Essays after Original Compositions

by

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Preface

The matter of control is invariably confronted in all types of creative expression. While crafting a work, the artist is most often in nearly complete control, although certain movements have sought to diminish this influence. Of course, producing or contemplating chance art requires one to engage with the issue of control, and it should be remembered that even the simple act of defining any item or idea as a piece of art is a demonstration of control; personal influence can never be fully eradicated from any artwork, no matter how indeterminate it is considered.

The five compositions presented in this thesis are not in any way aleatoric, however, so the nature of control within them is at first more straightforward; the notes that form the pieces have been selected as intentionally as possible. Complete control by the composer is not attainable, though, nor is it desired. The introduction of performers requires that many expressive aspects of the works be left to the discretion of others, even if, as in this case, the composer conducts the performance. The next, last, and most significant step of control transfer occurs when listeners, or observers of whatever types apply to a given art, interpret and react to compositions. They are free to explore their understanding of the works, and hopefully are encouraged to do so. As this happens, the pieces become theirs.

It is with this in mind that these essays were written. They are not parts of the artworks; they are not even true companions to the music or a collection of statements of artistic purpose. They simply catalog parts of an individual’s understanding of the pieces, including to various extents programmatic and harmonic interpretations. It is
of course significant that this individual is the composer, but it is also crucial to bear in mind that the ideas therein were for the most part encountered after composition was complete, and often after the works had been performed. The interpretations are for the most part not preconceived meanings, but responses formed after the fact. The subjectivity of the position of composer is unavoidable, so opinions expressed here should not be taken as the views of an outsider. However, they are in no way absolute truth. Some essays focus on possible programmatic inferences, while others concentrate more on the techniques and events that foster individual readings. Any narrative suppositions are purely personal, and even harmonic analyses were mostly done after the completion of the works and may be contested.

These essays are for the curious, not for those looking to find any singular meaning behind the works. All of this music is intended to be evocative, but in a manner unique to each listener. Similarly, the titles are meant to be evocative, but not in any single way; the essays may shed light on some possible meanings, but in no way do they present the only valid conclusions. Having been presented publicly, the pieces are out of the composer’s hands, so any and all outside interpretations are entirely legitimate. It would be enormously unfortunate if individuals were somehow made to understand the works in some homogeneous way. Such a development would crush the essence of this art. It is then preferable that readers come to their own conclusions about the compositions before investigating the composer’s thoughts. For this reason, each score is presented here before the essay that addresses it. Hopefully, the accounts that follow will only spark further thought and interaction with the music.
The Gentle Hoax

Clarinet notated in concert pitch
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Bs Cl.
Pno.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.

poco a poco cresc.

14
The Gentle Hoax

*The Gentle Hoax* begins with an act of subtle, implicit deception, the true nature and significance of which can only be understood once the basic properties of the beginning of this composition are investigated. The first flute provides a majority of the lyrical figures in the piece, and possessing the most communicative of the parts, it clandestinely perpetrates the mild trickery in its first note. The subsequent context provided by the piano is what exposes this act. The piano’s passive betrayal is carried out using a pattern that is rhythmically intriguing, but extremely repetitive, as it recurs through most of the piece. This steadfast element anchors most of the composition, not allowing it to stray far from a basic structure. Near the end, however, the piano sheds its unwavering supporting role and shifts the direction of the piece drastically and surprisingly. It is revealed that the piano’s laying of groundwork has not been for the sake of stability, but for the purpose of misdirection. *The Gentle Hoax* is therefore bookended by two unforeseen twists; the first is brief and only revealed implicitly over time, while the second is lengthy, recognized immediately upon arrival, and impossible to turn back from once it arrives.

The piano and flute are the only instruments heard in measures 1 through 8. In this stretch, ignoring the two-beat pickup for a moment, every note is in the C minor scale. In pairs of identical measures, the piano begins a pattern that continues uninterrupted for nearly the entire piece; in each measure, the right and left hands simultaneously alternate between two pitches, first the lower as a dotted eighth note, then the higher as a sixteenth and an eighth, then the lower as an eighth and a
sixteenth, then the higher again as a sixteenth and an eighth, and finally the lower as an eighth. This is continually supported by the C below middle C, which acts as a stubborn pedal tone. The flute plays a melody that is not always tied directly to the chords articulated by the piano, but its refusal to break away from the C minor scale, as well as the piano’s similar adherence to that key and the recurrence of the C pedal tone at the beginning of every measure, situates the beginning of this piece strongly in C minor. Of course, the music begins not with measure 1, but with the pickup, in which the flute plays two notes alone, E-natural followed by F. These two notes are presented without context; it is not until the piano joins with a C minor triad on the downbeat of measure 1 that a frame of reference emerges. Once this occurs, the home of C minor is established (if not immediately, then in the next few measures, as the progression in C minor continues). As the key of this section reveals itself, the first note of the piece is contextualized anew. The E-natural is suddenly retroactively out of place; the framework it initially seemed to prepare has now rejected it. The question then becomes, has the listener noticed? In the score, the note’s peculiarity is rather evident, it being the only one with an accidental in the first eight measures. However, given the late arrival of the perspective provided by the piano, the unfamiliar ear may not be truly aware of what occurred in the pickup. More likely, the E-natural has created an uncertainty in hindsight, being the major third above C rather than the minor third that is so vital to any minor scale’s identity. In this way, a note held for just one and a half beats remains to an undefined but real extent in the fabric of the music, or at least in the mind of the listener, for the entire beginning of
the piece. However, at this point, it remains to be seen how prescient the momentary hint of C major is.

After the flute finishes its part of the melody, the clarinet immediately takes over in measure 9. After the flute holds an F for eight beats, the clarinet enters just one step below, on a concert E-flat, making for a smooth transition. The clarinet continues in the melodic style started by the flute; any aural shift between the two parts is due simply to a change in timbre. After three measures of melody alone with the piano, the clarinet leads into the first significant development in terms of density, achieved by the reintroduction of the flute and first appearance of the strings. While the piano continues its repetitive pattern (it should be emphasized that the notes used in this pattern change every two measures) and the clarinet holds a D for the length of each of the two measures, staggered entrances of all the remaining instruments except the decidedly underused second flute initiate the chaotic but controlled arrangement of measures 13 and 14. The flute appears on beat 3, the cello on beat 4, the viola on beat 6, and the violin on beat 7. Excepting from the dotted quarter note E-flat the flute plays in measure 14, each of these four instruments sustains notes for two beats at a time until the last beat of measure 14. Thus, though they enter at different times, the flute and violin end up playing together, aside from the flute’s aforementioned durational exception, as do the viola and cello. Thus the piano is flanked by two clashing quarter note patterns, amounting to a three-layered syncopated figuration in which the already peculiar 7/8 rhythm of the piano is combined with what are essentially two 4/4 rhythms that are out of phase by one eighth note. The fairly haphazard pitches of the flute and strings only build upon this disorder. For instance,
the flute plays an A-flat while the violin, viola, and cello (as well as the left hand of the piano) are unified on G in the last beat of measure 13, and on the downbeat of measure 14, the flute is still playing A-flat and the violin is still playing G, but the viola plays A-natural, increasing the dissonance further. The flute, violin, and viola are strictly ascending for these two measures, the cello strictly descending, but the leaps that make up their lines are largely unpredictable. As long as the piece is restricted to figures that occupy the space provided by the piano’s pattern, arrangements like this present a valuable means to create drama.

In measures 15, the rhythmic disunity all but vanishes. The violin and clarinet play in unison while the cello plays different notes in an almost identical rhythm, one that is syncopated but more fitting for the seven-beat measure. Meanwhile, the flute and viola have much simpler parts. This is followed in measure 16 by short, soft statements by the flute, clarinet, violin, and viola that lead to a four-measure section that is similar to measures 13 through 16, but larger and more chaotic. Once again, it is brought on by the clarinet playing a sixteenth note at the end of the measure and then moving one step to a sustained D in the next measure (in measure 16, the sixteenth note is a C, whereas an E-flat is played in measure 12). As before, the other instruments have staggered entrances in measure 17, though they start much earlier in the measure and occur in a different order than in measure 13. The strings are not bound to strictly ascending or descending lines this time, nor are any of them rhythmically unified with any other, making for an even more confusing pair of measures. Measure 19 mirrors measure 15 in many ways: the clarinet plays notes in the same rhythm it played earlier, while another instrument, now the flute instead of
the violin, plays an identical part in its respective register; the cello also uses the same rhythm as before; and the two remaining instruments have much simpler parts yet again. Instead of being followed by a quiet measure, however, the syncopated rhythms from measure 19 are reused immediately, over a wider tonal range than before.

The boisterousness of that section is quickly calmed when all the strings and woodwinds drop out, leaving just the piano to play the figure that appeared in measure 1. As other instruments gradually reenter over the next few measures, the piano does not simply duplicate its part from the beginning of the piece. After measures 21 and 22 replicate measures 1 and 2 exactly, measures 3 and 4 are repeated, but with the middle Cs replaced by B-naturals; consequently, the piano plays a ii diminished 7th instead of a ii half-diminished 7th. Because the notes are played individually four times in each hand, the change is quite noticeable. From here, the piano is free to continue down an entirely new path. It may go unnoticed here, but the piano has just quietly exhibited its hidden control. After letting excitement build, it brings the narrative back the beginning, but takes it in a new direction, and is able to get the other instruments (again, excluding the second flute) to follow one by one over the next several measures.

In measures 21 through 36, the piano oscillates between i chords and others, two measures at a time. The i chords in measures 21 and 22, 25 and 26, 29 and 30, and 33 and 34 are articulated uniquely in each pair of measures, but their presence, along with the unhurried and almost entirely diatonic accompaniment of the other instruments, makes this the most clearly C minor section of the piece. Yet, the V
chord in measures 35 and 36 leads to IV/I in measure 37, which is in C major, the key intimated in the first note of the piece, but forgotten until now. The major mode is confirmed with the arrival of the C major chord in measure 39. The richly dense texture that continues from here through measure 42 enhances the refreshing nature of this shift to the major. The clarinet and cello drop out in measure 43, and the flute, violin, and viola follow suit in measure 45, letting the piano stand alone once again.

The viola reenters in measure 47, the violin in measure 48, and the cello in 53. Until their final exit in measure 69, with a single exception in measure 48, the strings hold each note for seven or fourteen beats. The motion is therefore extremely slow, and it is also mostly stepwise. The piano seems to enjoy its new tonal home, playing I, IV, and V chords in its typical pattern until a ii chord appears in measures 67 and 68, right before the drastic shift that is to take place in measure 69. In measure 61, the first flute and, for the first time, the second flute, add to the apparent celebration, playing almost entirely in diatonically parallel fourths.

Abruptly, in measure 69, the piano is left to play solo one last time. Unlike before, though, it truly takes advantage of its freedom, finally stopping the rhythmic pattern it used for all the previous sixty-eight measures and playing by itself for almost all of the next nine. Through measure 74, the piano rejoices in its patiently plotted achievement, employing larger chords and octaves played in 4/4 (plus one measure of 5/4). It ends with passage with a whole note V/V that leads to a G major section that ends the piece.
Measure 75 consists entirely of repeated Bs anticipating the third of the I chord in G major that appears in the next measure. This preparation of the major chord echoes the attempt by the E-natural that began the piece. However, the Bs are preceded by the dominant of G major, providing a clear context, whereas the flute’s E-natural lacked such a context and was therefore unable to have its suggestion of a major modality realized until much later in the piece. The I chord that appears in measure 76 is the beginning of a transposition to G major of the material from measures 69 through 74. The transposed passage is played in its entirety in this new key, joined by supportive parts from all three woodwinds starting at the end of measure 77; the flutes and clarinet have been convinced to follow the piano in this new direction. The clarinet withdraws in measure 79, leaving the flutes (including the surprising latecomer that is the second flute) as the piano’s accompaniment at the end of the piece. Since the piano transposition is exact aside from one additional note in measure 76, the section, and therefore the piece, ends on a V/V chord. It is a surprising conclusion, given the various aspects of The Gentle Hoax that have defined most of its duration, including the piano’s rhythmic pattern and position in the background, the 7/8 time signature, the presence of strings, the absence of the second flute, and the parallel keys of C. The piano is not even content to truly end in the key of G major, in which it suddenly positions itself. The implied objective of the first note of the piece is reached with the arrival of C major in measure 37, but then taken further than ever imagined. After the second flute is finally allowed to join the ensemble, it is one of the few instruments heard at the end. Various expectations have been at once defied, satisfied, and exceeded.
Distraction
Freely and more slowly
In *Distraction*, the piano finds itself constantly struggling to achieve tranquility. In the course of its search, it often ends up moving in circles, traveling great distances only to emerge where it started. Occasionally, it may enter a period of relative calm, but this is nearly always cut short, interrupted by an overzealous reaction to the supposed serenity. It is not a scarcity of opportunities that forces the piano into this frenetic predicament; there are a number of places where permanent repose seems entirely attainable, and occasionally it appears to have been reached. However, the piano’s excitement is repeatedly its own undoing, and until the end, it remains unable to truly find peace.

The instrument’s enduring inability to fully escape certain conditions and situations, as though on a leash that limits potential distance from a central point, is anticipated on a smaller scale in the beginning of the composition. The piano begins strikingly with the frantic and repetitive main theme, which is characterized by the delayed identification of harmonies and rhythms that start with two dotted eighth notes. A majority of the one hundred and thirty-five measures that make up this piece begin with two dotted eighth notes (either literally or implicitly through different, but basically equivalent, rhythmic notation), which usually make a measure seem unbalanced by placing extra emphasis on its beginning. As the music progresses (and regresses), what follows the two dotted eighth notes varies, especially given the assortment of meters that are used; the exploration of possibilities facilitated by these variations permeates the whole composition.
In the ten measures that make up the opening theme, the right hand presents a
number of approaches to measures that start with two dotted eighth notes. Measure 1
follows them with a quarter note and an eighth, achieving the sort of rhythmic
imbalance mentioned before; measure 2 uses four dotted eighths, temporarily
achieving equilibrium that is lost when measure 3 repeats measure 1. The 2/8
measure 5 essentially adds two beats to measure 4, allowing it to take the rhythmic
model of measure 1 and extend the last two notes each by an eighth, thereby swinging
the balance away from the beginning of the measure. Measures 1 through 5 are
repeated in the next five measures, except for one changed note in the second 2/8
measure that helps lead into the next section. Thus the piano performs a tumultuous
rhythmic balancing act, and the listener is quickly made aware of the indecisiveness
and instability that will be heard in most of the piece.

The harmonic characteristics of the opening theme are less prototypical for the
rest of Distraction than its rhythmic qualities, but no less indicative of the nature of
the music. The left hand begins with D-flat in octaves for an eighth note followed by
a quarter note A-flat, indicating a D-flat triad of some sort. The right hand’s first
notes are E-natural, G-flat, and E-flat, none of which has much to do with a D-flat
chord. After being held for one and a half eights, the E-flat moves down to D-flat,
but it is not until beat 2 that the right hand plays F and A-flat, the third and fifth of
that chord, thus revealing the first chord to have been a D-flat major triad. By this
time, however, the left hand has moved onto the next chord, playing an octave of E-
flat. Since the right hand is busy defining the previous chord, it is not yet able to
concern itself with the current actions of the left. Both hands end the first measure on
B-flat, the fifth of an E-flat triad, but again it is not immediately clear whether it is major or minor. With the downbeat of measure 2 come G-natural and D-flat in the right hand; these two notes, combined with the E-flat and B-flat from the last measure articulate a V7/III in F minor. However, as before, the left hand has already moved forward, taking the root and fifth of the chord with it. The left hand starts measure 2 with Fs followed by C, the root and fifth of I; the third is not heard until the right hand plays A-flat (as well as C) after the same delay used in the beginning of measure 1. On beat 2 of the second measure, both hands somewhat uncharacteristically play only chord tones, specifically the root, third, and seventh of V7. When the right hand moves for the last time, in the second half of beat 2, it changes the harmony to v by moving from E-natural to E-flat (the chord could also be considered III7, if the A-flat is not deemed a nonchord tone). The deferred indications of sonorities give this section its quality of inattentiveness; the repetitively circling harmonic progression demonstrates on a small scale the piano’s tendency to return to prior settings.

Measure 11 finally brings some harmonic relief for the piano, although it is still largely forced into old rhythms. The mode shifts temporarily to the parallel F major when both hands play F and C and the right hand arrives at A-natural at the end of the measure. This technique of postponed clarification is a relic of the previous 10 measures, and it is not used again for some time. With the change in meter to 5/8, both hands play a dotted eighth note followed by a staccato sixteenth note and an eight rest, and then finish with a quarter note tied into the next measure. The staccato sixteenth note and the subsequent rest function together as a dotted eighth note, but with a lighter touch, so the measure is rhythmically likened to the right hand of
measure 1 with the last eighth note removed; measure 13 is in 6/8 and therefore is able to take the rhythm from measure 1 and simply makes the second note staccato. Measures 14 and 16 offer two more takes on the dotted eighth motif, and after so many different attempts at breaking from the rhythm, the piano is finally successful for a moment, as measures 18 through 20 contain no traces of the otherwise ubiquitous figure. However, measure 21 brings it back in a new way, in preparation for the approaching ferocious and persistent new treatment of the rhythm.

At this point the tempo changes, the dynamic becomes forte, and the time signature changes to 5/8. Over a bass note held for five beats, both hands play two dotted eighth notes followed by two eighths, the rhythm from measure 1 with the third note cut in half. This rhythm is used repeatedly until measure 35, which reduces it slightly by removing a couple of notes in the last two beats while having notes from beat 4 held through the end of the measure. The next measure starts with a dotted eighth, but follows this with no movement in either hand. The energy of the section thus dissipates, and a calmer transitional section begins in the 2/4 measure 37. There, the last eighth note in the 5/8 rhythm is removed so the remaining notes can fit into the shorter measure; this results in a rhythm identical to that of measure 21. The rhythmic relation between measure 21, measures 23 through 36, and measure 37 make the transitions smooth, but also draw attention to the piano’s failure so far to find an exit.

After a number of successive shifts, the meter settles briefly on 6/8 in measure 41. From there through measure 49, the music bears almost no resemblance to what has come before; the piano seems to have eluded the otherwise persistent rhythmic
format and is eager to enjoy its newfound freedom. In measure 43, it begins to explore A minor, though the presence of both major and minor 7th scale degrees creates some tension between the harmonic and natural minor scales. The progression leads to a V chord at the beginning of measure 49, over which an arpeggiated D minor chord leads to another key change, which might be incorrectly predicted to make permanent the piano’s escape from its past environments.

In measure 50, the piano finds itself in A major, the key parallel to that of the previous setting. With the introduction of common time comes an uncomplicated progression that is quite relieving in its contrast to the intricacies of all the music that has preceded it. Unfortunately, the new simpler sonorities come within an all too familiar rhythmic framework; each of measures 50 through 53 begin with two dotted eighth notes. The piano seems to enjoy itself in these measures, especially as it reinforces the harmonies in measures 55 and 56 with low octaves, as though it has not yet realized what has happened. It plays comfortable chords that avoid confusing intricacies, but soon the mistake it made by returning to the dotted eighth rhythm it had left behind is revealed.

Measures 57 and 58 each begin with two dotted eighth notes in the right hand and lead directly, if unnaturally, from an A major chord to a B-flat minor chord. The unusual harmonic shifts in these two measures give the impression that the piano is being forced in a particular direction, or at least unwillingly tempted toward it. The destination is revealed in measure 59: after so much new material has gradually changed keys and shed the dotted eighth motif, measures 1 through 10 have returned,
though transposed up a half step. The theme has followed the piano’s path and caught up to it in a different tonal region.

Just as measures 1 through 10 were followed by a transitional section before the vigorous phrasing of measure 24 began, so too are measures 59 through 68 followed by new material before the transposition of measure 24 arrives. The V7 in F-sharp minor that sounds in the second half of measure 67 and continues for the two eighths of the next measure (although only the fifth of the chord is played in that measure) resolves to an F-sharp minor chord as the time signature returns to 6/8, but it soon becomes clear that the key has changed. Both hands start with a pattern of two dotted eighth notes followed by three eighths, yet another new rhythm in the tradition of measure 1 and so many others, but this is the last time dotted eighths are used for a bit. Moving in similar motion over an F-sharp pedal point until the second half of measure 76, the hands drift up and down through the E major scale. The hands diverge into a V chord right before the meter becomes 4/4 and the V resolves to E-flat minor. The energy from the previous measures is sapped, and measure 80 ends with a V chord that ushers in the next section.

All is not well, though. *Distraction* is only a bit more than half over, but there is no entirely new music to be heard. In fact, measures 81 through 124 (with an ornamental exception in measures 112 and 113) are identical to measures 24 through 67 transposed down a major third. In measures 112 and 113, two high arpeggios replace low octaves, but the effect of forceful emphasis on the respective harmonies is much the same. After reiterating the material from measures 1 through 10 (the right hand plays one different note in measure 125, which would have been a transposition
of measure 10), the main theme of the piece is repeated loudly with a much more intricate bass line, but without the 2/8 measure extensions present in all three previous iterations. A ritardando at measure 132 slows down the action, so the all the energy built up over the course of this more boisterous version of the main theme can be released, and the piece ends with two large arpeggios on D major.

Throughout *Distraction*, two dotted eighth notes begin an almost overwhelming number of measures and introduce a wide variety of material to conclude those measures. The dotted eighth notes function most often as a means of creating lopsided figurations within measures, but with so many different rhythms and time signatures used, the effects and nature of the imbalance varies. Each instance can be seen as an attempt by the piano to find new settings that might offer more freedom. It tries many variations on the dotted eighth note motif, but when the main theme returns in measure 59, the efforts are revealed to have been unsuccessful. In measures 69 through 80, the piano makes one final attempt, its longest and most promising, only to see the material from measure 24 onward return. At this point, it simply gives up, repeating dozens of measures of music with minimal changes, aside from transposition. When the main theme is repeated at the end of the piece with a more energetic bass line, it appears that the piano has finally embraced the thematic material, embraced its fate; indeed, it not only repeats the theme, but it expands on it. When the piece ends grandly with wide arpeggios of D major chords, it must be considered whether a change in perspective has allowed freedom to be found in what was originally seen as imposed restraints or the piano has resigned itself to an unenviable fortune.
Amends

Flute 1

Flute 2

Clarinet in B♭

Violin

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

\( \begin{align*}
\text{Amends} \\
\text{at all times}
\end{align*} \)

Clarinet notated in concert pitch
Amends

The structure of *Amends* is in a way at odds with itself. It is relatively sectional, made up mostly of short, unique phrases, but these sections link to one another in several ways that result in a perhaps unexpectedly cohesive whole. Ultimately, the eccentricities of the various sections are assembled into a sort of free, train of thought narrative. The continual changes foster forward progress; there are a few recollections along the way and the path occasionally crosses back over itself, but only to lead somewhere new, never to retread for any large amount of time. What is most paradoxical about the composition is not that it is at once fragmented and flowing, but that the first characteristic is actually essential to the realization of the second.

Many of the small sections that fill this piece establish their entrances in part with a change in meter. The metric shifts between sections help create the sense of freedom present in much of the music. A number of them also contain more than one time signature. These various meters are for the most part used for a small number of measures at a time, so the piece rarely settles into one metric space for long. Consequently, the material unfolds in a way that seems free and organic.

The first section is somewhat uncharacteristically lengthy, filling nine measures. The first flute provides the melody here, with minimal movement in the other parts. Measures 3 through 9 (as well as the two subsequent measures, which are in the second section) are in 3/4 and the melody does not obscure the division of beats in these measures, so a sizable region near the beginning of the piece contains little of
the rhythmic freedom seen later. However, measure 2 is in 5/8, essentially breaking a pattern that has yet to be established. This 5/8 measure is created by removing one eighth from what is expected to be the third beat in 3/4. The second and third notes of the measure could have logically been two eighth notes or a dotted eighth and a sixteenth, as their counterparts in measure 5 are; making them sixteenth notes is a subtle move that does not disrupt the flow of the melody, but quietly foreshadows the metric irregularity that will begin to reveal itself in measure 14.

The second section of *Amends* is shorter than the first, occurring in measures 10 through 13, all of which articulate i in G minor, resolving the V from measures 8 and 9. The double bass enters for the first time, and there is increased activity in the other strings. While the flute descends from the D that ended the first section, the cello finds itself with a bit more to do, and the viola has the most melodic line. The first two measures of this section continue the 3/4 from before, but measures 12 and 13 are in common time, though the change is not apparent until the last beat of measure 12; after descending in alternating half notes and quarter notes in the previous two measures, the flute seems to continue this pattern, but sustains the second note into the fourth beat of measure 12. The viola is the only other moving part in that measure, and it behaves similarly, although it actually moves on beat four. The smooth yet unexpected nature of the shift lets measures 10 through 13 exist as an acceptably unified section that is still unbalanced. With common time finally established by the end of measure 12, the next measure contains only half and whole notes, which make the meter quite clear. However, any supposed stability in meter is false, as a 9/8 measure appears immediately after.
This return to triple meter, but with beats one and a half times as long as before, is the most striking change heard yet, and it marks the beginning of the third section, which occupies measures 14 through 16. Once again, the section in question is shorter than the one before it, both in terms of measures and beats. The rhythmic variety continues to escalate, making it increasingly difficult for any specific musical idea to be sustained for a substantial amount of time. As the second flute makes its entrance in measure 14, the first regains the melody. In each of the three measures, it plays three eighth notes, the second being the highest, and then two more notes. Just as measure 2 was made to fit agreeably as a 5/8 measure surrounded by measures in 3/4, the middle measure of this section is shortened by reducing the duration of its last two notes. Meanwhile, the accompaniment consists entirely of dotted quarter notes, making the 9/8 and 6/8 rhythms unmistakable. Just as before, though, this metric plane is left quickly.

Measures 17 and 18 make up the shortest section yet (from here on, section length fluctuates more randomly). In these two measures of 3/4, the clarinet takes the melody, accompanied by the viola, cello, and double bass. The melody in both measures is divided into three eighth notes followed by a quarter note and then another eighth note. This is the same rhythm used for the melody in measure 15, but the difference of the accents in 6/8 and 3/4 make for a new sound; the reused rhythm helps bridge the gap between the sections while allowing the music to change over time. Measure 19 begins another two-measure section, this time with the clarinet and first flute both playing melodically in 4/4. This section and the two before it are the three sources of repeated or adapted material later in the piece.
After a pair of two-measure transitional sections in measures 21 through 25, the first theme to reappear is that of the section in measures 17 and 18. The melody played earlier by the clarinet undergoes literal transposition and is divided among the various instruments in measures 25 and 26. Both flutes play the first note of the former clarinet melody, D, as does the viola, which holds the note for two beats as the flutes continue on to the next note, C. The second flute holds the C for the rest of the measure while the first moves to F, the third note of the melody, which is already being sustained by the violin. The first flute plays the fourth note, E-natural, and is joined by the viola half a beat later. While those two instruments hold that note for an additional half beat, the clarinet and violin continue the transposed line by playing A. They both hold the A into the subsequent measure, where the cello and first flute play the next note, D, which they hold for three entire beats. In the second half of beat 1 in measure 26, the clarinet and violin play F, which the viola has been playing since the downbeat. While the clarinet and viola are still on F, the violin and second flute play A, holding it for the remainder of the measure. The clarinet and viola provide the E-flat needed in the second half of beat two and the last note, D, which has been played by the cello and first flute for the entire measure. The expansion of this melody creates a much grander sound that contrasts effectively with the gentler figures heard in the next two measures.

The variation on the motif from measures 17 and 18 is eventually followed by an adaptation of measures 19 and 20, but not immediately. Measures 27 and 28 form a small section in which the woodwinds play without string accompaniment for the only time until the ending. It makes for a brief but striking change in color,
reinforced by yet another meter change. After a three-measure section in which all seven instruments play, the theme from measures 19 and 20 is rehashed in measures 32 and 33. This time, the flute plays a literal transposition of the former clarinet part while the clarinet does the same for what was flute’s part. As before, this variant leads the piece forward into new territory, rather than dwelling on or extensively developing the old material.

For the first thirty-three measures, the composition remained mostly in G minor, with occasional tonicizations, but measure 34 begins a five-measure section that takes the piece into the parallel major. This leads directly into a particularly expressive section in measures 39 though 41 that exemplifies the rhythmic freedom and ambiguity heard throughout much of *Amends*. The three measures in this section are all in different meters, first 3/4, then 2/4, and finally 4/4. The more melodic parts in the first two of these measures, in the clarinet in measure 39 and the flute in measure 40, end each of those measures with a note tied to a half note in the next measure, obscuring the meter further. Yet, typical of *Amends*, the rhythmic irregularities are not confusing, but freeing. The focal point is, as always, the expressivity of the notes; temporally intriguing intricacies are used entirely for the purpose of supporting the nonspecific narrative conveyed by the ensemble. Were the rhythmic details to draw focus away from this delivery, it would likely undermine the meaning (which should be unique to each listener) behind the notes, so if this composition is successful, it has avoided this possibility.

Measures 42 and 43 contain the final example of recycled material in the form of a flute melody similar to that of measures 14 through 16. There is no 6/8 measure
this time and the part is not transposed literally, but the pattern of three eighth notes, the highest in the middle, followed by two more notes is distinctive, especially since it is used in all five measures whose beats are dotted quarters. Except for the last note of measure 42 and the first of measure 43, the flute melody is a minor 6th lower than the corresponding part of measures 14 and 15 (and it should be noted that the last two notes of measure 15 are shorter than the corresponding notes in measure 43, since the former contains one less beat than latter). As before, the accompaniment is entirely in dotted quarter notes, accentuating the temporary change in beat length during these measures.

Measure 44 follows naturally from the prior two measures, as a sort of conclusion to the 9/8 section, but it also sets up the last part of the piece. The clarinet plays three descending eighth notes at the end of the measure to lead directly into the final section, which begins in measure 45 with the flute playing its notes from the previous measure an octave lower, though the D is now held for only two beats instead of three. This three-note motif starts an ascending, interwoven pattern among the three woodwinds in which they take turns playing an eighth note followed by a note sustained for two and a half beats one step higher. After the first beat of measure 45, exactly one woodwind plays an eighth note at the beginning of each beat through measure 47. As described, this eighth note is followed by a note held for two and a half beats, resulting in a number of notes being tied over bar lines. Thus, the motion is constant and the meter is hard to define; during these three measures every beat is structurally identical, with the three woodwinds swapping roles cyclically while they all rise. The swirling arrangement, which leads immediately to the sustained notes
that end the piece, is a fittingly ambiguous yet structured conclusion. The rhythmic freedom in this composition is meant not to appear chaotic, but natural. The piece does not intend to sound improvisatory, but constantly progresses forward, even when old material is reused. It does not necessarily sound spontaneous, but it maintains an organic quality; it is as though random thoughts are pouring out, but subconscious links among them create a sense of cohesiveness that is present throughout the entire composition.
Open Shadows
Energetically
Open Shadows

*Open Shadows* derives much of its expressive power from the use of ninth chords. The dissonance inherent in them, especially those that are minor, creates tension within the intervals themselves, but the particular intervals found in this piece frequently produce further ambiguity when heard in the framework in which they reside. Of the two notes in each ninth, one is often relevant to the given harmony while the other is a nonchord tone, but they occasionally imply conflicting harmonic identities upon their tonal settings. Ninths are used where octaves would suffice, creating sonorities that are not only denser than that simpler option, but also more stimulating. Instead of being treated as unstable, ninths are held for long stretches, not forced to resolve typically, and given a central role in the structure of the composition. The beauty of the ninths in this composition is in their simultaneous nearness to and distance from the consonance of an octave. Each conveys a sense that as one idea is being expressed, innate contradictory elements within it are being exposed. That these ninths are so often allowed to unabashedly resonate portrays a sincere willingness to accept, and even embrace, such reasonable internal conflict.

In measures 1 and 2, the left hand repeats a six-note pattern that includes the notes C, G, D, and A-flat, thereby implying the key of C minor. A-flat is the only one of them that is in the minor key and not the parallel major, but through repetitions it gains influence. However, the right hand brings some uncertainty to the modality of this section with intervals that together suggest no single tonal home. The first notes of the piece are in the pickup, in which the right hand plays alone, first A-flat and B-
flat and then G and A, both forming minor ninths. The first interval is built from the 6th and 7th scale degrees of C minor, while the second uses the 6th of C major and the 5th shared by both parallel keys. Acting alone, these two ninths give little evidence of a key center; it is not until the bass line begins in measure 1 that one might find a perspective from which to understand the functions of the notes played by the right hand. Yet for ten beats starting at the beginning of measure 1, the right hand holds E and F, a minor ninth that whose upper note is common to both C major and minor, but whose lower note is the third of the major key, a particularly defining scale degree. When this minor ninth is sustained over the C minor bass line, the conflict created by the simultaneous implications of parallel keys adds to internal tension of that interval, resulting in a tonal landscape that is a bit jarring, but intentionally more compelling than repulsive. The arrangement of these two measures is typical of much of this piece in that it achieves its intriguing character principally in two specific ways. Firstly, it creates ambiguous tonalities, not through atonality, but hints of polytonality, specifically with two parallel keys being utilized simultaneously. Secondly, the ear is at times made to expect a certain note or set of notes, and these expectations are often satisfied, but incongruous notes are pervasive and frequently quite close in proximity to those expected notes. A great deal of the material in Open Shadows is of a form similar to that of measures 1 and 2, so it is unsurprising that so much of the piece retains the subtle peculiarity of harmony present from the start.

In measures 3 and 4, the left hand plays its part from the previous two measures transposed up a major fourth. A major ninth of A and B appears in the right
hand, and once again the lower note is the third of the major triad suggested by the figuration. Since the ninth is major rather than minor, the top note is a half step away from the fifth of the triad, rather than a half step from the third, as was the case in the first two measures. In both situations, tension is created by the nearness of a nonchord tone to a note in the major chord, and the dissonant pitch refuses to resolve; however, the chord tone it tends toward is already present in another voice, so the chord is at once secure and unstable.

With an octave on F-sharp leading in contrary motion to the minor tenth of E and G at the beginning of measure 5, the left hand returns to the original arpeggiation in C minor. The implication of C major by the right hand is clearer now than before, since the top note is G, rather than a nonchord tone. At the end of measure 6, an octave on D leads to C and E-flat in a move precisely a major third below that which linked measures 4 and 5. The addition of the C octave in the left hand at the end of measure 6 makes a distinction between the section that was and that which is to come; measure 7 marks the beginning of a new take on the first six measures. Aside from another change at the end of the sixth measure of the section, the left hand plays the same notes it did before. The right hand plays entirely different notes, but in a way strongly reminiscent of its earlier actions. This begins with the minor tenth of C and E-flat already mentioned, which indicates C minor, unlike the corresponding interval in measure 1. For five beats, therefore, the minor key is unequivocally occupied. However, two whole steps upward lead to the interval of E-natural and G in measure 8 that restores the conflict between parallel keys. After one quarter note of A-flat and B-flat forms the interval that began the composition, the minor tenth of
G and B-flat provides dissonance for a full measure, neither note being in the F major or minor triad. With the root and fifth being the only present chord tones in this measure or the next, the repetition of D-flat, a member of the F minor scale but not F major, may lead one to sense an F minor chord. The presence of D-natural in the right hand in measure 10 conflicts with this understanding somewhat, though. Similarly, measures 11 and 12 have no third for the C chord they suggest. However, the interval of E-flat and C in the last beat of measure 10 affects the interpretation of what follows, and it gives the last measures of this section a minor feel.

Measure 13 clearly describes an F minor chord and forms the transition to a section that is much more tonally transparent than any of the first twelve measures. Every note, besides a B-natural at the end of measure 15 that is part of a V chord, is in C minor. The progression i-VI-VII-VI-V in the minor key is played four times; the right hand is raised an octave and the left hand plays octaves during the third occurrence, and the right hand is reduced to octaves as well during the fourth, which makes for a grander sound devoid of the prior intricacies. After a run down the C minor scale in measure 23 and a few V chords, the pace slows down and becomes even more deliberate than the beginning of the piece.

From measure 26 through the end of this new section, the tonal center is clearly C minor. A new theme is stated in its most basic form in the first two measures, which twice articulate a C minor chord with a nonchord tone A, before the A and E-flat each move down a half step as parallel tritones in the second measure. The A is not only a nonchord tone, but also not even a member of the minor key; its lasting presence adds to the air of suspense in this motif. Pairs of measures, the first
4/4 and the second 6/4, fill most of this interlude and new elements are added over time. The slowness and repetitiveness of this section make it an appropriate setting for the layering of parts over numerous repetitions. First a melody in the right hand works its way down from the fifth to the root of C minor in measures 29 through 32. Then in measures 33 through 35 right hand octaves are heard in a figuration similar to the preceding melody in reverse (with an entirely different rhythm, though). Measure 34 breaks the sequence of alternating time signatures, being in 6/4 when 4/4 is expected, but the pattern is otherwise uninterrupted through measure 39. Measure 35 ends with the return of the melody from measures 29 through 32, but with added notes filling formerly empty space. In measure 36, the main theme is lowered an octave; it is now played entirely by the left hand to allow a more complicated melody to be played in the right, and with the sustain pedal in use, the difference should be minimal. At the end of measure 39, the last four notes of measure 37 (which are also the last four of measure 31) are transposed down a fifth to lead into the lively transitional section in measures 40 through 46.

Measures 40 and 41 each contains two chords a whole step apart sounded simultaneously over the course the measure. In measure 40, the left hand repeatedly plays the root and fifth of a D-flat triad, while the F in beat 1 in the right hand confirms it as a major chord. Meanwhile, surrounding that F are E-flat and G, the root and third of an E-flat major chord. As the E-flat is repeated, the top note makes its way through the rest of the E-flat major scale (which is identical the C minor scale), with a flat seventh. Thus both the D-flat major and E-flat major chords are continually implied for these six beats. Measure 41 begins with only Fs and Cs
sounded, suggesting an F chord, but as the left hand dwells on the two original notes the right hand clearly defines a G major chord by playing the lower third of G and B twice, the upper third of B and D once, and finally the whole triad. Measure 42, on the other hand is rather more clearly centered on a single chord, C major. Both IV and V chords may suitably resolve to I, so given the simultaneous presence of both in measure 41, the resolution to C major is doubly satisfying, though in an unusual way.

Measure 43 also concerns itself with multiple coexisting chords. The right hand outlines a iii chord at both the beginning and end of the measure and plays E and A in the middle; the left hand plays A the whole measure, so with the strong C from the previous measure looming, a vi chord is implied. It could be argued, though, that either both chords are put forward at the same time or the measure simply has a iii chord over A followed by an A minor triad and then another iii chord over A. The next measure continues the trend of a pedal tone bass line supporting chords that are open to some interpretation. Over G in the left hand, the right hand seems to mainly suggest a vi chord, with a V7 in beat 2 reinforced by the pedal tone. As this section comes to a close in measures 45 and 46, measure 41 is harmonically recalled; the left hand again plays mainly Fs and Cs while the right hand confirms the triad on F, but also suggests a G major chord by playing both its thirds, G and B as well as B and D. As before, the combination of IV and V resolves to I in the next measure, this time bringing with it the return of material from the first twelve measures of the piece.

This begins, somewhat unexpectedly, with what was the end of measure 4, not measure 1; an F-sharp octave leads into measure 47, and from there measures 5
through 12 are replicated with a great deal of new content added. Filling the space that was previously taken up simply by sustained ninths and tenths in the right hand is an additional melody that begins quickly in measure 47, slows down in the next two measures, gains a second line in measure 50 and progresses into whole note intervals in the two measures after that. The E-natural and E-flat that sound in the first four beats of measure 54 quietly embody the tension between the parallel keys of C that characterizes these eight measures as well as measures 5 through 12.

The buildup of energy over the course of the last section brings forth an invigorated return of the material from the pickup and measures 1 through 4, transposed up a major third. As before, many notes are added to the original, and though there is less movement than there was in measures 47 through 54, the power with which the notes are played combines with the higher register and bright, surprising new chords to form the most rousing part of the composition.

The enthusiasm is tempered after measure 60, as the majestic chords shrink first into two-note intervals and then a melody consisting mostly of individual notes in the right hand. Measure 66 restores some excitement with a climbing motif that is then expanded upon in octaves in the following measure, reminiscent of measures 20 and 21, in which the material from the first measure is made simpler and yet grander by the use of octaves in the second. The connection between these two sections is strengthened at the end of measure 66 by the reuse of the first three intervals found in each of measures 14, 16 and 18, though in a vastly different context.
Measure 68 marks the beginning of the end. Figures in the general style of the piece’s opening appear, but in increasingly fractured form. For nine measures, the right hand plays only large intervals, most often ninths. The bass lines are similar to those found earlier, but they now betray a sense of distraction. In measure 68, the left hand twice continues upward past points where it is expected to descend. Contrastingly, the bass line stops short in the second halves of measures 69, 70, and 71. Measures 73 and 74 are missing a beat, and this seems to result in the right hand’s losing its place in measure 74. However, traces of the order found earlier in the piece are still audible in parts that echo previous sections more strongly. The first three intervals from the opening of the piece are played from the end of measure 71 to the beginning of measure 72, as well as in measure 75. Also, the major ninth of A and B played over an F triad, originally found in measure 3, appears in measures 73 and 76. By measure 76, the last measure before the concluding section, both hands have returned to their normal routines, with some extra notes added. With relative normalcy restored, it is time to embark on the focused, deliberate, and perhaps desperate finale.

In measures 77 through 89, the right hand plays only ninth chords over the left’s sprawling series of rising and falling eighth notes that span as much as a minor 14th and no less than a major 10th in any measure. Measures 77 through 80 make up a I-V-vi-ii progression in C major, as do the subsequent four measures, which are almost entirely identical to those before them. In each set of four, this progression occurs while the first and lowest note of each measure descends from C to B and then to A before rising back to D, which is lowered back to C in the following measure. In
measures 85 through 88, the first bass notes ascend stepwise from E up to A, and each is the third of the chord presented by the corresponding measure; the first bass note of measure 89 is G, but it is the root of the chord being conveyed, not the third. Consequently, the progression in those measures is I-ii-iii-IV-V. Given the sincerity conveyed by the painstaking figurations and basic falling and rising of the low notes in the left hand, the dissonant ninths in the right appear particularly anguished.

Once the sorrowful passage slows almost to a halt in measure 89, the V chord in that measure resolves to a gradually uncovered I in measure 90, after which a thirty-second note C is quickly followed by an accented major sixth of G and E. Following an extended pause on IV in measure 91, the thirty-second C and the major sixth are played again, but in both hands, one and two octaves above the previous sounding, and the piece ends on a low C major chord. Both times, the quick C and the held major sixth G and E ring out intensely. The dissonant intervals that have filled *Open Shadows* consistently reiterated the bittersweet feeling of near success, and this character has seeped into all sonorities heard in the composition, so as the final major chord pierces the silence, it is up to the listener whether the piano is rejoicing or wailing.
The Last Years

Flute 1

Flute 2

Clarinet in B♭

Timpani

Gong

Snare Drum

Harp

Piano

Violin

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

Clarinet notated in concert pitch

° simile
poco a poco cresc.
The Last Years

Of these five compositions, *The Last Years* employs the largest ensemble, and it uses the full range of timbres it is afforded to convey a turbulent musical narrative. It is relatively straightforward in harmony and structure, but in its simplicity there lies a sincerity. That is not to say it is without its intricacies, but its primary purpose is to depict a journey that can genuinely be grasped. There is no one programmatic story imposed upon the listener, but the accessibility of sonorities encourages personal interpretation without distraction or confusion. Various arrangements of the instruments are used not only to achieve dramatic fluctuations in overall density, but also to explore the intangible, but effective, expressive qualities found in different instrumental combinations. The piece aims to be beautiful, not by being pleasing to the ear, but by occupying the space between tangible and intangible in ways unique to the art of music. The interpretation is entirely in the hands of each listener, but the music provides a great deal of evocative material to consider.

The composition begins with a contemplative, perhaps mournful, introduction. The piano quietly plays chords four quarter notes at a time, the repetition adding to the temporary sense of resigned melancholy. The first flute joins the piano in measure 2 to add some motion, but its exploration of the G minor scale only adds to the sorrowful disposition. In measure 9, the harp starts playing chords in the pattern of a half note followed by two quarter notes and a whole note. It adds little harmonically, but serves to define a division between measures 8 and 9. The flute melody in measures 9 and 10 is a theme that returns in various forms later in the
piece. Without the harp, the piano and flute interactions would do little to stand out from the previous eight measures; the dividing line helps distinguish the motif so it will resonate more deeply when it eventually returns.

Measure 15 sees the harp and flute drop out while the piano plays a more lively, syncopated transition into the denser and richer landscape found in measures 17 through 24. There, the clarinet, cello, and double bass all enter for the first time as the flute returns as well. The viola arrives on measure 18, the violin on measure 21, and all the strings play long stretches of notes with breaks staggered to allow for a generally continuous sound with only one of each string instrument present. The piano continues to play, though without the right hand for a moment; the top part returns in measure 18 to play a refreshingly energetic set of octaves over fours measures, while the other parts (including that of the second flute, which enters in measure 21) grow progressively louder until they reach the apex at measure 24 and then withdraw for the quieter section that follows.

A four-measure transition from G minor to the parallel major starts in measure 25, with only the harp and piano present. These measures alternate between G minor chords and F-sharp diminished chords, that is i and vii°/I. This resolves to G major in measure 29, when the piano begins to play alone for four measures. When it relinquishes control to the harp and flutes in measure 33, a G minor chord is arpeggiated, but this is just a temporary lapse into the previous key; measures 34 through 43 consist entirely of I chords and major chords a tritone away from I, (measures 34 and 35 introduce this idea by having both flutes descend by a tritone in two octave ranges). No strings are present, but the wide arpeggios of the harp in
measures 34 and 35, as well as the loud and high flute phrase, lead to the raucous eight measures that follow. The introduction of timpani, snare drum, and gong in measure 36 occurs at the same time the harp begins playing glissandi and the piano starts playing tremelos, reinforcing the relentlessly more lively character of this section.

The strings reappear in measure 44, accompanied only by percussion, and bring back the parallel minor key. The relative decrease in energy fits this shift; though the timpani and snare still play (the timpani actually plays twice as many notes as it did before), the gong is absent, and the dynamic is mezzo-forte rather than forte. The lack of rhythmic movement in the strings, which play only whole notes for eight measures until the second climax arrives at measure 52, is what makes this section most distinct from what came before it. In these eight measures, the strings play the exact same notes that the piano used in the first eight measures of the piece, but with whole notes instead of four quarter notes per measure. This bleaker restatement of the opening passage sets up a markedly more rousing take on the section that followed those first eight measures, a section that, as described earlier, begins with the theme that is to be reused and retooled throughout the piece for the communication of various intangible yet distinctly real musical emotions.

This variation on the theme is even more bombastic than the first climax, mainly due to the addition of the strings, especially the frenetic parts played by the violin and cello. The sixteenth note triplets of those two instruments are especially grandiose, and while the harp arpeggiates chords rather than playing glissandi, the overall effect of the instrumentation is quite grand; this is the true peak of the
composition. This section begins as an expansion of the original theme, with a i chord in the first measure accompanied by the flute melody from measures 9 and 10 for two measures. After measure 52, the harmonic progression takes a new path that eventually leads to the same conclusion heard in the theme at the beginning of the piece. The next five measures form the pattern VI-III-VI-VI-VII, delivering all and only the major triads in the G minor scale. Not only is this progression confined to major sonorities, it implies the relative major, B-flat major, more than G minor. After two measures of playing together in octaves, the violin and cello split apart in measure 54. The chords rendered in the last two measures of the section (VI and VII) match those of the first statement of the theme, but in a decidedly more glorious context. The second flute enters in measure 56 and plays in similar motion to the first. Meanwhile, all the other central characteristics of this version of the theme (piano octaves, harp arpeggios, sixteenth note triplets in the strings, and the snare and timpani rhythms) continue as the piano drops out in measure 57, only to return in the next measure, accompanied by no instruments except the timpani.

The closing passage of The Last Years begins in measure 58 with a final new treatment of the theme, this time in a manner at least as subdued as the beginning of the piece. The left hand of the piano plays four quarter notes on a single chord in each of measures 58 through 65, similar to the beginning of the piece, while the right hand plays a variation on the theme seen before only in the flute. However, the harmonic progression is derived from the previous section, not the initial theme, and the last two chords (VI and VII) are repeated in measures 64 and 65. At the end of measure 60, the theme in the right hand begins to differ from the original. While the
piano plays the melody, the flute moves in contrary motion to its former part until the end of measure 60, where the changes begin to occur. The piano is left alone with the timpani in that measure, and it begins to play a version of the theme in octaves in the right hand, though the first four notes are the only part of it left fully intact. Meanwhile, the timpani supports not with loud quarter notes, but with a heartbeat rhythm of a sixteenth note and quarter note in the middle of each measure. With the ritardando at measure 66, the heartbeat slows down, and after appearing half a measure early to connect measures 68 and 69, it disappears. This irregular beat gives way to the slow, soft return of the strings. The left hand of the piano plays repeated chords in quarter notes like it did at the beginning of *The Last Years*, and the composition ends with a final restatement of the first three notes of the theme (flanked above and below by E-flats), leading not to the F from before, but an E-flat major chord. As the latter parts of the theme have gradually been changed and removed, the opening phrase that has until now been a question with various answers has been cut short and forced to answer itself. The last four measures all describe a VI chord; the final delicate flourish in the piano does not lead the theme anywhere new. The G and B-flat in the opening of the theme are made to be part of an E-flat major triad, not a G minor one, so the final chord of the piece is reached without any harmonic movement. The answer is found within the question itself, just in a different context.