
Analysis 5

Schoenberg, Suite for Piano, Op. 25, Gavotte Stravinsky, *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas*

The Gavotte from Schoenberg's Suite for Piano, Op. 25 is based on a twelve-tone series. But rather than beginning with the series, let's plunge right into an examination of the first phrase of music, shown in Example A5-1, to discover what sorts of musical ideas Schoenberg is working with.



Example A5-1 First phase of the Gavotte from Schoenberg's Suite for Piano, Op. 25.

Play the phrase and think about what is gavottelike about it. A gavotte is a Baroque dance in duple meter that usually begins and ends in the middle of the bar and places some stress on the second beat of the measure. It is usually quite simple rhythmically. Schoenberg's gavotte exhibits each of these aspects. Its simple two-voice texture also recalls familiar Baroque models. At the same time, of course, the melodies, motives, and harmonies have little in common with those of a Baroque work. Schoenberg has been severely criticized, by the composer Pierre Boulez among others, for mixing old forms with a new musical language. In this critical view, it would have been more consistent and more convincing if Schoenberg had devised new forms that grew organically from his new language. Schoenberg's defenders have responded that, far from a sign of weakness, his use of old forms shows the power of his new musical language both to create musical coherence and, at the same time, to remake the old forms. He creates beautiful new works that subtly, and ironically, imitate old ones.

Now play the phrase again and listen particularly to the intervallic and motivic structure of the melodic line in the right hand. That melody is divided into two groups of four notes. Those two groups balance one another in duration and shape, and each ends on a tritone: G–D \flat for the first group and A \flat –D for the second. The tritones are rhythmically similar—the second note of each tritone is a half-note on the down-beat of a measure. The second tritone, with its wide intervallic span, sounds like an

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expansion of the first one. Between the tritones, connecting them, is the descending 3 from $G\flat$ to $E\flat$. Those two pitch classes form, with each of the tritones, a member of set class 4-Z15 (0146). (See Example A5-2.)

Example A5-2 Two tritones linked by a 3 to create two overlapping forms of 4-Z15 (0146).

The two forms of 4-Z15 are related by inversion, specifically by the inversion that maps $E\flat$ and $G\flat$ onto each other: $I_{G\flat}^{E\flat}$. One can hear the first tritone, $D\flat-G$, flipping around the $E\flat-G\flat$ to map onto the second tritone, $A\flat-D$. The dyad $G\flat-E\flat$ thus draws the tritones together and balances them. Play the melodic line and listen for this.

The first tritone, $G-D\flat$, is preceded by a member of interval class 1, $E-F$. Similarly, the second tritone, $A\flat-D$, is followed, in the left hand, by another 1, $C-B$. In both cases, the combination of interval class 1 with the tritone creates a form of set class 4-12 (0236). As with the statements of 4-Z15 (0146), these two statements of 4-12 enhance the sense of melodic balance in the phrase. (See Example A5-3.)

Example A5-3 Two tritones preceded and followed by a semitone to create two balancing forms of 4-12 (0236).

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The sets are related at T_7 , which one can hear in the interval between the first and highest note of the first set (E) and the last and lowest note of the second set (B) as well as between the last and lowest note of the first set ($D\flat$) and the first and highest note of the second set ($A\flat$).

The first three notes in the phrase, E–F–G, and the last three notes in the phrase, D–C–B, both form members of 3–2 (013). In addition, other forms of the same set class are embedded in the left-hand part. That part begins with B–C–A, overlapped with C–A– $B\flat$. When the $B\flat$ is reached, the pitches are stated in reverse order: $B\flat$ –A–C is overlapped with A–C–B. All of these are members of 3–2. (See Example A5–4.)

The musical score is in 2/2 time. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melody starting with E4, F4, G4, followed by a rest, then A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F11, G11, A11, B11, C12, D12, E12, F12, G12, A12, B12, C13, D13, E13, F13, G13, A13, B13, C14, D14, E14, F14, G14, A14, B14, C15, D15, E15, F15, G15, A15, B15, C16, D16, E16, F16, G16, A16, B16, C17, D17, E17, F17, G17, A17, B17, C18, D18, E18, F18, G18, A18, B18, C19, D19, E19, F19, G19, A19, B19, C20, D20, E20, F20, G20, A20, B20, C21, D21, E21, F21, G21, A21, B21, C22, D22, E22, F22, G22, A22, B22, C23, D23, E23, F23, G23, A23, B23, C24, D24, E24, F24, G24, A24, B24, C25, D25, E25, F25, G25, A25, B25, C26, D26, E26, F26, G26, A26, B26, C27, D27, E27, F27, G27, A27, B27, C28, D28, E28, F28, G28, A28, B28, C29, D29, E29, F29, G29, A29, B29, C30, D30, E30, F30, G30, A30, B30, C31, D31, E31, F31, 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B327, C328, D328, E328, F328, G328, A328, B328, C329, D329, E329, F329, G329, A329, B329, C330, D330, E330, F330, G330, A330, B330, C331, D331, E331, F331, G331, A331, B331, C332, D332, E332, F332, G332, A332, B332, C333, D333, E333, F333, G333, A333, B333, C334, D334, E334, F334, G334, A334, B334, C335, D335, E335, F335, G335, A335, B335, C336, D336, E336, F336, G336, A336, B336, C337, D337, E337, F337, G337, A337, B337, C338, D338, E338, F338, G338, A338, B338, C339, D339, E339, F339, G339, A339, B339, C340, D340, E340, F340, G340, A340, B340, C341, D341, E341, F341, G341, A341, B341, C342, D342, E342, F342, G342, A342, B342, C343, D343, E343, F343, G343, A343, B343, C344, D344, E344, F344, G344, A344, B344, C345, D345, E345, F345, G345, A345, B345, C346, D346, E346, F346, G346, A346, B346, C347, D347, E347, F347, G347, A347, B347, C348, D348, E348, F348, G348, A348, B348, C349, D349, E349, F349, G349, A349, B349, C350, D350, E350, F350, G350, A350, B350, C351, D351, E351, F351, G351, A351, B351, C352, D352, E352, F352, G352, A352, B352, C353, D353, E353, F353, G353, A353, B353, C354, D354, E354, F354, G354, A354, B354, C355, D355, E355, F355, G355, A355, B355, C356, D356, E356, F356, G356, A356, B356, C357, D357, E357, F357, G357, A357, B357, C358, D358, E358, F358, G358, A358, B358, C359, D359, E359, F359, G359, A359, B359, C360, D360, E360, F360, G360, A360, B360, C361, D361, E361, F361, G361, A361, B361, C362, D362, E362, F362, G362, A362, B362, C363, D363, E363

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Example A5-5 illustrates the construction of a twelve-tone series from various musical intervals. The notation consists of five staves, each representing a different intervallic concept:

- tritones:** Shows two tritone intervals (augmented fourths) on a staff.
- 4-Z15 (0146):** Shows a tetrachord (four-note segment) with intervals of 4, 1, and 6 semitones.
- 4-12 (0236):** Shows a tetrachord with intervals of 4, 1, and 2 semitones.
- 3-2 (013):** Shows a tetrachord with intervals of 3 and 2 semitones.
- series:** The final staff shows the complete twelve-tone series, which is a permutation of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale.

Vertical dashed lines connect the notes across the staves, showing how the intervals are combined to form the final series.

Example A5-5 The series built up from the interaction of the musical ideas it contains.

Far from being an arbitrary or mechanical listing of notes, a twelve-tone series is the embodiment of interrelated musical ideas. A piece of music based on a series will be concerned with the musical ideas contained in the series.

In principle, forty-eight forms of the series are available and could be summarized in a 12×12 matrix. In practice, however, most twelve-tone pieces use far fewer than forty-eight forms, and Schoenberg's *Gavotte* uses only four: P_4 , P_{10} , I_4 , and I_{10} . These are written out in Example A5-6.

Example A5-6 displays four specific forms of the twelve-tone series, each written on a single staff:

- P_4 :** The first form, starting with a half note followed by quarter notes.
- P_{10} :** The second form, starting with a half note followed by quarter notes.
- I_4 :** The third form, starting with a half note followed by quarter notes.
- I_{10} :** The fourth form, starting with a half note followed by quarter notes.

Each form is a permutation of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale, with specific intervallic relationships between the notes.

Example A5-6 Four forms of the series.

Analysis 5

As we've already noted, one way of getting oriented in a twelve-tone piece is to do a "twelve-count," identifying the forms of the series being used and the order position in the series of each pitch class. A twelve-count for measures 1–8 of the Gavotte is provided in Example A5–7. Occasionally, a single pitch will be simultaneously the last note of one series-form and the first note of the next.

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The time signature is 2/2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. The analysis is integrated into the score as follows:

- System 1:** Measures 1-4. Pitch classes 1-12 are numbered above notes. A box labeled P_4 is under measure 1. A box labeled I_{10} is under measure 4. Dynamics include p and sf .
- System 2:** Measures 5-8. Pitch classes 1-12 are numbered above notes. A box labeled P_{10} is under measure 8. Dynamics include p and sf .
- System 3:** Measures 9-12. Pitch classes 1-12 are numbered above notes. Boxes labeled I_4 , I_{10} , and I_4 are under measures 10, 11, and 12 respectively. Dynamics include sf , fp , and ff . A "Red." (Reduction) symbol is present under measure 12.
- System 4:** Measures 13-16. Pitch classes 1-12 are numbered above notes. A box labeled P_4 is under measure 14. Dynamics include p and sf .

Example A5–7 A "twelve-count."

Analysis 5

But while such a twelve-count can help us to get oriented, it hardly begins to answer the kinds of musical questions that normally concern us—questions of harmonic and motivic organization, questions of rhythm and phrase structure, questions of contour and shape. We have already tried to approach these questions in the discussion of measures 1–2. Now let's see how the musical ideas presented there are developed in the subsequent music.

The second phrase, measures 2–4, balances the first in a kind of antecedent-consequent formation. Just as the first phrase is balanced within itself, the second phrase balances the first to form a larger musical unit. Play the second phrase, and notice, as in the first, the two tritones joined by an interval 3, preceded and followed by an interval class 1, accompanied by a retrograde-symmetrical line in the left hand consisting of overlapping forms of 3–2 (013). Of the two tritones in the second phrase, one of them, G–D \flat , is the same as in the first phrase. In fact, all four of the series-forms that Schoenberg uses—P₄, I₄, P₁₀, and I₁₀—have that tritone as their third and fourth notes. Figure out why this is so. One of the reasons that Schoenberg uses the series-forms he does is precisely to feature this particular interval. As you listen to the rest of the piece, you will certainly notice how prominent the interval G–D \flat is throughout.

So far, we have been concerned mainly with the melodic progress of each line, but the lines combine in interesting and significant ways. Consider, for example, what happens at the barline of measure 2, when the melody in the first phrase leaps from A \flat to D, and at the same time the left hand states A and C. These four notes together make up yet another form of 4–Z15 (0146). This form of 4–Z15, however, unlike the others in the first phrase, is not a linear segment of P₄. Rather, it consists of the seventh, eighth, tenth, and eleventh notes of P₄. This form of 4–Z15 does, however, occur as a linear segment of P₁₀, where it comprises the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth notes. The same sort of thing happens in the second phrase. There, the melodic G \flat –C combines with F–D in the bass to create a form of 4–Z15 that occurs later as a linear segment of I₄ (see Example A5–8).

This example demonstrates two important principles of Schoenberg's twelve-tone music, and of twelve-tone music generally. The first principle is that the vertical combinations of notes, even when they don't follow the strict linear order of the series, still tend to express musical ideas that are found directly in the series. In the Gavotte, 4–Z15 (0146) is a linear subset of the series (it occurs twice). The vertical form in measures 1–2 reflects those linear forms. Tones that are not adjacent in the series are combined to create sets equivalent to those that do occur as contiguous segments of the series. Second, the sets formed by tones that are not adjacent in the series frequently come back later as contiguous segments of other series-forms; that is, they are secondary at one point in a piece, then they become primary later on. In this way, Schoenberg is able to direct the music from place to place. The vertical form of 4–Z15 in the first phrase gets a full linear statement later when the music moves to

Analysis 5

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system is in 2/2 time, starting with a piano (p) dynamic and a P₄ collection. A melodic line is circled, leading to an I₁₀ collection. The second system continues the melodic line, also circled, leading to a P₁₀ collection. The third system is in 5/4 time, starting with a piano (p) dynamic and an I₄ collection. A melodic line is circled, leading to a P₁₀ collection. Dynamics include p, sf, and fp. Arrows indicate the flow from P₄ to P₁₀ and from I₁₀ to I₄.

Example A5-8 Nonlinear subsets of P₄ and I₁₀ direct the motion toward P₁₀ and I₄, where the same collections occur as linear segments.

P₁₀. In that way, the music is directed from P₄ to P₁₀ (and, in similar fashion, from I₁₀ to I₄).

The first section of the piece comes to an end with a big cadence on the downbeat of measure 8. Let's consider some of the musical factors that make it sound cadential. Partly, it's simply a matter of tempo; the music slows down right at that point and then resumes its former tempo. It's also partly a matter of texture and contour; after a passage in which two or three lines move with great independence, all the parts come together here in a homophonic descent culminating in a single low note. There are also some pitch-related factors, as there must be to make a truly convincing cadence. For one thing, the music at this point returns to P₄ for the first time since the beginning of the piece. The melody, E-F-G-D_b, recalls the first four notes of the piece and thus seems to return us to our starting point.

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There is more. In this piece, phrases frequently begin and end a tritone apart. If you look back at the structure of the series, you will notice that its first and last notes are a tritone apart. (This is true for all forms of the series.) Since the phrases of the piece frequently coincide with a statement of the series, this phrase-spanning tritone is often in evidence. Look, for example, at the third phrase of the piece, beginning in measure 4 with a high B \flat and ending in measure 5 with the low, repeated Es. The same sort of thing happens over the course of the entire first section of the piece. The first note of the piece is E, in a high register. The section ends on the downbeat of measure 8 with the low, cadential B \flat . That very large-scale statement of E–B \flat reflects many briefer statements of that tritone and other tritones. The same musical idea we started with in discussing the melody of the first phrase is thus used over a larger span to link the beginning and end of an entire section of music.

During much of the twentieth century, Schoenberg and Stravinsky were considered antithetical. Schoenberg's new twelve-tone language and Stravinsky's neoclassical return to traditional textures and sonorities seemed to place them in opposing camps of progressives and conservatives. But more recently the connections and similarities between them have become more and more apparent. We have already gotten a hint, in his *Gavotte*, of Schoenberg's immersion in traditional music and musical forms. As for Stravinsky, close examination of many of his neoclassical works reveals an almost Schoenbergian concern with motivic saturation and manipulation.

Any gap between the two composers was bridged further in the early 1950s when Stravinsky underwent what he called his second "crisis" as a composer. His first crisis, back around 1920, marked his abandonment of the "Russian" idiom of his early ballets for the more intensive engagement with eighteenth-century models that defined his second, "neoclassical" period. His second crisis led to his embrace of twelve-tone serialism. For some observers, this change seemed an inexplicable capitulation to an alien force. For others, more sensitive to the musical continuities underlying the stylistic change, it came to seem a logical outgrowth of what had come before.

Stravinsky's transition to twelve-tone composition unfolded gradually and was marked by a number of short, experimental pieces. Some of these use a series of fewer than twelve pitch classes. In *Memoriam Dylan Thomas*, a setting of Thomas's well-known poem "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night," uses a series of five notes: E–E \flat –C–C \sharp –D (see Example A5–9).



Example A5–9 The five-note series for Stravinsky's
In Memoriam Dylan Thomas.

Analysis 5

Notice the intense intervallic concentration. All the intervals except one are members of interval class 1. The series as a whole comprises a chromatic pentachord, 5–1 (01234). Its first four notes state set class 4–3 (0134), a longtime favorite of Stravinsky's. (As we saw in Chapter 4, this set class was the basic idea for his *Symphony of Psalms*.) The fifth note of the series then fills in the gap in the middle of the set. This idea of creating a chromatic gap and then filling it, or of filling out a chromatic space, is an important one in this work. With a five-note series, a 12×12 matrix is obviously out of the question. Instead, the prime and inverted forms of the series are listed below. (The retrograde and retrograde-inversion forms can simply be read backwards.) Notice that for each prime ordering there is an inverted ordering with the same pitch-class content listed across from it.

P ₄	E	E \flat	C	C \sharp	D	I ₀	C	C \sharp	E	E \flat	D
P ₅	F	E	C \sharp	D	E \flat	I ₁	C \sharp	D	F	E	E \flat
P ₆	F \sharp	F	D	E \flat	E	I ₂	D	E \flat	F \sharp	F	E
P ₇	G	F \sharp	E \flat	E	F	I ₃	E \flat	E	G	F \sharp	F
P ₈	A \flat	G	E	F	F \sharp	I ₄	E	F	A \flat	G	F \sharp
P ₉	A	A \flat	F	F \sharp	G	I ₅	F	F \sharp	A	A \flat	G
P ₁₀	B \flat	A	F \sharp	G	A \flat	I ₆	F \sharp	G	B \flat	A	A \flat
P ₁₁	B	B \flat	G	A \flat	A	I ₇	G	A \flat	B	B \flat	A
P ₀	C	B	A \flat	A	B \flat	I ₈	A \flat	A	C	B	B \flat
P ₁	C \sharp	C	A	B \flat	B	I ₉	A	B \flat	C \sharp	C	B
P ₂	D	C \sharp	B \flat	B	C	I ₁₀	B \flat	B	D	C \sharp	C
P ₃	E \flat	D	B	C	C \sharp	I ₁₁	B	C	E \flat	D	C \sharp

In Stravinsky's setting of Thomas's poem, the singer (a tenor) is accompanied by a string quartet. The setting has a purely instrumental prelude and postlude, scored for string quartet and trombone quartet, which Stravinsky calls "Dirge-Canons." ("Dirge" refers to the emotional quality of the music, and "canons" to the contrapuntal relationships among the parts.) Example A5–10 contains the first phrase of the instrumental prelude.

M.M. ♩ = 100–102

The musical score is for the first phrase of the instrumental prelude. It is written for Tenor Trombones (I and II) and Bass Trombones (I and II). The time signature is 12/4. The tempo is marked M.M. ♩ = 100–102. The score includes a 'Theme' and its 'Inversion' and 'Riversion'. The music is in 12/4 time and includes various musical notations such as 'mp', 'etc. sim.', and 'Th.'.

(continued)

Analysis 5



Example A5-10 First phrase with series-forms marked.

Stravinsky himself identified the orderings of the series using his own personal vocabulary: “Theme” = prime, “Riversion” = retrograde, “Inv.” = inversion, and “R. Inv.” = retrograde inversion. The modern labels of the series-forms, including their transposition levels, are also given on the example. Sing each of the parts. You will immediately hear their mournful chromatic winding. Now listen for the contrapuntal relationship among the parts. Play just the parts for Tenor Trombone 2 and Bass Trombone 2, and notice that they have a canon at the octave. Now add Tenor Trombone 1 and hear how it imitates the other two a tritone higher. The contrapuntal relationship of Bass Trombone 1 is harder to hear, since it begins with the retrograde ordering of the series. Still, because of the intervallic concentration of the series, it sounds imitative and thickens the contrapuntal web. It also participates in filling out the chromatic space that defines the passage. Each voice fills in all the pitch classes within some span. The four voices together fill in the entire chromatic space from the low C in Bass Trombone 2 up to the high Bb in Tenor Trombone 1 (with a single missing note). Play all four parts and listen for both the contrapuntal imitations and the filling in of the chromatic space.

Now play it again and listen to the vertical sonorities. Unlike Schoenberg’s practice, they do not seem to duplicate set classes formed by subsets of the series. Instead, they are not entirely consistent. (Stravinsky did not solve to his own satisfaction the problem of creating meaningful simultaneities until several years later.) The sonorities used most often are 3-7 (025) and 3-11 (037), the major or minor triad. These diatonic references are by-products of the serial voice leading. The most striking simultaneity is the one that ends the passage. It is an Fb-major (or E-major) triad. Its emergence from the chromatic haze is arresting and dramatic. It is related to the frequent melodic emphasis on pitch class E in this work. Stravinsky here generally prefers series-forms that either begin or end on E; in this way, he creates a sense of centric focus within a serial texture.

The same sorts of musical concerns inform the song itself, the first two phrases of which are shown in Example A5-11.

Analysis 5

Diagram illustrating the series forms and their relationships:

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    F $\flat$  ————— C ————— F $\flat$ 
      \               /
      D               F
      /               \
      B               D
      \               /
      I $\flat$              I $\flat$ 
  
```

Example A5-11 First two phrases of the song, with series-forms marked.

The series continues to be developed, now with frequent octave expansions of its intervals. The series-forms used by the instruments are just those from the first phrase of the prelude: P_4 , P_1 , I_2 , and I_{11} . The texture is not overtly imitative, but the parts are still quite independent rhythmically. The simultaneities are formed more consistently than in the prelude. In the first instrumental phrase, the first and last sonorities are members of set class 3-7 (025). These come about because the first violin moves from E to D while the viola moves from D to E. At each end of this voice exchange, the D-E dyad is accompanied by a B in the other instruments. Another member of the same set class is formed in the middle of the passage. The only note common to all three forms, D, is the fulcrum on which the progression among them turns, as each inverts around D onto the next.

When the voice comes in, it overlaps two series forms, I_{10} , and R_4 . As a result, it fills in the chromatic span of a tritone and reaches up to an arrival point on E, reinforcing that pitch class as a point of centric focus. The motivic ideas in the voice part, particularly the dyads B \flat -B and E \flat -E, are echoed in the instrumental introduction and in the accompaniment (see Example A5-12).

Analysis 5

The musical score for Example A5-12 illustrates the motivic interplay between the voice and the instrumental accompaniment. The Tenor part begins with the lyrics "Do not go gen - tle in - to that good night,". The accompaniment, featuring Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, provides a rich harmonic and melodic context. Key markings include "dolce" for a soft, sweet quality, "M.M." (Moderato) for the tempo, "sul G" for a specific pitch or register, and "pizz." (pizzicato) for a short, sharp sound. The score shows how the vocal line and the instrumental lines share and transform melodic motifs throughout the piece.

Example A5-12 Motivic interplay between voice and accompaniment.

The first melodic dyad in the instrumental introduction, E–E \flat (first violin, measure 1) becomes the last melodic dyad in the voice. The last melodic dyad in the instrumental introduction, B \flat –B (cello, measure 3) becomes the first melodic dyad in the voice. That same dyad is also stated at the beginning of the accompaniment in measures 3–4. This kind of interweaving of the vocal line with the instrumental accompaniment continues throughout the song.

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