

Compositional process in the piano sonatas of Jean Coulthard

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COMPOSITIONAL PROCESS IN THE PIANO SONATAS OF JEAN COULTHARD*

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* I would like to thank Jean Coulthard for her enthusiastic support of this project.

The solo piano sonatas of Jean Coulthard are, in many respects, landmark works in her compositional output. Chronologically, these two works represent a fascinating cross-section of Coulthard's compositional career. Sonata No. 1 (1947) is one of the composer's earliest fully mature works, revealing the powerful presence of a number of formative influences, most notably the pianistic idioms of Debussy, Ravel, and Hindemith. Sonata No. 2, conversely, occupies an entirely different position on Coulthard's compositional time line. Completed in 1986, the piece represents one of the composer's most important late period works, reflective of an increasingly eclectic assimilation of recent developments in twentieth-century music.¹

As archetypes of Coulthard's large-scale formal procedures, these compositions are unique within the context of the composer's solo piano repertoire,² embodying the fundamental precepts of sonata form structure, variation technique, and cyclic principles characteristic of many of her large-scale compositions.³ Stylistically, both works are representative of the antithetical impulses of meditative lyricism and dramatic intensity underlying Coulthard's instinctive and personal idiom. The dualistic temperament of this style, deeply rooted in an intuitive sense of nature, is described by the composer as follows:

To develop this imagery, first is the rippling lyrical nature of sunlight glinting on the watered stone of a small brook. The other is more brooding—the depth of one's being reflected in the deep fiords of our west coast. Many works have, of course, elements from both styles. Certain signposts do keep recurring in all my music, though I am unconscious of this at the time of writing.⁴

¹These eclectic tendencies are characteristic of Coulthard's music from the 1970s to the present day.

²A body of music which includes 28 concert works and numerous teaching pieces.

³Most notably the symphonies, string quartets, and sonatas for various instrumental combinations.

⁴Jean Coulthard, "Music is My Whole Life," vol. 1 of *Radio Canada International Anthology of Music* (1982).

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Completed in 1947, Sonata No. 1 received international acclaim as the second place winner in the North American Prize for sonata composition (San Francisco, 1947), a competition which included 75 prominent composers from Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The work was premiered by Frances Marr Adaskin, to whom it is dedicated, at the First Symposium of Contemporary Canadian Music (Vancouver, 1950). Gordon Manley introduced the sonata to American audiences in a Carnegie Hall recital on Jan. 27, 1951, while the Israeli pianist Lola Granet-Mann performed the work at a concert of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Israel in June of 1954.⁵ The critic Rudolph Ganz, writing in a 1960 edition of *Clavier*, described the work as "three well written movements, essentially lyrical, partly bitonal".⁶

As Coulthard's first major piano composition, Sonata No. 1 forms an integral component of her first extensive treatment of large-scale forms.⁷ The year 1947, in fact, also witnessed the genesis of sonatas for both cello and oboe, while her first string quartet and symphony followed in close succession.⁸ As Coulthard's own comments indicate, it is in these works that we begin to witness the emergence of a distinctive Coulthard style:

I felt fully confident of my style about 1947, about the time of my Cello Sonata, or perhaps one work earlier than that, the Two Sonatinas for violin and piano. And from then on I felt quite assured about my direction.⁹

This new found confidence in the handling of more complex idioms may be partly attributed to the influence of Bernard Wagenaar, with whom Coulthard studied composition at the Juilliard school in 1945 and subsequently in 1949. Indeed, while her teachers included Aaron Copland, Darius Milhaud, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Bela Bartók and Arnold Schoenberg, it is perhaps Wagenaar, more than any other, who left an indelible impression. Coulthard's remarks on her studies with Wagenaar are as follows:

⁵Ida Halpern, "Composer Honoured: New Music Like a Bath," *Vancouver Province*, June 5, 1954.

⁶Rudolph Ganz, Review of Jean Coulthard's Four Etudes and Piano Sonata No. 1, *Clavier* 5/1 (1960): 31.

⁷Prior to 1947, the vast majority of her catalogue consisted of songs and smaller piano pieces.

⁸Coulthard's first string quartet was completed in 1948, while Symphony No. 1 dates from 1950.

⁹David G. Duke, "A Conversation With Jean Coulthard," *Music Scene* 370 (November-December, 1989): 15.

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He inspired one and opened many vistas... From him I gained a sense of form which he stressed... Of the eminent teachers I've had I truly believe that no one reached me as deeply as Wagenaar was able to do.¹⁰

Harmonically, Sonata No. 1 represents an extension of Coulthard's early bitonal experiments, as previously documented in the Four Etudes of 1945.¹¹ The composer at the time referred to this type of writing as polytonal, although bitonal is technically the more precise term for her process of superimposing two triads emphasizing the opposition of sharp and flat keys. Bitonal passages in Sonata No. 1 and other works of this period tend to be localized events which occur over the span of a single chord or several chords in close succession, as opposed to a large-scale tonal scheme based on the continual opposition of two tonal centres.¹² The creative impetus behind Coulthard's initial bitonal excursions was not to radically alter her concept of tonality or negate the importance of a tonal centre, but rather to enrich her tonal vocabulary with an increasingly diverse range of harmonic colours.¹³ As Coulthard states:

While studying in New York with Bernard Wagenaar, I became interested in exploring polytonal effects and absorbing them within my own more instinctive idiom. The idea of combining two chords for a richer or more subtle harmonic colour seemed, to me, a logical development.¹⁴

Thus while bitonal and extended chord forms create a rich palette of harmonic colours, cadential points are exclusively triadic (though rarely authentic), serving as unambiguous tonal referents. In the first movement, for example, the opening harmonies of the exposition, development and recapitulation are A minor, C sharp minor, and E major triads, respectively, revealing a tertian based tonal scheme relating

¹⁰Jean Coulthard, "Biographical Sketches," no. 2, undated, 2.

¹¹These tendencies, influenced by exercises undertaken during her studies with Wagenaar, are also present in the sonatas for oboe and cello, and in the orchestral piece *Rider on the Sands* (1953).

¹²In this respect, Coulthard's use of bitonal chords differs markedly from the use of bitonality as a means of large-scale tonal organization found in the music of Stravinsky, Milhaud, and the late works of Debussy.

¹³Coulthard's harmonic language at this stage was also characterized by parallel harmony, modality, and extended chord forms, traits which reveal the powerful influence of Debussy and, to a lesser extent, Vaughan Williams.

¹⁴Jean Coulthard, "Music is My Whole Life."

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to an A major triad. These tonal centres are emphasized both quantitatively (through reiteration and bass pedals) and qualitatively (through cadential points).

The opening movement, in sonata form, represents the first evidence of large-scale formal design in Coulthard's piano writing. As one of the composer's first extensive applications of sonata form principles, the movement typifies the individual yet systematic approach to sonata form which would become one of the hallmarks of Coulthard's large-scale works throughout her compositional career. In the exposition, four distinct, tonally related thematic ideas are presented, resulting in the following structural scheme (tonal centres in parenthesis): Theme 1 (A-G-F-B-flat-E-B) — Bridge — Theme 2 (G-F-E-flat) — Codetta (C-sharp). Development and recapitulation sections are patterned closely after traditional models. The recapitulation, underpinned by continual dominant-tonic tonal references, presents transposed, modified versions of each theme, followed by an extended coda.

The central movement, entitled "Threnody," is a rounded binary form with two contrasting thematic ideas prefaced by a recitative-like introduction which recurs at the end of the movement. The use of the title "Threnody," later applied to the second movement of Sonata No. 2,¹⁵ would become a recurring tendency in Coulthard's compositions, as the following works illustrate: *Five Part Songs* (1935), Symphony No.1 (1950), String Quartet No. 2 (1953, rev. 1969), *Requiem Piece* (1968), for piano. The inspiration behind her recurring use of this title ranges from the autobiographical¹⁶ to the philosophical:

The origin of the name "Threnody" for my second quartet arose from the wish I always had to be able at sometime in my life to write a musical requiem for our war century... for the lost souls of our generation.¹⁷

As a means of providing a unifying link between the first and second movements, Coulthard begins the introductory section with a bass pedal on A, reharmonizing the root of the final first movement cadence chord as the third of an F major chord. The entire introduction, in fact, functions as a composed-out cadence in the key of B-flat minor, the central tonality of the second movement (see Examples 1a and 1b).

¹⁵The title is perfectly suited to the deeply personal and introspective character of both movements.

¹⁶The second movement ("Threnody") of the *Five Part Songs*, based on text by Robert Herrick, was written in memory of the composer's mother. See David Gordon Duke, "The Orchestral Music of Jean Coulthard," Ph.D. diss., University of Victoria (1992) 192.

¹⁷Jean Coulthard, "Biographical Sketches", no. 2.

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Example 1a: Sonata No. 1, first movement, mm. 140-43.

Musical score for Example 1a, Sonata No. 1, first movement, mm. 140-43. The score is written for piano and features a complex rhythmic structure with frequent rests and dynamic markings. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score begins at measure 140 and ends at measure 143. Dynamic markings include *sf* and *ff*. The notation includes various rhythmic values and rests, with some notes beamed together.

Example 1b: Sonata No. 1, second movement, mm. 1-3.

Musical score for Example 1b, Sonata No. 1, second movement, mm. 1-3. The score is written for piano and features a slow, pensive character. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked "Slow and pensively" and "very freely". The score begins at measure 1 and ends at measure 3. Dynamic markings include *mf*, *pp*, *mol.ente.*, and *mp*. The notation includes various rhythmic values and rests, with some notes beamed together. Performance instructions include "Sustain ped." and "(half ped.)".

While the opening movement may be viewed as one of Coulthard's first extensive applications of sonata form principles, the finale represents the earliest example of another major form in Coulthard's pianistic idiom, the Theme and Variations. As one of Coulthard's earliest examples of variation form, the movement extends the variation principles first exemplified in *Music on a Quiet Song* (1946), for flute and string orchestra¹⁸ and, moreover, represents an important precursor work to the well known *Variations on BACH* (1951), for piano.

¹⁸Coulthard developed *Music on a Quiet Song* into a Theme and Variations during her studies with Wagenaar at the Juilliard School: "Impressed by her engaging short theme, Wagenaar encouraged Coulthard to expand it into its ultimate format, comprising the theme, six contrasting variations, and a final coda." David G. Duke, Notes to "Jean Coulthard", vol. 1 of *Radio Canada International Anthology of Canadian Music* (1982) 8.

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As was the case in *Music on a Quiet Song*, the third movement contains several overt neo-Baroque references, most notably the imitative exchanges between right and left hands contained in the original theme and Variation 1. As Example 2 illustrates, Coulthard's indebtedness to Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* is readily apparent (see Example 2). Coulthard's musical reference to Bach in this work invokes further comparison with the *Variations on BACH*, presaging the later work as an open homage to the Leipzig cantor. The composer's articulation instructions are unambiguous in suggesting a neo-Baroque clarity of articulation: "dry," "no pedal." The entire movement, in fact, is atypically linear and spare-textured for Coulthard's music, suggesting the influence of the piano sonatas and *Ludus tonalis* (1942) of Paul Hindemith.¹⁹

Example 2: Sonata No. 1, third movement, mm. 28-31

The musical score for Example 2 shows two systems of staves. The first system covers measures 26-28, and the second system covers measures 29-31. The right hand (RH) and left hand (LH) parts are clearly indicated. The score includes articulation instructions such as "dry", "pp", and "no ped." and dynamic markings like "pp".

The movement unfolds as a series of five variations in which the theme is freely transformed using melodic, rhythmic, characteristic, and figural variation techniques (see Figure 1). Stylistically, Variations 1 and 2 are meditative, lyrical sections (marked piano); Variations 3 and 5 are dramatic statements in slow rhythm featuring octave doubling, accentuation, and explicit expressive gestures,²⁰ while Variation 4 is a lively Scherzo.

¹⁹Hindemith's neo-Baroque influence is especially prominent in the piano sonatas of Coulthard's Canadian contemporaries in the late 1940s, such as Sonata No. 1 (1945, revised 1957) by former Hindemith pupil Violet Archer, and Sonata No. 2 (1946) by Harry Somers.

²⁰Most notably the designation "resolutely" at measure 90, recalling the character of the opening.

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Figure 1: Sonata No. 1, third movement, formal plan

MEASURES	VARIATION	TONAL CENTRE	VARIATION TECHNIQUE	CHARACTER
1-18	Theme	C-sharp		dramatic
19-31	Variation 1	C - C-sharp	rhythmic, figural, characteristic	meditative, lyrical
32-47	Variation 2	C-sharp	rhythmic, figural	meditative, lyrical
48-63	Variation 3	F-sharp	melodic (fragmentation, octave displacement)	dramatic
64-89	Variation 4	F-sharp	melodic, figural, rhythmic, characteristic	lively (Scherzo)
90-108	Variation 5	C-sharp	melodic (inversion)	dramatic
109-32	Recall of material from first movement	A - C-sharp		meditative, lyrical
133-44	Coda	C-sharp		dramatic

Consistent with Coulthard's flexible formal approach, these variations are not strictly delineated but rather unfold as a series of interdependent elaborations on an opening germinal idea.²¹ The distinction between successive variations is often obscured, motivic fragments from earlier variations recur in later ones, and the final variation is prefaced by a climactic bridge passage which culminates in a series of

²¹Similar to the approach used in Aaron Copland's *Piano Variations* (1930).

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double trills reminiscent of the late sonatas of Beethoven.²² The pianist John Ogdon has noted a similar cumulative effect in the *Variations on BACH*:

The final variation presents a good many difficulties. At its climax (bar 151) the BACH motif is splintered into a chromatic descent (CHBA) providing a powerfully emotional climax, after which the piece dies away into the subdued expression of its opening.²³

Following the final variation, Coulthard achieves a sense of inter-movement closure by recalling the opening theme of the first movement (see Example 3). Supported by an extended bass pedal on A, this restatement recaptures the precise tonal context of the original theme with the melodic contour freely varied, thus integrating the theme into the variation form of the finale. At measures 118-20 an even more striking inter-movement reminiscence occurs, as Coulthard combines the beginning of the first movement theme with a descending chordal sequence recalling the melodic and tonal context of the second movement. Interestingly, this passage resolves to a B-flat, the tonal centre of the second movement,²⁴ before returning to the home key of the finale (C-sharp). Thus in the span of a dozen measures Coulthard has, in microcosm, recapitulated the tonal plan of the entire sonata.

Considered in another light, the central tonalities of the outer movements closely relate to an A major triad, mirroring the tonal plan of the first movement (first movement: A minor, third movement: C# minor). David G. Duke has observed similar orders of tonal relations in the *Prayer for Elizabeth* (1953), in which the central tonalities define a B-flat minor triad, and the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (1963), in which the primary tonal centres combine to form a C-sharp major triad.²⁵ These tendencies suggest two prominent French influences: the cyclic principles of Franck and the tonal planning of Debussy.

²²The use of double trills to articulate the climactic moment of the movement invokes direct comparison with the Theme and Variations finale of Beethoven's Sonata in A major, Op. 109. In both instances, the cumulative momentum of extended double trill figuration is resolved in the ensuing measures by a return to the expressive character of the opening.

²³John Ogdon, Preface to *Variations on BACH* (London: Novello, 1972).

²⁴Emphasized by one of Coulthard's most characteristic cadential gestures, the anacrusis.

²⁵Duke, "The Orchestral Music of Jean Coulthard," 183.

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Example 3: Sonata No. 1, third movement, mm. 109-121.

much slower and tranquilly
♩ = 60

107

110

pp
slow

116

119

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It would be nearly four decades before Coulthard returned to the genre with the composition of her second piano sonata in 1986.²⁶ Nowhere is the passage of time more evident than in the opening dedication: "for my granddaughter Alexa Poulsson."²⁷ The work was premiered on May 29, 1987 by Roseanne Kydd at McGill University and has frequently appeared on the recital programs of Jane Coop.²⁸ Coulthard, in the programme notes to a performance of the work by Coop in Washington, D.C., provides the following description of the sonata:

The second sonata is the traditional three movement format. The first movement combines rich, coloured harmonies with a more-or-less traditional Sonata Allegro design. The poignant slow movement is titled Threnody [an elegiac mood often encountered in Jean Coulthard's music.] In contrast, the last movement exploits the virtuoso capabilities of the pianist to the full.²⁹

Musically, Coulthard's stylistic evolution in the works of the 1970s and 1980s is reflected in an expanded harmonic vocabulary and an increasingly eclectic synthesis of recent developments in twentieth century music. To cite two examples, the Octet *Twelve Essays On a Cantabile Theme* (1972), for double string quartet, features dissonant linear counterpoint, polytonality, and aleatory elements,³⁰ while the piano

²⁶Despite the 39-year separation between the two solo piano sonatas, Coulthard continued to write sonatas for varying instrumental combinations throughout her compositional career (most notably those for violin with piano). These works, excluding those aforementioned, are as follows: *Duo Sonata* (Sonata no. 1) for violin and piano (1952); *Sonata Rhapsody* for viola and piano (1962); *Correspondence* (Sonata no. 2) for violin and piano (1964); *Fanfare Sonata* for trumpet and piano (1978); *Sonata for Two Pianos "Of the Universe"* (1979); *A La Jeunesse* (Sonata no. 3) for violin and piano (1981); *Fantasy Sonata* for horn and piano (1983).

²⁷Alexa Poulsson, Coulthard's only grandchild, was born in 1975 to the cinematographer Andreas Poulsson and the painter Jane Adams (daughter of Coulthard and her husband Donald Adams [1908-1985]). For further details of Coulthard's family life see Duke, "The Orchestral Music of Jean Coulthard," 9-67.

²⁸The work was also performed by Glenn Colton in a concert of Canadian music commemorating the visit of guest composer Harry Somers to Memorial University on November 25, 1989.

²⁹Jean Coulthard, Programme notes to Piano Sonata No. 2 (1986), May 24, 1989. The notes were written for Coop's performance of the work in the "Arts in the Academy" series at the National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C. on June 10, 1989.

³⁰One of Coulthard's most extensive (and ingenious) applications of aleatory writing occurs in *The Pines of Emily Carr* (1969), for alto voice, narrator, string quartet, piano, and timpani.

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piece *Image Astrale* (1981) employs bi- and polytonality, tone clusters, aleatory passages and serial motives.

Similar tendencies are revealed in Sonata No. 2 through the use of polytonality, quartal chords, and tone clusters, reflecting the influence of recent contemporaries such as Crumb, Penderecki, and Xenakis. Coulthard's tone clusters, a manifestation of her unending quest for new sonorities, are used throughout the sonata to denote pivotal structural moments. Note, for example, the cluster chord (G#-B-D#-F-A-C), used at m. 60 of the opening movement to emphatically signal the end of the development section. This chord, in fact, represents the culminating moment of the entire movement.³¹ Similarly, Coulthard's use of a dense cluster chord (E-G#-B-D-F#-A) at the very close of the movement injects an unexpected degree of harmonic tension into the final cadence,³² strengthening the resolving effect of the ensuing A major triad³³ (see Example 4).

In terms of tonal planning, Sonata No. 2 reveals significant departures yet surprising similarities in comparison with its predecessor. Like Sonata No. 1, a sense of large-scale tonal planning is an integral facet of the musical structure, both on intra-movement and inter-movement levels. The opening movements of both sonatas, for example, are based primarily on the traditional dominant-tonic polar axis, with A as the central tonal centre in both cases.

Within the intra-movement tonal structure of the second and third movements, however, Coulthard's tonal planning departs significantly from the idiom of Sonata No. 1, displaying a progressive tendency towards non-tertian key relationships. A comparison of the inner movements of the sonatas (both subtitled "Threnody") is illustrative in this respect. In terms of melodic style and formal organization, the movements are remarkably similar. In both instances, an elegiac mood is established from the outset through imitative opening themes in slow, dotted rhythm (marked "dolente" and "Adagio mesto," respectively), followed by a contrasting cantabile themes in triplet rhythm. The rounded binary structure of both movements is likewise analogous.

³¹The culminating effect of this chord is affirmed by registral placement, dynamic and agogic emphasis, and melodic context, occurring at the apex of a gradual melodic ascent. The ensuing measures resolve the accumulated sense of drama with a reprise of the opening "dramatico" theme, signalling the beginning of the recapitulation.

³²The harmonic tension created by this chord stands in stark contrast to the tonal stasis of the preceding measures, underpinned by a six-measure tonic pedal.

³³Coulthard's dynamic markings further strengthen this gesture of resolution ($f > p$).

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Example 4: Sonata No. 2, first movement, mm. 93-100.

Tonally, however, the second movement of Sonata No. 2 demonstrates Coulthard's rejection of the basic dominant-tonic polarity (B-flat—F) of Sonata No. 1 in favour of the tritonic related tonalities of B and F. To emphasize the tonal clash, Section A cadences by juxtaposing the two pitches harmonically (see Example 5). This differs markedly from the corresponding cadence in Sonata No. 1/II, in which the termination of the A section is marked rather predictably by an imperfect cadence (B-flat to F), preparing the arrival of the second theme (Section B) in the dominant key.

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The use of tritonic subcenters, another manifestation of the enriched tonal vocabulary of Coulthard's late period works, reflects the influence of a number of twentieth-century figures, most notably her former teachers Bela Bartók and Arnold Schoenberg.³⁴

Example 5: Sonata No. 2, second movement, mm. 7-8.

Formally, Coulthard's steadfast commitment to sonata form structure remained relatively unchanged from the early large-scale works of the post-Wagenaar years. The principle of an exposition section containing four distinct and contrasting theme areas is once again exploited in the opening movement,³⁵ as is the modified recapitulation. The latter feature, a key component of Coulthard's organic formal process, manifests itself here in a multiplicity of ways, namely the transposition and compression of both themes, and deft harmonic modifications which thwart the listener's expectations by postponing expected points of tonic arrival. One of Coulthard's most striking harmonic transformations occurs at the cadence chord following a literal reprise of the initial "dramatico" chordal progression. This phrase ends not on the expected A major triad, as in the exposition, but rather on a colourful D⁷ sonority, temporarily denying the resolving effect of a literal thematic return through deferred tonic resolution.³⁶

³⁴Interestingly, Schoenberg did not advocate dodecaphonic techniques but rather encouraged Coulthard to write in a way which was natural and reflective of her own emotions. As Coulthard recalls, "I said I did not feel it [serial technique] suited me... He said, 'do not use it then—write as you feel.'" Christine Callon, "Jean Coulthard: An Interview," *Musicanada*, 36 (August 1978): 27.

³⁵These contrasting theme areas are as follows (tonal centres in parenthesis): Theme 1: "Con Forza, Dramatico" (A); Bridge: "Poco a Poco Stringendo"; Theme 2: "Poco Lento Cantabile" (E); Codetta: "Dolce" (E).

³⁶The tonic is convincingly re-established at the end of measure 70 with an A major cadence chord.

The most innovative aspect of Coulthard's structural design in this sonata, however, lies in her cyclic procedures. As in Sonata No. 1, the finale contains references to the thematic material of the first movement. Unlike the earlier work, however, thematic material from the opening movement is not recalled as a single gesture of closure but rather intricately woven into the formal fabric of the finale, elevating the cyclic principle to a higher structural level.

The opening theme of the finale establishes a sense of continuous motion from the outset with a frenetic triplet eighth-note rhythm, reinforced by incisive accents and the expressive marking "Allegro vigoroso," as if propelling the music forward in time. Following the first theme, however, the opening "dramatico" chords of the first movement are recalled (see Examples 6a and 6b).³⁷ The result is a dual conflict of temporal and rhythmic processes, creating an uneasy tension between anteriority and futurity, motion and stasis. Temporally, the "dramatico" chordal figure is oriented toward anteriority (drawing an explicit connection to past events and temporarily negating the implied futurity of the finale theme) and rhythmically oriented toward stasis (momentarily halting the "moto perpetuo" rhythm of the finale). While reconciliation of the rhythmic conflict is achieved in the ensuing measures through the integration of the opening theme into the rhythmic context of the finale, the persistence of the temporal conflict infuses the work with a new set of inter-movement tensions.

Example 6a: Sonata No. 2, first movement, mm. 1-2.

Con Forza, Dramatico Jean Coulthard

Allegro Moto Perpetuo

³⁷The underlying harmonic progression (E⁷-A⁷) alludes to the precise tonal context of the opening of the first movement.

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Example 6b: Sonata No. 2, third movement, mm. 14-15.

The musical score for Example 6b shows two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Allegro Altempo'. The first staff starts with a forte (f) dynamic and has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The second staff has a bass line with slurs and accents. There are dynamic markings of sf, sf, mf, and mp. The measure numbers 14 and 15 are indicated at the beginning of the first staff.

This pattern of thematic integration recurs at measures 71-78, at which point the "dramatico" theme is transformed into sextuplet sixteenth notes, building upon the rhythmic crescendo initiated in the cadenza (measures 63-64) and continued with a varied restatement of the finale theme (measures 65-70). The "cantabile" second theme from the opening movement is likewise integrated into the musical structure of the finale, not via rhythmic transformation (the original theme was initially stated in triplet rhythm) but rather through metrical shift (first movement: 12/8, third movement: 4/4). Interestingly, these inter-movement references alternate with varied restatements of the opening finale theme, creating a cyclic-based, composite ternary structure (see Figure 2).

The tonal plan of the movement reinforces this inter-movement design. The opening section (A) begins and ends with emphasis on C-sharp as the central tonality of the finale theme, symmetrically enclosing the first inter-movement recall of the "dramatico" theme (stated in its initial tonal context: A). Following the tonally digressive B section, comprised of secondary thematic material from both the first and third movements, the music returns emphatically to the tonal context of the first movement with a cadenza based exclusively on the notes of an A⁷ chord. The reprise of Section A continues tonal emphasis of A, transforming the original tonal context of the finale theme.

By re-asserting the tonality of the opening movement at this point, a sense of large-scale resolution is evoked, as if the music has come full circle to the germinal tonal material of the entire work. Any hints of tonal stability, however, are undermined by further modulations, followed by a bitonal coda (A-flat/D-sharp). The final cadence chord (A-flat—C—E-flat—D-sharp—F-sharp), in fact, may be respelled

enharmonically as a G-sharp⁷ chord, concluding the entire work on a sonority which is tonally unstable in both of the central tonalities of the finale (C-sharp and A).³⁸

Figure 2: Sonata No. 2, third movement, formal plan

MEASURES	SECTION	TONAL CENTRE(S)
1-13	A a - Theme A (finale theme)	C-sharp
14-27	b - Reminiscences of Theme A, first movement (modified rhythm)	A - G
28-42	a ¹ - Varied restatement of finale theme (transposition, inversion)	G - C-sharp
43-59	B c - Theme B	D - G
60-62	d - Reminiscences of Theme B, first movement (transposition, metrical shift)	E-flat
63-64	Cadenza	A
65-70	A a ² - Varied restatement of finale theme (compression, modified rhythm)	A
71-78	b ² - Reminiscences of Theme A, first movement (transposition, modified rhythm)	G - F
79-84	Coda	D-sharp/A-flat

The aural effect of this process is a movement in which past and present, continuity and discontinuity coalesce into a unified rhythmic and formal whole and in which an ultimate sense of tonal resolution is effectively circumvented. Duke has observed a similar phenomenon in the finale of the *Autumn Symphony* (Symphony No. 4), completed two years prior to Sonata No. 2:

³⁸This chord may be interpreted as either the dominant of C-sharp or the leading tone of A. This represents a significant departure from the cadence chords in Sonata No. 1, which are exclusively triadic and tonicizing.

Compositional Process in the Piano Sonatas of Jean Coulthard

Coulthard has developed a type of cyclic, process-based finale where the reprise of earlier materials in a transformed state returns, implicitly, to the cryptic, seminal forces that generate the composition: a music where 'conclusion' is never confused with 'goal,' 'climax' or, inevitably, 'resolution.'³⁹

As Coulthard's principal large scale piano works, the sonatas for solo piano are vital to a comprehensive understanding of the composer's pianistic style, harmonic vocabulary, tonal planning, and formal approach. An examination of the compositional process at work in these pieces enables us to trace the evolution of Coulthard's piano writing techniques from the early mature works of the late 1940s to the late period works of the 1980s, revealing a progressive tendency toward stylistic eclecticism, an enriched harmonic vocabulary, increasingly complex tonal planning, and an intricate network of cyclic relationships. Collectively, these works constitute an important contribution to the mid to late twentieth-century repertoire, a body of piano literature which includes sonatas by composers as stylistically diverse as Samuel Barber, Pierre Boulez, Elliott Carter, Aaron Copland,⁴⁰ Alberto Ginastera, Thea Musgrave, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Michael Tippett, and others.⁴¹ Both sonatas, moreover, are reflective of a deeply personal approach to the art of composition, serving as microcosms of Coulthard's style, aesthetic philosophy, and creative personality:

I feel that music is my whole life. If one can interpret it, one can understand my personal philosophy. When I write music, I am releasing my inner self.⁴²

³⁹Duke, "The Orchestral Music of Jean Coulthard," 216-17.

⁴⁰Coulthard submitted her work to Copland for critical assessment in the late 1930s. See Vivienne Rowley and Bryan N.S. Gooch, "Jean Coulthard," *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, Helmut Kallmann, Gilles Potvin and Kenneth Winters, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 319-20.

⁴¹Other notable piano sonatas in the Canadian repertoire include those by Violet Archer, Harry Somers, Sophie Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté, Jacques Hétu, Talivaldis Kenins, Barbara Pentland, John Weinzwieg, and Clermont Pepin.

⁴²Jean Coulthard, "Music Is My Whole Life."