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Series of Lectures for Composition Class 1994

1. The Processes of Composition – Idea (Concept) to Outcome (Product)
2. Extension Techniques – Extended Line/Melody
3. Textural Contrasts – Single/Multiple Lines
4. Formal Coherence – Recurring idea as important
5. Motivic Growth – Motive/Full Theme
6. Transformation and Cross Reference – effects of contextual change
7. Extra Musical Motivation as exemplified in *Tasmania Symphony – The Legend of Moinee*

1. The Processes of Composition – Idea (Concept) to Outcome (Product)

Introduction

No matter what level the budding or established composer is at, however experienced or otherwise a constant preoccupation tends to be: *how to find a good idea, how to establish it securely, how to communicate it satisfactorily.* This is called *process* and is a life-long preoccupation for the composer. At one level it never gets easier; at another level, it can become, at least sometimes, a little less arduous, or more arduous.

One could immediately respond to this by saying that if the composer doesn't automatically have ideas, let alone good ideas, then s/he is not a composer, or perhaps should not want to be a composer. Perhaps so, perhaps not. I don't think anything should be overly assumed in the process sequence. I do think, though, that for the *real* composer, however, hard or easy s/he finds the process, the effort is somewhat compulsive and can't be left unattempted for too long. So, let me say now, that anyone who can take it or leave it is probably *not* going to make it.

Stages of Process

I've mentioned three broad stages – *finding an idea, establishing it* and *communicating it*. Depending on the level of experience and context for the composition, these broad stages tend to vary in the degree of challenge. Sometimes getting the idea seems the most elusive aspect; at other times, shaping what seems a tremendous idea seems impossibly difficult and so on.

Let me spend a little time on the first stage; *getting the idea*.

Stage 1

There is much speculation about the getting of ideas for musical composition. Much mystique seems to surround this area. Perhaps some of it is justified, but only some. It is no doubt due, in part, to the abstract and seemingly elusive nature of this stuff that we have, often in a perpetual state of transformation and transition, so unlike things you can see and touch. The score can't be called music; only a means by which a sequence of sounds can be set in motion if the symbols can be interpreted by people who make sounds, called musicians. It seems to me that what we often call the idea, i.e. a musical phrase or rhythm pattern or chord sequence or just one single sound, is, in fact, stage two in the process. By that I mean, that musical idea, which excites us, symbolises something and that 'something' is really the first idea of concept. In other words, it's important to try to develop a curiosity and understanding of what our 'exciting' ideas symbolise or represent for us. If we don't enter into that concern, but are content to play with sounds for their own sake, I believe it can make life harder in knowing *both how to compose* and *what to compose*. Also, it makes it harder to know *why we compose* as a useful member of society.

All our expression says something about ourselves and our understanding of the world. The greater our understanding of things in the world, it follows the more there is to say. To an extent we're caught in a bind – we have to experience to have things to express and at the same time we have to take time to develop craft skills as communicators, seemingly, thereby, depriving ourselves of discovering more about the world and our relationship to it. How do we reconcile these dual needs to gain a reasonable balance?

I believe one way (the only way?) is to regard *all* learning and experience as potentially providing ideas which can be transformed into appropriate expression in general or specific ways. The *real* composer (the compulsive writer of music) is always on the look-out for ideas and means to express them on the one hand, and, on the other, gaining the appropriate time for reflection and selection and working through the ideas to resolution of expression in an almost blinkered even fanatical manner.

The 'exciting' musical idea that we might discover seemingly by chance is bound to be associated with something in our experience. If we know what that is (at least in part) then we can *more* easily know what to do with it. The all embracing areas of experience include:

- *the natural environment;*
- *the human-made environment;*
- *fantasy;*
- *history;*
- *individual experience.*

Sometimes we can be quite specific in identifying the musical idea with the experience, but sometimes only vaguely so, e.g. idea (a) = a certain mood – *happiness, fear, anger, nostalgia*; idea (b) = a specific event which may generate a certain mood or series of moods incidentally as well as, say, narrative ideas for sequencing in a particular order. Idea (a) can sometimes be helped by imagining a reason that generated the mood, just as idea (b) can sometimes be helped by examining every facet of the 'event' to suggest other complementary music symbols or representations. In (a), expression of mood may be a primary concern, in (b) a sequence of dramatic or significant events regardless of mood might constitute the primary intention. A third idea (c) might seem quite abstract, i.e. non specific and mood-less – you just like the sound, the pattern. Then it's important to assess what in that idea causes you to like it, even if you can't identify the idea 'behind the notes' that drives it. You need to be objectively analytical, so the *rhythm, melody* or *harmony* or *timbre* can be explained.

To 'get an idea' can be considerably helped by first looking at personal experience within the aforementioned categories with a view to transforming it into musical symbols. So I would encourage you to explore *different ways of thinking musically* to help overcome other process challenges.

Stage 2

So, we have, let us say, an idea i.e. of the (a), (b) or (c) variety. We like (a), let's say, because it symbolises a known mood (*at least*) *or* (b) because it strongly associates with a significant event of a non-musical nature *or* (c) without being able to explain, *but* we can, at least, explain the attraction in its musical make-up i.e. harmony, melody or rhythm or timbre – that somehow validates its worthiness. These ideas are all embryonic, they haven't gone anywhere yet, but they're ready to be tested.

The testing and securing of the idea can be assisted by using different musical thinking methods. These include:

- *pure thinking;*
- *literal thinking*;
- *metaphoric thinking;*
- *abstract thinking.*

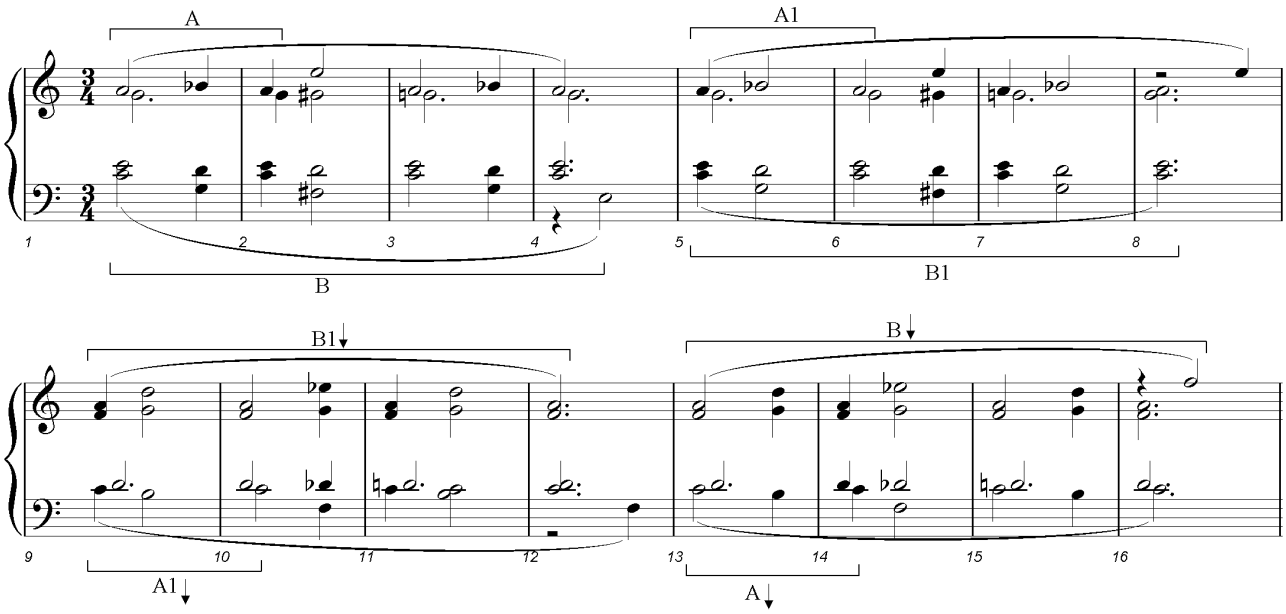
Pure = sounds for their own likeable sake.
Literal = sounds trying to sound like other sounds (extra-musical).
Metaphoric = sounds that allude to; are suggestive of 'outside music' things.
Abstract = sounds that have their own internal patterning and logical reasoning and appeal.

In trying to develop an idea or have it go forward, these four ways of thinking can be of considerable assistance. Sounds suggestive of extra-musical things/events, i.e. literal and metaphoric can sometimes provide sounds for the next stage in the musical flow. Sometimes using pure or abstract patterning can enable an otherwise metaphoric idea to develop on. These different ways of thinking, even in the one piece, can be mutually supportive.

Example

Suppose I like the idea of trying to capture through music a gentle, lazy quality that could be associated with a summer's day – maybe a gentle breeze or slowly undulating water in the bay, for example. My intuitive attempt to encapsulate that with a musical symbol or representation could be:

A Summer's Day



Summary of Example

To me this example contains enough for stages 1 and 2, i.e. an experimental idea – 'Summer's Day' as well as a testing of the initial symbol to reassure me I could develop a communication. Note that if I found those see-sawing harmonies without having a 'Summer's Day' image first, the sounds might suggest the image(s) to me, if I was concerned to seek that association. That connection, I contend, can potentially help me to know how to develop a piece. But, also, the securing of the idea through the testing process can potentially also enable me to go on in the (c) sense, i.e. patterning to build abstract forms.

Having gone through this 'seeking an idea' and 'testing its musical validity' to secure its communication potential, it is clear to me that I have started from an idea *drawn from the natural environment, indulged in metaphoric and abstract musical thinking*; that I am at least conscious of so far in the process.

Stage 3

To go on now and make a developed communication that consolidates the initial extra musical image *or* turns it into an abstract musical statement regardless or the (in this instance) metaphoric starting point *or* mixes one with the other, requires extension technique skills.

Already, in testing possibilities for the idea, some of these techniques have been tried a little e.g. varying the rhythm pattern of the phrase or even the motif A, even if minimally (to suggest fairly undistributed tranquillity); turning the pattern of B and B1 upside down to add further fairly unobtrusive harmonic variety. This required more of an intellectual challenge for me to get it right and put me more into abstract thinking mode. I just realise, though, that the very act of *inventing* the harmonies can symbolise upside down reflections in the water of any calm, peaceful stretch of bay. That, in itself, can trigger other events and their representations, or simply remain as mathematical patterning devices which leaves extra musical imagery behind.

Another technique applied, so far, to arrive at the eight bars has involved stretching motif A into phrase B and again phrase B1 by virtue of the rhythm variation and again into B1 (vertically) and B. This constitutes one kind of *augmentation*. Other fundamental techniques include, besides *inversion* and *augmentation*, *diminution* and *retrograde*. These four techniques with all their implications of strict and free applications in relation to *all* the elements of *pitch*, *duration*, *dynamic* and *timbre* can assist you, the composer, in freeing up and finding multiple rationales for validating your musical patterning; for freeing up from weak and pale pattern stereotyping, guided by superficial adherence to particular (what some call) styles. The aim of the real composer is to forge his/her own style, which enables the composer to *communicate* the idea with individuality and integrity true to the idea. Having recourse to *five basic areas of motivation*, a variety of *four acknowledged ways of musical thinking* and *four fundamental extension techniques* for developing ideas can offer tremendous security and alleviate the frustrations of not knowing: *what to do to get an idea*; *if the idea is viable* and *how to go on* to complete the piece.

Another very important factor in getting the shape or form of the piece right is *learning how to pace it*; how to sequence the main ideas in the general flow of the piece without overcrowding *or* being under-nourishing. The former invites confusion and incomprehensibility; the latter boredom in the listener. All good music acknowledges the psychological need in the listener (i.e. in an extended piece more particularly) for more exciting moments balanced with joining phrases; mountain peaks and valleys; tension and relaxation; heightened and lowered emotions and so on.

The ear, of course, is the final arbiter in making judgement, but the ear needs to be stretched by heightened intellectual and emotional endeavour; to learn to respond to unusual and challenging sounds and their combinations. Intellectual application in analytical process and emotional liberation from inhibition can enable the ear to take 'more on' before being too judgemental.

To know about instruments and voices and what is effective writing for them separately and together is, of course, a life-long study. Try always to know if the passage is viable for the instruments but also be bold in usage. Don't be afraid of stretching or challenging the performer's technical as well as aesthetic capability.

It is my intention to consider, with you, over the next five weeks some five topics concerned with technique and process in composition and to illustrate these with reference to my own composition *Tasmania Symphony – The Legend of Moinee* for cello and orchestra.

During these sessions I aim to provide some written tasks or assignments to do, that also have some relevance. For example, I'd like you each, for next time, to add six more bars in ¾ time to the 16 bars I've given in today's example. I'd like you to do it in a *very explainable* way (e.g. my use of brackets and letters to show relationships). I don't want you to invent *any* new material, but work with the material provided, to re-order the first six bars, say, or voice the chords differently to create more vertical space or alter the colour and octave registration. Bar one, for example, might be effectively followed by bar nine and so on.

In working out your response to the challenge, always be conscious of its viability on the piano. Do your rough working out on *other* paper. Only add on this paper the finished result, copied out in your very best calligraphy (good practise!) to match or go one better than mine. And the last point, regarding this exercise: your musical imagination, in rounding off a satisfying 32 bar piano piece (I hope), will no doubt draw on metaphoric cum abstract ideas – let one way of thinking help the other. It can serve as a criterion safe-guard in determining the 'rightness' of what to do.

2. Extension Techniques – Extended Line/Melody

Introduction

When we consider the term 'extension' as a technique in composition it can apply to all the elements, even timbre, let alone dynamic, pitch and durational aspects. Today I want to try to focus on ways of extending the line or melody, and that will enhance, of course, all those elements to a greater or lesser degree.

Definition of Melody

Refer to Collins Dictionary of Music: “a succession of notes forming a distinctive sequence, tune”. This definition suits my purpose quite well and includes what some prefer to call line. So “tune” is too narrow a term for my purpose. But *some* people's melodies can appear to be other's tunes! *or* vice versa!

Let's, in general terms, consider the ingredients of a melody. What characterises a satisfying melody? Its *core* or *main motif* is *often memorable* even if the rest is vague in our recall. It's often made up of *phrases built from the motif*. The first phrase might be answered by a second phrase in a complementary way i.e. almost, if not, an exact repeat, *or* the same, but added to, as if searching a little further. After a certain point of adding or building up a series of phrases of equal or unequal length and which relate to the motif and its extension into the first fully fledged phrase, the whole thing might repeat or set out to repeat before it stretches or inflects into a slightly new direction. Last time, when I talked of augmentation, diminution, inversion and retrograde realise that *all* these techniques can be applied to the motif to know how to manipulate it for extension purposes.

Our melody might, of course, feed from, or feed to some type of accompaniment; not necessarily be wholly self-sufficient. The nature of the accompaniment might allow the melody some breathing space between longer sections or even quite short phrases. In places the melody might temporarily become a bit subservient to the accompaniment or support texture, if you want to think of it like that.

Example

Let me refer you to the cello line in *Love Voice of Moinee* at this point, to begin to see how it is structured [Refer to piano/cello realisation].

We are considering primarily, at the moment, the cello line! In general terms, I've been through it and identified what I regard as 22 main phrases stretched over a span of 153 bars with a 2 bar introduction before the cello's first entry. This sustains for 9 minutes at a tempo of crotchet = 52.

The main motif is the two notes rising a major second. The phrases built from these first two notes are of differing lengths – some reiterative, almost exactly *or* substantially transformed and developed. Always, though, the 2 note motif is not far away as a driving force and constant reference. *Then* go through to bar 61, noting the way that, at certain cadences or pauses in the flow, the accompaniment changes into a more active role, having the effect of re-energising the melody, *or* providing a foil to it *or* helping it develop via integration, *or* dialoguing with it. At bar 62 there are a group of 5 short staccato phrases (same rhythm pattern, but varying melodic pattern) as subordinate embellishment phrases to the accompaniment before at the 6th time it 'takes off' to develop into a more extended

phrase. After that the phrases become very extended and at bar 92 the 'tail' dialoguing of the 16th phrase is longer than the 'head'. Phrase 17 is a return to Phrase 1 but with a whole tone scale inflection as in Phrase 18. Phrase 19 gets the melody to a big climax ending on a trill at Phrase 20 to ultimate climax also culminating in an extended trill. Between Phrase 20 and Phrase 21 the accompaniment extensively defuses and winds down to prepare melody for a summarised reprise in form of return of Phrase 1 and 2, i.e. Phrases 21 and 22, but Phrase 22 is made to slow down and and rise to A, sub-dominant of E minor with a lowered 7th *or* final (tonic) of the mixolydian mode on A, whichever way you care to think of it. Let me say the mixolydian mode as the basis for the melody was a retrospective discovery, *not* a pre-planned ploy.

Play recording of 2nd movement of Tasmania Symphony with student access to the full score

Following this will be a live performance by Christian Wojtowicz and Leon Stewler in the realisation for cello and piano. The students will be asked to observe the way the piano endeavours to realise the orchestral part – the cello staying exactly as in full score. A later task on piano reduction will be set. Then invite discussion on 'Love Voice of Moinee' and the Phil Treleor and Keith Humble pieces played earlier that day at lunch time concert.

3. Textural Contrasts – Single/Multiple Lines

Introduction

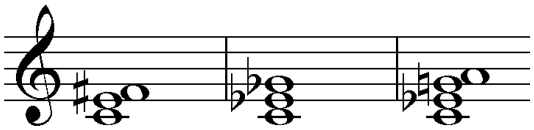
The word texture conjures up a variety of possible associations or meanings to each of us, but my intention here is to consider the term primarily from the point of view of effects created by adding or reducing the number of lines going simultaneously in music and the variety of functions of more than one line happening simultaneously in a horizontal flow to generate different effects.

Types of texture applicable in non-musical terminology

These can include such things as: *muddy, thin, thick, rough, smooth, bumpy, spacious, prickly, gritty, transparent, bright, dull* and so on. These terms are more or less analogous to what we broadly call *homophonous* or *contrapuntal* texture in music. I don't believe we have nearly enough musical terms to describe the subtleties of texture we can identify in visual and tactile terms, like the above and many more. That's not necessarily a good or bad thing and, in any case, some of the above terms (non-musical) *are* used to describe musical passages in textual terms. What is important, I think, is that our imaginations can consider textual qualities as an *important* consideration, and that we develop techniques to help us explore textural possibilities. It is too bland to just stop at 'homophonic' or 'contrapuntal'. We need to become aware of the varieties of those things and it can help to allude to extra-musical terms to open up the imagination and, through the imagination, find appropriate techniques.

One voice/part/line/melody *alone* can suggest a number of those initial qualities I mentioned, e.g. *bright, dull, bumpy, spacious, prickly, rough, smooth, etc*. 'Transparency' might be interesting to attain with a single line too. 'Gritty' *might* be easier to convey with multiple lines and some of the others easier, perhaps, than with a single strand.

Those adjectives, in any case, are useful to channel our imaginations, as needed. Textural qualities, as a means to vary the same material, and thereby sustain interest for longer, is quite a major consideration on its own. Some evidence from your recent 32 bar piano exercise 'A Summer's Day', revealed concern to vary the texture by inventing small intervals to make seconds into sevenths, for example, or thirds into sixths. As well, the two hands were possibly separated more to create greater space between them as well as add to a simultaneous higher and lower sonority. It's possible that some turned four note chords into five or six note chords to enrich the texture, by doubling one or more notes. By thus adding notes vertically as, as well, spacing out the chord vertically the effect can result in enrichment not *necessarily* thickness. Thickness is more dependent on density of notes vertically, involving close harmony and timbral choices. Another factor involved in creating thickness is the number of notes of different alphabetical pitches,
e.g. what sounds thicker?



There *are* subtle differences.

Vertical considerations

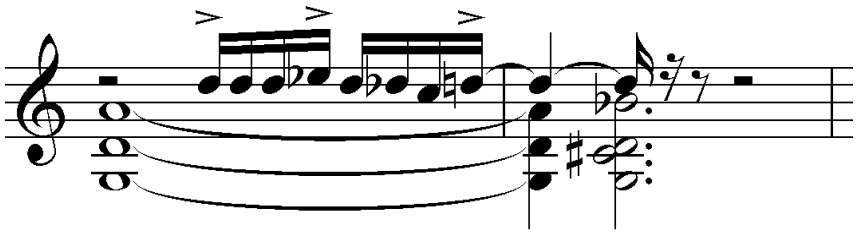
So, clearly, in devising appropriate texture to match the expressive idea, *vertical decisions need to be made,*e.g. 1. *How many pitches* required *simultaneously*; 2. *how many doublings* of pitches at unison or at varying octaves; 3. *how much spacing* of those vertical pitches. All of those questions will be partly dependent on the number of instruments/voices at your disposal *or* in the case of the piano, for example, the understanding of how many notes 10 fingers can simultaneously sound. If the harmonies are quite simple, e.g. triadic, the question of sonority will help determine how spaced and doubled the three pitches should be. Two piano hands widely spaced, can imply, for the orchestrator with an instrumental ensemble, where and if the 'middle' spaces need filling to 'complete' the texture.

Historical considerations

Similarly, the horizontal contour of the line or lines is very important – both how they go left to right and, if multiple, in what relationship to each other, contour-wise, e.g. *parallel*, *contrary*, or *a mix*. The size of the intervals, e.g. all large, or small, or mix to make, perhaps for unpredictability, or simply repeating pitches, is a determining factor in creating certain effects.

Examples

(a) In the 1st movement of *Legend of Moinee* the opening texture is straight away *big, explosive* and *grand*. The full orchestral tutti is involved from bar 2 with much doubling, built on chords:



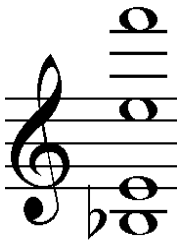
Note the components in each instrumental group.

(b) At bar 7, cello single line (with self accompaniment) creates a complete textural contrast till the repeat of the explosive outburst (semi tone higher) at bar 15.

(c) At bar 28 the opening figure:

this time a homophonic dissonance in four strands plus contrary motion (by inversion) go in a little canon in one bar to create considerable turbulence (wind v. brass), followed immediately by another textural contrast:

(d) At 29 – a rush of dissonant chromatic strings driving upwards in a homophonic swirl, punctuated by the piano and then xylophone, before heavy brass rise against the static string tremolando on:



Note: <u>all</u> use these pitches

to the wind figuration at bar 34.

(e) At bar 48 the texture is similar to 29, except punctuations are done by woodwind in the upwards string rushes.

(f) At bar 51 the frenzied reiterations on woodwind is worth noting; they recur intermittently to create an increasing tension against the alternative of single cello line.

(g) At bar 79 note flute and piccolo mirror pattern against overlapping sliding descending strings to create a gradual lazy descent effect plus a sparseness in texture.

(h) How strings at bar 89 against high cello for ethereal 'floating' quality in a two part texture plus at bar 92 and bars 94 and 95 distant echoes, very reminiscent of opening motif.

(i) The two part bassoon duo at bar 98, offset by cello and final opening motif on muted trumpet creates a sort of three layered texture to complete the movement; thinking of two bassoons as one layer, cello another, trumpet and snare drum a third – resulting in a very spatial quality.

Play the movement through following the score. The movement is generally characterised by strong textural contrasts.

4. Formal Coherence – recurring idea as important

Introduction

Some kind of formal coherence is necessary for any work at all, including music. The degree of flexibility in arriving at that 'coherence' or satisfactory form or shape seems, these days, to be greater than, perhaps ever before, in view of all the experience and understanding of previous examples through recorded history. That experience can make the contemporary composer's task in establishing satisfactory form *both easier and harder* at the same time. Easier, because there are that many more examples to be guided by; harder, because we are more conscious of having to be more imaginative and skilful in order to arrive at fresher and non-stereotyped forms. Comparisons are often odious!

The nature of form

I've spoken of the elements of *pitch, duration, dynamics* and *timbre* as being the very ingredients contributing to the mix we call music. The *culminating outcome*, the *rightness of the mix*, *the statement*, *the overall expression*, *is the* <u>*form*</u>. I believe it is something more substantial or profound than any one label such as binary, rondo, ternary, sonata for example. These terms are handy and traditional terms to explain certain structural aspects of form. We all know of the variety of ways that some of these terms have been applied to explain the build up of a piece. Yet those terms are not enough to satisfy an added criterion in our evaluation process. What makes the form convincing? Were our recent 32 bar piano pieces formally lacking because they didn't adhere to a known stereotype? Were they satisfactory because they honoured the image ('a summer's day') or resolved (in a nicely contrived patterned way) certain structural devices?

Ultimately, I think the best way to judge the rightness of the form, *the hardest single evaluative question*, in the composing process, is to ask oneself the question: *Does the piece sound the right length for what it is trying to say?* Does it overstay its welcome or is it cut off before its time? In trying to answer those most important questions one has to determine what needs adjusting in the content to satisfy the length question. It could mean the length *could* be appropriate with a bit of internal re-adjustment of the content, *or* we need to extend the piece to honour its intention in real time. Music happens in time; this requires of the listener a capacity to remember events. Repetition is therefore a main means of ensuring a logical coherence and flow. *Unity in variety* is a well known catchphrase to encapsulate a formal requirement. In all the well known traditional forms I've mentioned, repetition is used as an important unifying means.

Today I want to focus on *one* type repetition more particularly, but again, it can't be absolutely exclusive. Some forms of repetition involve subtle or quite radical variations of the 'main idea'. This happens all the time in the contrapuntal flow of Bach and the thorough working out in Beethoven developmental sections, for example. More subtle (?) organic-type variations of gradually evolving forms or repetition happen in larger forms of Debussy (La Mer) or Sibelius (7th Symphony) or Steve Reich. A recurring idea which remains more or less intact and immediately recognisable no matter where and when it pops up is often referred to as a rondo idea (refer to Collins Pocket Dictionary). This is the kind of formally binding repetition I'm meaning to focus on, but not according to rigorous classical models. However, in saying that I don't mean for you not to study such models (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert).

Example

I'll play, without further ado, the third movement of my symphony and *then* look at the score with you with the rondo idea in mind as the primary focus. So, at least, try to identify the *main* recurring idea.

Play third movement.

Then – seek identifications of the recurring idea (1st appearance only)
Then – Go through score identifying thus:
Solo Cello

1. Bar 19 – on C (open string) full three bar motif
2. Bar 48 – on G (open string) 1st bar and 1st beat
3. Bar 60 – on G (open string) 2nd bar (with slight variation)
4. Bar 92 – on C (open string) 1st and 2nd bars only

Orchestra

5. Bar 101 – on B, 3rd bar and 1st development bar

Solo Cello

6. Bar 105 – on G (open string) 1st bar and orchestral development for 2 bars

Orchestra

7. Bar 116 & 118 on C, two suggestive two bar 'snippets'
8. Bar 130 on G, third bar only

Note:
(a) That busy patter is often suggested/developed/referred to elsewhere;
(b) Grandioso theme (summation) stems from it.

Then play again pointing out each recurrence.

5. Motivic Growth – motive/full theme

Introduction

To an extent I've already spoken of motivic growth through a single line, e.g. 2nd movement cello solo, with its 22 main phrases and constant reference to the 2 note motif, structured and transformed so to speak. Today I mean to speak in a broader sense, to consider the overall formal structure of a movement, through general motivic structuring involving the whole sound source *or*, in this case, orchestra. Another way of considering this structuring technique is to think of *organic growth*. So the 'theme' culminating from the smaller component lead-up parts is, so to speak, an 'all orchestra' shared thing. If you listen to, say, Beethoven's 5th symphony (1st Movement) or Sibelius' 5th and 7th symphonies you'll fairly clearly see two masters doing this sort of thing in their different ways. It's as if the piece grows from the roots and flowers and branches out like a tree to culminate in its full glory in well paced way.

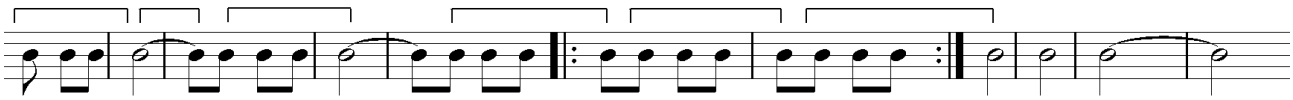
In classical sonata form we often expect to find a clearly defined *exposition* (2 subjects), *development* and *recapitulation* but in organic growth the situation is often less clear cut sectionally; it's more like *one integrated movement*.

Characteristics of motivically structured music

The fabric of the music seems to be comprised of a sequence of small ideas some of which are immediately memorable and others seemingly insignificant. Only gradually do they seem to integrate and come together to culminate in the fully mature statement through the course of the work. During the course of this growth towards culmination little 'seeming digressions' and hesitancies, changes of direction, seem to take place, analogous to roots searching for nourishment, before a new stage of at least temporary stability is attained. This stage stretches out after a bit in search of new growth and so on until, finally, full form is attained. The effect, in retrospect, is of everything seeming accountable and relevant to the final summation. It seems like the result of *some effort*.

If one refers to the example of Beethoven's 5th symphony (1st movement) the sonata form principle is still in place but the

idea appears to have been pervasive and a dominant feature striving towards a triumphant conclusion to the movement. Any extension of the four note motif seems easily relating to it e.g.



etc.

In Sibelius, the organic process seems more subtle, more gradual, made up of more small components till they later on link up. The sonata form principle seems less discernible, less obvious if, in fact, it is strictly applicable at all in any kind of classical sense.

The language factor

I don't believe the motivic/organic growth technique is dependent for its credibility on the choice of language e.g. tonal, modal, a-tonal, free chromatic, pan tonal etc. Rather, it's the matter of structuring within the chosen language. It's a matter of small components accumulating to make a whole. On the face of it, free chromatic idioms in our tuning system seem well-suited *or* 12-note serial language! But they are not exclusive in their suitability.

Example

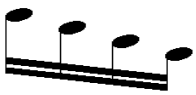
The 4th movement of The Legend of Moinee seems to have a motivic/organic growth principle at the base of its formal structure. I shall explain it best by reference to something I wrote a few years ago for a talk to artists from other disciplines to music. Refer to pp 4-6 Tasmanian connections in the composition of my music 3rd paragraph:

I recall spending about two days endeavouring to compose a melody symbolic of my imagined Moinee. That had to be right before a context in which to place it was created. It had to be noble, timeless and suggestive of heroic qualities. The next thing was to compose a rising and falling figure suggestive of incessant driving rain. It had to work as an accompanying figure to the Moinee theme, so the theme dictated subtle pitch variations to the 'rain' figure to enable them to comfortably integrate. Once that was right, I felt I had the core of the structure established.

Catalogue of important 'snippets' in *Land of Moinee*

1. bar 1:

2. bar 5:



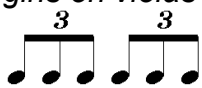
3. wind motif, bar 10
4. bass motif bar 17
5. glockenspiel motif, bar 25
6. strings bar 28:

7. glockenspiel, bar 31
8. piano and woodwind, bars 33-34
9. solo violin/cello, bars 33-34

Note: After bar 40 these fragments begin to build together quite quickly across the orchestra. By bar 57 the horns, celli and basses show a beginning of consolidation; for five basses with a *f* rendition of the first part of the 'Moinee' theme accompanied by swirling woodwind and upper strings with heavy brass punctuations. Following this the swirling/descending effect (like driving rain?) lurches towards a climax at bar 74 with crash

cymbals before quite sudden quietening. *Then* a return to power, snippets and bits of 'Moinee' theme of solo violin and cello. Some 'by-play' on harp, percussion etc. before horns crescendo leads into heavy idea again.

A certain steadiness settles again at bar 108 before a kind of rhythmic gear switch at bar 114 *as fully fledged 'Moinee' theme begins on violas and celli*. The accompanying figure -



- is integral with the melody and the flute/piccolo interpolations also important accessories (after the fact) in a general texture. This section, mid-way through the movement is the culmination of all the ingredients. When it winds down by bar 145 and changes rhythmic gear (back to where it started) at bar 147 the snippets sort of return over long-held string chords until a slower 'Moinee' theme re-emerges much more contemplatively at bar 159. Thereafter, *that* theme awakes, while earlier snippets appear and disappear. The emergence of the violin solo is significant at the last beat of bar 177 until the conclusion.

Finally, play the movement with students following the score.

6. Transformation and Cross Reference – effects of contextual change

Introduction

So far, the idea of taking the gem of an idea (motif) and extending it melodically to bring to some kind of maturity or culmination *or* taking a broader *theme* affecting the whole fabric of the music i.e. *texture, harmony, rhythm* and *timbre* – how these various factors add up and gel to make the *form*, is what we've been considering. Let's now consider the effects of transforming the theme by placing it in different surroundings or contexts, thereby producing a form of transformation.

Different context

In the case of a melody or motif, a change of context can mean a number of things e.g. altering the harmony to change its character or mood; altering the mode – e.g. major to minor – *or* tonal to whole tone *or* some other mode; placing it in a passage or other movement seemingly not designed for its ready presence, by virtue of, perhaps, the tempo, pulse, general 'feel' *or* metric groupings. This last, placing the motif in an unexpected or foreign place, can create quite a startling effect *or* almost its opposite – a camouflaging effect. In what is sometimes called cyclic form, the theme is used as a unifying technique e.g. Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Harold in Italy* and Cesar Franck *Symphony in D Minor* and *Violin Sonata*, Beethoven's *5th Symphony*. By virtue of the cross-referencing and transformation effect by change of context from movement to movement the work can appear to be more unified than otherwise. If the motif is striking enough, though, this unifying method is full of interesting possibilities. It's like a motto theme or 'idée fixe', as Berlioz called it. It is also a way of identifying characters in operas as developed by Wagner, so that even when the character is not present on stage the orchestra can suggest reference to the character by quoting his/her associated motif.

Example

'Hand-out' of 3 samples from *Tasmania Symphony*: (a) and (b) from 1st Movement and (c) from 5th Movement. (a) and (b) less 'different' in effect from (a) or (b) to (c) which is very transforming, not just because of what you *see* on the 'hand-out' (i.e. pitches and rhythm) but also because of tempo dynamic and timbre. Refer to full score, p 117.

Further example

I shall now play the final movement to make the point about the transformation of the 'Moinee' theme. Also, note the very opening cello phrase, another variation on the rising second and 4th, so characteristic of the 'Moinee' theme, appearing, more or less, in each movement.

7. Extra-Musical Motivation as exemplified in *Tasmania Symphony – The Legend of Moinee*

Introduction

In the previous sessions 2-6 I've been at pains to consider structuring techniques as demonstrated in my own work *Tasmania Symphony*. I believed it would be helpful to decide what particular technical aspects characterised each of the five movements, to speak of those techniques in general terms before trying to show how they were applied in my own piece.

Two weeks back I referred to 'landscape' in relation to the 4th movement. Also, it would have been apparent from the sub title and the movement titles that the piece generally had extra musical associations. I would like today to share those associations with you before hearing the whole piece through and thus closing this chapter.

Then quote from 'Tasmanian connections in the composition of my music' p 4 except 2nd and 3rd paragraphs starting 'In 1983...'

In 1983, about two and a half years prior to my visit to Hastings Bay, I composed an orchestral work in response to a commission from Elizabeth Walker in Queenstown while her husband, Stephen, worked on a sculpture for the Queenstown Centenary. She asked for a piece to commemorate the western and south western regions of Tasmania. This provided me with an opportunity to explore spatial qualities and static aspects of landscape even though music moves through time. I had determined to compose a landscape piece, but struggled to find an appropriate descriptive title. I found reference to the spirit of Moinee, reputed by the Aboriginals of the area, (as reported to Augustus Robinson in the late 1820s and 1830s) to have created the region. My fascination for the general landscape with its weather patterns, remoteness and the epic qualities of the whole saga of the creation of the land by Moinee (as the short reference in the South West Book revealed) provided the main source for ideas. I called the piece 'Land of Moinee', sub-titled 'A Symphonic Impression'.

...p 6 starting 'By 1988...'

By 1988 I completed for the first performance in November my 'Tasmania Symphony – The Legend of Moinee' for cello and orchestra. 'Land of Moinee' was included as the fourth of five movements, changed only by some additional scoring touches. The response accorded 'Land of Moinee' in its several performances round the state by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra conducted by Barry Tuckwell in 1983 encouraged and inspired me to embark on the larger work expressing my interpretation of the whole Moinee mythology as the original South West Book reference succinctly conveyed it. Also, I was encouraged by Elizabeth Walker's tireless efforts to raise funds by inviting many Tasmanians to contribute, acknowledged by the gift of a copy of a print of Deloraine (Tasmania) donated by Lloyd Rees.

Then give out title pages and full scores to note the quote from 'South West Book'. Then quote p 8 to end of 3rd paragraph, '...a fundamental way'.

Before setting out on the composition of the symphony, I established, according to the mythology, a sequence of episodes which made a strong and complete structure on which to base a symphonic form. The classical model usually embraces four movements, for

example – allegro (quick and energetic), adagio (slow and lyrical), scherzo (witty, humorous, whimsical), finale (summation, grandly stated). There are many, many variants to this example, some in the extreme form of one complete movement, others in excess of the classical four. I felt a sequence of five movements not only allowed me to compose contrasting movements according to the symphonic tradition, but interpret the main aspects of the Moinee mythology in a way which was true to the story to create a satisfying overall form.

The idea of a solo instrumentalist in a symphonic structure is unusual, but I felt the presence of a symbolic soloist essential for this context.

'The Legend of Moinee' exemplifies for me in my work a good balance between satisfying abstract notions of form and responding to stimuli which are external to music. I should add that the processes described for creating 'Land of Moinee' were similarly applied to the other four movements. I was confident the predetermined formal structure would counter any temptation to be over descriptive in too pedantic a way. My hope was that the listener could respond at many levels and not necessarily need to know the mythology to gain satisfaction from the music. What was important and significant for me in this whole endeavour was the realisation and subsequent satisfaction that my music can be enhanced by striving for such connections; that some of my music, at least, can claim to be associated with this island in quite a fundamental way.

Example

Play the whole work uninterrupted. Invite questions or comments.