THE *SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO* (1988) BY

DAVID MASLANKA:

AN ANALYTIC AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE.

by

CAMILLE LOUISE OLIN

(Under the Direction of Kenneth Fischer)

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* by David Maslanka has come to the forefront of saxophone literature, with many university professors and graduate students aspiring to perform this extremely demanding work. His writing encompasses a range of traditional and modern elements. The traditional elements involved include the use of "classical" forms, a simple harmonic language, and the lyrical, vocal qualities of the saxophone. The contemporary elements include the use of extended techniques such as multiphonics, slap tongue, manipulation of pitch, extreme dynamic ranges, and the multitude of notes in the altissimo range. Therefore, a theoretical understanding of the musical roots of this composition, as well as a practical guide to approaching the performance techniques utilized, will be a valuable aid and resource for saxophonists wishing to approach this composition.

INDEX WORDS: David Maslanka, saxophone, performer's guide, extended techniques, altissimo fingerings.

THE *SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO* (1988) BY DAVID MASLANKA: AN ANALYTIC AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE.

by

CAMILLE OLIN

B. Mus. Perf., Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, Australia, 2000

M.M., The University of Georgia, 2003

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

of the

Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2006

THE *SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO* (1988) BY DAVID MASLANKA: AN ANALYTIC AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE.

by

CAMILLE OLIN

Major Professor: Kenneth Fischer

Committee: Adrian Childs
Angela Jones-Reus
D. Ray McClellan
Stephen Valdez

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank David Maslanka, first, for his important contribution to the saxophone repertoire, and second, for his time and effort in helping me to provide accurate and engaging information for this document. I would also like to thank my major professor, Dr. Kenneth Fischer, for all of his guidance, support, and encouragement throughout my degree; Dr. Adrian Childs for his guidance with my analyses, as well as the other members of my committee: Dr. Stephen Valdez, Dr. D. Ray McClellan and Ms. Angela Jones-Reus. I wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the North American Saxophone Alliance in granting permission to reproduce the musical excerpts. Finally I would like to thank my parents, and my close friends in both Australia and the United States of America. Without their assistance and support this project would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS……iv

LIST OF EXAMPLES……....vi

CHAPTER

I ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE……..…..1

II HARMONIC STRUCTURE AND UNIFYING FEATURES OF THE *SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO*…….…….....9

III THE HARMONIC LANGUAGE OF THE *SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO*…….…..…26

IV A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO THE *SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO*……...…38

V AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID MASLANKA……...…….…....58

VI CONCLUSIONS……101

BIBLIOGRAPHY……...…104

APPENDIX

SAXOPHONE FINGERING CHART……...…105

LIST OF EXAMPLES

CHAPTER II Page

Example 1. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 1-24. 10

Example 2. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 24-58. 11

Example 3. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 72-87. 12

Example 4. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 129-144. 14

Example 5. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 106-111. 18

Example 6. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm 113-114; mm. 116-117. 18-19

Example 7. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 31-38. 19

Example 8. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 40-41. 20

Example 9. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 63-64. 22

Example 10. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 84. 22

Example 11. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 34-38. 24

Example 12. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 71-77. 24

CHAPTER III

Example 13. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 68. 26

Example 14. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 56-60. 27

Example 15. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 285-299. 28

Example 16. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 71-72. 30

Example 17. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 14-19. 30

Example 18. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 28-33. 31

Example 19. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 49-56. 32

Example 20. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 92-99. 32

Example 21. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 61-62. 35

Example 22. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 8-10. 36

CHAPTER IV

Example 23. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 14-20. 39

Example 24. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 64-70. 40

Example 25. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 99-102. 41

Example 26. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 117-120. 42

Example 27. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 44-56. 43-44

Example 28. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 11-12. 44

Example 29. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 21-33. 45-46

Example 30. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 137-139. 46

Example 31. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 225-231. 47

Example 32. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 276-277. 48

Example 33. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 282-285. 48

Example 34. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 150-162. 49

Example 35. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 24-27. 50

Example 36. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 56-60. 50

Example 37. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 449-456. 51

Example 38. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 154-157. 51

Example 39. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 140-144. 52

Example 40. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 175-181. 54

Example 41. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 301-307. 54-55

Example 42. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 62-64. 56

Example 43. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 117-120. 56

Example 44. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 38-45. 57

CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The American composer, David Maslanka, has made a positive contribution to the literature of the saxophone. Born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1943, Maslanka was awarded the Bachelor of Music in Music Education in 1965 from the Oberlin College Conservatory. He studied composition with Joseph Wood, and traveled to the Salzburg Mozarteum in Austria for one year while obtaining this degree. He then attended Michigan State University from 1965 to 1971, studying theory with Paul Harder and composition with H. Owen Reed while earning the Master of Music and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. His works for winds, percussion, and wind symphony have become well known, being performed throughout the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia and Europe. He has received numerous grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts; the State University of New York Research Foundation; the Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music; and the American Society for Composers, Authors, and Publishers. Maslanka is listed in the *International Who's Who in Music*, and *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. He has served on the faculties of the State University College - Genesco (NY), Sarah Lawrence College (NY), New York University, and Kingsborough Community College (CUNY), and is a frequent guest composer and conductor at colleges and universities. Presently, Maslanka lives in Missoula, Montana, where he is a free-lance composer working solely by commission.

In an interview with saxophonist Russell Peterson, Maslanka said “Certain voices have been prominent in my work, why should I be writing for saxophone? I don’t know! I love the

qualities that the saxophones produce."[1] Many of his works feature the saxophone not only as part of the wind ensemble, but as a solo instrument in a chamber setting. These compositions include *Heaven to Clear When the Day did Close* for tenor saxophone and string quartet, *Mountain Roads* for saxophone quartet, the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano*, *Song Book* for alto saxophone and marimba, the *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble*, and *Hell's Gate* for three saxophones and symphonic wind ensemble. He has taken a great interest in the different colors, timbres, and effects that can be produced by the saxophone, utilizing performance techniques that include the use of the altissimo register, multiphonics, flutter tonguing, slap tonguing, and pitch alterations throughout his works. The *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* describes his compositional style as characterized by Romantic gestures, tonal language, and clearly articulated large-scale structures.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a performance guide and analytical study of the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* by David Maslanka. The researcher intends this document to provide a resource for performers, teachers, and musicians who are interested in the musical style and compositional approach of this composer.

Need for the Study

In recent years, the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* has come to the forefront of saxophone literature, with many university professors and graduate students aspiring to perform this extremely demanding work. Therefore, a theoretical understanding of the musical roots of

[1] Russell Peterson, "Interview with composer: David Maslanka," *Saxophone Symposium* (Fall 1999), 119.

this composition, as well as a practical guide to approaching the performance techniques utilized, will be a valuable aid and resource for saxophonists wishing to approach this composition.

Delimitations

The analytical tools applied to the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* include a modified Schenkerian approach in addition to a standard harmonic analysis. There are obvious tonal prolongations and important linear lines within the work, so the music has been reduced to Background and Foreground levels where appropriate, looking at relationships between structural and surface material. Non-functional harmony is evident throughout the work, while formal constructions are loosely related to "classic" or standard forms. The use of set-class analysis has been incorporated in the discussion of the use of referential collections.

Sub-problems

Questions that will be addressed in this study include:

1. What are the composer's musical and historical influences for the Sonata?
2. What compositional techniques are used?
3. What are the reasons for the use of traditional forms?
4. What large scale harmonic language is used?
5. What specific performance considerations are found in the work?

Definition of Terms

Style: A term used for the composer's manner of treating various elements that make up a composition – the overall form, melody, rhythm, harmony, instrumentation – as well as for the performer's manner of presenting a musical composition. The style of both composer and performer is influenced by many factors, personal and historical.[2]

Articulation: In performance, the characteristics of attack and delay of single tones or groups of tones and the means by which these characteristics are produced.[3]

Rhythm: The pattern of movement in time. In the widest sense, it is set beside the terms melody and harmony, and in that very general sense, rhythm covers all aspects of musical movement as ordered in time, as opposed to aspects of musical sound conceived as pitch (whether singly or in combination) and timbre (tone color).[4]

Tempo: The speed at which music is performed, i.e., the rate per unit of time of metrical pulses in performance.[5]

Meter: The pattern in which a steady succession of rhythmic pulses is organized; also termed time. Most works of Western tonal music are characterized by the regular recurrence of such patterns.[6]

Altissimo register: The range of pitches lying two octaves above the treble staff.[7]

Extended techniques: Techniques which fall outside the realm of traditional instrumental

---

[2] Christine Ammer, *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Music* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 426.
[3] Don Randel, *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), 55.
[4] Ibid., 700.
[5] Ibid., 838.
[6] Ibid., 489.
[7] Ibid., 31.

playing. In this study mulitphonics, quarter tones, feathered beaming, flutter-tongue, and slap tongue will be considered as extended techniques.[8]

Flutter-tonguing: The tongue is fluttered or trilled against the roof of the mouth, just behind the front teeth.[9]

Slap tonguing: A percussive sounding staccatissimo produced by placing the flat of the tongue on the reed, building up the air pressure in the oral cavity and releasing the reed quickly.[10]

Multiphonics: Two or more pitches sounded simultaneously on a single wind instrument.[11]

Pitch alteration: Altering the desired pitch of a note through manipulation of the lips or jaw following a diagramed notation.

Timbre changes: Changes made to the timbre of a single pitch on an instrument. On the saxophone it is accomplished with alternate fingerings.[12]

Methodology

This document is organized into six chapters. Chapter I is entitled "Organizational Plan and Review of Literature." Chapters II and III contain harmonic analysis covering the areas of form, harmonic language, rhythmic character, and melodic components. The score provided is written in concert pitch; therefore, analysis from the score will refer to concert pitch only. The analysis discussed will be drawn from the score published by the North American Saxophone Alliance, along with accompanying graphs that are based on Schenkerian models, with the intent

[8] John Stephen Bleuel, "A Descriptive Catalog of the Solo and Chamber Saxophone Music of Lucie Robert" (DMA diss., University of Georgia, 1998), 5.
[9] Randel, 863.
[10] Ronald L. Caravan, *Paradigms I* for Alto Saxophone: 10 Graded Compositions Using Contemporary Techniques, (Medfield MA: Dorn Publications, 1976), ii.
[11] Randel, 515.
[12] Jennifer Lynn Turpin, "A Descriptive Catalog of the Solo and Chamber Works for the Saxophone by Jindrich Feld" (DMA diss., University of Georgia, 2000), 5.

of drawing out key areas, harmonic relations, harmonic prolongations and thematic structure. The graphs provided have no registeral preference, and are presented in a way so that motivic, linear, and harmonic relationships can be viewed clearly. Enharmonic equivalence is also assumed when transferring elements from the score to the graphs. The author recommends that the reader obtains a copy of the piano score to use as an additional aid in reference to these two chapters. Chapter II is entitled "The Harmonic Structure of the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano,*" and Chapter III, "The Harmonic Language of the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano.*" Chapter IV, is entitled "A Performer's Guide to the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano*," presented as a separate chapter discussing the performance issues presented for the saxophone soloist. This includes recommendations for the approach to tempo, phrasing, dynamics, and other interpretive concerns, as well as practical suggestions for producing the required extended techniques. When discussing the specific pitches of the saxophone line of the sonata for this chapter, the written pitch will be provided, with suggested fingerings underneath. A corresponding fingering chart is available in the Appendix showing the appropriate keys of the saxophone. Chapter V, entitled "An Interview with David Maslanka," includes a transcription of several interviews that took place with the composer at his home in Missoula, Montana, during February 21-23, 2007. The final chapter, entitled "Conclusions," contains a final summary of the document.

In addition to a general harmonic analysis, the analytical tools utilized in this document include a modified Schenkerian approach to all of the movements, and set-class analysis when appropriate. The essence of the theoretical analysis will examines how Maslanka establishes tonality, and what his tonal language sounds like.

The researcher corresponded with the composer via email and telephone, and traveled to Montana to interview Maslanka concerning the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano*. Points of discussion included the compositional techniques used, historical influences regarding form and style, and performance suggestions for the work. For accuracy, all correspondence with the composer pertaining to this document was recorded.

Review of Literature

"An analysis of David Maslanka's *Concerto for Piano, Winds, and Percussion*" is a doctoral dissertation completed by John Patrick Brooks in 1995 at the University of Cincinnati. The study examines aspects of formal structure, harmony, rhythm, melodic content, and instrumentation techniques, along with providing relevant biographical information, a catalogue overview, and an explanation of the analytical techniques used.

A second doctoral dissertation on Maslanka by Michael Lynn Varner from the University of North Texas is entitled "An examination of David Maslanka's marimba concerti: *Arcadia II for Marimba and Percussion Ensemble* and *Concerto for Marimba and Band*, a lecture recital, together with three recitals of selected works of K. Abe, M. Burritt, J. Serry, and others (Keiko Abe, Michael Burritt, John Serry)." This study examines compositional techniques, aspects of formal structure, tonality, melodic content, and marimba technique found in the two works mentioned above.

There are two doctoral documents from the University of Georgia written by saxophonists that helped influence the organization of my research. John Bleuel's DMA document completed in 1998 is "A Descriptive Catalog of the Solo and Chamber Saxophone

Music of Lucie Robert" while Jennifer Lynn Turpen's document "A Descriptive Catalog of the Solo and Chamber Works for the Saxophone by Jindrich Feld" was written in 2000.

An interview with David Maslanka by Russell Peterson was published in the *Saxophone Symposium* in Fall, 1999, after the world premiere of his first saxophone quartet. The discussion includes information on *Mountain Roads*, *Song Book*, and the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* along with questions concerning his compositional process, musical inspirations, ideas, and philosophy.

The literature mentioned above assisted the organizational plan of my document in many ways. The inclusion of a chapter devoted entirely to the performance practice techniques utilized within a work was adapted from Jill L. Schneider. The dissertations written on David Maslanka's works included an interview with the composer as a separate chapter, which I also applied to my structure.

CHAPTER II

HARMONIC STRUCTURE AND UNIFYING FEATURES OF THE *SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO*

The analysis of David Maslanka's *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* (1988) reveals several challenges and questions regarding the formal structure, relationship of key areas, and harmonic function.

After an initial viewing of the score, along with the familiarity of playing the piece, it is obvious that the formal structure of the first movement is a large-scale ternary form with a coda. The first challenge is determining the type of ternary form this piece was in, and then dividing the music into sections that conform to a formal structure familiar to theoretical practices. The work may be divided into four sections as follows:

Section A – Measures 1-87

Section B – Measures 88-128

Section A' – Measures 129-149

Coda – Measures 150-197

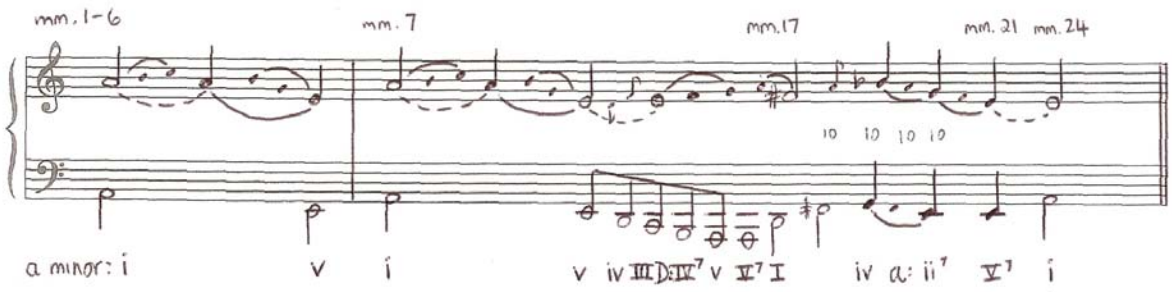
By dividing the work in this manner, the formal structure applied is a sonata form with an extended coda. Section A could be described as the exposition; Section B is the development; Section A' is the recapitulation. By viewing the thematic material alone, the first movement conforms to our expectations of Sonata form; however, harmonically, our preconceived notions of this formal structure are challenged and need to be addressed.

The first challenge to present itself is contained within the exposition. A sonata form exposition usually contains the first theme group, presented in the tonic, followed by a transition

into the second theme group in a related key, usually in the dominant or relative major. A closing theme and/or codetta is usually used as a conclusion for the exposition reinforcing the new key area before a move into the development. In this particular sonata however, due to the unconventional use of key areas and the textural changes, there could be an argument whether there are two or three subject groups present in the opening section.

The first view presented will contain three thematic groups. Theme group one presented in measures 3-24 is in the tonic key area of A minor. This is supported in Example 1 through the movement of i-V-i in the first seven measures of the lower voice, while the upper line prolongs the tonic chord through an arpeggiation from A-C-A-E. There is a brief tonicization of D major in measure 17 with an imperfect authentic cadence, moving to the pivotal E-dominant seventh chord in measure 21 to conclude the first thematic group with an imperfect authentic cadence in A minor at measure 24.

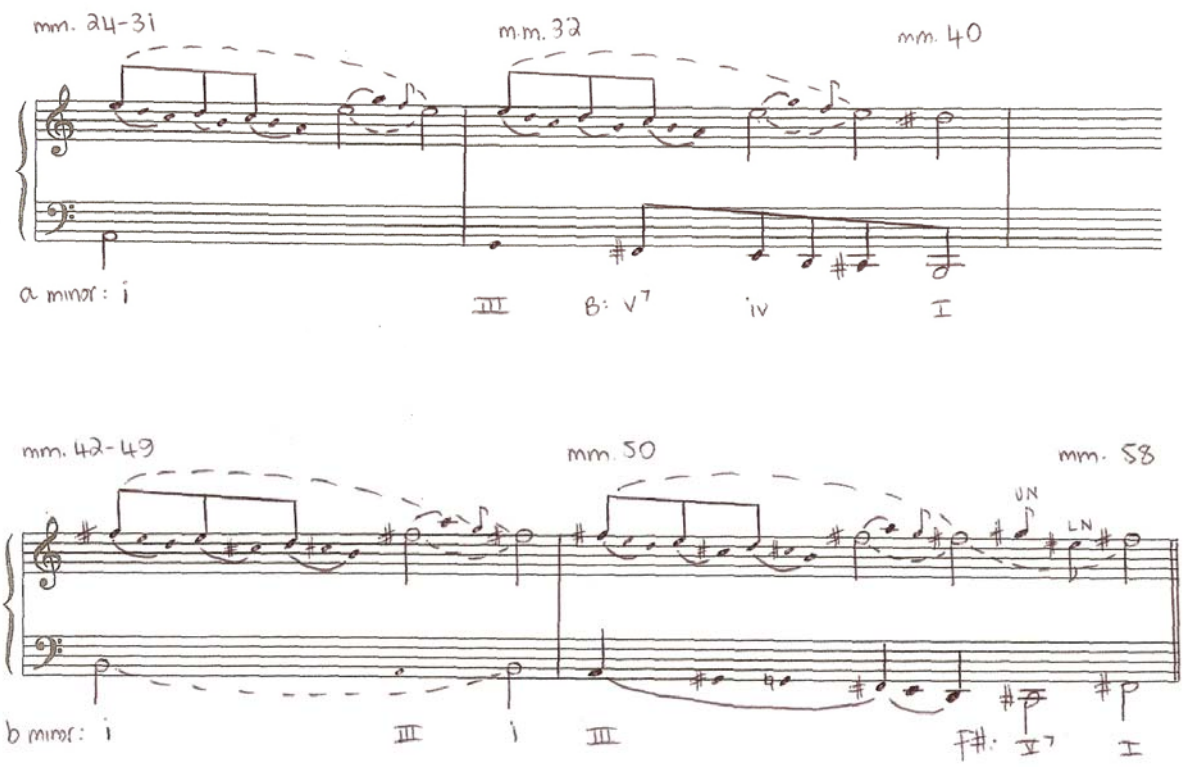
Example 1. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 1-24.



It is here that the second theme group begins with the textural change of an arpeggiated bass line outlining the A-minor triad. The melodic line has also changed, moving in descending thirds from E-C, D-B, C-A before moving to the fifth scale degree of A minor. This figure is

repeated again in the top voice at measure 32, however there is a modulation to B minor outlined by a descending five-note linear progression beginning on F-sharp moving down to B, to reinforce the establishment of a new key area. The melodic material is presented a whole step higher in B minor at measure 42, with a perfect authentic cadence in F-sharp major signaling the end of the second thematic group. These elements are supported through an analysis presented in Example 2.

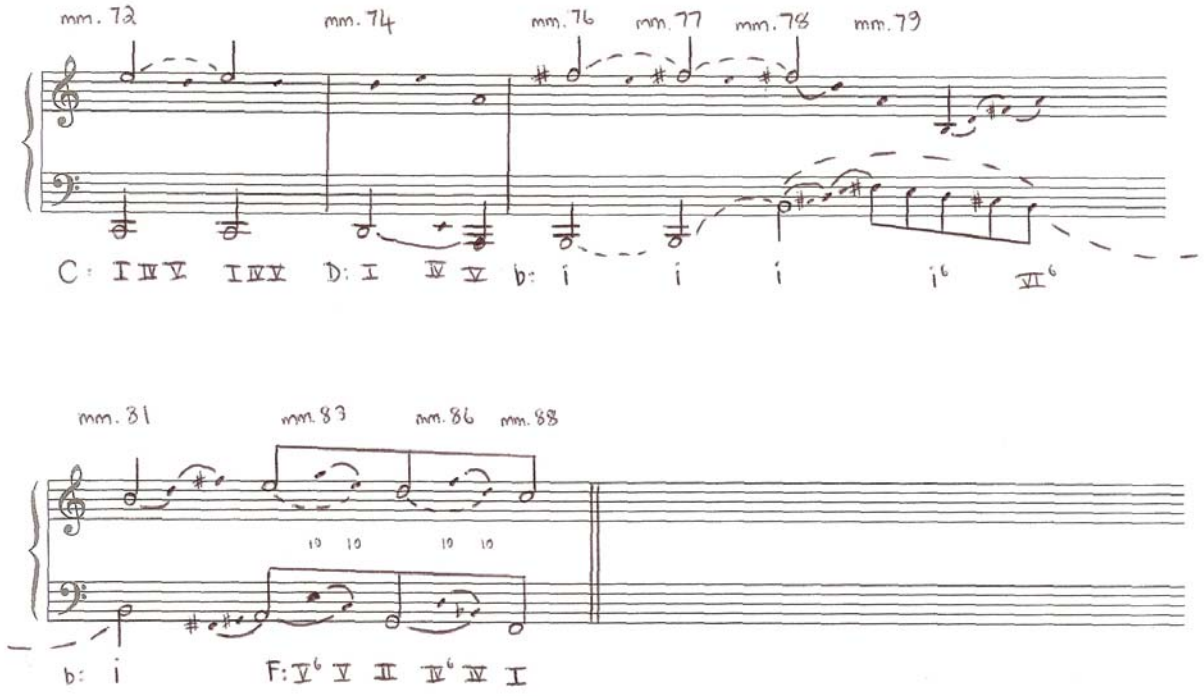
Example 2. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 24-58.



An explosive transitional passage occurs at measure 60 bringing us to the closing theme group at measure 72 in C major, the relative major of the original key of A minor that was stated at the beginning of the exposition. Five measures into the closing theme the key area of B minor

is briefly explored once again, along with a hint of A major before concluding with a plagal cadence in F major to lead into the development section. See example 3.

Example 3. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 72-87.



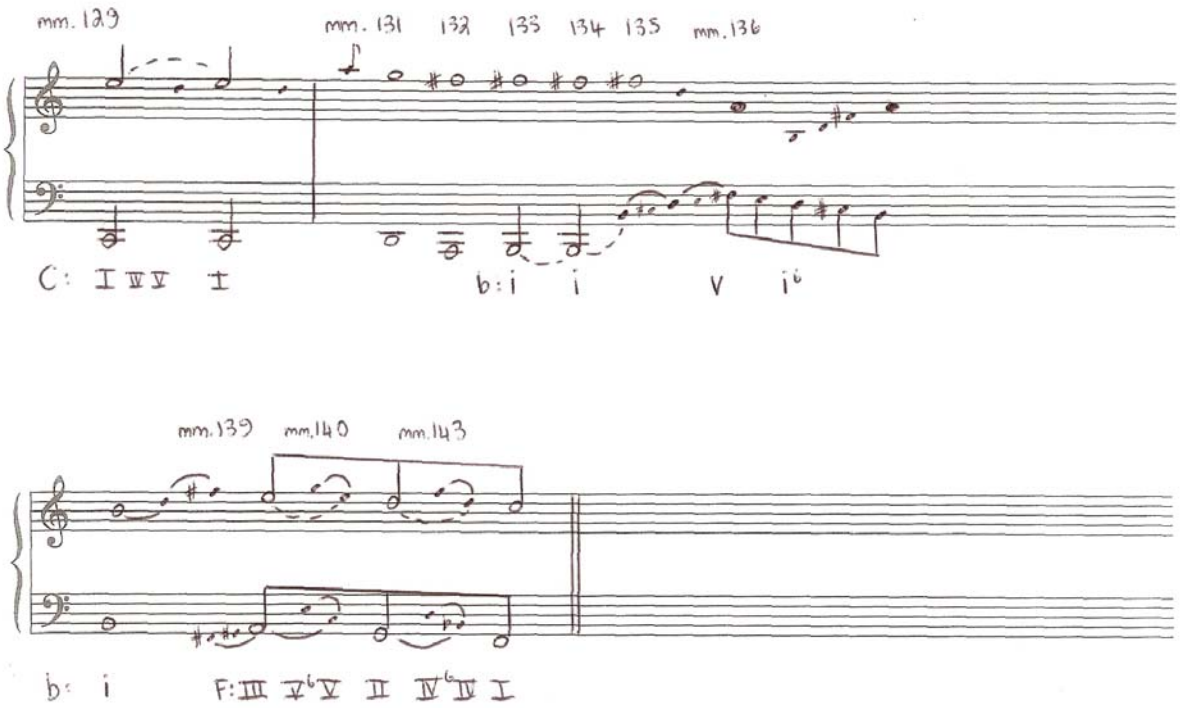
Alternatively, the exposition could be viewed as only having two thematic areas. Theme group one could be in measures 3-58, beginning in A minor and moving to B minor before concluding with a perfect authentic cadence in F-sharp major with a transition leading into the second theme group in C major at measure 72. Although the alternative is linked by a transitory passage that is expected in a sonata form movement, this is still not harmonically supported in the traditional understanding of the formal structure as there should be a modulation at the end of the first theme into the relative major. Although the change of key areas between the two theme groups fits harmonic expectations better, the two theme groups would formally be very imbalanced with this viewpoint.

The next obvious discrepancy is contained with the recapitulation. A typical recapitulation within a sonata form movement will contain a restatement of the previous thematic groups, with the only difference being that the second theme group is now presented in the tonic key area. The problem within this particular sonata is that the first theme of the exposition does not return at the recapitulation. Instead, the closing theme (from the first view) is presented at the recapitulation in measure 129. In a conversation with the composer, the author questioned if there was a reason as to why the recapitulation began with the closing theme material, with the answer being "it got to be there because of its nature, which is a very intense, very emotional kind of arrival point; very strong, very bright, major arrival point. And that seemed to be what the piece needed at that point to complete the energy that had been accumulated by the previous passage work."[13]

Melodically, the first half of the closing theme at measure 129 is presented as a variation on the original, although the harmonic structure and texture in the accompaniment exists as it did before. The brief exploration of B minor leads back into the second half of the theme that is almost an exact repetition as it existed in the exposition, beginning in C major and moving to F major at the conclusion of the theme. The pedal note of F then transitions into the coda at measure 150. At this point however, another peculiarity comes to the fore. The melody from the second thematic group is featured in the key of C minor over a harmonically static accompaniment. Typically, this material would be expected to return before the closing theme, but in this instance it appears as an afterthought in the coda. Another discrepancy is that the coda would usually reiterate the cadence of the tonic key area, but instead, this coda is preparing us harmonically for what is to come in the second movement of the work. See Example 4.

[13] David Maslanka, interview by Camille Olin, 21-22 February 2007, Missoula, 77.

Example 4. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm.129-144.



The second movement of the *Sonata* is described by the composer as an undisclosed song form. The music may be divided into three large sections as follows:

Section One – Measures 1-33

Section Two – Measures 34-101

Section Three – Measures 101-end.

The thematic material presented in the opening and closing sections of this movement are similar, and could thus be labeled as A. The saxophone line exists as a very free, expressive melody, while the accompaniment is providing the harmonic foundations. The first A section begins in C minor, passing through B-flat minor before reestablishing itself with a V-i cadence in C minor at measure 12. The harmonies continue to be ambiguous, concluding the opening material with a complex dominant of G minor, resolving to the new tonic in measure 34.

The middle section of the second movement opens with a restatement of the first theme of the first movement, explored further with the addition of the right hand of the piano and the saxophone doubling this melody. The tonality of C minor is firmly established in measures 63-83, before a change into A-flat major at measure 84. The C minor tonality is grounded at measure 101 with the return of the opening statements from the second movement.

In the program notes provided for the *Sonata*, David Maslanka refers to the third movement as "a huge rondo form – ABACA and coda."[14] The following divisions can be made in the movement:

Section A – measures 1-99

Section B – measures 100-144

Section A – measures 145-261

Section C – measures 262-312

Section A – measures 319-467

Rondo form typically features a recurring theme in the tonic key area between intervening episodes of contrasting thematic material. To further complicate the formal structure, Section A may be divided into three parts, resembling a ternary form structure consisting of a-b-a'. The first a section in measures 1-33 contains two thematic ideas. The first is presented in C minor with many chromatic alterations in a contrapuntal texture, before moving to a homophonic texture, with a long, drawn out melody in the saxophone over a harmonically static accompaniment. A transitory passage occurs with a change to A-flat major in measure 26, leading into the b section. There is a significant textural change in the b section in measures 34-59. This is based on the same thematic material as the a section, but presented as canonic

[14] David Maslanka, *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* Program Notes; available from http://www.davidmaslanka.com/display.asp?Piece_ID64; Internet; accessed 26 February 2007.

imitation between the saxophone and piano lines. The textural change is apparent enough to warrant a divide in formal structure. From measures 60-99 the original material from the beginning of the movement is presented in a similar fashion, also stated in the key area of C-minor.

Section B of the rondo form occurs at measure 100. The harmonic foundation established is B-flat major, with a dominant pedal in the middle line of the accompaniment. The melody presented by the saxophone in measure 110 is doubled by the right hand of the piano, leading to a transitory passage in measure 134, ending in A minor.

At measure 145, theme A returns, however, this time it is stated in the parallel major of C. The structure of the theme group is also presented in a ternary form as before, governed by a canonic interlude as the middle section in measures 216-238.

Section C is introduced at measure 262. Although harmonically ambiguous, there is the presence of several important pedal tones, moving from C in measure 265, to B-flat at the end of measure 269, moving back to C two measures later, before arriving on A-flat in measure 274. This tone then acts as a neighboring tone transitioning to the tonality of G in measure 277, acting as the dominant of a C tonality in measure 286 where the familiar static accompaniment figure is presented once again. A retransition occurs at measure 313 serving as a link back to the concluding statement of A in the rondo form movement.

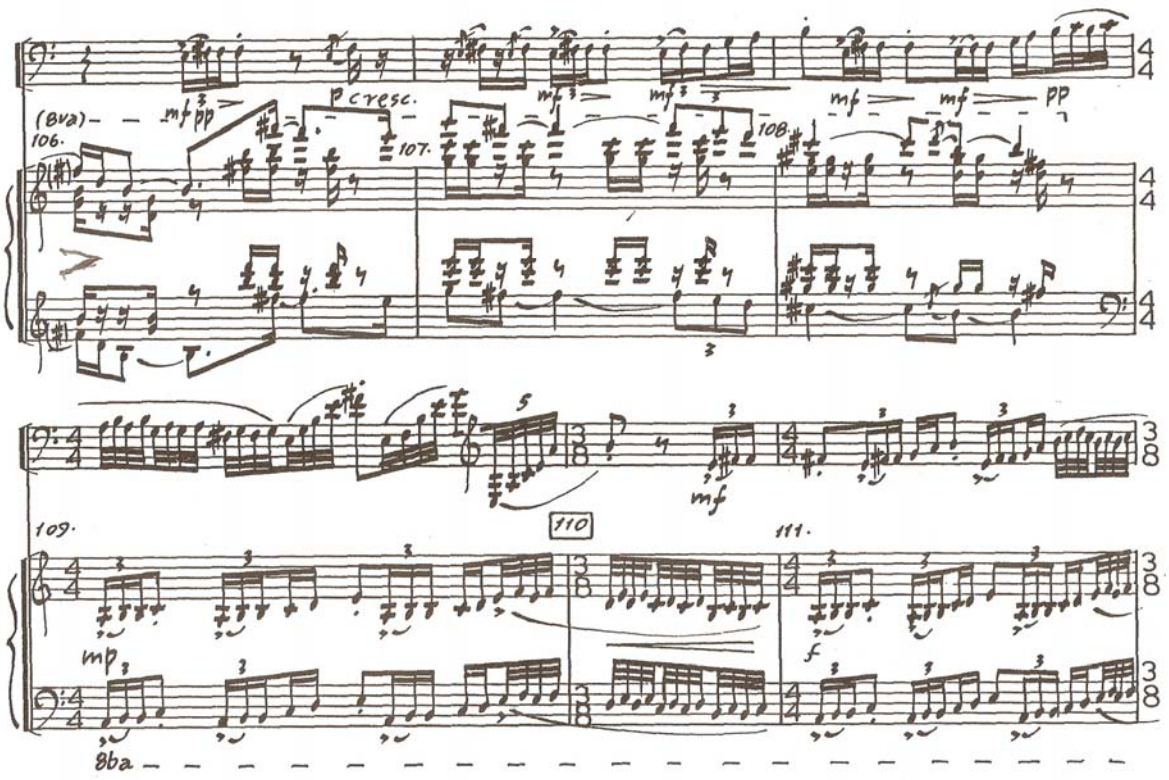
The final A section states the original thematic material in a similar fashion to the beginning, only this time there are changes with the dynamic levels. The ternary structure of a-b-a' is still present, although the statement of a' is extended much further, eventually bringing the piece to a close. This is accomplished by using the same drawn out saxophone melody accompanied by the static piano lines, and a change to the parallel major of C in measure 400.

Harmonically, the figure gradually descends traveling through a variety of keys, eventually losing momentum rhythmically with interruptions of silence, before concluding with a single cluster of notes each a half step apart, based on B-sharp, the enharmonic equivalent of C.

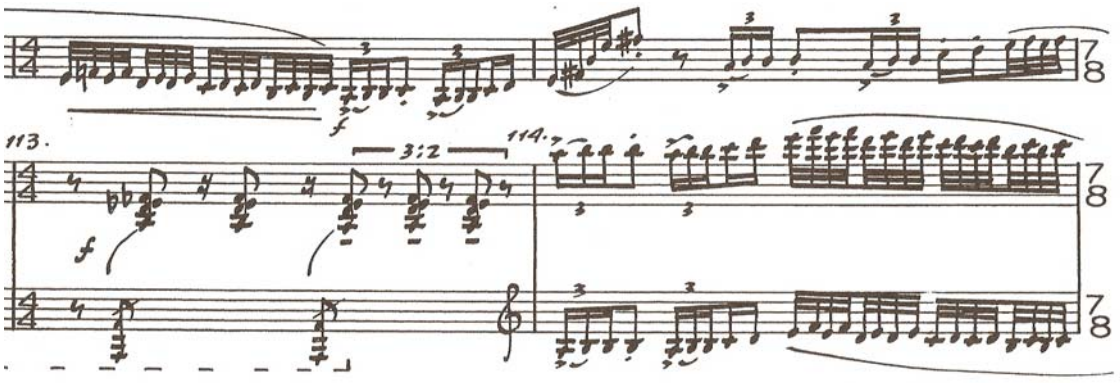
When discussing the structure of the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano*, it is also appropriate to recognize common traits used by the Maslanka in his compositional style. These traits include the use of imitation, the structure of transitional passages, the cyclic use of themes, and the emphasis on structural thirds at a harmonic level.

The use of canonic imitation, mentioned briefly in earlier discussion, is an important compositional tool that delineates structure within the *Sonata.* The first use of canonic imitation appears in the development of the first movement. The saxophone introduces the subject material on the second beat of measure 107, the piano beginning with the same subject a fourth higher and five beats later in measure 109. The next instance brings the concurrence of imitation closer together, with the saxophone beginning on the last eighth note of measure 110, and the piano stating the subject a fifth lower only one eighth-note behind. See Example 5. In measure 114, the roles of the saxophonist and pianist are reversed, with the piano introducing the subject on the first beat, while the saxophone imitates at the octave one and a half beats later. The gap is further reduced so that the two parts are only one eighth note apart in measure 116 before the lines move into homogenous material. This can be viewed in Example 6.

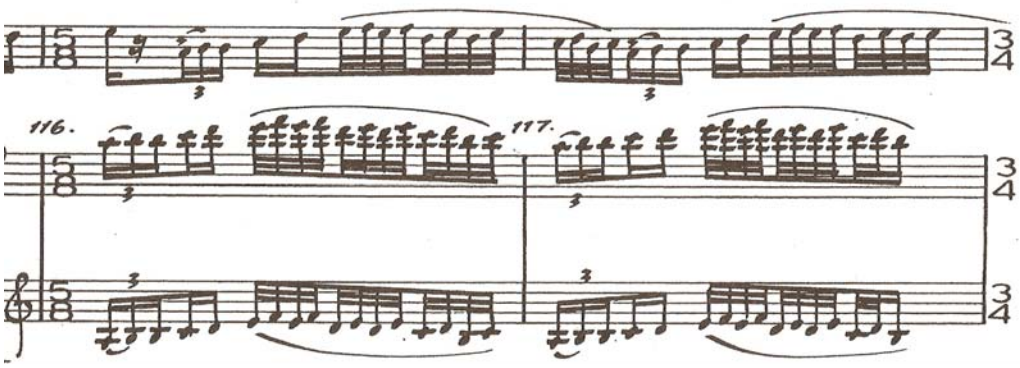
Example 5. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 106-111. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



Example 6. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 113-114; mm. 116-117. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

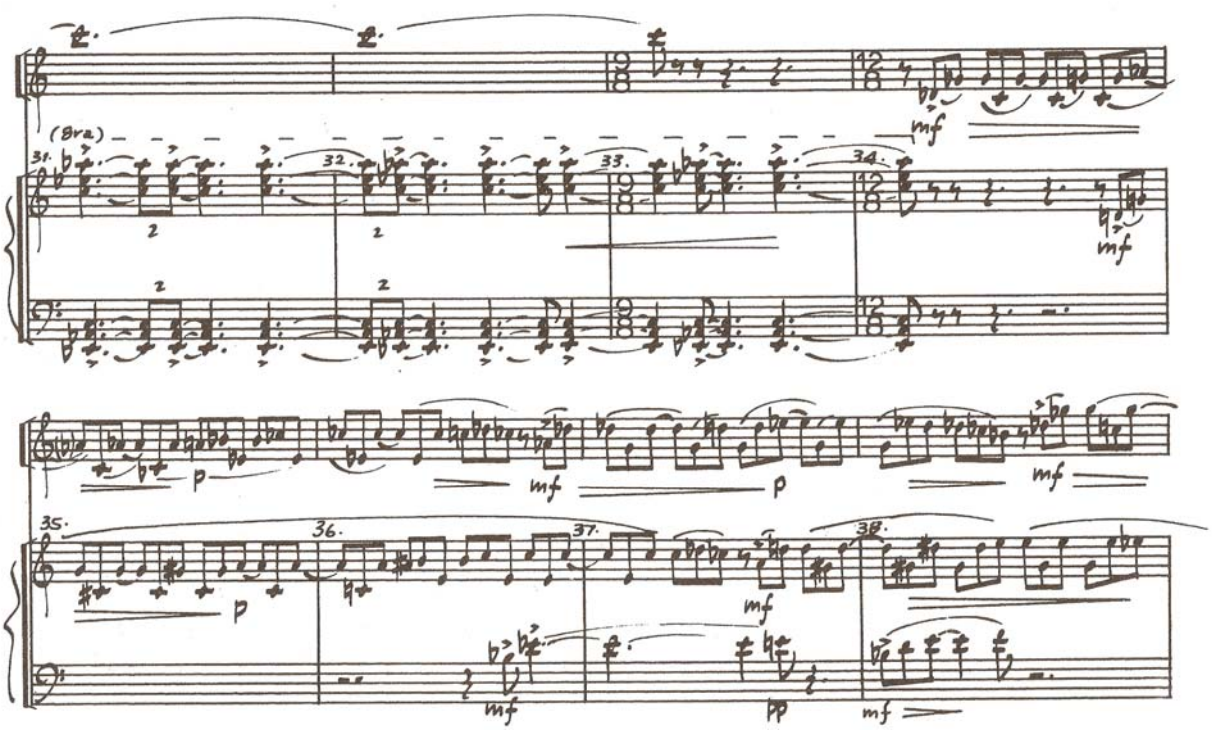


(Continued on next page)



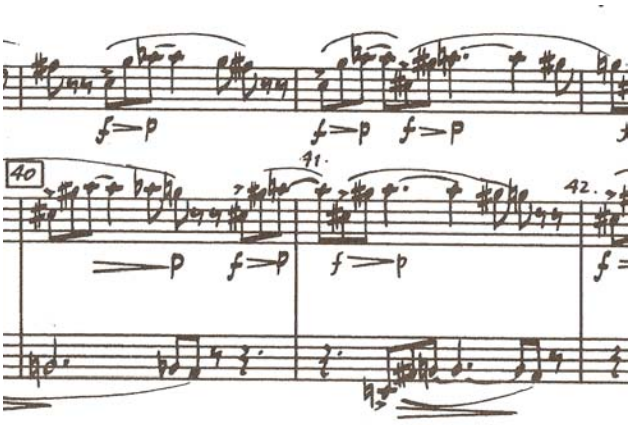
Theme Group One of the third movement also features canonic imitation as a compositional tool defining structure. The subject material is introduced by the saxophone in measure 34, imitated by the right hand of the piano three beats later and melodically a half step higher. See Example 7.

Example 7. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 31-38. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



A slight alteration in the accompaniment brings the piano to the fore in measure 40, with the saxophone in imitation only one beat behind. The imitation continues at the same melodic distance of a half step though, before the lines develop into their own entity. See Example 8.

Example 8. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 40-41. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



Canonic imitation is also utilized in the third section of the third movement with the introduction of a new theme in measures 216/217. The subject is four measures long, outlining the key areas of C major and A-flat major for two measures respectively. In measure 221 the piano states the fugue subject for a second time in C major. When it moves to A-flat major in the latter half of the statement, the saxophone begins in C major so the two tonalities exist equally through the duration of this passage.

The final use of canonic imitation occurs in the concluding statement of A in the third movement. This material is presented exactly as it was at the beginning, creating a ternary form division within Section A.

Another compositional trend that is apparent in the *Sonata* is the use of the saxophone alone in transitions between large structural segments. The first instance occurs in measure 56 of the second movement, where tremolos are incorporated into the saxophone line, providing harmonic movement when the pianist drops out in measure 58. The saxophone continues by itself for five measures before the piano reenters and the tonality of C minor is established once again.

Measure 101 of the final of the second movement also features the saxophone alone, recalling the melodic ideas originally stated at the beginning of the movement in a contemplative way.

There are three instances in the third movement where the solo saxophone is used as the transitional tool between sections. At measure 96, the saxophone sustains a concert F pitch for two measures by itself, leading directly into the B section where the pitch of F is sustained functioning as a pedal tone as the dominant of B-flat major.

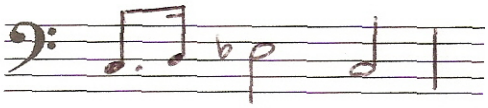
The C Section beginning at measure 262 opens with the solo saxophone line which is joined by the accompaniment three measures later with thick harmonies. The final occurrence of the saxophone alone is from measures 313-318, in the retransition to the final statement of theme group one.

The cyclic use of themes is explored in multiple places within the *Sonata.* The first occurrence is in the B section of the second movement. The first theme of the first movement is expressed in the bass line of the accompaniment in measure 34, doubled by the right hand of the piano and later by the saxophone in measure 38. This theme is presented initially in G minor, then A minor when the saxophone joins in, moving to C-sharp minor in measure 44. At measure 63 of the second movement, another important motive appears in the bass line, originally from

the closing theme of the first movement. The rhythmic motion includes a dotted rhythm and the ascent of a minor third melodically. It is also reminiscent of the first theme through this melodic ascent. See Example 9. This bass line motive also appears in the second movement at measures 71, 84, 85, and as a sequence in measures 92-99. See Example 10.

Example 9. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt 2, mm. 63-64.

Example 10. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 84.



The C section of the third movement also contains cyclic elements. The accompanying figure in measures 278 and 280 is based on the motive previously stated by the saxophone in the second movement at measure 24. The rhythms here are identical to the original statement, as well as the stepwise melodic ascent and descent of a minor third.

The relationship of thirds at a structural harmonic level is also apparent throughout the *Sonata.* In measure 42 of the first movement, there is a restatement of the second theme in B minor. Eight measures later, the same melodic material is reproduced, yet the supporting harmonies have changed to D major. The end of the second theme concludes in the key area of F-sharp major, thus outlining an arpeggiation of B, D and F-sharp in the bass structure (refer to Example 2).

When reducing the notes of the first theme of the first movement, it is apparent that the skeletal structure is based on thirds. The melodic voice ascends from A to C through the passing tone of B, outlining the A-minor harmony, before moving in a downward motion of thirds through the E-minor chord, acting as the dominant (refer to Example 1).

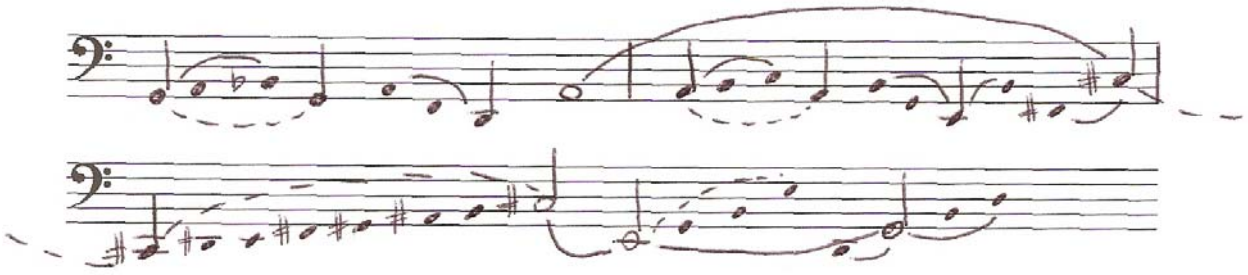
This thematic material also appears in the second movement of the *Sonata* occurring in the bass line of the accompaniment at measure 34. The figure travels through the key areas of G minor, A minor and C-sharp minor, doubled by the top voice of the right hand of the piano and then by the saxophone in measure 38.

The third relationships are even more apparent in the second theme of the first movement at measure 24. The top voice moves from E down to A, through an arpeggiation of thirds, once again outlining the A minor tonality. Toward the end of the phrase, there is also the movement of a third from E to G and back to E through the passing tone of F. In measure 42, the theme is transposed into B minor, treated in a similar fashion to what has preceded it (refer to Example 2).

The third theme of the first movement reveals the motion of a third in the bass line in measure 78. Paired with a distinctive rhythm, this figure becomes an important compositional tool used to support the harmonic foundation set in the development and further on in the second and third movements.

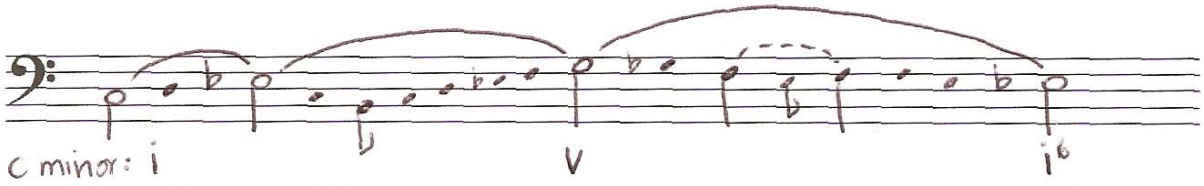
The middle section of the second movement at measure 34 is where the first theme of the sonata form movement is heard. Although beginning in G minor, the following statements of A minor, to C-sharp minor, to E minor and finally back to G major in measure 47 also outline the harmonic leap of thirds. See Example 11 for a bass line reduction outlining this movement.

Example 11. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 34-38.



The next significant third relationship occurs after measure 71. It is at this point that the key of C minor is clearly reestablished with the arpeggiation of thirds outlined in the bass reduction in Example 12. In measure 86, there is a move to A-flat major, a third below C, with the opening melodic material returning in measure 101, bringing with it the shift back to C minor, also a leap of a third.

Example 12. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 71-77.



The relationship of C minor and A-flat major is further explored in the third movement. Maslanka himself describes the use of the two keys as a primary relationship: "a fascination with a particular sound that keeps coming up and up again in my music."[15] Section A of the third movement begins in C minor, shifting to A-flat major at measure 26 and remaining for eight

[15] David Maslanka, interview by Camille Olin, 21-22 February 2007, Missoula, 92.

measures as a transition into the imitative section. As mentioned before, the new theme introduced at measure 216 also displays a prominent relationship between these two key areas.

Harmonic structure in the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* is demonstrated in many ways. Through a harmonic and thematic analysis, formal divisions are perceived in each movement, producing familiar formal constructions such as sonata form, song form and rondo form. Compositional tools such as the use of imitative polyphony, the structure of transitions, the cyclic use of themes, and the use of structural third relationships also contribute to unifying the work as a whole.

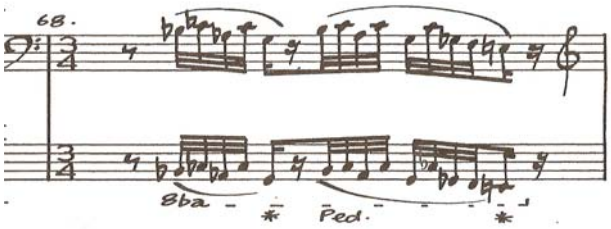
CHAPTER III

THE HARMONIC LANGUAGE OF THE *SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO*

A discussion of the harmonic language in the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* encompasses a range of musical concepts, including the use of third relationships motivically, cadential structures, prolongational methods, and references to octatonic collections within the composition. In general, the quality of Maslanka's harmonic language is based on thirds: through the use of triads, seventh chords, stacked minor thirds, and major/minor sonorities throughout the piece. A thorough analysis of the *Sonata* reveals a fascination that lies with the relationship of thirds within the entire work. While Chapter II demonstrated the pervasiveness of thirds as structural elements, they also saturate the melodic and harmonic surface of the *Sonata*, forming a key building block of the basic harmonic language.

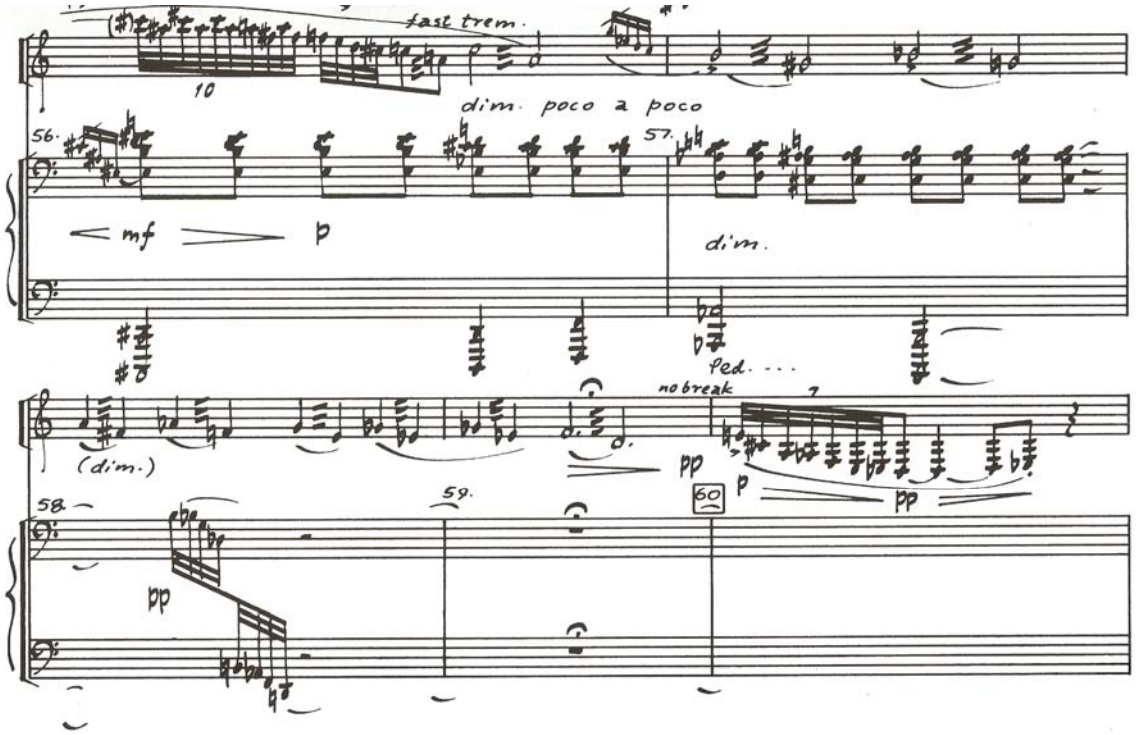
An example of the surface manifestation of thirds is contained within the accompaniment of the first movement at measure 68 in Example 13. There is a descending motion of thirds occurring on each eighth note of the measure, from B-flat to G (repeated) before finally moving to E. This passage also appears before the recapitulation at measure 125.

Example 13. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 68. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



The following excerpt in measure 56 of the second movement contains melodic thirds in the form of a tremolo in the saxophone line. See Example 14.

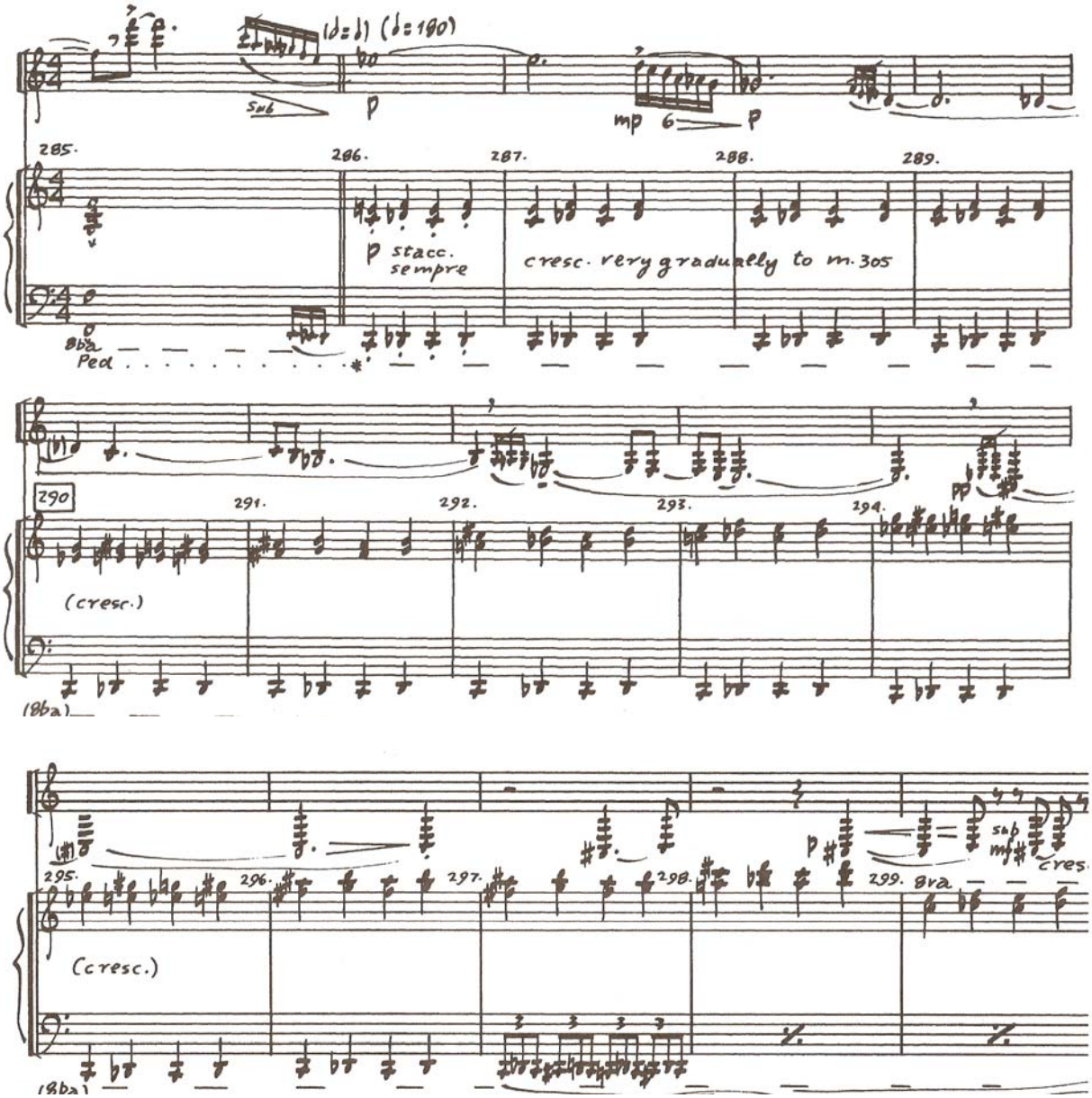
Example 14. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 56-60. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



Beyond the basic tertian harmony of the piece, thirds also structure some of the more complex and chromatic harmonies. The following example from the third movement of the sonata reveals interesting melodic and harmonic surface patterns related by thirds. The saxophone line in measures 286-295 contains a series of melodic thirds, moving from E-flat in measure 286, followed by G-flat two measures later, moving to D a third below at the end of the measure, continuing in a descending motion to B-flat, G-flat, E and finally resting on C-sharp at the end of measure 294. The melodic succession of thirds forces a succession of triads in the

accompaniment also related by thirds. The notes of the right hand of the piano line ascend in thirds each measure beginning in measure 290 until measure 300 while the left hand essentially has a pedal-tone function. See Example 15.

Example 15. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 285-299 . Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



Another example where motivic thirds are utilized is in the third section of the third movement at measures 216/217. The canonic subject here is not only based on thirds melodically, but also harmonically with a shift switching back and forth between C major and A-flat major in the saxophone and piano lines.

The cadential structures of phrases in the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* reveal a move away from the expectations of a "classical" theoretical perspective. Although the composer often uses progressions which move from dominant to tonic, it is also common to see the use of plagal cadences in large cadential structures. The closing theme of the exposition of the first movement concludes with a plagal cadence in F-major in measure 86-87, transitioning into the development.

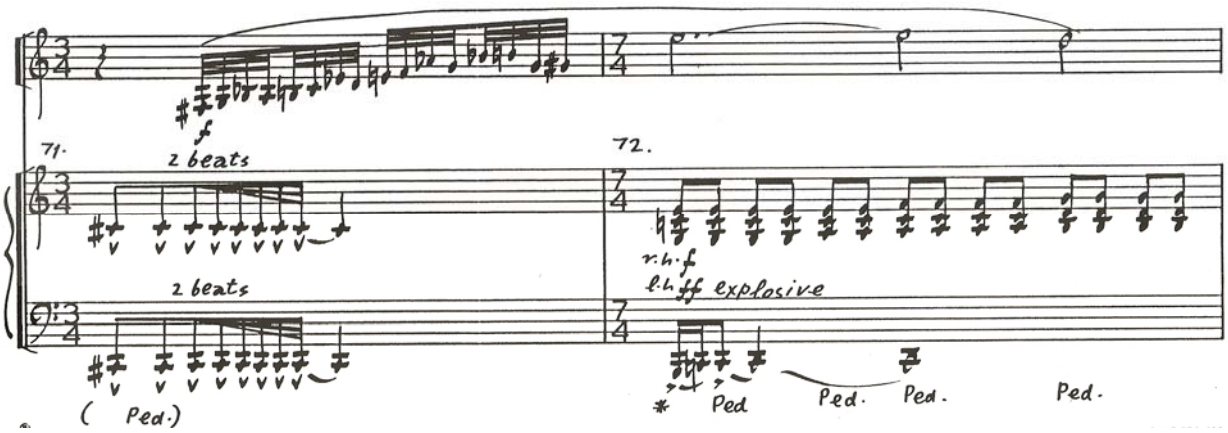
The next use of the plagal cadence can be seen at the end of the recapitulation moving into the coda. In measures 140-142 there is the movement from C major to G major, immediately followed by B-flat major to F major. The single repeated tone of F is then resolved to the bass tone of C through the motion of a fourth in measure 150.

The plagal cadence is consistently used in the B section of the second movement with the phrase beginning at measure 34. In measures 36-37, there is a cadence from D minor to A minor; in measures 40-41, there is a cadence from E minor to B minor; and the following two measures move from F-sharp minor to C-sharp minor.

A common trend noted within this piece is the use of parsimonious voice leading as a vehicle for changing from one tonality to another. Often, half-step motions serve as a link between two key areas. An occurrence of this type of progression is noted in the following excerpt. At measure 71 in the first movement, the single note of C-sharp is repeatedly played in

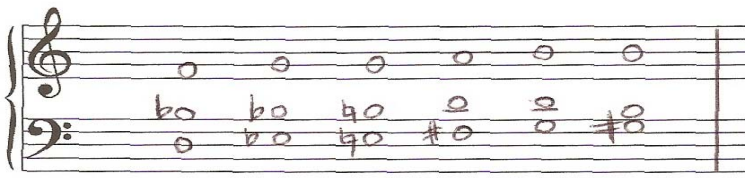
the piano, finally resolving a half step downwards into a C major tonality. This also occurs during the retransition into the recapitulation, in exactly the same way. See Example 16.

Example 16. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 71-72. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



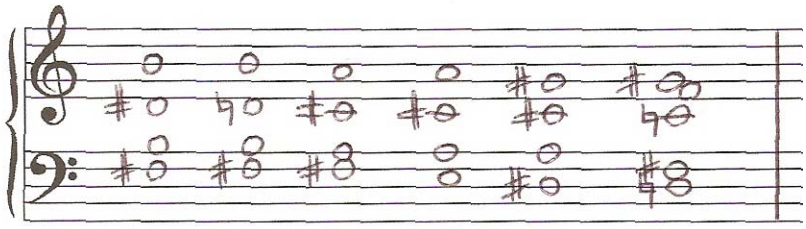
Parsimonious voice leading is frequently utilized in the accompanying lines of the second movement. The progression featured in measures 14-19 displays the retention of common tones in the middle and upper voices of the piano while the lowest notes are ascending in step-wise motion. Example 17 is a reduction of the score to clearly show the movement in each voice.

Example 17. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 14-19.



The predominance of stepwise voice leading can also be seen in measures 28-33 in both the saxophone and piano parts. Example 18 displays this movement in a four voice texture.

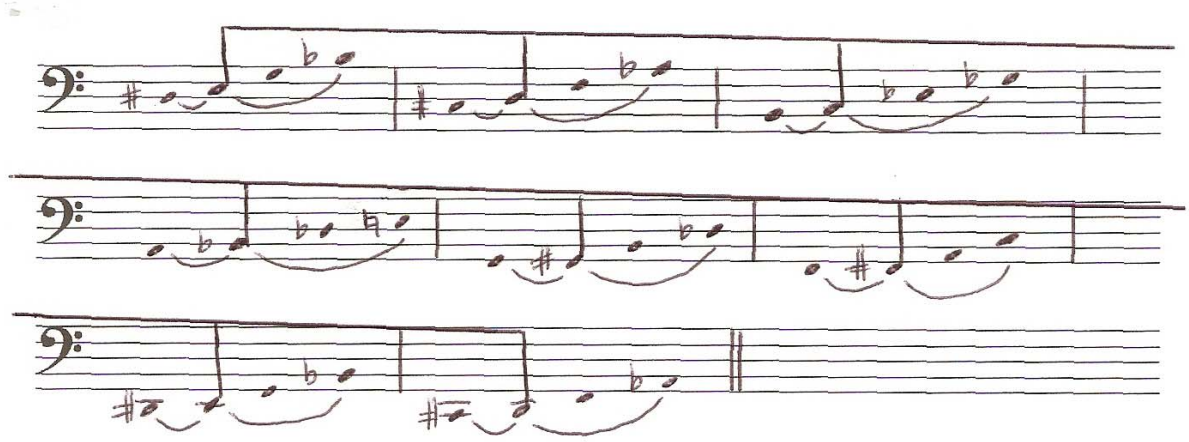
Example 18. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 28-33.



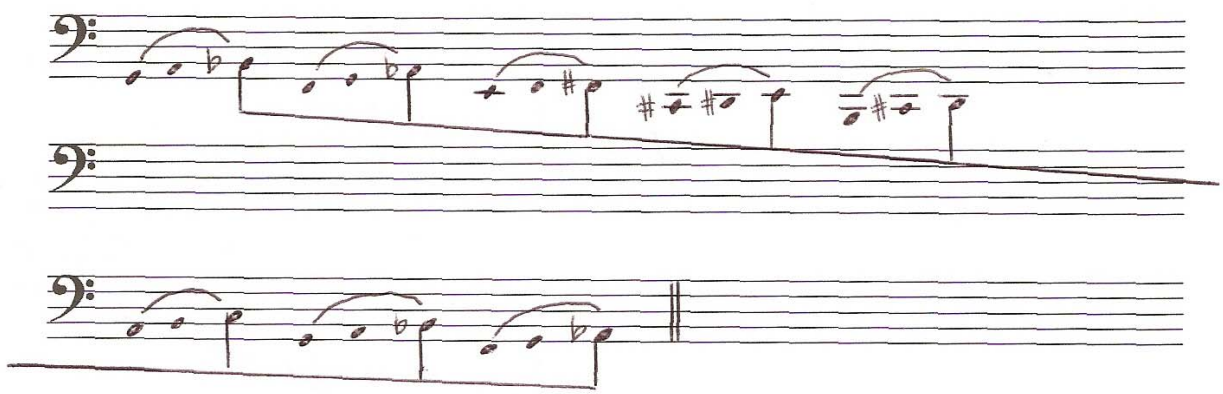
There are many long harmonic prolongations that take place in the *Sonata*. A common trend in the work includes the prolongation of a tonality using lines that descend through an octave plus a whole step. An example of this occurs in the second movement at measure 49. By only graphing the notes of the bass line in this section, it becomes apparent that there is a descent from E through a whole step motion down to D an octave lower on the third beat of measure 56. See Example 19.

A similar motion can be viewed from measure 92 in Example 20. An important rhythmic motive and melodic contour of a third occurs here in each measure, with the tonic chord occurring on the latter half of the measure considered to be the tonic. From this, a descent of an octave plus one step from B-flat through a whole tone progression brings the passage to A-flat in measure 99.

Example 19. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 49-56.



Example 20. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 92-99.



Methods of prolongation are explored at their greatest in the third movement. There are multiple places where a single tonality is drawn out for an extended length of time. The first section displaying this quality is in measures 1-20, prolonging the key of C minor. This is accomplished in the beginning by the C minor chords played in the accompaniment, while the melodic line is centered on the notes of a C minor arpeggio. From measure 6, the texture

increases to three voices with the upper lines moving in contrary motion to the bass. An ostinato is established in the accompaniment in measure 12, with the movement of a leading tone to the tonic of C minor in the upper notes of each hand. When asked, "Is it acceptable to label the chords as C minor here when a B-natural is reinforced on the stronger beats of the measure?," Maslanka responded, "Well the B really is a leading tone into the C and it is used that way in the piano part so it is continually B-C-B-C-B-C-B-C and then it is stretched out in the voice of the saxophone. So I would not think of it as a chord tone, it is definitely a non-chord tone there, even though it hangs around to see whether you like it!"[16] While the saxophone continues with the melody, the accompaniment changes beginning in measure 20, where a descending line from C to B to B-flat to A then finally A-flat occurs in measure 24. In measure 26, the tonality of A-flat major is firmly established in the piano, while the saxophone continues, leading to the canonic imitation that begins in measure 34. The material from the beginning of the movement is recycled in measures 68-81, with a change in measure 82 from what was previously used to allow the continuation of C minor for the remainder of theme group one before transitioning into the next section.

At measure 100, the tonality of B-flat major is established, with the prolongation strategy this time being the pedal tone of F for five measures. In measure 110, there is a brief tonicization of G minor, before moving back to B-flat major in measure 118 using the same strategy.

The second statement of A in the rondo movement begins with the same melodic material as before, yet this time the accompanying chords are the parallel major of C. In measure 153, the saxophone line establishes a new idea where a melodic line appears through the eighth note figurations. The melody is prolonging the mediant and dominant notes of C major through the

[16] David Maslanka, interview by Camille Olin, 21-22 February 2007, Missoula

use of neighboring tones, while the accompanying lines finally settles into the accompanying figure that was established in measure 12, although this time appearing in the major key area. The melodic figuration that was featured in the saxophone line is then transferred to the piano in measure 180, extending the C major tonality through to measure 188.

Further exploration of pedal tones as prolongational devices is featured in measures 286-312. The note of C is reinforced on the first and third beats of each measure in the bass line, with a chromatic variation introduced in measures 297-304, before returning to the previous idea.

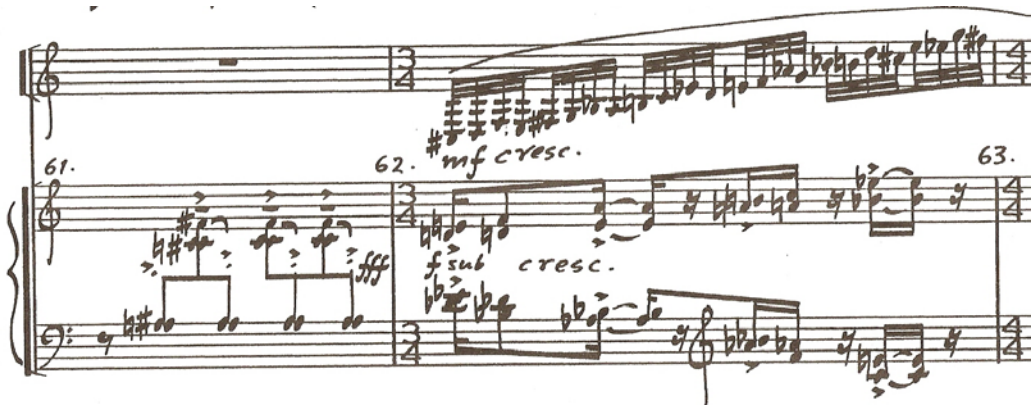
The concluding statement of A is the final section of music where the extension of tonalities occurs. This is achieved through the use of a descending line in the middle voices of the accompaniment. The descent begins from the note G in measure 400, moving to F in measure 408, and then E in measure 412. From here the descending motion occurs in half steps from E-flat in measure 416, to D in measure 420, D-flat two measures later, and finally to C in measures 426-429. This process repeats itself in measures 430-455, with A-flat major established in the following measure. In measure 462, the texture thins out to just the solo saxophone line, with the piano playing the final chord, a cluster of four notes from C to E-flat, each a half step apart.

The final aspect of harmonic language to be discussed is octatonicism. Many of the non-diatonic harmonies in the *Sonata* are octatonic subsets, often supported by small surface presentations of octatonic scale fragments. Individual octatonic collections are not invoked in a large scale perspective however.

The first example is from transition of the first movement at measures 60-61, with the use of the [01347] subset in the accompaniment. At measure 62, the piano chords include the subsets of [0347], [0137], and [0146], while the saxophone line above contains the subset of

[0134] on each eighth note within the measure. See Example 21. The pattern changes at this point, becoming more chromatic as the transition continues. Another example of octatonicism is present in the saxophone part is in measure 71 and 128. The subset of [0134] is also presented on each eighth note beat if the notes are grouped into fours.

Example 21. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 61-62. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

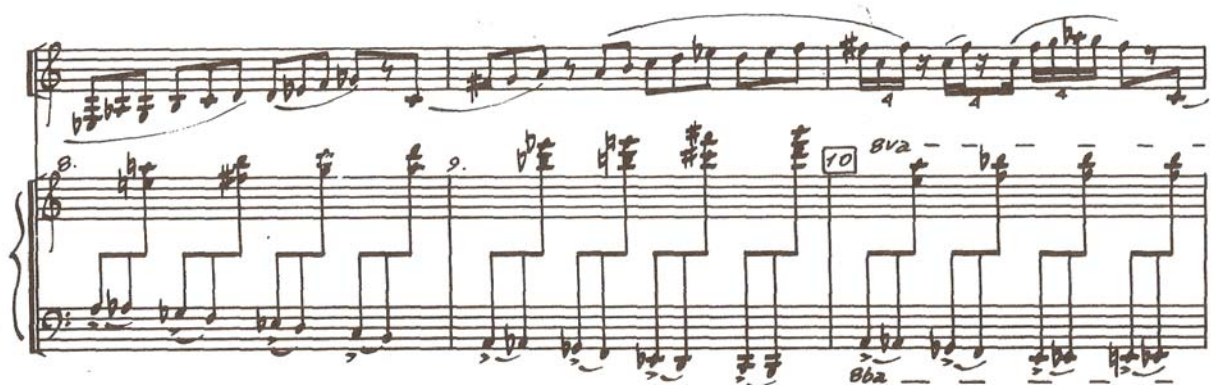


The second movement also contains many instances of octatonicism. The sustained chords at measure 6 and measure 7 belong to the octatonic subset of [0258], used in a non-tonal context. The bass line of the second movement at measure 49 contains tones also belonging to the octatonic collection. From measure to measure, the subset of [0147] is used to move through the three octatonic collections. Continuing with the accompaniment in measure 57 there are statements of the [0236] subset, followed by an [0369] in the left hand in measure 58. Near the end of the movement, in measure 99, the chord stated on the third beat of the measure is an octatonic subset of [0347], while the addition of the note D in measure 100 produces a [01347]

subset. The final statement by the solo saxophone in the second movement also concludes with a [0236] subset from the $OCT_{0,1}$ collection.[17]

Octatonicism is also prevalent in the third movement of the *Sonata.* The bass line of the accompaniment in measures 8-10 of Example 22 utilizes the notes from the $OCT_{2,3}$ collection.[18] This descending passage occurs multiple times throughout the movement outlining an octatonic scale.

Example 22. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 8-10. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



The melodic fragments of the saxophone line at the beginning of section C of the rondo is quasi-octatonic, while the inclusion of the saxophone tones with the accompaniment at measure 456 and measure 458 produce [0347] and [0258] subsets respectively.

The harmonic language of the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* is primarily based on the relationship of thirds. Thirds are present motivically through a single interval, or harmonically as triads, sevenths, ninths, or any combination of stacked thirds. The cadential

[17] Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-tonal Theory* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), 144.
[18] Ibid., 144.

structures featured do not always follow a classical perspective in forms of functional harmony, with step-wise voice leading an important vehicle for traveling from one tonality to another. Various prolongational methods are used to extend particular sonorities, and there are frequent references to octatonic collections throughout the entire work.

CHAPTER IV

A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO THE *SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO*

The *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* by David Maslanka presents many challenges for the saxophone soloist. Control of all the registers, especially the altissimo register, dynamic extremes, fluid fingering technique, and other extended techniques such as multiphonics and slap tonguing are essential to produce a successful performance of the work. It is advised that performers follow the composer's metronome markings, musical directions and clear phrases that have been provided on the score.

Mastery of the altissimo register is an essential ingredient to performing the sonata. The saxophonist must think of these notes as an extension of the normal saxophone range, extending full range scales to gradually include more notes of the altissimo register into their daily practice routine. For further study, the author highly recommends Eugene Rousseau's *Saxophone High Tones, A Systematic Approach to the Extension of the Range of All the Saxophones: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone,* Second Edition.

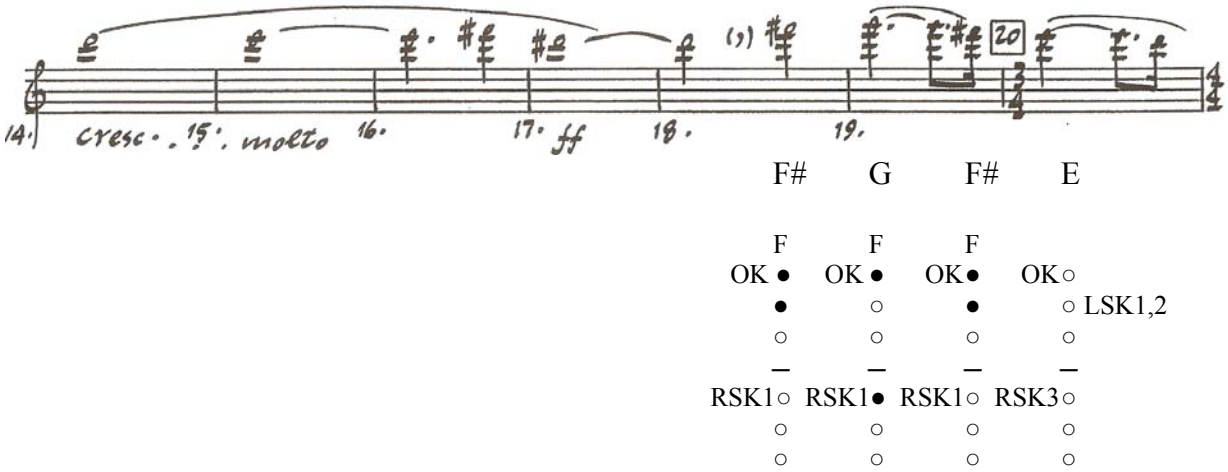
When David Maslanka composed the *Sonata*, he was quoted as saying "Now, the altissimo register, I just understood from players that this was possible and this was about how far you can go and I just wrote the music because that's what I want to hear."[19] Maslanka consistently challenges the saxophonist's thinking and use of the extended range throughout the entire sonata, demanding technical proficiency and musical agility. Therefore, the saxophonist must be fluent when passing between what is considered to be the normal range of the instrument and the altissimo register.

[19] David Maslanka, interview by Camille Olin, 21-22 February 2007, Missoula, 61-62.

Within the altissimo range there are a multitude of fingerings for any given note, so it is important that the saxophonist consider the approach to and departure from the altissimo notes when deciding on the fingering combinations. The following examples are excerpts from the saxophone part of the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* dealing with the extended range. For each passage there are several choices regarding fingering combinations. The fingerings provided below the excerpts are considered by this author to be the most fluid. Due to the nature of repetition throughout the work, a passage will only be discussed on its first appearance in the *Sonata.* It will also be assumed that if there is a repetition of notes with a particular phrase, then the same fingering will be applied to that note unless an alternate fingering is provided.

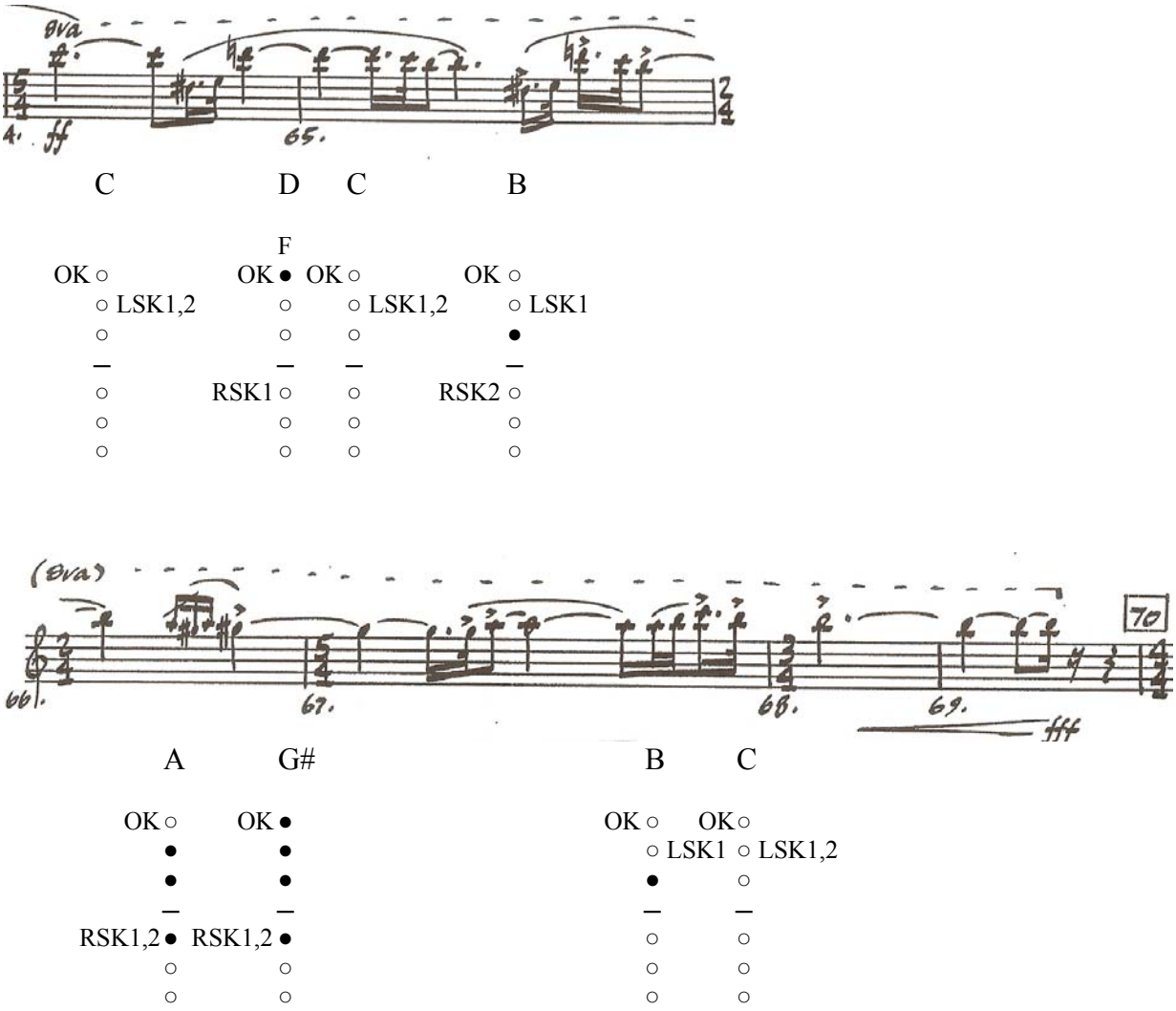
The first encounter with the altissimo register occurs in measure 19 of the first movement in Example 23. This phrase ascends to a G3, neighbored by F-sharp3 on either side. Therefore, it would be most sensible to approach the note through the front F-sharp fingering.

Example 23. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 14-20. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



While the first encounter was brief, the second is more extensive, with the melodic line soaring into the upper register where it is sustained for quite some time, requiring endurance and emotional extremes from the performer. This occurs during the violent transition into the closing theme of the exposition. See Example 24.

Example 24. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 64-70. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



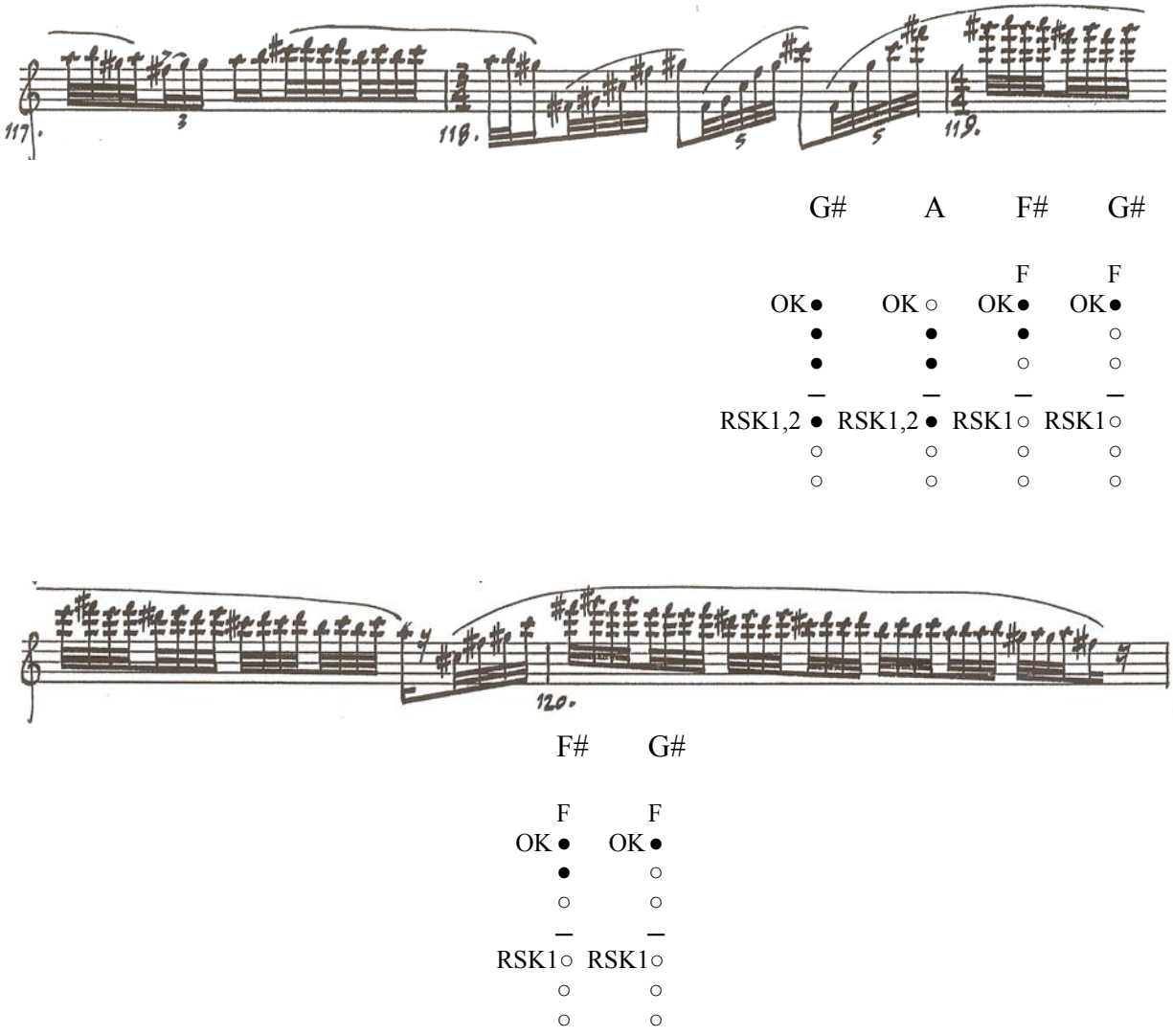
The following excerpt is perhaps one of the most difficult as it requires the utmost control of the altissimo range whilst being performed at the dynamic level of pianissimo. Therefore, it is essential that the fingerings chosen speak easily and have the most stability for this to be attainable. See Example 25.

Example 25. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 99-102. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

G#	F#	A	G#	F#	E
OK ●	OK ● bis	OK ○	OK ●	OK ○	OK ○
●	○	●	●	○ LSK1,2	○ LSK1,2
●	○	●	●	○	○
—	—	—	—	—	—
RSK1,2 ●	○	RSK1,2 ●	RSK1,2 ●	RSK3 ○	RSK2 ○
○	RSK4 ○	○	○	RSK4 ○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○

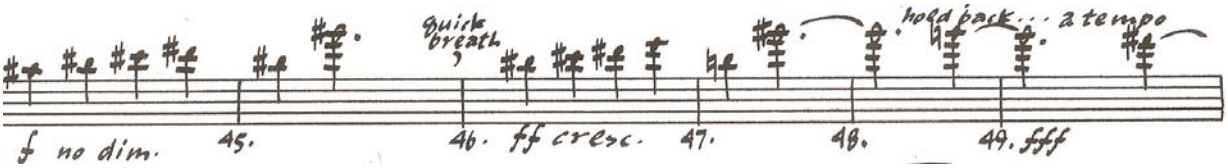
The development of the first movement also reveals passages that border between the normal and extended ranges of the saxophone. Due to the excessive speed of the notes it is necessary to choose fingering combinations that will allow for technical proficiency and agility in the following excerpts, as shown in Example 26.

Example 26. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 117-120. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

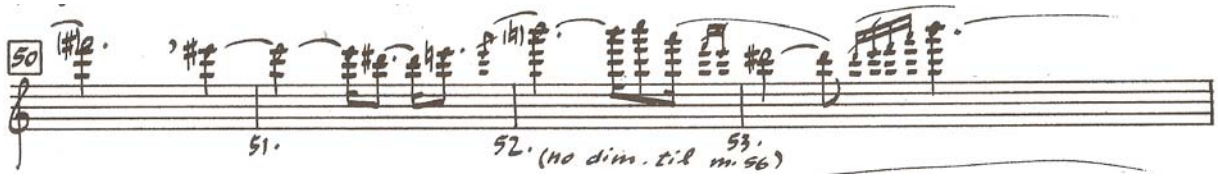


The next passage with extensive use of the altissimo register occurs in the middle section of the second movement. It is important not only to choose fingering combinations that are fluid under the fingers, but to choose fingerings where the intonation is stable for sustained notes in the extreme range. Suggested fingerings are provided in Example 27.

Example 27. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 44-56. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



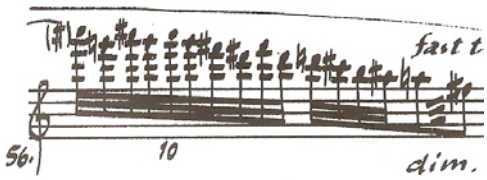
	G#		G#	G	F#
				F	F
OK	●		●	●	●
	○		●	○	●
	●		●	○	○
	—		—	—	—
RSK	2 ●		1,2 ●	1 ●	1 ○
	○		○	○	○
	○		○	○	○



	B	C	A
OK	○	○	○
	○	○	●
LSK	1	1,2	
	●	○	●
	—	—	—
RSK	2 ○	○	○
	○	○	○
	○	○	○

	A#
OK	○
	○
	●
	—
RSK	2 ○
	○
	○

(Continued on next page)



A#	G	A#
OK○	OK●	OK○
○	○	○
●	●	●
—	—	—
RSK2 ○	RSK1 ●	RSK1 ○
○	○	○
○	○	○

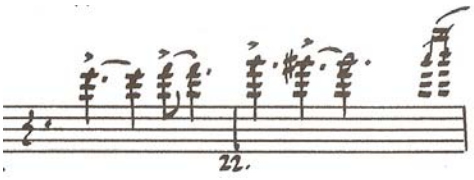
Of the entire the *Sonata*, the third movement contains the most extensive use of the altissimo register, demanding technical proficiency and agility from the saxophonist. This excerpt approaches the altissimo range through scalar motion with a supporting crescendo. A suggested fingering is included in Example 28.

Example 28. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 11-12. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

G#
OK●
○
●
—
RSK2 ●
○
○

The third movement also contains passages where endurance in the upper register is required. The following passage in Example 29 is twelve measures long, with the phrases screaming over a static C minor accompaniment in the piano.

Example 29. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 21-33. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



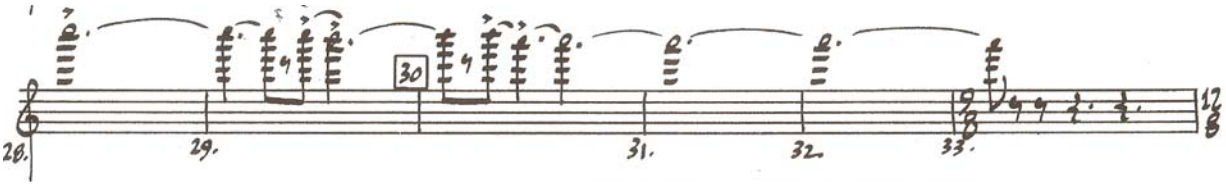
E F G G#

F F
OK● OK● OK● OK●
● ● ○ ○
● ○ ● ●
— — — —
○ ○ RSK1● RSK2●
○ ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○

C B G# A G# A B

OK○ OK○ OK● OK○ OK● OK○ OK○
○ LSK1,2 ○ LSK1 ○ ● ○ ● ○ LSK1
○ ● ● ● ● ● ●
— — — — — — —
○ RSK2○ RSK2● ○ RSK2● ○ RSK2○
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

(Continued on next page)



C	B	A
OK ○	OK ○	OK ○
○ LSK1,2	○ LSK1	●
○	●	●
—	—	—
○	RSK2 ○	RSK1,2 ●
○	○	○
○	○	○

When looking at the excerpt below, it can be seen that the approach is also scalar. The fingering provided in Example 30 was chosen to match the timbre of the notes preceding it.

Example 30. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 137-39. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

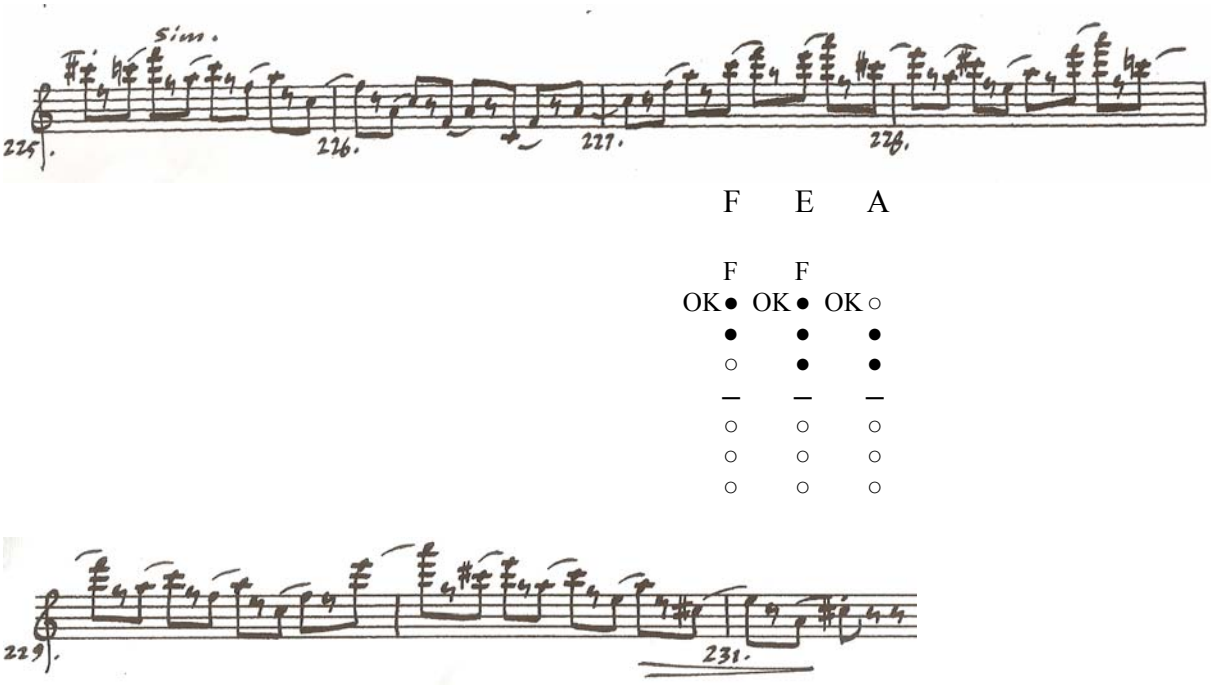
G#

OK ●
○
●
—
RSK2 ●
○
○

In measure 217 of the third movement, a new theme based on a series of broken arpeggios is presented in the accompaniment. Canonic imitation of this theme occurs in measure 223 between the saxophone and piano, with the saxophone line extended into the altissimo

register. The fingerings first provided beneath should also be applied to the remainder of the excerpt in Example 31.

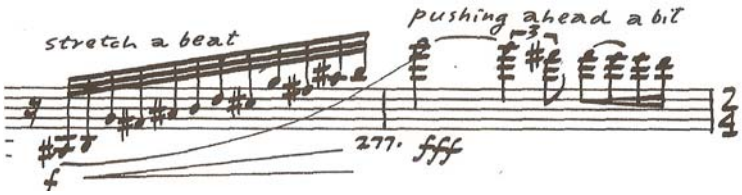
Example 31. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 225-231. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



In Example 32, the approach from the note B to altissimo G occurs twice in this portion of the movement. Therefore, it is necessary to choose a fingering for the altissimo G that is easily accessible from the preceding note, and suitable for the note occurring afterwards.

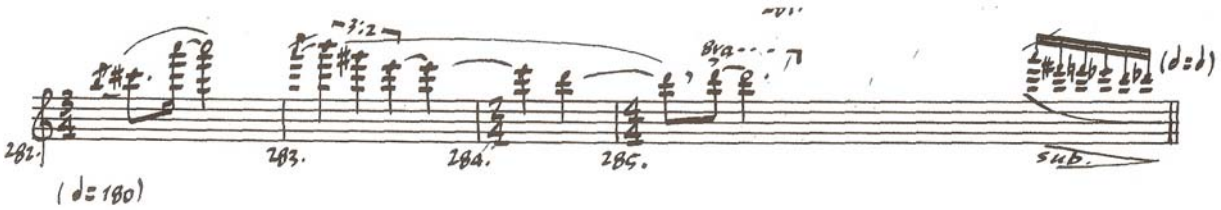
The final example dealing with the altissimo register before transitioning back into familiar material occurs towards the end of the third movement. The climax stretches up to an altissimo D, preceded by an octave below, requiring precise intonation and a fingering of the utmost stability. See Example 33.

Example 32. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 276-277. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



G	F#	E
F	F	
OK ●	OK ●	OK ○
○	●	○ LSK1,2
○	○	○
—	—	—
RSK1 ●	RSK1 ○	RSK3 ○
○	○	○
○	○	○

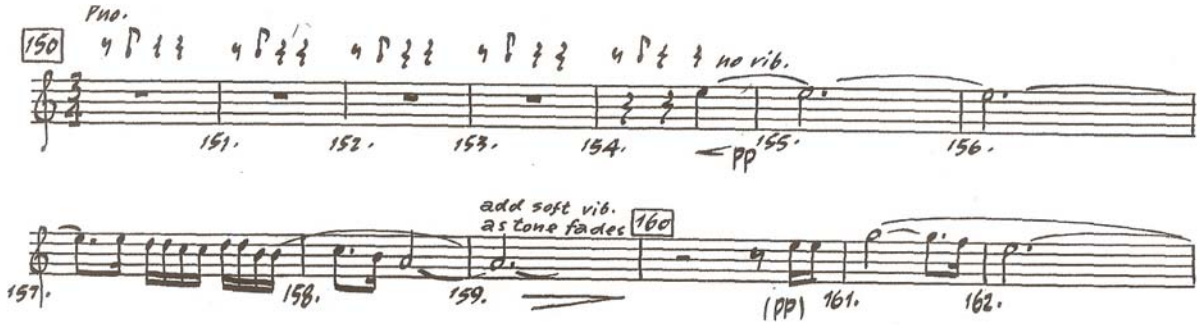
Example 33. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 282-285. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



A	B	G#	E	D4	A
				F	
OK ○	OK ○	OK ●	OK ○	OK ●	OK ○
●	● LSK2	●	○ LSK1,2	○	●
●	●	●	○	○	●
—	—	—	—	—	—
RSK1,2 ●	RSK1,2 ●	RSK1,2 ●	RSK3 ○	RSK3 ○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○

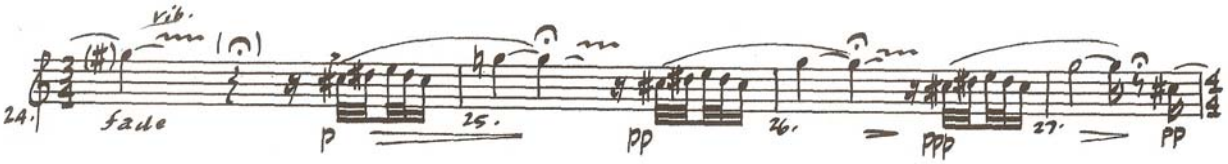
Apart from providing specific fingering combinations for the notes of the altissimo register, there are also many places where the saxophonist may choose to use alternate fingerings in the middle of the range, depending on the particular passage. The following four examples are passages where alternate fingerings are better suited to avoid a timbral change when the saxophone moves into the middle octave. The fingerings are provided underneath each passage.

Example 34. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 150-162. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



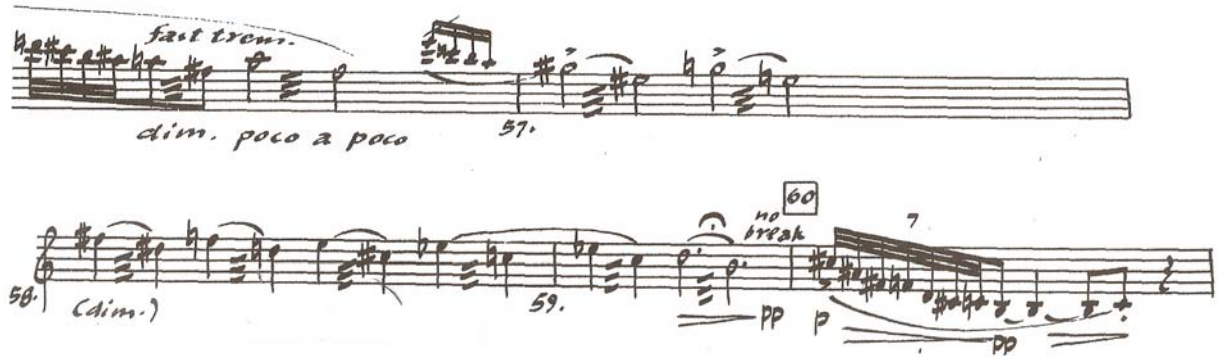
E	D	C	D	B	C
○	○	○	○	●	●
● LSK2	● LSK2	●	● LSK2	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○
—	—	—	—	—	—
○	○	○	○	○ RSK2	○
RSK4 ○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○

Example 35. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 24-27. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



C#	D#	E
○	○	○
○	○ LSK2	○ LSK2
○	○	○
—	—	—
○ RSK3	○ RSK3	○
○	○ RSK4	○
○	○	○

Example 36. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 2, mm. 56-60. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

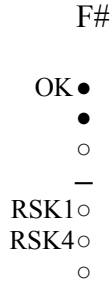


F#	D#	F	D	E	C#	Eb	C	D	B
OK ●	OK ●	OK ●	OK ●	○	○	○	○	●	●
●	●	●	●	○	○	● LSK3	●	○	○
●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○ RSK3	○	○
●	●	○	● RSK4	○	○	○	○	○	○
●	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
	D#								

Example 37. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 449-456. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

At first glance, it would appear that the passage below in Example 38 could be performed with regular fingerings. While this can be done with extensive practice, an easier option is provided following discussions with Dr. Eugene Rousseau.

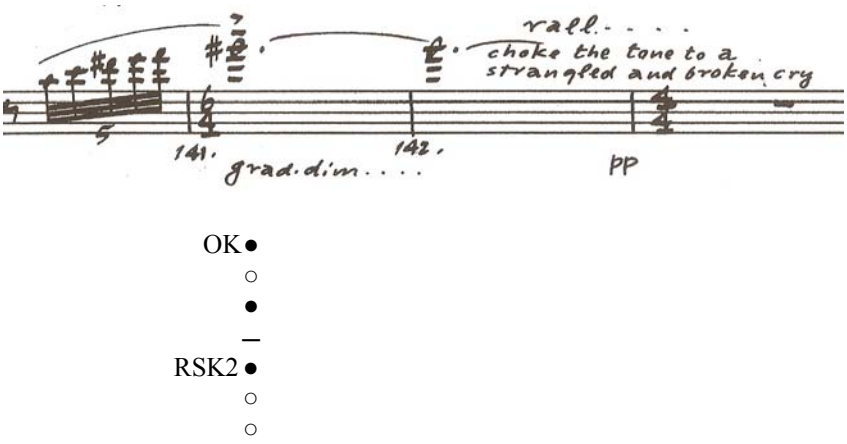
Example 38. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 154-157. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



Aside from the challenges discussed thus far, the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* also presents other obstacles for the saxophonist regarding extended techniques. This includes the bending or manipulation of a pitch, the use of slap tongue, and the incorporation of multiphonics into the work.

The first example that requires the use of other extended techniques is seen below in Example 39, where the saxophonist to required to "choke the tone to a strangled and broken cry". To achieve this successfully one must first choose a fingering that produces a stable note. From here, you can "choke" the sound by flattening out your bottom lip, then begin to manipulate the air stream with the back of your tongue to bend the note downwards as far as possible before the note cracks. It would be advantageous to involve the manipulation of pitch in a daily practice routine. Beginning from the written B above the staff, it is possible to bend the pitch down as far as a minor third. As you work up higher in the saxophone register, it is then possible to further manipulate the pitch to a larger interval, creating greater flexibility and control over the instrument.

Example 39. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 140-144. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

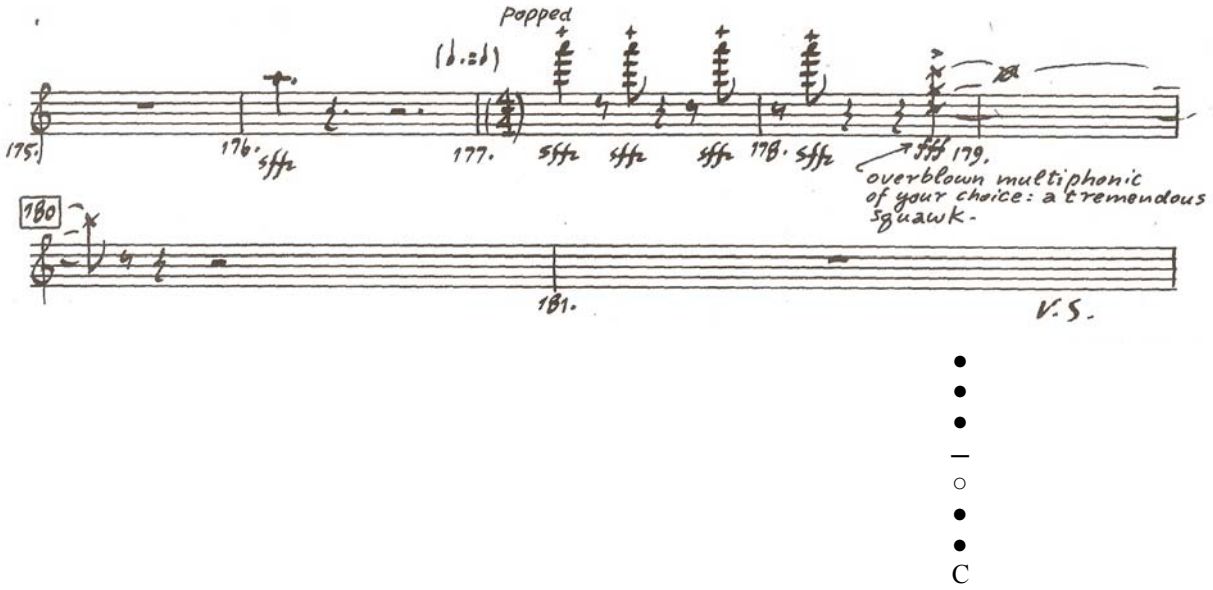


In measure 177 of the third movement, a small cross appears above the notes in the score with the direction of "popped" written in the score. This effect can be achieved in two different ways. The first is through the use of a pure slap tongue, where the tongue is manipulated to hit the reed so it is flat, creating a vacuum between the tongue and the reed to ultimately result in a popping or slapping sound when articulated. The alternative is producing what is sometimes referred to as the burst slap, where the embouchure is released from around the mouthpiece while manipulating the tongue in a slapping action against the reed. This produces a louder burst of sound, as opposed to the percussive slap of the tongue alone. See Example 40.

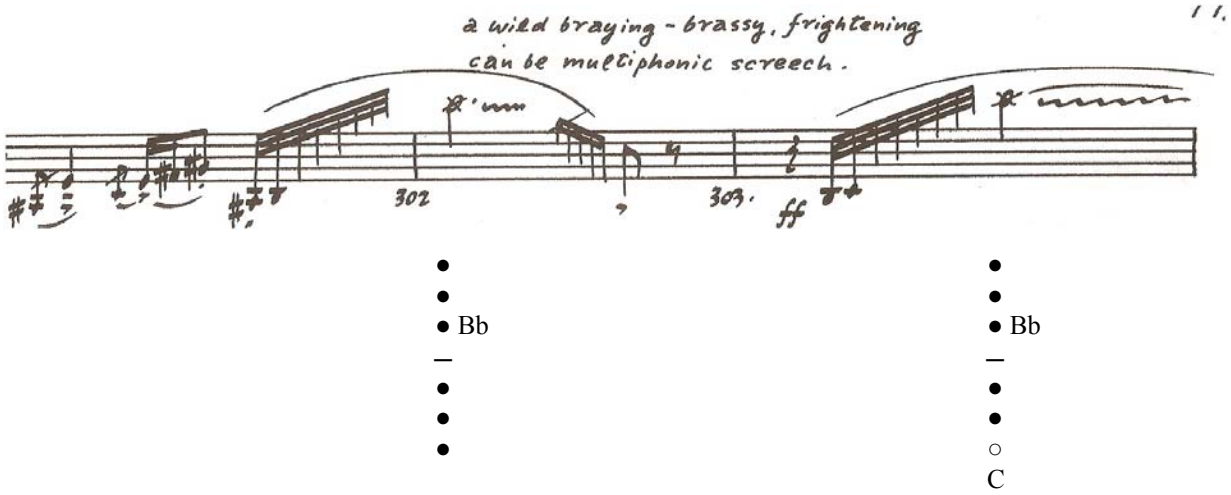
The final instance in the use of extended saxophone techniques takes place in the third movement of the *Sonata.* The end of measure 178 is where multi-phonics are first incorporated. The idea is expanded further in measures 302-307. In both instances it is at the liberty of the performer to decide on which multi-phonics will be played. As the tension builds in the accompaniment, a great effect can be achieved if the saxophonist chooses multi-phonics that ascend each time, adding to the suspense before the figure is finally resolved in measure 308 with the tonic area of C minor. Some suggested fingerings are included below in Examples 40 and 41.

At this point in the piece, it should be drawn to the saxophonist's attention that there is a marking in the piano score saying "remembering Barney Childs' *The Edge of the World*". *The Edge of the World* is a piece composed for bass clarinet and organ by the Californian composer, Barney Childs. The braying quality of the music was what David Maslanka had in mind when writing this segment.

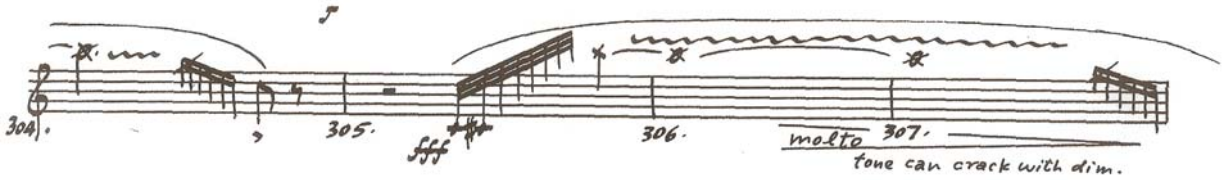
Example 40. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 175-181. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

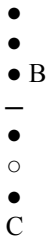


Example 41. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 301-307. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



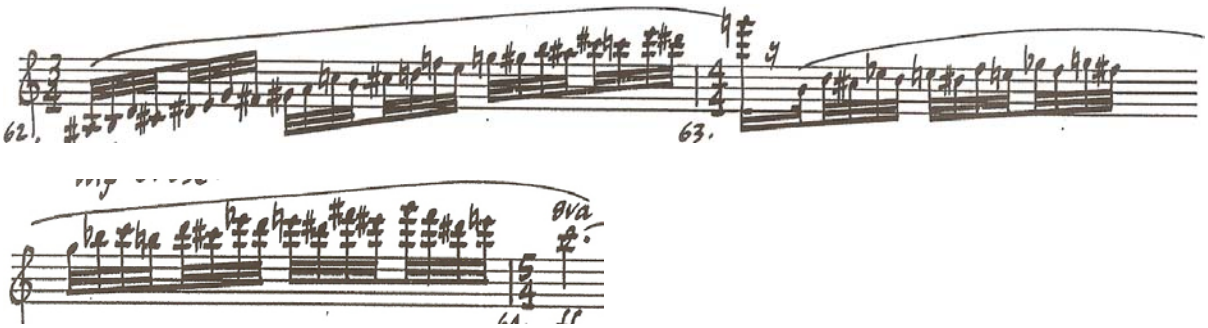
(Continued on next page)



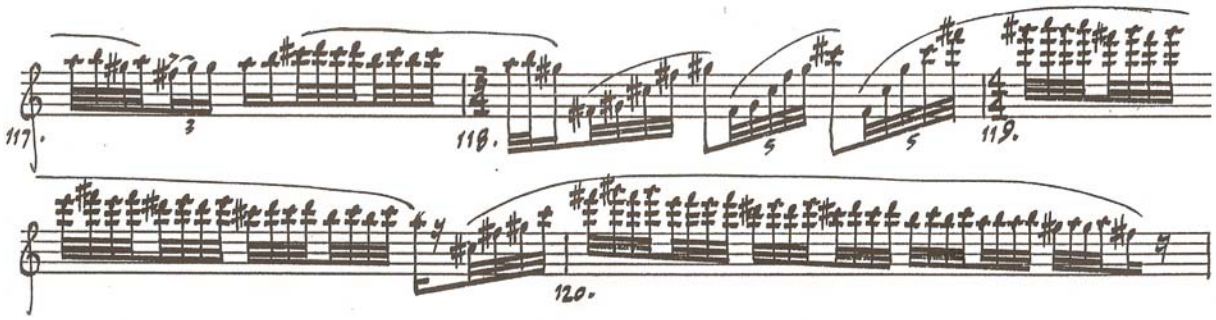


Another challenge for the saxophonist is acquiring fluid finger technique. There are some passages within the *Sonata* that are technically demanding, traveling at an extremely fast pace in sudden bursts of sound. Examples 26 and 27 are just two excerpts of many that require precise fingering technique. A suggested practice method to eventually provide fluidity to the passage would be to break each phrase down to five note groupings, beginning each grouping on the following eighth note, to work over the seams. Once this has been accomplished at tempo, expand the groupings to include nine notes, working from quarter note to quarter note, then expanding again until the entire phrase can be put together successfully. This practice routine with slight adaptations can also be applied to many other sections within the entire work, such as those in Examples 42 and 43.

Example 42. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 62-64. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

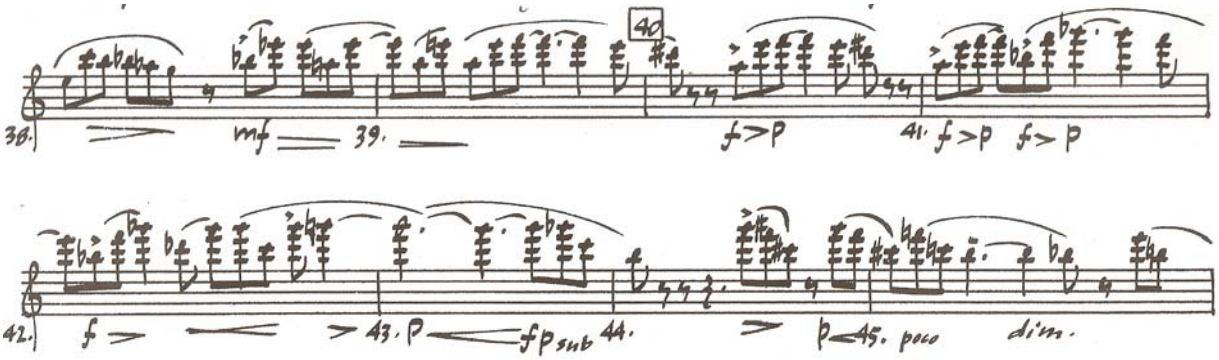


Example 43. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 1, mm. 117-120. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



It is clear in Maslanka's style of composition that he loves to explore extremities, especially concerning the dynamic range. The rate of dynamic change can often be a slow progression, gradually building as the musical line develops. This often takes place in a short span of time, requiring great control from both performers. Example 44 is an excerpt displaying some of the dynamic extremes that are incorporated into the third movement of the *Sonata.*

Example 44. Maslanka Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 38-45. Maslanka SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. Copyright 1988 by North American Saxophone Alliance. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



The *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* by David Maslanka presents a multitude of challenges for the saxophone soloist. Mastery of the instrument is required in all aspects such as the altissimo register, extended techniques (including slap tonguing and multi-phonics), fluid fingering technique, and dynamic contrast. These elements have been demonstrated in the examples mentioned throughout this chapter, providing insight on how to approach and overcome the obstacles set before us.

CHAPTER V

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID MASLANKA

Conversation 1: February 21, 2007. David Maslanka's home. Missoula, Montana.

CO: What triggered your interest for writing for the saxophone? What attracted you to the saxophone?

DM: Well, I was a clarinet player to start with, and as a boy, but no contact with saxophones until later on. When I first began composing for winds, my very first piece did not have saxophones in the ensemble, and I am not sure why, I just didn't. I think it took some discovery time so I am trying to put the chronology together here. 1985 I began my second symphony for wind ensemble and it suddenly developed a movement that began with saxophone quartet. It was my own remaking of an African-American spiritual tune. Do you know that music by any chance? Have you heard that symphony with the saxophone ensemble there?

CO: Yes.

DM: That was the very first thing I wrote for saxophones, and I found the sound tremendously appealing, and I began to like the voice of the instrument. The next thing that happened is that I was asked somewhat mysteriously to write a piece for tenor saxophone and string quartet. I don't even remember the person's name who asked me, but someone came to New York, sought me out and asked me if I would write such a piece. Well I did and had no more contact with that person.

CO: And why did you choose tenor saxophone?

DM: That's what he wanted. That was his instrument. So that piece was my first major work for a saxophone and ensemble. Do you know that piece at all?

CO: Yes.

DM: There is a nice recording done by Ray Ricker at the Eastman School. Ray and I were at Graduate School together. So that was the next contact for saxophone. The next request to write for the instrument was the Sonata commissioned by the North American Saxophone Alliance. It was a curious situation. They wanted a piece for a concert solo, competition.

CO: That's what I was wondering. Did they give you any stipulations – if there were certain things they wanted in the piece, and what ended up happening, because this isn't your typical competition piece?

DM: No it isn't. In fact, this is always a danger when people commission me, because these things happen. For instance, my premiere that was on Sunday was a commission from Illinois State University, for its 150th anniversary celebration. The commission was set out to be a fifteen minute piece with a narrator for some relevant text for such an event. Well, it turned out to be forty minutes which was accepted and we did very well with it. It was the right thing, and it worked awfully well but once you get started, if it is going to be that long then it IS that long and I can't stop it. And so this is one of those pieces, where they asked me to write a piece with no stipulations, no restrictions, nothing.

CO: So did you think of it as being a competition piece, or you were just writing a piece?

DM: I have no conception of what a competition piece is….

CO: I suppose with the technical facility….

DM: Something that people could learn and play handily, with some degree of facility, which is not this. The weird part about it was that the people who were in the competition had to learn the solo part….

CO: How long did they have to learn the piece?

DM: I don't know, I can't remember any more. But there were, if I am not mistaken, three finalists who had been brought to the convention that was a NASA convention in Virginia, and these three came, I think one player had their own pianist with them, and the other two had hired a piano player who sort of hacked his way through some of this. So there was a young lady, whose name I know longer recall who won the competition. She did very well and had her own piano player. But it was just very strange to have a piece premiered under those circumstances. And even less fortuitous, or less fortunate, was the performance circumstance itself. They had scheduled this event for the premiere of the *Sonata* by the winner of the competition immediately following a jazz performance and immediately before supper. So the jazz performance ran almost an hour past its time. And we were left with an event starting at roughly five o'clock in the afternoon, and people were just filtering out like crazy to go to dinner, so we had an audience of about twenty people for the premiere of this piece. Out of that, it took a long time for this sonata to gain some sort of hold in saxophone player's minds. But a person who was there at that performance was Stephen Jordheim, from Appleton. He was immediately taken by the piece and then took it up himself, so he was one of the people to really push this piece. He made a very good recording of it, with a lot of strain. It took him several years. He made an initial attempt at recording the piece and then, because of the recording quality that came out of it, it wasn't very good. The amount of effort he put into it exhausted him, so he put the piece away for a while and came back to it with a different pianist and a different recording engineer, and

then did an excellent job. From that point the piece began to gain some acceptance and grow, but it took a fair amount of time. But I think out of this piece, I began to, and out of the piece for tenor saxophone and string quartet, I began to love the saxophone voice. I think it has amazing flexibility, and the family of instruments is amazing, from top to bottom. I am especially fond of soprano saxophone, and have transcribed my oboe sonata for soprano saxophone, but I haven't heard many performances of it at all, but I really like that piece.

CO: How did you learn what the saxophone was capable of in terms of extended techniques? Did you approach players? Or did you just listen? Do your own research? How did you find out?

DM: I just made it all up. [chuckles] It sounds dumb, but that's just how it goes. Actually that's pretty much it. I am a listener.

CO: What did you listen to?

DM: Anything, I can't say now what I listened to for saxophone. Here's a thought about me and composing. I am not a researcher. I have a doctorate, but I am not a researcher and I am not interested in that very much. I will do, and this is hardly dismissive of the procedure, because it is intense what happens when I am composing, but imagining what an instrument is from the inside is how I go about things. In a very crude way of saying it, I pretend that I am saxophone here in my person, my body, my mind, and what that feels like.

CO: Did you ever dabble in the saxophone being a clarinetist yourself?

DM: Just a couple of times, never seriously. I had a sense of my hands on the instrument but never to play it as a serious player. But I do have a background of being a clarinetist that allows me to understand all those qualities of wind playing – articulations, character of playing, breath, particularly breath. But the altissimo register, I just understood from players that this was

possible and this was about how far you can go, and I just wrote the music because that's what I want to hear, and let them figure it out.

CO: Yeah, that's a lot of figuring out!

DM: It is. Now the question is, nobody has complained too much, which I am happy for, but I am sure there are things in there that I could have written differently had I known quote unquote "what I was doing". But there it is, and it seems to have extended peoples thinking about certain aspects of that upper register. The saxophone concerto is also the same way – it has a fairly extensive altissimo range and I worked through that piece initially with Joseph Luloff at Michigan State, and he showed me exactly where the hard parts were, and how hard they were and why, and we made some adjustments because he worked really hard at the piece and was able to tell me this was farther than he wanted to go and can or should go to get a certain effect from the instrument.

CO: So did you consult someone in the writing of this sonata?

DM: No. I am a private person. I never thought of composing in any way as a collaborative project, except that in recent years, I have had the benefit of a number of commissions so when people ask me to write, I will focus very carefully on that person who has asked me to write. I will ask to hear recordings of their performances or see them in performance and then my work will be in a meditative way to focus very clearly and sharply on that person to find a central quality about them, in them, that moves a music that wants to happen. That's the kind of collaboration that I will do. Over a length of time – I have written music for a very long time, over forty years of writing music – what has happened is that I have gained a skill in my competence. Performances show me back the quality of the music, whatever difficulties they

may have had and my interest generally is not to rewrite anything but simply go write another piece. So that's how it works, in part.

CO: In the interview that you had with Russell Peterson, you spoke about your influences for the *Sonata* with the reference to the Liszt *B-minor Piano Sonata*, Gesualdo madrigal writing and the Swedish composer Allen Pettersson, who I had never heard of before. I was wondering if you could expand on your influences for the sonata a little more.

DM: Did you look up Pettersson by any chance?

CO: Yes

DM: What did you find?

CO: I found several recordings in the library. I listened to the *Second Violin Concerto* and a few symphonies….

DM: What did you think?

CO: It is very emotional, extreme….wow

DM: I remember listening to the *Second Violin Concerto* lying on the floor of my apartment in New York City, not trying to make any sense of it what so ever, simply lying there and let the stuff come to me….receiving it in a semi-conscious way, 'cause it's just so much. But that quality of Pettersson's work which is typical of his work. I think it was *Symphony No. 12* that I was listening to initially…

CO: How did you come across him?

DM: I think it was by accident.

CO: Because I have asked several people and they don't know of him.

DM: Well, he died in 1970, and was born in 1900. He wrote sixteen symphonies and *Symphony No. 16* is for saxophone and orchestra. The only recording I know is by Fred Hemke.

It is an old recording. It's a curious piece in a single movement, it's in that style. It's very embroiled with passion, that screaming thing he had going on. So out of the Nordic composers there seems to come that quality, something very dense, brooding, and intense, forceful. Pettersson was an unhappy man, and explicitly stated as being that. He disliked being himself, but that's what he had to live with, and that's what the music brings out. But I was struck by it obviously in a very deep way. The sheer force of an unrelenting return to given material and given tonalities, and for long stretches of time a tonality would stay in a single area. There would be a lot of activity, but the fundamental would be that single harmonic place, a tonal place rather than a harmonic place. And the minor key is preferred as the foundation for a very dissonant kind of music. So that aspect is something which influenced, and still does, but it influenced strongly this sonata in not only the third movement but also the first. Each of the themes of this first movement are in A minor and it doesn't ever travel any great distance away from that area – the fixation on tonality and the power that emerged by the continual return to that tonal center. So in that way, it diverges markably from classical tonality and classical uses in this form. Franz Liszt is another of those composers who is hugely passionate in the work. Do you know the B minor sonata? Have you listened to it?

CO: Yes, I was actually listening to it in the car on the way to the airport this morning to refresh my memory of it.

DM: It's been a long time since I have actually listened to it. It's been about thirty years since I have actually listened to the music, but I remember powerfully listening to it back then and being always tremendously moved by it. Liszt has a curious reputation as a composer. I don't know whether you know anything about this in terms of history, but when I was a student there were still discussions as to Franz Liszt's legitimacy as a composer. But this very high emotional

intensity that he produced struck me very strongly, and it seemed as the themes worked themselves out in this first movement that they bored some resemblance in my mind to the quality of that writing. You know, this idea of new music – there is still the new music movement that came out of the twentieth century that went through all the serial procedures, and other experimental procedures, micro tonality and down to computer workings in music – which have gone quite away from anything resembling tonality. And apart from some small experiments when I was younger, my music has always come straight back to the simplest of tonal materials because I like it. Simple. The relationships that are involved, the sense of a relationship with consonance and dissonance which is the foundation of tonality, still works. It still has profound expressive ability.

CO: Can I ask you to describe or comment on the tonal language that you use?

DM: Maybe primitive is a good word because there are the simple statements of a tonality and of an unmoving statement of that tonality and of simple functions within that tonality. Now this sonata has more in it than that of course, but the one thing is in relation to the other. So that when you have very simple tonal statements, then those elements that are radically dissonant and rhythmically different than the beginning here have a context in which they are heard. So one plays against the other. There's more to be said there, so we will say it before we finish.

CO: And what about Gesualdo and madrigal writing?

DM: As a graduate student I had several years of sixteenth-century counterpoint in all the styles, very intensive work of composing in all the madrigal styles and church styles. I loved the madrigal music, especially Gesualdo. Maybe it's the quality of intensity? He used what we call a tonal language but used it very freely. So qualities of chords were used in juxtaposition with each other as a way of heightening the intensity of expression. That way of thinking and feeling

impressed me very deeply and it came out in this piece. You asked me about why I liked the saxophone? One of the answers to it is that the saxophone is capable of remarkable intensity of sound, from a very biggest intensity to the smallest, and the full range, and all, strikes me as, maybe this shouldn't be a quote, but of all the wind instruments as having a quality closest to the human voice for me. I love the other wind instruments, I love them very much, and they all have that voice quality to me, but this has the most complete, most compatible with my own voice. My composing is always through the voice, I am constantly singing when I am working, so everything comes as a vocal melody for me, even the most complex of things. So there is a definite relationship there. And Gesualdo and those madrigals and vocal music…the intensity of four or five voices, not a full choir, just four or five voices that are able to do that, or the intensity of a single voice like the saxophone or a single instrument like the piano, or the saxophone or any solo instrument with ensemble, I have always been drawn to it. I have now written I think twelve concertos for various instruments and all of it for a solo instrument plus wind orchestra or wind ensemble. But that nature of a solo voice is what pushes me. The individuality of it, to be able to speak with that voice, or have that voice speak through me, is a better way to put this. In my composing I have evolved the idea that it isn't what I want happen in a piece of music. For me the brain, the intelligence is the prepared part that has had all the training and it is ready to receive and write down, but it isn't the part which comes up with the fundamental impulse for the piece of music or for the nature of the music itself, that is the harmonies and melodies. Does that make sense as an idea?

CO: Yes.

DM: Just to make a parallel as a player, what do you think about intelligence related to performing? Maybe that's a hard question? Do you think when you perform, in the sense of deliberately making this choice or that choice?

CO: No. Generally I am in my own little world. Everything else is blocked out. Sometimes it will creep in and I will realize where I am and what I am doing, but then it goes back out again. I just sing what comes out of me when I play…I don't make it that I am going to play it exactly like this because it is not going to be the same every time, it depends….

DM: But you are there, you are very much there, very consciously there in the performance and yet the thinking part is not what is directing the flow of the music, it is the thing that has allowed you to achieve competence at your instrument and your deliberate work in learning how to play your instrument. So the preparation is there, but when it comes to actually playing, that process relaxes. Your conscious attention is there, yet the thing that is moving is coming out of a different place in your whole system. And in my understanding, it is coming out of a deeper place than yourself. So composing is exactly the same way. The music is coming out of a place that is not my conscious mind. So if I attempt on the outset to think that I know what a piece of music is supposed to be, that is to make a plan, saying it will be this long or if it will have this kind of a shape, then almost invariably I will be stopped by the piece of music. It will get to a certain point where I will say this is not working. And then patiently waiting inside is that other thing that is saying, "okay I am ready to listen now," and then I say "okay fine, what do you want?" And then this other thing begins to happen that I need to pay attention and listen to. So that is the fundamental way of going about the composing and it has a lot to do with identifying very deeply with each of the instruments that I am writing for. So not only for the solo instrument, but if I am writing for an ensemble, each of the sounds that I am hearing is coming

from a different place than my intellect. They are appearing with their own meaning, with their qualities of emotion which I have to feel and then pay deep attention to so I internalize that and know what it is, then use the brain to write it down on a piece of paper.

CO: So you had no plan for the sonata? Whether it would be a multi-movement work? The cyclic elements? You labeled it sonata because it ended up being a sonata form?

DM: This defeats the whole idea of analysis to put it nicely. The reality is that you can go back and analyze it, I won't, it is not my job, but you can analyze it and you have found out that there is a lot in there that doesn't initially meet the eye and it doesn't initially meet my eye either. So you can do an analysis and I can look at it and say "oh that's interesting" because it comes through without my having analyzed it. And it becomes itself and there it is and I have certain things that I can point out. Yes it does have a relationship to sonata form because it does have themes, it does have a first movement, and it does have something comparable to a development if not more a transition than development, and then has a recapitulation. The second movement is in an undefined song form of some sort that doesn't have a label. The third movement has its relationship to the rondo because of the return of materials and these seem to be favorite ways I have of going about things. So put it all together, it's a sonata and I didn't know it was going to be three movements. What often happens in the composing of a piece is more and more I do a lot of sketching, and of late a lot of sketching through each piece without knowing the shape or size or the number of movements it is going to be. So the pieces often wind up large. The *Percussion Concerto* was premiered last November. It's about forty minutes of music, and in five movements, but I was actually looking at eight or nine movements and finally came down to deciding you just can't do that. So deciding what does fit and what truly wants to be in there and leave the rest for something else. It generally goes back into what I call my compost pile and

then sometimes maybe another year or five years or twenty years it might show up again, so it is not a very scientific process.

CO: What about the composition process for this sonata in particular? Was there any movement that you wrote first? Was the first movement written first, or did it come afterwards?

DM: I do believe the first movement was written first, yes. I think I probably told the story that I was doing jury duty in New York City sitting in the jury room waiting to be called for Brooklyn and I began sketching out the themes for the first movement. So that came first, that was the first impulse for the piece, and I think I started working on that first. I may be wrong but I do think It was in order – one, two, and three, although that is not always the case.

CO: When you come up with the idea for a theme, do you sketch it down and think about how it could develop and progress, or development of motives, expanding motives?

DM: They teach you in theory how to do all that. To take a motive, turn in upside down, backwards, do upside down, retrograde, tada tada tada, and expansion of themes, diminution and all that stuff, and rhythmic elements. I don't do any of that in any official way. What that invariably does is to…I can do a bit of it in a way of prompting my imagination, to think deeply about something. But here's an idea, if you do that as a process, if you are going to say, "Alright I have got my little motive here, how do I turn it upside down? How do I make it do all those things?" Then you have that, and it may lead you to something else – it may, or it may simply be a little box that you put yourself in and you can't go any further. Because you say, "Well I am supposed to do this," but you are not supposed to do anything you don't want to do. What I find that happens is that an idea like this first simple tune from the sonata comes up – and I may only get that much – in this case the first four bars just as a theme that appears in my mind, and I will sort of wrestle with it, hearing it just like a tape clip going on in my head continually, and it may

not give me anything else immediately. But over time when you stare at the same point again and again and again and again, there is a deepening of your awareness of the elements in that point so that you will finally feel something – this is a starting point you where you will feel something that was not possible to imagine by a rational means. A powerful thing will happen and it will just happen. The thing becomes powerful inside and it wants to speak itself out. Then that happens, but I am not analyzing how that powerful thing is related to [hums the first theme], it just is. And then I may come to a conscious awareness that these are related and I do know that they are related because they are in the same area. This happened, this happened, they must be related. But as to a technical analysis of it, that seems to be often beside the point, or to begin from an analytical stand point? It's about dreaming. First off allowing yourself to dream and then being persistent about it. I think that's probably the difference between a person that is a composer and a person that isn't – that the dream life is the center of existence and finding that dream life, and living in it. That doesn't mean not having contact with the real world, but having found a way to be between the conscious world and the unconscious world. To be able to go here and yet to be also able to understand its relationship, to say being able to notate something, to write it down, or to bring it back out if you to put it that way. But this has no relationship at all to rational thinking. So does that make any sense?

CO: Yes.

DM: So when you do your performing and you are in that dream space, which is very powerful, and you know that you are playing very well, something is moving through you which is not rational and which is a powerful dream. And that power is conveying itself through you to your listeners, and this is what they perceive. So if you get stuck in your own ego you can say,

"Well I have done this, I am responsible for this, and I am proud of this." Well, you can have your pride and your accomplishment, but to think that you did it is different than the truth.

CO: So, could we talk about form a little bit?

DM: Sure.

CO: We spoke earlier in the kitchen how you said that it just turned out to be a sonata form and you can go back afterwards and label it a quasi-sonata form although it doesn't follow our expectations in the classical sense of sonata form, especially harmonically. But just looking at labeling themes first, would you regard it to be a two or three themed exposition?

DM: I think three. Where do you find themes? Where do you say are three themes?

CO: Well, for arguments sake, I was looking at it as a three theme exposition. I labeled theme one at the beginning, then theme two starting at measure 24 with the change of texture. But if you were looking at the key areas, is there enough argument to say that that is a second theme area because harmonically it is still in A minor?

DM: Right. Well, most interestingly I am not a real student of classical music, but if you look at something like a Mozart sonata or a Beethoven sonata, you are often going to find collections of material. Something you know which "Is that enough to be a theme?" Mozart worked that way too. That he would just intuitively put this with that and this with that and that would be his exposition. And Beethoven did this the same way too.

CO: I was interested because I would argue for it to be a three-themed exposition, but my professor wanted to challenge me into thinking that maybe this was just one large theme group at the beginning transitioning into a second theme. So, I was just wondering what your point of view would be and how you perceive it.

DM: Well, when you are thinking about it… [He begins to hum through the statement of the first theme then the second theme] there is a good argument for both ways because the two themes are so closely related to each other. The first theme moves between the tonic and dominant to E [hums melody] and then [hums the beginning of the second theme] it is almost the same theme backwards or upside down in some ways. So there is a real relationship and yet, it doesn't necessarily have to say that one is this or one is that, I mean, you can question the arguments for both sides of the case. Are you required to choose?

CO: No.

DM: Well you can also say that the composer doesn't know – clearly! And the wonderful thing about it is the simple fact that it is ambiguous. But there is such a change with the arpeggiated left hand at measure 24 that you have a sense of a new scene taking place. So I would tend to go in that direction. My sense is that that is a second theme.

CO: I didn't know whether you were interested in looking at graphs at all, or going on theme by theme or whether you were interested in looking at that yet?

DM: Hmmm, maybe in a little bit. Let me just lay out where we are here with all things done. You have this wonderful thing that happens, this eruption at measure 62. What do you think of that in terms of its relationship to form?

CO: I looked at that as a transitory passage going into the closing theme. But looking at this passage in particular – It is kind of quasi-octatonic, consisting of octatonic subsets, but I was wondering about the patterning? Did you sit down at the piano and dabble around to find a sound that you liked?

DM: There is no preconceived theory with this at all.

CO: Because there is a lot of quasi-octatonicism throughout the whole work, but there is always a leading tone that doesn't fit in with the rest of the set. And it's a pattern that happens throughout that I have noticed.

DM: Isn't that awful [laughs] it just doesn't quite work. Well, I wouldn't be too hasty in trying to create a theory about the piece. I think the best thing that can be done is to describe it and if things don't fit then say, "This doesn't fit in this description so then this is its own element." Now the next thing that you begin to ask, is does that thing which doesn't fit, what is its character and quality? Do you know much about Carl Jung the psychologist?

CO: I know the name but not much about him.

DM: Well he was a scientist and he is one of my favorites and I have done a lot of reading and studying of Jung. But one of his ideas was that science in general tries to come up with a theory that includes most of everything and tries somehow to exclude those things that don't fit, so you can have a theory about an average thing happening, the repeatable average thing. But he got most interested in the things which didn't fit. The stuff at the edge. And he began to understand that that stuff at the edge tells you that a whole different universe is at work than what you think might be happening here. So just this idea, I offer to you as a way as beginning to look at the anomalies in the piece, if indeed they are anomalies and I don't necessarily look at them that way. This is what happened in the composing of the piece and it felt right to me. I do everything from an intuitive basis – it must feel.

CO: So you didn't have a skeleton of notes and think about how you were going to fill it in? It's just how it is and how it came about?

DM: [laughs] I have to apologize for that I guess, because that doesn't make any theory for you. Now the only thing I can say, and this is the most interesting part about composing and

probably the scariest part for people who are either beginning or don't think this way. That there isn't anything there until it happens you know?

CO: That's hard for people to accept sometimes.

DM: Well we have all the models that we have heard all our lives, so there is this musical language that you understand and can make something out of in that regard there is the background out of which language comes. And yet, the particular piece is not there until it emerges, and how you let it emerge is the most important part for composing. If you have a theory in advance of what will emerge then you are telling it what it can't be. You are saying you must conform to what I think you will. So that element of being spiritually surprised and being open to the possibility of a power occurring that you don't know anything about…and much more. I am taking over, and being able to let it take you over so that in your performance you are perfectly prepared as best you can. You know how your fingers work, how your breath works, and you've learned the music, and you've learned all the notes. But you could in your performance limit it to what you think it is supposed to be. You could say , "this is what I've learnt and this is what I know is going to happen. This is how I am going to do this" and you can make your way and do a very nice performance. But you can also suddenly understand that that door opens to the place that has no name, and suddenly you are taken over and a thing happens in you that you can't make happen, and you can't force it to happen, and that's what composing is about. And it has to be there first, and the composing also can't be there in the performance. You know there are certain pieces that you play in which you are quite limited and you realize that this isn't going to go any farther than that. And then there are pieces in which you don't feel that limitation and it goes farther than you know how to go and you grow into being able to open that area within yourself. I think over the course of our conversation here that we will get to a lot

of the ideas because I cannot jump in and give you a rational "this is how it works" because that is not how it goes. But in terms of coming back down into what the shape of the thing is, here you do have it at measure 62 – the thing that opens the door to another thing, which given the first two themes you would not think likely. Then of course at measure 72 it does come back to C major with that big rolling passionate thematic statement. So I do agree that there are two brief opening themes and this more expansive third theme which moves into a simple section of the piece. And I would guess that this section from measures 88-128 might qualify as a development. I am not terribly interested in that word. I have always shied away from the word because it sounded like you have just done some stuff to manipulate your things.

CO: What I didn't even realize before looking at this from an analytical point of view is with the ostinato going on the piano, I had no idea that this had appeared before measure 88. It wasn't even, I don't know , there was no realization of that until I sat here and was looking at the score and saw that that idea had already occurred at measure 80. So in that way I took it that you had started the development, that you had developed that idea specific idea…

DM: Okay, you can use the word. I don't care [laughs]. It's all right.

CO: And what about the canonic imitation? It just happened? Or did you think it might be cool to start doing that….

DM: [laughs] That's it, you can quote the composer! "He thought it might be cool to start doing that!" You are in this awful position of having to create a rationale for a piece that doesn't necessarily work that way. So the canonic things are never worked out in any great distance. They tend to be things that are used to propel the texture and to open a certain direction of thought. I think there is more of that in the last movement, and more consistently than here, so this is the first hint at it and it comes up in bigger places. So this is, I don't know…when you

think about the history of composing, you have really good composers like Brahms, who was extremely economical in his use of material and in his evolution of ideas in an intellectual way, at the same time infusing them with a power of quality. Then you have J.S. Bach with the tremendous work in writing fugues. These have always been put up as the highest models of the relationship of the intellectual to the spiritual or emotional aspect of a piece of music – intuitive. I want to say that fugues, good ones at their heart, have the same quality of musical impulse as quote unquote a "free" piece of music does. There's a real quality of intuition to realize that intuitive, wonderful, powerful music comes out of a rational ordering of things. So there is always this balance between what your intellect does and what the other impulse is. But I am thinking of a piece of music like the *Goldberg Variations* by Bach, in which you have the layout of the canons. And the pieces of music involved in these canons are just wonderful. He worked over the course of his lifetime, because his mind worked that way, to evolve the mechanics of being able to write canons at all intervals and to be able to improvise a fugue.

CO: Is that something that you worked on earlier in your career?

DM: I have done all my counterpoint studies but I have not gone in the direction of being consistently taken by counterpoint. Ideas from it, bits and pieces of it will motivate my music, but it is not like what he did at all in that direction. So I am just musing on this, I am not making definitive remarks on anything.

CO: Getting back into the Recapitulation, I was going to ask if there was any reason why it went straight back into the closing theme? Obviously there isn't an answer for that. Why the second and first themes weren't there?

DM: Well the question may be whether that indeed is the recapitulation at measure 129? If it does do that?

CO: I was looking at the recapitulation as starting at measure 129 with a variation on the closing theme.

DM: It is very much the third theme, and the third theme does not come back in any other way.

CO: At the end, I was just viewing this as a coda, where the second theme returns there [pointing to the place in the score].

DM: Yeah. I think you could safely say that that is true. It is simply that the third theme, where it comes back in at 129, got to be there because of its nature, which is a very intense, very emotional kind of arrival point. A very strong, very bright, major arrival point. And that seemed to be what the piece needed at that point to complete the energy that had been accumulated by the previous passage work. This is a thought which I give to young composers, that is everything that you do has a consequence. That is, every gesture you make has its consequence either immediately or at some distance. So all the energy that has been accumulated by these rapid filtering down scales and the pieces of canonic writing – if that had just stopped right there and gone back to the first theme, it wouldn't have had its proper release.

CO: So then are we correct in labeling this movement as being in sonata form, or should we say that it is a large ternary form or just sectional?

DM: I think it has enough about it of the sonata form to say that it is in that model. There are the thematic statements; there are the two brief first themes; there is a closing theme and then there is a definite shift of the attitude toward something which is quote unquote "developmental" and a definite movement away out of that; and a return even though it is in different order. So I would tend to vote that it has a stronger relationship to sonata form than it has to any other. So I say this as an interesting thought. There was this person who did a doctoral dissertation on a choral composition of mine, a large piece, and this was at the University of Kentucky and she

was in correspondence with me. She sent me the document and I read it carefully and made extensive thought on it and she brought all that thought back to her committee and they said that they didn't want my intrusion of the project, that they didn't want that element there, which struck me as insane. So I was just thinking that this is sonata form, but you could say well the composer says does that have any authority?

CO: I think it does.

DM: Well finally it is out of my hands [laughs]. Well, do you have more in the first movement that you are thoughtful about?

CO: Not unless we get into my analysis and graphing…

DM: Well, what I would like to do is take a break and we can continue with this at a later time.

CO: Beautiful.

End of tape.

Conversation 2: February 22, 2007. David Maslanka's home. Missoula, Montana.

CO: So when I was initially looking at the third movement, you had commented in your program notes that it was in a Rondo form, so I tried to divide it initially into five large sections. But I had trouble labeling it as a rondo form, as I discovered smaller sections within the large ones. I was wondering whether it would be more appropriate to label the third movement as a sonata-rondo form?

DM: This section that begins at measure 145, very definitely has some character of development to it, but I am more inclined toward thinking of it as a separately related episode. I don't consciously go about this developmental process. I just don't. It doesn't say to me now I

am going to take my motives and twist and turn them and do that. Some of this may happen, and it obviously happens here so you can be led into the thought that this has a quality of development to it. And so you can put it in those terms without necessarily having to create a category to say that this is a sonata-rondo form, you can simply begin…you don't even have to use those words, although I have used the word rondo for this. I have just recognized in my own writing the fact that there exists the return to the primary thematic material on these several occasions and interspersed with things that are not. So in a very general way it relates to that form. But I am much more inclined to thinking about form in terms of dreams. So that in each set stage of the way in a movement like this there is a particular self contained dream-like unit. You can see the relationships. But when the theme comes back, and I guess the classic rondo form can do this as well, when the theme does comes back you do have it with variation often, sometimes not. So these are other visions of the same material, and I tend to think in two directions: one is to think almost of a static dream; and the other is to understand the connection of all this material by a single tension line that carries it through the whole space. So for me, if I were analyzing this piece, I would tend to start there as a thought, as opposed to trying to impose a formal scheme which it may resemble on the surface but may not deeply resemble otherwise. Does that make some sense as an idea?

CO: Yes.

DM: Does that screw up everything you have done so far?

CO: No. The third movement is turning out to be a challenge to look at analytically.

DM: Maybe the simple idea of being in different parts of the forest – now we are looking at this tree, and it's related to other trees, but here it is. If it is possible to characterize each segment in certain ways, that is, to look at it for its own sake, and to simply describe its qualities,

and then possibly to describe how those qualities are the same as and different to the material from which it seems to be related than the outset of the piece, then that might make some sense as a way to go about it. Do you have a requirement to come up for a term for a form for the piece?

CO: No. Although they like you to try and come up with a label for everything, you know how it is?

DM: Yeah I know. So maybe that would loosen up your approach to the piece and be more helpful to see what's there. I would always try to start an analysis from very specific observation as opposed to trying to start from a generalization. Then the generalization has a chance to appear, but it may appear in a surprising way that you'll find you will wind up with a language which you didn't even imagine when you started out. In a way that would then parallel exactly how the composing was done, because I don't start with any sense of any form, and I do work on specifics until they begin to reveal themselves to have a larger shape, but it is not my job to put a label on that larger shape, just to know that it works. Now when you have that opening statement or element from the third movement and to say at measure 34 that you have a second theme…

CO: Well a second section….

DM: There's definitely a sectional quality to it, but there is immediately the same essential material as at measure 5, and then in the left hand of the piano at measure 36 there is the same motivic material that comes out of the original thematic statement from the saxophone.

CO: I suppose, just because of the texture and what's going on it seems appropriate to divide it a little. That's what I was thinking. You do have the stuff coming back from the beginning but there is a lot more happening.

DM: That's true. It does happen in a different way – its imitative, very close imitation. So it has that element, if I were to call anything developmental in a piece, it would be a passage like this. But here strikes me as a very close relationship to baroque music, where the interweaving of lines is the nature of the texture. It is completely contrapuntal, and it is an evolution from the beginning as opposed to a real difference from the beginning. And I would think that one element of baroque music that does often fit into my music, is that once a way of expression starts it tends to stay there for lengths of time. Now what was the baroque expression for the quality of a particular emotional tone or spiritual tone? However you want to describe it, once the music started that's what it did for its duration. Now this piece doesn't obviously do that all the way but in its sections it tends to. Even though you have a sectional nature here starting at measure 34, there is a continuity of intent. It is not like a romantic sonata in which you have first theme and then very clearly, the whole scenery changes and you have second theme and so on.

CO: Okay. How did you figure out the interval where the imitation was going to work melodically?

DM: That's a hard question to answer. It became a thing of interest to me as I started working into it – to see how it what would happen. The experiment to see what interval works best and at what distance is pretty quick, it doesn't take a lot of effort to mess around with it and see where it fits.

CO: Is it a conscious effort that it gets closer and closer together as it goes on?

DM: Yes. And it just kind of crams onto itself. So it is a conscious thing, but it was not a rational design in that there is no number system underneath how it works. It is purely subjective feeling for "Does this feel right to me as a musical thing?" I have a feeling that underneath subjective feelings and that sort, if they are tuned in – by subjective feelings I don't necessarily

mean my whims or my fancies, I mean an awareness or rightness that wants to happen in the music and that's what I always aim for. Its kind of a curious concept to say that there is always what I always refer to as a click point in my brain when I know that something is right. How long a passage needs to be, what's its dynamic nature needs to be, what its harmonic nature and melodic nature…all of these elements when they come together will result in this point of rightness. I don't look at it in a rational way – I am simply listening for that point of rightness. If that happens, then I know that that is okay and I don't go back and feverishly revise and worry that what I have written is not any good, because I know that it is good. It is purely a non rational, or deeply rational way of understanding the music. I am constantly concerned with the relationship of conscious mental processes with an intuitive musical impulse that wants to happen. The intuitive musical impulse has to be the thing that drives everything and that results in a kind of consciousness which isn't about thought, it's about simple awareness. Do you do any meditation?

CO: No.

DM: In the simplest and most direction forms, meditation is about stopping, and that is about stopping your every day thought process. That doesn't mean to hurt yourself by forcefully removing thought from your mind, but it is about being quiet and releasing your conscious mental thinking functions. So if I were to ask you to sit quietly for a few minutes, what would happen is that a lot of thought would happen in your mind. And you have done this any number of times. You have sat quietly or been quiet or been in a place where you are simply waiting for something to happen or been in a class, not paying attention and your mind is going da da da da da. And it will do everything. You will go from this thought to that thought, it will relate to this one. Oh, I was thinking about this I have to do this afternoon or this other thought about the

music and so on. Personal issues, problems, fun things, everything…it just goes da da da da continuously. And if you try to stop that you will find that it is often very difficult to stop that. Meditation is about very direct ways of releasing all of that mental churning. Because most of it doesn't result in anything useful, it is just what the mind is doing because it is awake and active. So the meditative process arrives at a point very, very similar to what it feels like to be in intently in the middle of a good performance. So a performance is in a way, meditation. Because you have released everything else except the fact that this music is flowing through you. You are not thinking about what you had for lunch…you might be! [laughs] Has that ever happened to you? That you were in a performance and all of the sudden an extraneous thought comes to you?

CO: Not that much in performance, but in rehearsals definitely!

DM: I just wanted to connect it to something that you already do very well. So meditation without performance is arriving at the same kind of mental space but without any other things going on. What comes of that is a quality of awareness of your present moment and of yourself in it. No more, no less. Now in that space, once that's arrived at, it is possible to actually listen to your deeper mind, to receive into it things that would be obscured by the chatter, and this is where the deep connection in the pieces of music comes from. So it is my job in actually in composing, composing is its own form of meditation, my job is to release as much as I can of the surface of the mental work that is going on, to be simply not involved with it, and be focused on what I would say wants to happen as opposed to what I am telling it to try and do. So when I say that this idea of the point of rightness is not thinking, it is a deep awareness of something that actually is correct, and which has come through my deeper system and my mind is able to perceive it, to accept. Now there are both performers and composers, some of them can be very good, whose mental activity can not be quieted and who are constantly fretting over what they

have done is right or wrong. You know people of that sort and I know composers of that sort. Some who will be in a rehearsal of a piece of music and are constantly making changes at that point and some big changes, to the extent that I have heard tales of conductors, ushering them out of rehearsal, telling them to sit out there somewhere and we will rehearse the piece, but you, the composer, are not allowed to disrupt it this way. My conductor friend Barry Green who teaches at the University of Miami had this experience with a composer, and I won't mention his name, so it will never get out this way, but who said that he would come into a rehearsal with a new piece that was being rehearsed and the players would be playing things that he didn't have in the score and nobody told him, because the composer had rearranged it all overnight and given it all to the players but not contacted the conductor yet. So you understand what I am saying now with the difference. For me, all that has to be settled before I let a piece of music out. So as far as analysis goes, my thought for you since you are deeply familiar with this music already, would be to listen to your own performance of it, or someone else's, and preferably someone else's whom you haven't heard before. And listen to it, without trying to analyze it. Listen to it until you don't want to listen to it anymore. Because your mind will tell you, "Alright, you have heard enough, its okay." Then begin to let your mind wander over the next little while, several days, to begin to pop up ideas about it and let it speak to you, because you also have that deep function of understanding that already understands in its own way what this is, but it is now trying to give you the verbal language about what's going on here. So I hope that makes sense as a thought. But you might pursue some ideas of meditation for the sake of your own life, and particularly for the sake of performance, to come to that understanding.

CO: Would you mind looking at some of the analysis that I have done so far?

DM: Okay. Would this be easier to do at the keyboard?

CO: No this is fine. So, this is where [showing him my pages of analysis], using quasi-Schenkerian techniques I have tried to bring out what I think is important. Schenker always has the big idea with prolongations, linear progressions, bringing out certain voice leadings…

DM: You can treat me as ignorant of a lot of this, so you can explain it to me and it's alright!

CO: It's just trying to reduce everything down to a basic thing, on different levels. You can have your foreground level where there's a lot more detail, the middleground where there is a bit and the background structure where it is just the bare bones. So this would be considered to be a middleground graph, where I am trying to point out relationships on a surface level and background structure.

DM: So what does this tell you if another person were looking at this that had some knowledge, would you present this as something in your paper?

CO: Yes.

DM: And how would you go about discussing this, or making a verbal presentation about what this means.

CO: Well what I am trying to draw out is the important relationships. Because this is A minor, this is all prolongation of A minor, with the arpeggiation of E, being the dominant. Schenker often likes five line linear progressions to show prolongations in the bass, and so this shows the prolongation of the dominant going into D and then there is an imperfect authentic cadence in D.

DM: But this is not really cadential. It does have that look to it, and it does have a cadential progression, but I would not ever think of it as a cadence in that particular instance [moves to piano, plays progression and hums melody]. It has the motion but it is not cadential in the sense that it doesn't come to a halt in that particular spot. And it's not as if we stopped…

CO: No, it does keep on going on…

DM: So I guess while having that chord pattern you don't have a cadence

CO: I suppose the big thing is a prolongation of tonic as we get back to A minor very quickly…

DM: Yeah, so in a situation like this you do clearly have a cadence effect, a dominant ninth chord going to a dominant seventh chord, extended, extended, extended, and here's your cadence. But it would be in my terminology, if I can dredge it up from a thousand years ago, it would be an elided cadence, the end of one is the beginning of the next. Okay, alright, so this certainly makes sense of a little graph of the harmonic elements that are going on and the fundamental melodic elements. Tell me more…

CO: Going into the second theme. I had graphed the theme in two different ways. In this particular way I was trying to bring out the third melodic motion, but when I had originally done it, I had tried to bring out a descending stepwise progression.

DM: I need to ask a question here…what do you derive from this once you have done this process? What does it tell you that you needed to know about this music?

CO: If I were to look at it this way, there's a lot of fascination with the interval of a third on a foreground surface structure level, along with a background level later on as well.

DM: So, how far have you gone with your analysis?

CO: Basically I have done the whole exposition and recapitulation of the first movement. I have also graphed the second movement entirely and completed parts of the third movement because I wasn't sure how to approach some of it using these techniques.

DM: Alright. Now, without saying that this is right or wrong, or even bringing into question whether this is a useful thing to do, it certainly can have its uses. It is not a way I would

personally go about analyzing anything. Of course, I am not right the right person to ask about that.

CO: I was just wondering what your thoughts were, because I have two different ways of graphing the theme. And with Schenker they say that there is no incorrect answer, it is just what you think should be brought out in the music.

DM: Which ones appeals to you most?

CO: I am kind of stuck between the two.

DM: Is there some way to incorporate both ideas into a single graphing of the piece, or do they do two different things.

CO: Well this one is bringing out a linear progression with stepwise motion and the prolongation of chord one, while the other is showing motion in thirds

DM: And the third motion you are referring to as specifically as what? The way in which E-C, D-B and so on?

CO: Yes, E-C, D-B, C-A and then a third going up.

DM: Now, this is a very local thing happening and something of a surface manner. Now does this give you what you need to know about the longer sense of harmonic motion? Yes, you have begun to work it through there. And having done this, what does it tell you about harmonic language in the piece? Can you make some thought about the nature in which harmony works once you have done an analysis of this sort?

CO: What was interesting for me was looking at the way in which you go from section to section. A lot of stepwise, or parsimonious voice leading…it wasn't traditional cadences where you are going to see cadential patterns, it is a lot of step wise voice leading.

DM: Does that thought come out of this analysis?

CO: Yes, it does come across.

DM: I think the fundamental question I am asking you is whether you have started with Schenkerian analysis as a method and then attempted to do that analysis on consecutive portions of the piece? Does it give you the kind of larger insight into the music that you are looking for? It may in certain degrees do that, or does it act as a block to see a different way of seeing the piece? So if you start with an official analysis procedure, which is a Schenkerian nature, because of its way in which it works, does it limit you in how you view your piece? Is that a fair question?

CO: I think no matter what method you use there are going to be limitations.

DM: There are. So I am beginning to ask the question about not starting with a method. Now these are tools that are given, and again, you may go back to your committee and say the composer is making a problem for you and you may not want to listen to all I have to say here. The thing that I do bring up and I do think we have had quite a bit of talk about so far, is that deeply intuitive approach to analysis in the same way in which you have a deeply intuitive approach to performance and I have to composing. If you were able to start with thoughts of the way in which cadences work and what you heard. Did you get your cadence idea from the analysis procedure or was it a thought that arrived simply because it arrived?

CO: No, through the analysis procedure.

DM: Yeah, the analysis gave that idea to you? Alright. Well I am not rejecting this I am simply asking the question whether this is the thing that will get you to the core of what you are trying to find. Now I am not given to charts of this sort personally, this is me personally. I am not saying that this is wrong for you to do or that you should not do it. I say if this is working for you and gives you a way of looking at the piece that you find valuable and in which you can

communicate to someone so there is value communicated to them about the nature of the piece, that's of consequence, as opposed to having a statement that you alone understand.

CO: Right. Well you have to be able to make or help other people understand it. You can't just throw these graphs in front of someone because they will say "What is that?" They will have no idea. Going through the music, what I found to be interesting with some of the bass graphs I have made is like here, at measure 92 in the second movement. This is a pattern that has come out quite a bit. Essentially there is a movement in the bass line from a B-flat down to an A-flat, so it is an octave plus a whole step…a prolongation is happening moving down by whole steps. This occurs in a few places so I was wondering whether this was a conscious or unconscious thing? Actually, the first time it happens is at measure 49, with the movement from E-D as an octave plus a whole step in the bass line.

DM: My way of looking at it would be to go back to the beginning. [plays opening, whole step down, cadential pattern in a sense, then down, bass line goes down and so on…]

CO: How would you label those chords at the end there?

DM: Very nice [laughs]

CO: Well they sound very nice but I don't know how I would label them?

DM: [looks on next page] Again a cadential pattern that has to be seen in the terms of what is coming up next. So if you wanted to think about your harmonic analysis, this in relationship to this motion is real stinky. Let's see? [tinkers around more] My ear would tell me at this point that we are in the area of B major, to B minor, dominant F-sharp minor, the transition point away from B, we go to A major, which is the dominant of the dominant of G, then this [hums and plays]. You may even think of these just as chromatic passing tones to a very complex dominant of G minor. Then we have modal minor. The reality here is that the harmony here is very

slippery. It does, you could look at it in big terms, move from C minor to G minor, but the path is really tricky. The only thing that I can say about the way the harmony works is that my ear moves me in that direction. I am not sitting here doing analysis of these chords, ever, because it doesn't matter to me. It is purely "Does it sound right?" Continuously pure, "Does this sound right?" So a passage like this is not working in any theory, it is just because these chords sound correct. If hard pressed I could probably do a decent harmonic analysis on the piece. Well, does that help you at all I hope?

CO: Yes. I was just wondering about this octave plus a whole step pattern?

DM: You will find that, and you can say with some assertive power that this is true in this piece, but it was not a conscious necessarily.

CO: Okay, that is all I was wondering, whether it was a conscious means of prolongation or whether that was just what your ear led you to and that's what happened? The other thing too is the idea of octatonicism and how those things have come out? But I suppose I asked a bit about this yesterday and it was just a means of your ear. One other question I had was with the third movement, when you have the movement in the accompaniment at measure 12 with the movement from B-C in the accompaniment. Obviously this is C minor, but would you include the B as a chord tone and is that questioning our thoughts of consonance versus dissonance?

DM: Well the B really is a leading tone into the C and it is used that way in the piano part so it is continually B-C-B-C-B-C-B-C and then it is stretched out in the voice of the saxophone. So I would not think of it as a chord tone. It is definitely a non-chord tone there, even though it hangs around to see whether you like it I guess.

CO: When it moves down in measure 20 from B-flat to B-natural, then what would you consider to be a chord-tone? If you were to do a harmonic analysis and the same when it moves from A to B-flat and moves down again? And how did you come about writing that?

DM: I would say that in this passage that your tonality is clearly C minor and that you are doing a linear motion down through the potential scale tones of the key of C minor. You can have those chromatic scale tones of B, B-flat, A-natural and this is simply working its way down through those and these can be seen more as a line sense rather than a harmonic sense. It does result in harmonies of course but we essentially have a leading tone moving to another tone, the B-flat is a leading tone to a leading tone. So I think what you have to consider where it's going and it arrives at that A-flat as a significant stopping point, and then it gets to the G-natural only in measure 34-35 in the piano part. So you have some small element of resolution of that tension of the A-flat chord there at that point. So there's a resolution point of that sense of moving from C to B to B-flat to A to A-flat and then finally to G. So all the way from measure 12-34 is actually quite simple in the key of C minor with these added tones, if you want to put it that way. The added tones then form a chromatic motion within the framework of this stable harmony that bring the ear to that longer tension point when the A-flat kicks in at measure 24, where A-flat is clearly fixed in the stages there. So in my own thinking harmonically in my music, I think that my harmonic language is really quite simple and that I devote long stretches either to harmonic preparation like this A-flat that comes into play at measure 24 which is then, because of its length will give an impression of being a thing itself. Because it is extended in time you begin to trust that that is your harmonic center but it isn't. It is still old relationship to C in this particular case and then it comes immediately back and gives you a touch of resolution in measure 34 before it darts off in a new direction. So I think that the ear is carried through this music by

those longer areas of tonal stability, simply by keeping a certain harmony for a length of time you get a sense of well "We are here now and we can rest our ears in that particular spot," regardless of the surface complexity of it. And then there are times when there is movement and you have to move along with that movement aurally. But fundamentally it always comes back to the simple tonal center and a lot of diatonic movement. So yes, you can see the whole steps down and the whole steps down, but I think if you can take in the bigger picture of these arrival points, and you can focus on what those might be then that might be very helpful. Am I saying anything useful? I have a feeling like sometimes I talk to much [nervous laugh]?

CO: No, not at all. It is all very useful. Definitely.

DM: Let me have a thought before we go on – that I really do think my harmonic language is essentially simple, and in a movement like this, the relationship between C and A-flat is probably the primary one. So if your ear and your intuition can lead you to the direction that it is simple harmonic language and it is almost child-like in the simple harmonic language. I have often wondered about that, because I just have a fascination with particular sounds and particular relationships and they keep coming up again and again. So the third relationship between C major and A-flat major are comparable things, very interesting to me, always, continuously for years and years and it keeps happening. So I think that would be very useful that your ears tell you those kinds of things, and then you can begin to evolve a theory that will fit the actual aural perception. And I think that for me that would mean coming at it from a bigger distance as opposed to getting stuck on individual chords and sonorities at this point. You have done a lot of work already on trying to figure things out.

CO: Yes. I think it is a lot easier to see the bigger picture. Yes I get that, I know what is happening but I was trying to delve more into it and get into the nitty gritty which is what is hard. And if it can't be done, it can't be done.

DM: I think it can be done in the sense of always understanding where your connecting points are. That is, where the music has its arrival points, and where there are held points of a longer presentation of a single harmony. That may be a useful thought if you were to go through and say in this passage the fundamental harmony is sustained for this length of time, and in this passage it is sustained here, so that you see areas of fundamental sustained harmony in the movement and maybe how they relate to one another as a thought. Then it becomes easier to understand the connective tissue. And for me, the harmonic connective tissue as you have already pointed out is often by the change of a single note, the change of a second note, and a change of something else. So when you started in C minor you are suddenly in A-flat minor or some other area, and there is no plan other than the intuitive one that says that this was the right thing to do under the circumstances.

CO: Okay, great. Let's see if there is anything else I need to ask concerning analysis? [fumble through pages] No. I did have another question though that I was interested in regards to interpretation. And obviously, a few people have recorded the sonata, and I know that you worked very closely with Steve Jordheim in that recording, but I was wondering if you have heard other interpretations where there are things that you do like or don't like, or if there are things that people may misinterpret when playing the piece?

DM: Okay. There have been some very good recordings of it. There is Steve Jordheim's and two recent ones, Otis Murphy and Masato Kumoi, who just came out with it. Who else were you thinking of?

CO: Ken Tse.

DM: Yes, this has been some years now since he did that. Now all of these, and there have been several others – I can't think of names at the moment – that have been very good, some of them more so. Some have worked with me and some have not. Russell Peterson also did a very fine recording of the *Sonata* as well. I didn't work necessarily with Russell to build that interpretation; he is just a very intuitive good player. The ones I have liked – I liked Russell Peterson's very much, and Steve Jordheim's very much. Now I remember having some thoughts about Kenneth Tse that I wished he had been in touch with me when he made this piece, but I do not remember now what that was about. But that's been a while now. Now, Otis did his on his own, but he has played the piece a lot and continues to do. He has taken it a lot of places, and I thought that his awareness of the piece was very, very good, and his wife Haruko is a remarkable piano player and they perform together, so I liked that a bunch. The newest one with Masato Kumoi came as all his stuff does – out of the blue, without any input from me – and it is a very, very good piece of work. The thing I like about it and this is not saying things about the other performances, because I am very, very pleased with what people have done with this piece. It is clear to me that Masato Kumoi has thought deeply about every issue in the piece. There isn't anything that hasn't escaped a very deep attention. He is technically on top of everything and then there is a quality of depth in the sound of the play which is quite extraordinary. Again I do not wish this to be said that the others don't have this – they have it differently. I am just focusing on this one because it is the first one that came to my mind. I think a fundamental issue for players, there are several fundamental issues – one is to get on top of the technique of the piece, which is a high challenge, I know that. And I want to thank people for doing that because you take seriously what's on the page there [laughs] and it is serious, but it just means that you

have to work in a certain way that you might not for other kinds of pieces. The relationship between the piano and the saxophone is one of equals. Now the performances that I have liked less have been those that have tried to place the saxophone forward as a soloist with the pianist less in a present mode, and that doesn't do what the piece does. So it is a collaboration of equals here.

CO: Definitely, they have to put quite a bit of work into it as well. It is not an easy piano part by any means.

DM: No, it is not. And it is not simply lay back and accompany.

CO: Are you a pianist yourself?

DM: No. I play moderately well but I will never play in public. It's not what I do. I was a clarinet player to begin with and the piano was a learned thing over many years, starting when I went to the university for the first time at H.A.T. I had never played a piano before that. So I work through everything on the piano writing in my own hands so I know the feel of it and how it works. And I have been told that my piano writing is its self. That is, once a pianist gets into it, they begin to understand the logic of it, but it is not like other piano music [laughs] for someone that a skilled player might do.

CO: And is there anything else that you would like performers or the audience to know about the piece in general? Or with interpretation, or advice on how to tackle it?

DM: Well I think what has emerged in the performance of the piece over time, and the fact that I have been able to contribute to a number of these performances, is the very passionate nature of the music. So there are extremes. And that performer has to be not only technically equipped but emotionally equipped to allow that to happen. So you tell me as a performer, you are normal

looking person [laughs]. What happens to you when you get into this piece? How do you describe what you are moved to do as you perform this piece?

CO: I am transformed into another world.

DM: Can you say more about that, what that world is? I am putting you on the spot now… [laughs]

CO: It is dreamlike for me. I get certain pictures and images as I am playing. Its great to be able to play something with so much passion and so many differing emotions, and it's a challenge to try and bring that out within the music.

DM: Is the length of the piece problematic at all, in terms of endurance and the ability to deal with all the varieties of things in it?

CO: For me, not really. But then again, I made sure on my recital that that was the first piece. I scheduled that first as the opening piece because of the length and because of the audience too. Hopefully they are more attentive in the beginning when they come in and you are not going to bore them.

DM: I just wondered if, I don't know, does an audience need to be warmed up to a piece like this or is it alright to go straight into it?

CO: I went straight into it. Especially because it opens with the single A on the piano. I tuned prior to the beginning of the recital, went offstage, everyone came in and we just played. People thought originally that the pianist was playing an A for me to tune too and then I started playing and they were like "What, this is the piece already?" And they were kind of shocked.

DM: [laughter]

CO: But because of the length and endurance I did put it first. But in all of our recitals we play so much challenging stuff, stuff that is challenging on the chops, so it is just a matter of picking and choosing what should go where.

DM: Yes. Speaking of players. I was just thinking now do you know the man who teaches at Eastman? A Chinese man, teaches saxophone? His name is not coming to mind but he did a remarkable performance. He did a Carnegie Hall recital last year and sent me a recording from that, and that was very, very fine. Well, I have a real warm place for this piece still. It seems to endure well, after all these years – 1988, it has been nineteen years. It took a while for it to come into focus as a piece that people were interested in, it had its first performance in 1989, and thereafter it took quite a while before it got any other performance. Then Steve Jordheim did it, and then it took quite a while before there were other performances, but then there was a gradual increase and awareness of the piece that seems to be something that continues to attract players. But it has about it for me just a long stretch of life, and I don't think that music is autobiographical in the sense that you can then write out something about a composer or a person from the music, but it is…music is a thing which opens the mind, and my experience of it over the years is that it has been the thing that has continued to act on my conscious mind from an unconscious position, forcing me to come to terms with myself. So, a piece like this is one part of that journey, and I would think that of any composer that is serious about it, that you could begin at the beginning of that person's work and simply line up all the pieces and be able to trace out the nature of elimination of coming to awareness over that long stretch of time. Some composers seem to have a disconnect between their musical lives and their personal lives and this seems to me to be a phenomena to be observed of a lot of older composers. And some of my favorites are the people who had the hardest struggles with this relationship of musical life and

personal life. Mozart was one who was clearly a genius of the highest order in music, but had a messy personal life and was not able to reconcile the two. And personally, Wagner, who was an amazing musician and many ways a hateful human being. Mussorgsky is another favorite who struggled with alcohol, and died in his early forties from alcohol. He was not able to reconcile the troubles of the mind, and his own subconscious difficulties with that powerful musical thing that was working through him. There are other composers who were a lot more balanced, but I think I have been very sympathetic to those who did not have the balance. Because I also started my young life without the balance and got into some very deep trouble and had to figure things out, and music was the life raft that kept bringing me back to the reconciliation of the unconscious impulse to make music and the need for the conscious mind to receive it. I had a very clear realization one day, and I can even remember where I was. I was sitting in a pizza shop in Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn, in New York and that would have to have been around 1985, maybe earlier, probably earlier. So that it became suddenly clear to me that I had a responsibility to the musical thing that was trying to happen, to work at a clarification of another life so that all the emotional or deeper issues that were clouded and not clear had to be worked on and worked out, so that the music had the capacity to flow in its own way, much less impeded by my conscious mind. At this point in my life I have a clear sense that my mind is quite clear. I still have my issues, but I am not troubled by very much in terms of, I know how at least to work with the issues so they are not impeding the musical flow. So I think for performers that this is the same path. That the clarity of your performance and the power of your performance depends on the capacity for you to release the conscious mind into the performance, as opposed to being someway impeded by it. So the whole issue of nervousness, let's say people who get nervous before a performance. Some of that is going to happen some people get horribly nervous who

are still good performers. But that is an issue for them, which they then have to go deeply into and resolve to some degree, if not all the way, to play well. So this piece is now, as far as my mental and emotional life goes, historical [laughs]. It's still alive and very much alive for me. There is no denying of this piece at all, I love it.

End of tape.

Conversation 3: This occurred as we were packing up and David started talking about Barney Childs as an afterthought, so I stopped him and continued recording.

DM: At measure 301 in the third movement is a note that says, "remembering Barney Childs, *The Edge of the World*." Barney Childs was a California composer. He taught at Redlands University towards the end of his life and he was a friend. So he was born I think in 1927, and lived about seventy years, so he died in the late 1990's. And he was one of the first people beyond my official teachers who I think of as a mentor. I met Barney at the McDowell Colony when I was there the first time, and he took an immediate liking to my music and thought there was a lot of capacity and that things would evolve for me over time. So he was a composer of a very different kind than I was – he did not have systems but was given to a very condensed, epigrammatic, sometimes plain old weird kind of musical thinking. So very much in some forms of minimalist new music, minimalist not in the sense of repeated patterns, but of "not much there" on the page. But there is a piece of his called *The Edge of the World* for bass clarinet and organ, which has been recorded, but I don't know where you would get a recording of it any more. But some of the qualities that came from that recording just came to mind and reminded me what was happening as I produced this passage here for this braying kind of quality.

CO: I wish that had been written on the saxophone part. If you weren't looking at the piano part you wouldn't know it is there. My pianist, well I have had two people accompany me on this piece over the past four years, and neither of them had mentioned it.

DM: And so, just as a further reference point. We talked about Gesualdo, and Allen Pettersson, and Franz Liszt. I think a fourth name to be added to that list would be Francis Poulenc. When I was a student I was very fond of his music. I played the Clarinet Sonata. My sense of my own sonata writing or solo plus piano writing for wind instruments starts there. Poulenc was a modernist in the early twentieth-century idea, but certainly not a modernist in the mid-to-late-twentieth-century idea. In fact, his music would be seen as not modern at all in that regard. He was given to a very clear and open harmonic language, and a melody writing which was very classical and Mozartian in its nature. And that's what I liked best and that's where my music started. I seemed to have leapt across and ignored all of what is called modern music from roughly 1950 to 1980 or 1990, but I have simply not gone there, and taken as my model these much older composers and older styles.

End of conversation.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Composer David Maslanka has made many valuable contributions to the saxophone's repertoire. The *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* is just one of these works at the forefront of saxophone literature, challenging both amateur and professional saxophonists to conquer this demanding work. His writing encompasses a range of traditional and modern elements. The traditional elements involved include the use of "classical" forms, a simple harmonic language, and the lyrical, vocal qualities of the saxophone. The contemporary elements include the use of extended techniques such as multiphonics, slap tongue, manipulation of pitch, extreme dynamic ranges, and the multitude of notes in the altissimo range.

The discussion of harmonic structure reveals the use of traditional forms throughout the *Sonata.* Maslanka's use of traditional forms is rooted in the influences of numerous composers. He makes reference to the Liszt *B-minor Piano Sonata*, stating that as "the themes worked themselves out in the first movement they bore some resemblance in my mind to the quality of that writing."[20] Francis Poulenc was another musician influencing Maslanka's style of sonata writing. Of Poulenc, Maslanka says "he was given to a very clear and open harmonic language, and a melody writing which was very classical and Mozartian in its nature. And that's what I liked best and that's where my music started."[21] In the first movement of the sonata, the themes are simple but lyrical with a clear and open harmonic language, bearing a close resemblance to a sonata form movement. The second movement is an undisclosed song form, although melodic material is brought back as a unifying device. The first theme of the sonata form movement appears in the middle section of the second movement as a cyclic element, as well as a return to

[20] David Maslanka, interview by Camille Olin, 21-22 February 2007, Missoula, 65.
[21] Ibid., 100.

the opening material near the end of the movement. The third movement is in another traditional form, rondo, featuring a recurring theme between intervening episodes of contrasting thematic material. This movement also displays the widest use of canonic imitation between the saxophone and piano, governing formal divides within the music.

The harmonic language of the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* could be described as primarily tonal. The interval of a third is explored not only melodically and harmonically, but also as the basis for building triads and extended chords through the stacking of thirds. The use of functional harmony occurs within phrases, yet there are places where step-wise voice leading predominates as a vehicle for moving from one tonality to another, especially in the second movement. "Intensity of expression" is an important phrase to be used in conjunction with this piece and Maslanka. In reference to Gesualdo, Maslanka states "He uses what we call a tonal language but used it very freely, so qualities of chords were used in juxtaposition with each other as a way of heightening expression. That way of thinking and feeling impressed me very deeply and it came out in this piece."[22] There are also many long sections within the *Sonata* where a tonal sonority is extended for a long period of time using different prolongational methods. This element of Maslanka's writing was highly influenced by the Swedish composer Allen Pettersson in both the first and third movements. "The sheer force of an unrelenting return to given material and given tonalities, and for long stretches of time a tonality would stay in a single area. There would be a lot of activity, but the fundamental would be that single harmonic place, a tonal place rather than a harmonic place. And the minor key is preferred as the foundation for a very dissonant kind of music."[23] The outer movements are both in minor keys, A minor and C minor respectively, with large periods containing a statement of a single tonality.

[22] David Maslanka, interview by Camille Olin, 21-22 February 2007, Missoula, 65.
[23] Ibid., 64.

The technical demands required of the saxophonist include a fluid fingering technique and the mastery of several extended techniques, especially the altissimo range. Melodies often lie between the divide in what is considered to be the "normal" and upper registers, yet there are extended periods when the melodic material is contained within the altissimo range alone, requiring great endurance and flexibility of the performer. In relation to the writing in the altissimo register, Maslanka states "I just understood from players that this was possible and this was about how far you can go, and I just wrote the music because that's what I want to hear. I am sure there are things I could have written differently had I known what I was doing, but there it is, and it seems to have extended people's thinking about certain aspects of that upper register."[24] Other extended techniques include the use of multi-phonics, chosen at the discretion of the performer, slap-tongue effects, and the bending of pitch. Extremities of the dynamic range are also explored, requiring great control to provide the contrasts needed.

The *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* by David Maslanka is a work that exhibits the extreme versatility of the saxophone as a lyrical and technically demanding instrument. By grounding the foundation of the music into a tonal piece with traditional forms, the contemporary techniques are seamlessly incorporated resulting in a challenging and exciting work to be performed by the saxophone and pianist as equals. It is the author's wish that this document will lead to further study and performance of David Maslanka's works for the saxophone.

[24] David Maslanka, interview by Camille Olin, 21-22 February 2007, Missoula, 62.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ammer, Christine. *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Music.* New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995.

Bleuel, John Stephen. "A Descriptive Catalog of the Solo and Chamber Saxophone Music of Lucie Robert." DMA diss., University of Georgia, 1998.

Brooks, John Patrick. "An analysis of David Maslanka's *Concerto for Piano, Winds, and Percussion*." DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1995.

Caravan, Ronald L. *"Paradigms I for Alto Saxophone: 10 Graded Compositions Using Contemporary Techniques.* Medfield MA: Dorn Publications, 1976.

Maslanka, David. www.davidmaslanka.com. Internet: first accessed September, 2005.

Maslanka, David. *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano.* North American Saxophone Alliance, 1988.

Peterson, Russell. "Interview with David Maslanka." *Saxophone Symposium* 24 (Fall 1999): 105-119.

Randel, Don Michael, ed. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*. London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982, 1986.

Rousseau, Eugene. *Saxophone High Tones: A Systematic Approach to the Extension of the Range of the Saxophones: Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Baritone.* Saint Louis MO: MMB Music, Inc., 2004.

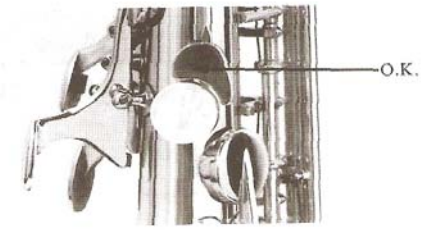
Straus, Joseph N. *Introduction to Post-tonal Theory.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000.

Turpen, Jennifer Lynn. "A Descriptive Catalog of the Solo and Chamber Works for the Saxophone by Jindrich Feld." DMA diss., University of Georgia, 2000.

Varner, Michael Lynn. "*Arcadia II* for Marimba and Percussion Ensemble and *Concerto for Marimba and Band*, a lecture recital, together with three recitals of selected works of K. Abe, M. Burritt, J. Serry, and others (Keiko Abe, Michael Burritt, John Serry)." DMA diss., University of North Texas, 1999.

APPENDIX

SAXOPHONE FINGERING CHART



Left Thumb