ANALYTICAL FRAGMENTS CONCERNING GYÖRGY KURTÁG'S

...CONCERTANTE..., OPUS 42

by

R. DAVID SALVAGE

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

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Abstract

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Despite the many apparent differences between it and the majority of compositions in his oeuvre, György Kurtág's *...concertante...*, op. 42, (2002-2003, rev. 2006) offers analysts a profound and welcome opportunity to explore his approach to large-scale form. While *...concertante...* reflects a formal tightening relative to Kurtág's famous song cycles, its approach to form remains the same: fragments are grouped into sections which in turn comprise the entire work. The difference is that taken together the fragments in *...concertante...* bear strong traces of conventional formal paradigms. Because *...concertante...*'s fragmentary nature is not as apparent as other pieces, the analyses in this essay draw attention to Kurtág's many techniques of musical interruption–an idea central to the concept of fragment advanced here. Because of the difficulties inherent in the word "fragment," the analyses alternate with discussions about how the term is applied in Kurtág's music.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my adviser Stephen Blum for his patience with and enthusiasm for this project, one that at times veered very far from what was proposed in 2007. I am grateful for the insightful and constructive comments of my two readers, Joseph N. Straus and Richard Kramer. János Demény, artistic director of Edito Musica Budapest, kindly granted me permission to reprint excerpts from works by Kurtág under copyright to EMB. For help with translations, I thank Gabriella Gruder-Poni (French and Italian) and Dan Shore (Danish). For giving me time off to finish this project, I thank Gloria Nicosia, coordinator of the Writing Across the Curriculum program at Kingsborough Community College.

PREFACE

Some comments on the unusual form of the following essay and Kurtág's 2006 revision of ...*concertante*... are necessary.

The essay presupposes that musical and linguistic domains are close enough together to allow the use of one domain to advance an impression of the other. Language is good enough at imitating things normally thought of as being done only by music that a concerted effort to imitate in words what happens in music can form the basis for rhetorical strategy. By way of enforcing arguments about Kurtág's ...*concertante*..., the following essay attempts to do with words much of what Kurtág does with notes. To paraphrase David Lewin, the essay aspires to answer one poetic work with another (Lewin 2006, 103).

Preeminent among the concepts discussed is "fragment." One of this essay's main contentions is that ...*concertante*... is a sequence of fragments. Therefore, the essay itself is a sequence of fragments as well. These fragments are numbered in the text. Each essay fragment corresponds to one of ...*concertante*...'s fragments. Most of the fragments in the essay discuss music found in the corresponding fragment from the piece. (A chart of ...*concertante*...'s fragments can be found on page 77.) To address in some way the entire composition is another motivation behind this approach. The essay's technique also aims

to reflect a more fundamental statement about musical fragments: deliberately composed fragments depend on “radical brevity.” A discussion of radical brevity takes place on page 20. The fragments of this essay are intended to strike readers as being radically brief.

The essay further argues that musical interruption is central to the articulation of musical fragmentation. By way of imitating interruption, two literary techniques are adopted. First: each essay fragment begins and ends with a sentence fragment. Essay fragment I.1 (on page 1) starts as follows: “. . . begins with the minimal amount of musical material necessary for the perception of fragmentation, fragmentation being–even in this expansive single-movement work for violin, viola, and orchestra–the heart of the compositional technique of György Kurtág (b. 1926).” By removing the subject from this sentence, a fragment is created; inserting the subject restores the “prehistoric entirety” from which the present fragment has been broken off (much more about this process in the essay). Thus the complete (non-fragmentary) sentence is really, “...*concertante*... begins with the minimal amount of musical material necessary for the perception of fragmentation, fragmentation being–even in this expansive single-movement work for violin, viola, and orchestra–the heart of the compositional technique of György Kurtág (b. 1926).” Similarly, essay fragment I.4 (page 13) begins, “. . . abandoned development shortly resumed abound.” The full sentence is, “Moments of abandoned development shortly resumed abound.”

Another technique of interruption applies between different essay fragments. Sometimes the sentence fragment ending an essay fragment find its continuation in a sentence fragment at the beginning of a later essay fragment. The sentence fragment concluding I.5 (page 19) combines with the sentence fragment beginning III.3 (page 65) to form the complete sentence,"Then there is Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante,* and that Kurtág's title is an homage soon becomes evident." The sentence fragment concluding I.6 (page 21) combines with the one beginning II.7 (page 50) to form the complete sentence, "*...concertante...*, grand though it may be, integrates well with this orientation, born out of small forms, songs, and chamber music, being written for, dedicated to, and premiered by violinist Hiromi Kikuchi and violist Ken Hakii, who are married to each other." Other instances of this kind of interruption exist as well.

Two other techniques need mentioning. The essay fragments resemble another concept important in the essay: the found object. The fragments of the essay, like found objects, are not smoothly led up to and away from as they would be in a conventional piece of scholarly writing. It is this essay's contention that fragments and found objects spring from the same narrative (for a discussion, see page 22). Like the music of *...concertante...*, the essay fragments fall into two alternating spaces. In *...concertante...*, these spaces are defined principally by their metric construction (see page 28); in this essay, these spaces are defined by whether the object of the analysis is Kurtág's music or

more abstract considerations of form and fragmentation.

Finally, the music examples assume a similarly unusual approach. Instead of being presented within the essay fragments, the examples (with one exception) are presented in between them. These sections might be thought of as “photo essays” constituting a third space that is braided with the two spaces explained just above. The captions for the examples are more expansive than customary in an effort to connect the examples back with the corresponding discussions, which usually take place a page or two earlier. Some examples are presented in facsimile. The first and last examples are taken from the published score of *...concertante...*; they are in facsimile in order to create the impression of personal interpretation fading in and out (pages 3 and 103). Two examples from works other than *...concertante...* also appear in facsimile on page 27. In the context of a discussion of a performance by Kurtág and his wife, the concert program from Carnegie Hall is reprinted. Unique among the examples, it resembles a found object (page 53).

Therefore, while the essay does argue its theses through logical inference and supporting evidence, the standard tools of scholarly persuasion, the essay also makes a conscious effort to mesmerize–an effort more commonly made by composers and other creative artists. After the initial awkwardness, readers hopefully will grow accustomed to the essay’s techniques, and this mode of fragmented reading will hopefully translate to a

mode of fragmented listening. The essay aims, in other words, to provide a preparatory experience for a sympathetic listening of ...*concertante*....

Lastly, in February 2009, a late date in this project's development, it came to my attention that Kurtág had in 2006 revised ...*concertante*.... I immediately attempted to get a hold of the revised score, but was not successful. As a result, the present analysis is based on the score published in 2005.

The liner notes of the single commercially available recording of ...*concertante*..., which reflects the 2006 revision, contain an outline of the piece's form, including measure numbers. Though Kurtág seems to have cut eleven measures from the earlier version, the measure numbers in the outline correspond perfectly with events in the published score. All measure numbers I refer to, then, are based on the 2005 score, and no adjustments to account for discrepancies between the two versions appear to be necessary.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Senza tempo–Sostenuto, parlando, pulsato

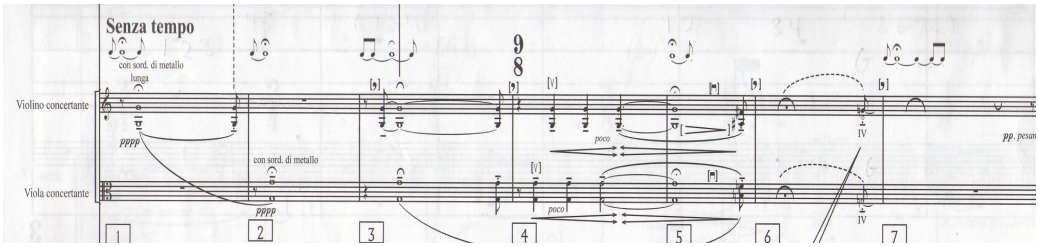
I.1

. . . begins with the minimal amount of musical material necessary for the perception of fragmentation, fragmentation being–even in this expansive single-movement work for violin, viola, and orchestra–the heart of the compositional technique of György Kurtág (b. 1926). The two soloists deliver to us in the opening measures of ...*concertante*..., op. 42, (2002-2003, rev. 2006) the ruins of a G drone of indeterminate length. Kurtág marks measures 1-7 “senza tempo”; measures 1-3 and 5-7 have no meter; many of the rhythmic values in the reduction provided in the score (nine values over measures 1-3, nine over 5-7) have fermatas; a footnote insists the stemless quarters do not relate to the whole notes as they would were the music metered: there is only longer and shorter.

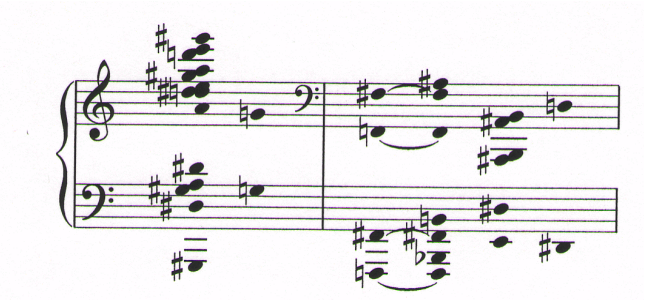
All is tentative incipiency. From the first measure, a whole-note tied on both sides to single eighths, approximating 10/8, the second measure subtracts an eighth note, approximating 9/8; the third measure, an 11/8, adds an eighth to the value of measure 1. The fourth measure emerges, metered, 9/8, proposing a shape. The slowly alternating shades of the drone take turns more rapidly; a gently rushing crescendo brings us closer to the G, before, in an easing of decrescendo, the drone falls to a G-less semitone-based

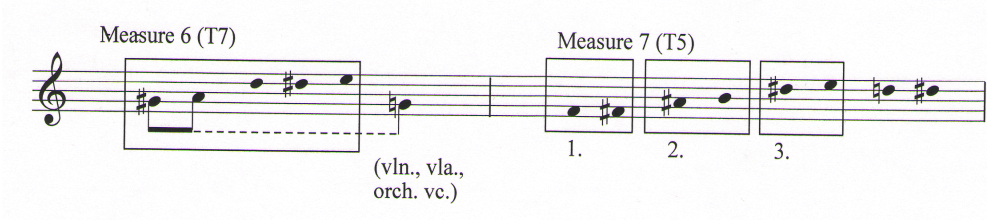
sonority; the orchestra takes up three more semitone-sonorities in measures 6 and 7–the sonorities groping in unmetered measures for the unison sound we heard before. The clusters at first surround G; among them is a preponderance of T_5 and T_7 mappings. The G drone had been presented in octaves; now the semitones glom around perfect fourths and fifths–the octave's acoustic neighbors. Measures 5 and 6 return to the approximate 9/8 of measure 2, and measure 7 expands the augmentation of measure 3. Measures 5-7, slightly longer, creating an uneven balance with measures 1-3, signal a return to the indeterminate world of ellipsis introduced in the first three measures, the musical objects now unfamiliar.

Drones, albeit of usually more determined length, will recur at many points in ...*concertante*... to remind us of the prehistoric *Urmusik* upon which the present, fragmented music depends–upon which *all* deliberately composed fragments (these constitute ...*concertante*... as they do most of Kurtág's oeuvre) . . .



The solo parts in the first seven measures of ...concertante.... *The rhythmic reduction is above the violin staff; there are nine values to one side of the 9/8 measure, nine to the other. Each unmetered measure seems to aim at 4/4, but always gives too much.*





Measures 6 and 7: reduction and graph. The orchestral chord on the downbeat of measure 6 is made up of five pitch classes: G ♯, A, D, D ♯, and E. The chord resolves in the same measure into a unison G. Two T_7-related chromatic trichords, G-G ♯-A and D-D ♯-E, thus constitute the pitch content for the measure. In measure 7, F-F ♯ sustains as an A ♯-B dyad joins the texture. The orchestra then slides to a tetrachord on A ♯-B-D ♯-E. The dyads A ♯-B and D ♯-E mark T_5 advances from F-F ♯. The chord resolves to a D-D ♯ dyad in the same measure.

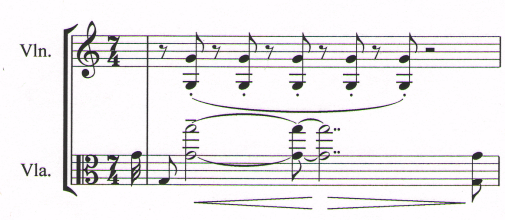
I.2

. . . the nine rhythmic values distributed over measures 5-7, ...*concertante*... begins. Kurtág writes “Sostenuto, parlando, pulsato” above measure 8. The indication anthropomorphizes the music: “parlando,” “speech-like”; “pulsato,” “pulsing.” At measure 8, ...*concertante*... acquires mind and body–the mind as evidenced through speech, the body as through heartbeat.

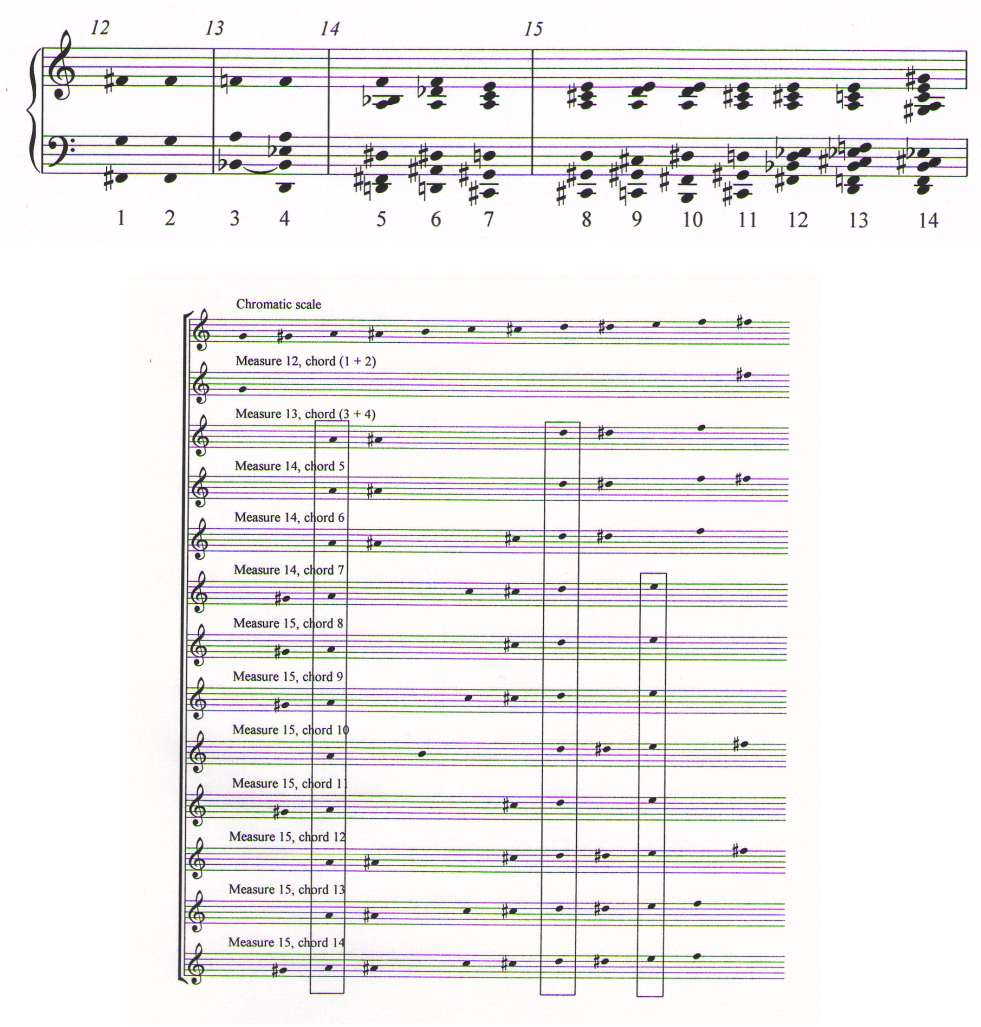
Now metered, the music fixes the shape suggested in measures 1-7 and expands upon it. The quarter-note meters of measures 8-14 lead up to a measure in 12/8 (measure 15). The dramatically increased musical activity of measure 15 subdivides the eight measures into 7 + 1. In the group of seven (measures 8-14), we find an echo of ...*concertante*...’s first seven measures; measure 11 resembles measure 4 in the increasing rapidity with which the shades of the drone G alternate; 11 shares a hairpin with the earlier bar as well; the viola jumps up to a higher G and down again. Like measure 4, the bar sticks out metrically: the metric numerators of measures 8-14 are 5-4-3-7-3-2-3; measure 11 is substantially longer (7/4) than the surrounding bars. Like measures 5-7, the G’s drop out in measures 12-14; the orchestral sonorities are thicker versions of the semitone chords from the earlier passage, the thicket of T_5-related clusters more dense. This seven-measures, like the earlier one, is 3 + 1 + 3. Measure 15 brings the search for

unison G's to feverishness and indeterminate end. The elongation of the measure resembles the augmentation in measure 7. 3 (measures 1-3) + 1 (measure 4) + 3 (measures 5-7) becomes 3 (8-10) + 1 (11) + 3 (12-14) + 1 (15). Just as measures 5-7 slightly lengthen 1-3, measures 8-15 lengthen 1-7. The nested asymmetries recall the layers of golden mean-determined music Ernő Lendvai finds in Bartók (Lendvai 2000, 20).

The first seven measures of ...*concertante*... are recomposed in measures 8-15, the latter passage a living, breathing version of the disembodied earlier one. Through the application of mind and body, the earlier music has been transformed; what was unconscious has been made conscious. The score, published in 2005, the year before Kurtág's revision, shows "...[fantasia]..." written above the first measure and "[Tempo I]" above the eighth. These editorial marks convey well . . .



Measure 11 with its faster rhythm and hairpin plays the same role as measure 4 does earlier (see page 3). The up-and-down viola octaves anticipate a motif from the main theme of ...concertante.... *(see page 10, measures 24, 26, and 28).*



Measure 12-15: reduction and pitch content chart. The orchestral sonorities accumulate in density. Shown in relation to a chromatic scale, the music soon abandons G and emphasizes pitch classes D, A, and E; taken together, these four pcs form an i7 cyclic tetrachord. Various configurations of T_5 and T_7 chromatic-cluster mappings can be deduced from the chart.

I.3

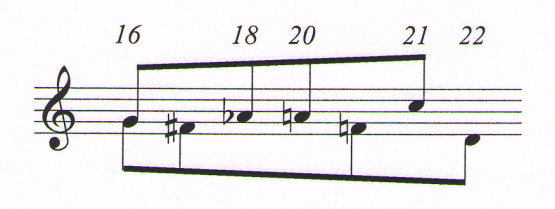
. . . prepares the first appearance of the main theme by incrementally opening up pitch-space in measures 16-22. The solo parts, interrupted by brief tutti rests, outline a wedge structure: Kurtág takes the violin up from G_4 to C_5 (measure 21) and the viola down to a double-stop major ninth (C_3-D_4) in the same measure. The viola C an octave displacement of the previously introduced C in the violin, the array skips up and down to form a stack of fourths, D-G-C. The gaps left in the array come to be partially filled in by the subsequent theme: the apex of the theme, B_5, fills in the gap left between A_5 and C_5; the theme's resting point, E_4, fills in the corresponding gap between D_4 and F_4.

Having been approached gradually, the main theme is cut off abruptly. Measures 24-29 get stuck in a rut, repeating the same two-measure gesture three times: an E-G♯ dyad answered by up-and-down octave G's. The soloists carry the first two iterations (measures 24-27). The orchestra plays the third (measures 28-29): horns and mallet percussion take the dyad, the woodwinds take the G answer. Repetition, obstinate, stunts the growth of a melody whose careful preparation leads us to anticipate fuller development.

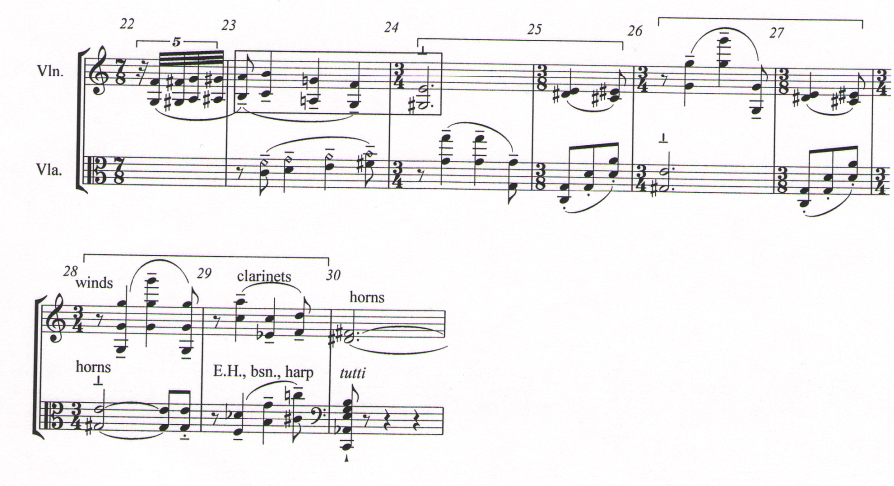
Kurtág jolts the music from its rut in measure 30 with an aggressive chord in the brass, reinforced by the percussion. Then measure 31 goes on to something very different.

But later a chord sounds in measure 236, the beginning of the recapitulation, which is analogous to the chord in measure 30: both feature the brass, both carry a fermata, both are based on 4-4-3 interval cycles. This is a favorite cycle of Kurtág's which Stephen Blum finds in *Kafka-Fragmente*, op. 24, (1985-1987) among other compositions (Blum 2002, 353); Edward Gollin finds the same cycle in Bartók (Gollin 2008, 140).

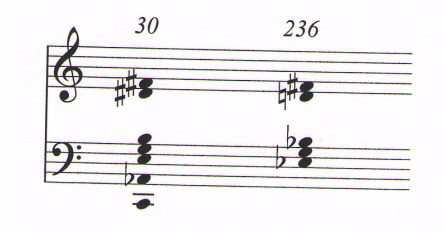
Recapitulated, Kurtág allows the theme to develop expansively; he continues right where measure 29 breaks off. After recapping the up-and-down octave G's, the soloists play the same notes in measure 239 (in almost the same rhythm) as the clarinet and English horn in measure 29. Now integrated into a larger gesture, these chords begin a passage that carries out conjunct motion in sixths, punctured by sudden silences. Now allowed to blossom, the theme can only stutter: the silences do not mark breaths between contrasting ideas; they interrupt the progress of an upward trajectory that leads to a shattering *tutti* chord in measure 248, the climax of . . .



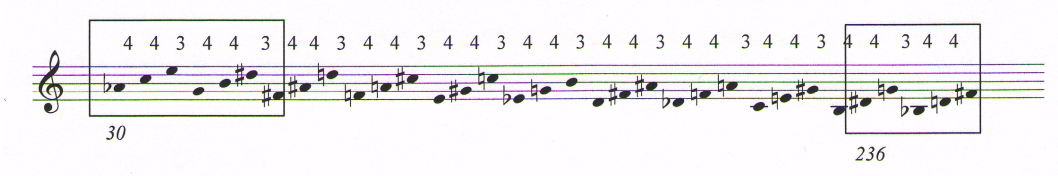
From measures 15-22, the pitch content of the solo parts begins to open up. The inversionally-symmetrical wedge reaches C in the upper voice and D in the lower, each an i5 from G, the point of origin.



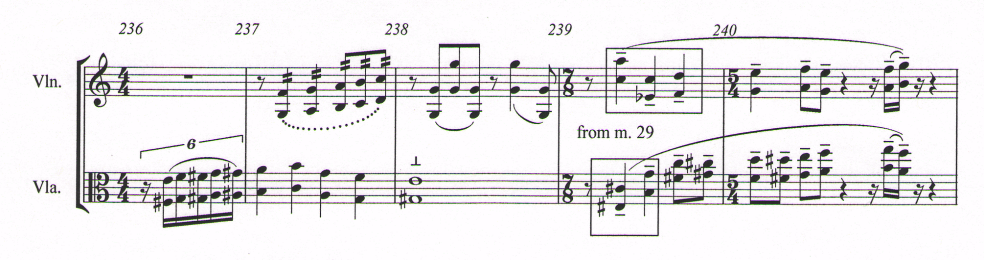
The main theme of ...concertante...*, shown here in its first appearance (measures 22-30), gets stuck in a two-measure rut that gets played three times, the third time in the orchestra. In the box is the theme's head motif, which Kurtág isolates later in the piece.*



Here are the analogous chords in reduction, played at measures 30 and 236.



Here are the two chords mapped onto a 4-4-3 interval cycle. They are not precise transformations of one another, but the tonal resemblance receives emphasis from the similar instrumentation and formal placement.



Kurtág recapitulates the main theme, now in the solo viola, at measure 236. The boxed notes correspond to the winds in measure 29 (see page 10). Kurtág now realizes the line the parallel sixths started earlier. Measures 241-247 (not shown) bear the same sort of brief tutti *rests that appear in the theme's initial preparation (measures 16-22).*

I.4

. . . abandoned development shortly resumed abound. There exist doubly-interrupted passages where Kurtág breaks off one stratum of music to drop down to another, then breaks this second stratum to drop down to a third. After the third, he climbs back to the second and finally makes his way back to the first.

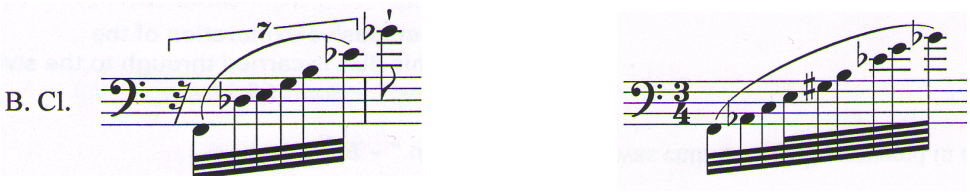
Between measures 28 and 49, the moves between strata of music are conspicuous. A bass clarinet arpeggio cues the second stratum at measure 29 and jerks the first back at 48. Before measure 29 and after measure 49, the music is slower than the adjacent second level and features bassline pizzicati and brief thirty-second-note flickers–the texture the same as that in which Kurtág embeds the main theme. On the second level, measures 31-37, the bass flute, cimbalom, and pianino sound pin-pricks over an empty droned minor third (D♯-F♯). A lusty melody interrupts (38-43). The pin-pricks return (44-47), the xylophone and timpani joining the pianino, the drone now a chromatically filled-in minor third (C-E♭).

The third level, the melody, does not get repeated elsewhere in ...*concertante*.... The solo strings use mutes to distinguish their timbre here from that at the first level. The melody, which could have fallen directly from a Bartók score, concerns the closing of a minor-third (D-F) located in between the minor-third drones on either side. The

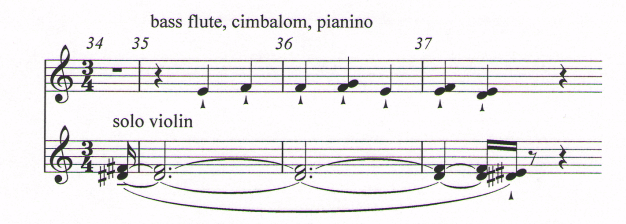
semifermata (a fermata without a dot and thus somewhat shorter) in measure 41 suggests a 4 + 2 subdivision for the third level; below the semifermata, the triple-dots on the E♭ pun with the ellipses of the composition's title. Measure 42 shifts the short-long rhythm from the downbeat of the measure to the upbeat; the G♭ pickup in 41 complements the C♯ downbeat of measure 38, each a semitone outside the central minor third. Measures 42 and 43 form a two-measure consequent to the four-measure antecedent that is 38-41.

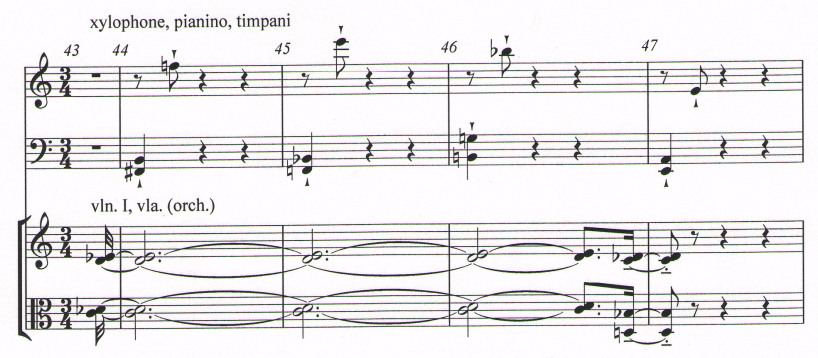
A subtler but no less striking doubly-interrupted passage takes place in measures 294-299, leading to a similarly un-repeated lowest stratum. 294 and 299 contain the wide, slow, meditative leaps that are the music's foreground since measure 285 and move at the same tempo. 295 drops down to a level marked by slightly slower music and conjunct motion; a mournful descending trombone glissando–a sound we have not heard until now–emerges as the *Hauptstimme*; the trombone's B♭-A♭-G dovetails with a glissando in the timpani which begins on C and moves down to G♯. A faster tempo underlays the marcato oscillations of the third stratum (measures 296 and 297)–one of the composition's oddest moments. In 298 the tempo slows, the glissando returns, and the music picks up the second stratum again. The glissando now resides in the bassoon and begins on the E♭ a perfect fourth above the trombone B♭ in 295; the timpani glissando returns on C, dovetailing with the bassoon, descending to subsume the G♯ (as A♭) and

moving down to G♮ in 299–the C-G motion inverting in the same register the first timpani glissando of the piece (measure 9). The third level here sounds designed to interrupt the progress of the glissando at 95 before it can complement this G-C glissando from the . . .

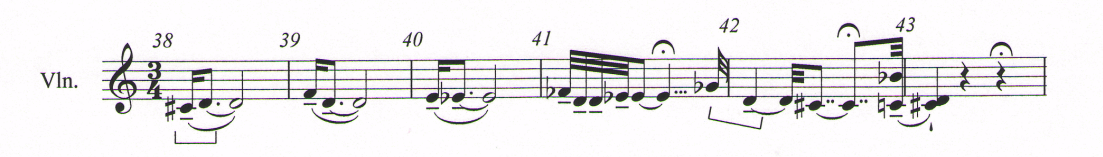


These two bass clarinet runs, at measures 29 and 48 respectively, cue different levels of music. The music at 50 sounds continuous with the music at 29. While not identical, the arpeggios begin and end on the same notes and share some pitches in between. (The pitches shown are those that sound.)

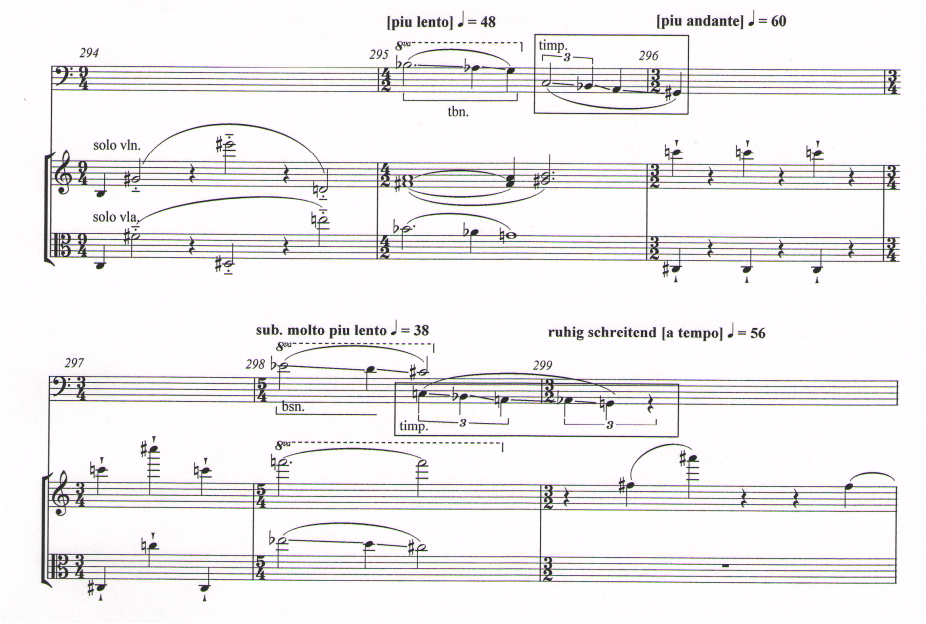




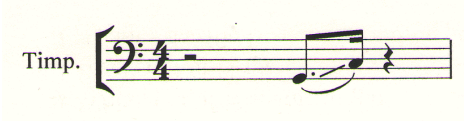
From the second level: the bass flute, cimbalom, and pianino pin-pricks in measures 35-37 are picked up again in 44-47. The minor-third drone gets transposed and filled in.



The melody of the third level, lusty and unrepeated, could have dropped right out of Bartók (measures 38-43). The G ♭ in 41 complements the C ♯ in 38, being one semitone outside the D-F minor third that is the center of the melody's pitch content. The melody's underlying semitone motion from D-E ♭-D will return on C in the "Choral" at 213.



Another double-interruption, this time from measures 294-299. In addition to the marcato of 296-297 cutting off the timpani glissando, which intends to go to G, the third level seems to block out our hearing a ritardando from quarter = 48 to quarter = 38; the music is forced to resume the second level at a "suddenly" slower tempo. Notice the work with chromatic minor thirds again in the solo parts in 295.



The timpani glissando from measure 9 provides the basis for the later ones in measures 295 and 298.

I.5

. . . is itself an interruption: “concertante” breaks the continuity of silence attempted by the ellipses. They exist on a silent, ineffable plane; “concertante” on a separate, articulate one. One might even say the ellipses emerge from the nothingness to the left and disappear into the nothingness to the right, creating another double-interruption: the first stratum is a void; the second carries the indicators of words not said, assertions of the gravitational pull of elements not present; the third stratum is one of full, verbalized articulation. The pre-linguistic qualities of the first and second strata suggest metaphorically that the third is the “highest” level in the title.

Far from being a static label, “...concertante...” is a narrative whose qualities reflect those of the music to come. The title moves from the utterly silent, to the unarticulated, to the articulated, back to the unarticulated, and into silence again, a nonretrogradeable shape encompassing the absent and the present within its circumference of music. The paradoxical recourse to silent music is a trope from the Romantic generation, when paradox was celebrated as a gateway to human expression in its pure, unspoiled state. Kurtág himself has paid homage to great Romantics like Hölderlin and Schumann in his music. The preconscious opening of *...concertante...* resembles the ellipses by asserting the presence of absence, the G drone. The exposition

and recapitulation of the main theme, the hint of a second theme, the cadenza, and the orientation of the ensemble–soloists and orchestra–all engage the tradition the word "concertante" comes from. A perfectly empty 9/4 bar, the last measure, maps to the second ellipsis.

Then there is Mozart's *Sinfonia* . . .

I.6

. . . compositions arrive to us in pieces. His titles often direct attention to the incompleteness of movements to come; we listen to discrete "beads" (*klárisok*) making up a necklace; "messages" (*посланйя*) only fully ascertainable by readers who know more than just the words; "splinters" (*szálkák*) extending aberrantly from the surface of a log or plank; "scenes" (*сценьи*) cut loose from the play in which they were embedded; assorted "sayings" (*mondásai*) whose only commonality is their source; "musical moments" (*moments musicaux*) from pieces we do not entirely remember; "signs" (*jelek*) whose signification needs signifying. Not always so artful, Kurtág sometimes even explicitly calls compositions "fragments," as in the *Attila József Fragments*, op. 20, (1981) and *Kafka-Fragmente*.

He reinforces the sense of fragmentation by writing movements that are often very brief, inscribing them with roman numerals and final barlines. *Eight Piano Pieces*, op. 3,

(1960), which takes no more than six minutes to perform, consists of eight fragments; *Hommage à Mihály András*, op. 13, (1977), which lasts around ten minutes, has twelve. Other pieces group fragments into larger sections that together make the composition. Among these pieces are Kurtág's three large song cycles. *The Sayings of Peter Bornemisza*, op. 7, (1962, rev. 1976) contains 24 fragments grouped into four titled sections, and it lasts around 45 minutes; *Messages of the Late R.V. Troussova*, op. 17, (1976-1980) distributes 21 fragments across three sections, and it runs around 25 minutes; and *Kafka-Fragmente* contains 40 fragments and places them into four sections, and the piece lasts about an hour.

As all of these pieces demonstrate, the simplest and most complementary of compositional procedures constitute the foundation from which Kurtág fashions fragments: radical brevity and silence. A musical fragment cannot *a priori* be something short or long. But the incompleteness essential to a fragment implies brevity because of our cultural association of completeness with comprehensiveness; time is required if one intends to exhaust all possibilities. Still, the term "radical brevity" is preferable to "brevity" by itself: many short pieces do not seem fragmentary to us at all. "Radical" means the shortness of the music is so salient, that the conjuring of a longer, idealized entity gets triggered in a listener's imagination; from this absent entity, the present "radically" brief one seems broken. Fragmentation, then, often depends on the presence of

a listener reflexively attuned to what is “radical” and not. Radical brevity does not work unless listeners are cultured into a particular musical tradition; the residue of personal experience precipitates the perception of fragments hewn from this simplest of means. Fragments are nearly impossible on the *tabula rasa*.

Kurtág’s music presumes shared experience. Perhaps this is unremarkable. But the degree to which Kurtág makes music with and for friends and family and the frequent personal dedications on his pieces suggest more is going on. The fragment is more than a preferred form or a knowing nod to Romanticism: it is an expression of musical and artistic intimacy. ...*concertante*..., grand though it may be, integrates well with this orientation, born out of small forms, songs, and chamber . . .

I.7

. . . a narrative or “prehistory” shared by all deliberately composed fragments. Before we hear the broken off pieces, there existed an entirety. We cannot describe this prehistoric entirety with certainty. Nor has the composer actually composed this absent entirety: with fragments, the process of creation is destruction. The composer breaks apart the entirety; then the composer arranges the pieces according to how strong the pull should be from the absent entirety. A stronger pull comes from a sense that the essence of the prehistoric entirety is in front of us, the essential being a quality pregnant with unrealized potential.

Critics and scholars routinely make reference to Kurtág's ability to present the unadorned "essence" of things, and such comments testify to his talent for fragmentation.

The prehistoric entirety not being properly "composed," we can perhaps associate it with musical givens–individual notes, common scales, particular instrumental attributes–not of any composer's invention. These givens, appearing as the lowest common denominators of countless pieces, are central to the process of enculturation upon which fragments depend. We hear certain scales repeatedly; we hear them *realized* repeatedly. Presenting them incompletely is another step composers can take toward composing musical fragments. What simpler and more potent fragment exists than a major scale that ascends only to its leading tone? A chromatic or pentatonic scale left incomplete–or whose progress toward completion gets interrupted? The presence of such givens may mean little in a post-tonal context; but the bareness with which they appear in Kurtág's music is striking; and to posit a deeper significance for them than an artistic interest in simplicity is satisfying. To compose so close to musical givens is to orient oneself differently from serial composers who base their music on rows they invent themselves. Even standard practice compositions–filled with these musical givens–are generated more from invented themes and motifs than their scalar underpinnings.

Since the found object, then, lies at the root of composing fragments, we should not be surprised to find fragment composers treating their original music objectively.

Perhaps the most essential characteristic of an object is portability; it can be placed, with relatively minimal adjustment, into many different contexts; it is discrete, and its boundaries are clear; it is recognizable as an entity in and of itself. Such thinking runs deep in Kurtág. He speaks of musical passages and pieces he composes (and is satisfied with) as "gifts" which he feels free to use in different compositions, often transforming them in the process (Grmela 2002, 372); a string quartet piece becomes a movement of a work for piano and large ensemble; a line of music carrying text appears textless elsewhere. He sometimes assumes the compositional style of other composers. In one piece, *Officium Breve in Memoriam Andreæ Szervánszky*, op. 28, (1988-1989), Kurtág goes so far as to incorporate arrangements of works by two other composers into an otherwise original work: Anton Webern and Szervánszky, a Hungarian composer. The liberality of some of Kurtág's free-standing arrangements reinforces . . .

I.8

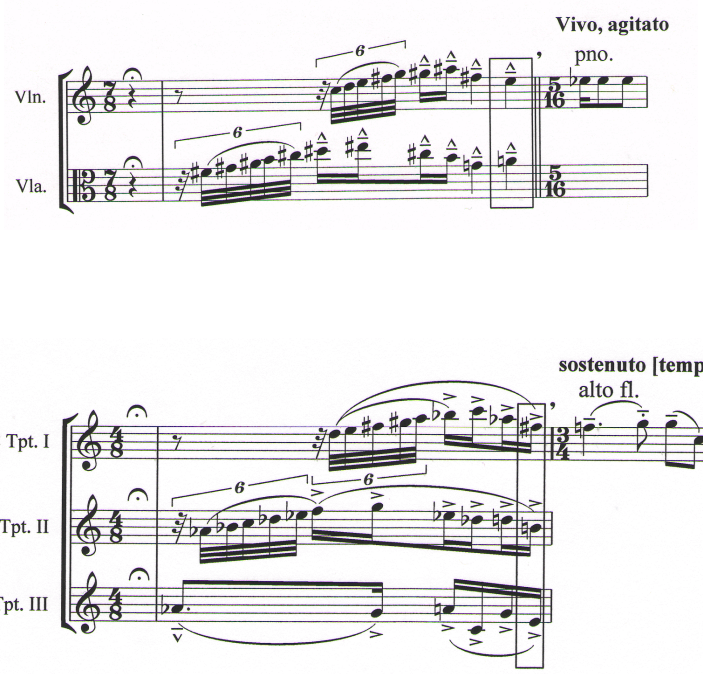
. . . suddenly happen upon the main theme, isolated, presented as a discrete object in measures 59 and 202, surrounded by silence, at the slowest tempo in the piece (eighth note = 60); both measures cap larger sections of music. Before measure 59, Kurtág writes a quarter rest with a fermata for the entire orchestra; he adds a breath mark over the double barline that concludes measure 59. Before measure 202, he places a fermata inside

the staff of each instrument (this fermata is not attached to any rest or note) and afterward he writes a breath mark over the barline into 203.

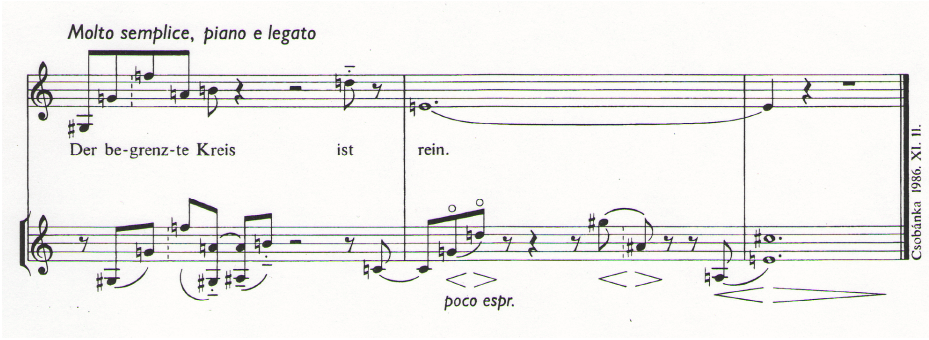
59 and 202 take the beginning of the main theme and, like the timpani glissando to G later in *...concertante...*, cut off the motif from the note to which it is headed. When the expected continuation occurs, an entirely new section begins. In the first presentation of the theme (measure 23, see page 10), the top line of the solo violin, A-B-G-F, continues a half-step to the top E of the dotted-half-note dyad E-G♯. In 59, the violin G♯-A♯-F♯-E suggests immediate continuation on a long E♭ in the next measure. The music fulfills this expected melodic motion only on the other side of the breath mark and double barline and at a new tempo. The E♭'s in measure 60 patter in the midst of a quietly energetic ostinato; new melodic ideas take off above them. The trumpet's B♭-C-A♭-F♯ in 202 implies continuation on a long F♮; it comes in 203, after a tempo change and breath mark–like 59-60. In measure 203, the alto flute takes over the melody, beginning a mellow section labeled "recitativo" on a soft, sustained F♮.

These two found objects, neither approached nor left developmentally, relate to one another through techniques that look beyond the immediate context. Most noticeably, Kurtág adds a third voice in 202 to the two-part setting carried over from 59. He has done this before. A similar, two-part canonic texture exists in the sixth movement from section III of *Kafka-Fragmente*. The same movement, "Der Begrenzte Kreis," is recomposed into

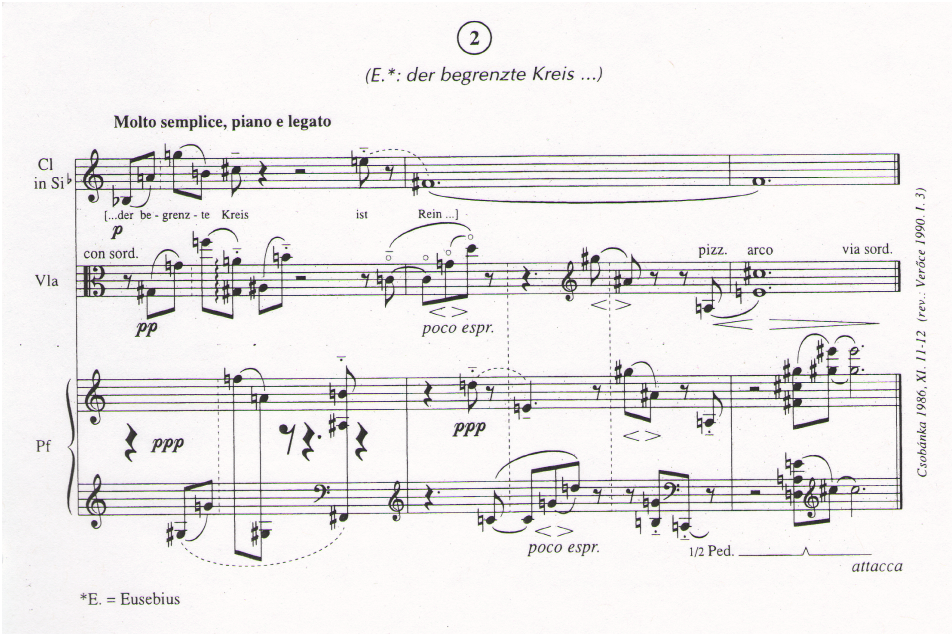
Hommage à R. Sch, op. 15d, as a three-part canon at the unison for clarinet, viola, and piano; the piano has the new voice. The vertical sonority that concludes measure 202 builds on the one that ends measure 59. The violin and viola finish measure 59 on an A-E dyad; the three trumpets in 202 end on a stack of i7's, E-B-F♯, that projects the i7 articulated earlier into a cyclic segment. An emergent attention to i5's and i7's appears to be . . .



Measures 59 and 202 and their immediate surroundings. Structural pauses take place in between the fourth and fifth notes of the head motif of the main theme, the fifth note now becoming part of a different gesture. The A-E dyad in 59 gets projected into a cyclic segment in 202 (see boxes). The three-part setting of 202 is played by trumpets. The first trumpet will also replay the opening G's at 210-211, the first time we will have heard them since the beginning of the piece.



Kafka-Fragmente*: III.6. "Der begrenzte Kreis"*



Hommage à R. Sch.*: II. "(E.: der begrenzte Kreis...)"*

These two pieces illustrate the same kind of recomposition applied in measures 59 and 202 of ...concertante.... *In English, the line, by Kafka, means, "The closed circle is pure."*

Chapter 2

Vivo, agitato–Recitativo

II.1

. . . observe meter as a sign of self-awareness at the very beginning of ...*concertante*.... The composition's metric inventiveness, sustained to the end, can be approached by thinking in terms of *metric sets*, sets of meters sharing common denominators (3/16, 5/16, 8/16 . . .), and *metric spaces*, passages of music that intersperse meters from two or more metric sets.

Kurtág uses meter to call to mind an over-arching organization for the fragmented surface of the piece. Seen in terms of alternating metric spaces, the five sections of ...*concertante*... create a ritornello-like form.

Section	Measures	Metric Space
I	1-59	a
II	60-79	b
	80-114	a_1
	115-202	b
	203-212	(a_1)
III	213-254	a
IV	255-284	b_1
V	285-313	c (a_2)

Metric space *a* is determined by interspersed quarter- and eighth-note meters; metric space *b* by interspersed sixteenth- and dotted-eighth-note meters; *c* by quarter- and half-

note meters. Spaces *a* and *b* prioritize one metric set over secondary sets. Section I privileges quarter-note meters over eighth-note meters, as do measures 203-254. a_1, measures 80-114, switches the sets: eighth-note meters assume primacy over quarter-note meters. All *b* spaces privilege sixteenth-note meters over dotted-eighth-note ones. The introduction of a new metric space, *c*, reflects section V's title: "...epilogo..."; space *c* privileges half-note meters over quarter-note meters. (For details, see Part A of the appendix.) Overall, the confinement to such a limited number of metric spaces helps prevent the frequent interruptions and tempo changes from bumping the music into incomprehensibility.

Indeed, the metric proportions underpinning spaces *a* and *b* create a steady and dependable sense of contrast. Metric space *a* has a proportion of 2:1 (two eighths for every quarter); metric space *b* has a proportion of 3:1 (three sixteenths for every dotted-eighth). The metric spaces thus take turns in engaging simple and compound metric proportions. The final space returns to a proportion of 2:1 (two quarters for every half), the rhythmic values of the denominators an augmentation of space *a*. The alternating spaces also generally hold to a distinction between slower and faster; roughly, the tempo in *a* spaces averages 53 quarters; the tempo in *b* spaces 66. In *c* space, the tempo is even slower, averaging 51 quarters per minute.

The metric design of ...*concertante*... far outstrips anything Kurtág has done with

meter before. Partly this is a matter of ensemble: meter assists coordination, and Kurtág, who favors small ensembles, often prefers a looser, meterless coordination between instruments. But other large-ensemble works do not evidence the metric imagination on display in *...concertante....* While the first movement of *Troussova* and the second movements of *...quasi una fantasia...* op. 27 no. 1 (1987-1988) and *Stele*, op.33, (1994) do show the composer manipulating meter more carefully than usual, the variability of the number of instruments playing at once in *Troussova* allows Kurtág to be looser about coordination at other times, and in *Stele* and *...quasi una fantasia...* meter disappears or becomes consistent in slower sections. *...concertante...* is his first application of meter on a grand . . .

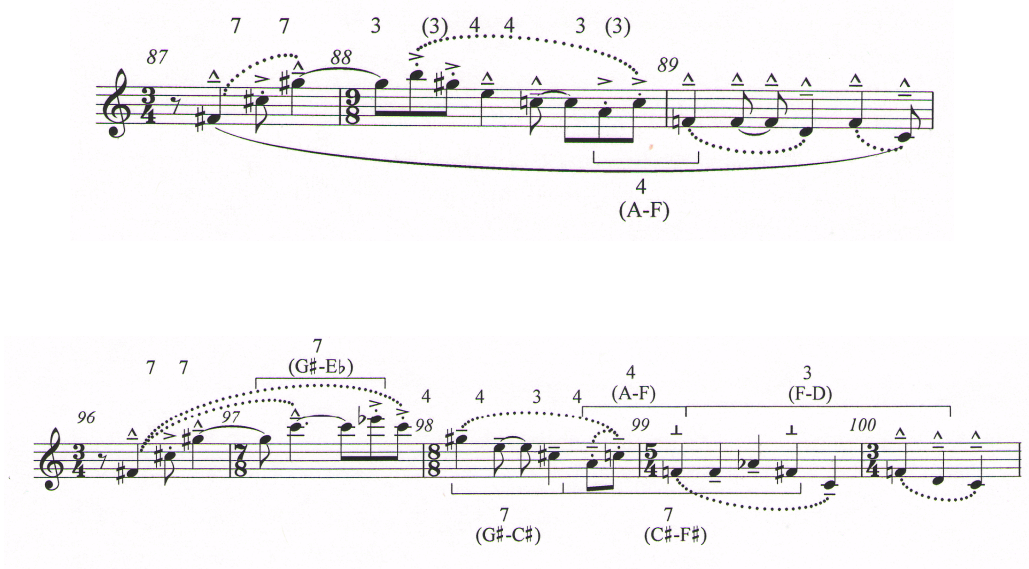
II.2

. . . teases us with the possibility of a second theme. At measure 87, the soloists join in a melody that gets replayed and expanded at 96. Kurtág does not go so far as to establish a suggestive tonal relationship between this and the main theme. But the emphasis given to this new thematic material suggests we might hear it again later in a recapitulation and that measures 60-79 act as a transition between two theme groups.

Kurtág constructs the melody from i7 and 4-4-3 interval cycles. At 87, the tune rises two perfect fifths to a G♯, where it switches to motion by thirds. Moving on to B

(i3) in 88, the line descends back through G♯ to E (i4), C♮ (i4), and A (i3). The development of the theme at 96 expands the statement at 87 from three to five measures by advancing another step higher in the i7 cycle (from G♯ it ascends to D♯) before embarking on a similar 4-4-3 descent through the same pitches. F♯ appears at measure 99 revisiting the note from which the melody began and completing a descent of the i7 cyclic segment from D♯; an analogous i7 descent does not take place in the theme at 87. Like the main theme, both instances of the second theme get stuck shortly after they get going; the highly contoured music stops abruptly for flat, vertical utterances–five at 89, eight at 99-100.

Kurtág does not revisit his “second theme” after the recapitulation of the main theme. Though other material from the “exposition” comes back (never in its exact form), the absence of the melody from 87 and 96 opens the possibility that the recapitulation is incomplete–a fragment of the . . .



The two instances of the second theme, both played by the soloists together, at measures 87 and 96 respectively. The numbers and brackets show the interval cycle construction behind both appearances. 96 expands 87 by advancing another step in the i7 cycle and by adding three more notes at the end.

II.3

. . . taking place. Perfect fourths and fifths–let us use the category ic5–play a role both in large-scale organization and local note-by-note progress. ...*concertante*... articulates a single, complete ic5 cycle; complementary ic5 cyclic segments exist hundreds of measures apart; the smooth unfolding of individual cycles gets interrupted.

The sonorities that follow the composition's five double barlines advance an i7 cycle off the opening G. D is part of the cluster pattering away at the beginning of section II (measure 60); open A-E fifths sound at measure 80; at measure 115 the propulsive sixteenth notes driving the passage center on B. The music that begins section III, marked "Choral (quasi 'Trio')," returns over and over again to a tetrachord based on the cyclic trichord D♭-A♭-E♭–the same chord featured in "Medal–in memoriam Lajos Hernádl" from *Játékok* book VIII (though the present music does not seem to be a recomposition). Section IV, "Recitativo, ed...," coming after the last double barline in the piece, may not feature B♭ so markedly; but, with A, it is the most repeated note in the initial chromatic figures.

From G-D-A-E-B-D♭-A♭-E♭-B♭, F♯, F♮, and C are missing; moments that do not host a double barline feature these three pitches conspicuously and in concert with other changes textural, temporal, and so on. The missing F♯ occurs at measures 180-182

in the solo violin. The pitch, $F\sharp_6$, enters after a passage, measures 170-179, that sees a dramatic fall in register from very high to very low. Measures 180-201, which extend to the found object at 202, constitute one of the most distinctive passages in ...*concertante*..., being one of only five passages that remain in a single metric set for ten consecutive measures or more (and the only one of the five in dotted-eighth-note meters). The opening F♯ takes on structural significance.

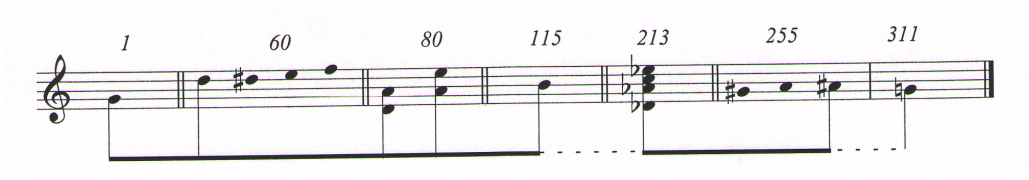
The F♮ and C that finish the cycle take place at measure 301 and similarly mark a clear point of arrival. Kurtág writes “esitando” (hesitating) at the end of the previous measure and a breath mark over the barline into 301, which then resumes the established speed (“a tempo”). Grounding the ascent 301 begins, the contrabassoon F_1 is the lowest F the instrument can play; the viola C_3 is also the lowest playable C on the viola. Together, a rich sound results.

Slow repeated octaves–fragmented drones–carry the ascent up to E in 304, an ascent that continues another one on slow repeated notes Kurtág abandoned earlier. Also initiated by a contrabassoon F_1, this ascent happens in measures 113-114. From F, the chords build perfect fourths: F-B♭-E♭-A♭-C♯/D♭-F♯-B. The cyclic sets from measures 301-304 and 113-114 are complementary and can be subsumed into a complete i7 cycle off B.

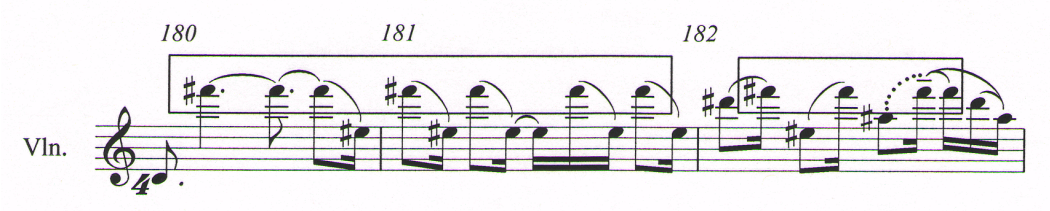
Kurtág thus paces relatively evenly the global i7 cycle durationally. Order

positions 1-6 occur in sections I and II, which together take up about twelve minutes of a 24-minute-long piece. The complementary articulation of the cycle is just one element suggestive of an underlying binary form for ...*concertante*...: sections I-II being the *A* section, sections III-V the *B*. The 2006 revision reinforces the binary idea by revoking the heading of "coda" which Kurtág had written above section IV (measure 255); sections IV and V are now no longer an appendage to an already more or less complete structure; they are part of the body itself.

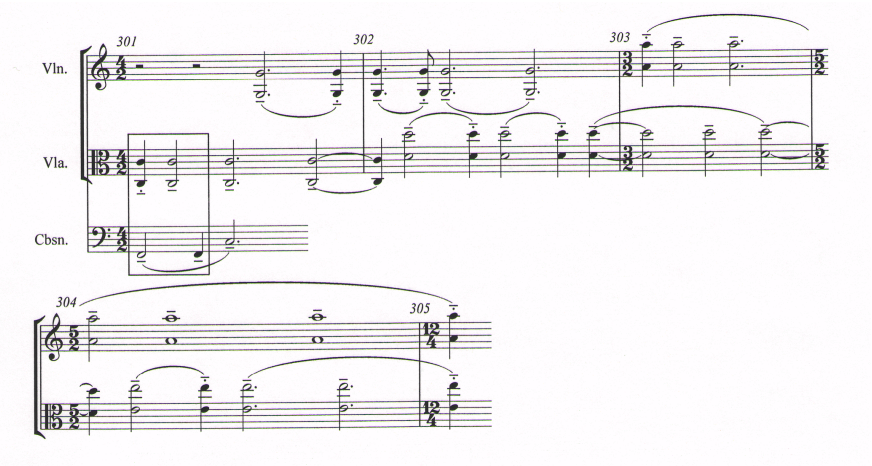
Just as a rising i7 cycle provides an over-arching plan for ...*concertante*..., one also guides the note-to-note progress of the solo violin and viola from measures 213-235–the opening stretch of music in section III and the passage that leads up to the recapitulation of the main theme. Order positions 1-9, C-G♯, appear through measure 224, where Kurtág stops the progress of the cycle–a progress that has followed a rise in register; almost the entire passage is played on natural harmonics. Measures 226–229 contain a retreat of the cycle, going back through order positions 7, 6, 4, 3, and 1, descending in register. After the cadenza (measure 230), the soloists rely less on harmonics as the music both advances through the remaining pitches of the cycle (E♭-B♭-F) and transitions coloristically to the . . .



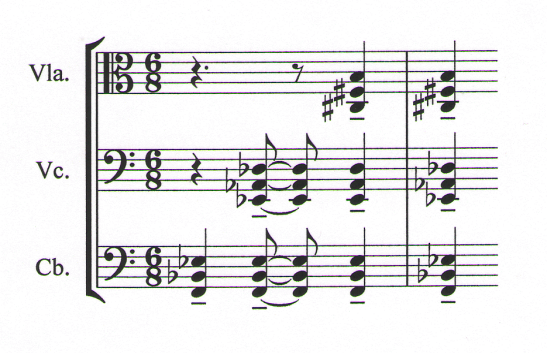
...concertante...*'s opening pitch and those pitches that follow the five double barlines suggest an i7 cycle from G. The antepenultimate and penultimate measures (311-312) take the succession back to G, full cycle. Solid beams show adjacent steps in the cycle, dotted beams show where steps are missing.*



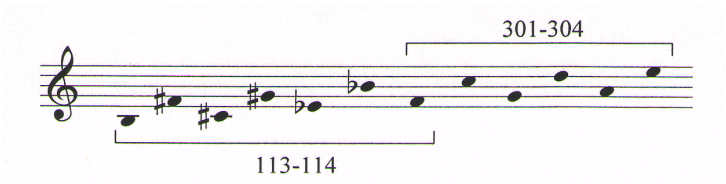
The F ♯ missing between measures 115 and 213 takes place in the solo violin from 180-182, opening a beautiful, ethereal passage.



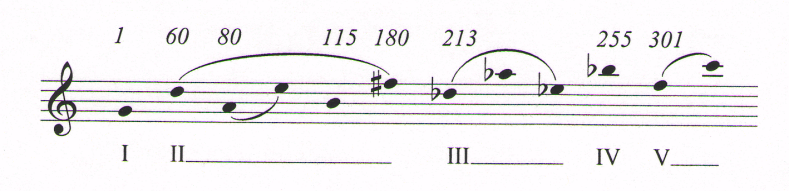
Measures 301-304 bring back the drones, with their characteristic slurred-tenuto articulation. Here (within the box) we find F and C, the other two pitches missing from the global i7 cycle.



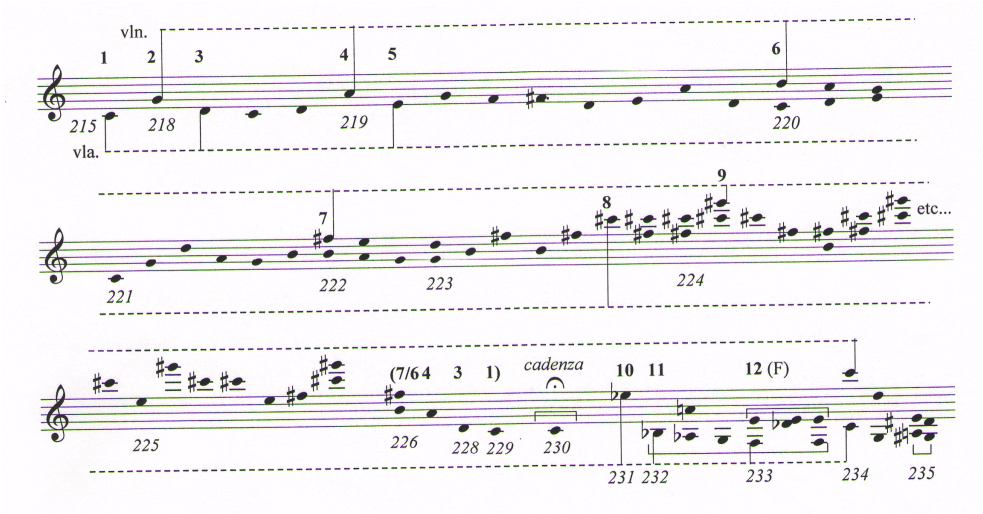
The orchestral violas, cellos, and basses stack and pulse fourths at 113 and 114 . . .



. . . which are complemented by the stacks and pulses in 301-304.



The global i7 cycle related to ...concertante...*'s five sections. Supporting the notion that the composition exists in two complementary parts, order positions 1-6 appear in sections I-II, 7-12 in sections III-V.*



A reduction of the solo violin and viola parts, measures 215-235. The stems and dotted beams show the i7 cyclic ascent guiding the moment-to-moment succession of the notes; the bold numbers show order positions. Bracketed notes are the ones not played on natural harmonics. The cycle essentially stops in measure 224, then backtracks to C in 229, and resumes on E ♭ in 231. The cadenza is on C, the note from which the cycle originates.

II.4a

. . . impose order onto fragments is to take them back in time–an undertaking that can cause tremendous formal tension. Fragments are post-form. “Form” applies to the prehistoric entirety which the composer fragments, destroys. One cannot affix form to the incomplete; only in relation to the complete can statements of balance, imbalance, proportion, and disproportion be made. Only in relation to the complete can statements about the harmony between part and whole be made.

Fragments *want* to be disordered. The more a composer tries to glue them back together through various means of interconnection, the more precarious the structure seems. We sense this in architecture as well as music. Ancient ruins are beautiful–even peaceful; they need nothing but themselves, however enjoyable tourist booklets that reassemble them may be. But a dilapidated building, sitting awkwardly on its foundation and whose walls are coming apart, needs renovation; our impulse is to push its cracking surfaces back together again. Formally, the ruins have little tension whatsoever; their presence triggers no struggle to order them back into their original entirety; onlookers are happy to let them lie, disordered and separated. The dilapidated building, however, is very tense, its crumbling beams triggering an instinct to restore what is breaking apart. The formal tension of a work, therefore, is greater when the prospect of disunification

exists than when the work is actually disunified.

Kurtág's compositions at times parallel the ancient ruins and the dilapidated building, with countless intermediary stages as well. Some of his works are ruin-like open forms, most notably a series of vocal pieces from the 1990s: *Hölderlin Gesänge*, op. 35, *...pas à pas–nulle part...*, op. 36, and *Einige Sätze aus dem Sudelbüchern Georg Christoph Lichtenbergs*, op. 37. Performers may select and sequence movements from these collections as they please. In effect, performers treat his collections *Játékok* and *Signs, Games, and Messages* the same way, though both collections are not intended to be individual works: Kurtág assigns neither an opus number. These pieces are Kurtág's least problematic–least tension-inducing–compositions with regard to form. To analyze them with respect to form is to be oblivious to their nature. Their components and ordering undetermined, the analyst cannot identify any moment as beginning, middle, or end; the position of the composed moments depends on the individual decisions of performers. Compositional analysis collapses into performance analysis. The substance of the "work" has changed.

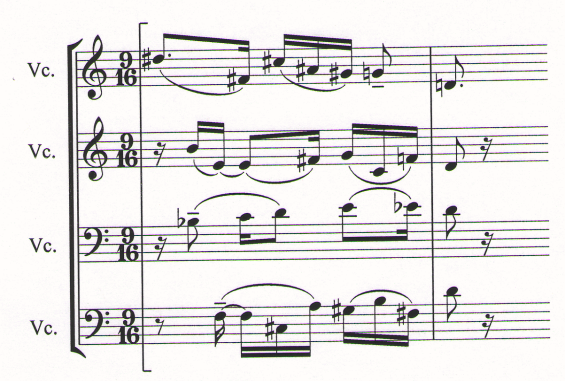
But formal tension–the pushing back of fragments to their original entirety–is not absent from Kurtág's music. His unidirectional, ordered fragment sequences . . .

II.4b

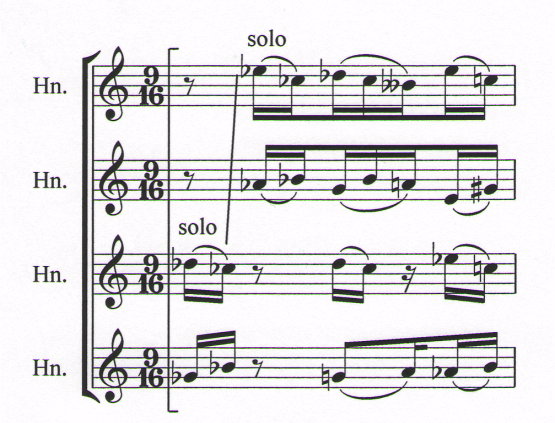
. . . from the only commercially available recording of ...*concertante*..., Kurtág makes one change in the 2006 revision significant to the form of the version published in 2005 (the score of the 2006 revision is not available as of this writing): measure 150 of the published score jumps directly to measure 162, resulting in eleven entire measures from the 2005 score being dropped. The snare drum flam in measure 151 now appears by itself on the downbeat of measure 162. The cut abruptly truncates a passage beginning at the double barline at 115 whose continuity Kurtág sustained in the now-missing measures; no great musical change occurs between measures 150 and 151. One curiosity about the omitted measures can be observed by comparing measures 157 and 76; in each measure, a quartet of instruments is bracketed in the score and marked "solo"–horns in 157, cellos in 76; like brackets do not appear anywhere else in the piece. While the pitch content of the two measures does not seem to bear any special resemblance, clearly the two moments are meant to be analogous in some way: four horns double the cellos in 76. In the revision, however, Kurtág decides to do without the horn quartet–seemingly leaving the earlier quartet unanswered.

The significance of this window into Kurtág's compositional workshop is not hard to discern. To cut is to interrupt; whereas elsewhere interrupted statements have been

resumed later on, measures 115-150 are left broken off, their consequent (151-161) unarticulated. Kurtág stops short a stream of music and never returns to it again. Measure 162's starkly contrasting texture could hardly be a more decisive break from what has led up . . .



Measure 76, played by four solo cellos (doubled by horns), surely corresponds to . . .



. . . this short horn quartet, marked "solo," in measure 157, cut from the 2006 revision.

(At sounding pitch.)

II.5

. . . begins an eight-measure passage (measures 162-169) consisting of 14 block chords played *tutti*. Though rests separate the chords, Kurtág draws dotted slurs over the first nine attacks, grouping them 5 + 4. A contour reduction of the top lines of these two groups shows a process of incremental subtraction applied. (In measures 1-7, we observed incremental rhythmic addition.) “0" stands for no change in contour.

5: – + – 0
4: + – 0

Rests divide the remaining five attacks 3 + 2, resulting in the progression 5-4-3-2; we never make it to 1.

The group of 3 amounts to a rhythmic fragmentation of the group of 5. Here is a schematization of the rhythm in measures 162-165 in terms of sixteenths.

chords		**3**		**2**		**2**		**1**	**2**
rests	**3**		**7**		**4**		**8**	**7**	

The five chords last 3, 2, 2, 1, and 2 sixteenths respectively; the rests preceding each chord last 3, 7, 4, 8, and 7 sixteenths. The schematization below represents the group of 3 block chords in measure 168 the same way, aligned to show how this later group skips over some of the rhythmic steps taken in the earlier group.

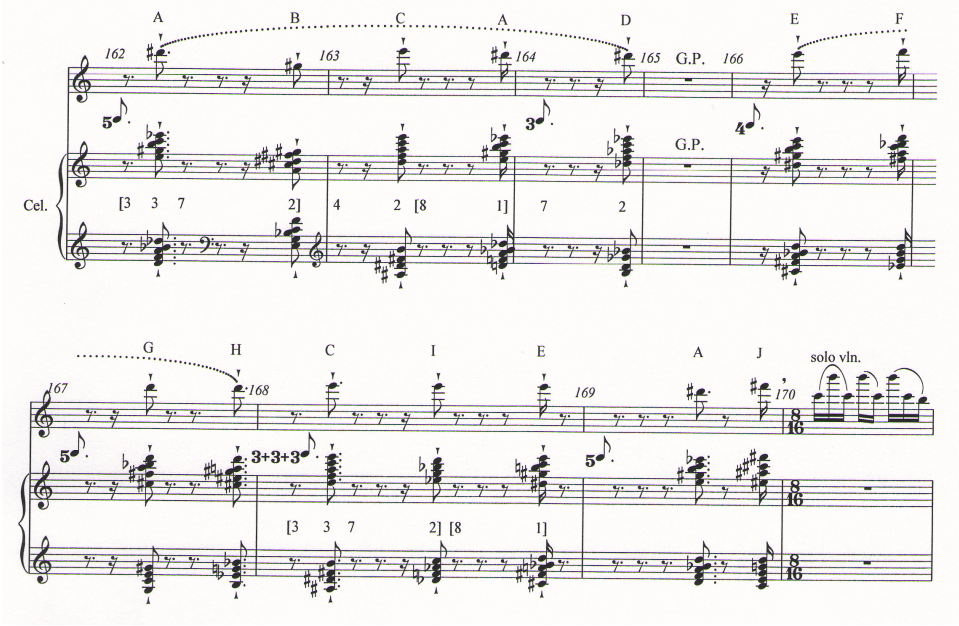
chords		**3**		**2**		**. . .**		**1**	**. . .**
rests	**3**		**7**		**. . .**		**8**	**. . .**	

The rest/chord pairs 4/2 and 7/2 have been omitted to create the group of 3. By leaving out two chords each two-sixteenths long, Kurtág subtly maximizes rhythmic variety in the group of 3: each chord is now a different length. That in both groups the “3" and “1" chords harmonize the same melodic pitch supports the sense of fragmentation.

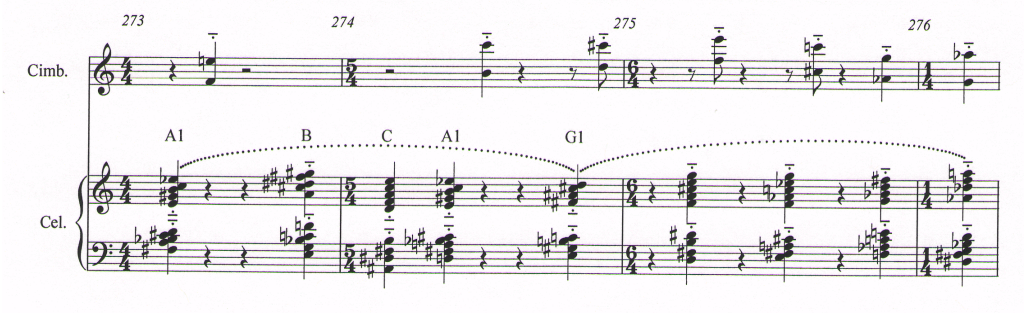
Later in *...concertante...*, Kurtág brings this music back. The G.P. at 165 matches up with the “longa” fermata *tutti* rest in 272: 164 and 165 and 271 and 272 are all bars equal to 9/16. 273 restarts the block chord texture abandoned since 169, the dynamics softer, the orchestration reduced, the tempo slower. Measures 273-276 embark on the same process as the one just observed, fragmentation by omission, but in a different way. Every chord in 273-274 corresponds to one in 162-166, each harmonizing the same melodic pitch; but many pitches from the melody in the earlier passage get passed over. The remaining pitches possess the cardinality and contour of the head motif of *...concertante...*’s main theme. Here is a representation of the chords beginning each passage; alike variables stand for alike chords.

162-166 chords	[A B C A D] [E F G H]
273-274 chords	[A_1 B C A_1 ... ...G_1]

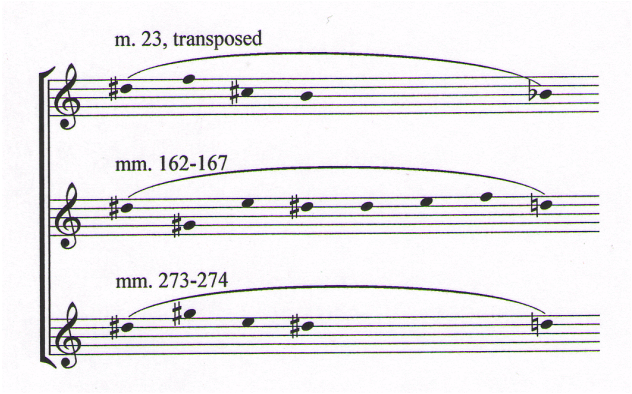
The prime versions of the chords differ from their models only by one semitone: A_1 substitutes an F♯ for the F♮ in chord *A*; G_1 omits the A♮ from chord *G*. Like the found objects at 59 and 202, a new line is added in measures 273-276. The cimbalom . . .



Measures 162-169, the celesta and the top line; measure 170, solo violin. Letters show that some chords recur; the numbers show the rhythmic fragmentation that occurs between the groups of 5 and 3. The penultimate chord in measure 169 is A*, the chord that began the group of 5;* A *being marked as a "starting chord," we expect the block chords to continue. But the texture changes completely in 170, when the solo violin enters.*



The celesta carries the content from 162-169 in 273-276; some of the same chords are repeated, though the second instance of A_1 *jumps directly to chord* G_1*, skipping chords* D, E, *and* F. *Whereas in the earlier passage nothing is played in the rests, in the present passage Kurtág adds another line, represented here in the cimbalom, though other instruments play it as well.*



Measures 273-274 bid farewell to the main theme. Here, the theme is shown in its original statement, transposed, in measure 23; then the top line from 162-167, which inserts three notes between the fourth and fifth notes of the theme; the theme is restored in 273-274, though with intervallic changes.

II.6

. . . of the main theme, which occurs in section III, the two parts of ...*concertante*... contrast significantly and may be identified as a binary *AB* form, the fast *A* section balanced by a slow *B* section. The tempo scheme of ...*concertante*... supports this interpretation. Not including *rubato* indications lacking metronome markings, there are 36 tempo changes in ...*concertante*..., and, to be sure, Kurtág has never before been so meticulous in his manipulation of tempo. For the most part, the speed stays between 40 and 60 quarter notes per minute, making the piece generally slow. But the two parts manifest different approaches toward tempo change. The first part, measures 1-212, contains the slowest and fastest tempos of the piece. In addition to their reaching of extremes, the tempo changes in the first part tend to be part of broad accelerandos and ritardandos, whereas the tempo changes in part two generally alternate between slower and faster speeds.

I. 1 2 3 2 3 2 1
II. 2 3 2 1 0 1 0 -1 -2 -1 0
III. 1 0 1 0 1
IV. 2 1 0 1 0
V. 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0

Above is a representation of the tempo changes in ...*concertante*.... The representation does not show the amount by which tempos change, but illustrates the

tempo trends of the piece–tempo changes that carry out previously established trajectories and changes that reverse trends. The piece begins at 0; if the tempo increases, 1 is added; if the tempo decreases, 1 is subtracted. A more detailed representation is found in Part B of the appendix.

Although it does not reflect how slowly or quickly the music moves, the representation does happen to designate the fastest and slowest individual tempos with the highest and lowest values (3 and -2 in section II). The representation also reflects the more volatile nature of the first part of the piece; though one might expect the second part to be jerkier with its tempo oscillations, the back-and-forth speeds actually reflect an overall lulling in the music: the second part contains fewer than half the number of measures as the first (101 to 212) yet lasts just as long. The approaches to tempo change and speed in the two halves of ...*concertante*... are complementary: in the first half, the broader trajectories of tempo change are balanced by a generally faster speed and greater extremes; in the second half, the lack of such trends–the oscillating back and forth–is balanced by a more steady speed in general: only about one-fourth of the measures in the second half stray outside the range of 38-60 quarters per minute.

Along with the ritornello idea sketched in the metric analysis above, the binary idea . . .

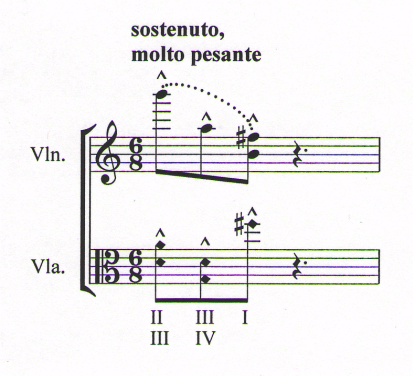
II.7

. . . music, being written for, dedicated to, and premiered by violinist Hiromi Kikuchi and violist Ken Hakii, who are married to each other. The two solo voices in ...*concertante*... are mutually reinforcing and speak together as one persona, "concerted," as opposed to being in antiphony or dialogue. Conceptually, they might be playing the same instrument.

The idea of married couples playing music together is a theme in Kurtág's musical activity. He and his wife, Márta, perform joint recitals. A recent performance at Carnegie Hall gives an idea of what these unique concerts–themselves "composed"–are like; the form of these concerts applies in many respects to ...*concertante*....

The Kurtágs played on an upright piano with their backs to the audience–as if we were watching them at home. The piano had a "supersordino" pedal, making the timbre especially muffled and quiet–useful for playing when one does not want to disturb the neighbors. So soft was the sound, the instrument needed amplification; this was supplied by their son, György Kurtág Jr., a composer and audio engineer, who was positioned behind the piano for the entire concert. The Kurtágs began with two four-hand arrangements: the first work was by Bartók, the second by Bach. As would be the case throughout the concert, Márta played primo, György, secondo–the same orientation as Hiromi Kikuchi and Ken Hakii in ...*concertante*.... ...*concertante*... also makes extensive

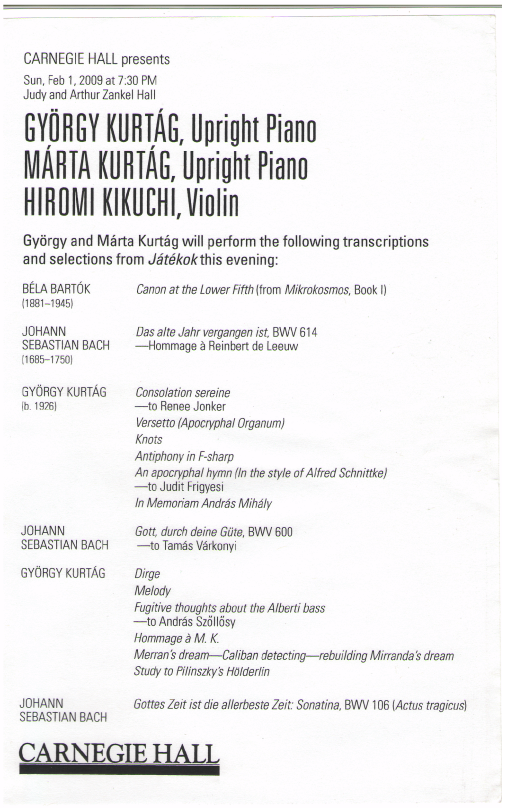
use of practice, or, “hotel,” mutes, paralleling the supersordino pedal favored by the Kurtágs. *Measure 192 interrupts the flow set out upon and otherwise maintained from 180 until 201. It is the only time in the piece Kurtág applies “pesante” to the entire ensemble. The measure reintroduces the bass register to the music, which has been high and ethereal since the timpani solo in 179. The interruption is so brief and so smoothly approached that, despite the silence that ends the measure–*



After the two four-hands pieces, Márta stood to turn pages for György, as he played a group of solo pieces from *Játékok.* She then joined him again for a four-hands arrangement of Bach’s *Gott, durch deine Güte* BWV 600. Then György stood to turn pages for Márta, as she performed another set of pieces drawn from *Játékok.* The two united to conclude the program with an arrangement of Bach’s *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit: Sonatina,* BWV 106 *(Actus tragicus).* Considered as a whole, the program resembles the ritornello form at which *...concertante...* hints: the Kurtágs played together and separately *ABABA*; the pieces by other composers, with their contrasting musical

language, take on the quality of the found objects scattered across ...*concertante*...; like the Kurtágs' performance, the piece ends with music conceived separately from that which leads up to it: a recomposition of the opening of ...*quasi una fantasia*.... Kurtág's op. 28 ends similarly, quoting Szervánszky's *Serenade* for string orchestra.

Kurtág has other collaborations that, if not marriages, testify to his predilection for prolonged musical partnerships. After working with soprano Andrienne Csengery on *Troussova,* Kurtág wrote two other song cycles for her: *Attila József Fragments* and *Kafka-Fragmente*. He has also composed several pieces for his chamber-music protege, violinist András Keller, whose quartet also specializes in Kurtág's . . .



CARNEGIE HALL presents
Sun, Feb 1, 2009 at 7:30 PM
Judy and Arthur Zankel Hall

GYÖRGY KURTÁG, Upright Piano
MÁRTA KURTÁG, Upright Piano
HIROMI KIKUCHI, Violin

György and Márta Kurtág will perform the following transcriptions and selections from *Játékok* this evening:

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881–1945)	*Canon at the Lower Fifth* (from *Mikrokosmos*, Book I)
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)	*Das alte Jahr vergangen ist*, BWV 614 —Hommage à Reinbert de Leeuw
GYÖRGY KURTÁG (b. 1926)	*Consolation sereine* —to Renee Jonker *Versetto (Apocryphal Organum)* *Knots* *Antiphony in F-sharp* *An apocryphal hymn (In the style of Alfred Schnittke)* —to Judit Frigyesi *In Memoriam András Mihály*
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH	*Gott, durch deine Güte*, BWV 600 —to Tamás Várkonyi
GYÖRGY KURTÁG	*Dirge* *Melody* *Fugitive thoughts about the Alberti bass* —to András Szőllősy *Hommage à M. K.* *Merran's dream—Caliban detecting—rebuilding Mirranda's dream* *Study to Pilinszky's Hölderlin*
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH	*Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit: Sonatina*, BWV 106 (*Actus tragicus*)

CARNEGIE HALL

The program for the second half of the concert of Kurtág's music that took place on February 1st, 2009 at Carnegie Hall, showing the selections the Kurtágs played together. The first half consisted of Hiromi Kikuchi performing Hipartita *for solo violin, op. 43–a piece written as a "thank you" for her work on* ...concertante....

II.8

. . . essay “fragment: entre l’inachevé et le fini” makes explicit the connection between the fragment as compositional metaphor and historical document. That historically the word “fragment” has been applied to the sketches of composers provides Boulez with a template for understanding fragmentary modernist compositions. These works promote the “inferior attempt” and “preserve” the “traces” of finished works (Boulez 2008, 10).

Seen in this light, Kurtág’s works are assemblages of attempts and sketches. And it is more than the professional connection between Boulez and Kurtág that encourages us to interpret the latter’s works in such a way. Kurtág began his entire *Játékok* project to free himself from the burden of writing “serious” works meant for sophisticated audiences and highly-skilled musicians (Halász 1996, 14). We can liken the children’s pieces in *Játékok* to sketches for bigger works, because Kurtág continually mines his children’s music for material to be incorporated into larger, “serious” pieces. *Játékok* is indeed an ongoing sketchbook. By publishing these “sketches” and allowing them to be performed, Kurtág promotes his “inferior attempts” to full-blown compositional achievements, preserving them as a part of his oeuvre.

Of a piece with the Boulez connection is Alan E. Williams’s suggestion of a possible literary source for Kurtág’s sense of form (Williams 1999, 146-147). In *Játékok*

book V, Kurtág pays tribute to Sándor Weöres, an eminent poet and contemporary. Some of Weöres's published collections bear the title *rongyszőnyeg* (rag carpet). Rag carpets are sewn-together composites of smaller pieces used for other purposes; the rags are promoted into something more formal, a carpet; a patch from an old shirt or pair of pants gets preserved. A rag carpet is made from the bottom up, out of whatever material might be at hand, as opposed to from the top down, pieces cut for the exclusive purpose of being a part of a pre-conceived pattern. Indeed, *Kafka-Fragmente* seems to have come about in almost precisely this way. After composing the individual fragments (rags), Kurtág left most of their ordering (their stitching-together) to András Wilheim, his assistant and editor (Wilheim 1997, 38). (Just as Kurtág incrementally subtracts in ...*concertante*..., "Glocken-Fanfare for Sándor Weöres" incrementally adds; Kurtág makes explicit in the score his organization of the piece's twelve measures into 3 + 4 + 5. Unlike ...*concertante*..., however, there is no "point of completion" to step-by-step addition.)

In an open-formed work, the rags are not stitched together, the sketches are not ordered. Open form–thought of here as the absence of the imposing of order on a collection of pieces--provides the most congenial context for fragments, and, from the standpoint of form, Kurtág's open works are his least problematic. Because, as Boulez says in his essay, an audience cannot perceive formal openness, fragments find a similarly paradoxical host in open form (Boulez 2008, 13): just as fragments are incomplete and

complete, open form compositions are simultaneously open and . . .

II.9

. . . measures 202-212 and 255-284 “Recitativo,” another indication that, beneath its instrumental surface, ...*concertante*... is rooted in the sounds and gestures the human body can make on its own. Oddly for a recitative, most of the melodic gestures between 202 and 212 are marked “cantabile”–including a fragmented statement of the main theme in the horns in 208-210. There is, however, one exception: the G drone that opened the piece returns in the first trumpet (muted) in measure 210; the notes are marked “parlando.” As in measure 1, the G’s begin after an eighth-note rest. Kurtág, also like the beginning, articulates the notes with slurred tenutos–an important marking in ...*concertante*... in general.

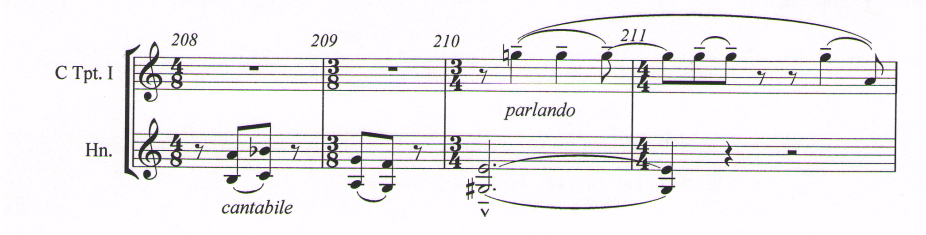
This marking is worth dwelling on. To wind players, slurs indicate to play notes without tonguing; to string players, slurs (especially in contemporary music) indicate to play notes in a single bow-stroke. A slur, in other words, encompasses the notes beneath it in a contiguous, united gesture. When applied to repeated notes, however, slurs present players with a contradiction: wind players must either tongue the notes or re-breathe; string players must stop the bow-stroke and then continue in the same direction; in both cases, technical demands rupture the contiguity the slur insists upon. By writing tenutos

beneath the slur, Kurtág brings contiguity and discontiguity into sharp confrontation: the slur shows us the prehistoric entirety (Kurtág here makes use of the notational alikeness of slurs and ties); but the tenutos insist musicians break into and out from the entirety, fragmenting.

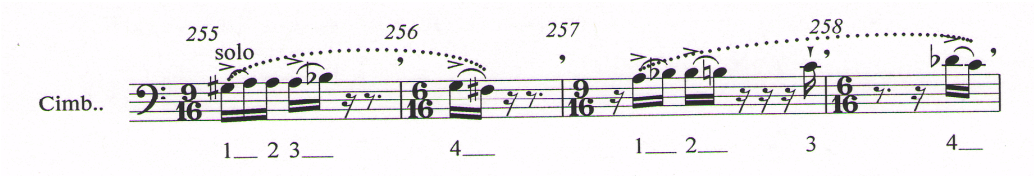
Measures 255-284 bear a more direct resemblance to what we know as recitative: the articulation is less smooth, the notes much faster. The lines, however, are very short: syllables come out in quick bursts, the speaker constantly in need of catch-breaths. Dotted slurs suggest much about an "extra-musical" interpretation for the passage. Kurtág marks the cimbalom "solo" from measures 255-258. Considering the normal slurs (also present) to be extensions of individual syllables (as is often the case in vocal music), the cimbalom articulates eight syllables; the dotted slurs group them 4 + 4; each group has the same number of notes: seven–three groups of two plus a single note; each dotted slur might be interpreted as marking a single, unified statement–a word. The cimbalom–and the instruments doubling it–has trouble, however, getting the words out. Rests interrupt their articulation. Beginning forcefully on the downbeat, only the first three syllables manage to come out before a dotted-eighth rest, still under the dotted slur, breaks in; the fourth and final syllable happens on the downbeat of 256. The equivalent of four sixteenths of rest elapses before the second statement begins on the second sixteenth of measure 257–not on the downbeat. The cimbalom here has even more difficulty; only two

syllables manage to come out before the instrument must rest for three sixteenths. The next syllable comes on the weakest part of the measure–the final sixteenth–and seems to take even the cimbalom by surprise: Kurtág writes a *marcato* over the note. After four sixteenths of rest, the final syllable of the second group takes place–on a metrically weak part of the measure (258), unlike the final syllable of the first group.

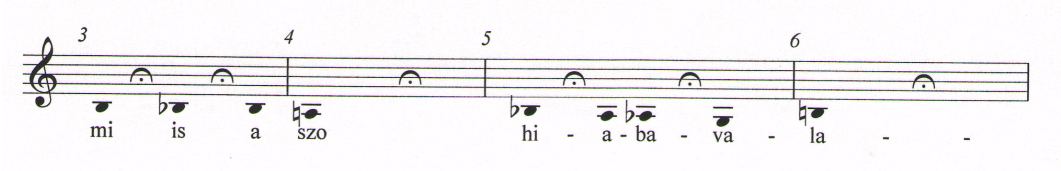
In an earlier composition, Kurtág makes his stuttering recitative explicit. *Samuel Beckett: What is the Word*, op. 30b, (1991) was written for Ildiko Manyók, a Hungarian pop singer whose ability to speak was temporarily lost due to injuries sustained in a car accident. The composition dramatizes Manyók's struggle to regain speech (Kunkel 2001, 114). Similar to what we just observed in measures 255-258 of ...*concertante...*, Kurtág uses chromatic scalar lines punctuated by rest to portray her . . .



The fragmented main theme in the horns at 208-210 with the trumpet G's that follow. Measures 203-210, not overtly recitative-like, may be thought of as a fantasy on similarly broken statements of the main theme.



The cimbalom solo at 255 provides an example of Kurtág's "stuttering" recitative. The syllables come out in short bursts and cannot articulate statements without great difficulty. The numbers show the syllables of the unsaid words.



Ildiko Manyók's entrance in Samuel Beckett: What is the Word. *In measure 5, rests begin interrupting the words. In English, the line, by Beckett, means, "What is the word / folly–."*

Chapter 3

Choral (quasi “Trio”)–Recapitulazione

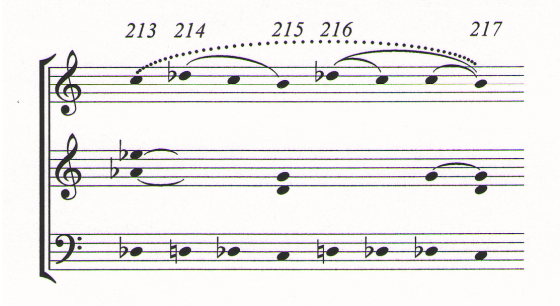
III.1

. . . the grand pause in 212, measure 213, as Kurtág’s heading indicates, begins a chorale. During the music corresponding to the first half of the heading (measures 213-236), 213-217 and 226-229 exhibit a traditional chorale texture; 234-235 revisits the chords from 216-217. All of these passages feature the increasingly familiar play with perfect fifths and semitones.

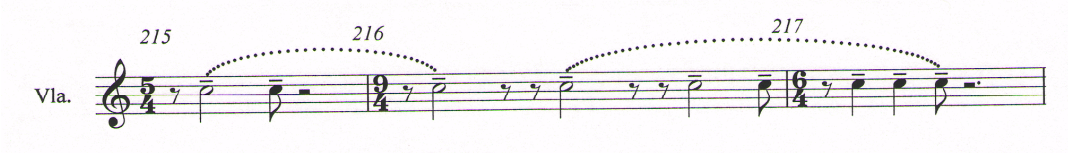
The eight-note chorale tune in 213-217, not the topmost voice, uses C as a pivot between D♭ and B. The bass moves in parallel with the melody, using D♭ as a pivot between D♮ and C. While C may not be felt as a tonal center in this passage, C is nonetheless important enough to compare with the prominence of G at the beginning of ...*concertante*...: C is undoubtedly the central note in the tune. Like an obligato line, the solo viola slowly plays in natural harmonics a broken-drone C, a deliberate reminder of the opening G’s. Conductor Michael Schønwandt, who led the world premiere, sees ...*concertante*... as enacting a large-scale dominant-to-tonic motion from G to C (Nielsen 2003, 9). The piece indeed seems to have started again–a restart similar to that found at the beginning of many sonata-form development sections.

The other chorale passage, 226-229, does not so much harmonize a tune as abstract the essential motion from the earlier passage. As two oboes move in parallel fifths (A♭-E♭, G-D), two clarinets play at the same time in contrary motion G-D, A♭-E♭. The chords grow more dense than the earlier passage: the chords in 213-217 never accumulate more than six pcs; in 226-229, the concluding chord contains eleven pcs; the missing C, however, sounds at this time in the solo viola in anticipation of the cadenza.

But Kurtág goes halfway toward giving this passage another distinction: Trio. Formally, however, Trios never exist by themselves: they are bound up with a minuet or scherzo. Little in ...*concertante*... resembles anything like a minuet or scherzo, and certainly no moments here suggest the comparison. Yet there is nonetheless something "trio-like" Kurtág wishes to express in these moments. What this might be is hard to tell. But two things can be said about Kurtág's label: (1) a Trio by itself is incomplete–fragmentary, and (2) Kurtág's indication resembles Chopin's removal of the prelude from the fugue or the suite; Chopin attempts to isolate a certain "beginning-ness" in music that actually is not a beginning; Kurtág isolates a certain "middle-ness"–within the middle of his piece, to be sure; but the sense that section III signals a new *beginning* is impossible to . . .

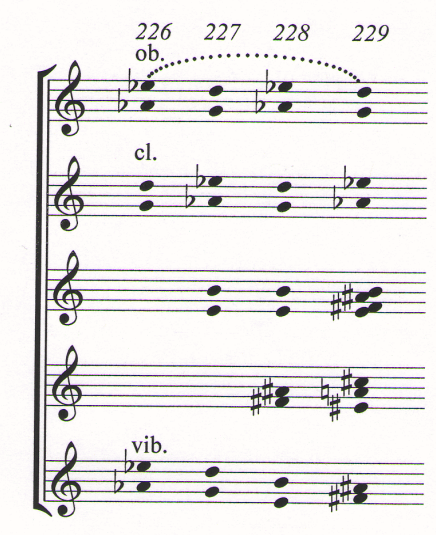


The eight-chord chorale from 213-217, reduced. An invariant A ♭-E ♭ fifth is shared by all the chords. Inner voices occasionally touch a D-G fourth; it will return, inverted as a fifth, to clash with A ♭-E ♭ in 226-229.



At sounding pitch, here is the solo viola obligato line played from 215-217.

...concertante... *seems to be starting over again, now on C. Is this the start of a development section?*



The four-chord chorale from 226-229, reduced; oboes and clarinets play the T_1-related fifths. The density of the harmonies quickly grows from four to eleven pcs, the missing C in the viola at 229. If there is a chorale tune here, perhaps it is found in the vibraphone, which elaborates a descending i5 like the main theme (see page 10).

III.2

. . . notes, ”The form of the work . . . always seemed to me complex and somewhat unapproachable. Something like being in a foreign city trying to get somewhere, but whichever direction you set off in, you always end up in the same street. [I have a] feeling of getting lost and starting out again . . . the piece is characterized by a kind of ‘formal stuttering’”–perceptive remarks by a son about his father’s music (Kurtág Jr. 2006). ...*concertante*...’s form is “complex” and “somewhat unapproachable” for the same reason: suddenly the master of the fragment unbottles a large, single-movement work. Yet the choppy surface of the music, its frequent starts and stops and sudden changes, dares listeners, particularly those familiar with Kurtág’s music, to imagine the piece as a string of fragments–however much more tightly they may be bound together than usual. ...*concertante*..., as Kurtág Jr. suspects, teases us with the possibility that completeness can be constructed from incomplete pieces.

His feeling of “getting lost and starting out again” describes a feeling of interruption. One intends to reach a destination; on the way one loses one’s bearings; one ends up where one began; one sets off again. The progress goes unconsummated, does not reach its goal, remains incomplete like a broken-off statement. That Kurtág Jr. “end[s] up in the same street” while analyzing the form makes sense given what we know already

about the music: the “same street” is happened upon by surprise–unintended, unprepared–like the main theme at 59 and 202, like the block chords at 162 and 273, like the ending of the piece. That he considers the form “stuttering” also reveals a deep understanding of ...*concertante*.... Kurtág Jr. is attuned to the anthropomorphic qualities of the music; he is aware the silences in the recapitulation of the theme stand for more than drama; he remembers his father’s unique, somewhat tortured style of . . .

III.3

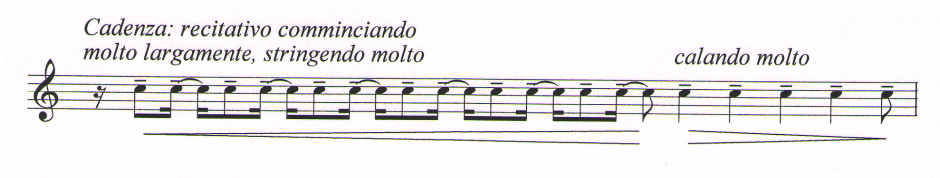
. . . *Concertante*, and that Kurtág’s title is an homage soon becomes evident. Both works are double-concertos for violin, viola, and orchestra. In both works, the note C sits in the center: in the Mozart, the middle movement is in C minor; in the Kurtág, the violin and viola join together for thirty seconds of uninterrupted unison C_5‘s about halfway through the piece (measure 230). Both these C’s are unusual in their contexts: C minor was a rare key for Mozart to use in his concertos at the time (1779), though the slow movement of K. 271 is a clear forerunner (Einstein 1945, 294); Kurtág labels his monotonous passage “cadenza,” ordinarily the most florid and virtuosic part of a concerto. Other parallels seem paler, if not unremarkable: while Mozart’s close attention to orchestration may have been striking in the context of a classical-era concerto, one would expect such attention from Kurtág, who is consistently meticulous with timbre; Mozart dividing the orchestral

violas is noteworthy; that Kurtág frequently does the same in ...*concertante*... is less so, since he often divides the other orchestral strings as well.

Therefore, we might suspect a ghostly, unwritten "sinfonia" precedes "concertante." Kurtág almost-invokes an almost-genre. Sinfonie concertante exist somewhere between symphonies and concertos; the role of the soloist is less dominating than in a traditional concerto. The genre presupposes some finite whole in which territory lost is territory ceded to another influence; in a sinfonia concertante, the orchestra takes power from the soloist. The genre stakes out a new ideal balance between soloist and orchestra. But to assume ...*concertante*... shares this ideal, however, would be hasty, seeing as "sinfonia" has been removed. The ideal is not between "orchestra" and "soloists," but between a vestige of the symphony and the reality of solo parts. The dialectic Kurtág sets up has a somewhat ludicrous foundation: the one term ("concertante") we can grasp; the other ("sinfonia") is utterly dependent on our imaginations. If the dialectic in the Mozart is between two clearly established poles, in the Kurtág we may say the dialectic is between one pole and a half of one pole.

And we are, of course, failing to consider the second ellipsis. What we face is not "[Sinfonia] ...concertante" but "[Sinfonia] ...concertante...." To have found one ghost behind the first ellipsis raises the possibility of another one behind the second. At best, we found the first ghost to be a "known unknown": we do not know for sure what it is,

but a plausible educated guess is possible. What lies behind the second ellipsis, however, is anyone's guess. We might think of the title's three components as "known unknown," "known known," and "unknown unknown." Kurtág has fashioned a title of truly extraordinary ambiguity and . . .



The cadenza (measure 230); the soloists play together. The only unmetered measure after measure 7, its shape resembles that found in measures 4 and 11–measures at the heart of nonretrogradeable structures. Considered in terms of the presence or absence of meter, the cadenza also sits at the heart of a palindrome: (8-229)-230-(231-313).

III.4

. . . the composer or the analyst applies organization to a collection of fragments, the process is the same: both persons push them backwards toward conventional cohesiveness, toward wholeness–toward form. But the prehistoric, form-bearing entirety from which the fragments come is of neither person's invention: it is given. The *form* of the entirety toward which the composer and analyst are pushing is a given.

To adopt Mark Evan Bonds's useful distinction, this form is not "generated"; it is "conformed." When taking into account "abstract, ideal types" and "norms outside the musical work," an analyst works from the standpoint of conformational form; when dealing with the organic, incremental development of a piece of music–with little or no recourse to idealized examples–an analyst works from the generative approach (Bonds 1991, 13-14). Bonds's categories bear rough resemblance to the distinction Carl Dahlhaus makes between "form" and "structure"; the latter term is more closely related to compositional technique and the coherence of local musical detail; the former term arises in the nineteenth century as a "complement to aesthetics" and is inextricable from "genre" (Dahlhaus 1987, 259-260). Bluntly, we may say that form pertains to genre, and structure to individual compositions. By invoking genre, Dahlhaus moves up the ladder of abstraction and invites comparison with Bonds's "conformational" recourse to "norms

outside the musical work."

When dealing with music containing such striking interruptions as ...*concertante*..., the limits of a generative orientation toward form are clear. The idiosyncracy of ...*concertante*... lies not in its *motivische Arbeit*, but the conflict the piece establishes by repeatedly aborting such *Arbeit* within a context–a spacious concerto movement–where the opposite would be expected. We keep expecting organic development; we keep getting disappointed.

To speak of formal givens is to speak of things like sonata forms, binary and ternary forms, rondos, theme and variations and the like–idealized templates contemporary composers can engage. We have seen already how some of these idealized forms come up in ...*concertante*..., and to speak of the piece as being pushed toward them is to take honest account of its ritornello, binary, and sonata aspects–paradigms that are not after all . . .

III.5

. . . take an important step back toward conventional cohesiveness, toward wholeness–toward form. By fixing cardinality and order in such compositions as *Eight Piano Pieces* and *Hommage à Mihály András*, Kurtág establishes definite amounts, and definite beginnings, middles, and ends: there are eight pieces in the one and twelve in the

other; we know how each composition begins, we can look at what happens in the middles, and we can point to the last measures. Such data are the bare minimum for formal analysis; without them, we cannot attempt to trace broader developmental lines, lines that could reveal the form behind the fragmentation. The extent to which intense preoccupation with large-scale form in such fixed fragment sequences as *Eight Piano Pieces* and *Mihály András* is warranted, however, is worth reflection: searching for formal tightness in a (still relatively) loose structure can quickly become a fool's errand: the fragments might as well be components of an open work.

The fragments are pushed backward more when Kurtág groups them into larger sections, as in his big three song cycles. A double layer of organization results: each fragment exists not only as a link in a global chain, but also as a link in a smaller chain itself marked as a discrete section of the whole piece. A new class of beginning-ness and end-ness emerges. While in the simple fragment sequences there were only the beginning-of-the-composition (B_c) and beginning-of-a-fragment (B_f) classes, *Bornemisza*, *Troussova*, and *Kafka-Fragmente* add another beginning-class: the beginning-of-a-section (B_s); the same classes exist now for endings. The greater differentiation with which Kurtág establishes degrees of beginning and end tightens the form by setting up a more complex system by which the strength of beginning can be determined. For instance, here is a representation of the 21 fragments in *Troussova* using beginning-classes. The three

sections contain 2, 4, and 15 fragments respectively.

B_c
B_s B_s B_s
B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f B_f

In such compositions, we are in a better position to determine the relative weight of fragments; such determination brings us a step closer to being able to distinguish sections; distinguishing sections brings us closer to distinguishing form. The gravitational pull of the prehistoric entirety grows stronger; formal tension escalates.

But still the looseness and spontaneity of the music in these cycles, reinforced by the stopping and starting of the short movements, makes one reluctant to tie down the forms and posit a specific process of conformation. The progressions of *Troussova* and *Kafka-Fragmente* do not trace clear enough satellite orbits to make statements about the planets they close in on. Rachel Beckles Willson does call *Bornemisza* a "'concerto' for soprano and piano," and it is arguable this work engages traditional form and genre more than the other two big song cycles (Beckles Willson 2004). But even without recourse to tradition, all three cycles have another means by which form can be constructed: language. And as many scholars have demonstrated, Kurtág's talent for selecting texts with an eye for recurring imagery and literary techniques is beyond doubt.

Of all Kurtág's works, only ...*concertante*... brings . . .

Chapter 4

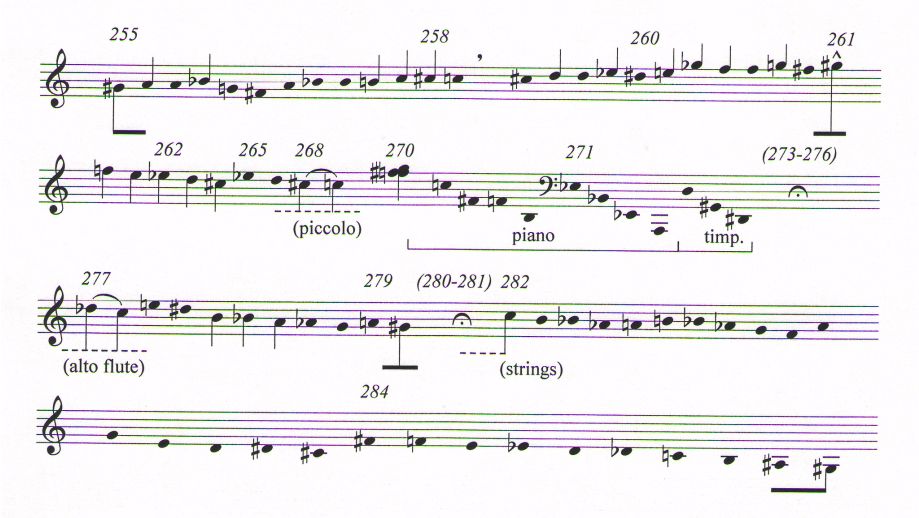
Recitativo, ed . . .

IV.1

. . . is among these musical givens and organizes the moment-to-moment melodic activity from measures 255-272, and arguably from 277-279 and 282-284 as well. Even so, the progress of the chromatic scale is not straightforward. The melodic line, led by the cimbalom, begins on G♯ in 255 and winds its way to C♯ in 258 before being assumed by the trumpets in 259; they complete the scale, taking it to G♯ in 261. The descent back to G♯ is filled with holes. The melody in 261 continues immediately down to F♮ and E–skipping G and F♯. Measures 262-264 descend chromatically from E to E♭, D, and C♯. Measures 265-267 back up to E♭ and D; measure 268 continues to C♯ and C♮, but here Kurtág halts the descent. At 270 the piano breaks the semitone motion for a solo downwards in fourths and fifths, a solo continued by the timpani in 271. 273-276, after a "longa" fermata *tutti* rest, runs completely different music at a very different tempo. Measure 277 picks up the chromatic descent where it left off, on the descending C♯ (now D♭)-C♮ figure, and takes it back down to G♯ in 279. Measure 279 breaks off into something new. The scalar descent resumes at 282. Now not so explicitly chromatic or dominated by semitone motion, the resemblance to the passage at 255 is nonetheless

unmistakable; that the walk down ends on G♯ in 284 makes the connection explicit. Beginning on C–severed from its companion D♭–measures 282-284 are like a fragmented coda; they bring section IV to a close.

The important role of C♯/D♭ in the foregoing passage reveals Kurtág's thinking behind the salience of semitone and ic5 motion in ...*concertante*...: eleven ic5 steps exhaust the aggregate, just as eleven ic1 steps do–the one a "telescoping" (to use George Perle's word) of the other (Perle 1977, 10). While Kurtág most often entangles the two kinds of melodic motion, it is not unreasonable to note a general alignment between a preference for one or the other and the ritornello structure advanced earlier: *a* and *c* metric spaces, generally slower, emphasize ic5 motion; *b* spaces, generally faster, emphasize ic1 motion. While both ic1's and ic5's saturate the total chromatic equally efficiently, the former tend to sound dissonant, the latter consonant; juxtaposing them promotes tonal contrast. They also suggest an aesthetic contrast between the synthetic and the natural: fourths and fifths are acoustically close to the fundamental, semitones acoustically . . .



The interrupted chromatic ascent and descent to and from G♯, measures 255-284. Stemmed notes mark the progress of the chromatic scale. The passage encapsulates much of the musical language of ...concertante...*: the importance of ic1 and ic5 motion, the idea of interruption as well.*

IV.2

. . . has been mentioned before; all bring about significant changes in texture, most after silences. Fragment I.1 gets recomposed in I.2, the latter a clearer image of the former; I.3 gets stuck in a rut and is cut off to be resumed in III.5, the recapitulation; I.4 is broken off, the empty minor-third drone filled-in in I.6; I.5 is a lone melodic line that never returns, as we might expect; I.7, like III.5, is a resumption of I.3; I.8 is a found object, a truncated version of the main theme. II.1 takes off at a faster tempo with the note we were expecting to hear within I.8 and builds a new texture and metric space and faces a lost complement (II.4b); II.2 contains the unrecapitulated second theme and continues the acceleration of tempo begun in II.1; the rising i5 cycle in II.3 gets cut off; Kurtág cuts II.4a short in the 2006 revision, omitting the measures here labeled II.4b; II.5 bears fragmentation by omission and seems to restart at 169, but this is aborted; the tumble in register in II.6 introduces the high music that follows; II.7 is interrupted at 192, and the music sets out again, this time with the bass; II.8 is the three-part recomposition of I.8; II.9 takes off at a faster tempo with the note we were expecting to hear within II.8, II.9–like II.1–introducing a new metric space. III.1 seems to initiate a steady climb through an i7 cycle, but Kurtág cuts it off after order position 9; III.2 suddenly brings back the chorale texture that began III.1, abstracting its essential semitone motion; III.3 is

the cadenza on C, the only unmetered measure in ...*concertante*... after measure 7–an extraction from the earlier unconscious music of measures 1-3 and 5-7; III.4 finishes up the i7 climb and pays a passing visit to the chorale in III.1; III.5 takes I.3 past the point at which it was chopped and through a stuttering ascent to the composition's *tutti* climax at 248. . . . ; IV.2 is a truncation of II.5; . . . ; . . . ; . . . . V.1-3 is a doubly-interrupted passage like I.4-6; V.4 completes the ic5 cycle begun in II.3; . . .

Binary	Section	Ritornello	Sonata	Fragment	Measures
A	I	a		1	1-7
				2	8-15
			1st theme	3	16-30
				4	31-37
				5	38-43
				6	44-49
				7	50-58
				8	59
	II	b	transition	1	60-79
		a_1	2nd theme	2	80-112
				3	113-114
		b		4a	115-150
				[4b	151-161]
				5	162-169
				6	170-179
				7	180-201
				8	202
		a		9	203-212
B	III		develop.	1	213-225
				2	226-229
			(cadenza)	3	230
				4	231-236
			1st theme	5	237-254
	IV	b_1		1	255-272
				2	273-276
				3	277-279
				4	279-281
				5	282-284
	V	c (a_2)		1	285-295
				2	296-297
				3	298-300
				4	301-304
				5	305-307
				6	308-313

IV.3

. . . its fragments close enough together that there is palpable formal tension. Only with ...*concertante*... does conventional form in Kurtág become a "problem." Some of the trappings of sonata-form concerto movements exist. Kurtág even nods quickly to multi-movement symphonic form by including a "quasi 'Trio'" and writing in a grand pause between the piece's two parts–themselves suggestive of some kind of complementary fast-slow binary. Perhaps he is collapsing multi-movement forms with single-movement sonata forms–like Liszt in his tone poems. Considerations of meter and tempo suggest ritornello forms–as does Kurtág's closeness to Bartók.

The order Kurtág brings to ...*concertante*... is of a more advanced degree than his big three song cycles–the grouped sequences of fragments we considered above. Whereas there Kurtág increases the organization by establishing sections, ...*concertante*... has not only sections, but refrains, parts, a main theme, and even half a second theme as well. The spaciousness of the music's dimensions is of a magnitude untouched by Kurtág's longer compositions–all of which are more explicitly fragmented. The precise hierarchy of formal layering may not be fixable, but that more than a double-layer of organization applies is not in doubt. Kurtág has pushed closer together the fragments that constitute ...*concertante*... than any other group of fragments he has composed.

But because, as we have seen, he is still a fashioner of fragments, the act of applying form is not straightforward. To listen to ...*concertante*... is to be tugged between different instantiations of form. The initial incipiency recalls many other compositions that begin with invocations of the primordial: the open fifths of Beethoven's Ninth, the pedal C of Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, for instance. The elegant way Kurtág prepares the main theme, by opening up pitch space in a wedge, supports the feeling we are in the hands of music that develops in a traditional way. But the sustained, incremental motivic development does not last; the music's progress breaks down as the theme gets stuck and is then dropped at measure 30 for something different.

...*concertante*... never really recovers. Certain fragments appear to blossom–but never for long. Music comes to us mostly in half-minute or minute-long bursts. It is always starting anew, always getting interrupted. Suddenly we return to the main theme again (measure 236); but it is like the return of an old acquaintance, broken before we ever really knew . . .

IV.4

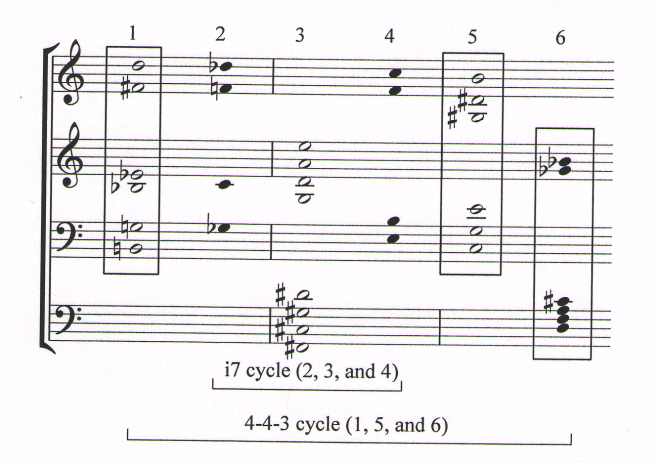
. . . fragment begins mid-measure. Kurtág divides 279 into two meters (3/16 and 3/2) and two tempos (dotted-eighth-note = 56, half = 40). The ensuing chorale, in three pairs of two chords for a total of six, provides a pithy summary of ...*concertante*...'s harmonic

language. Chords 1, 5, and 6, like the chords at 30 and 236, are derived from a 4-4-3 interval cycle. On a cycle beginning on F♯, each chord occupies six adjacent pcs that T_9 maps from chord 6, to chord 1, to chord 5; we might even imagine a missing chord T_9 away from chord 5. Chords 2, 3, and 4 map onto an i7 cycle, together saturating eleven of twelve pcs: only A♯ is missing. Chords 2 and 4 contain four pcs and are made up of two T_1-related perfect fifths; chord 3 consists of two i7 cyclic tetrachords, also mapped by T_1.

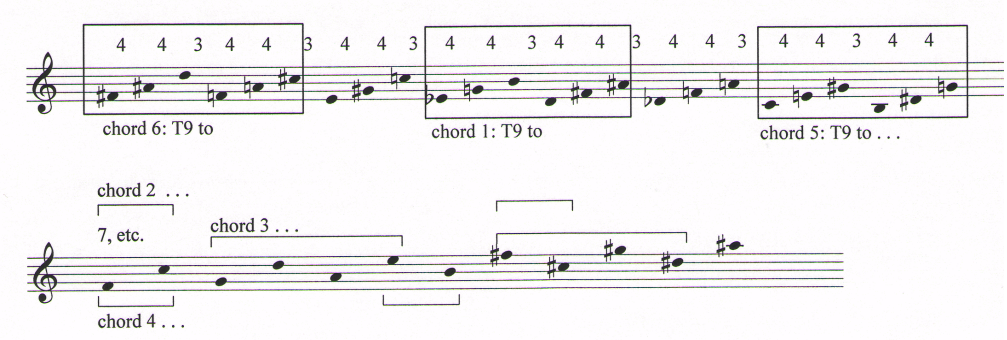
Chords 2, 4 and 6 play a role in the gradual chromatic saturation that takes place from measure 279-281–the extent of the fragment. Chord 1 is sustained as chord 2 plays, as is chord 3 during chord 4, and 5 during 6. Chord (1 + 2) exhausts nine pitches of the total chromatic: G♯, A, and E are left out; chord (3 + 4) exhausts eleven pitches: A♯ is missing; chord (5 + 6) contains all twelve pcs. We observed a similar incremental increase in harmonic density in I.2, measures 8-15. (5 + 6) holds over onto the downbeat of 282, where the previous tempo returns, and the chromatic scalar motion initiated at 255 begins to come to a close.

The five fragments that make up section IV exhibit the ritornello form we have seen on a more global level in ...*concertante*.... Chromatic motion and stuttering recitative establish real similarity between measures 255-272, 277-279, and 282-284, even though the last two passages are slower than the first one. The return of the block chords, measures 273-276, and the chorale, 279-281, are interruptions: the verticality of these two

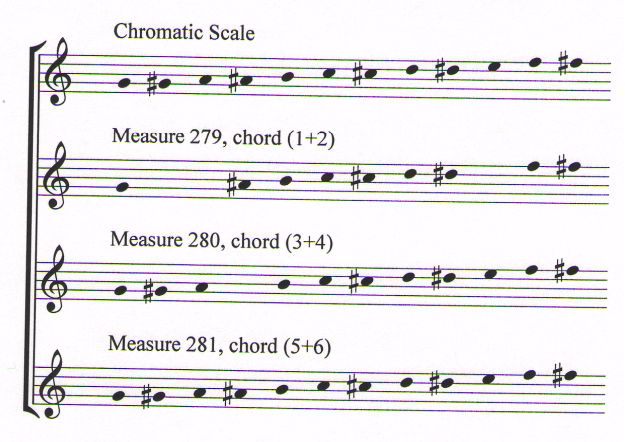
passages contrasts strongly with the horizontality of the other three. One might speculate that Kurtág associates the idea of ritornello with interruption: the contrasting sections disrupt the contiguity of the . . .



V.4, measures 279-281, in reduction. Beginning mid-measure, this fragment provides a quick summary of ...concertante...*'s harmonic language–from interval cycles, to* T_1*-related perfect fifths, to progressions that grow more dense in pitch content.*



The six chords of IV.4 shown on interval cycles. Chords 1, 5, and 6 map onto a 4-4-3 cycle. Chords 2, 3, and 4 map onto an i7 cycle.



The three composite chords in IV.4 start fairly dense already. But complete saturation ends the progression.

IV.5

. . . a representation like the one for tempos, but this time for durations. The durations are based on the recording made in 2006, conducted by Zoltán Kocis. His tempos differ from those on a live recording of the 2005 version that has circulated on the Internet–but not dramatically: sometimes they are slower–as at the very ending of the piece; sometimes they are faster, as at the beginning. Altogether his recording is about a minute shorter than the Internet recording–a remarkable similarity, given he is conducting eleven fewer measures of music. In short: while the durations upon which this representation is based cannot be definite, they are reliable, and the point is to show a general trend–not to make fine distinctions.

Like the tempo representation, the numbers here are derived by comparing the duration of a fragment to the one before it; if the second of the two is longer, it is marked with a plus, and 1 is added; if the second is shorter, it is marked with a minus, and 1 is subtracted. The piece starts on 0.

I. -1 0 -1 -2 -1 0 -1
II. 0 1 0 1 0 1 2 1 2
III. 3 2 3 4 5
IV. 4 3 2 3 2
V. 3 2 3 4 4 5

The trend is for fragments to increase in length relative to the ones that precede them.

After the first section, which shows shortening lengths, and the second, which pivots between faster and slower durations, section III starts to stretch our sense of time. Section IV marks a retreat; we sense time accelerating, the numbers decline. Section V returns to the elongation of duration set out in section III. For a more detailed representation, see Part C of the appendix.

Compared with tempo, we see relative duration is more variable in ...*concertante*.... The numbers above range from -2 to 5, eight values altogether; the tempo numbers range only from -2 to 3–six values total. While we observe different approaches to tempo undertaken in the two halves, with duration an overarching trajectory from shortening to lengthening can be seen. Indeed, the longest individual fragment (V.1) opens the final section.

This trajectory reflects well Kurtág's general practice: it is often the case in his music that final sections expand the amounts of time into which we are accustomed to hearing discrete passages of music fall. The last movements or sections of his opus 1 string quartet, *R. Sch.*, *...quasi una fantasia...*, *Stele*, and *Hipartita*, are not only longer than any of the others; they sometimes dwarf the length of the previous sections combined; the final (fortieth) fragment in *Kafka-Fragmente* is longer than all but one other fragment in the cycle; even *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit*, the Bach transcription with which the Kurtágs tend to conclude their performances, is noticeably longer than the

fugitive pieces from *Játékok* that precede it.

The last movement of *R. Sch.*, perhaps Kurtág's most exaggerated example of an elongated conclusion (it is almost twice the length of the preceding movements combined), suggests a program behind his tendency to expand time at the end of compositions. Entitled "Abschied: (Meister Raro entdeckt Guillaume de Machaut)," Kurtág makes reference to Mahler's "Der Abschied" from *Das Lied von der Erde*–a work in six sections like *R. Sch.* and a work, like ...*concertante*..., for two soloists and orchestra. The reference channels a rich web of extra-musical themes surrounding death (Lück 1995). In "Der Abschied," the first speaker bids farewell to a friend whom he will never see again; while death is not explicitly mentioned, the theme of impending mortality–and the afterlife–is clear. ...*concertante*... bids its own farewell in the ...epilogo...; the soloists switch to . . .

Chapter 5

. . . epilogo . . .

V.1

. . . electronic instruments called “silent violin” and “silent viola” at measure 285 and play them until the end. Like the mutes used at the beginning of ...*concertante...*, these instruments are intended for use while practicing. Virtually inaudible when bowed, their strings send a signal into a device that translates the fingered pitch into sound which the practicing musician hears through headphones. In ...*concertante...*, these instruments are played unamplified, creating an extraordinarily soft, disembodied sound Kikuchi calls “a little spectral” (Bosco 2006).

The silent violin and viola possess thematic significance as well. Heard in the context of a broadening of formal duration, we can see them as representing the next life of musical performance–the gradual shift from acoustic to electronic instruments; perhaps it is not too much to say that Kurtág here bids farewell to acoustic music. Furthermore, the idea of practice relates well with the idea of fragment: to practice is to work toward the completion of something; what is played during practice time is not a final expression of music; like a fragment, practice is an attempt. Just as Kurtág promotes sketches to composition, in ...*concertante...* he promotes practicing to performance.

But the silent instruments are also part of the work's extensive vocabulary of silence, a vocabulary whose lexicon plays an important role in pushing the form back toward traditional notions of cohesion. In Kurtág's works, fragments are normally divided from one another by final barlines. Without any other indication, the space between a final barline and the resumption of music is unmeasured; performers may take as much or as little time as they deem appropriate. Kurtág sometimes places a fermata above these final barlines, but not very often. In compositions divided into fragments and sections, like the three big song cycles, it is natural (and, arguably, implied) that performers should take more time after fragments that conclude larger sections than fragments that do not. The increased formal hierarchy tightens the form relative to pieces consisting of only a string of individuated fragments: the hierarchy created by sections suggests two classes of unmeasured silence between fragments: longer (S_l) and shorter (S_s); simple strings of fragments only suggest a single unmeasured class of silence (S).

Silence combines frequently with tempo, textural, and instrumental change in *...concertante...* to articulate the sequence of fragments on page 77. The approach to fragmentation is essentially the same as that in the large song cycles; but the degree to which the lengths of silences between fragments are determined is far greater in *...concertante...*. Most often, these silences are brief, but lengths vary dramatically, and Kurtág is very imaginative in how he expresses the amounts of silence he wants; gone are

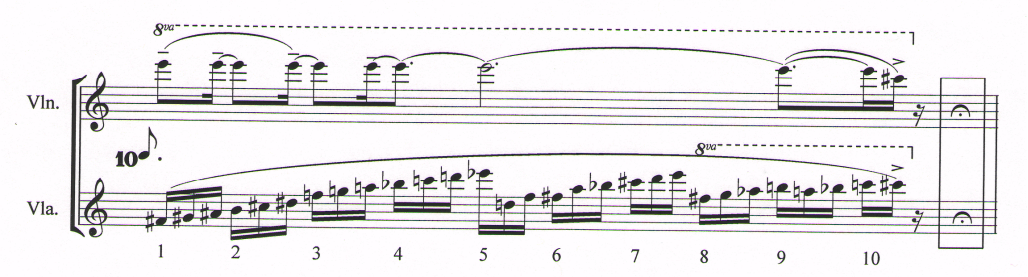
the days when barlines and roman numerals said all that needed to be said.

19 of the 33 passages identified as fragments end in silence. The overwhelming majority of the time, Kurtág articulates these silences with imprecise notations: fermatas and breath marks. Sometimes he adds fermatas and breath marks to measured rests; sometimes he adds fermatas and breath marks to barlines, themselves not measurements of time at all. As in his other fragment collections, Kurtág leaves considerable freedom in how long these formal silences actually are.

Fragment	Measure	End-Silence Articulation
I.4	37	semifermata over quarter-rest
I.5	43	semifermata over quarter-rest
I.7	58	fermata over quarter-rest
I.8	59	breath mark over double barline
II.4a	150	breath mark over barline
II.5	169	breath mark over barline
II.7	201	unattached fermata in staff
II.8	202	breath mark over barline
II.9	212	G.P. bar: 3/4 *tutti* rest
III.1	225	semifermata over breath mark over barline
III.3	230	breath mark over barline
III.4	236	breath mark over sixteenth rest
III.5	254	fermata over double barline
IV.1	272	“longa” over fermata over 9/16 *tutti* rest
IV.2	276	breath mark over barline
IV.3	279	sixteenth rest
V.3	300	breath mark over barline
V.5	307	fermata over equivalent of six quarters of *tutti* rest
V.6	312-313	17 quarters measured *tutti* rest; fermata over final barline

Two of the end silences bear elaboration. Perhaps the strangest articulation of

silence in ...*concertante*... takes place in measure 201. The measure has ten beats, each worth a dotted-eighth-note. Every last sixteenth of the measure is taken before Kurtág writes a fermata within the staff; the fermata is not attached to any note or rest; he adds time where there should be none. The final silence also deserves attention. 17 quarters of measured rest elapse before Kurtág writes a fermata over the final barline; a long unmeasured rest follows a long passage of measured rest. After Kurtág has so scrupulously combined unmeasured with measured indications of rest, to find him distinguishing so emphatically between the two is curious. The difference between the two kinds of silence must be important for him. Perhaps measured silence is "musicalized" silence; the music has not truly faded away until the final barline fermata. His habit of combining unmeasured with measured silence shows that, in characteristically paradoxical fashion, Kurtág often wants it both ways: he wants unmeasured measured . . .



Measure 201, the soloists. All ten beats are completely accounted for, but Kurtág adds time nonetheless. The first and third viola groups are T_{11} transformations of each other, as are the second and fourth groups. The groups contract from major thirds to minor seconds by the end of the measure.

V.2

. . . ethnic elements in ...*concertante*.... The chromatic upward sweep of the main theme is a mark of gypsy-style "Hungarian" violin playing, the backward "short-long" rhythm of the melody at I.5 as well (see pages 10 and 16). Kurtág expands upon this style in the two "In Nomine–all'ongerese" pieces from *Signs, Games, and Messages*–one for violin, one for viola, dedicated respectively to Kikuchi and Hakii. The prominence of the cimbalom places ...*concertante*... in an Eastern-European setting too.

The contrasting simple and compound proportions exhibited by metric spaces *a* and *b* can be projected into a reading that takes ethnicity into account. In its metric conception, the composition may well evidence the internalization of "Bulgarian" rhythmic proportions which Kurtág knows from their frequency in Bartók. Consider a steady ostinato 1-2-1-2-3-1-2-1-2-3... with the stress on 1. The ostinato creates a short-long proportion of 2:3, as opposed to the more familiar short-long ratio of 1:2, the former proportion being a foundation of Bulgarian rhythmic patterns, the latter a more typical proportion in Western classical music.

These nods to ethnic idiosyncracy further evidence ...*concertante*...'s Romantic lineage. Like his early nineteenth-century forebears, Kurtág has an interest in creating "picturesque effects of local color" to elevate the "sensuous experience of Nature" to

reflect the “spiritual and intellectual workings of the mind” (Rosen 1995; 129, 411). The Romantics’ high esteem for the original, unspoiled state of things is a quality Kurtág shares. This quality connects with the historical designation of fragment–a fragment being something spontaneous, tossed-aside, unedited, the raw material of musical creation.

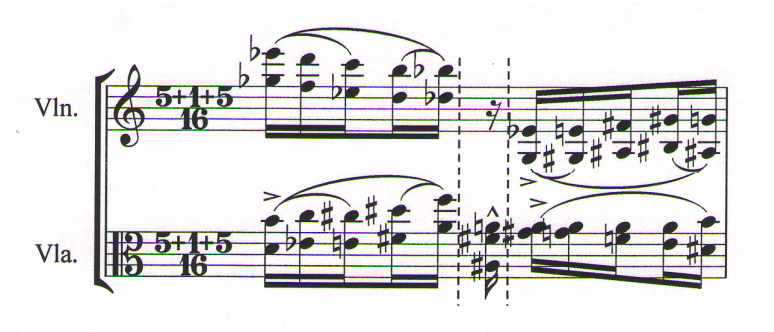
Kurtág has even become a bit of a national cultural hero in Hungary. While his friend and contemporary György Ligeti fled during the Hungarian revolution, Kurtág ended up staying. Like Bartók, he has been an important teacher, active chamber music coach, and pianist. His relocation to France in 2003 was a minor scandal; but he moved in order to live closer to his son (Swed 2007). The two recently composed . . .

V.3

. . . by section 8-9-5-5-6. The two parts of ...*concertante*... divide as evenly as possible: 17 fragments in part one, 16 in part two. This reflects well the 6 + 6 complementary division of the global i7 cycle, the roughly equal durations of the two parts, the sense of new beginning to which section III gives rise, and the new directions in relative duration and tempo the second half takes.

Yet if we take into account the ritornello alternation of metric spaces, the little unevenness in fragment distribution gets ironed out. From the point of view of the ritornello, the divide between II.9 and III.1, the last fragment of the first part and the first

fragment of the second part, does not result in a change of section; on either side of the G.P. at 212 the music speaks the meditative, ic5-dominated dialect of metric space *a*. Indeed, the change between II.9 and III.1 is considerably less total than the one between II.8 (a found object quoting the main theme) and II.9–never mind the change between II.9 and II.7, the previous fragment of any lasting duration. Furthermore, II.9 is surrounded by silences and given its own titular designation: “Recitativo.” Altogether, II.9 seems rather isolated–cut off from the rest of the metric space in which it belongs by a G.P. Perhaps a better representation of the fragments, instead of 17-16, would be 16-1-16; each part of the binary would then have an equal number of fragments to correspond with its other equalities; the recitativo would be an interlude. Such stand-alone fragments are not unheard of in Kurtág. *Bornemisza* breaks down 1-10-9-4 and *Kafka-Fragmente* 19-1-12-8. Kurtág is also not beyond applying similar grotesquerie to meter, as measure 140 of ...*concertante*... illustrates. 140's meter is (5+1+5)/16: three trombones assist in emphasizing the middle beat of the . . .



Palindromic metric grotesquerie. The measures surrounding 140 are in 10/16 and (5+5)/16 respectively. Kurtág here aggressively adds an extra beat into the middle. Perhaps he has a similar form in mind for the entire piece.

V.4

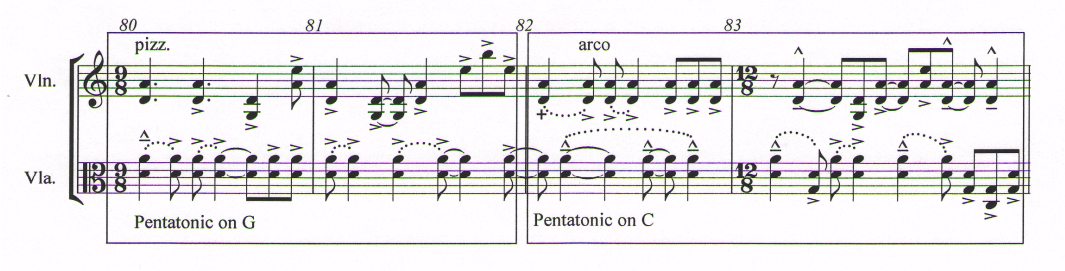
. . . strings combine to create another musical given to which the music of ...*concertante*... stays close: the pentatonic collection. The first conspicuous use of open strings happens in the first measures of I.1: the G octaves are voiced such that both solo instruments use their open-string G. Then, II.2 opens elaborating two pentatonic collections based on open-strings: G-A-B-D-E (measures 80-81) and C-D-E-G-A (82-83).

During the i7 ascent in III.1 (see page 39), Kurtág pays close attention to pentatonic subsets. After the first phrase, in which only the viola obligato C sounds, a pentatonic collection on C takes form and is sustained (measures 218-220). Measures 221-224 wiggle up the i7 cycle without establishing any other adjacent five notes. At 225, the violin and viola settle on the cyclic tetrachord B-F♯-C♯-G♯, whereupon at 226 the viola lands on a sustained E. At 227 a new phrase backtracks along the cycle. Considered in terms of pentatonic collections, we might interpret measures 223 and 224 as anticipating the establishment of a pentatonic collection on E, which only arrives at the high point of the phrase (226). Pentatonic collections on C and E overlap on E and combine to form the first nine order positions of the i7 cycle on C. Kurtág allows himself to backtrack along the cycle only after he has touched again on the pentatonic sound that took form in the cycle's early stages. The post-cadenza music does not establish any more

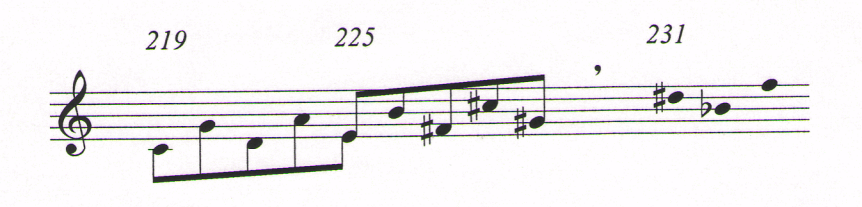
pentatonic areas, thereby carrying us into the tonal landscape of the main theme, which is not founded on pentatonic collections.

At V.4, measures 301-304, the solo violin and viola perform in octaves a pentatonic scale on C; the octaves are voiced such that all but one of them features an open string: the viola plays its open C and D, the violin its open G and A. The viola E octaves in 304 do not use any open strings (see page 37). The two soloists present the pentatonic scale as a stack of ascending fifths–the acoustic origin from which it springs. Kurtág is concerned in ...*concertante*... with making music near the physical source of all music: the overtone series–the ultimate musical given. He unites the overtone series with perfect fifths and pentatonic scales by using harmonics–especially natural harmonics–extensively throughout, but especially in III.1. To play natural harmonics, players gently touch nodes at specific locations on strings indicated by the composer in the score. The string remains "open" in the sense that, because it is not pressed against the fingerboard, very little vibrato can be applied; the timbre, while thin, nonetheless is close in character to open strings.

Therefore, we witness in ...*concertante*... an interest in the natural and social origins of music: the overtone series and ethnic markers rub shoulders. Again like the Romantic generation, Kurtág . . .



The open string invocation that begins II.2, measures 80-83. The connection between open strings and pentatonic collections is here established for the first time in ...concertante....



Kurtág lingers on pentatonic subsets during his i7 ascent in III.1. A pentatonic collection on C is left behind and, when the music comes back to the pentatonic sound, now based on E, the music retreats down the i7 cycle and moves on–for now–to different ideas.

V.5

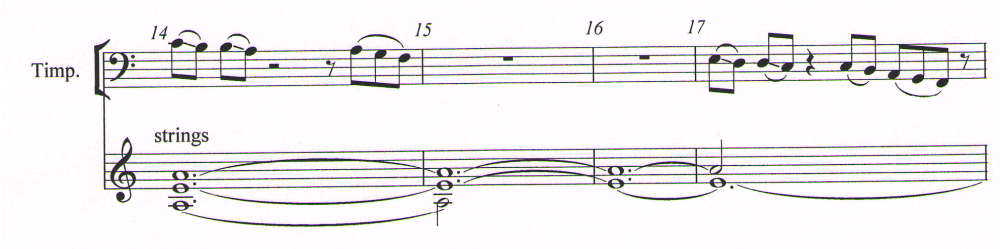
. . . dovetails with the beginning and ending of an earlier composition, ...*quasi una fantasia*.... While nominally a piece for piano and large ensemble, Kurtág's spatialization of the instruments suggests he has a double concerto in mind; one other instrument joins the piano on stage: the timpani. The ellipses and buried reference of the title and the use of instrumental recitative also connect the two works.

The fourth and final movement of ...*quasi una fantasia*... is an elaborate reworking of the fifth movement of *Hommage à Mihály András* for string quartet. Near the end of ...*quasi una fantasia*..., the texture thins out, leaving an A-E fifth sounding in the strings–like the A-E fifth in ...*concertante*... in 304, though in ...*quasi una fantasia*... it is played on natural harmonics. A descending timpani glissando from C-F begins in measure 14, a descent that mirrors the glissando ascent in the timpani and double basses in ...*concertante*... (V.5, measures 305-307). Besides the obvious gestural similarity, Kurtág takes great care that both passages are seen by the audience: the timpani is on stage in ...*quasi una fantasia*...; a note in the score of ...*concertante*... instructs orchestras to make sure the double basses in V.5 are visible: they play a "dramatic" role, in Kurtág's words.

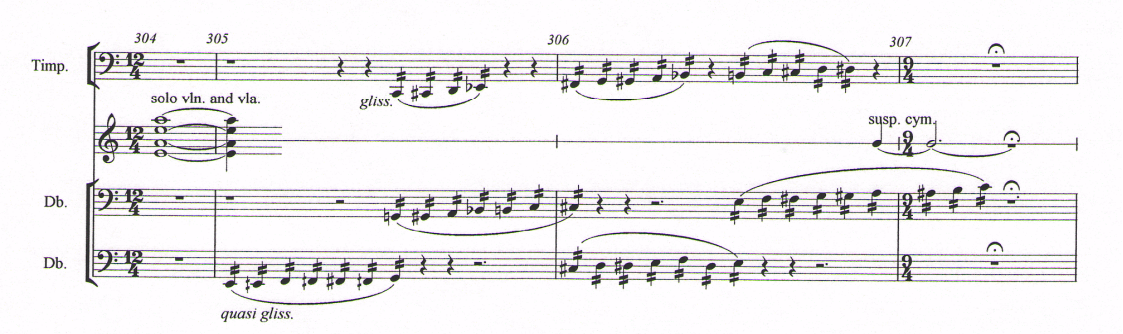
On the downbeat of measure 307, a low suspended cymbal sounds; the glissando

fades away. The cymbal fades away. A long silence follows. On the other side, we emerge

. . .



...quasi una fantasia..., *IV, measures 14-17. Along with the A-E chord in the strings, the timpani descent . . .*



. . . reflects the ascent in the bass and timpani in ...concertante..., *V.5, measures 305-307. Whereas the descent in* ...quasi una fantasia... *goes from C-F, the ascent here goes from E-C--a "quasi" inversion. Notice the parallel fourths between the timpani and basses.*

V.6

. . . at the very beginning of ...*quasi una fantasia*.... The first movement opens with a descending C major scale played very slowly by the piano–the soloist. V.6, the final fragment of ...*concertante*..., begins with a descending C♯ major scale, played by the violin and viola–the soloists. These major scales are in no way disguised; the rhythm is even, the descent predictable and unobscured by surrounding musical material. Kurtág confronts in these places another musical given with extraordinary boldness and clarity; it is hard to think of another contemporary European composer who would dare such a "banal" gesture. Ligeti, in his analysis of the first movement of ...*quasi una fantasia*..., compares it with Debussy's first piano etude (Ligeti 2007, 491). Kurtág dares, because the major scale is of a piece thematically with so much that is behind his music. In these two pieces, both requiring formidable technical feats from their performers, practicing gets thematicized, and major scales are an important part of practicing. The pianist warms up on them in the first movement of ...*quasi una fantasia*...; the soloists in ...*concertante*... warm down on them at the end of their piece.

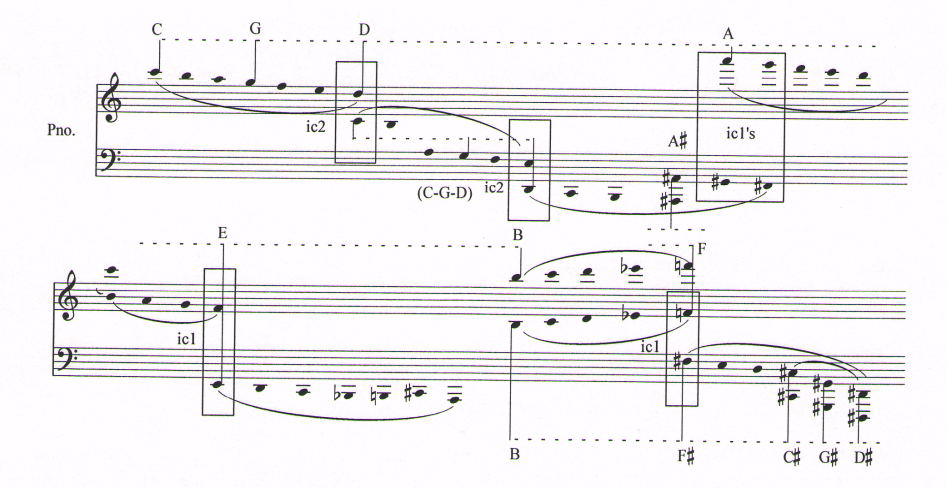
Each scalar passage also highlights intervallic content important to the larger composition. The scales of the first movement of ...*quasi una fantasia*... unfold a descending i5 cycle. The first seven-note phrase unfolds C-G-D; D is then displaced to

the bass; A appears high in the treble; then E in the bass. B begins the first ascending scale of the piece, which walks up to F♮. Coinciding with the F is an F♯ in the bass, the next note in the cycle; the descending octaves C♯-G♯-D♯, the last notes the piano plays in the movement, link up with the octave A♯ played a few measures earlier, which in turn finds its continuation, and the endpoint of the cycle, in the double-octave F that coincides with the F♯. The cycle does not unfold linearly in time, therefore, but rather double-backs on itself.

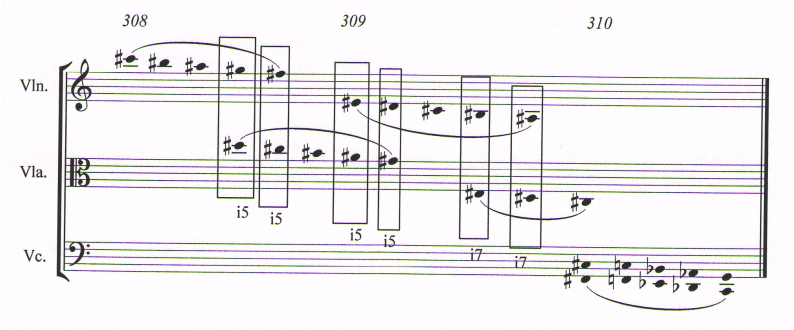
One other aspect of the ...*quasi una fantasia*... scales demands attention. The first two scalar fragments overlap via i2 dyads; the next two via i1 dyads. The last two phrases are separated from the others, but they too are joined by an i1 dyad. This i2-to-i1 story gets reinforcement from the prominence of whole-step motion in the diatonic scales that open up the movement and the softly clashing C- and D♭-major triads that conclude the movement (played whimsically by harmonicas). The triumph of semitones over the course of the first movement anticipates the dissonant, chromatic movements that come next.

The scales concluding ...*concertante*... highlight perfect fourths and fifths. The viola enters playing parallel fourths with the violin; the violin returns after two beats to play the same interval in parallel with the viola; after one beat of rest, the viola comes back in for two parallel fifths with the violin, and a beat later the cellos take the scale

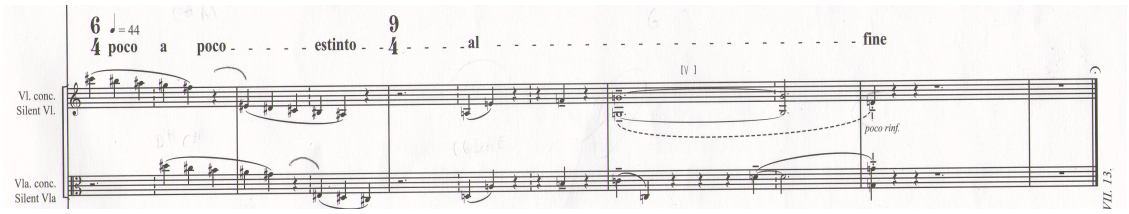
over, dragging it down in parallel fifths, sliding to an open C♮-G♮ in 310. In 312, the soloists and timpani find G-D-G–the last sound before the silences before the . . .



The descending i5 cycle from C-F that double-backs upon itself, ...quasi una fantasia..., *I. Kurtág gradually tightens the harmony by moving from ic2 to ic1 connections (shown in boxes). The middle two movements of* ...quasi una fantasia... *are considerably more dissonant than the first.*



The descending major scales in ...concertante...*, measures 308-310, highlight ic5's–perfect fourths and fifths. The soloists warm down on major scales just as the pianist in* ...quasi una fantasia... *warms up on them.*



. . . end.

CONCLUSION

A deliberately composed fragment depends on an *Urmusik*, a prehistoric entirety not of the composer's invention. A found object, or musical given, the composer breaks apart this entirety and presents the pieces to an audience. These fragments are by their nature incomplete, and they resist attempts at reassembly. The act of reassembly is one of organization, and to the extent a composer applies organization to a collection of fragments, formal tension occurs.

Kurtág's works fall at different points in the narrative of fragmentation and reassembly. To some compositions, he applies little organization whatsoever; the form of these works may be described as "open." To ...*concertante*..., however, he applies considerable organization. The minute-long bursts of music that form the fragment sequence underlying the composition boast such interconnections that underlying formal ideas–conventional formal ideas Kurtág "finds"–can be perceived and explored. The proximity of the prehistoric formal entirety is sufficient to exert its gravitational pull upon the fragments.

...*concertante*... seems once to have been a sonata form. The music suggests the binary and ritornello constructions that underpin the classical sonata-allegro. The thematic organization is similarly suggestive. ...*concertante*... has a first theme (measure

23), a transition (measure 60), and a second theme (measure 87). The opening material of the exposition, the G drones, comes back in measure 215 on C, a suggestive dominant-tonic or tonic-subdominant relationship. The solo violin and viola join forces for an early, monotonous cadenza (measure 230) before the first theme returns (measure 236). The second theme never comes back; the recapitulation is incomplete.

Close-reading of the music reveals Kurtág to be taking a clearly "objective" approach to composition. Some of these objects are of his own devising. Measure 59, not contiguous with the surrounding measures, sounds neither led up to nor away from. He recomposes measure 59 in measure 202, adding another voice to the texture in the later measure. Measure 273 begins a similar recomposition of the block chord music at measure 162. Other objects are musical givens which are common musical currency. A simple chromatic scale, ascending and descending from G♯, unites the odd-numbered fragments in section IV. A complete rising i7 cycle regulates the note-to-note motion of the solo parts in III.1 and III.4. A descending C♯-major scale closes the piece. The 4-4-3 interval cycle, arguably a musical object "given" to Kurtág by Bartók, regulates both melodic motion (the second theme at 87) and the construction of chords (chords 1, 5, and 6 in fragment IV.4, for example). Kurtág invokes the ultimate musical given, the overtone series, in his extensive use of natural harmonics.

...*concertante*... presents another dimension of fragmentation, one connected with

the reality of the fragment as historical document as well as the metaphor that is the deliberately composed fragment. The practice mutes, the exposed major scales, and the silent instruments used in ...*concertante*... promote the act of practicing to the act of performance. Historical fragments are sketches, attempts tossed aside for an alternate, more refined version. Sketches are our records of composers practicing, rehearsing music until it is ready to incorporate into the final composition. Just as Kurtág exposes his practicing in *Játékok*, he takes listeners inside a performer's practice room in ...*concertante*.... Doing so reminds us of the illusion of the finished work. Compositions and performances are snap shots of composers' and performers' on-going progress, progress that is never truly finished.

APPENDIX

Part A. Primary and secondary metric set content per section. (See page 28.)

h = half-note meters
q = quarter-note meters
d-e = dotted-eighth-note meters
e = eighth-note meters
s = sixteenth-note meters
x = without meter
parenthetical numbers = # of measures in set

Section	Measures	Primary	Secondary	Other	Space
I	1-59	q (40)	e (13)	x (6)	a
II	60-79	s (11)	d-e (9)	—	b
	80-114	e (23)	q (11)	h (1)	a_1
	115-202*	s (42)	d-e (30)	e (5)	b
	203-212	e (5)	q (4)	s (1)	(a_1)
III	213-254	q (31)	e (10)	x (1)	a
IV	255-284**	s (21)	q (4)	d-e (3), h (3)	b_1
V	285-313	h (17)	q (13)	—	c (a_2)

* Measures 151-161 not counted.
** Measure 279 counted twice.

Part B. Metronomic tempo changes in ...*concertante*.... (See page 48.)

Section	Measure	Tempo (sixteenths)	Change	Designation
I	1	senza tempo		
	8	168		
	20	176	+8	1
	23	184	+8	2
	31	224	+40	3
	50	168	-56	2
	53	192	+24	3
	54	132	-60	2

Section	Measure	Tempo (sixteenths)	Change	Designation
	59	120 (slowest)	-12	1
II	60	224	+104	2
	80	552 (fastest)	+328	3
	104	456	-96	2
	115	396	-60	1
	147	288	-108	0
	171	360	+72	1
	180	288	-72	0
	188	276	-12	-1
	202	120	-156	-2
	203	208	+88	-1
	210	224	+16	0
III	213	240	+16	1
	219	176	-64	0
	226	240	+64	1
	237	200	-40	0
	239	240	+40	1
IV	255	396	+156	2
	273	192	-204	1
	277	168	-24	0
	279	320	+152	1
	282	168	-152	0
V	285	208	+40	1
	295	192	-16	0
	296	240	+48	1
	298	152	-88	0
	299	224	+72	1
	301	216	-8	0
	305	232	+16	1
	308	176	-56	0

Part C. Fragment durations in ...*concertante*.... (See page 83.)

Fragment	Measures	Duration (seconds)	Change	Designation
I.1	1-7	64		
I.2	8-15	58	-6	-1
I.3	16-30	68	+10	0
I.4	31-37	30	-38	-1
I.5	38-43	24	-6	-2
I.6	44-49	33	+9	-1
I.7	50-58	56	+23	0
I.8	59	7	-49	-1
II.1	60-79	44	+37	0
II.2	80-112	64	+20	1
II.3	113-114	7	-57	0
II.4	115-150	55	+48	1
II.5	162-169	15	-40	0
II.6	170-179	24	+9	1
II.7	180-201	73	+49	2
II.8	202	8	-65	1
II.9	203-212	51	+43	2
III.1	213-225	107	+56	3
III.2	226-229	20	-87	2
III.3	230	30	+10	3
III.4	231-236	35	+5	4
III.5	237-254	88	+53	5
IV.1	255-272	39	-49	4
IV.2	273-276	27	-12	3
IV.3	277-279	6	-21	2
IV.4	279-281	26	+20	3
IV.5	282-284	18	-8	2
V.1	285-295	115 (longest)	+97	3
V.2	296-297	11	-104	2
V.3	298-300	32	+21	3
V.4	301-304	39	+7	4
V.5	305-307	39	0	4
V.6	308-313	61	+22	5

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