Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music
Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music

Third Edition

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For my mother and father
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Preface

Instruction in music theory at the college level has for many years been concerned primarily with the music of the tonal era, spanning roughly some 300 years and including the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods. The reasons for this are not hard to imagine. After all, most of the masterworks that are our steady diet as concertgoers and performers were composed during that time, some significant exceptions such as concert-band music notwithstanding. And probably no one who has studied the tonal system in depth has failed to be impressed with what must surely rank as one of the greatest of humanity’s artistic achievements.

But the achievements of the twentieth century have also been of great significance, and theorists in recent years have shown interest in devoting more instructional time to the music of that century. One problem, however, has been the lack of appropriate instructional materials. While there are several fine books available on twentieth-century music, few of them deal with the topic in a way that seems appropriate for the general music student, and it is this need that the present text is intended to meet.

*Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music* is organized primarily by compositional technique and only partly chronologically. Most chapters deal with some aspect of music (rhythm, for instance) throughout the twentieth century, but there is a quasi-chronological method in the ordering of the chapters. No attempt is made in the text to teach music history per se or to explore in detail the styles of individual composers. Instead, the emphasis is on musical materials and compositional techniques. Each chapter includes an introduction, several subheaded sections, and a summary. The discussions are illustrated by a large number of musical examples drawn from the music literature of this century. With
few exceptions, the examples are currently available on recording, and as many of them as possible should be listened to. The last part of each chapter consists of exercise material that in most cases is divided into four subsections: Fundamentals, Analysis, Composition, and Further Reading. (See the Bibliography for complete bibliographical references for notes and Further Reading assignments.) Most teachers will find that there are more exercises than they can make use of profitably.

*Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music* is appropriate for a twentieth-century unit as short as several weeks or as long as a year. In the former case, I suggest omitting some of the chapters that are less vital for a short overview—perhaps Chapters 1, 7, 8, 11, 13, and 15, for example, depending on the interests of the instructor and students. A short course would also have to omit most of the exercise material, but the usefulness of these exercises for class drills and discussion should not be overlooked. Few teaching situations would allow the thorough study of every chapter and the completion of all of the exercises. Some of the Further Reading exercises, in particular, are appropriate only for the more advanced and highly motivated student. Another point to keep in mind is that some chapters (9 and 10, for instance) require more time than the average to complete successfully, while others (such as 8 and 15) require less.

To a certain extent, the chapters in this book are freestanding because they do not follow a chronological sequence, but there are exceptions. Chapter 9, 10, and 13 should be taken up in that order, although other chapters may be interspersed in between them. Also, some instructors assign Chapter 9 very early in the sequence so that students can have longer to practice with the concepts that it presents. Finally, Chapters 2 through 6 form the core foundation for many of the chapters to follow, so it would not be advisable to omit any of them.

**NEW TO THE THIRD EDITION**

All of the chapters have been revised to a degree, but six of them received special attention. Chapter 2 (Scale Formations in Twentieth-Century Music) now introduces the augmented (hexatonic) scale. Chapter 9 (Nonserial Atonality) has been revised and expanded to include information on Forte labels and subsets, and the method of determining the best normal order has been modified. In addition, an appendix that contains a listing of set classes, Forte names, and interval-class vectors appears at the end of the book. The serial terminology in Chapters 10 and 13 has been brought into conformity with current practice. Chapter 12 (Timbre and Texture: Electronic) has been extensively rewritten and updated, and Chapter 15 (Minimalism and Beyond) has been revised to include developments since 1995.

The Further Readings lists at the end each chapter have been revised and updated. In addition, there are several new musical examples in this edition, most of them from works by female composers.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I benefited substantially in the development of this book from the critiques provided by my students at the University of Texas at Austin, and I am grateful for their sympathetic and helpful evaluations. David Rains was generous in sharing his expertise in the area of electronic music, while Mary Blackman applied her considerable organizational skills to the task of obtaining permissions. Thanks go as well to the staff of the Fine Arts Library of the University of Texas, and especially to Olga Buth and Karl Miller, for their expertise and assistance.

Many of the changes found in the second edition were suggested by my friend and colleague, Kent Kennan, whose close reading of the text was most valuable. Other helpful ideas came from James Bennighof of Baylor University, Joseph DiStephano of East Carolina University, William Dougherty of Drake University, and James O’Donnell of Indiana State University. The revision of Chapter 12 was done with a great deal of assistance from Charles Menoche, also of the University of Texas at Austin and a true authority on music technology. The enormous job of obtaining permissions was carried out with great efficiency by Laura Lawrie. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my wife, Mary Robertson, for her encouragement and for her inspiring love of music.

A number of people made helpful suggestions that were incorporated into the third edition, and I am grateful to them all but especially to Robert Fleisher of Northern Illinois University, Timothy McKinney of Baylor University, and Kip Wile of the Peabody Conservatory. The revision of Chapter 12 was largely done by Keith Kothman of Ball State University, whose expertise was most appreciated. Other helpful ideas came from William Lake, Bowling Green University, Per F. Broman, Bowling Green University, and Robert Maggio, West Chester University.

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