RICE UNIVERSITY

METHOD AND STYLE IN THE STRING QUARTETS
OF ROGER SESSIONS:
AN INTERVIEW AND ANALYSIS

by

Charles B. Lovekin

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF MUSIC

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE:

Ellsworth Milburn, Associate
Professor of Music, Chairman

Paul Cooper, Professor of Music

Alice Hanson, Assistant Professor
of Music

HOUSTON, TEXAS

May 1982
METHOD AND STYLE IN THE STRING QUARTETS OF ROGER SESSIONS:
AN INTERVIEW AND ANALYSIS

by

Charles B. Lovekin

ABSTRACT

Analysis and comparison of the String Quartet in E minor (1936) and the Second String Quartet (1951) (which are the only two string quartets written by Roger Sessions) reveals important aspects of Sessions' compositional style and how certain of these aspects undergo change over the fifteen years separating the quartets. The two quartets have more similarities than differences in style. In both works form is clearly demarcated by very traditional associations of musical ideas, the music depending upon developmental procedures for its direction. Tension is controlled through careful contrasts of tempo, motion, texture, rhythm, consonance and dissonance, melodic contour and range, etc. The various climaxes and cadences in the two pieces also reveal the same procedures. Finally, both works display long, often- elided phrase constructions.

The most important stylistic difference between the two quartets is that the Second String Quartet presents and develops
fewer ideas per movement and has more movements (although approximately the same number of bars). In broad terms the quartet may therefore be described as embodying greater control of fewer resources than its predecessor.

One of the principle differences between the two quartets might seem to be the use of key in the String Quartet in E minor but not in the Second String Quartet. In fact, this difference is of little significance to the writing style common to both works, since each is highly chromatic. In the earlier piece only large-scale harmonic progressions may be analyzed with any degree of accuracy; chord-by-chord analysis is virtually impossible because the tonal relationships are too complex.

In comparison to the String Quartet in E minor, the Second String Quartet represents not a turning away from, but a growth beyond the use of tonality. Thus, in its own way, Sessions' development as a composer parallels that of Arnold Schoenberg in the early years of the twentieth century, and reinforces the example of artistic craftsmanship that serves, rather than hampers, expression.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I: ANALYSIS OF THE STRING QUARTET IN E MINOR</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Movement</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples 1.1 - 1.31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Movement</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples 1.32 - 1.43</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Movement</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples 1.44 - 1.67</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composer's Remarks on the String Quartet in E Minor</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II: ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND STRING QUARTET</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Movement</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples 2.1 - 2.9</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Movement</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples 2.10 - 2.26</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Movement</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples 2.27 - 2.37</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Movement</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples 2.38 - 2.53</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Movement</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples 2.54 - 2.65</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composer's Remarks on the Second String Quartet</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III: CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX: INTERVIEW</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude goes to the following persons for their kind aid in the completion of this thesis:

- to my parents, for their love, support and encouragement;
- to Roger Sessions, for taking time from a busy schedule to grant an interview, and for his writings and music which have been a constant source of inspiration;
- to my advisors, Dr. Ellsworth Milburn, Dr. Paul Cooper and Dr. Alice Hanson, for their professionalism and guidance;
- to the music librarians at Rice University and Yale University, for their kind assistance in obtaining materials;
- and finally, to my typists Lucy Lambert and Anita Poley; and to Evanne Brown, who prepared my musical examples.
INTRODUCTION

Roger Sessions was born in Brooklyn, New York, on December 28, 1896. As a youth he demonstrated exceptional musical and intellectual abilities and when only fourteen he entered Harvard University, graduating in 1915 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. This was followed by two years of study at Yale with Horatio Parker and a Bachelor of Music degree in 1917.

The first of many teaching posts held by Sessions was at Smith College from 1917-1921. During this time he began taking composition lessons from Ernest Bloch, afterward following Bloch to Cleveland where he took a position as his assistant in the Cleveland Conservatory of Music. Sessions spent the years 1925-33 mainly in Europe as the recipient of two Guggenheim fellowships as well as the American Academy in Rome and Carnegie fellowships. Though living abroad he lent his support to a series of contemporary music concerts in New York which were organized in collaboration with Aaron Copland (the Copland-Sessions Concerts). The series, which ended in 1931, was regarded as an important show-case of new American Music.

Other teaching posts held by Sessions were at Boston University (1933-35), the New Jersey College for Women (1935-37), Princeton University (1935-44), the University of California at Berkeley (1944-52), again at Princeton as the Conant Professor of Music (1953-65), as the Bloch Professor at Berkeley (1966-67), and as the Norton Professor at Harvard (1968-69). He currently teaches composition at the Julliard School of Music. Among his students may be counted Edward Cone, Andrew Imbrie, Milton Babbitt, Leon Kirchner and other well-known names in the fields of musicology and composition.

Sessions has written many articulate articles and essays which collectively discuss a wide range of topics related to music. These writings have appeared in such publications as Modern Music, Musical Quarterly, Musical America, Perspectives of New Music, and others. In addition he has written three books: The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener, which consists of a series of lectures delivered at Julliard in 1949; Harmonic Practice, a theory textbook, and Questions About Music, which is the compilation of the Charles Eliot Norton lectures delivered in 1968-69 at Harvard.

Sessions' musical output, more than half of it written after the age of sixty, includes eight symphonies, two string quartets and

---

a string quintet plus other chamber music, the incidental music to The Black Maskers suite, two operas (The Trial of Lucullus and Monte-
zuma), a setting for soprano and orchestra of the Idyll of Theocritus, three concertos, and various works for piano, cello, violin, organ and choral ensembles.

Sessions has been called the "dean of American composers". He is a younger contemporary of such giants as Schoenberg, Bartok, Debussy, and Stravinsky; his life and creative output span years of revolution in his field. Thus he is to be counted in the vanguard of the tremendous changes of the twentieth century. The respect generally accorded his music, his lengthy career and unique historical position would seem to be a good reason for study and dissemination (not to mention performance) of Sessions' works. Surprisingly, while there are many short articles and reviews dealing with them, they are the subject of relatively few complete, in-depth analyses in papers, theses or dissertations.

In the hope of understanding certain aspects of Sessions' compositional style, the first and second string quartets (written in 1935-36 and 1951, respectively) were analyzed. Historically, the string quartet has been the vehicle for composers' most personal expression, combining the best aspects of solo and symphonic mediums. Also, Sessions has stated\(^5\) that these two pieces were important

points in his development. The fact that the two works chosen utilize the same medium provides a measure of control in their comparison, since they were written fifteen years apart.

The two quartets reveal clear formal procedures. The String Quartet in E minor has three movements: a *Moderato*, where tempo varies from $\frac{\text{J}}{\text{=}}=100$ to $\frac{\text{J}}{\text{=}}=126$, and which combines stanza-like repetitions of materials with sonata form; an *Adagio Molto* ($\frac{\text{J}}{\text{=}}=56-60$) which, as Cone writes "may be described as a slow movement with a *Scherzo* as trio;"* and a *Vivace Molto* ($\frac{\text{J}}{\text{=}}=120-136$) in sonata form.

The *Second String Quartet* has an arch-form of five movements: the first, *Lento* ($\frac{\text{J}}{\text{=}}=58$) utilizes fugal procedures in sonata form; the second, *Allegro Appassionato* ($\frac{\text{J}}{\text{=}}=116$), has an ABA'B'A" structure which roughly matches sonata-rondo form; the third, *Andante Tranquillo* ($\frac{\text{J}}{\text{=}}=80$), is a theme with five variations; the fourth, *Presto* ($\frac{\text{J}}{\text{=}}=120$) is a *Scherzo*-like movement with an interesting correlation to the early Classical sonata; and the fifth, *Adagio* ($\frac{\text{J}}{\text{=}}=58$) explores two themes and is a lyric, pensive epilogue to the quartet.

The two quartets also show a traditional use of musical elements. Melodies, themes, motives, accompaniment patterns, texture,
tempo, phrasing, etc., show special functions and are easily identified and related. The music, however, possesses a richness of detail and activity which contributes to its reputation for being "difficult".\footnote{This is Sessions' own assessment. See his article "How a difficult composer gets that way," New York Times, 8 January 1950, section 2, p. 9. Also in Roger Sessions on Music: Collected Essays, Edward T. Cone, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 169-171.} The problem of difficulty is heightened dramatically by Sessions' use of tonality. The String Quartet in E minor represents what Edward T. Cone correctly calls "a greatly broadened tonal system."\footnote{Cone, Modern Music, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 159-163.} This "system" is so vast that in fact it is unlikely to be appreciated by any but the most conscientious listeners. The Second String Quartet uses no key nor any visible substitute system of organizing the notes, although in some respects (for example, the use of the themes in the first movement) it seems to presage the use of dodecaphony in Sessions' later music.

While analysis of the String Quartet in E minor requires a discussion of key, this is not a concern in the analysis of the Second String Quartet. In both works, attention is focused on identification of significant elements--themes, motives, "melodies", rhythms, textures, tempi, etc.--and on how they define form. The means of effecting cadences and climaxes are discussed with regard to both works, since these may be viewed as dramatic extremes where traits otherwise difficult to observe are highlighted and used in specific and consistent ways. Analysis of voice leading and chord
structure proved difficult when faced with the task of determining key or any other method of tonal organization. Consequently, little focus is placed on these topics.

It seems desirable at this point to make a statement about the nature and place of analysis with regard to a work of art, since much time has been spent in determining a guiding principle to this study. Analysis always takes place after the fact of creation, especially when the analysis is conducted by anyone other than the artist. This apparently simple statement has important ramifications for the student of theory, for if one yields to the temptation to quantify all conceivable aspects in a work, one risks losing sight of the whole in consideration of its parts. An undifferentiated mass of convoluted data will be the primary result, a condition which, if not alleviated, means difficult assimilation for the reader.

An analyst further strays when attempting to defend or criticize a work according to a point of view foreign to that work. For example, if an analyst is unable to quantify a particular aspect of a piece, there always exists the temptation to induce that no one can, or even that that aspect must have no real effect on anyone else's appreciation of the work. Such easy conclusions are not only erroneous but presumptuous. Naturally, the analysis then continues based on that assumption, regardless of circumstance.
The purpose of analysis is to observe and explain. It must begin with a specific, clearly presented goal and relate all observations to that goal. Only then is it properly conducted. Hence the purpose of this study is only to observe and explain the two string quartets of Roger Sessions in the belief that, ultimately, the music must speak for itself, and also that future scholarship concerning Sessions will thus experience the least difficulty in using the information contained here.

Chapter I presents an analysis of the *String Quartet in E minor*, while Chapter II deals with the *Second String Quartet*. Each chapter is divided into sections, each devoted to the analysis of a given movement. Examples appropriate to each movement are to be found grouped at the end of their respective sections. The chapters also contain excerpts of an interview with Sessions relevant to the particular work, and brief conclusions about each work. In Chapter III, the results of analysis of the two quartets are compared and final conclusions drawn.

The following is an explanation of terms and abbreviations found hereafter: m. denotes measure, mm., measures; ex. denotes example, exx., examples. Examples are numbered according to chapter and sequence (thus 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc.).

Specific tones are underlined, while labels of key or tonal level are not. Locations of specific tones within the chromatic scale are indicated by a combination of upper and lower case letters.
and apostrophes, with C as point of reference. Thus, C two octaves below middle C is indicated C; one octave below, c; middle C is c'; one octave above is c'', etc. Tones within the octave above a given C take similar form. Hence G below c' is g; that above, g'.

The term 'sonata' describes the traditional first-movement form where exposition, development, and recapitulation sections may be identified. Use of the term 'sonata-rondo' designates a combination of this procedure and that of the traditional rondo where each section of the sonata form coincides with varied repetitions of opening materials (thus AB|A'B'|A'').

The scores used for the analysis were the Arrow Music Press, Inc. printing of the String Quartet in E minor (1938) and the Edward B. Marks Music Corporation printing of the Second String Quartet (1954).
CHAPTER I

Analysis of the String Quartet in E minor

The String Quartet in E minor presents many ideas in a relatively short time; texture is quite polyphonic and, in general, harmonies are of complex construction. Much takes place within the context of a tonality whose relationships are not easily definable.

First Movement

In describing the first movement, Cone writes:

The general design--three successive expositions of the same material--corresponds in a rough way to exposition, development, and recapitulation; but...a more accurate picture is obtained from the composer's own term, three-stanza form."1

Each of the three "stanzas" of the first movement consists of three recurrent sections characterized by differing themes, rhythms, textures, tempi, etc. The sections, which may be referred to as theme-groups, occur in the same order with each stanza. Stanza II acquires the air of a development section, and stanza III that of a recapitulation, both due mainly to the way in which theme-group I is treated

throughout the movement. Stanza I is 79 bars long; stanza II, 81; and stanza III, 64. The movement closes with a coda seventeen bars in length.

Each theme-group depends not only on the themes and associated tempi, but on particular combinations of motion and texture, and on related rhythms and motives for its structural definition. 'Motion' as used here refers to typical note values; 'texture' refers to the number of instrumental parts or chordal 'voices' and how these are used, e.g., polyphonically, imitatively, etc.

Theme-group I, in tempo Moderato (\( \frac{4}{4} = 116 \)), contains the main theme of the movement, seen in the 1st violin part in mm. 1-9. The first phrase of this theme (theme I) is characterized (following the first note) by the rhythmic pattern \( \frac{4}{4} \frac{4}{4} \frac{4}{4} \), which carries the line alternately up and down using successive intervals no larger than a P4th (mm. 1-5). The phrase ends with a question-like rising m7th; the second phrase begins with the same m7th, moves in the rhythmic pattern \( \frac{4}{4} \frac{4}{4} \) in a smooth arch briefly up, then descends to cadence (ex. 1.1). Hereafter the presence of theme I is announced through three devices: 1.) the head motive of the first phrase (the opening four notes); 2.) the rhythmic patterns and general contour of the first phrase; and 3.) the rhythmic patterns and general contour of the second phrase.

Theme-group II, with \( \frac{4}{4} = 100 \), opens at m. 38 with theme II in the 2nd violin part. Thereafter theme II appears in m. 39 in the
1st violin line, m. 42 in the 2nd violin part, and fragmented in a two-and-a-half bar sequence in the 1st violin part in mm. 47-49. Each time it appears, this theme is identifiable through nine notes (ex. 1.2); after each entrance, the line dissolves into eighth-note counterpoint, rendering its treatment reminiscent of Baroque fugal process.

Theme-group III, opening at m. 49, has no theme or subject per se, but depends on radical changes in tempo (\( \text{\textbullet} = 120 \)) and motion for its definition. However, three motives (out of many appearing in this section) always serve to signal its beginning. Motive I consists of the pattern of sixteenth notes first seen in the 2nd violin and viola parts in mm. 47 and 48. This motive permeates the movement; some of its variations may be seen in ex. 1.3b. Motive II is the impetuous sixteenth-note gesture, seen in the viola line at m. 49, which utilizes melodic P4ths, and is followed by a related gesture in the cello line in m. 49 (ex. 1.4). Motive III appears first in mm. 49-50 in the 2nd violin part, then again on the same tonal level in m. 53 in the 1st violin part (ex. 1.5). The tempo, \( \text{\textbullet} = 120 \), is actually not indicated until this entrance; the four bars preceding (mm. 49-52) are marked \textit{poco animando}. In later stanzas, when theme-group III enters it has less preparation.

In broad terms, theme-groups I and II are similar in their motion, since each at first uses time values no smaller than eighth notes; in addition, eighth-note motion in one or more parts is
virtually constant in these two sections. Theme group III, on the other hand, utilizes nearly constant motion in sixteenth notes.

The melodic and rhythmic shapes of the lower parts in the opening nine bars govern the environment at each recurrence of theme I. In mm. 1-9, the inner parts' lines move predominantly in flowing eighth-note motion emphasizing constant changes of direction while the cello moves more slowly, its line more filled with rests (see ex. 1.1). The texture is four part and polyphonic, although there is no doubt as to which part carries the theme.

Theme I itself reappears throughout the movement in many guises. For example, one of its versions initiates a varied repetition of theme-group I (which originally lasted only nineteen bars) from mm. 20-28 where its melodic contour is varied and passed between the viola (mm. 20-24) and 1st violin parts (mm. 24-28). The texture is in three parts, again polyphonic, but motion is virtually the same as in the original form (ex. 1.6).

In stanza II (beginning at m. 80), treatment of theme I and its accompaniment illustrates the developmental nature of that section. The theme appears in the viola part in m. 80, and elides with the entrance of the cello in m. 83, to be overlapped by a third entrance in the 1st violin part in m. 85. The cello line assumes two brief gestures from the second phrase of theme I at the point where it is interrupted by the 1st violin entrance. The latter also quickly gives way to dotted quarters and eighths (ex. 1.7). The
texture is primarily in four parts, but motion is changed with the addition of sixteenth notes taken from theme-group III, appearing in motives derived from the latter and in bowed tremolos in the accompaniment, which moves basically in eighth notes. The return to theme I materials in m. 80 leads to a reference in mm. 90-98 to mm. 20-28, with the melody again passed from viola to 1st violin (ex. 1.8).

The three bars of tempo I (£=116) which precede the entrance of theme I in m. 160 serve to create a sense of recapitulation at stanza III. In addition the entrance of theme I in the viola part is at the original tonal level, with the motion and texture in the other parts very similar to those of stanza I. However, this atmosphere is interrupted by an abrupt change of texture leading to a new key and to developmental handling of theme I similar to that seen in stanza II.Overlapping cello and viola entrances in m. 169 and m. 171 refer back to mm. 83 and 85. Each line breaks into dotted quarter and eighth notes before reaching the end of the phrase. The accompaniment again utilizes bowed tremolo on eighth-note motion (ex. 1.9).

Finally, there are two last appearances of the theme, in the coda in mm. 230-234 (1st violin) and mm. 236-241 (viola). The former comes close to completing the first phrase of the theme, but it is elided by the six-voice chords which dominate the texture in mm. 235-241. The viola's entrance varies the theme, using its
rhythmic cells in a free sequence to the cadence (ex. 1.10). Texture and motion in these final bars is unprecedented. Normal accompanimental patterns are replaced by a texture acting as transition to the second movement.

When each statement of theme I material is concluded, it is followed by the motive first heard in mm. 9-11 in the 2nd violin part (ex. 1.11). The details of this motive's construction and the manner in which it is treated may vary; however, usually it appears in stepwise descending sequence between at least two parts. In mm. 9-12, the 2nd violin states it first on f\#", followed by the 1st violin on e". These two statements are exact intervallically. The viola imitates the initial motive downward, but varies the ending. Although constant motion in eighth notes continues, the motion is between parts, as the texture moves from six voices in mm. 9-10 to one voice in m. 12.

Similar activity occurs in mm. 29-31, this time with the 1st violin opening on g", overlapped by the 2nd violin on f\#". Again, the entrances of the motive are exact through the ninth note. Although the motion slows, texture does not thin as much as before (ex. 1.12).

The next appearances of this motive are in the violin parts in mm. 105-109. The 2nd violin enters on a", the 1st follows on g"; this time there are slight intervallical variations between the two.
Motion hardly changes at all, nor does texture until the last note of the 1st violin statement (ex. 1.13).

Last appearances of the motive occur in close, free imitation, in mm. 179-182 among the upper three parts. There the accented and sustained first note serves to attract attention, although the motive may be altered or even absent. For instance, in the viola part in m. 180, the dotted half-note double-stop sounds like an entrance even though it is not followed by any subsequent eighth-note motion belonging to the motive. The entrances, except that particular one, are all on $g^b$ or $g^{b''}$ (ex. 1.14).

This motive is clearly cadential, since it always closes any statement of the first theme which is to be followed by link material (see discussion below). Every time the motive occurs it is accompanied or soon followed by diminuendo; also, its consistent motion from high to low registers may be taken to imply progression from an area of greater tension to an area of lesser tension. However, its environment changes: that is, the motion and texture do not always show an immediate tendency to change or thin, which adds to a feeling of cadence. Therefore, the motive itself is clearly of structural importance, since it acts as a signal for change, notwithstanding varied surroundings or minor intervallic changes in its appearance.

Each appearance of the motive described above leads to what has been designated 'link' material, so named since at almost every
occurrence it contains a change of key and leads to different material. Of all the recurring motives and passages, the link undergoes the most extensive variation throughout the movement. Constant eighth-note motion in all four parts permits easy identification, but in addition each link passage is comprised of small gestures, organized in groups of two or four notes. Also, each line is individual; at no point do all parts (in three or four-part texture) move in parallel or even similar motion; at least one part will be contrary to the others.

The first occurrence of link material in mm. 13-19 demonstrates the above characteristics. Each line seems to be composed primarily of P4ths, derived from the opening bars of the accompaniment to the first theme. The P4ths are altered unpredictably, sometimes to M3rds or m3rds, sometimes to larger intervals, and are connected usually by 2nds or 3rds. The thick texture makes perception of such changes difficult (ex. 1.15).

Mm. 13-19 lead to a re-entry of the first theme-group (of which they are a part) in a varied repeat of the first nineteen bars. At the end of the repeated theme-group, the link passage again appears in mm. 32-35, leading now to a change of key from one sharp to three flats, and after that to cadence and the entrance of theme-group II. This link passage is less predictable than the previous one. It does not emphasize P4ths; instead, every interval through a m7th is represented at least once. Yet the groupings of two to four
notes and constant changes of direction are evident in each line (ex. 1.16).

The next link passage again demonstrates the developmental character of stanza II. Beginning with the 2nd violin at m. 109 and adding the other parts one by one, it introduces a change of signature to five sharps from six flats. The lines are much freer than those in earlier link sections, until m. 113, where all four parts suddenly repeat at the half-bar. From m. 113 through m. 116, motion is more similar to preceding examples (ex. 1.17).

The final link section begins in m. 183 with all four parts moving in fairly regular motion, comparable to the link passage from m. 13 to m. 19. The signature changes here from four flats to one sharp. After the 2nd violin drops out in m. 184, the 1st violin and viola lines settle into static, almost Alberti-like accompaniment patterns in contrary motion to each other. Meanwhile the cello line becomes the vehicle for a brief, steeply arching melody which continues in eighths and exploits all the characteristics of the link passages, i.e., unpredictable patterns of repetition and groupings of two or four notes. The passage leads again to theme-group II (ex. 1.18).

Because it is so short, theme-group II has very few separately definable features; for this reason it undergoes little development. Besides the tempo change, theme II, which is treated imitatively at each recurrence of the theme-group, provides the most
notable signal of structural identity. This is because the counterpoint/accompaniment is similar both to previous accompanimental material and to the link passage preceding it.

The most notable characteristic of theme II is its initial drop of a m7th, followed by two ascending half-steps. This characteristic is almost invariable throughout its appearance in the movement; each entrance retains the general contour, but specifics vary. As previously mentioned, the first nine notes often share the same contour (see ex. 1.2). This is true of the first three entrances: m. 38 in the 2nd violin part, m. 39 in the 1st, and m. 42 in the 2nd violin again. In m. 49 (1st violin part), only the first three notes appear, as the subject is cut off by theme-group III.

Mm. 125 through the first two bars of 134 (in the cello part) show no changes in theme II, but this time there is no sequential treatment of the head as theme-group III approaches. In stanza III the cello and viola parts add sequential treatment in diminution of the head of the subject, in m. 195 and in m. 196. More sequential treatment of the subject head appears in mm. 197-199 in the viola line, in original rhythms (ex. 1.19).

The accompaniment in these three passages, like the link passage, emphasizes unpredictability through constant change of direction in the line. Unlike the link passage, the lines do not emphasize repetitions of gesture, nor do they seem planned to move in opposition. They are, therefore, freer in rhythm and contour.
The second theme-group is always approached by cadence, to be subsequently interrupted by outbursts of theme-group III material. The cadences which lead into it are created by: slowing of motion in one or more parts; thinning of texture to two or three voices; change of meter; use of diminuendo and ritardando; overall drop in register; and twice (first and third appearances) by phrasing breaks in all parts between the last bar of cadence and the first bar in theme-group II. Each occurrence of the second theme-group is interrupted by the same impetuous sixteenth-note gesture described earlier in relation to theme-group III (motive II). Other appearances of motive II are in mm. 134 and 199 in the viola and 1st violin parts, respectively.

Whereas theme-group I and II make use of relatively few materials, theme-group III uses many, beginning with motive I. These materials consist of chords, accents, rhythms, motives and longer lines of melody and accompaniment, creating a rich web of activity and an area of sustained tension. Strangely, however, like theme-group II, theme-group III undergoes practically no development.

The section is permeated by the striking use of dynamic accents, which appear mainly on notes other than sixteenths and give the music an abrupt and energetic quality. Accents are given added force when used with chords (which are written as such in double, triple or quadruple stops).

Theme-groups I and II have relatively few melodies or motives which are unique in function. Theme-group III has eight; the first
three have been previously described (see exx. 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5). They appear at the beginning of each recurrence of theme-group III. Each time (except for the first) motive III is punctuated by heavily accented chords.

The fourth melodic motive, almost an inversion of the third, is also supported by multi-stopped chords and accents, and it makes use of the dotted rhythm of m. 51 in the 2nd violin part (see ex. 1.5). But unlike motive III, it is used in close imitation, invariably between the 1st and 2nd violin parts (ex. 1.20).

The fifth "motive" is actually a long melodic line constructed on an ascending sequence. The melody appears only in the 1st violin, following motive IV. The first appearance is in mm. 57-60 (ex. 1.21); the second appearance (extended by a tail which refers to motive III in its dotted rhythms) is in mm. 137-142. The third and last occurrence makes use of brief portions of the melody only, in mm. 204 and 205 (ex. 1.21).

Motive VI is a rising P4th followed by motive I (ex. 1.22). Motive VI is used imitatively at each occurrence of theme-group III, each time preceded by a reduction in the number of parts playing. Thus it is used in coordination with texture to heighten tension and delineate form. Passages where it occurs are at mm. 63 and 64 through m. 69; mm. 145 through 149; and mm. 208 through 214. The last two passages use it in stretto, decreasing steadily the amount of time between successive entries, building towards a climax. The
last such passage relies more on this device (plus the addition of smaller note values) than on layering of texture to heighten tension (ex. 1.23).

The seventh motive signals the end of theme-group III. It follows the imitative use of motive VI each time and is usually (with one exception) surrounded by signs of cadence (drop in register, slowing of tempo, \textit{diminuendo}, thinning of texture, etc.). Its first appearance (ex. 1.24) is across the bar-line between mm. 75 and 76 in the first violin part. At its next appearance in mm. 149-151 (ex. 1.25) it appears in octave double-stops in the 1st violin part, serving as both a sign of approaching cadence and as a sign of sectional climax, since the preceding fugal section builds to it. For this reason it is not immediately surrounded by other signs of cadence at this point. At the end of the last occurrence of theme-group III motive VII appears once in the 1st violin part in m. 223, then is treated in close imitation between the cello and 2nd violin in mm. 228-231 (see ex. 1.10).

The final structural motive of the third theme-group is closely tied to the seventh since it too signals the end of theme-group III. The two appear together without any particular order. The first appearance of motive VIII is in mm. 76-79 in the 1st violin part (ex. 1.26). At its second appearance, beginning in the 1st violin part in m. 150, it alternates with and overlaps appearances of motive VII (ex. 1.27). It is seen a final time in the 1st
violin part in mm. 224 and 225 (ex. 1.28). Because of their rhythmic groupings of two eighths followed by a quarter or half note, motives VII and VIII are used as transitional material to theme I, which has similar groupings or cells of two eighths followed by a dotted half note.

By observing key signatures, it becomes clear that key is also used structurally. Most key changes occur in sections of theme-group I; key signature never changes in the midst of theme-groups II or III. Therefore the theme-groups are treated differently, in a tonal sense.

Throughout the music is so chromatic that it becomes impossible to place a harmonic function on every note, line or chord. Several key signatures are used, some of which are rather removed from E minor. For example, the opening, for approximately one beat, is unequivocally in E minor, with one sharp in the signature and each part beginning on a member of the tonic chord. The sequence of key signatures after this is as follows: three flats, m. 35; one sharp, m. 83; six flats, m. 90; five sharps, m. 115, four flats, m. 166; and finally, one sharp again m. 184.

Theme-group I undergoes the most flexible use of accidentals, often with brief areas dominated by either flats or sharps. For instance, after the opening, the melody is influenced mainly by flats for the first nine measures while the lower three parts use a mixture of sharps and flats, rapidly obscuring the tonal center of E minor.
Since each altered note has an enharmonic equivalent and since the piece opens in a sharp key, it would be tempting to say that each flatted note could be rewritten to reveal a function more related to the tonic. For instance, in the first bar, B♭ makes passing appearances in the upper three parts, but on the first beat of m. 2, A♯ appears in the lower three. It might be a mistake to say that the two spellings were functionally the same, since the composer took the trouble to write them differently. Yet they move by quickly, occur with virtually no preparation, do not necessarily have linear resolutions, and are surrounded by other similar tonal ambiguities—therefore aural perception of the minute difference between A♯ and B♭ is extremely unlikely and questions of function become somewhat superfluous.

It is tempting also to create enharmonic equivalents of some of the key signatures in order to construct a functional progression in a traditional sense. If the six flats in m. 90 were changed to six sharps, for example, an enticing progression from one sharp in m. 83 to six sharps (f♯?) in m. 90 to five sharps (B?) in m. 115 could be postulated, representing a harmonic progression from I to ii to V of E.

Although theme-group I is varied the most in its use of key and accidentals, the other theme-groups are not much clearer harmonically--they merely have fewer key changes and use accidentals more consistently. Throughout the movement, harmonies which reveal
tertian construction occur only intermittently, and typically are veiled either by the presence of "non-chord" tones or by conflicting horizontal motion, which render their perception difficult.

There are many examples of such obscured harmonies. Most chords seem to have two or more roots; that is, they appear to be polychordal, while others are not really identifiable at all in tertian terms. For example, the chord in m. 9 (see end of ex. 1.1) appears to be primarily in B minor with C major or minor superimposed, represented by c' in the 1st violin and g in the viola part. The chord on the downbeat of m. 29—which corresponds structurally to that in m. 9—is constructed in exactly the same way, though on a different tonal level and differently voiced (see ex. 1.12). It consists seemingly of C minor with D♭ superimposed, represented in the viola and 2nd violin parts by a♭ and d♭, respectively. The chord which follows in m. 29, however, offers no easy definition, containing B♭, a♭, g♭', d♭', c'' and either g'', f'', e♭'' (depending upon which note in the melodic figure is viewed as being a note of resolution) (ex. 1.29).

Similar examples occur at the openings of theme-group III sections. Each time, the accented chords which support the melody may be viewed in different ways: as polychords; as one chord with "added" tones; or simply as a vertical construction which is pleasing in effect and serves a rhythmic purpose, but whose origin and therefore harmonic function is basically not explainable according
to system. Other excellent examples of the latter may be seen in mm. 120-123 and in the final ten bars of the movement.

Brief examples of harmonies outlined melodically but veiled by horizontal motion are to be found mostly in link sections. In m. 15, E minor is outlined in the viola and cello parts on the third and fourth beats, at the same time that the 1st and 2nd violins are outlining $E_b$ minor. In m. 17, the violin parts outline $B^b$ major and then B major on the first and second beats, while the lower parts outline other harmonies. Indeed, the entire passage (mm. 13-19) is composed primarily of sequential P4ths both horizontally and vertically; therefore implied roots at any instant are numerous (see ex. 1.15). In the second link passage, mm. 32-34, $D^b$ minor and $B^b$ major definitely begin the passage, leading through shifting chords to an $F$ major chord with m7th outlined clearly in all four parts on the last four eighth notes of m. 34 (see ex. 1.16).

The chords in the last passage described can be clearly heard; they stand out from the music before and after, and unquestionably have a feeling of progression to a dominant function at the end of m. 34. Close examination of the next bar reveals what seems to be a $B^b$ chord on the downbeat, but with $E^b$ and $A^b$ in the viola and the 2nd violin parts, which resolve stepwise downward. By the time each has reached a chord tone of $B^b$ major, the outer parts have moved from the $B^b$ and $F^b$ that they were on, so that any impression of $B^b$ as the resolution from $F$ in the preceding bar can only be fleeting.
However, such brief passages belie the assumption that key is not an influential force. It is apparent at the beginning of each theme-group that some arrival has been made, whether or not tonal level is perceivable. It has already been mentioned that the movement begins in E minor. In m. 20, when the first theme-group is repeated, it is equally plain that B^ are the tonal center, though it too is obscured quickly in a manner quite similar to the opening (see ex. 1.6). This could explain the A#s (hence, B^s) in the opening bars.

The second link passage analyzed above seems to lead to B^ but changes to a signature of three flats. The cadence in mm. 35-37 is ambiguous tonally, but ends with c' and c'' in the 1st and 2nd violin parts; the cello line gradually descends to C, rises through A^ and B to C again, then drops to G and ends on A^--all of which are within the key of C minor.

Each of the subject entrances in theme-group II begins on a level easily related to C minor (see ex. 1.2); the first, on f'; the second, on c''' (1st violin, m. 39); the third, on g' (2nd violin, m. 42); and the closing sequence, twice on f" (1st violin, mm. 47 and 48). The viola line in m. 38 ascends the C minor/major scale, and the cello line throughout the passage remains within the harmonic minor of the key with the exception of h^ and a^ in m. 45. The cello part even goes through a sequence of dropping fifths (in mm. 41 and 42) which outline C and its dominant (ex. 1.30).
The motive which opens the third theme-group (see ex. 1.5) seems to begin by ascending the first three notes of the C minor scale. The 2nd violin statement also repeats and raises the third; the rest of the tones in the brief melody may be explained at the tonal level of C.

The return of the opening theme in m. 80 (viola part) is on a or in the key of D. At the cello entrance in m. 83, there is a key change to one sharp. The cello entrance is on B, therefore a return to E minor seems implied. In addition, the cello's first note of the theme is coupled in a double-stop with D#, suggesting B major, or V of E; and, above, the 2nd violin plays repeated double-stops on g and e', thereby implying the tonic. Above this, the 1st violin plays a', which, though within the key of E minor, obscures further the mixed effect of the other parts (ex. 1.31). The cello statement is overlapped by the 1st violin making an entrance on g'', or in the key of C#. It is worth noting that at this point sharps rather than flats dominate. The next bar momentarily switches back to flats, then the next three bars (mm. 87-89) use sharps and double-sharps again.

At the next change in key signature (m. 90), tonality is unclear, since the theme enters on g in viola, while the other parts begin on Bb, c'-e' (2nd violin) and b. The linking passage in mm. 109-116 moves to a key signature of five sharps. The subject entrances of theme-group II in mm. 125-133 are on the levels of c#',

b', g#, and a#. Thus, all are in B major, or G# minor, which is the key of the scalar motive of theme-group III when it appears in m. 134, 2nd violin part.

In m. 160 when theme I returns a third time, it is on b again, but the line makes use of f, implying that it is remaining in G# minor. The sudden change to four flats in m. 166 is followed by two overlapping entrances on _F_ in m. 169 (cello) and d' in m. 171 (viola) which stand in the same tonal relationship as the overlapping entrances in the previous stanza. However, tonal direction at this point, as in stanza II, is unclear.

The final link section returns to the key signature of one sharp. It appears that theme-group II and III are here oriented to A minor or major: the entrances of theme II are on a' and e'' in m. 189 (violin parts) and f in 193 (cello); the opening scalar motive of theme-group III in mm. 199 and 200 is in A minor (2nd violin).

The final appearances of the opening theme in m. 230, 1st violin part, and m. 236, viola part, are once again tonally ambiguous, since they seem to occur on levels that have little relationship to previous key levels. Perhaps it is worth noting that by beginning on c', the 1st violin entrance outlines E major in the first rhythmic cell, and again (enharmonically) in the third (see ex. 1.10). The final chord of the movement appears to be an inversion of B major with A minor superimposed in the viola and 1st violin parts.
The first movement presents a contrast between a clear structure and an ambiguous sense of direction. The main reason for this is that in broad terms there are three of everything, creating what could be called a dramatic homogeneity unrelieved by any single point of tension or release that might focus the energies of the different musical ideas. The use of the transitional coda gives a clear indication that the dramatic impetus of the first movement is resolved later in the quartet.
First Movement

1.1. mm. 1-9

1.2a. mm. 38-44
1.2.b. mm. 47-49

1.3.a. mm. 47,48

1.3.b. mm 57-60

1.4. mm. 49-51

1.5.a. mm. 49-51

1.5.b. mm. 53-55
1.18. mm. 183-188

1.19a. mm. 195

1.19b. mm. 196-199

1.21a. mm. 57-60

1.21b. mm. 137-142
1.27. mm. 149–159

1.28. mm. 224–225

Vln. I

1.29. m. 29

1.30. mm. 38–44

Vc.

1.31. m. 83
Second Movement

The second movement of the String Quartet in E minor meditatively explores the melodic, rhythmic and textural possibilities inherent in a single motive. A different permutation of this motive opens each of four theme-groups arranged in the form ABCA'DABCA'. D in this scheme is the Scherzo mentioned earlier with regard to this movement (see the Introduction); it occupies a central and singular position in the movement. The sections which precede it are almost mirrored when they re-enter after its conclusion. Whereas theme-groups I, II and III (A,B,C above) are in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, in the tempo Adagio molto ($\frac{3}{4}$=56), theme-group IV (D above) is in $\frac{3}{8}$ meter with a tempo of Allegretto grazioso where $\frac{3}{8}$= of the preceding tempo.

The rondo-like repetitions of theme-group I give the movement its pensive, tentative air. Growing out of the tonally ambiguous ending of the first movement, this theme-group presents a lyric main theme supported by slow-moving, but harmonically restless chords. Not only the harmony gives this theme-group its disquieted air; each part, while moving in chordal relationship to the others, bears its own specific, melodic identity. Throughout the opening appearance of theme-group I (mm. 242-276), long phrases in values of quarter and half notes predominate, and the number of voice parts seldom drops below four (ex. 1.32).
Theme-group II lightens the mood by creating a patchwork texture, usually of no more than three parts, in which the parts rapidly alternate melodic and rhythmic gestures. Typical motion is in eighth and sixteenth notes, with a marked tendency for a particular motion (in quarters, eighths, etc.) to occur in only one part at any given moment (ex. 1.33).

Theme-group III (mm. 290-305) combines long lines reminiscent of theme-group I with the smaller time-values of theme-group II. However, a particular type of motion tends to remain in any given part for a much longer period of time, so that the patchwork quality of the previous theme-group is not present. Melodic parts move somewhat irregularly in combinations of quarter, dotted eighth and sixteenth notes. Accompanimental parts (here, the viola and cello) begin in regular patterns of sixteenths employing double-stops then become freer, showing at first a pattern, (soon dropped) of avoiding the first quarter of each beat (ex. 1.34).

In mm. 302-305, the viola line, which is moving in sixteenths (not unlike those seen in the first movement), adds a bowed tremolo to each value so that a line of repeated thirty-second notes is created. At the same time the 2nd violin begins motion in quarter notes and half notes, preparing the re-entrance of theme-group I.

The return of theme-group I in mm. 306-319 uses motion and texture similar to the opening, but augmented by the presence first of dotted eighths and sixteenths, then just eighth notes in one or more parts, taken from theme-groups II and III (ex. 1.35).
Theme-group IV (D above), with its faster tempo and changed meter, offers a striking diversion from the previous materials. Texture and motion are similar to those of theme-group II, in that the parts pass gestures rapidly back and forth, recreating the patchwork quality of the latter. Here, however, the parts alternate so rapidly and with so little overlapping that usually no more than two parts are sounding at once. The increased tempo, the brevity of the alternating gestures, the overall soft dynamic level (opening con sordino pp in all parts), and the use of harmonics in the 1st violin part render texture even thinner in effect (ex. 1.36).

An exception to the two-part texture throughout theme-group IV is the extraordinary cadence in mm. 371-377, at which all parts suddenly and simultaneously begin to converge in a wedge shape consisting of repeated, scalar sixteenth notes. In m. 375, all parts arrive on a trill; then in mm. 376 and 377, 2nd violin and cello parts diverge in sixteenth-note scales, while the 1st violin thickens the texture with a series of bowed thirty-second tremolos on double-stopped chords. The viola line drops out in preparation for re-entrance on the signal-motive or "theme" of this section in m. 378 (ex. 1.37). This event is significant, for with no warning it gathers the previously disparate motions of the parts, flings them briefly together, then lets them go again. By so doing it functions as the climax of the movement, since its occurrence is unique.
From m. 378 through m. 406, the motion and texture are at first as they were before the cadence described above, then activity gradually ceases. After m. 390, fewer alternations take place between parts; motion is stopped twice, once in m. 390, and again in m. 399; in the last six measures, duple quarter notes (four eighths in the space of three, by meter) are introduced, which slows motion for the return of tempo I \( \frac{\text{♩}}{\text{=56}} \) and \( \frac{\text{♩}}{\text{4}} \) meter in m. 407 (ex. 1.38).

The remainder of the movement from m. 407 to m. 476 corresponds structurally to the portion before the entrance of theme-group IV (from m. 242 to m. 321). That is, theme-group I reopens in m. 407, to be followed by theme-group II (at m. 427) and III (in m. 443), in turn followed by theme-group I material in m. 458, used to close the movement. Overall changes are slight, although of course specifics vary. Theme-group I is again chordal in nature but shorter than before; II again brings out a lighter texture with more rests and variable number of parts; and III uses, as before, four or more voices, with longer lines than theme-group II.

One difference between the recurrences of theme-groups I, II and III following theme-group IV and the original appearances preceding that section lies in the appearance of cadential fermata, at m. 426 between theme-groups I and II, and at m. 439 on the third beat. The latter fermata occurs in a cadential passage from m. 436 to m. 443, which finds its counterpart in mm. 287-290. In these passages, the unpredictable rhythms in each part give way to more
consistent motion in eighth and quarter notes, each time presaging a change to theme-group III. When theme-group I materials recur at the end of the movement, the chordal motion is again accompanied by the melodic rhythms of III. As in the passage preceding m. 321, the final bars break motion, with pauses in all parts before the final chord.

The motive which helps to unify the movement first appears in the 1st violin part mm. 242 and 243. Surprisingly, this motive is very short, consisting of only three notes utilizing the intervals of a m2nd and a m3rd. Its use in theme-group I is as the first of four cells which comprise the main theme (see ex. 1.32). Often the only portion of this theme (theme I) to appear is the first cell; the others may not appear, or may be altered intervallically.

Entrances of this motive occur in m. 252, 2nd violin; m. 255, 1st violin; and m. 263, cello part. At no point after the opening statement does theme I repeat in full. For instance, the 2nd violin entrance in m. 253 replaces the last cell with free motion (ex. 1.39a), and the third cell begins on a different relative tonal level than before. The 1st violin entrance in m. 255 extends the first cell, and alters the rest so that only the descending P5ths of the third cell are recognizable, though again on the wrong relative tonal level (ex. 1.39b). The cello entrance uses only the head motive (first cell) in free descending sequence (ex. 1.39c). The
motive appears twice more in inversion in the cello part in mm. 270-271 and mm. 273-274; the other cells do not appear.

When theme-group I materials recur in mm. 306-320, theme I enters four times, once in each part. After the 1st violin statement which opens the section, however, each successive statement is shorter by one cell, so that the cello entrance in m. 313 consists only of the head motive. When each part completes its theme statement, its line dissolves into free counterpoint (see ex. 1.35).

The recurrence of theme-group I in m. 407-426 offers striking parallels to the opening of the movement in the use of the theme. Theme I is again in the 1st violin part, on the same tonal level, and is exact through m. 415. The next entrance in the 2nd violin part in m. 417 is at the same time interval as the second theme entrance in m. 252, though on a different tonal level. In addition, the 1st violin entrance in m. 407 is accompanied by the same descending half-step motion in the viola part from m. 242 (see ex. 1.38). Other entrances of theme I are in the viola part in m. 419 and in the cello part in m. 424; in each, only the head motive appears.

Theme-group II starts with a rising m3rd followed by the head motive of theme-group I in diminution in the viola part, mm.277-279. This is attached to a tail (m. 279) which leads to free counterpoint (see ex. 1.33). Since this section is short, this two-bar theme (theme II) recurs only once, in the 2nd violin part in m. 283. However, its head is used imitatively beginning with the cello part
in m. 286, to achieve a change of key and, along with the change of motion noted earlier, herald cadence in m. 290 and the beginning of theme-group III in m. 291 (ex. 1.40).

When theme-group II recurs (in mm. 427-442) the full theme appears three times (m. 427, 1st violin; m. 431, 1st violin; and m. 434, cello part), and as before its head is used imitatively to lead to cadence in m. 442 (ex. 1.41).

Theme-group III opens with another version of the head motive of theme-group I as melody in the 2nd violin part in m. 291; that is, a m3rd up followed by a M2nd and then a m2nd down. Intervallically, only the first and third entrances of this "theme" (theme III) are exact through more than these four notes; but rhythmically, each appearance is the same through the downbeat of the bar following any statement opening. In each section of theme-group III, theme III occurs only twice; the first is in m. 291, 2nd violin part; the next is in m. 296, 1st violin part; then, skipping to the recurrence of theme-group III, in the viola part m. 443; and then again in the 1st violin part m. 447 (ex. 1.42).

The melody line of theme-group IV in m. 321, 2nd violin part, opens with a m3rd followed by a M2nd, but with the directions reversed from that of theme-group III. This theme, as such (theme IV) extends four bars. Its only recurrence follows the cadence, discussed above, in m. 377; there it is in the viola part, but on the
same tonal level as in m. 321 with slight intervallic changes (see exx. 1.36 and 1.37).

Of the four theme-groups, only the first and second have any recognizable countermelodies or countermotives. The descending three-note motive in the 2nd violin part which accompanies theme I at the opening has already been noted since it recurs at m. 407 in the viola line. This is the only motive to return with this theme.

There are two countermelodies to theme II. The first is seen originally in the 2nd violin part in m. 277 (see ex. 1.33). Like the theme it lasts two measures. A modified version of it returns in the viola line in mm. 283 and 284. It appears again in the viola line in mm. 427 and 428 when theme-group II returns for the second time. When theme II is stated in the 1st violin part in m. 431, only the head of this countermelody (first measure) is present. It does not accompany the final statement of the theme in the cello part in m. 434, although the viola line does reflect its melodic gestures.

The second countermelody appears only twice, in the 1st violin part in mm. 279-280 and in the 2nd violin part in mm. 429 and 430. Its function is to continue the line of melody begun with the first statement of theme II in each section of theme-group II (subsequent entrances of the theme do not lead to this melody).

It is again obvious that key contributes to the structure and development of the work; however, the determination of key or
tonal centers in this movement is again difficult. The movement
starts with a key signature of two sharps, changes first to five
sharps in m. 287 (end of theme-group II), then to one sharp in
m. 321 (theme-group IV), then returns to two sharps in m. 407 (with
the return of theme-group I). The only tertian harmonies with
clear function are the first and the last chords, which are both
obviously B minor/major chords.

The head motive of the first theme seems to explore the
minor and major modes of B; however, its spelling, using a m3rd
followed by M3rd, is not consistent with each appearance of the
motive. For example, the entrance in the 1st violin part in
m. 255 begins on f#", to g", to b\(^b\)" (see ex. 1.39b). To imply E\(^b\)
minor, for instance, the opening note of this entrance should have
been g\(^b\)". Of course, it may be that the motive is opening on
another relative step of the scale of another key—for instance,
G minor, in this case.

The change to five sharps in m. 287 may be a change to G#
minor, since F\(^x\)'s and E\(^#\)'s begin to appear in all parts in the follow-
ing bars. However, by the same token there are many other acciden-
tals also appearing such as D\(^b\), A\(^b\), G\(^b\), etc.

The change to one sharp in m. 321 presents similar problems
of tonal definition. The two entrances of the signal motive of
theme-group IV both begin on g", then descend to e", then ascend to
f#". Hence, there is no way of knowing whether this section is in
the key of G major or E minor (see exx. 1.36 and 1.37).
The return to two sharps in m. 407 is almost certainly a return to B minor/major, with all chord tones present and the only odd element a G which alternates with B in the cello part. As at the beginning of the movement, melodic motion rapidly obscures the effect of the key.

The theme-groups II, III, and IV occur at particular tonal levels with each entrance. Theme-group IV is discussed briefly above. Statements of theme II are related by whole-step, and related to their countermelodies by a P5th (or P12th) except where the latter are modified. Similarly, the second countermelody always opens at the correct tonal level—that is, an octave higher than the first statement of theme II. Theme II originally opens on a', with the first countermelody on d' in m. 277. When the theme re-enters in m. 283, it is on g' (with altered countermelody). When the theme-group returns in m. 427, the theme is on e'' with countermelody on a'; both later statements are on D, (d'' and d) the first with countermelody on g'. The key signatures of both sections are two sharps.

Theme III appears twice in each occurrence of theme-group III; the entrances within a section are related by a m7th. The entrances the first time are at a tonal level of c#' and b'; the second time, at b and a'. The key signatures, respectively, are five sharps and two sharps.

The entrances of the head-motive of theme-group I are at many different tonal levels, in no particular observable order. However,
about one-third of the entrances are on D, followed each time by D♯, then F♯. Other tonal levels are C♯, A, B, F♯, C, E, etc.

As in the first movement, cadences utilize such features as diminuendo, ritardando, changes in motion and meter, overall drop in register, and thinning of texture. New sections are often set off by pauses in the form of phrasing breaks (breath marks), fermata, and sustained rests. Examples of this may be seen between theme-groups I and II (ex. 1.43), between I and IV (see ex. 1.36) and vice versa (see ex. 1.38), etc. In a similar manner, theme entrances are often preceded by a bar or two of rest or even just phrasing breaks in the part in which they are to occur.

It has been mentioned previously that the second movement communicated an air of disquiet, mainly through the four appearances of theme-group I material. The second, third and fourth theme-groups provide some contrast to that feeling; however, they are themselves diverse in mood. For this reason the mixture of effects (between theme-groups) creates a tension that propels the movement to its end. There the prevailing mood represented by theme-group I closes utilizing an unprecedented open P5th, thereby creating a startling contrast to previous harmonies and a final gentle push to the next movement.
Second Movement

1.32. mm. 242-251

Adagio molto

1.33. mm. 277-285

1.34 a. mm. 291-292
l.36. mm. 320-345

Allegretto grazioso

1.37. mm. 370-378
1.38. mm. 386-408

1.39. mm. 252-260

1.39. b. mm. 255-263

1.39. e. mm. 263-274
Third Movement

The third movement is in sonata form. Exposition, development and recapitulation are identifiable through varied treatments of the same material. In particular, the recapitulation repeats large portions of the exposition with few changes, the most noticeable of which is the addition of a coda to close the movement.

Three themes serve as structural pillars. Theme I occurs in the 1st violin part from m. 477 to the downbeat of m. 487. It consists of sixteenth notes, and is accompanied at first by brief sixteenth-note couplets on the first and third beats of each measure, which later give way to motion in eighth notes. In its constant changes of direction and use of intervals primarily of a P4th or smaller, this theme is reminiscent of theme I of the first movement. Because of the fast tempo ($\text{J}=120-132$), it has a hurried quality, which also permeates the rest of the movement, since there are very few places where motion in sixteenth notes is not present (ex. 1.44).

Theme I begins in a steep arch comprised of melodic 4ths, and then descends gradually in smaller intervals accompanied by $\text{diminuendo}$. By mm. 484-486 activity is limited to graceful turns using 2nds. The tension of the beginning is thus tapered preceding the entrance of the second theme in the viola part in m. 487.

With its motion in quarter or eighth notes accented on the first and/or third beats, theme II seems deliberate in contrast to
theme I (ex. 1.45). It is accompanied here by groups of sixteenth notes alternating in the violin parts and complimentary eighth notes in the cello.

Theme III first appears in the cello part in m. 556. The texture here is reduced to three parts, the two accompanying parts moving in patterned eighths (viola) and sixteenths (2nd violin) (ex. 1.46). Like theme II, this melody seems quite deliberate with its repeated notes, "square" phrasing (sixteen bars divided evenly into four phrases) and accents on the strong beats of the measure.

The first and second themes are closely related in that they always appear together, while the third theme is treated separately. In addition to their expository statements, all are accompanied by gestures, textures, etc., which have a particular structural function.

Theme II is followed in mm. 498-505 by two four-bar phrases utilizing the same subject with varied tails (ex. 1.47). The second phrase leads into a cadence where for the first time motion in sixteenth notes is broken by paired glissandi in contrary motion (ex. 1.48).

The next twenty-four bars are an extended repetition of the first eighteen where the first and second themes are introduced. In m. 532 a melodic gesture is introduced in the 1st violin part which is developed briefly in the following section of music, preceding theme III (m. 556). At the opening of this section it is used in descending sequence along with a variant in the 2nd violin part, and
new sextuplet figures in the viola which are attached to descending glissandi (ex. 1.49). Following a brief passage which leads to a three-bar pedal point on B (mm. 544-546), these ideas reappear several more times in mm. 548-551.

Following the third theme the parts again break the motion in sixteenth notes with the accented, rapidly converging motives of mm. 572 and 574. Sextuplets reappear in the company of quintuplets and eighth-note triplets in the scalar passages which precede and follow these gestures (ex. 1.50).

In mm. 576-589 the music builds to a sudden, complete halt. Melody and countermelody in the 2nd and 1st violins in mm. 580-585 are accompanied primarily by alternating eighth notes in the viola and cello. The separation of melodic vs. accompanimental functions breaks down in mm. 586-589 as the parts drive up in coordinated motion, then come together in octaves in descending scales which stop on unison and octave B's. Interestingly, the scales in m. 588 are in B (violins and cello) and E (viola) Lydian modes, with E# and A# raised. In m. 589, after a brief change in direction, all parts descend the C major scale (ex. 1.51).

The use of Lydian mode and the appearance of C major are significant as one of the few clear articulations of tonal direction. The halt of motion in mm. 590-592 builds tension before leading to an unequivocal arrival in C major demonstrated by the chords in mm. 595 and 597 (ex. 1.52). The 1st violin part adds a Lydian
flavor by ascending to $f'''$ in m. 598 and touching on it again several times thereafter. The textural coordination of the parts at this point is accompanied by crescendo. When the C major chord is reached in m. 595, the dynamic level is fortissimo and the texture changes to one of melody with accompaniment.

After three bars of free descending sequence, the cello line states a variant of theme III in m. 605. Meanwhile, the 1st violin line combines repeating eighth notes taken from theme III with glissandi in one motive (ex. 1.53). The notes of this line (through m. 610) all belong to the C Lydian mode. The effect of the passage is that the cello parodies the third theme while the 1st violin seems to laugh. Cadence in mm. 616 and 617 is effected by diminuendo; by the thinner texture, as the 2nd violin line drops out momentarily; by rhythmic and melodic changes in the cello part; by use of progressively smaller intervals in the top line; and finally, by overall drop in register.

The staccato melodies in eighth notes in the inner parts beginning at m. 618 derive from theme III--they answer it and serve to introduce the close of the exposition. There is a fleeting dance-like quality produced in the next four to six bars by the thinner texture, lower dynamic level, the ornamental quality of the 1st violin line and the clear harmonic shifting between $b^b$ and $A^b$ in the cello line (ex. 1.54). The impression quickly gives way to a renewed drive—not unlike that in mm. 593 and 594—leading to the forte
giocoso melodies in the two violin parts in m. 626. In m. 629 all parts drive yet again to the fortissimo close of the exposition at about m. 636 (ex. 1.55).

The musical ideas described above recur in the same order in the recapitulation (for the moment skipping over the developmental section), with the exception of the beginning of the section in mm. 773-781, where varied versions of the first and second themes are stated in the 1st and 2nd violin parts. Mn. 782-830 correspond to mm. 477-542. The statement of the first theme in mm. 782-787 is an exact repetition of its counterpart at the opening of the movement, but it is cut short by four bars. Thereafter, entrances of themes I and II and related materials take place on higher tonal levels than at the beginning, although with virtually the same musical environment.

At m. 821, the melodic motive in the 1st violin part is on the same tonal level as the original in m. 532 (see ex. 1.49), although the lower parts are different in details. The next four bars are almost exact copies of the original, but shortened and with a metric shift which is resolved by a one-bar change to $\frac{3}{4}$ in m. 825. With a return to $\frac{2}{4}$ in m. 826, the next five bars (mm. 826-830) are exact with respect to their model in mm. 538-542.

In a similar manner the recapitulation alternately duplicates the exposition exactly and modifies it in varying degrees. For example, the statement of the third theme in m. 835 through approximately m. 849 changes the tonal level, voicing and figuration
somewhat; in addition, the melody is split between viola and 1st violin parts at m. 843. Yet the similarities are more noticeable than the differences with its appearance in mm. 556-571 (ex. 1.56; cf. ex. 1.46). In another example, a large compression of material takes place between the section from m. 543 to m. 555 (preceding theme III) and the corresponding section from m. 830 to m. 834. A similar compression from six bars to two may be observed between the passage in mm. 572-577 and the one in mm. 851 and 852.

The remainder of the movement through m. 904 may be easily compared to the remainder of the exposition, with the major exception that the tonal arrival following the near complete stop in mm. 865-868 is to the level of E major. Duplications within this tonal change are almost note for note. Again, a Lydian flavor is gained by melodic use of A♯ (ex. 1.57).

The development section utilizes most of the materials of the exposition in fragmented and somewhat disjointed forms, but seems to be concerned with theme III and associated materials more than anything else. The section begins with an ostinato pedal in the cello part in m. 634, overlapping a written trill in sixteenth notes in the upper parts which ends the exposition. This ostinato pedal uses the rhythm of the head of theme III in a melodically changed shape. A sudden drop in texture in m. 636 is followed by a stretto use of the head of the first theme through m. 642 (cello part). One of the stretto entrances in the viola line continues to become a varied and
extended version of the first theme, accompanied in three part texture by the 1st violin with the second theme and the cello on supportive patterns of eighth and quarter notes (ex. 1.58).

Four part texture returns in m. 649 with the 1st violin stating the second theme against syncopated eighth notes in the cello and patterns of sixteenths derived from the first theme in the inner voices. A new variant of the third theme opens in the 2nd violin part in m. 660, as before exploiting a combination of accented, detached eighth notes with square phrase construction. It is repeated in the 1st violin part beginning at m. 667. Both are accompanied by a short recurring figure of sixteenth notes (ex. 1.59).

The "laughing" glissando gesture from mm. 605-609 is developed in the passage of music from m. 676 through m. 687, appearing frequently in two parts simultaneously. The "parody" of the third theme which went with it previously is not present; instead there are short, somewhat disjointed segments of eighth and sixteenth notes, reminiscent (in their combinations) of mm. 571-575 (ex. 1.60; cf. 1.50).

The brief dance-like feeling of mm. 618-622 is recreated briefly beginning at m. 688 (ex. 1.61). Growing out of it is a sustained push, utilizing ostinato-like patterns of accents grouped by three eighth notes (ex. 1.62), to a fortissimo statement of the third theme in mm. 709-718. The activity surrounding this statement is radically different from its original appearance. The melody is
split between 2nd violin and viola in m. 716; in mm. 719-721 it is interrupted by an unexpected fortissimo outburst in the 1st violin. Thus the music here gives the impression of battle between this theme and its environment (ex. 1.63).

The head of theme III appears reiterated in the cello part in mm. 719-723. In mm. 727-734 the third theme recurs in the cello part, again beneath a developmental texture. In the subsequent passage fragments of it may be observed in the viola and 2nd violin parts (ex. 1.64).

A very long approach to the juncture between development and recapitulation begins approximately at m. 742. Through m. 757 variants of the melodic motive from m. 532 appear in inversion (ex. 1.65); as this happens, and through m. 766, the melodic gestures becomes progressively more static, texture thinner, the dynamic levels lower, motion somewhat fragmented, and articulations change (bringing pizzicato in briefly). The parts drop in register, then begin to rise briefly between m. 766 and m. 771, along with a crescendo and a spurt of activity. Finally, the parts coordinate in a long descending arpeggio in mm. 771 and 772; as each part finishes its portion of this arpeggio, it drops out, so that texture rapidly decreases to one part leading to the entry of the second theme and the beginning of the recapitulation in m. 773.

The quartet is closed by a coda introduced by double-stopped chords in the violin parts in m. 910, against which fragmented portions of the first theme begin to appear in the cello and viola
parts (ex. 1.66). Soon the parts all engage in short ostinato-like patterns of notes, gradually increasing motion and widening the spread of voices until in m. 926 descending scales referring to mm. 588, 589 and mm. 863, 864 (see ex. 1.51) begin in the violin parts. These are picked up and continued by the lower parts in m. 928, leading not to a complete halt as before, but to a last statement of the head of the first theme and its environment in mm. 929-930. The piece closes on a triumphant sforzando E major chord (ex. 1.67).

While much of the third movement is as complicated tonally as the other movements, the arrival points in C and E major/Lydian provide a clear outline of tonal direction. These points are climactic not only to the movement but to the quartet. The arrival in E major/Lydian (m. 870) carries more dramatic weight since the listener will recognize it as a transposition of the earlier arrival (in C). Following this, final resolution is reached with the E major chord which closes the piece.

Whereas the first and second movements possess forms which only remotely bear resemblance to Classical models, the third movement clearly shows a sonata form. In addition, the third movement is the only one in which tonal levels are readily identifiable and structurally important. For these reasons it functions as the resolution long awaited through the rest of the quartet.
Third Movement

1.44. mm. 477–487

Vivace molto

1.45. mm. 487–496

by me and more o' more.
1.57. mm. 869-875

1.58. mm. 634-650
1.67. mm. 921-931

[Music notation]

[Additional text not visible]
Composer's Remarks on The String Quartet in E minor

Q: In the first quartet, there are many key signatures. There's many meter changes also, but I assume that meter changes, which happen frequently, are to accommodate phrasing. Is that correct?

R.S.: Yes. It's phrasing in a larger sense. Yes, I suppose so.

Q: Are key signatures actually "key signatures?" For instance, Bartok often wrote key signatures that merely would put in the accidentals that [were] most frequent; and that would save him the problem of writing it out each time.

R.S.: No, well I guess you'd say that every time I used key signatures they were really key signatures.

Q: They were intended to imply a background of particular tonics, then?

R.S.: Yes.

Q: Then to what extent are the vertical structures, that is, chords governed by key? Was key something that was purely to be thought of, and heard, on a large scale, at cadence points, and at the beginning of sections and end of sections? [Because] in the piece, there was a mixture of chords that could be identified as belonging to a key and leading toward the cadence, or to a cadence; and there also seemed to be chords that were not conceived as chords within a key, but
were the result of voice leading and maybe the way you particularly wanted it to sound at the time.

R.S.: Well, but I would say that a key is always a set of relationships. There's the tonic, which is the principal note, and all the other notes of the scale, diatonic and chromatic, are related to that tonic in one way or another. Now, the diatonic notes have, generally speaking, various specific relationships with that tonic. The chromatic tones have relationships to the tonic, naturally, and to the other tones of the scale. That's essentially what a key is. Of course, eventually that takes care of everything.

Q: Is it possible, then, to do a blow-by-blow harmonic analysis for each beat and each bar?

R.S.: Well, I don't think you'd ever get to the end of it, necessarily. You can do it; but then the relations are more complex than that, because, for instance, I'm just taking at random this note here--it's related not only to the tonic note of the key, it's related to all these other notes, too. And finally, everything in the piece will be related to everything else, some rather closely, and sometimes more distantly, you see.

Q: Now again I want to get back to when you were composing it; would you hear something that you liked in, say, for lack of better words, your inner ear, then put it down, and then maybe
alter it in such a manner so that you liked it better? Did
you think in terms of hierarchies specifically when you
would write an individual line, or this note here? Or was it
something where you had a broad sense of the key in mind
[which came out naturally in the course of composition]?

R.S.: Yes, but you are somehow assuming--not consciously perhaps--
that one is analyzing as one composes. And I don't; I
analyze it afterwards.

Q: Yet, to have a conception of a piece that you are writing
means that in some place or another you have defined hier-
archies of your own [choosing]. Do these always remain un-
conscious, or do they ever come out in the fore when you
compose? Are they something that is easy to see, after the
fact, in analysis?

R.S.: Well, but analysis is something quite abstract, you see, and
composing is very concrete.

Q: Well, that's right, there are eventually notes on the paper.

R.S.: And, the notes in one's mind are concrete--notes, sounds in
one's imagination. And, little by little they grow. And
then one sits down one day and starts writing. As one writes,
the whole thing becomes more full. I mean, it's a perfectly
familiar process.

Q: Like if you write a letter.

R.S.: Yes, exactly.
Q: Then, in choosing notes, you just use your ear?
R.S.: You use your ear, exactly. Your ear is paramount.

**Conclusion**

In many ways the *String Quartet in E minor* is quite traditional. It employs specific themes, motives, textures, etc., in a consistent manner which clearly demarcates form. It also makes very conservative use of meter and rhythm. The former changes occasionally but within a limited range: several times to $\frac{3}{2}$ from $\frac{4}{4}$ and back at cadences in the first and second movements, to $\frac{3}{8}$ in the middle section of the second movement, and to $\frac{3}{4}$ from $\frac{2}{4}$ and back several times in the third movement.

The quartet remains free of complicated polyrhythms in all but one or two instances (for example, the simultaneous combinations of unaltered sixteenth notes, quintuplet and sextuplet sixteenths, and triplet eighths in mm. 573 and 575 of the third movement).

Cadences depend on typical devices for articulation, such as *decrescendo*, *ritardando*, descent in register (usually applied to the upper two or three parts), thinner texture, changes in meter and slowing of motion (longer rhythmic values). Correspondingly the music often reaches climaxes in ways opposite in effect to those which announce cadences. For example, the occurrences of theme-group III in the first movement might be considered to contain or constitute climaxes with their rapid motion, faster *tempi*, 
abundant accents, louder dynamics, etc. In the second movement, theme-group IV achieves a high point in the movement predominantly through a singular and unexpected use of materials (mm. 370-377). The third movement reaches its climactic points like the first (with the arrivals in C and E major/Lydian). It is interesting to note that the climaxes of the first and third movements (as defined here) are all immediately preceded and set up by brief sections utilizing slower rhythmic values, few accents, lower dynamic levels, etc.

In many ways, however, the String Quartet in E minor is quite untraditional and complex, particularly since it contains such a large number of melodic and motivic ideas. For example, theme-group III of the first movement has no less than eight different motives which never fail to appear in some guise with each occurrence. In addition, each part has its own melodic identity at all times, even in chordal textures, so that the quartet is thoroughly polyphonic. While the contours of each part closely reflect the contours of the other parts in some manner, each line is subject to several possible interpretations in phrasing.

Finally, added to phrasing ambiguities are those concerning tonality. About the time of the composition of the String Quartet in E minor, Sessions wrote:

Every composer is aware through his own experience of the reality of a "background" in his musical construction that goes beyond the individual traits of melody and harmony which constitute the most immediately perceptible features of his work. He is conscious, that is to say, of a type of movement
which takes place gradually and over large stretches, and which embodies itself in the need which he feels, say, at a given moment, for such and such a high note, or for this or that particular harmonic or melodic intensification.... But the composer, too, will recognize the fact that musical line is, in its full significance, an extremely complicated affair, and that a single note may be fraught with a hundred implications and embody a hundred relationships within a given work....

Another way of interpreting this quotation would be to say that tonal relationships are actually quite free. Therefore it is little wonder that, for example, harmonies yield so little to analysis.

The above quotation demonstrates the complex thought behind the microstructure of the quartet. It is evident that Sessions' complexity of thought permeates his music, and accounts for the abundance of detail present in its construction. However, the quotation also shows the curiously uncomplicated thought behind the quartet's macrostructure: plainly Sessions' use of the "ear" governs the intangible dramatic aspects of composition first, with choices for single notes (for example) following accordingly. The analysis of the Second String Quartet which follows shows that these qualities (and their governing thought) remain the same in the later work.

---

CHAPTER II

Analysis of the Second String Quartet

The Second String Quartet (1951) shows the same individualistic handling of compositional tools as the String Quartet in E minor. Although separated from the latter by fifteen years, its elements of style remain easily identifiable as Sessions' own.

First Movement

The first of five movements, in Lento tempo with \( \frac{7}{8} = 58 \), is in sonata form. There are two main themes which are treated imitatively, and two countersubjects which are also treated in an imitative manner. This treatment lends the music a polyphonic nature, with most of the material directly related to either the themes or their countersubjects. Although a sense of chordal progression may be construed, harmonic functions of chords are indeterminate.

The movement opens with fugal treatment of theme I. There seems to be no harmonic scheme to the theme entrances. The viola enters first without accompaniment on d'. The first four or five tones seem to imply D major/minor, but this feeling is quickly lost as the line descends in a chromatic manner foreign to either mode of that key (ex. 2.1).
When the 2nd violin enters with theme I on $b'$, the viola line switches to countersubject I which begins on $a^{b'}$ (ex. 2.2). The next two joint entrances of these melodies (which are the last where they occur together until m. 80) preserve this enharmonic tonal relationship, with theme I always a m3rd above or M6th below countersubject I. Subsequent entrances of theme I are on e (cello) and a'' (1st violin). Free counterpoint containing melodic and rhythmic similarities especially to countersubject I is interwoven with strict appearances of the two melodies.

The fugal treatment of theme I does not immediately end after the 1st violin statement in mm. 18-21. Theme I is treated in descending whole-step sequence at two bar intervals beginning in m. 26 in the viola on $d'$ and continuing with entrances in the cello on $c'$ and (displaced up one octave) in the 2nd violin on $b^{b'}$. The rhythmic and metric plasticity of the theme is demonstrated both by the shift to $\frac{5}{4}$ meter at m. 30, where the three statements overlap, and by the rhythmically altered head of the theme in the 2nd violin statement. Countersubject I makes few appearances as such after m. 21, but its presence continues to be intimated in the free counterpoint accompanying this sequence.

Fugal treatment of theme I and countersubject I ends following this sequence. Free counterpoint in all four parts dominates from the middle of m. 32 through m. 44. The head of theme I appears twice more: rhythmically augmented and in harmonics in the 1st violin.
part, mm. 39-44; and, briefly, in eighth notes in the 2nd violin part in mm. 41-42.

The first thirty measures exhibit consistency of range, meter, tempo and motion (in combinations of eighth, quarter, and half notes); rhythms and melodic gestures are designed to be homogeneous and avoid creating tension. At m. 30, this changes: meter changes to \( \frac{5}{4} \) from \( \frac{4}{4} \) and in the next ten measures changes seven times, exploiting the two above plus \( \frac{3}{4}, \frac{3}{2}, \) and \( \frac{5}{4} + \frac{1}{8} \) (m. 38); statements of theme I are altered rhythmically and shortened; range is more extended; \textit{poco animando non troppo} is indicated in m. 30 (followed by \textit{calmando} in m. 33); motion increases with the appearance of sixteenth notes in the 1st violin part in m. 30 and at other points later; and the rhythms and melodic gestures exploit qualities of suddenness and discontinuity (ex. 2.3).

After a high point in mm. 32 and 33, the upper parts begin to move to lower registers and tempo slows again. The 2nd violin line, which in m. 32 begins a long line of sixteenth notes, breaks this motion with quarter-note trills beginning in m. 35; the viola part also employs trills to aid in slowing the momentum. A brief cadence is reached in m. 39 (utilizing two melodic ideas which reappear in the second movement), followed by return to \( \frac{4}{4} \) and the calmer feeling of the first thirty measures in m. 40. A pianissimo background and a return to more uniform motion in the lower parts accompanies the 1st violin statement of the head of theme I in harmonics. In m. 44,
motion ceases, and morendo is indicated. This cadence measure is extended by use of \( \frac{7}{4} \) meter for one bar only.

Theme II enters at the end of m. 44 in the cello, in a new tempo with \( \text{\textsuperscript{4}}_\text{\textsuperscript{2}} = 72 \) (Un poco agitato). Like theme I, this theme also is treated fugally, entering four times (once in inversion) on \( \text{E}_b, \text{c}_#, \text{d}_b, \text{and} \text{B} \). Also like the first theme, it has a countersubject which appears twice (once in inversion in m. 49, viola part) (ex. 2.4). However, there seems to be no consistent tonal relationship between the two new melodies.

Theme II contrasts radically with theme I because it is typified by shorter time values and restless syncopated rhythms. Countersubject II compares in a like manner to countersubject I. The fugal treatment of theme II is also much shorter than that of theme I, since it lasts only nine bars.

What may be regarded as the development section begins in the inner parts in mm. 50 and 51, overlapping the last entrance of theme II in the cello part in m. 51. Through m. 57 (in the 2nd violin part) portions of the first theme are treated in each part in fragmented, rhythmically altered and inverted patterns; there are hardly any notes that cannot be accounted for in this manner (ex. 2.5). Beginning in m. 57 in the cello and 1st violin parts, the second theme and its countersubject in inversion enter and through m. 62 are developed similarly to the first theme, in all parts. Again, almost every note can be accounted for. Following m. 62, portions
of the first theme again appear in development, and lead to the climax of the movement in m. 70, utilizing freely derived materials in sequential patterns (ex. 2.6).

The activity of this short developmental section is overwhelming: motion varies from quarter to sixty-fourth notes (bowed tremolo); meter changes frequently; dynamics vary from pianissimo to fortissimo; tempo changes several times; and, of course, thematic material is altered in many ways. Most of the material is freely developed except in m. 63 where the lower three parts suddenly engage in coordinated repetition that gives the impression of stuttering in its rapidity (ex. 2.7).

Following the climax in m. 70, the texture drops to one melodic part, which is a quiet statement of the first theme in diminution. Abruptly, its tail is cut short by a unique and powerfully dramatic series of chords—the clearest as such so far—exploiting the two lowest open strings on the cello with secco pizzicato articulation. Above, the 2nd violin and viola shift back and forth in parallel chordal motion. This in turn is followed by a dark series of tremolos again shifting chordally back and forth in the lower three parts (ex. 2.8).

The recapitulation opens in m. 80, with return to Tempo I ( ♩=58). In the cello part at this point, the same ascending half-step motive as that seen in the 1st violin part in m. 75 (see ex. 2.8) appears in harmonics as a last remnant of the previous section.
Above, the viola engages in static accompanimental patterns while the 2nd violin and 1st violin state the first theme and its counter-subject, respectively. In m. 81 the meter changes to $\frac{4}{4}$ and remains that way for the rest of the movement. The mood is now one of tranquility (ex. 2.9).

Successive entries in the viola and cello parts overlap that of the 2nd violin, which in turn runs without pause into an inverted statement of the second theme. Gradually the parts move to free counterpoint in quarter and eighth notes in mm. 87-94, giving way to more sustained time values in mm. 95-99. In these closing bars the opening motive of the second movement appears again several times.

The first movement is interesting for the manner in which Sessions adapts imitative and fugal procedures to the dramatic purpose of the music. Even though thematic materials are treated in a manner resembling a fugue or a double-fugue, the dramatic shape of the movement, as evidenced by control of motion, texture, pacing, etc., is more that of a sonata. The recapitulation, for example, is so labelled because of its position and because it returns to the mood of the exposition (through m. 50). The development represents an area of sustained tension which pushes forward to the climax in mm. 70-79.

The energy of the climax has the air of finality. However, the quiet recapitulation which follows mitigates this feeling, serving not only as an ending for the movement, but as a link or prelude
to the next. This is a combination of effects first found in the final bars of the first movement of the *String Quartet in E minor*. The first movement therefore projects at once a sense of having attained a goal and a feeling of inconclusion. Thus it is clearly intended to involve the listener and draw him onward.
EXAMPLES FROM SESSIONS' SECOND STRING QUARTET

First Movement

2.1. mm.1-7

Viola

2.2. mm.7-10

Viola

2.3. mm.30-32

91
2.4. mm. 44-49

Un poco agitato (Lento)

2.5. mm. 53-54

poco a poco calmante

dim. poco a poco

2.6. mm. 68-70

dim. poco a poco
2.7. mm. 63-64

2.8. mm. 73-79
2.9. mm. 80-81

Tempo I (d=30)
molto tranquillo, sempre

modo ordinario

pp

pp sempre sulla tasto silente

pp
Second Movement

The second movement has an ABA'B'A" structure. Differences in motion give the clearest definition to the two sections A and B, but each also possesses its own unique set of melodies, rhythms, articulations and, of course, textures. As in the first movement, almost all the material is linked to a few melodic and rhythmic motives.

Section A shows consistent motion in eighth notes. However, each line is highly fragmented rhythmically due to unpredictable combinations of note and rest values, the former ranging from eighth notes to dotted halves, the latter from eighth rests to a bar and a half of silence. The meter is largely in $\frac{2}{2}$, but shifts several times to $\frac{3}{2}$, once to $\frac{5}{4}$ and once even to $\frac{3+4}{8}$.

The changing meter removes the possibility of a regularly recurring scheme of accents. Pervasive dynamic accents further heighten the effect of irregularity and give the music an abrupt, energetic quality, since often they do not reflect the influence of the metrical beat.

Three melodic ideas provide the basis for much of the material in Section A. Motive I is stated in several guises in the opening bars of the movement: in the 1st violin part, mm. 100-103; in the 2nd violin part, from the last eighth note of m. 103 to the first of m. 105; and in an extended form in the 1st violin and cello parts (the latter in inversion) in mm. 107 and 108, respectively (ex. 2.10).
This is one of the motives that was pre-figured in the first movement, in m. 39 (ex. 2.11) and in the closing bars beginning at m. 93 (ex. 2.12).

Motive II usually occurs in conjunction with motive I, which it resembles to some extent, and with which it is therefore frequently combined. The first three appearances of this motive give some idea of its different shapes: the first, in the 1st violin part in mm. 108-109, may be considered the original; the second, in the cello in mm. 109-110, has been shortened; and the third, in the 2nd violin part m. 110, has been shortened, inverted and altered to resemble motive I (ex. 2.13). Like motive I, motive II also occurred in the first movement in m. 39 (ex. 2.14).

Whereas the identities of the above motives rest upon intervallic construction and their melodic emphasis, the identity of motive III is based largely upon its dotted rhythms and the complementary rhythms of motive IIIa which frequently accompany it. Motive III first appears in the violin part in mm. 120-122; IIIa appears in the parts below (ex. 2.15). Motive III incorporates materials resembling motive I (in the second half of m. 121 of the above example). Other versions of motive III and IIIa are shown in example 2.16.

In section A, motives I and II are first introduced and somewhat developed. At m. 120, motives III and IIIa enter and very quickly begin to appear in various combinations with the first two
motives. This developmental treatment builds to a climax in m. 143, then drops quickly in preparation for section B (ex. 2.17).

When the varied section A returns beginning in m. 188, the same sequence of events takes place, except that, after motive III enters, the material is developed at much greater length than before. Tension peaks beginning at m. 239, where the inner parts move in parallel 2nds derived from motives I and II while the outer parts move in the dotted rhythms of motive III (ex. 2.18). The section climaxes at m. 247 with a fortissimo arrival in all parts and the viola and cello stating a melody utilizing the intervals of motive I and the rhythms of motive III, accompanied at first by IIIa in the 2nd violin part (ex. 2.19). Through m. 257 tension drops through use of general descent in register, diminuendo, trills and coordinated pauses in all parts. The length of A' underscores its developmental nature: it is seventy measures long, whereas section A is only forty-seven.

In section B, motion is generally slower than in section A, with frequent examples of notes tied across several bars. The melodic lines are long, predominantly legato, and, whereas the dynamics in section A tended to be loud, those in section B do not usually rise above the level of piano. The section avoids frequent accents and a sense of meter, with the result that portions of the music possess a suspended, unmeasured quality.

Section B depends less upon specific melodic ideas for definition of its structure than did A, since its important lines are stated
infrequently and are not as pervasive. Correspondingly, accompanying motion and texture assume greater responsibility in the delineation of structure. In the discussion which follows, elements deemed to be of structural importance are those which recur in section B'.

A sustained, unchanged \( ppp \) chord played by the 2nd violin and cello parts opens the section from the last eighth of m. 146 onward. The first motive of formal significance to B (motive IV) appears in the 1st violin part in m. 148 and consists of only two notes (ex. 2.20). What may be viewed as an altered form of this brief motive appears beginning in m. 150 in the viola part.

Following this opening passage, motive V (actually a line of melody) appears in the 1st violin part beginning at m. 154. This motive is supported by another sustained chord between the 2nd violin and cello parts and counterpoint in the viola (ex. 2.21). This line is important for the broad aspects of its shape and rhythm. A sixth motive is played in the cello part in m. 167, identifiable by its repeating melodic pattern (ex. 2.22) and its tendency to lead away from cadence in m. 166 to a texture again emphasizing sustained chords (this time with a trill). These, in turn, support a final significant motive (again, actually a line of melody) in the 1st violin part in m. 171 (ex. 2.23). As motive VII progresses, activity in the accompanying parts increases in complexity as section A' (described above) approaches.
The motives and their accompaniments described above recur in section B', but not necessarily in the same order, since they undergo development. Motive IV and the texture accompanying it again open the section but lead into a brief developmental passage of chordal half-note triplets (ex. 2.24). Motive VII follows, with its accompaniment of sustained chords and trills augmented by tremolo, as before gradually building up activity and momentum. This time, however, it leads to a varied form of motive V, which is accompanied by a changed texture of staccato chords in eighth notes in the lower parts (ex. 2.25). This melody is greatly extended; the parts beneath it soon assume characteristics of the slower motion seen in section B. Cadence is reached in m. 300, where, as before, motive VI appears in the cello, but this time in quarter notes, rather than eighths. Motive VII appears truncated in the viola part beginning in m. 303; above, the 1st violin states an augmented and inverted version of motive I.

Section A'' briefly recalls motives I, II, III and IIIa and the activity of section A. It begins in m. 315 with a quasi-fugal treatment of motive I in inversion. After only nine bars, momentum begins to slow and brief fragments of the theme of the third movement begin to appear; they dominate melodic motion in the final nine bars (mm. 324-332) (ex. 2.26).

The structure of the second movement has more than a token likeness to the sonata form. The brevity of the most significant
and textural resources insures that their development commences from the very beginning of each section (A and B). Yet more extensive development takes place in A' and B', therefore making earlier occurrences of these sections seem expository in nature.

Like the first movement, the second ends with a section (A'') which functions as both recapitulation and transition to the third movement. This recapitulation-transition proceeds differently than that of the first movement, since up until the final nine or ten bars it moves with the rapid, loud materials of A'' before becoming quiet. Because of this, a great deal of impetus is created which carries past the end of the second movement, notwithstanding the last bars where the theme fragments of the third movement appear.
Second Movement

2.10a. mm. 100-103

Vln.I

2.10b. mm. 103-105

Vln.II

2.10c. mm. 106-108

Vln.I

2.10d. mm. 107-109

Vla.

2.11. mm. 39

Vla.

2.12a. mm. 92-94

Vla. poco a poco cresc. --- dim.
2.12. b. mm. 93-95

2.12.c. mm. 95-98

2.13a. mm. 108-109

2.13b. mm. 109-110

2.13a. m. 110

2.14. mm. 39
2.17. mm. 141-147

2.18. mm. 239-240
2.22. mm. 167-168

2.23. mm. 177-179

2.24. mm. 267-274
2.26. mm. 323-332
Third Movement

The third movement consists of a set of five variations on material stated in an opening section. While each variation differs from the others in its treatment of these materials, the general contours of each section—that is, how each builds and relaxes tension—are similar throughout.

The 1st violin states the main theme in the opening eight bars (ex. 2.27). The theme's identity rests especially in the melodic and rhythmic shape of its head motive. This motive ascends a m3rd, then a m2nd and has a rhythmic anacrusis of an eighth note followed by two quarters. It appears with each variation in some form. Other portions of the theme appear irregularly.

Repetitions of material affect both the phrasing and the form of the opening section and, consequently, that of the following variations. An example of such repetition—which is rarely exact—may be seen in mm. 338 and 339 (see ex. 2.27). The second phrase of the first section (mm. 343-349 inclusive) also relies upon repetition for its shape (ex. 2.28). The final six bars, however, are free, and carry the tension to a peak, then quickly release it in the approach to the cadence.

The opening section establishes a standard of motion to which the variations may be compared—each part has a mixture of eighth and sixteenth notes, but moves in a complimentary manner to the other parts, while meter is consistently $\frac{2}{4} \{\frac{4}{8}\}$. 
In variation I, the 1st violin, viola and cello open with the head of the theme, using original intervals (although at different tonal levels) while the 2nd violin presents an altered form (ex. 2.29). The principal voice, at first in the viola part, shifts to the 2nd violin and finally to the 1st violin in m. 360 where it remains for the rest of the variation.

The lines after the opening make very free reference to the main theme and other portions of the opening section. Due to its simplicity, the head motive (motive I) can be found or implied wherever a leap in any direction is either preceded or followed by a step in the same direction; such examples are too numerous to mention. The portion of the theme seen in m. 335 (motive II) re-appears two octaves lower in the cello part in mm. 359 and 360 (see ex. 2.29). In another example, the 1st violin line in mm. 364-368 makes melodic reference to the 2nd violin line in mm. 337-341 (ex. 2.30).

Although constant variation of materials and of meter render the phrasing less clear than in the opening section, the repetitions which shape the phrasing may still be observed in mm. 360 and 361 (which correspond to mm. 338 and 339) and in the four bar progression from m. 365 through m. 368 (which corresponds structurally to mm. 343-347). From m. 370 to m. 375, the 1st violin moves in a free melodic line of sixteenths while the lower parts move in slower supportive time values; this passage has the same effect and function as the
closing measures of the first section. Reiteration of theme fragments in conjunction with thinner texture and pauses in the momentum create cadence in mm. 375-379.

Like variation I, variation II opens with the theme fragmented and the principal voice passed between the parts, then taken mainly by the 1st violin (ex. 2.31). Motive II appears in original guise in the viola line in m. 379, and altered in the 1st violin part, mm. 379-380, and again altered in the 2nd violin part in mm. 380-381. Motive I is stated in sixteenth notes and inverted in the 2nd violin part in m. 380 and in the 1st violin part in m. 381.

Phrasing is clearer than in variation I. Repetition of material takes the form of a rising sequence in mm. 380-382, and is exact between mm. 384 and 385. A final sequence from m. 386 to m. 390 leads to free material imitating the contour of the closing bars of the two previous sections. The sixteenth-note motives which appear in mm. 380 and 381 reappear approaching cadence, again giving the variation a rounded form. Motion in the center of the section is predominantly in even eighth notes that, in conjunction with unchanging meter, bring out a strong chordal orientation which has been partially prefigured in the accompaniment to the melody in the final measures of variation I. The thinning texture, pauses in the previously steady motion, melodic fragmentation and general descent to lower registers again mark the cadence.
Variation III changes the approach previously taken towards the principal voice, the texture and use of repetition of material. For a third time fragments of the theme open the section (ex. 2.32), but now in $\frac{5}{8}$ meter. Each opening line in variation III retains its melodic function for a relatively longer period of time than in the previous variations. Some of the motives that follow are even more freely derived from the theme than those of variation I, to which they bear some resemblance (compare ex. 2.33 with ex. 2.30). The meter changes several times between $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{5}$, $\frac{5}{7}$, $\frac{6}{8}$, $\frac{7}{8}$, $\frac{8}{8}$, and $\frac{9}{8}$.

Structure in variation III depends for its definition more on melodic function (that is, which voice is principal or secondary) and on texture than upon repetition of melodic ideas. The opening texture of four parts dominates the first six bars, with the melody in the 1st violin. The melody shifts to the 2nd violin line and the texture thins to three parts for approximately two bars, leading to the melody in the viola and two-part texture from m. 413 through m. 415. Tension heightens beginning in m. 416 with four- to six-part texture, a change to $\frac{7}{8}$ meter and *animando molto* indicated; the parts move in thick, syncopated chords through m. 419. The melody during this activity is in the 2nd violin part. A final melodic shift to the 1st violin part in m. 419 starts the line on $b''$ and gracefully brings it to the lower register of the instrument. This action is accompanied by a change to slower motion in the lower parts in mm. 420 and
421, followed by a drop to two-part texture and a last flurry of syncopated chordal activity in mm. 422-425.

The third variation reflects the effect of repetition of material in subtle ways. The 2nd violin line in m. 410 seems to refer to the 1st violin line in the opening section (mm. 337-339) (compare ex. 233b with ex. 2.27). The two-part texture with viola and cello (mm. 413-415) shows the antecedent-consequent structure of repetition in its phrasing, with two miniature phrases split at the barline between m. 414 and m. 415 (see ex. 2.33c). The latter example also shows a loose repetition in terms of rhythm in both parts and in terms of pitch in the cello. Finally, the climactic bars (mm. 416-419) could be explained as a highly telescoped series of repetitions, with a last reference in m. 423 (ex. 2.34).

Variation IV contrasts markedly with III in mood. A lengthy cadence between the two leads to Più mosso tempo, less complex motion, steady $\frac{2}{4}$ meter--which changes only once to $\frac{5}{8}$, then back immediately at a later cadence--and a wider spread between the high and low instrumental lines, which renders a feeling of reduced texture. Motive I appears alone in original and inverted form among all four parts in mm. 427-430. As in the first two variations the principal voice is initially passed from viola to 2nd violin to 1st violin before settling in the latter line in m. 429. The only repetition in this variation begins at the end of m. 429 (1st violin), ending in m. 431; after it, all four parts engage in a smooth, quiet descent
in register for seven bars, reaching cadence in m. 438, and thereby abridging the structure used in previous variations. Three-part texture and a nearly-complete statement of the theme follow (ex. 2.35). The variation closes with a *pianissimo* texture reminiscent of its beginning, again using motive I (top two parts).

Variation V opens with a varied form of the theme and its accompaniment in full at the original tonal level. The texture and motion are quite similar to the opening section. The principal voice, which is in the 1st violin part for the first eight bars, shifts after a brief cadence to the 2nd violin in m. 455, then in m. 457 to the viola, and finally back to the 2nd violin in m. 460 where it remains through the close. Repetition of material appears between the 1st violin, m. 454, and the 2nd violin, m. 456, and in the 2nd violin part in mm. 460-463—as usual, these occurrences are not strict (ex. 2.36). Between these repetitions, and incorporating the second one, a *pianissimo* progression begins which grows suddenly to a final climax (using the first *fortissimo* in the movement) in mm. 465 and 466 (ex. 2.37). Following this, the dynamics, range and texture quickly taper to a *morendo* close.

Hence, the third movement combines variation form with the sonata principal. While there exist particular parameters which recur in different guises with each variation, and while each variation is distinguished by its use of texture, principal voice, meter and rhythm, etc., there also exists a large-scale progression through the movement that is similar in structure to a sonata. In
this progression, the opening section serves as exposition, since there the materials discussed above are presented in original form. The first three variations represent an overall growth in intensity to variation III, which, by its unique character, serves as the center of the movement. Variation IV is clearly a transition to variation V, which recalls the opening section. Thus, variations I, II and III may be seen as a development, and IV and V as recapitulation.

Finally, as in previous movements, attention must be called to the close of the third movement. The return to opening materials in the first eight bars of variation V gives way to a meditative passage which answers the dramatic intensity of the third variation as it climbs suddenly to the fortissimo mentioned above, then just as suddenly dies away. As before (in the second movement), the tension thereby created carries past the end of the movement.
Third Movement

2.27. mm. 333-341

Andante tranquillo (3-80)

2.28. mm. 344-347
2.34. mm. 416-419

moltocalmando a tempo
2.35. mm. 438-447

2.36. mm. 451-457
2.37a. mm. 457-462

237b. mm. 465-471
Fourth Movement

Sonata form is again seen in the fourth movement. The exposition and recapitulation share the tempo of Presto, with \( \text{jet} = 120 \), while the development is marked un poco meno mosso, with \( \text{jet} = 96 \) (mm. 651-769). The recapitulation is nearly an exact replica of the exposition. Its opening section is tonally removed from its model by a P4th, while the remainder is virtually tonally exact. In this manner the movement bears strong resemblance to the early Classical sonata.

The opening bars of the exposition present a remarkable contrast to the third movement, which rarely reached a forte dynamic level, and possessed long, legato melodic lines. The principal effect immediately created by the fourth movement is one of great motion, energy and humor, utilizing a background of the rapid tempo and highly accented triple meter, against which is set a mosaic of short melodic gestures fragmented both rhythmically and melodically. The many brief motives of each part coordinate to produce a clear sense of phrasing.

The opening motive (motive I) embodies the spirit of the fourth movement. The fact that it is played in octaves, plus its mobility in range, forte dynamic marking (followed by crescendo!), heavy emphasis on melodic P4ths and its abrupt, fragmented qualities make it seem almost a brash mockery of the lyricism of the third movement (ex. 2.38). Its use of P4ths is significant, since that
interval plays a highly visible part in the movement, permeating it melodically and harmonically. One example of this is the tonal relationship previously mentioned between the openings of the exposition and the recapitulation. Its presence may also be postulated wherever there appears a m7th (hence, also, by inversion a M2nd), as in the double-stops played by the 2nd violin in m. 476 (see ex. 2.38). These use c♯" and b", which are each related by P4th to the F♯s immediately preceding as the last notes of motive I.

In mm. 478 and 479 a motive appears in the viola line which serves as a dramatic foil to motive I. Constructed primarily of 2nds, motive II is notable for the rhythmic configuration of its second half which frequently appears by itself reiterated (ex. 2.39a, b,c; see also ex. 2.38). Motive II is melodically more contained than motive I and acts as the melody to the accompaniment of two other parts; still it possesses the same characteristic of fragmentation, highlighted by the use of staccato in all parts.

The remainder of the exposition devotes itself to the presentation of the two motives in a texture which shifts rapidly from one to four parts. A principal voice with accompaniment alternately appears and disappears according to whether motive II is dominant or not. Non-Legato lines which are often quite angular and frequently broken by rests maintain the boisterous spirit of the music.

Utilizing an abrupt drop in texture to one voice, descent in register, ritardando and decrescendo, the music reaches a sudden
cadence in mm. 521-523. A new section begins at m. 524. The texture shifts once again to one of melody and accompaniment, the former (melody I) making liberal use of P4ths and 2nds in a long, *legato* arch, the latter primarily of *marcato, staccatissimo* chordal motion in brief phrases strongly reminiscent of the opening of the movement (ex. 2.40). At m. 538 this passage gives way to one where a line of bowed tremolos in the viola—which may be considered as another guise of melody I—is accompanied by alternating *staccato* melodic gestures in the 1st and 2nd violin parts and periodic entrances of the cello. The latter three are derivations of motive I (ex. 2.41). Introduced in this section are two new timbres which are of importance later: *sul ponticello* in the accompaniment of bowed tremolos, mm. 528-529; and *sulla tastiera* in the viola line, mm. 538-546. Both are used in special ways in the development and by their use highlight *modo ordinario*, which also has specific uses in that section.

Following a cadence in mm. 545-548 (which resembles closely that in mm. 521-523) (ex. 2.42) a return to the fragmented texture of the exposition accompanies the first appearance of melody II in the 1st violin with countermelody in the cello (ex. 2.43) in mm. 549-555. Melody II, like melody I, makes marked use of P4ths and 2nds but is more noticeable for its rhythms. Its countermelody is based on the rhythms of motive II. The second half of melody II appears in the 2nd violin part in mm. 556-559 in altered form.
The sudden interpolation of the passage from m. 562 to m. 567 heightens the effect of fragmentation by coordinating it between the parts. At the same time are heard disjunct statements of motives derived from the anacrusis to motive I (ex. 2.44). The use of hemiola here prefigures similar metric alterations which occur in mm. 608-616.

Melody II reappears in the cello line beginning at m. 572 without countermelody, in the 2nd violin part in m. 575 in abbreviated form, and again in the 1st violin line at m. 579 with the rhythm of the countermelody used imitatively in the lower three parts. The texture again resembles that of the exposition.

Beginning in m. 586 the parts show increasing coordination of specific activities utilizing progressively shorter and more fragmented units of repetition. Crescendo sempre is marked in mm. 594-595, animando poco a poco in mm. 598-599, and again piu crescendo in m. 601. At m. 608 subito piano e crescendo poco a poco appears. The passage from m. 608 to m. 616 (previously mentioned with respect to mm. 562-567) abruptly executes concerted metric accelerando (ex. 2.45) utilizing hemiola, sesquitertia, and finally, simply six eighth notes to the bar in m. 614. The drive this action creates is in motion only, since the notes hardly change; essentially the same chord is reiterated over and over, changing only in mm. 613 and 614. As represented by the notes in the cello, the roots of the two resultant chords are D and E, which lie a M2nd apart. More important is the
heavy dependence of the harmonies in these bars on the vertical P4th. For example, the primary chord built on D has it in A, D, G, and C with passing references to F♯; that on E contains B, E, A, D, G, and C with references to A and F.

The growing tension culminates in the forceful yet amazingly simple climax to the exposition in mm. 616 through 631. The 1st and 2nd violins play motive I in original form in octaves, while the viola and cello play parallel P5ths in double-stops, also in octaves. The motions of the latter derive again from the anacrusis in motive I (ex. 2.46). All parts are fortissimo. The P5ths in the viola and cello give way in m. 626 to material based loosely on motive I; together they move in unison in contrary motion to the upper parts, which at this point also move more freely than in the immediately preceding bars. Thus in broad terms the texture in mm. 616-631 is two-part.

The section closes with a recurrence of motive II in original form in mm. 632-639, accompanied by material similar to that at its opening (mm. 478-483) appearance. A transition using material which recurs in the development closes the exposition. The 1st violin plays sul ponticello a patterned line of staccato quarter notes derived from motive II, while the viola and cello parts engage in hemiola with half notes and tied quarters played sulla tastiera. The latter are derived from melody I (and will be referred to below as melody Ia). The cadence is unannounced by ritardando, but steady diminuendo,
più staccato and then pizzicato in the 1st violin part prepare for the three-beat break in mm. 650-651 (ex. 2.47).

The materials in the development are most clearly related to motive II and melody I. Specific combinations of different bowings, textures and melodic derivations determine the structure.

The transition material between exposition and development reappears, opening the development. The 1st violin, now legato and playing modo ordinario, outlines an arching melodic line of quarter notes (motive IIa); the head of motive II appears somewhat altered on the second through fifth notes (mm. 651-655) (ex. 2.48). The viola and cello lines again play melody Ia, but without hemiola. This brief passage (development A) reappears twice more with similar part distribution, dynamic levels (pianissimo), melodic contours, rhythmic values and bowings. The first such return is in mm. 666-670; the second, in mm. 713-720.

Alternating with these statements of development A are more loosely defined passages that use the same material in different ways. Development B is in mm. 656-666, mm. 671-713, and mm. 720-768. Melody I appears again in the lines of dotted half notes that occur in at least one voice at all times (referred to henceforth as melody Ib). Unlike those of Ia, the rhythmic values of melody Ib change usually on the downbeat; modo ordinario is used most often. Their rhythmic traits and timbre are the chief methods used to group these lines together as derivations of melody I; overall they vary
considerably in melodic contour, even though there exist certain broad similarities between some statements in this respect.

Derivations of motive II and IIa, designated motive IIb, appear usually in one voice at a time with *staccato* articulation, at first with *sul ponticello* bowing, but towards the end of the development *modo ordinario*. A final offshoot of motive II, motive IIc, involves *legato* quadruplet quarter notes (in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter), played *modo ordinario*, that occur in two voices at a time (ex. 2.49).

While each occurrence of the development B section is longer than the last, they all begin in similar manners. The three-part texture of development A leads to four parts in development B, motive IIa runs into IIb (but not necessarily in the same voice), and motive IIb leads in turn to IIc. Simultaneously, melody Ia (accompanying only motive IIa) is replaced by Ib when motive IIb appears.

Following the above sequence of events, structure varies between occurrences of development B. The first cadences shortly after motive IIc appears (ex. 2.49). The second reaches a brief cadence at a similar point, but this is overlapped by what amounts to a development-within-the-development, using only melody Ib and motive IIb and their respective timbres (mm. 680-713; ex. 2.50). The climax of the development transpires in this section, created chiefly by a growth to *fortissimo* in m. 696. The last occurrence of development B also overlaps the brief cadence following motive IIc
(ex. 2.51) with further development of melody Ib and motive IIb. As this section advances the *sul ponticello* bowings of motive IIb disappear, the lines become more fragmented rhythmically and meter changes several times rapidly between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{2}{4}$. From m. 754 to the end of the development all parts *crescendo* steadily, driving to a *fortissimo* entrance of the recapitulation (ex. 2.52).

As previously mentioned, the recapitulation is nearly an exact replica of the exposition, with the exception of approximately the first quarter, which opens a P4th lower. In other ways this opening section differs from that of the exposition: the general sequence of events is the same, but the materials (motives I and II) are treated in a varied manner (cf. exx. 2.52, 2.37); also, it is compressed, being only forty-three measures long in comparison to fifty-two previously.

The remaining passages of the recapitulation (containing melodies I and II) replicate those of the exposition note for note, with the sole exception of m. 812, where the chords are the same as those in m. 524, but voiced differently. Also, a six-bar tail extends the end of the recapitulation, consisting mostly of silence, and serves to provide a transition to the fifth movement of the quartet (ex. 2.53).

Like the third movement of the *String Quartet in E minor*, the fourth movement of the *Second String Quartet* has an ABA' structure and therefore at least two climaxes of dramatic significance (one
in each A section—that in the development, or B section, not being considered here). As before, because the second climax is anticipated by the listener (mm. 905-920—see exx. 2.45 and 2.46), it is the stronger of the two. In discussing the second and third movements of this quartet, it has been noted that a loud, climactic point close to the end of the movement has a tendency to give the movement a "weak" ending—that is, one characterized by a feeling of expectancy—when it is insufficiently balanced by a subsequent quiet passage. The fourth movement creates the same effect and emphasizes it, since, at the end of A, the "weak" ending is quickly answered by B. Thus, it is a pregnant pause that ends A', answered in turn by the fifth movement.
Fourth Movement

2.38. mm. 472-478

Presto (4-120)

2.39. a. mm. 478-481

Viola

2.39. b. mm. 484-486

Viola II

2.39. c. mm. 497-503

Viola I, II

 Presto

mf subito

mf subito

mf subito

mf subito

mf continuando
2.43. mm. 549-555

2.44. mm. 562-564

2.45. a. mm. 586-591
Fifth Movement

The fifth movement serves as an epilogue to the quartet. This term is chosen because it gives an impression of the free form and intimate mood of the movement. The tempo is Adagio (♩=58); throughout most of the movement dynamics rarely range above piano, with two important exceptions (discussed below). The meter is primarily $\frac{2}{4}$ with brief but frequent changes to $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{5}{8}$ and $\frac{7}{8}$. Sixteenth and eighth notes dominate the motion, and the texture is at first predominantly four-part, changing to three-part in the last third of the movement.

One theme pervades the movement, supported by two subordinate melodies. The latter appear only twice (melody I) and three times (melody II) respectively. The theme and melody I resemble themes from previous movements: the former (ex. 2.54) resembles portions of the melody in variation III of the third movement, not only in contour but in its use of $\frac{5}{8}$ meter, which predominates in that variation (cf. 1st violin, ex. 2.32); the latter (ex. 2.55) seems to be derived from motive I of the second movement (cf. ex. 2.10).

The movement opens pianissimo with theme I in the 1st violin over free accompaniment in the lower three parts. After the two statements of melody I in the 2nd and 1st violin parts, theme I re-enters in the viola line in m. 952 (ex. 2.56); a varied form of it in the 1st violin part in mm. 954-956 leads to a cadence in m. 957. Each phrase through this cadence is characterized by brief, single
dynamic swells. The cadence is effected not only by use of the varied form of theme I but by typical traits such as thinning of texture, *ritardando*, several metric shifts in a row, descent in register and pauses in the heretofore constant motion in eighth or sixteenth notes.

With a return to tempo and $\frac{2}{4}$ meter in m. 958, the 1st violin states melody II (ex. 2.57), while again the lower parts move in free accompanimental patterns. Melody II is restated in the 2nd violin part in mm. 961-963.

Beginning in m. 963 with a varied form of theme I in the 1st violin line, all parts start a drive to the first of two climaxes in m. 968; the clearest indicators of this drive are the instructions *animando poco a poco* and *appassionato e sempre crescendo*, along with suddenly constant sixteenth-note motion between parts and overall ascent of register (ex. 2.58).

The *fortissimo* arrival in m. 968 is followed by a *subito* return to tempo and *diminuendo* through m. 974. Theme I appears twice in only slightly varied form, each time with a brief dynamic swell (exx. 2.59a,b); a cadence in m. 974 is preceded by two statements of the head of the theme in the violin parts in mm. 973 and 974 (ex. 2.59c).

Melody II reopens in extended version in m. 975 in the 1st violin line. Supported at first by loosely sequential activities in the 2nd violin and cello parts, the melody moves to a second climax which, in its sudden intensity, serves to answer and balance the first.
This climax in m. 979 differs in certain interesting ways from the first—*ritenuto* is marked over melody II following the cadence in m. 974, followed by *allargando* in m. 979, while the line descends in register to the climax. In other ways the two climaxes are quite similar, such as in the increased complexity of motion, thickening of texture and use of *fortissimo* (ex. 2.60).

*Subito piano* in m. 980 accompanies another return of the theme in the 2nd violin part, overlapping a statement in m. 982 in the 1st violin (ex. 2.61). An interesting echo of the cello activity in m. 979 appears in the viola line in m. 982 utilizing P4ths; this in turn is supported by a similar motive in the cello at that point (ex. 2.62).

Treatment of the various melodic materials changes beginning at m. 986, thereby clearly indicating the approaching end of the quartet. Following a brief *animando* in m. 984, theme I enters in the viola in m. 985 but gives way to a phrasing repetition in mm. 986-987. Because the accompanying parts support it so closely, the repetition suddenly stands out from the preceding free motion (ex. 2.63). Two complete statements of theme I in the cello and viola parts, overlapped by fragmented portions of the theme in the violin parts (as in mm. 973 and 974, helping to create a feeling of cadence), lead to yet another phrasing repetition in mm. 992 and 993 (ex. 2.64).

Such phrasing repetitions serve to slow the sense of progression forward. In the final ten bars this feeling is reinforced by
progressively more contained linear gestures and shorter units of repetition (ex. 2.65). The movement ends on the enharmonic equivalent of an E♭ major chord in the first inversion, creating a beautiful, if startling, effect.

In terms of the usage of the theme, the fifth movement could be called a modified rondo with coda. If the theme were A, melody I, B, and melody II, C, the formal scheme would then be ABACACA coda, with the coda beginning approximately at m. 992 or m. 994. Certainly the theme never truly overlaps any appearance of either melody I or II—all thematic and melodic statements are sequential, not simultaneous.

Another perspective of the form is derived from the main cadences, of which there are two: one in m. 957, the other at m. 974. Superimposing this over the scheme shown above, the result is: ABA|CA|CA coda (where the vertical marks represent the cadences). Finally, yet another perspective may be formed by considering the structural placement of climaxes. Applied to the first formal scheme only, the result might be written ABAC\textsuperscript{V}AC\textsuperscript{V}A coda (where the caret represents the location of the climaxes); applied to the second, the combined result might be ABA|C\textsuperscript{V}A|C\textsuperscript{V}A coda.

Thus, the movement communicates a sense of thorough yet free construction and development of materials; for, while it is hardly possible to account for every motive (especially in the accompanimental background), the movement sums up the previous ideas and tendencies of
the quartet. For this reason the descriptive label epilogue is the most apt for describing the fifth movement's place and function in the quartet.
Fifth Movement

2.64.  mm.945-947

*Adagio (J-i-ss)

Vln. I

2.55.a.  mm.948-950

Vln. I

2.55.b.  mm.950-952

Vln. I

2.56.  mm.952-954

Composer's Remarks on the Second String Quartet

Q: In [the Second String Quartet] how did you decide what notes you were going to put down?

R.S.: That's what I heard in my mind, in my imagination.

Q: Okay. Then, it was more or less an impulse that you followed out.

R.S.: It always is.

Q: Well, yes, but one can compose freely, or one can follow a system such as the twelve-tone system.

R.S.: Well, I wasn't using the twelve-tone system in writing this quartet. You see, my relation to that is a long time ago... And it comes by degrees, and one uses it or doesn't use it as one feels like. One interprets it sometimes; naturally there are some things that don't go.

Q: You mean in analyzing?

R.S.: No, I mean when one is writing. If one suddenly introduced a perfect cadence into a twelve-tone piece it would sound out of place.

Q: This theme, the first theme, is quoted by E. W. Schweitzer, who wrote a thesis analyzing [the Second] quartet among others. Did you ever hear of the thesis?

R.S.: No.
Q: It says, "Generation in the String Quartets of Carter, Sessions, Kirchner, and Schuller: a Concept of Forward Thrust and Its Relationship to Structure In Aurally Complex Styles." [Schweitzer] suggests that there are key areas in the theme; that if you look at one section of the theme, like the opening three notes, you could find the key of D major there. And that if you shifted, you could find another key here, and thereby imply [the presence of] various keys. Was that in your intent?

R.S.: Not at all. Naturally there are elements of contrast, and sometimes that's desirable in terms of key. But, on the other hand, the intervals are always there.

Q: Then [keys] can always be inferred by any listener. But that was not the original intention of the theme, was it, to imply shifting key areas like that?

R.S.: I couldn't think of key in those terms at all.

Q: You were saying that of course there were moments of contrast where you could analyze in terms of key. Are there sections in that piece that could be analyzed according to chord progressions?

R.S.: If it's in terms of key, it's apt to be in other terms, too. I would say this quartet was a turning point in a sense, in a somewhat private sense, because when I wrote it I suddenly was surprised to be writing music like that. Now when you
ask me what I mean by "like that" I can't tell you. But it seemed to me, I had thought of music as being primarily diatonic before, and this turned out to be much more chromatic.

Q: Was most of the earlier music, or all of it, written with a key in mind?

R.S.: The First Quartet was written with a key in mind, and my Second Symphony was written with a key in mind. But I was so used to writing I didn't think of key, many times. In the Second Quartet, I wasn't thinking of a key. I had written [not] only my Second Symphony, the big orchestral work, but I had written also an opera, I'd written two piano sonatas, I'd written another quartet...

Q. All with key?

R.S.: Well, but, key stops being an idea after a while; it becomes just part of the tools one takes for granted. I was thinking in terms of keys, that's true. But, with the opera, [The Trial of Lucullus] there were places where I forgot about keys.

Q: Then, what was important at that point was the expressivity of the line, and the background.

R.S.: And the raw musical material. One thing led to another, you see...
Conclusions

It is evident from analysis that the movements of the Second String Quartet are closely related. Indeed, just as the fifth movement is an epilogue, the first movement is a prologue. Represented in the first movement are two contrasting moods: one that is calm and the other, agitated, associated with the exposition/recapitulation, and the development, respectively.

In broad terms the remaining movements (including the fifth movement) explore these two moods. The second and fourth movements communicate an effect of agitation through their fast tempi, use of accents, fragmented lines, etc., while the third and fifth movements express the feeling of meditative calm through lyric melodies, slow tempi, relatively unaccented lines, etc.

Therefore, every movement has an important role to play and is necessary to the dramatic cohesion of the quartet. This observation is offered in contrast to the possibility that the quartet could be a collection of independent (though necessarily contrasting) character pieces, separable from the work. In the case of this quartet, the transitional, or relatively unresolved, endings which prepare each following movement emphasize the ties between the movements.

The quartet displays a wide variety of meters: \( \frac{3}{8}, \frac{4}{8}, \frac{5}{8}, \frac{7}{8}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{3}{2}, \frac{9}{2}, \frac{2}{1} \) and \( \frac{3}{8} \). In every movement the meter changes several times. In addition, in the second movement (B and B' sections) different meters are used simultaneously. These
facts indicate a concern for phrasing and line, not only of the ensemble but of separate voices within the ensemble.

Rhythms are generally not complex. The second and fourth movements offer the most rhythmic difficulties with occasional polyrhythms. For example, at m. 181 in the second movement the second violin and cello lines stand in relation of 9:4 in $\frac{3}{2}$ time (the former consisting of three quarter-note triplets, the latter of a half-note quadruplet). This is probably the most complex time relationship in the piece, since most other polyrhythms consist of $\frac{3}{2}$ or $\frac{4}{3}$.

Throughout the piece cadences are announced by any combination of the following characteristics (and often all of them); drop in register (primarily in the upper parts); reduced texture; slower motion; *ritardando*; *diminuendo*; or change in meter. Key has no apparent effect or place at any cadence. In contrast, climaxes often utilize *crescendo*, *animando*, an extended range or ambitus between parts and thicker texture.

There are few places where the signs for "principal voice" and "secondary voice" do not appear in one or more parts. While these are non-musical aids to the performer only, they serve to indicate the importance of line in Sessions' music. An examination of the themes, especially from the slow movements, shows that they owe a debt to traditional vocal melody. Such lines are as elegant and singable as any instrumental melody from more traditional repertoire.
The importance of line is also felt in the polyphonic nature of the music. Frequently the end of a phrase in one line is elided by other lines and, rather than pausing or briefly cadencing, the music proceeds. In the score this is sometimes indicated by a breath-mark or apostrophe in one part only, or by a bar or bars of rest in one part, after which that part will enter again with the melody. Again such elisions happen especially in the slow, lyric movements, since the fragmented textures of the faster movements obscure such effects.

Key is not an organizational device in the Second String Quartet, yet the music exhibits logic and direction. Notwithstanding the plethora of detail that may make the piece seem overly complex, the carefully balanced use of recurring elements (such as themes, melodic and rhythmic cells and motives, textures, tempi, etc.) provides a clear outline of both the form and meaning of the quartet.
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

The *String Quartet in E minor* and the *Second String Quartet* (henceforth referred to as the first and second quartets, respectively) exhibit many of the same stylistic traits. One quartet uses key and the other does not, but it must be remembered that, as Sessions notes in the interview, "...key stops being an idea after a while; it becomes just part of the tools one takes for granted...."

His description of the composition of the second quartet ("...I suddenly was surprised to be writing music like that....") indicates that the transition from a compositional process using key to one not using key was a rather undifferentiated one. In fact, it could be argued that the realization that the second quartet "turned out to be much more chromatic" was a belated one, and might reflect a new personal understanding of his work as much as any difference in either the method of its composition or its aural effect, since both works are highly chromatic.

An interested listener will be aware of the presence of key in the first quartet and even in the second, if he is so inclined. Conversely, a listener interested in other aspects of the two works may conclude rightly that in neither work is key necessary to his
appreciation of them. However, neither listener will be able to deny that, in certain respects unrelated to key, the quartets depend upon the same tools, even though separated by fifteen years.

Both quartets approach cadence in the same way: motion slows; meter often changes as though to accommodate an extension of the end of the phrase; melodic and rhythmic gestures are more contained; the instrumental lines generally move to a lower register; texture usually thins; and ritardando, diminuendo, etc. are used. Sometimes a change of bowing or articulation will herald the cadence. In their consistency these traits are relatively exaggerated in comparison with music employing a more traditional sense of tonality, as though to make up for less harmonic "pull" at cadences.

The polyphonic nature of Sessions' writing is evident in both works. This aspect ties in with the importance of the melodic line in general. From the use of meter at cadence points, the care given to both individual line and ensemble phrasing is clear.

Other evidence of the primacy of the melodic line lies in the consistent use of significant melodic themes and motives. Finally, both quartets exhibit a certain prolixity in that phrasings of individual lines are frequently elided by other parts. Only major cadence points bring unified rest.

As previously mentioned, climaxes in the music most often make use of methods in direct contrast to those visible at cadences. Motion utilizes quicker rhythmic values; melodic and rhythmic gestures
become relatively more mobile; a higher register and/or a wider range or ambitus between parts is employed; the texture becomes fuller and often more pronouncedly polyphonic; crescendo appears virtually without fail, and, frequently, accelerando. Such climaxes differ little from climaxes in tonally traditional music since they do not depend on any particular harmonic progression for effect. We may speak of the "V-I" cadence, but no comparable "V-I" climax exists.

One of the more traditional aspects of the first and second quartets is the idiomatic usage of the instruments. Both works share the use of pizzicato, sul ponticello and sulla tastiera bowings, although the second quartet uses the latter two more extensively than the first. Also, the first quartet uses the timbre con sordini (in the second movement) and the second uses "snap-pizzicato" (in the third and fourth movements). In both pieces the 1st and 2nd violins have the main melodic lines much more frequently than either of the lower parts. While all parts are rhythmically mobile, there is a tendency for the lower ones to move in slower time values than the upper ones.

Throughout this analysis the sonata principle has been used extensively in describing the formal structures in the two quartets. This reflects the developmental treatment of the materials of each work. As analysis shows, the importance of any musical idea depends upon its recurrences in varying circumstances, that is, its development. And conversely, no significant idea is developed less than
thoroughly. The formal structures of each quartet are intimately connected to these principles.

The use of the term 'sonata' to describe the appropriate movements of each piece reflects also the presence of a particular sequence of dramatic events where (for the purposes of analysis) the development section corresponds to a sense of sustained, heightened tension. This does not refer specifically to the climactic use of materials where great tension is concentrated and released simultaneously. Different sonata-type movements use tension differently. For example, the first movement of the first quartet deserves the label sonata mainly in its treatment of the musical materials, but not so much in dramatic terms--it defers the release of tension to a later movement. On the other hand, the first movement of the second quartet deserves the label for both the treatment of materials and its dramatic outline, for it comes to a climax between "development" and "recapitulation", after which the tension is essentially dissipated (notwithstanding its links to the next movement).

From the foregoing discussions it may be seen that tension and relaxation are effected by quite traditional means. In general the traits found at cadences reduce tension, while those concentrated at climaxes heighten it. Any abrupt or singular event, properly placed, serves to focus tension and in varying degrees release it.

One way of controlling dramatic tension has not been discussed, and this is through relative consonance and dissonance. Attempts to
identify patterns of consonance/dissonance vs. tension have mostly
failed because of the complexity of the task and the number of un-
answerable questions concerning tonality, polytonality, atonality,
etc. However, each quartet offers evidence that in broad terms there
exist "standards" of consonance and dissonance such that the former
evokes relatively less tension, and the latter, more. The "standards"
are again traditional: 2nds or 7ths, for example, are dissonant com-
pared with 3rds or 6ths, which are dissonant compared to octaves,
onisons, P4ths and P5ths.

The evidence supporting these standards is limited to extreme
cases. For instance, both quartets end with a major triad. In the
case of the second quartet the triad is not only aurally but analyti-
cally provocative since such a harmonic structure is unprecedented
within the piece (barring possible passing chords). Because it is
unprecedented, the question arises whether the chord actually does
serve to produce rest or whether it might not have the opposite ef-
fect since it is so unusual. Unfortunately there is only one other
place in the quartet where similar circumstances prevail, and that is
at the close of the second movement where the final chord is G, f and
$f^b$, in three voices. The dramatic environment of this chord, at the
end of a transitional section leading to the next movement, supports
the idea that dissonance serves to create tension.

In the case of the first quartet, the consideration of key
complicates the question of consonance/dissonance vs. relative tension.
As Sessions notes in the interview (see the end of Chapter I), the tones of any interval will have "various specific relationships with [a] tonic." Thus, in the key of C major, for example, the M3rd between F# and A# could be considered less consonant with regard to the key than a M3rd between F and A because the tones of the first interval are further removed from the tonic than those of the second.

The examples considered against this background are again provocative: 1.) the quartet opens briefly with a minor triad; 2.) the second movement opens with a minor triad and closes with a P5th-octave combination in three voices; 3.) the third movement has two important climaxes which make pronounced use of major triads, and, as mentioned above, closes with a major chord. In the first two examples, the position of the chords in places where one might expect relatively low tension supports the association between consonance and relaxation. In the latter example, it could be argued that the use of essentially major chords at climactic points provides a sense of resolution, since the tension preceding these points has been building steadily with no diatonic relationships becoming evident. The abrupt appearance of such relationships therefore communicates a sense of arrival and release.

In the interview Sessions notes that he uses his "ear" when making compositional decisions. This may be understood in small and large terms, from the choice for a particular note to the pacing and juxtaposition of events. The concern for ideals of contrast and
balance demonstrated in both quartets shows that Sessions is a dramatic composer in the tradition of great music. While it is complex, his music displays that tension between form and content that is the hallmark of all dramatically sound music.

Sessions' works are deemed to be important for other reasons besides their inherent musicality, however. As seen in the two quartets, his work represents a growth not away from but beyond the specific demands of tonality. The musical traits revealed by the quartets are all present in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works. By emphasizing these values, his works take a rightful place beside the works of other great twentieth-century composers as models of the possibilities of musical expression that is based on sound traditional craftsmanship.
APPENDIX

INTERVIEW

Roger Sessions gave the interview for this thesis in February, 1981, at the Julliard School of Music in New York City. The following brief portions of the interview are included here because they clearly demonstrate Sessions' attitudes toward music. In particular, these remarks afford a view of the thought which guides the composition of his own music.

Q: Did you use twelve-tone technique [in writing the Second String Quartet]?
R.S.: Well, you know, the twelve-tone technique is not that unique. I used to see Schoenberg quite often when I lived in California. I went to see him every time I was in Los Angeles, and we got along very well together. But, I said to him one day that I thought the twelve-tone technique had been over-publicized and that it had been somewhat distorted. So then he looked glum and he nodded and he said, "Yes, of course you're right," he said, "and I have to admit that it's partly my fault." But then he perked up and he said, "But it's much
more the fault of some of my disciples."

The row is there, it has a function; but exactly what the function has in any given work is the matter the composer has to deal with. It's a way of keeping track of the notes and what they're doing.

Q: What do you feel is the place of analysis in music?

R.S.: Well, I think analysis must be after the fact. It's the piece that's very important. I think that this is misunderstood in Theory because, I mean, you analyze it for the purpose of finding rules, or principles, but then you have to look out and be very, very careful. One should never be bound by what one finds. One may find something, then later decide that's not so important after all. There's no substitute for being really familiar with a piece of music. It's like performance...you've got to see [a piece] as a whole, and see details as part of the whole. And of course many of the details are not that precise. I mean, dynamics are purely relative, and there is no way of being precise. You can be precise about note values, about relative note values, and one can make very, very subtle interpretations of the note values. But, if one counts all the time, and one thinks in terms of
counting, then it just doesn't work. Maybe in certain pieces it would, but in general it doesn't. One must finally think of the whole shape.

Q: If you changed specific notes, but left gestures--that is to say, outlines of gestures--and phrasing and meter and rhythms the same, would it make a difference to you, for instance, as you listened to the piece? Would it become a completely different piece?

R.S.: Well, it depends upon how much you do this, and it depends upon whether it really works or not. You'd have to change an awful lot and the possibilities are endless. There's questions of tempo, and there's questions of meter, and of course the overall rhythms...

Q: Leaving all the parameters unchanged except the notes.

R.S.: Well, it's very hard to leave them all unchanged, because they affect each other, you see. If I write E instead of an E♭, or vice versa, in one place, sometimes it will be obviously a mistake, sometimes it will be something not very important or fundamental. But, if you do that all over the place, it's not the same piece. Sometimes it may not be a piece at all.
Q: Okay, I guess this is all that I wanted to ask, because I have found it impossible to account for every detail in your quartets.

R.S.: Well, I don't think it can be done. A note is just one molecule, so to speak...it's the tempo and the phrase, the sense of a rhythmic design, all sorts of other things put in. The notes are the raw materials. It's something organic, you see? It's consisting of a thousand relationships between notes, and also between durations, so to speak, and the atoms that these make. And the trouble is, if you try to isolate these things then they make no sense.

Q: Right, I understand that. But there are so many things that are impossible to measure in the pieces.

R.S.: Well, there are things that are unobserved. I don't know whether measuring has any importance or not. One can observe.
For a more complete bibliography of works by and concerning Sessions, see below Lesley A. Wright's article, "Roger Huntington Sessions: A Selective Bibliography and a Listing of His Compositions," (edited by Anne Bagnall).

Writings by Sessions

Books —


Articles —


"Song and Pattern in Music Today." *Score* 17 (September 1956): 73-84. Also in *Roger Sessions on Music: Collected Essays* (see entry above), pp. 53-70.

"To the Editor." *Perspectives of New Music* 5 (Spring-Summer 1967): 81-97. Also in Boretz and Cone, *Perspectives on American Composers* (see entry below), pp. 108-124.
Writings about Sessions

Books —


Articles —


Cone, Edward T., "Roger Sessions' String Quartet." Modern Music 18 (March-April 1941): 159-163.

Imbrie, Andrew., "Roger Sessions: In Honor of His 65th Birthday." Perspectives of New Music 1 (Fall 1962): 117-147. Also in Boretz and Cone, Perspectives on American Composers, pp. 59-89.


Unpublished Dissertations —


Reviews —

Livingston, Herbert., "Roger Sessions; Second String Quartet." Notes 13 (June 1956): 523-524.