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HINDEMITH'S THIRD PIANO SONATA: A NEW ASSESSMENT

The Ohio State University D.M.A. 1984

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HINDEMITH'S THIRD PIANO SONATA
A NEW ASSESSMENT

DOCUMENT

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

By
Viscount Francis Thurston, B.M., M.M.

****

The Ohio State University
1984

Reading Committee:
Dr. Alexander Main
Dr. Rosemary Platt
Richard Tetley-Kardos

Approved By
Richard Tetley-Kardos
Adviser
Department of Music
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Finally, special thanks go to my wife, Vickie, with admiration for her fortitude in typing all drafts of the paper while maintaining the roles of wife, mother, and homemaker. It is no exaggeration to say that the completion of this document was made possible by her love.
VITA


1973 ....................... B.M., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1980 ....................... M.M., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1980-1983 ................. Teaching Associate, Department of Music, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1980-1984 .................. Adjunct Faculty, Department of Music, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio

Recital Dates:

- May 18, 1981 Solo recital
- March 9, 1982 Concerto
- November 18, 1982 Chamber recital
- May 19, 1983 Solo recital

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Piano Performance

Studies in Piano Performance. Professor Richard Tetley-Kardos

Studies in Piano Literature. Professor Rosemary Platt

Studies in Music History. Professor Alexander Main

Studies in Music Theory. Professor Gregory Proctor
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Paul Hindemith's Third Piano Sonata, perhaps his finest solo piano composition aside from the *Ludus tonalis*, was long held in general admiration. Yet in recent years, doubtless in part because of the decline in Hindemith's reputation that set in just after his death, the work seems almost to have fallen out of sight. Apparently something has gone awry. Either the Sonata's earlier reputation was undeserved or a major work has been at least temporarily dropped from the repertoire. For those of us who claim to be serious pianists, it is time the case was reopened.

The Third Sonata in a sense belongs to that group of Hindemith's works, such as the opera *Mathis der Maler*, whose first performances in Germany were prevented by a government ban. All three of Hindemith's piano sonatas were composed in 1936, and the First Sonata was to be played in Berlin in the autumn of that year by Walter Gieseking. Shortly before the scheduled date for the concert, however, the German Propaganda Ministry, having lately censured the violinist Georg Kulenkampff for playing Hindemith's new Violin Sonata in E (1935) in public, ordered Gieseking to remove the First Piano Sonata from the program. As the famous pianist explained to Hindemith later that autumn, the authorities, disturbed by the demonstrative applause that the Violin Sonata had aroused, had thought it
expedient to forbid further performances of Hindemith's works.¹

Had this ban not been imposed, it is likely that Gieseking, who at that time often included recent works in his programs, would have played the Third Sonata in Germany not long afterward. This can be inferred from a letter to Hindemith dated August 3, 1936, from his friend Willy Strecker at the publishing house of B. Schott and Sons in Mainz:

... Gieseking called me delighted with the Third Piano Sonata, and spoke of his meeting with you. He has been made completely happy by the Third Piano Sonata, even though the last two movements are still missing, and he appears to give it preference over the two others.²

It is startling to hear of such a reaction to the first two movements alone, since, for those who know the sonata in its entirety, it is apt to be the fugal finale that makes the most vivid impression. This, at any rate, is the movement that has been most often remarked upon in print. In a review, for example, of the Third Sonata's first public performance anywhere, which was given by Jesús María Sanromá at the Library of Congress in April of 1937,³ Cecil Michener Smith, reporting the event in the pages of Modern Music, singled out only this movement for individual mention:

The fugue is undoubtedly one of the masterpieces of recent polyphony... No serious student of modern music can afford to overlook this spectacular fugue.⁴
Smith expressed only one reservation about the sonata, and it was a sympathetic one. The difficulty of the work, he felt, would deter many pianists from learning it. Nevertheless the Third Sonata was performed often enough in the next few decades that Royal S. Brown, reviewing Glenn Gould's recording for *High Fidelity* in 1974, called it "a staple of the contemporary piano repertoire."\(^5\)

The reasons for its early popularity are not hard to find. Not only did it have pianistic as well as musical appeal; it was aided by the favorable critical climate of the forties and fifties, an era in which Hindemith's importance was hardly questioned. Even Schoenberg, in his last years, was aware of Hindemith's standing, to his own discomfort. Thus, in a letter to the painter Oskar Kokoschka dated July 3, 1946, Schoenberg complained that even some of his own adherents placed Hindemith (along with Stravinsky and Bartók) on a par with himself.\(^6\) Hans Tischler probably expressed the sentiment of a good many musicians and critics when, in an article written for *Music Review* in 1959, he hailed the *Ludus tonalis* as "a worthy peer of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier."\(^7\)

Not long after this, however, Hindemith's critical fortunes took a turn for the worse. Soon after his decease on December 28, 1963, Hans Redlich, in an article "Paul Hindemith: a Re-assessment," which appeared in the *Music Review* for August 1964, described Hindemith's output following *Mathis der Maler* as "music learned, disciplined, and— ...
monotonous in the morose drabness of its shapes, narrow in its acoustic compass, and extremely ugly in sound." William Austin, in his *Music in the Twentieth Century*, decried Redlich's polemic as "an unusually explicit statement of some harsh judgments widely current when Hindemith died, offered with no new evidence." But Ian Kemp’s cool, unsympathetic treatment in the New Grove article on Hindemith has probably done little to dispel the anti-Hindemithian vapors. In fact, Kemp at one point seems to concur with Redlich, remarking of the works after Mathis—and these, of course, would include the Third Piano Sonata—, "The warmth and passion that entered his music with *Mathis der Maler* tended thereafter to keep their distance." It is noteworthy that Andrew Porter, admiring some of these very works, finds them "inspired, warm, joyful, even passionate." Porter’s voice, indeed, has been one of the most authoritative to lament the current neglect. In a review for *The New Yorker* in 1979, he had this to say:

> Since his death in 1963, Hindemith has lacked champions among those who plan concert programs and opera seasons, and as a result some of the most noble, substantial, and nourishing music of our time is going unheard.12

That the neglect is real was made plain—at least symbolically—by the pre-season brochure that was issued for the Aspen Music Festival of 1983. The twentieth-century compositions to be performed numbered 144, and this in itself
was an impressive showing. But, not one piece of Hindemith's was included.

Not only have the times been bad for Hindemith in general, but the worth of his Third Piano Sonata has been questioned by two prominent interpreters of twentieth-century piano music. In 1973 the late Glenn Gould, in the notes to his recording of the three Hindemith sonatas, pointed to a "gaffe" in the Third Sonata that he attributed to Hindemith's "fondness for contrapuntal mischief" and his "not infrequent miscalculations in stage management." Three years later David Burge, discussing, for Contemporary Keyboard, the twentieth-century pieces most worthy of a pianist's consideration, gave short shrift to Hindemith's Third Sonata. While conceding that the three sonatas were "solid and craftsmanlike" (a description hardly calculated to inspire enthusiasm), Burge found them "conservative" (in context the sense was pejorative), and he dismissed the Third Sonata, along with the First, as "pretentious."

As might be expected, the Third Sonata has received but little in the way of serious critical attention. Dorothy Anne Flood, in a study of all three of the piano sonatas, examines the relationship between rhythm and harmonic fluctuation. Eberhard Zwink, in his dissertation, "Paul Hindemith's Underweisung im Tonsatz als Konsequenz der Entwicklung seiner Kompositionstechnik," offers harmonic and melodic analyses of the Sonata's first movement. And Günther Metz,
in a monograph on Hindemith's polyphonic style, offers a brief formal analysis of the fourth movement. To the best of my knowledge, however, the piece has nowhere been treated as a whole. The present writing attempts to remedy this deficiency.

The Third Piano Sonata, a work lasting eighteen minutes in performance, consists of a gentle pastorale, a driving, witty, scherzo, a richly lyric slow movement, and a triumphant double fugue. With the exception of the scherzo, all the movements engender moods suggesting strength and nobility. In the scherzo, appropriately, the mood is lighter, but even it ends on a note of serenity rather than humor.

The outer tonal scheme of the four movements follows Viennese Classical models, the tonal centers being Eb in every movement but the third, which employs the subdominant Eb as its tonic. The choice of a tempo for the "slow" movement that is more andante than adagio (mässig schnell \text{\textsuperscript{a}}\textit{etwa 84}) also brings the Haydn-Mozart era to mind. As will be seen, however, the inner tonal schemes of the first, second, and fourth movements do not imitate Classic or even nineteenth-century models, but are based instead upon a large scale application of— to use Hindemith's terminology— upper and lower leading tones, i.e. the pitches lying, respectively, a half-step above and below the tonic.
The first movement is a sonata form modified by an arch-like plan as seen below:

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{Exp.} & \text{Dev.} & \text{Recap.} \\
\hline
\text{Sections: } & A-B-\text{trans.}-\text{dev.}-\text{trans.}-B'-A' & \\
\hline
\text{Tonal Centers: } & Bb-A- & \uparrow \downarrow \uparrow \downarrow \\ & B-Bb & \\
\end{array}
\]

The turbulent development is framed by outer sections that are pastoral in mood, exemplifying what Kemp, in his Hindemith, calls "the calm at the center of his post-Mathis music, the quality which distinguishes it most readily from the often tense and agitated music...of the majority of his contemporaries."\(^{18}\)

The two-part phrase which opens the sonata pervades the first movement. At least one of its two motives (shown below) is present in 96 of its 131 measures:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ex.1} \\
\text{Ex.1}
\end{align*}
\]

The gentle harmony, with its frequent major and minor triads and mostly mild dissonances, is maintained throughout the whole of the exposition.
After 17 measures that develop the two motives of the first phrase, Group I closes with a new idea. Its tied-note chords of parallel thirds and sixths avoid the strong beats, conjuring a momentary sensation of floating in space:

I, 18-23

As Group II begins, the opening motive from Group I (ex.1-"x") is reheard as an ostinato. This is an instance of the combining of First- and Second-Group material that Kemp cites as a typical feature of Hindemith's expositions:

I, 27-43
This passage, with its expansive melody, its warm sonority, and its lilting ostinato, forms no contrast to Group I, but rather it enriches the prevailing mood of tranquility.

The development, however, does form a marked contrast to the exposition. Besides its obvious difference in dynamic level, this section is set off by a restless figuration in sixteenths that unifies an otherwise fragmented succession of motives from Group I:

This device is something Hindemith may well have learned from Beethoven. In ten of the earlier master's piano sonatas, the first-movement development sections are similarly unified by a continuous rhythmic pattern.20
Following a passage whose full chords and furious broken octaves produce the movement's biggest sonority, the present development ends with the cessation of the sixteenth-note figuration:

I, 66-68

Ex. 5

A brief transition leads to a recapitulation of Group II. After the unsettled development and the chromatic intensification of the motive immediately preceding it (mm. 72-74), this music imparts a gratifying sense of well-being:

I, 72-77 Recap.

Ex. 6
A sparsely textured recapitulation of Group I commences in m. 99 in a high, remote register:

I, 99-101

Ex. 7

Like the passage that closed Group I (ex. 3), the coda uses tied chords that hover off the beat. After a last reminiscence of the now familiar pastorale motive, the movement ends on a quietly lingering major triad whose position seems to suspend it in midair:

I, 129-131

Ex. 8

Having thus scanned the first movement, we now have some matters of form to be cleared up that were only mentioned in passing above. The development proper is framed by two transitional passages of similar length, the first
(mm.43-48) building up to the dynamic level of the development, the second (mm.68-74) winding down from it. These two transitions, in turn, are flanked by the original and recapitulated versions, respectively, of Group II, and the two versions of Group I, farthest from the center, lie on either side of the Second-Group sections. Hence, a kind of formal palindrome results:

... A-B-trans.-dev.-trans.-B'-A'

Fig. 2

Furthermore, Group II is not recapitulated in the tonality of the opening (Bb), but in A, the lower leading tone to Bb. Since the two leading tones are opposites, in a sense, this structural use of them might be described as a kind of reversal, echoing the one that is inherent in the movement's arch-like design:

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<tr>
<th>Exp.</th>
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<th>Recap.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sections:</td>
<td>A-B</td>
<td>B'-A'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonal Centers:</td>
<td>Bb-B</td>
<td>A-Bb</td>
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Fig. 3

This structural relationship between the leading tones, A and B, occurs in a condensed version in the coda, as if in summary of the main tonal features of the movement:
Before leaving the first movement altogether, attention must be drawn to the striking resemblance it bears, at least in certain aspects, to the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata in A major, Opus 101. Hindemith, like the earlier master, chooses to open a four-movement sonata with a terse pastorale. Though fairly unusual, this in itself may not be a significant link, but the likeness between the two passages below is so strong as to preclude the possibility of mere coincidence:


Hindemith, Third Sonata, I, 113-119

Ex. 9

Ex. 10
In addition to the strong visual similarity between the two passages, the chords that are tied over the beats in the Beethoven example elicit the same floating sensation mentioned above in connection with Hindemith's tied-note chords. Later, moreover, when these passages recur in their respective recapitulations, both composers add tension to the previously placid music by the use of more complex chords, underlining the effect by an increase in volume:


Hindemith, Third Sonata, I, 113-119
Finally, both codas employ the hovering, tied-note chord idea, reduced to isolated, single chords in Beethoven, and to three-chord groups in Hindemith. Moreover, in each case, the one- or three-chord units are punctuated by two silences of three eighth rests each. To be sure, in the Hindemith, the left hand fills up those rests with a little motive, but the essential similarity to Beethoven seems undeniable:


Hindemith, Third Sonata, I, 121-125

The second movement is a lively scherzo and trio in modified ternary form, as is shown in Fig. 4 below:
This movement opens with a relentless rhythmic motive that, along with chromatically moving inner voices, sounds against a Bb pedal in the bass:

After fourteen measures the hands switch roles. The right hand takes over the pedal and the inner voices while the left hand reproduces the melody, arriving at a cadence on A that was heard previously in m.12:
In both cases there is movement toward the tonality of A that is curtailed by a return of Bb. It may be mentioned here in passing that A will be more firmly established in a later passage, where it will play a role in the same kind of leading tone relationship discussed in the analysis of the first movement.

In the present section, the elements that were described in the first five measures (ex.13) are developed, beginning at m.29, through an imaginative use of sequence and clever changes in meter, rhythm, and phrase lengths. For example, in the following sequential passage (mm.26-37), a gradual rise in pitch and a contraction of phrase lengths (3+2+2+1) combine to produce a sense of increased momentum:
In a passage which comes four measures later, a similar process of foreshortening is used, only this time the unit of contraction is not a measure but a quarter note. Six short phrases, indicated by brackets in ex. 16 below, are separated from each other by the insertion of a quarter rest after each phrase. Not counting these rests, the first two phrases take seven beats each (using the quarter-note, for ease of description, as one beat). The second two phrases take six beats each, and the final two take five beats each:

II, 40-53
Along with the crescendo to fortissimo in this passage, the gradual metric compression generates considerable energy. The way in which the resulting climax is quickly left behind by the slight, playful sequence that follows (mm.51-53) recalls similar sudden shifts of mood in Haydn.

As mentioned above, the tonality of A is temporarily established (mm.60-64) before giving way to the section's final return to Bb (m. 69) in a forceful restatement of the opening:

Ex.17
This opening scherzo section ends with a quiet, little codetta, which comes to full stop on a major triad before the trio commences:

II, 86-91

Ex. 18

The fleet virtuosity of the trio anticipates the fourth interlude, a perpetuum mobile, of the Ludus tonalis. A sense of exhilaration is engendered by the perky, staccato chords of the accompaniment in combination with the melody's careening arpeggios:

II, 91-94

Ex. 19

After eleven measures, the hands trade parts in a repetition of the same idea, and then, both hands execute the rapid eighth-note figuration in parallel octaves:
Following this passage, the opening of the trio returns, and the section closes with a final burst of eighth notes that plummet to the piano's lowest Bb. This last pitch of the trio announces the tonality of the returning scherzo.

In the modified return of the scherzo section, with the exception of a pianissimo marking instead of piano, the first fourteen measures duplicate the original version (ex.13) in Bb. Then, however, new sequential material follows in which, as in the first scherzo section there
is no clear tonal center. The correspondence continues in the momentary tonicization of another leading tone—B—in the present case—before the music returns to Bb in the climactic restatement of the scherzo’s opening measures (mm. 189-200 literally repeat mm. 69-80, ex. 17).

In this movement, then, as in the first, there are just two subsidiary tonal centers; namely, the upper and lower leading tones of Bb.

Except for an interpolation of five new measures (mm. 211-215), the movement ends just as the first section did. In the added passage, the rests between the final repetitions of the rhythmic motive slow its momentum before all motion comes to a halt on the sustained Bb major chord:

II. 207-217

Ex. 21

The third movement is a sonata-rondo with a march-like, yet lyric refrain. Its sections include a three-voice
fugato and a charming melody with delicate accompaniment.

This movement's formal plan is shown below:

Sections: R  \( \text{fug} \) | A | B | R
Tonal Centers: Eb | Bb | Eb
mm.: 1-27 | 27-55 | 55-75 | 76-87

Sections: C | R | B' | Coda
Tonal Centers: Eb | Eb | Eb
mm.: 88-113 | 119-144 | 145-159 | 159-178

Fig. 5

In the rondo refrain, the metronome marking \( J = 84 \),
the dotted rhythm, and the walking bass line suggest something between a funeral processional and a quick march:

III, 1-19

\( \text{Maßig schnell} \)
The legato melody has a noble, almost grim character. It is spun out in four connected phrases, the fourth being an appealing example of Hindemith's use of "wedge" progression (mm.13-19). The gradual thickening and thinning of the texture is finely wrought, as is the emergence of the A major chord (m.15) out of the darker harmony that precedes it.

After a brief transition, the fugato that follows begins on the tonal center, Bb, the dominant of Eb (the tonal center of the refrain). The subject, with its martial rhythm, is restrained at first (pianissimo), coming, as it were, from a distance:

III, 27-32

Ex.23

With each of the subject's four entries the dynamic level is increased until the music reaches a forceful climax in fortissimo. The tension is then quickly dissipated by the charming melody mentioned previously:
The Bb tonality of the fugato is maintained here by the double pedal, Bb-D, which sounds on every beat in the left hand. Together with its simple accompaniment, the high, wistful melody elicits a music box quality that offers a pleasing diversion from the refrain's dark sonorities.

A short transition leads back to the refrain, which proceeds for twelve measures before giving way to a digression (C) that develops the first two and a half measures of the refrain's melody.

At the end of "C", rapid figuration in both hands begins in a low register and quickly rises, erupting into a massive apotheosis of the refrain:

III, 114-122
After this climactic statement, the music winds down to a low, quietly resonant Eb that marks a return of the "music box" music (B'). This time, however, its sparse chordal accompaniment gives way to a single voice derived from the refrain. The effect of this high, serene counterpoint following the fully scored rondo refrain is magical:

III, 149-152

The coda briefly develops a fragment from the refrain before the topmost voice is dramatically isolated in the highest octave of the keyboard. After a momentary hesitation, it plunges downward through four octaves to arrive at a last evocation of the refrain in its original register (mm.167-170):
We note that the left hand continues the descent until the lowest octave of the piano has been reached. Thus, since extremes of register have earlier been used to provide contrasts of mood and sonority, the bridging, here, of a six-octave compass in only four measures encapsulates the registral terrain that has already been covered. In the cadential passage that follows (mm. 171-178), the gently cascading thirty-second note figuration continues under the sustained notes of the right hand, and the movement ends quietly in a mood of hushed contentment:

Here again, as in the first and second movements, the last chord is an isolated major triad whose $\frac{6}{4}$ position seems to
portend things yet to come.

The late Glenn Gould, writing in his offhand way, found fault with this movement for its inclusion of a fugato. The reason he gave for his objection, however, was an odd one, namely, that the very same fugato, with changes of tempo and meter and with a few new octave doublings, reappears in the finale. This was his remark in full:

A gaffe is evidenced by the otherwise beautifully structured adagio of the Third Sonata in which, as a secondary episode and for no apparent reason, Hindemith previews, note for note and at approximately half tempo, 24\frac{1}{2} bars of the scintillating third subject from his upcoming triple-fugue finale. It is a lapse that attests not only to his fondness for contrapuntal mischief but to his not infrequent miscalculations in stage management—the miscalculation is not inherently musical but theatrical.²¹

Two inaccuracies are worth noting here. First, there is no adagio in the Third Sonata; the third movement is obviously the one meant, and this, as we have seen, is a fairly brisk "slow" movement. Second, the fugato on its first hearing is not really "at approximately half tempo." The tempo marked is 84, as opposed to 112 for the recurrence. Neither does every analyst see the finale as a triple fugue. Gillespie (Five Centuries of Keyboard Music)²² and Getz²³ agree in finding only two subjects. Apparently Gould counted as a second subject a subsidiary idea that functions actually as a countersubject, as will be seen
below. The main point here, however, is that Gould, saying nothing against the effect of the fugato in its original appearance based his objection solely on the fact that it was a "preview." Surely this was missing part of the point, which is the startling effect of the later recurrence.

As for the rest, the fugato's appearance within the third movement seems amply justified by the effect it makes there. Its loud, rich-textured climax sets the stage, by contrast, for the first appearance of the delicate "music box" section (mm. 56-57, below):

The finale, very likely one of the finest fugues Hindemith ever wrote, has subjects that are arresting and bold, dramatic sectional contrasts, and virtuosic elán. It is essentially a three-voice fugue with two subjects and a countersubject in five sections, as may be seen in Fig. 6 below:
The first subject is distinctive, as a fugue subject ought to be. Its head motive, emphasizing tonic and dominant, is solidly emphatic. The second motive, characteristic of the composer in its use of melodic fourths, is given an unusual threefold presentation that makes a compelling effect in performance:

Following three entries of $S_1$ at regular four-measure intervals, the exposition is given a climactic conclusion by the remarkable harmonic setting of the fourth and final entry. The upper two voices of the counterpoint are treated sequentially while the threefold presentation of the subject's second motive takes on the role of a bass ostinato:
The first episode, beginning on the second beat of m.17, is based on a motive derived from the subject's second motive:

The ensuing development is tonally centered around the dominant and presents in rapid succession four new entries of S₁ (mm.28-44). Here, too, the fourth entry is given special treatment. A burst of speed in the right hand, the big sound of the widespread doubled octaves and fifths, and the extension achieved by an additional repetition of the ostinato motive in irregular augmentation, all lead to a sudden arrival on A, the tonal center of section B:
This new section consists of two ten-measure subsections in which the second literally repeats the new melodic idea (shown in m.45 above) an octave higher. When repeated, this idea proves to be a countersubject:

In light of the use of leading tones as subsidiary tonal centers in two previous movements, this section's
insistence on the lower leading tone of Bb is worth noting. There are no fewer than four strong cadences on A, and both entries of the subject, as well as all four instances of the new melodic idea, are also in A.

Section C is the exposition of a new fugue subject, but as we have seen, this music has been heard elsewhere. It is a streamlined version of the third movement's fugato. Here, in a different movement and at a considerable distance from its first hearing, the new-old subject bursts upon the scene without the slightest warning, and the transformation wrought by its new tempo is breathtaking. This second subject is shown below with its counterpart in the third movement placed above it for comparison: (see page 34 for ex.35)
III, 25-35

IV, 61-69

Ex. 35
The music from the earlier fugato leaves off in m.81, and section C ends with a chord progression that builds to an arrival on B (m.84), whereupon the countersubject returns:

IV, 80-84

Ex. 36

In the first ten measures of the new section, the countersubject appears in a literal transposition of its original version, and $S_2$ resumes immediately against it. This first subsection of $B'$, then, may be seen as a counterpart to the second subsection of $B$, where the then new melodic idea was repeated as a countersubject to $S_1$.

The second subsection of $B'$, however, is the first place where both first and second subjects are combined. Set in prominent relief, as though chiselled out of rock, the first subject's head motive effectively complements the driving second subject:

IV, 94-96

Ex. 37
This propulsive music eventually runs headlong into a full authentic cadence on B (m.107), which closes the section:

IV, 104-107

A', the last section of the movement, has two subsections, the first centered around Eb and the second around Bb. The three entries of the first subsection, accompanied throughout by the energetic figuration that concluded section A (ex.33), all begin in octaves on the subdominant:

IV, 108-116

Ex. 38

Ex. 39
This alternation of the two subjects in quick succession continues to the end of the movement.

The music returns to Bb in a broadened, fully scored statement of $S_1$:

IV, 122-127

At m.126 the last pitch of the first subject becomes the first pitch of the second subject, which continues normally at first, but then, beginning in m.127 (as seen in ex.40, above), concludes in augmentation. This imaginative development of ideas continues as the rate of alternation is quickened by the juxtaposition of only the head motive of $S_1$ (mm.133 and 135) with a fragment of $S_2$ (mm.134 and 136):
Then the music drops in both register and dynamic level to set the stage for a final surge in which subject fragments seem to pile up on top of each other (mm. 138-140), reaching at last the massive sonorities of the sonata's jubilant conclusion:

As may be seen in the example above, Hindemith saved his most ingenious pairings of $S_1$ and $S_2$ for last. After a statement of the first subject's head motive, it
seems, at first, as though $S_2$ will take over from the head motive's last pitch and continue as in ex.41 above. This proves to be a false start, though, since $S_2$ hardly begins before it is interrupted by the head motive. This pattern is repeated an octave higher, and when the head motive sounds a third time in a still higher octave, it would seem that $S_2$ must finally be allowed to continue. And, indeed, it does continue, though not from the same point as the two previous false starts. For instead of starting at the beginning of $S_2$, the music follows the head motive with an augmentation of approximately the last half of $S_2$. In this last pairing of the two subjects (from the "ff" of m.140 to the "fff" of m.144), even though it has never been heard until now, the synthesis is so natural that the seamless join passes unnoticed.

Though it may not be apparent from the above discussion of each section in chronological order, the finale follows an even more rigorous arch plan than the first movement. When viewed from its center outward in either direction, the fugue reveals an astonishingly thorough reversal of sections and subsections. To the best of my knowledge, no one, not even Metz, despite his formal analysis of the fugue, has noticed the palindromic structure in any of its aspects.

The midpoint of its 148 measures falls on the bar line between m.74 and m.75, which is just one quarter-note
beyond the exact center of the central section (C). It occurs near the end of the third entry, which is flanked by two pairs of entries that mirror each other in the order of their respective tonalities, as seen in fig.7 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tonality</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig.7

As seen above, section C is framed by the corresponding subsections of B and B' respectively, and, still moving outward from the center, although their outer subsections do not use corresponding ideas, they each maintain the structural polarity of their tonal centers, the leading tones A and B respectively. On either side of the B sections, the correspondences continue with the use of the same texture and figuration, as seen in ex.33 and 39 respectively, and the use of respective tonal opposites, dominant and subdominant. Finally the picture is completed by the Bb tonality of the outer sections of A and A' respectively. This arch design, then, at least in its larger aspects, may be seen at a glance by referring to fig. 6 above.

It is amazing that so glorious a fugue should receive no mention in Burge's rating of twentieth century piano works (*Keyboard*, June and August, 1982). It is amazing, too, that even Hans Tischler leaves it out of
account when he compares other contemporary fugues with the finale of Barber's Piano Sonata, which he calls "the most successful fugue of our generation." The Barber fugue deserves the praise it has received, but a comparison with Hindemith's would show that the latter is no less worthy of attention. The whole sonata, indeed, is imbued with qualities that should appeal to pianists and their listeners, among them variety of tonal color, diversity of mood, virtuosity in the service of ideas, and a powerful ending that affirms.

This last element is entirely in keeping with the conception of music that Hindemith, in a discussion of Augustine's De musica, set forth at Harvard in the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures of 1949-50:

We receive music's sound and forms, but they remain meaningless unless we include them in our own mental activity and use their fermenting quality to turn our souls towards everything noble, superhuman, and ideal. It is our own mind that brings about this conversion; music is but a catalytic agent to this end.

As Hindemith goes on to say, some sorts of music are better suited to this than others. As an agent of this kind, probably no other twentieth century piano sonata has surpassed Hindemith's Third, for none other that I know of so boldly embraces joy.


20. Op. 2, no. 1; op. 10, nos. 2 and 3; op. 13; op. 14, no. 1; op. 27, no. 3; op. 79; op. 101; op. 109; op. 110.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


