RHAPSODY FOR SAXOPHONE AND ORCHESTRA

by

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to the required standard

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Abstract

*Rhapsody for Saxophone and Orchestra* is a work of 15 minutes duration, scored for solo alto saxophone, flute (doubling piccolo), oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, timpani, percussion, piano, and strings. Within the work, an invented harmonic structure is combined with a freely improvised melody that is subjected to a large-scale formal process of phrase expansion and contraction. Layers of musical activity, involving interval templates (defined as invariant patterns of pitches), phrase-lengths, melodic contour, referential rhythmic gestures, and pedal-notes are set in motion from the outset. While operating independently, these musical elements converge at major section points in the work, of which there are ten. The ultimate aim is to devise engrossing musical textures that embody variation within coherence, and possess strong goal-directionality.

The method of composing with interval pairs represents a novel approach to harmony, and the resulting harmonic structures underlie much, but not all of the work. In terms of melody, the predominantly step-wise and back-circling (melody which moves away from then back towards a central tone) character is also of great significance in the work, providing the basis for much canonic imitation.

The commencement of a new section in the work is often marked by two gestures: a treble pedal figure, and a “bouncing” figure, which occur in the first and last quarters of the work. Examination of larger-scale structures designated as “super-sections” (each comprising three or four sections) reveals the systematic phrase expansion and contraction that juxtaposes sections with short phrases next to those with long ones. This expansion and contraction of phrases creates the ultimate structure of the work.
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Instrumentation

Flute (doubling piccolo)
Oboe
Clarinet in B-flat
Bassoon
Horn in F
Timpani
Percussion (one player: vibraphone and glockenspiel)
Piano

Alto Saxophone in E-flat

Strings (either one to a part or a minimum of 4-4-3-2-1)
Double-bass requires a C-extension

The score is transposed. The glockenspiel sounds two octaves higher than written, the piccolo one octave higher, and the double bass one octave lower. The vibraphone is to be played with the motor off at all times. The discs are to be turned so that the resonating tube ends are open.

Duration = 15:00
Score is transposed
\[ J = 66 \]

**RHAPSODY**

for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra

Neil Currie

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Bassoon

Horn in F

Timpani

Percussion

Piano

Alto Saxophone in Eb

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Bass

© 1998 by Neil Currie
Espressivo

$\frac{3}{8}$
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Timp.
Perc.
Pfie.
Sax.
Vln 1
Vln 2
Vla
Vlc
Cb

144

P.53
Piu Mosso

\( j = 66 \)
P.90
Piu Mosso

\( \text{beat} = 104 \)
Analysis and Commentary

A. Structural Overview:

*Rhapsody for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra* (hereafter referred to as *Rhapsody*) resulted from the choice of the saxophone as solo instrument, and from the conception of the solo line as a collection of flexible, predominantly stepwise, back-circling melodies, similar in structure to a kind of rapid Gregorian Chant. It was felt that melodies of this character were capable of expressing significant variations in dramatic intensity, by introducing wider intervals into the melody, by expanding the registral compass, and by shortening the note-values.

Given the potential plasticity of the solo melody’s rhythm and pitch materials, the desire for structure was expressed in three principal ways:

1. the construction of a system for organising pitch into interval pairs, which when elaborated, comprised *interval templates*, defined as invariant patterns of pitches, used as an accompaniment to the soloist.

2. the structuring of the large-scale dimension of the melody in *Rhapsody* according to the gradual evolution of melodic phrase-length within ten sections.

3. the utilisation of various types of *canon* as the principal implement for textural construction throughout the work.

In *Rhapsody*, within the confines of the structures and procedures described above, collections of intervals (templates) to be used for the background of certain of the ten sections were selected (for example, Sections III, V, and VI), and the saxophone melodies were generated from them. In the spirit of a set of variations—in this case, variations on the templates and on the melody—sections of varying character emerged. The textures of these sections, in turn, were generated substantially through various types of canon, and their dimension was controlled by the large-scale evolution of the phrase-length.

B. Stylistic Influences:

Initial models were Ravel, Stravinsky, and particularly Bartok, whose piano music the writer has played since about the age of ten. In Bartok’s *String Quartet IV* (1928), the *Sonata for Piano* and *Out of Doors Suite* (both 1926), and the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937) one can see the genesis of the close canons at fast tempo of *Rhapsody* (for example, bar 293).

The melody of the opening of *Rhapsody*, and the canon derived therefrom (e.g. bars 29 and 124) owes much to textures like those of the third movement of Bartok’s *String Quartet IV* where a conjoint and chromatic melody is juxtaposed against a relatively consonant and static background. The presence of secondary and tertiary canonic voices in *Rhapsody* also owes something to the spirit of the interplay of second violin and viola in the same
movement of *String Quartet IV* (bars 47-51).

The general melodic contour of *Rhapsody* definitely owes something to the generic form of the Australian Aboriginal song known as *tumbling strain*. The principal feature of this form is a phrase that begins in high register then gradually descends until a low note is reached and repeated at phrase-end, as exemplified by *Guluwada* (*Figure 1*)\(^1\).

---

**Figure 1: Guluwada: An example of the generic form of Australian Aboriginal song (tumbling strain)**

\[\text{Figure 1 image}\]

In *Rhapsody*, this form, albeit modified, first occurs in the very opening of the work, extending to bar 25.

The notion of composing in layers of sound which overlap, was first considered as a result of a paper by Edward Cone in which he described a way of analysing Stravinsky’s music in terms of *Stratification, Interlock, and Synthesis*\(^2\), which the writer examined while analysing Stravinsky’s *Hymne* from *Serenade in A* (1924). In studying composition with Stephen Chatman in 1995 and 1996, Eugene Wilson in 1996, and Keith Hamel in 1997, the technique of disguising seams or joins between sections of discrete material was enhanced, principally through the method of dovetailing various strata or layers of music. For example, in *Rhapsody*, at bar 27, the sixteenth-note rhythm of the subsequent saxophone melody commences in flute and oboe while the bouncing figure is still being acquitted, two bars before the saxophone entry proper at bar 29. The pedal note played by vibraphone commences at bar 28, creating a staggering of entries at one-bar intervals between bars 27 and 29, which effectively elides the adjacent sections.

### C. Elements of Structure

#### i. Pitch Structures: Composing with interval pairs

Pairs of intervals have been used many times in composition, but normally they are contained within a single trichord. For example, the spaces between three successive

---

1 Moyle, 1966.
2 Cone, 1968.
pitches such as C, C#, E (014 pitch-class set type) are notated as [1,3]. In the case of Rhapsody, the intervals would still be 1 and 3, as there is one semitone between C and C#, and three between C# and E. The reason that conventional pitch-class set notation is not used, however, is that, in the present case, the intervals that are generated, extend invariantly across several octaves at once. They cannot, therefore, be notated by a 12-note modular system; to put it another way, the system used in Rhapsody deals with pitches, rather than pitch-classes.

What was left to the composer, in the case of Rhapsody, firstly, was to have the soloist occupy the template at whatever register seemed appropriate. The relevant pitches vary depending on the register of the template in which one dwells. The broken chords spun out by the templates establish a sufficiently rich harmonic landscape against which the saxophone elaborates the melody. The resulting harmonic language is non-functionally harmonic with tonal associations.

Further, the soloist is granted the use of “non-essential” notes, to ensure a sufficiently conjunct character for the melody. The composer’s melodies tend to be diatonic; they are often suggestive of a definite scale or key, if taken alone. Rhythmically, they tend to disguise the beat with the use of ties and odd beat divisions.

Large-Scale Rhythm and Register of the templates:

In the present study, the terms consonance and dissonance mean the perceived stability or instability of a complex of two or more sounds. These terms are used in a contextual sense: the intervals regarded as dissonant sound as if they require resolution to the more stable consonant intervals. When testing the various interval templates for dissonance levels, each succession of notes was initiated in the lower part of the piano, and played upward, at a slow, even, pace. The sustain pedal was held while elaborating the template. Subsequently, in consideration of the rhythmic character of templates, this method of testing was found to be more than simply a default behaviour, and, in fact, became the prototype for the rhythm of the interval templates for sections IIIa, IV, V, and VI.

Thus, in Rhapsody, templates appear as broken chords (Figure 2), at a slow and even pace, and the pitches are sustained, once sounded. Template notes appear only in ascending order. A rigidity of register has been retained, at least in the instruments which sound the template first, that is, the piano or strings. For example, as shown by the piano and strings at bar 182, if an instrument sounds a pitch, that pitch is in the precise register

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3 The somewhat unusual combinations of accidentals in the work reflect this conceptual reality; in saxophone, at bars 36-39, the accidentals flip from sharps to flats in close proximity. This is because the melodic line is conceptualised as traversing different scales (not keys) from beat to beat, analogous to a jazz improvisation. Bar 170 in the saxophone is based on an F# minor scale for beat one; beat two is partly F# minor, partly Eb minor; beats 3 and 4 are based on an Eb minor scale.

prescribed uniquely by the selected bass note and template. In the upper range, the piano, glockenspiel, and flute displace octaves somewhat freely (bars 183 ff.), as their notes are relatively staccato and the higher pitches generate relatively inaudible clashes of harmonics.

Once sounded, pitches within a template may be emphasised by any player, while other pitches may sound and be ignored. They may be played in any rhythm, as long as the pitches of the template are adhered to. Once the template changes, all pitches are expunged and must await the construction of the new template.

The idea is that, from a designated bass note, one extends the intervallic pattern (in the example given on p.125, it is [1-3]) upwards, creating a template for the duration, until a new bass note, and new pair of intervals is sounded. This approach compares closely to the structures that Bartok found when collecting folk music in the Biskra area in 1913, namely, scales without a fixed final note and containing repeating fragments within the octave. He used such scales in his Piano Suite op. 14 and the Second String Quartet.

Thus, commencing on a bass note of C and extended to the full, interval pair 1-3 (Lendvai, who discusses these structures in detail, would call it model 1:3) would create: C,C#,E; E,F,G#; G#,A,C, which begins to repeat itself after only three statements. In pitch-set terminology, such structures are known as cyclically-generated pitch-class sets. Messiaen’s modes of limited transposition represent a related usage of invariant interval patterns: for example, his fourth mode (semitone, semitone, minor 3rd, semitone), would be depicted as 1-1-3-1 in the present classification. An examination of Messiaen’s music, however, suggests that his usage would probably be more flexible regarding the

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5 Lendvai, 1975, p.3
6 Michael Tenzer, 1999, personal communication
pitch on which his modes commenced, and that the establishment of the interval pattern on one note would not preclude its commencement on a different note.\(^7\)

Many pairs, however, create pitch-(as opposed to pitch-class) specific extensions which go much further before beginning to repeat pitches. For example, interval pair \([9,10]\) needs to travel through all 12 elaborations before the pitches begin to repeat, creating, hypothetically at least, a template which extends over: \((12 \text{ elaborations}) \times (19 \text{ semitones per pair}) = (228 \text{ semitones})/(12 \text{ semitones per octave})= 19 \text{ octaves}\). Owing to the patent impracticality of a 19-octave structure, the extension process may “wrap around”, continuing the same pattern of intervals. After reaching a very high note, the extension may revert to the bass register again, to allow the template to occupy favourable registers (once these are vacated by the previous template’s pitches) for acoustic instruments (and for human hearing). In this case, the pitches initially sounded by the present template in the bass would be discontinued, to clear the register for the remaining pitches.

In preliminary work with the interval pairs, a \(12 \times 12\) matrix was established, which yields every non-compound interval pair possible (compare this with Morris’s discussion of the \textit{Room Square}, with its \(n \times n\) cells, which is used to depict distinct pitch-class dyads in rows and columns which each total the aggregate\(^8\)). Considering them one at a time, subjective ratings were made as to the dissonance level of the extended template created by each pair, while also noting the number of transpositions possible before the pattern began to repeat on the same pitches. \textit{Figure 3} shows a subset of the 144 possible pairs.

The intervals in each pair in the table are separated by a period. Below each pair is a rating from 1-5 as to the dissonance level of the pair’s template (1 = low, 5 = high). Many locations in the table of \textit{Figure 3} are represented by only a period. This reflects a preliminary screening of pairs, during which 92 pairs were eliminated, leaving 52, on the basis of aesthetic preference, and also on the basis that some pairs (such as \(12.12\) and \(6.6\)) generated very little harmonic richness.

The remaining 52 pairs were considered a second time; this time, designations were made as to which pairs were found to be particularly pleasing aesthetically: These appear in the table as large and bold type. Pairs of secondary interest are notated in medium sized print, while pairs which were subsequently designated to be of least compositional interest are notated in small print.

Across the top of the table, the modular 12 sum of the two intervals is listed, while at the bottom of the table, the number of unique transpositions possible for each pair is given. In consideration of a process for composition, these two factors, as well as the overall dissonance rating of a pair, and whether or not pairs shared intervals-in-common, \footnote{Watkins, 1988, p. 482.} \footnote{Morris, 1995, p. 346.}
Figure 3: Table of interval pairs

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#Transp.: 12 6 4 3 12 2 12 3 4 6 12

Format: For example:
1.12 denotes interval x. interval y
4 denotes a dissonance level of 4 (where 1 = low, 5 = high)
were found to be useful as a basis for establishing hierarchies among pairs, leading to a kind of elementary syntax among pitches.

**Stability and Dissonance:**
To wit, interval pairs which had low numbers of transposition (for example, those with a modular total of 6 (2 transpositions possible), 4 (3 possible) or 8 (3 possible) are perceived as having a greater stability than pairs which embody high numbers of transpositions. This is notwithstanding the fact that these low-transposing pairs embody considerable diversity of dissonance ratings, ranging from 1 to 4. As expected, pairs with the highest number (12) of possible transpositions (mods 1, 5, 7, 11) were heard to engender an impression of instability, again, despite diverse dissonance ratings (mod 5 and 7 values range widely from 1-4, while mod 1 and 11 values were rated more consistently, as either 4 or 5 for dissonance).

Dissonance level, of course, served as a logical basis for sorting interval pairs, in the attempt to construct a passage of music which appeared to be evolving consistently towards a goal.

**Intervals in common:**
Unsurprisingly, interval pairs with the same modular total were heard to possess a natural connection to each other. Pairs which possessed a common interval, such as 3-4 and 3-5, were also heard to be connected, although the degree of the connection was heard to vary considerably depending on register and on the total number of pitches sounding at once.

**Overlay:**
It was found that a measured degree of complexity could be injected by overlaying an intervallic template onto itself (the same could be done by overlaying one template onto that of another, but that is beyond the scope of the present experimentations). In the resulting template, one of the original pair's intervals is divided into two or three smaller intervals; the result sometimes yields a third interval, sometimes only two intervals, albeit different from the original pair. As a consequence of this exploration, and again on aesthetic grounds, a small collection of overlaid templates was retained:

<table>
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P.129
For *Rhapsody*, the first succession of interval templates to be devised was a combination of ten pairs and six overlaid templates:

**Subset of interval pairs selected for Rhapsody:**

1. 3-5, 1-7 (bars 29 ff.),
2. 7-2 (bar 132), 7-3 (b.136), 7-3-8-3 (bar 140), 7-4 (b. 144 and ff.), 7-4-7-3 (bar 156), 3-4-2-4 (bar 168), 4-7-3-7 (b. 176), 4-3 (b. 172),
3. 3-2 (bar 164), Not used: 3-8-3-5, 8-2-9-2 , 7-4-7-1.
4. 7-9, 7-8 (bars 182 ff.).

The order of this group was predicated on several factors; first, pairs 3-5 and 1-7 were designated as stable and dissonant templates. They span only a short distance, each transposing uniquely only three times.9

The second line of intervals traces a connecting line of interval 7 (perfect fifth) following on from 1-7 in the first row. This group of four pairs (and three overlaid pairs) was designated as dissonant, but also as unstable, generating as it did, longer (potentially between four and 12) pairs of intervals before repeating. The deliberate repetition of intervals in the present system contrasts with Morris's pursuit of the all-interval series to obtain an all pitch-class saturated texture^ 10 .

The third line, with one pair and three overlaid pairs, is connected to the second by the interval of 3; it transfers via the interval of 8, and of 11 to its final overlaid pair. This line is meant to embody slightly less dissonance than the second line, and again, to embody relatively large instability (between 4 and 12 transpositions). As it happened, only the first interval pair was used from this line.

The fourth line of this example was intended originally to connect with the third line via the interval of 7 to two fairly consonant and stable pairs, 7-8 and 7-9, possessing dissonance ratings of 3 and transpositions numbering 4 and 3 respectively (Figure 3). Owing to the fact that the overlaid interval groups from line 3 were not employed, the intervallic connection was lost.

*Figure 4* shows how two interval pairs, [1-7] and [3-5], have been used to create chords, in *Rhapsody*, in the strings from bars 29-37. In the process of voicing the passage, however, the template, at times, appears to have been broken: for example, in the score, the last chord of bar 29 constitutes the following intervals, reading upwards: [9,5,4], a voicing that does not reflect the template as it appears in *Figure 4*. It actually appears to conform to neither [3-5] nor [1-7]. In this instance, the exigencies of voice-

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9 Interestingly, both of these templates reduce to the same prime form: [014589], but in the realm of pitches, instead of pitch-classes, this may be of relatively less importance.

10 Morris, 1974, p. 364.
leading and register led to breaking of the template for expedient purposes.  

Figure 4: Interval Templates [3-5] and [1-7] in Solid Chords

ii. Melodic Phrase Structures: Evolving Phrase Lengths and Gestures of Section Delineation:

From Figure 5 it may be seen that *Rhapsody* can be divided into ten sections which contain layers of melodic and harmonic references. Within the ten sections, phrases accumulate, largely in regular, two or four-bar, durations. Phrase numbers that are underlined in Figure 5 denote phrases that: 1. are members of an antecedent-consequent relationship, or 2. share the same bass note on which the current template commences (anchor note). Significant gestures of section delineation are denoted in Figure 5, for example the recurrence of a pedal note in the treble (P₁), and of a “bouncing” figure (B₁): these figures mark the commencement of sections in the first and last quarters of *Rhapsody*.

The onset of each new section depends substantially on the variables depicted in Figure 5, but partly, too, on tempo and instrumental/textural changes. Specifically, the

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11 This process of re-voicing the interval pairs demonstrates that the interval pairs served as a guideline for pitch allocation, not as an absolute rule. Their principal benefit was felt to be in providing a pitch framework that could be adhered to, or modified, depending on the character of the music generated in response to that framework.

12 Anchor notes are designated as occurring only in sections IIIa-VI, and not in other sections where interval templates are still, nonetheless, in effect. In these other sections, the note on which, in theory, the template commences (the potential anchor note) is, in practice, not necessarily stated first, nor is it in the lowest position, largely robbing it of its anchoring function.
commencement of Section II is marked by the onset of the first melodic subject by the soloist, Section III by the second melodic subject. Section IV, an interlude in which the soloist does not play, is defined by a slower tempo and lighter instrumentation. Section V re-establishes orchestral tutti and the return of the soloist. Section VI is marked by a change in accompanimental texture (the use of quick and repeated notes in flute, glockenspiel, and piano). Section VII is defined by the interruption of the step-wise ascent of the anchor notes with a V-I cadence; in addition the woodwinds commence a series of cascades of scales.

Section VIII signals the end of the series of Anchor Notes of the previous sections and the establishment of a new texture where the soloist initiates a series of cascades downward, accompanied by strings. Section VIII marks the return of the first melodic subject, and of much of the accompanimental texture from Section II. Section IX corresponds to Section III in the same way, recalling the second subject briefly before launching a coda at bar 297.

The presence of interval templates is denoted in Figure 5 as an underpinning, depicted as existing literally below the other structural elements in the texture. Rhapsody is substantially determined by the melody, as would be expected in a work for solo instrument and orchestra. Often, however, the harmony contributes an a priori framework within which the melody moves. For example, the establishment of interval templates at bar 25 and bar 124 creates the harmonic structure with which the melody conforms. This structure is reiterated in modified form (labelled as “derivatives”), for example, at bars 280 and 208, respectively.

This aspect of reiteration in modified form is important, as it exemplifies the principal process of composition in Rhapsody: the creation of melodic material to be used by the saxophone soloist in response to an evolved form of the intervallic templates. By the time the music preceding Section VII was written, the sound of the templates was well-ingrained in the composer’s ear, and, by bar 208, they were deployed in a rather subconscious way. Harmony, from that point onward, was created in response to, and as following on from, the templates. Thanks to the imperfection of memory, the harmony became a modified version of the original interval pairs ([7-9] and [7-8]). Thus harmonies after bar 207, are labelled as “derivatives” of templates, not in a mathematical sense, but in a freely-improvised, musical, one.
Figure 5: Large-Scale Form of Rhapsody for Saxophone and Orchestra

**Key:**
- $B_1$ = Bouncing Figure 1
- $P_1$ = Treble Pedal 1
- $GP$ = General pause
- $S_1$ = Subject 1
- $EXT_7$ = 7-bar extension
- $B_i$ = Bouncing Figure Inverted
- $A.N.$ = Anchor Note
- $5.5$ = five and one-half bars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>I.</th>
<th>II.</th>
<th>III.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal marker</td>
<td>$P_1$</td>
<td>$B_1$</td>
<td>$B_2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrase-lengths</td>
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<td>4</td>
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Larger Units

Harmony

IV. V. VI. VII.

P. 13

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<tr>
<th>$124$</th>
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<tr>
<td>$A.N.$</td>
<td>$Eb$</td>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>$D$</td>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>$G#$</td>
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<td>$A#$</td>
<td>$B$</td>
<td>$D$</td>
<td>$E$</td>
<td>$F#$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 7-9 & 7-8 | 1-7 & 7-8 | 1-7 & 7-8 |

VIII. IX. X.

$P_3$ $B_3$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$236$</th>
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<th>$249$</th>
<th>$251$</th>
<th>$264$</th>
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</table>

$Bb$-$Eb$ $A-D$ $Bb$-$Eb$ $B-D$-$Bb$

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$S_1$</td>
<td>$S_1'$</td>
<td>$S_2$</td>
<td>$S_2'$</td>
<td>$S_2''$</td>
<td>$S_2'''$</td>
<td>$S_2''''$</td>
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VII. 7-9 & 7-8 derivatives
Linear movement in the bass line is, at times, superseded by bass-note movement of a perfect fourth or fifth. This constitutes a de facto V-I bass-note movement, which is noted in Figure 5 at bars 204, 234, and 238. Like the frequent four-square phrasing and the use of major seconds and minor thirds in the interval templates, this bass-note convention is employed deliberately to call on its rich associations of resolution and completion within traditional classical repertoire.13

Rhapsody may be understood to exist in three super-sections (each comprised of three or four sections), based on expansion or contraction of phrase-length. These super-sections occupy the three lines depicted in Figure 6. Sections I, IV, and VIII have an introductory or intermediary function on each line. Leaving them aside, it may be seen, on the first line, that phrase-length increases between the beginning of Section II and the end of Section III. On the second line, phrase-length decreases between the start of Section V and the end of Section VII. On the third line, phrase-length again increases from the start of Section IX to the end of the work. The evolution of the phrase-length throughout the work, summarised in Figure 6, provides significant formal impetus. This initial establishment of rigid phrase-structure creates a highly-ordered milieu in which changes to duration may be perceived readily.

Figure 6: Super-sections in Rhapsody

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-section</th>
<th>Section and evolving Phrase-Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I (long)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>IV (short)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>VIII (long)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II III (short to long)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V VI VII (long to short)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IX X (short to long)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### iii. Textural Structures: Canon

The organisation of Rhapsody according to evolving phrase-length interacts with the characteristic use of canon in close proximity at fast tempo.

At bar 294 of Rhapsody, three-part canon is undertaken (between strings and piano) at a distance of two eighth-notes. The prototypical Currie technique of treating such textures—which derived from a study of Steve Reich's works such as Music for Eighteen Musicians (1976)—occurred first in Windmill (1985). In Windmill, the subject phrase itself, in its normal form, is a passage of three-part canon in close proximity at intervals of 13

Consideration of these V-I structures shows that they constitute a circle of fifths: c-f (204), f to b-flat (234), b-flat to e-flat (241). The final gesture of Rhapsody does not use a V-I cadence, but the final note of a-flat stands in such a relationship to the "tonic" bass-note (Eb) of the preceding V-I gesture at bars 241-243.
a major second and a perfect fifth. The passage derived from this subject phrase is a concatenation of eighth-note fragments of the phrase of incremental duration:

1+2+3+4+5+6...etcetera. In the reverse case, the passage states the phrase in its entirety at first, then successively diminishes by one eighth-note at each repetition until it is reduced to nothing: 16+15+14...etcetera (Figure 7).

Used inflexibly, this technique amounts to little more than predictable iterations. As a structural underlay, however, it is a good example of how an a priori process may become the basis for an interesting passage, through the use of creative instrumentation, of dynamics and articulation, of selective octave transpositions and of selective deletions to the solid texture of notes which comprises the prototype in Figure 7. Thus, these elements generate musical interest and also may serve to divert the listener's attention sufficiently so that the impression of formal momentum towards a goal is maintained while the exact means by which this is achieved may happily remained obscured.

In Rhapsody, the two components of this process, canon and phrase-length expansion/contraction, are utilised separately. The evolution of phrase-length occurs at a deeper background level of structure that spans large sections of the work, while the technique of canon remains in the textural foreground.

iv. Instrumentation:

Instrumentation in Rhapsody was not organised by an a priori structure or set of structures. It was adapted to the requirements of the dramatic purpose as enunciated by the soloist, much in the way described above in the discussion of the use of canon. That is not to say that this element’s contribution is less important, but that its contribution is situation-specific in character. Instrumentation highlights and reinforces existing dramatic gestures which have already emanated from larger-scale pitch structures in Rhapsody, both melodic and harmonic. As such, it is not readily given to quantification.
Figure 7: Diminishing Phrase Length in Windmill (1985):
Winds provide most of the supporting counterpoint for the soloist, used individually or in various combinations (for example, saxophone, flute, oboe, and violin comprise a contrapuntal texture between bars 6 and 21). When doubling the saxophone at rhythmic unison they provide colouration to the solo line as well, via harmonic as well as timbral means.\footnote{The saxophone concerto by Stanley Myers, recorded by John Harle (\textit{Sax Drive}: ARGO records 443 529-2) demonstrates the effectiveness of the frequent doublings towards the end of varying and strengthening the melody. As early as 1834, Berlioz demonstrated with \textit{Harold in Italy}, the potential for timbral variation by doubling the viola soloist with various instruments from the orchestra.}

Piano has an important role in elaborating, and to an extent, sustaining, the interval templates created by elaborating the successive interval pairs (for example at bars 124, 132, and 183). It also provides clarity and definition by doubling the melody (bars 36-42) or by doubling moving parts, particularly in lower winds and strings (bar 29). Percussion has principally a coloristic role, using vibraphone (bar 28) and glockenspiel (bar 305). Timpani doubles tutti chords (bar 83), providing them with greater definition.

The strings, at times, outline the interval templates (bar 182). At other times, strings play the melody as a section (bar 95), and elsewhere violins and viola use mutes, harmonics, \textit{pizzicato}, and \textit{tremolo sul pont} to provide coloristic foil for the saxophone soloist.

D. Interaction of Structural Elements in \textit{Rhapsody}:

\textbf{Section I: bars 1-28}
In this section, phrases of four or five bars duration appear, the last extended by approximately one-half of a bar (\textit{Figure 5}). These are very free in rhythm and occur in what is, effectively, an unmetered texture. They are designated as introductory material in the formal analysis, corresponding to Sections IV and VIII (\textit{Figure 5}). They possess an independent role, distinct from that of the other sections in the formal scheme.

In the second violin and viola (bar 2), the first instance of a \textit{Pedal} occurring in treble register ($P_1$) appears as \textit{glissandi} in contrary motion in violin two and viola. The reiterated "bouncing" figure occurs ($B_1$ at bar 25). It comprises the first example of interval templates in the work ([1-7], [3-5]).

\textbf{Section II: bars 29-71}
The first melodic subject ($S_1$) appears at bar 29, constrained by templates [1-7] and [3-5]. The melody is notable for its regularity in both of its manifestations in Section I ($S_1'$ commences at bar 46). In both cases, the short and regular unit durations are succeeded by an extension which comprises two eighth-notes followed by a quarter-note. As in Section I, this section ends with the bouncing figure, extended to seven from the four bars of Section I (bar 25).
Section III: bars 72-123

Melody, designated as S2, is virtually the sole foundation of this section. The phrases are significantly longer than in S1 (Section II). The bass movement and pitch simultaneities are substantially linearly determined, and do not refer specifically to templates. Template contribution to form in this section stems mainly from having established harmony of a definite character, in Section II, thus setting implicit pitch parameters, which are observed in the realisation of the music of Section III.

Section IV: bars 124-131

This section corresponds to Section I in functioning as a kind of independent interlude and marks the start of the second super-section. It is the first section in which interval templates palpably dominate the other determinants (those in Section II were embedded). While modified versions of S1 (from bar 29) are sounded by woodwinds, two-bar interval templates [7-9] and [7-8] appear in the piano, oscillating back and forth in a four-bar antecedent-consequent fashion. This serves as a portend of the regularity of interval templates throughout sections V-VI.

Section V: bars 132-179

A sequence of interval templates is initiated at bar 132 ([7-2], [7-3], [7-3-8-3], and [7-4]); the increasing speed of its transpositions determines the form of this section in a primary, if embedded, way.

The solo melody follows the pitches asserted by the templates from the outset at bar 132, within the confines of the melodic character (stepwise and back-circling) established at the outset of the work. The melodic contour assumes a significant structural role as it slowly ascends to a high register, creating the apex of the section at bar 160.

From Figure 5, it may be seen that the duration of anchor note decreases substantially, from 16 bars (bars 132-147) to four bars, commencing at bar 164, in the drive to the end of the section. The four-square character of phrase is retained—variations in orchestration, melodic contour, and in quickened speed of harmonic rhythm provide the musical interest, above a phrase structure that, while telescoped, is still regular.

Section VI: bars 180-207

Structure here is determined firstly by a new set of templates. Pairs [7-9] (bar 182) and [7-8] (bar 183) are used, in the regular antecedent-consequent fashion of Section IV. The anchor notes are now deployed every four bars, with the template changing every two bars. The ascending movement of the anchor notes for the interval templates is also important in formal determination.

The melody is similar in character to that of Section V, which begins in low register and reaches a peak in high register (bar 197). Texture plays an important role, first at bar
180—where it is stripped away—then again at bar 200, where a previously relative diffuse orchestral background is replaced by a strong, almost monodic (except for the broken chord in piano, bassoon, and horn), texture. These textural interruptions are akin to the treble pedal and bouncing figure in demarcating significant section points.

**Section VII: bars 208-235**

In this section, pitch structure similar, but not identical, to the interval templates, is the initial formal determinant of the section. The oscillation between two chords, and their ascension, is the preeminent structure in this section until bar 223. These chords are labelled “7-9 & 7-8 derivatives” in *Figure 5*. Template and anchor note change speeds up within the section, culminating in one-bar phrases at bar 227.

Novel texture initially delineates this section from Section VI, and also partially determines form within Section VII, specifically when the soloist and accompanying instruments reverse roles at bar 223 (displaced by one bar from the new anchor note of $a_2$ at bar 222).

Texture and melody again become prominent over the rapidly changing anchor notes, from bar 227 onward. Piano and winds re-establish the frenetic counterpoint from the opening of the work, which provides the impetus to reach the second treble Pedal at bar 235.

**Section VIII: bars 236-253**

This section, parallel to Sections I and IV (*Figure 5*), marks the onset of the third super-section. Its phrases are longer, compared to the short phrase-lengths of Sections VII and IX.

A series of solo cascades is realised over successive dominant-to-tonic simulations in the bass. At bar 244, the regularity of the cascading pattern breaks off, and surface gestures from the opening of the work, specifically the growling gesture and the string *glissandi*, suggest that a recapitulation of some kind is imminent. The following treble pedal (bar 249) and bouncing figure (251) reinforce the impression that an important dividing point has been reached.

**Section IX: bars 254-287**

This section is parallel to Section II. In Section IX, $S_1$ appears almost verbatim. The extension, however, is very long and leads not to $S_1'$, but to another premonitive bouncing figure at bar 280. The same three-note figure of two eighth-notes followed by a quarter-note previously used at bars 56 and 116 is used for the sequential extension at bar 266. The harmony, here, is the same as in Section II (templates [1-7] and [3-5]).
Section X: bars 288-323

Expanded duration of phrases occurs, in parallel to that which occurred at Section III. First is the restatement of part of S2 at bar 288. In this case, the extension comprises canon in fast, metered texture, derived from Section III, but with the accompanying texture pared away to create a simpler, and more forceful, statement. Instead of winding down, as the music began to do at bar 113, the extension at bar 297 of Section X builds upward, in preparation for the climactic close of the work.

Scalar melody and textural contrast dominate the form of this final section, which owes relatively little to the interval templates, but instead returns to the linearly-determined character of Section III. The fourth treble pedal and fifth bouncing figure occur at bars 309 and 315, respectively, for the last time.

E. Conclusions:

Much, though not all, of the solo part of Rhapsody was composed in response to the newly-constructed interval templates. The freedom of usage within the partial confines of a system, here, may correspond to what Morris quotes Lewin as saying about musical form arising out of the way a composer dances, as it were, through a space. Morris's discussion about the distinction between compositional space, compositional design, and improvisation (by the composer, not the performer) would seem to refer to a universal condition of composing: composers vacillate between establishing an a priori structure on the one hand, and responding to the exigencies of the musical moment, on the other. As material is recycled throughout Rhapsody, the ultimate interest in the work may derive from seeing how small-scale or surface gestures interact with the underlying large-scale structures to produce flowing, directional, music.

The process of composition commenced with fairly small-scale details of melodic contour; this was married to the pervasive, medium-scale, harmonic organisation provided by the interval templates. Within these boundaries, the piece really represents the interaction of conservatism with idiosyncrasy. The use of V-I gestures, the allusion to sonata form subjects, the retention of four-square phrasing, and of intervals of a major second, minor third, perfect fourth and fifth, was deliberate. These elements have a meaning for experienced musicians that was established over 250 years in a vast common-practice repertoire. Such elements were combined with methods such as phrase-

17 Eugene Wilson has pointed out that the identification of two thematic subjects in Rhapsody, which return in the latter third of the work, does suggest thematically-based sonata form. This archetype undoubtedly resides in the composer's reservoir of intuitive musical tendencies, but it was not utilised deliberately. The case for sonata form would have to be made largely exclusive of tonal scheme, as the first and third parts of the work do not have readily-identifiable anchor-notes (see note on page 133).
expansion/contraction and canon, to create textures that are intended to embody a degree of complexity, while remaining relatively transparent.

Within ten sections of largely unitary character—some of which last almost three minutes—sufficient contrast is embodied to sustain the form in the smallest-scale; and the most local, way. Layers of processes, involving templates, anchor notes, phrases, melodic contours, bouncing figures and pedals, are set in motion. These run independently at times. At section points they often converge before diverging again in the next section. The sameness of unified textures is alleviated by contrast; contrast is unified by coherence. At the most basic level, a texture is allowed to continue until it begins to lose momentum and to meander from the ultimate destination.

Overall, it is the process of phrase expansion/contraction that provides the work with its largest-scale source of direction and momentum. Within that over-arching goal, however, the medium- to small-scale enactment of canon and textural details is of equal importance in sustaining the listener’s attention, and ultimately his absorption.
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