SONATA FOR PIANO, Op. 26: A REFLECTION OF SAMUEL BARBER'S STRUGGLE BETWEEN NEO-CLASSICISM AND MODERNISM

A Doctoral Document

Presented to

The Faculty of the Moores School of Music

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

By

Catharine D. Lysinger

May, 2004

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Abstract

Samuel Barber's *Sonata for Piano*, Op. 26 combines one of the major movements that emerged in the early twentieth century, neo-classicism, with various other "modernist" components that evolved between the two World Wars including serialism, bitonality, and rhythmic complexity. Neoclassicism was in many ways a reaction against the compositional "excesses" of the time including serialism, an outgrowth of the chromaticism and atonality of the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries. Barber combines both tendencies in his sonata and in doing so, reflects a struggle faced by many twentieth century musicians to balance the classical tradition with the modernist language of the new era.

This study uses two levels of analysis to demonstrate Barber's approach to his struggle. Standard formal analysis is used as a point of departure followed by an examination of various modernist elements used in the *Sonata* including bitonality, serialism, rhythmic complexity and motivic development. While it is impossible to completely separate the traditional and contemporary elements from one another, analysis demonstrates that large-scale considerations largely emulate classical techniques whereas small–scale considerations reveal the modernist composer at work. Motivic development, central to understanding the *Sonata* as a whole, is presented as the bridge between the traditional and the modern.

This document explores both the neo-classic and modernist compositional elements of the *Sonata* and cites specific examples of the struggle to merge the traditional with the contemporary. It demonstrates that Barber's creative process in this work is a

reflection of his struggle as a contemporary composer. The fascinating resolution to Barber's struggle lies in his ability to instill a sense of flexibility into both the traditional and contemporary elements. He effectively defines his own version of twentieth-century music by requiring that all compositional guidelines, new or old, adapt to the music itself. An analysis of differing interpretations of the *Sonata* demonstrates that Barber's struggle must ultimately be revealed by the performer.

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INTRODUCTION

Samuel Barber's *Sonata for Piano*, Op. 26 combines one of the major movements that emerged in the early twentieth century, neo-classicism, with various other "modernist" components that evolved between the two World Wars including serialism, bitonality, and rhythmic complexity. Neoclassicism was in many ways a reaction against the compositional "excesses" of the time including serialism, an outgrowth of the chromaticism and atonality of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Barber combines both tendencies in his sonata and in doing so, reflects a struggle faced by many twentieth century musicians to balance the classical tradition with the modernist language of the new era.

Historically, the struggle depicted by Barber in the *Sonata* is reflective of the world of art music at the time. The neo-classic style was well represented in works such as Stravinsky's ballet, *Apollo* (1928, revised 1948), his *Symphony of Psalms* (1930), and Copland's *Piano Sonata* (1941). By contrast, the modernist movement was well represented in works such as Schoenberg's *String Quartet*, No. 4 (1936) and *A Survivor from Warsaw* (1947). Though Schoenberg's *Structural Functions of Harmony* was not published until after Barber's *Sonata*, Schoenberg was already influencing a generation of American composers at UCLA throughout the 1940s. Some composers followed the post-tonal path forged by Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School, expanding the musical vocabulary beyond chromaticism into atonality and ultimately serialism. Other composers chose to retain or extend the harmonic practice of the common practice period while employing contemporary

practices in a variety of ways. Samuel Barber's *Sonata* exemplifies the struggle of this duality by melding eighteenth-century sonata form with twentieth-century language.

In addition to reflecting the struggle of the current artistic period, the *Sonata* is a reflection of a difficult period in Barber's career. At the time it was commissioned, Barber's work was receiving an increasing amount of criticism for its lack of modernist ideas. While the creation of this work was particularly troublesome for Barber, the *Sonata* ultimately represents a turning point: Barber struggled to reconcile his more conservative tendencies while responding to the pressure to create "modern" music. Upon its premiere, the *Sonata* was immediately hailed a success as well as a significant step forward for Barber's work.

This study uses two levels of analysis to demonstrate Barber's approach to his struggle. Standard formal analysis is used as a point of departure for an examination of various modernist elements used in the *Sonata* including bitonality, serialism, rhythmic complexity and motivic development. While it is impossible to completely separate the traditional and contemporary elements from one another, analysis demonstrates that large-scale considerations essentially emulate classical techniques whereas small–scale considerations reveal the modernist composer at work. Motivic development, central to understanding the *Sonata* as a whole, is presented as the bridge between the traditional and the modern.

Several books, articles, and dissertations have been written about Barber and his music, including Barbara Heyman's *Samuel Barber: The Man and His Music,*[1] James

[1] Barbara B. Heyman, *Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Siffermann's *The Solo Piano Music of Samuel Barber,*[2] and Douglas R. Heist's "Harmonic Organization and Sonata Form: The First movement of Barber's Sonata, Op. 26."[3] Many of these include traditional analyses of the large-scale (e.g., formal) components of the music. However, none of these relate the *Sonata* to either 1) Barber's personal struggle to define himself and his work; 2) how Barber used that struggle to combine traditional and contemporary techniques; or 3) how divergent interpretations reveal similar struggles for the performer.

This document explores both the neo-classic and modernist compositional elements of the *Sonata* and cites specific examples of the struggle to merge the traditional with the contemporary. It demonstrates that Barber's creative process in this work is a reflection of his struggle as a contemporary composer. Lastly, an analysis of differing interpretations of the *Sonata* demonstrates that Barber's struggle must ultimately be revealed by the performer. A comparison of two well-known and highly regarded recordings by Vladimir Horowitz, representing a widely-accepted interpretation, and John Browning, representing a more "modern" approach to the work, demonstrates divergent approaches to both the instrument and the music. The comparison further illustrates many of the key questions today's performer must consider in order to successfully perform the work.

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[2] James P. Sifferman, "Samuel Barber's Works for Solo Piano" (Ann Arbor, MI: Universiity Microfilms, 1982).

[3] Douglas R. Heist, "Harmonic Organization and Sonata Form: The First Movement of Barber's Sonata, Op. 26," *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 27 (January – June, 1990): 25–31.

I

To fully understand Barber's struggles as a composer, and especially the struggle he confronted as he composed the *Sonata*, it is important first to understand the history of Barber's musical evolution and the artistic and cultural climate in which he worked. Samuel Barber's life (1910 – 1981) spanned an era of significant change in American music and culture. Though he experienced great success as a young composer and throughout his career, by the 1960s and '70s, he was frustrated that his work was often criticized for "lacking the individuality to create a lasting body of music."[1] He was so discouraged, in fact, that towards the end of his career, he composed very little and when he did, the music did not come easily.[2]

Barber's earliest works, some of which were composed while still a student in the inaugural class at the Curtis Institute, were often met with great acclaim. In 1935, the Philadelphia Orchestra premiered his *Overture to the School for Scandal*, Op. 5. His *Adagio for Strings*, Op.11, also achieved wide recognition. These early successes were confirmed before his twenty-fifth birthday, by which time Barber had won both the *Prix de Rome* and the Pulitzer Prize for music.[3]

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[1] Harold C. Schonberg, "From Gottschalk to Copland," in *The Lives of the Great Composers*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 566.

[2] He struggled for over a year to compose the *Ballade*, Op. 46 to fulfil his final commission from the Van Cliburn Piano Competition in 1977. Barbara Heyman, *Samuel Barber*, 495-96.

[3] The Pulitzer Prize, (which Barber won in 1935) was a traveling scholarship for study abroad in the amount of $1500. He won the Prix de Rome the same year. Nathan Broder, *Samuel Barber*, 55

Despite these accomplishments, even Barber's early works were criticized for lacking a "modern" style. One example of this criticism demonstrates the extent to which Barber could, at times, be vilified by critics. During a 1938 tour of England, Arturo Toscanini (at the time, conductor of the New York Philharmonic) included two of Barber's compositions, *Adagio for Strings*, Op.11 and *Essay for Orchestra*, Op. 12, on the program as representatives of new American works. Their inclusion sparked considerable debate on both sides of the Atlantic. In a letter to the *New York Times,* one writer succinctly summarized the critical outlook: "One listened in vain for evidence of youthful vigor, freshness or fire, for use of a contemporary idiom. Mr. Barber's music was 'authentic', dull, serious music - utterly anachronistic."[4] Perhaps because of this early successes, similar criticism would follow Barber for much of his early career, as demonstrated in a critique written for *Modern Music Magazine* in 1943: "Barber's music is actually and absurdly romantic in an age when romanticism is the catch word for fools and prophets."[5] Barber gradually responded to his critics, but on his own terms. He made a concerted effort to merge contemporary ideas with his more lyric style. Stylistically, Barber rejected trends if following them meant compromising his musical ideals, retaining his focus on an underlying lyricism as he actively sought ways to incorporate contemporary elements into his music. This struggle, epitomized in the *Sonata*, was explored as early as his Second Symphony (1944).

The Second Symphony marks a notable departure from Barber's previous style. In it, he composed melodies based on intervallic rather than harmonic structures that predominate

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[4] Ashley Pettis, Letter in "From the Mail Pouch," *New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1938.

[5] Robert Horan, *Modern Music* XX, no. 3 (March-April, 1943): 168.

his earlier compositions.[6] The symphony also features increasing harmonic dissonance, more angular melodic contours and reveals Barber's earliest use of tone clusters. Written when Barber was enlisted in the United States Army, he developed a fascination with airplanes which ultimately found its way into the symphony. One strongly contemporary gesture occurs in the last movement where the elimination of bar lines and the resulting free and irregular rhythms suggest the sensation of flying. Despite these more modernist techniques, the army officer responsible for overseeing Barber was displeased with the work. Used to listening to contemporary music on his short wave radio and having developed a certain fondness for quarter-tone harmonies, the army officer criticized Barber's music for failing to reflect his personal taste in contemporary music.[7]

After the war, Barber received a commission from the League of Composers to compose a new solo piano work in celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1947. At the time, only a small number of solo piano works by contemporary American composers were considered significant enough to be regularly performed, including Aaron Copland's *Sonata* and *Piano Variations* and Charles Ives' *Concord Sonata*. Barber's only previous contribution to this genre was his *Excursions*, Op. 20, a set of four short pieces inspired by American folk music. The pianist Vladimir Horowitz, who was familiar with the *Excursions, Op. 20* and found Barber's style "appealing" and full of "substance," was eager to add a new large-scale piece to his repertoire, which at the time consisted largely, though not exclusively, of

[6] Like the *Sonata*, the Second Symphony is based on the interval of a second as a unifying element. Barber had also used this concept in *Overture to the School for Scandal*, Op. 5 and *Medea*, Op. 23.

[7] Heyman, *Samuel Barber*, 301.

Romantic literature.[8] It is likely that Horowitz knew Barber's successful collaboration with the pianist's father-in-law, Arturo Toscanini. To fulfill the League of Composers commission, Barber decided to write a piano sonata and Horowitz agreed to give the premiere of the piece the next season.[9]

The collaboration between composer and artist proved stressful but ultimately triumphant. Barber completed the first movement almost immediately but struggled with the remaining movements. "Writer's block" delayed Barber's progress to such an extent that Horowitz frequently expressed his impatience to his wife, Wanda Toscanini Horowitz, as well as directly to the composer. When Barber finally submitted his completed score, it had only three movements – the first three of the now familiar four- movement work. Horowitz appreciated the work and offered various suggestions on the score, the most significant of which was the recommendation to add a fourth movement that was "flashy, ...but with content,"[10] thereby creating a more appropriate finale.

For months, Barber struggled to compose a closing movement that would fulfill Horowitz's recommendation. Finally inspired or perhaps frightened by an angry phone call from Mrs. Horowitz (herself tired of listening to her husband's complaints as the premiere approached), Barber composed the entire fugue in one day.[11] Satisfied with the newly completed work, Horowitz gave the premiere to great acclaim and performed the *Sonata*

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[8] Heyman, *Samuel Barber*, 305.

[9] While the details of Barber's initial connection to Horowitz are unclear, Barber never indicated that the *Sonata* was written specifically for the pianist nor is it dedicated to him. Ibid., 300.

[10] Ibid., 300.

[11] Interview with Robert Sherman, WQXR, 30 September, 1978. Quoted in Heyman, *Samuel Barber*, 301.

many times in the early 1950s. Critics proclaimed the work a triumph of modern music. After Horowitz's premiere, Olin Downes, critic for the *New York Times*, wrote: "We consider it the first sonata really to come of age by an American composer of this period. It is stated naturally and convincingly in the language of modern music."[12] After the same concert, Henry Levinger, critic for the *Musical Courier*, wrote: "The *Sonata* is an important contribution to contemporary piano music. Its idiom shows modernism with traditional ties."[13] Ultimately, the *Sonata* afforded Barber an important and visible opportunity to challenge those who had concluded that he was incapable of composing in a contemporary style. As Levinger himself noted, it also gave Barber an important opportunity to explore the struggle he felt as a composer caught between the worlds of tradition and modernism.

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[12] Olin Downes,"Horowitz Offers Barber's Sonata,"*New York Times* , January 24, 1950, 27.

[13] Henry W. Levinger, "New York Concerts", *Musical Courier* 141 (February 15, 1950): 42.

II

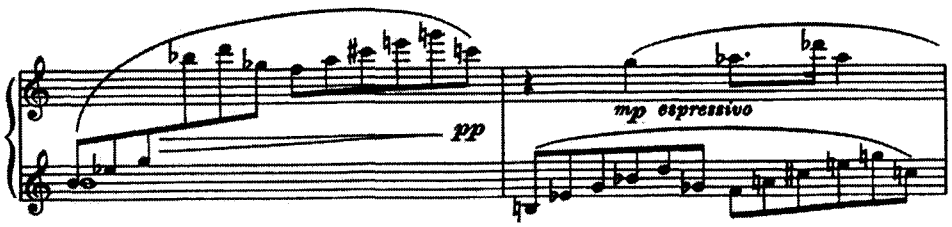
To fully appreciate Barber's accomplishment as well as his struggle in composing the *Sonata*, the work should be examined on two levels. On one level, the "large-scale" considerations reveal a formal structure that largely follows the established harmonic and formal elements of eighteenth-century sonata form. On the other level, the "small-scale" considerations reveal extensive use of modernist idioms. The dichotomy between the large- and small-scale elements is ultimately bridged by Barber's use of motivic development. It encompasses all four movements in a way that defines Barber's approach to creating his own contemporary style: a product of a flexible and adaptive approach to both neoclassic and modernist compositional techniques.

Large-Scale Considerations

The large-scale aspects of the *Sonata* reveal the strong influence of eighteenth-century sonata form. The *Sonata* is made up of four movements with the respective forms: sonata-allegro (*Allegro energico*), rondo (*Allegro vivace e leggiero*), ternary (*Adagio mesto*), and a fugue (*Allegro con spirito*). Barber's sonata shares many characteristics with eighteenth-century multi-movement works. The outer movements are in the same (tonic) key and are characterized by a fast tempo and strong forward propulsion. Additionally, one of the inner movements is slower and more lyrical, and the remaining one, a fleeting, light scherzo, provides significant contrast in both texture and

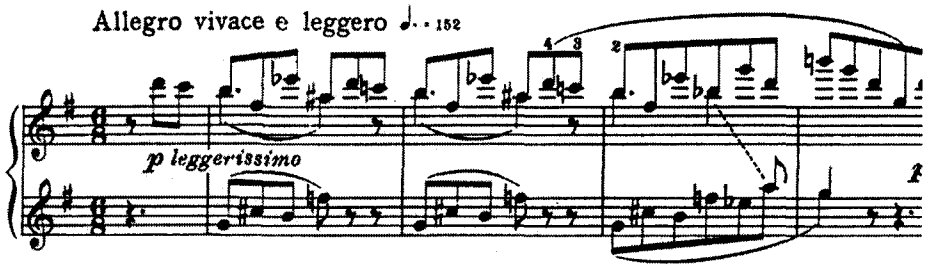
character when compared to the other three movements. In keeping with classical models, the keys (or more aptly, pitch centers) of each movement are closely related, however, they progress by major thirds rather than fifths (perhaps a reflection of Barber's romantic sensibilities). The first movement begins in E flat and proceeds in subsequent movements to G and B before returning to E flat (the tonic key and enharmonic key of D sharp, a major third above B). The resulting augmented triad that is created by combining the pitch centers of each movement foreshadows the significance of this modern element within the *Sonata* as a whole.

This aspect of the *Sonata* reveals Barber's attempts to expand the triadic relationships that were historically an integral part of sonata form. Barber's extensive use of the augmented triad, E flat-G-B, is clearly a unifying device throughout the work. While the key relationship between movements spell the augmented triad the same triad plays an important small-scale role in each of the four movements. In the first movement, the accompaniment to the second theme begins with E flat-G-B using B as the first pitch, as shown in example 1.



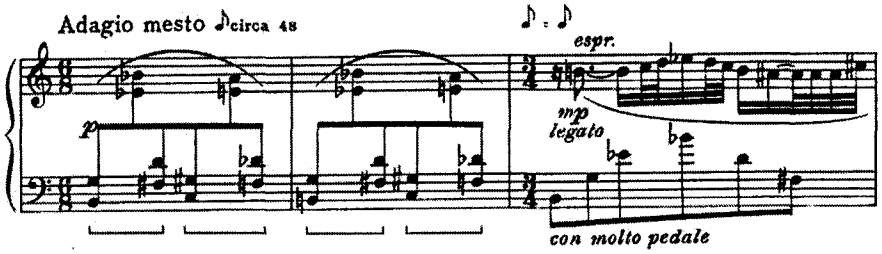
Example 1. First movement, m. 23

In the second movement, the pitches that emanate most audibly from the running eighth-note pattern of the theme are E flat-G-B, here using G as the central tone as shown in example 2.



Example 2. Second movement, m. 1 – 2

The third movement features the same material found in example 1; E flat-G-B appear as the first three pitches with B as the first pitch, as shown in example 3.



Example 3. Third movement, m. 1 – 3

Lastly, example 4 shows the first four notes of the fugue subject in the fourth movement include an augmented triad (as part of a MM7 chord) (E-flat)-G-flat-B-flat-D-natural.

Example 4. Fourth movement, m. 1

Barber's use of the augmented triad in the context of traditional sonata form is only the first way in which he amplifies the struggle between modernism and classicism. Further examples can be found in his choices of motive. The primary motive that opens the *Sonata*, a descending half step, is ultimately the defining element of the entire work. While the idea of motivic development is for all intents and purposes a neo-classic technique, the choice of the descending half-step as the primary motive reveals the struggle by contributing to the dense chromaticism of the work as a whole. Again Barber seeks neo-classic means through which he can explore modern compositional elements. A study of Barber's traditional use of form as well as the development of the primary motive through all four movements reveals how Barber unifies the Sonata and bridges the struggle between the neoclassic and modern. The most significant large-scale consideration in the *Sonata* is the development throughout each of the four movements of the two-note motive that opens the Sonata. Its importance as the bridge between classicism and modernism is such that a separate, more comprehensive study dedicated to this topic exclusively appears as "section IIb".

First Movement

The first movement adheres structurally to common practice models of sonata-allegro form. It features an exposition with first, second, and closing themes, a development section based on these themes, a recapitulation that restates the themes in

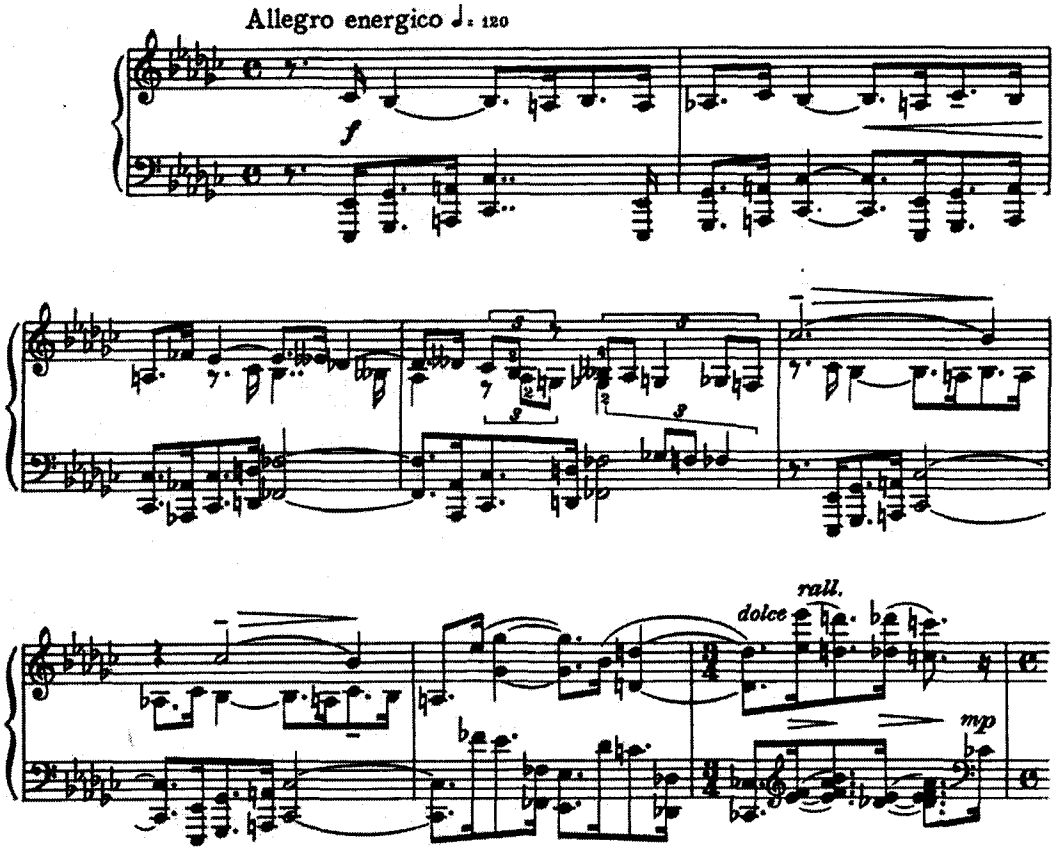
the tonic key area, and a coda based on previously presented thematic material. These sections are shown with their key areas in the chart below.

<table>
<tr><th>Exposition
m. 1 - 50</th><th>Development
m. 51-109</th><th>Recapitulation
m. 110-148</th><th>Coda
m. 149 - 167</th></tr>
<tr><td>m. 1-8
First theme
Eb min./Cb</td><td rowspan="2">m. 51-74
Based on first theme
Eb, B, Ab</td><td>m. 110-117
First theme
Eb min./Cb</td><td rowspan="2">m.149-158
(Transposition of
m. 75-109)
Eb</td></tr>
<tr><td>m. 9-22
Transition</td><td>m. 118-128
Transition</td></tr>
<tr><td>m. 23-40
Second theme
B tonal center</td><td rowspan="2">m. 75-109
Based on fragments
of second theme
C, Eb</td><td>m. 129-142
Second theme
D tonal center</td><td rowspan="2">m. 159-167
Eb
(fragments of
motives, twelve
tone rows, and
themes)</td></tr>
<tr><td>m. 41-50
Closing theme
Ab</td><td>m. 143-148
Closing theme
Eb</td></tr>
</table>

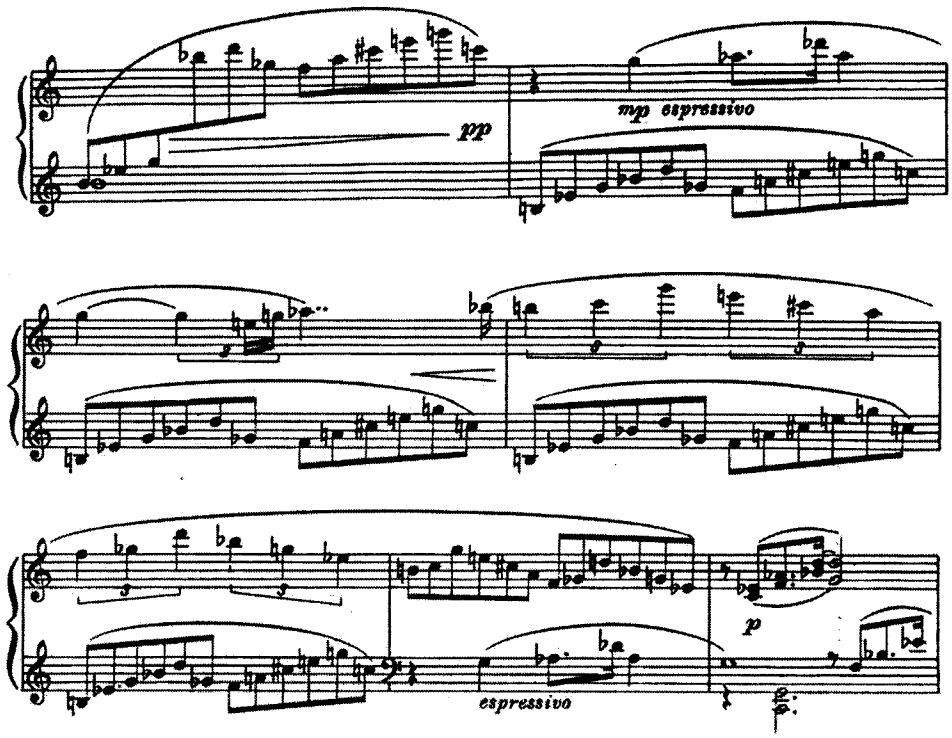
Figure 1. Summary of first movement

Large-scale considerations

Besides overall structure, many other neo-classical elements consistent with sonata-allegro form are present in the first movement, including a more traditional use of repetition, variation, and harmonic tension and resolution. Also central to classical sonata-allegro form is the idea of contrasting thematic material. In Barber's *Sonata*, the rhythmic and contrapuntal first theme contrasts in both texture and character with the more lyrical second theme. (See examples 5 and 6.)

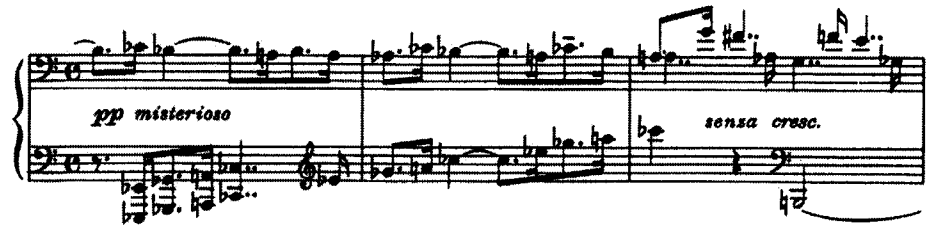


Example 5. First movement, m. 1 - 8



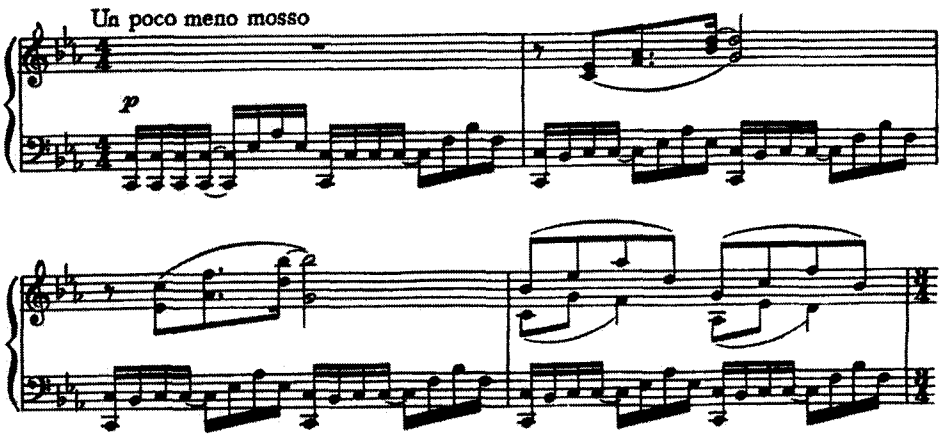
Example 6. First movement, m. 22 - 28

Consistent with common practice models, a lengthy development, comprised of two distinct parts, incorporates fragments of both the thematic and motivic material presented in the exposition. The first part is based on the first theme and is contrapuntal and chromatic, as shown in example 7.



Example 7. First movement, m. 51 - 53

The second part develops a fragment of the second theme. (Example 8.)



Example 8. First movement, m. 75 – 78

This section is one of the few sections that clearly states a tonality, in this case C minor, established by repetition of the pitches C and E-flat, rather than through traditional functional harmony. The recapitulation restates thematic material in a fashion conforming to *a priori* models, with the notable exception of the second theme's tonal center, which delays the harmonic resolution. In the *Sonata*, the coda has heightened responsibility as it serves the atypical function of re-establishing the tonic key.

Figure1 (page 5) also demonstrates that the three large sections (exposition, development, and recapitulation) are evenly proportioned, each one approximately one-third of the elapsed movement followed by a coda. The lyrical second theme is longer than the first, perhaps a reflection of Barber's Romantic tendencies. Although cadential points are clearly stated throughout the first movement, they are more often articulated through textural changes as opposed to functional harmony. The general overview of the large-scale elements of the first movement reveals basically traditional structures that

have at least some non-traditional qualities. The overall form is clearly articulated despite extensive chromaticism and the absence of functional harmony.

Motives

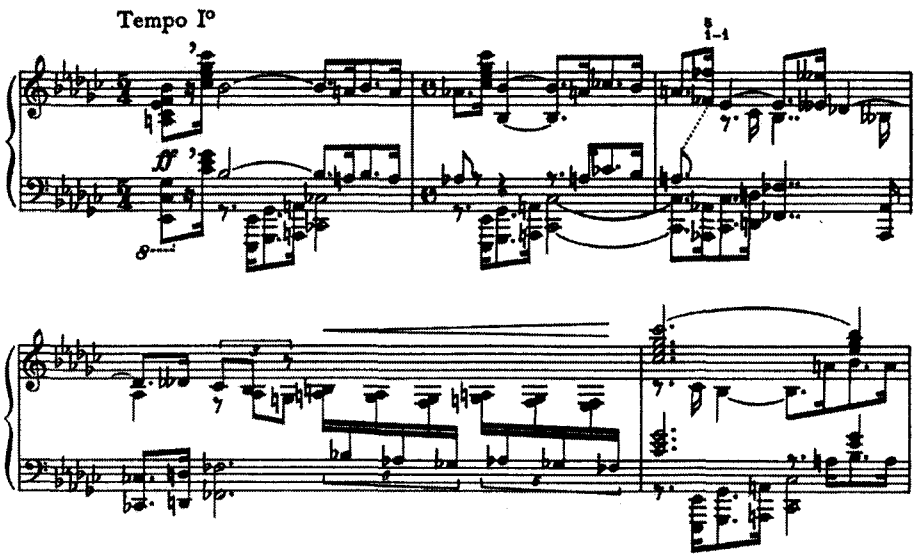
Three motives are featured prominently in the movement's melodic material. Despite their "modern" character, they are vital to understanding Barber's neo-classic use of sonata form in that they are used to accomplish more traditional function from a structural perspective: they articulate the larger sections of the form and are occasionally used to facilitate harmonic movement. From purely a motivic perspective, the neo-classic side of Barber's struggle is highlighted by his thorough development of motives 1, 2, and 3 within the first movement, and motive 1 throughout the *Sonata*. The modern side of the struggle is equally present in Barber's choice of intervals and pitch relationships within the motives. An in-depth motivic study is reserved for section IIb of this document.

Harmonic Considerations

Referring back to Figure 1 (page 5), on a broad scale, Barber clearly intends this movement to be thought of as being in a "key." The E-flat tonality, however obscured, begins and ends the movement, revealing Barber's neoclassic intention. This is further supported by a prevalence of more triadic language throughout the movement. Where Barber articulates the struggle of neo-classicism versus modernism can be found not only in his use of non-traditional key relationships (e.g. he avoids tonic/dominant and relative major relationships in favor of such intervals as an augmented fifth) but also in his

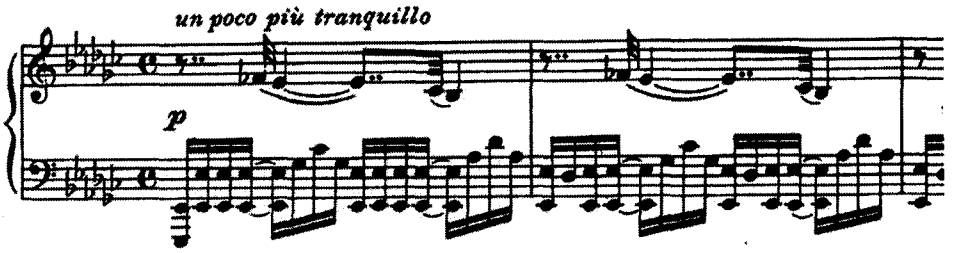
tendency to obscure tonalities with non-diatonic pitches. Harmonically, the first movement is a fusion of both eighteenth-century practice and twentieth-century harmonic vocabulary. For example, the key signature at the beginning implies E-flat minor but changes shortly after the statement of the first theme and continues to change throughout the movement. The underlying concept of harmonic tension that defines sonata-allegro form is essentially kept intact, but Barber stretches traditional expectations by immediately imposing harmonic ambiguity in the first theme (see example 5 above).

Referring back to example 5, the melody emphasizes E flat-B flat (I – V) while the left hand emphasizes C flat-E flat-G flat. A-natural is also emphasized in the left hand figure, perhaps implying a leading tone to B flat (V). The tension that arises from the conflict of key center is heightened in the recapitulation where the first theme is accompanied by vertical C-flat major chords.



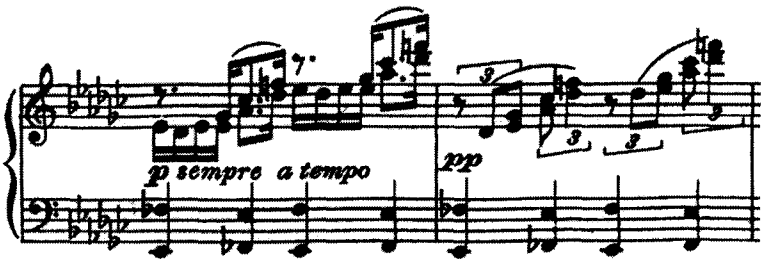
Example 9. First movement, m. 110 - 114.

The contrapuntal texture of the main theme leads to a conflict between E flat and C flat where the right hand gravitates towards E-flat minor (tonic) and the counterpoint of the left hand drives toward C flat. This ambiguity establishes a feeling of unrest for the entire movement; E-flat eventually "overcomes" C flat, but not until the coda, and even then, tonality is established not through functional harmonic means, but by ostinato figures and pedal points on E flat. (See example 10.)



Example 10. First movement, coda, m. 149 – 150

In example 10, E flat is used as the pedal tone in the bass and is supported by statements of the primary motive that emphasize both the tonic and dominant pitches (E flat and B flat). Even to the end of the movement, the relentless struggle is articulated by the fact that the E-flat tonality is obscured by an ostinato figure that oscillates between a minor ninth and a major seventh.



Example 11. First movement, coda, m. 159 – 160.

Harmonic analysis of the second theme reveals strong influences of modernism. Rather than employing a traditional modulation to the dominant (B flat), it has a tonal center on the pitch B, an augmented fifth above E flat (a reflection of the augmented triad that outlines the movements), which is established by repetition of this pitch on the downbeat of each measure. (See example 6 above.) In this case, B might be considered a re-spelling of C flat, from which one can conclude that Barber intended for this key to resolve the conflict presented in the first theme. In his article, " Harmonic Organization in Barber's *Sonata*, Op. 26," Donald Heist explores the harmonic relationships of the first movement, focusing mainly on the conflict between E flat and C flat.[1] He theorizes that the presence of C flat in the first theme is transformed into B in the second theme. Because C flat seems to be equal in importance to E flat (in the first theme), the listener cannot hear the harmonic tension between the two primary themes, essentially negating the harmonic function of sonata-allegro form. While this may be true, Heist's assessment does not take into account the recapitulation of the second theme. Here, D is established rather than E flat as would be expected in traditional models, thus extending the harmonic tension throughout the movement on a much larger scale. The traditional function of the recapitulation is altered because the harmonic conflict in the exposition is not resolved until the coda, which finally establishes that E flat is the tonic key.

[1] Douglas R. Heist. "Harmonic Organization and Sonata Form: The First Movement of Barber's Sonata, Op. 26," *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 27, (January – June, 1990), 25 – 31.

Serialism

The second theme incorporates elements of serialism, unprecedented in any of Barber's works, representing further evidence of Barber's efforts to expand beyond traditional triadic relationships. Barber's use of such progressive language is an indication that he intended for the sonata to be more modern than previous compositions. Serial application in this sonata reveals that the composer wanted to write modern music, but only as such devices could conform to the expectations of classical forms, in this case, sonata-allegro. In the *Sonata*, The "modernization" of Barber's musical language is heightened by his use of 12-tone patterns yet simultaneously diminished by only a partial commitment to true serial technique-again a reflection of the struggles of this work.

Whether or not the patterns in the first movement constitute serialism or simply a collection of twelve chromatic pitches is a matter of debate among scholars. In James Fairleigh's article, "Serialism in Barber's Solo Piano Works," the author acknowledges that serialism is "not the basic compositional technique in the tradition of Schoenberg."[2] As demonstrated in the following examples, several of Barber's rows exhibit qualities that lend themselves to triadic relationships. Furthermore, the rows are generally applied to the music in such a way as to support traditional relationships. In the first movement, Barber uses two of the rows in the transition section following the first theme.

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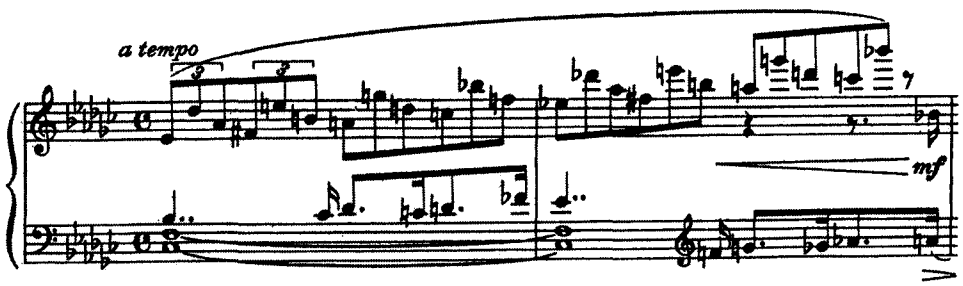
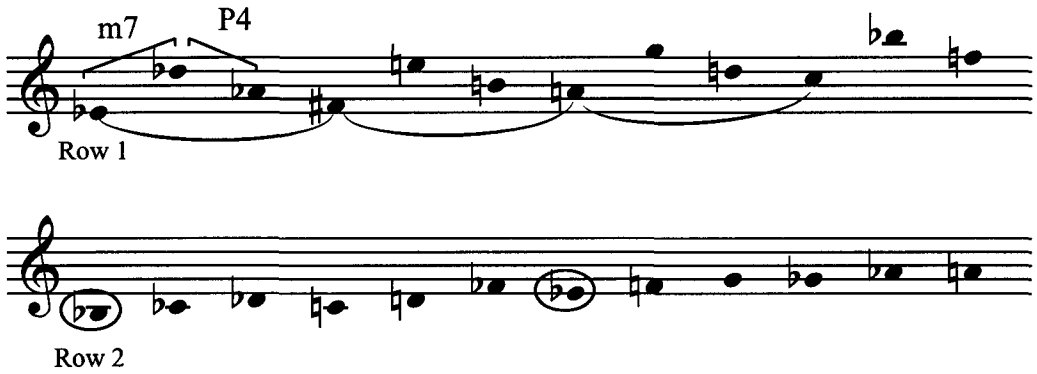
[2] James Fairleigh, "Serialism in Barber's Solo Piano Works," *Piano Quarterly* (Summer, 1970): 13–17.



Example 12. First movement, m. 9 – 1 0

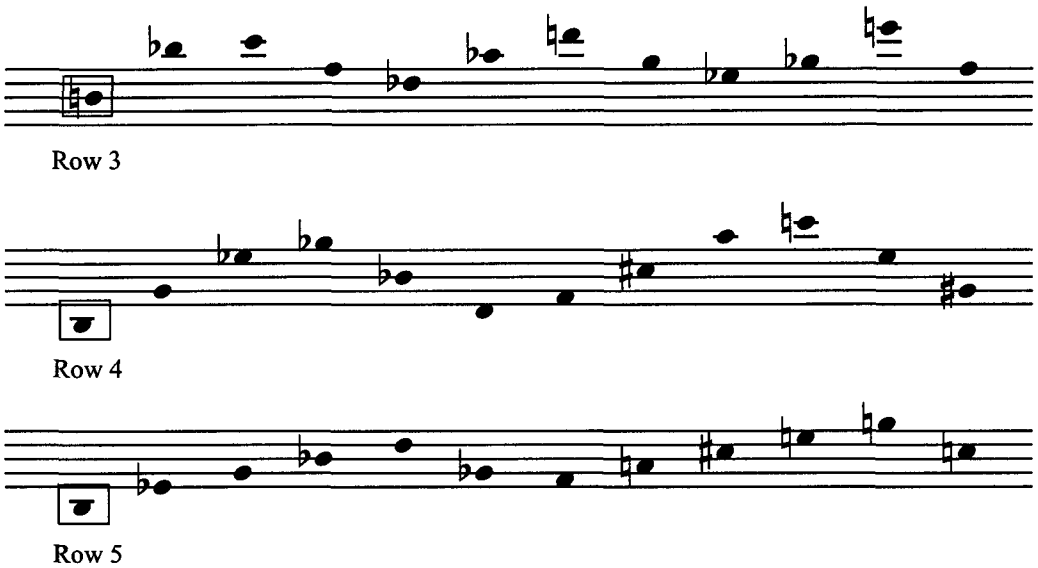
The first row is an ascending sequence of minor sevenths and perfect fourths. (See example 13.)



Example 13. First Movement, rows 1 and 2

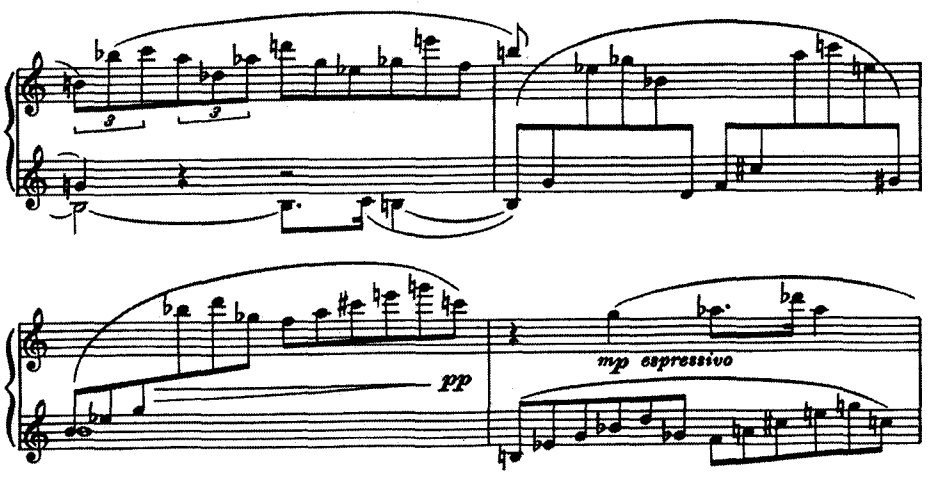
Fairleigh writes that this row is "built on quartal harmonies," but this analysis ignores many of the triadic implications within the larger context. The row begins on the tonic pitch, E flat, on the downbeat of both measures nine and ten and repeats itself an octave higher in measure ten. In addition, the first note of each triplet figure spells a diminished seventh chord, E flat - F sharp - A natural - C natural. The second row, which appears in combination with the first (example 14), is rhythmically related to the primary theme of the movement. E flat as a pitch center is further reinforced by the fact that the first

hexachord starts on the dominant pitch, B flat, and the second hexachord, a transposition of the first, begins on the tonic pitch, E flat. The third, fourth, and fifth tone rows used in the movement can be found in the transition to the second theme and are shown in the extraction in example 14.



Example 14. First movement, rows 3, 4, and 5

Here, too, Barber does not fully commit to serial techniques. Because serial technique was designed to avoid a central tone, all pitches were intended to have equal significance. However, as shown in example 15, Barber begins each row with the same pitch, B, on the downbeat of the bar, thereby effectively establishing an implied tonal center for the second theme.

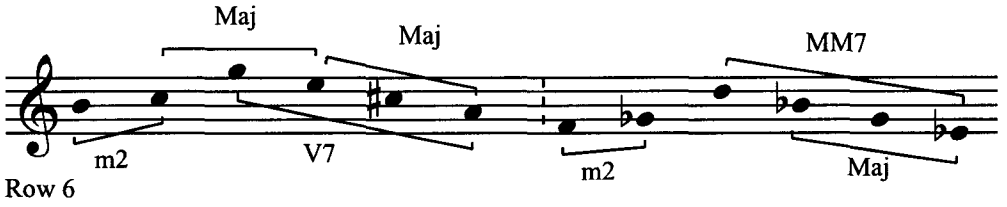


Example 15. First movement, m. 20 - 23

The fifth row is subsequently developed into a recurring arpeggiated accompaniment to the melody. The structure of this particular row (example 16) reveals the triadic nature of its construction, typifying Barber's method of melding this modern concept with familiar characteristics.

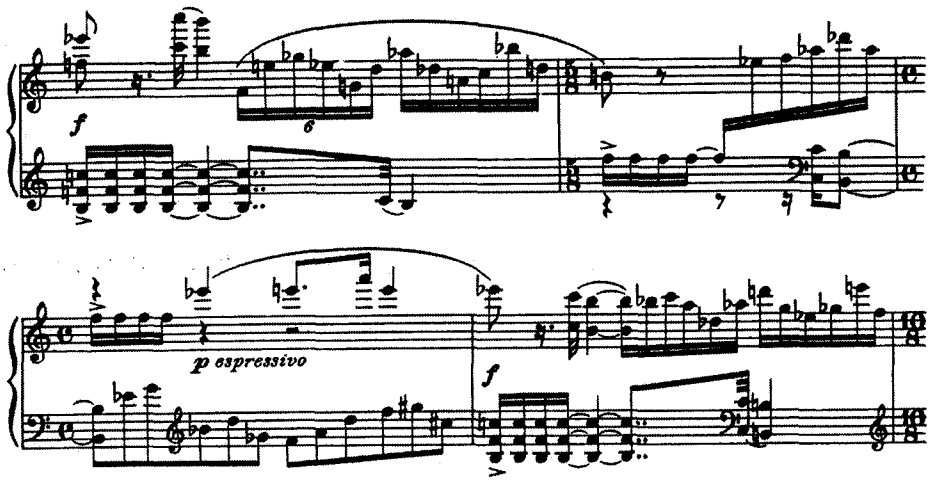
Example 16. First movement, chordal analysis of fifth row.

The sixth and final row in the first movement appears within the melody of the second theme and is shown in isolation in example 17:



Example 17. First movement, sixth row.

Its construction is almost identical to that of row five. Both rows contain a C-major triad, an A-major triad and an E-flat-major triad. Row six can also be analyzed as containing two hexachords, each of which begins with an ascending minor second (an inversion of the motive 1) and continues with a descending seventh chord (Mm7 in the first hexachord and MM7 in second hexachord), another indication of Barber's preference for triadic structures. There is only one application of typical serial procedure other than the transposition that occurs at the recapitulation of the second theme. It occurs in the closing theme (and again in the coda) where Barber states the third row and follows it with a retrograde inversion in diminution as shown in example 18.



Example 18. First movement, m. 35 – 38

This first movement only begins to illustrate Barber's struggle to integrate modernism with neo-classicism. Analysis of subsequent movements will continue to reveal new dimensions of the same conflict.

Second movement

The second movement, *Allegro vivace e leggero*, was supposedly inspired by a composition by Barber's uncle, Sydney Homer, himself a composer of some renown.[3] Upon hearing a scherzo Homer had written for his violin sonata, Barber expressed in a letter that he wished he had thought of it himself.[4] Its *leggiero* quality and the almost exclusive use of the piano's upper register create a stark contrast to the intensity and full keyboard sound of the neighboring movements. There is a general absence of the thick chordal and contrapuntal style of the first movement in favor of more linear motion.

Large-Scale Considerations

Consistent with the first movement, the neo-classic aspect of Barber's struggle is represented in the form of the second movement that follows the common practice rondo model: ABACA as summarized below in Figure 2.

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[3] Sydney Homer (1864-1953) was known primarily for his contributions to the American song repertoire. In addition to over one hundred songs, his *Violin Sonata* (1936) is one of five chamber works composed in the latter part of his career. He was married to Samuel Barber's aunt, Louise Homer, an accomplished singer in her own right. Nicolas Slonimsky, ed. *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: G. Schirmer, 2001), s.v. "Sidney Homer."

[4]Heyman, *Samuel Barber*, p. 297

A **m. 1-46**	**B** **m. 47-80**	**A** **m. 81-101**	**C** **m. 102-139**	**A'** **m. 140-165**
(a) m. 1-8 G	(c) m. 47-70 C /F	(a) m. 81-88 G	(d) m. 102-114 Bb	(a) m. 140-156 G
(b) m. 9-14 G/C	**m. 71-80** **trans.**	(b) m. 89-94 G/C	m. 114-125 trans.	m. 156-165 codetta
(a) m. 15-26 G		(a') m. 95-101 G	var. of (a) m. 126-139 Ab	
m. 27-46 **trans.**				

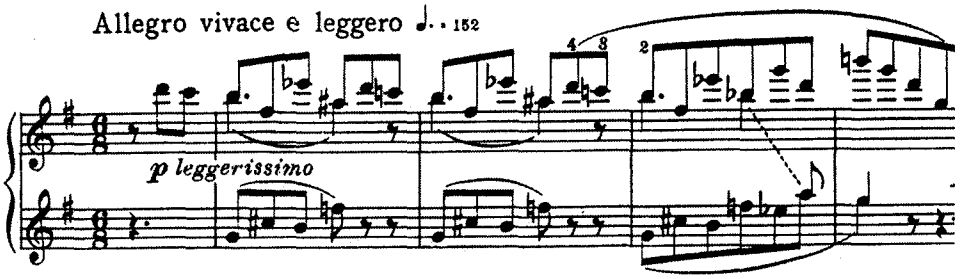
Figure 2. Summary of second movement

While the second movement is longer than the third movement in terms of number of measures, its length in performance is the shortest of the four. It is of classically consistent proportion for a scherzo movement (in comparison to the other movements) even though its position as second movement is atypical of common-practice multi-movement form. The proportional lengths of each section are also well balanced. The first and second appearances of the A sections are almost exactly the same length, each encompassing similar subsections as noted above. Additionally, the inner sections, B and C, are roughly the same length.

Harmonic considerations

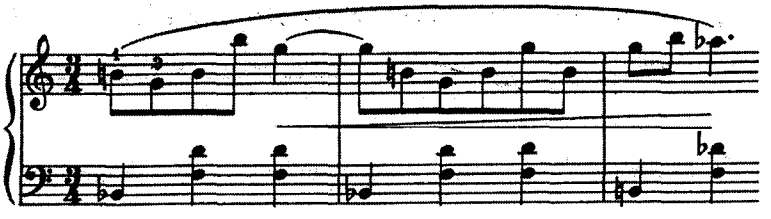
Again, in keeping with the model that Barber establishes in the first movement, the "modernist" side of his struggle is demonstrated through his choice of harmonic

language. The key signature is initially indicative of a pitch center as demonstrated by the first theme below.



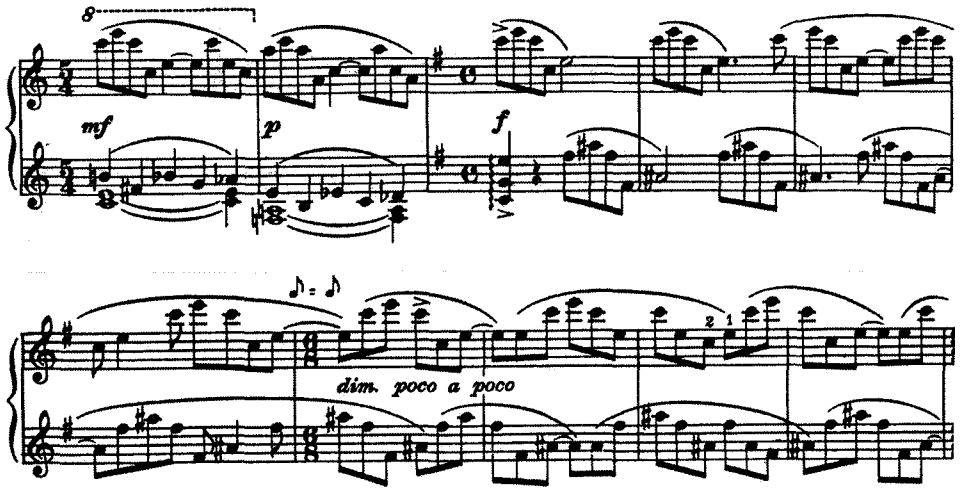
Example 19. Second movement, first theme.

Thematically, Barber reveals his neo-classical tendencies by ensuring that the primary melodic material is in G for all of the "A" sections, however, an "inner" theme, derived from motive 1 of the first movement, and marked with double-stemmed notes in example 8, reinforces the chromatic character of the piece. As in the first movement, Barber obscures the tonality, here, by incorporating major and minor thirds within the melodic line. The resulting bi-modality is the primary characteristic of the chromatic theme that is supported by repetition of the tonic pitch on the downbeat of each bar in the left hand. Two examples of polyharmony augment the bimodal thematic statements increasing the harmonic tension in the second movement. In example 20, G major arpeggios in the right hand compete against a B-flat waltz texture in the left.



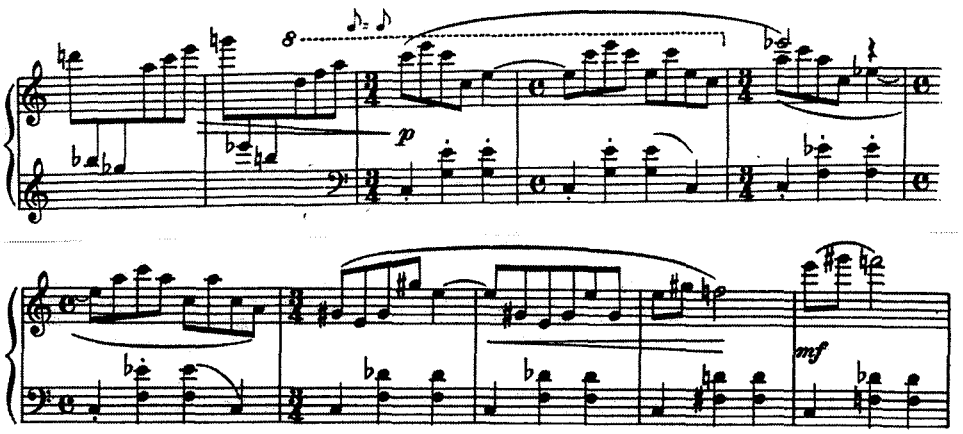
Example 20. Second movement, m. 60 - 61

Example 21 (m. 69-78) reveals a C major arpeggio in the right hand juxtaposed against an F-sharp major figuration in the left (both chords omit the fifth).



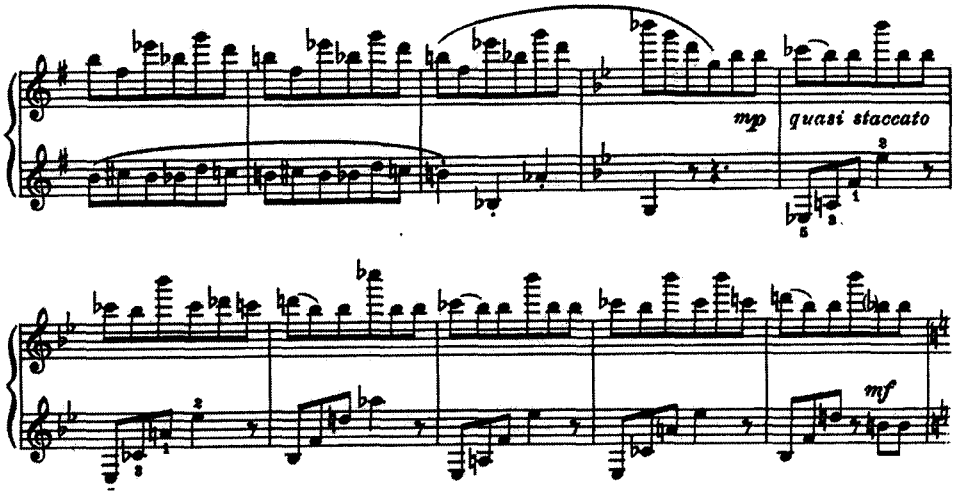
Example 21. Second movement, m. 69 - 78

The key areas of the inner sections of the rondo (B and C) are closely related to the tonal center G by a fourth (C) and a third (B flat) respectively. They contrast with the first theme and each other both in texture and rhythmic activity, though each section is unified by the continuous flow of rhythmic eighth notes. While Barber uses harmonic changes to articulate key sections, the listener will probably be more immediately struck by how structural articulation is achieved through changes in textural variety. One notable nod to the scherzo's classical roots can be found in the composer's use of waltz texture in the B section. However, the waltz rhythm is deliberately made unpredictable with the alternation of 3/4 and 4/4 meter.



Example 22. Second movement, m. 47 - 53.

In the third section (section C, m. 102), where Barber creates a variation of the A section's inner theme, rhythmic devices obscure the meter. Alternating bars of duple and triple rhythm followed by melodic gestures consisting of four eighth notes, rather than three as might be expected in 6/8 time, add to the "modernization" of the scherzo.



Example 23. Second movement, m. 99 - 108.

While one interpretation of the C section might analyze these measures as a hemiola, the rhythmic juxtaposition and displacement should be viewed within the context of the movement as a whole. It is the combination of these rhythmic devices, no matter how

simple, with the chromatic, thematic, and motivic development that gives the movement a distinctively modern character. In the context of the whole sonata, the second movement is the least intense despite its obvious restlessness. While its structure follows neo-classic models, its combination of chromatic and rhythmic qualities are modernist innovations.

Third movement

The third movement, *Adagio mesto*, combines a ternary form with elements of a Baroque compositional technique (chaconne), and incorporates among the most contemporary harmonic and intervallic language of the *Sonata*, serialism. As such, the third movement might be considered the strongest illustration of the struggle Barber confronted at the time of its composition. Post-tonal technique is unprecedented in Barber's earlier works, as previously mentioned, and although there is much debate as to whether Barber's application qualifies as true serialism, its use as a compositional framework must be acknowledged and ultimately addressed by the performer.

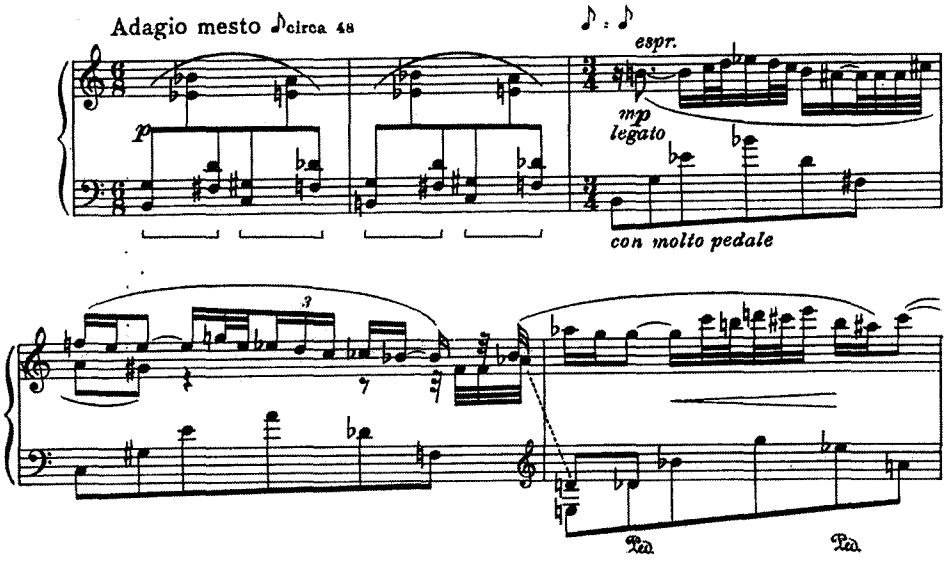
Large-scale considerations

Figure 3 illustrates Barber's balance of proportion in this movement, here characterized by a longer middle section framed by two shorter A sections. The chart below illustrates the major sections of the third movement and their respective tonal centers.

A	B	A'
m. 1 – 10 B	m. 11 – 27 E	m. 28 – 39 B

Figure 3. Summary of third movement

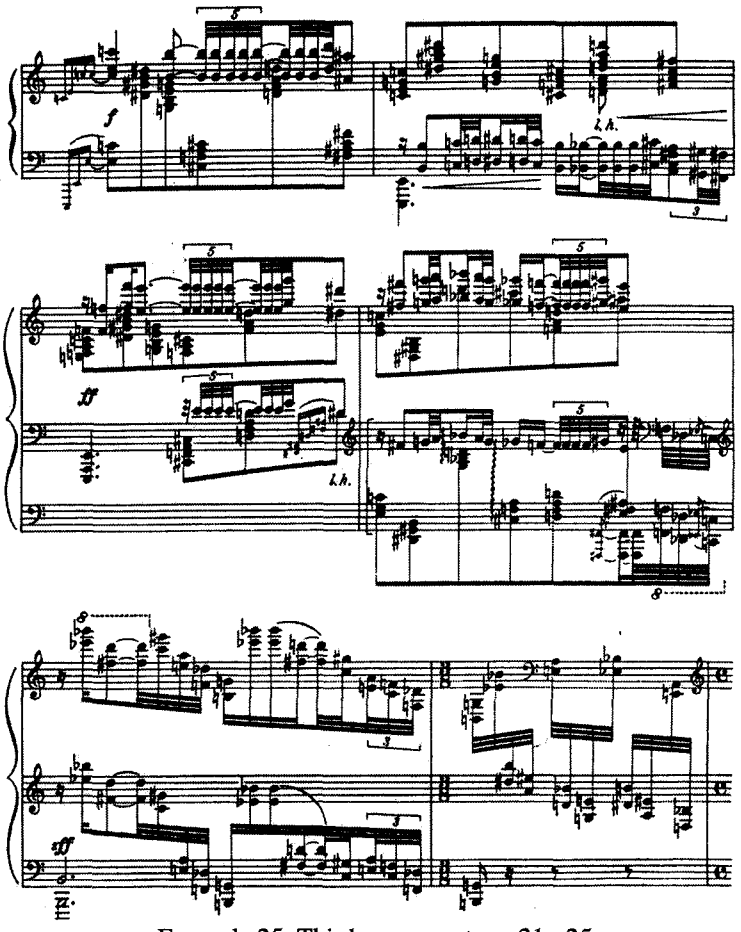
The movement is characterized by long melodic lines stated over a steady, arpeggiated eighth-note pattern as shown in the example below.



Example 24. Third movement, m. 1 - 4

Referring to figure 3, the tonal center shifts to E in the B section by transposing the arpeggio that accompanies the first theme. As in the previous movements, the structure is not only defined by harmonic shifts but also by textural change. While the theme of the B section is similar to that of the A section, the addition of more notes per beat, harmonic seconds in the melody and dyads in the accompaniment create a thicker texture and increased momentum. Functional tonality is used to define some aspects of the ternary form, although the textural changes provide the clearer auditory cues for the listener, a

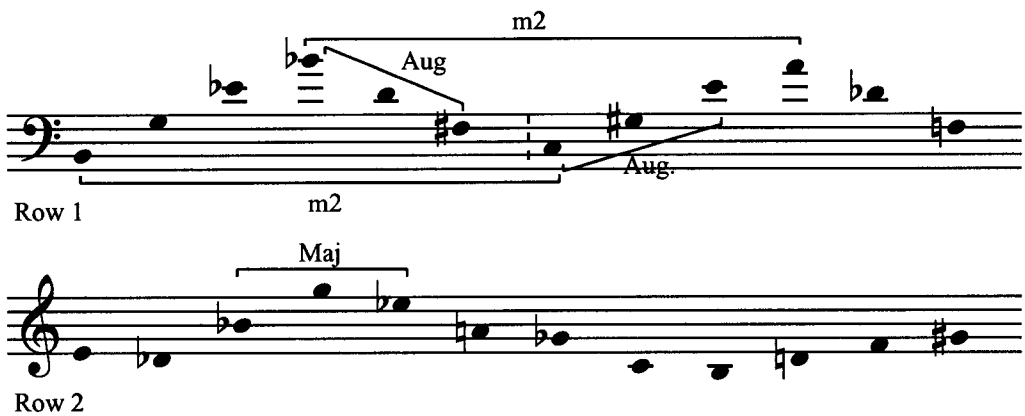
characteristic found throughout the *Sonata*. For example, the initial A section begins with two introductory measures and proceeds with a two-voiced texture. Voices are gradually added through measure eight, where there are five voices, before the intensity diminishes and the section draws to a close. The B section begins exactly as the A section began, but develops quickly. Ultimately, it requires three staves to accommodate the textural aspects of climax, which, recalling the first movement, covers the full range of the instrument.



Example 25. Third movement, m. 21 - 25

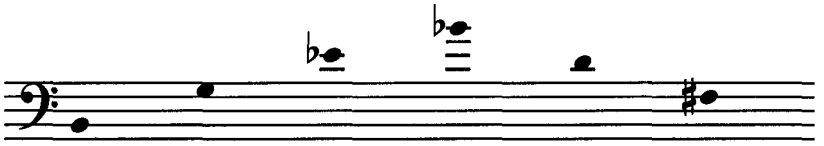
Serialism

In the third movement, despite the prevalence of twelve tone rows, an elusive tonality is preserved because Barber gives some pitches more structural weight than others. This is amplified through Barber's adaptation of twelve-tone technique. Initially, two rows form the basis of much of the musical material in the movement as shown in isolation in below (in example 26):

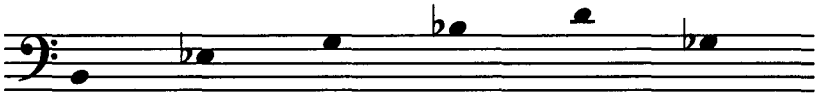


Example 26. Third movement, rows

Similar to those featured in the first movement, these rows have triadic characteristics; row 1 outlines a series of augmented triads (a reference to the large-scale relationships between the movements), while row 2 outlines a series of diminished seventh chords. The first hexachord of row 1 contains the same pitch order as the first hexachord of the fifth (and most prominent) row from the first movement, establishing a link between the two movements. Each row begins with the same augmented triad, E flat - G - B followed by another augmented triad, G flat – B flat - D.



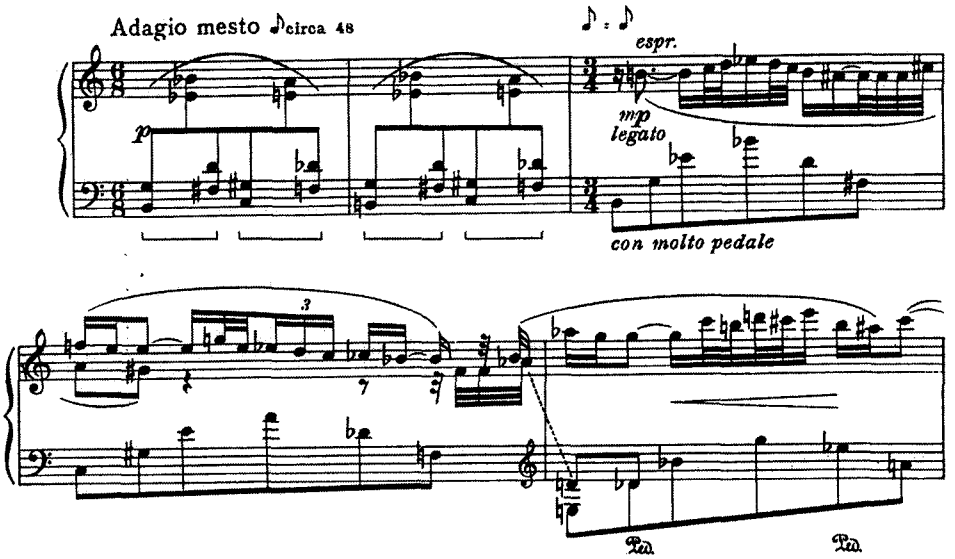
Mvmt 3, Row 1, first hexachord



Mvmt 1, Row 5, first hexachord

Example 27. Movement 3, row 1 and movement 1, row 5

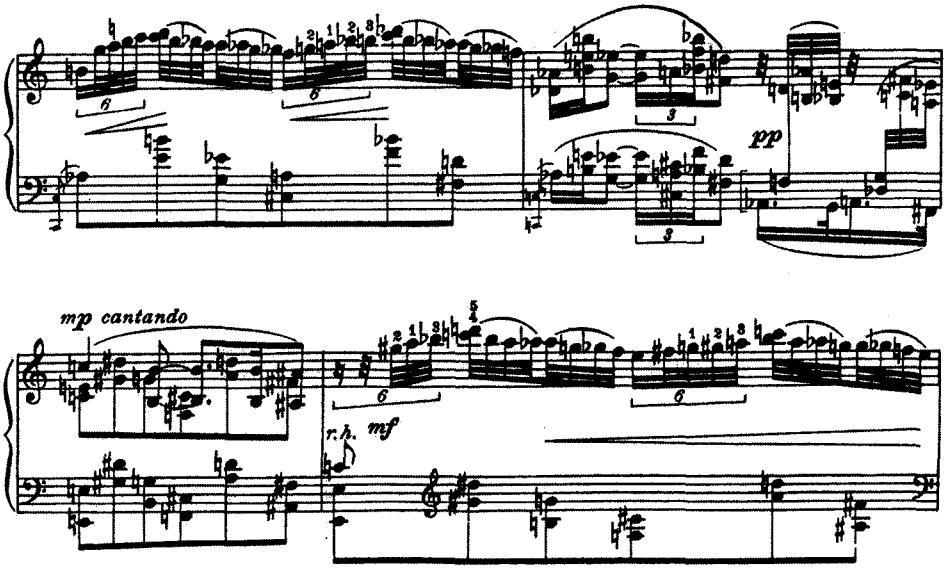
Following the introductory bars, where row 1 is initially presented as six dyads, Barber develops the rows into arpeggiated patterns that serve as the melodic accompaniment as shown in example 28.



Example 28. Third movement, m. 1 - 4.

As in the first movement, the predominance of a single pitch implies a tonal center within the context of the serial technique. In this case, implies B serves as a tonal center due to its repetition on the downbeat of each bar. This sense of tonality is supported by the

melody that begins on the same pitch. A shift of tonal-center from B to C occurs in the middle section of the third movement where row 1 is transposed a half - step to C at measure fifteen. The same row is transposed to E at measure eighteen.



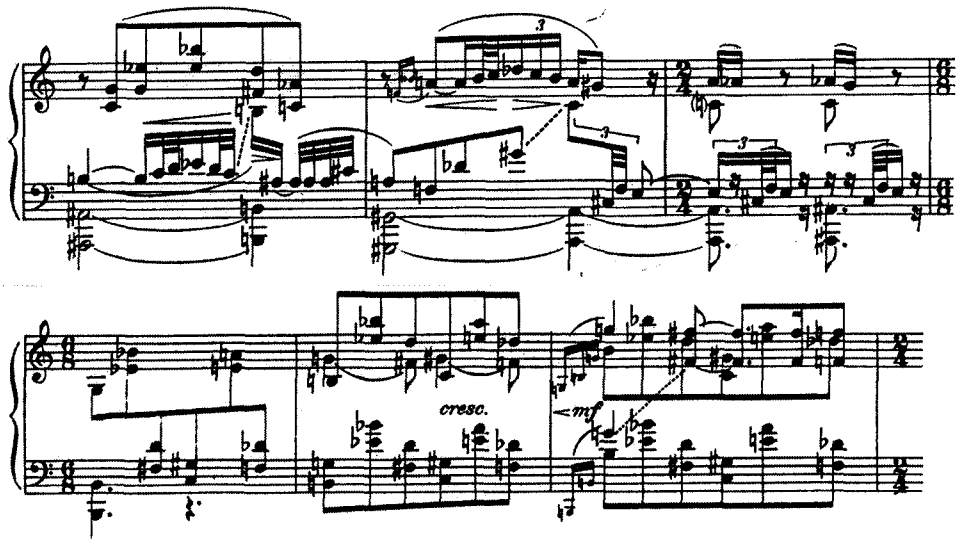
Example 29. Third movement, m. 15 - 19

Barber's struggle is best illustrated by his adaptation of serial technique within a neoclassic context. While serial procedure typically carries atonal implications, Barber overrides this "rule" through tonal implications in each row and enhances it through repetition of the row in such a manner as to create a sense of pitch center. The rows are an integral part of the harmonic and melodic material, but are not the basis of the entire piece.

Harmonic considerations

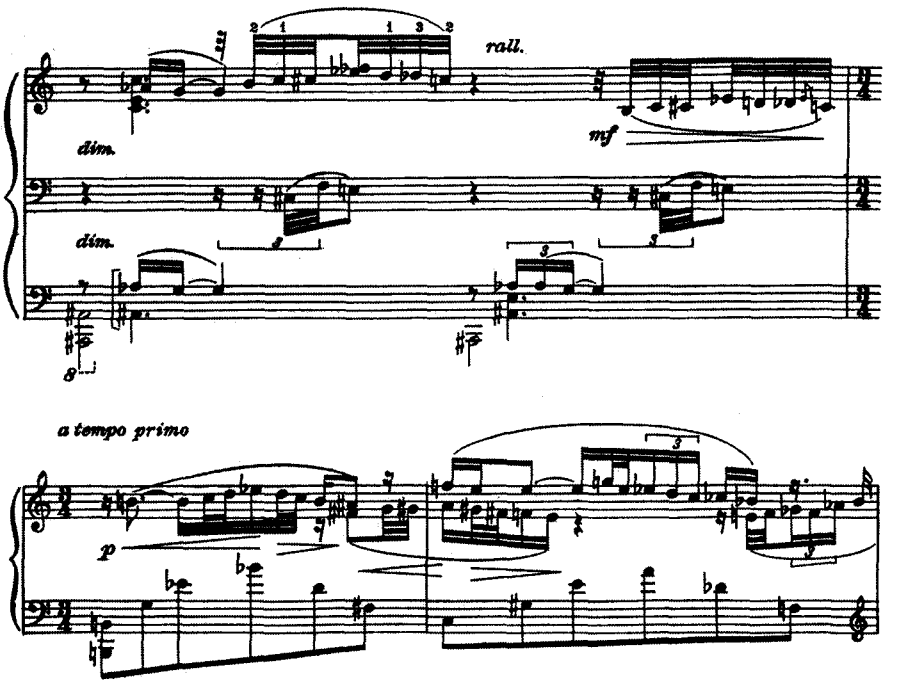
In the third movement, Barber expands the traditional use of key center in relation to form. Tonal centers, B and E, are clearly established, but tonality is obscured both by

dense chromaticism and the use of serial techniques. Herein lies another example of Barber's struggle to reconcile classicism and modernism. As mentioned previously, the atonal effect of serial technique is negated through recurrence of the pitch B on the downbeat of the first three measures. Even more significant to the establishment of tonality within a serial context is the presence of the leading tone, A sharp, in strategically important places. This can be seen prominently in measures 8 – 11, where the bass line emphasizes A sharp – B natural as the section draws to a close and the B section begins.



Example 30. Third movement, m. 8 – 11.

Similarly, in measures 26 and 27, A sharp is repeated in the bass before resolving to B as the movement returns to the A section.



Example 31. Third movement, m. 26 – 27.

Fourth movement

Due to its upbeat character, distinctive subject, driving momentum and significant technical demands, Barber's fourth movement has become one of the most frequently performed and recognizable single movements from the twentieth-century solo piano repertoire. It is a four-voice fugue creatively adapted from the eighteenth-century tradition.[5]

Large Scale Considerations

The fugue, solidly established in E-flat minor (a return to the tonic key of the entire sonata), is further evidence of Barber's propensity to use *a priori* forms. His fugue includes an exposition with a subject and countersubject, a tonal answer, and a subsequent five episodes and coda as shown below:

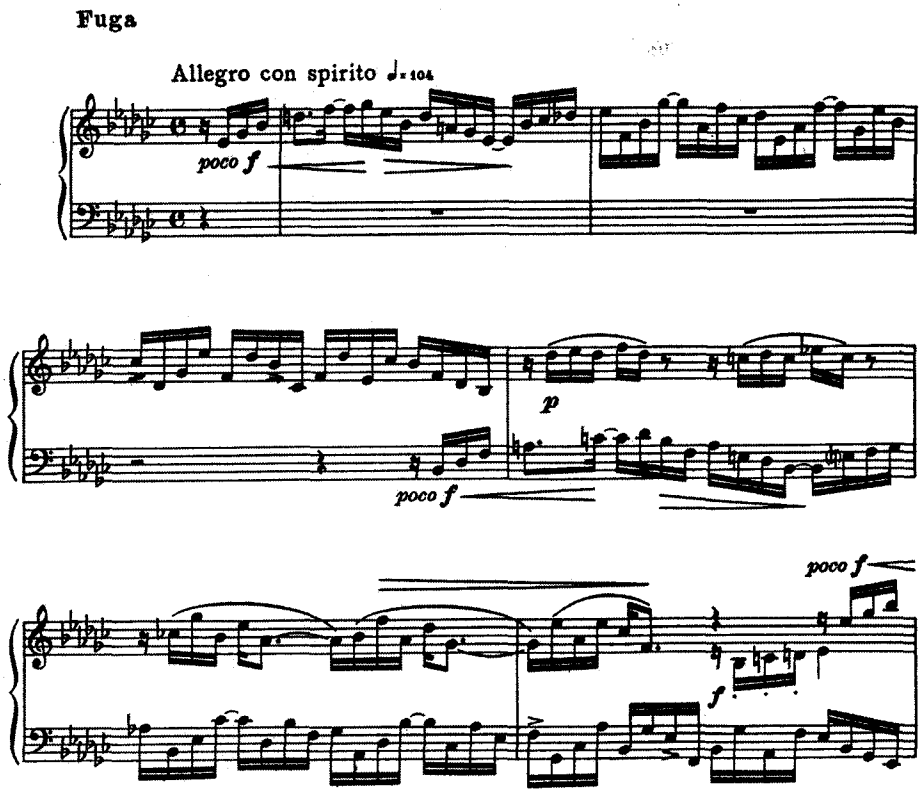
Exposition m. 1-12	**Transition** m. 13-17	**A** m. 18-36	**B** m. 37-54	**C** m. 55-71	**D** m. 72-89	**A'** m. 90-106	**Coda** m. 107-146
4 voices ABST entry Eb min.	Sequence based on CS	Subject material Transitory	Subject-augmented and inverted A min.	CS augmented and inverted E /C /E min.	Subj/ CS Eb/F	Stretto Eb/Bb	Ostinato Eb

Figure 4. Summary of fourth movement

The exposition features standard entrances of the subject and countersubject in the expected tonic-dominant-tonic-dominant order. However, the unorthodox pairing of entry voices, alto/bass followed by soprano/tenor, foreshadows Barber's frequent simultaneous use of the widest ranges of the keyboard at important arrival points. The fugue subject is

[5] Heyman, *Samuel Barber*, 290. Barber reportedly kept a copy of J.S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* on his piano and spent hours at a time practicing the Preludes and Fugues almost daily.

characterized both by its length and syncopated rhythm. Because fragments are treated separately within the context of the movement, the subject is divided into two parts (a "head" and a "tail") for purposes of this analysis, as shown in example 32.

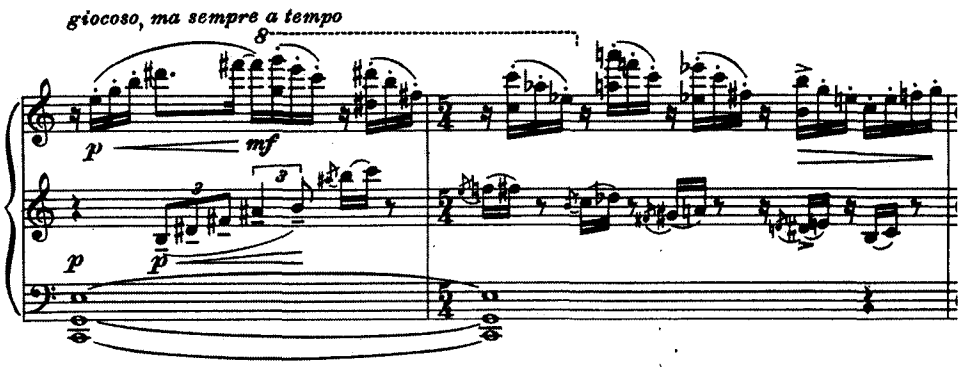


Example 32. Fugue subject and countersubject

As shown above, the head of the subject moves upwards by thirds from the key center, E flat, ultimately arriving at F. It subsequently returns to E flat, giving it a strong tonal quality. The tail of the subject begins on the dominant pitch, B flat, and proceeds through a sequence that outlines melodic sevenths and seconds and ultimately returns to B-flat. The fragmented nature of the countersubject contrasts with the long line of the subject. It, too, can be divided into two parts, the "head" of which appears more

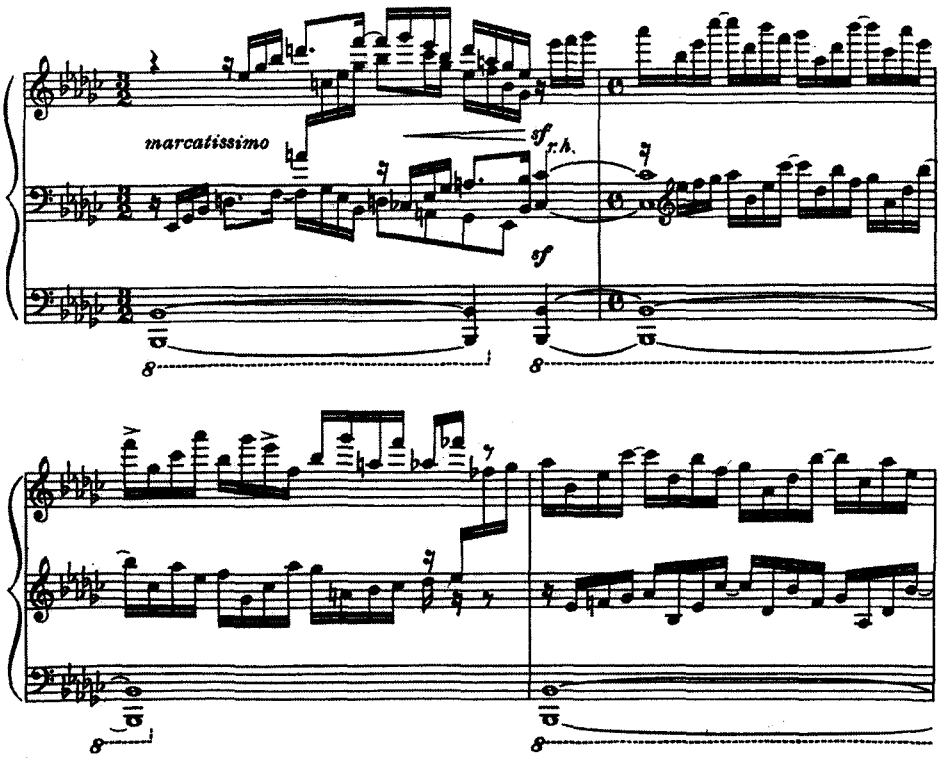
frequently throughout the fugue than the remainder. The intervals of the countersubject, which include major and minor 2nds, can be considered an expansion of motive 1.

In this movement, the neoclassic side of Barber's struggle is illustrated by the many examples of traditional contrapuntal procedures including augmentation, fragmentation, stretto, sequence, and inversion. As previously noted in example 18, the alto voice features the countersubject in augmentation. In example 33, Barber transforms of the first part of the subject with stretto entrances and development of the subject's rhythm to triplets (in the middle staff).



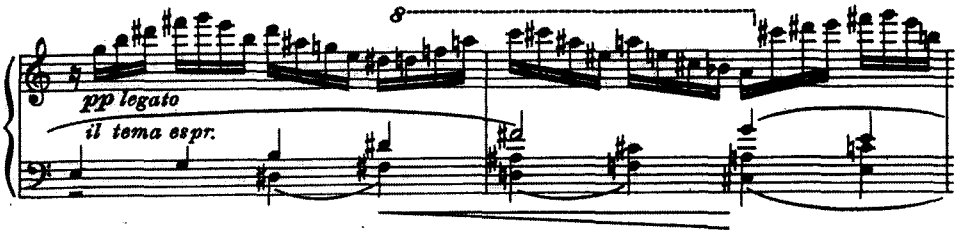
Example 33. Fourth movement, m. 64 - 65

An additional example of stretto can be found in the final entrance of the subject in E flat (measure 90). This is followed by the tail of the subject in canonic imitation at the quarter note. (See example 34):



Example 34. Fourth movement, m. 90 - 93

Episode D (mm. 72 - 89) is based on a fragment of the subject in augmentation in the tenor voice. The right hand accompaniment in this excerpt is derived from the melodic material of the subject.



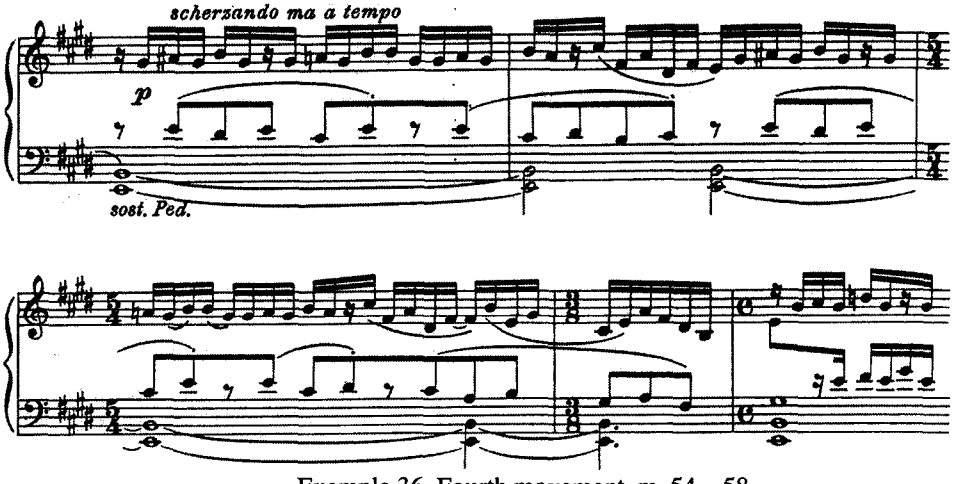
Example 35. Fourth movement, m. 72 - 74

As in the preceding three movements, the fourth movement exhibits qualities that reflect common practice period models. And, as is consistent with the previous movements, the fugue demonstrates even proportion and balance between sections (each

is sixteen to eighteen measures in length). The fugue culminates with a coda that, at forty measures, is far more substantial than the codas of the previous movements.

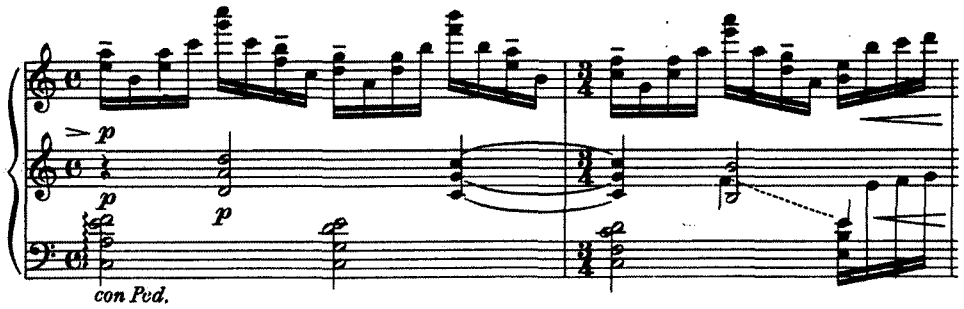
Harmonic considerations

Harmonically, the fugue begins and ends firmly in the tonic key of the entire sonata, E-flat minor. The fugue is more rooted in tonality than the other three even though it features extensive chromaticism. The exposition firmly establishes E-flat minor in the subject which is then reinforced by the alternation of tonic and dominant entries of subsequent voices. While the subject and its subsequent fragments dominate much of the fugue, lending a strong overall sense of tonality to the movement, the countersubject is prominently featured in many instances, adding to the sense of chromaticism in the fourth movement. In the following example, the countersubject serves as the melody and an augmented inversion of the countersubject serves as counterpoint. Here, the music sounds more tonal than most places in the *Sonata* given the prevalence of the E-major triad.



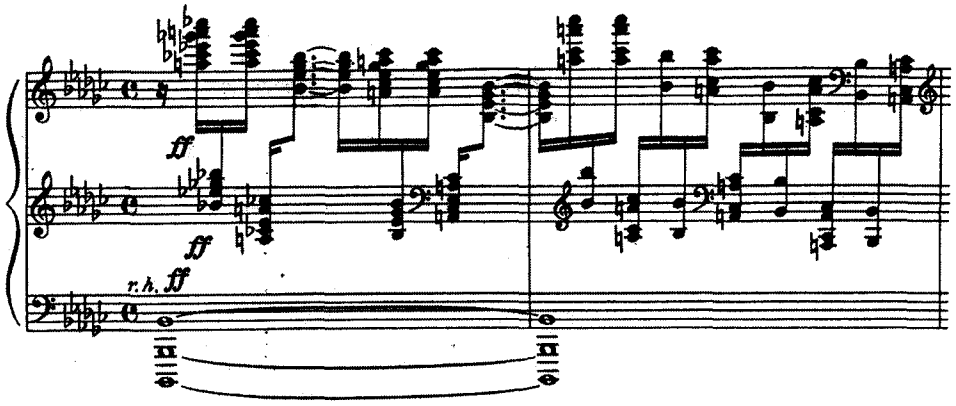
Example 36. Fourth movement, m. 54 – 58

The preceding example is unusual in the *Sonata* in that it is so strongly triadic. In measure 54, the G sharp in the left-hand figure appears just before the open fifth on E in measure 55. The melody, based on the countersubject, carries the G sharp throughout the phrase which ends on the same E-major chord on the downbeat of measure 59. The same episode features C major in another section. In this case, Barber obscures the major triad through the addition of quartal harmonies as shown in example 37.



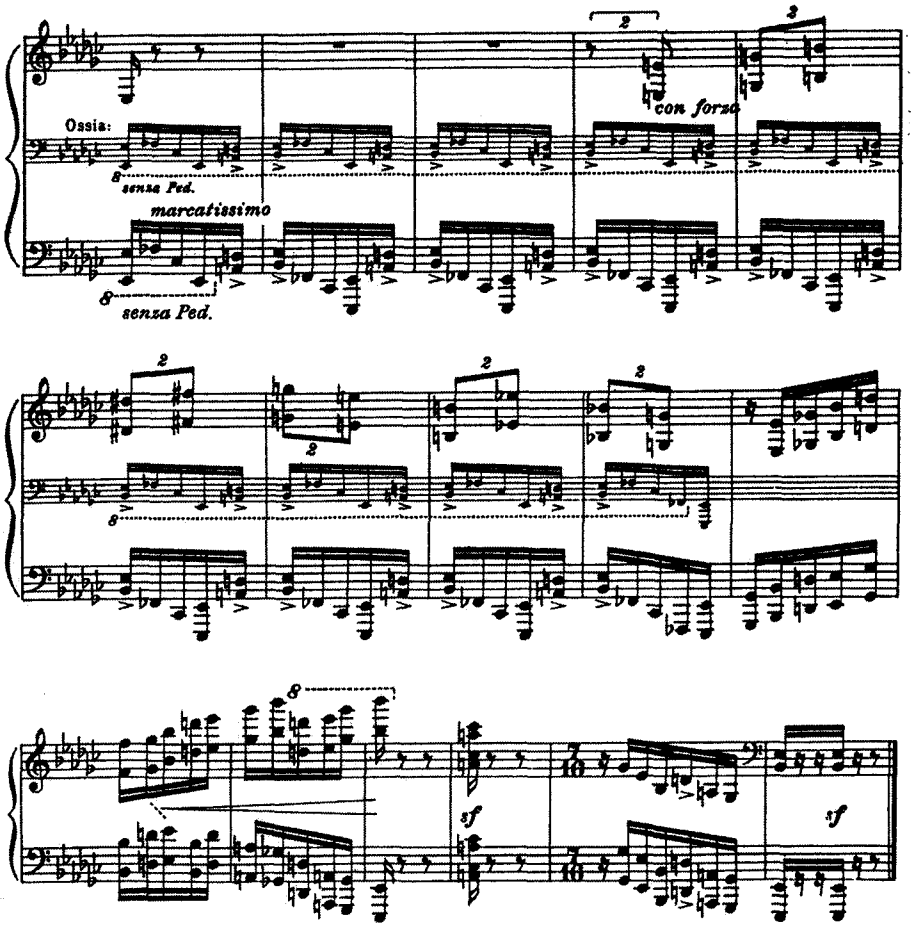
Example 37. Fourth movement, m. 66 – 67

However, the relatively clear tonality of the preceding examples is unusual. In keeping with the concept of obscured tonality, the following example shows a variation of the countersubject as featured at the climax in measure 88, where it appears in thick vertical structures over a dominant pedal. Here, one finds thick tone clusters, a stark contrast to the last example, over a dominant (B-flat) pedal. The prominence of the dominant arrival is obscured by the clusters which include A natural and C flat. This combination of pitches, specifically the C flat in the right hand over the B flat in the left, signal a return to the pitches which open the sonata, thus bringing Barber's overall harmonic design to a close.



Example 38. Fourth movement, m. 88

In the coda, Barber dilutes the tonal closure through a return to bitonality, found previously in the second movement. At measure 121, E-flat triads in the right hand are juxtaposed against a left-hand figure which drives to C flat (a clear reference to the same harmonic juxtaposition that opens the first movement). The last statement of the subject's head is stated in E and accompanied by an ostinato in the left hand in E flat, as shown in example 40. The obvious importance of the minor second as a reference to motive 1 is clear even until the final notes of the work.

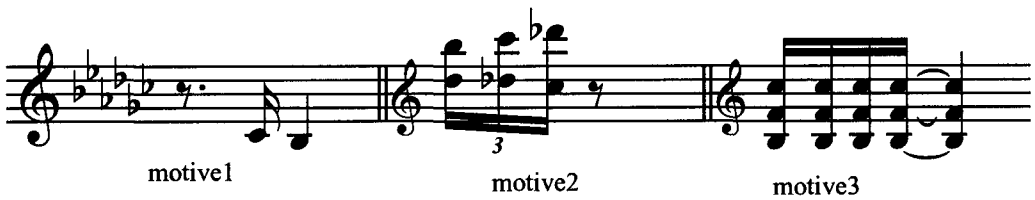


Example 39. Fourth movement, m. 131 - 146

Ultimately, each movement of the Sonata represents a different facet of Barber's struggle between neo-classicism and modernism. The conflict Barber creates between the use of classical forms and a predominantly modernist language is bridged by the figure that opens and closes the entire work: the descending half-step motive.

IIb

Barber's neo-classic tendencies are exemplified most clearly in the *Sonata* through his use of *a priori* forms and through motivic development. As previously mentioned, three motives are an integral part of the melodic and harmonic material in the first movement (see example 40).

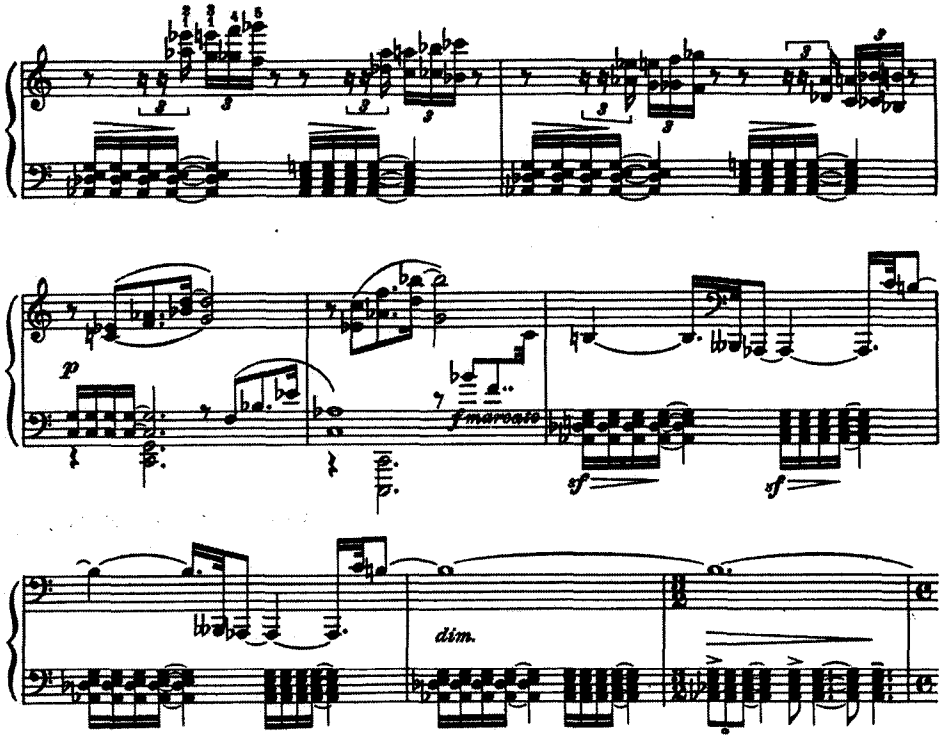


Example 40. Three motives in first movement

Motive 1, a descending half step, can be seen in the initial statements of the exposition, development, and recapitulation. Two other motives are a significant part of the first movement as well. Together, these create a harmonic framework for the chromaticism found throughout the movement. Additionally, each motive is comprised of intervals that recur within the melodic content, and each lends rhythmic vitality to the first movement. Motives 2 and 3 feature minor ninths as their widest interval, an expansion of the primary motive through octave displacement. Motive 2 also contributes to the contemporary language because of its chromatic nature: half - steps in contrary motion expand from a major sixth to a minor ninth. The intervallic structure of motive 3, a tritone and a perfect fifth, epitomizes Barber's struggle. It is heard as a rhythmic motive, but a closer study

reveals that this motive, like motives 1 and 2, holds structural significance within the first movement and is also reflected in the melodic content.

Barber's use of the motive in the first movement helps to articulate the formal sections of the sonata-allegro form. In the first movement, this motive occurs frequently in various transpositions and usually in combination with either motives 2 or 3 or with both.[1] At the opening of the *Sonata*, it immediately develops into a chromatic, rhythmically energetic theme, as shown previously in example 5. A more subtle reference to motive 1 facilitates harmonic movement within the left-hand chords where D flat resolves to C and ultimately to C flat, as shown in example 41.

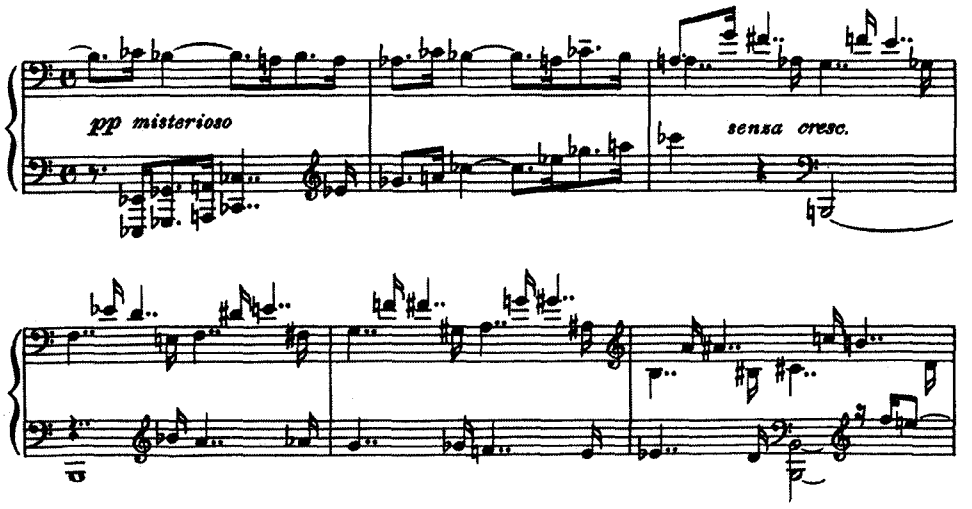


Example 41. First movement, m. 43 - 50

[1] Some references to the half step were included in section IIb as part of the discussion on tone rows.

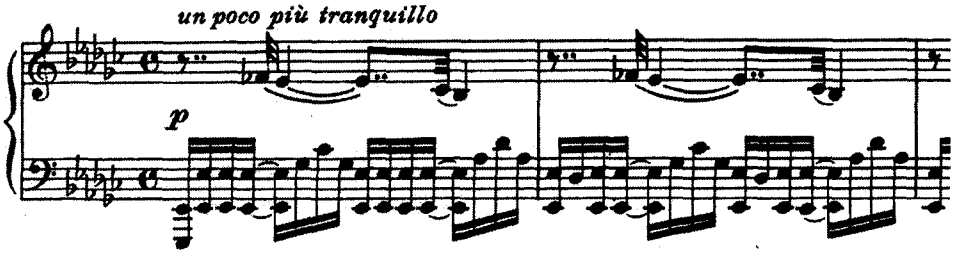
Appearing exclusively in the closing sections of the exposition, recapitulation and coda, the pitches of motive 2, though obscured by chromaticism, establish a tonic/sub-dominant relationship, thus stabilizing the harmonic framework. It is interesting to note that motive 2 begins as a stable perfect fifth before quickly expanding to a minor ninth (a minor second, the same interval as motive 1, plus an octave). Also shown in example 41, the appearance of motive 3 increases the tension created in measures 39 - 40, arriving on A-flat in measure 41 with a consistent rhythmic pulse on the downbeat of every bar for the remainder of the section. Its presence then stabilizes the rhythmic tension of the preceding measures. Motive 3 is a syncopated rhythm that, in and of itself, would seem to contribute to instability. However, its appearance usually serves as a stabilizing factor after a section of even greater rhythmic instability. In addition to the previous example, other important occurrences of this same function can be found at the beginning of the second part of the development (measures 75-76), the recapitulation of the closing theme (measures 143-148), and in the coda (measure 149 - 167). The tritone at the foundation of motive 3 (B – F) is the prominent interval throughout the closing section as entrances of the melodic fragment in measure 36 overlap in succeeding measures.

As mentioned previously, the first theme (and motive 1) is developed into a contrapuntal section featured in the first half of the development section. The development section begins exactly as the first movement began. Within a few bars, motive 1 (in imitation at the seventh) appears over a pedal point on B. It is also inverted in the middle voice (beginning in measure 54).



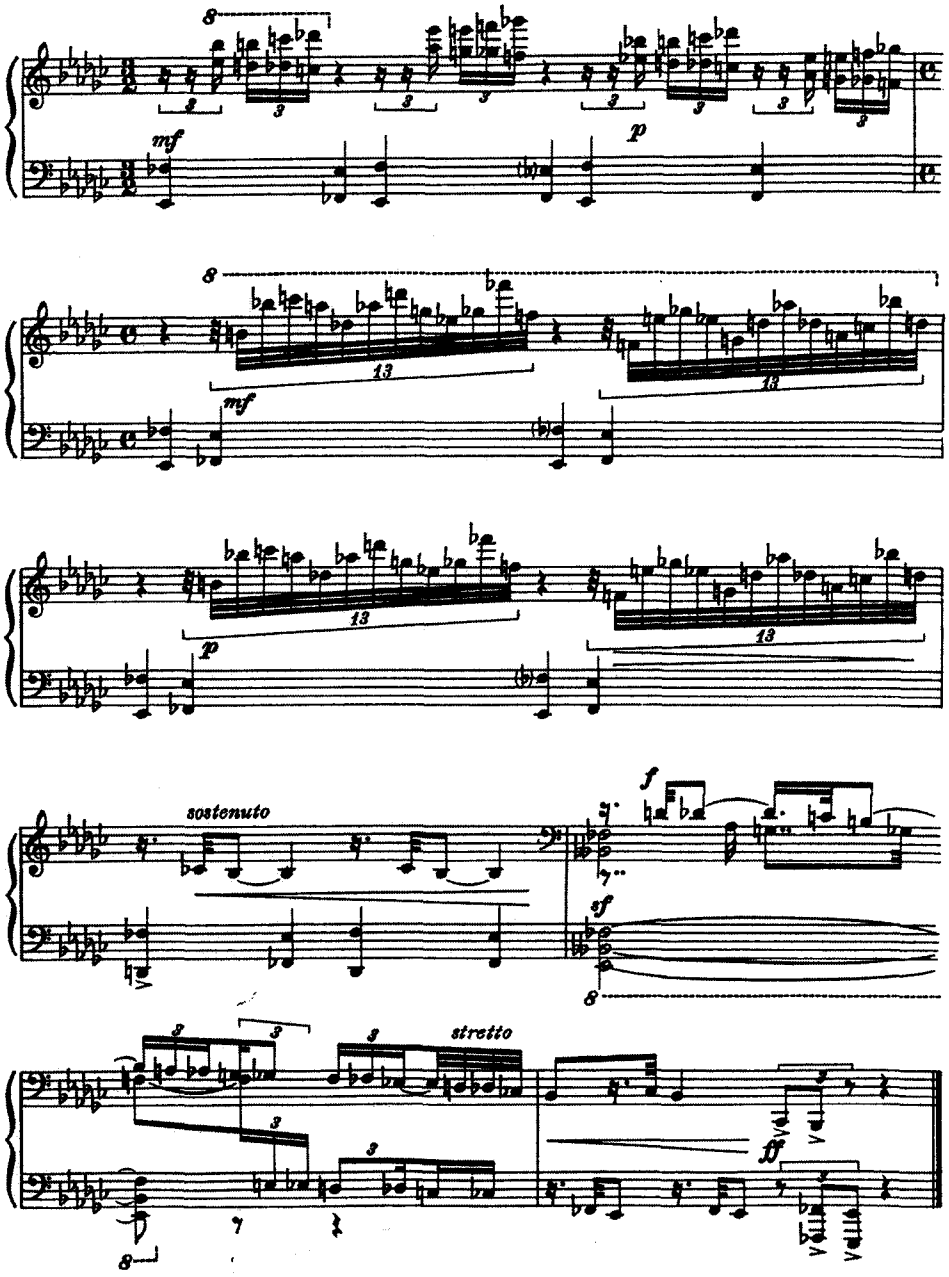
Example 42. First movement, m. 51 – 56

In the coda, (measure 149) motive 1 is used to re-establish the tonic key of E flat minor where E flat (tonic) and B flat (dominant) are emphasized in the melody as shown in example 43.



Example 43. First movement, m. 149 - 150

Additionally, an ostinato figure in the bass is derived from the same motive as shown in example 44.

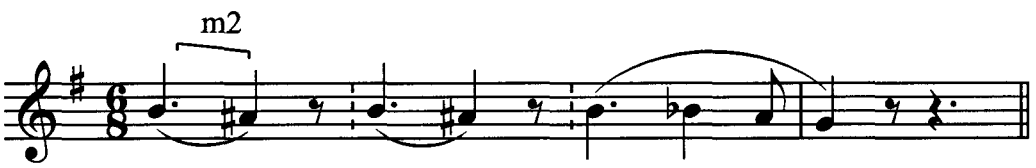


Example 44. First movement, m. 161 - 167

The ostinato features alternating minor ninths and major sevenths (octave displacement and inversion, respectively, of motive 1) between F flat and E flat. In measure 164, the minor ninth expands to a minor 10th to highlight the lower neighboring tone of E flat just as the primary motive on its original pitches (C flat - B flat) returns to announce the

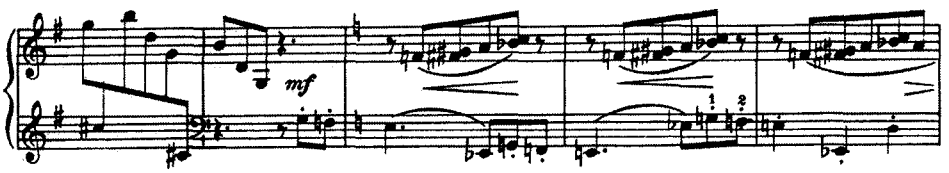
descent to E flat. The B flat functions as a dominant to E flat. While the movement ends with the reiteration of E flat in the bass, Barber returns to the tonal ambiguity that is reminiscent of the opening bars by placing the C flat as the first triplet note and E flat as the third, effectively giving C flat a stronger rhythmic emphasis than E flat.

By far, motive 1 plays the most important role in all four movements of the *Sonata.* Within the main theme of the second movement, a series of double-stemmed notes define an "inner theme" which is highlighted by its longer note values and rhythmic placement as shown in example 45.



Example 45. Second movement, "inner theme"

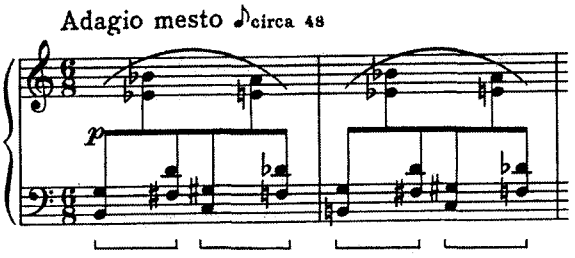
The chromatic quality results from the reiteration of the half-step motive, here spelled B – A sharp. This theme is transformed in measure 27 (and again at measure 152) and includes octave displacement. The chromaticism of this passage is intensified by the accompaniment in the right hand.



Example 46. Second movement, m. 27 - 30

The half-step motive is also integral to the third movement. In addition to the connections drawn in relation to the tone rows integral to this movement, another

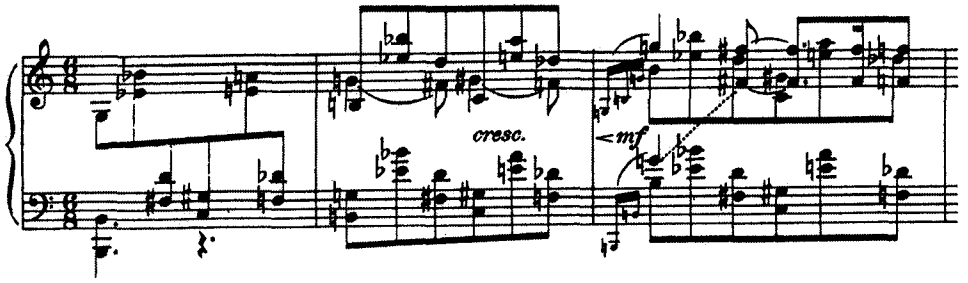
significant connection is concealed at first but gradually becomes more prominent as the movement progresses. A four-note motive, similar to the "inner" theme of the second movement is embedded in the introductory dyads. (See example 47 below.)



Example 47. Third movement, m. 1 - 2

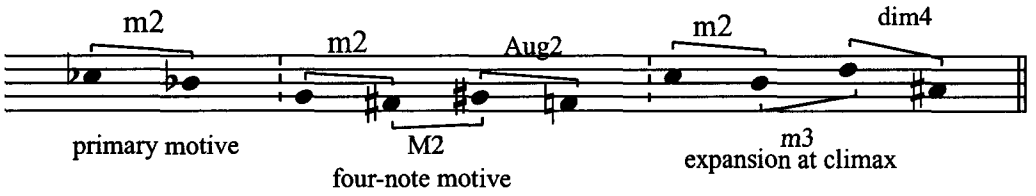
The circled tones, G - F sharp - G sharp – F natural, a development of the half step motive, are featured prominently in the middle section, sometimes transposed, sometimes with rhythmic variation. This expanded motive recurs frequently throughout the movement in a manner reminiscent of a chaconne.[2] The first overt indication in the score of the structural importance of the four notes occurs in measures 12 - 14 where Barber doubles these pitches at the octave and slurs the articulation. The four-note motive also expands into a melodic fragment at measure 13 and is featured as a bass line at measure 14 (where the pitches are respelled G - G flat - A flat – F natural) as shown in example 48.

[2] However, unlike a typical chaconne, this theme does not appear in every section nor does it produce clearly segmented variations.



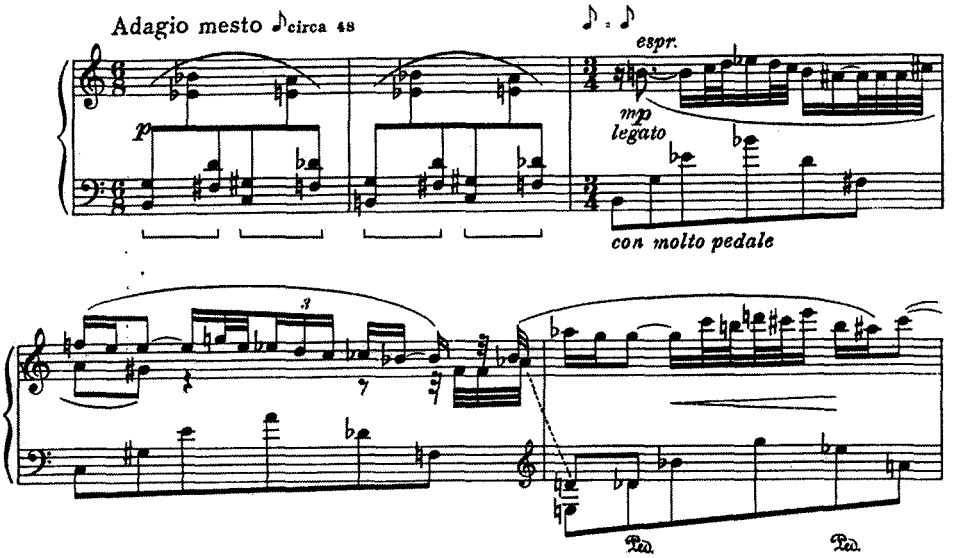
Example 48. Third movement, m. 12 - 14

At the approach to the climax, the four-note figure is expanded melodically and rhythmically from its initial half step to a four-note motive to C - B - D – A sharp as it ultimately appears at the climax (m. 20 – 22). (See example 49.)



Example 49. Expansion of primary motive (motive 1)

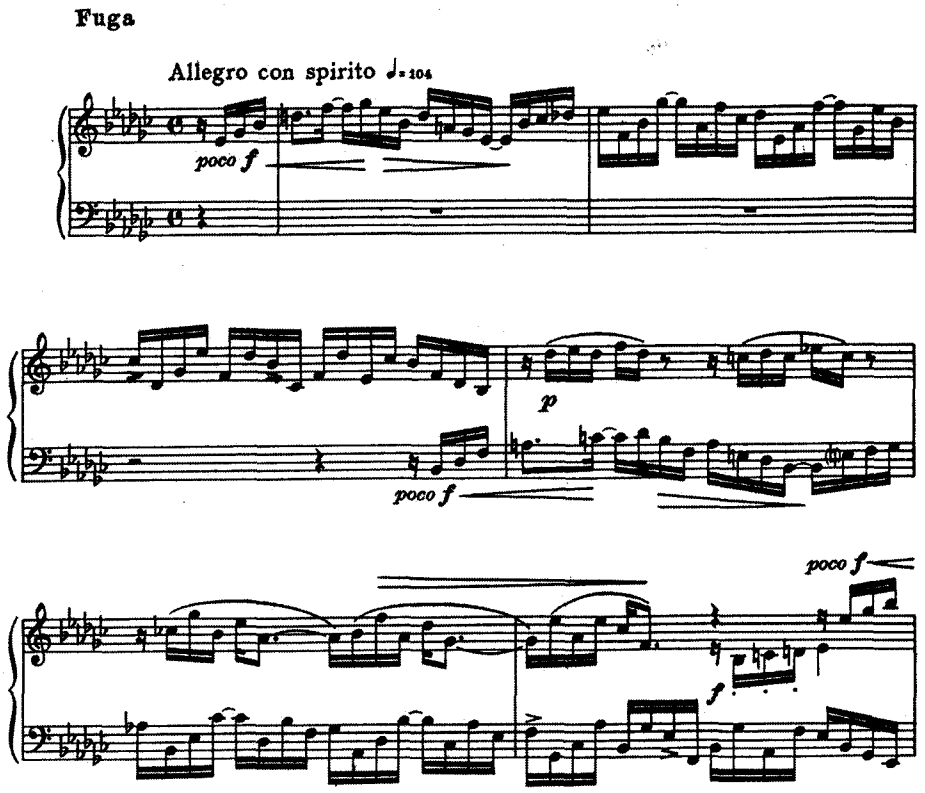
In addition to the chromaticism that develops from the evolution of the primary motive, the melody of the third movement can also be viewed as an expansion of the half - step. In measures three and four, the melody gravitates from B towards A sharp in the third measure and ultimately to B flat in the fourth measure as shown in example 50.



Example 50. Third movement, m. 3 - 4

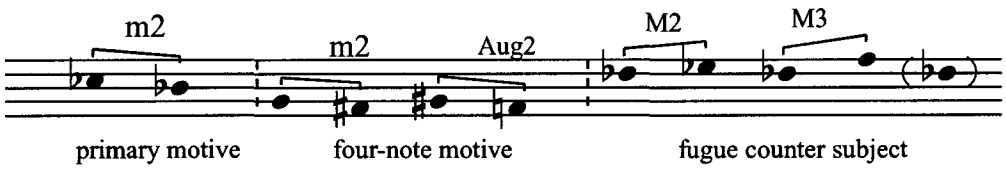
As in the second movement, the B and A sharp/B flat are respelled pitches of the primary motive from the first movement and contribute to the overall chromaticism which characterizes the entire work.

The fourth movement also includes important statements of the primary motive. Within the tail of the subject, accent marks are placed over two notes that not only enhance the syncopated rhythm of the subject but also bring motive1 (here in its original spelling C flat and B flat) to the forefront as shown in example 51.



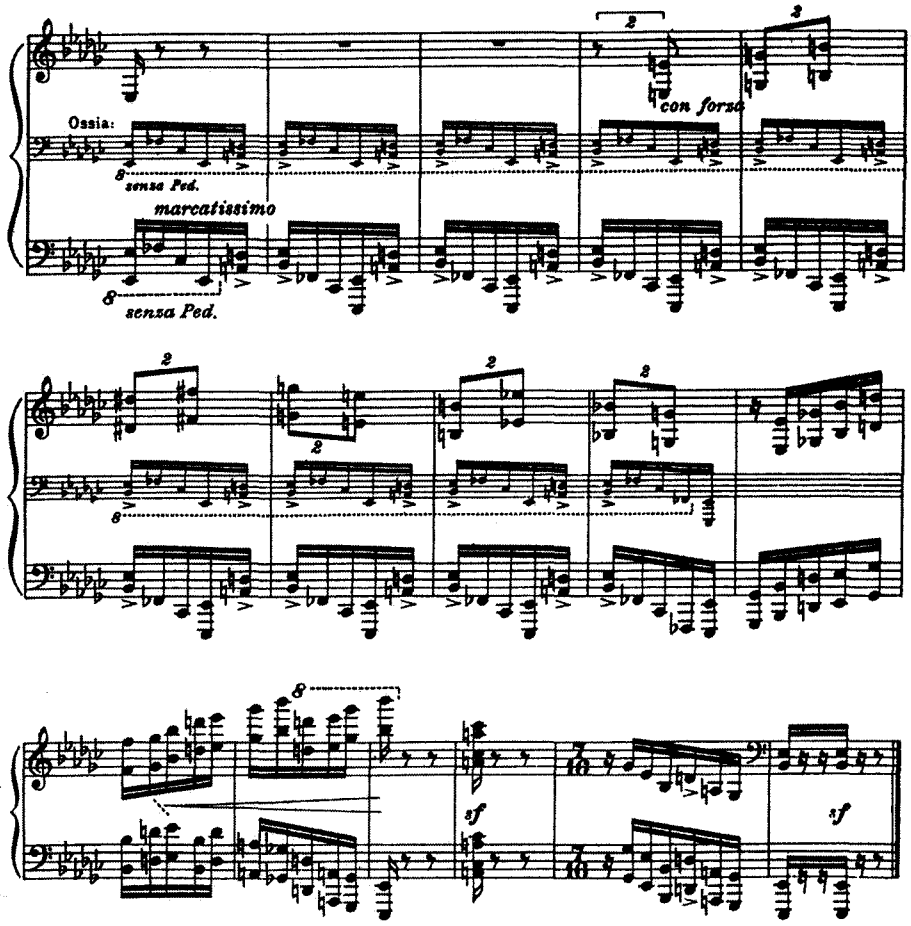
Example 51. Fourth movement, subject and countersubject.

The accented tones clearly indicate a relationship to the prior three movements. This relationship is notated in every appearance of the subject, underscoring Barber's conscious effort to make this connection clear to the performer. In addition, the tied notes in measure 2 of the example highlight a sequence of major and minor seconds (another reference to motive 1). The fugue's countersubject can also be viewed as an expansion of the four-note figure from the third movement, which is itself an expansion of the primary motive as demonstrated in example 52.



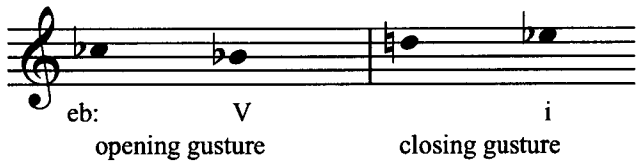
Example 52. Development of motive 1

The conclusion of the Sonata completes the cyclic relationship and various transformations of the primary motive with a final statement of the chain of motivic material. Through his use of motive 1, Barber ends the Sonata as boldly as he opens it, creating a satisfying sense of both symmetry and cohesion. As shown in example 54, the final sixteen measures incorporate the final statement of the fugue subject over an ostinato figure.



Example 53. Fourth movement, m. 131 - 146

By placing accents over the leading tone (D natural) and tonic (E flat) pitches, Barber uses the inversion to answer, or resolve, the opening statement of motive 1. Example 54 also demonstrates how the original motive C flat – B flat emphasizes the dominant function of the entire sonata that is ultimately answered by the motive's final statement and inversion to E flat thus implying tonic function.



Example 54. Motive and "answer"

The accent on D appears in the second to last measure, implies that it is meant to function here as a leading tone to tonic.

Throughout the *Sonata,* Barber consistently uses Motive 1 as the bridge between neoclassicism and modernism. The prominence and thorough development of motive 1 is neo-classic in and of itself. Similar to works of Beethoven, Brahms, or even Wagner, the influence and importance of motivic coherence was foremost in Barber's mind as he composed the *Sonata.* At the same time, the motive's intervallic quality and its development throughout the piece emphasizes the modernist harmonic language that Barber knew was necessary to be considered a contemporary composer. The fascinating resolution to Barber's struggle lies in his ability to instill a sense of flexibility into both the traditional and contemporary elements. He effectively defines his own version of twentieth-century music by requiring that all compositional guidelines, new or old, adapt to the music itself. This struggle or challenge is ultimately passed to the performer. How should the *Sonata* be presented to the listener?

III

A comparison of two recordings combined with ideas based on the author's personal experience with the *Sonata* presents various options for interpretation as they apply to structural coherence and motivic coherence and approaches to the instrument itself in relation to tone production, pedaling and overall clarity of sound. Ultimately, a successful performance of the *Sonata* will be one that communicates Barber's struggle rather than favor one element over another. Two well - known and highly - regarded recordings of the *Sonata* by Vladimir Horowitz[1] and John Browning[2] amply demonstrate that the struggle initially undertaken by the composer is ultimately extended to the performer. The conflict arises not only where interpretive decisions are involved but also in the approach to the instrument itself. Horowitz, who was intimately involved with the creation of the *Sonata* and gave its premiere in 1949, responded to Barber's struggle in a variety of ways. Not only was the fourth movement created at the pianist's request, but several cadenzas and pedal indications including *con molto pedale* at the beginning of the

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[1] Barber, Samuel. "Sonata for Piano, Op. 26." *Horowitz Plays Prokofiev, Barber, Kabalevsky Sonatas.* Vladimir Horowitz, piano; digital disc (RCA Victor 60377 – 2 - RG, 1990).

[2] Barber, Samuel. "Sonata for Piano, Op. 26."*The Complete Solo Piano Music.* John Browning, piano; digital disc (Music Masters Classics 01612 – 67122 - 2, 1993).

third movement were added to the final version after Barber and Horowitz rehearsed the work together.[3]

Horowitz's impulsive, emotional, and heavy-handed interpretation stands in stark contrast to the more conservative and controlled performance of John Browning. Browning, like Horowitz, collaborated with Barber, but to a lesser extent with regard to the *Sonata.* Browning met with the composer many times and was eventually chosen to premiere Barber's *Nocturne*, Op. 33, his next work for solo piano. In contrast to Horowitz's exuberant performance, Browning's performance exhibits remarkable restraint and perhaps, a greater attentiveness to the score. What one might see as a lack in fervor, it compensates for in objectivity and clarity of finer detail. Where Horowitz explores the extremes of the piano's sound, ranging from an inimitable agility to expansive washes of sound, Browning retains a level of moderation and control.

Horowitz and Browning represent different generations of pianism - Horowitz is generally considered one of the last of the "Romantic" pianists, while Browning represents a younger generation of pianists dedicated to recording new repertoire. Their interpretations of the *Sonata* exemplify two "schools" of thought of which contemporary pianists should be cognizant when preparing the work. A number of specific comparisons help to detail these contrasting interpretations and are useful in suggesting approaches to the work. The most important decisions required of the performer can affect structural clarity (especially as this relates to harmonic clarity or obscurity as the case may be) and motivic coherence.

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[3] Heyman, *Samuel Barber*, 300.

Structural considerations

A comparison of overall tempi provides a basis from which one can observe a difference in interpretation with regard to structure. Horowitz's *Sonata* is much faster than Browning's as shown in figure 5.

	Horowitz	Browning
I	6:23	7:20
II	1:54	2:15
III	5:38	6:25
IV	4:34	5:09
Complete Sonata	18:29	21:09

Figure 5. Comparison of performance time

The longer lengths of each of Browning's movements reflect a more deliberate approach in which virtuosity is subservient to the music. Browning usually articulates every appearance of the motive throughout all four movements indicating a conscious awareness of its significance as a unifying factor. He also takes more time between phrases and large sections of the music. Due to slower tempi and clearer definition of phrase beginnings and endings, the listener is more likely to hear other unifying factors such as the augmented triad which is an integral part of each movement, as discussed in chapter 2 (pages 11 – 12). By contrast, Horowitz's recording demonstrates a consistent forward drive with rarely any time or space for relaxation of the energy. In general terms, his performance demonstrates a preference for the "big picture" where the overall structure of the entire sonata form is strongly articulated. His fleeting interpretation of the second movement, for example, makes this movement a part of a greater whole rather than an important entity in and of itself. Likewise, his massive accumulation of sound in

the third movement indicates that he feels the climax of the entire sonata here. Throughout the *Sonata*, Horowitz's tempi do not always allow for clear definition of every phrase within any given section, though larger sections are generally well articulated.

The differences between the two pianists' overall interpretations can also be depicted through a comparison of each performer's approach to significant structural points in the work. One example of the pianists' disparate interpretations is evident in the passage that leads to the recapitulation of the first theme in the first movement (measure 110), Horowitz accumulates a massive wash of sound by applying a long, extended damper pedal while simultaneously increasing both the volume and tempo.[4] He swiftly approaches and passes through measure 110 ignoring the composer's notation (') to briefly pause. The effect is exciting yet thought-provoking from an analytical standpoint. On the one hand, the listener may not immediately realize where the recapitulation begins. The conflict between E flat and C flat, highlighted by Horowitz's thick tone, is stronger here than in the exposition. On the other hand, perhaps Horowitz deliberately intends to push the listener forward towards the coda since this is the only place where the resolution to the tonic actually occurs. Horowitz's interpretation reminds the listener that the *Allegro moderato* is, from a harmonic perspective, an unsettling composition. Since Barber denies the resolution of harmonic tension that is usually featured in traditional sonata-allegro form, Horowitz's recording implies that there is no reason to articulate the recapitulation with extra time.

In contrast, Browning's recording demonstrates his interpretation of the large-scale structure in a way that strongly emphasizes the recapitulation. Where the pause is indicated, Browning takes a greater amount of time. He also heeds Barber's indication for less volume at measure 99 in order to create the notated crescendo, thus allowing for clearer delineation of the recapitulation and stressing its structural importance.

The pianists' contrasting interpretations are related to their different approaches to texture throughout the sonata (e.g., thick chordal passages). Where Horowitz prefers long pedals and a vast accumulation of sound, Browning balances the volume of individual tones in such a way that the wide range of the keyboard is more apparent to the listener. He accomplishes this by changing the pedal more frequently and voicing the highest and lowest sounds of the chords more strongly than the middle tones. Though the building of energy that can be found in the Horowitz recording is unequalled in Browning's interpretation here, the thinner texture and more frequent pedal changes serve to make harmonic, melodic and motivic detail more audible to the listener. In a section such as the recapitulation of the first theme in the first movement, such clarity can be more meaningful to the listener. While both Browning and Horowitz demonstrate opposing views regarding the recapitulation, a combination of their interpretations would serve to amplify the importance of this section to the listener. Specifically, if too much time is taken at the caesura (') in measure 110 of the first movement, the forward motion to the coda is lost and the intended continuation of the tonal conflict between E flat and C flat negated. Conversely, overuse of the pedal might obscure the presence of both tonalities.

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[4] Refer to example 9, p. 18.

The preceding discussion highlights the most significant example of the choices the performer faces in regard to structural presentation. Many examples related to motivic cohesion within the first movement and throughout the entire sonata are discussed later in this chapter.

The recordings by Browning and Horowitz also demonstrate different approaches to structure in the second movement. Horowitz's performance is much faster than Browning's - the rhythmic impulse of the main theme is heard as one beat per measure compared to Browning's two beats per measure.[5] Horowitz's overall sound quality is dryer because he uses little or no damper pedal and he plays with quick, sweeping phrases. In addition, his dynamic range remains at mezzo forte throughout the movement. Each phrase blends evenly into the next with little distinction. This effect may be precisely Horowitz's intended purpose in that the listener is forced to hear the second movement not as a particularly significant movement in and of itself, but rather, as part of the larger sonata structure. In Horowitz's recording, the intensity and magnitude of the first and latter movements is heightened by the flurry of relatively hushed activity in a high tessitura.

By contrast, Browning's slower, more methodical performance allows for greater clarity of detail within and between phrases. As already mentioned, his rhythmic impulse in the introductory measures is two beats per measure, rather than one, which allows him to clearly articulate the indicated slurs, resulting in a more audible clarification

[5] Refer to example 19, p. 28.

of the movement's rondo form. The "inner theme" and its variation (measures 27 – 31) are also more audible because they are played at a louder dynamic level.[6] Browning signals the listener's ear by slowing the tempo slightly just prior to the entrance of the left hand melody in measure 26, beats 5 and 6. His choice results in a wider variety of dynamic levels between phrases and sections and contributes to a more audible comprehension of the structure of the movement. The definition of structure within the second movement is better understood in Browning's recording because he uses a more diverse palette of sound (color) as the texture changes from section to section. The beginnings and ends of phrases are also enunciated through a greater flexibility of tempo (rubato). The most obvious example can be heard at measure 47 where the B section begins.[7] Browning adds a ritardando to the measures immediately preceding the onset of the new texture. The asymmetrical rhythm of this section is clearly articulated in Browning's recording due to careful articulation of the slurs from beats three to four in the 4/4 measures and some flexibility of tempo in this section. The downbeat of every seven beats (3/4 plus 4/4) is played with a slight agogic[8] accent thus enhancing the meter for the listener.

As previously noted, Horowitz's interpretation of the second movement is fleeting. He applies a similar sound quality throughout the entire movement, in keeping

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[6] Refer to examples 19 and 47, pgs. 28 and 53 respectively.

[7] Refer to example 22, p. 30.

[8] Here, the term "agogic" refers to the extra time before the first and fourth beats. In the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, "agogic" is defined as "those deviations from strict tempo and rhythm that are necessary for an intelligent rendering of the musical phrase."

with the "elfin" character that sets this movement apart from the other three. Sections are rarely distinguished from one another (as discussed earlier, probably intentionally so). The ideal performance might again combine qualities of both performances, i.e, Horowitz's fleeting sound with more definition of motive 1 at key places. The development of the motive into an "inner theme" in section A, its variation at the end of the same section, and another variation in section C should not, in the interest of motivic coherence, be obscured. The "modern" elements of the second movement might be better understood by using half pedal (depressing the damper partially) so that the chromaticism (the "inner theme") that evolves from the main theme is not lost in the texture. Similar pedaling, strict rhythm, and equal tone (volume) in both hands will highlight the bitonal sections for the listener as well. Additionally, too much rubato may diminish the effect of the changing meter where Barber clearly intends to remove predictability from the rhythmic aspects of the B section.

Significant structural differentiation can also be heard in the two performances in the third movement. The melody of the main theme in the third movement has a long dynamic shape and is strongly voiced *(forte)* in Horowitz's recording, drawing the listener's attention towards the larger phrase structures and through the sections as a whole. Horowitz also slowly and gradually accumulates the sound to such a level at the climax of the third movement that it is clear he intends the climax of the entire Sonata to be within this movement. In contrast, Browning's approach to the melody in the third movement has a more improvisatory quality as he emphasizes every turn and, in the spirit

of motivic cohesion, every occurrence of motive 1 through dynamic shading and a much greater sense of rubato.[9] However, Browning's phrasing is somewhat disjunct, and his use of dynamics in the A section (which is more spontaneous than planned) does not pull the listener's ear forward in a way that defines the sections as clearly.

In comparing the performances of the third movement, it is also interesting to note that Horowitz's more even tone, especially within the opening phrases, reveals the twelve-tone aspects of the theme more clearly by denying any given pitch individual significance. In this regard, he finds an ideal resolution of the struggle between modernism and classicism in his presentation of the third movement by simultaneously making both the modern element, serialism, and the neo-classic element, the ternary structure, audible to the listener.

Finally, in regard to structural cohesion, some of the same interpretive differences found in the second movement are true for the fourth. Specifically, Horowitz's faster tempo precludes the listener from hearing many of the finer details of the fugue. For example, a person listening to Horowitz's recording of the fugue may be unable to hear some of the "classical" fugal techniques including stretto and augmentation in measures 64 - 65 or 90 - 93 because his tempo is fast and his pedaling is thick.[10] However, by creating generally long phrase shapes, he performs the fugue in one, vast wave of energy, thus creating an exhilaratingly satisfactory conclusion to the Sonata without detracting

[9] Refer to example 24, p. 32.

[10] Refer to example 33, p. 41 and example 34, p. 42.

from the emotional climax of movement 3. By comparison, Browning generally takes more time to introduce and resolve individual sections, particularly the sections in E major and C major (perhaps because these are so strikingly tonal).[11] His more careful approach (slower tempo, less pedal) allows for greater clarity of each entrance of the subject; the often thick layers of the texture are rarely, if ever, unclear. Ironically, and perhaps because Browning's attention to detail lends itself to a sense of disjunction, one does not have the same sense of overall structure when the fugue (and the entire sonata) ends. While definition of structure is one goal in any performance of the *Sonata*, motivic cohesion is perhaps even more important to understanding the work, and as such should be taken into careful consideration when preparing the work.

Motivic considerations

In both performances, many significant uses of motive 1 are clearly audible; however, neither Horowitz nor Browning consistently draws the listener to what analysis reveals to be the more significant occurrences within the structure, melody, or harmony. Because of its obvious importance, all appearances of motive 1 should be brought to the forefront of the texture. For example, the opening pitches in the right hand of measure 1 (movement 1) should be articulated more strongly than those of the left hand.[12] The contrapuntal texture suggests that pedal be used minimally, ideally reserving its use only

[11] Refer to example 36, p. 43 and example 37, p. 44.

[12] Refer to example 5, p. 14.

to color the ambiguity of the tonality (e.g., allow the right hand to dominate the beginning of measure 1 and the left hand to dominate, or at least be equal in volume to the right hand through the end of the measure). This clarifies the motive as well as the introduction of the tonal conflict central to both the movement and the sonata as a whole. In the interest of structural definition and motivic coherence, a similar approach at the beginning of the development and the recapitulation will reveal these auditory cues to the listener.

At times, the function of motive 1 is to clarify harmonic direction. For example, in movement 1, measure 22, the motive in the left hand (c-b), draws attention to the B pedal which is ultimately the tonal center of the second theme, thereby suggesting additional emphasis.[13] While these tones complement the more obvious appearances in the right hand of the motive in this measure, careful attention and articulation can help avoid a dissonant, indistinguishable sound.

To achieve motivic cohesion within the first movement the ideal performance considers not only motive 1, but also motives 2 and 3. In regards to motive 2, the pianist should play all of the tones of motive 2 with equal weight, perhaps non-legato, so that each of the pitches is clearly articulated. (Small-handed pianists might consider using the sostenuto pedal to hold the bass, thus freeing the left hand to articulate the motive with both hands.) In many of the performances examined in the context of this study, pianists play this motive much faster than the given tempo and/or without even articulation,

[13] Refer to example 6, p. 15.

thereby obscuring an important audible connection for the listener. This motive is related to harmonic movement and motivic development (as discussed in chapter IIb), and a tempo that is too fast may obscure these relationships.[14] Likewise, a performance that is too fast or overpedalled might obscure not only the rhythmic importance of Motive 3, but also the fact that the intervallic structure of this motive is immediately echoed in the melodic content of the same measure and that motive 1 is simultaneously emphasizing the B pedal in this section.[15] A more discriminating use of the pedal and adherence to one tempo with as little rubato as possible will clarify the reiteration of motive 3 in measures 47-50. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, the reference to motive 1 within these chords should be brought out of the thick texture in order to highlight the harmonic direction inherent in this progression.[16]

In the second movement, neither Horowitz nor Browning voices the double-stemmed notes in the first theme, a significant oversight in regards to motivic cohesion in the context of the complete *Sonata*.[17] Based on these recordings, the listener might never fully understand that 1) these notes are marked with different articulation or that 2) these notes are meant to be heard as an extension of motive 1. However, as discussed earlier, Browning's slower tempo creates some awareness of these pitches. Also in the interest of motivic cohesion, in measures 27 – 30, the performer might play the left hand more

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[14] Refer to example 41, p. 48.

[15] Refer to example 18, p. 25.

[16] Refer to example 42, p. 50.

[17] Refer to example 19, p. 28 and example 45, p. 52.

strongly than the right and shape this phrase towards the downbeat of each measure in order to give the listener a clear understanding of the inversion of the inner theme.[18] Likewise, the variation of the inner theme might be lost unless the pianist specifically brings the circled tones out of the texture.[19] Attention to these tones also highlights the triple rhythm in the right hand against the duple rhythm in the left.

In the introductory measures of third movement, Browning immediately voices the four-note motive G - F sharp - G sharp - F natural suggesting that even though such an articulation is not indicated in the score, Browning wants his audience to hear the motivic relationship between movements.[20] The six beats of the introductory measures are grouped into two larger beats (three plus three) in Browning's recording and six individual beats in Horowitz's. Browning's version emphasizes the four-note motive immediately by placing an agogic accent before beat four and by articulating beats three and six softer than beats one and four. As previously mentioned, Horowitz emphasizes the long phrases of the third movement in support of the greater structural design. His dynamic shaping in the melody forces the listener to hear B (the first note) as related to B-flat, the last note of the phrase and therefore, a connection to motive 1. However, his emphasis of the larger phrase structure diminishes the clarity of some smaller details throughout the opening section, particularly as this applies to reiteration of the

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[18] Refer to example 46, p. 52.

[19] Refer to example 23, p. 30.

[20] Refer to example 48, p. 53.

descending half step (motive 1). Horowitz saves a more emphatic articulation of the four-note motive (a development of motive 1) for later sections of the movement. In Horowitz's interpretation, the listener understands the serial quality of the accompaniment patterns because he applies equal weight (volume) to these pitches. To emulate the struggle most effectively, the performer should maximize the potential contrast between the simplicity of the A section, as demonstrated by Horowitz, with the intensity of the climax which has a more dense texture. Playing these thick chordal structures without voicing (contrary to the very pronounced melody of the A section) helps to define the structure and brings attention to the keyboard range utilized at this significant moment in the *Sonata.*

Neither Horowitz nor Browning effectively communicates the connection to the primary motive in the fourth movement. An ideal performance should draw the listener's ear to the accented tones within the fugue subject (C flat, B flat) by playing these tones with more volume (as noted in the score by the accents).[21] It will also shape the dynamics of the subject in such a way as to crescendo to this point in the phrase. Using this approach throughout the fugue will complete the development of motive 1 and serve to clarify the subject throughout the fugue, thus adding to the definition of the formal structure. In the fourth movement, while Browning does not articulate the accented pitches in the subject he strongly articulates the accented tones of the subject where it

[21] Refer to example 32, p. 40.

appears in the coda. The accents in the subject (as well as in the coda) are an important connection to motive 1. While Horowitz articulates the accented notes in the fugue subject throughout the entire fugue, he fails to clearly articulate them when he reaches the coda. His motivation for this interpretation may be to finally emphasize the elusive tonic key, however, the essence of the struggle, made ever-present by the pervasiveness of the half-step motive even in the coda, seems lost.

The final motivic connection, found in the coda of the fugue, should be clearly audible, despite the fact that many pianists overpedal the entire section. In measure 107, the B flat - C flat (inversion of motive 1) in both hands should begin slightly under tempo to establish these pitches after the strong arrival of the C flat chord. (As if to remind the listener that there is an unresolved conflict, this chord embodies the essence of the sonata: it is a C - flat chord (first inversion) with E flat in the bass and four E flats in the chord itself.) Likewise, in measure 131, the motive in the left hand pattern should not be overpedalled or played at such great speed that the final pitches become lost in a wash of sound.[22]

A comparison of each pianist's approach here offers another example of varying interpretive decisions. Both Horowitz and Browning begin with a similar clarity and precision at measure 107 with an appropriately strict rhythm. By measure 118, however, Horowitz has built up a huge wash of sound by fully depressing the damper pedal (similar to his approach in the recapitulation of movement 1).

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[22] Refer to example 54, p. 58.

Throughout the section, Horowitz ignores Barber's indication to decrease the dynamic level to *piano* at measure 121. Releasing the pedal at measure 131 (as indicated in the score), Horowitz plays with a strong, clear, angular tone in the final measures. Although his version of the *Sonata* ends with great satisfaction for the listener as a result of sheer technical brilliance and accumulated volume, a significant structural element is missing. Lost in Horowitz's interpretation is the clarity of the final gesture, Barber's answer (D – E flat) to the opening statement (C flat – B flat). The penultimate measure also includes an important accent on the pitch D, as if to imply that this pitch should be heard more strongly than the others in the context of its relationship to the final E flat.

The articulation of form and motivic coherence can also be directly related to timing, use of pedal, and tempo in the context of their overall performances. Horowitz's "romantic" approach is characterized by a seemingly indiscriminate use of the damper pedal which, on the one hand, obscures some of the formal structure in the context of both motivic clarity and/or harmonic direction. On the other, Browning generally applies the damper pedal more sparingly and takes more time between sections allowing for greater aural understanding of both motivic coherence and harmonic direction. However, this more deliberate approach creates a diminished sense of the sonata as a complete experience. Another notable difference of interpretation occurs between each performer's use of pianistic tone color. While there is no indication on the recording itself which instrument each pianist used to record the *Sonata* (which might significantly impact tone quality), Browning's touch is more direct; it is much more pointed and percussive than

Horowitz's tone. This is especially evident during dense chordal passages where Horowitz's tone sounds heavier and "fleshier" - a difference that could reflect his typically flat hand position. However, the pianist's different sound qualities also reflect a conceptual difference - a more incisive "Prokofiev-like" tone in the case of Browning as opposed to a more thick "Brahmsian" one in the case of Horowitz. The struggle for the performer lies in the fact that their responsibility is not to present merely an analytical understanding of the music, but to create a vivid, even an emotional, experience. The listener must hear both the "modern" elements and the "neo-classic" forms within which these appear.

Conclusions

Two general schools of interpretation gradually emerge from a comparison of these recorded performances. Browning's exhibits clarity of texture, attentiveness to score detail and clear communication of the work's architecture through emotional restraint and objectivity. His performance exemplifies a "contemporary" or "modernist" interpretation because it rarely, if ever, gives in to the impulses one might feel when performing a late Romantic work, particularly with regard to dynamic growth and timing within and between phrases. His crescendos and decrescendos are usually evenly graded and tend to lead to one climax. Phrase shape tends to be succinct rather than lengthened; pedalling enhances harmonic change without overblending; timing and tempo relationships are

nearly exactly as they are indicated in the score, except where flexibility might enhance motivic or structural details within movements - in all, a logical and precise presentation.

By comparison, Horowitz's recording enhances the "romantic" elements of the *Sonata*, i.e. overall form. Melodies are always clearly articulated; the dynamic shaping usually lends itself to long melodies, which in turn clarify larger sections of the work as opposed to smaller components. Crescendos and decrescendos are more impulsive, sometimes creating multiple climactic moments within one movement. Heavy use of the damper pedal tends to blend and sometimes obscure harmonic function. Structure is defined more by his emphasis on textural variety rather than by any clarification of either harmonic direction or motivic coherence. Horowitz's exuberant approach to both the music and the instrument itself is a stark contrast to the more restrained yet, impressively accurate interpretation exemplified in Browning's performance.

Both performances are important models, to the point of sharing the distinction of being definitive. However, a comparison of some of the significant differences demonstrates that any performer preparing the *Sonata* faces their own struggle, not unlike the one faced by Barber when he composed the piece. Understanding the creative influences as well as the large-scale, small-scale and motivic components in the music will allow the performer to make informed decisions. The goal of any successful performance must be to emulate the difficulty Barber experienced as a traditional composer in a modern age. Browning's performance presents consistent structural and motivic coherence - it is not difficult for the listener to hear Barber's compositional

integrity; even if only hearing the *Sonata* for the first time. Many instances representing the composer's struggle to write contemporary music within a traditional framework are brought to light by Browning's attention to detail.

Other interpretive options are represented by Horowitz's performance which projects the large-scale relationships and, more notably, the emotional impact of the sonata, even if small-scale considerations are somewhat diminished. Projection of the dramatic side of the *Sonata* is absolutely as important as projection of the compositional detail because it reflects the struggle Barber faced while composing the *Sonata*. A performance that bridges the gap between the intellectually sound and emotionally charged interpretations will have the best of both qualities. Ultimately, the most successful performance will emulate the inherent struggle rather than deny it.

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