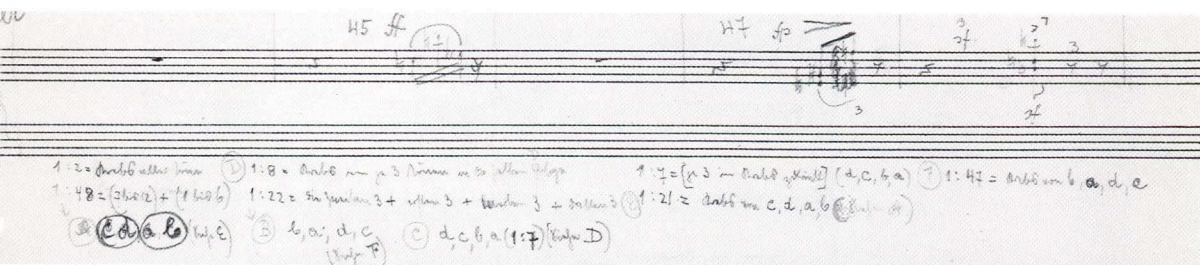


## Harmonic Thought in Webern's Sketches

In his first sketch for the Concerto, Op. 24, found on p. 39 of Sketchbook II<sup>1</sup>), Webern divides his tone row into four subsets and labels them a, b, c, and d. The sketch dated February 5, 1931, found in the middle of this page, makes it clear that Webern was well aware of the serial connections between the four subsets. This fact has long been a matter of record among Webern scholars, since p. 39 was included in the Facsimile Sketchbook published by Moldenhauer in 1968.

By contrast, however, the chart found at the foot of p. 45 in Sketchbook II has not received attention in scholarly literature on Webern. In a graphic format, Webern shows the relationships between eight different row forms.



Below, I have organized the information given in Webern's chart.

For each of the rows in Webern's chart, I have given in order:

- 1) the letter that Webern uses to identify the relationship in his chart;
- 2) Webern's own row number taken from his row charts;
- 3) the set number as it is labelled in current usage;
- 4) the pitches of the row; and
- 5) the order of the four subsets, using Webern's designations a, b, c and d.

P: 0:	F	E	G $\sharp$	A	C $\sharp$	C	D	B $\flat$	B	F $\sharp$	G	E $\flat$ :	a	b	c	d	
8: RI-1:	G $\sharp$	E	F	C	C $\sharp$	A	B	B $\flat$	D	E $\flat$	G	F $\sharp$ :					
B: 22:	R-6:	A	C $\sharp$	C	F	E	G $\sharp$	F $\sharp$	G	E $\flat$	D	B $\flat$	B:	b	a	d	c
F: 47:	I-7:	C	C $\sharp$	A	G $\sharp$	E	F	E $\flat$	G	F $\sharp$	B	B $\flat$	D:				
A: 48:	RI-7:	D	B $\flat$	B	F $\sharp$	G	E $\flat$	F	E	G $\sharp$	A	C $\sharp$ :	C:	c	d	a	b
E: 21:	P-6:	B	B $\flat$	D	E $\flat$	G	F $\sharp$	G $\sharp$	E	F	C	C $\sharp$ :	A:				
C: 7:	I-1:	F $\sharp$	G	E $\flat$	D	B $\flat$	B	A	C $\sharp$	C	F	E	G $\sharp$ :	d	c	b	a
D: 2:	R-0:	E $\flat$	G	F $\sharp$	B	B $\flat$	D	C	C $\sharp$	A	G $\sharp$	E	F:				

My chart, as it has been derived from Webern's chart, shows that he recognizes four different pairings of sets, each of which presents the subsets a, b, c, d, in a different serial order. Within each pair, the order of individual pitches within a subset has been reversed.

From Webern's chart one may generalize that any prime form may be paired with a retrograde inversion whose final pitch is a semitone higher—e.g., P-0 and RI-1; and any inverted form may be paired with a retrograde form whose final pitch is a semitone lower—e.g., I-1 and R-0. In all such pairings, the subsets will appear in the same order but with their internal pitches will be in reverse order.

Webern's use of this principle is shown in the first two row presentations of movement I.

The musical score shows the first two row presentations of movement I. The first row (row 21) is presented in the flute, oboe, trumpet, and clarinet parts. The second row (row 48) is presented in the piano part. The score includes dynamic markings (f, p), articulation (accents), and performance instructions like 'rit.', 'tempo', and 'immer mit Dämpfer'. The piano part also includes a note about 'Klingen wie notiert'.

The movement begins with the four subsets of Webern's row number 21 appearing in succession in the oboe, flute, trumpet and clarinet, respectively. Immediately afterward, a similar disposition of row 48 appears in the piano.

Although the serial order differs in the manner shown above, the vertical ordering of each of the four subsets is identical in these two row presentations. Thus, in a harmonic sense, the piano is merely restating the first phrase given by the wind instruments.

Similar “harmonic” properties are found throughout Webern’s twelve-tone works. I suggest that the “harmonic” aspect of Webern’s music is one that has been neglected and is in need of careful study. The sketchbooks contain much information that helps to corroborate this approach to Webern’s *œuvre*.

1) Moldenhauer designates the sketchbook that contains sketches for opp. 17–19/I—which is presently found in the Pierpont Morgan Library—as Sketchbook I. Therefore, in his numbering system the five sketchbooks found in the Webern Archive of the Paul Sacher Foundation are designated as numbers II through VI. I have chosen a different numbering system because: 1) The Morgan Sketchbook is much smaller and in a quite different format than the other five books; and 2) The five remaining sketchbooks—which are similar to each other in their format and considerably larger than the Morgan Sketchbook—have the numbers I to V on their covers. Although these numbers may not have been assigned by Webern himself, there is more logic in maintaining this designation than in reassigning the numbers as Moldenhauer has done. Accordingly, the sketchbook under discussion here is II in the Anton Webern Collection of the Paul Sacher Foundation, but III in Moldenhauer’s system.