



MTO 26.3 Examples: Roeder, Interactions of Folk Melody and Transformational (Dis)continuities in Chen Yi's *Ba Ban* (1999)

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.3/mto.20.26.3.roeder.html>

Example 1. The folk tune Ba Ban, with Chen Yi's grouping analysis

The musical score for the folk tune Ba Ban is presented in four staves, each containing two measures. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: Measure 1: B-flat, A-flat, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. Measure 2: A-flat, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat, A-flat.
- Staff 2: Measure 3: B-flat, A-flat, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. Measure 4: A-flat, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat, A-flat.
- Staff 3: Measure 5: B-flat, A-flat, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. Measure 6: A-flat, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat, A-flat.
- Staff 4: Measure 7: B-flat, A-flat, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. Measure 8: A-flat, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat, A-flat.

Grouping analysis (Chen Yi's) is indicated by numbers and plus signs above the notes:

- Measure 1: 3 + 2 + 3
- Measure 2: 3 + 2 + 3
- Measure 3: 4 + 4
- Measure 4: 3 + 2 + 3
- Measure 5: 3 + 2 + 3 + 4
- Measure 6: 4 + 4
- Measure 7: 5 + 3
- Measure 8: 4 + 4

A "golden section" is indicated by a downward arrow pointing to the end of measure 5, with the text "(= "+2+2")" below it.

Example 2. The first two segments of the tune in an augmented and embellished version



Example 3. "Green Mountain Perch," by Li Bai (701–762 CE), with translation (by Dongbo)

碧山樓

Green Mountain Perch

問余何意棲碧山

You ask why I perch in Green Mountains?

笑而不答心自閒

I chortle, don't reply, my heart at ease!

桃花流水杳然去

Peach blossoms fall, float to the horizon,

別有天地非人間

Here in this no men world.

Example 4. Interacting folk-tune and post-tonal materials in *Ba Ban*, mm. 1–21

Duration: c. 6'

Ba Ban

for Piano

3
CHEN YI
(1999)

Slow, ad lib. (0247)

The score is divided into several sections:

- Introduction (mm. 1-5):** Features a piano introduction with a right-hand (RH) melody and a left-hand (LH) accompaniment. The RH melody is marked with *ff* and includes intervals labeled (ic 1) and (ic 6). The LH accompaniment is marked with *f* and includes intervals labeled (ic 6) and (ic 1).
- Vocal Melody (mm. 6-9):** Features a vocal melody in the RH staff, marked with *ff* and including intervals labeled (ic 6) and (ic 1). The LH staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with notes labeled (la), do, mi, and re.
- Piano Accompaniment (mm. 10-21):** Features a piano accompaniment in the LH staff, marked with *ff* and including intervals labeled (ic 6) and (ic 1). The RH staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with notes labeled (la), do, mi, and re.

Key annotations and markings include:

- ic 1** and **ic 6**: Intervallic relationships.
- T₂ (chromatic)** and **T₂ (pentatonic)**: Transposition relationships.
- accel.**: Accelerando marking.
- Allegretto (♩ = 132)**: Tempo change.
- 8va**: Octave up marking.
- loco**: Locomotor marking.

Example 5. The opening presentation of the folk tune has sequential but not metrical continuity

Slow, ad lib.

Example 6. First, metrical presentation of post-tonal materials, mm. 12–17

accel.

(deepening metric hierarchy)

9 10

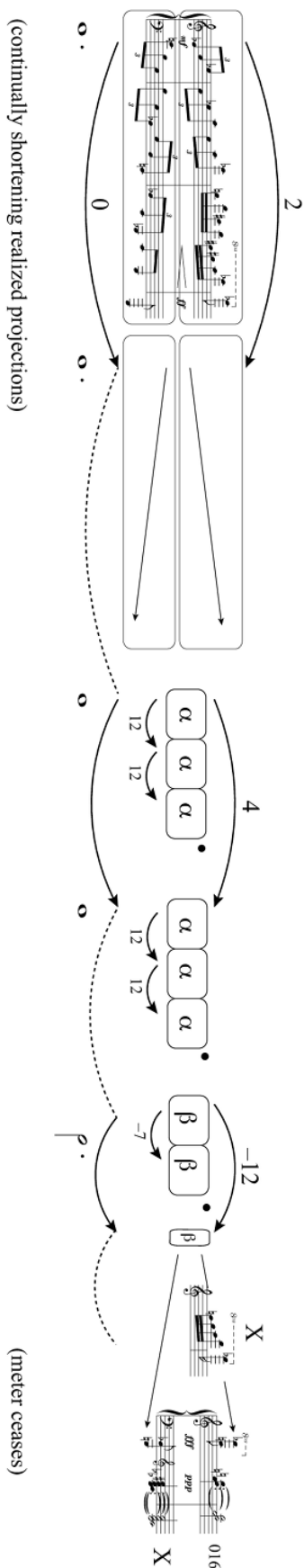
12 12

$**r_3 RI_4$

(Prime form of the row)

(Partial prime form of the row)

Example 7. Contraction of metrical projections and dissolution of meter, mm. 30–48



Example 8. Changing temporalities of folk and post-tonal materials during the opening of *Ba Ban*

mm.	Ba Ban	Post-tonal (12T, X)
1–12	strongly sequential but haphazard pulse	acciaccatura/atemporal
12–17	interval fragments transform PT materials	continually deepening meter
18–29	meter but fragmented sequential continuity	vertical/atemporal
30–48	absent	continually shrinking metrical projections

Example 9. Folk-tune sequence and pulse control the post-tonal materials in the first variation, mm. 64–70

(Ba Ban first phrase in highest voice)

Forms of the 12-tone row

Example 10a. Persistent folk-tune control of sequential temporality, mm. 76–81

accel. *f* *mp* 8va

(Ba Ban 025)

(Baban first phrase 3+2)

(Ba Ban 025)

(Row embeds Ba Ban pentatonic set, and CMm7, used in the right hand above)

Example 10b. Folk-tune continuity becomes fragmentary, mm. 87–88

025

3

025 025

Example 11. Unpredictable transposition of groups at the beginning of the second variation

“first variation”

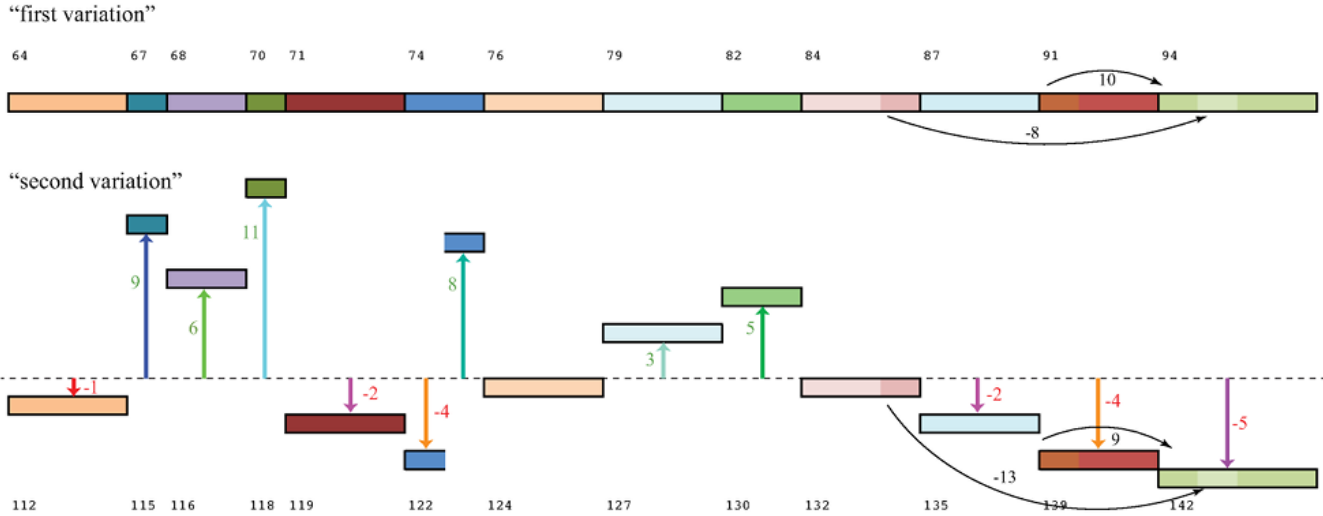
“second variation”

0247 (melody)

X

025 (melody)

Example 12. Unpredictable transposition of groups continues throughout the second variation



Example 13. All three materials composed out in the third variation, mm. 175–180

Series of transpositions composes out the end of the first segment (la-re-do) of Ba Ban

Ba Ban first segment

8va

(basic motive X)

(X)

(+ 8va)

(X)

(X, rotated)

Ba Ban first segment

cf. ↑

Series of transpositions composes out the beginning of the row

Series of transpositions composes out the beginning of X

Ba Ban first segment

Row first 4 notes

Series of transpositions composes out X

177

(in double octaves)

Motive X

(+ 8ba)

(basic motive)

Series of transpositions composes out the second segment (sol-la-do) of Ba Ban

Example 14. The folk-tune sequential continuity is neutralized as the row becomes metric in mm. 193–196

Right hand chains the folk-tune opening motive into a closed major-third cycle

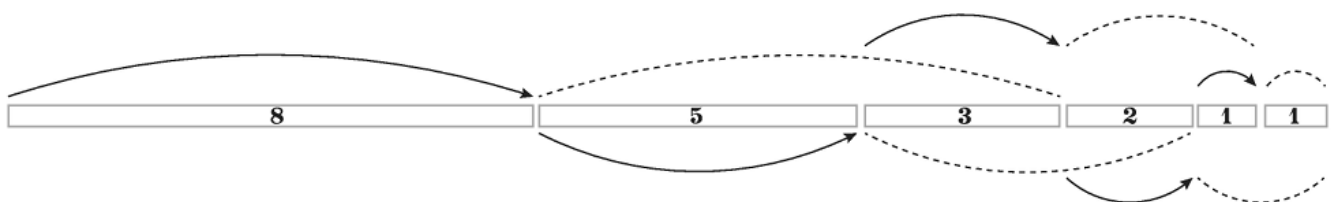
Left hand repeats first hexachord of the row
(at first starting on C)

Example 15. Composing out of motive X directs large-scale continuity in mm. 193–222

Retrograde of the first six numbers in the Fibonacci (1,1) series determines the number of repetitions of each sequence leg.

X motive intervals (also from the Fibonacci series) transform the first hexachord of the row

Example 16. The projective fecundity of Fibonacci rhythm (apropos of mm. 193–222)



Example 17. *Ba Ban* coda, mm. 233–257

233 *Più mosso* (♩ = 144) ³

pp (complete row, with clear meter)

8va. una corda loco

8va.

238 (complete *Ba Ban* but no meter or sequential continuity (see Ex. 17))

8va.

243

8va.

248

8va.

254 *ppp* 5 (X + *Ba Ban* incipit with clear meter....)

8va.

8va. ...but *Ba Ban* vanishes

The musical score is presented in five systems. The first system (mm. 233-237) is in bass clef, marked 'Più mosso' and 'pp', featuring triplets and an annotation 'una corda loco'. The second system (mm. 238-242) is in treble clef, marked '8va.', and contains a note about the absence of meter or sequential continuity. The third system (mm. 243-247) is in treble clef, marked '8va.', and continues the melodic line. The fourth system (mm. 248-253) is in treble clef, marked '8va.', and shows a continuation of the pattern. The fifth system (mm. 254-257) is in treble clef, marked 'ppp' and '5', and includes a note about the 'Ba Ban' incipit and a final annotation '...but Ba Ban vanishes' with an asterisk. Arrows and dashed lines indicate melodic and harmonic connections across the systems.

Example 18. Transfiguration of the folk tune in the coda

The image displays two musical systems, each consisting of a melody line and a corresponding rhythmic pattern line. The left system is labeled "Ba Ban" and the right system is labeled "242".

Left System (Ba Ban):

- Melody:** A single line of music. Above it, a bracket indicates "8 beats". The melody is divided into three groups: "3 beats, 5 events", "2 beats, 3 events", and "3 beats, 5 events".
- Rhythm:** A line of music with vertical strokes representing events. Above it, a bracket indicates "11 beats". The rhythm is divided into three groups: "3 events", "2 events", and "3 events".

Right System (242):

- Melody:** A single line of music. Above it, a bracket indicates "8 beats". The melody is divided into two groups: "4 beats, 7 events" and "4 beats, 7 events".
- Rhythm:** A line of music with vertical strokes representing events. Above it, a bracket indicates "10 beats". The rhythm is divided into two groups: "4 events" and "4 events".