A “New Harmony”: Intertextuality and Quotation in Toru Takemitsu’s Folio III

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Abstract

The last in a set of three pieces, Folio III (1974) by Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996) was the composer’s first foray into solo classical guitar composition. Although Takemitsu’s guitar works are often overlooked or examined sparingly at best, Folio III is a complex composition that warrants exploration. It combines aspects of chromatic saturation and octatonicism with Baroque-era tonality via the quotation of Chorale No. 72 “O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden” from the St. Matthew Passion (1727) by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). This essay blends theoretical analysis with aspects of Takemitsu’s philosophy to clarify the significance of the chorale’s quotation to the overall composition. In the Passions, chorales—due to their origins in a communal performance practise—provide links between complex music and that understood by the common population. In Folio III, the quotation of the chorale enables similar dialogues between tonal and post-tonal music; classical guitarists and the larger classical music community; and, the past and the present. Through intertextuality and quotation, Takemitsu’s Folio III reconciles these dichotomies to create an environment of mutual understanding, rather than isolation and exclusion.

Key Words

Intertextuality, Quotation, Music Theory, Guitar, Postmodernism
In “Gardener of Time,” Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996), explains his compositional philosophy: “My music is something like a signal sent out to the unknown. Moreover, I imagine and believe that my signal meets another’s signal and the resulting physical change creates a harmony different from the original two.” 1 In a postmodernist context, this statement can be interpreted as Takemitsu’s approach to intertextuality through quotation. 2 As such, it is the basis of my analysis of Takemitsu’s quotation composition, Folio III (1974), which depicts the “physical change” that transpires when Takemitsu “meets” Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). 3 The last in a set of three Folios for solo guitar, it quotes Chorale No. 72, “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden,” (O Heart Full of Blood and Wounds) from Bach’s St. Matthew Passion (1727) in the D section of its rondo form (see Fig. 1). 4 This essay will examine the “new harmony” of Folio III—a dialogic relationship between tonality and chromatic saturation, mediated by octatonicism. Through quotation, Folio III reconciles the twelve-tone and diatonic compositional idioms.

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2. According to Miguel Roig-Francoli, some of the hallmarks of postmodernism (during the 1960s and 1970s) were the removal of boundaries between past and present, tonal and post-tonal, and conservative and progressive styles. Postmodernist composers sought a dialogical relationship with the past, creating a circular, rather than linear, model of time. Miguel Roig-Francoli, Understanding Post-Tonal Music (New York: McGraw Hill Higher Education, 2008), 300. Similarly, the Japanese perception of time, as described by F.S.C. Northrop in The Meeting of East and West, was non-linear: “The Westerner represents time either with an arrow, or as a moving river…whereas, the Oriental portrays time as a placid, silent pool within which ripples come and go.” F.S.C. Northrop, The Meeting of East and West: An Inquiry Concerning World Understanding (New York: Collier, 1946), 343.

3. In “Up the Garden Path,” Peter Burt surmises that scholars typically adhere to one of two approaches to Takemitsu’s music; they either present a methodical analysis of pitch organization and formal structure, or, they address the philosophical and poetic issues in the music, using a “stream-of-consciousness” writing style akin to Takemitsu’s own essays. However, each of these methods is incomplete insofar as it excludes the other. This essay will attempt to synthesize the two approaches. Peter Burt, “Up the Garden Path: Takemitsu, Serialism, and the Limits of Analysis,” in A Way a Lone: Writings on Toru Takemitsu, ed. Hugh de Farranti and Yoko Narazaki (Tokyo: Academia Music Ltd., 2002), 155.

4. The Folios are simply named because of their two page length. In the liner notes for the original LP release, Takemitsu wrote: “The ‘folio’ of the title is used here in a sense of a sheet of paper folded in half to make two leaves. In accordance with this meaning, the work consists of several pieces [three], each written on two pages.” Quoted in Vineet Ashok Shende, “A Portfolio of Four Compositions: Snarl, Struwwelpeterlieder, Seven Mirrors, and To Musique,” Part 1, (DMA diss., Cornell University, 2001), 17.
Figure 1. Structure of the rondo form in Takemitsu, *Folio III*. This piece includes material extraneous to the traditional five-part rondo form (the D section), and lacks the fourth repetition of the A section that occurs in seven-part rondo forms. Nonetheless, the adamant return of the A section places it firmly within the rondo family—albeit slightly modified from its conventional structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Sub-Sections / Important Notes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1–4</td>
<td>a (mm. 1–2) b (mm. 3–4) *“a” is constant between all A-type sections, but “b” is not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A¹</td>
<td>5 (line 4)–9</td>
<td>a (mm. 5–6) b (mm. 7–9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>10–12</td>
<td>a (m. 10) b (mm. 11–12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A²</td>
<td>13–21</td>
<td>a (mm. 13–14) b (mm. 15–16) trans. (m. 17) c (mm. 18–21) *“b” is the same as A; “c” uses ideas from “b” of A¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>22–24</td>
<td>Quotation of “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>25–28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much like any other composition or artwork, *Folio III* was not created in isolation; in other words, its explicit intertextual relationship with “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden”—which is indicated in the score—is not its only influence. Although Takemitsu was largely self-taught, he did spend a short duration under the tutelage of Yasui Kiyose and received some informal instruction from the film composer, Fumio Hayasaka.⁵ Throughout his career, he also cited influences from Olivier Messiaen, Claude Debussy, and jazz music—popular during the post-World War Two American occupation of Japan.⁶ In *Folio III*, these influences are evident in the prominence of the octatonic scale (one of Messiaen’s Limited Modes of Transposition); the use of an A pedal tone and varying timbres (i.e. harmonics, open and closed fingerings, and *sul ponticello*)—both “signature”

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Debussynian devices; and, pitch-bending—common in American Blues music.\textsuperscript{7} The use of pitch-bending as ornamentation, or \textit{embai}, is also common in \textit{biwa} playing and in the traditional Japanese \textit{gagakû} orchestra, another of Takemitsu’s influences.\textsuperscript{8} Although this essay will focus on the intertextual relationship between \textit{Folio III} and “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden,” it is important to recognize that other musical dialogues are present—between Takemitsu, Debussy, Messiaen, jazz, and traditional Japanese music.\textsuperscript{9}

According to Peter Burt, Takemitsu’s choice of “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden” was arbitrary and has little significance to one’s understanding of the piece.\textsuperscript{10} I disagree. Although the reason for its inclusion in \textit{Folio III} could merely be an homage to the \textit{St. Matthew Passion} (which Takemitsu score read as a pre-composition ritual\textsuperscript{11}), a closer examination of the original work and the relationships within \textit{Folio III} suggest that this conclusion is insufficient. Due to the communal performance practice of chorales, their use in the \textit{St. Matthew Passion}, as Paul Steinitz writes, created “a link between elaborately composed music and that understood by the people.”\textsuperscript{12} In \textit{Folio III}, where the chorale quotation is the only strictly tonal music of the piece, it creates a link between the post-tonal chromatic language of modern art music and that “understood by the people”:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7} Yayoi Uno Everett, “Reflecting on Two ‘Cultural Mirrors’: Mode and Signification of Musical Synthesis in Toru Takemitsu’s \textit{November Steps} and \textit{Autumn},” in \textit{A Way a Lone: Writings on Toru Takemitsu}, ed. Hugh de Farranti and Yoko Narazaki (Tokyo: Academia Music Ltd., 2002), 149.
\item \textsuperscript{8} Following Takemitsu’s meeting with John Cage in 1964, he became more interested in traditional Japanese music, which he had previously avoided. While attending school, he lived with his aunt—a \textit{koto} player—and he associated its sound with painful war memories for many years. Siddon, \textit{A Bio-Bibliography}, 2, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{9} It is also possible to conceive of a dialogue between Takemitsu and the international guitar community. Although Takemitsu played guitar at a rudimentary level, and had previously composed for guitar in chamber music settings—i.e. \textit{Sonant} (1965)—it is unlikely that he would have ignored the performance expertise of Kiyoshi Shomura, to whom \textit{Folios} is dedicated, and his composer-guitarist friend, Leo Brouwer. Takemitsu remained “in dialogue” with this community after \textit{Folios}, going on to compose the following works for solo guitar (in addition to a concerto and several works with guitar as a chamber instrument): \textit{12 Songs} (1974–77); \textit{The Last Waltz} (1983); \textit{All in Twilight} (1987); \textit{Equinox} (1993); and, \textit{In the Woods} (1995)—dedicated to Shomura, Julian Bream, and John Williams.
\item \textsuperscript{10} Peter Burt, \textit{The Music of Toru Takemitsu} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 154.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 153.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Paul Steinitz, \textit{Bach’s Passions} (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1978), 24.
\end{itemize}
tonality. Takemitsu’s quotation retains Bach’s harmonic setting of the chorale’s first phrase with slight modifications to accommodate the guitar’s technical restrictions (see Ex. 1), resulting in some voice crossings, inversional changes, and parallel fifths between the lower voices in m. 22, b. 3–4. Nonetheless, the quotation retains the basic harmonies and syntax of the original. In the second phrase, however, Takemitsu partially re-harmonizes the melody (see Ex. 2) to complete the aggregate while retaining the pretense of a tonal setting (see Ex. 3). The chromatic alterations of the original pitches (see Ex. 4) create pitch-class sets, 3-3 (014), 3-2 (013), and 4-12 (0236), all of which feature prominently in the originally-composed material of *Folio III*. In this way, Takemitsu inextricably links the chorale to the rest of the composition, overlapping ideas from tonal and post-tonal harmony within the quotation.

**Example 1.** Quotation of “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden” (mm.1–2) in Takemitsu, *Folio III*, mm. 22–23. The colour of each note indicates its registral placement in Bach’s setting of the chorale for the *St. Matthew Passion*, mm. 1–2.

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13. The melody for “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden,” was originally composed by Hans Leo Hassler for a secular song, “Mein G’must ist mir verwirret von einer Jungefrau zart” (My Heart is Troubled by a Tender Maiden), which would have contributed to its familiarity. Steinitz, *Bach’s Passions*, 124.
Example 2. (top) Takemitsu’s re-harmonization of Bach’s “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden” to complete the aggregate. Added passing tones are indicated in blue while chromatically altered pitches are indicated in red. Takemitsu, Folio III, mm. 23–24. (below) Reduction of Bach’s setting of “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden” (mm. 2–4) for comparison.

Example 3. Completion of aggregate while maintaining A minor “tonality” in the quotation within Folio III, mm. 23–24. The number indicate how many times each pitch-class appears in this excerpt.
**Example 4.** Pitch-class sets 4-12 (0236), 3-2 (013), and 3-3 (014) created via the chromatically altered pitches in Takemitsu, *Folio III*, m. 23–24. (a) Takemitsu’s alterations (to Bach’s chorale) create set-class 4-12 (0236); (b) example of (left) Bach’s harmonization and (right) Takemitsu’s re-harmonization (with pitch-classes indicated underneath); (c) relationship of pitch-classes between Bach’s harmonization (whole-notes) and Takemitsu’s harmonization (filled-in note heads), as shown in (b). The notes that are close in pitch-space to those that they replace (e.g. the C-sharp, B-flat and D of Takemistu’s replace the C of Bach’s chorale) form pitch-class sets 3-3 (014) and 4-3 (0134), the latter of which has as its subsets, 3-2 (013) and 3-3 (014).

(14) Quoted in Per F. Broman, liner notes to *All in Twilight: Toru Takemitsu, Complete Music for Solo Guitar*, Frank Halasz (BIS CD-1075 Digital), compact disc, 6.

The chorale also connects the isolated world of classical guitar composition to the larger musical community (who would be familiar with the *St. Matthew Passion*, but not many guitar compositions). In the introduction to the first edition of *12 Songs*, Takemitsu wrote, “In Japan especially, the world of the classical guitar is a self-enclosed one which seems to have lost all contact with the world of today.”

Just as *12 Songs* connects classical guitarists to the world via arrangements of popular music, *Folio III* instigates a relationship between the classical guitar and...
the classical music community. Thus, the “new harmony” that the quotation in Folio III creates is one of mutual understanding rather than isolation and exclusion.

Via the text of the quotation and its role in the St. Matthew Passion, Folio III also advocates reconciliation. The chorale, sung after the death of Jesus, is a plea for His support at the time of one’s own death. The text speaks of Jesus’ fall from popularity, His crucifixion, and foreshadows His rebirth:

O Head full of blood and wounds,
Full of pain and derision…
O Head once beautifully adorned…
But now most dishonoured:
Let me greet you!15

In Folio III (subtitled “elegy” in the original recording) Jesus is replaced by tonality, derided by serialism; it is an “elegy” for the tonality’s “death.”16 Takemitsu described his inspiration for Folios in a letter to the guitarist, Michael Lorimer: “Contemporary music has been going a certain way, but I couldn’t take it anymore. I felt compelled to return to tonality—I couldn’t resist—and this piece is about that.”17 Folio III, however, is not a return; it suggests a “new harmony” through the meeting of past and present. Tonality was often not respected in contemporaneous academic art music, but via quotation, Takemitsu reaches out a hand: “let me greet you!” Folio III depicts the resurrection of tonality in a post-tonal context.

This is not to say that tonality replaces, or triumphs over, chromatic saturation in Folio III; rather, Takemitsu demonstrates their ability to coexist within a single work. As previously

15. For German text and translation of the chorale, see Appendix.
16. It is interesting to note the connection between this piece and Takemitsu’s lifelong concern with death and its expression in music. Starting with Requiem for Strings (1957)—instigated by the death of his close friend and mentor, Hayasaka, in 1955 and his own chronic poor health—Takemitsu wrote a collection of elegies. James Siddon suggests that these compositions constitute a thematic series, like the Garden, Tree, River, Waterscape, and Constellation Series into which Takemitsu catalogued some of his instrumental works. Siddon does not include Folio III in the “Death Series,” but its subtitle and connection to the St. Matthew Passion reveal an adherence to the same characteristics and themes as the other works that Siddon does include. Siddon, Toru Takemitsu, 6–8, 16.
mentioned, the chorale quotation combines elements of chromatic saturation with A minor tonality. This simultaneity is also evident in the modulation from originally-composed material to the Bach quotation and vice versa. To use terminology coined by Catherine Losada, Takemitsu employs pitch overlap, rhythmic plasticity, and chromatic insertion to create a dialogue between tonality and post-tonality. Using the indeterminate nature of rallentandos, Takemitsu employs rhythmic plasticity to transition into the quotation. The initial tempo of an eighth note at 120–146 beats per minute (bpm) transforms to a quarter note at 100 bpm via a rallentando; the rate of the original sixteenth note (240–292 bpm) slows to be equivalent to the new rate of the eighth note (200 bpm) (see Ex. 5). A similar effect appears at the end of the quotation where the rate of an eighth-note (200 bpm) becomes the rate of a sixteenth-note (112 bpm) via a rallentando molto (see Ex. 6). The chromatic saturation—or, insertion, to use Losada’s modulatory terminology—of the quotation’s second phrase also eases the transition from A minor to the A-centric, near-twelve-tone language of the coda (only F-sharp is absent, see Ex. 7). Takemitsu’s re-harmonization also obscures the chorale’s cadential resolutions (see Ex. 8). By denying one of the main components of tonality, Takemitsu avoids a complete return to an older musical language. This is replicated in the final cadential gesture of the piece, where the voices converge on A, but then negate a complete resolution to A with the use of a B-flat–B-natural pitch bend (see Ex. 9). Throughout the A-centric piece, the “dominant,” E, is also obscured through omission—it is the only pitch absent in the two-measure phrase common to all A sections—denying a strictly tonal understanding of this work. By incorporating post-tonal elements into a tonal chorale, Takemitsu obscures the boundary between tonality and post-tonality, defying their definition as opposing musical languages and ensuring that the quotation does not sound other-worldly or abrupt.
Example 5. Rhythmic plasticity leading into quotation in Takemitsu, *Folio III*, mm. 21–22.


Example 7. Pitch-classes used in Coda of Takemitsu, *Folio III*, mm. 25–28. Numbers below the staff indicate the number of times each pitch-class appears.

Example 8. Denial of cadential resolutions in quotation in Takemitsu, *Folio III*, (a) m. 23, (b) mm. 24–25.

The relationship between tonal and post-tonal elements is twofold. Not only does Takemitsu insert post-tonal ideas into a tonal context, but he uses tonal harmonies in a post-tonal context. The passage that immediately precedes the quotation—and indeed, the entire work—is A-centric. It also emphasizes the minor third interval, A–C, with chromatic neighbour (see Ex. 10): the first boundary pitches are A–C#; then, A–B; and, finally, A–C. This motif is foreshadowed earlier in the work in m. 8, and repeated in m. 20 prior to the quotation, transitioning smoothly into the chorale through pitch overlap. At the end of the quotation, the re-harmonization of the chorale’s second phrase results in a set-class overlap between the quotation and coda, specifically 3-10 (036), 3-11 (037), and 3-7 (025) (see Ex. 11). The second harmonic pitch set following the quotation, 6-Z45 (023469), contains
all of the triads and chords used in Bach’s harmonization: major and minor, 3-11 (037), and half-diminished seventh and dominant seventh, 4-27 (0258). Similarly, the first half of A2 (preceding the quotation), emphasizes 3-10 (036) and 3-11 (037) (see Ex. 12), and the first independent minor triad of the piece appears in m. 18 (see Ex. 13). The first dominant-tonic bass motion also starts in m. 17 (see Ex. 14), foreshadowing the tonality of the quotation. As stated in the introduction, the result of the meeting of two signals—Takemitsu’s and Bach’s—is “a new harmony different from the original two.” Takemitsu is not advocating a return to tonality, but an integration of it; he is greeting it in a post-tonal context.

Example 10. Pitch overlap and emphasis of A–C interval (indicated in red) through chromatic overtones in Takemitsu, Folio III, mm. 21–22.

Example 11. Set-class overlap between Quotation and Coda in Takemitsu, Folio III, mm. 24–25. The indicated set-classes are all taken from harmonic (rather than melodic) groupings—those that sound simultaneously.
Example 12. (a) Emphasis of 5-Z36 (01247), a superset of 3-10 (036) and 3-11 (037) in A2 of Takemitsu, *Folio III*, mm. 18–21. Numbers below the staff indicate the number of occurrences of each pitch class. (b) Emphasis of 3-10 (036) and 3-7 (037) in Takemitsu, *Folio III*, mm. 18–19. Each pitch set is harmonic.


The tonal and post-tonal languages of *Folio III* are further connected by the octatonic collection. The use of this scalar collection is consistent with other works by Takemitsu from the 1970s, which move “toward total chromatic saturation from a referential base”—most often, the octatonic scale. In *Folio III*, however, Takemitsu does not use the octatonic scale to move toward chromatic saturation; rather, it acts as a messenger between chromatic saturation and tonality. Each section of the piece uses an element of octatonicism as its organizing principle without “conforming to its limitations.” The A section emphasizes 4-12 (0236), a subset of the octatonic collection (see Ex. 15); the B section juxtaposes OCT\(_{2,3}\) and OCT\(_{1,2}\) to complete the aggregate (see Ex. 16); and, the C section cadences using two subsets of the octatonic collection, with a common subset of 4-12 (0236) between the two (see Ex. 17). In the quotation, 3-2(013) and 3-3(014)—subsets of the octatonic collection—are melodically prominent and Takemitsu’s re-harmonization includes these sets and 4-12 (0236) as harmonic statements, as previously stated (see Ex. 4). Thus, the octatonic scale is used as an organizing principle, much like the diatonic scale in tonal music, connecting the various sections of *Folio III*.

**Example 15.** Subset of octatonic collection, 4-12 (0236) in A section of Takemitsu, *Folio III*, mm. 1–2. (a) Prominent pitches in A. Numbers below the staff indicate the number of occurrences of each pitch-class. (b) Harmonic sets in A; (c) Opening melodic gesture.

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18. For an example of this in another of Takemitsu’s compositions, see Timothy Koozin’s analysis of *Far Away*. Interestingly, the pitch-class set, 4-12 (0236), is prominent in both *Far Away* and *Folio III*. Timothy Koozin, “Octatonicism in Recent Solo Piano Works of Toru Takemitsu,” *Perspectives of New Music* 29, no. 1 (1991): 127.

Example 16. Juxtaposition of OCT\textsubscript{2,3} and OCT\textsubscript{1,2} to complete the aggregate in B section of Takemitsu, Folio III, m. 5

Example 17. Pitch sets of the cadential gesture in C using subsets of octatonic collection in Takemitsu, Folio III, m. 10.
Through pitch relationships between “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden” and the originally-composed material for *Folio III*, Takemitsu creates a harmonic language that relies on the connection—not opposition—of tonality and chromatic saturation. Catherine Losada notes that the difference between pre-twentieth century quotation and postmodernist quotation is that the latter emphasizes juxtaposition, not unity.\(^{20}\) While this is true to an extent in *Folio III*—that is, Takemitsu does not translate the entirety of Bach’s chorale into his own stylistic language—the very act of juxtaposition in this piece constitutes a unity of sorts. *Folio III* creates a world—a united entity—where tonality and post-tonality coexist. They are not a unity in the sense that they are the same thing; they are a unity in the sense that one cannot readily separate sections of “pure” tonality from “pure” chromaticism and finish with coherent ideas. *Folio III* uses a harmony that is “different from the original two”—it is not Bach, but nor is it wholly Takemitsu. Neither is it entirely tonal nor post-tonal.

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Bibliography


Appendix

German text and translation of Chorale No. 72, “O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden,” from the St. Matthew Passion by Johann Sebastian Bach

O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden
voll Shmerz und voller Hohn,
O Haupt, zu Spott gebunden
mit einer Dornenkron.
O Haupt, sonst schön gekrönet
mit höochster Her und Zier,
jetzt aber so verhöhnet,
gegrüβet seist du mir!

O Head full of blood and wounds,
full of pain and full of derision,
O Head, in mockery bound
with a crown of thorns,
O Head, once beautifully adorned
with the most honour and adornment,
but now most dishonoured:
let me greet you!21

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