

SIFTING THROUGH ASHES

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ABSTRACT

A varied and elaborated form of a simple theme serves as basis for the refrain material in a seven-part rondo. Via additive process, the initial motive is revealed, recognizable yet harmonically distant.

While purely melodic compositional techniques such as augmentation, diminution, etc., allow for great flexibility, I use an expanded *harmonic* palette for the episodic material while still retaining the original melody. I utilize a compositional technique used by both Béla Bartók of John Coltrane, specifically equal divisions of the octave in thirds, fourths and other distributions. While such division is nothing new (diminished and augmented chords), I use it differently. Instead of chordal motion in thirds (a la Coltrane's *Giant Steps*), I combine notes from triads a third apart (as well as their corresponding dominant chords) to create 'modes;' (Bb major triad + D major triad = D, F, F#, A, Bb pentachord, etc). Such melodic and harmonic principals are used in all episodes, albeit to different effect.

After the final 'A' section and a brief coda, the unadorned theme is repeated, forming a musical bookend to this 10-minute piece.