

<http://www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/encyclopaedia/hutchinson/m0009510.html>

## **Atonality**

Music that has no sense of tonality and no obvious key. Atonal music uses the notes of the chromatic scale and, depending on the system employed, uses all twelve pitch classes in hierarchies other than triadic harmony. This means that there is no pull towards any particular tonic note.

Arnold Schoenberg was one of the first composers to explore atonality, from 1909, although Gustav Mahler experimented with it in many passages of his later symphonies. Schoenberg's aim was to extend tonal expression and not just to disturb. He rejected the term as he felt it was misleading. Other important composers of atonality include Alban Berg, Anton Webern, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Pierre Boulez. It has since become the main paradigm of all serious mid- to late-20th-century composers, due to the fact that the use of tonality now sounds clichéd due to all the possibilities of tonality having been exhausted.

Populist use of atonality can be found in film and television scores as background music for scenes of mystery or horror, although here it is only the dissonance (a small aspect of atonality) exploited for its ability to disturb.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serialism>

**Serialism** is a rigorous system of composing music in which various elements of the piece are ordered according to a pre-determined ordered set or sets, and variations on them. The elements thus controlled may be the pitch of the notes, their length, their dynamics, their accents, or virtually any other musical quantity, which, in serial terms is called a parameter. More generally, serialism is any music which uses any ordered sets applied to any musical element. However, this article discusses the more specific serialism. (See also Tonality, Atonality)

Serialism is an extension of Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique (sometimes called *dodecaphony*), which involves the use of tone rows: the basis of the system is that all the pitches of a composition are drawn from ordering of one (and only one) instance of each of the twelve notes in the chromatic scale and permutations of that row. The terms *serial* and *twelve tone* are often used as synonyms. To clarify the terms **total serialism** or **integral serialism** are often used to distinguish twelve tone composition from the more expansive kind.