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Einojuhani Rautavaara (1928 – 2016) is one of Finland's most well-known composers. He is widely respected for his compositions in the genres of opera, symphony, and vocal works, yet he has a significant body of work for solo piano that goes mostly unrecognized. Among Rautavaara's work is a set of three pieces composed late in his life that appeared nearly twenty-five years after his last prior composition for solo piano. *Narcissus*, *Passionale*, and *Fuoco* reveal a composer that developed a very personal and highly referential sense of musical style and sound conception. Furthermore, these works reflect the many influences and stylistic models that Rautavaara experienced over his lifetime. The analytical discussion of these three compositions will illustrate the specific elements that Rautavaara incorporated into his late compositions and the various sources of inspiration that he assimilated over the years of his career. Study of these works will demonstrate a composer who is able to integrate a truly eclectic set of techniques into one distinctive voice. Rautavaara's stylistic approaches to composition throughout his career are mirrored in these final pieces, which act as a microcosm of his development as a composer.

SYMMETRY AND RETROSPECT: A STYLISTIC AND ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF THREE WORKS FOR SOLO PIANO BY EINOJUHANI RAUTAVAARA

by

Kenneth M. Davis

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Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Kenneth M. Davis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

_____

_____
Date of Acceptance by Committee

_____
Date of Final Oral Examination

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES iv

LIST OF EXAMPLES v

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW 1

Review of the Literature 3
Dissertations and Books 3
Biographies 5
Journal Articles and Other Publications 6

II. HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY 8

Finnish Music History 8
Biographical Information 13

III. THE PIANO MUSIC OF EINOJUHANI RAUTAVAARA 19

Compositional Style 19
Neoclassicism 22
First Serial Period 23
Neoromanticism 24
Mysticism 25
Stylistic Development 26

IV. ANALYSIS OF LATE PIANO WORKS 30

Narcissus 31
Passionale 49
Fuoco 66

V. CONCLUSION 79

BIBLIOGRAPHY 81

LIST OF TABLES

Page

Table 1. Structural Layout of Rautavaara's *Narcissus*. 32

Table 2. Sectional Components in the Formal Layout of Rautavaara's *Narcissus*. 33

Table 3. Textural Elements of Each Section in Rautavaara's *Passionale*. 61

LIST OF EXAMPLES

Page

Example 1. A Kalevala Tune with Modal Melody and 5/4 Meter..... 11

Example 2. Extension of Rhythmic Phrases in *Runo* Songs..... 12

Example 3. Rautavaara, *Icons*, "Kaksi maalaispyhimystä," mm. 15 – 21..... 23

Example 4. Rautavaara, Piano Sonata No. 2, *The Fire Sermon*, Second Movement, mm. 25 – 27. 25

Example 5. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 5 – 14. 34

Example 6. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 1 – 7. 35

Example 7. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 5 – 7. 36

Example 8. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 12 – 13. 37

Example 9. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, m. 17. 39

Example 10. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 21 – 23. 40

Example 11. Octatonic Accompaniment with Tritone-based Inflection Points. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, m. 28. 41

Example 12. Pitch Content of Rautavaara's Symmetrical Octatonic Scale Variants. 42

Example 13. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 35 – 36. 43

Example 14. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 39 – 40. 43

Example 15. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 41 – 46. 44

Example 16. Rhythmic Sequencing. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 53 – 56. 45

Example 17. Rhythmic Cells in the Development Section of Rautavaara's *Narcissus*. 46

Example 18. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 65 – 75. 47

Example 19. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 108 – 114. 48

Example 20. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 3 – 6..... 53

Example 21. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 9 – 14..... 54

Example 22. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 28 – 36..... 56

Example 23. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 31 – 33..... 57

Example 24. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 46 – 47..... 58

Example 25. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 46 – 62..... 60

Example 26. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 17 – 18..... 63

Example 27. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, m. 28..... 63

Example 28. Messiaen, *The Technique of my Musical Language,* Example 317 (Vol. 2, pg. 50). 64

Example 29. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, coda, mm. 63 – 65. 65

Example 30. Rautavaara, Piano Sonata No. 2, *The Fire Sermon*, First Movement, mm. 53 – 61. 69

Example 31. Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, mm. 1 – 12. 70

Example 32. Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, mm. 22 – 27. 71

Example 33. Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, mm. 58 – 61. 72

Example 34. Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, mm. 1 – 9. 75

Example 35. Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, mm. 32 – 41. 77

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to examine the musical and extramusical content of three late solo piano works by Einojuhani Rautavaara (1928 – 2016). These works, composed between 2001 and 2007, offer a retrospective view of the composer's career in music composition, and we will see how his various influences and different stylistic trends have been integrated into this music. From the beginning of his career Rautavaara produced compositions for piano with some consistency, then in the middle of his life took a break of nearly twenty-five years in his output for solo piano. A study of his late piano style will help to reveal changes and developments in his compositional techniques during the intervening period.

Given the availability of detailed studies on Rautavaara's early works, only a few pertinent details of his most important piano works from the years 1949 – 1965 will be discussed. Compositions from this era will provide a useful frame of reference for the works that are the focus of this study. Some information regarding his Piano Sonata No. 2 (1972) will be incorporated as part of a snapshot of his "middle period" (1967 – 83) compositional output.

Of the four solo piano works from late in his life, the composer grouped the three works *Narcissus* (2001), *Passionale* (2003), and *Fuoco* (2007) into a set. This group will be examined in detail while his final piano work *Mirroring* (2014) will be left for a later

study. Rautavaara made brief comment about the association of these three pieces; therefore, one of the goals of this study is to explore underlying programmatic information and other associations within the set as well as relationships to other works by the composer.

The analytical portion of this paper will detail several aspects of three of these late piano pieces. Each piece will be examined for the presence of a number of techniques commonly found in Rautavaara's compositions, including mirror structures, symmetrical scales and figuration, and the mixture of serialism and tonality. Formal analysis will also be an integral part of reviewing these works. Rautavaara admitted to struggling with extended formal organization in his earlier compositions, and while the works of this study should not be classified as "large-scale," they are all quite sectional in their layout. In the context of Rautavaara's piano music, composition, formal organization, and performance techniques are all intrinsically related. Rautavaara took a mystical/spiritual approach to all of his compositions (and everything he did in life) and so the layout of notes on the staff as well as the gestures required to play them are of equal importance to the structure of each composition. While this writing will not include performance aids, discussion of the physical qualities of playing these works on the piano will be a necessary part of understanding the construction of these compositions.

Review of the Literature

With perhaps the exception of his Piano Sonata No.2, *The Fire Sermon*, his piano music is almost entirely unknown outside of Finland. Despite such limited recognition, scholarly study of some of his piano music does exist, primarily regarding his earlier compositions.

Dissertations and Books

The most recent study involving piano works is Kimberly Scott's 2009 dissertation.[1] Her work is a survey of the compositional techniques Rautavaara used throughout his life. This dissertation is a valuable resource for its presentation of broad trends throughout Rautavaara's compositional career. Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam's book, *Narrating with Twelve Tones* (1997)[2], discusses the early piano works in great detail, and is also one of the writings that played a pivotal role in establishing the now well-accepted partition of Rautavaara's career into discrete style periods. Several other dissertations concerning Rautavaara's music exist, and although none of them deal with piano music as a primary topic, they each contain some unique biographical information. These

[1] Kimberly J. Scott, "Unity and Pluralism: A Stylistic Survey of the Compositional Techniques of Einojuhani Rautavaara as Reflected in Selected Works for the Piano" (D.M.A. diss., University of Kentucky, 2009).

[2] Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, *Narrating with Twelve Tones: Einojuhani Rautavaara's First Serial Period (Ca. 1957-1965)* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1997).

include Andrews (1986)[3], Habermann (1997)[4], Lokken (1999)[5], Lovejoy (2000)[6], Dorsey (2006)[7], Creutlein (2006)[8], Friesen (2010)[9], and Leatherbarrow (2011)[10]. A relevant study from a slightly earlier period is Tawaststjerna's 1982 publication "Finnish Piano Music Since 1945."[11] He is currently a professor at the Sibelius Academy where Rautavaara once worked. Wojciech Stępień's 2011 book[12] provides valuable insight into the extramusical and mystical components of Rautavaara's music and life. In one chapter of Tim Howell's book *After Sibelius: Studies in Finnish Music* (2006)[13], he provides a

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[3] Jane S. Andrews, "The Religious Element in Selected Piano Literature (Bach, Liszt, Agay, Rautavaara, Bolcom)" (D.M.A. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ann Arbor, 1986).

[4] Joshua C. Habermann, "Finnish music and the a cappella choral works of Einojuhani Rautavaara" (D.M.A. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1997).

[5] Fredrick W. T. Lokken, "The Music for Unaccompanied Mixed Chorus of Einojuhani Rautavaara" (D.M.A. diss., University of Washington, 1999).

[6] Donald G. Lovejoy, "Annunciations: The wind Music of Einojuhani Rautavaara" (D.M.A. diss., University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2000).

[7] Rodney C. Dorsey, "An Analytical Survey of Einojuhani Rautavaara's Soldier's Mass" (D.M.A. diss., Northwestern University, Ann Arbor, 2006).

[8] Tarja von Creutlein, "Einojuhani Rautavaaran 'Vigilia Pyhän Johannes Kastajan muistolle' ortodoksisen kirkkomusiikin kontekstissa" (D.M.A. diss., Joensuu: Joensuun yliopisto, 2006).

[9] Elroy D. Friesen, "Einojuhani Rautavaara's 'Vigilia': From cathedral to concert hall" (D.M.A. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2010).

[10] James W. Leatherbarrow, "Part I: The Last Dream of Don Quixote: A Symphonic Poem for Saxophone and Orchestra. Part II: Angels and Transformations: Symphonic Unity in Rautavaara, Symphony no. 7 'Angel of Light'" (D.M.A. diss., Kent State University, Ann Arbor, 2011).

[11] Erik T. Tawaststjerna, "Finnish Piano Music Since 1945" (PhD diss., New York University, Ann Arbor, 1982).

[12] Wojciech Stępień, *The Sound of Finnish Angels: Musical Signification in Five Instrumental Compositions by Einojuhani Rautavaara* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2011).

[13] Tim Howell, "5. Einojuhani Rautavaara (b. 1928): Something Old... Something New..." *After Sibelius: Studies in Finnish Music* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2006).

thorough examination of Rautavaara's contextual position among Finnish composers of the modern era. Kimmo Korhonen's book *Finnish Piano Music* (1997, trans. Timothy Binham)[14], published through the Finnish Music Information Centre (Fimic), summarizes the history of piano music in that country from the 18th century through modern times. *New Music of the Nordic Countries* (2002)[15], by John David White and Jean Christensen, contains a broad overview of recent trends in the music of Finland and surrounding countries. Marjaana Virtanen published a volume in 2007 on the performance requirements of Rautavaara's piano concerti.[16]

Biographies

The composer wrote several autobiographies himself, the most recent being *Omakuva* (1998)[17]. Many segments of this writing have already been translated into English and it is the source for much of the knowledge about Rautavaara's earlier career. The most recent biography, *Tulisaarna: Einojuhani Rautavaaran elämä ja teokset* by Samuli Tiikkaja (2014)[18], is the only biography that covers the time period relevant to

[14] Kimmo Korhonen and Timothy Binham, *Finnish Piano Music*. (Jyväskylä: Finnish Music Information Centre, 1997).

[15] John David White and Jean Christensen, *New Music of the Nordic Countries* (Pendragon Press, 2002).

[16] Marjaana Virtanen, "Musical Works in the Making: Verbal and Gestural Negotiation in Rehearsals and Performances of Einojuhani Rautavaara's Piano Concerti" (D.M.A. diss., Turun Yliopisto, 2007).

[17] Einojuhani Rautavaara, *Omakuva* (W. Söderström, 1998).

[18] Samuli Tiikkaja, *Tulisaarna: Einojuhani Rautavaaran elämä ja teokset* (Helsinki: Teos, 2014).

this project. This biography contains almost exclusively chronological facts that do not present any analytical or narrative background concerning the compositions of this study. While *Tulisaarna* will certainly provide useful contextual details about the later portion of Rautavaara's life, this biography only makes the briefest mention of the works to be studied here.

Journal Articles and Other Publications

The *Finnish Music Quarterly* has published a number of articles in English by authors Mikko Heiniö[19], Kimmo Korhonen[20], and Rautavaara[21] that provide useful perspectives on unique elements of Finnish music and occasionally on specific works of Rautavaara. A handful of journal articles have been published concerning Rautavaara's piano music, with a couple of notable publications addressing his piano works specifically: Paul (2008, *The Ohio State Online Music Journal*)[22], several by Sivuoja-

[19] Mikko Heiniö, "A Portrait of the Artist at a Certain Moment – Focus on the Composer Einojuhani Rautavaara" *Finnish Music Quarterly* no. 2 (1988).

[20] Kimmo Korhonen, "A Solid Basic Treatise on Einojuhani Rautavaara" *Finnish Music Quarterly* 2015.

[21] Einojuhani Rautavaara, "Thomas - Analysis of the Tone Material" trans. William Moore. *Finnish Music Quarterly* No. 1-2 (1985).

[22] Brandon Paul, "Bilateral Keyboard Symmetry in the Music of Einojuhani Rautavaara" *The Ohio State Online Music Journal* 1, no. 2 (Autumn 2008).

Gunaratnam (1997[23], 1999[24], 2003[25]), and Rautavaara (1995, *Contemporary Music Review*)[26]. A number of web-published articles (in Finnish and English) are available – these resources primarily contain performance reviews of Rautavaara's operas and symphonies. Rautavaara published several articles discussing his own music and compositional style. A video biography entitled *Gift of Dreams*[27] was produced for a brief view into Rautavaara's compositional process.

[23] Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, "In Search of a Musical Subject in Serial Music: Analytical Examples from the Oeuvre of the Finnish Composer, Einojuhani Rautavaara" *Contemporary Music Review* 16 no. 4 (1997).

[24] Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, "'Narcissus Musicus' or an Intertextual Perspective on the Oeuvre of Einojuhani Rautavaara." *Topics, Texts, Tensions. Essays in Music Theory* ed. by Tomi Mäkelä, (Madgeburg: Otto-von-Guericke Universität, 1999).

[25] Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, "Integral Serialism, or Non-Meaning as Meaning?" *Musical Semiotics Revisited*, ed. by Eero Tarasti, (Imatra: International Semiotics Institute, 2003).

[26] Einojuhani Rautavaara, "On a Taste for the Infinite" *Contemporary Music Review* 12 no. 2 (1995).

[27] Einojuhani Rautavaara, *The Gift of Dreams* (Produced by Kristiina Pervilä, Directed by Aarno Cronvall, Juniper Films and RM Arts, 1997).

CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

Finnish Music History

Musical traditions in Finland have been rich and varied throughout history, from their humble beginnings when ideas were absorbed from controlling foreign powers to later flourishing with a uniquely diverse nationalistic style. Finland was long dominated by its neighbors Sweden and Russia, and while the western part of Finland remained under Swedish control for hundreds of years, ownership of the eastern region alternated between the two powers many times through history. 1808 saw the outbreak of the War of Finland, which resulted in the land coming completely under Russian control. This was ultimately a vital step in Finland's move toward independence because Russia recognized Finland as a Grand Duchy – allowing Finland to create its own governmental system. This stage in Finland's development did not come without troubles however – beginning in the late 1800s Russia tightened its control over Finland during two periods now known as the Russian oppression (1899 – 1905 and 1908 – 1917) that led to a revolution in Finland. It was only in 1917 that Finland finally gained its independence from outside control and began to develop its own cultural identity. It should be noted that although most recently under Russian control, the Finnish people held on to the

Western European influence instilled during the lengthy duration of Swedish control.[28] Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, Finland experienced a period of cultural development during which many of the various Finno-Ugric peoples collectively grew into a distinctive "Finnish" group. It is important to note that during that time, and as it remains now, Finnish culture was more a "harmonious synthesis of national and international elements than a purely national [phenomenon]".[29] The people of Finland have always maintained their awareness of international trends in the arts, and the incorporation of various global styles is a fundamental part of their culture. As early as the 1800s, Finland was aware of European Classical music conventions. Until the 20th century, Finland was more a recipient of this tradition than a contributor. One great figure responsible for bringing Western European practices to Finland was Fredrik Pacius (1809 – 1891), known as "the father of Finnish music" not only for his work as a composer but also for his contributions to building an organized, active musical community in Finland. Pacius was born in Hamburg and studied in Kassel and thus he brought a distinctively German outlook with him when he made his move to Finland to teach at the University of Helsinki. Elements of German and Italian opera became a fundamental part of Pacius' musical vocabulary, influencing a generation of Finnish composers to take up their studies in Germany.

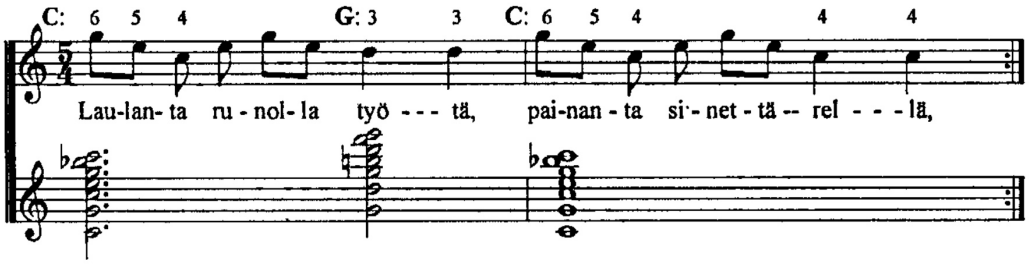
[28] White, 2002; 131.

[29] Ibid., 132.

In the early 1800s Elias Lönnrot (1802 – 1884) gathered many songs and poems from oral traditions in the different regions of Finnish lands. He compiled his findings into the *Kalevala*, an epic poem that has served a vital role as inspiration for Finnish artists of all types in the development of a unique culture. The *Kalevala* had two accomplishments of lasting influence in the cultural development of Finland. First, it provided tangible evidence of a uniquely Finnish culture and elevated it to a level that was comparable with other great civilizations of Europe. Second, the *Kalevala* brought to the forefront the issue of language. Owing to its long history of foreign rule, Finland was and is a multi-lingual country. Swedish came to be the preferred language among the learned and elite, while Finnish was associated with the lower class. While usage of both Swedish and Finnish languages has persisted to present times in Finland, the *Kalevala* aided Finnish people in developing a more unified culture centered around their own native language.

Performance of the poetry of the *Kalevala* most often took place with two people singing in a type of antiphonal match. There is a recognized "*Kalevala* style", which features a typically narrow melodic compass, monophony, and variation.[30]

[30] Jutta Jaakkola, et al., *Inspired by Tradition: Kalevala Poetry in Finnish Music* (Finnish Music Information Centre, 2004), 12.



Example 1. A Kalevala Tune with Modal Melody and 5/4 Meter.[31]

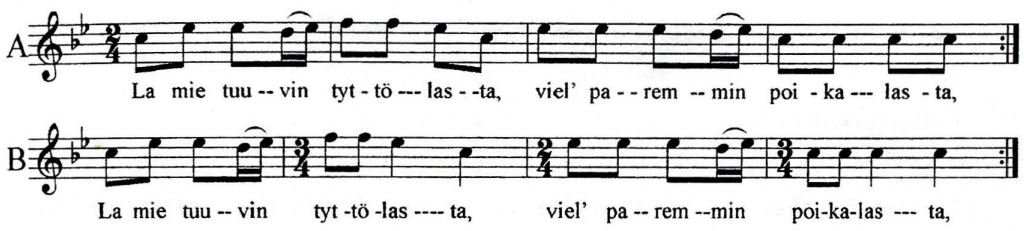
The simplicity of the melodies and poetry reveals a stylistic minimalism that could instill even slight variations with significance. While the melody in Example 1 could appear to the modern Western listener to melodically outline the chords C major and G major, this would be a misunderstanding of the construction of melodies from the time period in which it originated. Folk melodies of this type were created from clusters of pitches found in the overtone series of a fundamental tone, and the result is a modal construct that predates the system of tonality. Interestingly, although there were many variants of individual poems and songs, there was always a common rhythmic formulation, based on a trochaic tetrameter in 5/4 time.[32] The ancient *runo* ("poem") songs formed the basis of *Kalevala* poetry and the history of the songs in Finnish lands reveals a rhythmic structure that is deeply ingrained in this folk tradition. The five-beat pattern was most often derived from an extension of beats in a regular duple meter. It is possible that extension

[31] Ibid., 31.

[32] Matti Kuusi, et al., *Finnish Folk Poetry: Epic: An Anthology in Finnish and English* (Finnish Literature Society, 1977), 62-64.

of the last two rhythmic positions developed in order to give the singer more time to think about the line of text that would follow.[33]

Comparing the two versions of a melody in Example 2, we can see that melody A consists of two-measure phrases containing eight rhythmic positions per phrase. Melody B extends the last two rhythmic positions of each phrase, effectively mutating two eighth notes into quarter notes without necessitating any change of pitch or text.



Example 2. Extension of Rhythmic Phrases in *Runo* Songs.[34]

This practice could certainly be an influence on Rautavaara's proclivity for frequently changing time signatures and his music will be considered in the context of this Finnish tradition. To a certain degree, this rhythmic alteration is comparable to the contrapuntal technique of *augmentation* that was commonly employed in the Baroque period of Western music. The second notable element of this melodic practice involves improvisation; namely, that in the art of ancient folk singing, melody was seen as a basic pattern to be taken as a starting point for improvisation. The rhythmic foundation of *Kalevala* poetry is a central element of its structure, and we will see that decisive rhythms

[33] Jaakkola, 2004; 45.

[34] Ibid., 35.

are an integral part of Rautavaara's compositional process that are used to achieve precise goals of variation and development.

Biographical Information

Einojuhani Rautavaara was born October 9, 1928 in Helsinki to a very musical family, though he did not show particular interest during his earliest involvement with music. Several of his relatives were internationally recognized performers, including his father Eino Rautavaara, and two cousins, soprano Aulikki Rautawaara and cellist Pentti Rautavaara. Eino was an opera singer and a founding member of the Finnish Opera.[35] Having become disillusioned with the music profession, Eino did not encourage his son to pursue music, but Rautavaara's mother insisted he take piano lessons from his Aunt Wenny even though the young boy did not display much interest in the pursuit.[36] Rautavaara's father died of cancer in 1939, and soon after that the onset of Finland's "Winter War" would bring even more chaos into his life. Rautavaara's mother was a physician and was sent to remote areas of Finland to serve in battle hospitals with her son accompanying her. The harsh demands of her work led to a premature death at age 46, leaving Rautavaara orphaned at age 16. At that point the child was adopted by his aunt and moved to Turku. As a result of those several years of emotional hardship and the unfamiliarity of his new home Rautavaara turned to reading biographies of Finnish and

[35] Dorsey, 2006; 5-6.

[36] Lokken, 1999; 3.

other European composers, which sparked his first genuine interest in music. At 17 years of age he asked to restart piano lessons and subsequently began to show real interest and progress in his musical development. Rautavaara began lessons with Astrid Joutseno, and as part of her innovative teaching ideas, was allowed to explore many works of contemporary composers even though much of the repertoire was above his technical ability at the time. As a result, Rautavaara got early exposure to music by Debussy, Ravel, Hindemith, and Bartók. The circumstances of his early childhood had a strong influence on his musical development:

> I was quick to realise the opportunities that music presented. Here was an entire universe to which I could escape, where everything would function to my liking, everything would be dependent on me alone and no-one could criticize the systems I chose to develop. Music was the world of my own norms, a realm of my own.[37]

Rautavaara's earliest compositions were essentially imitations of Debussy, and the composer performed his own works in piano recitals. In 1948, Rautavaara also began music theory lessons for two summers with Arvo Laitinen (1893 – 1966), a professor at the Sibelius Academy. Laitinen was an admirer of Wagner and Bruckner and thus instilled an appreciation for German Romanticism in his student. With Laitinen's help in preparing for the entrance exams at the Sibelius Academy, Rautavaara was accepted with the highest marks of his class.

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[37] Rautavaara, as quoted in Kalevi Aho, *Einojuhani Rautavaara: Sinfonikkona = Als Sinfoniker = As Symphonist* (Sibelius-Akatemian Julkaisusarja, Helsinki: Pan, 1988), 76.

At the Sibelius Academy, Rautavaara studied composition with Aarre Merikanto (1893 – 1958) until 1953. Merikanto was one of the earliest Finnish composers to follow the international trends of atonal music, though he never adopted dodecaphony.[38] He offered high praise of Rautavaara in a reference letter, writing that "among our under-thirty-year-old composers, [Rautavaara is] the only one who has all the qualifications for continuing development: hard work, talent and 'that something' without which nothing great is achieved."[39] Piano works from this period, including *Three Symmetrical Preludes* and *Pelimannit*, exhibit neoclassical influences.

In the early 1950s, the music of Stravinsky and Bartók was performed frequently in Finland, and it was through the Contemporary Music Association's event called "Arnold Schönberg 75 Years" that Rautavaara received his earliest exposure to the twelve-tone technique.[40] During this decade throughout Finland there was a significant interest in the Second Viennese style of composition, though it should be noted that in Finland "the reception of serialism, integral serialism, indeterminacy, electronic music, and instrumental theater was crammed into a time period of less than 10 years."[41] Not surprisingly, Rautavaara's early works were mostly an experimentation with these techniques, though his efforts reveal a desire not to be limited to merely using the popular techniques and styles but rather to build on them and make them part of his personal

[38] Lokken, 1999; 6.

[39] Aho, 1990; 80.

[40] Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, 1997; 23.

[41] Ibid., 21.

voice. Rautavaara had great success with his work *A Requiem in Our Time*, which won awards in international composition competitions. Rautavaara later said,

> I composed *Requiem* completely instinctively. At that stage, looking at things objectively, I knew nothing about composing, although, on the other hand, it proves that knowledge is not the most important thing. Inventiveness and insight are much more essential.[42]

After completing his Masters of Musicology degree in 1954, Rautavaara traveled to Vienna "just to escape from reality."[43] While there he first encountered the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke (1875 – 1926), whose writings the composer would set to music several times during his career. Rautavaara was chosen by Sibelius to be the recipient of the Serge Koussevitzky Foundation Fellowship in 1955, which provided the opportunity to study for two summers at Juilliard and Tanglewood. While in America, Rautavaara spent time studying with Vincent Persichetti (1915 – 1987), Roger Sessions (1896 – 1985), and Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990). Each of these three mentors had a marked effect on Rautavaara's development. During his studies with Persichetti, Rautavaara came into contact with Messiaen's modes of limited transposition – a tool that would find a prominent place in Rautavaara's musical output for the rest of his life. Sessions and Copland exposed Rautavaara to the Second Viennese School and Stravinsky's neoclassicism. Many of Rautavaara's early works (especially those for piano) reflect this exposure as they follow rather clearly in that stylistic trend. Rautavaara was fascinated by

[42] Lokken, 1999; 7.

[43] Juhani Aromäki, *Elämäni On Musiikki: Tunnetut Musiikkimiehet Kertovat* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1980), 236.

the greater awareness of and acceptance of contemporary musical styles than he had experienced in his own country.[44] This experience is reflected in his life-long inclination toward pluralistic compositional styles.

Following two years of study in the United States, Rautavaara was not yet satisfied with his control over larger formal structures and sought further guidance from Wladimir Vogel (1896 – 1984) in Ascona, Switzerland where he spent several months learning twelve-tone technique and serialism. Vogel was an advocate of German expressionism and dodecaphony and he was influenced first by Scriabin from his time spent in Moscow, and later by his studies in Berlin with Ferruccio Busoni. He developed a personal style of composition he called "ritmica," a type of variation based on a constant rhythm.[45] Erik Bergman (1911 – 2006), a notable Finnish composer, suggested Rautavaara and other Finnish composers study with Vogel. Bergman eventually became a pivotal figure in introducing serialism to the modern music scene in Finland following his own studies with the Swiss teacher. Having incorporated serialism into his arsenal of compositional tools following his lessons with Vogel, Rautavaara finally felt he had developed a personal and flexible composition technique that could adequately serve to create the music he desired to hear: "For the first time I really felt I was acquiring technique, not simply a method based on trial and error, aesthetic opinions about this and

[44] Lokken, 1999; 8.

[45] Tamara Levitz, "Vogel, Wladimir" *Grove Music Online*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), 2.

that, but something precise."[46] Rautavaara's early piano works, which sit neatly within his period of serial composition, have been well documented in Sivuoja-Gunaratnam's 1997 publication *Narrating with Twelve Tones: Einojuhani Rautavaara's First Serial Period*. This book is an essential resource for detailed analysis of Rautavaara's early works. In 1957 Rautavaara attended the "new music" seminars in Darmstadt, Germany to continue his study of twelve-tone technique.[47] Following the Darmstadt seminars and further study of atonal techniques in 1958 with Rudolf Petzold in Cologne, Rautavaara was an enthusiastic supporter of dodecaphony, other serial techniques, and avant-garde styles.[48] During the years of what he called his "artistic apprenticeship"[49], Rautavaara held several different music-related positions. 1959 – 1961 he worked as librarian for the Helsinki Orchestra, 1963 – 1965 wrote for the newspaper *Ilta Sanomat* as a music critic, and 1965 – 1966 served as director of the Käpylä Music School in Helsinki. In 1966 Rautavaara returned to the Sibelius Academy as a lecturer on composition and music theory. Rautavaara was promoted to Professor of Composition in 1976, succeeding Erik Bergman in the position. He remained at the Sibelius Academy until 1990, at which time he decided to devote his time fully to composition.

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[46] Aho, 1988; 82-83.

[47] Lokken, 1999; 9.

[48] Tawaststjerna, 1982; 189-90.

[49] Tapani Länsiö, "'And how does the avant-garde feel this morning?' - Paavo Heininen: Credo" *Finnish Music Quarterly*, no. 4 (1994), 37.

CHAPTER III

THE PIANO MUSIC OF EINOJUHANI RAUTAVAARA

Although he is best known for his work in the genres of symphony and opera, Rautavaara also has a catalogue of works for solo piano that is worthy of recognition. Following is a complete list of Rautavaara's works for solo piano:

- *Three Symmetrical Preludes (Kolme symmetristä preludia)* (1949 – 50)
- *The Fiddlers (Pelimannit)* (1952)
- *Aleksanteri Könni* (1952)
- *The Devil and the Drunkard* (1952)
- *The Icons* (*Ikonit*) (1955)
- *Seven Preludes (Seitsemän preludia)* (1956)
- *Partita* (1969)
- *Études* (1969)
- Piano Sonata No. 1 *Christus und die Fischer* (1969)
- Piano Sonata No. 2, *The Fire Sermon* (1970)
- *Music for Upright Piano No. 1* (1976)
- *Music for Upright Piano No. 2* (1976)
- *Narcissus* (2001)
- *Passionale* (2003)
- *Fuoco* (2007)
- *Mirroring* (2014)

Compositional Style

Like most Finnish composers, Rautavaara took his direction from composers both Finnish and foreign. The obvious Finnish influence is Jean Sibelius (1865 – 1957),

although Sibelius's legacy among Finnish composers that came after him is varied. Sibelius was so well-known and respected as the quintessential nationalist composer in Finland (even during his own lifetime) that many composers who followed him made a concerted effort to do something intentionally different.[50] It is not surprising that many composers chose to react against Sibelius' musical successes: considering how late Finland achieved its individual cultural freedom relative to surrounding countries, there was a compression of cultural development among Finnish people. The types of cultural development that took place over generations in other countries took place in a matter of several years in Finland. Although many composers felt pressure from Sibelius' legacy, Rautavaara wrote that it was never much of an issue in his career:

> I had never myself experienced Sibelius as a shadow in the negative sense, rather as a cool shelter from the heat during my Wanderjahre… The music, style and technique of an older colleague had never been a problem for me nor, I imagine, for my generation as a whole… From the very start, to the mind of a young composition student, that music seemed to be behind us. It seemed to be lacking in any further stylistic or technical relevance for our own time.[51]

Rautavaara worked toward creating his own personal voice by freely combining Finnish folk elements with traditional as well as modern compositional techniques. He is often referred to as a pluralist composer for his combination of eclectic devices. In the early 20th century, both neoclassicism and dodecaphony took on a principal role in the musical

[50] Howell, 2006; 2.

[51] Einojuhani Rautavaara, "Dodos, Chinamen and Sibelius" *Fazer Music News* no. 3 (1991), 4.

life of Finland. Mikko Heiniö noted the reception of these two musical developments by Finnish composers:

> Neoclassicism was taken as a comprehensive stylistic phenomenon – and a directly connected aesthetic attitude – primarily, that is, as music, with all its characteristic features and general ideals, not as a set of theories or recipes for composition; this, of course, called for both performances and time. The twelve-tone system was adopted primarily as a technique, or method (to use the term Schoenberg himself preferred). It was easy to learn the elementary technical principles of the serial technique and to forget its injunctions, behind which the more general aesthetic principles of twelve-tone music might have been found.[52]

This compressed development in musical language certainly applies to works by Rautavaara, especially during the earlier years of his career when he felt it was necessary to experiment with as many different methods as possible.

Rautavaara's career has been divided into several distinct periods, based on the prevailing compositional aesthetic he was using at any given time: neoclassicism (up to 1957), first serial period (1957 – 65), neoromanticism (1967 – 83), synthetic second serial period (1984 – 94), and a "mystical" style (after 1994).[53] A quick overview of each style period from Rautavaara's career will be presented in order to better understand all the elements that were at play when he composed his late works for piano.

[52] Heiniö, as quoted in White, 2002; 149.

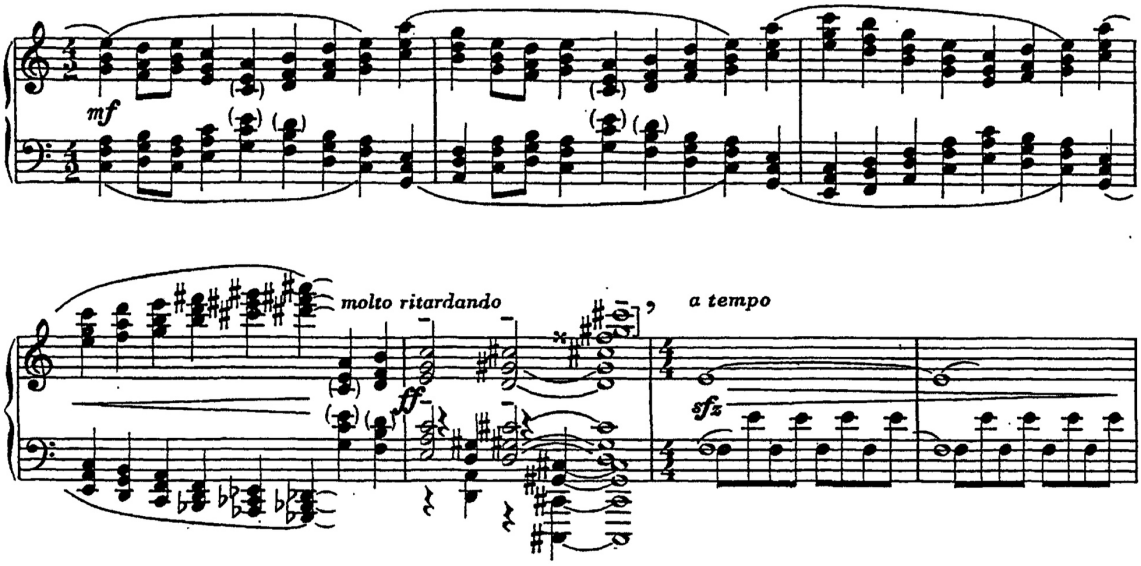
[53] Stępień, 2011; 69.

Neoclassicism

The influence of contemporary trends in composition is clear in Rautavaara's output during his years as a student. While studying with Aarre Merikanto, Rautavaara was introduced to works by Hindemith and Bartók; furthermore, after World War II the neoclassical style of Stravinsky and Bartók became the most popular compositional technique in Finland.[54] Rautavaara's piano works from this period, including *Three Symmetrical Preludes* (1949 – 50), *Fiddlers* (1952), and *Icons* (1955), make use of rigorous mirror symmetry, complex rhythms, and free tonality.[55] Example 3 shows a passage from *Icons* in which Rautavaara can already be found employing mirror arrangements of chords that are tonally non-functional though rather consonant in sound. Insistent, motoric rhythms in conjunction with triadic harmonies remained a vital part of Rautavaara's musical language.

[54] Dorsey, 2006; 16.

[55] Heiniö, 1988; 4.



Example 3. Rautavaara, *Icons*, "Kaksi maalaispyhimystä," mm. 15 – 21.[56]

Despite some rather abrupt stylistic changes over his career, Rautavaara would hold on to his neoclassical foundation and continue to make use of these techniques throughout his life.

First Serial Period

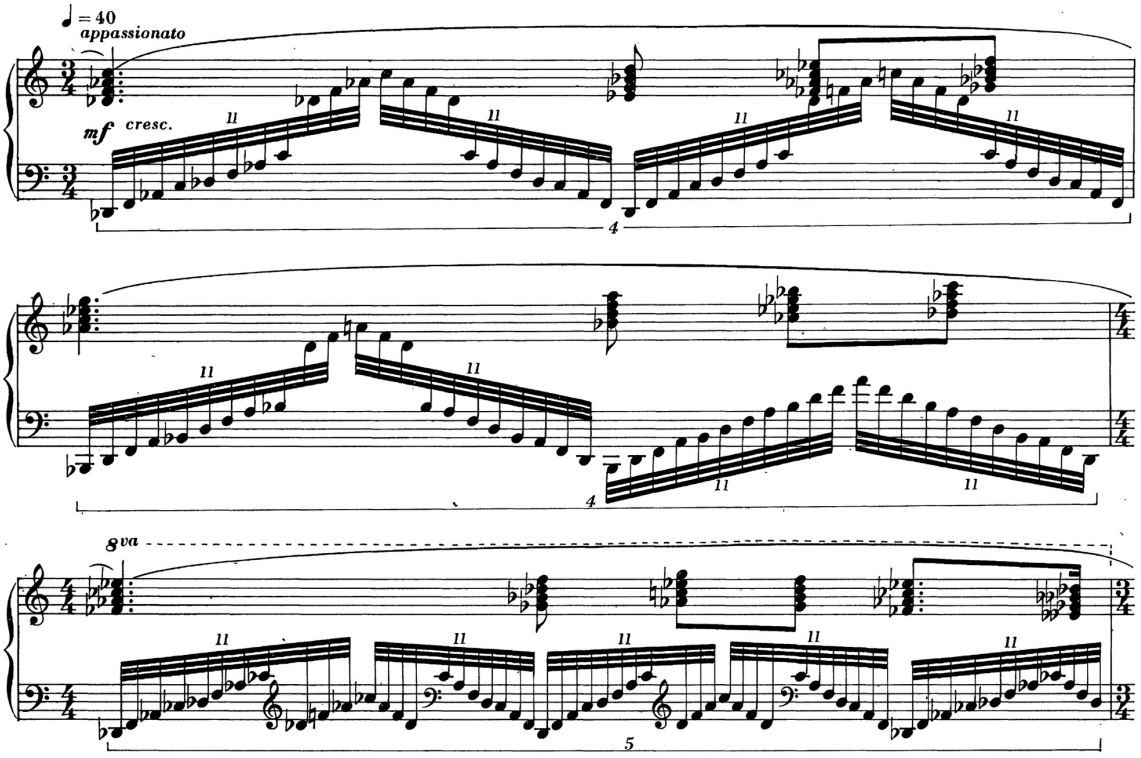
Serialism became an integral part of Rautavaara's musical language following his years of study in the United States. A particularly influential push toward dodecaphony came from Erik Bergman in the 1950s as he encouraged several other Finnish composers to study with Wladimir Vogel in Switzerland. This trend continued to gain traction with Finnish composers but was never fully accepted as a universal method of composition.

[56] Einojuhani Rautavaara, *Icons* (Helsinki: Fennica Gehrman Oy, 1963).

Rather, most Finnish composers including Rautavaara saw serial technique as one among many options to be used freely within a composition. Rautavaara did not compose any works for solo piano during this period, likely related to his own perceived weakness in extended forms and his desire to overcome that limitation.

Neoromanticism

In the late 1960s Rautavaara turned away from dodecaphony toward a more triad-based musical language. The symmetrical structures of his earlier periods still appear frequently, but in the context of harmonic progressions that do not follow traditional tonal function. His Piano Sonata No. 2 is a prime example of Rautavaara composing in this style. The following excerpt from the second movement illustrates his approach to composing in that idiom. In Example 4, note the presence of planing major 7^{th} chords serving a melodic function over virtuosic arpeggiated figures. The left-hand accompaniment also employs various major 7^{th} harmonies, making the entire section evocative of the French Impressionists Debussy and Ravel.



Example 4. Rautavaara, Piano Sonata No. 2, *The Fire Sermon*, Second Movement, mm. 25 – 27.[57]

Mysticism

Mysticism is the philosophy and compositional style that Rautavaara is most frequently associated with in Finland.[58] He has spoken of his role in the creation of music as a conduit for bringing out what already existed rather than feeling he is the creator himself:

> I am unquestionably a mystic. My job is not the job or role of a mother. My job is to act as midwife, to succeed in getting the work out from somewhere up there without tearing it to pieces… If I have a precise plan, want to do this and that, and

[57] Einojuhani Rautavaara, *Piano Sonata No. 2 The Fire Sermon* (Helsinki: Fennica Gehrman Oy, 1972).

[58] Habermann, 1997; 69.

> force the music accordingly, it variably dies, falls to pieces… If I have managed to treat it gently, employing all my technique and skill, succeeded in getting it out in one piece, it is not from me. It comes from somewhere else completely. I am just the instrument.[59]

Rautavaara's interest in the mystical often draws him toward metaphysical and religious subjects, including angels and liturgical service music for different religious denominations. He has four criteria that define a mystical experience in composition:

> (1) the experience cannot be described with words, only with music; (2) the experience has a non-dogmatic, artistically determining wholeness, the result of which is the composition; (3) the experience is fleeting, like what the romantics called inspiration: and, (4) the experience is by its nature passive and cannot be controlled by the artist.[60]

Even with the number of spiritual elements that appear in music throughout his career, Rautavaara did not consider himself to be religious in the traditional manner. From the 1990s Rautavaara made use of modern and traditional elements freely in his compositions.

Stylistic Development

Although stylistic trends can be discerned over the course of Rautavaara's career, his fundamental compositional goals in music remained steady throughout his life. A

[59] Rautavaara, as quoted in Aho, 1988; 88.

[60] Rautavaara in an interview by author Lovejoy, 2000; 12-13.

statement he made in a 1999 interview concerning his stylistic development bears repeating at length:

> …the only way for me to learn things was to write music in the techniques and styles I encountered. When I was young, I thought it was important to follow my time. So, I was a modernist. I was an avant-gardist. I was in the Darmstadt movement. And I wrote serialistic works. When I had more or less learned all those techniques, I realized that, if you follow your time, you come after it. You are not leading. The only way for me was to write the kind of music which I myself liked. That was the only criterion possible. I wrote the kind of music I wanted to hear at the moment. For instance, I learned the classical twelve-tone technique in my youth and I wrote several such works. But there was always the problem that harmony was extremely important for me. It was too important for me to go on in the direction the avant-garde took in the late 50s and 60s. I had to keep harmony. It was so central for me. But still, even today, I think that the 12 tempered tones are the vocabulary of the composer in this century, and it's only the question of syntax, of the organization of that vocabulary. My solution has been to seek a synthesis of the modern and of more or less tonal harmony.[61]

With a vigilant awareness of contemporary trends in the global music scene, and a willingness to experiment with current musical language, Rautavaara still sought ways to reconcile the old and new in his own output. As a result, music from any of his style periods is most often an amalgamation of all that he has grasped up to that point. Rautavaara has often been referred to as a "pluralist composer",[62] because of his penchant for using multiple (often diametrically opposed) compositional paradigms in the same work or even at the same moment. Aesthetic blending became a fundamental part of

[61] Einojuhani Rautavaara, "Rautavaara: Exploring His Musical Evolution" Robert Reilly, interviewer, *Schwann Opus* (Spring 1999), 7A.

[62] Sivouja-Gunaratnam, 1999; 9-12.

Rautavaara's musical language and will be examined in detail as it relates to his late piano works.

The importance of mysticism and extramusical associations in Rautavaara's music should not be underestimated. While his music rarely reaches the level of programmatic description, Rautavaara has a history of drawing inspiration from his life experiences, visual arts, literature, and philosophy. These associations necessitate exploring the connections between the music and the sources of reference.[63] Literature often played a significant role in Rautavaara's journey as a composer and particularly important were the writings of poet Rainer Maria Rilke:

> My youthful encounter with the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke turned out to be quite a discovery, not only in literary terms but also for the development of my world view. I still associate it strongly with the mysticism surrounding the ruins of post-war Vienna… I continued to carry with me – both mentally and in my suitcase – the *Duino Elegies*, Rilke's seminal work.[64]

Rautavaara wrote several works for orchestra based on the vision of angels that he developed from reading Rilke. *Angel of Light* (1994), *Angel of Dusk* (1980), and *Angels and Visitations* (1978) were all composed following on the idea that angels are powerful and terrifying. From studying the writings of Rilke, Rautavaara gathered the understanding that "'Every angel is terrible.' It was exactly what Jacob in the Bible does with his angel. He has to wrestle with it, and then I thought probably everybody must

[63] Wojciech Stępień (2011) presents a thorough discussion of this topic as it relates to several of Rautavaara's instrumental compositions.

[64] Rautavaara, commentary in the score of *Die erste Elegie*, as quoted in Stępień, 2011; 220.

wrestle with his angel."[65] All of this demonstrates the fundamental importance of the mystical and the spiritual in Rautavaara's work.

An example of Rautavaara's use of exterior sources of inspiration is found in his early work for piano, *Ikonit*. This suite of six pieces was very deliberately formulated based on a viewing of images in the book *Die Ikonen* by Insel Verlag. Rautavaara has described the process of viewing a particular image from the set and then quickly arranging the musical depiction of that experience. Later discussions of this work by the composer have revealed that he felt very vivid, and colorful, experiences of these images in the process of creating this musical manifestation.[66] Rautavaara's personal understanding of the images is an important part of the music; furthermore, he sees it as a fundamental goal of the music for other listeners to have an aesthetic experience, even if it is interpretively different from the composer's own understanding. Of interest to this study is the notion of *internal iconicity* – "musical signs that are similar to those heard earlier in the piece."[67] Rautavaara's fondness for revisiting and recycling portions of older works has been well documented[68], and the degree of self-reference within his earlier works requires that we consider internal repetition to have more iconic and narratological significance than simple musical variation.

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[65] Rautavaara in the documentary film *The Gift of Dreams*.

[66] Eero Tarasti, et al. *Musical Semiotics Revisited*, (International Semiotics Institute, 2003), 555.

[67] Ibid., 553. Tarasti discusses the significance of "icons" from the perspective of composer, performer, and listener.

[68] See Sivuoja-Gunaratnam (1999) for a discussion of intertextuality in Rautavaara's oeuvre.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF LATE PIANO WORKS

This section of the document will review the musical vocabulary of three late works – *Narcissus* (2001), *Passionale* (2003), and *Fuoco* (2007). Although they were each written several years apart, Rautavaara grouped them together as a set, described in the foreword of the *Fuoco* score: "I felt that *Passionale* and *Narcissus* would need a third piece to form a whole. Like the two first pieces, this finale of the trilogy displays virtuosic feroce passages, symmetry and *cantando* melodic moments."[69] The goal of analysis in this portion of the study will include comparison and contrast of the techniques used in these three compositions; furthermore, a view of these works as a snapshot of Rautavaara's ever-developing compositional style will allow them to be placed along the continuum of his stylistic career. We will see how these three pieces each have unique qualities to offer as they exist together to provide a retrospective view of Rautavaara's career as a composer. Each piece represents a different influence and stylistic paradigm. The hope here is not to simply identify the characteristic components of the musical structure, but rather to engage in a deeper discussion of how those elements interact with the experience of this music for both performer and listener.

[69] Einojuhani Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2008).

Rautavaara long considered himself a mystic, and it would be remiss not to take that perspective into consideration during an analytical survey.

Narcissus

Narcissus demonstrates Rautavaara at his most strict compositional output, but like all of his tightly worked-out pieces, this one remains approachable and enjoyable to listen to. *Narcissus* was composed for presentation during the 2002 Maj Lind Piano Competition in Helsinki, with Rautavaara stating that this piece "was an outcome of my love for symmetry."[70] The following analysis will reveal the extent of the symmetrical qualities that went into the creation of *Narcissus*. We should remain mindful of the fact that the structural components of this composition reveal Rautavaara's acknowledgement of his earliest experiences with the neoclassical style and particularly the influence of Igor Stravinsky.

The structural layout of this composition shows that Rautavaara has overcome his earlier issues with structural unity in longer musical forms.[71] The brief 114 measures of *Narcissus* are not enough to qualify the piece as a "large work"; however, the formal cohesiveness is indicative of a very organized structural plan that is executed with Rautavaara's distinctive brevity. Following the pattern of many of his early works,

[70] Einojuhani Rautavaara, *Narcissus*. (Helsinki: Fennica Gehrman Oy, 2003).

[71] See Sivuoja-Gunaratnam (1997) and Scott (2009) for discussions on Rautavaara's desire to effectively generate larger, unified developmental structures in his music.

Narcissus is a sectional piece, and in this case, each successive section is accompanied by a marked tempo change (and often an expressive heading as well). Kimberly Scott has suggested that this piece follows sonata form based on her interpretation of some of Rautavaara's manuscript sketches.[72] Her observations are based on a possible tonic-dominant relationship between different series from the matrices he derived. Furthermore, the clearly delineated sections of the work do suggest sonata form. The following table gives a brief overview of the layout:

Table 1. Structural Layout of Rautavaara's *Narcissus*.

Section	Measure number
Introduction:	1 – 16
Exposition:	17 – 27
Development:	28 – 89
Recapitulation:	90 – 99
Coda:	100 – 114

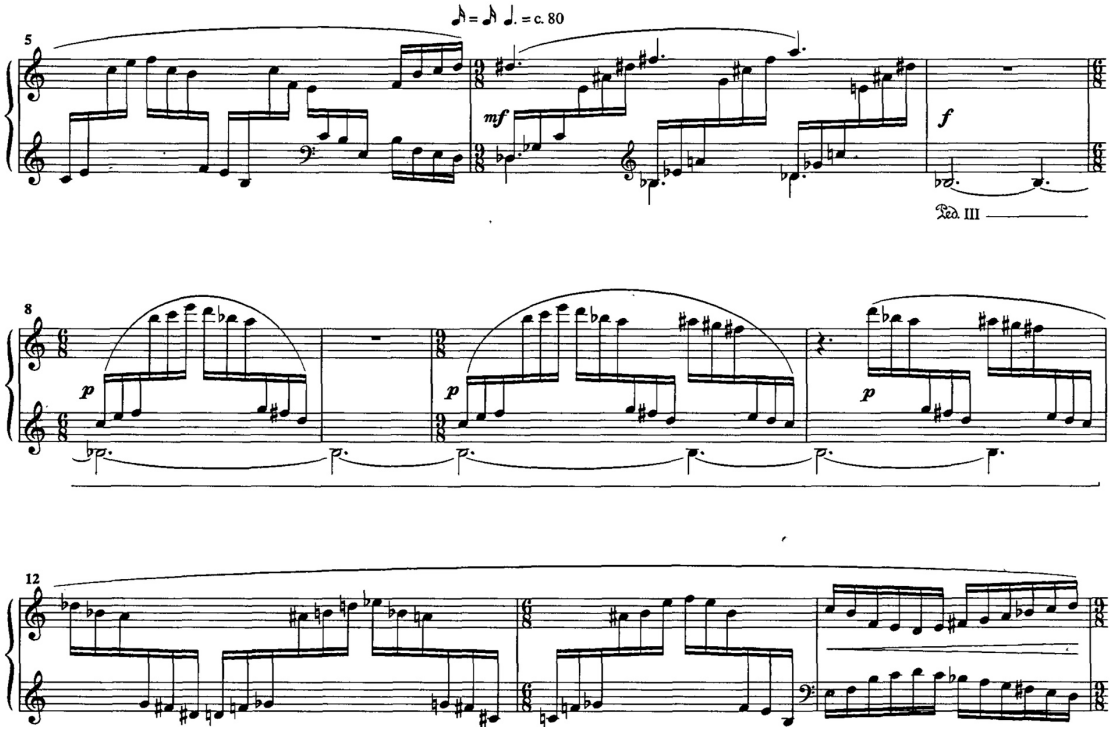
What is identified here as sonata form has been somewhat modified from the expected arrangement and the changes serve primarily to bolster the symmetrical nature of the piece – namely, the inclusion of two distinct sections in the development. Thematic groups are presented according to different compositional practices in each section of the form. The technical aspects of the work make the expressive tempo changes all the more striking due to changes of style and texture that accompany each different technique. The following chart provides a more detailed view of the leading techniques in each subsection of the piece:

[72] Scott, 2009; 143 – 144.

Table 2. Sectional Components in the Formal Layout of Rautavaara's *Narcissus*.

Section		Technique
Intro (mm. 1 – 16)	mm. 1 – 16	Axes of symmetry (revolving around diminished triad)
Exposition (mm. 17 – 27)	mm. 17 – 20	Primary theme with octatonic accompaniment
	mm. 21 – 27	Secondary theme Outer voices symmetrical around G-sharp Inner voices symmetrical around D (melody outlines tonal harmonies)
Development (mm. 28 – 89)	mm. 28 – 34	Primary theme presented in A-flat major and D-flat major with octatonic accompaniment
	mm. 35 – 40	Primary theme reharmonization and mode mixture (E-flat major/minor)
	mm. 41 – 46	Primary theme in minor mode (G-sharp minor) with non-symmetrical octatonic accompaniment
	mm. 47 – 51	Symmetrical dyads and new melodic theme
	mm. 52 – 60	Tonal harmony with rhythmic sequencing
	mm. 61 – 89	Isorhythmic cells with tonal ambiguity
Recapitulation (mm. 90 – 99)	mm. 90 – 99	Primary theme with octatonic accompaniment
Coda (mm. 100 – 114)	mm. 100 – 105	Symmetrical figuration
	mm. 106 – 114	Whole tone pitch content with tritone separation

Symmetrical elements play a vital role not only in the formal layout of the entire piece, but also as an organizing musical principle within some of the sections. The introduction (mm. 1 – 16) consists almost exclusively of figures that alternate between various axes of symmetry, as seen in Example 5.

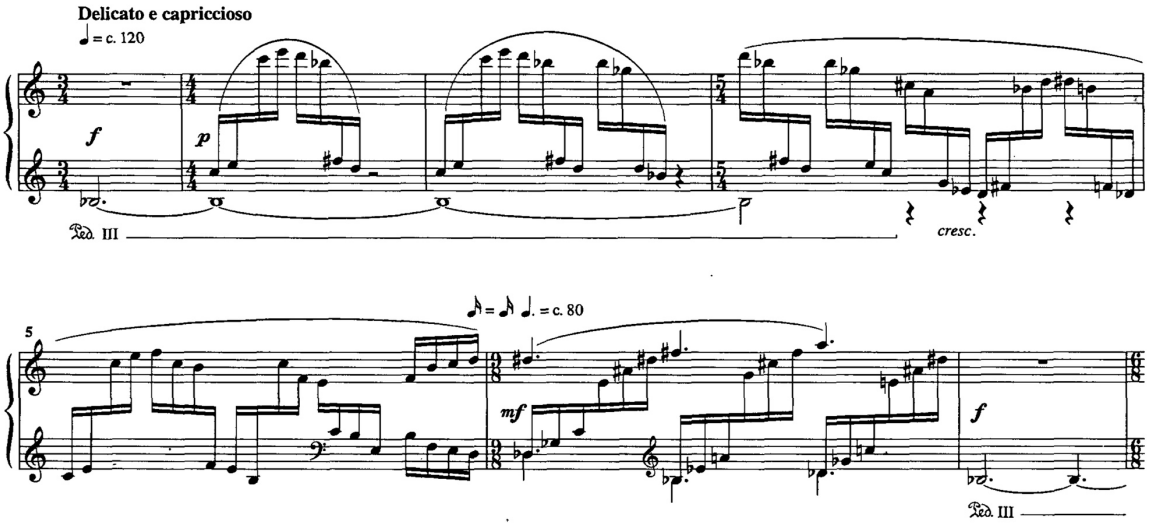


Example 5. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 5 – 14.[73]

The most prevalent axes are the pitches D, F, and A-flat, spelling a diminished triad as the primary "tonal center" for this section. It is common to find Rautavaara making extensive use of diminished triads and the interval of the tritone in his music. The tritone interval is also employed by the several variations of the octatonic scale that are put to use later in this composition. Rautavaara employs many different eight-note collections in his writing, often created from a symmetrical layout of whole steps and half steps. Rautavaara uses these modified octatonic structures as a means of connecting the symmetrical (atonal) with the tonal harmony that has remained a fundamental part of his

[73] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

musical language. As seen in Example 6, each of the figures in the first phrase (mm. 1 – 5) of the introduction is a symmetrically situated, chordal structure.

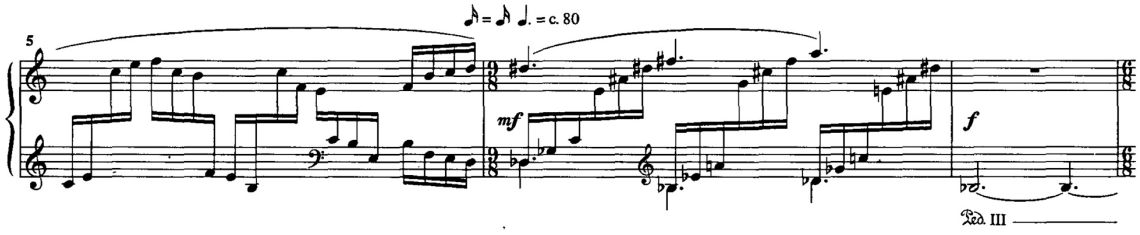


Example 6. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 1 – 7.[74]

The music here consists of tonal groupings, and the listener will no doubt pick up on the changing harmonic relationship between the chordal figures and the B-flat pedal tone sounding in the lowest voice. We often find Rautavaara implementing non-functional harmonic motion in a way that recalls the chord planing of Debussy, moving by chromatic steps or otherwise small intervals. Movement to mediant neighbors is quite common as well. This technique has endured from Rautavaara's earliest interactions with contemporary music during his childhood piano lessons, during which Debussy was one of the young composer's most influential sources of inspiration.

[74] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

This musical texture points toward another significant aspect of Rautavaara's compositional process – the use of contrapuntal voices in his music is both frequent and flexible in its appearance. As Rautavaara works through various iterations of the melody and accompaniment, voices appear and drop out seemingly on a whim.



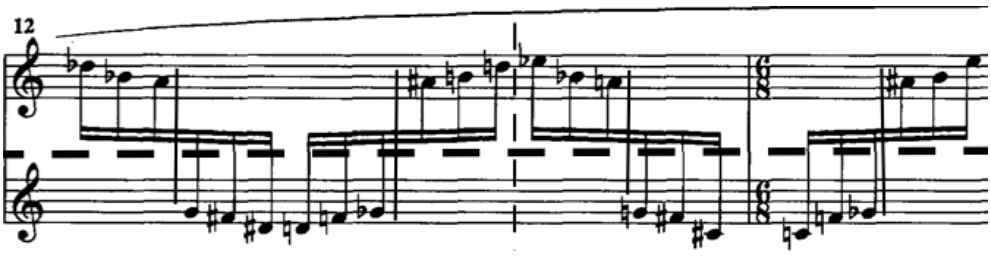
Example 7. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 5 – 7.[75]

In measure 6 (Example 7), the first instance of a melody appears in the top voice, with a counter-melody in the double-stemmed notes of the left hand. In the exposition, we will see this melody/counter-melody texture evolve into a mirror-image structure – another compositional technique that Rautavaara has put to frequent use in his piano music (see e.g. his Piano Sonata No. 2, *The Fire Sermon*). It is also interesting to note that the accompaniment in measure 6 might appear to be derived from quartal relationships, but in fact Rautavaara has laid these out consistently in pairs of perfect fourths and tritones mirrored between the hands in each beat.

The second phrase of the introduction continues alternating symmetrical axes, but the earlier tonal structures are now obscured by the addition of chromatic non-chord tones (all still functioning within the symmetrical organization of the music). There is a

[75] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

consistent struggle between non-functional tonality and non-tonal harmonic function in Rautavaara's music, which is surely born of his personal working-out of the conflict between modern and traditional compositional styles. For Rautavaara, physical symmetry is a link between tonal and atonal forms of musical construction; therefore, physical interaction with the piano keyboard becomes distinctly necessary to experience this music to the fullest degree. Measure 12 gives an example of both vertical and horizontal symmetry, as seen in Example 8. This particular musical figure demonstrates the kind of precision and tightly controlled structure that Rautavaara is capable of creating in his compositions.



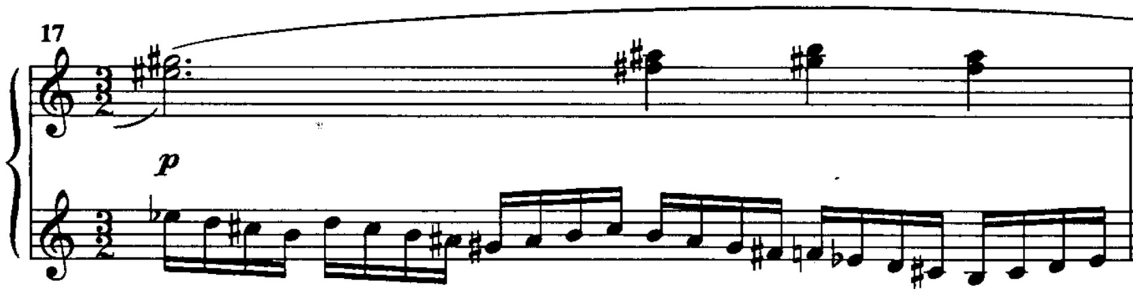
Example 8. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 12 – 13.[76]

The juxtaposition of symmetry, tonality, and serialism is a fundamental element of Rautavaara's reconciliation of modern and traditional compositional techniques. From the performer's perspective, a musical phrase such as that in measures 12 – 13 can be conceived of as a tactile, or kinesthetic, experience as much as an auditory one. The symmetrical cells that Rautavaara employs result in the pianist's hands falling on the

[76] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

keys in positions that mirror each other. Navigating the contours of the keyboard in this manner, while often resulting in sounds that might be difficult to describe musically, is a physical motion that is quite natural and simple for the pianist to execute.

The exposition begins in measure 17 and introduces the first thematic melody of this piece. This melody appears in different tonal areas over the course of the exposition and development, each time with a new rendering of the accompaniment. Seen in Example 9, the 8-pitch collection underpinning measures 17 – 20 is presented in cells of four pitches, each of which spans a series of intervals of either a diminished or perfect 4^{th} in size. Note also that the figuration of these cells is laid out in a fashion such that the sequence of intervals covered by the cells is symmetrical within the measure. This creates a juxtaposition of intervallic relationships when considered in conjunction with the alternating minor- and major-thirds of the melody above.

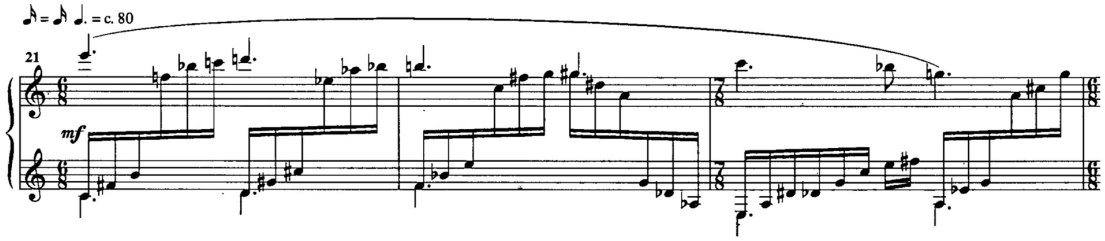


Example 9. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, m. 17.[77]

The metrical foundation for this section (and indeed, mm. 17 – 40) appears to be derived from the rhythmic needs of the melody. While the phrase structure of the primary theme melody involves differing numbers (and subdivisions) of beats, Rautavaara is not hesitant to adjust the time signature in order to set the phrase in a unique position within the beat structure of each measure. This compositional approach is a derivative of the melodically driven *Kalevala* chants, whose rhythms were frequently extended metrically to accommodate the needs of the vocal part.

The second theme group of the exposition is introduced in measure 21 (Example 10) with two primary organizational factors. The outermost voices are mirrored around the pitch G-sharp, while the inner accompaniment (formed by alternating tritone and perfect 4th intervals) is symmetrical around the pitch D.

[77] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.



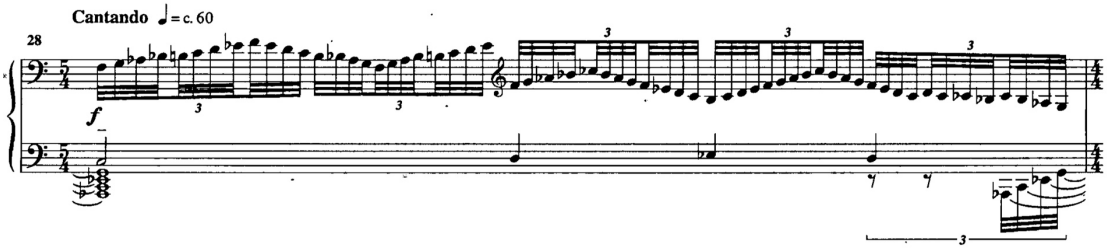
Example 10. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 21 – 23.[78]

This section demonstrates the use of points of symmetry in a similar fashion to tonal centers in traditional harmonic language. In Rautavaara's piano music the specific pitches A-flat and D are particularly common choices for centers of symmetry because of their symmetrically centered position on the keyboard. Regardless of the pitches involved, however, the tritone interval appears frequently. The second organizing element in this section is harmonic – the melodic line consistently outlines tonal harmonies until the onset of the development section in measure 28. The conflict between diatonicism and chromaticism regularly makes an appearance in Rautavaara's musical language and he uses this structural dissonance as a tool for thematic and formal development.

The development opens with a restatement of the primary theme from the exposition, this time with the texture inverted from its previous arrangement. The melody is now situated down two octaves, with harmonic support from chords in the extreme bass register. The first section of the development moves non-functionally through the key centers A-flat Major, D-flat Major, E-flat Major, and G-sharp Minor. Accompaniment beginning in measure 28 (Example 11) is provided by a symmetrical

[78] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

variation of the octatonic scale (formed from the pattern of whole and half steps: W-H-W-H-H-W-H-W) running in ceaseless 32nd-notes.

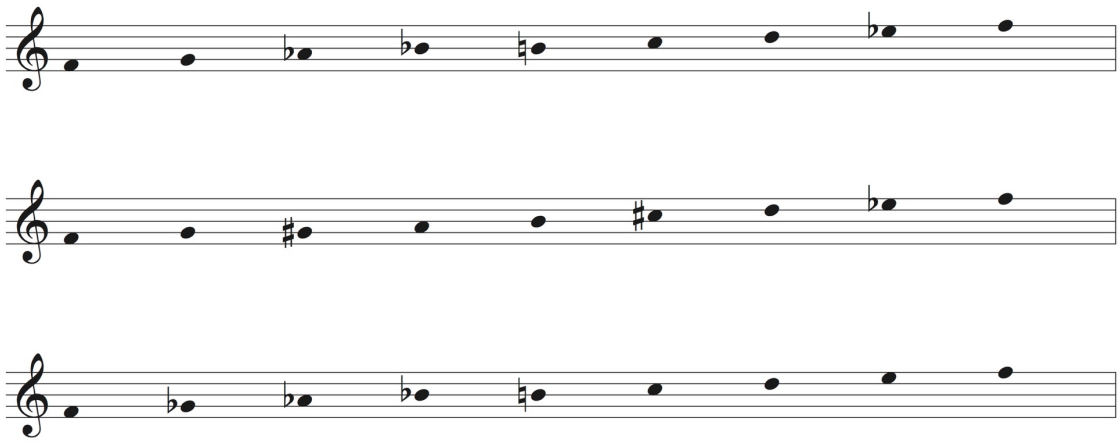


Example 11. Octatonic Accompaniment with Tritone-based Inflection Points. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, m. 28.[79]

The onset of the octatonic accompaniment brings with it a daunting number of notes to perform, but also demonstrates Rautavaara's superb ability to write musical figures that fall under the hand with great ease. It is clear from his chosen arrangement of the figuration that the composer is acutely aware of the physical necessities that performing his music demands. Grouping the scalar patterns into intervallic clusters yields a series of hand positions that are quite facile to navigate. The organized structure of this layout is bolstered by figuration that continually takes the pitches F and B (or C-flat) as melodic inflection points. This allows the hand to follow the contours of the figuration while maintaining the same clusters of notes grouped together. These inflection points form an ever-rising sequence of tritones (with octave displacement) in measures 28 – 34 that repeatedly coincide rhythmically with the melodic content of the left hand. Through this section of the development, three different symmetrical octatonic scale variants (see

[79] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

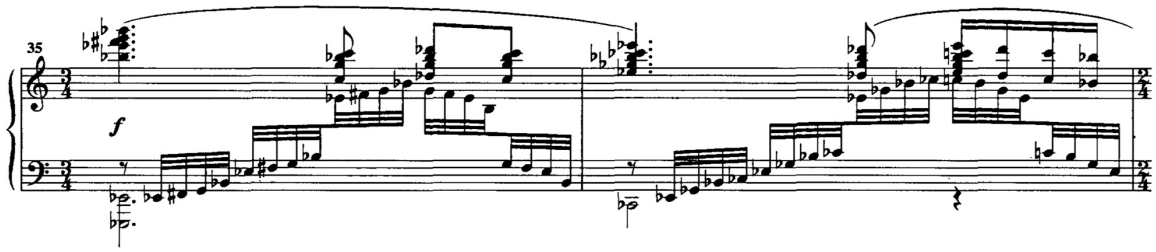
Example 12) are employed in conjunction with the changing harmonies of the left hand, all without interruption to the previously mentioned arrangement of tritone inflection points.



Example 12. Pitch Content of Rautavaara's Symmetrical Octatonic Scale Variants.

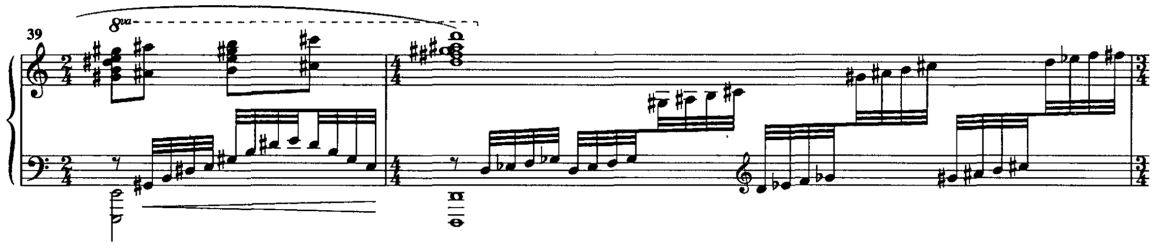
These variants will make another appearance in the recapitulation in association with the return of the melody they accompany here in the development.

Measures 35 – 46 consist of two six-measure segments that continue the development of the primary melodic theme of the exposition. The melody is first presented as a newly harmonized series of chords, as seen in Example 13.



Example 13. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 35 – 36.[80]

Employment of mode mixture in this section yields some tonal ambiguity, which leads the harmonic center from E-flat (Major/Minor) to G-sharp Minor. The symmetrical chord that is based on an altered D Major harmony in measure 40 (see Example 14) serves as a transition to the new tonal area by way of a tritone relationship.



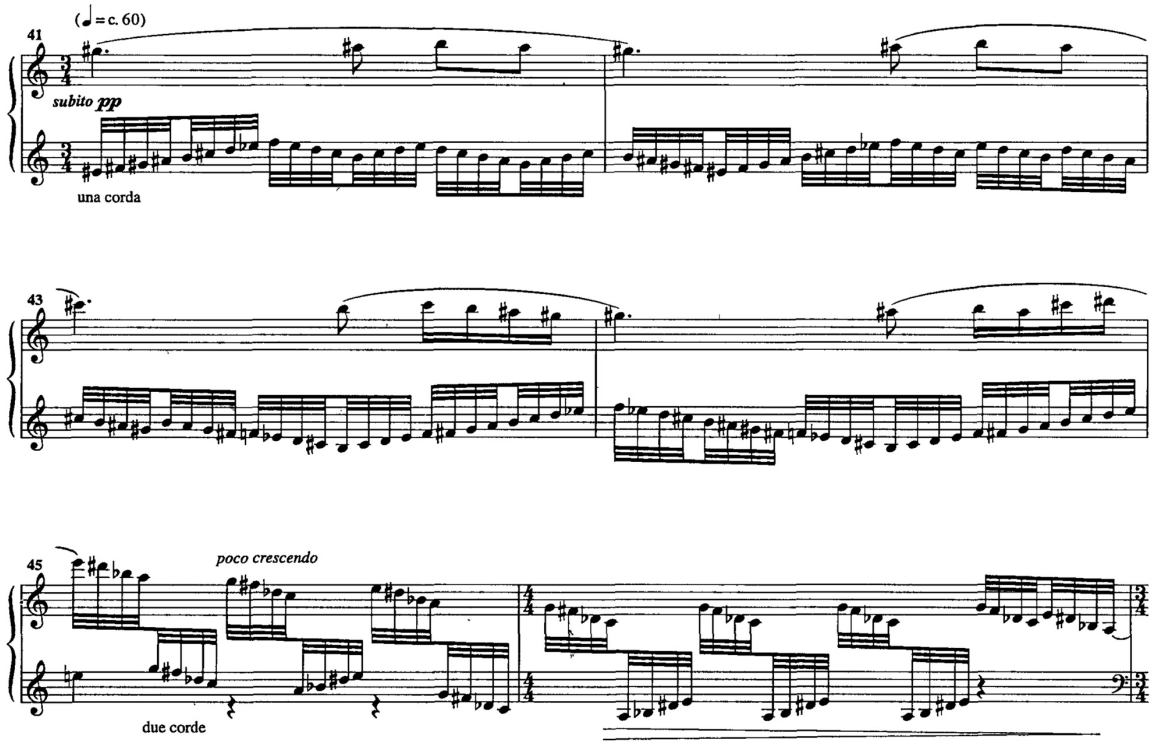
Example 14. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 39 – 40.[81]

While the primary theme here has been cast in the minor mode, the accompaniment in measures 41 – 46 (Example 15) is notable for its use of a non-symmetrical octatonic scale. Until this point in the piece, each instance of figuration using a an 8-pitch scale has been conceived using a bilaterally symmetrical series of whole steps and half steps. In the

[80] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

[81] Ibid.

case of this non-symmetrical octatonic scale, however, the pattern of steps (HWWH|WHHW) consists of two cells that are internally symmetrical and inversely related to one another. Manipulation of these cells continues through measure 46 with sequences and tritone-based points of mirroring.

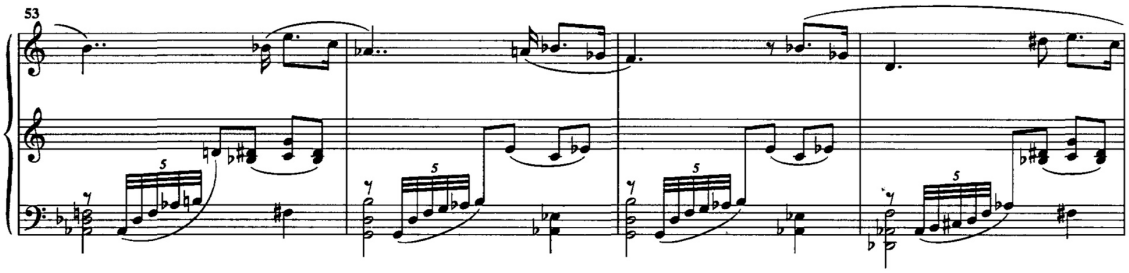


Example 15. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 41 – 46.[82]

An entirely different compositional model dominates the latter portion of the development beginning in measure 47. First, we encounter a new rather loosely organized melodic component that draws from both tonal and serial techniques, with elements from each system appearing in a sort of pointillistic array. Repeated sequencing of rhythmic

[82] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

figures (Example 16) in both melodic and accompaniment parts helps to alleviate the unpredictable nature of the tonal/serial dissonance.



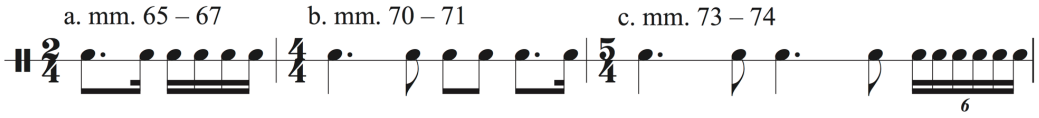
Example 16. Rhythmic Sequencing. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 53 – 56.[83]

The rhythmic sequencing calls to mind both the isorhythmic techniques of the medieval *talea*[84], as well as the rhythmic structure of traditional *Kalevala* recitation. With multiple threads of rhythmic patterns occurring simultaneously, this section gives an impression of contrapuntal organization without necessarily relying on such techniques. This design continues through measure 89, though as the music becomes steadily more founded on a harmonic basis, the isorhythmic figures become more sparse. Each of the three segments that make up this portion of the development is characterized by a particular accompanimental texture. Measures 47 – 51 employ symmetrical dyads alternating over a simple bassline. The new melodic theme introduces a rhythmic cell involving quintuplet 32nd notes. That five-note cell is then repeatedly sequenced in mm. 52 – 60 as the accompaniment moves nonfunctionally through various vertical seventh chords. The

[83] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

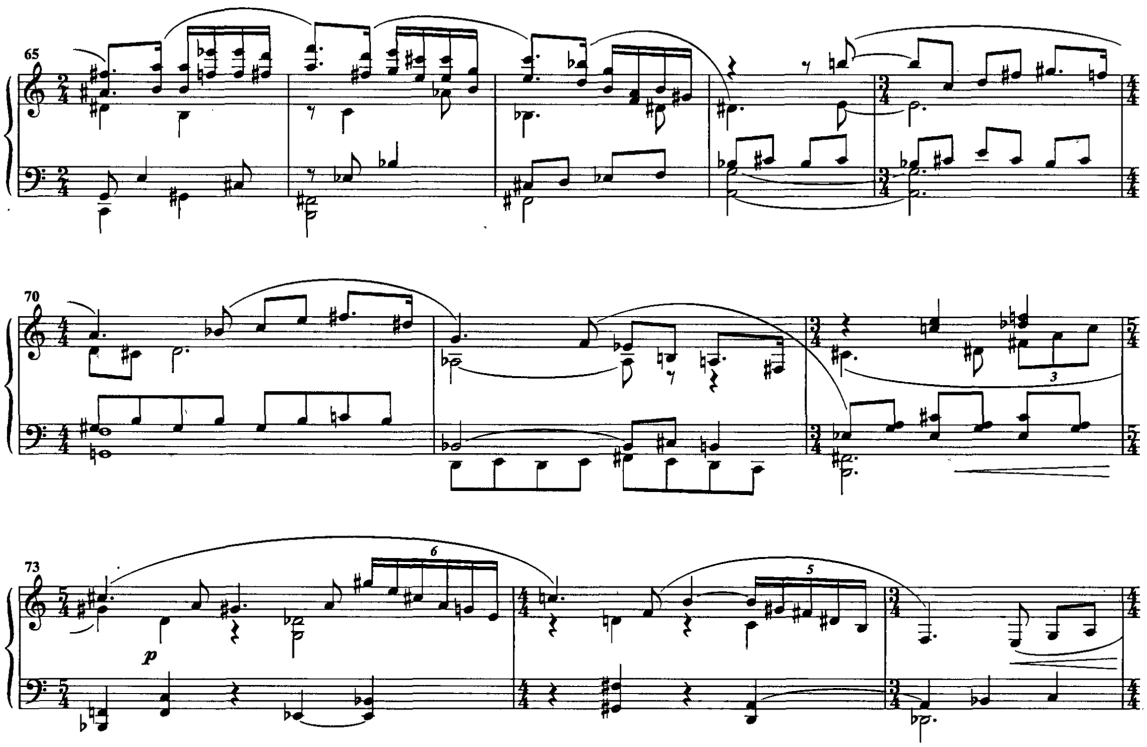
[84] *Talea* is a medieval term used to denote a repeated rhythmic configuration.

remainder of the development is devoted to elaboration on the content of the preceding two sections. Throughout mm. 61 – 89 we find the accompaniment alternating and interweaving tonal harmonies, references to the symmetrical dyads, and stark chromatic alteration. The pitch content of this section is difficult to define because of the seemingly arbitrary use of symmetrical figures, whole tone scales, and chromatically altered tonal harmonies. The ambiguity of the pitch content is moderated by a thread of various rhythmic cells, reproduced in Example 17 (also see Example 18 for the relevant music).



Example 17. Rhythmic Cells in the Development Section of Rautavaara's *Narcissus*.

These rhythms are at times adjusted slightly to accommodate for changing time signatures. The result of all this is almost a sense of improvisation using the musical material that was introduced just prior.

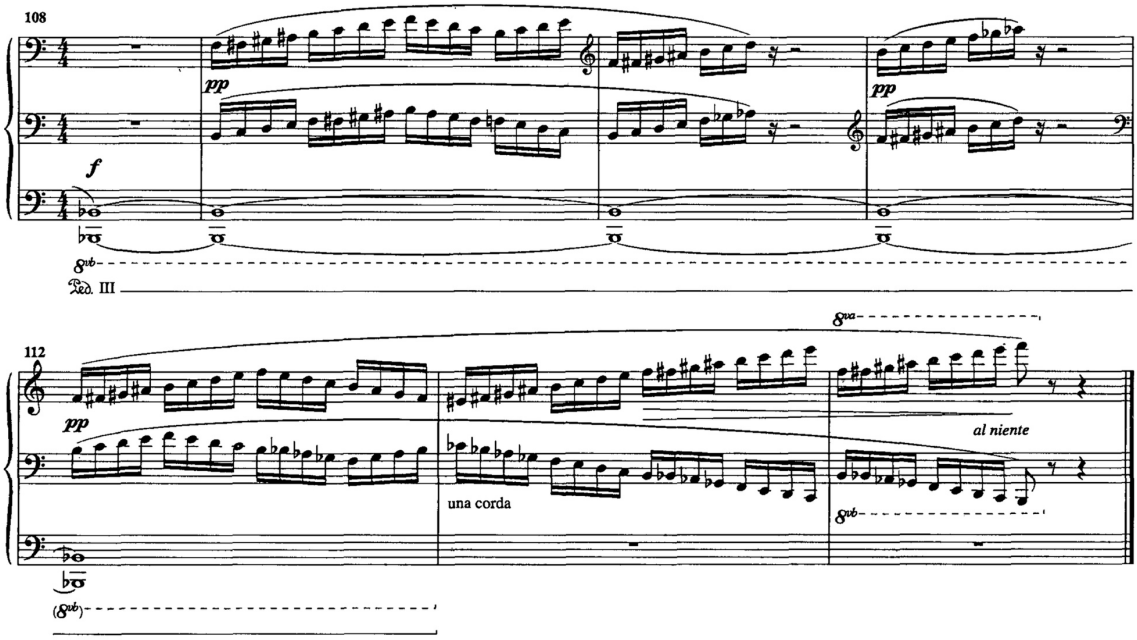


Example 18. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 65 – 75.[85]

Measure 90 marks the onset of the recapitulation and the return of the primary theme with octatonic accompaniment. At its reappearance, the theme is unable to find a harmonic footing in contrast to its previous manifestations and is therefore truncated as it quickly dissolves into a coda beginning at measure 100. Tonal elements continue to destabilize as the primary theme gives way to symmetrical mirror figures, suggesting a two-part invention with parallel motion between the parts at the interval of a tritone. Each hand follows an octatonic scale variant (interestingly with the right hand accidentals

[85] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

notated using sharps and the left hand flats, see Example 19) to the extreme registers of the keyboard landing on a widely separated tritone, ending the piece in total ambiguity.



Example 19. Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, mm. 108 – 114.[86]

To break his long respite from composing works for solo piano, Rautavaara looked back to his earliest sources of inspiration and demonstrated with *Narcissus* that he has truly mastered formal organization and compositional unity through the many various techniques he employs. By recalling the training from his earliest days as a nascent composer, Rautavaara began working down a path of reminiscence on which he would remember the journey his compositional career had taken him throughout his life. The title *Narcissus* is especially fitting in this regard, for according to Greek mythology, the

[86] Rautavaara, *Narcissus*, 2003.

young man Narcissus was led to a pool and shown his own reflection, with which he immediately fell in love. We see many elements in *Narcissus* that may be a musical depiction of this story, including the symmetrical (mirror image) layout of the piece and recurrent use of mirror figures and points of symmetry. Also, Rautavaara has shown compositionally that the reflection of those foundational techniques he learned in his formative years still resonates through his music after many years.

Passionale

Passionale is the second piece in this set of three late works and was completed in 2003 for the Iitti Music Festival in Finland. On the surface this piece appears to use a compositional approach that is similar in many ways to that of *Narcissus*; however, the motivations behind each piece are unique despite employment of some techniques that are common to Rautavaara's style. Whereas *Narcissus* exhibits a neoclassical structure and tightness of composition, *Passionale* demonstrates the composer's penchant for exploration of the spiritual and the mystical – his personal neoromantic style. Stravinsky was a pivotal guide in Rautavaara's early development (especially in his piano works) and a primary influence on the neoclassical style period of the younger composer. Likewise, Rautavaara's neoromantic expression was in large part inspired by the discovery of modes of limited transposition which he would use consistently throughout

his life as a composer, and many elements in *Passionale* bear out the influence of Messiaen through the use of this fundamental compositional device.

In his text *The Technique of my Musical Language*,[87] Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992) details many different aspects of musical construction including melodic contour, harmony, chords with added notes, modes, and rhythm, that when properly employed have the ability to affect deeper meaning in the music. Particularly relevant to Rautavaara's writing here are harmony, added notes, and rhythm. In his introductory chapter, Messiaen expresses a sentiment that very well describes the experience of listening to Rautavaara's *Passionale*: "It is a glistening music we seek, giving to the aural sense voluptuously refined pleasures. At the same time, this music should be able to express some noble sentiment…"[88] Rautavaara has stated that "I have experienced that there are very exact things in music which nevertheless cannot be expressed in words. I am conscious of a level of existence outside our own, beyond the cognitive."[89] While there are frequently some extramusical associations with Rautavaara's compositions, those do not typically rise to the level of producing truly programmatic music. The recurrent links to literature, art, religion, and philosophy in Rautavaara's output bolster the idea that he aspires to express something in its most pure (musical) form, where using words would inevitably fall short. What makes this idea compelling with regard to

[87] Olivier Messiaen, *The Technique of My Musical Language: Text with Musical Examples*, Translated by John Satterfield, (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 2001).

[88] Ibid., 13.

[89] Hilary Finch, "Guided by Angels" *Gramophone* 74 (June 1996), 24.

Rautavaara's music is how creatively he managed to reconcile rigorous syntactical devices (compositional methods) with rhetorically powerful sounds. Stępień has argued that Rautavaara's mysticism and his music work together to present another reality and in doing so "create a more powerful and more influential spiritual message."[90] Interestingly, Rautavaara has revealed that it is often a short phrase or group of words that initially inspires a piece of music, and those words often become the title of the piece: "But I feel that I owe those mantras for the inspiration, the idea and the energy for the music which resulted; it would be false to leave the mantra out of the title."[91] These "mantras" are a germination of a feeling or idea that instills the music with its particular energy and sense of mystical feeling as the composer understands it. In a creative twist, it is often a set of words that inspires Rautavaara to write the music which he states expresses that which cannot be adequately put into words.

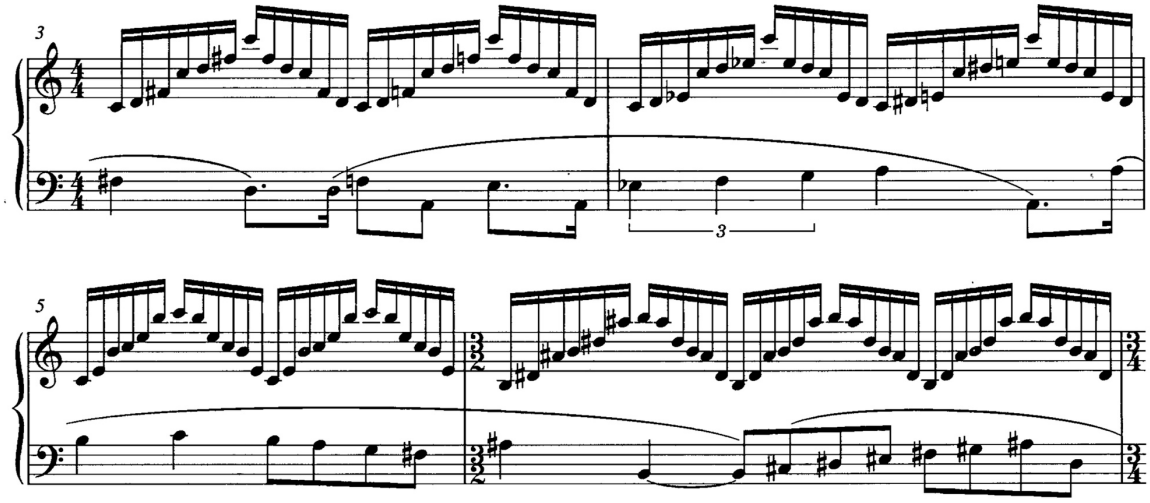
The harmonic language in *Passionale* presents a musical foundation that is almost kaleidoscopic in its function. Rautavaara stated, "the reason for the new arrangement [of pitch classes and melodic content] is naturally to avoid harmonic sequences. This provides an example of 'augmentation' between the various structural levels."[92] Two points can be taken from this statement in relation to the present composition. First, Rautavaara is thinking of multiple structural levels simultaneously; for instance, how

[90] Stępień, 2011; 89.

[91] Rautavaara, 1995; 115.

[92] Rautavaara, 1985; 4.

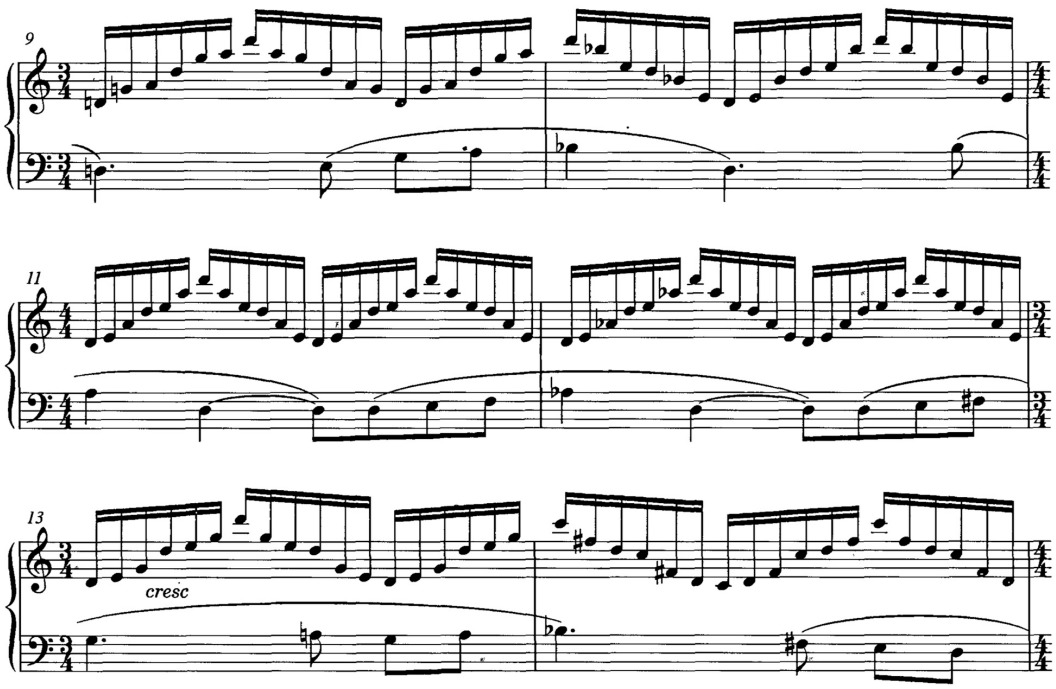
subtle chromatic changes in the melody may affect the conception of the harmony and its function in that moment. Second, the composer has a desire to avoid sequence (repetition) particularly in the harmonic layout, which stands in stark contrast to the amount of repetition that is found in rhythm and figuration in this piece and others by Rautavaara. This demonstrates the compositional influence of Messiaen, wherein simple changes in an otherwise static musical texture may engender quite profound changes in the experience of the listener based on the perception of those changes. We find in the opening measures of *Passionale* (see Example 20) a harmonic progression characterized by transmuted chord types (e.g., D^7 to $Dmin^7$ and $Cmin^9$ to C Major/minor to $Cmaj^7$ in mm. 3 – 4) on a common root, and root motion by chromatic steps, often relying on common tones in the process (for example, $Cmaj^7$ to $Bmaj^7$ in mm. 5 – 6, sharing the note B-natural).



Example 20. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 3 – 6.[93]

The texture of the music in this opening (mm. 1 – 16), that of chordal arpeggios accompanying a singular melodic line, lends itself quite well to such minimal modulations of harmonic character. The particular character of the tonality at any moment can be adjusted by simple chromatic alterations in the harmonic content of each arpeggio to create a subtly shifting harmonic scheme, as observed especially clearly in measures 10 – 14 (see Example 21).

[93] Einojuhani Rautavaara, *Passionale* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2007).



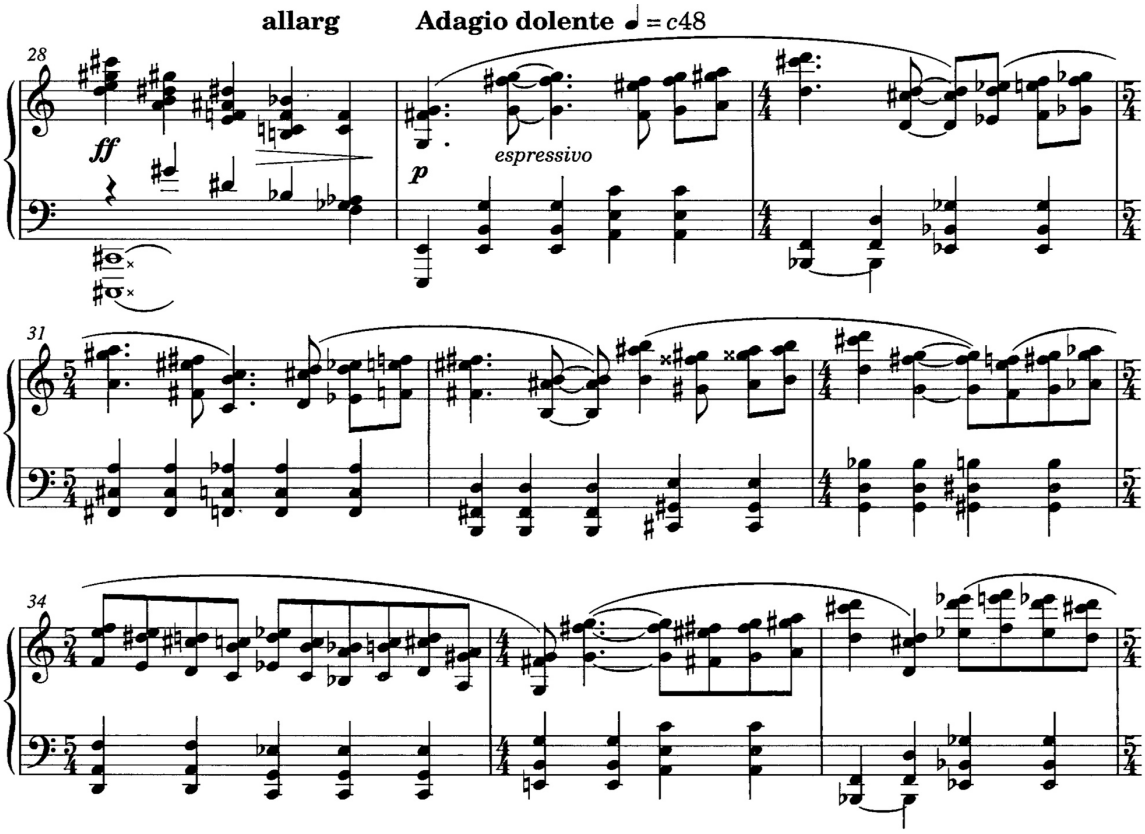
Example 21. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 9 – 14.[94]

In these measures a descending chromatic alteration can be traced in both the left-hand melody as well as the arpeggiation above it. Beginning in measure 10, the starting pitch B-flat is progressively lowered to A, then A-flat, G, then F-sharp with each change resulting in a new harmony. The range of harmonic alterations achieved from this simple process is surprising but ultimately rather easy to follow because of its sequential nature. This example points toward what we might consider a harmonic sequence. Based on the composer's own words referenced earlier, he makes a practice of avoiding harmonic sequence. And while we may detect a pattern in the root motion of measures 10 – 15 (that is – e, d, d, e, d, d), the qualities of those chords are anything but sequential. Rautavaara

[94] Rautavaara, *Passionale*, 2007.

was conceptualizing this music on multiple structural levels simultaneously and thus the chord quality derived from each successive chromatic shift is the defining structure in this moment, not to be overshadowed by the repetitive nature of the basic harmonic motion.

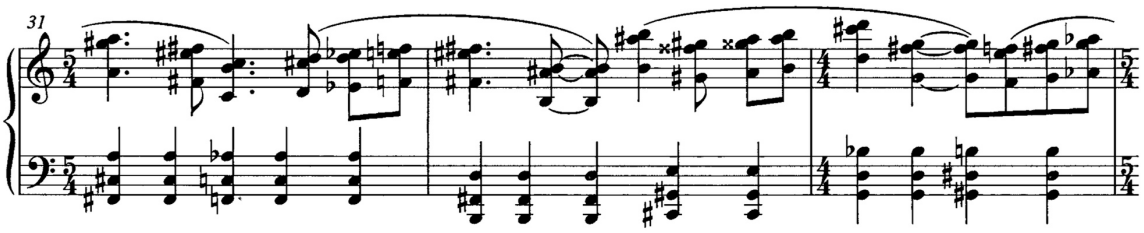
The next harmonically important event occurs in the section beginning at measure 29, which features a marked reduction of tempo as well as a drastic change of texture. Two features stand out in this section. First, the harmonic progression in measures 29 – 45 is arranged as two complete presentations of a twelve-tone row (0, 5, 6, 11, 2, 1, 7, 9, 3, 4, 10, 8) in the bass line, identifiable in Example 22 by the root of each chord played in the left hand. The second feature is derived from the harmonic interaction of melody and accompaniment.



Example 22. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 28 – 36.[95]

The left-hand chord progression is governed by the tone row but consists entirely of quarter-note minor triads. Seen in Example 23, the melodic material is presented in octaves with an interpolated major seventh resulting in repeated intervallic dissonance.

[95] Rautavaara, *Passionale*, 2007.



Example 23. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 31 – 33.[96]

The harmonic relationships that arise from the juxtaposition of these dissonant intervals to the simple minor chords of the accompaniment demonstrate the use of what Messiaen termed *added notes* in his treatise:

> It is a question of foreign notes, with neither preparation nor resolution, without particular expressive accent, which tranquilly make a part of the chord, changing its color, giving it a spice, a new perfume. These notes keep a character of intrusion… They have, nevertheless, a certain citizenship in the chord, either because they have the same sonority as some classified appoggiatura, or because they issue from the resonance of the fundamental.[97]

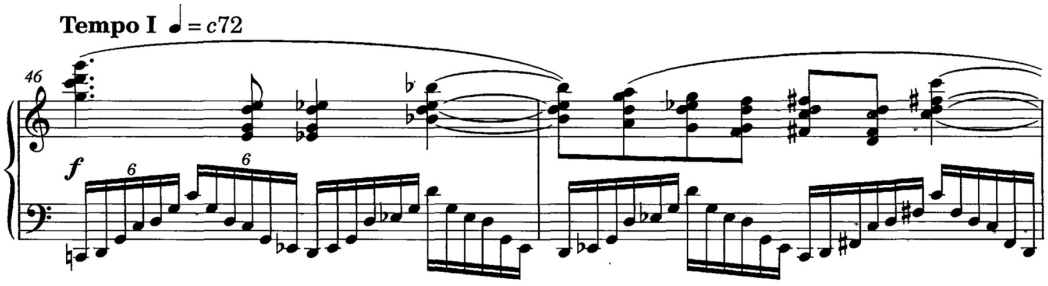
The added major 7th intervals can be analyzed as upper-structure chord tones (often with alterations) with respect to each chord of the left hand. The result is a series of very rich harmonies that may even be reminiscent of jazz harmony. A striking component of the added notes in this section is that the pitches do indeed seem to "issue from the resonance of the fundamental," with frequent appearance of the 9th, 11th, 14th, and 15th harmonics arising. While it is uncertain whether Rautavaara was actually thinking specifically of the harmonic overtones in this instance, it draws an interesting parallel back to the earlier

[96] Rautavaara, *Passionale*, 2007.

[97] Messiaen, 2001; 47.

discussion of ancient *Kalevala* melodies being derived from pitch sets of the overtone series.

The A section returns in measure 46 and is presented in a varied form. "Variation" occurs not in the traditional sense, but rather as a series of small changes and additions to the harmonic and rhythmic layout of the section. These adjustments serve to add density and complexity to the texture of the music. For example, the first two measures of the original A section dwell on the harmonic center of C for two measures; in the corresponding space of A´ (Example 24) we find Csus, Cmin, Ebmaj7, and C Lydian harmonies. The melody of measures 46 – 47 is a reiteration of that in measures 2 – 3, but the expanded harmonic palette, in addition to the added chord tones in the right-hand part, makes the presentation of the melody rather different at its second appearance.

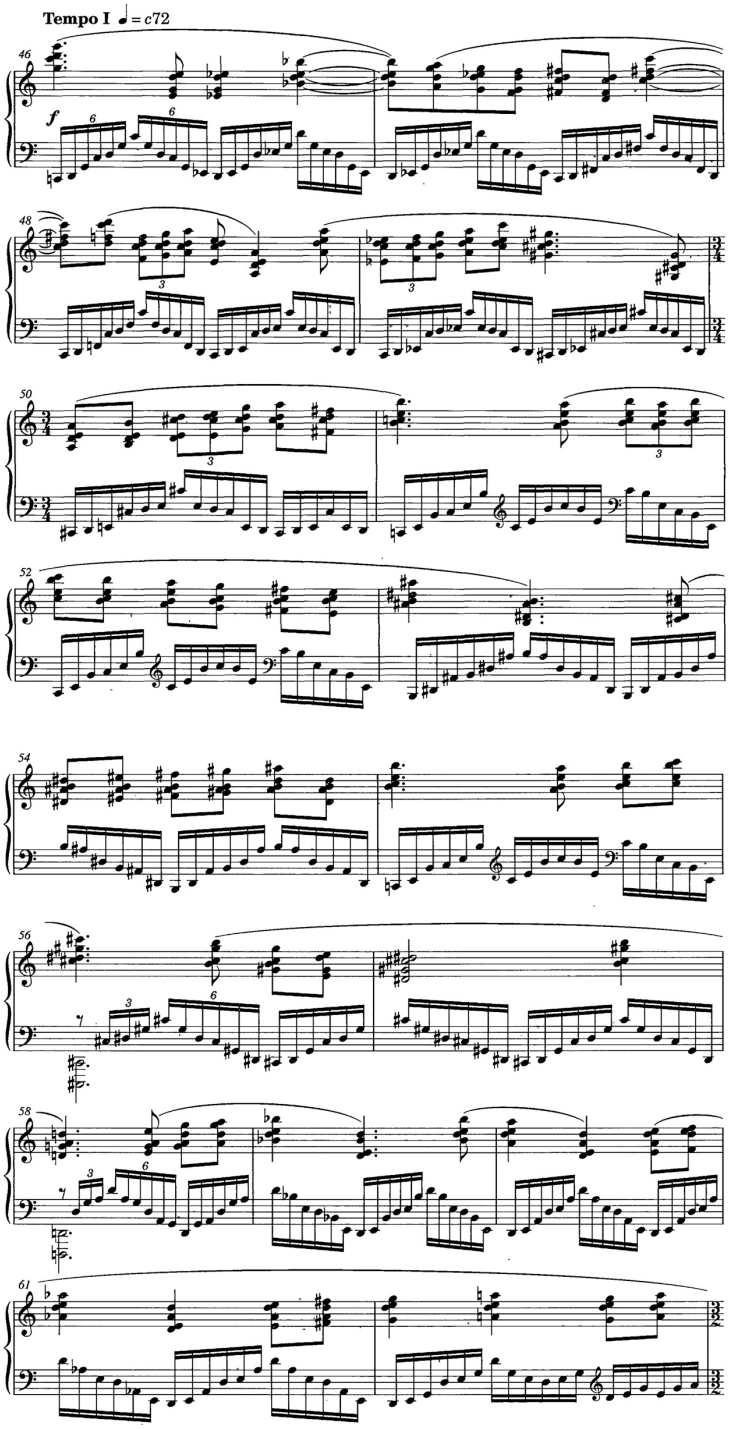


Example 24. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 46 – 47.[98]

There is a harmonic destabilization that occurs in the A´ section (mm. 46 – 62, see Example 25) as a result of the adjustments mentioned above. In the first A section, the harmonies of each successive measure seem to gravitate back toward the tonality of C

[98] Rautavaara, *Passionale*, 2007.

(major or minor) whereas in A′ there is a tendency to linger on chromatic neighbors of C (C-sharp and B) with each return to that central harmony being more fleeting. This creates an unsettled feeling that drives the music forward while simultaneously introducing some ambiguity at the conclusion – a common effect found in Rautavaara's music.



Example 25. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 46 – 62.[99]

[99] Rautavaara, *Passionale*, 2007.

A few notes on the texture and harmony of the various sections of *Passionale* should be made to clarify the developmental direction over the course of the piece. The harmonic language becomes continually denser based on the figuration and textural elements operating in each section. The following table illustrates this process:

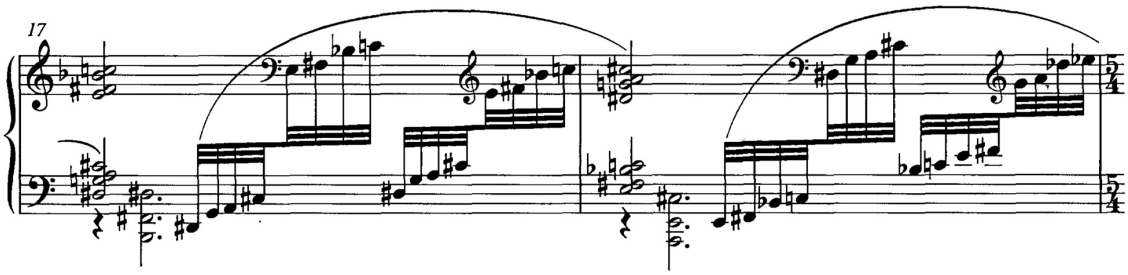
Table 3. Textural Elements of Each Section in Rautavaara's *Passionale*.

Section	Measures	Melody type	Accompaniment type
A	1 – 16	1 voice	Chordal arpeggios
B	17 – 27	4-voice chords	Octatonic variant scale
C	28 – 45	"added notes" (3 voices)	3-voice chords
A′	46 – 62	4-voice chords	Chordal arpeggios
Coda	63 – 65	—	Symmetrical mirroring

The textural uniformity of each section gives this work a sort of step-like gradation of development. Within a given section, the texture is well defined and quite static, but across the larger sections as a whole, there is a clear sense of direction. Section A presents the thinnest harmonic texture in the piece with its single-voice melodic line which mostly employs consonant tones over each harmony. Section B would appear to make a significant jump in textural density with its melody presented in 4-voice chords; however, the persistent octatonic scale variant in the accompaniment undermines any sense of harmonic motion, as it becomes a wash of sound swelling beneath the melody. Additionally, there is a conspicuous outlining of tritone intervals in the structure of the octatonic scale passages. Section C is the outlier with static block chord texture juxtaposed against very rich harmonic alterations. The "added note" section relies on the

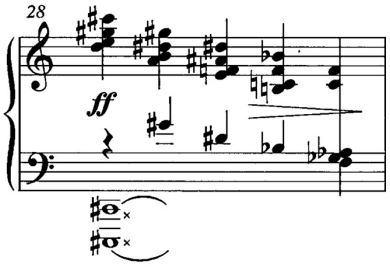
clashing sounds of simple triads in the accompaniment against dissonant major sevenths in the melody. In conjunction with the underlying harmonic twelve-tone row, the end result is a driving harmonic scheme that provides strong contrast to the textural density of surrounding sections. As mentioned earlier, A´ returns to the model of Section A but with more rich harmonic content in both the melody and accompaniment before giving way to a short coda. The mirror figures of the coda have a thick texture, consisting of 32^{nd} notes and 16^{th}-note sextuplets, but are harmonically ambiguous – yet another instance of the juxtaposition of textural and harmonic density.

One last statement about the structural organization of this piece deals with transitional material between the larger sections (A, B, and C). At each moment of textural change, there is a short interlude featuring the tritone interval in some way. It appears as though Rautavaara uses the tritone in these cases (often as part of symmetrical shapes) as a sort of "tonality palette cleansing" to prepare for the new material to follow. It is interesting to consider the tritone emphasis found in these transitional measures because those are the only instances in the entire piece that feature that interval as the defining structural characteristic. In measures 17 – 18 (Example 26) each measure initiates with a chord in each hand consisting of two stacked tritones, which is then followed by the same pitch set arpeggiated in rising figuration.



Example 26. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, mm. 17 – 18.[100]

This music is tonally ambiguous, but structurally symmetrical. The transition in measure 28 (Example 27) foreshadows the texture that follows in Section C. The chords of this measure all consist of a 5-voice texture in which every voice descends by a perfect fourth on each beat. This progression yields the result of featuring every pitch (except for G-natural) as well as each chord (with the exception of beat 4) containing every class of interval (2nd, 3rd, P4, TT, 6th, 7th, U/P8) within its structure.

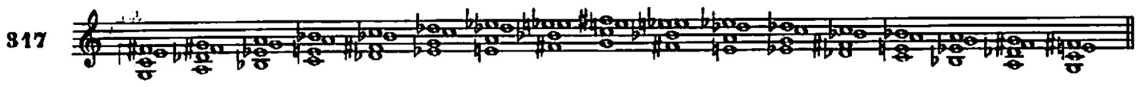


Example 27. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, m. 28.[101]

[100] Rautavaara, *Passionale*, 2007.

[101] Ibid.

Not surprisingly the 5th interval is diminished in each appearance thus introducing conspicuous repetitions of the tritone. This type of derived chordal progression is reminiscent of Messiaen's explication of the Second Mode of Limited Transpositions (see Example 28), in which he demonstrates that "Mode 2, first transposition, in parallel succession of chords (each voice realizes the entire mode, starting on a different degree)".[102]



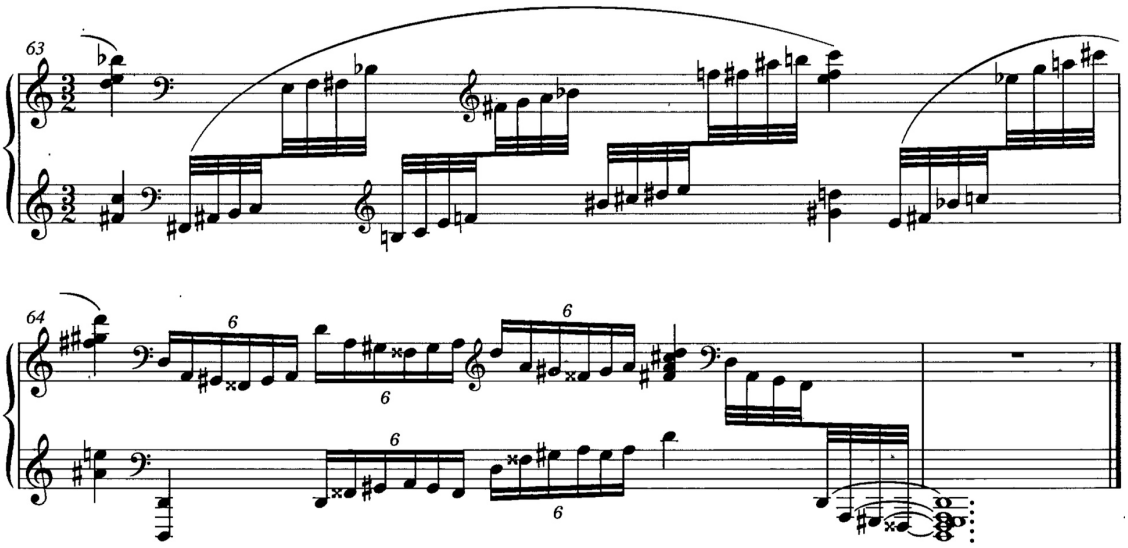
Example 28. Messiaen, *The Technique of my Musical Language,* Example 317 (Vol. 2, pg. 50).

While Rautavaara is not using Messiaen's Mode 2 as the basis for pitch content in measure 28 of *Passionale*, there is the shared application of deriving a chordal progression from the regular intervallic motion of individual parts.

The final transitional tritone figuration is found in measure 63 at the onset of the coda, seen in Example 29. In a similar fashion to the first instance found in measure 17, in the coda we find an initial chordal structure built using tritones which is then immediately arpeggiated in a rising pattern. Rautavaara doubles down on his use of the tritone with the tritone-spanning figures played by each hand being themselves symmetrical around pitches alternating between D and A-flat – yet another structural tritone relation. It is interesting to note that the harmonic structure of the coda is based on

[102] Messiaen, 2001; 59.

a rising point of symmetry for the mirror figures (D, E, and F-sharp) before finally resolving to a symmetrical chord structure that consists of two stacked fifths and two stacked tritones, revealing another instance of Rautavaara leaving a piece of music in tonal ambiguity.



Example 29. Rautavaara, *Passionale*, coda, mm. 63 – 65.[103]

Rautavaara's sense of the neoromantic is manifest through a number of techniques. He frequently explores alternative means of generating groups of pitch content, relying particularly heavily on the symmetrical modes that were favored by Messiaen. However, despite expanding his harmonic vocabulary and options through modern techniques, he never gives up his grasp on traditional tonal elements in his music. Rautavaara often undermines the functionality of triadic sonorities by lowering the 5th of

[103] Rautavaara, *Passionale*, 2007.

the chord to employ the tritone. His frequent use of that interval and diminished chords is a direct following on the German Late Romantic style, which he inherited from his studies with Laitinen.

Fuoco

Fuoco, composed in 2007, completes the trilogy of Rautavaara's late piano works. Rautavaara had this to say of the piece:

> *Fuoco* is the last of three pieces for piano completed in the first decade of the Millennium. Laura Mikkola had promised to perform at the birthday party of my wife, where we also wanted to celebrate the anniversary of our life together. I felt that *Passionale* and *Narcissus* would need a third piece to form a whole. Like the two first pieces, this finale of the trilogy displays virtuosic *feroce* passages, symmetry and *cantando* melodic moments.[104]

As with the earlier two pieces, *Fuoco* reveals the work of a composer who continued to rely on his characteristically eclectic compositional style; furthermore, this piece accomplishes its role of filling out the musical trilogy in a distinctive way that is simultaneously retrospective, mystical, and reverent of Western music influences. The following discussion will demonstrate how this piece "forms a whole" with *Narcissus* and *Passionale* not only in a musical sense, but in terms of the defining characteristics of Rautavaara's life-long compositional output.

[104] Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, 2008.

Fuoco is first a retrospective journey through the composer's own experience. Sivuoja-Gunaratnam notes,

> During all his artistic life Rautavaara has retained his interest in auto-allusions, for symmetric solutions at the micro- and macro-levels of a composition, and for Messiaen's synthetic modes (especially nrs. 2 and 6). Already his earliest published piece, the *Three symmetric Preludes* for piano (1949), contains symmetric settings in the rhythm, pianistic technique, and texture.[105]

Although these compositional techniques should not necessarily be viewed as instances of self-reference or quotation, they do provide an artistic fingerprint that remains constant despite changes in his primary stylistic drives. Whether the composer was working in serialism, or his neoromantic voice, or exploring mystical influences, these recurrent devices serve to add a sense of familiarity to new works in a way that aids in making Rautavaara's output a cohesive artistic collection. Rautavaara has stated that he struggled to accept his own developmental path as a composer, because his output was defined not by a smooth evolutionary curve, but rather by drastic leaps in style.[106] Rautavaara eventually reconciled his own particular development stating:

> When one has consciously set out to build for himself – no, rather around himself – a life as work of arts, then one's own escapist world, time, becomes spatial, it is transformed into an object such as a sculpture. And there is no chronology in sculpture, its author can revise and alter in front as well as from behind or on top and from below. It is present in spite of time.[107]

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[105] Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, 1999; 17.

[106] Aromäki, 1980; 243.

[107] Rautavaara, 1998; 164.

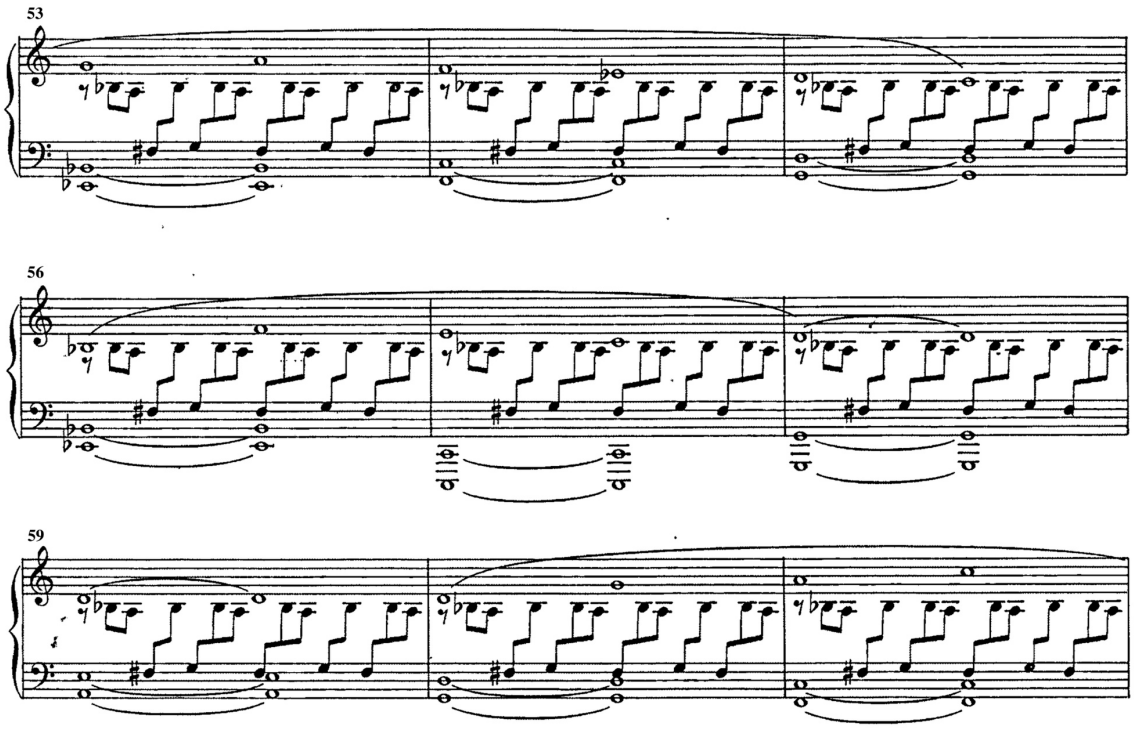
This composer's view of his own oeuvre as a timeless sculpture is a defining characteristic of his musical output, which yields a sense of familiarity among many of his compositions.

Along this thread of familiarity, we can see some intentional references between *Fuoco* and Rautavaara's Piano Sonata No. 2, *The Fire Sermon*. Beyond the overt references to fire in the titles of each work, there are musical similarities these two compositions share that reveal Rautavaara's practice of making reference to his own earlier works. The appearance of these elements in *The Fire Sermon* will not be discussed explicitly in this writing – for a detailed analytical review of this sonata see Erik Tawaststjerna's publication "Finnish Piano Music Since 1945".[108] The interesting case here is that the reference is not one of direct musical quotation, but rather of stylistic and technical expression that seems to hold a mystical evocation of fire for Rautavaara.

One of the primary elements of the formal construction of *Fuoco* is the use of tonal points of symmetry. Rautavaara has a long history of using symmetrical and mirror images in his piano music. Particularly important as symmetrical centers are the tones D and G-sharp, as these are the only two pitches on the keyboard that result in mirror images for the hands when moving by equal intervals in opposite directions. This instills a special importance in the gestures needed for the performance of this piece, and the significance to Rautavaara of the kinesthetic experience of playing mirror images on the keyboard should never be undervalued. Symmetrical centers are put to use in a unique

[108] Tawaststjerna, 1982.

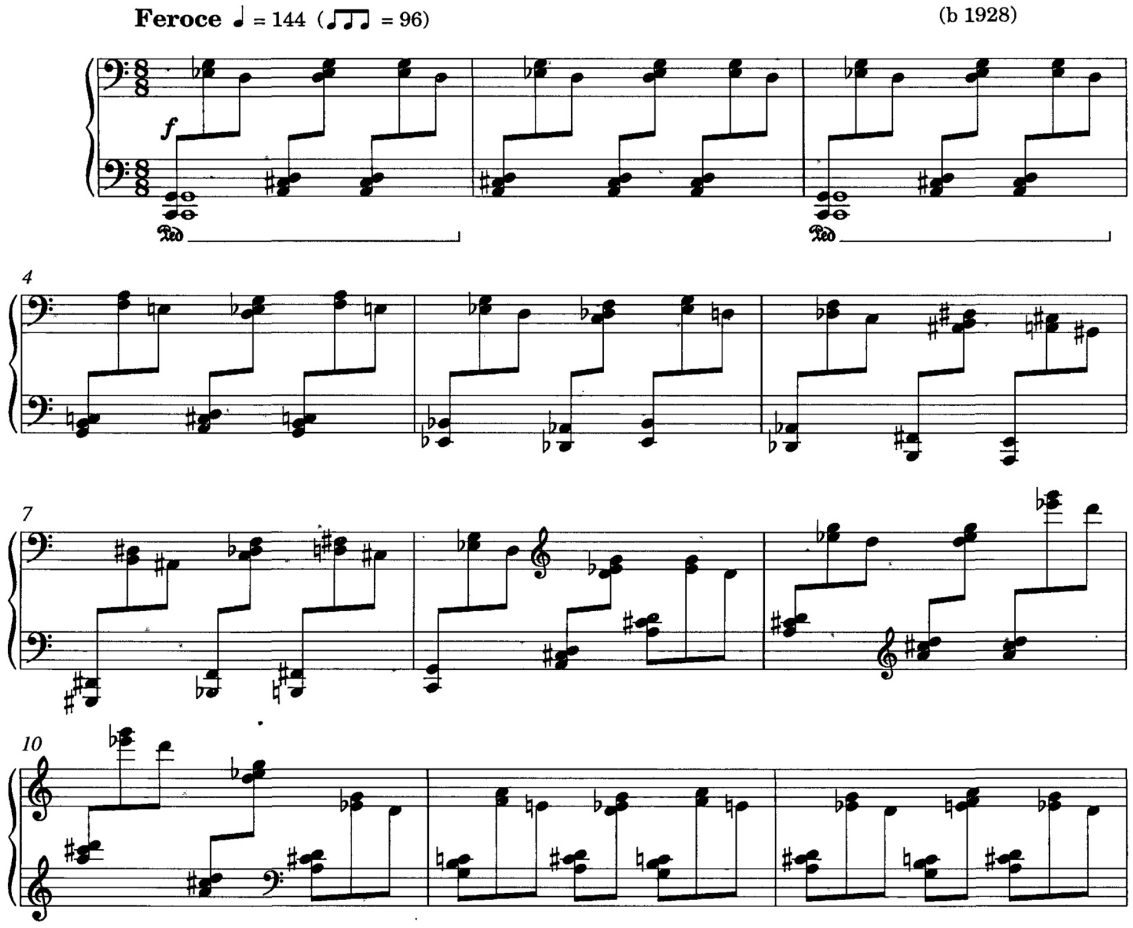
way in this composition. Whereas we frequently see Rautavaara making use of symmetry and chromaticism juxtaposed against tonality (as in *The Fire Sermon*, Example 30), *Fuoco* is dominated to a larger extent by symmetrical mirroring of rhythmic figures.



Example 30. Rautavaara, Piano Sonata No. 2, *The Fire Sermon*, First Movement, mm. 53 – 61.[109]

Additionally, melodic and harmonic content is occasionally derived from symmetrical centers, even if those points of symmetry may not actually be sounding in the musical texture. This second point bears further clarification. As seen in Example 31, *Fuoco* opens with an extended section of rhythmic mirroring, a typical rendering of this texture for Rautavaara.

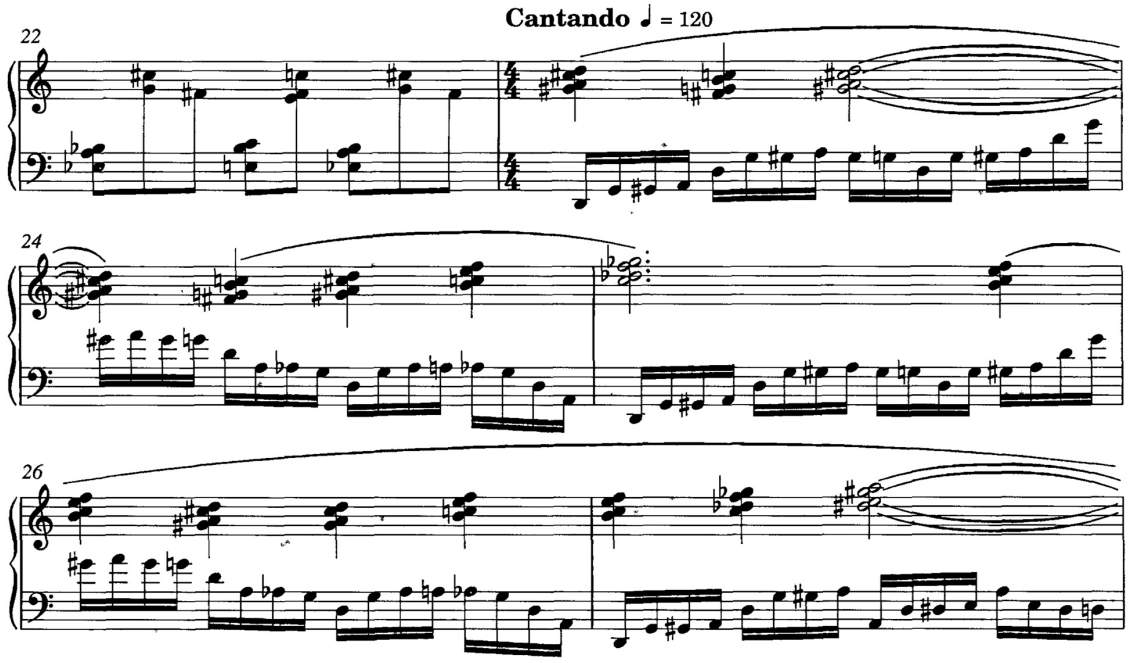
[109] Rautavaara, *Piano Sonata No. 2, The Fire Sermon*, 1972.



Example 31. Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, mm. 1 – 12.[110]

[110] Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, 2008.

At measure 23, the texture changes (along with the tempo and mood) to a series of dissonant symmetrical chords supported by swelling 16th notes. In Example 32 we see that each chord consists of two sets of stacked perfect fourths, a half step apart.

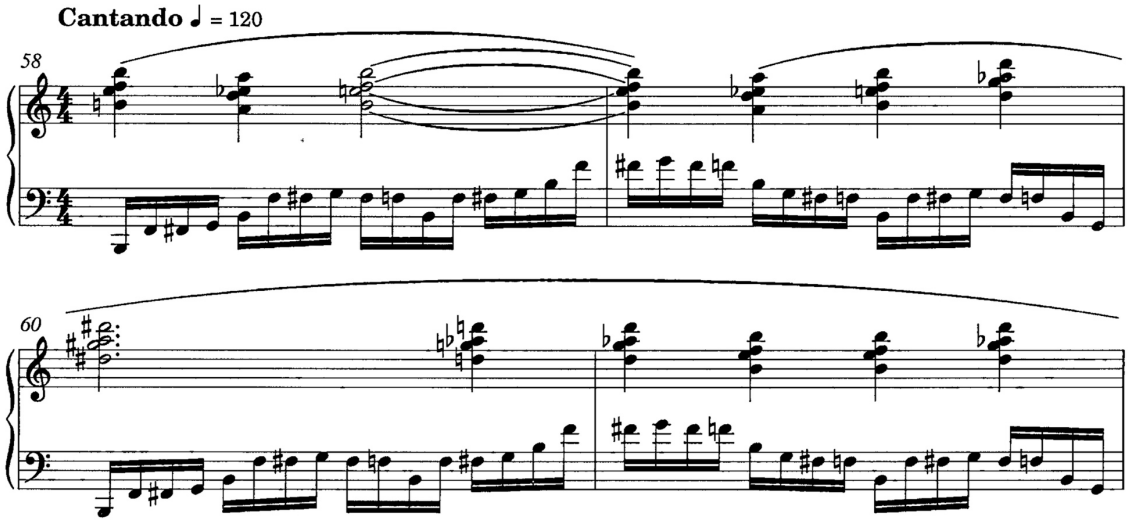


Example 32. Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, mm. 22 – 27.[111]

This arrangement yields a point of symmetry within each chord that creates a conceptual (non-sounding) melody hidden within the structure of the music. This would perhaps be but a novelty if not for the fact that later in the piece when this symmetrical chord texture

[111] Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, 2008.

returns (Example 33), a series of non-symmetrical chord structures present that earlier non-sounding melody prominently in octaves.



Example 33. Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, mm. 58 – 61.[112]

Rautavaara seems to be using these points of symmetry as a means of developing and conveying melodic and harmonic content. This type of conceptual relationship within the structure of the piece seems well-suited for development, though the composer does not pursue this line of composition any further.

The importance of extra-musical evocations in *Fuoco* should not be underestimated. We have already seen the conceptual depth at which the composer was working when he planned the structure and layout of this piece, and he is equally well known for drawing musical inspiration from outside sources. Rautavaara states:

[112] Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, 2008.

> My music, again, has always had its original impetus in some concentrated atmosphere – encountering a poem, a memory, a picture, a situation, nature – any powerfully idiosyncratic and intense phenomenon.[113]

These "encounters" may be as concrete as a series of religious images as with *Icons*, or something as abstract as a series of words. Rautavaara said that his second piano sonata had no specific programmatic elements beyond "seeking to express the atmosphere and associations of the words that are found in its title: *The Fire Sermon*."[114] As mentioned above, *Fuoco* and *The Fire Sermon* make an interesting comparison for their references to fire and the many compositional and expressive elements they share. It can be supposed that the extra-musical associations (especially those of a religious nature) that Rautavaara expressed in *The Fire Sermon* could imply the same types of suggestions in *Fuoco*. Even though the latter title does not explicitly convey any religious connotation, the common musical devices between the two works potentially have a consistent meaning for interpretation of each piece.

There is a dichotomy in the music of *Fuoco* that addresses the mystical element in Rautavaara's writing. The contrast between atonal and tonal structures is representative of the struggle between heaven and hell (if we allow the religious association), light and dark, good and evil, life and death. The latter of these held a particularly prominent place in the composer's mind. Rautavaara had this to say during a radio broadcast of 1976:

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[113] Rautavaara, 1995; 112.

[114] Rautavaara in an interview by author Tawaststjerna, 1982; 197.

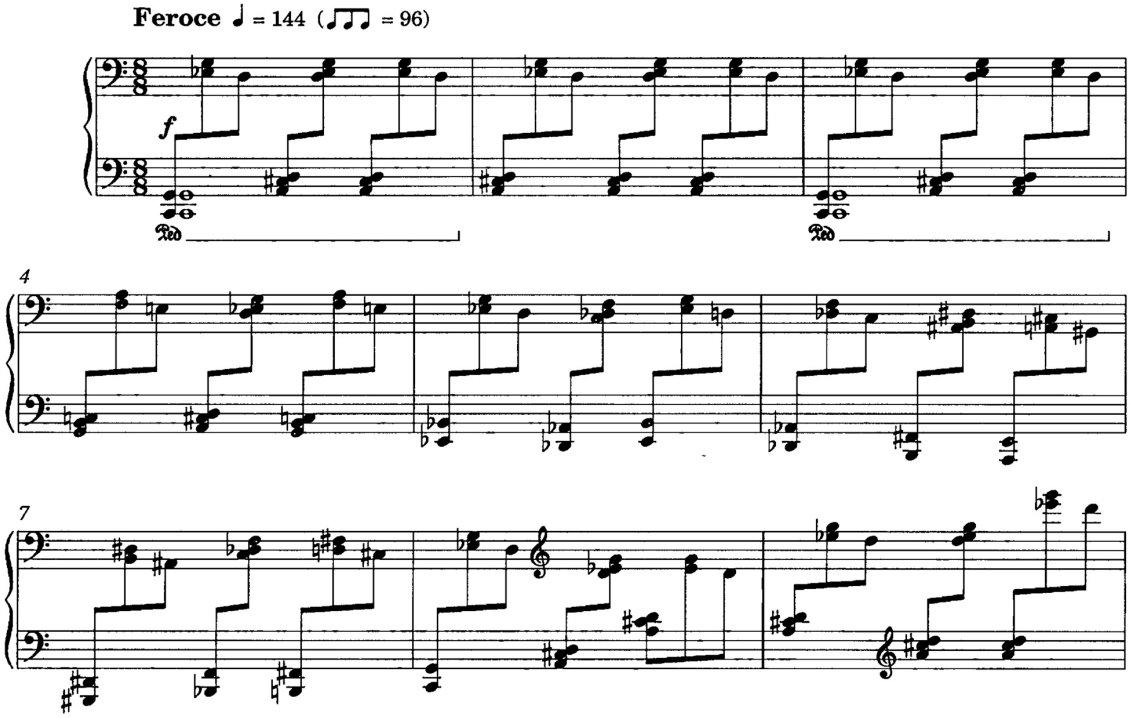
> And I discovered that the finale is of course the same as death, death of an individual, of a creature, an event, a story, or of a composition. I have seen people dying. They have lamented the physical pain or mental agony, and then they have died. Never have they declared anything. Maybe this is why every noisy finale makes me mutter, 'now you are lying'.[115]

Rautavaara made this statement specifically in regard to the endings of musical works, but the sentiment is equally applicable to *Fuoco* as a whole given its concluding position in a trio of works. The composer sees "endings" as not needing to attempt to make any grand statement, but rather to arrive at the natural (often fading) conclusion of what was already in existence. Indeed, we do see that many of Rautavaara's works end in a sense of anti-climax, though interestingly *Fuoco* has a marginally more conclusive ending than either of the other two works in this set. None of this is meant to imply that the musical work as a whole does not convey some sense of meaning or feeling, but rather that Rautavaara does not see the merit of trying to sum up at the end whatever is actually communicated by the music.

The dichotomies conveyed in *Fuoco* are articulated by the juxtaposition of symmetrical and harmonic elements. The separation of these elements is at times sharply delineated by sudden, stark changes of texture and style, though at other times this distinction is blurred by subtle shifts between symmetrical patterns and pseudo-tonality. In Example 34 we see this blurred distinction in the first few measures of the piece when

[115] Rautavaara, in a 1976 radio interview, cf. Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, 1997; 234.

a common rhythmic pattern is maintained despite a move from symmetrical shapes to parallel Major 7th harmonies.

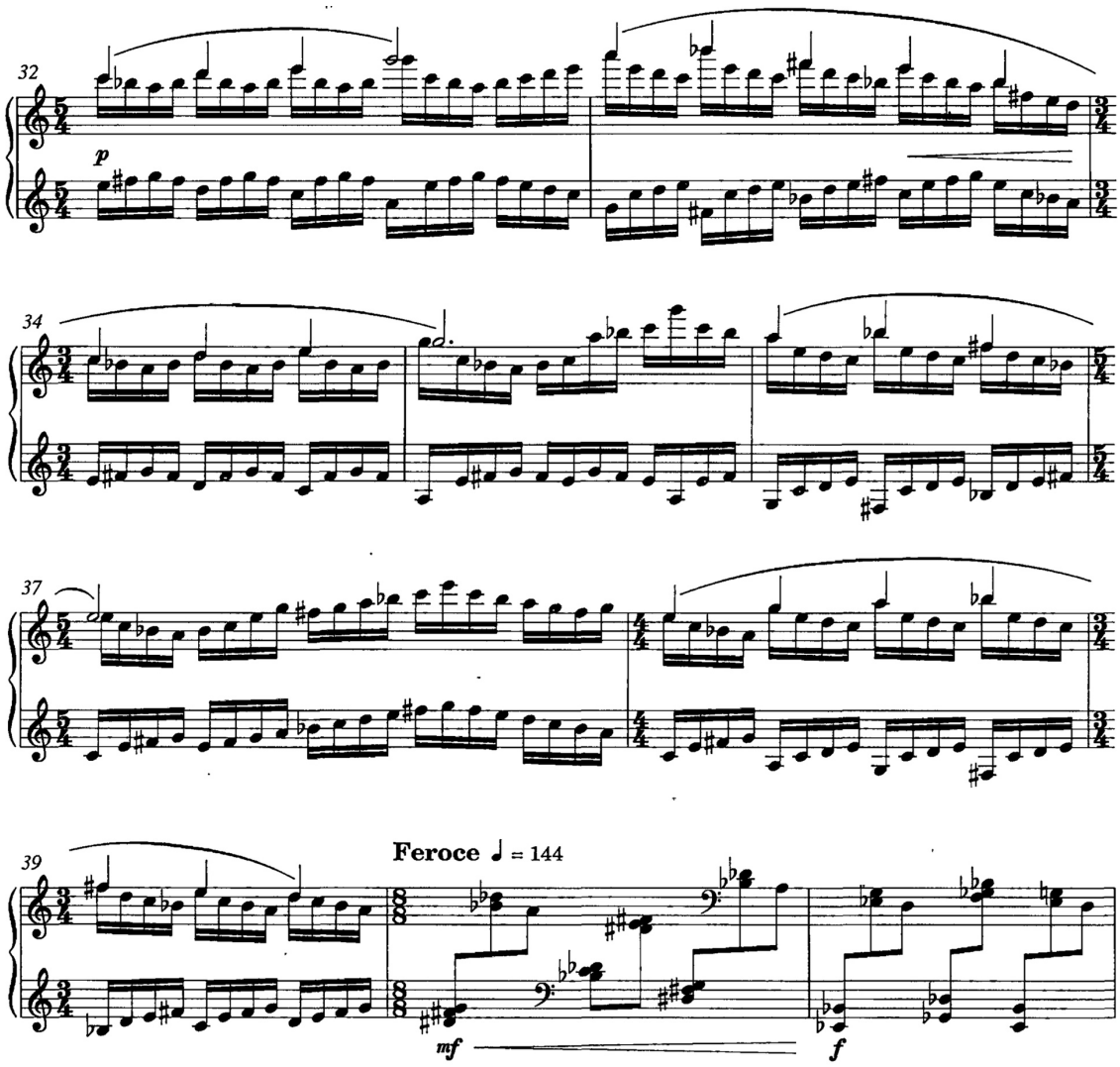


Example 34. Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, mm. 1 – 9.[116]

[116] Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, 2008.

Measures 1 – 4 consist of mirror shapes (the low open 5th notwithstanding) with the hands centered on the pitch D. The function of the left hand changes in measure 5 to recontextualize the symmetrical shapes of the right hand (now missing their mirror counterpart) as tonal harmonies. The major 7th chords sound like a consonant arrival after the less harmonically defined symmetrical figures.

Beginning in measure 32 we find the combination of mirror figures and tonality, or more specifically in this case, modal pitch collections. The mirror figures in measures 32 – 39 (Example 35) are derived from the C Lydian Dominant scale (major scale with raised 4th and lowered 7th scale degrees). This is an interesting departure from the pairing of atonal dissonance with mirror figures that is the more common occurrence in this piece and others by Rautavaara. The juxtaposition of chromaticism and diatonicism within the construct of symmetrical figures is an example of the "fiery" struggle between good and evil that Rautavaara has explored previously. This antithesis serves to generate a textural structure that gives *Fuoco* some developmental direction. The structure is founded on two primary elements, one rhythmic and the other pitch based. The rhythmic structure alternates between simple and compound meters, with sections in 8/8 being representative of Rautavaara's typical 3+2+3 rhythmic arrangement of chordal figures. Simple meter sections contain linear melodic material.



Example 35. Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, mm. 32 – 41.[117]

The pitch-based development reveals symmetrically centered music contrasting with non-symmetrical, often chromatically planing figures. It should be noted that as part of this development, symmetrical figures are centered around the pitch D in the opening of the piece (measures 1 – 22) and at measure 32, the symmetrical center moves a tritone away

[117] Rautavaara, *Fuoco*, 2007.

to A-flat, where it remains for all following instances of symmetrical figuration for the remainder of the piece. This creates a structural subtext in the music that is never adequately resolved. The final *Cantando* section that ends the piece (mm. 58 – 68) seems to gravitate toward a B tonality, although the chromaticism of the accompaniment and the melodically arranged right hand chords both obscure tonicization of a definite harmony. These features ultimately leave an open-ended impression through which the music addresses its topic without offering any definitive conclusions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The set of three late works for solo piano discussed in this study provides a unique view into the life of composer Einojuhani Rautavaara. Following a break of nearly twenty-five years of composing for that medium, Rautavaara offered a last glimpse into the elements that make his compositional style his own unique, personal voice. His earliest interactions with the French Impressionist style instilled a strong desire for melody and harmony that would stay with Rautavaara his entire life. The tightly executed forms of Stravinsky and Bartók provided an archetype for Rautavaara's approach to composing for the piano, which at times mimic the miniatures of the Second Viennese School with their brevity. Rautavaara would never fully give up anything he had learned previously and at every juncture of his development as a composer, he found ways to integrate new techniques and ideas without abandoning the skills he had developed up to that point. As he continued to cultivate his unique musical voice, Rautavaara found more and more that his work was not simply about musical expression, but rather a broader artistic expression, not unlike the *Gesamtkunstwerk* approach of Richard Wagner. Mysticism plays a substantial role in Rautavaara's approach to creating music, guiding his ideals toward music that is instilled with meaning beyond what is seen on the page or heard in the concert hall. His sense of mysticism strives for the creation of music that will

have inherent aesthetic value for the listener, even without their knowing what (or if) programmatic elements might be associated with the sounds being heard.

Narcissus, *Passionale*, and *Fuoco* as a set provide a microcosm reflection of a lifetime of experience and development. They function as a kind of mirror, in which the composer was seeing in one direction his past and everything he ever accomplished, and in the other a demonstration that he was able to keep moving forward into new territory while constantly reinventing himself.

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