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HARMONY, VOICE LEADING, AND PHRASE RHYTHM IN THREE EARLY PIANO PRELUDES BY SCRIABIN: A SCHENKERIAN PERSPECTIVE

by

MARTIN KUTNOWSKI

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

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David Olan
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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract: HARMONY, VOICE LEADING, AND PHRASE RHYTHM IN THREE EARLY PIANO PRELUDES BY SCRIABIN: A SCHENKERIAN PERSPECTIVE,

By MARTIN KUTNOWSKI

Adviser: Professor William Rothstein

While widely recognized as a pioneer of twentieth-century post-tonal practices, Alexander Scriabin has not received equivalent attention for the music that he composed during his initial, tonal period. Several historical circumstances shaped a particular perception of Scriabin as a composer less worthy than his more illustrious contemporaries, and his early music was largely seen as a weakly derivative of other composers, particularly Chopin. This dissertation shows, however, that the music is fully mature, with distinctive and original harmony and voice leading in coordination with rhythmic structure. Specifically, the music involves the intensive elaboration and extension of certain tonal norms, particularly those governing voice leading and phrase rhythm. The tonal system is thus pushed to its limits, but not beyond—the music is idiosyncratic in some ways, but ultimately grounded in tonal conventions. This dissertation examines three pieces composed during those early years: Op. 11, No. 2, part of the Twenty-Four Preludes for piano Op. 11, published in 1895; and Op. 22, Nos. 1 and 3, two of the four preludes published as Op. 22 in 1897. The particulars of voice leading, phrase and tonal rhythm, and form make apparent the uniqueness of Scriabin's voice in his relatively early works. The first chapter of the dissertation surveys the literature on Scriabin. Each of the three following chapters provides a detailed analysis of each of the three preludes, Op. 11, No. 2, and Op. 22, Nos. 1 and 3. Chapter Five summarizes the conclusions. (author)

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first contact with the music of Scriabin was in 1989. At the time I was a piano student at *Conservatorio Municipal Manuel de Falla*, in Buenos Aires, and I also had private students at home. One of my young students had been assigned some of the preludes, Op. 11 and she brought them to me for advice. As I was sight-reading at the piano the score of Op. 11, No. 2, I immediately realized that this was a unique harmonic language, totally governed by tonality and, at the same time, totally idiosyncratic. I further confirmed the unusual traits of the style by helping my student see the particulars of voice leading. As I was making a reduction of one phrase to clarify the harmonic motion, I came to realize that the main "trick," that complicated the voice leading was the freedom of register, which created an apparent disconnection between the voices. Subsequently, my student prepared her exam, and I seemingly forgot about Scriabin.

Many years later, during the first semester of my Ph.D. program at the Graduate Center, I took a class on theory pedagogy at Queens College with Professor Joseph Straus. The class prompted in me a critical re-examination of my own studies, both in Argentina and in the United States, and particularly the disconnection that I had perceived between tonal and post-tonal analytical practices. In my opinion, this was an issue of great importance for any 20th-Century composer, but also for any conscientious music teacher—which I intended to be for the rest of my life. Intrigued by the pedagogical implications of this dichotomy, I wrote a final paper titled "A Different Path towards Post-Tonal Music."

The paper was mostly concerned in showing how post-tonal music had been born out of tonal "misreadings." It discussed the psychological weight of common-era practices and the need to somehow redirect these intuitions into the post-tonal world. There were

also thoughts about the need to incorporate more quasi-post-tonal works in undergraduate textbooks. Writing that paper Scriabin's style came back to my mind. In a sub-section titled "Ambiguous Moments Inside Tonality," one of the first examples was, perhaps appropriately, Scriabin's Prelude Op. 11, No. 2. Some of my comments at the time were that in this piece Scriabin used a "distorted" voice leading and that "...while the analytical reductions clarified the function of all the notes, the freedom of the embellishments, continuous leaps in the melodic lines, and the freedom of register, created a certain harmonic ambiguity...." I also pointed out that "...[in some instances] the bass seemed to belong to a given chord (the apparent goal of the phrase) but that expectation was fulfilled only one bar later, as if the voices (or the different layers of the register) were out of phase....." In all, the initial analytical impulses for this dissertation were probably a development of these basic initial intuitions on Scriabin Op. 11, No. 2, triggered in turn by the atmosphere of critical inquiry fostered by Professor Straus in his seminar. I am very grateful to him.

In the second year of my doctoral course-work, 1998, I took a seminar on Phrase Rhythm with Professor William Rothstein. This class gave me access to systematic approaches on tonal rhythm and phrase structure. Because of this class I became very interested in tonal rhythm, and somehow made up my mind about the kind of dissertation that I wanted to write.

Working with Professor Rothstein was a thorough learning experience. Each successive meeting would open up new branches of scholarship to examine; after each correction of the draft new analytical possibilities would be revealed. I would like to thank Professor Rothstein for his expert and comprehensive guidance and for his immense

patience in pressing me to clarify what was confused. Being his disciple has been a true privilege.

There is one last portion of this story that also needs to be told. It has to do with explaining how a penniless music teacher of Argentina had the chance to study for a master's degree at Queens College first, and a doctorate at the Graduate Center later. There are, therefore, several people and institutions that must be acknowledged, both in Argentina and the United States. Perhaps the most important people of all are Professor Charles Burkhart and Dr. Ana Maria Trenchi de Bottazzi. Their help was crucial to helping me take the first, and probably most difficult, step. The Fulbright Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts of Argentina, the Board of Education of Argentina, and the New York office of the Institute of International Education provided financial and logistic assistance and played significant roles in the completion of this degree.

I owe an equivalent debt of gratitude to the Graduate Center. The Ph.D. Program in Music not only gave me an education but also let me teach within the system, as a way to pay for my studies. As a foreign student who would neither be able to obtain nor repay any loans, such financial help was simply the only way to pursue the degree. I would like to thank Professors Bruce Saylor, Joseph Straus, David Olan, Allan Atlas, Carl Schachter, and Poundie Burstein. All of them helped one way or another so that I could go on with my studies.

I would like to thank my wife Jennifer for her understanding during the past few years. Her love and support was in the end what made this dissertation possible. My parents, sisters, brother, and brothers in law in Argentina also provided much-needed long-distance encouragement and affection.

I would like to conclude this acknowledgement by stating my debt of gratitude to all my music teachers, colleagues, and students at *Conservatorio Municipal Manuel de Falla* in Argentina. Those first years of my musical education gave me a solid grounding in theory and practice; I would not have been able to complete this doctoral degree without the motivation and training that I had brought with me—and that remained in me—during my studies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Neglect of Scriabin's Earlier Style

While widely recognized as a pioneer of twentieth-century post-tonal practices, Alexander Scriabin has not received equivalent attention for the music that he composed during his initial, tonal period. The reasons for this oversight may be many, but perhaps the most important factor has been the historical stylistic change of the 1910s and 1920s (including the success and self-propaganda of composers like Schoenberg and Stravinsky), which at first seemed to obliterate any connection with previous harmonic and voice-leading techniques. As a result, Scriabin has been seen as a precursor of those twentieth-century techniques, while his early, tonal output has received less analytical consideration.

Scriabin's early death, in 1915, prevented him from continuing his development, perhaps along the stylistic lines taken by Stravinsky or Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. This was a time of profound change in Western classical music, and it may be that Scriabin's harmonic evolution would have continued. In any case, these historical circumstances shaped, early on, a particular perception of Scriabin as a composer less worthy than those illustrious contemporaries, and his early music was largely seen as weakly derivative of other composers, particularly Chopin. I will show, however, that this music is fully mature, with distinctive and original harmony and voice leading in coordination with rhythmic structure. Specifically, the music involves the intensive elaboration and extension of certain tonal norms, particularly those governing voice leading. The tonal system is thus pushed to its limits, but not beyond; the music is idiosyncratic in some ways, but ultimately grounded in tonal conventions.

This dissertation will concentrate on three pieces composed during those early years: Op. 11, No. 2, part of the Twenty-Four Preludes for Piano Op. 11, published in 1895; and Op. 22, Nos. 1 and 3, two of the Four Preludes published as Op. 22 in 1897. The particulars of voice leading, harmony, and form, among other basic parameters of any piece written within the tonal system, will make apparent and help define the uniqueness of Scriabin's voice in his relatively early works. It is my belief that the three pieces I have chosen are among the most personal and successful written by the composer at this stage of his life. To the best of my knowledge, these preludes have never before been analyzed in depth.

1.2. Earlier Style as "Transition"

Other authors have discussed Scriabin's early style, but mostly to stress the transition (which is sometimes placed around Op. 28) towards the composer's "second" tonal style. Nicholas Slonimsky, for instance, places the end of the first period at the completion of the Fourth Piano Sonata, op. 30, written in 1904, the end of the second after the completion of *Le Poème de l'extase*, op. 54, written in 1908, and the third from *Prométhée*, op. 60, written in 1910, to the end of Scriabin's life.[1] Slonimsky's periodization of Scriabin's output is more or less consistent with those set forth by other writers. Notwithstanding the slight differences of opinion about the precise chronological boundaries between stylistic periods, it is generally agreed that Scriabin's piano music (particularly the preludes) moved in the second period away from "melody

[1] Nicholas Slonimsky, appendix to *Scriabin, Artist and Mystic*, by Boris De Schloezer, trans. Nicholas Slonimsky (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 326.

and accompaniment" configurations towards more complex textural designs. The transition also had to do with an increasingly liberal treatment of dissonance, a path eventually leading to the post-tonal language of the composer's last period. I refer to and comment on the most pertinent of these approaches below.

1.3. Main Secondary Sources

1.3.1. Biographic

The biographical references in this dissertation originate mainly in Fabion Bowers' *Scriabin, A Biography* and *The New Scriabin: Enigma and Answers*, and Alfred J. Swan's *Scriabin*.[2] Both authors echo many of the negative views on Scriabin's early style. In fact, it is likely that the pejorative opinions about and subsequent neglect of Scriabin's early compositional work originates with the composer himself. According to Faubion Bowers, Scriabin "...treated all his youthful music like stepchildren—there, but unwanted."[3] Bowers also reproduces some of the pejorative judgments expressed by contemporary musicians. In these views Scriabin is often seen as a lesser composer than Stravinsky or Schoenberg.[4] In subsequent writings on Scriabin, Bowers and Swan are two of the most cited biographers of the composer.

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[2] Faubion Bowers, *Scriabin, A Biography,* 2nd ed., rev., 2 vols. (New York: Dover, 1996), 1: 78; Faubion Bowers, *The New Scriabin: Enigma and Answers* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973); Alfred J. Swan, *Scriabin* (London: Hon Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., 1923; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1969).

[3] Faubion Bowers, foreword to *Youthful and Early Works of Alexander and Julian Scriabin*, compiled and annotated by Donald M. Garvelman (New York: Music Treasure Publications, 1970), iv.

[4] See Arthur Bliss, "Interview," *The Observer* (London), 3 July 1921, quoted in Fabion Bowers, *Scriabin, a Biography,* 1: 78.

Other biographical information has been taken from Donald Brook's *Six Great Russian Composers, Their Lives and Works*, M. D. Calvocoressi's and Gerald Abraham's *Masters of Russian Music*, and Boris Schloezer's *Scriabin, Artist and Mystic.*[5] Many of these works (notably the one by Schloezer) emphasize the connections between the music of Scriabin and extra-musical elements (such as colors, landscapes, or philosophical ideas).

1.3.2. Literary Sources: Music and Metaphor, Russian Symbolism

Among the numerous studies on Scriabin that have an interdisciplinary aim, I am indebted to an article by Martin Cooper that sees Scriabin's music as reflecting Russian symbolism (which, in turn, reflected French symbolism).[6] Cooper describes how Scriabin's early piano music strongly recalls the language and the small forms (preludes, etudes, impromptus and mazurkas) used by Chopin. But he also notes that the "emotional concentration" of these brief pieces shares characteristics with poems by, among others, Bryusov and Merezhkovsky. These were young Russian poets occupied with translating (and imitating, in their own language) the poets of French Symbolism. Cooper's view is unique in that it makes explicit the connection between the early music of Scriabin and Russian Symbolism, a connection generally acknowledged only by the literature dealing with Scriabin's later compositional periods.

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[5] Donald Brook, *Six Great Russian Composers, Their Lives and Works* (London: Rockliff, 1947); M. D. Calvocoressi and Gerald Abraham, *Masters of Russian Music* (London: Duckworth, 1936); Boris Schloezer, *Scriabin, Artist and Mystic*, trans. Nicholas Slonimsky (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

[6] Martin Cooper, "Aleksandr Skryabin and the Russian Renaissance," *Studi Musicali* 1/2

Among some of the common poetic tendencies shared by the French Symbolists and Scriabin's circle cited by Cooper are the

> "...cult of the artificial and the rejection of actuality for a dream-world of the artist's own creation...the concern with death rather than life; and the interest in erotic perversion. ...many of Scriabin's early pieces, for all their superficial similarity to Chopin, are nearer in spirit to the miniature mood-poems of Verlaine and his Russian imitators... ."[7]

Cooper also concludes that Scriabin's pseudo-philosophical views were by no means as personal and idiosyncratic as they are usually considered. The connection between his music and its alleged literary inspiration was lost, Cooper speculates, because, as Scriabin's music kept gaining international exposure, non-Russian observers failed to perceive its literary sources. Cooper insists, finally, that any performer attempting to play the pieces written during the last period of Scriabin's life must look beyond their "objective" characteristics and

> "...suspend his disbelief in the magical, incantatory powers with which the composer believed his music to be invested... ."[8]

As suggested by Cooper in different portions of his article, it seems logical to extend this notion of music as metaphor to all of Scriabin's work; a thorough analysis of the early preludes should thus take their "essential character" (their "magical" or "metaphorical" component) into account.

The connection between Scriabin and Russian Symbolism is also documented in

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(1972): 327-356.

[7] Cooper, "Skryabin and the Russian Renaissance," 335-336.

[8] Ibid., 336.

Malcolm Brown, "Skryabin and Russian 'Mystic' Symbolism."[9] Brown explains that Scriabin's theosophical views often obscured the strong connection between his notions of music and Russian Symbolism. Debora Herman's master's thesis, "Skryabin and Russian Symbolist Thought," also stresses the importance of taking a Russian Symbolist aesthetic into account while examining Scriabin's music.[10] Much earlier, Leonid Sabaneyeff had also pointed out the common traits between Symbolist literature and Scriabin.[11] According to Sabaneyeff, to Scriabin, the notion of "pure" music was absurd; instead, Scriabin thought of music as a vital

> "utterance ... an esoteric language, comprehensible perhaps only to the one completely initiated, but grasped by all peripherally in some way. And not music alone, but every art as well... with Scriabin the borders separating one art from the other grew faint at an early age... ."[12]

Concerning the later period of the composer, Sabaneyeff goes further, drawing a kind of aesthetic, spiritual unity of all the music of Scriabin, with each different work coming into being as a separate fragment of the "Mysterium":

> "...toutes ses créations sont des fragments du *Mystère*, toutes sont créés à partir de son matériau, comme esquisses, parcelles d'un seul projet grandiose—toutes sont pénétrées de ses états d'esprit, reflétant dans leur pure sphère musicale, les états de conscience, les sentiments, qui avaient donné naissance a l'idée du

[9] Malcolm Brown, "Skryabin and Russian 'Mystic' Symbolism," *19th-Century Music* 3/1 (July 1979): 42-51.

[10] Debora Herman, "Skryabin and Russian Symbolist Thought" (M.A. thesis, Hunter College, 1984).

[11] Leonid Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, trans. Judah A. Joffe (New York: International Publishers, 1927), 41-44.

[12] Ibid., 44.

Mystère... ."[13]

In all, the poetic references identified by the authors cited imply the existence of a metaphorical substratum to Scriabin's music. As will be shown by my analysis, the conclusions drawn from a description of purely technical features will often suggest an extra-musical, metaphorical meaning.

1.3.3. Scriabin as a Post-Tonal Precursor

Showing the transition from the tonal style towards the post-tonal language of Scriabin has been precisely the goal of James Baker's *The Music of Scriabin*.[14] This book offers perhaps the most comprehensive and convincing discussion of this composer's music to date. It is nonetheless telling that a book with such an inclusive title would only discuss works from Op. 30 (1903) on, openly privileging the post-tonal portion of Scriabin's repertoire. He even goes as far as to say that Scriabin's

> "...early music continues the late romantic tradition and bears no direct relation to his highly innovative later work."[15]

In Baker's study, the few chapters that account for and analyze tonal works lean toward tracing the "seed," so to speak, of a post-tonal kind of thinking within the tonal

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[13] Leonid Sabaneyeff, "A. N. Scriabine, sa voie créative et les principes de la réalisation artistique," *Le contemporain musical* 4-5 (décembre-janvier 1916): 124; originally published in Russian in *Muzykalny sovremennik* 4-5 (Petrograd, 1916): 169-175; cited (as Sabaneev) in Marine Scriabine, *Alexandre Scriabine: Notes et rèflexions, carnets inédites*, trans., with an introduction and notes by Marina Scriabine (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1979), XVIII.

[14] James Baker, *The Music of Alexander Scriabin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

[15] Baker, *The Music of Alexander Scriabin*, viii.

style of the composer. My study, in a fashion similar to Baker's, will be strongly based on Schenkerian techniques; I will, however, concentrate as deeply as possible on the examples I have chosen from Scriabin's tonal period.

1.3.4. Scriabin's Stylistic Ancestors

Hugh Macdonald's *Skryabin* is a much shorter but more inclusive survey, encompassing small selected portions of the whole of the composer's oeuvre.[16] The author offers a brief introduction to Scriabin's work in chronological order, interlaced with a biographical summary; he then briefly discusses Scriabin's early style. The discussion of the early period is preoccupied with tracing aesthetic influences in Scriabin's music (mainly Chopin, but also other composers such as Liszt, Brahms, Franck, and Debussy), followed by a slightly more detailed examination of some specific elements concerning a few pieces (Op. 2, Op. 4, Op. 5, and Op. 13, No. 5). Based on those examples, Macdonald identifies several general traits that are particular to Scriabin's music, such as the importance of the German and French augmented sixth chords, the hints at part-writing within a homophonic accompaniment, the use of dominant pedals, and the importance of cross-rhythms (two against three, four against three, five against three, and other combinations). These observations, while true, remain extremely general, and the author leaves the chapter devoted to Scriabin's early style without offering any deeper insight into any specific piece, and without analyzing

[16] Hugh Macdonald, *Skryabin* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978).

any piece in its entirety. All in all, the approach seems to suggest, once again, that the early years should be understood only as useful to see "hints" of the later style.

1.3.5. Scriabin and Chopin

In a vein somewhat similar to Macdonald's, Roland James Jesperson's master's thesis concentrates on showing stylistic similarities between Scriabin and Chopin, focusing on short pieces for solo piano, particularly the preludes.[17] I shall refer to Jesperson's historical account and systematic comparison between the two composers, for instance regarding the formal relationships between Chopin's Op. 28 and Scriabin's Op. 11. Jesperson's account is very useful because it thoroughly discusses similarities in textural design, piano writing, and melodic style between the two composers, and the great influence that Chopin exerted on all of Scriabin's piano music. He notes that all of the works that Scriabin wrote for piano are, in one way or another, Romantic character pieces, and that many are in the same genres as those of Chopin: mazurkas, etudes, preludes, and sonatas. Among these types, Jesperson singles out the preludes, noting that they span all of Scriabin's compositional output, from Op. 2, No. 2, one of his first compositions, through Op. 74, the very last.[18]

Coincident with the periodization commonly adopted in the analytical literature, in Jesperson's opinion the early period comprises works written from 1887, when Scriabin started to work on Op. 4, through 1900, the year in which Scriabin wrote the

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[17] Roland James Jesperson, "The Early Period Piano Style of Alexander Scriabin: Chopin's Influence" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1977).

[18] Ibid., 20-22.

B minor Fantasy, Op. 28. But Jesperson also acknowledges that there are overlaps and exceptions; for instance, works written before Op. 28 do contain "premature appearances" of later traits, while works written after Op. 28 sometimes exhibit characteristics of the early style—he calls these "reversions." According to Jesperson, in general terms what makes the pieces of the early style different from those written during Scriabin's adolescence is an "increase in the compositional vocabulary" and the "absence of obvious flaws of craft." Citing some of the authors mentioned above, Jesperson goes on to describe the early style as a type of compositional language that relies heavily on Chopinian gestures, and where many stylistic traits that were unique to Scriabin, and which were to appear later in Scriabin's life, are "absent." Jesperson continues his analysis by offering a rather comprehensive account of the similarities in melodic and textural design, formal structure, and harmonic language, among other musical dimensions, between the two composers. He identifies parallels in the length and formal structure of the preludes, and specifically notes the similarities in the overall design and key structure of the Preludes Op. 11 and Chopin's Op. 28. As described by Jesperson, both composers seemed to prefer short, clearly structured part-form compositions. But sometimes, as in some of the preludes and etudes, both Chopin and Scriabin wrote *moto perpetuo* pieces organized around the sequential repetition or harmonic development of a single motive or idea (as in Chopin's Op. 28, No. 1, and Scriabin's Op. 11, No. 1, for instance). Concerning melodic structure, Jesperson rightly points out a series of parallels between the two composers. He enumerates a series of common characteristics that speak of their great imagination and skill, such as a wide melodic range, frequent skips, sudden changes of direction, and occasionally

jagged, temperamental melodic curves.[19] My analyses, particularly the one in Chapter Two, will examine several aspects of melodic design in Scriabin's music, together with the connection between these melodic features and the composer's voice-leading style.

Perhaps because the topic of Jesperson's study—stylistic similarities between early Scriabin and Chopin—probably stems from the impressions that many musicians had previously expressed about Scriabin's early music, his thesis also mirrors and magnifies those older prejudices and commonplaces. As was said earlier, those comparisons between Scriabin and his apparently exclusive stylistic predecessor (Chopin) often denoted a built-in, implicit, pejorative judgment. Sabaneyeff, an author cited above and possibly one of Jesperson's sources, had acknowledged Scriabin's harmonic refinement while pointing out that his early music was

> "...somewhat clumsy, excessively epigonic with regard to Chopin whom he plainly imitated at the time... Cui... dropped the winged expression: 'a trunkful of stolen manuscripts from Chopin.' And indeed, at that time it was difficult to discern anything else in the trunk...."[20]

The stylistic influence of Chopin on the early Scriabin is constantly insisted upon in the analytical literature. Swan recognizes the affinity in the "transparence of design" and defines Scriabin's music as having a "Chopinesque atmosphere," while Brook speaks of Scriabin as being "intoxicated" with Chopin's style. Calvocoressi and

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[19] Ibid., 24-31.

[20] Leonid Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, trans. Judah A. Joffe (New York: International Publishers, 1927), 40-41.

Abraham agree that Scriabin's early pieces are "completely Chopinesque." Slonimsky also finds that there is a kind of stylistic dependence, but is vague about its technical parameters. He speaks of the young Scriabin's works as being "in Chopin's style, poetic, fresh, and extremely well-written for the piano," admitting also that Scriabin's music at some point developed its own characteristics, upgrading Scriabin from a mere imitator to "one of Chopin's 'successors."[21]

According to Bowers, the "Chopinesque" quality and objectionable "un-Russianism" of the music—traits that were often ascribed and voiced during Scriabin's life—were angrily protested by the composer, at least in their negative connotations. Bowers quotes Scriabin as saying:

> "what if my music does sound like Chopin? It's not stolen. It's mine!...is it possible that I am **not** [bold by Bowers] a Russian composer merely because I don't write overtures and capriccios on Russian themes?!..."[22]

But the comparisons between the two composers were not always unfavorable to Scriabin. These pejorative views were sometimes tempered—somehow, contradictorily—with praise, even within the same paragraph:

> "...We cannot say that the 'salon' elements, of which there are so many in his piano compositions, will forever appear in the same light [i.e., as insubstantial]. Such they seem to us at present, for they have been too numerous, and we have been too absorbed in this intoxicating hothouse

[21] Swan, *Scriabin*, 19; Brook, *Six Great Russian Composers*, 177; Calvocoressi and Abraham, *Masters of Russian Music*, 456; Nicholas Slonimsky, "Alexander Scriabin," *Great Modern Composers*, ed. Oscar Thompson (New York: Dood, Mead & Company, 1941), 279.

[22] Faubion Bowers, foreword to *Youthful and Early Works of Alexander and Julian Scriabin*, iv.

> crowded with poisonous flowers. But Skryabin's elements possess elements of eternal beauty, elements equal in genius to the best pages of Chopin, Wagner, Liszt..."[23]

Jesperson does not address one of the main focuses of my study, voice leading, either, despite the space he devotes to chromaticism and some instances of tonal ambiguity in the works of the two composers. He discusses, for instance, a chromatic bass present in both Chopin's Op. 28, No. 22, and Scriabin's Op. 22, No. 2, but he does not elaborate on the function of this bass in either prelude.[24] Jesperson's thesis does not include a single harmonic reduction (Schenkerian or otherwise), and instead uses only lists of Roman numerals to describe harmonic motion.

1.3.6. Phrase Structure and Melodic Organization

Despite the extent to which different aspects of compositional design are discussed in Jesperson's thesis, there are almost no references to phrase structure. Perhaps more importantly, in those segments of the analysis where Jesperson draws a comparison between the two composers' melodic organization, he voices one of the most common misconceptions—or, at least, incomplete definitions—about Chopin's style, one that can also be ascribed to many Scriabin analyses: that, for these composers, "imagination" was more important than "structure." According to this view, probably the result of a somehow outdated theoretical conception,

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[23] Ibid., 57-58.

[24] Ibid., 52-53.

> "...the melodies of Chopin and Scriabin seem to follow their own innate inclinations and tendencies, producing phrases of widely varying length and clarity, rarely falling within such restraining classical structures as symmetrical periods..."[25]
>
> "An examination of Scriabin's melodies reveals that they resemble those of Chopin in over-all freedom of design and lack of classical symmetry and restraint."[26]

This analytical approach has been proven superficial and false by such ground-breaking articles as Carl Schachter's "Rhythm and Linear Analysis: Durational Reduction."[27] In this article, Schachter has demonstrated that the varying phrase lengths of Chopin's Op. 28, No. 3, rather than simply and only "respond[ing] to the innate tendencies of the melody," in fact reflect also masterful manipulations (expansions and/or contractions) of originally symmetrical prototypes. Symmetrical periods, thus, are not "restraining classical structures," but one of the fundamental components of phrase rhythm: a component necessary to grasp—and essential to—the compressions or expansions. As in the music of Chopin, Scriabin's tonal music deserves a careful examination of phrase structure. In my analyses, Scriabin's varied phrase lengths are often compared and contrasted to the "square" prototypes from which they originate. By unveiling the modifications in phrase rhythm and finding the reasons why they occur, I shall offer grounds to explain the aesthetic effect that these changes have on the listener.

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[25] Jesperson, 28.

[26] Ibid., 31.

[27] *The Music Forum* 5, ed. William Mitchell and Felix Salzer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); reprinted in Carl Schachter, *Unfoldings*, ed. Joseph N. Straus (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 54-78.

1.3.7. Organicism in Scriabin's Piano Preludes

Jay Mauchley's "The Preludes for Solo Piano by Alexander Scriabin" offers a comprehensive view of the entire body of preludes.[28] Following the common opinion in the analytical literature, Mauchley divides the ninety preludes into three styles, corresponding to the years 1886-1900, 1900-1909, and 1909-1915. Out of these three main periods he chooses a few pieces representative of each style. According to Mauchley, Op. 27, No. 1 inaugurates the second style of Scriabin, and he devotes a larger space to discussing this prelude. The analysis, like many others in Mauchley's dissertation, contains many interesting and insightful comments from the standpoint of piano texture and performance practice, but, like Jesperson's, it does not arrive at any kind of structural, let alone Schenkerian, view of the piece. In my analysis of selected Scriabin preludes I shall acknowledge Mauchley's contribution when referring to those aspects of compositional design that are meaningful and deserve to be noted. My aspiration is, however, to connect those relatively superficial traits (which may include motivic design, piano texture, rhythmic organization, and so forth) with deeper, more structural aspects of the global architecture of each piece. This deeper exploration into the global voice leading and phrase structure shall require that the most pertinent levels of the musical construction be expressed by means of contrapuntal reductions and/or graphs. As shown and demonstrated by Schenker, the leading theorist of the twentieth century, the compositional essence of a piece is simultaneously expressed in distinct

[28] Jay Mauchley, "The Preludes for Solo Piano by Alexander Scriabin" (D.M.A. diss., Indiana University, 1982).

levels, all the way from its deepest and most intrinsic core to the musical surface. In its differences and coincidences, transformations and parallelisms, each level relates to and informs the others.[29] Another fundamental theorist of the twentieth century, Arnold Schoenberg, also intuited and discussed in his writings factors that create coherence in the music of the great masters.[30] Authors such as Patricia Carpenter have also explored some of the implicit extensions of Schoenberg's *Grundgestalt*. According to Carpenter, for Schoenberg the notion of "musical idea" took a number of different meanings as it developed from the narrowest sense of "theme" or "motive" to that of a "single unifying germ" that "gave coherence, unity, and logic" to a whole given piece.[31] Organicism in music, in sum, either expressed through a Schoenberg-oriented search, or through Schenkerian analysis (or both), is now fundamental to the analysis of tonal music. My goal in this dissertation is to offer such highly integrated analytical descriptions for each of the Scriabin preludes considered.

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[29] Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition* (*Der freie Satz*), trans. Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979).

[30] Arnold Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique, and Art of its Presentation*, edited, translated and with a commentary by Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, ed. Gerald Strang (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967); Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1975; reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

[31] Patricia Carpenter, "*Grundgestalt* as Tonal Function," *Music Theory Spectrum* 5 (1983): 15-16.

1.3.8. Post-Tonal Approaches

A major contribution to Scriabin studies has been Varvara Dernova's *Garmoniia Scriabina* (Scriabin's Harmony), published in Moscow in 1968. This monograph, probably the most comprehensive analytical study of the composer's works previous to Baker's, has been translated into English, with commentary, by Roy J. Guenther.[32] Guenther's translation of Dernova's study is also more succinctly reproduced in "Varvara Dernova's System of Analysis in the Music of Skryabin."[33] Dernova's study is centered on the concept of "dual tonality." The main element of this theory concerns a dominant seventh chord with a lowered fifth, which in its enharmonic expression six half steps above or below works as the dominant of a new tonic a tritone away. According to this theory, one of the main consequences of this pivoting back and forth between the two polarities is that two tonics are being expressed at the same time, hence the "dual tonality." In words of Faubion Bowers,

> "...The tritone link and its permutations form [...] the basis of Scriabin's 'modulations,' although this is [...] a misnomer, since the 'dominance' of the harmony remains fixed and stationary. No longer can Scriabin's harmonies be understood in terms of 'passing notes, suspensions, cambiatas, or fermatas.'..."[34]

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[32] Roy J. Guenther, "Garmonia Skriabina, by Varvara Dernova: A Translation and Critical Commentary" (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1979).

[33] Roy Guenther, "Varvara Dernova's System of Analysis in the Music of Skryabin," *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*, ed. Gordon D. McQuere, Russian Music Studies 10, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983): 165-216.

[34] Bowers, *The New Scriabin*, 131-132.

Regardless of the persuasive force or weakness of this "dual-tonality" argument, and although my analyses will often refer to "implied" prototypes (harmonic, linear, contrapuntal, motivic, or rhythmic, among others), this specific "dual-key" notion—in Dernova's formulation, intrinsically linked to the "tritone dominant" idea—is not relevant to the works that are the focus of my dissertation. Dernova's "dual-polarity" chord may be, however, an important factor in the analyses of some of the pieces written by Scriabin in his later style.

1.3.9. Implied Keys, Ambiguity, and Common-Practice Tonality

The possibility of traversing "implied keys" has been examined even by Schenkerian theorists. Answering Charles J. Smith[35] and citing views inspired by Leonard B. Meyer's implication-realization theory, William Rothstein discusses several cases from the common-practice repertoire in which some tonal events can be associated with other keys, seemingly emancipated from the main tonal center. Those alternate tonalities, although never "realized," are thus somehow available for the adventurous listener. Rothstein speaks of a "web of such associations within a piece of music, comparable to a web of motivic relationships."[36] One of the reasons why Dernova's idea of "dual tonality," cited above, is alluring, is because this "ambiguous" aspect of tonality is of course crucial to the stylistic crossover at the beginning of the twentieth century. In fact, the early "atonal" music of composers like Schoenberg,

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[35] Charles J. Smith "The Functional Extravagance of Chromatic Chords," *Music Theory Spectrum* 8 (1986): 94-139.

[36] William Rothstein, "On implied tones," *Music Analysis* 10/3 (October 1991): 314-15.

Berg, or even Scriabin (all of whom had a thorough training in traditional tonality) can be appreciated perhaps nowadays as a kind of transitional language, where the concept of implied—but not realized—keys is probably crucial for analysis. Tonality was, after all, a force operating in the background of these composers' minds. The rich harmonic language of the particular preludes that are the focus of this dissertation makes it possible to perceive seemingly alternate tonalities—unexpected tonal centers which are more or less suggested, confirmed, or denied by voice-leading ambiguities. My study will explore those instances—particularly in Op. 22, No. 1—where imaginative ways to introduce and resolve dissonances help Scriabin to widen the harmonic language; these harmonic ambiguities will be examined, however, strictly within the boundaries of the tonal system.

1.3.10. Recent Research

Peter Deane Roberts's monograph, *Modernism in Russian Piano Music: Skriabin, Prokofiev, and Their Russian Contemporaries*,[37] is another comprehensive study that simply ignores—even more than Baker's—the earlier style of Scriabin. The earliest work cited (very briefly) is the Fourth Piano Sonata, Op. 30 (1903), and the writer relies entirely on Dernova's theoretical system.[38]

Among the most recent secondary sources related to Scriabin I shall mention here the extensive chapter that Richard Taruskin devotes to the composer in *Defining*

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[37] Peter Deane Roberts, *Modernism in Russian Piano Music: Skriabin, Prokofiev, and Their Russian Contemporaries* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993).

[38] Ibid., IX.

Russia Musically, George Perle's article "Scriabin's Self-Analyses" (together with Perle's references to Scriabin in *The Listening Composer* and *Serial Composition and Atonality*), Clifton Callender's "Voice-Leading Parsimony in the Music of Alexander Scriabin," and Elliot Antokoletz's "Hybrid Modes and Interval Sets as Formal Determinants in Piano Sonatas of Albrecht, Scriabin, and Prokofiev."[39] All of these studies privilege the post-tonal portion of Scriabin's output, practically ignoring the early works. Perle, for instance, gives Varèse, Scriabin, and Schoenberg credit for partitioning the octave symmetrically, making them therefore the "revolutionary composers whose work initiates the beginning mainstream tradition in the music of our century."[40] In *Serial Composition and Atonality* the two works cited by Perle are Scriabin's *Prometheus* (1910-1913) and the Seventh Piano Sonata (1911). Also in *The Listening Composer*, all of Perle's references to Scriabin concern the post-tonal techniques used by Scriabin in his second and third compositional periods.

Robert Morgan's "Symmetrical Form and Common-Practice Tonality," a recent article, addresses the problem of phrase structure (and, particularly, formal and tonal

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[39] Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 308-359; George Perle, "Scriabin's Self-Analyses," *Music Analysis* 3 (1984): 101-122; George Perle, *The Listening Composer* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 12; George Perle, *Serial Composition and Atonality: An Introduction to the Music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern*, 4th ed., revised (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977); Clifton Callender, "Voice-Leading Parsimony in the Music of Alexander Scriabin," *Journal of Music Theory* 42/2 (Fall 1998): 219-233; Elliot Antokoletz, "Hybrid Modes and Interval Sets as Formal Determinants in Piano Sonatas of Albrecht, Scriabin, and Prokofiev," *International Journal of Musicology* 3 (1994): 309-338.

[40] Perle, *The Listening Composer*, 12.

symmetry) in the music of several composers, including Scriabin.[41] Morgan limits his in-depth analysis to Op. 15, No. 5, Op. 33, No. 3, moving on afterwards to Op. 49 and later works. Some of the ideas expressed in this article are partially relevant to my analysis of Op. 11, No. 2.

In "Half-Diminished Functions and Transformations in Late Romantic Music," Richard Bass discusses lesser-explored functions and resolutions of different seventh chords from a neo-Riemannian perspective.[42] Bass's article, partially inspired by Schoenberg's "law of the shortest way"[43] and Richard Cohn's "parsimonious voice leading,"[44] proposes a hybrid method that explains harmony and voice leading simultaneously from transformational and functional (triadic) points of view. The article focuses on several examples of half-diminished seventh chords used by Scriabin and many of his contemporaries. Often, during the post-romantic era, such chords were spelled in various ways, and this facilitated novel resolutions. Often, also, such chords were prevalent in a given composition or successfully replaced the dominant function. Bass concludes his article with a formal analysis of Scriabin's Op. 27, No. 1, in which he applies his hybrid method. I shall refer to some of his analytical conclusions,

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[41] Robert P. Morgan, "Symmetrical Form and Common-Practice Tonality," *Music Theory Spectrum* 20/1 (Spring 1998): 1-47.

[42] Richard Bass, "Half-Diminished Functions and Transformations in Late Romantic Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 23/1 (Spring 2001).

[43] This is an expression introduced by Arnold Schoenberg in his *Theory of Harmony*, trans. Roy E. Carter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

[44] See Richard Cohn, "Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late Romantic Triadic Progressions," *Music Analysis* 15 (1996): 9-40.

particularly concerning the apparent "parsimonious voice leading" in some portions of Op. 22, No. 1.

1.3.11. Harmony and Voice Leading: Theoretical References

Another useful reference for my study is Rimsky-Korsakoff's treatise on harmony and voice leading (in English translation), which serves to establish the common Russian practices of the time, and reflects therefore the knowledge transmitted to Scriabin by his teachers.[45] This secondary source is helpful to ascertain the extent to which Scriabin was breaking ground (but still within the boundaries of the tonal tradition) in his early works. I will sometimes compare these ideas with those in harmonic textbooks of our time, such as Kostka and Payne's *Tonal Harmony With an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, Aldwell and Schachter's *Harmony and Voice Leading*, and Gauldin's *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*.[46]

1.3.12. Structural Approaches

1.3.12. 1. Schenker and Schoenberg

This study draws on two distinct theoretical traditions. The one associated with Schenker takes harmony and voice leading as its principal domains; the one associated

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[45] Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakoff, *Practical Manual of Harmony*, translated from the 12th Russian edition by Joseph Achron; 4th ed. (New York: Carl Fischer, 1943).

[46] Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne, *Tonal Harmony With an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 4th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000); Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, second ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1989); Robert Gauldin, *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

with Schoenberg takes form and phrase structure as its principal domains. Most of the sources cited fall into one camp or another, although some cross over.

1.3.12.2. Schenkerian Sources

In addition to direct and indirect references to works of Heinrich Schenker and his most immediate disciples, such as Felix Salzer (who devoted considerable attention to the incipient post-tonal, transitional repertoire), Oswald Jonas or Ernst Oster, I also apply analytical notions introduced, explained, or developed during the past twenty-five years by authors such as Carl Schachter, Charles Burkhart, William Rothstein, Jonathan D. Kramer, Frank Samarotto, Roger Kamien, and Harald Krebs. Consistent with Schenkerian practice, I shall often provide partial or total foreground, middleground, or background graphs to demonstrate contrapuntal, harmonic, and rhythmic patterns.

1.3.12.3. Systematic Approaches

Finally, I often resort to the methodological approaches of four treatises that take on the problem of formal organization and rhythm in tonal music in highly systematic and comprehensive ways. In chronological order, they are: Arnold Schoenberg's *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, Lerdahl and Jackendoff's *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, William Rothstein's *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, and William Caplin's *Classical Form*.[47]

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[47] Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*; Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983); William Rothstein, *Phrase*

1.4. Op. 11, No. 2, and Op. 22, Nos. 1 and 3

Scriabin's earlier piano preludes, taken individually, often exhibit a strong inner cohesion. Such cohesion is, however, absent in the sets: opus numbers do not reflect a true cyclic organization or any kind of pre-conceived plan. Passing from one prelude to the next, the listener cannot find either a deliberate connection, transition, or contrast. The only example of a set of preludes that seems to have a careful formal organization, the Twenty-Four Preludes Op. 11, was paradoxically a very heterogeneous compilation. These preludes were composed over a relatively long period of time (1888 through 1896). As the composer was urged to submit a substantial amount of music to justify fees already paid, he simply sent forty-seven preludes by mail, in different installments, to Russia (in 1896, while touring different European cities). Many of them had to be transposed in order to fit the harmonic plan in fifths, and, even more importantly, the final compilation was not decided by Scriabin himself but by Belaieff, his editor. It is conceivable that Belaieff combined the best of these preludes with less interesting ones within the same opus simply in order to improve sales. These forty-seven different preludes, interspersed with earlier works, came to constitute the bulk of Opera 11, 13, 15, 16 and 17. Needless to say, this origin would raise fundamental objections about the validity of an analytical approach to any of these early separate opera as defined units in themselves, unless one would be willing to accept Belaieff's

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Rhythm in Tonal Music (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989); William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

editorial decisions as constitutive of the compositional process.[48] Calvocoressi and Abraham maintain that Op. 11, Nos. 4 and 6, for instance, had been composed before 1891. Macdonald points out that No. 4 was originally in B^{b} minor and was intended to form part of a Ballade; it was later transposed to E minor to accommodate the tonal scheme of the entire opus. One last symptom that the opus numbers should not be taken as an indication of an organic conception is the fact that Scriabin himself is not known to have played any of these sets as an entire unit in any of his concerts, but rather offered a potpourri of individual numbers from several of them—although this was a customary practice for recitals at the time.

It is for the reasons stated above that the three pieces that are the focus of this dissertation do not belong to the same opus. Rather, and independently from Scriabin's earlier or later output, the three preludes were chosen because they reflect a secure technique and a mature compositional identity. Because these are rich, multifaceted works, they abound in compositional details that enhance the understanding of the primary parameters on which I shall focus my investigation. Hence, rather than singling out a specific trait or element (such as a "pivotal" dominant chord, in Dernova's terms) in order to explain the core of Scriabin's compositional language in this period of his career, my analyses are centered around three broader aspects of composition that define much of the identity of a piece or style: harmony, voice leading and phrase rhythm. Only by carrying out a thorough study of voice leading, comparing the different levels of reduction, is it possible to grasp the subtleties of Scriabin's art in this

[48] See Calvocoressi and Abraham, *Masters of Russian Music*, 458; Macdonald, *Skryabin*, 17.

area. By the same token, only a careful study of the phrase structure and formal organization reveals in each case the internal logic and therefore the ultimate aesthetic substance of each of the pieces in question. Often voice leading, harmony, and phrase structure collaborate with other compositional parameters (texture, meter and hypermeter, register, and so forth) in establishing this substance. These additional features, insofar as they are necessary to draw the analytical and aesthetic picture, shall be thoroughly explored.

1.5. Organization of This Dissertation

Each of the following chapters of this dissertation contains a detailed analysis of one of the three preludes, Op. 11, No. 2, and Op. 22, Nos. 1 and 3. Chapter Five summarizes the conclusions reached. Although Chapters Two, Three, and Four all address the same musical parameters (harmony, voice leading, and formal organization), the different features of each piece preclude using the same organization for each chapter. To avoid such a mechanical account, I preferred to mold the analysis into what the music proposes in each case, following the most salient or surprising features of each prelude. In this way, and although any analytical study necessarily dissects the object that is set out for explanation, my intention has been to assemble a theoretical description that would not weaken the original aesthetic impression.

Chapter 2: Op. 11, No. 2

2.1. Introduction

I start my discussion by examining this early Prelude in A Minor, composed in 1895. Bowers states that this piece is one of twenty-four preludes sent by Scriabin to his editor during that year; part of the group was later consolidated into the Twenty-Four Preludes, Op. 11. Scriabin sent another seventeen preludes in 1896, which appeared as Preludes Opp. 13, 15, 16 and 17.[1] As Bowers points out, many of these preludes were musical "postcards," "descriptions of Scriabin's journey to the West." Bowers goes on to say that

> "...As the music tells our ears, he sees everything with Russian eyes. He paints a picture of the Heidelberg Castle, of a torrential stream as it crashes on the rocks working its way to the river and then the sea, of the loneliness he feels at being abroad..." [2]

Bowers is not specific about which preludes he refers to in the paragraph above. But it is possible that these "postcards" may be Op. 11, No. 19 (the Heidelberg Castle) and No. 8 (the stream crashing on the rocks). On the other hand, a number of preludes may represent the "loneliness of being abroad." In any case, Bowers' remark reinforces the impression that Op. 11, No. 2 may have a kind of metaphorical meaning; indeed, it could be heard as a kind of *valse triste*. The prelude also seems to borrow part of its character from Chopin's Waltz in A Minor, Op. 34, No. 2. As was pointed out in the introductory chapter, many authors—such as Alfred Swan, Faubion Bowers, Robert P.

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[1] Bowers, *The New Scriabin*, 216-217. See also Jesperson, 24.

Morgan, and Hugh Macdonald—have referred to this early style of Scriabin as "Chopinian."[3]

2.2. Voice Leading and Harmony

2.2.1. Foreground Harmonic Rhythm

Example 2.1 offers a harmonic reduction of the entire prelude at the bar level, together with a summary of the harmonic structure and key areas.

2.2.2. Freedom of Register

Several details of voice leading become apparent through the process of reduction, or rhythmic normalization.[4] The first, most obvious, is the apparent freedom of register: voices connect properly from one chord to the next, but only if the listener disregards frequent registral discontinuities. Such freedom is established, or, better, imprinted, by the breaks of register that start to happen as soon as the piece begins. Example 2.2.a. shows the breaks present in the first four bars of the piece. Each arrow, representing an octave transfer, shows the disjointed connections from one chord to the

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[2] Bowers, *The New Scriabin*, 40

[3] For a detailed enumeration of common and distinct features between Chopin's Op. 28 and Scriabin Op. 11 see Jesperson, "Early Period Piano Style of Alexander Scriabin." The present study refers to those comparisons or associations where appropriate.

[4] The expression "rhythmic normalization" is taken from William Rothstein, "Rhythmic Displacement and Rhythmic Normalization," *Trends in Schenkerian Research*, ed. Allen Cadwallader (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 87-113. Some of the ideas presented in "Rhythmic Displacement and Rhythmic Normalization" stem from one of the chapters of Rothstein's doctoral dissertation, "Rhythm and the Theory of Structural Levels" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1981), 75-134.

next. Because of the implied octave transfers, the individual voices, which are seemingly disrupted with dissonant leaps, in fact do continue their (either chromatic or diatonic) "stepwise" motion. There are no arrows for the voices that connect by stepwise motion in the actual musical surface. In order to retain some of the effect that those registral breaks produce in the voice-leading fabric, the reduction—Example 2.1—keeps some of them (see the connection from bar 1 to bar 2 in the bass, for instance). Such voice-leading practice legitimizes itself as a valid part of the piece's tonal grammar by sheer repetition. From the moment in which the listener understands this mechanism, his or her ear is prepared (or perhaps forced) to accept the frequent huge breaks of more than one octave as representing diatonic or chromatic "steps." As in the aforementioned bass in Example 2.1, mm. 1- 2, a minor ninth between C4 and B2 can thus be readily taken to represent a minor second.[5]

One of the consequences of such liberal voice leading is that the whole register of the piano becomes fair game: no matter how far or isolated in register a specific tone may be, it refers—and must be construed as—a tone belonging to a stepwise voice-leading prototype. In the process, the tonal ear gradually accepts the melodic dissonances that arise. As seen in Example 2.1, mm. 1-2, a minor ninth, which is an unacceptable horizontal interval in traditional species counterpoint, must be reinterpreted—aurally normalized—as a minor second. Hence, the breaks in register revealed by the reduction, far from implying a disorganized or erratic voice leading,

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[5] See Heinrich Schenker, *Counterpoint: A Translation of Kontrapunkt, Book 1, Cantus Firmus and Two-Voice Counterpoint*, ed. John Rothgeb, trans. John Rothgeb and Jürgen Thym (New York: Schirmer Books, 1987), 184, 187.

have to be acknowledged as a significantly imaginative and stylistically forward-looking feature of the piece. Referring to similar stepwise "replacements," Schenker is unsure whether to express praise or complaint in his writings.[6]

2.2.3. Implied Tones

The sudden appearance and/or disappearance of a specific register, together with the inherent tensions deriving from the harmonic context, not only prompt the listener to reinterpret some large intervals as the expression of latent stepwise connections, but also force him or her to fill in those missing areas of the texture with implied tones. As expressed by William Rothstein, implied tones often introduce—or reintroduce—new or seemingly lost regions of the register. Any new pitch thus separated from the other registral areas must be either a chordal tone or dependent upon a chordal tone. Such a chordal tone may or not be literally present. According to Rothstein, implied tones are, in a literal sense, absent; their latent existence, however, is indicated—and required—by the surrounding context to complete a specific musical model.[7] Rothstein specifically writes of situations in which harmonic cadences may themselves generate implied tones in the bass. In those cases, an "inferred bass line becomes necessary" to compensate for the "bass-lessness" and to make sense of the motion of the remaining voices.[8] One such case is Example 2.1, m. 17. Because of the registral weight of E3 in m. 16, the

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[6] See Schenker, *Counterpoint*, 66.

[7] Rothstein, "On implied tones," 300. Implied tones are discussed more briefly in Allen Forte and Steven A. Gilbert, *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis* (New York: Norton, 1982), 119-123.

[8] See Rothstein, "On implied tones," 307-310.

repetition of m. 1 in m. 17, however literal, is not heard in quite the same way this second time. Strictly speaking, C4 is once again the bass in m. 17. But an implied A2 or A3 is necessary to match the registral and harmonic weight of E3 in m. 16. Although neither A2 nor A3 is explicitly present, one of them must thus exist as an implied tone, mandated by the registral and harmonic forces of the context. In fact, A2 is a slightly better choice; an implied A2 in m. 17 would also satisfy the natural expectation to define the space of an octave, an expectation that has been created by the stepwise descent from A3, in m. 8, to B2, in m. 15. Hence, in m. 17 the reduction shows an implied tonic triad in root position. Because the presence of A2 is not literal, it has been indicated between parentheses.

In m. 4 there is a similar situation: the V^7 chord needs to—and does—resolve into I, but without a bass to match the E2 of m. 3. Here there is also a reason related to timbre, aside from function and register: each pianistic register has a particular color, and the instrumental color of E2 would go unmatched without an implied A2 in m. 4. One could think of this situation as a bassoon featuring E2 in m. 3; a conventional continuation would consist of the same bassoon featuring the resolution to A2 in m. 4. A2 is implied, then, because it is to a great extent expected, despite its not being manifested in the surface. In "Register and the Large-Scale Connection," Ernst Oster discusses cases in which two tones that do not, seemingly, have any connection to one another, may be related merely because of the register that they occupy. He also explores situations in which tones, because of their registral placement, have a more

prominent role over small-, middle-, or large-scale harmonic prolongations.[9] Oster refers to explicit relationships between actual tones; in the case I am discussing, one of the tones is real, the other is implied. Nevertheless, the relationship between the two tones (or the absence of such a relationship) can be apparent to the attentive listener. The reduction makes similar assumptions about implied tones in various places in the piece; their presence may be needed to complete an expected harmonic motion, or to restore the proper voice leading by patching a broken melodic line. Some of the most necessary implied tones are shown in Example 2.1 with parentheses.

2.2.4. Register and Color

In the same article, Oster also identifies a basic characteristic of keyboard music: manipulating register is probably the main way to create contrasting virtual "orchestrations" and thus prevent monotony of color.[10] In sum, like those composers cited by Oster, in Op. 11, No. 2 Scriabin is defining separate harmonic spaces—and orchestrating, so to speak, for the piano—through register.

2.2.5. "Stretch" of Dissonance

A related consequence of this game of "implications" is a virtual stretch of the dissonance over time and a resulting expansion of the chordal vocabulary, a feature perhaps inherited from Wagnerian voice-leading. One instance of such a stretch is

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[9] Ernst Oster, "Register and the Large-Scale Connection," *Journal of Music Theory* 5 (1961): 56.

[10] Ibid., 62.

shown in Example 2.2.b., which concentrates on the vertical intervals of mm. 3-4: a virtual bar-long 4-3 suspension is paired with a minor tenth as an *appoggiatura* to a minor ninth. But the ninth is itself an *appoggiatura* to the octave, as the listener discovers in the next bar. Because the ninth resolves thus within the dominant chord, Aldwell and Schachter find it preferable to think of such ninths as ordinary neighbors or suspensions. According to them, in those cases ninths "intensify the dissonant character of the dominant" and "help to create a rich sonority."[11] To be sure, and since the E2 of m. 3 is, strictly speaking, supposed to last only a quarter note, a short-sighted harmonic analysis could have ignored the connection, and considered the remaining sonorities of that bar as independent from the low E (the result would be a V chord followed by a II chord). But the prevailing harmonic rhythm corresponds at least to a measure. Rothstein cites a similar example in Schumann's Piano Quartet Op. 44, originally used by Schenker to exemplify "implied continuations of bass notes."[12] Because Bar 3 does not contain the leading tone, the harmony could also be analyzed as a II^7 over a dominant pedal. Aldwell and Schachter cite a similar case, in Schumann's "Mondnacht."[13] One way or another, and regardless of the actual written duration of the low E, its registral weight (as discussed above, no other tone appears in that region), instrumental color, and function make that tone the most prominent bass, not just of that bar, but of the entire four-bar phrase. The four-bar phrase is not a dominant prolongation; there is, therefore, a clear disproportion between the tonal function of the

[11] Aldwell and Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 443.

[12] Rothstein, "On implied tones," 308-9.

chord and the way in which it is featured in the musical surface. In conclusion, the registral isolation of the dominant bass puts the V chord in the spotlight and greatly minimizes its resolution to the tonic at the end of the four-bar phrase. I shall devote more attention to register later in this chapter.

2.2.6. Horizontalization of Dissonant Harmonies

Stretching a chord over time opens a world of possibilities. A compositional procedure going back to the times of the lute and later the harpsichord, it allows for percussive instruments, such as the piano, to sustain a specific chord over time through arpeggiation, thus compensating for the rapid tonal decay of such instruments. Often, the arpeggio responds to a rather mechanical rhythmic design. Perhaps the most widely known example of this technique is the Classical-era Alberti bass. Once the chord's components are spread over time, however, the time it takes for the arpeggio to complete or successfully define the chord is a span of ambiguity: the listener cannot know for sure what the chord actually is. As long as the arpeggio is still unfolding, then, the composer is still in possession of the last word about that chord. This procedure is a valuable tool to introduce suspense and add interest, and Scriabin did not miss the opportunity. Unlike an Alberti design, the arpeggios of Op. 11, No. 2 are rhythmically spare, asymmetrical in design, and—as noted above—irregular in register, demanding constant attention from the listener.

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[13] Aldwell and Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 448-449, 452.

But there is yet another angle to the listener's implicit reconstructive effort when putting the chord back together. Unfolding a harmony creates, in fact, a kind of melody: a succession of horizontal intervals. Since melodic dissonances are more tolerable than harmonic dissonances (seconds, for instance, are perfectly valid in traditional counterpoint as horizontal intervals, but are quite restricted as vertical ones), the horizontalization of a relatively dissonant chord can be a way to avoid the clash that would result from presenting the chord all at once as a block. Scriabin uses this strategy extensively here, starting as early as m. 2, which features a II chord as a secondary dominant seventh of V with a diminished fifth.[14] The difference between playing the bar as it is written by Scriabin and the reduction—as a block chord, in Example 2.1—makes clear that stretching the chord softens the virtual whole-tone dissonance (B-A-D$^{\#}$-F) and, because the piano has the chance to fully ring each note individually, also dilutes the registral distance among the voices. It may also be noted that most of these arpeggios could not be played as block chords anyway: the stretch would be too wide for the hands of the pianist.

2.2.7. Unusual Progressions

The most interesting harmonic progression occurs in the second section, between bars 20 and 21. The V^7 chord of the key of A minor (E-G$^{\#}$-B-D) suffers here a radical reinterpretation, suddenly becoming a German augmented sixth chord in the key of G$^{\#}$ minor. The reinterpretation doesn't sound too harsh because the resolution of V^7

[14] This is Dernova's chord, devoid of any implication of "dual polarity."

to I had been greatly delayed and weakened through suspensions in m. 4, and the same had happened with the resolution of V^7/V to $V^{7/b5}$ in m. 8. By the time measure 20 arrives, the listener has been conditioned to accept such a delay in the appearance of the tonic chord, which of course in this case never arrives. Later, in mm. 25-26, Scriabin uses again the ambiguity of the augmented sixth chord to leave $G^{\#}$ minor, by turning the dominant of this remote key, via a chromatic inflection in the bass plus a diatonic half-step motion in the alto, into another augmented sixth chord, this one in E minor (mm. 26-27). Example 2.2.c. offers a closer view of these two unusual progressions. In principle, both progressions should be seen as pivot modulations: a dominant seventh chord that belongs to the previous key is enharmonically reinterpreted as an augmented sixth chord in a new key. This is especially true for mm. 20-21 (in which there is an enharmonic reinterpretation of D, turning into C double-sharp), but not entirely true for the modulation in mm. 25-27. The latter requires two half-tone inflections or adjustments, one chromatic ($C^{\#}$ to C in the bass) and one diatonic ($D^{\#}$ to E in the alto). In addition, there is an enharmonic reinterpretation of F double-sharp into G. In conclusion, and to be absolutely precise, the modulation of mm. 25-27 should be characterized as a common-tone, or common-dyad, modulation (G and $A^{\#}$ are the common tones), featured over highly chromatic chords (German augmented sixth) from the key of $G^{\#}$ minor into the key of E minor.

2.2.8. Contrapuntal Progressions?

Should the modulations shown in Example 2.2.c. be instead explored from the standpoint of pure contrapuntal activity? One of the most influential treatises of

harmony contemporary to Scriabin, Rimsky-Korsakoff's, contains a description of "false progressions," situations in which there are chains of non-functional progressions by stepwise motion where the chords belong to different keys. Rimsky was, indeed, referring to what are now often termed "contrapuntal progressions," chord progressions dependent upon voice leading and where most motions are by step.[15] Being transitional, such progressions do not bear a significant harmonic weight. Rimsky-Korsakoff catalogs many contrapuntal progressions featuring chains of seventh chords, leaving open the possibility for other types not described in his textbook. After saying that the voices should always move by step, he points out that "it is left to the curious student to find various false progressions of other seventh-chords, by himself."[16] In addition to the specific progressions shown in Example 2.2.c., one could see how this description would seem at first glance also appropriate for mm. 9 through 14, mm. 25 through 30, and mm. 57 through 62 (all of which are more or less strict transpositions of each other). A more provocative possibility is to think of the progressions purely in terms of the "law of the shortest way," and to classify them according to the number of semitones traversed by each of the individual voices from one chord to the next.[17] The raw total account of the contrapuntal motion between the individual voices of two chords, measured in semitones, is an analytical tool eminently useful for the twentieth-

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[15] Aldwell and Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 60. In a chapter titled "The 6/4 and Other Linear Chords" Robert Gauldin describes the concept in similar terms. Gauldin, *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*, 211-224.

[16] Rimsky-Korsakoff, *Practical Manual of Harmony*, 108.

[17] As defined in Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, 39.

century repertoire;[18] it would be applied here to music composed in the nineteenth century. In the transformation enacted between mm. 25-26 two voices move by half-step while the other two voices remain as common tones, as shown in Example 2.2.c.

But the progressions isolated in Example 2.2.c. are, in any case, not merely contrapuntal. They are, instead, pivotal moments of the harmonic structure. The modulation from the key of A minor to the key of $G^{\#}$ minor in mm. 20-21 introduces a new key that is immediately later confirmed with a thematic restatement, and the modulation from $G^{\#}$ minor to E minor in mm. 25-26 introduces a new key that is later confirmed with a cadence in m. 32 (E minor is also the key in which a new section of the piece starts, in m. 33).

2.3. Formal Organization

2.3.1. Sixteen-Measure Sentences

Example 2.3 combines a 3:1 durational reduction[19] and the grouping structures of the entire piece. Each bar (or dotted half-note) has been transformed into one quarter-note hyperbeat.[20] Overall, the form of the prelude corresponds to the song form

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[18] See David Lewin, "Some Ideas about Voice-Leading Between Pcsets," *Journal of Music Theory* 42/1 (Spring 1998): 15-72.

[19] As defined by Carl Schachter in "Rhythm and Linear Analysis: Durational Reduction," *The Music Forum* 5, ed. Felix Salzer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980): 197-232; reprinted in Carl Schachter, *Unfoldings: Essays in Schenkerian Theory and Analysis*, ed. Joseph N. Straus (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 54-78.

[20] The term hyperbeat is used here by extension to hypermeter, defined in Joel Lester, *The Rhythms of Tonal Music* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 51.

AABA, also called "quatrain" by Dénes Bartha.[21] Both Bartha and Rothstein, who also describes this song-derived form in his treatise, propose that a proportional balance between the four sections is the norm, although there may be repetitions or expansions.[22] It seems only natural that the strict symmetry of this form, in the hands of gifted composers, would often invite sophisticated alterations, such as indeed happens in Scriabin's Op. 11, No. 2. The first, second, and fourth sections are sentences; the third—the contrasting period, which I have labeled "B"—is a compound (hybrid) period.[23] According to William Caplin, a compound period comprises two eight-measure sentences; while the first sentence ends with a weak cadence, the second ends with a perfect authentic cadence. Unlike the normative form given by Caplin, in Example 2.3, mm. 33-48, the order of the cadences is reversed: the first cadence, in mm. 39-40, is strong (perfect authentic cadence), while the second, mm. 47-48, is weak (semicadence). All of the sections, except the last, are sixteen measures long. The form is detailed below:

A) First Section (mm. 1 through 16): A sixteen-measure sentence, it comprises two eight-measure halves. The first eight measures, which, following Caplin, I call "presentation," comprise a four-measure basic idea in the tonic key, A minor, followed by a transposition of the same idea to the key of the dominant, E minor. Caplin would

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[21] Dénes Bartha, "Song Form and the Concept of 'Quatrain,'" *Haydn Studies: Proceedings of the International Haydn Conference, Washington, D.C., 1975*, ed. Jens Peter Larsen, Howard Server, and James Webster (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981): 354.

[22] Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 107-108.

[23] I adapt the term "compound period" from the definition given in William Caplin, *Classical Form*, 65. I use these formal terms (sentence, presentation, continuation, basic idea, compound period, and so on) according to the definitions given in Caplin, *Classical Form*, 35-70.

label this as "repetition of the basic idea, dominant version."[24] The eight-measure presentation ends with the arrival to an altered (diminished fifth) dominant in the key of A minor. The eight-measure continuation starts with the elision of the unaltered tonic triad; a resolution to the tonic is implied by the previous altered dominant in m. 8. In strict Schenkerian terms, the resolution to the tonic is also necessary to properly prepare the tonicization of D minor—specifically, $G^{\#}$ would resolve to A before G enters (passing from A). From the motivic point of view, the continuation starts in m. 9 with a variant of the initial motive of the basic idea (ascending three-eighth-note upbeat). Two two-measure sequential fragments are then followed by a four-measure cadential idea that contains one-measure-long melodic fragments of the previous two-measure units, according to the principle of liquidation.[25] The sixteen-measure sentence, as a whole, ends with a semicadence in the key of A minor. Example 2.4.a. offers a harmonic summary of mm. 1-16.

The structure of the first sixteen-measure sentence is summarized below:

Presentation

(a) basic idea: A minor (4 bars) + (a') repetition of the basic idea (sequential, quasi-literal transposition of a): E minor (4 bars).[26]

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[24] Ibid., 10.

[25] Liquidation as defined in Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, 58.

[26] Sequence as defined in Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, 59.

Continuation

(b): $I^{7/\#}$ of A minor apparently tonicizing IV, D minor, but resolving instead with a deceptive cadence to VI, $B^{\flat}$ major (2-bar fragment; in the surface, the $B^{\flat}$ chord is in second inversion; note, however, the implied motion in the bass A1-B♭1, shown in Example 2.4, mm. 9-10) + (b'): quasi-sequence[27] prolonging $B^{\flat}$ through a voice exchange between bass and soprano (2-bar fragment) + (b''): cadential idea. The main features of the harmonic motion are a chromatic change turning $B^{\flat}$ (m. 10) into $B^{7/\#}$ (m. 14) and then into a half-diminished seventh on B (m. 15). At that point the bass line reaches the lowest tone, B2, which firmly establishes II before the cadential conclusion with the arrival to the V^7 of A minor in m. 16. The harmonic structure of the eight-measure continuation is $I^{7/\#}$ - $^{\flat}II$ - $II^{7/\#}$ - II^7 - V^7 (the Roman numerals given correspond to the main key of the piece).

A') Second Section (mm. 17-32). This section is a modulatory sixteen-measure sentence, a modified repetition (variation) of mm. 1-16. As discussed by Caplin, it is not uncommon for continuation phrases to modulate to another keys. It is also common that the final cadence of such continuation phrases be authentic, to confirm the new tonic. Caplin also stresses the usual dependence of modulatory sentences—at least, in the Classical style—upon the preceding formal units to form larger "themes."[28] These characteristics can be appreciated in Op. 11, No. 2. Measures 17-32 comprise two

[27] Quasi-sequence as defined in Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, 59.

[28] Caplin, *Classical Form*, 47.

eight-measure halves (the first eight measures are the presentation, the second eight measures are the continuation). Compared with mm. 1-8, the most significant difference of mm. 17-24 lies in the harmonic deviation in the repetition of the four-measure basic idea. Originally transposed to the dominant, the basic idea is now repeated in the key of $G^{\#}$ minor. As a result (and thanks to the harmonic adjustments of mm. 20-21 and 25-27), the eight-measure continuation (mm. 25-32) abandons the key of A minor and eventually arrives to a brief authentic cadence that confirms the key of E minor in m. 32. The arrival of the cadence divides the piece exactly at the midpoint of its basic length. The concept of "basic length" refers to the duration of the sections of a piece according to an established prototype—that is, the length of those sections once the phrase expansions or compressions have been reduced out.[29] The actual cadence that features the midpoint partition of the piece, however, is as weak as it could be: it occurs within a single bar (where the resolution into the I chord happens in the second beat of the measure); it is imperfect, for the I chord is in first inversion; the texture and register are compressed to the maximum; and the top voice features insistent appoggiaturas that delay E until the very last eighth note of the bar—which, by the time it finally arrives, fails to have any support in the bass. The weakness of the cadence is somehow disproportionate to the intensity of the harmonic journey and the textural weight of the sixteen-bar sentence that it concludes; however, the disproportion is consistent with the prominence of the dominant chord of m. 3 explained in previous paragraphs. In both cases, the musical surface leaves questions unanswered, so to

[29] Basic length is discussed in Schachter, "Rhythm and Linear Analysis: Durational Reduction," 197-232, and Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 106-107.

speak, pushing the tension forward and maintaining interest. Since the section starting in m. 33 does affirm the key of E minor at its beginning (in fact, it can be heard as the actual prolonged resolution of the previous phrase), another consequence of the weakness of the cadence is that it provides a more fluent continuity from one section into the next. Example 2.4.b. offers a harmonic summary of mm. 17-32.

The structure of the second sentence is summarized below:

Presentation

(a): basic idea in A minor (4 bars) + (a'): repetition of the basic idea, quasi-literal transposition into $G^{\#}$ minor (4 bars)

Continuation (modulating)

(b): apparent dominant of $G^{\#}$ minor, moving to a German augmented sixth of E minor (two-bar fragment) + (b'): quasi-sequence, passing through an E minor triad in second inversion—and therefore anticipating the imminent arrival to this key (two-bar fragment)— + (b''): four-measure cadential idea towards E minor. $F^{\#}$, the final tone of the descending bass, firmly establishes II of E minor (as V of V) in m. 30, just before the sentence reaches its conclusion with an authentic cadence in E minor.

B) Third Section: A compound (hybrid) period, stretching from measure 33 through 48, features a true contrasting idea and an intensification in contrapuntal and registral activity, thus its label as a "B" theme. This section of the prelude, quasi-developmental, shares many features with those that are typical of the B section in a *quatrain*, as described by Bartha: shorter motives, faster harmonic rhythm combined

with modulations, and, in general, more surface activity. Bartha goes as far as to characterize this section of the quatrain as a kind of retransition.[30] The sixteen measures comprising mm. 33 through 48 are made up of an antecedent and a consequent, each eight measures long, and each internally organized as a sentence, thus its label as a hybrid period. This type of sixteen-measure formal construction is described by Caplin by analogy to an eight-measure one. He discusses the antecedent function of the first eight-measure sentence, usually ending with a weak cadence, and how the second sentence, also eight measures long, usually ends with a perfect authentic cadence.[31] Except for the departure from the harmonic norm stated by Caplin (he refers to such cases as "Irregular Closure[s] of Antecedent Phrase[s]"),[32] Caplin's definition of the sixteen-measure period applies here. The harmonic irregularity seems logical; after all, Scriabin is not a composer from the Classical era. Measures 33 through 48 fall into what Caplin calls a "hybrid theme" because the period comprises elements both of the period-type form and the sentence-type form. As in a simple sentence, the eight-measure consequent shares continuation and cadential functions.

The eight-measure antecedent starts centered in E minor, and then turns to and resolves in its relative key, G major (mm. 37-40). The eight-measure consequent is an almost exact sequence of the antecedent, except for the added chord at the end (m. 48) that avoids an excessive affirmation of $B^{\flat}$ major and brings instead V^7 of A minor—both E minor and G minor had been also partly undermined by the presence of C#, in mm.

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[30] Denes Bartha, "Song Form and the Concept of 'Quatrain,'" 354.

[31] Caplin, *Classical Form*, 59, 65.

33-36, and E, in mm. 41-44, respectively. The ending of the compound period thus prepares the return of the main key in the last section. Example 2.4.c. offers a harmonic summary of mm. 33-48.

The structure of the compound period, mm. 33-48, is summarized below:

Antecedent: eight-measure sentence

presentation: E minor (2 bars) + repetition of the harmonic structure, freer design in the top voice (variation): E minor (2 bars) +

continuation: melodic liquidation in the soprano and fully prepared authentic cadence in G major (4 bars)

Consequent: eight-measure sentence

presentation: G minor (2 bars) + variation, G minor (2 bars) +

continuation: melodic liquidation in the soprano and fully prepared authentic cadence in $B^{\flat}$ major; the harmonic direction of the phrase is adjusted by shortening the duration of $B^{\flat}$ and introducing the dominant of A minor (4 bars).

A) Fourth Section (mm. 49 through 68): A sentence modeled after mm. 1-16. Whereas the first eight measures—the presentation—are a close variation of mm. 1-8 (only with a harmonic modification), the continuation (mm. 57-68) is four measures longer than its models in mm. 9-17 or 25-32 because of internal expansions. I will soon return to examine the particulars of those expansions. Example 2.4.d. offers a harmonic summary of mm. 49-68.

The structure of the fourth and last section is summarized below:

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[32] Ibid., 57.

Presentation: (modulating)

(a): basic idea in A minor (4 bars) + (a'): quasi-literal transposition of (a) into D minor (4 bars) +

Continuation + cadential idea (turned into a "cadenza")

(b): transition from the dominant of C major pivot-reinterpreted as VII of A minor; contrapuntal progression traversing through the dominant until the arrival to a firm $II^{\#}$ in root position at m. 62. The harmonic rhythm slows down until mm. 67-68, where the final cadence is reached and resolved. In all, the originally projected eight-measure continuation becomes extended by four extra measures.

2.3.2. An Alternate Grouping Structure: Seventeen-Measure Sentences

Despite the merits of the formal analysis offered above—in which the basic length of the prelude comprises four sixteen-measure sentences—the surface of the music contains some formal ambiguities that must be accounted for. Specifically, the first sentence could be heard as ending in m. 17 instead of m. 16. According to this idea, the seventeenth bar, resolving into the tonic chord in implied root position and concluding the (approximately) eight-measure continuation, would thus overlap with the first bar of the next eight-measure presentation, mm. 17-25; the presentation would start with the tonic chord in first inversion. A similar situation would happen in mm. 48-49. The overlaps, and the different status of the tones that conclude and start the sentence, are shown in Example 2.5. In both cases, the sixteen-measure sentence would end with an authentic cadence and not, as was shown before, with a semicadence. Rosthtein discusses cases where phrases may have an extra bar to allow room for the

cadence to the tonic. Many of these cases feature a phrase overlap, which allows both the old phrase to cadence and the new one to start.[33]

What are the reasons to consider this a possible—although admittedly less likely—hearing? In the first place, the absence of an A2 or A3 to match the registral and harmonic weight of E3 in m. 16 do seem to imply an elided bass at m. 17. The root-position $II^{\#}$ and V in mm. 14-16 might suggest that A3 or A2 should come next. I have referred to this problem earlier in the chapter. C4 is clearly adequate to start the new sentence, mm. 17-32, but it is also quite disconnected, in terms of voice leading, from E2 in m. 16. For that reason, an implied A2 is shown as ending the seventeen-measure sentence in m. 17 (Example 2.5), while, in the same bar, C4 starts the new sentence.

Secondly, the melodic ending of the cadential section of the sentence, in m. 16, is in some ways unconvincing. The resolution to E5 arrives too late in the measure—only at the last eighth note—to effect a satisfying half cadence, and the sentence ends on V^7 (instead of V), further weakening the sense of goal. Perhaps because of the absence of such a goal, the listener may feel tempted to hear the next A4, in m. 17, as the actual conclusion of the melodic shape; such a hearing would, in effect, extend the length of the sentence to seventeen bars and end it on an authentic cadence. In other words, E-A (V-I) would be in the melody instead of in the bass.

A quick look at the score verifies that A4 is indeed included on the downbeat of m. 17. It is featured, however, in a problematic way. Since I have, for now, assumed

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[33] Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 22-25.

that the phrase ends in m. 17 with a cadence on the tonic harmony and not with a semicadence in m. 16, it would be logical to think that A4 should be integrated into the melodic shape of the phrase that it apparently concludes. But this is not what happens in m. 17. Instead, A4 is relegated to the left hand, thus becoming separated from the melody in the right hand (the right-hand slur ends in m. 16). One would have to understand that the soprano melody reaches A4 in unison with the mandatory resolution of the alto (which moves from G♯4 to A4). All of this makes it difficult to determine if the resolution to A4 is part of a primary melodic line (belonging to the soprano layer) or a subordinate one (belonging to the alto layer alone).

The melodic beginning of the next period in the second half of the second beat in m. 17—the three-note upbeat—dissipates that doubt: as the new line of the soprano takes off to the highest register while A4 remains sounding, the definitive impression is that A4 belonged to the alto, not the soprano. The impression of A4 as melodic resolution is, although real, fleeting, lasting only a moment (although this would greatly depend on the performance).

In all, the argument considering seventeen-measure sentences is neither as persuasive nor as consistent as the one considering sixteen-measure sentences. Eventually, too many facts deny it. But that the seventeen-measure idea is false is not the most important conclusion; what really matters most is realizing that the music contains equivocal cues, and that those contradictions should be noted. In many portions of my study I examine those elements that introduce a dose of ambiguity and sophistication to the work. The formal ambiguities just described, together with other

types of ambiguities revealed by the analysis, should not be considered a compositional weakness but, on the contrary, an indication of Scriabin's mastery.

2.4. Transpositional Patterns

Before turning our attention to the internal expansion of the last section, it is worth noting the recurrence of the same (or partially modified) transposed materials in the prelude as a whole. Those returns are slightly adjusted according to different transpositional intervals to fit the overall harmonic scheme. In spirit, the relationship between the first eight-measure sentence presentation (mm. 1-8), the second eight-measure sentence presentation (mm. 17-24) and, particularly, the first eight measures of the final section (mm. 49-56) share some characteristics with a formal construction that Robert P. Morgan has described as a "transpositional period." Morgan points out how transposition was a very important compositional procedure to Scriabin, and the composer's specific interest in symmetrical pitch structure and form. Morgan discusses extensively symmetrical transpositions, especially those generated by the harmonic progression I-V / IV-I (in which each Roman numeral corresponds to the temporary tonal center of two parallel periods with phrases of equivalent length). Thus, in Morgan's article, since I is to V as IV is to I, the initial and final phrases of the piece feature a similar tonal journey (Morgan refers, for instance, to Op. 33, No. 5).[34] In Op. 11, No. 2, the harmonic structure of the first eight-measure presentation (mm. 1-8) and the last eight-measure presentation (mm. 49-56) can be summarized as I - V / I - IV

[34] Morgan, "Symmetrical Form and Common-Practice Tonality," 34.

(where each Roman numeral corresponds to the temporary tonal center in phrases of equivalent length).

Op. 11, No. 2 does not feature a true transpositional period because Scriabin changes the interval of transposition of the original four-bar group by changing the interval of transposition (a perfect fourth down in m. 5, a minor second down in m. 21, a perfect fifth down in m. 53) and by introducing a small harmonic mutation at the ends of bars 20 and 52. As a result, the last chord of bar 4 is an A minor triad, a pivot chord that turns from I of the key of A minor into IV of the ensuing phrase in the key of E minor; the last chord of bar 20 is a V^7 of A minor that is reinterpreted as an augmented sixth of $G^{\#}$ minor; the last chord of bar 52 is a dominant seventh chord on A, a pivot that effects a modulation from A minor to D minor. The ease of modulating to such distinct tonal areas is partly due to the expansion and flexibility of the harmonic vocabulary inherent to the post-Romantic era—as happens in mm. 20-21, a dominant-seventh chord can be easily reinterpreted as an augmented sixth.[35] Example 2.6 shows the repetitions and transpositions of these three sentence presentations and the harmonic mutations that make the modulations possible.

In mm. 53-57, having IV as the last temporary goal of the harmonic journey has several advantages. On the one hand, the subdominant harmony had not been reached anywhere before in the piece; its inclusion in the final section adds interest and color to the harmonic structure. But, more importantly, IV here works also as an effective pre-dominant, making more emphatic the ultimate arrival to the cadential 6/4 of bar 65.

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[35] Bass, "Half Diminished Functions and Transformations," 41.

2.5. Irregularities in Phrase Rhythm

2.5.1. Internal Expansion

Aside from the skillful recycling of the same thematic material by means of transposition, the most prominent phrase-rhythm feature of the piece is the expansion of the last sentence, mm. 57 through 68. The "bird's-eye view" in Example 2.3 allows one to better appreciate how the first three sections of the piece—mm. 1 through 48, which in the graph are seen as 48 hyperbeats—are, as explained above, perfectly symmetrical in length, and each contains 16 bars (in the reduction, each sixteen-bar section corresponds to four hypermeasures). The graph also shows the agreement between the established hypermeter and the four-bar grouping. As was pointed out above, the last sentence (mm. 49 through 68) is twenty bars long, because of the inclusion of an internal expansion before the final cadence. Since the strict phrase-length of the previous sections serves to establish a defined expectation for the same proportions as the piece approaches its conclusion, the frustration of that expectation introduces a healthy element of surprise and drama.

2.5.2. Expansion as "Cadenza"

The expansion, preliminarily shown in Example 2.7.a., consists of two stages. First, a two-bar expansion of II in mm. 63-64 features a kind of solo in the top voice (perhaps a solo "violin"?). The second stage, a three-bar expansion, this time on V (mm. 65-67), turns to the lower voice, resembling perhaps a short cadenza written for the violoncello. Being the last section of the piece, some kind of written-out rallentando

may be the reason behind the phrase expansion of mm. 57-68.[36] At this point, the original structure of the eight-measure sentence continuation, which had been [2+2+4], is completely destroyed. Should the twelve bars of the expanded consequent be grouped as [4+4+4]? Interestingly, that is not possible, because the melodic line fails to finish the half-phrase before m. 65. Instead, the line is prolonged into the second beat of m. 65 with a chromatic 7-8 suspension in the soprano, spreading the melody one bar "too far." Scriabin's slurring helps one to see that there is an overlap here: the five-measure group ends in m. 65 (with a slur for the right hand); the following four-measure group starts in the middle of m. 65 (with a slur for the left hand). The melodic grouping of mm. 61-65 is then 3+2, and the entire melodic grouping of mm. 57-68 is [4 + 5 + 4], with an overlap in m. 65 (see Example 2.7.a.). The total of 13 measures exceeds the 12 measures of the phrase because the overlapped measure (m. 65) is counted twice.

2.5.3. Psychological Seed of the Expansion

The seed for the asymmetry of mm. 61-65 was planted in advance. Example 2.7.b., rhythmically aligned immediately below 2.7.a., permits one to see that the phrases starting in mm. 13 and 61 share a common melodic origin and function, no matter the differences in their harmonic pace and goals. To some extent, the five-measure melodic grouping of mm. 61-65, with its resolution into E5, fulfills a latent impulse of the form, stated as early as mm. 13-17: that of having an extra measure for

[36] As discussed in Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 80-81.

the melodic resolution into the tonic. In previous paragraphs I have referred to the problem of considering sixteen-measure sentences (ending on a semicadence) or seventeen-measure sentences (where the resolution into the tonic in virtual root position that concludes each section overlaps with the beginning of a new section, but with a tonic chord in first inversion; see Example 2.5.). Example 2.7.b. assumes the latter—which I found to be a less convincing, but still possible—hearing.

The comparison between Examples 2.7.a. and 2.7.b. proves that neither the 3+2 grouping in mm. 61-65 nor the overlap at m. 65 are totally new. What is indeed new in mm. 61-65 is the inclusion of a relatively long E5 in m. 65, a note that, for the first time in the piece, properly concludes the melodic shape of the five-measure group. To be sure, E5 is only an eighth-note in the surface. Its normalized duration, however, comprises at least two beats, most likely the entire measure. On the one hand, the note on the downbeat of the measure, $D^{\#}$, is simply the first portion of a $7^{\#}$-8 suspension. Once normalized, the dissonance (the seventh) gives its duration back to the consonance that it delays. Once E5 arrives, no other tone replaces it in that register, so that it is kept—at least in the listener's memory—for the entire remainder of the bar. The normalized—implied—duration of E5 can be seen in Examples 2.1, 2.3, 2.7.a., 2.7.c,. 2.7.d, 2.8, and 2.9. Unlike the ambiguous A4 of m. 17, which for a moment seemed to belong equally to the alto and the soprano, there are no doubts here as to the status of E5 in m. 65: it belongs to the soprano line. So that it should not go unnoticed, Scriabin locally underlines it with a chromatic 7-8 suspension. The 3+2 irregularity in the melodic grouping, although it may be perceived as a local detour (which it is), is nevertheless tolerated and even welcomed because it is also perceived as the fulfillment

of an old desire—the desire to hear E5 as a point of arrival. The absence of a true melodic conclusion in mm. 16 and 48, where the line ended with a semicadence on scale degree 5 and on dominant harmony at the very end of the measure, although insufficient to confirm a sense of seventeen-measure sentences in mm. 1-17 and 33-49, was, in any case, surely stored in the listener's memory as somehow failed attempts to finish the phrase convincingly. The relatively long stop on E5 thus balances the unsatisfactory endings of the melody in mm. 16 and 48, giving a sense of achievement to the form. Incidentally, at this point it is also hinted that the end of the piece is near: often, the achievement of lifetime dreams comes at an old age.

2.5.4. Harmonic Rhythm vs. Melodic Grouping

Measures 57-68 are also irregular in their harmonic rhythm. Firmly established with one chord per bar in mm. 57 through 60, the harmonic rhythm suddenly slows down in m. 62, where the II harmony is prolonged (with a chromatic change) for three bars. The same situation happens in mm. 65-67, where the V harmony is prolonged for three bars. In contrast, the resolution into the final tonic lasts only one single bar. Example 2.7.a. also shows the lack of congruence between the melodic organization and the asymmetrical harmonic rhythm.

2.5.5. Expansion and Basic Length

Interestingly, the remaining four-measure phrase (mm. 65-68) becomes, in its own right, a four-bar group, superficially similar in structure and motivic content to the (2+1+1) basic idea stated in the first four bars of the piece, except that now the

melody is divided between the bass and the soprano. The composer singled out these four concluding bars by indicating a *ritardando*, and pointing out that "...a brief caesura, with following *pp*, is possible...."[37] But regardless of its salient features in tempo, dynamics, contour, and articulation that resemble the content of mm. 1-4, because the last four measures are an intrinsic part of the sentence continuation from which they grow, they comprise a unit of tenuous formal significance. Furthermore, since these four bars exist during the course of a sixteen-measure sentence that has not yet ended, they cannot be considered an appendix. Measures 61-68 must then be understood as an expanded and transposed version of mm. 29-32, but with a real (not implied) perfect authentic cadence. In conclusion, by virtue of the internal expansion, the eight-bar continuation is stretched and transmuted into a twelve-bar unit (mm. 57-68), but, at a deeper level, its basic length is still eight bars (or nine, if the resolution to the tonic is considered to happen in bar "seventeen" of the sentence).[38]

In order to uncover the underlying phrase and voice-leading prototype that gives rise to the expansion, it is necessary to define its basic length. Following up on the ambiguities discussed earlier, it is necessary to understand the sentence as either sixteen or seventeen measures long. Examples 2.7.c. and 2.7.d. explore the two possibilities. In Example 2.7.c., the basic length of the last sentence is seventeen measures; in 2.7.d., it is sixteen.

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[37] Scriabin, Alexander, *The Complete Preludes & Etudes for Pianoforte Solo*, ed. K. N. Igumnov and Y. I. Mil'shteyn (New York, Dover, 1973), 6-7.

[38] The relationship between basic length and phrase expansion is discussed, from a Schenkerian point of view, in Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 64-65.

Because the prototype must end with an authentic cadence—the ending of the prototype coincides with the end of the piece—its clearest realization is in mm. 17-32, which cadence in E minor. But, as pointed out before, the cadence in m. 32 is, in many ways, lacking in strength: it doesn't arrive to a root-position tonic, the metrical placement of the last chord is weak, and the harmonic rhythm is highly irregular. Based on these factors, are mm. 17-32 the closest expression of a sixteen-measure sentence or the modified (compressed) expression of a seventeen-measure prototype? It seems that, in any case, mm. 17-32 cannot be taken as an absolute reference.

Given the ambiguities suggested by mm. 17-32, the sentence comprising mm. 1-16 could be also used as a source to trace the prototype, notwithstanding the fact that it has some equivocal features of its own. Along these lines, if the sentence is considered to end with a semicadence in m. 16, then this sentence is the clearest expression of a sixteen-measure prototype. Alternatively, if the sentence is thought to end with an authentic cadence in m. 17, then the prototype would probably have to be seventeen measures long.

2.5.6. The Seventeen-Measure Sentence as Prototype

As has already been indicated, the latter possibility is expressed by Example 2.7.c. The top system, a reduction of mm. 9-17, is a nine-measure continuation prototype, the second half of a seventeen-measure sentence. Vertically aligned below, the second system represents mm. 25-32. In this system, the eighth bar of the surface (m. 32) is spread into two of the prototype ("8" and "9"). The bottom system is a reduction of mm. 57-68. A comparison between the first and second systems shows that

mm. 25-32 feature a one-bar compression; a comparison between the two top systems and the bottom system allows one to see that the latter features two expansions: in the first, the II chord is prolonged one extra bar; in the second, the V chord is prolonged two extra bars. In "Chopin's Concluding Expansions," Burkhart identifies a specific type of expansion that, because of its recurrence, is one of the trademarks of Chopin's style. My example is modeled after the ones offered in that article.[39]

2.5.7. Problems of the Seventeen-Measure Prototype

But the solution presented in Example 2.7.c. has two problems. In the first place, it assumes that the prototype lacks a regular harmonic rhythm. In effect, mm. "6" and "7" of the top system both prolong the II chord. Although plausible—but unconvincing—this solution also assumes that the first, third, and fourth sections of the piece all end with an authentic cadence in A minor, and the first and fourth sections compose out an almost identical middleground harmonic structure.

But the first and fourth sections of the piece, mm. 1-16 and 49-68, are in fact fundamentally different. Aside from the internal expansion and concomitant with it, what sets the last sentence apart from all others is the arrival to the A1 that ends the piece. Among other things, the registral uniqueness of that tone (a tone that is absent from m. 17) may be a hint suggesting that, indeed, the first sentence ends on a semicadence, while mm. 49-68 (and the piece as a whole) end on an authentic cadence.

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[39] See Charles Burkhart, "Chopin's Concluding Expansions," *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. David Witten (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 95-116, and Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 74-93.

2.5.8. The Sixteen-Measure Sentence as Prototype

It seems more logical to interpret a recurrent basic length of sixteen measures for all the four sections of the prelude; this possibility is explored in Example 2.7.d. The prototype inferred here for mm. 57-68 also takes its cue from the square regularity of phrases established up to that point, and considers that, since m. 68 is clearly the ending of the phrase and not the beginning of a new one, it should probably correspond to measure "eight" of the sentence continuation (or "sixteen" of the sentence), like all the previous section endings, but especially mm. 25-32. Measure 68 could not be considered bar "one" of a hypothetically ensuing sentence or period; it could never be the beginning of a new group because there is nothing afterwards.[40] My assumption here—that m. 68 is the "eighth" measure of the sentence—is made partly by analogy to m. 32, where the authentic cadence is made to fit within the sixteen-measure period (and so m. 32 is indeed the eighth measure of its sentence). In addition, and although the prelude is not explicitly intended for dancing, its meter, speed, and strict phrase regularity are clear characteristics of a danceable waltz. Bowers gives some hints as to the danceable characteristics of Scriabin's "salon" music.[41] If the basic length of each section is sixteen measures, the basic length of the piece is sixty-four bars, not sixty-five.

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[40] See the discussion on "Grouping Preference Rules," particularly "GPR 1," in Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 43.

[41] Faubion Bowers, foreword to *Youthful and Early Works of Alexander and Julian Scriabin*, vi.

Example 2.7.d. comprises four systems. The top system, which I call "Normalized Voice Leading Prototype," proposes a basic contrapuntal model for the eight-measure sentence continuation (in this case, the eighth measure has the resolution into the tonic chord). Since this prototype is never explicitly stated in the surface, the remaining three systems of the example help one to visualize the different manifestations—or realizations—of the prototype as the piece progresses. The second system represents mm. 9-16; the third system represents mm. 25-32; and the lower system represents mm. 57-68.

Measures 1-16, on the one hand, and mm. 25-32 and 57-68, on the other hand, are different. In the former, the phrase must only reach the dominant to end, while in the latter two the end of the phrase must reach the tonic. Compared with the prototype, mm. 9-16 feature, then, an expansion of II that is essential to the required phrase length and harmonic structure. II must be prolonged for V to arrive on m. "8" of the continuation; if it were to arrive on "7," V would be too early. The harmonic discrepancy between the first two systems in the seventh and eighth measures must be attributed to this distinction only. In this sense, mm. 9-16 are the closest to the harmonic rhythm of the prototype.

The situation is different in mm. 25-32, shown in the third system of the example. In this case, and in what at first sight seems to be an illogical choice, the expansion of II is retained, while V and I must be squeezed together in the same bar for the phrase to fit an eight-measure mold. But, once again, the prolongation of II and the compression of V and I are essential to the overall formal structure; as was explained earlier in the chapter, this authentic cadence must be weak enough so that the piece will

continue its seamless flow. The local disruption of the harmonic rhythm is justified, then, by the global needs of the form.

The fourth and last system, corresponding to mm. 57-68, is the most complex of all. It contains two expansions, shown with parentheses. In the first expansion, II is prolonged two extra bars; in the second, V is also expanded two extra bars.

Using the theme of Mozart's Sonata in A Major, K. 331, first movement, William Rothstein discusses at length the different possibilities inherent to the conclusion of the consequent of a period. Often, he says, a consequent can be modified in one way or another to make up for the additional, final tonic harmony that is necessary to conclude the period and that had been absent in the antecedent (which in these cases usually ends on a semicadence). As a given consequent is modified to fit the antecedent's prototype, the symmetry of the two phrases is preserved.[42] In an analogous manner, according to the hypothesis presented in Example 2.7.d., and comparing mm. 9-16 to 57-68, the last twelve measures of the piece feature not only two expansions (in the surface) but also one compression (at a deeper level); the compression is necessary to restore the resolution to the tonic within the confines of the eight-measure continuation. Measures 25-32 also manifested this need; the realization of the restoration there had corruptive side-effects. In mm. 57-68, as in mm. 9-16 and 25-32, the reasons to suspect the presence of an underlying prototype with one harmony per measure are largely a matter of tonal rhythm. In Example 2.7.d., the eight-measure contrapuntal model (top level) suppresses the stops in motion of mm. 14-15 or 30-31

[42] Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 22-25.

(which feature only chromatically different versions of the II chord). A quick look back at mm. 13-17 or 29-32 in Example 2.3 would confirm a sense of syncopation (harmonic and textural) from the second to the third beats of those bars, the syncopation being a side effect of the expansion of II. Astronomers use gravitational irregularities in a given star to discover invisible planets that may be orbiting the star. I propose that in mm. 13-17 and 29-32 of Op. 11, No. 2, the syncopation of II is a kind of gravitational irregularity that allows one to feel the presence of an invisible, eight-measure sentence-continuation prototype.

2.5.9. Expansion and Expression

What is the hermeneutic meaning of such an elaborate expansion? Clearly, because it departs from an expected, established model, it embodies a more charged expression. Burkhart points out that expansions are more "expressive" because they are of a "lower structural rank than the basic phrase structure"[43] But, in any case, what exactly does this mean? How is the expressiveness realized? I propose that a phrase expansion is a bit of a deception: as in a deceptive cadence, which neglects the arrival to a conclusive tonic, a phrase expansion is the manifestation of a phrase that failed to reach its goal in the allotted time, and which therefore must keep trying to do so (incidentally, as in Op. 11, No. 2, a deceptive cadence is an excellent way to start an internal expansion). It is perhaps because of the inherent frustration that the expression is intensified: trying again often requires trying with more energy, or more decidedly.

[43] Burkhart, "Chopin's Concluding Expansions," 99.

It seems only natural that such more energetic attempts would inspire more emotion in the expectant listener. Another feature of the expansion—the presence of a cadential six-four chord—also reinforces the suspense. In many cases, extended "cadenzas" on six-four chords in pieces other than operas or concertos symbolically represent, or refer to, the dramatic summation characteristic of operatic arias or concerto movements.[44]

2.6. Hypermeter and Accent

2.6.1. Four-Bar Hypermeter

The durational reduction shown in Example 2.3 represented a summary of the metrical and grouping structures of the piece. Because of the strict grouping regularity, the example assumed a four-bar hypermeter (4/4, where each dotted quarter note of the surface was transformed into a quarter note in the durational reduction). According to the example, the piece has 68 bars, or, in other words, seventeen hypermeasures. Comfortably enough, it would seem that at this durational level the hypermetrical structure remains as an "omnipresent subliminal reference point for the hearing of the tonal events."[45]

2.6.2. Eight-Bar Hypermeter

The next durational level, in which eight measures of the surface are reduced to one, also operates hypermetrically. At this level, four-bar hypermeasures alternate as

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[44] See Caplin, *Classical Form*, 109.

[45] Harald Krebs, "Some Extensions of the Concepts of Metrical Consonance and Dissonance," *Journal of Music Theory* 31/1: 99-120.

"1st" and "2nd" without incident up to the last, expanded eight-bar hypermeasure (mm. 57-68 of the surface). Precisely because of the phrase expansion in mm. 61-68, a hypermetrical modification emerges there, requiring a change from a duple hypermeasure into a triple one. Example 2.8, in which each measure of the surface corresponds to an eighth note, shows the change from a 2/2 hypermeter to a 3/2 hypermeter in the last section of the piece. Lerdahl and Jackendoff warn that, as durational analysis reduces larger durational units, their hypermetrical effect becomes more and more abstract, while grouping takes over as a perceptual force.[46] I submit, however, that the relatively fast tempo of the piece and the strict periodicity of the form still allow one to perceive the distortion of the eight-measure hypermeter. Kramer gives a Beethoven example that—although with a different formal organization—also extends an eight-bar hypermeasure into a twelve-bar hypermeasure. He calls such situation a "hypermetric irregularity."[47]

2.6.3. Coincidences and Disagreements Between Hypermeter and Grouping

The perception of a homogeneous four-bar hypermetrical structure, parallel to the constant four-measure grouping structure, still says nothing about the accentual synchronization of these two strands. There is, indeed, clear evidence of an alignment between grouping and meter: the beginning of each four-measure phrase, and the sectional beginnings in mm. 1, 17, 33, and 49, all of which start with a local tonic

[46] See Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 43.

[47] Jonathan D. Kramer, *The Time of Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 102-107.

function, give some sense of hyperdownbeat to those bars. Two "Metrical Preference Rules" from Lerdahl's and Jackendoff's treatise coincide here and reinforce each other. One of them is Metrical Preference Rule 1, which refers to parallel groups as usually having parallel metrical structures. The other is Metrical Preference Rule 2, which refers to the preference for strong beats to appear early in a group.[48] Carl Schachter has expressed this same notion. He explains that, because the effect of the accent must "shade off through time," beginnings, which also bring the "novelty" of the next time span, are more likely to receive metrical emphasis. But Schachter also stresses the difference between meter and hypermeter. Musical phrases, he says, are longer than measures, and while it is easy to accept the notion that the most important accent in a bar is at its beginning, the same notion, that the most important accent of a phrase happens at the beginning, does not apply equally well. Phrases, Schachter elaborates, usually express longer harmonic processes, and the preeminence of meter is displaced by that of tonal rhythm.[49] As for the relationship between metrical weight and harmony, an article by William Caplin discusses this relationship from a thorough historical perspective. As cited by Caplin, in general theorists have agreed that the tonic tends to be heard as "strong" and the dominant as "weak." But this impression can be—and is—modified often by the context; the dominant can be heard as "strong" while the tonic is then heard as "weak."[50]

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[48] Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 75-76.

[49] Schachter, "Rhythm and Linear Analysis: Aspects of Meter," 6-7.

[50] William E. Caplin, "Tonal Function and Metrical Accent: A Historical Perspective," *Music Theory Spectrum* 5 (1983): 1-14.

Notwithstanding that the coincidence of hypermeter and grouping is very frequent, the authors cited above concur that, just as easily, grouping and primary hypermetrical accent could be out of phase, and the hyperdownbeats could for instance consistently fall in the second, third, or even fourth bar of each group, out of synchronization with the groups' boundaries. Jonathan Kramer, for instance, identifies three possible cases of accents for a four-bar phrase: SWSW, WSWS, AND SWWS.[51] Rothstein's first musical example in his phrase rhythm treatise, the initial 33-measure period from "The Blue Danube Waltz," is a case where each hyperdownbeat corresponds to measure "2" of each four-measure group.[52] In Scriabin's Op. 11, No. 2, and assuming that the contradictory strands remain constant, their relationship would create a metrical conflict.

Some local elements—such as the starting vertical seventh in the left hand between B3 and A4 on m. 1—are intriguing enough to hint at a hyperdownbeat at the beginning of each four-bar phrase. But, aside from the metrical (and therefore, powerful) weight of each four-measure beginning, no other local element aids the cause of this hypermetrical strand. In fact, in each four-measure group, many different kinds of local accents consistently fall on hyperbeats that contradict the hyperbarlines as they are placed in Example 2.3. In all, I identify two additional—perhaps subordinate—accentual patterns, one consistently falling on the second hyperbeat of each four-bar group, the other, slightly weaker, more or less consistently falling on the third. The

[51] Kramer, *The Time of Music*, 81-122.

[52] See Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 4-14.

conflict is mainly related to (and expressed by) the textural and registral design, although other factors also participate. Roughly stated, the lower voice (the left hand) seems to echo the upper-voice (or right-hand) accent one measure later. The recent analytical literature has explored cases in which strongly conflicting accentual patterns—like the ones I am describing here—are maintained for an extended period of time. If so, at least one of the patterns becomes a pseudo-independent metrical layer, which has been sometimes referred to as a "shadow meter."[53]

Example 2.9 shows both accentual strands. The second-measure hyperbeats, represented by the upper voice, are consistently supported by the following features:

1) dynamics (crescendo from m. 1 to 2, decrescendo from m. 2 to 3, and so forth);

2) three-eighth-note upbeat towards B5 in m. 2;

3) *ritardando* marking on B5;

4) appearance of chromaticism in the accompaniment ($D^{\sharp}4$ in the left hand).

Since the same thematic materials of the beginning are recycled through transposition, once these accentual features are established for the first sixteen-measure section they remain in the others, and so this accentual strand continues to be present in all of the musical surface. The small and occasional intervallic modifications in general don't contradict but, rather, maintain these accentual implications. This notion remains true even for the contrasting section, mm. 33-48, where the local accents are,

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[53] See Roger Kamien, "Conflicting Metrical Patterns in Accompaniment and Melody in Works by Mozart and Beethoven: A Preliminary Study," *Journal of Music Theory* 37/2 (1993): 311-50; William Rothstein, "Beethoven with and without *Kunstgepräng':* Metrical Ambiguity Reconsidered," *Beethoven Forum* 4, ed. Lewis Lockwood and James Webster (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 165-93; Frank Samarotto, "Strange Dimensions: Regularity and Irregularity in Deep Levels of Rhythmic Reduction," *Schenker Studies* 2, ed. Carl Schachter and Hedi Siegel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 222-38.

interestingly, reinforced in some respects. For instance, the three-note upbeat design, which gives more energy to the arrival of B5 in m. 2, is significantly enhanced by the enlargement of the upbeat (to five eighth notes), by the increase in intervallic scope towards the same B5, and by the addition of C#6, an *appoggiatura* to B5. The second-measure accent is indicated with descending arrows in Example 2.9.

The accents of the second strand (the echo) are mostly expressed through one fundamental compositional parameter: register. In effect, the four-measure groups starting in mm. 1, 5, 17, 21, 49, and 53 all feature a lone low, heavy bass note on the third measure of the group. Often, the implied length of the tone also expands in time the "normal" length of a specific harmony. The reduction allows one to see that some of these harmonies seem to extend further than they should. For instance, the E major harmony of m. 3 extends as a suspension into the first two beats of m. 4. Example 2.3 normalizes such situations.[54] The accents in the left-hand strand are not nearly as consistent, though. The contrasting section, mm. 33-48, doesn't have them, and neither do the groups starting on mm. 9, 25, or 57. The third-measure accentual strand is indicated with ascending arrows in Example 2.9.

2.6.4. Counterpoint Between Accentual Strands

The two non-aligned accentual strands (or three, if one is inclined to include Swww, the background hypermeter) rhythmically take turns, emerging and submerging as the piece unfolds, gently propelling it forward like waves in water. The

[54] Normalization as defined in Rothstein, "Rhythmic Displacement and Rhythmic Normalization," 87-113.

differentiation in register helps to create the illusion of an organic cycle, a counterpoint of hypermeters, so to speak: one hears first the metrical accent on the first measure of each group, then the "high" accent one measure later, then the "low" accent after another measure. And all should be well. But there are some precious moments in which this established cycle is contradicted, and the occasional asymmetry creates a subtle imbalance. The groups that start on mm. 13, 29, 33, 41, and 61 are very important in this sense. In these groups the low bass and, consequently, the accentual strand on the third hyperbeat, vanishes or is displaced to another hyperbeat. The long melodic descent of the bass that starts in mm. 9, 25, or 57 finally arrives at its goal in the second hyperbeat of the four-measure group, thus occurring in the same measure as the upper-voice strand. The arrivals to B2 in m. 14, like those to F♯2 in m. 30 or B2 in m. 62, are all the more prominent because those moments feature a harmonic syncopation that temporarily strengthens the shadow strand on the second bar of each four-bar hypermeasure. In part because of the disappearance or relocation of the bass there is similar accentual agreement in mm. 34, 36, 42, and 44, where the high note in the upper voice is matched with an anticipation in the bass (a local syncopation = accent) and a significant registral expansion. Those moments in which the pattern based on second- and fourth-measure accents is featured by both voices are shown with straight vertical arrows in Example 2.9 in mm. 14, 16, 30, 32, 34, 36, 42, 44, and 62.

Concomitant to the disappearance of the "heavy" bass in the low voice, entire hypermeasures of the middle section (mm. 33-48) subtly reinforce the metrical accents (Swww) with a cadential 6/4 of G major in m. 37 (signaling that bar as a strong hyperbeat), its resolution to 5/3 in m. 38 (signaling that bar as a weak hyperbeat) and

finally resolving the chord into I of G major in m. 39 (making it half-strong, strong at the two-bar level). At first sight, the following eight-bar group should be easily interpreted in the same way by analogy; because the group has a different harmonic goal, however, it is not. Accentual coincidence between the lower and upper voices does exist up to m. 45: the arrival to the cadential 6/4 of $B^{\flat}$ coincides with the high register and double-neighbor figuration in the top voice. But the remainder of that hypermeasure is highly conflicting, with multiple—often opposing—surface accentual cues. On the one hand, register, contour, and the size of the leaps in the melody point to a clear accent on the second beat of m. 48, suddenly emphasizing thus the fourth bar of the four-measure hypermeter. The accent on B5 in m. 48 is the culmination, in fact, of an independent pseudo-metrical strand of the melody created by successive four-eighth-note groupings between mm. 45 and 48. To avoid confusion, those groupings are shown in a separate Example, 2.9.b. This quasi-hemiola strand operates as a further corrupter of the established meter and hypermeter. The corruption is expressed in the surface by the contrast between a duple pattern in the melody (four eighth notes) having to fit a triple meter (three quarter notes). Assessing the hypermetrical effect of this foreground rhythmic modification becomes even more problematic when the instructions of the composer are factored in: first *accel.*, then "***pp*** and *rit.*" Scriabin's indications, in fact, amplify the tendencies to extinction already present at the end of each phrase, and seem to create here a kind of negative accent. Of course, the observations above are justified only if one trusts the editors and assumes that these are indeed the composer's instructions, or that such instructions are to be placed at that particular moment of the prelude. Nevertheless, the instructions are entirely plausible

because they are coherent with Scriabin's personality and musical style, as attested in Bowers' biography.[55]

2.6.5. Hypermeter and Phrase Expansion

The accentual confusion of mm. 46-48 is perhaps a good transition to the last return of the A section, from m. 49 on. At first, the accentual patterns seem equivalent to the sixteen-measure sentences starting in mm. 1 or 17. But the last sentence, mm. 49-68, is different. The key factor that makes the last portion of the piece most hypermetrically conflicting is the internal expansion in mm. 61-68. As discussed above, grouping boundaries do not necessarily need to coincide with the established meter or hypermeter. But, because grouping and hypermeter are so closely associated in this case, the disruption of one throws into doubt the other. In the last two four-bar hypermeasures only one factor holds the established hypermeter together: the crucial arrival to the cadential 6/4 in m. 65 and the ensuing clarification of the harmonic rhythm. But the disruption of the grouping structure in the melody, plus the phrase overlap and *ritardando* in the second half of m. 65 (how far in this phrase, the last, should the *ritardando* retain its effect?), combine with the two other persistent hypermetrical strands to cloud the atmosphere.

An extreme alternate hearing might even consider that the arrival to the last chord of the piece (the only instance of a stable tonic triad firmly grounded in the deepest register of the piano) may be retrospectively perceived as a hyperdownbeat,

[55] See Bowers, *Scriabin, A Biography*.

shifting the hypermetrical weight towards the fourth bar of the group. Lerdahl and Jackendoff discuss a similar situation. The authors give the example of the Schumann song "Wehmut," from "Liederkreis," Op. 39. At some point, two textural levels (voice and piano accompaniment) have different metrical meanings at the same time: the melody must end in a weak beat (the fourth), while the piano postlude must start on a strong beat (the first). The situation is forced on the listener because of the overlap of both textural layers. In Lerdahl and Jackendoff's example the beginning of the postlude, and the following four-bar grouping and accent pattern, are what establish the hypermetric correction.[56] Extending this example to Scriabin's Op. 11, No. 2, I propose that the uniqueness of the arrival to A1 (and the accent that it carries) may have some contradictory effect on the prevailing hypermeter. Under this premise, a listener reorganizing his or her impressions in retrospect would perhaps have to reassign in some way the arrival at the cadential 6/4 in bar 65—which, as logic dictates, was heard as a metrically strong hyperbeat—to a hypothetical "second" hyperbeat of the four-bar unit, because m. 68 would now be the hyperdownbeat corresponding to bar "one" of the group. The retrospective force of m. 68 would then either modify the quadruple hypermeter (the hypermeasure before m. 68 would only comprise mm. 65-67) or, keeping the quadruple hypermeter, would shift the hyperdownbeat to m. 64. The retrospective contradiction that I am describing, like other latent tendencies of the piece, is not more than an alternate hearing, tenuously lurking in the shadows; the most likely hearing ascribes m. 68 to beat "four" of the hypermeasure. If the *ritardando* is

[56] Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 101.

considered to extend to the end, this hearing is possible. If, on the other hand, the caesura at the end of m. 66 is followed by a slight acceleration in m. 67 (quasi a tempo), m. 67 will acquire a local accent and then sound stronger than m. 68, once again reinforcing the impression that m. 68 is beat "four" of the hypermeasure.

The last twelve measures are in a way dramatic because they are more conflicting than the rest of the piece. In mm. 57-68 the effect of the hypermetric disagreements—and consequent reinterpretations—discussed above is combined with the phrase expansion and the irregularities in harmonic rhythm, melodic structure, and registral design. In fact, these are all musical parameters that, somewhere after m. 57, seem to go their own, separate ways. The differences between the accentual strands were more or less orderly in previous portions of the piece; one strand or another logically prevailed for each sixteen-measure section. (This can be seen in Example 2.9 by contrasting the accentual patterns in the first two systems, which are very similar, with the accentual patterns in the third system, which are subtly different.) Up to m. 49, Scriabin thus managed to confirm and deny these different perspectives, alternately tilting the scale from one to the other, but always keeping an exquisite balance. But in mm. 57-68 all the accentual strands seem to be present simultaneously, with equal force, making the conflict all the more explicit.

2.6.7. Hypermetrical Ambiguity as Musical Sophistication

In all, the metaphorical waltz represented here clearly has its whimsical angles, but the accentual contradictions probably mean that such a waltz should never be danced by thumping the feet on each downbeat, much less on each hyperdownbeat.

Multiple hypermetric nuances transform the square structure into a sophisticated interplay of contrasting rhythmic planes, but this in turn is only possible because of the omnipresent influence of the metrical accent, conspicuously returning every four bars. Far from suffocating metrical conflict, then, the firm but gentle hypermeter in the background establishes a dialogue with the other two, conflicting accentual strands in a rich and balanced hypermetric homophony of sorts—I use the term here by analogy to the idea of homophonic texture, music in which there is a predominant melody and one or more subordinate voices that complement and accompany it.

The discussion could continue. There are probably more accentual contradictions to be found, and a few more hypotheses to develop in order to find the primary hypermeter in this piece. To conclude, however, and assuming a somehow "Heraclitean" point of view, it may be more useful to assume that the listener may sense—at some level, indeed, understand—all of these different hypermeters, the "real" ones and the others that operate in the "shadows," at once. In fact, the different perceptual possibilities described above are surely available in each listening experience, competing among themselves each time to win the favor of the mind attempting to absorb them. Carl Schachter has expressed this problem in eloquent terms in his third article on rhythm, where he alludes to the profound discrepancies among different authors about issues of meter.[57] In addition to what happens while perceiving meter, one's retrospective impression—a perhaps strengthened or, instead, weakened residue—often differs from the real-time impression. Because the musical experience is

[57] Carl Schachter, "Rhythm and Linear Analysis: Aspects of Meter," *Music Forum* 6, ed. William Mitchell and Felix Salzer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986): 1.

such an immaterial, fleeing thing, depending so much on the malleable memory, it is possible that the appearance of this object—in this case, the piece and its hypermetrical structure—may also be malleable while the work unfolds. Like a prism that is used to break a single color into separate streams of light, in the last period of the piece the multiplicity of hypermetrical reflections breaks a unified, consistent hypermetrical structure into simultaneous hypermetrical streams. In any case, it is still the composer's prerogative and genius to create the best conditions so that these hypermetrical ambiguities will thrive and multiply. Lastly, it may well be that the intensification of the accentual conflicts in the last portion of the prelude, operating as a sort of hypermetrical liquidation—I use the expression here as an extension of Schoenberg's ideas[58]—is one of the factors that helps to logically dissipate the energy of the piece, dissolving it into extinction.

2.7. Motivic and Textural Design

2.7.1. Motivic Parallelisms

As a way of concluding the discussion of this prelude, two points deserve to be made about its motivic and textural design. The primary, most distinct melodic idea, taking off from E5, scale degree 5, consists of an ascending minor second that is followed by an ascending perfect fifth, motion which immediately afterward is balanced by a descending minor second. All of these intervals happen in relatively fast, eighth-note figuration. The rest of the phrase slowly completes the descent by stepwise motion

[58] See Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, 58.

towards scale degree 5. At a slower pace, the middleground bass traverses a very similar pitch-class path (see Example 2.3 or 2.9). Starting on C4, scale degree 3, the bass moves first a minor ninth down to B2, and then another perfect fifth down to the dominant, E2. The life of the bass comes here to a still point (there are no more tones in this register for the remainder of the phrase, except the implied resolution to A2). The imitation must end here, because, as in a finite canon, there are no more tones to compare the model and the imitation. In short, both outer voices (the melodic line at the musical surface and the bass line in the middleground graph in Example 2.10.a) feature an equivalent intervallic content, but at different rhythmic rates. Charles Rosen calls this technique "heterophony."[59] In general, though, Rosen uses the term to describe motivic relationships that can be found in the immediate surface, rather than, as in my example, between different levels of reduction. Charles Burkhart has described this motivic connection between different structural levels as "Schenker's 'motivic parallelisms,'"[60]—Schenker, in his later writings, had referred to it as "hidden repetition."[61] Perhaps, in his use of this unifying technique, Scriabin can be also linked to his main artistic influence, Chopin.

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[59] Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 325.

[60] See Charles Burkhart, "Schenker's 'Motivic Parallelisms,'" *Journal of Music Theory* 22/2 (1978): 145-175.

[61] See Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979), 88-89.

2.7.2. Motivic Linkage

Lastly, the motivic and textural identity of the piece, strictly consistent for sections A (1-16), A' (17-32), and A"(49-68) undergoes an important transformation in the contrasting, quasi-developmental section (bars 33 through 48). A new melodic idea—albeit related to the main motive exposed previously—comprising steadier and more extended eighth-note runs, is sculpted out of the last traces of the phrase ending in bar 32. The similarities and differences between the two motives create unity and variety at once: the descending figure of m. 32 is balanced by an ascending one in m. 33; the double-neighbor figure around E in m. 32 is answered by a double-neighbor figure around G in m. 33. What in m. 32 is the extinction of the phrase—the last traces of a liquidated theme—is recycled into contrasting new material to be developed in the following sixteen bars. Earlier in the chapter I referred to the harmonic connection between one structural section and the next. The sixteen-measure periods ending in mm. 16 and 48 arrive to a semicadence that spills the tonic resolution into the next section of the piece, hence propelling the form, so to speak, by avoiding a stop in the harmonic motion. This is not true in m. 32, which concludes the section with an authentic cadence, and the final cadence in mm. 67-68, which of course concludes the piece. But the authentic cadence of mm. 32 is anyway extremely weak, as pointed out earlier. In fact, the motivic connection between mm. 32 and 33 has to be seen also as an efficient way to unify the form: more or less in a concealed way, the subordinate motive at the end of one section lends the motivic identity to another, new section.

Schenkerian theory calls this procedure "linkage technique."[62] A detail of the transformation is shown in Example 2.10.b.

2.7.3. Melodic Design, Rubato, and Metaphor

The main distinguishing features of the contrasting B section are the increase of the intervallic scope (see mm. 33-34 or 41-42, for instance), the prominent incomplete neighbors in the upper register (mm. 42 or 46, for instance), the unresolved thirteenth (D5) in m. 46, the steadier motion in eighth notes, and the partial abandonment of the lower register, which is left empty for more extended periods of time than in the other sections of the piece. In all, it would seem that the mountainous path of the melodic design invites an increase in tempo and a freer rubato. Citing Boreslav Yavorsky, a Russian theorist contemporary to Scriabin, Bowers characterizes the first twenty *opera* of Scriabin as

> "...typical of most composers belonging to the epoch of 'psychological' nineteenth-century Romantic music. The music is marked by sweetness, gentleness and unrestrained rubato; and 'instability' of tonality begins to show precedence over 'stability'..."[63]

The opinion of Yavorsky, transmitted via Bowers, seems to support my impression about rubato in this piece; as the increase in contrapuntal activity may suggest, the rubato is perhaps particularly intense in the contrasting section. Yavorsky (1877-1942) was, according to Taruskin, one of the "great *éminences grises* in the

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[62] Jonas, *Introduction to the Theory of Heinrich Schenker*, 7-8.

[63] Bowers, *The New Scriabin*, 141.

history of Russian and Soviet music";[64] his opinion is very important because it gives a contemporary account of the performance practice of the style.[65] On the one hand, the unfortunate problem with many of Bowers' interesting observations is that they are often not specific enough to be verified in the scores he alludes to or cites. One could speculate, anyway, that the contrasting section, a more virtuosic and perhaps mischievous chapter of the piece, is perhaps a moment when the metaphorical waltz becomes lightheaded; the sudden disappearance of the lower register could suggest that the two whimsical dancers, moving in faster and wider steps across the ballroom, are entranced, somehow emancipated from the otherwise strict beats dictated by the orchestra. The analytical literature has discussed symbolic dialogues between soprano and tenor in purely instrumental works from the Romantic era, especially Chopin's mazurkas and waltzes. For instance, Rosen acknowledges operatic arias as one of the main inspirational sources for Chopin,[66] and he specifically describes several cases of symbolic duets between pairs of operatic voices.[67] The imaginative listener—or performer—could picture something akin to what Rosen describes in Chopin: in Scriabin's Op. 11, No. 2, the emergence of the tenor in the contrasting middle section

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[64] Richard Taruskin, "When Serious Music Mattered," *The New Republic Online,* accessed December 17 2001; available from: http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?i=20011224&s=taruskin122401&c=2; Internet.

[65] Yavorsky's own, "modal rhythm," analytical system (greatly motivated by Scriabin's post-tonal discoveries) is discussed in Gordon D. McQuere, "The Theories of Boleslav Yavorsky," *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*, ed. Gordon D. McQuere, *Russian Music Studies* 10, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983), 109-164.

[66] See Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 285, 347-350.

[67] Ibid., 348-349.

would signal the appearance of the male lead character, courting, perhaps, the already established female character. Unlike the Chopin examples given by Rosen, and because of their more jagged contours, however, the two melodic lines would not represent singers, but dancers.

Chapter 3: Op. 22, No. 1

3.1. Pianistic Design

I continue my discussion with Scriabin's Op. 22, No. 1, a prelude that exhibits several unusual characteristics. At first glance, the piano writing appears to be somehow unbalanced, posing relatively important technical difficulties for the left hand, and much easier material for the right hand. Perhaps this disparity of difficulty between the two hands, a feature that appears often in Scriabin's pieces, is not without a reason. Many biographies of Scriabin describe the composer's problems with his right hand, caused by an injury dating to his years at the Moscow Conservatory. According to Brook, despite Scriabin's perseverance, "his right hand gave him continual trouble."[68] In Op. 22, No. 1, in any case, the wide arpeggios starting in the left hand often invade the space of the melody when crossing over to the high register, making necessary a careful fingering to avoid the problematic superposition of both hands, not to mention the need to differentiate, in tone, melody from accompaniment.

3.2. Key Signature/Scalar Collection

Another puzzling aspect of the piece is its key signature, which at first sight corresponds to the key of $G^{\#}$ minor. Several factors, however, seem to point to a rather different scale/collection. In the first place, the initial tonic is in second inversion; as a matter of fact, the $G^{\#}$ triad (major, not minor) appears in root position only once throughout the entire work, and only as a passing element, in m. 25. In addition, the

[68] Brook, *Six Great Russian Composers*, 176.

piece ends on a D# major triad (the alleged dominant), concluding a four-measure group that, like the initial eight measures, is entirely governed by a low D# pedal tone.

One approach that would make sense of all of these suggestive factors would be to consider the piece to be in D# Phrygian rather than G# minor. The parallel 6/3 motion[69] over a low D# pedal in the reduction of mm. 1-8 (see the first system of Example 3.1), and the pianistic design consisting of an isolated single tone in the upper register against extended arpeggios in the left, would make a case for a kind of "Spanish guitar" texture. Such a strong Phrygian flavor, compounded with the ambiguities of the post-romantic harmonic language,[70] is not very frequent in the standard tonal literature. As a symptom, Aldwell and Schachter's comprehensive textbook of common-practice harmony and voice leading—like many other standard undergraduate textbooks in America—only discusses Phrygian cadences functioning as semicadences. Example 3.1 offers a harmonic reduction of the piece at the bar level.

Problems in Normalization

Although the harmonic rhythm is very straightforward (each bar corresponds to a different chord), the actual voice-leading reduction at the bar level is sometimes problematic. As in a piece written for guitar, the melody plus the arpeggio comprise a total of six voices (or "strings"). The more or less even registral distribution of these

[69] In literal terms, the first sonority is a 6/4 chord. But the reduction reorganizes the voice leading of the surface according to a consistent parallel 6/3 motion in the three upper voices. The pedal D# is understood as a separate textural layer.

[70] I am referring to Scriabin's liberal interpretation of tonal conventions, as discussed in the previous chapter, 28-38.

six voices is also reminiscent of the guitar, on which five out of the six strings are tuned in consecutive fourths; for reasons of harmonic clarity, a piano texture would have probably left at least one octave between the bass and the upper voices, so that the bass could be more easily individualized. It is understood that a piece for guitar may have a thinner texture. Although pianists have ten fingers, a piece written for the piano does not need to use ten-note chords at all times; conversely, in a piece for guitar not all six strings need to be used at all times. That being said, six-note strumming is one of the simplest ways to play a guitar. Because of the characteristics—limitations—of the instrument, such strumming textures often feature chordal configurations that are quite arbitrary from a pure voice-leading perspective, including seemingly unjustified 6/4 inversions or fairly dissonant pedal points.

In Op. 22, No. 1, since most of the chords have three or four notes, a four-voice reduction is sufficient to express the basic voice leading. But, consequently, a four-voice reduction also requires that two of the inessential voices be dropped from the texture. Example 3.2 shows this aspect of the problem, and two of the possibilities that result from compressing the texture from six to four voices. In both solutions A and B the outer voices are kept, for they are structurally more important. B3 is also kept because it is the only instance of the third of the chord. $D^{\#}3$ is clearly inessential because the fifth of the chord is already doubled. But $G^{\#}$ could be present either in the lower register ($G^{\#}2$) or in the alto register ($G^{\#}4$). According to traditional rules of harmony, the latter (solution B) is preferable: the tenor should never be too close to the bass, for a too close proximity imbalances the registral distribution of the chordal voices and obscures the function of the true bass, $D^{\#}$.

But Example 3.1 actually assigns $G^{\#}$ to the alto register because of one more, and probably more important, reason: the alto register defined by that very $G^{\#}4$ in m. 1 moves consistently in scalar motion throughout the first eight measures, whereas the baritone register (for lack of another term) defined by $G^{\#}2$ in m. 1 has a less strongly directed melodic life. This normalization problem, solved perhaps satisfactorily in measure 1, is nevertheless present throughout the piece, and requires constant reevaluation.[71]

As bass and baritone move downward in register, the issue of spacing between them—as they registrally obstruct each other—becomes even more pressing later in the piece, for instance in mm. 22-25. It is in mm. 26-29, when the baritone is finally absorbed into the bass, that the situation is corrected and the registral distribution of the harmony becomes more conventional. In mm. 26-29 the baritone simply doubles the extremely low pitch in the bass, giving focus to the powerful but otherwise blurry deepest register of the piano (much as a violoncello doubling is sometimes used to give focus to the pitch material presented by a double bass).

The last four measures of the prelude bring important definitions. On the one hand, the pedal point on $D^{\#}$ is doubled and marked *fortissimo*, which reinforces its independence as a separate textural layer and confirms, retrospectively, its similar status in mm. 1-8. Once the texture thickens, $D^{\#}$, as a pitch class, is emphasized even more strongly than before: out of the eight voices, five feature $D^{\#}$ in m. 29. The firmer registral and timbral presence of $D^{\#}$, where the lowest pitch is indeed separated by more

[71] On "rhythmic normalization" see Rothstein, "Rhythmic Displacement and Rhythmic Normalization."

than an octave from the tenor, is the other important retrospective correction of mm. 29-32; G$^{\#}$ can probably not be perceived as a tonic, either literal or implied. Instead, the last four measures, not having any other bass, strongly suggest that D$^{\#}$ is the Phrygian tonic of the piece.

Another aspect that adds to the normalization problem, one related to the registral spacing described above, is the interval expressed by the two initial lower notes, D$^{\#}$2 - G$^{\#}$2. A perfect fourth (traditionally considered a dissonant vertical interval) must be, at least at the beginning, counter-intuitively accepted as part of an initial tonic triad. This interval keeps being featured between the two initial notes of the accompaniment intermittently throughout the piece: in mm. 9, 11, 13, 17, 19, 21, 23, and 29. The recurrence of vertical fourths is probably also related to the guitar-like features of the prelude.

One final detail of the reduction in Example 3.1 is the presence of implied tones. In mm. 3, 7, and 13 these are indicated between parentheses. The presence of implied tones is strongly suggested by the need to fill gaps in the upper-voice descending scale. In all cases the implied tones belong to the chord; those in mm. 3 and 7 are sounded at the end of the preceding measures. The example also respells enharmonically some of the tones to clarify similarities between chords, often expressed through a seeming parallelism in the figured-bass signatures. The G$^{\#}$1 in m. 24 is therefore shown as A^{b}1, a spelling that allows one to label the chord with the same figures from m. 23 to m. 24 (6/4/3). The resolution from m. 24 to m. 25 probably requires C^{x} and not D—C^{x}2 resolves to D$^{\#}$2—and E$^{\#}$ instead of F—E$^{\#}$3 resolves downwards to D$^{\#}$3. No enharmonic respelling, however (Scriabin's or otherwise),

would turn the progression into any recognizable kind of standard harmonic motion. Most of this prelude's chordal progressions are eminently contrapuntal.

3.4. Formal Organization

3.4.1. Sixteen-Measure Sentences

The prelude comprises two sixteen-measure sentences ([4+4] + 8) + ([4+4] + 8).[72] The formal structure is shown in Example 3.3.a.

Beyond the uniform texture, always imitating the slow strumming of a guitar in the left hand, several surface cues strongly reinforce the square phrase organization. One of those cues is the regular presence of four-measure melodic groups in the right hand. There are also the matching changes in the intervallic pattern (happening every eight measures), expressed in Example 3.1 by the figured bass. The continuation in m. 9 starts a new 6/4/3 - 7/5 contrapuntal progression that contrasts with the 6/3 parallelisms of the previous eight bars. These parallelisms are obtained if two separate contrapuntal layers, superimposed upon and independent from each other, are considered. The top layer is a kind of *fauxbourdon;* the lower layer is a pedal point in the bass. In the first system the figures are placed between the right and left hands to reflect the existence of the two layers, unlike the figures corresponding to the remaining systems of the reduction. Once again I submit the metaphor of a guitar with the sixth string tuned to D$^{\#}$2.[73] The image I propose consists of the left hand of the guitar player

[72] Sentence as defined by Caplin, *Classical Form.*

[73] One could entertain the idea that, perhaps, in his travels through Western Europe, Scriabin did hear someone play a badly tuned guitar, exactly one semitone lower than normal, in which case the sixth string would have sounded D$^{\#}$2.

sliding down the bridge with the same chordal structure (the same fingering) one diatonic step at a time, while the open sixth string, with a different instrumental color, functions as a pedal point. In the first sixteen-measure sentence, the stability of the pedal point reinforces the unity of the eight-measure presentation. In the continuation, the new bass appearing in m. 9 contrasts with the pedal $D^{\#}$ of the initial eight bars, thus separating the two eight-measure groups. Lastly, mm. 15-16 are clearly cadential, dividing the piece exactly in half.

The eight-measure presentation of the second sentence, mm. 17-24, comprises a four-measure model with a four-chord 6/4/3 - 7/5 - 6/4/3 - 6/4/3 progression, followed by its four-measure repetition, a major third lower, in mm. 21-24. The continuation of the second sentence, mm. 25-32, consists of a four-measure fragmentation (2+2), followed by a four-measure cadential idea that repeats the theme of the beginning. The parallelism between the two sixteen-measure sentences can be seen in Example 3.3.a.; each sentence has a clear eight-measure presentation, followed by a continuation organized as [2+2] + 4.

But the apparent simplicity of the form hides several contradictory elements. Above all, the eight-measure presentation of the second sentence, mm. 17-24, is strongly reminiscent of the eight-measure continuation of the first sentence, mm. 9-16. In fact, mm. 9-10 and 17-18 are nearly identical. In the second sentence, the two-measure harmonic progression featured in mm. 9-10 and 17-18, 6/4/3-7/5, is then extended with the inclusion of two more 6/4/3 chords in mm. 19-20. (Measures 11-12, which feature the same harmonic content as mm. 19-20, are different in the sense that they feature a new, sequential two-bar melodic unit, F#-E; instead, measures 19-20

extend the duration of F#, as seen in Example 3.1.) Finally, the 6/4/3-7/5 progression comes back in the transposed repetition of the four-measure phrase, mm. 21-22, completed with the two added 6/4/3 chords for mm. 23-24.

By partially mimicking the progression of the previous eight-measure sentence continuation, mm. 17-20 give a strong sense of continuation to the presentation of the second sentence. For a moment, the parallelism between the two makes the listener feel that mm. 17-24 could be a repetition, or a more or less faithful variation, of the sentence continuation, mm. 9-16. As it unfolds, however, the second sentence presentation, mm. 17-24, turns out to be a fairly corrupt copy of mm. 9-16, not at all a repetition. Only in retrospect, and once the piece is nearly finished, it is possible to understand that the second group of sixteen measures is also organized as a sentence.

One more complicating element of the form is the great resemblance between the four-measure cadential idea, mm. 29-32, and the first four measures of the first sentence presentation, mm. 1-4. In addition to the continuational characteristics of mm. 17-24, the almost literal restatement of mm. 1-4 may tempt the listener to feel that there is some kind of recapitulation at the end of the prelude. The return to "A" (the initial idea) and the possible acceptance of this return as a separate formal unit undermines the cohesion of the second sentence and suggests, for a moment, a kind of ABB'A' form. Both formal interpretations, superimposed, are shown in Example 3.3.b.

Yet one more twist in this story is the harmony expressed by the initial theme, mm. 1-8 (or the cadential idea, mm. 29-32). On the one hand, the pedal point in mm. 1-8 gives a strong sense of stability to $D^{\#}$. Along these lines, if the $D^{\#}$ major triad is considered a tonic, the final cadence should happen, indeed, from m. 28 (an augmented

sixth chord in lieu of a dominant) into m. 29 (a $D^{\#}$ major triad, in lieu of a tonic), regardless of the delayed resolutions over the final bass note. The semicadence in mm. 15-16 features a 9/7/4 - 8/8/3 suspension; just the same, but over a longer time-span, the last four measures of the piece would have to be heard as the resolution of a double suspension 6/4 - 5/3 over a $D^{\#}$ bass. But the seeming semicadence in mm. 29-32 is the actual end of the prelude, and nothing indicates that it will lead into another section or movement. It must, then, be considered a final cadence. Obviously, the problem is that in this piece $D^{\#}$ is only a Phrygian tonic; it cannot be a conventional tonic because the pitch collection corresponds to the scale of $G^{\#}$ minor. In conclusion, mm. 29-32 give a hint of false—incomplete—recapitulation; these four measures fail to establish which is the most stable chord of the prelude—the 6/4? the 5/3? an unrealized 5/3 on $G^{\#}$?—as would have been required of a final cadence in the language of common-practice tonality.[74]

The formal ambiguities discussed above are not exhausted at the surface. As I shall explain in the following paragraphs, the problems will only become more complex as the analysis looks deeper into the contrapuntal structure.

3.4.2. Contrapuntal Skeleton: A Structural View

Often, and as explained above, pieces that seem to have a square organization feature ambiguities that, in turn, point to a far more complex formal structure. Op. 22,

[74] One interesting case is Chopin's Mazurka Op. 41, No. 2, in E Minor. This "Phrygian" mazurka is less ambiguous than Scriabin's Op. 22, No. 1, because it ends on an E minor triad. But the beginning of the mazurka is sufficiently ambiguous; one can not really be sure if the piece is in A minor or E minor.

No. 1 is one of these cases. In that sense, Example 3.3.a. expresses a somehow superficial interpretation of the form; the thirty-two measures of the piece are here understood as two sixteen-measure sentences. Example 3.3.b., on the other hand, shows some of the ambiguities that are present, even within this preliminary formal interpretation.

Instead, Example 3.4 reveals a principle of melodic and contrapuntal organization that looks beyond the most immediate details of the surface (such as the slurs, or occasional eighth-rests) and prioritizes instead the completion of melodic or contrapuntal prototypes. Common archetypes, as discussed by William Rothstein, are always available as a perceptual possibility in any established style, even if other musical parameters contradict their presence; because they are archetypes they are hard-wired into the musical prejudices of the cultivated listener.[75] Rothstein's discussion concerns situations in which some of the tones that belong to a linear pattern, because of their absence, must be inferred (or implied). In a reversal of this reasoning, I submit here another possibility: that a strong linear pattern, in and of itself, may have structural implications that ultimately contradict the musical surface and suggest the presence of an implied form. To express the opposition to the superficial form, corresponding to Example 3.3.a., and assuming the presence of such prototypes, I shall now submit another interpretation, which better conforms to the voice-leading structure.

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[75] Rothstein, "On implied tones," 302-303.

The prototype I am referring to is a run-of-the-mill, diatonic, stepwise descending octave, and its first manifestation is already present in the first phrase. As shown in Example 3.4, measures 1 through 8 comprise a descending octave from $D^{\#}5$ to $D^{\#}4$, symmetrically organized in two four-measure tetrachords. Nothing is surprising yet at this point, for both the superficial plans (the ones shown in Examples 3.3.a. and 3.3.b.) and the structural one (Example 3.4) coincide. The presence and function of the scalar model is hence unmistakably clear: it matches and reinforces the eight-measure phrase organization corresponding to the sentence presentation. The discrepancies, however, start soon thereafter. In the sentence continuation—mm. 9 through 16—the top voice traverses only a melodic span that is equivalent to the second tetrachord of the first eight-measure phrase. Originally introduced in m. 5, the tetrachord $G^{\#}$-$F^{\#}$-E-$D^{\#}$—which is itself a transposed version of $D^{\#}$-$C^{\#}$-B-$A^{\#}$—is now stretched in a kind of rhythmic augmentation from its previous four-measure version into a full eight measures. It is worth noting that the harmony of m. 9 is clearly derived from that of m. 5, subtly underscoring the motivic parallelism that connects the two phrases. Thus it could be argued that the sentence continuation develops—through augmentation plus variation—the second tetrachord, now within the span of eight bars.

I referred earlier to the undifferentiated nature and the continuational quality of the second sentence presentation, mm. 17-24. The sequential treatment (4+4) reinforces the four-measure grouping, which is then fragmented into two-measure units before reaching the last four measures that feature the cadential idea. The conclusion of the fragmented sequence and the beginning of the cadential idea in fact overlap on the downbeat of m. 29 (notice the right-hand slur from m. 28 to m. 29); the structure of

mm. 25-29 could in that sense be described as (2+2+1). Since the cadence arrived at in m. 29 is left unresolved via a double suspension until m. 32, the superficial formal view expressed in Example 3.3.a. easily integrated the last four bars, mm. 29-32, precisely as the cadential conclusion of the second sixteen-measure sentence.

But the investigation into the scalar patterns expressed in Example 3.4 shows that below the formal fabric of the sentence lies a "geological fault" of sorts. As seen in the example, mm. 17-28 are in one sense completely separate from mm. 29-32. The model shows that the basic contrapuntal structure of mm. 17-28, exceeding and ignoring the boundaries set by the sentence presentation and continuation, expresses, as in mm. 1-8 and 9-16, the realization of a strict scalar skeleton. The octave descent in the upper voice from G$^{\#}$4 in m. 17 to G$^{\#}$3 in m. 28, matched with the octave descent from E2 to E1 in the bass, is the essence, contrapuntally speaking, of these twelve measures.

The skeleton of mm. 17-28 is of course different from the one stated in mm. 1-8 (and the one stated in 9-16). First of all, it doesn't prolong any kind of D$^{\#}$ harmony; the boundaries of the descent—the outer voices—frame an E-G$^{\#}$ interval, which is a kind of II in the Phrygian mode on D$^{\#}$. Also, precisely because it stretches over twelve bars, the octave descent crosses the boundaries of the expected eight-measure span, also falling short of a hypothetical sixteen-measure span. The descent, although firmly delimited by the octave-span, is also different from the one in mm. 1-8 because of the unusual type of scale that it defines. The intervallic pattern outlined by the top voice (wwwwhhw) resists any standard scalar identification, although it includes all the notes of a whole-tone scale. Perhaps the oddity of the irregular scalar pattern is the intrinsic

cause of the expansion: mm. 17-24 require more time than mm. 1-8 or 9-16 for the listener to become aware of and digest the novel sonorities.

As shown in the last system of Example 3.4, the closing phrase, from bars 29 through 32, restates the opening tetrachord in its original rhythm, once again spanning only four bars. Separated by this "fault line," mm. 29-32 are thus easier to see as a unit separate from 17-28. In all, the structural view presented in Example 3.4 seems to support Example 3.3.b.: behind the two sixteen-measure sentences, and despite the asymmetrical time-spans, lies the idea of an ABB'A' form.

3.4.3. Contrapuntal Rhythm

There is an inherent logic to these transformations. First, a linear prototype comprising a stepwise octave descent is expressed in mm. 1-8, reinforced by—and reinforcing—the square harmonic and melodic structure. In the following eight measures (9 through 16), the superficial phrase rhythm remains constant (the sentence continuation, like the sentence presentation, is eight measures long), but the actual tonal rhythm moves more slowly. Because only the first half of the prototype is expressed, each of the four notes comprising the descending tetrachord $G^{\#}$-$F^{\#}$-E-$D^{\#}$ roughly corresponds to two bars, not one. And so, the basic pace (in a way, the actual psychological action) is half as fast as in mm. 1-8. The difference in basic pace is indicated above the staff in Example 3.4.[76]

[76] The expression "basic pace" is used by Channan Willner in "Sequential expansion and Handelian phrase rhythm," *Schenker Studies* 2, ed. Carl Schachter and Hedi Siegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 192-221.

The last sixteen bars of the piece, which might be expected to restore and affirm the tonal rhythm of the original prototype, bring instead two more modifications that further the sense of asymmetry. Because of the close similarity between the first sentence continuation, mm. 9-16, and the second sentence presentation, mm. 17-24, the tonal rhythm continues to feature one note every two bars, a motion half as fast as that of the original eight-measure prototype. The basic pace is restored only in the last eight measures of the piece—in the second sentence continuation.

To some extent, then, the tonal rhythm seems to reinforce the formal interpretation that I called superficial above; for each of the eight-measure formal units there is a uniform contrapuntal pace. Subtly enough, the tonal rhythm also suggests a kind of abba form (since the formal boundaries are slightly different, I use lower case here to differentiate it from the formal labels used in Examples 3.3.b. and 3.4 above). To be sure, abba is precisely the sequence of changes in the linear pace. In the first eight bars (a) each measure corresponds to one note in the middleground linear structure, the next two eight-measure sections (bb) move half as fast, and the last eight bars (a) go back to the linear pace of the beginning.

But once the deep contrapuntal structure shown in Example 3.4 is revealed there is no going back. The symmetry in durational span, abba (8+8+8+8), is therefore only apparent. Because of the separate identities of mm. 17-28, on the one hand, and mm. 29-32, on the other—segments originally born from within the sixteen-measure sentence, but made distinct by the separation between mm. 28 and 29 and by the consistency of the contrapuntal-linear prototypes—mm. 17-28 feature a number of changes from mm. 9-16. In the first eight measures, 17-24, the basic pace is similar to

that of 9-16. But because of the strict sequential treatment (absent in mm. 9-16) and the resulting lack of a cadence in m. 24, the phrase continues its motion downwards. Everything changes again in mm. 25-28, where the basic pace of the initial linear prototype (one note per bar) returns. Hence the third contrapuntal segment, mm. 17-28, features an acceleration in the second tetrachord (C-B-$A^{\#}$-$G^{\#}$) of the octave descent. At last, the final four-measure group, mm. 29-32 (where again only the first portion of the original prototype is cited), partially elongated through the indicated *ritardando* and *Lento*, seems to recall the entirety of mm. 1-8, so that the abbreviated version, in a way, stands for the implicit (but lost) eight-measure span.

In conclusion, the inner linear rhythm of the prelude undergoes one retardation and a final acceleration. Besides, the inner contrapuntal structure contains one expansion and one compression (both 17-28 and 29-32 refer to the eight-measure model of the beginning). All of these transformations are successful as a compositional resource—in other words, expressive—because, among other reasons, they are subliminally contrasted with the initial eight-measure statement. Being, as they are, woven more deeply into the compositional design, hidden below the musical surface, the changes in pace probably refer to the inner psychological or spiritual substance of the piece. Since the changes in pace modify the intervallic and registral substance of the prototype, they must be also considered, aesthetically speaking, developmental.

3.4.4. Structural Irregularities at Lower Levels

I shall now examine in further detail the internal structure of the expanded contrapuntal prototype underlying mm. 17-28. One important aspect of this twelve-

measure unit is the persistence of four-measure grouping, which is manifested most noticeably in the four-measure sequential treatment in mm. 17-20 and 21-24. Example 3.5.a shows how the music of mm. 21-24 is a sequence modeled after bars 17-20.

The remaining four-measure phrase, mm. 25-28, breaks the four-measure unit into two smaller units, each two measures long. One of the discrepancies between mm. 17-24 and 25-28 is the acceleration of the intervallic span covered: while mm. 17-20 and 21-24 each feature a descending major second in the top voice ($G^{\#}4$-$F^{\#}4$, then E4-D4), mm. 25-28 feature a major third (C4-$G^{\#}3$). But the increase of the intervallic span is not all. Perhaps more important, since two of the steps become semitones, the total span of a major third in mm. 25-28 leaves enough room to descend four scalar steps (C4-B3-$A^{\#}3$-$G^{\#}3$), which in mm. 17-24 had been the total number of scalar steps traversed in eight measures. The fragmentation of grouping patterns on the surface (2+2) has thus to be seen as complementing the acceleration of the descent. In all, the third four-measure phrase quickly sums up (liquidates) the extended model-sequence of mm. 17-24.[77]

At the middleground level, acceleration and deceleration are already part of the upper voice's behavior; as shown in Example 3.5.a., which is a durational reduction, the model expressed in mm. 17-20 consists of a quarter note followed by a dotted half note (1+3). The strict sequence that follows in mm. 21-24 simply continues this asymmetrical pattern. One of the consequences of these frequent changes of pace is that the upper and lower voices move in an asynchronous manner, despite the fact that they

[77] Liquidation as defined in Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, 58.

are both defining an octave as they descend. Interestingly, even if one were to assume an underlying (2+2) rhythmic normalization in the upper voice obliterating the (1+3) irregularity—such a rhythmically normalized version would feature each note of the upper voice for two measures—the rate of descent between the two outer voices would still not coincide. Because of the pitch distances traversed in each of the three four-measure spans, the upper and lower layers are irremediably asynchronous. For each four measures, the right hand moves first in two descending major seconds ($G^{\#}$-$F^{\#}$, E-D); then it descends a major third (C-B-$A^{\#}$-$G^{\#}$). By contrast, the left hand moves down an octave in three equal installments of a major third each (and so the descent is perfectly symmetrical). Example 3.5.a. shows both. The equidistant motion of the bass for each of the four-measure phrases (shown in quarter notes, each of which corresponds to one measure) provides a background phrase rhythm, a kind of pulse against which the upper voice slows down or speeds up. I say "pulse" because the grouping rhythm of the middleground bass coincides with the four-bar hypermeter. Borrowing the expression from Chanman Willner, I have referred above to this aspect of the tonal rhythm as "basic pace."[78] Hence, in mm. 18-20 and 22-24 the top voice is perceived as slowing down the rhythm, while in mm. 17 and 21 the motion seems to suddenly regain its original impulse. It is when both layers are finally back in phase, in mm. 25-28 and 29-32 (for the latter passage see Example 3.1), that the music gains and keeps, at last, a good deal of momentum; the impression then created is that nothing is holding the flow anymore.

[78] See: Willner, "Sequential expansion and Handelian phrase rhythm."

Precisely in the four-measure phrase of mm. 25-28 $D^{\#}$ is kept as a common tone in three of the four chords (see Example 3.1, mm. 25-27, left hand), faintly recalling, perhaps, the low pedal-tone $D^{\#}$ of the first eight measures of the prelude. Unlike before, however, its placement in an inner voice of the texture—the tenor—and its less problematic integration into each of the three triads prevents the perception of it as a pedal tone. Strictly speaking, $D^{\#}$ is only a common tone of all three triads in mm. 25-27, and not a pedal tone. But one could see this common tone as a surviving trace—a distant relative, so to speak—of the previous pedal tone, which is about to return in mm. 29-32.

In mm. 25-28 the outer voices move in parallel tenths. Each chord has a distinct vertical identity; this phrase contains the most varied figured bass, as compared with any other phrase in Example 3.1. Measures 25-28 contain (albeit in passing) not one but two augmented chords: an augmented triad, in 6/4 position, in m. 26 (the only instance of an augmented triad in the entire prelude); and, in m. 28, a French augmented sixth.

The second part of Example 3.5.b. summarizes the melodic descent of the right hand. It is easy to see how the two tetrachords of the complete octave descent are unequally distributed among the twelve bars of the phrase. Whereas the first tetrachord needs eight bars to traverse four scalar steps, the second must cover its ground in only four bars. Cross-matched with the steadier descent of the bass, the rate of descent in the treble line serves to convey a sense of urgency towards the end of the twelve-bar segment.

3.5. Hidden Repetitions

Motivic parallelism plays an important role in emphasizing the connections between different phrases and sections. I have, for instance, referred above to the relationship between the first and second eight-measure phrases (sentence presentation and continuation), where one of the two tetrachords, the one corresponding to mm. 5-8 ($G^{\#}5$-$F^{\#}5$-E5-$D^{\#}5$), is expanded into an eight-measure phrase, mm. 9-16 ($G^{\#}4$-$F^{\#}4$-E4-$D^{\#}4$; see Example 3.4). In this case, and in addition to the literal parallelism present in the upper voice of both phrases, the connection is also emphasized by smaller, meaningful segments of that line, and by the behavior of the bass. The hidden repetitions are shown in Example 3.6.

The example goes from the small to the big picture. The incomplete-neighbor motive E-$D^{\#}$, which is in turn a synecdochic version of the tetrachord (and also the most significantly Phrygian segment of the scale), is first recognizable as a foreground melodic component at the bar level (top system, mm. 7-8 in the reduction, top voice). Later, in the sentence continuation, the same neighbor-tone, E, appears in the bass. Not ruled by a deeper pedal point, this neighbor has more registral and harmonic weight than the one in mm. 7-8 (Example 3.6, Middleground). In the same example, but looking at a larger range, one can see that E2 is transferred, via a chromatic voice-exchange, to E4 before completing the neighbor motion by falling, once again, to $D^{\#}4$. It is worth noting that in the musical surface E4 disappears from the top line in mm. 13-14; that pitch is in fact transferred one octave below, to E3—E3 resolves to $D^{\#}3$. In sum, the hypothetical descent E4-$D^{\#}4$ is not present in the surface; Example 3.6 infers the presence of these tones via registral transfers and as the implied continuation of E4

in m. 12. The middleground Phrygian tetrachord thus reconstructed matches the foreground motion of mm. 1-8.

Finally, the third system of the graph (Background) shows how the same motive pervades the long-range voice-leading plan of the prelude. On the one hand, E is the background bass of bars 17-28 because it defines the boundaries of the octave descent in the lower voice, despite the 6/4/3 sonorities above it. Ultimately, the octave descent E2-E1 in mm. 17-28 is, itself, also motivic; as the initial register of the bass is transferred down one octave, mm. 17-28 have the function of linking the register corresponding to D#2, at the beginning of the piece, to D#1 at the end. As explained earlier, the two registers are coupled; E1 moves to D#1 and E2 moves to D#2 in mm. 28-29 (but the lower register is primary). In any case, and since the soprano does return to the original register while the bass moves down one octave, the texture of the piece ends one octave wider, registrally speaking, than it starts. The registral expansion (which is accompanied by a thickening of the texture, as more voices are added) is one of the journeys of the piece.

Example 3.6 shows, then, the many transformations of the E-D# motive, from the surface to the deepest background. The octave descent in itself is also an organic part of the piece, and it is equally expressed by the first eight bars in the upper voice at the foreground level and in the octave descent that comprises the entire piece at the background level: from D#2 in m. 1 to D#1 of mm. 29-32. All in all, these hidden motivic connections (hidden in the sense that they can be expressed only through reduction) are also essential to a proper understanding of the form. The background, middleground (see Example 3.4), and foreground versions of the octave descent

authenticate each other, so to speak: since each of the octave descents defines a solid linear unit, such units serve to strongly confirm the asymmetrical proportions—and the resulting formal conflicts—discussed in previous paragraphs.

3.6. Harmony

Another aspect of the piece that both justifies further and helps to verify its structural design is its harmony. As Example 3.7 shows, the two most important structural junctures of the piece are signaled by harmonic cadences in mm. 15-16 and mm. 29-32. On the other hand, the seventh chords in, for instance, mm. 10-12 or 18-24 are excluded from this graph because they are considered passing occurrences, vertical sonorities that are part of contrapuntal progressions. I have already referred to Schoenberg's "law of the shortest way" as one of the keys to understanding many of the progressions in this prelude. In his *Theory of Harmony*, his advice for the novice composer or harmony student is to use only those notes that are "absolutely necessary for connecting the chords," so that "each voice will take the smallest possible step or leap, and that, moreover, just that smallest step which will allow the other voices also to take small steps."[79] This advice is significant because it reflects a fundamental tendency of skillful harmonic motion in general and chromatic harmony in particular. Along the same lines, Richard Bass also comments on the "...ambiguities inherent in the [seventh chords'] voice-leading tendencies" in the post-romantic era.[80] Schoenberg's

[79] Schoenberg, Arnold, *Theory of Harmony*, trans. Roy E. Carter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978): 39.

[80] Bass, "Half-Diminished Functions and Transformations," 41, 46.

and Bass's observations help one to understand the passing harmonies of this prelude.

Most of the linear progressions described above are harmonized in one of two ways: either with passing chords moving in parallel motion or with passing chords moving in oblique motion; those progressions that feature oblique motion in the foreground serve to feature longer-range voice exchanges. Example 3.7 shows that both procedures—parallel motion and longer-range voice exchanges—serve the prolongation of a specific chord. The parallel motion in mm. 1-8 prolongs a 6/4 chord on $D^{\#}$ (minor triad in m. 1, major triad in m. 8); the foreground oblique motion in mm. 9-14 slowly progresses as a chromatic voice exchange taking place within a $II^{4/3}$ chord (becoming a chromaticized II^{7}) before reaching the cadence in 15-16. Bars 17-28 feature another, longer-range chromatic voice exchange that turns the same $II^{4/3}$ chord into a French augmented sixth before resolving into a 6/4 chord over $D^{\#}$, a sonority reminiscent of the beginning.

The example sheds light on several aspects that deserve comment. I will first concentrate on the 6/4 chord at the beginning, which is prolonged for eight measures. At the middleground level, this chord expresses—and prolongs—the $G^{\#}$ triad; it must, therefore, be considered a consonant 6/4. The deeper nature of the chord, however, revealed by the background view (included immediately below the middleground in Example 3.7), indicates that mm. 15-16 actually resolve the 6/4 sonority into a 5/3 chord, rendering the first eight measures a background dissonance. But "the background is not for everybody," it has been said.[81] The connection, stretched for

[81] William Rothstein, "The Americanization of Heinrich Schenker," *In Theory Only* 9/1: 14.

sixteen bars, and interrupted with a neighboring motion to E (see m. 9 in Example 3.6, Background) is indeed remote for the unprepared listener. Perhaps for that reason Scriabin also provides a more immediate reassurance: by featuring a 6/4 - 5/3 resolution above $D^{\#}$, mm. 29-32 provide a middleground version of mm. 1-16. Unlike the initial four-bar phrase, which is followed by a second tetrachord that completes the octave descent, in mm. 29-32 there is no return to any $G^{\#}$ minor tonic. Just as mm. 5-8 completed the octave descent in the soprano line and ended the first eight-measure phrase, one more four-measure phrase—hypothetically, mm. 33-36—"should have" ended the piece. I am, ultimately, referring to the frustration of such an expectation. The impression of openness created by the disappearance of the second four-measure tetrachord (mm. "33-36," which never arrive) seems to confirm that the Phrygian scale, abundantly expressed with octave descents throughout, is the most basic element from which the piece is built—perhaps even more than the $G^{\#}$ minor scale.

For the same reasons, and, despite their obvious similarity, mm. 1-4 and 29-32 must be interpreted in radically different ways. Measures 1-4 are followed immediately by a second tetrachord that completes the scalar motion; as a consequence, the chord in m. 4 does not last long enough to be felt as a definitive goal and is displaced as such by the chord in m. 8. Exactly the opposite happens in mm. 29-32: since the scalar motion is not completed because no second tetrachord ever arrives, the absence of a replacement for the last $D^{\#}$ triad, in m. 32, forces the acceptance of this chord as the definitive harmonic goal of the prelude; notice the *Lento* marking and the fermata, together with the individual accents for each note in the left hand.

In addition to the conflicts between middleground and background, and despite the economical repertory of true harmonic occurrences revealed by Example 3.7, the piece features variety and contrast. Although the chords prolonged in mm. 9-14 and mm. 17-28 contain the same pitch classes, the one in mm. 9-14 acts as a dominant of the dominant, whereas the one in mm. 17-28 acts as a true augmented sixth, resolving to the $G^{\#}$ minor tonic six-four (or cadential six-four). In mm. 14-15 the bass moves upward a perfect fourth; in mm. 28-29 the outer voices (featuring an augmented sixth) move outward to the octave. Hence the French sixth chord, a special sonority of the piece, clearly acts as a kind of magic wand, a pointer to mm. 14 and 28, singling out those places and making them two of the most important moments of the prelude.

3.7. Metrical Conflicts

By now it has been established that the pedal point on $D^{\#}$ is one of the essential features of the piece; its presence has implications for voice-leading, counterpoint, harmony, and form. Not surprisingly, its effects are also metrical. Example 3.8 shows the main features that create an alternate metrical organization—a kind of shadow meter—following the written meter one quarter note later.[82] In the second system of the example (labeled "Shadow Meter"), the rhythmic configuration of the arpeggio is interpreted as being displaced by one quarter note; the assumption is that the initial $D^{\#}$ in the left hand should be normalized as a quarter note to fill the entire first beat. How

[82] See: Samarotto, Frank, "Strange Dimensions: Regularity and Irregularity in Deep Levels of Rhythmic Reduction," *Schenker Studies* 2, ed. Carl Schachter and Hedi Siegel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 222-38.

is this impression created? On the one hand, the perfect fourth in the left hand in m. 1, a vertical dissonance—the normalization in Example 3.1 makes it vertical—points more to an accent on beat "two" than to an accent on beat "one." In other words, the melodic interval $D^{\#}2$-$G^{\#}2$, rather than suggesting a single chord, may seem to represent two separate harmonies: $D^{\#}2$, an upbeat, a pitch event that occurs on a weak beat at the eighth-note level, corresponds to dominant harmony; whereas $G^{\#}2$, a downbeat, a pitch event that occurs on a strong beat at the eighth-note level, corresponds to the tonic. Both features suggest that beat "two" is stronger than beat "one."[83] On the other hand, and in agreement with this, there is a rhythmic dissonance created by the arpeggio starting on a rhythmically weak portion of the bar (the second half of beat one).[84] The cancellation of the rhythmic dissonance would require that the arpeggio start on beat "one" (the normalization in Example 3.1 assumes this) or on beat "two" (beat "one" of the shadow meter). But the latter solution does not need to make an eighth-note shift, since, because of the harmonic interval itself, the arpeggio is partitioned into two sectors: $D^{\#}$ as an upbeat and $G^{\#}$ as a downbeat.

The melody plays an important role in the alternate barring of Example 3.8. In the first two measures of each four-bar phrase the longest duration corresponds to beat "two," not beat "one." The situation can be verified in mm. 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, and so on.[85] The four-measure slurring in mm. 1-5 (starting on the second beat of m. 1

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[83] See MPR 3 (Event) and MPR 9 (Time-Span Interaction) in Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 76, 90.

[84] Ibid., MPR 3.

[85] Ibid., MPR 5a (Length), 80, 84.

and ending on the first beat of m. 5), moreover, also emphasizes this one-beat metrical displacement.[86] Similar slurrings can be found in most of the remaining four-measure phrases. Finally, one more factor, dynamics, also underlines the "second beat" beginning at mm. 5 and 21.[87]

All of these factors create what Harald Krebs calls a "Type B" metrical dissonance, a situation in which two rhythmic strands of the same length are consistently out-of-phase.[88] This metrical conflict, first stated in m. 1 but also present later in the piece, has a profound significance in the perception of the harmonic organization. An alternate accentual interpretation, falling on the second beat of each bar, would make possible a partitioning of the six-voice chord presented in m. 1 into two portions: one portion (beat 1) would define only dominant harmony, whereas the second portion (beats 2 and 3) would define a root-position tonic harmony. Needless to say, if such a harmonic partitioning were consistently present throughout the piece, Example 3.1 should have been very different: a constant perception of an iambic harmonic foot at the bar level (quarter-note + half-note) would have generated a radically divergent hearing.

Because the textural design is consistent, the conflicting metrical conditions created in m. 1, with its leap from dominant to tonic in the bass from the first beat to the second, are in varying degrees recreated in some subsequent measures. In m. 5, for

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[86] Ibid., MPR 5c (Length), final version, 84.

[87] Ibid., MPR 5b (Dynamics), 84.

[88] See Harald Krebs, "Some Extensions of the Concepts of Metrical Consonance and Dissonance," *Journal of Music Theory* 31/1: 105.

instance, several factors stress the shadow meter: an octave leap in the melodic line ($G^{\#}4$-$G^{\#}5$), the break in the melodic slur, a seeming harmonic change from the I chord in beat "one" to IV in beats "two" and "three," and even the leap of a seventh in the bass ($D^{\#}2$-$C^{\#}3$). But the harmonic partitioning that so aptly seems to fit an alternate accentual interpretation in mm. 1, 5, and some other portions of the piece, is not consistent in all measures. In m. 4, for instance, $D^{\#}$ is clearly the most stable bass for the chord, and, consequently, the first beat of m. 4 is perceived as a downbeat (considering otherwise would imply a harmonic syncopation). The alternate metrical accent is, in sum, only hinted at occasionally in the prelude (thus its shadow nature). In some of the measures the harmony could be divided into two chords; in many others, it cannot.

3.8. Conclusions for Op. 22, No. 1

Beneath a surface of square grouping and metrical organization lies a network of formal devices that subtly contradict that very organization in diverse ways. The resulting formal asymmetries create a multiplicity of possible hearings for diverse musical dimensions. In the realm of grouping, conflict arises between the sentence-type paradigm and the asymmetrical units created by the contrapuntal rhythm; in terms of meter, for the meter indicated in the time signature there is occasionally a possibility to hear a shadow meter. The diatonic scalar collection indicated by the key signature is, according to 19th-century common practice, either $G^{\#}$ minor or B major; these are the default values, so to speak. But conflict is also introduced and left unresolved in this

aspect: denying $G^{\#}$ minor, a strong suggestion of $D^{\#}$ Phrygian lingers. These contradictory views—formal, metrical, harmonic—exhibit many more nuances as the listener focuses attention on the surface, foreground, middleground, or background levels.

The repetitive nature and relatively limited range of the melodic line would seem to suggest the representation of a nocturnal Spanish serenade. With a stretch of the imagination one could picture a narrow street on a small Spanish village where, masked by the shadows, a young man sings and whispers, guitar in hand, trying to conquer his beloved's heart. The metrical shifts and phrase accelerations, together with the plaintive tone of the Phrygian scale, would perhaps draw a musical portrait of the man's passionate and longing mood.

Chapter 4: Op. 22 No. 3

4.1. General Characteristics

The pianistic design in this prelude is rather conventional: a moderately expansive melody in the right hand, accompanied with quarter-note block chords in the left. In this sense, there is a superficial resemblance with Chopin's Op. 28, No. 4, except for the melodic design. The texture containing the melody in the right hand and three-voice chords in the left hand, featuring suspensions of variable length, has already been noticed by Jesperson, who found it "...particularly 'Chopinesque' in its melodic quality...."[1] Like Op. 22, No. 1, this prelude is set in a five-sharp key signature, which in this case indicates B major. The pathos of the piece swings between the languid atmosphere created by the lengthy suspensions in the upper voices and the relatively varied rhythmic design of the melody. The harmonic rhythm is not regular, either. Extended voice-exchanges or parenthetical interpolations, paired with a liberal sense about where dissonances can be resolved, and the appearance and disappearance of the bass register, are also crucial components of this whimsical quality. Given these characteristics, it is not surprising that many of the commercially available performances of this dreamy waltz make use of rubato.[2]

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[1] Jesperson, "Early Piano Style of Scriabin," 67.

[2] Among them, Scriabin, *Preludes, Vol. 2*, Evgeny Zarafiants, Naxos 8.554145; *The Complete Preludes of Alexander Scriabin*, Piers Lane, Hyperion 67057; *Alexander Scriabin: Complete Piano Music, Vol. 3*, Gordon Fergus-Thompson, ASV Living Era 919; Scriabin, *Preludes op. 11, 16, 22, 27*, Anna Gourari, Koch Schwann 3-1431-2.

4.2. Formal Organization

As in Op. 11, No. 2, and Op. 22, No. 1, symmetrical organization is felt on a first hearing or glance at the score. But the total number of measures in Op. 22, No. 3 (twenty-eight), makes it more difficult to see, a priori, what kind of formal prototype, if any, is at work. Indeed, the piece does not comprise two phrases of fourteen-measure length. In principle, then, two interpretations are possible: first, that the structure does not depend on any pre-conceived symmetry; second, that the superficial structure is the expression of a deformed symmetry, a sixteen- or twenty-four-measure prototype that has been expanded or a thirty-two measure prototype that has been contracted. Given Scriabin's preference for square phrase structures, it seems more probable that the apparent asymmetrical length of the piece results from the transformation of a symmetrical formal plan. But it still remains to be seen if the structure reflects the expansion or the contraction of such a square prototype, and how (and why) those phrase-length modifications are realized.

In order to establish the basic length of the prelude one must first answer a difficult and crucial question: how many periods, or perhaps phrases, does the piece actually comprise? For, as stated in previous chapters of this dissertation, the phrase length suggests the presence of expansions or contractions, and those modifications, in turn, point to underlying prototypes.

Strictly speaking, it would seem that there is only one cadence—at the end of the prelude—and one semicadence—at the end of bar 8.[3] According to this notion, the piece

[3] Although the melody ends only in m. 9. I will discuss the non-coincidence between melody and harmony later in the chapter.

consists of only one period, partitioned into two asymmetrical halves. This would be another of the several ways in which the prelude has close connections with Chopin's Op. 28, No. 1 and—especially—No. 4. Speaking about the latter, Schachter points out, among other things, the absence of an initial tonic in root position and the steady chromatic descent of the bass, which reaches the dominant at the approximate midpoint of the prelude. Schachter concludes that the prelude "...has the form of a large period..." and that, therefore, "...the second phrase constitutes a varied and intensified consequent, closing the structure with a resolution to a final tonic... ."[4] The connections here between Chopin and Scriabin are obvious: Schachter's remarks about the phrase structure, instability of the harmony, and the descending bass line in Chopin could easily describe the Scriabin prelude. Each of these preludes—Chopin's Op. 28, No. 4, and Scriabin's Op. 22, No. 3—would be structured as a parallel period, the first eight measures (the antecedent) ending more or less halfway in a semicadence to the dominant, the remaining eight measures (the consequent)—expanded in some way—ending with an authentic cadence. In this case, it would seem reasonable to assume that the two asymmetrical halves (antecedent and consequent) are, in the background, equivalent in their basic length because they complement and counterbalance each other.

But another option is to consider that the consequent ends in m. 22, while a third, new eight-measure phrase would begin in m. 21, with a two-measure overlap. In

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[4] Carl Schachter, "The Triad as Place and Action," *Music Theory Spectrum* 17/2 (1995): 150; reprinted in Carl Schachter, *Unfoldings*, ed. Joseph Straus (New York, Oxford University Press, 1999), 162.

this case, the form would relate more to the idea of a three-part strophic form (AA'A''). The music contains cues that support both views, and they are explored at length in the discussion that follows.

4.3. Aspects of the Harmonic Normalization

4.3.1 Harmonic Rhythm

Example 4.1 clarifies the harmonic rhythm of the prelude, which for the most part corresponds to one measure per chord. The graph also highlights the generous use of suspensions and appoggiaturas, which are sustained often longer than their respective resolutions (for instance, A-G$^{\#}$ in the alto, m. 3, or B-A$^{\#}$ in m. 9). One important characteristic of the prelude seems to be that many of these suspensions are paired with an accompanying voice, either in sixths or in thirds—parallel sixths are the most frequent case, as in bars 1-2 and 2-3, soprano and alto; parallel thirds can be found in m. 2, tenor and bass.

This level of the reduction also permits one to appreciate the two places where the surface harmonic rhythm changes to an iambic two chords per bar, in mm. 5-6 and the corresponding place in the second phrase, mm. 13-14.

4.3.2. Extended Tertial Formations

Another surviving trait from the surface, the appoggiatura D$^{\#}$-C$^{\#}$ in mm. 15, 17, and 19, finally achieves chordal-tone status (a real ninth) in m. 20. In m. 12 D$^{\#}$6 first resolves to C$^{\#}$6 and then the arpeggiation continues downward to E5. Since D$^{\#}$5 continues at the downbeat of m. 13, it is possible to assume D$^{\#}$ to be a real ninth in m.

12. This is even more so in m. 20. Here $D^{\#}6$ is reached on the downbeat and $D^{\#}5$ comes back in the last eighth-note triplet, defining an arpeggio in which both $C^{\#}$ and $D^{\#}$ are present, but not E.

On the other hand, in m. 21 the case of $F^{\#}$ is different. The beginning of the measure suggests that $F^{\#}$ is an eleventh, but, as shown in Example 4.1, in the last beat of the measure it is finally disclosed that $F^{\#}$ is simply a suspension—with a long-delayed resolution—to $E^{\#}$. Jesperson is one of the authors that points out the presence—literal or implied—of extended tertial formations in Scriabin's music.[5] As in previous analyses of my dissertation, in this and subsequent graphs implied tones are indicated with notes written between parentheses.

4.3.3. Auxiliary Cadence

Example 4.2, one level deeper in the process of reduction, helps to establish further interesting aspects of the piece. The absence of a root-position tonic chord at the beginning (or, for that matter, anywhere but at the end) is probably a major contributing factor to the languid atmosphere of this waltz. The registral break in mm. 2-3 (and 10-11) is a symptom that points to a further distortion, concomitant to the harmonic ambiguity: the leap in the bass, a perfect fifth down, expresses in fact a dominant-tonic relationship, but tonicizing the key of E major, the subdominant. The piece starts, then, with an auxiliary cadence.[6] The establishment of this first actual

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[5] Jesperson, "Early Piano Style of Scriabin," 55.

[6] Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition* (New York: Longman, 1979), 88 and figs. 110-111.

harmonic goal (the subdominant instead of the tonic) is, to a great extent, deceptive. It is in retrospect, only after hearing the eight-measure antecedent that ends with the dominant in m. 8, that the listener starts to hear B as the actual tonic of the piece.

4.3.4. Harmonic Interpolations

As shown in the graph with parentheses, mm. 5-6 and 13-14 are to some extent disconnected from the structural voice leading, at least at this level. In effect, if the chords of mm. 1-3 are a local $II^{\#}$-V-I (temporarily in E major), the harmonies of mm. 5-6 sound more like a harmonic interpolation, a digression, so to speak. As pointed out before, in this two-bar fragment the harmonic rhythm and even the metric foot (short-long) are different from everything else in the piece; throughout the prelude, there is always one chord per bar, except in mm. 5-6 (and 13-14)—notwithstanding the distracting effect caused by some of the long double or triple suspensions and appoggiaturas.

Furthermore, the harmonic progression of 5-6 and 13-14 is ambiguous and extremely weak. For all of these reasons, I consider the II chord to be prolonged from m. 4 through m. 7, where it is intensified to a secondary dominant of V. This is shown in Example 4.2 with a curved dotted line connecting both II chords (in Roman numerals). A similar process starts to happen in m. 12, and mm. 13-14 are once again heard as a harmonic digression. This second time, however, the prolongation of II is stretched by means of an internal phrase expansion.

4.3.5 Harmonic Prolongation and Phrase Expansion

Where does the expansion end? It is at this point, indeed, where analytical roads diverge: on the one hand, one could consider the internal phrase expansion to continue all the way until m. 26; the basic length of the entire piece would thus comprise only two eight-measure phrases. In that case, the II chord would be prolonged (and thus the phrase expanded) from m. 11 through m. 26. On the other hand, the expansion could be seen as ending in m. 21; m. 22 would effectively end the previous phrase and simultaneously be the second measure of a new phrase. In this case, the II chord would be prolonged (and thus the phrase expanded) only between mm. 11 and 21. Chord prolongation is not a synonym for phrase expansion, but the two concepts are related. In this case the expansion of mm. 11-21 or 11-26 would be inferred from the length of the eight-measure prototype, mm. 1-8. The chord prolongation would be seen as a partial confirmation—in the voice-leading realm—of the structural expansion. According to this view, the piece would comprise three phrases, not two. In Example 4.2 a dotted line connecting the II^{7} of bar 12, the $II^{6/5}$ of bar 15, and the $II^{\#4/2}$ of bar 21 expresses the latter view; the tenor B in m. 21, a minor seventh up from $C^{\#}3$ in m. 20, is assumed to express the interval of a major second; thus B2 is shown in m. 21. A close examination of the example shows that B3 is present continuously throughout mm. 10-21. B3 in m. 21 is not just a registrally transferred bass note representing B2; at that point, the bass and tenor voices merge into one voice.

4.3.6. Middleground Harmonic Rhythm, Hypermeter, and Phrase Structure

Example 4.3.a. adds further elements in the quest for the phrase and metrical structures of the piece; at least, it helps to better define one of the two alternate interpretations. In the example each bar has been transformed into a quarter note, and these have been grouped into 2/4 measures, representing hypermeasures of two bars—notice the caption "odd" and "even" corresponding to mm. 1 and 2. By eliminating all suspensions, one can more clearly see the deep connection between the IV chord (m. 3) and the following II chord (m. 4): both chords express the same, pre-dominant, harmonic function.

4.3.7. Phrase Expansion: Three-Phrase Hypothesis

4.3.7.1. One-Measure Overlap

This level also allows one to see that the first phrase is exactly eight bars long—an apparent first indication of squareness. The phrase, however, contains the seed of a metrical asymmetry: the prolongation of II^7 crosses the midpoint of the phrase at m. 5. That seed for phrase-length and metrical distortion is amplified in the second phrase. Does the second phrase finish around m. 22, to be followed by a third phrase, or is it expanded to the end of the piece? Like Example 4.2, Example 4.3.a. also expresses the first of these two interpretations. In the graph, the expansion of the second phrase ends at m. 21, and m. 22 marks the end of the phrase. But because there is a phrase overlap, m. 22 also marks the beginning of the third and last phrase. In the graph, the overlap is indicated with a dotted bar line at the end of m. 22 in the second system and the repetition of the same m. 22 at the beginning of the third system. According to this

interpretation, the second phrase, mm. 9-22, would be thirteen bars long (the internal phrase expansion would comprise five bars), and the third phrase, mm. 22-28, would only be seven bars long (an actual shortening of one bar, resulting from the suppression of the two-measure harmonic interpolation of mm. 5-6, but compensated by the added bar containing the tonic chord).

The one-measure overlap would also entail a hypermetrical shift. Whereas m. 22 would be bar "8" of the second phrase (an even-numbered bar), once reinterpreted it would become bar "1" of the third phrase (an odd-numbered bar).

4.3.7.2. Two-Measure Overlap

One last possibility to consider is that the third phrase starts not in m. 22 but in m. 21. Melodically, m. 22 groups with m. 21, m. 24 pairs with m. 23, and so on. In this case, the last phrase would be, once again, eight measures long. Thus there would be no hypermetrical shift between the second and third phrases—they would both have hyperdownbeats on odd-numbered measures. But the overlap would comprise two bars; mm. 21-22 would be mm. "7-8" of the second phrase and, at the same time, mm. "1-2" of the third. This possibility is expressed in Example 4.3.b.

4.3.8. Details of the Phrase Expansion

Example 4.4.a shows the details of the internal expansion in mm. 11-21. The chord prolongation is realized through two pairs of voice exchanges. The first voice exchange is completed in m. 15, the second essentially in m. 19. The latter voice

exchange is delayed by a 4-3 appoggiatura in the alto, from m. 19 to the last beat of m. 21.

4.4. Motivic Linkages, Hidden Parallelisms, and Metrical Conflicts

4.4.1. Quintuplet Figure

One of the noticeable elements that supports the assumptions behind Example 4.3 is the reappearance of the quintuplet figure in m. 21. Working as a device of recollection, this sophisticated sub-motive (double-neighbor figure stressed with a thirty-second rest and a trill) probably triggers in the listener an association with the beginning of the prelude. Undoubtedly, the return to this idea reinforces the prelude's unity. Together with this association, however, the return of the quintuplet underlines a latent metrical conflict. Even to an unprejudiced listener, the organization of the prelude into two-bar hypermeasures is beyond question. But it is less clear if the strong hyperbeats fall in the first bar (all odd-numbered measures would thus be strong) or in the second bar (all even-numbered measures would be strong). Most of the factors that support the idea of odd-numbered measures as strong could be classified as structural: the harmonic content; the sequence in mm. 5-6; the return to the beginning in m. 9; and so on. Inversely, many superficial factors seem to imply otherwise: the absence of bass support on the downbeat of m. 1; the novelty of the quintuplet—fully harmonized—in m. 2; the arrival to a melodic and dynamic climax in m. 4; and others.[7] As just noted,

[7] For a comprehensive enumeration and discussion of accentual parameters and their relative weight, see the discussion of "Metrical Preference Rules" in Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 68-104.

quintuplet figuration first appears in the second bar of the prototype phrase (mm. 1-8), and so it does in the second bar of the second phrase (m.10). In other words, the quintuplet is associated with the initial moments of the phrase; its return in m. 21 would seem to imply that a third phrase has started. Measure 21 is also an odd-numbered bar; it would seem that the quintuplet has shifted. By analogy, perhaps the hyperdownbeat has shifted as well. As if one occurrence were not enough, the quintuplet happens again in mm. 23 and 25, thus confirming what seems to be a hypermetrical shift of the motive.

4.4.2. Phrase Overlap

But it is the harmonic structure that prevents the conditions for a literal return of the quintuplet. As shown in Examples 4.2 and 4.3 (a and b), the second phrase of the prelude cannot finish until m. 22. The harmony of the beginning (dominant) is only restated in m. 22. In harmonic terms, then, m. 22 is an overlap zone where the second phrase ends and the third phrase starts. The problem is that none of this matches the previous behavior of the quintuplet. Measure 21 seems too soon for it to appear, because the third phrase has not yet started (recall that, previously, the quintuplet appeared in the second measure of each phrase). One might decide that the quintuplet happens before the phrase starts, signaling its return, but without being part of it. Or that the quintuplet, together with the return of the initial dynamic (piano), actually starts the third phrase. After all, a new two-bar model (quintuplet bar, followed by a dotted-half-note bar) is established in mm. 21-22, and this new two-bar unit—virtually the

reverse of mm. 1-2—is reinforced through sequential repetition in mm. 23-24 and 25-26.

4.4.3. Dichotomy Between Melody and Harmony: Implications for Phrase Length

Or perhaps the seed of the dichotomy between melody, harmony, and phrase length was planted early in the piece, by setting metrical contradictions between the musical surface on the one hand and the harmony on the other. As mentioned earlier, the initial eight-measure phrase, in harmonic terms, ends in m. 8; but the melodic line in that same phrase concludes only when $G^{\#}5$, a suspension, resolves to $F^{\#}5$. The melody of the initial phrase is, then, nine measures long; in m. 9 the end of the first phrase and the beginning of the second overlap. A secondary melodic fragment—$C^{\#}$-B-$A^{\#}$—starts in m. 8 and continues into m. 9. Slightly out of phase with the top voice, this alto line dims further the boundaries between the first and second phrases. Interestingly, and unlike the melody (or melodies), in m. 9 the harmony cannot be considered to express an overlap. This is because the harmony of mm. 8 and 9 is the same.

A similar situation is present in mm. 21-22: the melody does not cadence until m. 22, but the harmony starts the new phrase in the same bar. One could conclude that the ending of the second phrase overlaps with the beginning of the third at m. 21, m. 22, or both. Thus, as the third and last phrase starts, the fracture between the quintuplet, a powerful surface element, and the harmonic structure creates a corresponding fracture in the established grammar of the piece—particularly its grouping and hypermetrical organization.

Whether the last phrase starts at m. 21 or at m. 22, it features a steady chromatic descent in dotted half notes in the bass that lays the foundation for the two-bar sequence discussed above: the sequence in the bass starts at m. 22; that in the melody starts at m. 21. The chromatic descent is one more element effectively signaling the arrival at the conclusion of the piece and the separate identity of the third phrase. As shown in Examples 4.4.b. and 4.4.c., this melodic fragment had originally been present in the alto and tenor registers, in mm. 1 and 9 respectively. At those points, however, the chromatic descent was less prominent; it was partly masked by its placement in inner voices and by its irregular rhythmic configuration.

In addition to its whimsical rhythmic design, the first appearance of this chromatic material was also out of phase with the phrase length. Going from mm. 1 through 10 (from B4 a minor sixth down to D$^{\#}$4), the chromatic segment prolonged the descent an entire bar and a half further than the eight-measure span, stepping beyond the boundaries of the first phrase itself. As this happened, the descending line had to reposition itself as the tenor voice in mm. 9-10. (Since B4 also returns in m. 9, at this point the inner voices may even resemble the beginning of an infinite canon.)

The third phrase, in a way, finally takes care of these irregularities. The wandering, disorganized journey of the chromatic line, interrupted with harmonic interpolations in the first and second phrases and a relatively long voice-exchange in the second phrase, is shown in Example 4.4.b. The example allows one to see that the harmonic interpolations also involve a registral transfer one octave down from m. 4 to m. 5, and a subsequent recovery of the initial register in m. 6. As shown immediately below in 4.4.c., the line becomes straightforward when B3-E$^{\#}$3 is heard in mm. 21-26.

The chromatic descent is at that point halted for harmonic reasons (to return to the dominant in m. 27), and the phrase reaches a logical conclusion with an authentic cadence. A comparison between Examples 4.4.b. and 4.4.c. also allows one to see that there is a significant change in the spelling of one of the tones in the chromatic line; in mm. 4-5 the line goes from $G^{\#}$ to F^{x}, whereas in m. 24 the line goes from $G^{\#}$ to G. The difference is important. In m. 5, F^{x} appears tonicizing $G^{\#}$, whereas in m. 24 G appears as a descending passing tone towards $F^{\#}$. The latter is, evidently, a more direct tonal motion: unlike mm. 5-6—a segment that I have called a harmonic digression—G, a mere chromatic passing tone, does not slow down the last phrase. In the third phrase the change in function from F^{x} to G, expressed by the new spelling, matches the synchronization between the chromatic line and the phrase itself, all of which reinforces the identity and boundaries of the last phrase.

4.4.4. Metrical Conflicts

The metrical shift of the quintuplet signals (and forces) a retrospective reversal of the two-bar hypermeter. In Example 4.3.a., as discussed earlier, m. 22 is repeated to express the overlap, so that all three phrases start on a hyperdownbeat. As the ending of the second phrase, m. 22 is an even-numbered—weak—hyperbeat ("8"); as the beginning of the third phrase, the same measure becomes odd-numbered—strong—"1".[8] The sequential repetition of the quintuplet in mm. 21, 23, and 25 is an accentual

[8] Metrical conflict between bass and melody is discussed in Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*; Harald Krebs, "Extensions of the Concepts of Metrical Consonance and Dissonance"; Roger Kamien, "Conflicting Metrical Patterns in Accompaniment and Melody in Works by Mozart and Beethoven: A Preliminary Study";

element that suddenly reinforces the notion that odd-numbered measures are strong. In the last section of the piece—mm. 21 through 26—surface and structural accentual cues are finally in agreement with each other.

Part of the reason why Scriabin can get away with such a convoluted structural plot is because m. 22 has, on the one hand, the same function (and harmony) as m. 8, but also the function (and the approximate harmonic content) of m. 1 or m. 9. The one-measure overlap works because of the previous phrase expansion (which debilitates the sense of phrase regularity) and because m. 22 can easily be accepted as the correct harmonic conclusion of the previous phrase segment and the—already psychologically established—beginning of the new one. After all, this is precisely what happens in mm. 8-9; the same dominant harmony concludes the first phrase and supports the beginning of a new one.

4.5. An Alternate Formal Interpretation: Parallel-Period Prototype

Although plausible, the idea that the piece has three phrases is not the only possible interpretation of its structure (putting aside for a moment the problem of pinpointing exactly where the third phrase begins). Example 4.5 explores the alternate possibility of hearing only two phrases, where the second features a large prolongation of the II chord from m. 12 through m. 26, and a corresponding phrase expansion. According to the eight-measure model (given in the antecedent, mm. 1-8), the

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William Rothstein, "Beethoven with and without *Kunstgepräng'*: Metrical Ambiguity Reconsidered"; and Frank Samarotto, "Strange Dimensions: Regularity and Irregularity in Deep Levels of Rhythmic Reduction," among others.

supertonic harmony is expected to be prolonged for exactly four bars, the last bar featuring a chromatic inflection towards V. Example 4.5 shows the correspondence between the expansion and the underlying eight-measure prototype. According to the example, bar "4" of the prototype would match bar 12, bar "5" of the prototype would thus be expanded from m. 13 through m. 25, bar 26 would correspond to bar "6," and mm. 27-28 would finally correspond to bars "7" and "8" of the prototype.

The bass register seems to support the notion that the piece consists of only two phrases, the second with a long expansion. As seen in Example 4.5, the only tone that emerges and twice interrupts the flow of the passing harmonies in the second phrase, mm. 9-28, is $C^{\#}3$, which is of course the fundamental of the II chord and serves to reaffirm that harmony. In the second of these cases, and as discussed above, $C^{\#}3$ and the subsequent B3 of mm. 20-21 form the melodic interval of a seventh, in this context the expression of a descending second. According to the idea that there are only two phrases in the prelude, each pair of occurrences of $C^{\#}3$ would correspond one to each phrase.

4.6. Voice-Leading Background

One last graph, Example 4.6, serves to illustrate the auxiliary cadence with which the piece starts, and the prominent role of the subdominant / supertonic function within the piece. The whole prelude (not just the first phrase) is understood as an auxiliary cadence. In the graph, the importance of IV as a secondary harmonic goal is underlined with half notes.

The "wandering" effect of the music is possibly a direct consequence of the lack of any stabilizing tonic in the bass. The arrival to the dominant in m. 27 is the only instance of a low $F^{\#}$ ($F^{\#}2$), resolving in m. 28 to a low B (B1). Instead, II (a different flavor of the subdominant) is the most pervasive harmony of the piece, and the only one that repeatedly appears in the bass register until the final cadence.

4.7. Conclusions

In Op. 22, No. 3, Scriabin manages to build a game of contradictions between the deep structural patterns and the motion of the musical surface. On the one hand, the expansion of the II chord suggests the existence of a single phrase from mm. 9-28. On the other hand, the return of the quintuplet figure, together with the uninterrupted chromatic descending segment B-$E^{\#}$, are felt as a separate unit, the beginning of a third phrase, and suggest therefore a kind of recapitulation. In addition to this conflict, melody and harmony feature local discrepancies that blur the boundaries of each of the phrases involved. How many phrases does this piece have? Where do they really start and end? What is the true shape of the prototype? Perhaps more important than determining the ultimate answer to these questions is to understand that the mix of both kinds of formal devices—the real and the apparent, the deep and the superficial—is one of the most important ways in which Scriabin creates the often-described sense of ambiguity in his music.

Op. 22, No. 3 is one of the preludes in which Scriabin's style is said to resemble that of Chopin's. The pianistic design, consisting of a top voice accompanied by sustained chords in the left, is typical of those pieces in which Chopin intended to suggest an operatic aria, with a soprano accompanied by an orchestra. (The clearest

example of this suggestion is in the slower sections of Chopin's Nocturnes, but it can also be found in the slow movement of Chopin's Sonata in B Minor, for instance.[9]) As in those pieces by Chopin, in Scriabin's Op. 22, No. 3 the registral and rhythmic freedom in the top line—seemingly an improvisation—at times suggests a soprano singing an intimate aria or art song. The double-neighbor quintuplet—complete with a thirty-second rest and a trill, appearing and reappearing at strategic moments of the prelude—reinforces the vocal qualities of the melody. Other parameters, such as the prevailing dynamics, the non-tonic opening, and the long suspensions, all contribute to the languid atmosphere. In all, it would perhaps not be too much of an imaginative stretch to imagine a set of—unwritten—yearning lyrics for this "song."

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[9] See Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 344-348.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1. Summary

All three preludes analyzed in this paper share some common traits. Scriabin's particular combination of compositional techniques defines a personal style, albeit within the conventions of post-Romantic music. The most important of those traits are:

- Formal and metrical manipulations: existence of several non-coincident layers of structure, paired with a sophisticated technique of phrase rhythm and further metrical manipulations;
- Refined harmonic language, including the use of non-standard resolutions of half-diminished seventh and augmented sixth chords; flexibility of register, including licenses in the resolution of horizontal and vertical dissonances;
- In each piece, unifying features among levels of structure, including hidden parallelisms and motivic linkages;
- Refined pianistic design;
- Heavy local rubato (implied in the design), built-in rubato, and structural rubato;
- Metaphorical-poetic substrata.

5.2. Formal and Metrical Conflicts

Scriabin superimposes contradictory formal plans in all three preludes analyzed in this dissertation. In Op. 22, No.1, for instance, the basic contrapuntal structure does not match or is out of phase with the phrase structure. In an analogous manner, in Op.

11, No. 2 and Op. 22, No. 3 an established eight- or sixteen-measure prototype presented at the beginning of the piece is later stretched and/or contracted through phrase expansions and contractions. In Op. 11, No. 2, the phrase expansion occurs in the fourth—and last—"sixteen-measure" period (mm. 49-68); in Op. 22, No. 1, the expansion occurs in the second sentence (mm. 17-28); and in Op. 22, No. 3, the expansion occurs in the second half of the piece (mm. 12-26). These large-scale formal conflicts are summarized in Examples 5.1.a, 5.1.b, and 5.1.c.

In all three preludes, expansions and contractions happen in the second half—or towards the end—of the piece. This is logical; modifications of the phrase structure are more effective if they happen against a defined expectation, which must be created first. In this, the three preludes feature phrase expansions in the manner of Chopin, as discussed by Charles Burkhart in "Chopin's Concluding Expansions."[10] These phrase-length modifications are accompanied with small-scale formal conflicts; both small- and large-scale formal ambiguities are mirrored by metrical and hypermetrical uncertainty; the listener has to make forward or retrospective adjustments. Small- and medium-scale formal conflicts are shown in Examples 2.5, 2.7.a, 2.7.b., 2.7.c., 2.7.d. 3.3.b., 3.4, 4.3.a. and 4.3.b. Ambiguities concerning meter and hypermeter are shown in Examples 2.8, 2.9.a., 2.9.b., 3.5, 3.8, 4.3.a., and 4.3.b. Because they are deliberate and tasteful, such multiplicity of available interpretations enhances the aesthetic value of each of the pieces.

[10] Charles Burkhart, "Chopin's Concluding Expansions."

5.3. Harmonic Language, Non-Standard Resolutions, Flexibility of Register

5.3.1. Implied Voicings or Resolutions

Logically inscribed within the tonal vocabulary of nineteenth-century post-Romantic music, Scriabin's harmony manages to stretch such conventions without abandoning the tonal language. For instance, in Op. 11, No. 2, because of implied octave transfers, melodic ninths and sevenths need to be reinterpreted as seconds, as shown in Example 2.2.a. At times, the disappearance of particular registral regions or the sudden interruption of linear patterns frequently requires the inference of implied tones or harmonies. Implied tones are shown in Examples 2.1 (mm. 4, 8, 15, 17, 20, 21, 24, 32, 39, 43, 44, 49, 52, 56, 63, and 67), 3.1 (mm. 3, 7, 13), and 4.1 (m. 25), among the most prominent.

5.3.2. The Phrygian Mode in Op. 22, No. 1

Op. 22, No. 1 stands out as one of the pieces of the common-era repertoire that is most undoubtedly written in Phrygian mode. In *Romantic Music: Sound and Syntax*, Leonard G. Ratner enumerates examples of Romantic pieces written in the Phrygian mode; none is as truly Phrygian as Scriabin's Op. 22, No. 1.[11] Because it ends with a cadence in the Phrygian mode—and, therefore, the ending is perceived as incomplete from the perspective of major-minor tonality—the final cadence of Op. 22, No. 1 would probably fit as one of Ratner's "partial definition/partial dispersal" type of cadences.[12]

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[11] Leonard Ratner, *Romantic Music: Sound and Syntax* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 124.

[12] Ibid., 213-214.

5.3.3. Expansions of the Chordal Vocabulary

Another way in which Scriabin escapes traditional tonality is by expanding the chordal vocabulary by the inclusion of ninths and elevenths; the corresponding resolutions of these chordal extensions are sometimes greatly delayed. The two chords most favored by Scriabin are the half-diminished seventh and augmented sixth chords (French and German). Since they are used sparingly, the appearance of these chords usually points to important structural articulations. The resolutions, positions, and spellings of these and other dissonant chords used by Scriabin are often non-standard. Despite the moderate originality of these harmonic choices, their use by Scriabin should be seen as a rather natural application of post-Romantic (especially Wagnerian) contrapuntal voice leading. Richard Bass and Daniel Harrison have described some of these post-Romantic extensions.[13]

5.4. Unifying Features: the Basic Idea

The Schenkerian reductions provided for each prelude showed that these three preludes exhibit diverse degrees of motivic and structural coherence. The pervasiveness of the basic idea is most evident in Op. 22, No. 1. In this sense, this is the strongest prelude of the three; see Example 3.6. Op. 11, No. 2 also features connections between different structural levels, expressed through motivic linkages and hidden parallelisms; see Examples 2.10.a. and 2.10.b. In Op. 22, No. 3, the "hidden" coherence is partly

[13] See Aldwell and Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 60; Richard Bass, "Half-Diminished Functions and Transformations in Late Romantic Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 23/1 (Spring 2001); Daniel Harrison, "Supplement to the Theory of Augmented Sixth Chords," *Music Theory Spectrum* 17/1 (1995): 170.

achieved by the recurring presence of the chromatic segment B4-D#4 (mm. 1-10), its shorter version, B4-E4 (mm. 9-15), and its most straightforwardly presented version, B3-E#3 (mm. 21-26). These can all be seen in Examples 4.4.b. and 4.4.c. In Chapter Four I referred to each new appearance of this chromatic fragment as resembling the successive entrances of a contrapuntal subject. It is precisely in the last entrance that the uninterrupted linear motion—now in the bass—helps to give an indication that the piece is approaching its end.

Scriabin's varied ways of bringing coherence into each of these three preludes indicate a refined conception of common-practice tonality. As pointed out in previous chapters, many musicians—speaking from their intuition—have often made this same judgment about Scriabin. As early as 1918 he was being compared to Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, and other recognized masters.[14] Perhaps those musicians making the comparisons could instinctively feel, among other things, the inner, multi-level motivic coherence in Scriabin's music.

5.5. Pianistic Design

The three preludes analyzed in this dissertation are not virtuoso pieces. Rather, they were probably conceived—and published—with the amateur pianist in mind. They are, in that sense, different from other works in which Scriabin wanted to prove himself as a serious composer—his symphonies, for instance. Nevertheless, in their intermediate pianistic difficulty, the preludes exhibit an expressive and challenging

[14] Arthur Eaglefield Hull, *A Great Russian Tone-Poet: Scriabin* (New York: Dutton, 1918; reprint ed. New York: AMS Press, 1970), 268.

design. The most unusual of the three preludes is Op. 22, No. 1, where the left hand must traverse an extended arpeggio crossing over the right hand, while the right hand only plays an extremely simple melodic line. In all three pieces, however, Scriabin manages to explore different regions of the piano, try out different contrapuntal and chordal configurations, and organize the harmonies according to different vertical spacings. The pianistic design is considered successful because the variety of resources is consistent for each piece and never obscures the balance between the different layers of the texture.

5.6. Rubato

5.6.1. Types of Rubato

A distinction must be made here between three types of rubato. I call *local rubato* the one that is suggested by, for instance, the melodic or dynamic shape of a phrase; by *built-in rubato* I mean the kind of rhythmic figuration that captures instrumental or vocal improvisation or that features written-out accelerando or written-out rallentando.[15] There is a third kind, which I call *structural rubato*, that involves larger sections of music. All three types are present in the three preludes considered.

5.6.2. Local and Written-Out Rubato

Merely by inclusion within the Post-Romantic repertoire, all three preludes need to be played with a sense of rubato. Scriabin is often explicit about this in his preludes;

[15] For built-in rubato see Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 80-87.

even when he is not, the piece could justifiably be played with some rubato. Aside from this generalization, there are also specific reasons why these three pieces ask for flexibility of tempo. On the one hand, much as in some of Chopin's music, the melodic lines contain a rhythmic variety that speaks of some kind of written-out vocal improvisation. This can be seen especially in Op. 22, No. 3, which, for instance, contains a distinctive "coloratura" idea: a thirty-second quintuplet featuring a double-neighbor motive early on in the piece. Common musical sense dictates that the rhythm within this motive need not be interpreted strictly as notated or every time in the same way. Written-out rubato, by definition, invites a freer interpretation than any other kind of rhythmic figuration. Speaking about the dotted triplet in the second measure of Scriabin's Op. 11, No. 4, Mauchley points out that "...[the dotted figuration on a triplet is] a 'written-out rubato, a light hesitation over the last of the three triplets... ."[16] He later adds that "...[t]he dotted rhythmic figure occurs quite often in the early preludes. It may appear as part of a triplet...a quadruplet... or a quintuplet (Op. 22, No. 3)... ."[17] For similar reasons, and although the melody of the right hand is strikingly simple, in Op. 22, No. 1 the arpeggios in the left hand are not written in a way that would favor a performance in strict tempo. On the other hand, in Op. 11, No. 2, the composer actually indicated the tempo fluctuations in the score, with frequent "rit. - a tempo" instructions. In this prelude there are also instances where a *rallentando* may be written out, as in mm. 64-65.

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[16] Mauchley, "Preludes for Solo Piano," 13.

[17] Ibid., 22-23.

5.6.3. Structural Rubato

I believe that a sensitive performer of these preludes would also have to consider the notion of structural rubato, where entire sections, because of their different design, ask for a different tempo, regardless of the absence of any explicit changes of tempo in the score. One instance is the contrasting section of Op. 11, No. 2, mm. 33-48, where the sudden transfer of the entire texture towards a higher register seems to encourage an acceleration of the tempo. Another occurs in Op. 22, No. 3, where the extreme expansion (and retardation) of the consequent in mm. 11-21 is followed by an unrelenting chromatic descent in the bass before the final cadence; it is likely that mm. 22-25 should try to compensate for the great delay incurred until that point with a subtle *accelerando*. Similarly, in Op. 22, No. 1, mm. 29-32 would probably need to be accelerated to compensate for the delay seemingly incurred in mm. 17-28. This is precisely what Scriabin does in his piano roll recording of this piece from 1910.[18]

Historical recordings, such as those by Alexander Scriabin and his close circle—Alexander Goldenweiser (1875-1961), Heinrich Neuhaus (1888-1964), Samuel Feinberg (1890-1962), and Vladimir Sofronitsky (1901-1960)—offer eloquent insight into the "Scriabinian" approach to all three kinds of rubato. In Op. 11, No. 2, for instance, Neuhaus speeds up subtly in the middle section. Their recordings provide an invaluable, authentic source of information about this performance tradition, for these pianists related to Scriabin by a shared education and a strong aesthetic affinity. The

[18] *Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) and the Scriabinians: Preludes, Etudes, Mazurkas, Poems;* documents from the archives of Russia Radio selected by Julia Makayeva (France: Harmonia Mundi, 1992), RUS 788032, track 4.

recordings give evidence of a common approach to the question of rubato in Scriabin's music.[19]

5.7. Metaphorical-Poetic Substrata

5.7.1. Topics

It is likely that many of the stylistic traits described above are motivated by the metaphorical substrata of Scriabin's early music, a characteristic pointed out in some of the secondary literature. Martin Cooper addresses the analogies between Scriabin's music and Russian Symbolism at length[20]; his study can be seen as part of the intensive—and ongoing—discussion of the poetic substrata of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music.

During the nineteenth century, musical writers often ascribed poetic or visual analogies to a musical work. In the introductory sections of *Romantic Music: Sound and Syntax*, Leonard Ratner enumerates some comments by illustrious musicians on the connections between music, painting, and literature. Among others, he cites published comments by Weber on Spohr:

> "The mood of the musical introduction (D minor, strings with four horns, bassoon and timpani) is abrupt—stormy—lamenting—vehemently accented..."

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[19] Ibid., tracks 9-39.

[20] See Cooper, "Skryabin and the Russian Renaissance."

and Berlioz on Chopin:

> "...the last note drops like a pearl into a golden vase...after having followed the harmonious diminution of the half-tints of an evening's twilight, one remains motionless in the obscurity, the eye fixed upon the point of the horizon where the light is about to disappear... ."[21]

Ratner is also not afraid to intersperse metaphorical interpretations in the midst of purely technical discussions. Commenting on the phrase rhythm in a section from Schubert's Quintet in C Major (1828), he writes that

> "...the accompaniment suggests the plucking of a mandolin, of the sort that supported the singer of popular songs in the Viennese wine houses. What might have been a popular song, perhaps a berceuse or possibly a slow barcarolle, is stretched to enormous lengths..."[22]

Ratner also finds a song-like character to Chopin's Prelude in E Minor, Op. 28, No. 4:

> "...the chromatically descending bass eventually obscures the symmetry of the upper line; it allows the melody to spin out in slow iambic meter. The steady repetitions of this slowly moving figure mask its potentially songlike character..."[23]

Carl Schachter, the most eminent Schenkerian alive, also finds it possible to read a programmatic content in this prelude:

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[21] Leonard Ratner, *Romantic Music: Sound and Syntax* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 7-8.

[22] Ibid., 172.

[23] Ibid., 178.

> "...For many reasons, I find it difficult to contemplate this song for the keyboard without attributing to it a programmatic character—I hear it as a vision of death, perhaps the imagination of one's own death.... Needless to say, I don't require anybody—not even my students—to believe in this program, but I find that many people do seem to have an emotional reaction to the piece that would be compatible with its being strongly tinged with grief, mourning, and the thought of death..."[24]

Broadly speaking, the analogies between music, poetry, and painting can be traced to an overall preoccupation with "expression"; in *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*, a previous monograph, Ratner points out that such a preoccupation was already constant in the eighteenth century. Expression involved a

> "...wide range of concepts and procedures, from frank pictorialism to subtle evocation of mood...Apart from individual interpretations, 18th-century preoccupation with expression indicates the strong presence projected by this aspect of the musical art. Expression, however defined or regarded, was an essential quality; without it no piece was fit to be heard...Composers' own comments tell of their concern with expression; even more important is the weight of evidence in their music as it ranges from pictorial imagery to metaphor and affective states... ."[25]

Surveying these hidden meanings encapsulated in conventional musical gestures, Ratner reconstructs an essential repertoire of stylistic references that he calls "topics." Each topic creates musical allusion by strongly referring to coded style types. A

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[24] Carl Schachter, "The Triad As Place And Action," *Music Theory Spectrum* 17/2 (1995): 151-2; reprinted in Carl Schachter, *Unfoldings*, ed. Joseph Straus (New York: Oxford University Press), 163, 165.

[25] Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 1.

specific topic may correspond to a specific affect, class, or social occasion. Genre pieces (such as dances, hymns, French overtures) often manifest themselves as a "topic type," whereas complex forms—a sonata, a symphony—contain a multiplicity of mixed topics. Such cases—particular figures and progressions representing various topics within a larger piece—represent cases of "topic styles."[26]

5.7.2. Hermeneutic Interpretation as a "Leap of Faith"

In *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*, Robert S. Hatten points out that an hermeneutic interpretation must find potential meanings "...on the basis of any available evidence—from any relevant source, and at any level or organization... ."[27] He calls these hypotheses or assumptions "leaps of faith." The listener making the assumptions must, however, be "stylistically competent"; that is, the listener's musical and cultural intuitions must match the expressive conventions of the style. Precisely this aspect—the historical, contextual distance between the nineteenth-century composer and the modern listener—is what makes hermeneutic interpretations challenging, inherently ambiguous, and potentially vulnerable.

Edward T. Cone's "Beethoven's Orpheus—or Jander's?," his response to an article by Owen Jander discussing the alleged programmatic implications of the Andante of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, eloquently expresses how things can

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[26] Foreword to Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), x.

[27] Ibid., 2.

go wrong when one tries to ascribe programmatic content—in a way, the most ambitious hermeneutic interpretation possible—to a given piece of music.[28] Cone is quick to point out that many musical aspects, such as form, can seldom automatically mirror a dramatic narrative; regardless of any supposed extra-musical content, the fact is that music has its own discursive rules. In Cone's words: "...any attempt to impose a program without a constant reference to the musical form is futile." The discussion between Cone and Jander, spanning ten years, continues with a second article by Jander in which he partly retracts his earlier interpretation and attempts to reconcile both views—musical and extra-musical—by better drawing the boundaries between the two domains of the analysis. To be sure, whereas the analogies between the movement and the Orpheus myth could still be perceived as highly significant (including the pathos of the piece, the character of the themes, and so on), the music can withstand a formal analysis totally devoid of any extra-musical content.[29]

No matter the controversy, and the inherent risks, hermeneutic interpretation is an aesthetic and analytic necessity. Fortunately, bridging the distance between music and meaning are those works that have words, especially opera. Wye Jamison Allanbrook's *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro & Don Giovanni* is, like Ratner's, a systematic study that shows many of Ratner's topics in action—Allanbrook calls them *topoi*, or topics for formal discourse.[30] As shown by Allanbrook, the

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[28] Owen Jander, "Beethoven's 'Orpheus in Hades': The *Andante con moto* of the Fourth Piano Concerto," *19th-Century Music* 8/3 (Spring 1985): 195-211; Edward T. Cone, "Beethoven's Orpheus—or Jander's?," *19th-Century Music* 8/3 (spring 1985): 283-286.

[29] Owen Jander, "Orpheus Revisited: A Ten-Year Retrospect on the Andante con moto of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto," *19th-Century Music* 19 (Summer 1995): 31-49.

collection of topoi consisted of an actual expressive vocabulary that the composer shared with the audience. Wide portions of this topical vocabulary are lost to the modern listener; being in possession of the topoi would, according to Allanbrook, give the analyst an instant, unequivocal understanding of any given passage of music.[31]

But the Scriabin preludes studied here do not have words, and therefore the interpretation offered cannot aspire to give a single, ultimate interpretation as to their hermeneutic meaning. Paraphrasing Jander, the topic styles that I find in Scriabin's Op. 11, No. 2 and Op. 22, Nos. 1 & 3 are to a great extent speculative; conversely, the metaphorical imagery is in no way meant to replace the analysis *per se*. Rather than being opposed to objective musical characteristics, the metaphorical interpretations offered here spring from the analysis.

5.7.3. Hatten's Metaphor as Opposition of Genres; Topic Types and Topic Styles in Scriabin's Piano Preludes

Hatten's *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* is concerned about the interaction of topics in Beethoven's large-scale forms. In general, he finds metaphor—sometimes irony—in the dialectic opposition between stylistic topics within a movement. In the three preludes by Scriabin analyzed here the dialectic opposition would only exist between the medium itself—a piece of absolute music for the piano, with no explicit meaning ascribed—and the alternate

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[30] Wye Jamison Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro & Don Giovanni* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 2.

[31] Ibid., 3

genres alluded to or subtly suggested. Building on the notion of metaphorical substrata, I propose that each of these three preludes by Scriabin correlates to specific nineteenth-century topic styles: those of a danced waltz (Op. 11, No. 2), a romantic serenade (Op. 22, No. 1), and an art song (Op. 22, No. 3). Several authors have pointed out programmatic links in some of the Preludes, Op. 11 but, for the most part, these references between form and meaning in Scriabin have not been sufficiently explained. Mauchley, for instance, refers to the preludes as "travel postcards of music," mostly descriptions of the composer's impressions of places he visited.[32] Unfortunately, Mauchley fails to show how to make the connection between the music and the sites that are supposedly described. Authors such as Bowers, Hull, and Cooper have referred to these meanings in slightly more definite—but still not precise enough—ways. Speaking about Op. 16, No. 3, Hull compares it to a "... moonlight scene...,"[33] while Bowers imagines the same prelude as representing the atmosphere of "... Scriabin standing in a cathedral...."[34] Whereas musical intuition is valid, artistically speaking, some evidence is necessary if one is to justify any metaphorical allusion. Such evidence is ultimately provided in the form of what Hatten calls the "token of a stylistic type." A token is a structure or a process—an "entity," in Hatten's words—that is manifested in a

[32] Mauchley, "Preludes for Solo Piano," 9.

[33] Hull, *A Great Russian Tone-Poet*, 284.

[34] Bowers, *Scriabin*, 40, 215.

musical work.[35] The token can be described in purely musical terms and then interpreted as belonging to a given topic style or type.

5.7.4. Topic Types and Styles in Scriabin's Op. 11, No. 2, and Op. 22, Nos. 1 & 3

5.7.4.1. Op. 11, No. 2

In Chapter Two I described Op. 11, No. 2, as a kind of "valse triste." The constant rhythmic activity in the left hand and the strict phrase periodicity (except at the end) reinforce its allusions to the dance. Extending Charles Rosen's "vocal duet" idea, which he applies to the slow movement of Chopin's B-minor Sonata,[36] I hypothesized that the two contrapuntal strands of the contrasting section may represent two dance partners. The elaboration—abstraction—of dance material in Op. 11, No. 2 can be understood according to the definition that Ratner gives for speculative treatments of dance material: "...the typical dance rhythms are employed, but the length of the sections does not conform to the choreographic patterns of symmetry."[37] (See the discussion in sections in 2.5.1. through 2.5.9. of this dissertation.) Pieces created in this fashion are not intended to be danced; they are simply meant to create the recollection of the dance and the character, social and emotional, that is conventionally associated with it. The exact extent or meaning of the correlation between medium and

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[35] Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*, 17.

[36] Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 348-349.

[37] Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*, 18.

allusion is, however, a different matter. Indeed, from the perspective of the performer or listener this can become a relatively complex problem of semiotic interpretation.

5.7.4.2. Op. 22, No. 1

This dissertation has also pointed out the seeming traits of a Spanish guitar serenade in Op. 22, No. 1. This prelude features what is probably the most strongly suggestive topic style of the three. The most important traits defining the "serenade" are: the plaintive—or, in this context, longing—Phrygian mode; the singing style; the poetic meter, partly recalling a Spanish *zarabanda* (stronger accent on the second beat of the measure); the repetition of ideas, an equivalent to the rhetoric procedure known as *epistrophe;* and the dotted figures featuring appoggiaturas and rearticulated suspensions in the "vocal" line—in this case the repeated notes would create an equivalent to the rhetorical procedure known as *anaphora*. Ratner writes:

> "...references to the *singing style* are found in Koch, 1802, and Daube, 1797. The term indicates music in a lyric vein, with a moderate tempo and a melodic line featuring relatively slow note values and a rather narrow range. Presumably any of the familiar dance rhythms could be used... ."[38]

5.7.4.3. Op. 22, No. 3

Op. 22, No. 3 has probably the weakest—or most removed—topic style of the three preludes. Like Op. 11, No. 2, it also has the quality of a waltz, although, perhaps because of the less abrupt registral configuration of the outer voices, plus the less

[38] Ibid., 19

marked rhythmic character of the accompaniment, it is less of a danced waltz and more of a hummed, dreamy song. The wide ambitus of the melody conflicts with a literal-minded interpretation of the melody as "vocal." The revealing token, however—partly obscured by the arpeggios in the right hand, which are typical of instrumental music—is the dotted quintuplet feature, so strongly reminiscent of a solo vocal line.

5.7.5. Phrase Structure, Metaphor, and Rubato

The irregularities of phrase length and hypermeter in each prelude could be understood as representing the natural inflections characteristic of narrative or poetic flow. In general terms, formal acceleration creates anxiety, while retardation creates expectation. Since the actual literary substratum of the music—the hidden story, so to speak—is never made explicit, these psychological fluctuations remain rationally unexplained, much as in a Symbolist or Surrealist poem.

Rubato also has to do with acceleration and retardation. It is difficult, however, to say if the notion of rubato is implied by the metaphorical substrata or if the rubato, mandated by music *per se* (by the melodic contour, dynamic elements, rhythmic design, and so on), is what helps to shape and define the allusion inherent to each piece. The presence of rubato and metaphor is confirmed mutually; this correlation between the psychological pace and the metaphorical content—however difficult it may be to ascertain the interpretive implications of this pairing—should probably not be ignored by the conscientious performer or the inquisitive listener.

Early on, biographies of Scriabin and analyses of his music abundantly established that Scriabin's later style looked for ways to create a "fusion of the arts," a

kind of synesthetic expression of the human experience. This notion can be found in most of the secondary literature, as early as Boris de Scholezer's book on Scriabin, portions of which were written when the composer was still alive.[39] In fact, the connection between synesthesia and Scriabin is still one of the favorite topics of scholarship on the composer. After all, and unlike the generic titles that he chose for his early music (Preludes, Etudes, and Mazurkas, for instance), Scriabin chose instead powerfully descriptive titles for some of his most famous later pieces: "Prometheus," "Mysterium," "Towards the Flame," "White Mass," and "Black Mass," among others. Moreover, some of these later works also had implicit or explicit literary content. It is probable that this goal to embed music with "meanings" translatable to other senses (such as colors or ideas) could be traced back to the tenuous, less explicit, but conspicuous presence of poetic metaphor in Scriabin's early style.

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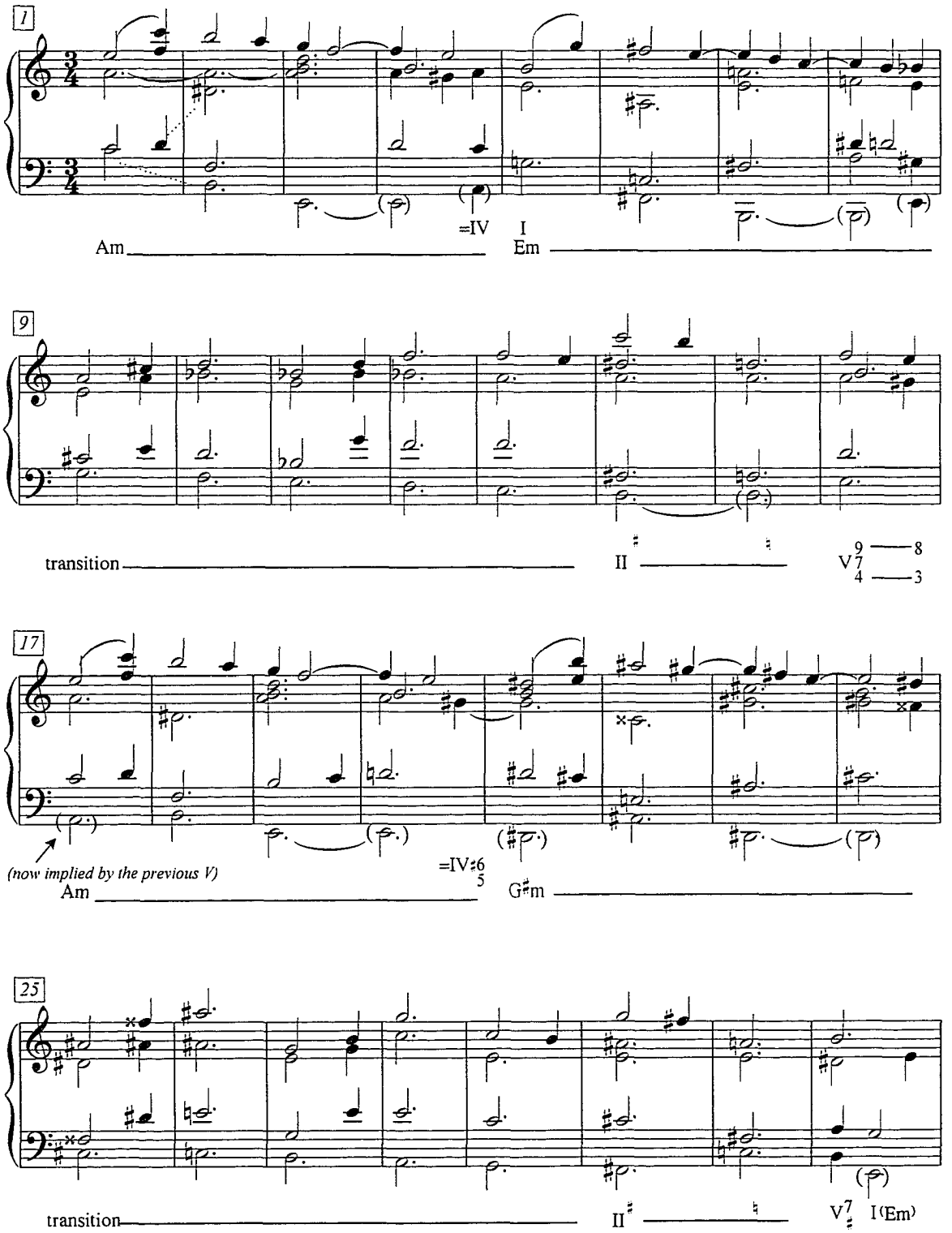
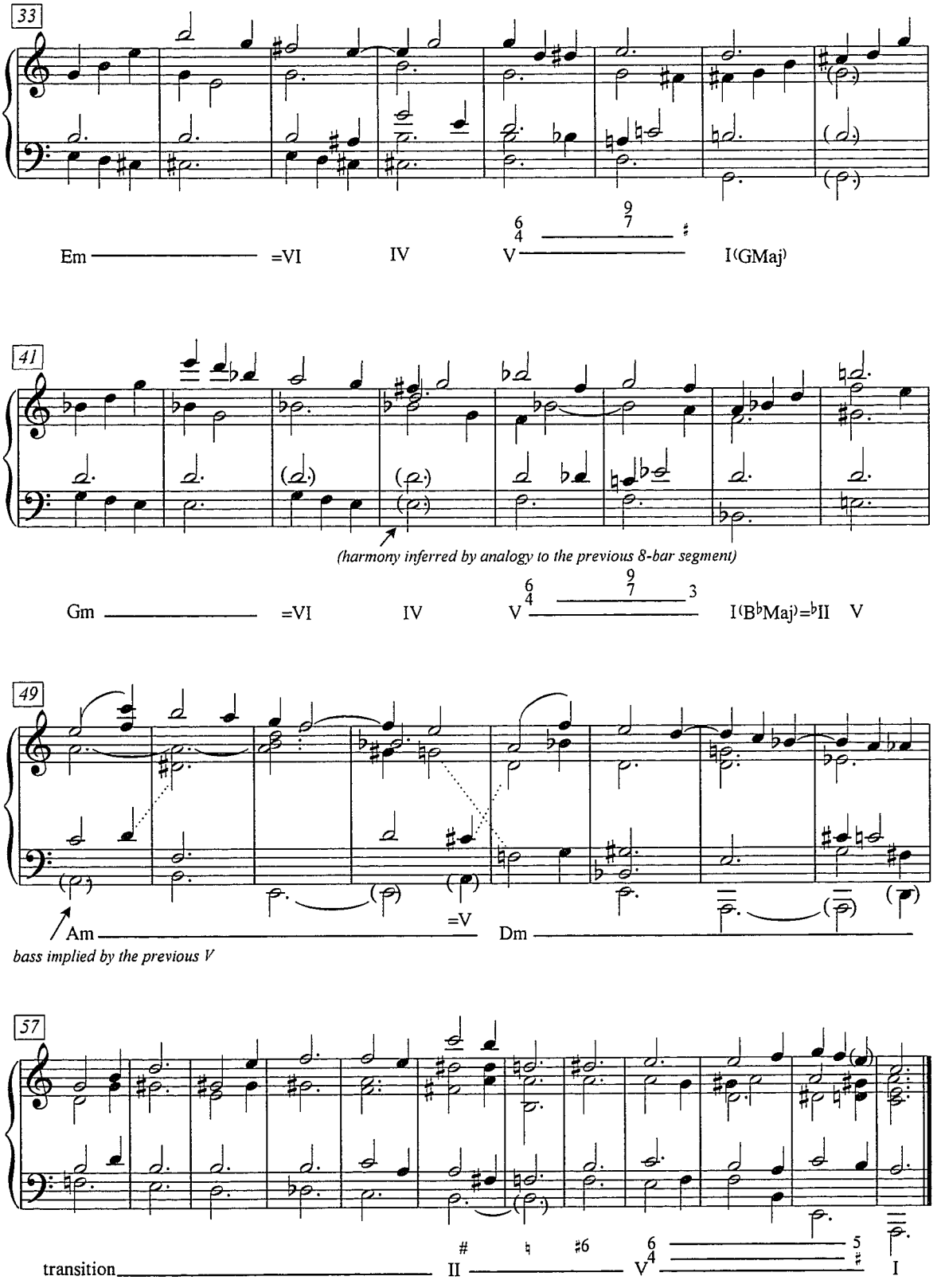
[39] Boris De Scholezer, *Scriabin, Artist and Mystic*.

Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.1
Foreground

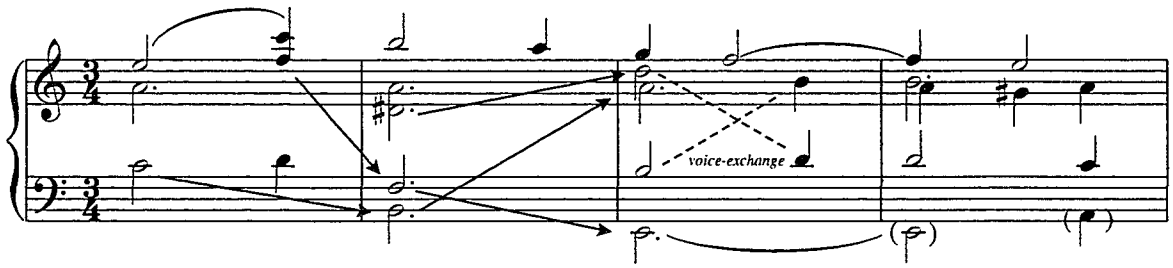




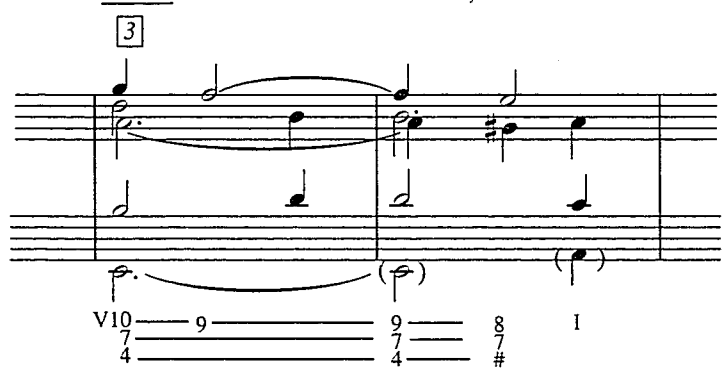
Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.2

Foreground A - Details

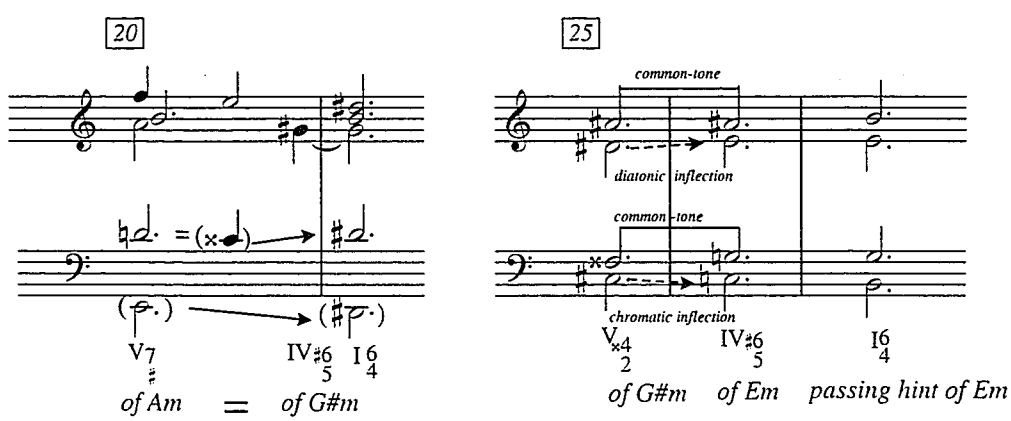
2.2.a.: Detail of the Octave Breaks, mm. 1-4



2.2.b.: Extended Dissonances, mm. 3-4

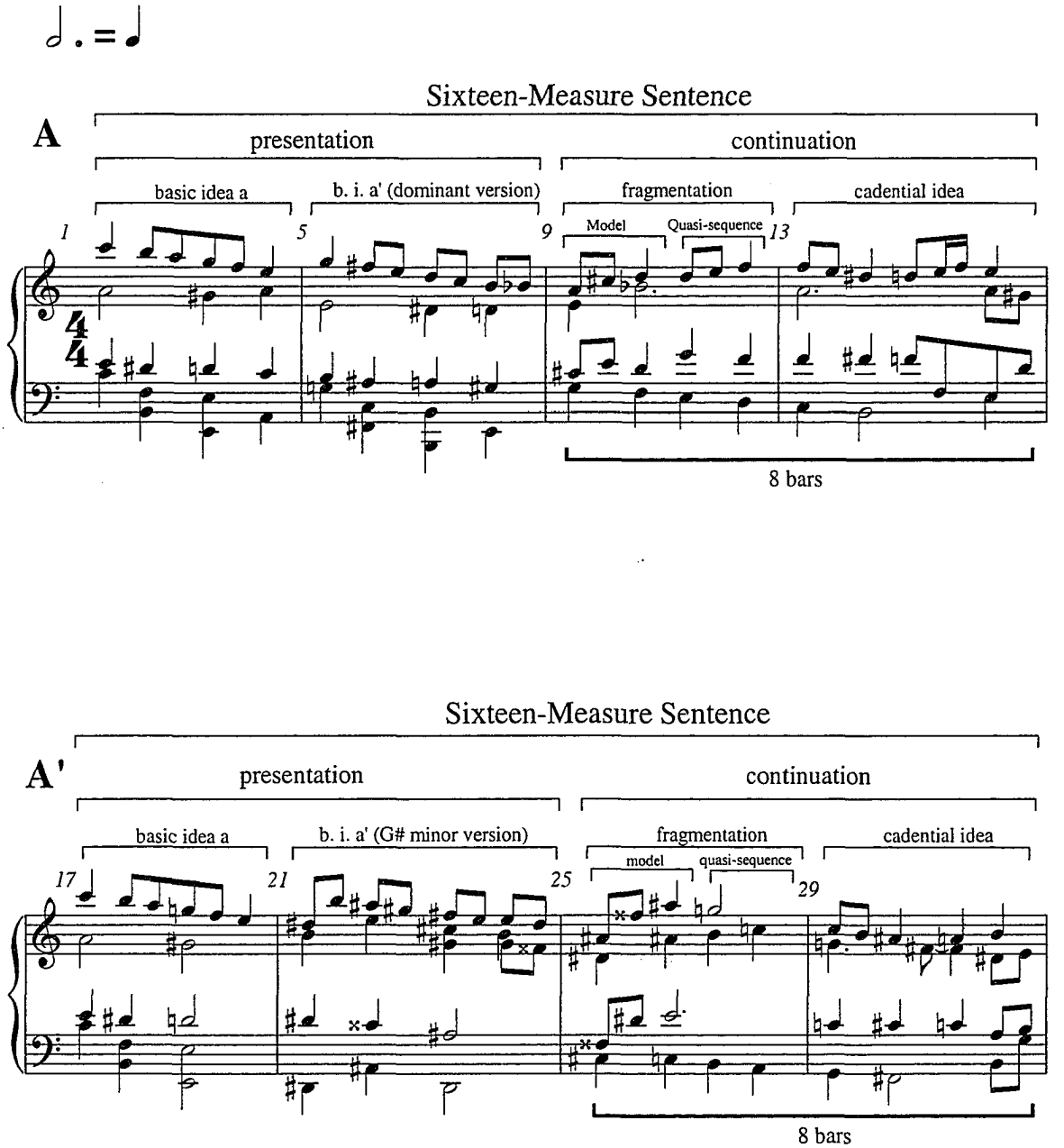


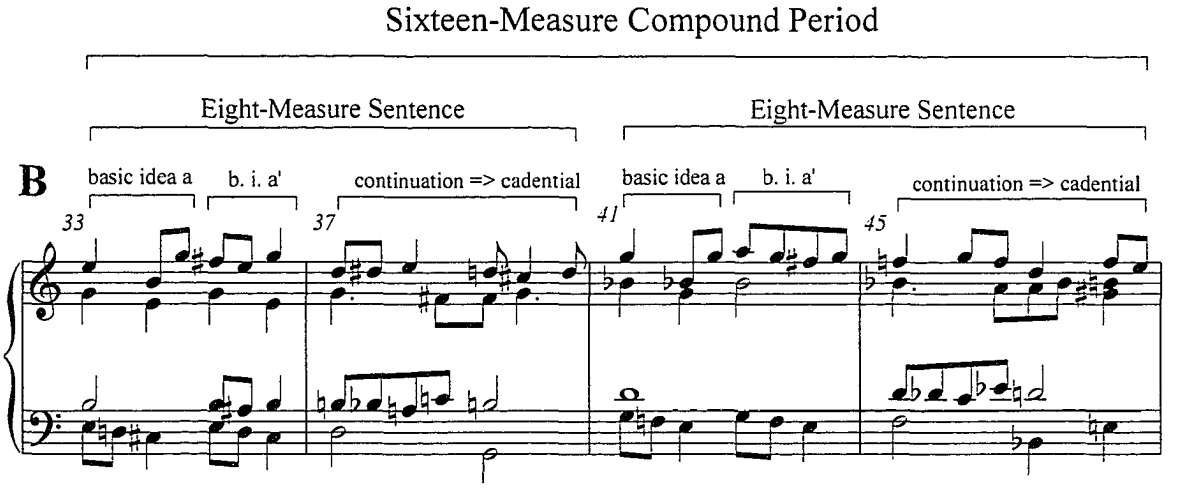
2.2.c.: Detail of the Harmonic Progression, mm. 20-21 and 25-27

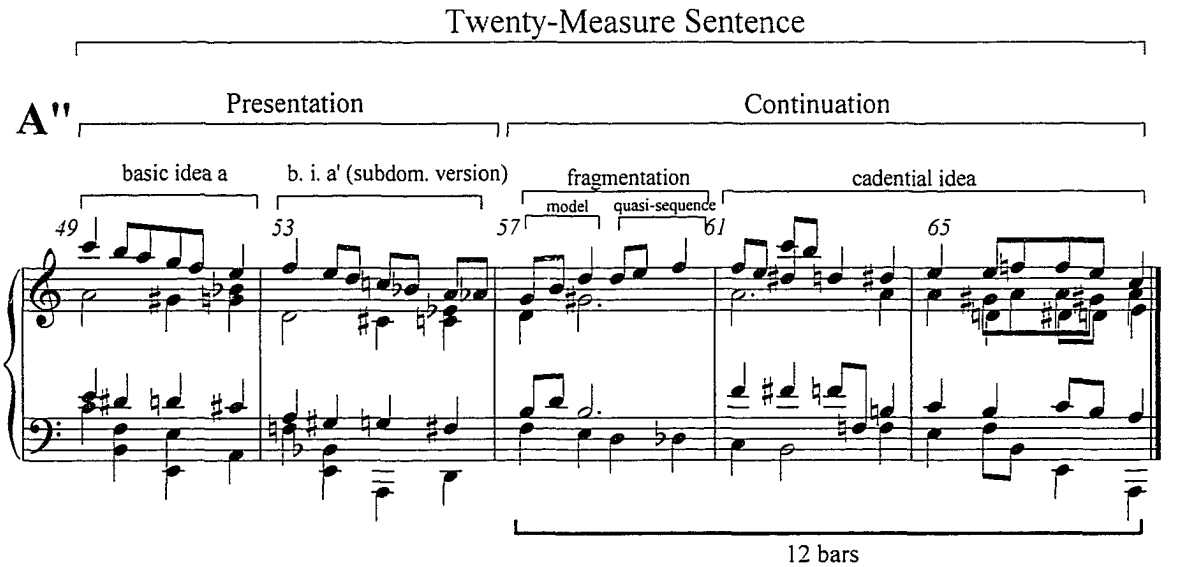


Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.3

Middleground: Durational Reduction & Grouping



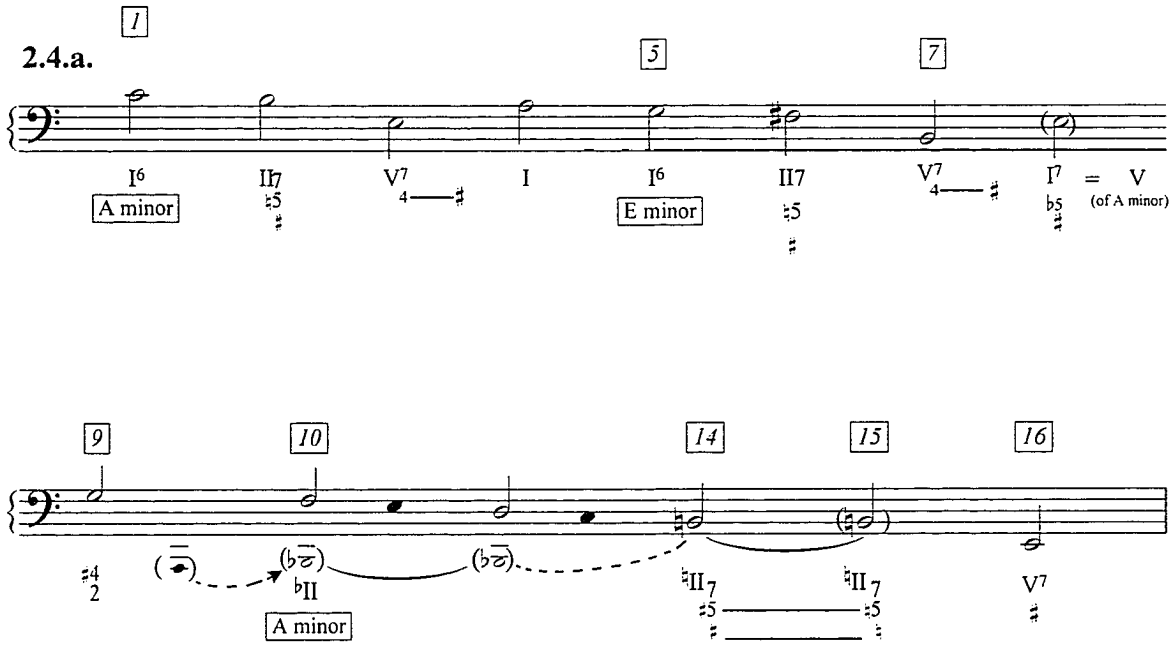




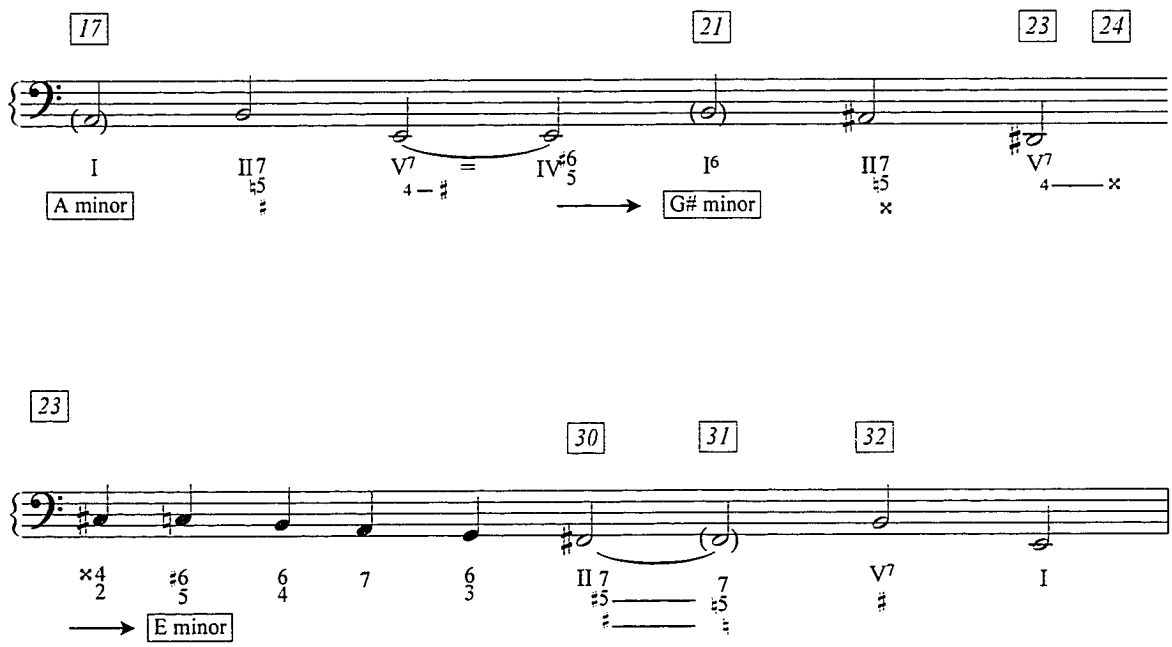
Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.4

Foreground Harmony (No Rhythmic Values)

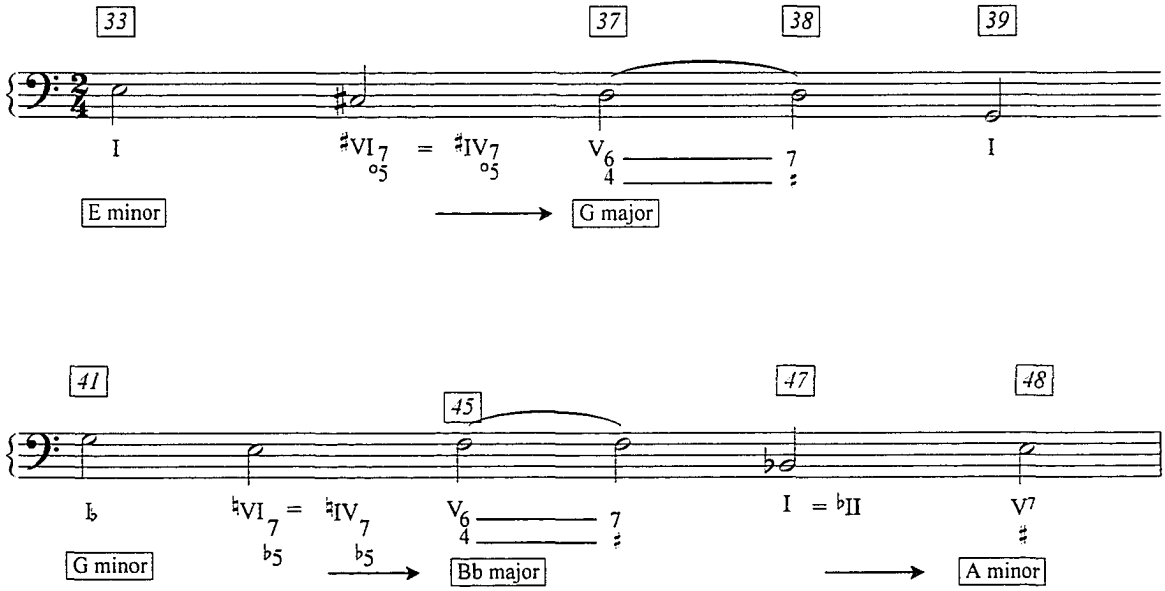
2.4.a.



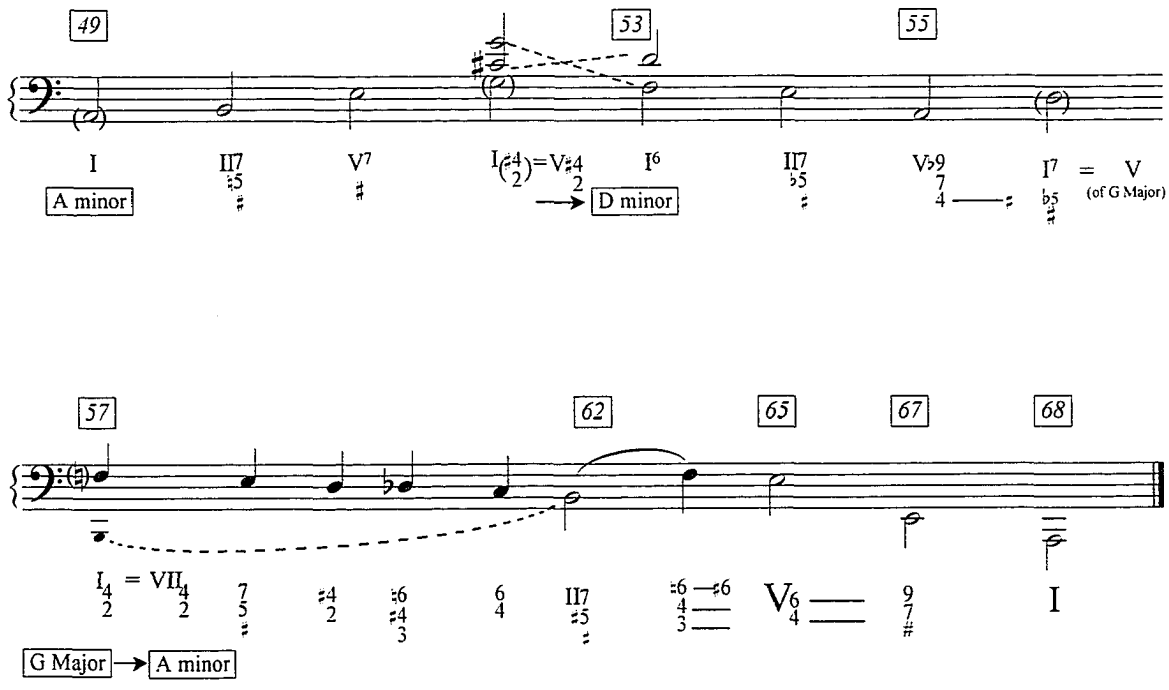
2.4.b.



2.4.c.

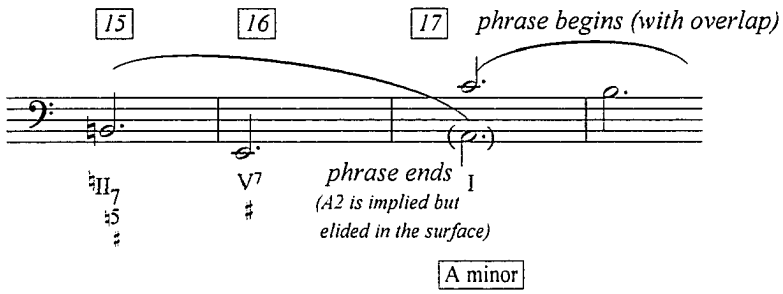


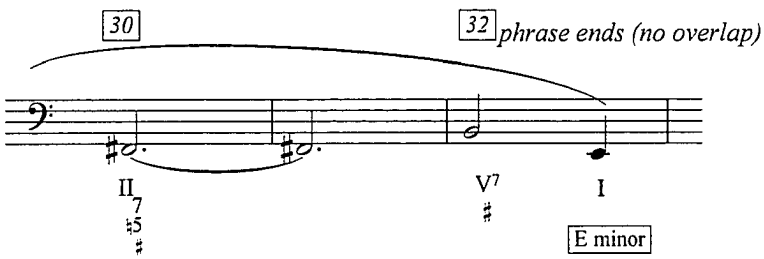
2.4.d.

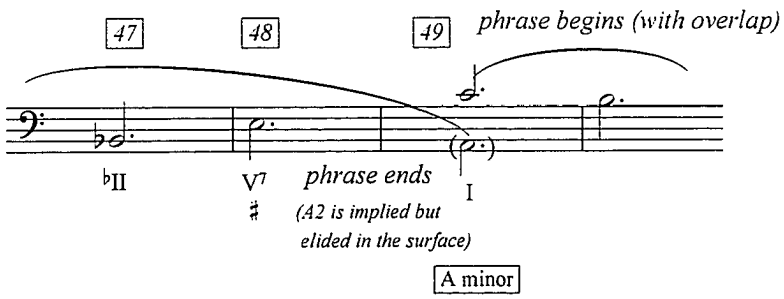


Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.5

Phrase Overlaps?

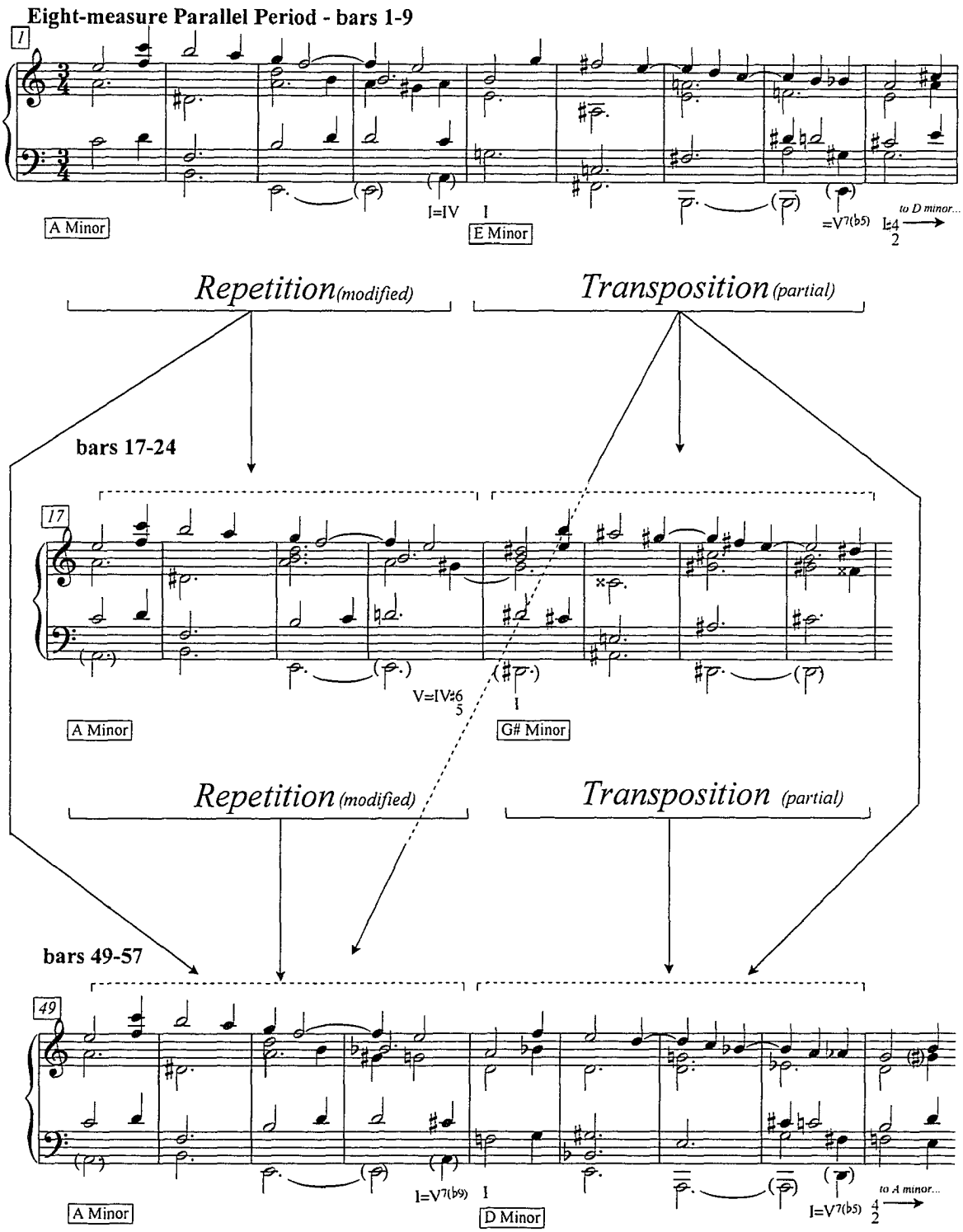






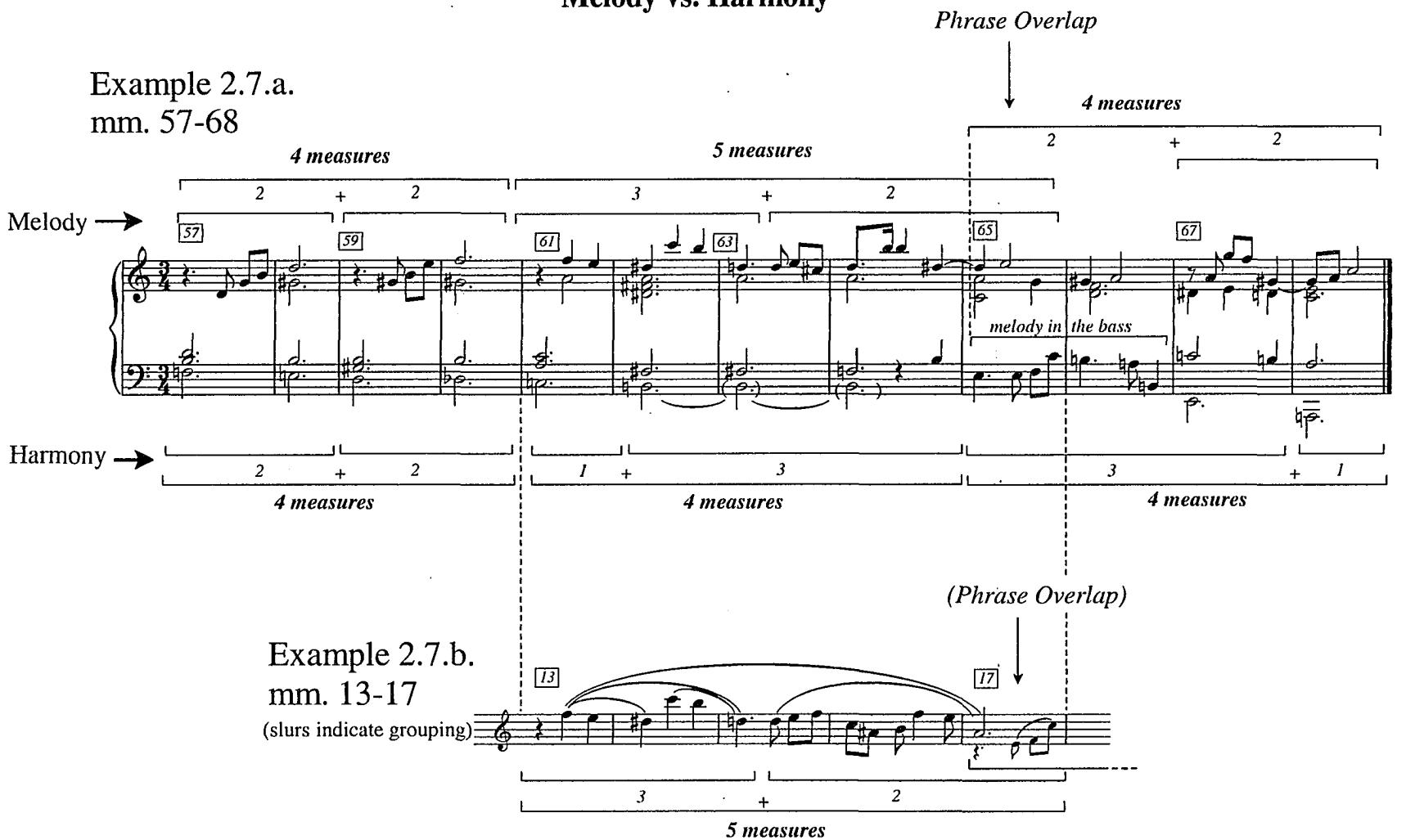
Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.6

Repetitions and Transpositions of the First Theme



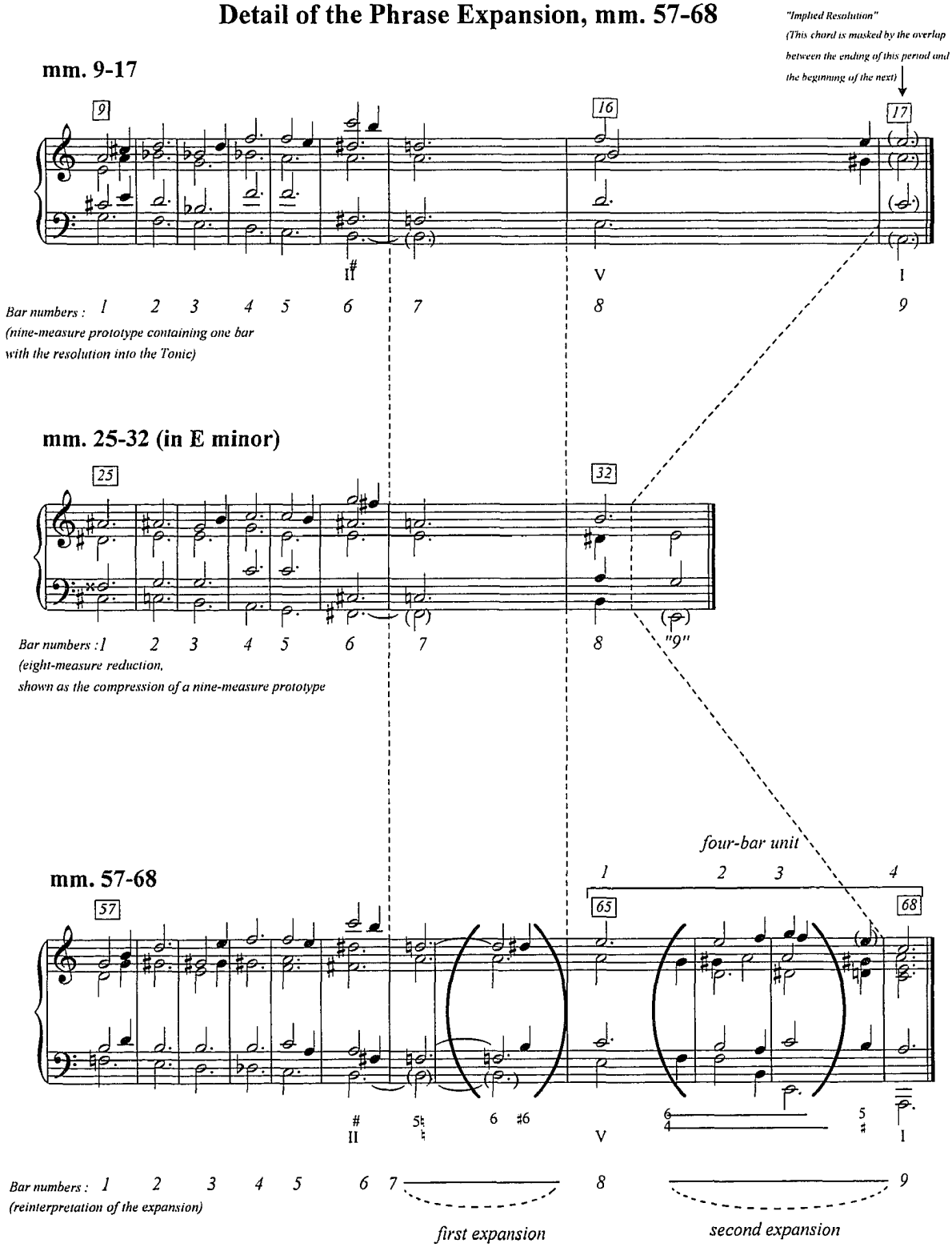
Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.7.

Melody vs. Harmony



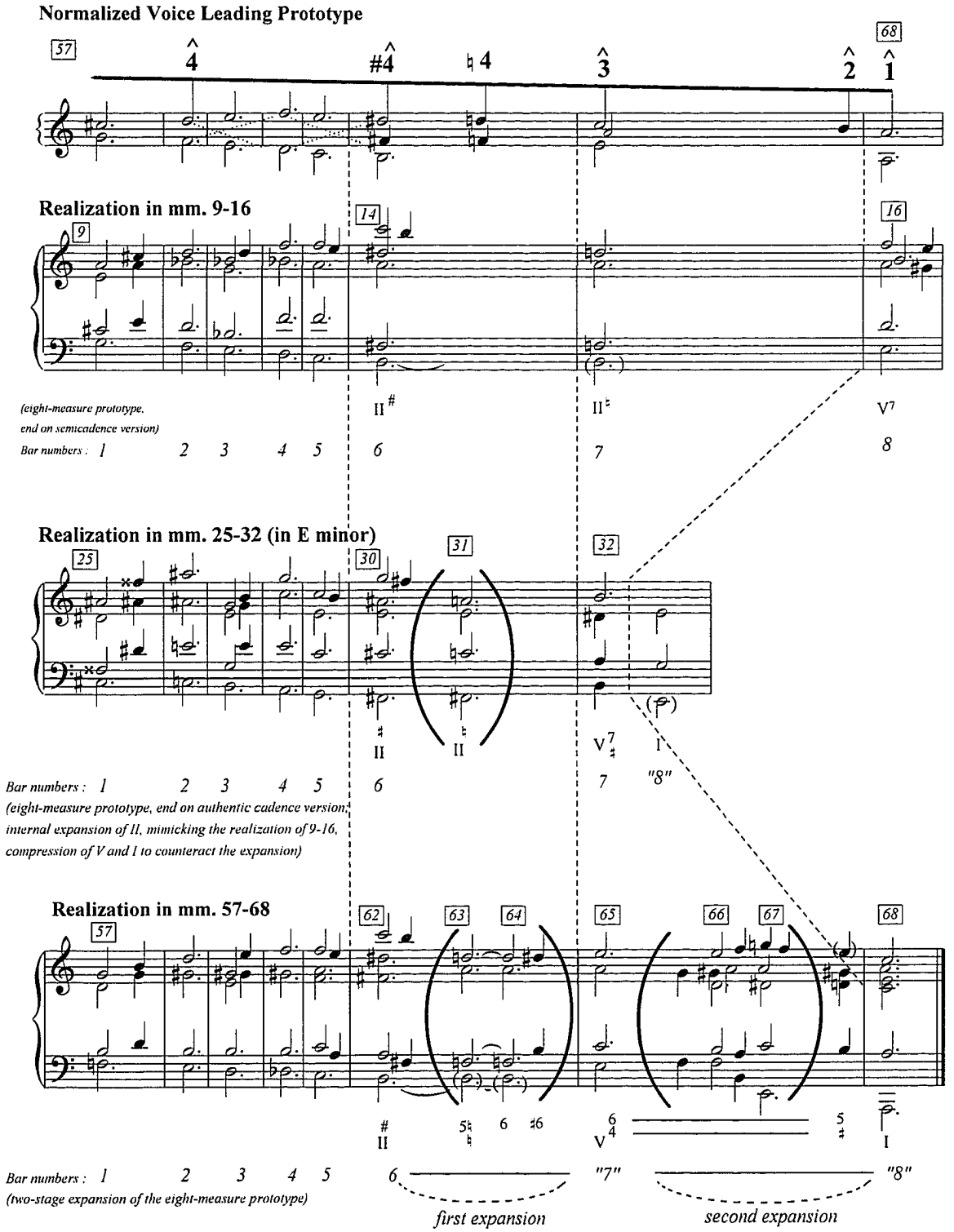
Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.7.c.

Detail of the Phrase Expansion, mm. 57-68



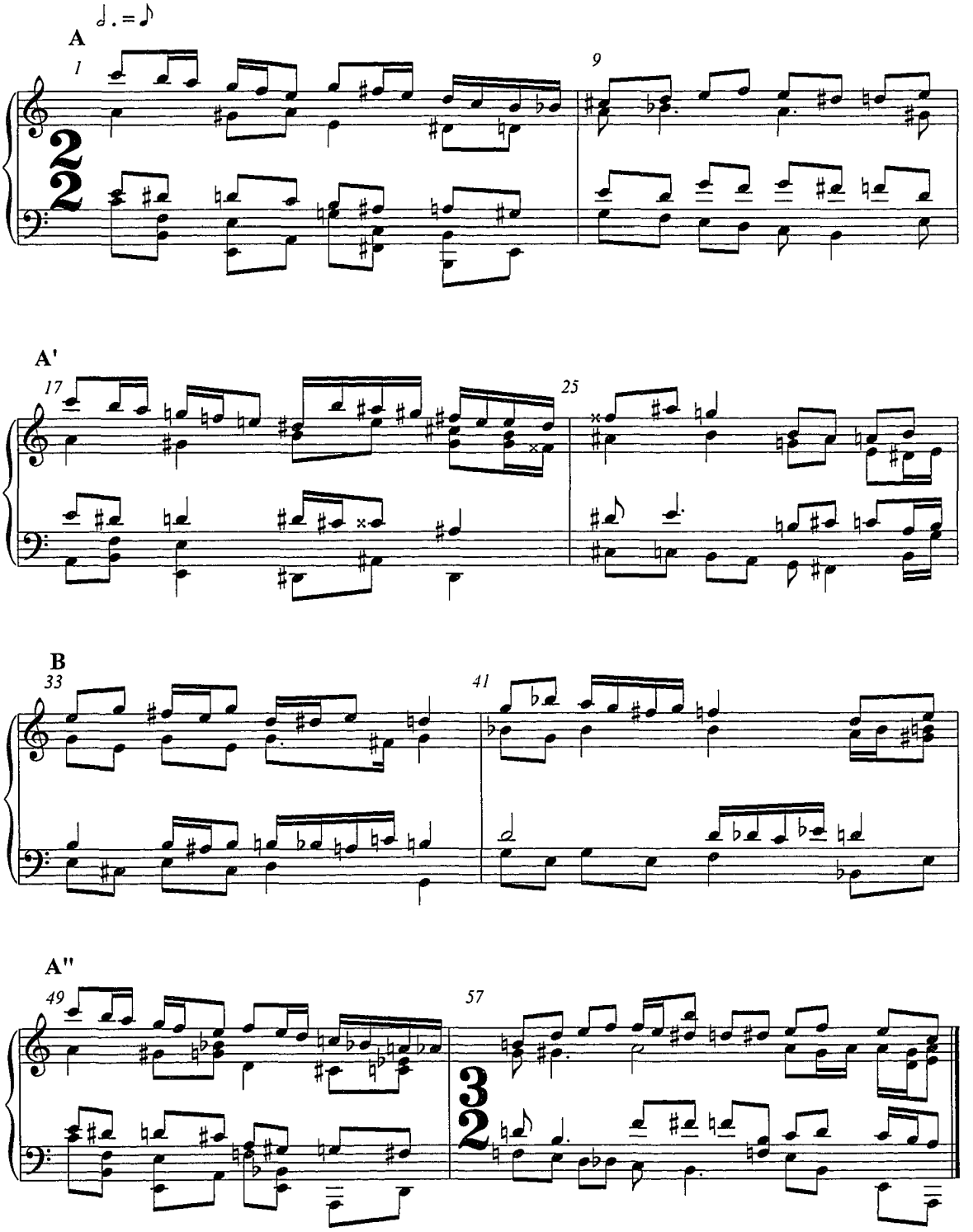
Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.7.d.

Detail of the Phrase Expansion, mm. 57-68

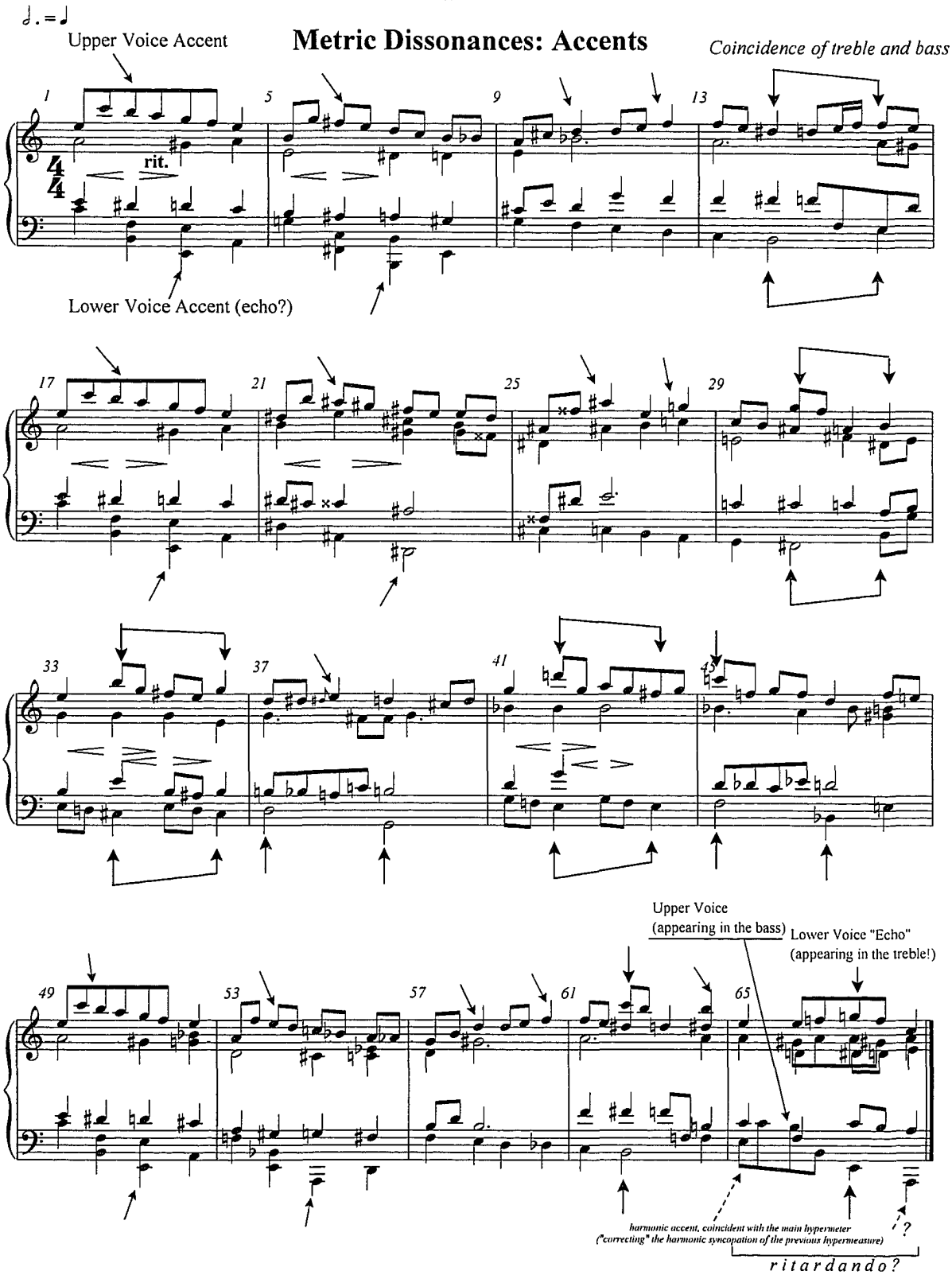


Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.8

Eight-Measure Hypermeter - Durational Reduction

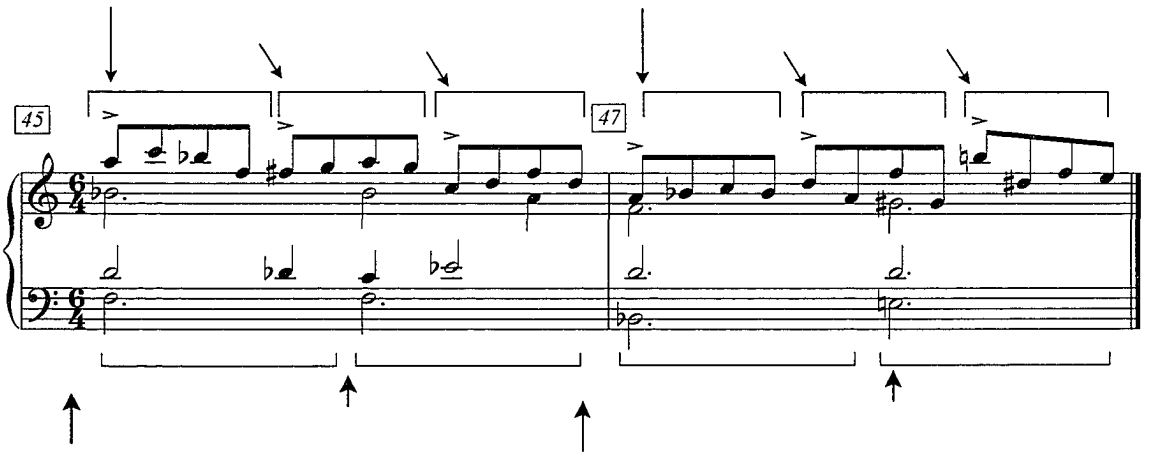


Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.9.a.



Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.9.b.

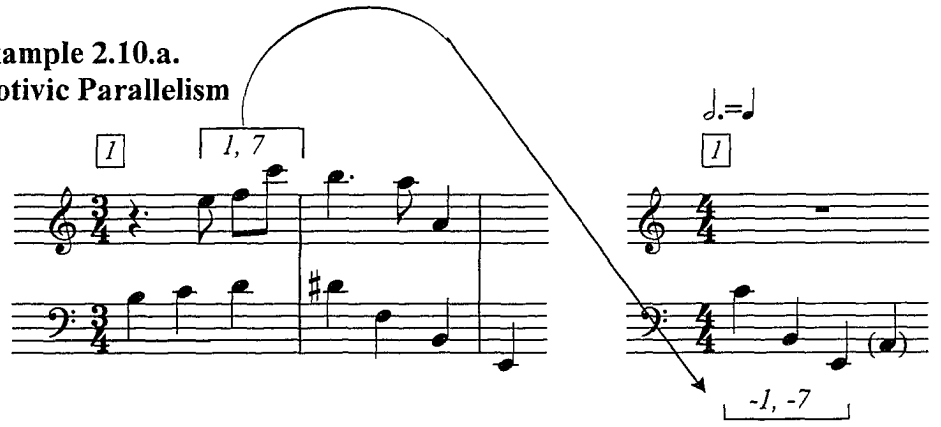
Metric Dissonances
Hypermeter & Accents: Quasi Hemiola



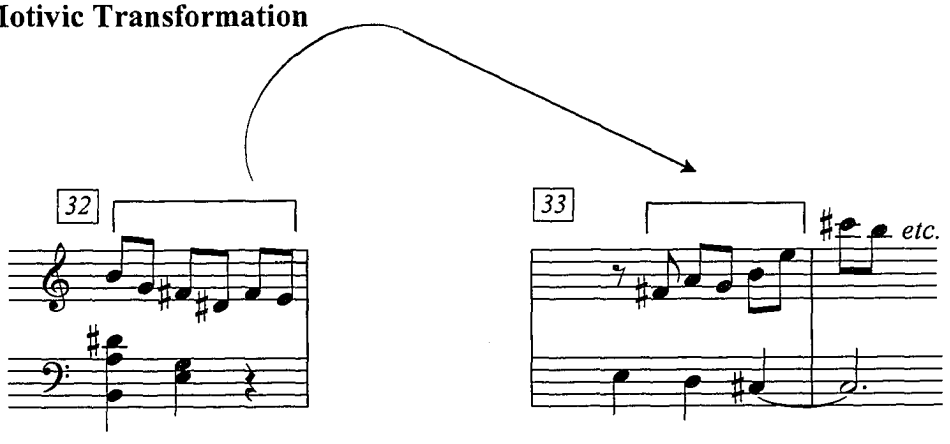
Op. 11, No. 2
Example 2.10

Linkages

Example 2.10.a.
Motivic Parallelism

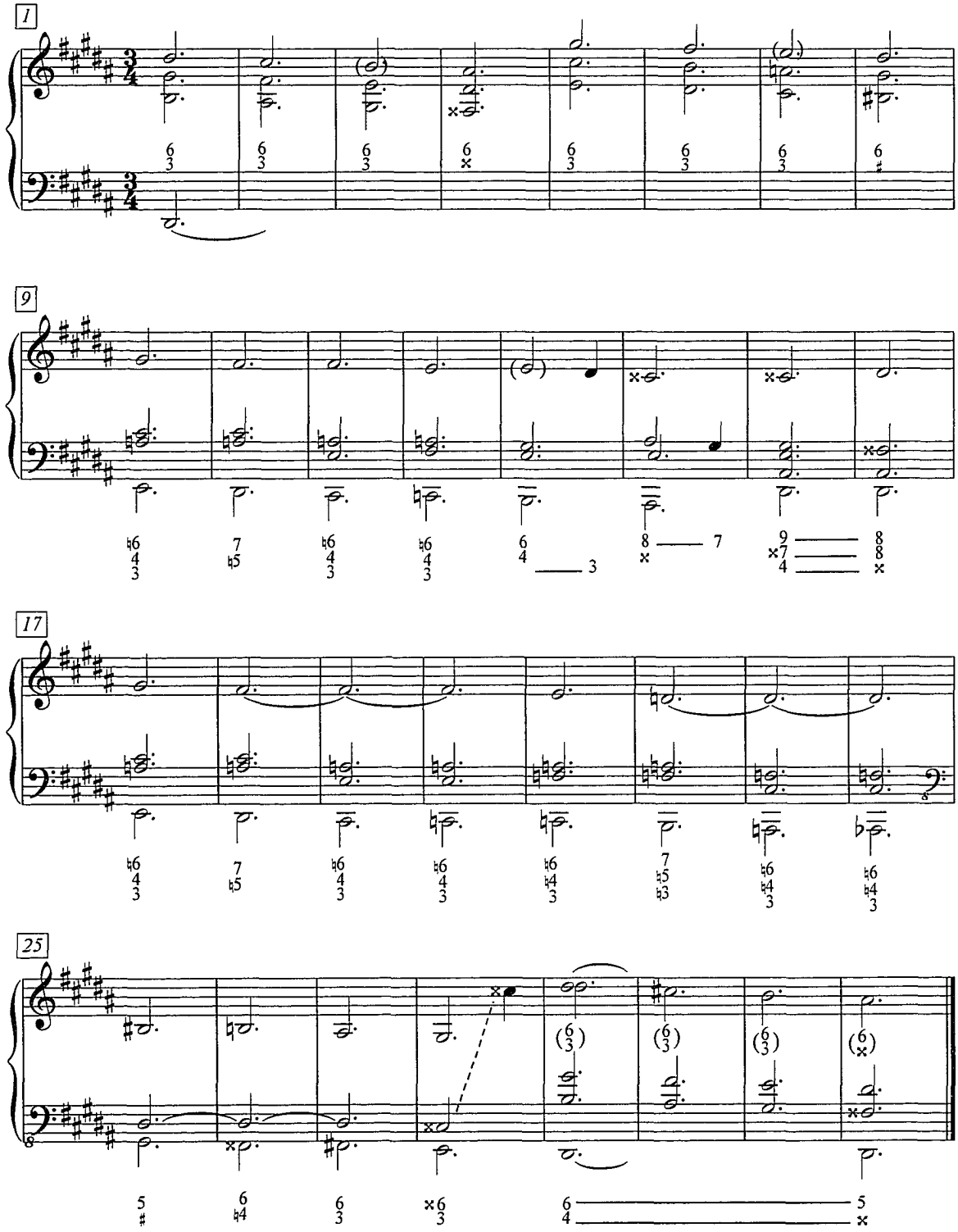


Example 2.10.b.
Motivic Transformation



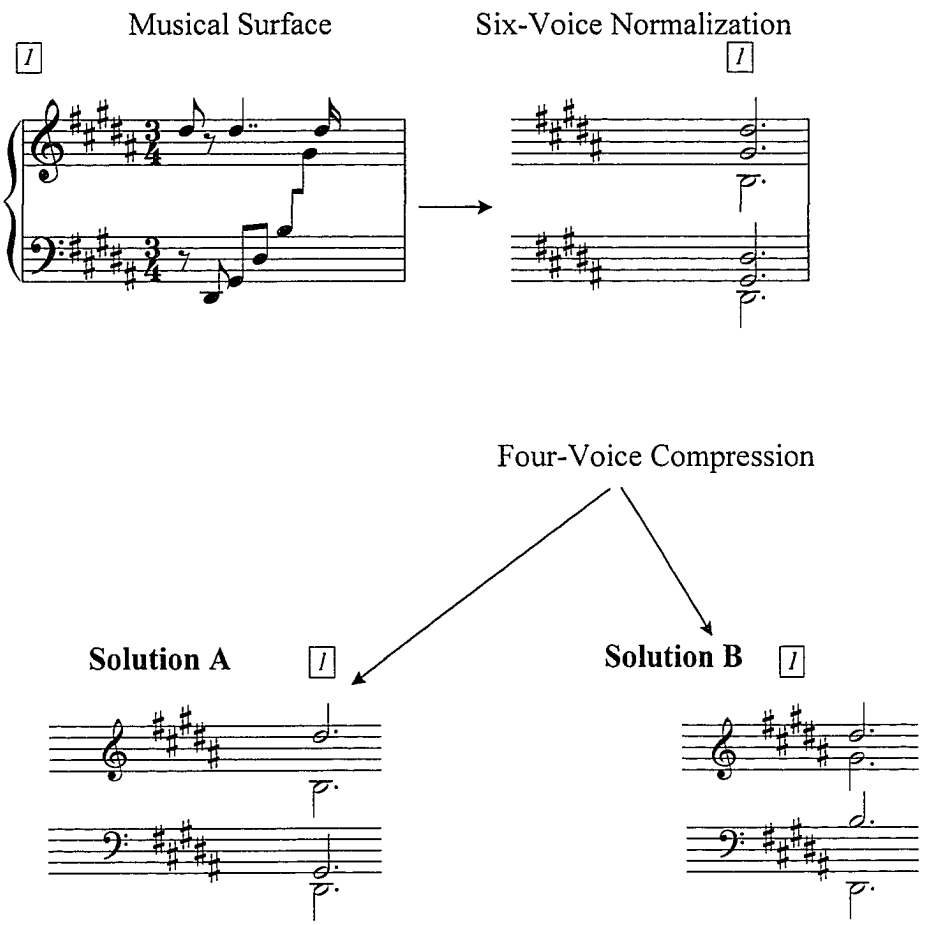
Op. 22, No. 1
Example 3.1

Foreground



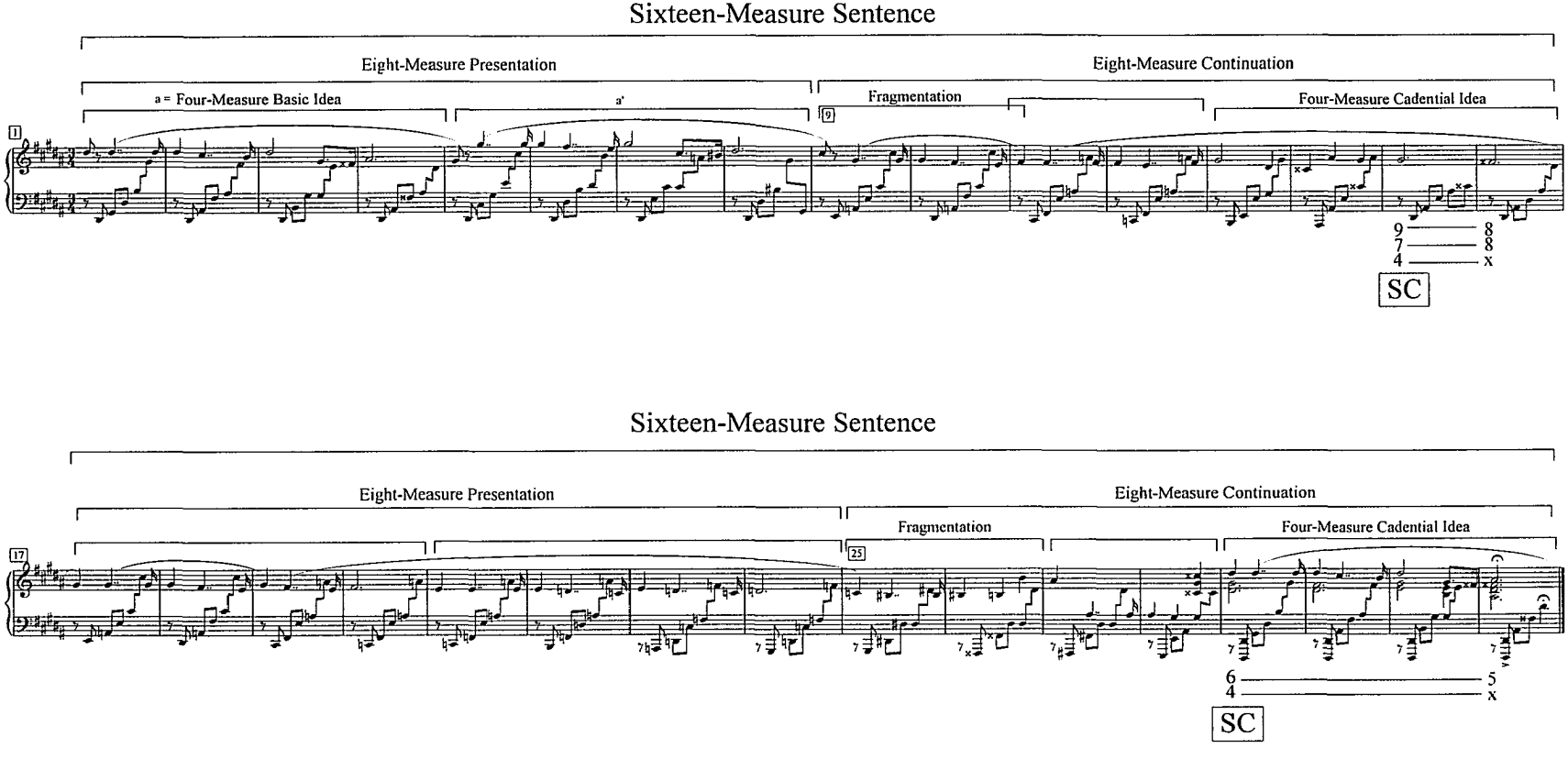
Op. 22, No. 1
Example 3.2

Normalization



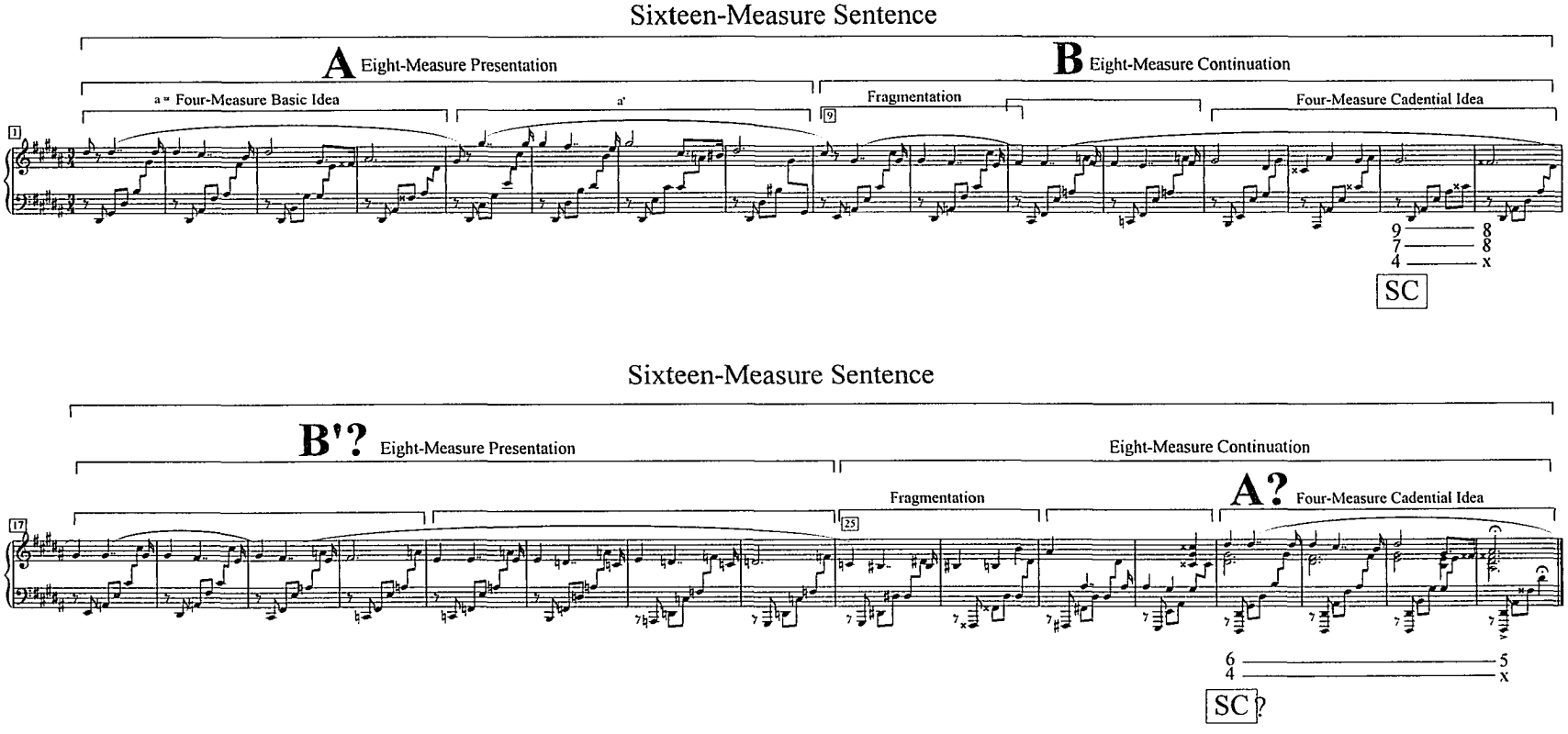
Op. 22, No. 1
Example 3.3.a.

Formal Organization



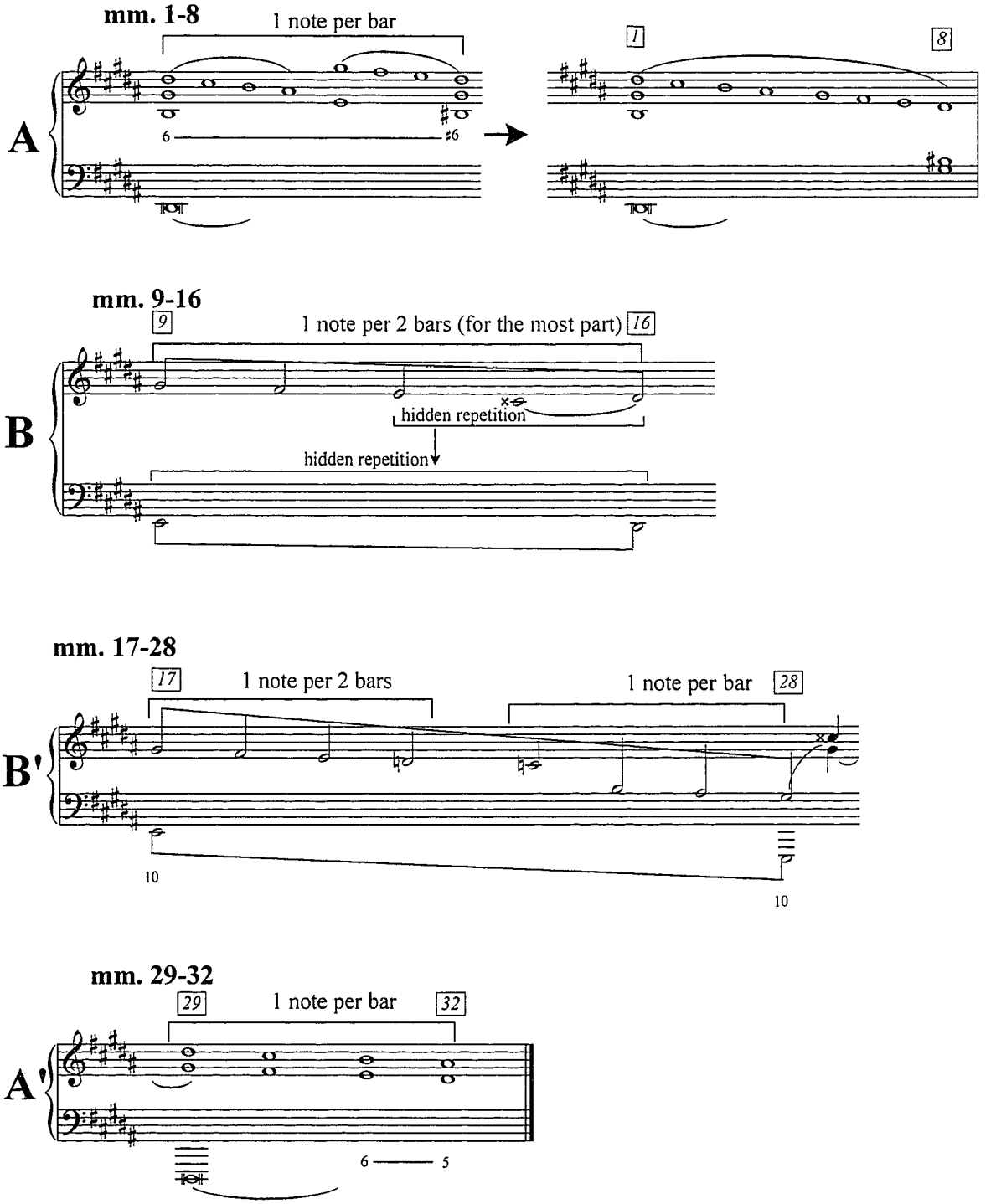
Op. 22, No. 1
Example 3.3.b.

Formal Organization



Op. 22, No. 1
Example 3.4

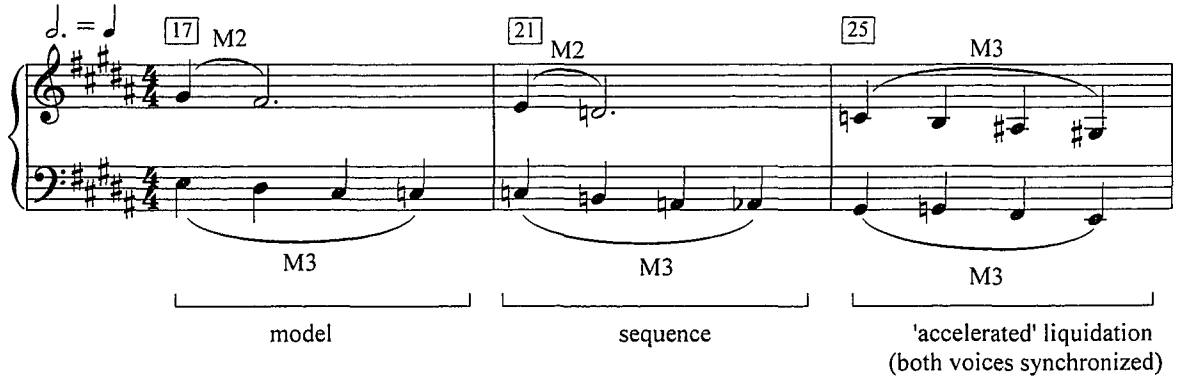
Linear/Contrapuntal Prototypes



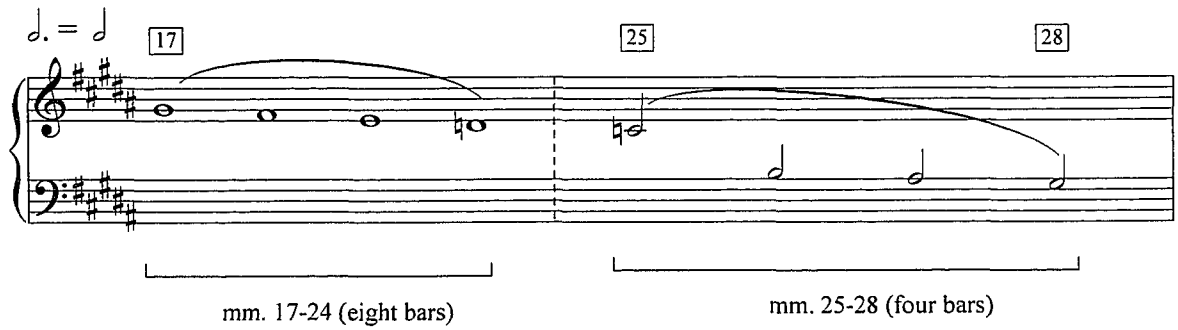
Op. 22, No. 1
Example 3.5

Rates of Motion

Example 3.5.a
mm. 17-28



Example 3.5.b
Treble Motion

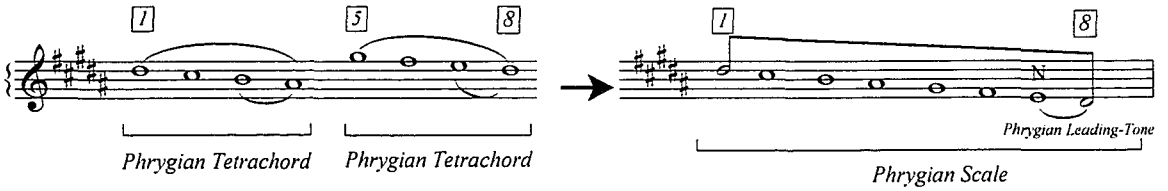


Op. 22, No. 1
Example 3.6

Hidden Repetitions

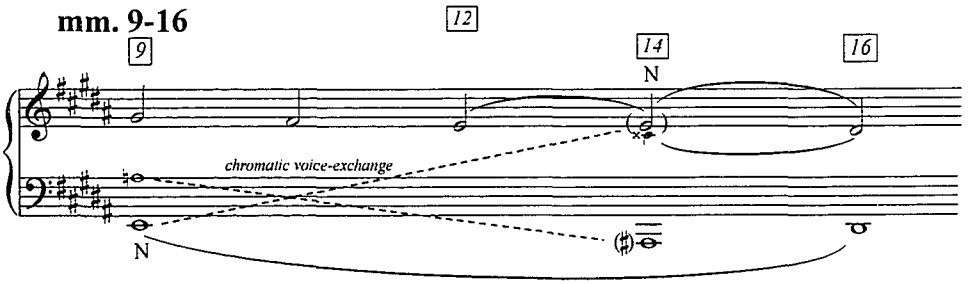
Foreground

mm. 1-8

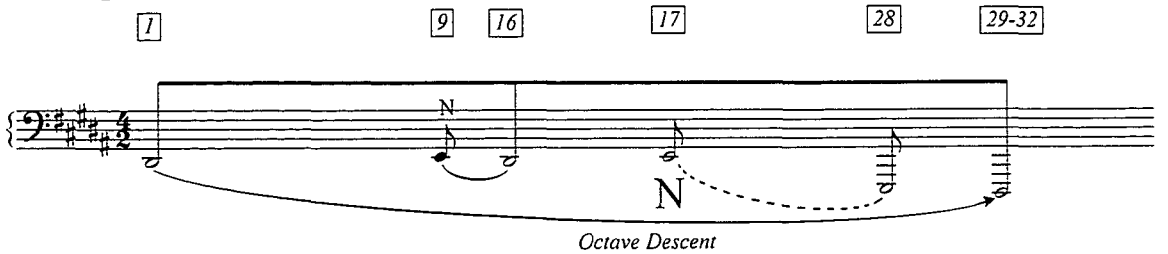


Middleground

mm. 9-16

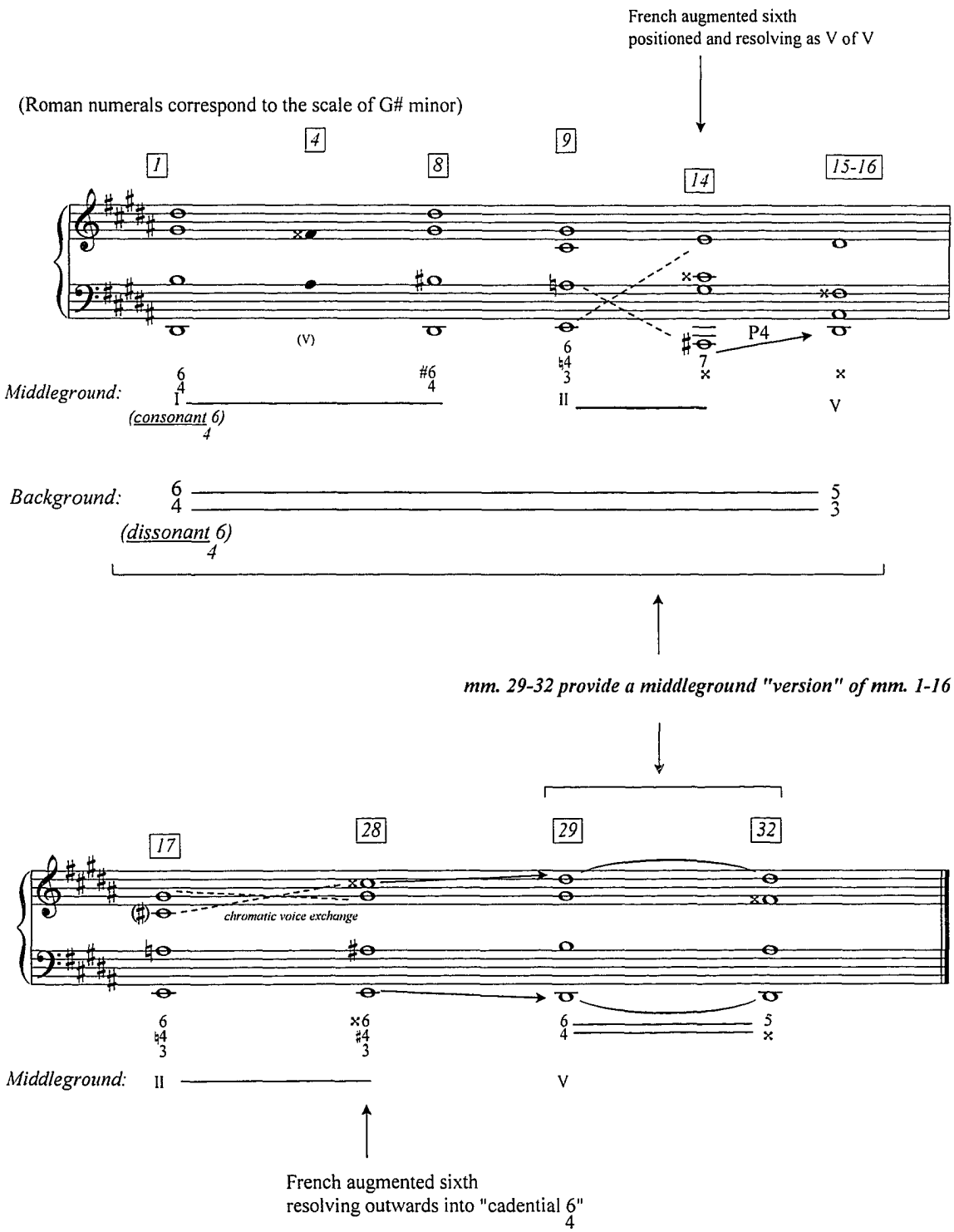


Background



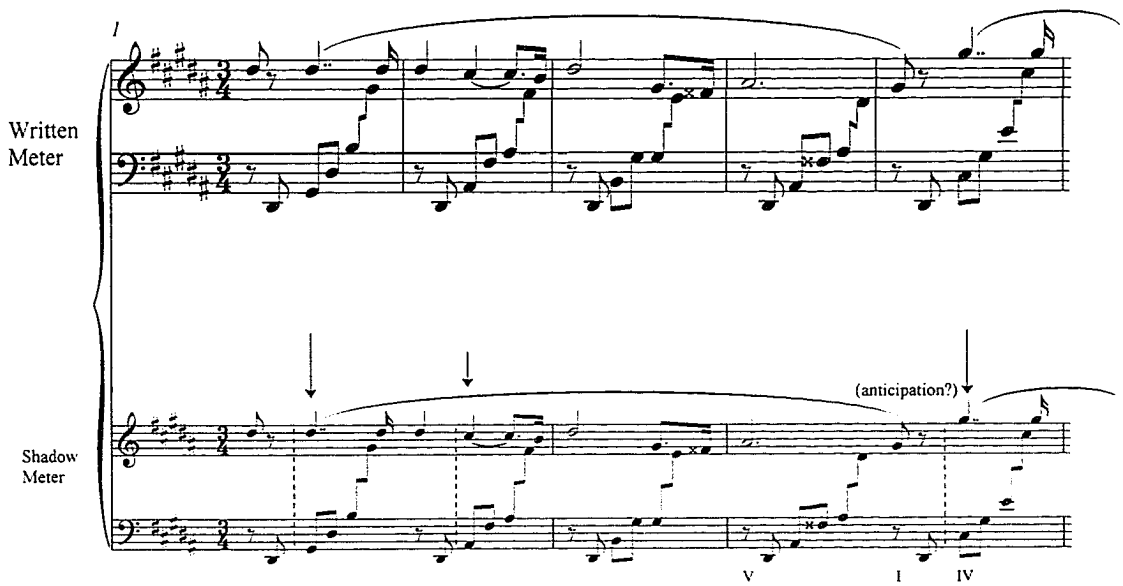
Op. 22, No. 1
Example 3.7

Harmony



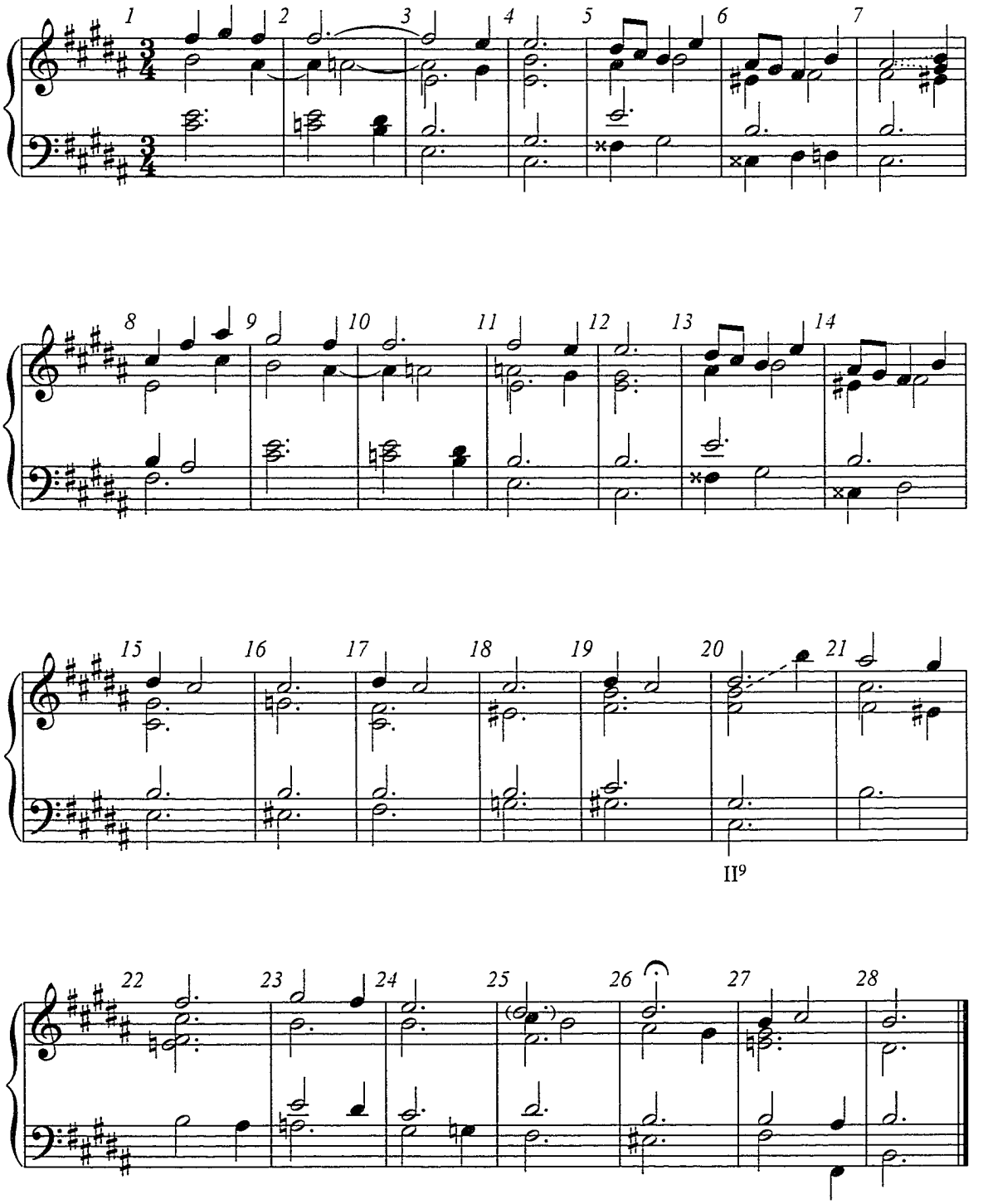
Op. 22, No. 1
Example 3.8

Shadow Meter

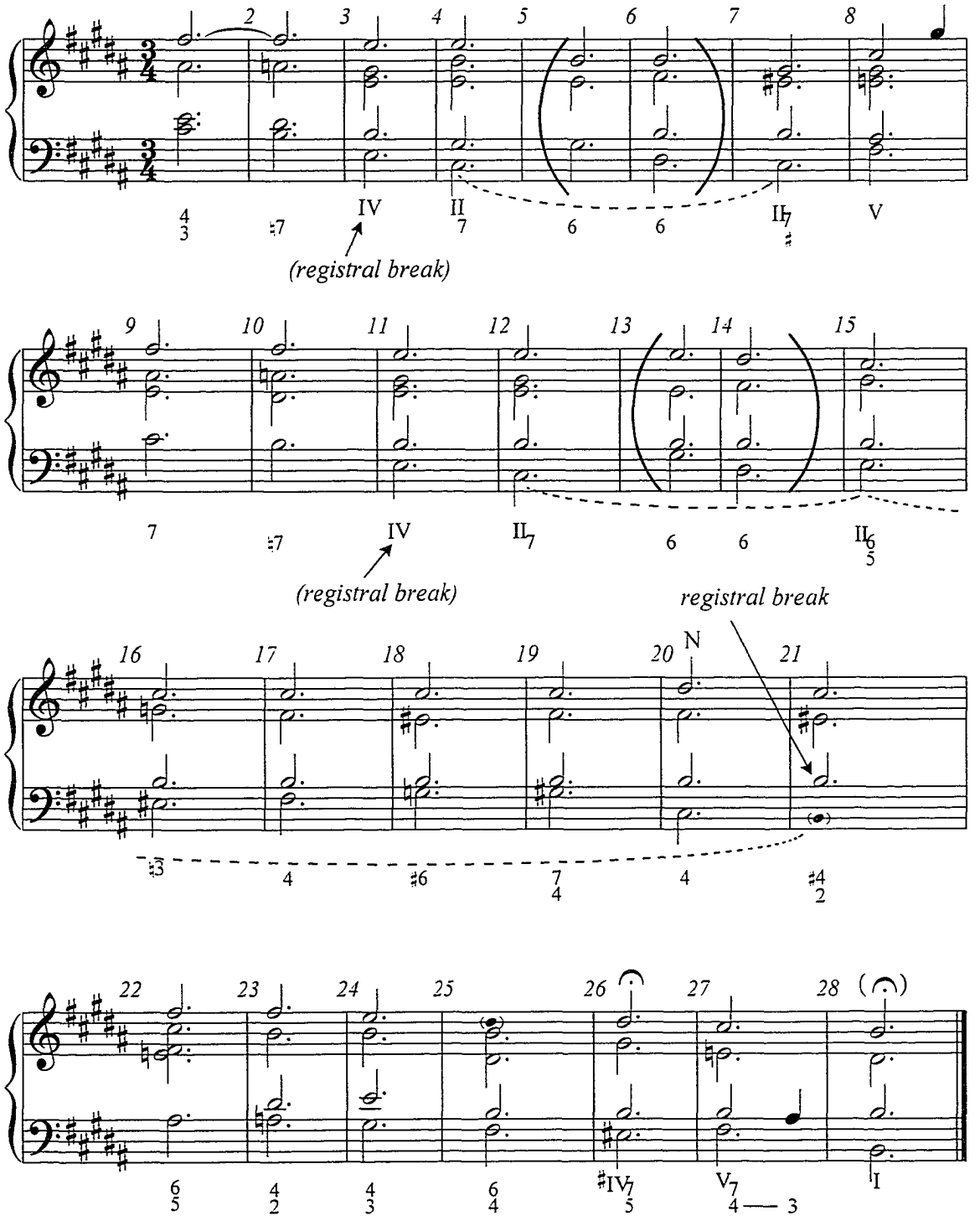


Op. 22, No.3
Example 4.1

Foreground

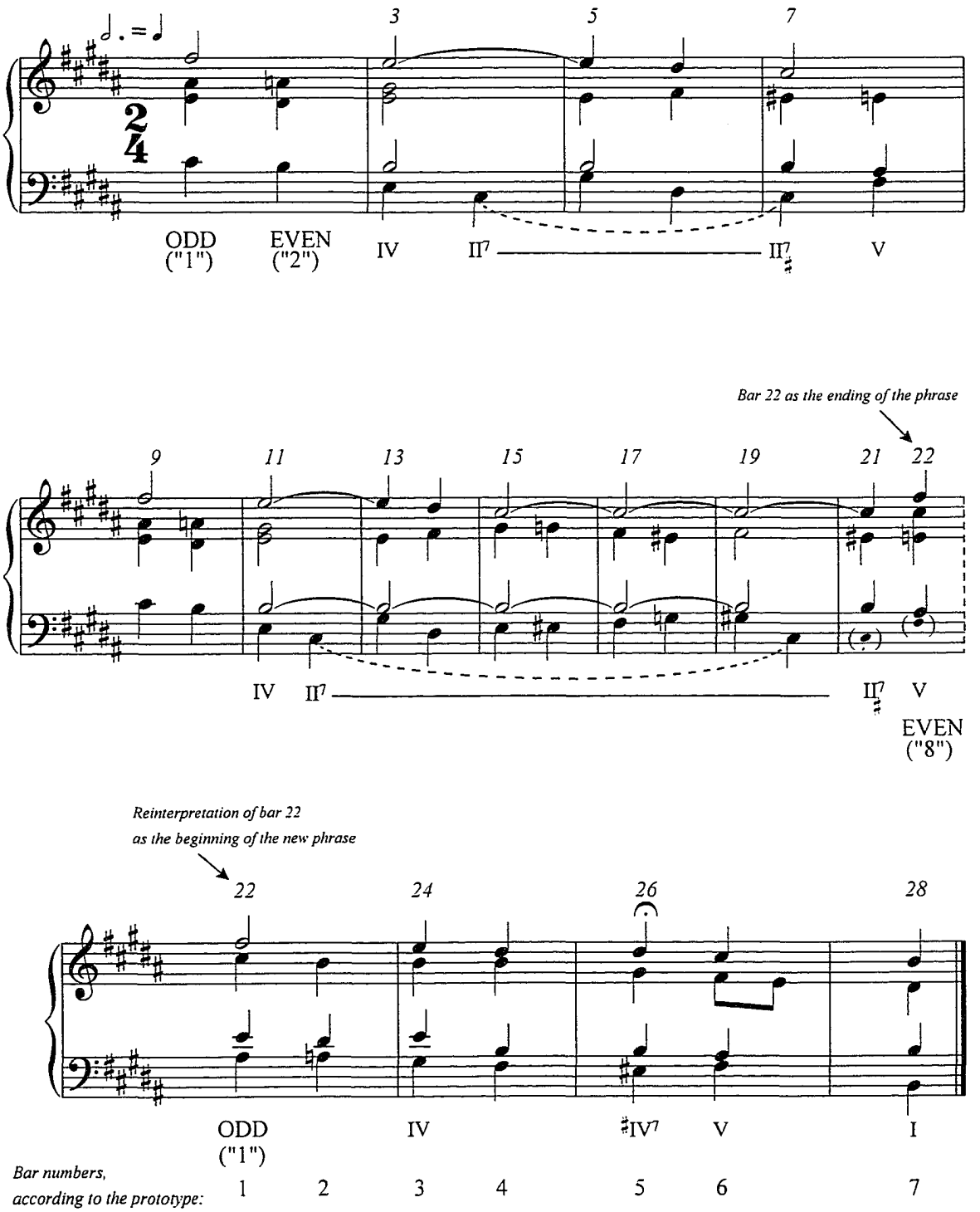


Op. 22, No. 3
Example 4.2
Foreground B



Op. 22, No. 3
Example 4.3.a
Overlaps: One-measure Overlap

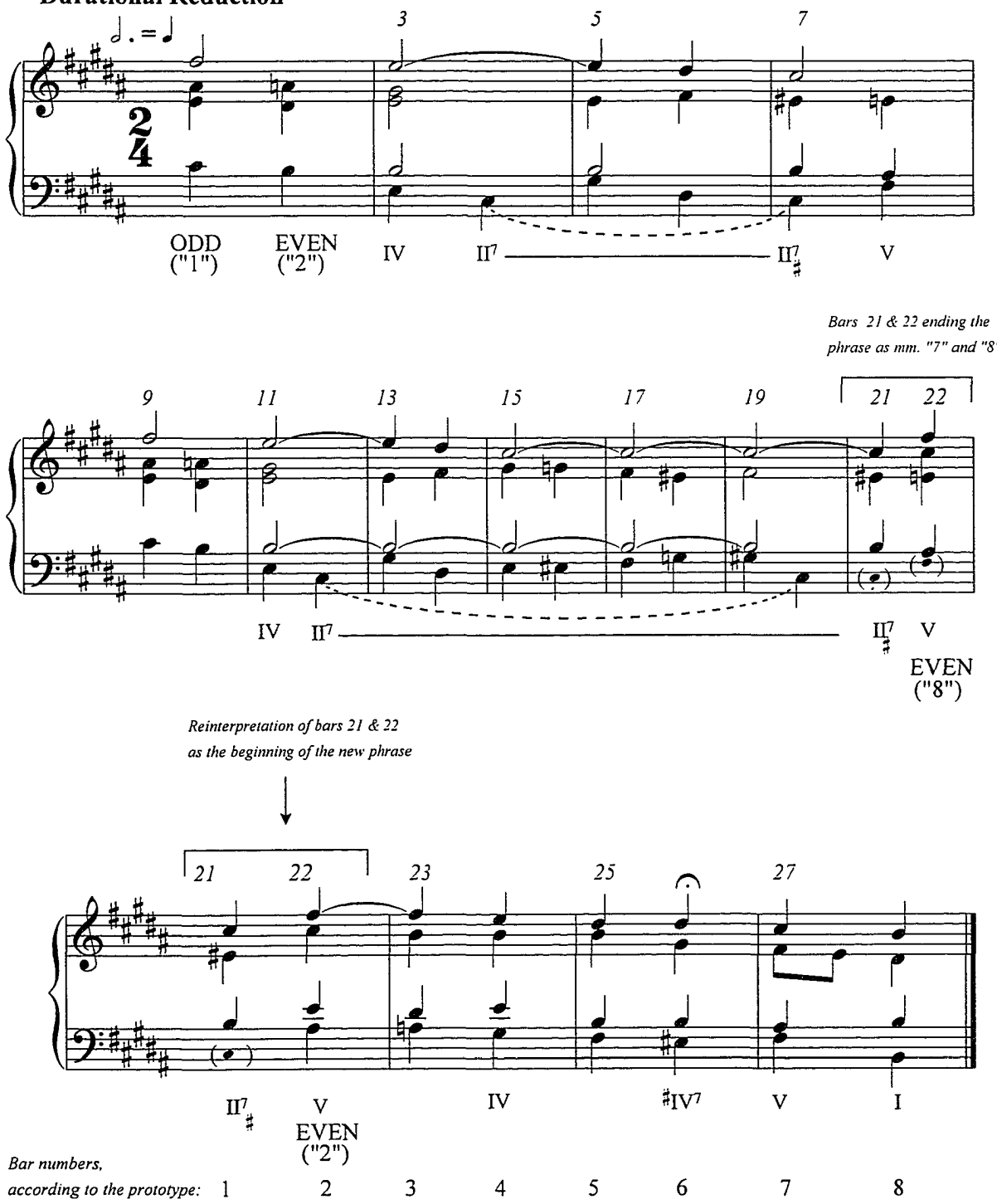
Durational Reduction



Op. 22, No. 3
Example 4.3.b.

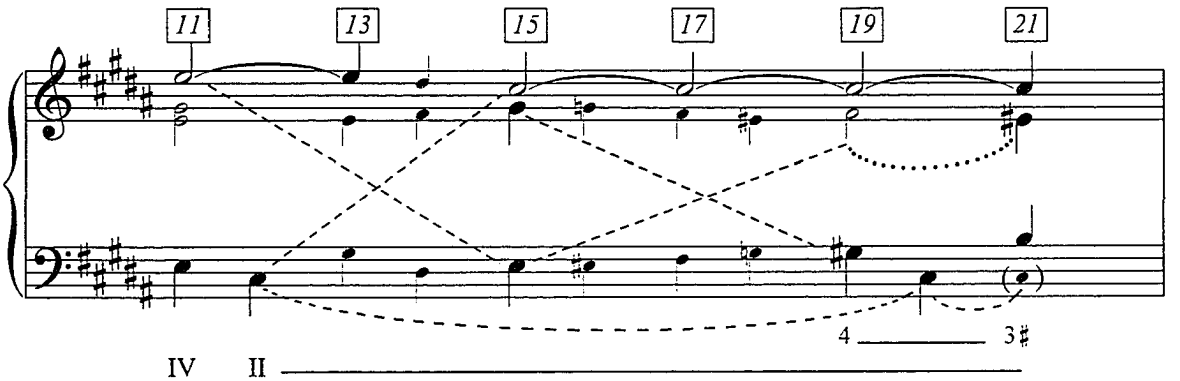
Overlaps: Two-measure Overlap

Durational Reduction

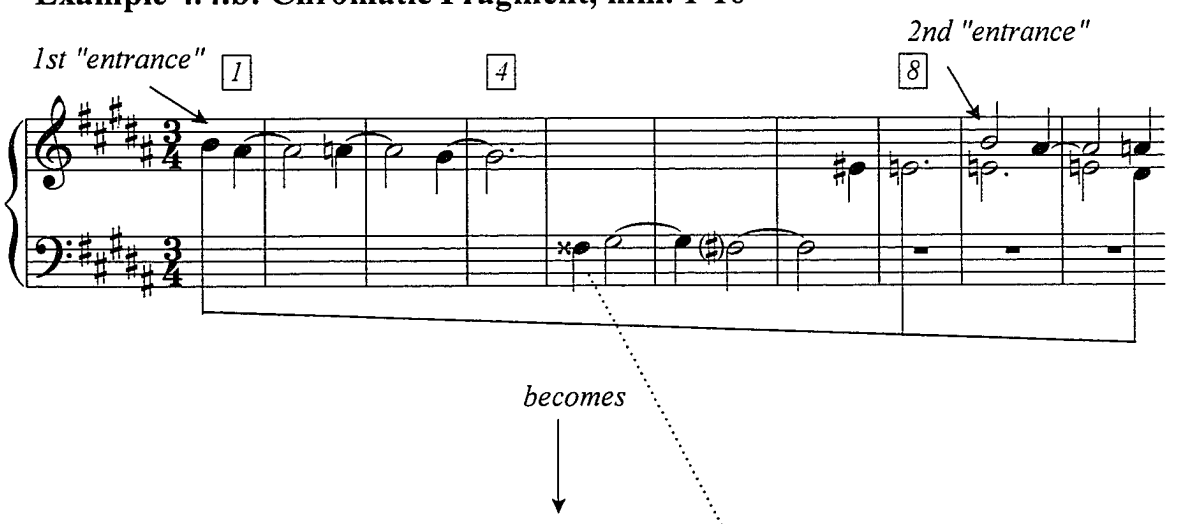


Op. 22, No. 3
Example 4.4

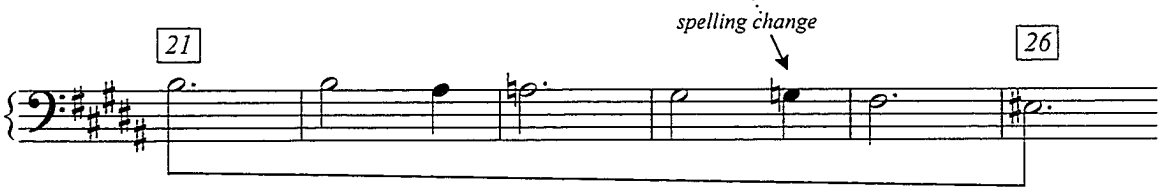
Example 4.4.a: Detail of the Internal Expansion, mm. 11-21



Example 4.4.b: Chromatic Fragment, mm. 1-10



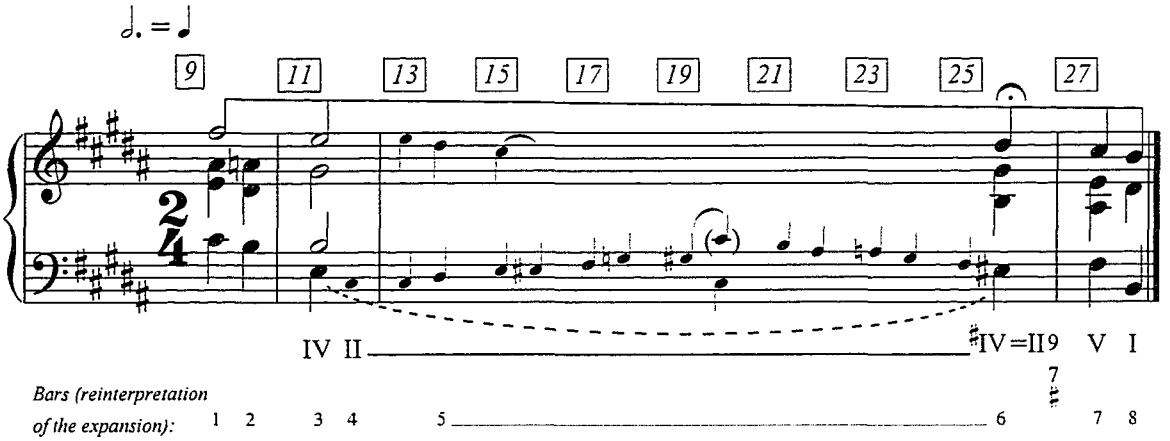
Example 4.4.c: Chromatic Fragment, mm. 21-26



Op. 22, No. 3
Example 4.5

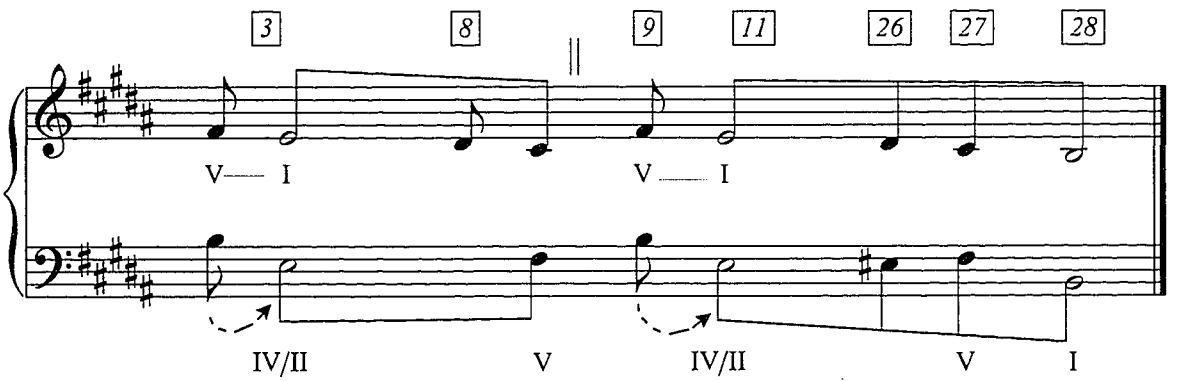
Middleground B (mm. 9-27)

Durational Reduction



Op. 22, No. 3
Example 4.6

Background

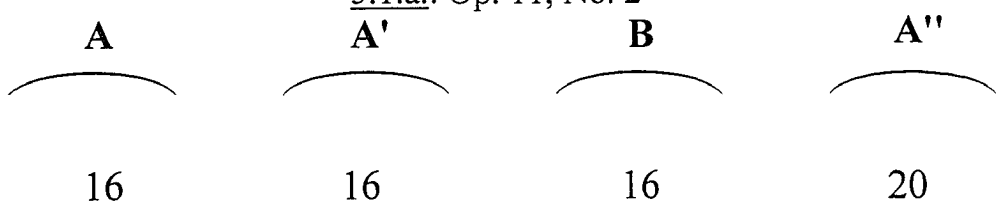


(Half notes represent the auxiliary cadences' points of harmonic arrival.)

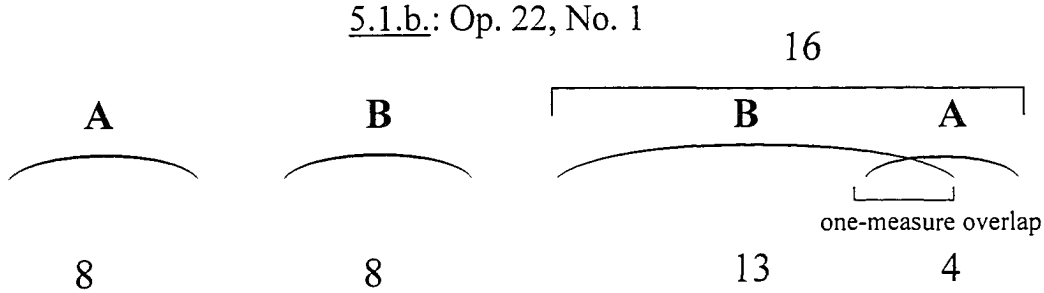
Example 5.1

Phrase Expansions & Formal Conflicts

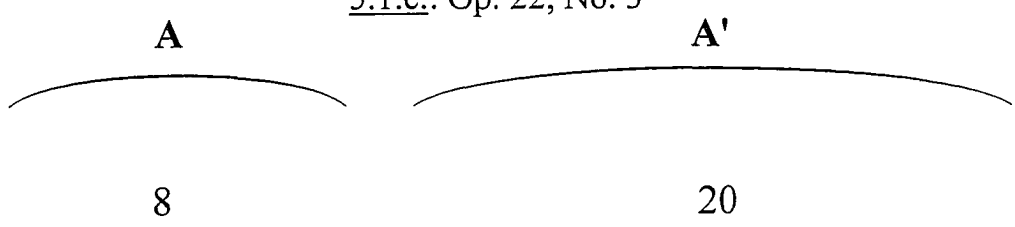
5.1.a.: Op. 11, No. 2



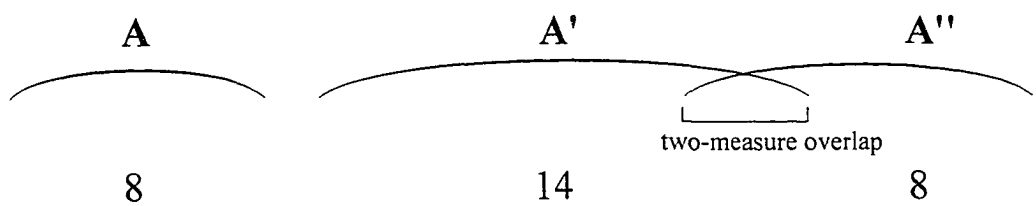
5.1.b.: Op. 22, No. 1



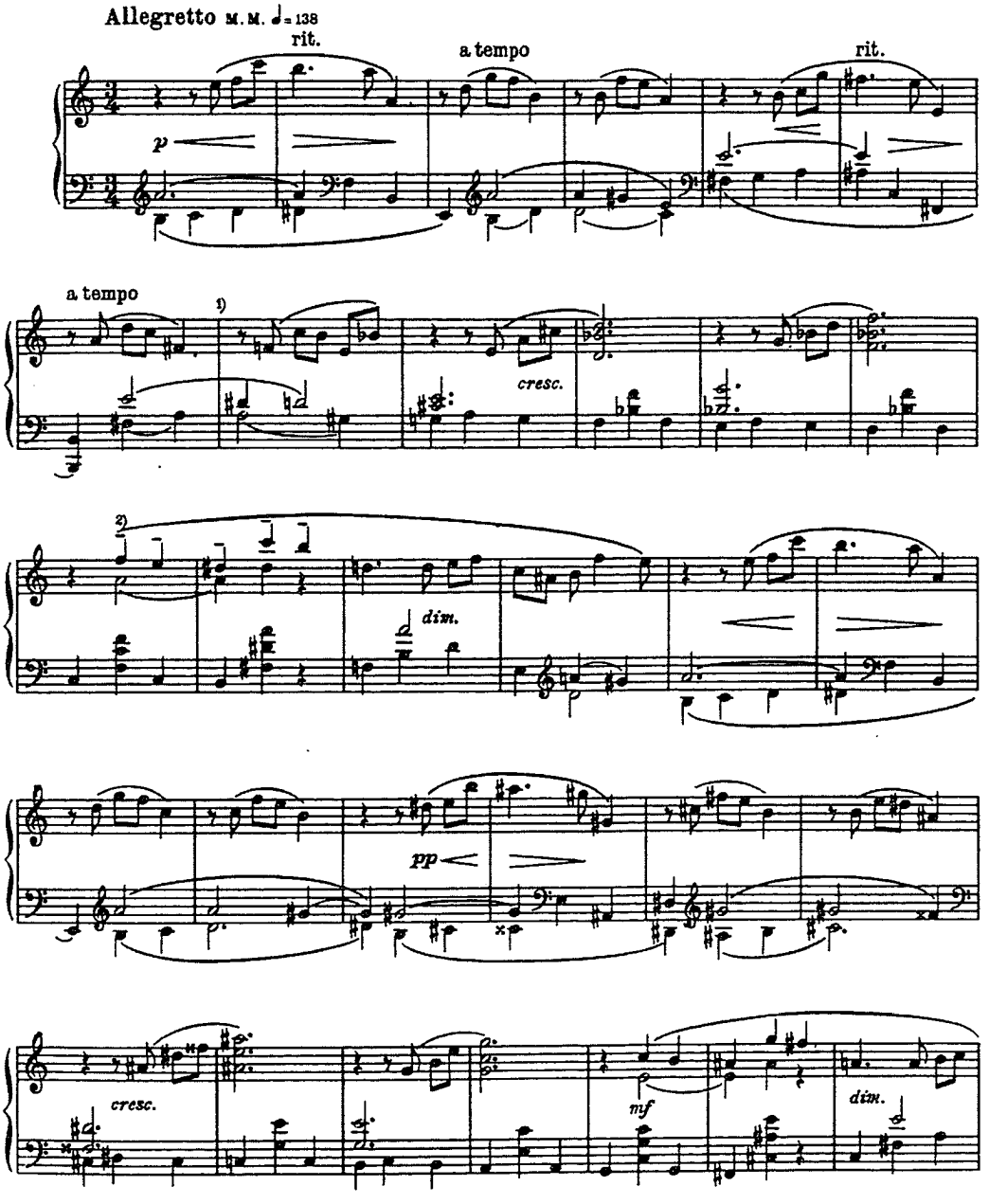
5.1.c.: Op. 22, No. 3



or:

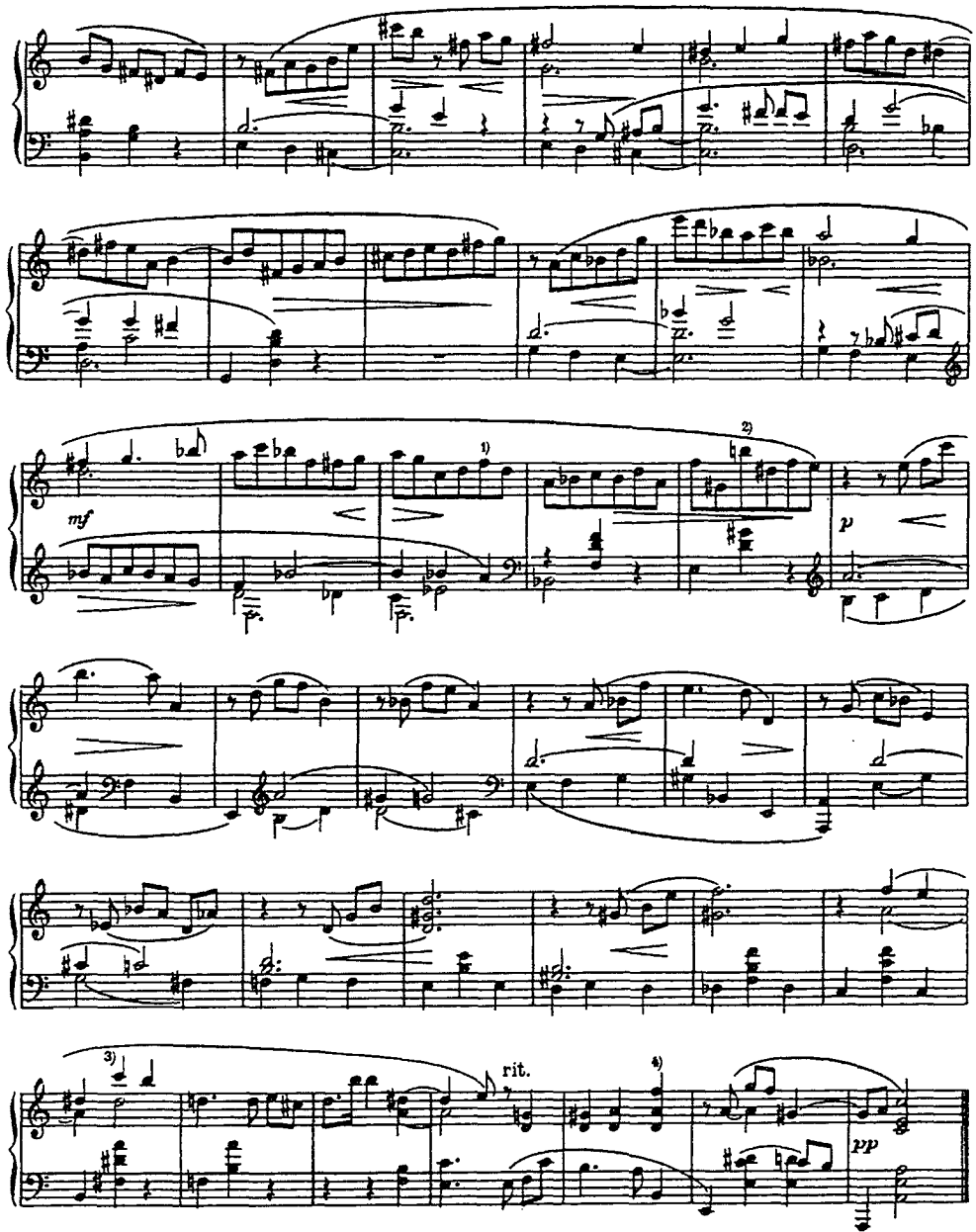


Nº 2



1) According to the composer's instructions, a brief caesura, with following *pp*, is possible here.

2) ___ (according to the composer's instructions).



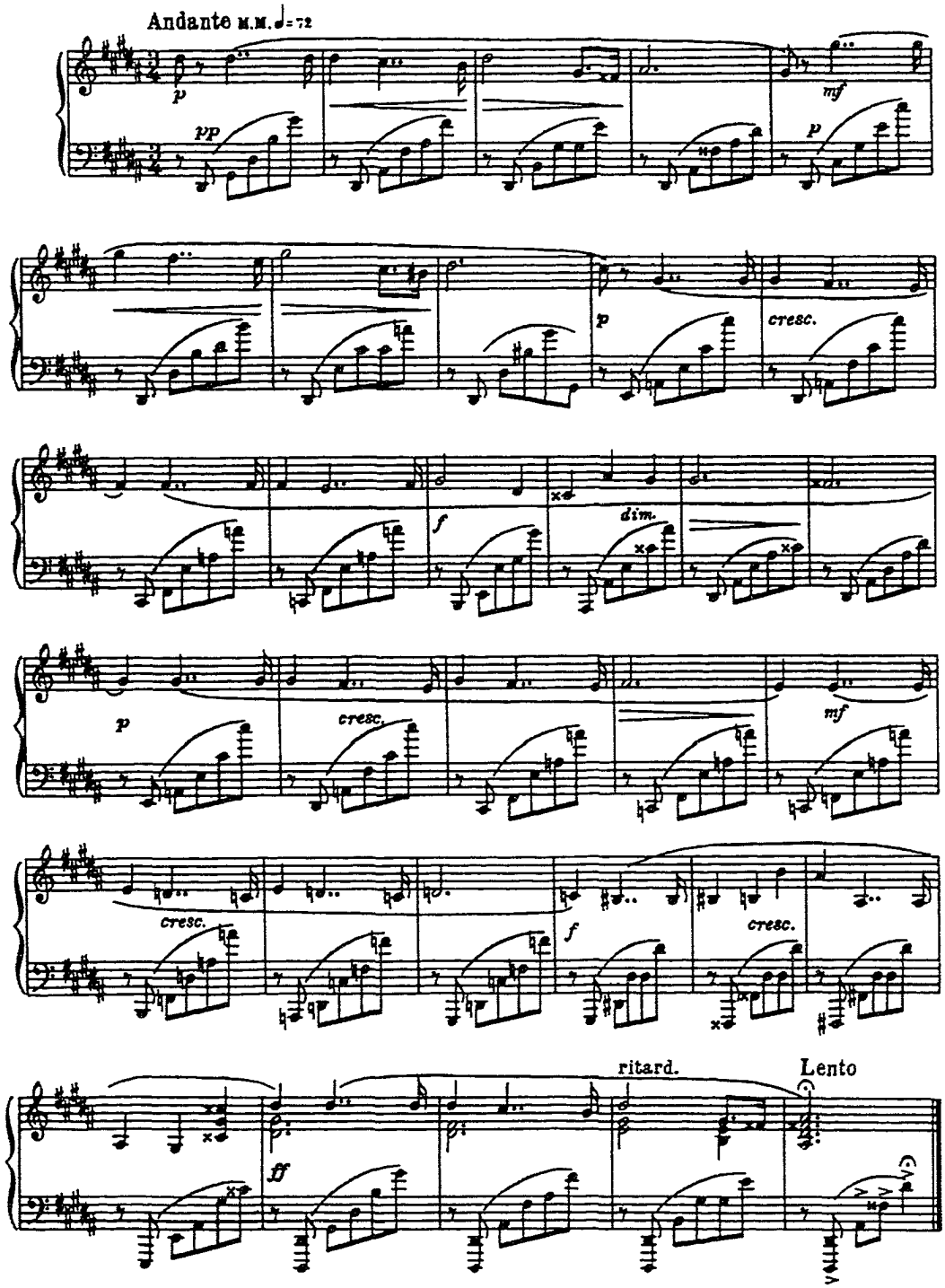
1) *Accel.*
2) *pp* and *rit.* } (according to the composer's instructions).
3) See note 1.
4) See note 1.

Moscow, November 1895

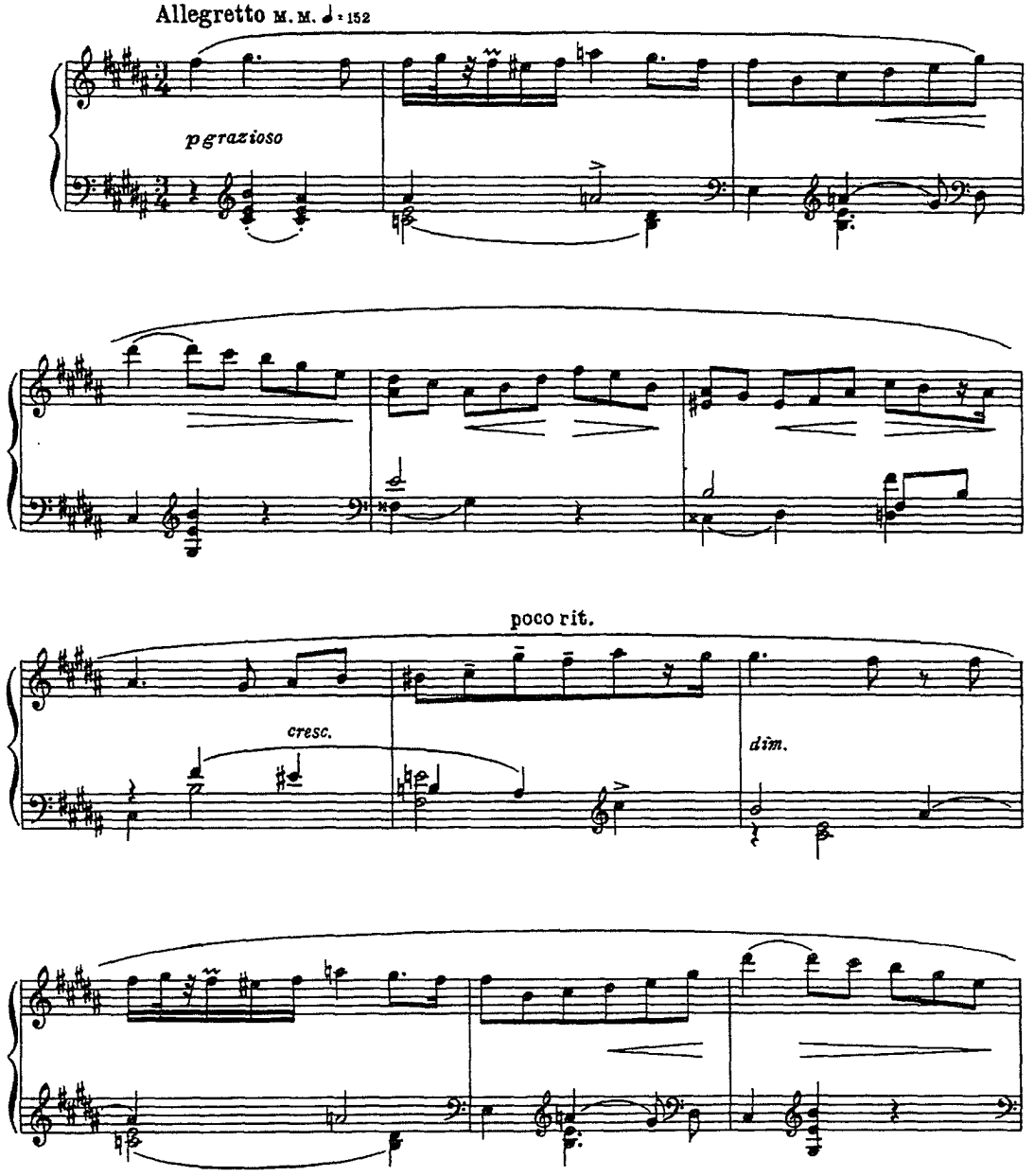
Preludes: Op. 11 (Part I), No. 2

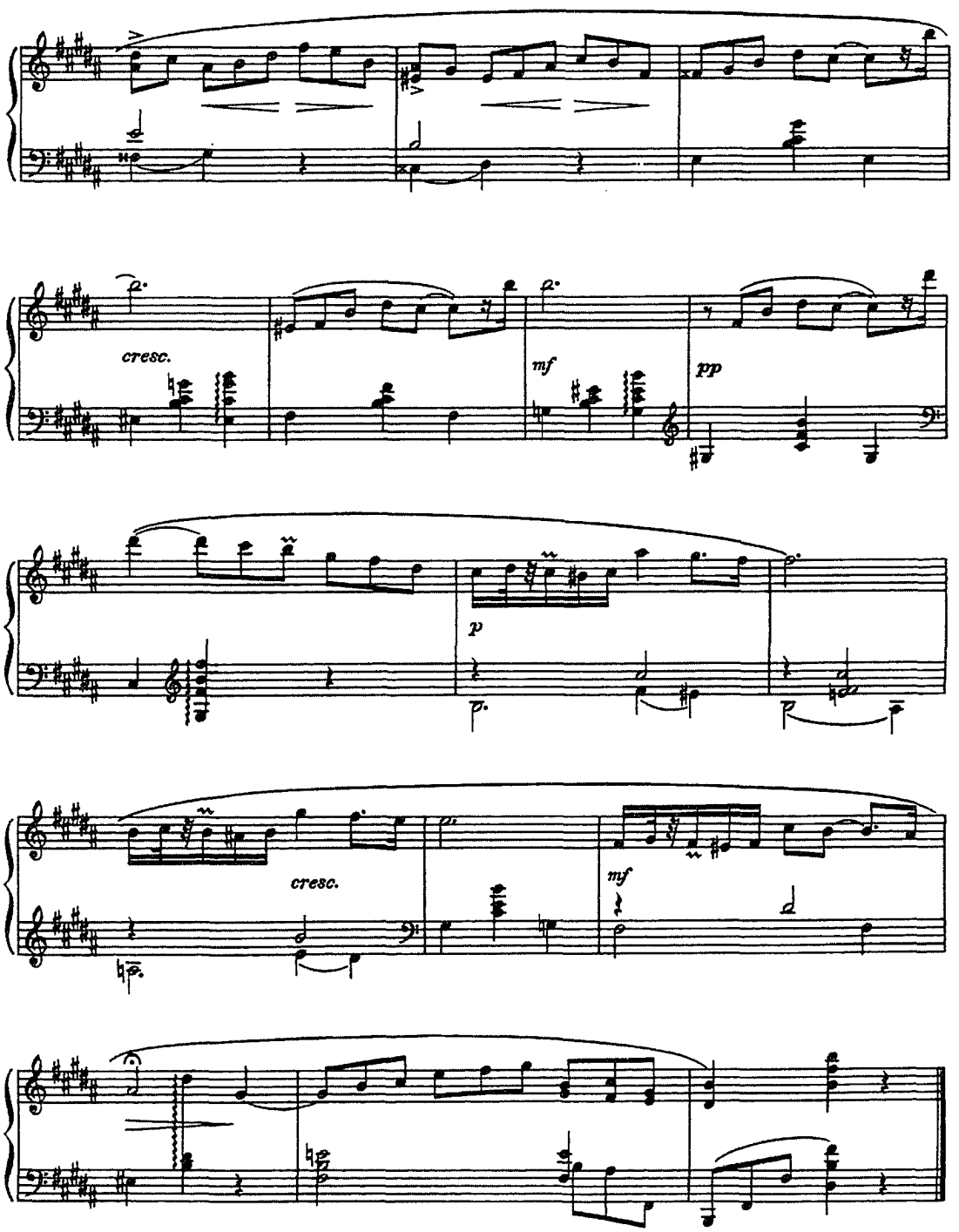
Four Preludes, Op. 22 (1897)

Nº 1



№ 3





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A

REQUIEM

for MEZZOSOPRANO, MIXED CHORUS, AND ORCHESTRA

by

MARTIN KUTNOWSKI

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

2003

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 29, 2003
Date

L. Poundie Burstein
Chair of Examining Committee

August 5, 2003
Date

David Olan (PB)
David Olan
Executive Officer

Professor Charles Burkhart

Professor David Olan

Professor William Rothstein

Professor Bruce Saylor

Professor Joseph N. Straus
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract:

Requiem, for Mezzo-Soprano, Mixed Chorus, and Orchestra

by

MARTIN KUTNOWSKI

Adviser: Professor Bruce Saylor

A composition in four movements, commissioned by Associazione Romana di Musica Sacra e Religiosa (A.R.Mu.S.eR) for the 2001 edition of Incontri di Musica Sacra Contemporanea. The piece was premiered in San Nicola di Bari, Italy, in December 1, 2001. Perfomers: Constance Beavon, mezzo-soprano, Paolo Lepore, conductor, Orchestra Sinfonica "G. Paisiello" della Provincia di Taranto, and Debreceni Kodaly Korus.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This piece was written for a friend, Guillermo Castillón, also a teacher of music, who was my colleague at *Conservatorio Manuel de Falla*, in Buenos Aires. A commission from an Italian association devoted to religious music—a contact generously provided by my advisor, Professor Bruce Saylor—gave me the opportunity to write the piece shortly after Mr. Castillón passed away in May 2001. The present version has been revised during the last year.

As I was writing a memorial for someone from Buenos Aires—a *porteño*—it was natural to use elements typical of the folk music of Buenos Aires, tango. But my association with tango—or my return to tango, for tango had always been with me—didn't start with this piece. Rather, tango has permeated my compositional output all of my life. In any case, seeing the obvious—as seeing one's essence—sometimes is difficult. For this reason, I would like to thank Professor Saylor for his helping me find and embrace my own musical voice. He was my teacher and mentor through all the years of my master's degree and my doctorate; I would simply not be the composer I am today had I not been his student.

I also want to thank Bruno Cinquegrani for his suggestions and comments, especially regarding the orchestration of this piece. His help, firmly grounded in his extensive conducting experience, was invaluable. A colleague and friend, over the years he has influenced not only my compositional style and technique but also many of my points of view about music.

I must also mention Professor Michael Czajkowski, my teacher and mentor during the four years in which I participated in the Aspen Music Festival and School, for the trust and confidence he deposited in me and the honesty and generosity of his teachings.

My gratitude also goes to mezzo-soprano Constance Beavon and to maestro Paolo Lepore, who respectively sung and conducted the premiere of this *Requiem* in San Nicola di Bari on December 1, 2001.

To conclude, I would like to mention here many of the world-class artists that generously provided their time and talent to read or perform my music. No composer could develop his style without this crucial vote of confidence. My deep gratitude goes to Ana María Trenchi de Bottazzi, Maria Bachmann, Linda Chesis, Darrell Rosenbluth, Jay Fishmann, Venancio Rius Martí, Danny Driver, Roger Arve Vigulf, Bertrand Giraud, Marcela Fiorillo, Michaela Harel, Adelaide and Nicole Federici, Elena Rojas, Myron Rosenblum, Laura Thompson, James Johnston, Simon Chang, Misha Santora, Gerard Doherty, Molly Morkowski, Blair McMillan, Konstanza Chernov, David Gabrovek, Maria Fernanda Bruno, and Juan Kaloustián.

REQUIEM

Requiem Aeternam

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Kyrie Eleison

Kyrie Eleison.

Pie Jesu

Pie Jesu Domine,
Dona eis requiem.

Lacrymosa dies illa,
Qua resurget ex favilla,
Judicandus homo reus,
Huic ergo parce Deus.

Pie Jesu Domine,
Dona eis requiem.

Recordare Jesu pie
Quam sua causa tuae vitae
Ne me perdas illa die
Recordare Jesu

Pie Jesu Domine,
Dona eis requiem.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
Misere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis pecatta mundi,
Dona eis requiem.

Amen.

INSTRUMENTATION

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets in Bb
2 Bassoons

2 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in B♭
2 Trombones

Timpani

Solo Mezzo-Soprano

Mixed Chorus

Organ

Strings

Duration: ca. 24 min.

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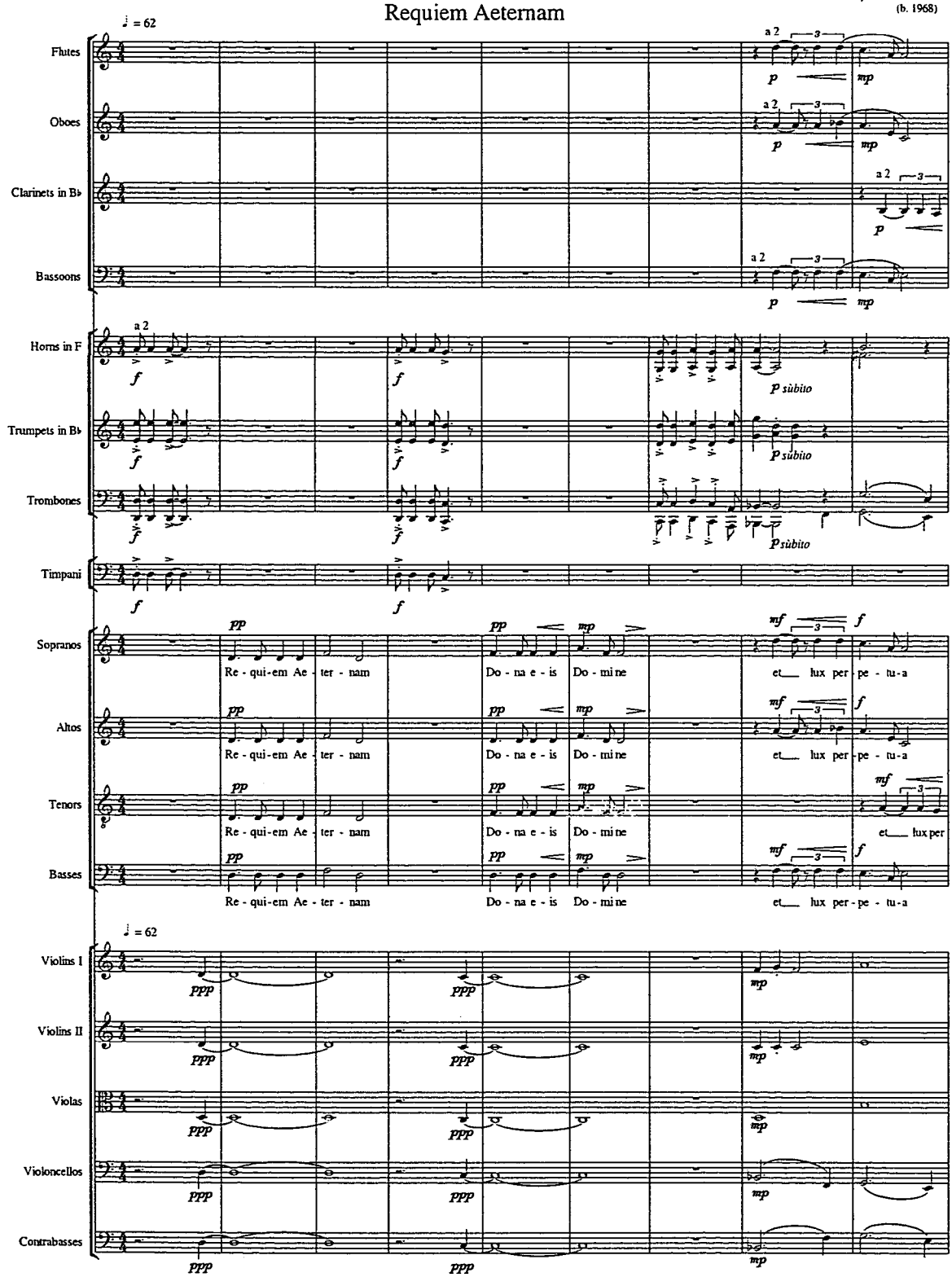
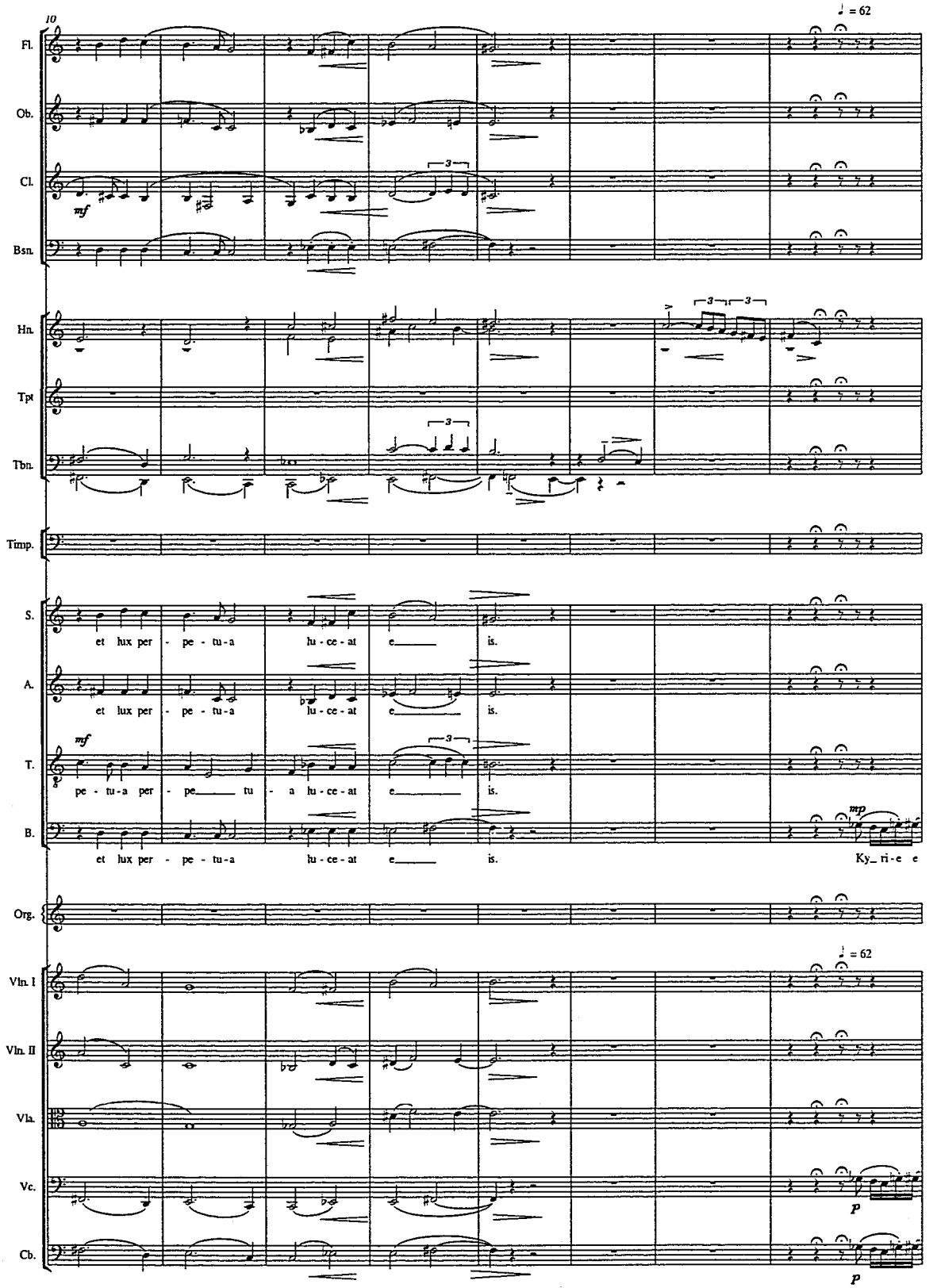
REQUIEM

Tranposed Score

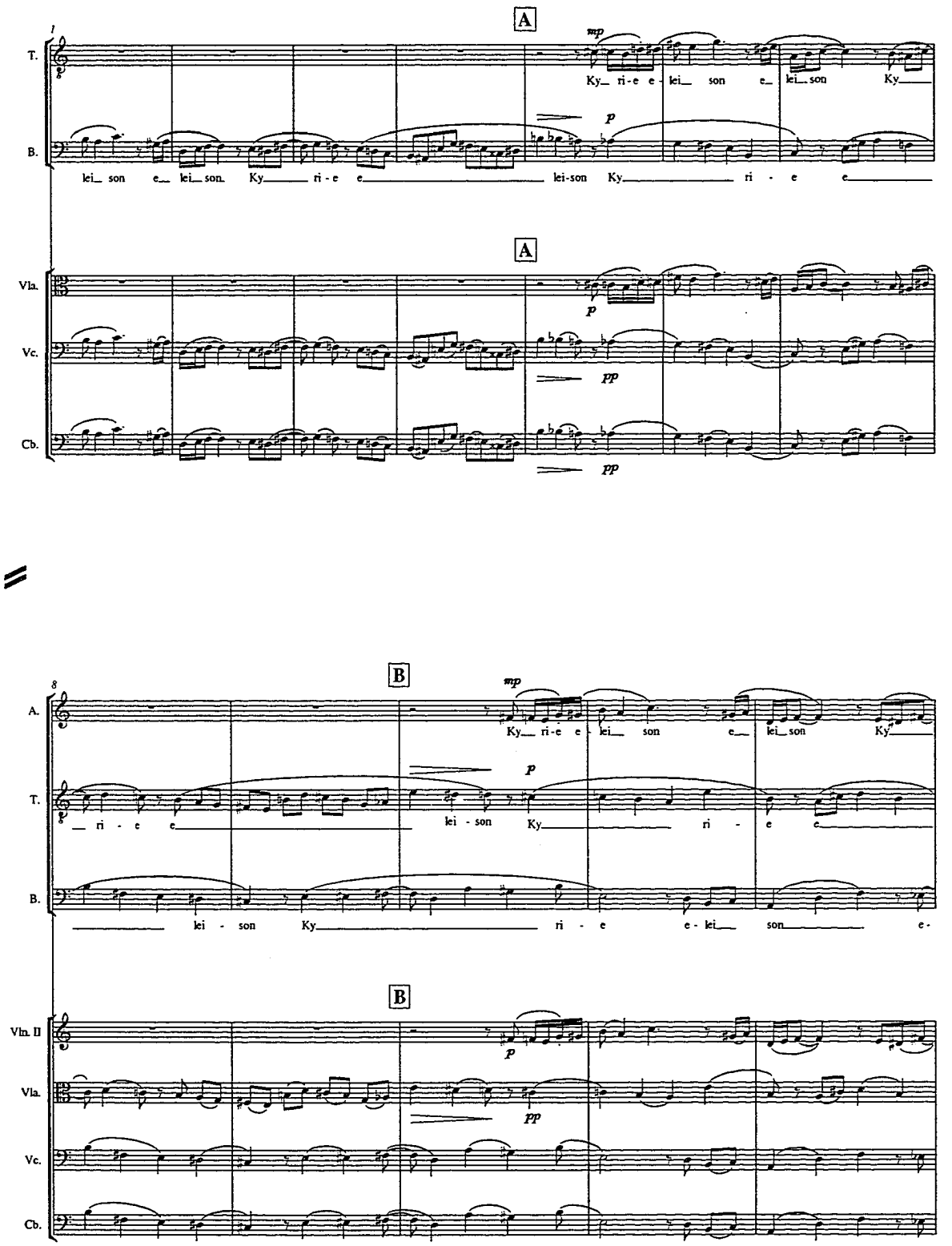
by Martín Kutnowski
(b. 1968)

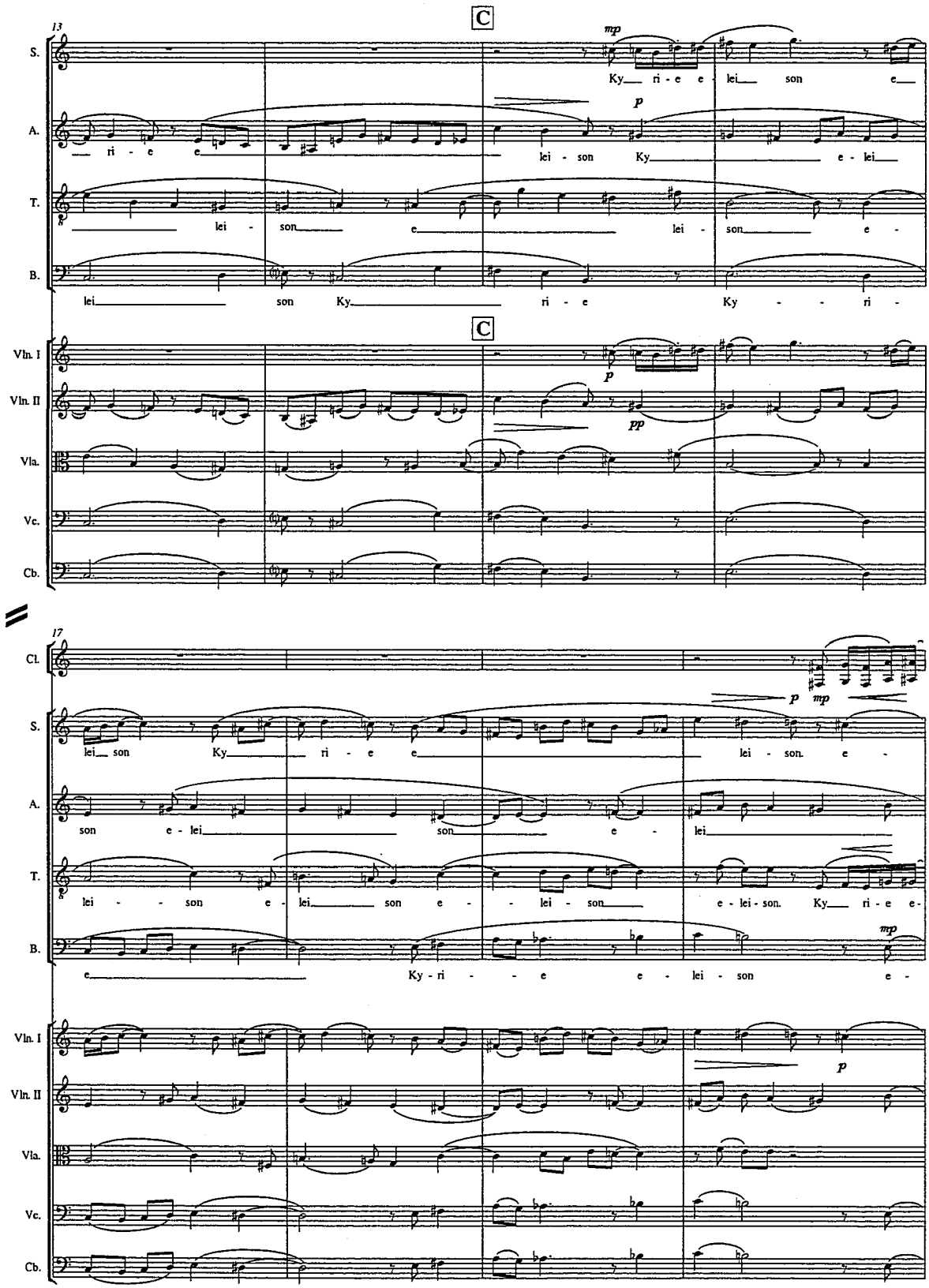
Requiem Aeternam

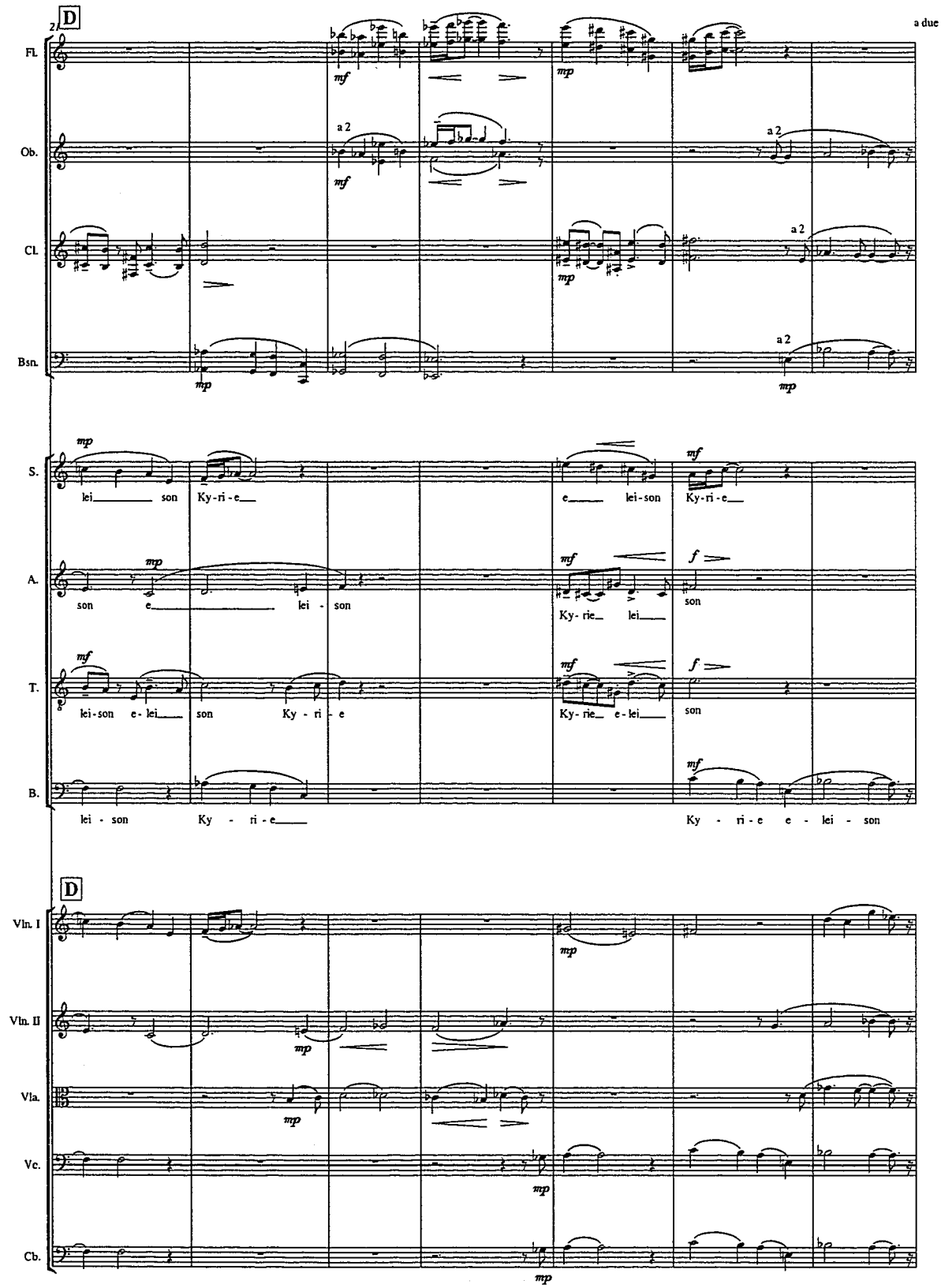


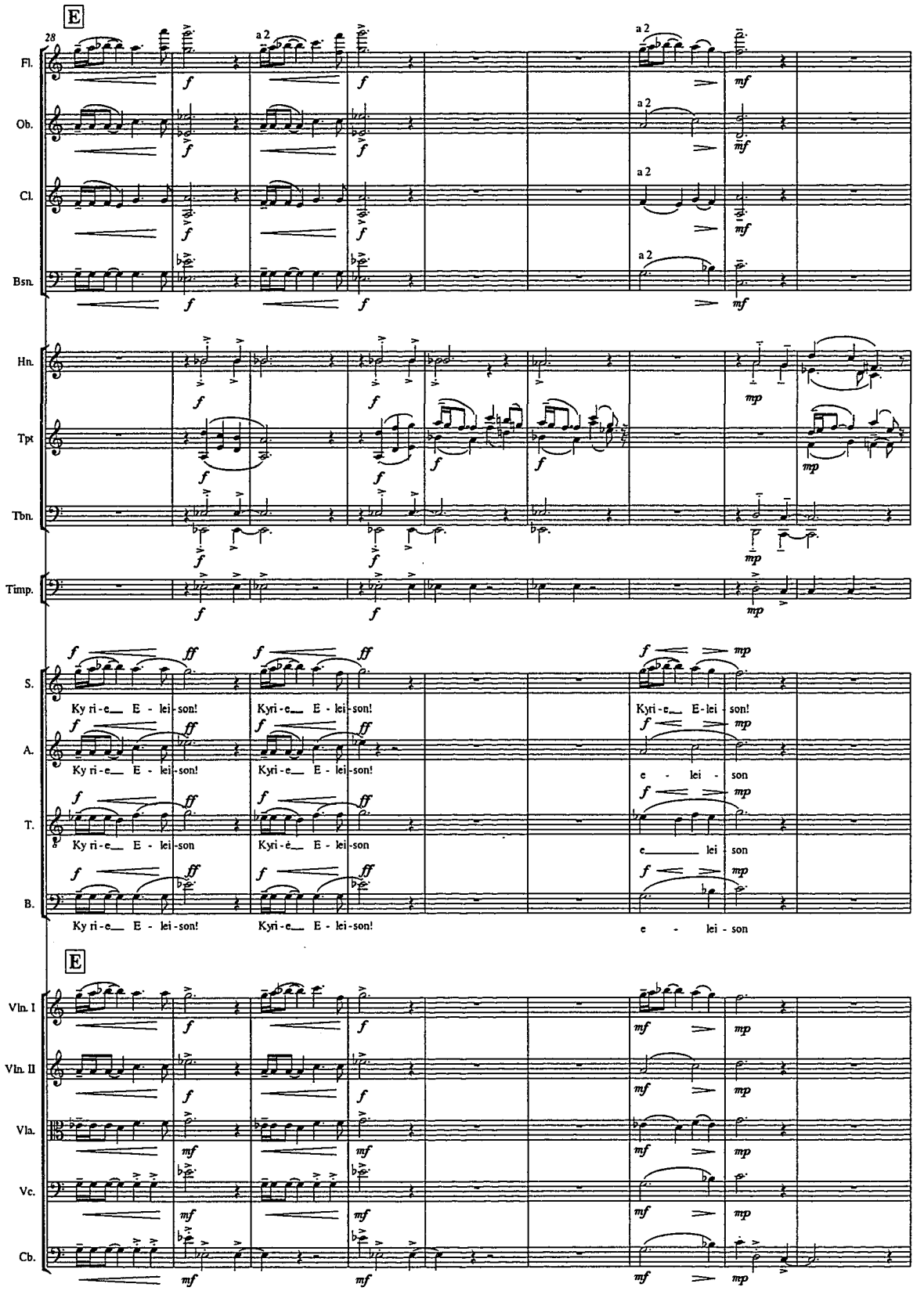


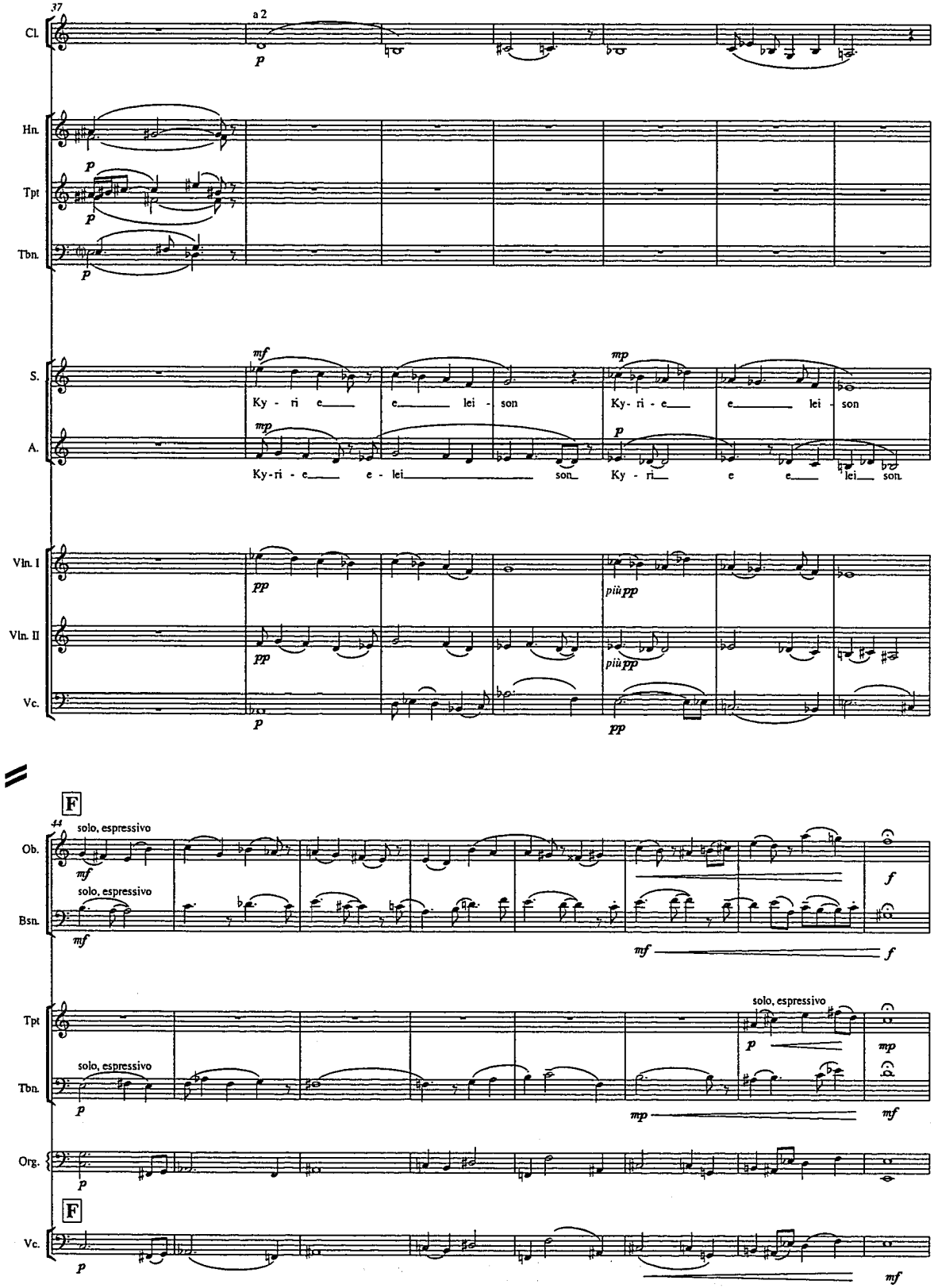
Kyrie

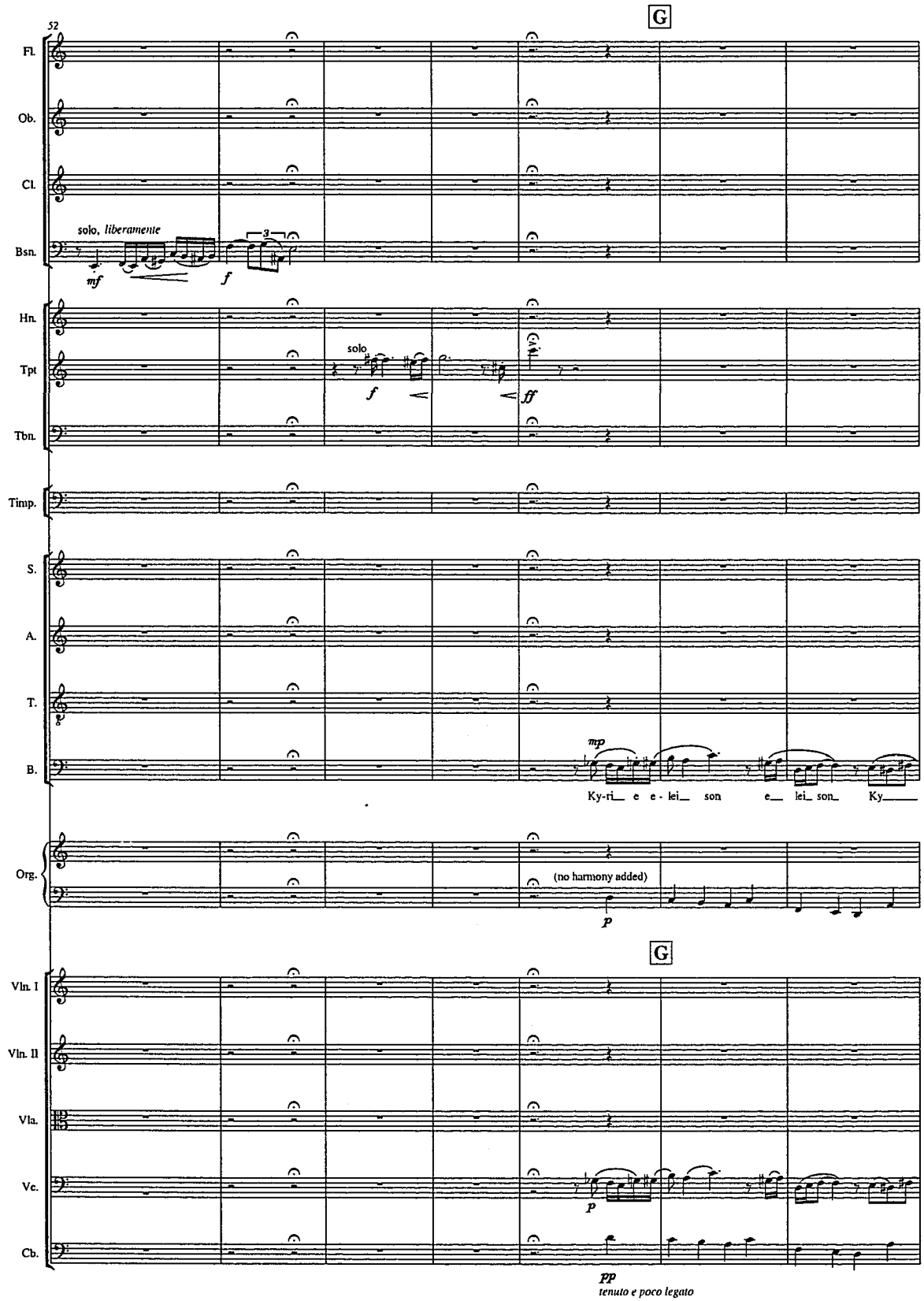


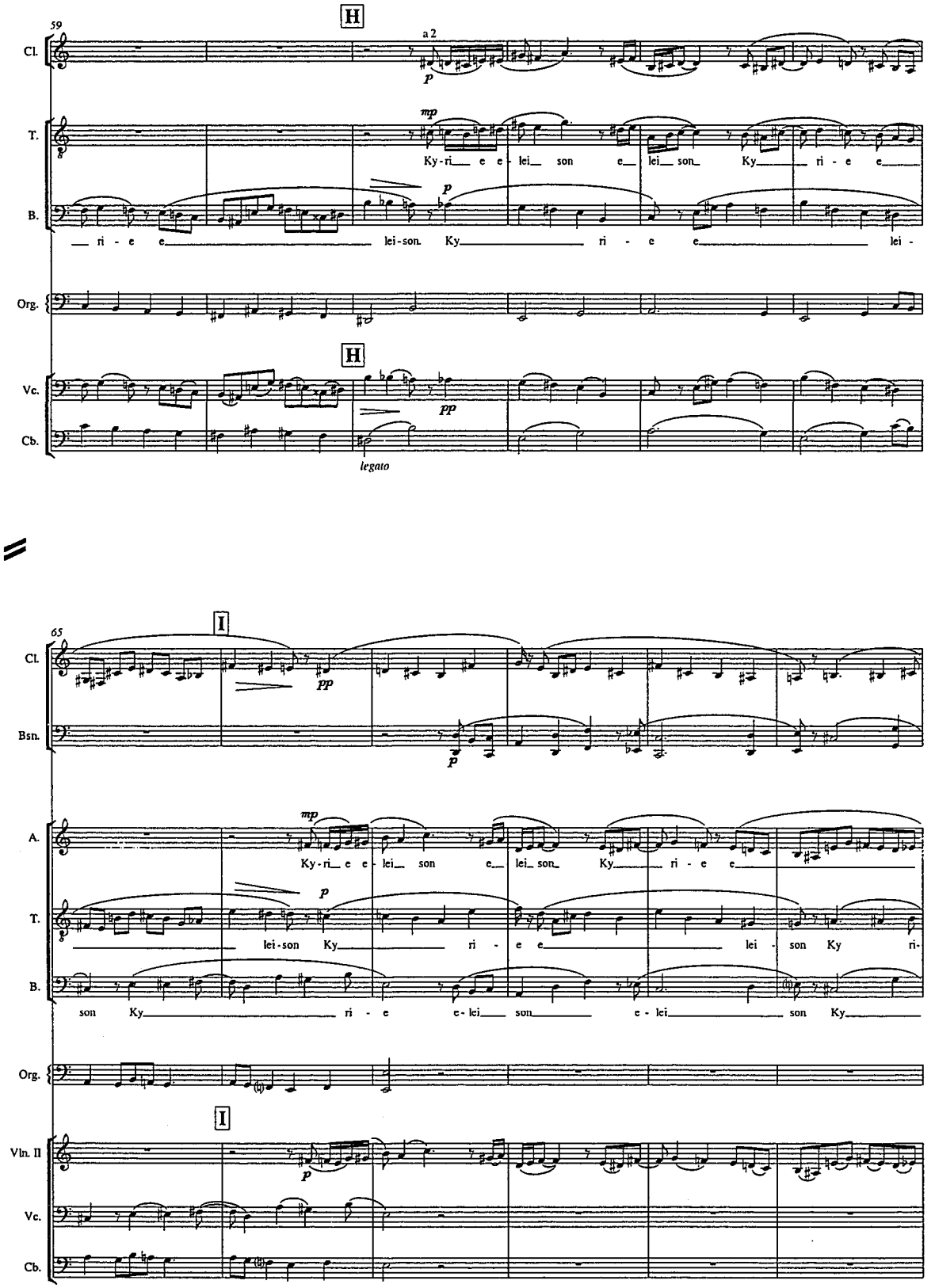


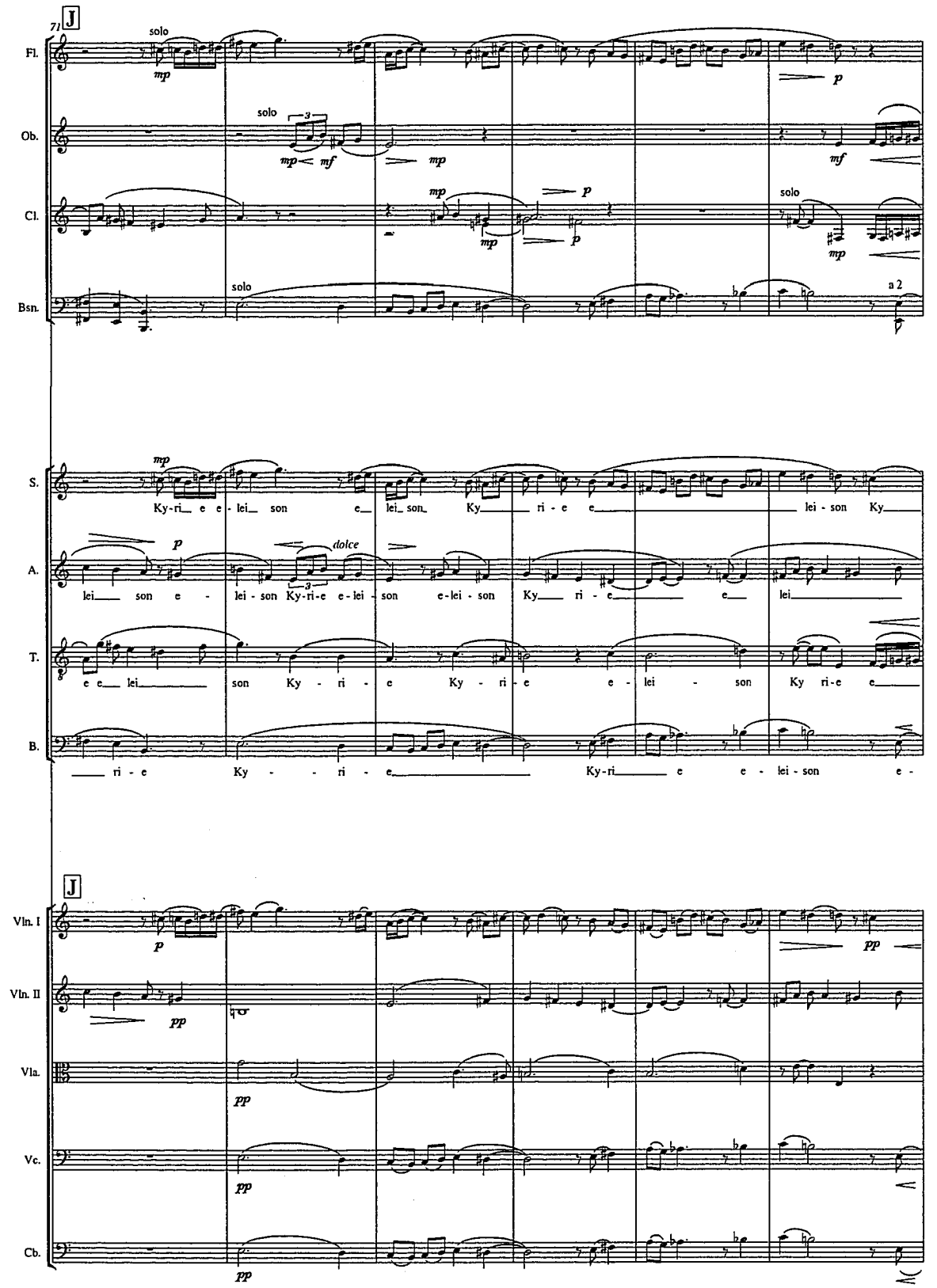


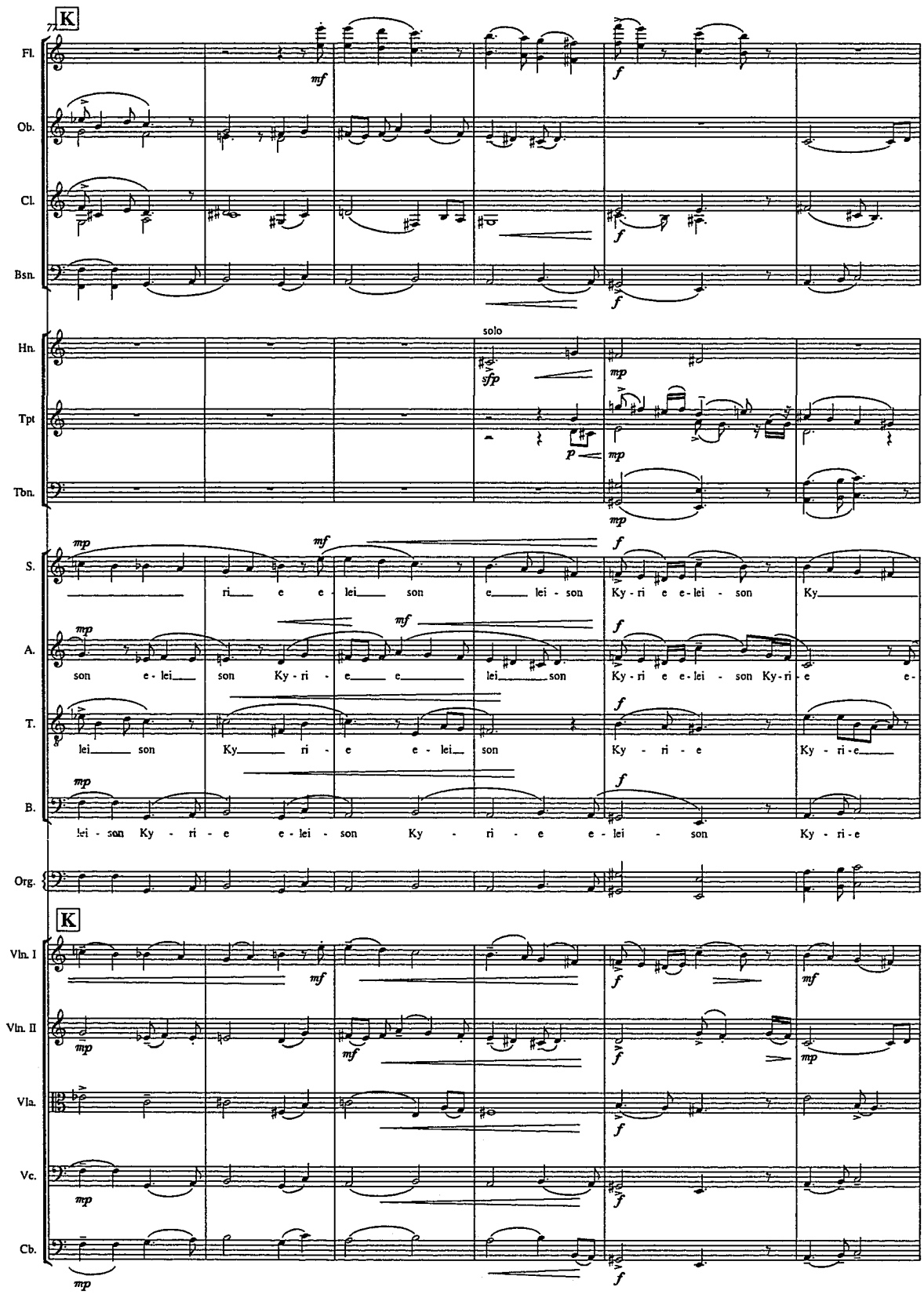


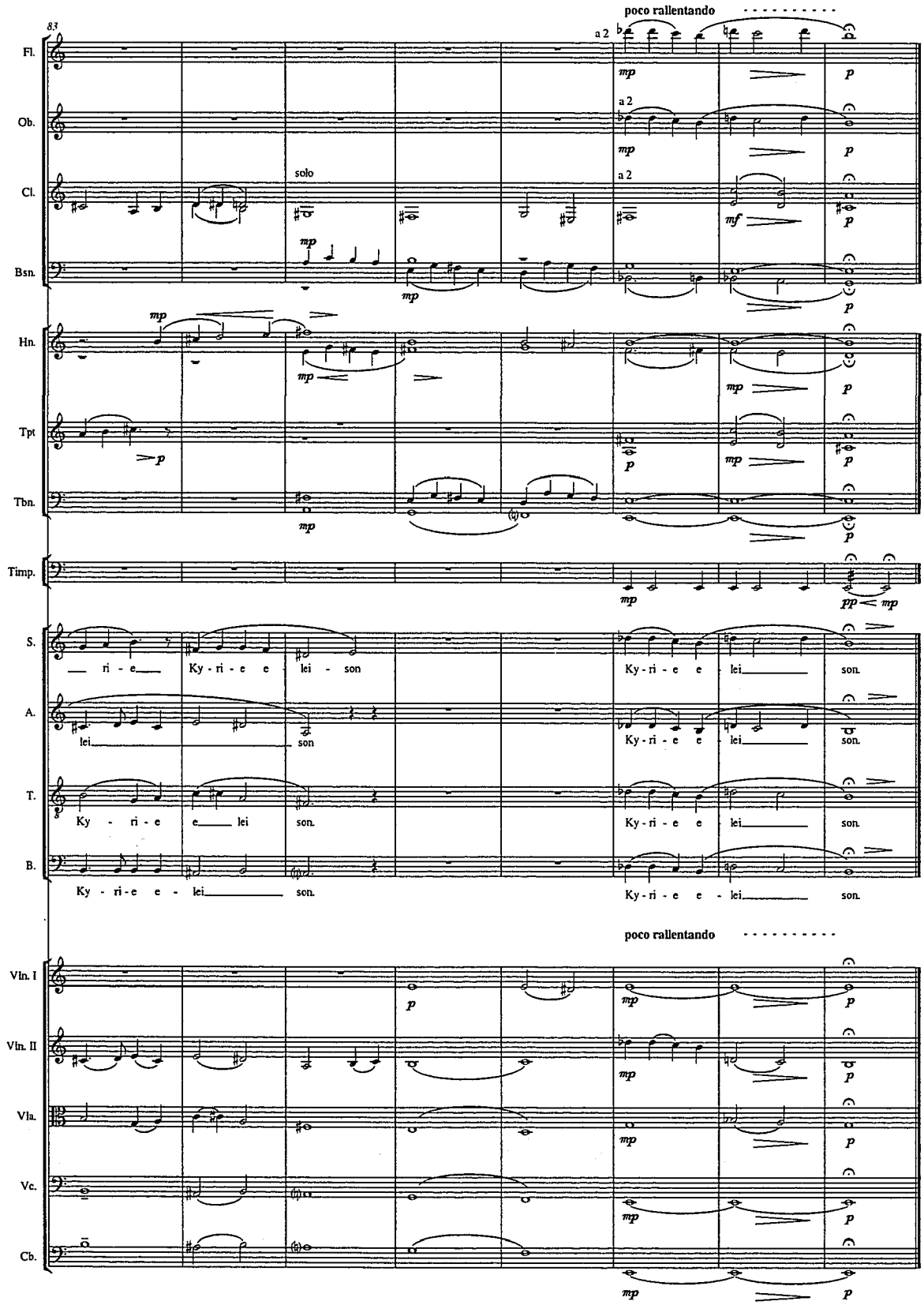




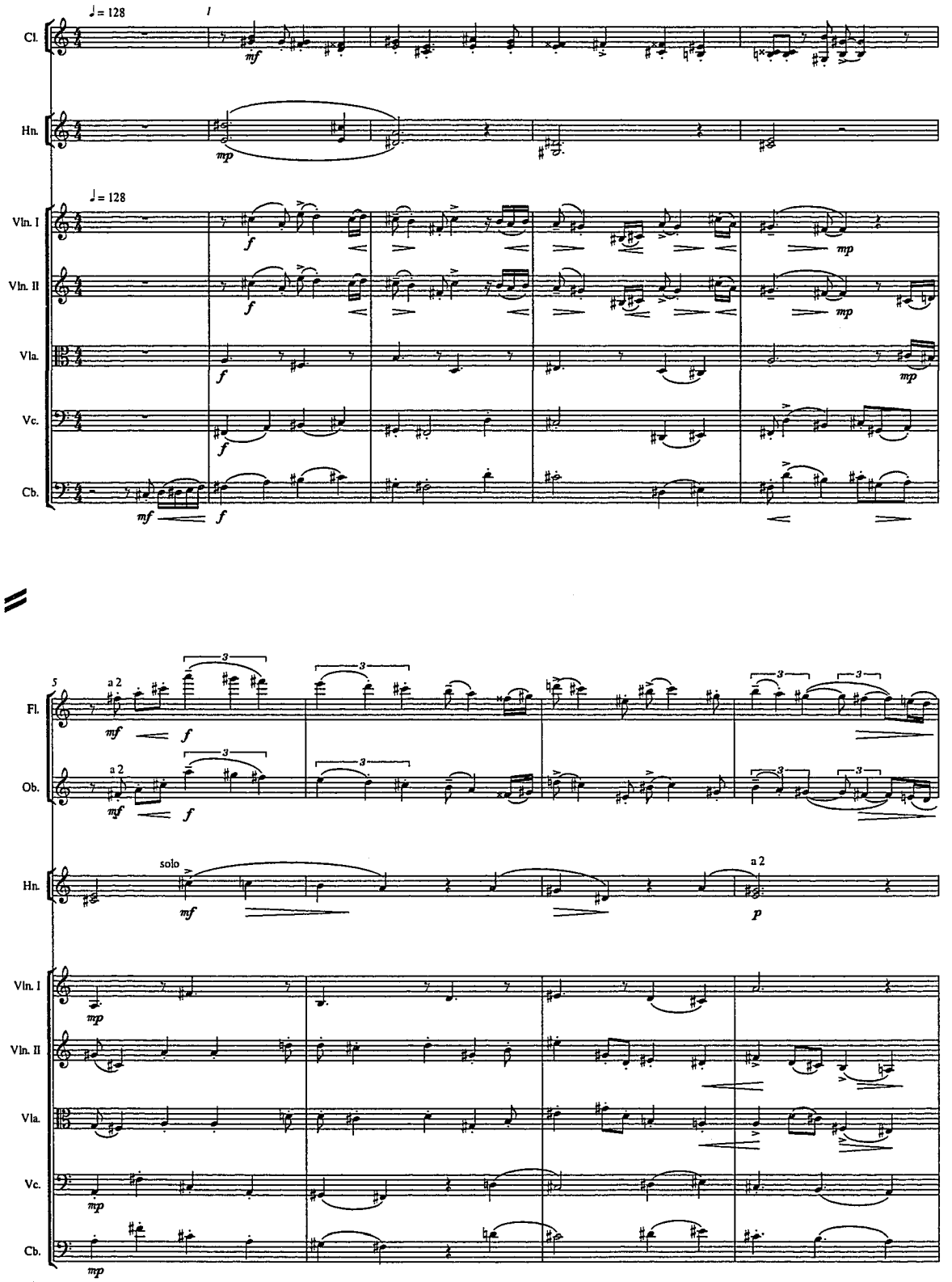


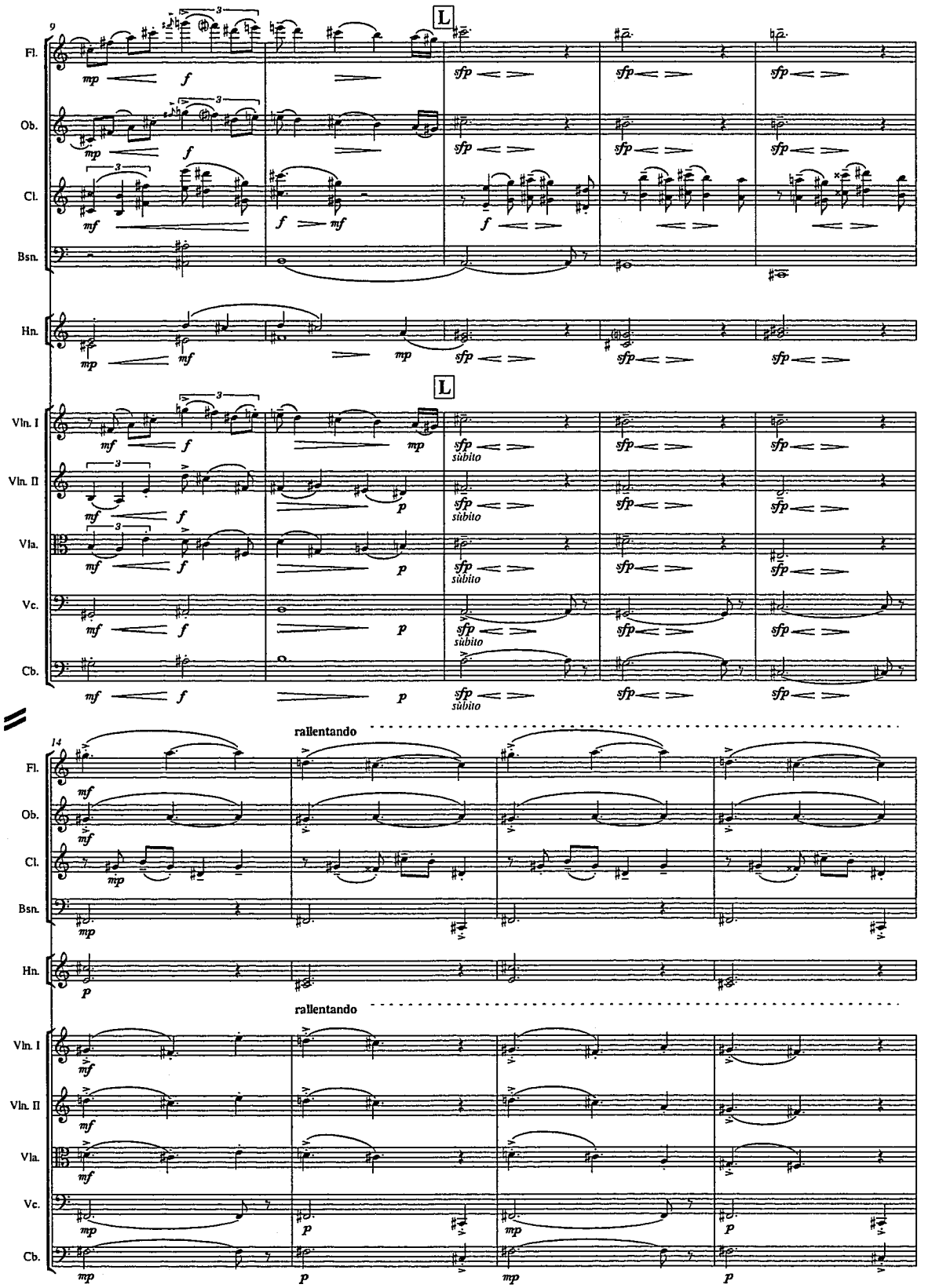


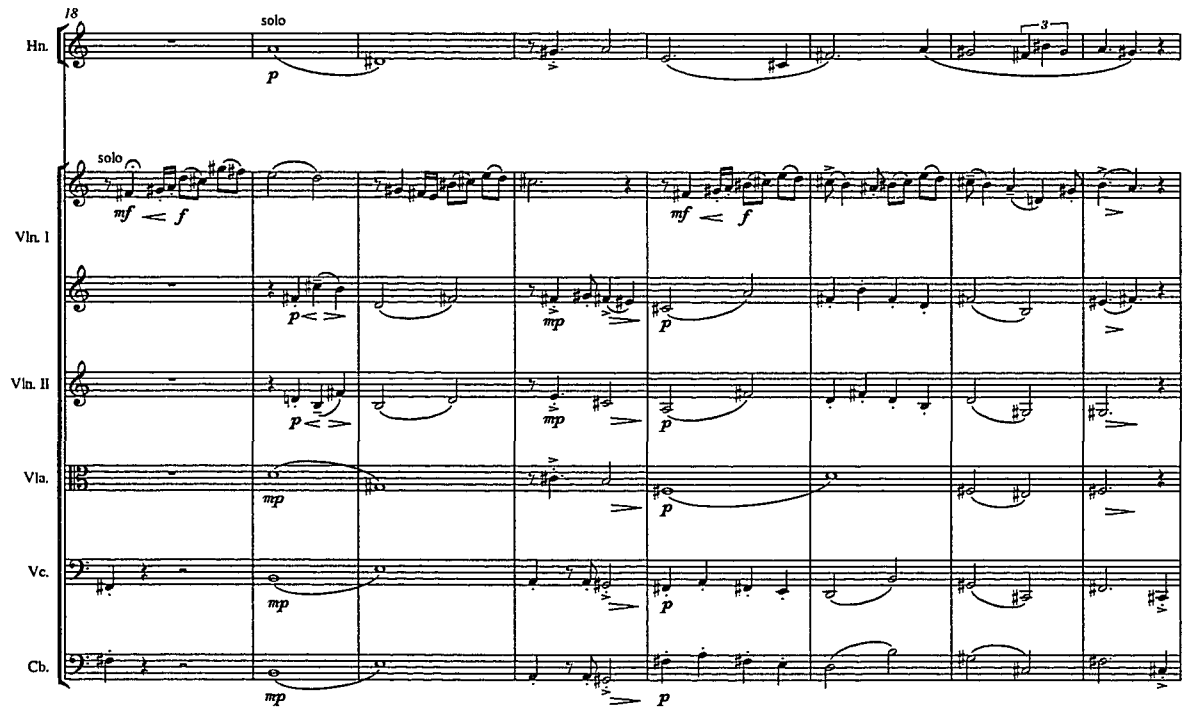


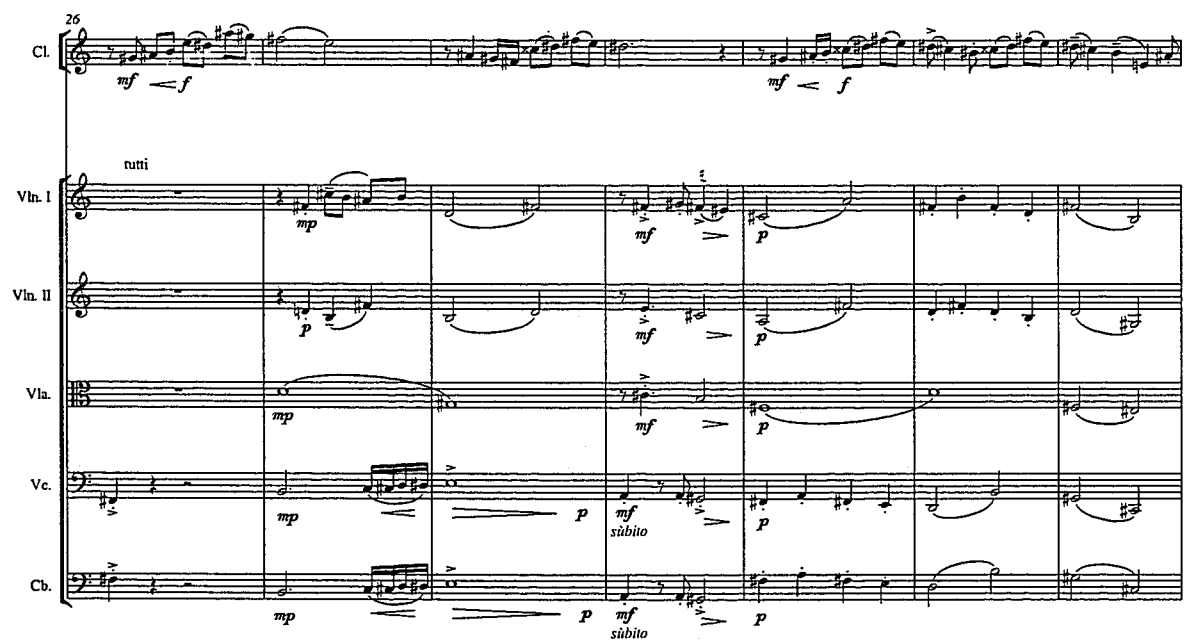


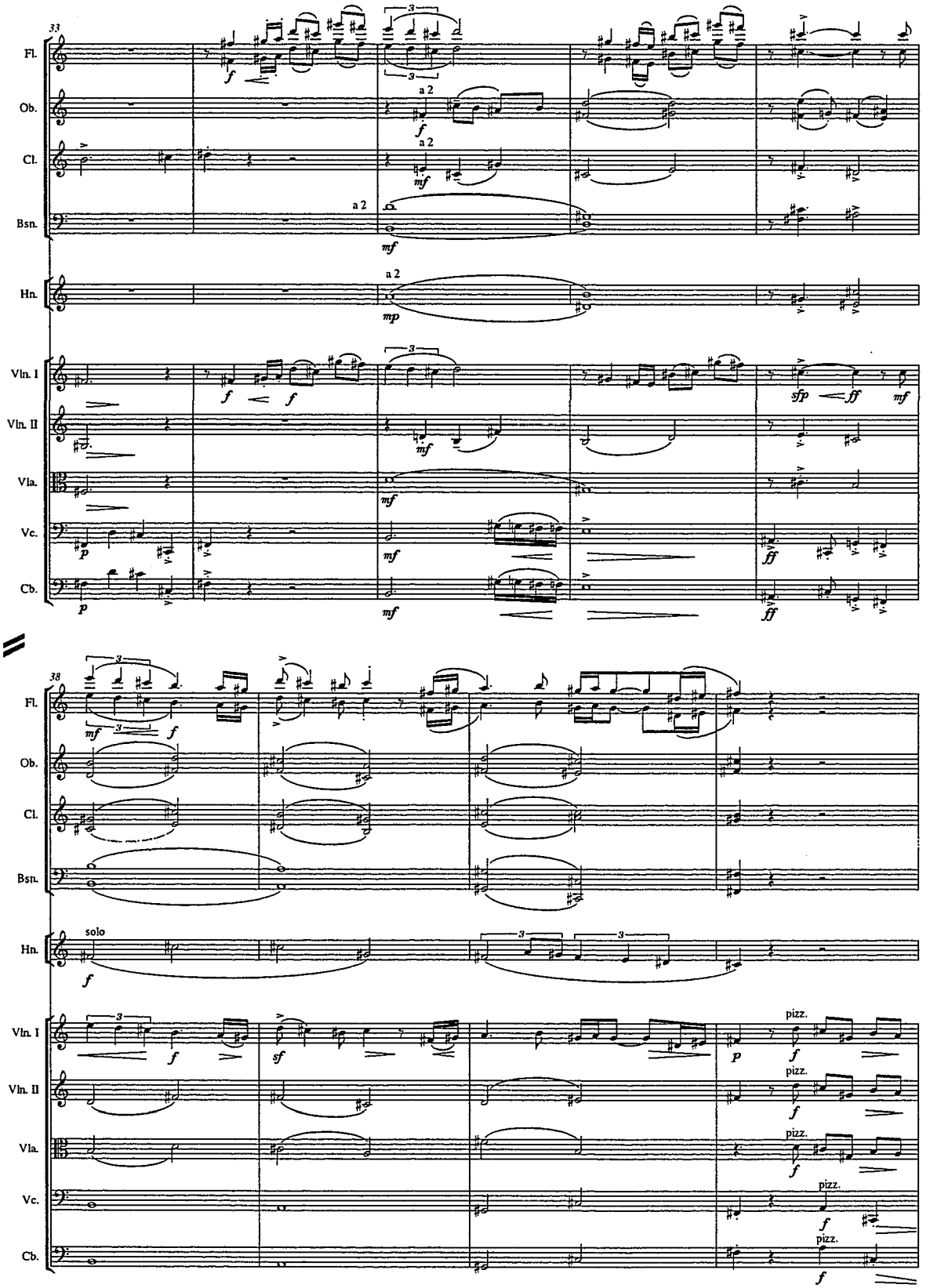
Pie Jesu

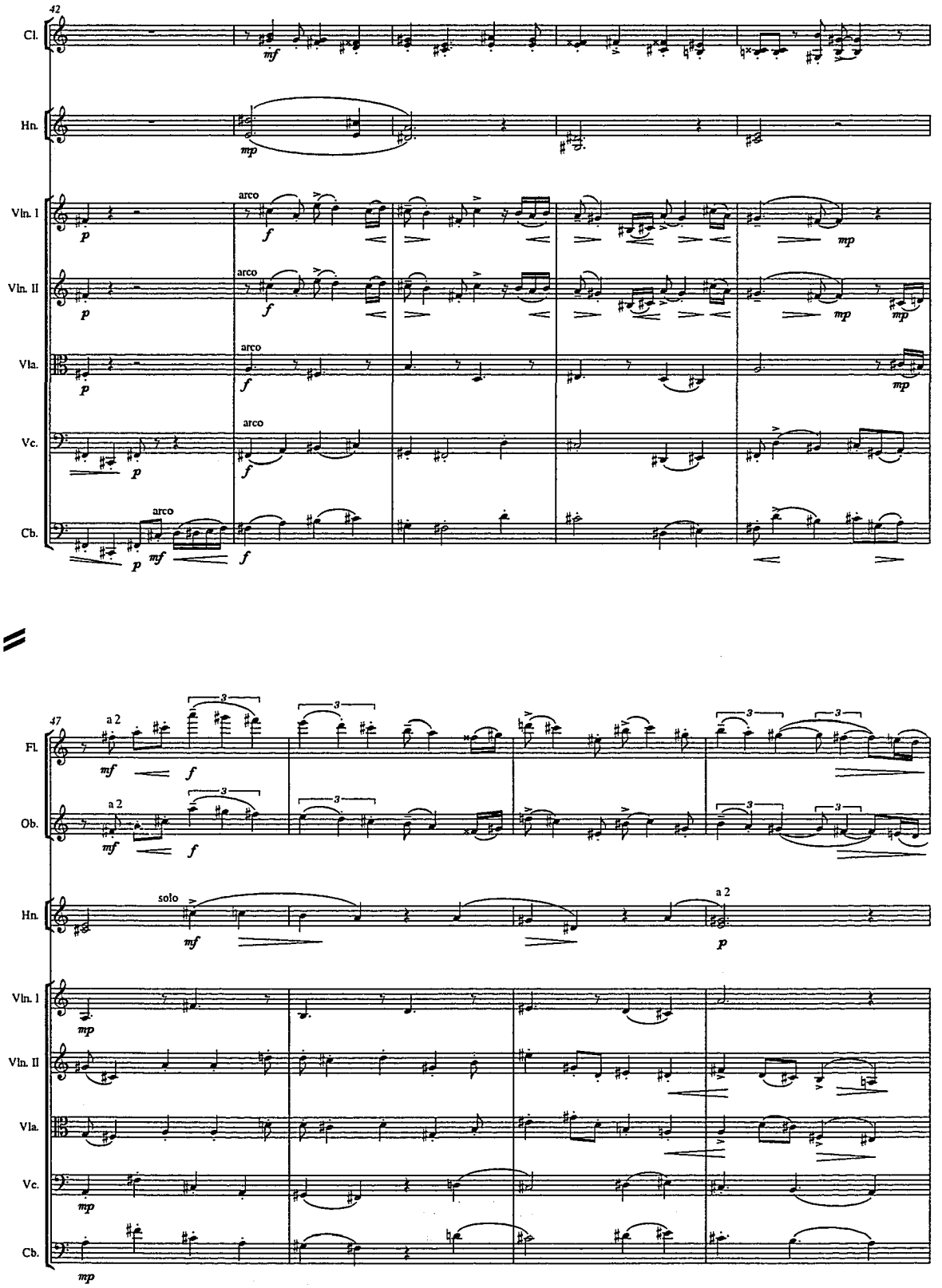


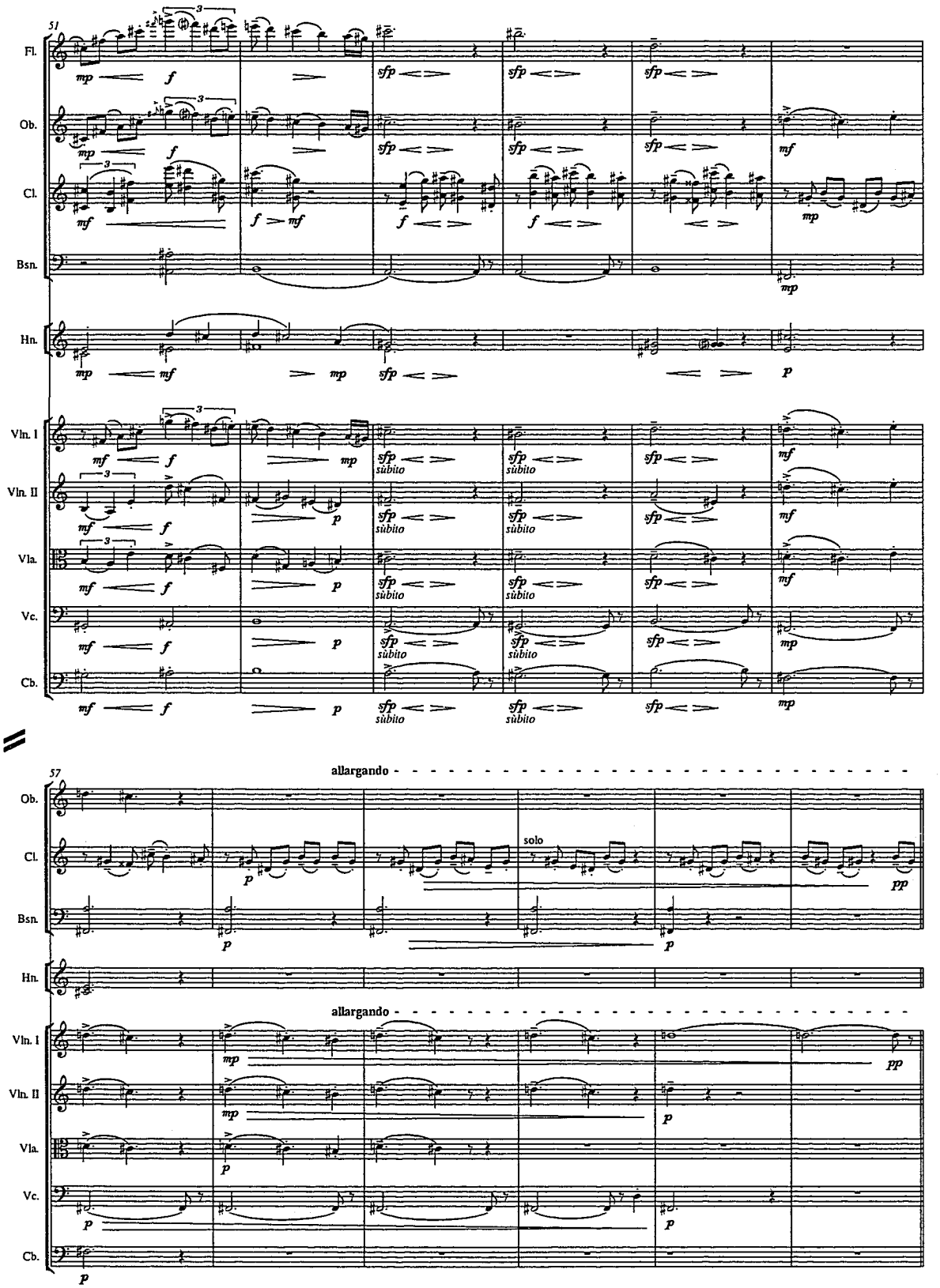


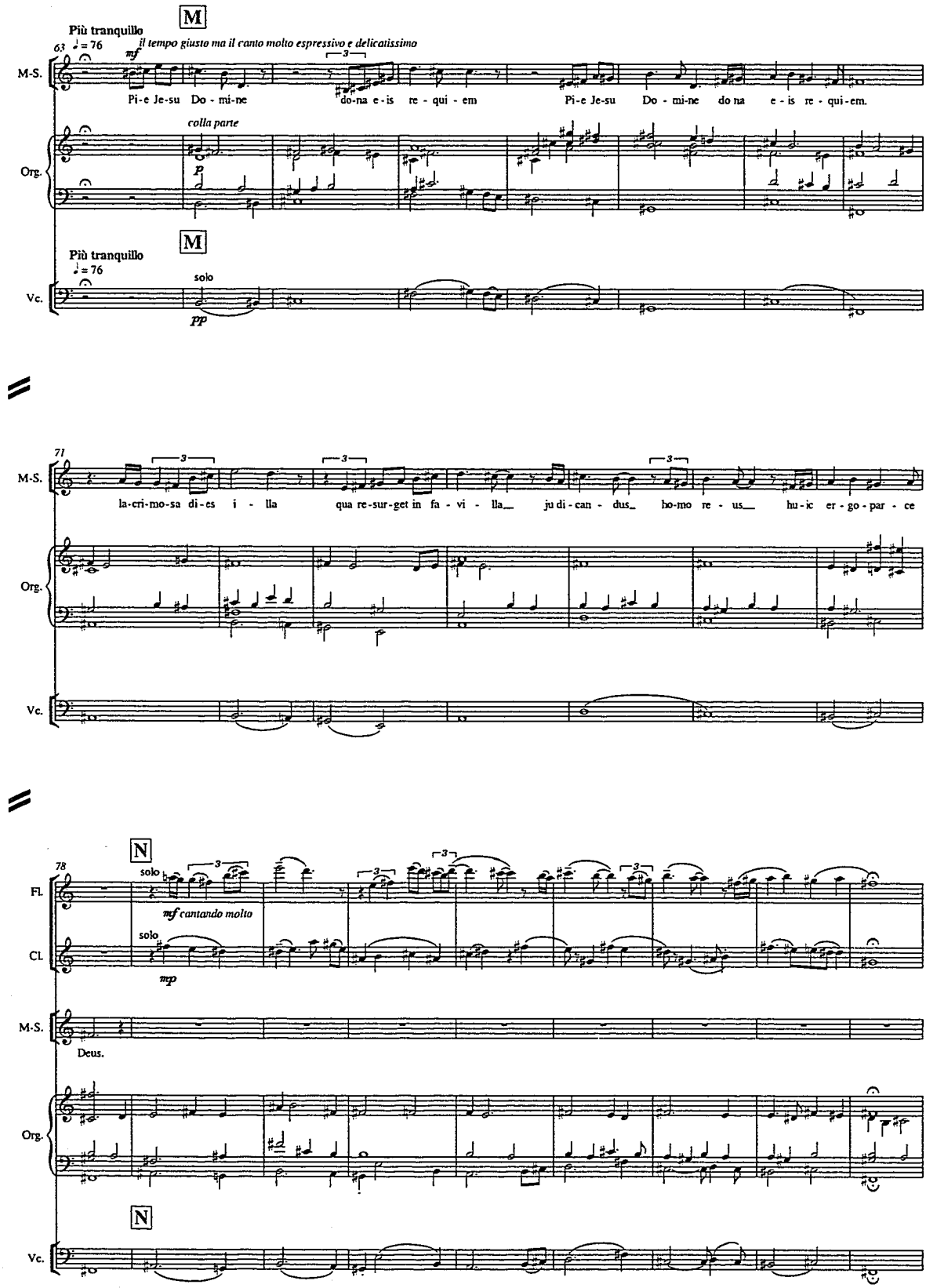


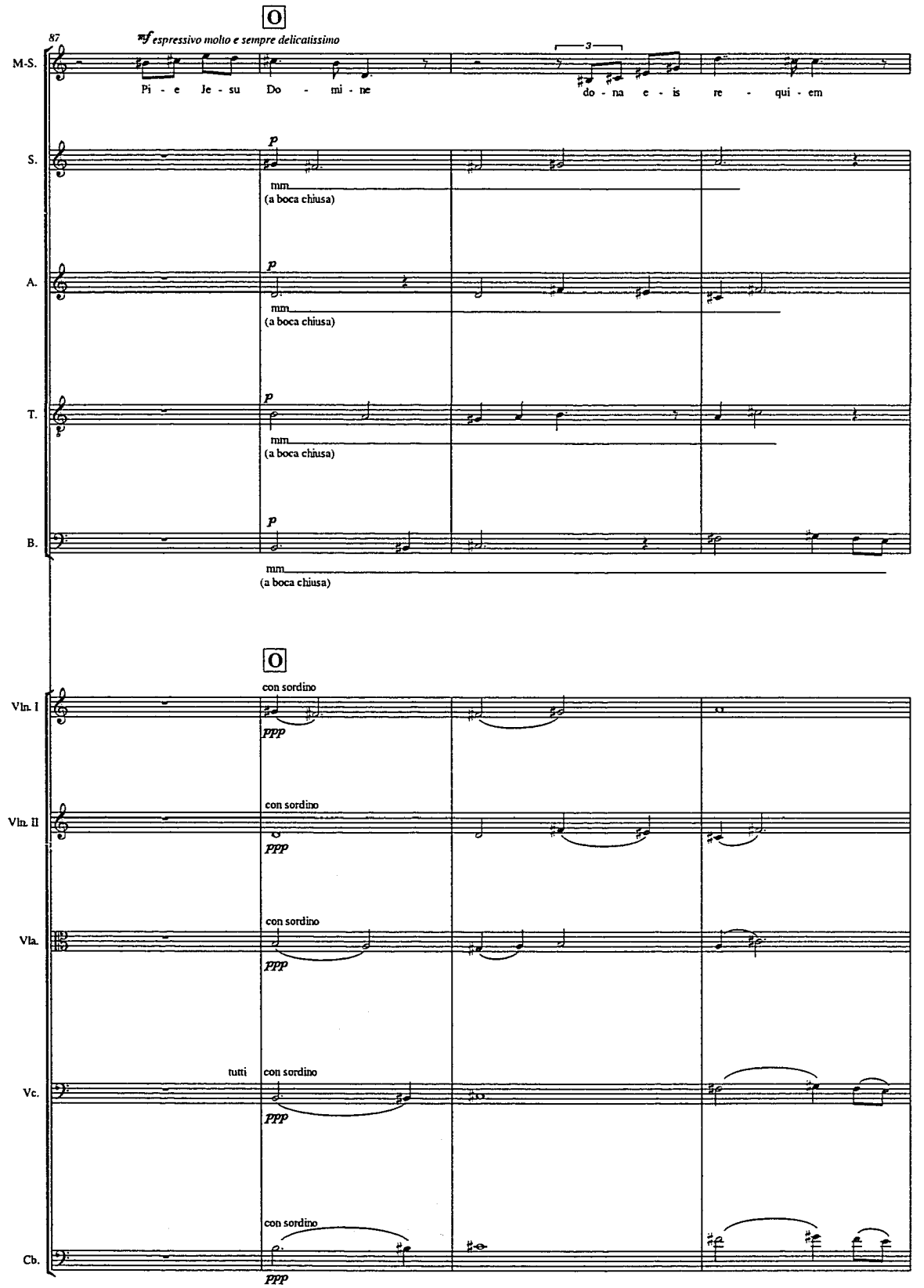


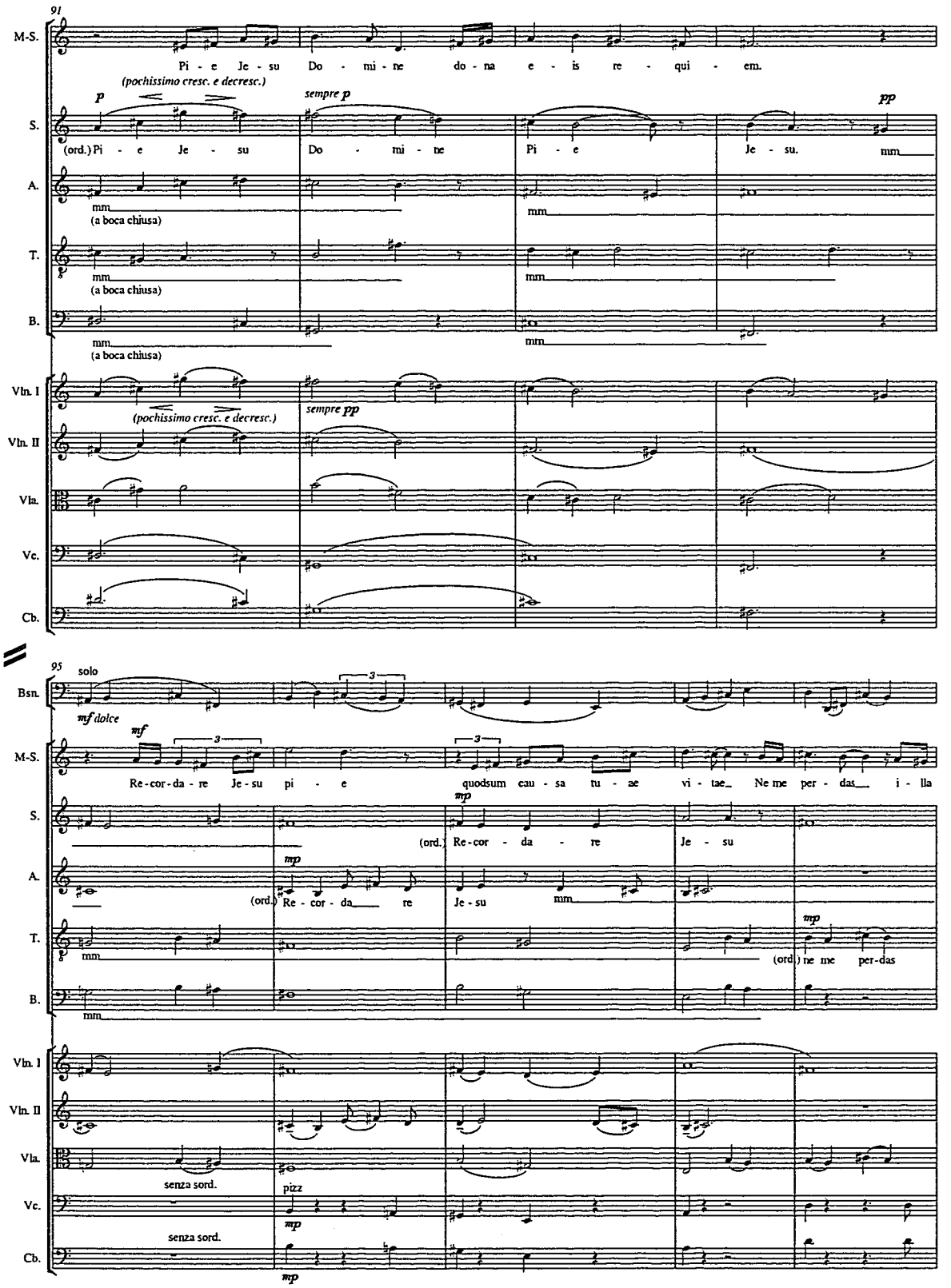


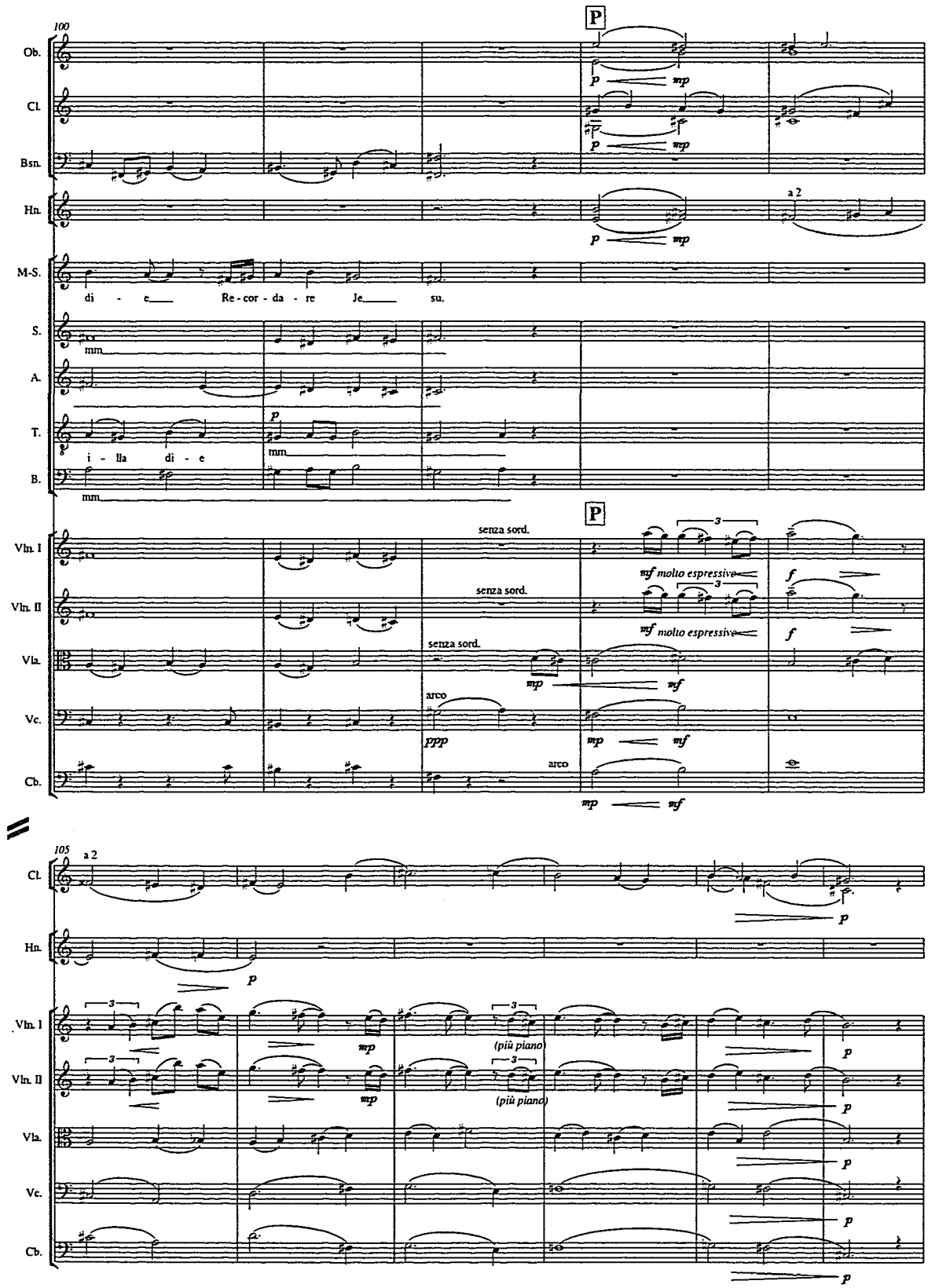


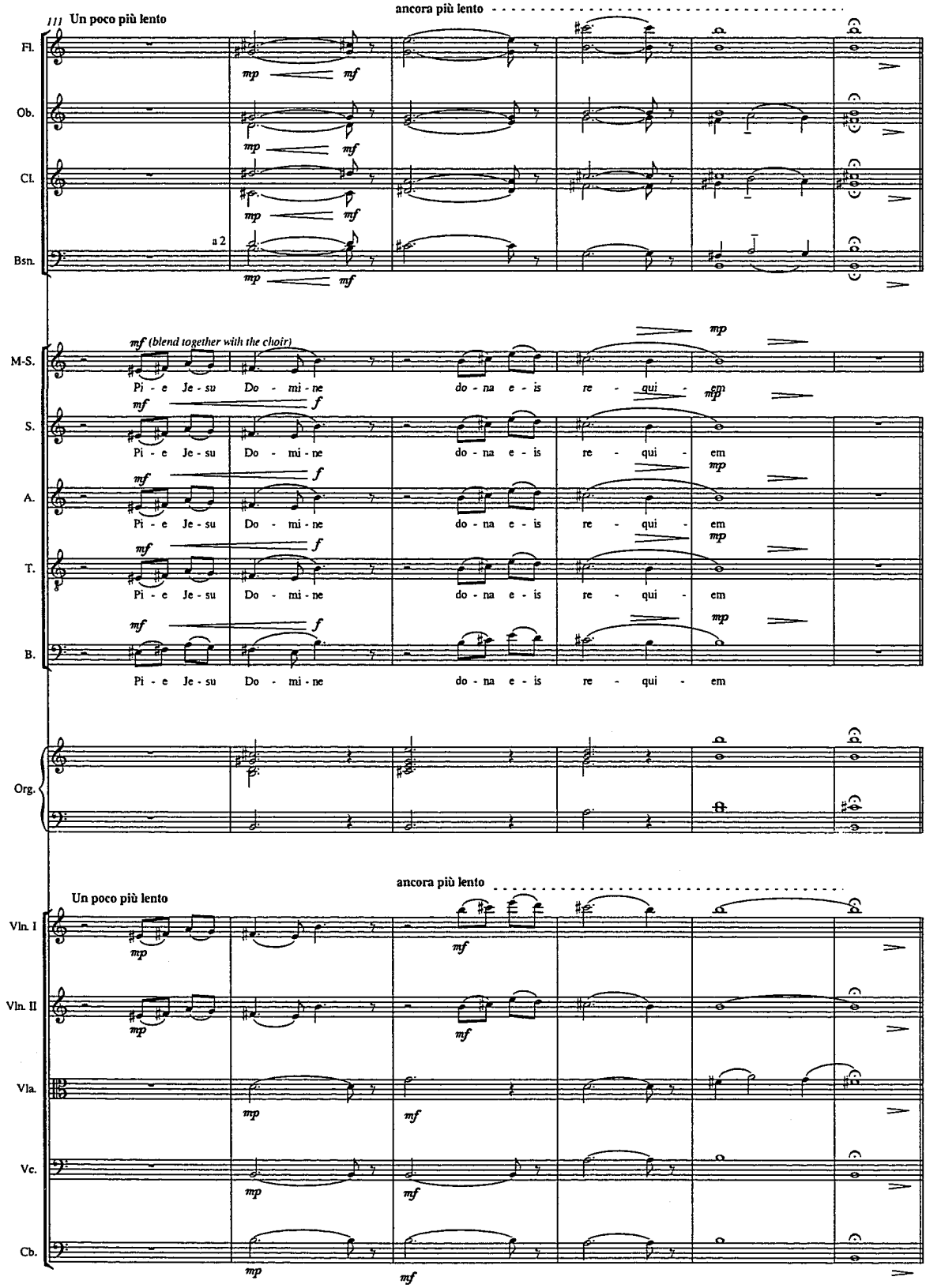


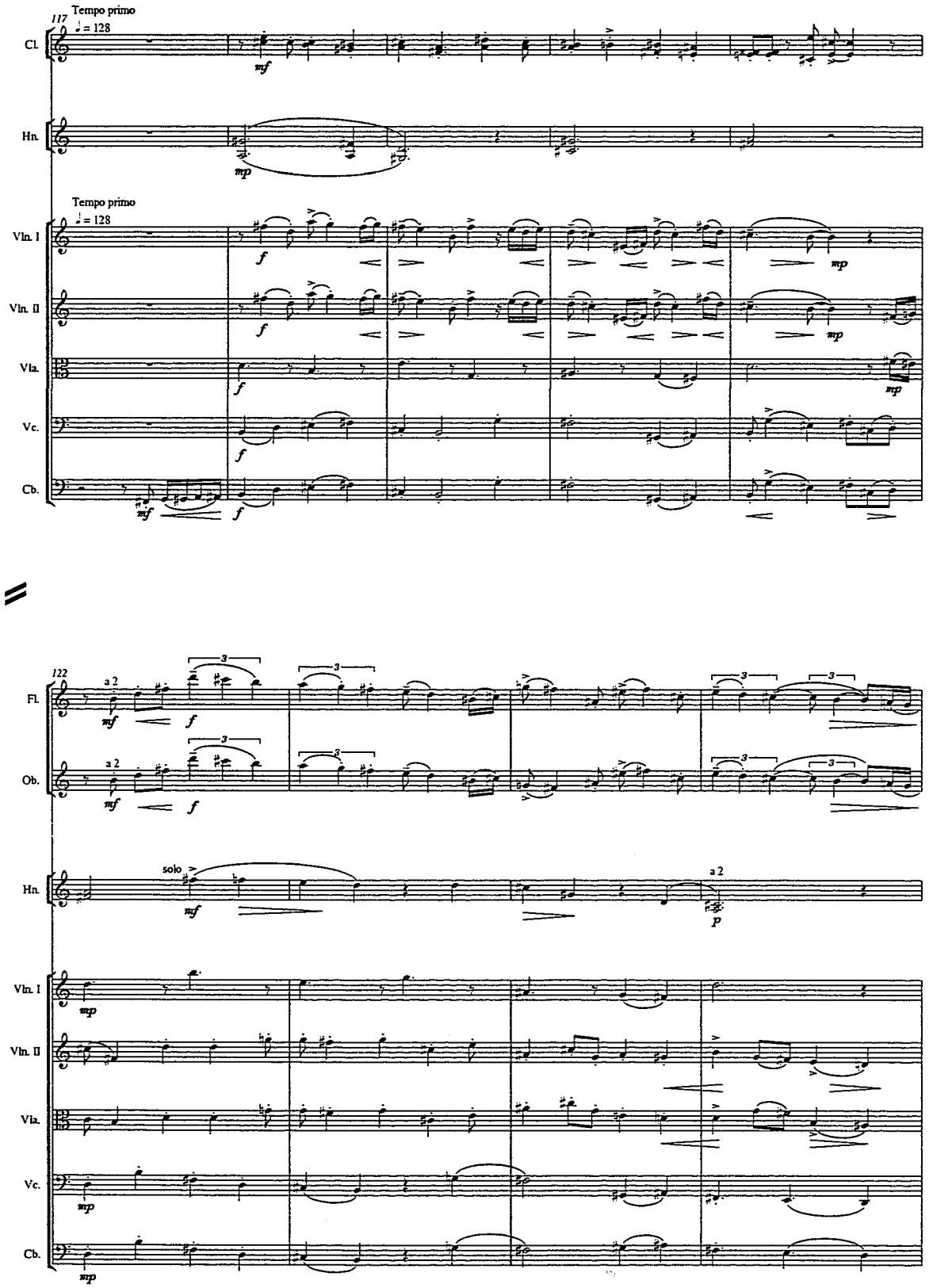


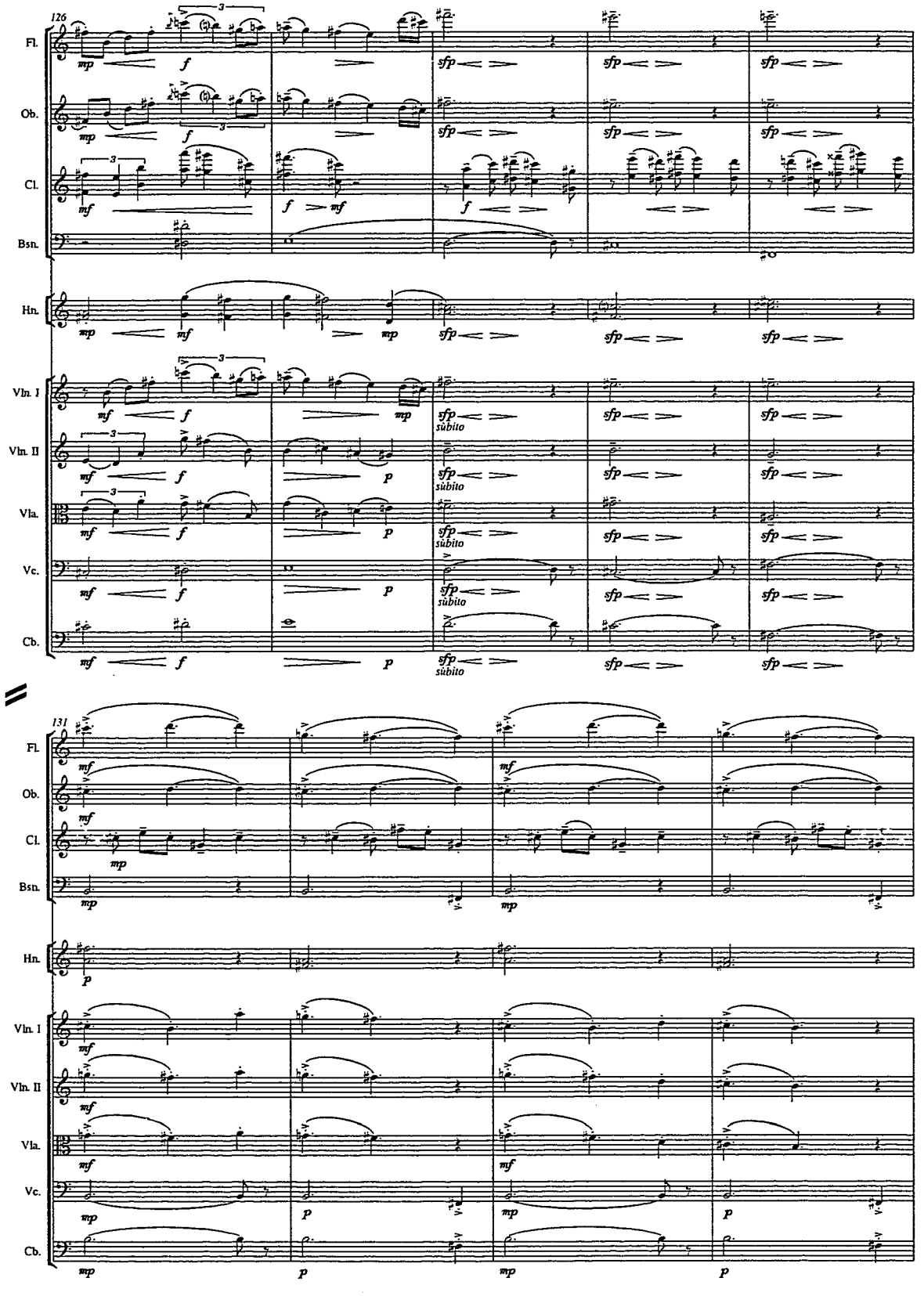


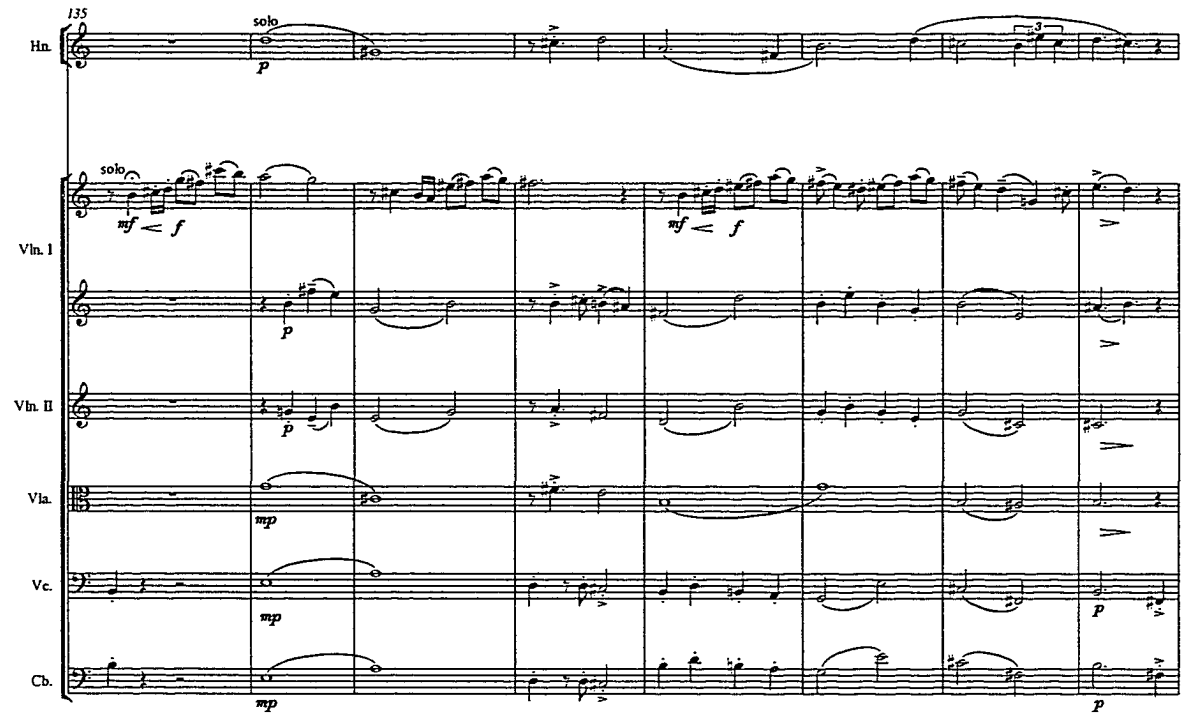


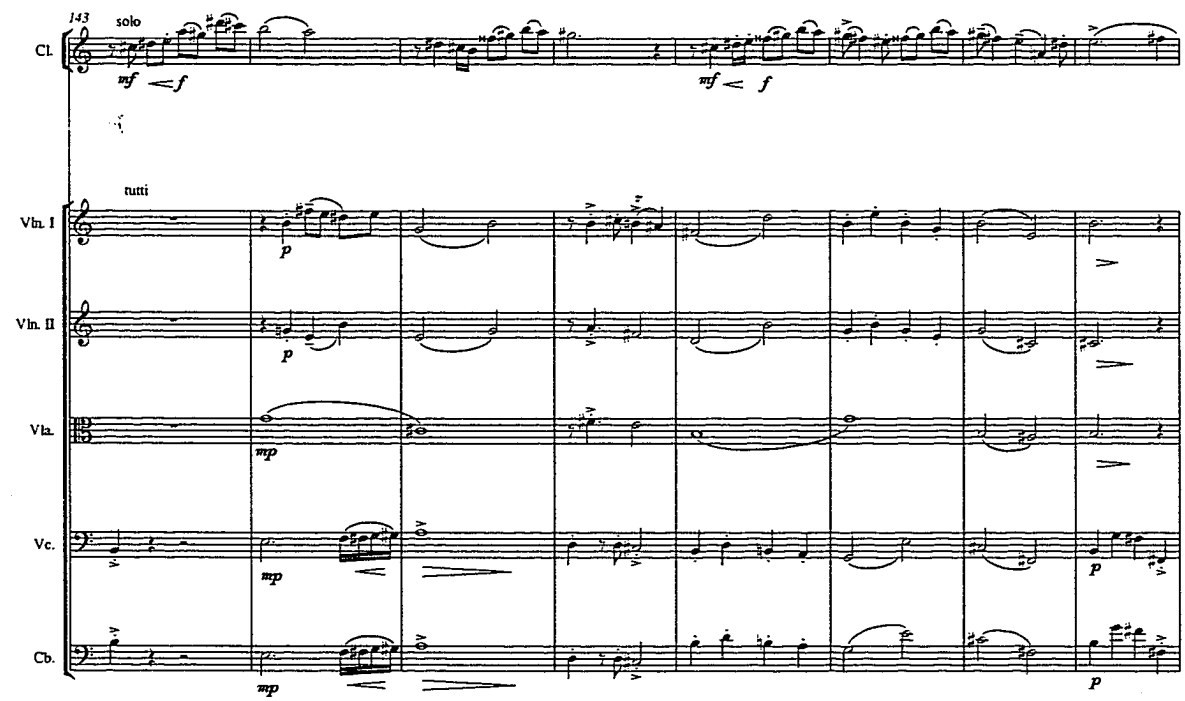


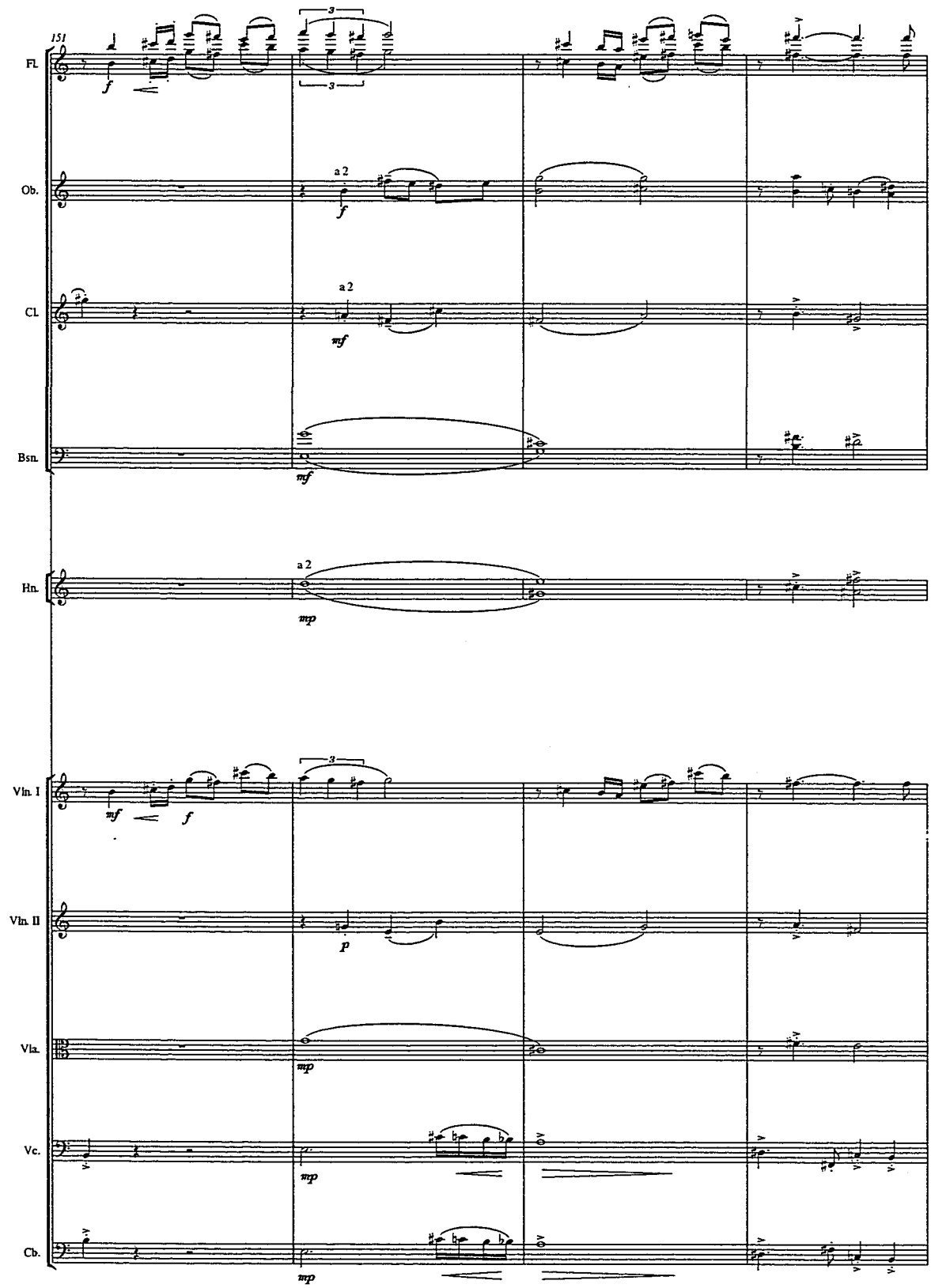


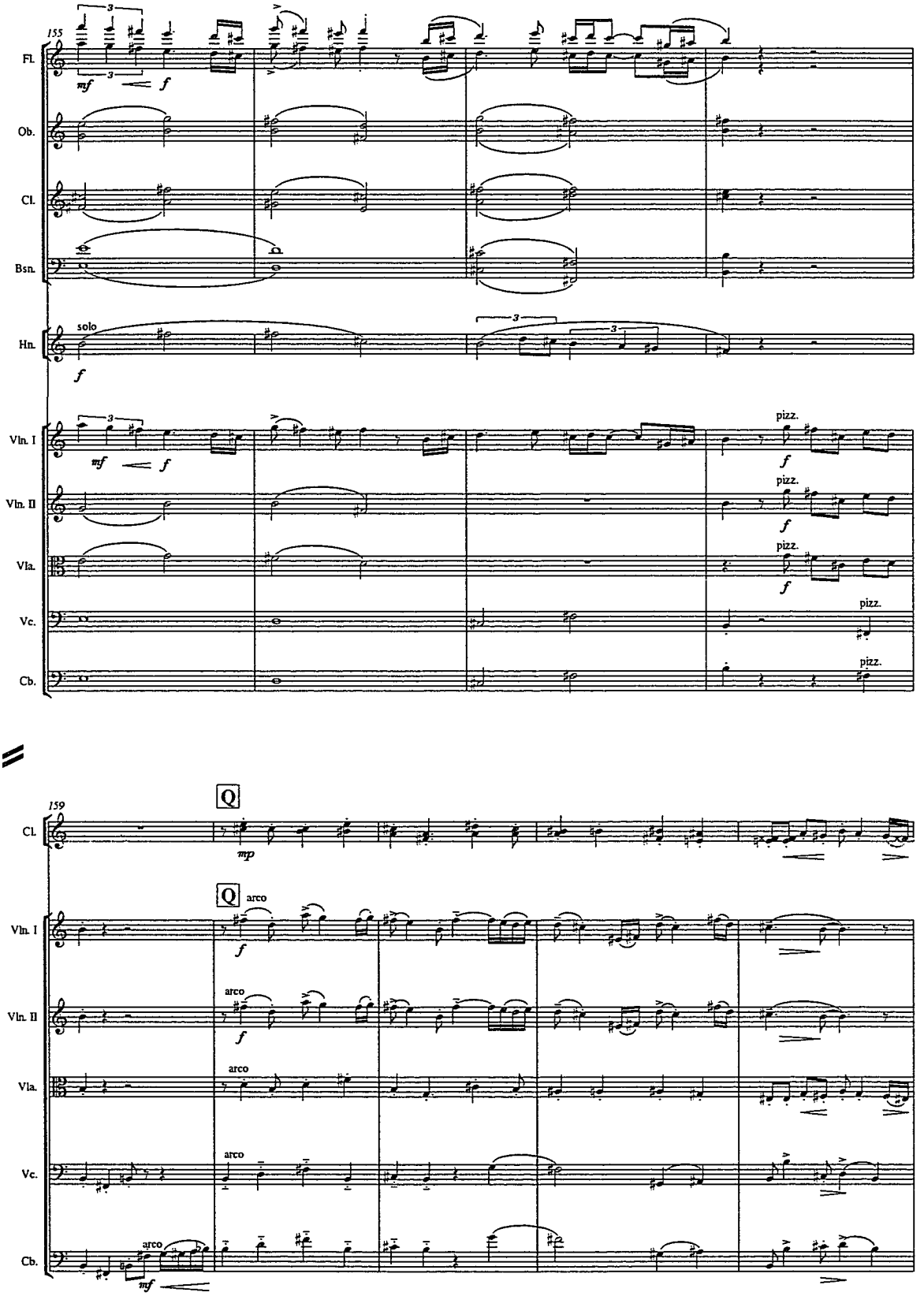


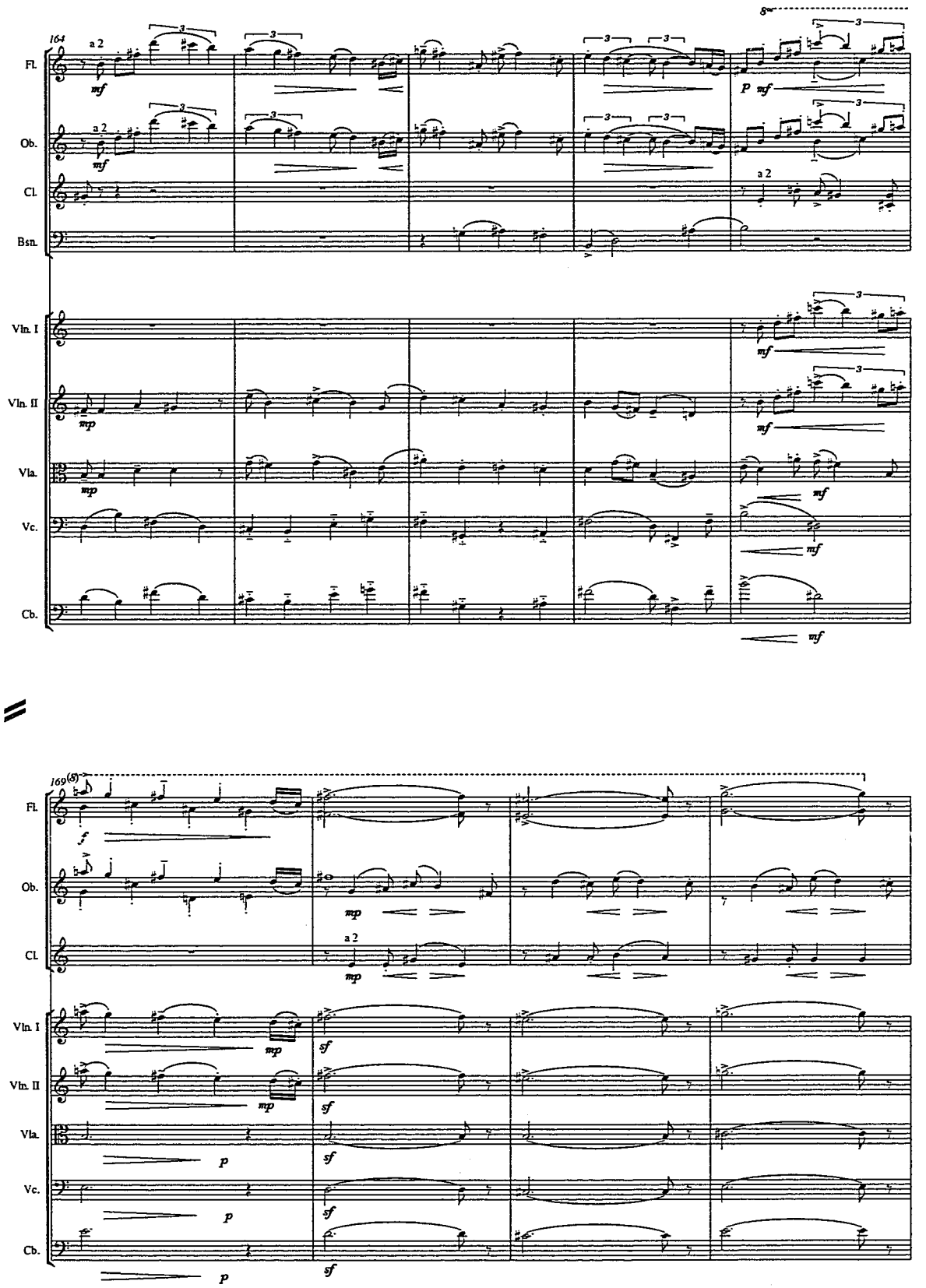


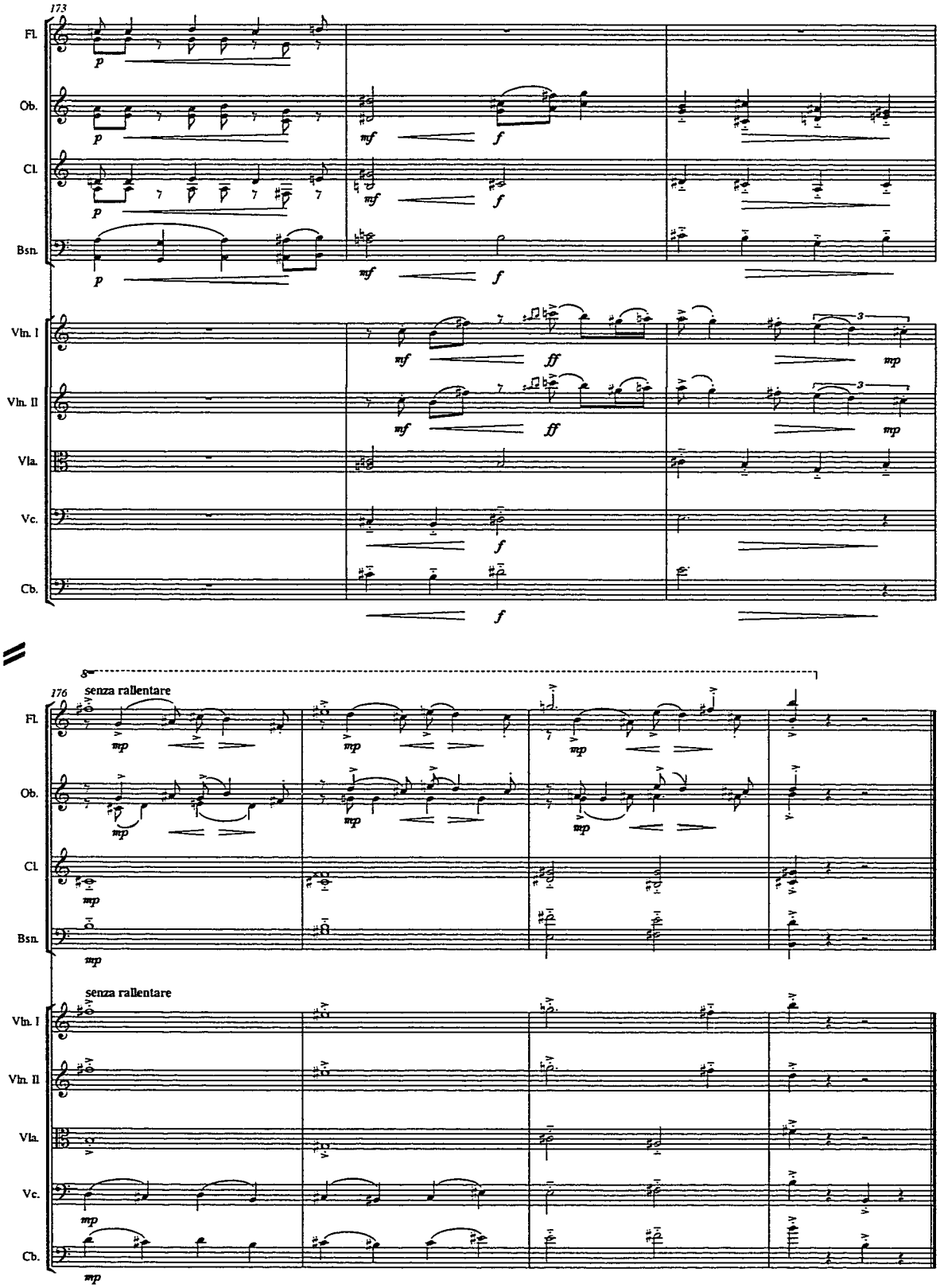












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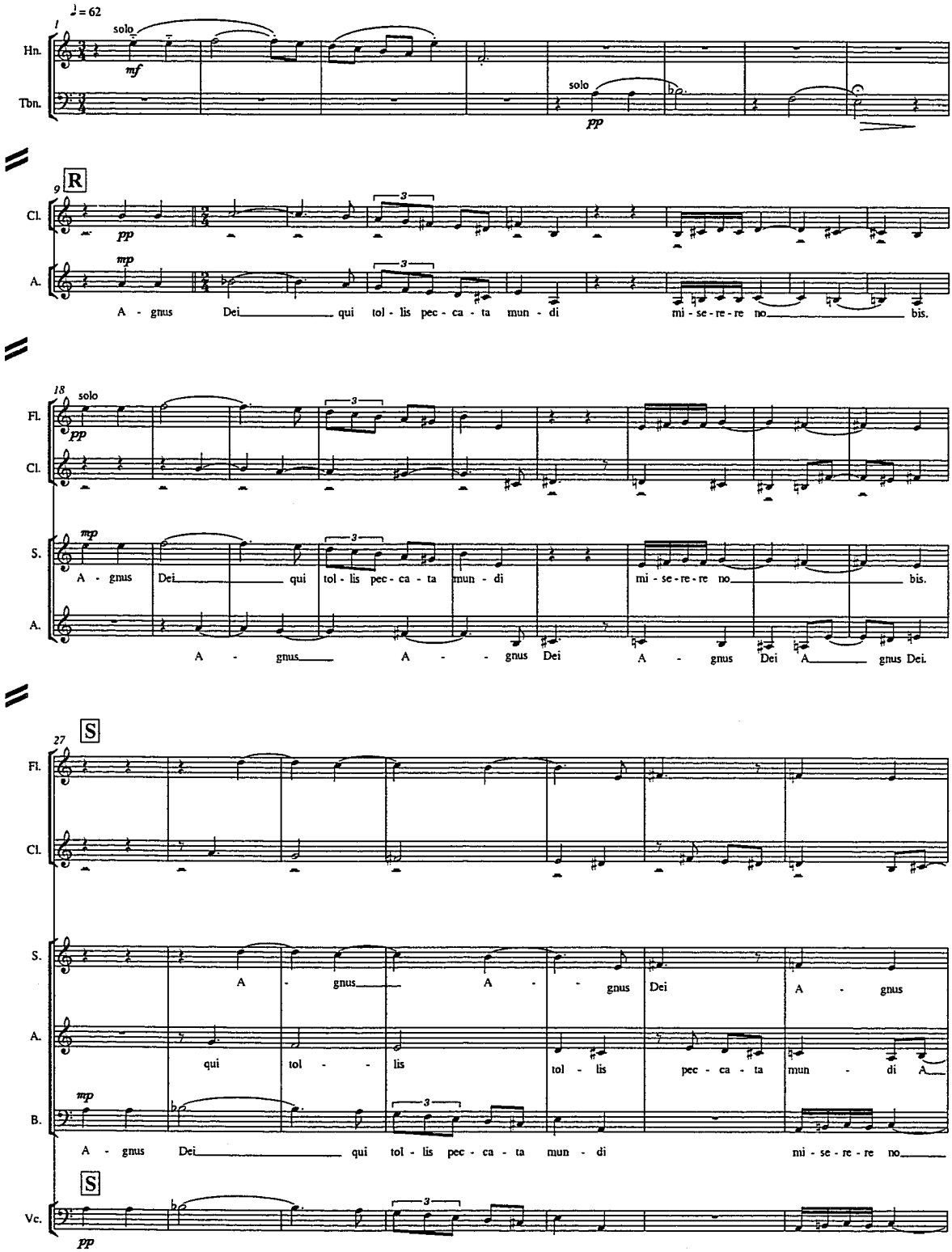

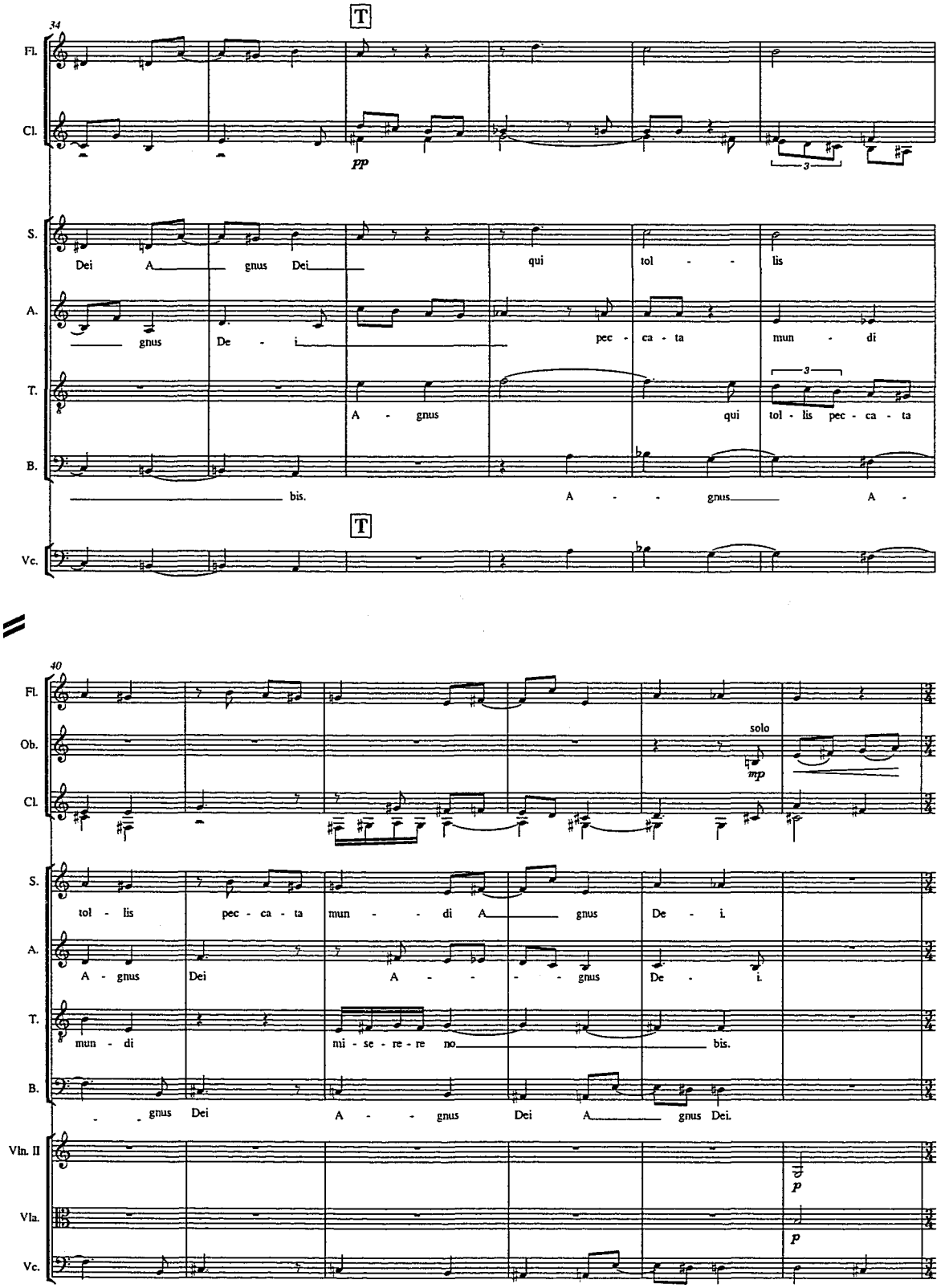

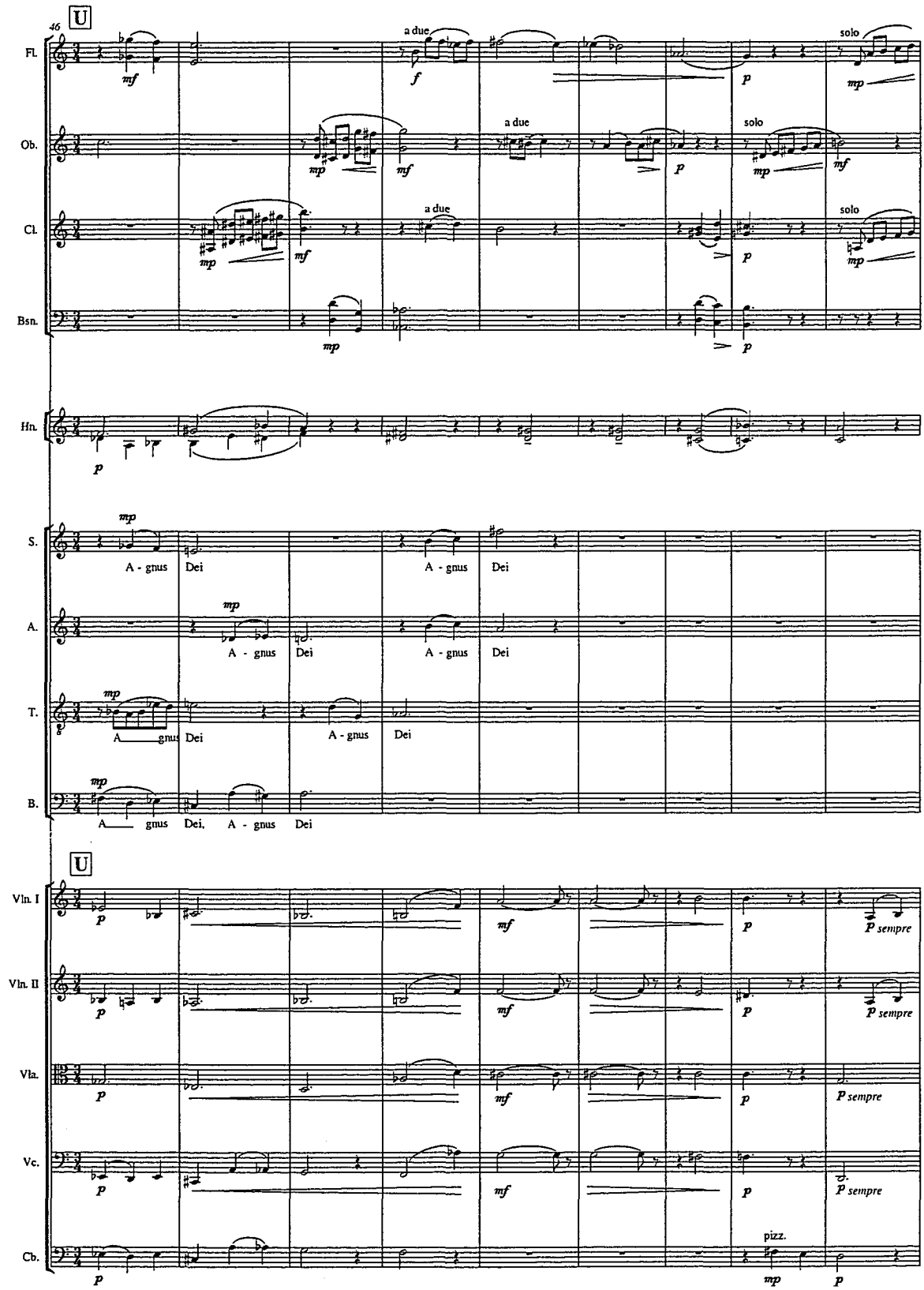

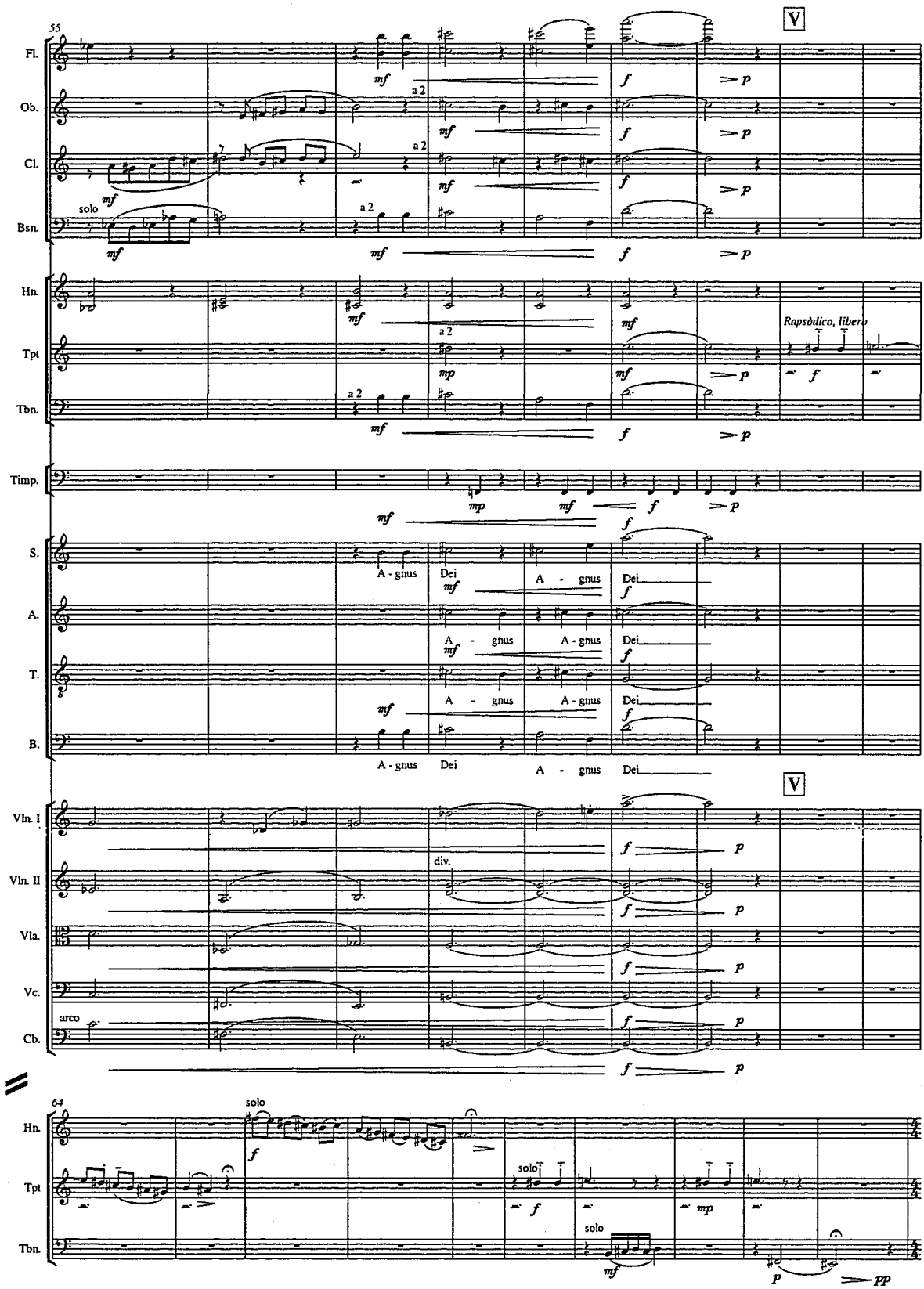

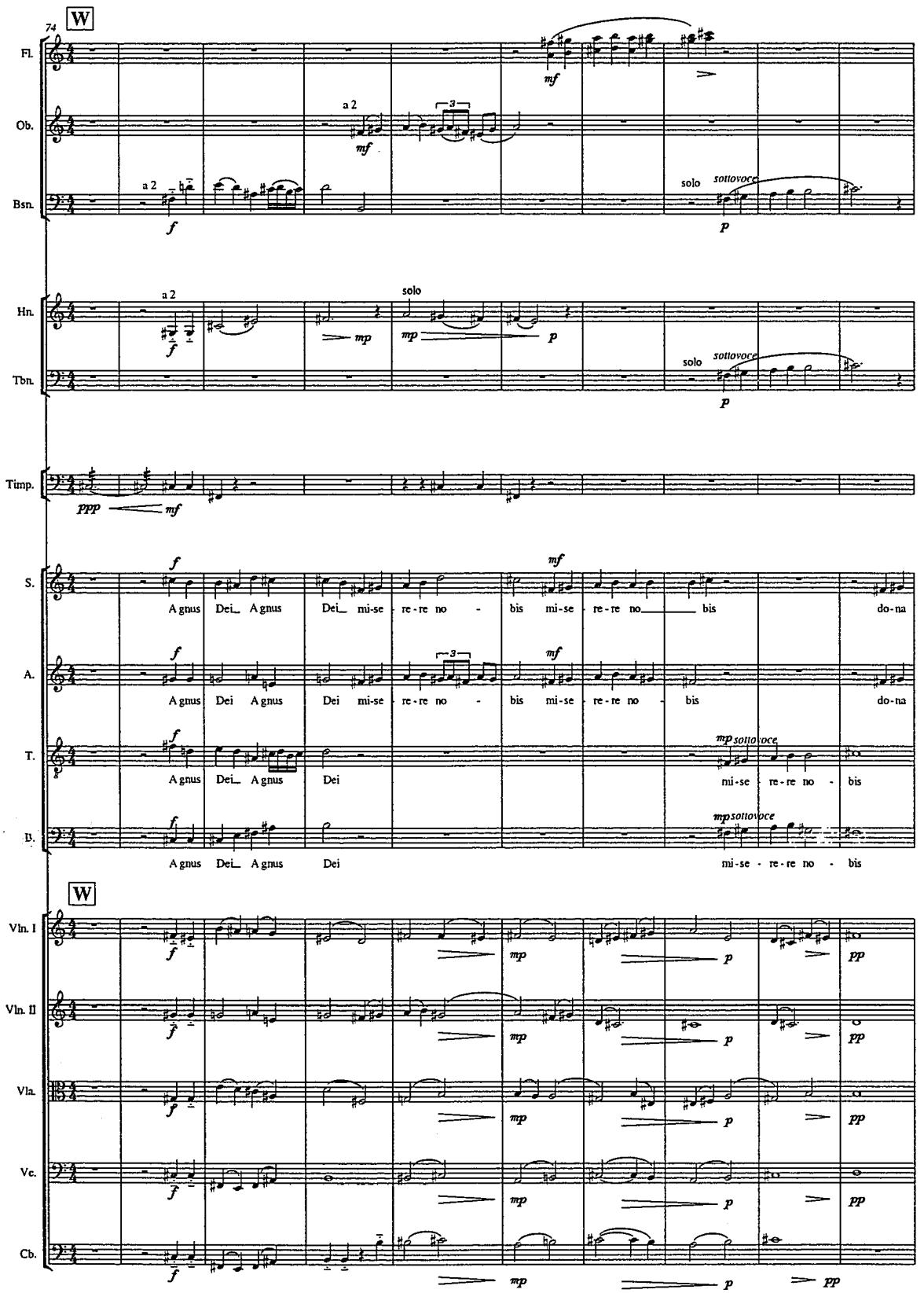

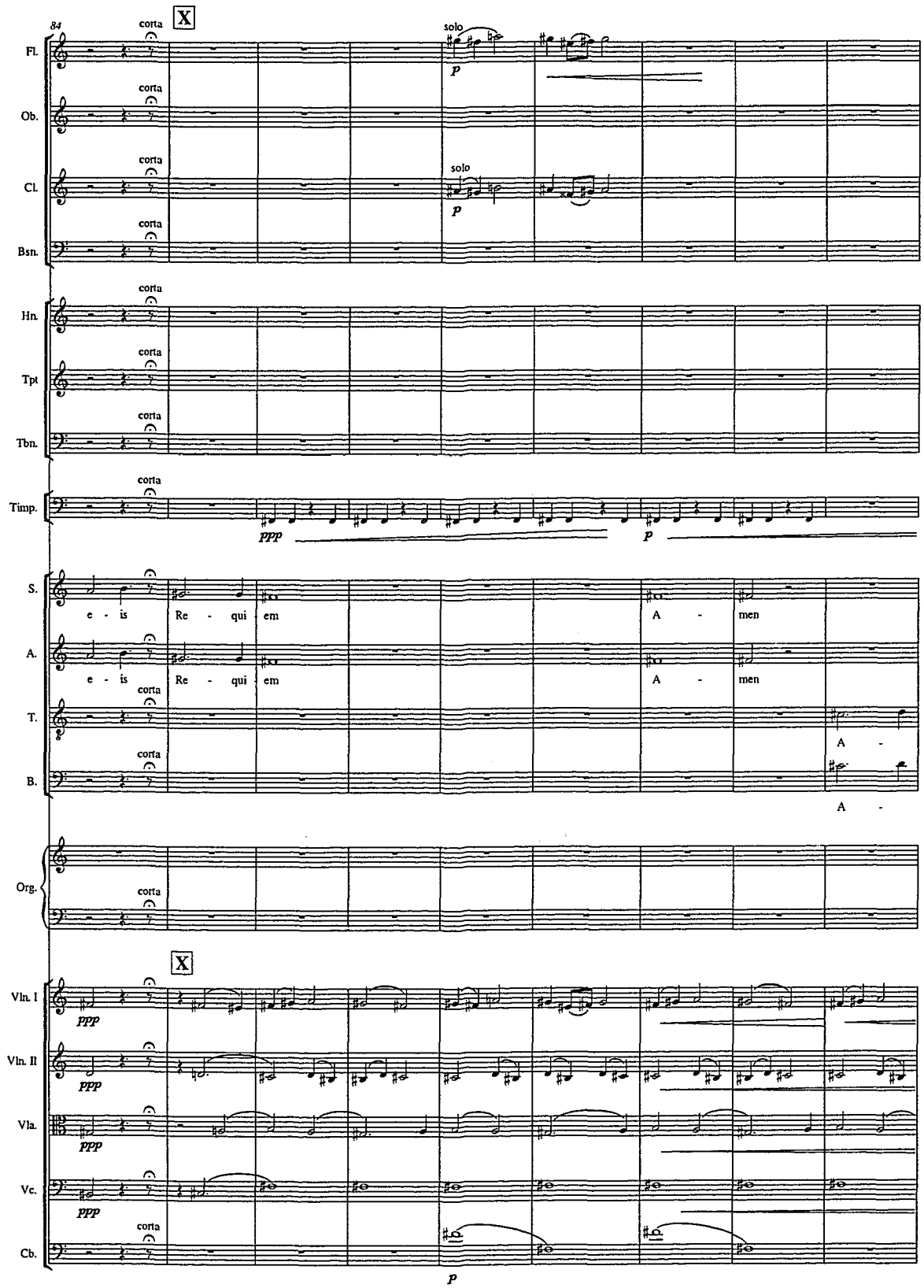

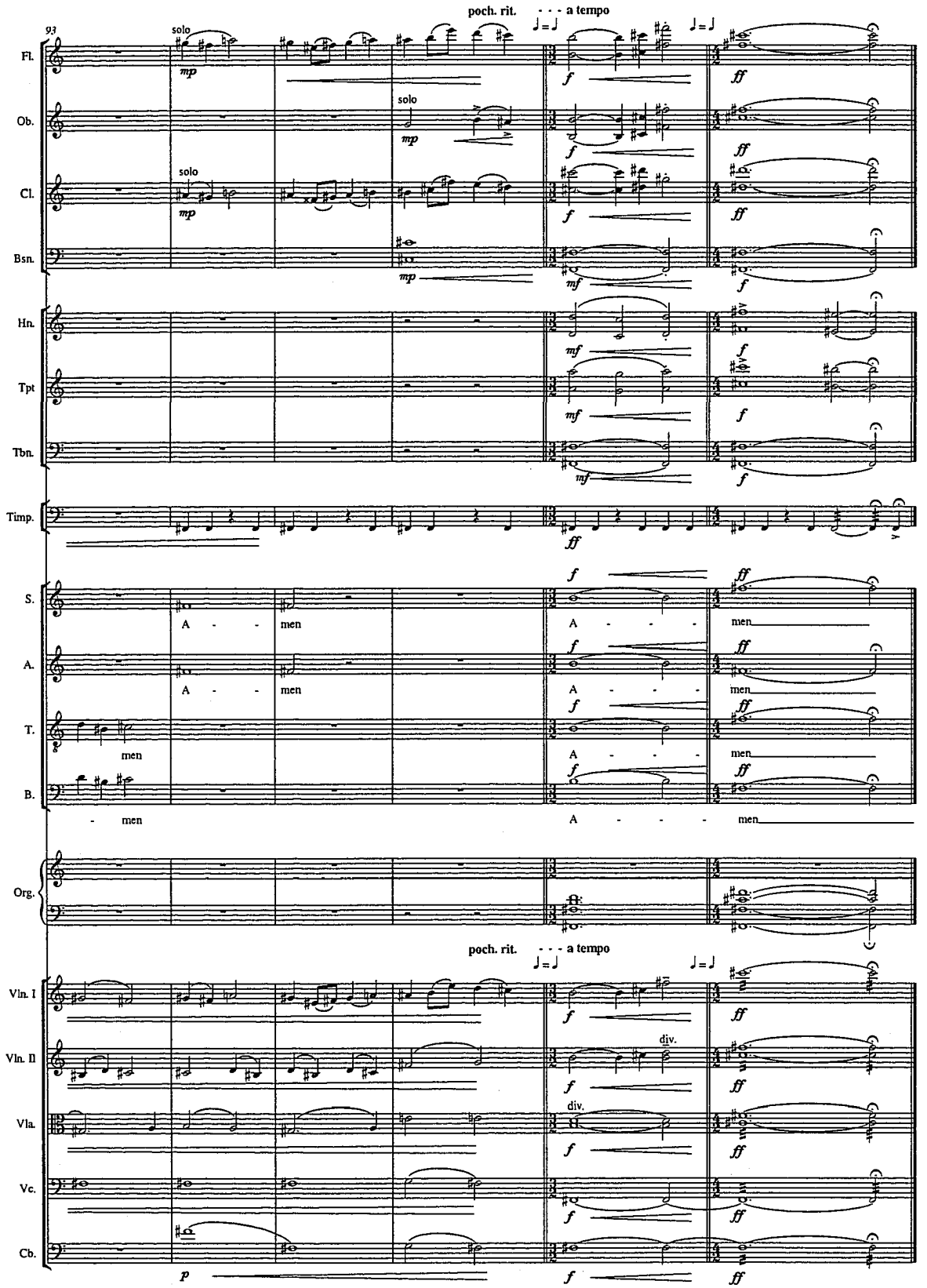

New York, June 2003