

Serialism

TONE ROW/NOTE ROW

- A 20th-century method of musical composition invented by Schoenberg in which the 12 notes of the Chromatic scale are organised into a series or TONE ROW. This row can be **transposed, inverted or played in retrograde**, and forms the material basis for an entire work or movement. It is a very extreme, almost mathematically organised form of Atonal Music.
- In the 1920s, Schoenberg discovered that if the **12 chromatic pitches** of the scale were arranged in a **particular order without repetition**, it was possible to compose long movements of music without the need for tonality.
- This method of composition is called **Serialism** (sometimes referred to as **Serial music or 12-tone music**).
- Serialism is therefore a method of writing music whereby the composer first creates a **tone-row**. This tone-row is simply all 12 notes of a chromatic scale.
- The composer then puts them in an order where no note is repeated until all are played.



- **Prime/Original** - the original tone-row
- **Retrograde** - the tone-row played backwards
- **Inversion** - the row played upside down
- **Inverse Retrograde** - the row played both upside down and backwards.
- **Transpositions** - the row is transposed either up or down

Original note row

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

- The row can be developed by turning it upside down. This is called an **inverted order (I)**
- To invert, start on the first note and move the same intervals, but in the opposite direction.

I 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

- You can also play the row backwards. This is called a **retrograde order (R)**.

R 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

- A **retrograde inversion (RI)** would be backwards, and upside down!

RI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

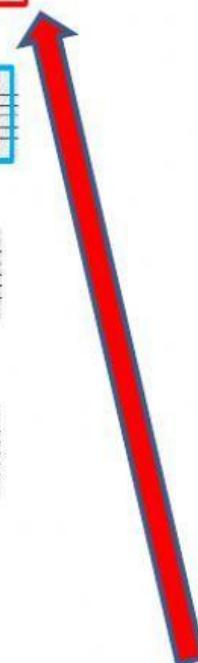
This is a tone-row by Arnold Schoenberg from his work *Variations for Orchestra Op. 31*

Prime

Retrograde

Inversion

Inverse
Retrograde



Here it is with rhythm and dynamics added, as used in the piece

NB F_b is **enharmonic** with E

[original]

[retrograde]

[retrograde inversion]

Other features of Serial Music

- **Unresolved dissonances** throughout the music (when two or more notes are sounded together which clash with one another).
- **No clear metre/ no regular pulse.** You cannot work out the time signature.
- **Large leaps** in melodic lines. This movement is described as disjunct. You cannot whistle the melody.
- Extremely **complex rhythmic patterns**
- **Augmentation** – increasing the value (length) of all notes by an exact amount
- **Diminution** – decreasing the value (length) of all notes by an exact amount
- As the music is so difficult to play, it tended to be written for **small groups of players** (usually chamber music)

Sprechgesang

- A twentieth century vocal technique which is half way between singing and speech. It is **atonal**, with awkward leaps in the “melody” line!!
- Listen Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*

Neo Classical

- Literally means “**New classicism**”. From about 1929 onwards this style in music came about when composers reacted against Romanticism and wanted to return to the structures and styles of earlier periods but combined with dissonant, tonal and even atonal harmonies.
- It was an attempt by modern composers to return to the ‘simpler’ sound of music from the 18th centuries as a response to what they considered to be excess within music of the late 19th century.
- Stravinsky’s Pulcinella is a re-working of actual music from the 18th century with a 20th-century twist. Stravinsky used a small ‘Haydn’-sized orchestra of double winds (no clarinets), two horns, one trumpet and one trombone, and arranged his strings like a baroque Concerto Grosso with small soloist group – Concertino (two violins, viola, cello, bass) and Ripieno (larger, fuller string orchestra.) so the piece instantly looked and sounded from the Baroque period

e.g. *Classical Symphony* – Prokofiev

The *Classical Symphony* is in the traditional four movements of its 18th-century prototype: a lively Allegro in sonata form; a songful Larghetto; the courtly Gavotte, whose harmonic surprises are to some ears entirely 20th-century in style and to others very like Haydn's classical style and a fast rondo finale which fuses the classical style with some 20th century sonorities.

Prokofiev Classical Symphony

Now listen to the 3rd movement of the Classical Symphony and fill in the missing banks. You will hear the music THREE times.

The articulation of the strings and the woodwind at the beginning is

_____ and the leaps in the melody are the interval of an

_____. The texture is largely _____ and the cadence heard

at the end of the first section is _____. At the start of the middle

section there is a _____ in the cello/basses and timpani while the

_____ and the clarinets play the melody. The melody then passes to the

_____ while the _____ plays a _____

alongside. On the return of the first section the strings play _____

Electronic Dance Music (EDM)

- Electronic dance music is normally heard in clubs where the DJ combines tracks electronically into one smooth mix.
- Electronic dance music originally featured drum machines, synthesisers and sequencers but is currently now mostly produced using computers and software that contains sampling, effects, and multitrack recording features.
- Electronic music can encompass music of different genres including *house music, dubstep, drum and bass*

e.g. *Daft Punk – One More Time*

Contemporary jazz

Contemporary jazz is an umbrella term for all kinds of jazz music being played now - as well as jazz music of the 80s, 90s, 00s & 10s. It encompasses the two main subgenres – modern jazz and smooth jazz. – which can feature some or all of the following:

- Sophisticated, highly chromatic harmonies (*verging on impressionist or atonal*)
- rhythmic experimentation (*cross rhythms, changing time signatures*)
- development of a groove based on just two or three chords instruments used in experimental ways (melodic instruments used in percussive roles, harmonics and other virtuoso performing techniques)
- world music and avant garde influences and inclusion of instruments never used seriously in jazz before (*flugelhorn, flute or oboe*)
- *e.g. Devil May Care – Diana Krall*

- *Tommy Smith – live @ the Blue Lamp, Aberdeen*