not sound sectionalized, but rather that it was made up of many related sections, was very important to Tower when he was preparing the CD of this work. So, ironically, in the effort to play the *Fantasy* more seamlessly, he needed to first find the seams as well as the relationships between sections.

As I approach any unfamiliar work my initial step is to examine the formal structure of the music. When does it change? Do ideas return? Are ideas varied or developed? Where are the areas of stability and where are the areas of motion? Like Spring, I found that some of these questions can be answered easily and some will take further study. The basis of this chapter will be an exploration of my initial responses when playing the *Fantasy*, finding which passages are more clear and which are more uncertain. In this study I found that the transitional passages were the most puzzling to me. It was also noticeable that elisions are frequently used to help create the "seamless" quality of the *Fantasy*. And lastly, it was clear that though there were many new sections, with no exact repetition, there was much related material binding each section together.

Because music evolves in time, musical form can not be grasped all at once by the listener or performer; while playing, we can only be in one moment at a time. However, to

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[6]Robert Spring, personal interview, 10 June 1998, 154-155.

be an effective guide to the listener, performers need to be aware of the "road map" they are following. Therefore, it will be helpful for me to study the form of the *Fantasy* from a static view. This is especially true since it is not a standard form such as sonata or theme and variations.

The following is a chart of the basic structure of the *Fantasy* as taken from my first intuitions. This chart will clarify some of the easier questions. The second half of the chapter is devoted to a more detailed account and will answer some of the more difficult questions.

This piece has many sections and not all are clear as to where they begin and end. Often one section is ending with one instrument while another begins with the other instrument. Tower seems to use these elisions to help create a seamless quality between sections. She has described her compositional technique as "organic," which she explains as one idea "growing" out of another. Cone describes the function of elisions as a natural unifier between sections since both cadential and initial measures are strong. Like a tennis ball being returned, it is both a beginning and an ending. [7]

As mentioned earlier, the piece has distinct areas of motion and stability. The Introduction, Themes and Coda are the most stable areas. The Transitions are the areas of motion. Theme I is characterized by its slow tempo, long durations, block chords, wide spaced intervals, legato style, soft dynamics and a minor third motive (motive x) which permeates the work. Though there are aspects in common between Theme I and Theme II, most notably motive x, I hear them as distinct. Theme II can be recognized by a faster

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[7]Cone 28.

Chart 1 Initial impressions of form.[8]

mm. 1 - 12: Introduction: Rising whole tone scales, long durations, soft dynamics, block chords, calm mood.

12 - 22: Theme I: Adds clarinet, minor third motive, wide interval leaps, long durations, soft dynamics, block chords, calm mood.

21 - 28: Transition a: Tempo changes, syncopated rhythm, rising octatonic scales, contrapuntal dialogue, crescendo, forward motion.

29 - 33: Uncertain w

34 - 53: Transition b: Rising octatonic scales, trills, loud dynamics, contrapuntal dialogue, forward motion.

54 - 59: Theme I': Slightly faster tempo, developed and transposed up a whole step. Accompanied now with quasi-ostinato rising octatonic scales of the previous transition, soft dynamics, calm mood

60 - 74: Piano Solo 1: Interlude, soft dynamics, octatonic scales (not rising), chords.

75 -100: Transition c: rising octatonic scales, trills, bouncing, staccato, machine-like rhythm, crescendo, contrapuntal dialogue, forward motion.

101-143: Uncertain x

140-172: Theme II: Bouncing, staccato, machine-like rhythm, soft dynamics, contrapuntal dialogue, stable.

172-218: Uncertain y

218-246: Axis section: The piece "turns" here. Calm legato theme, an unraveling and tonal shift of motive x, contrapuntal, trills (later). While legato theme is stable, the unraveling section and trills are unstable.

247-255: Uncertain z

255-267: Transition d: Contrapuntal, rising octatonic scales, crescendo.

268-300: Theme II': As before.

301-328: Transition e, Piano Solo 2: Rising octatonic scales, crescendo, counterpoint, monophony, block chords.

329-351: Transition f: Rising octatonic scales, trills, crescendo, monophony, block chords.

351-376: Clarinet Cadenza.

376-395: Coda: Motive x, long durations, calm mood, bouncing, staccato, machine-like rhythm, rising octatonic scales, trills, counterpoint, block chords.

[8]The score of the *Fantasy* is contained in Appendix D.

tempo, machine-like quick rhythms, contrapuntal texture and bouncing staccato style. Transitional passages are marked with rising octatonic scales (sometimes trilled), long crescendos with louder dynamics and counterpoint. The *Fantasy* is not structured as music was prior to the twentieth century where repetition of material was a main feature of formal structure. In fact there is no exact repetition and many ideas develop, changing gradually, but the above-mentioned musical ideas do recur. This is a challenge to me as the performer: to make the road map of this piece clear to the listener.

I will begin my deeper study of the work's shape by examining what my intuitions are. In what follows, I present a commentary on the *Fantasy*. The Introduction is for piano alone. It is the musical picture frame that Cone talks about in *Musical Form and Musical Performance*. It clearly sets a mood and eases the listener in. The subtitle, ". . . *those harbor lights,*" projects an image of a quiet harbor, sheltered from the ocean. It also lends to the wave-like feeling throughout the piece. The Introduction ends in m. 12. The piano is alone and there is a ritardando just before the clarinet entrance here. This main theme will be discussed in more detail in both Chapter 4 on Themes and Chapter 5 on Phrasing. The tempo picks up slightly with the clarinet entrance. I hear the D1 on the downbeat of m. 12 as an elision; it serves as both the end of the introduction and the beginning of the first theme. Where Theme I ends and Transition a begins is not so easy to say. It seems almost as if the piano and clarinet move out of sync here. For the pianist, Theme I clearly ends with fermata on the third beat quarter note rest in m. 20. But for the clarinet, the line does not seem to end until the end of m. 22. It could be that Theme I ends in m. 20 for the clarinet, in fact there is a fermata on the C. The slur, however,

connects the C to the following D. In addition we have already heard several wide spaced, ascending, interval leaps in the first theme so my intuition says to project my line as continuing to m. 22. Measures 28 and 29 are also slippery. The piano line seems to end with the downbeat of m. 28 and the C octatonic scale is an anacrusis to the next section beginning in m. 29. The clarinet line could end on the D as it is the high point of the scale. This would mean that the C would be a pickup to the next measure. I do not play it like this though. I play to the end of the measure, then breathe and begin the next section on the downbeat of m. 29. This means that while the piano is playing an anacrusis the clarinet is finishing a phrase. This next section, marked Uncertain w, is somewhat unclear to me. I do not quite think of it as a new section yet it is not entirely like any of the previous passages. (I will address this section in more depth later in this chapter. For now it is safe to say that I think of it starting in m. 29 and ending with the downbeat of m. 34.)

This next segment, Transition b, is filled with intensity and motion. No more calm waters, the waves are beginning to pound against the breakers. It is a loud, aggressive and forceful passage that has a clear beginning (m. 34) and ending (m. 53). Though it starts off very loudly it becomes soft as it moves on, but I do not find it as stable as earlier soft passages were. There is a compelling forward motion here, even as the rhythms begin to elongate in measure 50.

A stimulating combination occurs next with the return of Theme I (transformed). The clarinet line has a fairly clear return of the first theme, a section which was stable, calm and placid. It is accompanied here though not with stationary chords as before but with the rapid octatonic scales and chords of the previous motion filled transitional

passage. The difficulty at this point for the performers is to join these two ideas, to find the relationships between them. I prefer to keep the calm placidity of the theme as the overall mood in this section. But this is a question more for the pianist than clarinetist.

The piano solo ends in m. 74 and the next section begins with a clear change of texture in m. 75. This section has a clear beginning and ending (m. 100) but I am not entirely clear as to its function. On the chart I have marked it Transition c because it has the rising octatonic scale like m. 24, but the feeling is much different. It is almost a foreshadowing of the rising octatonic scale section that comes later in m. 329. I hear both a sense of stability and motion. There is a two-voice dialogue between the instruments which feels stable yet the constant trilling makes it anxious. It seems like an ending section. It is accented, fiery and filled with crescendos. Measure 100 is an ending and it is definitely a challenge not to overstress the sense of a close. (This section will be examined in more detail in Chapter 8 on Dynamics, Articulation and Tone Color.)

The wide pitch range and two-voice dialogue are retained for the next section but again I am not certain what to do with this section (Uncertain x). Is the listener supposed to think it is a repeat of sorts of this section? If not, can I make sure that the differences outweigh the similarities? It sounds like a variation of earlier material, the previous section as well as the first theme. What are the salient musical features in common besides the reiteration of motive x? Do I want to play is as a new section or as a variation of an earlier section? And if so, which? Hopefully, these questions will be answered as the piece

comes forward to me.[9]

The transition into Theme II contains another elision. The clarinet line ends with the downbeat of m. 144 but the piano begins the new section in m. 140. This section also has some ideas that have been heard previously such as syncopated rhythms (mm. 21-27) and bouncing staccato notes (mm. 80-90). Yet I think of this as more of a new section, not one that I want to relate as clearly to an earlier passage. Though, since the listener has heard some of this material before it will not sound shockingly new. I want to play this as a straightforward, stable section, for confusion and uncertainty soon return.

As if returning to the beginning of this section, m. 172 marks a new section beginning instead. Uncertain y puts us right back into the feeling of being in something new yet strangely familiar. It is with passages such as these that the listener can become confused and lost. Of course there is the question, is this the intention? Perhaps to some extent, but I do know that if I am not certain of what I am projecting that the audience will sense this and lose interest. Since there is very little clear repetition of material in this piece I think it is important that as the piece goes on, the performers give hints to the listener, at times bringing out the newness of a section, at others calling attention to familiar material. In this section, many things are going on at once. Overall it sounds new to me but there are many ideas that we have heard before. I think of it as an aggressive section that energizes the piece and thrusts it forward. I feel the desire to push the repeated pitches, to snap the widely spaced grace notes and to hit the accents harder. Things begin to quiet

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[9] "Comes forward to me," is an expression a performer uses that refers to getting to know a piece by practicing it. As we play a piece it becomes increasingly familiar, as if its meaning were coming forward to the performer.

down with the diminuendo and legato theme of the piano (starting the last beat of m. 217).

We are just over halfway into the piece. The clarinet joins the piano for what seems like the beginning of a stable section, but instead, things start to unravel. In the midst of this unraveling a harmonic shift occurs. Because of these factors, I came to look upon this section as an axis. This is a concept that came to me after playing through the piece several times, and though the listener hearing this piece for the first time would not know they were midway through the work, I find thinking of it this way helpful. In m. 221 the clarinet and piano toss around motive x on B♭ and G. This is a section in which I want to generate confusion. There are for the first time several beats of rest: first two and a half, then five and then three and a half. Surrounding these rests is a tonal shift. The motive first moves up from G to G# then from B♭ to a B natural. I think of this shift as pivotal to the piece. In fact, this is where the image of an axis came to mind. The upbeat B of m. 225 and the downbeat G# of m. 226 are a declaration. This is such a strong cadence that it almost sounds as if the piece is over, but a quiet, legato theme begins. Again the wave begins to build to m. 246 but even though it is *forte* and accented I do not want it to be too strong of an ending. I want to finish with a question mark, an incomplete cadence if you will, in m. 246.

Though I am not sure what to call the next section, Uncertain z, I do know that I want it to be calm again as it starts out; a smooth surface on the water in the harbor, reminiscent of the opening. But with the triplets (m. 248) a romantic feeling begins to push and pull things, an undertow, and some rubato is called for. If I was forced to say where this section ends and the next begins I would say the fermata in m. 255 marked the end.

This is a section, though, that I do not want to indicate a clear ending and so to make it more seamless I do not make too much of these fermatas which helps in keeping the motion forward here.

Motion is what this next section, Transition d, is about, but I want to slip into it. I want to rush it forward, head on, to a strong ending in m. 267. I mark this ending with a long hold on the fermata and take a breath after it. It is important, however, that this not be a breath that lets the intensity down but the kind you would take before stepping off the platform onto a tightrope.

In m. 268 as we step onto the tightrope I want the audience to recognize this section and be surprised at its return. When Theme II returns I want it again to be straightforward, very matter-of-fact. I have to be careful not to overdo the ending of the clarinet line because I do not want the audience to hear it as the end of this section. The piano continues after the clarinet finishes and I think the motion should continue unstopped, even though the clarinet has! The intensity of this wave continues to build through this next piano solo and comes to a crashing climax as the clarinet enters in m. 329. The clarinet's rising octatonic scales are similar to what we heard in m. 75. Now, however, coming on the crest of this climax, they are caught up like a crashing wave. This section, Transition f, though it is clearly different in material than the previous one, must not be different in mood. The listener is given the crashing climax but must be immediately swept up in the intensity of the next section. The trills must be forceful, the pace fast and the accented chords in the piano biting, as if the wave has crashed against some solid object. The momentum does not decrease until m. 329 as the clarinet begins to wind

down.

The E♭ (m. 351) ending Transition f also begins the clarinet cadenza. There are three sections in the clarinet cadenza containing thematic material as well as the song "*Those Harbor Lights.*" The cadenza comes to an end with a winding down motion like the one that lead into it.

The piano returns for the ending material or coda (m. 376). This section is calm and a sense of returning to the mood of the beginning must be conveyed. In addition several motives of the piece return here and this time I want to project each one as clearly as possible. This section, more so than the clarinet cadenza, is the summing up of the piece with all the important ideas returning but integrated into the calm, quiet stability of the opening. Here I want to convey a sense of resignation, a resolution of conflict.

It can be seen that my intuition is strong in some sections and not so secure in others. In some sections the feeling, is one of "I'm not sure." This uncertainty makes it clear that some analysis is necessary for me to have a more complete understanding of this piece. Where my intuition is strong, I will use it as a guide to an analysis of the structure of the fantasy. This will then lead me to a better understanding of the uncertain sections.

Using my intuition as a guide to the shape of the piece, I have found that I feel comfortable with the identity of the majority of the sections. I have also, using my intuition, come to the conclusion that there are many "seamless" connections between sections and that there is a dichotomy of stability and motion in this piece. By analyzing the sections I was more clear about, I see that the passages I think of as transitional (motion) have several common traits: rising octatonic scales (sometimes embellished with

trills), contrapuntal textures and long crescendos. The passages I think of as thematic (stability) also have some common traits although there are at least two contrasting themes. Theme I has the recurring motive x, longer durations, wide interval leaps and block chords. Theme II is polyphonic in texture and has shorter durations.

It is now possible, from this performance-based analysis, to clarify these four uncertain passages. Though the first one, w (mm. 29-33), contains some thematic material, motive x in particular, it is more transitional in nature. It is contrapuntal, has rising octatonic scales and an extended crescendo. This makes mm. 21-53 a rather long transitional passage. Realizing that these three sections are transitional and knowing that this "middle transition" contains thematic material (from Theme I), I will want to project this thematic material clearly, while retaining a sense of motion/transition. This clarifies how I want to play this section.

Continuing with this analysis, the next uncertain passage, x (mm. 101-140), is also more clear to me. Knowing that there is a tendency towards seamless connections I can now see that though this passage begins with thematic material (from both theme I and II), it begins to change to transitional material as it progresses (beginning around m. 116). In m. 101 motive x appears in a new contrapuntal texture. Though durations are short, the pitches are repeated, enhancing a sense of longer durations. We even have the block chord structures. By m. 116 we are beginning to see more in common with the transitional passages, the rising octatonic scales and crescendo in particular. I now have a better idea of how to proceed in this section; the thematic material can lead into the transition which will bring us to theme II.

Uncertain y is a complex section and brings up many questions. There are a number of things occurring here. Interestingly, it has motives in common with both previous uncertain passages. We find the widely spaced counterpoint and repeated pitches of the theme in m. 101 as well as the widely spaced intervals and grace notes of mm. 31 and 32. It has the bouncing staccato motive of theme II and the block chords, long durations and motive x of theme I. Knowing now about the middle "axis" section that is to follow I have begun to think of this as a development section in which each thematic idea is played with and expanded.

The last uncertain passage, z, comes just after the "axis" section and has the features of Theme I. In light of my findings, this could be a kind of recapitulation of Theme I, especially because it is followed by a transition and then Theme II.

Theme II, though it has elements in common with Theme I, lacks one of its most important defining features, motive x. Instead we have the diminished fifth. Still I want to project a sense of Theme I, with a fresh twist in the diminished fifth motive. This is another seamless passage which becomes transitional almost as soon as it starts.

Drawing on my analytical insights which grew from my initial intuitions I can now construct a new and more complete chart of the formal structure of the *Fantasy*.

Chart 2 Revised chart of form.

Introduction	Theme I	Trans. a	Theme I'	Piano Solo 1	Trans. b	Theme I"
1-12	12-22	21-53	54-59	60-74	75-100	101-115

Trans. c	Theme II	Development	Axis	Theme I"'	Trans. d	Theme II'
116-143	140-172	172-218	218-246	247-255	255-267	268-300

Trans. e (Pn. Solo 2)	Trans. f	Clar. cadenza	Coda
301-328	329-351	351-376	376-395

A brief review of my methodology here helps us see distinct stages. First, making a chart of the shape of this piece based on my intuitions helped me to identify the sections I was uncertain about. Next, comparing the musical landscape of these passages with the sections that I felt strongly about helped me to see the uncertain sections with more clarity and to make sense of them in relationship to the rest of the piece. Now the puzzling transitional passages make sense to me. Understanding the overall shape I will be able to make a more effective wave-like performance. As evidenced I have a better grasp of the "road map" of the *Fantasy*, and by being more familiar with its formal determinants can make these relationships manifest. By recognizing these relationships and noting the elisions between sections I will be able to more successfully project to my audience both the seamless quality and wave-like motion that are so important to this work.

CHAPTER 4

Themes

It may be helpful in discussing some of the thematic material in the *Fantasy* to first understand how the composer generates her ideas. Asked how she composes, Tower said:

> I sit down at the piano. . . and I improvise. I start out with an idea and I sort of sculpt it. I don't sit down and improvise a whole piece, I just start fiddling around with an idea and when I get something that I like, I start developing it at the synthesizer or at the piano or both. And I start writing it down when I'm sure of something I have. It's a long process; it's not a quick process at all.[1]

In examining the themes in this piece I found this improvisation of a single idea is evident as the themes have many musical features in common. With so many common musical traits and so much continuous change it is a challenge for the performer to illustrate which themes or motives s/he is playing. It is the responsibility of the performer to guide the listener through the piece and to highlight not only which themes or motives are being played but also to make clear the development of these themes/motives so that the listener does not get disoriented. In this chapter I will examine in more detail the two main themes of the *Fantasy* as well as the motives contained in the transitional sections. Theses two areas, themes and transitions, establish a dichotomy between stability and motion. This opposition of stability and motion is characteristic of much of Tower's work and is important for the performer to understand.

The two main themes and the transitional sections reappear in various forms

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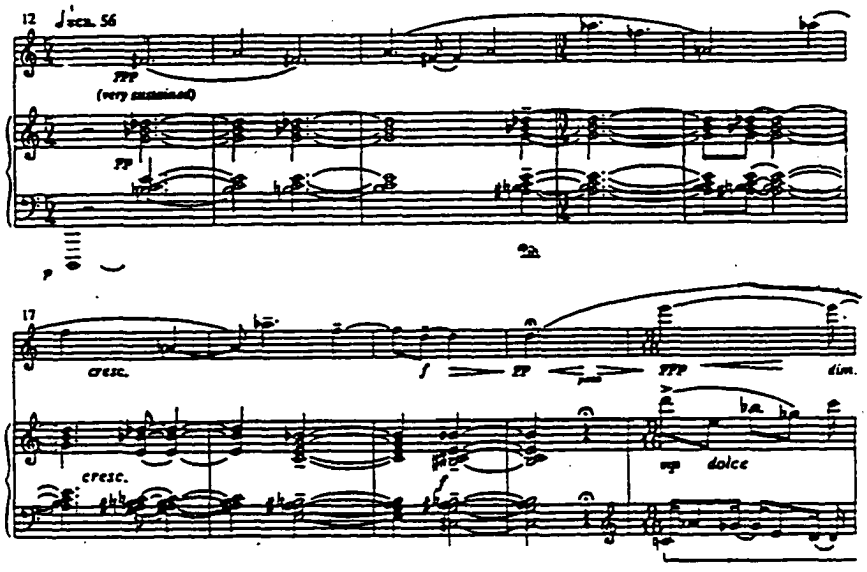
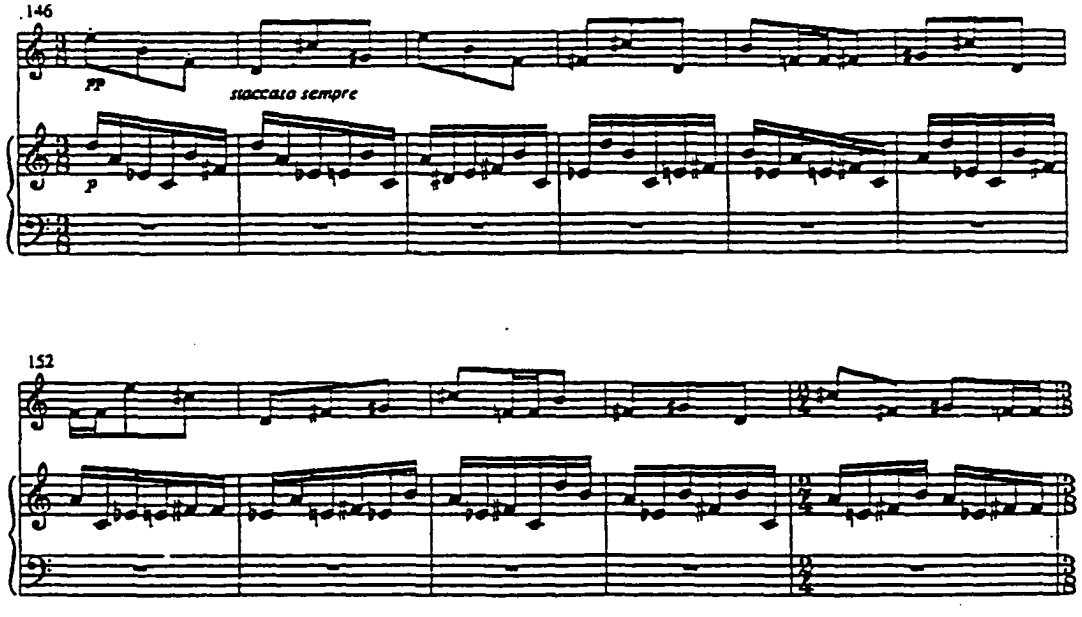
[1]Nancy Bond, "An Analysis of Joan Tower's 'Wings' for Solo Clarinet," D.M.A. diss., Arizona State U, 1992, 195.

Example 4.1

Theme I



Theme II



throughout the *Fantasy* (see example 4.1, Themes I and II). As discussed in Chapter 3 this piece moves in time by establishing a strong polarity between two contrasting concepts: motion and stability. Tower mentioned thinking in terms of action, so these two actions are the minimum of what I want to project to the listener: at which points the music is in motion and at which points it is at rest. In general the sections marked as themes are the more stable passages and the sections marked transition are the more motion-filled. But there is more than this to project. There are many common musical ideas in the *Fantasy* such as the minor third motive (motive x) and the octatonic passages. The thematic areas are more noticeably different from the transitions because of the sense of stability or motion. The common features of the transitional passages are the rising octatonic scales and crescendos. It is the increases in pitch and dynamics that give the transitions a sense of motion. The thematic areas are more constant in their pitch and dynamic levels.

More difficult to distinguish are the two main themes. Theme II grows out of Theme I and they share many characteristics such as motive x, softer dynamics and widely spaced intervals. The differences are mostly of rhythm and mood. Theme I contains longer durations and is more expressive or romantic in mood. Theme II uses shorter rhythms and is more restrained or classical in style. Additionally Theme I is generally more legato and Theme II is more staccato in articulation.

The subtitle for the *Fantasy—those harbor lights*—refers to a love song popular during WW II, *Harbor Lights*.[2] Tower, in an interview with Nancy Bond stated, "I started

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[2]Jimmy Kennedy and Hugh Williams, *Harbor Lights* (London: Peter Maurice Music Co., Ltd., 1937).

thinking about the *Harbor Lights* image and I got into all kinds of crazy things with boats sitting in the water and rocks and kinds of actions." She goes on to say that these were some of the things that inspired her, but were not intended as specific programmatic details. Still, knowing the song I could not help but have some images and characters in mind when playing the piece.[3]

In researching *Harbor Lights* I was told it was popular in WWII with women left behind by American soldiers. Knowing this, as I played the piece I imagined Theme I to be the character of the woman.[4] It is the more expressive of the two themes. Theme I is first heard in m. 12.[5] As stated earlier the downbeat D1 in the piano is both the end of the introduction and the beginning of the first theme. Theme I and its returns represent the more calm, stable sections of the *Fantasy*. The mood I want to convey to the listener is one of the woman walking near a calm harbor on a quiet evening. I do not want to play it with any abrupt changes or contrasts and with very little vibrato. Theme I ends with the clarinet in m. 22 and it is important that I make this clear to the audience. The difficulty is that the piano is beginning a transitional passage in m. 21 and I want the listener to connect with me until m. 22. There is a brief reference to Theme I, motive x, during this transitional passage in the clarinet line in m. 29 and I play it with clarity and a calm mood.

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[3]See Appendix C for complete text of the song.

[4]I do not wish to misconstrue this information about *Harbor Lights* to be either factual or given to me by the composer. It is an image that is helpful to me personally.

[5]The score of the *Fantasy* is contained in Appendix D.

Projecting the Return of Theme I

Theme I returns in m. 54. Tension is heightened slightly by a T1 transposition. In addition the piano has the rising octatonic scales of the previous transitional passage, now evoking a dreamlike mood, in contrast to the forward energy of the previous transition. I want to retain the calm mood of the theme changing it only to become more ethereal. The theme ends in m. 59 and leads into a piano solo with the same dreamlike mood.

Motives from theme I are heard in mm. 101-114. This section begins like a variation on the first theme but then becomes increasingly transitional. The long durations of this theme are subdivided into sixteenth notes. To see the theme, one must put the repeated notes together. I play the tenutos which the composer has placed on the first of each reiterated note clearly and keep the mood quiet and calm, even though the block chords break in trying to shatter this mood. By m. 115 the music has moved into more transitional material but one last reference of Theme I appears in the clarinet line even as Theme II is beginning in mm.140-143. The E♭ is sustained for three measures before moving to the C. It is motive x, which permeates the *Fantasy*, and the long durations link it to Theme I. The composer has helped to indicate that this E♭ must move to the C by adding a slight crescendo.

Aspects of Theme I also appear in the development section, mm. 173-217, most notably the repeated note (long duration) figure and motive x. The motive x, though, can be found throughout the piece and the repeated notes the motive takes on a more active, forward-moving role here. There is nothing of the mood of Theme I in this section, and though some aspects of it are being played with, I do not want to try to enforce any kind

of calm mood in this section.

Theme I returns in m. 247. However, this is by no means a clear repetition of this theme. When I first started to play the *Fantasy* I did not make the connection. It was after playing it several times that I began to have a sense that this was a return to the mood and style of Theme I. When I examined the structure of the piece I found that this section came just after a developmental section and before a return to Theme II. My analysis helped me to clarify this as a recapitulation of Theme I, or at least of its mood. Listening to recordings helped me further. The clarinet has a prominent diminished fifth interval which is unlike Theme I yet when hearing it I was strongly reminded of the first theme. It is the accompanying chords in the piano that evoke the sense of the theme. Though they contain the diminished fifth interval, they alternate between two chords separated by the minor third motive prominent in Theme I. Because I want to project to the listener a sense of Theme I, I play the passage slowly to evoke the long durations. I also want to keep the dynamic level down and the connections "very sustained" as indicated with the first articulation of Theme I. The clarinet line must be the more prominent line, especially where the piano begins to move with the triplet and eighth-note figures. There is frequent motion back and forth with the diminished fifth interval and it creates a rocking sensation, like a buoy in the water. The unstable nature of this interval also indicates that this is not a resolution and that there is more to come.

The end of this section, m. 255, is unusual. When first playing it I was uncertain what to do here. The ritardando and fermata indicate the end of a line or section, yet the material that comes after is certainly linked to the material prior to the fermata. Consulting

the piano score did not shed much light on the answer. I did see that the piano line was moving toward the following transitional section as early as m. 248, long before the clarinet line. Now that I am thinking of this section as a return to Theme I or at least to a stable section this fermata works to ensure that there is a point at which this theme (stable) becomes transition (motion). Typical of Tower's organic development of ideas, the transitional material grows out of the block chords starting in m. 248 and again in m. 251 when the triplets become sixteenths. We are being prepared for the transition which follows in which these triplet and sixteenth note passages lift us up on the crest of a wave which carries us to Theme II. Since it is not a clear repetition of Theme I material it would be easy to see how a performer could rush through this section as if it were all transition. I see the fermatas in m. 246 and the middle of 255 as setting this section off. Adding to this is the important tempo change (discussed later in Chapter 7) in m. 247.

Though there are musical ideas from both themes and transitions in the Coda, it is the calm, stable mood of Theme I that dominates. Still, I do not think of this as a repetition of Theme I. This Coda sums up the *Fantasy*. It functions as a conclusion and together with the Introduction creates a strong framework for the wilder, emotional *Fantasy*.

Theme II as a Stable Presence

Theme II is the bouncing staccato theme that is first heard in m. 140 and again in m. 268. While playing the theme I got the sense of something mechanical, cold and dry. Due to this sense of emotional restraint this theme was described earlier as classical in style. In keeping with the image I created, this theme represents to me the seemingly cold

nature of the soldier I imagined, as he leaves the woman behind to go back to his life. I want to project it as the stone face of a lover pretending not to feel an attachment. When this theme returns it is an almost exact repetition of the theme and I play it the same as the first time to make the listener aware of the same stone faced, mechanical mood.

The tricky thing about this theme is not the theme itself but the motives and fragments of the theme embedded in the transitional sections of the piece that require careful consideration. The first hint at the second theme occurs in a transitional section, m. 21, in the piano part. The mood is different here, so much so that the motives of Theme II are not easily recognized. The passage is a transition between two statements of Theme I and it is different in rhythmic intensity than later transitional passages. At this point it is slow and legato, but the wide intervals and syncopated rhythm decidedly prefigure Theme II. In fact, the foreshadowing began earlier. The pitches in the right hand of the piano (D, E, B♭, G♭, C) are the same pitches that begin the *Fantasy*, mm. 1-4. I think of this foreshadowing as the woman's effort to affect the stony attitude of her lover as Theme II is later heard. Motives of Theme II are then heard in the clarinet line, m. 80. The tempo is faster, the wide interval leaps are there and it is now staccato. These bars, 80-81 and 87-90, are surrounded by the transitional rising octatonic scale motive. What I do is project these measures as separate. I want them to stand out, to project them to the listener while remaining part of one line.

Moving into the next section, the development section, features of both Theme I and II are present. Since I am coming from Theme II, I will want to project its aspects the most here. Tower marks the bass line in the piano, which is where the Theme II material

is, *ff*, while the other lines are only *f*. I begin to even this dynamic difference out as the music moves on and project less and less of Theme II until I am no longer thinking of it at all.

Theme II is heard again in m. 268. A clear restatement, I want to be certain the audience hears it as such. This section is quite far along in the piece and the listener stands a chance of being lost. I want this repetition of material to guide the listener like the light house in the harbor, as mentioned in the song. The mood and style should be exactly the same.

The last time motives from Theme II are heard is in the coda, mm. 392-393 in the piano. Connections can be seen between the two themes here. This last reference to Theme II grows out of the block chord of the Theme I reference just before. The direction from the composer cautions the pianist to "balance with clarinet." I interpret this to mean that the second theme should not take over here but coexist with Theme I.

Transitions as Waves of Motion

There is an unusually large amount of transitional material in this piece: 122 out of 355 measures. Therefore I am calling these passages Transitions with the understanding that they are important musical passages that are motion-filled. They do, in fact, sometimes function as transitions taking the listener from one place to another. But sometimes they function as independent sections that are more motion-filled than most traditional thematic areas.

As previously stated the musical characteristics of the transitional passages are:

1. Rising octatonic scales, sometimes trilled

2. Trills
3. Louder dynamic levels with long crescendos
4. Contrapuntal dialogue

In addition the transitions are mostly fast paced with quick rhythms ranging from sixteenth to sixty-fourth notes.

The first transitional passage begins in m. 21. It is unlike the loud, raucous transitions heard later, but the seed is planted here. The rising octatonic scales first appear in the clarinet line at the end of m. 24 and the piano picks them up in m. 28. There is a delicate mood here, soft and carefully marked with tenutos and dots. It is very easy to overdo this passage, to push too hard, both with the rhythm and dynamics. Having a sense that this is just the beginning of this idea, the first wave, I want to play this understated, keeping the dynamics down and retaining a smooth legato and calm mood until m. 32. This will allow the next transitional passage, Transition b, to hit the listener like a stronger crashing wave.

This material from mm. 21-53 is framed by two hearings of Theme I. Theme I', m. 54, is altered by this section. The rising octatonic scales of this section remain as the accompaniment to the theme. It is an exciting passage with important recurring ideas that affect the development of the piece and I want to give it the necessary weight. The concepts of motion and stability are equal partners here. Since transitions are about motion, I want to push this section forward throughout. Even as the rhythms become augmented in m. 49, and a ritardando is indicated in m. 52, the motion is still forward. This direction is present in the ever rising octatonic scales.

The transitional material is returns in m. 75. Transition c is further developed with

trills, which heighten the sense of motion, and the second voice is changed. This wave is not as wild as the previous one. The rising contour of the octatonic scales and the constant trills will give the motion this section calls for. I want to play the trills aggressively but do not want to overdo the dynamics. The second voice in the piano is new material and plays an important role in the next section and I want it to be heard clearly by the audience. In addition, as mentioned earlier the seeds of Theme II are being planted here and I want to bring those out. It is not until the crescendo in m. 96 that I want to begin to let loose.

The music from mm. 100-254 is primarily thematic or developmental. The next transitional passage appears in m. 255. It is a fleeting one and is, in fact, transitional in function. It leads from the "recapitulation" of Theme I to Theme II. The listener has heard this material before and may now be aware of its volatile nature. It grows quietly out of the previous section and I want to allow this growth to continue unabated. I want the audience to expect that it will be something like they heard before, an extended active passage followed by another hearing of Theme I. Because of this I do not want to make to much of the ritardando in m. 266. I want the listener to be surprised both at the brevity of this section and the return of Theme II that follows.

The longest and most climactic of transitions begins with the piano cadenza in m. 301. The contour is one of constant rise and fall, both in pitch and dynamics. In m. 329 the clarinet is added and there is a change of texture. The clarinet takes over the rising octatonic scales and the piano switches to a nervous jabbing of chords. This is quite a difficult passage, not so much because of the technical expertise required but because of the demanding forward motion and prolonged intensity. There must be a constant growth

of intensity from the clarinet, mm. 329 to 349. If I back off at any point the forward motion may be lost. The trills must be furious, each one pushing into the next. The low-pitched eighth notes must all bounce sharply and leap into the next note. The jerky unpredictable piano chords add to the instability and to keep it moving forward they should be short and have sense of lifting up on each one. An especially easy section to let the intensity down too soon is the change of texture in m. 347. The sixteenths must be fast and loud with no diminuendo or ritardando until indicated.

Elements of the transitions do appear in the coda but they have been resolved now from motion to stability. The rising octatonic scales should not push forward. In particular the trills in this section must not be played too fast or with too much emphasis. They should be like trills in the slow movement of a nineteenth century work. The previous fiery transitional passages from before are only a vague memory.

These are the main thematic ideas that appear in the *Fantasy*. I have shown how first examining the structure of the piece lead me to identify these themes and then how my intuitions illustrate their development and role within the work. In doing so these themes have become characters to me and my more intimate knowledge of them allows me to portray them in a more realistic way.

CHAPTER 5

Phrasing

Phrasing, the controlled shaping and projecting of a melodic pattern, is a fundamental issue for performers. It is essential to understand fully the themes within a piece, the motion and construct, as well as the mood. Palmer says, "Phrases are considered an important element of interpretation, and they are often defined as units of musical meaning."[1] In her study Palmer found that performers use time, particularly the slowing of tempo or pauses, to indicate phrase boundaries. Dynamic shading and intensity level can be used as well. To indicate a phrase boundary we must first ask, where does each phrase begin and end? How are the phrases subdivided? Where are the climaxes? And, for the wind player, where is the best place to breathe? Wallace Berry in *Musical Structure and Performance* says:

> A fundamental, primary, often perplexing problem of performance is that which takes in such questions as the following: What events are most effectively and appropriately grouped together? According to what principles and elements of association are the events of the piece best interconnected? And if there are divergent possibilities, as is often the case, on what rational basis do I justify a particular judgement about grouping?[2]

In a tonal work these questions might seem rudimentary, but in a post-tonal setting, as Christopher Hasty says, "we are forced to ask very elementary questions

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[1]Caroline Palmer, "The Role of Interpretive Preferences in Music Performance," Cognitive Bases of Musical Communication, ed. Mari Riess Jones, Susan Holleran (Washington DC: American Psychological Assoc., 1991) 250.

[2]Wallace Berry, Musical Structure and Performance (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989) 219.

concerning the nature of musical coherence as a temporal phenomenon, questions which we often take for granted in analyzing tonal music because they are implicit presuppositions of traditional analytic concepts."[3] Because phrasing has an impact on how the listener understands a piece, performers must be certain of their phrasing choices. These phrasing choices are more complex in post-tonal music and deserve close study.

In this chapter I study the phrase structures of Theme I, mm. 12-21 and its first return, mm. 54-59. I begin my analysis by first considering my own intuitions. Next, I investigate recordings of four other clarinetists to see how they phrase the same sections. Following this investigation is an analysis of the phrase structure stemming from these performance-based findings and a discussion on how this analysis affects my performance.

My first sense is that Theme I, mm. 12-21, is an expressive theme and that it is one that is growing (see example 5.1). Each new phrase takes the previous phrase as a starting point and then builds on it. The first phrase, 1a (mm. 12-13), is a statement of the most important motive in the piece, the minor third interval. I play it as one phrase beginning on the E (all pitches referred to are in concert pitch), moving into the G (motion or intensity is indicated with an arrow), and pushing back down to the E with a slight rise and fall, and then I breathe, relaxing the intensity and creating a phrase boundary. Even though both pitches are included in the piano chords, my intuition is to play the E as the more stable tone and the G as the more dissonant one which allows for a resolution back to the original pitch, E. It is the first iteration of this motive and though I want to make it clear, it

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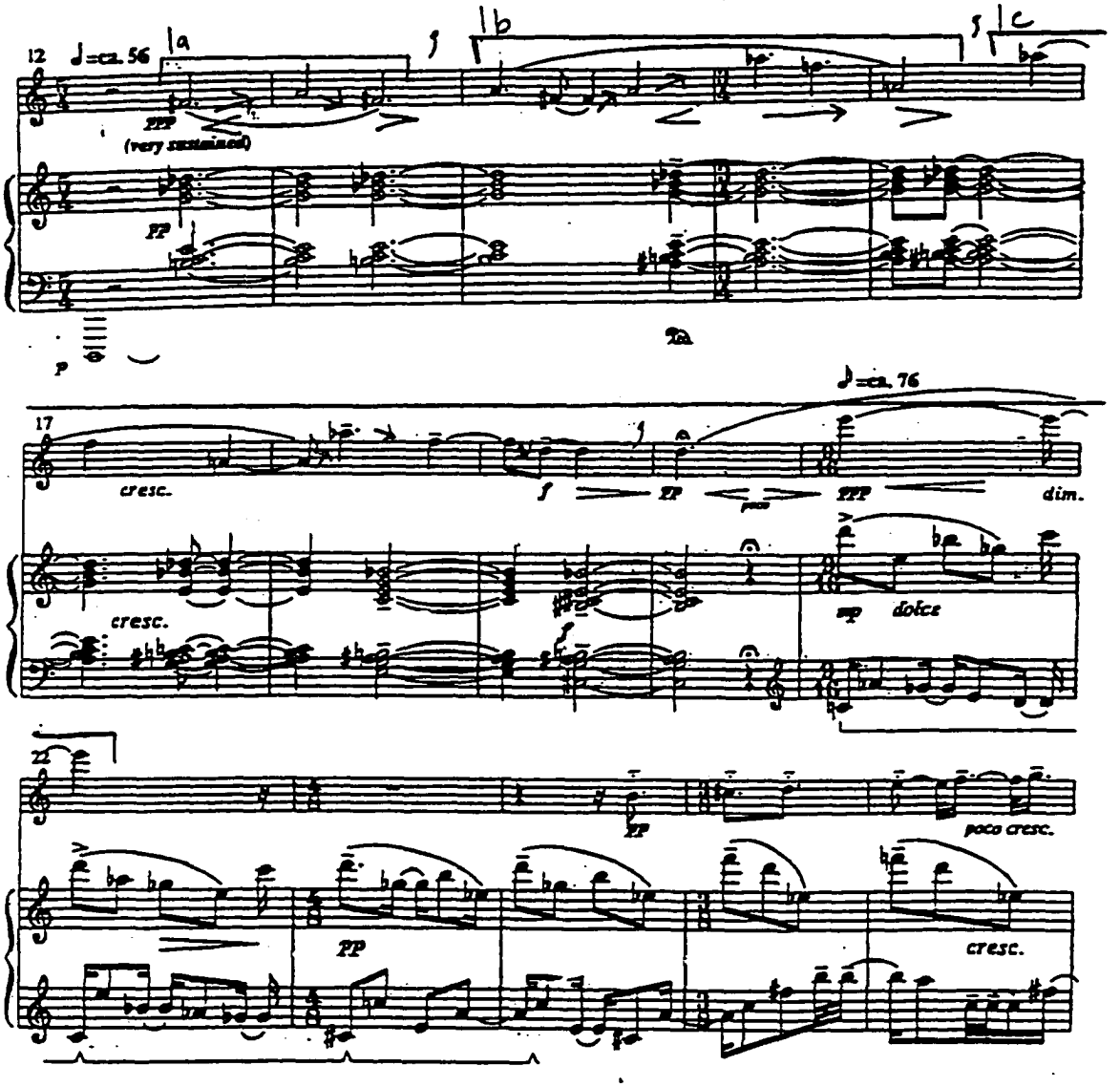
[3]Christopher, Hasty. "Phrase Structure in Atonal Music," Journal of Music Theory 28.2 (Fall 1984): 168.

Example 5.1: My Phrasing of Theme I



should not be over-dramatized.

The next phrase, 1b, is more expressive. It begins in m. 14 with an inversion of the first phrase but what makes it more expressive to me is that it continues with a wide diminished octave leap up. I notice that I now play the G dotted half-note in the beginning of m. 14 as a stable tone and fall back to the E, almost as if an echo. But this E is off the beat and tension begins to creep in. Increasing in intensity, I continue moving into the G half-note. The piano strikes a chord on the fourth beat and I move up to the surprising G♭ in m. 15. Since this G♭ is followed by an E♭ in the same register, it is possible to think of it as the beginning of a new phrase in a separate voice. However, my impulse is to increase the intensity on the G half-note in m. 14 and push into the G♭, thinking of it as the extension or organic growth of the same phrase that then resolves back to the G. The piano chord on the upbeat ends this phrase.

The quarter-note pickup into m. 17 begins the next phrase, 1c, with the new pitches from the previous phrase, the higher G♭ and E♭. This is the longest of the three phrases of this theme. The slur given by the composer links the upper G♭ and E♭ with the lower G. It would be possible to breathe here, but I do not as it would break the line and I want a more seamless connection. I continue through the repetition of the G♭, E♭ and finally the C. The C is not what I was expecting. After hearing the G♭ and E♭ resolve twice to the G, the C is a surprise. It is marked forte and coming at the end of a crescendo it is the loudest dynamic so far. I land on it with a sense of surprise, delaying it slightly and playing it with a more expressive attack. I think of it as a deceptive cadence. The piano plays a final clashing chord. Ideally, I would not breathe here and carry this phrase through

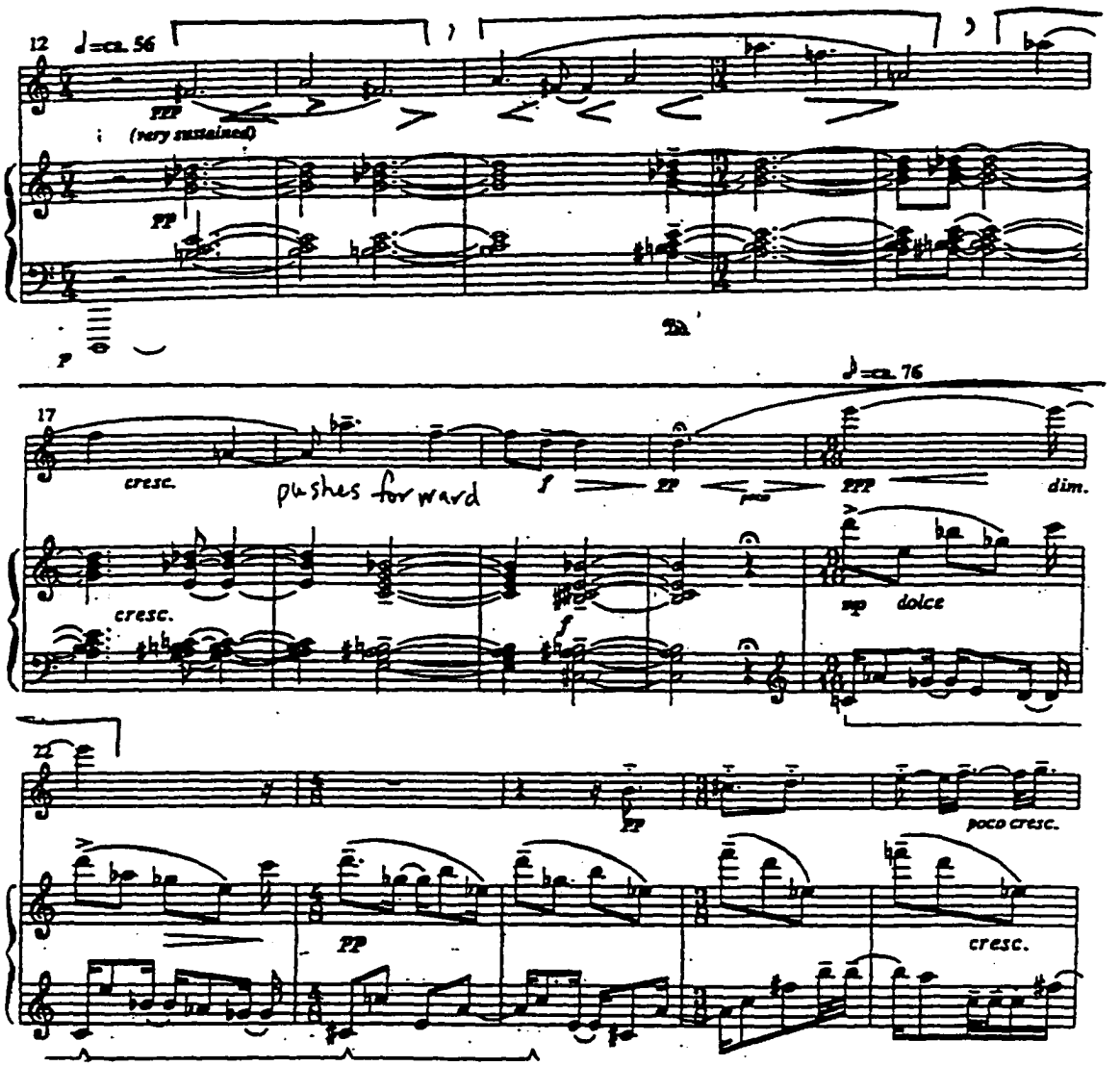
uninterruptedly as I had with the other phrases. Due to necessity, however, I must breathe, because I want to make the fermata in m. 20 long and must have enough air to control the connection from the C in m. 20 to the *ppp* high D in m. 21. Remembering that I want this to be heard as one phrase, I do not want to take a long breath or to relax the intensity because I do not want it to sound as if this phrase has ended in m. 19 but rather continues on to m. 22.

When first playing this piece I was uncertain if phrase 1c ended in m. 19 and that mm. 20-22 were the beginning of the next phrase, in fact that was my first impulse. But after playing mm. 20-21 as a beginning, I felt unsatisfied. My line, two pitches, was not enough and it did not seem to be connected to the piano line. Therefore, my decision was to play mm. 17-22 as one single phrase. This also made more sense with my original concept of the small phrase that continued to expand.

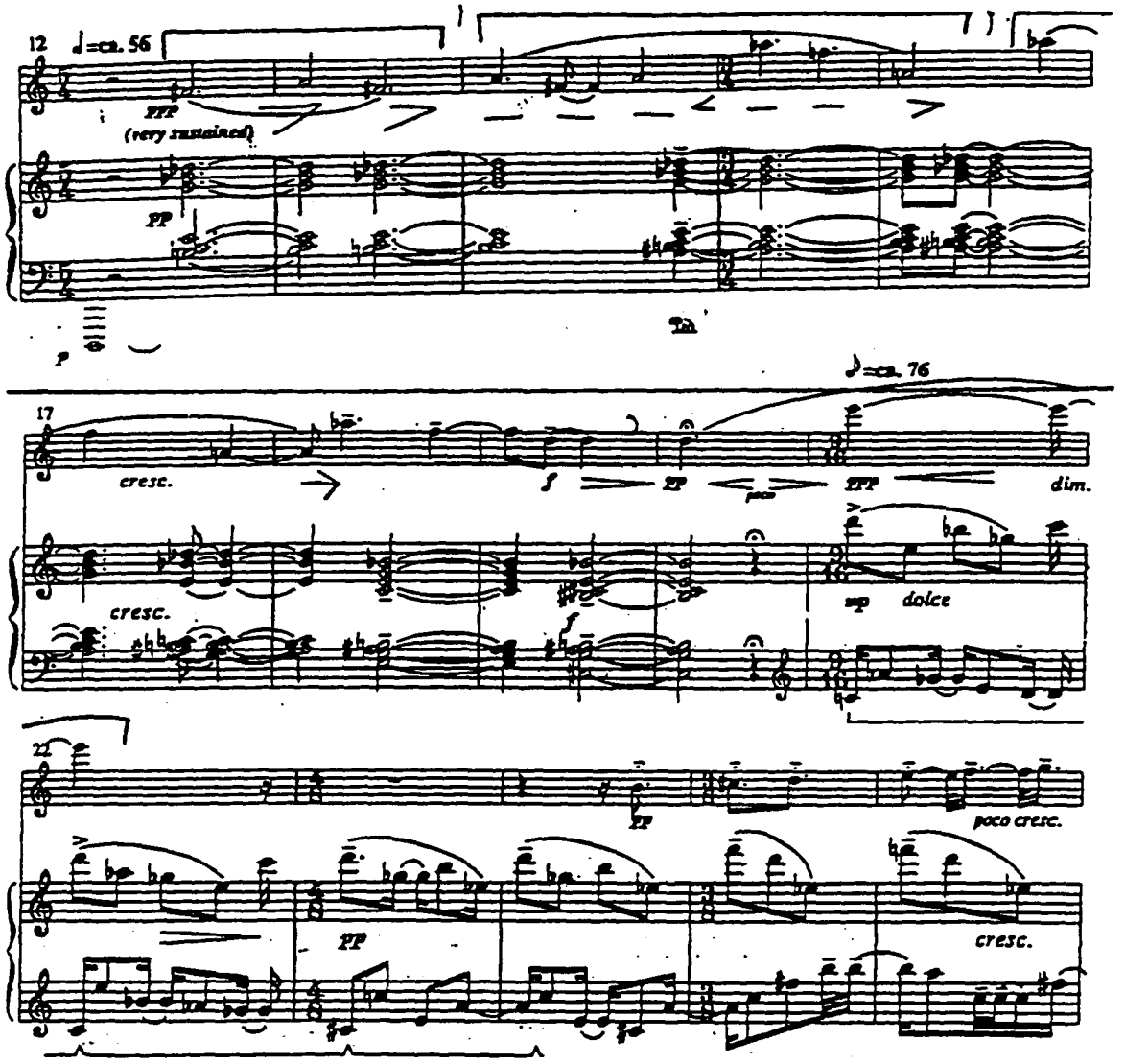
I had a strong sense of the relatedness of each of the phrases, each one taking its starting idea from something new in the previous phrase. The G is the new pitch in 1a, and it begins 1b. The G♭ and E are the new pitches in 1b and they start 1c. As to the climax of the theme, though the G♭ is the highest pitch, I feel it as a mounting tension and that the real climax of the theme occurs late in phrase 1c on the *f* C in m.19. This theme is 11 measures (37.5 quarter notes) in length. I divide it into three phrases: 1a, b and c. 1a is two measures (10 quarter notes), 1b is three (10 quarter notes), and 1c is six measures (17 quarter notes).

In support of this phrasing, two of the four clarinetists whose recordings I studied

Example 5.2: Phrasing, Robert Spring



Example 5.3: Phrasing, Laura Flax



divide the theme into the same three phrases.[4] They are Flax and Spring (see examples 5.2 and 5.3). Yet there are still subtle differences in the playing within each of the phrases, particularly with Flax's performance. In 1b, Flax begins each pitch with the same dynamic and then backs away, almost bell-like. Spring goes toward the G as I do, but then backs off, whereas I push back into the E. Flax said she remembered thinking of the phrase here as three and then three more and going on, and though she does create a phrase boundary at the end of m. 13, the pitches feel more equal in relationship to each other. Spring moves as I do to the upper G in 1a, but then he lets off the intensity so that the second E seems almost not connected. He said he felt the upper pitches were more one of motion as it was the one that leads up to the higher pitches as the phrase rises. Though he felt that phrasing was intuitive for him, he also consults the score to find the direction and resting points of each of the lines.

Spring's playing of 1b is very similar to my own except that he falls away from the G♭ and E in m. 15 more than I do. Flax's interpretation is markedly different. She plays each of the pitches in 1b almost evenly in intensity only slightly building to the G♭ in m. 15. She said that she felt that the G and E were not new, we had heard them in 1a, and so she did not make much out of them, preferring a more placid character, one that was evolving out of the mist of the harbor, as she put it.

Flax and Spring play 1c very much as I do. The differences are a pushing forward in time by Spring in m. 18 and a decrescendo by Spring on the fermata C in m. 20 that

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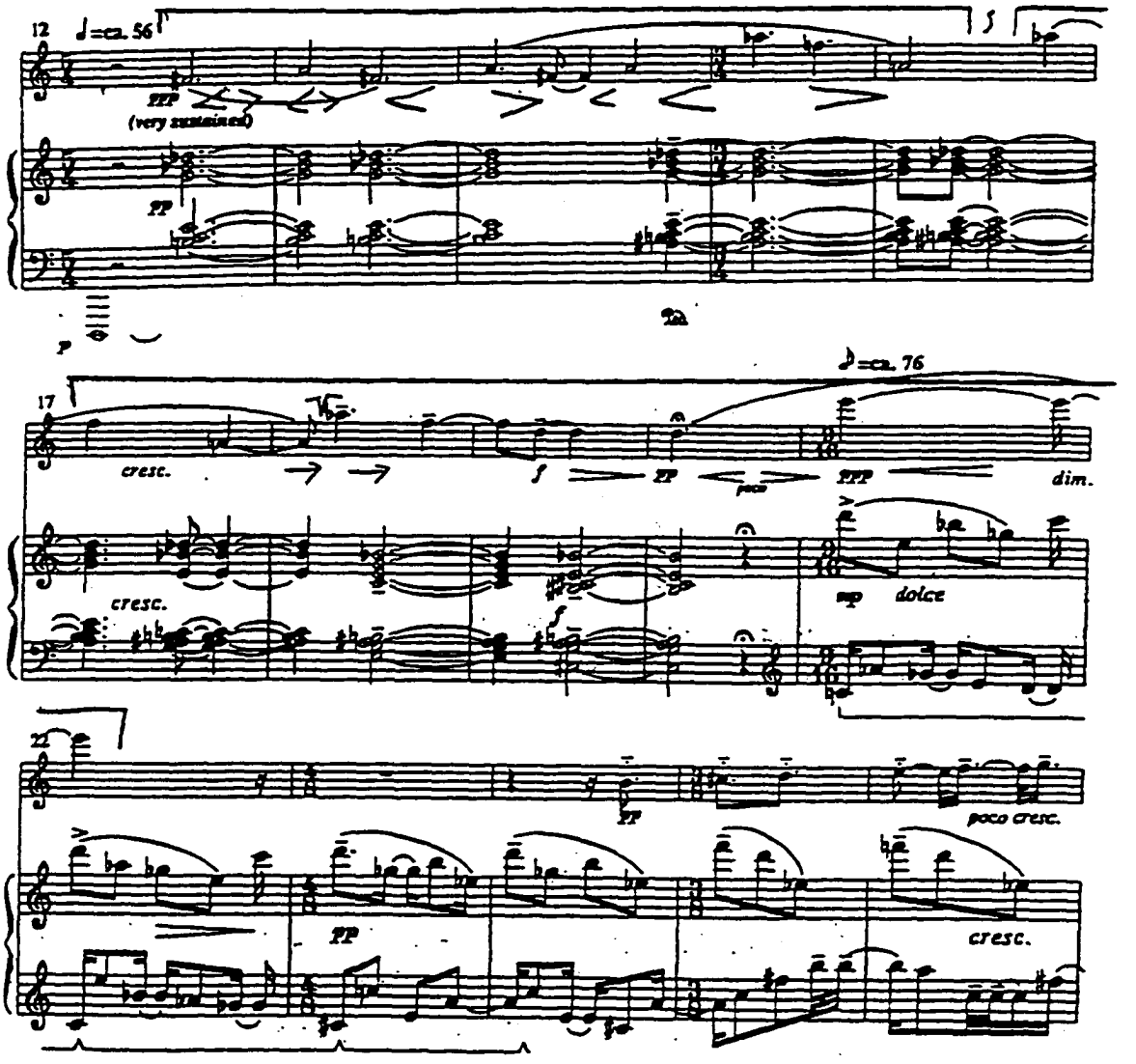
[4]The four clarinetists whose recordings I studied were Laura Flax, Charles Neidich, David Shiffrin and Robert Spring. See Appendix B for recording information.

threatens to separate it from the following D, which I feel certain was not his intention. In summary, Spring and I conceive of this theme similarly in phrasing and character. Though she phrases as I do, Flax has a different character in mind for at least the first two phrases, and though different from mine, one which I like, and that makes sense to me.

Two other possible phrase interpretations are offered by clarinetists Neidich and Shifrin. Neidich plays phrases 1a and b as one phrase and Shifrin adds a fourth phrase, my first impulse, by playing mm. 20 and 21 as a new phrase (see examples 5.4 and 5.5).

A noticeable variance is that Neidich plays the E in m. 12 as a tone of motion that pushes into the G. In m. 13, rather than relaxing on the E with a short phrase as I do, he clearly moves into the G in m. 14 and connects this as a longer phrase. In addition, he plays both the E in m. 12 and G in m. 13 with an expressive rise and fall of intensity, giving a more restless character to the opening. He backs off slightly from the G dotted quarter-note in m. 14 and seems to resolve into the E but then moves onto the G half-note. The intensity increases and he pushes into the upper G♭ in m. 15 and then decrescendos to the G in m. 16. Though he does not breathe after the half-note G in m. 16 he also does not push through it, effecting a phrase boundary. Neidich's first phrase then is a combination of phrases 1a and b. It could be said that Neidich plays this last phrase, 1c, as a single unit, but he does not push into the G♭ in m. 18, rather playing the reiteration of the G♭ E♭ a bit louder. In doing so he isolates these three pitches in what sounds almost like a small phrase. It should be noted that Neidich does not break for a breath throughout this section. This seamless playing is possible due to his mastery of circular breathing, allowing him to play continuously without stopping for air. Neidich describes

Example 5.4: Phrasing, Charles Neidich



the motion and phrasing of this section as incredibly clear:

> You have to move somewhere, that always happens. I don't think there's ever a case where everything is exactly the same. There are two possibilities. You can either go [he sings the two possibilities, one stresses the E, one stresses the G]. The one thing which has to be in the phrasing is the motion to the G♭. She sets it up as rhythmically consonant (m. 12), then it begins to unstabilize with the dotted quarter-notes (m.14). Then each of the following phrases are offset with the piano chords. The crescendo (m.17) changes the direction of the motion and pushes toward the C (m. 19) which goes back to the beginning of the piece. So the shape is in the music. You can feel it intuitively and play it well in the beginning or you can look at it and play it well eventually.[5]

Neidich also mentioned that he saw mm. 20-21 as an elision. He said he thought that Tower had not actually tied the C in m. 19 to the C in m. 20 because she knew that most clarinetists would need to take a breath, but Neidich feels they should still be connected as one phrase.

It is the phrase boundary that Shifrin creates at the end of m. 19 that makes his interpretation different (see example 5.5). There is a possibility that Shifrin only intended to take a quick breath and still have it be heard as one phrase. This is an example of the difference between an imagined performance and a real one. As heard on a tape of his live performance, the breath he takes effects a phrase boundary. The intensity is dropped, the breath is taken too far into the piano's decaying chord and so the break is more obvious to the listener and a fraction too long. These factors come together to create the sound of a phrase coming to an end and a new one beginning.

Ideally a wind player wants to breathe only at phrase endings, but it is not always possible to manage long phrases without breathing. This is achieved by keeping the

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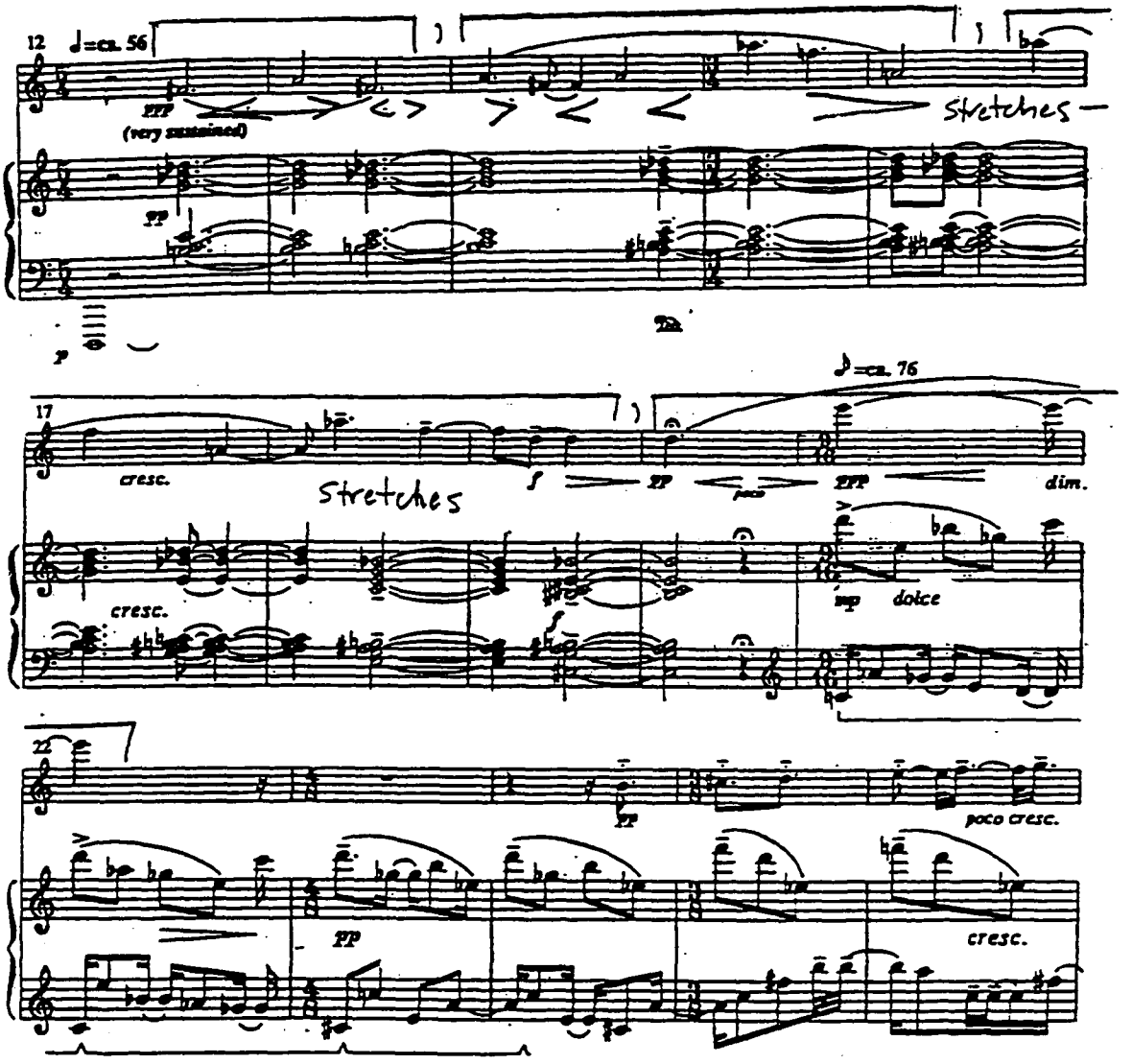
[5]Charles Neidich, personal interview, 5 March 1999, 173. (See Appendix A for interview transcripts.)

Example 5.5: Phrasing, David Shifrin



intensity, dynamic and rhythm steady and "catching" as quick a breath as possible, in effort not to effect a phrasing. The only other clear difference in Shifrin's phrasing is that he takes more time at the end of phrase 1b. He stretches the half-note G and the following quarter-note G♭. The G♭ and E♭ (marked with tenutos) in m. 18 are also stretched. The effect is a drawing out of the climax as opposed to rushing towards it (which Spring does).

In the interpretation that I share with Flax and Spring, the theme grows from a two-note phrase to a four-note phrase to a five-note phrase. Here I am referring to the number of different pitches in the clarinet melody. The G is consistently a tone of motion and so the second phrase comes to a kind of half cadence.

In reviewing the phrasing by Neidich, the main differences are Neidich's single phrase from mm. 12-16 with the more intense, moving sound of the opening phrase, as well as playing the Es as more dissonant. His single phrase of mm. 12-16, is different from my interpretation in that he hears the E and G as tones of motion towards the G♭ (m.15), whereas I play the E as the stable tone and the G as more dissonant. This discussion of stable and unstable tones is a model example of the challenge that post-tonal music gives us. Joseph Straus says, "Atonal music. . . . does not systematically distinguish between consonance and dissonance. As a result, deciding which notes are structural and which embellishing becomes arbitrary."[6] Neidich's phrasing is a viable one and he is consistent with playing the E as the tone of motion. Each time he plays the E he pushes into the G

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[6]Joseph Straus, "Voice Leading in Atonal Music," Music Theory in Concept and Practice, ed. James Baker, David Beach, Jonathan Bernard (Rochester: U of Rochester P, 1997) 239.

which would create at least a three-measure phrase. The problem is the G in m. 14. It has been reinforced to the listener as the stable tone, so why does it now push into the diminished octave in m. 14?

The phrasing by Shifrin is, as stated earlier, one that I considered, but later rejected. Hearing it has helped me be more certain that this phrasing does not work for me. However, I do hear more clearly the elision and, as Neidich mentioned, the introduction beginning again. The C and D in the clarinet are the first pitches heard in the piece and in m. 21 the piano continues the following pitches heard in the beginning. In this way the clarinet's ending becomes the beginning of the next section.

Hasty says that, "A new phrase may be constructed on the basis of a prior act of construction. The prior phrase will not then be recalled but may be *used* in the creation of the new structure."[7] Therefore, let us look ahead to the phrasing in the next statement of this theme. The next clear statement of Theme I comes in mm. 54-59 (see example 5.6). In addition to being more familiar, the theme this time is more compact and the piano plays an impressionistic accompaniment that makes it easy to focus on the Theme. This statement of the theme is clearer to me than the original and answers some uncertainties I had about how to phrase the first hearing of it. With the phrase in mm. 14-16 I had some doubt about separating the upper pitch of the diminished octave. Examining the phrase in mm. 54-55 is not helpful in clearing up that doubt, but the phrase beginning in m. 56 is. Now there is only the F# without the A leading to the upper A♭. I certainly want to play m. 56 as the beginning of a phrase and one pitch is not enough even for a motive.

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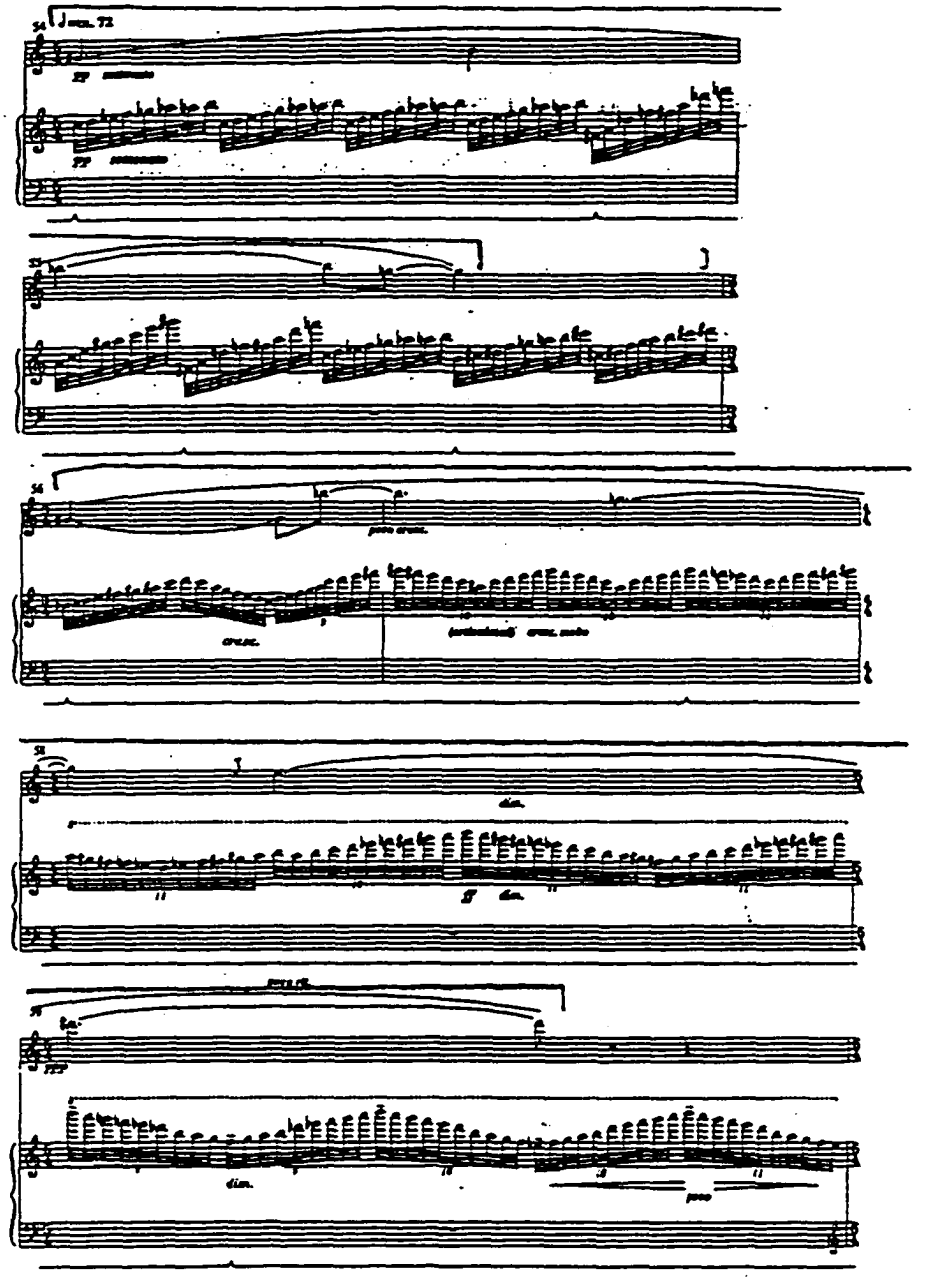
[7]Hasty 187.

5.6 Theme I'



Therefore I feel that this diminished octave works to intensify the climax of the phrase, rather than to start a new one.

Another question remains: what to do with the wide interval leap that ends this phrase? When first confronted with it in mm. 20-21, I was unsure whether to think of it as the end of the phrase or the start of the next. The piano's fermata in m. 20 makes it clear that this section has ended and a new one is starting in m. 21. The question is to which section does the clarinet line belong? This second playing of the theme makes that clear. This time while the wide interval is being played in the clarinet, the piano is not starting a new section but coming to the end of this one.

Of the four recordings, again Flax and Spring phrase this section as I do. There is also agreement now with the performance of Neidich and Shifrin. There was a difference in how we phrased the earlier hearing of this theme. Neidich played the lower tone of the minor third motive as the unstable tone that pushed into the upper tone. I played the lower tone as the more consonant and the upper as the dissonant. I argued that with my version, hearing the upper tone as unstable allowed for a stronger push into the diminished octave, and this first phrase in mm. 54-55 would support that. However, looking at the next phrase, mm. 56-57, I find that the upper note of the minor third is absent and now the leap, though here a doubly diminished tenth (major ninth), is prepared by my more stable lower tone. This particular observation, then, does not make one interpretation more valid than the other.

Though Shifrin does breathe after the F in m. 58, this time it is not heard as a phrase ending. The intensity level stays steady and the F pushes forward into the D. With

the realization that these two pitches constitute the end of this phrase in this hearing of the theme, I believe that the earlier playing by Shifrin was in fact an unintentional phrase ending.

Looking closely at how to phrase these sections as well as reviewing various performances has helped to clarify my interpretation of the phrasing of this theme as well as to open my ears to interpretive possibilities. Hearing other colleagues agree with my interpretation was gratifying and hearing other versions suggest expanded possibilities for performance. I have found that other good interpretations do exist and that analysis is helpful in clarifying expressive choices.

CHAPTER 6

Texture and Balance

In this chapter I will study texture and balance in depth. Texture is a determining musical element. Berry says, "Changes in texture. . . *are often among the most readily perceptible and appreciable in the experience of music.*"[1] Texture changes alert the listener to new sections within the formal structure; a return to a familiar texture often signals a repetition. In a work such as the *Fantasy*, with little exact repetition of material, it is often the progression, recession and variation of texture which delineates the structure.[2] One of the defining characteristics of the two main themes is that of differing textures. The contrast between motion and rest is created by texture, as well as differing levels of tension.

How does this concern the performer? Texture refers to layers of musical sound, the density and spacing of the layers. Further, it takes into consideration the relationship between musical lines. These three aspects—density, spacing, and the relationships between lines—affect the performer. Balance is a critical issue regarding the first two, density and spacing. To achieve the proper balance, performers must consider how thick the texture is as well as the particular instrumental range at which each line is being played. Careful dynamic balance between performers can help to bring texture changes out

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[1]Wallace Berry, Structural Functions in Music (New York: Dover Pub., 1987) 189.

[2]Berry 186.

to the listener. In addition, I point out in chapter 4 that motives appear in various sections and may be hidden and easily missed if the balance is not correct. The density and spacing of the texture are, therefore, performance issues. Concerning the relationship of the musical lines, just as it is important for the performer to know where s/he is in the formal structure, it is also useful to know the relationship of each musical line to the rest of the lines sounding concurrently.

In this chapter I will consider various sections where an awareness of texture is of utmost consequence for the performer. Perusal of the score rather than intuition gives me information about the density of the writing; however, intuition may guide me as to the relationship of a line I am playing to the other lines being played.

The introduction of the *Fantasy* begins with a monophonic texture which is widely spaced, 26 semitones in the first interval, and continues to expand textural space to 47 semitones with the entrance of Theme I in m. 12.[3] Also increasing is the density of the texture from a single pitch in the beginning to five layers in m. 11. This is what Berry refers to as textural progression a source of motion and musical direction.[4]

Theme I is recognized by its chordal texture. The middle chord tone in the clarinet line is marked *ppp* and is doubled by the piano which is marked *pp*. At first glance it would seem that the clarinet line is supposed to be actually under the piano line—simply a part of the chord—except for the initial attack. It is a throat-tone, part of the clarinet's

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[3]The score of the *Fantasy* is contained in Appendix D.

[4]Berry 186.

range which may be easily overbalanced by the dense piano chords in m. 12.[5] The initial entrance of the clarinet should sneak in, under the piano, but then my inclination is to press forward in intensity and somewhat in dynamics. I want the clarinet line to become more prominent and to do so in this range I must play out. This is most important on the third beat of m. 13 when the piano and clarinet reiterate the opening chord. In all but these two places the clarinet moves separately while the piano chords are sustained, and since these piano chords have a natural decay the clarinet will be heard clearly.

The clarinet and piano both initiate a textural progression in mm. 14 and 15. The clarinet line moves up and the piano bass moves down. Furthermore, the density increases as more pitches are added to the piano chords. This is important because it brings some interest to an otherwise static line. For the clarinet the problem is twofold. First, the nature of the instrument is that these pitches will sound clearly and therefore must be played even more softly so that they will not stand out. Second, when the clarinet moves to the lower throat tone register, the G is in danger of being covered by the increasingly heavy piano chords and must be brought out. The pianist must focus on the bass line with the new pitches being added to the chord progression as it moves down and endeavor to both bring these new pitches out as well as balance with the clarinet.

While the clarinet sustains the final pitch of Theme I (mm. 21 and 22) the piano begins the transition and must effect the change in texture by asserting the two lines in an equal polyphonic texture. Since the clarinet is in a high register, there is not much chance

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[5]"Throat-tone" refers to the notated clarinet pitches G4, G#4, A4 and A#4. These pitches use the shortest amount of clarinet bore; therefore, only the "throat" of the clarinet is used to give resonance.

of covering it so the pianist is free to play at the *mp* as indicated. The difficulty in this passage is the change in textural components.[6] When the clarinet enters in m. 24 there are three layers, in mm. 28-29 two layers, m. 30 three and then four layers, and so on. Both clarinetist and pianist must work to maintain an even balance. The polyphonic texture and its changes in density are a major characteristic of the transitions and help to give the forward motion, intensity and instability. Thinking of the my imagery from Chapter 3, one might conjecture that these are the rockier parts of the relationship between the parting lovers. The transitions represent the changes and the uncertainty. However, the musicians must strive to carry a sense of balance. The clarinet line in this section will project well due to its high register so the pianist can concentrate on bringing out the new lines as they are added.

Arguments begin in m. 34. This is a fiery transition passage, a loud yelling match between the clarinet and piano. The two lines are radically contrarhythmic until m. 44 when they begin to move in agreement and at times, concurrently. In m. 50 the piano begins to set the mood for the next section, a return to Theme I. It is the same rising octatonic scales that were being played earlier but now expanded, reaching higher and marked *ppp* and *delicato*. The clarinet has the more important line here. The piano scales are just preparing for the next section until m. 53 where they become equal to the clarinet line.

There is a textural variation in the next section, mm. 54-59. It is a recurrence of

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[6]"[T]he term 'component' may refer generically to any textural ingredient or factor as indicated in the immediate context of consideration" (Berry 186).

Theme I but now, the chordal piano part is replaced by the rising octatonic scales of the previous passage. These scale passages are an important glue connecting this section with the transition just heard and the piano solo to come, but they should not cover the more dominant clarinet theme. The purpose of this section is to show the audience the theme in a different light.

A distinctive texture appears in m. 75. It is so distinctive I consider it a motivic texture, easily recognized by the listener. It is a polyphonic texture, and it is widely spaced. Polyphonic textures have appeared in the piece as have widely spaced textures, though they have not appeared together. In an earlier transition, mm. 44 and 47 hinted at this texture but they were each only one measure. The wide texture space is reminiscent of the Introduction but there the space becomes more compressed with the entrance of Theme I in m. 12. An extended passage of wide spaced, polyphonic dialogue begins in m. 75. It begins with two components with occasional octave doubling. The textural space begins to decrease in m. 81 and signals an important motivic change in m. 82. Elements of Theme II are heard here. Theme II is also polyphonic but the lines are in a more compressed space. The texture returns to the wider space in m. 86 and begins to thicken in m. 87. The clarinet and piano have exchanged lines here. The trills and rising octatonic scales are now in the piano and the Theme II motives are in the clarinet. The exchange marks a more open dialogue between the two voices which had been so separate before. The voices come together more in m. 92 as both parts begin the trill passages, but the two parts are still contrarhythmic. An important event occurs with the last quarter-note in m. 95. The two lines come together with the trills and rising octatonic scale motive, as

well as pitch and rhythm. This creates the climactic moment.

Understanding the texture and how it changes in this section can help the performers heighten the tension and climax. We will want to portray the separateness of the two parts in m. 75. I would do this physically by moving or turning away slightly from the pianist, intensifying the effect of the wide texture and contrasting ideas. A small change must take place then as the two parts move closer together in m. 81 and the pianist begins a new motive from Theme II. There must be a lift at the end of m. 86 as the two parts exchange lines. By m. 92 I will want to be moving towards the piano, and in the moment we come together in m. 95 there must be an obvious physical connection between myself and the pianist which must continue to the end of this section in m. 100.

There is a striking change in texture in m. 136 which indicates a new section. After a dense texture of nine components (m. 135) there is an abrupt change to a monophonic texture. To make this more effective, there must be a slight lift at the end of m. 135 and the pianist must land forcefully with the *ff* dynamic indicated. In the following three measures the clarinet and piano have the same reiterated pitches equal to half-note durations. I interpret this as a variation of the long durations of Theme I. To make this more clear the softer dynamics must be followed. The piano begins Theme II in m. 140 but the clarinet does not finish with the Theme I motive until the downbeat of m. 144. Again, the clarinet is in the throat-tone range with long durations and it would be very easy for the pianist to cover this important line. The pianist must clearly finish this section with the end of m. 139. A slight lift just before m. 140 will help to create a fresh start but the pianist must be careful not to cover the ending clarinet line. Even with the indicated

decrescendo I need to push my line into m. 140 without a break. There is a slight but important change in texture in m. 142. Though the rhythm stays the same the pianist must now create two lines. To indicate this more clearly the composer has placed accents on the eighth-notes in the bass clef. This is the motive of Theme II and it needs to be projected. Still the clarinet line must not be covered so I must follow the indicated *poco crescendo* and both players must listen attentively to balance this section carefully.

The same widely spaced, monophonic texture is utilized by the composer to indicate the end of this section (Theme II) in m. 172. Again to make this more effective the pianist must lift (a clear rearticulation) just before the downbeat of m. 172. Because of the obvious and sudden change in texture these measures, 136 and 172, stand out. Even so, my impulse is to make them stand out more so, like signposts. To accomplish this there must be this lift just before and after each of these measures.

The motivic texture discussed earlier returns in m. 173. It has been further developed with an added line but is clearly recognizable by its wide texture space and polyphonic dialogue. The upper two voices are more similar than the lower voice. The composer has indicated that the lower voice should be at a louder dynamic. As discussed in chapter 3, I think of this section as a development section. I understand it as a series of variations on Theme I. In m. 173 the bass line is playing the minor third motive and for the listener to hear this as Theme I this motive must be projected. In this low register that is not an easy feat and so the clarinet in particular (the piano has a natural decay) must come back from the accented *f* dotted half-note so this line will be noticed.

The next variation begins in m. 178 and is recognizable by the texture change. The

texture is light, scherzo-like, with the piano in an accompanimental role. Because of the change in texture and style I want to make a change in character coming into this variation. Measures 173-177 are aggressive and punchy. As we approach m. 178, there must be some time taken, but not exaggerated. This can be accomplished with the last eighth-note of m. 177. It must be separated from the others just slightly and lifted to become an upbeat to this section.

Each subsequent variation is recognizable by its change in texture. Measure 190 becomes much denser with sustained chords and m. 201 begins a two voice counterpoint. It seems as if another variation is beginning at the end of this section, m.218, but in m. 221 the theme begins to unravel. The texture begins to fall apart. Fragments of triplets are bounced from instrument to instrument and octave to octave. They splash downward like water and stop, only to start up again. The texture here comes unraveled and that is the mood I feel, of coming undone. The image in my mind that conveys the mood I want to project is that of the pianist and myself as a pair of ice skaters. We trip in m.221 and fall, we get up and try again only to fall and again try and fall. I have witnessed scenes like this in couples figure skating and know the feeling the audience feels of fear, sadness, embarrassment, a wealth of emotions. We all begin to rally behind them, willing them to get up and finish. Finally one last determined effort, the pick up and down beat into m. 226, beautifully executed and we are off again. I have called this the axis section as it is in the middle of the piece and is a turning point. This is that turning point, having the audience there, engrossed, supporting, listening intently. The unknitting of the texture helps to ensure this.

The next texture change I want to address is the clarinet cadenza. The piano has had two solo interludes but the clarinet solo section is longer and because of the single line texture even more noticeable. An intense intimacy is created with the playing of the *Harbor Lights* theme as the cadenza begins. I am singing my song, telling my story and the single line texture helps to emphasize this feeling. The cadenza works up to a terrific climax as the pitch and dynamics are increased to the most extreme limits of the entire piece and then come back down to a *pp* fermata just before the piano enters.

The Coda, mm. 376-395, sums up the Fantasy. It contains ideas from each of the important sections, as well as all the texture types. This is a challenging section for the performers. Several moods and ideas must be presented in a short span of time. In one quarter-note, the third beat of m. 376, the wide registral space of the introduction is heard. Almost immediately it is combined with the rising octatonic scales and trills of the transitions. The clarinet brings in Theme I with the third beat of m. 377. The motivic texture of the widely spaced dialogue appears in mm. 379-382. Theme I begins to dominate mm. 383-391. The only important section that has not yet been heard again is Theme II and it appears with the last three sixteenths of m. 391 and continues in combination with Theme I until m. 394. The texture of Theme I is not repeated exactly; there are other components here, so the pianist must be sure to project to the listener the textural mood from Theme I. The *Fantasy* ends with the familiar motive x in a similar texture as the opening. The first interval is 26 semitones, the last two are 27 moving to 21.

Texture in the Fantasy helps to define not only the formal structure but the mood of the themes as well. Through these various techniques, texture creates a sense of

progression and motion. Yet it can also create a sense of calm and stability. Using my intuitions as a starting point, I have examined various sections such as Theme I and II as well as the transitional and developmental passages and shown how texture is used in the Fantasy. In doing so I have become aware of some further subtleties of the piece that will aid in my performance.

CHAPTER 7

Rhythm, Tempo and Movement

> Rhythm organizes music's temporal dimension. It marks the outlines and is in consequence the most conspicuous musical feature. But these outlines are too flexible for exact notation. They provide a scheme from which the rhythm can be inferred. In fact, the rhythm has to be supplied by the performer.[1]

Rhythm, as it is seen on the score, is perfect; a performance is another matter. Perfect rhythm does not mean perfect time. Time is exact and rhythm is flexible. If music were played in perfect time, it would be stiff and dull. It is the flexible nature of rhythm which allows for the performer's interpretation. Along with this allowance comes responsibility. Poor rhythm can wreak havoc and destroy the auditory rendition of the work, too fast and the music becomes unclear, too slow and it loses coherence, too strict and it becomes dull, too loose and the intended rhythms will be blurred and the performers not together.

This chapter addresses the following rhythmic topics in the *Fantasy*: 1. Flexible execution of rhythmic values; meter, tempo and beat value changes; 2. Rhythmic and tempo indicators; and 3. Movement. Following a similar method as Chapter 5, I will discuss my own interpretations and findings as well as comments from the four clarinetists in this study and the composer. For the discussion of tempo I will focus on mm. 244-257 and study the recordings of the four clarinetists. I found myself wanting to play this section of the *Fantasy* significantly slower than indicated and when listening to the

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[1]Erwin Stein, Form and Performance (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962) 38.

recordings, noticed the other clarinetists played varying tempos. I feel this "trouble spot" will become clearer when studied.

In music such as the *Fantasy* with its complex rhythms, executing the proper rhythms can be difficult. In addition, frequent changes in meter, tempo, and beat value add to the challenge. The challenge is immediately evident: there are thirteen different meters (the longest length in the same meter is only eleven measures) and four different beat values.[2] Such unpredictability is a characteristic of the fantasy genre. The paradox here is that though the use of rhythm in the *Fantasy* is complex, it must sound spontaneous and somewhat free. About the *Fantasy* Robert Spring said, "the whole thing is more of a fantasy. . . and I think the more we played it, the freer it got as well. We were not as concerned with lining everything up because it *was* lining up. Being able to be a little freer with the tempos, with the rubato sections."[3] Carefully observing one's intuitions and analyzing rhythmic features will also help make this more possible. It is important for the performer to understand what is happening in regard to the rhythm of a piece to help to know when one can be more free and when one needs to be more exact. Charles Neidich describes this aspect of rhythm in regard to the *Fantasy*,

> You see one thing about Joan's music, you can take time in places which are more improvisatory. There's two kinds of music in this, but most of the music that the clarinet plays is rhythmically highly structured. Now here for instance [piano, m. 75] is very Stravinsky and the clarinet has a rhythmic accelerando [dotted quarter-notes to quarter-notes, mm. 77-78] there, so you don't take time. It's highly structured. The place where you take time is in the piano part in the fantasia

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[2]The score of the *Fantasy* is contained in Appendix D.

[3]Robert Spring, personal interview, 10 June 1998, 153. (See Appendix A for interview transcripts.)

sections like here where she says *dolce e sostenuto* [m.60] and puts the tenutos. Those are indications that this is the different kind of "whooshing" music and time can be taken. As it goes on, it becomes more and more rhythmical and she does this very consciously because all of this is very long harmonically. It's when the divisions become more tighter [m. 74] that you can't take time anymore.[4]

The rhythmic and tempo indications also directly involve the performer. Each time there is an indicated change in the beat or tempo it is up to the performer to decide the extent. In addition, looking through the *Fantasy* one sees many even less specific rhythmic changes that take place. There are twelve *ritardandos* (two *molto*, four *poco*), ten *accelerandos* (four *poco*, four *poco a poco*), four *meno mossos*, one *poco piu mosso*, three *sostenutos*, four indications to broaden, one to play freely and six fermatas. From this, one can see that the performer has many opportunities to affect the outcome of an aural production of this work of art. Studying the rhythmic nature of the piece will help to insure a good performance.

The last area regarding rhythm that I will address is one that is not found on a score; it is particular to the real-time performance of a musical work. This is the "movement" of sound.[5] Music, as it unfolds, is felt to be moving in time. Notes are potential energy waiting to be released by the performer. Each musical line has a motion to

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[4]Charles Neidich, personal interview, 5 March 1999, 174.

[5]I borrow the term "movement" from Erwin Stein. In *Form and Performance* he says, "Making music means action on a prescribed course. The musical structure is so devised that, rightly understood, it directs not only the physical, but also the mental action of the performer. He should feel the groups of notes as latent forces; they are arranged in such a fashion that they create an impression of continually changing degrees of tension and relaxation, according to the affinity or disparity of the structural features. Potential energies are waiting to be released by the performer's action. . . . . Applied to music, the term movement signifies a continuous change of sonorities." Stein 126.

it, as does each pitch. Movement is continuous but not uniform, coherent but flexible.

Patrick Shove and Bruno Repp describe the various ways that motion can occur:

> In analyzing performance movement, one may refer to several interrelated factors: the mode of production (bowing, tonguing), the style of articulation (staccato, legato), the physical 'shaping' of a sustained sound (vibrato, lip trill), the rate of movement (tempo and timing, or agogics), the pattern of movement (rhythm, in the narrow sense), the force of movement (dynamics) and even the changes in pitch (musical space). All of these, some to a greater degree than others, are represented kinematically in the acoustic array and, upon their particular extraction, will shape the listener's perception of musical movement.[6]

Shove and Repp also point out the importance of both movement and the role of the performer in conveying movement to the listener:

> Simply put, patterned articulatory movements create patterned sequences of tones. In other words, articulatory movements are sound-structuring movements. The motion one attributes to a succession of tones — including its pacing, its character, even its directionality — belongs first and foremost to the performer. That a listener reports hearing a sonic object in motion, rather than a performer, reflects the listener's perceptual attitude towards the musical event.[7]

The movement expresses the character of a phrase and the realization of the structure will lead the performer to the correct movement. Because it is necessary to know the phrase and formal structure of a piece to understand the movement fully, this study of rhythm comes after the examinations of formal structure and phrasing. The resultant study of movement compels the performer to understand the importance of such studies.

Rhythm is important even before the *Fantasy* begins. The silence and the performer's understanding of the rhythmic movement to follow are crucial. The opening

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[6]Patrick Shove and Bruno H. Repp, "Musical Motion and Performance: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives," The Practice of Performance, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 64.

[7]Shove and Repp 61.

tempo is given with a metronome marking, and, as with much music in the twentieth century, each tempo change is accompanied by a metronome marking. A metronome is exact, though, and as stated earlier, rhythm is not. The metronome is rigid and many structures allow for—even demand—a certain latitude of tempo. Tower uses the abbreviation "ca." (circa) before each metronome marking. The markings are a guide, not a master, to the performer. To find the proper tempo the performer must first study the character of the music, and then find the tempo that sets it sharply into focus. Nancy Bond addresses this issue in another of Tower's works for clarinet, *Wings:* "As far as tempos in the piece, Tower feels everything depends on the context of what the performer does. The tempos need to be relative. There is a certain bottom line and top beyond which she wouldn't go, but there is a range." [8] In addition to the circa metronome markings, the composer adds the rhythmic indication *sostenuto* which means, "sustaining the tone to or beyond the nominal value and thus sometimes with the implication of slackening the tempo."[9] The tempo, ♩ = ca. 52, is slow and I feel this is indeed one of the times in which the *sostenuto* marking does imply a slackening of the tempo. Slow introductions often have a movement that is somewhat dragging, functioning to build suspense, tension and expectation. The slurs on each individual note of the first three measures help to indicate this dragging character as does the fermata in the fourth measure.

In discussing the opening of the *Fantasy,* the composer said that when she coaches

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[8]Nancy Bond, "An Analysis of Joan Tower's 'Wings' for Solo Clarinet," D.M.A. diss., Arizona State U, 1992, 170.

[9]Don Michael Randel, ed., Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978) 477.

the piece, pianists often have difficulty with the opening. She gives them the image of a very large boat in a harbor at night with the lights of the city around, the water lapping its sides as it slowly rocks back and forth.[10] Spring said that the main problem Tower had with his choice of tempos was that the slow tempos were not slow enough and he said that she preferred longer fermatas than he generally was playing. Slowness, however, is limited by the necessity of keeping the movement alive, a technical issue with the piano due to its natural decay of sound.

The movement in the opening can be described as vague. Contributing to this feeling are the long durations, tied notes and the sustained pedal which blurs the sounds together. The quarter-notes in particular must not be rushed. Since they fall on the third beat of each measure, if each is lengthened this slight delay of the downbeat will effect the desired dragging feeling. The half-notes must be followed by each quarter-note before the sound decays so much that it loses the connection between pitches. The fermata in m. 4 should be long, allowing for the sound to die off before starting up again. It must be felt, not counted. The crescendo beginning in m. 8 allows the continuance of the dragging beat as the louder and fuller chords will carry longer than the previous half-notes.

Most *ritardandos* emphasize a change in structure for the listener The *ritard* in m. 12 must prepare the change that occurs with the beginning of Theme I. Theme I conveys a sense of calmness. To achieve this I must move without haste, but also without hesitation. Character (and the movement needed to express it) is not decided by the melody alone. It is determined by the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic features of the passage. My intuition

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[10]Joan Tower, personal interview, 3 June 1998, 139.

is a guide, a starting point, but intuition can be wrong. Therefore, after noting my initial responses when playing the clarinet part alone, I must consult the full score. Upon inspection I see that the rhythmic values are long and marked sustained. The dynamics are soft and the harmonic changes are gradual. All of this leads me to trust that my intuition is correct regarding the character of Theme I.

There are several dotted notes in the clarinet melody that begins in m. 12. Dotted notes, in common time with a regular meter, can express rhythmic tension. If the first note is too long then there is no tension; if it is too short, the second note loses the effect of a dotted rhythm and becomes meaningless as such. I think the dotted half-notes are written extensions of a four beat measure. If a rhythmic idea is written into the music, such as this delayed downbeat, then the performer needs to play the rhythm as written and not try to delay the downbeat further. The dotted quarter-notes in mm. 13 and 14 are another matter. They do create a sense of tension that begins to creep into this theme. I must endeavor to give them the proper time to allow this to happen.

From examining the score I can also see that I will want to delay the downbeat of m. 15 somewhat. I say this for three reasons. First, the 5/4 measure is beginning to become regular. Second, there is an intensity of movement generated in the large interval leap. Third, there is a tenuto marked on the last quarter-note chord in the piano part. An accent is a dynamic indication; a tenuto is more of a rhythmic sign. It signifies a stress, or touch, which is most effectively executed by stretching the value slightly. This makes no sense if one takes into consideration only the piano part, as the quarter-note with the tenuto marking is tied to the following dotted half-note. It can only be seen as an

indication to the clarinetist to delay, or at the very least, not to rush the downbeat of m.15.

The 3/4 meter of the Introduction returns in m. 15. Measures 16 and 17 (in the clarinet part) have the same half-note, quarter-note rhythm found in the introduction. It begins to become distorted with the tied eight-note downbeat of m. 18. This change in the rhythm creates tension and adds to the growing intensity of the movement in this section. Though I sense the motion here is of growing tension and intensity, I feel the rhythms are all pulling back. The minor third motive, discussed earlier, is being extended in length. The clarinet line has tenutos on each reiterated note in mm. 18 and 19. The performers must hold back the tempo and not rush forward in time with the growing intensity. This creates a different kind of tension and movement, one that is constantly restrained but growing stronger.

The crescendo-decrescendo on the dotted half note fermata in m. 20 helps to absorb the forward movement and prepares the listener for the new section. Rather than calculate a length of time I must listen in each performance to the dissipation of the motion and let that be the judge as to the length of this fermata. I must also be sure to move before the motion has dissipated entirely as this pitch does move into the next one before ending this theme.

The changes in meter and beat value in this transition (m. 21) help to create the motion that begins to grow here. Because the movement is building gradually, I think of it like a wave in the ocean that gains momentum as it moves along toward the shore. As I mentioned before this wave-like motion affects several musical parameters, not just rhythm. Adding to the tension is the syncopations, dotted-note values, ties, and generally

complex rhythmic structures.

Stein says the more highly organized the music is the less the freedom of interpretation for the performer.[11] My understanding of this statement is that when the music becomes more active in a compressed period of time, the notation becomes more precise and there is less room for variance. The playing here must be tight. This is the first example of the "rhythmic crescendo" that Neidich mentioned earlier. Spring also commented on Tower's use of rhythm to build tension, "the rhythm is written such that it's a written out accelerando because you don't really realize that you're getting faster until all of a sudden you hit that section and you realize, 'oh my God, I'm really fast now.'"[12]

In this section the structure dictates the movement. Though there is always some allowance for interpretation (the frequent tenutos, the poco accelerando), there are too many fixed points here to permit much difference of opinion. I do believe the composer wants the performers to hold the reins in during this section. The pitfall here is to give too much too soon. Spring warned against moving too fast too soon in these extended sections where rhythm is used to build momentum: "Intuitively I think we all tend to accelerate probably early. It's like the crescendos, the idea is to carry the listener to the end and if you do too much too soon you don't have any place to go."[13] The first accelerando is marked *poco*, a cautionary metronome marking is given in m. 32, and even

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[11]Stein 160.

[12]Spring, interview 153.

[13]Spring, interview 157.

as the *accelerando* is marked in m. 33, both parts are given tenutos!

The real motion of this transition begins with m. 34. The wave has been gaining momentum and here begins to show white water. Momentum is fast and furious and the only rhythmic concern for the performer is to keep the intensity of the movement strong and to connect the alternating lines in good time. The motion of movement or intensity has been growing from the beginning. There has been a gradual increase of speed starting with a metronome marking of ♩= ca. 52. This is a high point before coming back down and must be maintained. The metronome marking here is ♪ = 112-120. Shifrin comments on the importance of Tower's fast tempos:

> She writes fast tempos. When you start to play them you wonder if she could really mean this. It seems so quick and demanding that you think she probably meant something slower. She prefers to work with the human element and will say, "Well, try it slower. Okay, that sounds good." But then she'll encourage you to keep working to get to what she originally conceived. She has a great sense of tempo. I think she says about herself that she has perfect tempo, like some people have perfect pitch. And when she says quarter-note = 144, she means it. There is a process involved in getting to where you can do that. I think tempo is important in her music. I've learned from the experience of learning a piece that working up to that performance level is an important aspect.[14]

A slowing down is written into the music beginning in m. 46 when the quintuplets are replaced with fours. The diminuendo and softer dynamics help to dissipate the intensity. The slowing is even more noticeable in m. 49 with the change to sixteenth-note triplets. At this point the performer must resist the temptation to exaggerate the slowing down. What is already written into the music does not need to be added to by the performer. Yet, even with the written-in dissipation of intensity, the composer has added a full ritard in m. 52. It

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[14]David Shifrin, personal interview, 19 Aug. 1999, 185.

is my responsibility to be aware of the level of intensity that is left at the end of this passage and to use this ritard as a safety valve to be certain that the energy level is at the proper place to begin the replaying of Theme I that follows.

Because both the clarinet and piano lines are rising, the movement still presses forward even with the ritard. This is the reason for the fermata at the end of m. 54. Each time there is a fermata, either on a pitch or a rest, the importance of the performer's role is stressed. Questions must be asked: how long to hold the sound or silence? Should the intensity carry through? Hold steady? Push forward? Die down? The wrong movement can confuse the listener at best and destroy the structure at worst. Intuition can help but the viability of each idea or impulse must be checked. My inclination here is to hold the final F# eighth-note for a short while, letting it evaporate but keeping the motion up.

Up to this point I have been mostly talking about the first two issues, the more or less flexible nature of the rhythmic values and aspects of tempo and rhythmic markings. By examining my intuitions and analyzing the use of rhythm, tempo and tempo indicators, I have gained a deeper understanding of this piece. In the next section I will speak more about the third issue, movement.

Movement, as described earlier, refers to something not seen on a written score but provided by the performer. It may be inferred by looking at a score and seeing events in the music such as a shortening or lengthening of rhythmic values, but it is entirely up to the performer to realize this aspect of rhythm. In an interview, Joan Tower addresses this aspect; she refers to it as "action":

In music you've got several kinds of actions. You've got one that holds, one that

> goes towards something, and one that goes away from something or one that intensifies or one that deintensifies. There is also the kind of action within that direction. Is it an action that is dry or is it sustained or is it elaborative or is it one-dimensional?[15]

The following analysis will focus on "movement" or, "action." By examining my intuitions and features of the score I will be better able to determine the type of movement or action that is appropriate for each section. Is this section holding? Going towards something? Intensifying? Deintensifying? What is coming up next? Later on? By answering these questions I will also be able to create a more complete grasp of the overall movement of the piece.

The rhythm of the next section I will discuss (Theme II, m. 140) is repetitive, very machine-like. A constant subdivision of sixteenth-notes is heard in the piano from m. 140 through m. 172. The clarinet, when it enters in m. 146, has mostly eighth-notes with some sixteenth-notes and some sixteenth rests. The only ripple in this tight framework is the change in meter and beat values (sixteen-note, eight-note and quarter-note). The changing meter and beat values add momentum and keep this section moving along. The movement here is forward and deliberate, yet, it must remain light. There is much repetition in both the piano and clarinet lines and this repetition also helps to propel the theme forward. The speed, however, should not increase. The character of the repeated shape remains the same. Movement in quick passages of equal note values such as this can be difficult to control. As mentioned, movement tends to increase momentum which can cause the performer to hurry. The performer must decide what the structure requires. My sense of

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[15]Bond 232.

this section is that it needs to remain steady. In chapter four, I refer to thinking of this theme as the stony facade of the soldier leaving his lover behind. Artificially restrained is the rhythmic movement that best characterizes this. Also, when examining the aspect of rhythm I noticed that this section falls in the middle of a long stretch, 146 measures, of the same basic tempo, ♩=126. Since it is not moving toward a faster tempo, I will want to hold this section steady. This does not mean that each of these equal note values is exactly the same. The melodic line is highly developed and makes for varied, if subtle, rhythmic groupings that need to be brought out.

In the development section that follows, m. 173, I notice that when playing I add some rubato. The melody becomes more rhythmically varied and as the changes occur, the listener needs a moments thought to understand the changes in direction. The first place where I feel this change of direction is m. 177 into 178. The pianist and I must place the last sixteenth-note of m. 177 carefully, as an upbeat to the next section. This is a difficult segment: the movement changes suddenly here and it takes the skill of an actor to identify with the character and make the changes quickly. The rhythmic movement in mm. 173-177 is decisive and forward, in m. 178 it becomes much lighter. The emphasis on the long downbeat and the quick upbeat cause it to limp somewhat. In mm. 186-187 the clarinet becomes a forceful trumpet. The sextuplet in m. 188 is another change. These measures, mm. 188-193, are deliberate and biting. The syncopation of this line, mm.194-199, breaks the system of the indicated time, 2/4, and provides further rhythmic contrast in this melody.

The character and decisive movement of m. 173 returns in m. 201. The repeated

notes contrast with the disjunct intervals and both work to add momentum to this section. The movement begins to dissipate somewhat with the softer dynamics, m. 210, and by m. 217 there is a lighter, more relaxed movement. Knowing what follows, I am aware that this is a false sense of calm and I will want to endeavor to project this with a change of tone color. In m. 221 the false calm does begin to fall apart.

The following rests are important. Rests, like notes, should be flexibly interpreted. The duration of the rest depends on their function in the structure. Rests can create a sense of tension (shortened) or relaxation (lengthened). They can separate or join a phrase. The performer must feel the rest rather than count it. There are four breaks in this section. They appear in mm. 222, 223-224, 225, and 226. My impulse is to lengthen the first two breaks, allowing the motion to dissipate with the more relaxed breaks, echoing the falling character of the melodic line. I want to jump in on the break in m. 225, to emphasize the surprise. At this point the listener is uncertain. The durations of the breaks seemed to be lengthening, but here (m. 225) it is quite short. The break in m. 226 will be long to bring back the relaxed character of the music that follows.

Each time a pause occurs the performer must make sense of it, understand its function. Should it be long or short? Tense or relaxed? My intuition regarding the fermata at the end of m. 246 is that there must be no slowing down coming into it. The section before is aggressive and deliberate with strong forward motion and needs to push, though not rush, to the end. The pause has to be long enough for the forward motion to die down and prepare for the more languid motion to follow. This means that this pause will be both tense in the beginning and relaxed at the end.

I found the next section (mm. 247-255) to be a troubling spot. Each time I came to this section I wanted something much slower than the indicated *meno mosso* to happen. During my interviews I found that I was not alone. Neidich and Flax both commented on this being a trouble spot which a slower tempo helped to solve. Tower also commented that everyone she hears plays this section slower than indicated.

I realized that I was looking for something like Theme I to return. To effect this I play this section significantly slower than the ♩ = 112 indicated. My intuitive choice for a tempo was around 69—almost half that indicated by the composer! With this tempo I ran into trouble in m. 251 where there is a *molto rit.* into what should have been the slower tempo of 92 at m. 253. In m. 255 the tempo comes down to 60 and I realized that I could not play the section at m. 247 this slowly unless I slowed and then came back to the same tempo each time. With the long range slowing of the pace in mind, I adjusted m. 244 to a tempo closer to 76. This allows me to slow down into m. 253 to a tempo more like 69 and then the *molto rit.* into m. 255 (though not as molto) brings me to the correct marking of 60.

A study of the recorded performances revealed that each of the four clarinetists was basically at the tempo marking given in the section prior to m. 247, and afterwards in m. 256 as well (see example 7.1).[16] The tempos taken in performance between mm. 247-256 vary widely. Even Spring, who worked with the composer while making this recording, plays the section at m. 247 slower than indicated.

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[16]The four clarinetists whose recordings I studied were Laura Flax, Charles Neidich, David Shifrin and Robert Spring. See Appendix B for recording information.

Example 7.1 Charting the tempos of the "trouble spot"

indicated:

m.244 ♩ = ca.126	m.247 ♩ = ca.112	m.253 ♩ = ca.92	m.256 ♩ = ca.60

Janssen

m.244 ♩=120	m.247 ♩= 76	m.253 ♩= 69	m.256 ♩= 60

Flax

m.244 ♩=120	m.247 ♩=100	m.253 ♩= 84	m.256 ♩= 63

Spring

m.244 ♩=126	m.247 ♩=100	m.253 ♩= 72	m.256 ♩= 60

Neidich

m.244 ♩=126	m.247 ♩= 76	m.253 ♩= 76	m.256 ♩= 60

Shifrin

m.244 ♩=126	m.247 ♩= 58	m.253 ♩= 60	m.256 ♩= 54

Spring and Flax come the closest to the indicated tempos in this section, yet for me, theirs are the least convincing playings. The *meno mosso* hardly feels like less movement and does not achieve a *dolce* quality. It feels too harried and tense even at 100. Neidich comes to same tempo as I do in m. 244 and does ritard as indicated in m. 251 (perhaps not *molto*). In m. 253 though, he goes back to the same tempo (76). Shifrin chooses the slowest tempo of all for m. 247, a full 54 notches slower than indicated! I like the mood of the slower tempo, but at this pace, there is no room for the ritards in mm. 251 and 254 unless one does as Shifrin and slows down and then goes back to a similar pace. The problem with Neidich and Shifrin's approach is that it does not convey the large-scale "rhythmic decrescendo" the composer has written into the music. As written, there is a

gradual, but steady, slowing of the pace from ♩=126 just prior to m. 247 to ♩= 60 in m. 255. Neidich's and Shifrin's playing, however, slow down and return to tempo twice. I think both may have been attracted to the favored slower tempo, but not thought it out with regard to the "rhythmic decrescendo" written in by the composer. In my playing of this section I enjoy the slower tempo, and more relaxed mood of the *meno mosso*, not quite achieved by Spring or Flax, yet retain the composer's overall plan of a "rhythmic decrescendo."

Rhythm is a complex element and has many aspects to it which are crucial not only for analysis and formal structure but also crucial to the performer for a successful performance. In this chapter I have shown how using my intuition was helpful in forming an analysis of some aspects of rhythm. One of these aspects involved rhythmic values, both notes and rests. Several examples were given where studying the use and changes in rhythmic values helped me to better grasp what was occurring in the music and whether these rhythmic values had to be rigidly adhered to, or could be more flexible. Another area of examination was tempo and rhythmic indications. Metronome markings, fermatas and subjective terms such as *sostenuto* were examined from the performer's, as well as composer's, perspective and then, using recordings, analyzed in a more exterior sense. In doing so, I was also able to see areas where my intuition sometimes led me to a way of playing that was not particularly viable and other times was. This initial study helped me to look deeper into the work. In doing so, I found another issue regarding rhythm that will raise the level of my performance, movement. Sometimes referred to as action, or direction, movement is an aspect of rhythm that is crucial to me, the performer. Robert

Spring talked about the importance of "carrying the listener along." To do this successfully the performer must be completely familiar with the movement of the piece. Intuition is an excellent starting point in examining movement, but I have found in this study that analysis helps to fill in the gaps and confirm or change the results of the initial, intuition-based performance.

CHAPTER 8

Dynamics, Articulation and Tone Color

This chapter focuses on three issues in the domain of the performer: dynamics, tone color, and articulation. Each one is a part of our daily bread and has a great impact on the performance of a work. Each can help outline the formal structure, shade melodic design, give character to the music, and add coherence, shaping, and definition to a phrase. Texture and balance can also be greatly affected by dynamics, articulation and tone color. Given the importance of these elements, it is surprising that they are often not considered in more detail by performers and theorists alike. These elements are often left to the performer to decide upon and many performers go on intuition alone in making their decisions. Flax remarked in interview that tone color is a "tremendously personal thing," for performers. She explains,

> Certainly color is something conscious. You know, intuition is the first time you play something. You're reading something for the first time. All your senses are out there. And then you refine. You say, that section needs to be warmer, so you make a warm color. . . or dark or whatever words you choose. But yes, that's very conscious. In my opinion color is one of the most important. . . . you know, what else is there?[1]

In this chapter I will examine my intuition regarding the areas of dynamics, tone color and articulation through a close look at one section of the *Fantasy,* mm. 75-100.[2] In

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[1]Laura Flax, personal interview, 16 June 1998, 168. (See Appendix A for interview transcripts.)

[2]The score of the *Fantasy* is contained in Appendix D.

working on this section, I found that careful use of the dynamics, tone color and articulation were imperative to a successful playing of it. First, this passage exemplifies the wave-like motion of the *Fantasy* mentioned in previous chapters. This time the wave motion is created mainly with dynamics. There is an overall crescendo from m. 75 to m. 100 but it is not a constant growth. By dropping the dynamics back and building again this wave-like feeling is achieved. Second, because of the dynamic homogeneity of the passage, smaller details of articulation and tone color are important in bring out various hidden motives. Following the examination of my intuition will be a study of the same passage in performances by Spring, Flax, Shifrin and Neidich. Their performances give insights into their approaches to dynamics, articulation and tone color. Comparing their approaches with my own will give me a wider awareness of the possibilities of interpretations. Then, I will consider how my intuitions, and those of the other clarinetists help to clarify the structure, the phrasing, balance, and character of the section under examination.

Of the three issues discussed in this chapter, dynamics is probably the easiest to study. Dynamic levels are measurable and more agreed upon than other parameters from one musician to the next. Types of articulation, interpretation of dynamic markings and tone color are much more individual and subjective. In music of the Baroque and even Classical period relatively few dynamic markings are given; the frequency of dynamic markings increases in the Romantic period, and in the music of the twentieth century. But even in contemporary music most composers do not indicate the volume of every note. A passage marked *piano* by Stravinsky is not necessarily meant to be entirely soft. And what

is the exact degree of softness necessary? Even though there is a range of various degrees of dynamics, each is relative to the performer and the instrument upon which s/he is playing.

Articulation refers to the manner of attack and release of the tones, and like dynamics, notational symbols for it are more frequent in contemporary music than in earlier eras. Though there has been increased attention to detail in articulation throughout history, the notation for it is less exact than even that of dynamics. Each symbol is open to many interpretations depending on the period, composer, and even instrument. In addition it would be unrealistic for composers to mandate something like the type of every single attack and release of every single tone. Therefore, composers must rely on performers to decide on the exact type of articulation necessary. When asked about articulation Spring mentions a particular section of the *Fantasy* which he referred to as the "chipmunk section" (mm. 146-163) because it reminded him of the busy yet focused activity of these small animals. He said,

> I think the decision to be made is how much of the piano do you want to cover up and how much you're a soloist and how much you're part of the overall textural idea of that entire section. My idea in those two sections is that it's just a big fabric and not one lion [sic] leaps out over the others. And in that case—the articulation— we made a conscious decision for me to play that short, as short as possible. So that I was not blocking so many of the notes that the pianist played. [3]

In addition to the usual slurs and staccatos, Tower uses in the *Fantasy* several articulation markings such as tenutos, accents, hairline accents (^), sforzandos, sforzatos, as well as written instructions like *marcatissimo*, *delicato*, *leggiero*, and *martellato*. Many

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[3]Robert Spring, personal interview, 10 June 1998, 158.

of these can refer to tone color as well. Consider an indication such as *energetic* (m. 319). Expressing this will involve not only the type of articulation but also tone color and rhythm. There are also times in which the articulation seems to be indicated and yet further cautionary words such as *very sustained* and *articulated* are given.

When referring to tone color I am in agreement with Stein's definition in his chapter on timbre in *Form and Performance.* He states, "The timbre of an instrument or voice is the specific character of its sound: colours, on the other hand, are produced by inflexions of the timbre."[4] The timbre of the *Fantasy* is clarinet and piano, piano alone, and clarinet alone. Tone color goes further and refers to the various shadings created by each instrument. Since tone color is a subjective element, even indications such as *dolce* and *espressivo* are open to a wide range of interpretations. As mentioned earlier, many articulation markings such as *leggiero* and *delicato* also refer to color. The subjective nature of tone color may be why it is the least indicated in notation. In his discussion of timbre Stein says that the composer

> must rely on the performer's ability to understand and realize his intentions, which are implied in the structure of the music. In colouring the timbre the performer has a comparatively wide margin for interpreting the text—in fact, the individual color that he applies is a performer's legitimate vehicle for expressing his own personality.[5]

Finding the appropriate color for a passage depends of the character, mood and movement of the line. I address these issues in previous chapters and show that it is important to understand the form as well as phrase structure to determine the appropriate character,

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[4]Erwin Stein, Form and Performance (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962) 64.

[5]Stein 64.

mood and movement. In addition, Spring feels that tone color is especially important to the performer as one of the ways of to create tension and to carry the listener forward.

I have shown that even though some indications for dynamics, articulation and tone color are given by the composer, they are subjective and not comprehensive. It is therefore up to the performer to realize them fully and to make the decisions as to what is appropriate to each particular phrase and section. Discussing the role of the performer, Shaffer says:

> If the structures in the music, particularly those governing tension and relaxation, define the implicit event, then structure should be the primary determinant of the patterning of expressive gesture over the musical surface. On the other hand, the shaping of expression and the choice of expressive features—timing, dynamics, timbre, and articulation—is a function of the musical character, and is, at least partly, created by the performer.[6]

The area under examination is transition b. Using graphic summaries I will compare performed dynamics to notated ones. I will also include some details regarding tone color and articulation. This section is full of dynamic and articulation markings. Typically, nothing is indicated about to tone color.

Graph 1 gives an impressionistic view of my initial playing of this passage. As can be seen from the chart my tendency was to overplay it. Too loud, too soon, and too much was my approach. This passage is an example of Tower's wave-like style in regard to dynamics. It is a rather long section, 25 measures, which increases in dynamics from *mp* to *ff*, but not quite in a constant crescendo. There are times when the dynamic level takes a

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[6]L. Henry Shaffer, "How to Interpret Music," Cognitive Bases of Musical Communication, ed. by Mari Riess Jones and Susan Hollerman. (Washington DC: American Psychological Assoc., 1991) 265.

small step back. Spring mentioned a lesson he learned from his teacher John Moller about not giving away the secret too soon, saying that this was vital to Tower's music.

> Listeners like to be carried as far as they can be carried, I think. I don't know if that's intuitive or if it's something that we're taught but when you listen to people speak. . . real good public speakers are able to raise the voice inflection, and raise the intensity of the sound until they get to the very end of what they're trying to talk about. And they don't go on and end for long periods of time. The end really is, I think, done relatively quickly, at the end of a sentence or the end of the idea. I try to do the same thing in the way that I think about this piece.[7]

I also played through mm. 75-100 the first time or two not noticing the small changes in the dynamics or the changes in character/theme which occur with the staccato triplet passages (such as m. 80). After playing it a few times I began to feel a need to separate the staccato passages from the trill passages. I did this with dynamic, articulation and color changes. In m. 75 I want to play a true *mp*. This will help to delineate the structure. Each of the trilled notes must be slightly accented, but within the *mp* dynamic. The rising line of the phrase will increase the movement so I do not need to add to it by playing louder. Even with the crescendo on the second beat of m. 78 I do not want to increase the dynamic by much. I want the *mf* in m. 80 to be slightly noticeable. The rising trilled notes are played slightly detached so that the accented rearticulation of the following note is always clear. The timbre is bright and somewhat anxious. I breathe just before m. 80 and change articulation and color. The dynamics have increased slightly and the accents are replaced with staccatos. I play these staccatos light and with a lot of bounce. The color is also lighter and rounder, more open. A clear change back to the previous dynamics, articulation and color in m. 82 will help to shape the phrases and

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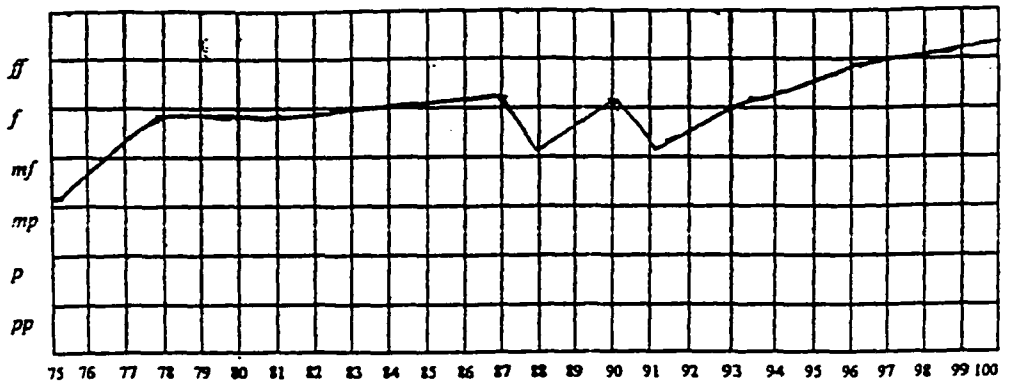
[7]Spring, interview 158.

Graph 1 Janssen, initial playing



indicate the different motives.

In m. 82 I want to hit the dotted quarter-notes and back out of the way. When studying the themes, I noticed that the piano has a motive which becomes Theme II later and I want it to come forward. A softer dynamic and lighter tone color will help to effect this. The rising line of the clarinet part increases in intensity and I must resist my initial temptation to increase the dynamic level until it is indicated. The texture changes with the indicated crescendo in m. 86. With the slightly thicker texture (octave doubling) and change in articulation to slurs in the piano, I can begin to play out more without covering the piano line.

Measure 87 is somewhat tricky. The piano forte in m. 86 and crescendo in the clarinet line can cause the clarinetist to play too loud in m. 87. It is important to notice that though the piano has a forte in m. 86, it comes back to mezzo forte in m. 87. The clarinet has a long crescendo from m. 85 to m. 90, and it must be a gradual change from mezzo piano to forte. Therefore m. 87 needs to be at the mezzo forte of the piano. This will also help to again separate this bouncing staccato motive.

By being faithful to the indicated dynamics, not only will the momentum build more slowly and more effectively but I will also be more aware of the subtleties of the character and foreshadowing of themes in this section. The listener will also be better carried along and will be able to hear these subtlties rather than becoming overwhelmed by the sameness and loud dynamics of this long stretch.

Measures 90-91 feel like an arrival point. There is a change in rhythm from quarter-note triplets to eighth-notes and the dynamic reaches forte. After m. 91 the

rhythms change and the dynamic drops to mezzo forte. In m. 90 the motion of the clarinet line is downward but the intensity of the line and forte dynamic must not back off as sometimes occurs in downward melodic lines. The direction of the line is toward the downbeat of m. 91. As a clarinetist I must be consciously aware of this. It is the nature of the instrument that the upper register will carry more easily and so as I come down to the middle and lower registers I must compensate by actually playing louder. The color and articulation must change as well. The staccato notes in mm. 90-91 should not be as light and bouncy as before. The intensity is increasing and to keep the momentum these staccatos must have more bite. The dynamic in m. 92 is *mf*, and this is one of the steps back that I mentioned. In my initial readings of this section I did not come back to *mf* in this measure or when it happens again in m. 95 (see graph 1). My intuitive response was to continue yelling at the forte dynamic I had already reached in m. 90, or even earlier. Though this section is intense, I realized later, on reflection that the composer has intended for it not to be quite as intense as I was playing it.

After the last, and most difficult, *mf* in m. 95 the tension and dynamic increases non-stop. I play m. 99 as two measures of 2/4 time with heavy, foot stomping accents on each beat. I do as much *ffp* as possible and though it is not marked I come down hard on the final eighth-note on the fifth beat.

Considering the performances in this study I would say that it is the CD recording by Spring that is the most faithful regarding at least the dynamics given by the composer. The clarinetists in the three live recordings, Flax, Shifrin and Neidich seem perform this section much as I did on my initial playing of it, as an almost steady growth in intensity

and dynamics from mm. 75-100.

Graph 2 shows the skeleton of dynamic markings as given in the score. Every performer will temper these markings to some degree. A marking of *mf* for three measures does not necessarily mean to maintain an even *mf* for the entire time but to stay within a *mf* range. As can be seen in chart 2, there is a sense of building intensity throughout these 25 measures, but not a constant one. Spring cites use of dynamics as an agent of forward growth as a particular style characteristic of Tower's music.

> Her music evolves dynamically from soft to loud. Very seldom are there enormous shifts in dynamics instantly. They work their way up to something, these huge climaxes. And I think the trick to the climaxes is to try to figure out where the biggest one is and make everything else secondary to that.[8]

The climax in this section is the final arrival point in m. 100; it is not the biggest climax of the work. For the most part the piano and clarinet move hand and hand with the same dynamic level, but there are two points where each is marked as stronger than the other. The difference in dynamics begins in m. 86 with the piano *f*. The clarinet has not yet reached even a *mf* level in its crescendo so the piano must bring this out and the clarinetist must not inadvertently come up. The character here is like that of a cresting wave which then subsides. Then the piano must work to maintain the indicated *mf* given in m. 87 while the clarinet becomes dominant with its continued crescendo arriving at *f* in m. 90. When the clarinet reaches this *f*, the piano is still indicated at a *mf* level. If the two performers are faithful to the dynamics of this section the ensemble will not reach a combined forte

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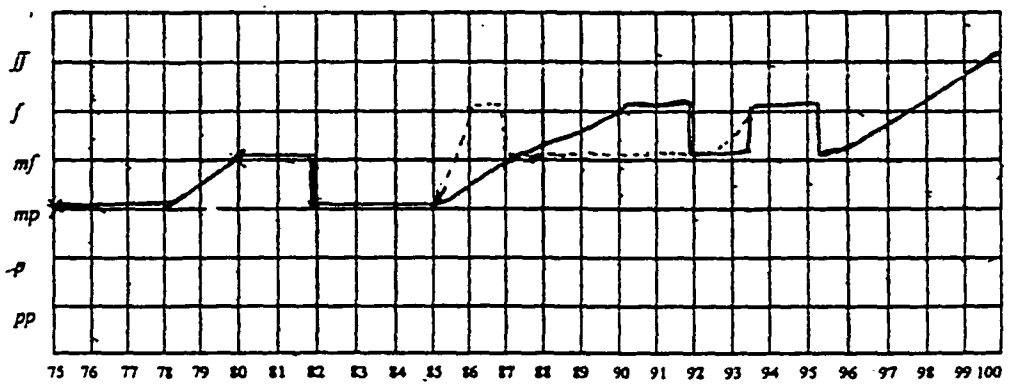
[8]Spring, interview 151.

Graph 2

Dynamics as indicated in the score (clarinet dynamics indicated with solid line, piano with dotted)



dynamic until m. 93.[9]

It will be helpful to now take a look at how each of the four duos handled this passage. Since Spring's performance is the only one that is a commercial studio recording, I will examine it separately. As can be seen from chart 3, the balance between the clarinet and piano is the best in this studio recording. In fact, they do not even step out of balance when the score calls for differing dynamic markings. This is why only the solid line appears on the chart—the dotted line of the piano is blended with it.[10] They do not follow the exact instructions of the score, most notably mm. 80-82 where they crescendo past *mf* and drop back and crescendo again. Though not marked in the score (it is also not marked *not* to do it), this approach is entirely in character with the wave-like motion of this section. Looking at graph 3 it can be seen that they rise and fall in dynamics a total of six times achieving the most convincing wave-like motion of all the performances. This could be, in part, due to Spring's familiarity with Tower's compositional style.

The other three recordings are from live performances (see graphs 4,5,6). There was no possibility to play a passage a second time or to readjust the microphones or levels. The placement of the microphones and the quality of equipment can have much to do with the balance and dynamics. For instance, this could be the case with the recording of Flax and Rothenberg where Flax seems to be consistently louder than Rothenberg. In

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[9]There is an editorial mistake in m. 92 where the clarinet should have a crescendo along with the piano. Joan Tower, email to the author, 10 April 1999.

[10]These charts were created in an impressionistic way; the methodology did not include devices to measure levels of volume. After repeated and careful listenings, I indicated my impressions of the levels of dynamics played.

Graph 3

Robert Spring, clarinet Eckart Sellheim, piano

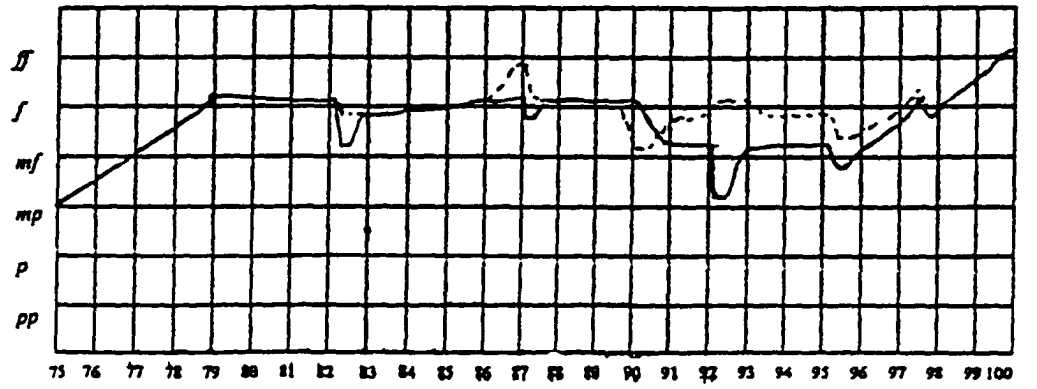
addition, the amount of rehearsal time and whether this was the first or fifth time the performers had played the piece in concert will affect the outcome. We can see, however, that each of these performances tries to one degree or another to effect some of this wave like motion of building and dropping back, yet none of them do so to the degree asked for in the score. In all three recordings, a forte dynamic was reached too soon and held for too long. According to the score, an ensemble forte is not reached until the middle of m. 93. Shifrin had reached it by m.79 and Flax and Neidich by m. 87 (or very nearly). It also seems as if the confusion over coming back in dynamic, and to what degree, derailed an effective climax in this performance for Shifrin and Vallecillo.

The dynamics are not the only thing that help make this section work. Articulation and timbre play an important role as well. Though movement is constant throughout this section, meaning there are no clear cadence points, there are changes. There is a patchwork quality to this section. Moments of accented trills rising in octatonic scales intersect with lighter, bouncing staccato passages (compare mm. 79 and 82). The clarinet's rising scale is interrupted by the staccato triplets in mm. 80-81 and continues in m. 82. These staccato passages are similar to the mood of theme II and as such need to be different in color and articulation than the rising trill passages. They also tend to coincide with a drop back in dynamic level, but that alone is not enough to fully set them apart.

Again it is the recording by Spring which best achieves this change in articulation and color. He not only highlights the change by dropping back in dynamic from a higher level than the score reads but also makes changes in his articulation and timbre. Spring plays each of the rising trill passages with a similar color and articulation (even when

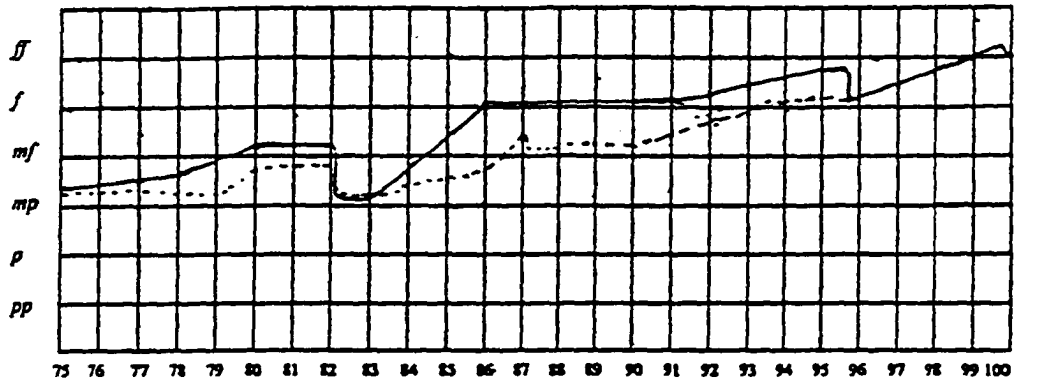
Graph 4

David Shifrin, clarinet Irma Vallecillo, piano



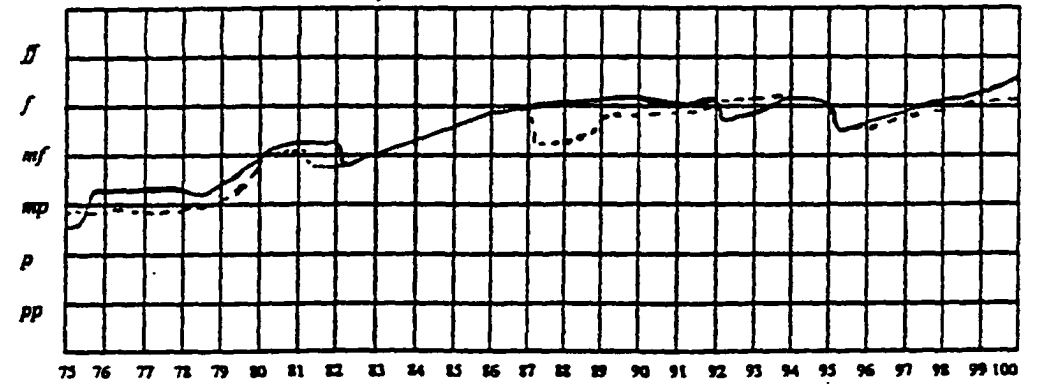
Graph 5

Laura Flax, clarinet Sarah Rothenberg, piano



Graph 6

Charles Neidich, clarinet Peter Basquin, piano



marked differently). He also plays the staccato triplet passages with similar color and articulative style. This helps the listener to connect these patchwork sections. It also helps the transition to gain momentum more slowly.

When the approach to articulation and color are the same for the triplet and trill passages the momentum builds too quickly and the effect of a gradually building climax is thwarted. This is true of the recordings of Shifrin and Neidich. Though they play the pitches in mm. 79-80 and 87-91 shorter than the trill passage pitches, the approach to the articulation and color are similar. The color is full, heavy and intense. The articulation of the staccato passages is not any lighter in feeling than the trill passages and the staccatos do not have a bouncing feel to them. Flax's approach lies somewhere in between. She plays the staccatos with more bounce and they are somewhat lighter than the trill passages, but not to the extent of the Spring recording. The more exaggerated change is more effective not only with the dynamic level but also with color and style of articulation.

I described my initial playing of the *Fantasy* by noting that I played too much too soon. I was not yet aware of the more subtle aspects of this section and went with the more immediate response. As I have become more aware of the pieces details my approach is changing, or as Flax put it, I am refining it. This examination of my playing as well as that of the other clarinetists has helped me to clarify my ideas and to gain a clearer vision of this section. I have seen how changing the dynamics, color and articulation can help me to effect the wave-like motion called for in this section and see how it is imperative in not giving too much, too soon. The subtleties of growth, the various moments when the piano and clarinet come out in mini-climaxes, create a sophisticated

interaction leading to a main climax that will not be as effective unless understood. I am also aware of how these changes will help to point out the different characters that are present in this section which helps me to better phrase this long passage. I understand that making dynamic as well as color and articulation changes between the trill and staccato sections and keeping them the same when they appear later will make for better coherence in this patchwork section.

Studying the dynamics, color and articulation has also helped me to balance the texture in this difficult section. I hear all too clearly how passages like mm. 82-85 can be overplayed by the clarinet and cover the hints at Theme II in the piano part. Hearing it in recordings, I am further convinced of the need to play louder on the dropping line in m. 90 so that the intensity does not fall off, spoiling the forward motion here. Lastly, I am aware from Shifrin's recording of how both performers must know well what they want to do in this section so that the clarinet line is not drowned in places like mm. 91-97 causing the highpoint of the climax to be circumvented. My study of these important elements that are the domain of the performer has shown me how to better "carry the listener," as Spring put it, through these rough waters.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

In this study I have shown how my intuitions, bolstered and enriched by study of musical issues of importance to the performer, guided me in creating my interpretation of a new work. I have also consulted other clarinetists on their processes and studied taped performances by each of the interviewees.[1]

Each clarinetist, and the composer, allude to the importance of both intuition and analysis. Shifrin said, "intuition and experience go hand in hand. There is no real intuition without experience. I think the interpretation of music has to be a certain amount analytical but the musical mind is analyzing even when it doesn't realize that it is, based on what our experience of sound is."[2] Spring thought of his playing as intuitive, but only after doing his "homework."[3] Flax's approach to creating an interpretation seemed the most intuitive but still conceded that, "for somebody to be an intelligent performer and use their intuitions, there has to be some kind of background."[4] She refers to this background knowledge as "collective experience." Finally, Neidich, who is the most analytical in his approach to creating an interpretation, said:

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[1]A CD of my interpretation is included with the dissertation.

[2]David Shifrin, personal interview, 19 August 1999, 184. (See Appendix A for interview transcripts.)

[3]Robert Spring, personal interview, 10 June, 1998, 157.

[4]Laura Flax, personal interview, 16 June 1998, 164.

> I think intuition is feeling the analysis. [Of] many performers in history, two pianists come to mind, Alfred Corto and Artur Schnabel, who played very freely and in a way very intuitively, spent a tremendous amount of time analyzing music. Or Maria Callas, who was supposed to be so spontaneous and very dramatic, was always analyzing. I think many times the most intuitive players are always analyzing.[5]

Though each clarinetist has slightly different approaches to learning a new work, the common idea is that knowledge of the work is definitely beneficial; though analysis is done, and collective experience called upon, in the end, the final interpretation has to feel and sound right in real performance time. Again, Shifrin:

> I'm convinced that there is a cycle that happens: what you see on the page, and what you think you want to make sound. Then you confront the reality of what it is to execute those sounds. Then you come almost full circle to where you get to the point where you can have a lot of choices from developing the skill and familiarity with the music, and playing it. It's only after that experience of practicing and rehearsing that you come back to making the choices of how close you can come to what you think you saw in the first place.[6]

Howat refers to this synthesis of analysis and intuition saying that, "our reasoned, stylistic, analytical assimilation of a score is (ideally) followed by the lightning intuition that releases a performance into living sound."[7] Epstein says there is even scientific evidence to support the synthesis of thought and feeling in musicians.

> It is by now common knowledge that the left and right sides of the brain deal with information in different modes, analytical aspects of cognition lying mainly within the left hemisphere, whereas the right hemisphere operates in a largely holistic manner. Less widely know is the fact that a vast number of fibres interconnect the two hemispheres. While the hemispheres are thus spatially separate, their functions

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[5]Charles Neidich, personal interview, 5 March 1999, 179.

[6]Shifrin, interview, 185.

[7]Roy Howat, "What Do We Perform?" The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 19.

> are to a large degree interdependent. Indeed, current neural theory views the brain as a complex of interconnected networks, whereby specificity of function is both attenuated and enriched by the intercommunications among subcomponents.[8]

Epstein goes on to say that in studies of the interconnectedness of the brain, amateur music lovers showed less activity in the left hemisphere when listening to music than did professional musicians. This suggests, as Shifrin said, that the musical mind is analyzing even when a performer is not conscious of it.

With its focus on intuition and practical musical experience, this dissertation is part of a growing intellectual trend toward what Rothstein refers to as "post-structuralism," which he describes as an approach "which refuses to regard musical structure and its discovery by means of analysis as ends in themselves."[9] He goes on to say that writers in this new trend are drawn to issues which relate structure to other aspects of music, one of which is performance.

Scholars involved in the "new musicology"—post-structuralism and feminist theory especially—have proposed models of analysis that privilege intuitive methods over traditional analytic procedure. Fred Everett Maus explains how looking at a score, rather than listening to it, switches the passive and active roles. Rather than passively listening to the music, the analyst is now actively controlling it. In addition, writing in a distanced, technical, non-experiential mode about the compositional process rather than in a

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[8]David Epstein, "A Curious Moment in Schumann's Fourth Symphony," The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation. Ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 128.

[9]William Rothstein, "Analysis and the Act of Performance," The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 217.

qualitative, personal, experienced-oriented mode also puts the writer in a more comfortable active role.

> The situation I am describing has two main features: kinds of thought and discourse that are associated with gender, and an activity that is easily perceived as passive and feminizing. If male music theorists find themselves engaged in a listening activity that they find alarmingly feminine, they can try to cheer themselves up by writing about music in ways that they and their readers can regard as masculine. The manly writing is the compensation, and screen, for the unmanliness of the listening.[10]

One drawback of exclusively writing about music in this "masculine" style is the exclusion of the other, more experiential/emotional aspects of music. Performers tend to speak about music in terms of emotion and experience. Though we study a score, we must feel the music as well. Marianne Kielian-Gilbert shows how feminist theory is applicable in performance:

> Rather than focusing on the poietic dimensions of an "object," my emphasis here is on how one composes an interpretation, that is, on interpreter's processes of poiesis — their subjective ways of reconstructing experiences. I refer to this constructing and personalizing of experience by the term *poiesis*. According to Jane Gallop, a poiesis of the body is a process of creation, of "newly metaphorizing" and transforming physical embodiment. Through the action of poiesis one becomes the other, recognizing that referentiality and designations of "the real" are ideological constructions that effect and play against one's transformations.[11]

One could say that transformation is the topic of this dissertation: an examination of the transformation and coming together of score/composer and performer in the creation of an interpretation.

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[10]Fred Everett Maus, "Masculine Discourse in Music Theory," Perspectives of New Music 31/2 (Summer 1993): 273.

[11]Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, "Of Poetics and Poiesis, Pleasure and Politics — Music Theory and Modes of the Feminine," Perspectives of New Music 32/1 (1994): 46.

Shifrin and Flax both alluded to this synthesis of score/composer and performance. Shifrin said, "that's one of the interesting things about different people playing the same music. To hear the blending of the personality and the style of the performer with the composer."[12] Flax described an incident when preparing one of Tower's other works:

> I remember having a conversation with Joan and I said I felt that I was being so straight with an interpretation, and she laughed because she felt like I was being so free with it and I felt like I was doing her markings. Unbeknownst to me I was putting myself there. At a certain point it becomes impossible not to insert or impose yourself on the page because you're interpreting it through your instrument.[13]

The current interest in issues of performance suggests that the performer's voice is once again important, making a study like mine possible. As Lester says, the change in attitudes allows the performer to "enter analytical dialogue *as performers*—as artistic/intellectual equals, not as intellectual inferiors who needed to learn from theorists."[14] My study has been in part to fill that void, to add my voice and the voice of other performers to the writings on music. This is a document by the performer, about the performer, written for the performer.

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[12]David Shifrin, interview, 186.

[13]Flax, interview, 163.

[14]Joel Lester, "Performance and Analysis: Interaction and Interpretation," The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 214.

APPENDIX A

Interview with Joan Tower at her home in Red Hook, New York, 3 June 1998.

RJ: I have to admit that I've never done an interview before.

JT: Oh, ok. Are you interviewing the clarinetists too?

RJ: Yes, I plan on interviewing Charlie Neidich, Laura Flax, Robert Spring and hopefully David Shifrin.

JT: That's great. Are you going to talk about the difference between Laura Flax's approach and Charlie Neidich's approach and David Shifrin's approach?

RJ: Yes, but I still need to find a recording of David Shifrin playing the piece. He's the only one I've heard play it live and is the reason I became interested in the piece to begin with.

JT: I'll get on his case to find a recording for you. And Michele Zukovsky is doing it this summer.

RJ: Oh good, I met her years ago and like her playing very much. I'll try to contact her as well.

JT: I have her number.

RJ: Before we jump into the heavy stuff it might be interesting since we've already chatted some about the piece to go to one of my later questions which I'd really like to hear the answer to. In the interview you did with Nancy Bond she was asking you about your pieces in general and you said something along the lines of you refer to your compositions as your star or delinquent children. At the time the *Fantasy* was a new piece and it hadn't had enough time to make a decision on that. I'm really curious now that it's been out for awhile, is it a star or a delinquent?

JT: No, it's not a delinquent. It's actually a star in that it's being played quite a bit. A composer's relationship to their music is very complex. Once it's written there's a whole history of how you view that piece. When you first write it sometimes you think, oh this is a disaster, you know, it's very traumatic hearing a first piece, especially an orchestra piece. And then as time goes on you start to step away from the piece and get a little more

objective about it. And at that point the piece has a life of its own. And that means that people have different relationships with it. And some pieces of mine some people feel very strongly about. They play it with great passion and energy and they play it all the time. Then there's other pieces that some people like and other people don't like and those are played sort of, and then there are some pieces that are hardly ever played. Now, my perspective of those pieces is tied in with their activity. Because I tend to have a strong relationship in terms of how is this piece going to have a life and if it doesn't have a life I feel that I've done something wrong, that there's certain reasons why it's not working. Now that's not necessarily true all the way through, because every world of music has a different parameter or structure. For example, some worlds like the string quartet world used to be a fairly dead, white, European, male world. More recently it's gotten into more composers, but it's a hard thing to move into as a composer and even if you wrote a spectacular piece it wouldn't have a whole lot of chance to have a life. Things are changing in the string quartet world now. Of course the repertoire is huge and you are competing with this huge repertoire. I wrote this string quartet that I thought was a disaster, the piece, that I was wrong. The piece is being played all over the place. And so I look at that and say what's wrong with your perceptions? Well it's because of the struggle of writing that piece, it was a huge struggle. And I guess I invested a lot more into it than I knew and to protect myself I said this is a disaster . We play this game with ourselves. Then there are these worlds out there like the flute and guitar world. Now I wrote a piece called *Snow Dreams*, for flute and guitar. The flute and guitar world is very different world. It has not as big a repertoire as the string quartet world and most of the works are arrangements of other pieces. I wrote this piece that I think is medium range. It's not a great piece, it's not a bad piece, but in that world of music that piece is not bad. Because the level of music in that world is not that high compared to the string quartet world.

RJ: In the interest of time and since these two topics are so big I want to ask your thoughts about this project, which to remind you is using the performer's intuition as a guide to a performance analysis. Knowing how to get started with analysis can be difficult. As well, not all aspects of analysis are pertinent to the performer. Several theorists have written books on analysis with performers in mind but they still tend to be too dense for the average performer and are from the point of view of the theorist informing the performer. My project goes with the idea that the performer has valuable knowledge from performance experience to offer an analysis. Starting with one's initial feelings, responses, and then looking deeper to support what one does, allows for a more performance oriented analysis. The initial questions will be about intuition and analysis. What do you think intuition is? What do you think of analysis and of the newer field of performance analysis?

JT: Okay, first of all I think it's very easy to dichotomize these things, to put them into opposing camps. There's a lot of structural support for that opposition in terms of the way performers are educated, the way musicologists are educated, and theorists. After many years of struggling with this issue—because I've been a performer for many years

and went through a very heavy academic training, 14 years at Columbia University—and struggled with this whole dichotomy of what does it mean to be a musician. And I wound up fighting the whole idea of academia. The academia thing became a monster in my head, because I couldn't put together the relationship of making music and studying about it. In fact when I was in New York all that time going to Columbia I had two separate lives. I was going to Columbia and studying in the library and doing all the, quote academic things — reading and analysis. Then I would go downtown to the Greenwich House where I taught piano and I would make music. I had a series there. I composed for the series and I played on the series. It was all making music. So I was leading these incredibly separate lives. I was also involved with serial music at the time and some very brainy people. This whole time I was trying to understand all of this, this mix of things. I finally decided to walk away from it. I walked away from the serial crowd. I walked away from academia and didn't want to have any part of it. Because there was something that I couldn't put together in my head about making music and analyzing it and studying it. And I actually have a fairly good mind for analysis. I used to love to analyze Webern and Schoenberg and all those guys. It was like figuring out the puzzle. Milton Babbitt's articles on 12-tone invariants and that kind of thing. And Ben Boretz who is this heavy intellectual guy who I brought up to Bard. So in a way, what you're asking me is so deeply embedded in my past. You're asking me to explain my past. My whole emergence as a composer is very much involved with all this.

RJ: Perhaps it might be easier then if you thought more of what your thoughts are now rather than the evolution of it. Is that possible?

JT: Yeah, and I'm willing at this stage now to put them out. I'm older and more confident about who I am and what my music is about. I never would have said something like this twenty years ago or even ten years ago. I guess experiencing music comes in all packages. And when you analyze it or talk about it you have to parcel it out. You have to say I'm now going to talk about rhythm or I'm going to talk about rhythm in relation to pitch or I'm going to talk about the harmonic language here, or something in specific. And you can get very interesting stuff from that. Whatever that package is you can say, oh wow that A flat was a whole lot more important than I ever realized it was, because. . . But playing music, and composing music, is a complete package. It is now one aspect of a package it has to be a complete unit. I think that performing and composing are different in the sense that as a performer you already have the music there and as a composer you don't. But in terms of approaching a piece of music as a performer you're dealing with a whole package and at any one time you can say, I'm going to study the bass line here, or I'm going to study the use of half notes. And it can give you an interesting laser beam into that space. But I don't think that it makes any difference unless you can put the whole thing back together again and use your formidable—your best musical intuition to make it work. Now that's an incredibly complex thing. It involves the talent level of the performer. There are certain performers who have great instincts about what they are playing and they can talk about it. Then there are certain performers who have great instincts about what

they're playing and the can't talk about it. And then there are terrible performers who can talk about everything they're playing and they can't play it. So the questions are, how do you package all this? And does it hurt to know too much about that bass line?

RJ: Those are good questions. Some people feel that if you look at it, it's going to destroy the magic of it.

JT: I think for some people that's true and for some people it isn't true. Because it depends on their priorities.

RJ: It's a tricky area to get into. To help pinpoint this a little bit. What about the comment made about working with Laura Flax when she wasn't really thinking about what she was playing. And working with Nancy Bond performing the same piece and your hearing that she really was thinking about the music, and the meaning behind it, and how it was put together, and specific aspects of it. You seem to have heard two different things coming from these two different approaches. Someone who was playing it without thinking about it (in an analytical way) and somebody who was playing it and really thinking about it, in an analytical way. The other one playing with a purely intuitive. . .

JT: But you see, again I think you're setting up the dichotomies a little too severely. Because Laura's playing is incredibly detailed and in depth. In other words she's circling around everything with a great deal of care.

RJ: But it seems to be more intuitive. She doesn't put actual analytical thought to it.

JT: Yes, but see it's too easy to say she's not putting analytical thought to it. I think in fact she may be putting a lot of analytical thought to it. It's just not coming out verbally.

RJ: Would you call that intuition then? I'm finding that intuition—when we begin to think about it—is a kind of subconscious analysis. You don't think consciously about analyzing it, but your brain is in a sense, analyzing it. Because of your experience, of playing through it, and past music, and conversations with the composer, and so on. For instance, if I were to play another piece of yours now, without knowing the piece, without analyzing it, I would definitely have a better approach to it because I've studied another piece by you. I know a little more of your musical language. I know about what you're interested in. And even if I don't consciously think of those things in this new piece, that would come into a kind of intuition on that new work.

JT: Yes but Laura Flax has probably also been as close to the music as you have because she's done a kind of in depth, experiential study of *Wings*. She would bring the same things to another piece too. But on the outside it looks like it's coming from a different point of view. As a composer, I think the question is not one of intuition versus analysis. I think it's very easy to get those two things separated out. I have all my life and I think it's

too easy. I think what you might want to try to do is to blend the two of them.

RJ: That is my goal.

JT: The issue is one of closeness. How close are we getting to this object. There's one person that comes in with six thousand lasers on rhythm, pitch level. . . And there's another person who comes in with, "I'm going to spend six hours a day on this piece, and I'm going to figure out how this piece goes." I've had that experience so often with so many clarinetists. I can actually tell. The minute they start playing I know what their involvement with this piece is. It's amazing. I don't have to know them at all, not even talked to them. I can tell. It's a question of knowledge and knowledge comes in different packages. Some people are able to talk about it, and some are not. Some of the greatest jazz musicians I knew. . . I was married to a jazz musician for ten years, and my husband couldn't talk at all. He couldn't describe what he was playing. But he knew. He had fantastic chord progressions, he knew all the styles and everything. So the question of being able to articulate even to yourself, what's going on here. Is that the question? To verbalize it. Is that the question?

RJ: Would you say that analysis was a kind of verbalization of some kinds of intuition? That when a performer verbalizes their intuitions they are, in fact, giving you a kind of analysis. They're putting their subconscious intuitions into verbal response. And those subconscious intuitions are often analytical in nature.

JT: But you see, I can hear a performer not even doing that. I can hear *what* they're analyzing the minute they play. I can tell what they're bringing out, what they're not bringing out, are they doing a structural thing, are they not? They don't have to tell me about it. I can hear it in their playing. I think the question of analysis versus intuition is largely a question of verbalization. And verbalization takes it outside the realm of music. Because you are now going into the world of verbalization and rationalization. In order to communicate to someone you have to be rational and you have to be verbal. But music has its own rational and musical verbalization. So if you keep it in that domain it's a little truer to the art. As we know there are just millions of articles written about music that are completely off the wall. You know—what's that got to do with the music? Talking about music of course is extremely difficult for most people.

RJ: It is. I'll agree. As I'm finding. I'm constantly being told you can't just say that, you have to explain, you have to give more detail, you have to justify. When you begin to write something you have to justify.

JT: But you have another problem with me, because I'm a woman. And I think that's an issue too.

RJ: How?

JT: Because also Laura is a woman and she's the one person who also doesn't want to talk to you too much about this because she doesn't know how to. I'm a lot more verbal because I teach, and because I'm a composer and you learn to fight with words. But for her this is very difficult because she's not in any of those worlds. She's a clarinetist, plays in the opera orchestra. But it's interesting that Charlie will tell you the analysis of what he thinks. So you have a gender-problem here too.

RJ: Could be.

JT: You should talk to Joe Straus about that.

RJ: It could be. I definitely want to bring that issue in. Probably more introduction/conclusion stuff. But that is an area I'll go into. And if I have more people that I can speak to. If I also speak to Robert Spring and Michele Zukovsky. I'll be able to get a little more. Is it just coincidence that the men will talk in more detail about what they're doing and the women feel less communicative about their intuitions.

JT: There's a whole thing in feminist musicology now about positioning. That men tend to position themselves. And that means that they take positions regarding style and such and women don't. It is a very interesting dichotomy there.

RJ: Let me say a couple of things from my point of view as far as this is concerned and it may help you respond to something a little more specific then about this same topic, especially involving intuition and analysis.

JT: I'm being too general.

RJ: I'm just trying to get a pinpoint. . .

JT: I know, you're trying to get a nice, good, specific quote from me that your advisors will say, "Ah, now that's something you can use."

RJ: As a performer, and you can relate to this too, when you're in school there's the time that you spend practicing and in your lessons learning the music. And then there's the time that you would spend, for instance, in your theory class, analyzing something. And they were always for me, as we have said, completely separate. And yet, I find myself now—perhaps because I like analysis—looking at the music. I do like studying it, and seeing what's in the score. Trying to understand deeper levels. That's how I think of it. That I'm trying to think of the music on a deeper level than what I have been doing. I find that with my teaching, because I have clarinet students of my own, younger students in particular, but even high school age students, that I am constantly bringing analysis into the lesson, which I did not have when I was taking lessons. I am constantly saying to them, "think the chords, think the scales. It will make your playing so much easier if you learn scales and

chords in your practice time and you recognize these patterns in the music then it will make playing your music so much easier." And we talk specifically about understanding which notes to stress and which notes to not stress. Or how to shape a phrase in different way. And you could think of a phrase in this way and you could think of a phrase in that way. To give a little example young students in particular want to simply punch out every single beat of the music. And I'm working with one student in particular now who's technically very proficient but he's in the eighth grade and so we're working very hard for him to see on the page and to hear that you don't need to punch all four beats of this because it's just one G major scale or it's just one G major chord. Go to the next change before you begin to emphasize that line. And that's a concept that's analytical and yet I'm talking about it in a playing experience. You see what I'm getting at? And he begins to understand, "Oh, I don't need to punch out every one of these beats because I'm playing a figure here and when that figure changes then I'll emphasize that change or I'll have a direction to that change." Let me give you another example. You have two F sharps in a C major piece and a kid is playing this piece and one of them is a lower neighbor tone G-F#-G and it's simply a chromatic neighbor tone, it reinforces the tonic and shouldn't be emphasized. And then you have the other F# which is part of a V/V and it's moving to V and it's a heightened expressive note. In pointing that out to the student I get them to see that there are two different reasons for these F#s being there analytically, and that they have two different meanings in how they are performed in the piece. One reinforces the tonic, it doesn't need to be so stressed, the other one is an expressive note that leads to the dominant and therefore it can have this more expressive motion and weight.

JT: Well, were they not getting that to begin with?

RJ: Young students don't automatically get this.

JT: All young students?

RJ: The ones that I have been working with, even if they get some things don't get everything. And it seems to me then that the intuition comes from years of trial and error practice that could be shortened if this kind of analytical thought came a little bit earlier on.

JT: Well first of all, your chordal scale thing, that's very understandable. When I was teaching piano, the younger they are the harder it is for them to put together abstract concepts. That's why reading music is a real hard thing for them. Because it's like these symbols are going by that they can't quite parcel. College age kids are very easy to teach how to read (music) because you say, "you notice the pattern there?" and they say, "oh yeah, right." You know it's C major. And so they get it fast because they've developed the tools to look at patterns, whereas five year olds have not. I was just thinking, I'm learning Haydn's London Symphony now with my husband. We play it four-hands. I'm going to be conducting this piece in the fall. I'm not sitting down there analyzing this piece. I'm sitting

there playing the piece with him because I want this piece to come forward as a full thing. I do notice modulations and structural things about it. . .

RJ: Then that is analysis.

JT: But I don't make a deal out of them, I just say, "oh wow, new pitches coming in here," stuff like that. The piece then is able to come forward to me as a package not as a lasered. . . . oh yes that F# is pointing to. . because, maybe that F# is not quite as strong as I think it is because it's modulating. Just because my brain says, "oh yeah that's an important note because it's modulating to over here," doesn't necessarily make it that important. I actually have a distrust of that kind of thinking, because sometimes the thinking makes it something it isn't. It's like when you do a huge rhythmic analysis and you notice that these three half-notes are different. And you say, "according to this system that I have set up here these three half-notes here are major notes." When in fact, they're not for some other reason.

RJ: But what we're thinking about here is. . . . I don't want you to get the impression that I'm thinking so black and white. I'm only wanting to say that this is one other way of, or one possible way of, further illuminating something that might be in the music. Not something that is infallibly in the music, but something that this could be, "oh I didn't see this," or, " this relationship might work." As a performer, if I do make some kind of analytical gestures they can help me to see things that I might not be seeing, connections that I might not be making. And they can also help in the concept that perhaps I have an intuitive idea, but not every intuition is necessarily a good intuition.

JT: Yes, ok, but let me reverse that. Not every analytical idea that your system has told you. . . now see this is the thing about the power of systems. It's like the power of policy. An insurance company says if you get here later than nine o'clock three times you're out. Well, somebody's having a baby or somebody's having a nervous breakdown. Do you make an exception? There's no exceptions with policies, depending on the rigidity of the policy. It's the same thing with analysis. Analysis take on this formidable rationale. And so what you try to do is say, "oh but that F# is important. This system is infallible. I have to find it. Why isn't it coming to me that this F# is important?" When in fact the system is wrong. That F# is just not important because of some other system is going on. On the other side, I would say that intuitions are also fickle. In terms of making decisions I've learned that there are four kinds of reactions you have with intuitions. One is, I like on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and on Thursday I don't like anymore, Friday I don't like. That's an up and down I like, I don't like. Inconsistent. Second one is, I like on Monday, Tuesday and so on. And 3 months later I still like. Or third, I don't like consistently. The fourth one is no reaction, nothing happened, zip, zero, 3 months. I've learned to respect these intuitions very, very highly. And so if I have the one that goes I like on Monday, I don't like on Tuesday, you know, that kind of fickle reaction, I have to spend a lot of time waiting for it to level off, which requires an infinite amount of patience. All I have are my

perceptions of what I'm doing. I can't listen to John Doe or Mary Z. All I have is me making choices. Now, if I use a system to back up my choices, I'm using a fall back—in a sense—that's outside of my intuitions. O.K. here we go into compositional thinking. A lot of composers start with the idea of, "I'm going to have a map." And it's going to be mapped very carefully in terms of rhythm, in terms of pitch control. The serialists like Milton Babbitt did that. He had his precompositional charts. So that it's like the chart dictates the piece. But of course *you* have to make the charts too, and that already says something about your choices. But then you fill in the details, so to speak. It's telling you exactly what to do. It's like a recipe. You take four of this and three of that. Well, I made the recipe and I know what's going to come out. Okay great, this is just another version of this cake. It's like planning a curriculum. Every time somebody talks to me about curriculum I go up the wall because it has implications that are very top down. Like if you say, "Well, what is your curriculum philosophy?" "Well we're going to do this, this, this and this." We just went through this this year and I was like, "Oh my God how is this going to effect the outcome of these student's lives?" And to make that relationship takes a tremendous amount of careful imagination of how those policies are going to trickle down to the bottom here. Which to me is where it's at. It's not the philosophy of the department that matters, it's the daily life. So in a way writing music is like that too. What is the outcome from note to note of this system or non-system? To me I actually go from the bottom up. I don't go from the top down. I distrust those precompositional thoughts very, very highly.

RJ: I don't mean to be taking you off from where you are, but specific to this topic, how does that relate, though, to the system of the performer? As a performer, which I know you were/are, as opposed to the composer. When you start talking about this as a composer it's hard for me to relate to it as a performer and I'd like to get back to you thinking as a performer as well.

JT: Well, actually I am a performer who composes.

RJ: Right, and these same ideas that you're talking about, as a performer playing a piece how can you explain the bottom up philosophy you're talking about?

JT: Well when I was a performer, I used to take the blueprint of a piece and start learning it.

RJ: Learning it, meaning the notes?

JT: Yes. Learning the notes, the rhythms. And the thing starts to come forward to you. Okay?

RJ: Okay now, that's where my project starts. That's what I'm trying to say, and we seem to be getting a little off. That's what I'm trying to get at in my discussion. I want to start

there. Literally my approach is, how do I play it?

JT: Okay, first of all, having played a lot of new music that isn't established music—not playing familiar Beethoven or whatever—the thing I started to notice was that this piece had a certain control over not only me but my group. This is after the fact. The piece starts to come forward to you as a personality. It's nothing on the page. It's a just a blueprint, that's all it is. And you start to play it on the piano and it starts to say something to you. It starts to say this tempo is really important and if you go any slower or faster, it's going to kill it.

RJ: And that's what I'm getting at. I think that is a resource that has been untapped as far as understanding the music.

JT: Exactly.

RJ: Rather than the theorists saying, "I've analyzed this (from the top down) and I say that this is the tempo that must be." I'm talking about taking what the performer feels and learns and says. Like, I strongly feel that this needs to be this tempo or this rhythm or this dynamic.

JT: Right. And also what I noticed, after years of playing, was that certain pieces had certain profiles to them that demanded certain attention to certain things. Like for example, some pieces required color. This is about color, we've got to make this very special. Let's see if we can get the tone kind of dark here. Not so much about the rhythm, we can be a little loose with that because the rhythm doesn't seem that important. Like with George Crumb. It's all about color. It's about these nice tapestries of very individual environments of color. But the fact that you take more time here or take less time here, or even play this a little slower is not a big deal in his music simply because it's not where the action is centrally located.

RJ: That's a very pertinent example of how a theorist may see something in the rhythm that seems so important and the performer says no this piece is about color. That's something that is so performance oriented.

JT: It's a lack of respect for what the package is doing. The theorist is coming in and saying, "I've discovered. . ." when in fact that's not the important part of that package because there was a little disease on the package. I discovered this disease on the package, when that's not important. Something's wrong with the theory.

RJ: Therefore, the performer's intuitions—if they can verbalize them—could be very valuable to helping to understand the music.

JT: Absolutely. Whereas with Stravinsky, first thing that hits you is rhythm. And boy if

you don't get that rhythm right and you don't get that tempo right you're not hearing the main action in his music. And Webern, Schoenberg and Berg I discovered after many years—I played a lot of their music—what I discovered is what you change in the piece effects. . . . For example, in Webern if you change the intervals you've destroyed the music because his music is about interval structure. If the minor third is not a minor third, you've destroyed that phrase. Because you've taken the essential ingredient of action that moves his music out. If in Berg you change the pitches, make mistakes in his music, it's heard and it's felt because the pitches really matter in his music as moving the action, as moving the harmony. But you know what? In Schoenberg, Mr. Pitch man, I made mistakes all the time, and I couldn't remember the notes from day to day Didn't matter, didn't matter. And here Mr. Schoenberg is Mr. Pitch. Yes, but in fact, when you really, really get inside his music, that's not the issue. It's not the issue. I used to transpose his stuff and I couldn't remember the pitches. Berg's pitches I remembered from the very first time I played them. They impacted me from day to day, from week to week. And I started noticing this as a player, that you have to find where the central action of the piece is, and go to that. And that's what makes that piece come alive as a profile.

RJ: The action that makes the piece come alive.

JT: And it's not necessarily something that historically has been explained either. It's interesting.

RJ: Because it comes a performance viewpoint. In the interest of time let's move on to the next question. Approximately how many performances of the *Fantasy* have you heard and by how many different players? I'm not looking for exact numbers.

JT: God, that's so hard, because it's been a number of years. First of all I just have to answer that since it's been published, it took a while to get published, the number of performances have increased dramatically. I guess people went from *Wings*, which they had played a lot, to the next piece, the *Fantasy*. I know that for a fact actually. I've heard maybe 50 performances.

RJ: And approximately how many players?

JT: 45, because I've only heard David [Shifrin] and Laura [Flax] repeatedly. Just those two repeatedly.

RJ: And then to follow that up, how are the various interpretations of the piece you have heard? And this may be tricky for you, do they play it as you intended? And is that important to you? I know you've said the piece takes on a life of it's own so I have some idea of what you're. . .

JT: Yeah, it's funny, this is a piece that. . . . .I don't how to say this. . . . it's a fantasy but

it doesn't have a whole lot of room for interpretation except in the cadenzas.

RJ: That's interesting that you would say that.

JT: I don't know why I'm saying that. Because I feel that *Wings* has more room. I don't know why I'm saying that, and I'm not even sure that's exactly true.

RJ: Let me lead you to where I'm going. There's been some discussion of pieces having an evolution of performance practice or a period of time in which a new piece played by performers was a, hit and miss. It was played. Something things worked, some things didn't work. People picked up on the things that worked and tried to make changes in the things that didn't work. Do you feel that since you've been hearing this piece that that is something that is happening over the last 15 years? That the piece is developing an evolution of where you used to hear it played in the beginning and things just didn't go, didn't work but now 15 years later it's become more of a repertoire piece. You've heard repeated performances. Is it developing a kind of performance practice?

JT: You know, actually I could talk about *Wings* better than this piece on that level, because I've heard *Wings* a long time and I've heard it a lot. I think clarinetists listen to each other. *Wings* has become a repertoire piece and it's gotten to another level. It really has gone to another level, *Wings*. Maybe this will happen with the *Fantasy*. Also players have gotten better. There are a lot of good clarinetists out there I've got to tell you.

RJ: You don't have to tell me!

JT: Millions of them.

RJ: Then would say there has been an evolution of for instance, *Wings*.

JT: Oh yes, definitely, of *Wings* yes.

RJ: That in the beginning people were doing things that didn't work. But now that it's moved on it's become more. . . .

JT: Actually, I think the field itself has played a role in that because people know *Wings* and they compete to play better. Every performance I've heard of *Wings* in the last few years has really been on a new level, which just blows my mind.

RJ: My next topic is twofold. It is regarding notation and the composer's intentions. As you might suspect I am interested in this area for two reasons. One, it points to the importance of the intuitions of the performer to interpret the notation and how that may differ from the way a theorist might interpret the same notation.

JT: Oh, absolutely.

RJ: And two, it addresses the responsibility of the performer to understand the music beyond what is written on the page. Do you have some further thoughts to add on this topic?

JT: Because the goals of the performer are just totally different from the goals of the theorist. Very simple. Different priorities, right?

RJ: Yes, but I'm wanting to try in my topic to become more blended. Open a dialogue if you will. Bring them somewhat closer together.

JT: You know what? Those two I don't think are ever going to come together because the goal of the performer is to share this piece as best he or she can with a listening audience.

RJ: But that's it. It's listening and the theorist once was/is a listener.

JT: But the theorist is sharing it with other theorists. Very different.

RJ: But it could also be from a point of view of what we're hearing rather than just what we're seeing.

JT: What does that mean?

RJ: Getting off the notated page, and hearing it. Really listening to the music as opposed to simply analyzing it solely from the score.

JT: The clarinetist is more in a position to do that simply because they're dealing with a whole package—my favorite term for the morning—whereas the theorist can't. They can't deal with the whole package.

RJ: Why do you say that?

JT: Because by talking about it they have to isolate things.

RJ: Or illuminate things.

JT: Or illuminate things.

RJ: That's the way I'm looking at it. That by talking about some things you can illuminate things. You make observations rather than statements, see what I saying? Rather than making some factual statement that is undeniable, that is in cement, as you said, they're simply more observations. Illuminating areas and ideas that you might not have heard.

JT: Why do they sound like they're making ideas in cement? They never sound like they're making observations.

RJ: But it doesn't have to be that way. My topic is one in which you're listening to the performer talk about the piece. Talking about it from their intuitive responses, and their images, and their thoughts, and their feelings. As opposed to the theorist who's looking at it from a more analytical point of view. I'm talking about the player who can also verbalize what they're playing, and how that person and those observations may help to bring these fields a little more together. So that theory and analysis can help the performer. Being taught both theory and analysis can help. Not that you have to. I'm not saying you have to make these observations. I can say from my own personal experience that it helps me. I know this piece better, and I will play this piece better—me personally—by studying it. By analyzing it.

JT: Because you have a certain talent for that too. For analysis, and an interest in it. I think the only way those two field are going to come together is if there are more theorists who play and more clarinetists who theorize.

RJ: That's where I'm trying to find my niche in the field. The performer's voice and hearing it in an academic field, but not being in stone. I may say this about this piece today, and may say something completely different about it in a year.

JT: Right.

RJ: But the observations that I have are interesting. If I do verbalize it, I'm able to say interesting things about the music. Okay, these are some specifics on my dissertation. I think I sent you an outline. The chapters of my dissertation focus on one area at a time. We've talked about how when we do talk about music you have to say, "I'm going to talk about rhythm now," and that's literally what I do. The body of the work then includes a section on formal structure, on themes, phrasing, balance and texture, rhythm, movement and tempo, dynamics, tone color and articulation. Then after these single focus chapters, a chapter entitled, putting it all together, with the clarinet cadenza. You can see that each one of these chapters are very specific performance issues. I don't go into anything that's not directly related to performance. The first section is on formal structure. What are your feeling regarding the structure of the piece? Do you think it's important for the performer to know where they are in the piece?

JT: That's going to be your story, not my story. Because the way you parcel out. . . essentially what you are doing is parceling out things. You're saying, "this is a room, that's another room, that's a return to another room, looks like that room." And you're identifying what are minor seams, I call them, or major seams. That's what a composer does. You're probably right about it but I'd have to go over it. I don't know whether you're right or not.

RJ: I don't want that. I don't want to be right, and I don't want you to have to say this is the structure of the piece. It's more the idea of when a performer is looking at the structure, is this valuable, is this valid? Is this a possible map?

JT: Well you found it valuable, because it gave you a way of getting through the places that you didn't understand. So for you it became a valuable tool.

RJ: The next chapter is the themes chapter. There seem to be two main ideas, one that was more motion filled, and the areas that were more stable. The ones that are more motion filled I call transitional material. Sometimes they were long passages. I don't mean transition in the sense that it was just a short, get from one to the other, but that the transitions were the more active sections. And the more stable sections I talked about as being themes. I labeled the slower sections as being Theme I, with long durations, like the opening passage in the clarinet. And Theme II is the more active, rhythmic, meter changing, staccato sections. The ways I talk about the image or the action, or the character that comes to mind—you may not like it—but part of the images and characters that came to mind come from the song. Because I looked for and found *Harbor Lights* the song, which I wasn't familiar with initially. And also I had an older student who told me it was a WWII song and that it was popular with Philippino women who had been left behind when the American soldiers went home.

JT: Oh really, I didn't know that.

RJ: That's how he described the song to me. So for better or worse, as a performer when I'm playing it and I'm thinking what is this piece about? What is the action or mood I want to express? That came to mind.

JT: Good, good.

RJ: I describe the opening theme as being the calm before the storm. The boats, the harbor. The indications of calm and sustained, lack of motion. And things get choppier as the transitional passages begin. And in particular, an image that helped me in that section, what I'm calling Theme II, was to imagine this. . . as I described it, the stony facade of the soldier who is trying to keep emotions at bay as he's leaving. It has a more mechanical, perfunctory quality. It's reserved, it's removed from the more expressive, emotional longer duration theme which can be fairly expressive and emotional. And those two images are ways in which I talk about these themes.

JT: I'm going tell you a story that's directly related to this, but I'm not sure you should use it. It's okay if you use it actually. I wrote this piece for Richard Stoltzman and Richard Stoltzman reminded me of a U.S. Marine that I fell in love with in Lima, Peru. And when I left Lima I left on a boat and our song was *Harbor Lights* and I decided to. . . .actually what you just said made me relive those moments. And actually you were describing the

soldier and it was *very* strange. Very strange, because it all hooked up to this thing when I left Lima in a boat. I had to say goodbye to him and we were very much in love. I was all of 17, 16 I think, and he was older, he was about 22 and we had to say goodbye. And that's all tied up with this piece. Isn't that interesting? I've never told that to anybody but since you're so invested in this piece I had to share that with you.

RJ: I'm glad it came out. In an earlier interview you mention something about the boats and the harbor and an old boyfriend and I thought, well I can't possibly ask, "Can you get more detailed?"

JT: Well it's so long ago and it doesn't matter anymore, but there is that whole story. In fact I think the *Harbor Lights* idea came up after. . . the actual words harbor lights and the tune came up during the piece, but when I go to coach the piece, the pianists always have trouble with that opening. And the image I use is can you imagine, and maybe this will help you and maybe it won't, some players it doesn't help, some players it does. Can you imagine a very large boat sitting in a harbor at night, and there are the lights of the city around it, and there's the lapping of the water, and this rocking very slowly back and forth. That's the image I give. With some pianists it works like a gem.

RJ: That's what I'm talking with this idea of analysis. When I talk about performance analysis that's what I'm talking about. I consider that to be. . . perhaps the word analysis triggers so many responses, but that's what I'm talking about.

JT: Oh,

RJ: You've analyzed the piece in a way that you've given it a character and you've given it an idea.

JT: An image.

RJ: That to the performer will make them play it better, possibly. Possibly.

JT: I do that all the time when I coach.

RJ: The next chapter is on phrasing. It's an area which is touched on by theorists and is so important to performers I feel. Especially in 20th century works where it's not so obvious where the phrases are. In particular you made a comment about breathing in which you said you were bothered by hearing performances of *Wings* where players breathed at critical points in the line. It struck me that that happens, probably quite a bit, in contemporary music. Can you imagine a professional level player breathing at a critical point in a phrase of Mozart. . .

JT: Brahms—

RJ: or Brahms. It wouldn't happen. And yet in your piece it happened. That's where for me the sense that that person's intuitions needed examining.

JT: Exactly.

RJ: And they needed to say, I'm breathing here, but you know. . .

JT: Exactly. That's the first sign that the intuitions aren't working. [examines *Wings*] This was one of the places, they would breathe right there because they viewed it in two. So I put this over that and this here to make sure that if they breathe anywhere they would breathe right there. And I did that throughout.

RJ: Right. We'll see this as a phrase marking.

JT: That's right.

RJ: And it's possible to breathe within a phrase marking. Sometimes you take a breath where, you may have to, for necessity's sake, and it's a quick breath and you can keep the line moving. And other times you take a breath and you really clearly divide it into a phrase.

JT: The other thing was that this piece has no stopping points. Everybody would stop here and turn the page and then resume playing, which would kill this going over to there, which was crucial. So I had to do this, "please do not turn this page during the rest." This was after several performances by several people before it went to publication. So that's what made these decisions.

RJ: Those are two very good examples of where, if the performer had done some analysis, and by that I simply mean. . .

JT: Or had good intuitions.

RJ: And definitely there are those, like you talked about, that have good intuition. But there are so many more of us, like me, who are definitely fallible. Whose intuitions are fallible, and who can enjoy playing music, and can give pleasure to others playing music, but not on the level of the ones that are just. . . gifted from God with perfect intuition. Where if I look at it, and I study it, and I think about it, and if examine it. . . .

JT: Then it shores up your intuition. . . .

RJ: I can say, "oh, that totally doesn't work to do that." Even listening to performances of myself playing it saying, "now that I'm out *here* listening to it, I can hear things differently."

RJ: The next chapter is texture and balance. In a quote from an earlier interview you say, "But space is very important. Where you are in the space and what is the action within the space? Is it this kind of action or is it this kind of action? How is the space compressed?"[1] That is what I do in this chapter, to talk about what kind of texture is this? Is it open? Is it wide-spaced? Is it compressed? What lines need to come out? What's the balance situation here? Where do I need to back off? Where does the pianist need to come out? What line of the piano needs to come out? Some of it happens intuitively, and as you said, just being aware of where you are in this sense. That's where my analysis moves toward.

JT: I can't wait to read this. I got that idea from Beethoven actually—of where are you in the register, and what is happening in that register, and how do you go from there to the next place? How do you make high, high and heated. Well you have to have some idea what is high. How high is high? There has to be some low thing around somewhere in the piece because the sense of space is only contextual. I do this with orchestra music all the time. If I want something feel really high, I'll put in a low bass pizz. just to give a perspective on, wow that's really up there. But it's not really up there unless we know what's down. Beethoven is a master of that. As a pianist I used to say, look we're down here and we're moving in six note chords and it's a thick texture and now the next thing is a single note up here in the middle register which is not moving and it's repeating. And those guys make that repeated note very significant. Otherwise it wouldn't have any significance. I'm always thinking about that.

RJ: And that kind of awareness, which I'm calling analysis, that definitely aids in your performance I would imagine.

JT: Oh, sure.

RJ: Being, like you said, aware of where you are in the space. And aware of that contrast between this heavy, thick, compressed, dense texture down here and this light, thin, high texture up here.

JT: I think awareness is the key word to this, to your dissertation. Because awareness takes on many shapes and whether or not you can articulate it is another issue.

RJ: That is something that I'm finding that I will have to bring up, probably in the introduction. This concept of being able to articulate these feelings/thoughts about music. Intuitions. Being able to articulate them. That everyone has these intuitions. Some work better, some work less. Some can articulate. Like when you said earlier some players don't think about what they're playing, they just do it.

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[1]Quoted in Nancy Bond, "An Analysis of Joan Tower's 'Wings' for Solo Clarinet," Ph.D. diss., Arizona State U, 1992, 233.

JT: They follow the map. They follow the directions. If is says go right, they go right. They do exactly what they're told. And you know it's interesting, the blueprint. The question of following the directions as opposed to making them. For example if you take the page away, and you're playing jazz. You're spending a lot more time making things than following directions. You have to, otherwise nothing would happen. You are working within a certain harmonic thing and you're working with other players who have solos at certain times. But you have to be very alert to making it happen now. I think what happens to some players is they get so trapped in following the directions exactly because they have so much, quote, respect for the composer. I don't think that's actually true. If you have real respect for the composer you go beyond the page because the piece has become meaningful enough to you that you want to make this tempo your own, or this dynamic your own. So you go against the page. A lot of performers would say that's not respectful, I disagree with that totally. Totally.

RJ: You talk about, and we've talked, about *my* interpretation of this piece, this is the map that I've created and this is how I'm making it work for my performance of that piece. This actually goes into one of the other chapters where you talk about tempo, and if you play this tempo here in the beginning, and it works better for you there, that's fine, because it works better for you and it will make the piece sound better. It'll make your interpretation of this piece work. And therefore, you do have to make these adjustments in the other sections where the tempo must relate. The changes must relate to the change that you've made earlier. For instance, especially a not technically proficient player, might slow down a fast, technical passage—they just have to, to make it work for them—but not make the adjustments to the other sections. . . .

JT: in relation. . . .

RJ: thinking they're staying true to the composer. . .

JT: Right.

RJ: And not realizing that—no, for my interpretation, and for the way I'm playing this piece, if I'm going to slow it down here, I'm going to have to make adjustments. . . .

JT: over here. Right. Exactly.

RJ: And that's where, again, now I'm analyzing. It's like what you talked about, getting off the page and if you really respect the composer you'll

JT: go beyond the page.

RJ: You'll make meaning of it. Well that's, for me, where I get into the analysis. I am going beyond the page in that I'm making my interpretation of the piece. But to do that I

do have to think about it. I have to think. . . if I'm going to do something that's different from the composer. . . you do have to think, am I making sense. Does this work for this performance? Does this work for the way I'm playing it? And then you are creating an interesting, unique interpretation of the piece. And talking about that: this is how I play it, and it's perhaps a little different, and this is why I play it this way, and this is what I'm thinking, and this is what comes to my mind, and this is what I'm trying to express. That's what I think will be an interesting product at the end. And helpful to other performers to be able to say, you can do this too. It may help you, and this is the way to approach it. You think as a performer. And we have our analysis course and we're taught pitch analysis and pitch class sets and things like that. Well I look at the *Fantasy* and I think, I want to do something with this piece. And maybe I'm not the most fantastically interpretive performer. Intuitively, everything is wonderful. I just play it and it's on the money.

JT: Right

RJ: Maybe I need to think about it a little to make more sense of it. Do I start with some kind of pitch class analysis, do I. . . . suddenly you get bombarded with, oh my God, theory and analysis. I don't know what to do. And you don't. Instead, I'm saying, well yeah, you can. Play it. You play it and being able to say, this is why. Take that as a starting point. Like I said, I'm breathing here. Well why am I breathing here? Let me look. And that gave me a place to start my analysis. As opposed to the overwhelming sense of, I have to make an *analysis* of this piece.

JT: Right, right.

RJ: Which is what Nancy Bond did in her dissertation. She made four analyses of that piece. Whereas I'm trying to express a particular interpretation of this piece as I'm thinking of it now.

JT: That's much more independent, actually, of you. She's trying to cater to the structure of her advisors and what they expect of her. And you're actually trying to carve our your own philosophy, and your own *theory,* sorry, about this. And that's very courageous. I think it's very gutsy.

RJ: It's a beginning field. There's a book out now, *The Practice of Performance,* a collection of essays on performance analysis.

JT: Really?? On intuition?

RJ: And it's all performers talking about music. What is interpretation? Talking from a performer's standpoint.

JT: Do you have some more stuff you want to cover? We're going to have to stop soon.

RJ: I do. The rhythm, tempo and movement chapter is the next thing I wanted to ask you about. In an interview you said, "also important is the performers awareness of the specific kind of action within each space." actions which you describe as, "holding, intensifying, or deintensifying." I'm going to playing devils advocate for a moment and say, "aren't these things built into the music already? Do I really need to know and be aware of that? Or isn't it already in the music?"

JT: hmm. Well it all starts with the music. And as a performer you respond to the music, or you don't respond to the music. So presumably, if you're not intensifying and deintensifying, you're just playing the notes. Right?

RJ: Is not just playing the notes enough? Ravel said something along the line of, don't interpret my music, just play it.

JT: Stravinsky too.

RJ: Don't interpret. Just play it.

JT: That's a kind of unsentimental. . . . Stravinsky also, the same thing. I never could understand what he was talking about. Let me play devil's advocate to you. Can you imagine a piece that says nothing to you intuitionally and you have to make it say something to you analytically.

RJ: Say that again.

JT: You're playing a contemporary piece and you haven't responded to it at all, for whatever reasons.

RJ: Right, *it doesn't make me dream.*

JT: [laughs] Right. It hasn't done anything to you musically. So you've been assigned to analyze this piece. Now, do you think that through analysis that it's possible that this piece would come forward to you?

RJ: Actually, yes. That would be a good example of when analysis would be particularly helpful. Because it would bring me into a work that I hadn't been getting into. And the analysis could bring me into it. It's a little like an actor. You think of an actor who's playing a role. Sometimes it's a character that speaks to them and they have no trouble getting involved in that character. Then there's another character that they read the part and they're just. . . it's not there. They really have to go study it. They have to go into it and study it because it's not familiar to them. It's not automatically speaking to them. And

it forces them into either being a bad actor and just reading the lines, or creating a feeling that doesn't automatically happen there.

JT: In the 60's we played a lot of abstract music that was very systematic and I never knew what to do with this music because. . . it just didn't say anything to me, but it was *my* fault. Because I was stupid or insensitive. I didn't get this piece. And for years I believed that. I said, "well I'm just kinda stupid, I don't get this piece." But actually, it wasn't my fault. It was the piece's fault, for the most part. Not all. There were a couple of pieces that I did wind up changing my mind about after I'd gotten into them. I'm not sure you can beat a dead horse so to speak by going into this and saying, "I'm going to take another path. I'm going to take a mental path," is what you're saying, right? . . . maybe that will open some doors.

RJ: You're not going to make it a great piece. You're not going to change the music. But you will give a better performance of that piece.

JT: Because you'll have more knowledge of it.

RJ: And you will have created an interpretation that will be better than what it was if you hadn't. That's one of challenges, in particular, where analysis comes into play. Another writer, Wallace Berry I think it is, talks about this. Where performance analysis really helps is with music that is not that great. Or with music that is good but has some areas that don't really, quite. . . . It's got some wonderful spots and some "ennh." And the analysis can help you to understand. Why isn't this spot working and what can I do to help it as much as I can? What can I do to bring this along? It would really work better in the piece if I played it slower, or played it softer, or played it thinner, and you can make these kind of adjustments. And you talk about that, where you said it says forte here and you have to play it forte. Maybe it just really doesn't work for that passage.

JT: Right.

RJ: And you do have to say, well this is what the composer intended but it's not working. I don't want to throw away the whole piece because I like some spots about it. To be candid there's a spot or two that comes up in the *Fantasy* where there are some spots that I latch onto and it's so cool and I am loving this. And then there's one particular spot that I'm playing and this is not what I wanted it to do here.

JT: Which ones? Do you know which ones?

RJ: I kind of wanted to ask you about this since I've studied the piece so much now.

JT: [laughing] yeah, right.

RJ: When I'm playing through this, let me get specific here. When I was playing this section [from m. 173] I wasn't sure what was going on. But when I started looking at it I noticed elements from Theme I and Theme II and the transitions and I began to think of it as a development section.

JT: I love this passage, this one right here [m. 173].

RJ: This whole section is my favorite. I love it. It's fun and it's so satisfying musically. And I love here where it falls apart [m. 222]. This is such a cool spot.

JT: This rhythm here is too short [the D# , last beat of m. 225]. And every clarinetist, every group I hear, they take more time. I miscalculated that.

RJ: And this is one of the things I'm saying. With a point like this when I talk about rhythm, what I would say is, I take more time here on this, I hang on this a little longer because it is such an important cadence. These things that you've learned about formal structure come back so my expectation may have been hampered by that. I've had this introduction, I've had this Theme I, I have this transition, I have Theme II, I've got this development section, and after this development section we move here [m. 247]. I so can't tell you how much I wanted theme I to come back here. I wanted that minor third motive and the longer durations here.

JT: Oh, yes.

RJ: And time. And the tritone thing here just totally throws me off. And the faster motion. It's unsettling for me. And one of the ways to make this work, at least for my interpretation. The whole piece has been a development of ideas, so this can be a further development. It's not really theme I, but I can bring back, at least for my self, the sentiment and stability and calmness of theme I.

JT: So do you play it slower?

RJ: I play it slower.

JT: [laughing] You know what?? Everybody in the world plays it slower! You're not alone.

RJ: I wonder if that could be why? I just wanted to ask you one quick question before we stop. Is the clarinet cadenza a classical cadenza in the sense that it plays on themes from earlier ideas?

JT: Yes.

RJ: Do you think that as the performer has an idea. . . . because cadenzas used to be written by performers. And they were written from the themes and ideas from before. Here we have a performer playing the cadenza but the composer has been the one who has given us the themes and ideas from before. Shouldn't we as the performer, to get that kind of improvisational feeling, make it feel like it's coming from something we've made up. And know the theme and the idea that it's coming from.

JT: Yes, absolutely.

RJ: That's the sort of thing that takes some analysis. Here's this part in the cadenza, what does it relate to? I need to know that so that I can make it grow out of that idea, and not just play the notes.

JT: What I'm not sure about is, this may sound stupid. Does it help to know that this is theme A again?

RJ: I need to have an association to play off of. Especially if I'm going to get off the page.

JT: But isn't theme A different when it comes back?

RJ: Yes, and each time I can see more what to do with it. How it's changing and what changes to bring out. I'm talking about what I, the performer, am thinking, to know what I want and how I want to project it.

JT: But you are a listener. The composer is the first listener, the performer is the second listener and the audience is the third listener. Aren't our goals directed toward that? Towards listening.

RJ: Yes. My goal is toward listening. But for the listening to be of my interpretation and for it to be what I feel is a good interpretation, personally, I have to know what I'm dealing with to know how I want to project the texture, the balance, the color, the dynamic, the phrasing, to the listener in the audience.

JT: But doesn't your thinking always start as a listener? Whatever thinking that is? See what I'm fighting all throughout here is this idea that the analysis, and I hate to use that word because that's a loaded word, but the *analysis* becomes the guiding light for you -- how you decide to do things -- rather than the *piece*. In other words, you say, "oh this is theme A again and therefore, because my chart says this is theme A again. . ." You're being pushed by the chart rather than by the music. You know what I mean? That's what I'm always suspicious of. Always.

RJ: You can be suspicious, because it is abused. But that's not what I'm talking about. If I have a chart, it's from what the music has spoken to me. And that chart is not, for me, in

any way written in stone simply because it is on paper. I can adjust this, and make changes. Things that I hear now that I didn't hear before.

JT: Oh, so that's flexible? You can say, "now wait a minute I don't think that's where theme II comes in at all, it's over here." In a way then this *textual* presentation of this piece is kind of a performance presentation. Because you're saying this is malleable. And it's dictated by how I view this piece as a performer on a Tuesday in March, but in November I go back and say, oh that's got to change, this doesn't work.

RJ: Yes, yes. The analysis has to be as malleable as the performer who plays it, and every time they play it, it's slightly different. What I'm writing now is like a recording of a performance. It captures that particular interpretation, but doesn't mean it is the *only* interpretation.

JT: That's a very good point because most of us think of analysis as fixed in cement. Right?

RJ:. Yes, I'll have to bring that out. In that pamphlet from your publisher, it says that the *Fantasy* is, "stylized after classical models like the Brahms Clarinet Sonatas."

JT: That didn't come from me. Some musicologist put that in.

RJ: Was there a model or inspiration for this piece like the Messiaen was for *Wings*?

JT: No.

RJ: Nothing? There wasn't a piece you'd heard for clarinet and piano that you thought of as a model?

JT: I actually hadn't heard a whole lot of clarinet and piano at that point. You talk about the power of words, because Richard Stoltzman had asked me specifically for a fantasy, because I was now given permission in some odd sort of way to just fantasize, this piece yielded some interesting new stuff for me. Like the boogie woogie thing, I was a closet boogie woogie player. I allowed that to come right out. It was a big risk. And the *Harbor Lights* tune came out as another risk. And other different gestures that I pushed the envelope on.

RJ: You've talked about your style as being organic. As a fantasy, this concept came naturally to you, this evolving. . .

JT: That's true, but this gave me some kind of permission. To be more exploratory within one piece.

RJ: I understand. Thank you so much for your time. You have been most generous and helpful.

JT: I look forward to seeing the finished product. Good luck to you!

Telephone interview with Robert Spring, 6 June 1998.

RJ: What is your relationship with Joan Tower?

RS: In 1991 I did the first recording of the *Fantasy* and the Concerto on a disc that also has *Wings* and *Breakfast Rhythms*. I've also performed the Concerto a couple of times with different orchestras around the country and actually am going to perform it again on July 5th up at Interlochen. So my relationship with her is that I met here when she came to Tempi, where I teach at the University, for a visiting composer's series. At that point Summit Records was asking me to do a recording. They wanted me to do a CD and they wanted it all one composer. So I submitted a bunch of different composers to Summit Records and they thought that Joan Tower would sell more records. So I auditioned for her on a couple of different occasions, because to do a first recording, if the composer is alive, you need to have the composer's permission. And I also wanted to have her there for the recordings as a music advisor so they would be recordings done the way she wanted the pieces done.

RJ: So she was there during the process of recording.

RS: Yes she was. All of it.

RJ: And did she make many comments? Particularly about the *Fantasy* since that's the piece I'm discussing.

RS: Oh yes. One of the big concerns that she had about the *Fantasy* before I recorded it was the ability to play through something from beginning to end and make sense of it, so that there was musical sense from beginning to the end. The *Fantasy* is pretty fragmented in a lot of ways and she wanted me to be able to play it from beginning to end and make musical sense of it. One of the pieces that she wanted me to mail her a tape recording of me performing was the Debussy *Rhapsodie* to see if I could do something like that. Having her there had a big effect on the interpretation.

RJ: So did she change some things or ideas that you had?

RS: Oh yeah. We sent her tapes along the way before we did the actual recording so she could hear what we were doing at the time and then she faxed back comments that she had.

RJ: The CD performance is really extraordinary. That comes through, that sense of knowing what's going on in the music from the beginning to the end. Did you find similarities in her music? A Joan Tower style if you will, that might help you to better

understand other Joan Tower pieces?

RS: Yes I did. I had a doctoral student. . .

RJ: Nancy Bond, yes, I've read it.

RS: Nancy's dissertation got me thinking about Joan's compositional style and how she evolves, how the process evolves from beginning to end. One of the things that helped me a lot was these little figures that whirl around a specific note, giving you a kind of tonal center in that area and then gradually without the listener really being made aware of it, the tonal center either rises or falls by these patterns shifting just slightly. You find it a lot in *Wings,* in the triplet section on the third page. You find the same things in the *Fantasy* in several sections and in the concerto in several sections. And I think that's one of the big things I've noticed is the way she evolves from one pitch level, and I'm not a theorist so I don't want to get into an analysis of it, but from one level to the next there are these whirlwind figures that center on one note and then they go one direction or another and you're not really aware they're moving because it moves perhaps one note at a time. And then the pattern shifts just slightly and you move up or you move down or to a different area. I find a lot of similarities between *Wings* and the *Fantasy* in the way that the big leaps works. And the cadenza, at the end, the way it moves. You start at one point and the next thing you know you're in the lower register and the next thing you know you're really high but you don't really know how you got there. The same thing happens in *Wings* on page 5 and 6, I think it is, where you really evolve upward to some really high, screaming trills. And you don't really know how you got there, it just sort of happened. I think that was one of the big eye openers that I had. The other thing is how her music evolves dynamically from soft to loud. Very seldom are there enormous shifts in dynamics instantly. They work their way up to something, these huge climaxes. And I think the trick to the climaxes is to try to figure out where the biggest one is and make everything else secondary to that.

RJ: I can definitely relate to that from the *Fantasy*. How did you approach this work in preparation for performance and for the CD? Did you do any formal analysis? By that I mean, not necessarily written but a conscious analytical thought process. And if so, what was the nature of that analysis and is that common for you when you're studying other works as well?

RS: I guess my analysis of it would have to be talking about tonal centers and where things were leading. Looking at the big picture to try to find out where we started and where we ended and how the clarinet fit into that whole picture. So yes I did a little bit of a formal analysis trying to figure it all out and figure out how to make the sections work together. In terms of preparation of the piece, Joan doesn't know this story, but I didn't know how to circular breathe until she gave me the permission to do the recording, I had to learn. So just from a strictly clarinet stand point I had to learn to circular breathe to get

through the cadenza. That was a big thing. All the preparation was done toward a recording as opposed to towards a performance, although we did several performances of it before hand. We wanted to make sure we weren't second guessing on anything. I guess it's kind of a different kind of analysis in that we did, the pianist and I, an analysis of where things were going and what was happening. But then we had to send the tapes back to her to get an idea if we were on the right track. So I guess it's a different kind of preparation in that it was not done entirely by the performer. It was done by the performer with the composer in the background

RJ: That's interesting, especially with this topic, the idea that your intuition may have lead you in one direction but the composer wanted something else.

RS: Most of the time the pianist and I were okay with it. There were little things that she would want something perhaps. . . . I remember one section, I don't have it in front of me now but it's a fast page turn and then you have this really loud low F# [m. 173]. I remember we just couldn't play that loud enough for her. She said it needs to sound like bowling balls. She never really got into the theory behind how she composed it or anything like that and I didn't ask her. I've done a lot of stuff with composers through the years and I find that most of the time when I ask composers how they compose something they get all nervous. So I didn't ask her how she composed it but we did talk a little bit about primarily climax points. Points of real important climaxes, either rhythmically, tonally or just in terms of pitch itself.

RJ: This question is a follow up to the previous one. In some ways you've already answered it but there may be something you'd like to add. To what extent do you follow your intuition when you're preparing a work? Do you ever find that your intuition or initial impulse has lead you astray and after hearing or perhaps analyzing a passage you've changed your mind?

RS: Not in her music. Being a performing composer as she is, I don't think she performs as much now as she did in the past when she was with Da Capo Chamber Players all the time, but I think that her music makes sense in terms of performance. That when you feel something moving a certain way, it generally does. And I don't know if that's because she's a performer herself, but it seem like my intuitions worked pretty well with it.

RJ: There wasn't a time when you thought: let me check this out with the score. I'm not talking about a formal pitch analysis, I'm talking more simple types of analysis like balancing or phrasing or tempo.

RS: Balance can be a problem in that you have to blow at times. The piano is pretty thick. I didn't feel at any given time that it was 100% different than what I expected it to be. I guess perhaps the only thing that would be different than what I had anticipated was the speed of things. That I tended to want to go faster than she wanted in some of the slower

sections.

RJ: The slower tempoed parts you wanted to play quicker.

RS: Yes, a little bit. She said that's me.

RJ: When I spoke to her she seemed to have a pretty good leeway for allowing the performer to do what works for them.

RS: Yes, I think she does to an extent. The only reason that it was not that way, in this case, was that we were doing it for a recording. Since it was the first recording of her music, it was very important that it be done a certain way.

RJ: Do you feel that there has been an evolution, if you will, of the performance practice of this piece? Trying different interpretations out, each time you perform it maybe something changes slightly and there's been a kind of what I call "falling into place."

RS: Yes, yes. We performed it a couple of times after we recorded it, maybe three or four times. And I've played it several times with several different pianists. The fellow I recorded it with, Eckart Sellheim, and I have done it maybe three or four times. We played it at the Clarinet Fest in Paris a couple of summers ago and we've played it on several recitals and I think if anything it becomes freer. The differences in tempos. . . . well the whole thing more of a fantasy. It becomes freer in many aspects. We know where everything lines up now so the performances become freer. And I would say the same thing holds true. . . . . I've played it with another pianist, Timothy Cheek, who teaches at the University of Michigan. He and I have done it on several recitals in Ann Arbor and then at the American Academy in Rome. And I think the more we played it the freer it got as well. We were not as concerned with lining everything up because it *was* lining up. Being able to be a little freer with the tempos, with the rubato sections.

RJ: That leads nicely into the next question involving the title, *Fantasy*. Did that have an effect on how you played it?

RS: Oh Yes, I think so. The way that it goes from the beginning from nothing and works itself up to a rhythmic helter-skelter at the bottom of the first page of the clarinet part. It's almost improvisational. The way it works up into that [m. 34] is an incredible, an almost improvisatory character I think. And it falls into that idea that I was talking about with her pitches. That you're evolving into something but you don't really know what's happening until you're there. The rhythm is written such that it's a written out accelerando because you don't really realize that you're getting faster until all of a sudden you hit that section and you realize, "oh my God, I'm really fast now." So yes, I think the improvisational character of a fantasy is very important in interpreting it and I think we thought of that a lot.

RJ: What about the song, *Harbor Lights*, were you familiar with the song?

RS: Yes.

RJ: Did you have any ideas, imagery, characterization in mind when you were playing the piece that came directly from that song?

RS: Oh yes. There are several cases, I think, where you have an image of things, a moon. I mean this sounds really hoky but. . . . .

RJ: No, these thoughts are important.

RS: Well the opening is very much like. . . I hate to say this, I sound like something I'm not, but a real moonlit bay, almost. And then in the section with the tritone [m. 247] that's very much like a buoy rocking.

RJ: That's interesting. I called it exactly the same thing when I described that section.

RS: She used a term once in the section where the piano has that incredibly difficult sixteenth note pattern when you're playing the eight-notes against it. [m. 146 and m. 268] She said once that it was chipmunks. And you know, it made all the sense in the world at that point.

RJ: That's funny. The last things I want to ask you involve the chapters of my dissertation. What I did was to divide the chapters up into issues that would involve the performer. A chapter on formal structure, on themes, phrasing, balance and texture, one involving rhythm and tempo and lastly one that combines dynamics, articulation and tone color. So the last questions are involving those chapters. Concerning formal structure, did you think of the formal structure as you were working on it? Some kind of thought process? Do you feel that it's important for the performer to in some way comprehend the structure of the piece?

RS: I think so, Yes. The evolution of learning any piece, I think as a performer, at least in my case is that I begin by actually learning the notes. And trying to figure out where it's all headed. For me, if I can hear something I'm a lot better off than just looking at it on the paper. So in the beginning I was learning the notes and just seeing how it all worked. Then actually the first time we rehearsed it we realized how far off we were from the mark. I think we both sat down and looked at the formal structure and tried to figure out how to make it all go together.

RJ: Can you say what the process was? When you made that decision sit down and look and talk about the structure and how it went together?

RS: What do you mean?

RJ: The actual process of analysis of the structure when you sat down to look at it, how did you go about it at that point?

RS: The first thing we looked for were big sections and those are pretty obvious. Then trying to find a way that perhaps those sections related to sections around them or other sections within the piece. And trying to bring out those relationships. And probably the last thing was trying to find a way to put it all together where it didn't sound like each section was a different section.

RJ: Yes, that's important to her. When I talked to her about formal structure she was a little bit leery of this concept of sectionalizing the music. She really wanted to have it go together.

RS: Well that was the thing that she griped at us about. That's why we worked so hard to create the idea that the piece is not sectionalized. That it exists of many sections that relate somehow.

RJ: What about the themes? Did you find there were particular themes or motives in the music?

RS: Yes, we marked a lot of them to try to bring things out. I can't remember what they were right now. We were not so concerned with the *Harbor Lights* melody at the beginning as perhaps we should have been. But we found different thematic elements that we thought were important to bring out, yes.

RJ: The next question is regarding phrasing, which also deals with breathing and the concept of consonance and dissonance. What pitches are stable and which pitches are pitches of motion. When you're thinking phrase structure, is that for you entirely intuitive or do you also some kind of analysis?

RS: I think the phrases are actually longer than you can do, in many cases, in one breath. Which is why I had to learn to circular breathe to do it. So I think intuitively I think we would maybe put breaks in, in places that she doesn't necessarily want breaks. The tension level rises quite a bit and by putting those breaks in I feel, personally, that you loose the tension that is necessary to continue the whole thing on.

RJ: You mean breathing out of necessity, even if you don't necessarily let the intensity down.

RS: I frankly don't like the breaks in some spots. I like it to continue.

RJ: How was it you made these decisions about the longer phrases? Was it purely intuitive or did you look at the score at some point to find. . . .

RS: Well we looked at the score to find points of rest, or repose, or consonance. And where everybody's line was leading. I have a terrific pianist that I work with who quite often steers me away from the fact that the clarinet part is not the entire piece. His doing that was what caused me initially to start looking at the score. I think that what we looked for were places where we could let the ideas rest. If I couldn't make it to a certain point, I had to figure out a way to do that. The phrasing ideas we were looking for was how to create the most tension possible within those lines.

RJ: What about the concept of consonant and dissonant pitches which is so obvious in tonal music. Did you find there was a thought process involving that or is it purely intuitive? I'll give you an example. In the opening clarinet theme [m. 12], which of those pitches in that minor third is consonant and which is dissonant, the upper one or the lower one?

RS: I always thought the upper note was more one of motion, perhaps just thematically because it's the one that leads you up to the higher pitch.

RJ: Was there some kind of conscious thought process like that, or was is purely intuitive though?

RS: I think that was probably more intuitive. I can't remember at this point exactly how I thought through that but I think there was an intuitive thing in front of that. There was a point were the pianist and I argued about that and I would have to look at the music again to remember how we actually decided that. But there was some thought process looking at how the pitches fit together as well as the line itself.

RJ: The next chapter is on texture and balance. In this area of texture did you find yourself doing any kind of analysis involving texture? And again I don't mean something a theorist would do, but consulting the score to find out how thick the piano part is or which register each instrument is in to decide. . . .

RS: Oh yeah, the register thing. When you're within a texture in the same range as the piano then you're going to have greater problems being heard—if in fact you're supposed to be heard. There are occasions in the piece, like the chipmunk sections [m. 146, m. 268], where you're not necessarily supposed to be heard as a solo line as much as you are to be a member of the whole class of pitches at that point. Quite a bit of the time you're within the pitches that are being played on the piano. It seems to me that it's sort of a "clariano" there. It's like an organ stop, that you're no as important, you're part of a larger texture.

RJ: That would be an area in which you were really consulting the score to find this

information out more so than an intuitive situation.

RS: Yes.

RJ: What about some aspects regarding tempo and rhythm, like the more subtle changes in tempo we talked about earlier, the lengths of the fermatas, or other aspects of rhythm that might have come up.

RS: You mean intuitive verses looking at the score?

RJ: Yes.

RS: Actually it's really funny, on the fermatas. The length of those came a lot from her. She would say that something had to be shorter or something had to be longer. And she liked the longer side. The area that would have the greatest impact on that would be the cadenza. We talked abut the effect of the pitch classes rising, and also the speed and character of the whole thing getting faster and faster. I think, since you're alone at that point, I probably was more concerned there was how to create the tension level. I probably varied further from her written tempos than I probably should have. I think I was a little fast on it in the beginning. But the idea was to create a tension and forward motion that would carry the listener.

RJ: When you're going through the process of making a decision on how much to speed up or slow down, or when to begin the change, or quite frankly whether to do the tempo markings and indications that are given. Is there a process there that's intuitive or . . .

RS: Well, both. She gives you a tempo marking on either side almost all the time. Intuitively I think we all tend to accelerate probably early. It's like crescendos, the idea is to carry the listener to the end and if you do too much too soon you don't have anyplace to go. So if anything we consciously held those back a little bit so that we could continue to carry the listener to the end. So I guess that would be intuitive. But you did have a beginning and ending tempo that you were supposed to go from and to.

RJ: The last one is where I combine dynamics, articulation and tone color. When you're making a decision with dynamics, especially in sections where not every note is marked, how do you make the decisions in how to vary the dynamics, articulation and tone color?

RS: I would say that's probably more intuitive. At that point you've done you're homework and you know where everything is supposed to go. And I think when you have long periods of time with the same dynamic level or whatever, intuitively what you as a performer do — and this is something we have to teach our students all the time to learn to do — is to carry the listener to the best of your ability and to not leave spots that are stagnant. And I think that's probably more of an intuitive thing. At least for me.

RJ: It's interesting though because you say as a teacher we do have to teach our students to do that. So I'm wondering how much of that is intuitive and how much of it is something we've been taught to do.

RS: Probably a little bit of both. In my case I had a wonderful teacher, who's retired now from the University of Michigan, John Moller, who was just an incredible teacher. His big thing was that we give away the secret too soon. I think that in her music that this is really vital, that you can't give away the secret too soon. Listeners like to be carried as far as they can be carried, I think. I don't know if that's intuitive or if it's something that we're taught but when you listen to people speak. . . real good public speakers are able to raise the voice inflection, and raise the intensity of the sound until they get to the very end of what they're trying to talk about. And they don't go on and end for long periods of time. The end really is, I think, done relatively quickly, at the end of a sentence or the end of the idea. I try to do they same thing in the way that I think about this piece, or any piece of music. I don't know if that's intuitive or something that I was taught, but I try to carry the listener until the last possible moment and then drop them.

RJ: What about various articulations. How do you make the decisions on what type of articulation is good for that phrase?

RS: I can give you a real particular one. Those two chipmunk sections. I think the decision to be made is how much of the piano do you want to cover up and how much you're a soloist and how much you're part of the overall textural idea of that entire section. My idea in those two sections is that it's just a big fabric and not one lion [sic] leaps out over the others. And in that case—the articulation—we made a conscious decision for me to play that short, as short as possible. So that I was not blocking so many of the notes that the pianist played. It was more of a textural thing.

RJ: That's an excellent example. What about tone color? The decision as to what tone color you want to effect for a particular section for instance.

RS: I guess this is all intuitive but at the same time all part of the academic mind set, since I make my living as a university professor. I try first to find the places where I want rest, or repose and try to create a more dark. . . dark is a bad word, I hate these words.

RJ: This is the hardest part, talking about music.

RS: I tried to create a tone color that was more at rest there, and not quite as, perhaps, strident. An example would be in the cadenza itself where you start at a very low dynamic and a low pitch and work up to the top of the second page of the cadenza to a high G#. We [clarinetists] use a variety of techniques to create that tension. And I think tone color is one we also use to try to carry the listener forward. We get more and more intense, I like that word more than bright, more and more intense with the sound and with the tone

color. Intensity is dynamics as well as tone color. So I think there was a conscious effort made to try to get a more intense sound.

RJ: That's excellent. The last question I have for you involves the cadenza. How did you approach the clarinet cadenza? Did you think of it in terms of a "traditional" cadenza that drew its material from the piece and expanded on it? If so, did you study it to find these relationships to the rest of the piece?

RS: There was some of that done, yes. Where certain things were found, interval structure I think more than anything. I can't remember right now, I'm trying to think of a particular one, but the *Harbor Lights* theme, you can find that in the piano in the opening and in the clarinet in different sections. The idea I had was to find the germ of where that came from and then to create more of an improvisatory character with it. So, yes, I was a little bit traditional in terms of trying to make it sound like an improvised event that got more and more intense as it went into it, sort of what a classical cadenza would be.

RJ: Is it, or how is it, important that we do understand where the material in the cadenza is coming from? In what way is that important to you as a performer?

RS: It's really funny, I was listening to "Talk of the Nation" yesterday on NPR and they had Leonard Slatkin on, who was talking about playing new music and how important it is to lead the listener in a direction so that they understand why certain things are being done. Whenever you have something that's not a traditional museum piece, I think it's important that the listener be aware of where certain things come from. If you're listening to Beethoven 5, anytime you hear da-da-da-daaa, da-da-da- daaa, you know exactly where that came from. When you're listening to Joan Tower you're not necessarily going to be able to hear that interval as strongly as you would have in Beethoven 5. If the performer understands where things came from and where things are going, I think the performer will then project a better image of where the piece is going aurally to the audience. So the audience will be able to hear and hopefully understand, or maybe not understand, but at least be driven, and drawn to the same directions and intensity levels.

RJ: That's an excellent way to put it. I wholeheartedly agree. That's it as far as questions I have for you. You've been extremely helpful and thorough and I thank you for letting me ask so many questions. I really appreciate the time.

Interview with Laura Flax at her home in New York City, 16 June 1998.

RJ: I know you are well acquainted with Joan Tower, in the works of that you have played, do you find that there is a "Tower style" that helps you to understand similar aspects of her works?

LF: Yes, I would say so. Her pieces have a natural shape. There're usually wonderful, slow, unfolding sections that build up with more and more momentum and they can either go back to that unfolding or resolution, or end with a bang. But there is a shape. Each of her pieces has a shape. The shape can differ, but you look for the shape of the piece.

RJ: And you notice that as an aspect of her style, not so much another composer?

LF: Oh, definitely.

RJ: Do you feel there has been a kind of evolution in the performance of the *Fantasy*? A falling into place as to how it works best for you?

LF: Yeah, you know frankly, I don't remember the performances that well. I remember my very first performance of it which was at the Bloomingdale School of Music. I remember that it was very rough. It was with Sarah Rothenberg and I and that we really hadn't gotten it. Joan had come to the last rehearsal or something. Definitely I got more comfortable with it and felt like I had settled into it. But it's kind of vague.

RJ: How long has it been since you've played it?

LF: Oh a long time. Six years? I played it a lot but in a small period of time.

RJ: It doesn't have to be that piece in particular.

LF: Well like *Wings* is a piece that I've played more recently and I lived with it more. *Fantasy* wasn't written for me so it was kind of presented. Here it was, it was a done thing. It was finished. With *Wings* I was getting it page by page. Also working on it myself, not having a collaborator in a pianist. Your original question was is there an evolution to. . . .

RJ: Yes, with any new pieces that you start out with that you don't have already a standard performance practice.

LF: Of course there's an evolution. You're confronted with a new composer's language. You can't put it in the classical period or the romantic period. It's now and it's whatever

style of that particular person. You have to find that language. Certainly with Joan, I feel like I speak her language. Still, that doesn't solve everything by any means. It's still a question of how to make that language speak to somebody else. It's spending time with it and getting to know the piece.

RJ: Do you find that's something that happens in practice time or in performance?

LF: It's a combination of both. But certainly when you're performing and you're in real time as opposed to your practice studio where you can imagine you're performing but. . . certainly the more you perform a piece the more you can refine it. I do remember that with the *Fantasy* that there were timing things that I could work on over and over by myself but unless it was in performance I couldn't really get a sense of whether it was working or not. And we got a chance to work things out.

RJ: Were you familiar with the song *Harbor Lights* before. . . .

LF: I wasn't, but I got the. . . . Platters, did they do it? I got a CD actually and I listened to it to get the mood of it.

RJ: So when you were preparing then, it didn't really have any effect on what you were doing.

LF: No, but I did listen to it so that I could try and pick out the melody because I was at *sea*, not in the *harbor*.

RJ: That's good. What about the title, *Fantasy*? Did that have any effect on it when you were preparing it, the concept of a fantasy as opposed to a sonata form.

LF: Well, sure. With a fantasy you expect that it can be freer than a sonata form. So I had a freer approach. In terms of the shape, it's like a fantastic shape as opposed to geometric.

RJ: You mentioned a moment ago that Joan had heard one rehearsal. Did she work with you on this piece other than that? Did she make comments? Change things?

LF: Yes, I remember the whole boogie bass thing. She didn't think that was working. She wanted more. I think she really wanted the piano to explode. And maybe we were being a little too polite. But I think we got it eventually. And I remember some tempi things. . . . maybe we weren't doing the beginning slowly enough.

RJ: How do you approach a new work?

LF: With great trepidation. You mean a contemporary piece?

RJ: Yes, a new contemporary piece.

LF: Well, I try to get an overview so I read through it. I don't study a score. It's me and my instrument and the music and I try and get through it. And then I try and get through it again. Then I do it by sections. As far as intuitions, I call on my knowledge of music, past and present and see what kind of shape I can make out of it.

RJ: If it's a work for clarinet and piano, a chamber music work, at some point do you listen to a recording of it or look at the score?

LF: Well, I'm assuming there isn't a recording. Sure if there's a recording I would definitely look at it. And yes, if it's with an other instrument I would absolutely look at the score, and play with the other instrument. Of course that becomes critical.

RJ: Are you able to do that when you have a new piece?

LF: Well if I'm learning it for a reason, which these days I pretty much do, then it would be for a performance with somebody and we would get together and rehearse.

RJ: Before the rehearsal is it your practice to. . . .

LF: Yes I would look at the score, of course, you want to write things in the part and to know what's going on.

RJ: That's what I would call analysis, as a performer that's what I think of. When I'm looking at the score and not having the instrument in my hands then I'm studying the score. I'm hearing it in my head.

LF: Except I'm not hearing it in my head. What I do is I look is I look and say, I have 5 bars rest there and there's no cue. I better write in what the piano has so I'll know when to come in. It's totally ensemble. I don't think I could really hear a score in my head to look at it.

RJ: Well, I'm not really hearing all the pitches in my head but I get a visual shape of what's happening in it.

LF: I don't do that.

RJ: So then it's when you get together with the pianist that you start to figure out what to do and you make adjustments in playing time.

LF: Right, absolutely.

RJ: The topic of my dissertation involves using the performer's intuition as a guide to analysis. Let me explain that by intuition I mean subconscious thought or feeling and by analysis I mean conscious thought or study. I don't mean a formal analysis that a theorist would do for a journal. I also don't mean finding the "right" way to play a piece. I simply mean studying a work to better understand it. To illuminate uncertain passages, find other possibilities, perhaps to gain a deeper understanding of it. On a questionnaire from Nancy Bond, she asked if you did any analysis of works and you answered, "no." How do you make the decisions you do and how do you come to understand a work that you're playing?

LF: You can call it intuition, but you could call it collective experience. I remember having a conversation with Joan and I said that I felt that I was being so straight with an interpretation, and she laughed because she felt like I was being so free with it and I felt like I was doing her markings. Unbeknownst to me I was putting myself there. At a certain point it becomes impossible not to insert or impose yourself on the page because you're interpreting it through your instrument. So even if you feel you're serving the music and you're being literal and you're doing everything you're supposed to do. To make any kind of artistic statement you have to interpret through your instrument and so there you are. I think I'm probably one of the most unconscious players so that it's difficult for me to say, "well I'm taking time there because I think. . . ." I won't do that. It is intuitive. I recall years in Da Capo Chamber Players where Joel Lester, who is a renowned theorist, and I would have violent arguments because he would have all these reasons why something had to be this or that. He could write a paper on it. And I would say, "well I don't think it should go that way. I don't feel that it should." And I felt as justified, if not more, that that was a valid reason. I don't think that's what the music is doing.

RJ: And you're able to make a statement like that (I don't think that's what the music is doing) without having to feel that you must justify it with specific. . .

LF: Yes. I think that's your prerogative as a performer.

RJ: That's something I want to keep away from with my approach, making it sound as if analyzing is something *everyone* needs to do. Some academics will say that. You can't go on just intuition alone, you must have study. I'm a more moderate line where I'm saying performers can go on intuition alone or if you're someone like me, who want's to do a combination of both, intuition and study, this is an approach that would work.

LF: I mean you're assuming that. . . . I remember I did a master class. A young boy came in and played Messiaen, the solo movement from the quartet, Abîme des oiseaux. The opening was fairly effective, kind of too fast in my opinion, and then he got to the fast section and it was way too slow. So I asked him why he chose his tempi, that in particular I thought that the happy birds were too slow. He said, "well they're not happy birds, they're sad birds," and I couldn't say anything. I mean, I thought they were happy birds. I

thought it was ecstatic there. So in my opinion he's wrong. He was wrong and if he had read all the stuff that Messiaen wrote, then he would have seen the light. But he *felt* that they were sad birds. I could talk to him about, "well I think they're happy birds and these are flourishes." I'm assuming that for somebody to be an intelligent performer and use their intuitions there has to be some kind of background. I don't think that performers need to go into Schenker analysis on every piece. But I do think you do have to have some historical understanding and the evolution of where the piece comes from. Like finding out about *Harbor Lights*, even if you do that kind of research. It's not Schenker analysis, you're not doing chords and all that. There is a difference. I don't think it's wise to rely on your intuition if that's the only thing you've done your whole life. Like the student you described who's musical and has good intuitions. In order for her to become a full performer that can stand up in front of an audience and have a point of view that is persuasive then she would need to get a broader context.

RJ: It's an interesting concept—what is intuition? A lot of times it seems that intuition is something that has been learned, either in hearing it in other peoples playing and your brain processed it, or someone had taught you in some simple way in a lesson or coaching and it's just become a part of you and you don't necessarily consciously think of it while you're playing, it just happens.

LF: You take your whole body of experience, and you guess. That's what you do.

RJ: You guess and then you find out if it works.

LF: Right, and it's based on what has happened before. And if it doesn't work, you guess again.

RJ: Do you notice when you're playing that something didn't work? Or do you sometimes listen to a recording where as a listener listening to yourself playing for instance the *Fantasy* or a new work where you think, that needs to be balanced differently or that needs to be louder?

LF: Both things. I'll have the experience while I'm playing like, "ulg". But sometimes I won't and then I'll listen to it and I'll say, "gee I had no idea that was how that was sounding. I don't like that, I want that to be different."

RJ: In the opening clarinet theme of the *Fantasy* some things that I found that I was uncertain with were the phrasing, the decision as to which pitches were consonant and dissonant and lastly what kind of color and articulation did I want to use to create the mood. Just in the opening part here [m.12-13] I think if I recall from a recording of yours that there was a little phrasing here [end of m. 13] and that first minor 3rd motive is so important to the piece. Do you recall when you played it if. . . .

LF: I remember thinking it was three and then three going on.

RJ: and which ones are the ones of motion and which are rest?

LF: I think I felt that. . . . I don't know. Maybe this [m.14] is already reminiscent of that (m.13) so that this [m. 14] is not necessarily so new. What's new is going to be here [m. 15]. That you're speeding up. . . .the notes are moving faster but we've had these pitches [m. 14]. This [m. 15] is what is new.

RJ: so you're moving to that because it's new?

LF: [nods her head yes]

RJ: And this last phrase here in m. 16 to 21. This was for me a little bit confusing as to how to phrase it, when to breathe.

LF: I think you shouldn't breathe till there [the end of the phrase, m. 22]. Because you're in the crescendo and the excitement is starting right in here [m. 17-19]. And then that's it and then this [m. 21] is a shimmer.

RJ: What do you mean a shimmer?

LF: Well it's like it ends and then this is a surprise to have this.

RJ: Do you think of it as part of that phase or it's a color that starts the next phrase?

LF: Doesn't the piano start that new rhythmic thing there [m. 21]? Yeah, so this is just fade out, color for the clarinet.

RJ: Do you recall noticing a change in these sections, the kind of bouncing, staccato triplet eight-note sections as opposed to the rising trill scales. Do you think of phrasing them any different?

LF: Yeah, probably, it's an interjection. There're two things going on.

RJ: Do you feel when you're playing it a sense, as I did, of, "okay this is a theme here, and now a transition and my theme comes back."

LF: I don't know.

RJ: I felt those times of less motion, like you were talking about in her music, were the more restful thematic areas and then there were these more motion filled. . . . .

LF: I'm sure that if I were working on it I would say, "you know where the slow part comes back let's do da-da-da." But I don't think I would go write in my music, A B A. but clearly the sections are related.

RJ: Yes, you said earlier something about when you play through it you do sections of it. So you do think of the music in formal structure.

LF: No, I'll go back to the "black" parts that I can't play or. . . . .

RJ: but that's a section is it not?

LF: Yes, right.

RJ: You're not putting a label to it but we do think of it in a structure, the slow part, the fast part, the trill part.

LF: Umhm.

RJ: When you're playing the sections that are more clearly thematic, do you think of them in terms of character or mood, or emotion?

LF: Sure, all those things. Just the way you were describing character change in those few bars. Surely that comes in as something new.

RJ: Do you remember thinking at any point a conscious story?

LF: No.

RJ: Like knowing the song I envisioned the boat, and the harbor and it's night. None of those particular images?

LF: No.

RJ: I know it's uncomfortable to *talk* about music.

LF: I don't mind talking about it, but there just wasn't that. . .

RJ: Those thoughts didn't come. But do you think. . .

LF: I think just in the beginning, in the opening. Setting that harbor, that's the only thing I thought in the beginning was out of the mist. . . .

RJ: I guess what I'm trying to get at is to ask you to put into words what you don't

normally put into words.

LF: But I don't do that.

RJ: Like, as I'm playing this I'm thinking or I'm feeling. . . .

LF: But I'm not. As I'm playing that I'm thinking about making a transition into the next. . . .

RJ: You're not trying to express character or story. . . . .

LF: Perhaps a character. No story, no image, no picture. I'm not telling a story. With this piece I never did. I felt like it was always team work and being there and making transitions and taking something over and giving something.

RJ: So when you say character then. . . .

LF: Well, I'll think this is perky or this is light, or this mysterious. But it's not necessarily part of a story.

RJ: I don't get that specific. For me, just what you're saying. When I say story that's really what I mean. I don't think of it like a novel. But I guess I do think more in images.

LF: . . . and I think in terms of a character.

RJ: Comparing these two sections, [m. 145 and 173] they are very different in terms of balance and texture. Do you remember in working on that any particular things about the balance or texture?

LF: Just that we had to be totally accurate there [m.145] and it wasn't so critical here [m. 173]. It was completely tight. There was no freedom at all there [m. 145].

RJ: How about this section here [m.173] to here [m. 246]. Do you remember having any thoughts of what's going on here? What is this part about? It's definitely something we would look at in practicing and call it new section.

LF: I remember this is a pretty weak section of the piece. I never felt like that section worked.

RJ: Do you recall when you came to this section [m. 247]? We come to a pretty clear ending here and a new start. Do you recall what was going on at this point?

LF: I think I always wanted to play it slower than it was. I remember that I had to get to

feel that this [m. 247] really related to that [m. 246]. It isn't something so new, even though it feels like it's the same as the opening, it's not.

RJ: Is there a sense that you want to come back to something like this [m. 12]?

LF: Yes, right.

RJ: Moving to the clarinet cadenza. When you played through it were you struck with it as being a classical cadenza in the sense that it's taken from material that's presented earlier on and built upon and improvised?

LF: No, I didn't think of it. I mean, I just put it together. . . . I don't know.

RJ: You didn't go back to see where the ideas came from?

LF: Oh no. Absolutely not. No.

RJ: You took the section, as is?

LF: Yes, as is.

RJ: The last area is dynamics, articulation and tone color. When you're playing the different sections do you have a sense of color? Like I want this to be a dark color here and this to be bright. Or is color something that you would say is entirely intuitive?

LF: No, certainly color is something conscious. You know, intuition is the first time you play something. You're reading something for the first time. All your senses are out there. And then you refine. You say, that section needs to be warmer, so you make a warm color. . . or dark or whatever words you choose. But yes, that's very conscious. In my opinion color is one of the most important. . . . . you know, what else is there?

RJ: And yet it's the thing that's the least indicated in the music.

LF: Well because that's for the performers.

RJ: It is something that is definitely important to the music in making it work, or creating the mood or shaping it, right? Your concept of how you color it.

LF: Yes, sure. But it's a tremendously personal thing.

RJ: And if you were to say, for instance, I want to make this section darker. If you were pressed to say why, is that something you could answer?

LF: I wouldn't say darker, that's not a word I would use. I would say, warmer or more covered, more of an emerging sound, a whisp/hushed. And I would justify it by what I think is happening. You're at the beginning of an emerging phrase or you're at the height of something that's come full blown. But I don't think anybody would call you on it, it's not something that I would get into with Joel Lester about because I don't think that's something that your colleagues hear as much as some other things. Sometimes somebody would say, "well try a different color there," and you do it.

RJ: I'm basically finished. I'm very interested in this issue of disagreements in rehearsals. It's an interesting subject to me. I've been in many rehearsals where musicians disagreed on how something should be played. Some musicians are feeling in one way and some are feeling it in another way. How do we resolve. . .

LF: So if you're lucky enough to get your opinion knocked through and everybody is honest enough to go with you in performance, then you get it. If you can bully it through, I mean that's all it is, it's bullying it through. And it's either with intentionality of performance or talking it through in rehearsal.

RJ: So in a discrepancy like that between you and another person. . . that person feels it that way and you feel it this way. You feel that both ways are valuable and that you choose one over the other simply because it's your choice?

LF: Probably.

RJ: and that it's just as valid to do it their way.

LF: Right.

RJ: What you're saying you didn't like was the idea of using analysis as a tool to club you over the head with and say, "because this is in the music, this is the way it is." I think of analysis like performance. You can make as many different studies of the piece as you can performances of it. Whatever you can find in the music to justify the way you want to play it, I could find reasons to justify. . .

LF: Right, it becomes personal, and there are other ways to do it. We were always open to trying all the different ways, but we were not always unanimous in our decisions.

RJ: There has to be an understanding that just because you can find a justification for it in the score theoretically, that doesn't *mean* that that's the way it has to be. Thank you so much for your time, you've been very generous.

RJ: I know you have played other works by Joan Tower. Do you find similarities? A "Tower style," that helped you to grasp or understand new works more easily?

CN: Oh, Yes. I would say the three works that I've played, *Wings, Fantasy* and the Concerto form a set which is very closely related, both thematically and stylistically. They form a continuum from like 1979 to 1986. These pieces are very much representative of her so called, "later style." Earlier music like *Petroushskates,* is a little bit different, but there's always something kind of similar, like a rhythmic vitality, even if the pitches are a little different.

RJ: Can you articulate more, other than rhythmic vitality what you think of in the clarinet works?

CN: She uses three things I guess. She has these rising figures. It's something she describes herself, it comes from the Schoenberg First Chamber Symphony. She uses these rising intervals, not just fourths though. She uses these big crescendos that come from Messiaen as well as her heavy use of diminished scales, octatonic scales which also you can say comes from Messiaen to a certain extent. And all those three pieces have that. What she also has is a use of rhythm where things will speed up and slow down in ways to create a sense of instability. The three piece that I mentioned are heavily loaded with these elements.

RJ: So when you came to a new Joan Tower work, you were prepared for that, you looked for it, it became a part of your knowledge.

CN: That's right, but that's true of any composer. A composer develops a particular language and even if they go off in different directions, if they're good, they have a profile, which makes their music recognizable.

RJ: So after you play a couple of her pieces, you begin to develop this kind of intuition because you've played her work before.

CN: I think it's two things. It becomes easier, you recognize things. But from the very beginning if you're going to play a piece of music you have to discover the language. That language, as you're learning the piece, hopefully becomes clear. When you go on to the next piece you can build on it, you don't have to discover it anew. If you're going to play a piece convincingly at all, you have to understand what it's about.

RJ: My dissertation is about the intuition of the performer, using it as a guide to creating

an analysis that is performance based. When you approached the *Fantasy* or any new work of Joan's, what is your process? How do you go about learning a new work?

CN: For me it is very important to look at the whole score, which I try to begin with if I can, and with these pieces I had them. That way you don't see just a little part, you see the whole thing. And I read it through.

RJ: You mean on the piano?

CN: I can read it through on the piano. I can read it through sitting down. Sort of looking at it, seeing what is happening in the piece and then I start to play it through and at the same time I look for the structure of the piece, the way the composer is building the work and also what I call the dramatic structure.

RJ: Which is?

CN: When you play something, there's a certain shape, it has to move places. And most music has culminations in places and then relaxations and you have to find those places. That's basically the process.

RJ: I'm particularly interested in the relationship and differences between initial response —what I'm calling intuition—and decisions that were made on a more conscious level—by which I mean analysis. I'd like to ask you about some specific topics that are of particular importance to the performer and try to jog your memory in regard to your journey while learning this piece. The first area is that of shape or structure of the piece. How did you come to perceive the structure of the *Fantasy*? How much of it had to do with playing it and having an intuitive response and how much of it was more on a conscious thought level?

CN: For me, there's very little difference between intuition and conscious analysis. I perceive both simultaneously. What it can be is that when I first look at a piece, I hear it, and whether it's conscious or unconscious, I'm always analyzing the piece. Maybe I miss a certain connection in the beginning and I see that connection later, and that connection will enrich my understanding of the piece. Also in a particular piece, as I go through it in the beginning I can say that, "yeah this is all clear, this is clear, I understand this, but this doesn't make sense to me. Why did the composer do this? Is this a mistake? A weakness? Or is it a lack of my understanding?" I think that the best way to proceed is that you begin by thinking that it is a lack of understanding. If you think it's a weakness then you might as well not bother being in music. You don't understand anything new. Depending on how complex a piece it is it will be either more complex or easy to come to grips with these little problems. You take a composer like Brahms who is complex. There are little details that interweave in his various pieces which are always crying out for some kind of resolution. His mind always thought in a very complex, intricate way. So there are even in

the Brahms clarinet sonatas, there are certain details, and I've played them for I don't know how many years, that just now I've thought, "ah, now I understand, this is what he's done." Joan's music is more simple than that. In the *Fantasy* the overall structure is very clear. So from the very beginning I felt no problem. Joan doesn't really perform much any more, but she was a performer and she's very aware of dramatic shape. Also there's this very funny idea of keeping performers happy. For instance, in this *Fantasy* she has two cadenzas. It's a very democratic piece. The dramatic shape that she has I think she models after Beethoven. We had many conversations about this piece [*Fantasy*] and especially the concerto when she was writing it. She often talked about Beethoven and how his harmonic rhythm was so unconditional, it can't be anything else. It's very rigorous and it has this great sense of naturalness of direction. So the sense of architecture is tremendously clear. Talking about the piece, the way the piece works is it has this introduction that sets the stage and then rhythmically it becomes more excited and she goes to shorter rhythmic groups. I talked earlier about how one characteristic of her music is how she does what Elliott Carter called rhythmic crescendi and diminuendi. She has these written out ritardandos and accelerandos so that you have this sense that something is getting more excited, more urgent and then relaxing. This comes from that classical composers did with harmonic rhythm. Doubling the harmonic rhythm, tripling it and doing the opposite. There, of course, it was done with a more regular beat. The divisions were always more easily divisible. While what Joan does is more detailed, but the sense of the pulse getting slower or faster is the same as in earlier music. So in this piece that's exactly what she does in the beginning to set the stage. It's incredibly clear. It goes into this first wave. Her music also has this sense of waves. So you have this first wave of energy that then dissipates. Then the second wave comes working itself into this rhythmic crescendo. Her music works is deals with sections which aren't variations in a classical sense but they are very much the same music. You can analyze it and see that they share say the minor third or the octatonic scales. Her variations, are sometimes connected with these transitions. This section here [mm. 146-171] I think are a high point, a point of arrival. As I see it, it's almost that she has this material [mm. 146-171] and then she came up with theme [mm. 12-21] and then sort of built the piece out from those.

RJ: You think that was the impetus of the piece?

CN: Well it's very possible, I don't know, and I don't care about that. When I compose, I rarely compose from the beginning of the piece and think that not many composers do. They get some idea, something crystallizes which may be the beginning but often it's the middle or sometimes the end, and then the piece grows. Anyway, after this section [mm. 146-171] you have this crescendo as it keeps going which breaks into the piano cadenza and then into the clarinet cadenza and then it returns to the opening. You can talk about this piece having these waves. Whether she did it consciously or not that way, that's the effect the piece gives. You have this wave that goes to this which is the body of the piece and then builds before coming down momentarily before the final wave which goes to the cadenzas. So there's this building to these big moments in the piece [mm. 146-171 and the

two cadenzas] and each wave is more developed and gets louder. And then you have this small coda where you go back to the beginning. It's also tremendously tonal revolving around this first C to the last part [mm. 391-394] but then it ends with this [last measure] which I bet has to do with the *Harbor Lights* tune. I haven't thought about it enough. Anyway I find it so clear.

RJ: The next area is regarding phrasing. Following up on the same idea, how much is intuitive and how much is conscious thought, and I thought a good spot might be this section from mm. 12-22. How did you approach this in regard to phrasing.

CN: Well her phrasing is incredibly clear. First of all she's written it out. And then the way it is harmonically. [he plays the clarinet part on the piano and refers to the G♭ and E♭ in m. 15 as creating tension].

RJ: So both the E and the G [mm. 12-14] are consonant? And they lead to the G♭.

CN: Right. Yes. They have to be consonant because she's constantly going back and forth.

RJ: So you don't think of one of them [E/G)] as being more stable?

CN: You have to move somewhere, that always happens. I don't think there's ever a case where everything is exactly the same. There are two possibilities. You can either go [he sings the two possibilities, one stresses the E, one stresses the G]. The one thing which has to be in this phrasing is the motion to the G♭. Composers always work. She sets it up as rhythmically consonant [m.12] then it begins to unstabilize with the dotted quarter-notes [m.14]. The each of the following phrases are offset with the piano chords. The crescendo [m. 17] changes the direction of the motion and pushes toward the C [m. 19] which goes back to the beginning of the piece. So the shape is in the music. You can feel it intuitively and play it well in the beginning or you can look at it and play it well eventually.

RJ: Let me ask you some specific questions about the phrasing of this theme. You see the slurs in mm. 12-17 is also being the phrasing . . .

CN: Yes.

RJ: And you feel a break before the G♭ in m. 18.

CN: Yes, that's sort of combined with the piano. And the last two pitches go back to the opening.

RJ: Is m. 20 the end of the phrase?

CN: It's an elision. It's the end and the beginning of the next.

RJ: Would you phrase just before the fermata?

CN: I see it in two ways. This is not a beginning. She puts this fermata here with the hairpin which means obviously it's the end and then it moves on. No question. And since you have this big diminuendo [m.19] you emerge from the piano because the piano will stay forte longer. She's a performer and she realizes that and also there's a reason why she doesn't tie that through. She just wants to give you a breath.

RJ: Okay, regarding rhythm now, note lengths, extending or shortening. Tempos, accelerandos, lengths of fermatas. One of the questions for the performer is when can time be taken and when must it be more exact? Looking at measure 75 for instance,,,,

CN: Well this is a spot where you can definitely not take time. You see one thing about Joan's music, you can take time in places which are more improvisatory. There's two kinds of music in this, but most of the music that the clarinet plays is rhythmically highly structured. Now here for instance [piano, m. 75] is very Stravinsky and the clarinet has a rhythmic accelerando [dotted quarter-notes to quarter-notes, mm. 77-78] there, so you don't take time. It's highly structured. The place where you take time is in the piano part in the fantasia sections like here where she says *dolce e sostenuto* [m. 60] and puts the tenutos. Those are indications that this is the different kind of "whooshing" music and time can be taken. As it goes on it becomes more and more rhythmical and she does this very consciously because all of this is very long harmonically. It's when the divisions become more tighter [m.74] that you can't take time anymore. So what she's done has gone from something very loose harmonically to where the clarinet comes in being very tight. So there's no way to take anytime here. She wrote it into the music, 100% exactly. Okay, so what's the next section?

RJ: The next part was over at measure 220, these breaks.

CN: Now those breaks there have to be exactly in time, because here [mm. 223-224] she has 5 beats, here [m. 222] 2 beats and here [m. 226] 3 beats. That's something she thought about, it's not by chance. So if you end up doing something kind of amorphous you loose the meaning of what those breaks are. The big break is framed by the shorter breaks that make up the same time. You have to be exact.

RJ: Even this part [two eighth-rests at the end of m. 225]?

CN: Yeah, that's exactly right. Everything is framed with these triplets and that is just the same thing twice as slow, so it should be exact. 100% and when you play it right it feels good too.

RJ: Going on to measure 247.

CN: Okay, the point of this is not a matter of taking time or not taking time. What's happening here is she builds up a lot of energy with these triplets before this section and she need to dissipate all this energy. So she puts this break and gives us this, call it an interlude [m. 247]. But here again you should not take time. It's a matter of choosing the tempo.

RJ: And what about that tempo? Do you play the tempo indicated?

CN: I play this part a little slower than marked, yes. But once you choose the tempo you shouldn't take time. Not taking time does not mean that you play without nuance. It's very different. The piano has the two-beat motives that kind of sigh and I go with that [in the clarinet part]. Then as the melody goes higher it becomes more *espressivo.* Then when she writes it in like m. 251 or 255, of course you take time. And then whether you start at 60 [m. 255] or slower that doesn't make any difference. But again there has to be a sense of tempo. Not in an exact metronomic beat, but something that is growing. Like when she writes the threes and fours [m. 256] it's like in the opening when you're dealing with time, it does not mean that you perfect triplets and perfect sixteenth-notes. No, you play with a sense of a rhythmic crescendo. She could have noted it graphically, she decided to use notes, just waking into bigger and bigger waves. But you have to understand that she doesn't want it straight, you blend the rhythms to create a sense of flux in the tempo. She does the same thing in *Wings.* Just like in the opening, you do the same here [mm. 48-53]. You blend the fives, fours, threes and twos together so in a way you take time in these places, a little faster, a little slower. That's an important part. This is the way she deals with transitions. Okay, what's next?

RJ: The next section deals with texture and balance issues. One way which you might talk about this is when you're playing this with a pianist and you're dealing with these issues of balance and texture. How decisions made. One of the areas we've talked about is this opening part [m.12]. For instance, does the clarinet line come out as a melody or is it part of a composite sonority within the piano chord?

CN: It's both. No question about it. It's contained within the piano chord.

RJ: But the marking of *ppp* makes it seem as if it shouldn't be projected as a melody.

CN: You have to understand that this has to do with the fact that she's a performer and she sometimes second guesses piano and clarinet. This is something we talked about years ago. I have discussions a lot with composers about this. Just recently with Elliott Carter about the same thing. I feel there's always a danger in marking music to second guess instruments because in the future people can take that as musical intention. I always think it's best. Say you have a trombone and a flute in the low register and percussion and it's

supposed to be *piano*, then you write them all *piano* because the idea sonorities should balance. Now in a practical situation that may mean that the trombone may have to play pianissimo and the snare drum incredibly softly and flute will have to play *mezzo piano* you see. That's my feeling but it's very complicated because maybe if I'm doing the performance then that's the way I think and I'll try to balance it, but someone else my not try to do that. So you can't really resolve it completely. So here, what she wants is for the clarinet to start as part of the texture of the piano chord, but as the piano sound decays the clarinet will emerge from it. And she was afraid if she just wrote *pianissimo* [which the piano has] that the clarinet would be to loud on the initial attack and stick out. That's why I say it's both. And then also the fact that it moves makes it come out. It can't work any other way. If the piano moved each time the clarinet did, then the clarinet would be part of the texture, and composers do that, make a chord using different instruments to give it one color or another. But here it's definitely not that. This is an interesting point, related to the beginning when I said there were two ways to do that [the clarinet line in m. 12]. [Neidich sings two examples. The first one gives an expressive articulation to the beginning of each of the three pitches in mm. 12-13 but there is a decay in sound and intensity on each one, so that there is not a sense of motion towards the upper or lower pitch. The second clearly moves into the upper note]. "Intuitively" I play it like this [the second example] you can say. I move to the A, the concert G. Now the reason is because I start in the texture, and then you're alone, and then you go back into the texture. And then after that you're all melody. But what I'll say is that I like that one. That's the way I like it. I think it sounds great that way and it's very much justified in the way she wrote it. But I can't say to someone that you're doing it wrong it you do it the other way. I can't say that. I mean if the person plays *mezzo piano* there or *mezzo forte* in the beginning, I can say, "Listen you're playing too loud." But if the person plays it the other way, I might say, "Well it's not to my taste, I think it's a little boring." I'll say that this is my personal opinion. All personal opinion I have is grounded in the text anyway. I think it's quite a nice effect that the A comes out and then goes back into the texture and then becomes more melody. And then she separates it by register, there's no way you're not going to come out here, and then you go back into the texture. Anyway, I hope I answered the question about it.

RJ: You did. The next section I'd like to look at is at measure 146.

CN: Well here, this is a composite sonority completely. She marks the piano louder than the clarinet. Personally I don't feel it, that the clarinet is actually softer than the piano. I like to blend the clarinet into the piano sound there. So you're not so aware that either instrument is playing what.

RJ: In this section did find that there were particular pitches within the clarinet part that you wanted to project?

CN: Oh yes. There's a sense of dance to it. The D and the A [concert pitch] are prominent in the beginning. It's just a matter of playing around with it. But I don't see that there's a

compelling reason to do it one way or another way. There's some freedom there. Where she changes the rhythm you sort of lead to that. You move to outline that instead of three you're in two all of a sudden.

RJ: Okay, moving ahead. The last area along this line is a chapter dealing with dynamics, articulation and tone color. I've limited it to just this section, measure 75-100. There are several articulation changes and these moments where color changes seem appropriate. Do you have anything to say on this section or subject? Are these areas completely intuitive? Or something where you consciously go back and say I need to play this shorter because. . . .I need to do this lighter because. . . .

CN: Well, I always think that way. I mean, I think that way intuitively also.

RJ: It is interesting that you think of both ways comfortably.

CN: You see, you look at it and you think of it, but you have to feel it. In other words you feel the analysis. So that can be intuitive. Anyway, in this section, the accents start here [m. 74] and you have these accents throughout [mm. 75-79]. Then of course m. 80 is an anticipation of measure 146. So it has that sense of being short because of that but also it gets faster and more energetic and in measure 81 the clarinet starts to participate in what the piano was doing in measure 75 so you start changing roles, the piano has the trills and you have that. Now you can think of that intuitively, and if you're a good musician I think you will because you've heard it already, so you play the same way. All you've done is you've analyzes intuitively what's happening. So then it starts again, and it gets faster.

RJ: Did you notice any thing about the dynamics? For instance in measure 86 when the piano has the *forte* indicated?

CN: It's just that that motive is rather important so she wants to bring that out.

RJ: And it's tempting when the piano plays out there for the clarinet to also come up to balance and then the piano drops back and you find yourself to loud.

CN: Well, if you play so loud that you can't make a crescendo to here [m. 90] then it doesn't make any sense. Maybe the first time when you rehearse it you do that, and the you say, "Opps, I made a mistake." Or you don't notice that the forte is here so you play to loud and then it clicks.

RJ: Then in this part [m. 92], the clarinet comes back and is in a middle range and it's very easy to be covered by the piano.

CN: It's a canon here and she's written quite well, so if the pianist plays as she wrote with very little pedal, or actually she wrote without pedal, then it's clean enough. So you don't

get this build up or wash of sound. I think it's written extremely well. The clarinet notes are in between the two hands, and the lower one which will project less comes after the two note octaves. The higher clarinet pitch comes after the chord, but in that register it will be heard. So as long as the pianist clears up the sound there shouldn't be a problem. I've never found a balance problem in this piece.

RJ: One of the things I noticed when I first played through it was that I played too loud, gave too much, too soon.

CN: Of course it's tempting when you first play it through for either player to play too loud. It's a natural tendency that if one player plays loud, that you play loud as well. That's why it's a good idea to know what the other person is doing. I think that intuition can give you good ideas, but you get a different intuition if you look at the whole score than if you just look at your own part, because you get more information.

RJ: We haven't really touched on tone color.

CN: Okay, what do you want to know?

RJ: Well it's an issue that is the least notated.

CN: That's right, sometimes composers will write vibrato or even dark.

RJ: Or *esspressivo,* or *dolce.* But it's not like dynamics or articulation which have gotten to the point where almost every note is marked. Is tone color something that you consciously think of? Like since you talk about sections anticipating later sections, do you think of recreating or using a similar tone color to help bring that out?

CN: Oh I think so. I you play similar passages I think it's nice to use tone color which puts things in relief. I do not do that in a programatic way. I wouldn't say, "Here I play bright, here I play green, here I play purple." I don't do that. It's more a feeling of the character of the music which is rhythm, dynamics, articulation and tone color as a unit.

RJ: To help create the character.

CN: That's right. So I'm thinking character of theme, and that will include tone color. But tone color is a complex issue. It has a lot to do with articulation and dynamics as well.

RJ: I agree. That is why I'm putting them together in one chapter.

CN: It's hard for me to talk about one without the other. Thinking of tone color, sometimes I try to blend with the piano, certain times I try to separate more and of course that involves tone color.

RJ: Let's move on to my last question, it's one I don't want to miss out on and I know we're almost out of time. We've been talking about it some already. What are your thoughts on "analysis" and "intuition" and the relationship between the two?

CN: Well as I said, I think the two, at least in my case, are completely related. That there's intuition that's informed by analysis and analysis that's informed by intuition. My bent is I *hear* relationships within the piece. And *see* them with my eyes. But I also *hear* them. Let's take a very clear example that doesn't involve this piece. In the Mozart [clarinet] concerto where you have this [he plays an example from the first movement, m. 62]. People often play this with a crescendo leading into the F which to my ear, my intuition is very wrong. Now that is because what Mozart does here is to go to an interrupted cadence on a vi chord rather than going to I, and then he goes back you see. So if you play that way, it's as if you're going to I. So intuitively it sounds wrong for me to go through that.

RJ: And yet I'm sure the players would say that the reason they play it that way is that it's intuitive!

CN: Yes, but they're not really hearing it. They're not hearing the harmony. They don't *hear* the analysis. See what I want to do is to *feel* and *hear* the analysis. I do that all the time. So I listen and I hear that vi chord, and if people don't hear that it's going to that chord and not to a I chord then they're not intuitive enough.

RJ: Could you give a definition of what you think intuition is?

CN: I think intuition is feeling the analysis. Many players in history, two pianist come to mind, Alfred Cortot and Artur Schnabel, who played very freely and in a way very intuitively. They spent a tremendous amount of time analyzing music. Or Maria Callas who was supposed to be so spontaneous and very dramatic. She was always analyzing. I think many times the most intuitive players are always analyzing.

RJ: How about a definition of analysis?

CN: Well you can analyze this way, you can play it and say, "No, it doesn't sound right." You can explain why or not, I don't care. Then you try another way and say, "Oh, that sounds better." You see, you go over it in your mind, you listen to it and hear that something isn't right or doesn't make sense to you. I don't have to articulate what it is, but I can go over it by trying something else.

RJ: So in your thinking of analysis, you don't think of it as being something—in the traditional sense—which *must* be articulated, but rather something that you hear.

CN: No, because I've know people and have had students that have been very good at

theory in a certain way, and they can tell me, "well that's obviously going to vi." [referring again to the earlier Mozart clarinet concerto excerpt] But they still play it wrong. So in other words, they've learned to *see* it, but they haven't analyzed it.

RJ: By your understanding of analysis.

CN: In the way it should be viewed because music is a language of sound. It's not a language of sight. You have to feel it. Someone might say, "That's an appoggiatura," but if you don't play it as an appoggiatura then you haven't understood that it's an appoggiatura. And if you've played it as an appoggiatura but you don't know the word appoggiatura, you've still analyzed it because you've analyzed it in the language of music.

RJ: Can you imagine an example a scenario where you've analyzed something and it seems right on paper but then you play it and you think, "This doesn't sound right."

CN: It's possible, I'd have to see a specific example. I articulate analysis. I've done it more and more since I started to teach. I have to show people what it is. I have to explain it in words, not just say play it like this. Although sometimes I do have to end up saying just that and then they say, "Oh yeah, now it makes sense," which is interesting. That's the old school of teaching, copy me. And then they gradually get an understanding. There's actually something very profound about that because they're just dealing in simply the language of music rather than extrapolating into words. But I try to show things because maybe it can be generalized to other things if people see it as well as hear it. But I've never found a case where, in fact, the analysis contradicts the feeling. In my case.

RJ: Unless perhaps you've come up with a bad analysis.

CN: That's exactly right, when there's a misguided analysis. I haven't found a case where the analysis would contradict. There are cases where analysis has shown, when I've looked at it carefully, I've seen something different than what I initially felt. But, when I've thought about it a lot, and thinking about it a lot is interesting. Thinking *in* the music rather than thinking in words. Just as I was saying before, you play it this way, you play it that way. It actually makes the piece clearer than before.

RJ: By thinking about the music, you mean exploring different alternatives, and that helps you to see which one you prefer, which one makes the most sense to you.

CN: Well yes, that's right, but sometimes with analysis I look at the piece and I see, "Oh, he's doing this. But that's weird. Is that really right?" What's happened to me always is that it comes back to me that I understand it. Or there's sometimes pieces where finally I say, "This is a flaw," in the composition. You don't always play masterpieces. There are times when you play music where something is not connected so well or something like that and you see it and you think, "Well, how am I going to make this work?"

RJ: So that's an example where analysis can be helpful to the performer.

CN: Analysis can show that it's going to a dominant here or I can see that he was trying to connect this and this, but not very successfully, so may I'll just play through it, or make a crescendo here or try to do something different to make it convincing as a piece. But that is rather rare and most of the time, well all the time in any really good piece that I've looked at, if I've seen something in the piece that I haven't felt, what I've seen actually in the end, enriches the piece. Enriches my feeling of the piece.

RJ: We're almost out of time let me toss you the last three questions I had and you can answer whichever you like. The first is, has your interpretation/playing of this piece had an evolution? The second is, did the title *Fantasy* or subtitle *those harbor lights* have any effect on your playing or approach to this piece? And the last is on your approach to the cadenza.

CN: The answer to the first one is either really short, which is yes, or really long. So maybe I'll pass by that one to a certain extent. But I will say that all the time there's an evolution when you play and sometimes some kind of mistakes can become ingrained. That happens with mistakes in text also. They become ingrained and become a part of tradition. Also when you play a piece for awhile, you get comfortable doing it certain ways. It's a good idea, and I like to do it, to go back and try to rethink something. Sometimes when you're so familiar with something, there may be something else you're passing by. Definitely the piece gets better as you play it. Now the *Fantasy*, you see fantasy and of course you think first of all different colors, not rigid, something that evolves, like a *Fantasy* is. Then *those harbor lights*, I was very lazy in the beginning, I had no idea other than it was an old pop tune. I thought maybe the minor third had something to do with it, and it had some jazzy bits, so it must be that. But it took many years before I actually became so ashamed of myself that I went out and finally found out what this song was. Then I saw how she uses it in very disguised ways. But I think that, in fact, it is something more personal than something public. It's not necessary for a good performance of this piece to know the song. You don't need to bring out or think, "Ok here are two notes from that piece." That's nonsense. This had to do with her own associations.

RJ: I was thinking more of what the song was about, the story of it, to give a fuller understanding or character to the piece.

CN: That's hard to say. I had sort of established it before I went there so I can justify anything , but it's not something that I thought about in the beginning. And it's not something that actually changed my sense of the piece. But I will say this, her music doesn't contain melodies in the traditional sense. It contains shapes, smaller motives, like waves, that sometimes can be in the form of a melody, but can also it could be a curve—or like in a painting, a streak of gray.

RJ: Well our time is up and we just made it to a quick answer to all three of those last questions. I'd like to thank you again for your time. You have been very helpful with this project.

CN: You're very welcome.

Interview with David Shifrin at his office in New York City, 19 August 1999.

RJ: I know you have played other works by Joan Tower. Do you find any similarities? A "Tower style," that helped you to grasp or understand new works more easily? Can you elaborate?

DS: I've played a number of her works, but the first work I played was the *Fantasy*, and the only work I'd heard before that was *Wings*. Of course I saw some similarities and gestures and modal patterns, her sense of drama, but each work is individual. After doing the *Fantasy* I commissioned the Clarinet Quintet which I have performed a number of times and recorded and then performed the concerto and recorded that too. So I started to play more of her music after the *Fantasy*. I met Joan Tower through the *Fantasy*. I was giving some recitals with Ursula Oppens, who is a good friend of Joan's. One of the places we played was up at Bard College where Joan is in residence. Joan came to the performance and that was when I met her, and in her own unassuming way she talked more about the Debussy than her own piece. She was very complimentary about the whole performance and it was only years later when I worked with her through a whole rehearsal sequence on the quintet that I realized how involved she gets in the preparation but how she was able to restrain herself from making a lot of comments just having heard a performance. It was beginning of a relationship. She was very enthusiastic, as was I. I was enthusiastic about the music and she was enthusiastic about the interpretation and we were clearly on similar wave lengths and agreed she'd write a piece. Then she wrote the quintet and she asked me if I was interested in the concerto, which I hadn't heard, and she sent me a wonderful tape of Charlie Neidich playing it and I got really turned on by the piece and I've added it to my repertoire and have played it many times.

RJ: So then have you found similarities?

DS: There are characteristics. She has a very distinctive style. You could probably hear a work for the first time and have a pretty good chance of identifying it as a work by Joan Tower, especially a work for the clarinet. She has a distinctive way of writing for the instrument and she knows the instrument and is able to take advantage of the dramatic and contrasting capabilities of the instrument. I'm sure you've seen her writing in the extreme registers and dynamics, taking advantage of all the things the clarinet can do, both expressively and acrobatically. Her sense of line, as well as motive and gesture, are quite identifiable.

RJ: The next question, which you've already gotten into some, is did Joan work with you on this piece? But you said played the piece before you met Joan.

DS: I rehearsed the piece with Ursula Oppens and performed it and met Joan at the

performance. But I subsequently played it again and she came to the rehearsals and I saw that she had things to say about it. Basic things that are more the kind of things that you'd rely on a good musical coach for any piece of music than specific to her own music. Things like drama and gesture and contrast and timing that could be the mark of a good musician talking about anyone's music. Rather than saying, "This is what *I* meant in this place" or, "This is one should think about when playing *my* music." It was more about music than about herself.

RJ: Did the title, "Fantasy" or subtitle, "Harbor Lights" have any effect on your playing or understanding of the piece?

DS: It's clearly a Fantasy, the way it unfolds and develops and the excitement of it and the way it tapers off at the end. "those harbor lights" only confused me because I didn't know the song and couldn't find it in the piece. She identified it for me, but it's pretty obscure. It's not a song I knew or know.

RJ: So the subtitle didn't but how about the title Fantasy then? How did that have an effect on your approach to the piece?

DS: Well, not terribly much. Even though it's a fantasy, that's a very loose title for what a work can be and the piece has structure. I think it's important to look for line and structure even in a piece that's tiled fantasy or rhapsody. I think the context of the music, hearing it and playing it does more to inform than the title. I think the title is good for the audience though.

RJ: My dissertation is about the intuition of the performer, using it as a guide to creating an analysis that is performance based. When you approached the *Fantasy*, or any new work, what is your process? How do you go about learning a new work?

DS: That's a good question and ties into the last question. I look for motif, structure. Trying to decide how to phrase and how to pace based on imparting long ideas to the listener so that they can get their mind around the whole idea of the piece and try to understand the architecture of the piece. If it goes from one point to another point and then returns to that original point in some way or another, to make sure that what you're doing points that out and doesn't obscure the plan of the composer. To bring out gestures and motives that are part of that plan and at the same time making everything you do interesting and attractive enough so that the listener will want to hear what the grand plan of the piece is. As far as intuition, I suppose that intuition and experience go hand in hand. There is no real intuition without experience. I think the interpretation of music has to be a certain amount analytical but the musical mind is analyzing even when it doesn't realize that it is, based on what our experience of sound is.

RJ: I'm particularly interested in that relationship of intuition and analysis. In particular

your initial response and decisions that were made on a more conscious level. This could be relating to your thoughts on structure, phrasing, tempos, fermatas and aspects involving dynamics, articulation and tone color.

DS: Regarding structure, you can get an idea from looking at the score what the structure is, but until it lives and breathes, you don't have a clear sense of how to execute that. The better you get that playing the piece the more you have an idea of how you want to do it. Sometimes when you look at a piece, and I think that's true of the *Fantasy*, it's an organic process of what's on the page and what's involved with performing. I've worked with many composers, including Joan. who have revised their thinking about the printed page after what they hear and see what happens when human beings actually play the music. In the matter of timing—which is not absolute—the length of a fermata or even the color of a note, depends on the room you're playing in and so many other possible factors. But I would say that one of the things that makes playing a really good piece of music is there's the absolute of being faithful to what's on the page and there's also the element of interpreting what's on the page. There really is no such thing as absolute notation. It's not an exact science. Just like the printed word can be spoken in so many different ways, the printed notes can be played and sounded so many different ways. I believe that from experience I'm convinced that there is a cycle that happens. What you see on the page, and what you think you want to make sound and then you confront the reality of what it is to execute those sounds. Then you come almost full circle to where you get to the point where you can have a lot of choices from developing the skill and familiarity with the music, and playing it. It's only after that experience of practicing and rehearsing that you come back to making the choices of how close you can come to what you think you saw in the first place.

RJ: We've covered structure pretty well. Is there an aspect of tempo you might mention? For instance the tempo markings.

DS: She writes fast tempos. When you start play them you wonder if she could really mean this. It seems so quick and demanding that you think she probably meant something slower. She prefers to work with the human element and will say, "Well, try it slower. Okay, that sounds good." But then she'll encourage you to keep working to get to what she originally conceived. She has great sense of tempo. I think she says about herself that she has perfect tempo, like some people have perfect pitch. And when she says quarter-note equals 144, she means it. There is a process involved in getting to where you can do that. I think tempo is important in her music. I've learned from the experience of learning a piece that working up to that performance level is an important aspect.

RJ: Were your decisions involving phrasing, and since we're a wind instrument, phrasing entirely intuitional or did you have some more conscience thought process?

DS: Breathing and phrasing go hand in hand, but they're not the same thing. I practice

breathing in all kinds of places to see what would be most effective for bringing off the phrase, rather than phrasing for where I had to breathe.

RJ: It's that decision that I'm interested in. How do you decide that?

DS: Trial and error.

RJ: But how do you decide which one is the most effective?

DS: Well, Joan has some opinions about how it should be phrased, but her music is logical, and dramatic and lyrical. It's informed by a language that existed before Joan, which she has made her own. But there are certain directions the music takes and rhetorical gestures, as well as lines that are clearly building and sequences, that you can understand what she's doing. Then it's the performer's job to try to bring those out most effectively. Joan certainly had some suggestions about where to breathe, but mostly about what the music should be doing. Then leave it up to the performer where to actually take in oxygen.

RJ: An area that is particular to the performer, not often discussed in analysis is dynamics, articulation and tone color. You briefly touched on that earlier. Perhaps a word or two on how you make those decisions?

DS: Joan is very explicit about dynamics, and certain types of articulation. To the point where she'll change the notation. If she wants a short note, she'll write a note with a rest. She is extremely skilled in notation and being able to ask for what she wants. She'll even write different dynamics for the two instruments so it's clear what she wants in the way of balance. As far as tone color, that's an individual thing. I think every person who plays any instrument has their own signature. The way their voice is different is like fingerprints. That's one of the interesting things about different people playing the same music. To hear the blending of the personality and the style of the performer with the composer. One hopes the two are compatible.

RJ: Does choice of tone color become conscious to you?

DS: Sure. If a passage is dark and mysterious, you want to make a dark and mysterious tone. If it's bright and festive, you want to make a bright and festive tone. There are conscious decisions for how to do that. Not scientific, but conceptual. Velocity and volume of air, how you make an embouchure, how you make the air travel through the instrument.

RJ: Does it affect matters of phrasing or structure?

DS: To varying degrees in different passages. Ideally, I think I, and most performers,

would like to forget about the instrument and just think about what we're hearing and to rely on all the skills we've developed to make those sounds happen, rather than thinking about how we're producing them at the moment we're performing a piece of music.

RJ: We're at the last question now. What are you thoughts regarding analysis and intuition and the relationship between those two, and how would you define these two terms?

DS: I think they go hand in hand. You can't rely on either one solely. You can't just analyze a piece and have that be the basis for a successful live interpretation. And you can't rely strictly on intuition to just wing it. No pun intended. So you need both. You have to develop an understanding of what the composer was doing and what their thought process was and where they were going with the piece. Then allow your imagination and your intuition and your sense of drama and lyricism to compliment it.

RJ: The last part of that question was a definition of these two words, analysis and intuition.

DS: As I said earlier I think that they are interrelated. I don't think there's necessarily such a thing as pure intuition because our intuitions are informed by experience. The reverse is true too. When you're analyzing, you have to begin somewhere. You have this innate reservoir of experience that's at least going to tell you where to begin, to start picking things apart. Knowledge and experience are the basis for both analysis and intuition.

RJ: Okay, that's it. Thank you again for your time.

APPENDIX B: RECORDING INFORMATION

Robert Spring, Clarinet, Eckart Sellheim, Piano. "Joan Tower, Music for Clarinet," Summit Records CD, 1991 (DCD 124).

Laura Flax, Clarinet, Sarah Rothenberg, Piano. Cassette tape of a live performance, Merkin Concert Hall, New York City, 21 October 1988.

Charles Neidich, Clarinet, Peter Basquin, Piano. Cassette tape of a live performance, Hunter College, CUNY, New York City, 8 October 1990.

David Shifrin, Clarinet, Irma Vallecillo, Piano. Cassette tape of a live performance, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Walter Reade Theater, New York City, 8 November 1993.

Appendix C: *Harbor Lights* Text

Harbor Lights, Words and Music by Jimmy Kennedy and Hugh Williams (Chappell: London, 1937).

Introduction
One evening long ago, a big ship was leaving,
One evening long ago, two lovers were grieving,
A crimson sun went down, the lights began to glow.
Across the harbor one evening long ago.

Refrain
I saw the Harbor Lights
They only told me we were parting,
The same old Harbor Lights
That once brought you to me,
I watch'd the Harbor Lights
How could I help if tears were starting?
Goodbye to tender nights beside the silv'ry sea.
I longed to hold you near and kiss you just once more,
But you were on the ship and I was on the shore.
Now I know lonely nights
For all the while my heart is whisp'ring,
Some other Harbor Lights will steal your love from me.

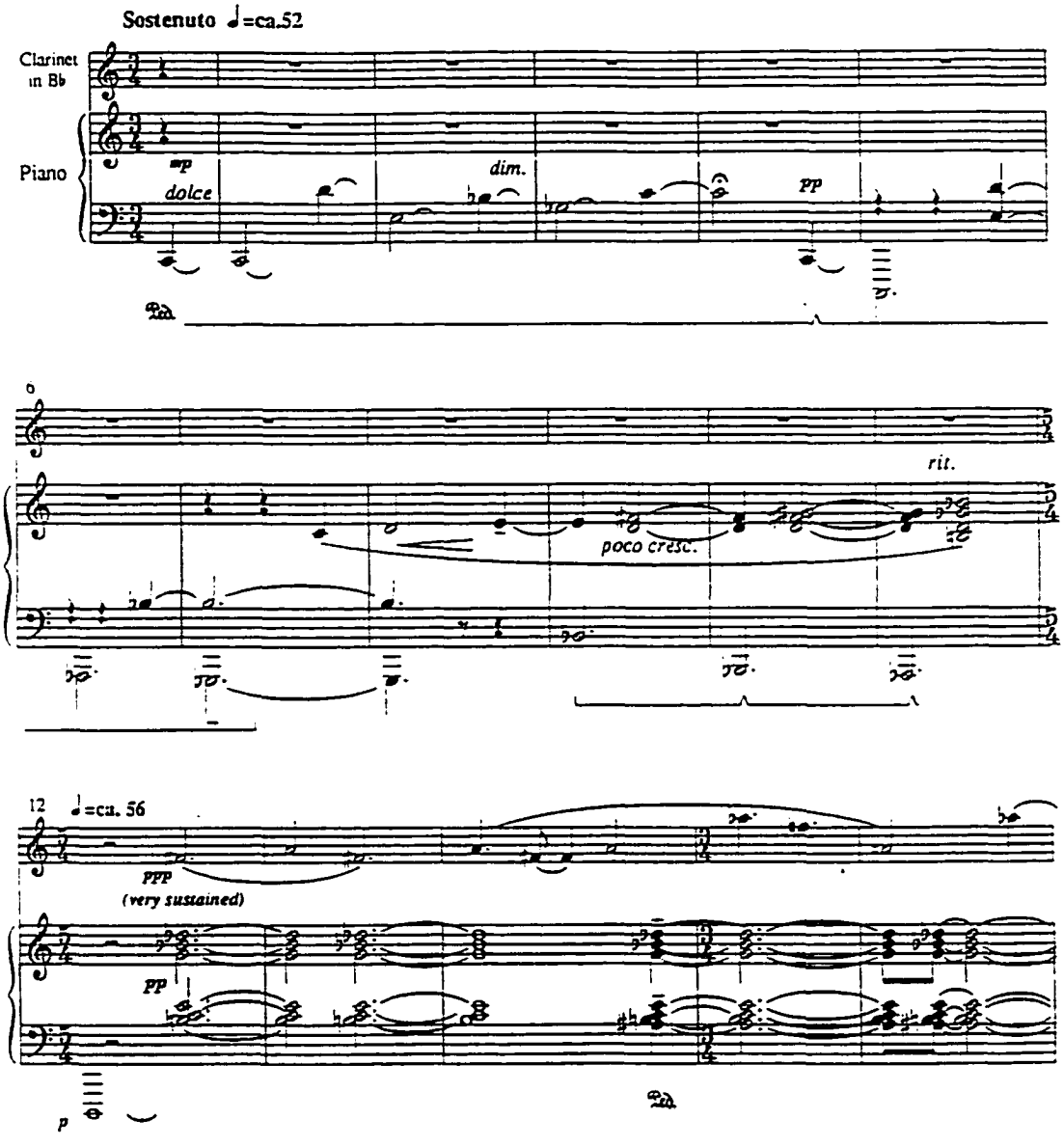
APPENDIX D

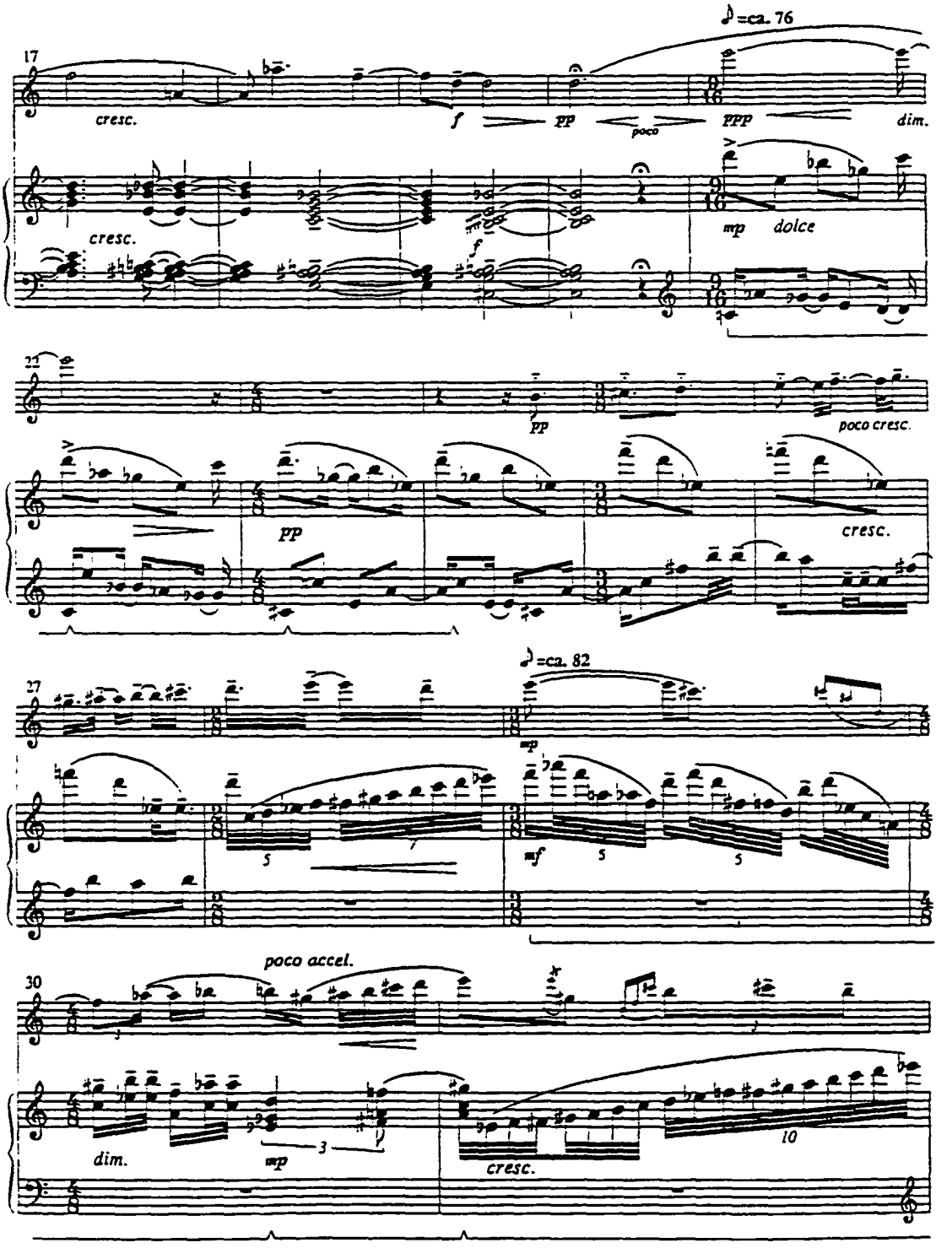
FANTASY FOR CLARINET AND PIANO
By Joan Tower

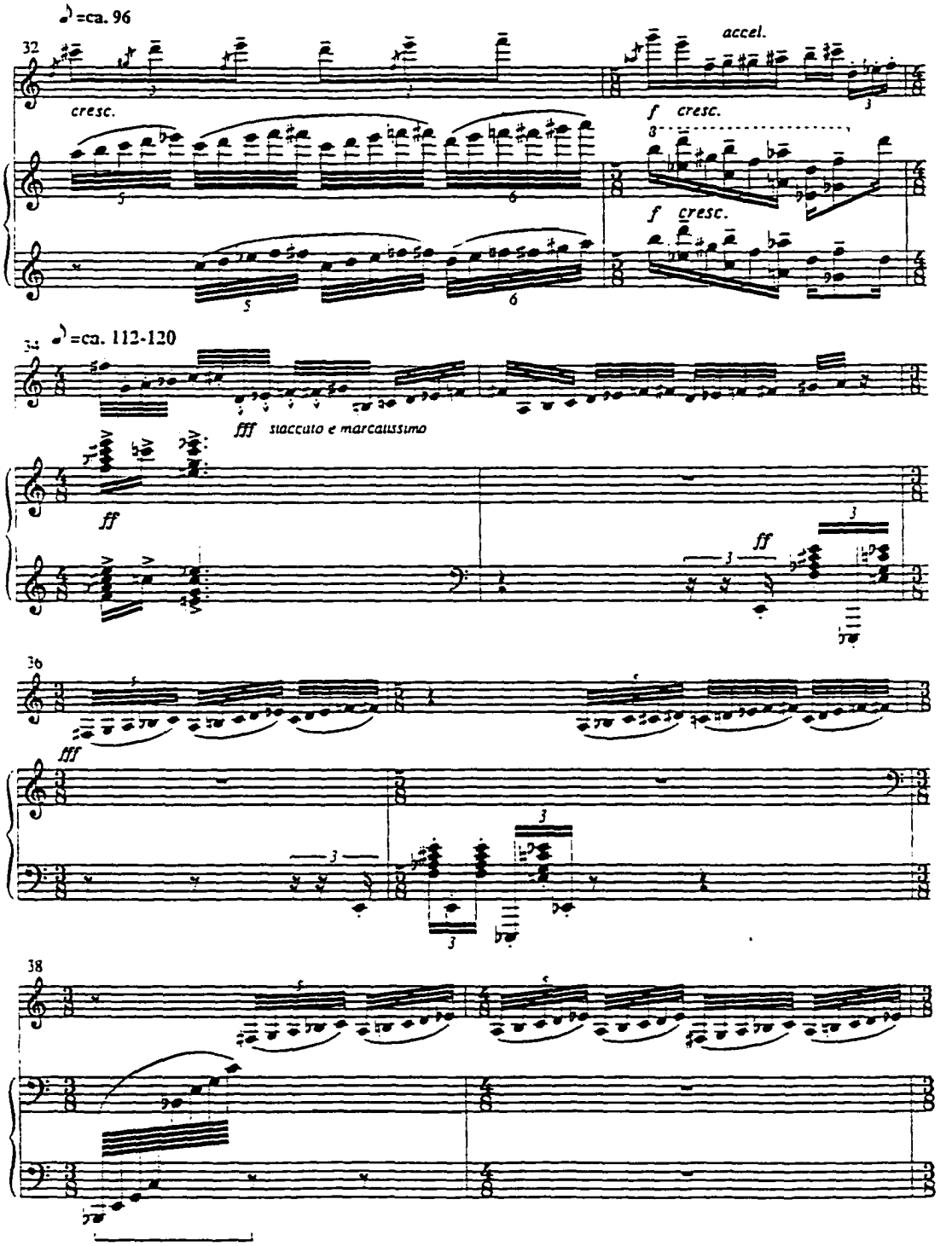
FANTASY

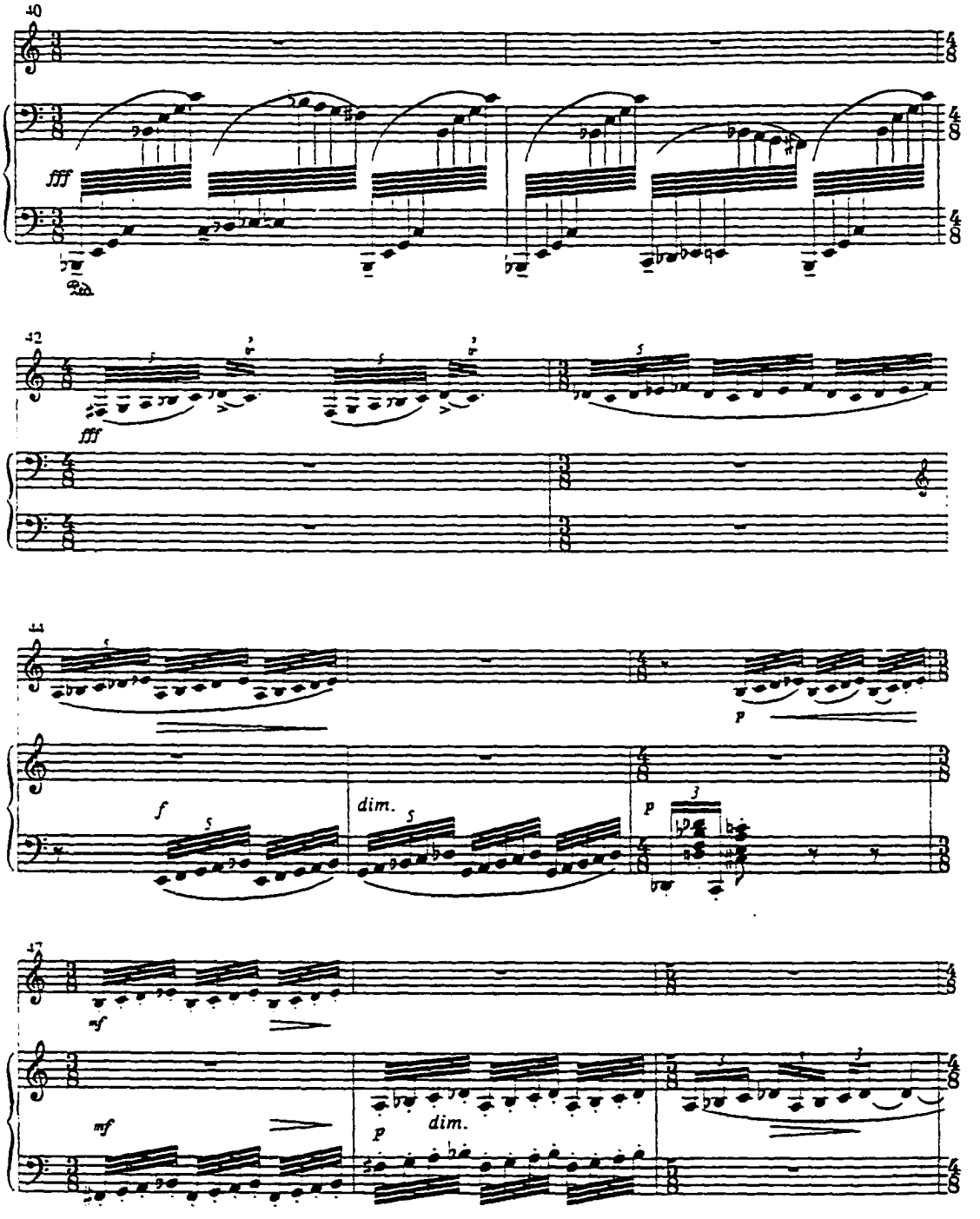
(...those harbor lights)

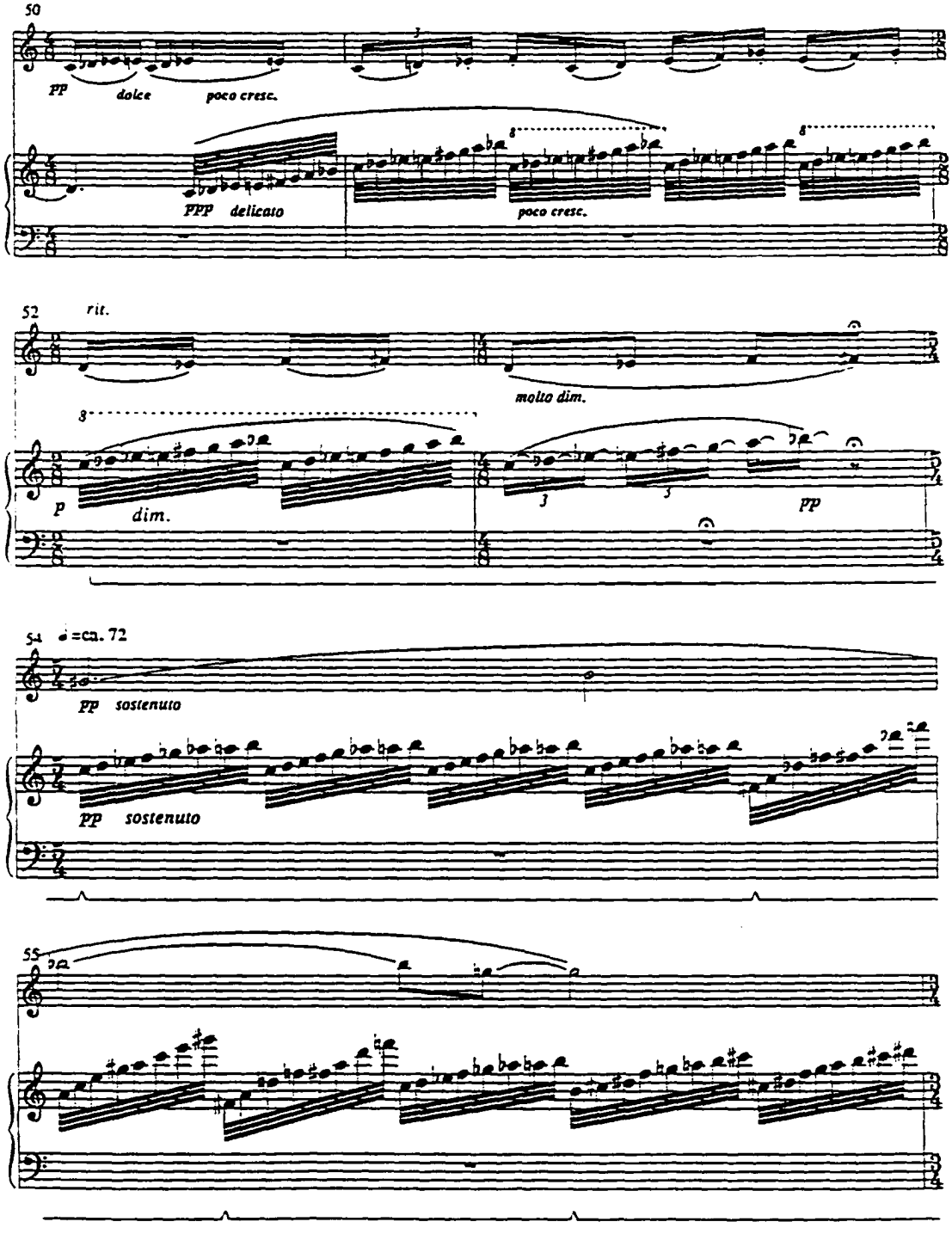
Joan Tower

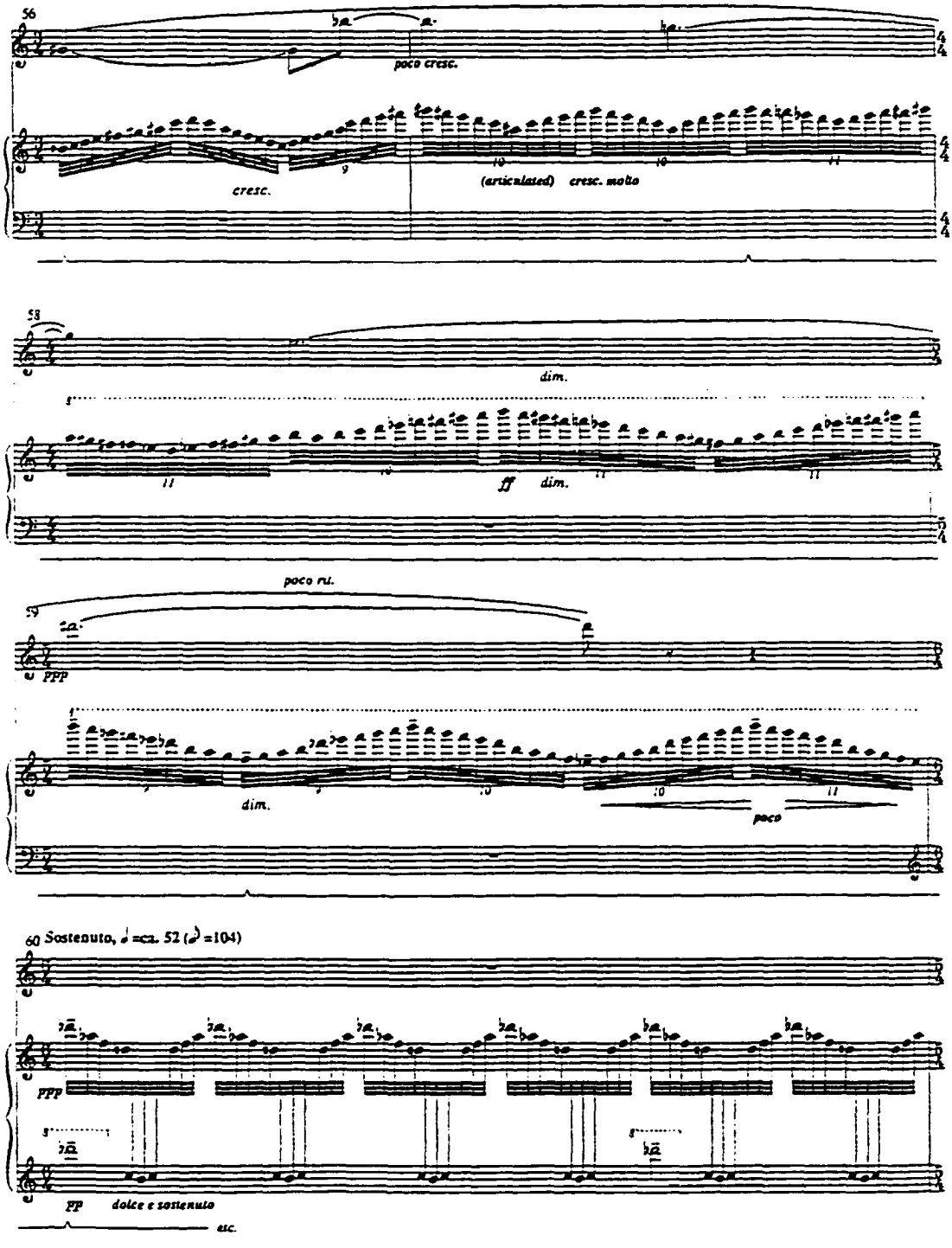


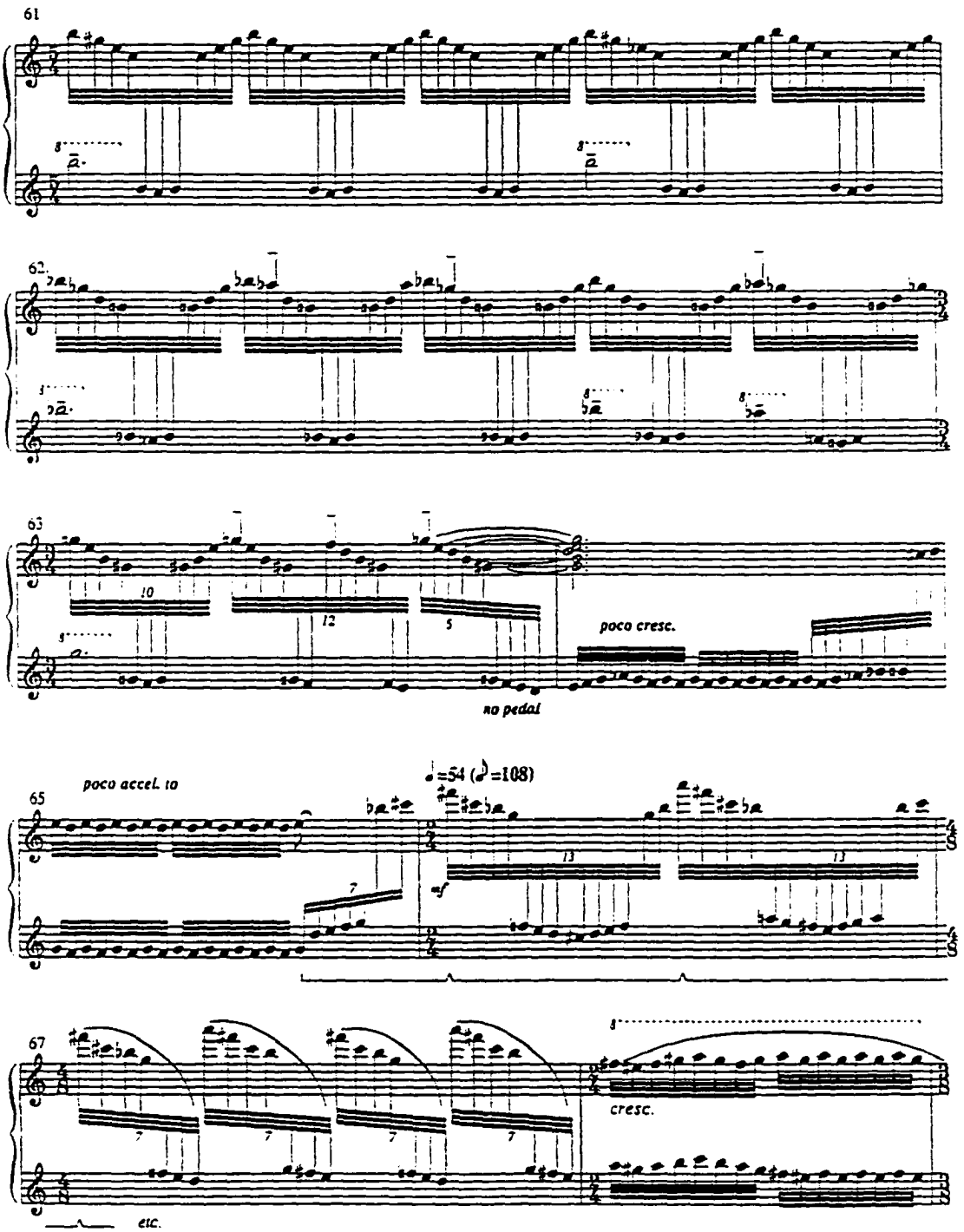


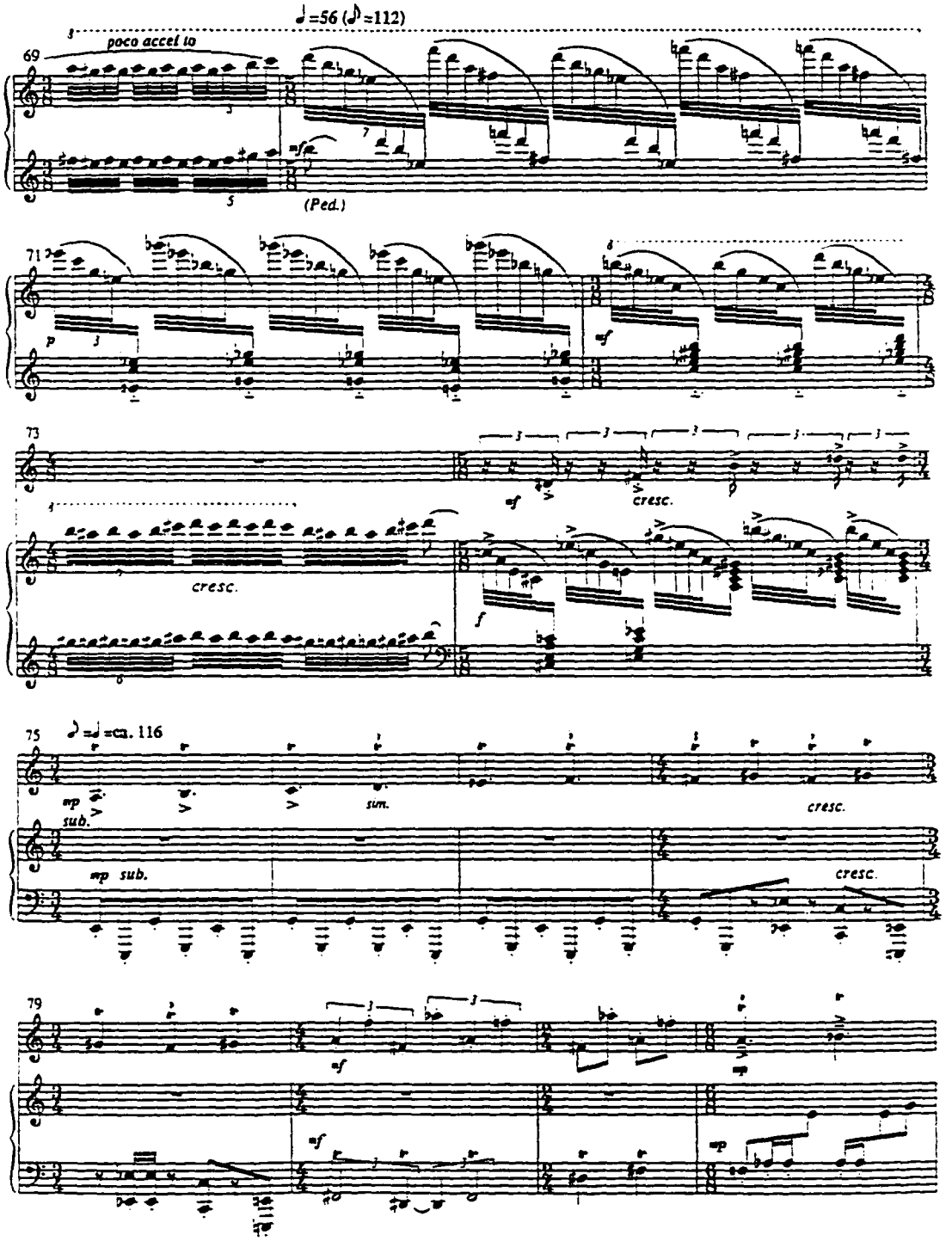


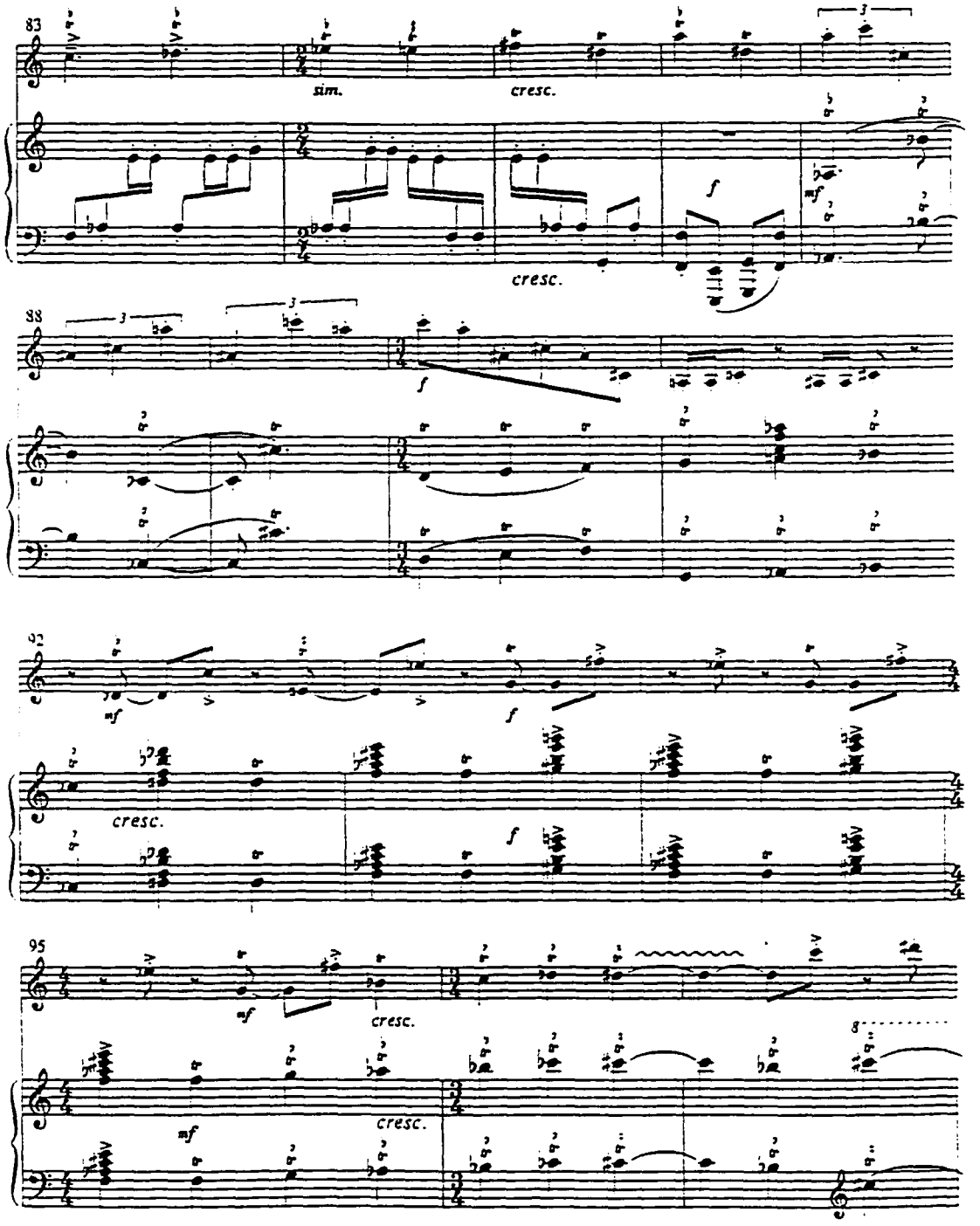


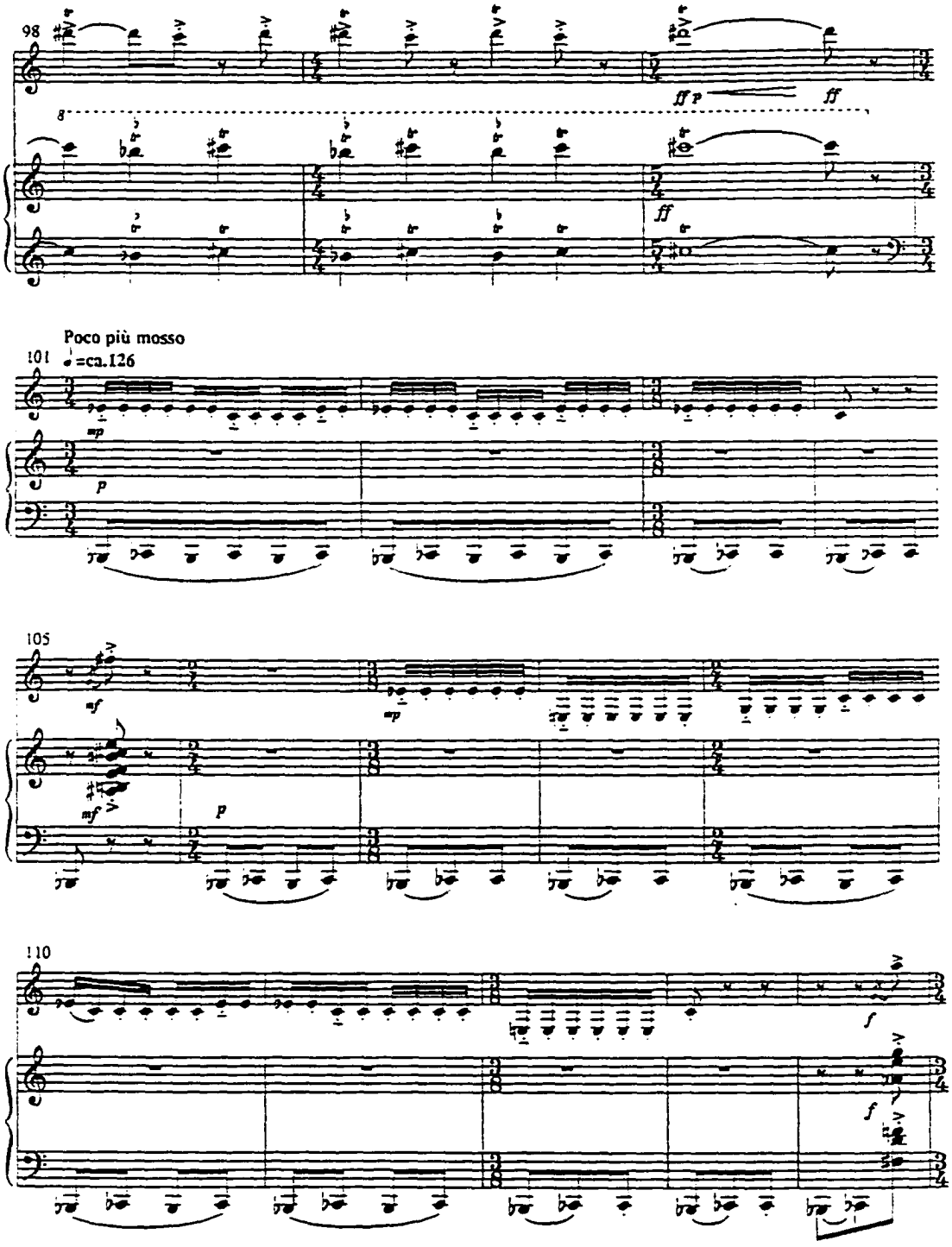


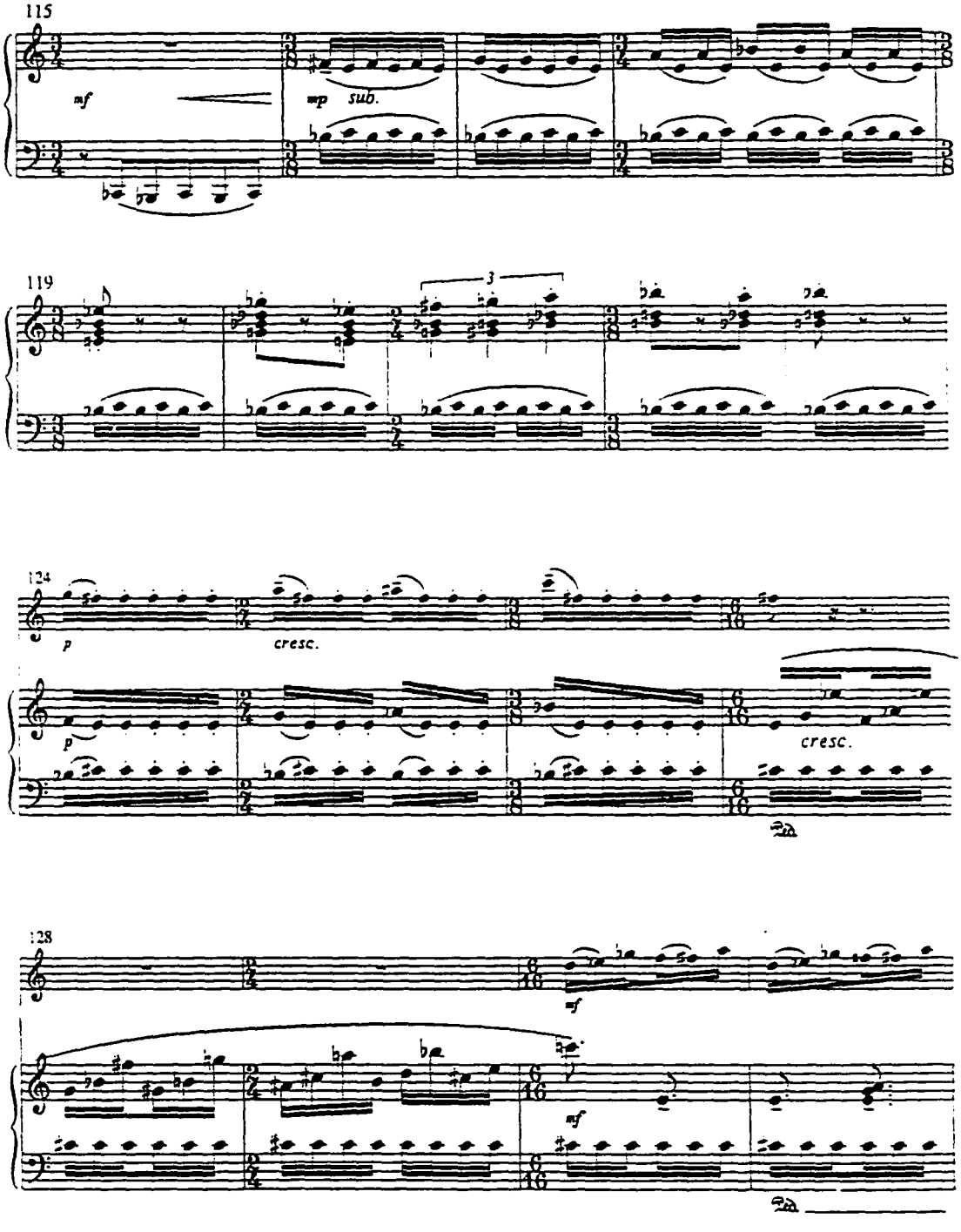


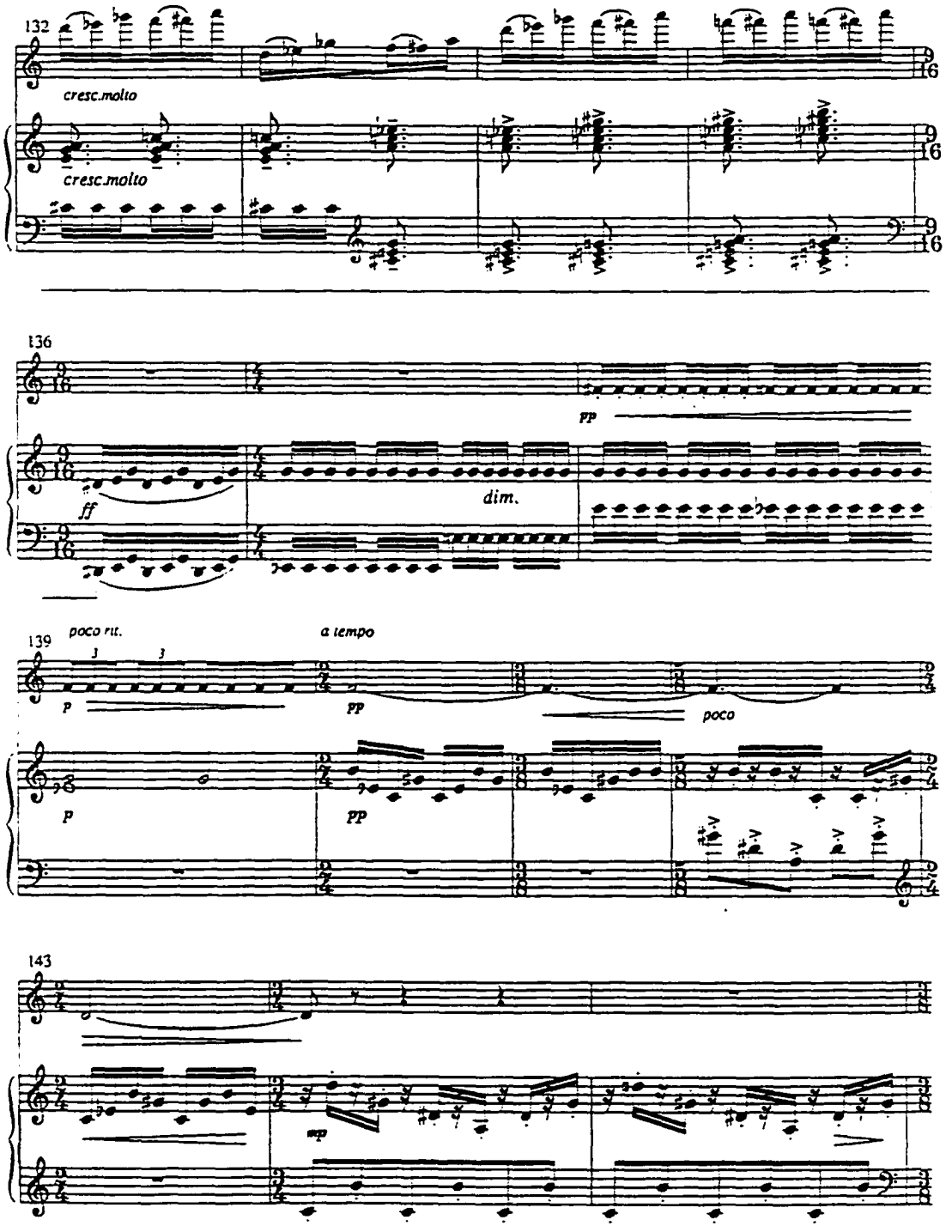


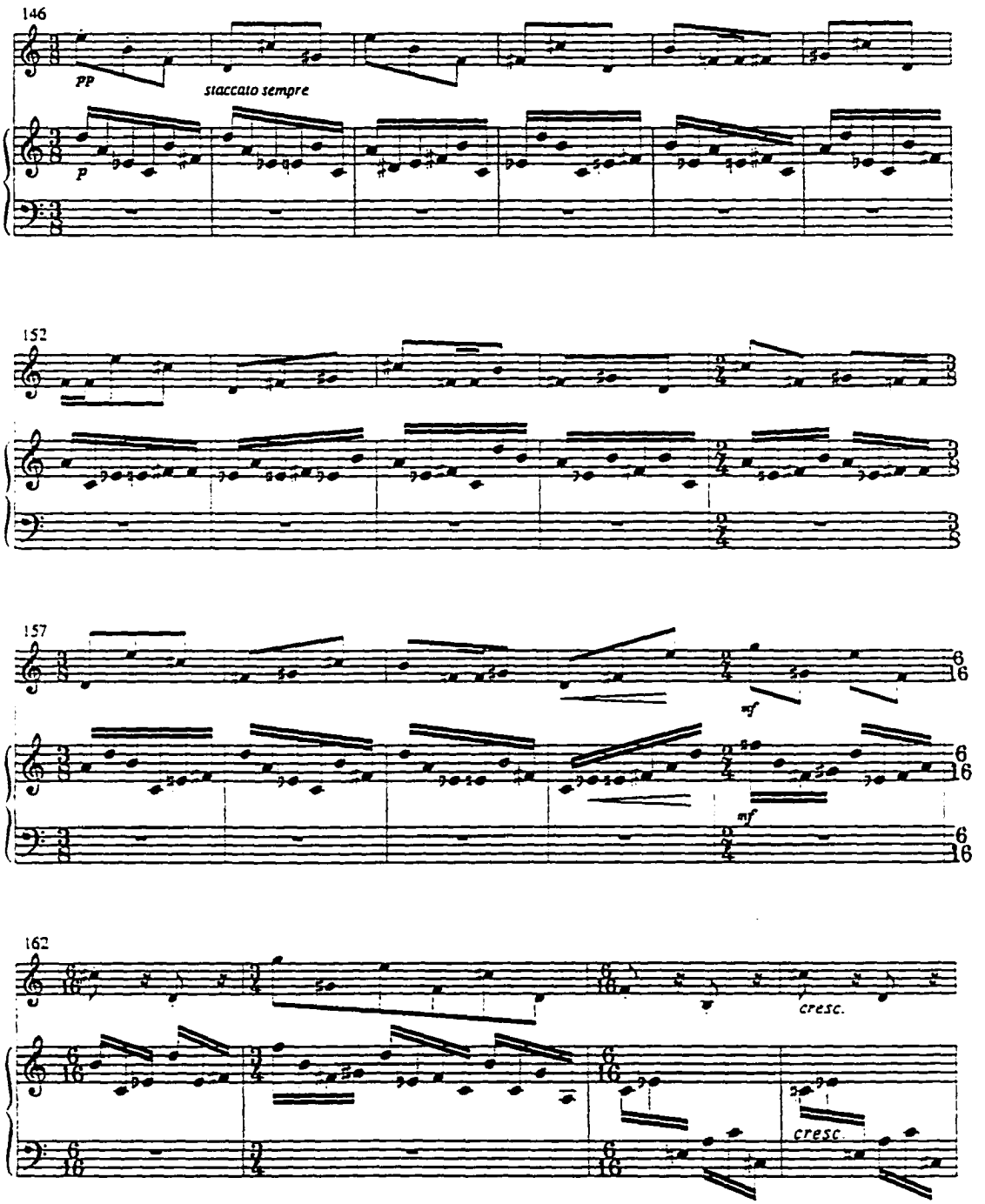


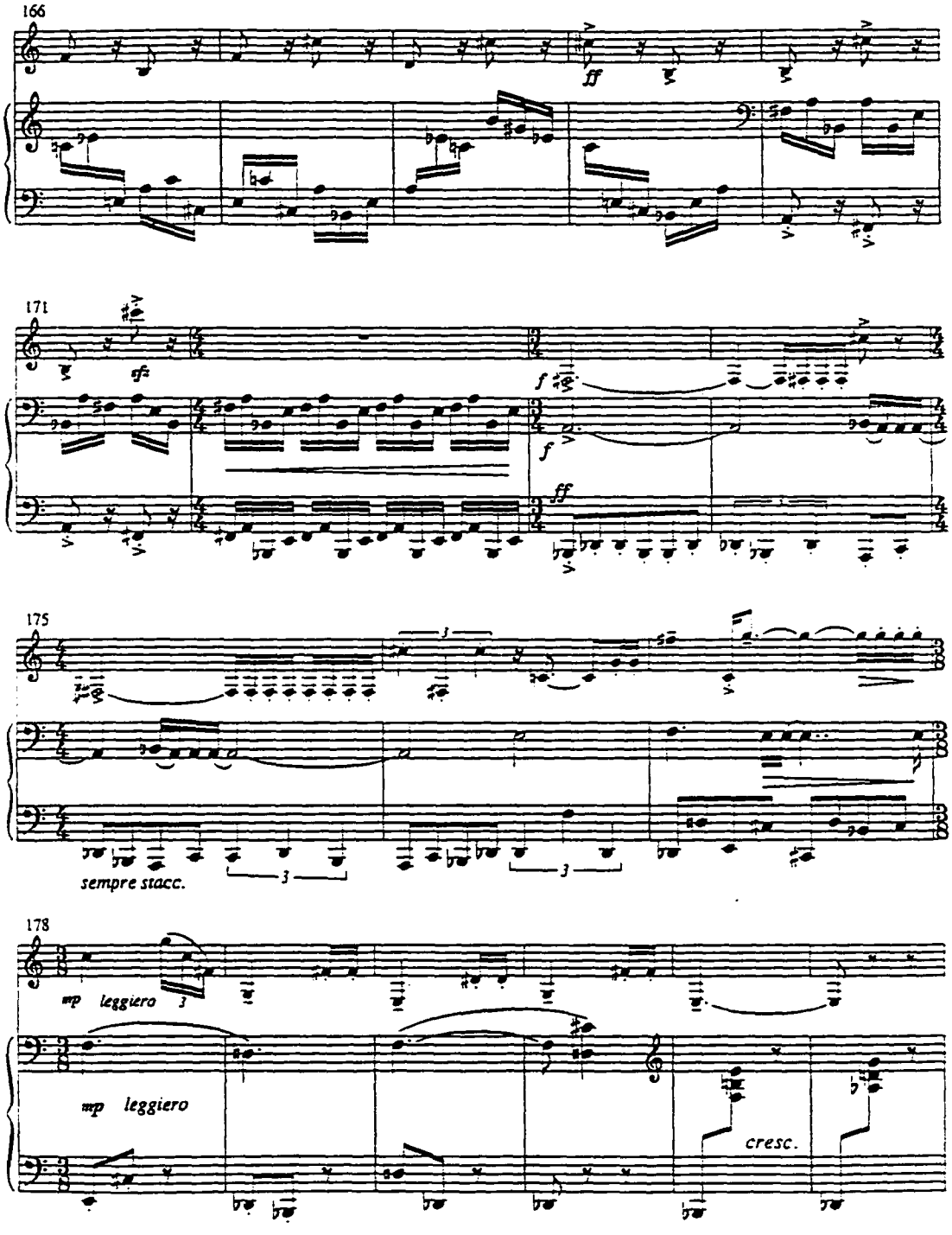


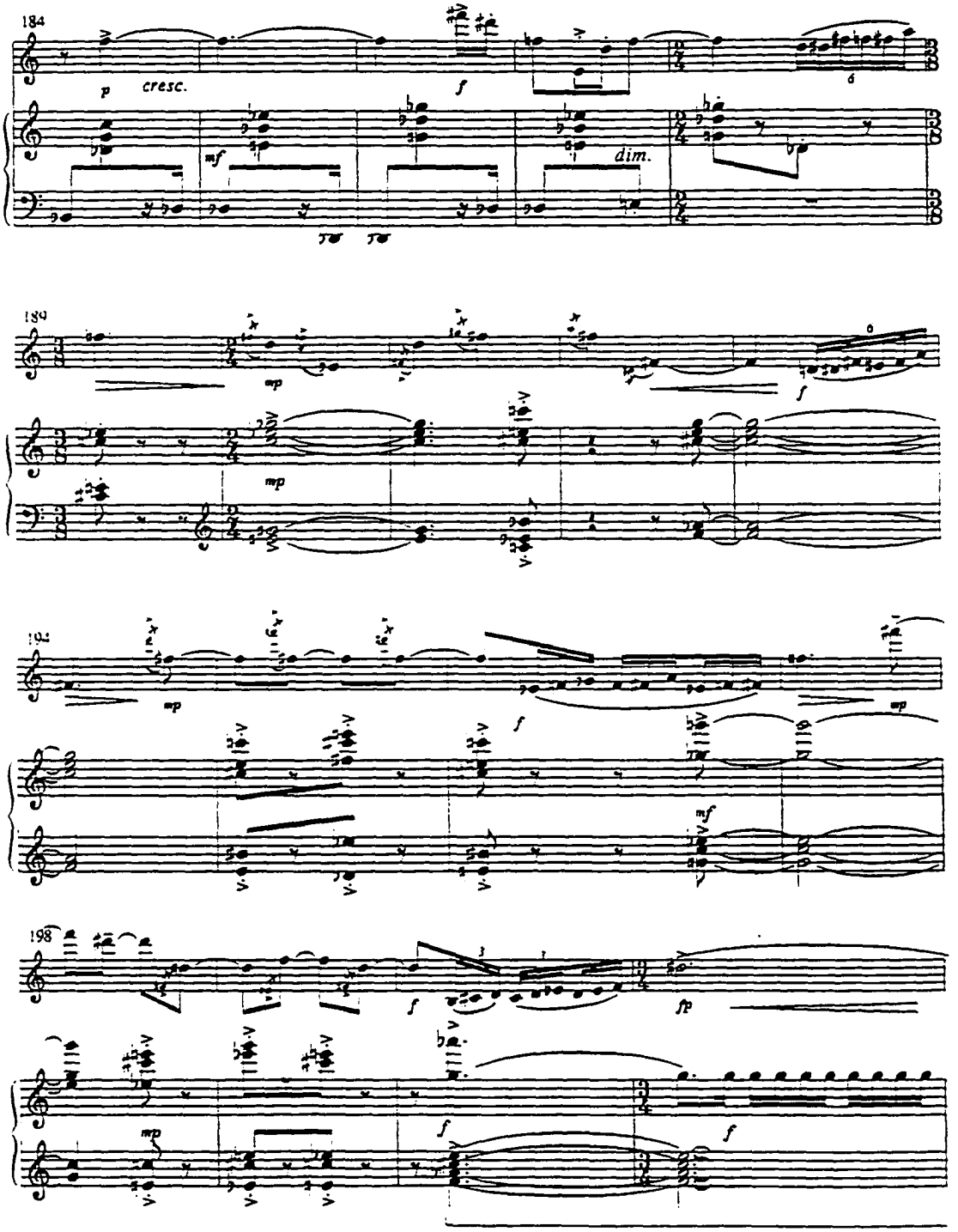


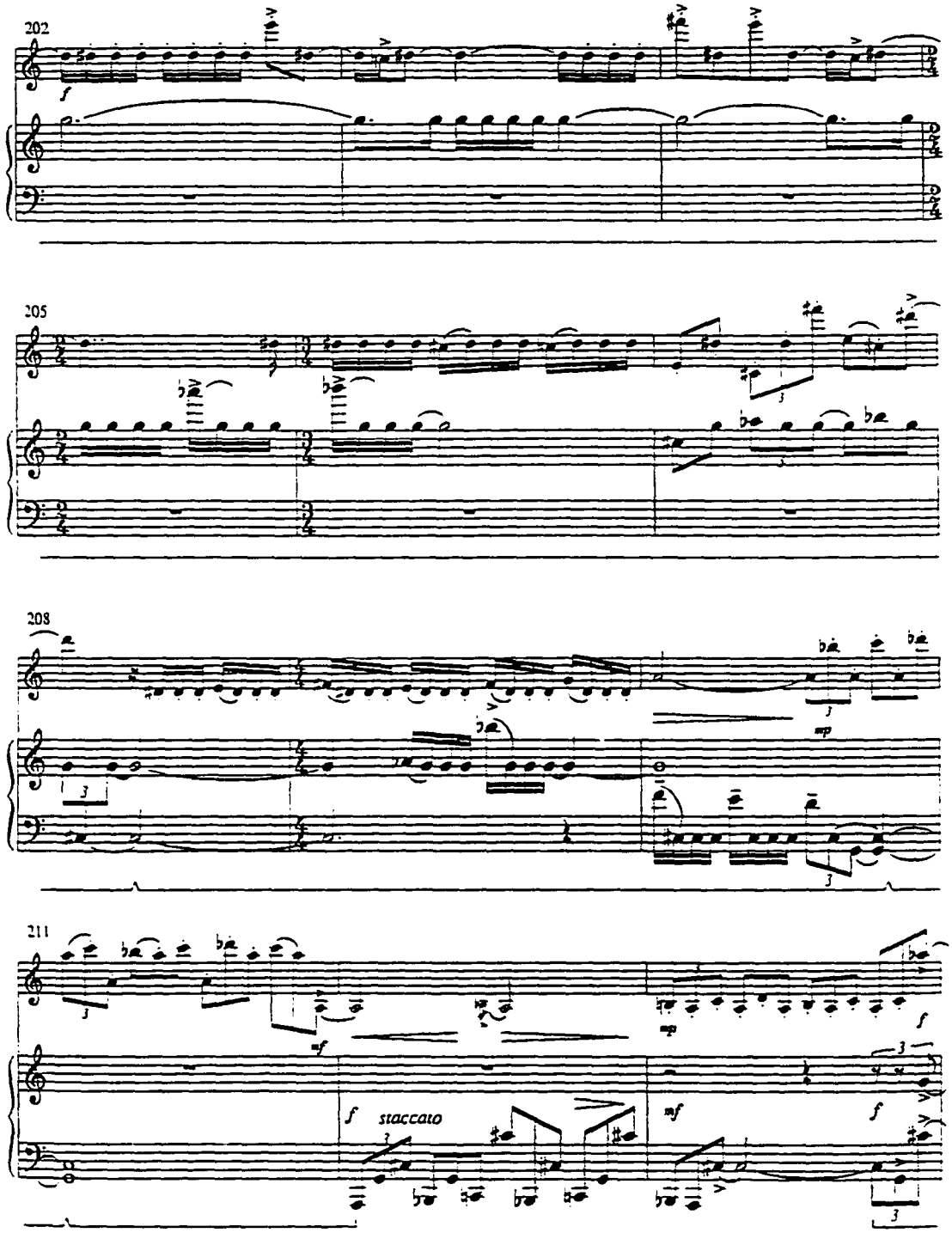


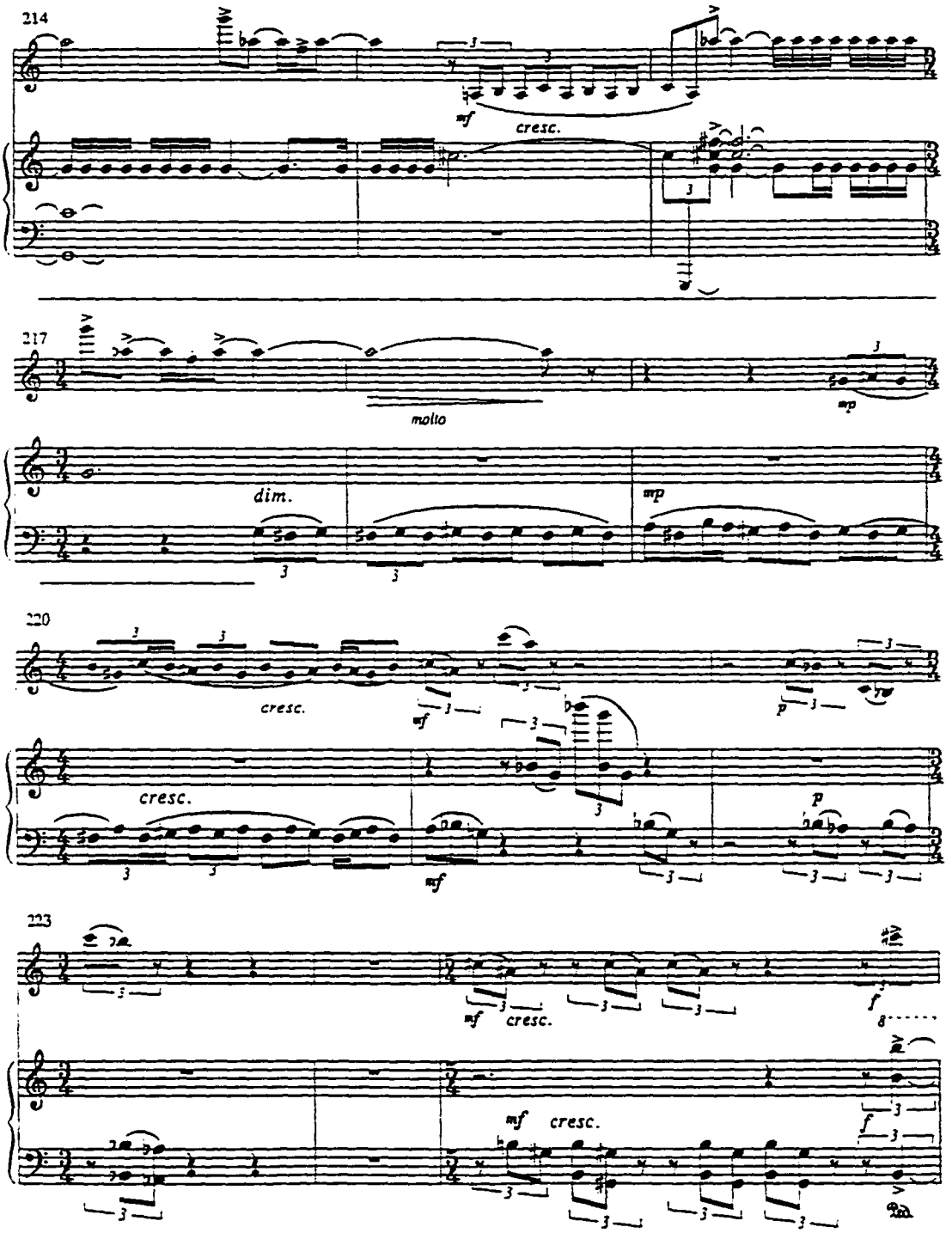


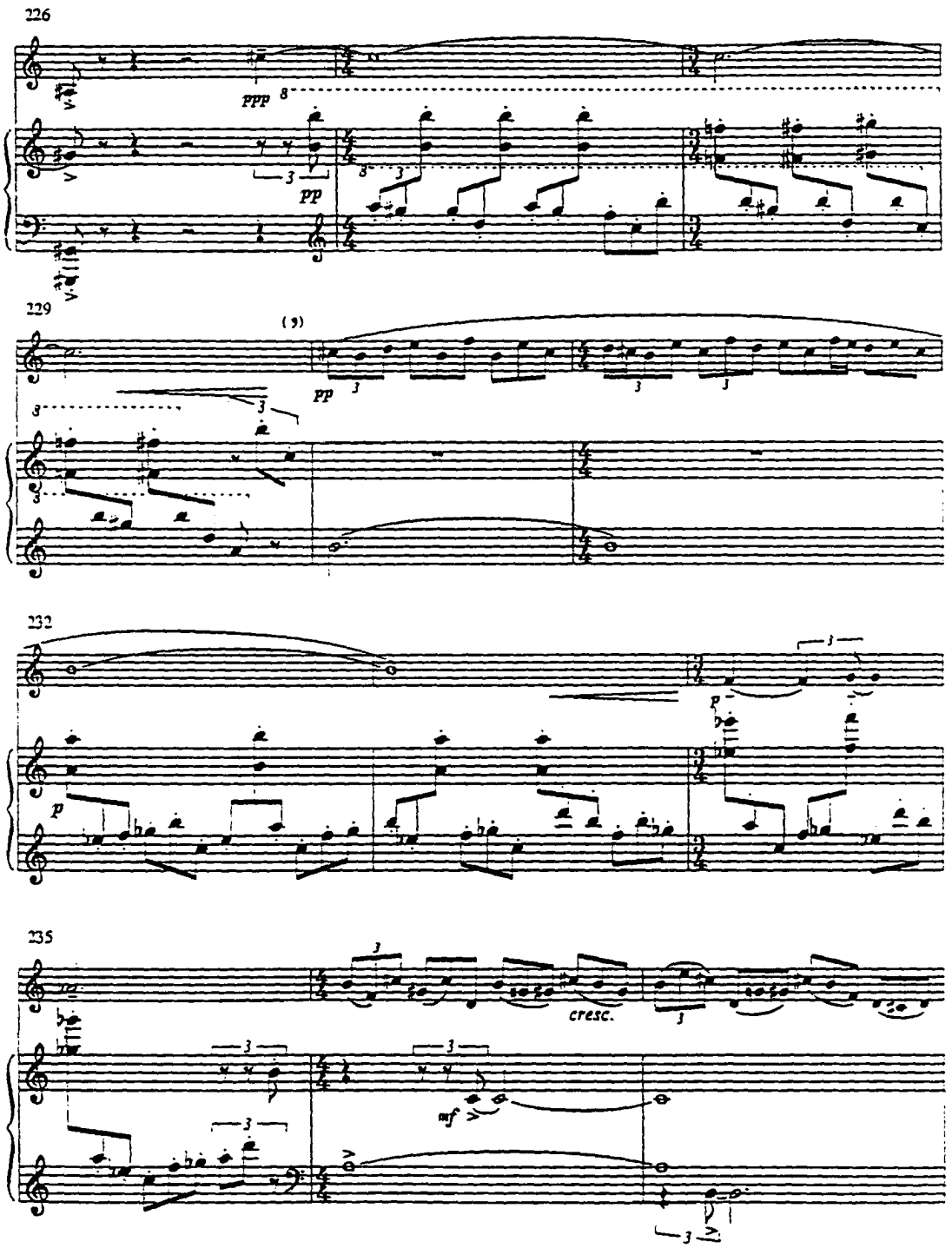


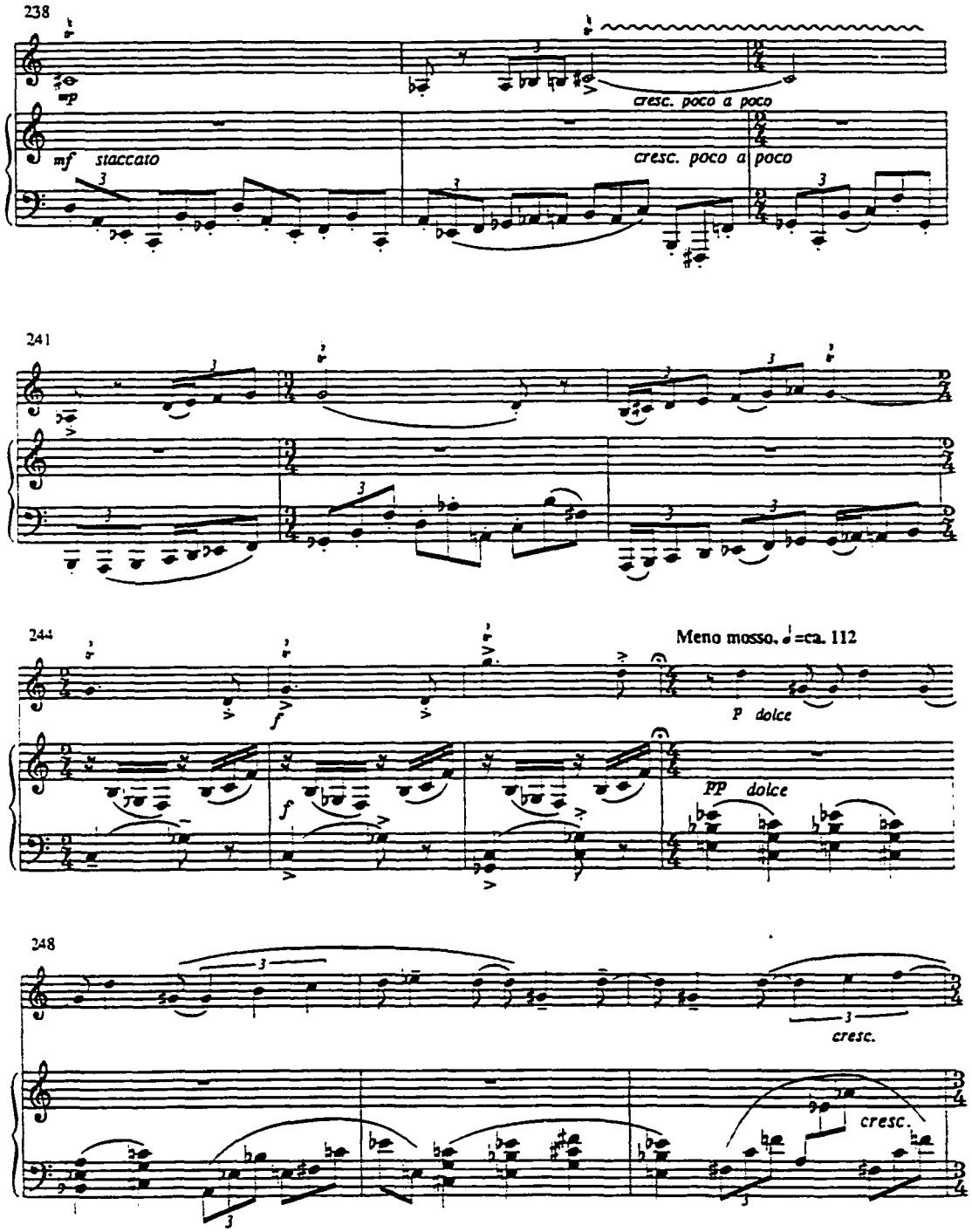


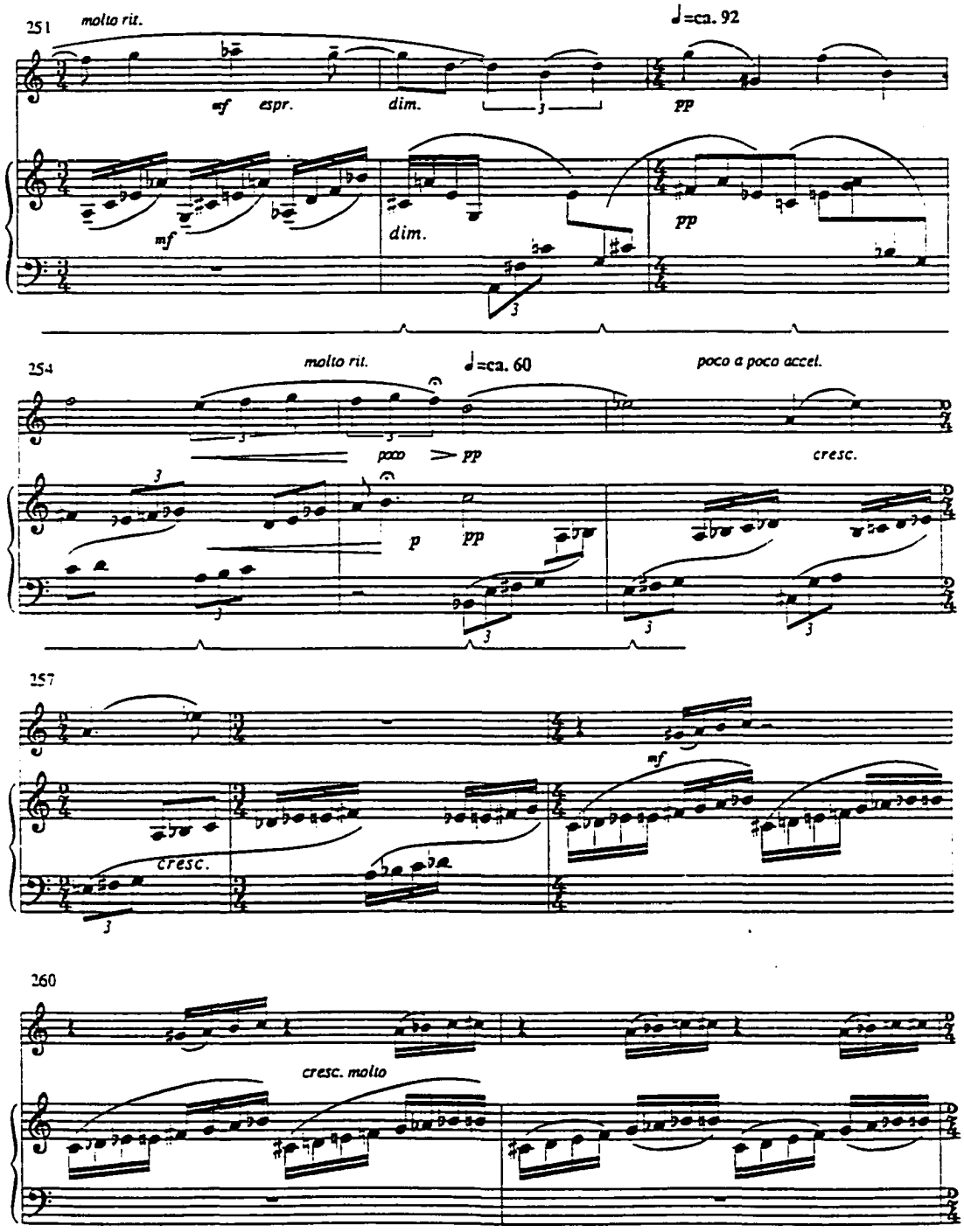


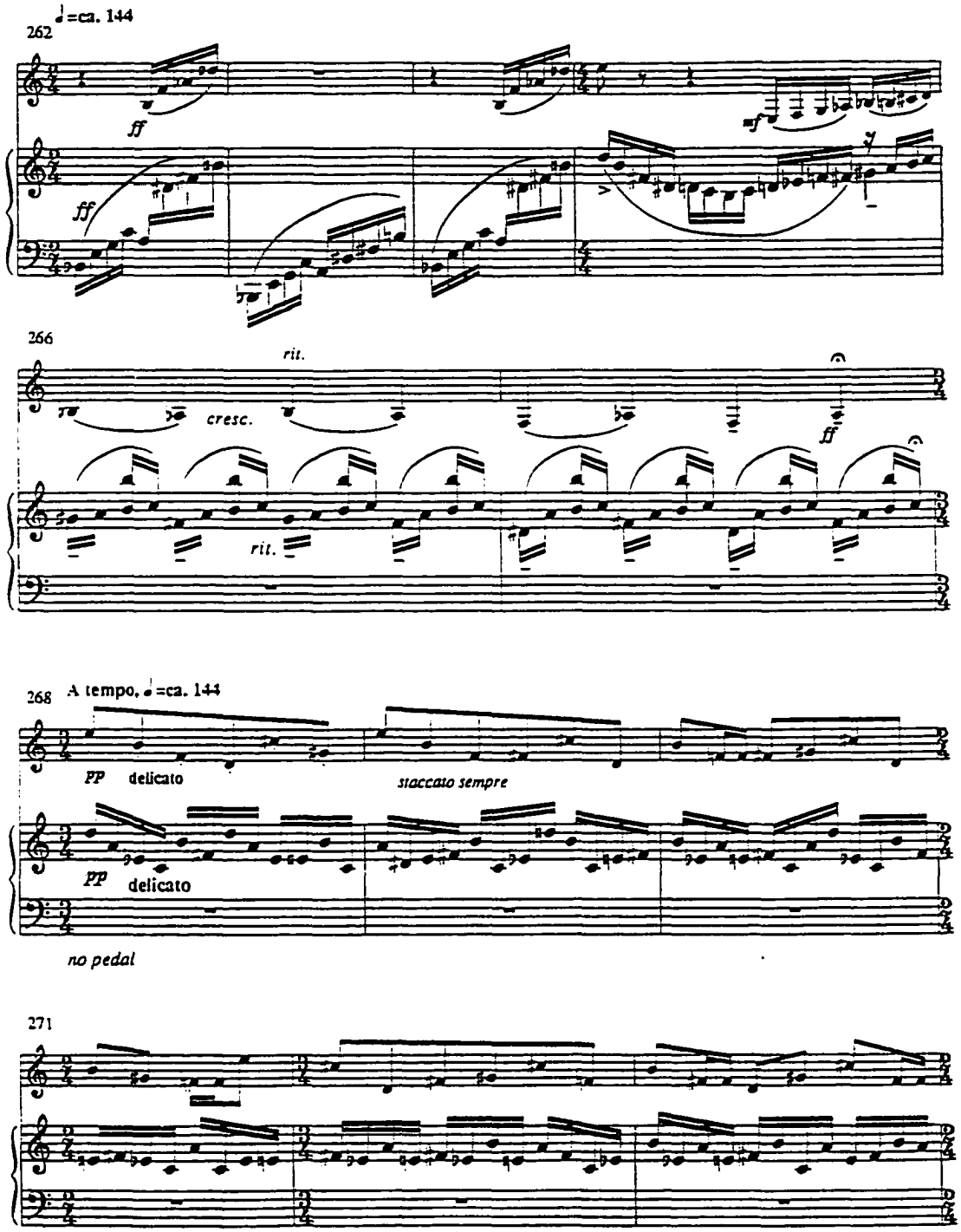


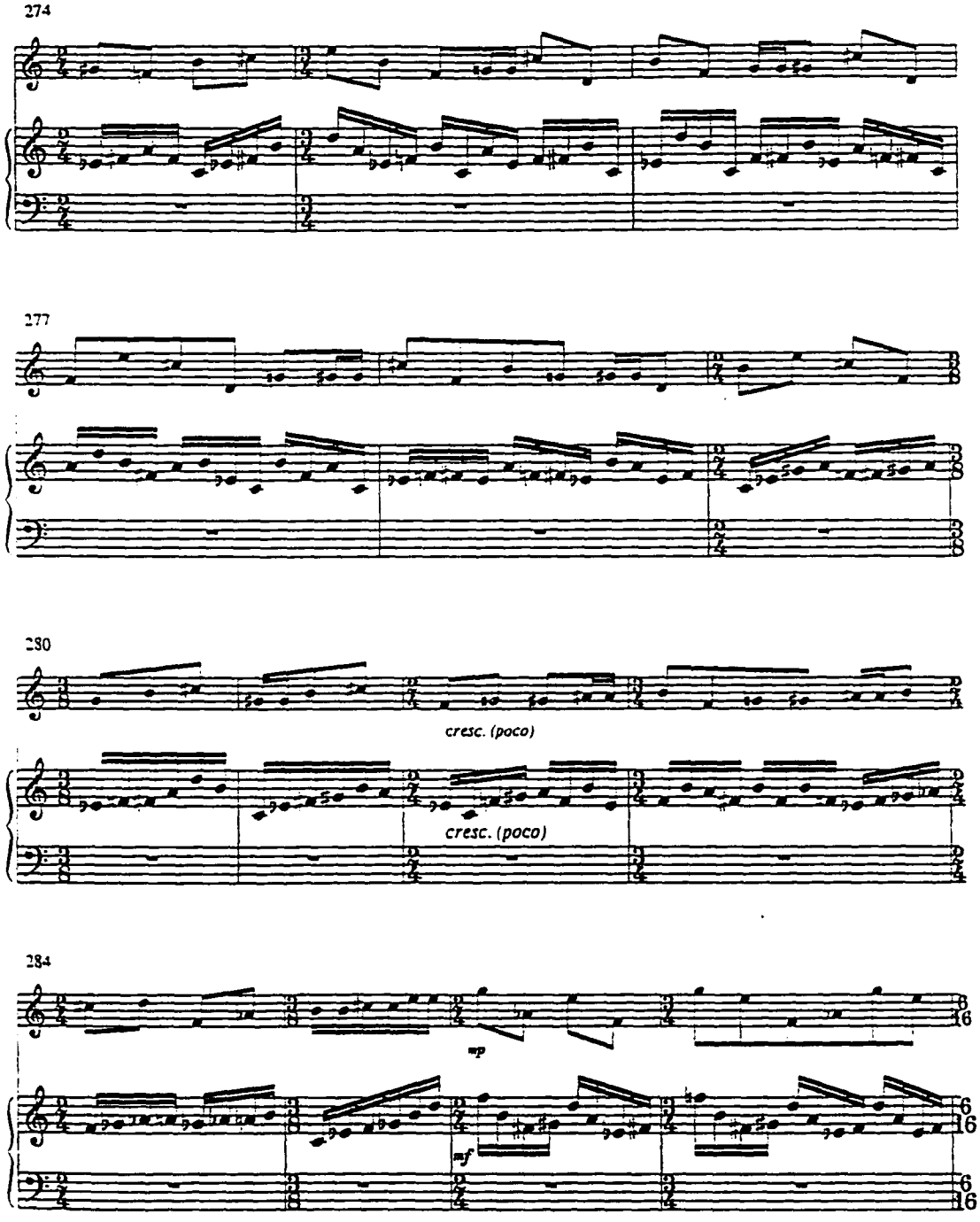


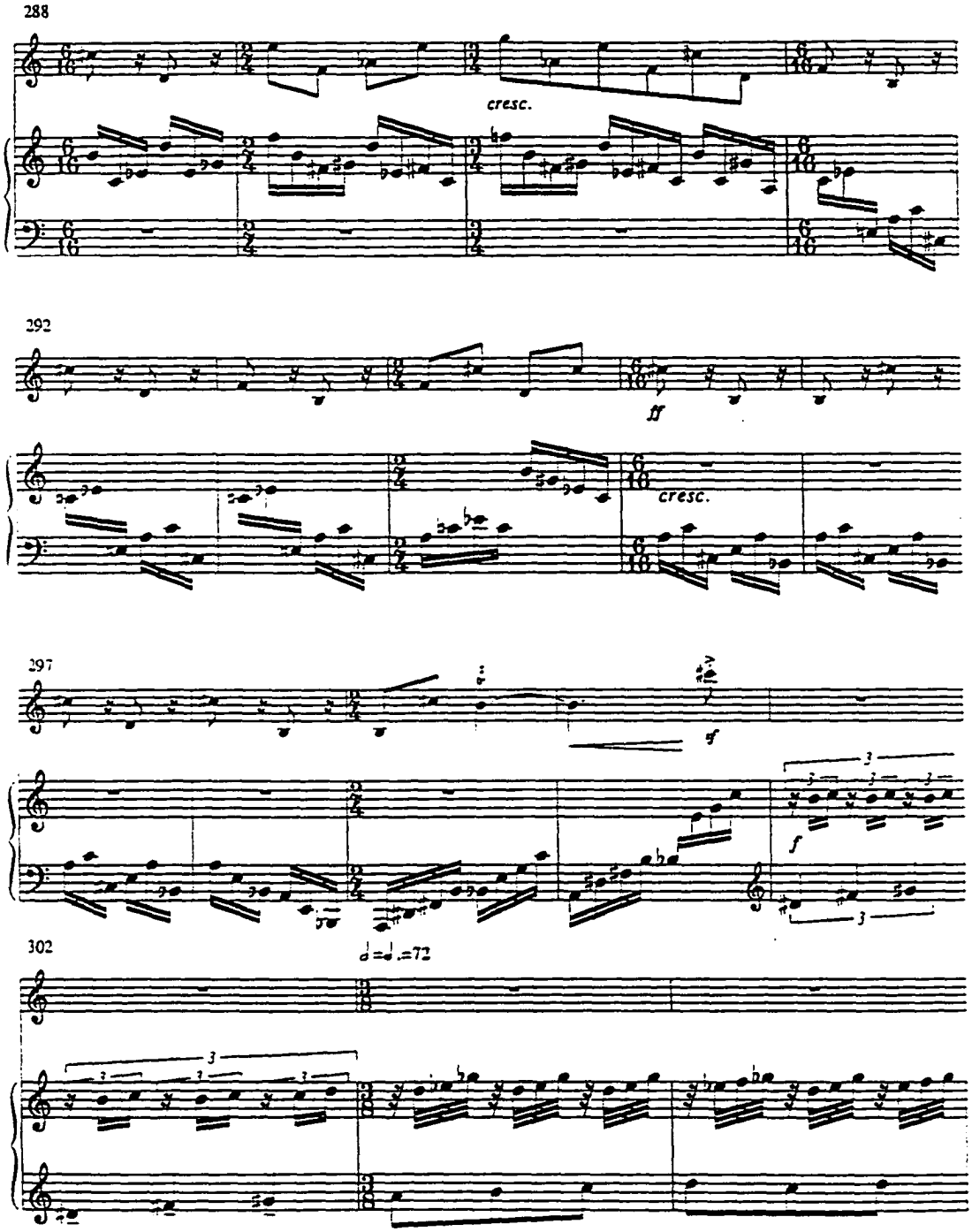


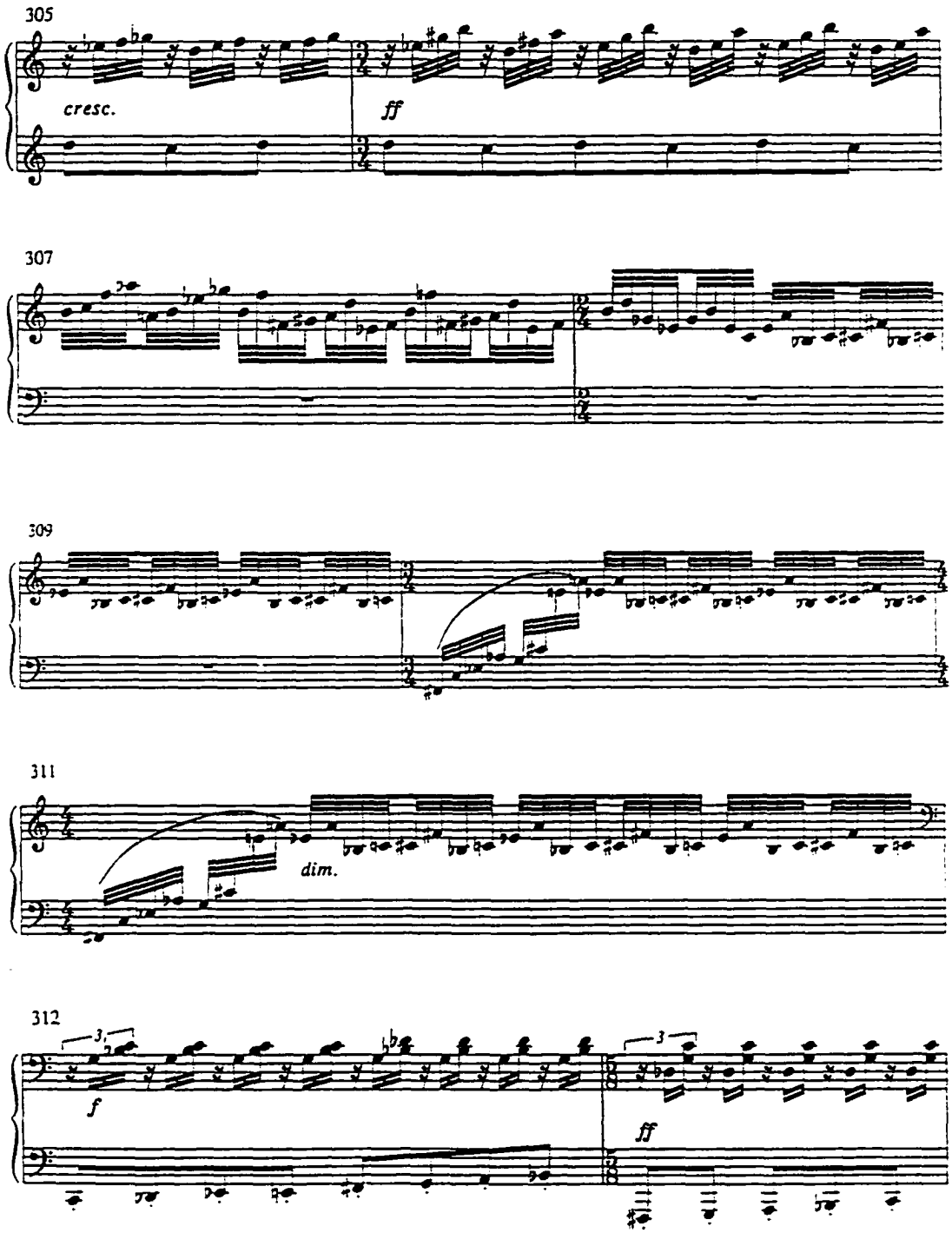


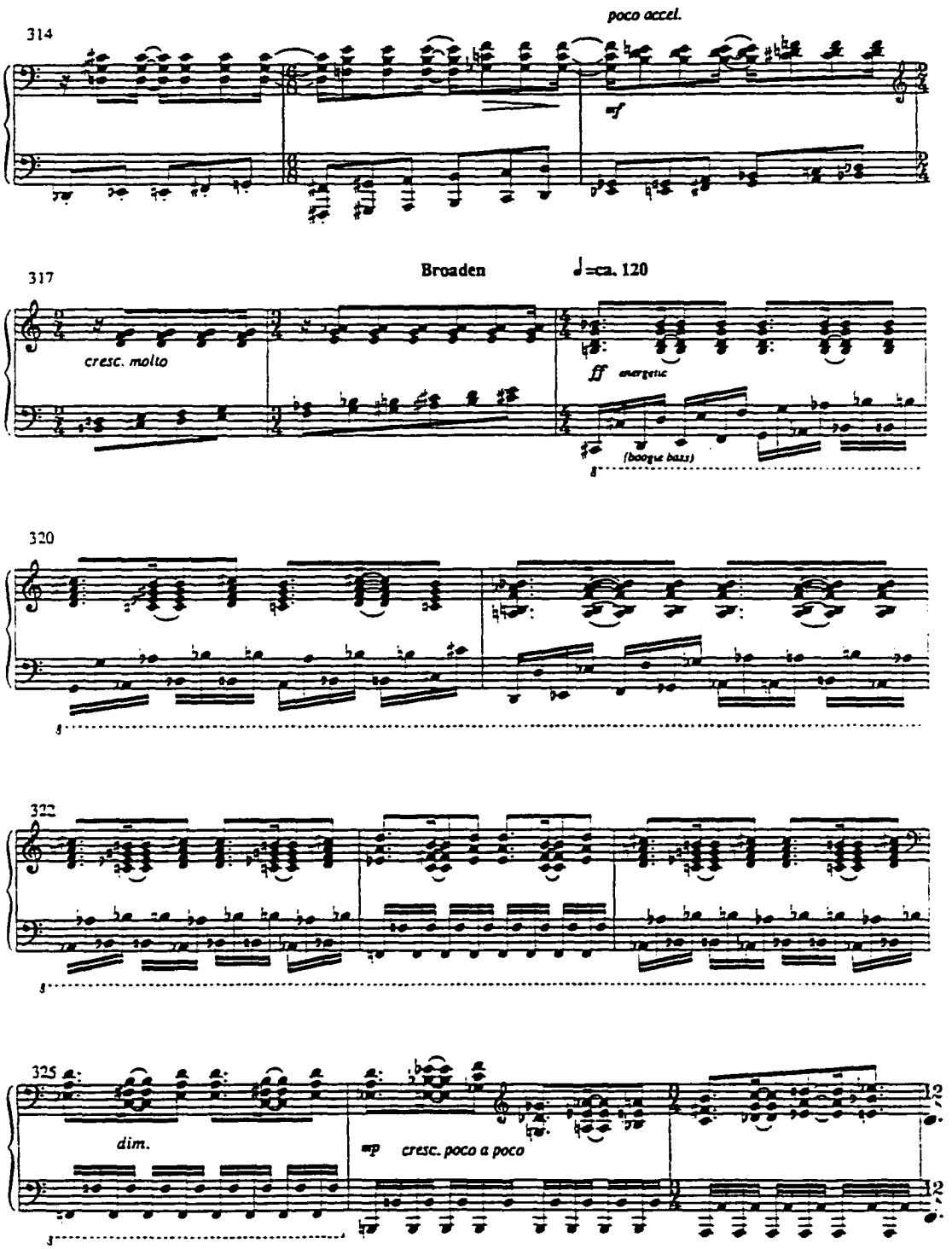


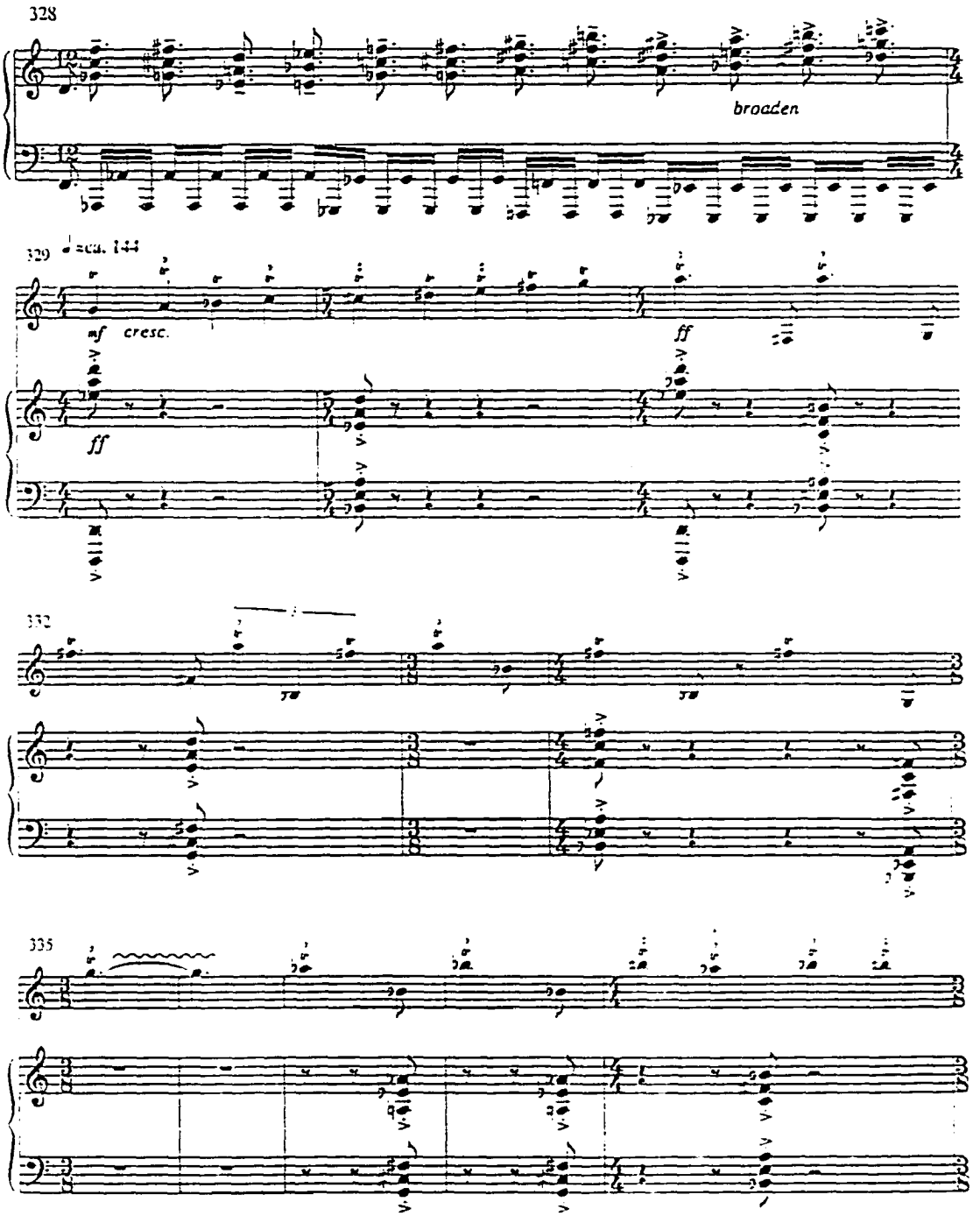


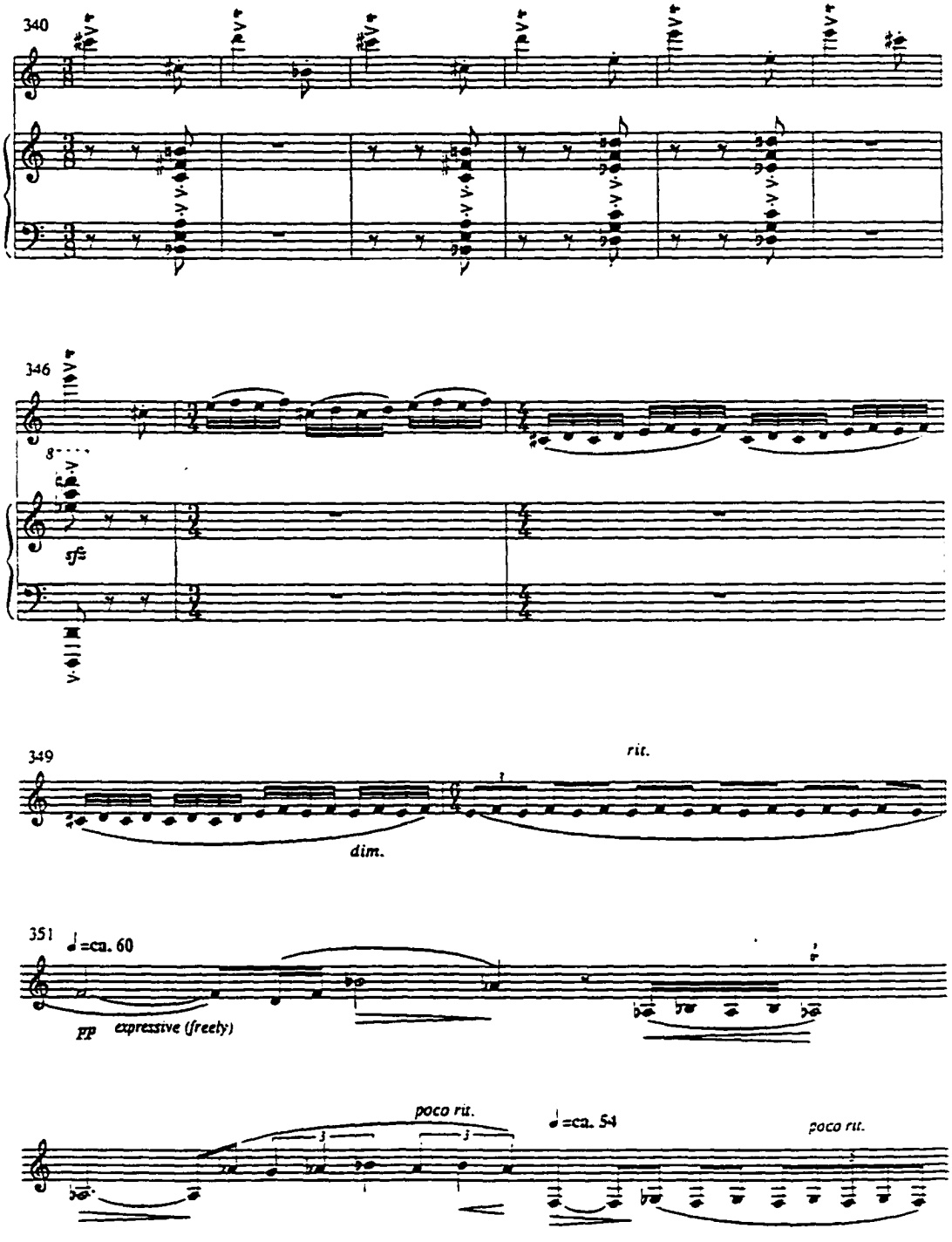


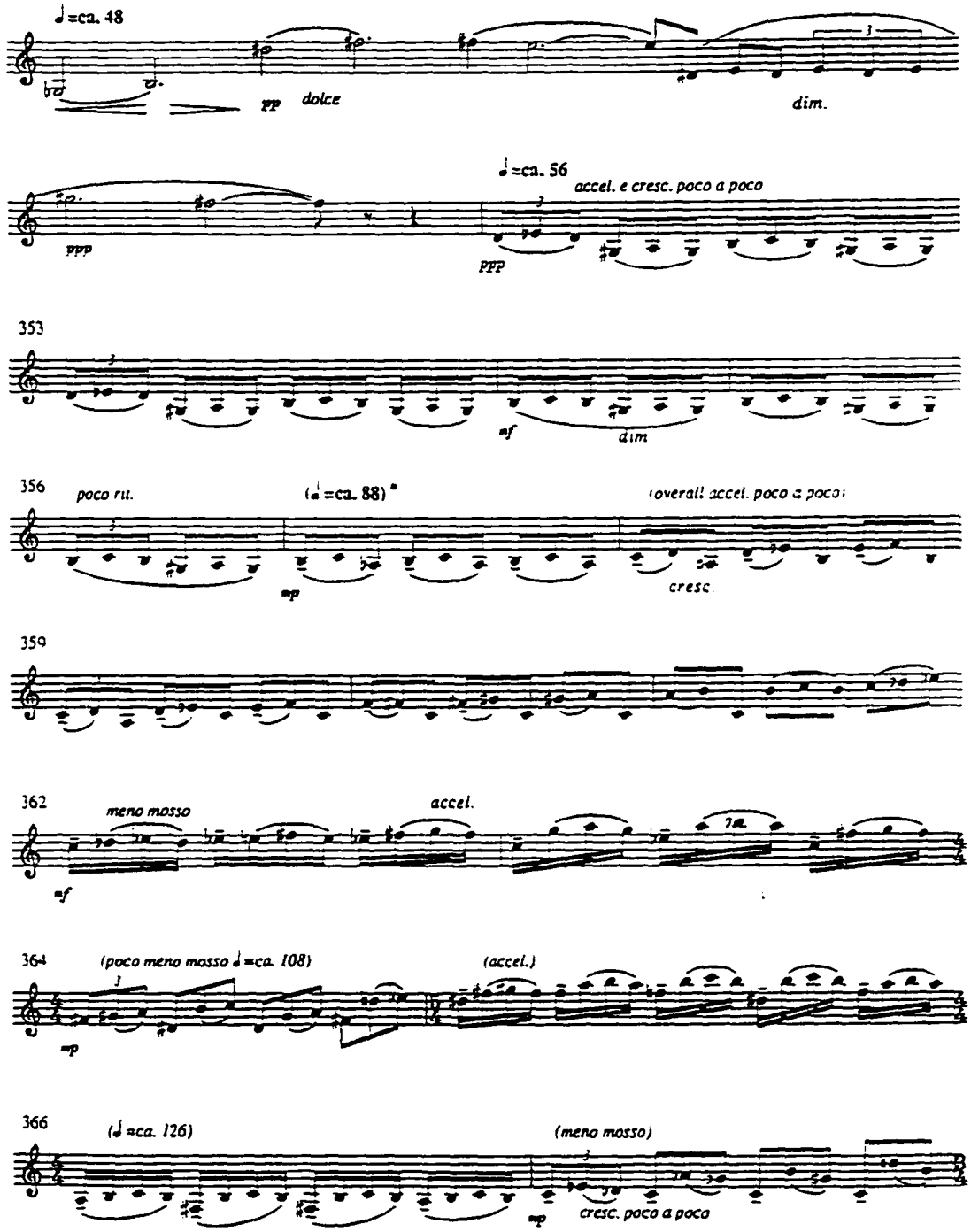




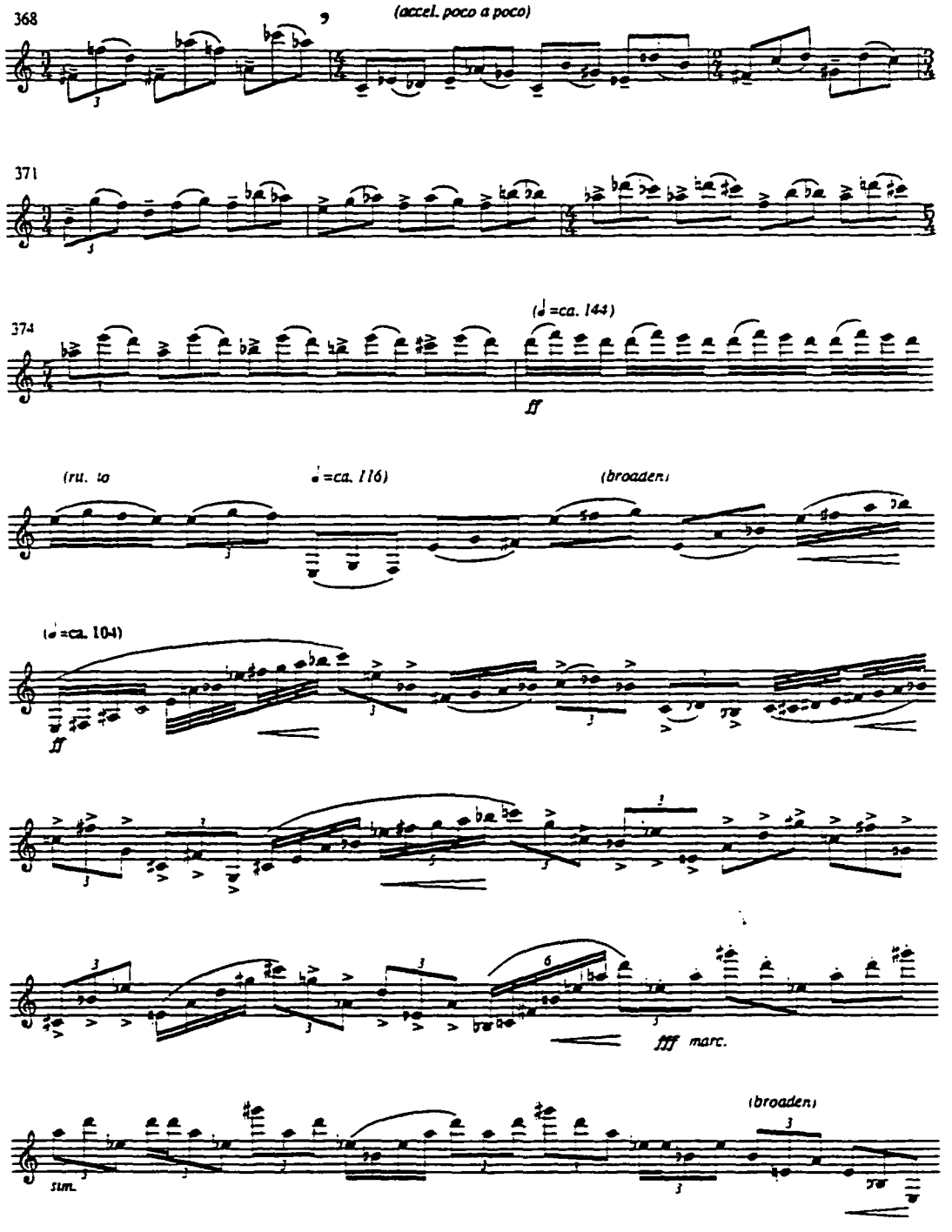


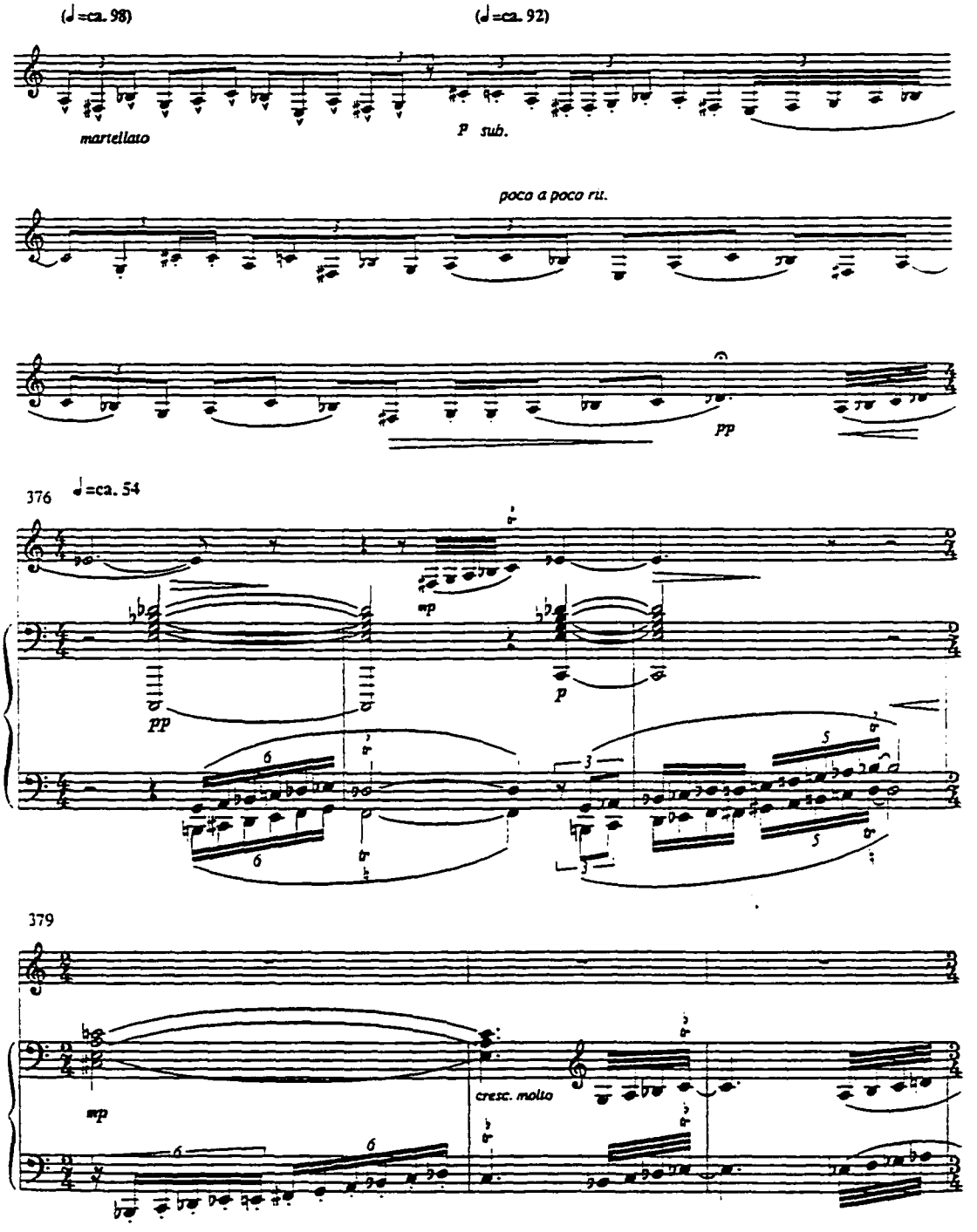


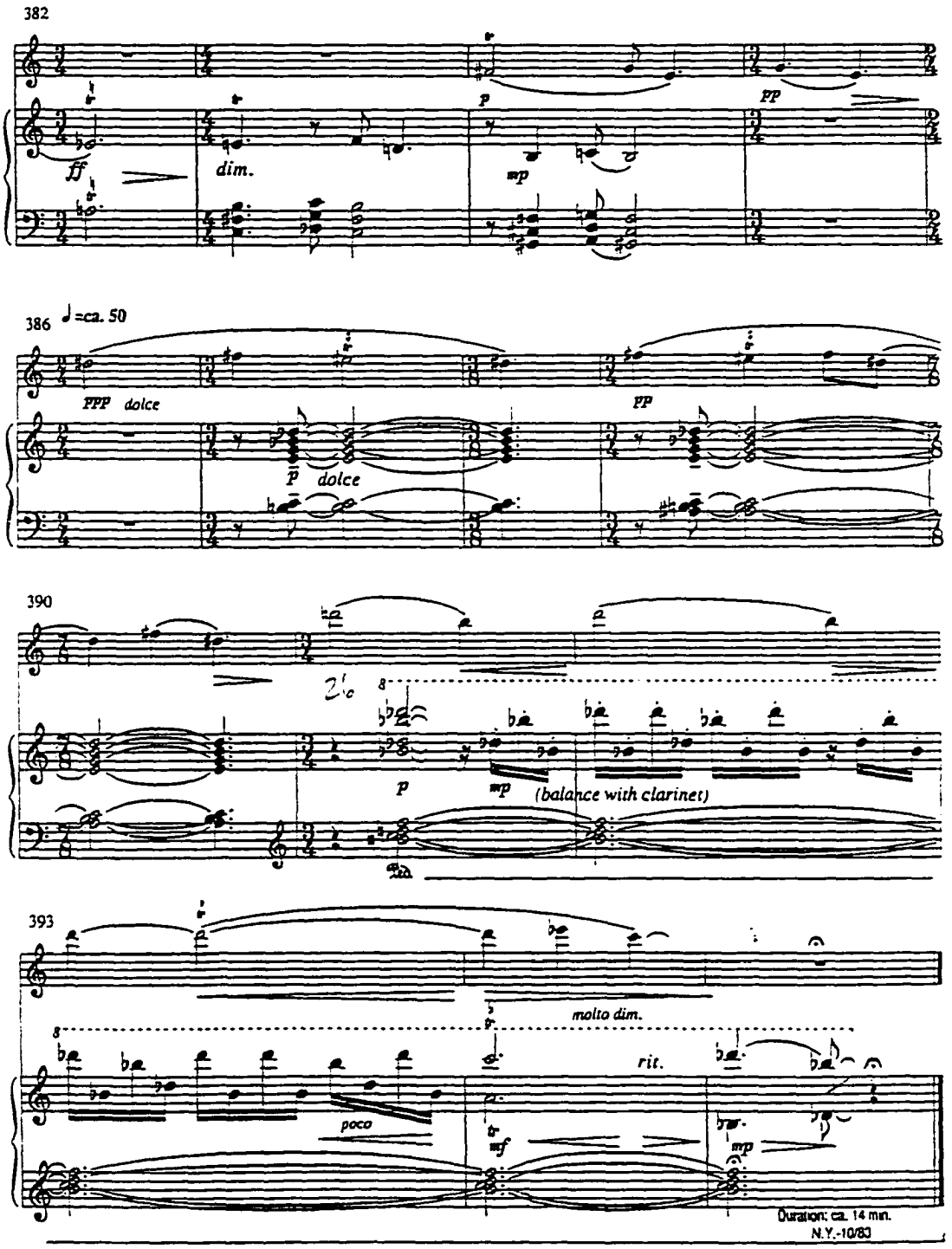




*all tempo indications (i.e. accel., meno mosso, etc.) in parentheses are only suggestions to the player.







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