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978-1-107-04686-3 - Schoenberg's Twelve-Tone Music: Symmetry and the Musical Idea

Jack Boss

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Schoenberg's Twelve-Tone Music

Jack Boss takes a unique approach to analyzing Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone music, adapting the composer's notion of a "musical idea" – problem, elaboration, solution – as a framework and focusing on the large-scale coherence of the whole piece. The book begins by defining "musical idea" as a large, overarching process involving conflict between musical elements or situations, elaboration of that conflict, and resolution, and examines how such conflicts often involve symmetrical pitch and interval shapes that are obscured in some way. Containing close analytical readings of a large number of Schoenberg's key twelve-tone works, including *Moses und Aron*, the Suite for Piano Op. 25, the Fourth String Quartet, and the String Trio, the study provides the reader with a clearer understanding of this still-controversial, challenging, but vitally important modernist composer.

JACK BOSS is Associate Professor of Music at the University of Oregon. His research interests center on large-scale coherence in Schoenberg's music, and he has published numerous articles relating to that topic in journals such as *Journal of Music Theory*, *Music Theory Spectrum*, *Perspectives of New Music*, and *Music Theory Online*. He has co-edited two collections of music-analytic essays: *Musical Currents from the Left Coast* and *Analyzing the Music of Living Composers (and Others)*.

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*To my mother, Jacqueline,
and to SunHwa, who reminds me of her*

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Jack Boss
Eugene, Oregon

Abbreviations and notational conventions

Acc.	accompaniment
AM:	A major (key area)
Am:	A minor (key area)
Ans.	answer (in a fugue)
h1, h2 (or h1, h2)	hexachord 1, hexachord 2: signifying the two discrete hexachords of a twelve-tone row (divided evenly into two groups of six, starting with the first note)
hex, hexes	hexachord, hexachords
Inv.	inversion
Mel.	melody
n–1 invariance	where two pitch-class sets hold all but one pitch class in common, for example {0,1,3} and {0,1,4}
P _x , I _x , R _x , RI _x	prime, inversion, retrograde, retrograde inversion. These four symbols identify some succession of twelve notes as one of the four “canonical” transformations of the source row. The number in the subscript signifies the first pitch class of a prime or inversion, and the last pitch class of a retrograde or retrograde inversion
P _x × 3	P _x is stated three times
P _x /h1, P _x /h2	discrete hexachords of a specific row form (P _x)
P _x T _y	signifies a rotated row form. “T _y ” represents an order-number transposition, and should be read as “rotated y order positions to the left”
pc	pitch class
r1, r2, r3, r4 (or r1, r2, r3, r4)	trichord 1, trichord 2, trichord 3, trichord 4: the four discrete trichords of a twelve-tone row (first three notes, second three notes, third three notes, fourth three notes)
Subj.	subject (in a fugue)
t1, t2, t3 (or t1, t2, t3)	tetrachord 1, tetrachord 2, tetrachord 3: the three discrete tetrachords of a twelve-tone row (first four notes, second four notes, third four notes)
t = 3	transposition “up” three half steps in pitch-class space (can be understood most easily as rotating a group of pitch classes three spaces clockwise on the “pitch-class clock,” an arrangement of the twelve pitch classes in a circle with 0 at the top)
tet, tets	tetrachord, tetrachords
Trans.	transposition
Var.	variation
Vert.	vertical (members of a twelve-tone row combined into a chord)

Successions of pitch classes or intervals are enclosed in angle brackets, unordered sets in curly brackets.

Interval and difference vectors are enclosed in square brackets.

Vertical (simultaneous) dyads are given in the text in the form “11-above-0.”

Pitch-class numbers are not given in bold; order numbers are given in bold.

Voices

Sop. (soprano), Mezzo (mezzo-soprano), Ten. (tenor), Bar. (baritone). Alto and bass are not abbreviated.

Instruments

Woodwinds (WW): fl. (flute), picc. (piccolo), ob. (oboe), E.H. (English horn), cl. (clarinet), bass cl. (bass clarinet), E^b cl. (E^b clarinet), bsn. (bassoon), cbsn. (contrabassoon).

Brass: hn. (horn), tpt. (trumpet), tb. (trombone), ta. (tuba).

Strings: vn. (violin), 1st vn. (first violin), 2nd vn. (second violin), va. (viola), vcl. (cello), cb. (contrabass), mand. (mandolin).

Percussion: timp. (timpani), cel. (celesta), glock. (glockenspiel), xyl. (xylophone).

Hp. (harp).

Pf. (piano): RH (right hand), LH (left hand).