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Topics in Music Theory: The Symphony 1825-1925

Unity in Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Winds*

In response to the death of his beloved teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, Igor Stravinsky composed a work in 1908 to his memory which was based inspired by ritual. The *Chant funèbre* was unfortunately lost but Stravinsky remembered it as the best work of his early period. Similarly, the death of Stravinsky's friend and colleague Debussy prompted him to write another memorial work dedicated "To the memory of Claude Achille Debussy" (Macdonald V). Debussy died on March 25 1918, and Stravinsky's early sketches of ideas from *Symphonies of Winds* date from July 1918 after news of the death. In April of 1920 the musical journal *La Revue musicale* was issuing a memorial supplement and invited leading composers to contribute short piano works as tribute to the great composer. Stravinsky composed his chorale, in June of that year and completed the *Symphonies* between July and November (Wason 123). Of the piano chorale, curiously entitled "Fragment des *Symphonies pour instruments à vent*" Taruskin notes its stark visual impression: "The sparse succession of widely spaced chords in quarters and halves, absolutely devoid of expression marks, gradually shedding their sharps and flats as the final phrase, entirely on white keys, approaches. Full of *Luftpausen* and, toward the end, full beats and even measures of silence, it comes across as a veritable slap in the face of rhetoric" (1462). Amid its companions, Stravinsky's fragment "beautiful and hard as steel and make people ashamed of their existence." This work was indeed representative of a new classicism, an objective hardness.

The work was originally scored for orchestral wind section of three flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), alto flute, two oboes, English horn, two Bb clarinets, alto clarinet, three bassoons (third doubling on contrabassoon), four horns, two trumpets in C, one trumpet in A, three trombones, and tuba. In 1942, Stravinsky revised the work substantially, changing meters (as he did in numerous works including *The Rite of Spring*), replacing the colorful alto flute and clarinet with their more available counterparts, and adjusting several of the parts to accommodate the new scoring's more limited ranges.

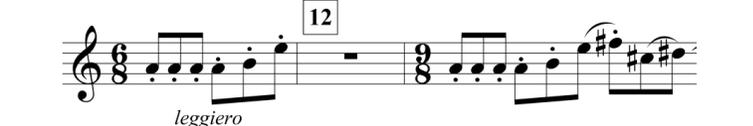
The work occupies a special position in Stravinsky's transition from the grand resources of his Russian Period, notoriously deployed in the *Rite*, to the leaner, more objective period of neoclassicism. Alex Ross notes that Debussy had been complaining "that Russians were losing their Russianness in 1915 and that Stravinsky was leaning dangerously toward the Schoenberg side... Debussy had been urging Stravinsky to be a Russian with all his energy, writing 'It is good to be from one's country, to be attached to the earth like the humblest peasant!'" (Ross 104). Indeed, despite its modernist exterior there is a deep Russianness that pervades the *Symphonies*. This paper will explore Alex Ross's postulate that in the *Symphonies*, based on Russian Orthodox funeral service, the solemn chant signifies that the composer is ritualistically burying his old Russian self alongside the body of Debussy." A series of catastrophic events meant that Stravinsky's childhood had been erased: the demise of tsarist Russia; revolution, early death of his beloved brother; and his estate at Ustyuh, "where polytonal chords of *Rite* had been hammered out, had passed into the hands of Polish farmers" (105). And while *The Rite* had been receiving praise in Western Europe, its harsh criticism in Russia might have further turned the composer's sights west. The work is indeed a "nine-minute sequence of lamenting cries, meandering chants, and chordal blocks" (104) which juxtaposes sharply contrasting material. Stravinsky himself described the *Symphonies* as an arrangement of "tonal masses...sculptured in marble... to be regarded objectively by the ear" (Taruskin 1486). Stravinsky's responses to the work are illuminating, writing that he:

did not count on any immediate success for this work. It lacks all those elements that infallibly appeal to the ordinary listener... It is an austere ritual which is unfolded in terms of short litanies between different groups of homogenous instruments. I fully anticipated that the cantilena of the clarinets and flutes frequently taking up their liturgical dialogue and softly chanting it would not prove sufficiently attractive (White 258).

In fact, the *Symphonies* was the first work to be linked to neoclassicism (Taruskin 1486), possible causes for which will be explored in the paper. The work can be viewed as both key to Stravinsky's lifelong style and "harbinger of certain radical departures in the conceptualization of musical time that came into fruition during the resurgence of hard-core modernism that followed the second world war" (Taruskin 1486).

This paper will not attempt a comprehensive analysis; rather I will attempt to unify research done using diverse methodologies for a more holistic understanding to inform performance. I will show that form in this work is inseparable from other dimensions of melody, texture/tempo, texture, orchestration, harmony, rhythm, pitch. Through analyses in each of these realms, I will demonstrate Stravinsky's unification of dimensions into cohesive whole beneath an external juxtaposing of seemingly unrelated materials.

Melody is the most easily unified dimension of *Symphonies* as Stravinsky manipulates several simple motivic cells by rhythmic and intervallic variation. Most of them exhibit a Russian peasant character as they are mostly constricted in range to a perfect fifth at widest, phrases are generally short and conjunct in motion, and phrases lack distinctive contours except for a distinct fall at their cadence points (Tyra 23). The following table summarizes these basic materials:

Theme	materials	notes
Chorale		Brass and tutti
Invocation		Clarinet
Scherzino		Oboes
Flute		
Bassoon		
Trumpet		
Litany		Clarinet
Opening		horn 1
Bridge		Oboes

László Somfai's work on organic development will constitute the body of this paper's motivic and thematic analysis. The chorale exerts a strong influence on the rest of the piece through its subtle motivic relationships. We will examine first the "chorale chord," which is given definitively by the brass at 65:



This beautiful chord can be understood as a revoiced G^{7b9} (Somfai 360), shown in root position in the example above. The harmonic implications of this chord will be discussed in later in this paper, but all of the primary themes derive from this chord:

- The *invocation* at rehearsal 26 emphasizes B, G# (Ab), and D prominently with G in the trumpet: here we have an outlined chorale chord G^{7b9} .
- The *scherzino* is a transposed reordering of the chorale melody's last four pitches (C, D, E, and F).
- *Litany* prominently mixes minor and major triads at 26, and this emphasizes the half step dissonance which is so pungent in chorale chord.
- Flute theme develops the major second of Chorale melody, later examined as the *flex*.
- Bassoon theme develops the filled in third the characterizes the chorale's melodic cadence.
- Trumpet motive is simply a spread out version of the *scherzino* which will serve as the jumping-off point for all new material presented in the wild dance section I name Scherzos.

The themes are so unique and contrasting in character that their relationship to chorale is revealed only under the microscope of analysis.

The final two melodic ideas are not fleshed out as full-scale themes, but are rather used as isolated motifs. Throughout their variations, Stravinsky maintains their original function and character, underlining "their related yet not identical characters with 'symphonies' of differing

orchestration” (362). The *opening* motive derives from the chorale’s melodic cadence emphasizing the filled in minor third (E-F-D transposed to F-G-Ab). Finally, the *bridge* inverts the chorale’s final three pitches: F-C-D becomes F-C-Eb followed by the descending third. Both the *bridge* and *opening* are used as transitions (2 before 6, one before 11, 26), occasionally as a buffer between two themes of stark contrast. Like all thematic materials in *Symphonies*, they are immediately subject to variation, truncation, and development with no recurrence exactly the same as any other statement.

We turn now to Stravinsky’s alteration of thematic materials via variation, development, and permutation. The composer’s most elementary procedure, **repetition**, does not exist in this work. Even phrases that seem like repetition are not: some process of contraction or variance is occurring. Somfai notes that when the bassoon theme returns, it is “reborn with a decidedly different orchestration and range. These are thus individual” utterances, not varied repetitions (369). Regarding variation, the variations don’t follow one another immediately like Beethoven might have done; rather, Stravinsky has dispatched to variants to other parts of the work. Their meaning and external form is unchanged-- the material just gets shortened, lengthened, or rearranged and appears in an unpredictable position in the work (369). Regarding **development**, there are no traditional procedures. Somfai writes that “one is struck principally by the separation in time of corresponding sections, the lack of a long line of directional movement from one point to another point, and the lack of any feeling of continuity or rationality in development” (370).

Developmental procedures are apparent in details of what Stravinsky called the “litanies” or “liturgical dialogues” of the flute-clarinet episodes. Somfai notes that organic development, the important structural principle of Gregorian monody, mainly directs progress of the static, gently chanting “litany’ sections” (370). To form the flute theme (rehearsal 6), Stravinsky spins out a long melody by manipulating tiny motivic cells. The following musical example gives its three main cells:



One can easily see how Stravinsky strings these three ideas together in various orders to make a ten-bar phrase that feels both unified and spontaneously developing; this is an example of what Somfai labels organic development, and this ancient procedure permeates *Symphonies*. A very cursory look at the bassoon theme which follows at rehearsal 8 can further demonstrate this technique.

More complex are the quietly chanting interludes of the clarinet theme in the segment 15-26. Somfai demonstrates how Stravinsky constructs this entire musical segment from four ideas which are given in the following example (373):



Throughout this section, Stravinsky rarely alters pitch content of these cells; rather, he manipulates their rhythm and phrasing and creates longer sentences from building blocks. This segment also gives opportunity for dialogue between the themes litany's interjections at 15, 18, and 22 and the trumpet theme's at 21 and 23; meanwhile the clarinet and flute continue their quiet chanting as if stuck in a trance.

Another example of organic development is Stravinsky's treatment of the chorale melody. This melody is comprised of three raw elements: the static chorale chord repeated, legato movement to a dissonant change chord, and the closing melodic cadence. The reader can compare statements at 42, 56, 65, and 69 to examine how Stravinsky is altering, repeating, and transforming elements of this chant. In fact, the chorale's distinctive melodic cadence appears at 1, 4, 10 (oboes), 11, 12 (trombones), one after 12, 27, 42, 65, 67, and 70; the reader can see how Stravinsky is progressively transforming this cell. Somfai labels this process *functional variation*.

Turning now to the *scherzino* motif, Somfai's analysis (375) shows the *scherzino's* fracturing into the trumpet motif and opening motif; these ideas are subsequently developed in the dance/Scherzos section of the piece (44-64):

The image displays a musical score analysis with the following components:

- (Tempo I) SCHERZINO MOTIF:** A boxed section for Oboe (Ob.) marked *f*.
- (Tempo II) TROMPET MOTIF:** A boxed section for Trumpet (Tr.) marked *mf leggiero* and *pp sub.*
- (Tempo II) OPENING MOTIF:** A boxed section marked *p*.
- 1st SCHERZO: (Tempo III):** A section for Trumpet (Tr.) marked *f* and *p sub.*
- 2nd SCHERZO: (Tempo III):** A section for Oboe (Ob.) marked *f* and *pp sub.*
- Instrumental parts:**
 - Ob. (8^{va}) *ff*
 - Cor. *mf*
 - Fg. *f*
 - Fg. *f*
 - 3. Trb. *ff*
 - 1. Cl. *p*
- Staff labels:** a, b, c, d are used to label specific lines of music in the lower sections.

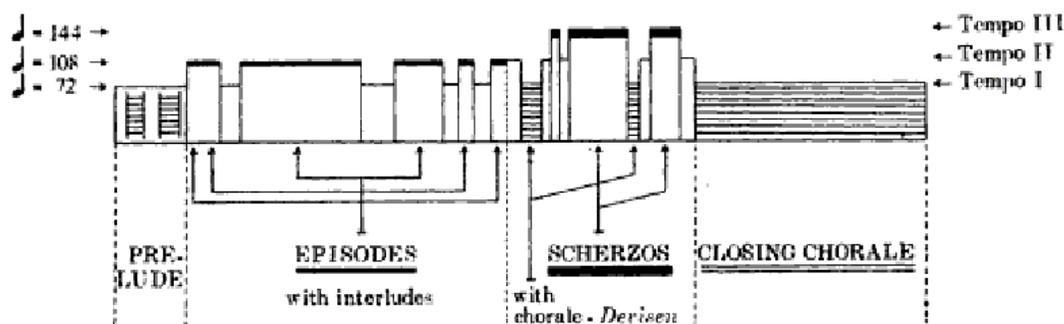
Thus, the *scherzino motif* generates trumpet and opening motifs and in turn all material for the wild musical segment Somfai names Scherzos. The ideas are constantly varied, and although tempo remains unchanged, a sense of constant variation affects the motif's length, range, phrasing, harmony, and orchestration. After insistent development of the *scherzino*, Stravinsky builds the piece's climax at 54 from simultaneous polytonal parallel statements.

Somfai demonstrates convincingly that all melodic ideas of this work are generated by the chorale and are spun out backwards in the piece. He summarizes that "the development technique, elevated to one of the most important principles of structure of larger forms from

the classical and romantic periods, is with Stravinsky an implement towards the organic continuity of the small elements and essentially static short episodes.” Instead of growth by variations following one another, Stravinsky transplants the material to analogous but well separated points and “there varies, condenses, extends, permutes the material” (382). The arrangement of materials seems at first to be a montage or mosaic of unassociated music; but not a montage because everything relates back to source (chorale), “and these connections become gradually clearer as the work flows onwards.” New combinations of materials spin forth in fast rhythm and assume the nature of inner units like movements (383). This paper will not attempt a comprehensive study of motivic development in *Symphonies*; the reader can see Stravinsky’s manipulation of these primary motives throughout the piece by a cursory examination.

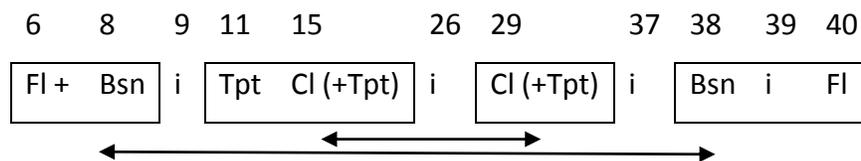
In comments on Stravinsky’s compositional process, Volker Scherliess notes that Stravinsky’s sketches (sometimes on restaurant bills or telegrams) reveal his process as assembling sketches from motives into longer sections. Manipulating single elements, placing them freely in various orders, breaking them apart, etc. “His work method thus deals with ordering and combining material... Its primary characteristic is not development of a motivic seed and growth to some organize whole, as in the case in the romantic tradition (and in the 2nd Viennese School)... Artist not as gardener, but as building engineer” (160).

Let us now turn to the dimension of **form**. Every analyst of this work seems to have a unique perspective with interesting conclusions, but Somfai’s is the most musically compelling. His is reproduced below from page 358:



I have adopted his four-part form that is derived principally from tempo relations. The Prelude section extends from the beginning through rehearsal 6. In addition to setting the basic tone, this section presents the *invocation*, chorale fragment, and *scherzino* themes with the *bridge* (2 before 6).

The next section, Episodes, juxtaposes tempi I and II. Its most distinctive formal feature is a bridge form. Although surely not harkening back to any traditional expository and recap structures, the listener will perceive recurrence of the motives in reverse order.



The *invocation* sharply punctuates the quiet chanting as interludes, but the Episodes section is mainly set at the tempo II. I have already explored the ways in which Stravinsky spins out larger sections (6-8 and 11-26) from small motivic cells; these motives recur throughout the Episodes section.

The Scherzos section constitutes the climax of the work. Not only is it the most savage emotionally, this wild dance seems to bring the already-developed motives together while the *scherzino* explodes with possibilities. Furthermore, it explores all three tempi abruptly and the *opening* motive joins different materials than it originally linked. Premonitions of the chorale occur suddenly and ghostly at 42 and 56, and there is a sense that the form is coalescing as motives become increasingly juxtaposed. Finally, the chorale “arrives with inevitability and finality” (Cone 160) to sum up everything that has been explored. Processing slowly and gravely, it is a satisfying, if unexpected, conclusion. Stravinsky’s closing otherwise non-tonal Symphonies with chorale “disguises the arbitrariness of ending a piece that has dealt with neither tonality nor foreground motion, but rather with permutation” (Kramer 180).

As has been already stated, *Symphonies* is extremely unified and as a result, form is manifested in all dimensions including texture. In his brilliant analysis of this work, Edward Cone definitively showed *Symphonies* as a progression through various strata. Each musical idea is

associated with one level (invocation, chorale, etc.) and the work results from Stravinsky's juxtaposition of contrasting strata. Unification is provided by smooth voice leading between strata and between restatements of the same strata level in addition to the interaction between these strata. I will summarize points which are important to my understanding of this piece.

Cone views Stravinsky's development in terms of three procedures: stratification, interlock, and synthesis. In stratification, Stravinsky's textures are frequently broken off in every musical dimension (156). Separation of these musical areas results in glaring contrast (at 1 and 2), or subtle (6 where there is new material but constant register). But Stravinsky always maintains some level of connection between layers with voice leading or harmony or instrumentation. However, since musical ideas are fragmentary and incomplete, suspended action must be resumed and completed resulting in tension between successive musical ideas. This delayed satisfaction necessitates the next phase of interlock.

Interlock is the case of alternating segments: A1-B1-A2-B2-A3-B3. Each segment interrupts the other and also unities the other. Thus, "although heard in alternation, each line continues to exert its influence even when silent. As a result, the effect is analogous to that of polyphonic strands of melody: the successive time-segments are as it were counterpointed one against the other" (157). There is almost a ritornello form then beneath the surface, which makes sense given Stravinsky's own interest in baroque.

The final procedure is synthesis—the interesting part of the process that gives coherence to the mosaic. Here, diverse elements are brought closer and closer together, all being accounted for in the final resolution. Cone gives 46 as an example in which "the material, first presented on levels separated by register and instrumentation, moves gradually into a tutti in which all strata are simultaneously stated." Stravinsky uses the *bridge* to mitigate starkness of opposition between strata; thus, "it is not a transition in the traditional sense, but an area with a life of its own, as its future development shows. Although acting as a bridge in the immediate context, it reaches forward to its next appearance in the interlocking pattern" (158). Cone views the section at 11, which has been discussed above from a motivic perspective, as synthesis of invocation and chorale: the *invocation* and flute motif strata have common pitch levels and are juxtaposed over contrapuntal soundings of chorale. *Invocation* is used at faster

tempo than before, the melodic cadence joins transformed (trumpet motif), and out of this all, the clarinet motif emerges and shows its close connection by maintaining the established tempo. The Scherzos section is concerned mainly with developing *scherzino* material, and Cone views the climax at 54 as a culminating convergence in which all strata are unified.

Cone also investigates the phenomenon of divergence in which a single layer divides into two or more, like the chorale splitting into horns (66) and oboes (68). A more subtle example is given as the *scherzino* motif splinters into the trumpet and *opening* motifs which are then developed in the Scherzos section. Thus, at first the *scherzino* seemed to be a continuation of invocation but proves to be source for all Scherzos material. The interested reader should refer to Cone's fascinating and illuminating chart for more detailed information on voice leading and relations between strata.

While discussing form and Stravinsky's juxtaposing starkly contrasting materials, issues of moment form arise. *Symphonies* has been described as the first moment form piece and I believe there is some validity in this claim. In a 1960 article "Momentform," Stockhausen explains that:

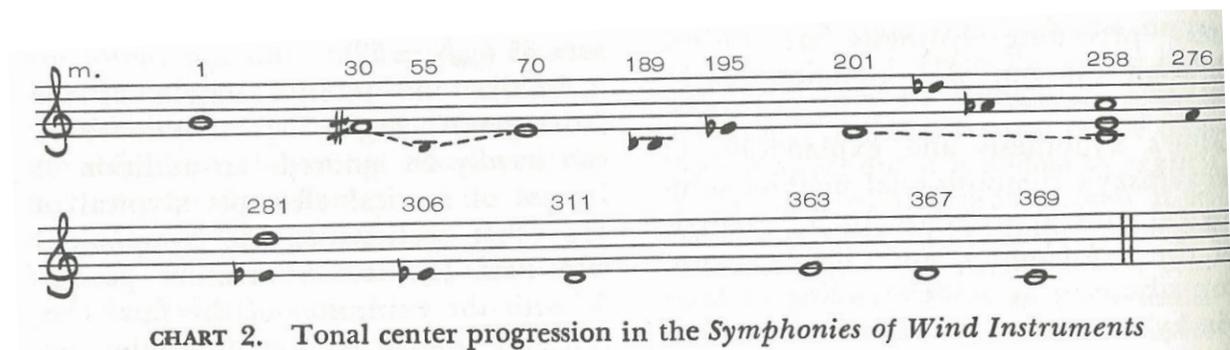
"Every present moment counts, as well as no moment at all; a given moment is not merely regarded as the consequence of the previous one and the prelude to the coming one, but as something individual, independent and centered in itself, capable of existing on its own. An instant does not need to be just a particle of measured duration. This concentration on the present moment - on every present moment - can make a vertical cut, as it were, across horizontal time perception, extending out to a timelessness I call eternity. This is not an eternity that begins at the end of time, but an eternity that is present in every moment. I am speaking about musical forms in which apparently no less is being undertaken than the explosion - yes - even more, the overcoming of the concept of duration. (Heikinheimo 120-21)

I believe Stockhausen's writings apply to *Symphonies* in this work's freedom to associate contrasting materials in a way that defies the listener's need to organize what he has just heard. Certainly, the chorale gives the impression of an eternal procession. But each tiny

musical segment does not exist independently, isolated in its own universe. And although the listener cannot explain the relationships of the colliding materials, there is a certain perception of accumulation; the subtle motivic relationships among the motives lend a perceptible unity that undermines a claim that a moment exists separate from any other. If Stravinsky really wanted to juxtapose completely unrelated materials he could have, and therefore I view claims of moment form as not helpful.

Let us continue our analysis of *Symphonies of Winds* with investigation to **harmony** and pitch content. Though obviously non-tonal, pitch is carefully organized, and tonal regions are often implied by the accumulation of pitches whose repetitions infer a center, derived octatonic scales, combined major and minor scales, melodic cells which emphasize a tonal center (Tyra 21). The sounding harmonies occasionally have harmonic intent, but are mostly the result of contrapuntal motion. The *invocation* and its harmonization imply an octatonic collection, occurring first on G, then on F# at 6, and then on E at 2 after 20. Additionally, its descent in transposed form by half step then by a whole step demonstrate another layer of the octatonic scale's governing development of the invocation (Taruskin 1494). The octatonic association and minor third descent is further confirmed by the minor third as the *invocation's* most prominent melodic interval. *Rite* chords exist but behave promiscuously just as colors, and the form is driven by melody and tempi with harmony being mostly decorative.

In the *Journal of Band Research*, Thomas Tyra has postulated the following tonal areas which I find compelling:



In the Prelude, the trumpet supports a foundation of G, and clarinet crying a D further supports G as a tonal region. The chorale premonition that follows interpolated material and is

thus not included in analysis; this chorale implies no tonic implied and quickly returns to invocation material, revealing itself as a prolongation of G.

In Episodes, the arrival at F# at 6 is prepared by *bridge* arriving on Gb minor. The flute then continues Gb as the tonal center for its theme before the bassoon picks up its melody in the closely related b minor; this motion to the subdominant will be repeated later in the piece. There is a return to F# at 9 in clarinet before moving again to subdominant (B) at 11. The *litany* segment at 15 descends to E: the second clarinet keeps returning to E, *litany* in the flute and Cl 1 clearly outlines E major/minor and returns several times. 27-29 returns to E with 28 being a temporary departure. The consistent return of certain thematic materials to E serves as an example of Stravinsky providing unification by associating tonal areas with materials. At 39 we the *invocation* brings us firmly back to E. In my view, an initial descent (G-F#-E) is now completed in the first half of the piece. Interestingly, the *scherzino* motive's original presentation at 3 summarizes the descent of parallel fifths third beginning G-D (at 3) through F#-C# to E-B, while the English horn accompaniment of the *scherzino* forecasts an ultimate resolution to C (Cone 160). At 40 we already begin to transition into the Scherzos region with the flute theme's recap of in Bb, subtly preparing next region of Eb with bridge at 41.

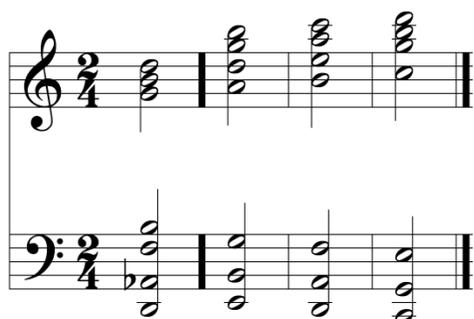
At the beginning of Scherzos (42) we notice a descent to D, a tone which will be prolonged through the Chorale and resolved only at the end. The majority of Scherzos features the opposition of D vs. Db with Ab barging in. At 51, the arrival on Ab is confirmed by tuba alternating back and forth between Ab and Bb. At the blistering climax at 54 all three notes of A minor triad are important as a polytonal harmonization; although C is in the bass, this descent to C not supported structurally and functions as a preview of final resolution. The *opening* motive at 57 shows another motion to subdominant (F), and the next scherzo (58) reestablishes D as the melodic center, but this time over an Eb (61). Eb seems to win out and is continued by next *closing* motive at 64.

Thus, the final chorale has already been shown to prolong the D realm since the beginning of the scherzos section at 42. 66 is a bit more chromatic, especially in the bass, but D returns in 69. The only departure is a settling on E minor at 71-74 which proves to be an ascent before descending down to great C major.

The chorale, which was foreshadowed at 42 and 56 and circumvented at 64 (opening), “arrives with inevitability and finality” at 65 (Cone 160); it is ushered in by a beautiful chord which is shown below:



This chord is derived from G^{7b9} (V^{7b9} of c minor), and in this construction it is tense, emotionally rich and beautiful; this is a typical Stravinskian reconstruction of traditional principles (Somfai 360). There is a certain tension in the diminished and augmented octave intervals which is prolonged throughout the lengthy and patient chorale and only resolved in the piece’s final measures. The basic tonality of C is only revealed at the end with an amazing and revelatory resolution to I^{Maj9} ; this motion by step from e minor to C, shown below is the sole unequivocal cadence in C:



Interestingly, Stravinsky retains the G triad in treble, mirroring the invocation’s first cries on G. This cadence is so amazing and powerful that it leaves a powerful impression on the listener as the chorale chord ($G7b9$), dissonant and excruciatingly prolonged, resolves into the cool C Major9 chord and acquires a dominant feel retroactively (Wason 128).

We turn now to aspects of **rhythm** and meter which are developed consistently through *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*. The work is crafted in three different but closely relating speeds: tempo I is 72, tempo II is 108, and tempo three is 144. We see that tempo II is one half faster than the first and that tempo III is exactly twice as fast as the first. Stravinsky manipulates

these tempi and their relationships ingeniously throughout the work, most notably in the Scherzos section. At first glance, rhythm and meter appear whimsical and disorganized as contrasting blocks of sound are abruptly juxtaposed, but Somfai has revealed several interesting aspects of Stravinsky's craft. Looking first at the chorale's final presentation at 65, he notes that it consists of diametric and trimetric 'feet', following each other in unpredictable succession. We cannot follow along after each phrase begins as "Stravinsky takes special care that there should be something new in each of the chorale sections with appear repeatedly" (363). On page 366, Somfai demonstrates the formation of a polyphonic texture using groups of two and three in the *invocation*:

1947:	$\begin{matrix} 2 \\ 8 \end{matrix}$	$\begin{matrix} 3 \\ 8 \end{matrix}$	$\begin{matrix} 2 \\ 8 \end{matrix}$	$\begin{matrix} 3 \\ 8 \end{matrix}$	$\begin{matrix} 2 \\ 8 \end{matrix}$	$\begin{matrix} 3 \\ 8 \end{matrix}$	$\begin{matrix} 3 \\ 4 \end{matrix}$
Fl.	2	2	3	2	3	2	+5
Cl. 1. 2.	2	2	3	2	3	2	+5
Cl. 3.	3	4	2	3	2	2	+5
Tr.	2	3	2	3	2	2	+5
Trb.	7			6		5	
(1926):	$\begin{matrix} 5 \\ 8 \end{matrix}$	$\begin{matrix} 5 \\ 8 \end{matrix}$	$\begin{matrix} 3 \\ 4 \end{matrix}$				

Here we see Stravinsky's assembling a phrase from units of 2 and 3 beats with cross-rhythms between voices causing a significant polymetric instability. These two examples summarize Stravinsky's cohesion throughout piece using microelements of 2 and 3: $2+3=5$, $3+2=5$, $2+3+2=7$, etc. The *invocation* occurs six times using same tiny cells; the recurrence of tiny motivic cells makes the listener sense repetition but each occurrence has been varied slightly; in fact, the recurrence of every theme through the piece can be viewed in this way. Somfai also notes that other themes constructed from combinations of these elements are emphasized unpredictably by "sharply incisive articulations (accents, legato phrase marks, breathing signs)" (363). Through the piece, there is sense of constantly evolving and new depending on metric and rhythmic combinations, which tempo is used, and where the stresses fall across the voices.

Since the units of two and three are deployed most obviously in the chorale and every motive relates directly to the chorale, I am adopting Somfai's thesis that the chorale governs rest of the work, including rhythmically. "First of all came the chorale and then, working backwards, Stravinsky filled out the whole structure to its full proportions" (368). Stravinsky clearly intended the chorale's first presentation to be totally non-metric and non-rhythmic as it is a "a succession of chordal dots and dashes floating, broken up, improvising somewhere in

time" (368). If one examines the rhythmic lengths of the nervous tenuto-staccato pairs, there is a noticeable acceleration; this condensation process stops at melodic cadence of chorale with quarter notes, an "illusion of security in a restless environment" (369). The 1947 revision shows Stravinsky headed toward deliberately misleading bar division. Taruskin argues that Stravinsky removed the chorale's halting musical divisions (Luftpausen) in the 1947 version, "having grown estranged from the imagic sources of his earlier music and insensitive to its expressive content" (1493).

Looking at the final choral, Stravinsky continues to manipulate units of 2- and 3 beats; more and more instruments add, and at the tutti the music assumes impersonal character of group anthem. Not yet simple or overly emotive, the chorale's procession remains faithful to the work's most important rhythmic principle: the unpredictable restlessness of the succession of the 2- or 3- element musical units. "Right up to the ultimate resolution, we do have only an approximate feeling that the work is over. Only at the resolution, for which we have waited the entire piece, when the metrical pulsation stops, are we certain of the concluding harmony. This immediate recognition of crystallization is the most inspired secret of the piece" (Somfai 382).

Regarding **orchestration** and tone color, one is struck by Stravinsky's association of melodic ideas with specific tone colors: the clarinet with the invocation and quietly chanting music, the flute and bassoon themes, oboes with bridge motive, trumpets with their theme, low brass with the cool chorale and savage climactic music, etc. Indeed, the title results from Stravinsky's exploration of chamber groups and "sounding together" of consorts of like instruments. The scoring is generally sparse, and there are only three tuttis: introduction of chorale, the savage fortissimo at 54 at approximately the golden point (Somfai 380), and the concluding chorale. Somfai also notes that "most themes and motifs are performed either by trios homogeneous in timbre (2 Ob + EH, 3 Fl, 3 Cl, 3 Bsn) or by trios formed by the addition of a "guest" instrument which is able to assimilate from the tone-color point of view (2 Bsn + EH; 2 Cl + Fl; 2 Ob + Bsn; 2 Cl + Bsn)" (380).

Somfai notes Stravinsky's manipulation of temperature through orchestration, which he views as capable of psychological impressions which we are able to feel on an aesthetic, unconscious level: a 'warm' wave following a cool atmosphere, or a cool settling down after a feverishly nervous temperature. There is a touching warm effect of horns vs. cool reeds around

67 and 69. (380-1), and at 65 the horns heat up an “otherwise unambiguously unreal-cool-metallic trumpet-trombone-tuba color” (381). On the other hand, the contrabassoon stiffens up the same sonority at 69. The segment 70-72 crowds in numerous temperatures as the rigid tone of the second stanza is alternated with vibrating colors of the new simplified cadence (the legato soaring of the trumpet), the rumbling bass (tuba and CBSn), and the warm horns/tbn/tba. The new-found warmth dies away at 71 with the tolling of the E-7 chords to alienating effect. Here Stravinsky achieves an icy effect by omitting the tuba and using only cylindrical brass. Immediately thereafter, “with cathartic force same chord sounded in complementary colors with soft tenuto repetitions and the warm high Ds movingly, stabbingly intoned by the first horn” (381). Throughout *Symphonies*, the texture is mostly light, and Stravinsky generally avoids mixing of color beyond the addition of the guest instrument to form a trio: section 26-29 “demonstrates Stravinsky’s predilection for the use of like colors for like materials as opposed to the mixing of orchestral color” (Tyra 24). The most notable example of diverse tone colors being mixed is the tuba occasionally tuba joining the horns as a conical brass family.

The last area which we will explore briefly is the link to the Russian funeral service, as explained very convincingly by Richard Taruskin in *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*. He views the *Symphonies* as an elaborate and stylized version of chant and this service. Stravinsky, the great reinventor of rites (1487) gives credence to this view in his own comments about the clarinet and flute liturgical dialogue and softly chanting. While acknowledging that it would be silly to search for every detail of the funeral service in *Symphonies*, Taruskin lays out the Russian Orthodox funeral service (panikhida) and draws several major similarities (1489):

1. Two major musical sections, referred to in the composer’s sketches as doxologies, exist surrounded by a wealth of brief interjections and refrains. In the service these segments are the *Tropar* and *Kanon*; in *Symphonies* they could be the Episodes and Scherzos sections.
2. Final chorale, demonstrably slow and quiet, parallels the “Eternal remembrance” part of the ceremony.

3. Throughout the *Tropar* and *Kanon*, there is a recurring votive prayer occurring after diverse musical segments: this could be symbolized in *Symphonies* by the *opening* motive.
4. The entire score is permeated by the chorale's distinctive melodic cadence, occurring most frequently with five syllables: this is obviously influenced by the "Alliluiya" in five syllables, sung as a refrain in the funeral service.

Most important to Taruskin is the chorale. The following example from page 1492 shows the chorale parsed as a chant, with a reciting tone, flex, and distinctive cadence.

1. reciting tone — flex — half cadence

2.

3. 8va — full cadence

b. *Vechmaya pamyat'* (*Obikhod*, p. 330)

Vech - na - ya pa - myat' — Vech-na - ya pa - myat' —

Vech - na - ya pa - myat'.

ostinato sections" (Somfai 383) supported by a tonal descent from G to E, prolonging D, and ultimately resolving gloriously to C. And by shattering traditional compositional procedures, *Symphonies* did more to prepare the modern age in music than others who were externally more modern (383).

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