

BACH'S INFLUENCES IN THE PIANO MUSIC OF FOUR 20TH CENTURY
COMPOSERS: SCHOENBERG, ROCHBERG, HINDEMITH AND SHOSTAKOVICH

BY

JUNE XIAO

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Doctoral Committee

Menahem Pressler, Chair

Luba Edlina-Dubinsky

Emile Naoumoff

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The twentieth century is one of the most diverse in Western musical history, due to the multitude of innovations and approaches to music that its composers have introduced. Composers continually experimented with traditional and non-traditional instruments to create sounds that explore the question of what music really is and what function it serves. Often a single composer would change his own style of composition several times during his lifetime, for aesthetic purposes, or due to severe political circumstances.¹ Continuing to strive for novelty in their approaches to music, many composers in the twentieth-century became fascinated, inspired and influenced by the music of the eighteenth century. Though this may seem to contradict their desire for originality in their approaches, one has to remember that the First World War (1914-1918) devastated Europe and many artists that, in order to explore new fields, they would need to explicitly draw on traditions and forms from the past, which were more familiar to them and the public. This would enable them to create a greater sense of order, and organization to their works. To a few of these composers, Bach became a model, probably due to his own ability to incorporate a variety of styles and forms (that were nearly always long-established before he used them) into a work that not only represented his mastery of musical craftsmanship, but also a new kind of amalgamation of these styles. Indeed, Richard D.P. Jones points out that by juxtaposing the French and Italian styles in his Partitas for keyboard, Bach essentially achieves a fresh synthesis, “the French style acting as an upholder of tradition, the Italian as a vehicle of innovation.”² In the twentieth century, Bach became a model for some composers, not only in terms of

¹ Stravinsky is a great example of this, and his works can be divided into three clear periods: Russian, neo-classical, and serial.

² Richard D.P.Jones, “The Keyboard Works: Bach as Teacher and Virtuoso,” In *The Cambridge Companion to Bach*, Ed. John Butt.(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

providing a standardized form to use, but also as a model in terms of culmination of musical innovation and profundity within an established form.

This paper will survey four composers: Arnold Schoenberg, George Rochberg, Paul Hindemith and Dmitri Shostakovich. These four composers revolutionized or at least changed their way of thought during their compositional lifespan; Bach was part of the inspiration, and in some respects the means for change, in their approaches to composition. By surveying a significant keyboard piece by each composer during this period of change, and by analyzing what makes them different from other works the composers produced beforehand, one can come to a greater understanding of how Bach influenced that change in style. In the case of Schoenberg, his *Suite for Piano, op. 25* represents his first complete work based solely on serialist techniques. It recalls the formal structure of the keyboard suites of Bach, a medium ideal for displaying his new organization of musical structure---the twelve-tone system. Rochberg's *Nach Bach* was written shortly following his decision to abandon his previous serial techniques, and the work directly quotes Bach's sixth Partita from the *Clavier-Ubung I*. Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis* is considered a contemporary *Well-Tempered Clavier* and was written the same year as the English translation of his theoretical treatise *The Craft of Musical Composition*. Finally, Shostakovich's *Preludes and Fugues, op. 87* also recall Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. They were written shortly after the Socialist government regime publicly criticized the state of music in Russia, at which point Shostakovich felt forced to change his writing style. By analyzing these pieces, one may gain a greater knowledge of the actual change in compositional style and why it came about. This last point is important to understand, since each composer's style change was not necessarily a direct

attempt to emulate Bach's music as much as a desire to adapt traits of Bach's music into a new style of writing. The question to be addressed is how and why this new style emerged for these composers, since that will not only explain why they changed their style of writing, but also why they chose Bach as a model.

By the end of the nineteenth century, composers such as Wagner and Mahler who had taken tonality to such an extreme of chromaticism, that a dilemma came upon those composers starting out their compositional careers at that time. Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), in particular, saw a necessity to continue the strong Germanic tradition of Wagner and Mahler, and his first few compositions show this intense chromaticism, though still within a somewhat obscured tonal framework (a great example is his op.4 string sextet titled *Verklärte Nacht*, in which he pushes tonal boundaries in a programmatic setting of a Richard Dehmel poem.) From this gradual breakdown of tonality it was only a short step to atonality, in which all twelve tones have equal importance. Schoenberg wrote in this "free" atonal style from 1909-1913, influencing other composers of the Second Viennese School (namely Webern and Berg) working at the time. However, writing a purely atonal work within large-scale structures proved very difficult, due to the standardized forms of these in the eighteenth and nineteenth century being so deeply rooted in tonality.

During the years 1915-1923, Schoenberg experimented to find a way of integrating atonality and the advances of 1909-1913 with the rich traditions of the past centuries, whilst at the same time fulfilling his concern for variety in his music. His solution was to use a system known as the 12-tone row, or what musicologists and

composers later termed serialism.³ In its most elementary sense, 12-tone music dictates that each of the twelve tones of the chromatic octave will sound once in a sequence of twelve notes to form a row. This row then serves as the basis for the rest of the composition (sometimes a single movement, or often with Schoenberg, an entire cycle of movements). The row can have several transformations, including inversion (inverting all the intervals within the row), retrograde (sounding the row backwards), retrograde inversion (reversing the inverted row), along with a transposition to start the row on any of the other eleven pitch classes, allowing up to forty-eight possible orderings of pitch classes within the same row. However, the row does not predetermine register, dynamics or rhythm, so, in essence, the composer has the almost limitless ability to modify a row. (Later composers such as Boulez would even serialize dynamics, register and other musical parameters.) Thus, with the 12-tone system, the row becomes an abstract referential idea, not a theme that recurs, that is, a means for gaining structure within the music, whilst still allowing for the freedom and advances of atonality.

It is important to note that serialism represents an evolution, not a novel innovation, though it was to become one of the most influential innovations of the twentieth century, with practically every significant Western European/American composer experimenting with it at some point in their compositional output. Schoenberg's entire musical output from 1923 to the end of his life was written within the parameters of serialism that he set.

³ Though the terms 12-tone music and serialism are often used interchangeably, it should be noted that 12-tone rows in music represent a particular type of serialism in which all twelve-pitch classes are present. There are, however, other forms of serialist music in which fewer pitch classes need be present, but the arrangement and treatment of those particular rows are similar to the techniques found in 12-tone music. For the purposes of this paper, though, it can be assumed that the forthcoming discussions on Schoenberg's serialism will focus solely on his use of 12-tone rows.

Schoenberg's first example of a piece that uses serialism is actually a sketch for a scherzo from a symphony he was planning on writing. It dates from 1914-1915, just when he was starting to experiment with large-scale forms and atonality in an attempt to unify the two. Though it is one of the first works in which Schoenberg uses all twelve-pitch classes in the principal theme, this is not work's most unique feature. Other composers before Schoenberg, such as Liszt, had already written themes that incorporated all twelve pitch classes. However, in the scherzo, Schoenberg employs the row's ordering of pitch classes to build a specific large-scale form. Thus, Schoenberg's innovation here is not the use of twelve chromatic pitches as a melody, but using it as a means of structurally unifying the piece. The scherzo was, however, never completed. From 1920-1923, Schoenberg began work simultaneously on three complete cycles of pieces: the op. 23 piano pieces, the op. 24 chamber music pieces, and the op. 25 Suite for piano. Though the former two of these display some serialist techniques within the movements, the op. 25 Suite marks Schoenberg's first fully serial work, showcasing his evolution to the 12-tone method of composition.

Before continuing with an analysis of serial technique in the op. 25 Suite, it is important to address the issue of why Schoenberg chose to write a suite for keyboard. Schoenberg's music is often described as being radical, and serialism is considered an opposition to the emerging neoclassicism of the time. However, if one views how Schoenberg developed the 12-tone system and serialism upon principles of unity and motivic development in music that has no tonal center, in an attempt to incorporate the past into a new aesthetic of no tonality, then it becomes apparent that Schoenberg actually developed serialism as an evolution out of the past. In this sense, as Rosen

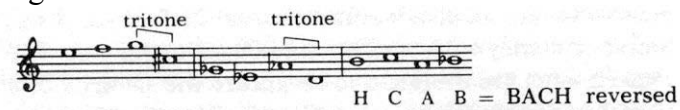
mentions in his book *Arnold Schoenberg*, serialism and neoclassicism “...were parallel rather than opposing movements, and the ease with which composers such as Aaron Copland combined both styles has shown how compatible they were after all.”⁴

Thus, in his op. 25 Suite, Schoenberg was presenting his new serial technique for the first time in a large-scale form. As Charles Rosen mentions:

“if serialism was to be not a break with tradition but a bridge from the incontrovertible accomplishments of the great atonal period into the center of history once again, it was important in this first completely serial work to demonstrate how it could deal with the basic classical forms: the final proof was to be the facility and charm with which these forms were reanimated.”⁵

The suite provided Schoenberg with the opportunity to write a selection of short character pieces, in a variety of styles, that demonstrated the capabilities of his new 12-tone system. Furthermore, in keeping with the “great Germanic tradition” of which Schoenberg always spoke, the suite, with its use of primarily Baroque dances, becomes an almost symbolic connection to the great German suites of the Baroque era, particularly those of Bach, whom Schoenberg cited as one of his great models. The exception is an intermezzo movement, more Brahmsian in character, but Schoenberg called even Brahms “progressive” and cited him as a great influence. Indeed, it is probably no coincidence the last four notes of the row in its primary form spell H-C-A-B (in German), which, when reversed (i.e. played in retrograde), spell “BACH”:

Figure 1



Schoenberg deliberately chose to make a reference to the Baroque era and, in particular,

⁴ Charles Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 72

⁵ *Ibid*, 79.

to Bach in this composition.

If Schoenberg were to write a suite in keeping with the tradition of Bach, then he had certain problems to face. One immediate problem was that of meter in the suite. The dances receive their characteristic identity from meter and tempo, and so Schoenberg had to relate his serial procedures to a metric organization to keep the nature of the dance intact. This issue of matching a metric organization with serial techniques was, likely, yet another motivation for him to write a suite; remembering that this was a time of experimentation for him, it would not be surprising that he would want to address this issue as a test of the versatility of the suite, and a successful application would ensure the achievement of his endeavor in serialism.

In the suite, Schoenberg has two different approaches to rhythmic and metric organization. Here is a section from the opening of the Gavotte:

Figure 2

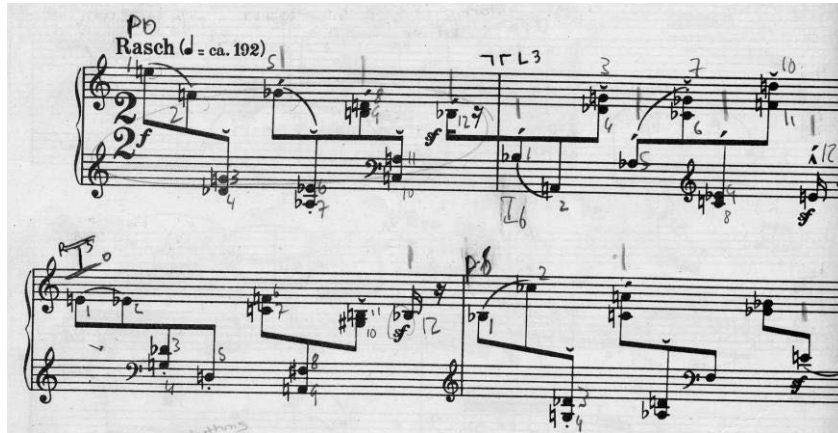


In the Gavotte, he divides the row into tetrachords and places the last note of each tetrachord (for the first four out five times it occurs) on the beat in a 2/2-meter, with an accent mark on each. Furthermore, he gives the traditional anacrusis in the Gavotte, starting out in the right hand. He further emphasizes the regularity in the right hand via the tritone leap to the note on the beat each time. (The interval of the invariant dyad, central to the row and entire composition by the way Schoenberg uses it throughout, was

already discussed.) This seems to be a more melodic way of applying the row to metric organization.

Schoenberg also uses another approach to give the dances their character, as can be seen in the opening of the Gigue:

Figure 3



Here, rather than divide the row and melodically outline the meter, Schoenberg establishes metric regularity at the start almost harmonically, thereby once again showing the complete versatility of his 12-tone method. In this case, he completes a statement of one row form per measure, giving a clear harmonic rhythmic structure. Furthermore, he adds a rest at the end of the first three measures to help establish a downbeat for the following measures. The harmonic use of the row in itself becomes the means for establishing form in the movement – later on in the gigue, he deviates from this row-per-measure structure, returning to it at the start of major sections of music and the end, thus employing it as a formal construction guideline. This particular technique of establishing a regular harmonic rhythm at the start of a piece by equating rows to metric units would become a technique Schoenberg would use often later in his life.

Another problem Schoenberg had to address was melodic diversity and interest,

yet unity in construction. Schoenberg typically limited the number of transpositions and transformations he used of the row (or at least more so than the other Second Viennese School composers) and, as already mentioned, in the Suite, he only uses eight out of a potential forty-eight transformations of the row. Thus, by limiting the usage of transformations, he does in a sense make the work more tightly knit. However, Schoenberg also divides the row into three discrete segments of tetrachords. Then he develops the row, in terms of dynamics and rhythm, within the tetrachord; that is, he frequently subdivides the row into three different sections, treating each of those as an individual unit, often against another transformation of the row carrying out the same operation of division. Schoenberg would constantly use this idea of segmenting the row throughout the rest of his career. The concept of dividing up a musical entity and developing sections of it is similar to Brahms' idea of motivic development, and indeed the concept was frequently used by Bach, especially in his chorale preludes, in which he would develop sections of a phrase later in a piece. The opening of the Prelude demonstrates the three shapes and pitch contents of the tetrachords:

Figure 4



The row is presented here in primary form in the right hand, in three shapes (marked a, b, and c). The left hand, as well, is divided into three tetrachords constituting the row form P6, and working in a linear fashion (dividing up mm. 2-3 into two

contrapuntal lines in the left hand.) Keeping with the right hand, however, there are in essence three phrases, what Schoenberg termed three “basic shapes.” With their intervallic relation and constant division of the row into three clear unique shapes, these make it easier to perceive the return of these individual entities, thereby creating a clearer sense of unity within the work. The segmentation also serves the purpose of stylistic enhancement. The opening of the Gavotte, as mentioned before, has each of the last notes of the tetrachords arriving on the beat in order to establish the meter. In the Musette, each tetrachord constitutes one beat in 2/2 meter, helping establish the meter by placing a different tetrachord on each beat. In the Minuet’s second measure, Schoenberg uses the intervals of the tetrachord to create a lilting feeling in the music and a certain lightness:

Figure 5



The division into tetrachords not only serves the purpose of making the row more recognizable and the work more cohesive, but also of facilitating the row’s development in a manner specific to each dance movement. It should also be noted that by dividing the row into tetrachords, Schoenberg brings particular attention to the B-A-C-H motif. The similarities between Schoenberg’s application of this technique to 12-tone rows and Bach’s own manner of dividing the melodic units in many of his chorale preludes and cantatas should not be overlooked. Their purposes are very similar-- to unify the work as a whole, at the same time employing a number of developmental (particularly contrapuntal) procedures, therefore providing unity among variety.

There is another problem that Schoenberg had to address when using serialism within standardized Baroque forms in the op. 25 Suite; that is, finding a harmonic substitution for tonality, and how this substitution would impact the formal structure. Traditionally, the forms of these compositions rely heavily on a tonal relationship between sections, particularly the tonic-dominant relationship, to establish harmonic stability and structure in the piece. Thus, Schoenberg had to develop some sort of harmonic alternative within the parameters of serialism. In all his compositions he addresses the issue differently, and his approach in the op. 25 Suite is most interesting and unusual.

We now have to address an interesting phenomenon involving the importance of the tritone. Of the eight transformations of the primary row form that Schoenberg uses, four of them begin and four of them end with a B-flat. Furthermore, the remainder of transformations begin or end with E. Thus, in a sense, Schoenberg sets up what Rosen terms a “polar opposite”⁶ between the B-flat and the E, then carries this out in the suite, constantly pitting the two against each other. In this sense, Schoenberg achieves a somewhat similar effect to that of a tonic-dominant polarization in tonal music, though Schoenberg’s tritone relationship avoids any such tonicization. A great example of this can be seen in the Trio, in which he alternates between rows starting on E and B-flat, due to the inverted two-part canon that occurs at the tritone. The first row begins on E in the A section (mm. 34-39), the first row in the B section (mm. 40-44) starting on B-flat, before returning to E when the final row appears in the trio. Thus, in much the same way as a tonal piece would outline a tonic-dominant-tonic relationship, Schoenberg

⁶ *Ibid*, 85.

establishes a relationship between the tritones.

This parallel to key structure in tonal music is further enhanced by another distinct property in the row. Analyzing the last four notes of the row, the famed “B-A-C-H” motif reversed, it becomes a series of rising half-steps (see Figure 1 above that outlines the BACH motif) which has an affinity to cadential figures in tonal music.⁷ The rising half-step from A to B-flat recalls the leading tone to tonic relationship within tonal music, and the approach from the supertonic has its implications as well (with a secondary chord implied before that). Thus, Schoenberg on one hand uses the BACH motif to make a symbolic reference to Bach himself, but on the other uses its properties to give the sensation of a cadence, particularly since it occurs at the end of the row. A clear example comes at the end of the Musette:

Figure 6



Here the inner voice of the right hand sets up the resolution of the cadence, closing off the piece, only sustaining the pedal G (which has reappeared throughout the movement) so that the *da capo* can be executed with continuity.

Schoenberg had to address all these problems when writing a serial piece that was to incorporate what Bach had accomplished two centuries earlier. Of course, there were some aspects that, by the sheer mechanics of constructing serial pieces, were easier to

⁷ *Ibid*, 85.

adapt than others. Counterpoint is an issue that serial music addresses very well: due to the absence of tonal guidelines, and by the nature of serial pieces with their automatically granted forty-eight row transformations,⁸ it becomes easier to write contrapuntally, though Schoenberg complicated this task by allowing no octave doublings in his own work. Nevertheless, the op. 25 Suite contains many examples of extensive counterpoint in a likely homage to J.S. Bach, whom Schoenberg considered as the supreme master of counterpoint and one of his models for it. Indeed, the transformations themselves (retrograde, inversion, the breaking into tetrachords, etc.) can all be found in many of Bach's fugues, among his other works. A great example of Schoenbergian counterpoint appears in the Trio of the op. 25 Suite, a masterful double canon inverted at the tritone, the first half of which is played with primary and inverted forms of the row, the second half with retrograde and retrograde inverted forms of the row.

In Schoenberg's attempts to incorporate serial music into the eighteenth century suite, other technical aspects, such as number of voices, were not as difficult to address. By common practice, certain dances had more voices than others, and voicing was an issue that Schoenberg himself also confronted. The Trio, for example, contains a smaller number of voices (only twice in the entire Trio do more than two voices sound simultaneously), in contrast to the more thickly voiced Minuet, which in Baroque times would traditionally have taken a more homophonic texture. However, in the Minuet, Schoenberg directly emulates Bach, in a way, by creating a primarily homophonic texture, but all the parts are continuously moving, so that he avoids creating a static texture. Another characteristic that Schoenberg retains is the use of a drone in the

⁸ Note: a symmetrical row reduces this to only 24 different transformations.

Musette: a pedal G sounds throughout the Musette, recalling the bagpipe drone effects in instrumental musettes from the Baroque era.

However, even if some aspects of serialism made it simpler to emulate a Baroque suite in a contemporary setting, the question stands as to why Schoenberg does so.

Charles Rosen mentions this and provides an explanation as to why Schoenberg does it:

“Of course, serial technique is a tiresomely ingenious and time-consuming way of composing Bach and Wagner: but the relevance of the new technique to the great German tradition had to be displayed, its ability to encompass - even textually, if need be - the forms of tonal music. Only when this had been accomplished, it seemed, could one go on to the forms that grew specifically out of serialism alone.”⁹

Rosen is saying two distinct things here. Firstly, Schoenberg had to prove that his 12-tone system was indeed an evolution, not a revolution, and that it merged the rich tradition of the past with the current aesthetic. Secondly, he implies that Schoenberg had to do this by not only selecting forms of the past and attempting to conform 12-tone music to that tradition, but somehow doing it in a convincing manner that recreated the style as well. In that sense the op. 25 Suite was a showcase for Schoenberg to prove what his new system could do.

It is no surprise, then, that Bach plays such a prevalent role in the influence of the Suite. Schoenberg makes a point of bringing that to attention by invoking the reversed “B-A-C-H” motif, but the influence stems well beyond that. As already mentioned, Schoenberg uses a Baroque suite as his model, and all the dances save one are taken from the Baroque era. The exception is the Intermezzo, which has a closer affinity with Brahms’s style. However, though the intermezzo may not be the official title of any Baroque dance, it should be pointed out that Bach himself labelled movements in between those of the Sarabande and Gigue in his *English Suites* “Intermezzi,” a term that

⁹ *Ibid*, 85-6.

musicologists and theorists use to label extra dances (i.e. those outside of the normal four-- Allemande, Corrente, Sarabande, Gigue) found in the standard Baroque suite.

The connection, though, goes deeper. It is probably no coincidence that Bach used the suite as the genre of choice, composing the six keyboard Partitas for his first publicly published work, the *Clavier-Ubung I*. The reasons for this choice, which are many, also include the fact that in the Partitas, Bach showed a multitude of musical styles--not only with regard to the specific dance but also the region of the dance; along with that, he achieved a fusion of different regional aspects like texture, and indeed keyboard virtuosity, for they pose a number of technical challenges to the performer, beyond what a regular member of the public could be expected to play. These Partitas represent a fusion of French and Italian styles, as well as a culmination of Bach's knowledge and experience in writing suites. Each of the Partitas begins with a different Prelude, showcasing a variety of styles. Thus, Bach used the Partitas as a means of showing his skill as a composer. In a similar fashion, a lot of these same reasons for choosing to write a suite occurred to Schoenberg while planning his op. 25. Here he has to showcase his new serial system. The suite, by its diversity and rich history, allows him to do so because he shows the versatility of the system (and himself as a composer) as well as unity and incorporation of past styles. So Schoenberg not only borrows Bach's formal structure and stylistic attributes, but in some respects, he also tries to achieve the same goal with the music that Bach had achieved.

Therefore, with the publication of his first wholly serial work, Schoenberg successfully shows that he can integrate the past (the inheritance of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) with the advances of atonality from 1909-1913. He does so by

explicitly invoking the keyboard suite and Bach as a model of the past, and then juxtaposing their formal and certain stylistic traits, demonstrating how 12-tone serial music can address that issue and offer a viable solution to it.

If a desire to integrate the past (particularly the use of Bach as a model) into the present served as Schoenberg's inspiration to move towards serialism, in terms of order and structure in music, then it is ironic that for George Rochberg, this very same desire was to become the catalyst for his move away from serialism in 1964.

Rochberg was one of the most prolific and adept composers of serial music in America in the mid-20th century. The influence of serialism (in particular the music of Webern) in Western musical composition after World War II is apparent by the sheer number of composers, especially in America, adapting to it. There was a level of intelligence behind Webern's compositional output that appealed to many composers, who themselves were often mathematics or science professors, or at least had experience in those fields. Webern's serialism was, in fact, the motivation for the Darmstadt school of composers, who wrote in a style known as "integral serialism" or "total serialism."

Integral serialism did not believe in applying serial techniques to only the tone row, but also to aspects such as rhythm, register, dynamics, and others. Composers from this school (including Pierre Boulez and Milton Babbitt) believed that Schoenberg's invention of serial technique was a great solution to the problem of structure in atonality, but he himself did not recognize and carry out the full potential of this idea. In this sense, they held Webern as their source of inspiration--in his music he often expressed a very mathematically calculated approach to serialism--using ideas such as an axis of symmetry, in which the composition is symmetrical around one single pitch, as well as

his unique use of a derived row, in which the discrete segments of the row all share the same prime form. This last property, therefore, enabled him to draw unity between the row forms themselves, and it also allowed tremendous mathematical flexibility in his construction of the row. Since all the discrete segments of the row have the same prime form, the intervallic structure between them stays the same. Hence, it is possible to have a retrograde of a segment (intervallically) within the row itself. This intensely mathematical use of the row was what appealed to a lot of these composers, who saw serial music as a means for structuring a piece, without the necessity to conform to older forms. Serial music presented these composers with the option to mathematically apply composition techniques and have complete control over the music.

It is important to understand this, since as mentioned in the mid twentieth century, nearly all Western European and particularly American composers were incorporating this into their music. George Rochberg was, as already mentioned, among the composers interested in integral serialism and he was considered to be one of its finest exponents; thus, it makes his move away from serialism, and the reason for it, all the more radical.

A few things about Rochberg's serial style should be noted, though, before beginning to explore his turn away from serialism. Rochberg, unlike many of his contemporaries, always attempted to shape a melodic line and contour in his pieces. Rochberg's lyricism and fondness for melody will be important to consider, because this characteristic stays in his compositional output. The reason for Rochberg's turn away from serialism is actually related to that. In an interview with Robert Reilly, when asked about how serialism had reached its limits for Rochberg, the composer responded:

"I couldn't breathe anymore. I needed air. I was tired of the same round of manipulating the pitches, vertically and horizontally. It wasn't so much that the scales were out of the running, arpeggios were out of the running, etc., anything... .. what I finally realized was

that there were no cadences, that you can't come to a natural pause, that you can't write a musical comma, colon, semicolon, dash, for dramatic, expressive purposes, or to enclose a thought.”¹⁰

Rochberg does not turn away from serialism merely because he was bored with that style of composition, or that he ran out of ideas, but rather that he wanted to achieve a kind of expression in music that serial music seemed incapable of providing. This was a type of expression related to a more natural kind of music (according to his comments about musical pauses, commas, colons etc.), as opposed to what Rochberg himself said in the same interview about serialism, that “there is everything artificial about it.”¹¹ Here, Rochberg is identifying the more mathematical application of serialism that he wanted to get away from, instead turning to something more natural.

Despite this reservation towards serialism that Rochberg himself admitted he held in the late 1950s, the death of his son in 1964 served as the real catalyst for his change in compositional output, when Rochberg wanted to express his grief but found serialism too inadequate. Instead, for several years afterwards, he sought out a new musical language, returning to many of his past influences for inspiration. These included not only Webern, but also the great masters of the past, Mozart (in *Music for the Music Theatre*) and Bach (in *Nach Bach*). He respectfully quotes both composers in these pieces in an attempt to reintegrate their expressive qualities, which he thought lacking in his serialist music.

Nach Bach, then, comes from a period of experimenting to find a new manner of expression. Rochberg himself writes:

I wrote [*Nach Bach*] in July 1966, while at Tanglewood, for harpsichordist Igor Kipnis... The work uses the Bach Partita No.6 in E Minor [BWV 830] as ‘source’ and becomes a free commentary on it, so to speak: quoting, splicing, transforming Bach mixed with ‘free’ passages which simulate the harmonic world and manner of the Partita or not, as the case

¹⁰ Robert Reilly, *The Recovery of Modern Music: George Rochberg in Conversation* (Publisher unknown), 9.

¹¹ Ibid 9

may be. In a solo piece there [is] little opportunity for simultaneous collage passages; consequently, shifts in gesture and language (tonal/atonal) occur successively rather than in parallel streams. My chief interest, besides discovering the harpsichord, was to ‘take off’ from the harmonic dialect (as I like to call differences in harmony viewed over long periods) of Bach; or even to show--but not didactically—that the dialects of harmony are really, after all, only that and not different languages.”¹²

In *Nach Bach*, Rochberg does not copy Bach’s style, but he seems to integrate a variety of twentieth century forms of composition together in a work that incorporates the sixth Partita of Bach.

The first style Rochberg uses is serialism. The opening of the piece unfolds like a serial work, with a series of twelve pitch classes sounded in succession, as they would be in a typical serial row. The matrix for this particular series as based on the opening row is shown below:

Table 1

	I 0	I 6	I 1	I 3	I 4	I 2	I 5	I 7	I 8	I 11	I 10	I 9	
P 0	Bb	E	B	C#	D	C	Eb	F	F#	A	Ab	G	R 0
P 6	E	Bb	F	G	Ab	F#	A	B	C	Eb	D	C#	R 6
P 11	A	Eb	Bb	C	C#	B	D	E	F	G#	G	F#	R 11
P 9	G	C#	G#	Bb	B	A	C	D	Eb	F#	F	E	R 9
P 8	F#	C	G	A	Bb	G#	B	C#	D	F	E	Eb	R 8
P 10	Ab	D	A	B	C	Bb	C#	Eb	E	G	F#	F	R 10
P 7	F	B	F#	G#	A	G	Bb	C	C#	E	Eb	D	R 7
P 5	Eb	A	E	F#	G	F	Ab	Bb	B	D	C#	C	R 5
P 4	D	G#	Eb	F	F#	E	G	A	Bb	C#	C	B	R 4
P 1	B	F	C	D	Eb	C#	E	F#	G	Bb	A	G#	R 1
P 2	C	F#	C#	Eb	E	D	F	G	G#	B	Bb	A	R 2
P 3	C#	G	D	E	F	Eb	F#	G#	A	C	B	Bb	R 3
	RI 0	RI 6	RI 1	RI 3	RI 4	RI 2	RI 5	RI 7	RI 8	RI 11 1	RI 10 0	RI 9	

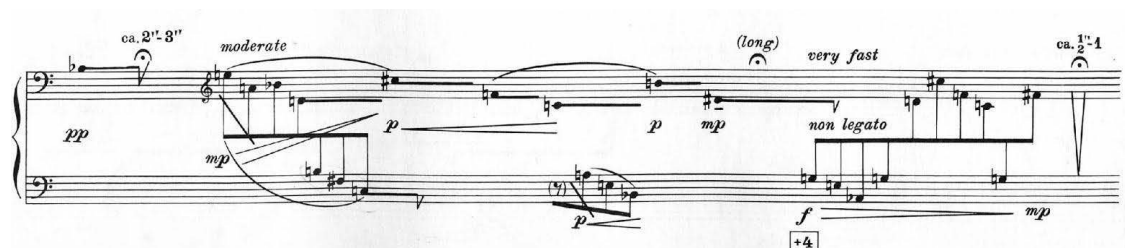
However, Rochberg does not conform to serial procedures, though he implies a serial work at the start. Once again, the row has a certain lyrical quality when presented, but it never recurs in the movement. Rochberg provides hints of it—the next row in the music is

¹² George Rochberg, *Nach Bach* (T. Presser Co., 1967), preface.

a kind of amalgamation of I0 (the tetrachord in the left hand is the opening of I0) and I7 in the right hand (though in a modified order). It acts as an acknowledgement of his serial past but, at the same time, also communicates his desire to break away from the conformities of serial music and the rigid guidelines that it holds. Often, throughout the piece, he only presents eleven out of the twelve pitch classes in a row (e.g. towards the end), and sometimes even fewer. The work certainly does not have a tonal center, and most of the sections that he quotes from the Bach Partita are taken from transition periods without a clear tonic, but Rochberg's piece is more pandiatonic than atonal. Therefore, in *Nach Bach*, there is a sense that Rochberg deliberately tries to defy serialist techniques by dropping hints of serialist applications, but not executing the technique as would be expected.

In the style of *Nach Bach*, Rochberg also borrows from a significant twentieth century development that goes directly against serialism: the use of indeterminacy. This style, for which John Cage became famous, came about as a revolt against the rigidity of integral serialism. It allows an element of chance in the music, based on circumstances during the performance. In this sense, indeterminacy represents an opposing approach to music to serialism. In the course of *Nach Bach*, Rochberg frequently leaves a level of indeterminacy to the rhythm, relying mainly on verbal instructions and a graphical score to give suggestions for duration of pitches and rests, for example:

Figure 7



Rochberg uses a selection of techniques in *Nach Bach* that are analogous to those common to the electronic music of the 1940s and 1950s. The manner in which he treats the sixth Partita--splicing, tempo changes, and repeating sections quoted from the music--recall the same techniques used by composers of *musique concrete* style in the mid-twentieth century. He also makes a direct reference to some of Stockhausen's experiments in electro-acoustic music (generating sounds by electronic means) with relation to serial procedures. For example, in the following passage:

Figure 8



The fast, leaping notes, marked *sempre secco*, with the U8 harpsichord marking, reminds one of the effects of Stockhausen's computer generated sounds in *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1956).

In *Nach Bach*, then, Rochberg integrates these various styles into one piece that quotes from Bach. However, it is still unclear as to why, while attempting to achieve expression by borrowing from the great masters, he incorporates all these other styles of his contemporaries, rather than copying those of past generations. Secondly, one may ask why he does this in a piece that directly quotes Bach's Sixth Partita. Before addressing these questions, and in particular the latter, it is important to consider how Rochberg

quotes Bach in the piece.

There are nine direct quotes from the Sixth Partita over the course of *Nach Bach*. The quotes do not begin or end at cadential points, but rather, they appear throughout the piece, often outlined by pauses in the music. Though the quotes are from various movements (primarily the Toccata and Sarabande), they are often changed in mood. In this example, shown below, he quotes the opening of the *Air* but marks it *fff marcatisissimo*, stripping it of its initial character as an *Air*.

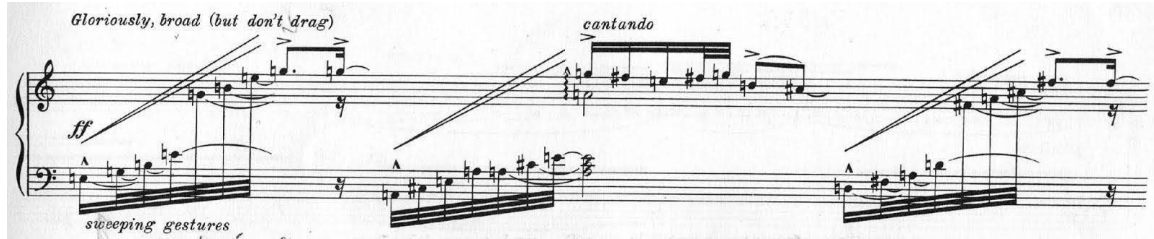
Figure 9

The figure shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is marked 'fast' and contains a melodic line. The bottom staff is marked 'fff marcatisissimo' and contains a bass line. A box below the bottom staff contains the text '8+4+C'. Below these two staves is a larger musical score for a piano, showing a quote from the Air in Nach Bach. The piano score is in G major and 3/4 time, and it features a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more rhythmic pattern in the left hand.

Nach Bach is also through-composed, rather than separated into individualized movements like the Bach; thus, Rochberg has to try and maintain a similar mood throughout the piece, since there is no break between movements.

Alongside the direct quotes, there are other ways in which Rochberg brings the sixth Partita into the work. The example below, which appears towards the end of the work, is a direct reference to the *stile brisé* of the Baroque period, and it employs a circle of fifths sequence borrowed directly from the Toccata of the sixth Partita:

Figure 10



Rochberg quotes the sixth Partita of Bach by allowing it to leap out of the texture of an otherwise completely contemporary work, juxtaposing styles of the twentieth century. He does this because, as Boustead says, “The idea was that he could quote great masters of the past for the familiar expressive quality that they evoked but still keep his musical language modern.”¹³ Thus, Rochberg was using the familiar sound of Bach’s expressivity, in the midst of all these twentieth century techniques, as a means to express himself. One must remember that this was an experimental time for him in trying to express himself, and so in *Nach Bach*, he takes on a diversity of styles in an attempt to find a style suitable for him. It is also no surprise that the majority of the sections he quotes from the sixth Partita are those that serve as transitions among other sections—the dissonant or modulating episodes, considered more expressive due to their instability.

This desire for experimenting for expressive purposes may also explain why Rochberg quotes within a contemporary framework rather than imitating the style directly. At this time, Rochberg was well known as an innovative thinker, always being at the forefront of innovation in composition. For a composer of such stature, to suddenly turn away from this and imitate styles of centuries earlier would be very difficult, due to the extensive criticism he would endure. Yet Rochberg felt that, to

¹³ Seth Boustead, “The Re-Enslavement of the Dissonance: George Rochberg’s transition from serial to tonal composer,” In *New Music Events in Chicago with Classical Composers*; available from <http://www.acmusic.org/rochbergessay.html>; Internet; accessed 11 March 2003.

progress forward, his music would have to abandon serialism, since serialist music, for him, was incapable of emotional expression. Instead, Rochberg compromises in *Nach Bach*. He quotes Bach, since at the time, quotation was an accepted means of moving forward in composition, and composers of the time frequently used it. At the same time, he experiments with a variety of twentieth century styles, though directly disregarding serialism, , in order to gain a new sort of expressive medium in music through them.

With this in mind, it becomes clearer as to why Rochberg chose Bach as his model, and in particular, the Sixth Partita. Bach was considered, in his time, to be a conservative composer. His style of composition was influenced greatly by composers such as Reincken, Fischer, Couperin, Frescobaldi, Corelli and Buxtehude, to name just a few. Bach did not invent a new style; rather, in essence, his work represents an amalgamation of past styles. His genius lay not only in his ability to combine all of these influences together, but also in the masterful way he applied it to all his compositions, often elevating them to new heights. In that sense he, along with a few other composers, represents the pinnacle of Baroque composition for his synthesis of all aspects of the Baroque. Drawing on the past is, therefore, how Bach moved forward, and there may be an analogy here to Rochberg. In *Nach Bach*, Rochberg directly recalls Bach in an attempt to move forward by going back to the past, during which Rochberg felt that music had the expressive quality he was seeking. Additionally, he does so by integrating not only Bach's work itself into the music, but also by employing major twentieth century compositional techniques.

This may also help explain Rochberg's choice of the Sixth Partita. As already discussed in the previous Schoenberg analysis, the Partitas come from the *Clavier-Übung*

I, Bach's first published work available for distribution to the public, and so it represents not only his mastery of the forms and dances of the suites alongside his technical mastery of the keyboard, but also a fusion of different styles. In particular, the sixth Partita stands out with its grand Toccata opening, recalling the organ toccatas and fugues of his Weimar years. The flourishes and fully executed three-voice fugue in the middle of it add a sense of grandeur and bring the correlation to the organ even closer. The dance movements combine a variety of French, German and Italian styles, often taking the meter of one style and adding the qualities of the other within that (e.g. the Corrente, which is Italian in meter, but somewhat French in ornamentation and rhythmic structure). In *Nach Bach*, Rochberg also combines a variety of contemporary styles in an effort to not only explore the harpsichord, but also to find a new kind of expression and make that apparent to the public. In this sense, there is a parallel between *Nach Bach* and the sixth Partita (as there is between Bach and Rochberg), and Rochberg brings this to attention by directly quoting it. The parallel is, of course, also apparent in the title "*Nach Bach*," meaning literally "After Bach," which represents a play on words by Rochberg. The word "After" ("Nach") in the title actually has a double meaning—on one side referring to the music being modeled on and taken from the sixth Partita, but also making a reference to the variety of styles in the piece that have developed after Bach's.

In the late 1960s, Rochberg would eventually start writing tonal music, despite his reservations of falling in favor with the critics. His String Quartet no.3 represents his first tonal work after 8 years of experimenting to find a new medium for expressing himself, quoting and imitating composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler, and Bach. *Nach Bach*, then, represents an intermediate stage in his compositional output, during which he

experimented to find a way of communicating his emotions after he felt serialism had lost its expressive qualities, and he turned to Bach for inspiration, in much the same way as Schoenberg had done when first employing serialism. Rochberg's revolutionary move to tonality in the 1970s had a tremendous impact on Western classical music, as it encouraged more composers to turn away from the strict formalities of serialism towards tonality. That is not to say that serialism was or should be viewed as negative; to the contrary, it did many great things for music and presented a multitude of options for composers. However, George Rochberg believed that it was not necessary to conform to serialism, just for the sake following compositional trends at the time, and so at great personal risk, he set out to find a new style of composition. For Rochberg, this resulted in compositions that relied on tonal boundaries. Though other composers did follow in his footsteps of adhering to tonality, many others were encouraged to experiment in new fields of composition, particularly the post-modernists. Rochberg's style became known as neo-Romantic due to its influence of Beethoven and Mahler, and quite a lot of his experimentation in *Nach Bach* was lost, but the concept of moving away from serialism, the use of a past generation of composers for expressive purposes, and the combining of a variety of past and present styles; all which he tried in *Nach Bach*, remained in his compositional output for the rest of his life.

Schoenberg and Rochberg were both developing new styles of composition that would influence the rest of their output, and in an attempt to bring the rich musical history of the past few centuries and juxtapose it with the present, they used the Baroque suite (and specifically Bach's model) in their first keyboard pieces that moved towards serialism or away from it, respectively. In another keyboard composition written during

the twentieth century, Paul Hindemith did not develop a new style of composition based around an influence of past generations of musicians, but rather, his *Ludus Tonalis* of 1942 marks one of the first keyboard pieces written after the publication of his theoretical masterpiece *The Craft of Musical Composition*, in which he discusses the theory of composition. Though in some ways related to the past few centuries of music, in many others it breaks away to form its own set of rules or guidelines for composition. Therefore, *Ludus Tonalis* becomes a compositional reference to what he discusses in his treatise.

Hindemith was, for most of his life, consistently interested in Baroque forms. His musical output has been divided into three periods: youth to 1923, 1924-1933, and 1933-1963. The first period shows a more romantic influence, stemming from Brahms, but the second period shows a closer affinity with the Baroque period, particularly in relation to Bach. It is during this period that Hindemith composed his *Kammermusicken* series for chamber orchestra and various solo instruments, whose textural clarity, repetitive rhythms, and balanced phraseology recalled the Brandenburg concertos.¹⁴ Three significant events occurred during this second period of his compositional output. One, related to his Baroque fascination, was a deep interest in the treatises and theories of Boethius, Zarlino, and Fux, in which these authors tended to reference the philosophy and science of music in order to explain musical construction. This was to have a tremendous impact on Hindemith's own compositional output and views on theory, and it probably explains his interest in Baroque and early music during the 1920s. The fourth string quartet shows his fascination with Baroque forms and Bach by its use of fugue, chorale

¹⁴ Watkins, *Soundings* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 342.

prelude, march, and passacaglia forms within the piece.

The second event in the 1920s that changed Hindemith's life was his appointment at the *Hochschule für Music* in Berlin, where he began teaching, a profession that he soon grew to love. It is as a result of his teaching that the three major publications of his life came about: *Elementary Training for Musicians*, *A Composer's World: Horizons and Limitations*, and most importantly, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, the main source of explanations for Hindemith's views on theory. Each of these books, while intended for public viewing, were primarily written as a teaching aid for him, and Hindemith found it necessary to write them because he believed that there was insufficient material written, up to that point, on these subjects.

The third event that occurred in the 1920s for Hindemith was his founded belief in the practical aspects of the purpose music served—something Hindemith termed *Gebrauchsmusik*, or music for use/work. This concept is important to understand, since it is with this idea in mind that Hindemith composed his music, and it also forms the basis for his theoretical publications. Hence, understanding Hindemith's music from 1920-1932, and seeing what influenced his future, requires a knowledge of what Hindemith meant by *Gebrauchsmusik*, to appreciate why it was written, and why it may borrow from other styles.

Gebrauchsmusik, or music for use/work, is Hindemith's term for a style of music that is meant to be accessible to everyone. In a famous statement made in 1927, Hindemith proclaimed:

“It is to be regretted that in general so little relationship exists today between the producers and consumer of music. A composer should write today only if he knows for what purpose he is writing. The days of composing for the sake of composing are perhaps gone forever. On the other hand, the demand for music is so great that the composer and consumer ought

most emphatically to come to an understanding.”¹⁵

With *Gebrauchsmusik*, Hindemith sought to bridge the gap between composer, performer and listener, and he felt that the composer had a moral obligation to create music that is for the benefit of society (a direct reference here to the philosophical treatises of the Ancient Greeks, including Plato’s Republic, where they say that music has to serve a function.) Of course, one way to bridge this gap is to use forms of the past and adapt them to a modern aesthetic—juxtaposing the familiarity of the past with the present (much as we have already seen in Schoenberg and Rochberg’s works.) This may explain Hindemith’s interest in using Baroque forms, especially those of Bach, who himself carried out the same purpose. However, there is another key relationship between what Hindemith mentions and the Baroque era. This relationship is what he mentions about “composing for the sake of composing,” rather than composing for a specific reason. Here, again, Hindemith draws a close parallel between his ideal and the Baroque period, as during that period, composers composed with a specific intent, working under various patrons, churches etc.. A composer did not have the freelance stature that developed towards the late Classical and early Romantic periods, but he/she was required to compose for a specific reason. In this sense, too, Hindemith parallels his music with the Baroque, and so it is no real surprise that Baroque music, and in particular Bach, would influence Hindemith for the rest of his life.

Later in his life, Hindemith would come to detest the term *Gebrauchsmusik* and in the 1930s, his refusal to adhere to Nazi governmental policy on music led him to exercise more individuality in his approach. However, the fundamental influence of

¹⁵ Weiss and Taruskin. *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), 491.

Gebrauchsmusik cannot be overlooked. In the late 1930s Hindemith moved to the USA, where he held teaching positions at Harvard and Yale. It was during his time in the USA that he wrote his treatise, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, which was to summarize his beliefs in harmony and melody (very little in the series relates with rhythm) that grew from his years of research in older treatises on music, his years of teaching, and his own compositional experiments and experience.

It is important, then, to consider *The Craft of Musical Composition* as a summation of all Hindemith's knowledge; and in that sense, *Ludus Tonalis*, his first keyboard composition written directly after the English translation, can be considered a summary of all the theories discussed in the treatise. They are not novel, and many of Hindemith's compositions prior to *Ludus Tonalis* use these techniques, but none so explicitly, nor in such a precise and direct manner as *Ludus Tonalis*. Therefore, in a way, *Ludus Tonalis* follows directly from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, which was meant to be a model of counterpoint. *Ludus Tonalis* has been termed a present-day "*Well-Tempered Clavier*," and it is probably no coincidence that it was written exactly 200 years after the second volume by Bach. It follows the same outline of Preludes and Fugues as the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, going through the various keys, however, with significant differences: Hindemith's only explores 12 key areas (without differentiating between major and minor modes); interludes replace the preludes; and the ordering of the fugues differs, to name just a few. All of these, along with the similarities between the two works, will be discussed shortly, but before delving into that, we must consider another affinity between *Ludus Tonalis* and the *Well-Tempered Clavier*: the purpose of the pieces. Volume One of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* states the following on its title

page:

“...for the use and profit of the musical youth desirous of learning, as well as for the pastime of those already skilled in this study...”¹⁶

The *Well-Tempered Clavier* serves as a pedagogical study for future generations to learn from. Within it, Bach provides specific examples upon which young people can draw so that they may learn about the correct procedures for counterpoint as well as prelude styles. This is particularly true of the second volume, which is generally stricter in its approach: the fugues more closely correspond with the formal design we teach today; the number of voices is more limited; and the preludes are more recognizable in their origin. In much the same way, Hindemith’s *Ludus Tonalis*, though intended for public performance, also acts as a study guide, showcasing Hindemith’s new theories (or more correctly “developed” theories) on how to compose, allowing future generations to observe and learn from them, almost as a musical supplement to his treatise.

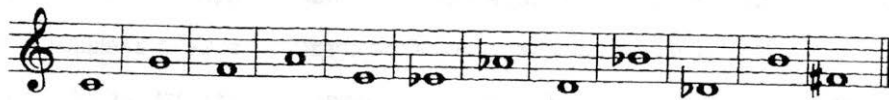
Before analyzing *Ludus Tonalis* itself, it is important to understand the concepts and theory that Hindemith was trying to show through this composition, in order to better grasp how Hindemith accomplishes this, and why he does so either in emulation of Bach or against Bach. *The Craft of Musical Composition* offers an explanation for the foundation of music by observing what Hindemith calls “the laws of nature.” This concept, in itself, is based around the philosophical observances of Boethius, Zarlino, Rameau, and Tartini (to name just a few) all of whose works Hindemith would have read in the 1920s. He combined these together to form his own theory on music, which centered on a belief in tonal logic in the music, relying on the triad, since the major triad formed the basis of music, because it arises from the first six pitches of the overtone

¹⁶ J.S.Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier: Book I*, edited and annotated by Francis Tovey (London: Associated Board of the Royal School of Music: 1969), preface.

series.

The overtone series was the most natural occurring series of music, and from the overtone series Hindemith derives his theory about pitch centers and their relationship to each other. In what he terms *Series 1*, Hindemith codifies a series of twelve tones, which venture increasingly further from the starting tone, until the final note in the series sounds (a tritone away from the starting pitch class). This tone is the furthest away in terms of intervallic relation and is therefore the least secure, or furthest removed from the tonal center; that is, the first pitch class:

Figure 11



The series itself is derived directly from the overtone series. Ideally, according to Hindemith, a composer explores key areas in relation to this series, going in a one-by-one fashion through the various tonal centers, avoiding jumping between the relationships (e.g. from pitch center C to G, then F, then may be back to G, but not suddenly leaping to B, as that is too abrupt). *Ludus Tonalis* provides clear examples of this within the various interludes and fugues, but the main example is in its overall design. Whereas Bach goes through the keys chromatically (in order, starting on C with the major and its parallel minor) until all twenty-four keys are explored, Hindemith starts on C, and his fugues follow the tonal centers in order of his Series 1, the interludes in between acting as modulating sections between the two pitch centers. Thus, in a sense, by leading the entire work through all the various keys in a prescribed order, Hindemith creates a unified whole. Hindemith also fashions the *Postludium* as a retrograde-inversion of the

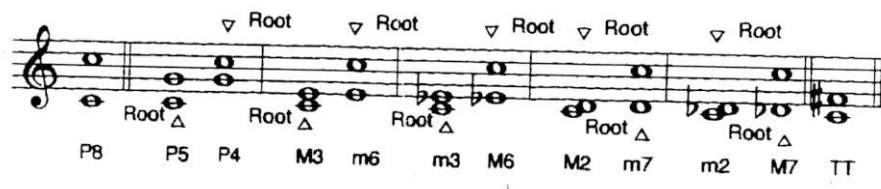
Praeludium to reinforce this unification .

It is important to note that Hindemith does not distinguish between major and minor modes. Hindemith mentions this significant aspect in *Craft*, and it derives from his Series 2. According to Hindemith, intervals, not chords, are the basic measure against the tonic:

“the key and its body of chords is not the natural basis of tonal activity. What Nature provides is the intervals. The juxtaposition of intervals, or of chords, which are the extensions of intervals, gives rise to the key.”¹⁷

Hindemith’s idea here is that it is possible to have a tonal center without necessarily relying upon a traditional harmonic framework. Chords are constructed by merely combining various intervals. Series 2 orders intervals in terms of their harmonic relationship, from strongest (left) to weakest, and they are derived from the phenomenon of “combination tones” that result when two notes are sounded at the same time. The technical explanation of combination tones is, however, beyond the scope of this paper, but let it be said that, in essence, this series once again proves important in regards to establishing the tonal center, based upon intervals, not chordal harmony:

Figure 12



Now, since both major and minor triads share the same intervallic relationship (just inverted), Hindemith found it unnecessary to distinguish between the two, and so he frequently went back and forth between them. Thus, it is important to discuss the pitch as

¹⁷ Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition I* (New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc, 1945), 107.

being a tonal center, rather than in a particular major or minor key. Series 2 allows a break from harmonic control and places more emphasis on melodic construction, based around intervals, in order to establish keys.

The concept then allows Hindemith to take a novel approach to cadence formation; indeed, balanced phraseology, a concept in which he believed strongly, is based on the principle of cadences. In essence, the cadence is approached intervallicly; that is, it takes on a more melodic character rather than relying on harmonic progressions. In these cadences, voices move in a stepwise direction towards their goal. An example comes from the end of the second Interludium:

Figure 13



The G# in the bass moves down (ornamented) to the G, while the upper voice F#, resolves outwards to G, and the middle voice C# to the D. Bach also frequently employs stepwise motion towards the cadence for smooth voice-leading and horizontal motion into his cadences. Notice, however, that Hindemith pulls the lowered supertonic down to the tonic, and raises the subtonic (flattened seventh degree) to the tonic, both of which contradict the traditional procedures for these two scale degrees.

This leads into a discussion about counterpoint and how Hindemith uses counterpoint in *Ludus Tonalis*, how that conforms to his theories on theory, and how it is, if at all, related to Bach's use of counterpoint in the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Naturally, a

difference between Hindemithian and Bachian counterpoint arises out of the fact that Bach was invariably conforming to the rules of harmonic motion—a more consonant kind of counterpoint--whereas Hindemith's appears more dissonant, in the sense that it values rhythms and melodic movement over suiting a particular harmonic function.¹⁸ However, though the two may seem different, when placed into the context of their time periods, the two are a lot closer than they may initially appear to be. Though his counterpoint is controlled by harmonic motion, Bach, even in the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, pays very close attention to leading all the parts of the polyphonic texture towards the cadence point in a linear fashion, with minimal leaps. Similarly, Hindemith, when compared with the serialist composers, actually does make a deliberate attempt to create cadences in *Ludus Tonalis*, which does establish a tonal center, rather than just completely basing a phrase on melodic and rhythmic movement. In fact, Tischler argues that Hindemith “employed consonant counterpoint but used certain techniques which give his polyphony the contemporary flavour of what may be called ‘dissonant counterpoint.’”¹⁹

Ludus Tonalis demonstrates a variety of approaches to counterpoint. This excerpt of the first fugue already shows most of them:

¹⁸ Note: the use of the terms “consonant” and “dissonant” are theoretical as they apply to counterpoint, and they are not to be considered the same as intervallic “consonance” and “dissonance,” for in the case of the latter, Bach was also a “dissonant” composer.

¹⁹ Hans Tischler, *Remarks on Hindemith's Contrapuntal Technique* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 175.

Figure 14

[illegible]

In measure 8, when the third voice enters, Hindemith shows what appears to be a free passage of non-harmonic tones, but upon careful examination, they all serve a function. Series 2 from *The Craft of Musical Composition* allowed Hindemith to form unusual triads, often favoring open-fifth chords and seventh chords, with the third, fifth, and especially fourth. It should be noted that the latter is essentially two fourths stacked on top of each other, which creates a very strong intervallic relationship between the notes in the chord and adds great stability to it, in Hindemithian theory. Thus, it is no surprise that the downbeat in measure 9 displays this chord, adding stability to the beat. Here, Hindemith's counterpoint works to create these chords due to the melodic movements of the parts at the time. Furthermore, in this example, he resolves multiple tonalities singularly, due to the contrapuntal procedure. In measure 7 the melodically sounding A flat triad in the right hand and F major in the left hand resolve to a G major chord in

measure 8, as the former descends a half step and the latter rises a whole step. Hence, in this one example, Hindemith employs multiple kinds of contrapuntal procedures. Certainly this can be found in Bach; for example, in the g minor fugue from the *Well-Tempered Clavier Book II*, he combines double invertible counterpoint into a sequential passage (mm. 60-62, before leading into the climax through contrary motion into the downbeat of m. 63). Here, even though there is a harmonic structure, the harmony is not what generates the climax of the fugue (in fact, the harmonic motion is more or less one chord per measure), but rather the linear approach of the lines. Of course, other composers used the very same procedure, but none as prolifically or as expertly as Bach. It is also interesting to note that Hindemith's fugue contains a real answer, as do all the other fugues from *Ludus Tonalis*, but they do not usually conform to the tonal center of that answer, often starting on the subdominant rather than dominant, and even the submediant (as in the third fugue). Though Bach did use real answers, he tended to be stricter about the harmonic implications of the answer.

It is interesting to note how Hindemith forms chords through polyphony, especially in a piece such as *Ludus Tonalis*, in which he does pay attention to strict voicing. In the above example from the first fugue, mm. 7-8 show how he conforms to his theory on musical composition, as laid out in *The Craft of Musical Composition*, in terms of intervallic relationships between polyphonic parts, i.e. the relationship of chords to their strength in relation with the tonic. In fact, in book 1 of *The Craft of Musical Composition* Hindemith lays out a table of chord groups as follows:

Table 2

A. Chords without Tritone	B. Chords with Tritone
<i>I. Without seconds or sevenths</i> 1. Root and bass are identical 2. Root lies above bass	<i>II. Without minor seconds or major sevenths</i> 1. With minor seventh only – root and bass are identical 2. Containing major 2nds or minor 7ths or both a. Root and bass are identical b. Root lies above bass c. Containing more than one tritone
<i>III. Containing seconds or sevenths or both</i> 1. Root and bass are identical 2. Root lies above bass	<i>IV. Containing minor 2nds or Major 7ths or both. One or more tritones subordinate.</i> 1. Root and bass are identical 2. Root lies above bass
<i>V. Indeterminate</i>	<i>VI. Indeterminate. Tritone predominating.</i>

The table is derived into two categories: on the left are the chords without tritones, and on the right, chords with tritones. The actual table itself is derived from a complex arrangement of *Series 2* interval relationships. However, Hindemith explained that to make harmonic sense, and so as to least disrupt the flow of motion of the music, one had to move gradually through each of the groups of chords, moving one at a time backward or forward, in a manner he called *harmonic fluctuation*. This allows Hindemith to gradually acclimate the ear towards the dissonance of the final group of chords. A great example of *harmonic fluctuation* can be found in the *Interludium* between the fugues in F and A:

Figure 15



Here he begins with an F minor triad (pitch center F) changing one note at a time in the left hand, moving from the fifth (in the opening anacrusis) to the leaping minor sixths in mm. 2-3 until, in m. 5, he begins alternating seventh chords with a chord made up of tritones, which by Hindemith's theory would be the most dissonant. He actually comes back the same way into m. 8, with the parallel fifths serving as the cadence. This serves as a great example of how Hindemith uses *harmonic fluctuation* to increase the tension in the middle of the phrase leading to the cadence, where he releases it. This in itself is a recollection of standard phrasing, where the greatest tension in a standard phrase occurs in the middle, before returning to the tonic at the end. It is also interesting to note that the melody is either stepwise in motion or leaping by a perfect interval, thereby conforming to his theory once again. In a way, the use of *harmonic fluctuation* shows a kind of contrapuntal technique, whereby modifying a note at a time creates tension until it released in much the same manner. This is not dissimilar to Bach, who creates tension in his textures by lowering a bass note, one pitch at a time, changing the harmony slowly, until it returns back to tonic. Several of his chorales contain instances of a static harmony in the upper three voices whilst the bass changes to create greater tension.

Another feature noticeable in the above example is Hindemith's preference for what he terms a *two-voice framework*. This is itself directly derived from the influence of Bach, where the bass voice and a principal upper voice provide the structure upon which the remaining parts are based. A very clear example is in the sixth *Interludium*:

Figure 16



Here, clearly, the lowest voice and the uppermost voice provide the framework around which the other voices are built. This derives directly from the Bach chorales that are worked out with in the most regard for the upper voice (the chorale melody), with the bass supplying the most important harmonic function of the four-voice texture. It also comes from Bach's inventions, which are two-voice contrapuntal pieces that, by necessity, must provide the majority of harmonic implications through only the two voices. *Two-voice framework* is by no means exclusive to *Ludus Tonalis* or even Hindemith, for that matter, but it is something that he uses often as a guideline for his compositions. Another feature of Hindemithian theory that can be found in *Ludus Tonalis* is the degree progression of melody, an excellent example occurring in the opening of the seventh fugue.

For all the innovative features of *Ludus Tonalis* that showcase Hindemith's recently codified theoretical approach to composition, there are also more direct influences of Bach in Hindemith's output. In much the same way as Schoenberg and

Rochberg were turning to Bach for inspiration, as well as a wanting to return to some stable foundation from which they could branch out, Hindemith here turns to Bach, in one of his most well-known compositions, to demonstrate his new theories on the craft of composition, some of which are closely related to Bach's own style of composition. In particular, this is true in relation to counterpoint, which forms such an integral part of the Hindemithian theory. Much as Bach does in the *Well-Tempered Clavier II*, Hindemith strictly adheres to the voices in the fugues, always maintaining the correct number of voices. This is actually relatively unique for a composition of such diversity and vastness as *Ludus Tonalis*. The contrapuntal procedures that he uses are very closely linked to those of Bach; augmentation, diminution, the passing of the subject through various voices, inversion, and stretto are some of these. In fact, the second fugue develops the bridge material over the course of the fugue, a technique Bach frequently employs, and then he later combines the bridge with the subject, inserted at a metric displacement:

Figure 17



Other examples include his double fugue in fugue number four, at the end of which he actually juxtaposes the two subjects together, while also including an inversion of the subject at the same time—the tour de force application of fugal and contrapuntal procedures, recalling those of the kind found only in Bach's *Art of the Fugue*. In fact, Hindemith's fugue eleven is a canon, again recalling Bach's *Art of the Fugue*, in which one of the *Contrapunctus* pieces is a canon. The right hand of the fourth *interludium*, in

particular, seems to recall the second Prelude in c minor from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* II:

Figure 18



An interesting reason why Hindemith may have chosen the *Well-Tempered Clavier* as a model, relating to the idea of writing pieces centered on all twelve pitch classes, was a new theory on tuning that Hindemith had also developed and outlined in *The Craft of Musical Composition*. This was based more on fundamentals than on equal temperament, and probably similar to Bach's clavichord in *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, which was probably not tuned in equal temperament, only more adjusted.

In *Ludus Tonalis*, Hindemith summarizes his theoretical philosophies on musical composition by taking a form, made famous by Bach in the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, and adapting it, so that it becomes not only a work that shows his new theory, but also a clearly unified whole, one that can be played through without interruption. In the fugues, he clearly shows that his new theories do not disregard the greatness of the past generations, in particular Bach, but rather embrace his prolific polyphonic and contrapuntal style. The interludes also show other theoretical ideas that, on one hand, are quite innovative, but on the other, actually pay homage to the past and demonstrate a number of similarities to Bach's writing especially.

The complete title to *Ludus Tonalis* is "*Ludus Tonalis: Studies in Counterpoint, Tonal Organization and Piano Playing*," which itself bears resemblance to Bach's original title for *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Certainly a desire to improve on his own

contrapuntal writing was a significant motivation for Hindemith to write this, and in 1951, a similar incentive motivated Dmitri Shostakovich, who set out emulating *The Well-Tempered Clavier* as a means to better his handling of counterpoint in his *24 Preludes and Fugues*. Yet, what started out as an exercise in compositional technique would become far more significant as he progressed through the work, but to truly appreciate Shostakovich's intentions as well as writing style, one must take into account many factors of his life leading up to this period, particularly political circumstances. By studying these circumstances, one may achieve a greater understanding of why and how he incorporates Bach into his music to suit these circumstances.

Among the countless music-related events that occurred during the course of the Soviet regime from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s, there were two that significantly altered Shostakovich's musical output up to the 1950s and the time of the *op. 87 Preludes and Fugues*. Both were communist publications in newspapers. One, published in 1936, focused solely on Shostakovich, and the other, published in 1948, involved many Soviet composers. It was the latter that would play the most significant role in regards to the *Preludes and Fugues*.

During the 1920s there were two major organizations associated with Soviet music. One was the *Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians* (RAPM). The ultimate aim of the RAPM was "[the] extension of the hegemony of the proletariat to the music field."²⁰ They emphasized simple, folk-oriented music that prominently featured programmatic works of a Russian nature, which they thought would appeal to the most people. In this respect, it grew directly out of the late Romanticism of nationalistic

²⁰ Weiss and Taruskin. *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984) 498.

Russian composers, such as Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky, often with a disregard for conventional “Western” forms. The second organization was the *Association for Contemporary Music* (ASM), made up of mainly musicians who studied, composed and performed experimental and contemporary work from Western composers (such as Stravinsky and Bartok).

Both organizations influenced music from the late 1920s into the 1930s, but the views of the ASM conflicted with those of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, who favored the RAPM’s approach to music, that of “music for the people.” Due to the lack of organization within the RAPM, the government itself stepped in and took control of all artistic aspects in the Soviet Union when it founded its new regime in 1932, termed *socialist realism*. This was a movement (or, technically, a system) in which the belief was that art is for the people, and it should be crafted so as to be understood by the masses. It gave explicit requirements on how music should be composed, and as such went directly against the creativity and imagination that the Western musicians at the time seemed to be advocating. Complex polyphony had to be avoided, music without a tonal center could be not written, and the music had to have certain folk roots.

To enforce this, the government frequently monitored the works of several prominent composers in the Soviet Union. Among them was Dmitri Shostakovich, who had already become an influential composer by this point, and he was recognized as one of the leading Soviet composers of his generation. The government exercised strict control over his works, as these set an example to other composers of the time. For four years Shostakovich kept within the boundaries of socialist realism, often pushing it to an extreme, but in 1936 a review in *Pravda* (the communist governmental newspaper),

discussing his opera *Lady Macbeth*, claimed his music to be “anti-socialist,” and as a result, Shostakovich became the subject of national criticism. He replied to this by writing his famous Fifth Symphony, which he titled “A Soviet artist’s practical reply to just criticism.” In the Fifth Symphony, there is less of a satirical quality within his music, but more emphasis on general optimism and clear melody, folk in origin. However, Shostakovich’s musical output then divided itself into two distinct categories; one that he made available for the public--usually large-scale symphonies--which conformed to socialist-realist views on music; and another that was more intimate, more oriented towards chamber music, and less closely monitored by the authorities. Works within the latter category were often not published until many years after they were written.

The onset of World War II left many composers feeling patriotic, and so post-WWII compositions tended to emphasize folk traditions and song, something that worked well with the Communist party’s views on music. However, it also left many composers attempting to express their emotions in ways that socialist realism did not allow, and so in 1948, the party published another, harsher manifesto through *Pravda*, this time targeting not only Shostakovich, but also six other prominent Soviet composers, among them Sergei Prokofiev. They were accused and publicly censured for “formalism,” which a musical dictionary at the time defined as “the artificial separation of form from content and the conferring on form or its individual elements of a self-sufficient and primary importance to the detriment of content.”²¹ The problem here was that the Soviet regime required there be a form and structure within the music, but not a complicated or complex one from Western civilization, that is, composers had to keep it simple. Shostakovich

²¹ *Ibid*, 499.

responded to this by writing a few songs in clear strophic forms. It was under these severe circumstances of Soviet censure that Shostakovich was writing in the mid-century.

In 1950, Shostakovich went to Leipzig to commemorate the bicentennial of J.S. Bach's death. This also had tremendous influence on Shostakovich, who upon returning from this trip, wished to improve his own contrapuntal writing. To accomplish this, he about writing his *24 Preludes and Fugues, op. 87* in emulation of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. It is difficult to say for certain if Shostakovich started out intending to publish these works or make them available for public performance, as opposed to writing them as mere exercises. He certainly had experience in counterpoint and fugal writing before embarking on this project. The first few pieces in the set show somewhat greater restraint than the remainder of the set. The fugal writing is stricter, with the number of voices kept exact throughout. The preludes are not as daring and innovative as they become later on in the set, and this would all seem to suggest he was writing these more as exercises. However, it is also possible that by being more conservative at the start of the set, he sets himself up to write with more liberty towards the end of the cycle, where he could experiment to a greater degree, and this may address the problem of "formalism" that Shostakovich had to deal with, since the beginning of the set is very accessible to the general public.

It seems very odd that under such close scrutiny from the government for "formalism," that Shostakovich chose to write a collection of preludes and fugues. The entire set is based around a form that Bach popularized, with no Russian association whatsoever. The counterpoint of the fugues also represents a complexity in music that would not appeal to the general Soviet population. Thus, in writing the *24 Preludes and*

Fugues, Shostakovich had to address this problem. Shostakovich does this by employing a diverse array of techniques. In this sense, there is a closer affinity with the first *Well-Tempered Clavier* than the second volume. In Bach's first collection from 1722, the preludes are more adventurous, the fugues more varied and less strict in their formal outline. The second collection of preludes and fugues (and it should be noted that Bach does not technically title this *The Well-Tempered Clavier*) has only three and four voice fugues, though the first volume also includes two and five part fugues. This diversity of styles can also be found in Shostakovich's *24 Preludes and Fugues*. The preludes recall a variety of styles, similar to Baroque dance and sonata movements. The first prelude, with its chordal texture, 3/4 meter and dotted rhythms, bears much resemblance to a typical Baroque sarabande. However, Shostakovich avoids the direct resemblance by changing the form to that of a miniature rondo, a form that by its sheer repetitiveness is more immediately accessible to an audience. The sixth prelude recalls the dotted rhythms of a Baroque French overture in the opening, but avoids a direct reference by casting it in 3/4 meter and giving it an almost militant, rather than elegant style. In the cycle, the movements that have Baroque references, in particular to pieces by Bach, are balanced by those of contrasting origin. The twenty-first prelude is a perpetual motion piece; the fourteenth recalls songs by Mussorgsky with its modal implications and use of Russian folk-music and rhythmic content; and the eleventh is a prelude of immense, almost clown-like satirical humor, employing staccato articulation and unusual harmonic progressions that defy logical progression:

Figure 19



Shostakovich, therefore, avoids formalism by invoking diverse styles that even apply to the fugues, all of which have unique characters. Thus, he avoids being criticized for imitating Bach, a composer whom the socialist realists would have considered too “intellectual” for the general public to grasp. However, Bach’s influence in the cycle (and how Shostakovich uses it) extends far beyond just a few similarities in stylistic features from the Baroque era incorporated into some of the pieces. Of course, one cannot overlook the overall formal design, which stems directly from Bach—the concept of a work that pairs a prelude and a fugue in each key, in one single cycle, covering all twenty-four keys in alternating major and minor modes. A work such as this is nearly always theoretical in purpose. For Bach, it served as a model from which other composers and performers could learn (as indeed many of them, including Shostakovich, did). For Hindemith, as mentioned before, it served as a platform for demonstrating new concepts on theory and musical construction. For Shostakovich, the idea began as an exercise for him to gain a better understanding of counterpoint, through emulating a master, but it also becomes an ideal vehicle for demonstrating individual creativity on a small scale. Within these short character pieces, as they essentially are, Shostakovich has the opportunity to take certain artistic liberties for some of them, without upsetting

socialist realist expectations, because the pieces are so brief. The few pieces that are inaccessible can be balanced by those that are accessible to the “general population.”

Though the keys are ordered differently between Shostakovich’s cycle and Bach’s cycle, there are many other similarities. The most obvious of these are thematic similarities between the two cycles. Shostakovich sometimes borrows material directly from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* and adapts it. A very clear example of this appears in the opening of the tenth prelude:

Figure 20



Compared with the opening of the seventh prelude in Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*:

Figure 21



Here, Shostakovich clearly maintains the melodic contour, rhythmic outline and even harmonic structure of the Bach prelude, but puts it in a minor key, C# minor, changing the character from Bach’s major-based prelude to a more nervous, almost tense-sounding opening, maintaining the continuous motion of sixteenth notes between the various parts and the piano’s legato marking. Bach’s has a pedal tone, maintaining somewhat more grandeur in style. Also, the B-natural in the third measure of the Shostakovich suggests

the Aeolian mode, as opposed to minor, and this mode has an affinity with Eastern nationalism. Thus, Shostakovich takes Bach's music and quotes it, but adapts it at the same time, and in such a way that a musician who knew Bach's music well would see the parallel between them; but to the common person and the governmental party monitoring the works, the relationship would not be apparent and at the same time, the work would suit their musical tastes.

Examples of Shostakovich's borrowing from Bach are numerous, and in his book *The Preludes and Fugues Op.87 of Dmitri Shostakovich*, Robert Thomas cites all the melodic connections between Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* and the *Preludes and Fugues, op. 87*.²² Often, it is not just a direct imitation of a section, but the entire prelude or fugue is reminiscent of the style of Bach's pieces (for example the A minor prelude, whose constant running sixteenth notes remind listeners of the c minor prelude from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*.)

There is also a parallel in terms of Shostakovich and Bach's approach and intention in both their sets of preludes. Particularly in volume one of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Bach wrote the preludes in the style of contemporary pieces at the time, including dance movements, overtures, forms and genres associated with orchestral works, and keyboard genres. In the same way, Shostakovich also reflects on not only contemporary forms and styles (with, for example, the jazz-like extended tertian harmony of the thirteenth prelude, or the satirical humor of the waltz in the fifteenth prelude), but he also draws on forms and styles from the Baroque era. The first prelude, as already mentioned, has characteristics of a sarabande; the twelfth prelude is a passacaglia; the

²² Robert Thomas, "The Preludes and Fugues op. 87 of Dmitri Shostakovich" (DMA. Diss., Indiana University, 1979), 159.

sixteenth prelude is a theme and variations; and the nineteenth is a chorale prelude.²³

Of course, by the sheer nature of fugues and Bach's accomplishment in fugue writing, it follows that there are similarities between Shostakovich and Bach's employment of counterpoint, especially in view of Shostakovich using Bach as a model to improve his counterpoint. The lengths of the two composers' fugue subjects tend to be similar, as do the lengths of the entire fugues themselves. Both composers (in comparison to Bach's first collection of Preludes and Fugues) used varying numbers of voices, from two to five, but were reasonably strict in voicing the parts, though Shostakovich did double with the octave frequently. Thomas points out that both composers frequently use stretto at climatic points in their music.²⁴ However, Shostakovich is freer with his development of the subject and counter subject in that he frequently varies the melodic and rhythmic content of the subject, as opposed to Bach, whose treatment is stricter. In the case of Shostakovich, as the cycle progresses, he gets more inventive with his counterpoint and more experimental. That is not to say that Bach is not ingenious or inventive with his use of counterpoint, but his fugues display a strict adherence to the principles of compositional guidelines for fugues throughout the cycle, with few exceptions. Both composers also use techniques such as diminution and augmentation throughout the cycle.

Another factor that should not be overlooked is how Shostakovich brings together the cycle as a whole. There have been many articles written about unification within Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, which probably exists more in the first book than in the second. However, in terms of drawing thematic relationships between each prelude and

²³ *Ibid*, 162.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 162.

Despite Shostakovich's efforts to emulate Bach and write a piano piece that suited his views on music, while at the same time creating a composition that was acceptable to the socialist realists, it was received with mixed emotions from the government and general public. Over time, however, they would gradually become more accepting. The writer Polyakova wrote:

The cycle of piano preludes and fugues (1951) stands apart in Shostakovich's chamber-music output. Arousing heated arguments when it first appeared, with time the cycle gained an honourable place in the repertoire of leading Soviet pianists...In the highly varied preludes and fugues, some full of energy and vigour, others tragic and sad, and still other concentrated and optimistic, one occasionally glimpses melodic elements of Russian folk songs, and yet sometimes the expressive media are angular and harsh. This has given cause to those who dislike Shostakovich's music to speak of his "formalist tendencies not overcome." But concert practice shows that those interesting and original pieces can hold their own; the number of opponents is dwindling and of those who like the cycle growing.²⁶

In this statement, Polyakova sums up how Shostakovich really took Bach's model and used it to create a work of his own, which attempted to unify his own aesthetic with socialist realist demands. Despite many offers for defection, Shostakovich would never leave Russia, unlike many of his comrades. He faced the hardships of his compositional life there, and it was not until after 1954, once Stalin's power had subsided, could he finally release many works that he had kept hidden from the public, some for more than a decade.

The music of Schoenberg, Rochberg, Hindemith, and Shostakovich is all frequently performed and analyzed today, and these are among the composers from the twentieth century most often studied by music theorists and musicologists. They all were responsible for a different approach to music in the twentieth century, often inspiring many followers. These composers did not view themselves as revolutionaries, but rather innovators, in that they developed upon already existing ideas and took them to a new

²⁶ Lyudmila Polyakova, *Soviet Music* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.) pp.156-157 as quoted in Robert Thomas, *The Preludes and Fugues op. 87 of Dmitri Shostakovich*, 21.

level; that is, they were original in how they combined and brought things together. In this sense, their affinity with Bach goes one level deeper. Considered as one of the greatest composers who brought the Baroque era to its pinnacle, Bach was not an inventor of new styles, forms or genres, in the same way that Tartini, Corelli, or Vivaldi was; but rather, he made his distinction by coalescing the variety of styles in the Baroque into his own musical voice, and in doing so he showed his mastery of not only that particular style, but in manipulating that style. Schoenberg, Rochberg, Hindemith and Shostakovich turned to Bach's music as a physical model, for it is something that they use to make this change in their approach to composition; but they also turned to Bach himself, through his music, as a transcendental model, someone to whom they can aspire. Of course, Bach's influence on music for the past two hundred and fifty years stems beyond just these four composers, with composers such as Beethoven, Brahms, Mendelssohn also paying homage to his legacy during the nineteenth century. As such, it remains a testament to J.S. Bach himself as to how a man, who was relatively unknown in his own time, and considered a "conservative" composer, made such a wide-ranging impact on the course of music history.

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