

Notes for KPEA, Aug. 1957

Kreuth Music, Berkeley

The Sonata for Viola solo was written in August 1942 at Bear Lake in the Rocky Mountains National Park of Colorado. At that time I was interested in adapting the twelve-tone technique, which I had studied and employed for more than twelve years, to the purposes of a type of sonata form which was derived from the traditional concept of the sonata form.

The sonata is based on two different twelve-tone rows which are constantly brought into variegated interplay until in the last movement they are integrated with each other. From the viewpoint of dodecaphonic procedure the treatment of the tone-rows may be called "free" in that the order of succession of the tones is occasionally modified in order to satisfy both the demands of the structural concept of the piece as well as the intention of gradually revealing the internal ~~secret~~ kinship of the two tone-rows which originally seem to be quite different from each other.

The first movement of the sonata follows the traditional form of such a movement, as it has an exposition containing two contrasting themes, a development section and a recapitulation. The first theme is based on the following tone row:

Ex 1

Students of twelve-tone music will easily notice that this row is very similar to that used by Alban Berg in his Violin Concerto:

Ex 2

Both rows consist of a sequence of thirds, although the alternation of major and minor thirds is different. Berg's row concludes after eight thirds with a sequence of three whole-tone steps, while my series has two steps of a fourth each after nine thirds. The fact that my Sonata has nothing in common

(the musical character of) with Berg's Violin Concerto goes to show that the interval sequence established in a twelve-tone row in no way determines the nature of the music derived from it.

The first theme of the Sonata is a statement of the basic series.

Ex 3, meas 1-3

In the transition to the second theme some of the triad formations which abound in the series are singled out and also used by inversion:

Ex 4, meas. 11-15 (to the first note)

The second theme is derived from the second twelve-tone row:

Ex 5 (2<sup>nd</sup> th)

In the brief development section fragments of both themes, and consequently fragments of the two tone-rows alternate with each other in successively shorter spans, leading up to the recapitulation which presents the first theme by inversion

Ex. 6, meas. 55-56

The transition is similar to that of the exposition, but shorter. The second theme is repeated <sup>at a pitch</sup> a fifth lower than that of its first appearance. The coda returns to the first theme.

The second movement, Adagio, is based on the following modified form of the original tone-row:

Ex 7

The third movement is a Scherzo, which is repeated after a Trio, according to the classical pattern. The opening theme presents a slight modification of the original row in that the last four tones here change their position:

Ex 8, followed by meas. 1-2

In analogy to the first movement, the recapitulation here also makes use of the inversion of the original statement:

Ex 9, meas. 19-22

The Trio is really a variation of the Scherzo since it contains the same thematic material. The rhythmic shape and the phrase context are different. Compare the tone-row which opens the Scherzo

Ex 10 = Ex 8

with the row which opens the Trio.

Ex. 11

It is a nearly literal inversion of the first series.

The last movement is called Chaconne because in it a relatively brief, concise statement is treated much in the way of the ancient form of this name. This statement is derived from the second of the two twelve-tone rows used in the Sonata. Compare the second theme of the first movement

Ex. 12 meas 19-22(I)

and the theme of the Chaconne.

Ex 13 1-9 (IV)

After the first variation of the Chaconne the design begins to reveal the close but so far hidden kinship of the tone-rows. It turns out that the second row consists of a number of steps of diminished fifth

Ex 14

When the thirds missing within the diminished fifths are filled in, we obtain a series of thirds very similar to the arrangement of our first tone-row. (3)

Ex. 15

The three tones attached to the string of thirds

Ex. 16

have an intervallic relation very similar to that of the group which concluded the first tone-row.

Ex. 17

This group is always used as a sort of punctuation sign separating the variations of the Chaconne. There are eight such variations. The last variation leads back to the main theme of the first movement.

It serves as conclusion of the whole work (inversion of the

Ex. 18 meas. 62-67 (V)