

Form & Flux

for solo 'cello & electronics

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'Form & Flux' takes the form of a set of five variations on a theme.

Each successive variation displays an increasing degree of abstraction; the performer is encouraged to mould, from this abstraction, the specific details of the performance.

Theme:

The opening statement of the piece and the point from which the process of abstraction begins. In the absence of barlines to mark a regular pulse, it might be assumed that a certain rhythmic freedom is offered. The Cmaj7 chord in line four is to be bowed rapidly back and forth across the bridge.

Variation I:

The pitch material from the theme is presented stripped of its rhythmic and expressive indications. The performer is invited to supply the rhythmic and expressive input. One valid way of performing this variation would, of course, be to replicate exactly the performance of the theme. However, the performer is invited to make new choices, to explore different expressive possibilities within the notes.

Variation II:

Having been stripped of ancillary information in the first variation, the pitch material of the theme is now fragmented into a series of short phrases. The black noteheads represent short note values, the white noteheads longer ones, although the precise durations of all the notes is left to the performer. The unmarked gaps between the phrases may be taken to indicate pauses, of greater or lesser duration. This choice is also left to the performer.

Variation III:

The short phrases from variation II are now subject to a twofold process of shuffling. Firstly, they are presented to the performer as isolated cells scattered at random across the page. A further degree of shuffling is provided by the player, who is invited to construct the variation from these cells by combining them at random. Any cell may be played in any order, may be repeated at any stage and may be played in isolation or linked to other cells. The choice of note values is, once again, at the discretion of the player.

Variation IV:

The pitches which feature in cells with only one note in variation III provide the material for this variation. They are presented as a row of natural and artificial harmonics which the performer is asked to combine electronically. A loop of around 15 to 20 seconds is set up on a sampler, which is then set to overdub. The harmonics are played, in order, into this loop in such a way that they combine in increasing harmonic depth as the variation progresses. This process should not be hurried; allow time for the interactions to grow. The loop should be allowed to fade to silence before moving onto the next variation.

Variation V:

A sequence of six chords, built from pitches indicated in variation V, is played in rapid arpeggiation. The manner in which they are to be played is indicated for the first chord. This sequence of chords is to be sampled, looped and set playing. Against this backdrop the performer is invited to improvise a melodic line in C minor, which may include all, some or none of the cells offered on the page below the chords. If wished, segments of the improvised melody may be overdubbed onto the loop which should, once again, be allowed to fade to silence after an appropriate period. The piece ends with a recapitulation of the theme. What have we learned about this theme, having heard it pulled apart and rebuilt?

Form & Flux

Theme

Richard Harding

Grave **poco rit.**

pp \longleftarrow *mf* \longrightarrow *mp* \longrightarrow *p* *espress.* \longleftarrow *mf* \longrightarrow *pp*

A tempo

mf *espress.* \longleftarrow *f* \longrightarrow *mp* \longleftarrow *f* \longrightarrow

Più mosso

mf *pp* (echo) *f* *molto espress.* *pp* (echo)

Tempo primo

mp \longrightarrow *p* *ppp* *mp* *mf*

sul pont. *pizz.* *arco*

Più mosso

f *non dim.* *pp* (hesitant) \longleftarrow *mp* *espress.* *cresc....*

rit. **rall.**

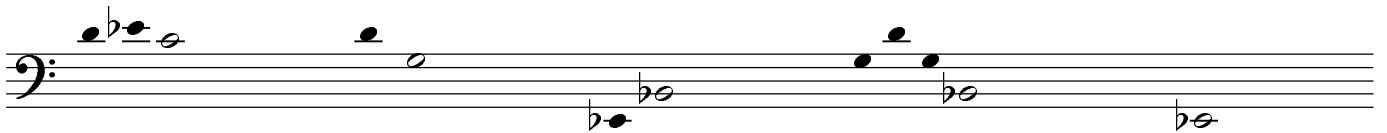
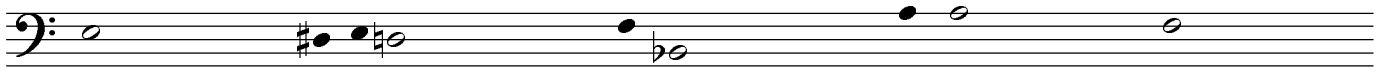
f \longrightarrow *mp* \longrightarrow *pp*

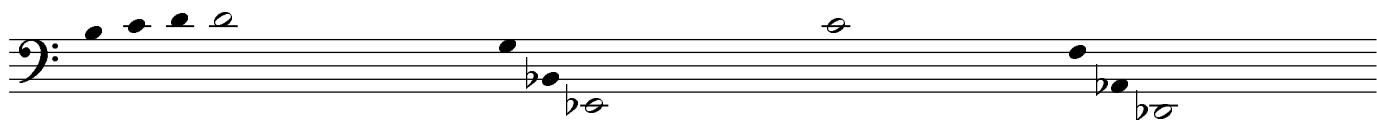
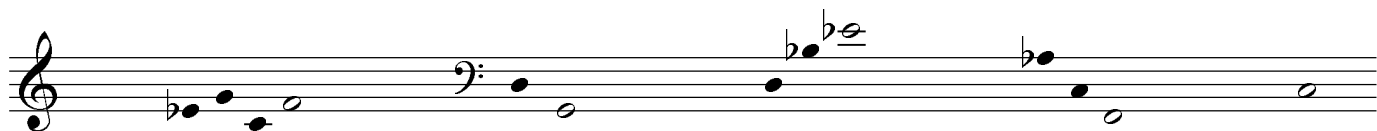
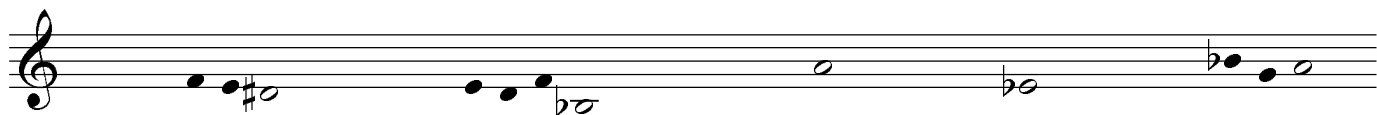
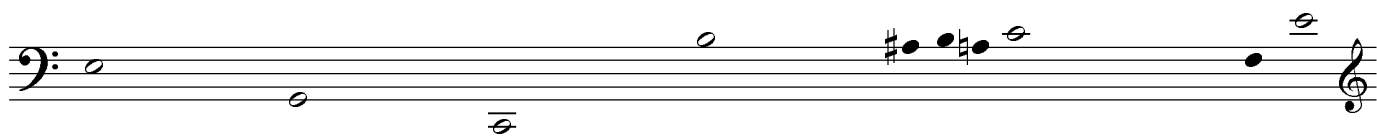
Tempo primo

p *ppp* *pppp*

pizz. *arco*

Variation II





Variation III

Musical score for Variation III, page 8. The score consists of ten staves of music in bass clef, with some staves containing treble clef notation. The music features various rhythmic patterns and accidentals, including a trill marked 'III' in the seventh staff.

Variation IV

IV
IV
(ϕ)

ppp sempre

($b\phi$)
IV

(ϕ)
IV
I

(ϕ)
II

(ϕ)
(ϕ)
(ϕ)

(ϕ)
(ϕ)
(ϕ)
(ϕ)

($b\phi$)
($b\phi$)
($b\phi$)

III
(ϕ)
($b\phi$)
(ϕ)

Variation V

sul pont.

mp

Sim...

Grave **poco rit.**

pp mf mp p *espress.* mf pp

A tempo

mf espress. f mp f

Più mosso

mf pp (echo) f molto *espress.* pp (echo)

Tempo primo

3 mp p ppp *sul pont.* mp *pizz.* mf *arco*

Più mosso

f *non dim.* pp (hesitant) mp *espress.* *cresc....*

rit. **rall.**

f mp pp

Tempo primo

p ppp $pppp$ *arco* III