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# Musical Method Analyzed

## Use of Twelve Tones Related by Schoenberg

by Maurice Hyman

Professor Arnold Schoenberg, revolutionary composer of modern music, appeared before a Royce hall audience last night and attempted to turn brickbats into bouquets with an explanation of the composition with twelve tones which is the basis of his music.

In composing such music, Professor Schoenberg first combines the twelve tones in an order which does not cause any note to be repeated until the entire twelve tones have been expressed.

### **BASIC SET**

The pattern of these tones comes from a "Basic Set" which is formed according to the method and are related only to one another. It is in no way identical with the chromatic scales.

In explaining the claim of many listeners that the music sounds dissonant, Schoenberg answers that "what distinguishes dissonance from consonance is not a greater or lesser degree of beauty, but a greater or lesser degree of comprehensibility."

### **EXAMPLES GIVEN**

During the course of the lecture, Schoenberg illustrated with numerous examples of how he arrives at harmonies from a Basic Set. He uses what he terms mirror-forms. A theme is either inverted (turned upside down,) retrograded, (played backwards), or is retrograded-in inversion (upside down and backwards.)

Professor Schoenberg concluded the annual Faculty Research lecture with what he thought Wagner probably would have said upon the introduction of harmonies which were contemporarily criticised—"Let there be Unity."