

Hans Abrahamsen's Second Period: An Analysis of *Wald*

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## Biographical Sketch

Here is the biography.

## Acknowledgements

Here are the acknowledgements.

## Abstract

Here is the abstract.

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## Introduction

Danish composer Hans Abrahamsen's piece for large ensemble, *Wald* (2009), is a "series of variations" building on the opening of his earlier piece for woodwind quintet entitled *Walden* (1978). This return to his own music stemmed from a crisis in Abrahamsen's compositional life, between 1991 and 1999, when he took an extended break from composing. During this time, Abrahamsen experienced debilitating writer's block; he wrote that he was "paralyzed by the white paper" and "felt that his music had become so complex that he no longer had the tools to create what he tried to imagine."<sup>1</sup> While he slowed in producing new compositions, he did not stop working. Throughout this period, which he calls the "fermata"<sup>2</sup> of his compositional life, Abrahamsen found inspiration in arranging and orchestrating other composers' works as well as his own earlier pieces. This period of reflection and contemplation provided the necessary catalyst for a new stylistic period, one built upon the foundations of his first period but extended beyond it to new territory.

A precocious composer, Abrahamsen had written a well-received body of work by age 27 (1979) and he was a prominent figure associated with the Danish "New Simplicity" movement. This movement, largely a reaction against Darmstadt serialism, sought to "establish a perceptible sense of form and to evolve a new relationship with past musical styles and objects."<sup>3</sup> Abrahamsen's pieces of this first period, including *Ten Preludes for String Quartet* (1973), *Stratifications* (1975), *Winternacht* (1976-78), and *Walden* (1978), blended the clarity of expression and economy of musical materials associated with "New Simplicity" along with elements of neo-classicism, neo-romanticism, and collage-like polystylism. Later first period works, like *Six Pieces*

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<sup>1</sup>Robin, "Hans Abrahamsen: Fame and Snow Falling on a Composer."

<sup>2</sup>Molleson, "A Composer for the Season."

<sup>3</sup>Ernste, "Hans Abrahamsen's *Winternacht*: Reflections on an Etching by M.C. Escher," 8.

(1984) for horn, violin, and piano, and *Märchenbilder* (1984), and *Lied in Fall* (1987) show a greater sense of chromaticism and denser, more granular textures, perhaps revealing the influence of his teacher György Ligeti.

The musical style of Abrahamsen's second period is deeply informed by the groundwork he laid during the period of his "fermata." He returned to his older works and reorchestrated them for alternate ensembles, most notably the woodwind quintet *Walden* and septet *Winternacht*. He arranged and orchestrated works by Charles Ives, Carl Nielsen, Per Nørgård, and Maurice Ravel for ensembles ranging in size from woodwind quintet to chamber orchestra. Most importantly, Abrahamsen found inspiration in a set of canons by J.S. Bach<sup>4</sup> that he arranged with a distinctly Minimalist aesthetic. These canons would have a significant impact on several post-fermata works.

Abrahamsen's "fermata" ended with the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (1999-2000); this piece initiated a fertile period of artistic synthesis that combined the practice of returning to previous works (and referencing other composers' works) with new innovations in compositional technique. In this second period, Abrahamsen returned to previous works in two ways: first, arrangement for larger ensembles, and second, starting from an existing germinal motive and expanding upon it significantly. For instance, Abrahamsen recasts the first four movements and eighth movement of *Ten Studies for Piano* (1984-98) for orchestral forces in *Four Pieces for Orchestra* (2004) and in the final movement of the *Piano Concerto*, respectively. *Air* (2006), for solo accordion, is a reworking and development of material from his first piece for accordion, *Canzone* (1978), and *Air* further serves as a point of departure for the *String Quartet No. 3* (2008).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>BWV 1072-1078.

<sup>5</sup>Abrahamsen, "*String Quartet No. 3*" Program note.

Beginning with *Schnee* (2006-08) and *Wald* (2008-09), Abrahamsen's style crystallized into one based on tightly constrained musical materials, microtonal sonorities, repeating material delineated by repeat signs, frequent changes of meter, tempo modulations, and complex polyrhythms. The two works are drastically different in scope and instrumentation: *Schnee* lasts an hour and is scored for nine musicians, while *Wald* lasts eighteen minutes and is scored for fifteen musicians. Abrahamsen has nonetheless indicated that *Wald* is a "twin piece" to *Schnee*,<sup>6</sup> and indeed they share not only the aforementioned characteristics but also clearly articulated forms and symmetrical ensemble seating plans.

While *Schnee* has gained greater notoriety, due in part to its dramatic hour-long length, *Wald* better exemplifies the synthesis of Abrahamsen's second period, where previous materials are recast and further developed within the context of these new compositional resources. It consists of seven variations based on the beginning of his woodwind quintet *Walden* (1978), and Abrahamsen has indicated there are additional connections to Robert Schumann's *Waldszenen*.<sup>7</sup> The thematic material appearing in both *Walden* and *Wald* is a rising perfect fourth horn call that elicits responses from other instruments.<sup>8</sup> The horn call repeats but has a slower periodicity than the other responses leading to a gradual change in the order of call and response. The passing of material around the instruments of the ensemble figures prominently throughout the work, and Abrahamsen controls this feature through the symmetrical arrangement of the ensemble into six groups. With these characteristics in mind, *Wald* represents an excellent case study to discuss the features of Abrahamsen's second period.

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<sup>6</sup>Abrahamsen, "*Wald*" Program note.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. Program note.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. Program note.

## Part 1: Historical Context

Table 1: Abrahamsen's Related Works

Work	Related Work
<i>Flowersongs</i> (1973)	<i>Ten Preludes</i> (1973) VIII
<i>Flowersongs</i> (1973)	<i>Schnee</i> (2006-08) Canon 2A
<i>Winternacht</i> (1976-78) IV	<i>Nacht und Trumpeten</i> (1981)
<i>Ten Preludes</i> (1973)	<i>Ten Sinfonias</i> (2010)
<i>Ten Studies</i> (1984-98) I-IV	<i>Six Pieces</i> (1984)
<i>Ten Studies</i> (1984-98) I-IV	<i>Four Pieces for Orchestra</i> (2004) I-IV
<i>Ten Studies</i> (1984-98) VIII	<i>Concerto for Piano and Orchestra</i> (1999-2000) IV
<i>Canzone</i> (1978)	<i>Air</i> (2006)
<i>Air</i> (2006)	<i>String Quartet No. 3</i> (2008)
<i>Walden</i> (1978) I	<i>Wald</i> (2008-09)
<i>Schnee</i> (2006-08)	<i>Wald</i> (2008-09)
<i>Schnee</i> (2006-08)	<i>Double Concerto</i> (2010-11) IV
<i>Schnee</i> (2006-08) Canon 1A	<i>let me tell you</i> (2013) I
<i>Traumlieder</i> (2009)	<i>Six Pieces</i> (1984)
<i>Liebeslied</i> (2010)	<i>Double Concerto</i> (2011) I

## Part 2: An Overview of *Walden* and *Wald*

It is important to note that the horn has a special significance for Abrahamsen. He was born with cerebral palsy which affects the right side of his body.<sup>9</sup> He walks with an uneven gait and has only two functional fingers on his right hand,<sup>10</sup> which left him unable to pursue most instruments with professional proficiency. So early on the horn became his principle instrument due to its ability to be performed with the left hand only. In fact, the first ever public performance of his own music was a piece called *October* performed by Abrahamsen in 1969. He played both the horn and the

<sup>9</sup>Robin, "Hans Abrahamsen: Fame and Snow Falling on a Composer."

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

piano with his left hand and incorporated the playing of “natural harmonics of the horn directly into the open strings of the grand piano to create resonance” while the pedal was held down by an assistant.<sup>11</sup>

Abrahamsen has featured the horn in several works beyond *Walden* and *Wald*. Most notably he wrote *Six Pieces* (1984), for horn, violin, and piano, as a companion piece to accompany the Danish premiere of Ligeti’s *Horn Trio*.<sup>12</sup> *Six Pieces* revisits six movements from the piano work *Ten Studies* where Abrahamsen “tried to ‘conjure up’ instrumental parts inside the piano movement.”<sup>13</sup> In 2009, he also rearranged *Six Pieces* for violin, cello, and piano under the title *Traumlieder*.

Beyond Abrahamsen’s personal and musical relationship with the horn, the instrument has historical and referential aspects connect it to his music and heritage. **more on horn’s connection to German/Danish culture, German romanticism, and hunting**

## Walden

### Background and Instrumentation

Abrahamsen composed *Walden* in 1978 on a commission from the Funen Wind Quintet. This original version is scored for a standard woodwind quintet of flute, clarinet in A, oboe, French horn, and bassoon. In 1995, Abrahamsen created an arrangement of the piece for the Calefax Reed Quintet scored for oboe d’amore, clarinet in A, bass clarinet in Bb, bassoon, and alto saxophone. With the exception of some tempi adjustments and the addition of descriptive markings, this alternate arrange-

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<sup>11</sup>Abrahamsen, “*Left, Alone*” Program note.

<sup>12</sup>Abrahamsen, “*Six Pieces*” Program note.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

ment is more or less exactly the same as the original but Abrahamsen reassigned the instrumental lines to different instruments. For instance, while both versions have a clarinet in A, the 1995 version clarinet performs the flute material from the 1978 woodwind quintet, while the alto saxophone in reed quintet performs the clarinet material from the original version. Table 2 gives an overview of the instrumental reassignments between these two versions. In the following discussions of *Walden*, the original woodwind quintet and its score will be the referenced version.

Table 2: *Walden* Orchestration Comparison.

Wind Quintet		Reed Quintet
Flute	→	Clarinet in A
Oboe	→	Oboe d'amore
Clarinet in A	→	Alto Saxophone in Eb
Horn in F	→	Bass Clarinet in Bb
Bassoon	→	Bassoon

Like many works throughout Abrahamsen's career, *Walden* is deeply inspired by nature and also inspired by the literary work of the same name by Henry David Thoreau.<sup>14</sup> Abrahamsen's first and second period works are often inspired by or otherwise make references to art, literature, poetry, or other music. For instance, the first and fourth movements of *Winternacht* are dedicated to Austrian poet Georg Trakl, while the second is inspired by Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher and the third, the most neo-classical in nature, is dedicated to Igor Stravinsky. **something on the second period extramusical connections**

These references and allusions provide a conceptual view from which to understand Abrahamsen's compositional methods and **something else**. His program note

<sup>14</sup>Abrahamsen has continued to borrow titles for his music. Other examples include *Märchenbilder* (1984) from the viola and piano duo by Robert Schumann and *let me tell you* (2014) from the novel by Paul Griffiths.

for *Walden* explains the inspiration, origin of the title, and describes the musical material and the kinds of processes found in the piece:

The title is taken from the American philosopher and poet Henry David Thoreau's novel from 1854 about living in the woods, which Thoreau did for two years. His stay there was an experiment, an attempt to strip away all the artificial needs imposed by society and rediscover man's lost unity with nature. In that particular sense his novel is a documentation of social inadequacy and a work of poetry (Utopia) as well.

All thought Thoreau himself never completed any actual social analysis he was way ahead of his own time in his perception of the economy and cyclic character of Nature, today known as ecology. His ideas are particularly relevant now that pollution caused by society has reached alarming proportions.

*Walden* was written in a style of re-cycling and "new simplicity". A lot of superfluous material has been peeled away in order to give space to different qualities such as identity and clarity. Various layers are encountered in the quintet such as the organic (growth, flowering, Decay), concretism (mechanical patterns) and finally the descriptive (distant horn calls and other ghost-like music of the past enter our consciousness like a dream). *Walden* consist of four movements.

**discuss stripping away, re-cycling, new simplicity, identity, clarity, and layers**

## Form

*Walden* is comprised of four movements without titles that differ in character and tempo but share identifiable melodies and motives, specific gestures, and harmonic consistency. **more on this?**

Table 3 shows how Abrahamsen in part shapes the overall proportions of the piece by successively decreasing the duration of each movement,<sup>15</sup> a technique he has

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<sup>15</sup>Durations taken from the recording of The Scandinavian Wind Quintet, Abrahamsen, *Wind Quintets*

used in both first and second period works. The movements or sections of *Winter-nacht*, *Schnee*, and *Wald* also decrease in duration over time, while the sections of *Märchenbilder* expand over time.<sup>16</sup>

Table 3: *Walden* Movement Proportions.

Movement	Tempo	Measures	Duration in Score	Duration on Recording
I.	$\text{♩} = 63-66$	67	3:35	2:57
II.	$\text{♩} = 76$	30	3:10	2:51
III.	$\text{♩} = 52$	32	2:30	2:33
IV.	$\text{♩} = 112$	28	1:00	1:04

The layers of organicism, concretism, and descriptive reflect how the material unfolds in each movement. Organicism is central to the first and second movements where motives develop gradually through additive processes, for instance, melodic expansion and rhythmic augmentation and diminution. The third movement features a three-note pattern articulated heterophonically with polyrhythms (10 over 7 over 4); this bubbling texture gradually decreases in speed and gives way to slow legato oscillating patterns that compress in rhythm, ascend in register, and coalesce into an interlocking sixteenth-note texture. The description, “ghost-like music of the past,” is relevant to both the horn call of the first movement as well as the contrapuntal texture in the fourth movement, which is stylistically reminiscent of Baroque music. This final movement features a composite texture of a duo of flute and bassoon in 3/4 and a trio of oboe, clarinet, and horn in 6/8.

<sup>16</sup>Abrahamsen, “*Märchenbilder*” Program note.



## Compositional Techniques in *Walden*

The clarity of form and expression and economy of musical materials associated with Abrahamsen's first period "New Simplicity" works are evident through a wide variety of compositional techniques in *Walden*. These techniques include: rhythmic displacement, consistency in rhythmic subdivisions, rhythmic augmentation and diminution/compression, rhythm and pitch retrograde, canons, limited harmonic collections, limited intervallic motion, polymeter and polytempo, and clarity in phrasing.

### First Movement

The first movement of *Walden* contains three different dichotomies that play out over the course of the movement: 1) harmonic ambiguity to harmonic clarity, 2) heterophony to homophony, and 3) ensemble as soloists to ensemble as subsets. The beginning features the quintet performing music that is harmonically ambiguous and articulated heterophonically, but by the end the quintet is performing harmonically clear and homophonic musical material. The instruments begin playing quite independently from one another, and over the course of the movement, they break into various duos and trios, and finally end as a tutti unit.

Abrahamsen uses several strict processes throughout *Walden* as a whole but particularly in the first movement. Rhythmic displacement, consistency in rhythmic subdivision, canons, and limited intervallic motion will be discussed.

The form of the movement unfolds over four short sections. The first features a call and response pattern that gradually transforms over four phrases via a process of rhythmic displacement. The second section consists of a heterophonic canon between flute, clarinet, and bassoon, while the oboe and horn continue calling. The third

section continues the heterophonic canon, now in the flute, oboe, and clarinet, while the horn and bassoon periodically interject a staccato interval. Finally, the fourth section introduces a homophonic three-octave melody paired with the increasingly insistent staccato gesture before abruptly transitioning into a tutti repeated chord.

Figure 1 shows the first two of these phrases separated by grand pauses.

Figure 1 consists of two musical staves, each representing a phrase in a heterophonic canon. The top staff is for the first phrase, starting with a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 63-66$ . It includes staves for Flauto, Oboe, Clarinetto, Corno, and Fagotto. The Corno part is marked "con sord." and "Corno \*).". The bottom staff is for the second phrase, starting with a measure rest (5) and including staves for Fl., Ob., Cl., Cor., and Fg. Both staves show dynamic markings (*pp*, *mp*) and articulation (staccato, *con sord.*). Grand pauses (G.P.) are indicated between the phrases. A footnote at the bottom states: "\*) Clarinet in A and Horn in F both written at actual pitch."

Figure 1: Horn call and responses.

The phrases contain two motives: a single rising Bb-Eb horn call and three D-F echoing responses in the flute, clarinet, and bassoon. Each instance of the motive differs slightly in rhythmic subdivision (e.g. eighths, triplets, and quintuplets), and

over the course of the four phrases, the order of the call and responses undergoes rhythmic displacement. The horn call consistently enters within beat four, but with each phrase “responses” shift by a consistent rhythmic value: the bassoon enters 5 quarter notes earlier, the clarinet 4 quarter notes, and the flute 3 quarter notes plus one triplet eighth note. By the fourth phrase, the horn call is isolated from the responses having rotated to the end (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Horn motive phrase four.

After this four phrase rhythmic displacement process finishes, the oboe enters for the first time with a falling F $\sharp$ -C $\sharp$  perfect fourth motive, and the second section follows. The second section features the oboe and horn working as one layer, while the flute, clarinet, and bassoon articulate a heterophonic, canonic texture. The oboe and horn remain in a consistent 5-measure rhythmic relationship. For 2 measures, the horn performs the rising perfect fourth call, now elongated by the addition of a F (B $\flat$ -E $\flat$ -F), while the oboe continues with the falling perfect fourth motive for 3 measures.

During the course of this pattern’s four repetitions, the flute, clarinet, and bassoon engage in a tempo and pitch canon.

On the oboe’s fourth response, the flute, clarinet, and horn make a jarring for-

tissimo interjection.

Harmonically, the endings of the first, second, and third sections are characterized by subtle changes in harmonic language that act as a transition to the next section.

## Second Movement

## Third Movement

## Fourth Movement

## Connections to Other Music

As with much of Abrahamsen's music, there are intersections between *Walden*, earlier pieces, and later pieces. Abrahamsen completed *Walden* and *Winternacht* in the same year (1978) and both share similar compositional features. The two works each contain four movements that successively decrease in duration, returning musical material between movements, and a final movement that is polystylistic, polytonal, and clearly references older musical styles. In the case of *Winternacht*, the first movement serves as a "kind of overture"<sup>17</sup> that foreshadows the music to come in the third and fourth movement. Figure 3 shows one example of this from the first and third movements. The first movement contains a section where Stravinskian rhythms articulated in the strings crossfade with material from a previous section. The same material, recast in a different tempo and meter, serves as the basis for the third movement. The way in which this and other sections return throughout *Winternacht* is like the difference between a door being temporarily opened and catching a glimpse of a room versus being inside the room.

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<sup>17</sup>Ernste, "Hans Abrahamsen's *Winternacht*: Reflections on an Etching by M.C. Escher."

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**F** [battere in 3 : perhaps with subdivisions]  
**Andante fluente (Tempo II)**  
 ♩ = 60 (♩ = 120)

47

Fl. alt.

Cl.

C. à p.

Cor.

Pf.

Vn.

Ve.

*p dolce*

*pizz.*

*pp*

*mp*

*p*

*morendo*

## III

Vivo, energico ma ben ritmico  
 ♩ = 120

Fl.

Cl.

C. à p.

Cor.

Pf.

Vn.

Ve.

*pp*

*p*

*mp*

*mf*

*pp*

*pizz.*

*p*

Figure 3: *Winternacht* Material from Movement I Returning in Movement III.

An additional connection between *Winternacht* and *Walden* can be heard in the presence of a similar horn call in both works. Figure 4 compares the two. The triadic nature of this horn motive calls to mind a natural horn, or more specifically a German *Jagd Horn* (hunting horn). In his dissertation on Ligeti's *Hamburg Concerto*, composer Anthony Cheung discusses



Figure 4: *Winternacht* and *Walden* Triadic Horn Calls.

*Walden* does not have large sections of music that return in the same fashion as in *Winternacht*. Instead several movements contain recurring gestures or otherwise similar material that retain particular musical identities. For instance, in measure 18-20 of the first movement, the first entrance of the oboe is a descending F# to C# perfect fourth. This same musical motive reappears in the second movement in measures 5-6, 15-16, and 24-25, as well as at the climax of the third movement in measures 26-27. Another case can be found in the close relationship between the ending of the first movement and beginning of the second movement. Towards the end of the first movement, a C# and E staccato repeated-note gesture appears in the bassoon and French horn while a new homophonic texture and melody arises in the trio of flute, oboe, and clarinet. The staccato repeated-note gesture grows in assertiveness and abruptly cuts off this melody and transforms into a tutti punctuated chord articulated by the entire quintet. In a way, the second movement picks up where

this prior melody left off. Abrahamsen presents it directly at the beginning of the second movement transposed a perfect fifth lower and shortly thereafter the staccato C# and E gesture returns in the clarinet and horn.

The opening section of the first movement of *Walden* also serves as the germinal material for *Wald* which was written many years later.

## Wald

### Background and Instrumentation

Abrahamsen completed *Wald* in 2009 as a result of a co-commission from the Asko|Schönberg Ensemble (Netherlands) and the BBC for the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (United Kingdom). Asko/Schönberg and conductor Reinbert de Leeuw gave the world premiere on January 14, 2010 at the Muziekgebouw aan't IJ in Amsterdam, while the BCMG and composer/conductor George Benjamin gave the UK premiere on August 6, 2010 at the Royal Albert Hall in London during the 2010 BBC Proms.

The piece is scored for a sinfonietta ensemble of fifteen musicians: bass flute, English horn, bass clarinet, bassoon, French horn, trumpet, bass trumpet, percussion, harp, piano, 2 violins, viola, cello, and double bass. **more on the use of unique doublings** The musicians are seated in a non-standard semi-circle configuration of four groups of duos and two groups of trios with the piano occupying the central position outside of any group. Figure 5 shows the tree-like diagram of this seating plan. This seating arrangement is intimately connected with the way Abrahamsen handles orchestration and the transference of material over the course of the work and will be discussed in greater detail later on.





Table 4: *Wald* Formal Proportions.

Section	Duration
Introduction	3:10
Variation 1	2:38
Variation 2	2:09
Variation 3	2:35
Variation 4	2:00
Variation 5	1:39
Variation 6	1:31
Variation 7	1:18

The variations are juxtaposed with little to no transitional material. Their boundaries and subsections are clearly demarcated in the score through the use of different tempi, meters, descriptive markings, and double bar lines. Table 5 gives a comprehensive list of every tempo change and descriptive marking that accompanies a new subsection or variation.

Table 5: *Wald* Tempo and Descriptive Markings

Section	Measures	Tempo	Descriptive markings
Intro	mm. 1-108		
	1	Tempo I ♩ = 88	Allegro con brio “wie aus der Ferne” (“as from a distance”)
	37	Tempo II ♩ = 66	Poco meno ma maestoso poco grottesco e ironico
	73	Tempo III ♩ = 100	Allegro vivace e agitato “aufgeregt” (“excited”)
Var 1	91	Tempo IV ♩ = 88	Meno mosso, soave e fluente
	mm. 109-267		
	109	Tempo I ♩ = 92	Allegro con brio ma un poco piu mosso ancora “wie aus der Ferne” (yet “as from a distance”)
	171	Tempo II ♩ = 77	Poco meno maestoso ma un poco piu mosso

Section	Measures	Tempo	Descriptive markings
Var 2	238	Tempo III ♩ = 100	ma poco lamentoso Allegro vivace e piu agitato “sehr aufgeregt” (“very excited”)
	254	Tempo IV ♩ = 88	Meno mosso, soave e fluente
	mm. 268-408		
	268	Tempo I ♩ = 94	Allegro con brio ma sempre poco piu mosso
	322	Tempo II ♩ = 82	Un poco meno ma ancora piu mosso lamentoso e melancolico
Var 3	382	Tempo III ♩ = 100	Allegro vivace e agitato “wieder aufgeregt” (“excited again”)
	402	Tempo IV ♩ = 88	Meno mosso, soave e fluente
	mm. 409-442		
Var 4	409	♩ = 32	Adagio misterioso (“Nachtmusik”)
	mm. 443-473		
Var 5	443	♩ = 32	Stesso tempo
	mm. 474-581		
	474	♩ = 64	Con nuova energia “Wie ein plötzliches Erwachen” (“Like a sudden awakening”)
	490	♩ = 144	Vivo furioso (“vielleicht eine Jagd”) (“perhaps a hunting”)
	522	♩ = 165	Presto volante (“galoppierend, immer vorwärts”) (“galloping, always forward”)
	562	♩ = 132	Più mosso
	mm. 582-594		
Var 6	582	♩ = 66	Andante mesto
Var 7	mm. 595-605		
	595	♩ = 64	Piu lento

This table highlights variations and sections that are musically connected by these indications, but does not describe the full extent of their relationships. There are interrelated sections and variations across the piece that are not captured by this

table. The entire form of the work can be grouped in the following way:

Part A: Introduction, Variation 1, Variation 2

Part B: Variation 3 and Variation 4

Part C: Variation 5

Part D: Variation 6 and Variation 7

The introduction establishes the primary motivic and harmonic material, while variations 1 and 2 are very close re-readings of the introduction with differences in proportion, orchestration, and motivic development. These three sections, grouped as Part A, each contain four subsections differing in tempo, harmony, and activity. Variation 3 and 4 contain the quietest, calmest, and most introverted music, while Variation 5 functions as the climax, with the loudest, most chaotic, and texturally dense music. Variations 6 and 7 are harmonically related to the fourth part of Part A and contain similar harmonic material with different orchestrations.

### **Spatial Layout**

Abrahamsen's arrangement of the 15 musicians into a semi-circle of six symmetrical groups guides his approach to orchestration. Throughout the variations, the six groups exchange musical ideas in a way that is balanced and symmetrical: phrases performed by one group of instruments are answered by phrases from the corresponding symmetrical groups. A brief examination of the first sections of the introduction (measures 1-36) illustrates this process.

## Part 3: An Analysis of *Wald*

### Introduction, Variation 1, and Variation 2

short section describing the interrelationships of the Introduction, Variation 1, and Variation2

describe how each of the variations has four discrete sections without any transition

Table 6: *Wald* Intro, Var 1, and Var 2 Sectional Proportions.

	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4
Introduction	duration	duration	duration	duration
Variation 1	duration	duration	duration	duration
Variation 2	duration	duration	duration	duration

### Section 1

Like *Walden*, the first section of the introduction features four phrases where the rising perfect fourth motive and three echoing motives undergo rhythmic displacement. Each of the four phrases features a specific collection of instruments from Group III and Group IV (see Figure 3). Furthermore, each phrase repeats verbatim from the extensive use of repeat signs, characteristic of Abrahamsen's second period works. These phrases alternate lengths of 9 measures and 8 measures following an unrepeated 2 measure intro:

$\frac{3}{8}$  2 mm. ||: 9mm. :||: 8mm. :||: 9mm. :||: 8mm. :||

This alternating structure determines the motives that the instrumental groups

perform as well as their harmonic material, which consists of only a D4-G4 dyad and a 1/6th-tone flat D4-G4. The 9-measure phrases feature the bass flute performing the rising perfect fourth motive equally tempered and colored by bisbigliando trills. The trio of instruments from Group IV (horn, bass, and harp) perform the echoing motives with the 1/6th tone flat intonation. These characteristics flip in the 8-measure phrases: the horn (seated symmetrically opposite the bass flute) performs the fourth motive with the 1/6th flat intonation while the trio of instruments in Group III (bass flute, cello, and percussion) perform equally tempered echoing motives. Unlike *Walden*, as the group exchanges material and the motivic displacement occur, the echoing motives increase in duration; for instance, the horn's repeated note gesture in the first phrase is doubled rhythmically when compared to its reappearance in phrase 3 (measure 23). Like the global form, this durational transformation is not strictly linear, but nonetheless gives an aural sensation of a ritardando.

These aspects of Abrahamsen's tight, almost obsessive, control over orchestration, harmony, form, and motivic development are evident throughout *Wald*. The piece is uniquely situated in his output as it directly follows his landmark work *Schnee* and builds upon the new techniques there and in the *Piano Concerto*. It is a work highly representative of his second period style where materials from an earlier work are revisited and developed in a markedly different direction, one informed by new approaches to timbre and development.

## Section 2

The second section of the introduction contrasts the first by way of tempo, meter, rhythmic activity, pitch collection, and orchestration, but it retains the same basic principle of gradual displacement and expands it to both motivic ordering and pitch

ordering. Like the first section, the second begins with 2 unrepeated measures and then repeats four phrases verbatim that alternate 8-measure and 9-measure lengths:

$\frac{2}{4}$  2 mm. ||: 8mm. :||: 9mm. :||: 8mm. :||: 9mm. :||

The starting 2 measures abruptly break the perfect fourth pedal point as the pianist performs punctuated <123678> clusters. The two violins of Group V that were previously alternating repetitions of the D4-G4 and 1/6th tone flat D4-G4 dyads begin exchanging dyads a half-step higher and lower (C#4-F#4 and Eb4-Ab4). The bass flute and horn (the most active of the first section) rest during the second section. The rest of the ensemble joins in articulating one of two motives: the calling perfect fourth gesture now harmonized as <123> and <678> clusters and a chromatically ascending percussive line.

Again the presentation of these two motives is largely connected to the ensemble seating plan. During the 8-measure phrases, Group I and Group VI play the perfect fourth motive, with the bassoon and bass clarinet (Group I) playing in equal temperament and the trumpet and bass trumpet (Group VI) playing a 1/6th tone flat intonation. The ascending chromatic line is fully presented by the harp, and additionally doubled in Group II, where the viola and English horn alternate each note of the line. The roles flip symmetrically during the 9-measure phrases (e.g. Group I divides the chromatic line while Group II plays the perfect fourth motive).

As is the case with the first section, these two motives gradually change position over the course of the four phrases. Additionally, the order of the pitches in the chromatically ascending line also undergoes a rotational procedure. With each phrase, the pitch class 6 moves forward one position (with the exception of phrase 3 where it occurs simultaneously with 2), and during the final phrase, pitch class 7 also shifts forward one position creating a series of chromatically ascending perfect fourths:

Phrase 1: <1 2 3 6 7 8>

Phrase 2: <1 2 6 3 7 8>

Phrase 3: <1 6 3 7 8 >

< 2 >

Phrase 4: <1 6 2 7 3 8>

**Section 3**

**Section 4**

**Variation 3 and Variation 4**

**Variation 5**

**Variation 6 and Variation 7**

## Appendix

### Chronological List of Works

Year	Title	Duration	Instrumentation
1970	Skum	14:00	orchestra
1971	Rundt om og Ind Imellem	10:00	hn, 2trp, tbn, tba
1972	EEC sats	10:00	3.3.3.3/4.3.3.1/3perc/pf/str
1972	Efterår	5:00	Tenor [=Soprano] vc, fl, gtr
1972	Landskaber	8:00	fl, ob, cl, bn, hn
1973	10 Præludier	20:00	string quartet
1973	Flowersongs	11:00	3fl
1973	Glansbilleder [Scraps]	4:00	vc, pf
1973	Universe Birds	4:00	10 Sopranos and 10 S or 5S
1974	Gush	4:00	asx
1974	Symfoni	14:00	2.2.2.2/4.3.3.0/timp.3perc/str
1975	Stratifications	8:00	2.2.2.1/2.2.1.0/2perc/pf/str
1976	October	6:00	pf
1976	Danmarks-sange	10:00	soprano and va, fl, cl, perc, pf
1978	Canzone	9:00	acn
1978	Winternacht	13:00	1.0.1.0/1.0+cnt.0.0/pf/str(1.0.0.1.0)
1978	Walden	11:00	fl, ob, cl, bn, hn



Year	Title	Duration	Instrumentation
1981	Nacht und Trompeten	11:00	2.2.2.2/2.3.0.0/5perc/pf/str
1981	String Quartet No. 2	15:00	string quartet
1984	Märchenbilder	14:00	sinfonietta
1984	Seks stykker	14:00	vn, hn, pf
1985	Zwei Schneetänze	4:00	4rec Alt Orch: vn, vc, fl, cl
1987	Lied in Fall	14:00	cello and chamber orchestra
1987	Winternacht	13:00	1.0.1.0/0.0.0.0/perc/pf/gtr/str(1.0.0.1.0)
1988	Storm og Stille	3:00	vc and Alt Orch: vn, va, vc
1990	Capriccio Bagateller	4:00	vn
1990	Aarhus Ragtime	3:00	1(pic).1.1.1/1.1.1.0/perc/pf/str 1.1.1.1.1
1990	Hymne	3:00	vc or va
1992	Efterårslied	6:00	Soprano vn.vc.cl.pf[hpd]
1995	Walden (reed quintet version)	11:00	ob, 2cl, bn, asx
1998	Ti studier	21:00	pf
1999	Two Pieces in Slow Time	7:00	2hn, 3trp, 3tbn, 2tba, 2cnt, 2perc
2000	Siciliano	6:12	vc
2000	Concerto for Piano and Orchestra	15:00	piano and chamber orchestra
2004	Fire Stykker for Orkester	17:00	large orchestra
2005	Three Little Nocturnes	9:00	accordion and string quartet
2006	Air	9:00	accordion

Year	Title	Duration	Instrumentation
2006	Schnee, Canons 1a & 1b	17:00	0+pic.1.0+Ebcl.0/0000/perc/2pf/str 1.0.1.1.0
2008	Schnee	57:00	1(pic,afl).1(ca).1(Ebcl,bcl)/perc/2pf/str 1.0.1.1.0
2008	String Quartet No. 3	12:00	string quartet
2009	Efterårslied	6:00	ca.pf[hpd]vn.va.vc
2009	Traumlieder	14:00	violin, cello, and piano
2009	Wald	18:00	0+bfl.0+ca.0+bcl.1/1200/perc/hp.pf(cel)/str(1.1.1.1.1)
20??	Kharon	7:00	trombone
2010	Liebeslied	3:00	bs fl, ob, bs cl, perc, pno, vn, va, vc
2010	Ten Sinfonias	20:00	orchestra
2011	Double Concerto	22:00	violin, piano, and string orchestra
2012	Flowersongs, version 2012	10:00	fl/a.fl, ob/Eng.hn, and cl/Eb.cl
2012	String Quartet No. 4	20:00	string quartet
2013	Schneebilder	20:00	violin, viola, cello, and piano
2013	Let me tell you	30:00	soprano and orchestra
2014	Bamberger Tanz	4:00	orchestra
2015	Left, alone	18:00	piano (left hand) and orchestra

Year	Arrangement	Duration	Instrumentation
	Bach: 8 Canons -	20:00	
	Bach: Befiehl du deine Wege -	5:00	
2012	Nielsen: Commotio	21:00	
1988	Nielsen: Fantasiestykker, op. 2	6:00	ob,vn,va,vc
	Nielsen: Festpræludium	3:00	

Year	Arrangement	Duration	Instrumentation
2010	Nielsen: Symfoni Nr. 6	32:00	
1990	Nielsen: Three Piano Pieces op. 59 posth.	10:00	
1989	Ravel: Le Tombeau de Couperin	20:00	
2011	Debussy: Children's Corner	18:00	
1988	Satie: Trois Gymnopedies	12:00	ob,str4tet
2012	Ligeti: Arc-en-ciel	4:00	
2012	Ligeti: En Suspens	2:15	
????	Nørgård: Surf	5:00	
	Schumann: Kinderszenen, op.15		Wind Quintet
1998	Weyse: Fire Aftensange	20:00	Mezzosoprano and orchestra

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