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Fantasy Variations on George Gershwin's Prelude II for Piano: An Analysis and Conductor's Guide

Brian Stevon Taylor
University of Southern Mississippi

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The University of Southern Mississippi

FANTASY VARIATIONS ON GEORGE GERSHWIN'S PRELUDE II FOR PIANO:

AN ANALYSIS AND CONDUCTING GUIDE

by

Brian Stevon Taylor

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

December 2008

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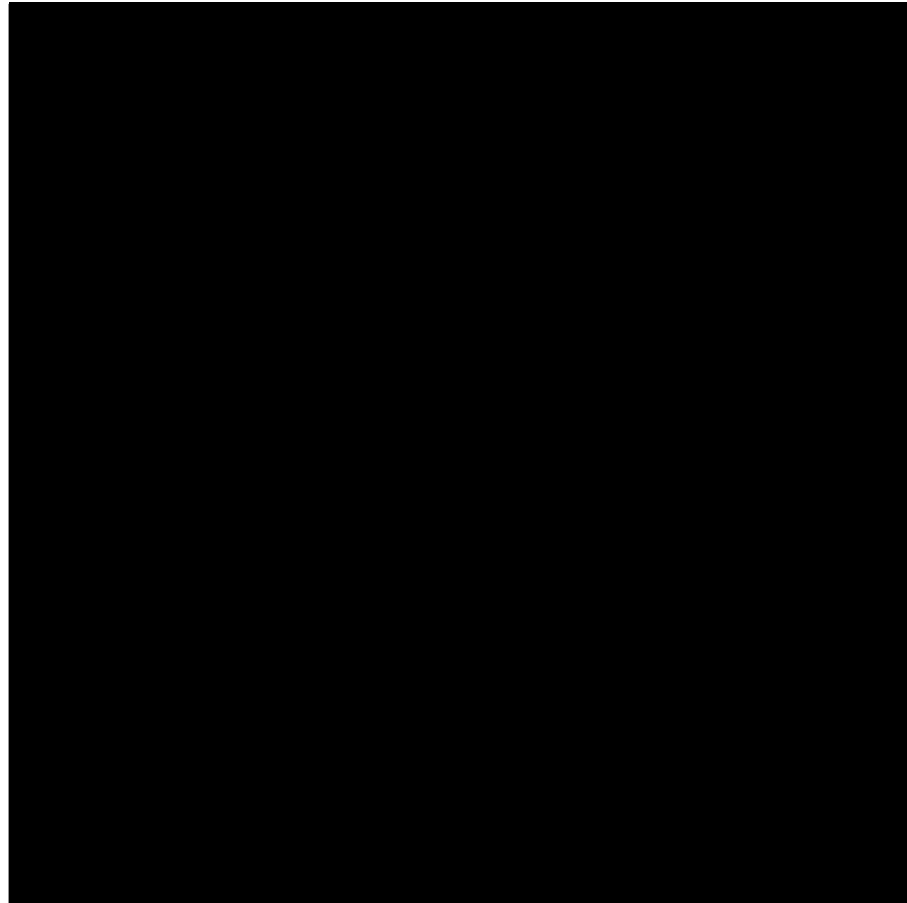
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ABSTRACT

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by Brian Stevon Taylor

December 2008

Donald Grantham has received much acclaim and awards for his compositions. *Fantasy Variations* proves to be noteworthy addition to his collected works and to the band repertoire. The work won the NBA/William Revelli Memorial Band Composition Contest in 1998 and the ABA/Ostwald Award in 1999. The piece has received much acclaim and many performances with several commercial recordings.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the importance of the band music of Donald Grantham through an analysis of one of his award-winning works. Further, another aim would be to help more bands perform this noteworthy piece by assisting in the understanding of its challenges through a complete conducting guide.

Biographical information about Donald Grantham and George Gershwin with Gershwin's *Prelude II* (1927) with background information and a presentation of the form and structure are presented. A complete analysis of the work detailing the overall form, motives derived from the Gershwin, compositional techniques, key centers, and thematic relationships are discussed. The requirements needed for performance, solos, ensemble challenges, and conductor responsibilities are explored in the conducting guide. An interview with Donald Grantham discussing his influences, compositional methods, and history of the work is included.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When compared to long-established performing idioms like vocal ensembles or orchestras, the modern band's history and development is short. It has taken place over the last century. In its early stages music to perform was a primary need, and performers borrowed literature from other ensembles. As an example, one might refer to the first instrumental ensemble's performing music originally written for voice. Band conductors, however, borrowed mainly from orchestral literature, therefore creating a base. Music, written specifically for the band, later became most important. In the 20th century, these concerns have resulted in the establishment of organizations composed of band directors whose interests lay in the promotion of bands through the support of quality performance and literature. Band organizations like the American Bandmasters Association and the National Band Association recognized this need and sought ways to encourage composers.

Dr. Edwin Franko Goldman, noted band composer and conductor, arranged a meeting of outstanding bandmasters in New York in 1929. Goldman's purpose stemmed from his idea that the public deserved good band music (Scott, 1995). From this meeting, and other meetings that followed, the American Bandmasters Association (ABA) was formed in New York on July 5, 1929 (Scott, 1995). Captain Stannard, leader of the U.S. Army Band, in a letter to A. A. Harding, Director of Bands at the University of Illinois dated August 1928, stated the intent of the ABA.

We conceived the idea of creating an ABA for the purpose of furthering the interests of outstanding American Bandmasters, and of interesting composers, arrangers, and music publishers in Wind Band music. It would be the aim of the ABA to unite in a concerted effort to influence the best composers to write for the Wind Band (Scott, 2001).

To this end, the ABA created “the first competition for band music composition in America” (Scott, 2001). The ABA describes the award as “the most prestigious award” in the field of band music composition (Scott, 2001). The ABA/Ostwald Award was presented for the first time in 1956 to J. Clifton Williams for his composition, *Fanfare and Allegro*. Other composers who have been awarded this prize included Robert Jager, Fisher Tull, Roger Nixon, James Barnes, David Holsinger, James Curnow, Dana Wilson, Timothy Mahr, Ron Nelson, Anthony Iannaccone, Dan Welcher, and Donald Grantham. Grantham, on whose work this paper will focus, won the award in 1999 for *Fantasy Variations* and again in 2000 for *Southern Harmony* (Scott, 2001).

Another group founded for the promotion of bands and band music was formed in 1960. The National Band Association was established

for the purpose of promoting the musical and educational significance of bands and is dedicated to the attainment of a high level of excellence for band and band music (NBA, 2001).

In 1977 the National Band Association created the William D. Revelli Memorial Band Composition Contest to award merit to deserving composers. Winners include David Gillingham, Arthur Gottschalk, Michael Colgrass, Martin Mailman, Mark Camphouse, Ron Nelson, and Donald Grantham (Tapia 1997, 2). Grantham, again, has been the recipient three times. *Bum's Rush* took First Place in 1995, with the same honor

being awarded to *Fantasy Variations* in 1998 and *Southern Harmony* in 1999 (Piquant Press, 2001).

Having received two of the most prestigious awards for band literature, both more than once, Donald Grantham has established his reputation among band conductors as an outstanding composer of band literature. In addition, Grantham has received the Prix Lili Boulanger, The Nissim ASCAP Orchestral Composition Prize, First Prize in the Concordia Chamber Symphony's Award to American Composers, three awards from the National Opera Association's Biennial Compositional Competition, three awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, and a Guggenheim Fellowship (Piquant Press, 2000). The variety of awards demonstrates the variety of mediums of his compositional range. Band, vocal and orchestral works, opera, vocal and instrumental chamber music, orchestral works, instrumental solos, and transcriptions/arrangements represent the mediums Grantham has chosen for musical expression (Tapia 1997, 3).

Tapia found that Grantham's music has been performed by many outstanding musical organizations and recorded for commercial release (1997,9). Organizations include the orchestras of Cleveland, Dallas, Atlanta, and the American Composers Orchestra. Bands throughout the United States, Asia, Europe, and South America have performed his music with hundreds of presentations documented (Piquant Press, 2001). Piquant Press, Peer-Southern, E.C. Schirmer, Mark Foster, and Warner Brothers Publishers have commercially released his music and recordings have been made available from Klavier, Summit, and Mark labels (Piquant Press, 2001).

Tapia discovered that Grantham's music has received much critical acclaim (1997, 7). In a Citation awarded by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and

Letters his music was praised for its “elegance, sensitivity, lucidity of thought, clarity of expression, and fine lyricism” (Piquant Press, 2001). Terry Austin, the 1995 chairman of the NBA/William D. Revelli Composition Contest committee, wrote, “*Bum’s Rush* is a wonderfully exciting and evocative piece which will undoubtedly receive many performances” (Tapia 1997, 8).

In contrast to the critical acclaim Grantham’s music has received, the number of dissertations, books, and journal articles remains scarce. Only three dissertations have been written on his music, with only one based on his band music. Neither pertinent books nor journal articles exist.

A foundation of studies written on specific band composers was found (Anthony, 1981; Birdwell, 1996; Bruning, 1980; Folio, 1985; Mitchell, 1980; Morris, 1991; Mullins, 1967; Nigg, 1995; Pittman, 1979). Several articles written as conductor’s guides to provide analytical information as well as performance suggestions exist (Garofalo, 1985; The Instrumentalist, 1993; Mitchell, 1987; Mitchell, 1980). Reference books offer information on band works, but none identify any of the band works of Grantham (Miles, 1997; Miles, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

This study examines a selected work by Donald Grantham and presents background information, a structural analysis, and a conductor’s guide for those wishing to perform the work. Performance suggestions are included.

Purpose of the Study

Although the wind music of Donald Grantham has received critical acclaim and awards, only one publication on his wind music exists. The purpose of this study was to

demonstrate the importance of the band music of Donald Grantham through an analysis of one of his award-winning wind works.

Scope and Delimitation

The study focuses on the band work *Fantasy Variations*. The primary sources of data were scores obtained from Piquant Press (the composer's own publishing company) and the version published by Warner Brothers Publications. Commercially available recordings were utilized. Pertinent books, periodicals, dictionaries, computer searches, and the internet were utilized throughout the research process.

The analysis was conducted with the following procedure and is divided in two major sections: 1) background information, 2) form and structure. Specific points regarding the rehearsal and conducting of the work are presented in the *Conducting Guide*.

Background Information

This information centers on the biography of Donald Grantham. Specific details relating to *Fantasy Variations* garnered special notice. Information related to the composition, such as commission, premiere, and dedications, were included.

Instrumentation is listed with attention devoted to instruments not in the customary wind ensemble. Sources from which Grantham borrowed melodic content were explored.

Details are included in regard to publishing information and available commercial recordings.

Form and Structure

Major formal structures were investigated. Thematic materials, phrase structure, melodic continuity, rhythmic similarities, and harmonic analysis were utilized to establish

relationships. In addition, the discussion covers specific ideas related directly to the sub-headings of melodic content, harmonic considerations, rhythmic structures, and aesthetic examples.

Conductor's Guide

Intended to be useful for a conductor considering the performance of this work, the guide offers recommendations for ensemble demands, preparation, rehearsal suggestions, and ideas for inter-related units of instruction.

Definitions

Any unique terms are defined as the term is used.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Searches for related literature were conducted at the Cook Memorial Library on the Hattiesburg campus of the University of Southern Mississippi. Library references and internet databases served as resources for information. Internet databases that were searched include *Music Index*, *MLA*, *Eric*, *RILM*, *Dissertation Abstracts*, *Dissertation & Theses: Full Text*, and *Books in Print*. The University Library Catalogue, *Anna*, was utilized for University holdings. The author's personal holdings provided additional references.

Dissertations

Numerous precedents in the study of wind literature establish a foundation for the study of a single composer's works. Selected dissertations include texts written about the wind literature of Gustav Holst (Mitchell, 1980), John Barnes Chance (Anthony, 1981), Joseph Schwantner (Folio, 1985), Vincent Persichetti (Morris, 1991), and Jacob Druckman (Nigg, 1995). Abstracts of these dissertations were consulted to provide a foundation.

Mitchell's dissertation examined through analysis and comparison all six works for military band by Holst. Examination of the scores in the British Museum and investigations of Holst's contact with military bands formed the basis of his analyses. Compositional changes that took place from first sketches to final copy are explored (Mitchell, 1980).

The five published works of John Barnes Chance form the basis of Anthony's text. *Incantation and Dance* (1962), *Variations on a Korean Folk Song* (1965), *Blue Lake*

Overture (1970), *Elegy* (1971), and *Symphony No. 2* (1971) are analyzed in regard to form, melody, harmony, and rhythm. Also characteristics of orchestration, scoring, and instrumentation are included (Anthony, 1981).

As a student at Eastman School of Music, Folio witnessed firsthand the compositional process of Joseph Schwantner, then a professor of composition. Her dissertation centered on the compositional tools used in the completion of several of Schwantner's works (Folio, 1985). Her understanding of serial composition plays an important role in the analyses. Other components such as form, melody, harmony, and serial contents were also examined.

The band works of Vincent Persichetti are analyzed in Morris' text. Biographical information on the composer was the primary focus. The compositional process was explored, but in-depth analyses of the works were not done. Morris' purpose is to provide additional information about the works to aid in future study (Morris, 1991).

Four band works were comparatively analyzed in order to provide overall conclusions on the compositional style of Jacob Druckman. Changes in his style provided the foundation of the comparison. The four works analyzed are *Engram* (1982), *Paean* (1986), *In Memoriam Vincent Persichetti* (1982), and *With Bells On* (1993) (Nigg, 1995).

Other investigations compared the works of one composer to those of other composers. An establishment of compositional histories and analyses were included before the authors' conclusions. These authors include Mullins (1967), Pittman (1979), Bruning (1980), and Birdwell (1996).

Mullins wrote about three band symphonies written by American composers: Gould, Persichetti, and Giannini. In his introduction, Mullins established a foundation for

study with a brief history of band literature and related studies. He cited three dissertations that were recent at the time. These texts proved outdated for the present study. The analyses, however, of the band symphonies presented a useful model.

Mullins analyzed each symphony within a specific format. He presented a short introduction with historical and instrumental data about the work and followed this with a phrase-by-phrase discussion of melodic events and form. A “stylistic characteristics” section followed. Within each subsection, Mullins offered his interpretation of the following general areas: melodic structure, harmonic structure and texture, rhythmic structure, and instrumentation. The latter section discusses specific solo and sectional challenges.

Mullins applied the same method of the analyses to his overall conclusions. Within his format, he also added another section: aesthetic characteristics. He covered any comparisons that could not be included elsewhere in this section.

Pittman’s treatise analyzed and compared what is considered by some as cornerstones of band literature: Holst’s *First Suite in E-flat* (1909), Grainger’s *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937), and Williams’ *Folk Song Suite* (1923). Each work was presented separately with discussion of the composer’s biographical background, analysis, and summative overview. Following, the author draws conclusions in the areas of form, melody, harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation.

Bruning’s objective was “to provide a handbook of analytical commentary on conducting, interpretation, and rehearsal problems which appear in seven significant works for band” (Bruning, 1980). These works included the *Sinfonietta* (1961) by Dahl, *Symphony No. 3 for Band* (1958) by Giannini, *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937) by Grainger,

Symphony in B-flat (1951) by Hindemith, *Symphony for Band* (1956) by Persichetti, *La Fiesta Mexicana* (1949) by Reed, and *Variations, opus 43a* (1943) by Schoenberg. The author presented his own analyses of the works. The results of a questionnaire were also presented. Bruning questioned seventy-five high school band directors about their experience with the selected works. Suggestions for rehearsal problems and solutions, views on interpretation, and conducting were extracted from the resultant data.

The Australian composer David Stanhope has published several band works based on folksong. In his dissertation, Birdwell examines Stanhope's *Folk Songs for Band* with regards to English folk song tradition as established by such composers as Grainger and Vaughan Williams. A detailed analysis of the Stanhope's compositional style with structural, harmonic, and melodic considerations with special attention to his orchestration qualities constituted the main emphasis of the text (Birdwell, 1996).

Searches located three dissertations about the music of Grantham. Burnett's (1987) discussion of Grantham's Choral Cycles and Sanders' (1992) approaches to modern string technique proved unrelated to Grantham's wind literature. Most of Burnett's text is devoted to choral specific topics like poetry, analysis in regards to text, and performance practice. However, a useful biography of Grantham and some discussion of harmonic vocabulary are included in Burnett's text. A short biography and a very detailed discussion of violoncello string technique from Grantham's *Caprichos II* (1979). The third dissertation, by Tapia, provided an analysis and performance guide for Grantham's *Bum's Rush* (1997).

Tapia stated that his purpose in analyzing *Bum's Rush* was to place the work in historical perspective (1997, 1). He further established a foundation for Grantham's

worthiness of study. Chapters one and two were devoted to a detailed biography, plus both musical and literary influences on the composer. The gangster novels of Raymond Chandler inspired Grantham throughout the composition of *Bum's Rush*. Raymond Chandler wrote gritty detective novels such as *The Big Sleep* (1939) and movie screenplays like *The Blue Dahlia* (1946). Grantham incorporated musical motives that represented slang used by Chandler. (Tapia 1997, 12) An orchestral chamber work, *Fantasy on Mr. Hyde's Song* (1992), and a brass quintet piece, *Bouncer* (1991), were also included to complete a picture of Grantham's compositional style in the period when *Bum's Rush* was completed.

Chapter three contained a detailed analysis of *Bum's Rush* that included discussions of form, jazz-like rhythms, metrical formations, tonality, and an outline of major music events. Tapia offered a suggestion for correct performance, especially of the jazz rhythms. Harmonic analysis emphasized Grantham's use of the octatonic scale and related modes. The octatonic scale is composed of eight pitches of alternating whole and half steps. From this scale three modes can be derived. Grantham incorporated all three of the modes in his harmonic structures. Specific harmonic and rhythmic ideas called "punctuated harmonies" (Grantham's own term) were discussed with appropriate examples. "Punctuated harmonies" involve the accompanying parts moving in strict parallel rhythm with the melody. The musical event chart and accompanying descriptions describe the inner workings of the composition in detail.

Chapter four discussed such topics as instrumentation and ideas for valuable rehearsals and effective performance of *Bum's Rush*. Chapter five contained the transcript

of an interview between Tapia and the composer. A complete list of Grantham's compositions is included as Appendix A and is followed by a selected bibliography.

Bum's Rush was premiered and written for the Bands of the University of Texas at Austin, where Grantham served as a composition professor. Tapia, a student at the University of Texas at Austin, had direct experience with the composer and the premiering band. His observations and questions proved to be an important source.

Periodicals

Journal articles were found that presented analyses or performance suggestions for wind literature. No articles were found regarding Grantham. In the *Journal of Band Research*, Goza (1987) contributed "Lincolnshire Posy: A Personal View" that contains information about the work and background related to performance. Mitchell (1982 and 1987) wrote about the historical background of several Gustav Holst's compositions, *A Moorside Suite* (1928), *Suite in E-flat* (1909), and *Suite in F* (1922). Similar articles about the two Holst Suites for Band, written by Udell (1982) and Garafolo (1985), were found in the *Music Educators Journal*.

Several journal articles that present analyses of band literature were printed in *The Instrumentalist* magazine. Forty-three articles were bound as part of the magazine's Conductor's Anthology (*The Instrumentalist*, 1993). The mainstays of the band repertoire provide the focus of these articles. Such works as *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937) by Grainger, *Music for Prague 1968* (1969) by Husa, both *Holst Suites* for band, *Toccata Marziale* (1924) by Vaughan Williams, *Sinfonietta for Concert Band* (1961) by Dahl, *Symphony in B-flat* (1951) by Hindemith, and *Variants on a Medieval Tune* (1963) by Dello Joio were

discussed. These “interpretive analyses” provide brief, concise, information on form, harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic structures. They were written by such band authorities as Frederick Fennell, Harry Begian, Fisher Tull, Keith Bryon, Claude T. Smith, and Barry Kopetz (*The Instrumentalist*, 1993).

Frederick Fennell, who wrote sixteen of these articles, provides a template for the analysis of band literature. For example, when he wrote about Grainger’s *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937), he began by discussing the collection of folksongs, and then described Grainger’s process of composition. He then discussed the inaccuracies of the original condensed score, and expressed a need for a revised full score. (Fennell later edited and published a complete, edited full score.) Fennel discussed each movement following the same pattern. He explained the meaning of each folk song and then the conducting and performance challenges. In the short written sections, Fennell provided a large amount of information regarding form, and harmonic, melodic, and aesthetic qualities. Meters and time signatures with suggestions for metronome markings were included.

Books

As of this writing no books on Donald Grantham’s wind music have been written. One resource guide provides examples of analysis and presentation. *Teaching Music through Performance in Band, Volume One* was written by a collective group of authors and edited by Richard Miles (1997). Miles collected information on one hundred band works from this group. The selection was based on the consensus of the authors concerning which are the most popular band works. A specific outline covering information on the composer, background compositional information, historical perspective of the work, technical considerations, stylistic considerations, form and

structure, suggested listening, and additional reference sources is presented for each work. Two additional volumes have been published: volume two in 1998 and volume three in 1999.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

The primary sources of data were obtained from the composer's publication firm, Piquant Press, and from the Warner Brother's Publication's score. Additional resources were found at the Cook Memorial Library on the Hattiesburg campus of the University of Southern Mississippi and in the personal library of the author. These include pertinent books, periodicals, dictionaries, computer searches, and internet resources. Conductors with performance experience were consulted.

Several books were discovered that provided foundations for definitions, compositional techniques, and typical instrumental writing. Kent Kennan wrote, with Donald Grantham named as co-author in the third and fourth editions, *The Technique of Orchestration* (1990). In it, strings, winds, and percussion instruments are discussed in regard to tone production, intonation tendencies, and normal ranges. Later chapters are devoted to combining instruments in a variety of ways. For this study Grantham and Kennan's book provide a foundation for defining ranges and instrumentation as usual or unusual.

Essential information about twentieth-century harmony is found in Vincent Persichetti's textbook, *Twentieth Century Harmony* (1961). Altered tertian harmony, quartal harmony, polychords and polytonality, and non-traditional scales are discussed. Grantham incorporates many of these techniques in his music. Definitions obtained in Persichetti's text provided were helpful.

A presentation of modern compositional techniques is found in *Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure* by Bryan R. Simms (1996). His explanations are based on the history of composers that originated or pioneered the techniques.

The analysis of Grantham's work by the present author follow an outline that is divided into three major sections: background information, form, and stylistic considerations.

Background Information

Specific points from Grantham's biography that relate to the work were explored. The history of the composition was examined through commission information, the composer's influences, the premiere, regular and unusual instrumentation, and origins of borrowed melodic content, publisher of score and parts, and available commercial recordings.

Form and Structure

Major formal structures were investigated through the identification of phrase structure, melodic continuity, harmonic tonal centers, and rhythmic motives. To support the major formal ideas, major musical events were outlined. An example of a major musical event would include a major solo or section soli. Stylistic considerations incorporating unique items, or points of interest, were discussed when not included in the previous section. As the form was discussed, ideas related to melodic content, harmonic considerations, rhythmical structures, and thematic sources were also presented.

Conductor's Guide

As a resource for the conductor, this section covered unusual orchestrations and instrumentation, timbre combinations, and passages of exceptional technical and range

demands. Also, suggestions for effective rehearsal organization and related topics that could be integrated into the band's rehearsal plans were given.

CHAPTER IV

BIOGRAPHY AND THE “BLUE LULLABY” PRELUDE

Biography

Donald Grantham

Donald Grantham was born in Duncan, Oklahoma in 1947. His home had a musical environment, featuring amateur performances by his father and mother. His primary instruments were the piano and trumpet. His mother was his first piano teacher, but he drifted toward the trumpet having heard his father perform on this instrument frequently and because it is a more social instrument with performing with other musicians. The trumpet also allowed him to experience different styles. Seeing how his part fit into the whole spawned his interest in composition. During high school, he began writing compositions and arrangements for brass ensemble. At this point, he realized that he needed piano skills (Burnette 1987, 6).

Grantham found Mary Helen Wade to teach him piano. Mrs. Wade first introduced the young composer to the *Preludes* of George Gershwin. On the recommendation of Mrs. Wade, he began the study of composition first, with local college professor, Dr. Ralph Lewis, and later with Kent Hughes (Tapia 1997, 4). Through his lessons, Grantham received a copy of an earlier edition of *The Technique of Orchestration* by Kent Kennan (1990). Grantham admits this book helped in his understanding the instruments for which he was writing (Burnette 1987, 7).

After high school, he began his studies at the University of Oklahoma at Norman. In 1970 he earned a degree in composition there having studied with Charles Hoag and Spencer Norton. After graduation he entered the graduate school at the University of

Southern California. During his time there he served as a teaching assistant whose duties were first- and second-year music theory, aural skills, keyboard harmony, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century counterpoint, and form and analysis. He was afforded the opportunity to extend his stay to five years, which allowed him to work with Ramiro Cortés, Robert Linn, and Halsey Stevens. In 1973 and 1974 Grantham was awarded the Walter Damrosch Scholarship, which gave him the opportunity to study with Nadia Boulanger in Fountainbleu, France.

Subsequent summers were also spent studying with Nadia Boulanger. Grantham remembers that Boulanger's style of teaching often involved cryptic statements, for example, "the great masterworks are discouragingly simple" (Tapia 1997, 5). An example she used was the first movement of the *Symphony No. 5* by Beethoven. Grantham quoted Boulanger as saying, "A good composer with solid technique is able to do something with anything" (Burnette 1987, 7). Undoubtedly, Boulanger had a great influence on Grantham and continues to inspire him today. One can suppose that the selection of the *Prelude II* for a variation form relates to both the simple nature of the work and Boulanger's concept of a good composer with the simple form and texture that creates such an elegant and musical work.

Before completing his doctoral studies, Grantham accepted a professorship at the University of Texas at Austin, where he still teaches as Professor of Composition. In 1980 he completed his Doctor of Musical Arts Degree at the University of Southern California (Tapia 1997, 5).

Awards won by Grantham include: the Prix Lili Boulanger for his *Chamber Concerto for Harpsichord and String Quartet* (1974), the Nissim/ASCAP Orchestral

Composition Prize for *El Album de los Duendecitos* (1983), the First Prize in the Concordia Chamber Symphony's Award to American Composers for *Fantasy on Mr. Hyde's Song* (1992), the first prize in the National Opera's Biennial Composition Contest for his opera, *The Boor* (1988), three first prize awards from the National Band Association /William D. Revelli Competition for *Bum's Rush* (1993), *Fantasy Variations* (1997), and *Southern Harmony* (1998), and two first prizes in the American Bandmasters Association/Ostwald Band Competition for *Fantasy Variations* (1997) and *Southern Harmony* (1998).

George Gershwin

George Gershwin (whose *Prelude II* provides the source material for Grantham's work) was born on September 26, 1898, to parents who were from Russian Jewish immigrants. Gershwin dreamed of becoming a concert pianist, but his first professional work was in the area of Tin Pan Alley in New York City. In the early 20th century, Tin Pan Alley was the central location of the sheet music business. It received its nickname from the constant pounding of dozens of pianos, similar to the banging of pans in the kitchen (Greenberg 1998, 25). Beginning as a piano "pounder" for Jermone H. Remick & Co., his job entailed spending up to ten hours a day selling Remick's publications. He would be required to play any tune from sight, in any key, for a constant parade of vocalists, theater managers, bandleaders, and vaudeville entertainers. He used his own charm and enthusiasm to sell as much music as he could (Greenberg 1998, 25). He eventually recorded and arranged piano rolls. His fame began with the commercial success of *Rialto Ripples* (1917) and with his first national wildly popular song, *Swanee*

(1919). From 1919 he began to write songs for musicals, many were performed in musical comedies of Broadway.

During 1920-24, he wrote the scores for *George White's Scandals*, an attempt by White to capitalize on the Ziegfeld's *Follies* success. A new revue was written for each of the year's productions. In 1924, George and Ira Gershwin collaborated to write *Lady, Be Good*. The standards, "Fascinating Rhythm" and "Lady, Be Good", are from this show. The partnership produced twelve more Broadway successes including *Funny Face* (1927), *Girl Crazy* (1930), and *Of Thee I Sing* (1931). *Of Thee I Sing* was the first musical comedy to win a Pulitzer Prize.

Although Gershwin spent the majority of his time writing and performing popular tunes, he was aware of the classical music world and the influence each genre had for the other. Upon hearing George practicing a "Prelude and Fugue" from Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier*, a fellow piano "pounder" asked George if he was "studying to be a great concert pianist." The reply was that he was practicing "to become a great popular music composer" (Greenberg 1998, 121). Therefore, Gershwin understood the relation between the popular and classical worlds thus sowing the seeds of his classical composition while he worked in Tin Pan Alley.

Gershwin crossed into the classical world with the premiere of *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1924. Seven more classical works followed including *Piano Concerto in F* (1925), *An American In Paris* (1928), *Cuban Overture* (1932), *Variations on "I Got Rhythm"* (1934), *Porgy and Bess* (1935), and *Catfish Row* (a suite based on *Porgy and Bess*, 1936).

Gershwin was influenced by the French composers of the early twentieth century, namely Ravel and Debussy. Traveling to Paris, he met his idols and attempted to arrange composition lessons with Ravel and Nadia Boulanger (who later taught Donald Grantham). Both Ravel and Boulanger encouraged Gershwin in that they implied that he had already developed a unique voice (Schwartz 1973, 128). Reportedly, after hearing how much money Gershwin earned, Ravel replied, “Why would you want to be a second-rate Ravel when you are a first-rate Gershwin?” (Greenberg 1998, 140). Other influences included Berg, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Milhaud, and Schoenberg. Also, Gershwin expressed interest in studying with other composers including Edgard Varèse, Ernest Bloch, Arnold Schoenberg, and Ernst Toch (Schwartz 1973, 54).

In 1937, Gershwin began to complain of blinding headaches and the recurring smell of burning rubber. He collapsed in Hollywood, California while composing the score for *The Goldwyn Follies*, a movie to be produced by Samuel Goldwyn. Gershwin had developed a cystic malignant brain tumor. He died July 11, 1937 at the age of 38, following surgery. He is buried in the Westchester Hills Cemetery in Hastings-on-the-Hudson, New York.

Gershwin’s estate continues to earn royalties on his many works. Many accolades followed, including the naming of a Broadway theater, his introduction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame (1970), and an Oscar nomination in 1938. Many of the popular songs written by the Gershwin have become standards in the American song repertoire. In 2007, paying tribute to this substantial contribution to our culture through song, the Library of Congress named an award after George and Ira Gershwin. The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song “celebrates the work of an artist whose career

reflects lifetime achievement in promoting song as a vehicle of musical expression and cultural understanding” (Library of Congress, 2008). Paul Simon was the first recipient.

Prelude II, “Blue Lullaby”

Gershwin spoke of composing a set of 24 études for piano having been inspired by Chopin’s set of preludes, exploring all major and minor keys; the set was the be named *The Melting Pot* (Greenberg 1998, 156). In 1927, only three preludes, all dedicated to William Daly, were published. The first and third preludes are fast, use exuberant Spanish bass rhythms, and are marked *Allegro ben ritmato e deciso*. The second, marked *Andante con moto e poco rubato*, is slow and has definite blue shading (Tyranny, 2003). His preference for the *ABA* structure is not only evident in the preludes individually, but can be applied to the three if viewed as a set (Zizzo, 1999). The original manuscripts for the first preludes are lost—only the edited first editions remain.

Prelude II, 61 measures long, incorporates a basic *ABA* form (Table 4-1). Both *A* sections are in c-sharp minor while the *B* section is in F sharp major. The thematic material of the *A* section is 12 measures long. These 12 measures are repeated, with a few measures of the introduction and the addition of an added parallel octave of the melody. The *B* section mimics the 12-measure phrase of the *A* material followed by a return to c sharp minor and the *A* theme. In *A'*, the thematic material is not repeated, though some embellishments occur. A codetta involves the c sharp minor chord arpeggiated, containing an added second, with a concluding bass c sharp.

Table 4-1: Form of *Prelude II*, “*Blue Lullaby*”

| A | m. 1-30 | c-sharp minor | |
|-----------|---|--|--|
| | m. 1-4 m. 6-16 m. 17-18 m. 19-30 | Introduction Period 1 Introduction Repeat Period 1 Repeat | Walking Bass Three contrasting phrases Walking Bass Added parallel octave of melody |
| B | m. 31-44 | F-sharp major | |
| | m. 31-44 | Period 2 | “Strumming” Banjo in upper voice Optional hand switch |
| A’ | m. 45-61 | c-sharp minor | |
| | m. 45-46 m. 47-58 m. 59-61 | Introduction return Period 1 Codetta | Return of main theme with variation Arpeggiated c-sharp minor chord |

The melody works within a special blues scale that has similarity to a mixolydian mode (Tyranny, 2003). Alternating third intervals in the melody create a “rocking” for the lullaby. The melody revolves around the 7th step of this scale. The steady bass searches for the neutral blues third that can only be approximated on the keyboard (Tyranny, 2003). Schwartz writes that this particular emphasis on the third has a Jewish influence that is evident in other works by Jewish composers, not just Gershwin (Schwartz 1973, 322).

Even before Grantham’s work, *Prelude II* lent itself to a variety of transcriptions. Heifetz used his arrangements for violin and piano as encores. A version for two pianos was arranged by Irwin Kostal and recorded by the Labèque Sisters. Dave Grusin arranged it for a collection of instruments including clarinet, keyboard, bass guitar, string bass, and

drums creating a “world of colour in an almost ‘funky’ style” (Greenberg 1998, 157).

Grantham says in the score for *Fantasy Variations* that “even as severe a composer as Arnold Schoenberg found it intriguing enough to orchestrate.”

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS

Composition Origins and Details

Gershwin's *Prelude II for Piano* holds a special place in Grantham's musical life. He includes an explanation in the forward of the printed score for *Fantasy Variations on George Gershwin's Prelude II for Piano* (1998).

Gershwin's *Prelude II for Piano* is the second prelude in a set of three composed in 1936 – his only work for solo piano. The set has been popular with performers and audiences since its first appearance, and even as severe a composer as Arnold Schoenberg found it intriguing enough to orchestrate. My attraction to the work is personal because it was the first piece by an American composer I learned as a piano student.

Grantham's treatment of Gershwin's composition begins with a version written for two pianos commissioned by William Race and Susan Race Groves. It is logical that Grantham would select his first piano work by an American composer as a source for variations for two pianos. The original formed the outline of the orchestrated version for band. A consortium organized by the University of Texas at Austin Director of Bands, Dr. Jerry Junkin, commissioned the band work. The consortium members included The University of Texas at Austin, The University of Oklahoma and its Phi Mu Alpha chapter, The University of Nebraska, The University of Illinois, The University of Florida, and Michigan State University. The University of Texas at Austin Wind Ensemble, conducted by Jerry Junkin performed the World Premiere at Carnegie Hall in New York on February 17, 1998.

Grantham's own publishing company, Piquant Press, originally published the music and offered the work as a rental. Warner Brothers has released a published score as part of the *Donald Hunsberger Wind Library* series. The Warner Brothers score is used for reference in this analysis. The instrumentation required for performance appears as follows (Table 5-1).

Table 5-1: Instrumentation for *Fantasy Variations*

| Winds | Percussion |
|---|--------------------------|
| C Piccolo (doubling C Flute 3) | Timpani |
| 1 st and 2 nd C Flute | Snare Drum |
| 1 st and 2 nd Oboe | Bass Drum |
| English Horn | Crash Cymbals |
| E-flat Clarinet | Suspended Cymbals |
| 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd B-flat Clarinet | Hi-Hat Cymbal |
| B-flat Bass Clarinet | Xylophone |
| BB-flat Contrabass Clarinet | Marimba |
| 1 st and 2 nd Bassoon | Orchestral Bells |
| Contrabassoon | Vibraphone |
| B-flat Soprano Saxophone | Tom-toms |
| E-flat Alto Saxophone | Triangle |
| B-flat Tenor Saxophone | Slapstick |
| E-flat Baritone Saxophone | Tambourine |
| 4 Horn in F | Wood Block |
| 4 Trumpets in C | Trap Set |
| 1 st and 2 nd Tenor Trombone | Tam-tam |
| 3 rd and 4 th Bass Trombone | Piano (doubling Celesta) |
| Euphonium | |
| Tuba | |
| Double Bass | |

This instrumentation follows standard instrumentation for modern wind ensemble with the following exceptions: a soprano saxophone and C trumpets are specified.

Typical scores call for four trombones, three tenor trombones and one bass trombone. But

this score specifies the 3rd and 4th parts are for bass trombone. The percussion writing is complex (shared by 5 parts) and all instruments are standard. Other additions include a double bass and piano (doubling celesta).

Form and Structure

The composer indicates the quite straightforward formal structure of the work throughout the score. Each individual variation is numbered. Some variations are independent, while others contain similar ideas or transitionally link larger sections. However, the most interesting aspect of the thematic variation technique belongs to the treatment of the original source material, the Gershwin *Prelude II*. In a traditional theme and variation, the theme is presented followed by successive by less recognizable variations. Each breaks the thematic and stylistic content into smaller and smaller pieces. This, in effect, progressively conceals the original material. Grantham begins with the thematic material obscurely written, and then gradually rebuilds that material to reveal the original themes. The variations borrow from each of the *Prelude's* major sections. From the work's ternary form, the A and B thematic groups encompass the source material for the variations (Examples 5-1 and 5-2). Grantham includes this note within the score:

In *Fantasy Variations*, both of the “big tunes” in the piece are fully exploited, but they do not appear in a recognizable form until near the end. The work begins with much more obscure fragments drawn from the introduction, accompanimental figures, transitions, cadences, and so forth. These eventually give way to more familiar motives derived from the themes themselves. All of these elements are gradually assembled over the last half of the piece until the themes finally appear in more or less their original form.

Example 5-1: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, A section, main theme (measures 4-15)

Example 5-2: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, B section, main theme (measures 31-44)

The work begins with an Introduction, moves through 20 variations, and finishes with a small coda. Within the variations, another formal structure appears. The first 8 variations form an A section, followed by 4 variations that complete a B section. The remaining 8 variations mimic the first section and comprise A'. Working within the variation form, the overall ternary structure is divided into individual ternary forms within each large section. Each of these are explored through the detailed analysis of the work.

In *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band, Volume III*, Grantham provides the skeletal outline of the work. Within this outline, he provides the list of 9 composer-identified elements that are used as material for variation. Grantham cites both melodic and accompaniment elements with 5 elements derived from the A section and 4 from the B. During analysis; thematic material is referenced with the number listed in Examples 5-3 through 5-11. These items are presented in the same key as the original version for two pianos. Through the course of the analysis as these elements appear, the number will identify the particular element. Motive 1 contains sections from the A theme (Example 5-3).

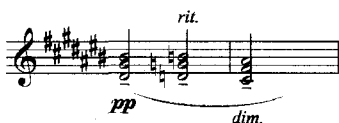
Example 5-3: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, motive 1



(Miles 2000, 668)

The second composer-identified motive comes from the right hand at the conclusion of the B section (Example 5-4).

Example 5-4: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, motive 2



(Miles 2000, 668)

In the same location as motive 2, motive 3 presents from the left hand at the conclusion of the B section (Example 5-5).

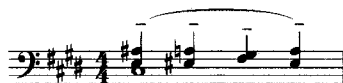
Example 5-5: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, motive 3



(Miles 2000, 668)

Motive 4 derives from an accompaniment figure in the close of the A section (Example 5-6).

Example 5-6: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, motive 4



(Miles, 2000, 668)

The first two measures of the main B section theme forms motive 5 (Example 5-7).

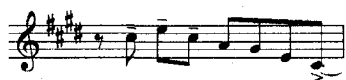
Example 5-7: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, motive 5



(Miles 2000, 668)

Motive 6 uses the eight-note passage from the last part of the A theme (Example 5-8).

Example 5-8: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, motive 6



(Miles 2000, 669)

Another fragment of the A theme forms motive 7 (Example 5-9).

Example 5-9: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, motive 7



(Miles 2000, 669)

Grantham utilizes a measure of the B theme for motive 8 (Example 5-10).

Example 5-10: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, motive 8



(Miles 2000, 669)

The final motive features the walking bass line heard in the introduction and accompaniment of the A theme (Example 5-11).

Example 5-11: Gershwin, *Prelude II*, motive 9



(Miles 2000, 669)

While incorporating these motives, Grantham often changes the nature of the original. For instance, the tempos of the original and the variations contrast. Gershwin's *Prelude II* follows an ABA form, slow-fast-slow. Grantham's ternary form is fast-slow-fast. Often, a tempo helps mask the motives even farther from the original. As stated in his quote from the score, Grantham's goal is to conceal the original motives until near the end of the work.

Overall Structure

Grantham outlines the form in this grid quoted from the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* article (Table 5-2).

Table 5-2: Overall Form of *Fantasy Variations*

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|------|------|-------|-------|------|
| | A | | | | | | | | | |
| Intro. | | Var. | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | |
| | | a ____ | b ____ | a' ____ | | | | Fugue | ____ | |
| | B | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Var. | | | | | | | | |
| | | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | | | | | |
| | | a ____ | b ____ | a' ____ | Codetta | | | | | |
| | A' | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Var. | | | | | | | | |
| | | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | |
| | | Intro. | a ____ | b ____ | a' ____ | ____ | Th 1 | Th 2 | Canon | Coda |

(Miles 2000, 669)

The balance of A to A' can be emphasized in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3: Balance of Sections, *Fantasy Variations*

| A | B | A' |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Intro | aba, codetta | Intro |
| 7 variations | | 7 variations |
| Fugue | | Canon/coda |

In addition to the small a-b-a of variation 1, 2, and 3, another level of ternary form exists. Within the first large group A, another ABA form based on length and tonal center appears (Table 5-4).

Table 5-4: Ternary Form within A section.

| | A | B | A' |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| Variation # | 1-4 | 5-7 | 8 (fugue) |
| Length | 64 measures | 63 measures | 64 measures |
| Key | c minor | Unstable/G major | c minor |

The overall structure and manipulation of form (the balance of repetition to variety) proves the mastery of the composer. The structure allows for order without

impeding the flow of the music. This form also facilitates a transfer of knowledge in rehearsal to expand the level of comprehension.

Introduction, measures 1-16.

The introduction in the first 16 measures establishes a 4/4 feel in a fast tempo of quarter note = 138+. In addition, the Italian phrase *Allegro ben ritmato e deciso* underlines Grantham's intent for "lively and very rhythmic and decisive." The duo piano original begins in E, while the band composition begins in E-flat. Grantham keeps the related modulations within the work so that all keys listed are one half step below the duo piano original. The first three melodic fragments from the *Prelude* can be found. The opening chords in the brass resembles motive 2 (Example 5-12). An inversion of this motive takes place in the same voices in measures 4-6.

Example 5-12: Motive 2 (measure 2 with anacrusis)

Motive 1 is hidden in the upper woodwinds and trumpets in measure 6 (Example 5-13).

Example 5-13: Motive 1 (measure 6 with anacrusis)

A fragment of motive 3 is contained in the passages by the piccolo, flutes, oboes, and trumpets in measure 9 (Example 5-14).

Example 5-14: Motive 3 fragment (measure 9 with anacrusis)

Motive 3 is found in many moving eighth note passages in piccolo, flutes, oboe 1, e-flat soprano clarinet, and trumpets (Example 5-15).

Example 5-15: Motive 3 (measure 11 with anacrusis)

The end of the variation is marked by repeated sixteenth note patterns in the last measure.

This motive will reappear at the end of variations 1-3 and in the coda (Example 5-16).

Example 5-16: Sixteenth note pattern (measure 16)

Variation 1, measures 17-32.

Without pause, variation 1 ensues and lasts 16 measures (measures 17-32). An unstable rhythmic environment begins with a switch to 3/4 time followed by alternating 3/8 and 2/4. This sequence of alternating duple and triple is repeated twice in this variation. A modulation to the relative minor of c minor ends at the first downbeat of the variation. Motive 2 is explored in the low brass (Example 5-17).

Example 5-17: Motive 2 (measures 18-20)

The musical score for Example 5-17 consists of three staves: Tuba, Euph., and Tuba. The music is written in bass clef with a 3/8 time signature and a key signature of one flat. Each staff begins with a dynamic marking of *ff sempre*. The notation includes accents and slurs over the notes, indicating a specific rhythmic and melodic motive.

The piano and low reeds elaborate a fragmented and inverted motive 3 (Example 5-18).

The first two eighth-notes of each 3/8 measure double the low brass, presenting motive 2.

Example 5-18: Motive 3 (measures 17-20)

The musical score for Example 5-18 consists of four staves: B. Cl., Cb. Cl., Bsns., and C. Bsn. The music is written in treble clef with a 3/8 time signature and a key signature of one flat. Each staff begins with a dynamic marking of *ff sempre*. The notation includes accents and slurs over the notes, indicating a specific rhythmic and melodic motive.

The large A section begins with this variation and includes all variations until variation 8. In addition, a smaller ternary form within the main A is also labeled. Variation 1 is the A section of this interior ternary arrangement.

Variation 2, measures 33-48.

Beginning in measure 33, variation 2 concludes in measure 48. The key remains c-minor. Changes in textural and timbre outline the transition into variation 2. Instead of changing meters, a stable 2/4-meter moves forward. The prominent piano and timpani, doubled by low reeds, in variation 1 now rests, leaving only the brass. Fugal entrances through the brass incorporate motive 2 (Example 5-19).

Example 5-19: Motive 2, (measures 33-36)

Borrowing from another Gershwin work, the trumpet solo from *An American in Paris* is inserted with the motive 2 quote. In measure 37 this melody is featured, written through the trumpet parts (Example 5-20).

Example 5-20: Motive 2 (measures 37-40 with anacrusis)

Serving as a contrast, this section can be classified as b in the interior ternary form within the large section A.

Variation 3, measures 49-64.

Measures 49 through 64, variation 3, marks the return of the motives and texture of variation 1. The unstable rhythmic foundation of alternating triple and duple beats reappears (Example 5-21).

Example 5-21: Alternating duple and triple (measures 49-52)

The image displays a musical score for measures 49-52, illustrating alternating duple and triple rhythms. The score is arranged in a system with 14 staves, each labeled with an instrument: Picc., Fls., Obs., E. Hn., E. Cl., B. Cls., B. Cl., Cb. Cl., Bsns., C. Bsn., S. Sax, A. Sax, T. Sax, and B. Sax. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into four measures. Measures 49 and 51 are in a duple meter (2/4), while measures 50 and 52 are in a triple meter (3/4). The woodwind parts (Picc., Fls., Obs., E. Hn., E. Cl., B. Cls., B. Cl., Cb. Cl., C. Bsn., S. Sax, A. Sax, T. Sax, B. Sax) play a melodic line that alternates between duple and triple rhythms. The brass parts (Bsns., C. Bsn., S. Sax, A. Sax, T. Sax, B. Sax) play a rhythmic accompaniment, often in a duple meter. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings like *ff* (fortissimo).

While it is not an exact copy, the variation contains the same motivic elements (motives 2 and 3), now more elaborate and more fully orchestrated. Therefore, this area can be designated the return of the interior a, completing the ternary form within the large section A.

Variation 4, measures 65-80.

This variation continues to present motives in a new way and further introduces a new motive. Under a xylophone solo, the low brass accompaniment presents variation on motive 4 (Example 5-22).

Example 5-22: Motive 4 (measures 65-70)

The musical score for Example 5-22, Motive 4 (measures 65-70), is presented in two systems. Each system contains three staves for Tuba, Euphonium (Euph.), and Trombone (Tbns.). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The Tuba part in the first system has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 67. The Euphonium and Trombone parts in the first system have a triplet of eighth notes in measure 68. The second system continues the motif with further variations in the Tuba, Euphonium, and Trombone parts.

Motive 1 can be seen in the clarinet choir in measures 71-72 (Example 5-23).

Example 5-23: Motive 1 (measures 71-72)

In measure 73, the horns and trumpets are scored in a top-to-bottom pyramid that builds vertically to a resolution invoking the chord activity of motive 2 (Example 5-24).

Example 5-24: Motive 2 (measures 73-77)

The sixteenth note motive that ended the previous sections appears modified in a sixteenth note triplet figure that is stated in the clarinets and moves to the flutes and xylophone (Example 5-25).

Example 5-25: Modified sixteenth pattern (measures 77-80 with anacrusis)

The tonal center remains stable of c minor through this variation. Structurally, variations 4-8 may be considered as a development section within the larger A grouping.

Variation 5, measures 81-96.

Sparsely scored with flutes, piccolo, and percussion, the tonal center becomes unstable as the development in the previous variation becomes extended. Statements of motive 1, including some inversions, permeate the first eight measures (Example 5-26).

Example 5-26: Motive 1 (measures 81-84 with anacrusis)

Expansions of motive 2 appear in the clarinets and saxophones in measures 89-92. An inserted 5/8 measure allows for the completion of the motive 2 expansion while allowing a pick up for the clarinets without overlap. The clarinets use motive 1 fragments as the source material for a modulation to the key of G that moves to the next variation (Example 5-27).

Example 5-27: Motive 1 and 2 (measures 89-97 with anacrusis)

The musical score for Example 5-27, Motive 1 and 2 (measures 89-97 with anacrusis), is presented for a woodwind ensemble. The score is in 3/4 time and features dynamic markings such as *pp*, *p*, *mp*, and *mf*, along with accents and slurs. The instruments included are Flute (Fls.), Oboe (Obs.), English Horn (E. Hn.), E♭ Clarinet (E♭ Cl.), B♭ Clarinet (B♭ Cls.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Bassoon (Bsns.), Soprano Saxophone (S. Sax), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax), Tenor Saxophone (T. Sax), and Bass Saxophone (B. Sax). The score is divided into four measures, with the first measure being an anacrusis. The dynamics and articulation markings are as follows:

- Fls.:** *pp*, *p*, *p*, *mp*
- Obs.:** *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*
- E. Hn.:** *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*
- E♭ Cl.:** *pp*, *p*, *p*, *mp*
- B♭ Cls.:** *pp*, *p*, *p*, *mp*, *pp*
- B. Cl.:** *pp*
- Cb. Cl.:** *pp*
- Bsns.:** *p*, *mp*, *pp*
- S. Sax:** *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*
- A. Sax:** *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*
- T. Sax:** *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*
- B. Sax:** *p*, *mp*, *mf*

The image shows a musical score for Variation 6, measures 97-117. The score is written on 12 staves. The first five staves contain musical notation. The first staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The second staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The third staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The fourth staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The fifth staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The sixth staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The seventh staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The eighth staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The ninth staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The tenth staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The eleventh staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The twelfth staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes various notes, rests, and articulation marks.

Variation 6, measures 97-117.

All of the previous sections display a 16-measure period with 4 or 8 bar phrases. This variation breaks that sequence with 21 measures. The key of G becomes established at the first note of the section. Motive 4 provides the rhythmic drive through the saxophones and double bass (Example 5-28).

Example 5-28: Motive 4 (measures 97-99)

Grantham introduces motive 5, focusing on the first three intervals, by placing the flutes and clarinets above the rhythmic accompaniment (Example 5-29).

Example 5-29: Motive 5 (measures 99-102 with anacrusis)

An extension, with diminishing dynamics, serves as a bridge into the next variation. The indication of development continues though new material has been introduced.

Variation 7, measures 118-142.

The new motive of variation 6, motive 5, provides the sole material for this variation. The composer alternates timbre groupings as he reshapes the opening intervals of motive 5 (Example 5-30).

Example 5-30: Motive 5 (measures 118-119)



These contrasting groups use low brass and reeds against upper woodwinds with, included later in the variation, piano. The 3/4 time signature facilitates the grouping of those opening intervals as a motivic element. Though in a stable G tonal center, the chromatic development continues.

Variation 8, measures 142-205.

Sixty-three measures in length, variation 8 proves to be the most expansive section. Finishing off several sections of development-like activity, this variation underlines the development idea through an elaborate imitative motive 3 (Example 5-31). Grantham uses the motive in a jazz swing as the imitative basis.

Example 5-31: Motive 3 (measures 143-150)

The musical score for Example 5-31 consists of two systems of four staves each. The top system is labeled with instrument parts: S. Sax, A. Sax, T. Sax, and B. Sax. The S. Sax part begins with a *pp* dynamic. The A. Sax part begins with a *pp* dynamic. The T. Sax and B. Sax parts are mostly silent. The bottom system contains four staves of music, with the first staff starting with a *pp* dynamic and the fourth staff ending with a *pp* dynamic. The music is in 6/8 time and features a repeated quarter note-eighth note rhythm. Accents (>) are placed over several notes in the bottom system.

The 6/8 time signature promotes the uneven idea of the long/short of a jazz feel through a repeated quarter note-eighth note rhythm. A tempo change (dotted quarter = 92) and the instruction, *comodo* appears. Note that the Italian word, *comodo*, can be defined as easy, leisurely, and at a convenient pace. While completing this large section A, and the development sub-section, Grantham returns to c-minor, but, interestingly, slows the tempo and introduces a new motive.

While previous variations moved seamlessly from one to another, the end of variation 8 uses first pause. Grantham does this to promote the idea of moving to the end of a large section A. A single horn sustains under a fermata across the section division. Once into variation 9, a two-bar euphonium solo assists with the transition (Example 5-32).

Example 5-32: Motive 3 and Motive 6 (measures 201-207)

Fls. *pp* *accel.*

Obs. *pp*

E. Hn. *pp*

E♭ Cl. *pp*

B♭ Cls. *pp*

B. Cl. *pp*

Cb. Cl. *pp*

Bsns. *pp*

C. Bsn. *pp*

S. Sax *pp*

A. Sax *pp*

T. Sax *pp*

B. Sax *pp*

Hn. *pp* *lunga* *niente*

Euph. *pp*

Variation 9, measures 206-223.

After the euphonium solo utilizing motive 6 (Example 5-32), a modulation from c-minor to a-minor occurs. Marked *Rubato e cantabile*, the tempo requested is quarter note at 63. Layering of bass clarinets (later adding the full clarinet section) alternating with the euphonium forms the basis of the instrumentation for this variation. The flutes enter in the last two measures to link to the next variation. Motive 6 provides the sole source material of the section (Examples 5-33 and 5-34).

Example 5-33: Motive 6 (measures 210-211)

Example 5-34: Motive 6 (measures 222-224)

A 3/4 measure is inserted with a *molto ritardando* indication that demonstrates the extent that Grantham wishes the rubato to be performed. The tonal center shifts to the relative major of C by the end of the variation.

Similar to variations 1-8 encompassing a large structural group, variation 9 begins another large structural grouping. Variations 9-12 can be grouped into a contrasting section called B. Like A, this section displays a ternary form as well. Variation 9 employs 18 measures. The first two measures (euphonium solo) provide a transitory passage and can be considered outside of the variation phrase structure.

Variation 10, measures 234-248.

The final measures of the previous variation make possible a modulation to D major. With a new key, a new motive is also explored. Motive 7 solely provides the material for the woodwind choir (without saxes) to perform a homogenous chorale (Example 5-35).

Example 5-35: Motive 7 (measures 227-231)

The musical score for Motive 7 (measures 227-231) is presented for eight woodwind instruments: Piccolo (Picc.), Flute (Fls.), Oboe (Obs.), English Horn (E. Hn.), E-flat Clarinet (Eb Cl.), B-flat Clarinet (Bb Cls.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), and Bassoon (Bsns.). The score is written in a key signature of two sharps (D major) and a 3/4 time signature. Each instrument part begins with a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, marked with *espr. p*. This is followed by a dynamic marking of *mp dim.* in the second measure, *p* in the third measure, and *pp* in the fourth measure. The melodic lines for the Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, English Horn, E-flat Clarinet, and Bass Clarinet are marked with a slur and a '3' above the notes, indicating a triplet. The B-flat Clarinet and Bassoon parts are marked with a slur and a '3' below the notes, also indicating a triplet. The dynamics *mp dim.*, *p*, and *pp* are consistently applied across all parts in their respective measures.

The celesta provides a new timbre as it plays the accompaniment. Outside of a few measures in variation 4, this variation showcases this new sound color. The vibraphone also provides a sustained pedal. The saxophones enter near the end of the variation and introduce a counterpoint theme. The brass is not included in this variation. Contrasting to the a of variation 9, variation 10 forms as b within the internal ternary form of the large B area. The total length of this variation is 25 measures.

Variation 11, measures 249-275.

With a return to a-minor and material derived from motive 6, variation 11 serves as the recapitulation of variation 9 (Example 5-36, 5-37 and 5-38).

Example 5-36: Motive 6 (measures 249-251)

Example 5-37: Motive 6 (measures 254-256)

Example 5-38: Motive 6 (measures 274-275)

This variation completes the ternary form of a-b-a. More fully instrumentated, the marking of *Con slancio e rubato* demonstrates how the variation is the same, but different. Thinner in vertical doubling, the melodic effect is again exaggerated with the *molto rubato*. The marking *Con slancio*, however, instructs the conductor to play with vehemence alternating with the singing style (*cantabile*) of the original.

This variation lasts 27 measures, but the last 8 measures use motive 6 fragments in a decaying echo fashion. As with the exposition, the modulation to the relative major also occurs.

Variation 12, measures 276-293.

In the overall form, this variation serves as a codetta to the ternary form of large section B. The key remains C major as more complete fragments of motive 6 stated over accompaniment sourced by motive 2 (Example 5-39).

Example 5-39: Motive 6 over motive 2 (measures 277-281)

Eighteen measures long, the first 16 measures “wind down” as the large section B comes to an end. A new motive, 8, heralds the end of the section, as well as, foreshadowing the motivic elements of the next variation (Example 5-40).

Example 5-40: Motive 8 (measures 292-293)



At the end of large section A, a new motive was also introduced in the last variation (motive 5) near the change of section. Grantham repeats that treatment here by introducing a new motive before the bridge and utilizing a fermata to outline major sections. The only pauses between variations has occurred between variation 8 (end of A) and variation 12 (end of B).

Variation 13, measures 294-306.

As before, this new large section begins with a change of tempo and timbre. Using fugal entrances while varying the range and instrument, a syncopated section of motive 8 moves quickly around the ensemble in an *alla breve* meter (half note = 88) (Example 5-41). The variation uses a pointillistic technique. From the late 19th century style of painting involving small dots of pure color to compose images, pointillism in music refers to a musical effect where the notes are heard as individual “dots” or sounds rather than as a consecutive, linear progression (Simms 1996, 116).

Example 5-41: Motive 8 (measures 294-297)

The musical score for Example 5-41, Motive 8 (measures 294-297), is presented for a woodwind and percussion ensemble. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Ob. (Oboe):** Measures 294-297, starting with a first ending (1.) in measure 295. Dynamics: *p*.
- E♭ Cl. (E-flat Clarinet):** Measures 294-297, starting with a first ending (1.) in measure 295. Dynamics: *p*.
- Bsn. (Bassoon):** Measures 294-297, starting with a first ending (1.) in measure 295. Dynamics: *p*.
- S. Sax (Saxophone):** Measures 294-297, starting with a first ending (1.) in measure 295. Dynamics: *p*.
- A. Sax (Alto Saxophone):** Measures 294-297, starting with a first ending (1.) in measure 295. Dynamics: *p*.
- C. Tpt. (Cornet):** Measures 294-297, starting with a first ending (1.) in measure 295. Dynamics: *p*.
- Tbn. (Trombone):** Measures 294-297, starting with a first ending (1.) in measure 295. Dynamics: *p*.
- D. Bass (Double Bass):** Measures 294-297, starting with an *arco* marking in measure 295. Dynamics: *p*.
- Xylo. (Xylophone):** Measures 294-297. Dynamics: *pp*.
- Mar. (Maracas):** Measures 294-297. Dynamics: *pp*.

Grantham refers to this an introduction of the ternary form of the large section he called A'. The key remains at C major. In the last measure of the variation, the bassoons and bass clarinets foreshadow the next variation by playing a variation of motive 3. In the same measure, the flutes and clarinets play the motive 8 fragments in octaves signaling the end of the variation (Example 5-42).

Example 5-42: Motive 8 over Motive 3 (measure 306 with anacrusis)

The musical score for Example 5-42 consists of ten staves, each representing a different instrument. The top five staves (Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, English Horn, and E-flat Clarinet) all play Motive 8, which is a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, marked with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The bottom five staves (B-flat Clarinet, B Clarinet, Contrabass Clarinet, Bassoon, and Contrabassoon) play Motive 3, a virtuosic running eighth-note pattern. This pattern starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic, marked with a crescendo (*cresc.*), and reaches a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The saxophone parts are staggered, with the Contrabassoon and Bassoon entering first, followed by the B Clarinet, B-flat Clarinet, and finally the Contrabass Clarinet.

Variation 14, measures 307-319.

Variation 14 incorporates an adaptation of motive 3 in a virtuosic running eighth-note pattern that moves through the saxophones. The first notes of this pattern invoke the intervals of motive 8 (Example 5-43). Of the four parts, only three are playing at one time. The entering and exiting parts dovetail seamlessly. The syncopated figure from variation 13 remains in the variation as a background motif.

Example 5-43: Motive 3 with Motive 8, (measures 307-312)

This musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with 13 staves. The instruments are listed on the left: Picc., Fls., Obs., Eb Cl., Bb Cls., B. Cl., Cb. Cl., Bsns., C. Bsn., S. Sax, A. Sax, T. Sax, and B. Sax. The score is divided into three measures. The Picc., Fls., Obs., Eb Cl., and Bb Cls. staves are mostly silent, with some woodwinds (Fls., Obs., Eb Cl.) playing a short phrase in the third measure marked *mp*. The B. Cl., Cb. Cl., Bsns., and C. Bsn. staves play a rhythmic pattern in the first two measures, marked *mp*. The S. Sax, A. Sax, T. Sax, and B. Sax staves play a melodic line starting in the second measure, marked *mf*. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4.

The image displays a musical score for Example 5-44, consisting of 12 measures across 12 staves. The score is divided into three systems of four staves each. The upper woodwinds, piano, and percussion parts feature Motive 9. The piano part includes dynamic markings: *f dim.*, *mf cresc.*, and *f*. The upper woodwinds and percussion parts feature Motive 9 with *mf* dynamics. The score is in a key signature of two sharps (D major) and a 4/4 time signature.

Motive 9 finds its way in the accompaniment provided by upper woodwinds, piano, and percussion (Example 5-44). At the fast rate of tempo, this variation passes quickly. In addition, this variation is the shortest of all at 12 measures.

Example 5-44: Motive 9 (measure 316-317)

Picc. *mf dim.* *p*

Fls. *mf dim.* *p*

Obs. *mf dim.* *p*

E♭ CL. *mf dim.* *p*

A large, homogenous passage of the first four notes of motive 3 emphasizes the final measure (Example 5-45).

Example 5-45: Motive 3 (measure 318)

B. Cl. *ff sub.*
 Cb. Cl. *ff sub.*
 Bsns. *ff sub.*
 C. Bsn. *ff sub.*
 S. Sax *ff sub.*
 A. Sax *ff sub.*
 T. Sax *ff sub.*
 B. Sax *ff sub.*
 C Tpts. *f sub.*
 Hns. *sub. f*
 Tbns. *sub. f*
 Euph. *f sub.*
 Tuba *f sub.*

In Grantham's design, variation 14 encompasses the a section of the A' grouping interior ternary form. The tonal center remains at C major through this variation.

Variation 15, measures 319-329.

This section's designation is that of b in the interior ternary. It is shorter variation of 11 measures. The tonal center transitions to the relative a-minor. The motive from variation 14 that combined motive 3 and 9 continues with an accentuated quoting of the original motive 3 between statements of the combined theme (Example 5-46).

Example 5-46; Combined Motives 3 and 9 with Original Motive 3 (measures 319-323)

Example 5-46; Combined Motives 3 and 9 with Original Motive 3 (measures 319-323)

The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following instruments and parts:

- E♭ Cl.**: Clarinet in E-flat, measures 319-323.
- B♭ Cls.**: Clarinets in B-flat, measures 319-323. Includes dynamic markings *p sub.* and *f*.
- B. Cl.**: Clarinet in B-flat, measures 319-323. Includes dynamic markings *p sub.* and *f*.
- Cb. Cl.**: Clarinet in C-bass, measures 319-323.
- Bsns.**: Bassoons, measures 319-323.
- C. Bsn.**: Contrabassoon, measures 319-323.
- S. Sax**: Soprano Saxophone, measures 319-323.
- A. Sax**: Alto Saxophone, measures 319-323.
- T. Sax**: Tenor Saxophone, measures 319-323.
- B. Sax**: Baritone Saxophone, measures 319-323.
- C Tpts.**: Trumpets in C, measures 319-323.
- Hns.**: Horns, measures 319-323.
- Tbns.**: Trombones, measures 319-323.
- Euph.**: Euphonium, measures 319-323.
- Tuba**: Tuba, measures 319-323.

The score is written in a key signature of two sharps (D major or F# minor) and a 4/4 time signature. The woodwind parts (Clarinets, Bassoons, Saxophones) feature complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings. The brass parts (Trumpets, Horns, Trombones, Euphonium, Tuba) provide harmonic support and rhythmic accompaniment. The score is divided into three measures, with the final measure (323) showing a strong dynamic shift to *f*.

The musical score on page 68 consists of 14 staves. The first three staves are in the treble clef, and the remaining 11 staves are in the bass clef. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The score is divided into two measures. The first measure contains complex melodic lines in the top three staves, with various note values and slurs. The second measure features more rhythmic and melodic activity, including slurs and accents, across several staves. The bottom staves are mostly empty, with some notes appearing in the final few staves of the second measure.

Toward the end of the variation, syncopated and augmented chords remind the listener of motive 2 (Example 5-47).

Example 5-47: Motive 2 (measure 329)

Variation 16, measures 330-341.

In a copy of the original variation 14, the variation stays at a short 12 measures and modulates back to the relative major of C. The interior ternary form completes as this variation forms the return of the a section (variation 14). Motive 9 (with rhythmic ideas of motive 3) appears throughout the oboes, English horn, clarinets, and saxophones. An arpeggiated figure (“walking bass line”) in the double bass, low reeds, and piano accompanies. The euphonium and tuba double the passage in a fragmented melodic pattern. This section is marked with the indication of “less motion” and “deliberate” and

an indication to swing. The intended feel strives to project a “jam session”. This frenetic activity continues through the next variation as Grantham approaches the climax of the work and the statement of the original themes.

Variation 17, measures 342-353.

The composer lists variation 17 as a continuation of the recapitulation that is variation 16. The full ensemble enters as the eight-note figure, based on motive 9, becomes altered with an eight-note triplet pattern. The quarter note bass line, with euphonium and tuba fragmented line, continues. A sudden change of tempo in the last measure and an imminent change to 4/4 time to signal the listener the importance of the next section.

Variation 18, measures 354-365.

The theme of the original material is finally presented in this variation. Thematic material from the A section of the Gershwin *Prelude II* is orchestrated with additional ornamentation in the upper woodwinds. The piece arrives at this variation in the key of c-minor. After the first 9 measures, a trumpet solo with material from motive 6 begins a *ritardando* leading into the next variation (Example 5-48).

Example 5-48: Motive 6 (measures 363-364)



A fragment of the Gershwin theme that contains motive 1 appears at the end (Example 5-49).

Example 5-49: Motive 1 contained in original fragment (measures 364-365)



Variation 19, measures 366-377.

After the *molto ritardando* in measure 365, this variation states the B material from the Gershwin *Prelude* at a fast rate (quarter note = 144+) and soft dynamic. The tonal center shifts to F major by measure one of this variation. Grantham presents the theme in all of the woodwinds except for the clarinets that have rapid 16th notes. A fragmentation of the melody links the final 2 bars to the next variation.

Variation 20, measures 378-390.

Like the first large group A, Grantham chooses to end the group with a contrapuntal treatment. A fugue was the method of choice in variation 8. Here, in the final variation of A', Grantham terms his technique a canon. The melodic material is stated in four different entrances (Example 5-50). The first entrance occurs on beat 1. Then the second entrance arrives 2 beats later. Interestingly, the third entrance comes but 1 beat later, followed by the fourth entrance another beat later. Therefore, one can infer there are two canons. The first two entrances are two beats apart. The second canon occurs at a one beat interval. This can be supported by examining the original version for two pianos. One canon is for the first piano followed by the second canon for the other piano. A melody derived from Gershwin's B thematic group follows the fugue. This material is from the second phrase of the B theme. Augmented chords stretch the end of this variation for dramatic effect driving the listener to expect a resolution on the downbeat of the next section.

Example 5-50: Motive 5 canon (measures 378-379)

Picc.

Fls.

Obs.

E. Hn.

E♭ Cl.

B♭ Cls.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

Bsns.

C. Bsn.

S. Sax

A. Sax

T. Sax

B. Sax

C Tpts.

Hns.

Tbns.

Euph.

Tuba

D. Bass

Timp.

This variation concludes the large section titled A'. Within this grouping of 8 variations and coda, Grantham outlines an introduction, a ternary form, presents the main thematic groups, and writes a canon.

Coda, measures 391-406.

The coda begins with quiet sixteenths in the clarinets. Grantham leads to the climatic resolution in the last variation. Augmented material from motive 7 begins in the flutes, high double reeds, and saxophones (Example 5-51).

Example 5-51: Motive 7 (measures 392-396 with anacrusis)

The musical score for Motive 7 (measures 392-396 with anacrusis) is presented for a woodwind and saxophone ensemble. The score consists of ten staves, each representing a different instrument: Piccolo (Picc.), Flutes (Fls.), Oboes (Obs.), English Horn (E. Hn.), E-flat Clarinet (E♭ Cl.), Soprano Saxophone (S. Sax), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax), Tenor Saxophone (T. Sax), and Bass Saxophone (B. Sax). The music is written in 3/4 time and features a dynamic progression from piano (*p*) to crescendo (*cresc.*) to mezzo-forte (*mf*). The melodic lines are characterized by sixteenth-note patterns and are often grouped with slurs. The score includes anacrusis for measures 392-396.

The sixteenth-note figure that framed the first variation reappears here in the trumpets and trombones (Example 5-52).

Example 5-52: Sixteenth note figure (measures 398-399)

The musical score for Example 5-52 consists of two staves: C Tpts. (top) and Tbns. (bottom). The music is in 4/4 time and features a sixteenth-note figure. The score begins with a flourish in the low reeds (measures 398-399) and ends with a trill in the upper voices (measures 400-401). The score is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and includes various articulation marks such as accents and slurs.

A two-measure flourish that begins in the low reeds leads to a trill that introduces a brass entrance. In the next to last measure, a fermata tensely holds the upper voices. The resolution arrives after the fermata with a passive ending in the low voices.

CHAPTER VI

CONDUCTING GUIDE

Fantasy Variations requires enormous levels of technical skill and musical ability from the ensemble. Not only are the individual parts difficult, Grantham features almost every instrument in the ensemble in a *solo* or *solì*. For example, in the pointillistic variation 13, all wind instruments except for flute and bass clarinet perform the fragment on which this variation is based. In other variations, piccolo, flute, clarinet, trumpet, xylophone, timpani, piano, and celesta perform solos.

Solos requiring additional mention involve the contrabassoon and euphonium. The contrabassoon, in variation 8, measure 193 through 200, performs a true solo with no accompaniment. Upper woodwinds frame the two phrases with combined bassoons at the end. The contrabassoon, not an instrument usually available in high schools (or some universities), bears the entire burden for this section. The euphonium solo at the beginning of variation 9 actually becomes a duet with another euphonium, therefore demanding two euphonium soloists.

Outside of featured solos, all players must perform independent lines. The *solì* and *tutti* sections demand independent performance skills. For example, the saxophone fugue in variation 8 supports this conclusion. Players must perform as soloists or chamber players. In variation 2, the brass provides another example. While doubling can be seen, each line must be performed independently as part of the composite texture. This technique compounds the difficulty placed on the performers.

Another example of independent performance involves entrances. The best example is found on variation 14 in the saxophones (Example 6-1). The saxophones present a running eighth pattern, but only three lines are playing at once. When the range becomes too high, or too low, the resting saxophone enters. Timing must be exact, as the exiting and entering parts must dovetail. Since this forms a complex situation, the speed and numerous intervallic leaps compound the difficulty.

Example 6-1: Saxophone Quartet (measures 307-312)

The image displays a musical score for a Saxophone Quartet, consisting of two systems of four staves each. The staves are labeled S. Sax, A. Sax, T. Sax, and B. Sax. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first system shows the initial entries of the saxophones, with dynamic markings of *mf*. The second system continues the piece, featuring dynamic markings of *f dim.*, *mf cresc.*, and *f*. The score illustrates the complex interplay of independent entrances and exits, where saxophones enter and leave the running eighth-note pattern as their range becomes too high or too low.

Percussion requirements are soloistic as well. High levels of technique paired with the considerable musical demands make this work a challenge for them. Scored for four players and timpani, the instrumentation can be called standard. However, percussion parts I-IV transition between instruments often multiplying the difficulty. Additional players may be added to ease this problem. Also, conductor involvement in insuring a common sense set-up may relieve some stress. Surveying the score, one can see the isolation of most of the percussion parts. Rarely are two percussionists doubled, for example in measure 64 with timpani and toms, measure 268 with bells and vibraphone. In contrast with traditional band writing, the percussion does not provide a rhythmic background. Grantham composes for these instruments no differently as he does for the wind instruments. This creates wonderful timbres but raises the level of difficulty, as the rhythmic pulse must come from other areas of the ensemble with guidance from the conductor. The full section provides effects at the beginning, end, and before the appearance of the full theme in variation 18. Grantham strictly rations the use of percussion to offer the listener notification of major ideas.

Keyboard instruments used are piano and celesta, with one player performing both. The independent scoring requires an accomplished keyboardist with ensemble skills. Often the keyboardist provides the rhythmical foundation. The celesta in variation 10 serves as an example. If a celesta is unavailable, a synthesizer could be substituted with little loss of effect. The programming of the Gershwin *Prelude II* by the keyboard player would enhance the audience's understanding of *Fantasy Variations*. Considering Grantham chooses to begin with fragments of the motives and the themes do not appear

in full form until close to the end, the original can place the themes in the audience's mind in order to readily recognize the fragments.

For ensembles lacking a double bass, these parts are doubled in other instruments (except in measures 44-47, but this single section could be omitted.) However, the double bass provides timbral and specialty effects. For example, the double bass plays pizzicato in measures 97-108. While the part is doubled in the saxophones, the pizzicato sound would be missing. In light of the blues and jazz feel of some of the movements, the loss of the double bass would be significant.

Other instrumentation aspects to consider include the trumpet parts written in C. Some high schools may face an obstacle in this transposition an unusual one for younger players. Also, the upper trombone parts are written in tenor clef. Again, younger players may find difficulty with reading but will eventually succeed with some out-of-rehearsal preparation. Brass ranges, on the whole, stay below the 6th partial. Exceptions include first trumpet and first trombone reaching to the 9th partial and a high b-flat sustained in the horns. Grantham does require flutter tonguing for the trombones in variation 1 (Example 6-2).

Example 6-2: Flutter tonguing (measures 18-20)



With these demands, sectional rehearsal and extensive individual practice would be the needed by the majority of ensembles. The sections needing the most attention can be surveyed at the first reading. Much time will be devoted to perfecting the range of

articulations and phrasings written. Another concern is the proper execution of the swing style in variations in 16 and 17.

The performer's understanding of the motives and the placement of the motives within each variation are necessary to create proper balance. Playing certain motives relatively louder will make these clearer to the audience. The conductor must clarify these priorities to the performers as well. Roles switch quickly from section to section, or phrase to phrase or even within a phrase. For example, the bass clarinet provides the bass support with bassoons and contrabass clarinet in the woodwind tutti section of variation 20 but provides a countermelody with the alto and tenor saxophone in the full ensemble of variation 11. The conductor's task of making inner lines and motivic relationships evident in the balance scheme is fundamental to the performer's understanding. The audience's perception of the form and structure relies on the audible realization of these concepts.

The work is largely set in major and minor tonalities. While some of the variations (or variation phrases) modulate, these sections have unstable or changing tonalities. Other sections are scored thinly and the tonality may be obscured, but clear tonal ideas are reinforced at structural cadences. Many accidentals appear through the work in chromatic flourishes, minor leading tones, blues inflections, or modulations. The keys employed are those used most often in band compositions.

Grantham uses basic meters for the majority of *Fantasy Variations*. These include 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 6/8. For most variations, meters stay constant through the section. Notable exceptions include variation 1 with an alternating 2/4—3/8—2/4—3/8—2/4 sequence. (The first measure of this variation is in 3/4, but is extended to offer a

conclusion to the introduction.) This sequence is repeated with variation 1 and appears again in variation 3. (Variation 3 serves as the a' section to variation 1's a section.) Variation 5 has an isolated 5/8 measure used to provide some silence between phrases. One 9/8 measure serves a similar purpose in variation 8. An inserted 3/4 measure promotes the *molto ritardando* of variation 9. At the end of variation 20, a 3/2 measure extends the last measure before the coda.

In assessing the overall difficulty of the parts, the meters are much less of a concern than the virtuosic nature of the writing. For the majority of the work, the conductor uses a two pattern for the 2/4, 2/2, and 6/8 meters; however, this simplistic pattern camouflages the conductor's task. Tempos must be accurate. The technical passages would not have the intended glimmer under tempo and would be confusing when taken too rapidly. Several phrases contain a composite melody broken between instruments. Care must be taken to retain consistent tempo. With a changing rhythmic pulse, the ensemble could easily disintegrate. Transitions also pose a hazard. Most variations stream from one to another. Meter and tempo changes must be made instantly. The conductor must be fully prepared to dictate these transitions.

One of the more notable aspects to this work stems from the challenge the composer extends to the performers. *Fantasy Variations* provides considerable work to all members of the ensemble, including the conductor. This challenge provides motivation for all to undertake such a large work. The educational opportunities stemming from rehearsing this work are plentiful. Topics like variation form, ternary form, theme, motive, Gershwin, blues influences in band literature, and compositional

techniques are some of the subjects that can be taught by using *Fantasy Variations* as a pedagogical work.

Grantham has given bands a unique piece that satisfies both ensembles and audiences. The rehearsal process results in a greater knowledge of music while providing a fulfilling venue for performance. In exploring details, the author hopes that this treatise will encourage conductors to program *Fantasy Variations* and to explore this masterwork.

CHAPTER VII
INTERVIEW WITH DONALD GRANTHAM

This chapter contains portions of a phone interview with Donald Grantham that occurred on July 21, 2008. The interview took place after the analysis and conducting guide were completed. Grantham confirmed several of the conclusions made earlier in the text. The author intends this interview to be supportive and informative.

BT: Thank you for spending time with me today. First, would you consider Gershwin as one of your influences?

DG: Yes, I would think so.

BT: What other composers are your favorites or influences?

DG: Well, I would say all of the standards of the twentieth century certainly have: Stravinsky, Bartok, Shostakovich, Britten. Shostakovich and Britten in particular I think I have derived quite a bit of inspiration from.

BT: Do you have a favorite piece?

DG: Well, that is so hard to say! I am very fond of Britten's works especially *Prince of the Pagodas* and *Billy Budd*. In fact I am going to Sante Fe later this week to see that. And Shostakovich, I like his 14th Symphony. I like his *Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues*.

BT: Can you tell me how you became the co-writer of the The Technique of Orchestration with Kent Kennan?

DG: We were office mates. He was on the search committee that hired me here at UT. We taught the same courses and since we were office mates, we talked a lot about the way we taught them. He was looking for someone to collaborate and take over future editions of that book.

BT: You have had the opportunity to study with Nadia Boulanger, Halsey Stevens, amongst others. How do they influence you today?

DG: Halsey Stevens was very influential on my vocal writings. He was very helpful. Nadia Boulanger had much more of general, aesthetic, philosophical kind of an approach in her teaching.

BT: You have quoted Boulanger saying, "A good composer with solid technique is able to do something with anything."

DG: That's right.

BT: Do you think that applies to the way you create with the sometimes small motives you use from the Gershwin?

DG: That is probably true. Like in Variation 13 that uses the half-step and octave leap would be a sample of that. I remember one of the things that she taught me was that very influential ever since. I studied with her in the early seventies.

BT: *Bum's Rush* received the NBA/ William Revelli Composition Award in 1993.

Was this your first work for wind ensemble?

DG: No, my first work was actually a *Concerto for Bass Trombone and Wind Ensemble* that I wrote in 1979 for Donald Knaub. He was the trombone teacher here at UT. I had written a work in high school, too, that had been performed by my high school band. But *Bum's Rush* was the first one in 13 years.

BT: Were you surprised with the response to your work from the band community?

DG: I was. I thought the piece was probably too difficult and demanding to get much play. But it got played quite a bit during the first few months it was around and played by a number high schools and smaller colleges and universities. I was very pleased and gratified that it did as well as it did.

BT: With your continued success with band compositions, have you received many commissions to compose for band?

DG: I have, quite a few.

BT: Is that where the majority of your work is now?

DG: Yes, it is.

BT: I have noticed that most of your scores are written in your own script. Is that how you compose, by hand?

DG: Yes, the earlier pieces I did not know how to use any music notation software. So, yes I composed them by hand and I also copied them out by hand. I guess about 5 or 6 years ago I learned to use Sibelius and I have been using that now for the preparation of my scores. But I still compose with pencil and paper.

BT: Do you use the piano as you compose?

DG: Yes.

BT: The commission by William Race and Susan Race Groves, were you given any parameters for the piano duo work?

DG: No, it was totally up to me what to do. Only a length, they wanted a work between 12-15 minutes.

BT: What drew you to the Gershwin?

DG: It was a piece that I had learned while I was in high school. I liked it quite a bit and it might be something that Susan and Bill would enjoy. I felt like writing a set of variations, so I took it from there.

BT: Do you remember the first time you played the Gershwin? What were your initial thoughts?

DG: I thought it was very attractive, a very clear-cut kind of formal design. That was interesting to me because I was just beginning to write myself round about then.

BT: When you were analyzing the Gershwin for source material, did you perceive it differently as when you played it?

DG: Well, yes because I was approaching from a different angle. Not as a performer but as a composer looking for material that I might be able to use. So, yes very different.

BT: Was there something from the Gershwin that you loved that you tried to capture in your work?

DG: I certainly tried to capture the lyrical qualities that are in the A sections of the piece. I tried to do that in the slow variations in particular. I also tried to expand the kinds of characters that are in it, because there are a lot of very fast, virtuosic, aggressive material in it that is not anywhere in the original.

BT: When composing a band work, do you normally produce a piano score then orchestrate? Or do you orchestrate as you go?

DG: I work in short score, which is what most composers do. It is not really a piano score; it's not playable at the piano but its got everything condensed on 3 or 4 lines. Then I orchestrate from that.

BT: I find it interesting that the composition process and the orchestration were separate. The band version follows the piano duo very faithfully. Did you have any ideas about orchestration as you were composing or were they separate procedures?

DG: Since I did the two piano version first, I wasn't really thinking in terms of orchestrating it at all. I was just thinking in terms of two pianos. Then as soon as I decided to orchestrate it, then I started to think in those terms.

BT: How did the band version come about?

DG: Jerry (Junkin) was planning the Carnegie Hall performance in New York and he asked me to write a piece on pretty short notice. I thought the duo version. It seemed perfect. I gave him the piece and recording of it. He listened to it and thought it was a great idea too.

BT: When you say "short notice", how long did you have to orchestrate?

DG: I think it was just a matter of maybe ten or twelve weeks, plus to produce the parts.

BT: Were there any areas that were idiomatic for the piano that were difficult in the orchestration?

DG: Yes, nothing out of the ordinary. The same kinds of things you would have orchestrating any piano piece: filling out textures and making sure the registers were appropriate for a large ensemble as opposed to a couple of pianos.

BT: Did you map out the form before you began?

DG: I thought very carefully about that. What I actually wanted to do was to not make it just a series of short variations, but to make smaller forms within the twenty

variations and then have the whole thing add up to a larger form. It is modeled on the Brahms *Handel Variations*. Brahms does the same thing there. There are not just independent variations but some of them are joined together to form longer units within the whole set of variations. That is what I did too. The first three variations are an aba form. One of the variations is *fugato*, very long. These are not the kind of variations where all the variations are the same length as the theme, but all different lengths.

BT: How close was the final form as compared to the initial design?

DG: Pretty close. I think I decided I needed one more slow variation in the middle and I did that.

BT: Melodically, did you know what motives you were using in different sections or did you that happen as you progressed?

DG: I had a pretty clear idea of what the instrumentation was going to be for all of the individual variations before I really started it.

BT: Before you began orchestrating, were there any specific places for certain instruments that you had in mind?

DG: I had it all figured out before I started.

BT: So many band pieces have uncreative parts for percussion. They rely mainly on rhythmic drive, where as your percussion writing tends to be more timbral and effects. Is that planned?

DG: I would probably never rely on the percussion to do that [rhythmic drive]. Not that they couldn't. It is, to my thinking, not a very interesting way to use them.

BT: In your writing, there appears to be an effort to spread the challenge to all instruments and showcase each area of the band. Is that a goal for you?

DG: I certainly want to give everybody an interesting part. I always try to do that whether or not they are actually showcased. In that particular piece just because the way it is put together it would be possible for everyone to have a moment to shine.

BT: This piece is very challenging. Have you heard of any high school bands performing the piece?

DG: Yes, several.

BT: What would you like for the performer to draw from your work?

DG: I would hope that players would think that it was worth the effort to learn and that they enjoyed playing the piece that is very important to me. Maybe they learn something from it, maybe about form, maybe about orchestrating.

BT: What is your next big project?

DG: I just received a commission in June for not a real long piece, long enough to write my first band symphony for band. I have been working on it since June and it is almost finished with it in short score. I am working on the coda right now.

BT: Thank you for your time.

DG: Thank you.

Dr. Grantham confirmed several of the author's conclusions. The response Grantham has received from his work has been overwhelmingly positive. Grantham continues to receive many commissions. The majority of his recent compositions have been for the band idiom. In fact, his first band symphony will be premiered soon. Time will prove the importance of Grantham to the band repertoire.

The significance of the original version for two pianos remains true. The understanding how the piece was composed and how the orchestration was a separate process provide insight to the conductor. Another point includes the fact that Grantham placed much importance on the form and motive elements. The foundation of the work was situated on the structure. Also, Grantham intended to create a good part for each player and, by making the piece challenging, spread the difficulty to all parts.

Though the work demands an incredible amount of technical ability, several high school bands have taken the challenge to perform it. This should be encouraging for conductors that are considering programming the work but have reservations. Finally, an interesting fact about the work: this fantastic work was the product of necessity. A short

time period was given for completion and the piano duo version provided the groundwork to complete this masterwork on time.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Donald Grantham's compositional output spans all genres. Performing ensembles from orchestras, chamber groups, vocalists, to bands experience this composer's brilliance. With regard to his band works, Grantham earns the highest recognition from the most notable band organizations and conductors. Not including the first composition written in 1979, all twenty-two band works that followed starting with *Bum's Rush* in 1994 resulted from a commission. Entities from military bands to school districts to university consortiums have sought out Grantham to contribute to the band repertoire. With the full range of band organizations and performing ensembles represented by these commissions, Grantham has secured a place amongst the elite among composers for the band.

Fantasy Variations proves to be an outstanding example of the compositional output of Grantham. The selection of the *Prelude II* brings familiarity to the thematic material, but the composer's technique crafts such a unique setting for the material. With the variations beginning with the motivic material camouflaged, the listener begins the journey without hearing the original themes for the variations. The listener's memory links the motives together as the composer reconstructs the themes. This leads to an additional impact with the climax being the orchestrated source material. The conclusion is a fitting celebration of the Gershwin themes.

A highly crafted piece, the work demonstrates a great deal of skill in regards to form and structure. A ternary form spans the work, but each section maintains an

independent ternary form in itself. The outer sections are nearly the same length with internal similarities like phrase structure and contrapuntal techniques. The use of tonalities and control of modulation also demonstrate the composer's skill. It is evident that Grantham took great care to construct the format in which the music is organized. Even with the work as structured as it is, Grantham's dexterity is demonstrated as an audience responds to the music on an emotional level.

Fantasy Variations provides challenges for all involved with the performance. All players are presented with individual challenges in regards to technique, range, and musicianship. The many solos and section features provide for the feature of individuals and small groups. A cohesive ensemble is required for a successful performance. The performance responsibilities place great demands in respect to tempo maintenance, phrasing, transitions, vertical alignment of technical parts, balance and blend, and intonation. Therefore, performers are tested on an individual, section, and ensemble level.

The greatest challenge falls to the conductor. Through rehearsals, careful attention must be paid to the ensemble's understanding of the motivic relationships, structure, phrasing, tempi, and refinement of performance issues like balance and intonation. Tempos must be exact especially through transitions. With the majority of the work using a two pattern, transitions must be rehearsed thoroughly and consistently. The conductor's responsibility also falls to the understanding of the listener. Balance priorities must be firmly established in order for important motives to be recognized by the audience.

Fantasy Variations provides challenge and reward for all who participate in a performance: the individual performer, the conductor, and the audience. A piece that is worthy of study but also a work that is exhilarating in performance. The piece can also be

used for pedagogical reasons with a band that wished to perform on a higher performance level. In summation, this composition offers many valuable experiences of performance and education to ensembles, performers, conductors, and audiences. It is the desire of this author that this treatise be beneficial in the programming and successful performance of this grand work.

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