

Feldman the Rug-maker, Weaving *For John Cage*
By Meg Wilhoite

In an interview with Jan Williams, Morton Feldman described his fascination with ancient Middle Eastern patterned rugs:

“In older oriental rugs the dyes are made in small amounts and so what happens is that there is an imperfection throughout the rug of changing colors of these dyes. Most people feel that they are imperfections. Actually it is the refraction of the light on these small dye batches that makes the rugs wonderful. I interpreted this as going in and out of tune. There is a name for that in rugs - it's called *abrash* - a change of colors that leads us into pieces like *Instruments III* [1977] which was the beginning of my rug idea.”¹

There is an intimate connection between the rugs Feldman admired and many of the pieces he wrote in the last fifteen or so years of his life. These rugs set up an overall effect of sameness by systematically repeating a set of patterns, while at the same time disrupting this effect by slightly altering the components of those patterns. Similarly, Feldman wrote long works that produce a sense of skewed sameness by writing musical patterns that repeat many times, but change in intonation and/or rhythm almost imperceptibly.

I present here a picture of Feldman as meticulous rug-maker, as he wove together what pianist Siegfried Mauser referred to as “an image of discreetly arranged musical sound and form.”² Thinking of Feldman’s lengthy late works in terms of rug weaving provides us with a useful framework on which to hang both small and large-scale analyses of his music. Unlike much of the scholarship on Feldman’s late pieces, some of which focus on formal divisions (York, Hamman, Johnson), others of which employ descriptive analysis to demonstrate relationships between musical patterns (Ames, Hirata), my work employs an analytical approach that draws on Feldman’s own organizational methods to elucidate the intended static effect³ of his music.

This study is based on my work at the Paul Sacher Stiftung (in 2003 and 2008) in Basel, Switzerland, which houses a collection of Morton Feldman’s sketches, formerly stored in the London office of Feldman’s publisher Universal Edition. I spent three months total studying Feldman’s sketches for his later works—those written from around 1971 until his death in 1987—focusing on a type of labeling system that Feldman used to organize his sketch material. The labeling system presents an interesting picture of Feldman’s organizational methods, providing clues as to what types of musical material he considered as constituting a pattern, and also how he wove those patterns together by organizing them into distinct sets.

Judging from his sketches and manuscripts, it is clear that the visual aspect of the score is a significant aspect of Feldman’s later works.⁴ The presence of circled numbers (which usually

¹ Jan Williams, “An Interview with Morton Feldman,” *Percussive Notes* (1983): 4-14.

² Liner notes for *Morton Feldman: Palais de Mari*, Kairos 2003.

³ Feldman: “The degrees of stasis...were perhaps the most significant elements that I brought into my music from painting.” Feldman, “Crippled Symmetry,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 2 (Cambridge, MA, 1981): 103.

⁴ Other scholars have also noted the significance of the look of Feldman’s scores; see: Brett Boutwell, “Coordinating Morton Feldman's False Relationships,” *Mitteilungen der Paul Sacher Stiftung* 23 (April 2010): 39-42; Tom Hall, “Notational Image, Transformation and the Grid in the Late Music of Morton Feldman,” *Current Issues in Music* 1 (2007): 7-24; and Kurt Ozment, “Musical, Rhetorical, and Visual Material in the Work of Feldman,” *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 13, no. 3 (2011).

served the purpose of counting out a specific number of measures per system) bolsters this assertion. For example, the sketches for Feldman's 1982 work *Three Voices* are marked for nine measures per system, and, accordingly, the composer's manuscript contains nine-measure systems throughout.⁵ During my perusal of the sketches for the late pieces, I found that, more often than not, Feldman laid out his scores so as to contain a certain number of measures per system that would generally hold throughout the score. (Nine measures per system in the case of *For John Cage* (1982).)

A problem arises when publishers, instead of reproducing Feldman's original score, digitally engrave it without adhering to the number of measures per system found in the manuscript.⁶ Some of the engraved scores are not edited in a way that adheres to the precise number of measures per system that Feldman laid out in both his sketches and his manuscripts, and thereby do away with an aspect of the piece that was apparently important to him. It is clear from statements Feldman made⁷ that the sound as well as the score played an important role in his aesthetic.

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Other scholars have discussed Feldman's desire to create musical analogs of the rugs, such as Paula Kopstick Ames in her chapter on *Piano* (1977)⁸. Ames, a pianist who references interviews she conducted with Feldman in the early 1980s, writes that "Feldman's writing of *Piano* in 1977 coincided with a developing interest in the rugs of pre-twentieth century Turkey." She also notes the importance of the layout of Feldman's scores:

"Intrinsic to the compositional process of *Piano* is Feldman's use of individual systems from the autograph as compositional objects. Because the layout of the autograph directly contributed to Feldman's compositional methodology, I found it necessary to analyze *Piano* as it appears in the autograph."⁹

Ames' analytical approach is compelling in that her vocabulary draws directly from her conversations with Feldman; using his own terms, she describes and categorizes several features of *Piano*, many of which are found in Feldman's other late works.

Beyond Ames' chapter, three studies serve as springboard for my work, in that they explore how his music eschews narrative and development in pursuit of the immediate, surface pattern; i.e., the aural analog of the visual, the connection between Feldman's music and the aforementioned rugs. In the final chapter of her 2003 dissertation, which asserts that analysis is interpretation, Catherine Hirata expounds "the way in which the particular combination of reiteration and change contributes to the distinctive character of [Feldman's] patterns" by drawing a relationship between Feldman's music and the ancient rugs. Hirata states that the irregularities in the rugs' patterns led Feldman to use "irregular orderings of sounds," in that he matched the slight variations in color and pattern-design in the rugs with the slight variations

⁵ Hall relates a 1983 quote from Feldman (whose early pieces were often written as grids) regarding the uniformity of his scores: "I still use a grid. But now the grid encompasses conventional notation."

⁶ Hall goes into some detail on this point.

⁷ Feldman: "Though these patterns exist in rhythmic shapes articulated by instrumental sounds, they are also in part *notational images* that do not make a direct impact on the ear as we listen." "Crippled Symmetry": 97.

⁸ Paula Kopstick Ames, "Piano," in *The Music of Morton Feldman*, ed. Thomas DeLio (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 99-143.

⁹ Ames, *ibid.*, 102.

found in the timing and intonation of sounds, particularly in *For John Cage*.

Hirata's choice of vocabulary highlights Feldman's manipulation of musical patterns in terms of rug-making: "how he weaves them, and the effect of that weaving." She posits that Feldman considered his patterns as complete units, with no connection from one to the other necessary, that "whereas one pattern might be suddenly interrupted by the next, another might seem to slowly unravel before the next...[some patterns] may contrast in every respect but pitch."¹⁰

Catherine Laws' chapter on Feldman's opera *Neither* (with libretto by Samuel Beckett) also focuses on Feldman's use of patterns. As the composer related in one of his Darmstadt lectures, part of Beckett's writing process was to "write something in English, translate it into French, then translate the thought back into the English that conveys that thought."¹¹ Laws relates this statement to Feldman's compositional style, describing it as a "constant re-contextualization of sound."¹²

In her discussion of Feldman's setting of the Beckett text, Laws writes that: "For the composer, the text is a multi-dimensional object, exposing different facets of the same 'non-idea' while giving the impression of change." According to Laws, Feldman's purpose was to create music with "surface" definition, so as to capture the "direct experience of temporal existence...Feldman avoids the sense of development or eventfulness that would normally result from the introduction of new material"; change and reiteration may both be present, "but only to the minimal degree necessary for the continuation of the piece."

Both Hirata and Laws focus on the sense of stasis (or, "ritual stillness", as Alex Ross put it¹³) that Feldman creates with his minimally changing patterns, which do not seem to share any deep level connection with each other, nor give the sense of forward motion of which music is capable. The effect is such that Feldman's late compositions seem like static art works, in which time becomes irrelevant. Time markers like cadences or thematic shifts are absent (or at least imperceptible), and the experience becomes much like sitting in a gallery gazing at a work of art.¹⁴

Leslie Blasius explains this experience by differentiating between music as narrative and stylistic music. He writes that, "the intrusion of virtuosity into language resulted in a pure stylistics, one contrasting in total with narrative, account, argument, or any of the other manifestations of language...it [has] the phenomenal effect of *freezing* the temporality of language." Blasius relates a quote from Feldman about his compositional process: "there is no continuity of fitting the parts together as in a sentence or paragraph...A syntactic approach would be as out of place

¹⁰ Catherine Hirata, *Analyzing the Music of Morton Feldman*, Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2003.

¹¹ Morton Feldman, "Darmstadt-Lecture," in *Morton Feldman Essays*, ed. Walter Zimmerman (Kerpen: Beginner Press, 1985). In the 2009 publication cited in footnote 20, Laws writes that Feldman's understanding of Beckett's writing process here may not have been entirely accurate.

¹² Catherine Laws, "Morton Feldman's *Neither*: A Musical Translation of Beckett's Text" in *Samuel Beckett and Music*, ed. Mary Bryden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹³ Alex Ross, "American Sublime: Morton Feldman's mysterious musical landscapes," *The New Yorker* (June 19, 2006).

¹⁴ Ross: "[Feldman's] habit of presenting the same figure many times in succession invites you to hear music as a gallery visitor sees paintings; you can study the sound from various angles," *ibid*. Similarly, Kyle Gann relates listening to Feldman's music to the experience of looking at a painting in *Music Downtown: Writings from the Village Voice* (University of California Press, 2006).

here as Schoenberg felt a tonality not based on triadic harmony would be in his music.”¹⁵ Therefore, according to Blasius, “to think of something as purely stylistic is to imagine a sort of radical present, one in which any of the devices of ordering are rendered null.”¹⁶ The eschewal of music’s narrative capability¹⁷ is of course not unique to Feldman, but recognizing this facet of his compositional style highlights the need for a way of understanding it on its own terms.¹⁸ That is, the non-narrative temporality of Feldman’s music renders the rug-weaving metaphor meaningful for the purposes of analysis.

LABELS

Feldman used labels in his sketches to designate individual notes, chords, measures and systems, most often for their placement in the final score; he also labeled less clearly delineated portions of material, usually a collection of around three measures, at times with a circle drawn around them. Generally, Feldman used the labels to organize his sketch material into the order in which it appears in the finished score, though he occasionally also used the labels as shorthand. Notated material is labeled with, for example, a letter, and thereafter the repetition of the material is signified by that letter and not re-notated.

	Numbers	Letters	Roman Numerals
Beats within a measure	X		
Entrances of instruments	X		
Chords within a measure	X	X	X
Notes within a measure	X		X
Chords	X	X	X
Notes	X	X	
Measures	X	X	X
Groups of measures	X	X	X
Systems	X	X	X
Lists of instruments			X

Fig. 1. The different types of labels used by Feldman in his sketches for his late pieces, housed at the Paul Sacher Collection.

Above is a list of Feldman’s label types and how he used them to designate material in his sketches for the later pieces. The Xs in bold indicate in which situations Feldman most commonly used that particular label-type. Though Feldman used labels in a variety of ways, by far the most common is as a designation for measures and systems. Overall, Feldman used number labels most frequently in his sketches for his later pieces.¹⁹

¹⁵ Morton Feldman, “String Quartet II (1984),” *ibid.*

¹⁶ Leslie Blasius, “Late Feldman and the Remnants of Virtuosity,” *Perspectives of New Music* 42, no.1 (2004): 32-83.

¹⁷ As Boutwell points out, Feldman went so far as to write on a page of his musical sketches, “The artist has only one responsibility, *not* to communicate.”

¹⁸ Dora Hanninen argues “that certain distinctive qualities of [Feldman’s] music render it difficult to analyse with tools, methods, and practices developed in response to other repertoires.” Dora A. Hanninen, “Feldman, Analysis, Experience,” *twentieth-century music* 1, no. 2 (2004): 225-251.

¹⁹ Feldman also used labels in his earlier pieces; the earliest instance I found was in the sketch for a piece for horn and piano called “CW” (from the early 1950s, found on slide MF 459-0111, below the sketch for *Projection 4*), in which Feldman used circled numbers to count off the number of entrances of the horn. A similar use of circled numbers is found in the sketch for *The O’Hara Songs* (1962), in which Feldman counted off the number of entrances of the vocal line. There are instances in which Feldman labeled specific notes with numbers, often 1-12 or 0-11. In a sketch for *Triadic Memories* (1981), Feldman wrote

My analysis shows that Feldman’s use of labels involves connecting patterns and pattern-groups together in order to create the musical analog of Coptic rugs (i.e., rugs woven by the ethno-religious group in Egypt known as the Copts). We will see, for example, how Feldman labeled measure-long musical patterns, ordered them by using numbers to designate their position within the system, and subsequently the position of the system on the page. This labeling system is what I think of when I read Laws’ reference to Feldman’s “use of a range of apparently contradictory compositional processes, both systematic and intuitive.”²⁰ Feldman sat at the piano, sketched out short musical patterns, and then, using his labeling system, determined how he would weave the patterns together.²¹

RUGS



Fig. 2. A rug from Feldman’s collection, “Bergama rug” reproduced in Juan Manuel Bonet, ed. *Vertical Thoughts: Morton Feldman and the Visual Arts*. Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2010

the word “series” over a passage in which individual notes are labeled with a number between 1 and 6 (MF 459-0338). To date, I have not been able to discover that these numbered notes indicate the use of serial technique by Feldman, though I am not willing to rule the possibility out at present.

²⁰ Catherine Laws, “Feldman - Beckett - Johns: Patterning, Memory and Subjectivity,” in *The Modernist Legacy: Essays on New Music*, ed. Björn Heile (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2009): 135-158.

²¹ Feldman was fairly explicit about this in describing the compositional process for his piano work *Triadic Memories*: “One chord might be repeated three times, another, seven or eight--depending on how long I felt it should go on. Quite soon into a new chord I would forget the reiterated chord before it. I then reconstructed the entire section: rearranging its earlier progression and changing the number of times a particular chord was repeated. This way of working was a conscious attempt at ‘formalizing’ a disorientation of memory.” From “Crippled Symmetry” in *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, ed. B.H. Friedman (Cambridge: Exact Change, 2000).

At this point it will be helpful to look at one of the rugs from which Feldman drew inspiration. Figure 2 reproduces a picture of one of the rugs in Feldman’s private collection, called “Bergama rug”, originating in Turkey circa 1880.

Though the maker of this rug has apparently set out to make an overall symmetrical image comprised of multiple repeating patterns, certain details skew the symmetry. For example, notice the dark blue field on which the star-diamonds are laid. On the right-hand side the field is uniform, while on the left-hand side two small rectangles of a lighter color appear in between two of the middle diamonds, and again between two of the top diamonds (one of the diamonds being halved). Also note the variations in the hue of the “internal” diamonds—those found at the corners of the big diamonds in between the points of the stars. Here we begin to see the *abrash* that Feldman speaks of in his “Crippled Symmetry” essay:

“The color-scale of most nonurban rugs appears more extensive than it actually is, due to the great variation of shades of the same color (*abrash*) - a result of the yarn having been dyed in small quantities. As a composer, I respond to this most singular aspect affecting a rug’s coloration and its creation of a monochromatic overall hue. My music has been influenced mainly by the methods in which color is used on essentially simple devices. It has made me question the nature of musical material. What could be used to accommodate, by equally simple means, musical color? Patterns.”

This statement has ramifications for the interpretive use of these rugs in analyzing Feldman’s music; as Kurt Ozment put it, “Feldman sets up a parallel between *abrash* in rugs and patterns in music. The problem, perhaps, is that we expect Feldman’s patterns to be modeled on patterns in rugs, not on *abrash*.”²² My interpretation, like Ames’, varies slightly from Ozment’s.²³ I hear *abrash* as being the aural equivalent to Feldman’s use of enharmonic spellings, minute variations in the rhythm, and subtle changes to articulation. In addition to the parallel of *abrash*, we will also see in the analyses how Feldman repeated clusters of measures or figures throughout *For John Cage*, much like the way in which a particular figure is repeated throughout a rug.

Another connection to the rugs is the way in which Feldman made his sketches; he often sketched starting at the bottom of the page, working his way up to the top of the page. This is intriguing because the rugs in his collection were most likely woven on vertical looms, on which the rug is woven from the bottom to the top.

²² Kurt Ozment, *ibid.*

²³ “The rugs’ coloration finds its analogue in Feldman’s repetitions and variations. The latter include revoicings, chromatic alterations and reregistration.” Paula Kopstick Ames, *ibid.*



Fig. 3. Example of a rug being woven on a vertical loom. (<http://www.little-persia.com/?action=persian-rug-making>)

These parallels between Feldman's music and the rugs notwithstanding, it is important to acknowledge both the "systematic and the intuitive" aspects of Feldman's compositional process (as Laws put it). Thus, my approach explores Feldman's systematic use of labels in weaving patterns together, at the same time recognizing that how he composed those patterns and the inspiration he drew from the rugs during the process must have been largely intuitive.²⁴

FIRST ANALYSIS

In addition to the rugs in his own collection, Feldman wrote of his "avid interest in all varieties of arcane weaving of the Middle East," particularly the "stunning examples of early Coptic textiles" on permanent display at the Louvre.²⁵ Louis Goldstein gives a clear description of these rugs: "One sees the same patterns repeated throughout a space, and the impression is strong that the result is symmetrical. However, closer examination reveals...that an inverted candelabrum shape along the borders is repeated eighteen times on one side and nineteen times on the other, and further, the colors do not match up...patterns...look the same but are in fact composed of small variations among the details."²⁶

²⁴ Feldman was clear that, unlike many of his contemporaries, his late music was an exploration of sound, not the working out of an *a priori* system. Nonetheless, the labels appear in enough of the sketches for his late works that it is safe to say that the grid of the score, with its prescribed number of measures per system, existed as a type of framework into which the results of his sound exploration would be placed.

²⁵ Morton Feldman, "Coptic Light," *ibid.*

²⁶ Louis Goldstein, "Morton Feldman and the Shape of Time," in *Perspectives on American Music since 1950*, ed. James R. Heintze (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999).

865

874

883

Score 1. Morton Feldman „For John Cage|für Violine und Klavier“ © Copyright 1982 by Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London/UE 21240. 37:35 to 38:51 (mm. 865-884) of Marc Sabat/Stephen Clarke recording (Mode Records 82/83, 2000).

Sketch 1. My reproduction (using digital engraving and handwritten notes) of Feldman’s sketches, held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung. Bracketed measure numbers and clefs added by me.

We find an example of patterns that “look the same but are...composed of small variations” toward the end of Feldman’s *For John Cage*. Score 1 contains measures 872-884 of the published score; Sketch 1 presents my copy of a portion of Feldman’s sketches, whose material corresponds to mm. 872-884 (Sketch 1 should be read from the bottom of the page to the top; see discussion above). The piano part in mm. 872-883 of Score 1 contains a repeated alternation between B-flat and A-flat. A closer look reveals that the durations of these notes are altered subtly every two to four measures: two half notes played as an octuplet in 7/8; two dotted quarter notes played as a sextuplet in 5/8; two dotted quarter notes in 3/4; and two half notes in 2/2. I hear this as the aural equivalent to *abrash*: the notes (colors) are the same, but their durations (hue) are subtly different.

In Sketch 1 we see the circled number labeling the measure—in the case of the 7/8 and 5/8 measures, combining two measures into one—and simultaneously indicating the measure’s position within the system as seen in Score 1 (see my bracketed measure numbers in Sketch 1). These labels clearly designate each measure’s placement within the system, and provide clues about Feldman’s conception of what type of musical material constitutes a pattern.

First, we see that the individual chords contained in the first twelve measures at the bottom of Sketch 1 are placed together two per measure in mm. 872-877 of Score 1.

Ex. 1a

Ex. 1b

That is, Feldman sketched the individual chords and then later paired them off so that the piano pattern of B-flat moving down to A-flat is visually contained within a measure. Second, we see

that texture—here, the thin alternation between B-flat and A-flat in the piano, and the denser dyad in the violin, inching upward by semitones—defines the larger-scale pattern, as the texture both before and after mm. 872-884 differs significantly from this section.

Third, we see that Feldman moved the first two measures found in Ex. 1a (labeled by Feldman with circled numbers 8 and 9) to the last two measures (mm. 872-873) of the top system in Ex. 1b, thereby starting this new pattern at the end of a system instead of beginning a new system with it. Similarly, we also see that he moved the first measure of the top system of Sketch 1 (labeled with a circled 9) to the end of the second system on Score 1, using the final measure of the pattern to begin the third system; i.e., ending this pattern at the beginning of a new system. The visual effect is such that the relative straight-forwardness with which this pattern group is presented in the sketch is skewed by the shifting of the material on the finished score.

This instance of labels in Feldman’s sketches reveals that: 1) The measure is treated as the smallest pattern to be ordered, and 2) that this pattern is ordered so as to create nine-measure systems that obfuscate visually the organization of the pattern. The piano chord in m. 884 is found several times throughout *For John Cage*, and appears to be a stand-alone pattern that occurs at the beginning or ending of a larger pattern-group.²⁷

SECOND ANALYSIS

Score 2. Morton Feldman „For John Cage|für Violine und Klavier“ © Copyright 1982 by Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London/UE 21240. 31:44 to 34:43 (mm. 811-837) of Marc Sabat/Stephen Clarke recording (Mode Records 82/83, 2000).

²⁷ Boutwell states (see footnote 4) that Feldman first began using such recognizable, stand-alone chords—found in many of his later pieces—in his composition *False Relationships and the Extended Ending* (1968).

Sketch 2. My reproduction (using digital engraving and handwritten notes) of Feldman’s sketches, held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung. Bracketed measure numbers and clefs added by me.

Sketch 2 should be read like Sketch 1, from bottom to top. Here we find the letter label, which Feldman used to designate one to two measures’ worth of material, as well as for shorthand denoting the repetition of already labeled material; this is one of the few instances in the sketches in which Feldman simply writes a label to indicate the repetition of already notated material.

As you can see from my bracketed measure numbers on Sketch 2, mm. 811 through 819 and mm. 825 through 837 of Score 2 are represented. Measures 820 through 824 of Score 2, which are missing in Sketch 2, contain the exact repetition of previous material (mm. 766-770). This is one of many instances in *For John Cage* in which Feldman has inserted an exact repetition of earlier material later in the piece, with long stretches of different material heard in between. As discussed above this bears a resemblance to the way in which self-contained patterns (like the star-diamond in Ex. 1) are repeated on a larger-scale throughout the rugs.

Looking at each system separately on Sketch 2, we see that the letters indicate a palindrome: A-B-C-D-C-B-A in the bottom system, and A-B-C-D-E-D-C-B-A in the top system. Here again, the measure contains the smallest pattern with which the larger, palindromic patterns are woven together. Even in the instances in which a letter designates two measures (e.g., “A” in the bottom system of Sketch 2), these measures are subsequently combined to form the single-measure pattern directly following (e.g., “B” in the bottom system of Sketch 2).

Note that Sketch 2 presents the two palindromes in a straightforward manner: each palindrome occupies a single system. As in the case of the first analysis, however, we can see that Feldman has rendered the material less straightforward in Score 2 by inserting prior material between the two palindromes, and also by shifting the second palindrome’s entrance to the middle of the system. Here again we see a resemblance to the rug in Fig. 2; just as this shift disrupts the

symmetrical effect of the second palindrome, so the groups of two small rectangles mentioned above disrupt the symmetrical pattern of the rug.

The two palindromes are similar to each other. In each, the pitch material, as well as the level of repetition, gradually increases toward the middle of the palindrome, and then decreases to the end of the palindrome. Further, the pitch material itself is essentially the same between the two palindromes.

piano chords, mm. 813-815 and mm. 829-831

The top two notes of each chord in m. 813 are transposed down an octave as the bottom two notes of each chord in m. 829. The bottom notes of each chord in m. 813, D#-C and G-Db, become the top notes of each chord in m. 829 with a few slight alterations: the D# of m. 813 is changed to Gb in m. 829. The G-Db of the second chord in m. 813 is transposed up two octaves in m. 829.

Noteheads in parentheses indicate notes present in the sketch but not in the score.

The top four notes of both chords in m. 814 are transposed down an octave in m. 830, with the F# of m. 814 respelled as Gb in m. 830. The bottom two notes of the first chord in m. 814, Ab and D, are transposed up two octaves in m. 830, with the Ab respelled as G#. The bottom two notes of the second chord in m. 814 are transposed up two octaves in m. 830.

Noteheads in parentheses in m. 830 indicate sketch notes that were changed for the score.

The top four notes of both chords in m. 815 are transposed down an octave in m. 831, with the F# of m. 815 re-spelled as Gb in m. 831. The bottom four notes of both chords in m. 815 are transposed up an octave in m. 831.

Noteheads in parentheses indicate sketch notes that were changed for the score.

The violin line is transposed up two octaves—the G of the first palindrome replaced by the enharmonic A-double-flat—while the piano chords of mm. 813-814 and mm. 829-830 contain mostly the same pitch material, with the register of the two halves of each chord switched, and again with enharmonic changes.²⁸ Additionally, Feldman extends the second palindrome by four measures with the addition of the first and last two measures.

Following Sketch 2, we can describe Score 2 as comprising a palindrome, followed by the repetition of a prior pattern, followed by an extended and slightly altered version of the same palindrome. Here again we see Feldman as rug-maker, through the subtle alterations to a single pattern, and through the weaving together of larger pattern-groups.

How does this understanding of how Feldman organized his patterns affect our listening? Certainly no amount of study will result in a hierarchical listening of this piece. Nonetheless, being able to parse the score can attune one's hearing and make it easier to concentrate on the events at hand, in the case of these small sections, at least. The piece as a whole still eludes a focused listening; i.e., Feldman is still successful in eliminating any sense of the forward progression of time as the piece is performed. Rather, the knowledge of Feldman's specific use of pattern informs the metaphysical appreciation of these later works, both as sounding music

²⁸ Ames refers to this chordal variation technique as "crossover revoicing", *ibid.*, 115-116.

and visual art—it is impressive that something so structured can still both sound and look so unstructured.

CONCLUSION

Morton Feldman's later compositions present challenges to those wishing to gain insight into their inner workings. Their lengthy durations and the feeling of stasis produced by the repeating patterns serve to put the analyst looking at the score in the same state of mind as she finds herself when listening to the music: that of a pensive trance, in which objects for the mind to grasp slip in and out of reach.

Feldman's desire to explore the concept of scale in his music resulted in lengthy pieces such as *Neither* (1977), *Spring of Chosroes* (1979), *Triadic Memories* (1981), *Coptic Light* (1986), and *For John Cage* (1982), and the six-hour *String Quartet No. 2*. As Feldman writes, the "question of scale...the reciprocity inherent in scale...has made me realize that musical forms...are essentially only methods of arranging material and serve no other function than to aid one's memory."²⁹ In each of these pieces, Feldman explores the extended repetition of patterns over the course of (at least) an hour, eschewing any sense of progression within or between the patterns. As we have seen, the patterns themselves are composed of small musical figures that are reiterated and altered slightly.

Examining Feldman's sketches through the lens of rugs (and thereby of stasis and pattern) allows us to parse these large pieces of music in a way that taps into the composer's organizational process. We can appreciate just how intricately constructed and structured the late pieces are, though they do sound like through-composed improvisations of sorts. As Feldman left us with such a large number of sketches, my study is only the tip of the iceberg, and further analysis along these lines will surely help to reveal further organizational principles behind the late pieces.

²⁹ Morton Feldman, "Crippled Symmetry," *ibid.*