

Stuart Greenbaum

Affinity

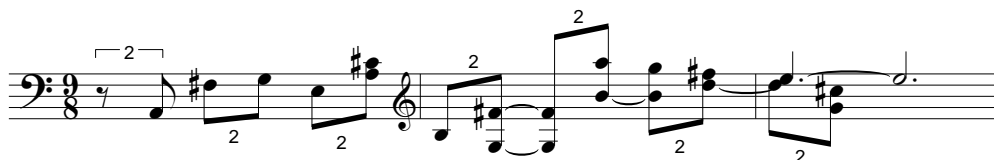
Ice Man is a 30-minute work for solo piano, composed by Stuart Greenbaum in 1993. 'Affinity' is the final section of the 3rd movement of *Ice Man*. As a conclusion to the piece, it essentially brings back three of the main ideas of the piece, but in a new, tonally calmer context. The most overt theme is melodic, found in the right hand from bar 5:



Features of First Theme:

- rhythmic motion in duplets
- narrow intervals (2nds, 3rds, 4ths) expanded to include 7ths for second phrase
- centred tonally around the note of 'D'

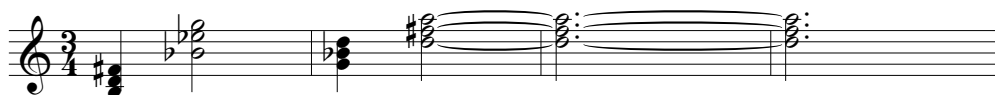
This melodic idea refers back to the hemiola rhythms found in 'The Moon' (1st movement). This theme is gradually elaborated until its longest statement in bars 31-33:



Features of transformation:

- rhythmic motion in duplets is extended
- intervals become further expanded and 7ths now appear as vertical sonorities
- very wide melodic tessitura encompasses 3 full octaves

The second theme (bars 16-18) is a tonal revoicing of the very opening bitonality of 'Lost', which starts the 1st movement. It represents the faceless, unforgiving coldness of the Himalayan landscape:



Features of Original Theme:

- succession of four tonally distant triads (B min, Eb maj, G min, D maj)
- sustain pedal is held down, creating a bitonal effect
- tonally, the last chord 'D' is to become the final destination of 'Affinity'

It is a theme that occurs throughout the entire half-hour work. When it is finally transformed in 'Affinity', it represents acceptance:



Features of Second Theme:

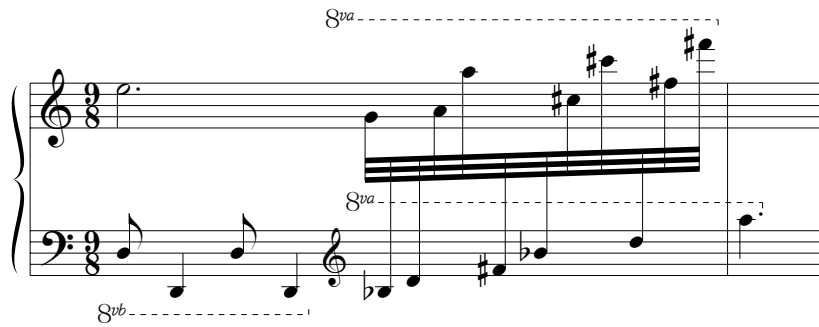
- Entirely within the key of D major (D maj, E min, D maj, A maj)
- Voicing of chords is now open-spaced (in 5ths and 6ths)

In the words of James Scott:

I felt a sudden affinity for my rock, and a deep wonder at the landscape. I still thought that this must be one of the most beautiful places on earth.

This, of course, despite that rock having been his virtual prison for 43 days. I see his "affinity" with the rock he sheltered under as an acceptance of nature - which is not necessarily 'for' or 'against' him, but still an object to marvel at. It is interesting to note that several days after he was rescued and taken to a local hospital in Nepal, he had fits of depression - demanding to be taken back to his rock. Perhaps he had to work so hard to accept his 'fate' that he could not initially cope with his miraculous rescue.

The third theme (in arpeggios), probably represents this darker side (which does not fully disappear, as such). It first appears in 'Picture of an Anorexic' which opens the 2nd movement and can be found in 'Affinity' from bar 23:



Features of Third Theme:

- superimposition of G minor and D major recalls opening bitonality
- demi-semi-quaver arpeggios create an upward flourish
- right hand outlines F# minor in octaves
- left hand outlines an augmented triad on 'D'

The Bb colours the arpeggio with tonal uncertainty, and represents a darker side. The introduction of B natural into this motive at bar 47, is obviously sunnier and is linked more to his "affinity" with nature. The darker Bb version has the final say, perhaps because the mountains themselves are more permanent and must continually be treated with respect.

Terms for further reference:

Augmented Triad
 Bi-tonality
 Hemiola
 Open Spacing
 Tessitura

Score:

The full score to *Ice Man* is published by Promethean Editions (PE005)

CD sound recordings:

- 1st movement, 'The Moon': *First Light* (FAC-98-1).
 2nd movement: *Greenbaum Hindson Peterson* (GHP9501)
 3rd movement, 'Affinity': AMEB 6th grade disc.

All recordings and scores available through the Australian Music Centre
 <www.amcoz.com.au>