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Résumé de l'article

Les notions oppositionnelles telles centre et périphérie, courants majeurs et mineurs, ou universel et local sont depuis longtemps des critères importants dans la recherche sur la musique occidentale. Encore de nos jours, elles sont souvent tenues pour acquis sans réflexion critique. L'article propose un examen critique de la relation entre la musique savante et la notion de musique nationale. L'objet d'étude est l'œuvre du compositeur canadien (d'origine tchèque) Oskar Morawetz. Le but n'est pas de nier que la musique puisse être associée légitimement à des lieux spécifiques, mais plutôt de voir comment ces relations se créent, évoluent ou se dissolvent à travers le temps.

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DECONSTRUCTING THE LOCAL: THE AESTHETIC SPACE AND GEOGRAPHIC PLACE OF OSKAR MORAWETZ'S STRING QUARTET NO. 5 "A TRIBUTE TO WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART" (1991)[1]

Friedemann Sallis

> In an age when classical musicians, and indeed the classical legacy itself,
> is often marketed in ways derived from commercial music,
> it is necessary to underline the distinction between music
> that merely forms part of a complex package of cultural signifiers
> and a quite different approach that regards a piece of music
> as possessing an objective identity of its own.
> *Julian Johnson* (2002, 144)

The related notions of centre and periphery, mainstream and margin, and universal and local have long been important criteria for the scholarly study of Western music. Indeed they are often taken for granted. During the nineteenth century these relationships were thought of as complementary, underwriting the corollary assumptions that, whereas great music serves to mediate the local and the universal, lesser music remains perforce contained in its local sphere. Lately these assumptions have become controversial. On the one hand, over the past quarter-century, musicologists have begun to question the validity of the universal/nationalist paradigm. Carl Dahlhaus pointed out as early as 1974 that the ubiquitous habit of treating the music of Germany, Italy and France as central and thus universal while all other music is qualified as national and thus peripheral is misleading. For one thing, musical nationalism was just as strong a factor in the so-called central nations as anywhere else. For another, the idea of national music has been approached almost exclusively from the point of view of *writing* national histories of music, which usually emphasize what is nationally unique or distinctive rather than what is common or shared (Dahlhaus 1989a, 90).[2]

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[1] I am indebted to two former students, Sylvie LeBlanc and Mylène Ouellette, currently engaged in graduate studies in musicology and ethnomusicology respectively. A few years ago they undertook an examination of works by Violet Archer and asked whether it is reasonable and justified to speak of Canadian music in this case. The successful outcome of their research project provided stimulus for this article.

[2] Ironically the universal/nationalist paradigm has taken firmest root in the United States, one of the erstwhile peripheral nations, and remains a determining factor in many of the most widely read

On the other hand, colleagues in so-called "new" musicology, ethnomusicology and popular music studies have tended to reverse the traditional relationship, suggesting that locally embedded music cultures of whatever sort (national, regional, or even municipal) represent sites of potential "resistance" to the global music market and to the still widespread aesthetic idealizations of high brow academics.[3] But the framing of any kind of widely-circulated music (be it artistic or commercial) in some local context can also be problematic. Milan Kundera has noted the often difficult situation faced by major artists who hail from what he calls that other Europe made up of the small nations.

> Secluded behind their inaccessible languages, the small European nations (their life, their history, their culture) are very ill known; people think, naturally enough, that this is the principal handicap to international recognition of their art. But it is the reverse: what handicaps their art is that everything and everyone (critics, historians, compatriots as well as foreigners) hooks the art onto the great national family portrait photo and will not let it get away. (Kundera 1995, 193)

According to Kundera (1995, 196), who is himself Czech, a proper understanding of Leoš Janáček's work was made difficult specifically because it was often subsumed within the framework of Czech culture. Attention was focused on Janáček's "passion for folklore, Moravian patriotism, admiration for Woman, for Nature, for Russia, for Slavitude, and other nonsense." As a result his contribution to early modernism was misinterpreted, underestimated, neglected and even betrayed. Notwithstanding the composer's own references to českost ("Czechness") in music (Beckerman 1986–87, 61), the fault lies, in Kundera's opinion (1995, 194–95), first and foremost with Czechoslovakian musicologists, blinded by their own self-inflicted nationalist ideology.

In the following we shall examine the music of Oskar Morawetz, also of Czech origin, who throughout his entire career had to negotiate the pitfalls of place and identity, not in the country of his birth, but rather here in Canada. Morawetz was 23 when he arrived and, though he returned often to the country of his birth, Canada is where his career as a composer *took place*. This essay's primary object of study is one of the composer's last major achievements: the String Quartet no. 5 "A tribute to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart" composed in 1991. It will examine the manipulation of thematic material in the first forty bars of the exposition and in a short section towards the end of the development in order to show how the composer's compositional technique and his aesthetics can be related to a sense of geographic place.[4] The task is complex but also

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American histories of nineteenth-century music (Beveridge 1993, 304). Among these, Beveridge cites Donald J. Grout (1988), Rey Longyear (1988) and Leon Plantinga (1984).

3 See in particular Adam Krims's remarks (2000, 1–2) on the "cultural resistance industry," which seems to have sprung up in certain corners of academia.

4 This article is not intended to present an exhaustive analysis of Morawetz's fifth string quartet. Rather, it uses data obtained from analysis to sustain a musicological argument, namely that the composer's aesthetic position is related to a sense of place, which can be attributed to the work. The author hopes that colleagues interested in analysis per se will be stimulated to give this fine work the attention it deserves.

rewarding because studying the work of exile composers reveals the limits of describing music monologically (Goehr 2002b, 181). Indeed, to adequately come to terms with Morawetz's work and his career, both must be set in a series of double perspectives: exemplar and paraphrase, technique and expressive content, past and present, Europe and North America.

OSKAR MORAWETZ

Morawetz was born on January 17 1917 at Světlá nad Sázavou, a small Bohemian town 120 kilometres south of Prague. He began taking piano lessons there at the age of six. At ten his family moved to Prague, where he continued studying music at the State Conservatory. In 1937, George Szell, impressed by Morawetz's abilities, recommended him as a conductor to the Prague Opera. Morawetz decided to pursue his studies in Vienna and was there at the time of the *Anschluss* in 1938. Like other members of the Jewish community, the Morawetz family had anxiously witnessed mounting anti-Semitism throughout the decade, but felt that their Czech citizenship would protect them. Soon after returning to Prague, Morawetz was sent to Paris to continue his studies as a pianist and was joined there by his family following the Munich agreement to divide Czechoslovakia. So as to put as much distance as possible between his family and the Nazi threat, Morawetz's father announced that he had obtained a visa to immigrate to Canada. He would have preferred to move to the United States, but quotas were full. Like many Europeans of his generation, he saw the Dominion of Canada as an extension of England and having spent time in Great Britain as a young man, he felt that Canada was a reasonable second choice. For his son, however, moving from Paris to the new world and particularly to Canada was at first simply out of the question. Morawetz knew nothing of this country; he had no idea if any kind of musical life existed here at all and so decided to remain in Paris (Beecroft 1983; Cornfield 2002).

This negative perception of cultural life in North America was not at all exceptional among artists and intellectuals at that time. Many who did come (one need only think of Béla Bartók, Arnold Schoenberg and Theodor Adorno) felt like pioneers or worse, like exiles in a cultural wasteland, and this perception persisted well into the post-war period. In a letter written on 25 December 1956 by György Ligeti from an Austrian camp for Hungarian refugees to Sándor Veress (his former teacher), the author toyed with the idea of moving to North America. He noted however that, having spent the last decade in Budapest yearning for a more sophisticated cultural environment, moving to the U.S.A. or Canada would amount to exchanging one provincial situation to another (Ligeti Collection). Veress responded on 10 January 1957 from Bern Switzerland where he had sought refuge in 1948, stating that Canada (like New Zealand and Brazil) was one of those "pioneer places," where life as a musician was neither easy nor satisfying (Veress Collection). In the end Ligeti remained in Austria; his professional concerns overrode his anxiety about having to live at the edge of the Soviet empire. Morawetz decided differently. Following the signing of the German-Soviet pact on 23 August 1939, he realised that war was

inevitable and wrote his father asking him to obtain a visa as soon as possible. After a harrowing period of uncertainty, Morawetz finally rejoined his family at Toronto in June 1940. He was thus part of that last wave of artists and intellectuals who sought refuge North America as National Socialism closed its clutch on continental Europe.

As it turned out, Morawetz's misgivings about moving to Canada were not at all unfounded. Following his father's suggestion that he obtain a professional diploma, Morawetz enrolled at the University of Toronto where he studied with Leo Smith and Alberto Guerrero and received a Bachelor's degree in music in 1944. In an interview given much later (Beecroft 1983), he admitted that the teaching of music was "terribly primitive at that time ... terribly bad." During this period and despite the poor quality of the tuition, Morawetz began to focus on composition. After six lessons with a "very average teacher" whose instruction consisted in pointing out parallel fifths and octaves he stopped and proceeded to teach himself (Beecroft 1983).

Morawetz's negative impression of the music education he received here is not simply the result of the inevitably unfavourable comparison obtaining between the relatively new institutions in Toronto and long-standing, prestigious schools in Prague, Vienna and Paris. Rebellious voices were also stirring among native-born colleagues. During the early 1950's both Barbara Pentland (1912–2000), and Louis Applebaum (1918–2000) claimed that they were part of the first generation of Canadian composers (Beckwith 1997, 101). In her well-known article, entitled "Canadian Music, 1950," Pentland (1950a, 43) accused a clique of "imported English organists" for being responsible for the poor state of musical culture in Canada. Among others, she was no doubt referring to Healy Willan (1880–1968), who taught at the University of Toronto from 1914 to 1950. Pentland complained bitterly that an overly-long dependence on "a *mother* country" (Pentland's emphasis) had allowed resources of native talent to be stifled and exported.[5] Indeed, she baldly asserted that she had no older generation of Canadian composers to emulate or admire. Of course Pentland, writing in 1950, and Morawetz, speaking in interview in 1983, were not complaining about exactly the same thing. Whereas Morawetz denounced the poor quality of teaching at the University of Toronto in the early 1940s, Pentland was objecting to a conservative academicism, pervasive in Canadian musical institutions at that time.[6] Also, to be fair, Pentland (1950a, 46) did end her diatribe on a positive note. "Creative music is becoming part of the university curriculum, and Handel is finally dethroned as the model for

5Later that same year, a slightly modified version of the text (Pentland 1950b) was reprinted in the concert programme of the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir. The fact that this text was circulating in various publications testifies to both its pertinence and the impact it appears to have had in Toronto. Six years later John Beckwith broadcast Pentland's message to a much wider audience by citing some the sharpest bits of her polemic in a chapter in *The Culture of Contemporary Canada* published by Cornell University Press (1957, 144). I am grateful to Benita Wolters Fredlund for pointing out these aspects of the reception history of Pentland's writings.

6The rule-confirming exception was the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Pentland explicitly congratulated CBC radio for broadcasting "all kinds of native music." (Pentland 1950a, 46)

the composition student." Be that as it may, that she could make such a statement in 1950 speaks volumes about state of music education in Canada and notably the teaching of composition.

From these rather inauspicious beginnings evolved a distinguished career in composition. By the end of the war Morawetz had established himself as a professional composer. Indeed his success was such that in 1952 the University of Toronto appointed him professor of theory and composition. In the following year he earned his Doctor of Music degree from the same institution and continued to teach there until his retirement in 1982. In 1987 Morawetz was the first composer to receive the Order of Ontario and in the following year he was decorated with the Order of Canada. He has also received numerous Senior Arts Fellowships from the Canada Council as well as Juno Awards. Today, based on the number of performances his works have received (often by internationally acclaimed musicians and ensembles), he is considered to be one of Canada's must successful composers.[7] Being a Canadian citizen, Morawetz is of course a Canadian composer, but does the adjective Canadian have any bearing whatsoever on his work and, if not, is there a local context within which Morawetz's music can be reasonably set?

THE HISTORICAL DIALECTICS OF PLACE IN WESTERN ART MUSIC

Before examining these questions, two points must be raised. First, as noted above, the relation of music to a specific locale is never as simple, direct or obvious as some would have us believe. Seen from the Romantic perspective, the local and the universal constitute a dialectical relationship, rather than a static dichotomy. For any local music culture to be perceived as such it must be set against a broader music culture, which bears some kind of sustaining or conflicting relation to it. According to Robert Schumann (1888, 188), Frederic Chopin was a great composer because he was able to convincingly draw on his cultural heritage and transform this essentially raw material into works of universal worth. This dialectical understanding of the local and the universal is still with us today.[8]

Second this relationship is also historical in nature. Before the end of the eighteenth century, the idea that one composed a piece which then was publicly performed in other places hardly existed. On the contrary, the task of composers was to produce music on request as time and occasion demanded (Goehr, 2002a, 178–79). In other words, music was thought of primarily as a locally conceived performance practice. This is not to say that pre-Romantic concepts of music were locked in the *hic et nunc*. Since the Middle Ages, the relationship between broader, more abstract perspectives on the one hand and local, particularising aspects on the other was not used to distinguish different

[7] In fact by the mid-1950s Morawetz had already established the reputation of being one of the "most frequently performed composers in Canada" (Beckwith 1957, 156), a remarkable achievement for a composer whose career was only just a decade in length.

[8] Krims (2000, 6) has observed that rap music should simultaneously be understood as a local, embedded culture and more broadly as mobile or mass culture.

types of music, but rather to differentiate the constituent elements of music per se. The notion of *musica instrumentalis* referred to the sounding reality of a particular performance and this would no doubt have included the specificities of local style. However this same performance could also be used to demonstrate the notion of *musica mundana*, that is to say the acoustic substratum expressed mathematically upon which all music and, according to a line of thought which can be traced back to Pythagoras, the entire universe is based.

An important milestone in the emergence of the modern universal/local dialectic was the rapid extension of what we now call the "Classical style" across Europe at the time of the French Revolution and the ensuing Napoleonic upheavals. Our current idea of universality in music is in fact a legacy bequeathed to us by the classic period. Works such as Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Haydn's *Creation* appear to transcend the difference between the popular and the esoteric (Dahlhaus 1989b, 35–37). As well, the apparent ease with which the music of the Viennese composers transgressed limits of place and time during the nineteenth century reinforced the widespread impression that this was not just a superior form of art music but rather the model against which all other art music could and should be judged. However, in as much as Beethoven's symphonies may have been intended for the all of humanity in the dual sense of an all-embracing throng and a substance which was common to all people, it was nevertheless only accessible to a relatively small portion of the population. The music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven was the music of the literate elite of their day: primarily the aristocracy and the *haute bourgeoisie*.

At the same time that the idea of universality in music began to take hold, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) put forward his view that all cultural activity and particularly the creative arts were based on what he called *der Volksgeist* or the spirit of the people. During the age of revolution, Herder's "national spirit" hypothesis merged with a political nationalism, creating a new sense of identity based on the postulate that, when forced to choose, a citizen's primary allegiance should be not to his or her creed, class, or dynasty, but rather to the nation (Dahlhaus 1989b, 40). In this new context, music acquired the potential to articulate nationalism by representing place.

> The nation grew as an amalgamation of places, for example, from the welter of dialects that nineteenth-century nationalists identified in folk song. There was an expansion of folk song repertories in concentric patterns as local songs constituted regional repertories, which in turn stretched across a national repertory. The nationalist model of the nineteenth century was anchored to its core, and the music that fulfilled the conditions of the core functioned like a national canon. Following the rhetorical model of Herder, who affixed national labels to folk musics in relatively democratic fashion, proclaiming the possibility that national "peoples" (*Völker*) without political independent nations gave "voice" to the nation through songs (Herder 1778–1779), nineteenth-century nationalists constructed enormous canons of folk song from the collective endeavors of folklorists, linguists, ethnologists, philologists, and musicologists. The landscapes of the nation and its songs were isomorphic. (Bohlman 2003, 50–51; his emphasis)

Thus, two complimentary principles (that great art is at once universal and rooted in some kind of local identity) supported by two complimentary canons (the great works of the national composers and the folk repertoires of the anonymous masses) became an important part of the very foundation of nineteenth-century bourgeois nationalism. However, like the idea of universality, the idea of "national art," based on the supposed "musical identity" of a given population, reveals itself as being an ideological construction promoted and sustained by the class which had the most to gain from its imposition. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the bourgeoisie sought to exploit art and folklore in order to legitimate its social position. The assumption, held to be an absolute truth during the nineteenth century, that folk music is always and above all the music of a nation is both questionable and ill-founded. On the one hand, nationalism was not at all an expression of self-awareness on the part of the lower classes, but rather a bourgeois phenomenon. On the other hand, dynastic loyalties normally took precedence over national ones for the nobility (Dahlhaus 1989a, 93).

> It was the nineteenth century which chose to believe—on very shaky grounds—that national character was the primary and essential quality of folk music (the equation of "primary" with "essential" was a notion of the romantics) and that folk music expresses the spirit of a people (understood as the spirit of a nation, first and most clearly manifested in the culture of the lower classes). At all events these beliefs were not established facts supporting nationalism but pious hopes created by nationalism itself. What is taken to be the premise and substance of nationalism is in fact its consequence and corollary. (Dahlhaus 1989a, 94)

Be that as it may, by the end of the century the "idea of national music" had become so entrenched that composers such as Wagner, Puccini and Debussy could hardly think of their music outside of its German, Italian or French frame of reference.

This view of the relationship between music and identity stands in stark contrast to the earlier idea of "national style," which was focussed primarily on decorative elements of compositional technique and had little to do with the ethnic origin of the composer. The so-called French and Italian styles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries constituted coherent sets of musical practice, which anyone could master given a sufficient amount of time and talent. George Friedrich Handel's sojourn in Italy provides a good example. Handel spent four years composing and performing in various Italian cities. During this period he was so successful in integrating the local style that he became an "Italian" composer.[9]

[9] Christopher Hogwood (1995, 44) speaks of the "Italianization" of Handel.

LOCATING MORAWETZ'S MUSIC

John Beckwith, writing in the mid-1950s, noted that it was between 1940 and 1955 that composers in Canada first began to consider their work to be in some sense representative of the entire nation, rather than of just a region or of a linguistic segment of the population. From Pentland's polemical attack on the "British" connection to the recent musings of R. Murray Schafer, the vexing question of whether there is such a thing as Canadian music has haunted both composers and musicologists for the last half-century. In 1962, Serge Garant summed up what would become a frequent explanation for why the music of Canadian composers has had such a low national profile.

> [Canadian music] distinguishes itself less by what it is than by what it is not. Rather like the Canadian himself, by the way!: he is neither French, nor British, nor American. For some time now we have been attempting to define his character in a more positive way, and it seems that no one has succeeded. (Lefebvre 1986, 111)[10]

Complicating the matter even further, Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1987, 157) noted that it is *always* possible for *anyone* to establish a link between a typical aspect of a musical style and a characteristic aspect of the culture within which this style is inserted.[11] This explains why music is rarely intended to be of *national* significance, but rather takes on this role after the fact.

As for Morawetz, when asked point blank (Beecroft 1983) if his music had anything to do with Canada, he politely but firmly changed the subject. In response he noted that as a child he had experienced a great deal of Slavonic music, and that elements of this traditional style could be heard in some of his more light-hearted works. Thus, following the composer's lead we might be inclined to say that being an expatriate Czech, his music should be understood as that of the Czech Diaspora.[12] After all Bohemia has been exporting expert composers and musicians for centuries. However, in the same interview Morawetz went on to say that with respect to his more serious works (the second String Quartet [1952–55, rev. 1960], the Piano Concerto [1962], *Memorial to Martin Luther King* [1968, rev. 1974], *From the Diary of Anne Frank* [1970], the Harp Concerto [1976]), he felt that there was nothing Slavonic about them at all (Beecroft 1983). In other words, associating composers with a place merely by virtue of the fact that they were born, grew up or worked

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10 "[La musique canadienne] se distingue moins par ce qu'elle est que par ce qu'elle n'est pas. Comme le Canadien lui-même d'ailleurs! : il n'est ni français, ni anglais, ni américain [*sic*]. Il y a déjà quelque temps qu'on cherche à le définir par des traits plus positifs, et personne n'a encore réussi, semble-t-il."

11 "Il est *toujours* possible à *quiconque* d'établir un lien entre un trait qui lui paraît typique d'un style musical et un trait qu'il considère caractéristique de la culture où ce style s'insère" (Nattiez's emphasis). Dahlhaus made a similar point somewhat earlier in his *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts*, published in 1980. "...any high-quality music written in an emerging nation will be taken as national music simply because it meets the nation's need for a common musical property" (1989b, 38).

12 Indeed this assertion is boldly made near the beginning of the "Morawetz documentary" (Cornfield 2002).

there is trivial. And yet, an examination of these "more serious works" reveals that they do suggest a sense of place. The use of instrumental colour and particularly the foregrounding of thematic-motivic development in a chromatic context evoke that aesthetic space where Bartók's music and the tonal and the non-dodecaphonic atonal works of Schoenberg's Viennese School overlap. Morawetz's music exudes what we could call a middle European style of the early twentieth century.

That the music of Morawetz should bear some similarity to that of Bartók is, at first blush, hardly surprising. Following the war, Bartók's reputation reached its zenith just as Morawetz was beginning his career. The Piano Concerto, one of Morawetz's first major achievements, shows several similarities to aspects of Bartók's style: specifically the forward-moving, motoric rhythms of the piano; the work's chromatic tonality; and the handling of the orchestra (notably at rehearsal numbers 9 and 48). Another more problematic common denominator between Bartók and Morawetz brings us back to a point made at the outset of this essay. Well-engrained habits of thought no doubt encourage an association of the two composers because both are perceived as coming out of so-called "national music cultures." This has been a standard feature of narratives on Bartók's career and weighs heavily on our understanding of his music.[13] By the same token Morawetz's music has been described in terms of its "vivacious Slavic rhythms" (Cooper and Keilor 2001, 100). Without necessarily denying the validity of the observation, such a reading can be problematic because it unwittingly and uncritically sets this music outside of some ill-defined "mainstream," which, in the second half of the twentieth century, is not easily identified.[14] Also, as Kundera noted in his critique of the Czech reception of Janáček's work, emphasizing this aspect of Morawetz's work can have the unfortunate consequence of masking other more significant affinities and correspondences.

Finding common elements in the music of Schoenberg and Morawetz would appear to be a far more difficult undertaking. Throughout his entire career, Morawetz maintained a distance between himself and the so-called twentieth-century avant-garde. Indeed he appears to have never even considered the possibility of using the twelve-tone method. Thus, at the same time as Pierre Boulez proclaimed the "uselessness" of composers not writing serial music,[15] Morawetz steadfastly produced expressive music in received forms, using

13 An important recent exception to the canonical reading of Bartók's career and work is Judit Frigyesi's recent book (1998). She sets Bartók's music in its Austro-Hungarian context and is thus able to get beyond the well-established limits of the narrowly nationalistic interpretation of the composer's legacy.

14 If the hegemonic position of German musical culture was indeed a reality for the young Bartók, the situation changed significantly during the first half of the twentieth century. We habitually ignore the fact that Schoenberg's notoriously nationalistic stance in favour of Germanic dominance of European music culture was in fact a defensive gesture made in an effort to "oppose Latin and Slav hopes of hegemony" (Schoenberg 1975, 173). Furthermore, by mid-century, except for the aesthetic backwaters where socialist realism still held sway, definitions of art music based on national characteristics were generally discredited, if not totally discarded.

15 "... tout compositeur est *inutile* en dehors des recherches sérielles" (Boulez 1966, 271; his emphasis).

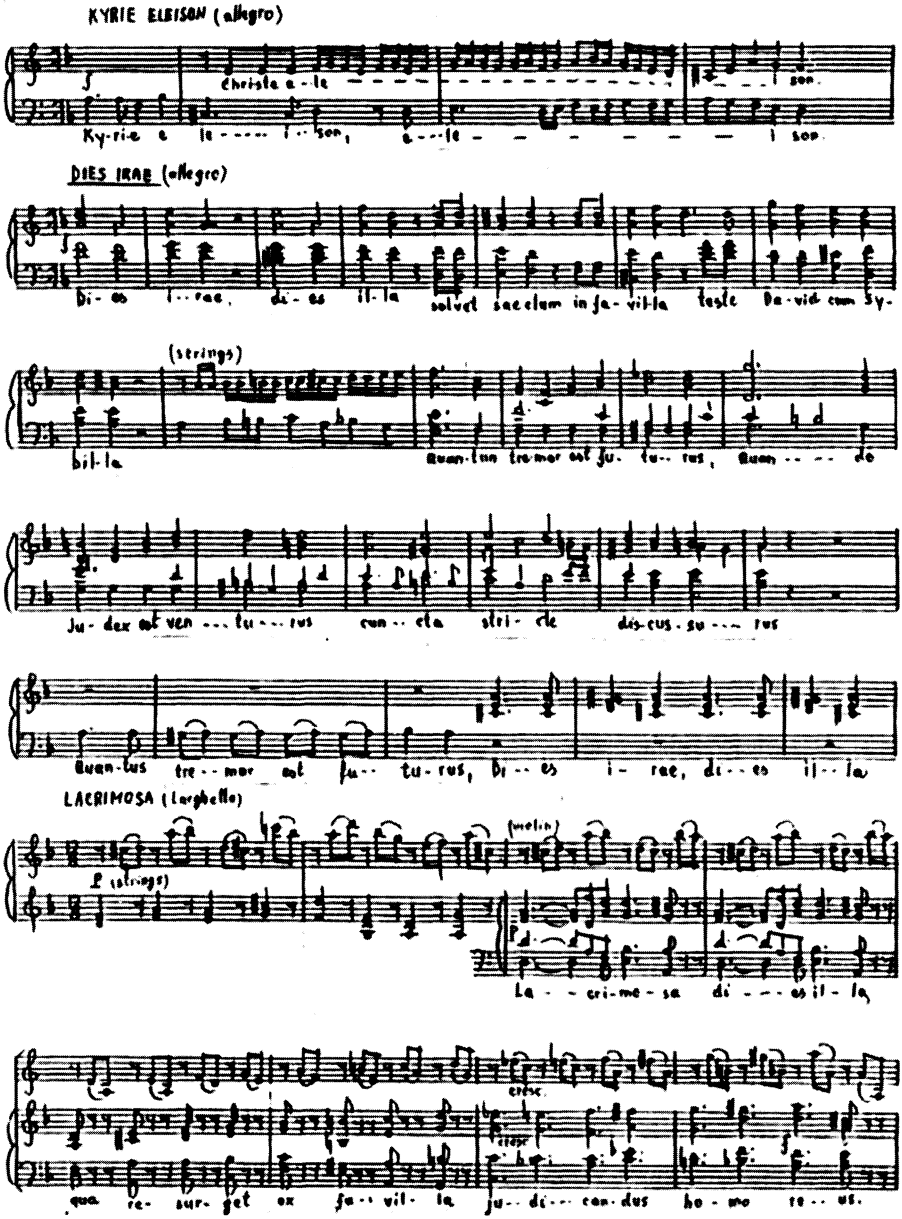
techniques and in a style of an earlier period and continued to do so to the end of his career. For this he paid the price of being ostracised and treated as a second-rate composer by some of his more "progressive" colleagues (Cornfield 2002). And yet, if one probes beneath the colouristic, surface features of his compositions, one can identify important aspects of his music which do correspond to that of Schoenberg.[16]

SCHOENBERG'S CONCEPT OF MUSICAL PROSE IN MORAWETZ'S STRING QUARTET NO. 5

Few compositions exemplify better the correspondences between the music of Schoenberg and Morawetz than the latter's String Quartet no. 5 subtitled "A tribute to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart." The work was commissioned for and first performed by the Orford String Quartet as part of the ensemble's last public performance on 25 June 1991. It is based on melodic ideas from three sections of Mozart's *Requiem*: the Lacrimosa, the Dies Irae and the Kyrie. The function of the borrowed material is thematic. The following example presents transcriptions of the borrowed sections from the *Requiem* made by Morawetz. They are conserved on a sheet of paper (8½ x 11) with the following statement written in typeface apparently by the composer at the top of the page: "This Tribute to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is based on the following themes from his Requiem." The document, until recently in the possession of the composer's daughter, Claudia Morawetz, has been deposited in the Oskar Morawetz Collection of manuscripts at the Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa.

The one-movement string quartet is set in a ternary, sonata-like form: exposition bars 1–100; development bars 101–206; recapitulation bars 207–73. The Lacrimosa and the Dies Irae melodies take the place of the contrasting first and second themes, which spawn numerous motifs setting in motion continuous musical development (example 2). The opening four bars of the Lacrimosa melody are presented by the violins with very little modification (bars 2–5). Thereafter Mozart's music is paraphrased rather than quoted. The 7/8 time signature of the step-wise chromatic assent from d' to a" (bars 6–13) destabilises the regular rhythmic values of the original material (compare this section of example 2 with Morawetz's transcription in example 1). The syncopations in the accompanying viola and violoncello parts echo the uneven rhythms of the paraphrased melody. Beginning at bar 23, a paraphrase of the first nineteen bars of the Dies Irae is presented. Except for the cadence (bars 38–40), the borrowed material is placed entirely in the first violin. Here again the original melody is modified through rhythmic elaboration and the interpolation of new material, the purpose of which is to provide a more suitable basis for further development by eliminating the predictability of regular rhythmic values. Between these two thematic sections, Morawetz inserts what would normally be the transition or bridge passage. Bars 13 to 22 are based entirely on rhythmic

16Morawetz's debt to Schoenberg can also be found in relatively innocuous notational devices, such as the brackets he uses to identify what Schoenberg called the *Hauptstimme* (page 1 of example 2, hereafter).



Example 1. Oskar Morawetz, transcription in short score of excerpts of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Requiem*. The example shows the Kyrie (bars 1–4), the Dies Irae (bars 1–19 and bars 40–44) and the Lacrimosa (bars 1–8) in that order. Reproduced with the kind permission of Claudia Morawetz.

and diastematic motifs taken from a chromatic passage from the Dies Irae (bars 40–44; see the transcription in example 1, the fifth piano staff from the top of the example). Note for instance the dotted rhythms (bar 13) and the semitone fluctuation around a" in the first violin (bar 14).

The continuous development of motifs derived from Mozart's borrowed melodies is crucially important because it compensates for the static quality of much of the work's harmonic structure. Like Bartók, Morawetz never completely abandoned tonality. Nonetheless, as is the case in many of Morawetz's mature works, the fifth string quartet is made up in large part of harmonically static textures. Note for example the chromatically saturated harmony of the transition section. Bars 13–14, 15–17, 18, 19 and 20–22 each contain all twelve tones of the chromatic scale. In sections such as these, what remains of tonality no longer provides the primary basis of formal coherence. The work's unity grows out of the motivic links produced by the anxious chromatic polyphony, which envelopes the quartet's borrowed melodies (both as accompaniment and as interlude) and constitutes the very fibre with which Morawetz weaves his fine musical textures.

That Morawetz, Schoenberg and Bartók all used motivic development to structure their works should not be understood as an indication that the latter two composers necessarily influenced the former in this respect. Rather it underscores the common roots of their respective compositional styles and techniques. By the mid-nineteenth century motivic development began to over supplant key relationships as a basis for musical coherence.

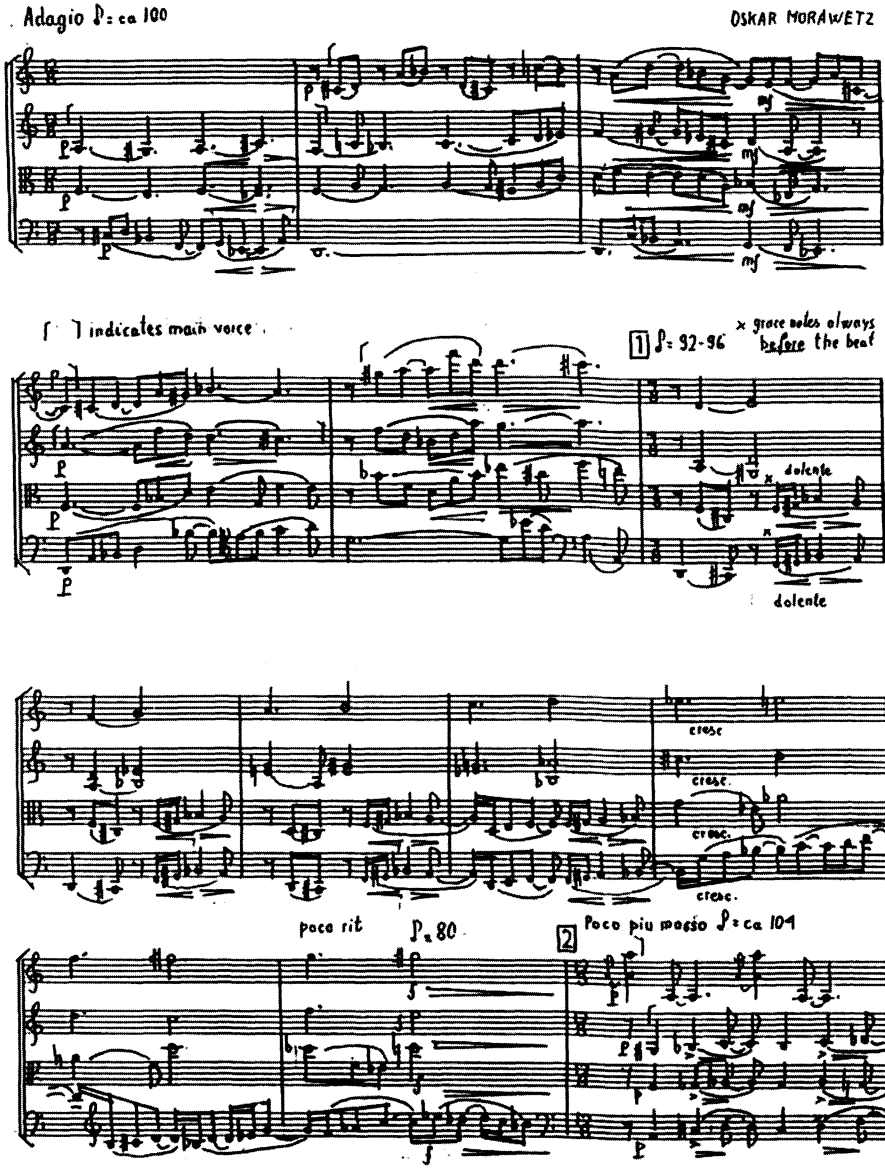
> By 1850 or thereabouts key structure had become so refined, and so weakened by colouristic uses of harmony, as to lose the fundamental significance that it had had for Haydn and Beethoven. Its role as an element of cohesion was taken over by thematic and motivic development, now spread over entire movements instead of being concentrated in development sections. Covering sonata movements with a fine mesh of motivic relations, or with half latent diastematic associations, compensated for the absence of clear form-giving properties in the key system and at the same time represented a "logical" counterpart to the poeticising and programmatic inclinations of the age. (Dahlhaus 1985, 69–70)

Those elements that the compositional techniques of Morawetz and Schoenberg have in common can be efficiently circumscribed using the concept of "musical prose." This concept is sometimes treated as though it were synonymous with the technique of "developing variation."[17] For Schoenberg the latter term refers to the technical elaboration of basic material, endowing musical

[17]In his study of thematic paraphrase the First String Quartet of Charles Ives, J. Peter Burkholder (1995, 50–51) uses the term musical prose in just this fashion. He notes that Ives modifies his quoted melodies in order to systematically eliminate redundancy and predictability in favour of asymmetrical phrase structure, which is more conducive to motivic development. According to Burkholder, Ives thus produced the sort of "musical prose" that Schoenberg so admired in the music of Johannes Brahms. In as much as he emphasises technical aspects (i.e. asymmetrical, non-repetitive phrasing), Burkholder's use of the term musical prose constitutes a short-sighted understanding of what Schoenberg meant. Though this may suffice for Ives's first quartet (which is after all a student work), it certainly falls far short of accurately describing the relationship between the borrowed material and the compositional technique of Morawetz's fifth string quartet.

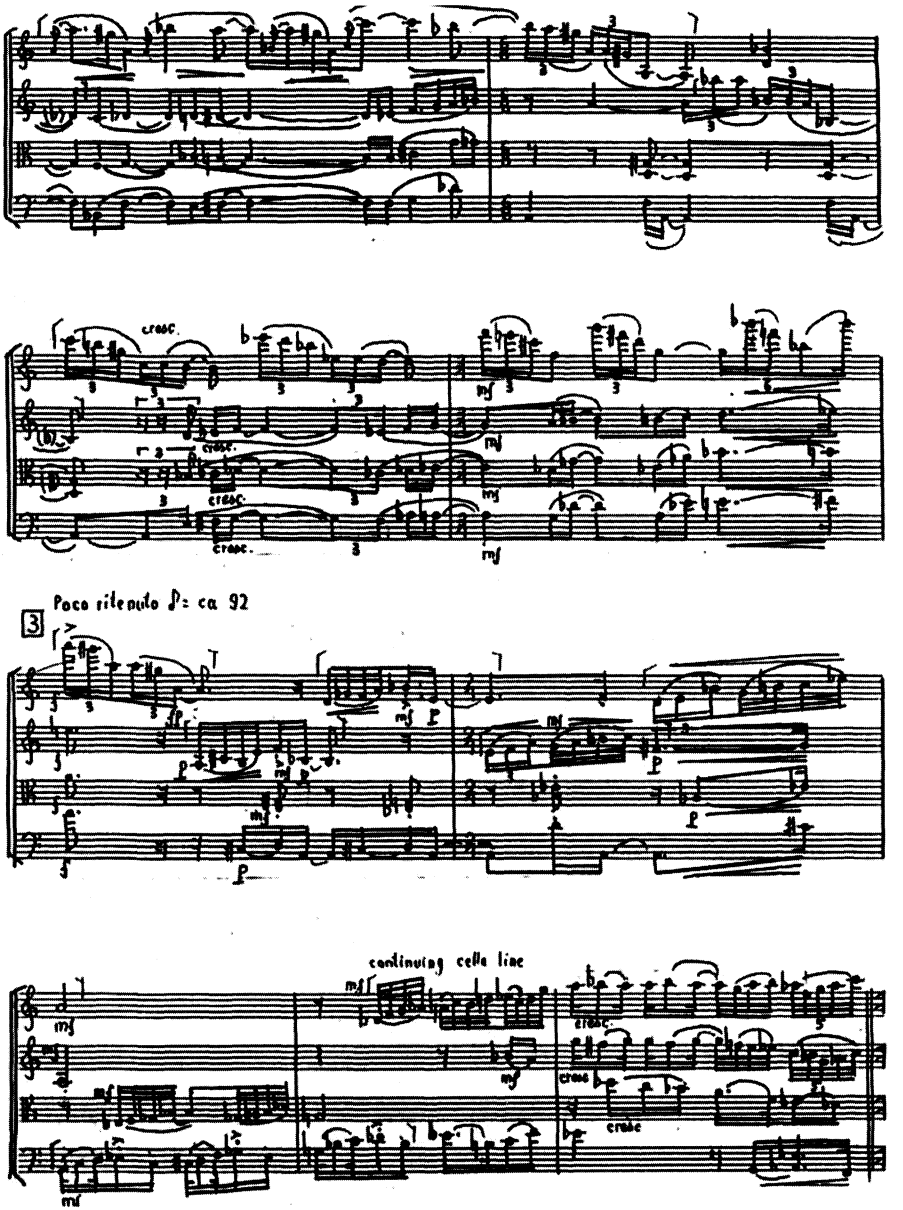
A tribute to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

String Quartet No.5 (1991)



Example 2. Oskar Morawetz, String Quartet no. 5, bars 1–40: the first theme (bars 1–13); a transition (bars 13–22); and the second theme (bars 23–40). Reproduced with the kind permission of Claudia Morawetz and the Canadian Music Centre.

Example 2 — *cont'd*



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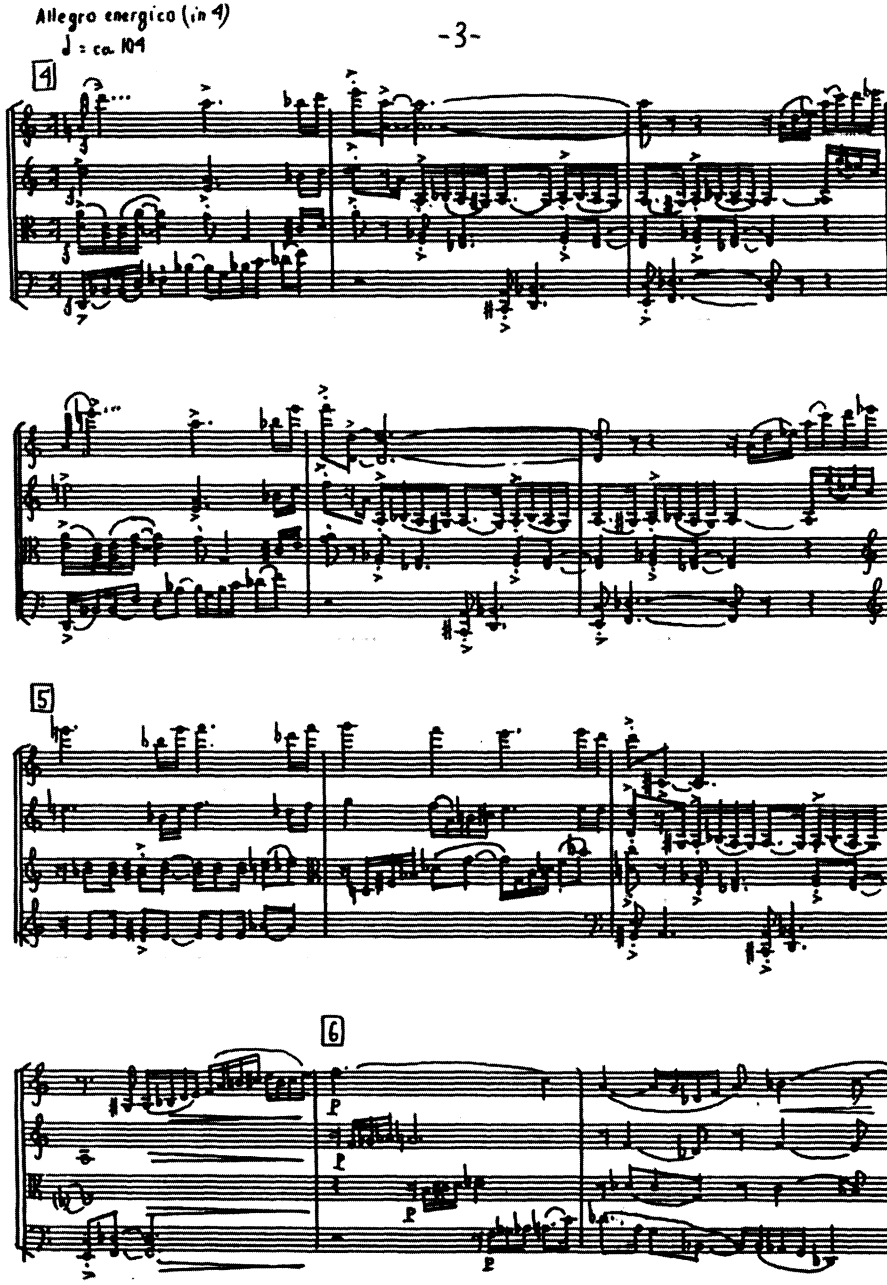

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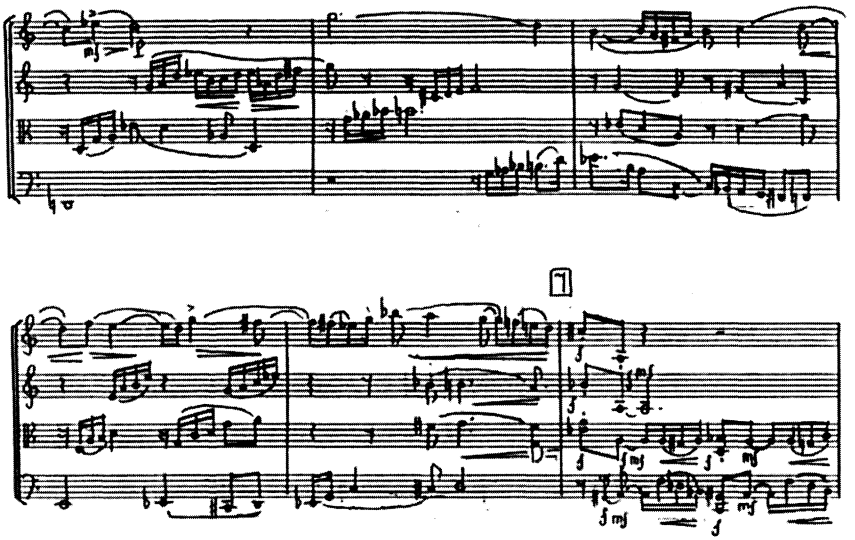

discourse with both unity and contrast (Schoenberg 1975, 397), and in fact the transition passage from Morawetz's quartet (bars 13–22) does provide an excellent example. Musical prose was a much broader concept, encompassing the substance of what is being manipulated.

The idea of musical prose is Romantic in origin. Referring to Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Schumann spoke of the work's "unbound speech" and praised the composition as a model of "higher poetic punctuation" because Berlioz had managed to emancipate his style from the law of the regular beat (Schumann 1888, 95; Dahlhaus 1990, 110). However, Schoenberg's concept of musical prose does not merely refer to releasing musical syntax from what Wagner scornfully called the straight jacket of "four-square musical construction" (Dahlhaus 1989a, 53). On the contrary, in order for the unbound quality of musical prose to be perceived at all it must be heard against some type of background regularity. Without this double perspective, the listener would simply be confronted by an undifferentiated series of unorganised beats. Taking the chromatic assent from d' to a" in 7/8 metre in the second part of the Lacrimosa melody as an example (example 2, bars 6–13), the attentive, knowledgeable listener (i.e. the listeners for whom string quartets are normally written) should be aware of the equal rhythmic values of the Mozart original as he or she hears the paraphrase. In this music the emancipation of melody from rhythmic-metric predictability is in fact a by-product. Musical prose is neither mere metric irregularity per se, nor a propensity for motivic development. It is rather what in German is called *musikalisches Denken* ("musical thought") that expresses itself *in prose*, that is, "a direct, straightforward presentation of ideas, without any patchwork, without mere padding and empty repetitions," enabling the composer to write for the "alert mind of the educated listener" (Schoenberg 1975, 414–15).

Clearly Morawetz is not simply quoting musical material from another age for its own sake in some neo-classic or post-modern fashion. The substance of this work is not about paraphrasing a clutch of tunes from Mozart's *Requiem*. To focus on this aspect of the composition would be to over evaluate the work's outer shell. Worse, it constitutes a misreading of Morawetz's debt to Mozart and to the Classical style he represents.[18] Schoenberg (1975, 173, 409–16) observed that from Mozart he had learned inequality of phrase length, co-ordination of heterogeneous characters to form a thematic unity, asymmetric thematic construction, the art of forming subsidiary ideas, and the art of introduction and transition. A careful study of Morawetz's fifth string quartet suggests that he learned similar lessons, enabling him to seamlessly integrate the borrowed material into his work. The composer is expressing himself through the legacy of the past but in a style and using a technique that he considered to be part of his musical present. This is musical prose as Schoenberg conceived it: past and present are welded together as two sides of the same coin and are inextricably bound up in the technique used to express this relationship.

What then is the *idea* of Morawetz's String Quartet no. 5? Morawetz's handling of the subject and countersubject of the Kyrie suggests a response. This new thematic material is first completely introduced towards the end of the development section. As a result the function of the borrowed material from the Kyrie is diametrically opposed to that of the Lacrimosa and Dies Irae melodies. Instead of generating development, it constitutes a pole of attraction towards which scattered motifs, derived from the Kyrie's subject and countersubject, coalesce. The work is thus carefully suspended between two complimentary procedures. The contrasting Lacrimosa and Dies Irae melodies set off a developmental process, beginning the sonata-like form. This initial impetus is then gradually overwhelmed by the gravitational pull exercised by the fugal subject of Kyrie in the middle section of the work. When it finally bursts into the open, the paraphrased material constitutes the high point of the entire work. But it comes as no surprise because it culminates a kind of reverse development. To be sure, musical ideas derived from the Kyrie subject and countersubject are more difficult to identify on first hearing than the Lacrimosa melody. Indeed the use of the subject's head motif to circumscribe the high point of the work is almost completely obscured. The five initial pitches of the subject are stretched across wide diastematic intervals and extended durations (see the violin and viola parts in example 3, bars 177–82), followed by distended fragments of the countersubject in the violins (bars 186–90). Nevertheless, once one becomes aware of the passage's identity, it is impossible not to hear the fugal subject.

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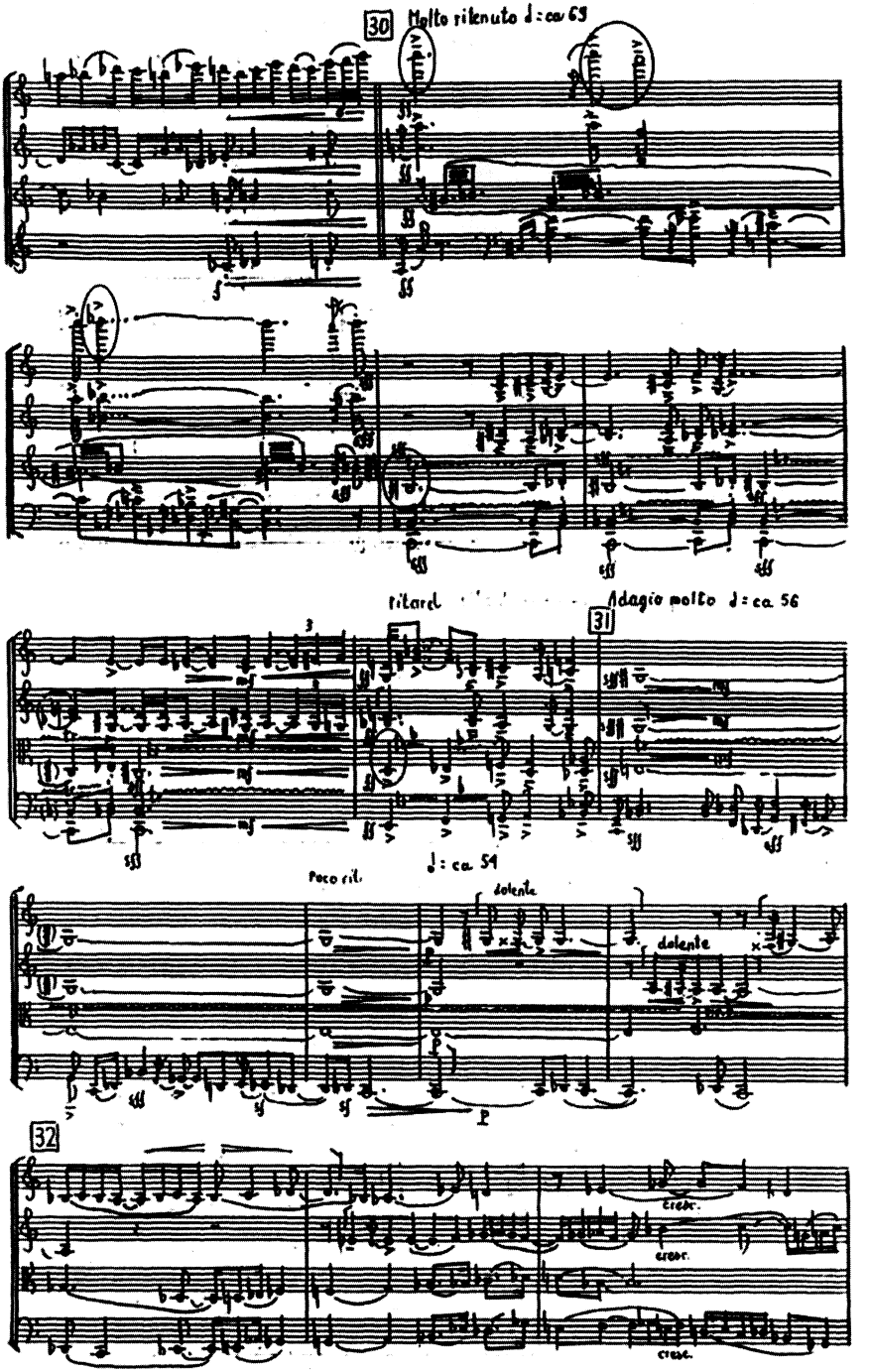
18 Such an approach harkens back to the evocation of place through the superficial colouring of musical exoticism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Beveridge (1993, 317) notes an analogous problem in conventional interpretations of the second movement of Antonín Dvořák's Piano Quintet in A major op. 81. This movement, entitled "Dumka," is supposed to pitomize the composer's desire to express his Slavonic identity through music. As it turns out, Beveridge's examination of Dvořák's sketches and his analysis of the score show that Dvořák's "Dumka" was in fact modelled on the slow movement of Schumann's Piano Quintet in E-flat major, op. 44. Indeed it would seem that Dvořák added the ethnically coloured title after the fact in order to cover up the source of his inspiration.



Example 3. Oskar Morawetz, String Quartet no. 5, bars 176–90. Reproduced with the kind permission of Claudia Morawetz and the Canadian Music Centre. The pitches derived from the fugal subject are encircled.

At the time of the quartet's premier, one critic remarked, rather superficially, that the "[s]craps gleaned from Mozart's Lacrimosa and Kyrie eleison were fashioned into the bricks for a kind of wailing wall to the master, who died before the Requiem could be finished" (Everett-Green 1991). The idea of premature death does indeed permeate the entire composition, but this idea is more than a simple reference to Mozart's untimely death. The silent text of the fugal subject "Lord have mercy" is cried out at the very centre of the work in long, strident tones and is never really answered. From this point the work sinks back into the anguished resignation of the recapitulation, built out of motivic fragments from Mozart's borrowed melodies. The work is a meditation on the loneliness of death, an idea which haunted Morawetz throughout his life, as it must have done for all those who narrowly escaped the holocaust.

Morawetz's Musical Family and the Idea of Canadian Music

Thus not only does the music of Morawetz's quartet mediate past and present as it aspires to be recognized as a work of high Western art, but it can also be understood as deeply rooted in a specific geographic area. Though difficult to delineate on a map, this central European place, where Germanic, Slavonic and Hungarian cultures meet and interact, has had a huge impact on Western musical culture of the past 200 years, particularly with regard to the inception and the development of the string quartet.[19] This is Morawetz's musical home, within which one could construct a network of family-like relations (as opposed to the more narrowly conceived notion of a "school" in the sense of Schoenberg's Viennese School or Kodàly's New Hungarian School). Not the "great national family" of which Kundera (1995, 193) complained so bitterly, it is rather a family of like-minded musicians and composers, based on a "continually transforming set of bonds organized by activities, conversations, and relationships that trace memories of the past, establish patterns of present significance, and suggest desires for the future" (Goehr 2002b, 176). The defining trait of this musical family is the concept of musical prose, which, as this essay has sought to explain, is not merely synonymous with thematic-motivic development. Like biological families, musical families can also spawn large networks of individuals, and, though these individuals may have been born, grown up and worked at opposite ends of the globe, they can nevertheless recognize a common inheritance, which historically can be traced back to a specific place.[20]

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19 Other such musically significant areas are the Mediterranean basin during late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, and the Low Countries (i.e. Northern France, Wallonia, Flanders, and the Netherlands) during the Renaissance.

20 At the risk of belabouring the point, one need not have been born or brought up in Central Europe to be part of the family or network presented here. Other Canadian composers (either native born or émigrés) could also be members. Conversely, composers who happen to have been born or brought up there may not necessarily part of the network. Bohuslav Martinů would certainly not be considered a member of this particular musical family. The deciding criteria would depend on a careful study of the composer's work. In other words, when coming to terms with Western art music, aesthetic criteria usually trump social considerations.

In light of the above, does Morawetz's work as a composer have anything to do with Canada? The answer would seem to be, very little if anything at all. And how could it be otherwise? When Morawetz arrived here one of the major vehicles used to transmit musical heritage (the teaching of compositional technique in particular and music education in general) was, at least from his perspective, still quite primitive. By the middle of the twentieth century the tradition of indigenously produced art music in Canada was, to paraphrase Joseph Kerman (1985, 39), so brief that it could hardly be taken seriously. In this respect Pentland got it right: the "imported English organists" left no world-class legacy. Consequently Morawetz was obliged to fall back on what he had already learned in Prague and Vienna. (His brief, tumultuous stay in Paris was probably too short to have had any lasting impact.) Thus, if we were honest, we should be describing Morawetz as Canada's most successful composer of Middle European music: a description which many colleagues and perhaps even the Canadian Music Centre may find troubling.

But is it really necessary and more importantly is it in our interest to pin a maple leaf or a *fleur de lis* on everything that happens north of the American border? It appears to this author that the term "Canadian music" is in fact a trap, obliging us to choose between two equally unpalatable alternatives. On the one hand, we could define the term narrowly so as to conform to some hypothetical notion of "Canadianness" in music. However we would automatically create a two-tier system within which composers and their works would be ranked according to their conformity to the given norm. Difference or "otherness," perceived as beyond the pale, would be classified in a kind of twilight-zone made up of Canadian composers of non-Canadian music to which Morawetz could well find himself consigned. On the other hand, to avoid this problem we could declare, together with Jean Papineau-Couture (Beckwith 1997, 90), that all music composed by Canadian citizens is Canadian music and simply abstain from dealing with difference altogether.[21] But we may well discover that by the end of the twentieth century the term Canadian music has become synonymous with contemporary Western music. In this case the "idea of Canadian music" reveals itself as just one more empty example of the universal fallacy: that is to say, a concept that purports to encompass everything ends up encompassing nothing.[22] Neither of these alternatives would allow us to adequately come to terms with the enormous contribution Morawetz has made to music in Canada.

As we have seen, the national identification of music was a product of nineteenth-century bourgeois nationalism. It has little to do with the mass market culture we have developed over the past century and everything to do with our colonial past. This type of nationalism is furthermore a relatively recent, dare I say ephemeral phenomenon because the social conditions which

21 "Canadian music is any music composed by a Canadian."

22 It goes without saying that the same critique can also be applied to concepts such as American music, *la musique québécoise*, as well as to those derived from the music of other national or regional entities created during the colonial period.

brought it into existence have changed considerably in Europe and even more so in North America. After all, the education and the general culture of the vast North American middle class have little in common with that of the European *haute bourgeoisie*, for whom Schumann, Chopin, Liszt and Wagner composed their music.[23] For the time being, then, the paradox seems to be that in order to fully develop a truly indigenous music culture we shall first have to consider dispensing with the notion of Canadian music.

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23 For a thoughtful survey of this point see Hobsbawm (1994, 500–21).

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Abstract

The oppositional notions of centre and periphery, mainstream and margin, and universal and local have long been important criteria for the schorlarly study of Western music. Indeed they are often taken for granted. This paper will take a critical look at the relationship obtaining between art music the notion of a national music. The objects of study is taken from among the works of the Canadian composer (of Czech origin) Oskar Morawetz. The point is not to deny that music can be legitimately associated with a given place but rather to examine how these complex, problematic relationships are created and how they evolve and/or dissolve over time.

Résumé

Les notions oppositionnelles telles centre et périphérie, courants majeurs et mineurs, ou universel et local sont depuis longtemps des critères importants dans la recherche sur la musique occidentale. Encore de nos jours, elles sont souvent tenues pour acquis sans réflexion critique. L'article propose un examen critique de la relation entre la musique savante et la notion de musique nationale. L'objet d'étude est l'œuvre du compositeur canadien (d'origine tchèque) Oskar Morawetz. Le but n'est pas de nier que la musique puisse être associée légitimement à des lieux spécifiques, mais plutôt de voir comment ces relations se créent, évoluent ou se dissolvent à travers le temps.