

Mozart's Twelve-tone Row for Orchestra

early June—July 20, 2014; orchestrated September 2014

Duration: about 6 minutes 14 seconds

Over the last decade I have preferred to write pieces from about 15 to 25 minutes long; this is most suited to the kind of music that I write. Opportunities for performance are generally for much shorter pieces, especially for orchestral music. I wrote three short pieces for violin and piano in the summer of 2014, and this is the first to be orchestrated.

The score is a modern take on the most dissonant music written by Mozart; the final half of the final movement of his 40th Symphony. This section starts with what is very nearly a twelve-tone row. What I have done here, as I have done several times in the past, is to see what I would do with the key ideas of this piece written in my own style and form. This is by no means an arrangement of the original, but instead is an entirely new work. (Never fear—as I have never written in the twelve-tone style, which I find obnoxious in the extreme, I have not done so here either.)

The original orchestra used by Mozart was quite small, with single flute, pairs of oboes, bassoons, and horns, and strings; no trumpets or timpani. Later he added two clarinets as an option. The instrumentation of my piece is much larger, with piccolo, winds in pairs, four horns, and two trumpets, but only one trombone (preferably bass trombone but tenor will do), tuba, and strings. While I usually use timpani, the drums were not suitable for this piece and are omitted.

Accidentals hold through the measure and not beyond, and do not refer to other octaves.

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