

MOTION:
A Work for Orchestra

A thesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

Motion is an orchestral piece, which consists of three main ideas and their development. The piece was composed for the Tufts Symphony Orchestra. The premiere took place in April 21st 2015, at Distler Performance Hall – Tufts University in Medford, MA- with Tufts Symphony Orchestra under the direction of John Page.

The piece is dedicated to my well-beloved mentor and supporter who enlightens my path. To Dr. Kayihan ARIC with deepest respect and affection.

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I must thank all Professors whom I have worked with over fifteen years. I am truly grateful to you all for making me ready for “the tough life” starting from my childhood.

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Introduction

When we think about the term “motion/movement”, we occasionally relate it to speed as the common result of the brain’s learned reflexes. But ‘tempo’ is not the only element that can create motion. In this piece, I aimed to create motion by using timbre, colors, and other compositional materials. My goal was to create a certain sound/color originating from and within harmonies that are reflections of the previously used similar materials, thus creating a seamless continuity.

Since *Motion* is an overture-like short piece, I present only three main compositional ideas and developed them throughout the piece. For practical reasons, I paid extra attention to make the work non-virtuosic, technically accessible, yet musically colorful, rich, and effective. After deciding to eliminate the powerful virtuosity element, I needed to rely on timbre/color, which meant the craft of orchestration, harmonic language and as well as textural elements. This approach was enhanced to create the attractiveness I wanted.

Contrast was another element that I used in the piece, not only in a fractal-like way (sub-divided/in small portions) but also in the bigger picture. Therefore, there are very sudden dynamic changes. By starting the work in a maximalist way with the big cluster chord at bar 1, and ending it with a single pitch, shows the range of contrast within the piece from a wide perspective.

In this essay, I will discuss my compositional elements, orchestration choices, and the challenges that I had to face and overcome to realize my intentions.

Compositional Materials

As mentioned above, this piece is built with three main compositional materials.

The first is a big cluster chord idea, which functions as an idee fixe and presents itself over and over again, always reliably yet unpredictably. The second element is a more mellow/warm, harmonically attractive and almost triadic-sounding chord progressions that is accompanied by sustained single or double pitches. This element also reappears frequently. Thirdly, unlike the other two, figures featuring horizontal/contrapuntal triplet ideas are used.

The duration of the piece (the length was requested by John Page, the Tufts Symphony Orchestra Music Director and Conductor) which was not a personal choice) was limited, and therefore a challenge. Writing for a college orchestra, with a busy schedule and limited time to rehearse, the length of the piece was something that I had to consider. These and similar challenges affected my compositional ideas and materials during the research and pre-compositional process.

In such short piece, I didn't want to waste any time by having long

introductions or calmer and/or wider expositions. As a result, I decided to start the work with a big sound, knowing that more reserved sonorities would likely emerge afterwards.

The Opening Chord

The telltale opening chord of *Motion* contains all twelve pitches, presented hierarchically. The G# / Ab is clearly dominates the chord played by first violin, first trumpet, first flute as well as by timpani, tuba and bass trombone as A flat.

When I was playing the e-flat minor Prelude and Fugue from the Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1, by Johann Sebastian Bach, I read from a couple of different printed editions of the fugue. In some cases it was notated in D# minor, enhancing the ability to read the music optically. This key choice had a psychological reflection (at least for me) as to how the piece should be performed. In my perspective, having the fugue in D# minor brought a musical brightness and sense of mildness.

Considering this emotional difference with the use of enharmonic notations (plus the sonority of the full orchestra), I believe that the difference between G# and Ab was remarkably noteworthy. I used the Ab. In the mean time, in the higher register, I wanted to have the above-mentioned brightness and so used the G#.

The horn section is the main cause of the clash in the chord. The horns work against the other sections of the orchestra and

emphasize the clash by playing the most dissonant intervals. But sometimes they work together with the rest of the orchestra, and in these instances the chord will sound less cluster-like and more obviously pandiatonic.

Though the idea of starting to start the piece with a big cluster chord was counter to the idea of motion, and making the motion bigger and heavier makes the chord less movable. I nevertheless, undulate the sound by using dynamics. I kept the bottom and top *forte* but in some inner voices, I used crescendos and decrescendos to create a wave and motion inside the chord.

Mellow/Warm Chord Progression

The second element-- a warm, mellow, and pastel-colored, alto register chord progression, almost sounds triadic. The progression features pandiatonic chords but in a chromatic relationship to each other. I call this approach "pandiatonic chromaticism". This is an interesting point because the dominant-driven music is the most powerful in terms of creating demand for release. But in a "pandiatonic chromatic" approach, the demand of release is created by chromaticism, not necessarily with dominant chord qualities. This way, the most stable cluster-like pandiatonic chord can sound unstable and create "motion".

Triplets

The third element is a figural idea highlighting the more melodic, horizontal and contrapuntally treated triplets. Since the

piece is short, I started to develop this idea near the beginning and soon started to use the material as part of cluster-like chords.

After programming the triplet idea rhythmically, it was easier to add melodic lines and horizontal shapes to it. But even when the triplets are presented in a melodic way, they are mostly in a major-second interval to each other, thus creating clusters. Since I tried to avoid chromatic scales in general, the lines that I used contain a lot of octatonic flavors even when they are not purely octatonic. In my opinion, this is due to prevalence of augmented seconds.

If we analyze them as trichords, we find [0,1,4] (3-3), [0, 1, 3] (3-2) but also [0,4,8] (3-12) which adds triadic flavor to those scales. We see a lot of (almost all of them) intervallically Z-hexachords such as 6-z3, 6-z4, 6-z17 (all-trichord hexachord), 6-z19,6-z36, 6-z44 (Schoenberg hexachord) etc. The economical and consistent use of the intervallic relationships of the lines was another element that allowed me to knit the piece together. Also as mentioned, the tempo of the piece is not fast but it needed to feel energetic and kinetic in climax-like passages. In such cases, I use an illusion; I present a counter rhythmic idea / motive (such as two against three), which creates a rhythmic clash. This clash makes the triplet idea feel faster to the listener. The only section of the piece that I left “unprepared” is the part with “random notes” (the ad-lib section; m.87). But even in this passage, the pitch centricity plays a role.

Pitch Centricity

Even though the piece has a blurry / non-transparent texture, there are some carefully chosen and clearly presented pitches that are more centered than the others. B natural is the central pitch throughout the piece. The reason for this is that B natural is the most unstable pitch to my ears, seeking to move. For example, at measure 10, the timpani starts to play B natural and adds F natural at measure 14. This is a preparation for measures 23-24. At measure 23, we hear the first sustained pitch, which is B natural played by piccolo and violin. At measure 24, the double bass joins with F natural. Another B, F tritone is played by oboe and Cor Anglais at measure 80. At 81, horn and violin play B natural and at 85, we hear a couple of B naturals in different registers and the B natural pedal continues during the “random notes” passage. At 94, the whole orchestra meets on B natural again and finally the piece ends with a single sustained B natural played by piccolo.

Quasi-Pandiatonicism

Motion is not a tonal piece but it is far away from being atonal, as well. In my opinion, pandiatonicism avoids a clear definition of tonality but at the same time, it creates a nonfunctional tonality.

The opening chord could be analyzed as an E7 (Mixolydian) chord—except for the horn section. The first time when we hear the sustained strings chord by itself at measure 32, we realize that it

actually was a pandiatonic E chord since the beginning. More melodic and alto-registered woodwinds play chord tones in major seconds, which also adds to the pandiatonicism. Chord progressions start with very busy clusters and become more transparent chord by chord. This process serves as the motion element mentioned in the introduction (e.g. mm.25-26, m.49-53).

Non-Scalar Octatonism

The octatonic (half-whole) scale is never clearly and completely presented throughout this piece, but it nevertheless contains a serious amount of octatonic material (p. 14,15). Some runs/melodies touch upon a symmetrical scale and then they connect to another scale by using a non-scale tone. There are also examples of near octatonic lines that consist of passing notes but still keep their octatonic qualities.

In my opinion, usually [0,1,4] (3-3) is enough to add an octatonic flavor and this specific trichord is the most consistent and processed trichord in the piece.

Orchestration

The orchestration was the most important and detailed part of the whole compositional process for *Motion*. I forged my set of compositional materials that fit with the idea of motion, but they needed to be presented correctly and effectively through the orchestration. Since I had limited the virtuosity, I had to create

color and attractiveness with special combinations and orchestral techniques. Sonorities are important but the technical aspect of orchestration is equally important and even critical.

For example, from measures 33 to 37, the clarinets play in *piano*, flutes *forte* and oboes *pp*. These look like sudden dynamic changes in the score, but I knew that the whole passage would sound *piano*. Because the flute cannot be heard easily in low registers. I had to write *forte*, knowing that it would give me a *piano* dynamic. Oboe cannot play *piano* in low register so I had to write *pp* in order to achieve *piano* in that register.

After dealing with such basic technical issues, my orchestration had to support the motion idea. The opening chord is like a spaceship, which loses a module every measure. After the woodwind cut-off at measure 2 we start to experience a new color in the absence of the woodwinds. In the third measure, we hear another color without the high brass. At measure 4, we only hear strings but we don't hear them long enough to realize that it has the pandiatonic quality. In the mellow / warm chord progressions, I wanted to keep the energy. Therefore, I used the warm, less airy, less round-sounding woodwinds. For example, I didn't use flutes, which are comparatively without warmth to my ear. I wanted to give the top notes to cello because I liked the sharpness of the A string, which would be blended and softened by violas and clarinets. I wanted to color the bass line with the bass clarinet, which wouldn't be enough to bring out the harmonic function of the chords but it

still would make us understand the character of the chords. I also supported the chords with accented *piano* tam-tam notes in order to create an atmosphere of depth. The challenge was to create energy even in long-sustained pitches. For example, at measure 71, violins play A natural on the D string, a very warm sound that I doubled with trumpet and oboe. This pairing added sharpness to the pitch but at the same it still kept its warm quality.

At measure 96, a progression starts vaguely and thickly, but becomes more and more clear, chord by chord. I didn't want to give a clear ceiling or melodic line until it became really clear. On the 4th beat at the same measure, bassoon and cello meet and start to work together by providing their topmost notes. Very quickly, clarity disappears and blurriness comes back with clusters played by flutes. My biggest goal was to make "motion" work here through orchestral shading and nuance.

This project has been a very valuable experience for me. Since my childhood, I have been searching and studying colors/sonorities as performer, orchestrator and composer. It has been very rewarding to hear the result of my years of studies. As a composer, I am aware of the difficulties of having a piece performed by an orchestra and I am very grateful for this unique opportunity.

MOTION

A work for orchestra

Cagdas Donmez

Transposed

$\text{♩} = 76$

Piccolo

Flute 1

Flute 2

Oboe 1

Oboe 2

English Horn

Clarinet in B \flat 1

Clarinet in B \flat 2

Bass Clarinet in B \flat

Bassoon 1

Bassoon 2

Horn in F 1

Horn in F 2

Horn in F 3

Horn in F 4

Trumpet in B \flat 1

Trumpet in B \flat 2

Trumpet in B \flat 3

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Timpani (A, B, F)

Percussion (Bass Drum, Tam-Tam, Susp. Cym., Fx)

Bass Drum

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

MOTION

The score is divided into two main sections, A and B, with measures 13 through 27 numbered at the bottom. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Piccolo:** Section A starts with *mf*, Section B with *sf* and *senza dim.*
- Flutes (Fl. 1, 2):** Section A *mf*, Section B *sf* and *f*.
- Oboes (Ob. 1, 2):** Section A *mf*, Section B *sf* and *f*.
- E. H. (English Horn):** Section A *mf*, Section B *sf* and *f*.
- Clarinets (Cl. 1, 2):** Section A *mf*, Section B *sf* and *f*.
- B. Cl. (Bass Clarinet):** Section A *mf*, Section B *sf* and *f*.
- Bassoons (Bsn. 1, 2):** Section A *mf*, Section B *sf* and *f*.
- Horns (Hn. 1-4):** Section A *mp*, Section B *p* and *f*.
- Trumpets (Tpt. 1-3):** Section A *con sord.* and *f*, Section B *senza sord.* and *f*.
- Trombones (Tbn. 1-3):** Section A *p*, Section B *p* and *f*.
- Timpani (Timp.):** Section A *pp*, Section B *f*.
- Percussion (Perc.):** Section A *mf*, Section B *p* and *f*. Includes a note: "scraped by triangle beater".
- Violins (Vln. I, II):** Section A *p*, Section B *f* and *ppp*. Includes notes: "col legno battuto", "ord. div.", "pp", "ppp".
- Viola (Vla.):** Section A *p*, Section B *f* and *ppp*. Includes notes: "sul C", "col legno battuto", "ord. div.", "pp", "ppp".
- Cello/Double Bass (Vc., Cb.):** Section A *p*, Section B *f* and *ppp*. Includes notes: "tamb. s.t.", "sul D", "sul A", "div. e sul E", "unis.", "pp", "ppp".

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The top section includes woodwinds (Piccolo, Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons) and brass (Horns, Trumpets, Trombones). The bottom section includes percussion (Timpani, Percussion) and strings (Violins, Viola, Cello). The score is written in a common time signature and features a variety of dynamic markings and performance directions. A section marked 'C' is indicated by a bracket at the top right. At the bottom, a sequence of numbers from 28 to 47 is provided.

MOTION

D

The score is divided into systems with various dynamics and performance markings:

- Woodwinds:** Piccolo, Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, English Horn, Clarinet 1 & 2, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon 1 & 2, Horn 1-4, Trumpet 1-3, Trombone 1-3, Tuba.
- Brass:** Trumpet 1-3, Trombone 1-3, Tuba.
- Strings:** Violin I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass.
- Percussion:** Timpani, Percussion (Lx).

Key markings include **D** (Dynamics), *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *ppp*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *mp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *mp*.

Performance markings include *scena sound*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *mp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *mp*.

Measure numbers 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54 are indicated at the bottom of the page.

MOTION

This page contains the orchestral score for the piece 'MOTION'. It features 38 staves, each representing a different instrument or section. The woodwind section includes Piccolo, Flutes 1 and 2, Oboes 1 and 2, English Horn, Clarinets 1 and 2, Bass Clarinet, Bassoons 1 and 2, Horns 1 through 4, Trumpets 1 through 3, Trombones 1 through 3, and Tuba. The brass section includes Timpans and Percussion. The string section includes Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score is written in 4/4 time and begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. Each staff contains musical notation with notes, rests, and slurs. The page is divided into four measures, labeled 55, 56, 57, and 58 at the bottom. A *G.P.* (Grand Finale) marking is present at the end of each staff in the fourth measure. The percussion part includes a *lc.* (cymbal) marking in the fourth measure.

MOTION

This musical score, titled "MOTION", is for a full orchestra and includes measures 59 through 68. The score is divided into several systems:

- Woodwinds:** Piccolo, Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, English Horn, Clarinet 1 & 2, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon 1 & 2, Horn 1, 2, & 3, Trumpet 1, 2, & 3, Trombone 1, 2, & 3, and Tuba.
- Brass:** Horns, Trumpets, Trombones, and Tuba.
- Strings:** Violin I & II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass.
- Percussion:** Timpani, Percussion (including bowed, Lv., and B.D.), and Cymbals.

Key performance instructions include dynamics such as *pp*, *ppp*, *mf*, *mp*, and *f*. The score also features specific articulation and phrasing markings, including "air sound" for brass instruments and "bowed" for percussion. The woodwind parts include notes with slurs and accents, while the string parts feature complex rhythmic patterns and slurs. The percussion part includes a "bowed" section and a "B.D." (Bass Drum) section.

The musical score is for a piece titled "MOTION". It is a full orchestral score, including parts for woodwinds, brass, percussion, and strings. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 69 to 77. The second system covers measures 78 to 86. The score includes a variety of dynamic markings such as *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*, and *f*. Performance instructions are provided for several instruments, including *col legno battuto* for strings and *con sord.* for trumpets. The percussion part includes a *Susp. Cym.* (suspended cymbal). The woodwind and brass parts feature complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The string parts are marked with *non div.* and include detailed bowing and playing techniques.

MOTION

G
Meno mosso

G
Meno mosso

G
Meno mosso

Picc.
 Fl. 1
 Fl. 2
 Ob. 1
 Ob. 2
 E. H.
 Cl. 1
 Cl. 2
 B. Cl.
 Bsn. 1
 Bsn. 2
 Hn. 1
 Hn. 2
 Hn. 3
 Hn. 4
 Tpt. 1
 Tpt. 2
 Tpt. 3
 Tbn. 1
 Tbn. 2
 B. Tbn.
 Tba.
 Timp.
 Perc.
 Vln. I
 Vln. II
 Vla.
 Vcl.
 Cb.

(imp. mallet)
 p
 f
 T-T
 mf
 Lv.
 Piatti
 f

sul pont.
 ord.
 tutti
 dim.
 f
 mf
 f
 p
 sul G
 unis.
 f
 pp
 non div.
 non div.
 non div.
 non div.
 non div.
 non div.

piz.
 tutti
 arco
 tutti
 tutti
 tutti
 non div.
 non div.

78
 79
 80
 81
 82
 83
 84

Picc. *pp*

E. H. *pp*

Cl. 1 *f* random notes

Bsn. 1 *mp* random notes *f* random notes

Bsn. 2 *pp* random notes

Hr. 1 *mf* random notes

Hr. 2 *mf* random notes

Hr. 3 *pp* *mf* random notes

Hr. 4 *mf* random notes

Tpt. 1 *p* random notes

Tpt. 2 *pp* *p* random notes

Tpt. 3 *f* random notes

B. Tbn. *ff* random notes

Tbn. *ff* random notes

Perc.

Vln. I *mp* *mf* *mp* *ppp* *gliss.*

Vln. II *ppp* *gliss.*

Vla. *ppp* *gliss.*

Vc. *f* *seagull effect sul A*

Ck. *pp* *ppp*

MOTION

This musical score, titled "MOTION", is for a large ensemble. It features woodwinds (Piccolo, Flutes 1 & 2, Oboes 1 & 2, Clarinets in Bb and C, Bassoon 1 & 2, Horns 1, 2, & 4, Trumpets 1 & 2, Trombones 1 & 2), strings (Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass), and Percussion (Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, Bells, Drums). The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 91-98) includes woodwinds, brass, and percussion. The second system (measures 91-98) includes strings and percussion. The score is marked with various dynamics (f, pp, p, fpp) and includes performance instructions such as "random notes", "sul tasto", "sul G gliss.", "direz.", "divi.", "unic.", and "B.D.". A section marker "I" is present at the beginning of the first system and above measure 96. The page number "19" is located at the top right.

Tempo primo
♩=76

MOTION

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The woodwind section (Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons) and brass section (Horns, Trumpets, Trombones) play sustained notes with dynamic markings ranging from *ff* to *p*. The strings (Violins, Viola, Cello) provide a rhythmic and harmonic foundation. The percussion part includes a snare drum and cymbals, with a 'lv.' (cymbal) marking. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 99 through 109 indicated at the bottom.

MOTION

This page of a musical score, numbered 21, features the section titled "MOTION". It contains 24 staves for various instruments: Percussion (Perc.), Flute 1 (Fl. 1), Flute 2 (Fl. 2), Oboe 1 (Ob. 1), Oboe 2 (Ob. 2), English Horn (E. H.), Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1), Clarinet 2 (Cl. 2), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Bassoon 1 (Bbn. 1), Bassoon 2 (Bbn. 2), Horn 1 (Hn. 1), Horn 2 (Hn. 2), Horn 3 (Hn. 3), Horn 4 (Hn. 4), Trumpet 1 (Tpt. 1), Trumpet 2 (Tpt. 2), Trumpet 3 (Tpt. 3), Trombone 1 (Tbn. 1), Trombone 2 (Tbn. 2), Bass Trombone (B. Tbn.), Tuba (Tba), Timpani (Timp), Percussion (Perc.), Violin 1 (Vln. I), Violin 2 (Vln. II), Viola (Vla), Violoncello (Vc), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The first two measures (110-111) contain musical notation for all instruments, including dynamics like *ff* and *f*, and performance instructions such as *non dim.* and *non dir.*. Measures 112 through 116 are mostly empty staves, indicating a period of rest or silence for the instruments. Measure numbers 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, and 116 are printed at the bottom of the page.