Tonal Procedures in Lowell Liebermann's Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra

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TONAL PROCEDURES IN LOWELL LIEBERMANN’S
CONCERTO FOR PICCOLO AND ORCHESTRA

by

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A THESIS

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This thesis seeks to impart how Lowell Liebermann incorporates common practice tonal elements into his twentieth-century Concerto for Piccolo. This will be shown through a detailed analysis of the three-movement work highlighting how the composer uses characteristics of common practice tonality as compiled by Joseph Straus in the third edition of his text, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*. This document is organized into five sections. The first explains background information on the concerto as well as presents the parameters to be used for the analysis. The second through fourth sections provide an analysis of each movement in chronological order, detailing how the characteristics for tonality are used or if they are dismissed in favor of more contemporary compositional techniques. The final section provides an overview of the tonal attributes of the entire work based on the detailed analyses provided for each movement. The closing statement aims to round out the discussion and reiterate why this concerto is a valuable addition to the piccolo’s repertoire.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Lowell Liebermann’s Concerto for Piccolo, op. 50, was composed in 1996 on a commission from the National Flute Association championed by piccoloist, Jan Gippo. This commission came toward the end of the flurry of music Liebermann composed for flute, most notably his Sonata for Flute and Piano, op. 23 (1987) and the Concerto for Flute and Orchestra, op. 39 (1992). Liebermann’s Sonata for Flute was launched into the standard repertoire immediately after its premiere performance at the 1988 Spoleto Festival by Paula Robison, flute, and Jean-Yves Thibaudet, piano. The well-received Sonata for Flute opened the door for many flute and piccolo works to be written by Lowell Liebermann.

Liebermann’s Concerto for Piccolo is one of the most commonly performed works on the instrument and one of a very short list of piccolo concerti commonly played. Evidence of this can be seen in the repertoire list curated by Dr. Christine Beard on her website.1 Beard’s list contains nearly forty concertos for solo piccolo and orchestra, but only seven are highlighted as being “most frequently called for in auditions.” Of these seven, only the Vivaldi Concerto in C major, RV 443—one of three Vivaldi concertos listed—and the Liebermann Concerto for Piccolo are commonly performed members of the repertoire. Minimal CD recordings can be found of the four pieces not by Vivaldi; this testifies to the relative obscurity of the other concerti on this list. Some YouTube uploads exist, but mostly for the Liebermann. For the Liebermann concerto, there exist only two commercially available recordings: one of James Galway with the London Mozart Players conducted by the composer from 1998, and another with Nicola Mazzanti with the Haydn Orchestra of Bolzano and Trento conducted by Marco Angius,  

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1 “Piccolo Repertoire,” Last modified January 12, 2008, Accessed January 31, 2017, http://www.piccolohq.com/repertoire.html. This website does provide a useful starting point for piccolo repertoire, but its management is suspect as the most recent update is listed as “1/12/2008,” but some of the pieces were composed after that 2008 date.
released in 2016. The three Vivaldi concerti, though delightful, were likely not originally intended to be performed on the piccolo. They were nominally composed for the flautino, which may have meant the one-keyed transverse piccolo, but more likely indicated for the sopranno recorder, a common instrument during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and more frequently used during Vivaldi’s life than the transverse piccolo. This leaves the Liebermann concerto as the only standard member of the concerto repertoire on the list fully intended to be performed on the piccolo. This solitary status is a reason this analysis was undertaken.

As with the availability of recordings by esteemed performers, there exists little scholarly output regarding Liebermann’s Concerto for Piccolo. The most in-depth discussion of this work is in Jeannine Dennis’s doctoral document, “The Life and Music of Lowell Liebermann with an Emphasis on his Music for the Flute and Piccolo” (University of Cincinnati, 1999). This thesis discusses the Concerto for Piccolo in terms of its importance to the repertoire as well as providing a thorough performance guide. Other documents that discuss the work include a collection of two-page articles on each movement in Flute Talk by Jan Gippo (1997), who led the commission and premiered the work, a 2007 Flute Talk performance analysis article by Colleen Matheu, program notes, and Christie Glaser’s report: “The Liebermann Piccolo Concerto and its Stylistic Elements” (2014). The Flute Talk articles focus mostly on melodic analysis and guidance for the performer. Glaser focuses her report on providing a surface-level analysis of the work by looking primarily at the melodic themes throughout while also highlighting some of the difficulties of performing the piece. She does not, however, provide anything close to a comprehensive analysis of this work and actually states false information at times.

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3 Examples of false information Glaser states: on p. 5: Movement I, m. 37 is a change into 2/2 time, not 3/2 time; also on p. 5: Movement I, mm. 69-139 (C Section) do not only modulate between major and minor as Glaser claims, but through other modal collections as well; on p. 10: Glaser states that the first two
Other dissertations that discuss Liebermann’s works for flute do mention the Concerto for Piccolo, but only as a line on the repertoire list. These doctoral documents by Lisa Garner (1997) and Lisa McArthur (1999) contribute a wealth of information on Liebermann’s style for flute, and Garner’s interview with the composer provides an enlightening look at his compositional process and opinions on the use of tonality. Most other scholarly work on Liebermann focuses on his piano works, such as the Concerto No. 1 for Piano and Orchestra, op. 12, Gargoyles, Piano Sonata No. 1, op. 1, and the Piano Sonata No. 2, op. 10, among others. The discussion of his piano works provides useful context for the Concerto for Piccolo.

The Style of Lowell Liebermann

Liebermann’s style is often generalized as “neoclassical,” “neoromantic,” or even “neotonal”\(^4\) by some. Evidence of this generalized style is prominent in most of his compositions dating from the mid-1980s onward. The only period of his compositions not conforming to this style are what Liebermann has determined are the “self-consciously modern”\(^5\) works of his student years. Towards the end of his studies at Julliard, he embraced the more accessible language that has persisted in his compositions to the present. There is no doubt that Liebermann writes in a way that is heavily influenced by the tonal approach of the common practice era.\(^6\) Of his own writing, Liebermann states:


\(^6\) Common-practice tonality is considered “the musical language of Western classical music from roughly the time of Bach to roughly the time of Brahms.” Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 3rd ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2005), 130.
I'm one of those composers who is very comfortable with [common practice] tonality and feels that it is a tool to be used. One doesn’t either have to avoid it or stick too closely to it. I basically think that tonality in music is inescapable. It has to do with the overtone series. In the most atonal works one can still hear references to tonality accidentally. It’s unavoidable.\(^7\)

Tonality as Liebermann describes it in this quotation refers to the rules and concepts of the common practice era, to be more fully described below. This, however, is not the only definition for tonality. The term tonality, in the broadest sense and how it will be used in this document, describes all music in which pitches are organized around a pitch center;\(^8\) the vagueness of this definition allows tonality to indicate both the key-based music of the common practice era and more contemporary music that operates around a pitch center. Based on this definition of tonality, atonality refers to music that does not have a central pitch. Even though Liebermann considers himself a common practice tonal composer, he does not write in a way that conforms exactly to this style. The fact that he refers to tonality as a “tool to be used” sheds light on his approach to composition and an inclination towards the looser definition of tonal; he says tonality is inevitable and openly asserts that how it is used is what is important. Because Liebermann views tonality as a tool, he combines tonality with modern techniques to forge a tonal style that is a unique marriage of both the traditional and contemporary idioms. The flexible way in which he molds these idioms together results in pieces that are both accessible to a variety of listeners and deeply complex upon further investigation. Because of this depth of construction, I will evaluate Liebermann’s Concerto for Piccolo in regards to tonal procedures that appear throughout each movement and the implications this has for the overall work.


**Parameters for Tonality**

To analyze the tonality of Liebermann’s Concerto for Piccolo, I will rely on the characteristics Joseph Straus outlines in his textbook *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory.* Straus explains that these characteristics are all present and codependent in traditionally common practice music. He explains further that these attributes can exist in post-tonal music, but not all of them have to occur or they can be used independently of each other. For this analysis, a slightly modified version of the Straus characteristics will be used. Modifications are necessary in order to make each characteristic independent from the others. By doing this, all the characteristics still apply to common practice music, but the modifications now allow for clearer identification of these characteristics in post-tonal music. The necessary modifications will be noted as the issues for each technique are summarized in relation to Liebermann’s language in the concerto.

Straus’s characteristics of tonality:

1. **Pitch Centricity.** A particular note is defined as the tonic with the remaining notes defined in relation to it. (S1)
2. **Centricity relations.** Pieces modulate through a succession of keys, with the keynotes often related by perfect fifth, or by major or minor thirds. Pieces end in the key in which they began. (S2)
3. **Diatonic scales.** The principal scales are the major and minor scales. (S3)
4. **Triads.** The basic harmonic structure is a major or minor triad. Seventh chords play a secondary role. (S4)
5. **Functional harmony.** Harmonies generally have the function of a tonic, dominant, or predominant. (S5)
6. **Voice leading.** The voice leading follows certain traditional norms, including the avoidance of parallel perfect consonances and the resolution of intervals defined as dissonant to those defined as consonant. (S6)

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*While these characteristics appear in the third edition of Straus’s textbook, they are completely absent from the fourth edition published in 2016. The third edition will be referenced throughout this document because of this omission.*

*Post-tonal referring to music written after the common-practice era spanning the Baroque to Romantic Eras.*

*Straus, *Post-Tonal Theory*, 130.*
These characteristics, S1-S6, will be used as points of reference throughout this analysis to determine to what extent Liebermann is maintaining tonality while also breaking from it. At different points during the work, Liebermann relies more heavily on certain tonal norms than others.

Pitch centricity pertains to sections of the music where a singular pitch is prevalent with other pitches acting in a subservient fashion. In his book, Straus calls this rule “Key.” Due to the way he explains this, it seems more like he is describing a pitch center rather than a key as would exist in the common practice era. The term “key” carries several associations, such as certain tendency tones and implications for harmonic progressions, and some of these associations exist elsewhere in Straus’s list of characteristics.

Centricity relations refers to the movement through pitch centers in a work and the relationships between these centricities. In the original version of this list, Straus labels this as “key relations.” Due to the related nature of S1 and S2, the modifications that occurred in S1 must also be taken into account in S2 since it refers to the way in which the music explores different pitch centers. For the purposes of understanding Liebermann’s use of tonality, it is important to know that he does not always move in and out of related pitch centers, but through an established order of pitch centers. The established order of pitch centers rarely follows the common practice (CP) expectation of tonic moving to dominant or another related centricity. Rather, it refers to movement through pitch collections in a predictable way; the establishment of the order occurs at the beginning of the work or movement.

In CP tonality, the diatonic collection is consistently oriented around a pitch center that allows the collection to coalesce as either a major or a minor scale. Liebermann, however, rarely uses diatonic collections organized in this way, opting instead towards the use of modal collections. Though these collections are made up of the same notes as the major or minor scale, they differ in that any singular pitch of the collection can serve as the centric note rather than the expected tonic. The modal
collections, sometimes called “church modes,” are: Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Locrian. In CP music, the classification of diatonic scales was much more restrictive, referring only to the major and minor, or Ionian and Aeolian modes of the diatonic collection. In the Concerto for Piccolo, major and minor orientations of the diatonic collection are used, but the Lydian mode and other modal collections appear just as naturally.

Triads are not exclusive to CP music as they occur frequently in a variety of post-tonal music. The way triads are used in post-tonal music, however differs from CP conventions because they do not exist within a network of functional harmony,\(^\text{12}\) to be discussed below. Because triads in post-tonal music are not bound by the restrictions of traditional functional harmony, composers have more freedom to employ them when the desire arises rather than consistently throughout a work. Like many other modern composers, Liebermann uses triads in a variety of ways throughout the concerto.

Functional harmony indicates that there are relationships between chords built on the different pitches of the collection in use—if there is one. The tonic, built on the centric note, is most stable and most prevalent. Triads occurring on other members of the pitch collection might fall into a dominant or predominant category.\(^\text{13}\) Triadic succession in music of the CP era tends to follow these conventions while much post-tonal music abandons functional harmony in favor of other organizational devices.

Voice Leading refers to how individual lines—voices—move and interact with each other. There are rigid conventions constructed to explain the way composers of the Baroque Era, such as Bach or Telemann, constructed their music. While these idioms occur in much CP music, it is also important to consider more contemporary voice

\(^\text{12}\) Ibid, 131.
\(^\text{13}\) Traditionally, a dominant triad progresses to tonic while a predominant triad occurs before the dominant triad.
leading techniques; these techniques include movement in and out of harmonies by specific intervals or the use of half-step motion to move smoothly between harmonies.

Of Straus’s characteristics, the Concerto for Piccolo makes clear use of the elements of pitch centricity (S1), pitch centricity relations (S2), diatonic scales (S3), and triads (S4). This is hardly surprising, as Straus comments that these “four characterize a significant body of post-tonal music, although often in non-traditional ways.” Since the use of these four characteristics is most common, the bulk of my analysis will focus on the roles of these components in the concerto and their fluctuating connections with CP norms. Straus remarks that functional harmony and voice leading in the majority of post-tonal music most often disregards CP norms in favor of more contemporary techniques. This comment is definitely true of functional harmony in Liebermann’s concerto, though voice leading exists in a much less traditional sense than described by Straus’s characteristic norms. Though CP norms favor smooth voice leading when possible, the movement through an acceptable progression of harmonies often prevents stepwise motion from occurring in all voices, especially in the lowest voice. Liebermann strays from this union of voice leading and functional harmony in favor of parsimonious motion not necessarily influenced by harmonic succession. In order to move through triads in this fluid way, Liebermann forfeits the standard harmonic progressions that indicate CP tonality. Instead, the progressions created by this style of voice leading relate more closely to the triadic transformations theorized by Hugo Riemann and developed in neo-Riemannian theory by David Lewin. These transformations rely on the half-step or step motion of one chord tone to create the next harmony (Figure 1.1). In this figure, a

15 Ibid, 131.
16 Ibid, 159. Straus states “voice leading parsimony” occurs when “triads are connected in the smoothest possible way, with the voices moving as little as possible. The most parsimonious voice leading involves two voices motionless and the voice that does move does so by only one semitone. Slightly less parsimonious voice leading might involve two voices motionless and one moving by two semitones, or one voice motionless and two voices moving by one semitone each.” The latter type of motion is the form most often found in this work.
17 Ibid, 161.
bold horizontal line represents a common tone; diagonal lines indication motion: single line for half-step and double line for step. Liebermann does not exactly adhere to these transformations since he often moves two chord tones rather than the single chord tone motion associated with neo-Riemannian transformations. The frequent motion of chord tones by half-step or step, however, is widespread throughout the concerto.

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Half-Step motion       Step motion

**Figure 1.1.** Transformation Examples.

Precedent exists for the use of parsimonious motion in CP music. Commonly, this type of voice leading was used for special effect. One such example of this is Chopin’s Prelude, op. 28, no. 4 in E minor (Example 1.1). This prelude, part of a collection composed in 1838–1839, was written in the middle of the Romantic Era and towards the end of the CP Era. In this prelude, the dense triadic structures slowly descend in a slippery fashion from an E minor triad (tonic) to a B dominant seventh (dominant) in the first twelve measures as the individual members move by step or half-step. A modified version of the first twelve measures occurs for the second half of this prelude.

**Example 1.1.** Chopin’s Prelude in E minor, mm. 1-5.
Analysis of the Concerto for Piccolo

Of the Concerto for Piccolo, Liebermann states:

The work falls into three movements which are united by thematic and motivic materials, significant among which is a twelve-note row which forms the basis of the second movement’s variations. The final movement, which puts the seriousness of the first two movements aside for an unbridled romp, makes use of three explicit musical quotations at strategic structural moments, one of which is an implicit homage to Shostakovich, who quoted from the same work in his own second Violin Concerto.\textsuperscript{18}

In this statement, Liebermann provides clues for analysis of the Concerto for Piccolo that will be elaborated on through this document. In my discussion of the tonal characteristics of the work, I will highlight the thematic and motivic ideas that are present throughout the concerto that make it a cohesive three-movement entity. The most substantial segment of Liebermann’s statement is the disclosure of the use of a twelve-note row that organizes the second movement; his treatment of the row will be discussed at length as he uses a variety of techniques to deploy the row while maintaining a sense of tonality. He casts the final movement as an “unbridled romp,” but its lighthearted nature conceals many of the structural motives that connect it with the earlier movements.

When analyzing a work with generic roots in the CP era,\textsuperscript{19} general expectations exist based on common traits found in the corpus of each genre. Since the concerto is a genre that originated in the baroque era and developed through the classical and romantic eras, there are several conventions readily associated with it; these norms will be used as points of comparison to show how Liebermann is consciously adopting and adapting an old-fashioned genre.


\textsuperscript{19} Other common CP genres: sonata, symphony, string quartet, opera, etc.
Some of these elements include the form and organization of the movements, instrumentation, and main key areas, among other components. The Concerto for Piccolo contains several of these facets: the typical three-movement format, orchestration featuring pairs of winds (excluding the low brass that were rarely used until the romantic era), and the internal order of the movements. A very typical organization of concerto movements—sonata-allegro first movement, slow ternary second movement, and rondo finale—exists in a modified manner in Liebermann’s Concerto for Piccolo with the main elements of each of these forms are present. This flexible usage of the normative movement forms is just one of the ways Liebermann manipulates CP constructs throughout the concerto. Though Liebermann exploits some of the CP expectations, he also strays from the expectations as well. To contrast the traditional orchestration, Liebermann colors the work with a variety of auxiliary percussion, piano, and harp. While the movements forms are influenced by CP norms, they are untraditionally disproportionate lengths of time—ten minutes for both first and second movements, but only five minutes for the third movement. This is not to say that they are unbalanced motivically or emotionally, however. Based on the expectations established by the use of the concerto genre and the incorporation of post-tonal and tonal elements, the Liebermann Concerto for Piccolo is ripe for study.
CHAPTER 2

MOVEMENT I

The first movement sets the stage for this large work in a light yet ominous way. It opens with a descending five-note figure doubled in octaves on the harp that floats over the mist of a perfect fourth produced by harmonics in the sustained strings. This thin orchestration creates a mysterious aura that the piccolo enters over in its low register. The low register of the piccolo is hollow, adding to this ethereal mood. As Liebermann hinted, this movement establishes many of the motives that return throughout the work and unite the three movements. While introducing the motives, this movement also establishes many of the characteristics of the particular brand of tonality that permeates the work.

Form

This movement is a five-part arch form—ABCBA—loosely based on principles of sonata-allegro form (Figure 2.1). This arch is created both thematically, with the returns of the primary and secondary themes in reversed order, but also with the gradual increase and subsequent decrease in tempo marked into the work. Liebermann starts the A section at $\downarrow=80$, accelerates to $\downarrow=96$ in the first transition, shifts to $\downarrow=72$ at B, and finally jumps to $\downarrow=100$ at C, the climactic section of the arch. The sudden shift in tempo and dynamic at the beginning of the Allegro, C section, shocks the listener out of the mystical haze generated by the A and B sections that preceded it. The Allegro drives the entire orchestra into a frenzy as variations are presented with a layering effect that builds in complexity. When the turmoil calms, a retransition returns the movement to the recapitulatory statements of B and A followed by a coda.
Characteristics of Tonality

The formal organization of this movement creates very clear sections based on differences in melodic ideas and the corresponding accompanimental texture. Within each of these clear formal divisions, Liebermann often chooses a clear pitch center to organize the tonal space. Lieberman opens the work centered on D. This centricity is established by the descending stepwise idea from A to D over the D pedal that repeats for the first six measures of the work; see Example 2.1.

Example 2.1. Movement I, mm. 1-4. Introduction of D pitch center and descending Lydian five-note pattern.
He moves to Db as the pitch center by the middle of the A section, then falls to C in the first transition and finally moves to A at the start of the B section. The return of the transition seems to briefly reinstate C as the center, but A centricity prevails through the C section and the retransition.

When earlier material returns at m. 160, D seems to be restored as the pitch center until the movement’s final nine measures. Liebermann then throws the listener a curve ball at m. 227 by introducing arpeggiations of the Eb/D# minor triad that alternates with the D major triads in these final measures (Example 2.2). Eventually, Eb pushes out D as the pitch center, which leaves the movement sounding tonally open and inconclusive.

Stemming from the pitch centricities used throughout the movement, there are emphases of diatonic collections (S3). A diatonic collection appears in the ominous opening of the work; the stepwise idea that repeats throughout the A section presents the first five notes of the three-sharp, or D Lydian, collection (see Example 2.1). The use of Lydian continues when the centricity slides down to Db, landing in the four-flat collection (Example 2.3). While Db is the pitch center beginning in m. 7, the descending five-note idea outlines both the initial Db Lydian collection and C# Aeolian, the four-sharp collection. Until this point, Lydian had been the only mode introduced, but the appearance of Aeolian serves to destabilize the Lydian collection, beginning in m. 11, while also emphasizing another instance of semitone motion.

Example 2.3: Movement I, mm. 5-11.
As Figure 2.2 shows, this is done by moving the members of the five-note figure up by semitone and the last up by whole tone all over a $\text{Db}/\text{C#}$ pedal. Following the initial entrance of the Aeolian mode at m. 11, the two modes, Lydian and Aeolian, alternate until finally C Lydian is reached at m. 27 (Figure 2.2). This arrival at C Lydian marks the beginning of the first transition and C centricity.

![Table: Movement through diatonic collections in Movement I, mm. 7-27.](image)

**Figure 2.2.** Movement through diatonic collections in Movement I, mm. 7-27.

The focus upon diatonic collections begins to dissolve in the transition and disappears by the start of the B section. Throughout the development, diatonic collections appear, but they change with each new measure. Full use of a diatonic collection returns with the restatement of the A material; D Lydian, D$\text{b}$ Lydian, and C# Aeolian briefly return in the condensed version of A, but quickly fade out when the coda begins.

In the C/development section Liebermann moves quickly through a series of diatonic collections and modes: A Aeolian, D$\text{b}$ Lydian, A Aeolian, C Lydian, A$\text{b}$ Lydian, A$\text{b}$ Dorian, G Ionian, F$\text{#}$ Ionian, D Aeolian, B Ionian, C Ionian, D$\text{b}$ Lydian, and finally back to A Aeolian. The diatonic collection changes in each successive measure and this whole series of collections is repeated five times as a variation set. The variation that highlights these diatonic collections in their clearest form is variation four, which appears in the piccolo at m. 110, Example 2.4. In this variation, the soloist flutters through a series of triplets almost entirely in stepwise motion. This contrasts with the prior variations that include duple arpeggiated figurations in variations one and three, and the second and fifth variations that present lyrical melodies similar to that of B.
**Example 2.4.** Movement I, mm. 111-125, Variation 4 with diatonic collections.

The relationships between centricities in this movement is both traditional and non-traditional (S2). The most traditional characteristic of the centricities featured in the first movement is the mere fact that D is heavily reinforced on either end of the movement—it is this traditional bookending of the movement with the same tonic that makes the final, sudden move to Eb so surprising. Of the centricities employed within the movement, the initial motion from D to C in the opening section is unusual from a CP standpoint as movement between centricities by step is less likely to occur than motion by fifth or third. As mentioned in Chapter 1, motion by half-step or whole step is common in the voice leading of individual triads, but it is also favored here to move between centricities. To move from D to C as the center, Db is featured as a large-scale passing tone along the way. This descending movement by half-step makes it idiomatic in the context of the work, but movement from D to C centricity is odd from a CP standpoint: C does not relate to D by third or fifth, but by second, which is uncommon in CP tonality. The later movement to A, a fifth above the origin D, is exactly the type of
motion presumed in most CP forms; this is then reinforced by the return to D at m. 160. This movement of pitch center back to the original for all recapitulated material is one of the most powerful of CP conventions. Liebermann even sets up this return with a retransitional passage that prolongs the A centricity while ultimately leading to the return of D centricity. This transition to the original centricity, while also reiterating the centricity a fifth away, is the exact device used in many CP sonata movements—where the centricity a fifth away would act as the dominant that falls naturally to the original tonic. A retransition in this way is another marker of sonata-allegro form and supports my claim that this arch form is derived from it.

The final shift from D to Eb is another rendering of the half-step motion occurring between centricities, but it is also layered with half-step motion as the two arpeggiated triads–D major and D# (Eb) minor–alternate in the last nine measures; the two harmonies are linked by the F#/Gb common tone with thirds above and below moving by half-step–D to D# and A to Bb. This juxtaposition of D and Eb is the first introduction of a motive that plays an important role in the following two movements. Ending this movement tonally open is unexpected and presents a struggle between two forces that will contend with each other until the end of the work.

Liebermann uses this movement to establish triadic harmonies as the accompanimental foundation for the concerto. The sparse opening does not feature triads. About halfway through the A section, dyad thirds are added and by the end of the section full triads emerge. At the transition, members of the triadic harmonies are repeated as an oscillating inner line that is then adopted by the B section (Example 2.5). When this occurs, the entire triad–moving through two octaves–is arpeggiated both to establish harmony and give the music a sense of movement despite the sometimes-slow harmonic motion. This arpeggiated idea continues into the following transition and then becomes the basis for the first variation in the C section.
Example 2.5. Movement I, mm. 28-42.

When the C section begins Liebermann employs development through variation. In the variations, triads move in and out of the scoring based on the character of the variation. When the initial idea is presented, triads are used to add texture to the rhythmic idea that exists as an ostinato throughout this section. Because the initial variation is based on the arpeggiation from B and T1', triadic concepts are reinforced; this variation, however, does not play arpeggios the whole time. As the variations layer
and the texture becomes more complex, stacked triads disappear to allow room for this composite idea.

As mentioned earlier, the half-step is an essential means of voice leading in this work and serves loosely to fulfill S6. Liebermann’s abandonment of traditional voice leading in favor of this parsimonious style reinforces the half-step as one of the most important motives to the work; the half-step appears in the voice leading, the movement between certain centricities, and the D to Eb motion that emerges throughout the work.

The outlined triads in the B section provide an excellent example of the type of parsimonious voice leading Liebermann employs throughout the work. Figure 2.3 shows the succession of triads in the B section, spelled based on the triadic inversion used, with the lines showing the motion of individual voices. The diagonal line connecting the B in triad seven to the B♭ in triad eight is dashed to show the descending motion along with the rearrangement of the voices. This figure is an attempt to show how Liebermann favors the use of a single common tone between harmonies while smoothly moving the other two voices by semitone or whole tone to create a new harmony around the retained common tone. In this figure, there are three triad changes where all members shift by semitone; these are indicated by the boxed moves in the diagram. These moments highlight how Liebermann sometimes does not retain a common tone when the harmony changes, but he does persist with parsimonious by sliding all the voices by semitone.

![Figure 2.3. Voice Leading Diagram of mm. 37-61.](image-url)

**Use of Tonality**

The evaluation of tonal characteristics throughout the first movement shows how Liebermann uses tonality as a tool to shape the work. Many of these characteristics of
tonality exist in some way throughout the movement. The most consistent characteristics are Pitch Centricity ($S_1$) and Pitch Relations ($S_2$); through nearly the entire movement pitch centers are easy to identify. This ease indicates a sense of stability because there is always a hierarchy\(^\text{20}\) even if the principal pitch changes.

The clarity of pitch center coupled with the unambiguous diatonic collection in the opening indicates that this is a tonal work with a contemporary inflection—Lydian is an unlikely choice for a CP work to begin in, but not uncommon in the twentieth-century. The slippery motion through pitch centers creates some instability as the diatonic collections shift to accommodate the changing centricity, but the B section regains ground and the triads act to reinforce the stability instilled at the beginning of the movement.

The portions of the movement that do not have solid pitch centers tend to be units of the form that are traditionally unstable, such as transitions and developments; this is especially true of the developmental C section. This area of the form starts and ends by emphasizing A Aeolian, but the drastic shifts in diatonic collection and centricity that occurs in each measure is jarring and the movement through collections seems to be without pattern; the only pattern that seems to occur is the repeated motion through the same thirteen pitch centers. The constantly-changing pitch centers create a sense of uncertainty until the shifts become predictable through the regularity of harmonic rhythm and the repetition of the full series in each variation. Despite the variation of the set being derived from the arpeggiations in the previous sections, the C section lacks the uninterrupted triadic character established in the preceding two sections; a fleeting arpeggiation here and there is not enough to consider triads an important characteristic of the development. Combine the lack of consistent pitch centricity, diatonic collection,

\(^{20}\) Hierarchy here refers to the use of D as the primary pitch center of the work while the other centricities visited relate to this D centricity. The relation of the other centricities through semitone motion or CP pitch center relations relate them to D as secondary areas.
and fluctuating triadic mentions with the prevailing lack of functional harmony throughout the movement and the chaos of layered variations, and it becomes clear that this section of the movement cannot be considered tonal.

When familiar material returns after the retransition, similar degrees of tonality exist compared with the original statements; the biggest change is that D becomes the main centricity to keep with the norm that a recapitulation states prior material in the home centricity regardless of the centricity used in the initial statement. Because D remains the overarching centricity for almost ninety measures, the recapitulation is more stable than the expositional statements. Liebermann detracts from this by inserting a measure of instability at the end with the sudden shift to Eb. This instability generates drama and the need for the work to continue in the subsequent movements. One reason he may have done this, other than to establish an integral motive of the work, is to indicate that this movement is not a stand-alone movement. Ending the movement tonally open creates the need to move on; if the movement ended on D just as it began, it could almost work as a stand-alone piece due in part to the length—ten minutes is more than enough time for a full piece—and the variety of characters presented throughout this movement.
CHAPTER 3

MOVEMENT II

Following the surprising shift to Eb at the end of the first movement, the second movement begins in a cloud of mystery. The murkiness of the strings in the opening creates a desolate atmosphere for the solo piccolo’s melancholy entrance. A ray of light appears with the entrance of a solo trumpet, temporarily lifting the piccolo’s spirit before it plummets back to a pit of despair and wandering distress. The heartbreaking journey of the piccolo continues to the end of the movement, except for one subsequent reminiscence of that lighter moment.

The mysterious qualities this movement evokes are linked to the tonal characteristics, or lack thereof, found throughout the second movement. Though there are motivic ideas that relate this movement to the previous one, the second movement contains decidedly fewer tonal characteristics than the first movement. This departure from some of the tonal elements is due to the use of a twelve-note row established in the opening measures of the movement and the transpositions of this row manipulated throughout the movement.

The Twelve-Note Row

The whole 12-note school, which attempted to abolish tonality, has been a miserable failure and everyone is glad that’s over with. On the other hand, that period has given composers valuable tools to work with. In fact, a lot of works I’ve done have combined very obvious tonality with 12-note ideas or a 12-note row used tonally to order the form of a piece.21

The second movement demonstrates how Liebermann uses a twelve-note row to organize a piece. The movement opens with the initial statement of the row on D, the “tonic” centricity of the entire work. After this initial statement of the row, shown in Figure 3.1, the row manifests itself in different ways throughout the movement. The variety of

21 Garner, 18.
presentations allows for Liebermann to incorporate CP characteristics into what is generally considered a post-tonal, or without CP conventions, technique. Liebermann uses a variety of unconventional harmonic progressions to accommodate the chromatic nature of the row. At times, this makes the movement less recognizably tonal than the outer movements, but he manages this challenge through the voice leading style established in the first movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$P_0$</th>
<th>$P_{11}$</th>
<th>$P_7$</th>
<th>$P_3$</th>
<th>$P_2$</th>
<th>$P_{10}$</th>
<th>$P_4$</th>
<th>$P_6$</th>
<th>$P_8$</th>
<th>$P_5$</th>
<th>$P_9$</th>
<th>$P_1$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>C#/$D_b$</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>F#/G♭</td>
<td>G#/A♭</td>
<td>A#/B♭</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D#/E♭</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.1.** Prime Form of the Twelve-Note Row

The twelve-tone row used throughout the second movement is actually foreshadowed in the first movement’s retransition at m. 145. This iteration of the row does not contain the full twelve notes because $E♭/D#$ is missing (Example 3.1). It should occur between the C# in m. 151 and the F in m. 152. This must be more than mere coincidence due to the important motivic nature of D and $E♭$ throughout the work. When the row occurs in the first movement, however, this D versus $E♭$ motive has not yet been introduced as it appears in the final nine measures of the movement. This quasi-introduction of the row foreshadows the second movement with its ghost-like setting in the low strings, marked *piano* and *pizzicato* when the row begins. Because of the subtle sound created by the low strings when the row is introduced, it seems to just add texture to the wandering piccolo line without making much sense. Since A is the pitch center in this section, $P_7$—beginning on A—is an appropriate choice for the row transposition used as it simply flows out of the repeated A’s occurring in mm. 143 and 144.
Example 3.1. Foreshadowing of the twelve-note row in Movement I, mm. 145-154.

The presentation of the prime form occurs in the opening twelve measures of the second movement in the celli and basses, as shown in the bass clef staff in Example 3.2. Each measure contains one note of the row played pizzicato in the low strings—an orchestral color pulled directly from the row’s foreshadowing in the prior movement.
Along with the presentation of the row in a single voice, the row later appears as the fundamental bass,\(^\text{22}\) elaborated in the melodic voice, or teased out in a cadenza. Liebermann uses the row in a different way for each new transposition. The changing presentation style makes it much simpler to identify when the row changes and creates clear formal sections.

**Form**

The second movement is an arch form similar to that of the first movement (Figure 3.2). The three large sections, ABA', appear to be a ternary on the surface, but the subsections within reveal the arch. The subsections in A' occur in the opposite order than in the initial A section. A' is then followed by a short coda based on the first thematic idea. Each formal section of this movement corresponds to a different transposition of the row. There are instances where a subsection may continue after the full row has been sounded. When this occurs, the original pitch of the transposition is restated while the subsection comes to a close.

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Characteristics of Tonality

Liebermann’s use of a twelve-note row to organize this movement may lead one to believe the movement is completely lacking CP conventions. As he suggests in the quotation above (see p. 23), Liebermann combines this twelve-note row with characteristics of tonality in an intriguing way. When the movement opens, it sounds atonal because of the close voicing of the violins and violas that creates a dismal mood atop the presentation of the row; the clustering of the upper strings is nicely demonstrated by the piano reduction in Example 3.2.
Throughout the movement, all twelve transpositions of the prime form are used in a particularly meaningful order. The order of pitches in the prime form of the row (see Figure 3.1) regulates the order of transpositions presented throughout the movement. To clarify, Liebermann starts with the row on D ($P_0$), followed by the row on Db ($P_{11}$), then the row on A ($P_7$)$^{23}$, etc., until all twelve transpositions have been used—following the order of pitches established in $P_0$. Because the transpositions are used in this established row order, any use of a transposition that deviates from the order of the row would violate this movement’s tonal principles. This relationship between $P_0$ and its transpositions throughout the movement establishes an expectation for the succession of transpositions to be used, thereby loosely satisfying the idea of S2. S2 is satisfied not because of pitch centers visited but because the order determined by $P_0$ establishes a way to organize the pitches of this movement and how to move among the transpositions. Since S2, in CP terms, refers to pitch center relations, the relationship between the transpositions is an equivalent concept in twelve-tone row theory. Once all transpositions have been used, the original, $P_0$, makes a final—albeit altered and incomplete—appearance to conclude the movement. The reiteration of the original prime form is different as it veers away from the determined row on the eleventh tone, m. 177, and twists around to end the movement on the same unexpected Eb minor chord that closed the first movement (Example 3.3).

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$^{23}$ There is a discrepancy between the full orchestral score and the piano reduction in measure 40. The piano reduction moves to an expected harmony, C major, that maintains the movement of the fundamental bass through the row in this measure. The full score, however, has several parts (2nd flute, 2nd oboe, 2nd clarinet, and 3rd viola) moving to an A in this measure rather than a G, which changes the harmony to A minor and disrupts the pattern of the row by repeating a member and excluding another. Since the A present in the orchestral score in m. 40 disrupts the twelve-note row, I believe the G in the piano reduction is correct.
The closely voiced upper strings in the opening measures of this movement create clusters that change on each beat as the voices move one at a time by whole-step or half-step. Though instances of stacked thirds occur, they are the result of this voice leading rather than functioning in a traditionally tonal way. The initial lack of CP characteristics in the first $P_0$ section makes the triads later in the movement seem out of place compared to the stark atonality of the first measures. At measure 25, rhythmic dyad thirds appear in the upper strings and begin to add depth and texture when the entrance of the next row transposition, $P_{11}$, occurs. These repeated dyads form complete triads when the sustained pitches of the winds and low strings are considered, but there is a disconnect between these dyads and the sustained pitches over which they occur. As shown in Example 3.4, this disconnect arises as the result of the rhythmic differences between the two ideas and the fact that the pitches sometimes change at different moments. The use of dyads to
transition into the use of full triads is a technique first observed in the prior movement, mm. 12-13.

Example 3.4. Rhythmic discrepancy between the sustained lower voices and their rhythmic upper voices in Movement II, mm. 25-30.

Full triads finally appear with the start of the third transposition of the row, P₇, at m. 37. The P₇ section of the movement is also the most unabashedly romantic section of the piece; the triads finally appear fully voiced along with the melody, doubled in octaves by the piccolo and violins—with two octaves between the second violins and the solo piccolo. The fullness of the triads coupled with the octave doubling create a thick, lush moment that is an emotional climax of the movement. This is also a rare moment in the movement where S₃ occurs even though it is only partially fulfilled: mm. 37 through 51 contain a melodic line that is based on the three-sharp collection, usually associated with A Ionian—the initial note of the row transposition at this time. When this material returns at mm. 127-143, the transposition featured is P₅, beginning on G. As in the P₇ version, the return uses a diatonic collection, this time it is the one-sharp collection associated with G Ionian.

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24 Mm. 44 through 46 include outside pitches that function like modal mixture between A Ionian and A Aeolian. Modal mixture occurs frequently in CP music. The pedal A and E that sound throughout this section help to solidify the A centricity and allow for some colorful non-chord tones and the modal mixture without deterring the strength of the A pitch center. The same type of movement outside of the diatonic collection occurs when this material returns at m. 127.
Once established, the use of triads is consistent until the B section of the movement starts at m. 84; at this point, the texture thins and the character changes dramatically. Triads return in m. 106, sustained in the violins, to accompany the piccolo’s second cadenza. As the movement transitions out of the cadenzas, triads remain, but they are no longer sustained as stacked harmonies. The row appears in the cello and bass parts, as it often does, accompanied by major triads in the vibraphone part; these arpeggiation and the twelve-note row seem to be in conversation with the row occurring on the first and third beat of each measure and the vibraphone filling the space in between (Example 3.5). The vibraphone triads advance through a series of first and second inversion triads that move smoothly in and out of the root position triads that start and finish the pattern.

![Example 3.5. Movement II, mm. 119-126.](image)

These triads serve to embellish $P_8$. The circled notes of the vibraphone line in Example 3.5 show how the row is incorporated within these arpeggiation. When the A section returns at m. 127, the triads return, presented in the same way as in the corresponding subsections of the initial A section.

25 With the exception of the A minor triad outlined in measure 121.
The voice leading techniques established in the first movement play a similar role at times in the second movement; when they occur, they evoke S6 of the characteristics of CP tonality. The movement opens with the parsimonious motion in the closely voiced upper strings previously discussed (Figure 3.4). As the lines move through each beat of the first 24 measures, the voices often move one at a time, by half or whole step, or one voice will be stationary while the other two move by half or whole step. This type of motion where one voice moves while the others remains static continues with the entrance of P11.

![Figure 3.4. Voice leading, Movement II, mm. 1-6](image)

Beginning with the P11 statement, the voice leading becomes more unpredictable as voices move by larger intervals or all the voices move at the same time; sometimes this motion is in different and unrelated directions. When P7 begins, the voice leading style initially continues, but the triads begin to shift by larger intervals towards the middle of the section. The largest shifts occur in mm. 44-46, when the melodic line veers from the three-sharp collection in which it had been functioning. When the shifting ends, the three-sharp collection returns in the melodic line to close this section.  

The transition, mm. 68-83 using P3, continues to integrate both the parsimonious and shifting voice leading to move through root position and first inversion stacked triads in the piano. Over these dense chords, the upper woodwinds seem to cry out while the piccolo solo meanders to the beginning of the B section.  

When P2 begins in m. 68, the texture thins dramatically as the triads discussed earlier instantly drop away. At this point, the piccolo plays a descending melody over a

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26 With the exception of a lone F₃ in m. 48 that acts as part of a neighbor group that decorates E₃.  
27 In this section, the woodwinds play what is considered the “sighing” motive. The “sighs” occur when two descending notes a semitone apart are grouped together to recreate the sound of sighing or crying. It is usually associated with lamentation.
line of triplets in the vibraphone that ascends by half- and whole-steps until the
vibraphone reaches G. Once G is attained, it is repeated as an ostinato until the start of
the cadenza at m. 94.

The portion of the B section based on $P_{10}$ features rather disjunct motion in
comparison to the rest of this work. The dyads in the oboes are the only moving
accompanimental idea throughout this section; the rest of the orchestra is either
sustaining a pitch or repeating the G. The lower note of each of these dyads represents a
member of the twelve-note row, while the upper note serves to harmonize it. The
resulting harmonizations imply a major triad every time the third is present with the row
member as the root. The upper voice attempts to move smoothly through the desired
harmonies, but there are times when smooth motion cannot be maintained if the pattern
of implied major triads is to be kept.

The set of cadenzas that interrupt the B section and the return of A exhibit a
variation of the parsimonious style of voice leading. The first part, mm. 94-105, is
characterized by a sixteenth-note figure that spins through all twelve notes to outline $P_1$.
This figure appears first as an unaccompanied piccolo cadenza before moving to the
vibraphone and continuing the rhythmic motion under the piccolo’s more sustained
melodic line. Though not a typical presentation of the row, there is significant emphasis
of $F\#$ to both start and end the figure, and an $F\#$ pedal underscores the figure’s repetition
in mm. 95-103. $P_1$, beginning on $F\#$, is also the logical row at this point since Liebermann
works through the row transpositions based on the order presented in the original row.
The piccolo’s groups of six sixteenth-notes in m. 94 contain a compound idea of three
independent lines; the top two lines move by half-step while the bottom line contains
pairs of semitones separated by a larger interval (Figure 3.5). There is one break from the
half step motion in the top line that occurs between the E and D; logistically this complies
with the order of the row, but motivically, it allows this line to end with the $D/E\#$ motive
that permeates the work. One voice moves every other grouping of sixteenth notes until
the entire row has been presented (Example 3.6). This unwinding of the row is a variation
of the voice leading style; progression through the row occurs in such a way that all three
lines move as smoothly as possible.

* A break in the half-step motion occurs at this moment
because Eb comes after D in the row.

**Figure 3.5.** Simplification of the three independent lines from the cadenza in m. 94.

**Example 3.6.** Piccolo cadenza in Movement II, m. 94.

The parsimonious voice leading returns with the entrance of P₈ when the music
transitions into the A’ section at m. 120. It is logical at this point for the return of the
original voice leading to occur because the movement is returning to previous material.
This movement away from and return to the smooth voice leading of the initial bars
follows closely with the arch of the movement’s form; as the movement reaches the peak
of its arch at the dual cadenza section, it contains the least smooth motion and is therefore
less tonal than the other portions of this music.
Use of Tonality

The second movement is the most removed from CP conventions of the three. This modern approach to tonality begins with its construction upon a twelve-note row. Because the twelve-note row is used as a unifying principle, the second movement exhibits different treatments of the S2 characteristic of tonality. Since the movement is formulated from a single tone row moving through each transposition based on the order of pitches in P₀, identifiable pitch centers are much less common than in the outer two movements. There are moments when diatonic collections emerge seeming to point towards a particular pitch center, but these are exceptions. In these exceptions, the collections are only in the melodic line as the row is generally played by the lower accompanying parts of the orchestra. Because the construction of a tone row requires the use of all twelve chromatic pitches, this forces a certain level of disconnect between the melodic line and rest of the orchestra that makes it difficult to say a single pitch serves as the center in an entire section. The principles of S2 here hinge upon the motion from one row transposition to the next; the proper motion is derived from the very specific order outlined by the presentation of the row. Liebermann manages to follow through in his use of all twelve transpositions in the prescribed order in a way that is both cohesive and fascinatingly complex.

Though two instances of diatonic collections appear in this movement, in modified fashion, diatonic collections are otherwise nonexistent as this movement features much more chromaticism than the other two. This chromaticism is a by-product of the parsimonious motion featured in the work, but also relates to the semitone idea that exists throughout the work, including the motive of D moving to Eb.

The duality of D versus Eb introduced at the end of the first movement is crucial to the row used throughout the movement. The initial row, P₀, starts on D to align with the overarching D centricity that connects all three movements. From D, the row moves down by half step to initiate the semitone motive. Even more important is the movement
from start to finish in each row: $P_0$ starts on D and ends on Eb. Throughout everything that happens in the row, the overall motion from start to finish is by half-step. Because the movement travels through all twelve transpositions of the row, the overall motion of the movement seems to be a half-step as well, reinforced by the return of the original melodic material that initially appeared over $P_0$ reappearing over $P_1$, beginning on Eb.

Liebermann reinforces this large-scale half-step motion by returning to $P_0$, in the coda, after the conclusion of $P_1$. While this return seems like $P_0$, at first, it is actually a false presentation of the row; the first ten pitches of the row are presented, but in m. 178 the pitches of the row are abandoned and the row is left incomplete. Following this deviation, an Eb minor triad ends the movement, just as occurred in the final measures of the first movement. This inability to complete a statement of the row is unexpected as it is the only time Liebermann shatters this established convention of the movement. Liebermann does this as a way to relate this movement’s end with that of the previous movement, which also ended in an unpredictable way and on an Eb minor harmony, to reinforce the D and Eb predicament, and finally to leave the audience anticipating the final movement.

The characteristic that gives the second movement an essence of CP tonality is the use of triads throughout much of the movement. These triads change by using similar voice leading to the triads in the first movement, but they are used in a different way. Throughout this movement, they are used to either harmonize the row as it appears in the bass or to present the row through fundamental bass motion. As in the first movement, the chord successions used do not create a sense of functional harmony as required by S5. This is less of a surprise in this movement due to the stronger leanings towards atonality.

The B section and the cadenzas retain some of the characteristics of CP tonality as the orchestration becomes very sparse and exposed. The CP qualities these sections do maintain are the prescribed use of the twelve-note row transpositions, aspects of the parsimonious voice leading, and some triads in the second cadenza and the transition that
returns to the A section. When the texture thins dramatically at m. 68, triads disappear and all that remains is the row, a slow-moving chromatic line in the vibraphone, and the aimless piccolo melody. As the texture begins to thicken at the second cadenza, triads return, but the piccolo often plays notes dissonant with these harmonies making them sound as if they do not belong.

Like the first movement, the second movement sounds the least CP tonal in the middle section because it lacks the full triads that are more prominent in the outer sections and is conspicuously more chromatic. This middle section, however, still relates to the tonality of the rest of the movement by continuing through the prescribed order of row transpositions and through parsimonious motion despite the increased chromaticism. Reinforcing the claim that this is the least CP tonal section is the sudden shift in m. 68 from the more traditional orchestration used thus far to the modern chamber instrumentation of vibraphone—an instrument not even present during the CP era—sustained viola, and occasional pizzicato low strings; over this sparse instrumentation appears another wandering piccolo line. This instrumentation does not persist throughout the B section and cadenzas, but the vibraphone continues to play a prominent role until the return of A at m. 127.

The cadenzas also expand on the motive of the half-step interval (as described above). The initial cadenza at m. 94 highlights movement through the row by half-step, but the repetitive nature of the figure slowly swirls down by semitone. When the second cadenza begins at m. 106, it continues to feature semitone groupings. Half-step motion is crucial to the tonal language and procedures of this movement.

Because of the forced adjustments to characteristic S2, the less frequent use of triads, and the more modern orchestration, this movement represents a move away from the more CP variety of tonality introduced in the first movement. Though this movement includes nostalgic glances at tonality in the melody of the A section, the prominence of the twelve-note row and chromaticism undermine even this attempt at tonality.
CHAPTER 4

MOVEMENT III

The final movement of the Concerto for Piccolo seems like an outlier upon first hearing. It has a much more frivolous character than the preceding two movements, making use of musical quotations, a whirlwind tempo, and agitated melodic lines. Beyond its frivolous and frantic disposition is a movement that is deeply linked to the two that preceded it through the same use of the D/Eb duality, smooth movement by chromatic motion, and the retention and ultimate confirmations of D as the concerto’s global pitch center.

Form

The final movement of the Concerto for Piccolo is in a form evocative of a rondo. It contains a main thematic idea, the refrain (A), that returns several times throughout the movement. Between statements of the refrain are episodes of contrasting material, labeled B and C in Figure 4.1. There are three episodes, with the B material repeated in the third episode, making this a seven-part rondo-based movement. It is not strictly a rondo because the final refrain occurs in the coda after a short reprise of the second episode. Because of the ordering of the sections, ABACAB(A), this movement retains aspects of the arch forms used in the prior two movement—a linking factor throughout.

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**Figure 4.1.** Form of Movement III.
Characteristics of Tonality

This movement immediately references the overall pitch center of the work, D, and the duality that has developed between D and Eb. This duality is present in the poignant opening chords. These chords are a reference to the opening of the first movement of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 “Eroica,” but instead of the Eb major chord that appears in the Beethoven, Liebermann uses a D major triad with an added Eb to initiate the ongoing opposition laced throughout the work (Example 4.1). After the opening two measures, D takes over as the centric note, forcing Eb temporarily to the background.

![Example 4.1](image)

Example 4.1. Liebermann *Concerto*, Movement III, mm. 1-2 (left); Beethoven *Eroica*, Movement I, mm. 1-4—strings only (right).

Liebermann immediately reinforces S1 and S2 in the two main thematic areas of this movement. The A section once again establishes D as the centric note, a trait shared by all three movements. This section ends transitionally and gives way to the initially suppressed Eb centricity exhibited in the B section. The refrain later appears on G centricity (mm. 76-90) and then on C# centricity (mm. 174-204). Between the two returns of the refrain is the C section, which is ambiguous in terms of pitch centricity. The first half of this second episode, mm. 129-140, are constantly shifting without any anchoring pedal notes; the only hint at centricity is a pattern in the bassoons that always begins on B (Example 4.2). In the second half, mm. 141-154, Bb is much more clearly emphasized as
the centricity, since multiple voices land on B♭ at m. 141 (Example 4.3) along with a pedal B♭ that sustains from this moment until m. 149 when the piccolo’s melodic line begins a downward spiral. The clarity of the B♭ centricity in the second half of C, in conjunction with the potential for B as the centricity in the first half—since it is the initial note of the repeating five note pattern, and the tendency for large-scale motion by semitone present throughout the entire work could make an argument for a retrospective assignment of B as the pitch center of the first half of this episode. Assigning centricity to mm. 129-140 is not conclusive and it could be disputed because of the lack of a prolonged pitch throughout.

Example 4.2. Movement III, mm. 129-137, bassoons I and II.

Example 4.3. Movement III, mm. 139-143.

The movement between centricities up to this point is in kind with the other movements. The initial shift up by half-step from D to Eb is well established. The
subsequent pattern of motion by third from Eb to G and then to (B)/Bb reflects one of the common relations between pitch centricities in a CP composition (as noted in Straus’s discussion of S2). (Even though B is ambiguous as the centricity in the second episode, the eventual movement to Bb is still a third from G, and still conforms to the motion-by-third pattern.) What is odd about the movement through G centricity in the second refrain is the CP convention that rondo refrains generally return to the original centricity, in this case D. Liebermann continues to disregard this norm by moving from Bb at the end of the second episode to C# centricity in the third refrain. C# seems, at first, to be a strange centricity to use for this refrain because it is not the original centricity and because it means moving by augmented second from the Bb centricity in the previous episode. Thinking of C# enharmonically as Db, however, means motion through the centricities continues by third. This chain of centricities, Eb-Gb-Bb-C# (Db), outlines a German augmented sixth chord that contains the tendency tones of Eb and C# that would resolve to D—and does resolve in the case of the C#—according to CP conventions.

Looking at the issue of a refrain on C# centricity from a compositional standpoint, the choice of this movement begins to make more sense when considering the rest of the movement. Following this final full refrain, the material of the first episode returns in the final episode—the last section before the coda at m. 278. When these two sections were introduced, the motion between centricities was D in the refrain ascending to Eb in the episode. Liebermann must have desired to preserve this semitone relationship while also wishing to returning to D centricity as the movement comes to an end. His other logical centricity options for these sections may have included: have the third refrain on D centricity, preserve the semitone relationship, and repeat the motion the Eb in the third episode, just as in the beginning of the movement, or disregard the semitone relationship between these sections and have both be on D centricity. Both of these options, however logical, make less sense in this context because of the importance of the semitone motion as a motive throughout the entire work and because Liebermann had already broken
with CP norms for centricity in the second refrain. Once D has returned as the pitch center, it remains there except for a brief shift to A in the beginning of the coda. Unlike the other two movements, the final movement does not end tonally uncertain with an Eb interruption; it ends very firmly on D.

The third movement makes sparing use of diatonic collections. The most prominent instances are the B sections. The first B section relies heavily on Eb Aeolian, six-flat collection, in the solo piccolo’s melodic line. The rest of the orchestra begins and ends within this collection, but abandons it for periods of time. The orchestra’s accompaniment is a four-measure figure that repeats in full four times, Example 4.4. Following the fourth repeat, the pattern changes in m. 50 as the first refrain comes to an end. Within this four-measure idea, Liebermann establishes the six-flat collection adopted by the solo piccolo, but it also pushes against this collection as show by the boxed sections in Example 4.4. These groupings are outside the diatonic collection and serve to add tension to the repeating idea, driving it forward with the need to return Eb and the pitches of the six-flat collection.

Example 4.4. Movement III, mm. 34-43.
This same idea occurs in D Aeolian in the third episode. Other instances where diatonic collections are prominent include the return of the *Eroica* quotation at m. 124 (Example 4.5). This quotation is expanded to include not only the idea of the initial chords, but the first two bars of Beethoven’s theme stretched across three measures. It is through this direct quotation that Eb Ionian—Eb major in the symphony—briefly makes an appearance.

**Example 4.5.** Movement III, mm. 122-128.

The only other true use of a diatonic collection is in the last four measures. At this point, Liebermann finally allows D centricity to end a movement, and he reinforces this with the exclusive use of the D Ionian collection. There is no ambiguity in these measures because the piccolo plays a two-and-a-half octave scale in this collection and the final two chords are A7 and D major (Example 4.6); these two chords act very strongly as a perfect authentic cadence to reinforce the D centricity.

**Example 4.6.** Movement III, mm. 302-307.
This combination of harmonies is pulled directly from CP tonality and is the only time functional harmony (S5) exists blatantly in the entire work.

Full triads or some form of arpeggiated triads saturate the movement, with the exception of transitional areas and part of the C section. The A sections contain strings of close-voiced triads as shown in Example 4.7. Throughout the A sections, planing motion connects the individual triads—first moving through root position triads and then moving through first-inversion triads, Example 4.8.

Example 4.7. Movement III, mm. 3-5.

Climactic Arrival

Example 4.8. Movement III, mm. 9-11.
Because Liebermann is consistent in his voicing, the refrains throughout the movement exhibit prolonged planing motion as Liebermann moves through each series of triads. Due to the movement of all voices initially through root position triads, the succession creates objectionable parallel fifths\(^{28}\) that would never occur to such an extent in CP music; when the chords flip to first inversion, the objectionable parallels no longer exist. Even though planing is less common in CP music, it became a more frequently used technique in the early twentieth century. Composers like Debussy incorporated this type of motion into many of their compositions because they were not concerned with the rules CP voice leading.

Compared to the angular feeling of the blocked triads in the refrain, the flowing arpeggiation of the first and third episodes creates a tangible contrast that is mirrored in the melodic lines of these two sections; this flowing quality continues into both of the transitions that follow. In the first transition, a sudden texture change occurs in the last five measures as the low strings break the accompaniment of the spinning sixteenth-notes to return to the dovetailed eighth-note accompaniment of the refrain. These five measures are based on the opening of the first movement from Mozart’s Symphony No. 40 in G minor (Example 4.9); the melodic line is inverted in this first mention, but appears closer to the original in later quotations (e.g., mm. 255-258), Example 4.10. This initial Mozart quotation is expanded further in subsequent transitions; the second transition, T', even develops this melodic idea.

\[\text{Example 4.9.} \quad \text{Mozart “Symphony No. 40,” Movement I, mm. 1-3 (top), Liebermann “Concerto for Piccolo,” Movement III, mm. 71-74 (bottom).}\]

\(^{28}\) Objectionable in the context of CP voice leading rules.
Example 4.10. Movement III. Mm. 255-258.

The parallel thirds in the first transition carry into the second episode, C, and typify the area that is ambiguously centered on B. When the pitch center firmly becomes B♭, the triads return to the accompanimental lines. After this, returning material contains the use of triads as they appeared in their initial presentation.

In this movement, the concerto continues to exhibit elements of parsimonious voice leading. New to this movement, however, is the previously mentioned planing motion of the refrains. Typically, Liebermann has preferred to retain at least one common tone when progressing from one harmony to the next. Here, by contrast, there is often no common tone retained as the result of the planing motion used to change harmonies. Because Liebermann combines planing with changes in triad quality (i.e. a major triad moving to a minor triad), there are times when the voices all move in similar motion, but not by the same interval. When this occurs, the voices are still moving primarily by a half- or whole-step at a time. This change of quality occurs only one time while the triads are in root position, but becomes more prevalent when first inversion triads take over. Combined with this new use of continuous almost-parallel motion in the upper voices of the orchestra is the ascending chromatic line29 of the low strings. The agitated nature of both the solo and orchestral lines in the refrain slowly build to a climax at m. 28 and then immediately allows the orchestra to slip and fall down to the low rumble that is the flowing sixteenth-notes of the first episode.

29 This line ascends almost exclusively, but there are moments where the line shifts down to slow the overall ascent.
Use of Tonality

The final movement is the culmination of the concerto’s tonal features and motives. Like the previous movements, pitch centricity—S1—and pitch relations—are large factors contributing to this movement’s tonal approach. As discussed, Liebermann first moves up by half-step between the first two pitch centers, D and Eb; this motion returns when the A and B material reappears, only on C# and D this time to return to the tonic of the movement. The move to Eb in the first episode is unexpected based on the norms of rondo form; typically, the pitch center would shift up a perfect fifth—which would be A, but that is not the case. The movement by thirds that occurs between Eb, G, and Bb is analogous to the “three-key exposition” that was sometimes used in sonata-allegro forms by Romantic composers such as Brahms. In a three-key exposition, movement from tonic to dominant is interpolated with a stop on the mediant. While the third movement is not an exposition of a sonata-allegro form, and the tonal motion in question does not originate on the starting pitch center, this example serves to show that this kind of motion between pitch centers by thirds has roots in CP music. Liebermann pushes this idea one step further when the centricity moves to C# in the final refrain to outline the previously-mentioned German augmented sixth chord that resolves to D centricity. The second refrain occurring on G, however, is surprising from a CP perspective because refrains are expected to occur on the same centricity each time they occur. Liebermann disregards this norm with the exception of the first refrain because it is the initial section of the movement. The only other time this material occurs on D centricity is when it returns in the coda to conclude the movement.

CP tonal procedure dictates the return of D centricity in the final refrain. Since motion away from the tonic centricity is always met with a return to this original centricity in CP works, returning to D centricity at the final refrain is as expected. It is also the norm in rondo form for the final refrain to be on the main pitch center of the
movement. In addition, the coda’s brief focus on A before jumping back to D serves to reinforce the strength of D: A centricity at that moment is acting like a dominant pedal in typical CP pieces. The final cadence of this movement serves to again reinforce the resilience of D as the main pitch center with the most blatantly CP-tonal moment of the entire work. This cadence, in fact, is the only true CP cadence in the entire concerto. The perfect authentic cadence affirming D acts to both define the ending of the piece in a conclusive way and leaves no room for the anyone to question the pitch center of this movement and the entire work.

This conclusive ending contrasts with the endings of the first and second movements. The first two movements both end harmonically unstable because Eb serves to undermine the centricity of D that attempted to close out each movement. The opposite occurs in the final movement; Eb serves to destabilize the pitch center in the opening measures, but the ending is very clearly on D as demonstrated by the two and a half octave D major scale in the piccolo and the authentic cadence mentioned above. This is not to say the Eb is completely absent from the coda of this movement. Db and Eb, both destabilizing factors of the work and the immediate half-steps from D, occur in the lowest voices of the orchestra. The second half of the coda, beginning at m. 292, starts with an anacrusis Eb that moves to D. This D is reiterated for eight measures before moving to a Db triad, then an Eb triad, and then finally works back to D. The use of Db and Eb act as neighbor tones to the main pitch of D in these final measures. Because of their emphasis at the end of the coda and the entire work, the half steps seem reminiscent of the semitone struggle that persists through the work, but also serves to indicate very firmly that D is the victor despite the ongoing struggle between D and Eb.

In the coda, half-step motion is rampant in the piccolo solo. Half steps characterize the repeated A-G♯ figure of mm. 287-292 and the Bb-A that fills mm. 300-303. These gestures provide upper and lower neighbors to A, the “dominant” in this D-centric work. This motive occurring centered on A acts to increase the drama leading up
to the final ending of the work. The idea of semitone oscillations continues into the final part of the coda, but this time using the upper neighbor, B♭, to emphasize A in the piccolo line. This idea can be seen in mm. 302-303 (Example 4.6 above).

As in the first movement, the least CP tonal sections of this movement are parts of the form that are traditionally unstable, specifically the transitions and the middle episode. Throughout this movement, none of the transitions have a firm pitch center as they function to move the music from one centricity to another. The lack of pitch center is combined with the choppiness exhibited in the Mozart-based idea used to move all over the pitch spectrum before settling into a new centricity. The middle episode, C section, is the episode that typically has the most freedom in terms of pitch center used and role; it is the one section in a sonata-rondo that acts like a development, providing the composer with creative freedom. The ambiguity of pitch center in this section and the chaotic melodic idea in the solo piccolo live up to this “anything goes” standard. This episode’s placement as the center of the arch also relates to poignant points of diminished tonality in the prior two movements. The more stable nature of the refrain and outer episodes helps to balance the lack of tonality that becomes present in the second episode and transitional sections.

Liebermann’s liberal use of CP-tonal characteristics throughout this entire work is underscored by quotations from Beethoven and Mozart. The use of the poignant opening chords to reiterate the D versus E♭ struggle adds a tangible sense of drama and surprise after the uneasiness that concludes the second movement. The repetitive use and development of the idea from Mozart’s Symphony No. 40 is especially interesting because the original quotation focuses on D with frequent use of the upper neighbor tone, E♭, another relation to the ongoing D versus E♭ motive. Because the original idea from Mozart focuses on this semitone motive, it easily fits into this work and is ripe for development. In the final transition, Liebermann layers the Beethoven and Mozart quotations with a new quotation from the trio of Sousa’s Stars and Stripes Forever. This
layering takes place in the orchestra at mm. 271-278 (Example 4.11) and acts as a humorous—for those that recognize the Sousa quotation in its altered form—final push into the rambunctious coda that closes out the work. Like the Mozart idea, the Sousa quotation also features repeated semitone motion, but as a lower neighbor that contrasts the Mozart’s upper neighbor idea.

Example 4.11. Movement III, mm. 270-278 (above and left); Sousa, Stars and Stripes Forever, mm. 39-46 (below).
This final movement serves to expertly balance out the expansiveness of the prior two movements. The conciseness of this five-minute movement comprises all of the overarching motives of the work while also simultaneously resolving them in this fast-paced movement. Liebermann manages to do this in a witty and thrilling manner with the inclusion of recognizable quotations and a flurry of notes that propels the movement from start to finish.
CHAPTER 5

TONAL LINKS THROUGHOUT THE CONCERTO

Liebermann’s Concerto for Piccolo is a post-tonal work that is clearly influenced by the tonal works of composers from the Common Practice Era. As shown throughout this analysis, elements of CP tonality are essential to the structure of the work. Sometimes these elements are pushed to limits that blur the connection to CP tonality. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Liebermann actively combines elements of CP tonality with post-tonal procedures in his works. This delicate balance leads to music that is accessible and modern on the surface, but deeply complex upon further study.

One aspect of Liebermann’s concerto that hearkens back to the CP era is its formal organization: at the larger level, into three traditional movements, and more locally in the internal form of those movements. The first is a sonata-allegro; the second, a ternary; and the third a rondo.

The first movement of the Concerto for Piccolo is an arch form based on sonata principles: primary and secondary themes, a development, and a recapitulation that inverts the order of those themes. In addition to reversing the traditional order of themes in the recapitulation, Lieberman introduces tempo changes with each different thematic area; traditionally, the only tempo change associated with sonata-allegro procedures is in accommodation of a slow introduction.

In the second movement, the use of a ternary form is consistent with the traditional concerto genre, but reversing the subsections when they return in the second A section adds a modern twist that relates the arch of the second movement with that of the first. The inclusion of a lengthy, multi-section cadenza after the B section before the return of A is slightly unusual. Cadenzas are a staple of CP concertos, with the composer either opting to write out the cadenza or allowing the performer to create their own. In this work, Liebermann provides the cadenza material as it contains two out of the twelve
row transpositions. What makes this cadenza unusual is that it is broken into two distinct sections connected by accompanied material rather than one large solo section.

The final movement takes the most formal liberty. This movement is evocative of rondo form in that a thematic idea acts as the refrain that usually appears between contrasting episodes. This movement follows the basic principles of rondo form until third and final episode is repeated at m. 241 and immediately followed by a coda at m. 278. After the final entry of the refrain concludes, the material of the first episode returns as the third episode. This final episode is twice as long as the original because it is expanded with an entire repeat of the material—once with just the orchestra and then again with the addition of the solo piccolo. The final episode is followed by a transition just as this material did the first time it appeared, but this transition leads to the coda rather than another iteration of the refrain. At this point, elements of the second episode are heard before finally returning to a semblance of the refrain.

The use of strong pitch centricities is not too surprising in a late-twentieth century post-tonal work as there are several contemporaries of Liebermann who compose in this way, including John Harbison, Joan Tower, and Ellen Zwilich, among others. Liebermann incorporates pitch centricity in such a flawless way that centricities are present in the outer two movements while also integrating other elements of CP tonality with post-tonal techniques. Throughout the outer movements, Liebermann steers the work through several pitch centers; some of these pitch centers align with CP models while others are approached through development of the semitone motion prominent in the work. Liebermann creates drama at the end of the first movement by introducing the unlikely pitch center of Eb to suddenly twist away from D in the final moments. This establishes one of the most prominent motives that shapes the two movements that follow; the emergence of Eb in the final measures of the first movement generates an unpredicted, last-second issue that then must be resolved in the following two movements. This unexpected change of centricity acts as a tonal impetus that influences elements of the
tonal structure in the second and third movements. The relationship between D and E♭ is used first to shape the twelve-note row of the second movement; this row moves through a series of small intervals to ultimately connect the tonic D to its rival E♭. Because of the way that Liebermann deploys the transpositions of the row, P₁, based on E♭, is the last full row to appear in the second movement. Liebermann tricks us into believing D could return to end the movement by using P₀ immediately following the conclusion of P₁, but this of course goes awry and gives way to E♭ once again. The feuding D and E♭ then appear simultaneously in the aggressive opening chords of the first movement as if shouting at each other. These hostile chords act as the climax of this motive that has been at odds throughout the second movement. E♭ tries to overshadow D and seems to take over the third movement starting with the first episode. The subsequent motion through pitch centers is based on third motion from E♭, and even the return of the opening chords does not hint at D. This does not hold as D eventually returns as the pitch center with the final episode—material that originally occurred in E♭. The pesky E♭ tries to nudge its way back to the spotlight in the coda, but D emphatically extinguishes this hope with the insistent D major scale in the piccolo and the ultimate perfect authentic cadence that proclaims D the tonal winner.

Unlike many CP works, all three movements of the Concerto for Piccolo start with D centricity or some other focus on D; due to the use of a twelve-note row in the second movement, it is difficult for a centricity to be established, but the presentation of P₀ beginning on D is the closest reference to D centricity at that moment. Traditionally the inner movement, or movements, of a multi-movement work would be in a closely related key, such as the dominant or subdominant. One reason Liebermann may have opted to feature D at the opening of each movement is because the second movement does not maintain centricity due to the twelve-note row and using a row starting on D is a way to unite the second movement with the rest of the concerto.
Other consistently present CP tonal characteristics are triads and the parsimonious voice leading used to move between them. Both stacked triads and arpeggiated triads play an important role in each movement. Since Liebermann opts to use smooth voice leading rather than the traditional rules modeled after the works of Baroque composers, functional harmony is suppressed until the final two measures of the third movement. Because of the lack of functional harmony or any other strong cadence earlier in the work, this moment is slightly surprising, but serves to emphatically reaffirm D as the main centricity of the entire work.
CONCLUSION

Lowell Liebermann’s Concerto for Piccolo is just one example of his practice of evoking traditional tonality to help shape his music. In this work, Liebermann combines a strong sense of pitch centricity and form with key motives to create a piece that is reminiscent of the concertos of the Common Practice era. Simultaneously, Liebermann’s Concerto relies heavily on post-tonal techniques to provide a contemporary update to the CP concerto genre. The use of CP-normative forms puts the listener in a sense of calm—the roadmap is familiar, but new—and grants Liebermann freedom to manipulate other characteristics without derailing listeners’ understanding. Because of this freedom, there are times when Liebermann breaks with tonality while never leaving the realm of the familiar.

The approachable and well-constructed and complex nature of this work has granted this concerto a spot amongst the most performed works for piccolo. This comes as no surprise because it accessible to a variety of audience member while still remaining intricate enough for the most sophisticated listener. It is also challenging for even the most well-renowned performers, as it requires the total mastery of a typically auxiliary instrument in order to sustain energy through the wide variety of characters presented in this 25-minute work. These factors combined make Liebermann’s Concerto for Piccolo a worthy piece of study written for a typically ignored instrument.
Bibliography


