



# Ryuji Kunimatsu Guitar Arrangement on the Oblivion by Astor Piazzolla: A Critical Analysis

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## Abstract

This study examined the characteristics of Kunimatsu's guitar arrangements in Astor Piazzolla's *Oblivion* by comparing aspects of musical form, melody, and harmony. As with other arrangements' performances, the primary motif of Astor Piazzolla's *Oblivion* melodic theme in Kunimatsu guitar arrangement has always been played differently from the original version. This performance phenomenon could responsibly risk blurring the identification of structural boundaries within its musical form. The purpose of this study is to prove the basic construction of *Oblivion* melody, including its form structure and rhythmic characteristics, by comparing Kunimatsu's arrangements against the composer's original score. This study uses musicological research methods. The approaches applied in studying this work are analytical, theoretical, and comparative. This study compares the two data to reveal the musical forms and the differences in the primary motive rhythmic characteristics. The results of this study are findings of the *Oblivion* musical forms in both publications and the differences in primary motives rhythmic patterns in both sources. The difference in musical form is impressive, possibly caused by the insertion of auxiliary members. As a result, Kunamitsu arrangement includes using the two-part song form, originally a three-part song form. With the revelation of the original melodic structure that is clear from the results of this study, the musicians who will present the *Oblivion* will at least have the essential reference in their interpretation. This research contributes to expanding studies in classical guitar performance and musical forms and new approaches in textual musicological analysis that are still infrequent.

**Keywords:** musical form, arrangement, classical guitar, Piazzolla, interpretation

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## INTRODUCTION

This study explores the characteristics of Astor Piazzolla's *Oblivion* performance interpretation in the guitar solo arrangement version. The *Oblivion* melody is so famous that many musicians perform it with different instruments and arrangements. In addition, the melody has also been arranged for guitar solos by many

guitarists. This study takes the arranged version of Japanese guitarist Ryuji Kunimatsu by comparing it with the original composer's script on its melody.

This research primarily relates to two subjects that the first author teaches in the Department of Music, Faculty of Performing Arts, Yogyakarta Indonesian Institute of the Arts (Institut Seni Indonesia, or ISI), musical form theory and guitar

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studies. Another reason for choosing this topic is the second author's undergraduate thesis, whereas the first author was his supervisor. Meanwhile, the third and the fourth authors' roles were as an examiner and a thesis reader.

The similarity of this research to the thesis is using the same sample, namely Kunimatsu's guitar arrangement on Astor Piazzolla's *Oblivion*. However, this research differs from the thesis because it focuses on analyzing musical forms as the performance interpretation, while the thesis on Kunimatsu's harmony aspects on the piece.

Music is like the human body that it has a form as its skeleton. The form in music consists of melody as its soul, harmony or counterpoint as mind, and rhythm as its heart pulse (Ewen, 1954; Maconie, 2010; Rachman, 2013; Rachman & Lestari, 2013).

Musical form range from figures as the smallest elements—combining two or more figures will result in a motif. These motif elements then form more meaningful units, such as semi phrases and phrases. For example, a pair of two phrases, namely antecedent and consequent, results in a sentence or a period. This combination constructs various forms of musical work (Rubio, 2019; Stein, 1979).

In current scientific journals, it is still hard to find the topic concerning musical forms. However, textual studies on music still exist. For example, a publication by Moseley (2019) examined the primary forms of Anton Webern's twelve-tone music. The other studies on the musical form have widely developed and are associated with physiology and the psychology of music. Bader (2021a) examines the correlation of musical form elements, i.e., musical phrases, to the capacity of human memory. Meanwhile, Deliège & Mélen (1997) investigate the listener's perception of understanding the musical forms.

Although not as many studies as in the psychology of music, recently, several theoretical studies of musicology have sought to uncover the application of musical forms in society. Boonplian et al. (2020)

analyze a musical form of the Mon ethnic groups' lullaby singing in Thailand. The other multi-discipline studies on musical form and media culture practiced by Hadi et al. (2021) analyze Banjar's popular Song in South Kalimantan. Another study contextualizes musical form study with stage communication strategy. Hudson (2021) analyzes Banjar popular Song in South Kalimantan. Another study contextualizes musical form study with stage communication strategy. Hudson (2021) studies compound ternary musical form's characteristic that Heavy Metal music has applied. He contextually looks at the strategy of musicians in manifesting the musical form, which is known as the compound AABA. Such an approach allows for musical form differences as the significance of aesthetic poses or social positions, which contrasts programmed communication.

In the context of music education in the digital era, Supiarza et al. (2021) examine the competence of the Z generation students in interpreting poetry into the creation of the Keroncong, Indonesian popular music in the 50s style. While his focus is on students, Ghozali (2020) examines the competence of teachers in learning music. Meanwhile, another study of Indonesian popular music by Raharjo et al. (2021) examines the conservation and transmission of Gambang Semarang music in the people of Semarang in Central Java.

Unlike bowed instruments that also use strings, even other guitars, the classical guitar has widely functioned as an instrument that performs solo works (Bader, 2021b). Since the late Romantic period, many classical guitar repertoires have been arrangements, or transcriptions, from the works for instruments of other former non-guitar composers. From the 1970s to the present, classical guitars have even used a wide repertoire range (O'Toole, 2019).

This study discusses musical form, motif, and harmony characteristics of Astor Piazzolla's work, *Oblivion* for various instruments, by comparing the original score and its guitar arrangement by Ryuji

Kunimatsu. Generally, musical elements, such as forms, and the other performance aspects, such as techniques, instrumentation, interpretations, arrangements, and composition, have recently been studied.

There are many famous Argentine composers, but Piazzolla is legendary due to his unique musical style. Illustration images cover various musical forms and genres in an article labeled as an essay not intended for Piazzolla fans. The illustration depicts Argentina's musical life; however, pattern details of their musical forms are not available (Vavilov, 2021). Besides, a book explores the historical traces of Tango instrumental music in Argentina, including Piazzolla's Tango style (Link & Wendland, 2016). The book offers a view of the Argentine Tango in developing instrumental art forms and musical style innovations. However, it does not specifically review the results of the analysis of their musical form.

Although publication of the Piazzolla studies is recently minimal, his works have attracted some college academic studies as companion reports on graduate recital final assignments. For example, in his doctoral dissertation on instrumental tango idiom, Drago (2008, pp. 107, 114) used works by Piazzolla orchestra, including *Oblivion*, among the Tango Nuevo's presentation and rhythm pattern samples.

The specific comparison between the arrangement results and the original melody of Piazzolla's *Oblivion* is still hard to find. However, Drago's research (2008) shows that the study uses extracts of original melodies on Piazzolla's works for comparison, including *Oblivion*. Drago(2008) analyzed the Tango style in the context of ornamental processing. From many analyzes of ornaments, *Oblivion* motif extracts were the ones to describe the grupetto ornament type. *Oblivion* extracts as the grupetto ornaments examples in comparing performance to its original melody are from bars 12-13 and 16-17. The other explanation of arpeggio-diminution application is in bars 17-21.

In completing her Master's stu-

dies, Molazadeh (2013) examined Astor Piazzolla's *Histoire du Tango* as a phenomenon of Latin musical influence on flute repertoire. In addition, to increase the loyalty of the style, Cosano (2019), a doctoral candidate, wrote new transcriptions of the three Piazzolla's Saxophone Quartets for critical writing assignments to complete his doctoral study.

Technical analysis of Piazzolla's music is a topic discussed in two of Cardoso's works. His first work examined incorporating jazz elements into the Tango of Astor Piazzolla (Cardoso, 2018). The other one explored the fourth intervals phenomenon that characterized Piazzolla's compositions (Cardoso, 2021). However, these studies relate to the style of music and composition techniques of the Tango.

Although there are studies concerning various musical aspects in Astor Piazzolla's compositions, including his new-tango style, no one directly studies his original guitar works or their arranged guitar versions, especially *Oblivion*. Zhovnir (2018) discusses the creative influence of Piazzolla's guitar works on the mainstream style trends of Latin American music but does not guarantee the authenticity of the composer's guitar version. Although Astor Piazzolla was not a guitarist but an instrumental virtuoso for Bandonion (Britannica, 2021), we assume that almost all of his guitar works are, in fact, arrangements by famous guitarists (see Vincens, 2020).

Currently, not many researchers are interested in the musical form of Piazzolla's works and the originality characteristics of his melodic motifs. This is because music form and thematic motif can only be known through melody, while studies that discuss Piazzolla's original pieces, *Oblivion*, do not yet exist.

Although the study of harmony in Piazzolla's works, particularly *Oblivion*, was not found, other Jazz studies assumption no doubt that it is in the jazz style (Cardoso, 2018, 2021). Jazz elements integrated into Piazzolla's music indicate that the harmonies of his works should contain

modified conventional chords. The chords with various extra-tones and conventional harmonic movements with several alternatives to the Dominant Seventh are prevalent in Jazz harmony (Aravena, 2020; Hedges et al., 2014; Pinheiro, 2020; Yamamoto et al., 2020). However, no research has proven the Piazzolla's harmony basis, both in the arrangement and original melody in particular.

This study analysis is similar to Drago's (2008) method, which compares the arrangement version to the original *Oblivion* melody. The difference is that he used a particular extract of *Oblivion* as one among other composition examples, while this study examines specifically the *Oblivion*.

Another similarity is with Vincens's (2020) study, which compares two arrangements of the same Piazzolla's composition. However, while he focuses on the creativity of two guitarists in producing an arrangement of a Piazzolla's work, this study focuses not only on the guitarist but also on the composition. Therefore, this study looked at how the interpretation of a composer's composition in its performance. This research reveals how the creativity and complexity of Kunimatsu arrangements in interpreting the work through performance.

To meet the demands of accurate interpretation, a musician needs to understand the actual structural boundaries within the form of a work he performed. In the context of this study, the research should formulate problems as a limitation of discussion. Therefore, the authors need to answer the research questions: 1) What musical form does the composer apply to the *Oblivion* melody? 2) Why do Kunimatsu's melody arrangements indicate a different musical form compared to the original version? 3) why are *Oblivion*'s primary motifs played differently in many performances, including Piazzolla? 4) What is Astor Piazzolla's harmonic style in *Oblivion*?

The purpose of revealing answers to these questions is to clarify *Oblivion*'s mu-

sical form and understand the performance interpretation of this melody that refers to its source. This study needs to refer to the original score representing the composer version to approach and solve the problems.

## METHOD

This study uses a musicological research method with approaches that encompass an analytical (Al-Mashakbeh, 2018; Shokotko, 2020; Watanabe, 1967), a theoretical (Cabria, 2021; Watanabe, 1967), and a comparative (Björk et al., 2021; Nettle et al., 1992; Nettle & Bohlman, 1991; Watanabe, 1967). As a field of musical science, musicology applies a comprehensive methodology so that it is equivalent to science in general (Winters et al., 2016).

The field has been treated as a visual-musicology among the current development. The discipline then has been a sub-domain of established musicology with appropriate analytical and visualization tasks (Miller et al., 2019). Novara (2020) states that musicology is a field of research that has methods and concepts. The field demands the development of methodological standards that are no less strict than natural sciences. Cherniavska (2019) theoretically explores musicology as a method. The musicological scope encompasses the form and notation of music, the lives of composers and performers, the development of musical instruments, and musical theory (such as harmony, melody, rhythm, and scale).

Musicology then has evolved from the discipline of historiography to a new research system. The system crosses the fields of acceptance history that encompasses: institutional history, structural and genre analysis, acoustics, critical reflection, semiological analysis, hermeneutical reflection, and epistemology (Barbo, 2020). The musicological method applied in this study seeks to uncover the proper musical form of Piazzolla's *Oblivion* melody based on two sources, the original melody and the transcription of Kunimatsu's perfor-

mance.

The sample of this study is Ryuji Kunimatsu's solo guitar arrangement publication on Piazzolla's *Oblivion*. The reason for choosing this arrangement was, first of all, the connection classical guitar education background of the authors. This option made it easier for researchers to analyze if they were more familiar with instrumental sounds than others they did not know.

Secondly, Piazzolla's *Oblivion* melody is trendy among 20th-century musicians, even today. The performance of various arrangements, both from the composer himself and from other musicians ranging from an instrumental solo up to orchestras, show a tendency towards the same rhythmic flexibility in performing the primary motif of this melody. The performances of the primary motif deviated from the essential characteristics of the written motif based on the original notation. According to the authors, Kunimatsu's arrangement as a sample in this study may represent this general trend in performing the motives.

This musicological study used analytical methods to interpret parts of *Oblivion's* melody and reconstruct them to determine the relationship between one part and another. This study examined Kunimatsu's arrangements through theoretical methods and confirmed with the theories in musical form. At the same time, this approach also looked the harmonic progression applied in the original manuscript. After analyzing *Oblivion's* original melodic motifs, a comparative approach was applied to compare it to the theoretical interpretations of the motifs contained in Kunamitsu's arrangement. By observing similarities and differences in two versions of *Oblivion* motifs, this study identifies Kunamitsu's interpretation of *Oblivion's* melody.

This assessment covers several stages. The first was to determine the research sample, in this case, the *Oblivion* melody of the Kunimatsu arrangement version. The second stage was to find the original script of the melody to find out the exact musical form of Piazzolla's *Oblivion* melody. It was

crucial to refer to the original manuscript, or at least from the publication of the original copy, to ensure the proper musical form of this melody. In this relationship, the third stage attempts to re-copied the original melody independently of this work to facilitate analysis. The fourth stage was to identify the main part of the *Oblivion* melody based on an independent copy of the score. The fifth stage was to identify the harmonic movements that clarify *Oblivion's* musical form.

The six stage was to analyze Kunimatsu's melodic version by extracting it from the guitar score. The seventh stage was to compare the musical forms of Kunimatsu arrangement to its source version. After going through these seven procedures, finally, the eighth stage was to identify the creativity of Kunimatsu's performance in Astor Piazzolla's *Oblivion* arrangement.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of this study is an analytical description of the musical form based on the original melody score of the composer's version arrangements. In this result and discussion section, the analysis of the musical form and comparisons between the two melodic versions are confirmed with theories about musical forms. In addition, confirmation of the findings of this musical form is reinforced by the analysis of the harmonic progression of *Oblivion* melodies.

The Piazzolla's *Oblivion* is a melody that is very popular among musicians of the current century. Various arrangements by other musicians cannot be separated from the strong association between this melody and the composer.

The manuscript, which is presumed to be original of the *Oblivion* composition found in this study, was not in the form of an ensemble or a solo instrument but the original single melody with chord accompaniment symbols. The melody is in the key of C minor with its three flats key signature, a minor relative to the key of E-flat major.



**Musical form and melody**

The original version of the *Oblivion* melody length is 64 bars. The melody uses a three-part song form, consisting of section A as Part I (the opening), then section B as Part II (the middle), which is a contrast, and back to section A as Part III (the return). The return of section A in Part III follows the *Da Capo al Fine* phrase at the end of Part II; the back from beginning up to finish sign. Therefore, there is no change whatsoever.

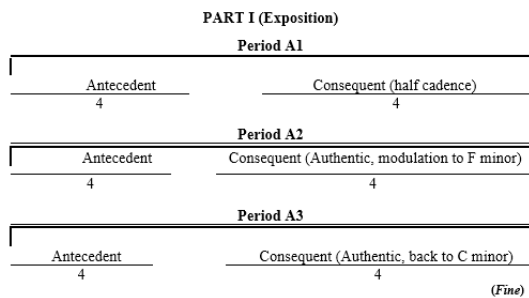


Figure 1. The repetition of period in Part I.

Part I consist of three conventional construction of periods. Thus, each of these periods consists of four bars of the antecedent phrase and four consequent bars. Because each period has a significant difference, identifying the periods in this Part uses numbers as the coding, namely A1, A2, and A3 (see figure 1).

The primary motif of the *Oblivion* formed in the first antecedent semi-phrase, from a series of five descending notes of the C minor scale, from its dominant to the tonic, or from G to C notes (see figure 2). The second antecedent's semi-phrase continues in the following third and fourth bars. The second motif appears in the lower sequent at the minor third interval in the next semi-phrase, moving down from E-flat to A-flat notes. Thus, an antecedent phrase has been confirmed (see figure 2).

The following four bars, starting from the fifth bar up to the eighth, are the second phrases of the first period. The first note of this second phrase starts from the tonic of C minor that lasts as long as a dotted half note equals the same duration as the three quarters. Although it may ap-

pear to be different from the primary motif at the antecedent phrase, it derived from its diminution. Consequently, the motif in the first semi-phrase does not serially decrease by five notes, but the fourth note stepped up one level.

Figure 2. Normative periodical construction of the first two periods in Part I

If the antecedent first phrase used five notes, then the consequent's first semi-phrase used four notes only. The fourth note seems to have been dropped on purpose and immediately closes with the fifth note so that this semi-phrase uses only four notes. The next semi-phrase completes the consequent. This semi-phrase motif develops the last three notes of the previous semi-phrase, which continued with a series of notes within the framework of a half cadence (bars 7-8). This condition formed the entire period, which is the theme of this *Oblivion* melody. Meanwhile, at the end of period A1, a half cadence shows that this period expects a period repetition.

The next period following the primary theme of *Oblivion* is a complement to the double period type. The first semi-phrase of the second period is not precisely the same as the consequent's first semi-phrases of the *Oblivion's* theme. In contrast to the first-period construction, where the two phrases tend to differ due to diminution, the consequent's second phrase of the second period (13th to 16th bars) has a more similar motive to its antecedent. It is the consequent phrases from interval below the tonic of C minor of its antecedent. However, the end of the antecedent's second bar forms the perfect cadence to conclude a series of double periods. This

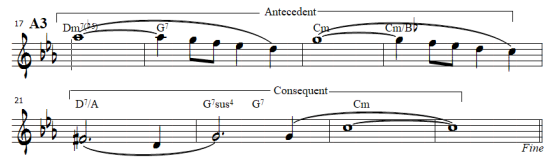
cadence brings the semi-phrase modulates to the subdominant key, the F minor, in the third bar of this phrase. So that this is uncommon that there is no second semi-phrase in this consequence. The three upbeat notes at the end of this consequent phrase as if would usher to Part III but, in fact, not happen.

The first phrase from the third period is a sequent in the upper minor second position above the primary motif. From the perspective of melody direction, these fluctuations were closely synonymous with the primary motif. However, from the harmonic perspective, the movement of harmony decorates this melody dynamically. The consequent phrases from this period use very emphatic harmonic dynamics with authentic cadences that lead to the tonic of the C minor key. Thus, this phrase provides certainty for the end of a three periods unit of the double periods.

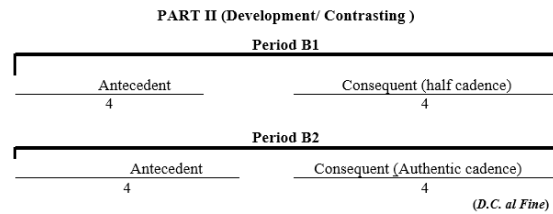
Figure 3 shows the continued construction of Part I from the expanded double period. The three periods of this section are composed of the usual arrangement of phrases. The first two periods almost showed a perfect double period but were interrupted by unexpected cadences. The cadence instead of going to the basic key of C minor but patterned to the subdominant, namely F minor. It was only at the end of the third period that the cadence brought back the basic key of this work.

As the departure part, Part II consists of two contrasting periods: the first new period and its repetition. Therefore, to differentiate between the two, the identification uses code B1 and B2, respectively.

Part II comprises the repetition of the first period as the beginning of period B2. Using this approach that presents noticeable cadence at the end of each period, the half cadence in the first period, and the authentic cadence in the second period, there is no doubt that this is a solid double period of Part II.

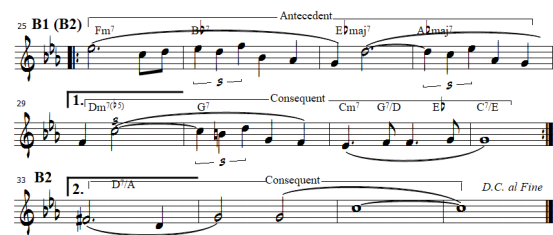


**Figure 3.** The third period of Part I is the consequent phrase's extension of the second period.



**Figure 4.** The contrasting part that resembles a development section.

Part II forms a standard double period that comprises two four-bars unit phrases. However, in terms of its harmony, it is not merely a contrasting section but also resembles a development section.



**Figure 5.** Modulation by authentic cadences in Part II.

The Part II of the *Oblivion* melody comprises the development sections, containing a series of authentic cadences that accompany modulation sequences (see figure 5). This section is mainly from the apparent repetition of periods. Theoretically, each of these periods should be the combination of two contrasting phrases. However, only the first period appears ultimately in its notation while the second only features its second semi phrase, the consequent. The repetition written with an ending in the first and second chambers clearly shows a perfect double pe-

riod construction due to the similarity in their antecedent. This development section ends with the *Da Capo* (D.C.) *al Fine* phrase, which means going back to the beginning up to the Fine sign (final/ end). The concluding mark of the composition at the end of the exposition section as the third Part, confirms that this piece is in three-part song form.

**Kunimatsu’s Musical Form and Melody**

This section compares musical form and motif which are applied in Kunimatsu’s arrangement to the original version applied by composer. Ryuji Kunimatsu is a Japanese guitarist who is very professional in his field. Kunimatsu was born in Kyoto in Japan in 1977. He went to Spain to study guitar and composition. Among the learning processes he went through, the most important was his study at the Luthier Art Music School.

The second analysis source of this study is the guitar arrangement by Ryuji Kunimatsu. As a composer, his works are numerous and varied, and he uploads them to his website to download them freely. Likewise, this research material makes use of these facilities (Kunimatsu, 2021b).

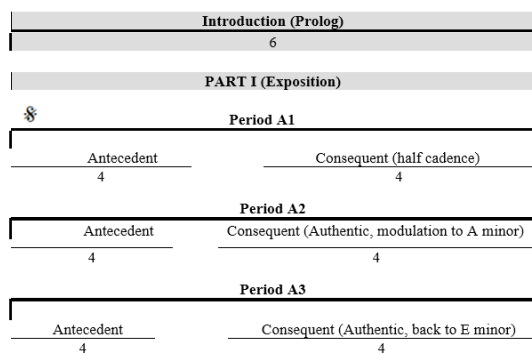


Figure 6. Part I of Kunimatsu’s version.

Kunimatsu’s guitar arrangement has the same parts as the original version, namely Part I, Part II, and Part III. However, the difference encompasses: Firstly, he added the introduction and *Coda* parts; Secondly, he does not use the D.C. (*da capo*) instruction sign, i.e., to return to the beginning of Part I, or D.S. (*dal segno*) back to the Segno sign, but rather rewritten as

a continuation of Part II. While the original version uses D.C., he did not stop after Part III but instead re-played Part II before entering *Coda*. As seen in figure 6, Part I, the overall picture of Part I of Kunimatsu’s arrangement is no different from the structure in the original melodic version.

Except for the additional introduction, the entire Part II form is exactly the same as its original version, that it has three equal periods. In addition to auxiliary members in the beginning, i.e., introduction or prologue, the use of key signature is no longer C minor but being E minor.

Kunimatsu’s guitar arrangement of the *Oblivion* includes a 16 bars unit of introduction. As a result, rhythmical tango characteristics appear in the introductory melody. A half cadence then concludes this section and expects the coming of the main tune in the tonic key (see figure 7). Harmonically, the E-minor ninth chord wraps the groove of the introductory melody towards its Dominant in the last two bars as a closing that leads to the main part of the work.

OBLIVION 1

Interpreted by Andre Indrawan Astor Piazzolla  
arr. Ryuji Kunimatsu

Figure 7. The short prologue with its unique figurative rhythmical pattern.

Part I, which comes after the introduction, consists of three consecutive periods. The motifs in this introduction section, or prologue, will reappear again in the *Coda* section or epilogue in the same way.

Figure 8. The first part of Kunimatsu’s version in E-minor.



In Kunimatsu's guitar arrangement, the central figure features the melodic motive representing *Oblivion* musical interpretations in many performances (figure 8). The second motive at the second semi-phrase does not start from the third bar but pulls a half-beat before the thesis beat to the end of bar 1 (see figure 9).

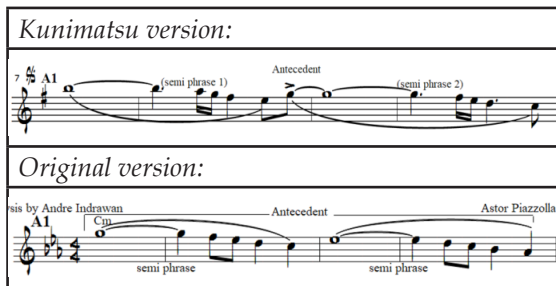


Figure 9. Motif comparison between Kunimatsu version and the original melody

This condition could cause the semi phrases borders to blur and the debatable whether it consists of five or six notes. Meanwhile, Part II promotes a parallel double period with the same characteristic of its antecedent.

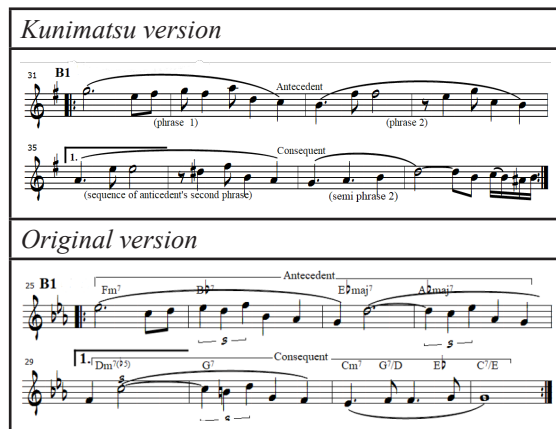


Figure 10. Periodical construction comparison of Part II

In Kunimatsu's score, the antecedent phrase is re-written separately. If the work is in three-part song form, the work should resume at the end of Part I. However, Kunimatsu continues to Part II for the second time up to the *Coda*. This condition makes the musical form of this work resemble the two-part song form. The Part II of Kunimatsu's arrangement is not essen-

tially different from the original version. However, he cut one bar of the consequent phrase of the second period in Part II.

Kunimatsu re-performs this Part again after the return that makes it fall into a repeated two-part song form. The use of repeat marks here is a kind of reduction that aims to understand its musical form's essence. The use of the *D.S. al Coda* in this analysis is not coming from the original printed arrangement score but the authors' idea. Even though obeying the printed score that was published without repetition, it does not change the essence from the perspective of musical form.

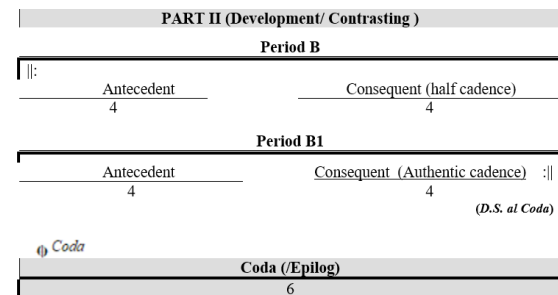


Figure 11. Sketch of Part II presenting double periodical construction.



Figure 12. The consequence appearance of Part II for the second time

This treatment caused the antecedent to consist of a single phrase. So the use of three bars phrase has happened previously that the combination of two three-bars phrase units forms a single period of the introduction and the *Coda*.

### Chord Progression Comparison

In the discussion of theory, it can be understood that jazz elements are integrated into the works of Piazzolla (Cardoso,

2018). Among other jazz elements, harmony and chord movement are characteristics that can be easily traced because they move along with the movement of melodies.

The chord analysis result will appear in the following three tables. Due to the limited space of columns in the tables, the use of symbols for major and minor chords applies capital and lowercase letters. For example, D-major will appear as “D,” while D minor as the “d.” The additional sharp symbol will use the upper case so that the B-flat chord will appear as “Bb,” and the raised seventh chord, e.g., the seventh F-sharp chord, will symbolize the “F#7”. The symbol of Major seven chords that sometimes use the “maj7” symbol following a chord. However, the triangle sign( $\Delta$ ) will replace it instead. The slash after a chord followed by a capital letter means the additional bass note to the chord. For example, “G7/D”, or G dominant seventh bass D, is a synonym term for the second inversion of G7. In this construction, the lowest note of the chord is the third note level of the G7 triad.

The last symbol appears in the following tables is a minus sign (-). The use of a minus sign between two chords shows a chord’s progression within a bar. Therefore, “G7sus 4 - G7” means a movement from the dominant seventh G chord with additional sustain on the fourth note (the C) to the next following original dominant seventh chord where the fourth, which is the dissonance note, is solved to the third (the B).

Table 1 illustrates harmony that strengthens the formal construction of the *Oblivion* original melody of the First and Part IIs. The border between the first two periods is the half cadence that brings the melody to the original tonic of C minor. In Part II, the melody modulates in the cycle-way through several subsequent authentic cadences. Finally, the dominant-tonic chord progressions of the authentic cadence appear in sequent in Part II.

The F-minor arrival at the last progression in F-minor brings to the period sec-

tion repetition marks the beginning and the end of the B1 period. The third period brings the melody to the F-minor key, which is the sub-dominant of C minor. The repeated antecedent passes the first ending and jumps to the second ending, to the sequent of the B2 period. The second period of the double period takes its antecedent’s second turn as the B2.

**Table 1.** Chord progressions defining harmonic setting of the source in the key of C minor.

Period	Phrase	Bars of Each Phrase			
		1	2	3	4
A1	Ant	c	c	c	c
	Con	f <sub>7</sub> - B <sup>b</sup> <sub>7</sub>	e <sup>b</sup> $\Delta$ - A <sup>b</sup> $\Delta$	d <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	G <sub>7</sub>
A2	Ant	c	c	c	c
	Con	g <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	C <sub>7</sub>	f	f/E <sup>b</sup>
A3	Ant	d <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	G <sub>7</sub>	c	c/B <sup>b</sup>
	Con	D <sub>7</sub> /A	G <sub>7</sub> <sup>sus 4</sup> -G <sub>7</sub>	c	c
B1	Ant	f <sub>7</sub>	B <sup>b</sup> <sub>7</sub>	E <sup>b</sup> $\Delta$	A <sup>b</sup> $\Delta$
	Con	d <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	G <sub>7</sub>	c-G <sub>7</sub> /D-E <sup>b</sup>	C7/E
B2	Ant	f <sub>7</sub>	B <sup>b</sup> <sub>7</sub>	E <sup>b</sup> $\Delta$	A <sup>b</sup> $\Delta$
	Con	D7/A	G <sub>7</sub>	c	c

Kunimatsu transposed the *Oblivion*’s original key signature from C minor to in E minor. However, he does not change the basic idea of its harmonic progression. Table 2 comprises a harmonic comparison between Kunimatsu’s arrangement and the original melody version.

The harmonic symbol accompanies the chord’s presentation. Therefore, the position of the chords in the key of C minor as the representation of original score and E minor for Kunimatsu’s arrangement would easily be recognized. The comparison of both versions shows no significant harmonic changes between the two sources except modifications caused by the key-signature transposition. However, some technical adjustments are inevitable due to the challenge of the limited capacity of the guitar.

The types of harmonies used in *Oblivion* indicate the integration of jazz elements. Jazz chords are formed from conventional chords added to other tones, and these different tones are obtained from

**Table 2.** Harmonic progression of the First Part of Kunimatsu’s version compared to the source

Period	Phrase	Keys	Bar of Each Phrase			
			1	2	3	4
A1	Ant	1 #	e	e	e	e
		3 b	c	c	c	c
		Symbol	i	i	i	i
	Con	1 #	a <sub>7</sub> -D <sub>7</sub>	GΔ- CΔ	f# <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	B <sub>7</sub>
		3 b	f <sub>7</sub> -Bb <sub>7</sub>	EbΔ-AbΔ	d <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	G7
		Symbol	iv <sub>7</sub> -VII <sub>7</sub>	IIIΔ-VIΔ	ii <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	V7
A2	Ant	1 #	e	E	e	e
		3 b	c	c	c	c
		Symbol	i	i	i	i
	Con	1 #	b <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	E <sub>7</sub>	a	a/G
		3 b	g <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	C <sub>7</sub>	f	f/Es
		Symbol	v <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	I <sub>7</sub>	iv	iv <sup>4/2</sup>
A3	Ant	1 #	f# <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	B <sub>7</sub>	e	e/G
		3 b	d <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	G7	c	c/Bb
		Symbol	ii <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	V7	i	i <sup>4/3</sup>
	Con	1 #	F#7/C#	B <sub>7</sub> <sup>sus 4</sup> -B <sub>7</sub>	e	e
		3 b	D7/A	G <sub>7</sub> <sup>sus 4</sup> -G <sub>7</sub>	c	c
		Symbol	II <sup>(4/3)</sup>	V <sub>7</sub> <sup>sus 4</sup> -G <sub>7</sub>	i	i

**Table 3.** Harmonic progression of the Second of Kunimatsu’s arrangement compared to the source.

Period	Phrase	Keys	Bar of Each Phrase			
			1	2	3	4
Ant	1 # :	a <sub>7</sub>	D <sub>7</sub>	GΔ	CΔ	
		f <sub>7</sub>	B <sup>b</sup> <sub>7</sub>	E <sup>b</sup> Δ	A <sup>b</sup> Δ	
		Symbol:	iv <sub>7</sub>	VII <sub>7</sub>	IIIΔ	VIΔ
B1	Con	1 # :	f# <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	B <sub>7</sub>	e-B/F#-G	E <sub>7</sub> /G#
		3 b :	d <sub>7</sub> <sup>-5</sup>	G <sub>7</sub>	c-G <sub>7</sub> /D-E <sup>b</sup>	C <sub>7</sub> /E
		Symbol:	ii <sub>7</sub> <sup>(-5)</sup>	V <sub>7</sub>	I V <sup>(4/3)</sup>	I <sup>(4/3)</sup>
Ant	1 # :	a <sub>7</sub>	D <sub>7</sub>	GΔ	CΔ	
		f <sub>7</sub>	B <sup>b</sup> <sub>7</sub>	E <sup>b</sup> Δ	A <sup>b</sup> Δ	
		Symbol:	iv <sub>7</sub>	VII <sub>7</sub>	IIIΔ	VIΔ
B2	Con	1 # :	F# <sub>7</sub> /Cis	B <sub>7</sub>	e	e
		3 b :	D7/A	G <sub>7</sub>	c	c
		Symbol:	II <sup>(4/3)</sup>	V <sub>7</sub>	i	i

multiples of third intervals over traditional triads. Suppose the increase or decrease of conventional triad elements impacts major, minor, augmented, and diminished nuances. In that case, triad elements will form the seventh chord so that the triad element becomes four tones. The increase or decrease of one of its elements will produce a wealth of harmony. Another exciting thing about the harmonic aspect of this work is the transfer of cadres by modulation.

By increasing its multiples to ninth chords, the triad element becomes five tones. The addition of the seventh tone will produce a unique tonic chord, the major seventh chord, while the decrease will change the chord status to Dominant seventh. The increase, decrease, and reversal of the position of the triad tone sequence will produce a variety of unique and rich chord nuances. However, *Oblivion* jazz harmony is not up to the ninth chord. Therefore, the jazz chords used are the standards applied, including major seventh, minor seventh, and fifth tone drop in minor chords and fourth tone suspense on dominant chords. The rest is triad reversal and the addition of another bass tone to a chord.

### Discussion

The form is an essential element in music as a framework that unites melody, harmony, and rhythm (Ewen, 1954; Maconie, 2010). As a language construction in a musical system, musical forms combine melodic sentences or periods. The three-part song form is the ABA pattern, also known as ternary form, characterized by statement, departure, and restatement. Theoretically, the length of the A is at least one period, while the B is from one phrase to one period (see Rubio, 2019; Jo Stein, 1979). The result of this study shows that the musical form of *Oblivion* melody is a three-part song form. Part I or the A in *Oblivion* is an extended double period, while the B is a double period. However, in this study, the Kunimatsu arrangement version has been identified as a two-part song form.

Since *Oblivion* is a piece of popular

music, it is natural to use a three-part song form. Moreover, as seen from its lyrics, lullabies music from Mon ethnic group in Thailand also uses ternary form (Boonplian et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Heavy Metal music uses a three-part song form, which he refers to as AABA (Hudson, 2021). Thus, the finding of form shift in Kunimatsu's arrangement confirms Hudson's (2021) theories as well as Boonplian (2020) related to the three-part song form (ternary form or ABA form) in popular music.

*Oblivion's* main parts comprise three periods of the double period type in exposition and two parallel periods in its departure or contrasting parts. Following the Part II, the melody goes back to the beginning and repeats the first part to meet the ternary form pattern and finish requirements. However, in the Kunimatsu arrangement version, there is a shift from a three-part song form to a two-part one, where the repetition occurs in all of the two main parts.

Musical forms are sometimes confusing in performance, whereas Piazzola's *Oblivion* is available in various versions, including solos and ensembles. However, except for Kunimatsu's arrangement, all versions of the work performances on the YouTube media, such as orchestral, chamber music, piano, and guitar solo, mostly apply a three-part song form. In addition, all of them use similar introductions and *codas*. Specifically, for guitar arrangements versions, guitarists who refer to these standard forms include Roland Dyens (International, 2016), Kossinskaja (Guitars, 2016), and Bardesio (2017). However, Kunimatsu's version was not only presented by himself (Kunimatsu, 2021a) but also by other professional guitarists such as Mathews (2014) and Trintschuk (SiccasGuitars, 2020) and amateur guitarists; among them is Hong (2018).

The musical forms identified in the Kunimatsu arrangement use introductions and *coda* that utilize the same melodic pattern. At first glance, we would think that Kunimatsu applies a fully repeated two-part form (excluding introduction). Ho-

wever, if we take a closer look, Kunimatsu might also agree with the three-part form. The appearance of Part II for the second time after the repetition of the first part could be on purpose. It might be possible that Kunimatsu likely placed Part II towards the end of the work as part of an epilogue. The section then was ended by a *coda* that uses the motif adopted from the introduction.

The melody that becomes the material of Part II has the characteristics of loose expressions, such as the celebration of freedom following the former repetition of three periods in the previous sections. If this happened in a popular music band, it seems that this Part II would be in repetition until it finally faded away. If so, then it was enough to conclude the work without including a *coda* anymore. However, instead of making it fade out, Kunimatsu chooses to display it for what it is and closes with motifs stemming from the introduction. Thus, this motif will lead the audience to the rhythm pattern of Piazzolla's *Tango Nuevo*. So, after Kunimatsu displayed his creativity through melodic elaboration, the audience would likely admire him. To end this arrangement, he wanted to return it to the composer, Astor Piazzolla, the originator of the *Tango Nuevo*.

The change in musical form in the Kunimatsu arrangement confirms the results of Hudson's (2021) studies on the implementation of AABA compound form presentation, or three-part song form, on heavy metal music. The presentation of heavy metal music allows for a shift in form as an expression of communication between musicians and audiences. Furthermore, the arrangement performance of Piazzolla's works, both from Kunimatsu and other musicians, generally falls into entertainment music. Thus, three-part song form and the shift in musical form in performance are natural phenomena in entertainment music.

The comparative approach carried out in this study agrees with Drago's (2008) method. The presentation of *Oblivion* melodic motifs on Kunimatsu arran-

gements that tend to outwit the structural boundaries of semi-phrases from the main motif is reasonable in the context of interpretation. On the Kunimatsu arrangement, the first tone of each motif repeat appears first in the last beat of the previous bar by syncopating and holding the tone past the first beat. As a result, the audience would think the tone was part of the first semi-phrase piece. In Jazz, such a thing is prevalent in bossa-nova (de Lima & Ramalho, 2008; Ricci, 2018), so it should not affect the structure.

The changes made by performers in jazz music should be correct interpretation as long as the player understood the essence of its original version as its composition background (see Shanks, 2020). While interpretation is often associated with the way a work performs (Meissner, 2021), the arrangement plays a significant role as another form of performance interpretation.

Arrangements that are widespread with various instrument formations present *Oblivion* melody quite differently from the original. However, even the composer himself performing this melody on the bandoneon did the same. Therefore, although not precisely the same as the other arrangements, this study has considered Kunimatsu's musical arrangement to represent the other's presence of the work performance interpretation.

The melodic motif in this arrangement sounds like a phrase with five descending notes and ended by one opposite upper note. However, according to the original melodic notation, it only has five notes in two bars. Therefore, theoretically, from the analysis of the original melody, a period becomes very clear, consisting of four two-bars units, which is equal to a combination of two four-bar unit phrases (Ewen, 1954; Maconie, 2010).

Determining precise structural boundaries between semi-phrases, phrases, and periods is challenging due to the arranger's improvisation or elaboration. Harmonic progression analysis could solve the structural identification problem as



a supplement in comparison to the original version. Chord progression turns out to be able to lead us to clarify these boundaries. However, the best way is to analyze the original melody so that an artist can estimate the structural limitations of the arrangements he plays.

Musical form differences between the original version and the others arrangements do not occur. There should be an explanation behind the change. First, possible reasons would be the inclusion of auxiliary members, in this case, the unique introduction and *Coda*. The arranger's creativity in ornamental improvisation, as in the Kunimatsu's arrangement, and possible uses of Part II after the returned Part III on purpose as an epilogue that ended up with *Coda*, was the other reason.

## CONCLUSIONS

The contribution of this research is specific to the expanding studies in classical guitar performance and musical forms as a device of interpretation. However, this study has revealed the productive creativity in showing the uniqueness of his composition. At the same time, this study has also revealed the reproductive creativity of performers in interpreting the composition. In addition, the performer has successfully exhibited his excellence as a musician in his guitar arrangement.

Besides its contribution to the development of guitar study, this research will positively impact future studies in musicology. Based on the literature review in this paper, studies of music analysis have friction on two opposing musicological sides, namely the increasingly sparse textual classical on one side and the increasingly widespread contextual on the other side, which can be compromised. Thus, the classical approach can be associated with real contemporary contexts in society to compensate for the contextual studies of musicology that depart from non-musical science.

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