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Traditional and New Techniques in Teaching Theory lect

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I have been asked to contribute to the present Forum a paper in which I would "outline briefly how [I] tie up the techniques of the past with the Twelve-Tone Technique". I gladly offer the following remarks on the subject on ~~the~~ condition that it ~~should~~ clearly be understood that I am ~~not~~ teaching the Twelve-Tone Technique neither exclusively nor predominantly. In my present position, I teach, apart from other things, advanced harmony, ~~and~~ modal counterpoint and composition, and out of eighteen students ^{whom} I have at this time only three are using the Twelve-Tone Technique, or certain ramifications of it, consistently in their creative ~~work~~ work.

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The Twelve-Tone Technique has been known for about twenty years, Arnold Schönberg having published ~~the~~ the first compositions in which he applied this device about 1923. Theoretical knowledge of the subject has progressed but slowly, since for several years only articles dealing with isolated phases of the technique ^{had} appeared ^{mostly} in German musical magazines.

More recently Richard S. Hill has offered a comprehensive study ^{in the Musical Quarterly} ~~and I have~~ and I have written a practical manual of the Twelve-Tone Technique ²⁾ as well as an essay on New Developments of the Twelve-Tone Technique ³⁾. I also wish to refer to my paper "Teaching the Atonal Idiom" ⁴⁾ given at the MTNA convention in Cleveland.

Like almost any other method of musical construction the Twelve-Tone Technique may be taught on two different levels:

1. as a technique designed for dealing intelligently with certain materials,
2. as a tool for ~~independent~~ personal artistic expression.

(35th Series)

4) Proceedings of the Music Teachers National Association, ~~1940~~ pp. 306-312 (Pittsburgh, 1940.)

1) "Schönberg's Tone-Rows and the Tonal System of the future", The Musical Quarterly, vol. xxii, No. 1, Jan. 1936, which ~~also~~ includes a bibliography of earlier writings on the subject.

2) Studies in Counterpoint, ~~XXXXXX~~ New York 1940.

3) The Music Review, vol. iv, no. 2, May 1943.

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In the first case the Twelve-Tone Technique is a variety of counterpoint, neither more nor less difficult or complicated than sixteenth century modal counterpoint. While modal counterpoint makes the student acquainted with the methods necessary in order to ~~write~~ ~~compose~~ handle sensibly the pre-tonal idiom, the Twelve-Tone Technique enables him to ~~write~~ achieve limited artistic results in the post-tonal idiom. Both ~~methods~~ disciplines are logically correlated with the instruction in tonal harmony. ~~For on the one hand, the~~ ~~modal counterpoint~~ foreshadows the rules governing voice leading in ^{the} tonal idiom, ~~the~~ Twelve-Tone Technique ~~on the other hand,~~ while in many of its principles is a logical outgrowth of ~~the~~ practices ^{applied} in ~~the~~ latest period of romantic harmony.

Although it seems theoretically possible to ~~teach~~ teach atonal counterpoint to beginners, a thorough training in modal counterpoint is a ^{highly} ~~most~~ desirable prerequisite, for ~~the~~ while the rules to be ^{obeyed} ~~applied~~ in ~~the~~ twelve-tonal counterpoint appear frequently as the exact opposite of those of modal counterpoint, so that both ~~body~~ bodies of prescriptions seem to be related to each other like positive and negative, the underlying principles are very much alike. ^{for example,} If ^{one} has properly studied the relationships of meter and dissonance in modal music, he will have no difficulty in applying the principle in ^{the} contemporary non-tonal idiom. In some respect the Twelve-Tone Technique ~~may be considered~~ shows a ~~more~~ subtle

3// elaboration on the old principles. While, for instance, modal counterpoint makes definite and rigid distinctions between consonance and dissonance, both concepts are given more flexibility in atonal counterpoint, inasmuch as the significance of a tone-combination in terms of higher or lower intervallic tension is frequently judged according to the context in which it appears rather than ~~dependent~~ to a ~~static~~ static evaluation of its constituent intervals.

Paradoxical as it seems, the ~~ostensible~~ ostensible core of the Twelve-Tone Technique, that is the compulsion to use constantly all ~~the~~ twelve tones in a ~~pre-^{previously chosen} determined~~ order of succession, is ~~not~~ rather incidental than essential in this discipline. As I pointed out in my Cleveland paper, it is of course perfectly possible to write non-tonal counterpoint without using twelve-tone series. However, the obligation of working with a given succession of tones and at the ^(same) time looking for the most suitable intervals between the voices causes the student to seek ~~for~~ the best solution through applying variegated rhythmic arrangements. The fact that the tones of the melody have to appear in a pre-established order, then, has pedagogically much the same function as the training in writing counterpoints to a given cantus firmus in ~~the~~ modal counterpoint. I am well aware of the ~~criticism~~ objections raised against the cantus firmus technique by ~~Arthur~~ I. Merritt⁵⁾ and agree with A. Tillman)

5) Proceedings of the Music Teachers National Association, 36th Series, Pittsburgh, 1942, pp. 153-167

("The Teaching of Counterpoint in the Liberal Arts College,"

4// Mr. Merritt in principle, but I still believe that the work in the so-called five species of counterpoint has much educational value, as it teaches the student to extricate himself skilfully of difficult situations and train his technical imagination. The same ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~old~~ ^{is} ~~be~~ ^{is} ~~tone~~ of the use of twelve-tone series in non-tonal counterpoint, but the twelve-tone series actually accomplishes more than that, inasmuch as the regular recurrence of similar or identical melodic features ~~and~~ teaches the student both to exploit this recurrence for purposes of thematic unification of larger spans and to ~~employ~~ ^{employ} all ~~available~~ ^{available} available devices of variation in order to avoid monotony.

As to the place which this purely technical instruction in non-tonal counterpoint, based on the Twelve-Tone Technique, ought to have in the usual curriculum, the decision will partly depend on the general layout of the plan of instruction. For various reasons it would seem practical and logical to begin the theory course with modal counterpoint and let tonal harmony follow, instead of the reverse order which is now usually being applied. I think that the main reason for the present arrangement is to be found in the time limitations imposed upon the theory and credit sequence in the liberal arts college. Yet, no matter the music department of which is first, tonal harmony or modal counterpoint, it would seem possible and logical to complete elementary instruction in the three idioms (pre-tonal, tonal and post-tonal) by teaching non-tonal counterpoint after the first two have been dealt with. This procedure would seem advisable in the case of most students who are not particularly interested

5/ in composition and want to take in only the minimum of theory required in the major field. While ten to twelve class hours devoted to the Twelve-Tone Technique ought to be considered sufficient in order to acquire an elementary working knowledge of the principles involved, the plan would probably require a slight ~~expansion of the~~ credits now allotted to theory in the major field.

(addition to the minimum of)

~~the~~ ~~Two~~ Students who want to ~~continue~~ proceed to the advanced phases of theory might better become acquainted with the Twelve-Tone Technique at a later stage, for they may be so tempted ~~to give the new device~~ ~~permanently~~ that it would ~~be~~ be difficult to take them back again to the point ~~at~~

express themselves in the new idiom from then on

at which they should start integrating contrapuntal techniques and harmonic orientation by writing tonal fugues, from which they should progress to the sonata form through the preparatory stages of variation, scherzo and rondo. In following this sequence the students usually arrive spontaneously at the threshold of the new, non-tonal idiom, and it is at this point that they ought to be made acquainted with the Twelve-Tone Technique as one of the means of organizing the new material.

+ Of course, it must be taken under consideration that instruction in the Twelve-Tone
at that point

Technique may ~~be~~ assume a significance different from ~~that~~ the elementary procedures mentioned above and may involve a choice

6/ of a permanent method of ~~personal~~ personal artistic expression, as intimated in the opening paragraphs of this paper. It will be the responsibility of the teacher to point out very carefully ~~that~~ the ~~more~~ technical as well as the philosophical significance and potentialities of the Twelve-Tone Technique so that the student will neither reject it as a foolish pedantry nor accept it as a parracea.

I hope I was able in my own experience to avoid both dangers. For I have had students who even at this advanced point of their evolution have calmly taken to the Twelve-Tone Technique as an intelligent and useful device of organizing the new material and have not ~~fall~~ ~~fallen~~ fallen for it as an easy way of escaping the true problems of composition, and I still count them among my best students. On the other hand, equally good students have made up their minds to the effect that digging into the problems of the Twelve-Tone Technique was the proper way for them to ~~progress in~~ fulfill their desire of achieving higher perfection in the art of composition, and I am proud to say that some of them have made real contributions to the ~~further~~ development of the ideas that generated the original concept of the Twelve-Tone Technique.

growth and expansion

It is true that the general trends prevailing at this time are ^{by and large} unfavorable to both creative work and research in the field of non-tonal music and twelve-tone counterpoint. I am sure, however, that future

7// generations of ~~many~~ musicologists and,
eventually, of music lovers will marvel
at the amount of ~~some~~ self-denying and
idealistic ~~work~~ ^{effort} that is constantly being
devoted to such studies and endeavors
by a ~~few exceptional~~ individuals.

considerable number of