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**METAMODERN COMPOSITION: IN SEARCH OF AN
AUTHENTIC HARMONIC LANGUAGE**

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Bachelor of Music with Honours in Composition.

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I investigate how contemporary art music composers use harmonic language to achieve authentic musical personalities. I believe harmony has an important role to play in the evolution of contemporary art music. Through analysing a portfolio of my compositions, I provide insight into my harmonic techniques and biases. I pioneer “magnetic” harmonic analysis as a tool for composers and musicologists alike. My investigation is informed by historical and contemporary approaches to harmony, and also adheres to the principles of metamodernism. I conclude that my harmonic language is indeed authentic, as opposed to unique. Indeed, I argue that “unique” is a poor descriptor or ambition for anyone’s artistic practise in this metamodern twenty-first century.

Keywords

harmony, harmonic language, metamodernism, authenticity, personality, pitch centre

FOREWORD

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A. D. K. Voltz



Alexander Voltz's (b. 1999) work takes inspiration from myth, politics and the historic, whilst also deconstructing and challenging the human condition. His music has been performed and supported by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Australian Youth Orchestra, Queensland Youth Orchestras, The University of Queensland and others. He has collaborated with musicians including John Curro AM MBE, Susan Ellis, Alex Raineri and Bradley Voltz. Alexander was a winner in Artology's 2015 Fanfare Competition (Sydney) and reached the semi-finals of both the 2018 and 2020 Bartok World Composition Competitions (Budapest). He was awarded The University of Queensland's Prize for Composition in 2019 and will graduate in 2021 with a Bachelor of Music (Hons) in Composition and a Bachelor of Arts in Ancient History, History and Writing.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's world is one of binary oppositions, of great promises and threatening terrors. 2020 has epitomised this. Among the year's numerous challenges, demand has arisen for a global reconsideration of what it means to be individual. The arts have been dramatically impacted by this. A post-pandemic society may indeed begin to reject "the death of the author" and find a renewed appreciation for creative intent.¹ Anticipating this, creatives should seek more than ever to hone their skills and understand their artistic practise.

Throughout my student years, I have critically considered the dilemma facing all aspiring composers: "What makes me different?" Upon first inspection, the answers are disappointing. My music is largely driven by pitch and rejects conceptual processes like the New Complexity and chance. I compose intuitively and greatly rely upon my aural skills. I prize my work for both its structural strength and its serious extra-musical qualities. None of that is unique; I will, however, argue that "unique" is a poor descriptor or ambition for anyone's artistic practise in this metamodern twenty-first century.

Melody Eötvös commented that she accepted me as a composition participant during the Australian Youth Orchestra's 2020 National Music Camp because my music demonstrated an "interesting use of harmony".² Later, during my studies as part of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Cybec 21st Century Australian Composers' Program, Brenton Broadstock described me as "not a tonal composer".³ Harmony, then, is a notable

¹ See Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Noonday Press, 1988).

² Melody Eötvös, in conversation with the author, 18 January, 2020.

³ Brenton Broadstock, in conversation with the author, 16 June, 2020.

musical parameter within my compositions. My harmonic language is what Stefan Kostka and Matthew Santa term “post-tonal” in that it does not obey the traditional conventions of tonal harmony.⁴ I think harmony has an important role to play in the evolution of contemporary art music, and so this paper explores my intuitive use of it for both private and public benefit.

Others cite the merit in deconstructing subconscious creative procedures. Geoffrey Skelton argues that Hindemith’s *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* was an attempt by the composer to remove “an over-reliance on artistic inspiration”.⁵ Philip Gossett, while acknowledging composition cannot be taught, promotes “thorough knowledge” as creative stimulus when “experience” fails an artist.⁶ In other words, academia can be used to solidify compositional techniques. Furthermore, Schoenberg writes that in his experience students are “complacent” towards learning compositional “rules” of their own accord. He challenges teachers to simply illuminate what their students do not know or are reluctant to study independently.⁷ Conscious of Schoenberg’s concerns, I achieve proactivity through deconstructing my work whilst simultaneously embracing an autodidactic philosophy. Jacques Chailley asserts that analysis involves “putting oneself in the composer’s shoes”.⁸ As if Cinderella, it would seem the composer best fits the analytical slipper.

John White writes that the “essential purpose” of studying music theory is to understand musical style.⁹ Therefore, in this paper I investigate how contemporary art music

⁴ Stefan Kostka and Matthew Santa, *Materials and Techniques of Post-Tonal Music*, 5th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018), 1.

⁵ Geoffrey Skelton, *Paul Hindemith: The Man behind the Music* (London: Gollancz, 1975), 143.

⁶ Philip Gossett, trans. Preface to *Treatise on Harmony: Reduced to Its Natural Principles*, by Jean-Philippe Rameau (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), xxxvi.

⁷ Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, trans. Robert D. W. Adams (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), vii–x.

⁸ Jacques Chailley, *La Musique Médiévale* (Paris: Coudrier, 1951), 104.

⁹ John D. White, *The Analysis of Music*, 2nd ed. (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1984), 1.

composers can use harmonic language to achieve authentic musical personalities. In Chapter 1, I engage with the literature of four related topics: (1) harmony as a musical parameter, (2) contemporary composers' approaches to harmony, (3) contemporary harmonic analysis, and (4) harmonic authenticity, framed by a metamodern perspective. An exhaustive survey of literature is, strictly speaking, impossible. I manipulate this to my advantage by discussing Chapter 2 within a personal context. I review composers and styles that directly influence or interest me. In so doing, I articulate the characteristics of my own artistic practise.

“Contemporary” is defined as being in use today. I observe Jochen Eisentraught's limitation of “art music” to encompass music of “high aesthetic value” in the Western canon.¹⁰ Having completed this survey, I present an informed methodology in Chapter 2 that frames Chapter 3. In Chapter 3, I further my research aims by analysing a portfolio of my compositions. This includes *Curtain!*, *String Quartet No.1*, and *Capital Hill*. I isolate and examine the harmonic language within these works, drawing comparisons across the portfolio when appropriate. In Chapter 4, I summarise my findings and offer final remarks regarding my artistic practise as an aspiring contemporary art music composer.

¹⁰ Jochen Eisentraught, *The Accessibility of Music: Participation, Reception, and Contact* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 8.

Chapter 1

LITERATURE WITHIN A PERSONAL CONTEXT

Harmony as a Musical Parameter

Though music has been practised since prehistoric times, Pythagoras of Samos (570 – c. 495 BC) made the first significant developments to harmony through his discovery of “perfect” intervals.¹¹ The Greek Ionian and Aeolian modes became known as, respectively, the major and minor scales of Western classical harmony and have since served as the bedrock of art music.¹² The concept of harmony as a musical “parameter” has evolved throughout Modern History.¹³ This evolution has affected other musical parameters, such as form.¹⁴ Additionally, Harald Krebs projects harmonic terminology onto parameters of rhythm, coining the terms “metrical consonance” and “metrical dissonance”.¹⁵ Like most

¹¹ Bills Wallin, Björn Merker, and Steven Brown, *The Origins of Music* (London: MIT Press, 2000), 10. See Gene H. Anderson, “Pythagoras and the Origin of Music Theory,” *Indiana Theory Review* 6, no. 3 (1983): 35–61; Andrew Barker, trans. *Greek Musical Writings: Harmonic and Acoustic Theory*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Eli Maor, *Music by the Numbers: From Pythagoras to Schoenberg* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

¹² Robert L. Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 165.

¹³ Morag J. Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics: Compositional Theory in Post-War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 62 fn. 85. See Ludmila Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony: Romanticism through the Twelve-Tone Row* (New York: Free Press, 1966); Matthew Shirlaw, *The Theory of Harmony: An Inquiry into the Natural Principles of Harmony, with an Examination of the Chief Systems of Harmony from Rameau to the Present Day*, 2nd ed. (DeKalb: Birchard Coar, 1970); Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991); Thomas Christensen, ed., *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, 136–51.

¹⁵ Harald Krebs, *Fantasy Pieces: Metrical Dissonance in the Music of Robert Schumann* (New York: Oxford University

musical parameters, harmony has not escaped philosophic scrutiny. Zarlino likens harmony to earth, in that both are the foundation for all other “elements”.¹⁶ In his postcolonial studies, Edward Said drew comparisons between musical harmony and cultural resolution.¹⁷ Hindemith went as far to declare his hope that harmony, supported by other musical parameters, would eventually lead to “a tremendous reformation of the universe”.¹⁸

Traditionally, classical harmonic understanding has been underpinned by a dichotomy between consonance and dissonance. These are affected by interval inversion, spacing, and “pitch height”, along with other parameters such as rhythm and timbre.¹⁹ Concerned by subjectivity, Ludmila Ulehla argues dissonance should be examined in terms of “tension” rather than aesthetic.²⁰ As perceptions of dissonance alter over time, so too do perceptions of consonance.²¹ Mark Tramo et al. propose that “consonance cannot be explained solely by the absence of roughness”.²²

Vertical assemblies of pitches, known as chords, establish both consonance and dissonance. What constitutes a chord has also varied over time. At one point, Rimsky-Korsakov was drawing attention to “accidental combinations”; at another, George Perle was

Press, 1990), 29.

¹⁶ Gioseffo Zarlino, *The Art of Counterpoint: Part Three of Le Istitutioni Harmoniche*, trans. Guy A. Marco and Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 281–2.

¹⁷ Rokus de Groot, “Music at the Limits: Edward Said’s Musical Elaborations,” in *How the West Was Won*, ed. Willemien Otten, Arjo J. Vanderjagt and Hent De Vries (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 138.

¹⁸ Paul Hindemith, *A Composer’s World: Horizons and Limitations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 102.

¹⁹ Vincent Persichetti, *Twentieth Century Harmony: Creative Aspects and Practice* (London: Faber, 1962), 17, 26; Mark J. Tramo et al., “Neurobiology of Harmony Perception,” in *The Cognitive Neuroscience of Music*, ed. Isabelle Peretz and Robert J. Zatorre (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 142; Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, 162.

²⁰ Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*, 423. See Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 266.

²¹ Persichetti, *Twentieth Century Harmony*, 17.

²² Tramo et al., “Harmony Perception,” 130.

cataloguing all the “intervallic structures” he thought possible.²³ Chords achieve musical character through their context.²⁴ For example, widening chordal spacing increases harmonic expressivity, while chromatic chords provide diatonic music with “colour”.²⁵ Furthermore, Ernst Kurth describes chords as possessing kinetic energy.²⁶ Chords are best thought of as existing on both vertical and horizontal planes, vertically experienced as harmonic “pillars” and horizontally experienced as “subordinate strands of melody”.²⁷ While past teachers have dictated melody as superior to harmony, I find merit in inverting the notion and championing harmony *as* melody.²⁸ Like melody, harmony possesses communicative and narrative qualities, which my music endeavours to exploit. Rameau writes that a bass line should govern both harmony and melody, and that it should generally move in a stepwise motion.²⁹ Post-tonal music often adheres to the basic conventions of traditional counterpoint; indeed,

²³ Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Practical Manual of Harmony*. 7th ed., trans. Joseph Achron (New York: Carl Fischer, 1930), 1; Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*, 354; George Perle, “The Possible Chords in Twelve-Tone Music,” *The Score and I.M.A. Magazine* 9 (1954): 54–8. See Howard Hanson, *Harmonic Materials of Modern Music: Resources of the Tempered Scale* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1960); Donald Martino, “The Source Set and its Aggregate Formations,” *Journal of Music Theory* 5 (1961): 224–73; Allen Forte, “A Theory of Set-Complexes for Music,” *Journal of Music Theory* 8, no. 2 (1964): 136–83; Jonathan Bernard, “Chord, Collection, and Set in Twentieth-Century Theory,” in *Music Theory in Concept and Practise*, ed. James M. Barker, David W. Beach and Jonathan Bernard (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1997), 11–51; Elliott Carter, *Harmony Book*, ed. Nicholas Hopkins and John Link (New York: Carl Fischer: 2002). Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*, 354 draws a distinction between chords and “intervallic structures”.

²⁴ Scruton, *Aesthetics of Music*, 292.

²⁵ Persichetti, *Twentieth Century Harmony*, 95; William Lovelock, *Second Year Harmony* (London: A. Hammond, 1947), 82.

²⁶ Ernst Kurth, *Grundlagen des Linearen Kontrapunkts* (Bern: Dreschsel, 1917), 64.

²⁷ Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, 27. See Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*, 405, 424; Kostka and Santa, *Post-Tonal Music*, 98.

²⁸ Olivier Messiaen, *The Technique of My Musical Language*, trans. John Satterfield (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1956), 13; Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, 5; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 929; Martinelli, *Philosophy of Music*, 104.

²⁹ Rameau, *Treatise on Harmony*, 206.

my harmonic progressions usually include perceptible bass lines that move in a stepwise motion.³⁰ Hegel views harmonic progressions as if they were a skeleton, in that a skeleton's bones, albeit rigid, enable movement.³¹ Bartók even applied the golden mean and other formal theories to his harmonic progressions, further demonstrating the interconnectivity of musical parameters.³²

As may now be apparent, harmony is the most codified parameter of Western music, rendering it the easiest musical parameter to teach compositionally.³³ In my experience, this has led to prescriptive approaches wherein harmonic language is valued less than other parameters such as rhythm and timbre. In fact, because of its inherent theoretical strengths, I strive to challenge harmony and harmonic language perceptions.

Contemporary Composers' Approaches to Harmony

Predating *Siegfried*, European composers including Beethoven and Berlioz had begun to stretch the bounds of classical harmony.³⁴ Under Wagner, the forefather of “tonal freedom”, the system exploded.³⁵ Robert Jacobs is convinced that, despite its “surface complexity”, Wagnerian harmony and post-Wagnerian romantic harmony are fundamentally grounded by traditional tonal structures.³⁶ My compositional process is similarly rooted. Initially, I will conceive a basic horizontal harmony, usually triadic and/or tertiary in nature. I

³⁰ Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*, 341; Kostka and Santa, *Post-Tonal Music*, 90.

³¹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 929.

³² Kostka and Santa, *Post-Tonal Music*, 141.

³³ White, *Analysis of Music*, 90.

³⁴ David Damschroder, *Thinking about Harmony: Historical Perspectives on Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 74. See Ora F. Saloman, *Listening Well: On Beethoven, Berlioz, and Other Music Criticism in Paris, Boston, and New York, 1764-1890* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

³⁵ Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*, 39–40.

³⁶ Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, 157.

will then transform this progression by complicating the chords' vertical properties, accomplishing Jacobs' surface complexity. The completed material will often fail to resemble its triadic and/or tertiary origins.

While composers Richard Strauss and later Dimitri Shostakovich continued the Wagnerian idiom, other early twentieth-century composers rejected it.³⁷ Debussy intended to create “music free from themes and motives” and therefore distanced from “professional rhetoric”.³⁸ If Wagner spread the good news of tonal freedom, Debussy founded its Impressionist denomination. One of Impressionism's lasting contributions to art music composition is the highly functional pedal note technique.³⁹ Ulehla claims the pedal ushered in polytonality, but at the time, the polytonalist Milhaud argued that the roots of his style lay in canonic writing.⁴⁰ Robert Morgan, like Jacobs, identifies “an essentially traditional harmonic conception” throughout Milhaud's polytonal works.⁴¹ Comparatively, Bartók and Stravinsky, perhaps inspired by the earlier advances of Chopin, Dvořák, Mussorgsky and Grieg, turned to neo-modalism, and in so doing “redefine[d] chromaticism” within their work.⁴² Messiaen viewed his “modes of limited transposition” as a hybrid harmonic system

³⁷ Edward Said, “Music”, *The Nation* 256, no. 3 (1993): 105; Ellon D. Carpenter, “Russian Theorists on Modality in Shostakovich's Music,” in *Shostakovich Studies*, vol. 1, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 90–1; Michael Rofe, *Dimensions of Energy in Shostakovich's Symphonies* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 21. See Bryan Gilliam, *Rounding Wagner's Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

³⁸ Claude Debussy, quoted in Oscar Thompson, *Debussy: Man and Artist* (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1940), 103.

³⁹ Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, 159, 163; Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*, 383, 434.

⁴⁰ Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*, 272; Darius Milhaud, “Polytonalité et Atonalité,” *Revue Musicale* 4 (1923): 29–44. See Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, 162.

⁴¹ Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 165.

⁴² Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, 166–7.

between polytonalism and neo-modalism.⁴³ In 1962, Walter Piston was convinced that composers no longer used vertical properties of neo-modal harmony; seven years later, Rautavaara's First Piano Concerto would unequivocally argue otherwise.⁴⁴ When considering the music of New Simplists like Arvo Pärt, Kostka and Sanata propose "pandiatonicism", or harmony within a diatonic framework but completely free of traditional conventions.⁴⁵ My own harmonies are more often polytonal and/or chromatic, rather than modal and/or diatonic. When appropriate, I do not hesitate to underscore my harmonic progressions with pedal notes.

The most defiant stance against the Wagnerian legacy was taken by Schoenberg and his disciples of atonality and serialism.⁴⁶ Perle writes that atonality seeks to "disassociate" the chromatic scale from chromaticism, something I have never consciously attempted.⁴⁷ However, Schoenberg alleged serial material should possess "a certain something" with which listeners were already well-acquainted, that being the twelve pitches of the Western chromatic scale.⁴⁸ The oxymoronic qualities of "atonality" therefore render it a difficult term to define.⁴⁹ If serial music is a "form of constructivism", as Morag Grant outlines, then serial

⁴³ Olivier Messiaen, *The Technique of My Musical Language*, trans. John Satterfield (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1956), 58–64.

⁴⁴ Walter Piston, *Harmony*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962), 258.

⁴⁵ Kostka and Santa, *Post-Tonal Music*, 97.

⁴⁶ Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, 168. See Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, ed. and trans. Dike Newlin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950); Scruton, *Aesthetics of Music*, 285–7.

⁴⁷ George Perle, *Serial Composition and Atonality: An Introduction to the Music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern*, 6th ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 1.

⁴⁸ Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, ed. Gerald Strang and Leonard Stein (London: Faber, 1980), 20. See Perle, *Serial Composition*, 5.

⁴⁹ Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*, 485–8; Kostka and Santa, *Post-Tonal Music*, 98. Schoenberg himself did not like the term. See Arnold Schoenberg, "Analysis of the Four Orchestral Songs Opus 22," in *Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky*, ed. Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 26.

harmony is equally mathematical and restrictive.⁵⁰ My harmonic language draws inspiration from Berg, who synthesised to great effect Schoenberg's twelve-tone system with classical harmony.⁵¹ Additionally, the fall of the Soviet Union allowed composers like Lutosławski to explore non-traditional pitch relations previously prohibited.⁵² Schoenbergian atonality gave rise to *musique concrète*, a style still fashionable in Europe today that was initially championed by composers such as Xenakis, Stockhausen, Boulez, and Helmut Lachenmann.⁵³ My compositional aesthetic typically avoids the *musique concrète* idiom.

The Anglosphere inherited Europe's multiplicity of harmonic languages. Vaughn Williams' embrace of modalism following the Second World War offered his music new avenues to explore, whilst simultaneously providing a foundation for the harmonic styles of Britten and Tippett.⁵⁴ Despite his luscious harmonic pillars, Bax referred to himself as a "contrapuntal composer".⁵⁵ On the other hand, Judith Weir first used a tone row in *King Harald's Saga*, and Brian Ferneyhough is credited as the father of the New Complexity.⁵⁶ Across the Atlantic in the United States, Copland's harmonic language gave rise to a distinctly national sound, emulated with conviction by Bernstein.⁵⁷ Alternatively, John

⁵⁰ Grant, *Serial Music*, 225–6.

⁵¹ Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, 171.

⁵² Antokoletz, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 977.

⁵³ Jacobs, *Understanding Harmony*, ix. See Frederick Charles Judd, *Electronic Music and Musique Concrete* (London: N. Spearman, 1961); Pierre Schaeffer, *La Musique Concrete* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967); David Ernst, *Musique Concrete* (Boston: Crescendo, 1972).

⁵⁴ Antokoletz, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 975.

⁵⁵ Vernon Handley, "Interview with Vernon Handley by Andrew McGregor on Arnold Bax's Symphonies," Sergio Cánovas, posted 29 September, 2019, YouTube video, 52:39, <https://youtu.be/fvZ7zcVSwdA>.

⁵⁶ Judith Weir. "King Harald's Footnotes: An Annotated Guide to *King Harald's Saga*," *Stretto: Journal of the Scottish Society of Composers and the Scottish Music Information Centre* 5, no. 2 (1985): 3. See Brian Ferneyhough, *Collected Writings*, 1st ed., ed. James Boros and Richard Toop, (London: Routledge, 1995).

⁵⁷ Emily Abrams Ansari, *The Sound of a Superpower: Musical Americanism and the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University

Corigliano described his early works as evolving from Copland and Barber's "clean American sonorities".⁵⁸ Carter codified his harmonic language within an encyclopaedic treatise.⁵⁹ Babbitt and Cage deviated from Schoenberg, with Babbitt first applying "set" theory to music and Cage insisting that composers should employ the "entire field of sound" within their compositions.⁶⁰ Perle describes "free atonality":

The 'rightness' of a particular note depends not upon its possible containment within a pre-established harmonic unit, as it does in tonality, but upon larger compositional factors whose meaning must be discovered within the work itself.⁶¹

Moreover, "minimal music", first suggested by Michael Nyman in 1968, achieved great popularity in America as a reactive style against European complexity.⁶² It remains prevalent today through composers like Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Terry Riley and John Adams.⁶³ I flavour my harmonic language with postminimal techniques like cellular repetition, which Elliott Antokoletz outlines as also a technique of free atonality.⁶⁴

Australia's perplexing societal condition, that being its embrace of multiculturalism against its preservation of colonial structures and attitudes, has indeed affected the harmonies of Australian art music.⁶⁵ In a letter to Barry Conyngham, Sculthorpe advocated for a "truly

Press, 2018), 178.

⁵⁸ Antokoletz, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 1050.

⁵⁹ See Carter, *Harmony Book*.

⁶⁰ John Cage, "The Future of Experimental Music: Credo," in *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 4. See Milton Babbitt, "The Function of Set Structure in Twelve-Tone System," (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1992), <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.uq.edu.au/docview/304002870?accountid=14723>.

⁶¹ Perle, *Serial Composition*, 9.

⁶² See Michael Nyman, "Minimal Music," *The Spectator* 221, no. 7320 (1968): 518–9.

⁶³ See Keith Potter, Kyle Gann and Pwyll ap Siôn, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013).

⁶⁴ Kostka and Santa, *Post-Tonal Music*, 306; Antokoletz, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 67–7.

⁶⁵ See Rodney Smith, "Representative Bureaucracy in Australia: A Post-Colonial, Multicultural Society," in *Representative*

global music, stateless, free from the shackles of Europe, betraying no particular place of origin”.⁶⁶ Sculthorpe, however, is widely considered the Australian Copland, and “very much about place”.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Roger Covell rebukes Sculthorpe’s hopes:

The [national] government is not interested in [Australian composers transcending their regional limitations]. It is not interested in having composers become...internationally famous. It wishes only to construct a program of Australian composition which will be approximately equivalent to the international popularity of the wombat and the koala.⁶⁸

The fact that Brett Dean, arguably Australia’s most internationally successful composer today, established his compositional career outside the country validates Covell’s argument. Consequently, without any sort of national model, contemporary musical styles in Australia are exceptionally diverse. Dean, Carl Vine and Nigel Westlake continue the European narrative. Liza Lim treads the bounds of the New Complexity. Maria Grenfell and Mary Finsterer sometimes create rich diatonic atmospheres. In Brisbane alone, Robert Davidson champions a postminimal harmonic aesthetic while Gerardo Dirié combines electroacoustic music with the sounds of his Argentinian heritage.⁶⁹

Bureaucracy in Action: Country Profiles from the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia, ed. Guy Peters, Patrick von Maravić and Eckhard Schröter (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013).

⁶⁶ Peter Sculthorpe to Barry Conyngham, 14 September, 1988, quoted in Michael Hooper, *Australian Music and Modernism, 1960-1975* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019), 240 n. 2.

⁶⁷ Wilfred Mellers, “New Worlds, Old Wildernesses: Peter Sculthorpe and the Ecology of Music,” *Atlantic* 268, no. 2 (1991): 94–8; Brett Dean, quoted in Hooper, *Australian Music*, 2. For a criticism of Sculthorpe’s “appropriative” techniques and philosophies, see Amanda Harris, “Indigenising Australian Music: Authenticity and Representation in Touring 1950s Art Songs,” *Postcolonial Studies* 23, no. 1 (2020): 143–4.

⁶⁸ Roger Covell, quoted in Graeme Skinner, ed. “Debate: That Australian Composers Should Set out to Develop a Distinctive Australian Music,” in *The Composer Speaks: Composers and Their Colleagues Discuss Australian Music* (Sydney: Sounds Australian, 1991), 13.

⁶⁹ See Tim Dargaville, “Speaking in Tongues: An Investigation into a Compositional Practise Informed by Intercultural Exploration,” in *Perspectives on Artistic Research in Music*, ed. Robert Burke and Andrys Onsman (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017), 159.

The Asian situation is similar to the Australian, albeit inverted. Ton de Leeuw suggests the region's startling return to tonal and modal composition is due to the assimilation of non-Western composers into the Western practise.⁷⁰ In 2020, globalisation by way of digitisation must be considered. Furthermore, Chou Wen-Chung was a contemporary of Toru Takemitsu, just as Tan Dun is a contemporary of Unsuk Chin, and each composer manipulates their own individual harmonic language. Therefore, socioeconomics and not geography might better explain why parts of Asia, Africa and South America preference certain harmonic languages over others.

Contemporary Harmonic Analysis

Composers themselves have held varying attitudes towards harmonic analysis. R. O. Morris assuredly proclaims that chordal identification is “the only difficult part of harmony”.⁷¹ Edgard Varèse thinks that “to explain by means of [analysis] is to decompose, to mutilate the spirit of a work”.⁷² Betsy Jolas argues that analysis is the result of experience, and so the best musicians to teach analysis are composers.⁷³ Jolas was a student of Messiaen, one of twentieth century's most important “composer-teachers”, who discovered musical analysis during his time in German captivity.⁷⁴ He taught both harmony and analysis at the

⁷⁰ Ton de Leeuw, *Music of the Twentieth-Century* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 196.

⁷¹ R. O. Morris, *Foundations of Practical Harmony and Counterpoint*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1966), 143.

⁷² Edgard Varèse, quoted in Jonathan Bernard, “Pitch/Register in the Music of Edgard Varèse,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 3 (1981): 1.

⁷³ Betsy Jolas, quoted in Vincent Benitez, “A creative Legacy: Messiaen as Teacher of Analysis,” *College Music Symposium* 40 (2000): 119. See Betsy Jolas, “Bridge Between Worlds – Betsy Jolas,” Fondation des États-Unis, posted 30 July, 2020, YouTube video, <https://youtu.be/Jq8yoDqd0p0>.

⁷⁴ Benitez, “Legacy,” 117; Claude Samuel and Olivier Messiaen, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color: Conversations with Claude Samuel*, trans. E Thomas (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1994), 175. The Germans permitted Messiaen a handful of

Conservatoire de Paris, and pioneered polytonality as an analytical concept.⁷⁵ Stravinsky's famous chord from the "Augurs of Spring", Messiaen claimed, was simply a polytonal combination derived from Debussy's *Pelleas et Mélisande*.⁷⁶ Convinced there was only merit in examining harmony's vertical properties, Messiaen was probably unfamiliar with classical analysts like Heinrich Schenker.⁷⁷

Even more enthusiastic than Messiaen was Hindemith, who invented a system to elucidate "total tonality", or "all the possibilities of the chromatic scale".⁷⁸ He assigned a "fixed value" to pitches and their combinations by finding mathematical relationships between their frequencies via two constructed series (Ex. 1.1).⁷⁹ When crafting harmonic language from these series, triadicism, quatrals structures and carefully controlled dissonance result.⁸⁰ However, several analysts have challenged the legitimacy of Hindemith's system.⁸¹ Towards the end of his life, Hindemith himself bore its reservations.⁸² Despite its weaknesses,

scores, including Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, Berg's *Lyric Suite* and Beethoven's Sixth.

⁷⁵ Jean Boivin, *La Classe de Messiaen* (Paris: Christian Bourgeois Éditeur, 1995), 194; Benitez, "Legacy," 126.

⁷⁶ Benitez, "Legacy," 125, 120 fn. 12. See Pieter van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 63–4.

⁷⁷ Benitez, "Legacy," 125–6. See Heinrich Schenker, *Harmony*, trans. Elisabeth Mann Borgese, ed. Oswald Jonas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).

⁷⁸ Simon Desbruslais, *The Music and Music Theory of Paul Hindemith* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2018), 23, 16 fn. 15; Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition: Theoretical Part*, 2nd ed., trans. Arthur Mendel (Mainz: Schott, 1942), 105. See Michael Schuijjer, *Analysing Atonal Music: Pitch-Class Set Theory and Its Contexts* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 138.

⁷⁹ Hindemith, *Craft*, 108; Desbruslais, *Hindemith*, 23–40.

⁸⁰ Desbruslais, *Hindemith*, 43–4.

⁸¹ William Thomson, "A clarification of the Tonality Concept," (PhD thesis, University of Indiana, 1952), 58, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.uq.edu.au/docview/302043745?accountid=14723>; White, *Analysis of Music*, 112–3. Kostka and Santa, *Post-Tonal Music*, 91 offer a contrary opinion.

⁸² Luther Noss, *Paul Hindemith in the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 94; Desbruslais, *Hindemith*, 55–6.

to Riemann's contemporaries and immediate predecessors.⁸⁹ Derived from Riemann's theories, Neo-Riemannian analysis has been championed by several musicologists, including David Lewin, Daniel Harrison and Alexander Rehding.⁹⁰ David Kopp pioneers what he calls a "transformational system based on common-tone tonality".⁹¹ Richard Cohn has used Neo-Riemannian theory to understand the hexatonic poles of Wagner's late operas.⁹² Additionally, Richard Parncutt asserts many of Riemann's harmonic theories hold psychoacoustic merit.⁹³ Morris, Ulehla and Roger Scruton agree that listeners' experiences should be considered when analysing harmony.⁹⁴

White outlines a general theory of analysis that is well suited to deconstructing harmonic language. He describes three analytical levels: (1) "microanalysis", (2) "middle-analysis", and (3) "macroanalysis".⁹⁵ In the context of harmony, microanalysis involves a

⁸⁹ See Hermann von Helmholtz, *On the Sensations of Tone*, trans. Alexander J. Ellis (New York: Dover, 1954); Moritz Hauptmann, *The Nature of Harmony and Metre*, trans. and ed. William E. Heathcote (New York: Da Capo Press, 1991); Arthur von Oettingen, *Harmoniesystem in Dualer Entwicklung* (Dorpat: W. Glässer, 1866).

⁹⁰ See David Lewin, *Generalised Musical Intervals and Transformations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Daniel Harrison, *Harmonic Function in Chromatic Music: A Renewed Dualist Theory and an Account of its Precedents* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Alexander Rehding, *Hugo Riemann and the Birth of Modern Musical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 94–6; Edward Gollin and Alexander Rehding, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Riemannian Music Theories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Timothy A. Johnson, *John Adams's Nixon in China: A Musical Analysis, Historical and Political Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2016), 9.

⁹¹ David Kopp, *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁹² Richard Cohn, *Audacious Euphony: Chromatic Harmony and the Triad's Second Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 143–6.

⁹³ Richard Parncutt, *Harmony: A Psychoacoustical Approach* (Berlin: Springer, 1989), 149. See Donald A. Hodges and David C. Sebald, *Music in the Human Experience: An Introduction to Music Psychology* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2011); Tim Ziemer, *Psychoacoustic Music Sound Field Synthesis: Creating Spaciousness for Composition, Performance, Acoustics and Perception* (Cham: Springer, 2020).

⁹⁴ Morris, *Practical Harmony*, 148; Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*; Scruton, *Aesthetics of Music*, 271.

⁹⁵ White, *Analysis of Music*, 16–8.

close examination of consonance and dissonance, cadences and contrapuntal and/or polyphonic techniques, as well the relation between harmony and text in the case of vocal music. Middle-analysis explores harmonic progressions, comparing harmony against structure and taking into account a passage's harmonic tension.⁹⁶ Finally, macroanalysis observes a work's overall harmonic style. Prior to this paper, my own understanding of White's three levels informed many of my compositional decisions.

Authenticity, Personality and Metamodernism

Clearly, perceptions of harmony, harmonic styles and analytical systems abound. This heightens the aspiring composer's "What makes me different?" dilemma. In their 2018 study, Neil Smith and Rachel Thwaites found that emerging British composers were chiefly concerned with the "originality" of their music.⁹⁷ However, Smith and Thwaites argue that context dictates composition, and that tempering originality can increase the chance of competitive success.⁹⁸ Put simply, a lush, postminimal work is unlikely to win the Geneva Competition, while *Bang on a Can* is unlikely to program a highly serial work.⁹⁹ Furthermore, both Leibowitz and Boulez outline how Stravinsky's harmonic language was predominantly a "system of thirds" wrapped around tonic, dominant and subdominant

⁹⁶ See Ulehla, *Contemporary Harmony*, 427; Scruton, *Aesthetics of Music*, 266.

⁹⁷ Neil Thomas Smith and Rachel Thwaites, "Narratives of Originality in Competitive Composition Opportunities for 'Emerging Composers'," *Tempo* 72, no. 283 (2018): 49.

⁹⁸ Smith and Thwaites, "Narratives of Originality," 50. See Hettie Malcomson, "Composing Individuals: Ethnographic Reflections on Success and Prestige in the British New Music Network," *Twentieth-Century Music* 10, no. 1 (2013): 134; Emma Steel, "Original Sin: Reconciling Original in Copyright with Music as an Evolutionary Form," *European Intellectual Property Review* 37, no. 2 (2015): 70.

⁹⁹ See *Concours de Genève: International Music Competition*, accessed 10 October, 2020, <https://www.concoursgeneve.ch/>; *Bang on a Can*, accessed 10 October, 2020, <https://bangonacan.org/>.

poles.¹⁰⁰ The late Roger Scruton asserts that there is no other language available to a composer other than tonality, and like a language, tonality can be extended or altered but not ultimately reinvented.¹⁰¹ Reflecting upon Scruton, I find I share in his suggestion; indeed, it well explains the manner in which I construct my harmonies. Music as an art form is evolutionary. Therefore, not only is “originality” somewhat undesirable, its very existence is questionable.

In 1877, Alexander Teetgen had the foresight to suggest that originality manifests in “the courage not to be original”.¹⁰² However, those who compose imitatively misappropriate Teetgen’s words. Lisa Colton clarifies that female composers are not merely “sponges” of male creativity.¹⁰³ Fred Lerdahl considers imitation a useful tool for students, but nothing more.¹⁰⁴ Leonard Bernstein and Bauer-Mengelberg proved an “infinite variety of music”.¹⁰⁵ Imitation is not contemporary art music’s inevitable conclusion.

Additionally, originality implies innovation. David Bernstein argues that as no one school of composition dominates the present day, “radical stylistic change loses its relevance”.¹⁰⁶ My intent, then, is not one of imitation or innovation, but rather “authenticity”.

¹⁰⁰ René Leibowitz and Pierre Boulez, quoted in Pierre Boulez, *Notes for an Apprenticeship: Texts Collected and Presented by Paule Thevenin*, trans. Herbert Weinstock (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1968), 71, 74.

¹⁰¹ Scruton, *Aesthetics of Music*, 308.

¹⁰² Alexander Teetgen, “Originality’s Present Claim in Composition,” *The Musical Standard* 12, no. 649 (1877): 4.

¹⁰³ Lisa Colton, “The Female Exotic: Tradition, Innovation and Authenticity in the Reception of Music by Judith Weir,” *Contemporary Music Review* 29, no. 3 (2010): 287.

¹⁰⁴ Fred Lerdahl. “On Teaching Composition,” *Contemporary Music Review* 31, no. 4 (2012): 291.

¹⁰⁵ Leonard Bernstein, *The Infinite Variety of Music* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 32.

¹⁰⁶ David W. Bernstein, “Techniques of Appropriation in the Music of John Cage,” *Contemporary Music Review* 20, no. 4 (2001): 72. See Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968); Leslie Fiedler, *The Collected Essays*, vol. 2 (New York: Stein and Day, 1971); Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Perloff Marjorie, *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

In my terms, an authentic composer's work is governed by genuine individuality, irrespective of whether it does or does not adhere to past or contemporary systems.

Many composers achieved authentic musical personalities. With *Wozzeck*, Berg simply desired to “write good music”.¹⁰⁷ Intertextuality is an essential quality of George Crumb's compositional style.¹⁰⁸ John Adams' use of non-diatonic pitch materials separates him from other postminimalists.¹⁰⁹ Whatever his motives, Cage encourages artists to think of “past literature as material rather than art”.¹¹⁰ Contemporary composers like Weir, Dean, John Zorn and Paweł Szymański have also embraced a “nostalgic” return to past aesthetics and narratives.¹¹¹ Frederic Rzewski, in *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*, employed a neoromantic aesthetic for political reasons.¹¹² My own work incorporates past stimulus, drawing from myth, history, politics and philosophy. Lerdahl declares “the notion that contemporary compositional practice has nothing to do with the past is destructive in its self-imposed isolation”.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Alban Berg, quoted in Willi Reich, *Wozzeck: A Guide to the Text and Music of the Opera* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1952), 22.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Steinitz, “George Crumb,” *The Musical Times* 119, no. 1628 (1978): 844–5, 847.

¹⁰⁹ Kostka and Santa, *Post-Tonal Music*, 304.

¹¹⁰ John Cage, Michael Kirby and Richard Schechner, “An Interview with John Cage,” *Turlane Drama Review* 10, no. 2 (1964): 53. See John Cage, *For the Birds* (Boston: M. Boyars, 1981), 143.

¹¹¹ Linda Hutcheon, “Theorizing the Postmodern: Towards a Poetics,” in *The Post-Modern Reader*, ed. Charles Jencks (London: Academy Editions, 1992), 77; Colton, “Female Exotic,” 278; Tom Morgan, “Judith Weir,” *New Music* 88 (1988): 43; Ivan Hewett, “Judith Weir: What Tavener and Copland Taught Me,” *The Telegraph*, 10 January, 2008, accessed 5 September 2020, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/3670386/Judith-Weir-What-Tavener-and-Copland-taught-me.html>; Ivan Hewett, *Music: Healing the Rift* (London: Continuum, 2003), 246; Violetta Kostka, “Linda Hutcheon's Theory of Parody and Its Application to Postmodern Music,” *Avant. Pismo Awangardy Filozoficzno-Naukowej*, no. 1 (2016): 69. See Judith Weir, “Composing Myself: Judith Weir,” Wise Music Classical, posted 20 July, 2018, YouTube Video, 1:10, 1:36, <https://youtu.be/T92hx9ldA4E>.

¹¹² Kostka and Santa, *Post-Tonal Music*, 309.

¹¹³ Lerdahl, “Teaching Composition,” 292.

Academics agree Lyotardian postmodernism has run its course, and Linda Hutcheon has challenged society to find a new label for the twenty-first century.¹¹⁴ In 2010, Dutch cultural theorists Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van der Akker codified “metamodernism”.¹¹⁵ Emerging from the “insecurities of the contemporary period” and Kantian theory, metamodernism “moves for the sake of moving, attempts in spite of its inevitable failure; it seeks forever for a truth that it never expects to find”.¹¹⁶ Metamodernism is comparable to neoromanticism, in that both “attempt to turn the finite into the infinite, while recognizing that [such] can never be realised”.¹¹⁷ Following Vermeulen and van der Akker’s work, metamodernism has continued to receive scholarly support.¹¹⁸ Ciprian Baci

¹¹⁴ Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 165–6, 181; Roul Eshelman, *Performatism, or the End of Postmodernism* (Aurora: The Davies Group Publishers, 2008); Alan Kirby, *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure our Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2009); Christian Moraru, *Cosmodernism: American Narrative, Late Globalization, and the New Cultural Imaginary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010); Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Post-Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012). See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, with a foreword by Fredrick Jameson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

¹¹⁵ Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van der Akker, “Notes on Metamodernism,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture* 2 (2010): 1–14. Mas’ud Zavarzadeh first referred to metamodernism in “The Apocalyptic Fact and the Eclipse of Fiction in Recent American Prose Narratives,” *Journal of American Studies* 9, no. 1 (1975): 69–83.

¹¹⁶ David Rudrum and Nicholas Stravis, eds. “Metamodernism,” *Supplanting the Postmodern: An Anthology of Writings on the Arts and Culture of the Early 21st Century* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 305; Vermeulen and van den Akker, “Notes,” 5. See Henry E. Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). In “Utopia, Sort of: A Case Study in Metamodernism,” *Studia Neophilologica* 87, no. 1 (2015): 56–7 Vermeulen and van den Akker draw association between metamodernism and global capitalism.

¹¹⁷ Vermeulen and van den Akker, “Notes,” 8.

¹¹⁸ Mary K. Holland, *Succeeding Postmodernism: Language and Humanism in Contemporary American Literature* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 200–1; David James and Urmila Seshagiri, “Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Revolution,” *Modern Language Association* 129, no. 1 (2014): 87–100; Dali Kadagishvili, “Metamodernism as We Perceive It (Quick Review),” *European Scientific Journal* 9, no. 10 (2014): 564; Ciprian Baci, Dana Opre and Sarah Riley, “A New Way of

Muşta Bocoş and Corina Baciú-Urzičă extend metamodernism's initial boundaries beyond the realm of aesthetics to include all facets of contemporary society.¹¹⁹ Conversely, David Rudrum and Nicholas Stravis identify flaws within metamodern theory, in that, as outlined by Vermeulen and van der Akker, it relies on an "oscillation" between modernism and postmodernism.¹²⁰ I propose that metamodernism is not just a rejection of the modern-postmodern binary, but a critical reflection upon all human existence.

Ten years later, self-conscious applications of metamodernism to music remain scarce. Vincent Meelberg names Jacob ter Velduis' 2001 *Paradiso* as metamodern.¹²¹ Niels van Poecke looks further back, arguing that the re-popularisation of folk music in the twenty-first century was part of metamodernism's emergence.¹²² Certainly, Bartók's contrapuntalism is objectively metamodern. Scruton argues in favour of metamodernism when he asserts that musical parameters in their rawest forms cannot be deemed "cliché".¹²³ Emma Steel advocates for copyright laws to acknowledge the "collective nature" of compositions.¹²⁴

Thinking in the Era of Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence," *Educata 21 Journal* 24, no. 1 (2016): 46; Joel Snell, "Meta Modernism: An Introduction," *Education* 137, no. 2 (2016): 202; Dennis Kersten and Usha Wilbers, "Introduction: Metamodernism," *English Studies* 99, no. 7 (2018): 722.

¹¹⁹ Ciprian Baciú, Muşta Bocoş and Corina Baciú-Urzičă, "Metamodernism: A Conceptual Foundation," *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences* 209 (2015): 35. Lauren Gardener, "Metamodernism: A New Philosophical Approach to Counseling," *Journal of Humanistic Counseling* 55, no. 2 (2016): 86–98 applies metamodernism to psychology and medicine.

¹²⁰ Rudrum and Stravis, "Metamodernism," 309; Vermeulen and van der Akker, "Notes," 6.

¹²¹ Vincent Meelberg, "Composing Beauty," *Notes on Metamodernism*, last modified 5 May, 2014, <http://www.metamodernism.com/2014/05/05/composing-beauty/>.

¹²² Niels van Poecke, *Pure Taste in Popular Music: On Poly-Purism as Metamodernism Consumption*, audio recording, "Papers from the Nijmegen Conference," *AHRC Metamodernism*, last modified 2 September 2019, 2:11, <https://ahrc-metamodernism.co.uk/papers-from-the-nijmegen-conference/#more-350>.

¹²³ Scruton, *Aesthetics of Music*, 290–1.

¹²⁴ Steel, "Original Sin," 78–9.

Alternatively, the twenty-first century's numerous systems of music notation cannot forgo mention.¹²⁵

I do not think harmonic language or music generally should be unnecessarily complex or unnecessarily simple. Rather, art must always challenge and deconstruct the human condition for society's benefit. Metamodernism looks beyond style, and may certainly catapult contemporary art music towards a "futureless future".¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Antokoletz, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 974.

¹²⁶ See Vermeulen and van der Akker, "Notes," 12.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

This paper's research is "practise-based", not "practise-led". It is a Non-Traditional Research Output that incorporates an original portfolio of musical compositions.¹²⁷ A portfolio of compositions "has the status of a thesis" and offers an original contribution to knowledge by way of an "aesthetic argument articulated [within]".¹²⁸ Recently, John Croft has argued that composition is not research.¹²⁹ He claims that "pre-compositional work and system building cannot be classed as research".¹³⁰ He later writes "research *about* music that already exists is a real activity; composition-as-research is not".¹³¹ However, Croft fails to acknowledge his argument within an original context. Pre-compositional work leads to composition, which upon completion results in an artwork that can be subjected to research.

Croft also contends research questions that can be answered ahead of research are false. He misappropriates Schoenberg, suggesting that the composer may have asked himself, "Can I make music in which all pitch classes are played equally often?"¹³² Rather, Schoenberg challenged himself to write "good" music which incorporated all pitch classes. A more accurate research question would read, "How will my music which uses all pitch classes equally be received?" Original composition is the only means by which Schoenberg may

¹²⁷ Peter Dallow, "Representing Creativeness: Practice-Based Approaches to Research in Creative Arts," *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education* 1, no. 2 (2003): 53.

¹²⁸ Thomas Reiner and Robin Fox. "The Research Status of Music Composition in Australia," *Australian Journal of Music Education* 1 (2003): 3. See Dargaville, "Speaking in Tongues," 157–84.

¹²⁹ John Croft, "Composition is Not Research," *Tempo* 69, no. 272 (2015): 6–11.

¹³⁰ Croft, "Composition is Not Research," 7.

¹³¹ Croft, "Composition is Not Research," 10. Author's emphasis.

¹³² Croft, "Composition is Not Research," 6.

Capital Hill is also scored for chamber orchestra and is approximately twelve minutes in length. It was commissioned by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra as part of the Cybec 21st Century Australian Composers' Program and will premiere in January 2021. *Capital Hill* incorporates my political philosophies, some of which were briefly alluded to in *Curtain!*, and notably includes quotations.¹³⁵ I sketched a rhythmic figure by hand in April (Ex. 2.2, see page 28) and did not complete the work until this month. Brenton Broadstock's mentorship greatly benefited *Capital Hill*'s development, as did Robert Davidson's.

I harmonically deconstruct this portfolio according to White's three levels of analysis.¹³⁶ I begin with macroanalysis, surveying the often-shifting pitch centres of each work. I identify these pitch centres through reading my scores and considering several musical parameters, including pitch content, rhythm, texture and orchestration, expressive markings, and extended techniques. I also observe Meelberg's recontextualisation of Mieke Bal's theory of memory into a musical trichotomy: (1) a listener identifies sound and stores this in their short-term memory, (2) the listener then organises that sound musically, and (3) the listener finally stores that organisation in their long-term memory.¹³⁷ After tabling each work's pitch centre data, I plot my findings on a graph adapted from Cohn's four hexatonic systems (Fig. 2.1).¹³⁸ Whereas Cohn labelled each quadrant of his chart in relation to its

¹³⁵ See Kostka, "Theory of Parody," 69; Linda Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 34, 57; George Rochberg, preface to *Music for the Magic Theater* (Bryn Mawr: Theodore Presser, 1972), 6.

¹³⁶ See White, "Analysis of Music," 16–8.

¹³⁷ Vincent Meelberg, *New Sounds, New Stories: Narrativity in Contemporary Music* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2006), 81–2. See Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) xv.

¹³⁸ Richard Cohn, "Weitzmann's Regions, My Cycles, and Douthett's Dancing Cubes," *Music Theory Spectrum* 22, no. 1 (2000): 95. See Richard Cohn, "As Wonderful as Star Clusters: Instruments for Gazing at Tonality in Schubert," *19th Century Music* 22, no. 3 (1999): 213–32.

position on a printed page, I interpret four cardinal directions accompanied by geometric units that can be used to approximately “magnetise” a work’s harmonic language. I map this by calculating the duration of identifiable pitch centres within each work, using the equation $t = \frac{d}{s}$, where t = time, d = distance and s = speed. I then display these calculations on radar graphs, presenting each work’s pitch centres uniquely.

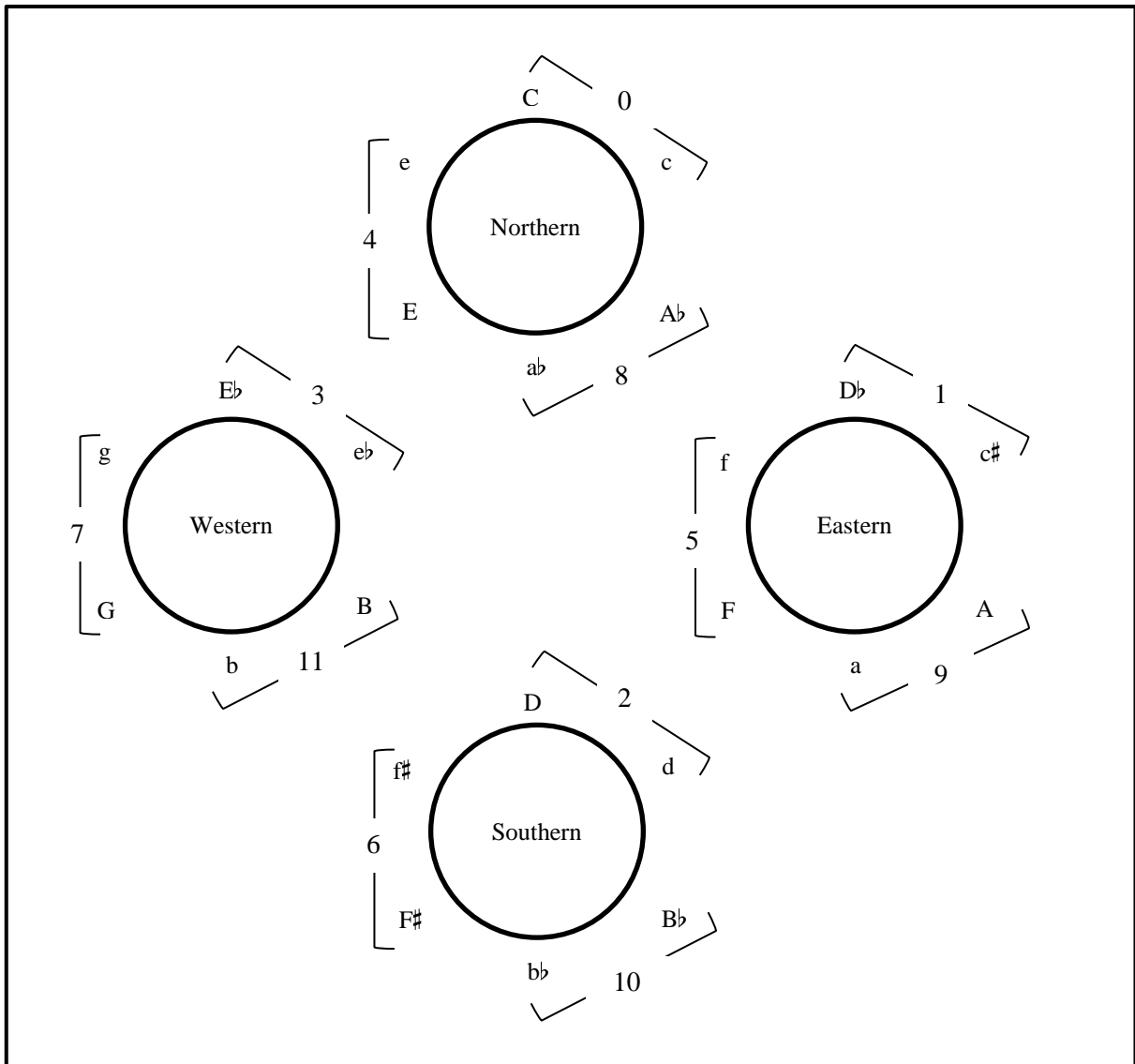


Fig. 2.1. Cohn’s four hexatonic systems, reproduced. Edited to include pitch-classes representing pitch centres.

There are sections of each work which do not possess identifiable pitch centres upon a first reading. I divide these sections into two categories: (1) transitory passages, and (2) complex passages. Transitory passages possess multiple identifiable tonal and harmonic

qualities which lose clarity when combined with other musical parameters. Complex passages are equally lacking in clarity, and do not possess any identifiable tonal or harmonic qualities. Additionally, I identify unpitched sections of each work. I do not take into account transitory, complex or unpitched passages when graphing each work's "magnetic harmony".

Having completed this macroanalysis, I perform middle-analysis by examining selected transitory passages from each work. Transitory passages contain fast-moving harmonic progressions and lend themselves well to horizontal deconstruction. Finally, I microanalyse selected complex passages from each work. The complex chordal pillars of these passages are well suited to vertical deconstruction. My middle- and microanalysis are both informed by the harmonic theories of composers and analysts discussed in Chapter 2. It is beyond the scope of this paper to dissect each work's harmonic language entirely. Circumventing this, I marry my investigation with metamodernism and study musical material of personal interest. Furthermore, I employ analytical techniques which best describe my music. In so doing, my analysis, alike my portfolio of compositions, promotes an authentic musical personality.

The musical score consists of five systems, each with multiple staves. The notation includes various time signatures such as 6/8, 7/8, 8/8, and 4/4. Above the first staff of each system are rhythmic groupings in parentheses: (3+2+2), (2+2+3), (3+2), (3+2+2), (2+2+3), (2+3), (3+2), (2+3), (2+2+3), and (3+2+2). The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and syncopation. A 'dim.' (diminuendo) marking is present in the third system. The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 2.2. Early rhythmic material for *Capital Hill*, typeset. The sketch is undated but was likely completed 18/19 April 2020. Now, I find there are markings which confuse me. As in Ex. 2.1, a contextual pragmatism appears to dominate my early compositional processes.

Chapter 3

ANALYSIS

Macroanalysis

Curtain! contains twenty-five identifiable pitch centres, the fewest of the portfolio (Table 3.1). The work begins in E with a low pedal from the contrabass and tuba, supported by the first violin.¹³⁹ The woodwinds' G-A \flat -G establish the third, cementing E as the pitch centre. A bass drum rhythm leads into C \sharp at bar 7. The muted horn's unique timbre is critical in emphasising this new pitch centre. B \flat at bar 17 is introduced by a percussive figure similar to that in bar 6; the listener remembers how the bass drum heralded C \sharp and so hears the timpani tonicising B \flat . A mood change occurs in bars 21-27, which rest comfortably in A \flat . The next pitch centre, B, is not established until bar 54, at first cadentially but then properly by bar 60. With a cautious regard for their chromaticism, bars 82-92 centre on E. The flute and bassoon at bar 93 indicate G major. Bars 101-102 are notable in that they suggest a return to E, but bar 103 instead gives rise to B \flat major in its second inversion. The clarinet and viola revel in a waltz; they threaten to dance away from B \flat in bar 113, but are pulled back by a melodious anacrusis.¹⁴⁰ The pitch centre shifts to E \flat in bar 118 and then to F \sharp in bar 120. Despite a brief interruption, this F \sharp landscape continues until bar 137. By bar 145, the trombone, harp and strings have tonicised B major. Throughout bars 121-157, second inversion chords dominate

¹³⁹ "E" is merely the pitch centre and does not infer E-major like it might in classical harmonic analysis. When appropriate, tonal inferences are specified. Pitch centres are measured to the whole bar.

¹⁴⁰ See Perischetti, *Twentieth-Century Harmony*, 94, 117.

harmonically. They also provide a shape for melodic lines, such as in bars 144 and 157, and therefore can be considered an authentic feature of my harmonic language.

LEGEND (see Chapter 2 for definitions)
T = without pitch centre; transitory passage
X = without pitch centre; complex passage
U = without pitch centre; unpitched passage

Table 3.1 PITCH CENTRES IN <i>CURTAIN!</i>		
Bar/s	Pitch Centre	Additional Remarks
1-4	E	
5-6	X	
7-9	C#	
10-16	X	
17-20	Bb	
21-27	Ab	
28-32	T	
33-53	X	
54-72	B	
73-77	X	
78-81	T	
82-92	E	includes T material
93-100	G	
101-102	E	
103-115	Bb	
116-117	T	
118-119	Eb	
120-127	F#	
128-131	T	
132-136	F#	
137-138	T	
139-143	X	
144-158	B	
159-161	Eb	
162-179	A	by assertion
180-182	T	
183-197	F#	
198-203	Bb	
204-222	B	
223-225	Eb	
226-246	G/D#	includes T material; informed by motivic material
247-259	T	
260-263	U	
264-287	Bb	
288-293	G	
294	U	
295-308	X	
309-311	Bb	
312	X/C#	by assertion

An Eb pitch centre is briefly established in bar 159, subsiding to A in bar 162. Kostka and Santa define “pitch centre by assertion” as any pitch centre that is artificially created.¹⁴¹

While the majority of my pitch centres are artificially asserted, bars 162-179 seem particularly so. The harp’s complex “harmony-melody”, along with the blurry harmonic structures of the brass and strings, are afforded clarity by the timpani’s repeated A. The oboe’s melody in bars 169-173 provides additional support, beginning and concluding on A. The passage finally resolves at bar 183. F# minor continues until bar 198, where the piano’s thematic melody is reharmonised to Bb minor. Bars 204-222 centre on B minor, and Eb minor briefly appears between bars 223-225. Polytonality governs bars 226-246, and G and D# comprise two distinct albeit related pitch centres. In fact, this is a harmonic transformation of motivic material that first

¹⁴¹ Kostka and Santa, *Post-Tonal Harmony*, 92.

appears in the clarinet at bar 35. In bars 226-246, the motivic B-G[#]-E-G is transposed and rearranged to D[#]-F[#]-G-A[#], fundamentally instructing the passage's harmony. This technique is more obvious to the analyst than it is to the listener. A reimagining of the earlier trombone solo establishes a B^b minor centre from bars 264-287. The pitch centre shifts to G at bar 288, uninterrupted by the ornamental polychords in bar 291. At bar 309, the curtain falls as it rose with a pitch centre of B^b. The harmonic content in bar 312 is complex, but a C[#] pedal reminiscent of bars 7-9 asserts itself as the work fades into nothingness.

The harmonic language in my First String Quartet is more refined than in *Curtain!*, as might be expected of a chamber work. It contains thirty identifiable pitch centres, some of which are only fleeting (Table 3.2). A high D^b emerges from the quartet's complex introduction in bar 4, creating a D^b pitch centre. This shifts with the viola's consecutive fifths in bars 6 and 7 to, respectively, E and E^b. At bar 18, the A-C third asserts a pitch centre of A, reinforced by the first violin and cello at bar 20. Following a transitory passage, F[#] is briefly established in bars 34-35. It is not until bar 39 that the quartet's first pitch centre of stability, C[#], occurs. It shifts briefly to E in bar 48 and, after a complex passage, firmly arrives at D in bar 53. However, the expectation that D will be another pitch centre of stability is subverted. There is a second firm arrival in bar 65, this time centring on G. Bar 69 reuses thematic material that was firmly stated in bar 53; the listener remembers the material was tonicised and so instinctively tonicises its reappearance in bar 69. G continues until shifting to B in bar 73. In bar 74, a polytonal moment occurs between B^b and A, predominantly driven by the first violin's D^b-A-C-B^b melody and the cello's *pizzicato* chord. The sixth in the first violin at bar 75, in conjunction with the second violin's D-E^b oscillation, re-establishes a pitch centre of G, though chromaticism and use of the minor second may cause the listener to regard bars

Table 3.2 PITCH CENTRES IN STRING QUARTET NO. 1		
Bar/s	Pitch Centre	Additional Remarks
1-3	X	
4-5	D \flat	
6	E	
7	E \flat	
8-12	X	
13-17	T	
18-21	A	by assertion
22-25	X	
26-33	T	includes Messiaen mode 2
34-35	F \sharp	
36-38	T	
39-47	C \sharp	
48	E	
49-52	X	
53-55	D	
56-61	T	
62-64	X	
65-66	G	
67-68	T	
69-72	G	
73	B	
74	B \flat /A	
75-84	G	includes T material
85-89	G/F \sharp	
90-92	F \sharp	
93-96	F/ F \sharp	
97-100	T	
101-103	D	
104-110	E \flat	
111-118	C	
119-125	T	
126-127	B \flat	
128-131	F \sharp	
132-134	E \flat	
135-137	T	
138-143	C	by assertion
144-147	F	by assertion
148-149	E \flat	
150-170	D \flat	includes T material
171-172	T	
173-175	D	
176-177	D/ E \flat	
178-179	E	
180-183	X	
184	D	
185-192	X	
193-195	D \flat	

75-84 as transitory. Bars 85-89 are polytonal. Though broken and voiced across the quartet, G and F \sharp triads, first major but then minor, compete against each other. F \sharp wins out in bar 90, and the importance of the second violin's *pizzicato* A in achieving this cannot be understated. Bars 93-96 introduce another polytonal landscape, this time between F \sharp minor and F minor. When adjusted enharmonically, the cello melody encourages F \sharp , but the listener cannot pass by the poignancy of the viola's C in bar 94, particularly after having heard the cello's accented F \flat . The violins' *sul ponticello* fluttering further muddies the passage. Transitory material ensues until bar 101, where the first violin restates the bar 53 theme, heralding a return to D. The viola's pedal from 104-110 creates a slight shift to E \flat , and another to C from 111-118. Bars 126-127 embellish B \flat minor, leading into F \sharp minor in

bar 128. This climactic passage is afforded further intensity when the pitch centre shifts to E \flat minor in bars 132-134. At bar 138, a strained viola *pizzicato* asserts C. Bars 144-147, through

another assertion, shift the pitch centre to F. In bars 148-149, the cello restates the bar 53 theme in E \flat , and once again the listener perceives tonicisation.

As the quartet nears its end, a lengthy D \flat pitch centre emerges in bars 150-170. While the harmonic fabric in bars 151-153 threatens a departure from D \flat , the cello's melody is decisively binding. This passage of unfamiliar optimism does not see the work out, however, and D minor returns with renewed vigour in bar 173. The pitch centre breaks into two for a final time at bar 176, when D and E \flat compete amidst an ambiguous melody and accompaniment. Bars 178-179 shift to E by way of the first violin's pedal tone, and there is a brief return to D in bar 184. Complexity dominates the quartet's finale; as in the beginning, a lonely cello D \flat emerges, dying away without any sense of resolution.

Capital Hill contains forty-five identifiable pitch centres, the most of the portfolio by a considerable margin (Table 3.3). In further contrast, the work's opening is modal. B \flat Lydian gives way to C \sharp Hypophrygian at bar 14. The brass announces C Aeolian in bar 26, which bleeds into A \flat Lydian in bar 33. While the Lydian mode continues, it becomes increasingly unstable as non-diatonic notes begin to sound. The C pitch centre in bars 51-54 is not necessarily audible to the listener, but it informs the pitch choices across the passage. E is more clearly stated at bar 55, assisted by a low E pedal tone. Bars 66-82 are polytonal. While the harp, piano and strings hammer E \flat , the trumpets' melody at bar 170 in conjunction with the upper woodwinds suggests A. This foreshadows a diminished fifth motif which is exploited throughout the work. After two brief shifts to E in bars 83 and 85, the timpani introduces C, supported by the bass clarinet and cellos. This atmospheric landscape morphs into E at bar 99. The upper strings, when adjusted enharmonically, use the pitches of the E Hungarian minor scale and are aided through an E pulse at bar 102. Note bar 105 of the piano solo, which attaches the diminished fifth motif to the end of a C-B-E theme. The lower

Table 3.3 PITCH CENTRES IN <i>CAPITAL HILL</i>		
Bar/s	Pitch Centre	Additional Remarks
1-13	B \flat	Lydian mode
14-25	C \sharp	Hypophrygian mode
26-32	C	Aeolian mode
33-50	A \flat	Lydian mode; includes T material
51-54	C	
55-59	E	
60-65	T	
66-82	E \flat /A	
83	E	
84	E \flat /A	
85-87	E	
88-98	C	
99-106	E	
107-111	A \flat	
112-114	F	
115-119	C	
120-123	X	
124	G \sharp	
125-127	X	
128-133	B \flat	
134-135	E \flat	
136-144	B	
145-148	G/E	
149-150	E	
151	D	
152-154	T	includes X material
155-160	E \flat	
161-182	D \flat	by assertion
183-186	C	
187-201	E	
202-207	G	
208-210	T	
211-219	E	
220-221	C	
222-226	T	
227-229	F \sharp	
230	T	
231-238	A/B \flat	by assertion
239	U	
240-242	F	Lydian mode
243-244	X	
245-248	F \sharp	
249-252	E \flat /A	
253-255	T	
256-257	F	Lydian mode
258	T	
259	E	
260-263	X	
264	T	
265-266	G	
267	T	
268-269	D \flat	
270-271	B \flat	

Table 3.3 cont'd PITCH CENTRES IN <i>CAPITAL HILL</i>		
Bar/s	Pitch Centre	Additional Remarks
272-274	X	
275-277	C \sharp	by assertion
278-279	A	
280-281	D	
282-284	X	
285-289	B	
290	X	
291-295	B \flat	by assertion
296-301	T	
302-306	C \sharp	

woodwinds and brass announce A \flat at bar 107.

This gives way to F at bar 112, and F in turn gives way to C at bar 115. In amongst complex passages, G \sharp is momentarily realised at bar 124. In bars 128-133, the strings declare B \flat , which leads to E \flat by way of the bass clarinet and second horn in bars 134-135. At bar 136, a harp scale solidifies B. A polytonal passage occurs in bars 145-148, with the melody centring E while the brass and lower strings centre G. The woodwinds ensure E wins out in bars 149-150, though their victory becomes pyrrhic when D emerges in bar 151. Bars 155-160 shift lyrically to E \flat .

The timpani asserts a D \flat pitch centre in bar 161, and the orchestra carries it through until bar 182. In bars 183-186, there is a slight shift to C; this is reminiscent of the work's

beginning, when C# Hypophrygian fell to C Aeolian. From bar 187, the upper strings repeat cells built off the C-B-E theme, establishing E. Bars 202-207 switch to G, the first violins' F# acting as the leading note. E returns in bars 211-219, shifting to C in bar 220. As harmonic tension builds, bars 227-229 centre on F#, despite the F opposition created through the timpani and lower strings. Bars 231-238 climax in a polytonal A/Bb, the brass asserting their repeated A pulse against the Bb of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. At bar 240, the pitch centre becomes F to suit a new *dolcissimo* mood. The work's modal origins are remembered as the harp and first violin B implies F Lydian. F# is established in bars 245-248 by the piano, which morphs into a restatement of the Eb/A polytonality at bar 249. The woodwind and strings suggest A, while the muted horns, timpani and lower strings argue Eb. F Lydian reappears in bars 256-257, offering another rendition of the C-B-E theme. The horns and violas' inner voices, aided by the tuba and contrabass pedal, shift bar 259 to E. After a second climax, G cuts through the chromaticism in bars 265-266. *Waltzing Matilda* is more obviously restated in Db at bar 268, and then again in Bb at bar 270. The first trumpet and harp assert C# as the next pitch centre in bars 275-277, which rotates to A at bar 278. The final climax, a reorchestration of the finale from Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, erupts in D at bar 280.

The work's epilogue is sparse and reflective. At bar 285, the strings leave behind the complexity of the previous passage and emerge in B. Chromaticism appears in bar 288, but the B pitch centre is maintained through the clarinet Eb(D#), the harp and piano F#, and the flute melody that flows over into bar 289. The violins assert Bb in bar 291, repeating a transposed variant of the C-B-E theme. The horns begin with this Bb centre but lose their clarity when the first trumpet enters. The work's final pitch centre is C#, cemented by the

harp and then the piano. The ending's triadicism comes in stark contrast to the rest of the work, affording it additional impact.

When each work's identifiable pitch centres are displayed on radar graphs following the formula outlined in Chapter 2 (Fig. 3.1), the results are helpful in interpreting the portfolio's harmonic language. The graph representing *Curtain!* is skewed towards Cohn's western and southern hexatonic poles; it can be said that the work's magnetic harmony points both south and west. My First String Quartet plainly differs. As the work centres mostly on C#/D♭, its harmonic language points east-north-east. *Capital Hill* is similar to *Curtain!*, leaning fractionally more south than east. Of the three works, *Capital Hill* most evenly distributes its various identifiable pitch centres, but even still favours some over others. For me, these graphs are useful in understanding inherent biases that affect my harmonic language. In each work, I largely neglect south-east (D, F) and north-west (C, G) centres. Centres like A#/B♭, B, C#/D♭, D#/E♭ and F#/G♭ are frequently exploited. It is also worth noting that each work in the portfolio unintentionally concludes centring on C#/D♭.

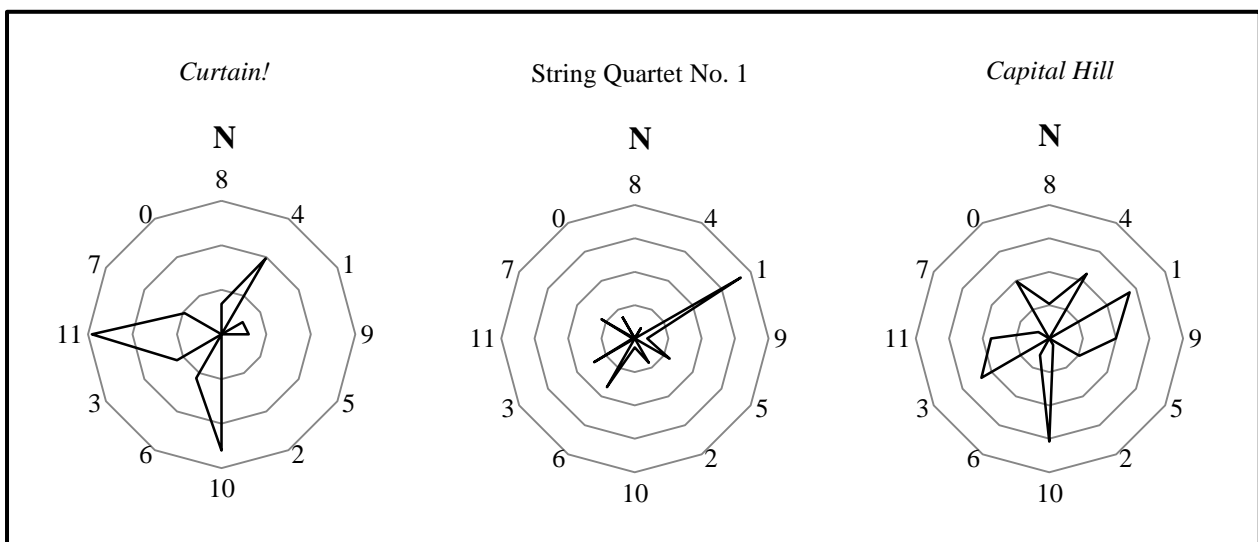


Fig. 3.1. The portfolio's pitch centres when magnetised, adapted from Cohn's four hexatonic systems.

Middle-analysis

Curtain! contains seven transitory passages, the fewest of the portfolio. I find two particularly interesting. The first occurs in bars 28-32. Bars 28-29, reduced in Ex. 3.1, present four individual difficulties for a listener trying to identify the passage's pitch centre:

Ex. 3.1. *Curtain!*, bars 28-29, reduced and annotated.

The solo flute's arpeggiated major triad implies a pitch centre of E (1). However, the strings' fast-moving Lydian scales (2), which are muted and *pianissimo* (3), weakly argue D. The common G# of both complicates matters. Moreover, the harp and contrabass, supported by the brass, hold a D major chord in its second inversion. When measured against the Lydian material, the A bass indicates A major (4).

The flute and piano's repetitive melody in bars 30-31 (Ex. 3.2) initially seems to confirm A Lydian, but the brass now explore B major, C major, D major and E major. As the harp *diminuendos* to *niente* and the contrabass undertakes an ambiguous *glissando*, the strings' scales also alter. Noteable is the piano's left hand arpeggiated seventh chords. These relate to the brass at first but quickly pivot away for greater harmonic colour.

Ex. 3.2. *Curtain!*, bars 30-31, reduced.

Bar 32 culminates with a C-D \flat -D-D \sharp /E \flat -E pentachord cluster. Theodor Adorno writes that “shock-factor” is an integral part of modern music; bar 32 manipulates dissonance alongside timbre and volume to shock the listener.¹⁴² Indeed, whether through musical or extra-musical parameters, shock is a prominent feature of my compositional style.

Another of *Curtain*’s interesting transitory passages occurs in bars 247-259. Polytonal triadic movement characterises this passage. In bars 247-248 (Ex. 3.3), the trumpet, when analysed horizontally, implies a V/V-V-I progression in E major. Vertically, however, the harmony shifts chromatically to create a non-diatonic yet related progression. The timpani’s

Ex. 3.3. *Curtain!*, bars 247-248, reduced and annotated.

¹⁴² Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973), 155–6.

G roll affords the passage a cadential feel whilst also accenting a rearranged transposition of the B-G#-E-G motif. Bars 252 and 254-259 extend upon this idea, creating a fluctuating chromatic landscape that is predominantly informed by triadicism.

My First String Quartet includes nine transitory passages. For me, one particularly stands out. It occurs in bars 26-33 (Ex. 3.4) and fuses Messiaen's second mode of limited transposition with canonic writing. The violins and viola start in unison at bar 26, implying G minor. Bar 27 shifts to Messiaen's second mode. The viola deviates from this with its E \flat , naturalised through the first violin's previous passing note. At bar 28, the first violin leads the second violin and cello in a modal canon, supported by the viola *tremolo*. By bar 30, the listener is prepared for the first violin's B-D#, recalling the E \flat dissonances. Bars 31-33

The image displays a musical score for a string quartet, specifically focusing on bars 26-33. The score is written for four instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The time signature is 3/4. The score is annotated with various musical terms and dynamics. Key annotations include 'unison' at the start, 'Messiaen Mode 2' indicating the mode used, 'accel.' for acceleration, and 'a tempo' for returning to the original tempo. Dynamics such as *p*, *f*, *ff*, *pp*, *mp*, and *p* are used throughout. Performance instructions like 'delicately', 'con sord.', 'pizz.', and 'arco' are also present. The score shows a progression from unison in bar 26 to a complex modal canon in bars 28-33, with various transpositions and alternate modes of Messiaen's second mode of limited transposition.

Ex. 3.4. String Quartet No. 1, bars 26-33, annotated.

extend upon the canonic motif, morphing into an alternate transposition of Messiaen's second mode at bar 32/3. Infrequent passing notes are softened by the earlier chromatic deviations.

Capital Hill includes ten transitory passages. Two particularly interest me. They are both short and primarily serve to pivot one pitch centre to another. The first occurs in bars 222-226 (Ex. 3.5) and bridges C and F#. The violas waste little time and delve into F# minor; however, their run commences on D to assist with the violins and contrabass's juxtaposing D minor. Additionally, the tuba and cellos are still languishing in C. This three-part tonal divide continues into bar 224. The violas succeed in martialling the violins into F#, but the cellos and contrabass diverge into B major. F# loses its clarity, split between its function as a root and a fifth. Moreover, the first horn's C is heard in the context of the previous pitch centre. The sustained notes of the brass fade in and out of the texture, creating further harmonic ambiguity. At bar 225, the cellos and contrabass begin to slowly fall, and while their descent is disorderly they land together on F# at bar 227. In short, while the passage is harmonically clear in print, it is so muddy in performance that the listener becomes disorientated. This disorientation makes the strong F# landing in bar 227 impactful. I use this compositional technique frequently, affording my music intensity.

Persichetti asserts that "root movement of a perfect fifth has a strong tendency to establish a definite modality and tonality".¹⁴³ Bars 296-301 (Ex. 3.6) capitalise upon this theory, each using perfect fourths to shift the passage's pitch centre. The horns' *Advance Australia Fair* fragment begins in Bb, but is interrupted by the trumpet's transposition of the same fragment centring on D. Bb and D unites in G minor, supported weakly by the woodwinds in bar 298. The pitch centre alters again when the trombone and tuba suggest Ab.

¹⁴³ Persichetti, *Twentieth Century Harmony*, 71. See Roger Sessions, *Harmonic Practise* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951), 407. Alternatively, Perle refutes Sessions in *Serial Composition*, 30.

The clarinet at first clarifies F amidst a G \flat major/F major polychord, but concludes its phrase in G \flat . The flute attempts to continue G \flat (F \sharp), but the clarinet introduces A minor, and its sustained C pivots the flute to chord V of C \sharp minor in preparation for a definitive C \sharp pitch centre in bar 302. This is another example of harmonic disorientation, albeit in an entirely different context. In both instances, the harmonic language is informed by triadicism.

The image shows a musical score for 'Capital Hill', bars 296-301, reduced and annotated. The score is in 5/4 time and consists of five staves: Flute/Bass Clarinet/Bassoon (Fl./B. Cl./Bsn.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn 1/2 (Hn 1./2.), Trumpet 1 (Tpt. 1.), and Trombone/Tuba (Tbn./Tba). The score is annotated with various musical markings and harmonic analysis. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo), *p* (piano), and *n* (normal). Articulation includes 'breathily' and 'espress.'. Harmonic analysis includes 'c#: V' and 'a: i'. There are also markings for '3' (triplets) and '3+2' (a 3+2 rhythm). The score shows a complex harmonic progression, with the clarinet and flute playing a phrase that concludes in G \flat . The flute attempts to continue G \flat (F \sharp), but the clarinet introduces A minor, and its sustained C pivots the flute to chord V of C \sharp minor in preparation for a definitive C \sharp pitch centre in bar 302.

Ex. 3.6. *Capital Hill*, bars 296-301, reduced and annotated.

Microanalysis

Coincidentally, each work in the portfolio contains seven complex passages. In *Curtain!*, bars 33-53 particularly interest me. Bar 33 begins with a complex pedal chord. Its construction can be regarded in a number of ways (Ex. 3.7). On one hand, an A \flat seventh chord is combined with E diminished, which in turn becomes C seventh. Alternatively, the triads A \flat major, C major, E \flat major and E \flat minor find common notes amongst each other and form a polychord. Consulting Hindemith's system of analysis, A \flat is the chord's root due to its perfect fifth relationship between the top D \sharp (E \flat). As the chord was initially voiced in this

way, with $A\flat$ distinctly its root, the intuition guiding my harmonic decisions can be seen functioning optimally.

Ex. 3.7. *Curtain!*, chord from bar 33, reduced and annotated.

The chords in *Curtain!*'s final bar are similarly deserving of harmonic analysis (Ex. 3.8). The $E\flat$ and $B\flat$ of the upper quartal chord are heard as accented dissonances when the bass affirms an A pitch centre. When the upper chord is restated with additional notes, its C creates an A minor chord with the bass; however, this is quickly interrupted by the assertive $C\sharp$ s. Thus, another rearranged transposition of the recurring B-G \sharp -E-G motif is executed. Whereas the domineering $C\sharp$ pedal fades, the weaker A remains for an eerie effect. The last chord could be broken into many triadic combinations, but is better thought of as a chromatic cluster which colours the mark tree's solo.

Ex. 3.8. *Curtain!*, bar 312, reduced and annotated.

There are two complex passages in my First String Quartet that particularly stand out to me. The first is the work's introduction, bars 1-4 (Ex. 3.9). When analysed, the upper strings' double stops exist within a "triadic frame". Of the first chord, the outer voices suggest D major. D \sharp and E can both be regarded as accented dissonances. The second chord's construction indicates A major. B and F are heard following the first chord's D and G, creating a horizontal G seventh, further clarified by the successive accented G. At bar 2, a diminished cluster contextualised by the accented G implies G diminished seventh. At bar 4, B \flat minor is embellished with Perle's "odd" note, in this case D.¹⁴⁴ The last chord combines the triads F \sharp minor and F major. While the accented G's open string timbre is idiosyncratic, it is not enough to assert a pitch centre for the passage. Indeed, an extra repetition might have made all the difference, and was likely omitted intuitively to maintain the passage's harmonic ambiguity.

Ex. 3.9. String Quartet No.1, bars 1-4, reduced and annotated.

In his Second String Quartet, Schoenberg identifies "many sections in which the individual parts proceed regardless of whether or not their meeting results in codified harmonies".¹⁴⁵ Such underpins several of the complex passages in my First String Quartet,

¹⁴⁴ Perle, *Twelve-Tone Tonality*, 162–4.

¹⁴⁵ Arnold Schoenberg, quoted in Willi Reich, *Schoenberg: A Critical Biography*, trans. Leo Black (London: Longman, 1971), 31.

including bars 49-52 (Ex. 3.10). There are, however, some intuitive triadic pillars in this passage. At bar 49, a whole-tone scale in the second violin lands the quartet on E minor at bar 50. Bar 51 begins with a similar pillar, now A minor. In bar 52, the first violin enters what might be regarded as a D “micro centre”, its G-A-B \flat -A providing a strong cadential feel. This is confirmed by the accented viola C \sharp and subsequent second violin E, sounding A major. The first violin’s A-C \sharp is informed by its previous A-F \sharp -D, creating a I-V progression which ultimately concludes in D minor at bar 53. On the page, the viola and cello accompany the almost *giocoso* attitude of the violins; for the listener, neither this hierarchy nor the triadic

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a string quartet, annotated with performance and harmonic details. The first system covers bars 49-52 and includes the instruction "poco a poco accel." at the top left. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The Violin II staff is annotated with "poco a poco cresc." and "whole tone scale" above a triplet of notes. The Viola and Cello/Double Bass staves also have "poco a poco cresc." markings. Above the first staff, the chord "Em" is indicated with a bracket over a triplet. The second system covers bars 51-52 and includes the instruction "Am" above the first staff. The first staff is annotated with "variation on Vln. 1 bar 49" and "D 'micro centre'" above a triplet. The second staff has "A" above a note. The Cello/Double Bass staff has "3" above a triplet. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 3.10. String Quartet No. 1, bars 49-52, annotated.

pillars are obvious.

I am very satisfied with *Capital Hill*'s complex passage in bars 119-123 (Ex. 3.11). Its harmony is predominantly built from stacked triads. In bar 119, A minor is superimposed over B \flat minor. The first trumpet restates the C-B-E motif, operating independently from the harmonies beneath it. Bar 120 sees a staggered harmonic shift to A \flat minor/G major, then E \flat major seventh. On the fourth beat of the bar, the harmony shifts again to G minor major seventh. Above this, an E micro centre is established between the first horn and first trumpet. Against the trumpet's E, the horn's F \sharp clamours to resolve, and does to G in bar 121. The E micro centre is abandoned for C minor seventh; the horn's F \sharp returns, however, creating a C minor/E \flat minor polychord. In bar 122, the second horn applies Persichetti's perfect fifth technique; while the polychord created is F major/G \flat major, B \flat is the prevailing pitch. The listener subconsciously recalls bar 119's A minor/B \flat minor harmony and perceives the passage's transition from antecedent to consequent. In bar 123, the initial polychord adjusts to become A minor/B \flat major, before an unfamiliar F minor/E major takes its place. Throughout the passage, the harmonic change is blurred by suspensions and rhythmic ambiguity. Though the listener is disorientated, they are not fundamentally lost as they were in Ex. 3.5 and 3.6. Simply, they float along with the music, guided by the winds of harmonic change.

Joseph Klett and Alison Gerber define "Noise Music" as "abrasive frequencies and profuse volume [that is] chaotic, unfamiliar, and offensive".¹⁴⁶ Some complex passages across the portfolio are best described as Noise Music. These include bars 305-308 of *Curtain!*, bars 62-64 of String Quartet No. 1, and bar 282 of *Capital Hill*. In all these

¹⁴⁶ Joseph Klett and Alison Gerber, "The Meaning of Indeterminacy: Noise Music as Performance," *Cultural Sociology* 8, no. 3 (2014): 75–6. Authors' capitalisation.

passages, any harmonic clarity is secondary to musical anarchy. The controlled use of Noise Music is a feature of my harmonic language, and unusually yet effectively aids my authentic musical personality.

The musical score is annotated with various performance techniques and harmonic changes. Key annotations include:

- triacid frame**: Located at the top left, above the first staff.
- Am Bbm**: Chords indicated above the first staff.
- Abm G Ebmaj7 Gm(maj7) Em**: Chords indicated above the second staff.
- Hn. 1 (ord.)** and **Hn. 2 (ord.)**: Horn parts with dynamic markings *n*, *p*, *pp*, and *mp*.
- Tpt. 1 (ord.)**: Trumpet part with dynamic markings *n*, *mp*, and *pp*.
- Tbn.** and **Tba.**: Trombone and tuba parts with dynamic markings *n*, *p*, and *pp*.
- C-B-E motif**: A specific melodic motif labeled in the trumpet part.
- suspension**: Two instances of suspension are marked with dotted lines and arrows.
- P.N.**: Performance techniques marked in the trumpet and horn parts.
- P5 technique**: A specific technique marked in the horn part.
- 5**: A fingering or articulation mark in the horn part.
- Chords**: Additional chords like **Cm7**, **Ebm Cm**, **F Gb**, **Am Bb**, and **Fm E** are indicated at the bottom of the score.

Ex. 3.11. *Capital Hill*, bars 119-123, annotated.

CODA

Although I initially feared demystifying my artistic practise, this paper has allowed me to reflect on my artistic practise, and ultimately aided me in cultivating an authentic musical personality. Through analysing a portfolio of my compositions, I have provided contemporary art music composers with stimulus to develop authentic harmonic languages. I have pioneered magnetic harmonic analysis as a tool for composers and analysts alike. In summary, my music, as previously thought, is largely pitch driven and characterised by its use of harmony. Recalling Scruton, investigation has revealed my harmonic language to be grounded by conventional triadic constructs. The metamodern author aims “to move the novel forward by looking back”, and as a metamodern composer I contribute to the contemporary art music scene by reimagining traditional Western harmony.¹⁴⁷ My efforts are neither unique nor imitative. Rather, through embracing both the techniques of the past and the possibilities of the future, my harmonic language achieves authenticity in so far as I have articulated the term.

Metamodernism is, however, not without its risks. Fisk refers to Cage as “the liberator of music from the chains of knowledge and technique”, and argues against substituting “personality for ability”.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Lerdahl introduces the schematic notion of “musical grammar” and criticises composers like Boulez, Babbitt, Carter, Nono, Stockhausen and Xenakis for misusing it.¹⁴⁹ Regarding the increasing tendency for contemporary art music

¹⁴⁷ David and Seshagiri, “Metamodernism,” 93.

¹⁴⁸ Josiah Fisk, “The New Simplicity: The Music of Górecki, Tavener and Pärt,” *The Hudson Review* 47, no. 3 (1994): 398.

¹⁴⁹ Fred Lerdahl, “Cognitive Constraints on Compositional Systems,” *Contemporary Music Review* 6, no. 2 (1992): 99–100.

composers to justify their practise through verbal or written description, Fisk pointedly notes that “the [listener’s] ear does not hear program notes”.¹⁵⁰ While I have proven metamodernism to be an exciting and useful philosophy, its misapplication could easily incur destructive consequences. Contemporary art music composers must acknowledge this and ensure that their work is always well-crafted.

Those who misunderstand authenticity will privilege it above technical artistry. To do so, when considered historically, is an imitative practise in itself.

¹⁵⁰ Fisk, “New Simplicity,” 410.

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