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# On the Interrelatedness in Vytautas Bacevičius' Musical Language: Two Analyses

*Vidiniai Vytauto Bacevičiaus muzikos kalbos ryšiai: dviejų kūrinių analizė*

## Abstract

An analysis of two representative piano compositions by Vytautas Bacevičius, *Quatrième mot*, Op. 31, and the first movement of Sonata No. 4, Op. 53, looks not only at tonal and formal aspects of each composition, but also examines how these aspects interact (or react) with other musical elements and compositional techniques peculiar to Bacevičius. This integrated approach allows one to recognize and appreciate a unique set of forces and interactions at work in each particular piece, resulting in (or springing from?) highly individual architectonic concepts. Controlling harmonic forces and their tonal implications is one of the principal challenges facing composers working in a post-tonal (or pantonal) idiom. In *Quatrième mot*, a sense of tonal center is controlled and varied by using harmonically neutral chordal structures. In the first movement of Sonata No. 4, the same objective is achieved by an extensive use of the fragmentation and rearrangement technique. While both of these devices have an effect of concealing a sense of tonal center, they are occasionally used by Bacevičius to achieve an opposite effect – to “construct” a tonal center (a traditional one in the Sonata, a binary one in *Quatrième mot*, the latter being accomplished by simultaneous processes, understood in the context of *Evolutionsform*).

**Keywords:** Vytautas Bacevičius, piano, pantonal idiom, fragmentation, rearrangement, tonal definition, binary tonal center, *mot*, *Evolutionsform*.

## Anotacija

Dviejų reprezentatyvių Vytauto Bacevičiaus kūrinių fortepijonui *Quatrième mot* („Ketvirtas žodis“), op. 31, ir Ketvirtosios sonatos, op. 53, pirmos dalies analizėje nagrinėjami ne tik kiekvieno kūrinių tonaciniai ir formų aspektai, bet ir šių aspektų sąveika (ar reakcija) su kitais V. Bacevičiaus būdingais muzikos elementais ir komponavimo technikomis. Toks integruotas metodas leidžia atpažinti ir įvertinti kiekviena konkrečiame kūrinyje randamus unikalios jėgų ir sąveikų derinius, sukuriančius ypač individualius architektoninius sprendimus (ar iš tų sprendimų kylančius?). Harmonijos veiksnių ir jų tonacinių implikacijų valdymas yra vienas pagrindinių iššūkių, su kuriais susiduria kompozitoriai, kuriantys posttonaliu (ar pantonaliu) stiliumi. „Ketvirtame žodyje“ tonacinio centro pojūtis yra kontroliuojamas ir varijuojamas naudojant neutralias akordų struktūras. Ketvirtosios sonatos pirmoje dalyje šis tikslas pasiekiamas plačiai naudojant fragmentacijos ir perstatymo techniką. Nors abi šios priemonės sukuria tonacinio centro pojūčio paslėpimo efektą, V. Bacevičiaus kūryboje jos kartais naudojamos, kad būtų pasiektas priešingas poveikis, t. y. „sukonstruotas“ tonacinis centras (tradicinis Sonatoje ir binarinis „Ketvirtame žodyje“, kur jis užbaigiamas paraleliai vykstančiais procesais, suprantamais *Evolutionsform* kontekste).

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** Vytautas Bacevičius, fortepijonas, pantonacinė idioma, fragmentacija, perstatymas, tonacijos apibrėžtumas, binarus tonacijos centras, *mot*, *Evolutionsform*.

## Introduction

After decades of relative neglect due to unfortunate political circumstances, the composer and pianist Vytautas Bacevičius has finally acquired recognition as one of the most important figures of Lithuanian musical culture. The centennial of Bacevičius' birth in 2005 provided a significant impetus for studying and reviving his music. A number of monographic studies, articles, and conference reports have been published over the past decade. However, there is still a shortage of focused musicological inquiry into Bacevičius' musical language. The most comprehensive and in-depth work on this subject remain a bachelor's and a master's theses by the musicologist Eglė Gudžinskaitė, dealing with tonal and formal aspects<sup>1</sup> of selected piano works.

While indebted to Gudžinskaitė's work, the author of this article believes that there is a great deal to be learned by a comprehensive, integrated, “holistic” analysis of Bacevičius' musical idiom as revealed in specific compositions. This approach would involve not only looking at tonal or formal aspects of a particular composition, but also examining how these aspects interact (or react) with other musical elements and compositional techniques peculiar to Bacevičius, resulting in highly individual architectonic concepts. The author believes that the key to the concept of each composition lies in finding a “matching” analytical approach, which would allow a unique set of forces and interactions in a particular piece to be properly understood and appreciated.

The following analyses of two contrasting piano compositions by Bacevičius will attempt to highlight

an impressive range of compositional devices as well as a sophisticated originality and interrelatedness of the Lithuanian composer's musical language.

### *Quatrième mot*, Op. 31

Managing harmonic forces and their tonal implications is one of the main challenges facing composers working in a post-tonal (or pantonal<sup>2</sup>) idiom. In *Quatrième mot*<sup>3</sup>, written in 1938, Bacevičius finds and goes on to masterfully exercising an imaginative and sophisticated means to vary and control a sense of tonal center and even to construct a binary tonal center, with the help of harmonically neutral chordal structures, in this case, an all-permeating augmented triad with an added ninth. Through a gradual transformation, an augmented triad acquires a new meaning: in its ability to combine two tonal centers a half-step apart, it embodies a new concept of the tonic chord. For the augmented triad's newfound role as a binary tonic chord to be fulfilled, a parallel process of establishing two tonal centers half-step apart is taking place. Thus, the use of the augmented triad to embody either tonal ambiguity or a binary tonality (and a transformation from the first function to the second) encapsulates the architectonic concept of *Quatrième mot*.

The type of form created by dynamic processes moving toward a certain goal, and projecting itself to both past and future musical events, has been described as *Evolutionsform* by Dietrich Mast in his study on Skriabin's piano sonatas<sup>4</sup>, and suggested by Gudžinskaitė as a useful model in analyzing some *Mots* by Bacevičius. *Quatrième mot* is a perfect example of *Evolutionsform*. Its architectonic concept is defined by gradual transformations that bring together essential unifying elements of the composition in such a way that the meaning and direction of these transformations are properly understood only upon their completion.

In an important letter to Milda Kazakevičienė<sup>5</sup>, Vytautas Bacevičius attributed *Quatrième mot* to a group of works whose style he called "new modernism." According to him, these works are characterized by angular rhythms, varied articulation, and accents (primitivism), and influenced by Prokofiev and Stravinsky. It might be added that the importance of a raised fifth (discussed below) and the style and texture of the composition's first part suggest the influence of Skriabin as well.

*Quatrième mot* unfolds in four distinct parts, which are set apart by the use of double bars (between parts A and B, and B and C), and different tempi (between parts B and C, and C and D). Gudžinskaitė's work was most useful in identifying different types of formal structures of the individual parts<sup>6</sup>. Gudžinskaitė's scheme of main tonal centers was adopted as well, although with considerable adjustments (see example 1). The limitations of Gudžinskaitė's analysis lie in its failure to identify any common threads running through the whole composition; each of the four part is viewed as a closed structure, without sharing any melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic elements with the other parts. Only the quickening tempo and some harmonic logic are credited with shaping the composition's overall form<sup>7</sup>.

In fact, one particular sonority unifies the whole composition. It is an augmented triad with added tones, most often a major ninth. After firmly establishing itself at the beginning, this sonority appears at structural points throughout the piece. Because of the chord's characteristic sonority regardless of its various enharmonic spellings and its harmonic context, it will be described throughout as an augmented triad, and not as a major triad with a raised fifth in its different inversions. Similarly, when an augmented triad appears with an added ninth, it will be called so, even though (because of the symmetry of an augmented triad) the added tone could be interpreted as a sixth, fourth, or second. This simplification will serve

	Part I			Part II							
Sections	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b1</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>c1</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f1</i>	
Measures	1-3	4-11	12-17	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-36	37-41	42-52	53-61	
Tonal centers	---				<i>F (and E-flat)</i>						

  

	Part III		Part IV				Coda			
<i>g</i>	<i>g1</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>j1</i>	<i>j2</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>i1</i>	
62-72	73-82	83-108	109-129	130-137	138-145	146-153	154-178	179-189	190-201	
<i>D</i>	<i>B-flat - E-flat - E - B</i>								<i>E - E-flat - B-flat - G-flat - E - B - E-flat</i>	

Example 1. *Quatrième mot*, Tonal and formal structure

the purpose of recognizing the chord's identity and, consequently, its overarching significance.

An augmented triad (hereafter marked <triad or <5) with a major ninth is firmly established at the very beginning of *Quatrième mot*. As can be seen in m. 1 (ex. 2, mm. 1–7), an initial melodic ascent in the bass outlines an <triad, and the only new tone contributed by the right hand's entrance is a major ninth (*e-flat'*). After being established as an initial sonority, an augmented triad with a major ninth (hereafter called <5<sup>maj9</sup>) appears in section *a* (mm. 1–3, as shown in ex. 1) on every quarter-note except for two (see ex. 2). In the following section *b* (mm. 4–11), the <5<sup>maj9</sup> continues to be used with great frequency: it appears in every measure, in most of them two or more times. The second case of a rare linear (melodic) appearance of an <5 is in m. 6 (ex. 2). It is ascending, just as in the opening measure, but this time it is a confident gesture in accented *forte* octaves, with a syncopated major ninth pulsating in the middle. After section *b1* (a variant of *b*), and a recapitulation of the virtually unchanged section *a*, a new part B is announced (m. 21) with another upward sweep through an <5, again including a major ninth (ex. 3).

After being firmly established in the previous part, an <5 with a major (or minor) ninth is not encountered with such great frequency in the rest of part B (notably, it is totally absent in sections *d* and *e*, mm. 31–41). But when it does appear, it is presented in an articulated form, highlighted by voicing, dynamics, repetition, expression markings, rhythmic placement, and particular placement within phrases. For instance, after opening part B in m. 21, the <5<sup>maj9</sup> is used in the second half of m. 23, where it is repeated twice (ex. 3). Then the whole five-measure phrase (mm. 21–25) is reiterated in a transposed and mirror-like form (mm. 26–30, same ex.). In sections *f* and *f2*, the <5, with either a major or minor ninth, appears most emphatically in *recitativo* sections (mm. 45–47 and 55–56, see ex. 4 for the second of them). Here it is given in the outer voices and on downbeats, with most of its tones held through the measure. Perhaps not accidental, then, is also the use of the <5 with added ninths on the only two chords in the whole *B* part that are marked *fortissimo*: the third quarter of m. 50 and the first quarter of m. 51 (taking into account *G1* in the bass, same ex.).

Example 2. *Quatrième mot*, mm. 1–7

Example 3. *Quatrième mot*, mm. 21–37

Example 4. *Quatrième mot*, mm. 50–60

In part C (mm. 62–81), the  $\langle 5$  becomes an *ostinato* figure. In fact, two different  $\langle$ triads (based on the note *d* in the left hand, and on *a* in the right hand) turn into *ostinato* figures, unfolding simultaneously (ex. 5). The one based on *d* can be considered primary, because its bass also functions as the tonal center throughout the part. The simultaneous  $\langle$ triads provide the material for *ostinato* figures at the beginning of each of the two sections making up this part (in mm. 62–65 and mm. 75–76).

In part D, the  $\langle 5$  is as frequently complemented by a major seventh as by the expected major or minor ninth (see, for instance, m. 85 in ex. 6, or m. 109 in ex. 7).

Example 5. *Quatrième mot*, mm. 61–77

(Again, the added note is called a major seventh despite possible interpretations of it as an added fifth.) In this, by far the most expansive of all parts, the  $\langle 5$  is not only less well defined (with its variety of added tones) but also used more sparingly (reasons for this will be discussed below). For example, unlike in the preceding parts, which invariably opened with an  $\langle 5$ , in part D the first appearance of this chord is delayed until the third measure (m. 85, ex. 6). When it is used, however, its placement is structurally significant. For instance, an  $\langle 5$  with a major seventh starts (m. 109) and ends (mm. 126–129) section *i*, in the latter case marked *sfz* and repeated twice (ex. 7).

Example 6. *Quatrième mot*, mm. 78–94

Example 7. *Quatrième mot*, mm. 107–130

Section *j2* starts with  $\langle 5^{\text{maj}} \rangle$  (m. 146), and the same type of chord comes into full force on *fortissimo* downbeats in mm. 115 and 117 (same ex.), this passage reappearing later in mm. 186 and 188.

The  $\langle 5 \rangle$  functions differently in the coda (*meno mosso*, from m. 190, ex. 8). Here, a major or minor ninth is again the exclusive added element to the  $\langle 5 \rangle$ , and the aggregate sonority is present in half of the measures of the coda. To affirm its structural importance, the same  $\langle 5 - E\text{-flat}/G/B$  (in its enharmonic variety) – is present in the thick harmonies throughout the last three measures of the composition.

Example 8. *Quatrième mot*, mm. 189–201

It is worth pointing out an ingenious connection between a defining sonority of the  $\langle 5 \rangle$  and symbolism of the number four present in the title of the composition. Because of their symmetric construction (i.e., an  $\langle 5 \rangle$  with *E* as its root is comprised of the same tones as  $\langle$ triads with *A-flat* or *C* as their roots), there are only four different augmented triads. It is undeniably symbolic and significant that each of the four parts of *Quatrième Mot* begins with a different kind of  $\langle 5 \rangle$ . Their roots are, respectively, *C#*, *C*, *D*, and *D#*.

After having gone through the piece examining the  $\langle$ triad's numerous occurrences and their nature, we should stress its subtle and quite limited role in shaping the musical foreground. Except for the three cases of its linear use in parts A and B (mm. 1, 6, and 21, all mentioned above), the  $\langle 5 \rangle$  functions exclusively as a vertical sonority. Moreover, it does not participate in harmonic progressions on a local or large-scale level. In most cadences the bass descends by either a second (see, for instance, mm. 57–58, ex. 4, and mm. 121–122, ex. 7), or a tritone (mm. 35–36, ex. 3, and mm. 200–201, ex. 8). The harmonic progressions

connecting whole parts are more traditional, and also have no relation to the  $\langle 5 \rangle$ : the bass moves down by thirds: *F* to *D* (mm. 61–62, ex. 5) and *D* to *B-flat* (mm. 82–83, ex. 6). However, the  $\langle 5 \rangle$  maintains an overarching significance at the very core of the compositional concept, as will be demonstrated later.

But first, we should identify the tonal processes taking place in *Quatrième mot*. As illustrated in ex. 1 (and suggested by Gudžinskaitė<sup>8</sup>), the whole composition is organized around two tonal centers, or, rather, around one binary tonal center *E-flat/E*, which reveals itself gradually in the course of the music. Temporary tonal centers *F* and *D*, which dominate the middle parts B and C, respectively, double and symmetrically frame this binary tonal center. An extensive use in the last part of the keys *B-flat* and *B* (dominants of *E-flat* and *E*), as well as the harmonic sequence of the coda (ex. 1 and 8), reaffirms *E-flat/E* as the binary tonal center.

As mentioned above, this tonal center emerges gradually as the music progresses. Unlike Gudžinskaitė, who sees “*in A—(Ais? Fis?)*”<sup>9</sup> as the tonal center of part A, the author of this analysis feels that the extreme harmonic fluidity of this part defies any attempt to identify its tonal center.

The first clear interplay between *E* and *E-flat* occurs in part B, in mm. 31–34 (ex. 3): first the middle voice (mm. 31–32) and then the bass (mm. 33–34) oscillate between *E* and *E-flat* (also note a revealing juxtaposition in the outer voices between these two pitches on the last quarter of m. 34). Even though a temporary tonal center *F* controls part B as a whole, *E-flat* emerges as an important tonal center functioning alongside *F*, at least from m. 42 on (ex. 9). Sometimes *E-flat* even overshadows *F* as a dominant tone, as in mm. 51–55 (ex. 4). And where the harmony is clearly based on the note *F* in the bass, as in mm. 58–61, the interval *E-flat/G* is still an integral and stable part of the harmonic sonority (same ex.).

Example 9. *Quatrième mot*, mm. 41–48

The shortest of all the parts, C, is tonally homogeneous, entirely controlled by the tonal center *D*. Compared with the harmonically undefined fluctuation of part A, the ambiguity of part B, and the total homogeneity of part

C, the tonal procedures used in the final part D are more traditional. An intense process of establishing the binary tonal center *E-flat/E* is carried out through various means. The simplest of them is defining *E-flat* or *E* as well as their dominants *B-flat* and *B* through cadences. Examples include: mm. 83–84 (*B-flat*, ex. 6), mm. 92–94 (*E-flat*, ex. 6), mm. 124–129 (*B*, ex. 7), and mm. 119–122 (*E*, ex. 7). In the coda (mm. 190–201, ex. 8) this process speeds up and intensifies: almost all of it is supported by one of the four tonal “pillars” (*E-flat*, *E*, *B-flat*, and *B*) in the bass.

There is a direct relationship between the degree of tonal definition and the use of the <5. Because of a tonally neutral quality of the <5, it is used sparingly in part D (the chord also does not start this part, unlike all the previous ones), in which the establishment of tonal direction and hierarchy is intensely carried out. And a great frequency of <triads in part A is directly connected to this part’s lack of tonal definition.

In addition to cadences on *E-flat* and *E* (and on their dominants), the next step in creating an integrated binary tonal center in part D is a simultaneous appearance of the two tonal spheres. In m. 94 (ex. 6), and again in m. 165, we see precisely such a case: a cadence on *E-flat* in the left hand (ongoing from m. 92) coincides with a cadence on *E* in the right hand. An even greater integration of the two tonal centers, with profound implications for the piece as a whole, is heard in mm. 126–129 (ex. 7). Here, the right hand cadences on *E-flat*, while the left hand (already from m. 124) cadences on *B* (which belongs to the sphere of *E* as its dominant). The resolutions of both simultaneous cadences on *sfz* downbeats in mm. 127 and 129 (these downbeats involve the lowest note so far, *B2*) make up the augmented triad *B-g-e-flat*<sup>1</sup> (same ex.). This chord represents the main tonal centers – *E-flat* and *E* (the note *g* being shared by both of them) – that come together through the dominating sonority of the piece! This way, the augmented triad acquires a new meaning: in its ability to combine two tonal centers a half-step apart, it embodies a new concept of the tonic chord. The “tonic” function of the <triad *e-flat-g-b* is already anticipated in the *recitativo* sections in part B (mm. 45–47, ex. 9, and again in mm. 56–57), where this chord is for the first time clearly sustained throughout several measures. The same “tonic” triad *e-flat-g-b* is present in the harmony throughout the last three measures of the piece, thereby reaffirming its “tonic” function and completing the merger of two tonal spheres.

This analysis does not intend to show that in this composition the <triad always represents a merger of two tonal centers. On the contrary, most of the time the <5 helps to avoid any tonal definition at all, as in part A. However, the <5 has the potential to encompass two tonal centers, and this potential is gradually realized, alongside the other gradual process of establishing a binary tonal center. Only when both of these processes are completed by merging

into one another, can one understand, retroactively, their direction and logic. Thus, the use of the <triad to embody either tonal ambiguity or a binary tonality (and a transformation from the first function to the second) encapsulates the architectonic concept of *Quatrième mot*. The dynamics of moving towards a conceptual goal of higher complexity, which is at the heart of the compositional concept of *Quatrième mot*, makes this work a fine example of previously mentioned *Evolutionsform*.

#### Sonata No. 4, Op. 53, 1<sup>st</sup> movement

It has been noted that Bacevičius uses a peculiar technique of repeating short, previously heard fragments in different order and, often, different pitch, as one of the means of building his musical forms. It could be called component replication and permutation<sup>10</sup>, fragmentation and rearrangement, or collage, mosaic, montage technique. This compositional procedure is present in Bacevičius’s compositions from all periods and in all genres, though to varying degrees. The process of fragmentation and rearrangement (the terms used in this article) can fulfill different functions in relation to other musical elements and processes. The following analysis of the first movement of Sonata No. 4<sup>11</sup>, written in 1952–1953, will attempt to reveal these varying relationships. In order to do that, one has to understand, firstly, the workings of the fragmentation/rearrangement technique as employed, quite comprehensively, in this sonata movement. Secondly, one has to ascertain other defining elements of the musical structure, including noting any tonally oriented sections of the piece, and to bring to light interactions among them. It is interesting to see how both the process of fragmentation/rearrangement and a true motivic development unfold alongside each other and interact with each other in a variety of ways. After identifying tonally oriented areas, we can see how a rearrangement of pre-existing fragments influences tonal focus. While rearrangement of musical fragments functions most frequently as a means for concealing any manifestation of tonal center in a post-tonal work such as this is, this same technique is also used by Bacevičius to achieve an opposite effect – to “construct” a tonal center.

In his letter to Juozas Žilevičius (1891–1985) – musicologist, composer, and the founder of the Lithuanian Archives in Chicago – Vytautas Bacevičius wrote that the form in his “... symphonies, sonatas, preludes and quartets, is traditionally classical, just slightly expanded, because I use three main themes instead of two, and the development section is much larger”<sup>12</sup>. However, Bacevičius’ sonata forms are not as classical as he claimed, and this analysis will reveal some original features of their motivic, harmonic, and tonal organization. His four piano

sonatas do have some features that betray his rigid and at the same time idiosyncratic concept of the sonata genre. All four of them have the same number and relationship of movements (fast–slow–fast), and many movements retain exactly the same tonal progression in the recapitulation as in the exposition (reminiscent of the Baroque *da capo* aria). Furthermore, unlike in his *Mots* and late *Poèmes*, in his sonatas Bacevičius clearly did not mind using repetition as one of the principal compositional devices.

In the first movement of his Sonata No. 4, a characteristic to Bacevičius technique of fragmentation and rearrangement is used to a great extent alongside other techniques advancing the musical discourse. In this analysis, we will see not only a whole range of these types of devices, but also different functions that they fulfill in relation to other musical elements.

It is a trivial fact that repetition at the same or different pitch (i.e., transposition) is an essential element of any musical form: any coherent form is impossible without some repetition of previously heard material. Except for proponents of athenatic esthetics (for example, the Czech composer Alois Haba, 1893–1973), no one has tried to banish repetition from musical forms. The way Bacevičius employs repetition in some of his compositions is, however, significantly different from its traditional use.

Conventionally, it is a whole section or at least a phrase that is repeated at the same pitch. Bacevičius, however,

often uses written-out repeats of passages as short as one measure, or even half a measure. Repeating a short passage immediately at a different pitch (i.e., sequence) is commonplace – it is one of the most common compositional techniques. Again, Bacevičius' "sequences" are different in that they often occur over a distance, when an audible connection between relevant passages is lost (see ex. 10 for these and other devices, discussed below). But the following characteristics of Bacevičius' approach to repetition are even more significant and original. He extensively uses a fragmentation/rearrangement technique, which consists of repeating the original material, with parts (fragments) of it appearing in a different order. There is an infinite variety to this process: original sequences can be retained, but with certain fragments cut out, or new material inserted; or, the original order may be reversed, with fragments that came later in a passage placed earlier instead, and vice versa, again with or without new material inserted. Certain fragments can appear more often than others, and the identity of a particular fragment is by no means fixed: with a new appearance, its longer or shorter version can be repeated. Resulting phrases and sections can in turn become primary material for new rearrangements. Fragments might reappear in the same section of the piece, or they might migrate to other sections. Taking into account that every fragment of original material can appear in transposition, the possibilities for new rearrangements are innumerable.

Example 10. Sonata No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 106–129

The way this infinite variety of rearrangements is put together is, however, fairly uniform. Fragments are produced by “cutting” vertically through all voices, usually along the bar line, and then placed next to each other in a different order, usually without any changes to the fragments themselves. The whole process can be compared to a jigsaw puzzle that is assembled and disassembled in different ways, or to a “copy and paste” (or “cut and paste”) procedure in word processing.

The development of the second theme (mm. 106–129, ex. 10) can serve as a fine illustration of various rearrangement techniques. Measure 111 is an exact transposition of m. 109 up by a tritone, while the next measure (m. 112) is a transposition of m. 110, this time up by a minor third. Measure 117 (and the first eighth-note of m. 118) is a transposition of m. 113 down a major second. The next fragment is longer, and is immediately followed by the fragment that originally came before it: mm. 118–120 are a transposed form (up a minor third) of mm. 114–116, and m. 121 is a transposition of m. 109 down a minor third. The following two measures (122–123) are based on the material from the exposition of the second theme (see ex. 11). Thus, mm. 122–123 are a transposition of mm. 21–22 up a tritone. The same fragment appears in mm. 125–126, but this time it relates to its original material by a minor second. The last two measures of this section (mm. 128–129) make a sequence on m. 109: the first of them (m. 128) repeats its original on the same pitch, while the second one (m. 129) does it a fourth lower. As we see in this section, previously heard fragments can follow each other immediately, or can be separated by connecting material (such as mm. 124 and 127); the connecting material

can itself become part of the rearrangement mosaic, as happens with mm. 114–116.

Because of the static quality on the elemental level, it has been noted that resulting structures should properly be described as variants, and not variations<sup>13</sup>. It is true that in some of Bacevičius’s compositions this process is substituted almost entirely for true motivic development. For instance, throughout the second movement of Suite No. 1<sup>14</sup>, musical material keeps coming back in an original or transposed form, in an original or rearranged order. When passages of new material appear, they are invariably short and function as either transitions or cadences.

However, in most other compositions, both the rearrangement and the motivic development unfold alongside each other and interact with each other in a variety of ways. Further analysis will show what interesting and unexpected effects can be achieved by creatively rearranging preexisting fragments.

But before approaching this topic, we should name some other characteristic traits of Bacevičius’s compositional language and examine the ways in which those traits are present in this particular piece. Eglė Gudžinskaitė has noted<sup>15</sup> the existence of certain common elements that permeate all themes and sections of individual movements in Bacevičius’s sonatas, thus unifying a composition. In the first movement of Sonata No. 4, there are two such elements: an interval and a motive.

The interval unifying the whole movement is a tritone. Its importance can be demonstrated by pointing out a whole range of functions it has. In mm. 76–79 (ex. 12), the tritone is not only part of many chords, but it also controls the harmonic progression in the bass: note the *G* to *d-flat*<sup>1</sup> progression in the second half of m. 76, and similar progressions

Example 11. Sonata No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 21–34

in the following measures in this example. In mm. 46–47, two discrete harmonies related by a tritone (based on *F#* and *C*, respectively) are combined into one vertical sonority (the second quarter of m. 46 and the first quarter of m. 47); these same harmonies switch places in mm. 48–49 (ex. 13). An extensive use of tritones is instrumental in achieving one important objective in a post-tonal work such as this movement, namely, avoiding tonal definition.

The motive unifying the composition takes on a variety of musical textures; it is more of a gesture or an idea than a specific combination of notes. Its primary form consists of an ascending and then descending (or vice versa) narrow interval of up to a minor third, often in two or more voices. It begins the piece in the right hand and is present throughout the entire opening, shown in example 14 (mm. 1–6, the main motive is circled). Because of the motive's fluidity, the piece is far from being



Example 12. Sonata No. 4, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, mm. 76–79



Example 13. Sonata No. 4, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, mm. 46–50

monothematic; used throughout, however, the motive assures that everything in the piece is perceived as “genetically” related. It is impossible and unnecessary to point out all the different transformations of the main motive, but the most important ones will be noted and illustrated by examples. For correspondence between subjects or sections and measure numbers, see the thematic and tonal graph in example 15 (T1, T2, and T3 indicate first, second, and third theme; “trans.” indicates transition).

The first four notes of the second subject (starting with the downbeat in the left hand, m. 21: see ex. 11) are a form of the same motive. The three-note legato motive, appearing simultaneously in three voices two measures later (same ex.) is closer to the one heard at the very opening of the piece (seen in ex. 14). In the beginning of T3 (ex. 16), several forms of the main motive are combined for the first time. In the left hand alone, we can see the motive unfolding on two levels: 1) in each of the first two quarters of each measure, we can recognize the motive in the figuration that first appeared in m. 33 (ex. 11); 2) on a larger scale of the whole measure (m. 66), the melodic passage in 16th-notes ascending over a tritone and then descending to the initial note can easily be heard as an expanded version of the main motive. The right hand at the same time plays the main motive in a straightforward chordal form using quarter-notes for beats 2–4 (see m. 66). A motivic transformation reminiscent of the left-hand part of the



Example 14. Sonata No. 4, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, mm. 1–6

Exposition				Development			
T1	trans. <i>a</i>	T2	trans. <i>b</i>	T3	new material	develop. of T2	develop. of T3
1-11	12-20	21-45	46-65	66-97	97-105	106-129	130-137
--	--	<i>E-flat--</i>	--	<i>A--D</i>	( <i>D</i> )--	--	<i>D[--G]--</i>
Recapitulation				Coda			
T1	trans. <i>a</i>	T2	trans. <i>c</i>	T3	some of T2		
138-146	147-155	156-181	181-193	194-202	203-218		
--	--	<i>E-flat--</i>	-- <i>E</i>	<i>E--</i>	<i>--E-flat (D#)</i>		

Example 15. Sonata No. 4, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, a thematic and tonal graph



Example 16. Sonata No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 65–68

last example occurs in m. 78 (ex. 12). In this measure, the previously seen motivic figuration supports the main motive that unfolds through larger-level polyphony in the top notes of the figuration ( $e^1-f^{\#1}-e^1$ ). It should be stressed that the cited passages are multiplied through repetition and transposition, and thus the main motive permeates the whole piece. Appropriately, the main motive ends the entire movement, this time stated in *fortissimo* octaves in the left hand, and in both directions:  $G\#-A\#-B-A\#-G\#$ , and then  $D\#-C\#-B1-C\#-D\#$  (mm. 216–218, ex. 17).

The grandest transformations of the main motive are presented in transitions *a* and *b* (as referred to in ex. 15). In mm. 11–15, and immediately after this in mm. 16–20, the ascending-descending gesture is extended to four or five measures. Here this gesture encompasses not merely one or two intervals, but an entire texture in both hands that shifts up and down (ex. 18). The same expansion, though with totally different notes, happens in mm. 58–62 in transition *b* (ex. 19). Despite varied melodic

material, the broad up-and-down sweeping motion is unmistakably the most characteristic feature of these passages. Because of this, and also because they do not introduce new themes, these transitions seem to function as variations of the main motive.



Example 18. Sonata No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 10–20



Example 17. Sonata No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 216–218



Example 19. Sonata No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 57–63

These two transitions have yet another function. Both of them make use of motives or whole fragments from preceding sections, while also anticipating textures of the following sections. At the beginning of transition *a*, a compact and purely chordal form of the main motive (right hand of mm.11–12) takes part in the whole expansive gesture. Measures 18 and 19 are variants of mm. 5 and 7, respectively (both of them in shorter note values). At the same time, the texture of the following T2 is anticipated in the left-hand staccato in mm. 11–12 and 15–17 (ex. 18). In transition *b*, one example of a repeated fragment from the previous section is m. 57 (ex. 19, compare to m. 33, ex. 11). The texture of the ensuing T3 is anticipated and prepared by the introduction of continuous 16<sup>th</sup>-note movement in m. 60 (ex. 19). This combination of repetition, variation, and anticipation explains the organically connecting quality of these transitions, the quality so important in counterbalancing an often fragmented texture of other sections of the piece.

After having described various unifying factors and compositional techniques used in the piece, the question might arise whether any tonal logic can be detected, and if so, how it interacts with the elements discussed. It has already been noted that an active role of a tritone in the harmonic progression helps avoid tonal definition. The same purpose is served by the two compositional devices discussed above – transposition and fragmentation/rearrangement. After an identification of some tonally oriented areas, several examples will follow illustrating how the varying use of transposition and rearrangement affects the degree of tonal definition.

Characteristic of Bacevičius's piano music, the opening has a quasi-improvisatory, searching quality that is marked with tonal uncertainty. (Similarly, as the previous analysis has shown, the opening part of *Quatrième mot* is tonally the least stable of all four parts.) The first half of T2 (mm. 21–35) is the first area that can be seen as tonally centered, in this case on *E-flat* (ex. 11 and 15). The next place where we detect an orientation towards a tonal center is the first phrase of T3 (mm. 66–68, ex. 16), with the bass progression *a-d-e-A* (three of these notes are also doubled by the top voice), clearly pointing to *A* as the tonal center. The third place is the cadence on *D* in m. 97 (ex. 20), which marks the end of the exposition and the beginning of the development.

Example 20. Sonata No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 94–97

In the development section, T2 appears (ex. 10, mm. 106–129) in a much more tonally volatile manner, compared to its presentation in the exposition. It loses any affiliation with a particular center, and the devices of transposition and rearrangement play an essential role in this tonal breakdown. In the exposition, a shortened repetition of the first phrase of T2 two octaves higher (mm. 29–33) reinforced the tonal center of *E-flat*, while the use of transposition was postponed for fourteen measures (seen in ex. 11). In the development, however, T2 is rife with altered intervallic relationships right from its first measure (compare mm. 106–108 with mm. 21–23, ex. 11), and its first instances of transposed rearrangement occur as early as the sixth measure of the theme (mm. 111–112, discussed above). A sense of urgency and instability is enhanced by inserting short transposed fragments; for instance, m. 109 (derived from m. 25) returns four more times in this section (mm. 111, 121, 128, and 129), three of these times in transposed form. Thus, greater tension and tonal instability characterizing a traditional development section are achieved here by a denser and more disjunct use of transposition and rearrangement. Immediately following T2, the short development of T3 is tonally more traditional (mm. 130–137, ex. 21). Though considerably chromaticized compared to its appearance in the exposition, it retains some tonal structure. Its first phrase can be heard in *D* (mm. 130–132), and this is then transposed to *G* (mm. 135–137).

Example 21. Sonata No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 130–137

As most of T1 and T2 returns unchanged in the recapitulation, so does the tonal center, *E-flat*. Most of transition *c* consists of new material (in addition to the pre-existing tritone) of a quasi-improvisatory nature. Its strikingly different texture evokes the image of a virtuoso cadenza (mm. 181–187). In mm. 186–193 (ex. 22), *E* is established as a tonal center, preparing the return of T3 (from m. 194) in the same key – a fourth lower than in the exposition (same ex.). The manner in which the tonal center of *E* is carried out is, however, most unexpected and unique. Short fragments from different sections, all of the fragments retaining their original pitch position (without transposition), are pieced together here; a fleeting quality of *E* that they all have shared in their original contexts is strengthened here by “gluing” these tonally-related fragments together, and thereby “constructing” a new tonal center. This procedure is contrary to the practice witnessed earlier in the piece, and indeed at the core of the style, namely, the use of fragmentation and rearrangement to conceal and avoid tonality. It is as if this particular case of rearrangement were the stylistic procedure in reverse: putting back together pieces of a puzzle that seem to have been scattered before. The coda (from mm. 203) is tonally volatile. However, since it cites fragments from T2, the ending in *D#* (enharmonically *E-flat*) is not unexpected (ex. 17).

Thus, the general scheme of tonal centers looks as follows: *E-flat*–*A*–*D*–[*G*]–*E-flat*–*E*–*E-flat* (compare ex. 15). It should be stressed that a scheme of tonal centers derived by taking into account only tonally identifiable passages

is of a substantially different nature compared to a tonal scheme of a truly tonal composition. However, it still reveals a great deal about a compositional structure, since the degree of tonal definition is an important variable of the architectonics of the piece. The progression of tonal centers confirms the dominance in Bacevičius’s music of harmonies related by intervals of the minor second (as seen in the analysis of *Quatrième mot*) and the tritone<sup>16</sup>. In this sonata movement, its main center, *E-flat*, is framed and supported by the neighboring *D* and *E*. The importance of the tritone (*E-flat* – *A*) in the sequence of tonal centers adds another dimension to its defining role throughout the composition. Lastly, the tonal progression in the recapitulation and the coda – *E-flat*–*E*–*E-flat* – can also be seen as a projection of the main motive onto the large-scale structure.

### Conclusion

Controlling harmonic forces and their tonal implications is one of the principal challenges facing composers working in a post-tonal (or pantonal) idiom. Two analyses of representative compositions by Vytautas Bacevičius demonstrated two different sets of interactions at work addressing this challenge. In *Quatrième mot*, a perception of tonal center is controlled and varied by using harmonically neutral chordal structures (namely, augmented triads with added tones). In the first movement of Sonata No. 4, the same objective is achieved by an extensive use of the fragmentation and rearrangement technique. While in most cases both of these devices have an effect of concealing a sense of tonal center, they are occasionally used by Bacevičius to achieve an opposite effect – to “construct” a tonal center. In *Quatrième mot*, this is done by endowing an augmented triad with a “tonic chord” quality to represent a binary tonal center, this transformation understood in the context of *Evolutionsform*. In the Sonata, a more traditional tonal center is “constructed” by “gluing” together short pre-existing fragments in such a way that vague tonal implications in each of the fragments are amplified in a resulting structure to a degree that a solid tonal center can be discerned.

It is hoped that the methods of inquiry in these analyses and the insights they produced will provide a useful template for further exploration of Bacevičius’ musical language.

Example 22. Sonata No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 186–196

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- <sup>2</sup> “Pantonality” (the term coined by Rudolf Réti), encompassing the major-minor, expanded tonality, and atonality, was proposed by Malgorzata Janicka-Slysz in Malgorzata Janicka-Slysz, “Vytautas Bacevičius i jego idee muzyki kosmicznej”, Ph.D. diss., Krakow, 2001, p. 76. Bacevičius himself used the term “synthetic style” to describe pretty much the same concept. See Bacevičius to his sister Gražyna, 29 January 1952, in Edmundas Gedgaudas, ed. *Vytautas Bacevičius: Išakyma Žodžiais*. Vilnius: Petro ofsetas, 2005, p. 28–29.
- <sup>3</sup> Published in *Vytautas Bacevičius: Works for Piano: First Edition*. Volume I. Gabrielius Alekna, ed. Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Center, 2006.
- <sup>4</sup> Dietrich Mast, *Struktur und Form bei Alexander N. Skrjabin*. Munich-Gräfelfing: Wollenweber, 1981, p. 286, 289.
- <sup>5</sup> Bacevičius to Milda Kazakevičienė, 1969 (exact date unknown), F118, Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Arts.
- <sup>6</sup> Eglė Gudžinskaitė, „Vytauto Bacevičiaus kūriniai fortepijonui: formos genezės aspektai“, p. 87–89.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 89.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 87.
- <sup>10</sup> The terms used by Malgorzata Janicka-Slysz, see Janicka-Slysz, Malgorzata. “Vytautas Bacevičius's Cosmology of Tones and the Expression of Structure”. In: *Vytautas Bacevičius in Context*, ed. Rūta Stanevičiūtė and Veronika Janatjeva, Vilnius: Lithuanian Composers' Union, 2009, p. 41.
- <sup>11</sup> In *Vytautas Bacevičius: Works for Piano: First Edition*. Vol. II. Gabrielius Alekna, ed. Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Center, 2006.
- <sup>12</sup> Bacevičius to Juozas Žilevičius, 25 October 1955, quoted in Donatas Karkus, „Vytautas Bacevičius – kūrėjas ir asmenybė“. In: *Pergalė*, 1986, No. 10, p. 153–154.
- <sup>13</sup> Eglė Gudžinskaitė, „Vytauto Bacevičiaus kūriniai fortepijonui: formos genezės aspektai“, p. 30.
- <sup>14</sup> In *Vytautas Bacevičius: Works for Piano: First Edition*. Gabrielius Alekna, ed. Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Center, 2006.
- <sup>15</sup> Gudžinskaitė, p. 83.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

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## Santrauka

Po dešimtmečius trukusio tam tikro ignoravimo dėl nepalankių politinių aplinkybių kompozitorius ir pianistas Vytautas Bacevičius pagaliau sulaukė pripažinimo kaip vienas svarbiausių Lietuvos muzikos kultūros veikėjų. Šimtasis V. Bacevičiaus gimimo metinių jubiliejus 2005 m. buvo stiprus jo muzikos studijų ir atgaivinimo akstinas. Per pastarąjį dešimtmetį paskelbta nemažai monografinių studijų, straipsnių ir konferencijų pranešimų. Tačiau kryptingų muzikinės V. Bacevičiaus kalbos muzikologinių tyrimų vis dar trūksta. Muzikologės Eglės Gudžinskaitės baigiamieji bakalauro ir magistro darbai, nagrinėjantys pasirinktų fortepijoninių kūrinių tonacinius ir formų aspektus, lieka išsamiausiai ir nuodugniausiai šios temos darbais.

Ši dviejų reprezentatyvių V. Bacevičiaus kūrinių fortepijonui *Quatrième mot* („Ketvirtas žodis“), op. 31, ir *Ketvirtosios sonatos*, op. 53, pirmos dalies analizė nagrinėja ne tik kiekvieno kūrinio tonacinius ir formų aspektus, bet ir šių aspektų sąveiką (ar reakciją) su kitais V. Bacevičiui būdingais muzikos elementais ir komponavimo

technikomis. Toks integruotas metodas leidžia atpažinti ir įvertinti kiekviename konkrečiame kūrinyje randamus unikalius jėgų ir sąveikų derinius, sukuriančius ypač individualius architektoninius sprendimus (ar iš tų sprendimų kylančius?). Pasitelkus gausius pavyzdžius, šioje analizėje atskleidžiama išpūdinga kompozicinių priemonių įvairovė ir lietuvių kompozitoriaus muzikinės kalbos rafinuotas originalumas bei tarpusavio sąsajos.

Harmonijos veiksnių ir jų tonacinių implikacijų valdymas yra vienas pagrindinių iššūkių, su kuriais susiduria kompozitoriai, kuriantys posttonaliu (ar pantonaliu) stiliumi. Du fortepijoniniai kūriniai atskleidžia du skirtingus sąveikų, naudojamų šiam tikslui pasiekti, derinius. 1938 m. sukurtame kūrinyje „Ketvirtas žodis“ V. Bacevičius atranda ir meistriškai plėtoja vaizdingas bei rafinuotas priemones, jas naudoja tonaciniam centrui keisti ir valdyti ar net binariniam tonaciniam centrui sukurti, pasitelkdamas harmoniniu požiūriu neutralias akordų struktūras. Tam jis naudoja ir pastaruoju atveju visur prasisiskverbiančius padidintus trigarsius su papildoma nona. Laipsniškai transformuodamasis, padidintas trigarsis įgyja naują prasmę: dėl savo gebėjimo apimti du per pustonį vienas nuo kito nutolusius tonacinius centrus, padidintas trigarsis įkūnija naują tonikinio akordo sampratą. Kad padidintas trigarsis atliktų naują binarinio tonikinio akordo vaidmenį, tuo pačiu metu vyksta paralelinis dviejų pustoniu besiskiriančių tonacinių centrų nustatymo procesas. Taigi padidinto trigarsio naudojimas tonaciniam nevienareikšmiškumui arba binariniam tonalumui įkūnyti (ir perėjimas nuo pirmosios funkcijos prie antrosios) sudaro „Ketvirto žodžio“ architektoninę koncepciją.

Forma, sukuriama dinamiškų procesų judėjimo tam tikro tikslo link ir besiskleidžianti tiek į buvusius, tiek ir būsimus muzikos įvykius, buvo apibūdinta kaip *Evolutionsform* Dietricho Mastro atliktoje Skriabino sonatų fortepijonui studijoje ir pasiūlyta E. Gudžinskaitės kaip tinkamas modelis kai kuriems V. Bacevičiaus „žodžiams“ analizuoti. „Ketvirtas žodis“ puikiai iliustruoja *Evolutionsform* principus. Kūrinio architektoninę koncepciją apibrėžia laipsniškos transformacijos, sujungiančios esminius unifikuojančius kūrinio elementus taip, kad šių

transformacijų prasmę ir kryptį galima tinkamai suprasti tik jas užbaigus.

Ketvirtosios sonatos, sukurtos 1952–1953 m., pirmoje dalyje V. Bacevičius valdo ir varijuoja tonacinio centro suvokimu, pirmiausia plačiai ir išradingai naudodamas ypatingą techniką, skirtinga tvarka ir dažnai skirtingame aukštyje pakartodamas trumpus, anksčiau girdėtus fragmentus. Pastebėta, kad V. Bacevičius naudoja šią fragmentacijos ir perstatymo techniką (arba koliažo, mozaikos, montažo techniką) kaip priemonę savoms muzikos formoms kurti. Tokia kompozicinė tvarka, nors ir skirtingu laipsniu, matoma visų laikotarpių ir žanrų V. Bacevičiaus kūrinuose. Šios Sonatos dalies analizė rodo, kaip panaudojama fragmentacijos / perstatymo technika, ir atskleidžia kintančias sąsajas tarp fragmentacijos / perstatymo proceso ir kitų charakteringų muzikos elementų bei procesų. Ypač įdomu stebėti, kaip tiek fragmentacija / perstatymas, tiek tikroji motyvų plėtotė atsiskleidžia greta ir sąveikauja tarpusavyje. Nustačius į tonalumą orientuotas kūrinio dalis, galima taip pat pamatyti, kaip ankstesnių fragmentų perstatymas daro įtaką tonaciniam centrui.

Jei „Ketvirtame žodyje“ tonacinio centro suvokimas kinta dėl naudojamos neutralios akordikos, tai Sonatoje šis tikslas pasiekiamas plačiai naudojant fragmentacijos ir perstatymo techniką. Nors abi šios priemonės dažniausiai sukuria tonacinio centro pojūčio paslėpimo efektą, posttonaliuose kūrinuose, kuriems ir priklauso nagrinėjamos kompozicijos, V. Bacevičius šias priemones kartais panaudoja priešingam poveikiui pasiekti, t. y. tonaciniam centrui „sukonstruoti“. „Ketvirtame žodyje“ tai pasiekama suteikiant padidintam trigarsiui „tonikinio akordo“ savybę būti binariniu tonaciniu centru. Sonatoje labiau tradiciškas tonacinis centras sukuriamas „sulipdant“ trumpus ankstesnius fragmentus taip, kad silpnos kiekvieno fragmento tonalinės implikacijos sustiprėja iki tokio lygio, jog naujoje struktūroje jau galima išskirti tvirtą tonacinį centrą.

Tikimasi, kad šiose analizėse panaudoti tyrimo metodai ir gautos išvalgos padės kaip naudingas tolesnių V. Bacevičiaus muzikinės kalbos tyrinėjimų modelis.