PRESERVING THE FRAGMENT: TECHNIQUES AND TRAITS OF FRANCO DONATONI'S JOYOUS PERIOD (1977 TO 2000)

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Abstract

This dissertation on the late works of Italian composer Franco Donatoni investigates how he reinvented his compositional style after overcoming struggles with his own mental health and personal doubt in his early career. Donatoni subsequently enjoyed a period of creativity and output in the last twenty-five years of his life, beginning around 1977 and ending with his death in 2000, resulting in what he himself referred to as his "joyous" period. The music from this period has a sound of bright jubilation and involves contrapuntal structures that rival those of the great masters of the Baroque. But more importantly, Donatoni found a way to inspire himself through the reinterpretation of his own work. Such rejuvenation reinforces the case for Donatoni as an autonomous artistic force in the late twentieth century.

Donatoni's production from this period will be discussed in three ways: by recounting his important life events, uncovering techniques of his early style, and investigating new approaches in his later style. Chapters 2 and 4 examine events in Donatoni's life that contributed to the divide that lies between his early and late styles, since he did not "write anything [he did not live], and vice versa." Chapter 2 looks at his career as a whole, while Chapter 4 looks more closely at his life in the mid-1970s when he bridged the stylistic gap between his early and late styles. Chapter 3 concerns his early codes used prior to his late style. *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck* (1967) serves as an excellent example of his early codes, and it is one of his most popular works from this initial period. Chapters 5 and 6 examine chamber and solo works in his later style, respectively. *Refrain* (1986) for eight instruments was chosen as a point of departure,

since it is a clear representation of his later chamber style. Two of his popular solo works, *Omar* (1985) and *Lem* (1982) are examined as examples of his later solo writing, and will be analyzed in the same manner.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> The most beautiful thing that Mahler said is something like this: "I never write anything than I have not lived, and vice versa." I verified that this was not a theory, for I've often experienced coincidences, parallelisms between my life and my work, also, alas more in the sense of fatality than of providence.
>
> When the time comes for lucid depression, one must fight to continue to write. This is like the necessary prayer even when one['s soul] is dry. Music is an insecurity; it leads to depression when you lack concentration. This is a daily fight.[1]

Franco Donatoni (1927 – 2000) spoke these words in an interview with the French musicology journal *La Revue Musicale* in 1975. This passage serves as a fitting introduction to this discussion of Donatoni's work not only because it draws a connection between his life and music, but also because it singles out depression as one of those life events. While it is not uncommon for lapses to occur in the productivity of a composer, such challenges test a composer's resiliency in the face of creative collapse. Such a collapse occurred in mid-career of the Italian composer, and regardless of his struggles with his own mental health and personal doubt, he emerged victorious from the ashes of his internal conflict, enjoying a period of creativity and output that would draw the envy of any artist. In fact, Donatoni's rebirth is one that lasted roughly the last twenty-five years of his life, beginning around the time of his interview with *La Revue Musicale*, and ending with his death in 2000, resulting in what Donatoni himself referred to as his "joyous" period.[2] The music from this period has a sound of bright jubilation, a feeling of

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[1] François-Bernard Mache, "Franco Donatoni: Juillet 1975" *La Revue Musicale* (Paris: 1975), p. 316. Translated by the author.

[2] In the accompanying booklet of Etcetera CD KTC 1053, Donatoni, upon the completion of *Spiri* in 1977, describes this new period as "joyous, almost euphoria." These sentiments are additionally

musical invention and `gamesmanship, and involves contrapuntal structures that rival those of the great masters of the Baroque. But more importantly, Donatoni found a way to inspire himself through the reinterpretation of his own work. Such rejuvenation reinforces the case for Donatoni as an autonomous artistic force in the late twentieth century.

In a 1981 article titled "Presenza di Bartók" in *Il sigaro di Armando*, Donatoni enumerates what he regards as the four essential aspects of the music of Béla Bartók, whose Fourth String Quartet had an immense impact on him at the start of his own career.[3] These essentials are "(1) cellular exposition and organism growth; (2) growth without development, conservation of the fragment; (3) juxtaposition of organisms; mutation, not evolution; and (4) stasis of pulsations, continuity of tone."[4] These four statements emerge today not only as homage to his mentor, but also as prophesy. Such traits are found in Donatoni's joyous period from 1977 to 2000. After a period of self-doubt and artistic transfiguration in the mid-1970s, Donatoni regained confidence by concentrating on the horizontal line, discovering a Bach-like "game-playing exercise in invention" through the more effective use of "automatic procedures," which he called "codes."[5] As will be shown in Chapters 3 and 5, small amounts of material are manipulated to generate a tightly knit interplay of fragments. The result is an efficient and clear music that is created through a deeply embedded and intricate design. In a 1990

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referenced in Michael Gorodecki's article titled "Who's Pulling the Strings?" in the May 1993 issue of the *Musical Times*, page 246.

[3] P. Santi, ed., "Franco Donatoni, 'Presenza di Bartók,'" *Il sigaro di Armando* (Milan: Spirali, 1982), p. 87.

[4] Ibid.

[5] R. Smith Brindle, "The Lunatic Fringe III – Computational Composition" *The Musical Times* 98 (July 1956) 354.

pamphlet he summarized his compositional goals: "Complexity of code, simplicity of result... [and] difficulty [for others] to know the nature of the code."[6]

This dissertation will explore Donatoni's production from this period in three ways: by recounting his important life events, uncovering techniques of his early style, and investigating new approaches in his later style. Chapters 2 and 4 examine events in Donatoni's life that contributed to the divide that lies between his early and late styles, since he did not "write anything [he did not live], and vice versa." Chapter 2 looks at his career as a whole, while Chapter 4 looks more closely at his life in the mid-1970s when he bridged the stylistic gap between his early and late styles.

Chapter 3 concerns his early codes used prior to his late style. "Codes," a term Donatoni equivocally uses to define his compositional processes, help to create music that is both complex and surprisingly simple. *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck* (1967) serves as an excellent example of his early codes, and it is one of his most popular works from this initial period. Although he used similar codes in both style periods, their application was quite different. This change in application is a key to understanding the difference between his early and late compositional processes. Hence we can better understand the creative process in Donatoni's later style by looking at his early style as well.

The third aspect of this study is the investigation of several representative works from his later style, with analysis of the "codes" applied by Donatoni. Chapters 5 and 6 examine his chamber and solo works, respectively. *Refrain* (1986) for eight instruments was chosen as a point of departure, since it is a clear representation of his later chamber style. Two of his popular solo works, *Omar* (1985) and *Lem* (1982) are examples of his

[6] Franco Donatoni, "Questionnaire on complexity in music" *Complexity?* (accompanying booklet to festival, Rotterdam: March 1990).

later solo writing, and will be analyzed in the same manner. Regardless of their place in Donatoni's output, all of these works incorporate the four points mentioned above in his discussion of Bartòk. In the chapters to follow, we will see how the composer's curious system of codes brings these four points to life.

Chapter 2: Donatoni's Stylistic Schism

In 1945, following the American liberation of Verona, Donatoni began his compositional studies at the Martini Conservatory in Bologna. Through radio broadcasts, he was exposed to contemporary masters from the previous 30 years, particularly Béla Bartók. In 1952 he traveled to Venice to pursue studies with Goffredo Petrassi at Accademia di St. Cecilia. Petrassi strongly influenced Donatoni as an accessible and enthusiastic educator, no doubt affecting Donatoni's own eventual teaching career, which is today a well-known aspect of his notoriety.

The young composer's next and biggest personal influence was Bruno Maderna, who introduced Donatoni to the works of Mahler, Schoenberg, and Webern while he was studying in Verona in 1953. Donatoni was encouraged by Maderna to absorb post-tonal German influences into his music, and further, to visit the Darmstadt summer school in 1954. In pursuit of these post-tonal elements, Donatoni began studying with Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez at Darmstadt, and he was impressed enough with their new directions that he felt compelled to follow their lead. Reminiscing about these times, he relates these sentiments in his interview in 1975 with *La Revue Musicale:*

> One cannot understand my recent works if one does not know the evolution that drove me there. It begins in 1952. I was then, as a lot of Italian musicians, subjected to a rather academic choice - Stravinsky or Bartók - and I have essentially been "Bartokian" until about the age of thirty. I have destroyed [all the works from this time] that I have been able; unfortunately I was not able to do anything for the published works. My ideas evolved with the meeting of Bruno Maderna first, then the Viennese school in 1957 thanks to Darmstadt. I

> began to create an art of imitation, with, for example, a work for piano that is only a bad copy of Boulez' *Second Piano Sonata.*[7]

This layering of influences led to stylistic confusion, and ultimately his personal creative crisis, as a deliberate personal style did not emerge until the 1960s. Further influences came from none other than John Cage, whom he met at Luciano Berio's home in 1959. Cage's ideas, in seeming opposition to the Darmstadt ideology, were not appealing to Donatoni at first. However, Donatoni soon began to experiment with Cage's ideas of selfless music, which represented a more objective approach than what he had embraced in Darmstadt. While this striking influence and adjustment of ideals was to be a cornerstone of his successful late style, its immediate effect was somewhat adverse, and will be discussed further in Chapter 3. Regardless, Cage's ideas never completely left him, and once properly implemented, they influenced his output and teaching for the rest of his career.

This philosophy of selfless composition became manifest within the realms of algorithmic order and logic, rather than chance procedures. Donatoni admits:

> Now, at this time I was animated by the need for an autonomous procedure, but not that of Cage chance. I knew very well that autonomy is not a feasible concept, but a tendency. I tried to apply it to different parameters: register, duration, dynamics...[8]

Donatoni's pieces were set into motion by a series of algorithmic compositional processes he called "codes" resulting in music of continual variation and change. Codes in his early career were enacted upon a found object, usually a fragment from someone else's music, deriving seemingly endless amounts of material. In his later career, this material was then arranged into "panels" that were organized by the composer to create

[7] Mache, "Franco Donatoni: Julliet 1975," p. 314-315.
[8] Ibid.

musical form.[9] With each code, a game was invented and set out, a product of the composer's subjective intuition. Equally objective, however, were the effects of the game on the material. Thus a balance between subjective choice and objective process is maintained throughout the composition of the work. His first major success with such operations was with *Doubles* (1961) for harpsichord. (After its performance, Stockhausen approached the composer to inquire about a score.) He achieved further success with *Puppenspiel* (1961) for orchestra, which is an excellent example of his panel-based formal organization, a technique that remained a part of his music throughout his career.[10]

However, soon after this wave of success Donatoni began his descent into creative self-annihilation. Even the best works to come out of the next few years became bogged down in automatic processes, relying almost completely on objective procedures and not enough on compositional choice. This is perhaps a direct result of Cage's philosophy regarding the separation of self from art. Indeed, this philosophy was not entirely adaptable to Donatoni's compositional approach. Freely autonomous transformations of found objects were rampant in this period, deconstructing Schoenberg in *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck* (1967), Stockhousen in *Souvenir* (1967), and Bussotti in *Solo* (1969). [11]

Apart from a one-year residency in Berlin in 1972, the early 1970s were not positive years for Donatoni. In 1973 his mentor, Bruno Maderna, and his own mother died, at which point his mental stability was threatened. Donatoni had always been prone to depression, and such tragedies only added to its effects. Still, he pushed on with composing, producing *To Earle Two* (1971 – 72) for chamber orchestra (a second take on

[9] Enzo Restagno, *Donatoni.* (Torino: EDT, 1990), p. 44
[10] Ibid, p. 42
[11] Ibid, p. 43

the marginal *To Earle* of 1970), *Lied* (1972) for chamber orchestra, and *Duo pour Bruno* (1975) for orchestra, composed in memory of Maderna. Although these newer works were quite well-received, Donatoni was still gripped by despair. He resigned from composing completely in 1975. Convinced that he had reached the end of his compositional career, he closed his composition studio and took a job as a copyist with his music publisher Suvini Zerboni. It is here that his "negative" phase ended, and the discouraged composer began to reconsider his career.[12]

This stylistic schism, while brief, continued amidst small spurts of activity between 1975 and 1977, as he searched out a new passage to creative freedom and stylistic cohesiveness. Encouraged by his wife Susan and a commission due for the Accademia Musicale Chigiana, the composer reluctantly resumed composing in 1976. The result was *Ash* for eight instruments, an aptly named renaissance of sorts that used the B-A-C-H motive as a found object. Unlike his previous works, the codes in *Ash* were employed in succession rather than simultaneously. The result was a more controlled contrapuntal texture of solo lines, and further, the solution to his compositional crisis. His artistic rebirth gained momentum while layers of confusion began peeling away. Finally a new representative and personal style was emerging. 1977 was a year of searching and experimentation, resulting in *Algo* for guitar solo; and *Toy* for piano, two violins and alto voice. However, it wasn't until the success of *Spiri* in 1977 that Donatoni's new "joyous" compositional style matured.[13]

This "joyous" period lasted from 1977 to his death in 2000, and is so named for its vibrant contrapuntal works, primarily for instrumental forces. His output during this

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[12] Ibid, p. 43

[13] Michael Gorodecki, "Who's Pulling the Strings," *The Musical Times* 134 (May: 1993), p. 246.

time, especially in the 1980s, was up to ten works per year and featured a consistent virtuosic style. Processing found objects from his contemporaries now gave way to processing material from his own past works. Donatoni still used fragments of music to drive this process, but now he was referring to his own compositions, reinventing pieces in new instrumental contexts. An excellent example is *Refrain* (1986), which then spawned the further works *Frain* (1989), *Refrain II* (1991), and *Refrain III* (1993).

This cyclical approach proved to be successful for Donatoni, as he was again able to find joy in composing. New processes were applied to his own material to produce different results. He thus was able to reevaluate his own fragments as found objects, furthering his philosophy of egoless music. Contrapuntal gamesmanship, continuous variation, and egoless self-commentary are what helped him to reemerge as an artist and make his "joyous" style work.

Chapter 3: Early Codes – Ghosts in the Machine

Writing objective music that would not showcase the complexities of the composer's methods was one of the few concepts that Donatoni retained from his interaction with John Cage in the 1960s. In Donatoni's early period, the 1960s and early 1970s, codes were applied to pre-existing materials, enabling Donatoni to mulch found objects into new material and create new contexts. The use of these codes in his "joyous" period was by comparison less rigorous, yielding works of apparent simplicity and clarity that contrast with the complexity of their inner workings.[14] It is at this time that his music takes a stylistic turn, and his regard for the four Bartókian points became most clearly implemented.

Prior to 1977, codes were not only derived from post-serial operations such as inversion, retrograde, and transposition, but also from a mixture of density and durational filtering. They served as a means by which to create a constant process of evolution with his material. Taken far beyond an all-encompassing pre-compositional matrix, such a code grew and developed through a process of self-evaluation, becoming a "self-aware mechanism, always watchful – its own caretaker."[15] This infers that Donatoni employed an effective mix of pitch or interval set-based composition techniques and autonomous algorithmic processes to create an organic structure. Therefore, Donatoni admits a certain level of indeterminacy into these inner workings. These elements of indeterminacy create a balance between what is desired by the composer's intuition (the subjective) on the

[14] "In Memoriam," *The Musical Times* 141 (2000): 6.
[15] Restagno. *Donatoni*, p. 35.

macro level, and what is created by indeterminate functions (the objective) on the micro level. In an interview with Enzo Restagno, Donatoni states:

> One could say that a principle of indeterminacy operates in the microform. This principle renders the modifications unpredictable in detail, but predictable statistically. In fact, I know that the microform follows a fixed pattern in its evolution. It has a determined way of occurring. That is to say, statistically I know more or less the directions it will take, but I do not know where or in what moment. All this establishes a broader, more global principle of determinacy that is reflected in the macroform.[16]

The algorithmic processes used by Donatoni's contemporaries are generally conceived with a degree of predictability. The overall effect of the process is predicted, but what must happen on the local level is not. As in Iannis Xenakis' "ST" series for example, Donatoni refers to codes used in previous works to recall compositional goals with new materials. His codes admit momentary infractions through self-evaluation that produce determinate events. In essence, one has room to create a personal and original style within an autonomous environment. Donatoni's point of reference is biological, incorporating errors and infractions that result in mutation. His works become an "organism," or a "self-aware mechanism."[17]

Donatoni's early and later music both utilize similar codes. The difference, however, is the manner in which they are employed. Donatoni's early codes are exemplified in his seminal work *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck* of 1967. The codes in *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck* are applied to nineteen pitches from the first bar of the second movement of Schoenberg's *Fünf Klavierstücke* Op. 23. This row of nineteen pitches becomes his found object, and is divided into small sub-sections, which are manipulated using standard serial procedures. However, unlike Schoenberg, Donatoni uses rows that

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[16] Ibid, p. 34
[17] Ibid.

are not twelve tones in length, but are rather smaller sets, or fragments, of the original nineteen. These new fragments represent the source material in its most recognizable form, and can easily be recognized throughout the "exposition" of *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck*, in mm. 1 – 21 (see figures 3.1 – 3.4).[18] After this point, Donatoni's codes are released upon this source material and render it unrecognizable until its reemergence at the end of the work. Thus, the goal of the work is to apply codes to this material in a way that both breaks it down and rehsapes it, so that by the end there is a complete statement of the original material. While this material is presented in its original form in m. 166, the final bar of the work, it is not achieved by purely autonomous means. Ironically, in striving for a fully autonomous procedure, Donatoni was forced to interfere rather arbitrarily in order to 'fix' the composition.

According to an unpublished analysis by Agostino DiScipio from 1989, Donatoni's borrowed source material consists of three gestures in quarter-note triplets (see figure 3.1). Donatoni separated each gesture and arranged them evenly in the 'exposition' of *Etwas* (see figures 3.2 – 3.4). DiScipio numbered these sets T1, T2 and T3 (T for *testo*, meaning 'text,' is short for T.O., or '*testo originale.*').[19] Set T1 begins the work at m. 1, T2 is found in beat three of m. 7, and T3 occurs on beat two of m. 14. The code that transforms this material begins after another seven measures in m. 21.

[18] Agostino DiScipio, *L'Imossible analisi: Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck di F. Donatoni*, unpublished article, 1988/89, p. 2. Used with kind permission of the author.
[19] Ibid.

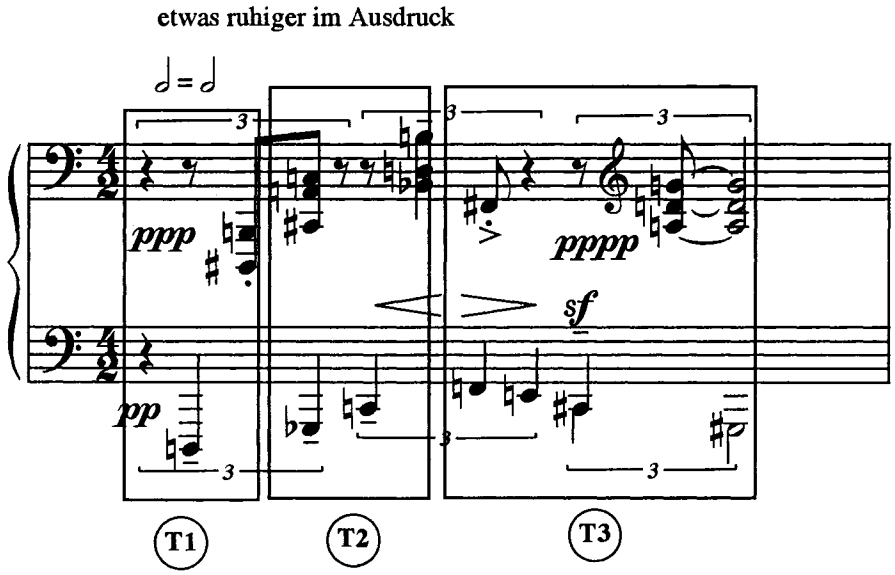

Figure 3.1: The original *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck* passage and its fragments.[20]

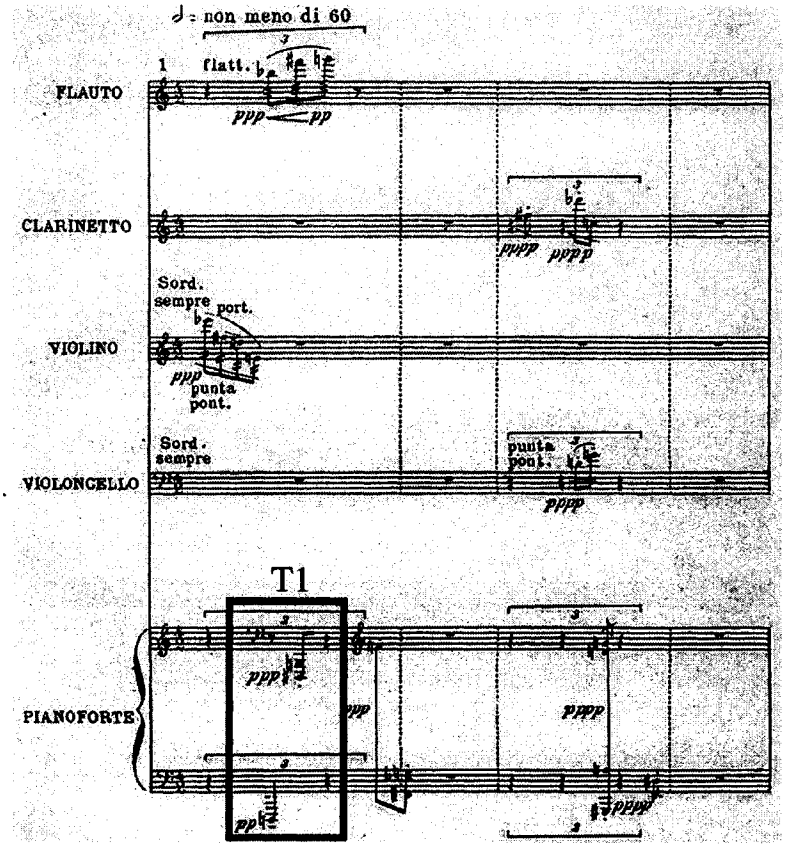

Figure 3.2: The first fragment (T1) in m. 1 of *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck*.

[20] Ibid.

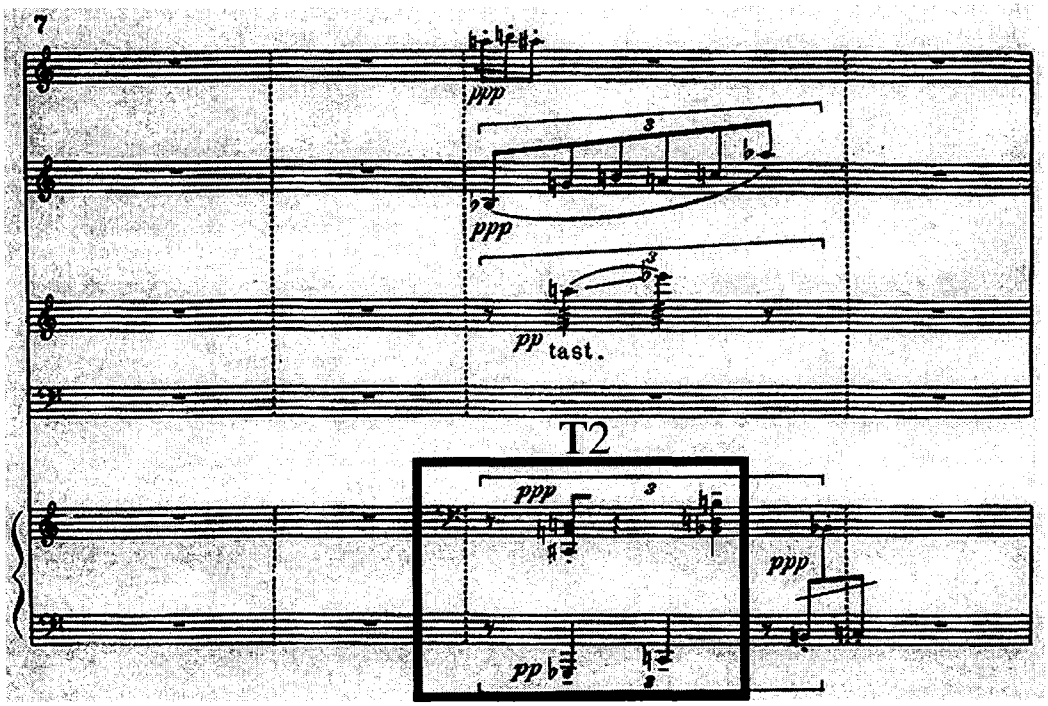

Figure 3.3: The second fragment (T2) in m. 7 of *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck*.

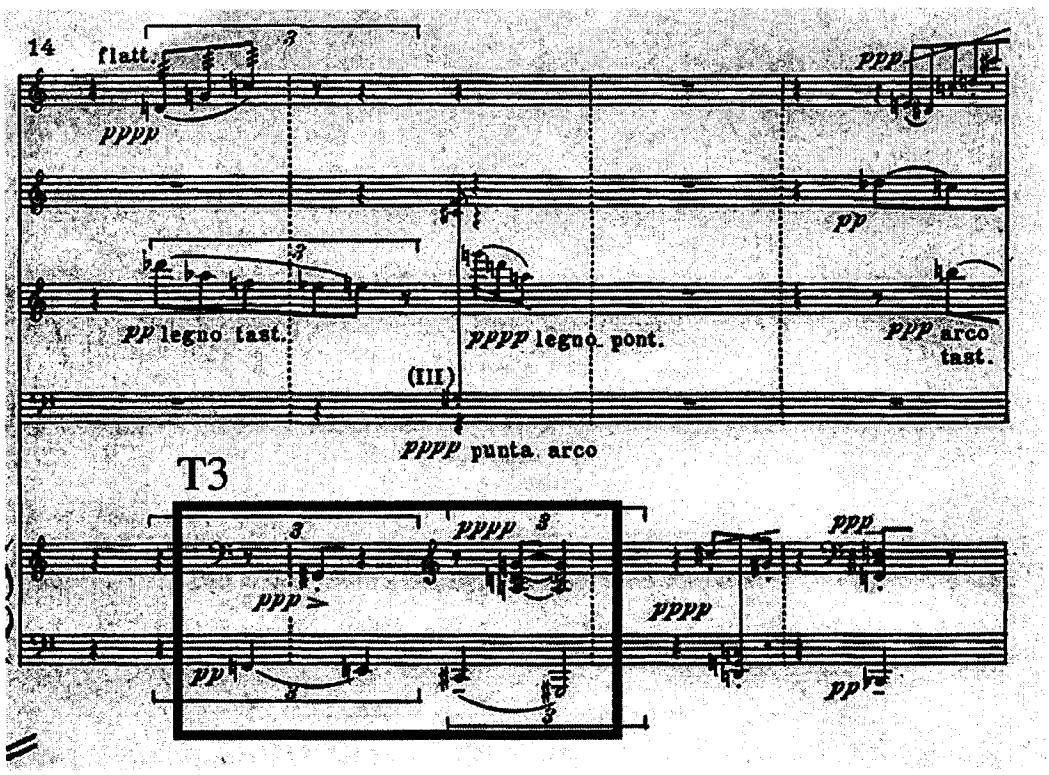

Figure 3.4: The final fragment (T3) in m. 14 of *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck*.

Larger sets T2 and T3 are reduced to smaller sets depending on gestural direction, creating smaller four-note subsets T2a, T2b, T3a, and T3b (see figure 3.5). Once these pitches are transposed up an octave and examined without rhythmic elements, the divisions by directional contour become clearer. The first rising three-note gesture is T1, which is anchored by a D in the extreme low register. The second four-note rising gesture is T2a, again anchored by a note in the left hand. The third four-note rising gesture that matches T2a is T2b. T3 consists of more varied motion, as T3a is a descending figure whereas the final gesture T3b suggests contrary motion. These five sets are then rearranged according to standard processes of retrograde, inversion, and retrograde inversion, to produce twenty resultant sets (see figure 3.6). These twenty sets are used as building blocks for the new quintet. Although theoretically bound to Schoenberg's Op. 23, they are stripped of their original context and assimilated into a new setting. Save for the meter (4/2) and gestural resemblances, the rest of the original context is completely foregone. The solo piano work is transformed into a quintet by adding flute, clarinet, violin, and viola.

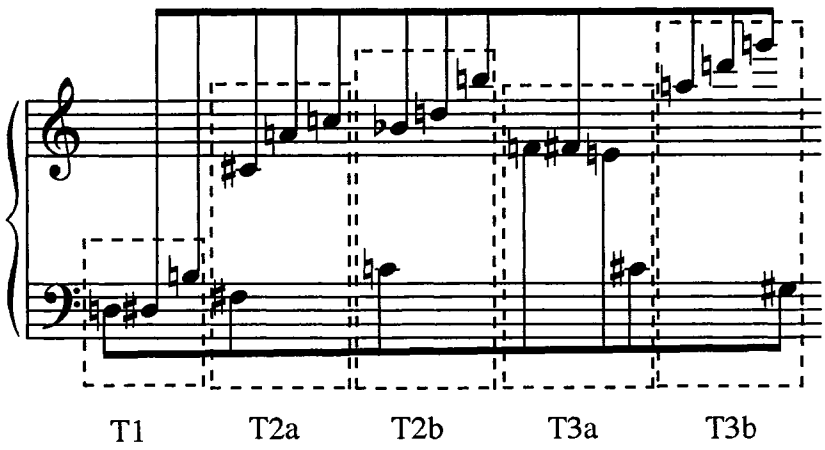

Figure 3.5: Further divisions of T2 and T3, depending on gestural direction, as determined by DiScipio.[21]

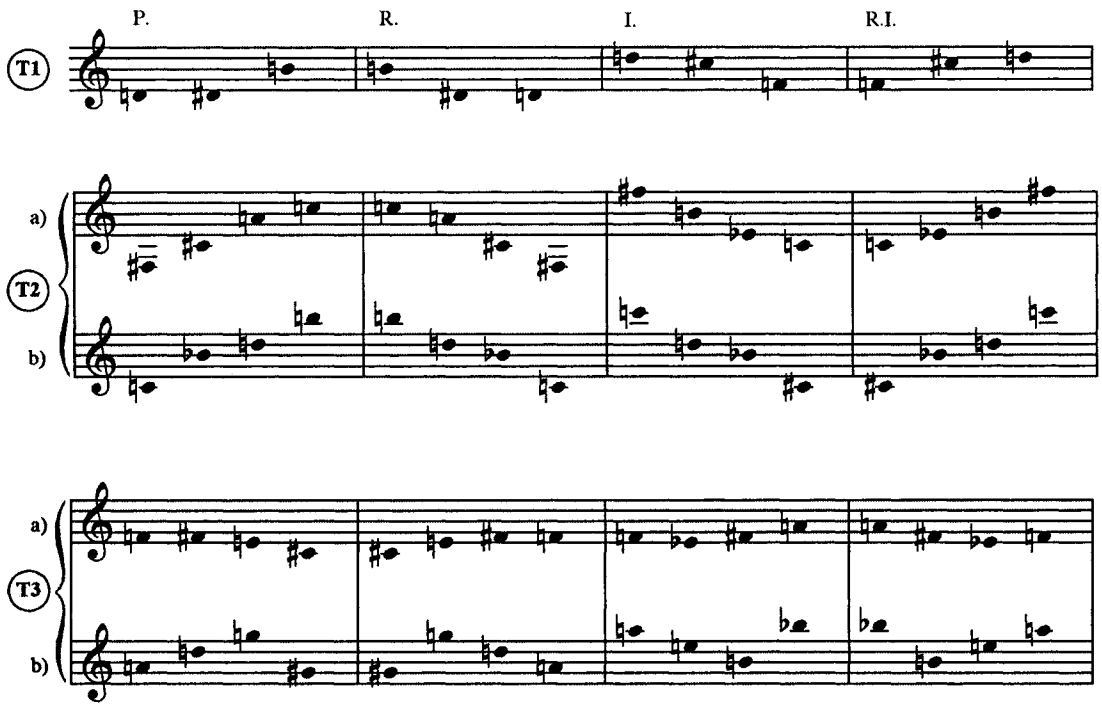

Figure 3.6: Subsets of the fragment as determined by DiScipio, within one octave.[22]

[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., p. 3.

In presenting these smaller sets in the first 20 bars, Donatoni imposes a code – a process of diminution - that filters the durational density of the notes of each instrument to their smallest value, the grace note. Durations in the violin are decreased by an eighth note value every seven bars, beginning with half notes in m. 21, dotted quarters in m. 28, quarters in m. 35, dotted eighths in m. 41, eighths in m. 48, and finally grace notes in m. 54. The identical process occurs simultaneously in other instruments: the cello begins in measure 28, the flute in m. 34, and the clarinet in m. 41, concluding the process by m. 81.[23]

After each instrument completes this process of reduction, they begin another that rebuilds density. However, it is now done through the accumulation of events-per-bar rather than the elongation of durations. The violin begins with one grace note per bar at bar 61, then three events in bar 62, five events in bar 63, seven in bar 64, and so on, subsequently increasing the density of events in each bar until reaching a maximum density (34 events per bar, with 3 rests) at m. 79. The cello, flute and clarinet follow suit in the same order. The last instrument, the clarinet, reaches its maximum density at bar 99 (29 events per bar, with 6 rests).[24] Layering these processes in this manner creates a very static texture in the four instruments in the middle of the work, as the piano plays quick arpeggiated figures based on the chordal thematic material.

[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

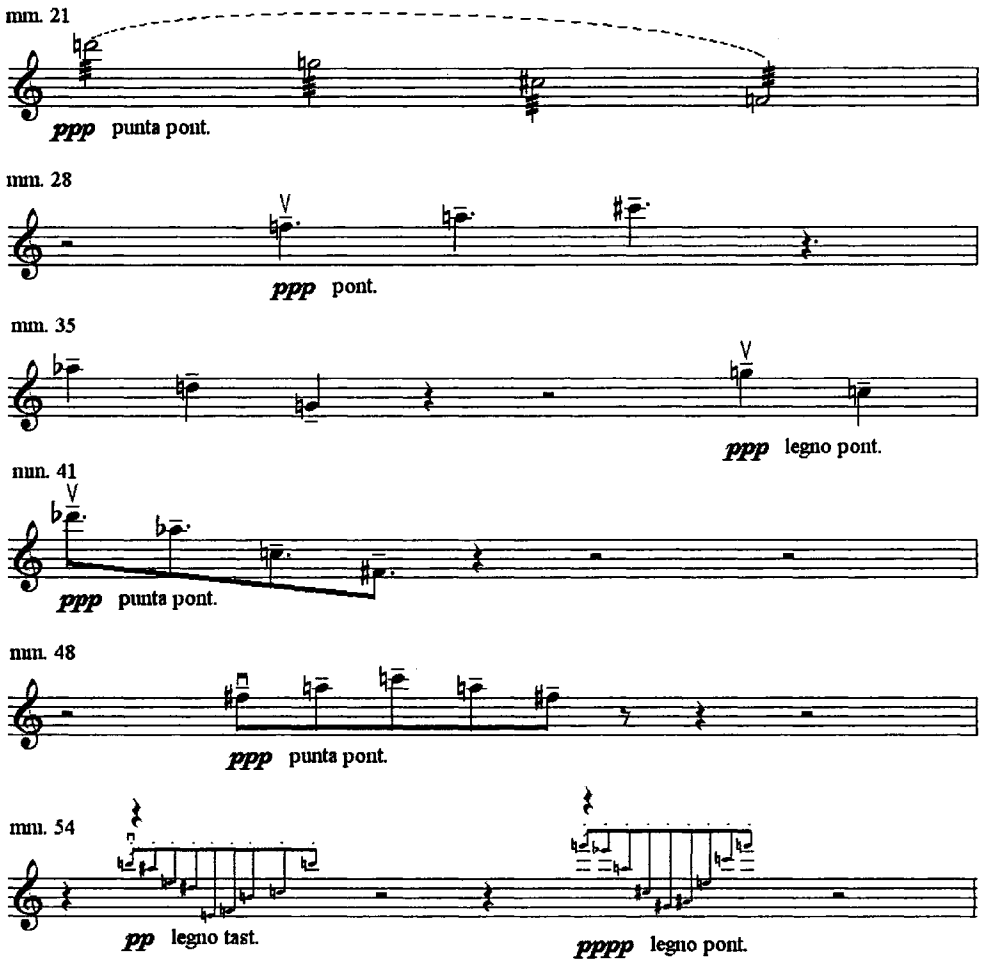

Figure 3.7: Durational density filtering in the violin part of Etwas, measures 21 to 54.

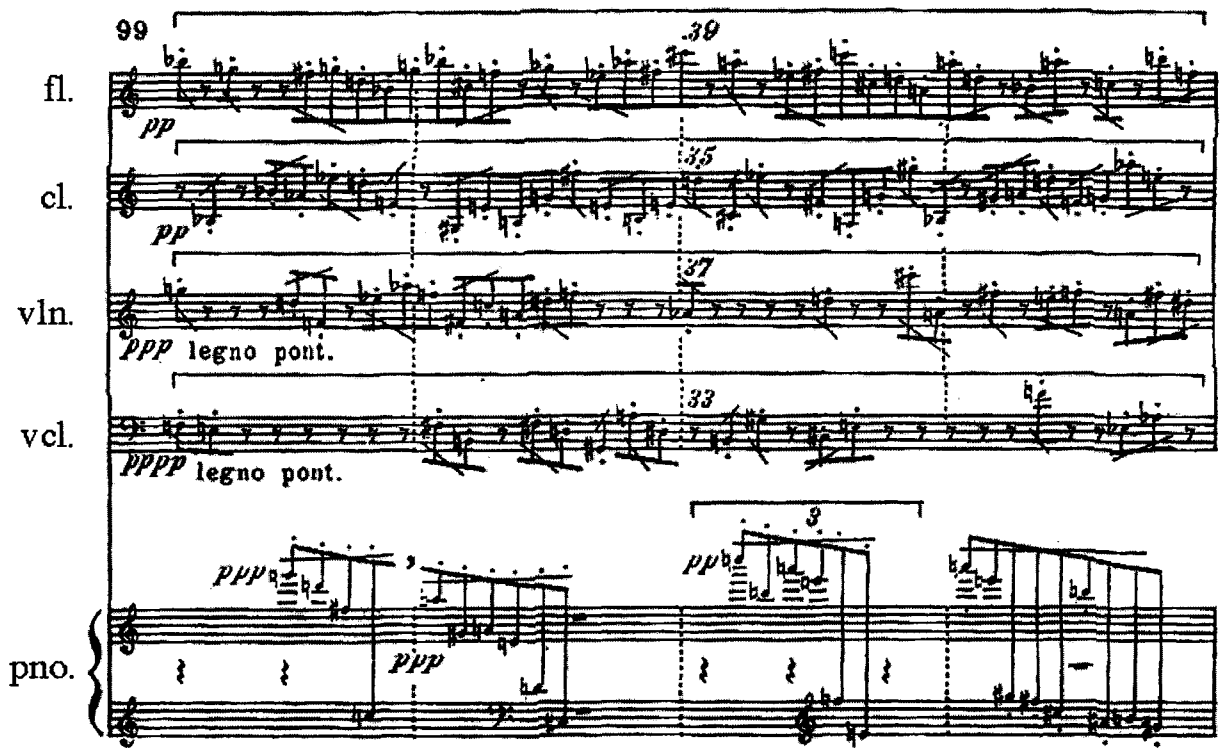

Figure 3.8: Static texture in m. 99 of *Etwas*.

At this point the faulty reassembling process begins. In m. 101 Donatoni imposes a new code of density reduction meant to expose the original material: beginning with the cello, fifteen notes are subject to a code that Donatoni calls a "reduction to the unison."[25] Successive intervals are moved a semitone either up or down, occasionally creating unisons between two adjacent notes. When this occurs, the second of the two notes is replaced with a rest. (See figure 3.9.)

[25] Ibid., p. 7.

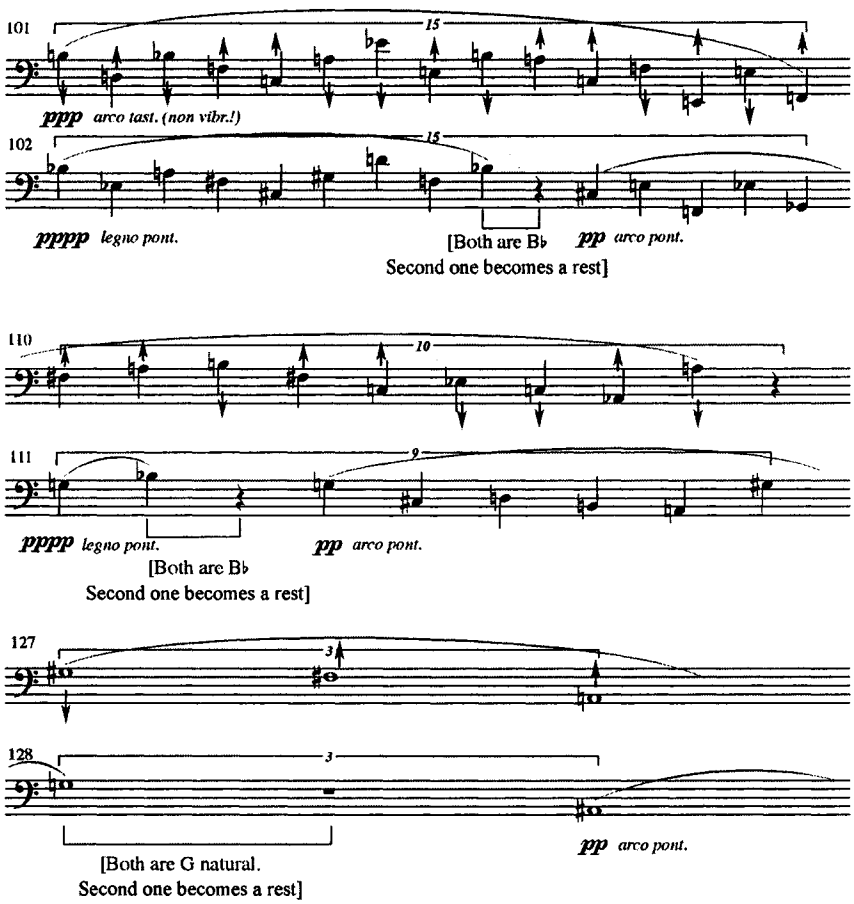

Figure 3.9: Three examples of "reduction to the unison" in the cello, mm. 101 - 132 of *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck.* [26]

This continual process of replacing notes with rests one by one slowly decreases the density. The other instruments, including the piano, immediately and simultaneously follow suit until m. 145. However, an interesting moment in this process occurs at bar 111, when the flute is reduced to fourteen notes. (See figure 3.10.) This phrase of fourteen notes does not reduce when submitted to the "reduction to the unison" code, because there are too many adjacent half steps. When two adjacent notes are half steps, one note carries over to the next iteration and the other jumps either an octave up or an

[26] Ibid.

octave down, depending on the register of the instrument. Because of the nature of the fourteen-note row and the directions they move, there are never any adjacent unison notes, and consequently, none removed from the sequence. Hence it becomes identical after fourteen cycles (recurring in mm. 111, 125, and 139). Therefore the code has exposed a catch: Because of its intervallic makeup the phrase is unaffected by the process.[27]

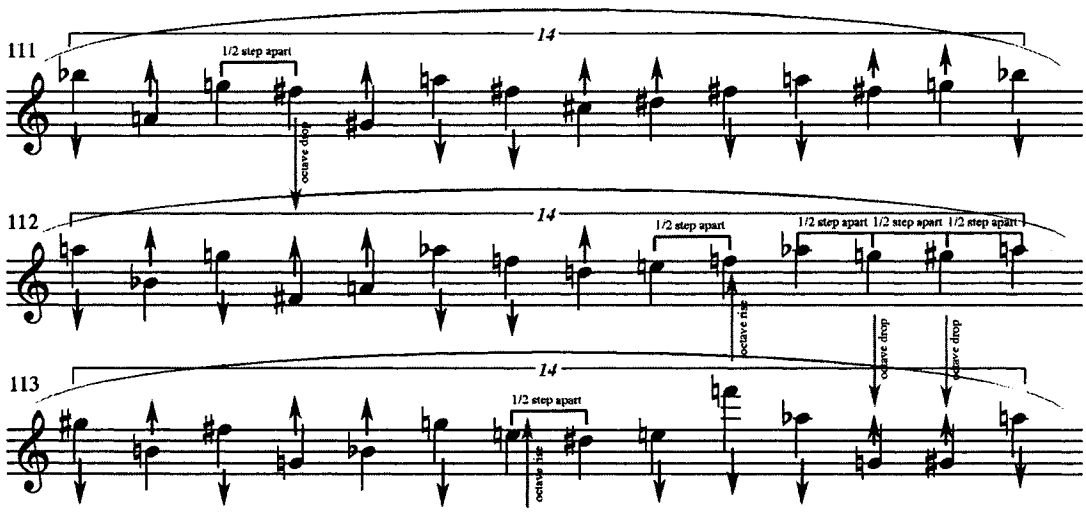

Figure 3.10: Non-reducible flute pitches, and two successive generations, begin in bar 111 of *Etwas*.[28]

This phrase of fourteen pitches is exposed after all others have been reduced in m. 144 and the work begins a new section. It appears that the ideal seed for the regeneration of the original material should have been the exposed flute pitches in mm. 144 and 145. This is evident by the pattern that emerges, where notes from m. 144 are used in

[27] Ibid., p. 8.
[28] Ibid., p. 7.

successive even bars (146, 148, etc.), and those in m. 145 are used in successive odd bars (145, 147, etc.).[29] (See figure 3.11, which shows the flute material in m. 144, and the piano in m. 146.) Note that the material in the piano is set T1 in bar 146, as derived from the pitches in bar 144. In the same way, the piano notes in bar 147 are derived from the notes in bar 145, but the "A" required to complete the set T2a is unfortunately absent.

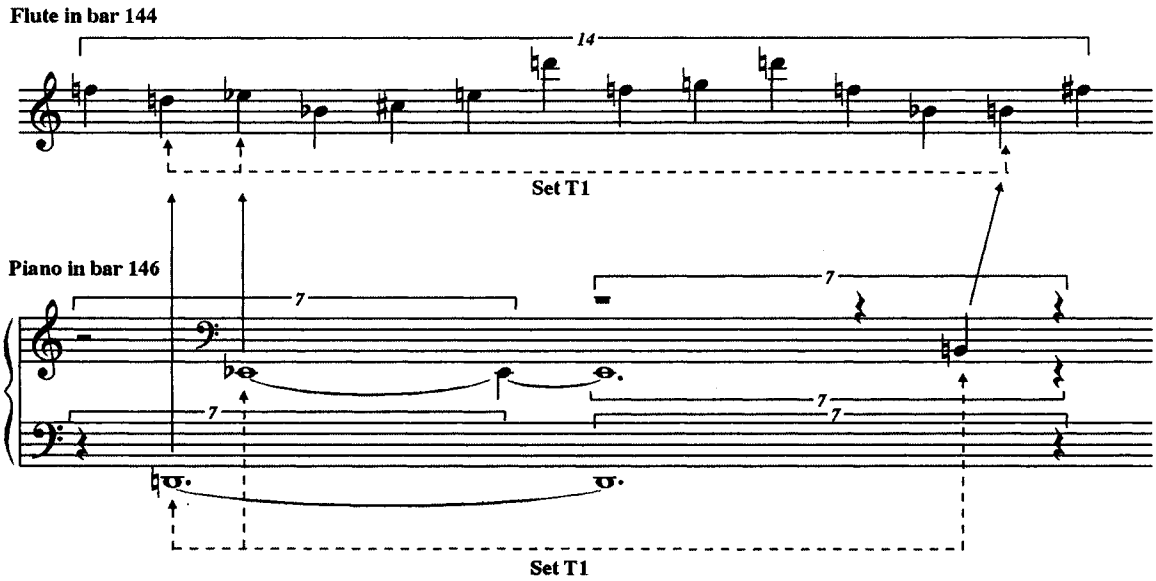

Figure 3.11: Set T1 in the flute in bar 144, and in the piano in bar 146.[30]

The error goes unnoticed and the process continues, as in m. 150 the pitches in the piano are T2b (as derived from measure 144). Thus the process gradually adds T1, T2 a/b, and T3 a/b, back into the piano part minus the A. It is not until m. 156 where Donatoni seemingly arbitrarily inserts six "A" grace notes amongst the ensemble within the last septuplet beat. (See figure 3.13.)[31]

[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., p. 9.
[31] Ibid., p. 10.

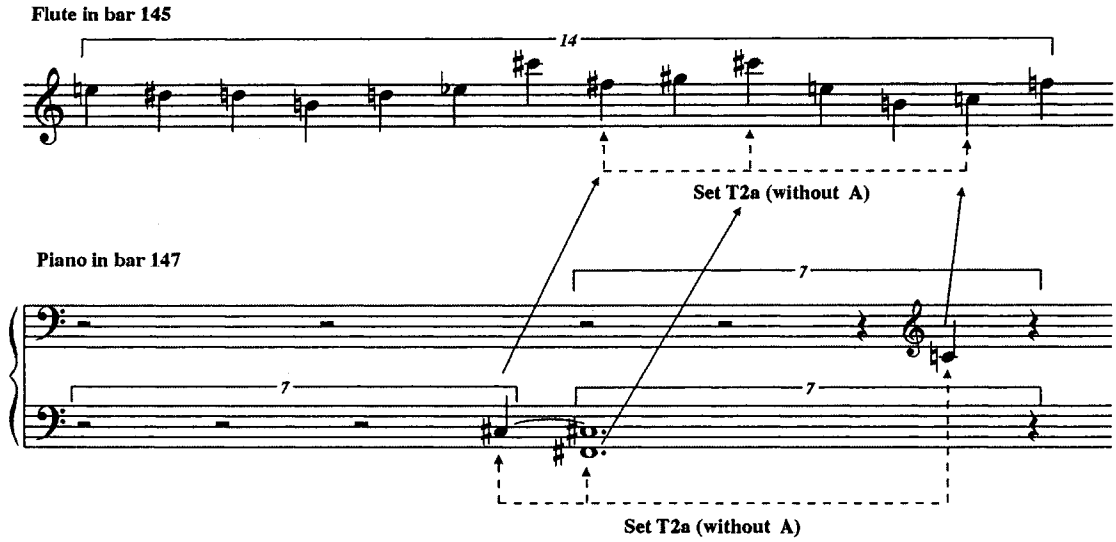

Figure 3.12: Set T2a in bars 145 and 147, missing the A.

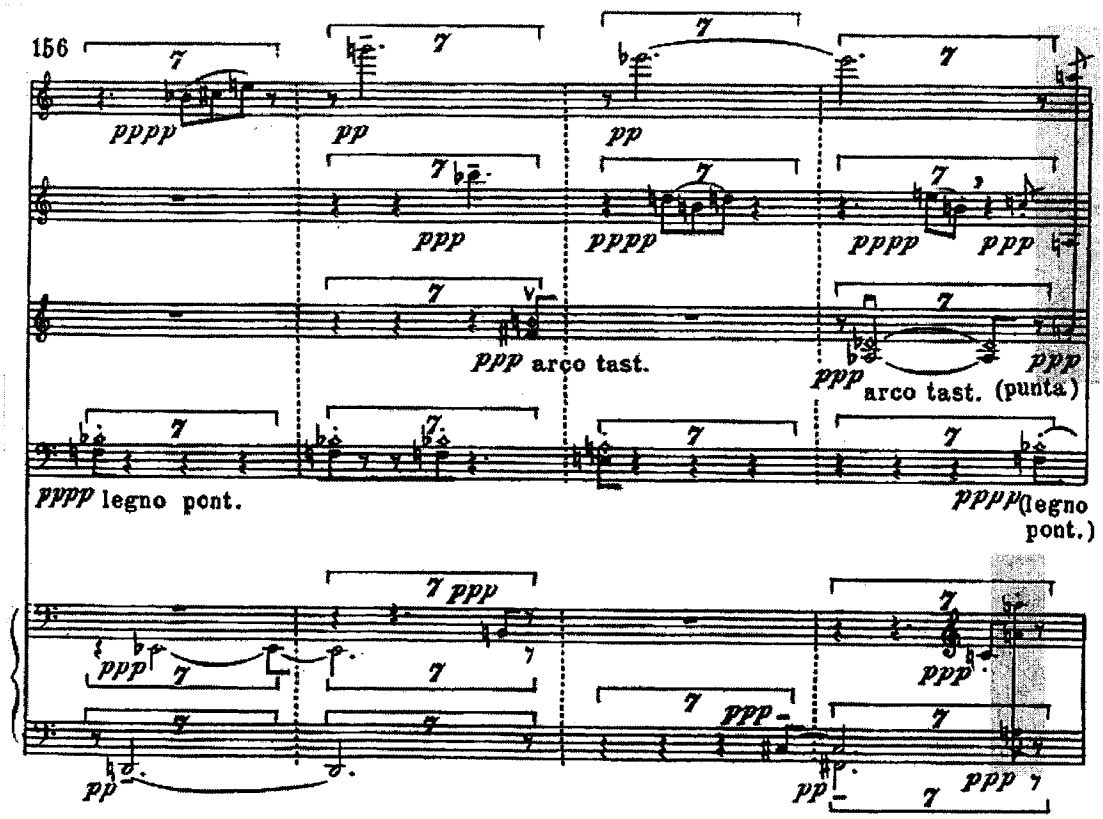

Figure 3.13: Insertion of "A" grace notes at the very end of m. 156.

Without this subjective insertion of the "A" in m. 156, Donatoni would have been unable to recreate the original material autonomously. Ten bars later in m. 166, the last measure, the original Schoenbergian phrase is finally exposed, almost in its original format. Only its rhythm is slightly varied and it is transposed up two octaves.[32]

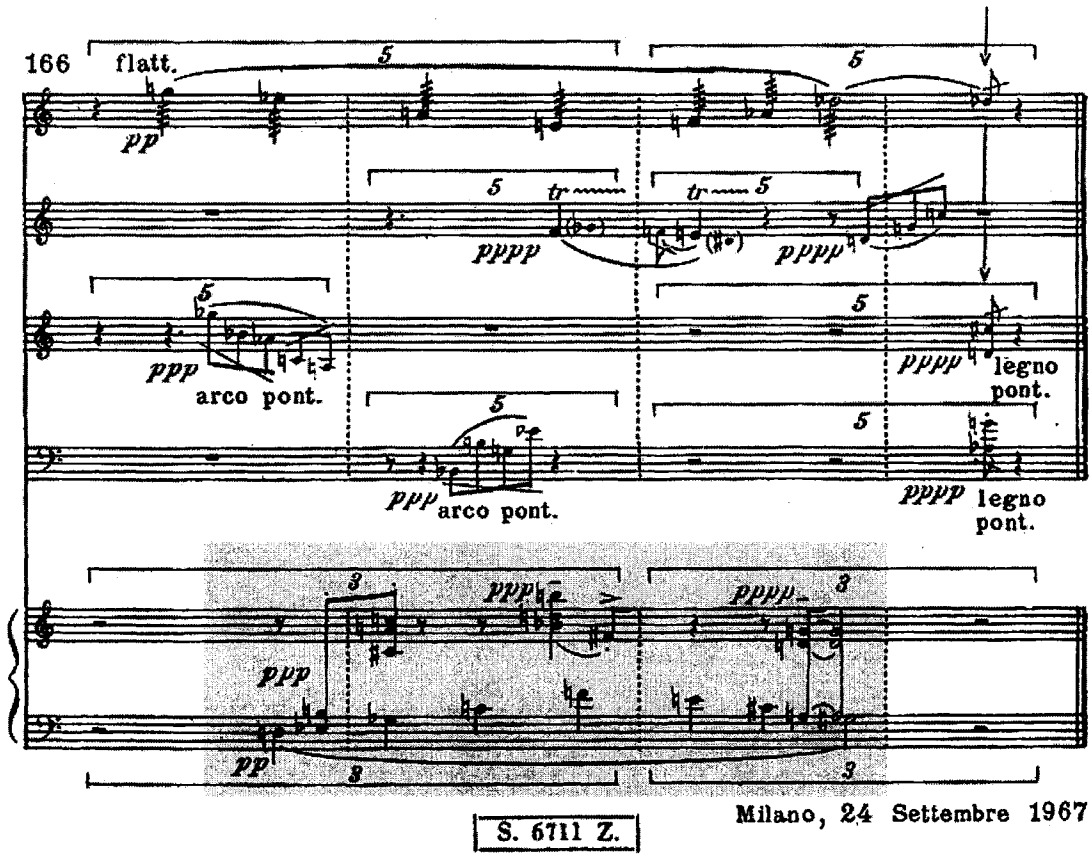

Figure 3.14: Emergence of original source material, transposed up an octave, in the final bar of *Etwas*.

Such examples of early codes found in *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck* expose Donatoni's tendency to create procedures so complex, they cannot autonomously regenerate the material. It is then necessary to fix the work by imposing subjective influence upon his autonomous code. The composer must interfere in order to produce the desired outcome. Thus the composer, as both player and arbiter, was forced to change

[32] Ibid.

the rules in the middle of the game. Donatoni, in retrospect, makes this observation: "What is interesting here is the normative function that rules exert within a playful context, not the ability of the player himself."[33]

While connections can be drawn between his early and late codes, those found in *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck* reveal one primary distinction; the pressure on the codes to succeed is much greater in his earlier works. Further, these early codes were conceived of independently from the material.[34] As can be seen in the fourteen-note flute phrase in *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck*, the material rejects the code, creating errors that must be corrected subjectively. Therein lies the difference between his early and later codes. Later codes, while generating the same general results (filtering phrases, accumulating density, etc.), were applied less rigorously and without such lofty goals, thereby creating a more positive relationship between the material and the code. The codes are adjusted to fit the material.

[33] Ibid., p. 9.
[34] Ibid., p. 8.

Chapter 4: Crisis - The Bridge to His Later Style

Two important factors in his early career brought Donatoni to his artistic crisis in the early 1970s: the rigidity of his codes, and his growing mental instability. The former stems from the fact that he was not using computers to enact his algorithmic processes. Unwanted human error crept into his systems. In pieces like *Etwas*, where the process defines the art, inaccuracies are somewhat critical. *Etwas* fails in its attempt to reconstruct the Schoenberg passage because of flaws in Donatoni's autonomous procedures. In an interview, the composer expresses this difficulty:

> Codes...(are) nothing more than what people do with the computer today. The intuition that dictates the function of the code comes in a moment, like all operations of a synthetic nature, invention, flashes of inspiration, etc. To produce the code, however, sometimes required a week of work. It is a bit difficult.
>
> I can give you a negative example – the one I give most often: You apply the principles of filter or extrapolation to a sequence of pitches with the intention of getting an f sharp. It is the case, however, that this sequence does not contain any f sharps. This case involves an autonomous code that declares itself to be a magic formula but does not have any function.[35]

In art, as in life, flaws can have their charm. Taking advantage of the opportunities of error, Donatoni would use these flaws as the catalyst of invention by creating other filters he called "subcodes." He enumerates this process as follows:

> If instead there *are* f sharps, then clearly they can be filtered out. Naturally the procedure of extrapolation supposes new realities. A code exists, but also a subcode and then the corrections of the code and so on.[36]

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[35] Restagno. *Donatoni*, p. 31.
[36] Ibid.

Donatoni considers this self-referential system a living organism. The composer influences it, yet it remains autonomous. In this regard, Donatoni refers to his systems as a metaphor for living things, citing the genetic code of DNA as an example. "The genetic code has its infractions, its errors. But, error disappears and if it does not, it is a mutation, a subcode."[37] By this reasoning, it seems that Donatoni's early use of code is also his commentary on the human condition, inspired by the blindness of evolution in nature. Donatoni's works, like human beings, employ systems that try to compensate for errors in a seemingly self-conscious manner.

Tied into this idea of human flaws is the second problem associated with his early career: his growing mental instability. At this time Donatoni was so completely fixed upon the autonomous micro-level that he lost sight of the subjective macro-level. His codes became increasingly complex, either along with, or as a result of his increasing mental illnesses. In this period, "the will was denied by automatism, but this negativity was overcome."[38] By the time he composed *Duo pour Bruno* in 1975, he began to notice his music trapped by these complexities, and saw a way to correct the problem through a more invasive personal intervention.

> You will begin to notice (a change in use of code) with *Duo pour Bruno* because the first part is rigorously codified. I then had to quit because of depression and a clinical recovery, but when I started again I became aware, later of course, that the second part was strangely dramatic. There was a malfeasance with the code of completely personal elements, of synthetic and inventive elements that I did not understand while I wrote, but whose existence I later recognized.[39]

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Mache, "Franco Donatoni: Juillet 1975," p. 315.
[39] Ibid.

This recognition took some time, as the completion of *Duo pour Bruno* was interrupted by his bout with clinical depression. Donatoni was convinced at the completion of *Duo* that his composition career was over. But it was from this struggle that he began to rebuild his confidence as a composer. For the next two years he began to work on *Lumen* and *Ash*, returning from his hiatus with a more relaxed and controlled approach to codes. *Spiri* (1977) is one representative of his new approach and perhaps his most encouraging early achievement in this new era. He relied on his own material instead of found objects. This idea of self-commentary propelled him into a more favorable compositional climate as his music changed for the better. With *Spiri* his destructive approach to codes was replaced by a more positive system of invention. His pieces began to focus on line, layers, and the preservation of material.

Indeed, the most prominent and characteristic implicit design to Donatoni's work is that his codes are applied to found musical "fragments". In this so-called "negative" phase, the found materials were from other composers. What did Donatoni wish to achieve by this practice? Was he expressing an appreciation for these composers, using, like Berio in *Sinfonia,* a post-modernist approach of quoting to place these composers on his creative radar? This is unlikely as his references are inaudible, insomuch as the fragments are completely transformed into new musical resources. Speaking of *Souvenir* (1967), the composer agrees: "Yes, the fragments were taken from Stockhausen's *Gruppen.* But naturally, these fragments are no longer recognizable because they have become something else."[40]

[40] Restagno. *Donatoni*, p. 31.

What interested Donatoni was not to provide a collage of borrowed elements, as in Charles Ives' Fourth Symphony for instance, but rather the *transformation* of such sonorous materials, thus disguising the traces of the composer's sources. Music emerges that reflects only the composer's code, and even this is not overtly audible. He achieves "separation between myself and the material, and this duality always exists."[41]

During the years of his compositional crisis, the composer found that such separation and mulching procedures resulted in drastic effects. Complete separation "between myself and the material" began to dilute the material into almost nonexistence. The material began to break down under such severe transfiguration. "After three or four years of this separation experience between the material and the gesture, I sometimes began to actually lose the material...I pushed too far, I had lost even the material, and with it the technical operation on the material."[42]

The composer's true intent involves degeneration of the material as much as possible, but resuscitation just before it expires. In this way, Donatoni thinks of his materials in a biological fashion. He produces material that seems to be a living thing, and its responses to his injections of various codes resemble mutation and evolution rather than mere development of a motive. Fragments become organic material, which when injected with a virus degenerates.

> What is interesting is to transform organic material into living material, and musical form is the living material. The importance of automatism, of repetition for example, is as great here as it is in cellular biology. I tried to improve upon the experiences from other disciplines which treat separation between means and the materials...I knew that there is certain types of unification between myself and the material that give place to certain phenomena that escape maybe to will. The will was denied by automatism, but this was overcome.[43]

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[41] Mache, "Franco Donatoni: Juillet 1975," p. 315.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

Donatoni uses the degeneration of this material as a way to comment on certain works. His Darwinian approach takes elements out of their native environment and places them in new ones to see how they will adapt. More processes are injected that further mutate his poor subjects. He extracts parts of already living works and tries to set them free. Donatoni thus achieves his goal of extracting the creator from the created: by pulling the ego of the original creator out of the material and inserting a new codes, he achieves a completely new, revitalized, fresh, and unrecognizable form of the original material.

Chapter 5: Panels – "Juxtaposition of Organisms"

The codes that are applied in Donatoni's later music are compositional tools that were used to attain either musical stability or motion. Both of these attributes are key to his creative process and the essence behind his late style. The dichotomy between stability and motion is manifest in a variety of codes that can be categorized as either panels or filters.[44] These codes are then applied to various elements of his music, such as orchestration, form, gesture and pitch. *Refrain* (1986) for eight instruments, is an excellent representative work from his later style, and will be used to show these techniques. This chapter will discuss how the panel technique is implemented in *Refrain* in regard to form, pitch, and interval content.

A. Formal Panels

In the analyses that follow I will define panels as the preservation of a musical element (such as a rhythm, pitch class, or formal section) over a period of time, resulting in a feeling of relative stability. Donatoni's panel approach to form begins with large strands of music, which are developed and realized to their logical conclusion. Sections taken from these strands become formal panels, and are assembled with other panels from

[44] Donatoni himself used the terms "panel" and "filter". The former can be found in an interview from 1990 with Enzo Restagno in *Autori Vari Donatoni.* (Torino: EDT, 1990), p. 44, where Donatoni states: "In 1976 the condition was different... the piece was conceived like a series of panels which interrupt the continuous flow of the orchestra." The latter, as noted in Chapter 4, is found in the same interview, on p. 31: "You apply... [a] filter or extrapolation to a sequence of pitches...This case involves an autonomous code." While Donatoni here refers to his earlier period, I am attempting to draw a connection between such older filters and newer ones in his joyous period.

other strands according to a formal plan. Each formal panel, taken from a fully realized and developed strand, reveals a moment from that lineage. The different strands interact through changing juxtapositions, thus creating new contexts for the material. Through this technique, the goal of Donatoni's third point regarding Bartók is achieved: "Juxtaposition of organisms; mutation, not evolution."[45] Material gains new life through new associations with other materials. The composer uses this technique on many formal levels, from large formal sections on the macro-level, to smaller strands of material within formal sections on the micro-level. He even uses this method to create a small model of the macro-level formal structure by arranging micro-level panels in a similar manner at the climax of the work. These techniques, to be discussed in more detail in this chapter, create both cohesion and variety, and contribute to Donatoni's inventive polyphonic style.

Donatoni's method of composing via the use of panels is exemplified through the sectional makeup and orientation of *Refrain* (1986), which is representative of his later chamber music style. The idea of periodic, recurring material suggested by the title is manifest in the ritornello-style approach to the formal organization of this work. (See chart in figure 5.1) *Refrain* uses 3 different tempi (♪ = 77, 88, 99), which provide obvious formal cues and help to divide the work into ten sections. The slowest tempo, ♪ = 77, is reserved specifically for the five "refrain" sections of the work, which like the *ritornello* model, differ slightly in orchestration yet use the same motivic material. The others are intermediary sections, or episodes, that consist of varying yet related material. There is also a two-measure "codetta" at the end, which is not considered a full section.

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[45] P. Santi, ed., "Franco Donatoni, 'Presenza di Bartók,'" p. 87.

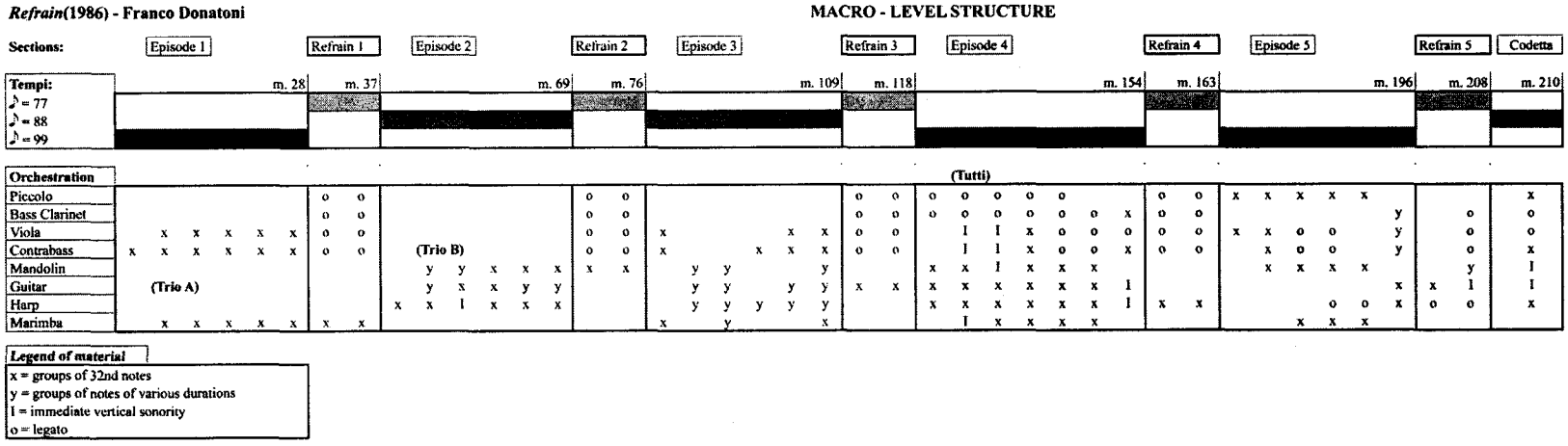

Figure 5.1: Macro-level structure of *Refrain* (1986)

Donatoni's panel technique is most clearly seen within the five episodes, as panels are clearly marked by abrupt changes in orchestration and motivic content. These abrupt changes produce dramatic contrasts, also making it possible to identify their lineage in the piece. An excellent example is in the third episode from mm. 76 - 109, which consists of three panels: mm. 76 - 84, mm. 85 - 95, and mm. 95 - 109. figures 5.2 and 5.3 below exemplify an abrupt orchestration change at m. 85. A trio of pizzicato viola, contrabass, and marimba (hereafter referred to as "Trio A") is immediately followed by mandolin, guitar, and harp (referred to as "Trio B"). (Also refer to the graph of *Refrain*'s macro-structure in figure 5.1.)

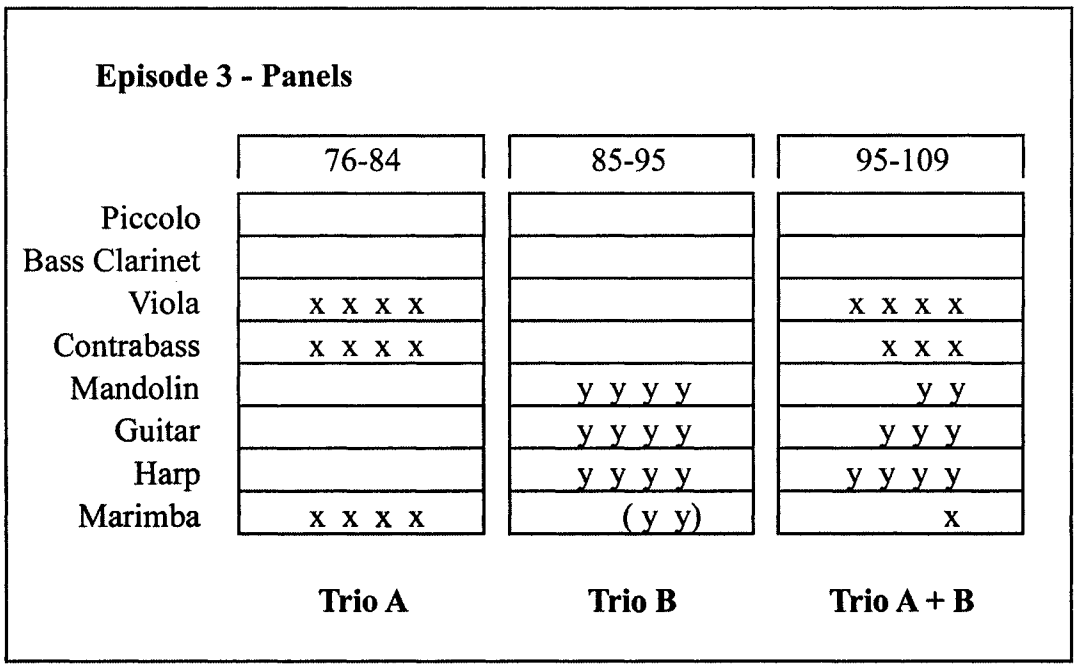

Figure 5.1: Detailed graph of panel structure in the third episode of *Refrain*, mm. 76 - 109.

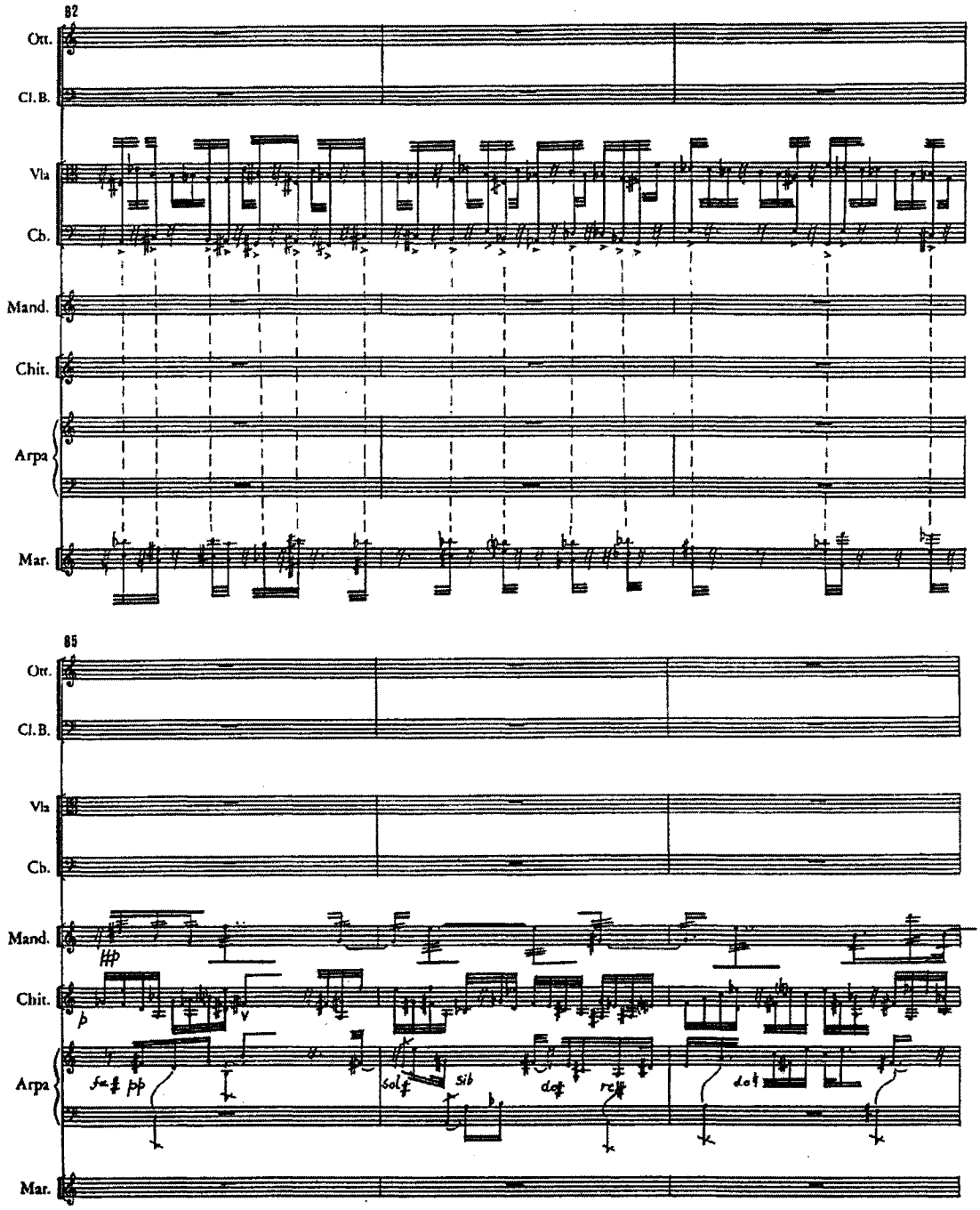

Figure 5.2: Abrupt changes in content and orchestration in *Refrain*, mm. 82 - 87

However, as noted above, the motivic content changes as well. Sporadic groups of thirty-second notes in the first panel in this example (mm. 76 – 84) are much smaller and

more incongruous than the following material. The viola plays groups of three to nine thirty-second notes, which are highlighted by dyads in the marimba, and notes in the contrabass. The result is a tense, unpredictable and undulating texture, with erratic stops and starts.

This panel proves to be thematically important, as it is first heard at the outset of the work in this exact timbral group, Trio A, from mm. 1-19 (See graph in figure 5.1). It is similar in both rhythm and motivic content, as it uses short groups of thirty-second notes and features mostly minor seconds and thirds and suddenly stops at m. 19. (Note the similarity between figure 5.4, and the first three measures of figure 5.3.) In m. 76 this panel reemerges after a fifty-eight measures interruption of other panels (sixteen measures of which are dedicated to refrain sections).

The second panel within the third episode, from mm. 85 - 95, involves Trio B - mandolin, guitar, and harp. As seen in figure 5.5, Trio B contrasts the previous panel in motivic content at m. 85, using more continuous phrases and rhythms, and producing few accents or gaps in texture. It begins with a sudden drop in dynamic level and intensity, builds to a quartet by adding marimba at m. 89, and concludes in ascending thirty-second note phrases by m. 91.

This panel can also be traced to earlier parts of the work. Mm. 52 - 68, the second half of the second episode, also uses Trio B and features ascending thirty-second note phrases. (Note the similarity between figure 5.5 and figure 5.6.) This passage is clearly the source of the later panel in episode 3, providing a marked contrast to the erratic and undulating panels of Trio A. The gap between these two related panels is however smaller (seventeen measures), including only one refrain.

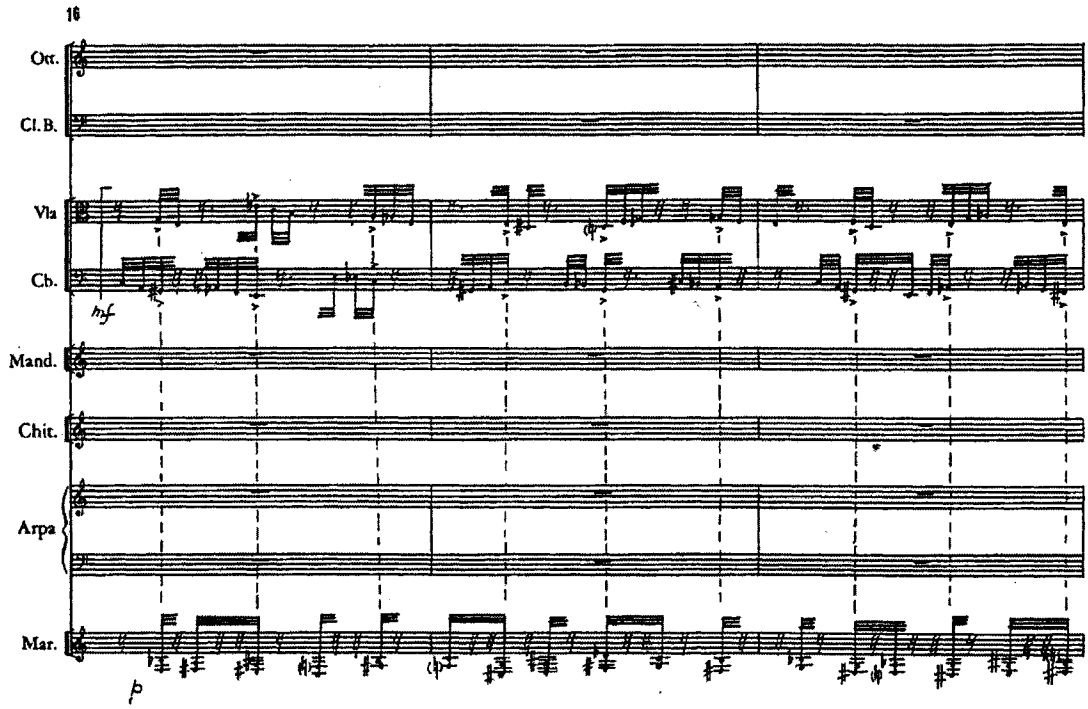

Figure 5.3: Trio A at the conclusion of the first panel in section 1 of *Refrain*, mm. 16 – 18

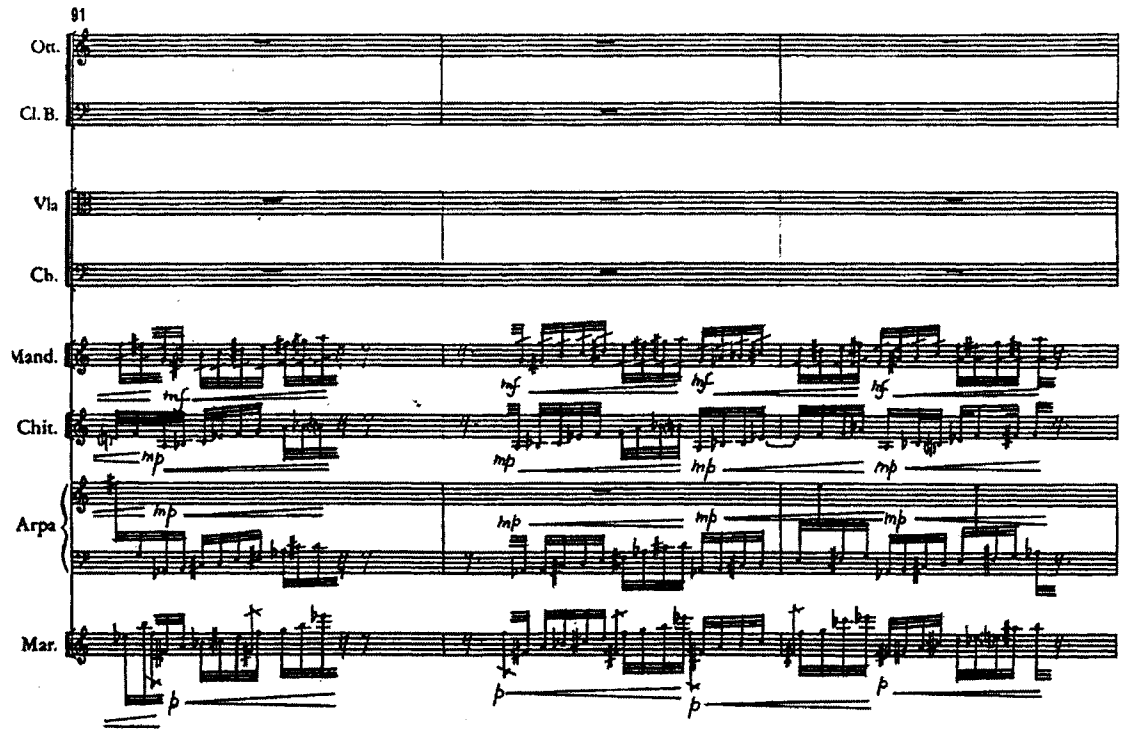

Figure 5.4: Ascending phrases in Trio B plus the marimba later in episode 3 of *Refrain*, mm. 91-93.

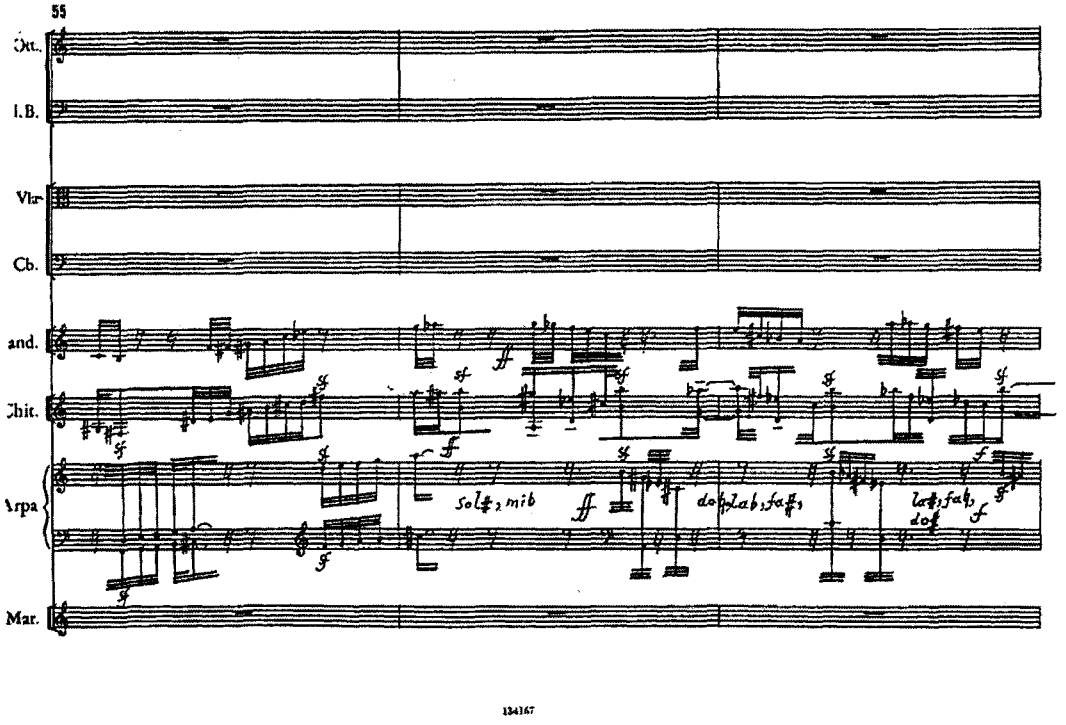

Figure 5.5: Ascending phrases in Trio B in episode 2 of *Refrain*, mm. 55 – 57.

Throughout this work Trio A and Trio B are often presented with their signature material, causing an assumption that such timbral groups are a signpost for thematic content. However, this is not always the case, and Donatoni often thwarts expectations in this regard. Trios A and B, and their respective motives, combine in the third panel of episode 3, mm. 97 - 109. (See chart in figure 5.2, and refer to figure 5.7 for a score sample of this material.) At m. 97, the panel begins with one representative from each timbral group (the viola from Trio A and the harp from Trio B) and each instrument holds a semblance to their signature material. By m. 101 (see figure 5.7) we have a quartet: two members of Trio A (viola and contrabass) and two from Trio B (harp and guitar). Each pair of instruments assumes attributes of their original panels as well. This combined panel finally concludes with a resounding cacophony of both thematic material and instrumental groupings, as from mm. 106 – 108 we have both Trios A and B presenting

their characteristic thematic materials simultaneously. (See figure 5.8) Through this process Donatoni achieves the goal of "juxtaposition of organisms; mutation, not evolution." Two panels fuse: each is provided with new surroundings, and the listener with a new composite texture.

Further implementation of the formal panel concept is found at the climax of the work, from mm. 131 - 144, as Donatoni reveals a small model for the whole piece. At this point, the piccolo and bass clarinet present an important melodic thread (see Chapter 6 for further discussion of this melody) that is periodically interrupted by the rest of the ensemble in unison. (See figure 5.9 for a score sample of this section.) The duality between piccolo/bass clarinet duo and the ensemble represents the episode and refrain sections on the macro level, respectively. Size ratios between the two elements in this climax section reflect the ratios seen in the macro structure of the piece. (Compare charts in figure 5.10 and in figure 5.1.) In addition, the number of sections is comparable in both the macro structure and the smaller structure of the climax. While there are six episodes in both, there are five refrains in the macro structure and six in the smaller version. Donatoni chooses an appropriate time in the work to reveal this important formal concept.

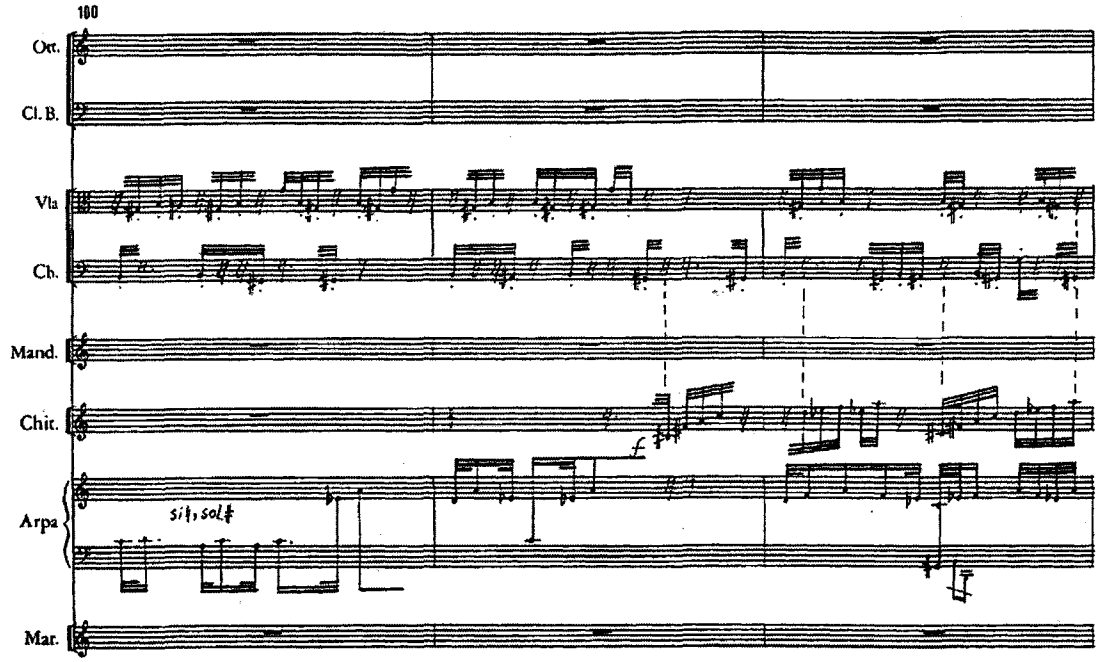

Figure 5.6: Two members of each Trio begin to build with representative material in *Refrain*, mm. 100 – 102.

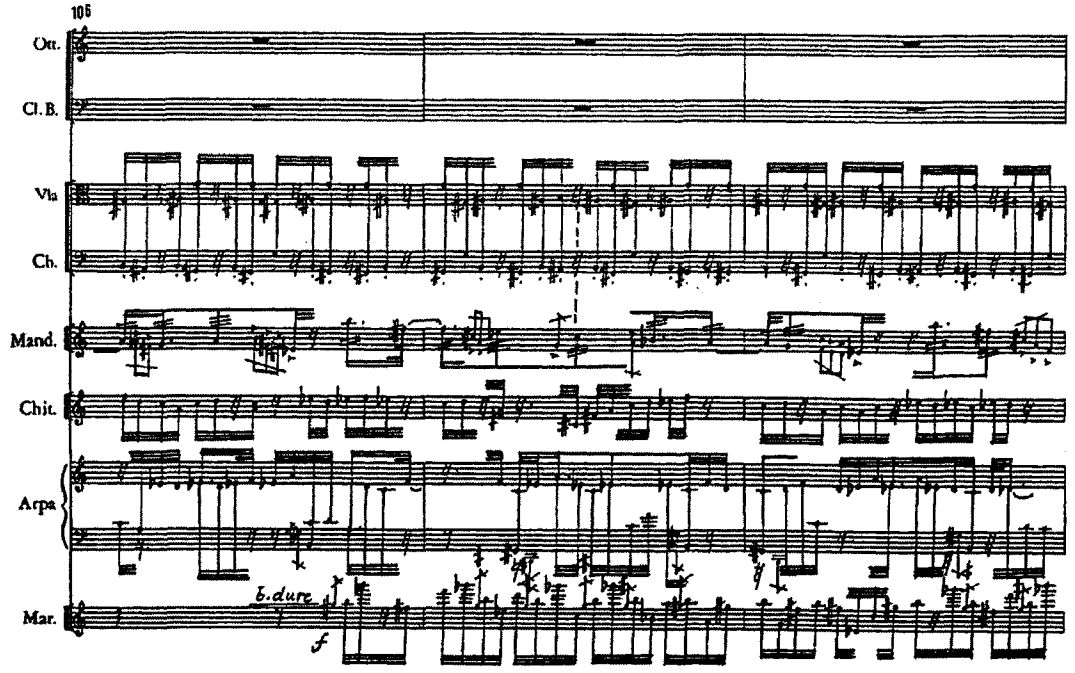

Figure 5.7: Trio A and Trio B combine in episode 3 of *Refrain*, mm. 106 – 108.

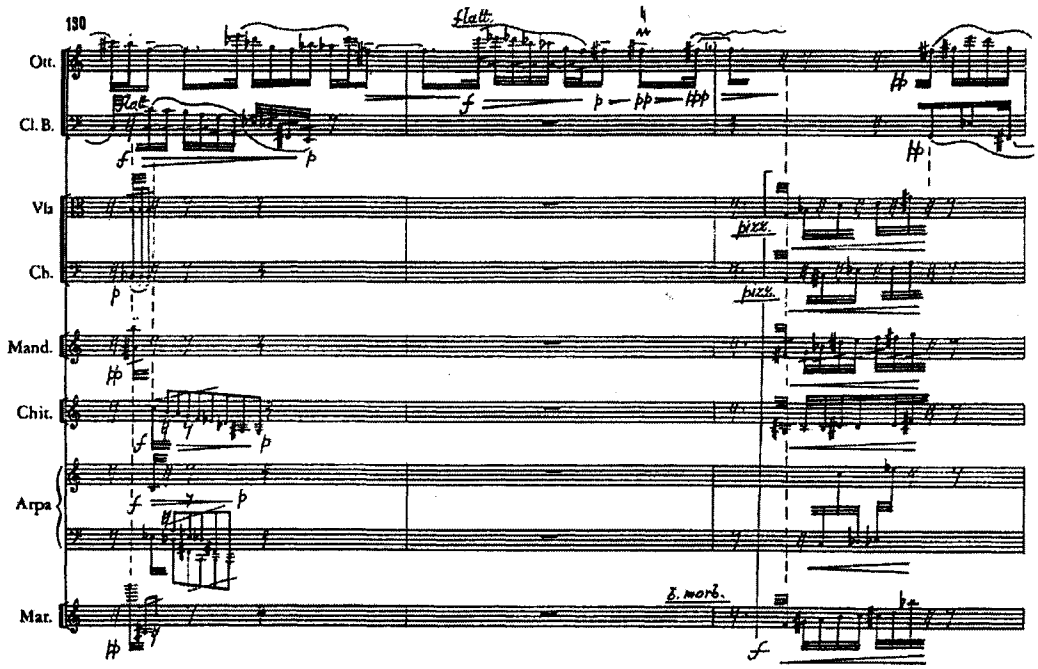

Figure 5.8: Two elements in the climax of *Refrain* imitate the macro-level formal structure.

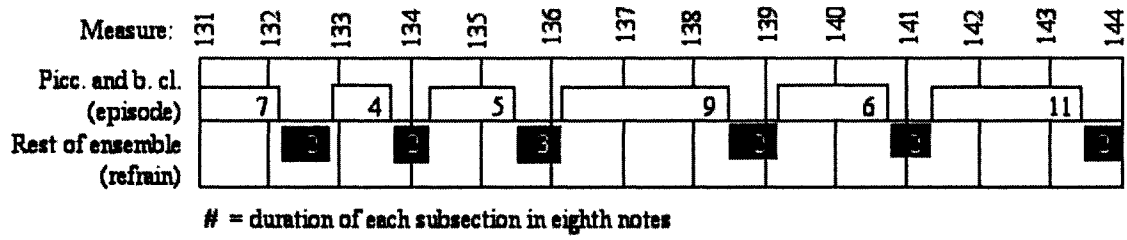

Figure 5.9: Arrangement of melodic and interlude elements in climactical section, mm. 131 - 144 of *Refrain*.

Formal panels can therefore be found on both the macro level and the micro level. The work as a whole is an assemblage of refrains and episodes, which are separated by changes in tempo, thematic material, and orchestration. On a smaller level, we have seen that episode 3 is also an assemblage of smaller recurring sections. Unlike the shifts between refrains and episodes on the macro level, these panel shifts are not delineated by tempo change. The effect, however, is functionally similar. Dramatic changes in both

orchestration and motivic content create obvious formal divisions while preserving a sense of unity and recollection.

B. Pitch Panels

Similar to the formal panels discussed above, Donatoni incorporates panels on an even smaller level with regard to pitch and register. Pitch panels, or extended passages where each instrument presents only a select group of register-specific pitch classes, provide points of relative harmonic stability. The harp solo in mm. 37 - 40 provides a clear example of this technique. (See figure 5.11) M. 37 shows the pitch collection used throughout the solo: A, A♯, B, C D♯, E, F, G♭, and G♯. At least for the first measure and a half, each presentation of these pitches is at a specific register. The result is a fixed pitch and register combination: A^1, $A♯^2$, B^3, C^2, $D♯^3$, E^2, F^3, $G♭^2$, $G♯^4$. Donatoni sets up this panel of fixed pitch to create a sense of suspended harmonic motion and time.

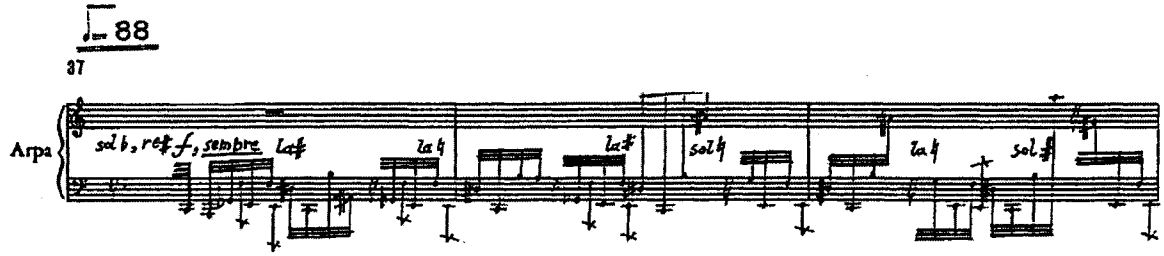

Figure 5.10: Fixed pitch and register in the harp solo in *Refrain*, mm. 37 - 40

But such use of pitch panels is rarely so simple, and as we see in this three-measure example, the composer controls register placement to provide direction. The fourth thirty-second note of beat three of m. 38 is an $A♯^4$, two octaves above its previous

register in m. 37. Each presentation of that pitch thereafter, as in m. 39, is in this new register. Other notes are on the move as well. In beat three of m. 39, the A^1 is now an A^5. In m. 40, A^2 moves four octaves to A^6. Although these pitches are migrating to higher registers, the harmonic character is preserved through using a consistent pitch class set, or "continuity of tone."[46] The tessitura of the passage widens, covering the entire range of the instrument, yet the passage remains harmonically consistent.

Naturally, one can expect Donatoni to contrast these periods of harmonic stability with periods of harmonic change. Through the combination of pitch panels and other contrasting harmonically active sections, Donatoni achieves a depth-of-field that is effective in contributing to the whole sound-environment: the harmonically active sections stand out as foreground elements against a background of static harmonic panels.

Orchestration panels also exist in this manner, combining stability and controlled motion to contrast moments of instrumental flux. An instance of this mixture at m. 100 features viola, contrabass, and harp, combining a pitch panel with additive timbral expansion (see figure 5.7). The viola, using pitches $G\sharp^3$, $A\sharp^3$, B^3, and G^4, and contrabass, using $G\sharp^2$, $A\sharp^2$, B^2, and G^3, use the same pitch classes in call-and-response fashion. The harp shadows the contrabass and viola, as its attacks imitate the composite rhythm of the viola and contrabass, playing short notes against the contrabass and long notes against the viola. These elements combine to weave a static texture.

Guitar, mandolin, and eventually the marimba enter on varying levels that do not conform to the fixed register of the viola, contrabass, and harp trio. (They do however use a "panel" code I call the "interval aggregate," which will be discussed in detail below.) In

[46] P. Santi, ed., "Franco Donatoni, 'Presenza di Bartók,'" p. 87.

order to provide a sense of depth and relief to an opposing texture, these new additions eventually surround the steady-state pitch "mosaic" held by the trio (see figure 5.8, mm. 106-108). Thus, a three-dimensional space is created through the juxtaposition of two different textures, again contributing to a sonic depth of field. This buildup of new and old textures eventually leads to the next legato refrain, establishing contrast and closure for this section.

C. Interval Aggregates

The panel concept is further manifested in *Refrain* through the "interval aggregate" code. In contrast to pitch panels, interval aggregates assemble gestures by combining intervals rather than pitch classes. Musical material is built from of a series of smaller intervals which, when summed, create a larger intervallic aggregate (i.e. 1 semitone + 3 semitones = 4 semitones). Short groups of notes, whether interrupted by rests or not, create intervals that add up to a larger total interval. While a repeated aggregate may stay constant, the individual intervals can change or use different orderings each time. This code is most likely related to the magic square technique, which was used by his teacher Bruno Maderna in his *Quartetto per archi in due tempi* from 1955.[47] Donatoni himself dabbled in this practice in his *Composition in Four Movements* for piano of the same year, in which he uses a magic square matrix to combine rhythmic gestures.[48] However, this present use of aggregates, some thirty years later, carries only a semblance to this former practice.

The majority of the opening episode of *Refrain*, from mm. 1 – 28, uses the interval

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[47] Restagno. *Donatoni*, p. 31.
[48] Reginald Smith Brindle, "The Lunatic Fringe" *Musical Times* 47 (July 1956): p. 354.

aggregate code. Entirely made up of Trio A, this episode is divided into two parts at its two-thirds point, measure 20. The code in the first section, mm. 1-19, is a combination of intervals 1 and 3 to create the interval 4. As can be seen in figure 5.12 below, groupings of these intervals are achieved regardless of bar lines, rests, or agogic accents, and are restricted to the same instrument. In the viola and contrabass the combination of the two intervals in either ordering (1 + 3 or 3 + 1) produces the same result: a sporadic counterpoint unified through related intervallic groupings and rhythmic profile.

The marimba intervenes with its own dyads at m. 8. These dyads only occur on certain accented beats and accentuate the points where the viola and bass meet. The marimba opposes the interval aggregate pattern set up in the strings, as its pitches are not a part of the aggregate pattern and their combined sonority is dissonant and unpredictable. By m. 17 a more consistent pattern emerges (although not rigorous or exactly repetitious) between all three, resulting in a more continuous and precise contrapuntal texture.

At m. 20 the marimba takes over the interval aggregate idea from the strings. As can be seen in figure 5.13, the instruments essentially switch roles: the strings combine to cover what were dyads in the marimba, and the marimba takes over the interval aggregate idea in the strings. However, this switch is not so simple, as the marimba line in mm. 20 - 28 represents a much more involved application of the interval aggregate technique. The previous technique in the strings, from mm. 1 - 19, uses only intervals 1 and 3 to produce the aggregate interval 4 within the span of three notes. The marimba's aggregate of 11 half steps is made up of four notes. Therefore, the marimba can use many more combinations of intervals to produce the aggregate, and Donatoni makes it a point to use

most of them. Figure 5.14 shows these combinations. While this three-measure figure does not show a repeated interval combination, the whole passage uses a handful of aggregates that do repeat but not with the same pitches. Like the strings' version in m. 13, rhythms or rests do not determine these groupings.

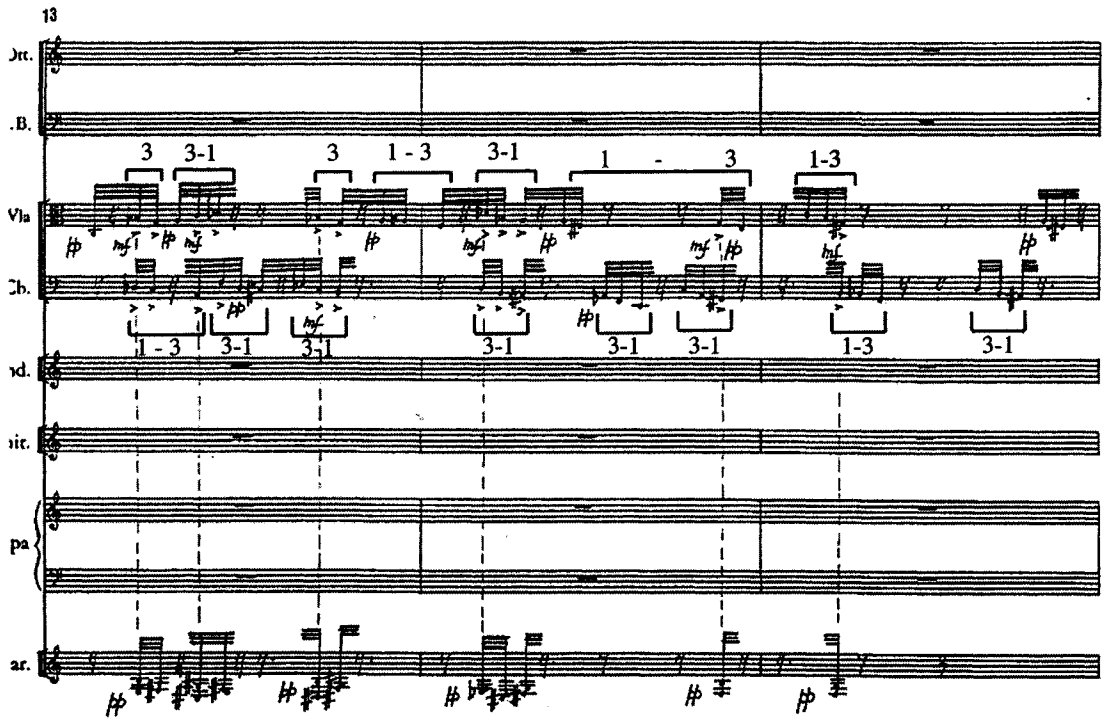

Figure 5.11: Two interval aggregate patterns in the viola and contrabass in mm. 13 – 15 of *Refrain*.

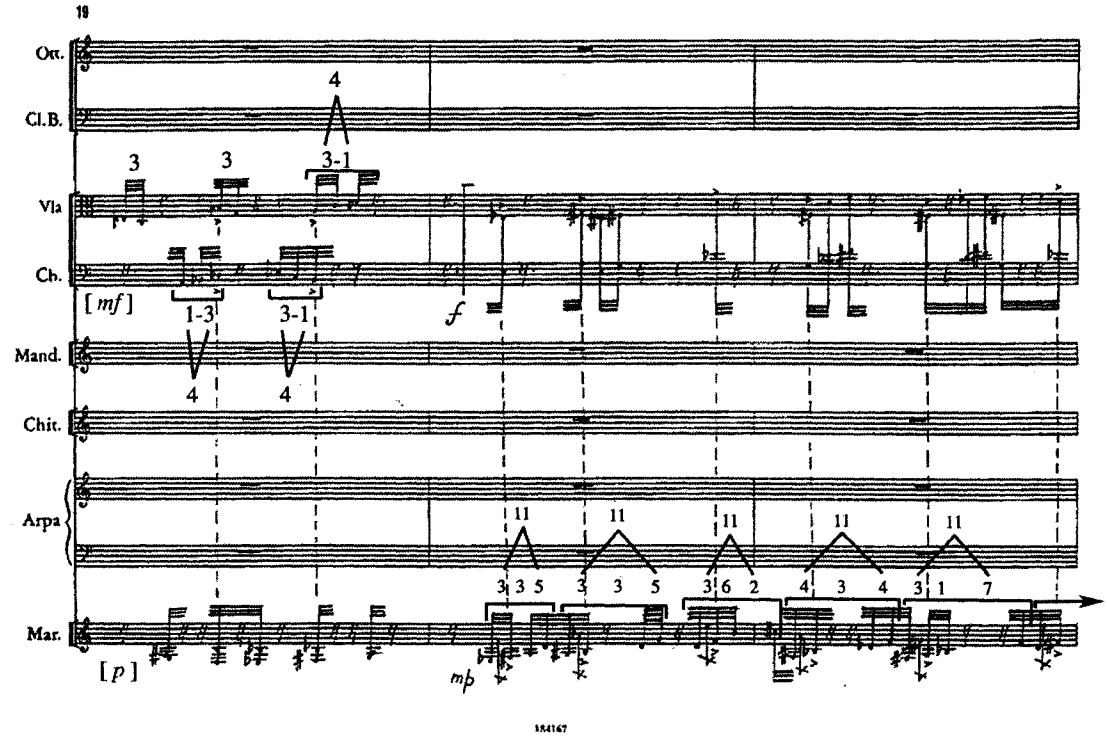

Figure 5.12: Sudden shift in material, yet continuation of the interval aggregate technique in mm. 19 – 21 of *Refrain*.

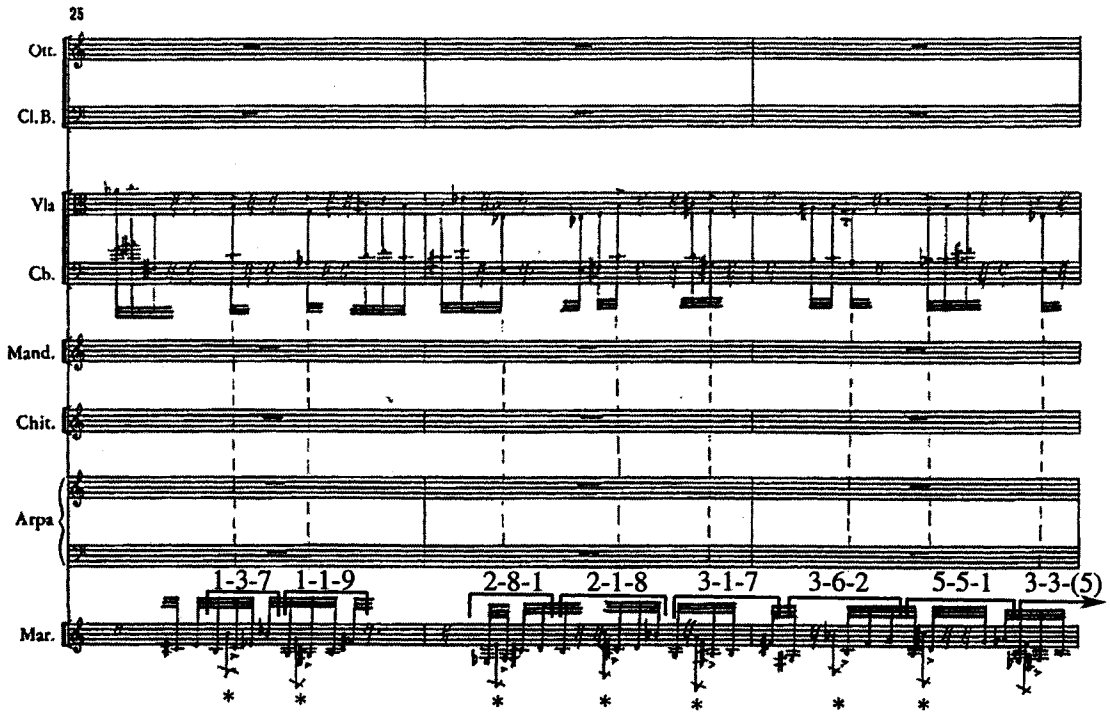

Figure 5.13: Use of interval aggregates in the marimba, mm. 25 – 27 of *Refrain*.

It should be noted that in this unique eight-measure section, the interval aggregate idea is taken to a smaller level. Not only do all of the four-note groups equal an interval of 11 half steps, but the distance between a grace note and its target note within these groups is also an interval of 11 half steps (see figure 5.14). The "magic number" of 11 is produced in two ways within the same figure, thereby fulfilling the Bartókian goal "conservation of the fragment." The fragment – an interval of 11 semitones – is not only preserved, but exploited. What's more, the string duo above it, as in the marimba role in the previous 19 bars, chimes in on certain accented beats and always combines in a dyad 11 semitones apart. (The contrabass part sounds an octave below the written pitch.) This point of arrival appropriately occurs immediately prior to the first refrain.

The panel idea, manifest in three distinct ways as seen in the above examples, allows the composer to manipulate material economically, clearly and consistently, while still providing different rates of motion. Form, pitch, and interval content are all manipulated through this panel technique, and on many levels. By treating different components of a work in a consistent manner, Donatoni achieves depth, unity, and compositional flow.

Chapter 6: Filters – "Growth Without Development"

In Donatoni's discussion of Bartók, he mentions "Growth without development; conservation of the fragment" as an influential aspect. This statement is cryptic: how does one further a musical idea without development? It is my belief that Donatoni was referring to a more gradual method of composition, where musical textures are revealed through a consistent presentation of small motives. Rather than a method of developing variation used by Brahms and Schoenberg, Donatoni "preserves the fragment," or retains the integrity of the original motive, throughout this evolutionary process. While the issue of whether "growth" is synonymous with "development" can be disputed, the method by which the composer attempts this goal is intriguing.

The idea of "growth without development" is achieved at several levels of Donatoni's compositional method through the implementation of codes. The previous chapter discusses codes that produce panels, which allow the composer to create new musical textures by juxtaposing established layers of material and thereby "preserving the fragment." This chapter will discuss the second category of codes - filters. As will be shown in the following analyses, filters provide ways to achieve "growth without development" through a gradual process of motivic evolution. While the term 'filter' suggests a gradual process of reduction or withdrawal, this process can of course be reversed, thereby gradually revealing or building a figure, gesture or melody. Hence, the term 'filter' is applied rather broadly to mean any gradual process of either reduction or revelation. On smaller levels, filters can also be applied to intervals in an attempt to preserve the integrity of the "fragment" while still achieving growth.

A. Interval Filters

Filters are processes that diminish, unravel, or otherwise change established musical objects. In contrast to pitch panels, which establish moments of harmonic stability, interval filters provide motion through a gradual change of interval and pitch selection. The identity of a motivic thread remains intact while its intervallic makeup slowly expands or contracts. One of the clearest examples of this technique is in the first refrain of the work, from mm. 28 - 36. Interval filters are used on two levels and at two different rates to allow two opposing strands to grow and return independently.[49] Stability and motion exist together on two different levels to create depth and direction. This section is also cyclic as it eventually returns to its original pitch class set.

Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 show this process in action. In the reduction in figure 6.2 pitch class sets are simplified into one octave, as range is not a consideration at this point. The standard quartet for the refrain sections (piccolo, bass clarinet, viola and contrabass) plays in rhythmic unison throughout the passage, which begins at m. 28 (see figure 6.1). The two woodwinds are always separated by the same interval, as are the strings. The result is essentially two dyads sounding at once, creating a four-note set.

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[49] A similar process to what is discussed here is found in Edward T. Cone's analysis of Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* in "Stravinsky: Progress of a Method" (*Perspectives on Stravinsky and Schoenberg* (Princeton: 1968) p. 156-57). According to Cone, Stravinsky alternates between different musical ideas through a process called "stratification," where two or more musical ideas alternate over a period of time, and are "usually incomplete and often vary fragmentary." He goes on: "Although heard in alternation, each line continues to exert its influence even when silent...the effect is analogous to that of polyphonic strands of a melody."

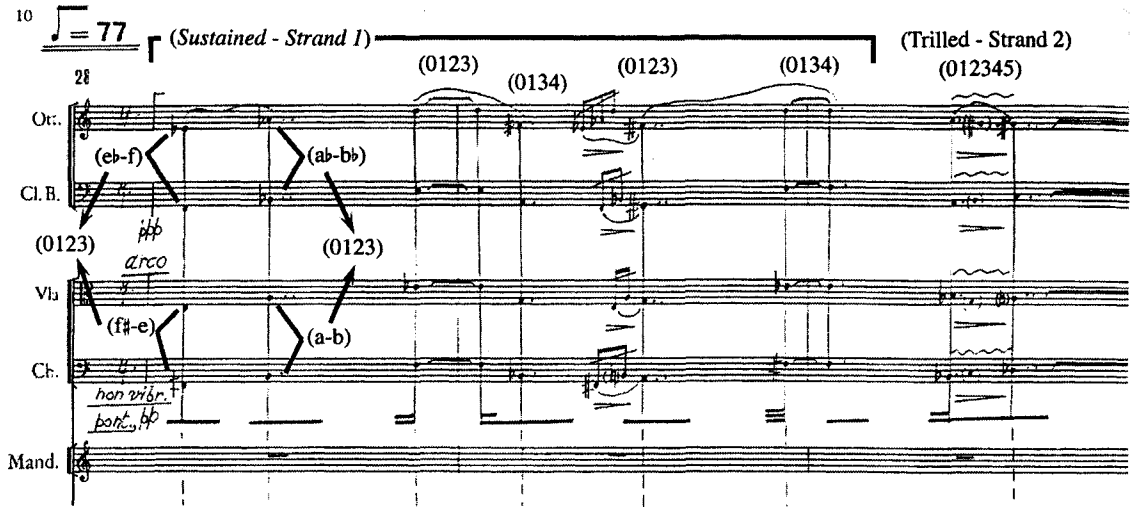
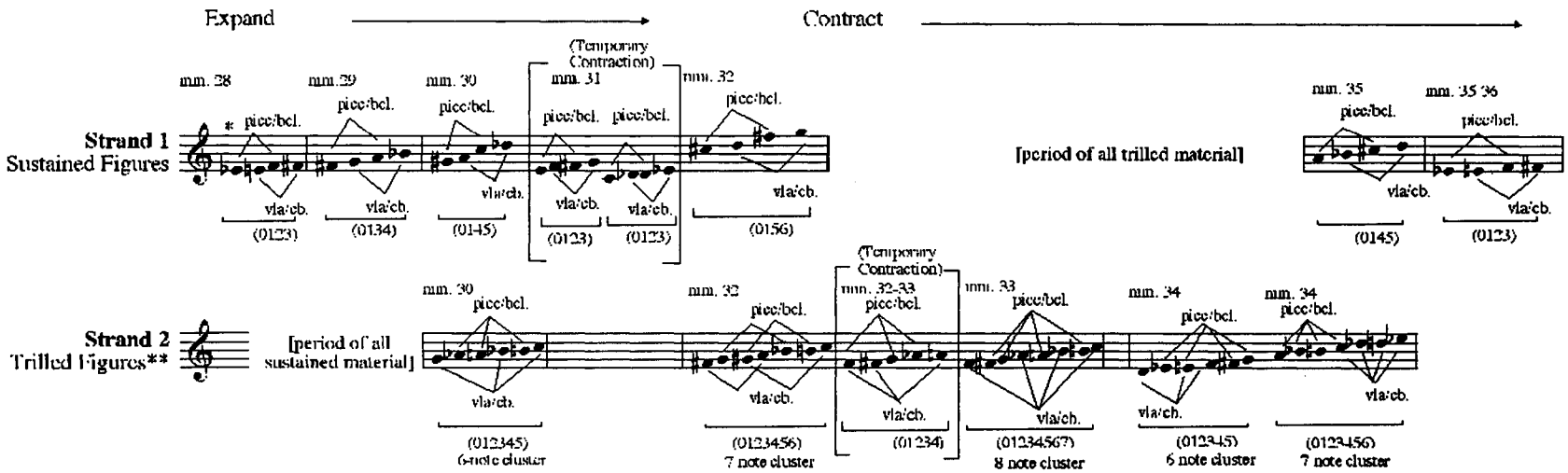


Figure 6.1: Woodwind and string pairs combine to begin the pitch filter process in m. 28 of *Refrain*.

The two strands involved in this process are defined by their articulation – a sustained strand and a trilled strand – and presented in all four instruments. (Auxiliary notes of all trills are included into their pitch class sets.) If each of the four instruments trills, then the accumulated set may have as many as eight members. The two strands thus become Strand 1 - the sustained, four-note sets; and Strand 2 - the trilled, four- to eight-note clusters. Since this refrain alternates between these two strands, the result is a combination of panel and filter codes (see figures 6.2 and 6.3).



* All pitches have been reduced to one octave, and arranged to fit cleanly on the treble clef.

** These sets include the auxiliary notes for each trill, as indicated in the score.

Figure 6.2: Set expansion, mm. 28 - 36 of *Refrain*.

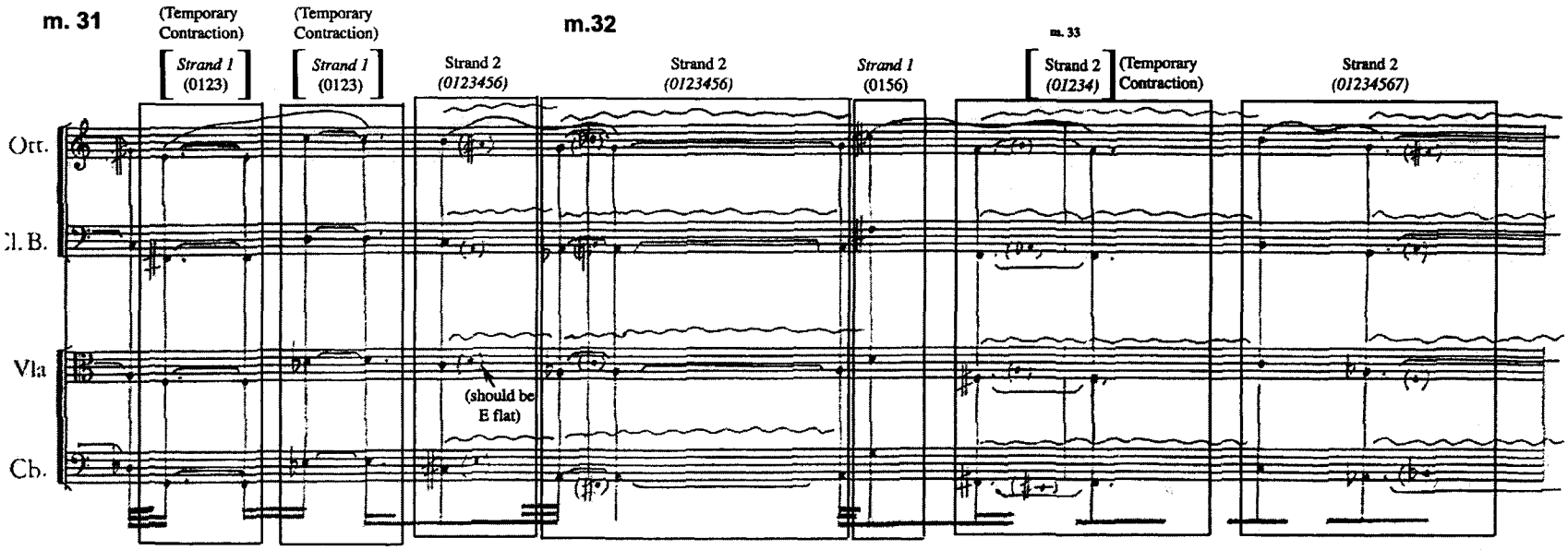


Figure 6.3: Both strands used in mm. 31-33 of *Refrain*.

Strand 1 - the sustained, four-note strand - is heard first and is the most systematically conceived of the two, since certain parameters remain constant throughout the process (see figures 6.2 and 6.3). At the outset, m. 28, the four instruments combine to create a chromatic set of (0123) between E♭ and F♯. When assigning instruments to these pitches, Donatoni alternates between the two timbral groups, the woodwinds taking the first and third notes of the set, and the strings the second and fourth. Thus the four are interlocked within the set, as can be seen in the first measure of the top stave of figure 6.2. By m. 29, the set expands in the middle to produce a whole tone between the two dyads, resulting in a set of (0134). The woodwinds still take the first and third notes, and the strings take the second and fourth. The duality between woodwinds and strings is preserved as a semitonal relationship, (i.e. piccolo and viola have F♯ and G, respectively) even though a whole step is inserted into the middle of the set. This semitonal duality is maintained as the process continues. With each passing measure, the set expands in the middle by a semitone. In m. 30 the set expands from (0134) to (0145), and by m. 32 it expands to its widest point (0156) with a major third in the middle. Even with this large gap in the set, a woodwind and string maintain their semitonal relationship. But once this point is reached, the progress of Strand 1 is paused in order to allow for Strand 2 to catch up. It resumes again at m. 35 and quickly reduces itself back to its original chromatic state, first as (0145) and finally as (0123) in mm. 35 – 36. The cyclic quality of this return to the chromatic set is reinforced through the use of the identical notes (E♭ to F♯) and instrument assignments as its original incarnation in m. 28. Thus, within this section we have a buildup of space between notes rather than a buildup of notes themselves, and a cyclical return to the original pitch class set.

Strand 2 (the four- to eight-note trilled groups) develops in a slightly different manner than Strand 1, although the two occur simultaneously and in the same instruments. This trilled strand does not commence until m. 30, and begins with a bigger chromatic set (012345). We again see the timbral groups divided amongst the set, but the semitonal duality is not as strict as the first strand. Note selection is more inconsistent as related instruments are assigned to adjacent notes in the set, and are arranged in different patterns from set to set (see figure 6.2, second stave).

Consequent sets in this strand are derived in a somewhat different manner from the previous method. Although both strands' boundary intervals grow progressively wider, growth in Strand 2 is achieved through the expansion of a chromatic cluster, not through the widening of an internal interval. Donatoni expands this set by adding a note to the original six-note cluster, as it evolves from (012345) in m. 30 (between G and C), to (0123456) in m. 32 (between F♯ and C). The seven-note cluster is created by simply adding another semitone, an F♯, to the collection. By m. 33 this trilled, purely chromatic texture reaches its largest state, an eight-note cluster (01234567) from F to C. While each instrument group accounts for four notes of the set, their assignment is not as consistent as in Strand 1. In addition, while Strand 2 does produce a wedge-like shape through expansion and reduction, it is not as cyclic as Strand 1. After first reducing to six notes (012345) in the first half of m. 34, Strand 2 expands back to the seven-note cluster (0123456) in the second half. In addition, these sets use different pitches than their original incarnations four measures earlier. Strand 2 ends here, while Strand 1 – the sustained strand - continues.

The whole section ends at m. 36 with Strand 1 in its original state, and a *diminuendo a niente* to its conclusion at the end of the bar. The music of this section, a texture that initially grows out of and then reduces to silence, is created through the use of two independent processes, or codes. Both of these codes maintain a semitonal base of expansion and timbral organization, use a chromatic set as its point of departure, and grow at different places and rates within the set. Thus, two related codes combine to create direction, motion and balance, while still providing another instance of "growth without development."

B. Gestural Filters

Another way Donatoni creates a feeling of relative motion and "growth without development" is through the diminution of entire gestures or phrases. This technique, which I call a "gestural filter," is analogous to previously discussed filters, but in this case a complete gesture is gradually and systematically reduced. Notes are extracted and replaced with rests, as seen earlier in the second half of *Etwas Ruhiger im Ausdruck.* However, just like any other process, this filter can be reversed. Gestural filters in *Refrain* typically begin with the most abridged version of the gesture or phrase and gradually reveal more components, until the entire musical object is presented. Exposing only a portion of the finished product at a time makes it easier for the listener to connect points in the piece that use the same gesture, and reduces the need for extraneous development. The result is a clear and unified evolution of gesture. This type of code, when coupled with panels, conveys a linear progression of gesture that eventually reveals a logical

musical consequence, or, in Donatoni's words, "growth without development, conservation of the fragment."[50]

To best achieve a sense of gestural growth, Donatoni often progresses from material in its most filtered state, and gradually filters back in the complete version at the appropriate moment. This is achieved on both a very specific and a more general level, as filters can extract either specific notes from a repeating phrase, or large portions of a recurring texture. In *Refrain*, the more specific filter can be accomplished in two ways: a "literal" filtering method, where little change in temporal placement occurs during the filtering process; and a "skewed" filtering method, where much more temporal displacement occurs during the filtering process. Both methods are shown in figures 6.4 and 6.5.

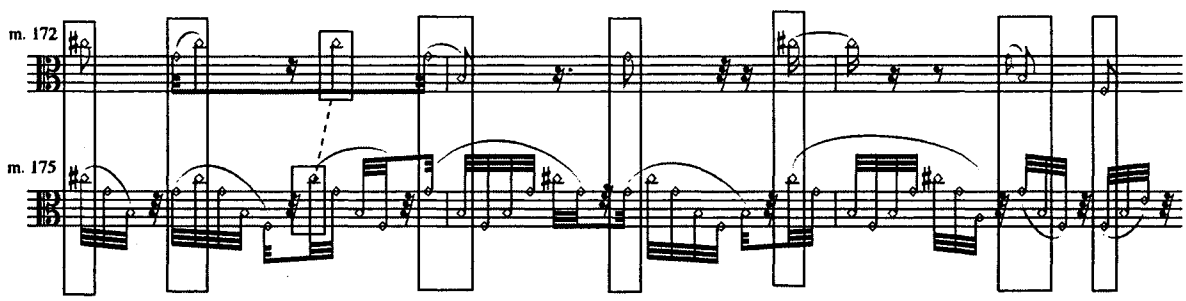


Figure 6.2: "Literal" gestural filtering in the viola, mm. 172 – 177 of *Refrain*.

[50] P. Santi, ed., "Franco Donatoni, 'Presenza di Bartók,'" p. 87.

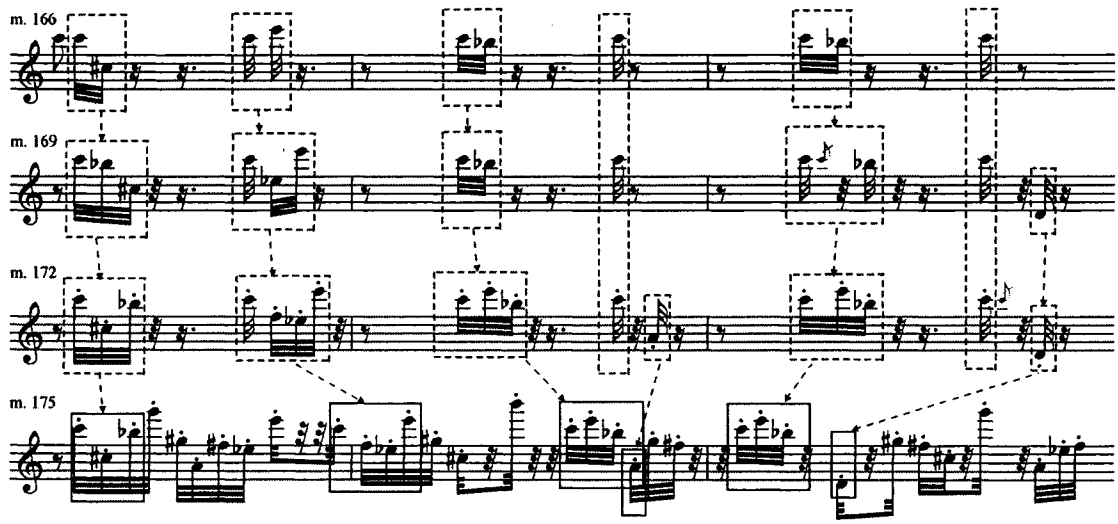


Figure 6.3: "Skewed" gestural filtering in the piccolo, mm. 166 – 176 of *Refrain*.

An example of the literal gestural filtering code is seen in mm. 172 - 177 in the viola, which at this point is playing legato harmonics exclusively. The viola in this passage presents a three-measure phrase twice, the first is filtered and the second is not. As can be seen in figure 6.4, the first presentation of the phrase is obviously sparser than the second. But on close investigation of the two superimposed, it becomes clear that notes from the second phrase have simply been subtracted to produce the first phrase, leaving notes that are temporally fixed to its source. For instance, the first C♯ in the first phrase is temporally linked with the first C♯ of the second. The next two notes of the first phrase, G and C♯, correspond to the exact temporal placement of the same notes in the second phrase. This is the case for the entire phrase, with few exceptions. However, these exceptions are quite minor, as the temporal differences are no more than a thirty-second note value. At a tempo of ♪ = 99, such deviations are hardly apparent.

The "skewed" method achieves "growth without development" in a much less precise manner. In figure 6.5, Donatoni uses gestural filtering in a more prolonged fashion than the previous example. The piccolo repeats a three-measure phrase four times in mm. 166 - 176. The first phrase is the sparsest, and more notes are filtered in with each successive phrase. Finally, by the fourth pass the texture is fully realized. This filter is skewed, however, since the temporal placement of the notes changes with each generation of the phrase. While the first three phrases remain somewhat closely related in temporal spacing, the fourth pass, the most fully realized version, is less related to the previous three. In this last version, only the first gesture remains temporally fixed while others seem to drift towards the center of the phrase. Some notes from the previous three phrases are filtered out entirely and replaced by other, more evolved gestures. Hence, this "skewed" filter achieves the same compositional goal as the "literal" version in a less rigorous and exact manner.

Both literal and skewed filtering codes employ a very gradual process of revelation and growth. In his discussion of Bartók, it is clear that Donatoni was alluding to these gradual un-filtering processes as "growth without development." The original integrity of the motive remains intact as the material musically evolves. Further, these processes are usually juxtaposed with other threads of material, which are involved in their own processes. Such threads coexist regardless of their different rates of change and evolution. Donatoni achieves a three-dimensional compositional environment through the juxtaposition of different rates of perceived motion, and different kinds of codes.

A broader, more general example of a gestural filter code involves material that is seen at the beginning of *Refrain* in its most filtered state, and then presented in other

unfiltered versions later in the work. The contrabass opens the work with an occasional figure of pizzicato thirty-second notes at an average of six per bar with large gaps of rest (see figure 6.6 below). This musical seed represents the most filtered state of a lively and active gesture among the three members of Trio A (viola, contrabass, and marimba). By m. 7 this same texture, now between the viola and contrabass, is more active, and by m. 8 the marimba enters to complete the trio (see figure 6.7 below). The strings are engaged in a conversation; the viola now answers the contrabass' thirty-second note figures, which have grown into considerably longer phrases, while the marimba periodically interjects with *pianissimo* dyads. All three instruments are at a *pianissimo* dynamic level.

This discourse grows in density and intensity and becomes more agitated as the piece progresses. Donatoni allows more notes to be filtered in as the dynamic level increases. Now at *mezzo forte*, the strings' thirty-second note phrases are shorter but more frequent as the viola answers the contrabass' every phrase. Each answer in the viola dovetails the end of the contrabass' phrase by one thirty-second note, producing at each instance an accented duet attack. The marimba joins in at these attack points, which become more frequent as the strings' phrases shorten. By m. 16 these marimba accent points are at an average of six per bar. Its dynamic level also increases from *pp* to *piano* at this point (see figure 6.8 below). Although this thread's intensity is steadily increasing, it is suspended at m. 19 to make way for a panel change within this first episode. However, this thread reemerges later at m. 76, and is clearly linked to the one discussed in measure 16, only it is thicker and more fully realized at this later point in the work because less material has been filtered out. As seen in figure 6.9 below, Trio A enters strongly at a *fortissimo* dynamic level, and provides an interlocked and more agitated

version of its thirty-second note material. This active texture continues unchanged through m. 84.

The gestural filter technique achieves Donatoni's goal of "growth without development," as in each instance the identity of the material has not changed. Rather, its character is preserved throughout the process while its gradual revelation provides direction.

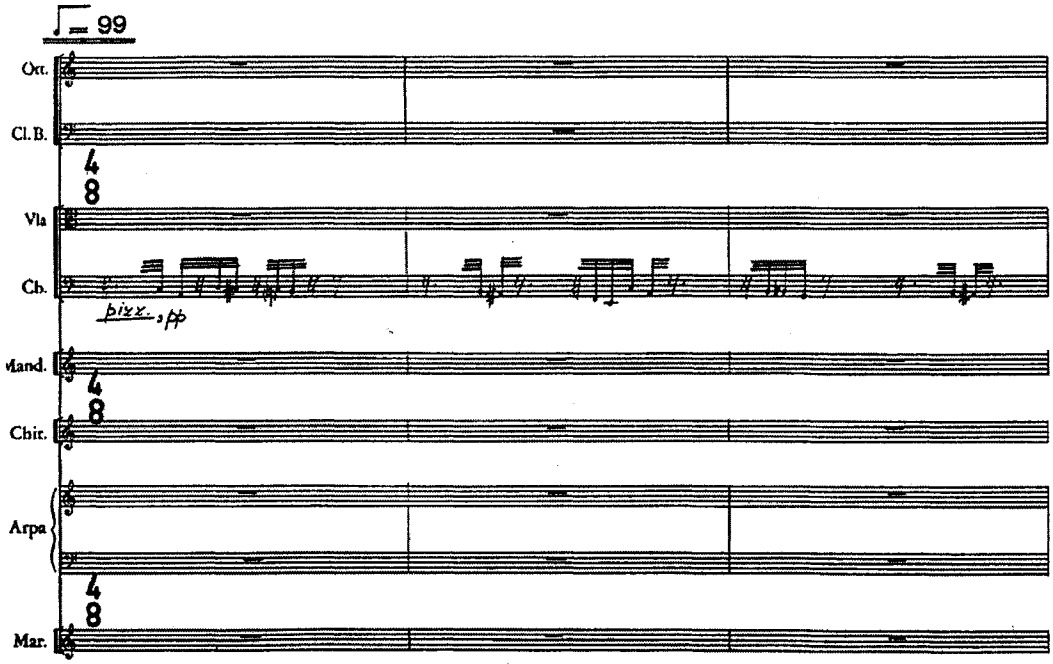


Figure 6.4: *Refrain* opens with the texture in its most reduced state, mm. 1 – 3.

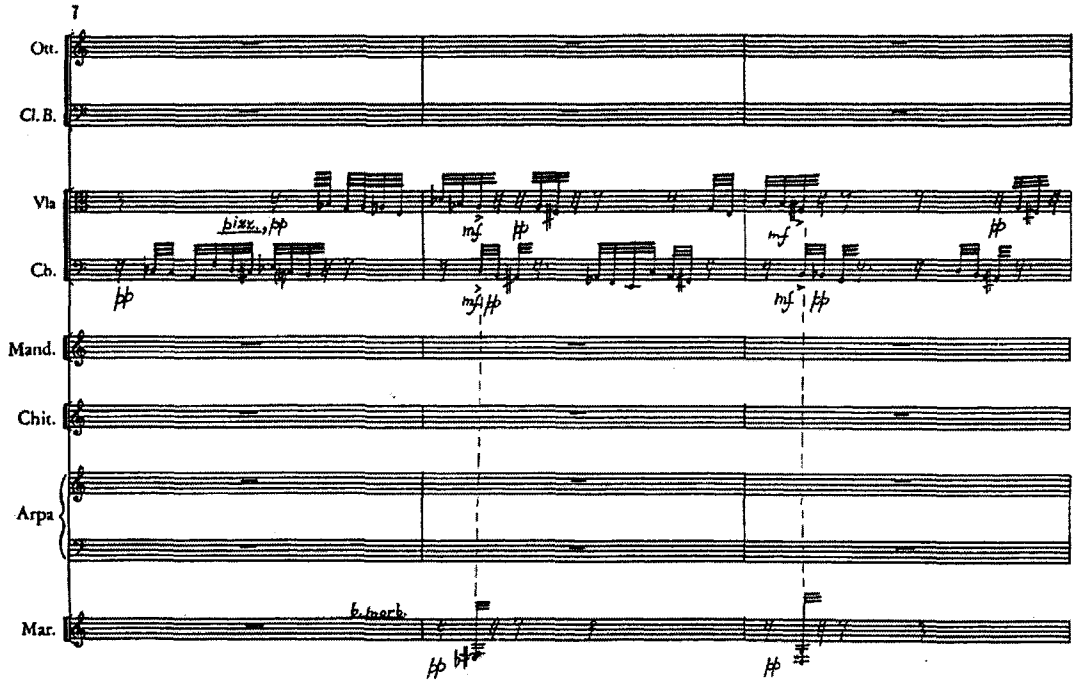


Figure 6.5: The texture, now less filtered, grows to incorporate Trio A in mm. 7 – 9 of *Refrain*.

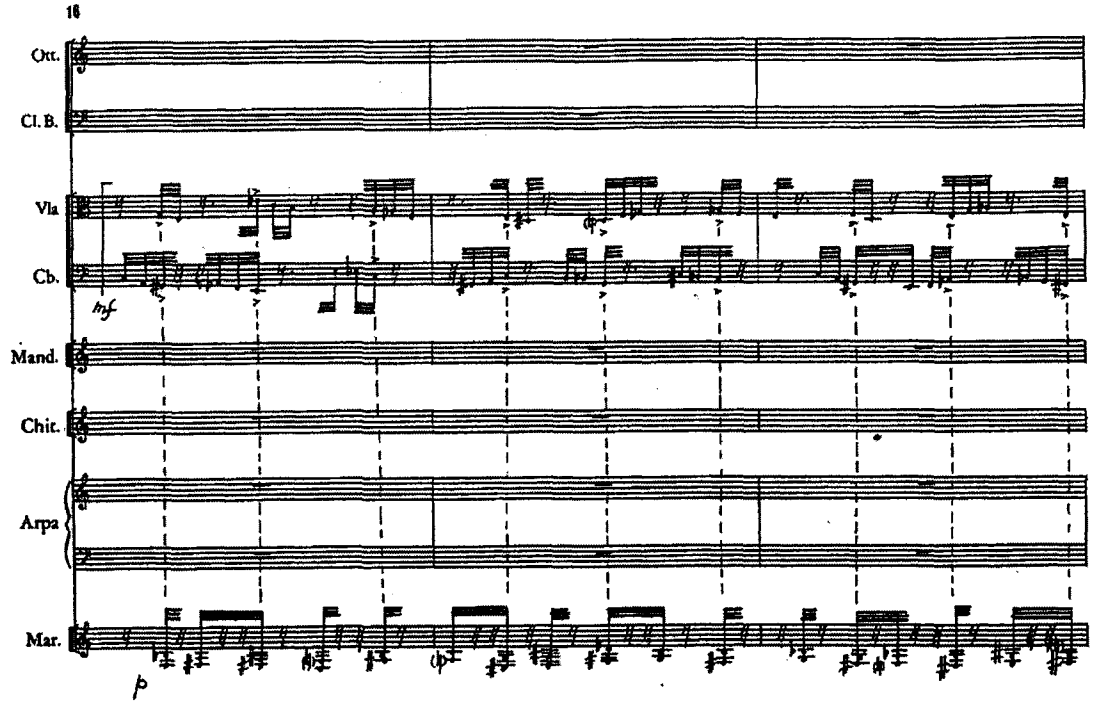


Figure 6.6: Further growth of the texture in density and intensity at m. 16 of *Refrain*.

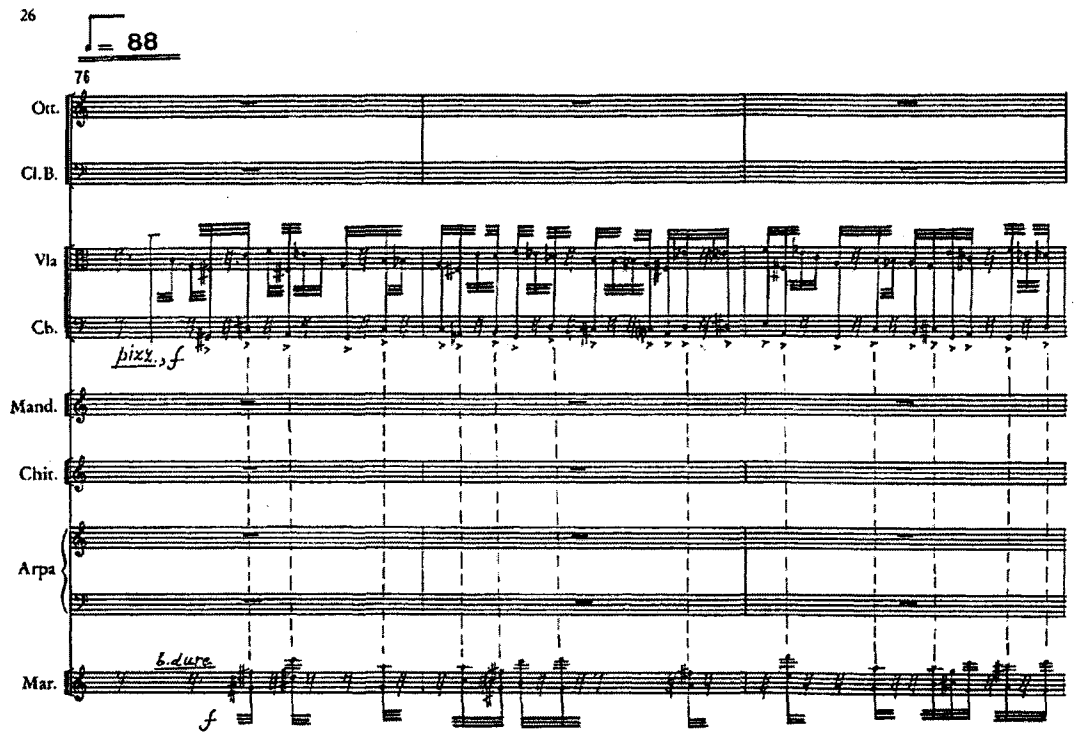


Figure 6.7: Fully realized and static texture in Trio A, m. 76 – 78 of *Refrain*.

A similar case occurs at m. 131, which serves as both the middle of episode 4 and the climax of the 210-measure work. The true main theme of the entire work is finally revealed at this point in the piccolo. This new melody is important for a variety of reasons (see figure 6.10 below). First, the timbre and tessitura of the piccolo project well over the entire ensemble, and along with the bass clarinet, is extremely exposed. Responses by the rest of the ensemble support this woodwind duet in a call and response fashion, but remain secondary and supportive to the main theme. Second, the very character of this melody is more cohesive and expressive than previous melodic phrases. Flutter-tongue, mordents, slurs, and dynamic contouring clearly set this melody apart from previous materials. Third, this is the piccolo and bass clarinet's first appearance

within an episodic section, and the first time the entire ensemble is active at the same time within any section of the work.

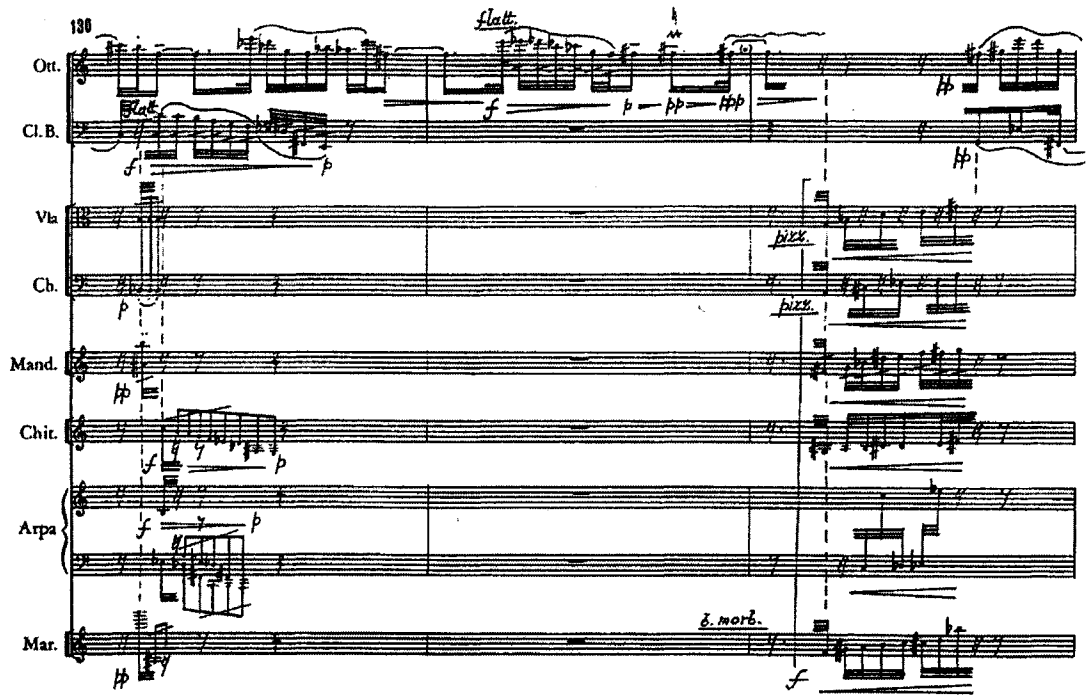


Figure 6.8: The complete main theme is presented in the piccolo, mm. 130 – 132 of *Refrain*.

The means by which this important melody is revealed is interesting because it mirrors the way the piece began. The main theme is eventually exposed in its fullest state by m. 131 through a gestural filter. By comparing it to its origins we can see how this theme is gradually filtered in. Episode 4 begins at m. 118, and with it, the musical seed that begins this process. The woodwind duo from the previous refrain section plays small slurred phrases three to six thirty-second notes in length, with large gaps of rest in between. A trio of plucked strings - mandolin, guitar, and harp - answers these figures to create a hocket. Both elements are already foreshadowed at this point: the woodwind duet, and the response by the rest of the ensemble. These smaller versions eventually

grow as more material is filtered in. By m. 121 (figure 6.11 below) the duo continues with shorter gaps of rest and more activity, and is still in hocket with the plucked string trio.

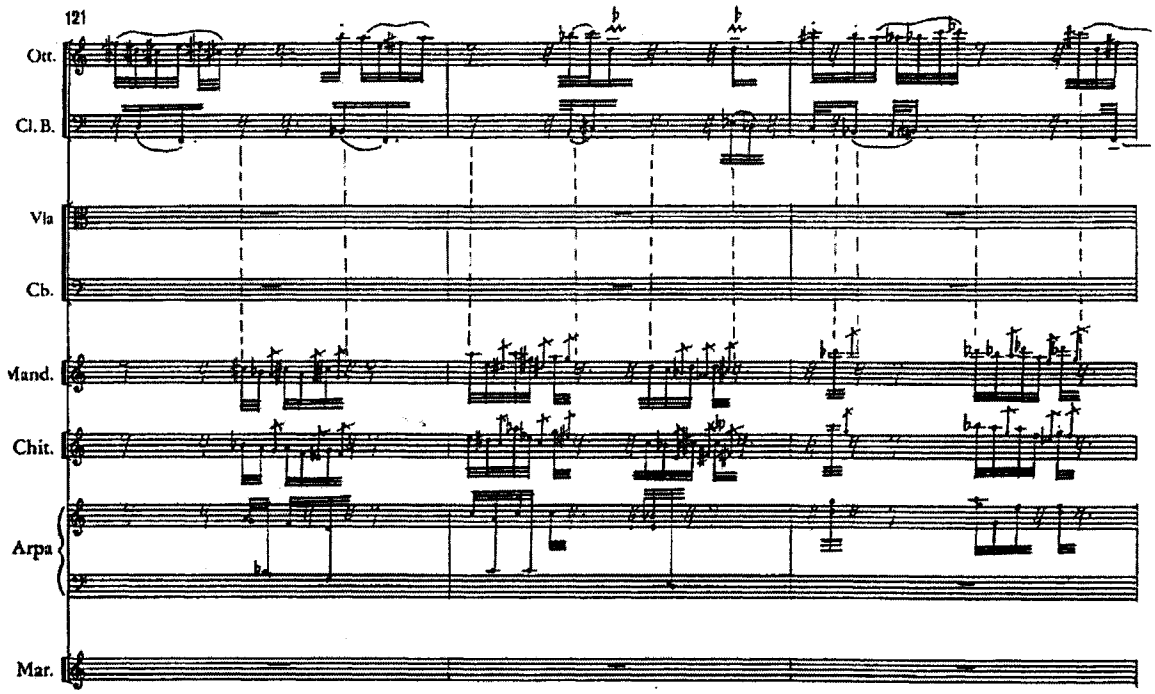


Figure 6.9: Gradual unfolding of the main theme in mm. 121-123 of *Refrain*, just prior to its full statement.

At m. 127 the gestural filter allows in more material, as the woodwind duo plays a seemingly continuous thirty-second note texture, with an occasional fluttertongue passage. The plucked string trio is doubled now to include the rest of the ensemble, and plays much shorter responses. Four measures later, the code filters in the remaining components, and finally reveals the primary theme of the work. Although not rigid or systematic, this process, or code, preserves the integrity of the motive, or "fragment."

"Growth without development" is a challenging phrase, as it suggests a seemingly impossible compositional goal. To many composers and music scholars, if one

"grows" a musical texture from a musical seed or motive, then one is in fact "developing" that motive. In this case, however, Donatoni refers to a specific type of growth, where the end result is very closely related to its origins. The growth process begins and ends with clearly matching musical components, and is therefore not "developed" to a point where the original identity is lost. The filter code types discussed above (interval and gestural filter) are a means to accomplish this goal. The application of gestural filters to preexisting threads of material allow for such growth to take place. Thus, two goals are achieved at the same time: not only "growth without development," but also "conservation of the fragment." The fragment, or the motive that generates the entire thread, is present from beginning to end of these processes.

Chapter 7: Donatoni's Solo Works

In this final period of his life and career between 1977 and 2000, Donatoni wrote twenty-six unaccompanied solo works, usually in two movements, beginning with *Algo* for guitar in 1977. According to the dedications on many of these solo works, they were often written for specific performers, and feature virtuosic and idiomatic writing with skillful and tasteful use of extended techniques. A look at these works not only reveals a style that is consistent with his chamber music writing of the same period, but also an economical method of composition that allowed him to produce many works per year.

During this prolific period Donatoni often wrote a series of solo works that incorporate similar motives and ideas. He would then compose a chamber piece that included the same instruments from the previous series of solo works. For instance, after *Algo* he wrote *Ali* for viola (1977), and *Argot* for violin (1979). These three works were immediately followed in 1979 by the chamber work *About* for violin, viola, and guitar. The next set - *Marches*, for harp (1979), *Nidi*, for piccolo (1979), and *Clair,* for clarinet (1980) – was followed in 1981 by *Small* for piccolo, clarinet and harp. In 1982, Donatoni produced *Lame* for cello and *Lem* for double bass, and in 1983 published *Ala* for cello and double bass duet. In 1983 he composed *Rima* for piano solo, followed by *Alamari* for cello, double bass, and piano later that year. This process resulted in an large output of works that resemble one another, as similar codes were used to produce both solo and chamber works for these instruments.

Much like the discussion of Donatoni's chamber works, this chapter will identify consistent compositional traits in the solo works from this period. His codes - panels and

filters - are incorporated in similar ways and produce similar results as those in his chamber works. The representative works chosen for this study are *Omar* for vibraphone (1985), and *Lem* for contrabass (1983).

A. Omar

Omar was written in 1985, one year before *Refrain,* for Italian percussionist Maurizio Ben Omar, and similar to many other solos from this "joyous" era, it consists of two movements. Like *Refrain,* it uses panel and filter codes to produce moments of stability and growth. However, because this is an unaccompanied solo work, each musical thought is exposed. And, although this would seem to clearly reveal Donatoni's compositional codes, marked complexities still exist. An investigation of these attributes in *Omar* will show their alliance with Donatoni's chamber music style.

Similar to *Refrain*, portions of *Omar* contain recurring **formal panels**, but on a smaller and more immediate scale than in the chamber work. Small secondary gestures interrupt these larger, more established panels. Tempo markings in much of Donatoni's work tend to denote large-scale formal divisions, and *Omar* is no exception. These solo works do not use measure numbers. Therefore, the reader will be referred to tempo markings and/or stave numbers for orientation.

In the first movement, at tempo marking ♪ = 155, third stave, a large formal panel is interrupted by a small, recurring, interrupting gesture, thereby invoking the formal panel technique used in Donatoni's larger works. The larger panel features phrases of steadily repeated sixteenth notes and sets of two or three dyads at a dynamic level of *mezzo forte* (see figure7.1). The smaller gesture of nine, ten, or eleven grace notes at

fortissimo interrupts this larger formal panel. The infusion of this secondary, grace-note gesture not only disrupts the flow of the large panel, but also foreshadows the use of the same secondary gesture in the movement to follow.

This secondary figure reemerges in the second movement at tempo marking ♪= 76, first stave (see figure 7.2), and interrupts an otherwise continuous large panel of three-note tremolos, which are discussed below with regard to interval aggregates. However, unlike those in the first movement, which consist of descending note groups of nine or more, the secondary gestures in the second movement are reversed, resulting in ascending grace note groups of nine or less. Regardless of their orientation, they both interrupt an otherwise continuous musical thought.

Pitch panels are also used in multiple cases. By the fifth system of page three, near the end of the first movement, Donatoni begins a more sparse, yet active, texture featuring *piano* sixteenth notes and grace notes at ♪ = 93. (See figure 7.3. Please note that Donatoni has placed some accidentals above the notes, rather than to the left. Accidentals affect only the notes they directly precede.) There are six phrases in this texture; each begins with an isolated B^4. (These phrases are also filtered and will be discussed below.) The first B^4 begins a phrase with fixed pitches: B^4, A^4, $C\sharp^5$, E^4, $E\flat^5$, $F\sharp^5$, D^4, $G\sharp^3$, C^6 and $B\flat^5$ (including grace notes). The pitch and register established by this first phrase remains intact for subsequent phrases and the rest of the movement, resulting in this pitch panel: $G\sharp^3$, D^4, E^4, A^4, B^4, $C\sharp^5$, $E\flat^5$, $F\sharp^5$, $B\flat^5$, C^6. Thus, by maintaining this pitch and register

combination for an extended period, Donatoni creates "continuity of tone," the fourth element he had identified in the music of Bartók.[51]

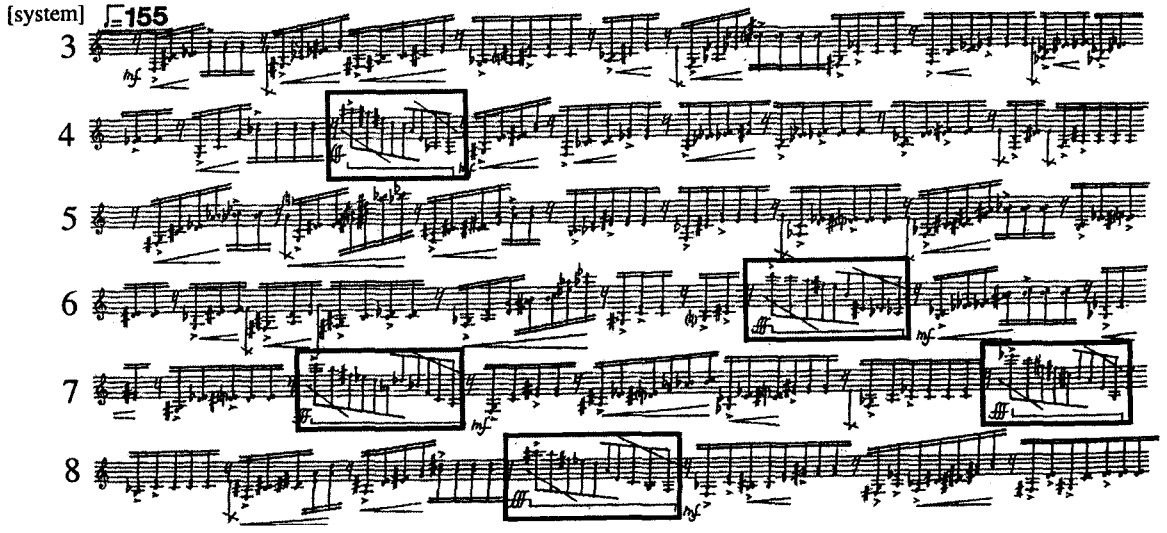


Figure 7.1: A secondary gesture within a larger formal panel on page 2 of *Omar*, I.

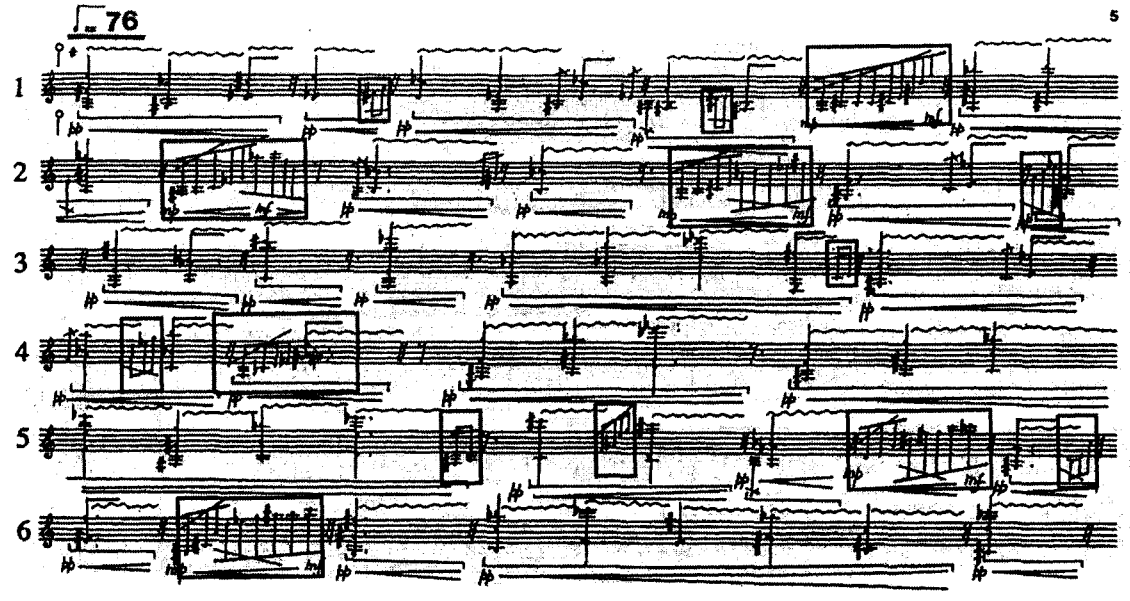


Figure 7.2: The same secondary gesture but reversed, on page 5 of *Omar*, II.

[51] P. Santi, ed., "Franco Donatoni, 'Presenza di Bartók,'" p. 87.

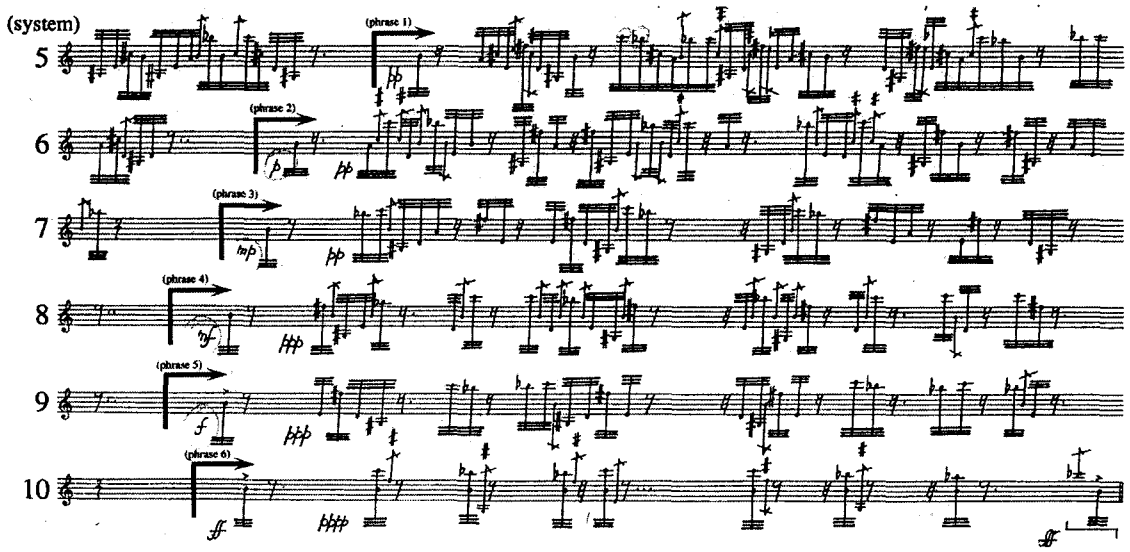


Figure 7.3: Pitch panel in repeating phrases at the conclusion of *Omar*, I, page 3.

The pitches in this pitch panel unfold in wedge form, as each phrase begins on B^4 and widens to $C\sharp^6$ or $G\sharp^3$. In figure 7.4, these pitches are compared to the first note by interval (given in number of semitones), in the order in which they appear. While the first two intervals are identical, the remaining intervals are not symmetrical, although they do gradually increase. This phrase, also discussed below in regard to filters, maintains both its pitch and interval code throughout these six phrases.

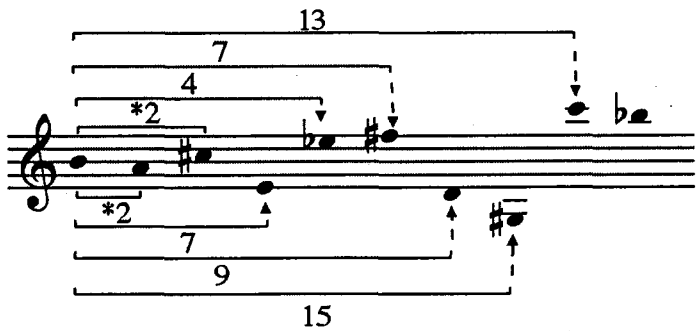


Figure 7.4: Pitch panel wedge in *Omar*, I.

A pitch panel also concludes the second movement, and serves as a brief *fortissimo* codetta section. This pitch panel begins two and a half staves before the end, marked *fortissimo* and *precipitando* ('hurling'). Consisting entirely of grace notes, it is a continuous fabric of vibrant vibraphone color and blazing technique, and provides an excellent closing passage to a challenging solo work. Figures 7.5 and 7.6 show how this panel unfolds. Although similar to the previous panel at the conclusion of the first movement in its shape, this panel in the second movement is not as symmetrical and systematic. Here, Donatoni uses ten main pitches in the pitch panel, just as in the first movement. But an eleventh pitch, $C\sharp^4$, is used only once and emerges only as the sixth-to-last pitch of the entire fixed pitch section. The other ten are repeated freely. Just as in the previous example in the first movement, Donatoni's use of pitch panel achieves a sense of harmonic stability while concluding the movement in blazing fashion.

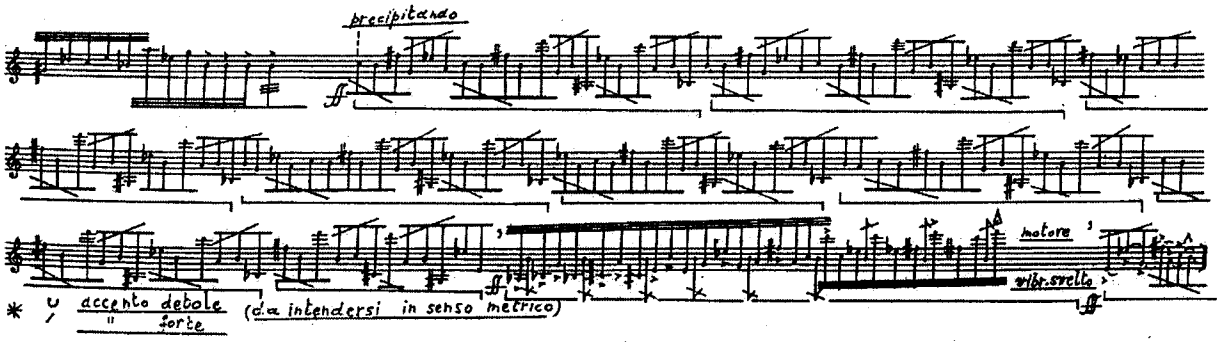


Figure 7.5: Pitch panel in the final two and a half systems of *Omar*, II.

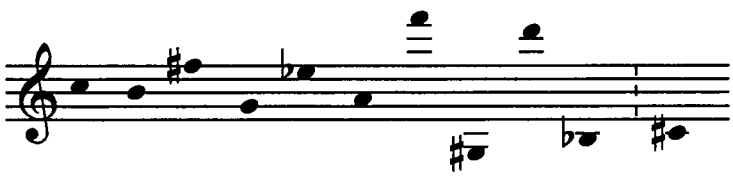


Figure 7.6: Pitch Panel in *Omar*, II.

Interval aggregate codes are also found in Donatoni's solo works from this period, and can be compared to those in his chamber works. In *Refrain*, interval aggregates are achieved in a linear, non-chordal structure, using different combinations of adjacent intervals to come up with the proper aggregate. In *Omar,* Donatoni uses vertical structures to create aggregates. The result is the same, as the pitches and registral positions differ while producing the same aggregate interval class.

An example of the interval aggregate technique is in the second movement of *Omar,* at the beginning of page five (tempo marking ♪ = 76), where the performer plays a succession of tremolo, *pianissimo,* three-note chords. The notes in these chords always combine to create a chromatic three-note set of (012), but are displaced by an octave (see figure 7.7). For instance, pitches in the first chord - F^3, $F\sharp^4$, and E^5 – combine to (012). The second and third sonority - $G\sharp^3$, A^3, and $B\flat^4$; and $D\flat^4$, E^4, and $C\sharp^5$ – do the same. This technique continues until the next tempo change six staves later, and produces a long, harmonically static texture (which is interrupted by grace notes - see the 'panel' discussion of *Omar* above). Through this process Donatoni simultaneously achieves consistency and variety: the consistent intervallic sonority is preserved through the use of a consistent goal aggregate, while compositional variety is manifested through different notes and registers.

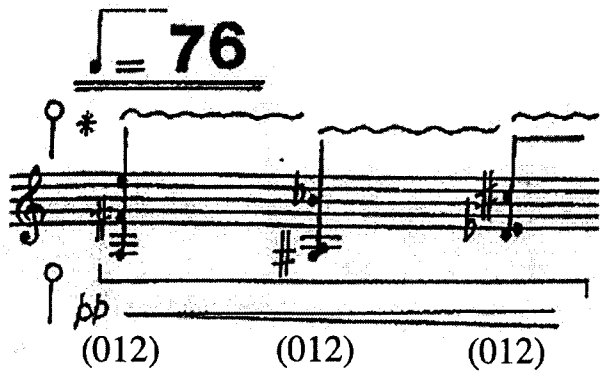


Figure 7.7: Interval aggregate code in *Omar*, II, p. 5

Filter codes in *Omar* are similar to those found in Donatoni's chamber works. A **gestural filter** code can be found in *Omar* at the conclusion of the first movement, and features five of the six phrases involved in the pitch panel code discussed above. (The final phrase of this section does not relate as closely as the first five.) In the middle of page three, the main phrase is repeated five times. (A re-creation of this passage can be found in figure 7.8.) Each phrase begins with a solitary B^4 and ends with a rest group. The isolated B^4 consistently grows in dynamic intensity with each phrase, growing from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* in six gradients, while the phrase group itself decreases in dynamic intensity, decreasing from *pp* to *pppp*. Although thirty-second notes are gradually filtered out of the phrase with each repetition, the B^4 remains each time and even concludes the movement.

The discussion of gestural filters in *Refrain* identifies both "skewed" filtering and "literal" filtering of a repeated gesture or phrase. *Omar* uses the literal filtering method, but not quite as strict as the *Refrain* example. (Compare figure 6.4 to figure 7.8.) The rhythm of the phrase can be literally traced from its most complete version to the end, and events that are not filtered out remain fixed to their temporal position. Pitch,

however, is not literally filtered. In the literal filtering of *Refrain* in figure 6.4, the pitches are consistent with each repetition of the phrase. In *Omar*, however, the pitches change with each phrase. The fourth eighth-note beat of each phrase provides an excellent example of how each phrase uses different pitches each time (see figure 7.8). In this beat, the pitches in the first phrase (excluding grace notes) are $B\flat^5$, $C\sharp^5$, A^4, and $B\flat^5$. The same beat in the next phrase filters out the third note of this group, and all notes change in pitch, resulting in $F\sharp^5$, A^4, a rest, and $F\sharp^5$. In both cases, the first and last pitch is the same. In the third phrase, both middle notes are filtered, resulting in only E^4, two rests, and another E^4. The same rhythmic scheme is kept for the next two successive phrases, but using C^6 in the first phrase, and $B\flat^5$ in the second. Similar connections can be found in portions of the rest of the phrase. For example, in figure 7.8, dotted boxes show how other note groups can be compared.

Through simultaneous uses of filter and panel codes (see the discussion of the same passage in regard to pitch panels, figure 7.3) this concluding passage imparts both stability and motion. The pitch panel provides intervallic stability, as the gestural filter provides motion by gradually reduces the texture. It therefore becomes a three-dimensional musical object, as the combination of panel and filter establishes two different rates of motion.

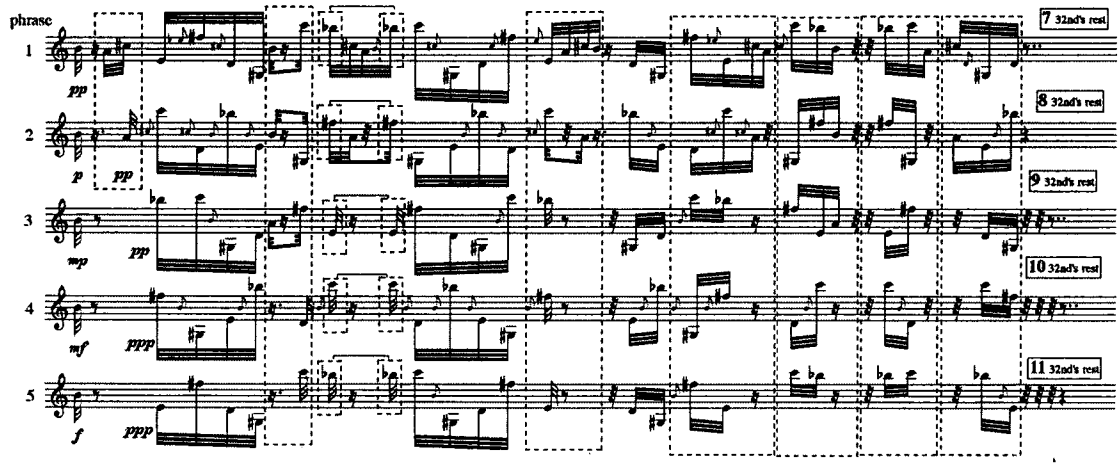


Figure 7.8: Gestural filter in *Omar*, I. (Staves have been re-notated to show superimposition of gestures.)

B. Lem

Published in 1983, *Lem* for solo contrabass also combines panel and filter codes to create a unified and virtuosic solo piece. In contrast to *Omar*, *Lem* is less concerned with vertical sonorities. Therefore interval class set filters are not found in this work. However, the intensity and intimacy of *Lem*, as well as Donaoni's other solos for strings, rivals that of his solos for other instruments from this period, and its construction is consistent with such related works.

Formal panels in *Lem* are clearly separated by rests, beamings, and tempo changes. As in *Omar,* secondary gestures often interrupt a larger formal panel. The clearest example is on the first page, staves four through six (see figure 7.9). In this section, two contrasting elements are juxtaposed: one main panel of isolated *pianissimo* and *pizzicato* sixteenth notes *sul ponticello,* and a secondary, interrupting gesture of short slurred phrases of five, six or seven *fortissimo* and *arco* sixteenth and eighth notes bowed normally. While they both share the same tessitura, their articulations, phrasings, and dynamic levels provide distinguishing characteristics. Variants of these two ideas

reemerge throughout the work. Despite their differences, connections between such instances can be clearly heard.

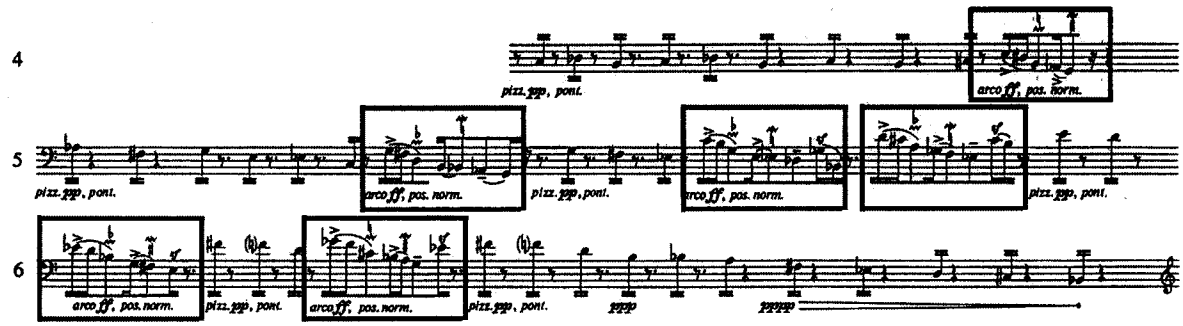


Figure 7.9: Secondary gestures on page one of *Lem* (1983), I.

On a smaller and more intricate level, **pitch panel** codes are used in *Lem* to provide continuity in both pitch and register. (It should be noted here that the *scordatura* prescribed in the score for *Lem* affects the normal sounding pitch of the contrabass. Because each string is to be tuned a whole step higher, notes will sound a major seventh below the written pitch. Any discussion of pitch hereafter is in reference to the written pitch.) An example of the pitch panel code is found close to the end of the second movement, page seven, staves three through six (see figure 7.11). A very intimate passage, this panel features groups of *pianissimo* sixteenth notes at the highest tessitura of the contrabass, played *arco* and *sul ponticello,* and separated by large rest groups. Also a formal panel, the pitch panel code in this section fixes each note to a specific register, and slowly expands the note vocabulary from six pitches to all twelve pitches between E^4 and $E\flat^5$. A diagram showing the pitch vocabulary for each phrase can be found below in figure 7.12. While the pitch collection grows, each phrase has neither a consistent order of pitches used, nor a pattern to the number of notes.

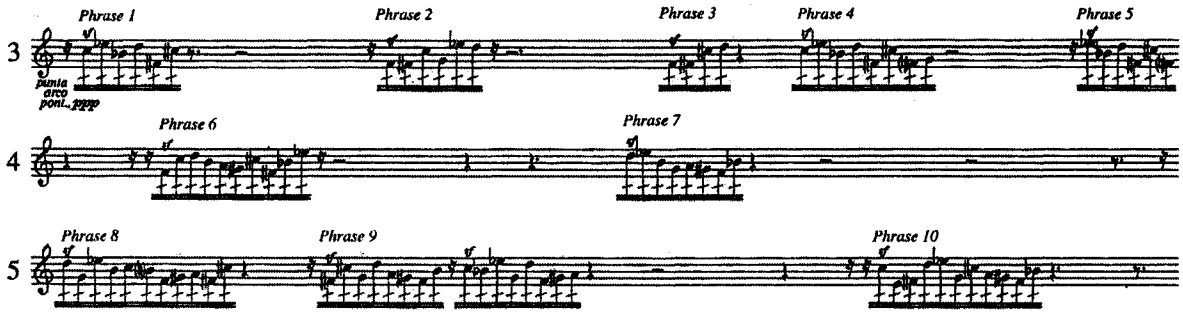


Figure 7.10: Growth of pitch panel on page seven of *Lem*.

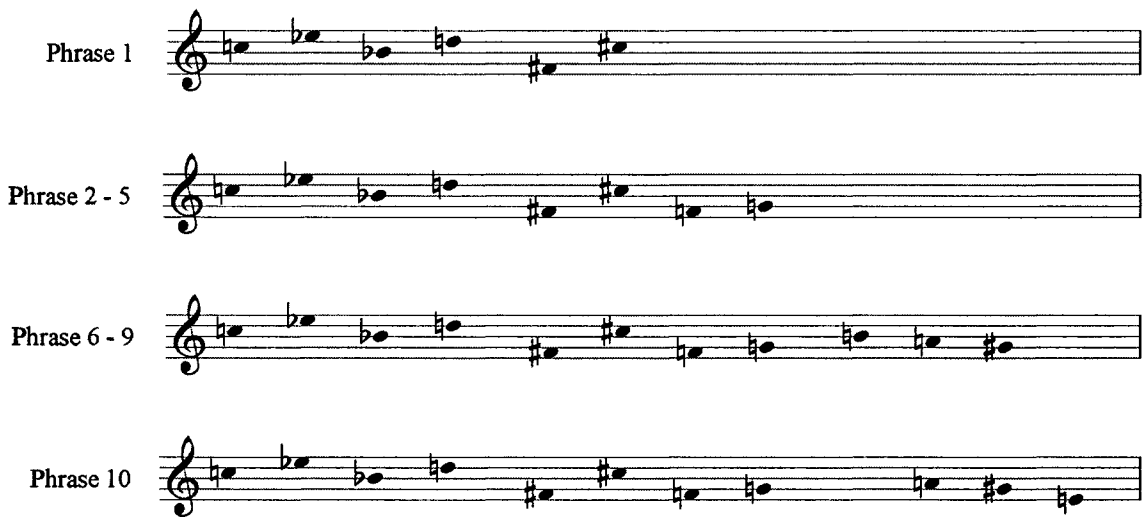


Figure 7.11: Four pitch categories in the pitch panel in *Lem*, page 7, staves 3-5.

The ten phrases of this section can however be grouped into four categories, which are determined by the pitches they use. The first phrase, the only phrase in the first category, uses C^5, $E\flat^5$, $B\flat^4$, D^5, $F\sharp^4$, and $C\sharp^5$. The second category is comprised of phrases two through five, and incorporates all the pitches in the first category plus F^4 and G^4. The third category, phrases six through nine, uses all of the previous pitches in the first and second categories but adds B^4, A^4, and $G\sharp^4$, totaling eleven pitches. Finally, the fourth category, the tenth and final phrase, also uses eleven pitches, but B^4 is replaced by E^4 – the only pitch not used up to this point in the panel. It is interesting to note that these four

categories are symmetrical in regard to the number of phrases they incorporate (1- 4 – 4 - 1).

Filter codes in *Lem* are also consistent with those found in other works from this period. *Lem*'s **gestural filters**, like those in *Omar*, are not as literal as those found in *Refrain.* However, the ones in *Lem* help to provide the same sense of continuity and growth. The best example of this code can be found on page two, staves six and seven (see figure 7.13). In this section, the soloist plays accented, bowed, double stops at *fortissimo*, where the top note is always an open string, and the bottom note descends chromatically from $F\sharp^3$ to $F\sharp^2$. Small rest groups separate each of the seven phrases. The bottom notes in the first and most complete phrase achieve a fully chromatic descent within an octave, from $F\sharp^3$ to $F\sharp^2$, resulting in eleven different dyads (there are thirteen events, but the last two dyads are repeated). The next phrase filters out two dyads from the previous phrase, resulting in nine different dyads. The third phrase is filtered slightly more, resulting in eight different dyads. Like other gestural filters discussed previously, the identity of the phrase remains intact even as its components are gradually filtered away.

The fourth phrase of this section involves a different range of pitches, and begins a new gestural filter. These last four phrases differ slightly in articulation and note content from the first three, as each eighth note dyad is to be articulated twice as sixteenth notes, and none are sustained as in the previous three phrases. However, the gesture remains closely related since it uses accented double stops, where one note is always an open string (not always the top note, as in the previous phrases), and the other completes the descent from E^3 to E^2. Phrase five is a filtered version of phrase four, and

uses ten dyads of the original twelve in the fourth phrase. Phrase six uses six dyads of the original twelve, and the final phrase uses four dyads. The same filter code from phrases one, two and three is used in phrases four through seven, thereby showing the close relationship of the two phrase groups. Ironically, by filtering the gesture (phrase one), these two gestural filters extend its use. Thus, Donatoni achieves "growth without development," since the basic properties of the gesture are preserved (and, according to Donatoni, not "developed"). The effectiveness of a gesture is extended through filtering, while its identity remains intact.

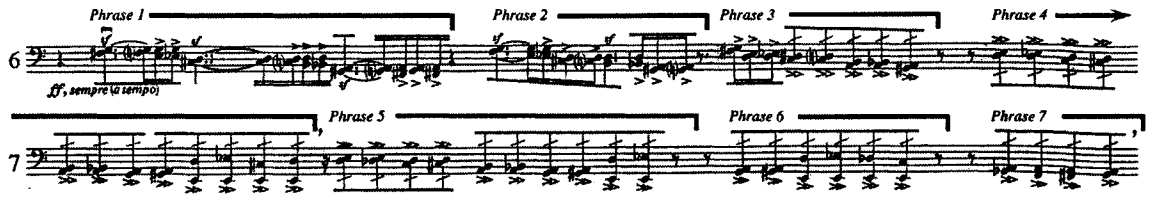


Figure 7.12: Gestural filter on page 2, staves 6 and 7, of *Lem*.

This study shows the incredible similarities that these solo works possess, and further, that related codes were employed in comparable ways from piece to piece in this period. Also, the examination of these codes shows how Donatoni was able to produce so many works per year. In 1983 alone, he remarkably produced ten works, four of which were solo pieces. In 1992, he wrote thirteen, five of which are solo works (see a complete listing of Donatoni's output in Appendix 1). These numbers show Donatoni's high regard for the unaccompanied solo, whose prominent place in Donatoni's catalogue should be noted. The composer was able to enjoy a high rate of production of such works during this time through the consistent application of his codes. Through the identification of

these codes, we gain access to Donatoni's creative process, and a greater understanding of the inner workings of his solo pieces.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The fact that Donatoni did not "write anything that [he] did not live"[52] is very important, as connections between his life and work can clearly be drawn. His first period of output was confounded by intense study of a variety of musical influences, and clouded by a deep depression; the resulting style was highly academic, somewhat tortuous, and relatively uninspired in comparison to his later works. This was followed by a period of searching and healing. His output temporarily waned as he recovered from clinical depression. Not until his recovery did his joyous style emerge, and he was able to enjoy a clear, consistent style and a prolific output of works.

Donatoni himself referred to his past experiences with serialism, chance procedures, cellular composition, autonomous procedures, magic squares, and the degeneration of found objects as "codes."[53] In search for a *modus operandi*, he explored various compositional techniques during his long career. In his early work, prior to his joyous period, the definition of "codes" changed with each cluster of works. It is not until this later style that Donatoni achieved a consistent application of codes that is clearly his own. An amalgam of the previously mentioned compositional techniques, these codes proved to be the most reliable, and even enjoyable, method for the composer.

His later codes provided a new means to balance autonomy with subjectivity. While his early codes in works like *Etwas ruhiger im Ausdruck* proved to be rigid and meticulous operations upon found objects, his later codes accepted a higher degree of subjectivity. It was as if the healing process Donatoni underwent in the early 1970s

[52] François-Bernard Mache, "Franco Donatoni: Juillet 1975" *La Revue Musicale* (Paris: 1975), p. 316,
[53] Donatoni uses the term "code" to describe his compositional processes throughout his career, in both his early and late periods. See Chapters 3 and 5 for specific references.

allowed him to let go of a highly academic, structured ideal in lieu of one that was more relaxed and flexible. The music from this period reflects this feeling of relaxation and confidence.

By comparing the codes in *Etwas ruhiger im Ausdruck* and *Refrain*, one can see how this transformation happened. *Etwas ruhiger im Ausdruck* is more concerned with the procedure of the code. The goal of the work is the same as the goal of the code: to break down and restore a quoted passage of Schoenberg. *Refrain*, and his later works, is more concerned with the way musical components interact to create the piece. The goal of the work *is* the work itself. Codes are used when they are appropriate, thus striking a balance between subjective influence and objective codes.

Such a compromise raises issues about how much composers should rely on autonomous procedures. Perhaps, as Donatoni stated, his earlier period would have been slightly more successful if he used computers as in today's climate.[54] But even if his procedures were executed with greater precision, would the results be any more successful? Should one be concerned with the musical quality of this result, where the art is the code itself? The answers to these questions emerged during Donatoni's career. His later success depended upon the notion that the work was not only the code, but also how the codes were applied. While he was still interested in an "egoless music," maintained by the "separation between [him]self and the material,"[55] he allowed for his codes to be arranged and superimposed in a logical fashion, using various panels and filters.

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[54] This refers to Donatoni's comments in his interview with Enzo Restagno in *Donatoni*, p. 31: "Codes...[are] nothing more than what people do with the computer today... To produce the code, however, sometimes required a week of work. It is a bit difficult."
[55] Ibid., p. 315

Knowing more about the artist's intentions gives one both a broader perspective of the work and a smaller pool of conclusions from which to draw. To these ends, it is not my intention to expose Donatoni's meticulous artistic methods, or define his notorious codes, but rather to know what their goals were and how they were achieved. Donatoni himself never confided the inner workings of his codes with the intention that they be published. In fact, he is on record saying that he does not wish they be revealed, as it would betray the objectiveness of his art.[56] Exploring his creative process in this manner does not however reveal coveted secrets. Indeed, analyzing his works both highlights and preserves these mysteries.

Throughout this paper musical properties in Donatoni's music are repeatedly linked to the four attributes he admired in the music of Bartók. These four points represent the cornerstone of Donatoni's creative impetus, and his requisites for a good work. Further, they were not only an integral part of his stormy compositional past, but also the link to his joyous period. The first two Bartókian points - "cellular exposition and organism growth," and "growth without development, conservation of the fragment" - are main themes of Donatoni's work, and are manifest through interval aggregates and gestural filters. The second two points – "juxtaposition of organisms; mutation, not evolution," and "stasis of pulsations, continuity of tone" are produced through the use of interval aggregates, formal panels, and pitch panels. While these attributes have been identified in *Refrain*, similar behaviors can be found in other chamber works from this era, such as *Spiri* (1977), *Tema* (1982) and *Cadeau* (1984). The same can be said for his solo works, which are a very important and substantial part of his later output.

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[56] In a 1975 interview with François-Bernard Mache in *La Revue Musicale*, Donatoni states that his codes are "an internal experience; it is not destined to hit the listener; this is a purely personal logic."

Regardless of instrumentation, the music from his joyous period utilized two opposing states – motion and stability – that are in constant flux (perhaps this duality is the reason that so many of his late works are cast in two movements). The creation and implementation of panels and filters facilitate these changes in momentum, and help to produce a vibrant sound environment of evolving musical organisms. It is my contention that other types of works from this period could be approached in the same light. Although his codes may vary slightly, they seem to produce similar results in any medium. This is evident through the comparison of his chamber and solo works in this study. Therefore, it may be possible that his larger works, such as *In Cauda* (1982) for chorus and orchestra, and *Prom* (1999) for orchestra, follow the same codes outlined above. Music from this later period is indeed joyous, as a struggling composer found new methods by which to create a consistent and successful style while remaining loyal to the four points identified in the music of Bartók.

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Appendix 1: Complete catalogue of works

Year	Title (Alphabetical within each year)	Duration	Publisher
1950	*Quartetto I, for string quartet*		
1951	*Recitativo e Allegro, for violin and piano*		Zanibon
1952	*Concertino for strings, brass, and timpani*	16'	Schott
	Concerto for basson and strings		
	Sonatas for viola solo	13'	Zanibon
1953	*Concerto for timbales*	20'	
	Overture for chamber orchestra	15'30'	Zanibon
	Sinfonia for strings		Boosey & Hawkes
1954	*Cinque pezzi per due pianoforti*		Drago
	Divertimento for violin, and chamber orchestra	21'	Schott
1955	*Composizione in quattro movimenti, for piano*		Schott
	Musica, for chamber orchestra	14'	Schott
1957	*La lampara, Ballet*		Ricordi
	Tre improvvisazioni, for piano		Schott
1958	*Quartetto II , for strings*	11'	Suvini Zerboni
1959	*Movimento , for piano, harpsichord and nine instruments*	5'	Suvini Zerboni
	Serenata , for soprano and 16 instruments, sur un poème de Dylan Thomas	14'	Suvini Zerboni
	Strophes , for orchestra	11'	Suvini Zerboni
1960	*For Grilly , improvisation for 7*	5'	Suvini Zerboni
	Sezioni , invention for orchestra	14'	Suvini Zerboni
1961	*Concerto for basson and piano*	6'30"	Zanibon
	Doubles , for harpsichord	6'	Suvini Zerboni
	Puppenspiel , Studi per una musica di scena, for orchestra	9'	Suvini Zerboni
	Quartetto III , for four track tape	5'	Suvini Zerboni
1962	*Per orchestra*	20'	Suvini Zerboni
1963	*Quartetto IV (Zrcadlo), for strings*	aleatoric	Suvini Zerboni
1964	*Asar , for ten strings*	aleatoric	Suvini Zerboni
	Babai , for harpsichord	3'	Suvini Zerboni
	Black and White , for 37 strings		Suvini Zerboni
1965	*Divertimento II , for string orchestra*	11'	Suvini Zerboni
1966	*Puppenspiel II , for flute and orchestra*	14'	Suvini Zerboni
1967	*Etwas ruhiger im Ausdruck , for five instruments*	12'	Suvini Zerboni
	Souvenir (Kammersymphonie Op. 18) for 15 instruments	14'	Suvini Zerboni
1968	*Black and White II (exercises for 10 fingers), for keyboard instrument*	aleatoric	Suvini Zerboni
1969	*Estratto , for piano*	50"	Suvini Zerboni
	Orts (souvenir II) for 14 instruments and reader	10'	Suvini Zerboni
	Solo , for ten strings	13'	Suvini Zerboni
1970	*Doubles II , for orchestra*	25'	Suvini Zerboni
	L. A. Senese '70, Materials for group elaboration, for nine strings		Collective work
	Secondo Estratto , for harp, harpsichord, and piano	12'	Suvini Zerboni
	To Earle, for chamber orchestra	aleatoric	Suvini Zerboni
1971	*To Earle Two , for orchestra and ensemble*	30'	Suvini Zerboni
1972	*Lied , for 13 instruments*	16'	Suvini Zerboni
1972-1973	*Voci (Orchesterübung), for orchestra*	13'13"	Suvini Zerboni

1973	*Jeux pour deux , for harpsichord and organ*	4'33"	Suvini Zerboni
1974	*Espressivo , for oboe and orchestra*	15'	Suvini Zerboni
	Quarto Estratto , for 8 instruments	2'30"	Suvini Zerboni
1975	*Duetto , for harpsichord*	2'	Suvini Zerboni
	Duo pour Bruno , for orchestra	19'	Suvini Zerboni
	Lumen , for six instruments	4'30"	Suvini Zerboni
	Terzo Estrato , for piano and 8 instruments	8'	Suvini Zerboni
1976	*Ash , for 8 instruments*	12'	Suvini Zerboni
	Musette per Lothar , musette	5'	Suvini Zerboni
	Portrait , for harpsichord and orchestra	18'	Suvini Zerboni
1977	*Algo , two pieces for guitar*	9'	Suvini Zerboni
	Ali , two pieces for viola	8'	Ricordi
	Diaro '76 , for four trumpets and four trombones	11'	Suvini Zerboni
	Spiri , for ten instruments	10'	Ricordi
	Toy , for harpsichord, two violins, and viola	15'	Suvini Zerboni
1978	*...ed insieme bussarono , for female voice and piano*	5'	Ricordi
	Arie , for female voice and orchestra	23'	Ricordi
	De près , for female voice, two piccolos and three violins	3'	Ricordi
1979	*About... , for violin, viola and guitar*	5'	Ricordi
	Argot , two pieces for violin solo	5'	Ricordi
	Marches , two pieces for harp	9'	Ricordi
	Nidi , two pieces for piccolo	6'	Ricordi
	The Heart's Eye , for string quartet	17'	Ricordi
1980	*Clair , two pieces for clarinet*	8'	Ricordi
	Le Ruisseau sur l'escalier , for 19 instruments and solo cello	14'	Ricordi
	L'Ultima sera , for mezzo-soprano and five instruments, text by Fernando Pessoa	19'	Ricordi
1981	*Fili , for flute and piano*	11'	Ricordi
	Small , for piccolo, clarinet, and harp	7'	Ricordi
	Tema , for twelve instruments	16'	Ricordi
1982	*Feria , for 5 flutes, 5 trumpets, and organ*	12'	Ricordi
	In cauda, for chorus and orchestra, text by B. Brandolini d'Adda	21'	Ricordi
	Lame , two pieces for cello	10'	Ricordi
	Lem , two pieces for contrabass	9'	Ricordi
	She , for three sopranos and six instruments	12'	Ricordi
1983	*Abyss , for contralto, bass flute in C, and 10 instruments*	18'	Ricordi
	Ala , two pieces for cello and contrabass	10'	Ricordi
	Alamari , for cello, contrabass, and piano	13'	Ricordi
	Cadeau for 11 instruments	10'30"	Ricordi
	Diaro '83 , for 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, and orchestra	18'	Ricordi
	Françoise Variationen (1-7), for piano	5'	Ricordi
	Ombra, two pieces for bass clarinet	12'	Ricordi
	Rima , two pieces for piano	9'	Ricordi
	Ronda , for violin, viola, cello and piano	12'25"	Ricordi
	Sinfonia op. 63 "Anton Webern", for chamber orchestra	4'	Ricordi
1984	*Atem , two acts and an intermezzo*	90'	Ricordi
	Darkness , for six percussionists	12'	Ricordi
1985	*Eco , pour orchestre de chambre*	10'	Ricordi
	Omar , two pieces for vibraphone	4'30" + 9'	Ricordi
	Sestetto , for string sextet	14'	Ricordi
	Still , for soprano leggero and 6 instruments farsa «Schweige still» from "the Magic Flue," scene XVI	10'	Ricordi

1986	*Arpège , for 6 instruments*	11'	Ricordi
	Refrain, for 8 instruments	10'	Ricordi
1987	*Ave , for piccolo, glockenspiel, and celeste*	7'	Ricordi
	Flag , for 13 instruments	7'30"	Ricordi
	François Variationen (15-21) for piano	5'	Ricordi
	François Variationen (8-14) for piano	5'	Ricordi
	O si ride , for twelve mixed voices	13'	Ricordi
1988	*Cinis , for soprano and bass clarinet*	20'	Ricordi
	La Souris sans sourire , for string quartet	18'	Ricordi
	Short: two pieces for trumpet in C	7:30"	Ricordi
1989	*Blow , for wind quintet*	13'	
	Ciglio, for solo violin	6'	Ricordi
	Cloches , for two pianos, 8 instruments, and 2 percussionists	10'	Ricordi
	Frain, for 8 instruments		
	François Variationen (22-28) for piano		
	Hot , for soprano or tenor saxophone, and 7 instruments	14'	Ricordi
	Midi, two pieces for flute	8'	Ricordi
	Soft, for B flat Bass Clarinet		
1990	*Ase (Algo II) , two pieces for guitar and female voice*		Suvini Zerboni
	Bok, for bass clarinet and marimba		Ricordi
	Chantal , for solo harp and six instruments	15'	Ricordi
	Het, for flute, bass clarinet, and piano		Ricordi
	Holly , for English horn, oboe, oboe d'amore and 13 instruments	11'	Ricordi
	Marches II , solo harp, 3 female voices ad libitum, 12 instruments and 3 percussionists	9'	Ricordi
	Rasch, for four saxophones		Ricordi
	Spice: (Ronda II) for violin/viola, bb clarinet/piccolo clar, cello, and piano		Ricordi
1991	*Cloches III , for two pianos and two percussionists*	7'	Ricordi
	Madrigale, for 4 voices, 4 percussionists. Text by Elsa Morante		
	Refrain II , for 11 instruments	8'	Ricordi
1992	*Aahiel , for (mezzo) soprano and three instruments. Text by Anonymous*	13'	Ricordi
	An angel within my heart: for female voice, two clarinets, and three strings (text by Susan Park)		Ricordi
	Concerto Grosso for Orchestra and five synthesizers		Ricordi
	Feria II for organ		Ricordi
	Feria III for organ		Ricordi
	Jay , for piano, two trumpets, 3 horns, and two trombones	6'	Ricordi
	Late in the Day (I) (Ronda III) for soprano, flute, clarinet, and piano. Text by Michael Riviere		Ricordi
	Mari, two pieces for marimba		Ricordi
	Mari II , for four marimbas	7'	Ricordi
	Nidi II, for flauto barocco tenore		Ricordi
	Scaglie , two pieces for trombone	7'	Ricordi
	Sincronie, for piano with cello soloist		Ricordi
	Sweet, for tenor flute		Ricordi
1993	*Algo II, two pieces for two guitars*		
	Ciglio II, for violin and flute		
	Concertino II for five synthesizers (Yamaha)		Ricordi
	Refrain III , for 14 performers	8'	Ricordi
	Small II: for flute, viola and harp		Ricordi

	Sweet Basil , for trombone and Big Band	9'	
1993-1994	*In cauda II , for orchestra*	15'	Ricordi
1994	*Ciglio III, for violin and piano*		
	Flans , for soprano and 9 instruments. Text by F. Villon	6'	Ricordi
	Françoise Variationen Nr. 29-35 for piano		
	Portal , for clarinet, Eb clarinet, bass clarinet, and orchestra	8'	Ricordi
	Puppenspiel III , for piccolo, flute, flute in C, and 14 performers	7'	Ricordi
	Serenata II , for 5 instruments	5'	Ricordi
	Sincronie II , for cello, piano, and 7 instruments	5'	Ricordi
1995	*Alfred, Alfred: seven scenes and six instruments. Text by the composer*	35'	Ricordi
	Algo III: for guitar and 23 instruments		Ricordi
	Cinis II, for bass clarinet, marimba and percussion		Ricordi
	Duetto II for two violins		
	Fanfara , per 4 corni, 3 trombe, 3 tromboni, tuba doppia contrebassa e tamburo napoleonico	2'	Ricordi
	Incisi - two pieces for oboe		Ricordi
	Luci, two pieces for flute in C		Ricordi
	Rasch II , for saxophone quartet, vibraphone, marimba, perucssionist, and piano	12'	Ricordi
	Triplum, for flute, oboe, and Bb clarinet		Ricordi
1996	*Algo IV, for 13 instruments*		
	In cauda III , for orchestra	10'	Ricordi
	Lame II, for 8 cellos		
	Lem II, for contrabass and 15 instruments		
	Luci II, for bassoon and horn		
	Refrain IV, for 8 instruments		
	Till, two pieces for Horn in F		
1997	*Al: for mandonlin, mandola, and guitar*		Ricordi
	Che, for tuba		
	Feria IV. Two pieces for accordion		
	Luci III, for string quartet		
	Tell. Two pieces for english horn		
1998	*Elly: for clarinet, cello, and piano*		Ricordi
	Cerocchi 70, for clarinet, violin and piano		
	Fire (In cauda IV) for 4 female voices and orchestra. Text by Jack Beeching		
	Poll: for 13 performers		Ricordi
1999	*Clair II: for clarinet in B flat*		
	Prom, for orchestra		
2000	*Esa (In cauda V) for orchestra*		

Author's Biography

Bradley David Decker was born in Springfield, Illinois, on March 19, 1975. He is a composer of acoustic and digital music, and music educator. He received his B.M. at Eastern Illinois University, M.M. at University of Tennessee-Knoxville, and is currently a doctoral candidate in composition at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His teachers have included Peter Hesterman, Kenneth Jacobs, and more recently, Zack Browning, Erik Lund, Heinrich Taube, Stephen Taylor, and Scott Wyatt. He was most recently a selected finalist for the *Bourges 31e Concours International de Musique et d'Art Sonore Electroacoustiques,* the *2005 ASCAP/SEAMUS Student Composer Competition*, the *IV Edition Pierre Schaeffer International Competition of Computer Music,* the *2004 Concurso Internacional de Música Eletroacústica de São Paulo,* the *Bourges 30e Concours International de Musique et d'Art Sonore Electroacoustiques*, and winner of the *2003 University of Illinois 21st Century Piano Commission.* He currently is a Composition Instructor and Research Assistant at the University of Illinois, Urbana, and Adjunct Faculty at Richland Community College, Decatur, IL.