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Roger Sessions' adoption of the twelve-tone method

Campbell, Alan Douglas, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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**ROGER SESSIONS' ADOPTION OF THE
TWELVE-TONE METHOD**

by

Alan Douglas Campbell

**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.**

1990

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Leo Kraft

Bruce Saylor

Henry Weinberg
Supervisory Committee

ABSTRACT

ROGER SESSIONS' ADOPTION OF THE
TWELVE-TONE METHOD

by

Alan Douglas Campbell

Adviser: Henry Weinberg

Roger Sessions' gradual adoption of the twelve-tone method in his music from the mid-forties through the early fifties is studied from the standpoint of his own writings on music.

The paper focusses on the piano pieces From My Diary, Nos. 1 and 2 (1937-40), Piano Sonata No. 2 (1946), and the Sonata for Violin (1953) in order to trace the composer's growing use of serial techniques and to find common elements which link these works with his mature twelve-tone compositions. These common elements include an emphasis on whole-tone and diatonic/perfect fourth collections, the use of semitonal displacement of stable (whole-tone/diatonic) pitches, the projection of long-range pitch/pitch complex priority, and the unified use of all musical elements to create a sense of musical progression and movement.

The culmination of the study is an analysis of the first movement of Sessions' Piano Sonata No. 3 (1963-65).

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I wish to thank Professor Henry Weinberg for his time, his encouragement, and his ideas about musical structure, which have provided a continuing source of insight to me and to many other students at Queens College and the Graduate Center.

Professors Bruce Saylor and David Olan were extremely helpful in their careful reading of various drafts; their suggestions and constructive criticisms account for much of whatever lucidity and sense this essay may possess. Professor Saylor in particular took a great deal of time away from an already full work schedule to read and critique the final version of this paper. The clarity and sense of purpose he brought to that enterprise are a direct extension of his achievements as a composer. His guidance as a composition teacher has been invaluable.

Finally, and most importantly, I wish to thank my wife Anne. Her patience and encouragement through six years of graduate school, her inspiration as a fellow teacher (and fellow spirit), and her love for me and our son Ian has been all I could ask for.

NOTE

Pitch register, where indicated, follows the standard of the Acoustical Society of America; for instance, middle C is C4, viola C is C3, B below middle C is B3, etc.

Row forms are identified by their first pitch, using the "moveable Do" practice. The main (or at least initial) row form is thus "P0" whether it starts on C or some other pitch. Inversions are identified by transpositional level in reference to P0. Thus, the prime row form of Sessions' Piano Sonata No. 3 (starting on Ab) is "P0" and the hexachordally combinatorial inversion of this (starting on B) is "I3". Order numbers, where given, begin with one and end with twelve, rather than beginning with zero and ending with eleven.

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CHAPTER ONE

ROGER SESSIONS AND THE TWELVE-TONE METHOD

Numerous writers, many of them former students, have remarked upon the gradual nature of Roger Sessions' adoption of the twelve-tone method. The composer himself told of showing his Solo Violin Sonata (1953) to Andrew Imbrie while he was still working on it. Imbrie noted the presence of the row in the opening measures of the piece (Sessions' first overtly serial work) and then remarked:

"But it's still your music." I said "Well, of course it's still my music. If it weren't my music I wouldn't have any business to do that."¹

In the same interview, Sessions remembered Milton Babbitt's similar observation regarding an earlier piece, the 1946 Second Piano Sonata; Babbitt saw this work as being "on the brink of the twelve-tone system."² Sessions also remarked to Edward T. Cone that "other people saw it coming

¹ Edward T. Cone, "Conversation with Roger Sessions," Perspectives on American Composers, ed. Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1971), 101.

² Loc. cit.

before I did,"³ and told Andrea Olmstead that it was only after composing the first six measures or so of the Solo Violin Sonata that "I realized that I was using the twelve-tone system."⁴

Writers such as Imbrie and Cone have seen in Sessions' pre-serial and serial works a continuing interest in "the long line"⁵ and a "nearly unbroken consistency of style."⁶ Other signs pointing in a twelve-tone direction were the increasing chromatic density of his music, both vertically and horizontally, from the twenties through the forties, its unapologetically rich web of counterpoint in the very teeth of the "Prairie Populist" era, and the evolution of Sessions' own attitude, as expressed in his writings, towards Schoenberg's method from the time of his earliest awareness of it until his own adoption of it some twenty-five years later.⁷

³ Loc. cit.

⁴ Andrea Olmstead, Roger Sessions and His Music (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 103. Quote from taped interview with the composer, March 12, 1975.

⁵ Andrew Imbrie, "Roger Sessions: In Honor of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday," in Cone, op. cit., 78.

⁶ Imbrie, "The Symphonies of Roger Sessions," Tempo 103 (1972), 28.

⁷ This will be the subject of Chapter Four.

Sessions' move was a smooth move: such is the judgment of those who were and are in a position to know--his most advanced students of the late forties and the composer himself. His ever-personal use of linear row-segments and verticals was consistent with his earlier reliance on diatonic motives and harmonies. His adoption of the twelve-tone method, then, can be seen as an argument in favor of its naturalness, of its potentially fruitful relationship to our musical past.

Sessions' initial resistance to it stemmed from two sources:

1. He felt no inner need for it from the late twenties, when he first began to become aware of its existence, through the early forties; he was working (like Stravinsky and others) with unordered diatonic collections and was able to generate large pieces on this basis. It was not until after World War Two that he came to see this diatonicism as insufficient.

2. He was not convinced, either by Schoenberg's twelve-tone music (about which he remained skeptical for a long

time)²⁰ or by Krenek's explanations (reviewed by Sessions in 1938)²¹, that the twelve-tone method (or "system," as Sessions then disapprovingly referred to it) was rooted in either the basics of human artistic perception or the traditions of Western musical thought. He felt that it was, in effect, an aberration or at the least a blind alley.

The fact that he subsequently overcame these often vehemently expressed reservations cannot be overemphasized--Sessions was generally very careful in his artistic judgments and public pronouncements. He, at least, ultimately became convinced of the rightness of twelve-tone thinking, although his adoption of it was gradual and highly personal.

I will attempt to relate Sessions' evolving compositional practice to his writings on the subject of Schoenberg and his method. The history of that relationship tells us much about Sessions' basic musical assumptions.

A fair question at this point would be: What do we mean

²⁰ As late as 1944, he found "a certain tenseness and dogmatic insistence" in Schoenberg's works of the twenties, despite a generally favorable attitude towards such later pieces as the Fourth Quartet and the Violin Concerto. "Schoenberg in the United States (1944, revised 1972)," in: Roger Sessions on Music: Collected Essays, ed. Edward T. Cone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 362. A footnote on p. 363 notes Sessions' more positive opinion of these pieces as of 1972.

²¹ Sessions's critique of Ernst Krenek's Über Neue Musik (Vienna, 1937) first appeared in Modern Music, vol. 15, no. 2, 123-128. Reprinted as "Exposition by Krenek (1938)," in Sessions, op. cit., 249-255.

by "twelve-tone method"? or, more precisely: What did Roger Sessions take it to mean? An initial answer would, of course, include the well-known triad of axiomatic operations--transposition, inversion, retrogression. A more detailed answer would include:

1. The use of linear rows, subject to the above axiomatic operations; these could be either chromatic and twelve-tone in nature or not, as described by George Perle.¹⁰ This dovetails in many respects with traditional (tonal) motivic usage but goes beyond it both in its literalness and in its concentration on pitch class apart from any particular rhythmic/metric/registral context.

2. The traceability of much or most (or even all) of the pitch materials of a piece to a particular row (or group of rows).

3. The partition of chromatic space into discrete segments, and the consistent use of this partition and these segments in a functional, hierarchical, shape-defining way: when the partition changes, the "design" or "gesture" of the piece changes.

4. The use of row transposition and of row-transpositional "areas" in a similarly functional way (an "area" being a group consisting of a prime, a retrograde, an

¹⁰ _____, Serial Composition and Atonality, fourth edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 40-59.

inversion, and a retrograde inversion, generally linked by common hexachordal content).¹¹ This has been compared--albeit somewhat equivocally--to the establishment of harmonic "areas" in tonal music¹²--"tonicization," in Sessions' translation of Heinrich Schenker's term.¹³ Whether such usage is successful in these terms or not is irrelevant here; I merely note its presence as an element of twelve-tone practice.

5. The use of inversion in demonstratively mirror-like passages. Again, this practice is not utterly unique to

¹¹ The use of the term "area" is discussed in David Lewin, "A Study of Hexachord Levels in Schoenberg's Violin Fantasy," Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky, revised edition, ed. Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1972), 78-92.

¹² See Lewin, ibid., 84-85, where he compares the "area" transpositions in Schoenberg's Violin Fantasy to Liszt's Consolation No. 3, which similarly "moves through a diminished seventh chord." See also Milton Babbitt, "Three Essays on Schoenberg: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 36," also in Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky, revised edition, ed. Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1972), 49; here Babbitt points out that the first fifty-eight measures of the Concerto consist entirely of a single "set-complex" (his term for "area"), and that "the area thus delineated is normatively closely analogous to a functional phonal [sic] area." Perhaps the typesetter at Norton could not bring himself to allow even such a qualified analogy between twelve-tone and tonal practice--Babbitt's article appeared first as part of the liner notes for The Music of Arnold Schoenberg, vol. 1 (Columbia Masterworks, M2S 679, 1962); there the relation to "functional tonal areas" was somewhat less equivocal.

¹³ Roger Sessions, Harmonic Practice (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1951), xvii. The original German term is Tonikalisierung.

twelve-tone music but is a strong indicator of its presence.

In his works written after World War Two Sessions began to avail himself of all of these elements, particularly the third one (the partition of chromatic space into discrete segments). This accounts in large part for the ease with which he ultimately moved from free chromaticism into serialism. Much of the present study will be concerned with tracing this evolving compositional practice, focussing on such key works as the Second Symphony (1944-46), the Second Piano Sonata (1946), and the Second String Quartet (1950-51).

Chapter Two of this study will lay out my approach to this analytical undertaking. Taking a lead from the composer's own writings, this chapter details several key concepts, notably the idea of musical "cumulation", or movement, and the idea that the ear always seeks out the simplest relationships among the tones. The way these ideas operate within the contexts of Sessions' pre-serial and serial pieces is the subject of Chapters Three, Five, and Six.

Chapter Three, more specifically, will look at some short pieces written several years before Sessions' first ostensibly serial works; this will provide a basis for studying the changes that ensued. It will also allow us to see what elements remained constant throughout the transition and beyond.

Chapter Four will deal with the evolution of the composer's attitude toward the twelve-tone method and toward Schoenberg and his music, from the time of Sessions' first writings on the subject in 1933 up to the early 1970s. The interest here will be historical: seeing which Schoenberg pieces he knew when, and what he may have gotten out of them; the other half of this story will naturally be told by Sessions' own writings on the subject. Of course, it is highly possible to overstate the case, to take a too-constricted view of cause and effect; still, much can be learned about a composer's evolution and thought-processes through this kind of research. The essential change in attitude, though prepared well in advance, took place between 1937 and 1944, a period of increasing dissatisfaction in his life at Princeton (he left for Berkeley in 1945), and of an increasingly tenuous relation between the chromatic complexity of his music and his adherence to some form of tonality.

Chapters Five and Six--the bulk of the study--will trace the gradual adoption of serial devices which led up to the Solo Violin Sonata (written in 1953) and then will undertake an analysis of the first movement of the Third Piano Sonata (1963-5). Here his use of the twelve-tone method is fluent and mature.

The final chapter will give an accounting of the elements of Roger Sessions' musical language which remained

consistent throughout the period 1937-65 and will summarize the ways in which his use of the twelve-tone method exploited those elements.

CHAPTER TWO

ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The first task in an analysis of a twelve-tone composition is to identify the row; the second is to trace its use in the piece. Surprisingly, this has been little done for Sessions' work, despite the interest that work holds for many writers on music. It is difficult to track down the row-derivation of many passages of Sessions; at times the essentially pragmatic nature of his use of the twelve-tone method renders such "row-counting" thorny, even futile. It is typical of writers about Sessions to post disclaimers in their work, pointing out the difficulty of finding unambiguous row statements in much of this music. Often they quote Sessions himself, who never went in for public protestations of serialism, and who was the first to reject any taint of orthodoxy in his work. For instance, Edward Cone has written:

Those familiar with Sessions' style will have noticed that neither of the discussions of passages from the Sonata no. 3 mentioned the twelve-tone method exemplified by that work. The omission was deliberate, since I wished thereby to illustrate and emphasize Sessions' own point of view about the technique and his own use of it. A composer who has always insisted upon the importance of results rather than of systems must obviously approach the twelve-tone method in a practical, undogmatic way. In Sessions' view, "it was designed in order to provide composers with a basis through which they could find answers in principle to certain compositional problems; and the fact that it has done so in a fairly considerable and distinguished number of cases is not only ample justification for its existence, but in reality the only possible

justification for any such principle."¹

Andrew Imbrie similarly observed:

The effect of his use of the series is simply that of a greater concentration of means: his later works, whether short or long, seem to make their points with greater incisiveness and economy. In describing his own thoughts on this topic, he insists on playing down its importance. First of all, he reserves the right at any time to "commit rape or mayhem" on the series. And he refuses to treat serialism as an abstract, form-engendering principle comparable with tonality.²

Edward Laufer, also a Sessions student, carefully traced the derivation of a number of harmonic progressions from the source trichords of the opera Montezuma, then conceded:

This is, of course, speculation; it is very difficult at the present time to discover the principles that may have guided the actual harmonic structure.³

When faced with such statements (which are certainly quite accurate), one is tempted to ask: Then what is the point of using twelve-tone rows and techniques? Is it simply a neurotic clinging to an appearance of order without the

¹ Edward T. Cone, "In Defense of Song: The Contribution of Roger Sessions," Critical Inquiry 2, no. 1 (Autumn 1975), 110.

² Andrew Imbrie, "The Symphonies," 28.

³ Edward C. Laufer, "Roger Sessions: Montezuma," Perspectives of New Music 4 (Fall 1965), 101.

reality of order? Can we be satisfied with a technique which may pull together certain surface features but leaves the user to fend for himself on larger, deeper levels of structure? Are there, in fact, larger, deeper levels of structure in posttonal music, and can they be defined in terms having anything to do with twelve-tone usage? It is just such questions which trouble me when studying Roger Sessions' music--partially because the music in itself needs no defense in terms of intellectual rigor, partially because positivistic, empty note-counting reveals so little about why the music is successful--nor, generally, does it attempt to do so.

Fortunately, there is a positive side to Sessions' denial of the importance of row schema: by denying the uniqueness of twelve-tone music as a self-contained system, he stressed that music's common links with the tradition from which it sprang. In looking for a deeper understanding of his own music, then, a good place to start is with the composer's writings on music in general. In point of fact, he left little doubt as to what he considered to be the essential driving force in music, namely the principle of systole/diastole or tension/release. This unfolds in all aspects and on all levels of musical structure. As he stated in 1949:

It seems to me clear indeed that the basic rhythmic fact is not the fact simply of alternation, but of a specific type of alternation with which we are

familiar from the first movement of our existence as separate beings. We celebrate that event by drawing a breath, which is required of us if existence is to be realized. The drawing of the breath is an act of cumulation, of tension which is then released by the alternative act of exhalation.

...I am tempted to call this the most important musical fact, and am sure that I have done so on occasion. More than any other fact, it seems to me, it bears on the nature of what I shall call "musical movement"; on it depends the appropriateness to their context of harmonies, of melodic intervals, and details of rhythmic elaboration. From it are derived the principles on which satisfactory musical articulation is based; and many an otherwise excellent performance is ruined through inadequate attention to what it implies.⁴

This grounding in the physical is a touchstone for Sessions' writing about music; it goes along with his innate, Yankee distrust of theoretical speculation, a distrust which came more and more to the surface as the postwar music scene turned towards manifestos and quasi-logical system-building. Such concepts as the much-touted "total organization" of all parameters struck him as being too atomistic, as not taking into account the essentially unified nature of musical perception. Writing in 1960, he asked several basic questions about it:

The basic question of all is of course--as is often the case--"Why?" The principle of "total organization" raises many questions and answers none, even in theory. First of all, what is being organized, and according to what criterion? Is it not a matter of organizing, not music itself, but various facets of music, each independently and on its own terms or at

⁴ Roger Sessions, The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 12-13. The book is based on a series of lectures given by the author at the Juilliard School of Music, New York City, in 1949.

best according to a set of arbitrarily conceived and ultimately quite irrelevant rules of association?"

A related issue is that of cadence and articulation. Sessions was adamant in rejecting the notion, stated by Boulez among others,⁶ that Schoenberg's realization of his own radically new idea of musical structure was somehow incomplete due to his reliance on classical forms and rhetoric. For Sessions, this was yet another example of the raising of irrelevant criteria. An exchange in the aforementioned interview with Edward Cone is very much to the point:

SESSIONS: ...I would say that Schoenberg didn't use sonata form in any real sense of the word. I think the sonata-form has been given very rough definitions that have very often missed the essentials. In fact, one of the essentials of the sonata-form is tonal structure. It is an absolutely ironbound, built-in condition of the sonata-form; if you don't have the tonal structure, you don't have the sonata-form.

CONE: What about the whole question of the general phrase-structure, the rhetoric, so to speak, the fact that his music is still built on antecedent and consequent, on cadential phrase-structure, and so forth, which, as you know, many present-day composers are trying to get away from?

SESSIONS: This seems pedantic to me. Antecedent-consequent phrase-structure means you have two phrases in an idea. And why is it worse to have two phrases in an idea, or more "nineteenth century," than to have one

⁵ Roger Sessions, "Problems and Issues Facing the Composer Today [1960]," Roger Sessions on Music, ed. Edward T. Cone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 84.

⁶ Pierre Boulez, "Schoenberg is Dead," in Notes of an Apprenticeship, trans. Herbert Weinstock (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1968), pp. 268-76. The article originally appeared in The Score, May 1952.

phrase in an idea?

CONE: Then the answer might be, "Let's have no phrase."

SESSIONS: Then you don't have any articulation...⁷

In his book The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener,⁸ he spoke in greater detail about what he considered to be the three principles of musical form, stating that "there are very few basic patterns possible, but that these are infinitely various in application."⁹ The first principle is that of "progression, or cumulation...Successive impressions must either maintain the level of intensity, of interest, of movement established at the outset, or they must raise it."¹⁰

The second principle was that of association, which could take the form either of an association with nonmusical elements (a text, a story-line, or some kind of physical gestures) or an association within the music itself, via some form of repetition. The idea of "antecedent-consequent" phrase-structure clearly falls within the purview of association via repetition, and is thus

⁷ Edward T. Cone, "Conversation," 106. The interview was originally taped on June 16, 1965.

⁸ Roger Sessions, The Musical Experience, 62-67.

⁹ Ibid., 62.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

elemental, whereas Classical-period use of it is incidental.

Sessions' third basic principle was that of contrast, which "throws ideas into relief, and thus determines as well as underlines their specific character."¹¹ He then goes on to make two rather crucial observations about the principle of contrast. The first is that there must be only one "major and dominating contrast in the work when viewed as a whole, and only one at any given moment. That is, on the largest scale only two basic forces may be brought into opposition; and if three or more elements are present, they must be so organized as to present themselves in two main groups."¹² He further observes that "the principle which I have called progression will extend itself to the various elements that are brought into contrast. Just as the level of intensity must be maintained and kept under control, so the level of contrast, which is one of the major aspects of what I have called the level of intensity, must be maintained. A weak contrast, no matter what the context and its character, or the proportion of the other elements involved, will never adequately balance a strong one."¹³

A final thought of Sessions turns out to be germane to this study: the idea that the mind tends to trace complex

¹¹ Ibid., 66.

¹² Loc. cit.

¹³ Loc. cit.

musical phenomena back to simpler "models." In his own words:

The ear coordinates impressions by reducing them always to their simplest relationships, by seeing (or rather hearing) them always in the simplest light...Likewise, over a fairly long stretch of music we hear by selecting from our impressions those tones or chords which are thrown into strong relief by the rhythmic and harmonic structure and relating them to each other on the first level.¹⁴

Andrew Imbrie makes a similar point in discussing the opening passage of Sessions' essentially diatonic Violin Concerto:

The foregoing analysis has depended upon the assumption that the ear tends, wherever feasible, a) to follow stepwise motion, and b) to expect this motion to have a goal consistent with the context as established. This context is the result of two forces: 1) the assumed tendency of the ear to select those relationships which, for scientific or historical reasons, for better or worse, are accepted as simpler; and 2) the imposition by the composer, through compositional selection and emphasis, of relationships which, in their interplay with each other and with those under 1) above, must be understood as characteristic of the individual work.¹⁵

The potential applications of this concept are far-reaching. Imbrie himself uses the concepts of neighbor-note displacement, of dominant-tonic polarity, and of expansion of small-scale, immediate relationships into large-scale

¹⁴ Ibid., 41.

¹⁵ Andrew Imbrie, "Roger Sessions: In Honor of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday," Perspectives on American Composers, ed. Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1971), 78.

formal tensions to explicate the first movement of the Concerto, then extends those same ideas to a discussion of Sessions' twelve-tone String Quintet (1958).¹⁶

The exact significance of the intervals in posttonal music was one about which Sessions pondered a great deal; writing in Harmonic Practice in 1951, he stated that "the intervals, and their effects, remain precisely the same [in nontonal as well as in tonal music]; two tones a fifth apart still produce the effect of the fifth, and, in whatever degree the context permits, will convey a sensation similar to that of a root and its fifth, or of a tonic and its dominant. A rising interval of a semitone will produce somewhat the effect of a 'leading tone,' principal or secondary, and so on."¹⁷ In the 1965 interview, Edward Cone reminded him of a remark he had made earlier:

CONE: I remember before you were writing twelve tone, you often used to say that not only did you hear all of your own music as tonal in a certain sense, but also that you heard even Schoenberg's twelve-tone music as tonal in a certain sense.

SESSIONS: Yes, if I could extend that remark I'd say it still--you've got to remember--in a certain sense. I had this out with Schoenberg once, too...I told him that the first movement of his Fourth Quartet suggested to me at moments the key of D minor. He said, "Yes, but it's not D minor at all. What you're hearing are relationships between the notes and you associate that with tonality, but that isn't all that tonality is--it's a great deal more than that." I got

¹⁶ Ibid., 78-89.

¹⁷ Roger Sessions, Harmonic Practice, 407.

his point immediately. Of course he was right.¹⁸

Just how far Sessions was willing to carry this "certain sense" of perfect-fifths-as-stable and half-steps-as-leading-tones is unclear; certainly, he was not one of those who used the twelve-tone series as a way back into tonal music as such, any more than did Schoenberg. Nevertheless, I intend to show that some such "sense" as this did inhere in his mature twelve-tone pieces, that the unique properties of the semitone and perfect fifth (and their inversions and octave equivalents) were properties to which he was in fact extremely sensitive, and that they played separate and specific roles in his sense of musical order. A list of these unique properties follows:

1. Both interval classes generate the total chromatic. Thus, any aggregate can be expressed as either a cycle of perfect fifths/fourths or a cycle of half steps. No other interval classes can do this.

2. Any diatonic collection can be expressed as a cycle of perfect fifths/fourths; this fact is highly relevant to music such as Stravinsky's (and Sessions') of the 1920s-1930s which "shifts" from one related diatonic collection to another. Generally the "shift" is at the boundaries of the collection--as in Stravinsky's Serenade in A, first movement ("Hymn"), where an initial "A Phrygian," or "one-flat"

¹⁸ Cone, "Conversation," 102.

collection is gradually pulled to the sharp side by the replacement of B-flat by B-natural, then of F-natural by F-sharp, and finally, at the end of the first period, of C-natural by C-sharp (m.1-14). Viewing the diatonic scale as a subsection of a complete cycle of perfect fifths/fourths allows us to see this "shifting" as a kind of moving about on a musical clock or slide rule.¹⁹ This is in fact often much closer to the truth of such pieces than is considering such "shifts" as a form of functional tonal "modulation." Further, since Sessions' musical idiom did in fact develop out of an essentially Stravinskian one which became ever more imbued with chromatic "contradictions," it seems logical to try to determine just how far this sense of diatonic/cycle-of-fourths cohesion carries into his later music.

3. While it is possible to have whole-step auxiliary motion in a diatonic context, it is impossible to create this same sense of displacement in a chromatic one with anything other than half steps. This is because of the ear's basic tendency to recognize gaps in the pitch continuum and to expect them to be filled, to look for completion of the scale collection in diatonic music and of

¹⁹ David Lewin uses the clock analogy for both diatonic and chromatic scales in Generalized Musical Intervals and Transformations (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 17. I am indebted to George Perle for the slide-rule analogy.

the aggregate in chromatic music. Anton Webern defined this latter tendency very succinctly, when he observed of his Bagatelles for String Quartet, Op. 9 (1911-13):

Here I had the feeling, "When all twelve notes have gone by, the piece is over." Much later I discovered that all this was a part of the necessary development. In my sketchbook I wrote out the chromatic scale and crossed off the individual notes...In short, a rule of law emerged; until all twelve notes have occurred, none of them may occur again. The most important thing is that each "run" of twelve notes marked a division within the piece, idea, or theme.²⁰

...it was soon clear that hidden laws were there, bound up with the twelve notes; the ear found it very satisfying when the course of the melody went from semitone to semitone, or by intervals connected with chromatic progression. That's to say, on the basis of chromaticism, not of the seven-note scale.²¹

Writing on atonal music in general, George Perle observed:

Voice-leading through symmetrical movement, repetition, sequence, or chromatic inflection is always "smooth" and a justification for any incidental simultaneity...

A chromatic progression may be direct...or indirect--that is, with octave displacements of inflected elements...²²

A basic tension seems to be posited here between the

²⁰ Anton Webern, The Path to the New Music, ed. Willi Reich, trans. Leo Black, English language ed. (London: Universal Edition, 1975), 51. The book is based on Webern's lecture series given in Vienna in 1932-33.

²¹ Ibid., 39.

²² Perle, Serial Composition, 24.

tendency to hear chromatic notes as inflections of diatonic ones and, contrarily, the tendency to hear whole steps as "gaps" in the chromatic continuum which need to be "filled." In music which lies somewhere between diatonicism and atonality--and much of Sessions' work of the thirties and forties fits this description--the tension can be quite palpable, and there is a need to consider both interpretations.

Perle's reference to symmetrical movement is also relevant here; notwithstanding the unique properties of the half step and the perfect fifth, there is the fact that any interval can serve as the basis of a symmetrical formation, even if it fails to create an aggregate. Numerous writers have pointed out the cohesive effect of such formations in the work of composers from Schubert to Schoenberg.²³ The role that symmetrical progressions and formations play in any particular work is, of course, an individual matter, and may range from the incidental detail to the overarching plan.

²³ See, for instance, Felix Salzer and Carl Schachter, Counterpoint in Composition (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1969), 215-219, for examples from Schubert and Chopin, George Perle, op. cit., 26-29 for examples from Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg; see also Perle, Twelve-Tone Tonality (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 171, for an example from Chopin (Prelude in Eb, m. 43-44) which combines two interval cycles--ascending whole steps in the bass and descending half steps in the soprano.

The power of symmetry to replace tonality as a first principle may in fact be quite limited; it is most successful when most obvious, and becomes too obvious all too quickly. Perhaps the strength of the symmetrical formation lies not at its center but at its margins, in its ability to establish an at least temporary sense of relatedness among its members. The concept of cyclical collection does not rely upon the listener's ability somehow to locate the center of a formation, nor upon the composer's dutifulness in hammering it home, but merely upon one's sense of a tone's "membership" or "non-membership" in the collection. The explicit projection or non-projection of an inversional center as such need not be a factor.

Cyclical collections have been seen to be important to the work of several twentieth-century composers: one thinks of Debussy's use of the whole-tone scale, Stravinsky's use of the octatonic scale (as described by Arthur Berger²⁴ and Pieter van den Toorn²⁵), and of Schoenberg's use of fourth chords and whole-tone collections in such transitional works as the Chamber Symphony, Op. 9--indeed, Schoenberg went to considerable lengths to trace such formations back to

²⁴ Arthur Berger, Problems of Pitch Organization in Stravinsky," Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky, ed. Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone, paperback edition (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1972), 123-154.

²⁵ Pieter C. van den Toorn, The Music of Igor Stravinsky (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

nineteenth-century origins and to show ways in which dissonant simultaneities could be derived from or resolved into more normative and traditional ones.²⁶

Although Sessions avoided explicit octatonic and whole-tone scales in his earlier, more Stravinskian works, he did make frequent use of fourth chords and diatonic/fourth collections. It will also be seen that the whole-tone collection begins to make itself felt in his works of the 1940s as Sessions' melos moves steadily away from diatonicism. Just how far these formations make themselves felt in his twelve-tone music, and what, if any, power they have to order his later music will be dealt with in Chapters Five and Six.

The American composer and Sessions student Henry Weinberg has studied the role played by whole-tone and fourth collections in the atonal and serial music of Arnold Schoenberg, seeing the fourth-hexachord (for instance, A-D-G-C-F-Bb) as a kind of inherent module, a "primitive," in the sense that it provides a background grid for the

²⁶ Arnold Schoenberg, Theory of Harmony, trans. Roy E. Carter, first paperback printing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 390-422. This translation is based on the third edition of his Harmonielehre (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1922).

chromatic inflections on the surface. He traces the importance of these two collections for Schoenberg back to Chapters XX-XXI of Harmonielehre which deal with them specifically, and to the works of the pre-atonal period, such as the Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, in which the three realms of whole-tone collection, fourth collection, and functional triad all battle very explicitly for supremacy.

Weinberg first began writing about this topic in his 1966 dissertation, which was essentially concerned with relating twelve-tone composition to certain Schenkerian concepts--notably "reduction" of foreground detail and "transference" of such foreground detail to higher levels of structure.²⁷ Several passages from the works of Schoenberg are cited here as examples of embellishment, or "prolongation," of a whole-tone or fourth collection via passing- and neighbor-notes.²⁸ Weinberg then goes on to state:

The special importance given to whole-tone chord structures and fourth-chords (both significantly

²⁷ Henry Weinberg, A Method of Transferring the Pitch Organization of a Twelve Tone Set Through All Layers of a Composition; A Method of Transforming Rhythmic Content Through Operations Analogous to Those of the Pitch Domain (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1966; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 66-13,366).

²⁸ Ibid., 3-5. The passages cited are: Pierrot Lunaire, Op. 21, No. 1, m. 1 and mm. 5-6 (piano RH part); Op. 11, No. 1, mm. 12-13 (LH); Op. 23, No. 1, mm. 1-3 (whole texture). The first two are graphed as embellished whole-tone collections, the third as an embellished fourth collection.

generated by a single interval) in the Harmonielehre is perhaps an indication that Schoenberg felt these structures might serve as the basis for composing-out, prolongation and elaboration, that is, more as normative structures than simply as vertical sonorities...these structures still play a special role in Schoenberg's twelve-tone works, particularly the early ones. And they are in keeping with a line of thought which emphasizes symmetrical structures such as those generated by a single interval or those which divide the twelve-tone set into equal partitions. The chapters on fourth-chords and whole-tone chords were developed not for the original edition but for the 1922 revision. Perhaps these chapters had meaning for his then recent work.²⁹

Later in the same study, Weinberg relates this thinking to a work of Schoenberg's American period:

The pattern of transposition in a twelve-tone work may function again as a long-range association of areas, carrying some pattern to a higher level of organization. Here the Fourth Quartet of Schoenberg yields a good illustration. [A footnote refers to the additional example of Op. 33a.] One of the three principal trichords of the piece is a fourth-chord. An extended fourth-chord structure forms the pattern of all transpositions on which the material first appearing at m. 66 reappears...

The fourth-chord cycle in the Fourth Quartet is associated with a group of themes which in the latter part of the piece are contrapuntally associated. Another important trichord of the set, the augmented triad, appears, with subordinate elaboration of whole-tones, as the pattern of transposition for another of the important thematic groups.³⁰

Weinberg has also written two extended articles about the work of Sessions. One, his article on the composer in

²⁹ Ibid., 6.

³⁰ Ibid., 12-13.

The New Grove Dictionary,³¹ extends somewhat the concept of structural fourth collections in an analysis of the opening of the Violin Concerto (the same passage which Andrew Imbrie studied in the article cited above).³² In this passage, which is essentially diatonic (or "pandiatonic," if you will), the authors see a kind of "slide-rule" shifting along the cycle-of-fourths continuum, G-sharp being displaced "to the left" by G-natural, D-natural "to the right" by D-sharp, and so on. The other article, written somewhat earlier, discusses the essentially traditional rhetoric of Sessions' serial works. Here Weinberg notes the progressive rhythmic diminutions found in the opening of the second movement of his String Quintet (1958) and sees in its unity of rhythmic and (serial) pitch units an echo of certain procedures in Beethoven and Mahler.³³

A detailed study of the theory of structural fourths, as elaborated by Weinberg in classes at Queens College, would be out of place here; the best all-around introduction

³¹ James Abruzzo and Henry Weinberg, "Roger Sessions," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), XVII, 194-197.

³² Imbrie, "Roger Sessions: In Honor," 69-78.

³³ Pierluigi Petrobelli and Henry Weinberg, "Roger Sessions e la musica americana," Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana 5 (March-April 1971), 249-263.

as of this writing is Edward Smaldone's 1986 dissertation;³⁴ it would seem, however, that Weinberg's view of the fourth/fifth collection as structural and the semitone as elaborative is not inconsistent with the views of Sessions, Cone, and Imbrie as stated above, and may also prove to be consistent with Sessions' compositional practice.

The notion of cyclical intervallic collections (especially whole-tone and diatonic/fourth collections) provides a key to understanding Sessions' harmonic evolution from diatonicism to serialism. His consistent grasp of the underlying musical forces of cumulation, of association, and of contrast is a further link between From My Diary of 1937-40 and the Third Piano Sonata of 1963-65.

³⁴ Edward Smaldone, Linear Analysis of Selected Posttonal Works of Arnold Schoenberg: Toward an Application of Schenkerian Concepts to Music of the Posttonal Era (Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1986; Ann Arbor Mich.: University Microfilms, 8629741). This dissertation studies Schoenberg's Six Little Piano Pieces, Op. 19, via Weinberg's method.

CHAPTER THREE

PRE-SERIAL WORKS

The set of short piano pieces published as From My Diary¹ presents a microcosm of Sessions' compositional practice at the time it was written (1937-40). Although the four pieces in the set are all fairly brief and relatively simple in texture, they are stylistically close to his larger, more complex pieces of the period, such as the Second Symphony (1944-46). The word "diary" in the title refers to the fact that each piece was substantially sketched in a single day, though revised in some cases over the course of several years.

Consistent with the idea of diary entries, the thematic ideas are straightforward and the motivic associations less far-reaching than in other works of the composer. This perhaps explains why these pieces have been cited numerous times in books and articles on Sessions' music.²

¹ This and all subsequent references are to the edition of 1947 (New York: Edward B. Marks).

² Wallace Berry, Structural Functions in Music, paperback ed. (New York: Dover, 1987), 244 discusses the end of No. 3; Edward T. Cone, "Analysis Today," The Musical Quarterly XLVI/2 (April 1960), 179-180, discusses Nos. 2 and 4; Cone, "In Defense of Song: the Contribution of Roger Sessions," Critical Inquiry II/1 (Autumn 1975), 93-112, discusses Nos. 1 and 2; Allen Forte, Contemporary Tone-Structures (New York: Bureau of Publication of the Teachers College, Columbia University, 1955), 48-62 discusses the third movement; and Imbrie, "The Symphonies," 25-26, discusses Nos. 2 and 3, taking Forte to task for his interpretation of No. 3 as being in D Major.

The use of a key signature in two of these pieces (and its omission in the two others) has been a source of some controversy. The most unambiguously tonal piece in the set, No. 4 in D (whether major or minor), has no key signature, while the first piece, with a key signature of three flats, can in no way be considered as being "in" C, or "on" C, or anything of that kind; insofar as this piece is "in" any key at all, it would have to be "in" F "minor". (My use of quotation marks is to indicate that such key and mode associations are equivocal and nontraditional.) The real point of the key signatures, then, has to be either convenience (that is, whatever key signature will require the fewest accidentals throughout the piece) or delimitation (the use of a key signature to indicate the priority of a particular diatonic/fourths collection). Speaking to Andrea Olmstead, Sessions noted:

I was asked by a lot of people why I wrote key signatures. Darius Milhaud asked of my opera The Trial of Lucullus, "Why did you put key signatures in it?" And I said, "Of course, I made my sketches without putting accidentals in and I thought of them in terms of key signatures. And I was too lazy to put in all those accidentals." And he said, "It's funny, I leave the key signatures out, because I'm too lazy to put them in."³

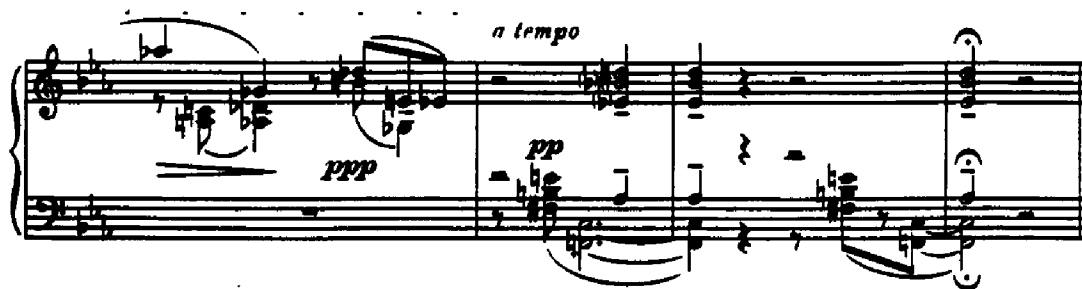
In a related conversation, Sessions spoke about the sense of key in his Second Piano Sonata, written in 1946:

³ Olmstead, Conversations, 56.

OLMSTEAD: We talked a bit about whether keys are even applicable to this piece. I had the impression that you were thinking in terms of C Major.

SESSIONS: As a point of departure, all right, yes. On the other hand, whether it's C Major or A minor, I wouldn't know, if you see what I mean.*

Consistent with this, the three-flat key signature in the first piece seems to serve a delimiting function: it hints at a kind of "boundary-play" between D-natural at one end of a diatonic collection (namely, D-G-C-F-Bb-Eb-Ab) and D-flat at the other (G-C-F-Bb-Eb-Ab-Db). The D-flat prevails in the initial descending motion of mm. 1-7; the D-natural is asserted by the vertical at mm. 8-9, a kind of extended "F minor thirteenth" chord. This chord--in fact, the whole cadence--is repeated at the very close of the piece [Example 1].



Princeton, May 1937. November 1939

[Example 1, mm. 37-39]

* Ibid., 81.

The other non-diatonic notes--F-sharp (G-flat), B, E and A-natural--enter as upper neighbors of F-natural, B-flat, E-flat, and A-flat, respectively, in mm. 3-6, and saturate the texture more and more up to the cadence; at that point they deflect back to the primary tones, some of the voices moving directly by half step, others by major seventh or minor ninth (as described in George Perle's Serial Composition and Atonality)² [Example 2].



[Example 2]

The choice of spelling F-sharp as G-flat, or vice-versa, seems likewise to be more than just a matter of convenience or "laziness." In mm. 5-6, the G-flat³ is clearly a local neighbor-note of F-natural, and this is transferred into the lower octave in mm. 7-8. The F-sharp of the left-hand chord F-sharp-B-E (mm. 7ff), however, begins to take on an identity of its own--an identity which

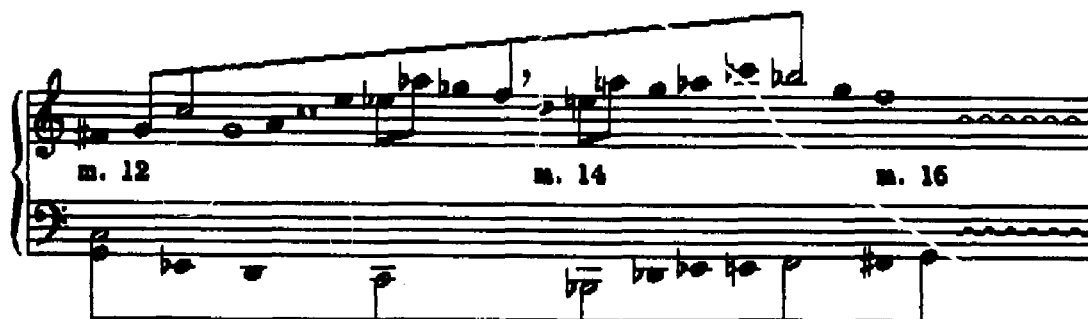
² pp. 24-5.

becomes clearer at m. 12, right hand, where it is a lower neighbor of G-natural [Example 3].



[Example 3]

At this point we have moved from a first idea which cadenced in "f minor" to a kind of "second theme" in "C Lydian." This does not last long, however: a wedge-like motion causes the melody to ascend by elaborated fourths (G-C-F-Bb) in mm. 12-15 and the bass descends to B-flat1 while emphasizing the same four pitches [Example 4].



[Example 4]

Sessions' use of his own principles of association, cumulation, and contrast are very much in evidence here. The first period (mm. 1-11) extends an initial four-measure idea out to eight measures; it then attempts to balance this with a parallel answering phrase of only three measures. The contrasting "second theme" which begins at m. 12 flows more continuously than did the opening; its initial rising motion stops upon reaching the C-flat6-B-flat5 neighbor-note motion in m. 15, and its subsequent descent carries through until the fresh musical impulse of m. 20. The ascent thus takes four measures to complete, and the downward turn itself is marked by a change in surface rhythm (from steady eighth notes to a "long-short" pattern) which creates rather the feeling of a "three plus five" measure breakdown than one of "four plus four". This unbroken quality is enhanced by the contrapuntal independence of the bass, which descends for three bars (mm. 12-14) and re-ascends for five (mm. 14-18). In a metrically clear (4/4) context like this one, such compression and expansion of the metric "module" are not without significance; the first period defies the common tendency toward extension of its consequent phrase (a tendency which underlies much sonata-form rhetoric), and makes the consequent (mm. 9-11) seem overmatched in relation to the antecedent. The weight of the second period, on the other hand, is on its latter half, in which the melody descends from a high Cb6 (m. 15) to the low B3 of m. 20, the

downbeat of the ensuing, developmental period. The overall sense of mm. 1-19, then, is a result of this metrical compression/expansion: the first period, being "top-heavy," points toward the second; the "bottom-heavy" second period brings the whole wave of expositional energy to a close, making possible the ensuing development (mm. 20-30).

This developmental (or "cumulative" passage) takes the form of an initial four-measure registral/dynamic/metric crescendo followed by a seven-measure decrescendo. The crescendo is "metric" in the sense that the 3/2 meter of measure 23 constitutes an energizing expansion of the eighth-note motive: the release of this tension in the following 4/4 bar is palpable.

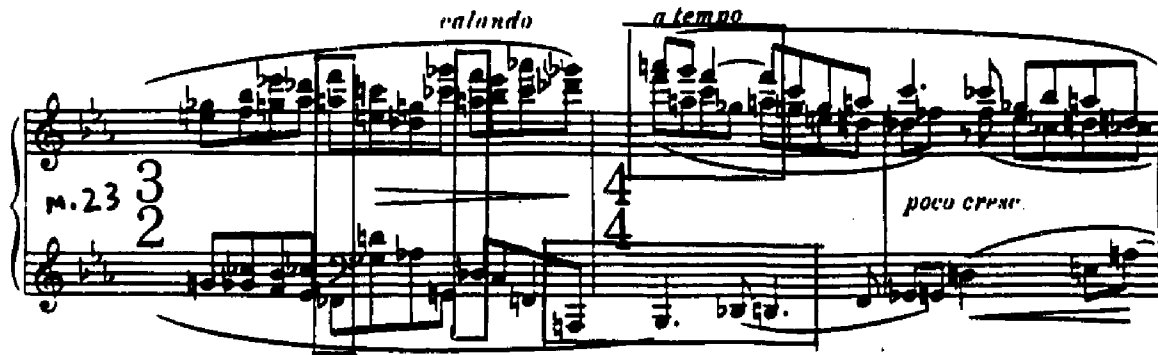
Harmonically, the development seems to feature a more rapid shifting--often by half-step motion--of the diatonic collection than we have seen so far in the piece. As the left hand takes up the full motive in m. 21, a greater harmonic tension is generated by the non-alignment of motivic half-steps between the two essential voices. This gives the half-step descent the feeling of resolution, as in Example 5.



[Example 5]

Although most of the simultaneities—even those resulting from rhythmic displacement—can be easily heard as belonging to one or another diatonic/fourth collection, one simultaneity that cannot be so heard receives repeated emphasis: this is the augmented triad D-flat-F-A. First appearing as an incidental sonority at the end of m. 21, it falls on the second and third half-note beats of the climactic measure 23. Indeed, the highest point of the melodic ascent, at the downbeat of m. 24, finds a high A6 joined to F6 in the right hand moving down to the minor sixth F6/A5 on the next main beat, while in the bass, B-flat1, approached from below via its neighbor-note A-natural, moves to D2 via its lower neighbor-note D-flat [Example 6]. Within the essentially diatonic context of this piece, the presence of the D-flat-F-A whole-tone triad, while contributing to the intensity of the climax, has an essentially non-normative, "special" role to play. Its role

here is subordinate to that of the diatonic/fourth collection.



[Example 6]

Throughout the central section D-flat seems to be a relatively unstable note, while the F and A are more stable; since there is no melodic use of whole-tone collections, some such sense of the notes of the augmented triad is almost inevitable--the only question being which of the notes will be felt to be more or less "dissonant." D-flat generally has been moving down to C-natural in m. 22-23; its shift of direction back up to D-natural in m. 24-27 creates a strong sense of tonal movement.

As is often the case with Sessions' music of this period, the exact "boundaries" of a diatonic/fourth collection are hard to fix; the sense of the relative stability or instability of a particular note is at times quite clear and at other times quite hazy. In Weinberg's theory of structural fourths, important clues for the ear as to the locus of the six-note collection are given by the

unique half-step between its outer members (for example: B-E-A-D-G-C) and by the necessity of having a unique "neighbor-note of the neighbor-note"--a result of the fact that the "harmonic (collectional) semitone" (B-C in our example) will allow only one neighbor-note whether approached from above or below [Example 7].⁶



[example 7]

A seven-note fourth (B-E-A-D-G-C-F) collection will, of course, yield two "harmonic semitones" (like those between 3-4 and 7-8 in a major scale) and a unique tritone; the five non-structural neighbor-tones can either ascend or descend without the necessity of a "neighbor-note of the neighbor-note" to complete the aggregate--in fact, without the need for an aggregate at all. Nevertheless, the reinterpretation of a non-harmonic note seems, as we have seen, to be of some importance in this music. The interpretation of the

⁶ These concepts are developed fully in Smaldone, op. cit., 24-29.

tritone, on the other hand, is somewhat more equivocal: it may act as a "remote" consonance, a kind of delimiting "position-finder" for a seven-note diatonic collection, or else as a dissonance, perhaps forming part of a whole-tone formation. The "consonant," or "position-finder" meaning of the tritone is best exemplified by the cadential chord of mm. 7-8 and mm. 37-39, in which the top voice D5 is the "outside" member of the seven-note (D-G-C-F-Bb-Eb-Ab) collection [Example 8a]. The "dissonant" meaning of the tritone is apparent, among other places, in m. 30, where the skip from B-flat4 down to E4 seems to conflict with the local presence of D-flat, A-flat, and E-flat in the bass and to push the E4 down to E-flat [Example 8b].



[Example 8a]



[Example 8b]

Another suggestive voice-leading feature of this piece is the relationship of F-sharp to G--and, alternately, of G-flat to F-natural. The stabilizing of F-sharp, or its use as a neighbor-note of G-natural, seems to be a key indicator of harmonic "distance" from the tonic collection (whether

that consists of seven or only six notes); the movement of G-flat (even when spelled as F-sharp) down to F-natural is an indicator of harmonic "return." This can be clearly seen by comparing the two appearances of the "second theme" in mm. 12ff. and mm. 31ff. In the first appearance, F#4 is a neighbor to G (the "C Lydian" second theme noted before), and the general direction is away from the "tonic" (or "structural") collection. In the second appearance, the G-flat2 in the bass is clearly an upper neighbor of F, and the passage as a whole anchors the second theme back in the realm of the "tonic" collection. The ultimate anchoring gesture is, of course, the repeat of the original cadence of mm. 7-8 at the very end of the piece.

More than incidental in this passage (mm. 31-end) is the continued stabilizing of D-natural which began back in mm. 24-30: here the Eb4, though locally a lower neighbor of E4 (paralleling the F#-G of the "second theme's" original appearance), is ultimately transferred by a process of "reaching-over" up to the D5 a major seventh above (Example 9).



[Example 9]

The sustained support of D-natural as "consonance" from

m. 24 to the end of the piece perhaps explains Sessions' original choice of the three-flat, rather than four-flat, key signature "as a point of departure."⁷

The role of voice-leading in the second piece of From My Diary, dedicated to Edward T. Cone, has been studied by Cone himself. He follows Sessions' lead in discussing harmonic syntax and melodic connection:

...Regardless of vocabulary, linear and chordal progressions still show striking analogies to older tonal procedures, analogies that are in turn reinforced by rhythmic structure...

...the ear will naturally connect each tone with those nearest to it in pitch. The adjacent pitches may be diatonic or they may be chromatic; they may be actually adjacent or displaced by one or more octaves; they may be present by implication only. In some cases motivic associations or peculiar scale-formations may enforce the acceptance of a larger module.⁸

Cone looks at the middle section of No. 2 (mm. 30ff) in order to illustrate several points about the nature of such stepwise connections [Example 10].

⁷ See quote, p.30.

⁸ Cone, "Analysis Today," 177-178.

Tranquillo ed espressivo
 3/4 del 12 (78)

M. 30

pp ma cantando

espr.

pp Ped. sempre secondo la parte della m.s.
 sempre legatissimo ma ben modellato

[Example 10]

Cone writes:

Here both the F in the first measure and the Gb in the third are associated with upper and lower chromatic neighboring tones. But what of the cadential motif? [D5-Eb5-D4, mm. 32-3] Why is it altered? And why is the linear descent from the Cb in the second measure [m. 31] broken at this point? There are several possible answers, all of which are probably relevant. First of all, the most prominent bass-note in each of the four measures--as indicated by its repetition and by its quarter-stem--is an F, which can be heard as a resolution, at another level, of the hanging Gb--a resolution confirmed by a direct Gb/F in the bass. But at the same time, there seems to be an implied E filling the space between the Gb and the D in its own voice--a tone suggested by the original association of E with Gb (as displaced neighbor-notes of F in m. 30), and by the prominent whole-step motion in the melodic descent. In this case, the line gradually increases its pace as it descends.*

Cone's original question regarding the irregularity in

* Ibid., 179.

the third appearance of the motive in mm. 33-4 leads to several conclusions:

1. The "hanging" G-flat⁴ of m. 33 resolves by octave displacement into the bass F³.

2. The melodic progression (Ab⁴-Gb⁴-D⁴) of mm. 32-33 implies the presence of the "odd" whole-tone scale as a kind of middleground elaboration superimposed above the F "root." This in turn implies the filling-in of the G-flat-D skip by an (assumed) E⁴.

In his Theory of Harmony, Schoenberg sees the origin of the whole-tone scale in the enharmonic reinterpretation of the (symmetrical) augmented triad; each contiguous interval of the chord can be enharmonically reinterpreted as a major third and consequently filled in by a whole-step passing note.¹⁰ In From My Diary, the use of upper and lower neighbor notes begins to introduce the whole-tone hexachord into Sessions' work. It is a formation that becomes increasingly important in his works of the 1940s.

In From My Diary, No. 2 the background is much less clearly diatonic than that of the previous movement. (Rather than indicating a general stylistic shift, the greater chromaticism of the second piece stems essentially

¹⁰ Schoenberg, Theory, 390-391.

from its restlessly energetic expressive character.)¹¹ The diatonic/fourth collection acts here less as a local element of cohesion and more as an arbiter of longer-range motion; the sense of a higher-level pitch collection is in fact helped by the greater swiftness of pace and of pitch circulation in the second piece.

In the opening measures, for instance, the status of the F and A-flat in the bass is uncertain: are they members of a diatonic collection (perhaps F-Bb-Eb-Ab-Db-Gb(F#)), or are they upper neighbors to the apparently stable tones E and G of the (G-A-B-C-D-E) left hand? Part of the very restlessness of the piece stems from our inability to answer this question at the outset. Indeed, it seems never to be answered directly. What is clear, however, is the importance of the G-F-sharp half-step in the right-hand melody, emphasized as it is by octave doubling and rhythmic stratification. [Example 11]



[Example 11]

¹¹ The first piece is dated "May 1937-November 1939" in the MS, the second "August 1939-March 1940" (Olmstead, Roger Sessions, 73). The MSS are at the Princeton University Library.

The "consonance" of the G, however, is compromised by the melodic motion of m. 3: the F#-Ab-Bb of the right hand seems to reduce G to the status of an incomplete neighbor note. The whole-tone implications of this {0, 2, 4} figure are extended immediately: the left hand at m. 3 alters its originally diatonic shape in order to unfold the complementary (G-A-B-C#-D#-F-G-A) "odd" whole-tone collection. The Db-Eb-F in the right hand at mm. 4-5 and the whole-tone/augmented triad successions of the left hand in mm. 7ff are further instances of this interpenetration of diatonic and whole-tone realms. [Example 12]



[Example 12]

The right-hand fourth-successions of mm. 7-10 unfold first a C-sharp/D collection (C#-F#-B-E-A-D), then an F/G-flat collection. [Example 13]

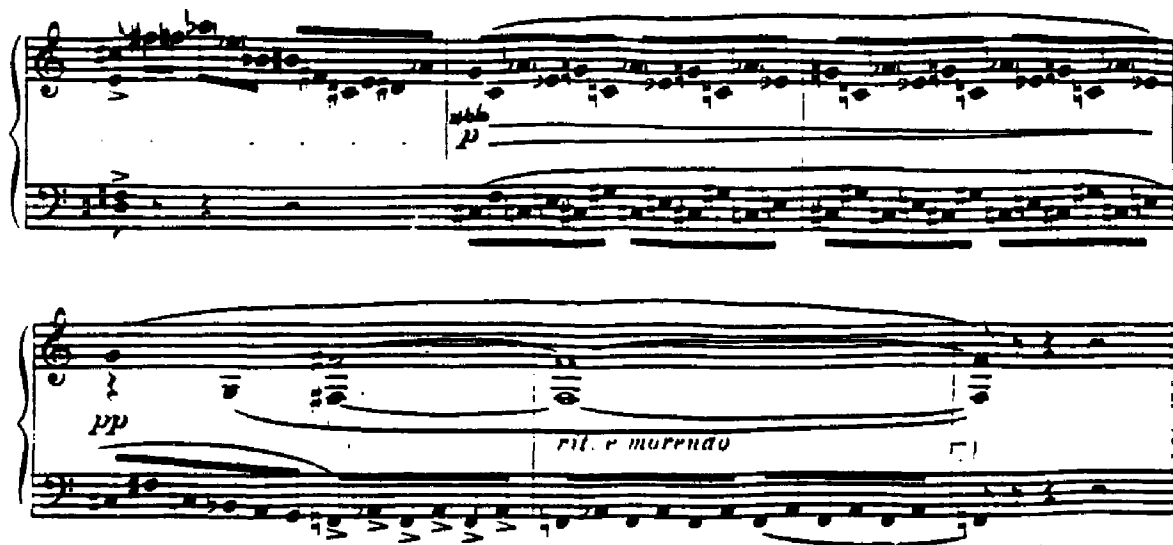


[Example 13]

The climax of this passage, at the downbeat of measure 10, pairs F6/7 in the treble with a G2-F-sharp2 eighth-note succession in the bass--further demonstration of the ambiguity of the "tonic" collection, or background. The ensuing passage interrupts a diatonic right-hand descent (Bb3-Ab3-G3-F3-Eb3-D3) with another whole-tone interpolation (C#3-B2-A2-G2, m. 12).

The second movement of Pages from a Diary, then, exemplifies the use of more overt fourth and whole-tone collections in ordering a context where the sense of diatony is more equivocal. Significantly, the composer attaches no key signature to this piece. The sense of a background diatonic collection is obscured by the "struggle" between the G-F-sharp and F-F-sharp(G-flat) dyads, the latter seeming to defeat the former by a process of "attrition" at the end of the piece (mm. 66-71). In this passage, the G seems to be finally reduced to an auxiliary role (either as lower neighbor to A-flat or as chromatic passing note between A-flat and F-sharp), and the G-A-B-C-D-E scalar bass

pattern of the opening is long forgotten. [Example 14]



[Example 14]

The interleaving of diatonic and whole-tone harmonies in From My Diary finds an echo in Sessions' book Harmonic Practice, especially in the section dealing with "Linear Impulsion and Dissonantal Tension" (pp. 393-398). Starting from a series of harmonically adventurous passages in Die Walküre and Parsifal, Sessions questions the applicability of traditional Roman-numeral analysis and concludes:

In order to account adequately for the sense of the passages in question..., one must recognize two factors other than that of root progression as conditioning the choice of specific harmonies: (1) the linear or melodic design, and relative movement, of the outer voices, including the quasi-cadential articulations of that movement, and (2) what has been described...as the "level of contrast."

If this is true in regard to the above [Wagner] passages, it becomes far more true in the case of chords of more complex structure. In progressions of this type, the motivating design will be shifted away to an even greater extent from the pull of tonality and of key relationships. The sustained contrast, so important in the Wagner examples, will be supplemented, enhanced, and even superseded by the tension inherent in dissonance--dissonance sustained or graded in the same way as the contrasts which are so essential in the Wagner examples and progressions of a similar nature.¹²

What Sessions meant by "sustained contrast" in the Wagner examples--especially in reference to the "Sleep" motive from Die Walküre--was the maintenance of a consistent level of contrast between successive triads; what this gets "superseded" by in later music is a consistent level of intervallic "tension."

By "dissonantal tension" is meant the specific quantity of dissonance--quantity being the category under which, for instance, the minor second and major seventh are often classified as "more dissonant" than the major second and minor seventh. Thus the dissonantal tension is noticeably higher in chord (a) than in chord (b) of Figure 233 [Example 15], and in both (a) and (b) it is higher than in chord (c).



[Example 15]

¹² Sessions, Harmonic Practice, 396-397.

The first (most dissonant) chord of Example 15 is the only one which cannot be contained within a five-note fourth-collection; the second consists of a "gapped" fourth-collection (D-(G)-C-F-Bb), the final chord consisting of a similarly "gapped" fourth-collection (E-A-(D)-G-C). Perhaps Sessions found the second chord to possess more "dissonantal tension" than the final one because the former prominently features a C5-B-flat5 minor seventh, while the latter features a perfect fifth (A4-E5) between the corresponding voices. Clearly, Sessions was considering both spacing and intervallic relationships as factors in the making of "dissonantal tension."

The composer warns, shortly thereafter, of the danger of too mechanistic an approach to this subject¹³--one thinks here of his 1937 critique of Hindemith's theories¹⁴--and consigns such attempts to the dubious realm of "speculative theory."¹⁵ Despite such stern admonitions, it is hard not to see a sense of normative sonority in Pages from a Diary; the heavy reliance on diatonic/fourth collections, whether unfolded vertically or horizontally, and the use of whole-

¹³ Ibid., 402.

¹⁴ Reprinted in Roger Sessions on Music, 241-248; the article, a review of Hindemith's Unterweisung im Tonsatz (v. I), (Mainz: B. Schott, 1937), originally appeared in Modern Music, XV/1, 57-63.

¹⁵ Harmonic Practice, 402.

tone formations and neighbor-like semitonal displacement to embellish the more normative fourth collections, attests to Sessions' sense of their inherent value in organizing his music of the late thirties and forties.

CHAPTER FOUR

SESSIONS ON SCHOENBERG

From the time of his first musical maturity, Roger Sessions had a strong interest in German, rather than French, musical culture. This was partly a matter of personal disposition and partly, it seems, a matter of chance: at the urging of his teacher Edward Burlingame Hill, Sessions intended to go to France to study with Ravel after graduating from Harvard, but the outbreak of World War II prevented this.¹

Although American musical life had up until that time been dominated by Germans, this was about to change. Starting with Aaron Copland, an entire generation of American composers turned away from Central European models and toward those of France and Russia; the central figures here were Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, and Nadia Boulanger. There were several reasons for this about-face; one, of course, was the United States' alliance with France and Russia against Germany and Austria in the First World War; another was the attractive freshness of the Franco-Russian composers' musical language; a third was the more positive attitude of the French--particularly Ravel and Boulanger--toward the potential uniqueness of American musical culture.

Sessions did not take up after the war with his plan of

¹ Cone, "Conversation," 91.

studying with Ravel. He had in fact already obtained a great deal of compositional training: first, a bachelor's degree at Harvard (earned when he was only eighteen), then a bachelor's degree at Yale, then self-study via Cherubini's Counterpoint and D'Indy's Cours de Composition, undertaken while he was teaching at Smith College. Yet Sessions still felt the need for more help.

I wrote to Bloch in New York. I wrote to him because he was the only composer living in the United States at that time whose judgment I felt I could rely on, and whose advice would carry weight with the department at Smith.²

Rather than leave the United States at this point (1919), Sessions decided to stay on at Smith College and study privately with the Swiss composer Ernest Bloch, who had studied with, among others, Ivan Knorr, a pupil of Brahms. He commuted to New York for two years, then moved to Cleveland as Bloch's assistant in 1921.

It is also possible that his early interest in German music had been stimulated by his family. His mother, Ruth Huntington Sessions, had studied piano in Leipzig as a young woman. His father and aunt knew Theodore Thomas, the conductor of the New York Philharmonic, and performed for him as chorister and soloist, respectively.

Sessions first became aware of Arnold Schoenberg's work

² Ibid., 93.

in 1912, when he purchased a copy of that composer's Three Piano Pieces, Op. 11 (1909).³ In 1914, he first bought the four-hand arrangement of The Rite of Spring (1911-13), learning it at the piano with Hill at Yale, and heard a performance of Schoenberg's Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16 (1909) in Boston in the fall of that year.⁴

...I was impressed to the point where I wanted to know them better. But they were much less accessible than Stravinsky was at that time. You understand that I had no chance actually to hear any of these pieces except the Five Orchestral Pieces and the Quartet, Op. 7. I felt there were very beautiful things in both of them, but for the moment I felt that they were beyond me--although I do think that The Black Maskers, which I wrote the winter after my experience with the score of the Sacre du Printemps, has a certain influence of Schoenberg too. Of course, I was never totally sold on either Stravinsky or Schoenberg, but I felt for the moment that Stravinsky was the nearer to me of the two.⁵

Sessions first visited Europe in the summer of 1924, visiting Florence, Geneva, and finally Paris, where he met Nadia Boulanger. From 1925 to 1931 he received a series of fellowships (from the Guggenheim Foundation and the American Academy of Arts and Letters) which allowed him to live in Florence (1925-8) and Rome (1928-31). It was in Rome that he first met and befriended Otto Klemperer, who planned to perform the premiere of Sessions' Violin Concerto (As it

³ Olmstead, Conversations, 152-3.

⁴ Cone, "Conversation," 95-96.

⁵ Ibid., 96.

turned out, the work was not finished until the fall of 1935, and Klemperer never seems to have performed it; it received its orchestral premiere in Chicago in 1940.)⁶ Sessions did, however, succeed in writing and hearing his First Symphony at this time: it was premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitsky in 1927. Indeed, both Boulanger (whom he continued to see socially) and Koussevitsky encouraged him in his work. According to Sessions, Boulanger "was the first European and musician of distinction to take American composers seriously. Then she tended more and more to really take over."⁷ A rift eventually developed between the two: "I think the root of the whole business is that she never forgave me for going to live in Berlin instead of coming to live in Paris," although her feelings about Sessions' divorce of several years later also contributed to the chill.⁸

It was also in this period that he first became aware of the whole idea of twelve-tone music:

I suppose I first heard about it in the early twenties, about the time I was writing The Black Maskers, or just before. I used to read much more than I do now. There was a French magazine called La Revue Musicale; it was very good. They spoke of it.

And, furthermore, I did know the works of Schoenberg slightly, but I just felt that I wasn't ready to cope with it at all. Then in 1928 I heard a

⁶ Olmstead, Roger Sessions, 43-45.

⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁸ Loc. cit.

concert after which the two pieces that stayed in my memory were a piece of Schoenberg and one of Stravinsky. The Schoenberg was the minuet from the suite [Op. 25, his first consistently twelve-tone work (1921-23)], which is still not at all a favorite piece of mine. The Stravinsky piece was his piano sonata [1924], which I think is a big bore. After the concert it was those pieces that stuck in my mind, and I tried to figure out why they did, because I thought the Schoenberg was alien. It wasn't so alien, because I was definitely getting away from Stravinsky, in a way. [At this time, Sessions had just completed his First Symphony, and had begun his First Piano Sonata.]

I never was influenced by Schoenberg in that way; I just got to know that music, that's all. I pinched myself and said, "You're a young composer still, and there's a whole part of the musical world that you don't really know much about." So I got all Schoenberg's piano pieces and I learned opp. 23 [1920-23], 25, 19 [1911], and 11 [1909] by heart. When I got to Berlin afterwards, I found a lot of people who expressed themselves very, very strongly for Schoenberg, but I found I knew these pieces better than they did.²

Encouraged by Klemperer, he moved to Berlin in 1931 with the assistance of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. Here he roomed with Max Strub, the concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic, and came to know the conductor Fritz Stiedry, his wife Erica Stiedry-von Wagner (one of the first interpreters of Pierrot Lunaire), and Artur Schnabel (who had grown up with Schoenberg), among others. Here he also heard the Schoenberg Serenade, Op. 24 (1920-23) and in November of 1933 met its composer for the first time.

² Olmstead, Conversations, 197-198.

Sessions returned from Berlin in 1933 and spent the next several years teaching in New York and Boston. At this time he felt himself to be very isolated; according to Milton Babbitt, "Europeans regarded Sessions as an American composer and Americans thought of him as a European. He was caught in the middle."¹⁰ If Sessions was regarded as too "European" and Copland, Piston, and Blitzstein weren't, this can be attributed in part to the fact that Sessions had never studied in Paris, in part to the fact that his works, few as they were at this time, lacked the simplicity of harmony and texture which characterized the work of most Boulanger students.

It was at this time that Sessions first committed himself to print on the subject of Arnold Schoenberg and the twelve-tone "system." Writing in Modern Music in 1933, he states:

This "Central European" tendency is chiefly embodied in the works of Arnold Schoenberg and his followers, though not strictly confined to them...Though in our belief it could, for historical reasons, have arisen nowhere else but in Vienna, and represents in fact an inevitable end-stage in Viennese musical culture, it claims for itself a universal validity, a more or less general monopoly, in fact, of what is significant in contemporary music. Far more than any other contemporary tendency it is dominated by a single personality, and its development is closely coincident with that of its leader...

The "twelve-tone system" has often been decried as a purely cerebral construction; and there is no question that some of its features are extremely dogmatic. It can not be too much stressed, however,

¹⁰ Ibid., 67. Based on a taped interview with Babbitt in 1975.

that a system of this kind has no existence apart from the works that embody it; it is the works of Schoenberg and his followers that constitute what is vital in their contribution to contemporary music, not the system under which they are written.

..."Tonality" in the old, cadential sense, scarcely exists in any music of the present day, and where it can be said to exist in essence its nature has been so widened and modified as to render it unrecognizable to a composer of the last century. But the ultimate foundations on which the older tonal system was built, since they are inherent in the physical phenomena of resonance, remain unchanged; they can be enormously extended but scarcely modified.

..."Alexandrianism of profundity," indeed, well defines the music of the Central European group in certain respects--its tortured and feverish moods, its overwhelming emphasis on detail, its lack of genuine movement, all signs of a decaying musical culture, without fresh human impulses to keep it alive. The technique of this music, too, is of a curiously ambiguous nature, and often represents an extraordinary lack of coherence between the music heard and, so to speak, its theoretical structure--another sign of an art that is rapidly approaching exhaustion. An orchestral movement, for instance, which is constructed according to the most rigid contrapuntal mathematics will turn out to be, in its acoustic realization, a succession of interesting sonorities without audible contrapuntal implications--an impression not to be dispelled by the most conscientious and sympathetic study of the score, the most complete familiarity with both its intellectual and its sonorous content...Such esoteric and discredited devices as the cancrizans variation of a theme, a technical curiosity which is admittedly inaccessible to the most attentive ear and which was used with the utmost rarity by the classic composers, becomes a regular and essential technical procedure. All of this goes...to produce what is either a fundamentally inessential jeu d'esprit of sometimes amazing proportions, or a kind of scaffolding erected as an external substitute for a living and breathing musical line.¹¹

¹¹ Roger Sessions on Music, 37-38. The article, "Music In Crisis--Some Notes on Recent Musical History," Modern Music X/2, 63-78, was equally critical of other contemporary trends.

A more complete rejection of the "twelve-tone system" could hardly be found, at least one written by a composer as fundamentally sympathetic to the "Central European tradition," and to Schoenberg's place in it, as was Sessions. The kind of "living, breathing musical line" which Sessions was striving for at this time--exemplified by his Violin Concerto of 1930-35--avoided both the sudden and frequent changes of direction and pattern typified by the Schoenberg Five Piano Pieces, Op. 23, Serenade, Op. 24, and Suite, Op. 25, and also their use of contrapuntal devices such as canon and inversion.

Within a few years, the chromaticism which was so clearly incidental in the Violin Concerto had become more pervasive--and more problematic. Nevertheless, Sessions remained critical of the twelve-tone concept. In an article written in 1937, he notes "the apotheosis of detail" in the works of Schoenberg's middle period [apparently referring to the "atonal," pre-serial pieces], and the concomitant downgrading of the element of "line" in importance.¹² The same article takes note of the immense distance traversed between the Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16, of 1909 and the Variations for Orchestra, Op. 31, of 1927-8, and finds that:

As for Schoenberg's own "twelve-tone system,"

¹² Ibid., 47. The article, "The New Musical Horizon," originally appeared in Modern Music XIV/2 (1937), 59-66.

in which an additional set of relationships is, as it were, rigorously superimposed on those derived from the phenomena of resonance, it perhaps appeals to a quite special type of musical mentality, but its ultimate value will depend not on any question of abstract merit but on its efficacy as a vehicle for the imagination of those who use it.¹³

Another Sessions article written the same year finds hope for the future of music in the existence of four contemporary works which "represent a high level of musical intention and achievement, and which have a genuine and deep significance for all those who are willing and able to hear and respond."¹⁴ The works included Hindemith's Mathis der Mahler, Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms, Bartók's Music for String Instruments, Percussion, and Celesta, and Berg's Violin Concerto--but no Schoenberg. Thus it would seem, on the surface at least, that little had changed about Sessions' attitude toward the whole subject in the intervening years.

According to Babbitt, however, the years 1935-38 were ones of considerable re-thinking for Sessions;¹⁵ Babbitt's own studies with the composer, which spanned the same years, mostly consisted of species counterpoint "from a Schenkerian point of view" and exercises from Ivan Knorr's Aufgaben für

¹³ Ibid., 50.

¹⁴ Ibid., 124. Originally published as "America Moves to the Avante-Scene," in American Musicological Society Papers, 1937, 108-119.

¹⁵ Olmstead, Roger Sessions, 69.

den Unterricht in die Harmonielehre as well as a large number of "imitation" pieces. Babbitt later stated that "I was already so involved in looking at twelve-tone things that Roger thought it would be more diplomatic if he didn't look at my music."¹⁶

It was at this time that Sessions undertook a series of reviews for Modern Music in which he attempted to spell out his theoretical thinking in more detail. The most relevant of these for the present study is an article written in 1938 entitled "Exposition by Krenek," a review of that author's Über neue Musik, which Sessions sees as an inspiring "confession of faith" in the twelve-tone system.¹⁷ Despite numerous protestations of admiration for Krenek, Schoenberg, and other members of the Schoenberg school, he continues to find fault with the "twelve-tone system" precisely because it is a system.¹⁸ Attempting to place what he sees as the dogmatism of the twelve-tone adherents in historical perspective, he writes:

One can well understand that a new impulse in art, by reason of its very novelty, is often forced into a polemical position by the intensity of the attacks upon it, and what begins as a fruitful artistic discovery soon degenerates into a dogma. In this case the bitterness of the attack, though by no means unique in music history, reflects itself on the other hand, in

¹⁶ Ibid., 96. Quotes based on taped interview with Babbitt, November 6, 1979.

¹⁷ Roger Sessions on Music, 249. The article first appeared in Modern Music XV/2, 123-128.

¹⁸ Ibid., 251.

the form, also not entirely new, of sharp antagonism in principle to whatever is contrary to the tenets attacked. Such opposition tends therefore to force the issue of partisanship.¹⁹

Sessions' major objection, however, is to the "intensely abstract nature of [the twelve-tone composers'] thought." He finds himself

...profoundly out of sympathy, therefore, with the conception which Krenek boldly avows, of music as an abstract system like geometry. On the contrary it seems to him [Sessions] that its human meaning--and this has nothing to do with "success," "conformity," or any of their current and more pretentious synonyms--lies ultimately in the fact that such elementary musical phenomena as the fifth, and the measurably qualitative distinction between consonance and dissonance, are psychological as well as physical facts, out of which a whole language has grown, and which even in music based on the twelve-tone system seem often more powerful binding forces (Relations-momente) than those inherent in the system itself.²⁰

In the same article, Sessions again notes the seeming absence of a "living, breathing musical line" in this music. He criticizes its "over-abundance and excessive elaboration of detail," which may lead, as with a case of poor biological adaptation, to "the annihilation of a species."²¹ As for the rapid changes of pace and expression in twelve-tone music,

Herr Krenek in some measure seems to answer and justify this charge at the end of his fifth chapter where he admits the fragmentary impression created by

¹⁹ Ibid., 251-52.

²⁰ Ibid., 253.

²¹ Ibid., 254.

his "new music" which he considers part of its character as the "innermost expression of reality" (das innerste Ausdruck des Wesens). But is it not precisely the nature of art to transcend this fragmentary reality and to give it significance through synthesis...Is not art therefore, significant precisely insofar as it is not fragmentary, and are not the greatest works of art those in which completeness, not so much of form as of range and depth and intensity, is most fully attained?²²

Sessions later described the years 1935-40 as "very tough, that's all."²³ In addition to his artistic isolation and his divorce, he faced various rumors and adverse criticisms of his still-unplayed Violin Concerto. The rumors centered around the suspicion, circulated in part by the violinist Albert Spalding (who was profoundly out of sympathy with Sessions' work), that it was unplayable and even that he was somehow unable to finish it, when in fact it had been completed in 1935.²⁴ At the same time, his low salary at Princeton required that he take on extra teaching jobs and private pupils, leaving little time for creative work. Between the completion of the Violin Concerto in 1935 and that of the Second Symphony in 1946 he composed only two sizeable pieces--the String Quartet No. 1 in E Minor of 1936 and the Duo for Violin and Piano of 1942. During these

²² Ibid., 254-55.

²³ Olmstead, Conversations, 164.

²⁴ Spalding cancelled his scheduled 1937 performance of the work, and its conductor, Serge Koussevitsky, subsequently refused to perform any of Sessions' music (Olmstead, Roger Sessions, 58).

years he wrote several more or less occasional pieces, the most representative of which was From My Diary of 1937-40.

The fact that he spent so much time writing reviews and articles must then be seen as significant. His other important reviews were of books by Hindemith²⁰ and Schenker.²¹ These reviews criticized their authors for putting too much faith in the overtone series, for not allowing enough play for the ability of the ear to grasp the more indirect relationships--precisely the opposite of what he had criticized Krenek for.

Sessions' criticisms of the "twelve-tone system," as he persisted in calling it, had remained fairly consistent over the course of at least five, and perhaps ten, years:

1. The "system" was rigid, and thus at odds with the artistic impulse and the basic sonic material of music.

2. The means--contrapuntal artifice, "scaffolding" via set-forms, and so on--was at odds with the audible results.

3. The excessive concern with detail and the rapid shifts of gesture militated against any sense of overarching line or movement.

By 1944, however, Sessions' attitude had undergone a

²⁰ Roger Sessions on Music, "Hindemith on Theory," 241-248. Originally published in Modern Music XV/1 (1937), 57-63.

²¹ Ibid., "Heinrich Schenker's Contribution," 231-40, originally published in Modern Music XII/4 (1935), 170-78; "Escape by Theory," 256-62, originally published in Modern Music XV/3 (1938), 192-97.

considerable transformation--so considerable, in fact, that one is forced to look in several places for an explanation. One possible source is his increasing contact with members of the Schoenberg circle who had come to the United States as refugees from Hitler: these included the violinist Rudolf Kolisch (Schoenberg's brother-in-law and early champion), the pianist Eduard Steuermann, Felix Greissle (Schoenberg's son-in-law, later Sessions' editor at E.B. Marks), and the conductor Heinrich Jalowetz, who gave a series of lectures in 1944 on modern music at Black Mountain College which Sessions attended (along with Krenek, Kolisch, Steuermann and others).²⁷ Otto Klemperer, the conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the pianist Artur Schnabel, both of whose relationship to the Schoenberg circle was more equivocal, had also been in the United States for several years by this time. (Schoenberg had decided to move to Los Angeles in 1934 partly after encouragement from Klemperer, and partly from a distaste for Koussevitsky and Toscanini, the "gods" of the East Coast scene, a distaste which was more than reciprocated).²⁸

Schoenberg himself was teaching at UCLA during this period; after Sessions left Princeton to teach at Berkeley

²⁷ H.H. Stuckenschmidt, Arnold Schoenberg: His Life and Work, trans. Humphrey Searle (New York: Schirmer Books, 1977), 482.

²⁸ Ibid., 403-407.

in 1945 the two men began a friendship which continued until Schoenberg's death in 1951.

I always knew some of Schoenberg's music very well, but I was not at all sure that Schoenberg's system, which I didn't fully understand at that time, could fit my needs. I came to it fairly slowly. When I arrived in California, I had some very good talks with Schoenberg and found out that our ideas were not very far apart. Soon afterwards I found myself in favor of it.²⁹

As we have seen, the Schoenberg pieces which Sessions "knew very well" prior to this time included the pre-serial Opp. 11, 19, and 23 piano pieces and Op. 16 Five Pieces for Orchestra, and the twelve-tone Suite, Op. 25. In an article written in 1944 and somewhat revised in 1972,³⁰ he writes of having closely studied the Fourth String Quartet, Op. 37 (1936), the Violin Concerto Op. 36 (1935-36), and the Piano Concerto, Op. 42 (1941); all three works had received their first performances by Schoenberg associates whom Sessions had originally come to know in Europe: Rudolf Kolisch, Eduard Steuermann, and Louis Krasner (Krasner had performed Sessions' own violin concerto around the same time (1940) that he premiered Schoenberg's).

Significantly, Sessions seems to have had no knowledge

²⁹ Tracy Cara and Cole Gagne, Soundpieces: Interviews with American Composers (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1982), 358.

³⁰ Roger Sessions on Music, "Schoenberg in the United States," 353-369; originally published in Tempo 103, 8-17.

of the hexachordally combinatorial pieces written before Schoenberg came to America in 1933--specifically, such works as the Piano Piece Op. 33a (composed in 1928), Accompaniment Music to a Film Scene, Op. 34 (1929-30), and, of course, the uncompleted and then-unpublished Moses und Aron (1930-32). Thus, the whole development of Schoenberg's musical thinking after Op. 25 was unknown to him for at least ten years. He states that his earlier judgment of the Variations for Orchestra, Op. 31 (1927) (see page 54, above) was based on a "first perusal of the score."³¹ The 1944 article sees "a separate phase and a new level" in Schoenberg's music³², which achieved "a freedom and resourcefulness which carries them in this respect far beyond his earlier works, especially those in the twelve-tone technique."³³ Although still seeing in the early serial works "a certain tenseness and dogmatic insistence," he finds that

In the works of the last ten years [1934-44] one feels no such limitation. The technique is used with the ease of virtuosity, with complete resourcefulness, and with such freedom that it is sometimes difficult to discover. The Fourth Quartet, the Violin and the Piano Concertos are, as far as I can see, his finest achievements of these yearsperhaps of his whole work...

They differ first of all in their longer and broader lines. This is not simply a question of "continuity"; Schoenberg has always been in this respect a master of form, and in no work known to me can he be accused of a lack of logic. But--with those

³¹ Ibid., 353.

³² Ibid., 357.

³³ Ibid., 359-60.

qualifications and exceptions--the individual details are underlined to a degree that they, rather than the larger lines, seem to bear the main expressive burden.³⁴

Sessions sees in the later pieces a greater emphasis on "the line as a whole. A sustained melodic line becomes the rule, rather than the exception."³⁵ He also points to the greater consistency of orchestral color over larger stretches of time than in, for instance, the Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16. Finally, he points to an element he finds somewhat more "elusive":

It is not easy concretely to demonstrate, in the two concertos and the Quartet, a still wider range of harmonic affect--one which includes all the simplest as well as the most complex relationships--or a much vaster harmonic line, at the least suggesting a new tonal principle, powerfully binding like the old but embracing all possible relationships within the chromatic scale. As far as I know, no adequate study has yet been made of Schoenberg's work in its harmonic and tonal aspects--aspects which lie deeper than the twelve-tone system or the individual sonority, and guide the ear of the listener in his real apprehension of the music.³⁶

What, exactly, did Sessions mean by this "vaster harmonic line" and "new tonal principle"? Sessions may have sensed in these three works a more expansive and consistent

³⁴ Ibid., 362-63. A footnote, added in 1972, adds that Sessions had by this later writing become aware of such "longer and broader lines" in Schoenberg's earlier work as well.

³⁵ Ibid., 364.

³⁶ Ibid., 365.

unfolding of the kinds of normative and embellishing pitch collections which he himself had been working with. In the Schoenberg Fourth Quartet, for instance, the second trichord is an F-Bb-Eb fourth collection and the third trichord is an E-Ab-C augmented triad; the remaining trichords (D-C#-A and G-F#-B) are not only inversionally equivalent at t4 but also form six notes of a seven-note fourth collection (C#-F#-B-(E)-A-D-G).

Henry Weinberg has pointed out larger applications of the fourth and whole-tone cycles in this piece.³⁷ The "areas" used in the exposition of the first movement, with the sole exception of one measure (m. 59), unfold an E-A-D-G-(C)-F (or "E/F") fourth collection. Considering (for purposes of illustration only) A0 (P0/I5) as the "D" level (since P0 starts on D), the "area"-succession of the exposition proceeds as follows:

measures:	1	31	42	52	59	60	79-94
"area":	A0	A5	A2	A3	A4	A7	A3
level:	"D"	"G"	"E"	"F"	"F#"	"A"	"F"

The one "area" omitted, A10 (the "C" level), follows immediately and begins the development section with an A10-A6-A2 "augmented triad" succession (mm. 95-139). The second and larger "wave" of the development and the greater part of the recapitulation (allowing some latitude for the use of

³⁷ See p. 26.

these terms in a nontonal context) similarly unfold the other fourths-hexachord (briefly, A8("Bb")-A1("Eb")-A6("Ab")-A11("C#")-A4("F#")-A9("B"), or a "A#/B" collection).

The rather abstract nature of these relationships is perhaps made more palpable by the repeated emphasis on the B-E and F-B-flat fourths at the end of this passage (mm. 226-238). These two fourths are notes four and five of P0/I5 and of P6/I11; they derive from the fourth-trichord mentioned above. The semitone progressions D-C-sharp and A-flat-G receive similar emphasis here; they are the initial two notes of P0/I5 and P6/I7, and they form the same [0,1,6,7] tetrachord as do E/B and F/B-flat. While there is much more to the movement than is stated here, and while the ultimate significance of such cycles and "macro-areas" is problematic, the mere presence of these formations in a work from 1936 recalls their more overt use in the Chamber Symphony of 1906.

Whether Sessions was consciously aware of all these relationships in 1944 or not, it seems clear that he sensed some kind of larger harmonic unity in the Schoenberg serial works of the thirties and forties. He had begun to feel that the use of a twelve-tone row as a source of linear and harmonic relationships could be a help to the free play of his imagination, rather than a hindrance.

CHAPTER FIVE

CREEPING SERIALISM

The years 1935-44 were, as we have noted, not the most productive for Sessions; during that period he managed to complete his First String Quartet (1936), several occasional pieces such as From My Diary (1937-40), and the Duo for Violin and Piano (1942). The following years saw a general increase in Sessions' output which essentially continued until his death in 1985.

Sessions' next large-scale work, the Symphony No. 2 (1944-46), was composed during his years at Berkeley; it is also the last of his pieces to possess a key signature. According to Sessions, "I considered my Second Symphony essentially tonal, but nobody else did...one doesn't think in terms of key relationships at all. But there are always relationships between notes, and that's why the term 'atonal' is wrong."¹ As for what he meant by "relationships between the notes," one must consider that his statement (in Harmonic Practice) that 'a fifth will still sound like a root and fifth, a half-step like a leading-tone' (context permitting),² appeared in 1951; whatever the construction one wishes to put on such a statement, it certainly should alert one to the role of those intervals in a work written

¹ Olmstead, Conversations, 56.

² Sessions, Harmonic Practice, 407.

some five to seven years earlier, and to the ways in which they might serve a quasi-tonal function. Sessions also said of this work:

I've seen the Second Symphony referred to as a "symphony in D minor." That's the way I thought of it, but the D minor is very well hidden. Not purposely; I was thinking of D minor as a reference, undoubtedly. It's not a twelve-tone piece, or anything like that.²

Several important aspects of the first movement⁴ are typical of much of Sessions' work and little of Schoenberg's. One such aspect is the clear sectionality of the movement: it consists of two highly contrasted sections which alternate throughout. As in his First Symphony of 1926-27, each section has its own tempo and motivic "characters" which seldom intrude on one another's "territory." This kind of quasi-Baroque Affektenlehre was not Schoenberg's way, even in pieces such as his violin and piano concertos which did have clear sectional articulations.

The increased chromaticism of Sessions' Second Symphony, as compared to that of From My Diary, is, again, only superficially similar to that of Schoenberg; while Schoenberg's chromaticism seems to come out of late Wagner, and at an early stage (at least as early as Gurrelieder,

² Olmstead, Conversations, 65.

⁴ The second and third movements were written "quite a bit" before the first; the second was originally conceived as one of the From My Diary pieces (ibid., 30).

begun in 1900) shows the presence of the whole-tone scale, Sessions' seems initially to derive from a more rapid shifting of diatonic fragments, into which the whole-tone collection only in the 1940s begins to be heard as a thing in itself.

Example 1 demonstrates the quick succession of diatonic/fourth collections in the opening of the first movement.



[Example 1]

The concern Sessions had shown in From My Diary, No. 2 for carrying out important voice-leading motions in several registers appears again in this fragment: the D-C motion is stated in two octaves, and the C is brought down to a third octave before being displaced by C#4. Similarly, A5, which at first was subsumed by the upward motion of m. 1, is also displaced to Ab(G#)5; this motion is also carried out in three registers, concluding the phrase with a final return to A3 [Example 2].



[Example 2]

An interesting detail, given Sessions' growing rapport both with Schoenberg himself and with his later music, is the literal inversion (at 14) of this figure--which includes all twelve notes--at mm. 13-14. Here it serves as a counterpoint to another theme. The particular transposition level chosen puts the same emphasis (via half-step neighbor-note) on the notes D-A-F#-B at its beginning as did the original statement of mm. 1-3, and it ends on D as well [Example 3].



[Example 3].

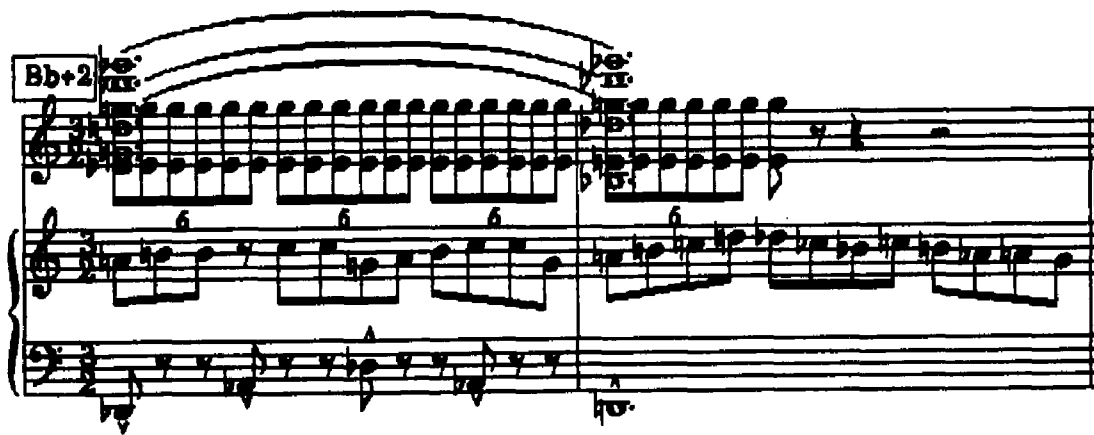
The emphasis on the note D can be seen, then, in the linear emphasis on D and A, which is achieved by neighbor-note elaboration and registral transfer. Another instance of emphasis on A is the contrasting motive which first

appears at mm. 3ff., and hammers insistently on A-F#-G#-A, while the rest of the texture suggests a possible octatonic collection (D#-E#-F#-G#-A) [Example 4].



[Example 4]

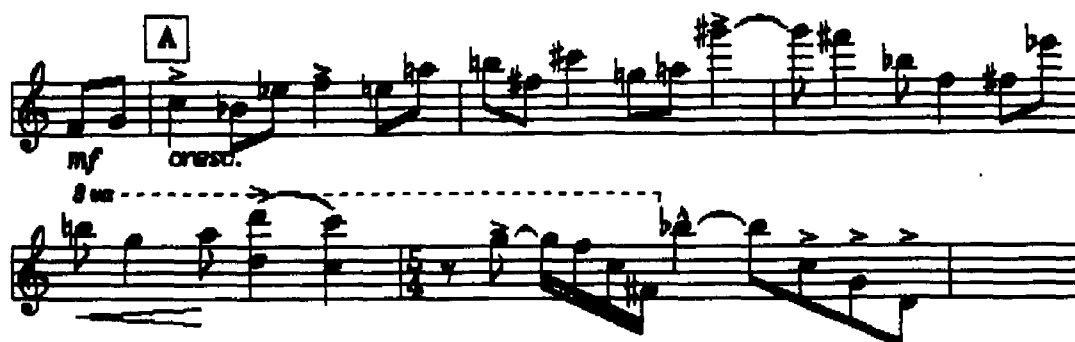
A later appearance of this motive at the central climax of the movement (Rehearsal Letter Bb+2) accompanies a return to the D-A fifth in the bass, again via neighbor-notes (D-flat and A-flat) [Example 5].



[Example 5]

The presence of the whole-tone scale makes itself felt, among other places, in the culmination of the opening melody, which seems to move from the diatonic/fourth collection realm into the whole-tone realm as it moves

upward, returning to the diatonic realm as it climaxes and descends [Example 6].

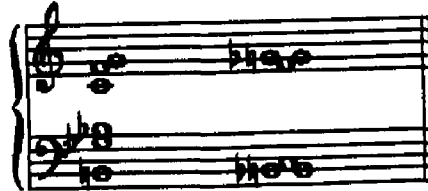


[Example 6]

A further hint of Sessions' study of Schoenberg seems to appear in the half-step voice-leading of passages such as letter B of the score, where two diatonic/fourth collections are sharply opposed both in pitch content and orchestration (strings vs. brass) [Example 7a]. The total pitch content of the final vertical can also be interpreted as two chromatic trichords a perfect fifth (or . fourth) apart, but the effect is masked here by its quasi-diatonic spacing [Example 7b].



[Example 7a: score]



(Example 7b: final vertical)

The practice of holding neighbor-notes while the "main" notes are being stated in another, usually lower, octave is also typical of Schoenberg, and perhaps relates to what Sessions in Harmonic Practice calls "the tendency of accessory tones to become 'frozen,' as it were, onto the harmonies with which they are associated."² The reiterated clarinet figure at the end of the movement typifies this (Example 8a), in that the G-sharp and C-sharp here feel like upper and lower neighbors, respectively, of the G-natural and D-natural; the cadence finds another "foreign" fourth-chord in the trumpets pitted, as in Example 7, against another simple formation--the "tonic" minor tenth D-F-natural--in the lower instruments. The final low D is approached via A-flat (Example 8b).

² Sessions, Harmonic Practice, 224.



[Example 8a]



[Example 8b]

The reiterated half-step relations--especially C-sharp/D and A-flat/A-natural--serve to emphasize these tones, especially when such half-step motion is carried out in several octaves, as it often is in this movement.

Nevertheless, "D minor" in this symphony is little more than a "point of departure," with the emphasis most decidedly on "departure."

According to Henry Weinberg,⁶ Sessions was enthusiastic about Bartók in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Bartók's attempt to reconcile certain contemporary concepts, especially the ideas of symmetry and tritone equivalence, with tonal centricity must have seemed promising to him. Bartók, of course, was not prone to divulging his compositional secrets, and it should not surprise us to see Sessions availing himself of the more superficial aspects of Bartók's language, rather than some of the deeper structural ones which have only been dealt with in studies written in the last twenty or thirty years.⁷ Sessions' Second Piano Sonata (1946) contains a number of Bartokian elements, including a kind of close, "filling-in-the-gap" chromaticism

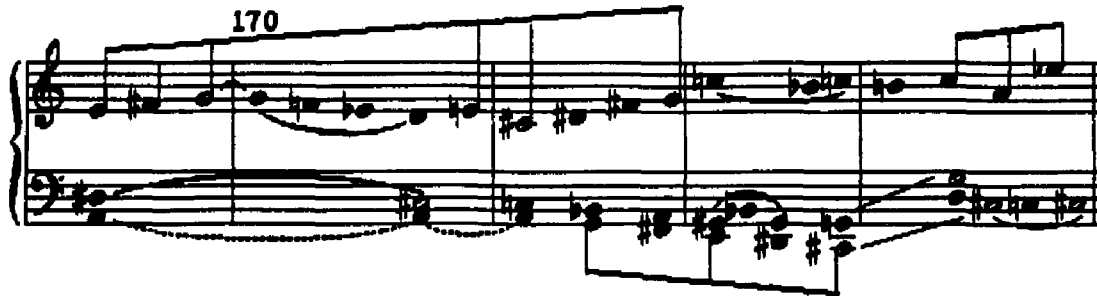
⁶ Private conversation with author.

⁷ Some of the more important of these studies are: Milton Babbitt, "The String Quartets of Béla Bartók," Musical Quarterly XXV (July, 1949), 377-85; George Perle, "Symmetrical Formations in the String Quartets of Béla Bartók," Music Review XVI (November, 1955), 300-312; Erno Lendvai, "Einführung in die Formen und Harmoniewelt Bartóks," in Béla Bartók, Weg und Werk, Schriften und Briefe, ed. Bence Szabolcsi (Budapest: Corvina-Verlag, 1957), 1-15; Elliot Antokoletz, The Music of Béla Bartók, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

which Sessions had not used earlier. This melodic style alternates in the opening of the second movement with whole-tone and diatonic successions. The initial melodic statement (mm. 169-172) emphasizes, through both contour and metric placement, the "diminished triad" C-sharp-E-G. This is then transferred into the bass (m. 172-3) [Example 9a and b], while the melody moves on to unfold another "diminished triad" (A-C-E-flat).



[Example 9a:score]



[Example 9b: "diminished triads" unfolded]

At the end of the movement (m. 257), the opening melody returns, but now transposed at the tritone. This emphasizes the same G and C-sharp (along, this time, with A-sharp rather than E) as did the beginning of the movement, perhaps a conscious echoing of Bartók's practice of "tritone equivalence." An important difference between this piece and the Second Symphony is that in the Sonata dissonant formations, such as the C-sharp/G tritone and the C-sharp-E-G "diminished triad", are being embellished, rather than the D/A perfect fifth of the earlier piece. As Sessions himself stated: "The whole principle of tonal structure was dissolved by the time this piece [Second Piano Sonata] was written, for me certainly."² A striking aspect of those early serial pieces of Schoenberg's with which Sessions was

² Olmstead, Roger Sessions, 83. Quote from taped interview, February 19, 1975.

familiar (the Suite for Piano, Op. 25 and Variations for Orchestra, Op. 31) is their emphasis on the tritone. In fact, this same C-sharp/G tritone is held invariant under the most common (or sole, in the case of the Suite) inversions and transpositions (along with another tritone, B-flat-E). In Schoenberg's Variations, the "diminished seventh chord" of the Introduction seems to "resolve" into a fourth-chord via the wedge-like motion of the tones G and B-flat to F-sharp and B-natural, respectively (mm. 1-5); the "diminished seventh chord" and the fifth B/F-sharp (with its axial neighbor-notes C/F-natural) underpin key points in the Introduction and ensuing Theme [Example 10].



[Example 10]

Milton Babbitt saw Sessions' Second Piano Sonata as being very close to the twelve-tone "system" (as he views it). In a letter written in 1952 to the pianist Beveridge Webster, who was to perform and record the work, Sessions

explained:

...The Sonata itself is not based on the twelve-tone system, though adepts of the system have remarked, and pointed out to me, that it is really very close to it. The work that I have written since then, especially my second quartet, is still closer. I have now arrived at the point where I feel that in all likelihood I shall some time go the whole way; but I am very glad that this evolution has been gradual and genuinely subconscious and absolutely undogmatic.⁹

Babbitt viewed the manipulation of the (E-F-sharp-G) cell of m. 169 as proto-serial in nature, in that the following notes (F-Eb-D) constitute an inversion (at 11) of the original, and complete an all-combinatorial (D-Eb-E-F-F#-G) chromatic hexachord.¹⁰ Sessions himself, however, had a rather simpler explanation, namely that the linear progression [E-F#-G-F-Eb-D] derives from the melodic minor scale, a pattern "so deep in one's consciousness."¹¹

[Example 11]



[Example 11]

⁹ Quoted in Olmstead, Roger Sessions, 82.

¹⁰ Based on observations attributed to Milton Babbitt in Olmstead, Roger Sessions, (pp. 83-4).

¹¹ Ibid., 83.

Of course, the "cancelling" of E-F-sharp by F-natural-E-flat has motivic significance here. As Sessions also stated, the "alteration of whole tone in one direction and a half tone in the other direction, or vice-versa, is very much a part of this whole thing."¹²

The point of the modal alteration in g minor is to emphasize the goal of the descending fourth-span (in this case, D). Heard in this way, the surrounding neighbor-notes (E-flat in the melody and C-sharp in the bass) keep the D from "settling" and thus keep the line moving, without in fact negating the significance of the D-G fourth. The D4 is then displaced in m. 171 by C-sharp/D-sharp in its own register, and the melody proceeds by embellished fourths upwards [Example 12].

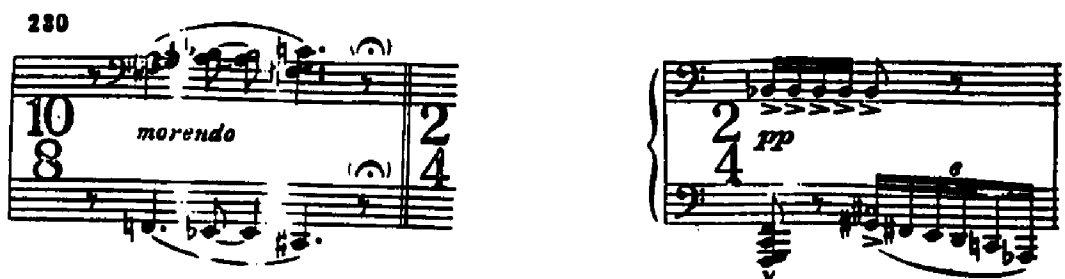


[Example 12]

¹² Ibid., 84.

The C-sharp of the much-emphasized tritone C-sharp/G, then, might perhaps be best understood as a chromatic elaboration of (or a "frozen" auxiliary of) a white-note collection that includes E, A, D, G, and C. The frequent appearance of whole-tone and octatonic formations in this and other passages could then be seen as further embellishments of a diatonic collection which struggles to emerge throughout the movement. Sessions originally planned to begin the following (final) movement with a reiterated C, but then decided that that note had already received so much emphasis at the end of the second movement that such continued emphasis would be excessive.¹³ A comparison of the ending of the second movement and the beginning of the third shows that the connection of the two movements is still palpable [Example 13]: the minor third motive in the right hand of m. 230 leads up to C4 while the bass leads down to C#2. The bass line and the final two verticals all derive from the "four-flat" collection (Db-Eb-F-G-Ab-Bb-C), and the final vertical itself contains the C-sharp/G tritone. The last movement, which ends on a repeated C/G/C vertical, begins with the fourth-collection G-C-F-B-flat, the B-flat being the "new" note Sessions introduced as a revision of the original C.

¹³ Ibid., 83. Based on taped interview of May 7, 1975.



[Example 12: End of 2nd mvt. Beginning of 3rd mvt.]

Clearly, the composer is interested here in using half-step motions to emphasize certain tones and in attempting to project these tones over larger spans of time than the single phrase. One of his continuing criticisms of serialism up to this time, the reader will recall, was precisely its purported lack of concern for "the living, breathing musical line." The aim here seems to be, first, to project the C-sharp(D-flat)/G/C-natural tonal complex, then to "resolve" this sonority in the next movement into the simpler C/G "tonic" fifth. The constant chromatic filling-in here plays the role, as it does in Bartók, of elaborating the more structural intervals.

Another device, common in Bartók as a "focussing" technique, is the symmetrical wedge progression (of course, the composers of the Second Viennese School also availed

themselves of this type of progression).¹⁴ Numerous examples appear in Sessions' works of this period, often making use of octave displacement in one or several parts [Example 14].



[Example 14]

Another, more typically Schoenbergian (and truly "proto-serial") moment is the cadence at mm. 176-77: the [G#-C#-F#] fourth-chord that is horizontally unfolded in the right hand over two measures is imitated in the left hand, but there it is compressed in time and interval-span [Example 15]. The imitation serves to emphasize the notes B and F-sharp via upper and lower auxiliaries.

¹⁴ Antokoletz, Bartók, has a good recent discussion of some examples in Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern (16-25).



[Example 15]

The following years saw the composer begin work on the opera Montezuma (1947-63), a work which though not twelve-tone at inception became so in execution. The only work completed between the end of 1946 and 1950 was his other opera, The Trial of Lucullus, which was written in great haste in 1947.¹⁵

Sessions' next piece was the Second String Quartet of 1950-51. As noted in the above letter to Beveridge Webster (pp. 82-3), he felt himself to be "still closer" to the

¹⁵ Olmstead, Roger Sessions, 84-85. The sketch was written between January 13 and February 13, 1947, the vocal score finished by March 13. The reason for such haste was purely practical: Sessions was asked at the beginning of the year to write a one-act opera for the Berkeley Drama Department's spring production to accompany its production of L'Histoire du Soldat. It was premiered on April 18, 1947.

twelve-tone method here than in any previous work. The fugue-like first movement, despite the tremendously dense chromaticism, was the first to be written:

I could say that my second quartet was written between 1937 and 1951. I mean, I just had some of the ideas for it then. Then I worked on the first movement for a long time, and the other movements I wrote quickly.¹⁸

The opening theme, or subject, shows the author's ongoing preoccupation with fourths and whole-tone collections [Example 16]. These interlock to create a stepwise descent in the top line from B4 down to F4; the only note initially skipped in the descent, A-natural, appears at the beginning of a new motive in m. 5. The completion of the aggregate thus is marked by a fresh musical impulse.



[Example 16]

The series of fugal entries that follows takes up from

¹⁸ Olmstead, Conversations, 74.

the B4 top note of the first entry (t9, m.7 (2nd violin)) and then proceeds by a cycle of fourths (t2, m. 14 ('cello)-t7, m.18 (1st violin)--t0, m.26 (viola)). After completing this cycle, the exposition concludes with a middle-voice entry of the theme in the 'cello at t10 (Example 17).



[Example 17]

The note-to-note correlation of separate polyphonic strands is not based on any strict concept of combinatoriality: the row, one of several quasi-serial "themes" used in the movement, is not hexachordally combinatorial in any case. A constant circulation of the twelve notes is nevertheless insured by the composer's desire to supply a consistent degree of chromatic "propulsion."

OLMSTEAD [re. the Second Quartet]: What types of criteria did you use to determine its vertical

relationships?

SESSIONS: I think movement, which nobody ever speaks about. Movement means movement in every sense of the word. Perhaps nobody speaks about it because it's such a complicated thing. It's something that one has to think of in terms of everything: dynamics, accents, everything. The movement is the final aspect which gives the music its character, mostly.¹⁷

This "movement," or "propulsion," often takes the form of either whole-tone stratification of the separate voices, as in Example 18a, or else of contrapuntal/intervallic tension, in which one voice seems to push the other away [Example 18b].



[Example 18a:
Stratification]



[Example 18b:
Contrapuntal tension]

The piece as a whole seems to inhabit a No-Man's Land between diatonic, fourths-dominated melody and serialism; the composer was perhaps torn between his growing admiration for, and understanding of, Schoenberg's work and his earlier feelings that serialism was perhaps a useless abstraction,

¹⁷ Olmstead, Conversations, 204.

irrelevant to his own work. Despite frequent protestations that the process of "creeping serialism" was subconscious,¹⁸ it seems to have been much on his mind. He has recounted a conversation he had with Luigi Dallapiccola the following year (1952) in which he continued to doubt that he would ever adopt the twelve-tone technique.¹⁹ Nevertheless, he did finally commit himself to serialism in the following year (1953) with the Sonata for Violin.

The Sonata for Violin is the subject of another oft-told Sessions story.²⁰ In one recounting, Andrew Imbrie was protesting what he felt to be Sessions' attempts to push him in a serial direction; Sessions' reply was to show him the opening of this piece, which starts out with an obvious row-statement, and Imbrie, noting this fact, was reassured that his teacher could still write "[his] own music" with it.²¹ Sessions also remembered that the opening seven-note fanfare

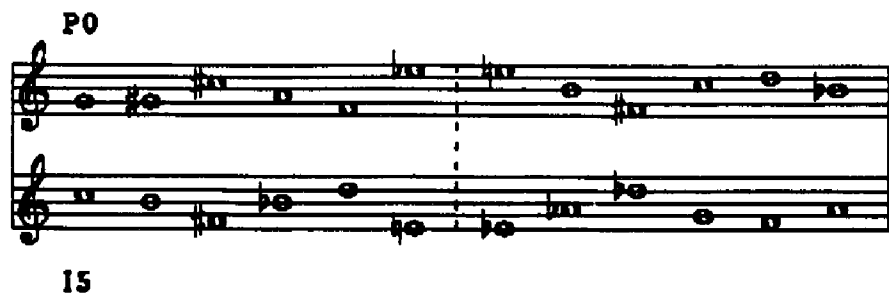
¹⁸ See the letter to Beveridge Webster, above (p.82), in which he is "very glad that this evolution has been gradual and genuinely subconscious..."

¹⁹ Cone, "Conversations," 101; Cara-Gagne, Soundpieces, 358. Sessions considered himself "too old" at fifty-five to adopt a new technique.

²⁰ See p. 1.

²¹ Cara-Gagne, Soundpieces, 358.

could not bear immediate repetition; therefore, the succeeding melodic idea used the other five.²² It was quite a stroke of luck, then, that the row, taken as a whole, turned out to be hexachordally semi-combinatorial at 15, exactly like the Schoenberg pieces (Opp. 36, 37, and 41) for which he had recently been expressing such admiration. Truly, as Branch Rickey once said, "luck is the residue of design!"²³ The row itself [Example 19] shows an ongoing preoccupation with fourths and whole-tone chords: fourths predominate in trichords one (G-G $\sharp$ -C $\sharp$) and three (E-B-F $\sharp$), while whole-tone intervals predominate in trichords two (A-F-E $\flat$) and four (C-D-B $\flat$). The hexachord, additionally, has a "five-plus-one" whole-tone content, which turns out to be quite important in achieving a sense of harmonic movement and longer-range circularity.



[Example 19]

²² Olmstead, Roger Sessions, 103.

²³ Quoted in Joe Garagiola, It's Anybody's Ballgame, paperback ed. (New York: Jove, 1989), 222.

I. Tempo moderato, con ampiezza e liberamente (d. ca 66)

Musical score for Violin Sonata, Example 20, page 1. The score is in G major, 4/4 time, and consists of 29 measures. It features various musical notations including slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. The score is divided into sections by measure numbers and includes performance instructions such as "poco rit.", "f", "p a tempo e poco cresc.", "Un poco più mosso (d. ca 72)", "Tempo deciso (d. ca 80)", "cresc.", "poco calando", "sempre dim.", "molto ritard.", "poco pp (subito)", and "capp. (poco f)".

[Example 20: Solo Violin Sonata, p.1]

The opening fanfare (motive "X", Example 21) includes both of the row's conjunct half-steps; the first (G3-G#3) is unproblematic and emphasizes the G-sharp-C-sharp fourth by its "lower neighbor-note" quality. The second half-step (Eb6-E7), at the "top end" of the fanfare, is stretched out over a minor ninth; this has the effect of "suspending" the E-flat6 within its own register into the D6 of m. 3, part of the contrasting (down-up-down) "Y" motive. The completion of this motive coincides with the completion of the row (P0).



[Example 21]

Measures 1-6 can be heard as a very compressed contrasting period. The first phrase (mm. 1-2) is a statement of the fanfare ("X"), the second phrase (mm. 2-6) is a gradual descent via the "Y" motive back to the original register. Harmonically, the row-succession P0-I5-P0 has the effect of moving from the "odd" [Db-Eb-F-G-A-B] whole-tone collection (P0, order nos. 1-6) to the "even" [C-D-E-F#-Ab-

Bb) collection (P0, order nos. 7-12), then from the "even" collection (I5, order nos. 1-6) back to the "odd" (I5, nos. 7-12), and so on. In m. 5, the "odd" notes of the original fanfare are finally brought back, this time compressed within a single octave, and the fourth-chord (B-B-F#) acts as a chromatic link to the concluding "even" collection [Example 22].



[Example 22]

The (F#-D-C-Bb) whole-tone segment is elaborated in mm. 3-4 by the juncture of P0 and I5 and is similarly projected across the end of the first period and the beginning of the second by the juncture of P0 and R0 (mm. 6-7). The "even" whole-tone collection, particularly the B-flat/D dyad, seems to form a point of stability throughout the first page of the sonata: it appears at the end of the first period (m. 6), at the beginning of the second period (m. 7), and at the emphatic downbeat at m. 11 ("Tempo deciso (J =80)"). It is reiterated as a sort of "ground" at the return of P0 in mm.

24-5. Finally, the whole passage ends on the repeated figure C-D-B-flat (P0, order nos. 10-12, mm. 28-29).

A more-or-less strict "twelve-count" can be made for all the pitches in mm. 1-12 (see Example 21); here all forms of the set lie within the "area" described by P0-I5 and their retrogrades. The following measures (mm. 13-22), a rhapsodic development of the fanfare idea, cannot be thus accounted for. Concerning another early serial work, Sessions remarked:

I was going about that [twelve-tone writing] very carefully and gingerly, and this is supposed to be rhapsodic. And I couldn't possibly have used the twelve-tone series strictly in a rhapsodic way then.²⁴

Several row-derived features are extrapolated for this passage: the "five-plus-one" whole-tone character is seen in the successions of m. 13 [Example 23] and in the top-line



[Example 23]

²⁴ Olmstead, Roger Sessions, 106 (in reference to Idyll of Theocritus, written the year after the Solo Violin Sonata (1954). Quote from taped interview, Oct. 15, 1975.

progressions G5-B5-C6-C#6 of m. 13 and F6-G6-C#7 of the following measure.

The "odd" whole-tone tetrachord C#-A-F-Eb (P0, order nos. 3-6) appears in m. 13, m. 16, and m. 19, and a further "odd" tetrachord F-B-C#-A (I9, order nos. 9-12) appears at the end of the "rhapsodic" passage, m. 23, as a link back to the "home area" (P0) [Example 24].



[Example 24: m. 23-4]

Appearances of fourth-chords are found at m. 15 (A#5-D#6-G#6), m. 17 (Eb5-Ab5-Bb5), mm. 22-23 (A5-D6-G6, order nos. 7-9 of I11), and m. 23 (G5-C6-F6, order nos. 7-9 of I9). The first two of these fourth-chords in mm. 15-17 are the same (A#-D#-G# = Bb-Eb-Ab) and the last two (those of mm. 22-3) overlap (A-D-G/G-C-F).

The descending thirds-chains of mm. 18-19 and 21-22 are not related to the primary material. They reverse the upward energy of the preceding measures, "liquidating" the earlier row-derived pitch material into a kind of inert mass.

The frequent whole-tone melodic progressions,

interspersed with quasi-diatonic segments such as that of m. 17, give the impression that Sessions was still trying to maintain some sense of stepwise progression--that is, to maintain the integrity of the whole-step as a thing in itself, rather than as a "gap" to be "filled in" by a half-step.

It would seem, then, from studying the Sonata for Violin and the works leading up to it, that Sessions was motivated to use the row out of three basic considerations:

1. The row could serve as a source of the fourth collections, whole-tone collections, and semitonal voice leading which he had been working with in the thirties and forties.
2. The very fixedness of the row provided a point of reference for material that might otherwise tend to become too generalized.
3. Conversely, he was able to drop the row entirely in order to achieve "recessive", rhapsodic, or "degenerative" effects, and to use the return of strictly-derived material as a source of fresh musical energy.

CHAPTER SIX

MATURE TWELVE-TONE PRACTICE: THE THIRD PIANO SONATA

The following years saw a ripening of Sessions' mature style. Several key features of row usage which had first appeared in the Solo Violin Sonata remained consistent throughout his later works:

1. The pervasive use of unordered row segments.

Sessions' application of the serial principle grew out of his earlier melodic idiom, which used successions of short diatonic (and, later, whole-tone) segments as a means of creating a sense of movement and return. This carried over, in the twelve-tone pieces, into a concentration on unordered segments (one of the reasons his rows are often difficult to uncover).

...I tend to work, first of all, with trichords. For instance, an original musical idea was the basis of the row in Montezuma. It is in the very first measure of the piece, divided into trichords. Now, you can pair these trichords. There are three possible combinations: you can group I and II together, or I and III together, or I and IV together...This gives a lot of leeway...¹

¹ Cone, "Conversation," 104.

2. The use of "symmetrical rows" (i.e., rows in which the second hexachord is an inversion, at some interval, of the first hexachord; this is the property that Milton Babbitt has dubbed hexachordal semi-combinatoriality.² Sessions' interest in this type of row has little to do with the linear presentation of P and I forms contrapuntally, so typical of Schoenberg's work from 1927 on; rather, it seems to relate to his desire to extract three or even four primary trichords out of the source hexachord as well as to be able to use the hexachord itself as a harmony.

If a row is symmetrical, you start with the last note of the second row and end on the first note of the first row. You go backward, but you arrange the notes in each hexachord. Here's the row of the Seventh Symphony [Example 1]. This is why it's symmetrical, because I can get the inversion of that with these notes...



[Example 1]

² Babbitt, "Some Aspects of Twelve-Tone Composition," The Score and I.M.A. Magazine 12 (1955), 53-61.

³ Olmstead, Conversations, 45.

...Take one of the two rows in my Ninth Symphony. The other one is just a row, which is perfectly good, too. A Bb Eb F D C#; G# B G F# C E. Now, if I take these notes and arrange them in order A Bb C# D Eb F and under that C B G# G F# E--a semitone, then a minor third, two more semitones, then a whole tone. Here's the same thing [the second "re-arranged" hexachord] going in the other direction...You can use these as harmonies, as Schoenberg does in his fourth quartet, for instance, or use these hexachords as harmonies while this is going on. I mean, if you were going to use the row simultaneously--make harmonies out of the hexachords--then the order of the notes becomes really subordinate...⁴

A number of Sessions' twelve-tone works show the same relationship of resultant P and I forms as the Solo Violin Sonata--that is, the familiar Schoenbergian one of P0/I5; the cantata, When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd (1971), and the first of the Five Pieces for Piano (1975) are examples of this; the Piano Concerto (1956) exemplifies the P0/I7 relationship, the inverse of this. The P0/I11 combinatorial (or "symmetrical") relationship obtains in the String Quintet (1958) and the opera Montezuma (1947-63), when its hexachords are comprised of trichords I (F-E-F#) and III (D#-C#-G) paired against II (B-G#-A) and IV (Bb-C-D). Piano Sonata No. 3 (1965), which exemplifies the same relationship at P0/I3, shares this with several other Sessions works such as the the Sixth Symphony (1966).

3. The emphasis on certain quasi-cadential note-segments. This was achieved on the first page of the Solo

⁴ Ibid., 46-7.

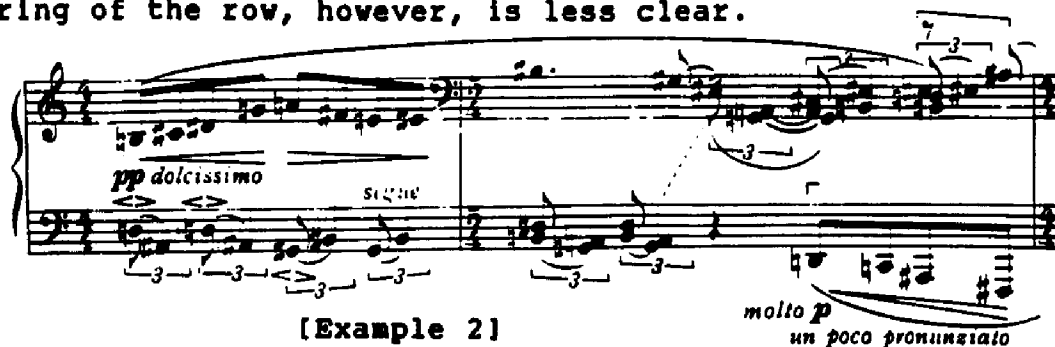
Violin Sonata by simple surface reiteration of the D/B-flat dyad, its appearance at key points of rhetorical emphasis, its transference through several registers, and the common use of half-step embellishing motion around its members. Again, these were techniques Sessions was using in his music of the late 1930s; their continued employment in his later music should come as no surprise.

4. The tendency to begin large musical passages with strict row formations and to end such large passages with a "liquidation" of serial elements. My use of the term "liquidation" here is purposeful: this technique stems from the similar use of clearly-defined thematic material in the classical era at the beginning of a passage and its "liquidation" into less well-defined material at the end. Sessions' habit was to associate relatively strict row presentations with initiatory, progressive thematic gestures.

The first music which Sessions wrote for the Third Piano Sonata was the opening of the third movement, a quasi-fugal elegy marked: "In memoriam: Nov. 22, 1963."² The partitioning of the total chromatic into registrally

² Olmstead, Roger Sessions, 141-42.

discrete whole-tone segments is clear in the first measure, as is the hexachordal content [Example 2]; the linear ordering of the row, however, is less clear.



Looking at the three movements as a whole, and at the first movement in particular, a clear trichordal grouping within the hexachords emerges [Example 3].⁴



[Example 3]

These two groupings, the hexachordal and the trichordal, are the most significant in the piece; as Sessions himself noted, he tended to work with trichords and unordered hexachords, as a rule, rather than with strict linear presentations. Nevertheless, a third level of ordering, the linear, can be determined by inspection of the

⁴ Throughout the following discussion the reader should consult the serial analysis of the first movement contained in the appendix.

piece as a whole. A prominent bass-register melody (first movement, mm. 13-16) unfolds all twelve notes in order (P8) - the most notable such example in the whole sonata. The second movement starts out with an obvious mirror gesture which will serve as a rondo-like refrain throughout the movement; it consists of order nos. 7-12 of the complementary row-forms I8 and P5 [Example 4].



[Example 4]

Transposing this back into the "home" area of P0/I3 (with which the sonata as a whole begins and ends) gives the following row-forms:

P0: Ab F A F# E C / Eb D Bb B G C#
 I3: B D Bb C# D# G / E F A Ab C F#

It will be seen that the hexachord has a "four plus two" whole-tone content (four "even" and two "odd" notes, or vice-versa), and that P0 contains two whole-tone trichords of the {0,2,6} variety: F#-E-C in the first hexachord, and B-G-C# in the second; the latter is a transposition of the former at t7.

The two remaining trichords manifest {0,1,4} and {0,1,5} interval content. The looseness of linear ordering enables the composer to exploit this hexachordal and trichordal content in a number of interesting ways.

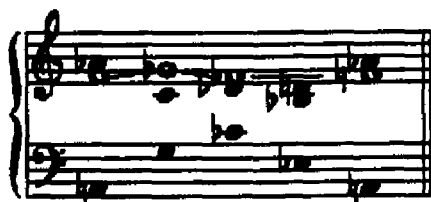
The opening phrase of the first movement exploits the idea of whole-tone segmentation further. The top line unfolds the "odd" whole-tone descent Ab-Gb-Fb-D, the bass contains the "odd" pitches A-G-Cb-Eb. In both outer parts, the emphasis on the first and fourth notes of the linear successions is clear: Ab-D in the melody, A-Eb in the bass [Example 5]. The Eb-Bb-D trichord of m. 3 acts as a goal, or counterpole for the initial A-F-Ab trichord, and the other two verticals (m. 2) seem to serve a linear and harmonic passing function; the outer voice framework (Ab4-D4-Ab over A2-Eb3-A2) reinforces this emphasis. A multidimensional affect is achieved by thus supporting the

whole-tone linear unfoldings exclusively with non-whole-tone verticals.

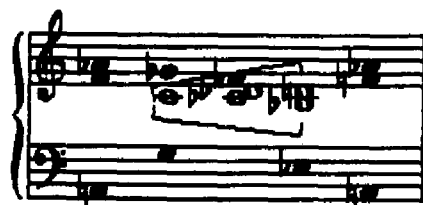


[Example 5, mm. 1-3]

While the motion of the outer parts in mm. 1-3 is fairly straightforward, that of the inner parts is more convoluted. A two-note embellishing motion surrounds the "alto" F4 of m. 1, displacing it first up to the Gb of the melody, then down to Fb [Example 6a]. The C4 of the "tenor" (m. 2) is displaced by a wedge motion outwards, first to Db/Cb, then to D4/Bb3 [Example 6b]. A remaining inner voice note, G3 (m.2), is left "hanging," and may be considered as part of the "odd" whole-tone unfolding of the bass.



[Example 6a]



[Example 6b]

Additionally, the "scrambling" of the linear ordering in m. 2 creates a new trichord (Fb-Cb-Db, notes 5, 10, and 12 of the series), at the end of the bar; this contrasts strongly with the succeeding (D-Bb-Eb) trichord in m. 3, a contrast enhanced by the diatonic nature of both these trichords, and by the rest that separates them. It will be recalled that Sessions spoke in Harmonic Practice of the "sustained level of contrast" which obtained in several Wagner passages, such as the "Wanderer" progression, in which simple triads maintained such contrast by the remoteness of their relation to each other;⁷ Sessions then gave an example of a "wrong" (i.e., too-closely-related) variant of this progression and warned that "a single instance of lessened contrast between any two chords would seriously weaken the musical effect..."⁸ The rest here serves to connect the (Cb-Db-Fb) vertical with what had preceded it and to separate it from the (D-Eb-Bb) vertical which succeeds it. Passages in earlier Sessions works such as From My Diary and the Second Symphony made use, as we have seen, of exactly such sustained contrast between successive diatonic segments.

⁷ See pp. 44-5.

⁸ Sessions, Harmonic Practice, 391-93.

The emphasis on the A-Eb tritone as a kind of cadential bass motion in mm. 1-3 is unfolded on a larger scale throughout the ensuing passage (mm. 1-23), a "double period" which can be thought of as a kind of first theme exposition. The "theme," rather than simply announcing an initial idea, evolves a series of chain-like phrases, each seeming to grow out of the one that preceded it.

The bass A2-Eb3 is initially displaced at the end of m. 6 by Ab-D in the same register. These are the other two axial notes in the melody-bass matrix from mm. 1-3. At this point the composer leaves row form P0 for the first time; the new row form, RI5, may have been chosen because its first two notes (the last two of I5, that is) are precisely Ab and D. RI5 is completely represented in m. 7 except for the third trichord (A-F-Eb); in place of this trichord, the composer presents a new row form (P4), beginning with the whole-tone trichord Eb4-Cb4-F3; in this way he avoids a vertical statement of the A-Eb tritone and maintains its half-step displacement by Ab-D until the upbeat of m. 9.

P4 is succeeded in m. 9 by P9 and shares with it the whole-tone trichord Eb-Fb-Ab (order nos. 4-6 in P4, 10-12 in P9). This trichord appears as an explicit melodic link between the two row forms. The other whole-tone trichord of P9 consists of Eb-A-Db; this is now stated in the bass (m. 9), effectively returning the A-Eb to prominence. On this occasion Eb appears on the bottom, rather than A (as had

been the case throughout mm. 1-6). The texture and phrase-rhythm of the piece thus far support this bass motion: the langorous melodic unfolding of mm. 1-3 is followed by the wide-ranging, more continuous melody of mm. 4-8, and this in turn gives way to the predominantly trichordal "thickening" of mm. 9ff.

The Eb5-G5-A5 trichord on the downbeat of m. 11 marks the culmination of the first period. This point is made by the general increase in tessitura, in textural density, and in rhythmic-metric clarity. The vertical on the downbeat of m. 12 (C4-E4-A4-Eb5) also gives harmonic/melodic emphasis to the A-Eb tritone. Eb1-A1 then appears as a trill in the low bass register.

This trill, which marks the midway point of the "double period", gives way to the twelve-note linear unfolding of P8 in the bass mentioned above, its initial E1 displacing the Eb of the trill, its last two notes consisting of Eb3 and A3 in the "tenor" register. The right hand part in mm. 14ff freely imitates this line via a linear unfolding of I10 (with hexachords reversed). Interestingly, although this and other passages in the movement unfold two or more row forms at once, Sessions nowhere superimposes the hexachordally combinatorial row forms (prime with inversion at t3) contrapuntally. The second movement, on the other hand, opens precisely in that way (I8 with P5, as noted above).

Hexachordal combinatoriality is but one of numerous criteria for combining row forms--with Schoenberg as with Sessions--and the rhapsodic character of this movement does not lend itself to right-hand vs. left-hand contrapuntal artifices. What is notable here is the way the right-hand melody sweeps up to a high-register Eb6 in m. 14 and down to a middle-register A4 in the following bar. An additional point of interest in m. 15 is the fact that the linear succession Gb-A-F-Ab (order nos. 1-4 of I10 here) also forms the first four notes of P0 (Ab-F-A-F#).

After the attainment of the climactic Bb6 in the right hand and the completion of the P8 linear unfolding with Eb3-A3 in the left (m. 16), the energy of the piece seems to ebb, animando giving way to a tempo and then meno mosso e pochiss. rit., the ever-increasing melodic length and range of mm. 1-16 giving way to the shorter, more compressed motivic cells of mm. 17-23, the general melodic direction shifting from upwards to downwards. The frequent emphasis on A and Eb--appearing, for instance, in the melody and bass of m. 18--remains a constant. Finally, the bass Eb1 from the top of page two (mm. 12-13) returns, this time underpinning a half-step displacement of the opening chord of the piece [Example 7].



[Example 7]

The role of A and Eb as quasi-cadential anchoring elements, then, is both subtle and pervasive. The initial A2-Eb3-A2 bass progression of mm. 1-3, which gave priority to the A, is displaced by the half-step motion (via a new row-form) to Ab2-D3 in mm. 6-8. When the original tritone returns at m. 9, the Eb has priority, and the "cumulative" movement outwards is reinforced by both the texture and the appearance yet of yet a new row form. Row-derived reharmonization of these two central pitches keeps the momentum building throughout the passage, while still maintaining their prominence. Finally, the clear sense of return at mm. 20ff is precisely "located" in chromatic space--its distance from the opening chord measured, in effect--by the presence of the Eb1 in the lowest register.

Example 8 summarizes the above points in graphic form.

m. 1 m. 3 m. 6 m. 12 m. 13 m. 16

P0 R15 P8(linear) P0-15(1-4)

m. 18 m. 20

P8(linear) P11

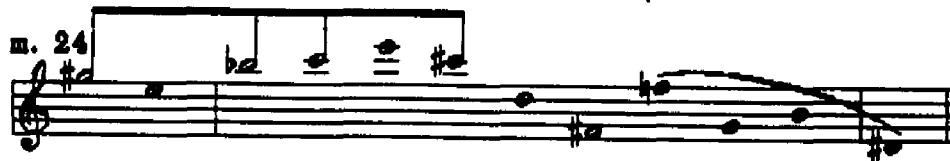
[Example 8]

After a fairly brief "settling-in" passage (mm. 20-23), the momentum resumes with the "second subject"-like motive of mm. 24ff. The upbeat figure in m. 23 which leads into this begins on Eb4 and ends on A5, the latter clearly functioning as an upper auxiliary to the G# of the following downbeat. In effect, the "second subject" is prepared by an embellishing wedge motion [Example 9].



[Example 9]

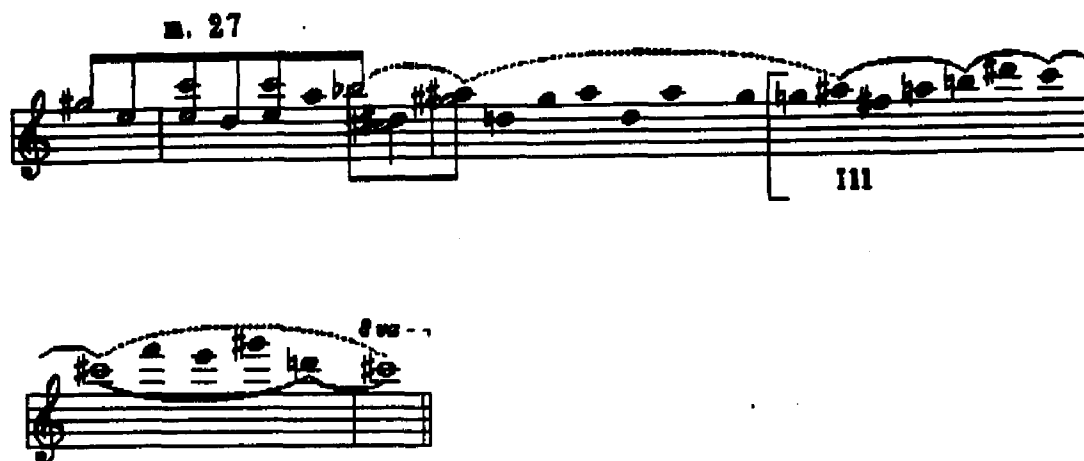
The newness and the repetitive nature of this motive, coupled with the forward propulsion of the left-hand chords, creates the sense of a fresh beginning--welcome after the recessive character of the previous seven bars. A stepwise melodic progression ascends in mm. 24-25 from the repeated G#5 through Bb5 and C6 to C#6, at which point the stepwise, registrally-connected motion breaks off in favor of an "odd" whole-tone arpeggiation down to D#4 [Example 10].



[Example 10]

The appearance of the same motive in the left hand at m. 27 seems to maintain the predominance of the "odd" whole-tone collection, again with an emphasis on C#. Indeed, throughout the middle of the movement the G-C# tritone seems to take over the "anchoring" role which was assumed earlier

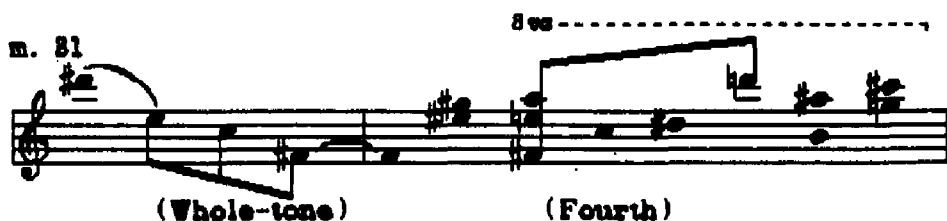
by A-Bb: the C# in particular receives a great deal of emphasis. The right-hand melody of mm. 27-28 shifts from an "even" whole-tone emphasis (to oppose that of the left-hand "odd" motive) to one of predominant fourths, breaking off into a linear unfolding of I11 and ending on a climactic C#7 (downbeat of m. 29). A more long-range view of the top-register line in mm. 26-28 would see a variant of the G#-C-Bb-C# motion previously heard in the lower octave of mm. 24-25 [Example 11].



[Example 11]

The C# (here paired with D) is now brought down to the "alto" register in m. 29, where it is again part of an "odd" whole-tone collection including F, B, and G; in this instance it is derived from an unordered presentation of P5

(A, Bb, B, C#, D, F / Ab, G, F#, E, Eb, C in normal order²). The linear unfolding of the second hexachord of P5 in m. 30 (G#4-G5-D#6-E5-C5-F#4) is followed by a statement of P0, arranged so that the F#-C-E trichord of one is followed by the F#-E-A trichord of the other (P0, order nos. 3-5). In this way a whole-tone motion seems to yield to a diatonic/fourths motion--one which continues up to the climactic D7-C#7 in the middle of m. 31 [Example 12].



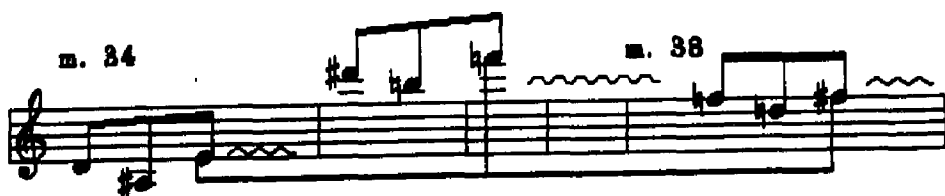
[Example 12]

At the end of this passage (m. 32), row form P8 again seems to play the role of embellishing the P0/I3 "home" area, as it comes between P0 in m. 31 and P0/I3 in mm. 33-35. The overall emphasis on C#-G remains audible here; throughout page three of the score this tritone maintains a kind of priority, the C# appearing variously as the goal of melodic motions (mm. 24-5, m. 27, and mm. 28-29), as a kind

² For a definition of "normal order" see Allen Forte, The Structure of Atonal Music, 2nd Ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 3.

of melodic jumping-off point (m. 29), as a climactic high point (m. 31, where the D7 gives way to a C#7-G6 dyad), and, finally, as a bass underpinning at the end of the passage (m. 33). Not coincidentally, perhaps, G and C# are the last two notes of P0.

The next progressive wave of the piece is characterized by a series of fugue-like entries of the "second subject." Following the pattern established previously, these alternate between unfolding one whole-tone collection and the other [Example 13].



[Example 13]

The third such entry, the freest thus far, leads rhapsodically up to C#7 (m. 38-39). The chromatic descent C#7-C7-B6 here is broken off in favor of a middle-register "mirror" passage (m. 40), in which both hexachords of P11/I2 are presented in normal order--that is, as scales. This is a kind of "liquidation", or even "liquifaction," of the

harmonic-motivic materials of the piece, and acts as a breathing-point in which to regroup and re-focus the energy of the movement. The attempt made by the walking bass of m. 42 to resume progress is unsuccessful: another kind of "liquifaction" in m. 43 finds parallel fourth-trichords (which have no direct basis in the trichordal structure of the row) "swimming" up and down in both hands in a kind of roughly imitative texture, finally coming to rest melodically on the C#4 of m. 44. The melodic motion here is stepwise and almost rigidly sequential--an unusual case for Sessions--and serves to direct the line that much more clearly to C# (Db).

The sequence is a technical device which is adaptable to many varied uses, and further references to it will be made in later chapters. It is essentially a means of transition from one well-established harmonic point to another, and its aptness will depend to a large extent on the relationship between its first and final harmonies.¹⁰

The above passage, from a section of Sessions' 1951 harmony book dealing with "harmonic elaboration," accords well with the Schenkerian view of sequences,¹¹ which sees them as end-directed. The whole passage from m. 40 to m. 44, filled with motion though it is, serves essentially as a

¹⁰ Sessions, Harmonic Practice, 218.

¹¹ See, for instance, John Rothgeb, "Design as a Key to Structure in Tonal Music," in Readings in Schenker Analysis and Other Approaches, ed. Maury Yeston (New York: Yale University Press, 1977), 72-93. Article originally appeared in: Journal of Music Theory V/1 (1961).

trough, or low point, which paves the way for the central climax of the movement. Example 14 shows one way of connecting the beginnings and endings of the sequential units found in mm. 40-44: the D#5-G#(Ab)4 linear fifth outlined by the first unit is repeated and then continued by the D#5-G#4-C#4 progression of the second unit.

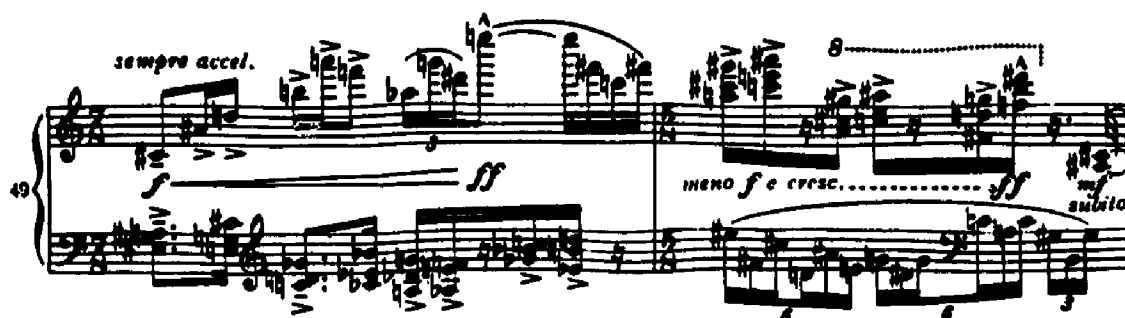
m. 40 m. 41 m. 42

P5

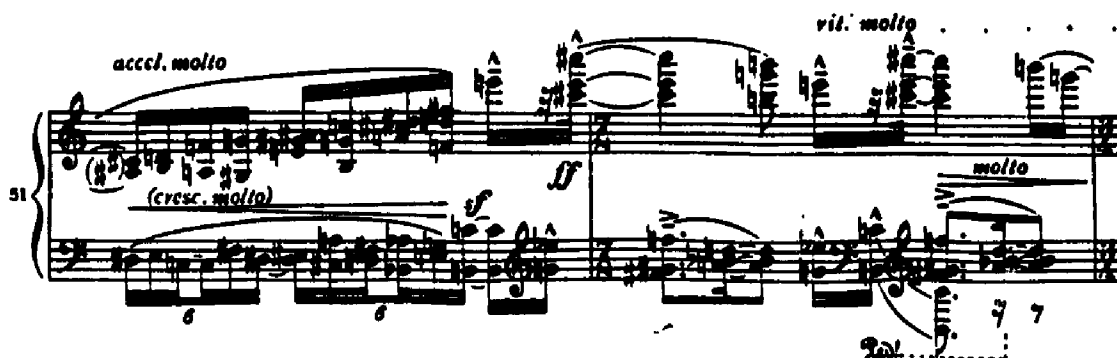
(Parallel 4th chords)

[Example 14]

This central climax occurs after a suitable build-up at mm. 49-52; again, C# plays a pivotal melodic role in this passage [Example 15a], as well as in the ensuing "recessive" phrase, where it is stated as part of an (Eb-C#-B-A-F) "odd" whole-tone unfolding in several registers (mm. 52-55) [Example 15b].



[Example 15a]



[Example 15b]

Another trough is reached at the end of m. 58. This one is marked by the appearance of the {0,1,4} trichord (the opening sonority of the piece) in the bass, now repeated as a kind of dirge; the "second subject" appears above it (A5-Db5-D6). This moment seems in a way to crystallize the whole piece: in addition to the fact that it contains primal motivic and intervallic elements of the first and second "themes," it also contains all three pitchs of the opening sonority (A6-F4-Ab2).

The Gb4 of the left hand and the Ab6 of the right at the end of m. 59 seem to form a double neighbor-note motion around the G6 of the first trichord in m. 60 (G6-B5-F5). A sequence of trichords follows in which perfect fourths and fifths play an interesting role: the top notes in the first

The musical score for Example 16 consists of two systems. The upper system is for piano (p) and includes a tempo marking of *a tempo* (♩ = 54). The piano part features complex textures with many beamed notes and rests. The lower system is for violin (vln.) and also contains complex textures with beamed notes and rests. Dynamic markings include *p*, *subito cresc. molto*, *mf*, *dim.*, and *p*. The score is written in a style that suggests a modern or experimental composition, with a focus on texture and dynamics.

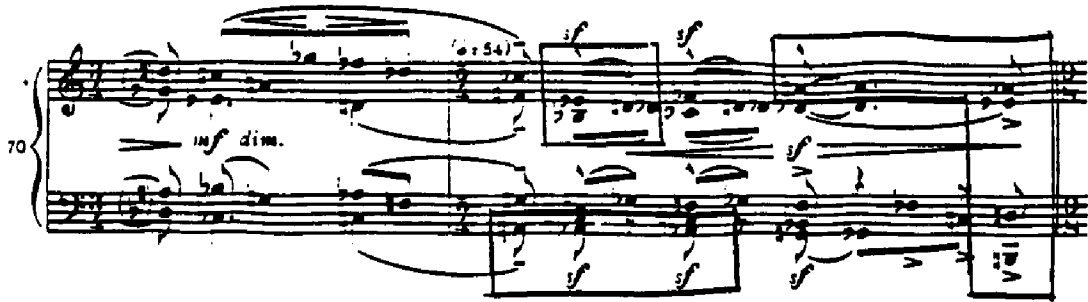
[Example 16]

pair of chords is G6-D3; that of the next pair is Fb5 (E5)-A3; that of the next (in the right hand) is again E-A, followed by Bb5-Eb5 (Example 16). The whole passage (mm. 58-62) is a point of repose between the climax which precedes it and the retransition which is to follow.

An important part of the sense of gradual return in the next three pages (pp. 7-9) is the de-emphasis of C#-G; the whole-step neighbor motion of the bass register in mm. 60-61, for instance, shows C2-Gb2 moving to D-Gb and back to C-Gb. Although instances of G's in proximity to C#'s can be found on these pages, these instances receive nothing like the emphasis found on pp. 3-6. This should not be seen as simply a large-scale application of the "save it for later" approach, which avoids using a particular note so that it may be "fresh" when needed: the slow build-up of a massive network of connections--which this chapter has attempted to trace in some detail--involves the constant use of all the notes. It is their relative roles and degrees of prominence that are at issue here. In point of fact, the G-Db dyad does appear rather noticeably in m. 65-67, first in the right hand (m. 66), then in the bass (m. 68); but the real point of these bars seems to be a melodic shift from Eb-Db to D-C: the latter progression is carried out in two registers in mm. 68-70.

At m. 71 a further stage in the retransition is effected by the return to prominence of the A-Ab and Eb-D

half-step motions in several registers [Example 17].



[Example 17]

A further connection back to the opening is made by the E-Eb-A of the melody in mm. 72-3; although the outbursts in m. 68 and mm. 72-3 are quite violent, they are unprepared and thus do not challenge the centrality of the earlier climax at mm. 49-52; rather, they are its final death spasms.

Several important voice-leading motions take place on

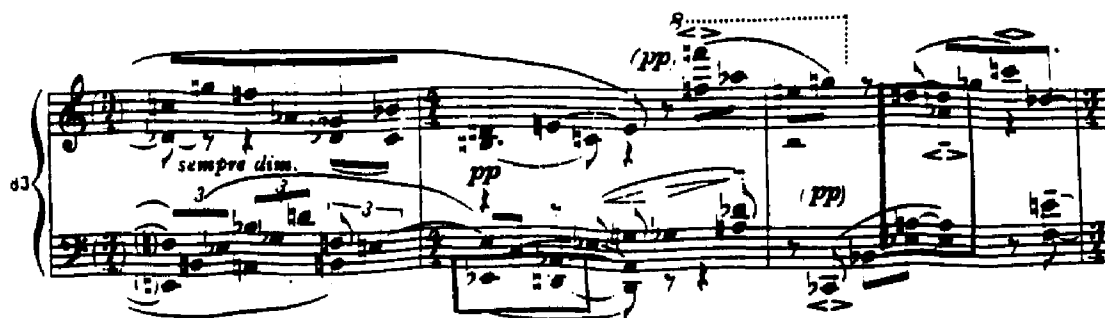
the last page of the movement: first of all, a pervasive Ab-G motion (mm. 84-85, RH, m. 86, LH, m. 87, LH) begins to be supplanted by the A-Ab motion (m. 88, LH ("tenor" register), m. 89, LH ("alto" register)) [Example 18].

The musical score for Example 18 consists of three systems of piano (RH) and left hand (LH) staves. The first system (mm. 83-87) features a pervasive Ab-G motion. The second system (mm. 88-92) shows the transition to the A-Ab motion. The third system (mm. 93-97) continues the A-Ab motion. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Performance instructions are provided throughout the score.

sempre dim.
pp
pp
quasi animando
cresc.
quasi calando
mf dim.
poco pronunciato
(molto)

[Example 18]

The Ab⁴-A⁴-Ab⁴ motion in m. 89 also involves the familiar A/Eb-to-Ab/D tritone displacement heard at the beginning of the piece. This has been prepared by earlier appearances of the same half-step motion in m. 84 and m. 85 [Example 19].



[Example 19]

The arrival of A-natural in the bass register at the end of the piece is prepared by the stepwise connections in mm. 89-94, which gradually become more focussed towards the final descent to A₂ [Example 20].



[Example 20]

The predominating fifths in m. 87 give way, after a linear unfolding of P₁, to a top-line unfolding of whole-tone collections; the final melodic Ab⁴ is thus prepared by

a shift, in m. 93, from the "odd" to the "even" collection [Example 21a], as well as by the repeated ascent from the "alto" register in mm. 91-2 and mm. 95-6 [Example 21b].



[Example 21a]



[Example 21b]

Several questions are prompted by this study of a

complete movement, questions relating to Sessions' use both of the series itself and of the whole-tone collections, diatonic/fourth collections, and semitonal displacements found in his preserial works.

1. What is the meaning of the row successions in this movement?

A cursory glance at the "row-count" of the whole movement (see Appendix) reveals very little in and of itself: a concentration on P0 on the first page and a return to it on the last page, most noticeably. This by itself is hardly evidence of the "vaster harmonic line" which Sessions had spoken of.¹² Sessions, as we know, was very suspicious of schematicism, and we should not be surprised to find that this piece lacks the tidy row successions of, say, the second movement of Webern's Piano Variations, Op. 27 (a cycle of fourths). A connection which does, however, appear to be meaningful is the use of P8 (whose last two notes are Eb and A) as a kind of "near relative" of P0 on page two and again at the bottom of page three, where it appears between extended unfoldings of the "tonic" combinatorial pair P0 and I3. The appearance of P5/I8 at mm. 29-30 and later at mm. 44-49 and m. 51 seems to be associated with the prominence of C# as a prominent note--a kind of counter-pole, in other words, to the A-Eb "tonic" tritone. P5 and I8 also form the

¹² See the quote on p. 67.

hexachordally combinatorial pairing which begins and ends the motoric central movement of the Sonata. The most important point-to-point factor in deciding row successions seems to be a more local one: the projection of the row's two {0, 2, 4} whole-tone trichords can create either a sense of movement (by going, for instance, from "odd" to "even" within a given register) or of stasis (by following the "odd" trichord of one row form, for instance, with the "odd" trichord of another). This practice, although of strictly local significance, does tend to reinforce the whole-tone flavor of the movement.

Speaking to Andrea Olmstead, Sessions remarked:

Atonality implied that there's no relation between the notes at all, and that's not true. No more true in Schoenberg than it was in Bach or Haydn. But what it is, is no tonal center can be unequivocally defined, that's all. Now, what I found as I went along is that you have to give up sustaining tonal contrasts, because the character of the harmonies doesn't allow that kind of sustained contrast. You can give the feeling, and sometimes I want to, momentarily, of a very sharp tonal contrast. But it isn't even a contrast between a key and another, it's a contrast between a chord and another, really. The influence of that chord is very clear at that moment, but it can't be kept up because anything but a triad or a very simple seventh chord can go in all sorts of directions. And it doesn't imply one direction, except in a very specific tonal context.¹³

Does this quote mean that Sessions didn't believe in the possibility of long-range voice-leading? His use of

¹³ Olmstead, Conversations, 73.

the word "tonal" in the phrase "you have to give up sustaining tonal contrasts" may be intended in the strict (i.e., tonal/functional) sense. On another occasion he stated:

It [the row] does influence the form of a piece, and it can be used that way. The whole province of aural organization is somewhat independent of serialism. The point is that, whatever shape the series takes in a given situation, it doesn't mean that any one relationship or any two or three basic relationships are inevitably predominant. There is a general shape, and this gives a set of relationships, but it doesn't establish sharp contrasts the way tonality does. What tonality means to me is that it gives a very definite, sharp framework for the organization of contrasts. I think it's other elements, more than the row itself that play--this is a very subtle and delicate point--at least an equal role in organizing contrasts.¹⁴

The point of this statement seems to be, not that sustained pitch/pitch complex emphasis is impossible in nontonal music, but rather that the relation of such emphases to the series itself is more indirect, more ambiguous than is the relation between local and large-scale progression in tonal music.

Another, possibly very "schematic" suggestion would be to see the origin of the G-C# prominence of the middle of the movement in the fact that these pitches are the last two notes of P0. This may, however, be coincidental, and the prominence of this tritone is probably based more on Sessions' desire to move away convincingly from the A-Ab-Eb-

¹⁴ Ibid., 201-202.

D nexus of the first two pages; the episodic, wave-like nature of the central section, with its emphasis on C#, especially at the most crucial moments, contrasts with the more restrained intensity curves of the opening and closing pages. Sessions' compositional mastery balances the freedom of being able to go "in all sorts of directions" on the immediate level with the need to give sustained emphasis to a given pitch or pitch complex on a larger level.

2. What is the role played by the occasional linear unfoldings of all, or most, of a row-form?

The most prominent of these is at mm. 13-15, where the bass melodically unfolds P8 at the midpoint of the opening "double period." The others--for instance that of I11 at m. 28 and of P5 at m. 49--tend to be energizing "surges" up to a climactic point. Linear unfoldings of hexachords and entire rows, where they occur, tend to mark the beginnings of passages or to be used for rapid melodic flourishes.

3. Why, if he doesn't make use of hexachordal semi-combinatoriality, does Sessions use a "symmetrical" row?

The most overt symmetry in this movement occurs in the trough passage at mm. 40-43, where the unordered hexachords of P11/I2 are unfolded in a mirror-like texture (m. 40), and then a series of parallel fourth-chords move against each other in a freely imitative manner (m. 43). But this specifically textural symmetry is not all that Sessions was looking for when choosing a symmetrical row. A more general

consideration is revealed by Sessions' remarks, quoted above (pp. 100-101), about the derivation of different orderings from the same hexachord in a "symmetrical" row, and the ability to use either a trichordal grouping, or the hexachord as a whole, as a source of harmony. In the Third Piano Sonata, the {0,2,6} whole-tone trichords act as a kind of foreground normative sonority, the other ({0, 1, 4} and {0, 1, 5}) trichords playing more specific, "position-finder" roles.

A less overt symmetry is suggested by the quasi-cadential succession that opens and closes the piece [Example 22]. In this succession, the "tonic" role is played by the A2/Ab4 vertical, the "non-tonic" counterpole is stated by the Eb3/D4 vertical. In the opening of the movement (mm. 1-3) both outer voices are drawn from another symmetrical formation, the "odd"/"even" whole-tone collection. The stability and focus of this complex of relations, with its eventual return to the A2-F4-Ab4 vertical at the end of the movement, derive in large



[Example 22]

part from its symmetrical nature. The attacca segue into the second movement, with its overt "mirror" opening on this same A-Ab axis (I8 and P-5, order nos. 7-12) confirms this symmetry--indeed, the movement which follows is pervaded with exactly the kind of right-hand/left-hand contrapuntal gestures which were lacking in the first movement.

4. Is there any sense of diatonic/fourth collection primacy in this movement?

The row does contain one trichord (Eb-D-Bb, order nos. 6, 7, 8 of P0) which could imply a diatonic/fourth collection origin. It would seem, however, that the presence of the two whole-tone trichords (F#-E-C and B-G-C#, order nos. 4, 5, 6 and 10, 11, 12) plus the whole-tone nature of so many of the movement's linear progressions would preclude the emergence of any sense of diatonicism.

There are strong indications, nevertheless, that the diatonic/fourth collection still lay "deep in [the composer's] consciousness"¹² as he wrote the Third Piano Sonata. One obvious indication is the fourths-dominated passage at m. 43: here, the fourth-trichord completely replaces the series as a binding force, and the entire passage ending at m. 43 stresses the pitches D#(Eb)-G#(Ab)-C#(Db) (see Ex. 14 above).

¹² See quote on p. 82.

Another such indication is the top-note progression outlined by the trichords of mm. 60-63 (see Ex. 16). This unfolds a G-D-A-E collection which is inflected at the end by the Bb-Eb descending fifth. This inflection (A/E-Bb/Eb) creates the same four-note intervallic nexus found in the opening phrase of the piece. There (mm. 1-3) the Ab-D top voice and the A-Eb bass unfolded linear whole-tone segments and marked the beginning of the movement itself. Here (mm. 60-63) the nexus concludes a passage of linear fourths, and marks both the end of the central development section and the beginning of the return. Coming as it does after the "strong sonic reminder"¹⁶ of the opening provided by mm. 58-9, it gives an indication to the careful listener that underneath the profusion of whole-tone and chromatic linear progressions there may lie a deeper, more normative layer of interlocked fourths, which "binds together all the simplest as well as the most complex relationships," making possible "a much vaster harmonic line."¹⁷

¹⁶ See Smaldone, 58.

¹⁷ See quote on p. 67.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION__

This paper began by noting the general opinion that Roger Sessions' adoption of the twelve-tone method was a gradual one: that, in Andrew Imbrie's words, he maintained "a nearly unbroken consistency of style" throughout the transition.¹ It then looked at a number of pieces written from 1937 to 1953, the year in which he wrote his first overtly twelve-tone work, in order to determine what were the elements that made for this consistency. These included:

1. A melodic sense based on diatonic/fourth collections, increasingly elaborated upon by whole-tone collections.

In From My Diary (1937-1940), the melodic/harmonic sense of the piece is rooted in a single diatonic/fourth collection, which is elaborated upon by the use of other diatonic/fourth segments and by {0,2,4} trichords and the augmented triad. In the works of the mid-1940s, the whole-tone collection itself comes to play a more central role, though fourths and fifths seem to retain a vestigial sense of priority (as in the "resolution" of the C#/G tritone of the middle movement of the Second Piano Sonata into the C-G-C of the third movement). In the (twelve-tone) Sonata for

¹ Imbrie, "The Symphonies," 28.

Violin (1953), the whole-tone row segment Bb-C-D-F# seems to have normative status, and the fourths-trichords (G-G#-C# and F#-B-E) assume the status of elaborations. In the Third Piano Sonata (1963-1965), the melodies derive largely from the whole-tone scale, and the sense of diatonic/fourths priority generally lies below the surface.

2. A sense of long-range pitch priority, and of long-range half-step displacement. In the first of the From My Diary pieces, the sense of "shifting" between D-flat and D-natural was conditioned by its diatonic context: the D-flat lay at one end of the (D-G-C-F-Bb-Eb-Ab-Db) continuum, the D-natural lay at the other; in the climax of the piece, the (Db-F-A) augmented chord acted as a non-normative harmonization of the D-flat, which ultimately moved down to C, leaving the D-natural as a seventh diatonic tone in the final tonic sonority. In the later non-diatonic works the role of half-step displacement became, if anything, more important in creating a sense of "sustained contrast." The subtle shifting away from A/E-flat priority, with its attendant neighbor-notes, to C-sharp (and, secondarily, G) priority in the Third Piano Sonata and back again is convincing proof of Sessions' increased compositional range. In the earlier instance, the large-scale D-flat/D-natural conflict must be "resolved" by the "victory" of D-natural; in the later instance, the whole (A-Ab-Eb-D) nexus claims centrality, gradually working its way back into focus on the

last two pages of the movement.

3. An ongoing concern with the composer's three basic principles of form (cumulation, association, and contrast).²

The first principle, cumulation, relates to Sessions' sense of the "long line" and to his early aversion both to the box-like modularity of the twelve-tone system as he first understood it, and to what he considered its morbid overemphasis on detail. His own increasing mastery of large-scale tension and release came, by 1965, to encompass something like the protean fluidity of design of the Second Viennese School, but always on his own terms: the difference in flow between the carefully-prepared central climax of the Third Piano Sonata's first movement (mm. 49-52) and the later, almost unexpected outbursts at mm. 67-8 and m. 72 is an example of this fluidity. The second principle, association, relates, among other things, to the composer's sense of motivic relationships. Always a subtle weaver of motivic webs, Sessions avoided literal repetitions almost instinctively in the works of the 1930s, looking for numerous means--rhythmic and gestural as well as pitch-related--with which to connect different strands in an organic, non-mechanistic way. His later use of the series demonstrated this same sort of flexibility. The third principle, contrast, generally takes the form, in Sessions'

² See Chapter 2.

music, of thematic dualism--see for instance the "first" and "second" themes from No. 1 of From My Diary; note also the contrast between the generally sedate thematic material of pp. 1-2 and the more energetic "second theme" of pp. 3ff in the first movement of the Third Piano Sonata; on another level, the D/Db conflict of the earlier piece and the A/Eb-C#/G shiftings of the later one constitute a further level of contrast.

Another of Sessions' ideas which this study has utilized--and which has been elaborated upon by several of his former students--is that the ear tends to seek out the simplest relationships and "explanations" it can find. Andrew Imbrie³ and Edward T. Cone⁴ take this concept to include both stepwise melodic connection and its elaboration by means of octave transfer and neighbor-note displacement. Both authors extend this surface connection to deeper levels; Cone considers the possibility of its inclusion within "a larger [scalar or harmonic] module,"⁵ while Imbrie refers to "the assumed tendency of the ear to select those

³ Imbrie, "Roger Sessions," 17.

⁴ Cone, "Analysis Today," 177-78.

⁵ Ibid., 178: "In some cases motivic associations or peculiar scale-formations may enforce the acceptance of a larger module."

relationships which, for scientific or historical reasons, for better or worse, are accepted as simpler."⁶

Henry Weinberg has posited the ongoing importance of several cyclical collections--notably the fourth-collection and the two whole-tone collections--to some posttonal music;⁷ the earlier importance of the fourth collection and later importance of the whole-tone collection in Sessions, at the very least, seem unarguable. Furthermore, Sessions' ongoing sense of the stability of the perfect fourth/fifth interval class is seen in the passages from the Third Sonata (first movement, m. 43 and mm. 60-62) in which these intervals predominate: the first is a kind of trough which prepares for the central climax, the second comes at another point of stillness prior to the retransition. In both passages, the perfect fourths/fifths seem to possess a sonic stability not unlike that mentioned on p. 407 of Harmonic Practice.⁸ The inherent sonic stability of formations generated by a single interval (like the fourth and whole-tone collections discussed here) does, indeed, seem to "lie deeper than the twelve-tone system or the individual sonority."⁹

⁶ Imbrie, loc. cit.

⁷ See Chapter 2, pp. 24-28.

⁸ See Chapter 2, p. 18.

⁹ Roger Sessions on Music, 365.

Finally, Sessions' actual use of the row in the first movement of the Piano Sonata No. 3 accords well with his remark that "the whole province of aural organization is somewhat independent of serialism...it's other elements, more than the row itself that play--this is a very subtle and delicate point--at least an equal role in organizing contrasts."¹⁰ The row, then, sets up a specific series of relations among these "other elements" (in this case the A/Ab-Eb/D nexus, the two {0, 4, 6} whole-tone trichords a perfect fifth apart, an Eb-D-Bb diatonic trichord, inversive symmetry at t3).

Sessions' compositional choices were informed not simply by the row itself, nor by the relations between diatonic and whole-tone elements imbedded within the particular row, but also by his strong predisposition, evidenced by his earlier music, to work with (and to elaborate upon) just these elements. The composer's ear, too, "coordinates impressions by reducing them always to their simplest relationships, by seeing (or rather hearing) them always in the simplest light."¹¹ Music as demanding (and rewarding) as that of Roger Sessions asks no more, and no less, of the listener.

¹⁰ Olmstead, Conversations, 201.

¹¹ Roger Sessions, The Musical Experience, 41.

APPENDIX:

**Serial Analysis of Roger Sessions'
Piano Sonata No. 3, First Movement**

PO

Adagio e misterioso - Sostenuto (♩ = 54)

p molto

p molto

p cresc.

cresc. sempre

p poco meno p

p poco f

PO

RI5

P4

P9

P10

IO

IO

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 12-22. The score is written on grand staves with treble and bass clefs. It includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings. Performance instructions like *animando*, *poco*, *a tempo*, and *Tempo I* are present. Dynamic markings like *p* (piano) and *cresc.* (crescendo) are also included. Measure numbers 12, 13, 17, 19, and 22 are indicated on the left margin.

Measure 12: *I 10*, *P 8*, *I 10*, *poco*, *pespr.*

Measure 13: *I 10*, *p animando*, *6 a tempo*, *P 8*

Measure 17: *P 8*, *animando mosso e pochiss. rit.*, *P 11*

Measure 19: *P 11*, *I 5*, *P 2*, *Tempo I (♩ = 56)*

Measure 22: *P 11*, *animando poco*, *pp mezzo voce*, *cresc.*

24 **p9** *un poco più corrente (♩ = 58)*
p subito

27 **I10** *pp* *poco sf* *p subito* *(molto)*

29 **I11** *animando* *poco f*

31 **I12** *più animando* **I14**

32 **p8** *cresc.* **I19** *animando* *(molto)* *molto* *dim e rit.*

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 34-41. The score is written on ten staves, with measures 34, 36, 38, and 41 marked at the beginning of their respective systems. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Key markings include **P0**, **P1**, **P2**, **P3**, **P4**, **P5**, **P6**, **P7**, **P8**, **P9**, **P10**, **P11**, **P12**, **P13**, **P14**, **P15**, **P16**, **P17**, **P18**, **P19**, **P20**, **P21**, **P22**, **P23**, **P24**, **P25**, **P26**, **P27**, **P28**, **P29**, **P30**, **P31**, **P32**, **P33**, **P34**, **P35**, **P36**, **P37**, **P38**, **P39**, **P40**, **P41**, **P42**, **P43**, **P44**, **P45**, **P46**, **P47**, **P48**, **P49**, **P50**, **P51**, **P52**, **P53**, **P54**, **P55**, **P56**, **P57**, **P58**, **P59**, **P60**, **P61**, **P62**, **P63**, **P64**, **P65**, **P66**, **P67**, **P68**, **P69**, **P70**, **P71**, **P72**, **P73**, **P74**, **P75**, **P76**, **P77**, **P78**, **P79**, **P80**, **P81**, **P82**, **P83**, **P84**, **P85**, **P86**, **P87**, **P88**, **P89**, **P90**, **P91**, **P92**, **P93**, **P94**, **P95**, **P96**, **P97**, **P98**, **P99**, **P100**, **P101**, **P102**, **P103**, **P104**, **P105**, **P106**, **P107**, **P108**, **P109**, **P110**, **P111**, **P112**, **P113**, **P114**, **P115**, **P116**, **P117**, **P118**, **P119**, **P120**, **P121**, **P122**, **P123**, **P124**, **P125**, **P126**, **P127**, **P128**, **P129**, **P130**, **P131**, **P132**, **P133**, **P134**, **P135**, **P136**, **P137**, **P138**, **P139**, **P140**, **P141**, **P142**, **P143**, **P144**, **P145**, **P146**, **P147**, **P148**, **P149**, **P150**, **P151**, **P152**, **P153**, **P154**, **P155**, **P156**, **P157**, **P158**, **P159**, **P160**, **P161**, **P162**, **P163**, **P164**, **P165**, **P166**, **P167**, **P168**, **P169**, **P170**, **P171**, **P172**, **P173**, **P174**, **P175**, **P176**, **P177**, **P178**, **P179**, **P180**, **P181**, **P182**, **P183**, **P184**, **P185**, **P186**, **P187**, **P188**, **P189**, **P190**, **P191**, **P192**, **P193**, **P194**, **P195**, **P196**, **P197**, **P198**, **P199**, **P200**, **P201**, **P202**, **P203**, **P204**, **P205**, **P206**, **P207**, **P208**, 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Handwritten musical score for piano, featuring complex notation, fingerings, and performance instructions. The score is written on five systems of grand staves (treble and bass clef).

- System 1:** Starts with a tempo marking *(d + + + + +)*. The right hand has a complex melodic line with many accidentals. The left hand has a more rhythmic accompaniment. A box labeled **P5** is at the end of the system.
- System 2:** Includes the instruction *sempre pp (a m. s.)* and *(poco)*. The notation continues with intricate fingerings and accidentals. A box labeled **P5** is at the end of the system.
- System 3:** Starts with *(poco)* and *poco a poco animando*. The right hand has a melodic line with many accidentals. The left hand has a more rhythmic accompaniment. A box labeled **P5** is at the end of the system.
- System 4:** Includes the instruction *piu accel.* and *poco sempre cresc.*. The notation continues with intricate fingerings and accidentals. A box labeled **P8** is at the end of the system.
- System 5:** Starts with *sempre accel.* and *meno f a cresc.*. The notation continues with intricate fingerings and accidentals. A box labeled **P5** is at the end of the system.

The score is heavily annotated with handwritten notes, including *sempre pp*, *(poco)*, *poco a poco animando*, *piu accel.*, *poco sempre cresc.*, *meno f a cresc.*, and *sf*. There are also several boxed labels: **P5**, **P8**, **I9**, **P6**, **P3**, **I7**, and **P4**.

51 *accl. molto* **pq** **I 10** *rit. molto* **molto**

a tempo (♩ = 54) e molto tranquillo

53 **I 10** *poco* *dim. poco a poco*

poco a poco rallentando *sempre dim.*

57 **p4** *piu dim.* **Tempo I (♩ = 54)**

allargando *rit. molto* *poco* **ppp**

59 **RI 11** **ppp**

15320 - 32

a tempo (♩ = 54)

I2 **I7** **I9**

p subito cresc. molto

rit.

I9 *molto f* *dim.* *p*

ritenuto poco (♩ = 52) *poco subito stringendo* *f subito*

I3 *rit. molto* *poco meno f*

mf dim. *PO*

70

15320-32

Handwritten musical score for piano, featuring various musical notations, dynamics, and performance instructions. The score is divided into systems, with measures 72, 71, 77, 79, and 81 marked. Key markings include "subito più mosso (♩ = 72)", "molto rit. (circa ♩ = 80)", "poco cresc.", "poco f e dim.", and "espr. sempre". Boxed labels P3, P5, IO, P4, P8, I4, I6, and P9 are present throughout the score.

83 *sempre dim.* *pp* *(pp)* **I9**

86 *quasi animando* *cresc.* **P1**

89 *quasi calando* *(molto)* **P1** *dim.* **P1** *poco pronunciato*

90 *molto tranquillo* **P4** *p e dim. sempre* **P2** **PO** *12*

93 **PO** *pp* *pp* *attacca!*

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