

Tonal Convention Within Post-tonal Music

Throughout the *Fregi* movement of Dallapiccola's *Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera*, Dallapiccola incorporates many of the ideas discussed in Jacqueline Ravensbergen's *The Twentieth-Century Canon: An Analysis of Luigi Dallapiccola's Canonic Works from his Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera*. Although this essay focuses primarily on the first three movements, Dallapiccola uses the same rhythmic and melodic repetition, inversions, and functional chords, to create a sense of polarity within *Fregi*. You should take care to observe these relationships in your performance, using parallel dynamics and phrasing to eventually challenge the conventions of both tonal and atonal music

Fregi undeniably carries with it the air of a romantic solo piano piece. Although the pitches are serialized and the rhythms off-set, Dallapiccola begins the piece with a clear melodic line that is allowed to come to a cadence of sorts before entering in a different form, accompanied this time by chords. Although the listener is unlikely to hear the relationship between the first six notes and the second six notes in the top staff, both phrases share the same prime form (014579). The chordal accompaniment enters exactly as the first row reaches the seventh pitch, and reaches its sixth pitch just as the first row reaches its conclusion. Immediately at the conclusion of the first row (P 10), the third row (R5) begins. While the two rows are connected by the matrix, most listeners are unable to hear this. Therefore, in order to create a sense of continuity, Dallapiccola stitches the two rows together using the second row (I8). This causes the listener to perceive a melody developed over a chord progression. This is further

emphasised by the technique of cross partitioning. Cross partitioning refers to grouping notes together in even number to create chords. Common practice results in “rectangular” cross partitioning (Ravensbergen 34-35) where the twelve notes of a row are evenly divided into two groups of six, three groups of four, four groups of three, or six groups of two. These groups are then stacked vertically into chords and shuffled within each chord. While Dallapiccola initially seems to take this approach, sorting his pitches into six groups of two, he holds out a pedal tone between measures three and four as seen in example one below.

Example One: Dallapiccola holds a common tone between measures three and four, offsetting his cross-partitioning.

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains four measures of music. The first measure has a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure has a quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The third measure has a quarter note F5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The fourth measure has a quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note D6. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains four measures of music. The first measure has a quarter note G2, a quarter note A2, and a quarter note B2. The second measure has a quarter note C3, a quarter note D3, and a quarter note E3. The third measure has a quarter note F3, a quarter note G3, and a quarter note A3. The fourth measure has a quarter note B3, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note D4. The notes G4 and B3 in the fourth measure are circled, indicating they are the common tones held between the two staves. The score includes dynamic markings *pp; sost.* and various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and triplets.

This creates a sort of suspension; half of each dyad lags behind the other. Dallapiccola remedies this by doubling the last note of the first row and the sixth note of the second row. He does this

however, by jumping more than an octave, taking a chord tone and placing it in the same register as the melody as shown in example two below.

Example Two :Dallapiccola doubles the E in the top staff which serves as as 12th note of P10 (labelled in black) and the sixth row of I8 (labelled in gray).

The image shows a musical score for two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff is in a higher register and contains a melody with notes labeled 10, 11, and 12. A bracket above the top staff indicates a doubling of the E note (labeled 12). The bottom staff is in a lower register and contains a bass line with notes labeled 5 and 4. Triplet markings (3) are present in both staves.

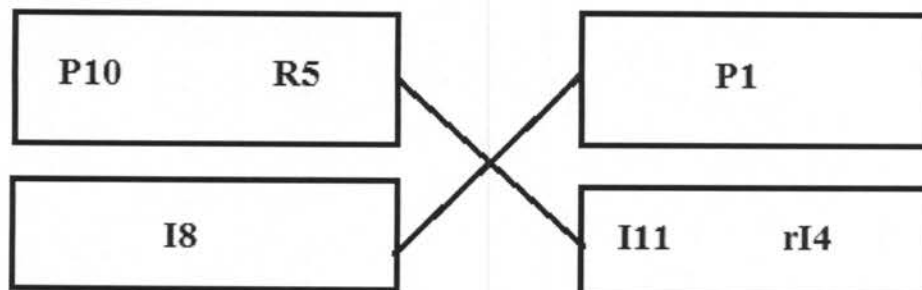
Because the ear is unable to discern this doubling, this has the effect of shortening the second row by “leaving out” the sixth pitch. This makes the end of the second row all the more noticeable. Dallapiccola repeats the last two notes of the second row, iP 9 and iP 2. This creates as sort of cadence to the ear. Because the listener does not hear all twelve notes in the row, this cadence comes earlier than expected. Dallapiccola emphasises this surprise cadence in several other ways as well.

At the same time that Dallapiccola repeats the last notes of I8 in the bottom staff, he repeats the last notes of R5 the top. Significantly, this is the first time that either the first or third rows have played chords. Until now, the first and third rows have played melody exclusively. At

this point, Dallapiccola is signifying a flipping of the piece. When the fourth tone row begins in measure six, it is an exact rhythmic repetition of the first row (p10) at I11. At this point the performer needs to emphasise this flip by drawing parallels in dynamics between the phrases the first and second time they appear. Ravensbergen points out that P10 and I11 are doubly invariant at the tetrachord outlined in places 1-4 (Ravensbergen: 21). In addition to that however, the rows are related by T9I. This draws an even stronger inversive relationship between the first row and the fourth row. Therefore, you should phrase each line in such a way that the listener can hear the similarities. This relationship should also be brought out in the second and the fifth rows, and the third and the sixth, since they are related in the same way as P10 and I11, both rhythmically and by transposition and inversion. This relationship takes on further significance when examined in context of the title of the movement.

In Italian, *Fregio* refers to the decorative ornaments that adorn the tops of buildings. Fregio are exclusively horizontal, and very often symmetrical. Dallapiccola is crafting a musical fregio, creating a crossed inversive pattern. While the staves are not symmetrical along the horizontal axis, they are symmetrical along the vertical axis as shown in example three below.

Example Three: Dallapiccola creates a symmetrical musical *Fregio* by crossing his lines across a musical axis.



It is important to remember that Dallapiccola was self taught in the art of serialism. He brought much of his tonal writing into 12-tone music. As such, he seeks to bring a strong sense of coherence to his work. In his work *On the Twelve Tone Road* he talks about the role of the tone row in his music

The note series technique is only a means of helping a composer achieve coherence of musical argument. If anyone says that a work based on such a series is automatically guaranteed such coherence, he is making a great mistake, since no artificial technique has ever guaranteed anything, and the unity of such a work will be, together with its melody, rhythm, and harmony, an inferior product.

(Dallapiccola 328)

Here we see Dallapiccola's fundamental belief regarding 12-tone music; it must be coherent beyond just the aspects of pitches. We see this come out in the cohesive rhythms, inverted voicing, and the way in which Dallapiccola chooses which rows to use. The way he constructs his rows, however, is also important.

Ravensbergen frequently references the Bach motive that appears throughout the matrix. Interestingly, this motive is almost entirely absent from *Fregi*. It appears only in two of the rows used in the movement, and even when it does appear it is subtle, placed on weak beats and in passages of relatively quick moving notes. Dallapiccola seems to want to draw us towards something different then. Dallapiccola emphasises the last three notes of the first and fourth rows, and the first three notes of the third and sixth rows by writing an arpeggio up and down in triplet quarter notes. While this is not significant on its own, the fact that the first arpeggio spells an a minor chord followed by an e minor chord, and that the second spells an F major chord

followed by a B-flat major chord hints at tonality. Although there is no tonal center to latch onto in the piece, the ear still hears these arpeggios as chord progressions. Perhaps as a *i* chord moving to a *v*, and then a *V* in a new key to a *I*. While these arpeggios hint at tonality, their primary role is as a marker for the ear, to show the transition from one row to another.

Dallapiccola has intentionally written these arpeggios into his matrix. Once again, he seems to be trying to write in the style of a romantic solo piano work, providing a context for his listeners to understand. You should make these arpeggios clear in your interpretation so that the listener can perceive them as chords. Once Dallapiccola sets these chords up, however, he challenges them. In measures six and twelve, Dallapiccola takes advantage of the cadences that he writes using repeated notes. When the last notes of the second and third tone rows are combined they spell out a fifth between D and A, with two thirds provided, an F-sharp (spelled G-flat) and an F-natural. Dallapiccola seems to dare the listener to assign a sense of tonality to his pieces; he cadences on what is both a major and minor chord. He does the same thing at the end of the piece, with a G, C, E, and E-flat (spelled as a D-sharp). This is clearly an intentional choice, had he wanted to avoid these different thirds, he could simply have ended one of the rows earlier. But not only does he cause them to end at the same time, he cadences on them; repeating each chord several times before moving on (or ending). The performer should take care to bring out these middle notes in order to highlight the contrast between tonality and serialism.

Dallapiccola creates a hybrid between tonal and post-tonal music in his *Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera*, particularly in the *Fregi* movement. He uses repetition, inversion, and chords to create a sense of tonality and structure which gives the listener a context. He also

shatters it, however refusing to give the listener a clear cadence, shattering the tonal connections they may have formed.

List of Works Cited

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