The Piano Works of a Contemporary Mexican Expatriate: Samuel Zyman's Two Motions in One Movement and Variations on an Original Theme

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THE PIANO WORKS OF A CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN EXPATRIATE:
SAMUEL ZYMAN’S TWO MOTIONS IN ONE MOVEMENT AND
VARIATIONS ON AN ORIGINAL THEME

by

Nayeli Dousa

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A Document Submitted to the Faculty of the

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2013
As members of the Document Committee, we certify that we have read the document prepared by Nayeli Dousa entitled *The Piano Works of a Contemporary Mexican Expatriate: Samuel Zyman’s Two Motions in One Movement and Variations on an Original Theme*, and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the document requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

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Lisa Zdechlik  
Date: April 16, 2013

Final approval and acceptance of this document is contingent upon the candidate’s submission of the final copies of the document to the Graduate College.

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SIGNED: Nayeli Dousa
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I would like to acknowledge the following publishers for granting me permissions to include musical examples in this document: Boosey and Hawkes, Theodore Presser Company, and Dover Publications. In particular, I would like to thank John White of Boosey and Hawkes, Christina Rosado of Theodore Presser, and Joann Schwendemann of Dover Publications for their assistance.

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It is to God that I am thankful for everything that I have been given, for the opportunity to live, and for the experience of His love through the people around me.
DEDICATION

To my lovely husband Dominic and our sweet baby Diego
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ABSTRACT

Samuel Zyman (b. 1956) is one of the leading Mexican composers of our time. He has composed more than 55 works in a variety of genres, including symphonies, concertos, orchestral pieces, film music, chamber music, and music for solo piano. This study includes an overview of Zyman’s background as a musician and composer, with an emphasis on his solo piano works. It provides a discussion of Zyman’s musical style and an analysis of his two most recent solo piano compositions, *Two Motions in One Movement* and *Variations on an Original Theme*.

Zyman cites the music of Bartók and Prokofiev, along with Impressionism and jazz music, as important influences in his piano compositions. This study demonstrates that in his solo piano compositions Zyman has created a style that incorporates four diverse influences of 20th-century modern compositional practice — the tonal language and percussive approach to the piano of Bartók, textural elements found in Prokofiev’s piano works, elements of Impressionism, and certain rhythmic and harmonic elements of jazz music — into a distinctly personal 21st-century voice. This synthesis of disparate elements into a compelling contemporary musical language makes Zyman a modern composer deserving of the attention of professional musicians and scholars.

This study provides musicians insight into Zyman’s compositional style, and brings the work of an important Mexican composer of our time to the attention of contemporary pianists and audiences.
CHAPTER I:  
INTRODUCTION 

Samuel Zyman was born in Mexico City in 1956. He studied medicine at the UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), and at the same time piano, composition, and conducting at the National Conservatory. Despite the completion of his medical degree, he chose to dedicate himself fully to music upon moving to New York City to study at The Juilliard School.¹

Zyman’s music has been widely acclaimed in his home country and abroad. His music has been performed throughout the United States, Mexico, Latin America, Europe, Russia, and New Zealand and has been recorded on labels such as Sony Classics, EMI, Naxos, Urtex Digital Classics, Island Records, Albany Records, Ambassador, and Quindecim. Besides orchestral and chamber music, concertos for solo instruments, opera, and music for film, Zyman has written four solo piano works.

Zyman’s compositions have been premiered in important concert venues, including Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Concert Hall, Carnegie Hall, and the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City. They have received positive reviews in such newspapers as the New York Times and the Fort Worth Star Telegram in the United States, and Excelsior, La Jornada, El Universal, and Milenio in Mexico. The Suite for Two Cellos has been performed by Yo-Yo Ma and Carlos Prieto.² His orchestral piece Encuentros was

¹ Samuel Zyman, Skype interview by author, New York City, October 5, 2012.
performed by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra at Meyerson Symphony Hall.³ Zyman’s music is published by Theodore Presser Company, one of the most notable publishers in the United States.

Throughout his compositional career, Zyman’s music has been honored in Mexico. He has received numerous awards and his music has been widely acclaimed and performed by the leading orchestras of the country, including the National Symphony Orchestra. In 1992, he was recognized with the Diploma of the Mexican Society of Critics of Theater and Music as Most Outstanding Composer of the Year. In 1998, the Embassy of Austria in Mexico awarded him the Mozart Medal for outstanding achievement in music, and in 2000, he was selected as jury president for the National Composition Prize in Mexico.⁴ His commissions, recordings, awards, publications, and work as a Juilliard professor place him within the ranks of internationally-recognized Mexican composers of our time.

Nationalistic elements such as folk tunes, mariachi instrumentation, and rhythms typical of Mexican music are present in some of his works. Encuentros, a piece strongly representative of the Mexican tradition, has become one of Zyman’s most acclaimed orchestral pieces.⁵ The rhythms in this piece, the composer states, are definitively Mexican. A recently composed piano quintet, Cartas de Frida, which is not yet published, was inspired by the letters of the famous Mexican painter Frida Kahlo. In this


⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Interview with Zyman, October 5, 2012.
piece, Zyman also includes notable Mexican elements. In contrast, the piano works of Zyman, as well as some of his compositions in other genres, are not centered in Mexican elements and reflect a more cosmopolitan, international approach. Perhaps his formal musical training at Juilliard and his experiences living for many years in New York City broadened his perspective on international compositional trends as he became more directly exposed to ideas of composers from different backgrounds and countries.

Academic interest in Zyman’s music includes Merrie Siegel’s doctoral thesis from Rice University, which examines his Concerto for Flute and Small Orchestra and Sonata for Flute and Piano. This thesis includes interviews with Zyman and the flutist who commissioned the pieces, as well as a detailed musical analysis of both works. Grove Music Online provides a brief biographical entry on Zyman which includes a general overview of his training and musical output.

There are a number of newspaper articles, journal articles, and websites of music departments at various universities in the United States that provide information on Zyman’s music and evidence of his international reputation as an outstanding composer of our time. These sources describe his compositions, review performances of his works, and highlight upcoming concerts of his music. The official website of Theodore Presser

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6 Interview with Zyman, October 5, 2012.

7 Ibid.

8 M. Siegel, “Samuel Zyman’s Concerto for Flute and Small Orchestra and Sonata for Flute and Piano” (DMA diss., Rice University, 2000).
Company presents Zyman’s biography, list of published works, recordings, awards, and critical reviews.⁹

Zyman’s piano music has not been investigated in detail in scholarly publications. Several of his piano works have been commercially recorded, but none have been the subject of academic study and analysis. The scarcity of scholarly written documents led me to personally contact Zyman to discuss my interest in researching his piano compositions. Through two subsequent Skype interviews, I gathered information about his life, career, and the specific pieces that are the focus of this study. A detailed study of his important piano works will give professional musicians insight into the various contemporary elements of his compositional style.

To better understand his music, I will provide relevant biographical information and discussion about his musical formation, including quotes obtained directly from the composer that proved to be fascinating. An overview of his four piano solo works and his *Concerto for Piano and Chamber Ensemble* will be part of my study. I will conclude with a detailed analysis of the last two works that Zyman has written for piano solo, *Two Motions in One Movement* and *Variations on an Original Theme*.

Zyman has created a style that incorporates four diverse practices found in 20th-century modern composition — the tonal language and percussive approach to the piano of Bartók, textural elements in Prokofiev’s piano works, elements of Impressionism, and various rhythmic and harmonic elements of jazz music — into a distinctly personal 21st-century voice. In this study, I will demonstrate how these disparate influences are

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⁹ Theodore Presser, “Samuel Zyman.”
evident in Zyman’s last two works for solo piano by making connections to specific examples from various 20th-century works of Bartók, Prokofiev, and other composers.
CHAPTER II:
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Life and Musical Training of Samuel Zyman

Samuel Zyman was born in Mexico City and grew up there with his older brother and younger sister. As is common in a family of Jewish origin, he attended the Colegio Israelita de México until he completed high school. Zyman remembers life in Mexico as tranquil and happy.10

Zyman’s first contact with music came at the early age of six, when someone sold his father an accordion.11 At this same time, Zyman was also exposed to classical music. One source was the accordion method that he was studying, which included numerous transcriptions of classical music. Another source was a large collection of classical music masterpieces in LP format purchased by his parents. He and his brother explored this music and enjoyed it very much. After these introductory experiences, he began to take piano lessons. Martín García, who also taught him accordion, was his first piano teacher.

Zyman considers his first accordion teacher, Guillermo López Hinojosa, as very influential, not only because of what he taught him, but also because he recommended Hector Jaramillo as a possible piano teacher for him. A few years later, Zyman’s mother asked Jaramillo to take her son as a student. Jaramillo was a flutist and initially declined,

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10 Samuel Zyman, Skype interview by author, New York City, December 30, 2012. The biographical information throughout this chapter was obtained through two Skype interviews with Zyman (October 5, 2012 and December 30, 2012).

11 Zyman does not know what motivated his father to purchase the instrument. When his father brought it home, it was placed in a closet. Then, at a birthday party that he and his family attended, they heard someone playing an accordion. They enjoyed the music so much that their mother decided to find a place where he and his older brother could take lessons.
since he did not think that he could teach Zyman effectively. However, after Zyman’s mother mentioned López’s recommendation and insisted that he give Zyman lessons, he relented. Jaramillo was the first teacher to encourage Zyman to compose. During their lessons, they would improvise together. Zyman later wrote pieces for flute and also learned the basic skills of flute and guitar playing. He remembers Jaramillo as a “fabulous musician and wonderful person” who has been for many years principal flutist of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) Philharmonic Orchestra. Zyman considers Jaramillo to be the most influential musician in his early years.

Zyman also took lessons with the outstanding Mexican jazz-pianist Juan José Calatayud, who according to Zyman was the “the most important jazz pianist in Mexico at the time.” During his studies with Calatayud, he became more interested in improvisation. Later Zyman enrolled in the National Conservatory of Music, where he studied piano, conducting, and composition.

In 1975, he began medical studies at the UNAM School of Medicine, while continuing at the National Conservatory of Music. Even though his love for music was very deep, he was reluctant to pursue a career as a professional musician, as he could not imagine how he would make a living solely as a composer. Moreover, Zyman did not consider himself a skilled enough pianist to pursue a career as a soloist. It was for these reasons that he decided to complete a medical degree. His interest in biology and mathematics provided further support for this career choice. About the decision to study medicine and music simultaneously, he said:

When it was time for me to choose a career and go to the university, I chose medicine. I did not have pressure from anyone to study medicine, certainly not
from my parents. I made the choice and took the entrance exam. I went to the National University to study medicine. I thought I was going to be a doctor — somebody who loves music and plays the piano on the side.

Zyman was a teaching assistant in the Department of Histology (1975-76) and in the Department of Physiology (1976-78), and from 1979 to 1981 he was a Lecturer at the UNAM Department of Histology. He recalls these years as extremely busy and that studying medicine and music simultaneously was “insane.” However, he was academically successful in both subjects. Within that time, it became clear to him that he would dedicate himself to music and would not practice medicine. However, as he was far along in his medical studies, he made the decision to finish both degrees.

At the National Conservatory, his principal piano teacher was Maria Teresa Castrillón. He also studied conducting with Francisco Savín and Eduardo Díazmuñoz from 1978 to 1981. In 1980, he received a Piano Diploma from the National Conservatory of Music, and also the Medical Doctor Degree from the UNAM. The following year, he attended workshops given by the composer Humberto Hernandez Medrano, with whom he studied musical analysis and counterpoint.

Zyman’s first choice for graduate studies was Juilliard, though it was not the only option he considered. At the time, he and his girlfriend Nancy Carrasco (now his wife) sought a place where he could continue graduate studies in composition, while Nancy, an outstanding scientist, could find a laboratory for a postdoctoral fellowship in molecular biology and biochemistry. They explored several possibilities, including Switzerland and

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even the Soviet Union, though in the end, New York was the most attractive. It was there that they finally settled.

The year 1981 marked a turning point in Zyman’s career, for he was awarded the UNAM International Fellowship to study music abroad. In preparation for his application to Juilliard, he studied with Stanley Wolfe, a composer who at that time was the director of the Evening Extension Division at Juilliard. Zyman noted, “I owe Stanley an enormous debt. He was amazing to me.” Under Wolfe’s tutelage, he wrote his first piece for string orchestra, his first piece for full orchestra, and his first chamber pieces. For his formal Juilliard application, Zyman submitted a portfolio of works completed while studying with Wolfe.

During his graduate studies Zyman was awarded several scholarships and fellowships: the FONAPAS fellowship (National Fund for Cultural Affairs, Mexico), the Juilliard Scholarship Committee Grant, the Florence Louchheim Stol Foundation Fellowship, the Irving Berlin Fellowship Fund Award in memory of George Gershwin, and a fellowship at Juilliard as an ear training teaching assistant. He was also a teaching assistant in the Department of Literature and Materials of Music from 1983-1986 in the Evening Division. At Juilliard, Zyman completed his MM and DMA degrees in composition. During the first year of his master’s studies, he studied composition with Roger Sessions, while during the remainder of his time at Juilliard he was a student of David Diamond, whom he described as very influential. He also noted Vincent Persichetti as a possible influence, even though Zyman did not study privately with him. Michael White, chairman of the Music Theory Department at that time, appreciated
Zyman’s work as a teaching assistant, and when part-time positions became open, Zyman was invited to teach music theory. Zyman began his Juilliard teaching career with an assignment of a few classes and eventually became a full-time professor. Since 1987, he has been on the faculty of Juilliard’s Music Theory and Analysis Department. Numerous commissions have kept Zyman active as a composer while fulfilling his teaching duties at Juilliard.13

B. Overview of Zyman’s Major Compositions

The *Concerto for Piano and Chamber Ensemble* (1988) has been very significant in his career, since it marked his debut as a composer in New York. The concerto is in three movements and lasts approximately 23 minutes. The orchestration includes flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, timpani, 2 violins, viola, violoncello, and double bass.14 Zyman selected the instrumentation so the concerto could be played with as few as 11 instrumentalists, or with a chamber orchestra or full orchestra. Zyman organized the premiere concert and conducted the performance. This concert marked the beginning of his successful career as a composer.15

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13 Zyman chooses not to follow a set schedule for composing. When he does not have a deadline to complete a commission, he works at his own pace, combining teaching, composing, and time with his family, always considering the priorities of the moment.


15 Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.
The **Sonata for Flute and Piano** (1993) is Zyman’s most performed work.\textsuperscript{16} It is considered a “major repertoire piece” and was featured as a required work for the Young Artist Competition at the 2009 National Flute Association Convention.\textsuperscript{17} Mexican flutist Marisa Canales commissioned and premiered the work. Among the many performances that the sonata has received, it was performed at three of the National Flute Association Conventions, in 1997, 1998, and 1999.\textsuperscript{18} This work and his flute concerto were the subject of Siegel’s doctoral dissertation.

Within his chamber music works, the piano trio **Search** (2005) is significant. Commissioned by the Texas Christian University School of Music, the trio was premiered at Carnegie Hall.\textsuperscript{19} Juan Arturo Brennan described it as “a work unmistakably his own, with tight textures, parallel motion, rhythmic subdivisions and a careful attention to structure. The music includes imitation and an episode of fugato.”\textsuperscript{20}

The **Suite for Two Cellos** (2007), one of his most popular pieces, was commissioned by Carlos Prieto and performed by Prieto and Yo-Yo Ma in the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City at two sold-out concerts.\textsuperscript{21} In 2010, Ma and Prieto also

\textsuperscript{16} Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.


\textsuperscript{18} Siegel, 1.


\textsuperscript{21} Interview with Zyman, October 5, 2012.
performed the work in Spain.\(^{22}\) This piece continues to gain popularity within the cello community, as in February 2013 when Ma performed several movements of the suite following a master class for advanced cello students in Mexico City.\(^{23}\)

Among his symphonic works, the *Concerto for Orchestra* called *Tres Laberintos Concertantes*, stands as a major work. Written in 2010, it is considered by the composer his most significant large-scale orchestral piece. Zyman described it as “the most ambitious and perhaps the most accomplished work” in this genre. It was commissioned and premiered by the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería, one of the leading orchestras in Mexico.\(^ {24}\) The premiere was conducted by Carlos Miguel Prieto in Mexico City at the Sala Netzahualtcoyt in 2010.\(^ {25}\)

These works are significant because they have afforded Zyman international exposure through performances at major venues by world-class artists. Commenting on the above works, Zyman noted the emotional impact they have had on audiences. For him, it is the single most important measure in assessing the significance and quality of his individual works.\(^ {26}\)


\(^{24}\) Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.


\(^{26}\) Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.
CHAPTER III:
SAMUEL ZYMAN’S PIANO WORKS

A. Three Piano Pieces

_Three Piano Pieces_ is one of the Zyman’s earliest compositions, although it is not among his published works. The set, his first composition for solo piano, was written in 1981 in New York City for the Argentinian-American pianist Mirian Conti, who premiered it at one of Juilliard’s student composition recitals. At this point in his career, Zyman sought to incorporate more dissonance into his harmonic language in response to his preoccupation with adopting a more “modern” compositional voice. He experimented with developing musical styles similar to that of the contemporary composers whose music he heard. Though not sure of the aesthetic path he would follow, Zyman knew he was in the process of developing his voice as a composer. Nevertheless, _Three Piano Pieces_ does not differ significantly from his later piano pieces because the set incorporates such elements as tritones and driving rhythmic patterns, features that appear more fully developed in later works.27

B. Concerto for Piano and Chamber Orchestra

As noted, the _Concerto for Piano and Chamber Orchestra_ is a major composition in Zyman’s career and marked his New York debut at Merkin Concert Hall in 1988. In a review of the concerto, Allan Kozinn of the New York Times described it as, “a score full

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27 Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.
of fascinating textural interplay.”

It is dedicated to Mirian Conti, who premiered the work with the Chelsea Ensemble conducted by Zyman. A commercial recording is available on the Antilles/Island Records label. In composing this concerto, Zyman was inspired by Prokofiev’s *Piano Concerto No. 3*. About Prokofiev’s work he remarked, “the first time I heard the concerto it blew me away… powerful energy, exciting music…it was definitely influential to my Piano Concerto.”

Zyman worked on this piece for about six months and described the process as challenging because at that time he and his family were moving from New Jersey to New York. He notes:

I remember exactly the time when I wrote the concerto and what was going on in my life…it was crazy…we were moving, and our new home was not yet ready when we sold the old one, so we practically had no place to stay for about a month. We were at staying at other people’s places. Mirian let me use an apartment with a piano to compose because there was no piano where I was staying, and I had to keep working on the piece because I had already a date set in Merkin Hall.

Zyman stated that the style of his piano concerto is “more fluid and freer” compared to earlier works, because at this point in his career he was no longer concerned about writing in a style that would be viewed as overly traditional. He described this concerto as energetic, tonal but with dissonance, and generally neo-romantic in style. The first movement is in traditional sonata form. The second movement is pastoral and lyrical, while the last movement is an energetic *moto perpetuo*.  

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29 Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.

30 Ibid.
The concerto was selected as required repertoire for the 2004 Biennal International Piano Competition held in Baja California, Mexico. The winner, I-Hsuan Cheng from Taiwan, performed it with the Baja California Symphony Orchestra. The concerto has also been performed by Mexican pianist Claudia Corona. Corona is currently working on recording the concerto in Germany.

C. Dance for Piano

Composed in 1989 and premiered by Mirian Conti, Dance for piano is Zyman’s second solo piano work. This piece was commissioned by Ilana Vered, director of the Rutgers Summerfest. This festival was established in 1987 and featured performances by the music, theatre, and dance departments at Rutgers University, along with exhibitions from the visual arts department.

Dance had its New York premiere at an unusual concert with twenty pianists presenting 32 premieres. All the works for this concert were no more than five minutes in length. Alpin Hong gave an outstanding performance of the piece at this concert. Anne Midgette of the New York Times wrote, “A star of the night, Alpin Hong raised the

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32 Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.

33 Ibid.

34 Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts, [http://www.masongross.rutgers.edu/about/history](http://www.masongross.rutgers.edu/about/history) (accessed March 2, 2013).
curtain with Mr. Zyman’s explosive *Dance* for piano, which sounded a little like Debussy on speed."

The *Dance* is set in short ABA form. The A sections feature lively syncopated rhythmic patterns along with fast scalar passages, while the B section is slow and lyrical. Of his piano works, it is the most consonant, with the entire B section confined to a C-sharp Aeolian mode. As in all of his solo piano works, a light texture is prominent throughout. Zyman describes this work as “light, jumpy, lively and showy.”

D. Two Motions in One Movement

In a review of *Two Motions in One Movement*, Allan Kozinn from the New York Times writes, “In *Two Motions*, Impressionism and jazz wind around each other like vines.” Perhaps the most well-known piano solo piece by Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement* was commissioned by the Music Teachers Association of California. The work was premiered in San Diego at the MTNA Convention in 1996. Audrey Andrist, a Canadian pianist who studied at Juilliard, was in charge of the commissioning program

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36 Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.


and contacted Zyman to request a work for solo piano that would be the required piece for all participants in the MTNA Young Artist competition. Zyman recalled:

I was invited to go to the convention in San Diego… I remember one pianist after another played the piece, twenty or twenty-five… I don’t remember how many played it… the piece was written as a competition piece — it was not written for someone in particular.³⁹

Following the event, the piece was published immediately by Presser.

About the title of the piece, Zyman noted:

I had to come up with an interesting clever title because I was writing a piece that was in a single movement, but it had different characters, with slow and fast sections. The idea was that the piece should not be too long or exceedingly difficult. I was told by the person who commissioned it that it needed to have a title that was adequate for the purpose of the competition. It could not just be called Piano Piece No. 3, so I came up with the title in English — Two Motions in One Movement — with the idea of playing with the words, because motion and movement mean almost the same thing, and the piece has the fast and slow sections. The tough thing was to translate it to Spanish, because the word motion in Spanish is movimiento, and movement is too, so the translation would be Dos Movimientos en Uno.⁴⁰

Two Motions in One Movement has been performed and recorded by various professional pianists. Mexican pianist Claudia Corona recorded it for the CD “Música Latinoamericana” in 2000, along with piano works by Mario Ruiz Armengol (1914-2002), Carlos Chávez (1899-1978), Heitor Villalobos (1887-1959) and Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983).⁴¹ Mexican pianist Mauricio Nader has performed this work extensively in

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³⁹ Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.
⁴⁰ Ibid.
⁴¹ Samuel Zyman, Two Motions in One Movement, Claudia Corona, Naxos 8551282, CD, 2009.
Mexico and other countries. He recorded it live at a concert performed in Paris in 2010 for a commercial recording entitled *Mauricio Nader in Paris*.42

E. Variations on an Original Theme

Composed in 2007 and dedicated to Mirian Conti, *Variations on an Original Theme* is the last work for solo piano that Zyman has written, and the only one from his compositional output in theme and variations form. The premiere took place on June 6, 2009 at the Annual Meeting Recital of the Leschetizky Association that was held at the Tenri Cultural Institute in New York. The score was selected and published in January 2009 as “Score of the Month” in *L’Orfeo*, an online classical music magazine in Mexico. The Variations were subsequently published by Theodore Presser in 2010.43

Zyman was intent on writing a serious theme for these variations and he described the work as a “deep meditation with contrasting variations, an adventurous piece of substantial length and difficulty.” It took him several months to finish the Variations. About the premiere, he recalled:

I was there. I remember it very well… it was great (he said with an excited tone of voice). Mirian played it beautifully. She spoke to the audience before performing the pieces in the program, and before playing my piece she explained how she and I had been classmates at Juilliard, and that we have been friends for over 20 years, and that she had asked me to write this piece. It was actually quite emotional because my wife was with me… it was here in New York, and Mirian spoke so nicely and introduced me to the audience, and then played the piece; it was well received, so it was really very emotional for me.44

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44 Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.
CHAPTER IV:
20th-CENTURY INFLUENCES IN SAMUEL ZYMAN’S PIANO WORKS

When asked about his primary influences as a composer, Zyman cited the music of Bartók and Prokofiev, as well as Impressionism and jazz. However, he explained that when composing, he does not consciously try to emulate the specific style of a composer or piece. For example, when describing the influence of Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No. 3, he stated clearly that he did not study that particular score while writing his piano concerto. Rather, he had the sound of the work “in his head.” Instead of deliberately trying to reproduce the technical approach of these composers, he absorbed and internalized their musical style, to the point that it became a part of his own musical language. A closer examination of Zyman’s techniques and that of his influences reveals the connections between them.

A. Bartók’s influence

Zyman cited Bartók’s use of counterpoint and the rhythmic vitality in works such as the String Quartet No. 4 and the Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta. These two elements, as well as Bartok’s percussive approach to the instrument, were compelling for Zyman. Bartók’s influence is evident not only in these elements, but also in his treatment of melody and tonal language.

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46 Ibid.
In the two fast variations of *Variations on an Original Theme*, Zyman employs a two-part contrapuntal texture for extended passages. Some of these passages involve free two-part counterpoint, while others include imitation. Passages with similar textural treatments are present in some pieces of Bartók’s *Mikrokosmos*, Volume VI. Examples 1 and 2 illustrate these similarities.

Musical Example 1: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 150-158

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Musical Example 2: Bartók, No. 145 “Chromatic Invention” from *Mikrokosmos*, mm. 1-7

Bartók more often carries imitation further than does Zyman, but both composers employ free two-part counterpoint with extensive chromaticism typical of 20th-century style.

Another similarity in the piano music of Bartók and Zyman is the use of the piano’s percussive capabilities. Bartók explored the inherently percussive nature of the piano in a number of his works: *Allegro Barbaro*, the *Out of Doors* suite, the *Sonata for Piano*, and others. Some passages in Zyman’s *Variations* have a similar percussive character to passages found in Bartók’s *Piano Concerto No. 2*. In both works, chords that include repeated notes, along with driving, insistent rhythms, became a part of the musical style (Examples 3 and 4).
Musical Example 3: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 230-239

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Musical Example 4: Bartók, *Piano Concerto No. 2*, third movement, mm. 178-185

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There are other examples of a percussive approach to piano writing in Zyman’s work. In Example 8, the syncopated homorhythmic attacks on the accented harmonic tritones project a percussive sound. In Example 22, the extensive syncopation and accents also highlight the piece’s percussive character.

In their melodic style, both Bartók and Zyman at times employ extended melodic lines that are highly chromatic and involve primarily stepwise motion. Even though the contour of these lines is smooth, the chromaticism injects a feeling of tension. These lines are not confined to a chromatic scale or to other types of traditional or 20th-century scales. Instead, shorter segments of one type of scale overlap with segments of a different type. This approach provides structure to the chromaticism, yet the unpredictability of the lines creates a more unsettled and nervous effect.

Both Bartók and Zyman incorporate elements of octatonic scales into their work. While Zyman makes more extensive use of octatonic scales, there are also similarities in the treatment of this scale. In his book on Bartók, Elliott Antokoletz devotes a chapter to the discussion of the “interaction of diatonic, octatonic, and whole-tone formations.” He analyzes the ways in which Bartók’s melodies and harmonic structures include octatonic segments that overlap with diatonic and whole-tone formations.47

One example from many that Antokoletz cites is an excerpt from No. 11 of Bartók’s *Bagatelles*. He notes the interactions of a complete octatonic scale in the melodic line, accompanied by diatonic quartal harmonies.48 In m. 25, the melodic line

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48 Ibid, 206.
features an octatonic segment beginning on D sharp. In the next bar, a chromatic passage follows, and in mm. 27-28, a complete octatonic scale is presented, starting again on D sharp. In mm. 28-29, Bartók uses a diatonic segment (Example 5).

Musical Example 5: Bartók, Bagatelle No. 11, mm. 24-30

Zyman tends to use the octatonic scale for portions of his melodies and also incorporates overlapping scale segments. In mm. 15-18 of Two Motions in One Movement, the octatonic scale is the primary scale used, but there are also overlapping diatonic and chromatic segments (Example 6).
In Variations on an Original Theme, there are also examples of octatonic-scale and chromatic-scale combinations. One example begins at m. 176, where both hands start with a contrapuntal chromatic segment in octaves and continue to outline the octatonic scale in the following bars (Example 7).
In Bartók’s music, the scale segments tend to be shorter, while Zyman places greater emphasis on the octatonic scale. However, both composers use the idea of overlapping scales, which provides melodic variety beyond the notes of the octatonic scale only and gives a coherent structure to the lines.

The use of tritones is prominent throughout Zyman’s piano works, especially in the Variations. As an example, Zyman presents harmonic tritones in counterpoint starting in the Piu mosso section of Variation 1 (Example 8). Similar textures are found in other parts of the work.
In some of Bartók’s music, there are passages that share a similarly distinctive treatment of tritones in counterpoint. An example of this treatment is taken from the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (Example 9).
Musical Example 9: Bartók, *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, first movement, mm. 13-18

(piano parts only)

tritones in counterpoint, independent rhythmic lines

\[
P. I
\]

\[
P. II
\]

\[
14
accel.
\]

Another example occurs in an early work, No. 8 from Bartók’s *Bagatelles* (Example 10).
Antokoletz notes Bartók’s interest in tritone-based harmonies and specifically cites the *Bagatelles*.\(^{49}\) In Examples 9 and 10, Bartók’s approach demonstrates greater rhythmic independence in the counterpoint than does Zyman’s approach. However, with both composers the treatment of this interval as both a harmonic sonority and contrapuntal device is similar.

The preceding examples illustrate some of the connections between the musical style of Bartók and that of Zyman. Despite these similarities, each composer uses these various elements in his own way. While the rhythmic style of both composers includes frequent syncopation, Zyman’s patterns tend to be more regular in contrast to Bartók’s irregular rhythmic groupings. Zyman employs harmonic tritones and octatonic scales more extensively than Bartók. Nevertheless, Zyman’s incorporates elements of Bartók’s style that he finds interesting and adapts them to fit his compositional voice.

\[^{49}\text{Elliott Antokoletz,} \text{Twentieth-Century Music (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992), 115-116.}\]
B. Prokofiev’s influence

Zyman cites Prokofiev as an influential composer and specifically names *Piano Sonata No. 7* as a work of particular interest. He notes the percussive nature found often in Prokofiev’s piano music.\(^{50}\) However, Prokofiev’s influence is most evident in Zyman’s music in the element of texture. Like Prokofiev in his later piano sonatas, Zyman tends to favor leaner textures. In his 2008 book on Prokofiev Piano Sonatas, Boris Berman describes the texture of Sonata No. 7 as “dry, transparent, even austere,” and characterizes some of the writing as “two-part Scarlatti-like.”\(^{51}\) The texture of the A section in *Two Motions in One Movement* is similar to that of the first theme in the first movement of Prokofiev’s *Sonata No. 7*. Both composers write single-line passages, sometimes with unison octaves, and include occasional punctuating three- or four-note chords. Examples 11 and 12 show the first bars of each piece.

\(^{50}\) Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.

Musical Example 11: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, mm. 1-5

![Musical Example 11](image)

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Musical Example 12: Prokofiev, *Piano Sonata No. 7*, first movement, mm. 1-10

![Musical Example 12](image)

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In the works of both composers, the accompaniment in faster-moving sections often consists of single notes or octaves (e.g., Prokofiev, *Piano Sonata No. 7*, first movement, mm. 28-69). As well, chords tend to function in a percussive role rather than to provide only harmonic background.

The slower-paced sections of their works share notable similarities in texture. Both the main theme of Zyman’s *Variations on an Original Theme* and the second theme in the exposition of Prokofiev’s *Piano Sonata No. 7* (Andantino) have three distinctive layers, each working in counterpoint and with an emphasis on contrary motion between the outer parts. Zyman uses more octaves and a substantially wider range than Prokofiev, but the triple layering is present in the works of both composers (Examples 13 and 14).
Musical Example 13: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 12-16

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This layering creates not only an effective contrast to the leaner textures in the faster sections, it also provides a different sense of rhythmic pacing. The distinct rhythmic patterns in each layer work together to create an active composite rhythm, though without one particular layer sounding like the primary rhythmic driving force. This texture gives the slower sections a sense of momentum without the aggressiveness of the faster sections.

Zyman noted that he was influenced by a particular textural effect employed by Prokofiev: the use of alternating hands when playing a figuration pattern.\textsuperscript{52} At the beginning of the third movement of his \textit{Piano Sonata No. 7}, Prokofiev writes chords in

\textsuperscript{52} Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.
the right hand and octaves in the left hand in a recurring two-measure rhythmic pattern (Example 15).

Musical Example 15: Prokofiev, *Piano Sonata No. 7*, third movement, mm. 1-8

For the first 25 bars of this movement, Prokofiev maintains this textural pattern in which both hands never play simultaneously. When the pattern is finally broken, he returns to a thin two-part texture similar to that of Musical Example 12. In parts of Zyman’s *Two Motions in One Movement*, there is a similar use of the division of hands (Example 16).
Zyman’s use of this texture is not as continuous as Prokofiev’s and occurs in smaller segments, though it is a prominent component of the outer fast sections of the piece. Such a texture also yields a percussive sound that Zyman favors. In Zyman’s piano works, texture appears to be the primary element that reveals a kinship between his music and that of Prokofiev’s.

C. Impressionistic elements

In his book *Impressionism in Music*, Christopher Palmer notes some of the features associated with the style of music so closely aligned to Debussy: the use of modes, whole-tone scales, parallel chords, and “tendencies towards a new vagueness and fluidity of expression.” All of these elements are present in parts of Zyman’s piano pieces. He confines the use of these elements to the slow sections of *Two Motions in One Movement* and *Variations on an Original Theme*.

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One of the salient impressionistic features in *Two Motions in One Movement* is the use of chordal planing. The B section of the piece starts at m. 62, with the tempo indication *tranquillo e rubato* (Example 17).

Musical Example 17:  Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, mm. 62-65

In the first two bars of this section, the right hand plays a recitative-like melody marked *legato espressivo*. A passage incorporating diatonic planing within an E Aeolian scale follows. Examples that feature this kind of texture are found in the works of composers associated with Impressionism. One of them occurs in Debussy’s *Sarabande* from the suite *Pour le Piano*. Example 18 demonstrates Debussy’s use of parallel descending chords, all within a C-sharp Aeolian/E Ionian scale.
Musical Example 18: Debussy, *Sarabande* from *Pour le Piano*, mm. 38-41

In Musical Examples 17 and 18, the inversions are not strictly maintained for all chords, though there is indication of parallel motion throughout each excerpt. With the diatonic planing, the use of upper register for both hands, and the downward direction of the line, the excerpt from Debussy’s *Pour le Piano* has a character similar to that of Zyman’s B section of *Two Motions in One Movement*.

Another example of diatonic planing that bears a resemblance to Zyman’s use of planing is found in the *Five Mystical Songs* of Ralph Vaughan Williams, a composer who studied with Ravel, another prominent composer associated with Impressionism. The second song of this cycle, “I Got Me Flowers,” shares a similar impressionistic texture (Example 19).
Musical Example 19: Vaughan Williams, “I Got Me Flowers” from *Five Mystical Songs*, mm. 18-25

As in the Zyman example, the parallel chords are limited to triads, and in the right hand all the sonorities are voiced in first or second inversion (from m. 20 to the downbeat of m. 23). While Zyman does not voice the left hand in mostly root-position sonorities as does Vaughan Williams, the effect of triads moving in parallel motion in both examples is similar. Confining the chords to a mode produces a sense of stability. However, the parallel motion results in a nonfunctional chord progression, creating a fluid, less goal-directed sense of harmonic motion. By shadowing the main line, the parallel chords also thicken the texture.
In *Variations on an Original Theme*, there are no sections of parallel triads or 7th chords, though impressionistic features are present in a different manner. Zyman occasionally creates impressionistic effects through the use of texture, along with ambiguous harmony and rhythm. In Variation II, Zyman presents a series of arpeggiated chords after the end of each main phrase. These chords are derived from whole-tone scales, which are often associated with impressionistic works such as Debussy’s prelude *Voiles*. The chords are written in a high register over a low sustained B-flat pedal in octaves (Example 20).

Musical Example 20: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 103-105

The combination of the sustained low notes, the placement of the rolled chords in the high register, and the harmonic ambiguity of the chords create an ethereal
atmosphere. Example 21 shows an excerpt from Debussy’s *Reflets dans L’Eau* that exhibits some features similar to Zyman’s example, notably the use of a wide range, sustained low notes, ambiguous harmonies, slow tempo, and arpeggations.

Musical Example 21: Debussy, *Reflets dans L’eau* from *Images* Book I, mm. 82-89

Throughout Variation IV, Zyman employs fluid rhythmic patterns and frequent cross rhythms within a slow tempo to create a vague sense of the beat (see Example 23 and 57). In addition to this rhythmic effect, Zyman spreads the textural layers over a wide range in parts of this variation. Such rhythmic ambiguity and textural writing contribute to the impressionistic sound world found in this piece.

Zyman’s use of modes may have been influenced by his familiarity with the piano music of Debussy and Ravel. He specifically cites Ravel’s use of modes in the *Sonatine* and *Tombeau de Couperin*.\(^\text{54}\) In the opening bars of the first movement of Ravel’s *Sonatine*, the theme begins in the F-sharp Aeolian mode, with the effect of the natural 7th

\(^{54}\) Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.
degree clearly audible. In the B section of Zyman’s *Two Motions in One Movement*, the first theme, which is set in the E Aeolian mode, produces a similar effect.

By comparison to composers such as Debussy and Ravel who are traditionally associated with Impressionism, Zyman uses impressionistic features less extensively. Passages with such features occur only occasionally within his music. Specific impressionistic elements such as parallel chords, textural and rhythmic ambiguity, and modes are used to delineate sections within his piano works. For example, impressionistic elements are the defining features of the first part of the B section in *Two Motions in One Movement*. In the second variation of *Variations on and Original Theme*, the arpeggiated chords derived from whole-tone scales serve to clearly separate the phrases. These impressionistic passages provide a striking contrast to the material that comes before and after.

D. The influence of improvisation and jazz

Throughout his youth, Zyman played piano in restaurants, often improvising and playing jazz music. Thus, it was natural that jazz elements would find their way into his compositional style. In discussions centered on the topic of jazz and how that style was incorporated in his compositions, Zyman briefly identified one chord — a dominant 7\textsuperscript{th} split-3\textsuperscript{rd} harmony or a dominant 7\textsuperscript{th} with a sharp 9\textsuperscript{th} — and several syncopated rhythmic patterns found in *Two Motions in One Movement*. Beyond these examples, he did not identify specific jazz techniques that might be found in his piano works.\footnote{Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.}
Jazz musician and educator Mark Gridley notes that an “abundance of syncopated patterns” is an essential element of jazz music.\textsuperscript{56} Frequent syncopation is one of the defining features in \textit{Two Motions in One Movement} and in the fast variations of \textit{Variations on an Original Theme}. The octatonic scale, also known as the “diminished scale,” is another element used often in jazz improvisation.\textsuperscript{57} In Examples 6 and 11, the music reflects a style that one might associate with a jazz pianist improvising — extensive syncopation, a single line focused on the octatonic scale, and accented chords that punctuate the rhythm of the melody. Example 8 illustrates some of these elements as they occur in the \textit{Variations}.

Another element frequently found in jazz music is the use of quartal harmonies. Paul Berliner, in his book \textit{Thinking in Jazz}, notes how jazz pianists often construct chords in fourths to create different colors.\textsuperscript{58} In mm. 23-24 of \textit{Two Motions in One Movement}, chords appear in fourths in the right hand, while the left hand plays open fifths. In his instructional publication \textit{The Jazz Piano Book}, Mark Levine notes that chords in fourths are common voicings in jazz. In particular, he describes how the famous jazz pianist McCoy Tyner sometimes voiced chords by striking an octave or open fifth, followed by


\textsuperscript{57} Mark Levine, \textit{The Jazz Piano Book} (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music Co., 1989), 76-81.

three-note chords in quartal voicing to fill out the harmony.\textsuperscript{59} In Example 22, Zyman’s voicings are similarly constructed.

Musical Example 22: Zyman, \textit{Two Motions in One Movement}, mm. 23-24

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{quartal_voicings.png}
\end{center}

Zyman did not cite particular jazz compositions that he could specifically relate to his piano music, though he did identify Oscar Peterson and Dave Brubeck as jazz pianists he admires.\textsuperscript{60} Through the use of syncopated rhythmic patterns, idiomatic chord voicings, harmonies, octatonic scale patterns, and musical gestures with an improvisatory character, the influence of jazz is prominent in Zyman’s piano music.

E. Synthesis

As seen in the previous examples, Zyman incorporates some of the elements of various important musical trends of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Example 23 demonstrates one of the ways in which a combination of influences is successfully synthesized in the context

\textsuperscript{59} Levine, 107.

\textsuperscript{60} Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.
of a singular musical passage: the use of octatonic segments with overlapping chromatic
segments and the use of harmonic tritones similar to that found in the music of Bartók;
the multi-layered texture typical of some of Prokofiev’s piano works; the use of fluid
rhythmic patterns associated with impressionistic style; and melodies with an
improvisatory quality that are characteristic of jazz.

Musical Example 23: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 284-285
Zyman may not have consciously incorporated the specific theoretical techniques outlined above. However, his familiarity with the diverse sounds and styles of 20th-century music led him to combine these varied elements into a coherent musical passage. The excerpt above exemplifies the characteristic traits that define Zyman’s distinctive musical voice.
CHAPTER V:
MUSICAL ANALYSIS

A. Two Motions in One Movement

According to a review of Two Motions in One Movement that appears on Indiana University’s website, this piece “has a ternary form (a slow section is framed by two fast ones that share the same material), the harmony is primarily modal and the work has mixed influences: one can hear some references to jazz and Latin music and the central section is reminiscent of Debussy.” Zyman considers the “two motions” to represent the fast and the slow sections of the piece.

The piece is in ABA´ form and may be diagrammed as follows (Table 1):

Table 1: Zyman, Two Motions in One Movement, Outline of Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A´</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm.</td>
<td>Fast tempo</td>
<td>Slow tempo</td>
<td>Abbreviated version of Section A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-61</td>
<td>Extensive syncopation</td>
<td>Recitative and parallel chords in the first part; hemiola rhythms in the second part</td>
<td>Harmonically unstable though it concludes with A as a the tonal center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harmonically unstable</td>
<td>Modal in the first part; more chromatic in the second part</td>
<td>mm. 105-140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 62-104</td>
<td>mm. 62-104</td>
<td>mm. 105-140</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


62 Interview with Zyman, December 30, 2012.
The outer sections are marked by constant rhythmic energy and drive, while the slower middle section provides contrast with its reflective mood, more consonant harmony, and impressionistic character. Even though there are references to A as a tonal center, traditional harmonic progressions do not occur. Some passages in the outer sections are based on the octatonic scale, while parts of the B section are clearly modal. With few exceptions, the texture is lean throughout, often with two individual lines and occasional punctuating chords.

Table 2 outlines the form of the opening A section:

Table 2: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, Outline of Section A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introductory figure</th>
<th>mm. 1-2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>mm. 3-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory figure</td>
<td>mm. 25-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>mm. 28-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory figure</td>
<td>mm. 45-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding section (derived from a)</td>
<td>mm. 48-61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Zyman starts with an introductory figure that includes a short opening flourish followed by material based on a motive consisting of a descending half step and downward leap, along with an arpeggiated diminished-seventh chord (Example 24).

Musical Example 24: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, mm. 1-2

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The syncopation in this opening figure sets up the rhythmic style of the piece, and the diminished-seventh chords introduce the flavor of the octatonic scale. This figure is the only one in the piece that is played with both hands in unison one octave apart. The fanfare-like opening, along with the unison texture, gives this figure a declamatory character. Zyman uses it here and in other places to delineate the beginnings and endings of subsections.

The first subsection, *a* (mm. 1-27), is largely based on three motives. Occurring in the first half of many measures, motive *x* is characterized by syncopated rhythms in both hands, with accented octaves or open fifths in the bass and the right hand answering in a higher register. While all the intervals in the two-note groupings in the right hand are
minor thirds in the following example, these groupings are not confined to this interval within subsection a (Example 25).

Musical Example 25: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, mm. 3-4

Motive y, presented in mm. 5-6, includes rhythmic syncopations similar to those of motive x. However, certain characteristics differentiate it from motive x. In motive y, the hands play together, and there is an eighth-rest on the second beat. Both of these features emphasize the syncopations and increase the rhythmic tension. The right hand plays a repeated chromatic segment. After m. 5, in every statement of this motive, the left hand consists of harmonic major sixths, such as those found in m. 6 (Example 26).
To complement motives \(x\) and \(y\) in mm. 8-9, Zyman introduces motive \(z\), a rhythmic pattern in the left hand that consists of an eighth rest on the third beat followed by three staccato eighth notes. This motive always follows motive \(x\). It provides a more stable rhythmic foundation over which faster rhythms occur in the right hand, as well as a sense of drive toward the downbeat. This motive appears in either steps or thirds (Example 27).

Musical Example 27: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, mm. 8-9
Almost all the material found in subsection a is built from these three motives. A sweeping sense of momentum combined with an unrelenting nervous energy is achieved through almost continuous sixteenth-note motion in this subsection. Beginning in m. 8, Zyman gradually moves toward the higher register, building tension and leading to a climax in m. 23 (Example 28).

Musical Example 28: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, m. 23

![Musical Example 28](image)

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Much of the pitch material in motive x is derived from an octatonic scale, which destabilizes the sense of tonal center in this subsection. There are some elements that point to A as the tonal center. Motive z emphasizes notes derived from the A minor scale, focusing on patterns belonging to the tonic and dominant chords (see Example 27). At the climax in m. 23, the note A is reinforced on the downbeat with the accented open-fifth chord on A in the low register, along with a quartal chord built on A in the high register. In the left hand there is a series of diatonic open-fifth chords moving from A to E, outlining tonic to dominant (see Example 28). However, throughout this subsection, the extensive chromaticism in the right-hand melodic lines obscures the tonal center.
In m. 26, the introductory figure returns suddenly, but this time an octave higher than previously heard. It is extended and concludes with descending accented triplets that stop on a *sforzando* octave E in the left hand on the downbeat of m. 28. This point marks the beginning of a new subsection, *b*.

A freer development of earlier ideas, with more angular melodies and rhythms that are not as intensely syncopated as before, characterize subsection *b*. It consists primarily of three ideas: (1) the sixteenth-note motives that derive their contour and rhythm from the opening flourish in m. 1 (Example 29, mm. 30-32); (2) the syncopated eighth-note motive that accompanies a sustained tone in the melody (m. 29); and (3) the rhythmic figure of a sixteenth rest followed by sixteenth note and eighth note, which creates a call-and-response effect (mm. 30-31).

Musical Example 29: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, mm. 28-32
The tonality in this subsection remains unstable. There is no emphasis on A, although there are some suggestions of greater weight on E, its dominant. Subsection b opens with a low octave on E in m. 28 and ends on a low octave G sharp on the downbeat of m. 45. The melody first comes to rest on G sharp in m. 29. Even though there are no traditional chords in this subsection, E is more prominent in the bass in some places. While up to this point the allusions to a tonal center are subtle, these hints toward a sense of tonic and dominant help to reference A as a tonal center. This note does become the clear tonal center at the end of the first main section, as well as at the end of the piece.

The introductory figure returns again in m. 45, now two octaves higher than at the beginning of the piece. Like in m. 27, it concludes with accented triplets descending, but this time cadences unexpectedly in m. 48 to repeated open-fifth chords in half notes (Example 30).
These chords abruptly halt the momentum and provide a striking contrast to the rhythmic and harmonic tension up to this point. They give clear reference to A as the tonal center and signal the beginning of the concluding subsection. Two bars of half-note chords alternate with two bars of material either closely derived from or taken exactly from subsection a, with a sudden change in dynamics, figuration, and rhythmic activity (Example 31).
In m. 61-62, the last time that the half note chords are heard, there is a *ritardando* that segues into the new tempo and completes the transition to the B section.

In contrast to the agitated A section, the B section, marked *Tranquilo e rubato*, has a reflective character. Throughout this section there is a sense of rhythmic freedom,
with many indications of *ritardando* and *rubato*. The outline of the B section is illustrated in Table 3:

Table 3: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, Outline of Section B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1 (mm. 62-78)</th>
<th>Part 2 (mm. 79-104)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Recitative melody, followed by parallel chords</td>
<td>• Melody derived from Introductory Figure, hemiola rhythms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opens in A Dorian, settles into E Aeolian</td>
<td>• More chromatic and harmonically unstable, tonal center drifts to B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first part of the B section (mm. 62-78) consists of two distinct ideas: a recitative-like melody over a sustained octave and a series of descending parallel chords in response (Example 32).

Musical Example 32: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, mm. 62-65
A distinctly modal flavor is found throughout this opening part. From the preceding open-fifth chords, A continues as the tonal center in mm. 62-63. The consistent use of F sharps projects the Dorian mode. However, the tonic drifts towards E in the next several bars and is confirmed with the cadence in m. 68. At this point, the tonality settles into E Aeolian as the recitative and the parallel chords alternate.

Beginning in m. 75, Zyman develops the parallel-chord passages. The textural accompanying parts no longer move in parallel motion with the melody. The melody remains close to that of the initial statement in mm. 64-65, though Zyman uses F natural now, giving the harmony a Phrygian inflection. In mm. 77-78, a second statement of the melodic idea, now at higher pitch level and in octaves, leads to a melodic cadence on B, which concludes the first part of the B section.

The second part of the B section (mm. 79-109) is more chromatic and rhythmically active. The melodic material is largely derived from the opening flourish motive in m. 1, although the slow tempo conveys a more relaxed character. The accompaniment alternates between a softly pulsating syncopated figure mainly in seconds in the middle to high register and figures of sixteenth notes that involve hemiola rhythms and outline broken chords.

This second part opens with impressionistic effects. In the first two bars there is a running scale with an improvisatory feel that stops on a half-note trill followed by another running scale leading to the main thematic material. These figures, along with the gentle syncopations in the left hand and the higher register, give these opening
measures a sense of rhythmic fluidity that de-emphasizes a clear sense of beat. The seconds in the accompaniment serve to blur the harmony as well (Example 33).

Musical Example 33: Zyman, Two Motions in One Movement, mm. 79-82

In m. 85, the music becomes more restless with hemiola figures in both hands. This part builds to a high point at m. 88 followed by a cadence on B in m. 89, where the more placid feeling returns with the pulsating seconds in the left hand. The hemiola figures start up again in m. 95, and then the pace quickens in m. 99 with a più mosso e rubato tempo indication and a più f dynamic marking (Example 34).
Musical Example 34: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, m. 99

![Musical Example 34](image)

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The character of the music becomes agitated with frequent accents in both hands, and the dynamic level rises to *ff* at the climax of the B section at m. 101 (*quasi maestoso e rubato*). The low B octave in the deep bass register is answered by the thematic material from m. 81, played in both hands two octaves apart (Example 35).

Musical Example 35: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, mm. 101-102

![Musical Example 35](image)

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In this second part of the B section, the harmony becomes more unstable with the chromaticism of the arpeggiated hemiola figures in m. 85, though the tonal center settles toward B in m. 89 when the calmer texture returns. This note is emphasized in the right hand, and the accompanimental figures which were previously based in E are transposed down a fourth to reflect this shift toward B (Example 36).

Musical Example 36: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, mm. 89-90

The unstable harmony returns in m. 95, though B is confirmed as the goal at the climax, where it is both the lowest note and the opening note of the motive in the upper parts (see Example 35). Thus, throughout the B section, the tonal center has slowly shifted up by perfect 5ths, from A to E to B. The last four bars of the B section present three statements of the main thematic idea, retaining the texture and force of the climax.

The A’ section (mm. 105-140) begins abruptly with a sudden *sforzando* chord that marks the return of the opening fast tempo. It is followed by music of a restless character derived from subsection *b* of the first A section (Example 37).
Musical Example 37: Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement*, mm. 105-107

After only five bars of material derived from subsection b, the introductory figure returns, two octaves higher than in the opening of the piece, and this time extended to five bars (mm. 110-114). A literal recapitulation of subsection a is presented in mm. 115-136. Subsection b does not return after this point. After one final statement of the introductory figure at m. 137, the piece ends suddenly with an accented octave on the lowest A in the left hand, confirming this note as the piece’s primary tonal center.
B. Variations on an Original Theme

This work consists of a theme with a somber character, followed by four variations that feature contrasting moods and tempos, as well as challenging pianistic passages. There is a literal restatement of the theme after the last variation. Some prominent characteristics of this piece are contrapuntal passages, cross rhythms, and the extensive use of harmonic tritones and octatonic scales. With a few notable exceptions, the harmony is not functional in the traditional sense. An outline of the piece follows (Table 4):

Table 4: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (mm. 1-26)</th>
<th>Largo espressivo e rubato in 4/4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A – A’ – Coda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation 1 (mm. 27-94)</td>
<td>Allegro molto agitato in 12/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation 2 (mm. 95-141)</td>
<td>Tranquillo. Rubato e molto espressivo in 2/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation 3 (mm. 142-277)</td>
<td>Allegro molto in 6/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation 4 (mm. 278-304)</td>
<td>Adagio con espressione in 4/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme restated (mm. 305-330)</td>
<td>Largo espressivo e rubato in 4/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme

The theme is in AA’ form with a coda. The extensive chromaticism, slow tempo, and low register of the opening contribute to its dark, serious mood. The first four notes of the melody provide the motive whose contour (a descending half step followed by a descending skip and an ascending step) will be the focus of development throughout the piece. In the first four bars, harmonic tritones support this opening thematic idea (Example 38).

Musical Example 38: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 1-4

While the main melody is not confined to an octatonic scale, it includes segments of four notes that belong to this scale. These segments hint at the more extensive use of octatonic scales later in the theme and in the variations.

Rhythmically, Zyman starts with longer note values in the accompaniment. As the theme unfolds, the note values become shorter and shorter, giving a sense of
continually increasing rhythmic momentum. After the opening half-note chords, he moves to quarter-note triplets in m. 4, to eighth-note triplets in m. 5, to sixteenth notes in m. 7, and finally to sixteenth-note triplets in m. 8. To further heighten the rhythmic tension, Zyman introduces 4:3 cross rhythms in m. 7.

In addition to this buildup of rhythmic activity, Zyman quickly expands the range to a high point in m. 7. Here, he develops some of the ideas presented in the first bars. There is a transformation of the opening motive that begins a rapid descent in register. The middle layer of the texture includes harmonic tritones, while in the left hand, a full octatonic scale is presented (Example 39).

Musical Example 39: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, m. 7

As the main line descends, it is primarily chromatic, though there are also short segments which fit an octatonic scale. The momentum of the descending figure in the right hand is stopped in m. 9 with the *ritardando* and the punctuation in the low register of three
accented notes marked \textit{ff}. Here there is a cadence marked by a quarter rest, bringing the opening section of the theme to a close (Example 40).

Musical Example 40: Zyman, \textit{Variations on an Original Theme}, mm. 8-9

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example40.png}
\caption{Zyman, \textit{Variations on an Original Theme}, mm. 8-9}
\end{figure}

After the quarter rest in m. 9, the first tempo returns, with a sudden change to a \textit{p} dynamic level and a sudden move to a higher register. The right hand ascends and includes motivic material from before, while the left hand plays descending harmonic tritones. These bars set up the modified statement (A´) of the opening section (Example 41).

Musical Example 41: Zyman, \textit{Variations on an Original Theme}, mm. 10-11

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example41.png}
\caption{Zyman, \textit{Variations on an Original Theme}, mm. 10-11}
\end{figure}
The second part of the theme (A’) is a free recapitulation of the first part. Now the outer parts are in octaves placed in the extreme high and low registers. In between lies a more distinct third layer, which includes harmonic tritones throughout. The main melodic and rhythmic motives from mm. 1-9 serve as a foundation for the material in this part (Example 42).

Musical Example 42: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 12-14

At m. 18, there is another rapidly descending scalar passage, much like the one in m. 8. This time it is longer and incorporates a more extensive octatonic segment that includes the complete scale. After the punctuating three-note figure that marks the cadence, the left hand plays a recitative-like passage marked *liberamente* (Example 43).
Musical Example 43: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 19-20

This recitative-like passage serves as a link to the coda (mm. 21-26). The note D is reinforced several times and functions as the dominant, preparing the arrival of G as tonic at m. 21. This measure marks the first time a clear tonal center emerges. Zyman presents the opening motive in the left hand, now transformed into a diatonic context. While he omits the third degree of the scale, making it unclear whether the mode is major or minor, the tonal center on G is clearly heard through the use of open fifths built on the tonic note. The rhythmic activity slows down to mainly half notes and whole notes, giving a calmer feel to this concluding part of theme. The theme closes with a plagal cadence in mm. 24-25 (Example 44).
Musical Example 44: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 21-26

Variation I

Like the other variations, Variation I does not closely follow the exact form of the theme. Rather, it draws upon distinct elements of the theme and makes them the focus of development. An outline of the structure of Variation I follows (Table 5):
Table 5: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, Variation I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Development of ( a ) and ( b )</th>
<th>Chromatic lines and further development of ( a ) and ( b )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( a )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-part counterpoint</td>
<td>3-layer texture</td>
<td>Thicker texture and hemiola rhythms</td>
<td>Primarily 2-part texture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 27-34</td>
<td>mm. 35-42</td>
<td>mm. 43-61</td>
<td>mm. 61-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( b )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melodic material derived from contour of opening motivic idea</td>
<td>Harmonic tritones in counterpoint</td>
<td>Opening motivic idea and harmonic tritones</td>
<td>Chromatic lines; opening motivic idea and harmonic tritones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marked *allegro molto agitato* and in 12/8 meter, Variation I opens with a single line in the low register. The melody begins with a similar contour to that of the opening motive of the theme, but departs quickly from the original melody. It includes a hemiola rhythm that is an important element in this variation (Example 45).
Musical Example 45: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 27-29

Var. I

\[ \text{Allegro molto agitato} \quad \frac{4}{4} = 138 \]

\[ \text{opening motive, transformed} \]

The opening part of this variation (a), mm. 27-34, features counterpoint in two voices, with primarily stepwise motion within the octatonic scale. The *accelerando* marking in mm. 33-34, along with a dramatic ascent, sets up the syncopated second part (b), marked *piu mosso*. Rhythmic drive and energy prevail in this section, which is characterized by a thicker texture in three layers. The outer parts play tritones in contrary motion, alternating with a figure that includes a tritone in the middle register. Hemiola rhythms are prominent throughout this section (Example 46).

Musical Example 46: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 36-38
In m. 42, the repeated rhythmic pattern of the previous seven bars is broken by the last three chords that ascend chromatically in the right hand and descend in the left hand. The contrary motion in the outer voices leads to a climax in m. 43 with a *sforzando* chord on the downbeat of the bar, marking the beginning of a new part.

The next part (mm. 43-61) features a development of material from the *a* and *b* parts. After a sudden contraction from an extremely wide range on the keyboard to a narrow focus at its center, the music continues in a thinner two-voice texture. The first four measures develop the motives in the opening part (*a*). In the second halves of the bars starting in m. 47, hemiola rhythms return with a new motive, while the left hand accompanies with accented sets of descending tritones. The hemiola rhythm is derived from the second part of this variation (*b*). The tritones move within an octatonic scale, clearly projecting the sound of this scale (Example 47).

Musical Example 47: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 48-50

At m. 51, octaves in the low register punctuate the downbeats and expand the range. The hemiola motive is repeated for several bars and restated each time at a higher pitch level,
leading to a climax in m. 55 before there is again a sudden shift to a narrower range. The thin contrapuntal texture returns, this time in a slightly higher register.

In m. 61, Zyman introduces a new melodic idea that highlights the chromatic scale (Example 48).

Musical Example 48: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 61-64

In mm. 61-77, stepwise motion in the melody and contrary motion between the hands prevail, with accompanying tritones. Occasionally, motives from the previous parts briefly return. At m. 75, the climax of this variation arrives with *sforzando* octaves. In m. 77, descending lines confined to an octatonic scale move towards the low register. From mm. 81-86, the left hand plays accented notes on the beat while the right hand plays the opening thematic idea of this variation. Even though the melodic idea is syncopated, the figure in the left hand clearly projects the 12/8 meter consistently for the first time in this variation (Example 49).
In m. 87, the rhythm slows down to dotted half-notes and dotted whole-notes. This relaxation of the rhythmic pace recalls the calmer rhythmic character of the last bars of the theme (mm. 21-26). The variation concludes with a low octave on D, which is sustained into the beginning of Variation II.

Variation II

Variation II is in a slow 2/2 meter. Marked *tranquillo, rubato e molto espressivo*, its noble character provides a clear contrast to both the Theme and Variation I. The rhythm in this variation is slow and steady, with none of the faster syncopations of the previous variation. Like the rhythm, the harmony and sense of tonal center is more stable in this variation, opening in B flat and moving to E flat at the end. The form is clear, with three well-defined phrases. After each cadence, Zyman uses a series of arpeggiated, harmonically ambiguous chords in the high register to create an atmospheric effect. In its texture and overall stability, this variation is derived from the theme’s coda.
In the opening measures, there is a steady B-flat pedal point in the highest voice. The melody and harmony in the first phrase remain exclusively within a B-flat major scale, and the phrase concludes with a V-I cadence. After this cadence, the high-register chords enter. They are derived mainly from whole-tone scales and destabilize the harmony. These chords create a dreamy, floating sense between the majestic, stable, chorale-like phrases (Example 50).

Musical Example 50: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 100-105

The second phrase presents the same melody as the first, though the octaves in the bass line enter earlier. There is one extra measure of chords after the cadence. Throughout these first two phrases, the dynamics remain piano, contributing to the calm mood.

In contrast to these opening phrases, the third phrase begins loudly, marked *ff sonoro e subito*, with both hands playing the same harmonic intervals an octave apart in an accented, percussive manner. The melody and harmony are more chromatic, and the tonal center becomes less clear. At m. 121, a low B octave thickens the texture. An open fifth on B flat returns in m. 124, though after the unstable chords that preceded it, B flat
no longer sounds like the tonic. In the next two bars, its new function as dominant becomes clear. As the phrase continues, a pedal point on E flat from m. 126 until the end of the variation establishes this note as the new tonal center. The fortissimo dynamic level remains until the decrescendo that leads to the melodic cadence in m. 132. There is a hint of a Phrygian inflection with the F flats in mm. 127-128 and 131 (Example 51).

Musical Example 51: Zyman, Variations on an Original Theme, mm. 126-129

Following this phrase, the tritone-based chords are heard for the last time, before the variation concludes quietly with repeated low E-flat octaves in mm. 140-141.

Variation III

Set in a fast 6/8 meter, Variation III has an agitated character and is similar in style and content to Variation I. Some of the material, such as hemiola and harmonic tritones, is derived from the material of Variation I, though there are some new rhythmic motives that define this variation. The syncopation of the opening motive of Variation
III, although accented, does not disturb the listener’s awareness of the pulse. There is a sense of continual development of the main ideas throughout.

This variation starts with a single-line melody, similar to the beginning of Variation I. The contour of the theme’s opening motive serves as the foundation of this melody. New rhythmic motives involving sixteenth notes enter in the third bar. As in Variation I, the second voice enters in a contrapuntal manner a few bars after the first. This second voice involves scalar passages belonging to an octatonic scale (Example 52).

Musical Example 52: Zyman, Variations on an Original Theme, mm. 142-145

In mm. 148-149, there are figures with harmonic tritones, hemiola rhythms, and contrary motion that are similar in character to figures from Variation I (Example 53).
Zyman occasionally interjects these motives into the material of Example 52. From the opening to m. 175, there is a constant rise and fall in register. In these bars, there are also crescendos followed by a subito p. At m. 176, a climax is reached, with octaves in counterpoint and in syncopated rhythms moving from the outer reaches of the keyboard in contrary motion (Example 54).

Musical Example 54: Zyman, Variations on an Original Theme, mm. 176-179
The rhythmic motive in the first two bars in the upper part becomes a focus of development in the next 20 measures. Then, there is a long buildup to another climax. In this passage, Zyman incorporates motives involving sixteenth notes, along with syncopated figures derived from mm. 176-179. The texture is mainly in two parts, though it builds to three layers as the range expands greatly. From m. 202 to m. 210, harmonic tritones form the middle layer, as they do in Variation I, while the upper part plays syncopated rhythms in octaves (Example 55).

Musical Example 55: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 201-210

The *sf**orzando* chord that marks the climax in m. 210 is followed by a new element, a series of repeated percussive staccato chords. After four bars of these chords, Zyman presents a varied repetition of the buildup in mm. 197-210, again consisting of the
various rhythmic motives heard earlier in the variation. After another climactic point, the repeated percussive chords return, though now this idea starts one half step lower than in m. 210 and is expanded to eleven bars.

After this second statement of percussive chords, Zyman combines motives from the first part of this variation. After a rest in m. 250 that interrupts the momentum, the material from mm. 142-160 is repeated almost literally. Bars of rest in mm. 253 and 256 break up this material and create a sense of fragmentation (Example 56).

Musical Example 56: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 250-260

Following this fragmentation, the main line comes to rest on a sustained D. After several bars of rhythmically staggered motives in the left hand that echo the sense of
fragmentation in mm. 250-257, the variation closes quietly with repeated octave D’s on the downbeats of the last three bars.

Variation IV

Marked *adagio con espressione*, Variation IV continues the pattern of alternating slower and faster variations. This variation has a clearly defined form of ABA. With only a few exceptions, there are sixteenth-notes triplets running continuously in some layer of the texture. Even though the tempo is slow, this rhythmic pattern provides a sense of flow and forward motion. The pattern is one of the defining characteristics of this variation and is derived from the rapid descending scalar passages and recitative in the theme. These triplets are sometimes played against straight sixteenth notes, creating a floating, ambiguous rhythmic feel in some places, which contributes to its impressionistic character.

In the A section of this variation, the melody starts in the left hand. Out of all the variations, here the melody most closely resembles the melody and rhythm of the theme, as it uses the motives from mm. 1, 3, and 4 of the theme (Example 57).
Three bars later, the melody shifts to the right hand and presents in octaves a variation of the introductory thematic idea at a different pitch level (mm. 281-283). It concludes with the quarter-note triplet figure from m. 4 of the theme, though now it sounds like the end of a phrase. The *ritardando*, along with the pattern in the accompaniment, create a sense of a cadence on E major (Example 58).
Musical Example 58: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, m. 283

The B section begins in m. 284 and is defined by the use of three layers, expanded range, and four-versus-six cross rhythms. The lowest layer consists primarily of sustained notes in the low register. The middle layer provides the patterns that create the cross rhythms with the top line and focuses on harmonic tritones, which have been important elements throughout the piece. The top layer takes the melody, which covers a wide range (Example 59).
Several bars later, the melody reaches the highest note of the keyboard. Motives from the A section of this variation combine with transformed motives of the theme and octatonic segments to make up the material in the B section. In this section, the texture, range, and rhythmic intensity build to a climax in m. 292. A feature of the B section is the use of octave figures with repeated notes, which have an insistent quality that projects a more powerful character than does the material in the A section (Example 60).
Musical Example 60: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, m. 292

A declamatory version of the motive in m. 3 of the theme is presented in octaves in m. 294, followed by the quarter-note triplet figure from m. 4. This triplet figure marks the end of the B section, just as it marked the end of the A section. The cadence on E flat and the Phrygian inflection (spelled E instead of F flat) recall the last phrase of Variation II.

Musical Example 61: Zyman, *Variations on an Original Theme*, mm. 294-295
The A section returns in m. 297 without modification, except for a repetition of the final bar one octave higher with a change of one note. The marking *meno mosso*, a *ritardando*, and a fermata bring this variation to a close. The slowing of the rhythmic pace and the soft dynamic set up a return of the theme.

Like Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* and Rzewski’s *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*, the piece ends with a literal restatement of the theme. It serves as a frame for the structure of the work. This repetition recapitulates the elements that became the basis for the variations and provides for a conclusion that is calm and resolved.
CHAPTER VI:
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

With the vast diversity of styles in the modern musical world, forging a convincing musical language is a challenge for contemporary composers. Samuel Zyman has developed a style that represents a musical voice that draws upon a wide range of traditions of western music. Into his own style he has assimilated a diverse set of elements, ranging from the musical styles of acknowledged 20th-century masters like Bartók and Prokofiev, to the stylistic trends of Impressionism and jazz. His use of these elements is not merely a replication of the work of other composers or of academic and historical practices, but rather is an integration of these sounds into a new voice that reflects contemporary musical culture. The ability to create such a voice reveals a composer who understands both the contemporary musical world and the traditions from which it developed.

Zyman’s musical experiences in his formative years provided him with a foundation in standard classical piano repertoire and technique. As he advanced in his classical studies, performing music such as Debussy’s *Reflets dans L’Eau* familiarized him with impressionistic styles. His acquaintance with and study of Ravel’s piano music further brought the sounds of Impressionism into his musical consciousness. By this time, Zyman also had extensive experience performing jazz. His strong interest in this music led him to merge these two seemingly disparate influences into his compositional voice. This interest, along with his ability to improvise, may have helped him to blend these influences in a convincing manner. While the influence of jazz is clearly evident in
the rhythmic style and improvisatory character of Zyman’s music, his ability to weave this element into the musical fabric of a classical idiom in which every note and rhythm is written out is noteworthy.

With his move to New York City and studies at Juilliard, Zyman’s musical horizons expanded through intense study of 20th-century repertoire and exposure to a wide range of musical styles that he gained through frequent attendance at concerts and interaction with world-class musicians. His academic studies and direct contact with important living American composers broadened his perspective on contemporary compositional trends. These experiences led him to incorporate specific elements, such as those found in Bartók’s and Prokofiev’s music, into his compositions. His last two piano works, *Two Motions in One Movement* and *Variations on an Original Theme*, draw upon these modern influences in addition to Impressionism and jazz, and reflect a cosmopolitan style. In her book *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, Yolanda Moreno Rivas quotes Zyman regarding his approach to compositional style:

> I do not want to declare myself against a particular style or tendency. Modern composers have the right to be as academic as they want. In my case, I want the music to provoke emotions, evoke images, and stay in the memory.63

Working in an important center in the international music scene, he is well aware of the stylistic trends that are considered within the mainstream of 21st-century classical music and how a contemporary composer must discover a unique voice within that context.64

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64 Siegel, 35-36.
The two piano works analyzed in this document include the general features of Zyman’s compositional style: the use of harmonic tritones, octatonic scales, energetic sections with rhythmic drive that are contrasted with lyrical passages of impressionistic qualities, incorporation of jazz voicings and rhythms, and thin textures that alternate with the use of a wide range of the keyboard in multi-layered textures. His music is clearly recognizable by the combination of these elements. These elements lend his piano pieces a contemporary sound, but one that is accessible and appreciated by both trained musicians and general audiences.

As a representative of his native Mexico, Samuel Zyman has gained widespread recognition as one of the leading 21st-century composers of his country. However, his influence as a composer and teacher extends to the international level. With his prestigious teaching position, the commissions he has received from notable world-class artists and ensembles, and his published work by Theodore Presser, he has earned recognition as a musician on the international stage. His music has gained the interest of professional musicians, scholars, and general audiences alike, and the performances of his works at notable concert venues reflect his significance as a modern composer of our time.

The piano works of Samuel Zyman, *Two Motions in One Movement* and *Variations on an Original Theme*, are a noteworthy contribution to contemporary piano repertoire. The fusion of diverse modern compositional techniques into a distinct personal style and accessible contemporary idiom has attracted professional pianists to include these pieces in their repertoire. They involve challenging pianistic passages that
are appropriate for the concert stage, though the overall technical demands of the works are within the reach of aspiring professional pianists. Through this study, I hope to bring them to the attention of more pianists, particularly those interested in expanding their modern repertory.
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**TWO MOTIONS IN ONE MOVEMENT**

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Scores


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