

Example 11.1 *Figment II*, mm. 1–21, pitch-class harmony (after Roeder, “A Transformational Space”)

mentor.²³ Although the piece is not categorically different from Carter's other homages to departed colleagues, its evocations of the *Concord Sonata* (with which Carter had a long and turbulent history) and *Hallowe'en* are significant. Carter may even have been thinking of John Kirkpatrick's 1973 essay subtitled "An Open Letter to Elliott Carter." To illustrate both the early date and the novelty of Ives's innovations, Kirkpatrick writes that "[this] amazing polytonal study [*Hallowe'en*] must have been written in 1906. Its hair-raising effect depends in no degree on added dissonance but on the relations of the purely diatonic scales."²⁴ Thus Carter's reference to *Hallowe'en* may have been a way of wryly alluding to the controversy about "added dissonances" by recalling Ives's use of diatonic materials and adding a few "dissonances" of his own.

Figment III

For solo double bass

(2007) 3'

Dedicated to Donald Palma

First performance: Jan. 18, 2008, Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY; Donald Palma

Figment III was composed as a surprise thank-you gift for double bassist Donald Palma, a founding member of Speculum Musicae and a long-time colleague. In addition to celebrating a personal and professional connection, *Figment III* was part of Carter's late strategy of contributing to a rich and challenging repertory for instruments not often heard as soloists, while also filling the gaps in his catalog.

The piece returns to the continuous form and cross-cut textures of the first *Figment*, rethought for the very different timbral resources and technical constraints of the double bass. Lyrical melodies in the high

²³ See Carter, *CEL*, chapter 3 and Meyer and Shreffler, *ECCP*, pp. 206–207.

²⁴ Meyer and Shreffler, *ECCP*, p. 209.

register, explosive multiple-stops, and left-hand and snap pizzicati are all retained from the earlier *Figment*, as is the focus on the ATH at significant moments in the form. There are also echoes of *Figment II – Remembering Mr. Ives*, notably the three declamatory double-stops four measures from the end, as though the piece were about to lead into the opening of its predecessor. Tetrachord 2 (0167), which plays a leading role in *Figment II*, makes a dramatic entrance in *Figment III* in the quadruple-stop in m. 3, and returns in m. 12 when the open D and G strings are played pizzicato against the arco G♯ and C♯ in the melody. *Figment III* also features a variety of narrowly ranging lines that form chromatic scale segments, notably tetrachord 1 (0123), which is sometimes a subset of a derived core harmony and sometimes assumes a thematic role on its own.²⁵

Early on, marcato and *espressivo* textural layers are seamlessly joined (as in m. 10 and mm. 19–20). But as the marcato layer descends, it is increasingly cross-cut with the *espressivo* melody, and the boundaries between them become clearer. The melody ends just as the marcato layer reaches its lowest point in m. 48, recalling the earlier use of open strings in mm. 10–12 and foreshadowing their return during the climax in mm. 60–65. The gesture also marks a transition in the harmony, sounding the ATH rather than tetrachord 1, which recedes into the background as core and derived core harmonies increasingly dominate. At least they do until the final two measures, when the earlier pairing of two i2 dyads a semitone apart is reworked across a much wider span as an evaporating glissando and a tag of two pizzicato harmonics. In a characteristic bit of Carterian whimsy, tetrachord 1 returns unexpectedly to bring *Figment III* to a close with an airiness not usually associated with the double bass.

Figment IV

For solo viola

(2007) 3'

Dedicated to Samuel Rhodes

First performance: Jan. 22, 2008, Cité de la Musique, Paris; Samuel Rhodes

Like *Rhapsodic Musings* (dedicated to Robert Mann), *Figment IV* is a thank you to one of the guiding lights of the Juilliard String Quartet: Samuel Rhodes, who was the quartet's violist for more than forty years (1969–2013). Rhodes has spoken eloquently about the importance of the Carter quartets in his own personal and musical development. He played in the

²⁵ See, for example, the series of short marcato gestures that progressively descend throughout the piece, beginning in m. 9.