

‘New Chaconnes for Old?’: Steve Reich’s Sketches for *Variations for Winds, Strings and Keyboards*, with some thoughts on their significance for the analysis of the composer’s harmonic language in the late 1970s

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Figures

The image displays a page of a musical score for Steve Reich's *Variations for Winds, Strings and Keyboards*, specifically bars 1 through 8. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. At the top left, a circled number '5' indicates the page number. The instruments listed on the left side of the score are: Fl. 1 & 2, Fl. 3, Ob. 1 & 2, Ob. 3, Tpt. 1 & 2, Tpt. 3, Tbn. 1 & 2, Tbn. 3, Tuba, Org. 1, Org. 2, Org. 3, Pno. 1, Pno. 2, Vln. I, Vln. II, Vle., Vc., and Cb. The Flute 1 and 2 parts feature a complex, rhythmic melody with many sixteenth notes. The Flute 3 part has a similar but slightly different rhythmic pattern. The Organ 1 and 2 parts play a steady, rhythmic accompaniment. The Organ 3 part plays a sustained, harmonic accompaniment. The Piano 1 and 2 parts play a rhythmic accompaniment similar to the Organ 1 and 2 parts. The Violin I and II parts play a sustained, harmonic accompaniment. The Viola part plays a sustained, harmonic accompaniment. The Violoncello part plays a sustained, harmonic accompaniment. The Contrabass part plays a sustained, harmonic accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *Diu sempre* and *p sempre*.

Figure 1: Steve Reich, *Variations for Winds, Strings and Keyboards*, bars 1-8
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July 4, 1979 VERMONT

Analysis of harmonic progression in Purcell's "A New Ground" - 1689

July 5 - try it again $\text{♩} = 120$

with

Piano F# sticks octave to tenor above mid C

Romanesca - bass

C

Figure 2: Steve Reich, sketches, 'July 4, 1979, VERMONT[:]' Analysis of harmonic progression in Purcell's "A New Ground"-1689'; 'July 5 [including] 'Romanesca-bass' [Sketchbook 18]. Courtesy of the Steve Reich Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel.

7/9/79 Cycles of scale - key *elaborate three melodic variations*
 movement - constant melodic - scale pattern.

The sketches consist of three systems of musical notation:

- System 1 (7/9/79):** Two staves of music. The top staff shows a melodic line with circled numbers 1, 2, and 3 indicating different melodic variations. The bottom staff shows a bass line. A note in the top staff is marked with a circled 2 and a sharp sign (2#).
- System 2 (7/10):** Two staves of music. The top staff shows a melodic line with circled numbers 1, 2, and 3. The bottom staff shows a bass line with circled numbers 1, 2, and 3. A note in the top staff is marked with a circled 3 and an arrow pointing to a circled 4 (3 → 4). A note in the bottom staff is marked with a circled 1 and a sharp sign (1#).
- System 3 (7/11):** Four staves of music. The top two staves are treble clef, and the bottom two are bass clef. The notation shows chord progressions with various accidentals (sharps and flats). A note in the top staff is marked with a circled 1 and a sharp sign (1#).

Additional handwritten notes:

- Under the first system: "forms a diminished 7th chord of 4 minor thirds" (with "thirds" written below).
- Under the second system: "forms up a whole step - of a minor third - down a fourth".
- Under the third system: "as chorale to repeat as harmony for strings".

Figure 3: Steve Reich, sketches, '7/9/79 [= 9 July 1979:] Cycles of scale - key . . . constant melodic - scale pattern -'; '7/10 [= 10 July 1979]; and '7/11 [= 11 July 1979:] Chord progressions in Music for Mallet Inst. - as chorale to repeat as harmony for strings' [Sketchbook 18]. Courtesy of the Steve Reich Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel.

AV. 1057375112 EZRA'S BIRTHDAY (Hoban) 4
1876

Aug. 3 MUSIC FOR STRINGS AND WINDS. 8/24

This was realized by Japo 7/30

*Possibly duple
etc

perhaps
4 cellos here

6 cello

8
4/4

Figure 4: Steve Reich, sketch, 'Aug 3 [= 3 August 1979:] MUSIC FOR STRINGS AND WINDS' [Sketchbook 18, page numbered 14]. Courtesy of the Steve Reich Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel.

8/6/79 "1" 2

HARMONIC structure - Music for Strings & Winds

London Symphony Orchestra
 Claudio Abbado - conductor
 with Michael Tilson Thomas
 Program on
 Edvard Grieg
 Works

D. F.
 for 1981

Write out first section using these chords

2nd section

Plus a third voice = soprano and alto
 lower (on bottom)

find a theme to harmonize while staying in Eb's

Find passing harmonies to no flats

try to expand this maybe

(18)

Figure 5: Steve Reich, sketch, '8/6/79 [= 6 August 1979:] Harmonic structure – Music for Strings and Winds' [Sketchbook 18, page numbered 18]. Courtesy of the Steve Reich Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel.

8/16 D 17

MUSIC for STRINGS + WINDS

1) Try different contours at bar 11. What is, what is, what is distance + is there a bar in a voice? Also bar 18 and also at 23?

MS
Swept
Lead
Cello
+ 1st
Violin
4/13

$\text{♩} = 120$

Handwritten musical score for the first system, consisting of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains a melodic line with notes marked with circled numbers 1, 5, and 10. Dynamics include *mf* and *mf*. A *rit.* marking is present. The middle staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with notes marked with circled numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. The bottom staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line with notes marked with circled numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. There are various performance markings such as *mf* and *rit.*

Handwritten musical score for the second system, consisting of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains a melodic line with notes marked with circled numbers 10, 12, and 16. Dynamics include *mf*. The middle staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with notes marked with circled numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. The bottom staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line with notes marked with circled numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. There are various performance markings such as *mf* and *rit.*

Handwritten musical score for the third system, consisting of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains a melodic line with notes marked with circled numbers 15, 18, and 23. Dynamics include *mf*. The middle staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with notes marked with circled numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. The bottom staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line with notes marked with circled numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. There are various performance markings such as *mf* and *rit.*

2) continue moving harmonically (→ melodically - staying in $\frac{8}{4}$?) as indicated on p. 13 eventually leading to p. 14

In string writing keep good voice leading + cross parts instead of unisons

FS (Frz) (Frz) (25)

maybe add alts?

8/14 (30) (35)

8/15 (40)

Flute
Clarinet
Wood
Bassoon
Corno

-24-

Figure 6: Steve Reich, sketches, '8/10', '8/13', '8/14' and '8/15' [= 10, 13, 14 and 15 August 1979:] 'Music for Strings + Winds' [Sketchbook 18, pages numbered 23 and 24]. Courtesy of the Steve Reich Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel

BAR NUMBERS

1 - 30

31 - 48

MELODIC PATTERNS (FLUTES, OBOES, ELECTRIC ORGANS AND PIANOS) + BRASS CHORDS

FLUTES ETC.

BRASS CHORDS

CHACONNE (STRINGS AND ELECTRIC ORGANS)

49 - 74

75 - 85

86 - 94

OBOES ETC.

FLUTES ETC.

OBOES ETC.

49 - 70 51 - 57 58 - 65 67 - 73 71 - 74 75 - 81 83 - 85 87 - 93 91 - 94

49 - 57 58 - 65 66 - 74 75 - 85 86 - 94

95 - 106 107 - 125 126 - 144

95 - 102 99-105 103 - 106 107 - 122 115 - 122 123 - 125 126 - 144 129 - 135

FLUTES ETC.

95 - 96 97 - 106 107 - 114 115 - 122 123 - 125 126 - 128 129-135 136 - 144

Figure 7: A Harmonic Analysis of Steve Reich's *Variations for Winds, Strings and Keyboards*, Section I (Bars 1-144)