

Math and Religion in Arvo Pärt's Out of the Depths

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Abstract : Arvo Pärt is an Estonian composer who started his musical career under the influence of twelve-tone music and dodecaphonism. From 1968 to 1976, he isolated himself to search for a new path as a composer. In this period, he converted to Russian orthodoxy and changed his composing to tintinnabuli, a musical technique combining triadic chords with simple melodies. The recent analysis of Pärt's output demonstrates that mathematics remained an influence after the invention of tintinnabuli. The present discussion deals with the relationship between math and religion in his work Out of the Depths (1980), proposing a musical-text approach and examining the minimum elements of the piece, such as motives and sub-phrases, which is the main focus of this work, considering text patterns and the role of the organ, which also uses the tintinnabuli system. The analysis of these elements demonstrates that Pärt uses math as a formal element, and the composer combines musical parameters to execute a personal and innovative interpretation of the text.

Keywords : Arvo Pärt, Out of the Depths, math, religion, analysis

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