AN ANALYSIS OF UNIFYING MELODIC AND MOTIVIC ELEMENTS
IN LEONARD BERNSTEIN’S MASS

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KYLE B. JONES

DR. BRETT CLEMENT – ADVISOR

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA
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Chapter 1: Problem and Significance

Leonard Bernstein (1918–92) is among the most important figures in American music. His contributions as a conductor, educator, advocate, and composer made him the face of classical music in the twentieth-century United States. He gained prominence as the conductor of the New York Philharmonic from 1943–69 and as the composer of popular theater works such as West Side Story (1957).¹

Despite his fame, Bernstein’s compositions have not received the same level of scholarly attention that many of his contemporaries have, such as Copland, Britten, or Boulez. There is not one particular reason for this disparity, but one significant factor is Bernstein’s tendency to incorporate stylistic elements from popular genres, most notably jazz. To many academics of the time, jazz was a lower form of music, and therefore did not merit serious consideration.² He was accused of pandering to audiences, rather than pursuing the advancement of the art. Bernstein, however, believed that he was helping to solidify an American musical style distinct from the strongly European style of previous generations. From a young age, he argued that incorporation of elements from African-American and Latin American music was the natural progression of music in the United States. His senior thesis at Harvard, “The Absorption of Race Elements into American Music” (1939), was focused on this topic.³

This is not to say that Bernstein never utilized more esoteric or academic compositional techniques such as serialism or counterpoint. Throughout his career, critics and proponents alike termed him an “eclectic” composer. Some viewed him as a jack-of-all-trades, but master of

³ Ibid., 48.
none. Others lauded his ability to create quality music in a variety of styles, sometimes mixing them in the same work. Either way, it was evident that Bernstein drew from many different sources for influence and inspiration.

Since his music manifests aspects of many different genres, analysis of Bernstein’s music can be challenging. This factor, too, may have contributed to his repertoire being overlooked. A piece like *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs* (1949), which exhibits traits of both a big band chart and an eighteenth-century chamber work, may not fit well into any single analytical approach. Conversely, trying to hybridize approaches can end up creating more confusion than clarity.

Jack Gottlieb’s 1964 dissertation cuts through the distraction of genre and addresses the underlying musical structure. It serves as an important model for those studying Bernstein’s works. The dissertation contains an analysis of Bernstein’s compositional style, focusing on a single compositional aspect: melodic-motivic development. Gottlieb demonstrates how many of Bernstein’s pieces feature melodies based on similar motivic germs and melodic developmental techniques. He does not address specifically rhythmic, harmonic, or formal elements, except when they pertain to the motives being discussed. However, many of these factors are dependent on genre, and thus would distract from the unifying purpose of the study. His analysis provides an excellent starting point for approaching *Mass*.

*Mass: A Theater Piece for Singers, Player, and Dancers* (1971) is a prime example of Bernstein’s eclectic compositional style. At different points throughout the piece, one hears a polyphonic choir, blues singing, twelve-tone rows, instrumental dances, and English, Hebrew, or

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7 Ibid., 194–195.
Latin languages. *Mass* casts a wider stylistic net than any other work of his. It may even be considered the most auto-biographical of Bernstein’s compositions.\(^8\) Running about an hour and forty-five minutes in full performance, *Mass* is a *tour de force* of composition and performance. The text is taken from the Roman Catholic Mass, with English commentary text added, but, as the title points out, this is not a liturgical piece, but rather a theatrical performance. As such, there are departures from standard elements of the Mass.\(^9\) Social commentary plays a major role, creating an attitude that is less reverent and more accusatory, toward both God and the audience.

The huge theater piece faced mixed reviews. It found popular support from its premiere on. It ran for a full month at the Metropolitan Opera, had a performance at the Vatican, and found commercial success with its record album sales. However, some critics were less enthusiastic. Two major criticisms were its pastiche quality and its political overtones. The rock sections of *Mass* were accused of sounding like “stylized imitations,” sticking out among the more natural sounding theatrical music.\(^10\) While the general message of the work is about reconciliation and purity of faith, Bernstein was criticized for making a statement that had already been heard. *Mass* does not offer any specific solutions or resolutions for the issues and sacrilege it presents, and for that reason, some considered it irrelevant, or even blasphemous.\(^11\)

No analysis of the music of *Mass* has been published, only commentaries on the textual and social aspects of the piece. This paper seeks to fill that void. Not only does *Mass* showcase similar techniques to other works in Bernstein’s oeuvre, it acts as something of a summary of his compositional style. Elements that can be found scattered throughout his body of work come together in *Mass*. How does such a large work, with so many different styles, maintain a sense of

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8 Laird and Schiff, “Bernstein.”
unity? As this paper will show, unity is achieved the same way that Bernstein connected his entire body of work: common motives and melodic development.

Time has been kind to *Mass*. There have been many prominent performances since the turn of the century, including the Philadelphia Orchestra in 2015, and the high quality recording of the Baltimore Symphony in 2008. It seems that Hugo Cole’s 1972 review was a bit prophetic, in which he wrote:

> At some point we have to ask of the work not 'how is it done?' but 'why was it done?' and, perhaps, 'should it have been done?'. Bernstein indeed lays himself open to accusations of bad taste. Yet it is creative bad taste—the kind which Brigid Brophy declared to be 'a far more useful gift to an artist than good taste'…Whether *Mass* is in 'good taste' will undoubtedly come to seem less and less important as time goes on and the stratifications of our own musical society cease to colour our judgments. What will remain is the composition and the quality of musical invention.\(^\text{12}\)

Understanding tends to foster acceptance. Better understanding of Bernstein’s compositional brilliance is long overdue. There are many articles and dissertations discussing meaning, social commentary, message, overt symbolism, and other surface elements in his works. These provide valuable insight into Bernstein as a person, concerning his beliefs and passions. However, there is a notable lack of analysis and discussion of the music itself, particularly his later works. In fact, the criticism he faced of writing shallow music, without intellectual substance, can also be applied to the body of literature about his music: it lacks depth. This project will rectify a small part of that problem.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

Regarding the aims of this thesis, the most relevant contribution to the scholarly analysis of Leonard Bernstein’s music is Jack Gottlieb’s dissertation, “The Music of Leonard Bernstein: A Study of Melodic Manipulations.”

Gottlieb had a personal relationship with Bernstein, as he worked as Bernstein’s copyist and assistant in the late 1950s and 1960s. As such, he became intimately familiar with the composer’s works, and developed an understanding of his style. The goal of his dissertation, much like this study, was to give scholarly credence to Bernstein’s music by analyzing it from a theoretical perspective.

Gottlieb makes two major assertions. The first is that Bernstein’s melodies are derived from small motives in one of three ways: melodic segmentation, melodic integration, and melodic concatenation. The second is that these motives tend to prominently feature a leap in one direction, followed by a step, usually in the opposite direction. These two assertions create the system in which he analyzes many of Bernstein’s compositions.

Initially, he establishes the six types of motive, which he bases on the initial interval. The most common is motive by third. The next most common is motive by fourth or fifth, which are considered inversionally equal. Then, sixths, sevenths, and octaves appear in decreasing frequency. Finally, he argues that motives that move by seconds are simply scalar patterns, and do not really count as motivic structure particular to Bernstein.

Gottlieb then takes these motives and shows how they appear in a variety of pieces, developed through segmentation, integration, or concatenation. Melodic segmentation, which can be found in “Something’s Coming” from West Side Story and Symphony no. 1: “Jeremiah,”

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2 Ibid., 2.
3 Ibid., 33–47.
is the process of creating a melody by taking motivic segments from a single idea, and
manipulating them in various ways, resulting in new material for an entire verse or piece.
Melodic integration, which can be found in “Somewhere” from West Side Story and Symphony
no. 3: “Kaddish,” is the opposite process. Motives are introduced at various points throughout a
piece, eventually being combined as a clear statement of a complete idea. Melodic
concatenation, found in Symphony no. 2: “Age of Anxiety” and the symphonic suite from On the
Waterfront, is evolutionary development. It is like continuous variation, but rather than dealing
with phrases, motives are gradually transformed throughout the piece. This work is vast in
scope, and very thorough in analysis. By his own admission, Gottlieb did not address every
compositional aspect of the pieces he analyzed. However, his system provides the best approach
for understanding the body of work as a whole.

Gottlieb’s approach was by no means new. Motivic analysis, as a specific study, emerged
in the early twentieth century, with roots reaching back generations before that. Jonathan Dunsby
illustrates three perspectives of thematic and motivic analysis: developing variation, set theory,
and semiotics. Each area has its own proponents and detractors, and each seeks to provide
insights that would otherwise remain unclear.

Arnold Schoenberg was a major advocate of the concept of developing variation. Not
only did he believe that it was the best means of understanding deeper musical meaning, he also
considered it an essential compositional technique for his own writing. He believed that
“composers should be ‘connecting ideas through developing variation, thus showing
consequences derived from the basic idea and remaining within the boundaries of human

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5 Ibid., 151–152.
6 Ibid., 194.
thinking and its demands of logic.”

This attitude toward composition and analysis found application with music from the Classical era to the modern day. Particularly noteworthy was Schoenberg’s study of Brahms, in which he sought “to demonstrate at the level of theme and motive a maximal balance of unity and diversity.”

Schoenberg makes his perspective concerning the role of motives clear in *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*. He defines the features of motives, and explains its role in the creation of a piece of music. He claims that “everything depends on [the motive]’s treatment and development.” From there, Schoenberg provides numerous examples of how motives can be developed, and how they can be shaped into phrases. The book builds on these ideas, expanding to the construction of themes, small forms, and finally large forms. The whole process is based on the primary motive.

Throughout the century, various means of codifying or standardizing motivic analysis emerged from various sources. The set theory developed by Allen Forte was the one of the first successful approaches of its kind. It established a new perspective by which new music could be understood, rather than trying to modify ideas of the past to fit the present. His method concerns the twelve-tone universe without an inherent hierarchy. It views pitch class sets with transpositional and inversional equivalence, which is a departure from tonal understanding. In an era filled with atonal compositions, it is helpful to have a system that describes the music in its own context.

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8 Dunsby, “Analysis,” 912.
9 Ibid.
11 Ibid., 8–9.
The third method Dunsby discusses is semiotics, which is concerned with elements, or “signs”, that exist in a work, and interact to create continuity. The distinction of semiotics is that it views these signs as “arbitrary” or independent. They do not contain any inherent meaning for the music, so meaning must be determined by looking for structures or relationships between them.\footnote{Ibid., 920–921.} This approach connects signs to other aspects of the work, as well as cultural aspects outside of it. What results is signification of signs by two characteristics: paradigmatic and syntagmatic. Dunsby summarizes, “the paradigmatic tells us about the identity of a sign, and the syntagmatic tells us about its structural function.”\footnote{Ibid., 921.}

Although these approaches were codified in the twentieth century, their principles can be found in earlier music. The works of Franz Liszt (1811-1886) are poignant examples of the general concept of “thematic transformation.” Lyle John Anderson’s dissertation, “Motivic and Thematic Transformation in Selected Works of Liszt,” focuses on that concept.\footnote{Lyle John Anderson, “Motivic and Thematic Transformation in Selected Works of Liszt” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1977).} There is not one specific method of thematic transformation, as it “embraces all types of modification ranging from slight melodic ornamentation to extensive alterations of meter, tempo, register, and harmonic context.”\footnote{Ibid., 32.} As such, Anderson’s analysis is similar to Gottlieb’s. Both survey a range of compositions, considering the particular means by which their subjects achieve unity within a broader perspective of melodic development.

Anderson divides thematic transformation into three aspects of alteration: melodic, temporal, and contributing. Melodic alteration includes techniques that change the linear character of a motive or theme, such as intervallic expansion or contraction. Temporal alteration includes changes in meter or note lengths, such as rhythmic augmentation or diminution.

\begin{itemize}
\item[14] Ibid., 920–921.
\item[15] Ibid., 921.
\item[16] Lyle John Anderson, “Motivic and Thematic Transformation in Selected Works of Liszt” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1977).
\item[17] Ibid., 32.
\end{itemize}
Contributing alteration includes variation of peripheral elements, such as dynamics or articulations.\textsuperscript{18} He breaks down each of these categories into specific techniques, and applies them to passages from four compositions.\textsuperscript{19} Anderson concludes that Liszt creates cohesion in his works by “restating the thematic elements frequently throughout each work.”\textsuperscript{20} Whether those elements are easily recognizable depends on the complexity of the transformation. Nevertheless, Liszt’s transformations create unified musical forms in works that do not necessarily fit into prescribed structures.\textsuperscript{21}

Each of these perspectives is manifest in Gottlieb’s analysis, despite Forte’s and Anderson’s works being published a decade later. His focus on development and manipulation of motives to create unity is aligned with Schoenberg, and reflects Liszt. His consideration of the basic motive types, which are dependent on interval rather than specific pitch, is founded on intervallic principles similar to that of set theory. The connections that he draws between the same motives and methods of development in different pieces are semiotic in nature. Assimilation of these different approaches creates a system that can make greater meaning of the musical elements being studied than any one by itself.

Aside from Gottlieb’s dissertation, very little theoretical analysis of Bernstein’s works has been published. Erik Lars Helgert recently filled a portion of the void with his Ph. D. dissertation “Jazz Elements in Selected Concert Works of Leonard Bernstein: Sources, Reception, and Analysis.”\textsuperscript{22} As the title suggests, Helgert gathers a large amount of information about the role that jazz plays in some of Bernstein’s compositions. He reviews and analyzes a variety of Bernstein’s own writings, as well as the testimony of other musicians and critics. Over

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 33–91.  
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 149.  
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 31.  
\textsuperscript{22} Helgert, “Jazz Elements in Selected Concert Works.”
half of the dissertation addresses the philosophy surrounding jazz, and the reception of its inclusion in “classical” music.\textsuperscript{23}

The latter portion of Helgert’s dissertation is comprised of musical analysis, highlighting examples of jazz elements in seven pieces: \textit{Sonata for the Piano} (1938), \textit{Sonata for Clarinet and Piano} (1943), \textit{Symphony no. 2: “Age of Anxiety”} (1949, rev. 1965), \textit{Serenade After Plato’s “Symposium”} (1954), \textit{Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs} (1949), \textit{Touches: Chorale, Eight Variations, and Coda} (1981), and \textit{Halil} (1981).\textsuperscript{24} The term “jazz elements” could be a vast, nebulous category of musical components. For Helgert, and indeed most people approaching jazz with a self-inflicted “outsider” perspective, jazz elements consist of rhythmic alterations and blue notes. Rhythmic alterations could be swing patterns, syncopation, or “beat group distortions”—a term taken from Bernstein’s senior thesis at Harvard.\textsuperscript{25} Blue notes are chromatic inflections of the diatonic scale, a lowered third, fifth, or seventh scale degree, common to the jazz idiom.

Helgert’s analysis is thorough for each of the pieces he studied. He gathers a collection of pieces spanning Bernstein’s career and shows the similarities and differences in the use of jazz between them. However, this analysis does not contribute much to Bernstein’s scholarly reputation, nor does it reveal any previously-unrecognized method or technique (as opposed to Gottlieb’s work). Bernstein’s use of jazz is well documented. Helgert points out specific instances, and provides a reference for clearly stating which jazz elements Bernstein employed. It is certainly informative, and potentially useful in research, but it does nothing to elevate the repertoire to a higher level of academic recognition.

The most useful aspect of Helgert’s dissertation is the discussion of Bernstein’s own views on jazz. Bernstein was like many white musicians of the time, in that he viewed jazz as a

\begin{footnotes}
\item[23] Ibid.
\item[24] Laird and Schiff, “Bernstein.”
\item[25] Helgert, “Jazz Elements,” 42.
\end{footnotes}
lower form of music than “serious” classical music. This attitude is present in his senior thesis, as well as many of his later writings. Helgert should not be blamed for limiting his analysis to rhythmic alterations and blue notes, since Bernstein seemed to think that those were the defining aspects of jazz. He showed the most respect for jazz when discussing it in terms of its contribution to an American style of music. As such, he considered the Latin rhythmic and African melodic influences to be the important elements. Mass is no exception to Bernstein’s proclivity for inclusion of jazz. Helgert’s research and discussion certainly provides insight and context to certain parts of Mass.

Another recent dissertation, by Katherine A. Baber, titled “Leonard Bernstein’s Jazz: Musical Topic and Cultural Resonance,” investigates how Bernstein used jazz to represent extramusical concepts. Her work has no theoretical analysis, but focuses on cultural connections. She progresses chronologically through Bernstein’s career, from the beginning to West Side Story (1957). Baber showcases profound depth and insight in her discussions. She draws on a wide variety of sources, and makes cogent arguments. The overall effect of her work is to solidify Bernstein as a major figure in social commentary and progress during his lifetime.

The lack of musical analysis is understandable, being a musicological dissertation, rather than a theoretical one. However, it does not serve to fill any space in the vacuum of scholarly analysis that surrounds Bernstein’s repertoire. Still, that does not make it irrelevant to this paper. In fact, Baber’s discussion of Symphony no. 2 and West Side Story relate directly to material

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26 Helgert, “Jazz Elements,” 40.
27 Ibid., 41.
29 Ibid.
30 Baber, “Bernstein’s Jazz,” 337.
found in *Mass*.\(^{31}\) Her insights help make sense of certain movements, which may otherwise seem tangential to the work as whole.

Baber spends an entire chapter each on *Symphony no. 2* and *West Side Story*. Much of the discussion of *Symphony no. 2* addresses three different perspectives on the piece: an American Symphony, a Jewish Symphony, and a Cold War Symphony.\(^{32}\) These perspectives highlight themes that reappear in many of Bernstein’s other works. The discussion of the Jewish aspect is particularly relevant to *Mass*. *West Side Story* showcases jazz throughout, and Baber identifies certain subgenres, such as bebop, as simultaneous representations of conflict and unity – a dichotomy also present in *Mass*.\(^{33}\)

The twenty-first century has seen something of a resurgence in the popularity of *Mass*. This is evidenced in a number of ways, including recent dissertations focused on the piece specifically, rather than multiple works together. The first volume of Jeffrey Alexander Bernstein’s (no relation to the composer) Ph. D. dissertation “The Expressive Use of Musical Style and the Composer’s Voice in Leonard Bernstein’s *Mass*” discusses the means by which the composer crafted *Mass* to be a representation of his personal views and aesthetic values.\(^{34}\) He asserts that “the work behaves like its composer, reaching out to everyone, offering an embrace that is sometimes too close and too tight, but ultimately sincere if naïve.”\(^{35}\)

The author remains neutral throughout his dissertation, refraining from passing judgment on the quality of the piece, or the composer’s style. Rather, he presents his findings, giving equal weight to critics and proponents. The study focuses on style and voice, but forgoes theoretical analysis in favor of discussion of subject matter and eclectic tendencies. The result is an

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 240–336.
\(^{32}\) Ibid., 240–266.
\(^{33}\) Ibid., 303.
\(^{34}\) J.A. Bernstein, “Musical Style and the Composer’s Voice.”
\(^{35}\) Ibid., vii.
interesting presentation that relates various elements of Mass to previous works by the composer, and works that that may have influenced or inspired him. For instance, the author draws a connection between Stravinsky’s Pulcinella (1920) and Mass by pointing out the common method of incorporating material from centuries past into a modern musical context.\textsuperscript{36} Plenty of specific examples are given, and the information supports the author’s argument. However, this dissertation has the same shortcoming as so many others: it does not address compositional techniques.

Bernstein has garnered attention from audiences and scholars alike. It is unfortunate that so much of his music, particularly his later works, have garnered that attention for overt subject matter and generic style, rather than compositional craft. That is not to say that Bernstein did not purposefully create spectacle. He certainly did not shy away from declaring his beliefs through his music. However, he was also a masterful composer, and much of the literature ignores that, or mentions it in passing.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 20–21.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The focus of the analysis in this thesis is melodic-motivic development. Motivic analysis emerged in the early twentieth century, often as a means of identifying cohesive elements in music. Both Schoenberg and Schenker considered motives to be the basic elements through which works of high quality gained a sense of wholeness, rather than simply being “a collection of individual parts pieced together.”¹ They both recognized the tendency of good composers to develop and vary motives throughout a piece. However, they differed on their views of how motives were used. Schoenberg considered connections within a piece to be derived primarily from motives and themes, while Schenker believed that connections were made through harmony and voice-leading, of which motives are expressions.²

Schoenberg illustrates his perspective clearly in his Fundamentals of Musical Composition.³ He provides examples from Beethoven and Brahms, as well as his own work. In Example 1, he takes a “broken chord,” and shows how it can be varied and developed in a multitude of ways. This creates numerous “motive-forms” from which further variations and themes can be crafted. Alterations such as inversion, retrograde, augmentation, diminution, beat-shifting, reordering, and many others provide the composer with new material based on an original motive.⁴ Schoenberg argues that great music is organically crafted through continuous use of these alterations and variations.⁵

² Ibid., 373.
³ Schoenberg, Fundamentals, 8–19.
⁴ Ibid., 12–19.
⁵ Van der Toorn, “Schoenberg and Schenker,” 371.
Jack Gottlieb’s dissertation, an important precursor for the motivic approach I adopt in this study, applies motivic analysis with a focus on melody, thus his specification of “melodic manipulations.” Gottlieb finds that Bernstein’s works share certain tendencies concerning melodic-motivic development even when they are of contrasting styles and purposes. The previous chapter describes his assertions. His three general methods of motivic development—segmentation, integration, and concatenation—allow for important distinctions to be made regarding the means by which developmental techniques form melodies and themes. Though Schoenberg was likely aware of these different methods of development, he did not discuss them specifically.

To demonstrate Gottlieb’s “segmentation” process, consider his melodic analysis of the song “Something’s Coming” from West Side Story (Example 2). In breaking down the first measure, he claims “the secret of the entire song is unfolded.” He extracts two motives, which he labels $x$ and $y$, then illustrates how these motives are combined, varied, and manipulated to

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7 Ibid., 63,151.
8 Ibid., 65.
create the melodic material for the entire song. In segmenting the melody as shown in Example 2, Gottlieb demonstrates how an idea, the first measure in this case, is used to build thematic material for the rest of the piece. This approach aligns with Schoenberg’s view that “the motive generally appears in a characteristic and impressive manner at the beginning of a piece.”

**Example 2.** Motives identified in measures 1–2 of “Something’s Coming” (Gottlieb, “Melodic Manipulations, 65).

Melodic integration is less Schoenbergean in nature. Gottlieb demonstrates integration through “Somewhere,” also from West Side Story. He identifies the “fundamental motives” of the song, each of which are found earlier in the musical. In this case, motives that initially appear in isolation come together to create a complete melodic statement, or the melody of an entire song. Within “Somewhere,” the motives are varied and developed, just like “Something’s Coming.” The difference is that the resultant melody is a product of combining, or integrating, multiple extant motives, rather than extrapolating new possibilities from a single source. Miguel Roig-Francoli describes a similar method in Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring (1913). He identifies five primary themes and shows how they exist separately throughout the piece, interrupting each other or stratifying atop one another. More importantly, he explains that

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9 Ibid., 65–70.
10 Schoenberg, Fundamentals, 8.
Stravinsky takes elements from each theme and synthesizes them into a unified melody late in the work.\textsuperscript{13}

Concatenation is the most evolutionary of the three methods identified by Gottlieb. It is found in \textit{Symphony no. 2: Age of Anxiety}. As shown in Example 3, the entire symphony is a set of variations, each of which varies the material from the section before, rather than being a new variation of the original theme.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, the motives that begin the piece are not recognizable by the end. However, the process is easily traceable and coherent. It takes Schoenberg’s notion of “continuous variation” to the next level. Where Schoenberg’s variations are always grounded in the original motive, concatenation treats each variation as a new motive. Example 3 shows the progression of motives in the “Seven Ages” section of \textit{Symphony No. 2}. The music is easy for the ear to follow, because each successive variation is a transformation of material from the previous one. However, this perpetual transformation leads to thematic material that does not resemble material from variations three or four before. The purpose is not to tether each variation to an original idea, but rather to focus on only each individual transformation on its own.

\textbf{Example 3.} Continuous variations through the “Seven Ages” in \textit{Symphony no. 2} (Gottleib, “Melodic Manipulations”, 162).

\textsuperscript{14} Gottlieb, “Melodic Manipulations,” 161–162.
Gottlieb’s work clarifies an effective way to analyze Bernstein’s music. However, it is incomplete in its terminology and scope. *Mass* contains the techniques that he discusses, and more. There are two levels within the general concepts of thematic transformation or melodic development: the specific instances of variation in particular motives, and the general methods by which those motives are used to make melodies. Gottlieb addresses some of the general methods. Schoenberg addresses many of the specific variations. They are not, however, exhaustive.

Another form of melodic development found in *Mass*, not covered by Gottlieb, is isomelism. Isomelism is “a technique in which a melody’s succession of pitch classes (and often
just pitches) is preserved (or transposed) while its rhythms are altered.”\textsuperscript{15} What results is a new melodic phrase that has the same contour as before, with a new rhythmic character. It is a method found in works by composers who influenced Bernstein, like Stravinsky, and his contemporaries, like Frank Zappa.\textsuperscript{16} Bernstein tends to focus on the motivic aspect of his melodies. Isomelism usually uses longer, more complete melodic ideas. In the case of \textit{Mass}, isomelism is present, but not prevalent. Still, it is addressed in this study, and that requires consideration of methods beyond those of Gottlieb.

Based on these ideas, this study approaches \textit{Mass} from the perspective of melodic-motivic development. The structure of \textit{Mass} affords interesting possibilities for motivic cohesion. It is divided into seventeen sections, some of which are further divided into two to five movements. Each section exhibits its own unifying elements. Some of those elements recur in later sections, in either their original form, or varied. This creates a sense of connection throughout this lengthy work. Some sections or movements are purposefully cacophonous or monotonous, and thus do not demonstrate these methods within themselves. However, as they are still connected to other sections, they still contribute to the cohesion of the work. For practical reasons, not every section is discussed in depth in this analysis. The sections that most prominently exhibit melodic segmentation, integration, or isomelism are considered. Significant motives are identified and tracked through their sections, and through the entire piece, if they do recur. Sometimes, entire melodies come back without change. These are less compositionally impressive, but certainly effective in fostering a feeling of cohesion. In order to effectively track the development of motives, original forms are identified with specific labels. Then, that

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 29–38.
particular motive is considered at length, with discussion of its fragments and variations. When multiple motives interact, both are presented individually, then considered together.

The majority of Bernstein’s works, including *Mass*, are tonal. Even the sections that use twelve-tone rows, like the Credo, maintain connection to a tonal context. As such, this analysis does not use pitch-class nomenclature or pitch-class sets. Inversional and octave equivalence does not always exist in *Mass*, so excessive explanation would be necessary to use pitch-class nomenclature in many cases. For the sake of ease and consistency, pitches keep their letter names, and intervals are designated with direction. Mostly, motives and varied motive-forms are referred to by their given names.
Chapter 4: Analysis

This section identifies important unifying elements in Mass. It is divided into two parts, each concerned with different ways that Bernstein creates a cohesive identity for the piece. The first part addresses melodic development within individual sections, and how those separate, smaller portions are unified. The second part discusses motives and melodies that connect disparate sections of Mass. This technique provides unity in the larger context of the work as a whole. There is not one particular means of development that Bernstein uses to achieve that unity, but rather a mixture of methods, including segmentation, integration, and isomelism. Within these larger methods, he employs more specific transformations of motives, described by Schoenberg (e.g. augmentation, reordering, and retrograde). Not every musical aspect is addressed, only those that are relevant to the focus of this paper. Names for particular motives or melodic units are original to this study.

Below is the order of sections and movements in Mass. Roman numerals designate larger sections. Arabic numerals designate movements, if there is more than one within a section. Movements are often referred to by their numerical designation (i.e. the first movement of the first section is I.1).
I. Devotions Before Mass
   1. Antiphon: *Kyrie Eleison*
   2. Hymn and Psalm: “Simple Song”
   3. Responsory: “Alleluia”
II. First Introit (Rondo)
   1. Prefatory Prayers
   2. Thrice-Triple Canon: *Dominus Vobiscum*
III. Second Introit
   1. *In Nomine Patris*
   2. Prayer for the Congregation (Chorale: “Almighty Father”)
   3. Epiphany
IV. Confession
   1. *Confiteor*
   2. Trope: “I Don’t Know”
   3. Trope: “Easy”
V. Meditation No. 1
VI. Gloria
   1. *Gloria Tibi*
   2. *Gloria in Excelsis*
   3. Trope: “Half of the People”
   4. Trope: “Thank You”
VII. Meditation No. 2
VIII. Epistle: “The Word of the Lord”
IX. Gospel-Sermon: “God Said”
X. Credo
   1. *Credo in unum Deum*
   2. Trope: *Non Credo*
   3. Trope: “Hurry”
   4. Trope: “World Without End”
   5. Trope: “I Believe in God”
XI. Meditation No. 3 (*De Profundis*, part 1)
XII. Offertory (*De Profundis*, part 2)
XIII. The Lord’s Prayer
   1. Our Father…
   2. Trope: “I Go On”
XIV. Sanctus
XV. Agnus Dei
XVI. Fraction: “Things Get Broken”
XVII. Pax: Communion (“Secret Songs”)
Melodic-Motivic Development within Sections

This portion discusses melodic-motivic development within selected sections of Mass. Elements that foster cohesion within individual sections are identified and discussed. The examples below highlight how Bernstein unifies individual and adjacent movements, and creates distinct identities for certain large sections in the piece. He does not limit himself to one particular method, but employs integration and segmentation, mixed with isomelism and other simple techniques of motivic variation.

I. Devotions before Mass

The first section of Mass exhibits melodic integration as a means of tying together its two live performance movements, I.2, “A Simple Song,” and I.3, “Responsory: Alleluia”. “A Simple Song” features the leading role of Mass, the Celebrant. It begins with a meditative hymn, then it proceeds to the main song. The song’s melody contains the material from which the following movement is derived. Bernstein utilizes melodic integration of three separate motives, and even an entire phrase, from Simple Song to craft the melody for the Responsory.

I.3 is entirely comprised of two melodic ideas: the contrapuntal A melody, on scat syllables, and the homophonic B melody, on “Alleluia”. The A melody consists of three phrases integrated from three different figures in Simple Song, demonstrated in Examples 4, 5, and 6. The first phrase exhibits a rising fourth from C to F followed by an ascending contour to C. The anacrusis to measure 49 of I.2 features the same rising fourth, and the next two measures continue up to C. However, the motive is varied and extended in the Responsory by filling in the interval between F and B-flat with gradually ascending syncopated material. The original motive
is further obscured by Bernstein taking the rising fourth that was on a weak beat and placing it on the downbeat of the phrase (Example 4).


The second phrase of A mixes integration with Schoenberg’s style of melodic variation. It includes E-flat and A-flat, which are outside the keys of both movements (Example 5). However, this phrase has the same pitch content, reordered, as the flute line from the previous movement. The contour is an inverted and rhythmically augmented variation of the material from the previous phrase, with expanded intervals. Example 4 shows ascending leaps, mostly of thirds, alternating with downward steps. Example 5 shows downward leaps, mostly of fifths, alternating with smaller upward intervals, thirds and seconds. The rhythm and contour from the first phrase is varied in the second phrase. But, the pitch collection is taken from the previous movement. Bernstein incorporates elements from both sources, creating a phrase that seems unique, at first glance.


The third phrase of A consists of three variations of a motive that originally occurred in Simple Song (m. 53). Its original form is two ascending anacrustic notes, then a four-note rhythm continuing the scalar ascent, with the final interval being a downward third. In I.3, this motive remains mostly intact, transposed by step, in its first variation. It is immediately altered to reduce the last interval to a step, and transposed again (Example 6).


I. Devotions before Mass 3. Responsory: Alleluia, mm. 9–12.
Together, these three examples from I.3 make up the entirety of the A melody. This is an interesting case of melodic integration. It can be seen how material that appeared separately earlier on comes together to create the complete melody. Yet, the first phrase of the A melody contains a significant extension, and the second phrase requires multiple steps to determine its origins. In typical cases of melodic integration, the contributing motives are maintained mostly intact, encouraging the listener to make a connection between the original statement and the new. It is not so clear in this instance. The next portion is more straightforward.

The B melody of the Responsory utilizes isomelism as a means of connecting material with the previous movement. It is nearly the same as the vocal line from measures 33 through 39 of Simple Song (Example 7). It is augmented, slightly rhythmically altered, and the first notes of the phrases in Simple Song are omitted in the Responsory. However, this is not just a motivic development. It is a full restatement of an entire phrase. This exemplifies the difference between isomelism, which can vary in the way that it transforms larger melodic units, and more precise motivic variation techniques, such as diminution and inversion, which designate specific transformations in smaller units.


This reiteration of a complete melodic phrase is not surprising when it is understood that the melody of the whole movement is clearly derived from the previous one. However, there has been enough variation of motives in the A melody, and a change of stylistic context from aria to vocal jazz, that the return of this melody is obscured somewhat. The B melody sounds familiar, but not so familiar that it has become trite. The result of this employment of isomelism is a strong sense of unity between these two movements.

By using “A Simple Song” as a generator for the motives that would build the Responsory, Bernstein is able to craft a clear, cohesive identity for the first large section of Mass. These melodies are not found in any other section, although there are other motives in I.1 and I.2 that appear later on. Bernstein seems to have separated those elements that unify the section itself from those that connect this section to others.
II. First Introit

The First Introit consists of two movements: (1) Prefatory Prayers; and (2) Thrice-Triple Canon: *Dominus Vobiscum*. The first movement, a rondo, is lengthy in the context of this work. The second movement is short and simple. The melody from II.2 is derived from two motives found in II.1. This is another example of melodic integration, taking melodic fragments from earlier points, and combining them into primary material.

The first motive, here called “x,” consists of dotted rhythms, ending with a downward leap (Example 8). The second motive, called “y”, is found earlier in the first movement. It consists of the first six notes of an ascending major scale, ending with a descending third leap (Example 9).

Example 8. II. First Introit 1. Prefatory Prayers, mm. 122–23.


In the second movement, motive x is altered (Example 10). The dotted rhythm is augmented and is combined with the descending third, creating a new motive-form, *xʼ*. *xʼ* is transposed down by a step, followed by a rhythmically even downward fourth, augmenting the interval and duration of the latter notes of *x*. Motive *y* follows, with the same rhythm and contour, but the exact intervals are different, due to their position in the diatonic scale. The
original $y$ motive begins on scale degree 1, whereas the transposed $y$ begins on scale degree 6, given the key of G major in both cases. The text “spiritu” also contributes to the connection between the two instances of $y$. Together, $x'$ and $y$ create the three-measure melodic unit that is repeated throughout II.2.

**Example 10.** II. First Introit 2. Thrice-Triple Canon: Dominus Vobiscum, mm.231–32.

The Thrice-Triple Canon is constructed around the number three, as the title suggests. As demonstrated above, the basic melodic unit is three measures long. The full statement of the melody consists of three iterations of the unit, transposed up by a third each time. Nine voices sing the full melody twice, entering in canon every two measures. The number of voices and structure of the movement necessitate a simple melody. Too much complexity in a single line, layered nine times, would create sonic mush. Bernstein fosters clarity and unity by taking two simple motives from the first movement so that the listener has already been primed to recognize them. He then integrates them, with a bit of variation, into a single melody for the entire following movement.

**V. Meditation No. 1**

Meditation 1 is a single-movement section, and clearly demonstrates melodic segmentation. It is slow, lush, and the first fully instrumental movement. It follows an arch-form. The melody for the entire movement is based on a single idea, stated at the very beginning
(Example 11). This primary idea is characterized by two motivic segments, here called \( a \) and \( b \). Motive \( a \) contains a dotted eight-note, followed by two descending thirty-second-notes. Motive \( b \) is a descending third, with the first note occurring on the beat and the second note syncopated.

**Example 11.** V. Meditation 1, mm. 1–2.

These two segments are varied and manipulated throughout the movement. The first complete phrase of the piece sees a new motive-form of \( a \) based on its inversion, and a reordering of that motive-form (Example 12). Motive \( b \) is also transformed through inversion and the interpolation of appoggiatura. What would have been a minor third from B-flat to D-flat is expanded to E-flat. Already, these segments from the initial statement are being used to create a fully-developed melody. The rest of this primary melody continues with similar figures and variations of the motives.

**Example 12.** V. Meditation 1, mm. 3–5.

A tranquil interlude functions to transition between the primary melody and the secondary. This interlude contains new motive-forms, or variations of the original motives (Example 13). Motive \( a \) is rhythmically augmented, now ending with the descending third
characteristic of motive $b$. Then, a transposed variation of the original $a$-$b$ motive occurs. The rest of the interlude employs transposition and repetition of these two measures.

**Example 13.** V. Meditation 1, mm. 17–18.

The secondary melody, which follows the interlude, contains multiple variations of $a$ and $b$, using inversion, intervalllic expansion and contraction, and reordering (Example 14). The upward sixth from the first measure to the second is simply a continuation of the motion by thirds of the previous two notes. Thirds have been firmly established as a characteristic interval of motive $b$. However, two versions of motive $b$ in this melody display motion by half-step, rather than thirds. The important element that identifies them as motive-forms of $b$ is the rhythmic syncopation. There is also an ascending perfect fifth, connecting the first half to the second half, designated by a diamond. This is the first perfect fifth in the movement.

**Example 14.** V. Meditation 1, mm. 25–28.

This melody is accompanied by a simpler line, which relies on the original $a$ and the half-step version of $b$ found in the previous melody. Most of the line utilizes slow chromatic ascending motion. However, the end of it, leading into a reprise of the interlude, changes
character (Example 15). Motive $a$ is inverted and repeated, then augmented. This reduces the musical energy, and harmonically prepares the return of the interlude melody.

**Example 15.** V. Meditation 1, mm. 35–40.

![Example 15](Image)

The remainder of the movement contains only melodies and motive-forms that have already been established. Bernstein creates an entire movement, with distinct sections, using only two segments of a small initial idea. The motives he uses are not transformed beyond recognition, but give unique character to the different melodies that occur. The unity fostered by the motivic connection allows the movement to flow logically and organically.

**VII. Meditation No. 2**

Meditation 2, like Meditation 1, showcases segmentation as a means of crafting melody. This meditation is a one-movement section. It does not take material from preceding movements, nor does it prepare material for following ones. Meditation 2 is a theme and variations with a coda, built on a tone-row. It is not a standard twelve-tone row, since it does not actually state all twelve pitches in its initial form, nor does it refrain from repeating pitches that have already occurred (Example 16). The excluded pitch, B, is implied as the final pitch in the row. It is arranged in such a way that a nearly complete chromatic scale is interrupted by occasional downward leaps. It is stated in the bass, one note at a time.
The first variation rearranges segments from row. The row remains in the bass, one note per measure, while the upper voices contain variations. They begin with what appears to be the retrograde row, but it is actually a reordering, interspersing various trichords and tetrachords from the row (Example 17). These segments are often retrograded or inverted. They are sometimes separated by half-step dyads, which are seen all throughout the row. This variation elides with the next, by using the final A of the row as the first bass note of the new variation.

The remaining variations are much shorter, though yet still each contain at least one complete iteration of the row. For example, variation two is three measures long. The row contains sixteen notes, which is divided into four tetrachords (Example 18). The first two measures of this variation each contain a tetrachord from the row, condensed into block chords, the last of which contains two tetrachords. The tetrachords appear in the same order as the row. Dense sonorities result from these chords. So far, this movement has only contained 2-part harmony. Now, it expands to 4-part, without actually altering the row itself.
Example 18. VII. Meditation No. 2, tetrachords in variation three, mm. 29–31.

Variation three is also three measures long. The row is presented twice in rapid ascending triplets (Example 19). The second measure also contains what sounds like an allusion to the “Ode to Joy” from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, which happens to be a reordering of the second, third, and fourth tones in the row. This allusion is notable if only for its novelty. The “Ode to Joy” does not recur elsewhere in Mass, nor does that ordering of the row recur in this movement. Yet, the accents, loud dynamic, and prominent voicing indicate that it is meant to be heard.

Example 19. VII. Meditation No. 2, m. 33.
The fourth variation is reminiscent of variation two, since it contains stacked tetrachords. However, Bernstein creates a slightly different sonic palette by gradually building the chords at a softer dynamic. The first two measures contain the first half of the row, structured as two tetrachords stacked atop each other. The next two measures each have the subsequent two tetrachords. The final measure contains an additional tetrachord, which seems to be out of place, considering the row has already been completed (Example 20). However, the four pitches are B, A-flat, G, and F. Looking at the original row as a true twelve-tone row provides clarity. Ignoring repeated pitches, the row is arranged as F-sharp, C, A, B-flat, E, C-sharp, D, E-flat, G, F, and G-sharp, with an implied B as the final pitch. The final tetrachord of this row is presented in the final measure.

Example 20. VII. Meditation No. 2, twelve tone row and m. 39.

The coda contains three partial presentations of the row. The first three measures have a few different elements presented in tandem (Example 21). The organ and strings sustain chords: first A major, then E major-minor seventh. The pitch A is maintained as a pedal throughout. Under this, the timpani and basses sound the first, second, fourth and fifth tones of the row. They skip the third, A, because it is already being played. Starting halfway through the second measure, the second violins play an ascending A major scale, leading to a partial restatement of
variation one. That leads into a reprise of variation three. This whole passage guides the ear
toward A as the tonal center. It is confirmed when the movement concludes on the pitch that was
emphasized both as a pedal and a scale, A.

Example 21. VII. Meditation No. 2, mm. 40–42.

This meditation is essentially an exhibition of motivic variation. The original row is
segmented, usually into trichords and tetrachords. Those segments are then reordered, inverted,
retrograded, and rhythmically transformed. The row itself, without having its basic structure
altered, is presented in a variety of contexts in quick succession. However, the characteristic
chromatic ascension found throughout the row, and thus in the segments, allows the listener to
grasp the connection between iterations.

Melodic-Motivic Development between Sections

This portion of the analysis addresses movements that develop motives and themes that
originate in earlier sections of Mass. These sections tend to exhibit melodic integration, since
they often take material from multiple previous sections. Elements that help to unify the entire
piece are identified and discussed. Bernstein creates larger connecting arcs from section to
section by developing, or simply restating, material that had already been established. In this way, he fosters a cohesive musical identity for the entire work.

*De Profundis*

Sections XI and XII, both one-movement sections, are entirely composed of material from previous sections. Specifically, sections III, IV, and V provide the musical basis for these two movements. While the melodies of XI and XII are not necessarily simple, they clearly exemplify melodic integration. Different motives contribute to different parts of these two movements. Yet, they should be considered in tandem, since together their texts make up the *De Profundis* psalm.

Section XI is Meditation No. 3. Its melodic material is taken directly from Meditation No. 1, and it is structured in three parts, separated by short aleatoric sections. The secondary melody from the earlier section is now the primary melody, transposed to a comfortable vocal range and rhythmically augmented (Example 22). This melody is transposed and reiterated five times in its complete form through the first two parts of the movement.

**Example 22.** V. Mediation No. 1, mm. 25–28.

XI. Mediation No. 3, mm. 2–5.
The middle part of the movement is built from segments of the melody, particularly focusing on the half-step interval from the first measure. The vocal part explores the semitones on either side of A, with the sopranos leaping up by major sevenths (Example 23). It occurs four times in a row, varying rhythm and duration. On the last instance of this figure, the ascending major seventh is filled in with two major thirds. The four pitches that result – A, B-flat, D, and F-sharp – return in the third part of the movement.

Example 23. XI. Meditation No. 3, mm. 16–20.

The third part of the movement continues to emphasize half-steps, but begins the transition from section XI into section XII. At first, a sequence of descending semitones, offset by fifths (or their inversions), appears in canon (Example 24). After the first phrase, the canon continues, though now the voices do not change pitches, sustaining a chord consisting of the four pitches from earlier: A, B-flat, D, and F-sharp (Example 25). This begins the preparation for the following section, since repeated eighth-note rhythms on a single pitch are prominent, and will be discussed below. The voices then synchronize rhythm, and alternate the previous sonority with a chord containing G, B-flat, E-flat, and G-flat. The movement ends by switching between these two sonorities.
Example 24. XI. Meditation No. 3, mm. 32–36.

Example 25. XI. Meditation No. 3, mm. 39–43.

The two chords in Example 25 are not randomly chosen, as they reference material from earlier in Mass. The pitch collections in the last part each contain more than one of the typical triad types: major, minor, augmented, and diminished. The first has both B-flat augmented and D-major triads. The second has both E-flat major and E-flat minor triads. This combination of triadic types is also prominent in section XII, and is clarified below.

Section XII, the Offertory, also exhibits melodic integration. Bernstein pulls three distinct melodic segments from previous sections and gradually combines them throughout the first half of the movement (Example 26). That portion is an alternation between the melodies from III.2, Prayer for the Congregation, and IV.1, Confiteor. The chorale melody from III.2 is restated in its entirety, though rhythmically altered (Example 26, 1). It is broken up by interjections of the repeated eighth-note motive from IV.1 (Example 26, 4).
The *Confiteor* motive first appears as an enharmonically-spelled diminished triad on F, over a sustained augmented triad on D. The combination of the two also creates a B-flat major triad and a B minor triad. Thus, all four types of triad are present simultaneously. This structure is only the second harmonic idea of the movement, and a transformation of the first. The first chord of *Confiteor* is also split between the upper and lower voices. It is a C minor triad over an A major triad (Example 26, 2). Together, these also create a diminished triad on A. The only triad type missing in this primary structure is augmented.

Section XII incorporates this harmonic progression in its iterations of the *Confiteor* motive. The first statement combines five pitches – A, G, B-flat, E-flat, and G-flat – that create an E-flat major triad, E-flat minor triad, and E-flat diminished triad. Although the structure does not match the first harmony of section IV, it still combines the same three triad types. The next statement evolves the same way, by incorporating an augmented triad sonority. This is clearly a variation of the material from *Confiteor*, integrating into the context of the later movement.

After four phrases, the rhythmic aspect of the *Confiteor* motive is integrated into the chorale melody (Example 27). Before, it had repeated the text that had just been sung; now, it continues the text, making it part of the same melodic line. What would be long notes in the chorale melody becomes rapid eighth notes. The two motives are thereby merged into one.

The two melodies are fully assimilated with the unison “Gloria Patri,” at the end of the vocal portion of this movement. That final unison rhythm on D facilitates the nearly identical return of the instrumental section of III.1, *In Nomine Patris*. The only difference is that it is slightly truncated. Where III.1 faded into a reflective horn solo with the Celebrant speaking, XII stops abruptly in the middle of the last phrase.

*De Profundis* integrates material from three different earlier sections. However, Bernstein does not simply splice together various motives. Rather, he develops the melody within the section as well. The origin of the material, and the core identity of the motives, belongs to previous movements. Yet, the organic growth of the melodies in sections XI and XII makes them more than just copies. They have discrete identities as movements. What results for the listener is an organic continuation of the piece, along with a reminder that everything they hear is connected and meaningful.

**The Opening Motive**

Bernstein does not always employ complex methods of motivic development. As seen with the *In Nomine Patris* melody returning in the Offertory, he does sometimes restate melodies
in their original forms without variation. He also fosters a sense of unity by using simple motives that appear in a variety of places, but which do not necessarily contribute to the construction of complete melodies. These appearances are more like reminders than developments.

For instance, the very first beat of Mass introduces a motive that reappears in every section. Sometimes it is inverted, or retrograded, or expanded. This “Opening Motive” is comprised of an ascending minor third, followed by a descending major second. These intervals are varied throughout the work, replacing the minor third with a major third, or the major second with a minor second. The first two notes are usually quick, sometimes even written as grace notes. The Opening Motive is a prominent melodic figure in the first movement. The movement is played by quadraphonic tape, with each of the four speakers projecting a different ensemble, playing a distinct setting of “Kyrie eleison.” The first speaker plays a sixteen-measure setting, which is repeated three and half times. The motive appears twelve times in that setting (Example 28).
Example 28. I. Devotions before Mass 1. Antiphon: Kyrie Eleison, speaker 1, mm. 1–16.

The Opening Motive recurs in almost every movement in some shape or transformation. The interval content of the motive allows for some flexibility in its audible effect. In its original form, without an external harmonic context, it sounds like an ornamentation of tonic, ti-re-do. This can help establish a tonal center, or challenge an existing one. When it appears in this way, it is usually placed in the foreground. This is the case in II.1 and III.3, which place transpositions
of the motive at the very beginning of the movements. The first part of II.1 is in G major, but the first notes establish D, the dominant, as the tonal center. This makes the later cadence in G slightly less predictable (Example 29, 1). III.3 is an atonal cadenza, so the motive does not necessarily imply a tonic (Example 29, 2).

Example 29. 1) II. First Introit 1. Prefatory Prayers, mm. 1–4. 2) III. Second Introit 3. Epiphany, mm. 1–2.

Other movements exhibit more subtle incorporation of the Opening Motive. For instance, the x’ motive from II.2, which is still a development of material from II.1, is also a descending sequence of altered forms of the Opening Motive (Example 30). The rhythms are changed, making the first and last notes longer. Also, the intervals are inverted and made to conform to the key, rather than strictly maintain the minor third-major second structure. Finally, the motives are elided, creating an easy flow. By itself, this passage could be considered just a scale in thirds. However, the prominence and frequency of the motive creates a context in which this figure gains significance.
A similar variation of the Opening Motive occurs in the Sanctus, section XIV. The primary melody, sung by the boys’ choir, also overlaps rhythmically altered forms of the motive in a stepwise sequence (Example 31). A curious result of this elision is that nearly every successive note can be the beginning of another iteration. Those iterations may be in inversion, retrograded, or have different rhythms, based on its placement in the larger melodic line. This also applies to the Dominus Vobiscum melody above. In Example 31, inversions are designated with stars, and retrograde inversion is labeled with the diamond.

The first movement of the Second Introit has a primary melody that incorporates the Opening Motive even less noticeably (Example 32). The first full measure of the melody begins with a neighbor-note figure on F-sharp, which then leaps to A, and steps to G. The meter of the tune emphasizes the upper note, unlike the previous variations, that emphasize the final note of the motive. This, combined with the neighbor-note elaboration, obscures the Opening Motive.
However, a more apparent variation closes out the phrase. E leaps to G, then steps down to F-sharp, emphasizing the last note.

**Example 32.** III. Second Introit 1. *In Nomine Patris*, mm. 2–6, tenor.

![Musical notation for Example 32](image)

Other variations of the motive appear in subsequent phrases. The second phrase begins with three repetitions of a new motive (Example 33). The last two notes of this new motive and the first note of its repeat are F-sharp, G, and E, in that order. This is a retrograde of the variation on “Filii” in Example 32. The connection of this figure to the earlier one, and the ubiquitous Opening Motive, is obfuscated by placing part of it in one idea, and part of it in the next.

**Example 33.** II. Second Introit, 1. *In Nomine Patris*, mm. 10–13.

![Musical notation for Example 33](image)

Another retrograde variation is found in the instrumental interlude. Here, the meter has switched, putting the triple-eighth-note portion of the measure at the end, rather than the beginning. The melody is presented as a canon between the ensemble and a horn solo. The last three eighth notes of each measure in the ensemble create a retrograded Opening Motive. This means that the three quarter notes in the horn line are the same notes. Thus, the motive is present
at all times in this phrase (Example 34). The last measure has yet another motive-form. It is transposed to start on G and fills in the leap with a passing tone. The internal placement of the motive variations, and the addition of a passing tone continue to obscure the original motive, allows the melody to feel familiar, yet sound fresh.

**Example 34.** III. Second Introit 1. *In Nomine Patris*, mm. 24–27.

*In Nomine Patris* contains numerous variations of the Opening Motive. This means that the motive continues developing in the two other movements that are connected to it: III.2 and XII. As discussed above, section XII includes the entire melody from III.2. However, that melody is nearly identical to the primary melody of the movement before. Some notes are omitted, and the end of III.2 alters a few pitches, but it is obviously the same melodic idea. Thus, any time that an Opening Motive variation appears in the melody of *In Nomine Patris*, there is an analog in Prayer for the Congregation which is then transplanted into the Offertory with the rest of the Prayer melody. In this way, Bernstein establishes a particular strain of motivic development that links section III to section XII (Example 35).
Example 35. 1) III. Second Introit 1. In Nomine Patris, mm. 2–4, tenor. 2) III. Second Introit 2. Prayer for the Congregation, mm. 1–4. 3) XII. Offertory, mm. 1–5.

This is not the only instance of transplanted melodies providing opportunities for continual variation. As was discussed above, sections V and XI share significant melodic material. The Opening Motive can be found in them, just like every other movement. It and other motives are developed and varied across the sections, creating a strong sense of unity and continuity in this vast piece.

XVI. Fraction: “Things Get Broken”

Section XVI, Fraction: “Things Get Broken”, is the climactic movement of Mass. Here, the audience finds the Celebrant at the limits of his endurance. Cynicism and selfishness expressed in previous movements have worn him down. Musically, this is the movement that synthesizes a great number of elements found throughout the work. It develops material from other sections, and creates motives that are then developed within the movement itself.
It begins with the Celebrant singing a faint musing about wine. That musing follows the row from Meditation 2 (Example 36). It is divided by tetrachord, as were variations 2 and 4 of the earlier movement. The vocal melody as well as the accompaniment figures are bound to the row. The last portion of the row is repeated and extended upward, creating a recurring motive on the text, “What are you staring at? Haven’t you ever seen an accident before?”

Example 36. Theme row from VII. Meditation No. 2 and XVI. Fraction: “Things Get Broken”, mm. 7–20.

After more rumination, he again asks “haven’t you ever seen an accident before?” This time, however, the meter has changed, giving a slightly different emphasis to certain syllables.
More importantly, the contour has changed, with a surprising downward fourth at the end of the phrase, which causes the rolling melody to abruptly stop on a repeated E-flat. While this is a variation of the motive from earlier in the movement, it is also a variation of a figure from IV.2, “I Don’t Know.” The original figure is in a meter of five, rather than seven, and the ending leap is an upward perfect fifth, rather than its inversion (Example 37). This is a mixture of melodic integration, incorporating material from section IV, and Schoenberg’s continuous variation, by slightly altering a motive that appeared only once before.


Abruptly, the Celebrant’s mind shifts to a new topic, characterized by contrasting music. This part of the movement abandons the Meditation 2 row, and increases the energy. The melody sounds almost new. However, it is actually formed by integrating three different melodic fragments found earlier in the work.

The first element, the Opening Motive, appears in two forms. Initially, it is retrograded, and expanded to contain only major intervals. Four measures later, it is in its original formation, with elaborating neighbor tones (Example 38, 2). The second element is the eighth-note triplets, which are simply a variation of a figure in I.2, with its intervals contracted (Example 38, 1). The third piece of this melody is a motive found in the Gospel-Sermon, section IX. That motive itself
was taken from IV.2, charting an even larger course of continuity through Mass. It has two motive-forms here (Example 38, 3 &4). The first has outer intervals of fourths, and the second contracts them to thirds, making it a combination of the Opening Motive variation and the Gospel-Sermon motive.


At measure 85, the Celebrant again shifts suddenly to a new melody, this time taken note-for-note from section VI, *Gloria Tibi*. Shortly after that, he reprises the first phrase of section XIII, “Our Father,” while the orchestra fades out the *Gloria Tibi* melody. A few measures later, the Celebrant asks once more, “Haven’t you ever seen an accident before?” Now, the music resembles the figure from “I Don’t Know” even more closely, ending with an ascending perfect
fifth. That interval ends the “I Don’t Know” figure, and begins a snippet from movement X.4, “World Without End.” Then, the first melody of the Fraction returns, on the row from Meditation No. 2.

The previous section establishes the pastiche aspect of this movement. Later, the Celebrant sings a cadenza in which he rapidly flows through thirteen different melodic fragments from various places earlier in the work, complete with the accompanying text. Each fragment elides into the next, showcasing exceedingly clever textual flexibility, as well as a large vocal range. This section succeeds at gathering a variety of musical ideas into one statement. However, these motives and figures are not so much developed, as they are merely referenced.

The cadenza is followed by a lamentation, which utilizes the primary melody from section V, Meditation No. 1. This theme is transformed rhythmically, through some reordering and augmentation, though it is not drastic (Example 39). The text dictates the melodic rhythm, but pitch durations remain similar. This variation repeats the first phrase, and alters the final pitches of the melody. It continues with a subtle variation of the interlude melody. The initial phrase does not affect a key change, which is present in the earlier movement, so the pitch content is transposed down by a whole-step. That is, until the last phrase, which steps up to the same pitch content as Meditation No. 1. The closing phrase of this part flows into the final statement by the Celebrant, which is one more iteration of the first melody, on the Meditation 2 row.
Example 39. Alterations of melody from Mediation No. 1. 1) V. Mediation No. 1, mm. 1–3, cello. 2) XVI. Fraction, mm. 280–84, Celebrant.

The Fraction is filled with motivic and thematic relationships from previous movements, and its own material. It is the emotional and musical climax of Mass. Everything that had happened before comes together, and the weight of it proves too much for the Celebrant. This is the moment the Bernstein reveals the musical plan for his grand work. He lays clues, makes connections, borrows and develops motives and melodies, all to create one final, dramatic conclusion in which the whole piece is summarized and laid bare.
Chapter 5: Conclusions

A variety of elements have been identified and analyzed, elucidating how Bernstein manipulates small amounts of original material to create large amounts of melodic content. Mass includes melodic-motivic development at multiple levels, both in terms of the structure of the piece and the methods of development utilized. Motives are varied and transformed to create melodies in individual parts (e.g. the Opening Motive in the first speaker of I.1), throughout entire movements (e.g. Meditation 1), between adjacent movements (e.g. I.2 and I.3), and across discrete sections (e.g. De Profundis). Bernstein crafts his melodies with combinations of procedures that range from specific (i.e. motivic transformations, such as inversion or retrograde) to general (i.e. melodic segmentation, integration, or isomelism).

Since Mass is such a vast work, with thirty-two individual movements, he does not limit his techniques to just one method, or just one structure. The size of the piece both allows and necessitates the use of many different techniques. Bernstein had written large works before (e.g. West Side Story), so he understood the balance required by such a work. There are enough distinct ideas to maintain the listener’s interest. On the other hand, he develops and varies those ideas throughout the piece, fostering a sense of cohesion and unity. An hour and forty-five minutes of constantly changing music does not allow the listener to find a foothold. Bernstein is precisely economical with his musical material.

Practical considerations are not the only explanation for the variety of styles and techniques, however. Bernstein is known for incorporating different styles into a single piece. Mass is no exception, and dives even deeper into eclecticism than any other single work in his repertoire. Most of his pieces juxtapose or combine two styles (e.g. jazz and eighteenth-century counterpoint in Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs). Even West Side Story did not venture very far from
jazz and Latin. However, *Mass* includes jazz, blues, rock, chorale, atonal, and contrapuntal aspects. In this way, it is his most “Bernstein-like” creation – a summary of his compositional style.

Overt genres represented in *Mass* are not the only indication of the piece’s summative nature. Gottlieb illustrates examples of Bernstein’s melodic-motivic development techniques in most of his works before 1965. These techniques appear side-by-side in *Mass*, with others not discussed by Gottlieb. At this deeper level of composition, Bernstein is still combining and incorporating various elements into one artistic statement. Some people criticized the work for its eclectic character. However, it is precisely that character, evident in the style and compositional method, that makes *Mass* a powerfully comprehensive example of Bernstein, as well as a masterpiece of the twentieth century.
Bibliography


