

**Peter McKenzie Armstrong**

**[ CTT-95 ]**

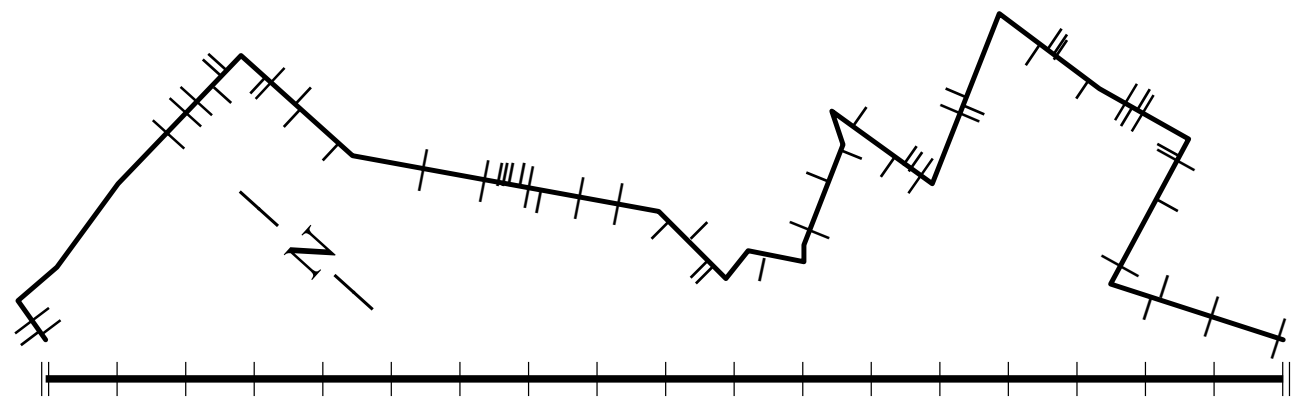
**Bus Ride over a Bach Bass**

**for mixed digital quartet**

**Opus 14**

*Edition Ottaviano Petrucci*

NOTES



Circumstances obliged me recently to take a bus — the CTTransit local from Hartford’s Constitution Plaza, across the Connecticut River and south to Glastonbury. The ride would have gone unremarkably, had not something just before made me unusually vulnerable to distraction. A conversation, calling to mind the Air from Sebastian Bach’s D–major Orchestral Suite, had sparked an irresistible urge to run this sublime music through my head. Soon more irresistible, however, was the lurching bus’s cacophony of whines, rumbles and squeaks. My urge went down in defeat, and I vowed revenge: to concoct a musical busride powerless against JSB’s Air. Back home, after a frenzy measuring Rand McNally and tinkering with Merriam Webster syllabifications, a strategy emerged, which I summarize here to describe the outcome.

Taking as point of departure the Air’s 4–part layout: replace main melody (Violin I) with a rattletrap engine (steel drums); preserve fully the original bass line (Continuo); move inner–voice ranges (Violin II, Viola) to the outside instead (two xylophones, one too low to exist) for squeaks & rumbles respectively.

Derive content entirely from the names of streets, taken in two groups: those driven on (18, coincidentally the number of bars in the Air), and those intersected (~70 total, on L or R only or on both). Map these names to the chromatic scale by spelling and to meter by their relative syllabic stresses. Set each Group–1 (drums) phrase as a single voice iterating perpetually once per beat, each time parrot–whipped by its inversion. Set each Group–2 (xylophone) phrase as a voice pair, sounding once only, painfully augmented.

Apply global controls as follows. Move the engine’s tessitura to parallel the bus’s north–easterly height (see map). Vary tempo, slightly but often, with the relative stop–to–stop distances. Scale with complementary fractions to make the engine’s "perpetual" beats seldom in fact quite equal. As its tessitura attempts dangerous heights, down–shift the stressed engine via transposing canon. And through all, ensure that the Air’s bass line, while not unaffected by tempo instability, proceeds unperturbed to completion.

The score, while not humanly playable or performance–speed readable, has served to auto–sequence for MIDI and to discipline my efforts. Its dedicatee, please note, I made up, with an extra character honoring August Emil Daniel Ferdinand Wilhelmj, the nineteenth–century violinist who commandeered this Air to immortalize his G string.

Challenge to the Listener: Can you imagine, perhaps hum, the Air melody — from memory, of course, and in sync with its sounding bass here — without losing track?

to Nikola Gharzumj

[ CTT-95 ]  
Bus Ride over a Bach Bass

For Mixed Digital Quartet

Peter McKenzie Armstrong  
Opus 14

Score for Mixed Digital Quartet, featuring Xylophone I, Steel Drums, Celli Pizzicato, and Xylophone II. The score is divided into two systems, each with four staves. The tempo is marked  $\text{♩} = 159$ .

**System 1:**

- Xylophone I:** Features a melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes, marked with [Temple St.] and [Talcott St.] locations.
- Steel Drums:** Features a complex melodic line with triplets, sixteenth notes, and slurs, marked with [Market St. at Constitution Plaza] and [Talcott St.] locations.
- Celli Pizzicato:** Provides a steady bass line with a single note in the first measure of each staff.
- Xylophone II:** Features a melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes, marked with [Kinsley St.] and [Talcott St.] locations.

**System 2:**

- Xylophone I:** Features a melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes, marked with [Chapel St.] and [Morgan St.] locations.
- Steel Drums:** Features a complex melodic line with triplets, sixteenth notes, and slurs, marked with [Morgan St.] and [Talcott St.] locations.
- Celli Pizzicato:** Provides a steady bass line with a single note in the first measure of each staff.
- Xylophone II:** Features a melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes, marked with [Morgan St.] and [Talcott St.] locations.

2  
5

[Bulkeley Bridge]

Measures 2-5 of the Bulkeley Bridge section. The melody in the treble clef consists of eighth-note runs with various triplet and sixteenth-note groupings. The bass clef has a single note on F#4.

7

Measures 7-10 of the Bulkeley Bridge section. The melody continues with eighth-note runs and triplets. The bass clef has a single note on F#4.

9

♩ = 148

[Blacksmith Ln.]

[Connecticut Blvd.]

[East River Dr.]

Measures 9-12 of the piece. Measure 9 is the start of the Bulkeley Bridge section. Measure 10 continues Bulkeley Bridge. Measure 11 is the start of Blacksmith Ln. Measure 12 is the start of Connecticut Blvd. Measure 13 is the start of East River Dr. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, sixteenth notes, and rests.

11

System 11: Treble and Bass staves. Treble staff contains a complex melodic line with triplets and slurs, including measures 14-13, 14-15-3, 13-12, and 13-14-3. Bass staff contains a single note in the first measure and a whole note in the last measure.

12

[Thomas St.]

System 12: Treble and Bass staves. Treble staff contains a complex melodic line with triplets and slurs, including measures 11-12, 12-11, 11-10, and 12-13. Bass staff contains a single note in the first measure and a whole note in the last measure.

[Ash St.]

System 13: Treble and Bass staves. Treble staff contains a complex melodic line with triplets and slurs, including measures 11-12, 12-11, 11-10, and 12-13. Bass staff contains a single note in the first measure and a whole note in the last measure.

13

[Governor St.]

System 14: Treble and Bass staves. Treble staff contains a complex melodic line with triplets and slurs, including measures 10-9, 9-8, 9-10, and 10-11. Bass staff contains a single note in the first measure and a whole note in the last measure.

[Governor St.]

System 15: Treble and Bass staves. Treble staff contains a complex melodic line with triplets and slurs, including measures 10-9, 9-8, 9-10, and 10-11. Bass staff contains a single note in the first measure and a whole note in the last measure.

[Prospect St.]

Measures 14-15. The score is in 3/4 time. Measure 14 features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. Measure 15 continues the melodic line in the treble and adds a bass line. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Section: [Prospect St.]

Section: [South Prospect St.]

[Harrison Place]

[Lynn St.]

Measures 15-16. The score is in 3/4 time. Measure 15 features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. Measure 16 continues the melodic line in the treble and adds a bass line. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Section: [Harrison Place]

Section: [Lynn St.]

[Ward St.]

Measures 16-17. The score is in 3/4 time. Measure 16 features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. Measure 17 continues the melodic line in the treble and adds a bass line. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Section: [Ward St.]

Section: [Main St.]

[Main St.]

[Central Av.]

Measures 17-18. The score is in 3/4 time. Measure 17 features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. Measure 18 continues the melodic line in the treble and adds a bass line. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Section: [Main St.]

Section: [Central Av.]

Section: [Main St.]

Section: [Chapel St.]

Section: [Garvan St.]

[Saunders St.]

18

♩ = 149

[Carroll Rd.]

[Blinn St.]

[State Highway 517]

20

[Pitkin St.]

[Silver Ln.]

21

[East River Dr. Ext.]

The musical score is for a piece titled "The Streets of New Orleans". It is in 2/4 time, with a tempo of 134 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#), indicating the key of D major or A minor. The score is written for a piano and includes a variety of musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, triplets, and sixteenth rests. The piece is divided into sections labeled with street names: [Brown St.], [Judson Av.], [Lilac St.], and [Willys St.]. The [Brown St.] section is marked with a 25. The [Judson Av.] section features a triplet of eighth notes. The [Lilac St.] section includes a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth rest. The [Willys St.] section is marked with a 1.5. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The bass clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is written on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The bass clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is written on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The bass clef has a key signature of one sharp (F#).



[Sisson St.]

[Risley St.]

[Willow St.]

[Willow St.]

[Crosby St.]

[Crosby St.]

[Colt St.]

[Crosby St.]

30

$\text{♩} = 132$   
[Ensign St.]

$\text{♩} = 131$

32

$\text{♩} = 135$

[High St.]

[High St.]

[Carriage Ct. Dr.]

34

$\text{♩} = 132$   
[Brewer St.]

[Pent Rd.]

[High Ct.]

[illegible]

43. [Nassau Ln.]

♩ = 133 [Evans Av.]

♩ = 132 [Handel Rd.]

♩ = 134 [Woodycrest St.]

[Evans Av.]

[Handel Rd.]

[Evans Av.]

[Handel Ct.]

♩ = 142 [Canterbury St.]

[Norwich Ln.]

[Evans Av.]

[Suffolk Dr.]

[Maple St.]

51

[Maple St.]

[Maple St.]

53

[Clayton Rd.]

[Holly St.]

[Spaulding Cr.]

[Spaulding Cr.]

55

[Forbes St.]

[Forbes St.]

[Forbes St.]

♩ = 131

[Landers Rd.]

[May Rd.]

♩ = 132

[O'Connell Dr.]

[Heritage Ln.]

[Woodmont Dr.]

[Prospect St.]

[Long Hill Dr.]

♩ = 133

[Linwood Dr.]

[Montclair St.]

[Madison Rd.]

The musical score is for "The Streets of New York" by George Gershwin. It is a piano and voice piece in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into three systems, each containing a piano part (left) and a voice part (right).

**System 1 (Measures 63-64):**

- Piano Part:** Features a complex melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. It includes several measures of rests and is marked with "1.3", "5", "1.3", "13:14", "6", "13:12", "6", "14:13", "6", "14:15", "6", and "6".
- Voice Part:** Includes a vocal line with lyrics "[Wyllys St.]". It features a melodic phrase with notes marked "3.2", "3.2", "3", "1.2", "6", and "1.2".

**System 2 (Measures 64-65):**

- Piano Part:** Continues the complex melodic line with notes marked "15:14", "6", "14:15", "6", "15:14", "6", "16:15", "6", "16:17", "6", "16:17", "6", "15:16", "6", and "15:16".
- Voice Part:** Includes a vocal line with lyrics "[Lancaster St.]", "[Shelley Ln.]", and "[Harris St.]". It features a melodic phrase with notes marked "3.2", "3.2", "3", "1.3", "6", and "1.3".

**System 3 (Measures 65-66):**

- Piano Part:** Continues the complex melodic line with notes marked "15:16", "6", "15:16", "6", "16:15", "6", "17:19", "6", "17:15", "6", "8:7", "6", and "1.3".
- Voice Part:** Includes a vocal line with lyrics "[Griswold St.]", "[House St.]", "[Griswold St.]", "[Salem Ct.]", and "[Harris St.]". It features a melodic phrase with notes marked "1.2", "1.2", "6", "1.3", "5", "1.3", "3", "5", "1.5", and "1.3".

The score is written for a piano and voice, with the piano part featuring a complex melodic line and the voice part featuring a vocal line with lyrics. The tempo is marked as "♩ = 137".

67

$\text{♩} = 137$   
[Bantle Rd.]

69

$\text{♩} = 130$   
[Wrights Ln.]

71

$\text{♩} = 134$   
[Main St.]

$\text{♩} = 139$   
[Spring St.]

[Main St.]

[Main St.]

[Pratt St.]



73

75

♩ = 120  
[New London Tpk.]

[Welles St.]

[Naubuc Av.]

[Welles St.]