APPLICATIONS OF PARTIMENTO TOWARDS PRESENT-DAY

COMPOSITIONAL PRACTICES

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Applications of Partimento Towards Present-Day Compositional Practices by SAMEER ANJUR RAMCHANDRAN

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The technique of partimento developed in eighteenth-century Italy with the purpose of instructing students in improvisation, composition and general musical knowledge. Partimenti took the notational form of a single staff wherein a variety of clef changes could be employed. Within this single staff contained all of the necessary information to produce an entire improvisation or composition for keyboard. Partimenti had a dual purpose of serving as a pedagogical device as well as a tool that composers would use for artistic purposes in their own works. Generally, the tradition of partimento instruction was an oral one. As a result, much of the information on the subject remains unknown. What survives are treatises that provide partimento rules along with the partimenti themselves, but these texts do not provide exact information on how to complete the partimenti.

This dissertation considers ways in which partimento can be used in contemporary musical practices. It traces the history of partimento from its origins in Italy to its development as a significant teaching method used to great effect by a collection of Neapolitan conservatories known as the Neapolitan School. It also places partimento within the greater context of music theory with the aim of anticipating the challenges that modern-day composers may face when attempting to adapt this technique for contemporary purposes. With the help of recent research that has shed some light on this oral tradition, it outlines the manner in which an existing partimento can be used to create a com-

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position. Finally, it studies the use of partimento in *Lost City*, a work of mine for chamber orchestra, and the role that partimento plays in that work as it exists within a larger environment of contemporary modality. *Lost City* undergoes a formal analysis with the purpose of discovering how a modern musical context can change the manner in which eighteenth-century textures derived from partimento are heard, understood and experienced.

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INTRODUCTION

The musical practice of partimento developed in Italy in the late-seventeenth century, particularly in Naples, and continued into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Partimento served as a pedagogical tool for teaching composition, accompaniment, and improvisation, as well as a practical framework for constructing fully realized compositions and improvisatory forms. These improvisatory forms ranged from simple chordal accompaniment of bass lines to more complex textures like toccatas and fugues. Early partimenti were written as bass lines, but they eventually acquired their own distinct form of notation. This notation was characterized by the use of a single staff wherein a variety of clefs could be used to indicate changes in melody, form and texture. The bass lines could be figured or un-figured.

The influence of partimento spread from Italy to all parts of Europe, shaping the musical approach of numerous composers throughout the eighteenth century and beyond. For example, Giovanni Paisiello's appointment to the court of Catherine the Great of Russia resulted in the subsequent publication of his partimenti there in 1782. Other instances of this influence include the French theorist Alexandre-Étienne Charon's publication of Italian partimenti in 1804, whose list of subscribers included Haydn, who himself studied under the esteemed Neapolitan composer Nicola Porpora, Beethoven and others.

¹ Giorgio Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento: History, Theory and Practice,* (New York: Oxford University, 2012) 5.

² Robert Gjerdingen, "Gebrauchs-Formulas," Music Theory Spectrum 33, 2, (2011), 191-199.

After its adoption by the end of the seventeenth century, partimento became widely used during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and began to decline by the early to mid twentieth century, as focus shifted to twelve-tone techniques and other compositional systems. Partimento received little attention from composers or scholars throughout most of the twentieth century. It was not until the publication of the Langloz Manuscript in 2001 that interest in this subject was renewed.³

I personally discovered partimento while studying the history of music theory. I became interested in the topic because throughout most of my musical life, I have searched for a fluid system of writing counterpoint, both in a traditional and modern sense. I was in search of a system that to my mind, accounted for the prodigious output of composers of the eighteenth century. I felt that my training in counterpoint did not fully address some of the more practical concerns of composing contrapuntal textures. For instance, having to be conscious of, and to simultaneously command vertical (chords) and horizontal (contrapuntal) systems at all times for each compositional endeavor seemed particularly arduous. Partimento represented the "missing link" between theoretical study and practical output that I was looking for.

In the seventeenth century, early partimento notation was similar to thoroughbass notation. These early partimenti consisted of bass lines notated on a single staff, and the earliest usage of the term *partimento* was as a substitute for a bass line.⁴ This continuo

³ see William Renwick, *The Langloz Manuscript. Fugal Improvisation through Figured Bass*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴ Rosa Cafiero, "La didattica del partimento a Napoli fra Settecento e Ottocento: note sulla fortuna delle 'Regole' di Carlo Cotumacci," 1993

part could be either figured or un-figured and early partimento interpretation consisted of simple realizations of these parts on a keyboard instrument, usually organ. These bass lines began as training exercises that enabled the student to become comfortable realizing a continuo part. Example A presents an un-figured partimento by Fedele Fenaroli, published in 1847.



Example A, The first exercise from Fenaroli's "Book Four: of Unfigured Partimenti" (Naples:Cottrau, ca. 1847)

The goal of this early partimento exercise was for students to complete the bass line by adding a polyphonic texture. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the concept of partimento began to change.⁵ Instead of only consisting of a bass line on a single staff, a partimento could have numerous clef changes and multiple voices within the single staff. These clefs included those associated with the upper voices such as the soprano or French violin clef. Example B shows Francesco Durante's partimento in D minor, a more advanced example that contains clef changes and multiple voices. This single-staff notation relayed motivic and contrapuntal information alongside bass lines and harmonic content.

⁵ Sanguinetti, 11.



Example B, Franceso Durante, partimento in D minor, Gj 235, from manuscript I-Nc 45.1.4 (c. 96v.)

This change from simple bass lines to more elaborate structures is first and most famously associated with the Roman composer Bernardo Pasquini (1637-1710).6 Soon after, composers of the Neapolitan tradition adopted similar practices and began to codify this technique into a rich pedagogical system with the aim of teaching improvisation.

This new type of notation resembled a *basso seguente*, which was a type of notation used frequently by composers and organists. The *basso seguente* served as a means of accompanying an ensemble (see Example C). On a single staff, the *basso seguente* included not only the bass line, but also the lowest part of any section of a score. For instance, when

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⁶ Ibid, 20.

entries of a fugue occurred in the upper voices, this information would be conveyed in the organ part through a clef change.⁷



Example C: Basso seguente: an excerpt of the 'Gloria' in Haydn's Missa Sancti Nicolai (bb. 108-114)

The earliest known partimenti, dated between 1703 and 1709, are authored by Pasquini, suggesting that the first partimenti may have had Roman origins.8 Rome was a leading center of music in the late seventeenth century as royal and noble patrons, as well as high raking clergy, spent large amounts of money funding composers, performers and schools. Queen Maria Christina of Sweden was one such patron, and a royal academy was established in her name in 1656. After her death in 1689, the name of the academy was changed to the Arcadian Academy.9 Although not a conservatory, the academy brought together men from various backgrounds; scholars, philosophers and musicians shared this space and intermingled freely. This type of environment encouraged a rational approach to music that favored the development of a nascent short hand notation resem-

⁷ Ibid, 11.

⁸ Ibid, 20-23.

⁹ Ibid.

bling figured bass into a more involved technique that would become partimento practice. As Giorgio Sanguinetti describes in *The Art of Partimento*, the leading figures of what would become the partimento tradition, including Bernardo Pasquini, Alessandro Scarlatti and Francesco Durante all conferred in this Roman environment.

Scarlatti and Durante are both associated with the so-called Neapolitan School. Scarlatti was appointed *maestro di cappella* to the conservatory of *Santa Maria di Loreto* in Naples in 1689. He left that post after a brief time and then left Naples for Rome in 1702. Passquini exerted a commanding influence over his colleagues in Rome, which most likely included Scarlatti. Although he didn't write a considerable amount of partimenti, Scarlatti's most significant manuscript that contains a partimento is dated 1715, which is the year that he left Rome to return to his teaching in Naples. Sanguinetti makes the conclusion that, "it seems therefore that in the short span of a dozen years, in Rome, the partimento in its dual form (as a form of art and as a pedagogical device based on improvisation) took its definitive shape, thanks to the fortuitous meeting of two masters, Pasquini and Scarlatti." A native of Naples, Durante was a student in Rome at this time and so it is very likely that he too was exposed to the beginnings of this art form.

Soon after these significant figures met, the development of partimento shifted from Rome to Naples. This was in large part due to a number of conservatories that were established in Naples around this time. In other Italian cities, such Bologna and Rome,

¹⁰ both Scarlatti and Passquini were associated with the Arcadian Academy. This association is discussed by Roberto Pagano in *Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti: Two lives in One*, (Hillside, NY:Pendragon Press, 2006),158-68.

¹¹ Sanguinetti, 20-23.

instruction took place primarily through a private, one-on-one discourse between teacher and student. 12 In Naples, due to a large number of abandoned children living on the streets in the seventeenth century, conscientious citizens established *conservatorios*. ¹³ or conservatories to house the children and to teach them a trade, which included music.¹⁴ The conservatories of Naples required a more standardized approach in order to accommodate what became a larger number of students, as the schools eventually began to accept students who were willing to pay. The four main conservatories in which partimento practice was a significant part of the curricula were Santa Maria di Loreto (founded in 1537), Sant'Onofrio a Capuana (1578), Santa Maria della Pietà dei Turchini (1583) and I Poveri di Gesù Cristo (1589). 15 As stated above, Scarlatti acquired a post as maestro di cappella at Santa Maria di Loreto in 1689. He left after two months, probably due to the low salary that the post offered. More significantly, Durante, after his studies in Rome – studies most likely conducted under Pasquini – obtained the same position in 1742 until his death in 1755.16 These schools went on to become significant centers of partimento practice in the eighteenth century. They produced a number of skilled musicians who

12 Ibid.

¹³ the origin of the word conservatory is *conservare* which means "to preserve." In this case, the meaning of the word refers to the need to preserve the fatherless of the city

¹⁴ Sanguinetti, 31-34. See also Robert Gjerdingen, "Partimenti Written to Impart a Knowledge of Counterpoint and Composition," In *Partimento and Continuo Playing in Theory and Practice*, ed. Dirk Moelants (Leuven: Leuven University, 2010), 43.

¹⁵ Peter van Tour, "Counterpoint and Partimento: Methods of Teaching Counterpoint in Eighteenth Century Naples." Dissertation, Uppsala University, 2015, 16.

¹⁶ Sanguinetti, 20-23.

were able to attain various musical appointments throughout the Europe after their education.

Overview

This study will examine partimento from a historical and theoretical perspective. The primary focus will be on examining the way in which a composer today can understand and utilize this method within contemporary compositional practices. Chapter One will place partimento in context by comparing it with the historical and cultural parallel of the theatrical tradition of *commedia dell'arte*. Chapter Two will explore the theoretical context of partimento by briefly comparing this Italian theoretical tradition with the more popular Franco-German Harmonielehre tradition that began to emerge in the mid-eighteenth century, followed by a short review of partimento rules. Chapter Three will outline the manner in which partimento was employed in the eighteenth century, in so far as it is currently understood, by taking an existing partimento by Fedele Fenaroli and realizing it into a composition in the traditional style. Finally, Chapter Four will examine the ways in which partimento can be used within the scope of a contemporary composition. This examination will take the form of an analysis of Lost City, a multi-movement work of mine for chamber orchestra.

CHAPTER ONE:

Definitions and Purpose

My own interest in partimento lies in the desire to use and adapt the technique for contemporary compositional purposes. It is not my intention to replicate a pure eighteenth-century traditional work by utilizing specific schemata of the period in a way that a galant-era musician might do. Rather, I apply this technique alongside other, more recent compositional practices.

Currently, there is no standardized definition of partimento; the meaning of the term differs from scholar to scholar, depending on their understanding of historical context. For instance, in reference to a collection of partimenti from the Santini collection in Münster, musicologist Gustav Fellerer focuses on the performance of partimento, calling it a "guided improvisation" (*gebundene Improvisation*). He alludes to the idea that motivic and formal content are pre-determined, while the final performance details are left to the performer's choice. More recently, Friedrich Lipmann elaborated on this definition by stating that partimento is "the outline of a polyphonic composition, notated as a single voice with frequent changes in clefs, consisting partly of thorough-bass elements, partly of thematic statements, which can be used as a basis for a more or less improvised key-

¹ Karl Gustav Fellerer, "Das Partimentospiel, eine Aufgabe des Organisten im 18. Jahrhundert." In *Premier congrès. Société Internationale de Musikologie: campte rendu*, ed. Peter Wagner and Wilhelm Merian, 109-112. Guildford: Billing, 1930. 109.

board performance."² Robert Gjerdingen establishes a connection between the improvisational nature of partimento and its possibilities as a framework for composition. Since a partimento can serve as a shorthand for the structure of an entire musical work, Gjerdingen states that "someone unacquainted with partimenti could easily mistake a manuscript copy of an advanced partimento for a composer's sketch."³ This implies that a partimento can impart a significant amount of information within a condensed form. Most recently, Georgio Sanguinetti defines partimento as, "a sketch, written on a single staff, whose main purpose is to be a guide for improvisation at the keyboard."⁴

To further clarify the different aspects of partimento, it is helpful to explore this practice within the context of eighteenth-century music and the galant style. Gjerdingen considers "galant" to be an umbrella term that encompasses most of eighteenth-century music. As a result, I will use the term galant interchangeably with eighteenth-century practice. According to Gjerdingen, galant refers not just to music with a thin texture or clear melody, but also to pieces with a high degree of emotional expressiveness, as well as dense fugues. The galant style also encompasses the partimento and improvisatory traditions of the eighteenth century. As a general rule, he describes galant as "a code of conduct, an eighteenth-century ideal and a carefully taught set of musical behaviors." Fur-

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² Friedrich Lippmann, "Sulle composizioni per cembalo di Gaetano Greco," In *La musica a Napoli durante il Seicento, Atti del convegno internazionale, Napoli 11-14 aprile 1985*, eds. Domenico Antonio d'Alessandro and Agostino Ziino, 285-306, (Rome: La Torre d'Orfeo, 1987), 287

³ Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style*, (New York: Oxford University, 2007), 381.

⁴ Sanguinetti, 14.

⁵ Gjerdinggen, 6.

thermore, Gjerdingen states that "a hallmark of the galant style was a particular repertory of stock musical phrases employed in conventional sequences." 6

This idea parallels the practices of the improvisatory theater known as *commedia dell'arte*. In this famous tradition, actors used stock speeches, slapstick, jokes and plots that were memorized. Scenarios were provided, but they included only the barest of material. The actors were expected to fill in the rest through the use of the appropriate stock speeches that they had learned. This "filling in" was the method of improvisation. Actors also had stock character roles. For example, Pulcinella represented the male simpleton, Pierrot, the sad clown, Dottore, the elderly father and so on.

A galant musical score was like a *commedia dell'arte* scenario: it provided a minimal notation of the sequence of events. A skilled performer with a detailed knowledge of improvisation, thorough bass and ornamentation, could flesh out the work into a fully-formed performance. Another parallel feature between music and theater include the fact that both began in what is now present-day Italy and were exported to the rest of Europe; France in particular successfully adopted these various conventions. A third feature is that the popularity of both art forms continued from the seventeenth century well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Actors in the commedia dell'arte tradition learned their material by studying the book of their respective repertory companies. These books were known as zibaldone and

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ see Rosa Cafiero, "The Early Reception of Neapolitan Partimento Theory in France: A Survey," *Journal of Music Theory* 51, 1, (2007), 137-159.

⁸ Gjerdingen, 8.

they were manuscripts of stock speeches used by the actors. The word *zibaldone* was also used to describe a music student's notebook. Young music students of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would apprentice themselves to older masters in the hopes of learning a trade. The masters would create musical exercises for the student to complete and the student would carry these exercises in their *zibaldone*. Ideally, the master would create new exercises for each of their students, but this was not always the case. From the contents of these notebooks, one can partly see where Gjerdingen gets his idea of "stock musical phrases." The material from composers' *zibaldone* provided a wealth of musical ideas and phrases that could be combined in different sequences, depending upon the circumstance.

This idea of memorizing these stock musical phrases lies at the heart of how partimento practice worked. Students would realize increasingly difficult partimenti in their studies at the conservatory, usually over the period of several years, until the various bass lines, contrapuntal, and motivic developments were internalized. They would then be able to call upon these "stock phrases" when presented with a score for improvisation, or in order to compose a work quickly. Composers could write in a shorthand (partimento or thoroughbass) and be sure that the performer would possess the proper skill to realize the music.

⁹ Ibid.

A Brief Introduction to Schema

The idea of "schema" relates to the music of the galant style in a significant way. As a philosophical term, it was first explored by German philosopher Immanuel Kant.¹⁰ At its most basic, schemata are mental representations of categories that are similar to an idea or form. Gjerdingen points out that three types of schemata are significant. The first is a "prototype." These are "abstractions created from the common features of similar experiences." The second type of schema is an "exemplar." This is a reference point used by an individual with which to compare other instances. The reference point is usually an exceptional case that the individual has studied intently. The third type is known as "theories." Theories are formed by children as they learn more about the world. They form associations that alter how they experience new ideas and events.¹¹

Generally, the musical concept of schema as related to the galant style represents a musical idea or pattern that manifests itself in the movement of both the upper and lower voices of a passage. The overriding theory in Gjerdingen's *Music in the Galant Style* is that schemata "formed one of the cores of the galant musicians' *zibaldone* and they formed an aural medium of exchange between aristocratic patrons and their musical artisans." Although never discussed or written about explicitly, patrons and musicians understood various schemata intuitively through a shared musical experience. The way in

¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J.M.D. Meiklejohn, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952).

¹¹ Gjerdingen, 10-13.

¹² Ibid, 15.

which these schemata were used in a composition dictated the manner in which galant music was understood by its intended audience.

A Contemporary Approach to Partimento

My use of partimento differs from the traditional definitions in four ways, which I will outline here and then elaborate on below. First, my intent is to use partimento practice as a compositional method rather than an improvisational one. Second, my musical approach will not be limited to keyboard works, but will instead be expanded to include compositions for any forces (in the case of this study, chamber orchestra). Third, a partimento will not dictate the entirety of a piece, but will instead be used in specific sections where a polyphonic texture is desired. Fourth, in this study I will use partimento only in a compositional setting, rather than as an instructional tool. While I believe there is potential to use partimento for contemporary pedagogical purposes, this approach is beyond the scope of this study.

In terms of the division between improvisation and composition, the Neapolitan School divided its teaching into two categories: partimento and counterpoint. The primary difference between these categories was that partimento was improvised and counterpoint was composed. Students would learn the partimenti given to them by their instructors in order to realize them at the keyboard. This enabled the student to internalize the schemata present within the partimenti.

¹³ Sanguinetti, 43.

In the eighteenth century, improvisation was a significant aspect of musical performance, not just in Europe, but in many other corners of the world. For instance, eighteenth-century court musicians of present-day Iran, India and Korea utilized the practice of improvisation as did the eighteenth-century courtly musicians of present-day England, France, Italy and Germany. It was not until the nineteenth century that tenets of the Romantic period dictated that composition would supersede improvisation as a means of musical expression in the European classical tradition. Gjerdingen explains that for a galant audience, recognition of various bass lines and melodic content was a valued aspect of courtly manners, and that the explanation of cadential or sequential harmonic progressions and melodic construction would have to wait for the wider acceptance of theorists such as Fétis, Riemann and Schenker in the nineteenth century. Is

Rather than identifying specific harmonic progressions, partimento practice concerned itself primarily with imparting musical schemata into the consciousness of those who studied it. This was done through memorizing certain rules and knowing how those rules should be used when presented with a partimento. Stanislao Mattei succinctly explained this idea in response to his pupil, Gioachino Rossini. When Rossini asked Mattei why certain practices of study had to be undertaken, Mattei replied, "this is the way it has

¹⁴ Gjerdingen, 370.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ students were also expected to be familiar with solfeggi (exercises meant to be sung that allowed the student to internalize melodic schemata). By combining the study of partimenti and solfeggi, students had a vast knowledge of melodic and harmonic content to draw from. For more about solfeggi, see Gjerdingen, 122.

always been done."¹⁷ This meant that "why" something was done was not as important as the "how" it was done. These schemata would later make their way into the compositions of students within the conservatory system. In this way, many composers utilized partimento technique within their compositions. So, while the main purpose of partimento was to be a guide for improvisation, it could also be a guide for composition.

The second way in which my usage of partimento differs from the traditional definition is that I expand my use of the technique beyond music for keyboard. Although my realizations of partimenti are done at the piano, the final result of my process can be for any number of instruments, not just solo keyboard. The precedent for this approach lies in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century activity of creating a *disposizione*, or a setting of a partimento, which will be looked at in Chapter Two.

The third way that my usage of partimento differs from traditional approaches is that I will often utilize a partimento within the fabric of a composition, but the partimento itself may not be used to create the entire piece. An eighteenth-century partimento was a shorthand that dictated the direction of an entire improvisation. That is, the beginning, middle and end of a work were all addressed in a given partimento as bass lines or uppervoice motives. The beginning of a partimento represented the beginning of the improvisation, the middle represented the middle of the improvisation and so on. In my work, this is not always the case. Often, I will have segments of a composition that do not utilize partimento. When I wish to introduce a contrapuntal texture, I will insert material derived from a partimento into the fabric of the work at specific moments. This material may

¹⁷ Gjerdingen, 370-371.

share motivic elements with other sections of the work as they are not isolated. When the partimento section is finished, I will continue the piece with another technique or process that is not addressed by the partimento.

This last difference between my approach to partimento and the traditional one has to do with the fact that eighteenth-century partimento was primarily a teaching device. However, it was also used by galant-era composers in their own works. The distinction between Kunstform (works intended for artistic purposes) and Schulform (works intended for scholastic purposes), which became so significant during the nineteenth century, is much less of a distinction in the eighteenth as the boundaries between these two categories of musical practice were blurred. Compositions that began as school exercises include the fourth movement of Handel's Concerto Grosso Op. 6, no. II, Scarlatti's Essercizi, Bach's Well Tempered Klavier, Klavierübungen, Orgelbüchlein and cello suites. 18 While teaching partimento was a significant aspect of the curricula in the Neapolitan conservatories, it was also a way in which composers realized their works. As stated above, although I am interested in exploring ways in which partimento can be used as a modernday pedagogical tool, in this dissertation, I am primarily concerned with using the technique for artistic purposes. 19

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¹⁸ Sanguinetti, 16.

¹⁹ for more about partimento as it relates to contemporary pedagogy, see Gilad Rabinovitch, and Johnandrew Slominski, "Towards a Galant Pedagogy: Partimento and Schemata as Tools in the Pedagogy of Eighteenth-Century Style Improvisation," *Music Theory Online*, 21 no. 3, 2015, doi: 8.2019/http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.15.21.3/mto.15.21.3.rabinovitch.php

Relevance to modern times

While there has been a great deal of scholarship on partimento in the field of music theory, its usage in contemporary composition is much sparser. Perhaps this is due in part to a perceived antiquated nature of the technique, causing some to question its relevance as a compositional tool in contemporary music. After all, this technique's heyday was over two hundred years ago, and its practitioners lived in a different time and place, with different societal structures, rules and expectations. Below, I propose five primary reasons as to why I believe that this technique is significant and relevant in today's compositional world. These are reasons that I have found useful in my own practice, and I hope that other composers may find them useful as well.

First, partimento represents a powerful tool for adding contrapuntal material to a composition. In my compositional process, partimento has made it easier for me to add contrapuntal textures that might otherwise be more cumbersome and time-consuming. This is because partimento presents a different process from the species counterpoint as outlined in treatises such as those by Johann Fux, for example, that are currently taught in music schools. While this sort of traditional counterpoint training is still necessary, it can be supplemented with partimento in order to achieve more fluid results. This fluidity can be attributed to the internalization of various schemata that partimento practice demands.

²⁰ see Johann Fux, *The Study of Counterpoint: From Johann Joseph Fux's Gradus Ad Parnassum*, trans. Alfred Mann and John Edmunds (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965).

Second, performers have a familiarity with content derived from tonal counterpoint in a general sense, particularly in regard to execution. This familiarity allows for (hopefully) a quicker mastery of potentially challenging material, in both a technical and expressive sense. This applies primarily to musicians who have conservatory training and are accustomed to performing works that use the particular harmony and voice leading properties that are consistent with partimento.

Third, utilizing this technique provides me with a means to write a composition or improvisational framework in a musical shorthand. More significant than a sketch, a partimento can provide a detailed outline of work. This is primarily because partimento is written on one staff, yet still contains the necessary information needed for a complete musical work. I have found that it allows me to plan the full arc of a work in detail before delving into the specifics of realizing a piece through orchestration and other types of elaboration.

Fourth, given the numerous changes in musical style that have occurred over the last two hundred years, as well as compositional techniques developed to accommodate these newer styles, it is still possible to utilize partimento technique alongside these newer techniques. Through the combination of these many styles, both new and old, one can experience this type of eighteenth-century counterpoint in a new light. For example, a piece can juxtapose partimento sections with other sections of a more contemporary style. This idea is explored further in Chapter Four, where musical sections derived from partimento are combined with musical sections derived from modality.

Finally, I believe that it is important to keep a dialogue with the musical past in the compositional work that I pursue. As previously stated, modern-day performers and audiences of Western music have an understanding and familiarity with this music, at least on a sound-textural level. Additionally, I feel that this dialogue with music is a way of having a dialogue with physical and historical time. This dialogue can add a richness to a given piece of music through its association with the passing of time, and I find it interesting to try to work with and manipulate this understanding. For instance, material derived from partimento can evoke a subtle sense of antiquity. In a musical setting, moving from material of this nature to material that is more modern can be analogous to the movement of historical time as represented in a musical context.

CHAPTER TWO:

Theoretical Context, History and Rules

In order to better explain why partimento is relevant in today's compositional landscape, as well as to have a more well-rounded understanding of the history of this technique, it is helpful to present partimento as it exists within the greater context of music theory. In other words, how might we understand partimento when it is compared to other developments in music theory that were occurring at the same time or shortly after? This context is important because it helps to explain how a student might approach partimento today, which, due to the type of training that is offered in modern conservatories and music schools, is different than the way in which a student of the eighteenth century would have approached it. For example, when I initially approached partimento, I was often able to fall back on my traditional music theory training to explain certain segments of a partimento that the rules did not directly address.

Significant aspects of the partimento tradition differed from concurrent ideas about tonality that began to emerge in the early to mid-eighteenth century with Rameau's *Traité de l'harmonie* (1722). These ideas took shape in the form of a pure music theory that sought to explain the origin and function of chords and harmony. Taken as a whole, they concern themselves with the principles of tonality and the way in which these principles can be applied to a particular musical setting. This school of thought eventually took form in what Ludwig Holtmeier calls the German *Harmonielehre* tradition. On the

¹ see Ludwig Holtmeier, "Heinichen, Rameau, and the Italian Thoroughbass Tradition: Concepts of Tonality and Chord in the Rule of the Octave," *Journal of Music Theory* 51, 1, (2007), 5-6.

other hand, in its most essential form, the partimento tradition sought a more practical path by focusing on the realization of thoroughbass without necessarily having to explain – in a rational sense – why one particular harmony might follow another.

Pedagogy and Thoroughbass

As partimento is an offshoot of thoroughbass, Thomas Christensen suggests that aspects of the partimento tradition presented an empirical form of music theory, and that thoroughbass practice itself was a type of music theory training. When discussing thoroughbass practice, he writes that:

...the many challenges of realizing a figured bass for a performer of that time [from 1600-1750] also presented explanatory challenges to the speculatively-minded theorists. The pedagogical mnemonics by which figured-bass was taught to young musicians became a surprisingly powerful instigation for remarkable developments in the area of tonal theory.²

By "speculative-minded theorists," he is referring to the pure music theory mentioned above, which relates to the acquisition of a deep knowledge of the workings of music without having to (or knowing how to) perform or compose it.³ Christensen postulates that thoroughbass served as an instigator, or catalyst for modern music theoretical discourse, primarily because the realization of a figured bass made the student think of harmony as a succession of chords that were specified through Arabic numerals written be-

² Thomas Christensen, "Thoroughbass as Music Theory," In *Partimento and Continuo Playing in Theory and Practice*, ed. Dirk Moelants (Leuven: Leuven University, 2010), 9.

³ Thomas Christensen, "Genres of MusicTheory," in *Towards Tonality: Aspects of Baroque Music Theory*, ed. Peter Dejans and Sylvester Beelaert (Leuven: Leuven University, 2007), 9-39.

low the bass.⁴ Composers and musicians then understood music as a succession of chords threaded together through the use of proper voice leading.

To learn figured bass technique, students first had to learn the vast array of chord structures from which a select few would be played when realizing a specific bass line. This includes all the different types of chords that can be played above a given scale degree. However, learning these chord-structures did not address the issue of proper voice leading between the chords. This issue continued to be a significant and fundamental challenge. The challenge was also pedagogical, as teachers realized the massive task that students would be faced with. Chords, primarily triads, would be played in the right hand while the left would play the bass figurations. Teachers began to realize that many of the chords that were played were variants of each other, as the right hand would play the same chord, but the bass note would be different. In order to make things easier, teachers began to tell their students to imagine a perfect (major or minor triad) harmony above a different bass note. As an example, a 6/3 or 6/4 would be a version of a perfect triad.

This idea of chord-variants relates to Rameau's theoretical writings and subsequent understanding of the relationships between various chords. Rameau began to think of these chord variations as inversions of the same chord, and that his idea of *son fondamental* (fundamental sound) became the generative root of a harmony. Christensen believes that this idea has its roots in speculative theory, which was alien to the more practi-

⁴ generally in the partimento tradition, the numerals occur above the bass.

⁵ Christensen, "Thoroughbass as Music Theory," 11-12.

cal perspective of figured bass practice of the early eighteenth century.⁶ The idea of *son fondamental* states that a chord has a fundamental sound by which it is defined. It does not matter which note of the chord is in the bass, the fundamental sound will remain and serve to identify the properties of that specific chord. Additionally, the fundamental sound may be transposed by an octave and still retain its function, as the octave is unique in its ability to retain the same identity independent of register.⁷

Rameau and the Neapolitan School

Towards the mid-nineteenth century, the Neapolitan tradition superficially sought to combine the two schools of thought that were *son fundamental* and thoroughbass technique. Outwardly, the tradition was primarily known for propagating the older type of thinking that favored a practical realization of thoroughbass. I say outwardly because most of the instruction at the Neapolitan conservatories was accomplished by way of an oral tradition, and so the true, *inward* workings of the conservatories cannot be entirely known. Towards the late-nineteenth century, there was no clear consensus among musicologists as to the specific nature of the teaching methods at the conservatories. In particular, members of the Academy of the Cherubini Institute, a leading society for the discussion of music theory in Florence, had conflicting opinions on the Neapolitan teaching

⁶ Thomas Christensen, *Rameau and Musical Thought in the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993), 90 ff.

⁷ Christensen, "Thoroughbass as Music Theory," 13.

methods.⁸ Maestro Ettore De-Champs, Resident Academician, stated in a meeting of the society in 1878 that he felt that partimento rules were taught independently from the origin and function of chords. It was only after continuous study and guidance from their teachers, and employment of the rules that students began to get an understanding of these origins and functions.

Soon after this meeting, Riccardo Gandolfi, a student of the eminent Neapolitan teacher Carlo Conti, refuted De-Champs argument in his own memoir. Gandolfi stated that, in addition to teaching music in an empirical way as De-Champs described, there were also lessons on Rameau's theory of son fondamental and Reicha's ideas on chord classification, as well as lessons about the tonal properties of varying scale degrees. Furthermore, he posed the notion that, given the celebrated nature of the maestros of the Neapolitan school – from Scarlatti to Zingarelli – it would be difficult to imagine that these men did not possess a knowledge and understanding of musical structure and theory. It is more likely that they did possess this knowledge and imparted it to their students. However, because there was no printed record of their lessons, and because information was transmitted orally, there was no concrete proof with which to discard all other theories. A limitation of the Neapolitan School that Gandolfi did concede, however, was that the teaching did not include the more modern techniques of the time, such as the usage of modal mixture, modulation to remote keys and chords with color tones and their inversions.9

⁸ Sanguinetti, 95-96.

⁹ Ibid

Perhaps the clearest example of how Rameau's ideas made their way into partimento pedagogy occurs in the writing of early-nineteenth century editions of Fedele Fenaroli's *Regole*, ¹⁰ which does not appear in the original edition published in 1775. In that later edition, in a section entitled *Nozioni preliminari*, or "preliminary axioms," Fenaroli writes that "all music is nothing but a chord of the first, third and fifth." He goes on to place a high importance on triads built on the I, IV and V scale degrees, echoing Rameau's own thoughts on the hierarchy among triads. ¹²

Methods of the Neapolitan School

Due to the oral traditions in Neapolitan conservatories, there is very little written in terms of primary sources on how classes were taught. What is left however, are the numerous partimenti themselves. Thus, it is clear that instruction that was in line with the prevailing thoroughbass tradition must have been a large part of the curriculum. Peter van Tour has researched the teaching methods of the various Neapolitan conservatories and the masters who presided there. He seeks to clarify the role of partimento and solfeggio in the teaching of counterpoint at the Neapolitan school during the eighteenth century.¹³ Van

¹⁰ Fedele Fenaroli, *Regole musicali per i principianti di cembalo*, (Naples: Vincenzo Mazzola-Vocola, 1775)

¹¹ Fedele Fenaroli, *Partimenti ossia Basso numerato*, Florence, Gio. Canti n.d. ca. 1850. Facs. Bologna:Forni 1978.

¹² Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 102.

¹³ Peter van Tour, "Counterpoint and Partimento: Methods of Teaching Counterpoint in Eighteenth Century Naples," Dissertation, Uppsala University, 2015, 23.

Tour traces the methods of teaching, and carefully examines the partimento of the school's masters, both in terms of substance and teaching style. He focuses significantly on the contributions of Francesco Durante, Leonardo Leo and Fenaroli.

Durante in particular followed a two-part system for teaching partimento to his students. The first part consisted of what van Tour has named the "basic course," in which partimento rules are stated under various headings. In order to better learn the rules, they are followed by partimenti that the student would be expected to complete. Examples of these rules include "how to treat the dissonance of the seventh" or "variations applying to the seventh or sixth." More advanced partimenti in the basic course sometimes combined different rules in one partimento. Usually, the partimenti in this basic course were figured. The second part of Durante's pedagogical method employed the use of examples with *moti del basso* or the "system of bass motions." This second part used the lessons from first and fused them with lessons from the bass motions, so that the method "looks back" at partimento realization as a whole, this time with the added knowledge of bass motions included. In this second part, figures were not included, but there were some measures that were fully realized. 15

According to the teaching curricula at the Neapolitan conservatories, composition instruction was based on keyboard improvisation, which was in turn based on partimenti

¹⁴ Peter van Tour, "Partimento Teaching according to Francesco Durante, Investigated Through the Earliest Manuscript Sources," in *Studies in Historical Improvisation: From Cantare Super Librum to Partimento*, ed. Massimiliano Guido (London: Routledge, 2017), 134.

¹⁵ Ibid.

and strict counterpoint. ¹⁶ In the area of fugue, the differences in improvisation and composition took shape in the form of partimento fugues and vocal fugues. Partimento fugues were improvised, and the improviser would use the partimento as a thread and guide, where strict voice leading could be relaxed due to the improvisatory nature of the performance. Vocal fugues, on the other hand, were composed, and they allowed the student more time for contemplation. With only a sketch given to them by the teacher, a student had to complete the vocal fugue by providing their own form, structure and phrasing, and they could focus more on providing a polyphonic texture with more exact voice leading. ¹⁷

A link between the improvisatory nature of partimento training and the act of composition existed in a type of partimento realization called a *disposizione*, which roughly translates into "setting." These were exercises as well as final compositions that often used a partimento as a basis for a strict polyphonic setting. The number of voices (usually two or four) was set and the realization was done utilizing multiple staves. This differs from partimento practice which tended to be freer in terms of the number of voices, and which were improvised on the keyboard. Because of the improvisatory nature of partimento realization, music written on more than one staff was rarely necessary.¹⁸

The process of creating a *disposizione* from a partimento is shown in the examples on the following pages. Example 2.1 shows a partimento fugue by Fenaroli, where

¹⁶ Giorgio Sanguinetti, "Partimento-fugue: the Neapolitan Angle," In *Partimento and Continuo Playing in Theory and Practice*, ed. Dirk Moelants (Leuven: Leuven University, 2010): 72-73.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid, 101-102.

Sanguinetti has indicated the various significant structural aspects of the fugue. This example was first published in 1775, and later published again in a more expansive edition in 1814 in Paris. ¹⁹ Example 2.2 shows a *disposizione* based on this partimento fugue as realized by a virtually unknown Venetian musician named Emanuele Guarnaccia, published in approximately 1825. Guarnaccia's realization is very similar to a keyboard realization of the same partimento fugue by the more well-known musician and teacher, Angelo Catelani. ²⁰

From these examples, we can see that music written in the upper voices (soprano and alto clefs) are copied directly onto the *disposizione* from the partimento, with no accompaniment from the lower voices. This follows the practice of canon and fugue where the motive enters one voice at a time, and where the prior voices are still present in a contrapuntal capacity as the motive unfolds in each voice. In the case of partimento realization, it is not until the motive is introduced in the lower voices (tenor and bass) that the student is expected to "fill in" the upper voices with content derived from the rules of partimenti. In other words, this new content does not explicitly exist in the partimento, but is instead expected to be provided by the student or performer. For example, we can see that there is musical content in m. 8 of Example 2.2 in the alto part that does not exist in m. 8 of the partimento in Example 2.1. Later on in this chapter, I will discuss further the initial steps of realizing a partimento. This will continue into Chapter Four, where I will discuss the way in which partimento can be realized within the context of a contem-

¹⁹ Ibid. 95-96.

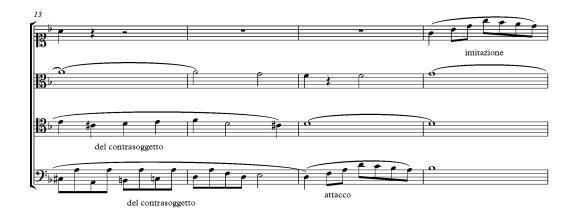
²⁰ Ibid, 100-101.

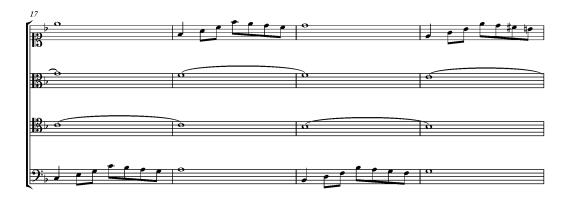


Example 2.1: Fugue no. 1 from Fenaroli's fifth book of partimenti.



Example 2.2: Fenaroli, Fugue no. 1 realized as disposizione by Emanuele Guarnaccia







Example 2.2: continued

porary composition.

The practice of *disposizione* provides examples of how the improvisatory practices of partimento could be used in a compositional setting. It also serves as an example of how a partimento can be utilized for both the basis for a keyboard realization and a vocal realization for two to four voices. The historical precedent set by these examples make them very helpful for the purposes of this study. They show that using partimento for compositional purposes is a very natural application of partimento technique.

Outline of the Rules

One important point to remember is that although there are many partimenti that have been left behind by the masters, the exact manner in which these partimenti can be realized is not entirely clear. Sources such as Fenaroli's describe the types of intervals or chords to place over a note, but they do not detail the next steps of partimenti realization. These steps include diminution (transforming a slow melody into a faster one) and imitation, not to mention aspects of texture and style. With respect to diminution and imitation, in the Neapolitan tradition of instruction, studies in these subjects ran concurrent with studies in counterpoint and fugue, and there was significant overlap with partimento.²¹ The treatises that are left behind do not provide much information as to the manner with which to apply these methods to a partimento in order to create florid, complex, imitative

21 Ibid

structures. This lack of information represents one of the main challenges towards understanding partimento technique today.²²

However, some general thoughts about the purpose of the rules, or *regole*, can be of assistance when realizing a partimento. As with Durante, information in treatises such as Fenaroli's tended to divide these *regole* into one section, leaving the partimenti themselves in another. The expectation was that a student would learn certain rules and then utilize them when realizing a relevant partimento. With more advanced partimenti, a student had to decide which intervals or chords to place over a given bass note. In order to accomplish this, the student had to understand context within the partimento. This was accomplished by determining the nature of the notes that came before and after a given bass note presented in a partimento. For example, are the notes of the partimento from a particular scale? What is the bass motion? Can the scale degree be accurately defined?²³ The nature of these questions will be clarified with a brief discussion about the rules themselves.

Because paritmento rules are described in detail in other sources, I will only outline the most salient concepts as they relate to my study. A significant portion of the information that I present here is found in Sanguinetti's *The Art of Partimento*, which was extremely useful in my own project.²⁴ Much (but by no means all) of Sanguinetti's re-

²² Sanguinetti, *That Art of Partimento*, 168-9.

²³ Ibid, 99-100.

²⁴ Those who require a more detailed account may wish to consult that source.

search is taken from Fenaroli's *Regole*.²⁵ In this section, I will briefly discuss the important rules starting with basic axioms and cadences, followed by the Rule of the Octave (RO), then continuing to suspensions. Afterwards, I will move on to other types of ascending and descending bass motions, and then finish with chromatic and leaping baselines. Sanguinetti places these rules into five categories, including basic axioms, the Rule of the Octave, suspensions, bass motions and scale mutations (a concept roughly similar to tonicization).²⁶ Table 2.1 lists the categories of rules along with their key characteristics.

Rule Category	Characteristics
Basic Axioms	Addresses Tonal Coherance, Nature of Dissonance, Cadences
Rule of the Octave (RO)	Provides Accompaniment for a Scale, Defines Key
Suspensions	Upper Voices (4th, 7th, 9th), Bass Suspensions
Bass Motions	Conjunct and Disjunct Motions
Scale Mutations	Half Step Motions in Bass, Cadential Progressions, Occurrence of Key Intervals

Table 2.1: Partimento categories of rules and their key characteristics according to Sanguinetti

The establishment of key, or mode, is one of the first of the basic axioms. This is done through the establishment of qualities that constitute tonal coherence, which is concerned with the hierarchy among triads. In terms of chords built upon scale degrees, Fenaroli states that "the first tone gives its law to the fourth [...]; while the third gives its

²⁵ Because partimento rules are a collective work, codified through the help of generations of teachers and students, there is no one source that contains them all. Often, some rules are left out at the expense of others. Fenaroli's edition is considered to be the most complete, however.

²⁶ Sanguinetti, That Art of Partimento, 99-100.

law to the sixth..."²⁷ The significance of this statement can be understood using Roman numeral analysis, where the chord qualities (major and minor) of I and IV will match, as does III and VI. However, this was a significant guideline that, interestingly, did not outlaw modal mixture. For instance, authors such as Giacomo Insaguine and Giovanni Paisiello stated that melodic scale degrees 2,4,5 and 7 must not be altered (2 and 7 being major intervals and 4 and 5 being perfect), while 3 and 6 may be lowered or raised without changing the understanding of the underlying tonality. The alternation of 3 and 6 may change the mode, but the key can still remain the same. Altering a tone such as the fourth, however, would indicate a change in tonality.²⁸

Another basic axiom concerns the nature of dissonance as it relates to partimento theory. A number of treatises, Fenaroli's included, describe the intervalic dissonances as the second, fourth, seventh and ninth, and the consonances as the third, fifth, sixth and octave. Indeed, this classification does not differ from our traditional, established understanding. However these intervalic dissonances are understood within the context of the proper execution of strict counterpoint, but not necessarily within the context of partimento practice.

On a larger level, Fenaroli's use of the term "dissonance" can only be applied to a suspension when harmonizing a bass line. In other words, any harmonization that requires a suspension is considered to be dissonant. Anything other than a suspension, including chords such as a dominant seventh that include dissonant intervals, are in these

²⁷ Fenaroli, *Regole* (Canti) "Nozioni preliminari"

²⁸ Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 102-104.

cases considered consonant. When Fenaroli states that "music is composed with consonances and dissonances," he is referring to both ideas; that within strict counterpoint, there is an alternation of consonant and dissonant intervals, but within the realization of partimenti, the appearance of a suspension within the context of other harmonies establishes the relationship between consonance and dissonance.²⁹

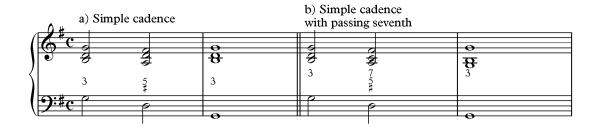
Cadences are generally divided into three types.³⁰ The first are simple cadences that utilize one metrical unit on the dominant, where consonances are used exclusively. The second are called compound cadences, which expend the metrical unit to two divisions on the dominant, and tend to use a 4-3 suspension above the fifth scale degree in the bass. Finally, there are double cadences that utilize four metrical units on the dominant, and tend to use a specific progression above the fifth scale degree in the bass: 5/3, 6/4, 5/4, 5/3. Example 2.3 shows examples of these classification of cadences according to Fenaroli.

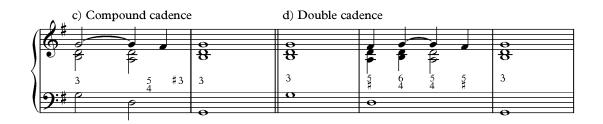
One of the most significant aspects of partimento and music theory of the Italian tradition is the concept and use of the Rule of the Octave, or RO. The significance of this concept lies at the heart of the division between the thoroughbass music theory derived from the eighteenth-century Italian practice and the more speculative theory derived from Rameau's writings that led to the later German *Harmonielehre* tradition.³¹ It is true that Rameau used the RO as a jumping off point for his own theories in his *Traité de l'Har*-

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, 105.

³¹ Holtmeier, 9-11.





Example 2.3: Fenaroli's classification of cadences

monie (1722), and the RO took a more central role in the third and fourth books of the *Traité*. This can be explained through a characterization of the third and fourth books as more practically-oriented versus the first two, which are more speculative, dealing with abstractions derived from the *basse fundamental*. However, Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg and Johann Philipp Kirnberger can be blamed (or credited) for the disappearance of the RO in the *Harmonielehre* tradition as they were the most avid supporters of Rameau's theories in German-speaking territories. The Rule of the Octave is hardly mentioned in their works³²

The RO is a way of harmonizing an ascending and descending scale where each note of a scale is assigned its own precise harmony. Although the term "Rule of the Octave" (regola dell'ottavia in Italian or règle de l'octave in French) was famously associ-

³² Ibid, 12-13.

ated with the French theorist François Campion after the publication of his treatise in 1716, it appears in other treatises throughout the seventeenth century.³³ There were many versions of it in existence, including Campion's, but some versions were more widespread than others. Examples of the Rule of the Octave have been found in treatises by many Italian masters, including Fenaroli, Scarlatti, Paisiello, Tritto and Valente.³⁴ An example of Campion's version in C major is shown in Example 2.4. What makes the harmonization of the Rule of the Octave different from a sequential pattern, which is another way of harmonizing a scale, is that the former represents one schema for the entire scale, whereas the latter may have multiple patterns that are shorter than the scale itself.³⁵ These sequential patterns represent another category separate from the Rule of the Octave that will be discussed later on.



Example 2.4: The Rule of the Octave according to François Campion

An important aspect of the RO, other than its excellent ability to provide an accompaniment for a scale, is that it has the effect of establishing, or codifying, a clear

³³ Thomas Christensen, "The '*Règle de l'Octave*' in Thoroughbass Theory and Practice," Acta Musicologica 65, fasc.. 2 (1992): 96-100.

³⁴ Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 123.

³⁵ Ibid, 113.

tonality. This effect was understood by Rameau, who set about finding a way to explain its tonal properties, from which arose his theory of the *basse fondamentale*.³⁶ In the Neapolitan tradition, the Rule of the Octave was taught directly after cadences. By observing the RO as well as the cadences that were taught, it becomes clear where the teaching of Rameau and the Neapolitan school intersected. By teaching cadences first, students became aware of the hierarchy of the V-I or I-V-I progression, even if they did not label it as such.³⁷ Learning the RO subsequently had the effect of expanding upon the V-I or I-V-I progression by including other harmonies, while still retaining its core principles of emphasizing the tonic and dominant harmonies.

A significant aspect of utilizing the RO is that a scale does not have to exist in its entirely to be used. Segments of a scale can be harmonized with the RO, provided the correct context calls for it. The smallest division of the RO can consist of two bass notes. In this way, one can see how the RO is an indispensable tool for providing an accompaniment to a passage where step-wise motion occurs.

The third classification of rules is concerned with suspensions. As stated earlier, suspensions constituted the only type of dissonance in partimento theory. Dissonances resulting from melodic motion were explained through diminution.³⁸ In the partimento tradition, suspensions occur in the conventional manner. There is a three-part process that

³⁶ Holtmeier, 12.

³⁷ The Roman numerals associated with *Stufentheorie* would come later with the ascendance of the *Harmonielehre* tradition, where scale degrees would also be associated with specific chord-structures. These harmonic scale degrees, as we understand them, can be manifested as melodies, chords or counterpoint. See *Heinrich Schenker, Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien, i: Harmonielehre (Stuttgart, 1906; Eng. trans. By O. Jonas, 1954/R)*

³⁸ Sanguineti, *The Art of Partimento*, 125.

consists of the preparation, the suspension itself, and then the resolution.³⁹ The suspension occurs on the down beat, with the resolution occurring on the beat after. Partimento rules spend significant effort listing various bass motions that generate suspensions. An example of this is when a fourth suspension needs to occur at the octave, the bass moves down a fourth. If the same dissonance needs to occur at the third, the bass moves down a step.⁴⁰ Having knowledge of these bass motions becomes important if the figures are not given in a bass line.

Suspensions are divided into two categories: suspensions in the upper voices and bass suspensions. Upper voices utilizing the interval of a fourth are most important.⁴¹

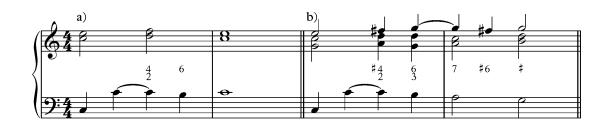
This is primarily because these suspensions are often an element of double and compound cadences. Another suspension in the upper voices utilizes the seventh. Most often, this suspension occurs on scale degree 2 in the bass and resolves to scale degree 1 after the resolution of the leading tone in the upper voices. The last upper-voice suspension concerns the interval of a ninth. It is much more limited than other two in terms of preparation. It can only be prepared from two consonances (the third and the fifth). In comparison, fourth suspensions can be prepared from the four consonances and two dissonances (minor seventh and diminished fifth). Typically, the ninth suspension occurs on the subdominant. Occasionally, it occurs on the tonic.

³⁹ Edward Aldwell and Carl Schacter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 3rd edition, (Belmont, CA:Thompson), 2003. 328-330

⁴⁰ Sanguinetti, The Art of Partimento, 126.

⁴¹ Ibid, 127.

The final type of suspensions are bass suspensions. These are considered the most important type of suspensions because they are dictated by the partimento itself. The other types of suspensions do not have to occur, especially if the bass is un-figured. However, the need to implement a bass suspension occurs when a note in the bass is tied or syncopated. In this way, figures were not necessary, as one can recognize the occurrence of this type of dissonance as it exists in the baseline. An example of two types of bass suspension is shown in Example 2.5.



Example 2.5: "minor" and "major" fourth suspensions in the bass

When the bass descends by a half step and then returns to the first note, as it would in a neighbor-note type of movement (see Example 2.5a), it is accompanied by a "minor" fourth (what we would call a perfect fourth today). 42 This progression causes the harmony to move back to the tonic. If the bass descends by a half step and then continues downward by whole steps, then the "major" fourth suspension is employed (an augmented fourth). Inevitably, this type of progression will often result in a tonicization of the dominant, as it does in Example 2.5b. Alternatively, bass suspensions can occur in a sequence where the syncopated bass notes descend over a period of several bars. This type

⁴² Ibid, 133.

of sequence can end with a weak cadential movement to the tonic where the bass will descend stepwise from scale degree 2 to scale degree 1.

The next classification has to do with various types of bass motions. According to Sanguinetti, these are divided into two categories. The first are called "conjunct motions" and they are characterized by chromatic and diatonic stepwise motion in the bass that occurs in the same direction (ascending or descending). Although the bass motion is similar to that of the RO, the schema that they represent is different. With conjunct motions, usually the accompaniments are sequential and the bass motion is not (since the basses often consist of an ascending or descending scale). The accompaniments utilize repeating patterns that are shorter than the scale (remember that the RO has a unique accompaniment for each bass note and so uses the entire scale as its model). The second category of bass motions is called "disjunct motions," and in contrast to the previous type, are wholly sequential, consisting of regular transpositions of an interval of two consecutive bass notes. Of this second category, there are two types: chains of fifths (or fourths), and chains of thirds (or sixths).

I will very briefly outline the different types of conjunct motions here.⁴³ First, there is the ascending 5-6, which alternates root position and first position chords. Then, there is the ascending 7-6, which utilizes the resolution of a suspension as the bass ascends. The ascending 9-8 which also uses a resolution of a suspension over an ascending bass line is similar, but because the primary voice is higher, it allows for more flexibility

⁴³ For a more detailed account, as well as for musical examples, see chapter 9 of Sanguinetti's *The Art of Partimento* or Chapters 2-6 of Fenaroli's *Regole*. See also examples 1-30 in Ledbetter's *Continuo Playing According to Handel*.

with the placement of the third voice. The result is that there are more variants of this type of schema. However, this motion does not span the entire scale in the bass as the previous two do, but rather ends on the fifth in the bass. Next, there is the descending 5-6 that differs from its ascending counterpart in that there is a successive bass note for each exchange of the fifth and the sixth, rather than one base note for each exchange of the fifth and the sixth.

There are innumerable examples of this schema throughout musical literature and it is a variant on the schema that Gjerdingen calls the *Romanesca*.⁴⁴ Another descending schema is the 6-6 where there is one accompaniment over each bass note. Every bass note except for the first is allowed a sixth chord. The first bass note has an accompaniment of a fifth and a third (root position chord). The last schema that involves a descending stepwise motion is the 7-6. There are two possible realizations of this, where both have suspensions in the upper voices.

Ascending chromatic motions can occur in major and minor, and can be seen as extensions of the 5-6 paradigm. Generally, they follow the principle that within a succession of semi-tones in the bass, the diatonic chord will possess the interval of a sixth, while the non-diatonic chord will possess the interval of a fifth. In major, the chromatic ascent will occur between scale tones 3 and 6 in the bass. Due to the varying types of scales that can be used, the ascending chromatic in the minor is different. Fenaroli alternates between a plain 6/3 chord and a 6/3 chord with a diminished fifth. 45 The chromatic

⁴⁴ Gjerdingen, Music in the Galant Style, 25-43.

⁴⁵ Fenaroli, *Regole* (Canti), 46.

ascent can continue through the octave in two ways. First, there can be a repetition of scale degree 3 in the bass (with a different accompaniment), and a diatonic continuation of the progression after scale degree 6. The other approach, taken by Valente, is to use a variant of the 5-6 combined with freely dissonant figures. These do not follow a specific pattern and he presents three different ways of solving this problem. In this way, Valente allows for a complete ascent of the octave.

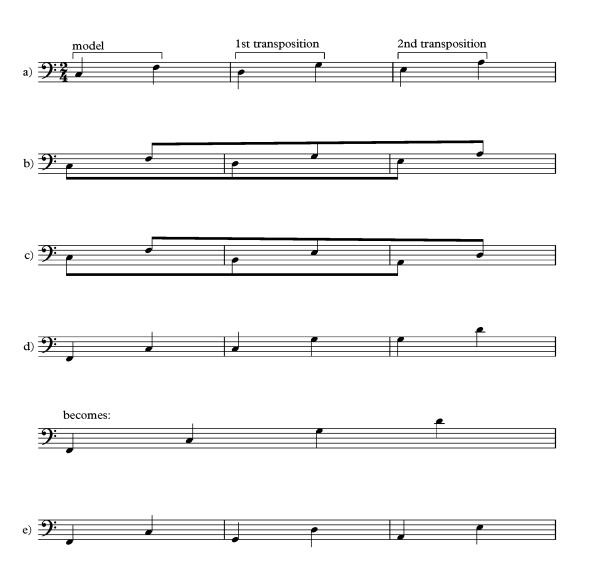
There is a type of descending chromatic schema that occurs frequently in musical literature and is known famously as the *passus duriusculus*. It is a variant of 7-6 paradigm where the seventh occurs on the chromatic bass note and resolves on the diatonic note. This descending tetrachord is associated with symbols of lament in music.⁴⁶ Other types of descending tetrachords include one where a voice moves in a chromatic, contrary motion with the bass, and another that emphasizes 6/3 chords while employing an augmented sixth chord to underscore the final destination of the chromatic movement. These other examples occur less frequently, however.

Disjunct bass motions are non-scalar and tend to form sequences. These sequences are formed by transposing a short module (usually two notes) by the same interval multiple times. Although in theory transpositions can occur by any interval, in traditional partimento practice, transpositions are stepwise. This means that the transposition interval is either one step up, or one step down. Example 2.6, taken from Sanguineti, shows how this process works.⁴⁷ As the re-barring shows in examples 2.6b and 2.6c, there

⁴⁶ see Peter Williams, *The Chromatic Fourth During Four Centuries of Music*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

⁴⁷ Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 147.

is a step-wise ascending or descending line connecting the transposed pitches of the original module of two notes. The last two parts of this example, 2.6d and 2.6e point to the idea that the interval of the pattern itself can be used as a transposition because it will simply create a chain rather than a sequence (in this case, a chain of fifths). The solution to this problem is to invert the second note of the module, which then creates a sequence. In 2.6e, the example becomes a sequence rising by fifths and falling by fourths. A majori-



Example 2.6: sequential bass motion movement

ty of sequences consist of an initial module followed by two transpositions. Partimento practice designates these sequences by labeling the interval of the module and then labeling interval between the second note of the initial module and the first note of the next one. So, Example 2.6e becomes a sequence where the bass rises by fourths and falls by thirds.

Some other examples of disjunct bass motions include rising by step and falling by thirds, rising by thirds and falling by step, and rising by sixths and falling by fifths.

The only instance where a disjunct bass motion does not produce a sequence is where there is motion by thirds or sixths. The usual accompaniment for this type of bass motion is to supply a 5/3 chord for each note. This succession of triads has the effect of creating a sense of suspended tonality.

The last classification of rules refers to what Sanguinetti calls "scale mutations." ⁴⁸ These are essentially bass motions that encourage tonicizations that may or may not signal larger, global key shifts. A scale mutation cannot be reliant on the bass alone, as the upper voices play an equally important role. The main factors that can produce a scale mutation are threefold: First, there are half-step motions in the bass that are frequently chromatic but can be also diatonic. When two notes in the bass are a half-step apart, they can become scale degrees 7 and 1 in the new key. The second factor is that there are diatonic bass structures such as cadences or cadential progressions, or aspects of the RO, that signal a shift to a new key. For instance, in a passage that is in C major, if one observes a bass-movement of scale degrees 5 and 1 in G major (scale degrees 2 and 5 in C

⁴⁸ Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 158-9.

major), one can identify this as a scale mutation (in other words, this may signify a cadential progression of V moving to I in the new key). Finally, specific intervals in the accompaniment must be present. These include the augmented fourth, minor second and the major sixth. The augmented fourth occurs with the major second and the major sixth occurs with the minor third.

Partimento Practice in Russia

The teaching of partimento persisted at least until the turn of the twentieth century or later. In Russia, this pedagogy existed in the form of what Gjerdingen calls the *Gebrauchs*-formulas of the Russian composer, pianist and music professor, Anton Arensky (1861-1906).⁴⁹ A teacher of Rachmaninoff and student of Rimsky-Korsakov, Arensky was the author of a collection of lessons for the study of harmony entitled *Shornik zadach* (1000) dlja prakticheskogo izucheniia garmonii, first published in 1897. ⁵⁰ These lessons were basically a collection of partimenti where the student would progress from simple figured bass exercises to florid, un-figured basses that lasted forty to fifty measures. According to an article by Gjerdingen entitled "Gebrauchs-Formulas" published in 2011, many of Arensky's early examples show a parallel with the eighteenth-century Italian partimento tradition. For example, there is an exercise from his collection that utilizes the

⁴⁹ Gjerdingen, "Gebrauchs-Formulas," 191-192.

⁵⁰ Anton Arensky, *Shornik zadach (1000) dlja prakticheskogo izucheniia garmonii* (A Collection of 1000 Lessons for the Practical Study of Harmony), (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izatel'stvo-Muzykal'nyi Sektor, [1897] 1929).

above mentioned *Romanesca* descending bass sequence. This sequence occurs perhaps most famously in Pachelbel's Canon in D. Sanguinetti identifies this bass as a disjunct motion in which the bass is "falling by fourths and rising by step."⁵¹

Eventually, Arensky's collection progressed to the more complicated modulating sequences of his day. For these examples, he provides fully realized models that constitute the *Gerbrauchs*-formulas. These models are numbered "motives for modulating sequences" that are similar to the *regole* of Italian masters like Fenaroli, except that Aresnky's examples are shorter. These formulas can be strung together in a manner similar to partimento rules, and they are more suggestive of a mid-to-late Romantic aesthetic. These formulas suggest the musical expressions of Schumann, Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov in the same way that Fenaroli's partimento rules might suggest the musical expressions of Bach, Scarlatti and Durante.

Both Arensky and Rimsky-Korsakov passed these formulas on to their students so that they would be provided with starting points with which to create meaningful music. Among the students of Rimsky-Korsakov were Fedir Akimenko and Vasily Kalafati, both early teachers of Stravinsky. In fact, in some of Stravinsky's early piano works, such as the Scherzo (1902) and the Sontata in F# minor (1903-4), there are "motives for modulating sequences" that resemble Arensky's *Gebrauchs*-formulas. For instance, the Trio of Stavinsky's Scherzo shows parallels with the use of Nos. 849 and 859 of Arensky's formulas. In the Trio, Stravinsky extends Arensky's module No. 849 by moving down a third in mm. 7-8, and extends module No. 859 by rising by a second in mm. 11-12. Simi-

⁵¹ Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 154.

larly, in Stravinsky's Sonata, the descending gesture in mm. 7-8 and ascending gestures in mm. 19-20 both show similarities to Arensky's module no. 865.⁵²

In terms of eighteenth-century practice, there is a specific schema that Gjerdingen calls the Prinner that is embedded within Stravinsky's Sonata in mm. 163-168 of the fourth movement.⁵³ The Prinner is a "reposte" or answer to an opening thematic statement. If one were to make an analogy between musical and social behaviors of the galant, the Prinner would be a witty reply to another person's opening remark. The Prinner occurred frequently throughout the music of the galant and it represented one of the central schemata that Gjerdingen's describes.⁵⁴ The existence of a Prinner in such a chromatically advanced work as Stravinsky's, at time when the galant had ended over one hundred years prior, points to the persistence of these types of musical behaviors as they traveled throughout the European continent over the course of many decades. This persistence is most likely due to the musical meaning that they were imbued with when shared by performers, composers and audiences.

In the mid to late-twentieth century, Russian composers and composers of Eastern Europe continued to adopt forms, phrases and genres of eighteenth-century music in their works. Sofia Gubaidulina's *Chaconne* (1962) for solo piano, written in 1965, is one such example. The work recalls the celebrated form from which it draws its name through the reliance on an eight-bar motive that defines the piece. This motive undergoes continuous

⁵² Gjerdingen, "Gebrauchs-Formulas," 193-197.

⁵³ Ibid. 196.

⁵⁴ Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style*, 45-60.

variations in a manner similar to a traditional chaconne. The theme has ambiguous triadic harmonies associated with it that often segue into cadence-like structures. Thematic elements of J.S. Bach make their way into Gubaidulina's concerto for violin and orchestra entitled, *Offertorium*, in which the primary theme of Bach's *Musikalisches Opfer* (Musical Offering), a theme originally given to Bach by Frederick the Great, forms the centerpiece of the work. The theme is passed around the orchestra and each time it is played, a pitch is removed from the beginning and end of the theme.

Similarly, Alfred Schnittke recalls a celebrated eighteenth-century genre in his Concerto Grosso No. 1 (1976-77). In this work, he utilizes a concertino of two violins against a ripieno that consists of a string orchestra with harpsichord and prepared piano. The first movement, Preludio, presents a theme in the very beginning played by the prepared piano. The key signature and C natural pedal tone suggest a vague, C minor tonality. There is even a cadential moment in m. 9 that ends the opening phrase. As with Gubaidulina's Chaconne, this theme appears in variations throughout the movement as elements of the theme are passed between the soloists and the ripieno. The second movement, Toccata, is more similar to a traditional concerto grosso, where sections featuring the soloists of the concertino contrast sharply with the ripieno. Even the thematic content recalls the seventeenth and eighteenth-century phrasings of Vivaldi or Corelli, however the context here is much more frenetic, chaotic and dissonant.

The borrowing of eighteenth-century forms and textures in the twentieth century spread from Russia into Eastern Europe, notably to Poland. An example is Henryk Górecki's *Harpsichord Concerto*, written in 1980. The instrumentation of the piece, harp-

sichord and string orchestra, recalls the early eighteenth-century forces of the Baroque solo concerto. The piece is slightly over nine and a half minutes long and is divided into two movements. The first movement is marked by eighth-note phrasings in the harpsichord that are played in octaves. These phrasings imply a D minor tonality due to the emphasis on D naturals and B-flats. Similarly, the strings play sustained D naturals in octaves underneath. Later in the movement, the harpsichord begins to play chromatic descending gestures against the sustained strings. The polytonality of this section stands in stark contrast to the D minor tonality of the opening. At the end of the movement, the accompaniment shifts to stacked thirds as the piece continues, attacca, directly into the second movement. This movement has more eighteenth-century gestures, where the harpsichord begins with a theme that alternates between a D major triad and an A dominant chord with a fourth suspension. After this theme is echoed in the strings, the harpsichord plays a variation of the theme using clusters in the left hand. The repetition of this theme gives the movement a minimalist aesthetic as the variation is repeated in the strings after the statement by the harpsichord. This alternation between eighteenth-century gestures and more modern harmonic sensibilities allows the listener to view the eighteenth-century gestures and timbral combinations with a new perspective.

Conclusion

Looking at the various types of theoretical developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is helpful because it not only contextualizes partimento as a form of

music theory during that time, but it also helps to explain the manner in which a composer of today may approach this technique. Contemporary composers' conservatory training typically gives them a background in the *Harmonielehre* tradition that differs from the more practical standpoint of partimento practice. It was useful for me to recognize where these schools intersected when I began this project, because I often found myself unconsciously relying on a more speculative practice that emphasized functional harmony and primary chords. This could at times be helpful. However, it was clear that an eighteenthcentury student would arrive at similar solutions through a different mode of thought. As partimento is very much a pedagogical tool, it can be understood as an outgrowth of thoroughbass practice, which in itself is a form of music theory training. The practical nature of this pedagogy possess an alternate perspective from the theoretical tradition as exemplified by Rameau's writings, but there were attempts by the Neapolitan School to reconcile these two seemingly disparate camps. However, these camps were not as distinct as one might think, as it is entirely possible that Rameau's theories were in turn influenced by his contemplation and study of the Rule of the Octave. Finally, as a pedagogical device, the disposizione form a link between the improvisatory nature of partimento practice and its usefulness as a tool in composition.

CHAPTER THREE:

An Analysis and Realization of an Existing Partimento

The following chapter outlines the method that I employed to realize an existing, eighteenth-century partimento into a short piece for keyboard. For this exercise, I used the fifth partimento from the first book in Fedele Fenaroli's *Regole*, first published in Naples in 1775. Generally, these early exercises introduced the student to the practice of realizing a figured bass, but they also served as a generator for an improvisation and/or a realized composition – the latter of which I have done here.

Procedural Overview

One important goal of this entire study was to develop a model that I could use to create my own partimenti. The exercise in this chapter represents an early step towards that end. To begin, I analyzed the partimento itself with the aim of understanding its construction through the identification of significant characteristics. I noticed an immediate difference between this partimento and the partimento fugues discussed in Chapter Two. In the case of the partimento fugues, which are a significant and advanced type of partimento, motivic material can dictate the various formal structures of the fugue, making the specific construction fairly obvious. In examples that are not partimento fugues, such as the example in this study, things are not always as clear. There is a formal ambiguity that

¹ see Fedele Fenaroli, *Regole musicali per i principianti di cembalo*, Naples: Vincenzo Mazzola-Vocola, 1775.

may have much to do with the improvisatory nature of these examples. Nevertheless, Sanguinetti does attempt a general categorization of partimento forms. Even with respect to partimento fugues, which as stated above were the most advanced type of partimenti, there is no single type that exemplifies the form. Additionally, arguments can be made as to whether fugue is more a type of texture, rather than a formal structure. However, given that there are certain formal structures in fugue, including entrance of motives, exposition, and episodes, I wanted to understand the role of motivic material in a partimento where these formal structures are much less clear, or in some cases, non-existent. The results of this analysis will be discussed below.

After completing this analysis, I realized the partimento with simple block-chord accompaniment. I will explain the process that I used to interpret the bass line and my reasons for choosing specific harmonic accompaniment. The last step in this process was to transform the chordal accompaniment into a piece with a polyphonic texture. This process is generally called "diminution." As described in Chapter Two, diminution can be defined as the transformation of a slow melody into a faster one.³ I will explain my own approach to diminution as it applies to this example. The result of this entire procedure is a finished, through-composed work that uses a partimento as its basis.

² Kent Kennan, Counterpoint, 3rd Edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ:Prentice-Hall, 1987), 201-02

³ see chapter 2, 33-34

Partimento Analysis

Example 3.1 shows Fenaroli's Partimento Number Five in its entirety, which I have transposed to F major from the original B major.⁴ Because this is an early partimento in Fenaroli's series, it contains figures. Also, as is the practice with partimenti, the fig-

Partimetno No. 5



Example 3.1 the fifth partimento from book one of Fenaroli's Regole

⁴ Ordinarily, the student would be expected to be learn the rules in all major and minor keys before moving on to partimento realization. However, this transposition was necessary because at this stage in my research, my command of the rules is more precise in certain keys, and less so in others. It is my plan to continue to study the rules that I have learned in more keys in the future.

ures are written at the top of the staff rather than at the bottom. In studying the construction of Fenaroli's example, one facet that I looked at was melodic contour. The first eight measures of the partimento partially outline various chords in the bass. These partial outlines do not spell out full triads, but the upward and downward movement of thirds clearly implies specific chords. Rhythmically, these figures are characterized by an eighthnote rest at the beginning of the phrase. This is a very specific motivic feature of this partimento that I will call the "thirds motive."

In Example 3.2, the first three measures outline the primary harmonies of the tonic, dominant and subdominant. This partial outlining of chords (as shown in the first one and a half measures for example), along with the rhythmic eighth-note grouping, is motivic – if not melodic – in nature. I define "motive" as material that is very short and incomplete, but still identifiable. Motives can be as short as one or two beats, in contrast to melodies which are longer, more complete, more harmonically defined and more "singable." The bass line at the end of m. 2 contains cadential material, and this prevents the partimento from being too overtly melodic. A bass line that is too melodic may not possess the rhythmic and harmonic anchor that the structure needs. However, the partial outlining of a chord in thirds and the specific rhythmic phrase in the first two beats of the



Example 3.2, first eight measures of partimento 5

first measure form a motive that is used throughout the partimento. This motive also represents a structure that can be used as an imitative device in the other voices once the bass line is realized.

One conclusion that I drew from these observations is that a partimento needs to have a melodic nature in order to be engaging in a polyphonic setting. This melodic nature can consist of significant intervallic and rhythmic variety. The partimento must also imply a clear harmonic progression as one would expect from a bass line. It can neither be too overtly melodic – in the sense that it would be understood as a tune – nor can it be purely functional in that it would only imply a harmony without including varied rhythmic and melodic elements. At m. 8, the partimento acts more like a functional bass line that serves to move the harmony forward. There are repeated notes, and there is less rhythmic variation at this point. By m. 10, the partimento becomes purely functional in that the stepwise ascent of quarter-notes possesses very little melodic or rhythmic variety. From studying this section, it seems that the middle section of a partimento should clearly indicate the harmonic direction of the piece, once the motivic material has been introduced.

By m.14, more melodic ideas return. These ideas are accompanied by an increasingly varied rhythm, where specific chords can be identified because they are partially spelled out. The material becomes more chromatic by m. 14. This combination of rhythmic variety and chromaticism indicates a transitional phase in the music. At this point, the bass line is neither clearly harmonic, nor overtly melodic. This ambiguity helps to define the unstable character of this moment. At m. 19 diatonicism returns with a more stable.

clear bass line progression by step. By m. 22 the melodic elements of the partimento have given way to a cadential progression. This cadential progression indicates that the piece is coming to an end. The need for stability becomes apparent here because endings and authentic cadences are traditionally associated with the movement from unstable elements (dominant) to stable elements (tonic). The purely functional nature of the partimento is at this point characterized by quarter notes that emphasize the sub-dominant, dominant and tonic. It is devoid of melodic embellishment, helping to create a sense of stability.

Another conclusion that I drew from this analysis is that a successful partimento needs to combine many elements at once. By "successful," I mean a partimento that is capable of providing the basis for an engaging and texturally varied work. As stated earlier, taken as a whole a partimento should neither be too overtly melodic, nor be just a rhythmically simple, functional base line. It must have a clear melodic impulse and it must be (generally) rhythmically predictable. It should present levels of stability through the establishment of key because less motivic development corresponds to a higher harmonic stability. An area of harmonic stability is illustrated in Example 3.3, where mm. 19-25 show that the thirds motive is abandoned in favor quarter-notes primarily in stepwise motion, along with leaps of fourths and fifths that clearly imply dominant to tonic harmony that one would expect at the end of a piece. This stable rhythm and stepwise

⁵ Even in a contemporary compositional sense, altering this rhythmic predictability through modern devices such as mixed and changing meter, proportional notation, non-traditional time signatures and polymeter may result subverting the relationships between strong and weak beats within various schemata. This subversion may be undesirable because it is these relationships that make the schemata interesting.



Example 3.3, mm. 19-25 from Partimento no. 5 shows areas of harmonic stability.

motion in the home key implies that the thirds motive can, if desired, occur in the upper voices, particularly on the third beat of m. 20 and the first beat of m. 21.

The partimento can at once be melodic and harmonically functional. However, if the level of chromaticism is higher, the resulting realization becomes more transitional and developmental in nature. A partimento, as any musical work, needs stable elements to put these transitional parts in context in order to create a dynamic and compelling musical whole.

Block-Chord Realization

After analyzing the partimento, the next step was to provide a simple accompaniment of block chords to the bass line. My own result is shown in Example 3.4. First, it must be noted that the figures clearly dictate which chords to place on top of the bass notes. However, for this exercise I found it effective to use the figures as a guidepost to

Partimento No. 5 (Chords)

Fenaroli Realized by S. Ramchandran



Example 3.4, Partimento no. 5, with block-chord realization

check my work, and instead relied on the rules of partimento to harmonize this bass line.⁶ I did this because I wanted to use partimento rules and did not want to think of the figures as "chord symbols" that would be calculated from the bass.

This realization was completed as follows: The thirds motive in the first three beats of the bass outlines a tonic to dominant progression that goes back to tonic. In terms of partimento rules, this bass movement represents a simple cadential movement in second position (this term is discussed below). As previously stated, partimento rules do not necessarily address the terms tonic or dominant (the development of these terms happened later), but through the study of cadences, the student would recognize these types of progressions. Further, although there is no written evidence, there was speculation that the Italian masters must have had some knowledge or understanding of these harmonic relationships.

The term "second position" indicates that the top voice of the chord progression begins on the third scale degree of the key. This would be A natural in the key of F major.⁸ These positions primarily exist as versions of the Rule of the Octave (RO), which has three positions. First position has the top voice beginning on the first scale degree, second position has the top voice beginning on the third scale degree and third position has the top voice beginning on the fifth scale degree. The bass motion leads to a cadence in mm. 2-3. Here, I chose to use a cadence with a fourth suspension in the upper voices.

⁶ More simply, I imagined that the figures were absent and that I was working with an un-figured partimento. I referred to the figures only if I was unsure of which direction to take.

⁷ See Chapter Two, 40.

⁸ Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento* 121.

The bass then continues in a fashion similar to the beginning, except this time it is transposed up a fifth. The B natural in the bass in m. 4 indicates that there is an exploration of the key of C major. This led me to use chords derived from the RO in C major. I used the RO according to Fenaroli for this and all subsequent partimenti realizations. Again, I used the rule of simple cadences in second position because the bass outlines a simple cadence in m. 5 in C major. The thirds motive continues from m. 5 into m. 6. Due to the tonicization of C major in the preceding cadence, I decided to start briefly in that key. However, I did not strictly utilize the RO in mm. 6-7. This is because I felt that an F major triad would be a better fit at this point than the 6/5 chord that the RO dictates on the fourth scale degree in the bass. The thirds motive seemed to imply a strong presentation of the subdominant here because it echoes the root-position, triadic movement of the first measure. A simple cadence in F major, then, follows in mm. 7-8.

Even though the last two beats of m. 7 predict a cadence in F major on the downbeat of m. 8, I chose instead to utilize the 6/5 chord that would normally occur on the fourth scale degree in the RO of C major. This is because the rising half-step figure from F natural to F sharp signifies that there will be some kind of movement to G major, and so this 6/5 chord in the upper voices can work in two ways. In terms of the RO, it can be a 6/5 chord in C major (which acts like a IV6) on the fourth scale-degree with the F natural in the bass, and it can be a 6/5 chord in G major (which acts like a V7) on the seventh scale degree with the F-sharp in the bass. 11 This is shown in Example 3.5.

⁹ see Fenaroli's *Regole*

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gjerdingen, Music in the Galant Style, 468.



Example 3.5 shows the usage of the 6/5 chord in mm. 7-8

This 6/5 chord with an F# sharp in the bass sets up a brief modulation to the key of G minor. The thirds motive returns in m. 9 in the bass. The F sharp here indicates a dominant in G minor that then resolves to a G minor chord. What follows in m. 10 is a cadence in G minor that utilizes a fourth suspension in the upper voices. The stepwise motion in the bass starting from the second beat of m. 10 into mm. 11-12 indicates that a harmonization according to the RO in G minor is appropriate. This segment concludes with a cadence in G minor that again utilizes a fourth suspension in the upper voices.

Scanning ahead to other segments of the partimento, it can be observed that a tonicization occurs in D minor in the second half of m. 14. This is clear because of the C sharps in measures 14 and 15, as well as the appearance of the alternating thirds motive that outlines the tonic and dominant in D minor. With this realization, the repeated eighthnote G-natural motive in the second beat of m. 13 can be understood as part of the RO in D minor, and *not* as a cadence in G minor. However, I chose to briefly substitute the RO in D major here, which explains the B natural in m. 13, as shown in Example 3.6. This was a creative decision to utilize modal mixture at this point in order to make what I felt was a more dynamic passage. In any case, this measure represents a shift in temporary



Example 3.6, m. 13 and the beginning of a shift to D major/minor

tonality from G minor to D major/minor. The C sharp on the downbeat of m. 14 indicates that this chord should be harmonized using the RO in D major/minor in second position. The chord then resolves to a D minor chord on the second beat of m. 14. D minor is then continued into m. 15.

The pitches of B natural and C natural in m. 16 indicate that the piece is now moving into the key area of C major. This becomes more evident if one scans ahead and



Example 3.7, mm. 14-18. Scanning ahead to m. 16 shows a shift in tonality

observes the outlining of the tonic and dominant in C major in measures 16 and 17. We can therefore shift to the RO in C major on the downbeat of m. 16 (Example 3.7). This continues until m. 18. Here, the C natural and the thirds motive in the second half of the

measure indicate that the piece is moving back to F major. I utilized the ascending RO in F major from measures 18 until the end. There is a cadence in m. 23 and a final cadence that utilizes a fourth suspension in the last two measures.

Polyphonic Realization

After the completion of the chordal accompaniment, I proceeded to write a piece based on Fenaroli's partimento by utilizing the technique of diminution. While a polyphonic texture is not mandatory, it is a textural choice that can be made when realizing a partimento. A more homophonic texture would be equally acceptable. It is the choice of texture that makes one partimento realization different from another, which is why a partimento serves as a useful basis for different types of fully-realized compositions.

I have found through exercises such as this one that diminution in partimento practice has certain parallels with species counterpoint. This is because as one voice moves rhythmically faster, contrapuntal figures for the remaining voices can be provided. Indeed, the instruction of diminution, which was an art in its own right during the Italian Renaissance, began to be absorbed into the instruction of strict counterpoint towards the end if the sixteenth century.¹²

Example 3.8 shows my final realization. For this realization, the bass line was kept intact and was treated as a *cantus firmus*. The upper voices of the block-chord realization provided the contrapuntal material that was used against the bass. There were in-

¹² Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 183.

Partimento No. 5

Fenaroli/Ramchandran



Example 3.8, Partimento no. 5, realized

stances where I made alterations in the chordal version in order to produce what I felt were more appropriate musical decisions in the polyphonic version. This is in line with the improvisatory nature of partimento practice, where the realization process is fluid and can have multiple solutions.

As a general rule for this exercise, the upper-most voice of the realization was taken from the top note of the chordal accompaniment. ¹³ The notes of the middle voice were taken from the inner voices of the chords, or those pitches not taken by the melody. The rhythm of the middle voice was written as a contrast against the upper and lower voices, as would normally be the practice in counterpoint writing. For instance, in the first measure, the melody is taken from the top notes of the chords of the corresponding measure of the block-chord realization. In m. 2, however, the melody assumes the values of the top two chord notes. The inner voice in both of these measures is constructed from the leftover pitches. Again, the rhythm of the inner voice(s) provides a contrast to the other two voices.

In m. 3, the melody is taken from the topmost chord tone, while the inner voice is taken from the bottom two chord tones. Passing tones were used in the inner voice in this measure to provide more melodic interest. Example 3.9 shows a side by side comparison of m. 3 as realized by a) block-chords and b) the polyphonic realization. Leaps between voices – in this case the alto and tenor voices – can either be kept intact by changing a harmonic interval to a melodic one, or be "filled in" through stepwise motion. For example, on the second beat of m. 3 in Example 3.9a, the harmonic interval of a third as ex-

¹³ The upper voice could also consist of a series of notes taken from the harmonic accompaniment. For instance, the top two notes of a chord might be written out horizontally in the top voice.



Example 3.9, a) block-chord realization and b) polyphonic realization of m. 3

pressed by the alto and tenor voices (F natural and A natural) becomes a melodic interval when the two voices are merged into one in Example 3.9b. The result is that a four-voice texture is reduced to three voices. However, on the third beat of m. 3 in Example 3.9a, the alto and tenor voices express the interval of a harmonic fourth. In this case, the G in the tenor voice can move by step to the C in the alto voice. The same is true for m. 4. On the second beat of m. 4, passing tones are again added, this time in the upper voice to connect the chord tones and to provide melodic interest. The inner voice in this measure "fills out" the G major and C major triads with the left-over notes of the block-chord. Due to the descending melodic line in m. 5, the harmonic voicing in m. 6 was moved from first to third position (the soprano note of the block-chord realization was changed from F natural to C natural for the first two beats of m. 6 in the polyphonic version) in order to accommodate for the change in register of the voices. The second half of m. 6 utilizes the same voicing as the original chordal accompaniment. The stepwise motion of the melody exists to connect the chord tones E natural and C natural. The melody in the first half of m. 7 is taken from the highest and middle chord tones while the second half utilizes only

the highest tone. The inner voice in m. seven utilizes the lowest chord tone in the first half and the lowest two chord tones in the second half.

Measures 8 and 9 use the top notes of the chordal accompaniment for melodic content while arpeggiating the remaining notes of the chords in the inner voice. In m. 10, I decided to do away with the suspension on the second and third beats of the block-chord realization and instead use a basic tonic to dominant cadential progression. At this point in the piece, I felt that the melody needed more rhythmic motion (see Example 3.10). The eighth-note motive on the first beat of m. 10 was taken from the top two voices of the chordal accompaniment. Most of the chord tones were used up in the form of eighthnotes. This included the G natural that would form the fourth suspension in the inner voice. In the polyphonic realization, the G natural acts more like a neighbor tone in the soprano. The result of this neighbor motion is that the suspension could not be realized. The same was true for m. 12. After the melodic half notes of m. 11, I felt that for the sake of rhythmic variety, the melody needed to move quickly again here. Having decided to put the melody in eighth notes in this m. meant that the suspension of the original chordal accompaniment in m. 12 could not be realized effectively.



Example 3.10, a) block-chord realization and b) polyphonic realization of m. 10

I completed the rest of the polyphonic realization in much the same manner. The block chords are used as a guide that predicts the polyphonic material in the upper voices. If a four-voice texture is desired, then one note of a given chord can be assigned to a particular voice. If a three-voice texture is desired, then two of the upper voices in the chordal texture can be condensed into one. Although it was not done in this example, the lower voices can be condensed as well if the bass is not treated as a *cantus firmus*. If the rhythm allows, intervals between voices can be "filled in" through step wise motion. The composer (or arranger) must judge how best to use the chordal material in a contrapuntal manner. The composer should also make sure to keep the original voicing intact so as to preserve proper voice leading. In certain areas, non-chord tones can be added to modify the texture of an existing realization based purely on the already-realized chordal accompaniment. These can be neighbor notes, appoggiaturas, passing tones.

Conclusion

Realizing a partimento from start to finish provided me with a solid understanding of the way that this particular partimento was constructed. I was able to a) observe and study melodic contour within the bass, b) study the implication and outlining of certain chords at certain specific moments, and c) draw conclusions as to why these "chord" moments occurred were they did – in contrast to the more stepwise motion in other parts of the bass line. Additionally, I observed harmonic pacing and the way that modulation and tonicization was handled and implied within the partimento. Specifically, I observed and

drew conclusions about the amount of time that could elapse before a modulation would be deemed acceptable to take place according to eighteenth-century musical practice (albeit in this one example). I also observed where and how those modulations would occur. These observations are important because if I choose to speed this process up (or slow it down) in my own compositions, I want to understand – in a general sense – the manner in which it was practiced in the eighteenth century. This could be considered a "control" from which to either deviate from or follow in my own work.

After having gathered this information through this exercise, my goal was to write original partimenti based on this and other existing partimenti to use in my own compositions. As I will outline in the next chapter, one aspect of my work that differs from traditional partimento practice is that while an eighteenth-century partimento forms the basis of the entire composition or improvisation – in that all of the information of the piece is derived from the partimento – it was my intention to use partimento technique as the basis for only a portion, or several portions, of a piece. I also wanted to fit partimento technique and the harmony that it implies into a musical fabric that would not have been utilized by composers in eighteenth-century Europe.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Lost City: Partimento Structures as a Compositional Technique

In this chapter, I will outline my approach to partimento and contemporary compositional techniques in *Lost City* (2020), a three-movement work for chamber ensemble consisting of flute, clarinet, oboe, horn, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, 2 percussion, piano, 2 violins, viola, cello and double bass. For this work, I wrote original partimenti, which I then realized in the manner outlined in Chapter Three. *Lost City* was composed for the Helix! New Music Ensemble at Rutgers University and the piece was performed as individual movements on different dates. The first movement was performed on April 28, 2019. The second was performed on December 13, 2019 and the third on April 26, 2020.

Lost City explores narrative as well as musical representations of historical time and the passage of time. I accomplish this by juxtaposing ancient elements alongside contemporary and forward-looking structures. With this juxtaposition in mind, I used the idea of a "Lost City" as an analogy for the music. Throughout the world, civilizations have been lost due to natural disasters, economic or social upheaval or war. Sometimes, so much time passes that we become unsure of where these places existed. What were the people like? How did they live and what did they believe? This work is an attempt to rediscover and experience these civilizations and their downfall in a broad, musical snapshot. The sound-images in the piece conjure moods, atmospheres and ancient structures. Partimento – as a lost musical technique – serves as a musical allegory to a lost civilization.

Not all of the material in *Lost City* was derived from partimento. Instead, the partimenti were constructed so that they could be inserted into the fabric of the piece in a seamless manner. Despite the fact that each movement as a whole did not stem from a single partimento, as would traditionally be the case, the technique played a crucial role as it was combined with material that was derived from more modern compositional techniques and sensibilities, particularly modality. I use the term modality to describe passages that utilize melodic and harmonic content derived from the seven diatonic modes. It also stands in contrast to the term "key" because these passages do not always use traditional harmonic progressions. I will refer to the partimenti that I wrote as "partimento-structures," since they tend to be short and lack enough developmental material to generate complete pieces on their own. One of my goals was to change the way we hear and experience the eighteenth-century textures that emerge from partimento by placing them in a new context.

Each movement will be discussed in terms of of four components: First, the overall form of each movement will be discussed. Second, thematic material, including themes, the development of themes and the harmonic accompaniment of melodic themes, will be examined. Melodic themes are especially significant because they are often a key component of the partimenti used in each movement. Third, I will present the partimenti that I wrote and discuss the way in which they were constructed. Fourth and finally, I will discuss how the partimenti were realized and how they fit into the fabric of each movement as a whole.

¹ See Stefan Kostka, *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth Century Music*, 2nd Edition (Saddle River, NJ:Prentice-Hall, 1999), 28.

Movement I, Brightly, with a mystique

The first movement is divided into two parts, Part A and Part B. Part A lasts from mm. 1-121 and Part B lasts from mm. 122-229. There is also a coda from m. 230 until the end. Both parts are divided into two sections: Section 1 and Section 2. Each of these sections contains material that is derived from two themes (four total themes). An outline of the organizational material from this movement is shown in Table 4.1. In this table, "Section 1a" and "Section 1b" refer to that part of the movement whose material is primarily derived from Themes 1 and 2. Likewise, "Section 2a" and "Section 2b" refer to that part of the movement whose material is primarily derived from Theme 3. Theme 4 only occurs in Section 2a and serves as a contrast to Theme 3. Material from both the Transition and Coda are freely derived, meaning that they are only slightly influenced by the other parts of the movement.

Part A (mm.1-121)		Part B (mm 122-229)	
Section 1a (mm. 1-42)	Theme 1 (m.1)	Section 1b (mm. 122-207)	Theme 1 (m. 122)
	Theme 2 (m.9)		Theme 2 (m. 130)
Section 2a (mm. 43-87)	Theme 3 (m. 43)	Section 2b (mm. 208-229)	Theme 3 (m. 191)
	Theme 4 (m. 88)		
Transition (mm. 88-121)		Coda (mm. 230-end)	

Table 4.1 Organization of movement 1

As mentioned above, Section 1a is comprised of Themes 1 and 2. Theme 1 is textural and is first played by the piano in Part A at the beginning of the piece (Example 4.1). This theme is "textural" because it does not possess any clear melodic content, but rather consists of an oscillating movement of chords combined with an eighth-note texture in the top voice. The harmony of this theme consists of an A-flat major chord with the added tones of a sixth and seventh in the upper voice. This harmony moves to a B-flat major chord with the added tones of a ninth and sixth in the third measure. The importance of this theme lies primarily in the establishment of harmonic color, which is expressed through the mode of A-flat Lydian. This mode gives the passage a feeling of weightlessness and mystery.



Example 4.1, Theme 1, mm. 1-9 as played by the piano

The sense of harmonic color is also achieved through the alternation between the two chords as well as the use of added color tones and eighth-note figuration. Theme 1 is juxtaposed with Theme 2 which is shown in Example 4.2. This theme first occurs in mm. 8-11. Each theme possesses its own, separate harmonic content, yet they occur simultaneously. The melodic content of Theme 2 is first carried by the oboe and first violin, and the accompaniment is played by the clarinet, horn and the rest of the strings. As in Theme 1, harmonic colorations in Theme 2 are established through the parallel movement of

chords in the accompaniment. Although it starts on an E-flat major chord, the resolution of the theme on an A-flat major chord further establishes the mode of A-flat Lydian.



Example 4.2, reduction of Theme 2, mm. 8-11.

The juxtaposition of the two themes is characterized by an overlap that occurs in mm. 15-17. This overlap can be seen most clearly in the piano part. The eighth-note figuration of Theme 1 is played in the right hand, while the parallel harmonic gesture of Theme 2 is played in the left hand. This gives the effect of a brief pandiatonicism, which again emphasizes aspects of color over functional harmony, where the timbral quality of the combined harmony becomes most important. The melodic portion of Theme 2 is developed slightly during a transitional section in mm. 26-38 that serves to move the modal area from A-flat Lydian to C Ionian. The eighth-note figuration closes out this section in the new mode in mm. 39-42.

Section 2a begins on m. 43. Example 4.3 shows a reduction of the first theme of this section, Theme 3. This theme is characterized by one primary phrase that occurs in the first three measures. This phrase outlines a C major triad in its opening statement. The accompaniment in this passage consists of triads and chords with color tones taken from the diatonic scale. For instance, the chord on beat two of m. 43 can be seen as a C major chord with added seventh. This moves to an F major chord with an added seventh and

ninth which occurs on the downbeat of m. 44. The harmonic language in this passage has tonal qualities, but as before, it is more coloristic than functional. The harmonic capacity of this passage can best be described as existing in the mode of C Ionian, rather than the key of C major, because there is no clear tonic to dominant functionality, and much of the melody is harmonized using tones that are either triadic or ambiguous seventh chord structures. Also, the main phrase of this section is completely diatonic in that it utilizes all seven tones of the Ionian mode (or major scale). Another feature of this theme is the alternation of time signatures. This alternation causes metric unpredictability in this passage and it contrasts with the more rhythmically driven quality of the preceding passage, particularly as it compares to the eighth-note figuration of Theme 1.



Example 4.3, reduction of Theme 3, mm. 43-49

Content from Theme 3 was used to create most of the partimento-derived material in this movement.² This was done in order to thematically connect the partimento-derived material to material in other parts of the movement. I felt that this would allow the partimento sections to exist more naturally and seamlessly within the rest of the piece. Exam-

² When addressing the partimento structures, I refer to measure numbers as they appear in the score whenever possible, not as they appear in the partimento structure in isolation, outside of the score.

ple 4.4 shows the partimento-structure that was used to generate the material in mm. 72-88. This partimento-structure presents a slight variation of the top voice in Example 4.3. The variation includes a partial outlining of the triad in the first measure (m.72) as well as a similar sixteenth-note rhythm that descends and resolves back to the tonic by m. 74. This structure shows a movement from the key area C major to B minor. Measures 72-76 were realized using the Rule of the Octave (RO) in C major. The G-sharp in m. 77 presented an opportunity to briefly move to the RO in A minor before returning to C major in m. 79. There is a stronger movement to A minor at m. 83 where the theme is transposed in that key. I continue to use the RO in A minor until the A-sharp in m. 85 causes a shift to the RO in B minor. Finally, a cadence in m. 88 completes the modulation to B minor.



Example 4.4, mvt. 1, partimento-structure 1, based on Theme 3, mm. 72-88

Measure 88 introduces Theme 4 (Example 4.5). This theme is characterized by an oscillation between a B minor triad and an E major triad with an added sixth. There is also an A minor color-chord that moves to an E major color-chord in m. 91. These chords are foreign to the B minor tonality established by the partimento-derived material and their presence has the effect of subverting expectations of key. The repetitive nature,



Example 4.5, reduction of Theme 4, mm. 88-91

harmonic content and rhythmic homophony of this theme all serve as a contrast to the partimento derived material that came before.

The next partimento-structure in Part A occurs at m. 99 and is played by the cello and bassoon. This partimento is shown in Example 4.6 and is written in two parts separated by four measures of rests.³ This partimento is not based on any theme; its purpose is to move the music to a new key area. In the first part (mm. 99-106), the bass moves in a way that allows for the preparation and resolution of ninth suspensions in the upper voices. This bass line is a sequential, ascending by a fourth and descending by a fifth. Following this sequence, Theme 4 returns in mm. 106-110, with the partimento-structure resuming in m. 111. Measures 111-114 use an ascending 9-8 schema in the upper voices. The



³ These rests occur in the cello and bassoon, where the partimento bass appears, but not in the rest of the ensemble.

partimento then moves to a long cadential schema in D major from mm. 115-119. The location of the partimento sections for the first movement are shown in Table 4.2.

Part A (mm.1-121)		Part B (mm 122-229)	
Section 2a (mm. 43-87)	Partimento Structure 1 (mm. 73-78)	Section 2b (mm. 208-229)	Partimento Structure 3 (mm. 208-229)
Transition (mm. 88-121)	Partimento Structure 2 (mm. 99-119)	Coda (mm. 230-end)	New material/Theme 4

Table 4.2 Location of partimento structures in the first movement

As described above in Table 4.1, Part B, Section 1b begins at m. 122. Section 1b differs from Section 1a in that it is more developmental and expands Themes 1 and 2. At m. 122, Theme 1 enters in the piano, this time presented in the mode of G Lydian after the cadence in D major at the end of Part A. Since they both share the same key signature, G Lydian was substituted for D major as the new key (modal) area.

Theme 3 returns at this pint, this time in the mode of B Ionian. This theme is developed for a few more measures until a new partimento structure appears at m. 208 (Example 4.7). As with the first partimento section, content in this partimento is derived from Theme 3. The mode of B Ionian then moves to the key of B minor. A variant of Theme 3 can be observed in mm. 211-212, this time in the new key of B minor. Other variants of the theme occur again in mm. 216-217 and 218-219. The RO in B minor is employed from mm. 208-213, moving to the RO in G major from mm. 214-217, and then moving to the RO in C major from mm. 217-219. There is a series of bass suspensions in C major

from mm. 220-224. The RO in D major is employed at m. 226, then in G major immediately after in m. 227. Finally, there is a cadence in G minor from mm. 229-230.



Example 4.7, mvt. 1, partimento structure 3, mm.208-229

The section from mm. 230 until the end can be labelled a coda, with some thematic material taken from Theme 4. This movement concludes with a return to modality characterized by an alternation between G Dorian and F-sharp Dorian. At. m. 251, the oboe begins a melody that traverses both modalities. This melody is then traded by the ensemble until the end of the movement.

Movement II, Andantino

The second movement of *Lost City* is also divided into two sections which can be labeled Part A and Part B. Part A lasts from mm. 1-53 and Part B lasts from mm. 54-end. An outline of this movement is shown in Table 4.3. In contrast to the first movement, this

movement contains only one primary theme, shown in Example 4.8. Additionally, Part A is primarily modal, while the material of Part B is generated by a partimento structure that possesses a much clearer minor/major tonality.

Part A (mm.1-53)	Part B (mm 54-99)	Part B' (mm. 100-end)
Modal	Partimento	Modal/Partimento

Table 4.3 Organization of movement 2



Example 4.8, mvt. 2, primary theme, mm.3-4

The primary theme is characterized by an ascending stepwise motion spanning the interval of an octave over two measures. In the first measure, the theme rises to a fifth, from C natural to G natural. In the second measure, it rises a fourth, from F natural to C natural. Within these two measures, there is a clear tonic to dominant motion in the first measure and subdominant to tonic in the second measure. This theme is immediately followed by the secondary theme, which is shown in Example 4.9. In contrast to the primary theme, the secondary theme descends, spanning the interval of a tenth. As with the primary theme, the movement is stepwise, with the exception of a dow nward leap of a major



Example 4.9, mvt. 2, secondary theme, mm.5-7

third in the second beat of m.5 and a downward leap of a fourth in the second beat of m. 6.

Part A begins with the introduction of the primary theme in C Aeolian. This mode is confirmed by the absence of the major dominant of G major and by extension, the absence of any B natural pitches that would constitute a leading tone, and therefore infer the key of C minor. C Aeolian continues until m. 19, where a transition to the new mode of F Aeolian begins. This new mode is established in m. 25 through the slow introduction of D-flats. There is also a C major chord with a flatted thirteenth in m. 24. This chord acts as a colored C dominant chord that helps to set up the mode of F Aeolian. The shift to F Aeolian is confirmed with the appearance of the primary theme in that mode in mm. 25-26. The primary theme occurs again at m. 30, this time in the mode of G Aeolian before moving to E-flat Aeolian at m. 33. The secondary theme returns at m. 34 and begins to alternate with the primary theme in mm. 33-34. At m. 44, the primary theme goes through a number of chromatic alterations that are developmental in nature. The secondary theme returns in m. 50. This is a transitional section that serves to carry the movement towards a cadence in C major at m. 54.

At this point, Part B begins with the introduction of the partimento structure. The organization of this movement differs from the first in that it has only one partimento

structure. The choice to use one structure came about through a desire to not "break up" the partimento section as was done in the prior movement. I wanted to create one long segment with uninterrupted material derived from a partimento. In doing this, I was able to establish two distinct and contrasting sections of the movement: one derived from modality and the other derived from partimento.

Example 4.10 shows the partimento structure from the second movement. As with partimento structure 1 in the first movement, there are some clef changes. However, one feature that is different from the other partimenti is the use of figures. Part B begins with the primary theme in the bass in the key of C major (m. 54). This section of the partimento is realized in the score through the use of the RO in C major from mm. 54-58. At m. 59, there is a shift to the RO in A minor. The brief transition to A minor occurs in mm. 59-65. At the end of m. 65, the RO in D major is employed. There is a return to the key of D major through the cadential motion in mm. 67-68. At m. 70, a descending conjunct motion in the bass allowed for the use of a descending 7-6 schema until the end of m. 71. I chose to add figures at this point in order to specify the type of schema to employ. As stated in Chapter Three, without figures, the stepwise motion in the bass could imply the use of the Rule of the Octave as well.

From mm. 72-74, there is a long cadence in D major. At m. 74, the primary theme switches to the upper voice. Because of this switch, I created a contrapuntal line for the lower voice. This accounts for the two voices in the staff in that section. In my research into partimento practice, I have observed that whenever the motive appears in the upper voice, the author of the partimento added counterpoint in order to provide an accompa-



Example 4.10, mvt. 2, partimento structure, mm. 54-100

niment below. It is my understanding that this was done in order to make it easier for the improviser because improvising strict counterpoint is difficult. As a result, passages requiring strict counterpoint were provided. In instances where two voices were given, the improvisor would simply perform those voices without adding anything else. In the case of my composition, for those sections of partimento structures that contain two voices, only those two voices appear in the finished composition (with some occasional instrument doubling).

Measures 74-79 contain counterpoint that reverses the motion of the primary theme in the upper voices. Instead of moving up, the theme moves down. This passage serves to transition the music into the key of B minor. This key is established in m. 80, where the primary theme returns in the bass. The accompaniment for mm. 80-82 was created using the RO in B minor. The ascending chromatic bass in mm. 83-84 allows for the use of a Fenaroli progression where the bass ascends from scale degree 5 up to scale degree 8.4

Measures 85-88 allow for a partimento completion that utilizes bass suspensions. I provided figures in this instance, but they are not strictly necessary as the ties in the bass indicate that a bass suspension schema should be employed in such a situation. There is a cadential motion in m. 90 that sets up a tonicization of A major in the following measure. The primary theme returns in the upper voice in m. 91 and then in the lower voice in mm. 92-93. The theme returns in the bass in m. 94, this time in the key A minor. The RO in A minor is utilized to provide accompaniment from mm. 94-96. At m. 97, the RO in C ma-

⁴ Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 143-144.

jor is used. A cadence in the last two measures establishes C major, returning us to the original key of the partimento structure.

At m. 100, after the cadence in C major, the primary theme returns in the upper voice where it is harmonized using parallel chords. The anticipated key of C major shifts immediately to the mode of C Mixolydian, subverting expectations of a C major resolution. This moment signals the end of the movement in three ways. First, there is a return to modality that recalls Part A. Second, there is the return of the secondary theme at m. 105. Lastly, a long cadence taken from Valente is employed in mm. 133-116.5 The use of this cadence serves to place partimento practice within a surrounding context of modality. These three elements serve to tie together Parts A and B and bring the movement to a conclusion.

Movement III, Allegro Moderato

Unlike the other two movements, the final movement is divided into three parts with an introduction. The musical material revolves around the development of two separate themes that are joined together at the end. Theme 1 has a homophonic texture. Theme 2 has a more polyphonic texture that utilizes partimento. Table 4.4 shows how the third movement is organized.

A reduction of Theme 1 is shown in Example 4.11. It begins in m. 6 after a short introduction provided by the snare drum. The melodic portion of this theme is in G major.

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⁵ Ibid, 110.

Introduction (mm.1-24)	Part A (mm 25-99)	Part B (mm. 100-154)	Part C (mm. 155- end)
Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 2a	Themes 1 and 2
(Modal)	(Partimento)	(Modal)	(Modal/Partimento)

Table 4.4 Organization of movement 3

The first phrase begins on m. 6 on the third scale degree of the tonic and moves in m. 11 to the fifth scale degree. It moves back to the tonic by m. 14, outlining a progression of I-V-I. However, the harmonic accompaniment does not entirely draw upon this tonic to dominant relationship. Instead, it is made up of various polychords and other chords with color tones. For instance, the harmony in m. 6 combines a G major triad with an E minor triad, while m. 7 combines an E minor triad with an A minor triad. The first beat of m. 8 combines a D major triad with a G major triad and so on. The result of combining the melodic I-V-I outline with polychords in the accompaniment is that the passage as a whole has the sense of being in the mode of G Ionian rather than the key of G major. The



Example 4.11, mvt. 3, reduction of Theme 1, mm. 6-23

sense of key becomes ambiguous and is made present only though the skeleton-outlining provided by the melody.

Theme 2 is presented in m. 25. This theme is best characterized as a melodic entity and is shown in Example 4.12. It is introduced by the oboe in the key of E minor. The first theme ends ambiguously in G Ionian, but the second begins in the relative minor key (of G major). This theme is developed in sections of the movement that use partimento and also sections that do not use partimento. In the case of those sections that use partimento, the theme outlines various chords clearly and also serves as a bass line. The first measure outlines the I and V chords, while the second outlines IV. The third measure outlines the I chord and the fourth measure, the V chord.



Example 4.12, mvt. 3, Theme 2, mm. 25-28

There is one primary partimento structure in the third movement and one secondary structure. Theme 2 provides the basis for the primary partimento structure (Example 4.13). It appears directly after the first theme establishes a context of polychords and chords with color tones. A significant aspect of the material developed from the partimento structure is that it is juxtaposed with a solo passage in the first percussion part. A setup of three tom-toms, two bongos, three wood blocks and a splash cymbal accompany the eighteenth-century material in a manner similar to a concerto soloist, where both parts are often competing for attention and primacy. The overall result is a thick and complex tex-



Example 4.13, mvt. 3, primary partimento structure, mm. 25-99

ture where the percussion compliments the rhythmic qualities of the counterpoint, while also adding its own patterns of sonic color to the passage.

The piano has a subtle but significant role in this movement, particularly in the primary partimento section. Its accompaniment consists of chords based on the partimento rules, but with various color tones, such as ninths and thirteenths. I was not concerned with strict voice leading in the piano part in these passages and parallel harmonies consisting of fifths and octaves were regularly employed. My intention was to create passages that where slightly irregular and unexpected. The result was that the completed partimento section with piano felt at once familiar and new.

At m. 25, the texture becomes much more polyphonic, in contrast to the homophony of the opening. Looking at the partimento structure, it can be observed that Theme 2 is first played in the upper voice. The corresponding musical content in the chamber orchestra is taken directly from mm. 25-28, without any added voices. A third voice is added in m. 30, when Theme 2 appears in the bass. The material for the other voices in mm. 30-38 comes through a completion of the partimento using the RO in E minor. The ascending chromatic motion in mm. 39-40 allows for the use of an ascending chromatic partimento rule in E minor where scale degree 5 in the bass moves to scale degree 8 in the bass. Scanning ahead to mm. 40 and 41, movement towards A minor can be observed, allowing for the use of the RO in A minor from mm. 41-45. The F-sharp in m. 45 allows for a movement to the key of G major. The RO in G major is used in mm. 46-49. At mm. 49-50, there is a cadence that establishes G major as the new key.

To introduce the new key, Theme 2 returns in G major in the topmost voice. In the partimento structure, I wrote a counterpoint to the theme. Both the theme and its counterpoint were used directly in the completion of the partimento and are played by the trumpet and trombone in the full score. This is followed by another statement of Theme 2 in the tenor voice in mm. 54-56, this time carried by the horn. The upper voices were developed through the use of the RO in G major. The theme then appears again in the bass voice in mm. 57-60.

Additional chromatic motion appears in mm. 61-64. In this segment, I used one of Fenaroli's rules that allows for an ascending chromatic motion where scale degree 3 in the bass (m. 61) moves to scale degree 6 in the bass (m. 64). Measure 65 sees a return to the RO in E minor. Scanning ahead, the F natural pitches indicate a movement to another key. With this understanding, the RO in C major can be employed from mm. 67-69. The cadence in C major at mm. 69 and 70 allows for Theme 2 to be presented in that key in the alto voice. I wrote a contrapuntal line above this theme in the soprano voice that is shown in the partimento structure and appears in its entirety in the oboe part in the score. The tied C natural in m. 82 in the partimento indicates the need for a bass suspension.

The RO in C major returns in mm. 85-89. There is a shift to the RO in A minor at the end of m. 89 that continues until m. 96 where there is a cadence in A minor. The partimento structure concludes with a statement of Theme 2 in the upper voice. Both the statement of the theme and its contrapuntal accompaniment is carried by the piano in the score.

The movement returns to modality in m. 100, where they key of A minor gives way to the A Aeolian mode. This subtle distinction is made through the emphasis of the

minor dominant harmony of E minor in mm. 101, 104 and 105. To complement this modal shift, the melodic content presents several variations of Theme 2. One of these variations is shown in Example 4.14, where the oboe carries the melody at m. 100. This melody takes most of its character from the first two measures of Theme 2, where the triplet eighth-note figures of that theme are condensed to mostly dotted quarter notes in the variation. The melody is then transferred to the flute in m. 105. The mode shifts to F Aeolian from mm. 116-131. At m. 132, Theme 2 appears in its entirety in the flute, briefly moving into F minor (with the help of the major V of C major in m. 135). By m. 142, the movement has shifted into the mode of E-flat Dorian.



Example 4.14, variation of Theme 2 in m. 100 as played by the oboe

The return of Theme 1 in m. 155 completes a movement to the mode of A-flat Ionian. Then, the piano leads a tonicization of F minor from mm. 173-177 before a small partimento structure in mm. 178-191 transitions the music back to A-flat Ionian by m. 192. A variation on Theme 1 continues until m. 208. Theme 2 returns in the flutes at this point and is juxtaposed with Theme 1, resulting in a passage that is not in any mode or key. Theme 2 continues to be played against Theme 1 by various instruments until a cadential structure in A-flat major is reached at m. 229. Segments of Theme 2 occur in various instruments from mm. 230-243 before the tutti at m. 244 on Theme 2 ends the piece.

Conclusion

Utilizing partimento structures has become a significant part of my compositional process. This approach has allowed me to include polyphonic textures in a more fluid manner than, both in terms of composing these textures and adding them to my compositions. It has also given me new ways to present and develop motives. Motives that appear in a non-partimento section of a piece can be re-introduced and developed further in partimento sections. The reverse can be true as well, as motives introduced in partimento sections can be developed elsewhere in new contexts. Additionally, partimento has added another avenue with which to introduce shifts in mode and key, where I can use partimento to move to new key areas. Once a new key is established, I can continue forward using a different compositional technique.

A key objective of *Lost City* was to create a context for musical content developed from partimento that was different from the context that one would find in an eighteenth-century piece. The idea was to create a context that changes they way that the eighteenth-century material was heard and experienced. I achieved this primarily by combining contemporary modality with partimento. The juxtaposition of these two techniques resulted in the subversion of harmonic and melodic expectations. This subversion led to a new frame of reference with which to experience the tonal qualities inherent in the material developed from the partimento structures.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Conclusion

Adapting the compositional and improvisational tools from the partimento tradition has become an important part of my compositional process. Often, I seek to establish the role of partimento when beginning a new piece. I try and imagine where and how a partimento might fit within the overall structure. For instance, should the partimento be a significant structural and organizational element, or should it be used only to add a polyphonic texture in a simple, decorative sense? Following this study of partimento, I have found other areas that I would like to explore, related to both composing and teaching.

Although partimento was primarily an art form intended to develop improvisational skills, I have found that there are several compelling ways that it can be used for composition. Sanguinetti imagines an interesting way in which the construction of partimenti may have played a role in eighteenth-century compositional practice. The process begins by creating a bass "skeleton" where various schemata are combined in a simple but fluid manner. Then, through a multistep process that includes elaborating and refining the bass through diminution, the bass can be made into a more musical structure. This is followed by the process of realizing the bass until the desired multi-voice texture is reached. I see this as a good model for constructing future works that utilize partimento.

Lost City employed bass lines with mostly stepwise motion. Moving forward, I plan to explore the use of disjunct bass motions and some ascending and descending

¹ Sanguinetti, The Art of Partimento, 342-326.

chromatic schemata. At the time of composing *Lost City*, I had not yet gained the familiarity with which to use these more advanced schemata in a composition. I would also like to explore more remote key areas. This would provide more freedom and fluidity in combining partimento and non-partimento sections of a work, as more choices in key areas allows for greater flexibility in harmonic movement. One way I can continue to develop these skills would be to work towards realizing more advanced partimenti and partimento fugues from books four through six of Fenaroli's *Regole*.

Within the scope of this study, I have chosen to focus primarily on combining partimento with contemporary applications of modal music. However, there are other applications that I would like to explore as well, such as combining partimento with a minimalist aesthetic. Some minimalist textures were explored briefly in the first movement of *Lost* City. However, in order delve more deeply into this subject, I have imagined a three-fold approach that can be taken in order to apply partimento towards minimalism-based texture. First, shorter partimenti, or smaller segments of a partimento, can be used as a basis for generating material, for example a bass line consisting of three to five notes can be used. This bass can then be harmonized and repeated as needed. Second, introductions of new bass notes or changes in the upper voices can be used to develop a slowly shifting texture that is characteristic of this aesthetic. Finally, diminution can be employed in the upper voices as a means of shifting the texture. The resulting sound-world would be similar to John Adams' *Phrygian Gates*.

Another approach to using partimento in a minimalist context would be to develop certain motivic elements of a partimento. A motive as expressed in either the bass or upper voice of a partimento can be used as the basis of a large work. This approach would not be directly connected to partimento as it relates to generating material, but rather it would use a partimento as a jumping off point for something else. A repeating counter-motive can be employed also, either based on traditional rules or more recent, contrapuntal behavior that does not adhere to the use of traditional voice leading and major and minor scales.² This counter-motive can juxtaposed against the original motive. The motives and counter-motives would most likely have to be diatonic, although non-diatonic textures, like those that sometimes exist in minor-key, or modal contexts can be explored. Terry Riley's *In C* is a good example of this sound world, where the piece begins using a diatonic C major scale but then switches to the mode of C Lydian.

Other areas that I would like to explore include combining partimento with electronics. Some ideas for pieces that combine instruments and electronics include the following four techniques: One, an automated synthesizer patch can perform one or more of the voices in a polyphonic texture. Two, the electronics can include a fixed portion that can be characterized by non-pitched, *concrète* sounds. These sounds can form a backdrop to the more tonal elements that will be handled by the instruments. Three, the instruments performing material developed from partimenti can be subjected to real-time signal processing creating subtle and not-so-subtle timbral changes. Four, partimento methods can be used in sound synthesis based on the harmonic series. In this case, the harmonic series can be used to form new rules with which to realize a given partimento. For instance, the

² For more recent contrapuntal "behavior," see Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms* (mvt. 2); Bartok, *Music for Strings Percussion and Celeste* (mvt. 1); Ligeti, *Atmospheres*; etc.

tials can be used as modulating frequencies (or vice-versa). This approach can be used to construct a piece based around frequency modulation (FM) synthesis, reflecting the ways in which composers developed new approaches to exploring sound spectra in the twentieth century. For example John Chowning's *Stria* creates new harmonic relationships based on the golden mean.

Another goal of mine is to use the research in this study to develop a college-level course in partimento with the aim of encouraging students to use the technique for their own creative purposes. Because of its more practical nature, partimento is a powerful pedagogical tool for teaching composition, accompaniment, improvisation and counterpoint. It can give students the tools to create intricate, through-composed works and improvisatory structures. Partimento instruction would be ideal not only for students interested in eighteenth-century European musical practice, but also for those interested in more modern-day compositional practices such as song writing, popular music, musical theater, film music and interactive music. It can help reinforce general musical knowledge, and through its practicality students can immediately begin to see the relationships between motives, bass lines, harmony and counterpoint. These relationships can be viewed within a creative context through partimento's emphasis on composition, improvisation and performance. From a pedagogical perspective, partimento's strength is that it stands at a natural intersection of diverse musical disciplines, from history and theory, to composition, improvisation and performance. This may be the reason that it was originally such a successful teaching tool. Perhaps though modern instruction, it can be successful again as a means of helping students reach their musical goals.

APPENDIX: Lost City for chamber orchestra

Sameer A. Ramchandran

Lost City for chamber orchestra

2020 Roverbird Music

Instrumentation:

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Bassoon

Horn in F

Trumpet in C

Trombone

Percussion 1

Castenets

Slap Stick

Chimes

Temple Blocks

3 Tom-Toms

2 Bongos

3 Wood Blocks

Splash Cymbal

Percussion 2

Vibraphone

Tam-Tam

Glockenspiel

Wind Chimes

The following percussion instruments are shared: triangle, snare drum, cymbals, tambourine, suspended cymbal and bass drum

Piano

2 Violins

Viola

Cello

Bass

Performance Notes:

Score is a transposing score

All trills are whole tone trills unless otherwise noted

Indicates a snap pizzicato or Bartok pizzicato. The string should be plucked vertically so that it snaps and rebounds of the fingerboard

Horns are written without a key signature and sound a fifth lower than written

- + For horn, indicates that the horn is to be played stopped
- Also for horn, indicates that the horn is to be played open

sul pont. Indication for strings to play with the bow near the bridge so as to bring out the higher harmonics

With regard to string harmonics, fingerings and string numbers are given in order to achieve the desired sounding pitch.

All muted passages in the brass should be played with straight mutes unless otherwise noted.



With regard to woodwinds, unmeasured tremolo is meant to be played with the flutter-tongue technique.



Indicates long pause or silence



Indicates short pause or silence

For Percussion:

All events should be allowed to vibrate unless otherwise noted.

For the tambourine, a trill symbol means to play with the thumb-roll technique

For percussion 1, for the designation "Set-Up A," the following key is used in the third movement:



Program Note and Performance History:

Throughout the world, there have been civilizations that have been lost due to natural disasters, economic or social upheaval or war. Sometimes, so much time passes that we are unsure if some of these places ever existed. What were the people like? How did they live and what did they believe? This work is an attempt to re-discover and experience these civilizations and their downfall in a broad, musical snap-shot. In a narrative sense, it is a way of getting as close to myth as we can while allowing sound-images to conjure moods, atmospheres and ancient structures in the hope that we can come to an understanding. After all, perhaps one day ours will be Lost City.

This work was performed as separate movement on three different dates by Helix! New Music Ensemble at the Richard H. Shindell Choral Hall In New Brunswick, New Jersey. The first movement was performed on April 28th, 2019, Kynan Johns, dir. The second movement premiered on December 3, 2019, Brent Chancellor, cond. The third movement premiered on March 3, 2020, Brent Chancellor, cond.

Lost City for sinfonietta







































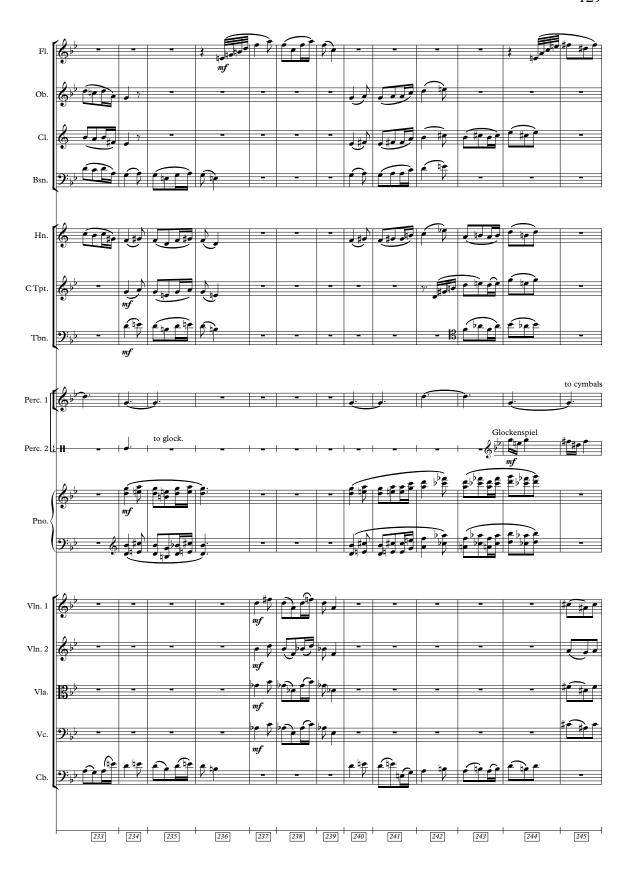






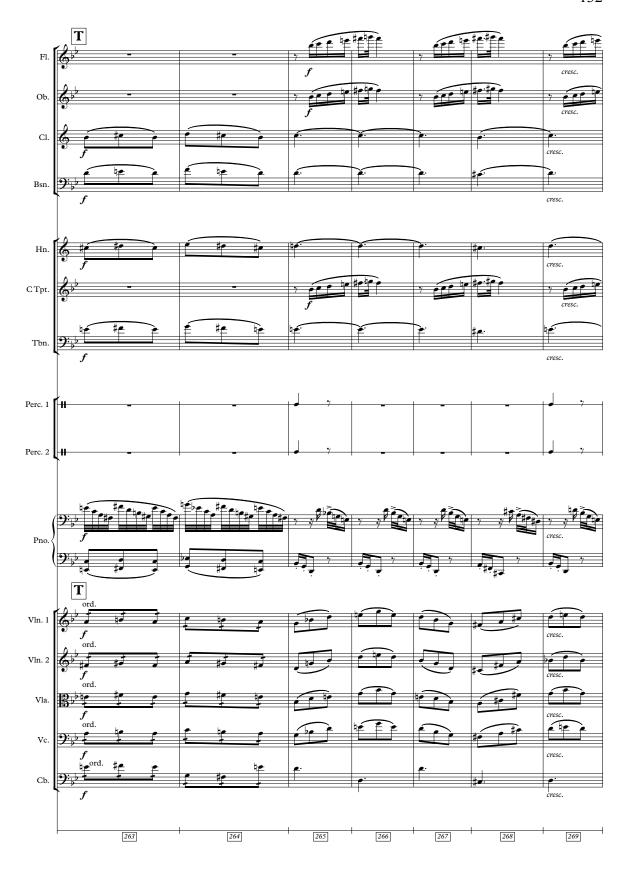




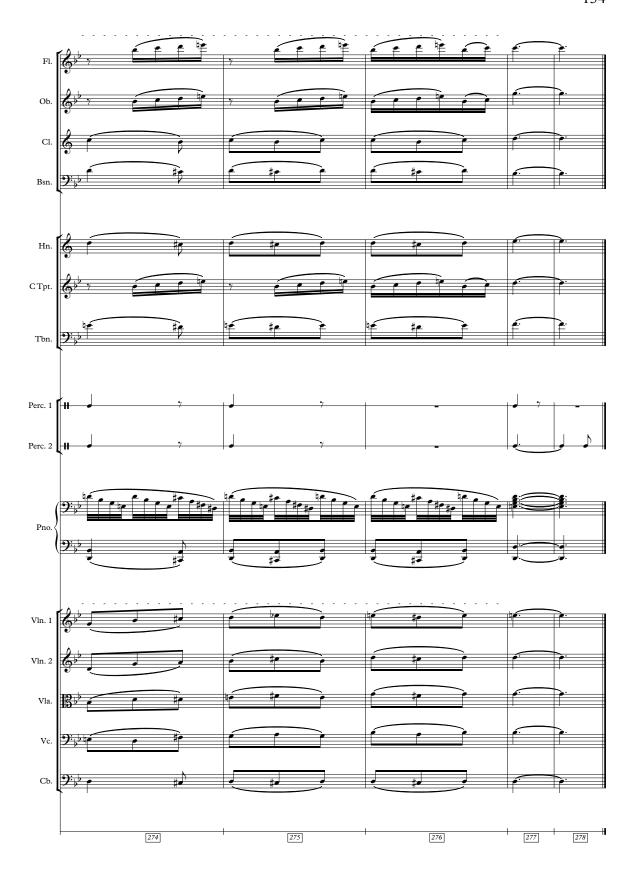


















































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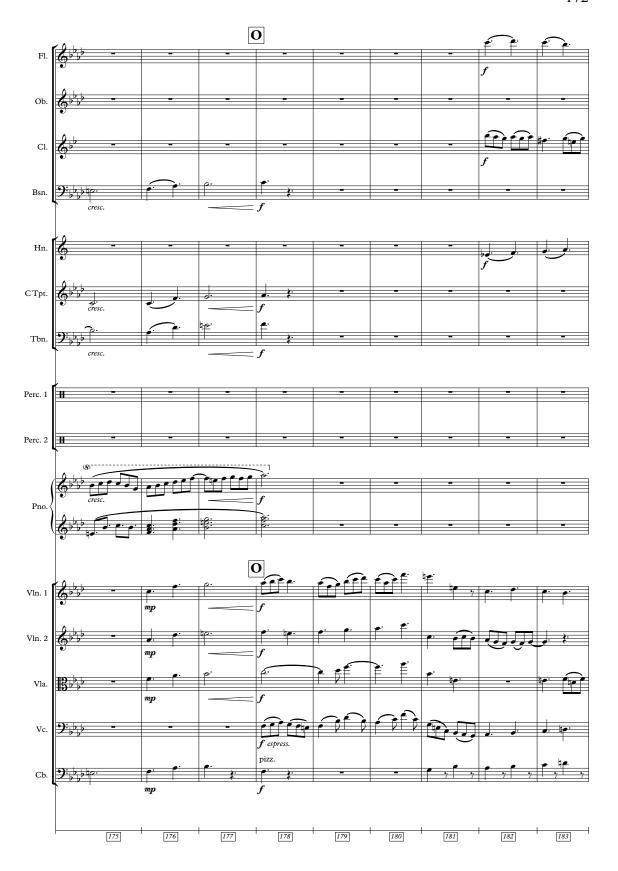


























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