JAN RADZYNISKI'S CANTO (1981): AN INTRODUCTORY VIEW OF ITS GENRE, STYLE, AND FORM, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR PERFORMANCE

D.M.A Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree of Doctor of Music Arts in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

by

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2012

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ABSTRACT

_Canto_ (1981) is the first composition written for piano by Jan Radzynski (b.1950). This instrument is clearly important to this composer's output; and in focusing on _Canto_, the present document will give a perspective on Radzynski's diverse compositional style and a view of the piano's contemporary possibilities as one composer saw them in the early 1980s. Though it is an early piece in the career of its composer, _Canto_ is already highly original in style and structure. It is also diverse, both old and new in its sounds and influences. The composer informs us that _Canto_ had many influences and contains many references to other music and to other traditions. It is written in a musical language that is clearly atonal, and in a basically through-composed form, yet the composer has said that his piece alludes specifically to Medieval, Renaissance, and contemporary minimalist techniques and to established traditions of piano performance. Therefore the piece gives rich opportunities for discussion and analysis, more than its playing time of ten minutes could suggest.

Radzynski’s title, meaning "song," might be a paradox because the piano is not innately vocal in its sounds, in short it is not by nature a singing instrument. Perhaps with this title, Radzynski has made some kind of connection with Chopin, a composer who also wrote "singing" pieces for the piano under the strong influence of _bel canto_ music. Unlike Chopin, however, Radzynski's "song" for piano is textured in a way that usually prevents any songlike lines from being heard
as songlike, or even heard at all. Much of the writing refers to the tone cluster
sounds and "barbaric" rhythm vocabulary of early 20th-century modernists. At the
same time, Radzynski's early piano work certainly shows a poetic and fulfilling
approach to the keyboard, and this will be quickly discovered by any pianist who
takes up Canto.

Canto poses extensive performance challenges regarding form, timing,
 fingering, and other issues of idiomatic piano writing. But the composer's true
musicality means that the process of learning, addressing, and performing this piece
is a fulfilling and rewarding process. Clearly, Canto is not a dogmatic or doctrinaire
piece of music and it is rich enough for different kinds of discussion and to let
interpreters come to different conclusions. This document offers many ideas on
performance and preparation for performance, but the author also hopes to make it
clear that there is no one specific way such an imaginative, varied, and allusive
composition should be interpreted — by the performer, or by the analyst and music
scholar.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract........................................................................................................... ii
Vita....................................................................................................................... iv
Field of Study...................................................................................................... iv
Table of Contents................................................................................................ v
List of Examples................................................................................................... ix
List of Table...................................................................................................... xi

Chapter

1. Introduction.................................................................................................1
2. Approaching Radzynski’s Canto..............................................................4
3. Historical Context........................................................................................ 6
4. The title of Canto.......................................................................................8
5. Canto as a “song without words”............................................................10
6. Genre & Function....................................................................................14
7. Is Canto based on a Contus Firmus or theme?......................................17
8. Themes and the question of key............................................................22
9. Texture.....................................................................................................25
10. Textural comparisons with other composers.......................................28
11. Voice-leading suggesting tonality..........................................................32
12. Form.......................................................................................................34
13. Different types of musical material.......................................................37
14. Canto as a through-composed form.....................................................39
15. Reminiscence and form ................................................................. 43
16. Small-scale repetition ................................................................. 46
17. Tempo .......................................................................................... 49
18. Performance Issues ...................................................................... 52
   18.1 Section A (mm.1-7) ................................................................. 52
      18.1.1 Fingering ......................................................................... 52
      18.1.2 Timing and pacing ............................................................. 53
   18.2 Section B (mm.8-13) ................................................................. 55
      18.2.1 Phrasing ........................................................................... 55
   18.3 Section C (mm.14-23) ............................................................... 57
      18.3.1 Articulation and color ....................................................... 57
   18.4 Section D (mm.24-36) ............................................................... 59
      18.4.1 Articulation and gesture ................................................... 59
   18.5 Section E (mm.37-41) ............................................................... 60
      18.5.1 Rhythm and gesture ......................................................... 60
   18.6 Section F (mm.42) .................................................................... 61
      18.6.1 Articulation and suggestions for practice ....................... 61
   18.7 Section G (mm.43-76) ............................................................... 63
      18.7.1 Voicing ........................................................................... 63
      18.7.2 Shaping ........................................................................... 66
   18.8 Section H (mm.77-81) ............................................................... 67
      18.8.1 Observing score detail ..................................................... 67
   18.9 Section I (mm.82-105) .............................................................. 68
      18.9.1 Touch and sound .............................................................. 68
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.10</td>
<td>Section J (mm.106-123)</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.10.1</td>
<td>Varied textures</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.11</td>
<td>Section K (mm.124-144)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.11.1</td>
<td>Reading graphic notation</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.12</td>
<td>Section L (m.147)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.12.1</td>
<td>Fast and unmeasured style</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.13</td>
<td>Section M (mm.148-160)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.13.1</td>
<td>Dividing music on three staves</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.14</td>
<td>Section N (mm.161-172)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.14.1</td>
<td>Left hand dynamic control</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.15</td>
<td>Section O (mm.173-205)</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.15.1</td>
<td>Echo effect with decrescendo</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.15.2</td>
<td>Phasing</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.16</td>
<td>Section P (mm.206-224)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.16.1</td>
<td>Block chords repeated with freely ordered notes</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.17</td>
<td>Section Q (mm.225-228)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.17.1</td>
<td>“Bouncing ball” rhythm</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.18</td>
<td>Section R (mm.229-234)</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.18.1</td>
<td>Three-voice texture on two staves</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.18.2</td>
<td>Drum effect</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.19</td>
<td>Section T (mm.237-239)</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.19.1</td>
<td>Interpreting the new version of Idea 1</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.19.2</td>
<td>Clarifying score notation</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.19.3</td>
<td>Dynamic plan</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF EXAMPLES

Examples

Example 1: Radzynski, Canto, mm.1-7.................................19
Example 2: Radzynski, Canto, mm.8-9.................................20
Example 3: Radzynski, Canto, mm.235-236..............................21
Example 4: Radzynski, Canto, mm.1-2.................................23
Example 5: Radzynski, Canto, m.239.................................23
Example 6: Radzynski, Canto, mm.8-13.................................26
Example 7: Radzynski, Canto, mm.52-56.................................27
Example 8: Bartók Piano Sonata, 3rd mov't, mm.37-46.........................28
Example 9: Debussy's "La Cathédrale engloutie," mm.43-46.........................29
Example 10: Debussy's "Minstrels," mm.59-62.................................29
Example 11: Radzynski, Canto, mm.141-146..............................31
Example 12: Radzynski, Canto, pitch reduction of mm.211-224.........................32
Example 13: Radzynski, Canto, mm.8-13.................................35
Example 14: Radzynski, Canto, mm.1-5.................................37
Example 15: Radzynski, Canto, start of m.42.................................38
Example 16: Radzynski, Canto, mm.14-21.................................42
Example 17: Radzynski, Canto, mm.82-87.................................42
Example 18: Radzynski, Canto, mm.183-191.................................47
Example 19: Suggested fingering for Radzynski, Canto, mm.1-7.........................52
Example 20: Radzynski, Canto, mm.1-7.................................54
Example 21: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.8-13..................................................56
Example 22: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.14-23.................................................58
Example 23: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.24-29..................................................59
Example 24: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.36-41..................................................60
Example 25: Radzynski, *Canto*, m.42 (beginning)........................................62
Example 26: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.43-55..................................................64
Example 27: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.43-44..................................................65
Example 28: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.47.......................................................65
Example 29: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.71-77..................................................66
Example 30: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.77-81..................................................68
Example 31: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.82-87..................................................69
Example 32: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.116-119.............................................70
Example 33: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.124-126.............................................70
Example 34: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.147 (beginning).................................71
Example 35: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.155-156.............................................72
Example 36: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.161-166.............................................73
Example 37: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.180-182.............................................73
Example 38: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.96-97..................................................74
Example 39: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.206-211.............................................75
Example 40: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm. 224-225...........................................77
Example 41: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm. 229-234...........................................78
Example 42: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm. 238-239...........................................80
LIST OF TABLE

Table

Table 1. Form of Canto…………………………………………………………………………………40
Jan Radzynski is an Israeli-American composer who was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1950, moved to Israel in 1969, and then arrived in the United States in 1977. He studied composition in Israel and in the U.S., at the Academy of Music of Tel Aviv University and then at Yale University, which he entered as a masters student in 1977 and from which he received his doctorate in 1984. While at Yale his composition teachers were Krzysztof Penderecki and Jacob Druckman. Radzynski himself taught at Yale from 1980 to 1994, and then joined the School of Music faculty at the Ohio State University as professor of composition, where he still teaches. While at Ohio State Prof. Radzynski has also taught at the Melton Center for Jewish Studies and started a festival celebrating music by contemporary Israeli composers and by composers in the Israeli diaspora.¹

Radzynski's compositions include a variety of works for orchestra, solo instruments, chorus, voice, and chamber ensembles. His orchestral works have been performed by, among other ensembles, the Cleveland Orchestra (which performed his Kaddish in 1988), the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, the Krakow Philharmonic, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, and the Cologne Radio Orchestra. Radzynski was originally trained as a pianist and cellist, and has shown

a special interest in composing music for strings and for piano. The work that is 
often mentioned as his first to attract international recognition is his Cello Concerto 
(1990/92), and the String Trio (1995) has been widely available on two recordings. 
The String Trio was commissioned by the City of Aachen and first performed by 
the Trio Arco, and can be heard on a CRI recording and on the Milken Archive 
label. These two compositions have been published by Theodore Presser, along 
with Improvisation for cello solo and Three Hebrew Melodies for piano and string 
quartet. Another Radzynski composition that has become familiar through 
recordings is his Take Five for brass quintet.

This D.M.A. document focuses on Radzynski's Canto, his earliest piano 
composition. Canto is another one of this composer's more widely known pieces, 
and it has been recorded twice. Since writing it Radzynski has added three more 
pieces to his list of keyboard compositions, the 2 Mazurkas (1988, 2008) and 

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2 The CRI recording was performed by members of the Spectrum Ensemble, and re-released on New World Records NWCR649, copyright 1993/2007. The String Trio was also recorded for the Milken Archive label by David Brickman, violin; George Taylor, viola; and Stefan Reuss, cello; Milken Archive of Jewish Music Vol.10, No.2, copyright 2011.

3 Recorded on Channel Classics by the Meridian Arts Ensemble, Channel Classics 9496, copyright 1996.

piano is clearly important to this composer's output; in focusing on *Canto*, the present document will give a perspective on Radzynski's compositional style and a view of the piano's contemporary possibilities as one composer saw them in the early 1980s.
CHAPTER 2: APPROACHING RADZYNSKI'S CANTO

Even though *Canto* is an early piece for Radzynski it is already highly original in style and structure, and shows a poetic and idiomatic approach to the keyboard. As this document will explain, *Canto* is a work of great variety and diverse references. Though *Canto* is clearly in a post-tonal language, the composer has said that his piece alludes specifically to Medieval, Renaissance, and contemporary minimalist techniques and to established traditions of piano performance. Here is the composer's complete note supplied as preface to his published score:

*Canto* (1981) is a fantasy in which fragments of a cantus firmus are woven into dream-like sequences. The composer employs a broad range of keyboard textures which evoke various national styles of piano playing, in particular the French and German.

The idea of repetition is expressed in many ways: impulse-reverberation, echo, ostinato and reminiscence. The various registers of the piano serve the composer as an inexhaustible source of inspiration. The broad spectrum of expressive demands made by the work, presents special challenges to the performer. *Canto* was first performed by Martin Goldray at the Yale Composers Concert Series at Sprague Hall in October 1982.  

As Radzynski's note indicates, *Canto* has many influences and contains many references to other music and to other traditions. Therefore, the piece gives rich opportunities for discussion and analysis, more than its playing time of ten minutes could suggest. It is so varied in its creativity and assertiveness, that

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obviously, it was not simply "the idea of repetition" that the composer "expressed in many ways." The composer says his piece had at least one "inexhaustible source of inspiration," and these inexhaustible and inspiring aspects must be a reason the final composition itself is so stimulating to listeners and performers.
CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

There are some similarities between Radzynski's music and the music of his most famous teachers: he studied at Yale with Penderecki and Druckman, two composers with dramatic tendencies who rejected musical abstraction and were open to a variety of influences including music of much earlier periods. In *Grove Music Online*, Austin Clarkson and Steven Johnson describe Druckman in the 1980s as a composer who quoted music from earlier times, who rejected any kind of single or modernist purity of style, and who wrote more with gestures than with actual themes. They describe Druckman's orchestral piece *Prism* (1980), a piece he wrote when Radzynski was studying with him, as follows:

> Quoted tonal passages appear as if refracted through the surrounding non-tonal context, drawing the listener into a liminal world of fragmentary, interflowing images driven by an intense psychological dramaturgy. His term "New Romanticism" marked a polemical stance against abstractionism and indicated a renewal of the kinetic power of the musical image from synaesthetic correspondences among sound, speech, gesture, colour and character.\(^6\)

Radzynski studied at Yale with Penderecki in 1977 and 1978, and this period corresponded with a very painful and critical time in Poland's history under communism. Cardinal Wojtyła was elected Pope in 1978, the Solidarity labor union

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was formed in 1980, and in 1981 the communist government declared martial law in Poland. Penderecki at this time was, like Druckman, described as a kind of new romantic composer. In New Grove Online, Adrian Thomas writes about Penderecki as a neoromantic who referred at this time to music not only of the Romantics but also of the Classical composers:

This quasi-political, patriotic role seems to have spurred Penderecki to develop his neo-romantic language to a point where conventions from the Renaissance and the 18th and 19th centuries are openly acknowledged. Diminished and dominant harmonies, cadential formulae and melodic phrases (most noticeably those beginning with a rising minor 6th), are now part of his vocabulary.7

This is the historical and musical context that surrounded Radzynski when he wrote Canto in 1981, and the above descriptions of 1980s pieces by Druckman and Penderecki also apply to Radzynski's piano piece. Canto is an intense and wide-ranging composition that is fragmentary and full of gestures but also refers specifically to musical techniques of the past. The description "neo-romantic" is more appropriate to the compositions mentioned by Druckman and Penderecki, but Radzynski's Canto is still a work that touches on the past as much as it inhabits the late 20th century. The specific political and educational contexts, as well as the diverse musical influences, help explain why Canto is such a wide-ranging composition and so rich a performing and listening experience. Just about every aspect of the composition, including the title on the cover, says something important about music, about this composer, and about the piece itself.

CHAPTER 4: THE TITLE OF *CANTO*

As with any musical work, the clearest indicator of the historical context of *Canto* is the title, to the extent that the title specifies genre and a time in history. In his book on Chopin, Jeffrey Kallberg writes about genre as an indicator of wide contexts:

> The choice of genre by a composer and its identification by the listener establish the framework for the communication of meaning. The genre institutes what E.D. Hirsch has termed a "code of social behavior" and Hans Robert Jauss a "horizon of expectation" (a term derived from Husserl's phenomenology of perception), a frame that consequently affects the decisions made by the composer in writing the work and the listener in hearing the work.\(^8\)

It is instructive that Jan Radzynski called his piano piece "Canto," the Italian word for "song," because the word can be used both as an individual title and as a genre of music. In other words, a song is a very common music genre, and giving a piece a generic title like this shows a classical and rather abstract way of thinking, similar to calling it a Sonata or Partita. On the other hand, a non-Italian composer rarely calls a piece "canto," especially in the 20th century, and so when that same title is used outside Italy it starts to suggest some much more specific things about that piece and its inspirations than just its genre.

Radzynski's title is therefore either abstract, generic, or precise, depending

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on what national, historical, and compositional context it is placed in. Because the
title Canto would sound old-fashioned now even to an Italian, it also suggests a
time some decades ago; it hints at the abstract 1950s and 1960s more than the
postmodern 1980s. It also perhaps suggests Eastern Europe more than America.
The title "Canto" reminds one of Penderecki's titles: Threnody, Canon, Pittsburgh
Overture, Intermezzo, and Fonogrammi. It sounds less like John Corigliano's titles
Voyage, How Like Pellucid States, Daddy, Gazebo Dances, and Pied Piper Fantasy,
but sounds more like the titles of Witold Lutoslawski pieces like Partita, Mini
Overture, Chain 2, and Novelette; and less like the titles by his American teacher
Jacob Druckman such as Dark Upon the Harp, Vox Humana, Counterpoise,
Synapse, Valentine, and Reflections on the Nature of Water.
CHAPTER 5: CANTO AS A "SONG WITHOUT WORDS"

Titles show something about how a composer thinks music can communicate or what kinds of things it says. Generic titles seem to say that music communicates as music, that it does not need unique and unusual titles to have a message. Radzynski would seem to believe when picking his abstract and generic title Canto that instrumental music can communicate as clearly to the listener as music with words can, if not more clearly. When Radzynski wrote Canto, a "song" for solo piano, he composed what could be called a "song without words." In this way Radzynski would probably agree with Chopin, who was another composer who wrote in genres, and who said that "we use sounds to make music just as we use words to make a language." Radzynski's title could also refer to words, and therefore to singing, in the sense that "canto" was also a classic long form of poetry. Dante's fourteenth-century epic poem The Divine Comedy was written in cantos, and poet Ezra Pound wrote his own Cantos in the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, Lord Byron completed 16 cantos of his epic Don Juan, though those are satiric poems.

Radzynski was bold in writing a piece for piano and titling it just "canto," bold and creative because the piano involves hammers and strings rather than vocal cords and air: people often say that a pianist can only seem to sing as kind of a

9 Chopin: Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by his Pupils, p.195.
illusion through using touch, timing, and balance. It should be emphasized, however, that there are many "singing" pieces written for piano, including Mendelssohn's eight volumes of *Songs Without Words* (Lieder ohne Worte). These many pieces show that composers have for centuries loved the challenge of making the piano imitate the voice. That task of making a keyboard instrument sing goes back at least as far as Bach, who wrote in the preface to his Inventions and Sinfonias that he wrote these pieces mainly to offer the keyboardist a way "to achieve a cantabile style in playing."

Radzynski's title is musical but also musically unusual for a non-Italian composer writing in the late 20th century, and therefore his title adds meaning to the piece — and takes some meaning away. Titles show whether a composer is more comfortable with common music genres or with titles that contain specific and non-musical words. A composer like Druckman who calls an instrumental piece *Incenters* or *Animus III* might seem to think that music needs assistance from words, or even that words mean more or mean more specific things than music does by itself. A composer with titles like that can seem unhappy with abstract music. Someone who gives music pieces generic titles like Sonata or Canto might say a narrower title like *Animus III* controls and limits too much of the meaning of the artwork. That person might say the viewer or listener should have more freedom to see or hear the artwork than the words "Animus III" would allow them.

An art criticism website has a useful three-paragraph discussion from three artists who have debated these questions about titles for artworks, and who all decided that titles might finally "say too much":

11
Titles are then an important resource for abstraction; they can help to bring works without images or depictions into closer relations with life, politics, history, what you will, but in the process the object itself seems to be diminished, to have less reason to exist for itself.

Titles are the minimum textual component that accompanies all artworks (even "untitled"), and that is often too much.

To name something is to take ownership of it but we do not possess anything, not even the bodies which we seem so attached to and reliant on. Even our bodies will disown us. Possession is an illusion. When something is given a name it hinders further investigation into the reality of its substance, it stops the process of thinking. A cat is a cat. There it ends.¹⁰

The first commenter above, Robert Linsley, says that "the object itself seems to be diminished" when a title is used with a work of art, but the situation he is talking about is when a painter uses a title that comes from the real world, from outside the field of painting. For example he thinks an abstract painting with no title is left stronger and richer in meaning than an abstract painting with a title such as "roses in a garden" or "portrait of father." Linsley's discussion, with the follow-up responding statements by artists Chris Gergley and Ricki Oltean, gives useful tools for understanding Radzynski's title. Does Radzynski's title "say too much?" Is it a real abstract title as Radzynski uses it? Canto is not completely a music-generic title, as discussed earlier, but is also a more specific and unusual one. To say that Radzynski used the title Canto does not necessarily mean he thinks in genre terms: he has written only one Canto, and his work list shows that he has not written any genre series like Sonata No.1, Sonata No.2, Symphony No.3, Symphony No.4, and

so on. His referring to singing with a piano genre rather than a vocal genre is already something that urges "further investigation," to use Ricki Oltean's expression. In that way, Canto is not a really an abstract title or generic title after all, because it does not "stop the process of thinking" as Oltean says.

The only other non-Italian composers to write a "canto" for an instrument or for instruments in the 20th century are Benjamin Britten, who wrote a "canto" section in his Suite No. 1 for Cello (1962); the American Peter Mennin, who wrote Canto for orchestra (1964); and Elliott Carter, who composed Canto for solo timpani (1966). Among these examples, Britten and Mennin used instruments of more obvious vocal style than the piano: Britten wrote for the cello and Mennin for strings and winds. It is much easier to "sing" in the orchestra and on the cello than on the piano and timpani. Carter's use of "canto" as a title for a percussion instrument is as bold and adventurous as Radzynski's, though Carter did write glissandos — a sound that suggests musical lines and vocal production.

[11] There are of course many examples of vocal cantos, including Luigi Dallapiccola's Canti di prigionia for chorus (1938–41), the same composer's Cinque Canti for baritone and eight instruments (1956), and Bernard Rands's Canti lunatic (1982). Toru Takemitsu gave a stranger title to his Fantasma/Cantos (1991) for clarinet and orchestra.
"Canto" is Italian for "song," "singing," or "melody." Radzynski's Canto is really not a "song" or a "singing" piece, however, because it does not use a text or a voice. Perhaps with this title, Radzynski has made some kind of connection with Chopin, a composer who also wrote "singing" pieces for the piano under the strong influence of bel canto music. Chopin also wrote pieces with genre titles like Prelude and Sonata and Impromptu rather than Carnaval or "Traumerei" or "Blumenstück." Because Radzynski's Canto is not an actual song for singing, his title might make one think of Chopin, who wrote waltzes but did not actually intend them for dancing. Since Chopin's waltzes are not actually for dancing, Carl Dahlhaus said are not examples of music in a genre, but are instead examples of "music about genre." In Dahlhaus's analysis, Chopin created salon music in the way that "the salon demands not only that the music harbor an element of artifice but that this element be kept concealed." Chopin brought into himself "the functional and literary character of his genres," character meaning the aspects that make a ballade a ballade or a mazurka a mazurka. "Virtually the whole of Chopin's oeuvre," Dahlhaus says, "thrives unmistakably on his practice of 'interiorizing' the essential features of literary genres or functional music… As a result, his music

12 Chopin has been quoted as saying, "one must sing with the fingers!" Chopin: Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by his Pupils, edited by Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.73.
exists in its own right as autonomous art, preserving the moods of the original
literary or musical genres as reminiscences. The general and extrinsic has been
subsumed in a 'tone' that is Chopin's own."

Mendelssohn was more clear and straightforward with his titles and his
intention when he wrote his Songs Without Words (Lieder ohne Worte). This title
indicates that the pieces are songs, except they have no text (or human voice). This
composer said once he thought differently from most people because he thought
music was more precise than words can be. Maybe Radzynski would agree with
Mendelssohn that, “people usually complain that music is so ambiguous, and what
they are supposed to think when they hear it is so unclear, while words are
understood by everyone. But for me it is exactly the opposite... what the music I
love expresses to me are thoughts not too indefinite for words, but rather too
definite.”

Radzynski's Canto is not functional music (not music for singing), not
program music (not music trying to show something outside of music), and
probably not absolute music (music only "for sake of music"). Instead the title
seems to say it is an example of "music about style" or "music about genre," as Carl
Dahlhaus might say it. As Dahlhaus suggests about Chopin's ballades or mazurkas,
Radzynski's Canto is a "piece about genre" or maybe "a genre piece." One could
say Radzynski "interiorized" songs and singing in the same way that Chopin in

13 Carl Dahlhaus, Nineteenth-Century Music, translated J. Bradford Robinson
14 J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, Claude Palisca. A History of Western
Dahlhaus's description "interiorized" the features of literary genres (ballads) and the features of functional music (waltzes, polonaises, mazurkas). Chopin did this to "paint a portrait" of genres (he created pictures of waltzes rather than actual waltzes that can be danced to), and to try to widen the dimension of the genre.

The word *canto* has a long history in music, and its meanings over history most connect to ideas of melody and of song. In the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Owen Rees defines ‘Canto’ as

> A term denoting, variously, Singing, the art of singing, the soprano part or partbook of a polyphonic composition, a melody, a Song, or the treble string of a bowed or plucked instrument (usually in its diminutive form as ‘cantino’). It is also applied to specific genres such as carnival songs (Canti carnascialeschi), folksongs (canti popolari), Gregorian chant (canto gregoriano), Plainchant (canto plano), measured music or florid song (canto figurato, Canto de órgano) and to a style of singing (Bel canto).15

Outside of Italy, the word *canto* is now seen most often in the phrase *bel canto*, which as Rees says refers to an influential tradition of "beautiful singing" that started in early 19th-century Italy with such opera composers as Bellini and Donizetti. Radzynski's title could suggest *bel canto*, which means it could indicate a style as well as a genre, as discussed above. The wide variety of connections and uses for the word *canto* shows the deep importance that singing and songs have had throughout music history: it is often said that the human voice is the original instrument.

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CHAPTER 7: IS CANTO BASED ON A CANTUS FIRMUS OR THEME?

As discussed above, Radzynski did not write Canto with any clear "singing" or bel canto style that we might know from Chopin's piano music. There are other definitions of the word "canto" that might apply to Radzynski's Canto, however. The word can mean "melody," according to Rees. However, Radzynski's title does not fit his piece in this sense either: there is no melody in Canto, at least if one thinks of melody as a "tune" and thinks of Tchaikovsky and Mozart and Schubert as defining examples of tuneful music. The notion of melody in the sense of a memorable tune is based in 18th- and 19th-century kinds of tonal harmonic progression. Donald Tovey writes:

> The popular conception of melody as "tunefulness" is modern and depends on symmetries of harmony and rhythm that seldom occur in recorded music before the seventeenth century, and are accidental, if frequent, potentialities in older folk-music. For us a melody is the surface of a series of harmonies, and an unaccompanied melody that fails to imply clear harmonies is felt to be strange and vague.\(^{16}\)

In trying to understand the "song" or "melody" aspect of Radzynski's piece, however, one should remember that 20th-century music theorists tried to keep and define the idea of melody even in atonal music. Theorist and composer Ferruccio Busoni defined the idea of melody in 1922 in quite abstract terms as follows, possibly in an attempt to keep it separate from the idea of a twelve-tone row:

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\(^{16}\) Donald Francis Tovey, *The Forms of Music*, 10th ed. (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1966), p.91.
A row of repeated (1) ascending and descending (2) intervals which (3) organised and moving rhythmically (4) contains in itself a latent harmony and (5) which gives back a certain atmosphere of feeling; which can and does exist (6) independent of accompanying voices for form; and in the performance of which (7) the choice of pitch (8) and of instrument (9) exercise no change over its essence … This ‘absolute’ melody, at first a self-sufficient formation, united itself subsequently with the accompanying harmony, and later melted with it into oneness; out of this oneness the continually progressive polyharmony aims to free and liberate itself.\textsuperscript{17}

Going back further in history, the word "canto" can also suggest melody in the Medieval or Renaissance sense of a \textit{cantus firmus}. Radzynski mentions in his note that \textit{Canto} does use a borrowed \textit{cantus firmus} (which could make it the piece a song in the old medieval sense of \textit{plainsong}, or \textit{cantus planus}). In his score commentary for \textit{Canto}, given complete above, he describes the piece as "a fantasy in which fragments of a cantus firmus are woven into dream-like sequences…” Radzynski does not say what the cantus firmus is or where it comes from or exactly where it appears in his piece. These points might not be very important, because he goes on to say that he uses \textit{fragments} of a cantus firmus and therefore the cantus firmus could be the Radzynski's own private compositional idea, and not something the listener needs to know or should know.\textsuperscript{18}

If \textit{Canto} has a song or a melody in any of the above senses, it should appear

\begin{itemize}
\item [\textsuperscript{18}] Radzynski does say in the interview included below, in the Appendix, that the last appearance of Idea 1 suggests to him the chorale melody \textit{Es ist genug}. Such chorale melodies were the cantus firmuses of the Baroque period.
\end{itemize}
somewhere toward the start of the work. Looking for a musical line in the first page, then, will give an idea of how Canto's title might be appropriate to the piece. The opening seven measures sound like the announcement-style opening of a French overture (see Example 1). They are clearly an introduction, so it would be expected that if the piece does have a main melody it would immediately follow. What is heard starting in m. 8 does sound like a specific musical idea. The "poco animato" indication separates this possible idea from the first seven bars, the rhythm changes when it appears, and the texture moves as a whole in one clear ascent (see Example 2).

Example 1: Radzynski, Canto, mm.1-7
Example 2: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.8-9 (Idea 1); showing melodic intervals and phrase climax point

The idea heard in mm.8-9 could qualify as a melody according to categories (1-3) of Busoni's definition. There is some regularity in uses of intervals: the chords in measures 8-9 consistently move in parallel motion through seconds and thirds, with the opening in the pattern *ascending 2nd - ascending 2nd - falling 3rd - ascending 2nd* (see Example 2). The line also leads upward to a climax, as a tonal melody would do: this high point occurs on the third-beat chord of m.9, as indicated by the star in Example 2. The intervals of the line then start to increase from thirds to bigger intervals, including a fourth and finally fifth (in m.10).

*Canto* is unlike a cantus firmus piece and certainly unlike any common practice music built on themes, because it becomes clear really only in hindsight that what was heard in mm.8-9 is a *returning* idea and could therefore count as a theme. The question remains open, though, about whether it is a theme. Busoni would call mm.235-236 a melody because those bars represent the piece's last "self-sufficient formation" or "intervals organized and moving rhythmically," to use his words. If that melody in mm.235-236 is heard as a restatement of mm.8-9, one
would have to say the material is changed so much it almost becomes unrecognizable (see Example 3, and compare with Example 2). While Radzynski hears both these passages as versions of the same musical idea, he hears mm.235-236 as a quotation of the chorale melody "Es ist genug" but does not hear the chorale melody in mm.8-9.\textsuperscript{19}

Example 3: Radzynski, \textit{Canto}, mm.235-236 (Idea 1 restatement); showing melodic intervals

There are several things that make mm.235-236 sound like a version of mm.8-9: the written out accelerando is heard again, with a similar rhythm and a rising melodic contour, again with seconds linked with thirds. (While the interval sequence in m.8 started as \textit{ascending 2nd - ascending 2nd - falling 3rd - ascending 2nd}, in m.235 the sequence begins \textit{ascending 2nd - ascending 3rd - ascending 2nd - ascending 2nd}; compare the annotations in Example 2 and Example 3.)

\textsuperscript{19} See the following interview with the composer, in Appendix.
CHAPTER 8: THEMES AND THE QUESTION OF KEY

An answer to the analyst's question of whether Canto is based on themes, melodies, or ideas, will depend on the analyst's decision on whether the piece is atonal or basically tonal. It might not be quite right to call Radzynski's Canto an atonal piece, and the term "atonal" is anyway a very general one. At the same time, Canto is not tonal. One could clarify the contradiction by saying that one can hear Canto as "on" A, though not "in" the diatonic key of A major or minor; in other words, A is not approached through its dominant E, and a listener would not feel the need to "sing A" after the piece or a part of it is heard. However, the way pitches are repeated, emphasized, and held back can sometimes give the work a tonal feel. The first and last sounds in the piece include A (see Examples 4 & 5). The first chord in m.1 has the two pitches A and B, with A then repeated; and the last chord consists of A with Bb, G, and F#. A is emphasized more in the first passage (Example 4), and in the last passage, there is perhaps more emphasis on G with repeated G octaves against F-sharp in the right hand and against the A, G, and B-flat in the bass (Example 5). Therefore, one could hear the end of Canto as a musical question mark, especially considering the repetitions of the chord al niente.
Example 4: beginning of Radzynski, *Canto* showing emphasis on A (mm.1-2)

Example 5: conclusion of Radzynski, *Canto*, showing emphasis on A, B-flat, and G (m.239)

To conclude, Radzynski emphasizes A locally as a pitch center but not as any kind of key, and this suggests that the word theme is not the best description for the important idea that appears in mm.8-9 and reappears in mm.235-236. Theme was originally a term from tonal music theory: it was a discrete phrase that established a key through cadencing. The musical idea that appears in Radzynski's mm.8-9 and reappears in mm.235-236 does not establish a pitch center and is always ascending. It is not a constant element in the form of *Canto*, and its changing character makes it more like an idea, which is a thing that often changes; Webster's Dictionary defines "idea" as "any conception existing in the mind as a result of mental understanding, awareness, or activity." Matthew Santa's recent book *Hearing*
*Form: Musical Analysis with and without the Score* shows how usefully abstract the concept of "musical idea" is for musical form theorists. Santa defines cadences as “gestures that serve to end a musical idea”; describes a phrase as “an independent musical idea terminated by a cadence”; and presents the subphrase as “a musical idea that sounds independent melodically, but not harmonically, and that can be understood as part of a phrase.”

The material of Idea 1, as it appears starting in m.8 or starting in mm.235, should not be called a motive either, because a motive is shorter than this idea — definitely shorter than a measure. In general, one would best conclude that the analytically neutral word "idea" is useful so long as it remains unclear whether Radzynski's *Canto* is built around themes, melodies, cantus firmus, or any other element of tonal music. The term is used more and more frequently in the analysis above, because it is the best description for the extended musical events in Radzynski's *Canto* that have conclusion, that can in some cases seem separate from the music that surrounds them, that have some kind of shape, and which can possibly return.

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CHAPTER 9: TEXTURE

Carter's *Canto* for timpani was discussed earlier in this document. In this piece Carter set for himself a challenge similar to the challenge that Radzynski apparently set for himself in *Canto*: to write a piece for a percussive instrument that demonstrates some form of song or singing. Carter uses the glissando pedal of the timpani to create a musical line even though hard sticks are employed. Analyst David Schiff says about the Carter work, "this study for pedal timpani has a distinctive tone colour because of the combined effects of glissandi and snare-drum sticks used to create an unbroken 'song.'"  

The paradox of Carter's *Canto* seems similar to the most basic paradox in Radzynski's *Canto*: that the piece is a "song" written for a non-songful instrument. As this document will now discuss, Radzynski also poses himself a challenge like the challenge Carter created for himself: Radzynski chooses to call his piece a "song" but then obscures, or at least challenges, any song-like qualities in the piece with certain techniques and style devices. First, Radzynski's basically atonal language makes it difficult for him to create an impression of traditional melody or song. Radzynski also tends to prevent any real sense of melody from forming by using dissonant intervals, especially vertical seconds. For example, the idea that is first heard in mm.8-9 and then extended through m.13 is heard in octaves, but these

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octaves are blurred by added seconds (see Example 6). Of course, the clarity of this passage depends on the pianist's voicing, but the added seconds do make it more difficult to hear a specific melodic line or voice-leading than if it were just written in octaves.

Example 6: Radzynski, Canto, mm.8-13 (Idea 1 and continuation)

A similar texture is heard in the main Allegro section (mm.52-56), where what sounds like an inversion of the idea 1 (starting F#, G, A, F# when first heard in mm.8-9, but starting here in mm.52-53 with G, F#, D, C#) is now descending (beginning as descending 2nd, descending 3rd, descending 2, and ascending 3rd) with vertical seconds added to make the chords sound more like clusters (See Example 7).
Example 7: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.52-56 (showing melodic intervals)

As mentioned above, this shows a puzzling feature Radzynski's *Canto*: that it is a "song" piece but is textured in a way that usually prevents any such songlike lines from being perceived as songlike, or heard at all. The dominance of vertical 2nds, and the difficulty of literally applying the idea of song, are additional reasons the analyst should discuss *Canto* not in terms of themes or melodies, but according to the more abstract term of musical idea.
CHAPTER 10: TEXTURAL COMPARISONS WITH OTHER COMPOSERS

In summary, Radzynski’s piano textures are cluster-like but also contain larger, intervals including octaves. One can find similar textures in works from earlier in the 20th-century. Radzynski says his *Canto* "employs a broad range of keyboard textures which evoke various national styles of piano playing, in particular the French and German..." The closest example to this kind of piano texture is not in fact French or German, but in the music of Bartók.

Example 8: Bartók Piano Sonata, 3rd mov’t, mm.37-46

A passage from the Bartók Piano Sonata (see Example 8) is close to Radzynski in having the parallel octaves with included 2nds, which gives a Bartók-ish sound of open interval put together with close intervals. When Radzynski said French piano textures he must have meant Debussy and Ravel. However, Debussy's use of intervals differs from Radzynski's and Bartók's. Debussy used the octave with
included 2nd either for purpose of color or for a humorous effect, and this seems to contrast with Radzynski. Example 9 shows Debussy using "2nd-colored" octaves as a kind of timbre; as the music gets quieter (più pp) here, the 2nds on beat two suggests an echo as colored by the sound's distance across space. Example 10 uses 2nds to create "wrong note" humor: minstrels were entertainers and much the same as court jesters, and here the small intervals give the ironic impression of clowning and slapstick.

Example 9: "2nd-colored" octaves in Debussy's "La Cathédrale engloutie," mm.43-46

Example 10: "wrong note" humor using 2nds, in Debussy's "Minstrels," mm.59-62

With Debussy, though, the 2nds also sound like decoration because of their timing, they tend to function as suspensions or as coloration when he approaches cadences. With Radzynski, these 2nds are not decorative in any way. When 2nds are used in a
quasi-atonal language like this it is hard to separate decoration from those notes being decorated, and the whole idea of pitch decoration subsequently disappears. The 2nds are used so consistently with octaves that it seems the composer is trying to make a different kind of octave-and-2nd sound.

Radzynski uses an amazing variety of textures for a piece that is relatively short, and he uses the contrasts in close proximity to each other. The final effect of Radzynski's vertical intervals is a sound that is both "open" and block-chord-like. It is hard to think of another composer who brings together thick chords and quite delicate voice-leading in the same piece, who writes tone clusters in two staves, and moves quite quickly from those sounds to the kind of divisi sonorities written on three separate staves that one hears in Debussy (in some of the Images), Ravel (Le gibet), Koechlin (Piano Sonatinas), and Dutilleux (Piano Sonata). To show this progression at a specific place in Radzynski's Canto, one can start with the Tempo di menuetto section (mm.106-146), which works up to a texture-sonic climax of more and more thick chords: six-note chords in m.124, seven and eight in mm.126-135, nine in m.136-137, ten in m.138, and finally block-notated clusters played "with open palms" in mm.144-146 (see Example 11).
Example 11: textural-sonic climax with thicker and thicker chords in Radzynski’s *Canto*, mm.141-146

In the Adagio section after this section (starting in m.148), Radzynski writes in three staves, first with thin and delicate lines, and then with thicker layered chords (mm.155-160). This wide variety must be part of what the composer meant when he said that *Canto* contains "various national styles of piano playing, in particular the French and German."
Another contrast in *Canto* is between the streamed chords and tone clusters and the passages where Radzynski has careful and delicate voice leading that sounds almost tonal. It is obvious that tonal impressions and voice-leading cannot be possible in music that has clusters or chords including more than eight pitches. However, Radzynski on occasion does write with careful voice leading, for example in mm.211-224 (Example 12).

Example 12: Radzynski, *Canto*, pitch reduction of mm.211-224 showing descending chords

The right hand moves by step here, but not as "chord streaming" where all voices would move in parallel motion. Instead, one hears dropping down through steps in the right hand, sometimes in half steps, what sound like 7th chords and inverted 9th chords: for example, the first chord B-E-A sounds like an incomplete A9 chord with the 9th degree B placed in the bottom voice (see Example 12). While the right hand descends stepwise through these tonal-sounding chords, the left hand moves up, first emphasizing leading tone to E, then F#, then finally G before flats come in.
To summarize, this passage is not tonal in the usual sense but is sensitive to tonal counterpoint thinking and is certainly distant from the thick cluster passages elsewhere in the composition.
CHAPTER 12: FORM

The form of Canto seems more continuous than any form based solely on tone-clusters. The form of a piece largely depends on the kinds of interval collections that it has. To speak in terms of vertical sonority, one could say that the form of a piece depends on the chords used. As more pitches are added to a chord, there is less and less need for that chord to move (or resolve) to any other particular chord. It follows from this that a piece with chords of clear triadic intervals, including seventh and ninth chords, has a clearer sense of chordal or harmonic direction than a piece with thicker chords and less harmonic certainty. Radzynski manages to give Canto an overall formal shape and linear sound, despite the fact that he frequently uses cluster-like chords. He manages this despite the fact that such chords with many pitches can suggest any key or suggest no key, and are therefore non-linear and static in the forms they suggest: as mentioned above, thicker chords do less than more obviously triadic chords to move the composition forward in terms of intervals. Despite the fact that it has extended tone-cluster passages, Canto moves forward and does so continuously through a structure that sounds neither block-like as with Stravinsky, nor repetitious (repetitious in terms of formal sections or ideas).

One way that Radzynski manages to give Canto a shape and linear sound different from the clusters is through careful performance indications. The composer's phrase marks and dynamics often encourage the pianist to create a sense of line and direction. He often "writes out" a performer's ideas of shaping
phrase with crescendo and diminuendo and sometimes rallentando and *a tempo*. To analyze the phrase events in measures 8-13 (see Example 13): to begin, (1) the starting crescendo in mm.8-9 clearly aligns with the rise up to the highest-register chord on beat 3 of m.9; (2) the chord on the downbeat of m.11 then suggests the end of an antecedent phrase as it has been shaped through that rise and brief fall; (3) the crescendo that follows in mm.10-11 leads up to the high climax of what sounds like an answer phrase (the climax again *forte*); and then (4) the *rallentando* down to the end of the antecedent-consequent phrase pairing in m.12 returns the whole passage to the same register (and the same F# octave in the right-hand) where it began. With careful and effective performance instructions, Radzynski helps the player to shape phrases. This is only one of many examples where the composer encourages the performer to form and articulate events and thereby convey the overall structure of his composition

Example 13: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm. 8-13 (Idea 1) - antecedent and consequent phrases with performance directions
A related element is the manner in which Radzynski creates an almost tonal sound to his atonal form by working, in an almost traditional way, toward important formal points. This is similar to the way a tonal composer works through a transition and modulation to a new theme in a different character and tempo, or the way a sonata recapitulation is prepared. Following Idea 1 in mm.8-13 (see Example 2 above), Radzynski uses rallentando and calando marks to prepare for arrival of different tempi and different texture and rhythmic motion at m.14. The biggest lead-up in the piece (at mm.56-76) is the increase in thick chords previously discussed, with crescendi and a last stringendo leading to the fff allegro maestoso and alla chitarra guitar chord effect in mm.77-80. This is a composed-out crescendo, with thicker and thicker chords and increasing dynamics. He has a similar lead-up to the unmeasured Presto, senza misura section in mm.147; this is the gradual and dramatic crescendo that ends in square-notated tone clusters, even bigger a lead-in and climax than the passage going to mm.77-80. Here, the long span of the gesture is important. It is unusual to write in an atonal composition a consistent 20-measure crescendo in this way. This is more typical of Beethoven or Mahler than Bartók, Schoenberg, or Webern. (But it does sound like some parts of Penderecki, Lutoslawski, and Druckman, composers who have been labeled "postromantic" musicians at time.)
CHAPTER 13: DIFFERENT TYPES OF MUSICAL MATERIAL

*Canto* is in multiple sections with different textures, tempo, and rhythmic activity. One traditional aspect of the piece is the basic division between passages that sound transitional and passages that present musical material. Other aspects of traditional form are heard. The first seven measures are clearly an introduction, and even have the kind of chordal sound and dotted rhythms that one hears at the beginning of the Baroque French overture (Example 14). However, the almost exact repetition of mm.1-4 in mm. 5-7, with rhythm written out as slightly slower, sounds more like the repeated chords that start a slow introduction in Haydn or Beethoven.

Example 14: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.1-5

Another kind of texture is the aleatoric/chance passages where the left hand has blocks of pitches repeating in free rhythm while the right has long-spanning figures.
Though it is unmeasured and random in its pitch structure, this music sounds more thematic than transitional. It can be thought of as recitative, though it also resembles coloratura singing with the right hand as soprano, something akin to the Queen of the Night aria in Mozart's *Magic Flute* (Example 15).

Example 15: Radzynski, *Canto*, start of m.42
CHAPTER 14: CANTO AS A THROUGH-COMPOSED FORM

Table 1 gives a structural overview of Canto, showing statements of material, contrasting rhythmic styles, and changes in tempo and texture. The table shows how the overall form of Canto is not repetitive or schematic as suggested above; rather, when one has perspective and listens to the piece from beginning to end, without a score, the overall form sounds through-composed. Table 1 illustrates this through-composed aspect of the form. The right column shows the repetitions of material (of Idea 1 and Idea 2, for example). These are few of these repetitions, however, and the "standing-back" listener is like to hear the broader form as presented in the left column of Table 1: as through-composed, with one kind of musical material presented after another, etc. Thus the left column presents the form as it might be heard by someone listening with a broader perspective. As given in the left column, this clearly audible form consists of sections A through T, with the overall form discussed in terms of similar sections rather than repeated sections.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A       | mm. 1-7     | \( j = 54-58 \)  
**Introduction**  
Combination of fast notes with long single notes, in French overture style |
| B       | mm. 8-13    | **Idea 1**                                                                                 |
| C       | mm. 14-23   | \( j = \text{ca.} 48 \)  
Consistent triple meter  
Alternation of clusters and single notes in right hand |
| D       | mm. 24-36   | \( j = \text{ca.} 56 \)  
Consistent triple meter  
Repeated single notes in the right hand |
| E       | mm. 37-41   | **Transition** suggesting style & texture of F                                              |
| F       | m. 42       | **Senza misura**  
Fast note passage in the right hand with freely ordered rotation of notes in the left hand |
| G       | mm. 43-76   | \( j = \text{ca.} 138 \)  
Clusters in parallel motion mostly with octaves, in repeated 8th notes |
| H       | mm. 77-81   | \( j = \text{ca.} 72 \)  
**Transition**  
Alternation of clusters with repeated single notes and dyads |
| I       | mm. 82-105  | \( j = \text{ca.} 60 \)  
Consistent triple meter  
Leaping between half-step dyads |
| J       | mm. 106-123 | \( \dot{j} = \text{ca.} 138 \)  
Consistent triple meter *(Tempo di menuetto)*  
Thicker three- and four-note chords |
| K       | mm. 124-144 | Clusters in parallel motion mostly with octaves, in repeated 8th notes  
Repeated chords getting thicker, finally becoming clusters |
| L       | m. 147      | **Transition**  
Fast passage, unmeasured *(senza misura)* |
| M       | mm. 148-160 | \( j = \text{ca.} 46 \)  
**Idea 2**  
Slow polyphonic section with three staves |

*Continued*
Table 1. Form of *Canto*

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>mm. 161-172</td>
<td>( \frac{\text{3}}{\text{4}} \approx \text{ca. 138} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Transition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repeated closely-voiced chords in right hand against contrasting rhythmic patterning in left hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>mm. 173-205</td>
<td>Phasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>mm. 206-224</td>
<td>Repeated chords in right hand with freely ordered rotation of notes in left hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>mm. 225-228</td>
<td>&quot;bouncing ball&quot; rhythmic figure in single notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>mm. 229-234</td>
<td>( \frac{\text{3}}{\text{4}} \approx \text{ca. 46} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Idea 2 returns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>mm. 235-236</td>
<td><strong>Idea 1 returns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>mm. 237-239</td>
<td><strong>Idea 1 variation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repeated notes beginning fast, ending in ritardando</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repeated chord, <strong>fff</strong> then <strong>morendo al niente</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 continued

To give one example of Radzynski building his form primarily around similarities of material rather than by repetitions of material, one can hear section C (mm.14-23, see Example 16) corresponding with section I (mm.82-105, see Example 17). These two passages have the following specific correlations: the tempos are similar, the dynamics are the same (both are *piano*), and they are both in consistent triple meter with the left hand clearly metrical and phrases that are one measure long. Perhaps the clearest similarity is the triple meter: the metric correspondence between the two passages is distinctly audible, especially as the rest of *Canto* tends to have frequent meter changes. At the same time, section I cannot be heard as an actual repetition of section C: the two passages do not have the same pitches or intervals, and the passages are not particularly close when one compares the rhythms in the right hand.
Example 16: Radzynski, *Canto*, section C, mm.14-21

Example 17: Radzynski, *Canto*, section I, mm.82-87
CHAPTER 15: REMINISCENCE AND FORM

There are two musical ideas that are repeated in Canto, though of course with some changes. *Idea 1* first appears in Section B (mm.8-13) and then appears in an altered restatement toward the end of the piece, in Section S (at mm.235-236) (see Examples 2 & 3 above). The distance between these two statements is one reason *Canto* sounds like a through-composed form. *Idea 1* then reappears almost immediately, in yet another version, in Section T (m.238). *Idea 2* is first heard in Section M (mm.148-160), and is then repeated at Section R (mm.229-234). When Radzynski describes his piece in the preface, he talks about different kinds of formal repetition: "The idea of repetition is expressed in many ways: impulse-reverberation, echo, ostinato and reminiscence." The last word here is interesting because it often refers to structure in 19th-century opera. The "reminiscence" or "reminiscence motive" was a small music repetition starting in French opera like Grétry, used at turning points in the opera plot. Dahlhaus defines the reminiscence motive as "the technique, used in opera since the eighteenth century, of relating separate numbers musically and dramatically by means of a striking motive." Carl Dahlhaus goes on to say that they "impart musicodramatic coherence beyond the confines of individual numbers" and writes, "they began to function as musicodramatic brackets, relieving the individual numbers of their aesthetic
obligation to be musically self-sufficient and continuous.” As Dahlhaus tells us the reminiscence was different from the Wagnerian Leitmotiv because it does not develop but acts as a kind of past thing remembered in memory: "like the reminiscence motives of romantic opera, the leitmotifs of music drama speak of the past, though a past that forms part of the essence of the present.”

As explained in this way, reminiscence is again different from basing a structure in repetition of material. Radzynski’s use of the word seems to say that music returns in Canto as subjective remembering, and reminiscence is not like the usual idea of themes and development of themes. When Idea 1 (mm.8-13) returns in mm.235-236, it is not only changed as described above, but shortened to sound like an abridged remembering — a reminiscence that is interrupted by the recitative-like final page of the piece. Maybe, like a reminiscence, it does not develop or progress in clear ways but returns changed, truncated, and shortened. This might be closer to the way real memory works: memory is never exact or moving to the future, and sometimes, one wonders if what seems like a memory is really memory or something new and different. The definition of reminiscence in opera is helpful with regard to Radzynski, because Canto does seem to contain different kinds of sections that move at different speeds and with different kinds of dramatic effect (perhaps just like numbers in operas). It is a difficult to give a clear answer to the question of how Canto finally comes together as one piece in spite of the differences and contrasts.

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24 Dahlhaus, Nineteenth-Century Music, p.201.
There is no clear and schematic form to hear in *Canto*, as the notion of reminiscence suggests. The description you would find in a textbook for Radzynski's form would be to call it *through-composed*. Ian Rumbold defines a through-composed piece as "a composition with a relatively uninterrupted continuity of musical thought and invention. It is applied in particular in contexts where a more sectionalized structure might be expected, as with a strophic song text, an opera divided into numbers or an instrumental piece divided into movements."²⁵ Radzynski's *Canto* is sectionalized so often that you would expect a section to have material repeated. However, each section sounds new, even when a musical idea is repeated — as with Idea 1, for example, which appears to be quite different in its first and second statements, at the start and toward the end of the composition. The piece is in improvisational style and seems to end in a different place than where it started. The composer calls the piece a fantasy and talks about the cantus firmus fragments "woven into dream-like sequences." What can dream-like mean in terms of musical form? Perhaps the reminiscence aspect discussed above, and not a literal repetition. Another is a different and changing impression of time, which makes *Canto* like a dream because of its different sections with its different rhythmic motions and different characters.

CHAPTER 16: SMALL-SCALE REPETITION

There is yet another Canto paradox, concerning the question of repetition. If reminiscence practice is faint and indirect, and repetitions in the Allegretto lusingando section are creative and quasi-classical, Radzynski also uses immediate and plain repetition that sounds rather like minimalism. An example is mm.173-205, a section in the style of minimalist "phasing." This leads to the last repetitive-echo-minimalist "bouncing ball" section (mm.225-228), which is then interrupted by the returns of Idea 2 (mm.229-234) and Idea 1 (mm.235-236, and again in 237-239). The "phasing" section weaves together independently repeating lines (Example 18 shows the beginning of this section), and with its minimalist-style repetition it definitely does not sound as if it came from a piece that is structured around similarities of material rather than around repetition of material. Actually, this does not really look like minimalist music but more like a slower passage from Stravinsky's neoclassical period; for instance, the rhythms and the layering of rhythms in mm.183-191 sound very much like the opening of Stravinsky's Concerto in D for strings.
Example 18: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.183-191

This section is described here as minimalism or as phasing, but it differs from the style of a minimalist like Philip Glass or Steve Reich in the way the repeated units do not change in a uniform or progressive manner and because the meters continually change. In Example 18, the number of beats and the beat length keep changing from bar to bar. The bars are not randomly coordinated, obviously: the composer is careful to align the written-in accents with downbeats and with the rhythm patterns. Radzynski clearly wishes to maintain a sense of meter and cross-rhythms here, in contrast to a composer like Messiaen who has additive rhythms that constantly shorten and lengthen the patterns by small rhythm values. With this metrical style, Radzynski recalls Stravinsky or Bartók — the latter, a composer
who must have influenced Radzynski strongly. For instance, the Bartók Piano
Sonata has single bars following each other in the changing meters of 2/8, 5/8, 3/4,
2/4, 5/8, 2/8, 5/8, 2/8, 5/8, 2/4, 5/8, 2/8, 5/8, 2/8, 3/4. In Bartók's instance, however, the alternation of 5/8 with
2/4 and 2/8 gives the music a folk-like sound that Radzynski does not have.
The Italian performance indications in a piece often show expressive character as well as tempo. When we look at the performance indications in *Canto*, we find inconsistency. Here is a list:

- Moderato (\( \frac{\text{m}}{\text{s}} = 54-58 \)) (m.1)
- Allegro (\( \frac{\text{m}}{\text{s}} = \text{c.138} \)) (m.43)
- Allegro maestoso (\( \frac{\text{m}}{\text{s}} = \text{c.72} \)) (m.74)
- Allegretto lusingando (\( \frac{\text{m}}{\text{s}} = 60 \)) (m.82)
- Tempo di menuetto (\( \frac{\text{m}}{\text{s}} = 138 \)) (m.106)
- Adagio (\( \frac{\text{m}}{\text{s}} = \text{c.46} \)) (m.148)
- Adagio (\( \frac{\text{m}}{\text{s}} = \text{c.46} \)) (m.229)

Here the Italian indications are not consistent with the metronome marks for tempo. For example, Radzynski's metronome marks show the beat in the Allegro at m.43 is almost twice as fast as the Allegro beat at m.74. (The Allegro in m.74 is not just allegro but is qualified with *maestoso* — a qualification that cannot by itself cut the tempo almost in half.) Turning to the Adagio sections at the end of the piece, one finds two Adagio markings at \( \frac{\text{m}}{\text{s}} = 46 \), which is just little slower than the beat of the opening moderato. From these indications it is clear here that the composer uses the Italian indications not to show consistent tempo relations, but instead as character indications or as more context-based tempo suggestions.
Radzynski is not the only composer with this type of inconsistency. Bartók is known as a composer who took great care over tempo markings and indications for performance — and his style as discussed above is not distant from Radzynski’s. In most cases, Bartók included not only Italian tempo descriptions but also metronome marks and elapsed time figures. Like Radzynski, Bartók showed inconsistencies in his tempo indications. In the *Romanian Folk Dances*, Bartók gives the first four movements as (1) Allegro moderato at \( \text{\textfrac{\text{dotted quarter note}}{4}} = 104 \); (2) Allegro at \( \text{\textfrac{\text{dotted quarter note}}{4}} = 134 \); and (3) Andante at \( \text{\textfrac{\text{dotted quarter note}}{4}} = 116 \). Note here that the Andante is faster than the Allegro moderato and not much slower than the second movement Allegro. It is not helpful simply to attribute inconsistency to Bartók and Radzynski — it is more likely that they used word tempo indications to suggest expression as well as to specify tempo.

*Moderato*, of course, means "moderately," and we usually see the word as a qualification to a tempo indication like *Allegro moderato*, meaning a bit slower than *Allegro*. There are also infamous examples of composers writing *Molto moderato*, including one in a Schubert sonata that leads to an amazing variety of tempos in performance. An 18th-century French music dictionary indicated that *moderato* meant "with moderation, discretion, wisdom, etc., neither too loud, nor too soft, nor too fast, nor too slowly, etc."26 The conclusion to be drawn here is that a composer's "moderately" direction is not only an indication specifically for a moderate tempo, but also suggests moderation as a broader expressive character.

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In Radzynski's *Canto*, as mentioned, the *moderato* metronome mark at the opening is almost as slow as for the last Adagio. One concludes that the composer includes the *Moderato* sign on the first page (see Example 1) to instruct the pianist to "moderate" somewhat the unusual slowness of the quarter (at 54-58). The opening *Moderato* warns the pianist not to let the tempo get too slow, or it could be telling the player not to let the tempo *sound* too slow (not as slow as an adagio sounds). More specifically, this might be to encourage the pianist from staying too long on the long tied note values. Each of these flourishes should go through to the next and not thought to be separate chords or events. It is only in m.4 that there is a fermata showing the end of this phrase.

The *Allegro* indication in m. 43 marks the start of a section where no problem seems to exist between the Italian tempo indication and the metronome marking ($\frac{\text{\textbullet}}{\text{\textbullet}} =$ ca.138). At the *Allegro maestoso* beginning in m.74, the relatively slow metronome mark makes sense when we look at the short note values: mostly 32nd notes. The *Allegretto lusingando* at m.82 is again confusing. "Lusingando" means "coaxing," "wheedling," "caressing," or "flattering." These are 3/8 measures, and at dotted quarter = 60, the rhythm — which is mostly in 16ths — moves by quickly. At this high speed, the question comes up of how to interpret the *lusingando*. Since it is impossible to coax and caress at this speed, the coaxing and caressing must be expressed through touch, phrasing, and dynamics rather than through tempo.
CHAPTER 18: PERFORMANCE ISSUES

Even though Canto is such an early composition it already shows a highly original, poetic, and idiomatic approach to the keyboard. In this section, Radzynski's idiomatic writing for the piano will be discussed in terms of specific performance opportunities and challenges. The present author has presented Canto twice in concert, and this study will help explain his increasing admiration for the piece just as the following performance suggestions will show his hope that more pianists will study it and perform it. The piece can seem like a collection of different compositional styles, and for that reason the pianist must first define the many and varied challenges posed throughout the piece, and then devise solutions to them.

18.1 Section A (mm.1-7)

18.1.1 Fingering

This first, introductory section combines fast notes with long single notes, but the first notes of each group are a dyad of major seconds (see Example 19).

Example 19: Suggested fingering for Radzynski, Canto, mm.1-7
Though this opening has the character of a French overture, as previously mentioned, for the opening of *Canto* it is important not to play the opening pentuplets and echoing 32nd notes as embellishments. In other words, every note must sound; the most important note is not the last, long note, but the first note of each group. If the composer wanted to emphasize the long notes he would have written the opening figures as ornaments, but he did not. The first notes must be fingered 5 and 3 in both hands, the second note as 4 in both hands, and the third note is 1. The last, held note changes from B to C in the right hand, so the last note is fingered 2. Each motion has to be one hand gesture with simple fingering and with no finger crossings or such, to play each group as just one gesture.

**18.1.2 Timing and pacing**

This A section poses particular problems in timing. As already mentioned, the opening seven bars are an introduction, and almost the very same pattern is repeated eight times (see Example 20). These seven measures can be divided into two different sections. The first section (mm.1-4) is the main statement and the second (mm.5-7) echoes the first. The composer indicates this echo when he writes "quasi lontano" (like distant) for the last three bars.
Example 20: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.1-7

The main, first section is *fortissimo* and written in quicker rhythmic values than the second section. It is as if the composer is writing an echo, with the time delay and the slower note values one would hear in an echo; to add to this effect he writes "meno mosso" above m.5. This second section is almost the same as the first in terms of notes: the dynamic is softer with the echo but compensating color has been added by adding some notes to the chords.

The pianist meets a considerable timing challenge already in the first four measures. The four gestures in mm.1-4, although each is a separate hand gesture by itself, must come together as one uninterrupted phrase until the last note. The
composer indicates for the pedal to be held over the entire four-bar phrase, helping the player bring the four smaller phrases together into the one uninterrupted bigger phrase; these pedals also produce the color of this passage. Another timing issue appears in m.5: the composer marks the end of the first four-bar section with a fermata and breath mark, but does not do this at the end of the section in m.7, making it clear that the player must move directly into the next section at m.8. In m.7 it is tempting to draw the rhythm out and end with a fermata, especially as this second section is a written-out as a ritardando rhythm, but one should resist this inclination.

18.2 Section B (mm.8-13)

18.2.1 Phrasing

As mentioned in the structural discussion above, Idea 1 of the piece is presented in Section B (see Example 21). One must, therefore, be very careful to present the phrase logically, and to present it with appropriate shaping.
For reasons of phrase structure discussed earlier, one should think of this as a single phrase and single shape. Though there are clusters, one must remember to voice the top line because emphasizing it and making it ring out makes the texture clearer. The tempo marking is *poco animato*, so a flexible tempo is recommended. The dynamic marking is also important: the composer clearly makes the phrase an arch with a *forte* climax on beat 3 of m. 9 and then a secondary high point on beat 3 in m. 11. There are two arches within the one phrase, in other words, and it is important to give them some separation by observing the *subito piano* in m. 10. There are many notes, so to make the color clear one should keep the pedal clean, changing it on each chord. Lastly, the right-hand phrase finishes on the 2nd beat of m. 12, but the left hand continues beyond this with a tolling line between C and C#, and this must be brought out clearly to finish this phrase. If one observes the composer's
rallentando and calando marks, the section will be finished properly.

18.3 Section C (mm.14-23)

18.3.1 Articulation and color

*Canto* contains four dance-like triple meter sections, each of them metrically quite distinct from the rest of the piece and its frequently changing meters. The first of these sections, Section C (see Example 22), directly follows Idea 1. The distinctive character of this music is created not only through meter, but also by touch: one must observe the *leggiero e molto delicate* marking. To make a "light" sound with appropriate color, the left hand must be very light but not sharp, since the staccato marks are slurred. The right hand part alternates clusters with single notes. I suggest using the wrist in a rotating motion, and that rotating motion has to be continuous to the end of the slur.
Example 22: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.14-23 — with suggested fingering for the ornament in m.22

In m.10 the crescendo starts and in m.11 there is a stringendo climaxing on the G# in m. 22. Though the line descends, one must drive the phrase forward to the G#.

With the ornament in m.22 it is best not to accent the first note, but to go directly to the G#, using just one hand gesture in each hand without finger crossing — therefore using 5-4-3-2-1-2 for the F to G# in the right hand and 5-3-2-1 in the left hand for C# to F#. In m.22 there is a pedal change right after the first 16th note.
This change cleans all color but leaves just the left hand G# and B. There is also a rallentando to prepare the next section.

18.4 Section D (mm.24-36)

18.4.1 Articulation and gesture

Section D contrasts with preceding sections because it no longer has alternation of single notes and chords, but repetition of single notes (see Example 23). The repeated 16th notes propel the music forward. One must be careful to distinguish this section from earlier ones: this can be done through careful attention to the composer's dynamic marking, louder than the previous section, and using the una corda pedal as instructed to change the coloration. A similar pattern is repeated after four measures at m.28, on a higher pitch. Here the tre corda makes another color change. This section is the beginning of movement toward another climax, one that will happen at the fff in m.37.

Example 23: Radzynski, Canto, mm.24-29

59
18.5 Section E (mm.37-41)

18.5.1 Rhythm and gesture

The previous section climaxes at m.37, as discussed, but this next section (Section E, see Example 24) is both a climax and a transition to the long *senza misura* section that follows (Section F, the long and unmeasured m.42). The left hand in mm.37-41 sustains the beat from the previous section but the right hand flourishes foreshadow the longer right hand figurations in the next section. Though the note values are very fast, every note must be clear.

Example 24: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.36-41 — with suggested fingering for gestures in mm.37-39
One has to be careful in presenting the gestures in m.38, where the right hand has a
glissando and the left hand has a nonuplet, nine notes in the duration of one 8th. In
the right hand in this measure, the G# trill and the glissando should really be one
gesture, one long decrescendo. In the left hand, the nine notes will have to be
separated into two gestures (G#-G# and C-C#) but this cannot affect the single
stretch of the glissando in the right hand. Also both hands have to decrescendo here.
This section stops in m.41 with a rallentando and diminuendo that help to define
the end of the section. In mm.37-39 there are six statements with the same gesture
of nine notes divided between the hands. The best fingering to produce each as a
single gesture will be 5-3-2-1 in the left hand, and 1-2-4-5-1 in the right hand.

18.6 Section F (m.42)

18.6.1 Articulation and suggestions for practice

In Section F (see Example 25), the *senza misura* ("unmeasured") indication,
the "liberamente" instruction, and the absence of barlines indicate the absence of a
beat or meter. In the left hand, the notes in boxes are to be played in freely ordered
quick rotation while the wide-ranging coloratura line of the right hand must be
dispatched *Velocissimo, presto ma liberamente e con delicatezza* ("very fast but
freely and delicately)." The rhythm and gestures of this section are the most
unusual and distinctive so far, and pose particular problems that require specific
practice techniques.
Example 25: Radzynski, *Canto*, m.42 (beginning)

The composer has broken up this long passage into bracketed groups according to changes in the left hand chords: sometimes one bracketed group in the right hand will be coordinated with two left hand chords, as one can see in the first half of the third system in Example 25. In this section, the right hand must be fast but clear, with each note heard. Memorization will aid fluency. It will help to practice each right hand bracket separately and then practice each bracket along with the left hand in blocked chords. The free pitch rotations in the boxes must be practiced by the left hand alone. Unlike the right hand, the left hand notes are not to be heard individually but are to create color. This section starts *pianissimo* but the dynamic
is gradually louder until the *fortissimo*; at the same time the tempo increases to a *prestissimo*. Each right hand bracket contains not one but several motions. For example, the second bracket has four motions: two notes, four notes, four notes, and then again four notes. Rotating the wrist helps to connect the notes within each motion.

18.7 Section G (mm.43-76)

18.7.1 Voicing

This next section contrasts with the previous section. Section F was very stratified, the hands separated into two very different kinds of material with the right hand exploring long lines of coloratura. By contrast, the block vertical sonorities of Section G pose special challenges in voicing (Example 26).
Example 26: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.43-55

The clustered octaves in this section involve much repetition of pitch and rhythm. Some voices in the chords move by step to the following chord, and some move by leap. In some bars the chords have no variety of voice-leading, but are "streamed" in consistent parallel motion. For example, in m.44 two of the four voices ascend or
descend while the other two voices repeat the same pitch (see Example 27): the top voice of the left hand moves A#-G#-G#-G-natural-G-natural-G#, while the second voice from the top in the right hand moves E-Eb-Eb-E-natural; at the same time, the bottom voice of the left hand remains on F# and G and the bottom voice of the right hand remains on F-natural. In m.47 every voice moves together (see Example 28). Even though these clustered octaves seem block-like, one must avoid dullness and heaviness by making phrases out of them and accentuating the voice-leading. Clarifying the voice-leading will be possible only if the chords are carefully voiced.

Example 27: Radzynski, Canto, mm.43-44 — varied voice-leading within chords

Example 28: Radzynski, Canto, mm.47 — chords moving in uniform parallel motion
18.7.2 Shaping

The composer's dynamic markings, the crescendos and decrescendos especially, help one phrase and shape this passage. At the same time as one clarifies voice-leading and shapes the chord sequences, one must maintain tension by strictly keeping the tempo until the più mosso in m.52. The composer adds progressively more notes to the chords in this passage: in m.52 each hand has three notes, but by m.53 the right hand has four, by m.54 the right hand has five and the left hand has four, and by m.55 the left hand has five. As the chords become thicker in such close voicing, they become more opaque. At this point, one shouldn't try to simplify the chords or make them sound lighter: the composer is creating a crescendo using texture. The climaxes of these passages with progressively thickened chords occur in mm.56-60, and in mm.71-77 (see Example 29 for the extreme thickness of the chords).

Example 29: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.71-77
18.8 Section H (mm.77-81)

18.8.1 Observing score detail

Section H (Example 30) is a bridge between the preceding clustered-octaves section and the following metrically regular *Allegretto lusingando* section (Section I). Section H combines the cluster sounds of Section G with the texture and rhythmic character of Section I (see Example 30): clusters appear in mm.77, 78, and 80; Section I is predicted with the progression of minor seconds to major seconds in m.79 and the clear rising progression in the right hand in m.81. Because of this variety, Section H demands that one pay close attention to detail in the score. For example, repeated notes appear in m.77 with the indication *alla chitarra*, in guitar style. This is repeated in m.78 but without the fermata, so it is best to avoid accidentally inserting one this time.
Example 30: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.77-81

18.9 Section I (mm.82-105)

18.9.1 Touch and sound

This next section (Example 31) returns to the triple meter, dancelike feel of Section C. At the same time, the right hand progression of major and minor seconds recalls Section H. There are many minor 2nds and major 7ths, and the two hands often come together to create four-note clusters: the E-F-F#-G sonority on the downbeat of m.84, for instance, and the D#-E-F-Gb cluster on the downbeat of m.87.
Despite the extensive dissonance, the composer demands a light touch —
*lusingando* means coaxing or caressing, as mentioned earlier. In brief, this section demands that one "caress" the harsh dissonances. The dissonances cannot be too heavy but should be played softly enough that they are more piquant or "tangy" than thick and harsh. Light pedaling, for instance a frequently changed half pedal, will help one attain a suitably light and delicate sound.

18.10 Section J (mm.106-123)

18.10.1 Varied textures

The *temper di menuetto* starting in m.106 is the third of *Canto's* three dance-rhythm sections. This section joins together techniques and texture from earlier parts of the piece. For instance, alternations of small clusters and single notes — as heard earlier in Sections C and H — appear in the right hand (Example 32).
Example 32: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.116-119

**18.11 Section K (mm.124-144)**

**18.11.1 Reading graphic notation**

K returns to a texture of block chords with one, two, or all voices moving in parallel or oblique motion (Example 33).

Example 33: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.124-126

Tone clusters reappear at the climax of this section: the player is instructed to "play with open palms descending clusters of indefinite pitch in the highest register" (see Example 11). The block notation at this climax has black squares in the right hand and white in the left. There is some question if this literally means black notes in the right and white in the left; that is how I have played the passage, and it is effective in that form.
18.12 Section L (m.147)

18.12.1 Fast and unmeasured style

With Section L, the piece returns to the unmeasured (*senza misura*), unbarred, and stemless style seen earlier in Section F (Example 34).

Example 34: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.147 (beginning)

18.13 Section M (mm.148-160)

18.13.1 Dividing music on three staves

Section M employs a variety of textures and compositional techniques not yet heard in the piece:

1. the slowest tempo yet heard in *Canto*
2. *poco rubato e sonoro* performance indication, the first indication for rubato
3. remarkable texture, the first use of three staves
4. big changes in range and register: the first use of bass clef and first time the music goes below the G# below middle C (even that was exceptional since the music before m.148 had almost entirely been above middle C)
5. compositional style and expressive vocabulary also go in new directions; the descending lines in double-dotted rhythm in mm.153-156 (see Example 28) having a funeral-march character, suggesting the second movement of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony.
When a composer chooses to use three staves, he wants the player to differentiate between multiple lines of music. For this reason, one should practice each stave separately and then decide which voice to bring out at a given moment as well as the redistribution between the hands of the notes on the middle staff. In mm.152-157, for instance, the most important voice is the top stave and the middle stave has to be less prominent. The right hand should play the middle stave for the first three beats of m.155, move to the top stave for beat four and remain there (see Example 35). The remainder of the middle stave notes will be played with the left hand.

Example 35: Radzynski, Canto, mm.155-156 — with suggested division of the middle stave between hands

18.14 Section N (mm.161-172)

18.14.1 Left hand dynamic control

After the slow Adagio in three staves, the repeated block chords appear in the right hand (Example 36) and the left hand — for one of the first times in the piece — has the more important line in the low register. This line has decrescendos while the right hand continues to play forte, asking the pianist to pay particular
attention to dynamic control in the left hand.

Example 36: Radzynski, Canto, mm.161-166

18.15 Section O (mm.173-205)

18.15.1 Echo effect with decrescendo

In the textural change arriving with Section O, the right hand has block chords and the left hand has small fragments of note repetitions (see Example 37). The left hand, as in the previous section, is more important than the right. As can be seen from the composer's indication, the first note of each repeated-note figure in the left hand has to be accented and the following notes decrescendo as an echo effect. This repeated-note echo effect shifts to the right hand starting in m.186.

Example 37: Radzynski, Canto, mm.180-182
18.15.2 Phasing

In Section O, rhythmic patterns move out of phase between the hands, in a way that suggests Steve Reich's period of phase composition. Starting in mm.196-197 more voices accumulate with this figure (see Example 38). One should practice this passage by playing each repeated-note figure separately until comfortable playing this effect, gradually adding more voices while carefully hearing that voice retains its own distinct shape and line.

Example 38: Radzynski, Canto, mm.96-97

18.16 Section P (mm.206-224)

18.16.1 Block chords repeated with freely ordered notes

As Canto approaches its end, more elements return from earlier in the piece. In the following part (Example 39), the "phasing" with repeated-note figures continues in the right hand while the left brings back the aleatoric boxed-note figure from the senza misura Section F (m.42).
From m.209, the right hand adds additional notes to form the kind of block chords that were heard earlier in mm.43 and after. It is difficult for the right hand to keep a steady pulse while the left is presenting freely ordered note groups. The best way to prepare this is to practice hands separately, and then focus on maintaining a strict rhythm by listening to the right hand instead of the left while playing hands together.

18.17 Section Q (mm.225-228)

18.17.1 "Bouncing ball" rhythm

In the next section starting m.225 the repeated block chords move to the left hand and the right hand starts the "bouncing ball" rhythmic figure (Example 40). This right hand figure begins a repeated one-note figure rather like a ball bouncing faster. It is challenging for the left hand must "keep a steady and persistent pulse"
— as per the composer's instruction — while the right performs an elastic accelerando. The "bouncing ball" figure requires rotating fingering, such as 3-2-1-3-2-1… and the player must practice this right hand figure by itself. Another challenge in this section comes in the third system where the right hand has the "bouncing ball" figure and then immediately has a ritardando before "pick[ing] up the exact tempo of the left hand pulse" while the left hand indicates a morendo. One must practice this repeatedly, always listening attentively. The fermatas are given exact timings and these should be observed.
Example 40: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.224-225
18.18 Section R (mm.229-234)

18.18.1 Three-voice texture on two staves

In m.229, Idea 2 returns from Section M. Here there are three separate lines of music placed on only two staves. In this section, each voice has a different character. The double-dotted rhythm requires care in a texture where so much is happening, and one must retain the same character it had back in Section M.

Example 41: Radzynski, Canto, mm.229-234

18.18.2 Drum effect

In m.233 there is a low stroke in triplet rhythm where one must imitate a drum (quasi timpano); for the imitation to be effective, one must create a new color by observing the una corda instruction. This drum figure cannot interrupt the
unfolding rhythm in upper voices.

18.19 Section T (mm.237-239)

18.19.1 Interpreting the new version of Idea 1

The final senza misura section sounds like a coda (Example 42). Idea 1 reappears in a much slower tempo than in Section B, beginning with the accented F and then continuing into the ornamented triplets. The first time we heard Idea 1 at the opening of the piece it was marked poco animato, and the character has clearly changed here at the end.

18.19.2 Clarifying score notation

In the second system of Example 42 the repeated notes follow graphic notation for separate rallentandos in the two hands. There is a space in the score after the accented Gs in both hands: there should be no gap between this note and the sudden fast repeated notes, which should begin immediately.

18.19.3 Dynamic plan

In m.239, in order to create an effective morendo on the last system, one must begin with the first chords very loud, ffff. So the second chord here in the right hand needs to be played with both hands, the left hand freed for this by depressing the sustain pedal on the bass chord. For an effective performance, the player should keep on "playing" the keys at the end of the morendo, even when no sound is being made. There can be no ritardando, as the composer has indicated.
Example 42: Radzynski, *Canto*, mm.238-239
Jan Radzynski’s *Canto* does not lend itself to effortless and straightforward discussion, just as it is not a work that invites a casual, relaxed, or even spontaneous approach to performance. As shown by the structural discussions above, *Canto* is compact in form. While writing the present document, however, the author at no time felt he was discussing a short composition. The piece is very rich in material and references to other times and traditions. The originality and variety of *Canto* mean that the work has different possibilities for interpretation and performance (it poses a "broad spectrum of expressive demands," as the composer says).

*Canto* poses considerable challenges to the performer, as listed and discussed above. Some sections of *Canto* pose fingering challenges: though Radzynski’s piano writing in *Canto* is colorful, idiomatic, and fulfilling for the pianist, some passages do not lie very naturally under the hand. This is a matter of the chordal structures being rather opposed to the shape of the hand, and common-practice pianistic techniques being unsuited to long and fast passages written in irregular, changing intervals. Passages with fast, repeated notes can be arranged in patterns and separated between the hands in ways that strongly challenge the pianist’s coordination. With its generally through-composed structure and rhythmic variety, the piece also poses challenges of timing and articulating form.

*Canto* poses extensive challenges, in summary, but the composer's true
musicality means that the process of learning, addressing, and performing this piece is a fulfilling and rewarding process. It is certainly substantial in its length and its variety of textures and stylistic references. Because Canto is also such a "musical" work, however, this performer identifies with it and feels that it is an opportunity for real musical expression. One cannot always say such things about examples of recent music, or about many compositions of any period.

The analytic descriptions in this description also show how varied and how clearly modern Radzynski's Canto is. It should be clear from this document that this is not tonal music or even music written to agree with and fit in with the common practice period. Nevertheless, it again proves to be an appealing work, and it is never dry or uninteresting. As the author himself has discovered in performance, it is not a piece just for professional musicians, but also appeals to audiences with its rich and varied nature. The point is that it is the compositional techniques themselves and their variety that engages the listener — the minimalist phasing, the Bartókian clusters and "barbaric" rhythms, the more delicate and polyphonic parts that can sound like Alban Berg. Canto is not an attractive piece in spite of its compositional techniques, but because of them.

Variety in a piece can be either intriguing or intimidating. The present author has worked to be truthful and thorough to explore the various paradoxes of Canto — self-contradictions that are interesting to the analyst, the music historian, the listener, but possibly risky for the composer. The most basic paradox in this composition is that it is a "song" written for a non-songful instrument. There are other paradoxes discussed, for example, the fact that the composer chooses to
describe *Canto* as a cantus firmus piece with a fragmented or hidden cantus firmus, and that the composer "plays with" ideas of recollection, similarity, and difference in putting together his form.

Clearly, *Canto* is not a dogmatic or doctrinaire piece of music and it is rich enough for different kinds of discussion, allowing interpreters to reach different conclusions. This document has offered many ideas and suggestions on performance and preparation for performance, but the author hopes that he did not suggest that *Canto* can or should be interpreted — interpreted in the sense either of performance or of analytical discussion — in one specific way. In fact, if a listener or performer were to ask this author for only one piece of information or guidance about *Canto*, he would say to approach it with an open mind and generous heart, and then to be prepared for a very generous and wide-ranging musical experience.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

Jan Radzynski discusses *Canto* in an interview

1. *Why did you call this piece Canto?*

I'm not entirely sure. If you composed it, what would you call it? I didn't know I was writing "canto"; the name came later. When the baby is born, then the name is given. When you hear the title to a piece, there are several reasons that particular title is given. You may want to hint at a mode of listening: you want to tell your audience something about the piece. You want to give the end of the rope to grab onto. This is also a marketing strategy, you know. You want the title to be intriguing, interesting, not boring. Imagine "Piano Piece No.7" - that's not very interesting.

2. *In the program note, you say that your piece evokes various national styles of piano playing, in particular the French and German. Are you talking about 20th-century pianists like Alfred Cortot and Arthur Schnabel? Could you say something more about those styles and how you used them?*

You know, when I think of the German style, it is something like this [m.229]. And there are other places, like the slow section. And this part sounds like the *Eroica* funeral march. And this part is Mahler to me, this dotted rhythm: a gesture [m.153]. Actually in two parts, two instruments playing, and here three. And with the harmony in the left hand. And it's demanding, this passage.
I don't know if you mention the dances here, for example the menuetto which can sound like a waltz [m.106]. I was thinking about Ravel. And then the \textit{alla gitarra} section, that is very Spanish [m.77].

If you write for the piano, you really have those three associations. To me this sounds very French this waltz, of course with changing meters. What determines for me that this is a waltz are these measures [mm.82ff]. Then the measures become shorter, but it doesn't really matter because you get [m.85]. Now then there are of course the pyrotechnics of more contemporary ideas about the keyboard, the echo and reverberation, and so on. I am very happy with this notation that I came up with, the idea of how to tell this note into a beat: a note that becomes offbeat becomes downbeat. I think that works well.

3. \textit{Are there any composers you would say are influences that you can hear in Canto? For instance, is the “phasing” section a reference to Steve Reich?}

No, I didn't know Steve Reich then. You know, Steve Reich at that time wasn't very well known, back in 1981. And he was composing music based on five pitches, four pitches, very minimalist - I was never drawn to that.

4. \textit{Since you studied for awhile with Penderecki, and a bit longer with Druckman. I'm wondering if you were influenced by them?}

This is a tricky question, because very often composers don't like to admit that they're influenced by anybody. But it's a good a question. I cannot really name a particular composer that I was influenced by. I was no longer Penderecki's student at that time, I was pretty much on my own. I had no teacher, I just wrote the piece
and sent it to the pianist.

If you ask Penderecki who he was influenced by, he would say Mozart! [laughs] But of course we all live in the context of other people and other music, and we hear different things. Whether they're influences or not, often we don't know - we can subconsciously take something we have in our memory without necessarily knowing consciously what it is we are taking. I knew that I was dealing with certain approaches to the keyboard, the German, the French. The German is more line and bass oriented. It depends on who's playing the piano. I think I was thinking about that. And one thing for sure that I was thinking, was that I didn't want to write a piece with pens inside the piano, with sound effects, with prepared piano. I wanted to write for traditional piano and traditional pianist, with two hands on the keyboard and two feet on the floor. Some things here are not traditional, but the notation is as traditional as can be. And you know there is some margin for interpretation, but everything is precisely notated. And there is one thing that is difficult to play: this crescendo on this note [m.229]. I mean, you play this note louder because you hear a crescendo; it's like a trumpet; you can't do it on the piano, but I can still write a crescendo. The pianist is moving to here; this will be louder, it does something to you when you interpret this: what did he mean crescendo on this one note? It's exactly the opposite of a diminuendo: you play the C, and immediately, that's the nature of the instrument.

5. Would you call Canto an atonal piece?

It is not a tonal piece, but it's not atonal either. I would say quasi-tonal, or para-
tonal, or near-tonal, or almost-tonal [laughs].

A melody doesn't have to be tonal: a melody is a melody, a line. There are some tonal centers in my piece. 'A' may be a local tonal center at times, but probably not globally. If there is a gesture that reminds you of tonal music, that doesn't necessarily mean it is tonal. It can be taken straight from Beethoven, a gesture of rhythm and direction and shape and contour, but it doesn't have to be tonal. Like Schoenberg. With Schoenberg's music, if you change the notes, you get Brahms. So Germanic, so full of pathos. Like Brahms, but atonal.

Now look here, I start this tune [m.209]. Now you think that the G# would come here [m.215] and then F# [m.217]. It would be a bit more banal, but I could have done it. Why does it sound like F# minor? Because this sounds like a suspension, starting here [m.215]. But I never go to F#. The tune here is almost like Vivaldi, up to this point. Here you think the E# will come [m.218] but the E# never comes [laughs].

6. When you wrote this piece, did you have any specific musical form in your mind?

No, I didn't. I just followed my intuition. It's a through-composed form. In other words, when I was here, I didn't know how I was going to finish it! But I would say the piece finished itself. When you start having a dialogue with your piece, the piece talks back to you. You see what you have, and you want it to make sense.

7. In the program note, you say that you used a Cantus firmus in your piece. What is the Cantus firmus that you used and how did you use it? Why is it a cantus firmus
and not a theme?

That's the full melody there, and then I quote it later - fragments of it. I called it a cantus firmus because it sounded good. [laughs]

The repetition element in Canto is all-present. You have a repetition of this, and you have a repetition of this element again. And the title Canto, I think has to do with cantus firmus. This melody comes back at the very end: and you know, this is a quote from the Bach chorale "Est ist genug." And this is really the first time where the melody is completely exposed, solo - like an oboist is playing here. Elsewhere it is decorated with other notes.

And you know that grace note here, this makes you think that I am quoting the Eroica funeral march. Some people pointed this out to me last week that I was quoting the Eroica; I wasn't really quoting the Eroica. But you know, each listener comes to the listening experience with his or her own baggage.

8. Would you say Canto is a “pianist's piece,” or a piece of music that you happened to write for piano? Is it difficult for you to write for the piano, as opposed to a string instrument for example?

I remember the pianist who first played Canto, Martin Goldray. he told me that any time he puts it on a program, everyone always asks him about this piece - not about other things, Schumann, Brahms, whatever.

I believe Canto could be orchestrated, but I cannot imagine it transcribed for another instrument like a guitar or the marimba, I can't imagine that. So it is a
piano piece. You know it is easier than it sounds! I always tell my students, it is easy to write something that sounds easy but is difficult to play. In five minutes I can write music that will take a year to learn; but this makes no sense. I'm not saying we shouldn't challenge the performer. I mean, you're challenged here. There are a lot of tricky things, difficult definitely. Also because there are some unusual things that you don't do in other pieces: like speeding up in one hand and slowing in the other, you don't do that usually. And that's difficult until you find that compound rhythms… I mean, there are ways to learn this, but it's challenging. All those fast passages are, uh, user-friendly. They're under your fingers; you never stop and say to yourself, does he think I have seven fingers. I wrote it at the instrument, always with one hand on the keyboard, so I was very aware of what is comfortable and what is not comfortable. If it is comfortable for my hand, it will be twice as comfortable for your hand.

This collection of notes [m.42] is harmony, but I don't want to limit the pianist to a particular group. It would have been very difficult if I had written a passage not with three passages, but in a particular order, as many as six notes, it would have been much more difficult. Because the way it is written, you know you have to play this very fast, and that you change the harmony but you don't insist on a particular order of notes. And then this is not free - it has to go, as you know. I could have written this with beams, like 32nd notes; but the page would have been black. Better to just write note heads, and then say play as fast as you can - so you don't have the stems, you don't have the beams, it looks less imposing.

The original notation was easier to read [m.14]: I wrote a bracket here for
black notes and then just added a single white note. Because when you start
learning it, you find out right away that the consecutive keys are usually played
with these four fingers. And the physiology of your right hand determines the notes.
It is not difficult, but it could have been very difficult if I hadn't thought about what
would be easy under the fingers, how can you play it without making any effort,
without changing from one 16th note to the next. It would change on every one of
these 8th notes. It would be hell, very difficult to learn. But the way it is, it is very
easy to learn.

The piano is a wonderfully versatile instrument. The piano can sing, the
piano can be brilliant, the piano can be deep, profound. It's a wonderful instrument.
But there's the nature of the instrument. If you want to do a crescendo you can do it
with successive notes, of course, but not on one note. You cannot swell the note,
but every instrument has its limitations. You mentioned the violin. You know, the
violin needs support. There are magnificent pieces for solo violin, but a usual violin
recital has the piano. Or "Johnny and Friends," violin and cello, or whatever. So the
instrument has its own limitations. But with the piano you can play the entire score,
and on the violin only one part. The piano is a wonderful instrument within the
orchestra, very useful. It's a great percussion instrument, and it leads pitch
resolution to other groups, because the low register speaks much faster than other
instruments. When you have double basses entering, it takes you three seconds to
understand what the note is. But when it is supported by piano, even if you don't
hear the piano, even if the piano plays pianissimo, you can hear the pitch
immediately.
9. *When will you write something more for the piano?*

I do have another piece I wrote when I was, seventeen, I think. But you know there's a story about Bartók. Bartók was once asked why he never wrote a piece for cello, like a cello concerto. And you know his answer? Because no one ever asked me, he said!