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An Introduction to Akira Yuyama and his Confections with a Discussion of Its Pedagogical Effectiveness

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AN INTRODUCTION TO AKIRA YUYAMA AND HIS CONFECTIONS WITH A DISCUSSION OF ITS PEDAGOGICAL EFFECTIVENESS

By

Dan Sato

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty of the University of Miami in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Coral Gables, Florida

May 2016
AN INTRODUCTION TO AKIRA YUYAMA AND HIS 
CONFECTIONS WITH A DISCUSSION OF ITS 
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Doctoral essay supervised by Professor Kevin Kenner.
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This thesis introduces Akira Yuyama, a prolific living composer of highest distinction for his contributions to, most notably, repertoire dedicated to performances by young musicians. Confections: A Piano Sweet is arguably his most creative opus and this thesis includes an analysis of the work for its musical content as well as its effectiveness in the pedagogical context. Yuyama’s Confections has been a best-seller for over four decades in Japan and is one of the most popular set of pieces assigned to young piano students. Despite its popularity and uniqueness as programmatic music about food, the composition nor its creator have been closely examined in academic spheres. This introduction will be the first detailed document devoted to the biographical information of Yuyama and analytical discussion of his work. Also included is the author’s commentary on the most fascinating facet of Confections, which is its use of food as the principal programmatic element, and the author discusses how that relationship may affect the performer’s interpretive decisions. A recommendation for further study is enclosed.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

In programmatic compositions, musical stimulation aims to connect the aural perceptions to other sensory modes, emotional states, and even elaborate scenarios (e.g. *Symphonie Fantastique* by Berlioz or any of Richard Strauss’ tone poems). However, it is very uncommon to find pieces that are designed to excite the sensations related to eating, or take food as their portrayed subject, among the extra-musical conditions. Among this rare musical genre exists *Confections: A Piano Sweet* by the Japanese composer, Akira Yuyama (b. 1932).¹ *Confections* is a collection of twenty-six works for solo piano comprised of an overture, twenty pieces named after confectionary, three intermezzi (illustrating effects of over-eating sweets), and a finale march, in which fragments of every movement reappear as a medley.

Yuyama is an award-winning, prolific composer of Japanese choral music, piano works, and methods for children. He was educated under Tomojiro Ikenouchi at the Tokyo University of the Fine Arts and, while a student, earned top prizes in the Music Competition of Japan in two consecutive years for his *Sonatine for Violin and Piano* (1953) and *String Quartet* (1954).² Although he composed art music, such as his *Two Movements for Six Solo Instruments in the Concerto Style* (1955), *Piano Sonata* (1955), and *Piano Trio* (1958), his career flourished through writing children’s songs aired on radio and television. His reputation as a successful composer for children eventually led to writing *Confections* in 1972. He was invited by the Zen-on Music Company to

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compose a series of character pieces based on sweets when his Confectionery on a Conveyor Belt was noticed for its immediate, rave responses from viewers after being featured on an educational program on national television. Confections were initially printed two movements at a time in the Zen-on Music Company’s monthly periodical and were ultimately published as a complete set in 1974. Since its first publication as a collection, the work has been through 142 reprints as of August 2015, which is an unusually high number for a piano work written by a Japanese composer. Although short and simple, the collection contains pieces of diverse challenges, as the composer states in its preface,

> These works are not necessarily meant only for children, but rather for both adults and children to play and listen to. If you look at their scores, you will find that children can play some of them easily, while others may be rather formidable even for adults. To let the instrument sing and chatter fully and freely… this is what I had in mind while composing them.  

With the exception of the finale, the length of each movement ranges from one to four pages and the pieces evoke their titles generally through these three ways: (1) portrayal of a stereotypical musical style that represents the dessert’s country of origin (e.g. an American, jazzy Doughnut or open-fifth and fourth sonorities of the Japanese Kaki-no-tane), (2) imitation of the texture and actions associated with the food (e.g. popping, staccato sounds for Popcorn and slurred, chromatic counterpoint in Nougat), and (3) use of consonances and dissonances that may be directly associated with the mood associated with a particular food item or physical condition (e.g. a gently flowing and joyful-sounding Birthday Cake as opposed to the biting dissonances of Decayed Teeth).

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3. Yuyama, Confections, 3.
Aside from a few works of chamber music, Yuyama’s music or his name has not been heard outside of the Japanese musical community with a kind of consistency on par with Tōru Takemitsu or Takashi Yoshimatsu. The lack of exposure is also due to the fact that a vast majority of his work is dedicated to children’s repertoire, which creates difficulties for performances to take place in professional contexts. Of these pieces, *Confections* represents a unique genre of music that is worth examining.

Searching for and identifying music about food is a challenge. There are examples in the vast repertoire that may refer to edible things (e.g. most movements of Camille Saint-Saëns’ *Le carnival des animaux* refer to edible creatures) or the act of eating or being eaten—for example, *Olim lacus colueram* (“I once swam in lakes”), from Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, is sung from the perspective of a roasted swan,⁴ or Albert Roussel’s ballet, *Le festin de l'araignée* (“The Spider’s Feast”) is about a spider’s preparation for its feast, who in turn is feasted on by a praying mantis.⁵

Maurice Hinson’s *Guide to the Pianist’s Repertoire*, arguably the most extensive survey of piano works, includes very few examples of food-related pieces.⁶ There are works to be found if one searches into obscurities and minor works: Gioachino Rossini’s Fourth Book of *Péchés de vieillesse* (“Sins of Old Age”);⁷ a collection of short piano pieces subtitled, *Quatre mendiants et quatre hors d'oeuvres* (“Four Mendiants and Four

---


⁵ Edward Blakeman, liner notes to *Roussel: Bacchus et Ariane / Le Festin de l'araignée*, BBC Philharmonic, conducted by Yan Pascal Tortelier, Chandos 9494, 1996, CD.


⁷ Ibid., 827.
Appetizers”), reflective of the composer’s epicurean appreciation; or Erik Satie’s *Valse du chocolat aux amandes* (“Waltz of Chocolate with Almonds”) from his suite for children, *Menus propos enfantins* (“Childish Small Talk”). There are several examples of simplistic beginner’s piano pieces that are food-related, but they will not be considered for this study as they primarily function as a pedagogical aid for learning how to read notes at the keyboard. Food-related titles were popular in ragtime piano music; as many as 149 titles are of this variety.

The most famous musical example outside of the piano repertoire is the second act of Tchaikovsky’s ballet, *The Nutcracker*, in which Clara and the Prince are entertained by the multi-cultural residents of the Land of Sweets, including Spanish Chocolate, Arabian Coffee, Chinese Tea, and the Sugar Plum Fairy.

At the current stage of research, the works listed above are the major representatives of food-themed music in the classical literature. When evaluating such repertoire, the ever-existent discussion of what music can express is a crucial starting point for understanding the gastronomic analogy. What can food mean in art, or how can

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8. Hinson, 850.

9. The relationships these pieces have with food are only distinguishable through their accompanying lyrics, which functions as an elementary guide to phrase inflection. For more information and samples of the sheet music, please refer to:


food-related concepts affect musical interpretation? William Deresiewicz wrote an opinion piece in the New York Times containing a strong statement regarding the similarities and differences between food and art:

But food, for all that, is not art. Both begin by addressing the senses, but that is where food stops. It is not narrative or representational, does not organize and express emotion. An apple is not a story, even if we can tell a story about it. A curry is not an idea, even if its creation is the result of one. Meals can evoke emotions, but only very roughly and generally, and only within a very limited range—comfort, delight, perhaps nostalgia, but not anger, say, or sorrow, or a thousand other things. Food is highly developed as a system of sensations, extremely crude as a system of symbols. Proust on the madeleine is art; the madeleine itself is not art.¹²

Conversely, while music or any other art form may not provide the same sensation or satisfaction as a meal, the feelings involved in preparing, consuming, and enjoying a meal could be employed as analogies in artistic discourse. In visual art, for example, food appears most commonly in still-life paintings and photography. Orford writes in her article, *Visual Art - Food as the Medium, Past and Present*, that still-life works can communicate messages beyond mere representation. Depending on the cultural context in which the art was produced or on the intention of the artist, food in paintings could speak in metaphors, whether it is the fragility and transient nature of life or commentary on wasteful opulence; therefore, the food becomes the message.¹³

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Research Questions and Purposes of the Study

1. Who is Akira Yuyama and what has he achieved in his musical career?

There are brief biographical mentions of Yuyama in English sources but they do not trace his career and educational background in depth. This essay includes a detailed sketch of Yuyama’s life and career that traces his musical lineage and progression of his compositional focuses.

2. What is Confections and what are its unique features?

The study introduces Confections in an academic context because there are no theses or dissertations devoted to this or any of the piano works by Yuyama. Despite its consistent popularity throughout four decades, the work has not been analyzed and introduced in a scholarly manner. Analyses of the movements examine the diverse musical styles found in this collection and salient attributes that are interpretively and pedagogically useful. In addition to traditional means of identifying unique harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic features, the study highlights Yuyama’s various strategies of linking the title subjects to their musical depictions.

3. What can one expect to learn or experience from playing Confections?

Lastly, this investigation of Confections highlights its usefulness in pedagogical settings. Among the countless possibilities in establishing connections between musical expression and extra-musical subjects, the use of metaphors and analogies can access a wealth of nuances already stored in the minds of students. The movements in Yuyama’s opus aim to elicit specific musical outcomes that can be described through a number of features associated with the confectionery, including their shapes, flavors, textures, etc.; therefore, students are required to access memories of multiple sensory modalities to
ultimately achieve a musical effect that would successfully demonstrate the corresponding features in sound.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

It must be noted that resources pertaining to Akira Yuyama and his compositions are very limited because there are no academic documents devoted to his career or his works. Due to such scarcity, this chapter is quantitatively disproportionate considering the principal purpose of this thesis (i.e. to introduce Akira Yuyama and his Confections) because supplemental materials used as references for the discussion of food-related music greatly outnumber the small amount of literature surrounding Yuyama.

Biographical Information on Akira Yuyama

Yuyama’s autobiography titled, Jinsei wa Rondo (“Life is a Rondo”), is the sole primary source of biographical information and anecdotes surrounding his compositional career. His collection of essays, Yuyama Akira no Poronēzu Mayonēzu (“Akira Yuyama’s Polonaise Mayonnaise”), offers supplemental insights but most of the pertinent data overlap with the materials in his memoir. The autobiography provides thorough details of Yuyama’s maturation process as a composer, as well as compositional inclinations and philosophies. All materials used from his autobiography and compilation of essays have been translated from Japanese to English by the author. Bonnie Wade’s Composing Japanese Modernity helps to contextualize Yuyama’s career in the history of modern Japanese classical music, particularly through her studies of the educational system that shaped the musical population of Japan. A dissertation on the career of Yuyama’s composition teacher, Tomojiro Ikenouchi, written by Ikenouchi’s


granddaughter, Kristina Reiko Cooper, has been additionally consulted to further understand Yuyama’s compositional lineage and language.

**Yuyama’s Confections**

As of August 2015, *Confections* has reached its 142nd reprint by Zen-on Publishing Company. *Confections* was revised once in 1994 with alterations in metronome markings by the composer. The revised edition also included new suggestions for fingerings and pedaling by pianist, Haruko Ueda, but there were no changes made to the music itself. The score is prefaced by introductory notes by the composer and also contains a practical guide written by Sumiko Inouchi that provides a few suggestions for interpreting each movement—both the foreword remarks and the practical suggestions are written in Japanese and in English Translation. Inouchi also altered the original ordering of the movements to improve the flow between pieces when it is performed in its entirety. From the revised edition, the suite is structured in this order: 17

**Overture: Confectionary on a Conveyor Belt**

I. *Chou à la crème*
II. *Baumkuchen*
III. *Kaki-no-Tane*
IV. A Shortcake
V. A Hot Cake

**Intermezzo 1: Decayed Teeth**

VI. Wafers (Lullaby)
VII. Drops
VIII. Chocolate Bar
IX. Birthday Cake
X. Cookies

17. The original edition is currently out of print and unobtainable for comparison.
Intermezzo 2: Getting Fatter

XI.  Nougat
XII. Softcream
XIII. Bonbon
XIV. Oni-Arare
XV.  Marrons glacés

Intermezzo 3: Gourmand

XVI. Confetti
XVII. Custard Pudding
XVIII. Pop Corn
XIX.  Chewing gum
XX.  Ama-Natto
XXI. Doughnut

Finale: Cake March

Inouchi’s commentary can function as a starting point for students to establish relationships between the music and the confections, but occasionally lacks details that would assist in forming such connections. The analysis portion of this thesis provides an extension for this section in Yuyama’s published score.

**Decoding and Interpreting Confections**

Although the analysis portion does not directly refer to these sources, the investigation of the musical contents has been conducted with the following ideas in mind: the gastronomic analogy, semiotics, and psychological and neuroscientific connections between taste and sound. The following resources are helpful in guiding the reader to contextualize the analytical content and possibly formulate his/her own interpretations while reading Chapter Five. These resources, individually or in combination, also may inspire further research on similar topics.
1. The Gastronomic Analogy

The first known verbal use of gastronomic analogies appeared in the discipline of architecture. The “gastronomic analogy” is a term linked to a lecture given by Scottish architect James Fergusson in 1862 that likened architecture to culinary culture by explaining that:

…the process by which a hut to shelter an image is refined into a temple, or a meeting house into a cathedral, is the same as that which refines a bold neck of mutton into côtelettes à l’Impériale or a grilled fowl into poulet à la Marengo…

So essentially is this the case that if you wish to acquire a knowledge of the true principles of design in architecture you will do better to study the works of Soyer or Mrs. Glass than any or all the writers on architecture from Vitruvius to Pugin.18

The chapter in Peter Collins’ Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture: 1750-1950 states that this is the first known use of the analogy. Collins also introduces Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin,19 who, in 1825, explained that to distinguish between a plain building from an architecturally refined edifice, the gastronomic analogy is most appropriate (more so than in any other forms of art or discipline) as they both pertain to necessities for survival (i.e. food and shelter) as opposed to luxuries. Furthermore, Brillat-Savarin stated that both gastronomy and architecture are partly science and partly art, going “far beyond the dictates of scientific analysis” and requiring “intuition, imagination, enthusiasm, and an immense amount of organizational skill,”20 referring to


the necessary knowledge and command of ingredient proportions and methods of
preparation.

In more recent times, the analogy appeared in the documentary of the Italian
architect Pier Carlo Bontempi, aptly titled *A Taste for the Past*.\(^{21}\) In the opening scene,
Bontempi laments about the state of modern architecture while serving dinner to his
guests:

> In Italy, there are 666 different types of Salami. Unfortunately, in architecture we
don’t have this. Buildings in Milan, Rome, Naples, I mean modern buildings are
all the same. It’s as if there was just one single type of salami. I’m peeling this
salami and I’m doing it in the traditional way, very carefully. I’m removing the
skin, it’s the pig’s intestines, because it has a film of mold. If you leave the mold
on, you’ll taste the mold and it will ruin the flavor of the salami. In Italy,
unfortunately, we don’t treat architecture the same way that we treat food. It is as
if we practice modern architecture by cutting straight into the salami without
properly peeling it.

The narrator explains that Bontempi’s reverence for local traditions and humanity shaped
his perspective as an architect and he feels that today’s buildings lack the warmth that
one would feel when enjoying a gathering around a traditional dinner table. Although this
is the only scene in which Bontempi references food in relation to architecture, it is
closely related to Fergusson’s concept of refined creation through experienced knowledge
of proportioning specific materials.

Neither sources mention it, but the concept of preparing and combining materials
and ingredients are vitally relevant to the work of a musician. Musicians likewise work
with “ingredients” (i.e. melodies and harmonies) and produce or interpret a piece through
their awareness of style and structural proportions.

\(^{21}\) *A Taste for the Past: Architect Pier Carlo Bontempi*, produced by Daniel Andries, aired March
2. Interpreting Confections through Descriptive Vocabulary

Vocabulary involved in the discussion of music and foodstuffs add another dimension to this study as words engage our aesthetic, emotional, and cultural judgment. While they are not the most sophisticated compositions, Confections requires hybrid thought processes of utilizing subjective perceptions of taste, sounds, and words (i.e. descriptors for the food) to formulate a personal understanding of the pieces to then evoke imagery or emotions through the physical act of piano playing. The ways in which food analogies translate to performance may differ from one pianist to another, but every interpreter is guided by the figurative language that is associated with each dessert.

To understand the origin, usage, and effects of analogies in language, it is helpful to be acquainted with concepts related to semiotics, or the study of signs and meaning. Surfaces and Essences: Analogy as the Fuel and Fire of Thinking by Douglas Hofstadter and Emanuel Sander, is a work that posits the premise that analogies are the basis for the complex networking of human thought. The book includes significantly detailed discussions on how words and phrases correspond to subjectively developed perceptions and understanding of the surrounding world. Since Confections allows its interpreters to arrive at unique conclusions of how the music communicates an extra-musical theme, it is important to first comprehend the nature of analogies in the creative process.

In other words, there is a cyclical process of identification, codification, realization, and evaluation when performing Confections: the interpreter first selects the most suitable descriptive vocabulary that best expresses the music (as dictated by the

score and based on his/her sensibilities), which then triggers the process of finding the
most appropriate pianistic means of expressing those words; the pianist would then assess
the resulting sounds to ascertain the accuracy with which the ideals were portrayed.

Semiotics is a many-branched field of study, that includes (but not limited to)
semantics, logic, rhetoric, hermeneutics, linguistics, aesthetics, poetics, non-verbal
communication, epistemology, biology, and music.23 In the chapter titled, “Music” in
Winfried Nöth’s *Handbook of Semiotics*, Nöth includes a subsection of compiled
information on musical reference and exosemantic content.24 The term *exosemantic
content* refers to the entities and concepts that exist beyond the context of the music, and
their major categories are: (1) sound events—mostly onomatopoetic representations of
extra-musical acoustic events, (2) emotions evoked within the hearer through
communicative gestures or patterns found in music, (3) synaesthetic and associative
contents—a hearer’s concomitantly perceived impressions in other sensory modes, as
well as word associations derived from reactions to the music, and (4) musical meanings
*sui generis*—meaning that lies in the domain of inexpressibility and understanding
without concepts.25 The first two can be considered parallels of musical gestures found in
*Confections*, in which the audible textures of the food are musically mimicked or the
music exudes a specific mood tied to the subject matter.

In one of the seminal writings on music aesthetics, Leonard Meyer’s *Emotion and
Meaning in Music* contains a chapter entitled, “Note on Image Processes, Connotations,

25. Ibid., 432.
This chapter can be consulted as an aid to defining the communicative capacity of *Confections*. Meyer discusses here about affective responses and connotations.

3. **The Psychological Interplay of Food and Music**

How are mental connections being made between the programmatic subject and the musical material? Empirical data provides reinforcements and evidence to support the philosophical claims. Diverse studies on the effects of food and music on the human psyche have been conducted, separately and jointly. Of such studies, Mesz, Trevisan, and Sigman’s experiment discovered unique insights on the perceptive relationships of words and their musical representations. The test required professional musicians to improvise on two groups of target words: the first four were taste names (salty, sweet, sour, and bitter) and the other four were typical musical, expressive indications (*deciso*, *dolente*, *feroce*, and *delicato*), and improvisations were categorized into three modalities: (1) monophonic melody, (2) chords, and (3) free improvisations without restrictions. The improvisations were conducted on a MIDI keyboard connected to the MIDI Toolbox, which was the software used to analyze the contents of the improvisation. The resulting


twenty-four improvisations were mapped by six musical dimensions: (1) average pitch; (2) average duration; (3) articulation; (4) loudness; (5) gradus suavitatis (the degree of consonance determined through mathematical computation); and (6) dissonance. The expressive markings were used as control words as they elicited expected and predictable patterns because they “reflect the musical contexts in which musicians use to encounter these words, and also because of their affective and sensorial connotations.”

Food words showed higher variance in responses, but this was also expected by the researchers because taste words do not have commonly associated musical representations, except “sweet” because dolce is an indication often found in scores. The recorded improvisations were then employed in another experiment: fifty-seven non-musical participants listened to twelve of the recordings and were required to conversely match the music with the taste words. Although the researchers remain speculative of the causes, resulting percentages showed that the matches were significantly above chance, showing the possibility that there are intuitively perceivable connections between taste words and musical expressions.

Multiple studies conducted by Charles Spence, Anne-Sylvie Crisinel, Adrian North, among others, offer additional findings of influential interactivity of tasted and

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29. From the Midi Toolbox website: The MIDI Toolbox is a compilation of functions for analyzing and visualizing MIDI files in the Matlab computing environment. Besides simple manipulation and filtering functions, the toolbox contains cognitively inspired analytic techniques that are suitable for context-dependent musical analysis that deal with such topics as melodic contour, similarity, key-finding, meter-finding and segmentation.

heard stimuli. The results of their multi-sensory research show basic associations and influential effects of music on perceived taste. For example, experiments have shown that different types of background music may alter the descriptive results of a wine-tasting; or studies have confirmed that people associate timbre and pitch with particular adjectives relating to taste. Although the discoveries are intriguing, psychologists have not pinpointed the exact mechanism of the cross-modal cognition.

Shinichi Furuya’s *Pianisuto no Nou wo Kagaku suru: Chouzetsugikou no mekanizumu* (“Science of the Pianist’s Brain: The Mechanism of Transcendental Technique”) is an aid in understanding the effects of verbal vocabulary in actual performance. Furuya’s research at Institute for Music Physiology and Musicians’ Medicine in Hannover University of Music and Drama dealt with the neuroscientific and physiological relationship of pianists and their instruments. The summaries of his research offers introductory information on the scientific findings related to how thoughts (specifically neuroactivity) manifest in actual playing (i.e. realizing interpretation) and the defined functions of the brain can be compared with the previously mentioned philosophical perspectives on digesting musical meaning.

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CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

A major portion of this study requires collection and organization of information and articles to satisfy the first and third purposes-of-study listed at the end of Chapter One. Biographical information from Yuyama’s childhood until his years surrounding the composition of *Confections* has been translated from his autobiography by the author. The biographical sketch will also incorporate information on his mentor and composition professor, Tomojiro Ikenouchi and historical studies of Japanese classical music in the twentieth century to contextualize Yuyama’s career among his contemporaries.

Fulfillment of the second and third purposes of study have been achieved through an analysis of the score to examine each movement for salient features in regards to their harmony, rhythm, structure, and texture. Every piece has been studied to identify the musical aspects that are supposedly representative of its title subject. Since analyses of musical works about any type of food are currently non-existent, there was a special challenge in attempting to understand the communicative potentials and aesthetic values of *Confections*. Multiple facets such as historical background, familiarity with the subject matter, observations of physical gesture, awareness of various musical styles, etc., were considered to construct an informed interpretation of the movements in *Confections*.

The process of finding the interrelationships have supported the usefulness of employing analogies as a tool for understanding, interpreting, and teaching music. Specifically, the gastronomic analogies have shown to be effective tools in capturing certain musical nuances that are otherwise difficult to convey through other terms.
Details to Akira Yuyama’s compositional career have not been discussed in scholarly documents with the exception of Kristina Reiko Cooper’s dissertation, “Tomojiro Ikenouchi and his influences.” Cooper’s work includes a five-page segment devoted to highlights of Yuyama’s biographical information obtained through live interviews and correspondences. Apart from this segment, his name appears in passing, mostly in the context of percussion literature in which he is credited for composing the Divertimento for Marimba and Alto Saxophone for Japanese percussionist Keiko Abe.

The biographical sketch in this thesis will be based upon the author’s translation of Yuyama’s autobiography in Japanese, Jinsei wa Rondo (“Life is a Rondo”), and will chronicle his life events from his birth in 1932 until the 1970’s when he began publishing the major bulk of his piano compositions. Some of the information will inevitably overlap with Cooper’s materials but the content will be substantially expanded upon. Cooper’s dissertation provides insight regarding Yuyama’s only composition teacher, which expounds his primary stylistic influence. Lastly, Yuyama’s autobiography is written in a conversational tone that vividly portrays his emotional response to many of his anecdotal accounts. The author has deemed it important to retain this tone in order to


enhance one’s understanding of the composer’s personality and compositional aesthetics. Unless specified otherwise, all information from this chapter is derived from the autobiography.

**Early Life**

Yuyama was born on September 9th, 1932, in the city of Hiratsuka, approximately sixty kilometers southwest of Tokyo. His earliest childhood years were spent with his mother and grandfather, and his first memory of any event was of his father’s funeral when Yuyama was a little over two years old. The early 1930’s were a turbulent era in Japan as the country plunged into the Second Sino-Japanese War and eventually World War II against the Allied Forces. Although not born into a professionally artistic family, he showed an inclination towards music as he was taught to read. Instead of plainly reading the words, he would invent melodies and rhythms to accompany words in newspaper articles that amused and delighted his family —especially his grandfather who was an accomplished amateur in the art of *gidayū* chanting.39 As the city of Hiratsuka was relatively less metropolitan, his interactions with nature were constant and intimate, and such times were greatly influential on his sensibilities, as one may observe in his choice of poetry for vocal compositions. Although not extensive, he was exposed to various genres of music, domestic and international, through a phonograph on which he listened to records of popular and traditional Japanese music and an anthology of international folk melodies.

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The only instruments he owned as a child were a harmonica and a toy xylophone and he desperately wanted others, upon which he would longingly gaze through music store windows. By the age of ten, his grandfather who deeply cared for Yuyama accidentally fell off of a train and passed away, leaving him in the sole care of his mother. After school, he played with neighborhood children but would routinely be left by himself when his friends would go home to have their snacks. During his childhood, a word such as “snack time” did not exist; it was a word infused with the sensation of envy and loneliness, with which he managed eventually to cope when he composed “Snack-time” for his collection of piano pieces, *Children’s World*. He spent many hours as the sun set sitting and waiting alone for his mother to return from work. He recalls that his curiosities extended to many things through the reading of children’s magazines, and his imaginative mind grew continuously, especially as material life in wartime Japan was far from satisfactory.

His musical education was initiated in the form of piano lessons even though he strongly desired singing lessons. He and his mother were convinced by the teacher that keyboard skills were essential to musical training and that vocal changes in puberty would present too many difficulties. Yuyama did not own a piano, but the teacher asked if they owned a “Beyer,” to which his mother enthusiastically replied yes. Yuyama was thrilled as he assumed that a “Beyer” was an instrument and was therefore excited to begin his lessons. However, what his teacher meant was a Beyer keyboard method book that comes with a fold-out paper keyboard on which one would silently practice finger
patterns. The soundless practicing, as expected of any child, was incredibly dull and tedious until the day he played a duet for the first time with his teacher. His single-note melody coming to life through his teacher’s accompaniment was a major moment in his first acquaintance with the piano’s timbres. He loved his lessons and walked two kilometers to his teacher’s house, regardless of the weather. The societal mindset of his generation also posed some opposition to his study of a Western musical instrument primarily taken up by girls. In the worst case, this was considered a sign of traitorous behavior to the country. As World War II escalated and his compulsory education became a priority (to proceed to a middle school of higher standards and prestige), he was forced to quit his piano lessons. He later imagined that he could have become a professional pianist had he owned an instrument during his formative years.

Upon successful enrollment at Shounan Intermediate School, he joined the marching band as a trombonist so that he could stand at the very front of the ensemble during parades. That year was 1945 and the war was nearing its end. Before Japan’s declaration of defeat on August 15th, Yuyama and his mother barely survived a firebombing raid over Hiratsuka where American intelligence had discovered secret barracks on the campus of a local agricultural high school. Their house fortunately stood undamaged, but life became difficult more than ever under the post-war occupation by the United States.


41. The trombonists at his school were placed in the front of the procession to avoid any accidents involving slides hitting the musician in front of them.
Post-War Struggles and High School Years

One of the paramount challenges of survival was related to finding food. Yuyama vividly recalls in his memoirs the common struggles among the Japanese people, such as his mother trading in her valuable kimonos for rice or adults fighting over half-eaten ration packets on the street that had been carelessly discarded by American soldiers. The most memorable episode was when he and his mother took apart their sleeping pillows that were filled with dried beans and planted them in their yard in desperate attempt to survive, which thankfully yielded a modest harvest of bean sprouts.

Although he kept playing the trombone at school, he wanted an instrument of his own, so he pawned a set of Mahjong tiles procured by his late father in Shanghai and used the money to buy a cheap violin. He began lessons on it before high school and developed enough proficiency to minor in violin performance during his university years, which later helped him to write effective works for the instrument (e.g. his award-winning Sonatine for Violin and Piano). Despite his forays into other instruments, his first and foremost love was for the piano. The hurdle, however, was securing one on which to practice. He joined his high school choir club as their accompanist in order to gain access to the only piano on campus. Much to his dismay, the upperclassmen saw that he had some talent in conducting, so he was elected to lead the ensemble instead, which meant that he could not play until after rehearsals. Then there was the additional struggle of being the first one of his classmates to use the piano. His main competition, only named “Y” in his memoirs, had a more fortunate musical upbringing. Y was already taking composition lessons and was writing works for the choir following proper rules of counterpoint and voice-leading, whereas Yuyama was at this point completely clueless in
all matters concerning music theory. Y also lived considerably closer to school and
owned a pump organ and yet had no intention of sharing the piano for practicing. Y
especially made sure to take up all the available time by dutifully following all repeat
signs and *da capo* indications whenever he practiced works that included such markings.
As a conductor, Yuyama was sponsored by the club to attend several sessions of a
seminar held in Tokyo taught by Kunihiko Masuyama, who was the President of the
Japan Choral Association (Kantou Region Chapter).

By the time he commenced his senior year of high school, most of his classmates
had chosen their universities and major fields of study. His advisor assumed that Yuyama
was set on applying to Tokyo University because he excelled in mathematics and science,
but his musical interests occupied a substantial portion of his time, thereby leaving him in
a dilemma of how to proceed. The music teacher, Mr. Kaburagi (first name not indicated
or found), became his new mentor and requested Yuyama’s mother to attend the school’s
festival where Yuyama conducted the choir in a performance of his own composition.
After the performance, Kaburagi invited Yuyama’s mother to discuss matters regarding
her son’s future while Yuyama waited outside for what seemed like a considerable length
of time. Even after the meeting ended, his mother did not mention a word about the
conversation until they arrived at home an hour-and-a-half later. She finally explained
over dinner that Kaburagi had adamantly advised her to support her son to pursue his
musical studies and a career in music. She was extremely concerned and doubtful about
such a decision as they did not own a piano, nor could her school-teacher salary possibly
provide for such a costly and unreliable path. Kaburagi insisted that he would not end the
discussion until she was convinced, and his deal-clinching argument was the experience
of his own son. His son, Hajime Kaburagi (1926-), was accepted to Tokyo University of Fine Arts as a composition student without access to a piano (it had burned together with their house in the Great Yokohama Air Raid). Kaburagi stated that all Yuyama needed was staff paper, pencils, and a will to work hard. Yuyama’s mother certainly recognized that the circumstances of these two boys were considerably different as Hajime came from a musical household, but she conceded to her son’s application to the university as long as the attempt was limited to only once.

Preparations for the Entrance Exam

In preparation for the entrance exam at the University of Fine Arts, Kaburagi referred Yuyama to Sadako Shimizu for piano and Tomojirou Ikenouchi for composition lessons. Ikenouchi was the composition professor of Kaburagi’s son at the University so Hajime Kaburagi wrote a letter of introduction, and it was decided that both Yuyama and Y would study with Ikenouchi until the exam. Tomojirō Ikenouchi (1906-1991) was the first Japanese person to receive musical training in France. He studied with Henri Büsser (1872-1973) and Paul Fauchet (1881-1937) and was appointed Professor of Composition at Nihon University in 1936 and subsequently at Tokyo University of Fine Arts in 1940.42

While the piano teacher lived in Hiratsuka, Ikenouchi resided in Tokyo, which was a two-and-a-half hour commute by train, bus, and on foot. On first meeting Ikenouchi, Yuyama and Y were intimidated by the aura of authority emanating from one of the most influential composition teachers in Japan at that time. They were accepted as

42. Cooper, 11-18.
pupils, but since Kaburagi never mentioned what the tuition would cost, they both paled in learning that the rate for one lesson was two-thousand yen per person.\footnote{¥2000 is roughly equal to $150 according to current exchange and adjusted inflation rates. “What was the worth of ¥10,000 in 1965?” Bank of Japan, accessed March 6, 2016, https://www.boj.or.jp/announcements/education/oshiete/history/j12.htm/.} Yuyama initially lost all hope as the fee was one-fourth of his mother’s monthly salary, and he could not muster the confidence to ask her for such a sacrifice over what seemed like a total gamble. Fortunately, Ikenouchi noticed their reactions, and accommodated the two boys who visibly lacked financial resources, suggesting they split the fee and take the lessons together.

For textbooks, they hand-copied Ikenouchi’s *Waseihoukougi* (“Lecture in Harmony,” which was then in the process of publication) instead of the costly standard text of the time by Theodore Dubois. As he was the son of prolific poet Kyoshi Takahama, Ikenouchi’s masterful command of language in the most esoteric and complex fashion immensly challenged and confused Yuyama even in the simplest topics of music theory. Actual lessons began only after many days of devoted effort to copying the text. Thereafter came another source of frustration that shattered his confidence in the prospect of becoming a composer. At the shared one-hour lessons, Y would receive attention for fifty minutes while Yuyama was only given the remaining ten. This was because Y already possessed a background of theoretical knowledge, whereas Yuyama worked on his assignments without any clue of the rules of harmony, further complicated by the difficult textbook. In later years, Ikenouchi gave a speech at a party celebrating the publication of Yuyama’s music saying that he “usually has a good eye for discovering great potential in students but was utterly incapable of noticing any hint of Yuyama’s
talent.” Ikenouchi apparently thought, for the first year and a half, that Yuyama’s acceptance into the university was a fluke.

Lessons began in June, and until November Yuyama remembers his deep depression as his mother’s savings dwindled. He barely received attention at his lessons despite the five-hour commute and did not have a piano to practice on. One day after his lesson, Yuyama happened to be by himself on the returning train ride, so he spent the hours in contemplation of his future, or the seeming lack thereof, and even considered suicide. Instead of getting on his usual train, he decided to transfer to another line in order to visit Lake Sagami where he might calm his thoughts. Yuyama had just read about Lake Sagami in the newspaper as a manmade lake built for the purpose of supplying water to the city of Yokohama, but Yuyama had misinterpreted this information and thought that it was a dam for a hydroelectric power plant. This assumption became a fortunate turning point for Yuyama’s understanding of harmony. He ultimately never visited the lake, but his imagination of the lake and the power plant suddenly inspired him to link the phenomena of harmonic progressions to the hydroelectric conversion process. He imagined the calm, stored water in the lake as representing the tonic harmony which, when released, would flow into the power plant. The consequent transitory motion then stood for the subdominant sound. When the flow of water would move the turbines, the generated energy functioned similarly to the tension felt in the dominant harmony. Finally, he imagined the water returning to the lake after fulfilling its purpose, resembling the release of tension and return to the placidity of the tonic harmony.

This revelatory metaphor finally demystified the concepts that were otherwise incomprehensible through Ikenouchi’s erudite prose, and he was glad to find identical
features between his teacher’s explanations and his personally discovered interpretation. After his understanding was formed, he stunned Ikenouchi during the last ten minutes of his lesson when he presented his completed assignment. Ikenouchi assigned tasks from various French sources with which he had returned from his study abroad, including exercise collections by Auguste Chapuis (1858-1933), Henri Challan (1910-1977), Jean and Noël Gallon (1878-1959 and 1891-1966, respectively), and Paul Fauchet. Ikenouchi often told his pupils: “The only things I can teach are harmony, counterpoint, and fugal writing, and if you are not able to compose with that knowledge, it indicates an absence of talent and you should consider transferring professions.”

As for his piano playing, he steadily prepared under the guidance of Shimizu but was also referred to Shimizu’s former professor at the University of Fine Arts who, like Ikenouchi, also lived in Tokyo. This meant that an additional five-hour commute was necessary during the week because schedule conflicts between his teachers did not allow him to take both lessons on the same day. Without a piano at home, he practiced on instruments at wealthier families’ homes, as well as the piano at the elementary school where his mother taught, and also the instrument at the Hiratsuka School of the Blind. He prepared Mozart’s *Piano Sonata in B-flat major*, K. 333, which he played successfully at this entrance examination.

The entrance exam consisted of three stages. The first part included tests on dictation, harmony, keyboard skills (with prepared repertoire and sightreading), and singing from the *Chorübungen*. The second was broken into two parts and was devoted to compositional tasks—the test in the morning requiring auditionees to compose an instrumental work based on two measures of a given theme, and the afternoon portion
which involved composing a solo vocal work with accompaniment (any instrumentation was permitted) using the text of an assigned poem. The final round was an interview at which Yuyama remembers being asked, among other things, about his family and whether or not he owned a piano.

A few days later, the results were announced on the school’s grounds where the accepted applicants’ identification numbers were displayed on a banner tied between two trees, and among them was Yuyama’s number 3. As indicated by Akira Nishimura in his correspondence with Bonnie Wade, being accepted to this university was a feat in itself. Nishimura mentioned that there were students who attempted the entrance exam for five years before being finally accepted. The prestige of the institution motivated such aspiring Japanese musicians to be a part of the highest level of musical education.44

The University Years

Not owning a piano, Yuyama once again had to scavenge for open practice rooms or borrow someone’s instrument at their house. Finding an open instrument was the source of fierce competition among many music students of the time. This inconvenience allowed him to develop the skill of audiation, which greatly benefitted him in coming years. Yuyama’s course load was relatively heavy as he was enrolled as a composition student playing the piano and violin as principal instruments, while also fulfilling his teaching certification requirements. In addition to Ikenouchi’s rigorous pedagogy, Yuyama was equally stimulated by a roster of colleagues who later became accomplished, celebrated figures, including such names as Minoru Miki (1930-2011),

44. Wade, 25.
Hikaru Hayashi (1931-2012), Michio Kobayashi (1933-), Norihiko Wada (1932-), and Akira Miyoshi (1933-2013). It was an eye-opening environment for him to also hear the music of Bartók, Prokofiev, and Khatchaturian for the very first time and occasionally hear music from the United States that was broadcasted for the occupying military forces. Halfway into the second year, Ikenouchi administered an exam to his students in the style of the Paris Conservatoire. It was a written test involving the harmonization of a given melody and the realization of a given bass line. The high level of audiation and understanding of harmonic functions (cultivated by his exposure to various types of music at school) helped him earn the highest marks. Henceforth, Ikenouchi became very fond of teaching Yuyama and showed favoritism towards him, which, in turn, spawned envy from other students. Yuyama was often invited for meals, and Ikenouchi would give him concert tickets sent out by various venues where Ikenouchi, an eminent musical authority, was the honored guest.

Yuyama eventually mortgaged his mother’s house in order to buy a piano. Obtaining the piano at last opened the floodgates of compositional ideas. His Opus 1, titled *For Children*, was a collection of six songs and was composed in a span of ten days. The text was by Chitose Shimizu, a poet and the mother of a younger composition student. This opus was published by the Kawai Publishing Company as part of an anthology of contemporary song repertoire compiled by Ryousuke Hatakenaka, a voice professor at the University who remembered the premiere performance. Hatakenaka commented:

> Whenever I hear Akira Yuyama’s *For Children*, I am reminded of the words in Saint-Exupery’s *Le Petit Prince*, ‘All grown-ups were once children… but only
few of them remember it.’ The music inspires me to hear these sentiments like a basso ostinato accompanying the songs.

After completing his songs, he employed his knowledge of violin playing to compose his *Sonatine for Violin and Piano*—a work inspired stylistically by Ravel’s *Sonatine for Piano*. Until this work, Yuyama only worked on harmony assignments and other compositional etudes with Ikenouchi, so it was the first piece he independently composed and presented to his teacher. At Yuyama’s lesson, Ikenouchi silently examined the score without playing and commented that it was well written. He did not make corrections but advised Yuyama to make a slight alteration in the end of the third movement. He further suggested that he should send this to the Mainichi Music Competition to see how it would fare. To this present day, the Mainichi Music Competition is one of the most prestigious events of its kind in Japan. Yuyama’s work shared the top prize that year with Akira Miyoshi’s *Sonata for Clarinet, Bassoon, and Piano*. The results were broadcast nationally and the works were aired on the radio program, “Music of Contemporary Japan,” an achievement marking his official professional debut.

In his senior year at the University, Yuyama attempted the competition again with a newly composed *String Quartet* that Ikenouchi was convinced would win the first prize. The result was second place due to an accident that occurred at the final round performance. In one of the movements, the violist lost his place and did not play for a while, spoiling the overall impression of the work. Despite the disappointing result, he became a celebrity among his peers for composing award-winning works for two

45. “History of the Competition,” The Music Competition of Japan official website, accessed March 5, 2016,
consecutive years as a student. Concurrently with the *String Quartet*, he completed his graduation piece, *Two Movements in Concerto Style for Six Solo Instruments* (flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and piano).

**Shinshinkai**

His first major composition for piano was written soon after his graduation for the inaugural concert of the *Shinshinkai*—a society of composers formed in 1955 consisting of Ikenouchi’s pupils. Ikenouchi requested Yuyama to create a piano sonata to be played by pianist Kazuko Yasukawa (1922-1996), who was already then an influential figure in the musical community. The first half of the concert program included Naohiko Terashima’s (1930-2004) set of art songs titled *Forgotten Autumn* and Akira Miyoshi’s *Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano*. After the intermission, the concert continued with the *Sonata for Flute and Piano* by Sadao Bekku (1922-2012), followed by Ikenouchi’s *Sonatine for Piano and String Quartet*, and closed with Yuyama’s *Piano Sonata*. Reviewers of the concert noticed the overall shift in trend “from pre-war Germanicism to the French sounds rooted in the Paris Conservatoire.” An anonymous critic was complimentary to Yuyama and his *Sonata* saying that, ,

[Of the five presented compositions,] Yuyama’s *Piano Sonata* was the richest in musicality. He skillfully adopted Japanese folk idioms into the construction of sonata form. However, the pursuit of traditional structure was too strongly in the foreground so should he further pursue his uniqueness, his career would be very promising.

As his output grew, he discovered the importance of precisely indicating his desired articulations on the scores of his pieces. He initially tended to write articulation

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46. Cooper, 22-23.
markings very sparingly but found that interpreters often misunderstood the intended
effect or played non-descriptively, so if he revised a work, it was to improve on the
specificity of the articulations. Another aspect that Yuyama continually strove to improve
upon was the process of discarding gratuitous material, to compose music with minimal
notes. Striving for refinement upheld Ikenouchi’s aesthetic principle of creating
“beautiful scenery” on manuscript paper, and Ikenouchi often cited the exquisitely
balanced orchestrations of Ravel and compositions by Mozart as models.

Progression of Yuyama’s Professional Career (1955-1966)

The repeated triumphs in competitions and performances did not immediately
translate to long-term successes for Yuyama. He was married before graduating in 1955
and lived in Hiratsuka. He supported himself and his wife, who was still then a
composition student at the Kunitachi College of Music, by teaching piano to about twenty
children and writing music for very occasional commissions. The widely broadcast news
of his competition awards brought him some jobs as a composer, such as composing alma
maters for intermediate schools and incidental music for radio dramas. Living in an area
removed from Tokyo (the center of cultural activity) without a telephone put him at a
great disadvantage, in comparison to his former classmates who were already being
frequently featured on radio and television programs.

His work with the radio programs allowed him to become acquainted with one of
the directors of King Records, a meeting with whom consequently took his career to the
next stage. The director (named only as Mr. N) casually invited Yuyama to King Records
without any intention of employing him, but Yuyama took this pleasantry to heart and
visited their offices, a few songs in hand that he had composed to children’s poetry.
Accompanying himself at the piano, he sang these pieces for Mr. N, and this caught the ears of another director, Gyōji Osada, who happened to pass by and also listen to some of the songs. Seeing that Mr. N never invited Yuyama for any further projects, Osada took advantage of the situation and sent a telegram to Yuyama indicating his interest in hiring him. Yuyama was asked to compose and record a song for a physical education convention that would be used to accompany a dance routine. His *Hana-Odori* (“Flower Dance”) written for this occasion became his first recorded work.

Yuyama moved from Hiratsuka to Tokyo in 1958 for the purpose of increasing his musical prospects. It was a fruitful year due to commissions by Radio Tokyo that yielded works such as his *Piano Trio in A* and the *Serenade for Ten Players*. Radio Tokyo, like many other art organizations of the time, competitively and passionately participated in the National Arts Festival hosted by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture. The move to Tokyo brought him additional work opportunities with a publisher of elementary school music textbooks and a significant engagement with the music department of NHK (*Nippon Housou Kyoukai*, or Japanese Broadcasting Corporation). In 1960, NHK hired him to compose music for radio programs that were heard throughout Japan in preschools and daycare centers. What started as a job that required new music every other week developed into a weekly commitment from his second year, and this pace lasted for six years.

The work he did for NHK, although not well compensated, became a valuable learning period of composing songs and piano pieces for children. He felt that it was very

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47. Since the 1950’s, the government-supported NHK hired graduates of the Tokyo University of the Arts (because the school was likewise supported by the government) to compose for their programming. Wade, 26.
rewarding to have his compositions immediately performed for a massive audience who frequently sent comments and critiques by mail or telephone call soon after the music was heard. Yuyama’s compositional output thereafter blossomed in multiple genres: he wrote prolifically for various choral ensembles and broadcast media, and he became instrumental in expanding the Japanese art song and instrumental literature. For the purpose of this thesis, only anecdotes surrounding the piano pieces will be introduced as described in his autobiography.

**Works for Solo Piano by Akira Yuyama**

The majority of Yuyama’s output for the piano is designed for children, primarily due to requests from publishers, and he took great care in working with the target interpreters in mind, as he did for all other commissioned works. He laments that Japanese pianists rarely include works by their countrymen in recital programs and hopes that future performers will incorporate Japanese works for composers to eventually gain international recognition through increased performance frequency.

**Children’s Land (1967)**

There was a twelve-year gap before he composed his first work for piano after the premiere of the *Piano Sonata* in 1955. The editor-in-chief of one of the major Japanese monthly musical magazines, *Ongaku-no-tomo* (“Friends of Music”), contacted Yuyama upon listening to the radio broadcast of his work for children and commissioned him to write a series of programmatic piano pieces for young people. Three or four of these works at a time were included in the magazine from January to June 1967. Since the pieces were aimed at young pianists, Yuyama designed the works to fit the hand-spans of
children (the largest required interval is a major-seventh). Such a concept was inspired by Yoshinao Nakada’s (1923-2000) passionate efforts in trying to popularize narrower keyboards for the Japanese people who, on average, have smaller hands than Westerners; but instead of changing the “hardware” (in Yuyama’s terms), he altered the “software.” Finding the most appropriate titles was also one of the most crucial steps to ensure the successful reception of these pieces. The titles had to be recognizable subjects/topics within the limited vocabulary of young children and had to aptly represent the musical content. Furthermore, it became increasingly challenging for Yuyama to think of imaginative titles as he wrote more pieces because he would occasionally come up with ideas that are very similar to past works. Despite his struggles in conceiving suitable titles, his collection grew to a total of twenty colorful pieces, and ranks now, in its sixtieth edition, as his second most popular opus for piano after *Confections*.

**Sunday Sonatina (1970)**

After the success of *Children’s Land*, *Ongaku-no-Tomo* requested another series of works to be printed in the sheet-music section of their magazine. They specifically expressed interest in the genre of sonatinas. The contract initially spanned only six months but the editor-in-chief asked for an extra sonatina when they could not find their next featured composer. The seven sonatinas were joined with an overture, *Tone Dessin*, and were published together with a new title, *Sunday Sonatina*, with each work named after the days of the week. Since the seven sonatinas were composed purely by coincidence, the titles do not suggest any programmatic intentions. This set has also been

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reprinted over forty times and still delights listeners and performers for its colorful harmonic excursions within the conventional sonatina style.

**Confections: A Piano Sweet (1974)**

In 1971, he was called upon by a producer from NHK to write a piece for an educational television program for young people called *Piano-no-Okeiko* (“Piano Lessons”). He felt extremely rushed as he was given only about a week to compose for the show but eventually stumbled upon an idea while experimenting at the piano. The piece had a briskly rhythmic moto-perpetuo character with frequent tonal modulations. Yuyama, however, could not find an apt, attractive title for this piece except for a portion of it, “Conveyor Belt,” describing its constant, motoric nature. He was displeased with the name because conveyor belts reminded him of construction sites and lifeless machinery, which did not seem like an appealing image for children. After much thought, he added the words, “Confectionary on a…,” to illustrate a scene involving the constant motion witnessed in a factory producing various, colorful sweets. The piece was a hit after it aired on television and Yuyama received numerous requests from the viewers for the sheet music of “Confectionary on a Conveyor Belt”.

The enthusiastic audience response caught the eye of Zen-on Music Company’s publication manager, Shinpei Matsuoka, who proposed to Yuyama the idea of writing a series of works inspired by confectionary. Instead of publishing the opus altogether, Yuyama composed two confection-inspired movements per month to be featured on the publishing company’s monthly newsletter from January to December 1973. The collection was officially published by Zen-on in 1974. As the number of movements grew, Matsuoka suggested Yuyama compose intermezzi which could warn children of
the dangers of excessive confection consumption, and this resulted in the creation of
movements titled “Decayed Teeth,” “Getting Fatter,” and “Gourmand.” At the very end,
Yuyama included a technically challenging medley-march incorporating themes from all
twenty-one confection-inspired movements.

*Children’s World* (1976)

As *Ongaku-no-Tomo* and Zen-on Publishing Company enjoyed the popularity of
works produced by Yuyama, Kawai Publishing was next in commissioning a collection
of children’s piano works. This collection was titled *Children’s World*. In contrast to the
subject matter found in *Children’s Land* written nine years prior (i.e. objects and
characters to be imitated through pianistic sounds), *Children’s World* takes an entirely
different approach, focusing heavily on the internal experiences of what children do and
feel. One can also perceive movements such as “Snack-time” and “An Afternoon by
Myself” as self-portraits of his emotional world from scenes of his childhood. Likewise,
*Children’s World* continues to enjoy success in more than fifty editions.

*Children’s Cosmos* (1988), *Children’s Space Station* (1993), and *Universe of the Piano*
(2003)

In addition to collections of short pieces, Yuyama published a piano method
series upon Zen-on’s suggestion. He began planning by examining foreign method books
but was quick to close them, fearing they could corrupt his original ideas. The writing
began with the beginning and ending in mind (i.e. finding middle C and progressing up to
intermediate-level works) and gradually worked towards the middle ground from both
ends. He considered it to be one of the most difficult undertakings of his career and the
three-part series took him more than a decade to complete in 1988, released as *Children’s*
*Cosmos.* Noticing an excessive gap in difficulty, he added to the series a supplemental volume titled *Children’s Space Station* that comprised works in between the complexity levels of volumes two and three.

Thinking of the diminishing population of children and rising number of adult beginner piano students, Yuyama adapted *Children’s Cosmos* for their usage by deleting illustrations and compacting the staves. He also added twenty-one new pieces, including works that adopted Chinese folk idioms, Bulgarian dance rhythms, and Okinawan scalar modes. Retitled as *Universe of the Piano*, this newly appropriated edition for adults was released in May 2003.

*Genei-no-Toki (“Hour of Mirage”) (1988)*

Yuyama’s *Hour of Mirage* (author’s translation) is a suite of five pieces for solo piano published in 1988. The work is based on an earlier set of ten pieces premiered in 1958 by Kazuko Yasukawa at the Seventh *Shinshinkai* Composition Recital. The piano teacher of Yuyama’s wife remembered the premiere performance and wanted to play it at her own recital twenty-eight years later, which resulted in extensive revisions and deletions of five movements which he considered valueless. The five pieces were published together with the movement titles all of an evocative nature: “Time of Mirage,” “Pierrot,” “Mysterious Song,” “Pegasus,” and “Flute of the Dynasty.”
CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF CONFECTIONS

The movements in Confections are short—with the exception of the Finale, the longest piece is four pages and less than three minutes long. Within the brief musical essays on the various desserts, Yuyama creatively uses the piano’s sonorities and compositional concepts to evoke the programmatic subject. As introduced in Chapter One, the composer accomplishes this task through: 1) musical style, 2) onomatopoeic and textural representation (relating the texture of the food to musical texture), and 3) harmonic coloration that illustrates a mood associated with the food. The analyses in this chapter will discuss the pianistic and compositional contents of the works to conjecture what the connections may be. Yuyama has never discussed what his exact intentions were for each piece, but the observations of dynamics, textures, articulations, harmony, form, and style may lead the interpreter to find his/her own method of preparing the given ingredients (i.e. the score). The role of the interpreter could thus be related to architect James Fergusson’s concept of likening his craft to that of chefs—artisans who create products to fit their vision by selecting and combining ingredients using specific cooking methods guided by knowledge and intuition developed through experience. In musical terms, that would be analogous to delivering a performance (the product) with an interpretation (the vision) that is built upon an understanding of the necessary technique and details on the score (selecting and combining ingredients) with an understanding of the appropriate style (method of cooking) attained through studying, practicing, and performing (knowledge) and being sensitive to one’s own instinctual responses to the music (intuition).
As listed in the literature review (Chapter Two), various resources on aesthetics, semantics, psychology, and neuroscience have shone light on the fact that the seemingly disparate worlds of musical and culinary expression are indeed connected. The study will not delve into the scientific or philosophical implications of *Confections* as a musical work about food, but the preliminary information provided by these resources will feed the hypothetical conclusion of why these works are so popular and effective. The section of further suggested research will offer ideas on how Yuyama’s pieces, and programmatic pieces in general, may be the starting point for tying together scientific knowledge and artistic expressions based on relating multiple sensory modalities.

“Overture: Confectionery on a Conveyor Belt” – Allegro (♩=96)

As described by himself, the *Overture* illustrates a scene in a confectionery factory in which the various sweets are “seen” through changes in harmony. For this movement, Yuyama envisioned a computer-controlled confectionery factory with numerous assembly lines producing diversely colored candies and chocolate treats. Following that imagery, the right hand could then be interpreted as machinery placing, decorating, and wrapping the confectionery (the different functions portrayed by the different rhythms and articulations) while the left hand depicts the constant motion of the conveyor belt. The harmonies move atypically with tonal centers shifting constantly in a chromatic fashion through the use of common tones. Visually speaking, the texture is classically designed with an almost incessant Alberti bass, but the modernized harmonic scheme adds to it a distinct character. The difference from traditional harmonies is the result of extended tertian harmonies and playful dissonances caused by moments of polytonality. As seen frequently in *Confections*, syncopations, rhythmically displaced
groupings, and uneven distributions of the metrical subdivisions create rhythmic interest even in the simplest sounding pieces. The overture is comprised of three motivic ideas. The first eight measures are made of a scalar staccato melody within the range of a perfect-fifth against a harmony that goes back and forth between implied tonal centers of F and F-sharp. (Example 1.1.)


Contrasting with the opening, the theme in measure nine spans a greater range of a ninth in legato arpeggios before the brisk staccatos return and the music transitions to the third theme characterized by syncopated accents without the usual Alberti-bass pattern. (Examples 1.2. and 1.3.)

Example 1.2. Akira Yuyama, *Confections*, “Confectionery on a Conveyor Belt,” mm. 9-12.

The closing material is a combination of the first and third themes building to a climactic sforzato chord followed by a major-seventh tonic chord played at a subdued piano dynamic. (Example 1.4.)


![MIDI notation](image)

The primary objective of this piece is maintaining the motoric nature of the constant left hand accompaniment while colorfully varying the right hand articulation at a fast tempo.

**“Chou à la Crème” – Tempo di valse (♩=66)**

“Chou à la Crème” (“Cream Puff”) is written in the style of a waltz. Inouchi’s suggestions for practicing tells students to emphasize the weighted downbeats to let the “sweet melody sway gently” and not let the piece seem like “an awkwardly rugged chou a la crème.” Careful pedaling is also advised for rounding the tone and rhythmic feeling.

The opening statement is composed of two two-bar fragments followed by an arpeggiated idea occupying four bars, which is then answered by a harmonically unresolved phrase in the ♭ VI harmony (dominant of the Neapolitan chord) that quickly returns to the original tonality. The B section starts from m. 17. Mm. 17-24 makes use of a hemiola melody against the elegant waltz accompaniment. (Example 1.5.)
Example 1.5. Akira Yuyama, *Confections*, “Chou à la Crème,” mm. 17-20.

*Chou à la Crème* would be the first example of textural representation. Like puff pastry encasing cream, the soprano and bass layers are written in longer, melodic note values while the inner voice pulsates the second and third beats within the texture.

(Example 1.6.)

Example 1.6. Akira Yuyama, *Confections*, “Chou à la Crème,” mm. 25-28

While the texture returns to the original pattern of melody and accompaniment, the mood is less active due to the double-stemmed bassline written to be held throughout the bars. Although not extremely different, the B section contains developments on the main theme as well as additional lyrical phrases that serves as a contrasting element in the overall form. The return of the A section contains some variants such as an additional layer of held notes above melodies and ornamented figurations on the theme. The fourteen-measure coda is reminiscent of the B section material and ends in an exclamatory fashion. It is interesting to note that this French confection is portrayed through a dance rhythm often associated with German and Austrian music. It is perhaps
due to Yuyama’s musical training in the French style that drew him to the idea of waltzes in the French style as exemplified by works such as Waldteufel’s *Les Patineurs*, Debussy’s *La plus que lente*, and Satie’s *Je te veux*.49

“**Baumkuchen**” – Allegretto (±112 ca.)

The second confection is a cake of German origin named after its design resembling a tree and its rings within. Broadly speaking, “Baumkuchen’s” structure can be divided into four parts containing diverse pianistic elements. The opening *cantabile* theme is derived from a gently winding major pentatonic scale that lends itself to a hand choreography that follows a circular trail, a la tree rings. (Example 1.7.)


The circular figuration is modified slightly in the answering melody marked *senza pedale* and *un poco leggero*, but quickly resumes its song-like character. The first contrasting section has an entirely different texture; while the A section simply divides the hands as melody (right hand) and accompaniment (left hand), the B section inherits the circular idea and embeds the accompanimental arpeggiation in the inner voice of the right hand. The left hand also suggests the possibility of round motions oscillating slowly

49. The Oxford Companion to Music notes that the French waltz is distinguishable through an emphasized return to the first beat, as opposed to the characteristic feature of the Viennese waltz called an *Atempause* ("breathing-space") that slightly anticipates the second beat.  
between large intervals, especially in consideration of smaller, child-sized hands.

(Example 1.8)


M. 49 brings back the A section with the theme with embellishments (characteristic of Yuyama) and ends on a half-cadence, unlike the conclusively written first A section. The final portion has a long-range crescendo divided into two parts, beginning with a descending bassline with the right hand supplying little sprays of sixteenth notes, and then the texture thickens when the left hand delivers an organ-like bass and its remaining harmonic tones in open-fifths as an upper pedal-point, all the while the right hand ceaselessly plays a current of swirling sixteenth notes—sign of tree rings, once again. All the activity culminates at m. 89 with a grand, Romantic texture with a resonant bass and doubled chordal melodies that fades out after four measures. (Example 1.9) As the fade occurs, the opening motive makes its final appearance bringing the piece to a serene close.
“Kaki-no-Tane” – Allegro vivace (.=152 ca.)

*Kaki-no-tane* literally translates to “Persimmon Seeds,” named after its shape, they are little, crunchy rice crackers coated in soy sauce and sometimes red chili pepper flavoring before roasting. The harmonies found in this movement are stereotypically “Oriental”-sounding with successive usage of perfect fifths and fourths, occasionally spiced with dissonant neighboring tones. The articulations is crisply *scherzando* throughout with occasional two-note slurs or very short slurred melodies, and the crunchiness is further emphasized by quick grace notes on staccato notes and accented repetitions of tritone polychords. “Kaki-no-Tane” begins with a motif based on falling fourths derived from the minor pentatonic scale and an ascending passage played on all of the black keys (i.e. major pentatonic scale), with an open-fifth accompaniment indicating the tonal center of A. (Example 1.10)
The second large phrase also starts with a scalar descent but in legato double-fourths accompanied by a three-note figure (an arpeggiated fifth of A and E adorned with a D-sharp) that creates a *hemiola* effect over three measures. The phrase is repeated an octave below with a syncopated version of the descending fourths before a relatively percussive-sounding section involving the aforementioned, insistently accented polychords (built from the notes of a whole-tone scale). (Example 1.11) The polychords act as an accompaniment to the call-and-response played by the left hand that maneuvers over the right-hand chords.


Mm. 27 to 38 contains additional syncopations that arrive at a subtle mid-structure climax. The varied primary theme in cross-rhythmic form re-enters at m. 39, which is followed by a *coda* that begins with a drum-like *ostinato* accompaniment with a soft, steadily descending *staccato* motive with a *subito forte* interjection every four bars. From the *subito piano* at m. 57, the music grows to its ultimate climax through planing major 6-4 chords in the left hand and a chain of rising syncopated two-note slurs, which is almost jokingly answered by an arpeggiated A major chord with an added ninth.

(Example 1.12)

“A Shortcake” - Moderato (\( \approx 84 \) ca.)

In Japan, strawberry shortcakes is conventionally understood as a layered cake with fluffy sponge cake, whipped cream, and strawberries, in contrast to the Western style that involves a crumbly biscuit or a heavier pound-cake base.\(^50\) The score visually evokes this layered structure of the cake in its simplistic writing of a constantly present triadic harmony supporting the top melodic layer. (Example 1.13)


This movement is likewise simplistic in its structure with only one eight-measure departure from the main thematic material through a brief key-change to F major. The closing eight measures nods in acknowledgement to this harmonic shift by including a F major chord that creates a cadential progression of \( bVI\text{-}ii7-I \), where the ii7 substitutes a IV chord and thereby creates a modified plagal cadence. (Example 1.14)


As the plagal cadence is known as the “Amen” cadence, it may be the composer’s cultural homage to the facts that the strawberry shortcake is one of the most popular desserts for Christmas time in Japan. Composed of six eight-measure phrases, it is one of the most repetitive pieces but the melodic innocence is a part of its charm.

“A Hot Cake” – Lively (\( \approx 144 \) ca.)

“A Hot Cake” is the first movement in the collection that shows an American jazz-influence, characterized by a constant presence of swung rhythms. Similar to *A Shortcake*, this piece consists of six four-measure phrases. Its challenges lie in fast repetitions of chords that require a well-coordinated and limber wrist, especially if the piece is played at the composer’s suggested metronome mark. The first two phrases may present challenges for beginner pianists who are not accustomed to reading tied syncopated rhythms, as well as steady control over the dotted rhythms and triplets.

(Example 1.15.)

The remainder of this work is based on these rhythmic ideas until the last four-bar phrase starting at m. 21, where the first “three-against-two” of the whole opus is found as well as the only time the music written on three staves with the exception of the finale’s ending. This very brief work finishes with the most complex harmony thus far with a tonic chord with extensions up to a thirteenth, aptly used for this jazz-related miniature. (Example 1.16.)


Visually, the stacked harmonic contents of the basic melodic material resembles stacks of pancakes and the resulting sound of the stacked interval of fourths, as an inverted form of the Suspended Fourth chord (Sus4), is an often employed harmony in American jazz and popular music.\(^51\)

**Intermezzo 1: “Decayed Teeth” – Allegro Assai (\(\approx 144\)~152 ca.)**

“Decayed Teeth” is written without a key signature and with numerous accidentals strewn about, but has an implied tonality of F major as seen in the major cadential gestures. The polytonality heard in this piece incorporates blatant semitone dissonances to portray the stinging, physical pain of tooth decay. As with the other two

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intermezzi, this piece was included as a comical cautionary message regarding the dangers of overeating sweets. Considering the prescribed metronome marking, technical proficiency is of great importance to adequately deliver clear articulations and variety of tone colors for both hands. The opening seven measures function as an introductory source of momentum with a biting polychord in which all the chord contents clash with one another and the music takes off in a brief flurry of sixteenth notes before establishing its basic pulsation of *staccato* eighth notes. (Example 1.17)


The first iteration of melodic substance takes place from mm. 8-10 in which the melody notes on the white keys are harmonically disturbed by the stinging insistence of the black key chords (C-sharp Sus4) that are usually a semitone above the melodic pitches. The polytonal color resembles that of the overture but the character is slightly more abrasive, as necessary to convey the work’s spirit. (Example 1.18.)

Mm. 16-23 involves a new thematic idea with a spryly upward-climbing eighth-note melody that slides down quickly from the apex in slurred sixteenth notes. (Example 1.19.) This new theme is repeated at a softer dynamic with an accelerated version of the accompaniment that changes from staccato eighth notes to slurred sixteenth-note Alberti-bass patterns.


A rapid three-note fragment leading to the half cadence halts all activity to create time and space for a meno mosso, dry recitative-like moment (that is repeated a whole step below) with a “dirge-like color”\(^52\) before returning to the highly dissonant chord that opens the piece. (Example 1.20.)

Example 1.20. Akira Yuyama, Confections, “Decayed Teeth,” mm. 31-36.

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\(^{52}\) “Dirge-like” is an expression used by Inouchi in the practicing guide, but the original Japanese text translates to a “lamentful song” (a term used as the translation for the Klagender Gesang section in the third movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major, Op. 110 and Mahler’s early cantata, Das klagende Lied. However, the author disagrees with the nuance of the wording because this section does not portray profound woe in the Teutonic sense, and should be rather described as “bluesy,” which is also a kind of deep depression, but in the American style of deep expressiveness.
The piece restarts da capo and heads to a four-measure long coda that finishes with the surprising decisiveness of a perfect authentic cadence, just as though the teeth were extracted.

“The Wafers (Lullaby)” – Andantino (.=96 ca.)

After the energetic and chromatic intermezzo, a very placid movement titled “Wafers” appears as a lulling song. Although principally diatonic, it has a peculiar quality of frequently wavering between C major and E major or minor. The tonality sounds stable nonetheless due to the shared chord tones between C major and E major/minor, with only one necessary alteration of G to G-sharp if moving to E major. (Example 1.21)


This dreamy work is in two parts of nearly identical contents, except that A1 begins an octave higher and has an additional six measures as an afterthought of the section’s last phrase. Inouchi describes this work as an etude for melodic playing in an exposed landscape, requiring subtly varied colorations of touch that fits the berceuse-like quality. Phrase groups are made of two four-bar phrases ending in half-cadences followed by an eight-bar phrase with motivic momentum with repetitions of fragments. The momentum is carried to the mid-point of the phrase which culminates in a soft-spoken melodic peak whereupon the forward moving energy dissipates through longer note values. (Example 1.22.)

The dynamics stay within the range of pianissimo to mezzo-piano, requiring pianists to maintain control of melodic playing with subtle expressive gradients in soft dynamics. As the delicate texture of thin and flaky wafers do not require much mandibular effort in chewing, the action of eating maybe related pianistically to the slow and gentle depression of keys to achieve the soft dynamics. The layered texture also evokes the image of thin layers that compose wafers, much like in the case of *A Shortcake*.

**Drops** – Moderato (\( \dot{z} \approx 66 \) ca.)

“Drops” is a one-page item resembling music by the late French Romantic period, namely of Fauré, in its harmonic adventurousness. *Drops*, in the Japanese sense, refers to the Sakuma-style drops developed in 1908 by Sōjirō Sakuma, who adapted the style of hard candies that were imported from the United Kingdom.\(^5^3\) These hard candies are colorful and flavored with different types of fruit juices. Yuyama’s “Drops” constantly uses chromatic modal mixtures within a very basic pianistic texture, which entails an

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assortment of colorful candies. Yuyama’s concept of relating harmony and visual color was a topic explored in the “Overture,” where the differences in multiple hues of the confectionery were illustrated by harmonic transformations.\textsuperscript{54} The 6/8 time signature calls for a flowing melodic stream—the majority are unidirectional scalar and arpeggio patterns with a steady accompaniment of broken triads. (Example 1.23.)


The frequent mixture of modes can be a reading challenge for students and the overall structure is also difficult to precisely delineate. Generally speaking, it is in three sections with each portion sharing the same two-measure opening melody that is combined with a different (but not drastically contrasting) melodic segment so the impression is similar to that of a rondo on a miniature scale. Right-hand passages require a clarity reminiscent of the French \textit{jeu perlé}, or in this case, \textit{jeu bonbon}.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{54} The most typically recalled instances of color-harmony associations can be traced to the synesthetic composers, such as Alexander Scriabin and Olivier Messiaen, who explicitly expressed themselves through aural-chromatic terms.
**Chocolate Bar** – Lively (.=190 ca.)

The vigorously polyrhythmic “Chocolate Bar” has the flair of Latin American music, perhaps in acknowledgement of the countries that produce cacao. Accented patterns and rhythmic ostinatos in this piece do not adhere to the meter and it is more effective to feel the rhythms by considering two measures to equal one unit. Within the 4/4 meter, the accompaniment pattern is always grouped by three eighth notes that do not conform to the barlines, which is reminiscent of the clave, a manner of rhythmic organization found in the music of the Americas and the Caribbean. (Example 1.24)


![Musical notation](image)

After the two-measure brassy forte opening, the main thematic idea is composed of a juxtaposition of light, mezzo-piano, *staccato* chords and loudly heavy-set, *legato* syncopations as seen in mm. 3-10. (Example 1.25.)

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55. On *jeu perlé*, we may refer to this paragraph: “...the French style of playing known as the jeu perlé: rapid, clean, even passagework in which each note is bright and perfectly formed, like each pearl on a necklace. This, style, which requires the utmost equality of touch and an unforced tone that is controlled entirely by the fingers, has been a prime concern of the French school...” Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism* (White Plains, NY: Pro/Am Music Resources, Inc., 1992), 16.

Example 1.25. Akira Yuyama, Confections, “Chocolate Bar,” mm. 3-6.

The uneven rhythmic unit of three quarter notes superimposed on the groups of three eighth notes create a thickened texture of compounded asymmetry in mm. 11-13 until a decisive, *fortissimo* arrival of A-flat\(^7\) is heard at m. 14. (Example 1.26.)


Immediately following this dynamic climax are two sets of two-measure rhythmic ideas marked *subito piano* using suspenseful polychords and accented interjections in the bass register that refers to the rhythmic motive of three eighth notes. After the repeat of its near-entirety, the piece closes with an ascending octatonic scale leading to a fanfare-like succession of dominant chords with a flattened ninth extension that resolves tenderly into a tonic chord, also with an extension of the ninth. In addition to the Latin-American rhythmic influence, one may infer that the presence of jazz-related harmonies connotes American music. Judging from Yuyama’s childhood struggles in post-World War II Japan, it is naturally thinkable that he associated chocolate with the United States. It is a
famous fact that starving Japanese children regularly surrounded American soldiers while desperately yelling in English, “Give me chocolate!”\textsuperscript{57}

**Birthday Cake** – Andante (\(\approx 100\) ca.)

“Birthday Cake” is written in a very Classical guise, as found in Clementi or Mozart sonatas and sonatinas. The right-hand melody increases its technical demands, especially for smaller hands, with an additional voice of a whole note played by the thumb, which then becomes a moving voice in a duet in *legato* double-sixths. (Example 1.27.)


![Example 1.27. Akira Yuyama, *Confections*, “Birthday Cake,” mm. 1-4.](image)

The fusion of Classical keyboard idioms with twentieth century harmonic language is a recurring, pertinent topic, as seen in several other movements. Control over textural balance is an issue when roles are reversed between the hands, especially when the registers are so close together that the accompaniment may intrude on the clarity of the melody. (Example 1.28.) To instruct the importance of balance between lines, it may be effective to employ the analogy of carefully cutting a birthday cake before serving in order to not spoil the presentation of the cake slices.

\textsuperscript{57} John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 110.

When the melody is returned to the right hand, the key modulates from C major to A major and remains in the new tonality until the end, perhaps symbolic of growing an year older.

**Cookies** – Giocoso (\(=152\) ca.)

In *Cookies*, the element of surprise is found in the playful compositional gesture of starting in a key with five flats (D-flat major) and ending with five sharps (B major) through a series of chromatic modulations. Dominant-seventh chords built on a chromatic neighbor tone of the original dominant harmony gradually lead the piece away from the starting tonality. For a short piece, it is amusing to follow the four modulations and it serves well as a helpful exercise in playing transposed patterns. Cookies is the second example of stylized Americanism with swung melodic figures and simple insinuations of a stride-bass pattern. (Example 1.29.) Beatrice Ojakangas states:

Cookies are truly American. In other parts of the world they are “little cakes,” “little breads,” “biscuits,”... The actual word “cookie” or “cooky” probably derived from the Pennsylvania Dutch word *koekje*, which is pronounced “cookie.”

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Due to the repeated appearances of the transposed melody, it gives an impression of a modulating rondo form, but it is more accurately described as a repeated binary form of ABAB₁ considering the relationships of the two separate motives.

The dryness of the articulation suggests that this is a crisp cookie, which is the common texture for cookies in Japan, as opposed to the chewier variety available in the United States.⁵⁹

**Intermezzo 2: Getting Fatter (.=92 ca.)**

“Getting Fatter” (or a more accurate translation of the Japanese title is, “Why do I get fat?”) expresses quiet pensiveness but without an overwhelming sense of guilt over gluttony. Inouchi’s performance commentary aptly describes, “Just as fat persons will not trouble themselves with small matters… the triplets should be played in a relaxed manner, with a rich sound.” The melody of this minimally-mobile character piece is contained within a narrow intervallic span and written in a dense triadic manner. The twos-against-threes between the hands and lazily lilting triplets hold the work’s relaxed pace. (Example 1.30.)

⁵⁹ The most famous brand of soft cookie in Japan is Country Ma’am, which was first sold by Fujiya Co. Ltd. in 1984 modeled after the American soft cookie. “Country Ma’am,” Fujiya, accessed March 8, 2016, http://www.fujiya-peco.co.jp/countrymaam/.

Rhythmic frictions disappear when the meter changes from common time to its compound equivalent of 12/8 and the flowing triplet subdivision becomes the prioritized unit. (Example 1.31.)


The two hands interact canonically before peacefully ending on a harmony stuffed full of all possible tertian extensions.

**Nougat** – Andantino (♩.=76 ca.)

“Nougat’s” musical content is based on a pun that very appropriately depicts the title subject and the musical style—“Nougat,” in the French pronunciation rhymed with “Fuga.” The fugal interactions between the chromatically meandering voices aurally represent the chewy consistency of the nougat. (Example 1.32.)

Its sound world, due to its lack of an obvious tonal center and chromatic saturation bears resemblance to compositions from the Second Viennese School and late works from Scriabin’s oeuvre. Although the musical depiction of the nougat is easily perceivable, the musical content is difficult to digest; its complex contours, independently moving voices, and resulting chromatic harmonies pose high hurdles for fluent reading. On the other hand, the sectional divisions of this movement are easily noticeable as the phrase groups almost always conclude at the peak of a crescendo and rhythmic acceleration. Utilizing these bite-sized groupings would be the suggested method of effectively absorbing this work.

Softcream – Allegretto (\(\approx\)126 ca.)

“Softcream” (a Japanese contraction of “soft-serve ice cream”) is a charming movement in ternary da capo form. The A section is based on the motive of a dotted-rhythm upbeat leading to a stronger beat, which is included in the first two phrases followed by two chords as commentary. (Example 1.33.)

From there on, a chain of this rhythmic idea completes the phrase group. Mm 7-8 repeats the opening statement with the right hand crossed over the left hand’s accompaniment chords, which is then followed by an elaboration of the dotted-rhythm motive that concludes the A section. The contrasting B section primarily consists of planing major 6/4 triads over a static *ostinato* pattern. (Example 1.34) Despite the slightly separated notes with staccato and tenuto marks, the overall continuity of the phrase is relatively seamless, which can be related to how soft-serve ice cream is generally eaten—one would typically not bite into the frozen lactic matter, but would rather consume it through licking, which is a smooth, gliding gesture.


This portion is closer to the viscous image of the “softcream” and special care is required to control the smooth motion of both moving and repeated triads within the dynamic range of *piano* to *mezzo piano*. The viscous cream is placed upon an accompaniment of fifths, a harmonically solid interval, which may be an illustration of the waffle cone on which the ice cream is served.
**Bonbon** – Tempo di valse (\(\dot{=}60\) ca.)

The allusion to the title of Johann Strauss II’s *Wiener Bonbons*, Op. 307 is blatant in this Viennese Waltz movement. In contrast to “Chou à la Crème’s” French waltz, “Bonbon” typifies the Viennese style with its special agogic treatment (i.e. *Atempause*) of the second beat. As Inouchi mentions, the right hand sings very freely above the steady waltz pattern. The theme is divided into two two-bar fragments followed by four bars of an *arabesque* in eighth notes that gently closes with a *hemiola* effect of lengthier dotted quarter notes. (Example 1.35.)


One can notice here that Yuyama’s meticulousness in organizing the number of measures in a phrase group: the repeated theme has an extension of the *arabesque* figure that adds an extra measure to the regularity of eight-measure phrases. This overstepping of patterns is skillfully remedied by introducing a new melodic episode (one that begins on a downbeat) that is seven measures long, balancing the phrase durations. The episodic material continues while wandering harmonically for another eight measures and an insertion of two extra measures signal a re-entrance of the primary melodic material. At
m. 50, the dancing comes to a sudden halt on a dominant chord and similar to Weber’s
_Aufforderung zum Tanz_, Op. 65, the quiet *coda* dissipates the momentum of the energetic
dance at a subdued dynamic in the lower keyboard register.

**Oni-Arare** – Allegro scherzando (=152 ca.)

There is hardly a moment of repose in the second of three Japanese snacks. Like
“Kaki-no-tane,” “Oni-arare” is another type of rice cracker and its name is composed of
two parts: “Oni” means “demon” or “ogre” and “Arare” is a type of rice cracker that
literally translates to “graupel” (a smaller form of hail). The name _arare_ comes from the
crackling and popping sounds made when _mochi_ (glutinous rice cakes) are crushed and
pan-roasted, which resembles the noise made by graupel hitting surfaces as it falls from
the clouds. The texture of this small snack is, once again, extremely crunchy and much
noise is a by-product of eating _Oni-arare_. In this work, “crunchiness,” as a descriptor of
sound quality is manifested through acute dissonances and pointed articulations.

Stravinsky-esque dissonance is heard in the first melodic theme with the hands in unison
playing a tritone apart, as found in Stravinsky’s _Petrouschka_. Like “Kaki-no-tane,” the
melody is derived from the minor pentatonic mode. There are many examples of stylistic
alikeness between the two rice-cracker-themed works but “Oni-arare” has increased
melodic development and diverse exploitations of the instrument’s percussive facets.

Many instances of such percussive effects resemble idioms frequently encountered in
twentieth-century piano literature by composers such as Stravinsky, Bartók, Bacewicz, et
al. There are no significant modulations from the tonal center of A minor and any hints of
harmonic shifting are the result of different dissonances played against the A minor
sonority. The motives sound very much unified since the several motivic ideas that
construct this movement are all based on the same minor-pentatonic mode. The changes in accompaniment patterns delineate the different rhythmic characters:

1) left hand doubling the melody at a dissonant interval (Example 1.36.)


2) An energetic ostinato in eighth notes (Example 1.37)


3) A drum-like open-fifth on every quarter-note beat (Example 1.38.)


4) Smooth arpeggiation pattern (Example 1.39.)

A major point of interest appears from m. 28 after a five-octave descent of major-second dyads, at which four bars are played with purely percussive intent—similar to works such as *With Drums and Pipes* from Bartok’s *Out of Doors Suite*, Sz. 81. (Example 1.40.)


The return of the melodic material in the left hand at m. 32 leads into an exciting build up to a *fortissimo* climax via a repeated motivic fragment and ends with a brutal final punctuation in the extreme bass octave.

Marrons Glacés – Moderato (\( \hat{\text{J}} = 69 \) ca.)

“Marrons Glacés” (candied chestnuts) resemble a forlana’s swaying dotted rhythm in a 6/8 meter. Although not as formally expansive as Ravel’s Forlane from Le tombeau de Couperin (Yuyama’s is AA₁+coda, as opposed to Ravel’s extensive six-part form), one may detect harmonic and motivic similarities in addition to the obviously shared rhythmic style. (Example 1.42.) Both works are written in E minor and are harmonized in a similar fashion, and the tonality establishes an autumnal mood for “Marrons Glacés,” corresponding to the seasonal context in which chestnuts are eaten. The soft, gentle touch required for this work also resembles the interaction between the mouth and the soft candied chestnuts.

Example 1.42. Akira Yuyama, Confections, “Marrons Glacés,” mm. 1-4.

The motive comparable to the first couplet in Ravel’s Forlane can be found in mm. 11-14. (Example 1.43.)

Example 1.43. Akira Yuyama, Confections, “Marrons Glacés,” mm. 11-12.

Another audible homage to Ravel is heard in the meno mosso section, in which the final chord is taken verbatim from Pavane pour une enfant defunte. (Example 1.44.)
Example 1.44. Akira Yuyama, Confections, “Marrons Glacés,” mm. 48.

In mm. 51-53, the ascending crescendo passage that is greeted by silence on the downbeat is peculiarly effective—almost like a gust that blows dead leaves and chestnuts off of the trees. The piece then ends with an emphatic sigh-like cadence that ends not on tonic, but on the relative major chord. (Example 1.45.)


Intermezzo 3: Gourmand – Tempo giusto (=160 ca.)

The last intermezzo, “Gourmand,” is a cheerful portrait of a sweet-toothed person’s joy and excitement of being surrounded by confectionery. While its melodic and harmonic contents stay very much within traditional boundaries, it could very well be considered a palate cleanser in the grand scheme of Confections. The form is AA₁B, of which B further builds the sense of joie de vivre with an acceleration of the subdivisions. As the movement progresses, the measures increasingly fills up with notes, which could signify two things: the notes filling up the measures could be symbolic of the “Gourmand’s” rapidly filling stomach, or it could plainly be his/her increased excitement.
In terms of technical hurdles, coordinating the togetherness of notes in briskly played chords and repeated notes may require the most practicing. (Example 1.46.)

Example 1.46. Akira Yuyama, *Confections*, “Gourmand,” mm. 11-14.

Confetti (Konpeitō) - Allegretto (.=116 ca.)

“Konpeitō” carries on with the topic of simplicity with musical material resembling a music box. *Konpeitō*, or originally *confeito*, is a type of hard sugar candy that was brought to Japan in the sixteenth century by the Portuguese along with other foods such as the *tempura*, soft candy, etc. Konpeitō are made by gradually coating poppy seeds or grains of coarse sugar crystals in syrup on a continually-rotating heated pan. The one to two-week long process of repeatedly heating and coating the core creates multiple protrusions that resembles colorful stars. The main suggestion by Inouchi is to make certain that the notes played by the right hand are firmly projected while the left hand articulations are kept gentle, which are evidence to the relatively basic demands of this piece. Structurally, it is in rounded binary form and its only harmonic excursion is to the Neapolitan key area, which easily slides back down to the home tonality. Melodically, the motives are based on arpeggios and very occasional usage of diatonic scales.

(Example 1.47.)

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The “firm” tone that Inouchi suggests for the melody could also be stated as a “shining” tone, considering its placement in the higher register, and they would both be adjectives for *Konpeitō*, which is a hard candy that is shaped like stars. On the note of likeness to stars, the melody contains similar contours to the French children’s song, “Ah! vous dirai-je, Maman” (known as “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” in both English and Japanese), as well as the descending melody in Leigh Harline’s “When You Wish Upon a Star.”

**Custard Pudding** – Allegretto ( =132 ca.)

The richly-sweet “Custard Pudding” is a work in quasi-ternary form with a very short, contrasting middle section that is motivically related to the rest through the use of a transformed fragment found in the A section. Beginning in a four-part texture, the soprano and tenor layers operate in canon at the octave repeating a motive in jiggling dotted rhythms while the alto and bass lines sustain harmonic tones by the half bar. (Example 1.48.) The issues of differentiating the voices require attention in finger independence and control to maintain the dolce tone quality. Richness in flavor is also communicated by the richness in sound, as seen in the relatively thick texture, and also through its placement in a resonant register of the keyboard.

The second phrase answers in mm. 5-6 with a textural transformation where the right hand maintains two voices by continuing with the jiggling rhythm with a sustained upper voice in whole notes as the left hand accompanies with a stride bass. (Example 1.49.)

Example 1.49. Akira Yuyama, *Confections*, “Custard Pudding,” mm. 5-6.

In the contrasting six-measure segment, the music resumes in four voices, but now with the melodic substance doubled by the soprano and bass for four measures, followed by two measures of particular rhythmic interest in which a motif from the A section coexist in augmentation and diminution in preparation for the reprisal of A. (Example 1.50)

**Popcorn** – Allegro assai (.=168 ca.)

“Popcorn” is the most onomatopoeic representation of its title. The slight dissonance of the sharpened fourth within the tonic triad or the sixth scale degree included in the $V^7$ alerts the ear that the chords are more than just a statement of tonic and dominant harmonies—it certainly functions as such, but also provides a suitable sound effect of popping kernels. The technical topic of jumpy, staccato chords also invites a form of Lisztian keyboard writing (who, in turn, inherited it from Paganini), which is passage in double-thirds that is not played by a legato-fingering but with a freedom of the wrist that enables rapid successions of thirds without changing fingers. (Example 1.51.)


This work is organized as a rondo with four episodes and key areas in this order: E-flat, A-flat, A, and E major. There are two different materials: one that is shared between the first and fourth and the other that is heard in the second and third, constructing an arch form in a rondo style ($ABCC_1B_1A_1$). B and C are the episodic materials in different key areas and the latter half all contain some sort of embellished variation using smaller note values.
**Chewing gum** – Marcato (\( \dot{=160 \text{ ca.}} \))

“Chewing gum” (“gum” is not capitalized in the published score) is another excellent etude in rhythms—a trait observed in other works written in the American style as seen through Yuyama’s eyes. The rhythmically steady bass pattern becomes a playground on which the melodic voice is given the opportunity to exercise its melodic freedom within finite lengths of the quarter-note pulse. Beginning with two bars labeled “Intro.,” the harmonies immediately deviate chromatically from C major to A-flat major using their common tone, and the additional presence of the G-flat major chord creates anticipation for a resolution to the Neapolitan. Instead, however, the \( \flat \) VI slides deftly back down to the dominant of C major. (Example 1.52.)


![Example 1.52](image)

The interest in the first section’s themes lies in their rhythmic variety rather than tunefulness. Syncopations and repetitions of patterns in gradually accelerating note values keeps the improvisatory forward momentum of the A section. There is one brief appearance of a singable motif in mm. 17-24, but otherwise, this forty-two measure movement is built upon the spunky swaggering of rhythmic ideas. (Example 1.53.) As Beldent’s 2013 social experiment discovered, the act of chewing gum contributes to a person’s positive, fun-loving image, contrary to the traditionally assumed stigma that
gum-chewing is a sign of delinquent character. The rhythmic activity can certainly be a point of association with a fun, up-beat atmosphere.


![Musical notation of Example 1.53](image)

The accented quartal harmonies add to it a distinct jazzy sonority as its contents also constitute suspended chords. Once again, the American flavor of “Chewing gum” has its roots in post-war Japan, where chewing gum was another commodity that young people craved in addition to chocolate bars. It is assumable that this image of the swaggering, gum-chewing American remains in the Japanese consciousness, as it also affected its musical manifestation through Yuyama’s pen.

*Ama-Natto* – Larghetto (\(_=69\)-72 ca.)

The last Japanese contribution to this assortment is the “Ama-Natto,” or sweet beans. Contrary to commonly incorrect assumptions, the *ama-natto* is not a sugary-flavored version of *natto* (fermented soybeans that are commonly a part of Japanese breakfasts). Yuyama is exceptionally resourceful in the various ways he clothes the pentatonic theme in this set of variations. Unlike his other works in which he develops ideas through rhythmic variations, acceleration, or contrasts, he achieves diversity via manipulation of texture without bothering the peaceful ambiance. Tranquility is reflective

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of Japanese customs and its relation to confectionery can be found in the tradition of tea ceremonies at which sweets accompany the ritualistically served tea. Tea ceremonies, as codified in sixteenth century Japan by Sen no Rikyū, was built upon the aesthetic of refined simplicity rooted in Zen philosophies. Although the *Ama-natto* is not eaten at such formal occasions (it is a more casually consumed confection), the exuded atmosphere of serenity allows for appreciation of beauty in subtleties. The music unfolds eight measures at a time, with the exception of Variation 3, which is extended by four additional measures. (Example 1.54.-1.58.) The variations also fit into a larger structural conception of binary form where Variation 1, although being an offshoot of the theme, contains new motivic substances of its own, and Variation 3 develops further upon these ideas. The musings on this tender melody ends ever so gently with a rhythmically augmented statement of the theme followed by a tonic chord layered with all the notes of the major pentatonic scale, which looks as though the essence of the whole piece is preserved in crystallized form. (Example 1.59.)


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**Doughnut** – Vividly (=152 ca.)

The last confection of the cycle is the *Doughnut*. Once again, the prevailing difficulty is the fluent navigation through rhythmic diversity. Another feature is the correlation between dynamic intensity and thickness of moving textures. Phrases with contrasting dynamic markings are juxtaposed very closely (i.e. melodies written in octaves and double notes are marked either forte or mezzo-forte while single-note passages are piano or mezzo-piano), requiring fluid transition and physical control over the passagework (e.g. mm. 5-8). (Example 1.60.)


Major punctuation points are indicated by emphatic dominant chords that hail the entrances and re-entrances of themes. The overall structure is ABA, of which the B
section is built on a rhythmic *ostinato* that explores a series of extended harmonies for sixteen measures. (Example 1.61.) The effect is alarmingly static in relation to the springing jazziness of the primary thematic sections.


Grandness is communicated through thick and widely spaced voices, preparing the ears for the exuberant finale. (Example 1.62.)


*Finale: Cake March* – Allegro, alla marcia (\(_=152\) ca.)

The grand finale summons the themes of all twenty confections and the overture in potpourri fashion; meaning, in other words, that the themes appear solely for the sake of re-appearance and without development or interplay. With the exception of “Baumkuchen” and “Cookies,” all themes appear in their original keys and most of them in their original textures, although occasionally reinforced by additional notes to sustain the grandioso character. If the movement was originally in triple or compound meter, they are assimilated into the march by rhythmic alterations that fit the duple meter and
subdivisions. The theme of this procession is designed to utilize the instrument’s sonorous potential by sustaining chords and octaves in distant registers with the pedal while filling in the inner voices with chordal passages. (Example 1.63.)


![Example 1.63. Akira Yuyama, *Confections*, “Cake March,” mm. 1-4.](image1)

Its extreme usage at the very end rivals the massive sonorities encountered in the virtuoso Romantic keyboard literature. (Example 1.64.)

Example 1.64. Akira Yuyama, *Confections*, “Cake March,” mm. 246-249.

![Example 1.64. Akira Yuyama, *Confections*, “Cake March,” mm. 246-249.](image2)

Dynamic richness is not the sole quality of this march of over six minutes. All the themes are treated with care to reintroduce each of their unique sound worlds, which allows the listener and performer to enjoy the colorful nuances of all the different flavors within one work. Since all of the technical and musical topics from the opus are present (except the three *Intermezzi*), it is not only necessary to have command over them, but also fluently transitioning from one to the next to deliver the work in a coherent, unified manner, as
opposed to a schizophrenic jumble of themes. Careful planning of the dynamic scheme assures the internal climaxes to be colored uniquely to make the very last celebratory exclamation to communicate the most epic statement of finality.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This thesis focused only on a portion of Yuyama’s life until the mid-1970’s—detailing a young man’s struggles with his musical education in post-war Japan to becoming one of the most beloved composers for children in his country. Since then, his achievements have been recognized in forms of awards (the most prestigious of them being the Order of the Rising Sun bestowed by the Japanese government) and appointments as the President of the Association of Children’s Song Writers in Japan and the Council Chairperson for the Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers, and Publishers (JASRAC). Of his many works, Confections occupies a special place among young pianists over several generations, as evinced by its consistently repeated publication since its birth.

The singular aspect that separates Confections from all other programmatic music is that it relies on the interpreter’s imagination for translating sensations from saporific stimulants into musical communication. Research in cross-modal reception, interpretation, and expression has discovered (although inconclusively) that the very thought of taste may affect its manifestation as sound. Also, studies in semantics have probed the internal networking of analogies that form individual perception and understanding of a given subject. Yuyama mentions in an interview that various desserts have connections to his memories and feelings tied to the food. It can therefore be interpreted that the pieces are not purely musical illustrations of the titles, but also mood paintings of the total experience of eating. There are, indeed, various hints as to how the musical materials resemble or elicit images of the sweets, but the ways in which an
interpreter may respond to these symbols may vary infinitely depending on their palate and past encounters with the confections.

On the topic of descriptive titles to his works, Yuyama states his belief that imagery is one of the most important guiding tools for young performers. He also adds that many of his titles originate from his memories of childhood, which very often involved imagined games during times spent in solitude to distract himself from the sorrows of loneliness.

In regards to the compositional content, Yuyama has been credited for redefining the tradition of harmonic and motivic simplicity in children’s pieces because his compositional style employs frequent modulations, polytonality, and irregular rhythms. To this, his response was: “Children do not consider how pieces are constructed but rather, they enjoy and play with sonorities without prejudice. ‘Difficult’ is just some label that grown-ups came up with.” Yuyama’s quote relates to one of the conclusions that I arrived at after analyzing Confections: the attempt in demystifying the compositional content to find perceivable analogies between sensory perceptions was dependent upon the limits of my imagination. The “lack of prejudice” that children possess may allow for a more natural response that is devoid of contrivances, and they may interpret compositional details only noticeable by their innocent and creative minds. However, ironically, teaching involves developing “prejudices” or boundary-setting guidelines in young minds to direct them according to the traditions of music making. It is nevertheless a necessary, circuitous process of growth and the best remedy for such a dilemma may

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64. This statement agrees with my encounter with Confections during my childhood, which was devoid of intimidation in the face of such “difficulties.” Musical styles and complex sonorities were simply absorbed through playing and listening.
simply be that teachers must be aware of the potential side-effects of their instruction so that the guidelines are liberating, rather than limiting.

On the other side of the proverbial coin, the intellectual probing of *Confections* was a delectable venture in combining knowledge with intuition, which fulfills Yuyama’s intention expressed in his prefacing quote.65

Children’s piano works by earlier composers such as Burgmüller, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and Bartok involve titles about peasants, wild riders, sick dolls, reapers, etc. that are expressive and imagination-triggering, but children of the twenty-first century may not easily establish a clear and vivid connection to such titles as much as they would with desserts. Due to their accessibility, food as a subject matter can be considered a more approachable pathway in connecting extramusical objects and phenomena to the context of musical interpretation. The pleasures derived from food’s visual appearance, texture, aroma, and flavor are all contributing factors to the formulation of an aurally expressive outlet. The gastronomic associations may also have stylistic connotations attached to wherever the desserts come from geographically. The connotations are informative as generalized impressions of the styles attributable to a country’s musical culture. As pedagogical devices, this double function of exciting a musician’s other sensory modes while exposing a student to various idioms are achieved simultaneously.

65. This quote can be found in Chapter One, but again in its entirety: These works are not necessarily meant only for children, but rather for both adults and children to play and listen to. If you look at their scores, you will find that children can play some of them easily, while others may be rather formidable even for adults. To let the instrument sing and chatter fully and freely… this is what I had in mind while composing them.
It is a notable feat of Yuyama, as well as his publisher’s biggest selling point, that this opus can be useful in teaching the process of synthesizing pianistic techniques, imagination, and stylistic awareness. In other words, Confections aims loftily, using relatable terminology, at teaching young musicians to formulate interpretations by unifying the processes of: 1) responding sensitively to musical material/imagery, 2) overcoming the technical demands, and 3) educating oneself in the cultural, historical, and stylistic background of a work. The pursuit of this caliber of total musical understanding inculcated through this learning experience may serve as exceptional groundwork for pianists who then proceed to satisfy their musical hunger with progressively advanced repertoire.

Suggestions for Further Research

Although it is arguable that defining the mechanism of subjective interpretation is a seemingly endless voyage into the unknown, it still remains as a fascinating area of exploration. The pursuit of answers to the mysteries of the human psyche may be endless, but the journey inward may gradually uncover truths just as astronomers continuously do in an outward fashion into the vastness of outer space. While I believe that it is not necessary to know 100% of the components in the interpretive process, it is helpful to be aware of as many aspects of interpretation as possible. Challenging oneself to consider the countless possibilities only aids in increasing one’s expressive and technical vocabulary. A rich vocabulary may then be applied in the pedagogical setting where the teacher must adapt continuously to the needs of the student, and the teacher must select vocabulary that best resonates with the student’s understanding of the world. Confections,
loaded with possibilities, offers a kind of unique opportunity to excite a student’s musical imagination not only through words and played demonstrations, but also through food.

Based on the pedagogical possibilities of *Confections*, the author suggests further research on:

1) Effects and responses of instructive cue words given to students measured by empirical research. This is similar to Mesz, Trevisan, and Sigman’s experiments on cue word-inspired improvisation, but in the setting of a music lesson.

2) Effectiveness of other works by Yuyama in the pedagogical setting.

3) Philosophical or conceptual connections found in multidisciplinary arts.
Bibliography


