CHAPTER 4

Toward a Pandiatonic Serialism

Richard Rodney Bennett's Impromptus (1968) and Sonata (1983)

RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT was "the people's serialist."[1] He had immense compositional pedigree, having studied with Pierre Boulez in Paris (1957–8), and having rubbed shoulders, as both student and teacher, with leading figures of the continental avant-garde at both Darmstadt and Dartington.[2] But he retained throughout much of his compositional career an interest in music that people *wanted*, or which they might find *useful*.[3] He composed myriad film and television scores, including *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and *Dr. Who*, and worked regularly, especially later in life, as a jazz cabaret singer and pianist.[4]

Bennett's diverse musical interests manifested themselves in his concert music by way of a "highly personal approach to serialism," the development of which had been his "chief ambition" from the 1960s until the early eighties: "I'm interested in creating serially a variety of mood and expression equivalent to the variety of other music."[5] Bennett was to become increasingly infuriated by the prismatic developments of musical culture in the post-modern era, however. In the late sixties and early seventies, an "enormous gulf" was forming "between the academic, serially orientated composers [Babbitt, Carter, et. al.], whose music I don't care for very much — with one or two exceptions — and the Cage stream."[6] (Turning to John McCabe, after the rehearsal for the premiere of Elliott Carter's *Triple Trio* in April 1983, he declared that "if he heard

1 Stephen Walsh, *The Listener*, 20 April 1967, quoted in Anthony Meredith, *Richard Rodney Bennett: The Complete Musician* (London: Omnibus Press, 2010), 166.
2 Meredith, *Richard Rodney Bennett*, 92–114.
3 Meredith, *Bennett*, 139.
4 A fascinating autobiographical account of Bennett's career is given in an interview with the composer, toward the end of his life. It can be heard here: Norman Lebrecht and Richard Rodney Bennett, *The Lebrecht Interview*, August 2011: https://open.spotify.com/episode/2A7NuRe7C4XYO7AFTtD9np?si=_JnFhdidRP6eW8PHGoTupw&dl_branch=1 [accessed 06/08/2021].
5 Meredith, *Richard Rodney Bennett*, 123; 141. See also 194.
6 Quoted in Meredith, *Bennett*, 214–15.

Oliver Chandler, *A Twelve-Tone Repertory for Guitar: Julian Bream and the British Serialists, 1956–1983*
GFA Refereed Monograph Series, vol. 4

any more of that kind of noise . . . it would drive him crazy."[7]) Bennett found solace, after a spate of bad reviews of his "serious" music in the British press, in the piano-bar culture of New York, after his relocation to the United States (1979–81)—but even this new-found refuge proved ephemeral. "By the 1980s, with the culture of rock and pop all-dominant and some of it even assuming intellectual respectability, the music of the American Songbook was essentially outsider music too."[8] This increasing bifurcation, between different facets of the avant-garde, and between composers and their (imagined) publics, led to deep soul-searching on Bennett's part: "There were so many years, from 1980 onwards at least, when I was trying to get away from my earlier musical personality, much to do with atonal music. . . . I wanted to be able to write extended music which had nothing to do with the 12-note system, but the fact that I had written that kind of music for so long meant that it was in my blood."[9] What follows is, in part, an attempt to interpret what Bennett meant by this remark.

Bennett's solo guitar pieces—Impromptus (1968) and Sonata (1983)—provide an interesting means of tracking these changes in his compositional development. The former piece is perhaps the most "wanted" twelve-tone piece in the guitar's repertory; it serves as many students' introduction to dodecaphony, and individual movements are often featured as set pieces for competitions and conservatory auditions. After Smith Brindle's *El Polifemo de oro*, it was the second serial piece that Julian Bream was to champion—it was written by Bennett as a precursor to his composing a guitar concerto in 1970. (The latter work, due to its greater difficulty and scope, as well as the requirement for an orchestral or piano accompaniment, has not been taken up in the same way.) While this work shows some signs of Boulez's influence, as we shall see—the row functions as a generating "complex" as opposed to a Schoenbergian "super motif": i.e., an aggregate-exhausting, ordered melody that embeds numerous, smaller motifs within itself, which can be fragmented and developed *à la* Beethoven or Brahms[10]—its glittering post-tonal language and its lyrical sensibility point to the earlier influence of composers like Elisabeth Lutyens.[11]

The later Guitar Sonata marks something of a point of departure: it was not written for a functional purpose (i.e., to commission) and, as implied by the chronology above, it was written at a time when Bennett was grappling with a feeling of frustration regarding the perceived limitations of dodecaphonic technique. In this sense, the compositional journey spanned by Bennett's solo guitar works can be understood in a similar way to Thomas Wilson's (see chapter 3)—albeit that Bennett's later critique of dodecaphony is of a very different kind, as we shall see.

7 Meredith, *Bennett*, 323.
8 Meredith, *Bennett*, 311.
9 Meredith, *Bennett*, 307.
10 Miguel A. Roig-Francolí, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 160.
11 It is worth noting that one of Lutyens's most voluptuous scores, *O Saisons, O Châteaux* (1946), also featured guitar.

The defining feature of Bennett's developing serial guitar style, I argue, is his use of *pandiatonic rows*.[12] In the first of his Impromptus, for example, sets are generally pandiatonic, but these "scale fragments" are not deployed as aurally obvious centers, in and of themselves (although they can sometimes be understood to frame sections in suggestive ways); they instead provide "content" for more abstract, motivic arguments. More locally, they are used for their extended-consonant sound. In the final movement of the work, the *Arioso*, however, a single, horizontally projected pandiatonic set class (prolonged by means of minimal sc expansions and contractions) is inflected in different ways by the changing harmonies of the accompaniment, the relative dissonance or consonance of which are partly determined by the scalar proximity or distance between any given vertical "chord" and the melodically projected set class (as determined by the cycle of fifths). Furthermore, the unfolding of the piece — readily described in terms of home, departure, and return — is determined by this pandiatonic set class's becoming increasingly "denatured" (i.e., turned into a fully chromatic set), before being restored at the beginning of the movement's final section. Pandiatonicism comes to control both content *and* form; in turn, it becomes more aurally salient.

In the opening *Allegro* of the Sonata, by contrast, a twelve-tone row is arguably supplanted by a "spontaneous gesture": a "sort of [eighteen-note] series for the movement." Bennett's new, more extensive row carries his pandiatonic arguments one step further. In a nutshell, it articulates a motion from pandiatonic overdetermination (i.e., sets that belong to a number of different diatonic collections) to pandiatonic specificity (i.e., sets that belong only to one diatonic collection). Even where strict serialism is seemingly abandoned, however, this is in aid of creating a richer harmonic argument, juxtaposing pandiatonic sets with both chromatic, octatonic, hexatonic and whole-tone sets. These juxtapositions might be thought to build on the "denaturing" process encountered in the *Arioso*.

The other movements, while still understandable in conventional (albeit sometimes slightly adapted) twelve-tone terms, seem to pursue narratives that interact with the twelve-tone principle more obliquely than some of the other pieces featured in this book. Consequently, I pursue analyses of them, particularly of the *Lento*, that self-consciously disregard Bennett's twelve-tone rows. While the "12-note system" was indeed in Bennett's blood, he did come close to creating new, competing musical systems, separable from dodecaphony, in the Sonata: a self-avowed goal of his from the 1980s onwards. Given that the Sonata was the last twelve-tone work to be associated with Bream, the gravitation of its previously dodecaphonically inclined composer toward competing compositional models is significant.

12 Richard Cohn defines pandiatonicism (after Slonimsky) as "using diatonic scales without triads": see *Audacious Euphony: Chromatic and the Triad's Second Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), xiv. I use the term principally to refer to diatonic, non-triadic sets, that are combined in (often freely) chromatic combinations.

Impromptus

No. 1, *Recitativo*

As is well documented, Bennett often elides the row forms in the Impromptus so that the final two notes of one series become the first two of the next. The result is a complete cycle of seven rows: P_n, RI_{n+1}, P_{n+8}, RI_{n+9}, P_{n+4}, RI_{n+5}, P_n. (Impromptu no. 1, for example, describes the cycle P_4, RI_5, P_0, RI_1, P_8, RI_9, P_4, P_0, where the final two notes of P_4 elide with the first two notes of RI_5, and so on).[13] Interestingly, though, this systematic background does not feature explicitly as part of the Impromptus' *musical* argument. While the rows Bennett chooses are obviously crucial—they determine the individual *sounds* of the available harmonies, as well as the progressions that connect them—the overarching formal narratives his materials are used to construct are ultimately indifferent to row boundaries. In a rare technical remark made to fellow Royal Academy of Music student Susan Bradshaw in 1957, Bennett stated that "I think I'm finally getting away from the 'motif' idea of the series towards the idea of it as a structural base."[14] The lack of rhetorical emphasis given to row boundaries throughout the Impromptus might be taken as an indication of how this idea works in practice.

Take the opening A section of the *Recitativo*, for example. Its *Grundgestalt* is composed of two [0237] tetrachords that invert onto one another around a B♭/B♭ axis—literally sounded in the music—which are themselves bookended by two trichords: [027] and [013] (see **figure 4.1**). The latter sets suggest a kind of E-major/A-lydian frame: [027] is a quartal chord that lacks a defining third or prominent functional agent; [013] contains a leading tone <E♭/D♯, E> but no fifth. They transform into one another by means of [0237] intermediaries, to which [027] *splits* and from which [013] *fuses*.[15] (Abstract) symmetry thus serves a somewhat ambiguous function here: it "alienates" [027] and [013] from one another, but it also facilitates a (relatively) smooth sc voice-leading transformation between them.

Measures 4–9 respond to this "basic shape" in two ways (see **figure 4.2**): 1) the <E, D♯, B, D> [0125] tetrachord contains both E's fifth and leading tone, thus consolidating earlier tonal references (albeit D♯ is "muted" by the subsequent move to D♮, creating a modally mixed sonority overall—more on this later); and 2) in mm. 6–7, the opposing pc-sets that bookended the mirror-form [0237]s are overlaid as part of the same sonority: <G, F♯, A> [013] and <B♭, C, F> [027] combine to form a [012457] superset. Distance in the horizontal dimension is overcome by the unification of those

13 See Steven C. Raisor, *Twentieth-Century Techniques in Selected Works for Solo Guitar* (Lampeter: Edwin Meller Press, 1999), 7–8; and Zachary Johnson, *The Solo Guitar Works of Sir Richard Rodney Bennett: A Theoretical Analysis of Impromptus and Sonata for Guitar* (Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011), 14–15.

14 Letter from Bennett to Susan Bradshaw (ca. early Feb. 1957), cited in Philip Rupprecht, *British Musical Modernism: The Manchester Group and their Contemporaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 237.

15 [013] is a subset of [0237]; 7 fuses to 3.

Figure 4.1 Richard Rodney Bennett, Impromptus, i, *Recitativo*, mm. 1–3.

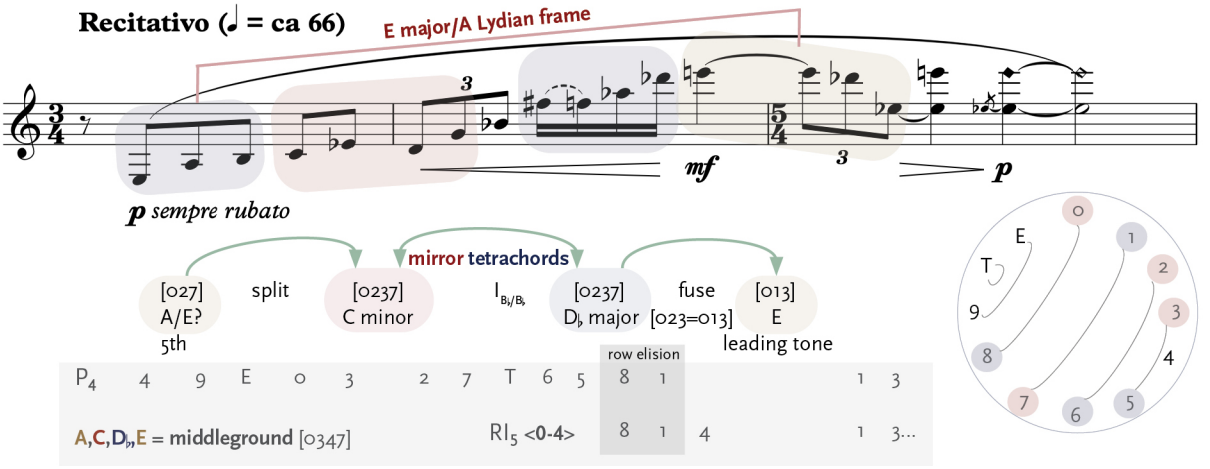
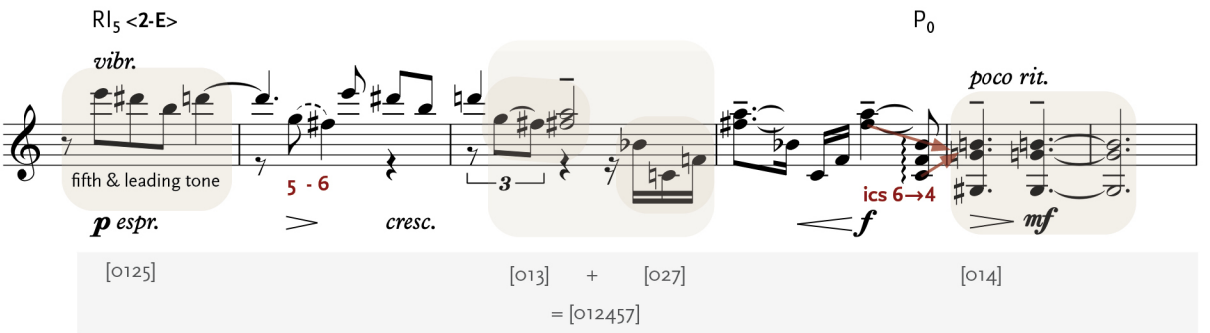
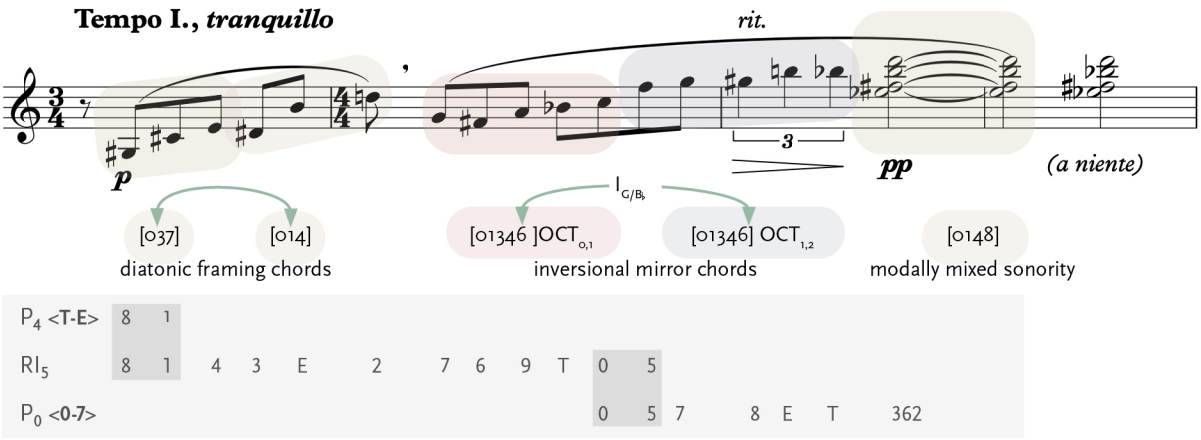


Figure 4.2 Richard Rodney Bennett, Impromptus, i, *Recitativo*, mm. 4–9.



two sets in the vertical; the need for an intervening symmetry is annulled. Crucially, this superset contains a tritone—the first aurally salient one in the piece—which subsequently contracts to a major third in m. 8 to produce a quasi-cadential effect (ics 6→4). The goal harmony in question {G♯, G, B} is also well-described in terms of the modally mixed E-minor/major frame that the piece has established for the beginnings and ends of its phrases up until this point. (It might also be thought of in terms of G♯ minor, but this intuition feels less salient.) Reading this passage in a quasi-Schenkerian manner, the {G♯, G, B} [014] trichord might be thought to represent not only a post-tonal form of resolution, but also a foreground, subset manifestation of a "composed-out" [0347] set, initially presented in the "middleground" in mm. 1–2: {A, B, E} in m. 1 (Î–2̂–5̂ in A) is transposed up a minor third to produce a C-minor sounding set {C, D, E♭, G} (Î–2̂–3̂–5̂), inverted around B♭ to become D♭-major-like {D♭, F, F♯, A♭} (1–3̂–4̂–5̂), and then the {F, F♯, A♭} subset of the previous tetrachord is transformed at T-3I to produce a concluding E-major-sounding set: {D♭, E♭, E}

Figure 4.3 Richard Rodney Bennett, Impromptus, i, *Recitativo*, mm. 22–25.

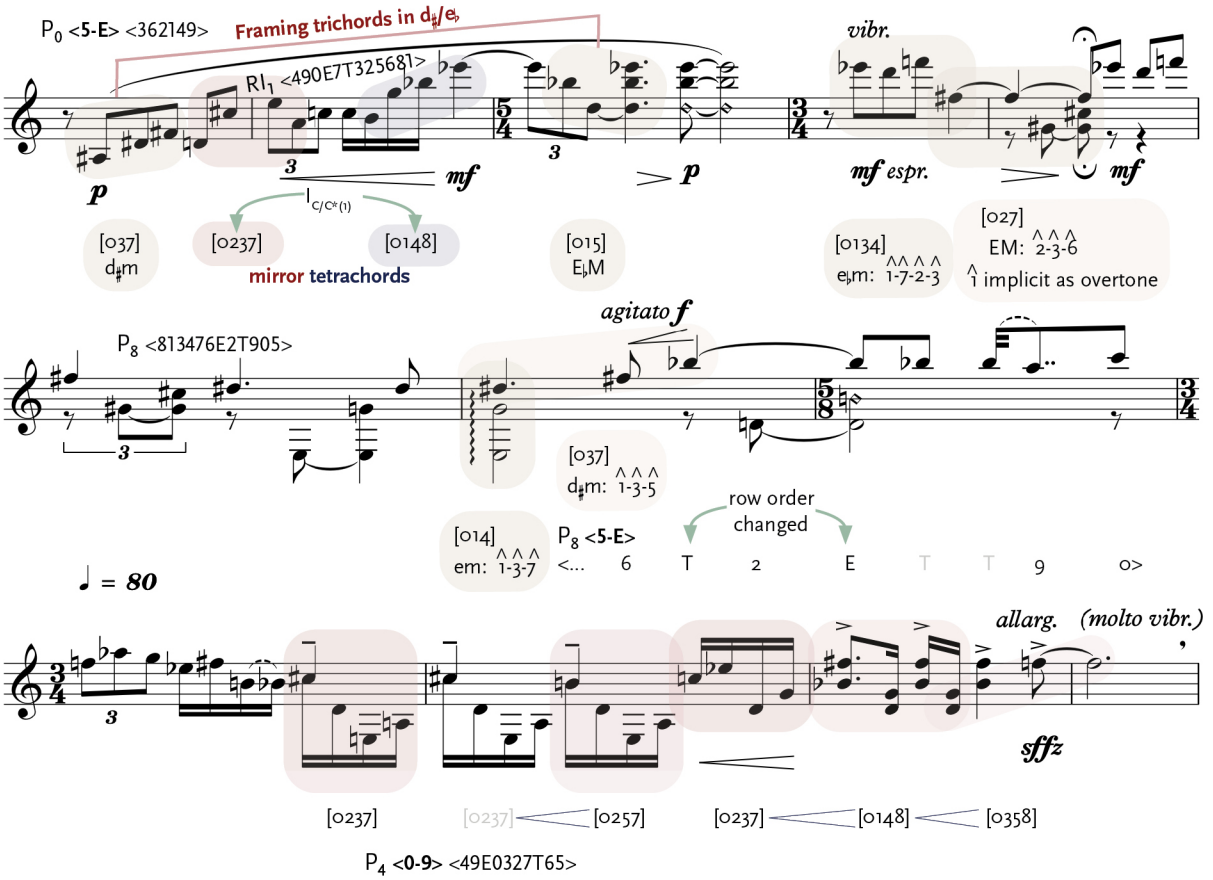


($\hat{6}$–$\hat{7}$–$\hat{8}$). Imagined abstractly, the succession of diatonic-scalar roots here—A, C, D♭, E—produces a [0347] set: namely, a triad with both a major and a minor third. The concluding [014] trichord in m. 8 contains both the major and minor third of {E}.

This musical argument is telescoped in the piece's final line, section C (*Tempo I., tranquillo*): representatives of the framing diatonic trichords separated by [0237] mirrors in the previous two sections, <G♯, C♯, E> and <D♯, B, D>, are now articulated beside one another (see **figure 4.3**). There's even an approximate symmetry to their relationship ($I^{E}_{D♯}{}^{*(4)}$): {E} maps onto {D♯}; {G♯} onto {B}; and {D} is offset by four semitones from the "correct" destination of {F♯}. This is subsequently intensified by a more obvious allusion to the [0237] mirrors of the first phrase: <G, F♯, A, B♭, C> maps onto <F, G, G♯, B, B♭> around a B♭/G axis, articulated by the first and last notes of the melodic line. The *Recitativo*'s concluding sonority is a [0148] set, or a minor/major seventh chord. Its modally mixed quality might be thought to reference—albeit obliquely—the [0347] set "composed-out" at a middleground level by the "modulation" of scale segments in the impromptu's first phrase, or—more literally—the foreground, section-concluding [014] in m. 9. All three aspects of the *Recitativo*'s opening phrase, then—framing trichords, inversional mirroring, modally mixed sonorities—are thus brought together in its closing one. Considered in isolation, however, the effect of this phrase is one of a disassembly into separate components, rather than of resolution, *per se*. (We will return to this point shortly.) Two row forms are used, RI_5 and P_0, but the overall musical flow pays no heed to the division between them, nor does musical resolution line up with row completion. Rows function as "generating complexes," rather than as containers in which melodic actions play themselves out.

In the B section, mm. 10–20, Bennett uses the same partitioning scheme as for the first section, albeit now beginning from the sixth note of P_0, as a consequence of the elision between different row forms (see **figure 4.4**). Despite the differences of intervallic content, the overall shape is similar. Diatonic trichords frame the total gesture. The relevant [037] and [015] sets both suggest E♭ minor, and combine third

Figure 4.4 Richard Rodney Bennett, Impromptus, i, *Recitativo*, mm. 10–21.



and fifth, and leading tone and fifth, respectively. In this sense, they are more diatonically distinct than the earlier E-major sets, which contained only fifth *or* leading tone. A tetrachordal mirror is in place once again, now inverting around a C/C axis, more prominently emphasized on the musical surface due to its double articulation. However, the quality of the inversion is "fuzzy": the {G♯} that should have been the goal of the inverted {E} is offset by a single semitone to {G}, which results in a set-class expansion from [0237] to [0148].

Mm. 4–5 were defined by a slowly unfurling [0125] tetrachord, which featured the "muting" of an E-major leading tone, <D♯, D♮>; this is then answered by a "minor-mode" lower voice, which forms a 5–6 suspension with the held {D} above it. Measures 13–14 play on similar semitonal relationships, not between modal sevenths or two-part suspensions, but between roots: an E♭-minor sounding set is juxtaposed (and elided) with a [027] <F♯, G♯, C♯> quartal set, which is recognized retrospectively as an $EM^{13/9}$ chord when the low E string is struck in m. 14. In the same way that [013] and [027] sets were overlaid as part of a "dominant"-like sonority in mm. 6–7, E-minor and D♯-minor sets are unified in m. 16. (The former is articulated vertically,

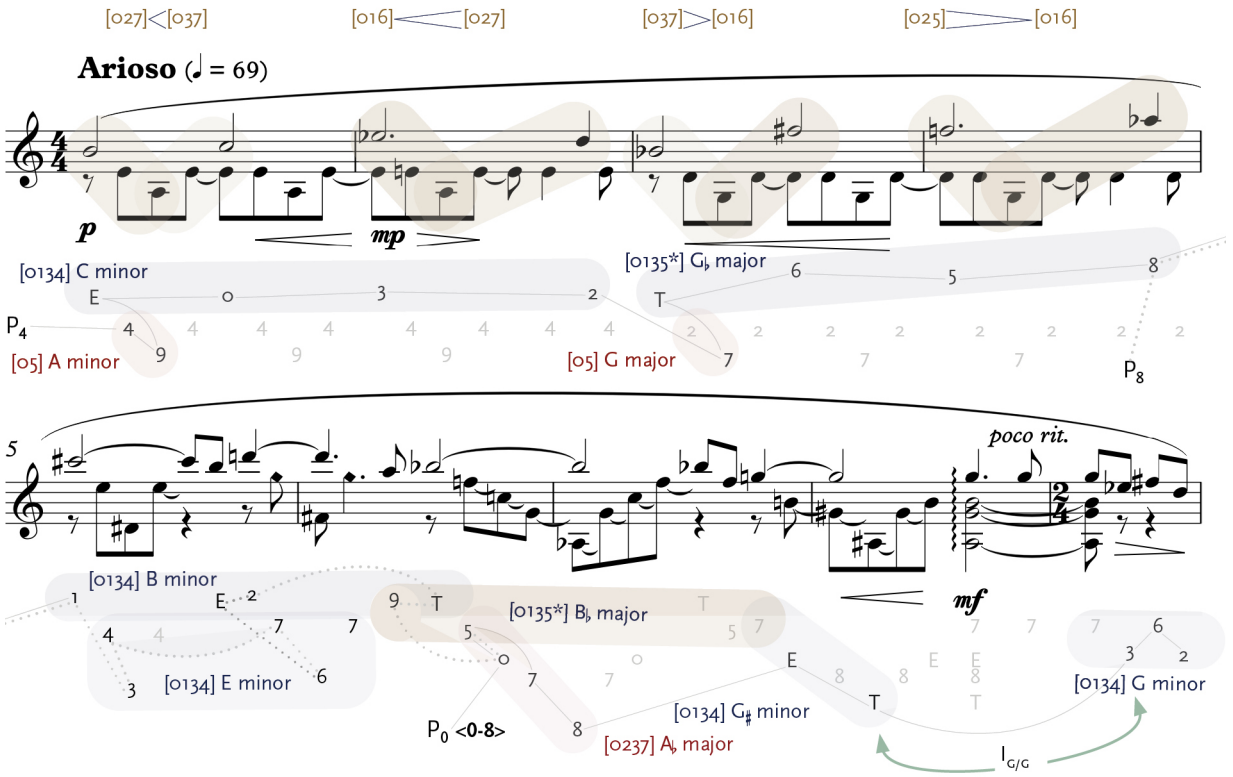
the latter horizontally.) Crucially, the {E} root and the culminating {B♭} of the D♯-minor/E♭-minor arpeggiation form a cadence-summoning tritone. (Note that row order has been modified here—{B} <6> should precede {B♭} <8>—as a means of emphasizing ic 6.) While the {B♭} does drop to an adjacent {A}, however, the E cannot be heard reasonably to relate to the high {F} at the beginning of m. 18. Indeed, this {F} actually enters into another, albeit subtle, tritonal relationship with the {B} harmonic sustained underneath it—the presence of which depends on whether one cuts it off after four eighth-notes, as written, or allows it to ring on). Again, though, any sense of resolution to {F♯} and {B♭} in the following measure is very abstract.

The lack of resolution here arguably precipitates the most dramatic passage in the piece: a furious outburst of sixteenth notes, culminating in a frustrated *sffz* (refer back to figure 4.4). I interpret this passage as attempting to compensate for the preceding lack of ics 6–4 discharge. (This expectation, of course, was set up by the resolution in m. 8.) Two set-class progressions are emphasized here by means of different rhythmic figurations: [0237] to [0257]; and [0237] to [0148] to [0358]. Each is defined by growing consonance, achieved through minimum offset voice leading: a post-tonal approximation of more normative cadential rhetoric (refer back to Brindle's theory of tension flow in chapter 1). The [0237] set with which both begin is six semitones offset from the most chromatic possible set, [0123]. In terms of voice-leading parsimony, the second progression is most exemplary: [0148] is seven semitones offset from [0123]; [0358], the concluding set, is eight semitones offset. Although its sound is more implied than literal, after the preceding minor/major seventh, it can be understood to manifest a "Gm7" chord. Famously ambiguous, these chords embed a minor and a major triad within the same sonority: B♭ major and G minor, in this case. It can thus be understood not only as the most spacious (and thus "resolutional") sonority in the section, but also as yet another reference to the modally mixed glossary of tetrachords embedded within Bennett's row complex.

Returning now to the *Recitativo*'s closing C section (*Tempo I., tranquillo*), we are in a better place to argue why it might be understood as a resolution of sorts (refer back to figure 4.3). While the opening couple of phrases might appear to imply an E-major/minor frame, the *Recitativo*'s final utterance seems to consist of pandiatonic sets, drawn from E major/minor, G minor, and E♭ minor. While the lack of a single focal pitch class might make it difficult to hear this as resolution-directed music, there's a sense in which {E}, {E♭}, and {G} can be understood as the putative "tonics" of their respective sections (mm. 1–9, 10–18$^{1-2}$, and 18^{3}–21, respectively). The way in which these "tonics" are progressively articulated in the final line of the score makes it possible to understand them as part of an "associative" tonic complex. Furthermore, if considered (very) abstractly, <E, G, E♭> forms a [014] trichord, the same trichord which is used to provide the only (traditionally) convincing closure of the piece in m. 8.

Pandiatonicism thus emerges as an important substrate of the *Recitativo*'s compositional processes; it might even be said to be the goal of those processes, insofar as it strives towards the articulation of a "summarizing" complex of pandiatonic sets at its end. However, this represents an extremely abstract way of understanding the music. Daniel Harrison distinguishes usefully "between a pleasurable condition of

Figure 4.5 Richard Rodney Bennett, Impromptus, v, *Arioso*, mm. 1–9.



effortless aural attunement [i.e., common-practice tonality] . . . and the hard work of discerning tonal hierarchy from a context-assertive event hierarchy both unfamiliar and complex."[16] My reading—and arguably the music itself—fits the latter category more comfortably. The fifth impromptu, however, throws pandiatonicism's structural possibilities into more immediate relief, insofar as they characterize both the content *and* the form of the movement; they become more directly perceptible.

No. 5, *Arioso*

In this final impromptu, Bennett exploits the pandiatonic pitch-class sets made available in the row in such a way as to produce varying degrees of "crunch" between implied scalar collections. The first section's homophonic texture, featuring arpeggiated accompaniment and *legato* melody, facilitates this. Secondary harmonies are projected in the upper voice—a chain of [0134] and [0135] tetrachords, the latter of which I interpret as fuzzy transformations of the former—which imply C-minor,

16 See Daniel Harrison, *Pieces of Tradition: An Analysis of Contemporary Tonal Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 17.

G♭-major, B-minor, and B♭-major contexts, respectively (see **figure 4.5**).[17] The supporting accompaniment, however, implies subsets of A minor, G minor, E minor, and A♭ major. In combination, these sets cycle through varying degrees of repose and tension, represented here by the semitonal distance between roots: A/C [03] > G/G♭ [01] < E/B [05] > A♭/B♭ [02] < B [0]. This is seemingly paralleled by the trichordal successions formed by the combination of melody and accompaniment on the music's surface. Take the relative expansions and contractions in the first two measures: for example ([027] < [037] > [016] < [027]), which are then reversed in mm. 3–4 ([037] > [015] < [025] > [016]). While one could say that the use of appoggiaturas in mm. 1–2 is merely rhetorical—one cannot genuinely distinguish between what *is* and what *is not* a harmony tone in a post-tonal environment[18]—they do result in pc sets becoming locally more consonant. That said, it would be reductive to call the opening measures tonal. Diatonic "islands" (pc sets) bob along on a chromatic ocean, sometimes colliding with full force, but often merely grazing one another's edges. Any sense of a functional topography is obscured by a general pandiatonic/chromatic haze.

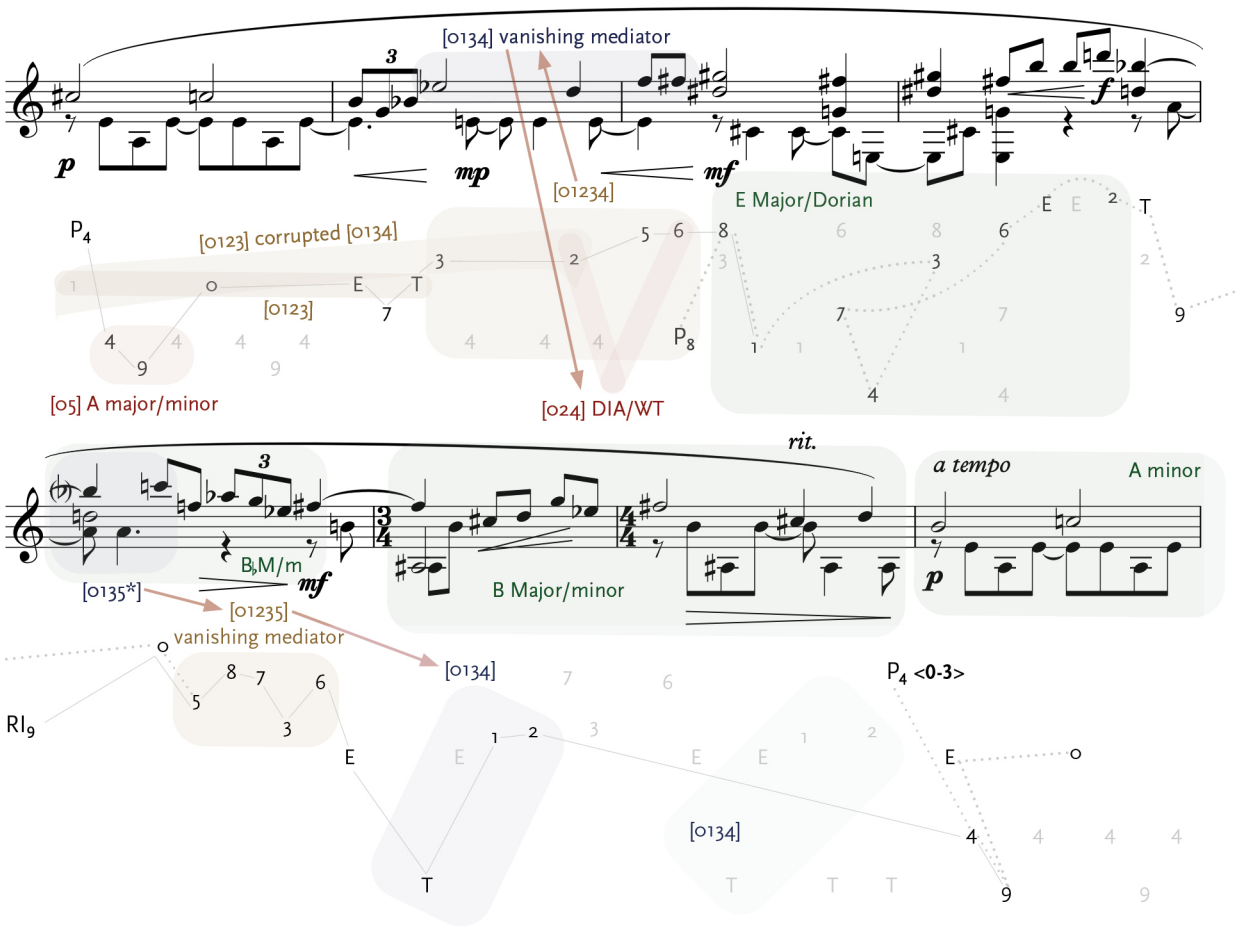
Toward the end of the first section, though, melody and accompaniment come increasingly to resemble one another. In mm. 6–7, the apparent whole-tone clash between B♭- and A♭-major sets is ameliorated by the emergence from the texture of a thirteenth chord over A♭—a sumptuous sonic object made up of stacked fourths (refer back to figure 4.5). Marking the local goal of the *Arioso*'s opening, mm. 8–9 represent an even closer proximity between upper and lower voices: <G, G♯, A♯, B>, split between both parts, inverts around a spotlit G in the upper voice, yielding <G, E♭, F♯, D> in the soprano line. (Note that these sets are presented separately rather than simultaneously.) Both are [0134] tetrachords—references to the piece's emblematic melodic-harmonic progression. They jointly derive from a modally mixed B minor/major. Furthermore, the inversional relationship that closes this section might be thought to allude to the <B, E, A> and <A, E, D> sets that inverted around A/E in mm. 1–2. Perhaps for this reason, there's a vague but tantalizing symmetry about the shape of the section as a whole.

In the piece's second section (mm. 10–16), one of the most immediately noticeable changes is the "corruption" of the [0134] pc set that has been projected so consistently (if in fuzzily transposed forms) by the upper voice (see **figure 4.6**). <C♯, C, E♭, D> forms a wholly chromatic [0123] tetrachord; this is reinforced by the accompanimental <B, B♭>, which, together with the earlier <C♯, C>, creates another, inversionally related [0123]. This is counterbalanced, though, by the fact that if the <E♭, D> dyad is allowed to group forward with <F, F♯>, rather than backwards, a [0134] set is produced. One might argue that a general chromaticism still prevails, though:

17 [0134] is a special tetrachord, insofar as it only implies one diatonic collection: i.e., a harmonic-minor scale. [0135], by contrast, can belong to two different collections, a fifth apart. In such cases, I privilege the collection that has its fundamental and leading tone included in the set in question when determining the latter's scalar derivation.

18 See Joseph N. Straus, "The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music." *Journal of Music Theory* 31, no. 1 (1987): 1–21.

Figure 4.6 Richard Rodney Bennett, Impromptus, v, *Arioso*, mm. 10–17.



<E♭, D> relates plangently to the pedal {E} in the bass. If these notes are hooked up to the following <F, F♯> in the soprano, a [01234] pentachord results. Articulation matters, however. In performance, {E♭} and {F} sound like upper and lower neighbors, respectively. If we hear them as "resolving"—to {D} and {F♯}—then a [024] <E, D, F♯> set emerges. [01234] becomes [024], arguably passing through [0134] as it goes. This is the most marked pc-set expansion, from dissonance to consonance, so far encountered in the *Arioso*. One of the sources of tension in the first section of the piece is perhaps that, while [0134] is a diatonic subset, its inherent modal mixture—it contains both the sharpened seventh of the major mode and the flattened third of the minor—means that it can also belong to octatonic or more fully chromatic (i.e., denatured) collections. In mm. 11–12, it's almost as if this tension—between diatonicism and something more chromatic—is made more explicit and thus resolved. [01234] and [024] represent absolute opposites—insofar as they are wholly semitonal or whole-tonal respectively within the same intervallic ambitus—but they are shown to relate to one another by means of a vectored progression—a directed

form of tension flow—with the [0134] <E♭, D, F, F♯> tetrachord functioning almost like a "vanishing mediator," facilitating a transition between them.[19]

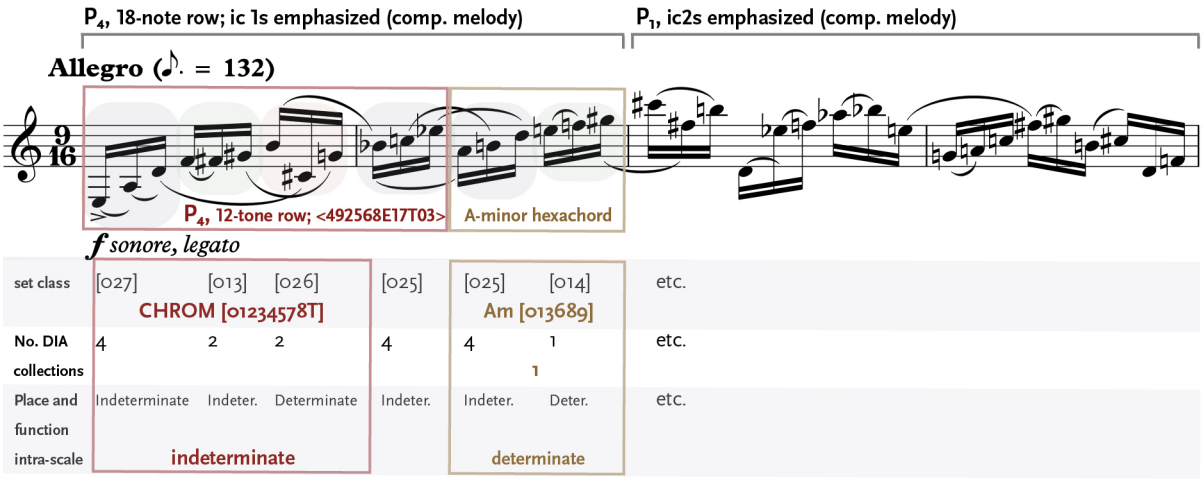
As a result of this liquidation of the soprano's principal motif, the dividing line between melody and accompaniment becomes much less acute, with the upper part now functioning in a more obviously compound way, implying a number of different potential voices. One consequence of this is that there is no longer much sense of vertically overlaid, conflicting diatonic subsets. Both parts articulate one scalic area at a time. Overall, an E-major/dorian, B♭-major/minor, B♮-major/minor trajectory is traced. If we connect this to the Am/m sound world established at the beginning of this second section, and we think of B♭ major as a passing mode in-between E and B, then one might argue that an abstract form of the piece's opening <B, E, A> [027] trichord has been "composed-out" in retrograde at a deeper, middleground level.

One might baulk at downplaying the structural significance of B♭ major, though, given that the <B♭, D, A, C> [0135] set in mm. 13–14 represents an attempt by [0134]-like sets to reestablish themselves in our ears. Directly following [0135], a [01235] <F, A♭, G, E♭, F♯> set is articulated. While this melodic grouping is obviously chromatic—note its prominent [0123] subset—it also embeds [0135] and [0134] within itself. One might thus describe this pentachord as another "vanishing mediator" set, which facilitates transition between [0135] and [0134] while also incorporating (and thus resolving?) the wholly chromatic implications of the "denatured" sets that began the *Arioso*'s second section. Indeed, [0134], emblematic of the *Arioso* as a whole, is subsequently articulated as a <B, A♯, B, C♯, D> succession in both mm. 15 and 16 (refer back to figure 4.6). The last of these [0134] statements marks an imminent return to P_4, the *Arioso*'s starting point: the bass {A♯} functions as a split leading tone, resolving to both {A} *and* {B} as part of a repetition of the [027] set from the opening.

That this is the first mention I have made of the row might strike the reader as unusual, but this is because, as in the *Recitativo*, the musical argument pays little heed to row boundaries. While the row is an underlying condition of this work's musical possibilities, it functions as a background "complex" as opposed to an omnipresent "super motif." Rather than failing to function as a typical twelve-tone piece, Bennett's Impromptus help to highlight that there isn't an *a priori* "typical" way of composing with twelve-tones to begin with. Row boundaries might sometimes manifest a high-point of musico-dramatic tension (as in Brindle's *El Polifemo de oro*) but they might also vanish altogether from the surface, being washed over and eroded by a tantalizingly pandiatonic yet still thoroughly post-tonal harmonic flow.

19 I take the term "vanishing mediator" from Fredric Jameson, "The Vanishing Mediator: Narrative Structure in Max Weber," *New German Critique* (1974), 52.

Figure 4.7 Richard Rodney Bennett, Sonata, i, *Allegro*, mm. 1–4.



NB: connective slurs represent compound melody ic 1s and 2s; they don't indicate phrasing.

Sonata

First Movement: *Allegro*

The Sonata, written in 1983, takes Bennett's earlier use of pandiatonic writing even further. Its opening is characterized by an explosive gesture of upwards-striving energy-gain (see figure 4.7). From the point of view of pitch, its eighteen-note row—a development, as opposed to rejection, of his earlier twelve-tone practice—can be described in terms of an increasing diatonic determinacy.[20] All of P_4's constituent pc-sets—[027], [013], [026], [025], and [014]—are diatonic, but they manifest different levels of *overdetermination*.[21] The *Allegro*'s opening trichord [027], for example, possibly belongs to four different diatonic collections (G, D, A, and E; relative minors are included implicitly as secondary rotations of these major scales), while the following [013] belongs to two (C♯, F♯). Concluding the first measure, sc [026] belongs only to *one* diatonic collection: namely, D major. Furthermore, this set-class is more *functionally* singular than is [013]: the constituent tritone is strongly associated with dominant function (see also chapter 1). Notice, however, that adjacent trichords imply *conflicting* scale segments. While one might hear this passage as becoming increasingly focused in terms of its implied diatonic collection(s), moment

20 On this piece as an example of Bennett's changing attitudes to dodecaphony, see Susan Bradshaw, "Bennett's Versatility," *Musical Times* 125, no. 1697 (1984), 381–84.

21 To avoid the concept of diatonicism's becoming too capacious in the proceeding analysis of this piece, I limit myself to deriving sets only from the natural major and minor scales, and, in rarer instances, the harmonic (as opposed to melodic) minor scale; the latter is needed only in order to explain the row's final [014] set, which sounds as part of a clear harmonic-minor superset.

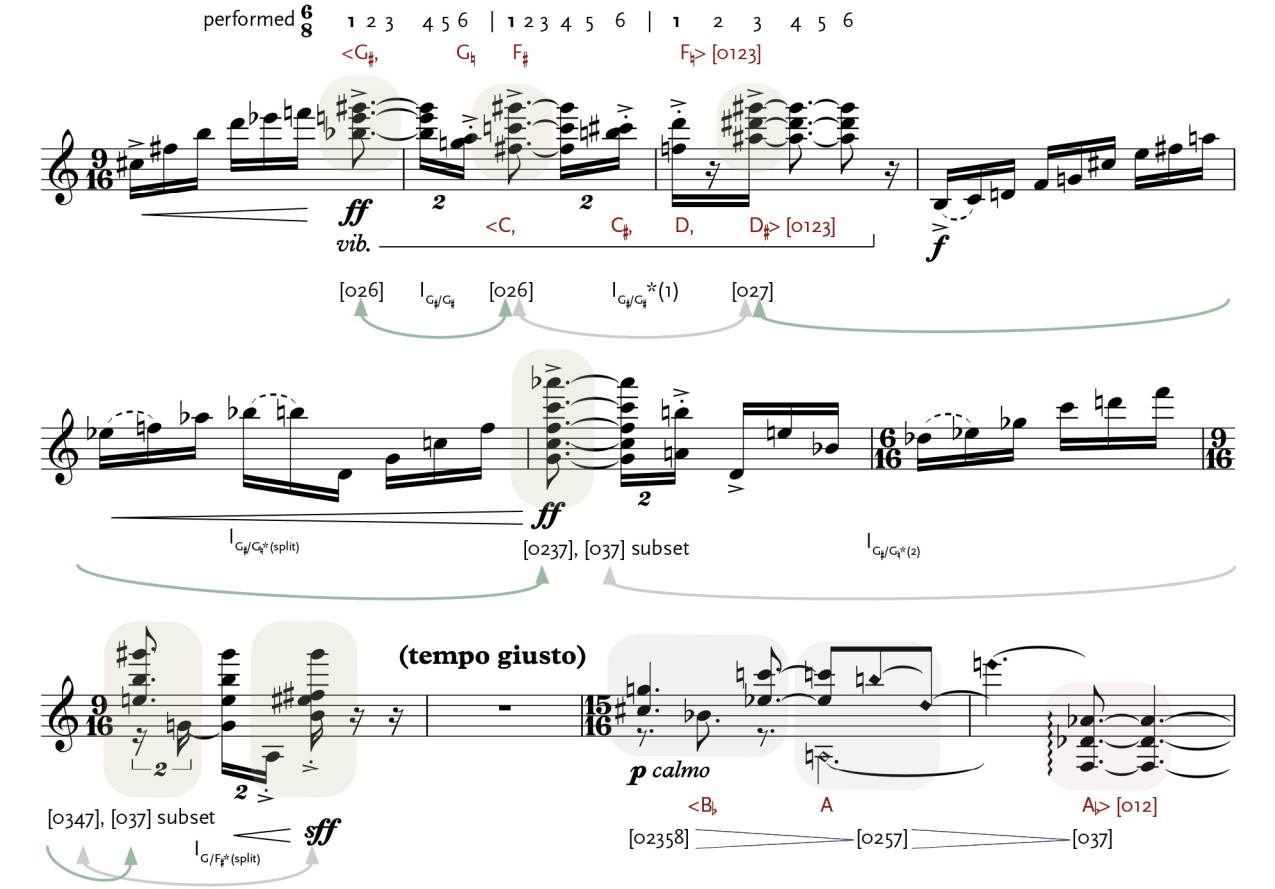
to moment, any such singularity can only be heard through the thickening haze of an increasingly chromatic macroharmony.[22] In m. 2, diatonic overdetermination reasserts itself with a [025] set representing four possible scales: D♭, A♭, E♭, and B♭. These are immediately negated by the downwards semitonal transposition to {A, B, D}. This marked transformational jolt — a temporary loss of diatonic altitude — produces an overspilling of conventional twelve-tone boundaries. The resulting hexachord [013689] leads to the formation of an eighteen-note row overall.

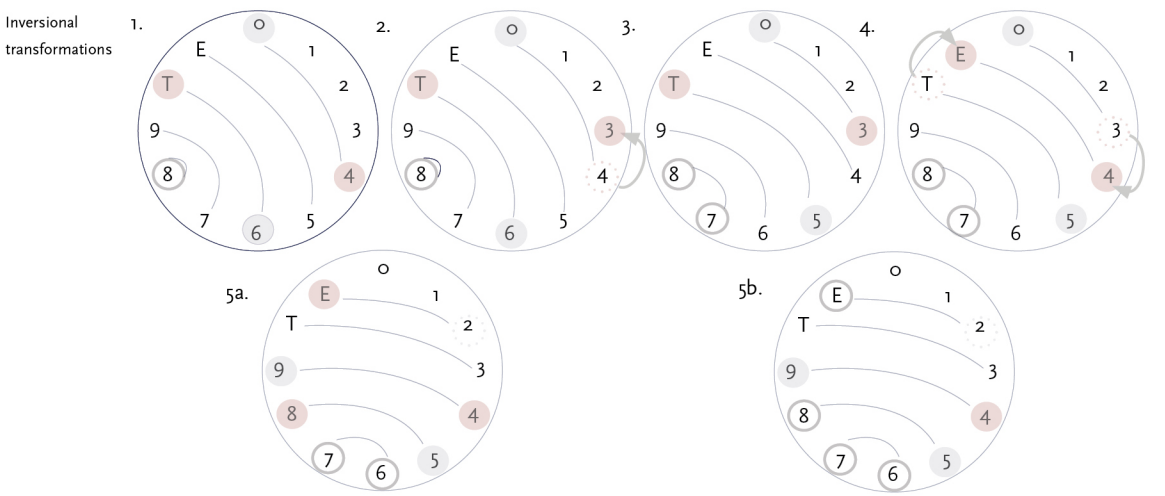
What might be the motivation for this? Bennett suggests this his foundational building block (i.e., the eighteen-note row) was a product of improvisation. Perhaps, then, there is no need to impose an arbitrary limit on the cardinality of such an inspired gesture? That said, such a perspective does nothing to explain *why* the gesture is as long as it is. A possible answer is that the over-spill hexachord in question belongs entirely to A *minor*. The initial twelve-tone row represents a movement toward diatonic clarification, but it produces a chromatic macroharmony that simultaneously undermines any such possibility — especially given the frantic speed at which the music unfolds. The following <A, B, D, E, F, G♯> hexachord, by contrast, is only one note short of a full A-minor scale: it allows for a fleeting and provisional moment of diatonic repose. While admittedly abstract — there's no sense in which a listener would be able to keep track of the precise diatonic significations described above — I imagine most players will have a sense of the opening line *leading* them somewhere: to a point of relative clarity; a local *telos*. Without such an intuition, one's interpretation will lack shape. Theoretical abstraction of the kind modeled above can allow us to understand *why* we might feel the music in a certain way — as a pandiatonic clarificatory process — without legislating that we *should* be hearing each and every detail I've picked out.

The change to P_1 at the beginning of m. 3 represents the crest of the piece's first musical wave; the {C♯} effects an implied change of mode, following on from the preceding A-minor material (refer back to figure 4.7). A subsequent drop in register seems to suggest that the <C♯, F♯, B> trichord groups backwards, with P_4, rather than forwards, with P_1. Rhetorical and gestural profiles seem, as was also the case in the Impromptus, to pay little heed to row boundaries. One of the clear differences between these pieces, though, is the way in which Bennett uses register. In a manner reminiscent of compound-melody textures in tonal music, each note of the opening P_4 — barring the opening {E, A} dyad, which Bennett indicates should be allowed to ring, and its concluding note — connects lucidly to a note either a semitone above (least common) or below (most common) it: refer again to figure 4.7. This changes with the last sixteenth-note of m. 2: {G♯} descends a whole tone to {F♯}, marking the boundary between P_4 and P_1. A series of compound-melody ic 2s subsequently proliferates. Supporting the aforementioned modal change implied by the {C♯} at the beginning of m. 3, this increase of relative intervallic spaciousness, from ic 1 to

22 Dmitri Tymoczko defines macroharmony as "the total collection of notes heard over moderate spans of musical time": *A Geometry of Music: Harmony and Counterpoint in the Extended Common Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.

Figure 4.8 Richard Rodney Bennett, Sonata, i, *Allegro*, mm. 19–29.





ic 2, helps to give one the sense that the piece is continuing to open up, even as its melodic contour is brought back down to the depths of the guitar's open bass strings.

In order to bring the *Allegro*'s first section to a close, Bennett allows a single note to emerge from the welter: the highest fretted {G♯} on the instrument (see **figure 4.8**). Its first three iterations are marked by vertical trichords — the first of the movement so far, further emphasized by their association with a new rhythmic figure: duplets — carved out from non-adjacent sections of the row. (The notated 9/8 is overridden here by a performed 6/8, which gives the sense of an accelerating hypermeter even as the surface rhythm slows down.) These trichords are related by inversion,

$$\text{<B♭, E, G♯>} \xrightarrow{I^{G♯}_{G♯}} \text{<F♯, C, G♯>} \xrightarrow{I^{G♯*(1)}_{G♯}} \text{<A♯, D♯, G♯>},$$

and might be heard to "prolong" the upper {G♯}; the chromatic lines <G♯, G, F♯, F> and <C, C♯, D, D♯>, which underpin these transformations, give a sense of linear, goal-directed motion so far absent from the pandiatonic melee. In m. 23, {G♯} recurs as a notated {A♭} on top of a <G, C, F, C> [027] trichord. The relative intervallic sharpness of this [0237] chord is carried over to, and then ameliorated by, the arrival of an E-major triad in m. 26 (again with the high {G♯} at the top of the texture), but a duplet {G♮} quickly dissonates below it. The end of the gesture is marked by the most piquant and the largest cardinality chord heard so far: namely, [01346] (albeit that it, like the others, is derived from a diatonic collection: F♯ minor). Overall, the following set-class trajectory is traced, with {G♯} functioning as a "prolonged" common tone:

$$[026]\ [026]\ [027] \xrightarrow{split} [0237] \xrightarrow{fuse} [037] \xrightarrow{split} [0347]\ [01346].$$

Set-class expansion is gestured toward, with the [0347] set marking a peak of relative intervallic openness, only to yield ultimately to the most dissonant set of the lot: the progression's final station. What gives this passage its *raison d'être*, however, is arguably the progressively disturbed quality of symmetry manifested by these sets.

There are, of course, many different kinds of symmetry. In his review of Miguel A. Roig-Francolí's textbook *Understanding Post-Tonal Music*, for example, Philip Stoecker critiques Roig-Francolí's conflation of *axial* centricity with *pitch* centricity. While an axis of symmetry — G♯, for example — might be made aurally manifest on the surface of the music, becoming a palpable center of gravity, it might also remain an absent presence that notes simply pivot around: i.e., its existence is conceptual rather than real.[23] Furthermore, Stoecker adds: "is it possible to hear the 'crunchy' dissonance of [an ic-1 axis, such as G♯/G] as a pitch center?"[24] Bennett seems to explore all of these symmetrical qualities — namely, instances in which axial symmetry and pitch symmetry reinforce one another; conceptual axes that are deemphasized on the surface in some way; and dissonant ic-1 crunch axes — in the extract described

23 Philip Stoecker, "Review: *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* and *Anthology of Post-Tonal Music*" in *Theory and Practice*, 35 (2010), 191–205.

24 Stoecker, "Review," 203.

above, playing on their progressively decentered aspects. As already stated, the first three [026/7] trichords relate straightforwardly though inversion:

$$\text{<B♭, E, G♯>} \xrightarrow{I^{G♯}_{G♯}} \text{<F♯, C, G♯>} \xrightarrow{I^{G♯*(1)}_{G♯}} \text{<A♯, D♯, G♯>}$$

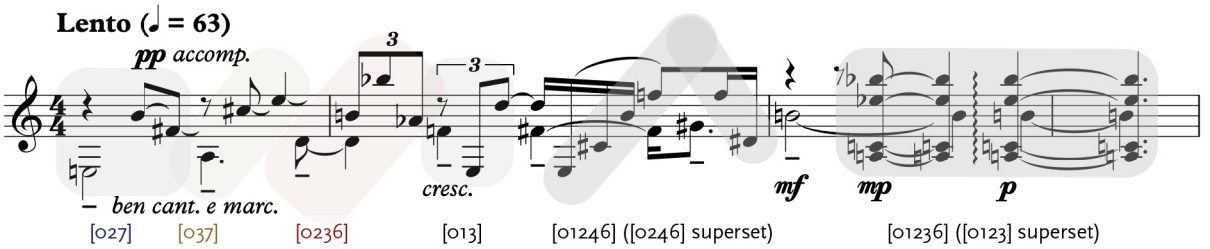
(Refer back to figure 4.8, to which all subsequent discussion relates, until otherwise indicated). Their axis of symmetry is the most prominent note in the texture; axial symmetry and pitch centricity are concomitant. While the change from {E} to {D♯} between trichords 1 and 3 is the result of a single semitonal offset from a perfectly crisp inversional operation, the increase in relative consonance—[027] as more intervallically expansive than [026]—compensates for this: {G♯}'s centric quality is heightened by its being retained as part of a progression to a more reposeful harmonic state.

A change of cardinality occurs between the third and fourth chords: namely <A♯, D♯, G♯> and <G, C, F, G♯>. Rather than undermining the coherence of the progression, the change to a tetrachord is made in order to make a new, dissonant inversional axis palpable: {D♯} maps onto {C} and {A♯} onto {F} around a G♯/G♮ axis. (Figure 4.8 represents these transformations on a clockface in order to make them more comprehensible.) In other words, {G♯} is still an important agent of symmetry, but its standing as a pitch center is challenged by its being absorbed into a dissonant dyad. Between the fourth and fifth chords of the progression, the {G/G♯} dyad is held in place, but minimal offset voice leading leads to a disruption of symmetry: {F} maps to {B} rather than to {B♭}; {C} maps to {E} rather than to {E♭}.

The progression's final transformation, <E, B, G♯, G♮> [0347] → <A, B, E♯, F♯, G♯> [01346], is "imperfect" in a number of respects. Let's start with the presumption that the former [0347] was intended to invert into {D, F, F♯, A}, $I^{G}_{F♯}$. This isn't too preposterous a claim: the Em/M chord—order position numbers <15, 16, 17> and <0> of P_7 and P_4, respectively—should proceed to Dm/M at <**1–4**> of P_4. (Note that, as is typical for Bennett, the traversal of a row boundary isn't rhetorically marked—rows flow into one another as part of a seamless gesture.) Even if this idealized row progression had occurred, however, the way in which the pitches in question are voiced means that the inversional axis G/F♯ isn't immediately apparent aurally: {G} and {F♯} are displaced from one another by an octave, and the latter pitch is embedded in the middle of thick sonority. It thus cannot function as a source of (dissonant) axial gravity. More problematic, however, is the fact that, while {G♯} can be understood to map onto {F}, {G♯} also stays in place, creating symmetrical imbalance. What is more, {B} doesn't map onto {D}: the latter note is totally expunged. The most dissonant point of the progression, then, also marks the moment in which {G♯}'s pretensions to be an organizing force on the musical surface are overridden.

After a bar of silence, however, when all seems lost for {G♯}, a progression unfolds that seems to mimic a vii°–I9 progression in *A♭ major*: <C♯, G, B♭> → <B♭, E♭, C>. However, the {B♭} that functions as a held pivot between these functions—dominant and tonic—causes them to coagulate into a [02358] pentachord. This contains a triadic subset {E♭, G, B♭}, but this doesn't house the crucial {G♯/A♭}, implied but not

Figure 4.9 Richard Rodney Bennett, Sonata, i, *Allegro*, mm. 72–6.



literally stated. Shrinking in size, the subsequent sets move toward a resolution: [02358] contracts to [0257], which further compresses to [037]. The progression's last sonority finally presents the extensively prolonged {G♯} as part of a stable triad: namely, D♭ major. (Note that, once again, a chromatic line <B♭, A, A♭> emerges clearly from the texture, giving it a goal-directed quality—even despite, or perhaps because of the fact, that it is foreign to the row's pandiatonicism.) A kind of post-tonal teleology emerges from and through this process. Each successive row develops from a state of diatonic overdetermination toward an increasing level of specificity and back, creating the effect of undulating waves, supported by the *perpetuum mobile* texture. (Note, however, that the peaks and troughs of these processes don't always align with row completion or initiation.) A single note then emerges from the texture, but it is ultimately harmonized with the most intensively dissonant chord of the piece so far. The just-analyzed two-measure gesture, however, provides resolution for this pitch, housing it as part of a stable, consonant triad.

Not all parts of the first movement are controlled directly by the expanded row, however. From 1983 onwards, Bennett suggests that his attitude toward composing changed—he began to write, not without directed flow, but without being conscious *a priori* of a clear structure or formula.[25] While most of the Sonata's first movement is strictly serial, the *Lento* section from m. 72 is not (see **figure 4.9**). Forming a kind of cantus firmus, P_4 is intoned in the bass (NB: it is marked with tenutos), with freer harmonic writing unfolding over the top of it in post-tonal counterpoint. This does not mean that the row disappears altogether; rather its control of the musical surface becomes more abstract. Taking cantus and counterpoint together, the opening sets—[027], [037], [0236], and [013]—are all present within the row; indeed, they follow its order numbers in a fairly linear sequence: **<0–2>**, **<1–3>**, **<2–5>**, and **<3–5>**. As we draw toward the end of this new section's opening phrase, however, we are presented with two very different-sounding melodic sets: [01246] and [01236]. The former contains a prominent whole-tone subset [0246]; the other, a chromatic cluster [0123]. These two "sounds" are antithetical: they represent the extremes of a harmonic continuum that dissolves the piece's pandiatonicism into (almost) fully symmetrical

25 Lance Bosman, "Richard Rodney Bennett's Sonata for Guitar," *Guitar International* 14, no. 4 (1985): 16–20, 19.

collections, based on either whole-tones or semitones respectively. In other words, we move from a freer harmonic world at the beginning of the phrase — albeit one that still uses the row as a conceptual ink well from which to draw set-classes — toward kinds of harmony that are "impossible" within it (other than as secondary harmonies). This sets up a tension that will be further exacerbated at the end of the movement.

Indeed, much like the first of Thomas Wilson's *Three Pieces*, the opening *Allegro* of Bennett's Sonata finishes on a harmony anomalous to the row: namely, <F, B♭, F♯, G♯, D> [02458] (repeated as the initial harmony of **figure 4.10**). Notably, though, this chord represents a departure from the "open-string" sets that initiate each of Bennett's rows. Unlike Wilson, who used the guitar's unmediated pitch profile as a means of escaping dodecaphony, Bennett escapes his previously omnipresent row by means of a chord that is not intrinsically guitaristic. This pentachord is perhaps most simply understood as a whole-tone tetrachord plus an errant semitone. It opens the door to the subsequent *Lento*.

Second movement: *Lento*

Unlike the Sonata's *Allegro*, which moved from a state of pandiatonic overdetermination toward an increased level of diatonic specificity as part of a *perpetuum mobile* rush, Bennett's slow movement is more preoccupied with the slow unfolding of a dialectic between harmonic surface and depth. The *Lento*'s first arpeggiated verticals — two whole-tone-based pentachords, connected by means of a linear chromatic cluster [0123] — are outgrowths of the freer harmonic writing that closes the first phrase of the *Allegro*'s *Lento* section (see figure 4.10). Following Kenneth Smith's recent model of "drive analysis," these two whole-tone-ish chords, [02458] and [02368],[26] can be understood as containing two "diatonic drives" each (i.e., seventh chords that have the potential to tonicize a tonal center if their roots discharge by fifth): namely, G♯7♭5 and B♭7; and F♯7♭5 and C7.[27] Taken together, the roots of these chords form a [0246] {F♯, G♯, B♭, C} whole-tone set. Understood in a more conventional, transformational sense, it might be thought that the two chords are each composed of a distinct pair of subsets: [026] and [05]. A kind of "voice exchange" swaps the registral places of each of these set classes, mapping them from the top to the bottom, and from the bottom to the top, respectively. (Note that this also supports the gestural profile of the *Lento*'s opening gambit: a motion up and then down.) The transpositional paths involved arguably compose-out intervals internal to a whole-tone collection:[28]

26 The underlined set-class integers denote single semitonal offsets from perfect whole-tone chords.

27 See Kenneth Smith, *Desire in Chromatic Harmony: A Psychodynamic Theory of* Fin de Siècle *Tonality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), chapter 6.

28 As is often the case when mapping between different set-classes, a number of distinct transformations are able to effect the same result. For example, {G♯, F♯, D} and {E, F♯, B♭} might also relate at $I^{F\sharp}_{F\sharp}$. I have opted for a more transposition-inflected approach here, however, to show the influence of a background whole-tone-ism, which I believe to be more salient than symmetry, in this instance.

Figure 4.10 Richard Rodney Bennett, Sonata, i, *Lento*, mm. 1–17.

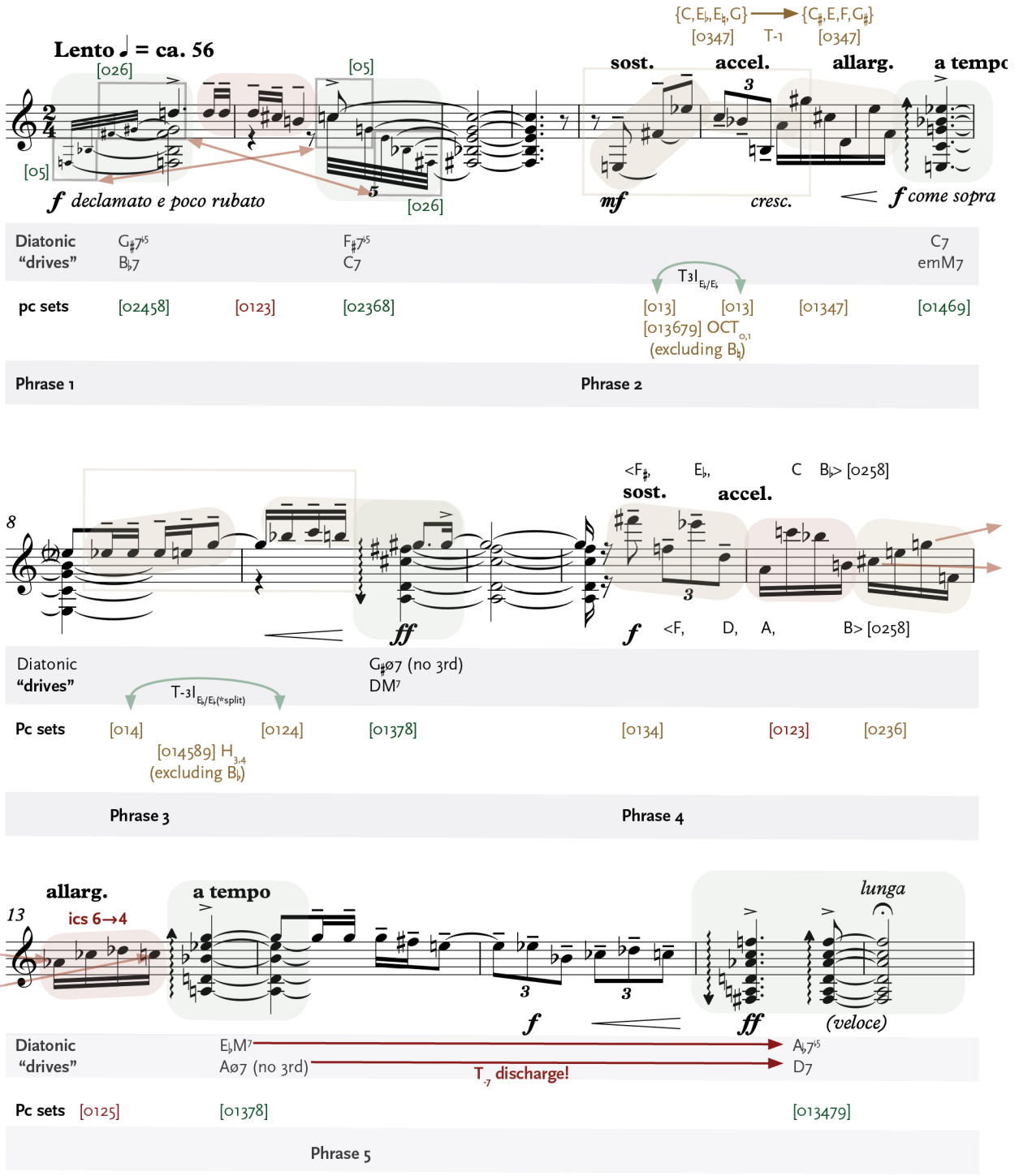


Table 4.1 Diatonic drives implied by phrase-ending verticals, Bennett, Guitar Sonata, *Lento*, mm. 1–17. The sign (!) indicates that the root of the drive in question is in the bass.

Diatonic "drives"	Phrase 1	Phrase 2	Phrase 3	Phrase 4	Phrase 5
C	DOM 7	DOM 7			
F					
B♭	DOM 7 (~~5th~~)				
D♯/E♭				MAJOR 7th	
G♯/A♭	DOM $7^{\flat5}$		ø7 (~~3rd~~)		DOM $7^{\flat5}$
C♯/D♭					
F♯/G♭	DOM $7^{\flat5}$ (!)				
B					
E		mM7 (~~5th~~) (!)			
A				ø7 (~~3rd~~) (!)	
D			MAJOR 7th		DOM 7

$$\{F, B\flat\} \xrightarrow{T_2} \{G, C\}$$

$$\{G\sharp, F\sharp, D\} \xrightarrow{T_{-4}I^{G\sharp}_{G\sharp}} \{E, F\sharp, B\flat\}$$

While a row is unfolded in the opening six measures of this movement (<568921E0T74[3]>), I would argue that the *Lento*'s harmonic background is actually a whole-tone complex that is subtly inflected by surface chromatic pitches.[29] This complex can be represented abstractly by the dispersal of "drives" arranged in a chain of fifths; the relevant whole-tone collection is left unshaded (see **table 4.1**). As Smith has argued, "drive dispersal in various established tonal spaces (whole-tone, octatonic, 'mystic,' etc.) does not equate to pitch-class materials associated with these spaces."[30] The transition from one whole-tone chord to another, for example, is made by passing through a fully chromatic set (i.e., the linear [0123] tetrachord),

29 While the ordering of this row is jumbled on the surface, and the final pitch is omitted (hence the [3] in square brackets), row order is clarified as the piece proceeds. See Tosone, "Bennett's Guitar Music," 20–1.

30 Kenneth Smith, "The Enigma of Entropy in Extended Tonality," *Music Theory Spectrum* 43, no. 1 (2021): 1–18, 12.

which serves to create a productive tension between background- and surface-level harmony. Missing from the background whole-tone complex at this point are drives built on {E} and {D}. Eventual attainment of *both* of these nodes provides the first section with its harmonic *raison d'être*. The various blockages and complications encountered along the way are used to create musical drama.

The second phrase (mm. 5–7) departs from the harmonic vocabulary of the first by using octatonic sets. Transpositional paths focus on intervals derivable from an octatonic collection. Its initial <E, F♯, D♯> {D♯, E, F♯} trichord, for example, moves to {C, B♭, A} by means of $T_{-3}I^{D♯}_{D♯}$ (all subsequent analysis of the *Lento* refers back to figure 4.10 and table 4.1). (Note that this set is spoiled by a low {B♮}, but a [013] subset is still salient registrally.) Once again, there is a tension between "foreground" chromaticism and "middleground" harmony—octatonic, in this case—which gives the music an attractive multidimensionality. The aggregation of both [013] trichords produces a [013679] set indigenous to $OCT_{0,1}$ (i.e., an octatonic scale beginning with a <C, C♯> succession). Following this, [01347] and [01469]—octatonic sets both—relate to one another most clearly by means of their prominent [0347] subsets, offset from one another by means of T_{-1}. These sets do not combine to produce an octatonic macroharmony, however—they are more plainly chromatic. Furthermore, the octatonic vertical that concludes the phrase expounds two diatonic "drives," C7 and EmM7 (~~5th~~). Both are members of the background whole-tone set established by the opening phrase; the latter, crucially, was one of the missing nodes from the complex established at the beginning of the piece.

The third phrase (mm. 8–10) seems to be broadly hexatonic in its organization. [014] is transformed at $T_{-3}I^{E♭(*split)}_{E♭}$ into [0124]. Ignoring the chromatic interloper, {B♭}, the result is a full statement of $HEX_{3,4}$ (i.e., a hexatonic scale beginning with a <D♯, E> succession). Once again, however, the concluding vertical of this phrase contains two drives that belong to the opening whole-tone complex—DM7 and G♯ø7 (no 3rd), the former being the last of its previously missing nodes. Surely this should be a moment of pronounced accomplishment? Perhaps. But none of the whole-tone drives so far sounded have actually been *tonicized*, and without this kind of traditional resolution, such a background complex cannot be anything but abstract. Indeed, this kind of fifth-based consolidation requires a move *outside* of the background whole-tone collection, albeit as a means of facilitating a triumphant return to it.[31]

Octatonic and chromatic tetrachords interchange in the fourth phrase: namely, [0134], [0123], [0236], and [0125]. However, dominant- and half-diminished sevenths [0258]—more functionally normative in terms of their sound—can be picked out from this flow if register (high and low) is taken into account. The melodic succession <C♯, G> <A♭, C> <B♭, G> in m. 11 is particularly marked, in this respect: it suggests a V7–I–V half cadence in A♭ major. The final dyad of this progression is housed in the fourth phrase's concluding vertical, which contains two drives: E♭M7 and Aø7 (no 3rd). Both of these sets lie outside of the whole-tone background established at the

31 This is comparable to the need to modulate to the dominant and back in order to consolidate a given tonic in Schenker's theory of tonality.

beginning of the piece. As sets become increasingly diverse—octatonic, hexatonic, chromatic, *and* diatonic—as the musical argument proceeds, the whole-tone background appears to be reconfigured. It is this very change however, that allows for fifth-based discharges—the first of the piece!—onto two nodes of the whole-tone complex in the *Lento*'s fifth phrase: A∅7 (no 3rd) and E♭M7 of the penultimate vertical resolve to D7 and A♭$7^{♭5}$ respectively in the concluding one. (These discharges are represented by the red arrows in table 4.1.)

In summary, a post-tonal background is made more palpable by means of conventionally tonal rhetoric at the section's end. And "the fluctuation of [scalar] spaces at a surface level" (to use Kenneth Smith's terminology) throughout the passage allows that background to be placed in a multidimensional perspective, which encompasses both surface and middleground levels too.[32]

Fourth Movement: *Fantasia*; *Allegro*

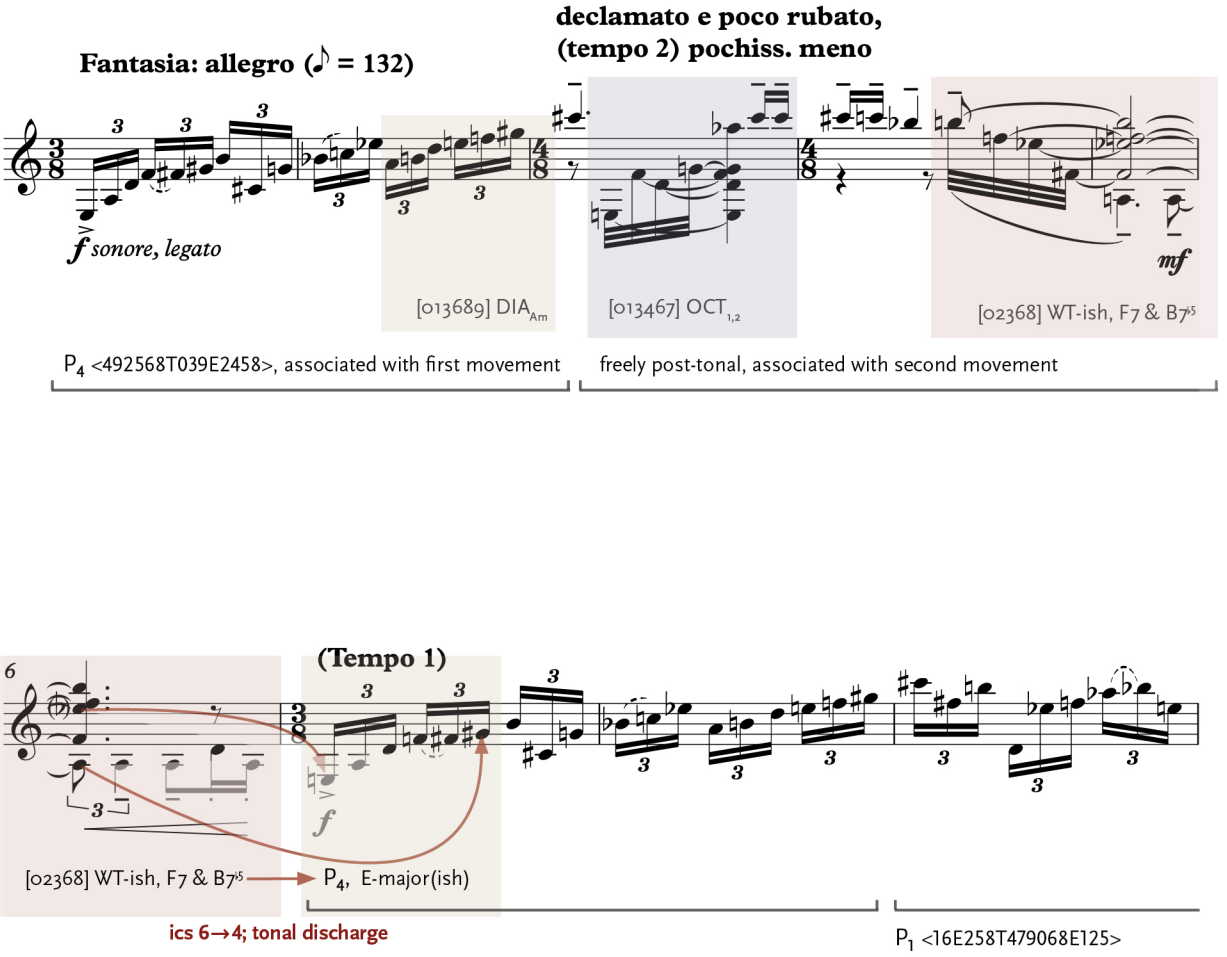
In the last of his *Three Pieces*, Thomas Wilson makes a return to the first movement's row; he gives dodecaphony "one more chance." Ultimately, however, his frustration with the method cannot be overcome; the apex of the piece is marked by a para-row harmony, based on an "open-strings" subset. The finale of Bennett's Sonata also marks a return to the work's opening row, but it is part of "some kind of free association like a recapitulation of things at a remove and in different order."[33] Rather than being repudiated, Bennett's serial material is brought into dialogue with freer atonal materials (see **figure 4.11**). The opening row—effectively extended to include the first note of P_1, which is elided with the next group of material—is followed by a wholly octatonic [013467] hexachord, which offsets the diatonic quality of the immediately preceding [013689]. It is articulated in such a way as to mimic the opening of the *Lento*; the following [02368] is a literal transposition of that movement's second whole-tone-ish chord. The purpose of this juxtaposition of *Allegro* and *Lento* materials isn't harmonic antagonism: the B$7^{♭5}$ drive of the <B, F, E♭, F♯, A> pentachord discharges by fifth into the repeat of the opening row, the first hexachord of which sounds consequently "E-major-ish" <E, A, D, F, F♯, G♯>. Whereas previously the row is best characterized—on my reading at least—in terms of an increasing level of pandiatonic determinacy, the way in which it is framed by the preceding *Lento* material makes it sound—arguably for the first time—like an arrival, as opposed to a point of frenetic departure.

This mutually reinforcing relationship between first- and second-movement materials (which both used different rows) is further consolidated in m. 10 (Tempo 2), when P_{10} content is articulated in the rhetorical and rhythmic garb of the *Lento*. While Bennett's approach to composition was becoming freer at this point in career, this in no way amounted to a vitiation of his past means of structuring pieces. Serial music exists comfortably within a new, postmodern language. There is good reason for this.

32 Smith, "The Enigma of Entropy," 14.

33 Bennett, quoted in Bosman, "Richard Rodney Bennett's Sonata for Guitar," 19.

Figure 4.11 Richard Rodney Bennett, Sonata, iv, *Fantasia*, mm. 1–13.



Even though Bennett had decided consciously to move away from dodecaphony, it was "in his blood."[34] As he was to put it in a conversation with Jim Tosone:

> [Composing in a twelve-tone idiom gives one] the same legacy one gets from studying counterpoint. Nobody writes strict counterpoint anymore and nobody in his or her right mind would write strict twelve-tone music today. But serial techniques occupied me for so many years because of the idea that you could take a small group of notes and write a symphony. That is an admirable way of composing—nothing wasted, nothing random.[35]

Julian Bream went even further:

> Whatever people say about the serial systems of the sixties and seventies, it did give those composers a language and a discipline. Eventually, though, it constrained them—so they broke it. The problem was what was going to happen after the serial system was discarded. We are now in the middle of that crisis.[36]

It is interesting, in this respect, that Bennett could not bring himself to abandon serialism or dodecaphony in his later Sonata—a New York work, born of his new, post-1980 compositional outlook. Read negatively, this is suggestive of anxiety: how to compose without the crutch of a system? Interpreted more positively, Bennett had managed to carry his earlier training forward into a looser compositional language, free of the ideological dogmatism of the previous decades. Either way, Bennett's Sonata can be heard as an outgrowth of the kinds of techniques modeled in the Impromptus. The pandiatonicism of the earlier work is significantly developed, being incorporated into a more distinctly vectored trajectory—hence, perhaps, the latter's greater length. Indeed, of all the pieces in this book, the Sonata is the one that most clearly goes beyond miniaturized form; its movements model the kind of development and duration one would expect from pieces written in a more traditional idiom.

Furthermore, the Sonata marks an important milestone for the current book: it was the last overtly serial work with which Bream was to be associated. A journey that had begun in 1956, and which had bequeathed six cutting-edge pieces of romantic-modernist British guitar repertoire to the world, had reached its terminus. *A Twelve-Tone Repertory for Guitar* has attempted to narrate this story; it is for fellow guitarists to ensure, in both their teaching and their concert programming, that pupils and audiences alike can continue to engage with this music.

34 Quoted in Meredith, *Richard Rodney Bennett*, 307.
35 Jim Tosone, *Classical Guitarists: Conversations* (North Carolina: McFarlane, 2000), 71.
36 Tosone, *Classical Guitarists*, 75.

Matrices

					I ↓							
P→	0	5	7	8	E	T	3	6	2	1	4	9 ←R
	7	0	2	3	6	5	T	1	9	8	E	4
	5	T	0	1	4	3	8	E	7	6	9	2
	4	9	E	0	3	2	7	T	6	5	8	1
	1	6	8	9	0	E	4	7	3	2	5	T
	2	7	9	T	1	0	5	8	4	3	6	E
	9	2	4	5	8	7	0	3	E	T	1	6
	6	E	1	2	5	4	9	0	8	7	T	3
	T	3	5	6	9	8	1	4	0	E	2	7
	E	4	6	7	T	9	2	5	1	0	3	8
	8	1	3	4	7	6	E	2	T	9	0	5
	3	8	T	E	2	1	6	9	5	4	7	0
					↑							
					RI							

Bennett, Impromptus

							I ↓										
P→	0	5	T	1	2	4	7	9	3	6	8	E	5	7	T	0	1	4 ←R
	7	0	5	8	9	E	2	4	T	1	3	6	0	2	5	7	8	E
	2	7	0	3	4	6	9	E	5	8	T	1	7	9	0	2	3	6
	E	4	9	0	1	3	6	8	2	5	7	T	4	6	9	E	0	3
	T	3	8	E	0	2	5	7	1	4	6	9	3	5	8	T	E	2
	8	1	6	9	T	0	3	5	E	2	4	7	1	3	6	8	9	0
	5	T	3	6	7	9	0	2	8	E	1	4	T	0	3	5	6	9
	3	8	1	4	5	7	T	0	6	9	E	2	8	T	1	3	4	7
	9	2	7	T	E	1	4	7	0	3	5	8	2	4	7	9	T	1
	6	E	4	7	8	T	1	3	9	0	2	5	E	1	4	6	7	T
	4	9	2	5	6	8	E	1	7	T	0	3	9	E	2	4	5	8
	1	6	E	2	3	5	8	T	4	7	9	0	6	8	E	1	2	5
	7	0	5	8	9	E	2	4	T	1	3	6	0	2	5	7	8	E
	5	T	3	6	7	9	0	2	8	E	1	4	T	0	3	5	6	9
	2	7	0	3	4	6	9	E	5	8	T	1	7	9	0	2	3	6
	0	5	T	1	2	4	7	9	3	6	8	E	5	7	T	0	1	4
	E	4	9	0	1	3	6	8	2	5	7	T	4	6	9	E	0	3
	8	1	6	9	T	0	3	5	E	2	4	7	1	3	6	8	9	0
							↑											
							RI											

Bennett, Sonata, I: 18-Note Row

	I ↓											
P→	0	5	T	1	2	4	7	9	3	6	8	E ←R
	7	0	5	8	9	E	2	4	T	1	3	6
	2	7	0	3	4	6	9	E	5	8	T	1
	E	4	9	0	1	3	6	8	2	5	7	T
	T	3	8	E	0	2	5	7	1	4	6	9
	8	1	6	9	T	0	3	5	E	2	4	7
	5	T	3	6	7	9	0	2	8	E	1	4
	3	8	1	4	5	7	T	0	6	9	E	2
	9	2	7	T	E	1	4	6	0	3	5	8
	6	E	4	7	8	T	1	3	9	0	2	5
	4	9	2	5	6	8	E	1	7	T	0	3
	1	6	E	2	3	5	8	T	4	7	9	0
	RI ↑											

Bennett, Sonata, I & IV: 12-Note Row

	I ↓											
P→	0	1	3	4	9	8	6	7	5	2	E	T ←R
	E	0	2	3	8	7	5	6	4	1	T	9
	9	T	0	1	6	5	3	4	2	E	8	7
	8	9	E	0	5	4	2	3	1	T	7	6
	3	4	6	7	0	E	9	T	8	5	2	1
	4	5	7	8	1	0	T	E	9	6	3	2
	6	7	9	T	3	2	0	1	E	8	5	4
	5	6	8	9	2	1	E	0	T	7	4	3
	7	8	T	E	4	3	1	2	0	9	6	5
	T	E	1	2	7	6	4	5	3	0	9	8
	1	2	4	5	T	9	7	8	6	3	0	E
	2	3	5	6	T	E	8	9	7	4	1	0
	RI ↑											

Bennett, Sonata, II: 12-Note Row

Acknowledgments

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