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AN EXAMINATION OF THE NEO-CLASSICAL WIND WORKS OF IGOR STRAVINSKY: THE "OCTET FOR WINDS" AND "CONCERTO" FOR PIANO AND WINDS

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE NEO-CLASSICAL WIND WORKS OF IGOR STRAVINSKY: THE *OCTET FOR WINDS* AND *CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND WINDS*

By

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ABSTRACT

AN EXAMINATION OF THE NEO-CLASSICAL WIND WORKS OF IGOR STRAVINSKY: THE *OCTET FOR WINDS* AND *CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND WINDS*

By

Scott Charles Lubaroff

In each century throughout the history of music, there have been a few individual composers who have asserted so great an influence that they are thought by many to have been revolutionary. Their innovations were largely responsible for re-evaluation of the language and syntax of music, whether it be in regards to form, texture, orchestration, or content. Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) was clearly one of the most important and influential composers of the twentieth century. He shocked the music world with the 1913 premiere of *Le Sacre du Printemps* and again defied expectations in Paris in 1922 with his one-act opera buffa, *Mavra*. Stravinsky is widely recognized as one of the leaders in the neo-classical movement beginning around 1920. His innovations and leadership in this move away from the ideals of the Romantic period as well as those of impressionism and expressionism are the most crucial to elements of a discussion of his *Octour pour instruments a vents* (1923) and *Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments* (1924).

Work on the *Octet* began in late 1922 and completed in the spring of 1923. It was originally published by Edition Russe de Musique in 1924 and then again in 1952 in a revised version by Boosey & Hawkes. The first

performance of the *Octet* was conducted by the composer himself and given on October 18, 1923 at a Koussevitsky Concert at the Paris Opera House. Serge Koussevitsky was so pleased with the initial performance of the work that he encouraged Stravinsky to write another work for one of his concerts the following year, and so was born the *Concerto for Piano and Winds*.

Beyond biographical information and discussion of the early compositional life of Stravinsky, this document will focus on the position of the *Octet* and *Concerto* as pivotal within his body of works, both from the standpoint of orchestration and instrumentation as well as formal compositional practice. In the years leading up to these two works, Stravinsky began moving away from the grandiose productions such as *Le Sacre* and *Petrushka*. Not only did he start showing preference for works of a smaller scale, but also made a conscious move toward writing for wind instruments and piano for their clarity and precision. Always alert, and seeking new outlets and idioms, Stravinsky also gradually began displaying tendencies toward the neo-classical ideals midway into the second decade of the century.

The *Octet* is seen by some, and is presented here, as the completion of this transition. Along with background and descriptive information on both pieces, a full analysis of the *Octet* is also provided. This is followed by a comparative analysis of the *Concerto* relative to the *Octet*. The aim of both of these descriptions is to solidify the positions of these two compositions as the pivotal works in Stravinsky's output during this period of his career.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAMBER WINDS AND THE PRE-HISTORY OF STRAVINSKY'S *OCTET* AND *CONCERTO* FOR PIANO AND WINDS

The history of what we now frequently categorize as chamber winds or wind ensembles is literally centuries old and responsible for a rich and varied body of literature. For several decades, however, this part of the repertoire was underutilized at best, and in many cases nearly ignored in most Western wind performance programs. Beginning in the latter half of the twentieth-century, wind programs at the American college and university level began to change their programming practices, rediscovering many of the "hidden gems" that had lay dormant for years. In more recent years much of the great music written for wind ensembles of a flexible and reduced instrumentation has also found its way onto the programs of the finest professional symphony orchestras.[1] This document is centrally concerned with two of the twentieth century's finest chamber wind compositions and their place in wind ensemble repertoire: the *Octour pour instruments a vents* (1923) and *Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments* (1924) by Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971).

To enable the best possible understanding of the place of the *Octet* and *Concerto* within the modern repertoire, it is first important to clarify the wind

[1] The phrase "reduced instrumentation" is used in here in contrast to the more standardized instrumentation of a full concert band.

ensemble traditions and practices that set the stage for their generation. The wind ensemble as a distinct and specific musical entity dates back to the eighteenth-century court of Louis XIV and beyond.[2] The double-reed ensembles called *Les Grands Hautbois*, and their Prussian counterparts, the *Hautboisten* bands represented the beginning of the formal tradition for ensembles of wind instruments. These were generally groups consisting of pairs of different sized oboes, bassoons, cornetts, and trombones that served to provide music for a wide variety of occasions: state, ceremonial, private, public, chamber, and chapel.[3]

Les Grands Hautbois and the *Hautboisten* bands led to the development of the first true concert wind ensemble, and that which remains the foundation of the present-day chamber-wind tradition, the *Harmoniemusik* ensemble. These were typically wind ensembles consisting of paired instruments: oboes, bassoons, clarinets, and horns. They might occasionally be augmented through the addition of instruments such as flute, basset-horn, trumpet, or trombone. While they sometimes ranged from six to twelve musicians, the typical harmoniemusik ensemble was a wind octet.

The wind repertoire enjoyed tremendous growth in the years surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century. This was in no small part due to the great demand for the new harmoniemusik groups in the upper levels of Austrian, Bohemian, and Hungarian society. Well-known composers and arrangers began

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[2] There were, in fact, wind ensembles of various sorts before this time, including watchtower musicians (waits), trumpet ensembles, and municipal and town bands. It was in the court of Louis XIV, however, that the first demand for a wind ensemble of a specified instrumentation was developed.

to be drawn to writing for them as well. Johann Wendt was perhaps the most prolific of those who produced nearly literal transcriptions of popular opera music of the day for these octets. Mozart composed several wind divertimenti and serenades, including that which is acclaimed by many as being the greatest composition ever written for winds: his *Serenade* No. 10 in B-flat Major, K. 361.[4]

Beyond the original traditions chartered through harmoniemusik, in the decades to come their initial popularity prompted notable composers to continue the musical and timbral possibilities inherent in the wind ensemble. Some of the composers that contributed significant works for winds in the remainder of the nineteenth century included Richard Strauss, Anton Dvorak, Franz Krommer, Gustav Mahler, Richard Wagner, Charles Gounod, Hector Berlioz, and Edvard Grieg.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, however, the emphases and philosophies within the world of performing wind ensembles began to evolve, especially those of the Western world. The emphasis in regards to instrumentation shifted more toward larger concert bands and military bands with more standardized instrumentation, brass bands, and the like. In respect to programming, the focus moved more toward music that was stereotypically utilitarian in nature. Bands were often called upon to rouse patriotic public sentiment or provide entertainment at outdoor events and parades.

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[3] David Whitwell, *The History and Literature of the Wind Band and Wind Ensemble*, Vol. 2, "The Renaissance Wind Band and Wind Ensemble," (Northridge, CA: WINDS, 1984), p. 39.

[4] Mozart's K. 361 was written for an inflated harmoniemusik ensemble of thirteen: two oboes, two B-flat clarinets, two basset horns, four horns, two bassoons, and a contrabass

Consequently, the traditions of the artistic chamber-wind ensemble were pushed more to the background.

It would be inaccurate to assert that no music of artistic merit was produced for smaller wind ensembles during the first half of the twentieth century, nor would it be accurate to contend that none of this music was performed in the West. A great deal of it, though, did have to wait, mostly under-appreciated, and certainly less than well known to a great many wind conductors. It was not until change was affected through a combination of substantial forces, influential individuals, and fortuitous circumstances that the eyes of many wind conductors were reopened to this portion of literature.

Mid-way through the twentieth century the leaders in the American wind conducting profession became more focused on higher musical ideals. In an effort to attract the best composers to help develop a wind repertoire of the greatest artistic merit, many conductors began to explore the concepts of flexible instrumentation. To that point, the fact that a band had been linked to a standardized instrumentation was one of the reasons that composers shied away from the ensemble. To them this restriction meant that they would be required to adapt the sounds that they imagined so that they stayed within pre-established boundaries. This new idea of flexible instrumentation was more reflective of orchestral tradition. It allowed for the composers to retake control over the music, in that they could again write for the instrumentation that they deemed appropriate rather than that which someone else had determined.

At the same time the wind repertoire began to expand, conductors were also rediscovering much of the chamber-wind and wind ensemble literature from the previous 150 years, including Stravinsky's *Octet* and *Concerto* for piano and winds. Since that time, both of these works have earned wide acclaim as two of the most important in the wind repertoire. Given that, the purpose of this document is to present them as pivotal in Stravinsky's body of work as well. As a musician and composer, after his *Rite of Spring* Stravinsky went through a fascinating progression over a period of approximately ten years in which his evolutions of orchestration, instrumentation, and formal design all came together with the composition of the *Octet* and the successive *Concerto* for piano and winds.

Stravinsky's youth and early music education were filled with life-shaping opportunities and encounters. He literally burst upon the worldwide musical scene with his monumental stage and ballet productions. However, at a certain point the composer and his music began to change. This enthralling transition was profoundly affected along the way by specific relationships, circumstances, and experiences that steadily steered this great composer toward a pivotal point in his career. He constantly observed, learned, and adapted over this time and the juncture at which everything aligned in his music was the 1923 composition of the *Octet for Winds*. This work is not only a representation of that from which Stravinsky had come, but also a launching pad from which his works over the ensuing several years are rooted.

CHAPTER ONE

THE EARLY FAMILY AND MUSICAL LIFE OF IGOR STRAVINSKY

An understanding of the early family, intellectual, and musical life of Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) provides valuable insight into a perspective understanding of the eventual evolution of his professional musical tendencies. The atmosphere in which Stravinsky lived as a child and young man, much of which was influenced by his father's profession, had great impact upon the development of his own attitudes. The acquaintances he made and the relationships he fostered influenced him musically and creatively. The educational paths he followed, some by his own choice and some impressed upon him, enabled his progression as one of the great musical intellectuals and innovators of our time.

Igor Stravinsky was born on 17 June 1882 in Oranienbaum on the Gulf of Finland and was baptized into the Russian Orthodox Church. The name Stravinsky comes from "Strava," the name of a small river, tributary to the Vistula, in eastern Poland. The family name had originally been Soulima-Stravinsky (Soulima being the name of another vistula branch).[1] The Soulima-Stravinskys had been landowners in eastern Poland as far back as could be traced. During the reign of Catherine the Great, the family moved from Poland to Russia and the

[1] Igor Stravinsky would later give the first name Soulima to his son.

Soulima was dropped from their name.[2] Igor Stravinsky's family belonged to the economically comfortable late nineteenth-century Russian bourgeois and enjoyed strong social and political connections.[3]

Igor Stravinsky was born the third of four boys. Their father, Feodor Ignatievich Stravinsky, had earned a strong reputation as an operatic singer. Considered one of Russia's finest, he had studied at the conservatory in St. Petersburg and was first bass in the opera houses, first in Kiev and then back in St. Petersburg. Feodor was a fiercely temperamental man, with whom his third son was never comfortable. Many of the resources and experiences that were made available to the young Igor through his father's profession, however, were central in sparking his initial interests in music.

Stravinsky's youth was not a happy one. "I do not like to remember my childhood," he would later reflect.[4] Toward his mother, Anna, Stravinsky felt little affection, if any, seeming to have preferred his nurse. In a later interview with Robert Craft, Stravinsky would say, "For my mother, I felt only 'duties'."[5] While he felt relatively close to his younger brother, Gury (two years his junior), he apparently disliked his two older brothers, Roman and Yury, and lived mostly in fear of his father, who evidently possessed a brutal temper.[6] Discussing his

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[2] Robert Craft and Igor Stravinsky, *Memories and Commentaries*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), p. 15.

[3] Curiously, it turns out that Stravinsky's eventual patron with the Ballet Russe, Serge Diaghilev, was actually his distant cousin, also descendant from Stravinsky's great-grandfather Roman Furman.

[4] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. xiii, quoted from *Expositions and Developments*, by Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft.

[5] Robert Craft and Igor Stravinsky, *Memories and Commentaries*, p. 18.

[6] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, (Berkely, CA: University of California Press, 1966), p. 19.

relationship with his father in *Memories and Commentaries*, Stravinsky explained:

> I was constantly frightened of him, which, I suppose, has deeply harmed my own character. He had an uncontrollable temper, and life with him was very difficult. He would lose himself in his anger, suddenly and unexpectedly, and without regard to where he might happen to be... He was affectionate to me only when I was ill... He impressed me in his death more than he had ever done in his life... His death brought us close together."[7]

The young Igor Stravinsky did not like school and had very few friendships as an adolescent. Instead it was a relationship with an uncle and the sights and sounds experienced on visits to an aunt's estate that may have made some of the first musical and cultural impressions on him. From the time he was about three years old, Stravinsky had developed a strong bond with his Uncle Ielatchitch who was a passionate amateur consumer of music. He explained that his uncle introduced him to the music of Brahms and Beethoven. "The only place where my budding ambition had any encouragement," he said, "was in the house of my uncle Ielatchitch."[8]

The Stravinskys eventually began spending summers at the large estate in the western Ukraine owned by one of Anna's sister's, Catherine. Igor did not particularly care for his aunt, but the trips did afford him the distractions of a nearby fair, at which he enjoyed watching dancing contests.[9] Later, looking back in his autobiography on his early memories of the summers in the country, Stravinsky also recalled being taken by the singing of local women from a neighboring village.

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[7] Feodor died of throat cancer in 1902.

[8] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1936), p. 7.

> There were a great many of them and regularly every evening they sang in unison on their way home after the day's work. To this day I clearly remember their tune, and the way they sang it... it is an odd thing that this occurrence, trifling though it seems, has a special significance for me, because it marks the dawn of my consciousness of myself in the role of musician.[10]

Stravinsky displayed a love for music at a very early age, and while his relationship with his father was almost entirely despairing, Feodor's life as a professional musician afforded his young son many resources and opportunities that fed his musical hunger. Stravinsky would often listen to his father practice at home, and was given access to Feodor's personal library, where he would spend hours at a time sight-reading vocal scores. Feodor also obtained a pass for his son that enabled him to attend opera rehearsals at the Maryinsky Theatre. Ever intrigued and curious, Igor spent a great deal of his free time at the Maryinsky.[11] When he was about seven years old, Igor was taken to see Tchaikovsky's ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*. The young boy was absolutely seized by the experience, beginning an extensive attraction, both to the music of Tchaikovsky, and to ballet.[12]

Stravinsky explained that his parents were not especially concerned with his musical development in his early years. In fact, they were never supportive of his desire to study music. They did allow him to begin taking piano lessons when

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[9] At thes dancing contests, Stravinsky watched the *trepak*, as well as the *presiatka* (heel dance), and the *kazachok* (kicking dance), both of which he would later use in the final scene of *Petrushka*.

[10] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography*, p. 4.

[11] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 23, 24.

[12] In fact, the vast majority of the live musical performances that the young Igor Stravinsky experienced was probably oriented to the stage, due to his father's operatic career. With this, a long with his professed passion for ballet, a logical parallel could be drawn between these early experiences and his initial commissioned works for the Ballet Russe.

he was nine years old. He learned to read music quickly and soon developed aspirations in improvisation. For these exercises, Stravinsky was criticized for wasting time. He was forever confused by this criticism. He felt the activity was helpful, not only in developing his knowledge of the piano, but also in "sowing the seeds of musical ideas." "I think it is a thousand times better," he would later say, "to compose in direct contact with the physical medium of sound than to work in the abstract medium produced by one's imagination."[13]

Against the greater wishes of his parents, Stravinsky continued to focus his time and energy on music. This had been, since his earliest years, his true passion, and by his late teen years he had begun to immerse himself in the study and practice of counterpoint, showing great interest in composition. "I do not remember when and how I first thought of myself as a composer," he said. "All I remember is that these thoughts started very early in my childhood, long before any serious musical study."[14]

In spite of his obvious love for music, however, Stravinsky's parents refused to give their blessings to the idea of him pursuing it as a career. Instead, they insisted that he study law at St. Petersburg University.[15] This attitude was not so unusual in Russian society of that time. Stravinsky himself even conceded that like most of the members of their social class, his parents simply wanted for him the kind of education that would assure him a comfortable livelihood. They saw his musical bent as amateurism, "to be encouraged to a

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[13] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography*, p. 5.
[14] Robert Craft and Igor Stravinsky, *Conversations*, p. 15.
[15] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 24, 25.

point," but law school was what would allow him a good life.[16] Stravinsky commented further, saying, "I think that my father judged my possibilities as a musician from his own experience and decided that the musical life would be too difficult for me. A new life began for me after [his] death, when I began to live more in accordance with my own wishes."[17]

While at St. Petersburg University, one of the students with whom the young Stravinsky had become acquainted was Vladimir Rimsky-Korsakov, the youngest son of the great Russian composer. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, along with Alexander Glazunov and Michael Glinka, was one of Stravinsky's greatest musical idols. Still maintaining aspirations in composition, Stravinsky eventually decided to find a way to consult the great master. What developed was the beginning of a very important and influential student-mentor relationship that was to last for the remainder of Rimsky-Korsakov's life.

Stravinsky's training with Rimsky-Korsakov lasted for approximately three years. During his meetings with his mentor, Stravinsky began learning about orchestration and about the capabilities, idiosyncrasies, and ranges of the various individual instruments in the orchestra. Rimsky-Korsakov would often give Stravinsky works written by composers like Beethoven or Schubert, asking his young student to orchestrate them and analyze their form and structure. Eventually, Stravinsky began bringing his own works to Korsakov for discussion and guidance[18]

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[16] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography*, p. 13.
[17] Ibid., pp. 21-23.
[18] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 27-29.

Stravinsky's relationship with Rimsky-Korsakov also paid dividends beyond the valuable instruction in many of the fundamentals of composition, orchestration, and traditional forms. Through his teacher Stravinsky also began making connections with others in the turn-of-the-century Russian musical world that began stimulating him more intellectually. Two regular gatherings of musicians and composers became very important. First when he began studying with Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky began routinely attending weekly meetings at his teacher's house where pupils' compositions were performed and discussed. At about the same time, three of his friends initiated a concert series called the "Evenings of Contemporary Music."

The "Evenings of Contemporary Music" were dedicated to the performance and discussion of music of many sorts. At one of these meetings was given the first public performance of one of Stravinsky's own compositions, his Piano Sonata in F sharp.[19] These meetings were unique in that, despite their name, they were not solely concerned with new music. The participants also learned about music from centuries past. Stravinsky explained the importance of these assemblies, saying that, "these St. Petersburg concerts, in spite of their name, tried to match the new with the old. This was important, and rare, for so many organizations are dedicated to new music, and so few to the centuries before Bach. I heard Monteverdi there for the first time, in an arrangement by d'Indy, I think, and Couperin and Montéclair; and Bach was performed in quantity."[20]

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[19] Ibid., p. 26.

[20] Robert Craft and Igor Stravinsky, *Memories and Commentaries*, p. 28.

In addition to the music that he heard and the intellectual exchange that he was afforded, these gatherings were also significant to Stravinsky in regards to the important acquaintances that he was able to make. One such connection that would pay dividends later in his career was Stravinsky's initial association with the conductor Serge Koussevitsky. Koussevitsky founded Musik Verlag [Edition Russe de Musique], which would later become Stravinsky's publisher. It would be at one of Koussevitsky's concerts that the *Octet* was premiered, and the conductor was then perhaps the main impetus behind the composition of the *Concerto* for piano and winds.

During the period in which he took instruction from Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky "learned the rules," so to speak. With the help of the great master, he had established a firm grasp on the more traditional techniques and practices of composition. When this schooling ended and he was aware of where the perceived conventional boundaries lay in music, Stravinsky was ready to step beyond and begin to establish his own innovative place in the musical world.

With the death of his friend and mentor in 1908, however, Stravinsky needed to find a new advocate. He needed someone with whom he could collaborate, and who could also help to publicize and promote his works. Through fortunate chance, Serge Diaghilev was in the audience at a 1909 concert in St. Petersburg where Stravinsky's *Scherzo Fantastique* and *Fireworks* were performed.[21] After working with the Paris Opera, Diaghilev had just returned to Russia to begin the Ballet Russe. Upon this initial hearing, he was

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[21] *Fireworks* was originally conceived and intended to celebrate the wedding of Rimsky-Korsavov's daughter Nadezhda.

taken by the potential he heard in Stravinsky's music, and so began the approximately twenty-year relationship between Stravinsky and the Russian Ballet.[22]

Diaghilev chose Stravinsky as one of several Russian composers whom he commissioned to orchestrate two pieces by Chopin, his *Nocturne* and *Valse Brillante.* They were for the ballet *Les Sylphides,* which was to be given in Paris during the spring of 1909. Shortly after the performance of *Les Sylphides,* Diaghilev engaged Stravinsky in his first commission for the Russian Ballet, contracting the composer to write the music for the ballet *L'Oiseau de Feu* (*The Firebird*).[23] *The Firebird* was premiered in Paris during the Ballet Russe's 1910 season. Interestingly, Diaghilev had actually intended to extend the commission to Anatol Liadov but wasn't convinced that he would be able to complete it in time.[24] This change of heart turned out to be enormous in regards to the career and fortunes of Igor Stravinsky. *L'Oiseau* received enthusiastic ovations at its opening performance and earned high praise from the press as well. Stravinsky was transformed nearly overnight into an international figure in the musical world.[25]

The collaborative relationship that had been formed with Diaghilev and the Russian Ballet through his work on *L'Oiseau*, for all intensive purposes, initiated Stravinsky's separation from his Russian homeland. At this point he was living

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[22] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works,* p. 32.
[23] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography,* p. 25.
[24] Liadov was actually a former professor of Diaghilev's.
[25] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works,* p. 33.

mostly in France and in Switzerland, in Ustilug, near the Polish border.[26] But his new connection to the Ballet Russe and the new fame and stature that he had achieved afforded Stravinsky, on ensuing regular visits to Paris, opportunities to meet other established leaders in composition such as Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Florent Schmitt, Eric Satie, and Giacomo Puccini.[27]

Along with the notoriety that Stravinsky earned through his work on *The Firebird,* the music was pivotal in that it was the first of his three most monumental stage works written for the Russian Ballet (*The Firebird, Petrushka, and The Rite of Spring).* These three productions came to best represent the music of Stravinsky's so-called "Russian Period." The latter two works in this "trilogy" came about through very different, yet equally profound inspirations, and while he actually conceived of *Le Sacre* first, it was *Petrushka* that received the earlier premiere. In fact, Stravinsky himself illustrated his initial inspiration for the subject of *Le Sacre.*

> One day, when I was finishing the last pages of *L'Oiseau de Feu* in St. Petersburg, I had a fleeting vision which came to me as a complete surprise, my mind at the moment being full of other things. I saw in imagination a solemn pagan rite: sage elders, seated in a circle, watched a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring. Such was the theme of the *Sacre du Printemps.* In Paris I told Diaghileff about it, and he was at once carried away by the idea."[28]

Continuing, however, he explained that before beginning *Le Sacre,* he felt that he wanted to "refresh" himself by composing an orchestral work, "a sort of *Konzertstück"* in which piano would play the most important role. He said that he had a clear picture in his mind, while composing the music, of a puppet,

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[26] Stephen Walsh, *The Music of Stravinsky,* (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 2.
[27] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works,* p. 35.

"suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of arpeggios. The orchestra in turn retaliates with menacing trumpet blasts." After deciding on the name for the work, *Petroushka,* Stravinsky played it for Diaghilev, who had actually come to him expecting to see sketches of *Le Sacre.* Instead, Diaghilev was so taken with the music of *Petrushka,* that he would not relent until he had convinced Stravinsky to develop it into a full ballet production.[29] The premiere of the resultant ballet was given in Paris on 13 June 1911, with Pierre Monteux conducting and Vaslav Nijinsky dancing the lead role. The performance received the same popular acclaim that *The Firebird* had garnered.

Stravinsky's music of this period was unique in very distinct ways. First, as its very foundation, it attempted to transmit a certain essence of Russian life. It brought to life through music much of the folklore, custom, tradition, and culture of the composer's homeland. Second, Stravinsky's Russian period music, through elaborate and complicated orchestration, appealed to the exotic and sensual in the minds of its audience. Third, the music explored the cohesive capabilities of various modular or patterned groupings, strongly metricized accent structures, and pitch repetitions and ostinati.

Stravinsky was very fond of the use of Russian, or at least "Russian-sounding" tunes, as well as stories based in Russian folklore. *The Firebird,* for example, makes frequent use of borrowed native folksongs throughout, and so too does *Petrushka.* The opening scene in the latter begins with an Easter Song

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[28] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography,* p. 31.
[29] Ibid., p. 32.

called *Song of the Volochebniki.* Later, the first theme of the "Nursemaids' Dance" is taken from a popular Russian dance song that had previously been used by composers such as Balakirev.[30]

The story of *The Firebird* is based on the Russian story by Michel Fokine about the young prince, Ivan Tsarevich and his battles between evil and good, represented respectively by the fairies Kashchei and the Firebird. *Petrushka* is the tale of the ambitions and disappointments of a Russian puppet, charmed to life by a street performer. Finally, in *The Rite of Spring,* Stravinsky created scenes from pagan Russia that delved into the mythological and cosmic. In it, he was expressing the resurrection of nature as spring emerged from the stifling indeterminacy of winter.

Stravinsky's music for the Russian ballet often broke from the rules or boundaries of traditional harmony, structure, and orchestration, instead relying heavily on "instinct."[31] He wrote for an extremely large orchestra, frequently in quite complicated divisi, enabling him to investigate innovative techniques of scoring and orchestration.[32] The large forces for which Stravinsky wrote also allowed him to make use of many imaginative instrumental effects, the end goal always being the creation of various exotic colors and textures, or as described by Claudio Spies, "elaborately detailed and complex *soundscapes.*"[33]

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[30] The*Song of the Volochebniki* was amongst several that were actually taken from Rimsky-Korsakov's collections of Russian Folk Songs.

[31] Stephen Walsh, *The Music of Stravinsky*, p. 24.

[32] In his *Expositions*, Stravinsky actually refers to the size of his orchestra in *The Firebird* as "wastefully large."

[33] Claudio Spies, "Conundrums, Conjectures, Construals; or, 5 vs. 3: The Influence of Russian Composers on Stravinsky," from *Stravinsky Retrospectives*, edited by Ethan Haimo and Paul Johnson, (Lincoln Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 82.

The music possessed a raw vigor. It was often strongly accented, sometimes creating an almost primal impression, as in the "Auguries of Spring" from *Le Sacre du Printemps.* The accent patterns were strongly metricized. This practice is significant to a later discussion of Stravinsky's coming preoccupation with Russian folk texts as he began his transition out of his Russian period. There his focus would be upon the syllabic, rather than metric accent and sequence of the words.

Stravinsky utilized a variety of subdivisions and note groupings to create totality through modular "cells," not only rhythmically, but also thematically, motivically, and harmonically. He also created background texture through pitch repetition and through the use of various ostinati.

By the time *Le Sacre* was premiered in Paris, on 29 May 1913, Stravinsky had, in a relatively short period of time, established himself amongst the great names in music in the early part of the twentieth century. His music had earned him great fame and fortune and taken him to the top of his profession. With a clear understanding of how he arrived at this point, one can now effectively venture on to examine the next stage of this great composer's career: the transition away from the enormity of the stage toward the intimacy of the concert hall.

CHAPTER TWO

TRANSITIONAL YEARS: FROM *LE SACRE* TO THE *OCTET*

ORCHESTRATIONAL CHOICES

After producing such large-scale works as *The Firebird, Petrushka,* and *Le Sacre,* and having developed public expectations for the grandiose, the intensely dramatic, and the boldly dynamic, Stravinsky began seeking new outlets and idioms through which he could express his music. He would come to be widely considered one of the central figures in the neo-classical movement in music in the 1920s and 1930s. Stravinsky began displaying signs of a progression toward these musical and compositional ideals in about the year 1914, when he moved permanently from Russia to Switzerland.

Stravinsky's initial move began along two paths. On the one hand, he was becoming more interested in the folk music of Russia, specifically with the syllabic rhythm and sequence of the text. On the other hand, he also began writing for gradually smaller and more intimate performing forces, in opposition to the lavish stage productions of the past several years, and began developing his orchestral vocabulary, evolving a more concertante style and manipulating instrumental textures in different ways. Some of the latter came about primarily through the manner in which Stravinsky felt the Russian folk texts should be transmitted through his music, but changes also came about due to much more

practical considerations. Stravinsky had already spent the majority of the colder months over the previous four years in Switzerland, and with the outbreak of the war, in 1914, he moved his family to permanent residence in Clarens.[1] His separation from his homeland and his Russian publishers, as well as from Diaghilev and the temporarily disbanded Russian Ballet, necessitated some changes in the mediums for which Stravinsky wrote. At first, this was simply due to the resources that were available to him, but in the years to come these adaptations began to manifest themselves in the form of a professed preference for the sounds of wind instruments and piano, as opposed to strings.

Stravinsky brought a collection of Russian folk stories and poetry with him when he left Russia, some of which he had borrowed earlier from his father's library.[2] Musically, he later referred to the composers Glinka and Dargomyzhski as models in whom he observed the use of folklore in Russian music, and Balakirev, Moussorgsky, Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakov as those who latched on to the use of popular melodies and liturgical chants in their works.[3] In fact, Stravinsky referred to Glinka as his childhood Russian musical hero... "all music in Russia stems from him."[4] Again, Stravinsky was not so concerned with the stories and their images as he was with the syllabic sequences. He felt that the rhythms and cadences in the words created an effect that was innately musical. His settings generally made use of simpler melodic material, usually more

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[1] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 51.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p. 94.

[4] Robert Craft and Igor Stravinsky, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday), p. 44.

diatonically based than the stage productions of the preceding years. The accompaniments were designed more with the goal in mind of allowing the vocal line to stand out. This he did through manipulation and contrast of instrumental combinations and timbres.[5]

In 1913 Stravinsky took melodies he had composed several years prior and set them to Russian popular texts. Dedicated to his own children, the collection was published under the title *Three Little Songs,* subtitled *Recollections of my Childhood.*[6] The vocal melodies are symmetrically phrased and the accompanying ensemble is simply a small chamber orchestra of strings and woodwinds. The following year, after returning from a trip to London, Stravinsky began work on *Les Noces* (The Wedding), a cantata in four scenes celebrating Russian wedding customs. The libretto is based on wedding songs and verse from Kireievsky's collection of Russian folk poetry, which the composer had brought with him from his homeland.[7]

Stravinsky's 1914 composition of his *Pribaoutki,* which is a series of very short, simple, sung stories was, by his own admission, important in that it was during its composition that he realized the musical qualities of the accent patterns of the Russian popular texts. "One important characteristic of Russian popular verse," he stated, "is that the accents of the spoken verse are ignored when the verse is sung. The recognition of the musical possibilities inherent in this fact

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[5] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey,* (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1948), p. 58.

[6] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works,* p. 49.

[7] Ibid., p. 251.

was one of the most rejoicing discoveries of my life."[8] The two-minute composition for voice and piano, *Three Tales for Children,* written in 1915/1917 is another example of Stravinsky's setting of Russian popular texts.

Like *The Wedding, Pribaoutki* is important in that it is a further example of Stravinsky's transition to more limited, intimate performing forces. "It is often believed that power can be increased indefinitely by multiplying the doubling of orchestral parts," explained the composer, "a belief that is completely false: thickening is not strengthening... the blowing up of sound does not hold the ear's attention."[9] *Pribaoutki,* a four-movement work lasting approximately five minutes, is written for voice, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, violin, viola, cello, and bass.

Although he was still writing for the stage, the size of Stravinsky's performing forces were becoming much more moderate. While in Paris, Stravinsky's friend, the Princess Edmond de Polignac, suggested that he write a short work for her small orchestra. "I had the impression," she states in her memoirs, "that, after Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss, the days of big orchestras were over and that it would be delightful to return to a small orchestra of well chosen players and instruments." The result was *Reynard*, the sketches of which Stravinsky had already begun.[10] It is a burlesque based on Stravinsky's adaptation of the Russian popular versions of Dutch and French folk tales about a fox, a rooster, a cat, and a goat. *Reynard* is written for four solo male singers and a limited chamber orchestra of woodwinds, strings, and percussion.

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[8] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works,* p. 236.
[9] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons,* pp. 130, 131.
[10] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey,* p. 60.

The 1918 production of *Histoire du Soldat* is a further example of Stravinsky's continued allegiance to the stage, while simultaneously shrinking the performing forces for which he was writing. His output during these years also included works such as *Waltz of the Flowers* (1914) and *Three Easy Pieces* (1915), both for piano duet, and *Four Russian Peasant Songs* (1914) for unaccompanied female voices.

While Stravinsky's move toward works of a smaller scale had an aesthetic element behind it, there was also a very important utilitarian aspect to his choices. Having been cut off from his homeland, the family estate, and more specifically from his publishers and from the Russian Ballet, Stravinsky was faced with a corresponding lack of resources. He no longer had available to him a large pool of performers, nor did he have the backing and promotional resources of the *Ballet Russe.* Consequently, in the course of conversations with his friend, Swiss author C. F. Ramuz, who himself was in difficult financial and professional times, the question arose: "Why not do something simple?"[11] From these discussions, was born *Histoire.*

Histoire du Soldat is set to a French libretto by Ramuz that is based on a collection of stories by Alexander Afanasiev dealing with the enforced recruitment during the Russo-Turkish wars.[12] The libretto focuses on the stories of a soldier and the devil[13]. In its full production, *Histoire* involves a narrator and dancers with a chamber ensemble of a clarinet, a bassoon, a cornet, a trombone, a violin,

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[11] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey* , pp. 76-79.
[12] *Les Noces* was also extracted from this same collection of stories.
[13] Eric Walter White, , *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works,* p. 264.

a double-bass, and multiple percussion instruments. It also exists in a piano reduction, a trio version (violin, clarinet, and piano), and concert suite setting.

Beyond its demonstration of Stravinsky's focus on smaller ensembles, *Histoire* can also be viewed as important from two other points of view. First, it is representative of Stravinsky's development of what is referred to as a concertante style of orchestration in which he not only divides his ensembles into solo and accompaniment textures, but also conceives of them as representing "families" of like instruments. This is a technique that will be seen in the following years leading up to and including the *Octet* and *Concerto for Piano and Winds.*[14] Second, *Histoire* , is reflective of the composer's new professed taste for the sounds of wind instruments and piano, one which would be fully realized in his *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* and *Mavra.*

While acknowledging a real lack of finances and resources at the time, Stravinsky also explained his choice of instrumentation for *Histoire*, saying that he had decided on a group of instruments which included the most representative types (treble and bass) of the different instrumental families: strings, woodwind, brass, and percussion.[15] Likewise, *The Wedding* had originally been conceived for a very large orchestra of about 150 players, which created separate categories of sound: wind (including voice, woodwind, and brass) and percussion (two string orchestras, one playing pizzicato and the other bowed). Knowing that he would not be able to engage that many players,

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[14] In his autobiography, written in 1936, Stravinsky refers to his 1916/17 work on the symphonic poem version of *Song of the Nightingale* as the beginning of his use of the concertante technique. He referred to it as an "orchestral experiment," revealing that in this work he chose to emphasize a concertante setting, not only of the solo instruments, but also to entire instrumental groupings.

Stravinsky realized that the instrumentation for the piece was too big. He ultimately produced a score for an orchestra of percussion instruments (including four pianos) which was divided into families of pitched instruments and non-pitched instruments.[16] In 1917 in *The Song of the Nightingale*, Stravinsky also used solo instruments along with like instrumental groupings in concertante treatments, resulting in a lighter, more transparent textural effect.[17]

Stravinsky was already displaying some of the clearer, more ordered approaches to his music that are fully represented in his later wind works. Orchestrationally, in the years approaching the composition of the *Octet* and Concerto, he began professing a preference for wind instruments and piano. Of wind instruments he stated that they were "more apt to render a certain rigidity of form I had in mind than other instruments... their differences of volume render more evident the musical architecture." And of the piano, Stravinsky explained that its "neat, clear sonority and polyphonic resources suited the dryness and neatness I was seeking in the structure of the music I had composed."[18] In fact, after the completion of his *Concertino* for string quartet in 1920, Stravinsky actually avoided writing for strings for some time because of their expressive

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[15] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 271.

[16] Ibid.,. 254.

[17] *The Song of the Nightingale* is a symphonic poem utilizing the music from Stravinsky's earlier stage work *The Nightingale* produced for the Russian Ballet. It is based on a story written by Hans Andersen. The first movement of *The Nightingale* was conceived and sketched as far back as 1908 when the composer was still under the instruction of Rimsky-Korsakov. By 1913 when he set about to complete the work, his techniques and styles had changed, reflecting slightly more regularity in phrasing. Consequently, the symphonic poem discards the music of the first movement and uses only material from the second and third, which are much more alike.

[18] Stephen Walsh, *The Music of Stravinsky*, (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 123.

qualities.[19] The following examination of Stravinsky's output during these years further confirms his new allegiance to wind instruments and piano, sometimes in somewhat unorthodox combinations.

Title and Year of Composition	Instrumentation
Valse des Fleurs for two pianos (1914) *Three Easy Pieces* for piano duet (1914/1915) *Five Easy Pieces* for piano duet (1916/1917) *Valse pour les Enfants* (1917) *Piano-Rag Music* (1919)	Piano solo or duet
Cat's Cradle Songs (1915/1916)	contralto and three clarinets
Pribaoutki (1914)	male voice, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, violin, viola, cello, and double-bass
Rag-Time for eleven instruments (1918)	flute, clarinet, horn, cornet, trombone, two violins, viola, double-bass, and percussion
Reynard (1915/1916)	four male soloists, seven winds, percussion, cimbalom, and string quartet
Histoire du Soldat (1918)	clarinet, bassoon, cornet, trombone, violin, double-bass, and percussion
Symphonies of Wind Instruments (1920)	twenty-three winds
Mavra (1921/1922)	one-act opera with accompanying wind and percussion ensemble

Beyond what has already been reviewed in regards to *Histoire du Soldat,* perhaps the two most significant works in a discussion of Stravinsky's writing for winds in the years prior to the *Octet* and *Concerto*, are *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* and *Mavra*. The *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* was written in dedication to Claude Debussy after his death in 1918. The work actually began

[19] The *Concertino* for string quartet was written while in Carantec and dedicated to the Flonzaley String Quartet. Interestingly, Stravinsky later arranged the original version for twelve instruments: ten

as a short, wordless chorale written in a piano version for the *Revue Musicale* under the title *Tombeau de Claude Debussy,* and later expanded.[20] This was the work immediately following the *Concertino for string quartet* - further illustration of his break from string writing. Its original instrumentation included three flutes, alto flute in G, two oboes, english horn, three B-flat clarinets, alto clarinet, three bassoons, four horns in F, two trumpets in C, trumpet in A, three trombones, and tuba.[21] Structurally, *Symphonies* still displays much of the modular construction typical in Stravinsky's earlier Russian period works like *Le Sacre.* But he also continues in his development of concertante writing. Stravinsky frequently divides the ensemble into smaller groupings or choirs of like instruments, whether it be single-reed or double-reed groupings, or various brass combinations, to achieve specific dynamic or timbral effects. Stravinsky described the work as an "austere ritual which is unfolded in terms of short litanies between different groups of homogenous instruments."[22]

Mavra, an opera buffa in one act based on the rhymed story of Aleksandr Pushkin called *The Little House in Kolomna,* surprised the Paris listening audiences who were expecting something more like the dissonance and rhythmic agitation of *Le Sacre.* In the music of *Mavra* the vocal lines are freer and more fluent, and the accompaniment is far less harsh, often written in quite complex counterpoint. Stravinsky explained that he conceived of the work partially

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winds with violin and cello obligato (published in 1953 by Wilhelm Hansen).

[20] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey,* p. 96.

[21] The *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* was published in a revised version in 1947. Its instrumentation is for three flutes, two oboes, english horn, three B-flat clarinets, three bassoons, four horns in F, three B-flat trumpets, three trombones, and tuba.

[22] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works,* p. 296.

"because of a natural sympathy I have always felt for the melodic language, the vocal style and conventions of the old Russo-Italian opera."[23] Metrically, the work is very straightforward, in strong contrast to the constant time changes of *Histoire* and *Symphonies of Wind Instruments.* Of most significance to the current discussion is the unusual accompanying instrumentation. The orchestra is essentially a wind ensemble of twenty-three instruments with timpani and nine strings, resulting in a bright and aggressive sound.[24] Stravinsky said that he used this instrumentation, "because the music whistled as wind instruments whistle, and also because there was a certain jazz element in it... that seemed to require a 'band' sound rather than an 'orchestral' sound."[25]

TRANSITION OF FORM AND TECHNIQUE: A LOOK BACK

Mavra is also significant in that it is indicative of the further transition that Stravinsky was beginning to make in his compositional techniques. In addition to the aforementioned change in focus in regard to instrumentation and scope, he was now beginning to show a tendency to "look back" to forms, structures, and textures of the past. This was the beginning of his move toward neoclassicism.

Stravinsky explained that in *Mavra* he was trying to stay within traditions that had been set forth by earlier Russian composers such as Glinka and Dargomisky. He felt that the contemporary embodiment of opera-bouffe would

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[23] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey*, p. 103.

[24] The instrumentation of the accompanying ensemble in *Mavra* includes three flutes, three oboes, three clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, four trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, two violins, one viola, three cellos, and three basses.

[25] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, reprinted in Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 268.

be the best method through which to tell Pushkin's tale, and he wanted to renew the "dialogues-in-music" styles that had been pushed out of vogue.[26] The published score is dedicated to "the memory of Pushkin, Glinka, and Chaikovsky."[27]

Mavra is a one-act opera without recitative. It is constructed of an uninterrupted series of vocal airs and ensemble music. Simply from the standpoint of metric design, in comparison to earlier works such as *Le Sacre, Histoire du Soldat,* and *Symphonies of Wind Instruments, Mavra* is far more conventional. The harmonic language is also more traditional. For example, in the opening air, sung by the character Parasha, Stravinsky takes liberties within the vocal part, yet the music is almost entirely based on tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant chord progressions. As in many operas of nearly a century before, the orchestra in *Mavra* is used throughout to imitate and develop selected melodic material taken from the vocal parts. There is even a brief fugato, a look back to a classical technique that to this point had not appeared in Stravinsky's music.[28]

Stravinsky himself acknowledged that the completion of the "Polka," the final movement of his *Three Easy Pieces* for piano duet, was the actual beginning of this return to more ordered formal techniques in the years approaching the composition of the *Octet.*[29] *Mavra* had shown continued progress toward a more

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[26] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons,* p. 58.

[27] Stravinsky further explained that *Mavra* was "dedicated to the memory of composers, not one of whom, I am sure, would have recognized as valid such a manifestation of the tradition they created, because of the novelty of the language my music speaks a hundred years after its models flourished.

[28] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey,* p. 103.

[29] Stephen Walsh, *The Music of Stravinsky,* p. 122.

formal architecture, more regular, periodic rhythm and more tonally based harmony. But the piece that best exemplifies this "classification" is *Pulcinella* (1919/20). An abrupt departure from nearly anything Stravinsky had done for some time, *Pulcinella,* an "action dansante," as he put it, was based on the music of Pergolesi and very much a recollection of many of the formal ideals and performance practices of the eighteenth century. By now Stravinsky had settled in France. Having totally severed ties to Russia and established roots in Western Europe, he very likely felt the need to do the same musically. The idea of *Pulcinella* was presented to Stravinsky by Diaghilev. He had obtained several of Pergolesi's little or completely unknown manuscripts on recent trips to Italy and subsequently gave them to Stravinsky.[30] The manuscripts were quite fragmented and the job was more than simply compiling or editing. In choosing a focus for the project Stravinsky asked himself:

> Should my line of action be dominated by my love or by my respect for Pergolesi's music? Is it love or respect that urges us to possess a woman? Is it not by love alone that we succeed in penetrating to the very essence of a being? But, then, does love diminish respect? Respect alone remains barren and can never serve as a productive or creative factor. In order to create, there must be a dynamic force, and what force is more potent than love? To me it seems that to ask the question is to answer it.[31]

The work on this project helped Stravinsky to begin thinking about the "unexplored possibilities," as he put it, "in the use of certain classical devices and forms."[32] Furthermore, he revealed that his work on *Pulcinella* led him to a new

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[30] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey,* p. 85.

[31] Ibid., p. 86.

[32] Stravinsky later returned to the musical material from *Pulcinella* in two other works. Some was adapted for his *Suite for Violin and Piano* of 1925. He also published two versions of a *Suite Italienne,* based on material from the Pergolesi transcriptions. The first version, for cello and piano, was in five

appreciation of eighteenth-century classicism and to "a new style of composition distinguished by certain classical features."[33]

> *Pulcinella* was my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible. It was a backward look, of course -- the first of many love affairs in that direction – but it was a look in the mirror too.[34]

The music of *Pulcinella* is itself still basically Pergolesi. Stravinsky took some liberties in regards to the manipulation of phrase lengths and harmonic rhythm, but no significant alterations were made. Of note is the fact that each movement is scored for a different combination of instruments, demonstrating that Stravinsky was continuing his current practice of writing in concertante groupings. Interestingly, because of Stravinsky's separation from the Russian Ballet during the war, Diaghilev and others were not aware of this change of principles concerning instrumentation. In *Pulcinella* they were expecting a work for large forces, similar to Stravinsky's earlier works for the company. When the finished product arrived, they actually had to revise choreography in accordance with the designated chamber orchestra of only 33 players.[35]

While the more classically-based music of *Pulcinella* demonstrated an increased focus and control of the form, rhythm, harmony, and overall structure of his music, it was also significant in its reflection of Stravinsky's ideals regarding his desire for greater control of the performance of his music. After *Pulcinella,* Stravinsky's output of works for the stage declined sharply. Partially

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movements and written for cello and piano. Two years later Stravinsky, in collaboration with the violinist Samuel Dushkin, produced the six-movement *Suite Italienne* for violin and piano.

[33] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 248.

[34] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, p. 248.

through his experiences with the Pergolesi production, Stravinsky had begun to form the opinion that "a perfect rendering can be achieved only in the concert hall, because the stage presents a combination of several elements upon which the music has often to depend." This was a turning point for the composer in that in an apparent fear of the misinterpretation of his music, he was demonstrating a growing desire to exert stricter authority over his materials, rather than having to compromise for staging, choreography, etc. This new focus on restraint meant an obviously significant change in Stravinsky's music in comparison to that of years past. Whereas just a few years earlier he had produced the ritualistic music transmitting the vigor of spring and the "aspirations and frustrations" of a puppet (Petrushka), he was now asserting that music was, "by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a natural phenomenon, etc."

Stravinsky wanted the music to be the focus, and nothing else. Any emotion should be held in the sound experience: in the music and nothing more. He would later say that what is most important to the clarity of a musical work is the elimination of the "Dionysian elements which set the imagination of the artist in motion... they must be properly subjugated before they intoxicate us, and must finally be made to submit to the law. Apollo demands it."[36] Further representative of his substantial reversal from his earlier primitivistic, senso-stimulative works, Stravinsky also stated...

> I am thus brought face to face with the eternal conflict in art between the Apollonian and the Dionysian principles. The latter assumes ecstasy to be

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[35] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey*, p. 87.
[36] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, pp. 80, 81.

> the final goal – that is to say, the losing of oneself – whereas art demands above all the full consciousness of the artist. There can, therefore, be no doubt as to my choice between the two.[37]

Stravinsky felt that if music did seem to express or portray something that it was simply illusion and not reality, and he began making a concerted effort to provide little to no opportunity for misinterpretation or "unauthorized expression" of his music.[38] Once again remembering the control that he was choosing to assert at this point through his works by moving away from the stage and into the concert hall, Stravinsky was now critical of the music of the romantics. "Musically extraneous elements that are strewn throughout their works," he said, "invite betrayal."[39] He would later go even further in his criticism, singling Wagner himself out while reflecting upon a performance of *Parsifal* that he had attended in Paris. "It is high time," he said, "to put an end, once and for all, to this unseemly and sacrilegious conception of art as religion and the theatre as a temple."[40]

By the time he composed the *Octet* Stravinsky had completed a transition in his compositional practices, formal designs, and orchestrational preferences that had begun nine years earlier. What began out of necessity became an entirely new philosophy of composition. He had begun writing for smaller forces upon separation from his homeland simply because he lacked the resources that had been made available to him through the Russian Ballet for the huge earlier productions such as *Le Sacre* and *Petrushka.* This experience led to a

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[37] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey,* p. 92.
[38] Ibid., p. 88-93.
[39] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons,* p. 125.
[40] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography,* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1936), p. 39.

realization that smaller ensembles allowed for a greater clarity, not only in the expression of text, but also in regards to pure precision. From here Stravinsky began to gravitate toward wind instruments and piano to further refine his music. As his orchestrational practices evolved, so too did the clarity of the musical forms he created. Stravinsky ultimately began to look back to forms and techniques of classic eras of the past, a practice most clearly demonstrated in *Pulcinella.* By the early 1920s, when he began work on the *Octet,* Stravinsky had established himself in a position from which he would be considered perhaps the most important and influential figure in the neoclassic movement in music of the early and middle twentieth century.

Views and definitions vary to some degree regarding exactly what neoclassicism means in music. Certainly Stravinsky's own feelings regarding the label, and of the status of his name and work being connected with the perceived movement are inconsistent at best. He acknowledged the importance of an awareness of, and grounding in the past, but made it perfectly clear that he did not feel that he should have been singled out as any sort of revolutionary figure. "I was made a revolutionary in spite of myself," he said. "Revolution is one thing, innovation another... there are so many other words better adapted to designate originality...Art is by essence constructive. Revolution implies a disruption of equilibrium"[41] To firmly understand the concept of neoclassicism, and more precisely, what part Igor Stravinsky played in its twentieth-century evolution, it is important to first examine some of the definitions and practices in neoclassicism surrounding Stravinsky's own contributions.

An exact, all-encompassing definition of neoclassicism is difficult because it is so diverse in actual application. The word *neoclassic* in itself creates a certain degree of ambiguity, implying a return to the practices of the classic period. This is not necessarily the case. To some, like Debussy for example, the term was equated more with French classicism, which was concerned with the music of the Baroque.[42] The term has been frequently met with a certain degree of disdain. For some time, music critics used the term *néo-classicisme* in a negative light. Much later, Milton Babbit, in his 1971 memoirs, called the label "neoclassicism" a "meaningless slogan, an advertising gimmick in the marketing of modern music."[43] In the early twentieth century there were terms spreading around Europe to explain what was occurring in art and music. Around 1920, Ferrucio Busoni contributed the idea of a "young classicism" (*junge Klassizität*).[44] Martha Maclean Hyde defines neoclassism as, "an impulse to revive or restore an earlier style that is separated from the present by some intervening period," or, "when two different period-styles confront each other." She asserts that early twentieth century composers were, "rejecting a prevailing period style (romanticism) in the name of restoring another."[45]

As mentioned above, the "classicizing" directions and tendencies in music of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were quite broad and

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[41] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, p. 10-13.

[42] Ludwig Finscher, "The Old in the New," *Canto d'amore: Classicism in Modern Art and Music, 1914-1935,* (Basel: Paul Sacher Stiftung, 1996), p.64.

[43] Martha Maclean Hyde, "Neoclassic and anachronistic impulses in Twentieth Century Music." *Music Theory Spectrum,* Vol. 18, No. 2 (fall, 1996), pp. 202.

[44] Ludwig Finscher, "The Old in the New," p. 65.

[45] Martha Maclean Hyde, "Neoclassic and anachronistic impulses in Twentieth Century Music." pp. 200-204.

divergent. The practice of simply transcribing and adapting compositions written in true classical style was very common. There was also music that alluded to techniques and forms of past times with new turns and stretches and unpredictable variations. Some of the greatest composers of the day were very actively practicing many of these trends. Camille Saint-Saens' always considered himself a "classicist," striving for the ideals of "clarté, simplicité, and précision." In discussing his *Symphonie Classique* (1917), Serge Prokofiev stated that, "It seemed to me that had Haydn lived to our day he would have retained his own style while accepting something of the new at the same time. That was the kind of symphony I wanted to write: a symphony in the Classical style."[46]

For his part, Stravinsky had a slightly different take on the practice of looking back to inspire the new. Perhaps what made him such an acknowledged leader in neoclassicism was his ability to make his own decisions based on past practice while still moving forward. Stravinsky considered the study of the past as more of a "hypothesis" that some artists used as a source of inspiration. He stated that his own experiences showed him that stimulus from the past can be used as an effective impetus to set forth creative thought.[47] He was able to take forms and techniques of prior times and use them simply frameworks for his own innovations. Within those parameters Stravinsky "bent" the traditional rules of tonality, harmony, structure, etc., to make the music his own. This is what has come to be known as true neoclassicism. "One must live in one's own time,"

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[46] Ludwig Finscher, "The Old in the New," p. 64.
[47] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, p. 26.

Stravinsky said. "Even if I wanted to relive the past, the most energetic strivings of my misguided will would be futile."[48]

While he was not terribly fond of the label *neoclassicism,* Stravinsky came to firmly believe in the importance of an awareness of, and respect for one's roots. He said that tradition is necessary to progress. Quoting Brahms in his Harvard lecture series, Stravinsky explained, "a method is replaced: a tradition is carried forward in order to produce something new." He continued in his own words saying that, "tradition thus assures the continuity of creation."[49]

Implying that music had reached a crossroads in the twentieth century, Stravinsky acknowledged the contemporary listener's need for a "completely different approach to music." He asserted that harmonic novelty had been exhausted, allowing for further exploration of rhythm, rhythmic polyphony, and melodic and intervalic construction. Importantly, however, he acknowledged that in advancing music, while we may be able to do more with rhythm, sound, and structure, we must also keep in mind that evolution does not negate that from which we evolved.[50] "Judge the tree by its fruits then, and do not meddle with the roots."[51]

Igor Stravinsky was neither the first nor the last composer to look to prior times for inspiration, but he was perhaps the most adept at using this inspiration to create original expressions within a new vocabulary. While this vocabulary was based in an established system, Stravinsky was able to rethink its syntax,

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[48] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, p. 82.
[49] Ibid., p. 57.
[50] Robert Craft and Igor Stravinsky, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, p. 126.
[51] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, p. 49.

placing it within a new framework in ways that elevated it to new levels. In his words, composers found themselves challenged with "a new logic of music that would have appeared unthinkable to the masters of the past. And this new logic has opened our eyes to riches whose existence we never suspected."[52]

Having established the evolutions through which Stravinsky and his music passed in the years leading up to his neoclassic period, a discussion may now continue with the positioning of his *Octour pour instruments a vents* as the work in which they all came together for the first time. A series of adjustments in practice and taste that began through the necessity of available resources and a concern with textual transmission eventually evolved into new orchestrational, formal, and compositional philosophies.

Following its 1922 premiere, *Mavra* was considered something of an aberration. Stravinsky explained that critics regarded it as undeserving even of any further scrutiny. But on his part, Stravinsky acknowledged *Mavra* as the realization of many of his musical ideas, to be more completely developed in the *Octet.*[53] In this sense, then, the *Octet* can now further be placed as the pivotal work from which sprang Stravinsky's further neoclassical works such as the *Concerto for Piano and Winds.*

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[52] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons,* p. 35.
[53] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography,* p. 103.

CHAPTER THREE

THE *OCTET FOR WINDS*

HISTORY, BACKGROUND, AND INSPIRATION

An understanding has now been reached of both Stravinsky's early musical education and compositional career and of his progressive evolution in orchestrational, instrumental, formal, and compositional preferences and techniques. With this in mind, the *Octet* can now be asserted as the work that represents the point at which all of these transitions came together for the first time. While select works from the approaching years can be pointed to as demonstrating inclinations in one or more areas, to this point there is not one work that can be seen as an embodiment of them all.

Histoire du Soldat was discussed in the previous chapter as one example in which Stravinsky began showing an interest in smaller ensembles. *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* and the single-act opera *Mavra* were designated as demonstrating the composer's new allegiance to wind instruments. These two, along with *Song of the Nightingale,* were shown to have illustrated the development of Stravinsky's so-called *concertante* method of orchestration. In *Pulcinella* and *Mavra,* there were the indications of his "look back" to forms, styles, and techniques of centuries past: his ascent into neoclassicism. In the following discussion and analysis it will be asserted that the *Octet for Wind Instruments* was the composition in which all of these tendencies came together, making it the pivotal piece in Stravinsky's body of work between approximately 1913 (the premiere of *Le Sacre du Printemps*) and 1930.

Work on the *Octet* began in late 1922 in Biarritz, a small coastal village in southwestern France, and was completed in Paris in May of 1923. It was subsequently published by Edition Russe de Musique in 1924 and dedicated to Vera de Bosset, who would later become Stravinsky's second wife. The first performance of the *Octet* was conducted by the composer himself on 18 October 1923 at a Koussevitzky Concert at the Paris Opera House. A revised edition was published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1952, though the changes are not drastic.[1]

Interestingly, Stravinsky provides two slightly discrepant accounts of the initial inspiration for the *Octet* and of the circumstances which led to his choice of instrumentation. In his autobiography he states that he began to write the music for both the *Octet* and *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*,

> without knowing what its sound medium would be – that is to say, what instrumental form it would take. I only decided that point after finishing the first part, when I saw clearly what ensemble was demanded by the contrapuntal material, the character, and structure of what I had composed.[2]

The composer later described the genesis of the *Octet* as having actually sprung from a dream.

> The *Octour* began with a dream, in which I saw myself in a small room surrounded by a small group of instrumentalists playing some attractive music. I did not recognize the music, though I strained to hear it, and I could not recall any feature of it the next day, but I do remember my curiosity – in the dream – to know how many the musicians were. I remember, too, that

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[1] Changes in the 1952 version (as listed on p. 313 of Eric Walter White's *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*): sixteen bar repeat in the "Finale" is written out with appropriate renumbering in the score; metronome marking of ♪=189 is replaced with ♪=160 in Variation D; Three notes have been altered in the clarinet part one bar before the fugato; various misprints are corrected; the numbers of the movements are omitted, but the letters of the variations are retained; the French directions (*trés sec, trés court,* etc.) have been dropped; a number of small changes are made in the interest of clear accentuation and better balance; there is some rebarring in the flute bridge passage leading from the fugato to the Finale.

[2] Stravinsky, *An Autobiography,* p. 103.

> after I had counted them to the number eight, I looked again and saw that they were playing bassoons, trombones, trumpets, a flute, and a clarinet. I awoke from this little concert in a state of great delight and anticipation and the next morning began to compose the *Octour,* which I had had no thought of the day before, though for some time I had wanted to write an ensemble piece – not incidental music like the *Histoire du Soldat,* but an instrumental sonata.[3]

Two statements within the latter quote are significant to the present discussion. First, Stravinsky's recollection of discovering the combination of instruments heard in his dream was notable relative to his new allegiance to wind instruments. Second, and perhaps more momentous, was the final sentence in the quotation, in which Stravinsky says, "I had wanted to write an ensemble piece – not incidental music like the *Histoire du Soldat,* but an instrumental sonata." Two important issues to this discussion are illustrated through the previous quote. First, Stravinsky is acknowledging his desire to move away from stage works, in which his music was a part of a whole, more toward the concert hall where his music would be the entire focus. Second, he also touches upon the neoclassic element of the *Octet's* importance when speaking of an "instrumental sonata."

INSTRUMENTATION

The *Octet* is set in three movements: "Sinfonia," "Tema con Variazioni," and "Finale." It is scored for the exact instrumentation that Stravinsky took from his dream: one flute, one B-flat clarinet, two bassoons, one trumpet in C, one trumpet in A, one tenor trombone, and one bass trombone. Further discussion of

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[3] Robert Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary,* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), Reprinted in E. W. White's *Stravinsky: The Composer and his Works,* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1966), p. 271.

the instrumentation and contemporary performances of the *Octet* should include the issue of Stravinsky's choice of trumpets. As just mentioned, the group of eight instruments includes two trumpets: trumpet in C and trumpet in A. The fact that trumpet in A is an instrument which is rarely seen anymore presents the dilemma of what to use in substitution – another trumpet in C or one in B-flat. The choice is fairly clear, since upon examination of the entire part, one finds that there is an instance where the written part goes below the standard range of C trumpet. While the tessitura is low and the transposition often puts the music in unusual keys with some awkward valve sequences, the music does in fact fall entirely within the range of the B-flat trumpet.[4]

The instrumentation of the *Octet* is somewhat unusual, essentially establishing four pairs of like instruments. This is reminiscent of works discussed in the previous chapter, such as *Histoire du Soldat, The Wedding,* and *Song of the Nightingale.* In these works Stravinsky was attempting to establish specific and representative genera of sound. An even closer comparison can be made between the *Octet* and *Symphonies of Wind Instruments,* in which Stravinsky essentially appointed instrumental groupings that were more like familial "choirs." Here in the *Octet,* the group of eight instruments has been divided into four pairs of like instruments, with the flute and clarinet functioning as one pair. Going one step further, each of the pairs of instruments in the *Octet,* with a few exceptions, is generally assigned a given role throughout the work (accompaniment, etc.). For instance, the flute rarely plays accompanying material. Rather, it usually

[4] The A trumpet part begins on a concert E-natural in the first measure of Variation A in the "Tema con Variazioni": below the standard range of the C trumpet.

plays the more active melodic lines in transitional passages or contrapuntal material to main themes. The bassoons generally carry most of the accompanying material. The setting of prominent melodic and thematic material is often designated to the trumpets, especially in the first two movements. The clarinet and trombones are very often used for reinforcement. The bass trombone is almost entirely an accompanying instrument. At times the first trombone carries thematic material and at others, accompaniment. The clarinet often supports either the flute or bassoon, but occasionally does present independent material.

Along with manipulating the specific roles or functions of individual instruments or pairs of instruments, Stravinsky also explored various doubling techniques in his orchestration. Specifically within the "Sinfonia" are displayed three prominent approaches to the reinforcement of primary material. There are actually very few times when an entire melodic passage is doubled. Rather, it is much more common to see a designated phrase reinforced through doubling, either in unison or in octave unison. Even more striking is when Stravinsky makes use of multiple combinations within a single passage, as in example 1. In this excerpt, from the first movement of the *Octet,* the composite presentation of the second theme is played in the first trombone. During this mere ten measures, the trombone's melody is doubled in three individual fragments, first by the clarinet and then in two separate segments by the first bassoon.

Example 1: "Sinfonia", mm. 128-137.

The second technique, illustrated in example 2, is one in which Stravinsky emphasizes a passage by simply reinforcing just a fragment, or multiple fragments within a composite melodic segment. Here, the composite line in the flute is being reinforced by the first trumpet. The initial three notes of this aggressive restatement of the first theme are doubled at the octave and each of the successive accented syncopations in the flute composite are bolstered one octave below by the trumpet.

Example 2: "Sinfonia", mm. 63-68.

Finally, as demonstrated in example 3, the composer may only reinforce a single punctuating note or notes at the close of a phrase or statement, in essence strengthening its resolve. In this passage, the clarinet and bassoon engage in a playful exchange based on a newly introduced motive. The bassoon, in essence, answers the clarinet's chromatic statement with more disjunct figures, but the entire exchange is emphatically punctuated in measure 100 as the two angrily sound the closing five-note figure in unison.

Example 3: "Sinfonia", mm. 95-100.

These various methods of doubling demonstrate some of the ways in which Stravinsky has achieved dynamic contrasts, both gradual and sudden, through orchestration. The result is generally a much more abrupt and dramatic change, not only in regards to the actual magnitude of sound, but also in the many diverse textures and timbres that are correspondingly made available. Stravinsky was keenly aware of the limitations that might be presented by this small ensemble, and his methods of orchestration were put in place to compensate for the inherent inadequacies of the chosen ensemble.

> I remember what an effort it cost me to establish an ensemble of eight wind instruments, for they could not strike the listener's ear with a great display of tone. In order that this music should reach the ear of the public it was necessary to emphasize the entries of the several instruments, to introduce breathing spaces between the phrases (rests), to pay particular care to the intonation, the instrumental prosody, the accentuation – in short, to establish order and discipline in the purely sonorous scheme...[5]

Each of these three modes of orchestrated dynamics is exhibited throughout the first movement of the *Octet.* In the ensuing discussion of its consequent work, the *Concerto* for Piano and Winds, it will be seen that these three methods, especially the third, were all developed and used much more frequently and to much greater affect.

Once again, it has been shown that in the years leading up to his composition of the *Octet for Winds,* Stravinsky's style had been evolving in regards to key compositional traits, including the size of the ensemble, choice of instrumentation, and now orchestrational technique. But to truly accomplish the stated purpose of this document, which is to assert the *Octet* as the pivotal work of this period, the final piece to be placed in the puzzle is the completion of the composer's progression to neoclassicism. This can best be shown through close examination of form, structure, and compositional technique in the *Octet*'s three contrasting movements.

FORM AND ANALYSIS

The *Octet* is a highly contrapuntal work that utilizes a tremendous variety of compositional techniques. Stravinsky makes use of direct imitation and a very notable fugue section, extensive employment of ostinato, and repetition and alternation of thematic material and melodic fragments. All of this is key, in this highly sophisticated work, to the effective unification of form. Stravinsky himself may have explained this most succinctly shortly after completing the composition of the *Octet*..

> Form, in my music, derives from counterpoint. I consider counterpoint as the only means through which the attention of the composer is concentrated on purely musical questions. Its elements also lend themselves perfectly to an architectural construction.[6]

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[5] Igor Stravinsky, *Autobiography,* p. 9.
[6] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works,* p. 311.

This is an interesting statement in light of the overall importance of form in establishing the *Octet* as focal within the body of Stravinky's work during this period. Form is central to the designation of the *Octet* as the pivotal work in the composer's progression to neoclassicism. The first movement will be shown to clearly imply classical sonata form. The second movement, a theme and variations with a ritornello, is notable simply in that it marks the first time in an original composition that Stravinsky included a theme and variations.[7] Finally, the third movement, which is in a rondo form with an abrupt coda, is reflective of his look back to the greatest of all Baroque masters.

> The third movement grew out of the *fugato* (the second movement's final variation), and was intended as a contrast to that high point of harmonic tension. Bach's two-part Inventions were somewhere in the back of my mind while composing this movement. The terseness and lucidity of the inventions were an ideal of mine at the time, in any case, and I sought to keep those qualities uppermost in my own composition.[8]

Earlier discussion of neoclassism can be recalled before proceeding to an analysis of the individual movements of the *Octet.* Ideas were presented in these discussions of reviving and restoring earlier styles, or more importantly, of alluding to earlier techniques and forms with new and sometimes unexpected tampering. This is exactly what Stravinsky displayed in the *Octet.* Within the accepted framework of referential classical and baroque forms, he stretched boundaries and adapted systems, in the end making them his own. In his

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[7] There is, in fact, a theme and variations in the earlier *Pulcinella,* but in this case the variations are simply adaptations of the originals which were attributed to Pergolesi. In the *Octet,* the "Theme and Variations" was placed in the role of a contrasting middle section, as it would be later as well in, in the *Concerto* for two pianos.

autobiography, Stravinsky asserted that freedom is actually born within borders and limits (the boundaries of a fugue or sonata-allegro, for instance). In total freedom he said there is only arbitrariness and randomness. Total freedom in music causes it to lose its focus and bearings. Quoting Leonardo da Vinci, Stravinsky stated, "Strength is born of constraint and dies in freedom."[9]

Once again, the opening "Sinfonia" strongly implies classical sonata form. So reminiscent of Haydn, the movement commences with a slow introduction that lasts forty-one measures, and leads to the beginning of the actual exposition, which is in a new, faster tempo. The slow introduction to a typical Classic period movement in sonata form was used, in part, to prepare and strengthen the tonic of the movement. It would generally anticipate the central key of the movement, in this case E-flat, by first establishing the tonic and then emphasizing its dominant in preparation for the resolution provided at the opening of the exposition.

The following examples show that, as in a classical sonata form movement, the opening of the "Sinfonia" in Stravinsky's *Octet* also serves to prepare the movement's tonic. The introduction is structured roughly in an ABA form, in which the "B" section (mm. 5-36) is much longer than the two surrounding "A" sections (mm. 1-4, mm. 37-41). Most of the more substantial middle section is very chromatic in nature, but the outer sections of the introduction clearly assert the dominant, both through individual notes and vertical sonorities. The tonic itself is not actually resolved until the initiation of the

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[8] Robert Craft with Igor Stravinsky, *Dialogues,* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1982), p. 39, 40.

exposition at measure 42, marked "Allegro Moderato." The opening "A" section of the introduction is presented in example 4. It is made up of two short phrases, both two measures in length. The two phrases, very similar in their construction, function as antecedent and consequent and both serve to focus the ear on B-flat. The antecedent phrase opens with the trumpet in C sounding the pitch alone, and the consequent phrase concludes with a root-position B-flat major triad.

Example 4: "Sinfonia", Opening "A" section, mm. 1-4.

The first eight measures of the "B" section (mm. 5-12) further strengthen the polarity of B-flat. While the bassoons maintain what amounts to a dominant pedal, the flute and clarinet are continuously vacillating to and from D-natural and F-natural combinations, which, of course, combine with the bassoon pedal to maintain the music's emphasis upon a B-flat major triad. Beginning in measure twelve, the music becomes much more chromatic, straying from its initial tonal focus. It is much more smoothly flowing and contrapuntal than the somewhat mechanical sounding opening four measures. The harmonic focus returns in

[9] Stravinsky, *Autobiography*, pp. 76, 77.

measure 34 when the trumpets and trombones commence a progression of dominant chords that lead to the beginning of the final "A" section in measure 37. This time, however, rather than sounding a B-flat, as at the beginning of the movement, the opening trumpet pitch here is an A-natural. This is set up in measure 36 by the ascending aeolian scale in E. The ensuing progression that is established with the addition of the bassoons over the sustained A-natural then ultimately leads to a diminished chord ($^{viidim.}/_{V}$ in E-flat) at the beginning of measure 39, and then finally a resounding dominant chord at the fermata in the introduction's closing measure.

Example 5: "Sinfonia", "B" section and closing "A" section of introduction, mm. 5-41.

The remainder of the first movement is marked "Allegro Moderato," and it leaves no doubt that its inspiration is a classical sonata-allegro form model, a

model which Stravinsky established in his Harvard lectures as the "richest" of musical forms from the standpoint of development."[10] It is complete with an opening exposition that introduces primary and secondary themes, an intervening developmental section, and a clear recapitulation and coda. However, Stravinsky takes the existing prototypical sonata-allegro form and bends it somewhat, making it his own. Once again, this inclination to utilize stimulus from the past to provoke new creative endeavors was, in prior discussion of neoclassicism, one of the traits that placed Stravinsky amongst the leaders of the movement.

In comparing the form of the "Sinfonia" to that of classical sonata form, there clearly are areas that can be seen to have been manipulated or stretched. These can be addressed from the standpoint of tonal organization, most specifically in the exposition, thematic exposure in the development, and the reintroduction of themes and the question as to exactly where the recapitulation begins.

Stravinsky discussed the importance of tonal centers in his Harvard University lecture series, referring to them as vehicles through which a specific order or form can be constructed in music.[11] In classical sonata-allegro form, the most important tonal centers are undoubtedly the tonic and dominant. The exposition generally moves from tonic to dominant and the recapitulation usually does just the opposite in bringing closure to the movement. In the *Octet,* however, rather than modulating from I-V, Stravinsky modulates only a half-

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[10] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 41

step's distance. After spending a relatively brief time in the tonic key, the music modulates down from E-flat to D. Also, whereas in traditional sonata form, once the dominant has been established in the exposition, it usually remains the tonal focus into the development, here the emphasis on D is tenuous at best. It is established with the introduction of the second theme, but becomes blurred almost immediately after this initial statement.

Example 6 displays the first theme of the "Allegro Moderato section." The theme itself is somewhat transient and its real anchor is its first three pitches, a falling minor third and rising minor seventh. After its first full statement in the first trumpet, it is presented in canon beginning in measure 49, and then is not heard again in its entirety until the recapitulation. For the remainder of the first theme section, the emphasis is mostly on its opening three-note fragment.

Example 6: "Sinfonia", First theme, mm. 42-48.

The transition from E-flat to D begins at rehearsal number 8 (measure 54). Simply noting that at this point the key signature is eliminated in all parts might reveal that something is about to occur. It is not an indicator of a specific modulation in itself, but does coincide with the tonal shift to come. The opening three notes of the first theme are developed first in descending sequence, setting up the first implication of a D tonality at measure 63. Here, the flute reasserts the first theme in syncopation while the second trumpet simultaneously sounds the

[11] Ibid.

theme in its original form a minor sixth below. Over the next six measures (example 7), each of the eight individual parts remains within the notes of the D-major scale. This section closes in measures 69 and 70 with the first trombone resolutely sounding a sustained D-natural, leading directly to the movement's second theme area. The question that next arises is whether the music has now arrived in D Major or D Minor.

As discussed above, during the measures involved in example 7 every instrument stays entirely within the notes provided by the D Major scale. However, in measure 69, while every other instrument resolves to a D-natural during the first beat, the flute actually ends on an F-natural, implying D Minor. The ensuing rising bassoon figure begins as well with a simultaneous D and F-natural. This is actually not so uncommon in Stravinsky's music. He creates a clear tonal focus, but within that perceived boundary stretches and blurs to a certain extent. This will be discussed further in presentation of the second movement and the use of the octatonic scale.

The second theme (example 8) is then presented for the first time at measure 71. As in the initial voicing of the first theme, the second theme is first performed in its entirety by the first trumpet.

Example 7: "Sinfonia," mm. 63-70.

Example 8: "Sinfonia", Second theme, mm. 71-76.

The next statement of the second theme is interesting in that it further blurs the music's tonal center. Comparing once again to classical sonata-allegro form, in which the music would normally solidify the presence of the dominant, here the music does nothing of the sort. Not only does the key of D (substitute for the dominant) become weaker, but the key center strays in two entirely different directions. In fact, the music of this section is bitonal, with two keys presented separated by a fifth. Here in measures 82-86 (example 9), the theme is played in A-flat while its isometric accompanying material suggests D-flat.

Example 9: "Sinfonia", mm. 81-86.

The development section begins at, or around, rehearsal number 13 (measure 87). Like the classical sonata model, the development here is tonally unstable. It is often freely chromatic and dissonant and implies multiple tonal centers, including C, G, E and B-flat. Also, as in its classical inspiration, this development section introduces new material (example 10).

Example 10: "Sinfonia," development motive, mm. 101-103.

An important question is exactly when the development gives way to the recapitulation. A convincing argument could be made for two different answers: the first placing the beginning of the recapitulation at measure 128, and the other placing it at measure 152. Both positions hinge upon one's interpretation of the reappearance of the second theme in measures 128-138. Traditionally, in the development section of a movement in sonata form, not only is there tonal

instability and frequently introduction of new material, but also a working out, or rehashing of previous material. Then in the ~~exposition~~ recapitulation the home key is then reestablished and the two themes from the exposition are revisited. Once again using classical models as a reference, two possibilities become available. In the majority of classical era compositions that make use of sonata allegro form, the recapitulation begins with the return of the first theme. There are some, however, that are structured in more of an arch-form. In this model, the recapitulation generally returns to the second theme first, then the first theme.

Whichever position one takes in regards to this movement, there is some characteristic that is left incomplete when compared to classical models. In choosing the arch-form model, marking the beginning of the recapitulation at measure 128, one could justify this saying that this is the reinitiation of the thematic material from the exposition. The second theme is sounded here, followed by the first theme in measure 152. The problem is that the recapitulation normally begins in the tonic key. In measure 128, the statement of the second theme is in E, not E-flat.

The argument for placing the recapitulation at measure 152 is based on the fact that this is where the first theme reappears and the music returns to the tonic key. The use of the second theme in measures 128-138 is simply designated as the aforementioned rehashing of previous material within the context of the development. Unfortunately, placing the recapitulation here brings up two problems. First, if the recapitulation begins at measure 152, there is only a recapitulation of the first theme, with no appearance at all of the second.

Second, this makes the recapitulation section extremely brief, a mere twenty-three measures.

The answer as to which choice is more logical might just come by reminding ourselves of the original discussion of Stravinsky and neoclassicism and how he manipulates and stretches the classical forms with which he is working, to enable his own creation. Also remembering the key scheme of a half-step from the exposition might provide the final piece of the puzzle.

In the exposition, rather than modulating from tonic to dominant, Stravinsky moved only one half-step, from E-flat to D. Identifying the recapitulation at measure 128 might be more correct because it allows for the completion of the focus on harmonic motion of a half-step. The second theme is written here in E, and lasts until measure 138. The transition back to the primary material and home key, a distance of one half-step, begins at measure 145. The flute and clarinet sound a G-sharp Major triad, but this tonality quickly dissolves as a chromatic descent carries the music directly to measure 151, where the bassoons arpeggiate an E-flat major triad. The final vertical chord of measure 151 is a dominant chord in E-flat, firmly setting the stage for the reappearance of the first theme. This scenario also allows for a more substantial recapitulation, lasting from measures 128-166. A brief coda then closes the movement from measures 167-175. It is bright and dynamic, beginning with an imitative setting of the first theme. Example 11 illustrates that while the meter changes five times in only nine measures, the music essentially maintains its original duple meter pulse throughout.

Example 11: "Sinfonia," Coda, mm. 167-175.

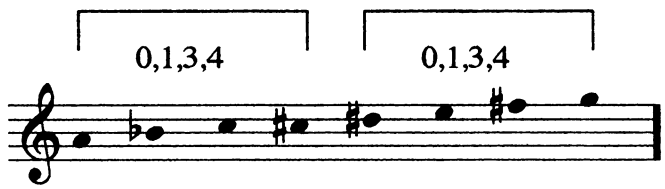
The second movement, "Tema con Variazioni," is unique in a few ways. It has already been stated that this was Stravinsky's first use of this form in an original composition. The movement consists of a theme and five variations, in which the first variation actually returns twice beyond its initial insertion, used as something of a ritornello.[12] The overall layout of the movement, then, is the following.

Theme – Var. A – Var. B – Var. A – Var. C – Var. D – Var. A – Var. E

Stravinsky explained that the process of creating the theme and variations did not actually begin with the theme as it is seen in the final product. "The Tema

of the second movement was derived from the waltz (Variation C); after I had written the waltz I discovered in it an ideal subject for variations. I then wrote the 'ribbons of scales' variation (Variation A) as a prelude to each of the other variations."[13] Furthermore, he spoke of the great emphasis that he placed on the relationships of each variation to the original theme. "In writing variation," he said, "my method is to remain faithful to the theme as a melody – never mind the rest! I regard the theme as a melodic skeleton and am very strict in exposing it in the variations."[14]

This movement also clearly displays Stravinsky's use of two specific pitch class sets. First is the octatonic scale. Example 12 shows the octatonic scale on which the theme is based. Its use, or more precisely, the misinterpretation of its use, has led some to describe parts of this movement as bi-tonal. In fact, in the course of the following analysis, it will be shown that this is not necessarily the case. The use of the octatonic scale, at times alone, and at times in combination with diatonic accompaniments is probably responsible for the misunderstandings.



Example 12: Octatonic scale on which the "Tema con Variazioni" is based.

[12] With the exception of some varied cadential material, Variation A is identical in each of its three appearances.

[13] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary*, reprinted in William Pope Edwards, "The Variation Process in the Music of Stravinsky," (PhD Dissertation, Indiana University, 1974), p. 8.

[14] Paul Henry Long, *Stravinsky: A New Appraisal of His Work*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1963), p. 61.

Example 12 also illustrates that the octatonic scale is a symmetrical collection. By bisecting its eight-notes, the two resulting tetrachords can each be reduced to [0,1,3,4] sets based on integer notation. These collections are not only central in the construction of the theme itself, but will also be presented as a unifying device within the movement as a whole.

The theme is fourteen measures long, and as demonstrated in example 13, can be segmented into several [0,1,3,4] set presentations. Two of these presentations involve an added pitch and there is one instance of two of the segments overlapping. The theme as a whole may be divided into two similar segments, making it an A - A' binary. The first segment lasts through the first eight measures and maintains the melody in octaves in the flute and clarinet. In the second segment the melody begins in the second trumpet and is completed by the first trombone.

Example 13: [0,1,3,4] segmentation of the second movement's theme.

The established tonality is centered around D. The theme could easily be mistaken as being bitonal, because the melody is based on the octatonic collection that does not include a D-natural, while the accompaniment is mostly

set within the confines of the diatonic collection which is D-minor. However, Stravinsky frequently asserts the leading-tone in D (C-sharp) throughout these opening fourteen measures to further strengthen this key, and he closes the thematic statement with a second-inversion D-major triad. This closing chord serves both in tonic and dominant functions. It supports the underlying tonal focus of D, and sets up a stronger resolution to a unison D with the beginning of Variation A in measure fifteen.

Variation A is divided into four distinct sections, each with its own unique treatment of the fragment of the theme to which it corresponds, and each transposed by an interval of a second. In each section, the varied melodic material is nearly masked by the florid moving lines above it. The first section, from measures 15-18, is a relatively literal presentation of the first four measures of the theme. The only variation is that the first note is displaced down by one octave and the ornamentation has all been removed. In the final measure of this section, the bassoons establish the ostinato accompaniment of alternating [0,1,3,4] octatonic fragments that will last for the duration of the next section, from measures 19-22. Here, the varied theme is much more subtly presented, in the soft, staccato off-beats sounded in the flute, clarinet, and trumpets. Both of these first two sections are transposed up a minor-second from the original melody.

Measures 23 and 24 correspond to the ninth and tenth measures of the theme. Like the opening section of the variation, the theme is sounded in accented notes on the downbeats with all ornamentation removed. The

transposition in these two measures, however is down a minor-second. The final two measures of Variation A actually correspond to the final four measures of the theme. The material is transposed up a major-second and overlapped into a diminished metric space (example 14). The variation closes with an A-natural/E-flat augmented-fourth sounding between the bassoons and the clarinet, setting up a modulation to E at the beginning of Variation B.

Example 14: Overlapping melodic presentation in final two measures of Variation A.

The march-like Variation B is divided into three sections and expands on the melody of the original theme. The first section, which lasts from measures 27-34, makes more use of repetition to extend its melody. The first phrase of the theme, sounded by the second trumpet in measures 29-33, is extended simply through several reiterations of the first two notes. Measure 34, which serves to link the first section to the second is notable in that it makes structural use of the referential [0,1,3,4] set. The four notes sounded in octave unison by the first trumpet and first trombone reduce to [0,1,3,4], and serve as transitional material leading into the new section at measure 35.

The second section, which spans measures 35-45, is more an expansion of the dotted-rhythm motives established in the previous section, and the

thematic material is more subtly placed. There are, however, literal insertions of material from the theme. The clarinet plays a descending figure in measure thirty-six, which is an untransposed restatement of the fifth and sixth measures of the theme. Example 15 shows that in measures 41-45, while the flute and clarinet are serving as the melodic voices, the actual theme is set as a counter-line in the first trumpet. In closing this section, Stravinsky uses repetition to help modulate back from E to D. The rising four-note motive played by the clarinet and second trumpet in measure 45 is a transposition of the same motive played one measure earlier by both trumpets.

Example 15: Variation B, mm. 41-45.

The final section of the variation returns to the use of short downbeat accompaniment, but the melody is now presented through a very legato exchange between the two trumpets. Variation B closes in measure fifty-six with a firm vii^{o} – I cadence in D before the first return of Variation A.

Variation C is the aforementioned waltz from which the original theme was taken. Stravinsky uses the techniques of octave displacement, transposition, repetition, elongation, and rhythmic development to relate the material from this variation to that of the original theme. However, he remains true to his statement regarding the theme as a "melodic skeleton." Several illustrations of the processes in this variation are shown in example 16.

Example 16: Excerpts from Variation C compared to corresponding material from the theme.

Variation C is the only variation (except for the final variation) that is not immediately followed by a return of Variation A. It moves directly into Variation D, which begins with a dance-like, three-part eighth-note ostinato played by the bassoons and clarinet. Like Variation B, this variation may also be divided into a three-part (A-B-A) form. Also like Variation B, the outer sections contain more literal treatments of more extended passages of the thematic material, while the middle section is somewhat more abstract. The important differences are in the variation techniques used, and in the fact that the theme is never stated in its entirety in Variation D. Instead, this variation shows some use of interjections of material that are based on a much more isolated fragment of the theme.

After an eight-measure introduction, the first phrase of the theme is very clearly stated in slight rhythmic augmentation, from measures 131-141. It is voiced in octave unison in the two trumpet parts for the first seven measures and a third octave is added above in the flute in measure 138. Interestingly, the melody is untransposed, but the tonal focus is now A, rather than D. Example 17 shows that after this very legato presentation, the texture is abruptly interrupted by a frantic clarinet flourish through measures 146-148. It is punctuated by the first trumpet and first trombone sounding, in accented quarter-notes, the climbing three-note motive taken from the seventh measure of the theme, consisting of a rising augmented-fourth followed by a rising minor-third. Moreover, in the following measures, the flute answers the clarinet's outburst with one of its own, the first part of which also consists of repetitions of this very same three-note motive.

Example 17: Variation D, mm. 146-153.

The B section begins in measure 156 and lasts until measure 175. It involves new material and travels through new key areas. At measure 156, the arpeggiated bassoon ostinato from the beginning of the variation is re-initiated, this time in F rather than A. Then, beginning in measure 161, the tonality becomes much less stable, modulating nearly constantly until a resounding cadence in A closes the section on the second beat of measure 175.

The third and final section begins in measure 176. The two-part bassoon ostinato is identical to the beginning of the variation, but the clarinet part has been altered. As in the first section, the melodic presentations are much more legato and sustained, as well as more literally connected to the theme. The music remains in A to the close of the variation and then moves directly to D for the third appearance of Variation A.

The final variation, Variation E, is a fugue. Stravinsky openly took great pride in this variation, and the vision that he had of it is itself a microcosm of the concepts that have been presented in relation to some of his orchestrational techniques which came to a head in this work. His concertante writing has been addressed from the aspect of his frequent division of the ensemble into distinct families. In the following statement, Stravinsky himself revealed that this was exactly his plan for the fugue. "The final, culminating variation, the *fugato,* is my favourite episode in the *Octuor,*" he said. "The plan of it was to present the theme in rotation by the instrumental pairs – flutes/clarinet, bassoons, trumpets, trombones – which is the idea of instrumental combination at the root of the *Octuor* and of my dream."[15]

The subject is simply an untransposed version of the first eight measures of the original theme. It is altered only by octave displacement, a few note deletions, and by inverting the final interval of the passage (Example 18). The texture of the variation is one of steadily intensifying counterpoint to a set juncture, and then a sudden tapering to the final six measures of the variation, which also serve as the introduction to the *Octet'* s "Finale." The harmonic language is far more chromatic than any of the previous variations, but this also subsides as the transition is made into the "Finale."

[15] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft. *Dialogues and a Diary,* pp. 39, 40.

Example 18: Variation E, Fugue subject.

The subject is presented five times. The first two are very literal, but from there Stravinsky began to take liberties. These took the form of beginning the subject in one voice of a "family" while completing it in another. The first two presentations are stated entirely in one voice, first in the first bassoon and then transposed up a fifth in the clarinet, in measures 220-224 and 224-228 respectively. In measure 230, however, the first trumpet begins the subject, but the second trumpet completes it in measures 233 and 234. The same technique is used for the fourth statement, but this time the material is actually passed between two families rather than between two members of the same family. The flute and clarinet begin the subject in octave unison, but it is the first trumpet that completes the composite in measures 237 and 238.

The texture becomes most dense in the ensuing six measures, leading into the final presentation of the subject, which begins in measure 245. Example 19 illustrates that the subject material in this last statement is itself divided into four smaller fragments and involves three of the four appointed instrumental families. The completion of the subject is then the material that is used as the basis of the cadenza-like transition initiated in measure 248 which ultimately

takes us to the bassoons' introduction to the "Finale." As a final integrative presentation of the [0,1,3,4] collection, the material sounded in the clarinet in measure 251, and handed to the flute in the following measure to initiate the linking to the "Finale," is built on this pitch set.

Example 19: Variation D, final presentation of the fugue subject, mm. 245-249.

It is little secret what Stravinsky's stimuli were in writing the final movement of the *Octet.* He had openly professed his joy in the "rediscovery" of sonata form in the first movement, and the investigation of the theme and variations and fugue is clear in the second. In further reflection upon the composition of the *Octet,* Stravinsky also spoke of the inspiration of the "tersenesss and lucidity of Bach's two-part inventions."[16] The "Finale" is a testament to Stravinsky's contrapuntal skills. Melodic and motivic material are

[16] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft. *Dialogues and a Diary,* Reprinted in Martha Maclean Hyde's "Neoclassic and anachronistic impulses in Twentieth Century Music," p. 212.

manipulated in two, three, and four-part counterpoint and in imitative settings. Furthermore, Stravinsky uses a brief portion of a section in the middle of the piece to foreshadow the stunning coda at its closing.

Texturally, the "Finale" is truly driven by syncopation and ostinato. There is virtually always an accompanying ostinato, either in the form of a cyclic scalar pattern or through a variety of isorhythmic units. The result is a relentless momentum that carries the music from opening to close. Formally, this is a distinct example of classical five-part rondo form (A-B-A-C-A) with a coda. While the form is very straightforward, Stravinsky "makes it his own" through the filter of the harmonic language for which he had become known. While much of the movement is tonal, at times Stravinsky also displays the use of mode mixture, meshing of octatonic and diatonic systems, and even polytonality.

The movement begins with the bassoons in a playful two-part invention-like counterpoint. They are then joined at the upbeat to measure thirteen by the clarinet.[17] The key center of this opening "A" section is ultimately revealed to be A, but this is not entirely apparent until its cadence in measure 37. Example 20 illustrates that this opening passage is an example of the combination of the relative keys C and A that avoids choosing a single focus until its very end. The accompanying ostinato pattern played by the second bassoon is a simple cyclic scalar presentation in C, rising and falling a total interval of a tenth. Next addressing the eventual tertiary material in the clarinet, its rising and falling

[17] Where the "Sinfonia" and "Tema con Variazioni" are scored for B-flat clarinet, the "Finale" asks for a clarinet in A. The performer is given ample time to make the instrument switch over the course of the thirteen-measure "cadenza" that closes the final variation of the second movement, as well as the opening eleven measures of the third movement.

scalar patterns are also seemingly in C. The melody in the first bassoon, however, appears to associate with both C and A. Despite sporadic chromatic alterations, it could be argued that at times the voice-leading implies both keys, as in measures five and six, and measures fourteen and fifteen, before the deciding cadence in measure 37.

Example 20: "Finale," mm. 1-37.

The first "B" section begins in measure 38 and lasts twenty-two measures. The melodic material sounded by the second trumpet contrasts that of the "A" section in that it is sustained and legato. It too is propelled a great deal by ostinato. It opens and closes with cascading eighth-note accompaniments,

similar to the second bassoon's in the previous section. There is effective use of imitation and sequence. Harmonically, however, Stravinsky stretches into bitonality and the intermingling of octatonic and diatonic pitch collections. In example 21, after the initial reinforcement of the focus upon A, the tonality seems to diverge. While the second bassoon, second trumpet, and bass trombone seem to move through the key of F in measures 40-42, the clarinet and first bassoon apparently hover around C.

Example 21: "Finale," mm. 40-42.

Continuing to example 22, as the flute and clarinet move into new, imitative material in measure 43, the music changes, both texturally and harmonically. The music is now based on simultaneous presentations of each of the possible octatonic collections. The eight notes played by the second bassoon in measures 44and 45, for example, are members of a single octatonic scale, and the three-step sequence performed by the first bassoon in measures 45-47 is all drawn from the octatonic scales. At the same time, the material in the flute and clarinet move from one collection to another, but are still

octatonically based until emerging chromatically back to the scalar eighth-note figures which return in measures 49-55.

Example 22: "Finale," Octatonic integration within "B" section, mm. 44-48.

The second "A" section is slightly varied in comparison to the first. It begins just as in the opening of the movement, but this time when the clarinet drops back out of the texture for the second time, it is the two trumpets that recapitulate the main thematic material from measures 80-91, rather than the two bassoons. The material has been altered slightly, closing this "A" section in somewhat different fashion and the music becomes less stable tonally as it progresses toward the "C" section, which begins in measure ninety-two.

Three notable introductions in this section are the syncopated foretelling of the coda's material, the initiation of new, isorythmic ostinato accompaniment, and the presentation of new thematic material in two different forms. Example 23 illustrates the isorhythmic ostinati played by the clarinet and first bassoon beginning in measure ninety-two. The clarinet performs a repeating three-note pitch sequence within the framework of a four-count rhythmic setting. At the same time, the eighth-notes in the first bassoon part cycle through a rotation

within a rotation. The top two notes remain fixed, but the bottom note rises and falls chromatically between G-natural and B-flat. Example 24 displays the two syncopated forms of the new thematic material. The first statement begins in measure 109 and lasts through measure 116. The second statement of this material spans measures 117-124 and involves some use of octave displacement in the last two measures.

Example 23: "Finale," clarinet and bassoon ostinati at opening of "C" section.

Example 24: "Finale," "C" section theme presentations, mm. 109-124.

The final "A" section begins in measure 128. The theme is initially in the first trombone, and then passed to the second trumpet in measure 136. Rather than the light and springy eighth-note dance feel of the prior "A" sections, however, this time the melody is rhythmically augmented and set in legato

quarter-notes. Not only is the melody augmented, but so too is the basic accompaniment (Example 25). The clarinet does revisit its cheerful accompanying figures in measures 133-135, but then retreats back to simple chromatic quarter-note gestures from there.

Example 25: "Finale," final "A" theme presentation in rhythmic augmentation.

The transition to the coda begins in measure 148 and is built on boisterous interjections in the trombones of the first phrase of the "A" theme. A final procession begins in measure 154, followed by a starkly deceptive coda, beginning in measure 160. In a subdued syncopated, jazz-like style, the flute and clarinet play melodic material over steady seventh chords in the brass, setting up a singing, hocketed trumpet duet which ultimately carries to the work's close and the full ensemble's resolving C chord.

The *Octet* was not only the completion of Stravinsky's progressions through instrumental preferences, orchestrational practices, and formal and compositional techniques. It was also a representation of those characteristics that made him so central a figure in the neoclassicism of the 1920s. There are clear references to the rhythmic devices and harmonic language for which Stravinsky had become known over a decade earlier, such as the fusion of

diatonic and octatonic systems. Earlier in this chapter it was mentioned that in his Harvard lectures, Stravinsky quoted Leonardo da Vinci in asserting that borders and limits in fact enable freedom rather than restricting it. He continued in his own words, stating, "A mode of composition that does not assign itself limits becomes pure fantasy."[18] The induction of the classically inspired formal frameworks into the composer's existing musical vocabulary resulted in a pivotal and influential work within the wind repertoire.

The mounting of the *Octet's* premiere performance was an anxious experience. The style of the music was somewhat outside of the realm of the performing musicians' experience and Stravinsky was admittedly limited in his technique and abilities as a conductor, but the composer was ultimately quite pleased with the resulting performance.[19]

Interestingly, the score of the *Octet* was later used for two ballet productions in New York in 1958. The New York City Ballet used it first, and then the American Ballet Theatre employed the music under the title *Agrismene.*[20] The immediate influence of the *Octet*, though, was as inspiration for Stravinsky's next great neoclassic wind work. Koussevitsky was so pleased with the success of the *Octet* that he then invited Stravinsky to write another work for one of his concerts in the 1924 season. Stravinsky suggested a piano concerto. Koussevitsky went one step further and proposed that the composer himself play the solo part for the premiere. So was born the *Concerto* for Piano and Winds.

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[18] Ibid., p. 63.
[19] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and his Works*, p. 313.
[20] Ibid., p. 314

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND WINDS

FROM THE OCTET TO THE CONCERTO

Igor Stravinsky's *Concerto for Piano and Winds* was born out of the success of his *Octet for Winds.* In many ways, it also represents the continuation of the formal, orchestrational, and compositional characteristics that were realized in its immediate predecessor. The *Concerto* is an obvious continued example of Stravinsky's professed predilection for writing for winds, now with the added concentration upon piano. Considering that Stravinsky's original training was on piano, it is curious that in the fifteen years prior to the composition of the *Concerto,* he had written relatively little for the instrument.[1] "Having again used a wind ensemble for chamber music in the *Octour,*" he said, "I later undertook the composition of my *concerto,* which, as regards color, is yet another combination – that of piano with a wind orchestra reinforced by double basses and timbals."[2]

Beyond the choice of instruments, in the *Concerto* Stravinsky demonstrates the further evolution of orchestrational techniques, specifically the orchestration of dynamics and *concertante* writing mentioned in earlier chapters. The addition of the solo instrument allowed for opportunities to institute new textures and treatments, including various approaches to the reinforcement of melodic material as well as the integration of the solo instrument into the ensemble setting. The *Concerto* is written for a larger ensemble than was the *Octet,* so it also provides for additional variation on the idea of instrumental

[1] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey,* p. 107.

"families." Finally, it is, of course, the next powerful manifestation of the composer's re-interpretation of classic forms and styles.

BACKGROUND

Like the *Octet,* the *Concerto* was composed at Biarritz, from mid 1923 to April, 1924.[3] It is dedicated to Madame Natalie Koussevitzky and originally published by Edition Russe de Musique.[4] It was first performed at a Koussevitzky Concert on 22 May 1924 at the Paris Opera House, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky and with Stravinsky as soloist. It seems that the final stages of the *Concerto's* composition were done somewhat frantically. In a letter to Ernest Ansermet, dated 28 March 1924, Stravinsky wrote, "Imagine that I must finish the last part of my Concerto, learn to play the whole piece on the piano, and perform gloriously at the premiere on May 15!"[5] Note that the date given by Stravinsky in this letter is a full week prior to that of the Koussevitzky Concert at which the *Concerto*'s recognized premiere was given. In truth, Stravinsky gave a private performance of the work on the earlier date at the Princess Edmond de Polignac's home. Stravinsky played the solo part, and a reduction of the orchestral score was played on a second piano by Jean Wiener.[6]

Not only were the final stages of the work's composition somewhat frenzied, but the public premiere apparently provided an anxious moment as well.

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[2] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography,* p. 104.

[3] The completed score is dated "Biarritz, 21 April 1924.

[4] The original published printing was in 1924, but the publishing rights were later obtained by Boosey & Hawkes.

[5] Igor Stravinsky, *Selected Correspondence,* Vol. I., Edited by Robert Craft, (New York: Alfred A.Knopf Publishing),.p. 179.

While Stravinsky's playing was evidently outstanding, he supposedly suffered an awkward memory lapse. "After finishing the first movement and just before beginning the *Largo* which opens with a passage for solo piano," he recalled, "I suddenly realised that I had completely forgotten how it started. I said so quietly to Koussevitzky, who glanced at the score and hummed the first notes. That was enough to restore my balance and enable me to attack the *Largo.*"[7]

As mentioned above, the *Concerto* was scored for a much larger wind ensemble than was the *Octet,* here for twenty-four instruments plus solo piano. The instrumentation includes one piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, one english horn, two clarinets in A, two bassoons, four horns, four trumpets in C, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and string-bass. Like the *Octet,* it is set in three movements (fast-slow-fast). Also like its immediate predecessor, the *Concerto*'s opening movement makes use of a slow introduction leading to a lively allegro.

While the previous chapter involved a detailed presentation and analysis of the *Octet*, focusing upon placing it as the work that represents the completion of Stravinsky's evolution from *Le Sacre*, etc. to neoclassicism, the present chapter has slightly different objectives. This discussion focuses on three areas. Through a more descriptive and comparative analysis it aims to illustrate those methods and techniques that Stravinsky carried, and even further developed, from the *Octet* to the *Concerto*. First, the *Concerto* is an obvious continuation of the composer's neoclassic rediscovery of the past, and a brief examination of form and sequence in its three movements will explore those manifestations.

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[6] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 318.

Next, it becomes clear what orchestrational techniques Stravinsky maintained and developed. One of these is the *concertante* style exposed in both of the previous two chapters, in which he frequently manipulated designated families of instruments. Finally, in adding the solo piano to the wind orchestra, Stravinsky displayed innovative treatments of the interaction between the solo instrument and the ensemble, both in the orchestration of dynamics and motivic development.

COMPARATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Something that is immediately apparent in the first movement of the *Concerto* is the concentration on dotted rhythms, reminiscent of the French overtures of the Baroque. In interviews published in Robert Craft's *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, the composer reflected, explaining that, "Dotted rhythms are characteristic eighteenth-century rhythms. My uses of them in these and other works of that period, such as the introduction to my piano Concerto, are conscious stylistic references. I attempted to build a new music on eighteenth-century classicism using the constructive principles of that classicism... and even evoking it stylistically by such means as dotted rhythms."[8]

As in the *Octet*, the more lively main body of the movement is preceded by a slow introduction. Just as in its predecessor, this introduction is structured in a three-part binary (A-B-A) form in which the much shorter outer "A" sections

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[7] Igor Stravinsky, *Chroniques de Ma Vie*, reprinted in Eric Walter White's *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 318.

[8] Robert Craft, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, p. 21.

surround a more substantial inner section. The "A" sections are entirely centered around a beautiful horn choir, although the final section is substantially abbreviated. The opening "A" section takes up the first twelve measures, while the closing "A" is merely four measures in length. The middle "B" section lasts sixteen measures, from measures 13-28.

Most striking, however, is the clear division of the entire introduction into alternating instrumental "choirs" (Example 1). From the inception of the "B" section, at measure thirteen, there is a steady progression of statements by the different instrumental families, from a double-reed choir to a brass choir in measures 15-18, back to the horns, and then again to the double-reeds.

Example 1: Movement I, Introduction, mm. 13-22

The "Allegro" begins in measure 33. Similar to the final movement of the *Octet*, it is driven by intense syncopation. The music is very aggressive and often percussive, reflecting a style reminiscent of the toccatas of Baroque masters such as Handel and Bach. The large-scale form of the body of the

movement is ternary. Example 2 illustrates a setting mid-way through the exposition that is a further representation of Stravinsky's passion for the contrapuntal music of Bach. In this excerpt the subject is presented in the form of a three-part invention.

Example 2: Movement 1, "Allegro" subject, mm. 69-86

The treatment of the subject material in this work is interesting in its variety. There is diversity in the manners in which the wind instruments accompany, interact with, and reinforce the piano's melodic material. It is also very common for the solo instrument to be integrated into the full orchestral texture, literally becoming a part of the ensemble itself. This is demonstrated throughout the *Concerto*. It is rarely the case that the musical material is contrasted from solo to ensemble, but rather, contrasting sounds, textures, and timbres of similar material are shared and developed between the two entities. Examples 3a-c illustrate some of these techniques. Example 3a shows part of the introduction of secondary thematic material in the exposition of the first

movement. The piano states it over relatively sparse accompaniment in the first oboe, english horn, and later the first clarinet. In Example 3b the same material is developed in a more assertive and syncopated setting, in which the horns and upper woodwinds assume much more leadership. Finally, in Example 3c, the final presentation of this material before the piano launches into the solo invention seen in Example 2, the composite melodic material is sounded in the first trumpet. The woodwinds vigorously reinforce the emphasis on the offbeats, while the piano is actually relegated to the accompanying role, simply performing technical arpeggiated figures.

Example 3a: Mvt. I, mm. 50-54

Example 3b: Mvt. I, mm. 59-63

Example 3c: Mvt. I, mm. 64-69

The final piano cadenza in the first movement, beginning in measure 252 is an extended recollection of the metrical device used earlier by Stravinsky in the coda that closed the "Sinfonia" of the *Octet* (Example 4). For most of the first

section of the cadenza (mm. 252-282), Stravinsky establishes a fairly regular rotation of 3/8, 2/8, and 3/16 meters. In the latter section (mm. 283-312), it is interjections of 3/8 measures into a scheme of 2/4 and 3/4 measures. As in the *Octet*, the driving sense of downbeat pulse is maintained through these constant shifts. This time, however, Stravinsky displaces the pulse several times by a single subdivision, never allowing the listener to entirely forget the feeling of syncopation that has propelled this movement from the very initiation of the "Allegro."

The cadenza tirelessly winds its way to a grand pause between measures 312 and 313 before the beginning of the coda. Where the brief coda at the end of the *Octet*'s opening movement completed its governing sonata form, basing itself on the main thematic material from the "Allegro Moderato," this coda rounds the movement off by returning to the music from the slow introduction at the start of the entire work. The noticeable difference is that this time, the piano participates.

Example 4: Mvt. I, close of final piano cadenza, mm. 297-312

The slow and rich second movement of the *Concerto* is marked "Largo" with a tempo indication of sixteenth-note=84. Its beautiful and expressive melody over vertical and broken chord accompaniments might easily be seen as a look back to the majestic nineteenth-century nocturnes and character pieces by the likes of Chopin. Stravinsky revealed that while writing this movement, "Some pages of the manuscript disappeared mysteriously one day, and when I tried to rewrite them I found I could remember almost nothing of what I had written. I do not know to what extent the published movement differs from the lost one, but I am sure the two are very unlike."[9]

The second movement is divided into three distinct sections (A-B-A'), articulated at each division by a starkly contrasting piano cadenza. These cadenzas are important from two views. First, this structure is somewhat suggestive of that of the middle movement from the previous year's *Octet.* Recall that in that movement, the "Tema con Variazioni," Variation A was used in a quasi-ritornello role. This "ribbons of scales" variation linked each of the other variations. In the *Concerto*, the piano cadenzas are not so much in place to function as ritornelli, but do resemble the primary variation from the *Octet* in that they involve contrasting dynamic and technical flourishes that clearly set apart their surrounding sections. The cadenzas are also notable for the fact they are really the two isolated interjections in which the piano fully functions as a solo or feature voice. Beyond those two passages, the keyboard is treated as an integrated member of the ensemble. More often than not, in fact, it actually serves as an accompanying instrument.

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[9] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 316.

Examination of this movement also reveals the following points of interest. First, it is immediately apparent that Stravinsky has maintained and developed the orchestrational concepts of isorhythmic ostinato and the division of the ensemble into distinct families or choirs. In regards to the latter, it is interesting that the bassoons have now been tied in with the brass-choir, creating an even more pronounced timbral contrast. The addition of the bassoon and contra-bassoon to the brass further enriches the darker quality of this grouping, while their removal from the woodwinds serves to lighten and enhance this opposing texture.

An illustration of the ostinato technique mentioned above is seen in the beginning of the second theme area (Example 5). Beginning in measure 45, the melodic material in the first oboe is played over a tri-level accompaniment in the english horn and piano. The left hand is seen simply rocking back and forth on an eighth-note diad, but the right hand of the piano and english horn have developed three and four-note isorhythmic ostinati, respectively.

Example 5: Mvt. II, mm. 45-50

Midway through this movement, Stravinsky also reveals to us that the main thematic material from the opening movement is to be used as a common,

unifying thread throughout the entire composition. Beginning in measure 53, the first flute joins the first oboe in the second statement of the subject for this middle section. The accompaniment remains in the piano, but the english horn takes on new material, subtly countering the melody with an extended gesture that recalls the toccata from the first movement (Example 6).

Example 6: Mvt. 2, English Horn counter-line, mm. 53-63

Finally, just as the final measures of the *Octet*'s second movement served to move seamlessly into the "Finale," so too does the closing of the *Concerto*'s middle movement transition directly into its closing movement. This closing passage is much shorter than that of the *Octet* and follows a slightly different path in preparing the third movement. Where the *Octet* closed its second movement by establishing the new tempo and style, the *Concerto* remains in the manner and tempo set forth by the "Largo" indication. It links the two movements through common cadential material. Example 7 demonstrates that the sensitive final cadence of the second movement of the *Concerto* is exactly the same as the opening cadence of its third movement, differentiated only by the tempo and a change of mode.

Mvt. II, final progression Mvt. III, opening progression

Example 7

The *Concerto*'s final movement reestablishes several of the techniques and textures from the first movement. Some of the similarities are relatively obvious, while others are somewhat less pronounced. Mid-way through the movement, we also see the next example of Stravinsky's attraction to the fugue that so prominently manifested itself the previous year in the *Octet.*

In the third movement of the *Concerto*, the music returns to a more agitated and aggressively syncopated style. The piano material is very technical, and at times even mechanical sounding. A focus upon dotted rhythms is also reasserted in the outer sections of the movement. The division of the accompanying ensemble into a variety of families or choirs is clearly maintained

and manipulated to create contrasting textures and timbres throughout. Furthermore, the connection of all three movements through the use of material from the original toccata subject of the first movement is made complete.

The opening fifty-five measures might very well be considered an extended introduction. The tone is nearly frantic in nature, alluding in fragmented and distorted forms to the movement's main subject material. This material is not presented in its entirety until measure 56 (Example 8). Within a matter of measures, however, this subject's relation to that of the toccata from the first movement becomes absolutely clear.

Example 8: Mvt. III, Main subject

After this initial assertion of the subject material, it is then successively restated three more times in various forms, almost insinuating a theme and variations within the movement. The first, beginning in measure seventy, is a recollection of the more fragmented presentation from the opening of the movement. The second, from measures 89-101, is a quite literal restatement of the theme in the solo piano. The third begins in measure 102. Through interjections of contrasting material, it stretches all the way through measure 143 and sounds the subject in rhythmic augmentation in a thickly voiced woodwind choir.

After a brief, but very angry sounding transition, the fugato begins in measure 147. The piano serves only to provide technical underpinning, as each of the subject's statements is in the winds. Interestingly, the presentation of the rather stately subject of this fugue bares curious resemblance at times to the imitative final presentation of the main thematic material at the end of the *Octet* . After the fugue, the remainder of the movement draws quite obvious references to the end of the *Octet.* Beginning at measure 168 is a buoyant, syncopated section that is undoubtedly pulled directly from the coda of the *Octet.* It is an equally engaging change of style, and the material in the winds is nearly exactly that which is found in the *Octet.*

In the final three sections following the fugue, Stravinsky not only wraps up just the movement, but also brings the entire work full circle. In the first of these sections, marked "Agitato," beginning at measure 176, the piano angrily revisits the presentation of the movement's main thematic material from its introduction. After sixteen measures, and a dramatic crescendo to a powerful ensemble exclamation in measure 195, the very slow dotted-rhythm material from the very opening of the *Concerto* beautifully returns. This carries directly to a brief coda, which completes the musical cycle of the work by playfully spinning to the close using material drawn from the toccata of the first movement.

While the *Concerto* is perhaps not as literal in its adhesion to actual classical forms as was the *Octet*, it is clearly a continuation of many of the orchestrational, structural, and compositional ideals that the *Octet* represented. What's more, it was not in any way the completion of Stravinsky's concentration

on the principles for which these two great works stood. In his *Autobiography*, Stravinsky explained that, "After the *Octour* and the *Concerto,* my interest was completely and continuously absorbed in thoughts of instrumental music pure and simple, untrammeled by any scenic consideration."[10]

Following the *Concerto*, Stravinsky continued writing for the piano, producing both his *Sonata* and *Serenade in A* for solo piano in 1924. The latter was dedicated to his wife. He continued in the use of a recapitulation as a potent unifying device in both of these works, but perhaps in the interest of even greater variety, avoided the literal repetition that was seen in the opening movements of both the *Octet* and *Concerto*.[11]

During the several years prior to the premiere of the *Concerto*, Stravinsky's efforts had admittedly not been focused on honing his skills as a solo performer. This performance, the first of many, was to revitalize this supplementary career for more than the next dozen years. In fact, during the five years following the 1924 Koussevitzky Concert performance, Stravinsky maintained the sole rights to the performance of the *Concerto*, and did so over forty times on tours through Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Yugoslavia, England, France, and The United States.[12] He appeared as soloist as well in his *Cappriccio* (1929) and *Concerto for Two Solo Pianos* (1935).[13] In one final connection shared with the *Octet*, in 1960, under the title *Treize Chaises*, the

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[10] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography*, pp. 114, 115.
[11] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey*, pp. 110-112.
[12] Ibid., p. 110.
[13] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 317.

score to the *Concerto* was used for a ballet produced by the Bühnen der Stadt Köln.[14]

[14] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 319.

CONCLUSION

THE POSITION OF THE *OCTET* AND *CONCERTO* IN MODERN DAY WIND PERFORMANCE PROGRAMS

The years surrounding Stravinsky's composition of *Symphonies of Wind Instruments, Octet for Winds*, and *Concerto for Piano and Winds* were some of his finest in regards to his writing for wind instruments. While after the *Concerto* he maintained a relatively strong concentration on composing for piano, his production for winds trailed off somewhat. In 1942 Stravinsky published his *Circus Polka* in versions for orchestra and wind-band. He did the same in 1944 with his *Scherzo á la Russe*. The *Ebony Concerto*, dedicated to Woody Herman was published in 1945, and *Mass* for mixed chorus and double wind quintet appeared in 1948. In 1952 Stravinsky produced the *Cantata* for soprano, tenor, female chorus, and a very small instrumental ensemble of two flutes, one oboe, one english horn, and one cello. In that same year, as discussed in an earlier chapter of this document, Stravinsky re-orchestrated his *Concertino for String Quartet* (1917) for ten winds and two string instruments. After the pivotal *Octet* and *Concerto*, however, Stravinsky never again put forth a work for wind instruments that has earned the level of acclaim or had the kind of impact on the literature for winds that these two works of the early 1920s did.

In the years to come, Stravinsky gradually moved from the interests he had displayed in the classic forms and techniques of centuries past into the world of serial music. He acknowledged great respect and admiration for the work of Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern. In fact, in the summer of 1955, Stravinsky said the following in tribute to the late Anton Webern.

> The 15th of September, 1945, the day of Anton Webern's death, should be a day of mourning for any receptive musician. We must hail not only this great composer but also a real hero. Doomed to a total failure in a deaf world of ignorance and indifference he inexorably kept on cutting out his diamonds, his dazzling diamonds, the mines of which he had such a perfect knowledge.[1]

In the continued evolution in compositional style and practice represented in his transition out of neoclassicism and into serial music, Stravinsky also demonstrated a reincorporation of works for larger ensemble. He did produce significant compositions for smaller groups of instruments, but in contrast to his more intimate neoclassical compositions during the years surrounding the *Octet* and *Concerto*, the musical texture of several of Stravinsky's central serial works was often much denser, as in *Agon* (1953) and *Threni* (1957).

Unfortunately, the impact of Stravinsky's *Octet* and *Concerto* for piano and winds did not resonate in the world of the concert band and wind ensemble in the United States until several decades later. As the first half of the twentieth century came to a close, the programming philosophies in the wind departments at the American college and university level were still wrapped up in a tradition that was centered on the large "symphonic band." Consequently, many of the significant works for ensembles of a reduced instrumentation were overlooked. In a paper

entitled "The Wind Ensemble Concept," Donald Hunsberger illustrated the prominent mid-century programming aesthetic by reproducing printed concert programs from performances by some of the most highly respected university band programs in the United States. Two of these programs are seen below. These performances highlighted mostly marches, orchestral and operatic transcriptions, and popular music for large-scale ensembles. There was very little of what might be termed "art music" that was originally written for winds, and there was certainly no utilization of any sort of music for reduced instrumentation.

University of Illinois Concert Band
Mark Hindsley Conductor
Sixty-first Anniversary Concert, March 20 and 21, 1951
University Auditorium

Overture to *Tannhäuser*	Richard Wagner
Second Movement from Symphony No. 1, "Nordic"	Howard Hanson
Salome's Dance from *Salome*	Richard Strauss
Masquerade Suite	Aram Khatchaturian

Intermission

"Tap Roots," from the motion picture	Frank Skinner
Suite for Concert Band	Gerald Kechley
Les Preludes	Franz Liszt

Mark H. Hindsley, conducting

Unveiling of a portrait of Albert Austin Harding, Director *Emeritus*, University of Illinois Bands

Finale from *Death and Transfiguration*	Richard Strauss
University of Illinois March	John Philip Sousa

Albert Austin Harding, conducting

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[1] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, p. 134.

University of Michigan Symphony Band
William D. Revelli, Conductor
Hill Auditorium, February 26, 1952
Sigurd Rascher, Saxophonist

Homage March	Wagner
Symphonic Poem – *The Universal Judgment*	De Nardis
"Meditation" from the Opera *Thaïs*	Massenet
Featuring the Flute Choir	
Concert March – *A Step Ahead*	Alford
Aria from *Bachianas Brasilieras* No. 2	Villa Lobos

Intermission

Toccata and Fugue in D minor	Bach
Introduction and Samba	Whitney
Sigurd Rascher, saxophone soloist	
Overture to the Opera *Colas Breugnon*	Kabalevsky
Trumpet and Drum	Land
Barbara McGoey, drum soloist	
Paul Willerth, trumpet soloist	
"Rag" from *Suite of Old American Dances*	Bennett
Michigan Rhapsody	Arr. By Werle[2]

This document has endeavored to show that in the transitional years leading up to Stravinsky's composition of the *Octet*, a series of events, associations, and experiences combined to affect change and growth in the composer's music. It was just so in the 1950s that a combination of forces sparked literal upheaval within the Western wind world. To that point the fact that the concert band had been more or less stamped with a rigid and standardized instrumentation meant not only that it was at a severe disadvantage in its ability to encourage the development of new literature intended for winds, but also that

[2] Donald Hunsberger, "The Wind Ensemble Concept," published in *The Wind Ensemble and its Repertoire: Essays on the Fortieth Anniversary of the Eastman Wind Ensemble*, (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press), p. 11.

that existing works for various reduced groupings of wind instruments were neglected.

The ideals surrounding the founding of the Eastman Wind Ensemble in 1952, the creation of the American Wind Symphony Orchestra in 1957, and the influence of the individuals involved in their creations has since changed the landscape of the wind ensemble. The new individuals that began to move into positions of influence in the wind conducting profession began demanding more at an artistic level, and the concept of the wind ensemble provided a vehicle through which much of this could be accomplished.

A new concentration on the finest music for diverse, rather than standardized wind genres emerged. The intent was to provide composers with a flexible ensemble through which they could communicate their art and introduce quality new literature into the wind repertoire. A bi-product of this new emphasis on flexible instrumentation was that it also allowed for a great deal of the music that had already been written to be uncovered. Stravinsky's *Octet, Concerto* for piano and winds, *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*, and the many other quality chamber-wind and wind ensemble works by composers of years past, those that had lay dormant for so many years were finally able to resurface. As a consequence, in contrast to a concert program like the ones seen above, within a few short years it was possible to find a performance like the one illustrated below.

Eastman Wind Ensemble
March 25, 1956, Kilbourn Hall

Mozart, W. A. — Serenade in B-flat No. 10, K. 361

INTERMISSION

Stravinsky, Igor — Octet for Wind Instruments

INTERMISSION

Stravinsky, Igor — Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments
Richard Woitach, Piano

Rogers, Bernard — *Three Japanese Dances*
Charlene Chadwick, Mezzo-Soprano
Frederick Fennell, Conductor[3]

Since that time, literature for chamber-wind and wind ensemble has become a central part of the programming practices in performing wind departments in American colleges and universities, and has even reached out and woven its way into many public school music departments. This rich and varied repertoire has helped to elevate the concert band and wind ensemble to artistic stature unprecedented in their history. In regards to Stravinsky's contribution and the enduring position of his *Octour pour instruments a vents* and *Concerto* for piano and winds, the results of a recent survey on the repertoire for chamber-winds and wind ensemble establishes both works as amongst the most highly regarded in the existing body of literature.

In his doctoral dissertation, John L. Baker surveyed nearly four hundred directors of bands at American colleges and universities, asking them to evaluate

[3] Donald Hunsberger and Frank Cipolla, *The Wind Ensemble and its Repertoire: Essays on the Fortieth Anniversary of the Eastman Wind Ensemble*, p. 231.

over four hundred musical works based on established criteria for artistic merit.[4] When the results were analyzed there were but three of four hundred and seven works that were deemed by all contributors as being of the highest possible merit and belonging in the core performing repertoire. Of these three works, two were written by Igor Stravinsky: *L'Histore du Soldat* and *Octour pour instruments a vents.*[5]

Not only can the *Octet* and the ensuing *Concerto* be discussed as pivotal works within the overall production of their composer, but also as integral works within the core body of the performing repertoire for the mixed-wind ensemble. They are important not only in their high artistic and musical merit, but also in how they represent crucial evolutions within two worlds. First, they represent the completion of an intriguing unfolding in the life and work of their composer. Second, they contribute to, and stand for much of that which the concert wind world has now become.

[4] Stravinsky's *Concerto for Piano and Winds* was not included in the repertoire listing for the Baker survey because the investigator chose to limit the sampling to music written for ensembles of no more than sixteen instruments. The *Concerto* is written for and ensemble of twenty-four.

[5] John L. Baker, "Mixed-Wind Chamber Ensembles and Repertoire: A Status Study of Selected Institutions of Higher Learning," (PhD Dissertation, The Florida State University), p. 106.

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