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***TOCCATAS AND ARIAS:***  
**ANALYSIS AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF**  
**VIVIAN FINE'S LAST WORK FOR SOLO PIANO**

By

MANON HUTTON-DEWYS

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

2017

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music  
in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

## ABSTRACT

*TOCCATAS AND ARIAS:*  
ANALYSIS AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF  
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by

Manon Hutton-DeWys

Advisor: Joseph N. Straus

Vivian Fine's *Toccatas and Arias* (1987) is an important work both in Fine's compositional output and in the history of ultramodern music. Through her close associations with Ruth Crawford, Henry Cowell, and others, Vivian Fine was very much a product of the musical scene that developed in New York in the 1920s and early 30s. *Toccatas and Arias*, Fine's last piece for solo piano shows that Fine continued to write in the ultramodern/dissonant counterpoint style throughout her life. Its characteristics also demonstrate that, contrary to music-historical writings that suggest such music essentially died out in the mid-twentieth century, Fine persisted in writing this way well into the twentieth century's last decades.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to many people who have supported me in the process of getting this degree. This work is dedicated to my father, Peter Hutton, who I lost in June, 2016. I miss him immensely. I wish very much that I could have shared my joy about this accomplishment with him. I would like to thank my husband, Dr. Donald McClelland. In addition to years of loving partnership, he has offered invaluable advice on writing, the dissertation process, and help with the challenge of teaching my first classes at Lehman College. I would like to thank my mother, Margaret DeWys, for, aside from being a major source of support and comfort at all times, being the person who first introduced me to the world of modern music and women who write it. Thank you to my aunt, Wendy Fern Hutton, for her endless love and open heart. I am so glad that we are close. Thank you to my parents-in-law, Chris and Steve McClelland, for their kindness and support. Thank you to Tom Sauer, my piano teacher, for his perceptive listening and feedback, and for introducing me to music making of the highest level. Thank you to my advisor, Joe Straus, for guiding me through this project. I could not have asked for a more supportive and distinguished mentor or for such incisive and helpful advice. Thank you to my committee, Phil, Norman, and Kyle, for their words of advice and for the time they gave to this project. Thank you to my classmates, teachers, and colleagues at the Graduate Center for five enriching years of music-making, writing, talking, studying, and friendship.

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## Part One: Vivian Fine's Life and Style

Vivian Fine was born on September 28, 1913 in Chicago.<sup>1</sup> She displayed remarkable musical abilities as a young child, winning a scholarship to attend the Chicago Musical College for piano lessons at age five. At eleven, she was accepted as a student by Djane Lavoie-Herz, a former student of Scriabin and a well-connected figure in the Chicago musical scene. It was decided that Ruth Crawford would provide Fine with theory lessons in exchange for Crawford's own piano lessons with Herz, and thus, Herz introduced Fine to her first composition teacher.<sup>2</sup> Crawford asked Fine to write a piece as an exercise, and from that first simple exercise, Fine began composing. Fine described that pivotal moment in her development in a 1975 interview with Frances Harmeyer:

Madame Herz... wanted me to have harmony lessons, so it started out with my studying harmony with Ruth Crawford. I must have been a little under twelve then, and one day she asked me to write a piece... And I could see that she listened to it with great attention, and ever since, after that, I composed constantly. I never stopped composing... I don't know what would have happened if she hadn't asked me to write a piece...<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The following biographical sketch is drawn from two sources: Heidi von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 1999), and Judith Cody, *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Here I refer to Ruth Crawford by her maiden name rather than her married name, Ruth Crawford-Seeger. I do this because she built her career under her maiden name and ceased composing shortly after marrying Charles Seeger.

<sup>3</sup> Vivian Fine, interview by Francis Harmeyer, June 28, 1975, interview 50, transcript, American Music Series Interview, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

According to Heidi von Gunden, Fine was fascinated by the avant-garde music of the type that was presented at Herz's salons. As a teenager, she would frequent the Lyon and Healy music store in Chicago to browse through their collection of scores, and she subscribed to Henry Cowell's *New Music*. At the piano, she studied pieces from Schoenberg's opuses 11 and 19 as well as some of Crawford's *Nine Preludes*.

Through Crawford and Herz, who arranged salon concerts for her piano students, Fine became closely acquainted with a circle of composers including Henry Cowell, Dane Rudhyar, and Imre Weisshaus among others. Dane Rudhyar was especially supportive of Fine, writing in a letter to her, "You have so much within you! Let it grow and develop – and do not forget your old friend who believes in you and your great power of expression."<sup>4</sup> Fine and Rudhyar exchanged many letters, and Fine spoke to Judith Cody in 1986 about how the sound of his music and piano playing influenced her:

He was quite different...he liked large resonating masses, larger masses of sound.

That concept has been an influence in my work...certain kinds of things that I write for piano. It also influenced how I played the piano, to get a yearning, a resonant, beautiful sound out of the piano.<sup>5</sup>

In 1928 either Herz or Crawford had put Fine in touch with Henry Cowell, a friendship which would be personally and professionally important to Fine. Fine would send him compositions and he would send back comments. In 1930, Cowell arranged for Fine's *Solo for*

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<sup>4</sup> Heidi von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Judith Cody, *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography*, 7.

*Oboe* to be performed at the Pan-American Composers Concert in New York at Carnegie Hall. In 1933, he assisted Fine in her first publication, her *Four Songs*, in the *New Music Edition*.

After Ruth Crawford was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship and left Chicago for New York in the late twenties, Fine studied briefly with Adolph Weidig at the Chicago Conservatory. Evidently, she could not or would not adapt to his style of teaching. Leslie Jones calls his approach “thorough” and “Germanic,”<sup>6</sup> and Cody asserts that Weidig was a “firm traditionalist.” Fine recalled, “He was a very fine person, a fine musician and has written a good harmony book. But I didn’t do things the orthodox way and I was, I imagine, somewhat of a bewilderment to him.”<sup>7</sup> Fine reported that after a brief period of time, she realized that she needed to move on. She set her sights on New York City, where she arrived in 1931 to begin a new chapter of her professional life.

By this point in her development, Fine had established the foundation for her compositional style. She was heavily influenced by those around her and had been given the privilege of association with a number of interesting and highly influential musical figures. Judith Cody affirms that that by the late 1920s the influence of Scriabin, Schoenberg, Ornstein, and Weisshaus was etched firmly into Fine’s compositional personality. Cowell, Crawford, and Rudhyar were also major influences. Cody avers that Fine’s music became “severely dissonant:” “She deliberately excised all tonal elements from her work as though excising all that had gone before...”<sup>8</sup> Fine affirms this:

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<sup>6</sup> Leslie Jones, “The Solo Piano Music of Vivian Fine” (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1994), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Vivian Fine, interview by Francis Harmeyer.

<sup>8</sup> Cody, *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography*, 9.

[My early compositions] were pretty wild. I, early, became very much interested and drawn into the avant-garde contemporary idiom of the time through Ruth Crawford mainly, I suppose.... I just composed, and I composed in the idiom of the people who were close to me were interested in—an avant-garde idiom.<sup>9</sup>

In the fall of 1931, Fine moved to New York City, where she formed more of the important professional relationships that would inform her career and style. Ruth Crawford introduced her to Blanche Walton, a wealthy patron of new music with whom Crawford had been boarding. Mrs. Walton presented a concert of works by Fine in her home in December of 1931. This concert was attended by a number of important composers, including, Fine recalls, about forty audience members as well as Ruth Crawford and Charles Seeger. In fact, Fine had moved to New York City with the idea of studying with Seeger. Von Gunden reports that one lesson took place, though Fine's statement about it in 1990 denies that a lesson ever happened. She said, "The idea [to move to New York] was to study with Charles Seeger, but it never took place. I don't know why, exactly."<sup>10</sup>

During her early New York years, Fine earned a living as a dance accompanist. By way of this entirely practical avenue, she made connections with some of the twentieth century's most important choreographers: Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Martha Graham. These relationships bore fruit throughout Fine's career beyond providing her an income through accompanying: her *Alcestis* (1960), a commission from Martha Graham, remains one of her most successful and popular works.

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<sup>9</sup> Vivian Fine, interview by Francis Harmeyer.

<sup>10</sup> Vivian Fine (master class, The City University of New York Graduate Center, New York, NY, April 17, 1990). Available through the International Music Score Library Project, [http://imslp.org/wiki/Interviews\\_\(Fine,\\_Vivian\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Interviews_(Fine,_Vivian)). Accessed January 14, 2017.

Along with her activities in dance accompaniment, Fine began to forge an identity as a performer of difficult modern scores. In the early 1930s she gave first performances of a number of important works of the time, including pieces by Ruth Crawford, Henry Brant, Israel Citkowitz, Carlos Chavez, and Gerald Strang. During this time, Fine became part of Aaron Copland's Young Composers' Group. This group of composers, which included Arthur Berger, Paul Bowles, Henry Brant, Israel Citkowitz, and Lehman Engel, would meet weekly and play through each other's music. Fine was the only woman in the group. Copland included her *Four Polyphonic Piano Pieces* in his first Yaddo Festival in Saratoga Springs in 1932.

In 1934, Fine began studying privately with Roger Sessions. Her studies with him provided her, along with support for her compositional ideas, a rigorous course of harmony and theory. She described this period in 1990:

And, as for myself, I had begun to study with Roger Sessions. Israel Citkowitz had decided I needed a thorough classical education... ..and he introduced me to Sessions... So I had a wonderful whole year of wonderful harmony education...and my idiom became tonal. I began to write tonal music, which was the first time I had written this. All my other music was atonal – very, definitely quite dissonant. Henry Cowell spoke of my “unladylike music”...because it was so angular and dissonant. And never would I let a C major chord appear on a page of mine, never at first. Even a third, a major third was taboo. It had to be sevenths, ninths, fourths, and combinations of that...but I also [along with many other composers] modified the way I was writing.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Vivian Fine, master class, The City University of New York Graduate Center 1990.

Notable examples from her piano music during this phase are the 1938 *Children's Suite*, *Suite in E-flat* (1940), *Five Preludes* (1939-41), and the 1944 *Concertante for Piano and Orchestra*.

Leslie Jones (1994), asserts that Fine's music can be divided into three style periods: a highly restricted, dissonant style from about 1925 to 1937, a more tonal style from 1937 to 1944, and then from 1945 on, a much longer period of atonality blended with tonal reference. Fine's statements in her 1991 interview with Elinor Arner agree with Jones's assertion. She describes loosening the reins on her stridently dissonant early music and later embracing some tonality in her music:

From about [age] fourteen through nineteen, I did have a rather severely dissonant, atonal style. I didn't use twelve-tone techniques; I doubt I even knew about them, but I was familiar with atonal music, as I said, and I was severe as only young people can be severe. Then, in the mid-thirties, there was a great shift in almost everyone's music. Copland, for example, went from the modernism of his *Piano Variations* into his "American" style. It was part of a whole cultural and political manifestation, and my own music became quite tonal for a number of years. I was very involved with dance then and this tonal trend showed itself particularly in the ballets I wrote for Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman. Then, in the mid-forties I turned to a style that was always anchored in some way to tonality, but not triadic tonality. I did admit a triad now and then, which would

have been strictly forbidden in my earliest period! ... I think this tempered atonality has remained characteristic of my music.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, *The Race of Life* (1937), which Fine wrote in collaboration with Doris Humphrey, incorporates key signatures, tonal anchors, and triadic harmony throughout.

Fine described in a 1997 interview with Leslie Jones how her music changed after this more tonal period: “I see this music as a sort of return to my [atonal] roots, but with added change, further study, and exposure to many composers and new music.”<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that after her studies with Sessions, Fine never sought out another teacher. Leslie Jones writes: “Thus the style that emerged [in the mid-forties] and grew resulted from a combination of elements of past study, her own intuitive abilities, the learned craftsmanship from her earlier compositions (1925-44), and changing external musical factors.”<sup>14</sup>

Fine’s solo piano compositions in the decade following the 1944 *Concertante for Piano and Orchestra* number only two, and each displays a turn back towards dissonant harmonies. The *Chaconne* (1947), is Fine’s singular composition with an overt, repeating twelve-tone row. As in a traditional baroque Chaconne, the bass line is preserved throughout all fifteen variations in the piece while the upper voice, according to von Gunden, does not relate strictly to any system, twelve-tone or otherwise. Fine explains, “I tried to experiment with twelve-tone technique in this piece. The basic theme or material of the *Chaconne* is twelve-tone, but the rest

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<sup>12</sup> Vivian Fine, interview by Elinor Arner, “A Conversation with Vivian Fine: Two Composers Talk Shop,” *Strings*, vol. 5 no. 5 (1991): 73-78.

<sup>13</sup> Vivian Fine, interview by Leslie Jones, “Seventy Years of Composing: An Interview with Vivian Fine,” *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 16 (1997): 21-26.

<sup>14</sup> Jones, “The Solo Piano Music of Vivian Fine,” 142.



of it is not. I could never get myself to reach the point where I could stick with it or be locked into it.”<sup>15</sup>

The 1952 *Sinfonia and Fugato* is one of Fine’s most important solo piano works. It was part of a larger, unpublished work called *Variations* and was premiered by Fine herself. In 1966, RCA Victor released a studio recording of the piece played by Robert Helps. Fine makes ample use of sixths throughout the *Sinfonia*, an interval she would avoided assiduously in her earlier works, but she is careful to suppress any possible triadic implications. The *Fugato* subject is tortuously chromatic, though it follows a predictable fugal scheme. Fine described her style post-1940s thus:

One listener referred to it as “mutating” tonality, which describes it very well, I think; the music veers off constantly into unaccustomed tonal relations. Another element that has remained constant in my music is its principally contrapuntal, linear approach. The harmonies fall where they fall; I hear them, but I rarely start out with a harmonic scheme.<sup>16</sup>

Considering the piano works alone, it becomes clear that Fine also had a lifelong interest in short, and especially, Baroque-inspired forms. Among her piano works are: *Five Preludes* (1939-41), *Suite in E-flat* (1940), *Chaconne* (1947), *Sinfonia and Fugato* (1952), *Double*

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<sup>15</sup> Vivian Fine, interview by Leslie Jones.

<sup>16</sup> Vivian Fine, interview by Elinor Arner.

*Variations* (1983), and *Toccatas and Arias* (1987).<sup>17</sup> When asked in 1994 if there was a reason why she was so inspired by the forms, Fine responded simply, “Yes. Because I’m a pianist.”<sup>18</sup>

In 1953, Fine was appointed musical director of the Bathsheva de Rothschild Foundation, a position that brought her some important recognition and connections in the New York City art world. In 1956, the foundation commissioned her *A Guide to the Life Expectancy of a Rose*. This comical piece for mixed small ensemble and two singers was premiered with dancers directed by Martha Graham. Other major compositions from these years include the *String Quartet* (1957). Von Gunden observes that the composer seemed more comfortable with larger-scale forms by this point in her output, and Leslie Jones (1994) notes that after her studies with Sessions, Fine’s melodic lines lengthened. Further, rather than being composed of strictly dissonant intervals, they tended more towards triadic outlines.

The sixties saw more professional success for Fine. In 1960, she was commissioned by Martha Graham to write *Alcestis*, her best known work today. In 1964 she began teaching at Bennington College, where she remained until 1987. Fine’s Bennington years were fertile compositionally, a fact which was due largely to her access to willing and capable musicians at the college. She wrote a number of solos and small ensemble pieces, many of which were performed by her colleagues: *Melos* for double bass and *Song of Persephone* for violist Jacob Glick in 1964, *Chamber Concerto* in 1966 for cello and six instruments for George Finckel, and a composition called *Four Piano Pieces* (1966), which Fine premiered herself. Unfortunately,

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<sup>17</sup> The music studied in this document should not be confused with Fine’s 1986 *Toccatas and Arias* for harpsichord, a separate and unrelated composition. This dissertation deals exclusively with the piece for solo piano.

<sup>18</sup> Vivian Fine, interview by Leslie Jones.

this work was never made available for publication and thus is presently unknown to scholarship.<sup>19</sup>

In one fascinating piece from 1965, the *Concertino for Piano and Percussion Ensemble*, Fine introduces two compositional techniques that were somewhat underused in her oeuvre so far: quotation and retrograde. As von Gunden explains, twice in the *Concertino*, overt quotations from *Alcestis* are presented: she notes that Fine considered her compositions as her memoirs, and in one of her final works, the opera *Memoirs of Uliana Rooney* (1994), she quoted heavily from earlier compositions. Though Fine made use of retrograde and inversion throughout her life's work, von Gunden points out its heavy usage in the *Concertino* and explains that from this point forward, Fine relied on these developmental techniques more frequently than before. Fine's remarkable application of retrograde frequently affects not only pitches but rhythm and expressive markings, and even entire formal sections of her compositions.

Showcased in an all-Fine program at Finch College in 1973 were several pieces that incorporated some newer, extramusical and otherwise experimental elements. On the program was Fine's new *Two Neruda Poems* (1972). In these songs, the singer is instructed to sing in a variety of timbres, such as "in the voice of an old person," as well as to turn to observe the pianist, walk to the left side of the piano, and eventually close the piano lid, forcing the pianist to play the final chord of the second song on the lid of the keys. Meanwhile, the pianist plucks and mutes strings inside the piano, performs forearm clusters, and executes some unorthodox pedaling maneuvers. Fine's new *Missa Brevis* for four cellos and taped voice was also premiered on this program as well as a larger-scale piano work, *Concerto for Piano Strings and Percussion*

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<sup>19</sup> Leslie Jones (1994, p. 175) states that they were unavailable at the time of her writing. The pieces are only mentioned by name but not discussed in Judith Cody's Bio-Bibliography of Fine. I assume that they are lost.

(*One Performer*) (1972). In the *Concerto*, the pianist must play, in addition to the piano, a timpani, triangle, cymbal, and flexatone. In the instructions preceding the score, Fine explains various methods for producing sound inside the piano. Many of the harmonies in the *Concerto* are clusters and chromatic material, and sometimes register (high, medium, low) is indicated in place of specific pitches. The *Concerto* demonstrates along with the *Neruda* songs and the *Missa Brevis* that Fine was continually expanding her compositional horizons within a constant framework of dissonant, linear writing.

The late seventies brought more commissions and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Several important works came out of this period: the cantata *Meeting for Equal Rights 1866* (1976) and the chamber opera *The Women in the Garden* (1977). Fine's piano piece *Momenti* (1978) was written for the occasion of the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of Schubert's death. This piece in six movements adapts motives from each of Schubert's *Moments Musicaux*, D. 780.

The 1980s brought Fine more professional success, including a great number of commissions from various foundations and ensembles, an award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and a Guggenheim fellowship. She produced four keyboard works during this decade: *Double Variations* (1982), *Aegean Suite* (1985), *Toccatas and Arias* for harpsichord (1986), and *Toccatas and Arias* for piano (1987), as well as a concerto for piano and orchestra, *Poetic Fires* (1984). The *Double Variations* was commissioned in 1982 by pianist Claudia Stevens on the occasion of Elliott Carter's seventy-fifth birthday. It was premiered at Carnegie Hall in December 1983. Heidi von Gunden calls it Fine's "most complex piece," and Fine herself is quoted as saying "...it is extremely difficult. I've never played it."<sup>20</sup> The work is

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<sup>20</sup> Jones, "The Solo Piano Music of Vivian Fine," 215.

meant to evoke the interplay of multiple lines and the metric complexity characteristic of Carter's music, specifically the String Quartet No. 1, which contains a variation movement. Fine's work consists of a theme and nine clearly delineated variations (during the course of which a second theme is introduced) followed by a fugato section and a fast-paced coda. The underpinnings of the first theme include a distinct G major triad, and similar tonal allusions occur throughout the piece.

The musical material of *Aegean Suite*, written for Fine's twelve-year-old second cousin, and the two sets of *Toccatas and Arias* are somewhat intertwined, according to Heidi von Gunden: some of the figuration between the three pieces is similar, especially between *Meltemi*, the final movement of *Aegean Suite* and the toccatas of the other two pieces. *Toccatas and Arias* for piano is rife with tonal allusions, and here Fine makes extensive use of developmental techniques she had previously relied upon, principally retrograde and inversion.

In 1987, just before beginning *Toccatas and Arias* for piano, Fine retired from Bennington College after more than twenty years. The late eighties and early nineties were busy years, and Fine received a number of commissions. *The Garden of Live Flowers* (1988) was commissioned by the After Dinner Opera Company, and the violinist Pamela Frank commissioned *Portal* (1990) for her New York debut. As von Gunden explains, the composition's opening describes the shape of an arch, with two phrases transposed and then repeated in retrograde. Fine's final major work was the opera *Memoirs of Uliana Rooney* (1994). This quasi-autobiographical work tells the story of a "feisty, feminist"<sup>21</sup> woman composer, and it quotes Fine's earlier compositions throughout. *Memoirs* was Fine's final major work, though she

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<sup>21</sup> Fine's words quoted in von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 143.

continued to write until her death. In March of 2000, at the age of 86, she was in an automobile accident and died of her injuries shortly afterward.

Vivian Fine was very heavily influenced early in her life by a small number of composers who shared similar musical goals, and she embraced their aesthetic wholeheartedly. She wrote in a relatively consistent style for the majority of her professional life, and despite experimenting with contemporary trends such as tonality and twelve-tone technique, she never gave up the basic practice of dissonant, linear writing, and the general avoidance of traditional consonance and triadic implication. In order to better understand Fine's lifelong style, it is necessary to understand the roots of this style, its major proponents, and its defining features.

## **Part Two: Background and Style Summary of Ultramodern Music**

In the early twentieth century the intellectual climate in America was characterized by restlessness. American artists were generally interested in establishing a style that was independent of romantic and, especially, of European influences. As Carol Oja states in *Making Music Modern*, the term *modernist* was used to describe a “kaleidoscope” of different types of music. She explains: “The beauty of modernism was that it encompassed no dominating center or clear line of authority. Modernism was impossible to pin down. It embraced many styles. It did not even have a stable home. Yet it stood for one basic principle: iconoclastic, irreverent innovation, sometimes irreconcilable with the historic traditions that preceded it.”<sup>22</sup> Vivian Fine's use of the term “avant-garde” in quoted statements throughout this document can be understood as an extension of this idea: a complex, dissonant musical movement. She used the

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<sup>22</sup>Carol Oja, *Making Music Modern* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4.

term to describe both her own music and that of others, thus situating herself within this general artistic movement.

After Schoenberg devised his twelve-tone system in the early 1920s, his ideas began to waft across the ocean to a small group of American composers – many of whom knew and influenced Fine in one way or another – who called themselves ultramodernists. This group centered around Henry Cowell and Charles Seeger and included, among others, Ruth Crawford, Carl Ruggles, Adolf Weiss, Johanna Beyer, and Wallingford Riegger. As Joseph Straus explains, these composers each experimented with adopting and adapting Schoenberg’s ideas to suit their own compositional needs. Their music is characterized by “...a linear/contrapuntal approach to music (reacting against a Romantic texture of melody and chords) and a commitment to “dissonance” (that is, non-triadic, atonal harmony).”<sup>23</sup>

These composers, principally Ruggles at first, adhered to a system in which a melodic pitch class was not repeated until a sufficient number – seven or eight – of intervening pitch classes had occurred.<sup>24</sup> Both Cowell and Seeger noted this in his music. In *New Musical Resources*, Cowell describes this:

Carl Ruggles has developed a process for himself in writing melodies for polyphonic purposes which embodies a new principle and is more purely contrapuntal than a consideration of harmonic intervals. He finds that if the same note is repeated in a melody before enough notes have intervened to remove the impression of the original note, there is a sense of tautology, because the melody

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph N. Straus, *Twelve-Tone Music in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>24</sup> Straus, *Twelve-Tone Music in America*, 12.

should have proceeded to a fresh note instead of to a note already in the consciousness of the listener. Therefore Ruggles writes at least seven or eight different notes in a melody before allowing himself to repeat the same note, even in the octave.<sup>25</sup>

Some developmental techniques utilized by Schoenberg were also adopted and exploited by these composers. Nearly all – very much including Vivian Fine – experimented with the presentation of series in retrograde, inversion, and canon.

Among the ultramodernists, the composers who were most important to Vivian Fine were Ruth Crawford, her teacher, friend, and role model, and Henry Cowell, who was an important advocate for her career and professional connections. These composers, along with Charles Seeger, all settled in New York City by the end of the 1920s. Crawford and Cowell were heavily involved in the creation of Charles Seeger's practice of dissonant counterpoint, a carefully considered system for composition laid out in Seeger's sprawling treatise *Tradition and Experiment in (the New) Music*.<sup>26</sup> *Tradition and Experiment* was the long-term distillation of Seeger's work with Crawford and Cowell while they were his students, and it is a theoretical-philosophical treatise on music composition and pedagogy. This document is important for any understanding of Vivian Fine's music because she was heavily influenced by the principles outlined within it.

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<sup>25</sup> Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources* (New York: Something Else Press, 1930), 41-42. Heidi von Gunden speculates that Vivian Fine was aware of Ruggles' practice, even as early as her *Solo for Oboe*, written in 1929. See von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 5.

<sup>26</sup> Though conceived and written throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, this work was not published until 1994.



John Spilker identifies the beginnings of dissonant counterpoint with Henry Cowell's attendance at the University of California Berkeley in 1914.<sup>27</sup> Two items remain documenting Cowell's studies with Charles Seeger during the years 1914 through 1917: a notebook entitled "dissonant governed counterpoint" and a single sheet of paper with the heading "Exercizes [sic] for Seeger."<sup>28</sup> Seeger temporarily abandoned this work when he left Berkeley in 1918 and only later, with Ruth Crawford's help, revisited the idea and put forth two documents outlining dissonant counterpoint and his new compositional system: one was a 1930 article in *Modern Music* called "On Dissonant Counterpoint," the other the *Manual of Dissonant Counterpoint*, a section of *Tradition and Experiment*.<sup>29</sup>

One basic principle of the dissonant counterpoint practice as first laid out by Seeger and Cowell reverses the traditional rules governing consonance and dissonance: consonance must be used sparingly and must be prepared and resolved in a specific way. Spilker differentiates this and other contemporary compositional approaches (for example, Schoenberg's twelve-tone method) by pointing out that the dissonant counterpoint technique relied upon a distinction between consonance and dissonance rather than a presumed equality between them.<sup>30</sup> Cowell's *New Musical Resources*, written between 1916 and 1919, posits the possibility of a reversal of consonance and dissonance as an example of polyphonic progress in the world of composition:

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<sup>27</sup> The following account of the development of dissonant counterpoint by Henry Cowell and Charles Seeger is drawn largely from Chapter 1 of John Spilker's dissertation. See John Spilker, "'Substituting a New Order': Dissonant Counterpoint, Henry Cowell, and the Network of Ultra-Modern Composers" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Johanna Beyer also outlined the technique in her program notes for Composers' Forum Laboratory concerts in the 1930s. Drawn from: Spilker, "'Substituting a New Order': Dissonant Counterpoint, Henry Cowell, and the Network of Ultra-Modern Composers," 9.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

Let us, however, meet the question of what would result if we were frankly to shift the center of musical gravity from consonance, on the edge of which it has long been poised, to seeming dissonance, on the edge of which it now rests. The difference might not be, any more than in Bach's practice, a matter of numerical proportion between consonant and dissonant effects, but rather an essential dissonant basis, the consonance being felt to rely on dissonance for resolution. An examination in fact would reveal that all the rules of Bach would seem to have been reversed, not with the result of substituting chaos, but with that of substituting a new order. The first and last chords would be now not consonant, but dissonant; and although consonant chords were admitted, it would be found that conditions were in turn applied to them, on the basis of the essential legitimacy of dissonances as independent intervals. In this system major sevenths and minor seconds and ninths would be the foundation intervals; major seconds and ninths, diminished fifths, and minor sevenths might be used as alternatives; all thirds, fourths, fifths, and sixths would only be permitted as passing or auxiliary notes; Octaves would be so far removed from the fundamental intervals in such a system that they would probably sound inconsistent and might not be used except in the rarest circumstances.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 38-39.

Cowell goes on to say that contemporary composers who eschew thirds and sixths as “banal” are simply following the line of progress begun by Bach wherein intervals previously considered dissonant are increasingly accepted as less dissonant or even consonant.<sup>32</sup>

Beyond a theory of harmony as simply dissonant, Seeger expounds in *Tradition and Experiment* upon his concept of *heterophony*. Taylor Greer explains:

...these exercises in Fuxian negation were far more than mere parody: they were designed to lead to a broader vision of composition in which all musical functions were nearly in perfect balance. This aesthetic vision Seeger called “heterophony,” and it consisted of maximizing tonal and rhythmic independence among parts and cultivating the art of “sounding apart” rather than “sounding together” – diaphony rather than symphony.<sup>33</sup>

Seeger’s prescriptions for careful treatment of consonance can be understood under the larger umbrella of the term “dissonation.” For example, a melody could be dissonated if the impact of its consonant intervals were minimized and triadic outlines avoided. In his book on Ruth Crawford’s music, Joseph Straus describes the term: “‘Dissonation,’ as Seeger uses the term here, thus refers specifically to the requirement that the notes of any triad or triadic interval

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>33</sup> Critical remarks preceding *Tradition and Experiment in (the New) Music* in Charles Seeger and Ann M. Pescatello, *Studies in Musicology II, 1929-1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 34.

be followed immediately by a note a semitone (or tritone) away. More generally, it refers to the ability of a melody to resist a traditional, tonal interpretation.”<sup>34</sup>

*Tradition and Experiment* outlines a number of other principles central to Seeger’s philosophy of compositional ideals. His theory of neumes as basic musical building blocks extends to guidelines for the construction of aesthetically balanced melodies, motivic unity, and large-scale forms. Straus explains, “Seeger’s ‘neume’ is akin to a traditional ‘motive’ in many ways – it is a musical shape from which other shapes may be derived.”<sup>35</sup> Straus goes on to explain that even in its smallest, most reduced form, a single neume must contain at least three musical events, three being the smallest number of events required to suggest developments such as retrograde and inversion. A neume is essentially a contour and can be reproduced in the dimensions of melody, rhythm, and even dynamics and articulation.<sup>36</sup>

Seeger also prescribes certain features for rhythmic schemes, such as frequent changes of meter or accent, use of polyrhythms and syncopation, and regular changes of rhythmic proportion (i.e., from duplets to triplets, or from eighth notes to quarter note triplets). Though Fine herself never studied with Seeger, by what seems like osmosis, she incorporated many of these ideas throughout her life’s work. Again, her statement from her interview with Francis Harmeyer affirms this: “I just composed, and I composed in the idiom of the people who were close to me were interested in—an avant-garde idiom.”<sup>37</sup> *Toccatas and Arias*, as will be seen in the following chapters, provides excellent examples of these practices in the dimensions of

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<sup>34</sup> Joseph N. Straus, *The Music of Ruth Crawford Seeger* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 18.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>37</sup> Vivian Fine, interview by Francis Harmeyer.

developmental techniques, practice of the principle of non-repetition, attention to contour, and more.

Shortly after Vivian Fine arrived in New York City, in the 1930s, the musical environment underwent a shift, and composers rebelled against the prevailing complex, thorny aesthetic, turning toward a more tonal, populist idiom. Fine summed up this shift in her 1990 master class at the CUNY Graduate Center:

What happened to the avant-garde after nineteen thirty-one, thirty-two? Do you know that things began to change enormously? .... people stopped writing avant-garde music about 1933...I had some songs published in *New Music Edition* which a lot of people became very, very interested in.<sup>38</sup> They were in my avant-garde style, in a free, atonal style. They're not twelve-tone... That was the last [avant-garde] music I wrote. And Varèse stopped composing for about twelve years during this period. He just stopped. Copland's last avant-garde work... are [sic] the *Piano Variations*. And then he turned to American folk sources. And Cowell stopped writing experimental music. This was a critical juncture in music. I can't help but feel that you no longer could write for as much - for a specialized audience.<sup>39</sup>

Oja refers to this moment (although she writes about the late 1920s rather than early 1930s) as one of an emergence of neoclassicism.

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<sup>38</sup> the *Four Songs* (1933).

<sup>39</sup> Vivian Fine, master class at The City University of New York, 1990.

Although slippery to define, neoclassicism popped up all across the Western modernist spectrum, often encompassing stylistic principles of ‘clarity’ and ‘simplicity’ and a broad range of attempts in art, music, and literature to re-imagine materials from the past.... Whatever its profile, as a loosely defined aesthetic it affected a significant body of American works written late in the decade.<sup>40</sup>

It was in 1934 that Fine began studying with Roger Sessions. With him she studied harmony and music theory, and was undoubtedly subject to what Babbitt called the “full Sessions treatment:” endless exercises and analysis of “...mountains of minuets, the fountains of fugues, and the bushels of bagatelles.”<sup>41</sup> As documented above, Fine described with great fondness and reverence her time spent with Sessions and noted that during these years her compositions became more tonal than ever before. Though she returned to an atonal idiom, most of her later works retained at least some references to tonality indicated by pitch centers and inversional wedges and triadic allusions.

Vivian Fine’s musical interests and professional connections were diverse, but it remains that her style was relatively consistent throughout her life. With a better understanding of the musical milieu in which she was steeped early in life, it becomes apparent that a piece such as *Toccatas and Arias* for piano is unique. Despite having been written in 1987, it displays the hallmarks of a much earlier musical style and is aesthetically aligned with the music of Fine’s friends among the ultramodern composers. Its existence also testifies to Fine’s firm lifelong compositional commitment to dissonant counterpoint.

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<sup>40</sup> Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 231.

<sup>41</sup> Milton Babbitt, "I Remember Roger," *Perspectives of New Music* 23, no. 2 (1985): 112-16.



## Chapter 2 : Toccata I and Aria I

### Introduction to Toccatas and Arias

*Toccatas and Arias* is the final solo piano piece Vivian Fine wrote. Written in the summer following her retirement from Bennington College in 1987, it was commissioned by the pianist Veda Zuponicic and premiered at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall on January 30, 1989. Alan Kozinn wrote of the performance in *The New York Times*: “The work requires finger power and concentration. Miss Zuponicic sailed through its thunderous explorations of the keyboard's full range with clarity and apparent ease.”<sup>42</sup> Zuponicic recorded it professionally on the Russian record label Melodiya, and hers is the only professional recording in existence today.<sup>43</sup> According to my research, she and I are the only two pianists to have performed the piece in public.<sup>44</sup> Previously available through Catamount Facsimile Editions, *Toccatas and Arias* now exists only in manuscript form. A scan of the score can be found on Vivian Fine’s page on the International Music Score Library Project website.<sup>45</sup>

*Toccatas and Arias* consists of five contrasting movements; three toccatas and two arias. Remarkably for a piece written at the end of the twentieth century, *Toccatas and Arias* bears a striking resemblance to music written by Fine and her cohort in the 1920s and early 30s. In these colorful and varied pieces, Fine utilizes an astonishingly small amount of musical material. The

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<sup>42</sup> Kozinn, Allan. Review of concert performance by Veda Zuponicic (piano), Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, New York. *New York Times*, February 1, 1989.

<sup>43</sup> Veda Zuponicic, *Americans from Russia*, Melodiya, MEL CD 10 00529, 1997, compact disc.

<sup>44</sup> I performed the piece on November 22, 2016 at the City University of New York Graduate Center, and I plan to repeat the performance on April 30, 2017 at Simon’s Rock College in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

<sup>45</sup> Vivian Fine, *Toccatas and Arias*, accessed October 17, 2015, International Music Score Library Project, [http://imslp.nl/imglnks/usimg/a/ad/IMSLP173639-PMLP306624-Toccatas\\_and\\_Arias\\_for\\_Piano.pdf](http://imslp.nl/imglnks/usimg/a/ad/IMSLP173639-PMLP306624-Toccatas_and_Arias_for_Piano.pdf).



analytical issues I address in the following chapters – primarily concerning developmental techniques, harmony, inversional symmetry, space filling, and tonal reference – highlight this piece’s connections to music of the early twentieth century and, more specifically, the practice of dissonant counterpoint. Each movement is based on a repeated series – here I use the term *theme* – which in its first statement comprises as little as a fifth up to a half of a movement. Throughout the duration of each movement, this theme is developed through use of retrograde and inversion, canon, and through more superficial modifications in texture, voicing, and register. Each movement’s theme references the aggregate of all twelve pitch classes: in most cases, Fine does not repeat a pitch class until she has saturated the aggregate (which usually occurs throughout the duration of a theme). Finally, *Toccatas and Arias*, along with many of Fine’s compositions from the latter half of her life, incorporates both overt and subtle references to tonality.

## **Toccata I Analysis**

### **Form and theme characteristics**

Toccata I is a lean, energetic movement written almost exclusively in a single voice. This string of sixteenth notes barrels up and down the keyboard at a hair-raising speed, covering nearly the entire range of the piano. Toccata I is comprised of five different phrases, each a repetition of the musical idea or theme presented at the outset of the movement. The theme spans from the beginning to the breath mark in system (s.) 4.<sup>46</sup> A description of each phrase and its relationship to the theme is summarized in the following table and described below.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Throughout my analysis of Toccata I, I will refer to system numbers (abbreviated “s.”) as there are no bar lines.

<sup>47</sup> Leslie Jones’ analysis of *Toccatas and Arias* (1994) in her dissertation covers form and Fine’s handling of the theme in each movement. Jones and I came to largely the same conclusions

Table 2-1: Toccata I Formal Layout

<b>Theme/Phrase 1:</b> s. 1 through breath mark in s. 4	
<b>Phrase 2:</b> s. 4 through breath mark in s. 7	Exact repetition of theme. Terminal segment transferred to lower rather than upper extreme of the keyboard.
<b>Phrase 3:</b> s. 7 through end of tremolos in s. 11	Theme at T <sub>0</sub> I. Brief canon inserted and tremolo material appended.
<b>Phrase 4:</b> s. 11 through end of tremolos in s. 15 (begins three sixteenth notes earlier in lower voice)	Theme doubled at the octave with canons inserted. Doubling at the end of the phrase and tremolos appended.
<b>Phrase 5:</b> s. 15 through end	Theme in retrograde. Initially doubled at the octave, concluding with single pitches.

### Developmental techniques

Fine varies her basic musical material very little throughout *Toccatas and Arias*, but it would be inaccurate to assert that she does not develop it at all. In Toccata I, she uses techniques of inversion, retrograde, and canon to vary the repetitions of the theme. She also augments it with a small amount of additional material as well as dynamic and expressive indications which depart from those in its initial statement.

The theme (Phrase 1) concludes on the highest Cs of the keyboard. Following the breath mark in s. 4, Phrase 2 repeats the theme note-for-note, but partway through s. 6 transfers it to the lowest register of the keyboard. As a result, Phrase 2 concludes on the lowest Cs of the keyboard. Phrase 3, spanning ss. 7 through 11, is the first developed phrase of the toccata: here the theme is presented in inversion. Toward the end of Phrase 3, Fine doubles the line at the octave and quickly thereafter initiates a brief canon: The lower voice repeats its pitches C-C-sharp-E-G while the upper voice carries on with the expected A-flat-A-C-F-sharp etc. (see Example 2-1). At

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regarding these topics throughout the piece, but Jones does not use the label *theme*. However, as her analysis visited these topics exclusively, what follows my discussion of them is work that has been done for the first time by me.

the end of s. 10, Fine affixes tremolo material to the theme, segueing rather than jumping directly into Phrase 4.

Example 2-1: Canon in s. 10

s. 10



Extra group  
Canon begins

While in the opening two phrases of this toccata Fine asks for only three changes of dynamic, her directions are more specific in Phrase 3: There are both gradual and sudden changes of dynamic, precise pedaling indications, and the expressive indication *grazioso* in s. 9. By recognizing the deliberate distinctions in expression between this and the previous two phrases, the performer may elect to distinguish this phrase even more by varying timing and touch and exaggerating the dynamics. Furthermore, it is worth noting that while the first two phrases are followed by breath marks, later phrase junctures are not highlighted in this way. This suggests that the first two phrases occupy an expository or introductory role (an idea I will return to later). The performer could choose to exaggerate the length of these breath marks to further separate them expressively from the rest of the toccata.

Phrases 4 and 5 incorporate canon, retrograde, and a small amount of additional material. Phrase 4 again contains two canons (beginning in the fifth duplet of s. 11 and in the third group of three in s. 14) as well as a glissando into the end of the phrase. The phrase dissolves into tremolos on C and B-flat and segues into Phrase 5. Phrase 5 presents the theme in retrograde,

creating symmetry between itself and Phrase 4, the midpoint of which is the C-and-B-flat tremolos. In Phrase 5, the material is initially doubled at the octave, but the movement closes as it began, with single notes concluding on G and F-sharp. As if to emphasize this return to the absolute beginning of the piece, Fine indicates that the damper pedal should be held for the duration of the F-sharp-G repetitions.

### **Characteristics of harmony and pitch collections**

Toccata I is essentially monophonic, and the vertical relationships present here are nearly always octave doublings. However, there is a very important relationship in Toccata I between pitch classes C and G, and Fine wields the power of their age-old association effectively. These pitches are situated at the center of several inversional wedges in the theme (to be discussed later), a fact which marks them as integral to it. With only two exceptions, C is not heard in the first two systems of the movement, while G is quite prevalent. Furthermore, the theme ends with deliberate, embellished repetitions of C in ss. 3 and 4. This ending, which I will call the “C cap,” implies C as a pitch center for the movement.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout this movement, the C cap is the only part of the theme that is varied. Its treatment reinforces the G and C relationship as well as C as the pitch center. Between Phrases 1 and 2, the C cap is set in the top- and bottom-most registers of the keyboard respectively. In Phrase 3, Fine appends tremolos to the C cap. The tremolos, an addition to the heretofore unadorned theme, subtly underscore this movement’s focus on the G-C relationship and the intervals that separate them. In the right hand, the tremolos leap by an interval of 7 while the left hand leaps down by an interval of 5 (see Example 2-2).

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<sup>48</sup> Jones (1994) refers to this feature as a “C pedal point,” though she does not discuss how it functions as a centric anchor for the movement.

### Example 2-2: Tremolos in ss. 10 to 11

The musical score shows two staves. A vertical dashed line marks the transition from measure 10 to measure 11. In measure 10, red brackets indicate intervals: a major seventh up (+ip7) and a perfect fifth down (-ip5). In measure 11, a red bracket indicates a major seventh up (+ip7). A wedge indicates a crescendo leading to a forte (f) dynamic. The instruction 'no ped.' is written below the bass staff in measure 11.

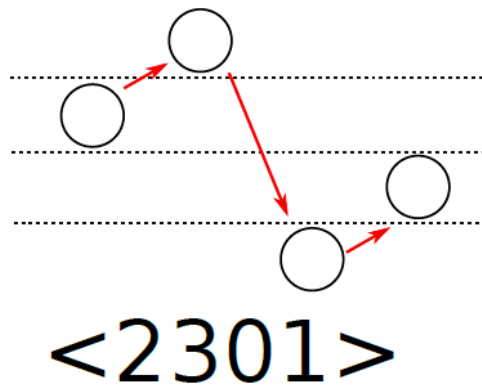
Phrase 4 contains one of the movement's most climactic moments, the C cap in s. 14. Fine leads into this C cap with a glissando and doubles it using the highest and lowest Cs on the keyboard. After the tremolos on B-flat and C, Phrase 5 begins immediately in retrograde, further lengthening and emphasizing the C cap. At the conclusion of Phrase 5, the movement ends where it began, with single notes and a wedge narrowing down to F-sharp and G. By pausing here in a movement so heavily involved with C, Fine accomplishes what amounts to a post-tonal half cadence. The listener is left hanging without the completion provided by the C cap.

### Space filling

A close examination of the theme elucidates the principle by which musical material behaves throughout the entire movement. The quickly traveling theme covers a large amount of pitch space while simultaneously, and more slowly, saturating pitch class space. This establishment and filling of pitch and pitch class space operates throughout Toccata I on the levels of contour, wedges, and inversive symmetry.

A contour segment analysis illustrates this breaking into and filling of space on the most basic level. The segment <2301>, found in pitch space throughout the theme, describes upward, then downward, motion which folds in upon itself. This is represented below in Example 2-3. The first two movements break into space above and below the first note. The final motion fills in the gap created by the second motion. Instances of <2301> and its retrograde, <1032>, are shown in Example 2-4.

Example 2-3: Contour segment <2301>



### Example 2-4: Contour segments in pitch space

**Allegro**  $\text{♩} = 104$

System 1 m.d. *f* m.s. evenly, no accents m.d. m.s. m.d. sim. *p* *sub.*

S. 2

S. 3

15

The image shows a musical score for three systems. System 1 is for piano and includes a melody line and a bass line. The melody line starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The bass line starts with a half note G3, followed by a quarter note A3, a quarter note B3, and a half note C4. The score includes various performance instructions such as 'm.d.', 'm.s.', 'evenly, no accents', 'sim.', and 'p'. There are also fingerings indicated by numbers in red brackets, such as '<2301>' and '<1032>'. System 2 and System 3 continue the piece, with System 3 starting at measure 15. The score is written in G major and 2/4 time, with a tempo of Allegro (104 bpm).

The theme of Toccata I begins with small pitch class intervals which expand and contract. The movement starts with several repetitions of pitch class interval 1. These are followed with instances of pitch class intervals 2, then 3 followed by 4, and so on. Thus, what began as two pitches very close together radiates outward on either side of the center to fill more space. Following a contraction, this expansion happens a second time in the first system (see Example 2-5). The second expansion also breaks into more pitch space, establishing space both above and below the outer limits reached by the first expansion.

musical score for "The Wind" by Gustav Mahler, featuring a piano solo. The score includes a treble and bass staff. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. Articulations include "m.d." (marcato), "m.s." (marcato), "no pedal", and "sim." (sforzando). Red brackets above the staff indicate "contraction" and "expansion" of the melodic line. The tempo is marked "mod.to allegro".

### Example 2-6: Expansion of F-sharp-G wedge

**Allegro** ♩ = 104

System 1

m.d. **ip 1**

*f* m.s. evenly, no accents m.d.

m.s. **ip 3** m.d. **ip 4**



Example 2-7: Reduction of wedge



Example 2-8: Inversionally symmetrical set [5678] in theme

**Allegro** ♩ = 104

System 1

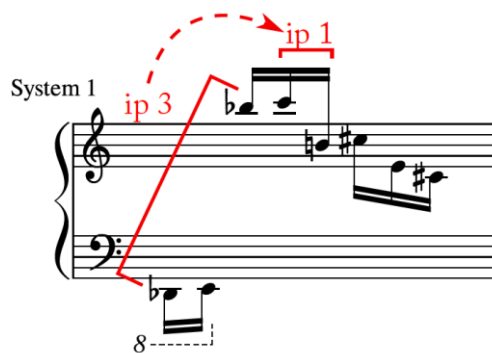
**[5678]**

m.d. m.s. evenly, no accents m.d. m.s. m.d.

**I<sub>1</sub>**

Beginning with the low D-flat towards the end of s. 1, a new, contracting wedge establishes pitches B and C at its center. First the pitch D-flat is introduced followed by B-flat, then B and C, creating the set [TE01]. The pitches E and F are remnants of the initial wedge. Another symmetrical set, [9T12], appears in s. 2 beginning with the A in the fourth duplet. This set is again centered on B and C. Examples 2-9 through 2-11 show the contraction of the B-C wedge in s. 1, a reduction, and isolation of the set [TE01].

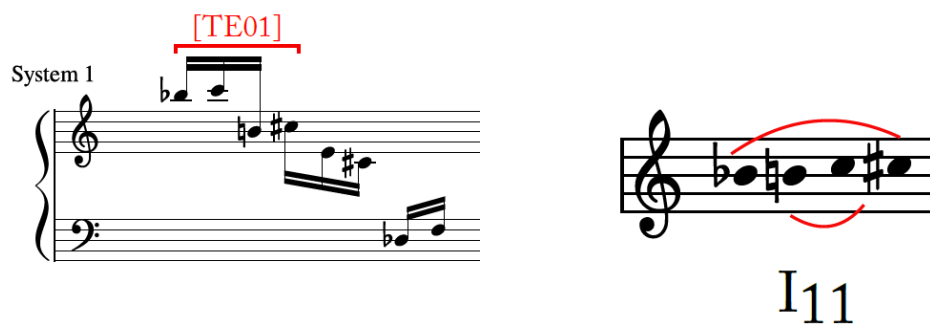
Example 2-9: Contraction of B-C wedge



Example 2-10: Reduction of wedge



Example 2-11 Inversionally symmetrical set [TE01] in theme



## Overarching processes

In a continuation of the ideas set forth above, that of a contour which establishes and fills space, expanding and contracting wedges, and inversive symmetry, one basic premise of Toccata I emerges: expansion and saturation. Fine saturates the space she creates on both local and global levels. For example, the theme visits every pitch class and nearly every pitch in between the first note of the movement and the final C in the theme, thereby both gradually breaking into and saturating a vast expanse of pitch space. Each wedge discussed above contains its own zone of saturation. These are diagrammed in Examples 2-12 through 2-14. The first part of s. 1 visits pitch classes 4 to 8. The second part of s. 1, beginning with the low D<sup>♭</sup>, saturates pitch classes T to 1. Finally, the first part of s. 2, the location of the second B-C wedge, introduces the remaining pitch classes, 2, 3, and 9.

Example 2-12: Saturation zone 1: pitches 4 to 8

**Allegro** ♩ = 104

System 1

reduction

Example 2-13: Saturation zone 2: pitches T to 1

The image shows a musical system labeled "System 1" with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). In the treble staff, a group of four notes (B-flat, A, G, F#) is enclosed in a red box. In the bass staff, a group of three notes (B-flat, A, G) is also enclosed in a red box. Below the bass staff, there is a bracket labeled "8" indicating an octave. A red arrow points from the word "reduction" to a single staff of music below, which contains the notes B-flat, A, G, and F#.

Example 2-14: Saturation zone 3: pitches 2, 3, and 9

The image shows a musical system labeled "S. 2" with a grand staff. In the treble staff, a group of three notes (B-flat, A, G) is enclosed in a red box. In the bass staff, a group of three notes (B-flat, A, G) is also enclosed in a red box. Below the bass staff, there is a bracket labeled "8" indicating an octave.

On a much larger scale, there is an establishment and filling of pitch space across the duration of the first three phrases, the important relationship between which was outlined earlier. Phrase 1 begins in the middle of the keyboard and breaks into its uppermost register in the first C cap. Phrase 2 begins again in the middle register. As Fine broke into the uppermost register of

the keyboard in the first phrase, here she forges into its depths, placing the C cap at the lowest possible point on the piano.

Viewed as a whole and from afar, Toccata I functions like a warmup for the ear, for the pianist, and for the entire *Toccatas and Arias* set; beginning in the center of the keyboard, Fine gradually introduces more and more of the keyboard in the first phrases of the piece. It is as though after this point, the entire range of the piano has been broken in and the toccata can begin in earnest. Recalling that the final phrase presents the theme in retrograde, as the movement winds down, the process is reversed. All the space won throughout the course of the movement closes back up at its end.

## **Aria I Analysis**

### **Form and theme characteristics**

Aria I, marked *passionato*, contrasts with Toccata I in its slower pacing and more varied texture, though it is hardly less dramatic in mood. This aria captures a singular grave, lamenting affect, though its disjunct melody is far more instrumental than vocal. The wide-ranging upper voice is liberally decorated with grace notes and tremolos which the simpler accompaniment counters by providing rhythmic structure. On the most basic formal level, the movement is symmetrical: independent of a four-measure coda, its second half is a retrograde of the first. The identical measures 17 and 18 are the hinge of this two-part form.

## **Developmental techniques**

Aria I's unique form reflects Fine's penchant for presenting musical material in retrograde, a frequently employed developmental technique throughout *Toccatas and Arias*. Here, Fine takes it to an extreme, essentially repeating the entire first half of the movement note-for-note. However, Fine sets several processes in motion which transform the musical material of Aria I both throughout its first half and throughout the entire movement. Among Aria I's most interesting features are a development of expressive markings as well as a gradual compaction and expansion of pitch space throughout the movement.

## **Characteristics of harmony and pitch collections**

A close look at pitch content confirms a great deal of harmonic cohesion throughout Aria I. Sonorities built on interval classes 1, 3, and 4 predominate. The accompanimental chords of the opening nine bars most frequently span pitch interval 11. Fine uses ic 1s in the same fashion that common-practice composers used octaves: to enrich the sonority of single notes. For example, the doubling at pitch interval thirteen of the melodic line in m. 6 and the doubling of the bass at pitch interval eleven in mm. 7 and 8 does not add motion or complexity, only fullness of sonority. Fine uses intervals 3 and 4 in a wide variety of applications: The accompanimental chords in mm. 1 to 5 all contain an interval 3 or 4. Similarly, tremolos and grace notes usually span these intervals.

The accompanimental chords in Aria I are strikingly similar to one another. The chords in the opening five measures of the movement are set classes (015), (025), and (014). These are labeled in Example 2-15. The set class (014) is the most commonly occurring set class throughout the movement and (015) and (025) each occur with some frequency. Between these

set classes, there are many occurrences of ics 1, 3, and 4, a fact which reflects those intervals' heavy usage throughout the movement.

Example 2-15: Opening chords labeled, mm. 1 through 5

The musical score for the opening five measures of the movement is shown. The first system contains measures 1 through 4, and the second system contains measure 5. The chords are labeled as follows:

- Chord 1: Measure 1, bass staff, circled in red.
- Chord 2: Measure 2, bass staff, circled in red.
- Chord 3: Measure 3, bass staff, circled in red.
- Chord 4: Measure 3, bass staff, circled in red.
- Chord 5: Measure 4, bass staff, circled in red.
- Chord 6: Measure 5, bass staff, circled in red.

The accompanimental chords of the opening five measures of the movement have some affinity to each other because of their similar interval content. Furthermore, these first five measures comprise a section that is texturally distinct from the material that enters at m. 6. (More on this later.) Example 2-16 shows these chords in context, and Example 2-17 shows their interval content.

Example 2-16: Related accompanimental chords, mm. 1 through 5

chord 1

chord 2

chord 3

chord 4

chord 5

chord 6

Example 2-17: Interval content of accompanimental chords, mm. 1 through 5

chord 1

chord 2

chord 3

chord 4

chord 5

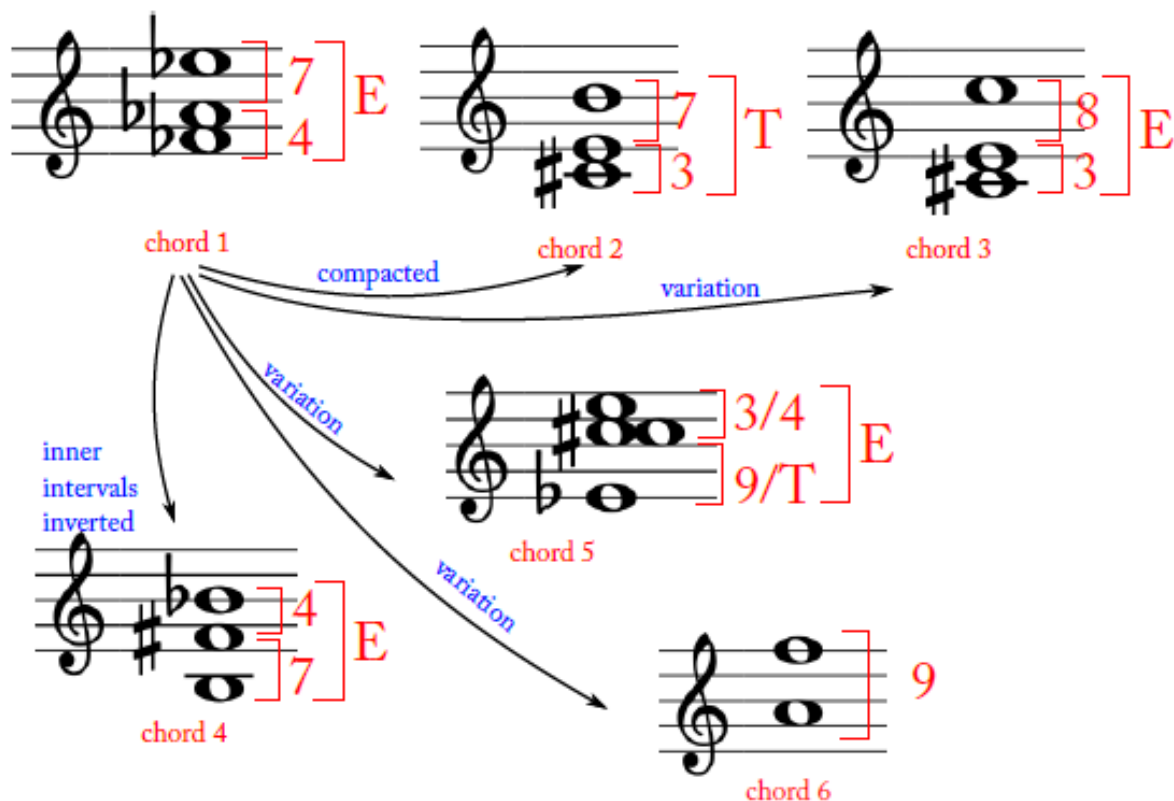
chord 6

Chords 1 through 4 each have an outer interval of 10, 11, or 13, and a small and large inner interval. Taking chord 1 as a prototype against which to compare the others helps to show



their interrelationship more specifically: Chord 1 has an outer interval of 11 and inner intervals of 7 and 4. Chord 2 is a more compacted version of chord 1 with an outer interval of 10 and inner intervals of 7 and 3. Chord 3 can be related to either of these with its outer interval of 11 and inner intervals of 8 and 3. Chord 4 is virtually identical to chord 1, but its inner intervals are inverted. Chords 5 and 6 are, like chord 3, variations. These interrelationships are shown in Example 2-18.

Example 2-18: Relationships between accompanimental chords, mm. 1 through 5



### Space filling

Aria I's drama is largely created by the grand, sweeping melodic gestures that open the movement. Its gestural language is quite unified, with most gestures in the first half of the

movement beginning from a melodic high point followed by a descent. A more specific description of the gestures at the center of Aria I is revealed with an analysis of contour segments. The first three measures contain the contour segment <210> on several distinct levels, shown in Example 2-19: Across the primary melodic pitches F, B, and F-sharp; across the upper pitches of each pair of grace notes G, C, and A-flat; and across the line described by the grace notes as they lead into the primary melodic notes. The segment <210> is also present in m. 6, 9, and 10, shown in Example 2-20.

Example 2-19: <210> on three levels, mm. 1 through 3

The image displays three staves of musical notation for measures 1 through 3. Each staff is annotated with a red bracket labeled "<210>" above it, indicating the contour segment. The first staff shows the primary melodic pitches F, B, and F-sharp. The second staff shows the upper pitches of each pair of grace notes G, C, and A-flat. The third staff shows the line described by the grace notes as they lead into the primary melodic notes. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a time signature of 3/8. The first measure is marked with a forte 'f' dynamic and a first ending bracket. The second measure is marked with a mezzo-forte 'm.s.' dynamic. The third measure is marked with a first ending bracket. The bottom staff shows a complex rhythmic pattern in the bass line.

Example 2-20: <210> in measures 6, 9, and 10

The image displays three musical staves, each representing a different measure (6, 9, and 10) from a piece. Each staff is a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. A red bracket labeled "<210>" is placed above the treble staff of each measure, indicating a specific interval or sequence of notes. In measure 6, the treble staff shows a sequence of notes: B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. In measure 9, the treble staff shows a sequence of notes: B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. In measure 10, the treble staff shows a sequence of notes: B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass staff of each measure contains various chords and single notes, including a prominent chord in measure 9 marked with a *mf* dynamic.

Echoing the movement's symmetrical form, the retrograde of <210>, <012>, is also quite prevalent. Measure 5 contains a <012> in the middle voice. In the left hand in mm. 9 and 10,

<012> is followed directly by a <210>. This juxtaposition happens again on a prominent level in both hands over mm. 16 through 19: the melody B-C-D-flat-D-flat-C-B describes the segments <012> and <210> back-to-back. These instances of <012> and <210> are shown in Example 2-21.

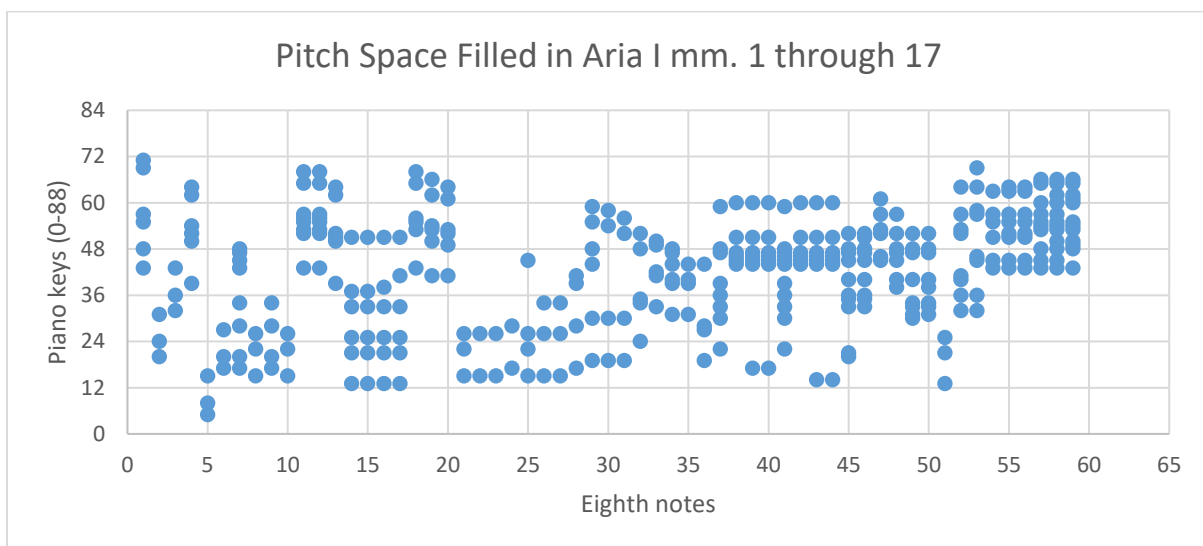
Example 2-21: <012> and <210> in measures 5, 9 to 10, 1 to 19

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano, illustrating specific pitch segments. The first system, starting at measure 5, shows a melodic line in the right hand with a red bracket labeled <012> spanning measures 5 and 6. The second system, starting at measure 9, shows a melodic line in the right hand with a red bracket labeled <012> spanning measures 9 and 10, and a red bracket labeled <210> spanning measures 11 and 12. The third system, starting at measure 16, shows a melodic line in the right hand with a red bracket labeled <012> spanning measures 16 and 17, and a red bracket labeled <210> spanning measures 18 and 19. The notation includes treble and bass staves, key signatures, and various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mf*.

When considering space filling throughout the entirety of Aria I, it becomes clear that there is a general trend toward compaction in pitch space used at the center of the movement. For the duration of the opening seventeen measures, there is a loose trend of less and less pitch space

being filled along with an increase in density towards m. 17. Chart 1 shows that the largest portion of pitch space is used in the first three measures of the movement. Compaction occurs and then levels off between mm. 11 through 15 (eighth notes 37 through 51 below), after which there is a dramatic closing up of pitch space and increased density of notes in mm. 16 to 17. (In the chart below, the downbeat of m. 16 is the fifty-fourth eighth note). Naturally, it follows that the process reverses until the entire first half has been repeated in retrograde.

Chart 2-1: Pitch space filled in mm. 1 through 17



## Overarching processes

Throughout the course of Aria I, there are several processes at work which are closely tied to the symmetrical form of the movement. As the music draws closer to the geographical center of the piece, mm. 17 and 18, the musical material evolves along the lines of texture, chord spacing, and the filling of pitch space.

As I mentioned earlier, there is a distinct textural change that happens during the course of mm. 5 to 7. In the opening of the movement, there is a very clear distinction between melody and accompaniment. Until m. 6, high-register melodic material in a single or doubled voice is complemented by lower-register three- and four-note chords. Then, beginning in m. 7, the lower voice initiates a syncopated ostinato over which a single-voiced melodic line is laid. It is only after m. 11 that the previously clear distinction between melody and accompaniment fades. Measures 11 and 12 present an explosive upward gesture balanced by single-note, low-register responses. After this point, from mm. 13 to 14, both upper and lower staves contain chords which compact increasingly. In mm. 17 and 18, the two hands play exactly the same thing: very dense and dissonant five-note chords. Amusingly, Here Fine has not bothered to notate the left hand, perhaps because of the trouble it took to notate the right. She merely writes in the lower staff, “left hand same as right one octave lower.” The manuscript is shown in Example 2-22.

Example 2-22: Manuscript of mm. 16 and 17



Alongside the gradual evolution of texture across the first half of Aria I, the spacing of chordal material also changes. After the chords in m. 6 expand the prototypical Chord 1, m. 7's syncopated accompaniment establishes interval 11 as a constant for the next two measures.

These two measures, curiously sparse when compared to the material that came before, mark a turning point in the movement. Beginning in m. 9, chords appear which have an unprecedented interval 1 between the top two voices. As the distinction between melody and accompaniment fades, chordal material gradually becomes denser as more chords appear with outer intervals smaller than 11. At the same time, chords accrete inner voices. Measures 17 and 18 represent the attainment of an apotheosis of density with each chord containing five closely spaced members doubled at the octave. Table 2 displays information about the number of chord members and chord interval content in each measure of the first half of Aria I.

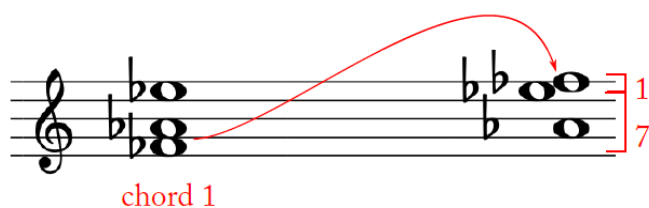
Table 2-2: Chord members, chord interval content in mm. 1 through 17

<b>Measure</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
Max. number of voices per chord in one staff	3	3	3	3	5	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	5	4	4	5
Chords containing interval 1 or 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	4	4	4	4	6
Chords with outer voices smaller than interval E	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	4	4	2	4	6

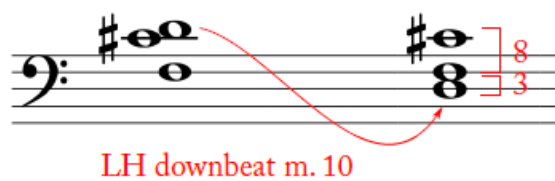
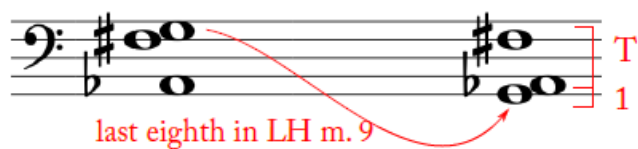
Glancing backward at the accompanimental chords of Aria I's opening, it is possible to identify links between them and ultra-dense chords of mm. 17 and 18. Taking the prototypical chord 1 from the opening and moving its lowest voice up one octave, we are left with a result very similar to the types of chords found after m. 9 (see Example 2-23). Performing the reverse operation on the three-voice lower staff chords from mm. 9 and 10, we find that the resultant chords bear a striking resemblance to the "family" of accompanimental chords found in mm. 1

through 6. This transformation is shown in Example 2-24. It is almost as though after the brief, sparse, interlude of mm. 7 and 8, the original accompanimental chords emerge again in a more compacted form.

Example 2-23: Transformation of Chord 1 to resemble a chord from m. 9



Example 2-24: Chords from mm. 9 and 10 transformed to resemble those at the opening





As the previous examples have demonstrated, Aria I is a movement in which a gradual process of evolution, and, more specifically, compaction occurs in correspondence with a structurally symmetrical layout. The trend of change is central to this movement not only in direct relation to its form, but also on a larger level throughout the entire movement. Remarkably, the fact that the second half of the movement is a repetition of the first half in retrograde is not immediately apparent during a first hearing. Due to some differences in dynamic and expressive markings in the second half of the movement, the music continues to evolve despite essentially repeating itself note-for-note.

Table 3, below, shows dynamic and expressive indications in analogous measures in each half of the movement. What is clear at first glance is that there is very little correspondence between them. For example, the dramatic *forte* statement of the opening is cut down a level when it is heard at the end of the movement. At the same time, more emphasis is given to the descending material from m. 6 when it is heard in an ascending form in m. 29. This crescendo marks the *forte* downbeat of m. 30 as an arrival point, whereas the same material in m. 5 did not create such a tremendous impact. Despite these differences in dynamics, it is important to note that grace notes, while all still present, are positioned differently in the second half of the movement. Instead of falling off from primary notes when heard in retrograde, they are “reassigned” and still lead gestures as they do in the first half, preserving the sweeping motion so characteristic of this movement.

Table 2-3: Dynamics in both halves of Aria I

First half measure	Dynamic and expressive indications	Corresponding second half measure	
1	forte	34	mezzo-forte
2		33	
3		32	
4		31	
5		30	forte
6		29	Two crescendos, mezzo-forte
7	meno forte	28	
8	piano	27	piano
9	mezzo-forte	26	diminuendo
10		25	
11	crescendo to forte	24	
12		23	
13		22	
14		21	
15	accents on beats 2 and 3	20	
16		19	
17		18	

Furthermore, evident in any performance would be slight interpretive differences between halves of the movement because of the different orientation of musical elements. A sensitive performer would likely vary micro-level timing and dynamic shaping in the second half of the movement rather than adhere rigidly to whatever was done in the first half. For example, measure 6, a descending line, would probably be performed in diminuendo while the corresponding m. 29 would probably be performed in crescendo even if it were not already asked for by the composer. Additionally, there are several rhythms that may be executed slightly differently in retrograde. Take for example the dotted eighth note followed by the sixteenth note in m. 5 and its retrograde in m. 30. Most likely, the pianist would shorten the sixteenth note in m. 5 in order to sharpen the prime form of the rhythm, yet would lengthen it in m. 30 in order to affirm the less common rhythmic pattern of sixteenth followed by dotted eighth.

The brief coda at the end of *Aria I* appropriates the grace note figure used so frequently throughout the movement and repeats it in diminuendo to draw the movement to a modest close. Perhaps what makes *Aria I*'s second half so convincingly different is the fact that the musical material is reimagined so effectively. Fine's treatment of the second half material is interesting because it implies that this musical material is plastic rather than firmly belonging to a single mood or expressive treatment. The expressive differences in the second half of the movement demonstrate that the evolution occurring over the course of the first half was not simply undone by its repetition in retrograde. Instead, gradual changes occur on a subtle level throughout the movement, and, rather than returning to exactly where it began, the music arrives somewhere very different from where it began.

## **Chapter 3 : Toccata II and Aria II**

### **Toccata II Analysis**

#### **Form and theme characteristics**

Toccata II is jaunty and fast-paced, with an irregular meter. Its texture and sections are more varied than Toccata I, but its basic premise is the same: a fixed series of pitches is repeated and manipulated over the course of five large-scale phrases. Toccata II's theme consists of a collection of pitches that move in parallel, mostly conjunct motion. The theme can be thought of as a stepwise melody which is consistently doubled at the octave and frequently doubled at ics 1, 3, and 4. Throughout the movement, the theme is presented in several different ways: in a melody-and-accompaniment configuration with the principal melody set in relief against a chordal texture comprised of its doublings, as a single line, and as a chordal texture only. Beyond Fine's manipulations of this theme, the most fascinating aspect of Toccata II is its tendency toward increased complexity and imbalance at both the end of the theme and the end of the movement. This happens in the dimension of rhythm, texture, symmetry, and pitch space.

Like Toccata I, this movement consists of five statements of the theme, explained below in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Toccata II Formal Layout

Theme/Phrase I: mm. 1 through 11	Theme. Melody in relief in upper voice against chordal texture.
Phrase 2: mm. 12 through 22	Theme repeated. Melody and chordal texture trade registers. Ends with chordal material in both hands.
Phrase 3: mm. 23 through 36	Texture and tempo change. Theme is intact but reduced to a single voice and some pitches are omitted. Thematic pitches doubled at i9 below.
Phrase 4: mm. 37 through 49	Texture and tempo change. Melody and chordal texture in retrograde.
Phrase 5: mm. 50 through 61	Two statements of the theme presented simultaneously in canon. Chordal texture only.
Coda: m. 62	Slower, <i>piano</i> reiteration of opening bar.

### Developmental techniques

Phrases 1 and the virtually identical Phrase 2 constitute the initial statements of the theme. In Phrase 2, the melody and accompaniment trade positions, and the isolated melody is played in a lower register by the pianist's left hand. Starting in m. 16, only the chordal accompaniment – the melody still embedded within – remains, and it is played by both hands. In Phrase 3, Fine reduces the texture to two voices, consistently an interval 9 apart for the duration of the phrase. The theme is only present within the upper voice, and some pitches are omitted. Phrase 4 includes another tempo change, this time with the indications *meno mosso* and *cantabile*. Here, the theme is presented in the melody-and-accompaniment configuration of the opening, but in retrograde. Phrase 5 presents two simultaneous statements of the theme in canon in chordal form only. The one-measure coda quotes the opening measure of the movement, indicated *meno mosso* and *piano*.

One of Toccata II's distinguishing features is the relative flexibility with which Fine treats its theme. While Phrases 1 and 2 of Toccata II are basically identical, the theme takes a slightly different form in Phrases 3 and 4, and the strength with which the principal melody is heard varies in each of these.

In Phrase 3, the entire theme is reduced to a single line and doubled at interval 9 in the lower staff. Here, notes drawn from what was previously the accompanimental chords are interposed between melodic pitches. Example 3-1 compares Phrases 1 and 3. Every pitch in the upper staff of Phrase 3 can be found at least once in a corresponding measure of Phrase 1, but not every pitch of the theme can be found in Phrase 3. The result of this is a section that sounds so different from the opening it could easily be mistaken for new material. While the performer may initially be tempted to emphasize the melodic pitches in order to show this phrase's relationship to the theme, Fine's indications here suggest that the opposite is desired; this phrase should camouflage rather than exhibit the theme.

Example 3-1: Relationship between theme and Phrase 3

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled with measure numbers 1 and 23, spans measures 1 to 23. It features a piano (p) dynamic and includes the instruction "con pedale". A tempo change to "Poco più mosso" is indicated at measure 138. The second system, labeled with measure numbers 8 and 32, spans measures 8 to 32. It includes a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and the instruction "p sub. legato". Red dashed lines and red circles are used throughout the score to highlight specific musical motifs and their transformations across the systems.

In Phrase 4, Fine rearranges the theme into the same melody-accompaniment configuration as in Phrase 1 but presents it in retrograde (see Example 3-2). She indicates another tempo change, this time with the indications *meno mosso* and *cantabile*. As she did in Aria I, she modifies the theme's articulation: slurs, staccato indications, and tenuto markings appear where they did not before. The afterbeats are situated in metrically stronger positions, giving the chordal texture the effect of strong single bass notes followed by metrically weaker chords. In Phrase 4, the principal melody shines: it is again set in relief, enhanced with expressive markings, and supported by a very differently organized chordal texture. Here, the performer could amplify the effect of these differences by exaggerating the change of tempo and embracing a freer, more lilting rhythmic approach.

Example 3-2: Beginning of Phrase 4 (mm. 37 through 41)

Meno mosso ♩ = 96

37

*mf, cantabile*

### Characteristics of harmony and pitch collections

Taking a closer look at the first statement of the theme, we can observe that the melody, and by extension, the entire theme, consists largely of stepwise material. Exclusive of repetition, the melodic pitches in mm. 1 through 4 (I will refer to this as segment 1) are the first five pitches of the ascending E major scale: E, F-sharp, G-sharp, A, B. This sequence of five pitches, (segment 2) shown in Example 3-3, repeats at T4I in mm. 5 through 7: C, B-flat, A-flat, G, F.



Measures 8 through 11 present shorter, imitative fragments of this melody. Fine's choice of the E major scale is a subtle example of her nods to tonality throughout *Toccatas and Arias*. Further, the pairing of the E major scale and its inversion at T<sub>4</sub>I acknowledges the anatomy of the piano keyboard: the inversion that maps E onto C maps all of the white keys onto each other and the black keys onto each other.

### Example 3-3: Melody in Phrase 1

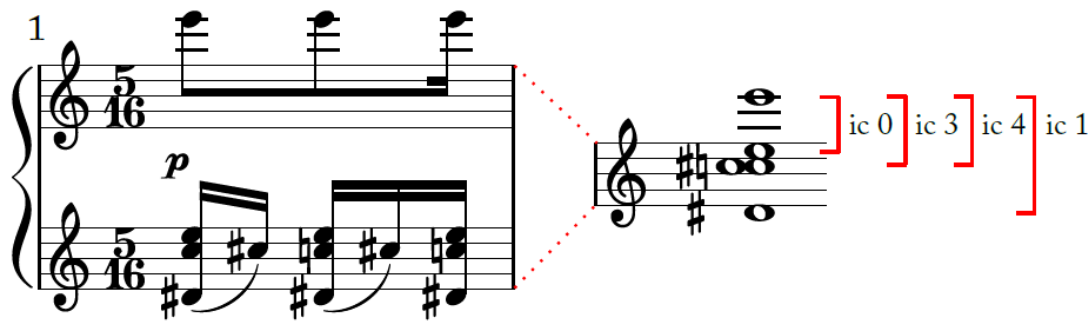
segment 1

segment 2

As the entire theme consists of a principal melody and its doublings, movement between parts is largely parallel. However, the chordal texture formed by the doublings also contains some single pitches. Melodic values of an eighth note are accompanied by two sixteenth notes in the accompaniment; a chord and a single-note afterbeat. Melodic sixteenth notes are accompanied by chords only.

The most typical doubling of the melody is at the octave and at ics 1, 3, and 4. It follows that the principal chords' outer voices nearly always form an ic 1. A typical doubling of the melody is shown in Example 3-4.

Example 3-4: Typical doublings found in the theme



The vertical makeup of the melodic doublings is quite consistent throughout Toccata II. The set classes most often formed by the doublings of the melody are (0134) and (0145). Beyond these, there are instances of (0236), (0147), and (0125), and, less commonly, (0136), (0135), and (0347). Most of these set classes are close in both interval class content as well as in voice leading space. Interval classes 1, 3, and 4 are well represented throughout, a fact which lends this movement its pervasive simultaneous major/minor sound.

Inversional relationships are manifested on more than one level in the theme of Toccata II. The first two melodic segments are inversionally related in pitch class space (see Example 3-3, which diagrams mm. 1 to 4 and mm. 5 to 8). Further, many of the melodic tones are supported by transpositionally related members of set classes (0134) and (0145), which are inversionally symmetrical. Example 3-5 is a reduction of the theme in which each melodic pitch is represented by a whole note and the makeup of its accompanying harmonies by solid note heads. Instances of pitch class inversional symmetry in the accompanying sets are indicated when present. Interestingly, instances of symmetrical accompanying harmonies dwindle as the theme nears its conclusion. This is a symptom of Toccata II's drive towards imbalance and complexity, an idea I will explore shortly.

Example 3-5: Instances of pitch class inversive symmetry in melody and its doublings

m. 1 (melodic segment 1)

(0134) (0134) (0134) (0134)

$I_4$   $I_2$   $I_6$   $I_2$

5 (melodic segment 2)

(0145) (0145) (0145)

$I_1$   $I_9$   $I_{11}$

8 (melodic fragments)

(0145)

$I_7$

10

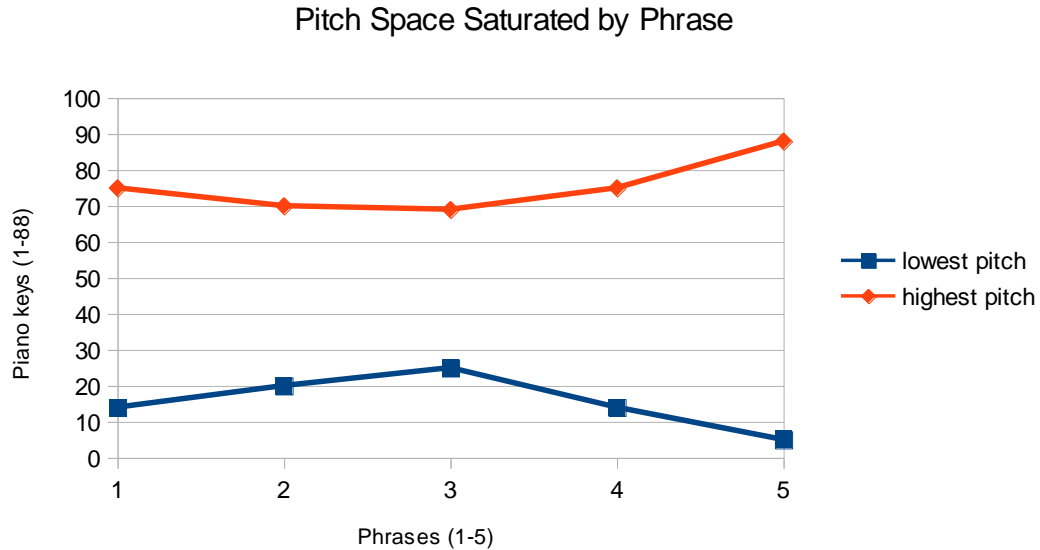
11

## Space filling

Throughout Toccata II, pitch and pitch class space is saturated in accordance with the progression of musical ideas. Considering the melody in isolation, pitch class space is almost completely saturated over the course of the first two melodic segments (mm. 1 through 7). Curiously, pitch class 2 is omitted from the melody entirely, though it does occur in the accompanying harmonies. The theme's non-melodic pitches saturate the aggregate over the course of the first melodic segment, mm. 1 through 4. Setting aside the omission of pitch class 2, the fact of total pitch-class saturation over the course of the first melodic segment, along with the other ways in which it is important, privileges it as a jumping off point for the rest of the movement.

Over the course of the movement, pitch space saturation fluctuates in a positive correlation with density of texture. Phrase 1 presents the isolated single-note principal melody against the denser chordal texture. Phrase 2 repeats Phrase 1, but midway through, the chordal texture dominates, increasing the density of notes present and pitch space covered in the phrase. Phrase 3's texture thins out dramatically as the theme is reduced to a single voice and doubled only once. Phrase 4's texture matches that of Phrase 1. In Phrase 5, with two simultaneous presentations of the theme in canon, the musical material is spread over a larger range of the keyboard. This is also the most complex material in the movement: The already irregular meter and groupings of the theme throw this final section into disarray, creating a dense, jumbled climax. Thus, throughout Toccata II, texture, pitch space saturation, and complexity fluctuate, but both reach an unprecedented peak in Phrase 5. A representation of pitch space used in each phrase is diagrammed in Example 3-6. The graph below displays the outer registral boundaries of each phrase. The music saturates nearly all of the pitches between the registral boundaries.

### Example 3-6: Pitch space saturated across phrases in Toccata II



### Overarching processes

The pervasive trend in Toccata II is that of a drive towards increased complexity and imbalance along with an expansion of saturated pitch space. This happens within the theme itself as well as on the larger levels of phrases and the entire movement.

Within the theme, there is a rhythmic acceleration in the principal melody that happens concurrently with an increase in density in the chordal texture. This is most clearly observed in Phrase 1 by breaking the melody into sections. The two longest segments, from mm. 1 to 4 and 5 to 7, each begin with a repeated note in the rhythm eighth-eighth-sixteenth and five pitches of scalar material. The following measures are imitative fragments of these first segments: Measures 7 and 8 imitate the opening with a repeated B and steps upward. Measures 10 and 11 both begin like the previous segments with repeated notes and stepwise motion. However, in both of these cases, the repeated notes are fewer in number and the motion upward happens more

quickly. In sum, there is a gradual shortening of the initial melodic unit and an acceleration of musical events within it. This acceleration is diagrammed in Example 3-7.

As the chordal texture echoes the behavior of the melody, it becomes texturally denser in mm. 10 and 11. Recalling that each eighth note melodic tone was supported by two sixteenth notes in the chordal texture (a chord and a single-note afterbeat), sixteenth notes in the melody are accompanied by chords only as in the second half of m. 10. Measure 11 as well includes fewer afterbeats and a fourth pitch is added to its final chords. The chordal texture accelerates and increases in complexity in tandem with the melody as shown in Example 3-7.

Example 3-7: Rhythmic acceleration in theme and increasing complexity of chordal texture

The musical score is divided into five segments, illustrating rhythmic acceleration and increasing complexity of the chordal texture:

- segment 1** (measures 1-5): The melody begins with a half note, followed by eighth notes. The chordal texture consists of chords and single-note afterbeats. A red arrow labeled "rhythmic acceleration" points downwards from this segment.
- segment 2** (measures 6-7): The melody continues with eighth notes. The chordal texture becomes denser, with chords only. A red arrow labeled "rhythmic acceleration" points downwards from this segment.
- fragments** (measures 9-10): The melody continues with eighth notes. The chordal texture becomes denser, with chords only. A red arrow labeled "rhythmic acceleration" points downwards from this segment.
- 11** (measure 11): The melody continues with eighth notes. The chordal texture becomes denser, with chords only. A red arrow labeled "rhythmic acceleration" points downwards from this segment.
- 12** (measure 12): The melody continues with eighth notes. The chordal texture becomes denser, with chords only. A red arrow labeled "rhythmic acceleration" points downwards from this segment.

Additional annotations on the right side of the score indicate "more chord members" and "fewer afterbeats" with red arrows pointing to the chordal texture in measures 11 and 12.

On a similarly local level, the afterbeats of each chord change subtly throughout the course of the theme. This is summarized in Example 3-8. For roughly the first half of the theme, the afterbeat is an interval 1 away from the middle voice of the principal chord. After m. 6, it begins deviating from its previous behavior by coming off of the lower voice of the principal chord. Simultaneously, the intervallic distance between afterbeats and principal chords grows. This confirms the trend of increasing complexity towards the end of the theme, as well as an increased coverage of pitch space as the intervals formed between afterbeats and principal chords grow.

Example 3-8: Behavior of afterbeats

Toccata II

Allegretto  $\text{♩} = 120$

The musical score for Toccata II, Allegretto, is presented in three systems. The piano part is in 4/6 time, and the afterbeat part is in 3/4 time. The afterbeat part is marked 'con pedale' and 'p'. The score includes intervallic analysis for the afterbeat's closest voice and its distance from the principal chord's closest voice.

Measure	Afterbeat's closest voice	Distance from closest voice
1	middle	i 1
2	middle	i 1, i 0
3	middle	i 1
4	middle	i 1
5	upper	i 2
6	middle	i 1
7	lower	i 7, i 6
8	middle	i 1
9	lower	i 7
10	middle	i 1
11	lower	i 2
12	lower	i 1, i 3, i 5
13	lower	i 4
14	lower	i 10, i 7

Just as rhythm, texture, and the behavior of afterbeats develops throughout the course of the theme, so do its accompanying harmonies. In segments 1 and 2 of the theme, most of the melodic pitches are supported by a member of the inversionally symmetrical set classes (0134) and (0145). In the first melodic fragment (mm. 8 and 9), only one of the melodic pitches is supported by inversionally symmetrical set classes (with near-symmetry under two other melodic pitches), while in the final fragments (m. 10 and m. 11), none are. In fact, in the final fragment (m. 11), the melodic pitches are supported by primarily chromatic material incorporating a single outlying pitch which throws off the balance of the set. This progression from greater to less frequency of pitch class inversional symmetry is shown in Example 3-9.



# Example 3-9: Increasing inversive imbalance in accompanying harmonies in theme

m. 1 (melodic segment 1)

(0134)  $I_4$  (0134)  $I_2$  (0134)  $I_6$  (0134)  $I_2$

5 (melodic segment 2)

(0134)  $I_4$  (0145)  $I_1$  (0145)  $I_9$  (0145)  $I_{11}$

outlier if  $I_1$   
tlier if  $I_4$

8 (melodic fragments)

(0123)  $I_7$  (012)  $I_2$  (0145)  $I_7$

10

11

(0123)  $I_7$

In sum, Toccata II is ruled by a stepwise principal melody and its doublings. Its harmonic makeup is extremely cohesive, while at the same time its theme is treated with more flexibility than the themes in most of the rest of *Toccatas and Arias*. An increase in complexity and a drive towards imbalance on several levels in the theme itself are echoed on a larger level with the final phrase's climactic canon.

## **Aria II Analysis**

The two arias in *Toccatas and Arias* share a great deal in their character. In Aria II, a languorous, quasi-parlando melody is grounded by rhythmically regular rolled chords. The melody here is heavily embellished, and Fine incorporates a great deal of free passagework and unaccompanied melody. Aria II's harmonies are, on the whole, less harshly dissonant than those of Aria I. As she did in Toccata II, here Fine relies heavily on doublings at ics 3 and 4. She also frequently uses several chords to which these intervals are integral, among them, the minor seventh and half diminished seventh chords. Like every other movement of *Toccatas and Arias*, Aria II has a clear formal layout, and, much like Toccata I in particular, it contains some very interesting references to tonality.

## **Form and theme characteristics**

The eight-measure theme of Aria II consists of three sub-phrases. Considering the first sub-phrase as a prototype, the second two sub-phrases – as well as the rest of the sub-phrases throughout the movement – can be understood as variations of it. Each sub-phrase is in the most basic terms a melody accompanied by chords or a lower line which then dissolves into rapid passage work. Sub-phrase a spans mm. 1 through 3, commencing with two A's embellished with

thirty-second note quasi-neighbor figures. After a brief visit to F-sharp in m. 2, the thirty-second notes in m. 3 fall downwards, giving this bar a desinential effect and ushering in sub-phrase b in m. 4. In imitation of the opening, here the pitch F is decorated and subsequently followed by a glissando and a free descending passage in the right hand. Measure 7, the beginning of sub-phrase c, again imitates the opening with a neighbor figure decorating C-sharp. An ascent followed by another glissando downward leads into the second statement of the theme in m. 9.

Example 3-10 diagrams the structure of Aria II's theme.

Example 3-10: Aria II theme structure

Theme

sub-phrase a

sub-phrase b

sub-phrase c

The musical score is written for piano in 2/4 time. It is divided into three systems, each representing a different sub-phrase of the theme. The first system, labeled 'Theme' and 'sub-phrase a', contains measures 1 through 3. It begins with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system, labeled 'sub-phrase b', contains measures 4 through 7. It starts with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and includes a glissando in measure 6. The third system, labeled 'sub-phrase c', contains measures 8 through 11. It begins with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and includes a 'tempo giusto' marking. The score is annotated with various musical symbols, including slurs, accents, and dynamic markings, to indicate phrasing and performance instructions. Red vertical lines are used to delineate the boundaries of the three sub-phrases.

## Developmental techniques

Throughout *Aria II*, Fine makes use of retrograde and inversion to develop the eight-measure theme. Table 2 diagrams statements of the theme throughout the movement. Within each phrase, I have labeled sub-phrases with a number and a letter. The number indicates the larger phrase to which a sub-phrase belongs (numbers are 1 through 4), and the letter (a, b, or c) corresponds to the three sub-phrases within the phrase. In Phrase 4, the theme is presented in retrograde, so it follows that the sub-phrases appear in reverse-alphabetical order.

Table 3-2: *Aria II* formal layout

<b>Eight measure theme and its repetitions</b>	<b>Locations of sub-phrases</b>	<b>Differences from theme</b>
Theme/Phrase 1: mm. 1-8	Sub-phrase 1a: mm. 1-3 Sub-phrase 1b: mm. 4-6 Sub-phrase 1c: mm. 7-8	
Phrase 2: mm. 9-17	Sub-phrase 2a: mm. 9-11 Sub-phrase 2b: mm. 12-15 Sub-phrase 2c: mm. 16-17	2b: In m. 11 hands switch parts; glissando replaced with rising line doubled at ic 3. 2c: “voice exchange” in m. 17; glissando replaced with fully notated chromatic rising line.
Phrase 3: mm. 18-25 (Theme in inversion)	Sub-phrase 3a: mm. 18-20 Sub-phrase 3b: mm. 21-23 Sub-phrase 3c: mm. 24-25	3c: “voice exchange” in m. 24.
Phrase 4: mm. 26-33 (Theme in retrograde)	Sub-phrase 4c: mm. 26-27 Sub-phrase 4b: mm. 28-30 Sub-phrase 4a: mm. 31-33	

Phrase 1 presents the theme while Phrase 2 (mm. 9 to 17) varies it slightly. Here, Fine inverts the positions of the melody and accompaniment, though the melody remains in the pianist’s right hand. In m. 11, the hands perform what Leslie Jones dubs a “voice exchange,”<sup>49</sup> though it is better likened to invertible counterpoint. The right hand takes the pitches that

<sup>49</sup> Jones, “The Solo Piano Music of Vivian Fine,” 248.

previously belonged to the left hand in m. 3, while the left hand takes what had belonged to the right. This is shown in Example 3-11. In the last beat of m. 13 (in sub-phrase 2b) Fine replaces the expected glissando with a different kind of interlude. With the two voices an interval 3 and then 4 apart, she spins out a tortuous rising line composed primarily of half steps.<sup>50</sup> This material is comprised of virtually the same pitch classes as the analogous passage found in sub-phrase 1b (see Example 3-10).<sup>51</sup> This is shown in Example 3-12. After a breath mark, sub-phrase 2c begins in m. 16. It is a replica of sub-phrase 1c, however, in m. 17, the two voices perform another “voice exchange;” rather than directly repeating mm. 7 and 8, the hands trade parts as the voices trade registers. Replacing the expected glissando is a rising chromatic run at the end of m. 17. This is shown in Example 3-13.

Example 3-11: "Voice exchange" between hands. Comparison of m. 3 with m. 11

Theme/Phrase 1

Andante ♩ = 54

1

*f*

RH E to A

LH E-flat to C

Phrase 2

9

*f, cantabile*

*mf*

RH E to C

LH E-flat to A

<sup>50</sup> There is an error in the manuscript in m. 14. Fine neglects to change the time signature from 4/4 to 3/4, but the notation clearly indicates 3/4.

<sup>51</sup> The one exception to this is pitch class 5 which appears in mm. 14 through 15 but not in the analogous m. 6 in Phrase 1.

Example 3-12: Comparison of analogous passages found in mm. 5 through 6 and 13 through 15

(sub-phrase 1b)

5

(sub-phrase 2b)

13

Example 3-13: "Voice exchange" in mm. 16 through 17 compared against mm. 7 and 8

sub-phrase 1c

7

tempo giusto

sub-phrase 2c

16

"voice exchange" between hands

The third statement of the theme, Phrase 3, begins in m. 18. Here, the melody is doubled at the octave and presented at T<sub>6</sub>I, and its inversive axis is A<sub>5</sub>. The accompaniment is not inverted. In sub-phrase 3c (m. 24), the melody is transposed up by an octave and resumed by the

right hand. Here, as in m. 18, the hands perform another “voice exchange,” diagrammed in Example 3-14. The pitch G in the middle of m. 24 belongs to both voices: it belongs to the upper voice (which is an inversion of the original melody) and it belongs to the lower voice which carries on with its original pitches. The final statement of the theme, mm. 26 through 33, presents the theme in retrograde.

Example 3-14: "Voice exchange" in m. 24

sub-phrase 1c

sub-phrase 3c

"voice exchange" between hands

## Space filling

As in Toccata II, Fine's filling of the aggregate throughout the course of the theme is gradual and deliberate. Considering the melody alone, the aggregate is filled repeatedly over the course of each of the four larger phrases of Aria II. Interestingly, several pitches are avoided for most of the theme and only appear in the free, unaccompanied, sections at the theme's conclusion. For example, before m. 6, the melody in Phrase 1 lacks pitch classes 2 and 3.

Similarly, these pitch classes are absent from the melody prior to the analogous measures in Phrase 2, mm. 14 and 15.

Taking into account both hands' parts in the theme, the aggregate is basically filled over the course of each sub-phrase. Curiously, as in Toccata II, pitch class 2 is entirely absent from the first sub-phrase (mm. 1 to 3) and is the final pitch to appear in sub-phrase b (mm. 4 to 6).

### **Characteristics of harmonies and pitch collections**

As I stated earlier, Aria II incorporates fewer harsh dissonances than the preceding movements in the piece. Most line doublings occur at ics 3 and 4, and the most frequently encountered chords are comprised heavily of ics 3, 4, and 5. Harmonic interval 5s are particularly scarce throughout *Toccatas and Arias*, but they appear frequently in this movement. The accompanying chords in Aria II form an easily isolated component of the movement's texture. Taking a closer look at the accompanying chords found in the theme, we see several set classes recurring. Example 3-15 labels them.



### Example 3-15: Tetrachords in the theme

Andante ♩ = 54

*f*

(0258) (0358) (0258) (0236)

4

(0258) (0258) (0258) (0237) (0258)

*mf* *f a piacere*

tempo giusto

(0237) (0123) (0123)

More than half of the tetrachords found in the theme belong to the set class (0258), though the closely related (0358) also appears. These larger set classes incorporate three types of seventh chords; (0258) is manifested here as both half-diminished and dominant seventh chords (or in  $T_n$  and  $T_{nI}$  forms), while (0358) appears as a minor seventh chord. (0358) is a symmetrical set class, so it only appears in this form. Some of the chords are simple pitch space transitions, for example the two four-note chords in the lower staff in m. 4 and the lower staff chords sounding on the downbeat of m. 1 and the third beat of m. 5. Fine's liberal use of these harmonies affords several moments of almost sweet-sounding consonance. Further, chords of this sort are unprecedented in *Toccatas and Arias*, as Fine tends to avoid triadically based harmonies (with the obvious exception of Toccata III, to be visited shortly). A look at the interval class vectors of these four set classes reveals a high incidence among these chords of ics 3, 4, and 5.

Table 3-3: Interval class vectors of most frequently used tetrachords

	<b><u>1</u></b>	<b><u>2</u></b>	<b><u>3</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>	<b><u>6</u></b>
(0258)	0	1	2	1	1	1
(0358)	0	1	2	1	2	0
(0236)	1	1	2	1	0	1
(0237)	1	1	1	1	2	0

The set classes comprising the remaining chords of the first two sub-phrases of the theme, (0236) and (0237) share some interval content with (0258) and (0358), but they incorporate more traditionally dissonant intervals. In fact, the accompanying harmonies become more closely compacted – and thus more dissonant – as the phrase approaches a climax, a point I will touch upon in my discussion of overarching processes.

### **Overarching processes**

Aria II's ornate melodic line is quite varied, though it incorporates several recurring contours. Generally, the movement's gestures rise and fall great distances over the span of only a few measures. These registral swings, when examined along with attendant phenomena in the realm of rhythm, texture, and harmony, reveal that Aria II has at its heart a phenomenon of frustrated climaxes. For example, m. 5's glissando, a sudden registral upheaval, is gradually dissipated by the descending passage in m. 6. In mm. 22 through 23, where the theme is heard in inversion, this effect is reversed: The precipitous registral drop caused by the downward glissando in m. 22 is cancelled by the slowly rising line in m. 23. These two frustrated climaxes are displayed in Example 3-16.

### Example 3-16: Two frustrated registral climaxes

The image displays two musical systems from a piano score. The first system, starting at measure 5, shows a right-hand melody that rises in pitch and density, marked with *mf* and *f*. A red bracket labeled 'registral upheaval' spans measures 6 and 7, and another red bracket labeled 'dissipation' spans measures 7 and 8. The second system, starting at measure 22, shows a similar rising melodic line, marked with *f*. A red bracket labeled 'registral upheaval' spans measures 23 and 24, and another red bracket labeled 'dissipation' spans measures 24 and 25. Both systems feature a trill and a glissando downward in the right hand.

Measures 7 and 8 build towards a climax more gradually and in several dimensions simultaneously. Here, a rising melodic line is intensified by shrinking rhythmic values and a higher density of pitches. Duplets lead to triplets in m. 7, leading to quadruplet, then quintuplet, sixteenth notes in m. 8. The left hand in m. 8, as though it cannot sustain the pressure of the rhythmic acceleration, compacts down to cluster chords before both hands perform a trill and a glissando downward. In a similar though less dramatic fashion, the rising line and momentum built up over the course of mm. 13 through 15 is abruptly cut off by the breath mark in m. 16. These two frustrated climaxes are diagrammed in Example 3-17.

Example 3-17: Two climaxes incorporating registral, rhythmic, and intervallic dimensions

The image displays a musical score for two climaxes. The first climax, starting at measure 7, is marked 'tempo giusto' and includes annotations for 'registral climb', 'rhythmic acceleration', and 'smaller intervals'. The second climax, starting at measure 13, is marked 'cresc. 6' and includes annotations for 'registral climb', 'rhythmic acceleration', and 'metric acceleration'. Red arrows point to the specific musical features corresponding to these dimensions.

Another integral feature of Aria II is its subtle focus around the pitch classes A, E, and C-sharp. These pitch classes are emphasized in various ways that give them a privileged status in the movement; they are repeated more than most and are placed in strategically important positions rhythmic, registrally, and structurally throughout the movement.

The melody in the first three measures of Aria II has at its boundaries the pitches A and E, and a descent from A to E occurs on two levels. The opening A in m. 1 descends to the E at the end of m. 2. This descent occurs again more quickly over the course of m. 3. The initial

descent from A to E fills pitch classes 9, 7, 6, and 4. In m. 3 the gaps are filled as the melody covers 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, and 4. An overarching descent occurs over the course of the three measures. These descents are shown in Example 3-18.

Example 3-18: Two levels of descent from A to E

overarching descent:  
A - E

initial descent:  
A - G - F# - E

second descent:  
A - Aflat - G - Gflat - F - E

Examining Phrase 1 as a whole, the pitches A, E, and C-sharp stand out structurally. Subphrase a begins on A and concludes on E. The glissando towards the end of subphrase b emphasizes E as its beginning and end points. Subphrase c begins on C-sharp and rises to a high A before the entire series repeats with the onset of Phrase 2 in m. 9. These privileged pitches are labeled in Example 3-19.

Example 3-19: Prominent instances of A, C-sharp, and E in the theme

Theme  
sub-phrase 1

sub-phrase 2

sub-phrase 3

Considering the relationships between phrases via transposition, inversion, and retrograde, these three pitches receive a great deal of emphasis throughout the movement. This triadic outlining is an excellent example of the ways in which Fine incorporates tonal reference into *Toccatas and Arias*. As Toccata I centered on C and G, so here Aria II uses as its structural pillars repetitions of triad members.

Throughout Aria II, Fine makes use of retrograde and inversion in ways that impact the operation of the entire movement. As Toccata I and Aria I concluded with a retrograde of the theme, in Aria II as well, the movement closes with a retrograde of its opening. As in the other movements, this bestows the end of the movement with an implication of undoing or neutralizing progress, an idea that is reflected in Aria II's many frustrated climaxes.

Perhaps more fascinating though is Fine's use of inversion on several levels. During Aria II's several "voice exchanges," musical material is inverted both registrally and in terms of the

pianist's hands. Similarly, the melody and accompaniment trade registers in Phrase 2; whereas throughout the majority of the movement, the melody appeared in a higher register than the accompaniment, here their roles are reversed. Finally, in Phrase 3, Fine imposes a pitch inversion onto the melody. Interestingly, as mentioned earlier, the accompaniment is unaffected by this.

Fine's use of retrograde and inversion highlight the highly plastic nature of her musical material as well as affirm the independence of its parts. In *Aria II* as in much of *Toccatas and Arias*, themes and their components are used as building blocks, continuously being repurposed, re-examined, and transformed throughout each movement.

## Chapter 4 : Toccata III

### Form and Theme Characteristics

Toccata III, the fifth and final movement of *Toccatas and Arias*, is a bright and lively end to the set. Toccata III's texture is strictly chordal and is composed almost entirely of major and minor triads which flit by quickly and with no immediately discernible harmonic logic. However, the resounding C major triad at the conclusion of the piece pays tribute to Fine's wit and the tonal allusions present throughout *Toccatas and Arias*. Fine links the triads in Toccata III using a multitude of different transformations. These nearly always avoid common tones between adjacent triads. Toccata III incorporates virtually no rhythmic or textural variation, and there are only several brief moments of relatively sustained harmony. Despite this, the musical surface is quite varied, with frequent fluctuations of dynamic and register. Toccata III's most distinctive feature is a pronounced reliance on retrograde. Several small-scale instances of retrograde occur within sections of the movement, and the junctures between the three major phrases of the movement are all symmetrical.

Toccata III is comprised of three large phrases. The theme spans m. 1 through the middle of m. 27 and can be divided into three sub-sections. These are diagrammed in Example 4-1. In m. 11, the initial sequence of triads rises to a dynamic and registral high point, and a second strand of triads is introduced in the lower register. Fine's beams and stems up to this point have indicated a shared musical voice between the two staves, so the separate beaming and overlap of two chords here indicates the entrance of a distinct musical strand. The second sub-phrase begins in m. 11 in the lower staff. In m. 14, Fine introduces pedaled, repeated chords in both staves. Almost as though the succession of triads has gotten stuck in a loop, two chords are repeated for



six measures. The pattern is broken in m. 21, where the third sub-phrase can be identified beginning in the lower staff. This sub-phrase culminates in another looping passage before leading seamlessly into the second statement of the theme in the middle of m. 27.

Example 4-1: Sub-phrases within the theme labeled

**Toccata III**

Presto leggiero ♩ = 144

*sub-phrase 1* →

*sub-phrase 2* →

*sub-phrase 3* →

*phrase 2* →

The musical score for Toccata III is presented in four systems. The first system (measures 1-6) features a treble and bass staff with a tempo of Presto leggiero (♩ = 144). A red arrow labeled 'sub-phrase 1' spans measures 1-6. The second system (measures 7-12) continues the piece, with a red arrow labeled 'sub-phrase 2' spanning measures 7-12. The third system (measures 13-21) shows a change in the bass staff, with a red arrow labeled 'sub-phrase 3' spanning measures 13-21. The fourth system (measures 22-27) concludes the section, with a red arrow labeled 'phrase 2' spanning measures 22-27. Various musical notations are present, including dynamics (p, f, sfz, molto f, sub. p, dim.), articulation (sempre stacc.), and phrasing slurs.

The looping passages between mm. 15 through 20 and in m. 27 contrast with the rest of the material in Toccata III. As stated above, they afford a few isolated moments of relatively static harmony as well as create boundaries within the theme. They also provide a certain level of metric and registral stability, and they are the only material in the movement for which Fine indicates the use of the pedal. The stationary nature of these looping passages is perhaps a symptom of the larger trend of the movement, that of retrograde and repetition.

### Developmental Techniques

As stated earlier, Toccata III's theme spans mm. 1 through 27. Phrase 2 begins in m. 27 and presents the theme in retrograde. The juncture of this symmetry between the first two phrases is found between the fourth and fifth eighth notes of m. 27. Phrase 3 presents a long segment of the theme, but omits its end. Whereas the theme initially lasts nearly 27 bars, here the final 7 bars are absent. Curiously, the theme segment reproduced in Phrase 3 is not exactly the same as what is found in the beginning of the movement. While the top voice of each triad remains as it was in the theme, Fine alters the bottom dyad of the chord. The movement concludes with a grand pause and a coda containing a symmetrical sequence of chords.

Table 4-1: Toccata III Form

Theme/Phrase 1: mm. 1 through middle of 27	Theme.
Phrase 2: middle of m. 27 through m. 53	Theme in retrograde.
Phrase 3: mm. 54 through 74	Partial theme with altered chords. End of theme (mm. 21 through 27) is omitted.
Coda: mm. 75 through 86	Grand pause followed by coda. Coda consists of a passage in prime form and in retrograde.

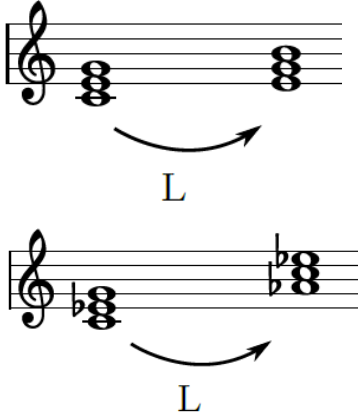
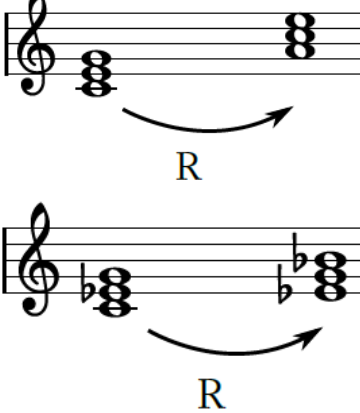
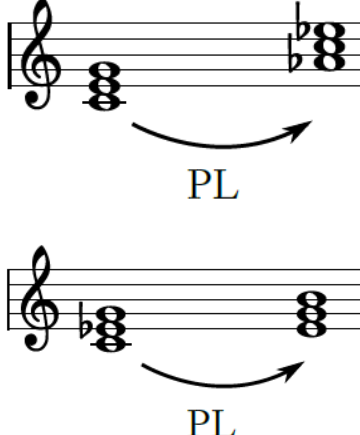
Phrase 3's altered chords are a subtle example of development in Toccata III. Measures 54 through 66, the measures containing these altered chords, correspond to the first two sub-phrases of the theme in prime form. From m. 66 until the onset of the coda (m. 76) the passage is unchanged from what is found in the opening.

Fine manipulates the triads in mm. 54 through 66 in several different ways. While the top voice of the triad never changes from what was set out in the theme, the middle and lower voices do. Most frequently, the middle voice is lowered by  $i1$  and the bottom by  $i2$ . Other transformations are as follows: The bottom dyad is expanded outward by an  $i1$  in both voices; the bottom pitch only moves down by  $i2$ ; and the bottom pitch only moves down by  $i1$ . These can be summarized using the familiar Neo-Riemannian transformations P, L, R and their combinations.<sup>52</sup> Table 4-2 provides a comprehensive list of the transformations found in between the two iterations of this passage along with descriptions of each. They are presented in order of most to least frequently occurring. Example 4-2 compares the first two sub-phrases of the theme in mm. 1 through 20 with the corresponding passage spanning mm. 54 through 72.

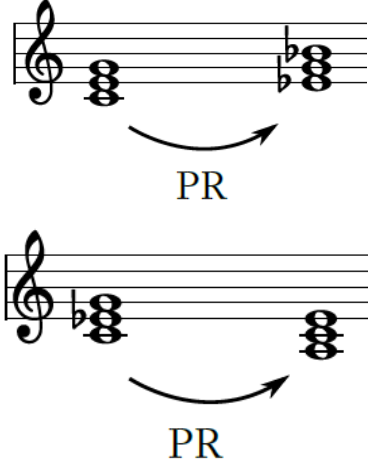
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<sup>52</sup> There is one triad between these passages that is not easily explained using one of these transformations. The C minor triad in m. 7 could map onto the corresponding triad in m. 61 (E major) at least two different ways: (PLP, RSP, for example).

Table 4-2: Descriptions, names, and occurrence of triad transformations between mm. 54 to 66<sup>53</sup>

Name and abbreviation	Example	Description
<b>L</b> (Leading-tone) The third of a major triad becomes the root of a minor triad and vice versa.		<b>Specific voice leading in Toccata III:</b> bottom pitch down by i1.
<b>R</b> (Relative) The root of a major triad becomes the third of a minor triad and vice versa.		<b>Specific voice leading in Toccata III:</b> Top note remains the same and bottom pitch moves down by i2.
<b>PL</b> (Parallel + Leading tone) <b>P:</b> Major and minor triad share the same root. <b>L:</b> The third of a major triad becomes the root of a minor triad and vice versa.		<b>Specific voice leading in Toccata III:</b> Top note remains the same and bottom dyad expands by i1 on either side.

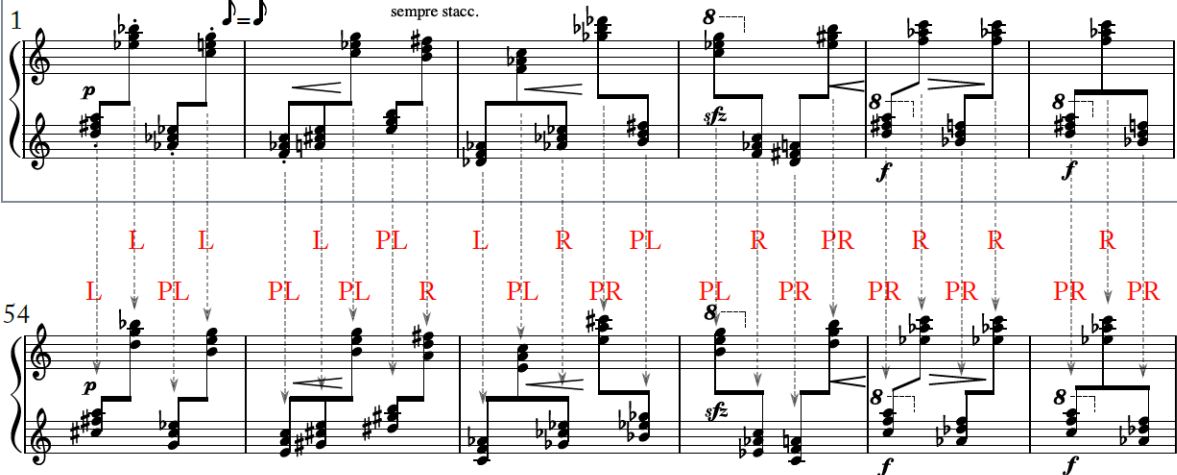
<sup>53</sup> Unless otherwise noted, definitions of each single transformation are taken from Straus, Joseph N. *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*. 4th ed. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2016.

<p><b>PR</b> (Parallel + Relative) <b>P:</b> Major and minor triad share the same root. <b>R:</b> The root of a major triad becomes the third of a minor triad and vice versa.</p>		<p><b>Specific voice leading in Toccata III:</b> Top note remains the same, middle pitch moves down by i1, and bottom pitch moves down by i2.</p>
<p><b>Id</b> (Identical)</p>		<p>Triad remains unchanged.<sup>54</sup></p>

Example 4-2: Comparison of sub-phrases 1 and 2 in the first statement of the theme (mm. 1 through 20) and in Phrase 3 (mm. 54 through 72).

Presto leggiero ♩ = 144

1 *sempre stacc.*



54

<sup>54</sup> The label *Id* is my own.

7

dim. *p* cresc. *f*

PR L PR PR PR PR PR PR L L PR R Id PL

60

dim. *p* cresc. *f*

PR PR PR PL PR PR PR R Id L R

13

*molto f* sub. *p*

Id Id Id etc.

66

*molto f* sub. *p*

Examining the occurrences of these transformations, a faint trend can be discerned: in the beginning of the passage, the more parsimonious transformations, L and PL, dominate, whereas towards the end, R and PR as well as D appear with more frequency.

## Characteristics of Harmony and Pitch Collections

Taking into account the spread of twenty-four possible major and minor triads, all but B-flat minor and F-sharp minor are present in the theme, with D major and F minor being the most frequently occurring by far. Leslie Jones asserts in her analysis of the movement that there is no rationale behind the succession of triads within each section of Toccata III.<sup>55</sup> In one sense, this is precisely correct, though the matter bears more careful consideration. Fine appears to have laid out a purposely haphazard series of triads in which each is only distantly related to its neighbor. Further, she embeds several symmetrical passages into the theme itself. The triads are connected by nearly twenty distinct transformations, though several transformations recur.

In examining the theme, several facts come to light which lend insight into the sequence of triads presented in the theme. For example, Fine reproduces several short strings of triads in retrograde, creating a number of brief symmetrical passages. The sequence B-flat major – F minor – D major is presented in retrograde over the course of mm. 5 to 6. There is a longer symmetrical sequence of triads spanning measures 6 through 10. The beginning of this series is the same D major triad at the center of the first. Both of these passages are symmetrical in pitch space. Finally, there are two brief episodes of symmetry in triad space across mm. 13 to 15. These instances of retrograde in the theme are shown in Example 4-3. Interestingly, Fine's manipulation of the triads in Phrase 3 (see Ex. 2) disrupts the symmetry of these retrograde passages. While the shorter symmetrical passage in mm. 58 through 60 is preserved, only the top line of the larger one spanning mm. 60 to 64 is still symmetrical.

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<sup>55</sup>Leslie Jones, "The Solo Piano Music of Vivian Fine," 249.

Example 4-3: Four instances of retrograde within the theme.

symmetry in pitch space


symmetry in triad space

The coda itself contains a series of triads that is immediately presented in retrograde. Here as in the opening of the movement, the musical line is shared between staves as indicated by shared beaming between the staves. At the hinge of the passage, the F major triad in m. 80, the two staves are beamed separately into distinct voices. The series of triads that began in m. 76 is reproduced in retrograde between the two voices with some overlap due to the rhythmic offsets between them. The coda is diagrammed below in Example 4-4.



#### Example 4-4: Retrograde passage within the coda.

C major  
C-sharp minor  
F major  
D-flat major  
A-flat major  
F-sharp minor  
E-flat major  
E minor  
A-flat major  
F major



76

*Sempre*

## Transformations between adjacent triads

A closer look at pitch class content from triad to triad reveals that there is a striking lack of common tones between adjacent triads. Example 4-5, in which common tones between adjacent triads are labeled, illustrates this: Each triad shares a maximum of one common tone with its neighbors. Frequently, there are no common tones between triads, a fact which invites the inference that Fine purposely chose triads with little common pitch class content. When adjacent triads do not share a common tone, there is at least one voice in each that is an ic 1 away from a voice in a neighboring triad, further discouraging common tones.

Example 4-5: Common tones between adjacent triads in the theme.

Presto leggiero  $\text{♩} = 144$

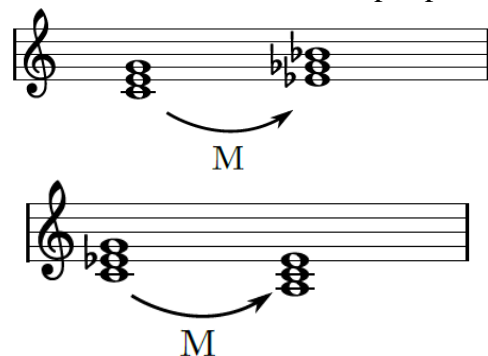
The musical score is divided into four systems, each with a measure number at the beginning: 1, 7, 13, and 22. Red dashed lines connect notes between adjacent triads to highlight common tones. The score includes various dynamics (p, sfz, f, dim, cresc., molto f, sub. p) and articulations (sempre stacc., sfz, 8va). The first system (measures 1-6) shows a series of triads with common tones highlighted. The second system (measures 7-12) continues the sequence. The third system (measures 13-18) includes a section marked 'molto f' and 'sub. p'. The fourth system (measures 22-27) concludes the theme with a final triad.

A more nuanced picture of movement between triads can be gained by identifying the different ways in which each triad leads to the next. Table 3 lays out all of the transformations occurring in the theme of Toccata III beginning with the most common and proceeding to least common. Fine utilizes no fewer than seventeen distinct transformations throughout the theme. What becomes immediately clear is that not only are common tones purposely avoided, among the most common transformations Fine makes use of, only one permits a single common tone between adjacent triads.

Table 4-3: Triad transformations found in the theme<sup>56</sup>

**M (Minor third relation)**<sup>57</sup>

Connects two triads of the opposite mode whose roots are an i3 apart in pc space. When a major triad is transformed by M, the result is a minor triad whose root is an i3 above the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by M, the result is a major triad whose root is an i3 lower in pc space. Preserves 0 common tones.

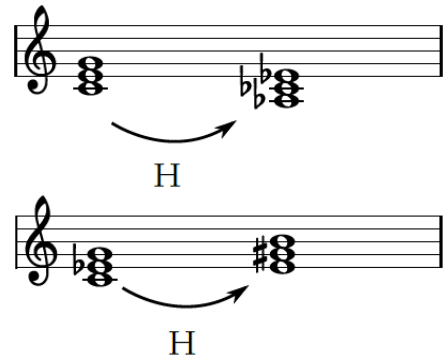


Major triad  $x \rightarrow M \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i3)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow M \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i3)$

**H (Hexatonic pole relation)**

Exchanges a triad for its hexatonic pole. Connects two triads of the opposite mode whose roots are an i4 apart in pc space. When a major triad is transformed by H, the result is a minor triad with a root an i4 below the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by H, the result is a major triad whose root is an i4 above the original triad in pc space. Preserves 0 common tones.



Major triad  $x \rightarrow H \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i4)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow H \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i4)$

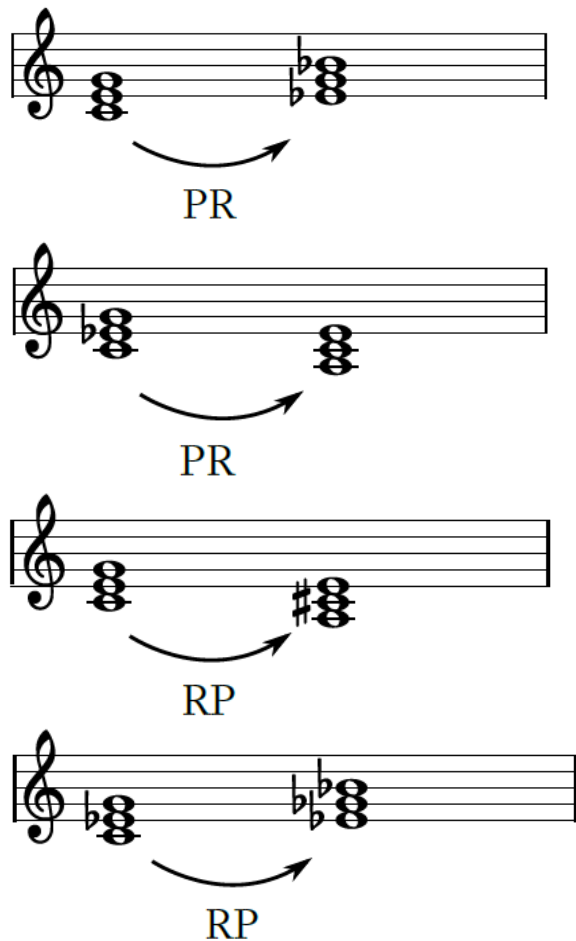
**PR/RP (Parallel + Relative relation)**

A compound transformation which connects two triads of the same mode whose roots are an

<sup>56</sup> Unless otherwise noted, definitions of each single transformation are taken from Straus, Joseph N. *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*. 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2016).

<sup>57</sup> Christopher Segall's name. Christopher Segall, "Triadic Music in Twentieth-Century Russia" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2013), 11.

i3 apart in pc space. The transformation **P** changes only the mode of a triad. For the transformation **R**, the root of a major triad becomes the third of a minor triad and vice versa. When a major triad is transformed by PR, the result is a major triad with a root an i3 above the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by PR, the result is a minor triad with a root an i3 below the original triad in pc space. When a major triad is transformed by RP, the result is a major triad with a root an i3 below the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by RP, the result is a major triad with a root an i3 above the original triad in pc space. Preserves 0 common tones.



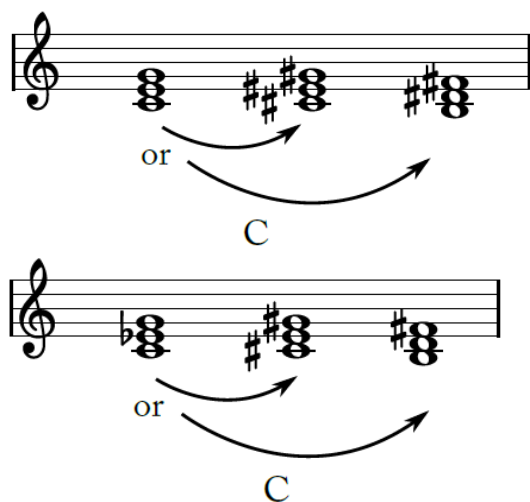
Major triad  $x \rightarrow \text{PR} \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i3)$   
 Minor triad  $x \rightarrow \text{PR} \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i3)$   
 Major triad  $x \rightarrow \text{RP} \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i3)$   
 Minor triad  $x \rightarrow \text{RP} \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i3)$

### **C (Chromatic step relation)**

Connects two triads of the same mode whose roots are an i1 apart in pc space.<sup>58,59</sup> Preserves 0 common tones.

<sup>58</sup> The labels C, CMODE, W, and WMODE are my own.

<sup>59</sup> This transformation can also be achieved using SLIDE-P for motion upward or P-SLIDE for motion downward.

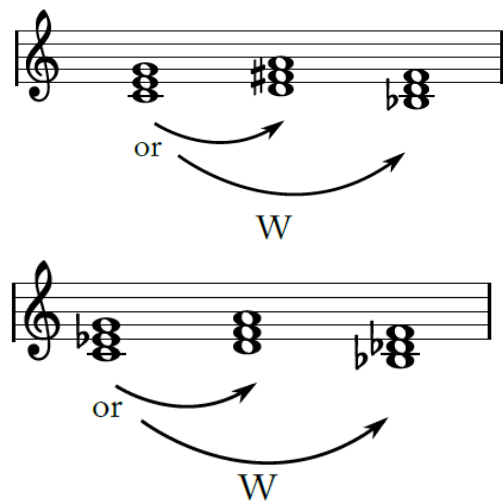


Major triad  $x \rightarrow C \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x + \text{or} - i1)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow C \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + \text{or} - i1)$

### W (Whole step relation)

Connects two triads of the same mode whose roots are an  $i2$  apart in pc space. Preserves 0 common tones.



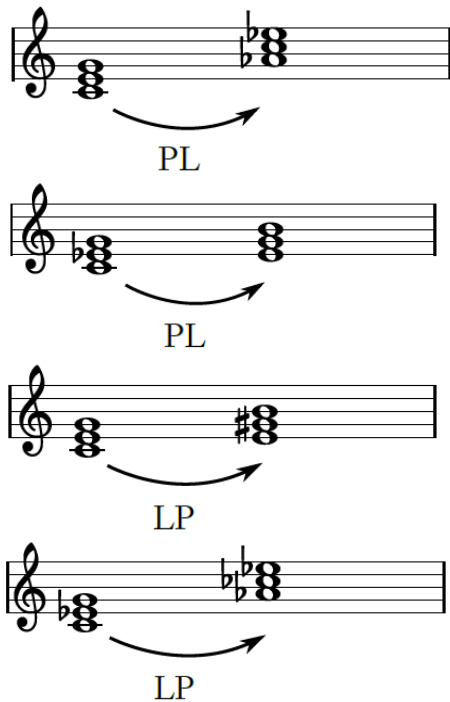
Major triad  $x \rightarrow W \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x + \text{or} - i2)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow W \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + \text{or} - i2)$

### PL/LP (Parallel + Leading tone relation)

A compound transformation which connects two triads of the same mode whose roots are an  $i4$  apart in pc space. The transformation **P** changes only the mode of a triad. For the transformation **L**, the third of a major triad becomes the root of a minor triad and vice versa. When a major triad is transformed by PL, the result is a major triad with a root an  $i4$  below the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by PL, the result is a minor triad with a root an  $i4$  above the original triad in pc space. When a major triad is transformed by LP, the result is a major triad with a root an  $i4$  above the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by LP, the result is a major triad with a root an  $i4$  below the original triad

in pc space. Preserves 1 common tone.



Major triad  $x \rightarrow \text{PL} \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i4)$

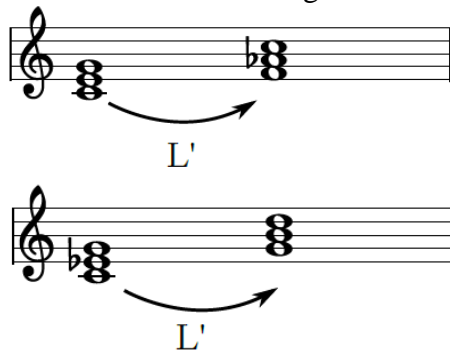
Minor triad  $x \rightarrow \text{PL} \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i4)$

Major triad  $x \rightarrow \text{LP} \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i4)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow \text{LP} \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i4)$

### L'

Connects two triads of the opposite mode whose roots are an  $i5$  apart in pc space. When a major triad is transformed by  $L'$ , the result is a minor triad with a root an  $i5$  above the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by  $L'$ , the result is a major triad with a root an  $i5$  below the original triad in pc space. Preserves 1 common tone.



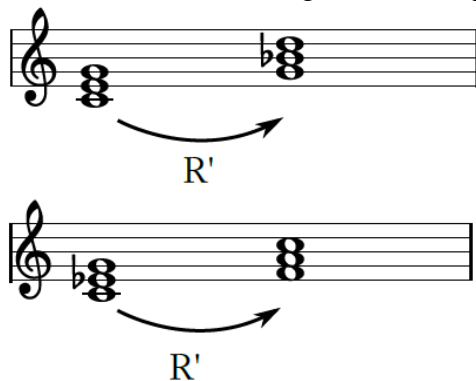
Major triad  $x \rightarrow L' \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i5)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow L' \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i5)$

### R'

Connects two triads of the opposite mode whose roots are an  $i7$  apart in pc space. When a major triad is transformed by  $R'$ , the result is a minor triad with a root an  $i7$  above the original

triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by  $R'$ , the result is a major triad with a root an  $i7$  below the original triad in pc space. Preserves 1 common tone.

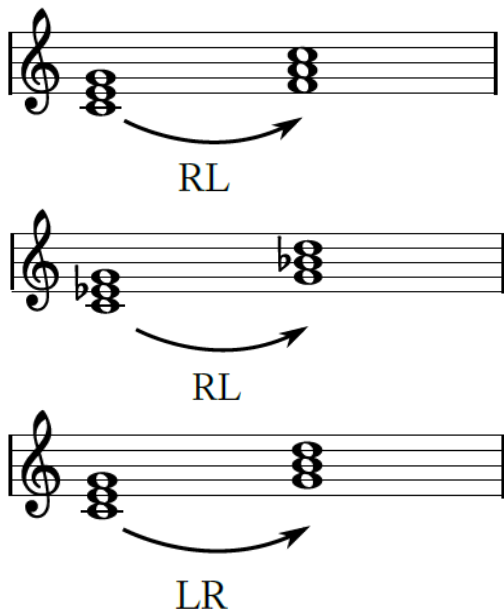


Major triad  $x \rightarrow R' \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i7)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow R' \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i7)$

### **RL/LR (Leading tone + Relative relation)**

A compound transformation which connects two triads of the same mode whose roots are an  $i5$  apart in pc space. For the transformation **L**, the third of a major triad becomes the root of a minor triad and vice versa. For the transformation **R**, the root of a major triad becomes the third of a minor triad and vice versa. When a major triad is transformed by **RL**, the result is a major triad with a root an  $i5$  above the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by **RL**, the result is a minor triad with a root an  $i5$  below the original triad in pc space. When a major triad is transformed by **LR**, the result is a major triad with a root an  $i5$  below the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by **LR**, the result is a minor triad with a root an  $i5$  above the original triad in pc space. Preserves 1 common tone.





LR

Major triad  $x \rightarrow RL \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i5)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow RL \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i5)$

Major triad  $x \rightarrow LR \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i5)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow LR \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i5)$

### **S (SLIDE relation)**

Connects two triads of the opposite mode who share the same third. When a major triad is transformed by S, the result is a minor triad with a root an i1 above the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by S, the result is a major triad with a root an i1 below the original triad in pc space. Preserves 1 common tone.



SLIDE



SLIDE

Major triad  $x \rightarrow S \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i1)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow S \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i1)$

### **CMODE (Chromatic step relation with mode change)**

Connects two triads of the opposite mode whose roots are an i1 apart in pc space. Not to be confused with SLIDE as the third is not held in common between the two triads. When a major triad is transformed by CMODE, the result is a minor triad with a root an i1 below the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by CMODE, the result is a major triad whose root is an i1 above the original triad in pc space. Preserves 0 common tones.



CMode





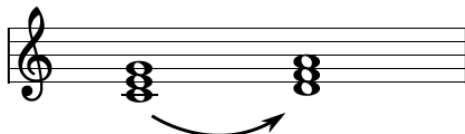
CMode

Major triad  $x \rightarrow \text{CMODE} \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i1)$

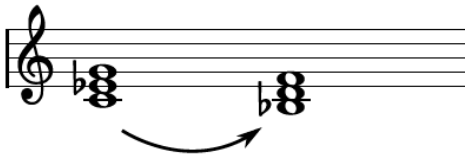
Minor triad  $x \rightarrow \text{CMODE} \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i1)$

### **WMode (Whole step relation with mode change)**

Connects two triads of the opposite mode whose roots are an i2 apart in pc space. When a major triad is transformed by WMODE, the result is a minor triad with a root an i2 above the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by CMODE, the result is a major triad whose root is an i2 below the original triad in pc space. Preserves 0 common tones.



WMode



WMode

Major triad  $x \rightarrow \text{WMODE} \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + i2)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow \text{WMODE} \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x - i2)$

### **Flat5 relation**

Connects two triads of the opposite mode whose roots are an i6 apart in pc space. When a major triad is transformed by Flat5, the result is a minor triad with a root an i6 away from the original triad in pc space. When a minor triad is transformed by Flat5, the result is a major triad with a root an i6 away from the original triad in pc space. Preserves 0 common tones.



Flat5

Flat5

Major triad  $x \rightarrow \text{Flat5} \rightarrow$  minor triad  $y$  with root  $(x + \text{or} - i6)$

Minor triad  $x \rightarrow \text{Flat5} \rightarrow$  major triad  $y$  with root  $(x + \text{or} - i6)$

The coda contains a similar distribution of transformations. All transformations within the theme are labeled in a simplified version of the score in Example 4-6.

Example 4-6: Triad transformations in the theme labeled

The musical score is divided into four systems, each showing a piano accompaniment with triad transformations labeled in red. The transformations are indicated by arrows connecting the triads.

- System 1 (Measures 1-6):**
  - Measure 1: C, L' H
  - Measure 2: L' M, H
  - Measure 3: RL, PL, WMode
  - Measure 4: L RP, WMode, L'
  - Measure 5: C LR W, M
  - Measure 6: WM R' R', M M R', C
- System 2 (Measures 7-12):**
  - Measure 7: PL RP, RP
  - Measure 8: RP, FL, H M
  - Measure 9: M H PR, LP
  - Measure 10: PR PR, LP R'
  - Measure 11: M, M
  - Measure 12: W, C, M, L'
- System 3 (Measures 13-17):**
  - Measure 13: W, MM, H
  - Measure 14: H, S, L'
  - Measures 15-16: *molto f*
  - Measure 17: CMode, S, M, M
- System 4 (Measures 22-26):**
  - Measure 22: WMode, LP
  - Measure 23: M, W, CMode, Flat5, WMode
  - Measure 24: S, H, C, W
  - Measure 25: H, C, RL
  - Measure 26: Flat5

Despite the fact that Toccata III's theme is most likely intended to evoke disorder, several short patterns can be discerned. For example, mm. 1 and 2 contain a short sequence of alternating L' and H. Naturally, the transformations in those passages which are presented in retrograde are in some cases repeated and in some cases replaced by the corresponding transformation in the opposite direction. Further, local prevalence of a single transformation can be discerned, such as the Ms in mm. 11 through 13.

In sum, the succession of triads in Toccata III is intended to sound haphazard, and Fine's choices preclude any possibility of allusions to tonal harmonic progression. There is not a great deal of reliance on any single transformation, but rather, Fine makes use of a multitude of them. However, transformations that leave one to no common tones between triads are favored.

## **Space Filling**

By examining the roots of the triads independent of their quality, another element of design comes into clearer focus. As in Aria II, Fine completes or nearly completes the aggregate in triad roots in pitch class space in each sub-phrase in the theme. Another dimension of organization can be discerned by looking at the triad roots in the theme in terms of the hexatonic collections to which they belong. In each sub-phrase, strings of as many as six adjacent triads belong to  $HEX_{0,1}$ . The remaining triads belong to  $HEX_{2,3}$ . Example 4-7 segregates the triads according to their hexatonic collection and illustrates Fine's filling of the aggregate. In sub-phrase 1, the aggregate is complete. Sub-phrase 2 omits triads whose roots are pitch classes 4, 7, T, and E. Sub-phrase 3 omits only triads whose roots are pitch classes T and E.

Example 4-7: Hexatonic collections and pitch class space filled by triad roots.

HEX<sub>0,1</sub>

HEX<sub>2,3</sub>

sub-phrase 1

pcs completed: 2...3...8...0...5...9...4...E...1...6...T

sub-phrase 2 (4, 7, T, E omitted)

pcs completed: 0...9...2...5...3...

sub-phrase 3 (6, T, E omitted)

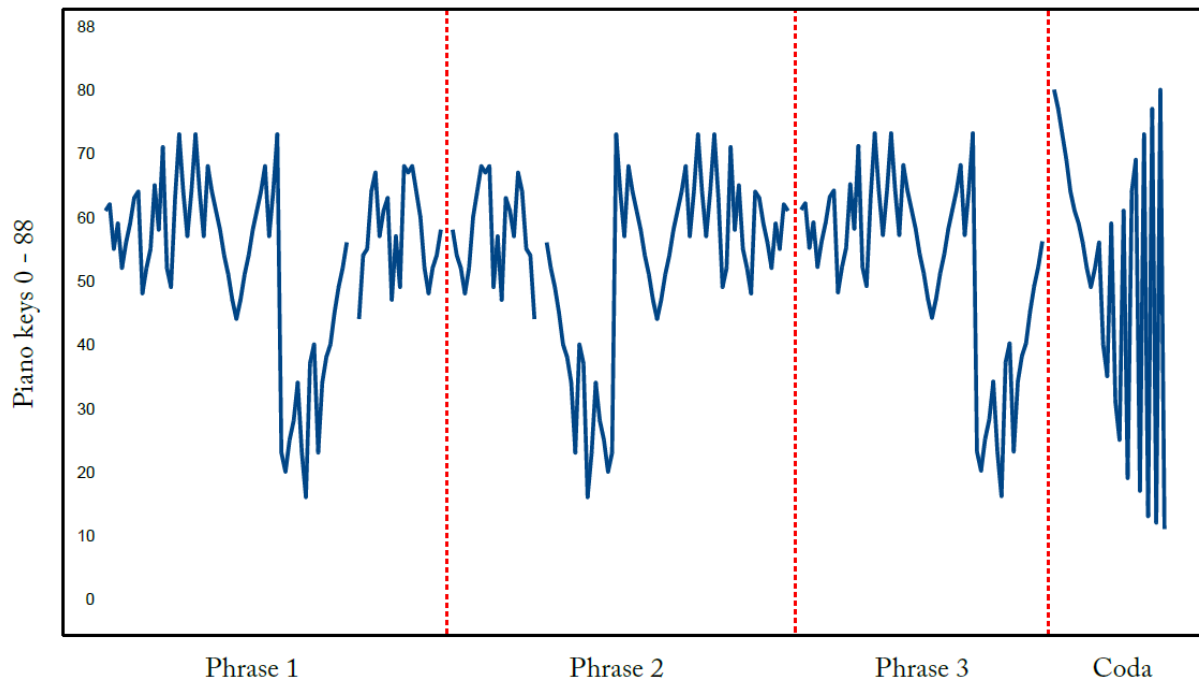
pcs completed: 1...2...3...0

phrase 2

## Overarching Processes

Retrograde, and by extension, repetition is Toccata III's principal feature. Recall that in developing the theme in Phrase 3, Fine varied only the lower notes within her series of triads. This invites us to investigate the aspect of the series that remains unchanged: the top line. By inspecting the contour created by the top line of each phrase of the movement, the structure of the entire piece is illuminated. Example 4-8 graphs the top line of each triad.<sup>60</sup> What becomes immediately apparent is Toccata III's great deal of repetition through passages in retrograde.

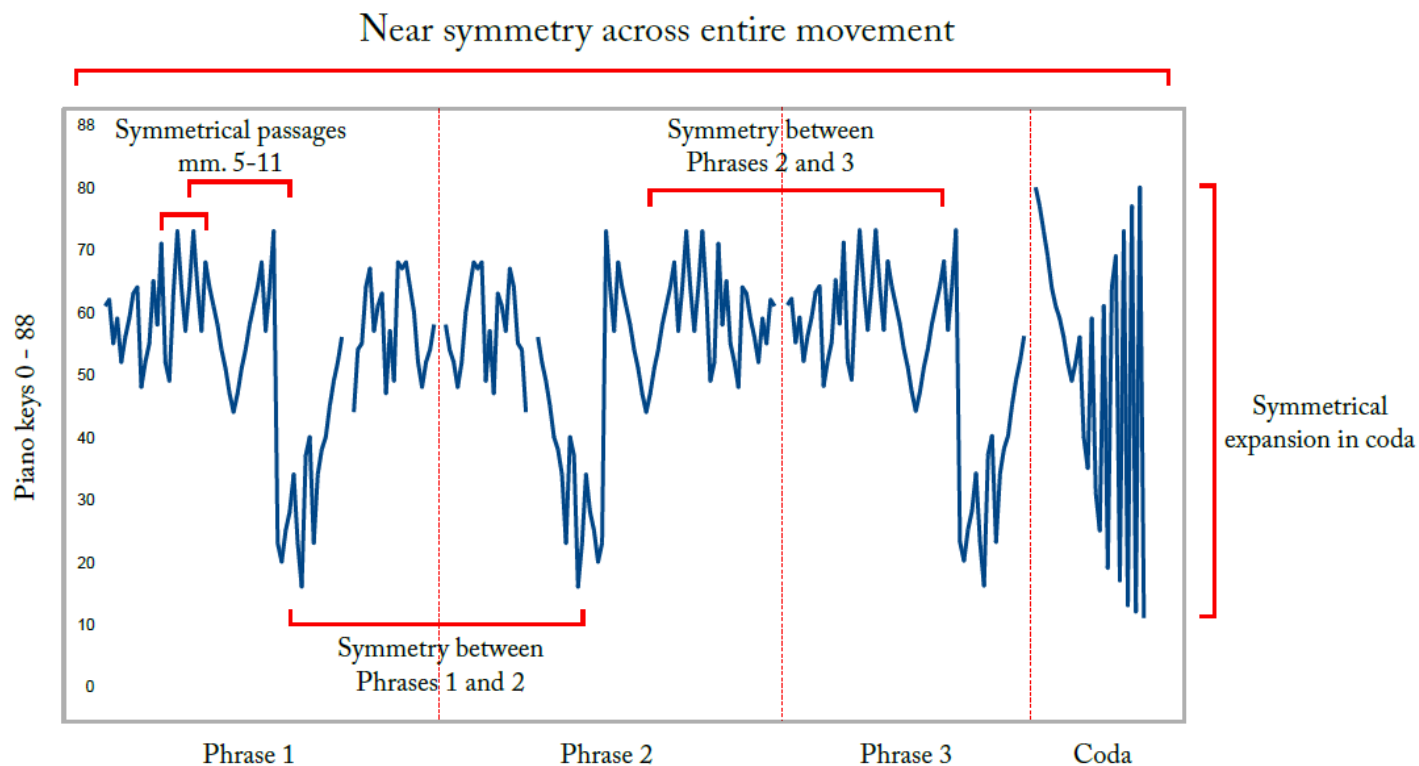
Example 4-8: Contour of the top voice of every triad in Toccata III



<sup>60</sup> The looping measures at the junctions of sub-phrases have been omitted and are represented here by gaps. When both upper and lower staves contained triads simultaneously, I recorded the upper staff first followed by the lower.

Example 4-9 labels symmetry across the entire movement. Three levels are visible: local-level retrograde passages within the theme; the phrase-level retrogrades, including that in the coda, which create symmetry at all phrase boundaries; and the near-symmetry of the entire movement.

Example 4-9: Contour graph with symmetrical passages labeled



Toccata III is a movement at once caught in a repetitive loop as well as in a constant state of motion. On the structural level, the movement makes little progress: as one phrase comes to a close, the next begins and essentially reverses what has just been done. This stasis is reflected on a smaller level in the looping passages at the junctures of each sub-phrase within the theme and in the short symmetrical passages within each phrase. Despite changes within some triads in

Phrase 3, the unwavering top line of the theme prevents any major variation from taking place. On the other hand, Toccata III's unassuming building block, the triad, is always in flux: Any given triad is approached and left in a myriad of ways, and most triads appear in two different configurations (such as root position and second inversion). With so many transformations in play, the context in which each triad is presented is continuously changing. Moreover, as in Aria I, despite a basically repetitive structure, expressive elements like dynamics, articulation, and accent, are varied throughout the movement. So, while as in every other movement of *Toccatas and Arias*, Fine keeps a close hold on her basic musical material, again in Toccata III she creates a colorful and ever-changing musical landscape.

### **Analytical conclusions**

Having examined *Toccatas and Arias* in great detail, we find that the piece has a number of unifying features. Fine writes with an astonishingly small quantity of musical material, and she is able to vary her material widely through repeated use of certain developmental techniques. While she makes ample use of inversion and canon, her use of retrograde is perhaps most striking. Rather than simply putting a series of pitches in retrograde, she subjects the entirety of the musical fabric to it – pitches, rhythm, even dynamic and other expressive markings – often resulting in absolute symmetry between adjacent sections of a movement. In Toccata I, Aria I, and Aria II, her use of retrograde carries with it a sense of undoing or dismantling the musical progress and structures built up throughout the course of the movement.

*Toccatas and Arias* incorporates many instances of tonal reference, and it reflects the history of Fine's lifelong style. Being essentially a dissonant, atonal piece yet including, for example, major and minor triads as in Toccata III, and an implication of dominant-tonic

relationship between centric pitches in Toccata I, it reflects her commitment to dissonant writing as well as the lasting effects of her experiments with tonality partway through her life. Despite the admission of triads and the traces of tonal relationships into *Toccatas and Arias*, Fine persisted with some basic practices associated with music written in the 1920s and early 30s and following the dissonant counterpoint practice set forth by Charles Seeger. Fine has a clear preference for dissonance and the suppression of triadic implications in her selection of harmonies, and she takes care to dissonate adjacent notes in individual lines (for example, in Toccata I) as well as adjacent triads (as in Toccata III). Further, her adherence to some variety of a principle of non-repetition affects the presentation of pitches at the beginning of each movement. With reasonable consistency, the aggregate is filled carefully and gradually over the course of a movement's theme.

*Toccatas and Arias* is in a number of ways the culmination of a lifetime of musical experience, and its existence demonstrates the power of the influences of earlier music on Fine's style even into the late 1980s. It is evident that *Toccatas and Arias* stands as a relic of a much older style. It embraces a lot of the ideals of the music that inspired Fine early in her life, and the fact of its creation in 1987 shows that the ultramodern/dissonant counterpoint aesthetic did not simply die out by the middle of the twentieth century when its more prominent proponents turned to new interests.



## Chapter 5 : Conclusion

*Toccatas and Arias* displays a number of traits typical of the ultramodern/dissonant counterpoint aesthetic embraced by Vivian Fine and her closest colleagues. This fact suggests a role for Fine as that of a holdout, willing to experiment with contemporary compositional trends, but who basically adhered to the same set of compositional principles throughout her life.

Encyclopedia entries, journal articles, and other texts agree that the proponents of ultramodern music and dissonant counterpoint followed their musical interests elsewhere beginning in the 1930s. This is especially true of Ruth Crawford and Charles Seeger. Crawford and Seeger had four children together, and the pressures of motherhood caused Crawford to stop composing in 1933.<sup>61</sup> The family moved to Washington, DC following Seeger's new appointment in the Federal Resettlement Administration, a position which he took in order to support his growing family.<sup>62</sup> He, too, stopped composing. During the next several years, Crawford transcribed field recordings for the Archive of American Folk Song. In the 1940s, she worked as a teacher of children and created and compiled numerous arrangements of folk songs. After a brief return to composition resulting in her 1952 *Wind Quintet*, she died of intestinal cancer in 1953.<sup>63</sup> Charles Seeger is primarily known for the work in musicology and ethnomusicology which he began to pursue beginning in the 1930s. Richard Taruskin describes him in the *Oxford History of Western Music* as "a minor composer but a very distinguished

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<sup>61</sup> Ellie M. Hisama and Judith Tick. "Crawford, Ruth." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed January 11, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2224168>.

<sup>62</sup> Anne Dhu McLucas. "Seeger, Charles." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed January 11, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2258144>.

<sup>63</sup> Ellie M. Hisama and Judith Tick, "Crawford, Ruth," *Grove Music Online*, accessed January 11, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2224168>.

musicologist,”<sup>64</sup> and Anne Dhu McLucas introduces him as a founder of musicological and ethnomusicological study in the United States.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, it was Seeger’s work on these topics that occupied his activities after the mid-thirties, and his accomplishments in these fields dominate his legacy.

Henry Cowell did in fact teach dissonant counterpoint well into the nineteen fifties, but his interests were numerous and his activities varied wildly, especially after the mid-thirties. In the article on Henry Cowell in *Grove Music Online*, David Nicholls and Joel Sachs write,

Cowell’s musical legacy is twofold. First, many of his advanced ideas – not least as expounded in *New Musical Resources* – have been taken up by later composers, both in America and Europe... Second, Cowell’s remarkable openness of mind, especially in relation to timbre and to non-Western musics – he once stated his desire “to live in the *whole world* of music” – set an important precedent for his own students, such as Cage and Harrison, who in turn influenced many younger composers.<sup>66</sup>

The authors speak to Cowell’s tremendous influence in the world of avant-garde music, but at the same time affirm that his work elsewhere was just as important. Following his

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<sup>64</sup> Richard Taruskin. "Chapter 11 In Search of the “Real” America." In *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, Oxford University Press. (New York, USA, n.d.). Retrieved 9 Feb. 2017, from <http://www.oxfordwesternmusic.com/view/Volume4/actrade-9780195384840-div1-011006.xml>

<sup>65</sup> Anne Dhu McLucas, "Seeger, Charles," *Grove Music Online*, accessed January 11, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2258144>.

<sup>66</sup> David Nicholls and Joel Sachs. "Cowell, Henry." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2249182>.

imprisonment on moral charges (for participating in homosexual acts) from 1936 to 1940, Henry Cowell, like Crawford and Seeger, began researching and experimenting with American folk music. In addition, he began traveling throughout the world and became deeply interested in the music of a number of non-Western cultures. Despite the shift in his compositional interests after his period of imprisonment, Cowell continued to teach dissonant counterpoint throughout the 1940s and 50s in his advanced music theory courses at The New School. New research by John Spilker documents the preservation of the dissonant counterpoint technique through Cowell's pedagogy.<sup>67</sup> However, most literature on Cowell, including the article in *Grove*, underscores his interest in non-Western music post-1940 and emphasizes his wide range of interests and varied musical style. This indicates that indeed, he pursued a diversity of musical interests which, if they did not eclipse his activities in teaching dissonant counterpoint, certainly competed with them.

Cowell, Seeger, and Crawford aside, other composers from a broader circle of ultramodernists – Carl Ruggles, Dane Rudhyar, Leo Ornstein, and Henry Brant for example – each followed their compositional and intellectual interests in a direction that led them away from the type of music they wrote in the first decades of the century. As Fine asserted in her 1990 master class,<sup>68</sup> general musical trends tended away from the dissonant ultramodern aesthetic in the mid-thirties in favor of a more widely palatable neoclassical, populist, tonal musical language. As Nicholls and Sachs state, the thirties saw a shift in attitude toward new musical ideas.

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<sup>67</sup> John D. Spilker, "The Curious Afterlife of Dissonant Counterpoint: Jeanette B. Holland's Class Notes from Henry Cowell's 1951 Advanced Music Theory Course," *American Music* 30, no. 4 (2012): 405-25.

<sup>68</sup> Vivian Fine, master class, The City University of New York Graduate Center, 1990.

Most of these new ideas [Cowell's and those of others in his cohort] were introduced during the period before Cowell's arrest in a cultural climate which was broadly conducive to innovation and novelty. In the early 1930s, the Depression induced many changes. Like many others, Cowell moved away from ultramodernism toward both populism...and transculturalism. After four years of comparative isolation in San Quentin [prison], he found that the effects of the Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, and the outbreak of World War II had shaped a different America, less open to new ideas.<sup>69</sup>

Much literature on twentieth century music seems to imply that with the change in focus among a small group of core composers, the dissonant counterpoint practice died out after the end of the 1930s. Dissonant counterpoint and ultramodern music of the sort written by Fine and her colleagues are presented as musical phenomena belonging to the earliest decades of the century, and very little literature exists which documents the persistence of this sort of music in the 1980s. For example, in *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, Taruskin describes the ultramodernists Cowell, Ruggles, Riegger, and Crawford as a unified school of composers who "briefly came into view" in the 1920s.<sup>70</sup> John Spilker's article on dissonant counterpoint in *Grove* emphasizes the practice as one which originated and primarily existed in the first three

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<sup>69</sup> David Nicholls and Joel Sachs, "Cowell, Henry," *Grove Music Online*, accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2249182>.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Taruskin. "Chapter 5 Containing Multitudes (Transcendentalism, II)." In *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, Oxford University Press. (New York, USA, n.d.). Retrieved 9 Feb. 2017, from <http://www.oxfordwesternmusic.com/view/Volume4/actrade-9780195384840-div1-005011.xml>

decades of the twentieth century.<sup>71</sup> At the very least, the existence of a piece like *Toccatas and Arias* deepens our understanding of the history of ultramodern music and the dissonant counterpoint practice: its temporal existence stretched further than is implied by the literature.

*Toccatas and Arias* is a fascinating example of music in a very specific style understood to belong to the 1920s and early 30s, yet having been written more than fifty years outside of the period of which it is a representative. Having been very much a product of the time in which she grew up, Vivian Fine was a torchbearer of the ultramodern/dissonant counterpoint style and in fact, carried it far later into the twentieth century than any of her colleagues. Her unique status in this situation distinguishes her in music history and invites further research into her life and music.

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<sup>71</sup> John D. Spilker. "Dissonant counterpoint." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed February 9, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2240654>.

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