2001


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WILLIAM ALBRIGHT'S SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO:
ANALYTICAL INSIGHTS AND PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

A Written Document

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

Brian Russell Utley
B.M., Murray State University, 1995
M.M., Louisiana State University, 1997
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For Seana, whose patience and support has always been unwavering, and for Jeffrey, who helps me keep everything in perspective.
Acknowledgments

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Abstract

William Albright's Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano amply demonstrates the stylistic eclecticism for which he is famous. The four movements exhibit distinct characters and musical languages, including references to compositional practices of the past, as in the two-part invention of the first movement and the follia of the second, and allusions to American popular music, as in the bebop sections of the finale. This polystylistic compositional approach also invites a variety of analytical techniques, including investigation into form, motivic development, register, texture, and pitch usage. This study, the first of its kind on Albright's sonata, examines these characteristics in each movement and across the entire work, and offers suggestions for the performers based on the analysis.
Introduction

William Hugh Albright was born on October 20, 1944 in Gary, Indiana. His formal musical training took place at the Julliard School Preparatory Department from 1959 to 1962, and at the University of Michigan where he received three degrees (B.M., 1966; M.M., 1967; D.M.A., 1970). Albright studied composition with Ross Lee Finney and George Rochberg, and organ with Marilyn Mason. Further education included composition study with Olivier Messiaen at the Conservatoire de Paris in 1970.

Albright was the recipient of numerous awards and prizes throughout his career, including Fulbright Fellowships in 1968 and 1986, Guggenheim Fellowships in 1976 and 1986, National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships in 1976, 1981, and 1984, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in 1970, and the Queen Marie-José Prize for his *Organbook I*. He joined the faculty of his alma mater in 1970 and achieved the rank of full professor in 1982. In addition to his teaching duties, Albright was Associate Director of the Electronic Music Studio at the University of Michigan, and also served as Music Director at First Unitarian Church of Ann Arbor for nearly 20 years. His untimely death came on September 17, 1998 when he succumbed to liver failure. Evan Chambers, a fellow composer and friend of Albright’s, wrote that Albright was “one of the most gifted composers of our time. His death leaves a gaping hole in the world…”

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3 Evan Chambers, “In Memoriam William Albright,” *Perspectives of New Music* 37, no. 1 (Winter 1999), 33.
Leslie Bassett said simply, "He loved music, loved composing it, playing it, thinking about it, had cherished it since childhood."\textsuperscript{4}

Despite these accolades from those close to him, the popularity and study of Albright's music, while growing steadily, is still in its infancy. The existing literature on his music is relatively scant.\textsuperscript{5} Albright himself wrote about the music of others but little about his own.\textsuperscript{6} Of the journal articles about Albright's music, most deal with several pieces from a specific genre rather than focusing on single works.\textsuperscript{7} These articles tend to be one-dimensional in their approaches; those concerning specifically organ music, for example, contain many performance suggestions, but little analysis. Also, there are several reviews of Albright's music (both scores and recordings), which, though brief, contain useful information with regard to recurring traits in his music.\textsuperscript{8}

By far the most in-depth research on Albright has come in the form of theses and dissertations. Naturally, these studies approach his music in a variety of ways: some discuss Albright's music within a study of works of similar genre by other composers.\textsuperscript{9}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{4} Leslie Bassett, "In Praise of William Albright," \textit{Perspectives of New Music} 37, no. 1 (Winter 1999), 28.
\item \textsuperscript{5} See bibliography for more comprehensive listing of literature than discussed here.
\item \textsuperscript{9} Sabrina Lynn Adrian, "Twentieth-Century American Organ Compositions: Selected Composers and Their Works" (D.M.A. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1995).
\end{itemize}
while others focus on either a specific genre or a specific work by Albright.\textsuperscript{10} Probably the most in-depth study of Albright’s music is James Perone’s dissertation “Pluralistic Strategies in Musical Analysis: A Study of Selected Works by William Albright,”\textsuperscript{11} in which he organizes several compositions into groups based on their unifying material with respect to different musical parameters: texture, pitch-class set relationships, Schenkerian tonal relationships, heterophony, or dodecaphonic relationships.

Similar to the variety of literature about him, Albright’s musical career was also multi-faceted. As a pianist, he was particularly interested in performing and recording traditional ragtime, stride, and boogie-woogie piano, and is credited with being “a principal figure in the revival of interest in Joplin and other ragtime and stride masters.”\textsuperscript{12} Also an active organist, Albright gave recitals throughout Europe and America in addition to having commissioned and premiered numerous works for that instrument. Furthermore, Albright composed for nearly every genre from solo works to orchestral, including several works requiring tape playback. Of his compositions, Albright wrote: “My music is generous, eclectic, and maximal. I enjoy and prefer messy diversity to boring unity. Many works are public; many are private. I enjoy lively rhythm and ecstatic beauty.”\textsuperscript{13}


\textsuperscript{13} Morton and Collins, eds., Contemporary Composers, 9.
Albright’s compositions are indeed eclectic in both style and choice of performance medium, and even the titles of his works indicate his musical diversity. An organist and pianist, he of course wrote numerous pieces for these instruments. Some solo piano works by Albright are *Pianoagogo* (1965-6), *Grand Sonata in Rag* (1968), *The Dream Rags* (1970), and *Five Chromatic Dances* (1976); organ solo works include *De Spiritum* (1980-1), *In Memoriam Johannes Albrecht* (1984), and the three volumes of the *Organbook* (1967, 1971, and 1978). It was also natural that he would write choral music, given his position as a church music director, and compositions from this genre include *An Alleluia Super-Round* (1973), *Pax in terra* (1981), and *David’s Songs* (1982).

Albright also composed music for numerous chamber settings: *Marginal Worlds* (1969-70) for twelve instruments, *Seven Deadly Sins* (1974) for seven instruments, and *Take That* (1972) for four drummers. While there are too many other chamber works to list here, it should be mentioned that Albright wrote for traditional groups, such as the brass quintet and woodwind quintet, in addition to more exotic mixed ensembles. Also an avid proponent of electronic media, Albright’s use of tape playback in live performance was another aspect of his compositional output. The *Symphony for Organ* (1986) calls for tape accompaniment or percussion; his *Organbook II* and *Sphaera (Sphere)* (1985) for solo piano also utilize tape playback.

In addition to the aforementioned works, Albright wrote works in several different genres which include the saxophone. Chamber works that involve the saxophone are *Introduction, Passacaglia and Rondo Capriccioso* (1974 - alto saxophone, solo tack piano, flute, clarinet, horn, trumpet, tuba and percussion), *That*

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14 The compositions discussed in this section come from sources cited in notes 1 and 11.

Albright’s sonata was composed under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The work was written for a consortium of three saxophone/piano duos: Laura Hunter/Brian Connelly, Donald Sinta/Ellen Weckler, and Joseph Wytko/Walter Cosand and was premiered by the Sinta/Weckler duo in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1984. It has become a staple of the saxophone repertoire and is performed frequently on student and professional recitals as well as at conferences. In spite of its popularity, this is the first study of its kind on the work. However, a review of the published score does indeed exist and a recording of it has been made.

James Perone defines a compositional trait of Albright’s as “the exploration of one primary musical idea or mood in each...movement within a multi-movement

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15 Two other composers were involved in this commission: William Bolcom, Lilith (New York: Edward B. Marks Music Co., 1984); and David Diamond, Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (San Antonio: Southern Music, 1993).


17 Morton and Collins, eds., Contemporary Composers, 9.


19 William Albright, Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano, performed by John Sampen and Marilyn Shrude, Capstone CPS8603, 1988, compact disc.
composition,\textsuperscript{20} and this trait can certainly be evidenced in the titles of the four movements of this sonata:

I. Two-Part Invention  
II. La follia nuova: a lament for George Cacioppo  
III. Scherzo "Will o’ the wisp"  
IV. Recitative and Dance

The first and second movements utilize historical compositional practices, and the finale contains fairly extensive sections based on the jazz style of bebop. These contrasting styles lend themselves to several analytical tools, from tonal analysis to voice-leading graphs to jazz analysis. The purpose of this paper will be to study the sonata providing insights that will promote understanding and more enlightened performance of the work.

The layout of the project will consist of chapters devoted to individual movements with each chapter examining aspects such as title implications, formal layout, pitch centers, and motivic makeup, while also offering performance suggestions based on the analyses. Topics unique to certain movements, such as the development of the chaconne in the second movement, will also be addressed. Issues that govern the sonata as a whole will be considered in the conclusion.

\textsuperscript{20} Morton and Collins, eds., \textit{Contemporary Composers}, 9.
Movement I: Two-Part Invention

Albright’s sonata opens with an intense, almost relentless movement that relies on the musical devices of the twentieth century while also evoking musical practices of the past. The music proceeds by fits and starts and is largely disjunct in nature, excepting only two Placido episodes that interrupt the otherwise driven, energetic sections. However, beneath this discontinuous surface lie many musical elements that serve to unite sections within the movement and to forge links to the rest of the piece.

One major issue is raised before the music even begins: the title. Two-part inventions are, of course, usually thought of as pedagogical keyboard works - especially those by J. S. Bach. They are also widely studied in theory classes as examples of finely executed two-voice counterpoint. Albright would surely be familiar with these works as both a pianist and composer, and given his penchant for historical compositional procedures (also evidenced by the second movement of this work), it is not surprising that Albright opens this sonata with such a movement. Edwin Hantz offers the following in a discussion of Albright’s organ music:

Unlike many contemporary composers, however, Albright does not turn his back on the specter of tradition. On the contrary, Albright delights in conjuring up the ghosts of the past and granting the rich organ tradition a vital and living share of the present. It is the balance of the old and the new, and the conflicts inherent in their coexistence, that I find most fascinating about Albright’s organ music.

All of the features one would expect to find in an invention are present in Albright’s setting. For example, the motives presented at the beginning serve as the

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basis for the entire movement and are subjected to development, fragmentation, transposition, and recombination. Likewise, the reliance on imitation will be seen in many of the musical examples below, though Albright's free contrapuntal style clearly differs from that of Bach. The movement also contains typical formal features, such as an exposition, episodes, middle entries, and a final entry. The following analysis will establish a general model for the rest of those in this study, examining the movement with regard to its formal structure, motivic makeup, and tonal profile, while also offering performance suggestions based on the analysis.

The form of the opening movement is illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1-25</td>
<td>Exposition part 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-43</td>
<td>Exposition part 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Cadenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45-48</td>
<td>Middle Entry I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>49-56</td>
<td><em>Placido</em> episode I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57-66</td>
<td>Middle Entry II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>66-67</td>
<td>Cadenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68-69</td>
<td>Middle Entry III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70-93</td>
<td><em>Placido</em> episode II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/B</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Cadenza (Final Entry)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1: Movement I, Formal outline

Albright organizes the movement loosely following the traditional format of an invention: an exposition stating the principal motives, followed by episodes consisting of new or reworked material, middle entries of the main motives, and a final entry where elements of the main sections and the contrasting *Placido* episodes are combined. A

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23 While several musical examples and charts will be placed throughout the text, it is recommended that the reader have a full score with measure numbers at the ready to facilitate the reading.
more detailed discussion of the form, including an investigation into pitch and registral choices that help define the form, will follow a look at the motivic elements that serve as the backbone of this movement.

The exposition contains two motives that become the basis of the entire movement. The first is best perceived as an expansive gesture with several notable characteristics:

**Ex. 1.1: Motive A (mm. 1-5)**

In general, the imitation between the two voices is highly irregular in presentations of Motive A. In this example, the piano waits a full two beats before entering after the saxophone’s initial attack, yet the second piano articulation comes after only one eighth note’s duration of the second saxophone note (illustrated by the diagonal lines in the example). Albright also writes across the measure and calls for articulations on weak beats or on subdivisions of the beat. Independent dynamics and large, soaring leaps are other important features of Motive A.
Tracking the opening motive throughout the movement reveals that, in addition to the aforementioned characteristics, it is a gesture of generation and reduction. The initial statement yields only three pitches, C4, A4, and F#5, yet as the movement progresses, more pitches are introduced, some of which become very important while others make only fleeting appearances. This aspect will be discussed fully below, but should be mentioned here as a major feature of the motive.

In addition to the actual changing of the pitch content, Motive A appears in many other guises. Some statements seem far removed from the opening gesture, while others harken back to the beginning more literally, as in the first of the middle entries:

Ex. 1.2: Middle Entry I (mm. 45-46)

![Musical staff image]

Obviously the rhythm here is much more active than at the beginning of the movement, but the use of C4 and F#5, two of the three pitches from the initial statement, and the close imitation and resultant wide leaps recall the opening.

The second important motive first appears in m. 6 and is shown in ex. 1.3 below. Motive B takes on the character of an interjection at first, yet soon becomes more independent. The intervallic makeup of Motive B is normally several half-steps and a leap of a perfect fourth and/or a minor third, and nearly always articulates the boundary pitches (first, last, and highest notes) E, C, and Ab. This motive also introduces several
new pitches (E4, F4, etc.), some of which find their ways into the pitch construction of Motive A. Other characteristics of this gesture include strict unison statements between the voices, heavy accents, and very small note values, such as the quintuplets of the original incarnation or sextuplets and thirty-seconds of later statements.

Like Motive A, this one develops over the course of the movement, generating two complete cadenzas (mm. 44 and 67) where it transforms into a freer, less interruptive gesture reminiscent of the "fall" in jazz and is slurred or lightly articulated:

Ex. 1.4: Beginning of first cadenza (m. 44)

Motive B also begins to take on certain characteristics of Motive A in these cadenzas. The close imitation between the two instruments, the overlapping entrances utilizing nearly identical pitch structures, and the use of independent dynamics are reminiscent of the opening (ex. 1.1). In spite of the new rhythms, articulations, and imitative texture
found here, however, the combination of a perfect fourth leap and stepwise motion clearly reveals a connection to the original statement of Motive B.

One characteristic shared by both motives is the predominant use of the interval of the third. Motive A begins as a diminished triad (F#-A-C) and even as other pitches are generated within this gesture, this basic stack of thirds remains. Likewise, the boundary pitches of Motive B reveal an augmented triad (E-C-Ab). This use of thirds is important throughout the entire sonata and will be discussed in the study of each movement.

The final motive to be discussed can be found in the Placido episodes. These sections reveal a completely contrasting character in both mood and content, as the frantic, disjunct nature of the movement gives way to four-voice chords descending chromatically:

**Ex. 1.5: Placido episode 1 (mm. 49-52)**

This chromatic descent takes place gradually, and often only one chord member changes at a time; in fact, in the first presentation of this material (mm. 49-56), the bottom members of the chord move only one whole-step, while the top two members move just a minor third. The use of thirds in this motive is again prevalent; the first chord reveals a
C-E-G# augmented triad in the piano with an upper neighbor in the saxophone, and as the descent continues, augmented triads are ubiquitous in the four-voice texture.

Now that the motivic makeup of the movement has been catalogued, the formal construction of this opening movement can be studied in closer detail, paying special attention to pitch and register, and to the addition of new pitches to the original motivic cell. This discussion will proceed by an overview of the entire movement, then in more detail by comparing and contrasting functionally similar sections, such as the first and second expositions, the three middle entries, etc. A voice-leading graph of the entire movement, shown on the following page, illustrates this analysis.

This chart highlights the importance of a select few pitches in the movement. The opening trichord C4-A4-F#5 remains largely intact throughout the movement, and G#5, added in m. 13, also becomes an important associate of the collection. In addition, the members of the opening trichord establish the three general registral voices in which the music exists. For example, F#5 is equated with a soprano voice which also brings in G#5, while A4 is in the alto register in which G#4 and F#4 soon enter. Lastly, C4 acts as the tenor voice, with which A3 is often paired in the movement. A bass voice does occasionally appear, but the A3-C4 dyad often serves the foundational role in the texture at structural points in the movement.

The first exposition (mm. 1-25) reveals a fundamental cell of C4, A4, and F#5 in Motive A. During the course of this section, A4 shifts down to A3 to create an important dyad in the lower register. At the same time, G#4 and G#5 are added, prepared by the Ab4 in Motive B (see ex. 1.7, pg. 15). F#4 also enters a few measures later, and throughout the remainder of the movement, these two octaves of F# and G#
Ex. 1.6: Movement I, Voice-leading chart
frequently coexist. Other new but less important pitches in Motive A include G₅, appearing briefly as a passing tone to G#₅, and B₃, which makes a striking entrance just before bar 16 and remains strong as a pedal point for four bars, filling in the A-C dyad in the tenor register. Also introduced is E#₃, appearing in the bass in mm. 21 and 22 before migrating an octave higher at the close of this section. Though it appears only briefly here, this pitch class takes on a slightly more prominent role in the ensuing section.

The second exposition (mm. 26-43) proceeds like the first in several respects but differs from it in important ways. Again, the augmentation of Motive A's pitch content drives the section, but the interruptive Motive B is absent. However, the absence of the second motive for most of this section will be compensated in the ensuing cadenza, which is wholly reliant on that motive.

Noteworthy events in the second exposition include a descent in the bass to D₃ at m. 33. This new bass pitch creates a D₃-G#₅ dyad, establishing a transposed version of the original C₄-F#₅ pitch collection; Albright uses this as a springboard to new material where D becomes very important. In m. 39, a transition begins, and the bass introduces the upper neighbor Eb₃ but still retains D₃. The saxophone then uses D₅ as a
springboard for several statements of Motive B in its jazzy "fall" guise. While vestiges of Motive A continue to be heard in the piano, Motive B dominates this transition and continues through the first cadenza in m. 44 (also shown in ex. 1.4, pg. 11, above), at which time both instruments participate in a dialogue based on Motive B.

The three middle entries contain restatements of either or both of the main motives, though each short section is unique and deserves special attention. The first middle entry lasts only four measures (mm. 45-48), two of which can be found in ex. 1.2 above. As discussed there, this is a reworking of Motive A, and the remaining measures of the entry consist of similar material. The other middle entries each begin with reworkings of Motive B and then proceed differently:

Ex. 1.8a: Middle Entry II (mm. 57-58)

Ex. 1.8b: Middle Entry III (mm. 68-69)
Middle Entry II (ex. 1.8a) works with the D4-G#5 transposition of the original pitch collection that was observed at m. 35, and interestingly, the two voices remain in strict unison for three measures, a rare event when Motive A material is present. The longest of the three middle entries, this ten-measure section contains a transition beginning in m. 63 that elides with the second cadenza: in mm. 65 and 66, the saxophone begins its “fall”-like version of the Motive B while the piano presents a pitch collection, A3-C4, F#5-G#5, derived from Motive A:

Ex. 1.9: Beginning of second cadenza (m. 67)

Ex. 1.8b above shows the entire statement of Middle Entry III, which begins with a Motive B statement like the previous middle entry. This section, however, abruptly changes character as it gives way to the second Placido episode.

As noted above, the Placido episodes consist of the slowly descending chords. However, several important events occur in the longer and more expansive second statement (mm. 70-93). First, there is a marked increase in harmonic rhythm as this section unfolds. The chords remain unchanging for the first four bars, and in the ensuing few measures, they change only one or two times per measure. In fact, not until m. 88 has the original chord descended one octave. However, the descent nearly covers
another octave in the last six measures due to the increase in harmonic rhythm toward the end of the section. The final two bars of the episode reveal an interesting dovetailing of the descending lines:

Ex. 1.10: End of second Placido episode (mm. 92-93)

![Ex. 1.10](image)

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The piano’s A2 in m. 92 marks the end of the bass descent, while the saxophone continues to descend from Fb3 to Db3, the lowest available note on the alto saxophone. As it does so, the piano reverses direction, and this brief ascent results in a final pitch cluster of Db-D-Eb with the saxophone actually at the bottom of the cluster. Looking ahead toward the Final Entry, it becomes obvious why Albright reverses direction in the piano: to prepare the low E heard at the beginning of the final section.

The Final Entry is actually another cadenza, though this section bears little resemblance to the previous ones. While the first two cadenzas largely develop Motive B, this Final Entry pairs Motive A with the chromatic descending lines from the Placido episodes (ex. 1.11 below). Another feature in this section is the achievement of new registral extremes: the first notes in the piano represent the highest (C7) and lowest (E2) heard thus far, though E2 also appeared briefly at the end of the first cadenza. In fact, the bass plummets all the way to Db1, while the right hand of the piano, via the use of percussive, almost piercing sforzando grace notes, reaches Bb8. The saxophone also

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reaches well into the altissimo register to F6, a minor sixth above the keyed playing range of the instrument.

Ex. 1.11: Beginning of Final Entry (m. 94)

Ex. 1.12: Saxophone part reduction (Final Entry)²⁴

Once again, the use of C4 and the two octaves of F# and G# is evident, being present at the outset and the conclusion of the section, while some of the movement’s other important notes are also recalled. A3, the pitch with which middle C paired to make an important dyad throughout the movement, returns, as does A4, the very first note sounded in the movement. The pitches in the altissimo register reach upward to a

²⁴ Since the entire cadenza is notated as a single bar, I have included Albright’s rehearsal letters to orient the reader.
curious D6-F6 dyad, one that perhaps stems from an octave displacement of D5, a pitch prominent in the first cadenza and again at Middle Entry II. For the first time, however, the pitch class D is used as a member of the main collection of Motive A.

The last section of this Final Entry (U) reveals a curious and somewhat deceptive ending:

Ex. 1.13: Ending of Movement I (U)

The pitches in the main motive have been reduced to a small primary cell, C, F# and G#, while the bass sounds a low D, a note that has risen to considerable prominence. Instead of ending here, logically pairing an important collection with this newly important pitch, Albright continues the bass descent to Db, which has been of little consequence. Descending one more half-step, to C, might also seem appropriate but Albright stops before falling to this structurally important pitch. This seemingly deceptive ending might be interpreted two ways: the descent has either gone one note too far or stopped one note too soon. Looking ahead, however, one may discern Albright’s intention: the second movement is clearly in f# minor, so ending the first movement on Db (and an Ab in the saxophone) intimates a V-I relationship across the movements.
In performing this movement, both musicians must exhibit total control over many parameters of their playing. Rhythmically, challenges arise from the very close imitative counterpoint, and the musicians should strive for complete rhythmic accuracy to perform it effectively. Dynamic extremes in all registers must also be mastered, and quick shifts between these dynamics (f to p in one beat, for example) are quite common. Both performers should also take care to differentiate among legato, staccato, martellato and accented articulations. For the saxophonist, the use of double-tonguing may be necessary to articulate Motive B’s quintuplets in the crisp, sharp manner in which they are marked.

Albright’s performance instructions are omnipresent and quite revealing when followed closely. The opening of the piece, for example, is marked “bell-like,” and thus the saxophonist may want to consider not using vibrato. The next entrance of Motive A in m. 6., however, is marked “molto espr.” and thus warrants the addition of vibrato. Throughout the movement, instructions such as “powerful,” “delicato,” “reflective, but to the fore,” “poco lirico,” and “impetuoso” appear, and combined with the meticulous marking of dynamics, articulations, etc., give one a clear picture of Albright’s musical intentions.

One final consideration is that of the saxophonist’s musical role in this movement. The saxophone is expertly intertwined with the piano, and instead of acting as a solo instrument, it often combines contrapuntally with one of the piano voices to maintain a strictly two-part texture. The following examples will illustrate the different ways in which the saxophone part is conjoined with the piano:
Ex. 1.14a: With low piano voice (mm. 26-27)

Ex. 1.14b: With high piano voice (mm. 13-14)

Ex. 1.14c: With both piano voices (mm. 35-36)

In ex. 1.14a, the piano is obviously paired with the bass part of the piano, while in 1.14b, the saxophone reinforces the top pitches of the piano. The last example, however, shows the saxophone playing both roles. In addition, the saxophonist at times needs to act as a soloist, when his or her lines are not doubled by the piano. Awareness of this aspect of the movement should help the saxophonist to fit better in the two-part texture.
This opening movement provides many challenges for the performers, especially with regard to control and ensemble issues. Likewise, it challenges the listener with its relentless character, rarely providing a moment’s repose. Knowledge of the motivic makeup and formal layout of the movement should assist players and listeners in their appreciation of Albright’s skillful blending of traditional and contemporary elements in this opening movement and throughout the work.
**Movement II: La follia nuova: a lament for George Cacioppo**

The second movement of the Albright’s sonata is a stark but welcome contrast to the opening, and is the only one about which the composer writes in his notes on the piece:

This movement is dedicated to the memory of George Cacioppo who died unexpectedly on April 4, 1984. Co-founder of the ONCE group and mentor to two generations of composers, Cacioppo and his music and personality rest at the foundation of my thinking. He would have very much appreciated the use of the traditional title “La follia” (the madness) in my reincarnation as “La follia nuova.” Like its Baroque antecedents, the movement is in a chaconne-variation form, although at one point the sections jumble together, or intersect. The fact that the key is F# minor may be important, or it may not be.\(^2\)\(^5\)

With such deep personal feelings playing a part in the composition of this movement, it is not surprising that this is the most emotional and longest of the four movements. The mood is at times soft and understated, utilizing middle ranges and sparse textures, while at other times it is loud and full, exhibiting dense textures and extreme registers. Tonal sections and non-tonal ones are juxtaposed, helping to define the form and allowing for further contrast in a movement that stands apart from the rest of the sonata. In general, the movement is one of profound beauty and should be approached with unabashed emotion and reverence by the performers.

The provocative title of this movement once again reveals Albright’s fondness of historical compositional procedures. Generally, the follia (often spelled “folia”) is thought of as a musical pattern used during the Baroque era as a basis for songs, dances, and variation sets. The original follia, however, was a popular dance in late 15th-century Portugal; the term meant “mad” or “empty-headed,” and this “was appropriate because

the dance was so fast and noisy that the dancers seemed out of their minds." This characterization is a far cry from the follia that was popular in the Baroque era, as it came to represent a chord progression and sometimes a melodic figure that, while appearing in slightly different guises over the years, often proceeds according to the following model:27

Ex. 2.1: Folia model (mm. 1-5)

Though harmonically slightly different than Albright's model (see exs. 2.3 and 2.4 below), the general movement from tonic to a dominant function chord is present, as well as the use of ties and delayed resolutions. A model more closely resembling Albright's harmonic progression can be found in that of the Italian fedele, a framework closely related to the follia:28

Ex. 2.2: Fedele model (mm. 1-5)

---


27 Ibid., 61.

Again, motion from tonic to dominant is present, but Albright’s use of the iv\(^6\) chord shows a closer connection to this historical model. Despite slight differences in the progressions, however, Albright’s minor key, slow-moving set of variations exhibits a recognizable kinship to those of historical models.

As revealed by the composer in his notes on the piece, this movement is cast in chaconne-variation form. Within this framework it can be divided into five large sections based on the development of the material in each variation set:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-16</td>
<td>Chaconne pattern and Variations 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-44</td>
<td>Variations 4-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>Variations 11-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-81</td>
<td>Variations 16-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-98</td>
<td>Coda: Variations 20-23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2: Movement II, Formal outline

The following analysis will focus on the characteristics of each section, highlighting individual variations that contain unique events.

The chaconne pattern itself deserves discussion with regard to its harmonic implications as well as its metric and rhythmic features. The harmonic scheme can be realized as that of i-iv\(^6\)-iv\(^6\)-v(7) with a bass line that descends from do to sol and dips to fa which, though implying the seventh in the dominant chord, is left unresolved. The initial statement of the chaconne pattern is solo and therefore includes many incomplete triads, but the melody presented in mm. 5-8 clarifies this harmonic pattern:

Ex. 2.3: Chaconne pattern with melody (mm. 5-8)

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Further characteristics of this model include a changing metric pattern of 4/4-3/4-2/4-5/8, one that remains consistent through nearly the entire movement. The harmonic rhythm of the chaconne roughly follows that of the meter, as the chords change with each new bar, but the delayed resolution of each harmony via the use of suspensions adds direction and flavor to the descent. The irregularity of these suspensions deserves notice:

Ex. 2.4: Suspension durations in chaconne pattern (mm. 1-4)

The first suspension is prepared, suspended, and resolved in the traditional manner, but several ensuing occurrences involve the lengthening of one or more of the components of this process. Another important feature of the chaconne is the use of syncopation. The pattern could have been written thusly without changing any durations:

Ex. 2.5: Rewritten chaconne (m. 1-2)

While probably easier to read this way, the agogic accent that Albright writes elicits richer performance implications, and also allows the suspensions to interact with the meter changes.

The first section, consisting of the chaconne pattern followed by three variations, acts as an introduction: it establishes the model and provides a small amount of melodic material to clarify the harmonic scheme. The first variation can be found in ex. 2.3
above, and is followed by one that presents this same melody in canon with the saxophone. This section's final variation (mm. 13-16) simply establishes F# and C# pedal points over the chaconne.

The ensuing section is characterized by registral development of the chaconne in addition to the introduction of a new motive in the saxophone in m. 20. This new motive, an ascending natural minor scale, is echoed by the piano in the following variation that begins in m. 26:

**Ex. 2.6: Ascending scale motive (mm. 22-26)**

\[\text{Ex. 2.6: Ascending scale motive (mm. 22-26)}\]

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This scalar motive then appears in both instruments in mm. 41-44 in unison for the first time, yet the two voices are rhythmically opposed and the principal register is shadowed by an upper octave in the piano:

**Ex. 2.7: Unison statement of scale motive (m. 41)**

\[\text{Ex. 2.7: Unison statement of scale motive (m. 41)}\]

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The chaconne pattern has begun a transfer to lower registers throughout this section while remaining true to the original model rhythmically and harmonically. The saxophone and right hand of the piano, meanwhile, move into higher octaves, creating a registral wedge between the two. This reaches a climax at m. 29 where the saxophone sustains C#6 (pianissimo!) supported by upper octave harmonies in the piano, while the bass reaches F#1. This plunge to the extreme low register is the start of an augmentation of the chaconne’s bass line with the harmonies continuing to change at the normal pace. This augmented bass line takes place over the course of three variations (mm. 29-40), as outlined below:

**Ex. 2.8: Augmentation of chaconne bass line (mm. 29-40)**

Characterized by reharmonizations of the original chaconne model, the third variation set bears little resemblance to the tonal ones that precede it. In fact, other than an F# pedal point in mm. 45-48 and 59-62, the metric pattern is the only obvious element that is retained from the original model. Deeper analysis of these variations, however, reveals harmonic and/or intervallic relationships to the chaconne model. One technique employed by Albright is the use of harmonic pedal points to provide consonant support for melodic pedal points, as between D3 and F#4 in the following excerpt from Variation 11:
Ex. 2.9: Reharmonized chaconne with consonant pedal points (mm. 45-46)

The subsequent variation (mm. 49-52) reveals an interesting reharmonization involving two falling fifth progressions (Bb-Eb, G-C). Despite this significant harmonic reworking, a veiled reference to the original model exists, featuring parallel sixths (A-F#, G-E, F#-Eb(D#), E-Db(C#)) instead of parallel thirds:

Ex. 2.10: Reharmonized/inverted chaconne (mm. 49-52)

The third variation in this group continues similarly, though in closing out the section and moving to new material, clearly establishes the tonic (F#2) in m. 53 and the dominant (C#2) in m. 56 for the first time in this section. This middle set of variations contains the richest and most adventuresome harmonic choices of the movement.

The next eight measures (57-64) represent the point at which “the sections jumble together, or intersect.”

variations in the form chart (fig. 2), in actuality they constitute a sub-section of their own and deserve special attention:

**Ex. 2.11: Jumbled sections (mm. 57-64)**

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The first two and last two bars belong to the fourth variation group, one that is characterized by more literal statements of the chaconne paired with chromatically ascending cluster chords. The middle four measures, however, represent an insertion recalling the reharmonizations found in the previous section. These eight bars reveal the first time the metric pattern is changed, though on a slightly deeper level, the meter does not really change, rather it is interrupted. Following the 4/4-3/4 in mm. 57-58, the metric pattern begins again and completes a full cycle; the interrupted cycle is then concluded in the final two bars of the excerpt.
The fourth group of variations (mm. 65-81) relies on the use of chromatically ascending cluster chords, as seen in mm. 57-58 and 63-64 from the jumbled sections in ex. 2.11 above. The chords themselves are basically triadic in their makeup, but also contain some embellishing pitches amidst the thirds; like the chords of the Placido sections from the first movement, not all voices of each chord move simultaneously. Nevertheless, the ascending chromatic line is obvious in the outer voices of each chord, and is presented in its most basic version in the right hand of the piano in the third variation of this section:

Ex. 2.12: Ascending chromatic line (mm. 73-76)

![MIDI notation for ascending chromatic line](image)

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The chaconne pattern in this section has begun to return to more literal restatements. It is first presented in its full version beginning in m. 57, but due to the insertion that breaks up the pattern, this restatement is not quite as obvious (see ex. 2.11). The following two variations bring back elements of the original model, but seem stuck on an F# pedal. The chaconne returns at m. 73 (ex. 2.12) almost in its entirety, but the pattern lacks its final ascent to B, opting instead for a C#/D cluster in the lowest voice. B# also appears in the right hand of the piano here, acting as a leading tone to the dominant, a harmony that pervades the following variation.
The final five measures of this section represent a codetta for this variation set. The chaconne in any guise is completely absent for the first time in the movement, and a high register ascent from C# to E# in octaves, much like that of the right hand of the piano in ex. 2.12, is the only melodic action of the variation. The last pitch of this line, E#, is one of the few times that Albright provides a true leading tone to the tonic F#, and this strong dominant preparation leads very effectively into the coda.

In the coda, all parameters of the chaconne are normalized for the first time: the meter remains steady and the harmonies change at barlines (not delayed by suspensions):

Ex. 2.13: Beginning of Coda (mm. 82-86)

The straightforward nature of the chaconne is complemented here by the rather complex nature of the melodic line, characterized by the use of florid ornamentation in the saxophone. The privateness of the performance (with the saxophonist turned away from the audience) gives the coda a very ethereal effect, and highlights a strikingly beautiful movement.
The movement closes with the repetitive sounding of a single “tolling” chord that is to be repeated “any number of times” through the metric cycle of the chaconne:

Ex. 2.14: “Tolling” chord (mm. 94-98)

The quartal chord itself is interesting in the context of this mainly tonal and triad-based movement. The chaconne pattern, and the movement as a whole, relies on the interval of the third, but the fourth indeed plays a major role as the boundary interval for the chaconne’s descent from the tonic scale degree to the dominant. The fourth is also important as the interval present at the suspensions, and lends richness to the chaconne model. Perhaps the most important feature of the quartal sonority, however, is its open spacing, which evokes the sound of a tolling bell.

Of the actual pitches in the chord, the F-natural in the top voice is perhaps best understood as E#, the true leading tone that has been prominent only at the end of the movement. E-natural is also present in these final chords, attempting to pull F down into the stack of fourths. However, the appearance of F as a grace note clearly sets it apart from the rest of the chord members, implying Albright’s desire for the true leading tone to take precedence.

In general, performers should not need much instruction with this movement if they keep in mind that it is a lament. The overall mood is somber, as the movement contains long, legato phrases, tasteful building and diminishing of dynamics, and a
relative simplicity of rhythmic construction. The performers should likewise respect this simplicity and play within the musical boundaries set forth by Albright, avoiding the temptation to be overly expressive, bearing in mind the composer's initial marking "semplice."

One aspect that should be discussed is Albright's use of independent dynamics, as it holds strong textural implications; and without careful attention to these areas, they might easily be overlooked. The following shows an extreme example of this, with a sustained ff in the piano against an "intense" pp in the saxophone:

Ex. 2.15: Independent dynamics (mm. 29-30)

In the examples below, however, Albright calls for subtler dynamic differences. In each of the examples, the piano is asked to be the stronger of the voices and this remains true for most of the movement. The saxophone rarely rises above the dynamic of the piano, and therefore it is important for him or her to realize this and remain subordinate in the ensemble texture.

Ex. 2.16: Subtle independent dynamics

m. 41
The coda itself is particularly rich in performance instructions:

Ex. 2.17: Coda (mm. 82-84)

The instructions \textit{alla corrente} and \textit{nobile} reveal that the saxophonist’s rhythmic interpretation should be quite strict, yet the turning away of the saxophonist creates an other-worldly sound as well as a striking visual effect. Though it does not specify, he or she should remain turned around for the rest of the movement. Likewise, the pianist should avoid any temptation to rush through repetition of the tolling chords (ex. 2.14 above). With intensity and insistence, these open bell-like sonorities will ring well past the final statements, out of which the opening flurries of the next movement begin.
Movement III: Scherzo "Will o' the wisp"

The third movement of Albright's sonata is the shortest of the work, yet it is also the most technically demanding for both performers due to the constant flurry of 16th notes. There is hardly a break for either instrumentalist, and extremes of register at a largely pianissimo dynamic add to the already considerable performance difficulties. Particularly hard for the saxophonist are the extended soft passages in the altissimo register. Equally challenging is the analysis of this movement, as it is through-composed and contains few recognizable recurring motives. However, factors such as register, texture, and articulation play important roles in sectionalizing the movement, even as the use of certain gestures, pitches, and scalar constructions help to tie it together. The analysis presented in this chapter will examine characteristics that define each section and identify features that aid in unifying the movement.

Albright again supplies a title with rich implications. Of the two definitions Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary provides for "will o' the wisp," the one that best characterizes this movement is "a delusive or elusive goal." The movement is indeed full of both delusion and elusion. When it seems as though Albright is working toward some sort of goal, we never actually get there as the music keeps pressing forward to something new. In fact, when the true climax of the piece, a unison arpeggio, does finally arrive, it is stated at a pianissimo dynamic level before exploding to fortissimo. (Perhaps the title also refers to the technical demands of the music, as the passages often elude the performers' fingers in practice.) Elusion and delusion remain to the very end; as will be discussed later, the coda misleads the listener with regard to its eventual goal.

30 The other definition refers to the ignis fatuus, which is defined as "a light that sometimes appears in the night over marshy ground and is often attributable to the combustion of gas from decomposed organic matter (foolish fire)" or "a deceptive goal or hope."

37

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The form of this scherzo reveals a three-part design with a coda:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>33-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>46-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>58-69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3: Movement III, Formal outline

The disproportionately long first section results largely from a lengthy canon between the instruments that begins the movement. The solo saxophone states a 10-measure model before the entrance of the piano; the piano’s answer remains true to the saxophone’s except for a one-measure *forte* interjection and a one-measure saxophone “tag” at the end. Though it may seem that the ensuing subsection (mm. 23-32) should be separated from the first, important features tie them together.

Register is one consideration in determining the form of this movement, as the voices in each section stay within their own registral domains. In the first section, mm. 1-32, the saxophone largely remains in a comfortable mid-range while the piano operates at opposite ends of the keyboard in the extreme high and low ranges:

Ex. 3.1: Registral domains of first section (mm. 16-17)

Though the saxophone creeps higher in register toward the end of this first section, the piano stays in the extremes throughout, allowing the saxophone to exist comfortably in the middle of the texture.
The next two sections, mm. 33-57, can be grouped together registrally as the piano moves to the middle register, largely avoiding the extremes, while the saxophone begins to explore both the low and high ends of its range. The end result of this exploration can be found in the climactic arpeggios, where the saxophone sails from the low end of the horn to the altissimo register in less than two beats:

Ex. 3.2: Climactic arpeggios (mm. 54-55)

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Other characteristics that enhance the effectiveness of this passage as a goal include the longest duration of a fortissimo dynamic anywhere in the movement and the unison texture.

In the coda (mm. 58-69), the piano returns to the registral extremes introduced in the opening. The saxophone, however, has shifted to the altissimo register exclusively, and this, combined with a diminuendo to ppp, creates an eerie effect. Despite the saxophone's high tessitura, it still lies between the registral extremes of the piano. In addition to looking back in this respect, the canonic texture of the coda also recalls the beginning. However, the imitation here is only one measure apart and gets even closer together as the measures grow shorter (ex. 3.3 below).

Just as differences in register help to define the form, so does the element of texture. The first section, after the unaccompanied saxophone introduction, consists almost entirely of a two-voice texture. Even when both hands of the piano are playing,
hinting at a three-voice texture, two of the three voices always sound at the unison or at the octave. (The relative lightness of texture throughout the movement, coupled with the use of canonic imitation at the beginning and end, is perhaps more typical of a two-part invention than the first movement.)

The second section is the most complex of the movement, with a thicker texture that at times fills out to three voices. In addition, the rhythms become more varied as Albright makes use of longer note values, and harmonies often result from either vertical sonorities in the piano or combinations of 16th-note lines. The following excerpt shows both the rhythmic and harmonic aspects that help to augment the texture:
A stark contrast characterizes the third section (mm. 46-57), as the denser texture of the second section gives way to a unison texture. One example of this can be found in the climactic arpeggios in ex. 3.2 above and another is shown below, where the saxophone interjections serve to reinforce the piano’s melodic line:

**Ex. 3.5: One-voice texture (mm. 48-49)**

The last two measures of the third section briefly dispense with this one-voice texture, and function as a transition to the coda (ex. 3.6 below). This transition helps to set up the piano for its return to the registral extremes and also recalls the climactic arpeggios.
The sparse, largely one-voice texture that characterized the third section resumes in the coda (ex. 3.3 above), where one continuous line is maintained as the saxophone echoes the piano at the octave.

In addition to register and texture, differences in articulation help to define the movement's form. As can be seen from the examples above, the saxophone lines are mostly slurred or are articulated on the beat, and the piano lines are similarly articulated. In the contrasting second section, however, staccato articulations, often in the tongue-two-slur-two pattern, and syncopated articulations are prevalent (ex. 3.4 above). The coda, while mostly slurred like the rest of the piece, briefly recalls the staccato in the concluding measures, as at ‘J’ in ex. 3.3 above.

The specific motives that make up this movement are difficult to isolate, as the constant, rambling 16th-note patterns seem to change with each new measure. However, certain motives, and even specific pitches, do recur throughout the movement, aiding in unifying the music as a whole. The solo saxophone opening, shown in ex. 3.7 below, contains several of these important gestures.

Through the largely chromatic lines, a few pitches, intervals, and motives stand out. One example is the interval of the third, a favorite of Albright's thus far in the
sonata that also appears prominently in this movement. In nearly every measure in the excerpt above, a third is explicitly stated, and in mm. 6, 7, and 10, it is virtually the only interval present. The D#-F# dyad receives special attention, particularly as a cadential figure in mm. 7, 9, and 10. D# also appears as the first long note in the movement in m. 14 in the saxophone, lasting one and a half beats, and it also receives the first dynamic inflection, a poco crescendo-diminuendo:

Ex. 3.8: Long D# (mm. 13-14)

A prominent gesture in the first section is the Lydian motive (Bb-D-E-A), first appearing on the fourth beat of m. 4. Ex. 3.9 below shows an area of heavy concentration of untransposed statements. The motive is repeated only twice after the
first section (m. 39, transposed for the only time, and m. 43, untransposed) but it continues to be important as it serves as the basis for other important gestures.

**Ex. 3.9: Lydian motive (mm. 23-26)**

Albright’s use of the whole-tone collection stems from this Lydian gesture. Purely whole-tone motives exist in several sections of the movement, two examples of which can be seen in exs. 3.10a and 3.10b on the following page. Albright’s employment of this collection is interesting as the surrounding material is highly chromatic, often juxtaposing chromatic pitches against the particular whole-tone collection used. As a reflection of this underlying chromaticism, both transpositions of the whole-tone collection are used in close succession.

A particularly interesting example of the juxtaposition of the whole-tone and chromatic scales occurs in mm. 27-35. A deep bass chromatic descent begins with a half-note C2 in m. 27 and extends nearly an octave to D1 (reduction shown in ex. 3.11 below), while the upper voices sound whole-tone material (see ex. 3.10a). This descent deceptively appears to end in m. 33, where the low register is abandoned and the
Ex. 3.10a: Whole-tone usage (mm. 28-30)

Ex. 3.10b: Whole-tone usage (m. 41)

line shifts up an octave. The deep bass then reappears two measures later and D1, the
correct register for completion of the bass descent, is sounded:

Ex. 3.11: Chromatic descent in bass (mm. 27-35)

Similar chromatically descending bass lines appeared several times in the first
movement. They occur in both of the *Placido* episodes where entire chords move down
by half-step, as well as in the final cadenza, where the deep bass descent resembles that
in the present movement.
The last motive to be discussed is that of the arpeggio itself. The climactic arpeggios in mm. 52-55 are foreshadowed several times during the movement by similar gestures, but in each instance lasting for less than one measure. However, throughout the entire third section the climactic arpeggios are carefully generated, and not only do they serve as the high point of the movement, but they also set up the coda.

**Ex. 3.12: Generation of climactic arpeggios and preparation of coda (mm. 46-58)**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm. 46</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>52</th>
<th>54</th>
<th>58</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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The outer-voice counterpoint of this section reveals an F in the bass, coupled with a Bb-Db dyad that shifts up a minor ninth to B-D. This construction can perhaps be interpreted as having a dominant function, setting up the “tonic” Bb that emphatically sounds at the beginning of the coda.

This structurally important Bb has been foreshadowed several times during the movement, thus making its appearance as a goal pitch in the coda not surprising. The Lydian motive, for example, started on Bb, and the prevalence of this motive in the first section creates a considerable emphasis on this pitch. While the use of Bb in the third section and the coda has already been documented, the second section also contains several important references to the pitch, as shown below:
Bb's importance throughout the work makes the ending on C even more surprising. While C has not been entirely absent thus far, it often functioned as a neighboring pitch rather than the primary one. For example, the very first gesture of the movement uses C as a lower neighbor to D (ex. 3.7). Likewise, the motives associated with those in the coda employ C as a neighbor to Bb. However, in the coda, the programmatic implications of delusion and elusion come to the fore with regard to C. Bb seems to be the target pitch for most of the coda as the motives fluttering about in the extreme registers revolve around this pitch. In fact, the coda commences with a deep bass descent to a whole note Bb0/Bb1 dyad, the longest note value of the movement. The delusive final turn to C, however, reveals that Bb has been functioning as a subtonic to C, and on a deeper level, recalls the whole-tone collection so important in this movement. And finally, marked quasi niente, the last notes of the movement are preceded and followed by rests, making the ending similarly elusive, leaving one to question whether or not more Cs may be sounding beyond the range of hearing.

This movement presents great challenges for the performers not only technically but also with regard to balance. The technique required by both the saxophonist and pianist is of a very high level. The saxophonist must exhibit great control to perform successfully this largely piano-pianissimo movement, and the frequent use of the
altissimo register adds to the difficulties. Fingerings for these pitches should be chosen that allow for ease of connection and consistency of tone color. In addition, the saxophonist should consider using palm key fingerings instead of going “over the break” wherever possible, especially in the solo opening. This will help one to maintain the *sempre pp* dynamic and to avoid unwanted tone color or dynamic changes when navigating this area of the instrument.

The issue of balance will obviously be important when the saxophone and piano have unison lines, but the topic should be mentioned with regard to other areas as well. For example, when the piano enters after the solo saxophone opening, the pianist must take care that neither of the extreme registers should overpower the other, and this may require the upper octave to be played out just slightly. The saxophonist should have no problem blending with this texture, and because both voices will be heard due to the differences in timbre, the saxophonist might consider playing slightly softer than the piano to give priority to the leading voice of the canon.

A common occurrence in this movement is the sharing of a single melodic line between the instruments. One person leads with the entire line while the other provides occasional unison support, as in the following example:

**Ex. 3.14: Shared melody (mm. 48-49)**

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It is obvious that the piano is the leader in this case, and the saxophone should maintain a secondary position. However, since Albright clearly intends a change in tone color at the chosen moments, the saxophonist might want to play just above the piano. One must keep in mind the continuity of the line and not play these isolated interjections as such. The reverse situation also exists, when the saxophone leads and the piano adds occasional support, and my suggestions would be the same for those sections.

The third movement of this sonata, while lasting less than two minutes, proves to be quite a challenge for both the performers and the analyst. The performers must negotiate virtuosic technical passages in all registers at extreme dynamics, and since the two parts are so closely intertwined throughout the movement, they must think as one musician playing both parts. The analyst is faced with the task of finding elements that both distinguish the individual sections and hold this ever-developing movement together. The end result is a highly enjoyable movement that is over in a flash, showcasing the virtuosity of the performers in a way that no other movement does.
Movement IV: Recitative and Dance

The finale of Albright’s work is perhaps the most straightforward movement of the sonata as the economical use of source material makes the foreground analysis relatively simple. For example, the same compositional procedure characterizes both the introductory “Recitative” and the ensuing “Dance:” the generation of a minor third motive into an expansive arpeggio. Likewise, the alternation between two contrasting sets of material in the dance, the minor third motive and the bebop material, and the constant return of the centric Eb-Gb dyad allow the formal scheme to be heard as a rondo-like structure. This economy of means affords the analyst the opportunity to concentrate on larger issues, such as motivic development, long-term pitch connections, and Albright’s successful embracing of the bebop style.

The analysis will begin with a discussion of the movement’s formal makeup:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recitative:</td>
<td>non-measured minor third motive, expansion into arpeggio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1-39</td>
<td>minor third motive with bebop interruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>1-13</td>
<td>minor third motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>14-17</td>
<td>Bebop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>18-39</td>
<td>minor third motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>40-69</td>
<td>Bebop with minor third motive interruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>40-51</td>
<td>Bebop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>52-54</td>
<td>minor third motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>55-69</td>
<td>Bebop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>70-108</td>
<td>minor third motive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4: Movement IV, Formal outline
The movement begins with a solo saxophone recitative that is followed by a rondo-like dance, characterized by the relentless use of the minor third motive with contrasting material drawn from the jazz style of bebop. In the dance, this main motive establishes itself as a ritornello, thereby delineating the larger sections as well as the subsections. As shown in the form chart above, Albright’s manipulation of this main material results in a three-part movement within the rondo framework: the A section utilizes the minor third motive as its main material with interruptive bebop material, while the B section does just the opposite, embracing the bebop style and using the ritornello as an interruption. An extended ritornello completes movement, where minor thirds concatenate to create a far-reaching arpeggio before liquidating to a single pitch at the end.

The recitative that opens this movement is further evidence of Albright’s fascination with past musical practices, a compositional trait that has been apparent throughout the course of this study. The recitative, of course, is historically associated with the operatic or choral genre and is normally paired with an aria; it often serves a transitional function and sometimes prepares the following aria by introducing the forthcoming material, whether dramatically or thematically or both. In addition, the recitative sometimes serves to expedite the delivery of text by utilizing speech-like recitation of the words, often resulting in melodic material characterized by frequent note repetition and irregular rhythms.

Albright’s setting of the recitative exhibits some of these characteristics while maintaining a highly personalized approach. Its pairing with a “Mad Dance” (so named by Albright in the score) is somewhat unconventional, though it clearly serves a
connective function between two fast and rather furious movements. This section, on a smaller scale, reminds one of the welcome sounds of the second movement after the disjunct and energetic "Two-Part Invention." The recitative also foreshadows the main material to come in the dance: the minor third motive and its eventual expansion into an arpeggio. Likewise, the melodic contour of the opening suggests the sonic structure of normal speech with its rising and falling gestures, as shown in ex. 4.1a below. However, because this setting is unaccompanied, the aural result is almost that of a cadenza, particularly with regard to the virtuosic arpeggios that close the section. Nevertheless, the connective function of the recitative remains clear and this section not only gives the listener a brief respite but also effectively sets the stage for the following dance.

As has been previously stated, the interval of the minor third, which is present from the outset of both sections, drives the entire movement as the primary motive:

Ex. 4.1a: Beginning of “Recitative” (Line 1)

![Ex. 4.1a: Beginning of “Recitative” (Line 1)](image1)

Ex. 4.1b: Beginning of “Dance” (mm. 1-3)\(^\text{31}\)

![Ex. 4.1b: Beginning of “Dance” (mm. 1-3)](image2)

\(^{31}\) Though Albright notates a complete pick-up measure at the beginning of the dance, I have not included this as such in my numbering; therefore, m. 1 begins at A with the first full measure of music.
In the recitative excerpt, one can see that between any two adjacent notes of the first phrase the interval of a third is formed, taking into account respellings and intervallic inversion. The second phrase also consists of largely thirds, yet Albright begins to venture from this pattern by introducing other intervals, beginning with the neighboring fourth D-G. Likewise, the beginning of the dance offers solely minor thirds; here, this obsessively economical approach is warranted, particularly considering Albright’s labeling of the section as “Mad Dance.”

The Eb-Gb dyad serves as the most important transposition of the main motive for both sections. Its pervasive use and development throughout the movement at times borders on minimalism, especially in the dance where it explicitly appears in no fewer than 40 measures of the ‘A’ sections; nearly two-thirds of the finale consists of repetitions of these two notes. It can be frequently found in the bebop sections as well, though here its use is somewhat masked; more attention to this aspect is forthcoming.

While the Eb-Gb dyad dominates the movement, other transpositions also occur. The F-D, or lower neighbor, dyad is one also of great importance, and in both sections it is the first dyad other than Eb-Gb to appear. It is given primacy at the end of the movement, where, quite deceptively, the piece concludes on a D after the liquidation of the principal motive to the single pitch Eb. Several other minor third dyads also begin to appear as Albright generates the arpeggio that forms the climax. This process, while occurring in both sections, is lengthier and more complex in the dance, where an entire section introduces numerous transpositions that have not been heard before. Through the course of these measures, Albright calls for every pitch of the chromatic scale:

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Ex. 4.2: mm. 70-80 reduction

Ex. 4.3: Climactic arpeggio (mm. 92-93)

A close look at Albright's ordering of dyads reveals the completion of diminished seventh chords at two transpositional levels, and thus uses the motive's own interval to generate transpositions of itself. Following the Eb-Gb dyad and its lower neighbor D-F, Albright builds the diminished seventh chord E-Gb-Db in the next four bars. A diminished seventh chord is then built using the primary dyad (Eb-Gb-A-C) and is interrupted briefly the Ab-Cb dyad, showing another lower neighbor connection to the upper members of that chord.

The return of the Eb-Gb dyad after this developmental section leads us to the climactic arpeggio:

D#5 is the registral center of the arpeggio, and continues to function as the lower note of the already established Eb-Gb dyad:

32 The dyads' registers have been normalized in order to facilitate analysis.
Ex. 4.3a: Symmetry of arpeggio

From this pitch center is built a large stack of thirds until the arpeggio covers more than two octaves. Of further interest is the range in which Albright writes this arpeggio, as the placement of individual pitches mirrors that used in the first movement; C4 and F#5 in particular recall the opening of the first movement.

The minor third motive is developed in many ways throughout the movement. As shown in ex. 4.1b above, the dance begins with a primal and barbaric unison statement of the minor third motive in relentless eighth notes. Rhythmically, the pattern rarely strays from straight eighth notes, but the accent patterns change from that of alternating pitches to less consistent groupings, especially as note repetition and meter changes occur. In addition, the unison texture of the original statement changes as the instruments begin to separate, crossing each other and appearing in different registers. Most of this motivic development occurs in the section leading up to the climactic arpeggios, part of which is shown in ex. 4.4 on the following page.

Further techniques of development include the filling-in of the interval. Melodic filling-in of the third is usually achieved via the use of linear chromatic lines, while harmonic filling-in often results in vertical clusters of pitches:
Ex. 4.4: Development of minor third motive (mm. 71-81)

Ex. 4.5: Filled-in thirds

4.5a: Melodic (mm. 33-34)  
4.5b: Harmonic (mm. 84-5)
The minor third motive also appears throughout the bebop sections, as Albright finds ways of incorporating the third, sometimes even the Eb-Gb dyad, into both the walking bass as well as the solo lines:

**Ex. 4.6: Thirds in bop sections**

4.6a: m. 51 4.6b: m. 55

Other hidden repetitions include the inversion of the interval to a sixth, as found in ex. 4.6a above in the saxophone part, as well as use of the compound third (see also ex. 4.6b, piano):

**Ex. 4.7: Compound thirds**

4.7a: m. 32 4.7b: m. 58

Finally, the juxtaposition of the minor and major thirds as pc set (014) takes place on numerous occasions; sometimes a Picardy third effect is created, as in ex. 4.8a below, while at other times, the set is used in conjunction with compound intervals (seen above in ex. 4.6b, piano right hand, and ex. 4.7a, piano left hand). In addition, it serves
as the basis for a recurring harmony in the extended bop section, as seen in ex. 4.8b below. The pitches C#, E, and F form the backbone of two of these harmonies. Though other pitches may sound with the chord, it is this specific collection that Albright uses most often in this section. Perhaps these pitches were chosen because E and F fill in the space between Eb and Gb, therefore creating a cleverly hidden filling-in of this principal third.

Ex. 4.8: Use of (014) set (minor/major third)

4.8a: Picardy third (mm. 20)

4.8b: Recurring (014) harmony in bebop section

mm. 59-61

m. 65

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The above discussion illustrates the different ways in which Albright takes a seemingly simple motive, made up only the interval of a minor third, and utilizes it as the basis for an entire movement. Countless other instances of the third certainly exist, though most of them fall into one of the above categories. The following section will consider the language and style of the bebop sections before returning to the main motive and its “resolution” at the end of the movement.

The bebop material in the finale is refreshing, especially given the fact that the rest of the movement contains little contrasting material. Albright’s writing shows a great understanding of the style and effectively invokes the spirit and language of bebop. Factors that contribute to the success of this writing include the use of jazz inflections, rhythms, and articulations, the role of the pianist as an entire rhythm section, and the authentic bop-like structuring of the solos, complete with necessary rests, building of intensity, and use of double-time.

The proper use of jazz articulations and inflections is an integral part of capturing the style, especially when working in a non-jazz setting. Articulations in jazz are often meant to bring out the contour of a melodic line, and rhythmic syncopation is often a result of these patterns. Likewise, the use of an inflection such as the fall is stylistically appropriate since it is a standard technique associated with jazz saxophone playing. These elements permeate all of the bebop sections and can be evidenced below in exs. 4.9a and 4.9b below.

The jazz combo that Albright mimics in these sections is that of a traditional quartet: a rhythm section in which the pianist also plays the roles of bass and drums, and a wind soloist, in this case the saxophone. The role of a piano in a rhythm section is to
fill out the harmonic structure left somewhat open by the bass, but only sparingly does Albright provide any explicit harmonies in the piano. When Albright finally allows the pianist to have its solo in mm. 55-62, the material given to it is not particularly bop-like, rather, a pointallistic sounding of pitches in extreme registers that is reminiscent of a style favored by Thelonious Monk.

The saxophone solos that Albright creates follow the traditional design of a bebop solo: they begin somewhat slowly with plenty of space (rests) and intensify to a climax before giving up the solo role to the piano. The very first bop interruption in mm. 14-17 contains only four and one-half beats of actual solo material in the saxophone, exhibiting a Miles Davis-like use of space. When the extended bebop section returns in m. 40, the saxophone solo again begins somewhat slowly but quickly intensifies before retreating and rebuilding to a climax. The following chart illustrates
the overall contour of the saxophone solo, taking into account parameters such as note activity, dynamic, and accompanying material:

Ex. 4.10: Contour chart of saxophone solo, mm. 40-51

Following the saxophone solo, a brief interruption of the minor third motive acts as a bridge to the piano solo at m. 55, where the saxophone assumes the role of a walking bass. Often in bebop music, a change in texture, mood, and material takes place when the solo passes from one instrument to another, and Albright employs this technique here as well. The piano solo, in contrast to the rather busy saxophone solo, is very sparse and exhibits the characteristics of a Thelonious Monk solo as stated above.

One final jazz technique employed by Albright is that of “trading licks.”

Ex. 4.11: Trading licks (mm. 63-64)

This technique is often found in bebop tunes before the return of the head (melody) and while Albright provides only a hint of this technique (in traditional bebop, players often begin by trading four-bar phrases, then two-bar phrases and so on until the return of the
head), it is yet another instance of Albright's ability to convincingly embrace the style of bebop.

The final topic of discussion in this analysis is that of the ending. As seen with each movement, Albright's endings are somewhat deceptive at the foreground level, but deeper connections can be revealed. Throughout this last movement, the Eb-Gb dyad has served as the primary transposition of the main motive. The closing of this movement, much like the beginning, consists merely of the sounding of these two pitches before Eb emerges as the more important one. However, as shown below, an emphatic, \textit{fff} move to D ends the piece:

\textbf{Ex. 4.12: End of movement (mm. 104-108)}

![Ex. 4.12: End of movement (mm. 104-108)](image)

Curious as this move may seem, it has indeed been well prepared in previous measures. Just before the final ritornello beginning in m. 98, a two-measure "freak-out" occurs where C#, the leading tone to D, appears in three distinct registers (ex. 4.13 below). Likewise, the importance of Eb in the primary dyad serves to, along with C#, surround D and eventually pull toward it.

For the performers, several issues must be considered when tackling this movement. Again, Albright is very specific in his performance instructions and
carefully following his markings should create a successful performance. However, a few further observations based on the music and this analysis will be offered.

The recitative should be expressive but not overdone by the saxophonist, as the adjective “semplice” appears at the top of the score. The contour of each phrase can be used as a guide for dynamic shading and goal pitches, yet again, too much expression could result in a seasick effect. A soft, pleasing sound should be the goal of the saxophonist, especially when the arpeggios are reached. Because these arpeggios cover such a wide range of the instrument, care must be taken to keep a consistent tone color, especially when crossing into the altissimo register. Fingerings should be chosen that allow for this timbral consistency and ease of connection at a soft dynamic level.

In the dance, both performers must approach the music fearlessly, never shying away from accents or dynamic extremes particularly in the ritornelli, the “maddest” of all the sections. The $ff$ dynamic, at which most of these sections appear, should be consistently observed. As this minor third motive develops and the metric patterns begin to change, the performers should not, unless specifically instructed by Albright, articulate with the natural tendencies of the meter. For example, a $5/8$ measure should
not receive any special accent on beats 1 and 4; these measures are often surprising, providing a sort of hiccup effect, and the secret should not be given away to listener.

Care must be taken in the bebop sections to portray what Albright has so carefully composed. If the performers have never before played jazz, it would be helpful to familiarize themselves with the style by listening to recordings of great bebop artists such as Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. It would be advisable for the performers to think of these sections in 8/8 instead of 4/4, thereby giving the pulse to the eighth notes instead of the quarter notes. Though our instructions are to “swing it!,” the swing should be in style and articulation only; a truly swung, triplet-based division of the beat, at this tempo, is stylistically incorrect and would result in a rickety, old-fashioned portrayal of the style. Albright’s performance instructions in these sections are particularly revealing, and include phrases such as “quasi pizz. (string bass),” “honky! angry,” “whispering,” “monotonous,” and “strident! honky.” Not only do these aid the performers, but they also provide a glimpse into the composer’s sense of humor.

An energetic, straightforward movement such as this is an excellent way for Albright to end his masterful sonata. The finale, like the rest of the piece, contains musical elements that look to the past as well as the present, and, to be discussed in the next chapter, contains passages that serve to unite the work as a whole. Complete with moments of sheer beauty in the recitative, total abandon in the dance, and allusions to American popular music in the bebop sections, Albright basically runs the expressive and stylistic gamut in ending his work.
Conclusion

Despite the distinct character and unique material exhibited in each movement, several elements serve to unite the work as a whole. Certain characteristics, such as deceptive endings and the pervasive use of the interval of the third, are shared among all of the movements. Specific pitches have also been important in each movement, and certain ones, such as the D#-F# dyad, appear in multiple movements, creating intermovement continuity. The finale of this sonata also contains restatements of material from previous movements which also aid in unifying the piece as a whole.

Each movement seems to end deceptively, often reaching within a step of an implied goal but never reaching it. The first movement closes with a chromatic descent in the deep bass that stops on Db, a pitch that received little attention otherwise, when one more half-step would have reached C, one of the movement's centric pitches. The tolling chords at the end of the strongly tonal lament are quartal structures instead of consonant triads. The third movement ends by overshooting the persistent high Bb and moving to C, while the shift down to D after a long Eb-Gb pedal closes the finale. When considering the work as a whole, however, two of these endings can be seen to help set up the following movements. The Db that closes the "Two-Part Invention," paired with the final Ab in the saxophone, establishes a V-I relationship with the F# minor tonality of the second movement. Likewise, the final C of the "Will o' the Wisp" can be paired with the Eb-Gb dyad of the finale to form a diminished triad, reinforcing Albright's fondness for thirds.

The third is important in each of the movements as a prominent interval of main motivic material. In the first movement, the diminished chord F#-A-C and the
augmented triad E-G#-C make up the initial statements of Motives A and B respectively. The lament relies on the third throughout because of its tonal setting. The entire finale is based upon the Eb-Gb dyad, which also receives some attention in the scherzo. Thirds also provide the basis for the climactic arpeggios of the last movement, where stacks of thirds sound continuously for six measures.

Background-level relationships among the movements reveal an even deeper importance of the third. The fundamental pitches of the outer movements, F#-A-C and D#-F# respectively, complete a fully diminished seventh chord, while those of the inner movements help to reinforce and embellish the progression. F# itself is important as the tonal center of the second movement, and A and C# qualify the minor modality. The third movement does not fit neatly into this mold, instead displaying its “will o’ the wisp” character even at the background level with its prominence of Bb. However, the D#-F# dyad does appear with some regularity in the beginning of the scherzo, and the deceptive ending on C helps to bridge the movements by filling out the diminished chord completed with the dyad D#-F# dyad of the finale:

Ex. 5.1: Overall construction of sonata

Albright also ties the work together at the foreground level by providing restatements of first and third movement material in the finale. (Probably because of the

---

33 The pitches originally appearing in extreme registers have been relocated to the middle register for ease of reading.
special nature of the second movement lament, Albright makes no explicit reference to it in the finale.) These restatements do not appear as literal repetitions, but as gestural or motivic reminiscences of the previous material. In the Recitative, for example, the use of the pitches C4, F#5 and G#5 and the presence of sudden dynamic shifts help to recall the opening movement:

**Ex. 5.2: Restatement in Recitative (line 4)**

![Musical notation image]

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The Dance contains some disjunct rhythmic gestures that allude to similar areas in the first movement:

**Ex. 5.3: Rhythmic allusions to first movement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finale (m. 49)</th>
<th>First Movement (m. 32)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Musical notation image]</td>
<td>![Musical notation image]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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While it is obvious that this material does not duplicate anything heard in the opening movement, the rhythmic instability and the wide leaps in both instruments bring to mind the disjunct nature of the opening, particularly in a movement that is as rhythmically regular as the finale.

The finale also contains several allusions to the third movement. The most striking similarity between the two movements is the use of a climactic arpeggio,
though, again, the restatement is not an exact repetition. Whereas the arpeggios in the third movement occur in unison and are built largely on fourths, those in the final movement proceed by thirds, and rather than sounding the two instruments in unison, Albright mirrors the two lines:

**Ex. 5.4: Climactic arpeggios**

**Movement III (mm. 54-55)**

![Ex. 5.4: Climactic arpeggios Movement III (mm. 54-55)](https://example.com/figure5.4)

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**Movement IV (mm. 92-93)**

![Ex. 5.4: Climactic arpeggios Movement IV (mm. 92-93)](https://example.com/figure5.4)

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In addition to the arpeggios, the double-time phrases in the bop sections are reminiscent of passages in the third movement, particularly those phrases that are largely scalar in nature. The fleeting, perpetual motion aspect of these lines engenders a recalling of the scherzo material (ex. 5.5 below).

James Perone describes a “tendency toward tightly controlled background structures with each succeedingly more foreground level being less tightly structured”\(^{34}\) as one of Albright’s trademarks, and this certainly holds true for the present work.

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\(^{34}\) Morton and Collins, eds., *Contemporary Composers*, 9.
Ex. 5.5: Sixteenth-note passages

Movement III (mm. 45-46)

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Movement IV (mm. 63-64)

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F# provides strong continuity at the deep background level as a focal pitch in the first, third, and fourth movements and as the tonic in the traditionally tonal lament. The next, and perhaps most tangible, level of continuity is the building of the diminished seventh chord around F# throughout the sonata. Foreground cohesion is perhaps less obvious, but restatements in the finale do help to recall the previous movements. Despite the polystylistic nature of the individual movements, and the seeming disjunct nature of the material, this very basic background structure, the diminished chord, holds a key for understanding the entire work.


March 30, 2001

Sean Lee
Louisiana State University
VIA FAXIMILE: 225-926-3572

Dear Ms. Lee,

This fax is in response to Brian Utley’s request to include excerpts from William Albright’s SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO in his doctoral dissertation. We are pleased to grant this permission gratis. The credit line should read: “© 1990 by Henmar Press Inc. Used by permission.”

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Vita

Brian Russell Utley was born in Owensboro, Kentucky, on July 10, 1973. Following graduation from Daviess County High School in 1991, Utley attended Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, where he was active in the Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band, and the MSU Saxophone Quartet. Utley was the State Winner in the 1994-95 Music Teachers National Association Wurlitzer Solo Competition, and also performed as a member of the Jackson (Tennessee) Symphony Orchestra and the Evansville (Indiana) Symphonic Band. He studied saxophone and bassoon with Scott Erickson and clarinet with Donald Story while at Murray, and graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Music *summa cum laude* in May 1995.

Utley began his studies with saxophonist Griffin Campbell at Louisiana State University in August of 1995, and completed the degree of Master of Music in May 1997. He continued with his doctoral studies at the same institution, where he was awarded a prestigious Graduate School Fellowship. At Louisiana State University, Utley was active in the Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band. He was also a co-founder and soprano saxophonist with the Red Stick Saxophone Quartet, an award-winning ensemble (Third Place, 1999 Fischoff Chamber Music Competition and First Runner-Up, 1998 Music Teachers National Association Chamber Music Competition) that specializes in the performance of new music. Utley will receive the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts with a major in saxophone performance and a minor in music theory in August 2001, and will begin a teaching appointment in saxophone and music theory at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, in the fall of 2001.
Candidate: Brian Russell Utley
Major Field: Music
Title of Dissertation: William Albright's Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano: Analytical Insights and Performance Considerations

Approved:

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Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

(Co-Chair)

Date of Examination: May 3, 2001