

Serialism in Asia went through a process of introduction, experiment, denouncement, concealment, integration, and expansion. The century's turmoil – civil wars, the Second World War, and colossal political shifts – were not simply the backdrop against which the history of serialism in Asia unfolded but were integral to its trajectories. The rise and fall of political ideologies, colonial conditions, governmental constraints and reforms as well as social movements steered the course and determined how serialism could be integrated with the region's distinctive musical aesthetics. Mobility – movement of people both transcontinental and intra-Asia – created interesting paths through which the concept of dodecaphony was circulated to and in Asia, itself a fascinating window on the history of modern music. After nearly a century of circulation, serialism has merged with different aesthetics of various Asian cultures and traditions in noteworthy ways.

China

The development of serial thinking in Chinese contemporary music spanned nearly a century. Although the process was marked by significant ruptures, it would eventually prosper, rising to become a prominent trend of contemporary composition between 1980 and 2000. Its prominence is, paradoxically, related to some extent to the cause of its rupture: a pursuit of doctrine and system of validation for musical composition and national identity. This complicated history can be divided into four periods.

First Period: Emancipation of Dissonance

The name of Schoenberg first emerged in China in 1928 in the climate of modernisation that can be traced back to the May Fourth Movement of 1919, an intellectual revolution and sociopolitical reform directed at rebuilding society and culture. Chinese who studied abroad became the main source of Western knowledge, and, during this period, Japan was the

most popular destination. Ke Zhenghe, a native Taiwanese under Japanese colonisation, went to the Tokyo Music School (later, Tokyo University of the Arts) intermittently for five years before going to teach at Beijing Normal University. There, he joined a society of music scholars and amateur enthusiasts and founded the journal *New Music Tide* in 1927. The journal explored all aspects of Western music; Ke himself penned many articles on concepts such as the whole tone scale, chromatic scale, polytonality, atonality, and polyrhythm. In 1928, he published 'Schoenberg's Music' as the journal's lead article, with Schoenberg's portrait on the journal cover (Zhao 2019: 25; Li 2013). It was a chronological survey up to and including *Pierrot Lunaire* op. 21 (1912). The enthusiasm for contemporary music – Stravinsky graced the cover of the following issue, while Scriabin, Debussy, and Hindemith were frequent topics – reflected the musical climate for the elite in Beijing. In 1931, the Shanghai-based journal *Musical Art* discussed Schoenberg's op. 25 and dodecaphony in an article entitled 'Introducing Several New Composers'. Its author, editor Qingzhu (the pen name of Liao Shangguo), earned a doctoral degree in law from the University of Berlin in 1920. He published many articles, introducing *Harmonielehre* and defending dodecaphony against German nationalists' denouncement of it as degenerate (Zhang 2017: 24). Qingzhu also translated an article by a German friend, Klaus Pringsheim, who was a student of Mahler and shared Mahler's supportive view towards Schoenberg's innovation. (The chapter will return to Pringsheim on p. 289.) In the 1930s, articles and books, many translated from Japanese, fostered an openness to new music and atonality in China, despite the lack of stable resources and infrastructure of the decentralised education owing to the turmoil occasioned by, *inter alia*, the Northern Expedition, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, and the Second Sino-Japanese War. The tumultuous times were marked by frequent warfare in attempts to unify the country, as well as temporary relocations of many universities into interior China following Japanese occupation of major cities such as Beijing and Nanjing.

Second Period: Modern Music in Shanghai

By the 1930s, Shanghai had become the centre for China's new music, owing to the establishment and growing prominence of the National Vocational Music School Shanghai (later Shanghai Conservatory of Music, hereafter SCM). It was founded in 1927 by Xiao Youmei, who studied at the Conservatorium der Musik and the University of Leipzig,

where he received his PhD, and was taught by Hugo Riemann, Wilhelm Wundt, Eduard Spranger, and Arnold Schering, amongst others. Since its inception SCM strived to be on a par with the top conservatories in the West, as reflected by its curriculum and faculty. Shanghai had a large population of foreigners; its number of residents of European origin grew to 150,931 by 1942 (the city's total population was 3,919,800) (Luo 2016). About half were Russian refugees fleeing the country's 1917 revolution, many musicians among them. Several cultural organisations performed Western classical music regularly. Some Russian musicians, such as Alexander Tcherepnin, worked to cultivate new Chinese music in a neo-Romantic style. Visiting virtuosic musicians included the likes of Arthur Rubinstein and Jascha Heifetz. Even after the Japanese occupation in 1937, the special status of Shanghai's foreign territory ensured that lively concerts continued. In 1940, Shanghai became a desirable (and visa-free) destination for the large exodus from Germany and Austria, and a popular host for Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis.

Refugees associated with the Second Viennese School helped foster China's first wave of musical modernism. They included Alban Berg's student, assistant, and copyist Julius Schloss and pianist Karl Steiner, both of whom were closely connected to the Second Viennese School circle. Most influential, though, was Wolfgang Fraenkel, who composed in a free atonal style or using a twelve-tone technique. Having fled a concentration camp near Berlin in 1939, Fraenkel came to Shanghai and taught theory and composition at SCM. From 1941 to 1947, he educated composers who later became the pillars of contemporary music in China. He taught musical analysis both of classical composers and of modernists such as Schoenberg, Hindemith, and Mahler, reflecting his distinctive view of contemporary music. Students later recalled his teaching of Schoenberg's *Harmonielehre* and Ernst Kurth's *Grundlagen des linearen Kontrapunkt*. After Fraenkel left for the United States in 1947, Schloss succeeded him at SCM. Both wrote twelve-tone works while in Shanghai. A student, Sang Tong (also known as Zhu Jingqing) composed *Yejing* [*Night Scene*] (1947) for violin and piano under Fraenkel's guidance, and another piece under the direction of Schloss (Cheong 2016). Sang's compositions were so highly regarded that Steiner played them in the United States Information Service concert series on 18 and 25 April 1948. The concert's programme notes are indicative:

Franz Tsu [referring to Sang Tong], Student of the National Conservatory of Music at Kiangwan and pupil of Professor Julius Schloss with whom he is now studying composition. Professor Schloss considers Mr. Tsu the most talented student he has

ever had in all his years of teaching composition in China. Mr. Tsu has completed several compositions and hopes to have them performed publicly in the near future. (United States Information Service concert series 1948)

Night Scene, a groundbreaking work, would come to be recognised as the first atonal work by a Chinese composer. Abandoning triadic harmony, Sang used the total chromatic, though with occasional reference to pentatonic sonorities. It is a remarkable first atonal composition, expressing aptly and fluently a new, post-tonal aesthetic. Although Shanghai merely served as a 'waiting room' for these refugee musicians on their way to more desirable places, they had an indelible impact.

Another significant event for modernism was the return of Tan Xiaolin. In 1946, this outstanding SCM alumnus returned to teach after seven years of studies in the United States. A student of Hindemith at Yale University, Tan was well versed in post-tonal aesthetics and embraced the use of total chromaticism, though preferring to retain some sense of tonality. His teaching of Hindemith's *Unterweisung in Tonsatz* (1937) planted the seeds of modernist aesthetics for burgeoning composers and musicians at SCM, including then-violinist Luo Zhongrong, whose importance will be discussed below (p. 283). Tan's premature death brought his teaching to an abrupt end.

Parallel to these students' enthusiasm for modern music, however, was their stout support for socialism and Communist Party activity in Shanghai. Their burgeoning modernism soon yielded to calls for proletarian music, particularly songs. Luo wrote a proletarian song in 1947 whose immense popularity fuelled the underground communists, and Sang assisted the Red Army in taking over SCM. With the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, little else was possible. Andrei Zhdanov's famous denouncement in 1948 of so-called 'formalism' in the USSR was translated into Chinese and shaped a general rhetoric denouncing modernism. The PRC government banned modern music, regarding it as unfit for its political ideals. A significant publication was the Chinese translation in 1956 of 'Against the Twelve-Tone System' by Grigory Shneerson, published just the prior year in *Sovietskaya Muzyka*, the official organ of the USSR's Composers' Union (Schwarz 1965; Ju 2017). The article, which denigrates the twelve-tone concept as a social vice, appeared in *People's Music*, the official journal of the Chinese government. Dodecaphony was not alone: 1963 saw Debussy's music harshly criticised and vilified. Under the Communist regime, there was no modern music visible for nearly three decades (that is, from the 1940s to the late 1970s); even the slightest trait had to be hidden. Luo went on to write upbeat

orchestral works as resident composer of China's National Symphony Orchestra. Soviet music textbooks in translation dominated, most notably *Textbook of Harmony* by Igor Vladimirovich Sposobin, published in 1957. In 1966, the Cultural Revolution began, bringing a virtual halt to most musical activities unsanctioned by the government, as well as to formal education at large. Eight so-called Model Operas that were sanctioned by Mao Zedong's wife, Jiang Qing, were blasted from speakers and radios all over the country and were learned by innumerable performing groups and youngsters. In the political tribulations, Sang and Luo were eventually labelled enemies of the people, condemned, attacked, and imprisoned. Ironically, imprisonment gave Luo time and space to return to modernism clandestinely, by smuggling in pages of Hindemith's book for study and translation during his detention. He also began learning twelve-tone technique by reading two chapters in Czech composer Ctirad Kohoutek's book, which was included in official materials as a negative example of formalism, subject to criticism. Modern music continued only in the most surreptitious conditions. In the 1960s, for example, Xiao Shuxian, composer and wife of Hermann Scherchen, secretly shared electronic music he sent to her with students in Beijing, a rare and highly risky act. The rupture of modernism in Chinese music history was significant.

Third Period: Prominence

First Twelve-Tone Compositions (1980–1990)


After the Cultural Revolution ended, universities and conservatories reopened in 1978. Music was one of the top pursuits, owing in part to the large number of youngsters participating in performing Model Opera. The number of applicants for the Central Conservatory of Music was more than 17,000. A significant political and economic reform swept through the country, and twelve-tone music was again possible, giving rise to two phases of development.

The post-Mao era's introduction of twelve-tone technique constitutes the first phase. In 1979, Luo Zhongrong composed a twelve-tone setting of a poem from the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) for voice and piano, *Picking Lotus Flowers at the Riverside*. It was published in 1980 in the March issue of *Musical Works*, a periodical sponsored by the official Chinese Musicians' Association showcasing newly composed works. A nod of approval promptly appeared in a leading Beijing-based journal: 'Comrade Luo's courageous move into the prohibited zone of twelve-tone

music should be looked upon as a meaningful exploration' (Cheong 2016: 92). Recognised as the first twelve-tone composition in China, the work's critical acclaim prompted many to revisit modern music and adopt dodecaphony. Significant works soon followed, including Chen Mingzhi's *Eight Piano Pieces* (1982), which used the tone row from Luo's *Picking Lotus Flowers*, Wang Xilin's *Symphonic Suite Impressions of Taihang Mountain* (1982), and the Moscow-trained symphonist Zhu Jian'er's *First Symphony* (1986). Between 1986 and 1999, Zhu composed ten symphonies, six of which use dodecaphonic practices. Prompted by the outpouring of interest, Sang Tong also published his atonal *Night Scene* in 1981. Many dodecaphonic works would appear in the next two decades, though these earliest works continued to be frequently discussed, analysed, and anthologised.

A pioneer work, Luo's *Picking Lotus Flowers* has great musical and poetic appeal, admired to this day. Luo created a pentatonic sonority by excluding non-pentatonic intervals in successive intervals of the tone row, which is saturated with several pentatonic subsets. Luo's mastery of the subtlety of classic twelve-tone technique is clear. As shown in Figure 17.1a, the tone row contains two orderings of the pentatonic collection related in a palindrome, a design connected to the row's inversive hexachordal combinatoriality. As the brackets show in Figure 17.1b, the partitions of the tone row yield successions of perfect fifths and fourths articulated in the low register, recalling similar surface details in the bass motion of the opening of Schoenberg's *Fourth String Quartet*. The trichord partitioning in b. 8 foreshadows Luo's future interest in trichordal derived series. Only the quintuplet of demisemiquaver notes in b. 3 provides a quick glimpse of surface pentatonicism. Through skilful unfolding of the aggregate, pentatonic subsets of different rhythms, durations, and densities resonate with one another in a mood of serenity, befitting the poetic expression. A fresh sounding piece is infused with a familiar pentatonic quality. In subsequent works, Luo's serial thinking continued to evolve with sophisticated derived series and pentatonic designs. Chinese instruments are also incorporated, such as in *The Faint Fragrance* for zheng and orchestra (1989) and *Tune of the Qin* for guqin and Western ensemble (1993), the latter of which uses several famous guqin tunes, such as 'Mist over River' (*Xiao Xiang Shui Yun*). Luo's serial thinking draws from both Hindemith and the Second Viennese School. It would have an indelible influence on the harmonic thinking of his pupils even if they did not adopt serialism, as in the case of Chen Qigang, who navigates through pentatonic space with aggregate completions (Rao 2002).

(a)




(b)

涉江采芙蓉

慢 悠远

Piano

P R 罗忠铭



涉 江 采 芙 蓉 兰 泽 多 芳 草

Pno.

Figures 17.1a and b Luo Zhongrong's tone row and *Picking Lotus Flowers*, bb. 1–8

Following normalisation with the United States in 1979, China's modern music took a significant English turn. Alexander Goehr's lectures at the Central Conservatory of Music in 1980 brought a survey, including serialism, for hundreds of students and faculty. This and other visits such as Dieter Acker in 1983 breathed new life into the contemporary scene and had immense influence on the first generation of post-Mao composers seeking new expressive languages. Tan Dun noted, 'Many professors came, including Goehr, George Crumb, and Takemitsu, and the '78 class became so hungry, absorbing all kinds of music. But at the same time buried deeply in our own bodies and minds, there is something very special, which is a very earthy and revolutionary kind of feeling' ('Composers Tan Dun and Chen Qigang discuss their membership in the Class of 1978' 2009). Many

of the new-wave composers in the class of 1978 explored serial practices, amongst them Guo Wenjing, in his violin concerto *Tune of Earth* (1986–7), Xu Shuya, in his Violin Concerto (1982), Chen Yi, in her piano solo *Duo Ye* (1984), and Tan Dun, in his string quartet *Feng Ya Song* (1982). Tan's string quartet won international recognition with a Dresden Award but also sparked heated debate in *People's Music* about whether the twelve-tone technique was adequate for expressing a Chinese sensibility (Chang 1991).

Standing on the ruins of the Cultural Revolution, these composers' pursuit of modern music spoke of hope for a new expression. The anti-modern political agenda continued to cast a shadow on the scene, though not enough to stop the new tide. Some teachers such as Luo embraced serialism; others did not but nevertheless shielded young composers' modernist endeavours from criticism. In this climate, the twelve-tone technique quickly stood out as a tangible *method* among the multitude of styles. As theorist Zhang Wei poignantly notes, 'the most astonishing phenomenon is that during this time, almost all Chinese composers, regardless of their ages, gender, and ethnicity, tried their hands at composing with twelve-tone technique'. As a result, composers' individual and personal versions of what they understood to be twelve-tone music gave rise to the important development of home-grown systems of composition. It is estimated that by 1986 there were nearly thirty works using the twelve-tone technique, including many large genres such as concertos, symphonic poems, and film music (Zhang 2017: 25). The method is used by many primarily as a thematic resource.

Theory Texts and Composition Systems (1990–2000)

A proliferation of articles and books intensified the spread of serialism in the second phase of its development. Neither performances nor recordings of dodecaphonic or serial works were accessible owing to the lack of libraries and concerts of modern music; composers learned primarily from theory texts. Particularly crucial were the translations of theory books and articles from North America, most notably Allen Forte's *Structure of Atonal Music* (1973). Introduced to China as early as 1982, the Chinese translation was published in 1986. George Perle's *Serial Composition and Atonality* and *Twelve-Tone Tonality* were also published in Chinese translation by 1982, though they had less impact. Scholarly work in this area grew quickly: eighty-nine essays on serialism alone were published between 1980 and 1990, along with many more general articles (Wu 2010: 7).

Zheng Yinglie, Professor of Music at Wuhan Conservatory, was influential in the dissemination of dodecaphony. He began teaching twelve-tone techniques in 1981, and his book, *Fundamentals of Serial Music Composition*, was published in 1989 (Zheng 2007). He also authored the first English article on serialism in Chinese music (Zheng 1990). Based roughly on Reginald Brindle's *Serial Composition* (1986), the book presents a systematic approach to serial technique, listing eight types of serialism: melodic, tonal, atonal, inversional, pentatonic, motivic, all-interval, and derived. Written as a composition manual, Zheng delineates a set of composing principles and analyses canonic twelve-tone works by Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg. Although the first Chinese book on serialism, it already draws on many Chinese twelve-tone compositions as examples. The book's influence spanned the next three decades, and Zheng's home institution, Wuhan Conservatory, became a powerhouse for the pursuit of serialism, attracting scholars, composers, and students. Chen Yi recalled obtaining a class-note version of Zheng's book after a conference for young composers held in Wuhan in 1985. Meanwhile, more pedagogical books on serial works were published in which Babbitt's work was introduced (Wang 1991).

New composition systems also emerged, reflecting efforts to infuse serialism with Chinese principles. 'Taiji Composition System' was created in 1987 by Zhao Xiaosheng (1945–), a student of Sang Tong, developing a correlation between pitch and the sixty-four hexagrams of the I Ching, while incorporating the traditional genre, Tang Daqu, as a formal design (Zhao 1990). The system received critical acclaim and analytical attention, though it was not widely adopted. Other systems of serialism proliferated, with distinctive features such as Wuxing philosophy, a nine-tone scale, and Chinese modal symmetry among others. Serial techniques were adapted in numerous ways, representing different sinicising efforts to express Chinese aesthetics. This trend stems from a long-held obsession about Chinese sensibility in new music. It was perhaps believed that, with a rationale, serialism could offer the search for Chinese sensibility a systematic answer.

Fourth Period (2000–Present): A Method of Structural Coherence

In the current period, pentatonicism figures prominently in Chinese composers' adoption of serialism. As composers gradually move away from strict serial practices, many retain the theoretical arsenal developed from it, such as derivative series, symmetry, or subset manipulations. Jia Daqun explored extensively related structural designs, such as tetrachordal arrays,

and became an important pedagogue. Serial thinking is retained to varying degrees in the control of sonic unity. Some composers are particularly interested in set theory, using set types as an organising principle but treating aggregate completion with flexibility. Numerous Chinese scholarly publications elucidate the concepts and properties of pitch-class sets. The full impact of set theory became most apparent from the late 1990s to the mid-2010s, culminating in Forte's visit to China in 2009 as keynote speaker of the inaugural Music Analysis Conference, which attracted 450 attendees from major conservatories and universities. The manifestation of set theory in Chinese compositions likely exceeded any expectations of its author. Set theory became the standard approach not only for post-tonal analysis but also for composition. There have been two unpublished Chinese translations of Andrew Mead's *An Introduction to Milton Babbitt* (Mead 1994). Nevertheless, serial practice has gradually receded into the background, as more composers shift their attention to other means of expression in the new cultural atmosphere of the twenty-first century, and as another generation of composers who studied abroad have brought back other eclectic styles and techniques. In Beijing, Stuttgart-trained Jia Guoping, a student of Helmut Lachenmann, constructed series according to the spirit of four characteristic timbres of Chinese guqin in *Qing Diao* (1998). In Shanghai, Geneva-trained composer Wen Deqing used six-note series as an organising principle in *Wu (l'aveil, buddhisme zen)* (1995) for soprano, alphon, and double bass. But currently neither consider serial thinking central to their sonic design.

Other Developments

Outside of Communist China, serialism took hold through different paths. A few composers in Hong Kong adopted dodecaphony, among them Chan Hing-yan, who frequently used Webern-like tone rows in scherzo sections of his large works, which feature orchestra with Chinese traditional instruments, as in *Hark the Phoenix Soaring High* (2010) for sheng and orchestra and *There's Something in the Wind* (2005) for dizi and sheng and orchestra. Many composers in Taiwan adopted serial approaches after studying abroad. In Germany, Pan Huanglong began using all-interval series and Webernian symmetry to express Chinese philosophical or mythical concepts in works such as *Elements of Change* (1979–86). US-trained Lu Yen borrowed tone rows from Webern's op. 21 and op. 28 for his works such as the *Fantasy for Orchestra I* (1987) and used serial practices to create an atonal tapestry to foreground Peking opera materials. Tzeng Shing-Kwei,

who studied in Freiburg between 1977 and 1981, was deeply immersed in serialism and electronic music, while US-trained Pan Shiji has developed a distinctive variety of serialism based on 'linear cells' (Sung 2008). One of Pan Shiji's teachers was Chou Wen-chung, who came to the United States in 1946 and became a protégé and heir of Edgard Varèse. Chou developed distinctive duration series and innovative approaches to hexachordal combinatoriality using ying/yang hexagrams in works such as *Windswept Peaks* (1995) and *Clouds* (1996). Several of his famous students, including Chen Yi, Zhou Long, and Lei Liang, adopted serialism as well. Lei's serial grid (or matrix) is built on a sphere rather than a square, which morphs and transforms its shape constantly, allowing fluidity. With such sophisticated designs, his duration series in *Listening for Blossoms* (2011) seeks to reflect principles of ink painting and Chinese gardens.

Japan

Serialism left limited traces in Japanese contemporary music. However, Japan had a key role in the initial dissemination of dodecaphony in Asia due to its early and systematic approach to Westernisation. The notion of 'modernism' in Japan constitutes a historical and artistic epoch starting in the late nineteenth century. Founded in 1887, Tokyo Music School (later Tokyo University of the Arts) was instrumental in the teaching of Western music, which began by establishing exchanges with Germany. Between 1875 and 1914, the Japanese Education Ministry sent 632 students (in all subjects) to Germany, the highest number from any country and almost twice as many as the second highest, Britain (330) (Takenaka 2016: 24). Subsequently, the Japanese musical world became organised according to German aesthetics. The flow of music cultural exchange grew after the First World War. For example, Kiyoshi Nobutoki studied composition in Berlin between 1920 and 1922 and returned to Japan to become a leading figure for the next two decades. Kōsaku Yamada and Saburō Moroi also studied in Berlin and then returned to prominent careers in Japan. Mobility of Japanese students ensured abundant information in Japan about recent modern music in Europe. While the Japanese curriculum remained focused on the German Classic-Romantic canon, works by Scriabin, Bartok, and Stravinsky were also introduced, performed, and studied. Japan's first music critic, Motoo Ōtaguro, a highly educated music enthusiast who studied in London, was extraordinarily influential, publishing nine books and three translations in the short period between 1915 and

1920. His writings, while for the general public, earned admiration from trained musicians for his sharp capture of the *Zeitgeist* (Ogawa and Mori 1988: 91). Many journals were also founded by composers for discussions of Western music theory, aesthetics, and related subjects, and books on technical aspects of music proliferated.

As early as the 1910s, articles on Schoenberg and his scores appeared in magazines and books. Schoenberg's name was introduced to Japan by Ōtaguro, first in a brief passage in *From Bach to Schoenberg* (1915), then in *After Debussy* (1920). The latter includes a Japanese translation of 'Schoenberg and Beyond' from the *Musical Quarterly*, an English article originally written in German by Egon Wellesz, Schoenberg's first private pupil, and translated into English by American scholar Otto Kinkeldey. Schoenberg's *Harmonielehre* was translated in 1929. Subsequent books on new music, including a forty-four-page biography of Schoenberg (1933) by Hiroshi Koizumi published in a book series on the world's contemporary musicians, covered both Schoenberg's atonality and his twelve-tone technique. Composers adopted the method in various manners; for example, Shūkichi Mitsukuri incorporated a twelve-tone method compatible with the pentatonic system (Yang 2019: 260). Also helpful were sympathetic views towards atonal music such as those of former Mahler pupil, Pringsheim, who worked as a composer/pedagogue and later as conductor of the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra. Pringsheim placed atonality firmly in the trajectory of German tradition (Katayama 2007).

In the interwar era, several large series of musical scores introducing contemporary music were published, creating a climate for diverse expressions. However, as the military adventurism of the Japanese empire grew and the government gained complete authority to outlaw any form of dissent, composers began to toe the political line more carefully. After Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the Nanking massacre in 1937, effectively initiating the Second World War in the Pacific, militaristic nationalism took over. Publishers came under the control of the government, who monopolised paper distribution and censored content. Music composition became part of the all-nation support system for the totalitarian government and imperial expansion. The end of the Second World War in 1945 precipitated a political, economic, and cultural transformation leading to changes in the styles, idioms, techniques, and ideologies of concert music in Japan.

Two forces, separated by the Second World War, were responsible for the roots of twelve-tone music in Japan. The first force appeared in the 1930s. Scores and information about dodecaphony began to be made

available. For example, the 1931 publication of a series of contemporary piano music in *Gesammelte Werke der Weltmusik* included Schoenberg's work. The journal *Ongaku Kenkyū* [Music Research] released a special issue in 1937 devoted to Schoenberg (Etheridge 2014: 60). Composers took notice. Isotarō Sugata (1907–52), a student of Nobutoki, also studied with Pringsheim and developed an interest in Schoenberg. Even the nationalist Nobutoki was said to have privately studied Schoenberg's scores and loaned the scores to Moroi, who himself connected the twelve-tone technique to folk song in an attempt to develop an abstract theory of music (Chōko Seiji, quoted in Janz 2019: 295). Moroi's students would go on to form important post-war trends of composition in 1946 as a part of the group named Shinseikai [Group of New Voices].

During the war, composers either were silent or undertook modernist pursuits clandestinely. Sugata did not write in a style derived from Schoenberg until 1946, when he composed a string quartet and an orchestral piece, *Picasso's Picture* (Katayama 2007). An interesting example was Kunihiko Hashimoto (1904–49), who was introduced to Berg during his studies in Vienna between 1934 and 1937, then travelled to Los Angeles to study with Schoenberg. According to his famous student Toshirō Mayuzumi, Hashimoto secretly made a prototype of his later approach to twelve-tone technique during the war.

The second force in Japanese serialism started after the close of the war, when the nationalist ideology no longer ruled and censorship was lifted. During the period of American occupation and even beyond, an atmosphere of free exploration was supported by new institutions such as the library of the American Cultural Center in Tokyo (Wade 2014: 62–4). There were three prominent groups critical to the post-war development of serialism. The most important of these was Shinseikai, a group of academic composers formed in 1946 by Moroi's students, Minao Shibata and Yoshirō Irino. Another pupil, Kunio Toda, chanced upon René Leibowitz's *Schoenberg et son école* (1947) while being detained at the end of the war in Indochina. He brought the book back to Japan in 1948 and joined Shinseikai, with whom he began to pursue dodecaphony seriously. Shibata and Irino became key exponents in Japan, and Shinseikai constituted the leading group of serialists for the following decade (Deguchi 2019: 304).

Irino's *Concerto da Camera for Seven Instruments* (1951) is recognised as the first Japanese twelve-tone work. Later, he also serialised rhythm. As a proponent of dodecaphony, Irino wrote an introductory book on twelve-tone music in 1953, authored many introductory journal articles, and made

Japanese translations of Josef Rufer's *Die Komposition mit Zwölf Tönen* (1952) as well as several other texts, including Leibowitz's book in 1965 (Sawabe 1992: 37–9; Galliano 2002: 174). He would continue to refine his twelve-tone technique, while incorporating Japanese instruments in distinctive ways, as in *Ongaku* for two kotos (1957). He founded the Institute of Twentieth-Century Music, which later sponsored Japan's version of Darmstadt. Shibata's dodecaphony work in mid-century includes *Asa no uta* [Morning Song] (1962), which uses existing series from Berg's cantata *Der Wein*, a practice he continued for several more works. He later turned to aleatory, electronic, and other avant-garde approaches. Associated with this group was also Makoto Moroi, son of Saburō. In 1953, he won two international awards for his twelve-tone works: *Partita for Flute* (1952) won a prize awarded by the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) and *Composition No. 1* (1951–3) was awarded seventh prize in the Queen Elizabeth Competition. He would be credited with introducing audiences to works of serialism and aleatory music.

Meanwhile, a generation of self-taught composers committed to Japanese and Western fusion became interested in serialism as well. They were formerly members of the New Composer League founded in 1930, which was interrupted by the war and, in 1946, reconstituted as the Japanese Society for Contemporary Music (later becoming a branch of ISCM), led by Yoritsune Matsudaira. The group also included Hashimoto, Jōji Yuasa, and Fumio Hayasaka. Matsudaira composed and wrote actively in his youth but went silent during wartime. His style shifted from impressionism to neoclassicism, then to serialism with extended influence of *gagaku*. In 1952 he won an ISCM prize at Salzburg with *Theme and Variations for Piano and Orchestra* (1951) based on a popular *gagaku* tune, *Etenraku*, whose expressive constraints and neutral quality resonated with him. Its third variation employs serial techniques, where three twelve-tone rows are derived from intervallic relationships found in *Etenraku* (Matsudaira and Benítez 1998). The first tone row is based on the first tetrachord of the ryūteki (flute) line of the *Etenraku* melody. Figure 17.2 shows (a) the *Etenraku* melody, (b) a derived series comprising the melody's first tetrachord, its retrograde, and inversion, and (c) the piano opening of Variation III. In his later works, Matsudaira derives most of his tone rows from *gagaku*. Winning international prizes, he gained significant reception, first in Paris and Darmstadt, then elsewhere in Europe, making a strong impression. Matsudaira was one of the few composers who continued to develop his serial thinking after it was no longer in vogue in Japan.

(a) 

(b) 

(c) *III. Variazione*


Figures 17.2a, b, and c *Gagaku* melody, tone row, and Yoriyori Matsudaira, 'Variations', bb. 1–3

The third group is Jikken Kobo [Experimental Workshop], formed in 1951 by Yuasa, Mayuzumi, Hayasaka, and Tōru Takemitsu, as well as artists, poets, and performers. It was a young group exploring many different media and new languages of which serialism was only one. Between 1953 and 1954, they studied intensely works of Schoenberg and Webern. At the Sogetsu Art Centre, concerts began in 1958, and a contemporary concert series was established in 1960 to feature a wide spectrum of artistic voices, involving many leading composers of the post-war art music scenes. Yuasa's work *Projection for Seven Players* (1955/56) is a study of twelve-tone technique, whose structure also demonstrates an elaboration of the music of Japanese Noh drama. As issues of temporality, space, and existentialism were central to Yuasa's work, he sometimes used serialised rhythm to achieve certain temporal effects, though not consistently, and he later abandoned serialism (Galliano 2018: 15–33). Similarly, while Takemitsu's distinctive style does not cohere with any monolithic idea of serialism, he also briefly engaged with dodecaphonic approaches, especially Webernian ones, from the end of the 1950s to the early 1960s. It coincided with the period of composing *Requiem for Strings* (1957), the work that famously caught Stravinsky's attention during his trip to Tokyo in 1959; his high praise brought Takemitsu widespread recognition. The

work employed several of Messiaen's modes of limited transposition, demonstrating a close attention to pitch organisation. His dodecaphonic or partial-serial works include *Le Son Calligraphié I, III* (1958, 1960), *Maque* (1959), *Pause Interrompue* (1952–60), *Piano Distance* (1961), *Ring* (1961), *Sacrifice* (1962), and *Hika* (1966) (Deguchi 2019: 318; Burt 2006: 50–82). The use of retrograde and inversion – a reversal of musical succession – commonly seen in these works has lasting influence on his oeuvre in his use of mirrors and palindromes (Burt 2006: 56–8). The 1960s also brought a visit from John Cage and David Tudor in 1962, and the advent of experimentalism and radical avant-gardism.

Serialism quickly declined in Japan, however: Yoritsune Matsudaira's work would receive more performances in Europe than in Japan. Composers born after the Second World War also studied serialism overseas. The most prominent among them is Toshio Hosokawa, who studied in Berlin with Isang Yun, then in Freiburg with Klaus Huber and Brian Ferneyhough. While schooled in advanced serialism, Hosokawa remained deeply enculturated in the unique instrumental timbre of Japanese music, such as the different types of flute including *nohkan* in the music of the Noh theatre, *kagurabue*, *komabue*, and *ryūteki* in *gagaku*, as well as the various genres surrounding the music of the *shakuhachi* such as the slow, free-rhythm *honkyoku*. In his *Vertical Song I* for flute (1995), serialism is combined with a large number of extended techniques in a search for new sonorities. He notes, 'I often utilized new playing techniques because I was interested in the meaning they had in the realm of modern music – the creation of tones which have an alien effect and the discovery of new instrumental sounds which hadn't existed before' (Hosokawa 1995).

Korea

Korea endured significant foreign interventions and changes of ruling regimes in the twentieth century, which shaped its development of serialism. As part of its modernisation process in the late nineteenth century, Korea accepted Protestant Christianity as its religion of all classes. Western music such as bands and hymns were introduced by US missionaries. Numerous anthologies of hymns with Korean lyrics were published, and hymn singing was actively practised and appropriated by Koreans in the pursuit of 'Christian modernity' (Choi 2009: 10–11). In 1910, following the first Sino-Japanese war, Korea became a colony of Japan. The end of the Second World War in 1945 marked the restoration of freedom for Korea,

though it also led to the intervention of the US military. Following the debilitating Korean War (1950–3), the division of the country into communist North and capitalist South resulted in their separate development and prolonged American involvement in South Korean society.

Under Japan's colonisation, Korea's Indigenous music was suppressed, and Austrian-German music and hymns with Japanese texts were used to indoctrinate the colonised in the Japanese empire. Korean composers underwent schooling with a Western music curriculum and advanced their study in Japan and the United States, the first group of whom included Un-Yung La, who studied with Saburō Moroi in Japan. Songs became the most popular genre. After the Second World War, the first co-educational music college based on European models was established at Seoul National University (SNU) in 1946. Meanwhile, Indigenous music was given the name *gugak* [national music], which the National Gugak Center shaped into the canon of traditional music. In the post-war period, South Korean composers of Western music confronted, as post-colonial subjects, the dual challenge of regaining their cultural heritage and identity/-ies and continuing or even catching up with the most recent trends of Western music, namely the pursuit of musical modernism.

Owing to its colonial history, many mid-century Korean composers became interested in modern music via Japan. Sun-nam Kim, who studied in Tokyo between 1937 and 1943, was one of Korea's first composers to use twelve-tone technique. His 1946 piano concerto exhibited stark atonality. After moving to North Korea in 1948, however, he faced the internal campaign against communists who came from South Korea. His work was censored, and he was sent to be a factory worker. In 1952, the Korean Society of Contemporary Music was established in Seoul; its founder was Un-Yung La, whose 'Enigma', the third of his Six Preludes for Piano, was premiered in 1955, Korea's first twelve-tone piano piece. 'Enigma' received wide attention and was followed by more interest in atonality and serialism. La would continue to play an important role as a writer, pedagogue, and composer. In the late 1950s, desire to catch up with modern musical trends prompted composers to pursue their study of dodecaphony in Europe. Isang Yun and Nam-June Paik represented the first generation to follow this path.

Isang Yun was born into a traditional literati family. Like other musicians during colonisation, Yun went to Japan in the 1930s – first to Osaka and then Tokyo – where between 1940 and 1941 he studied with Paris-trained composer Tomojirō Ikenouchi. Returning to Korea, he joined the anti-Japanese resistance while teaching music, gaining

a reputation as an avant-garde composer and founding the Association of Korean Composers. The Korean War that began in 1950 hampered creativity, but many continued to study modern techniques through books and scores from abroad. After the war, Yun taught at several Seoul universities, where he encountered a Japanese translation of Rufer's book, which inspired him to study more advanced techniques in Europe. He first went to Paris (1956–7) and, at the end of 1957, to the Musikhochschule Berlin to study with Boris Blacher and Rufer himself. In 1958, he went to Darmstadt and encountered works of more recent serialists such as Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Bruno Maderna, and Luigi Nono, as well as Cage and Matsudaira. The latter's orchestral work *U-mai* (1957) became the catalyst for Yun's own approach to serialism. His *Music for Seven Instruments* (1959) combines Schoenbergian serialism with Korean court music aesthetics and received critical acclaim at Darmstadt in 1959. He incorporated serialism with (unserialised) timbral characteristics of Korean instrumental ornamentation such as intense vibrato, trills, and coloratura. In his chamber work *Loyang* (1962) and the orchestral piece *Réak* (1966), he developed his distinctive serial style using the concept of a *Hauptton* [principal tone], as well as numerous ways of integrating Korean court music, folk music, philosophy, religion, and other cultural aspects of Korean tradition such as the Asian mouth organ (Kim 2012). On the score of *Loyang*, he noted the use of the ancient Chinese court music 'Nagyangch'un' [Spring in Loyang]. Yun settled in Europe after the success of his Buddhist oratorio *Om mani padme hum* in 1965. The work incorporates a serial melody alongside formal Buddhist chant, as well as echoes of crickets, running water, and wind chimes. However, in 1967 Yun was abducted by the government of Park Chung-Hee and transported to South Korea and sentenced to life on charges of espionage. It was part of the large international round-up orchestrated by South Korea's Central Intelligence Agency. After appeals from the international community that included, amongst others, Stravinsky, Ligeti, and Stockhausen, he was released to hospitalisation in 1968 in Seoul and eventually returned to Germany in 1971. There he stayed and taught a generation of prominent Korean composers including Sukhi Kang, Byung-Dong Paik, and Chung-Gil Kim, as well as other Asian composers such as Toshio Hosokawa and Pan Huanglong. In South Korea, however, Yun's continuing critique of the ruling regime remained a source of tension, and performances of his music were obstructed whenever less liberal administrations were in power (Chang 2020).

Yun's contemporary, Nam-June Paik, took quite a different route. Paik moved with his family to Hong Kong and then Japan, where he received a BA in Aesthetics from the University of Tokyo in 1956, with a thesis on Schoenberg. Intent on studying serialism, Paik, too, went to Germany. He attended Darmstadt at the same time as Yun, where he met Stockhausen and Cage. Almost immediately abandoning serialism, he was attracted by Cage's works and ideas and became a member of the Fluxus movement by 1962, establishing himself as an experimentalist.

After the Vietnam War and the normalisation of relations with Japan, South Korea rose on the world stage. This status intensified its quest for a national identity, particularly in the 1970s, as the public slogan of the Park regime during this time was 'Cultural Korea', a marker of the country's attempts to revive traditional culture. Composers had heated debates, which examined critically how Western music could serve as a vehicle for expressing and advancing Korean tradition and aesthetics. Meanwhile, the second generation of South Korean composers, many of whom studied at SNU, became more familiar with Western contemporary music through journals and community forums introducing serial, atonal, and electronic idioms and extreme avant-garde styles. Sukhi Kang was a leading figure. He visited Isang Yun regularly in 1968 during Yun's incarceration in Seoul (Kang 1992). In 1969, he started the Pan Music Festival, on the Darmstadt model, in Seoul, which would become a crucial forum showcasing contemporary music. In 1970, upon Yun's suggestion, both Kang and Byung-Dong Paik furthered their training in Germany, establishing a strong tie between Germany and South Korea. Kang met more contemporary composers, including Yuasa, and encountered new works of European modernists. He settled into studying engineering and music and developed a distinctive modern style. For example, in *Nong* for flute and piano (1970), Kang adopted serialism's notion of chromaticism without an ordered tone row to depict traditional shamanic ritual dance, while also incorporating Korean traditional rhythmic patterns (*changtan*). Register, pitch contents, and dynamic markings also became closely controlled to express the haphazardness and volatility of the shamanic spirit (Lee 2017). Kang returned to Korea in 1975 to teach at SNU but later divided his time between Korea and Germany, becoming a highly respected composer of his generation in both countries, with students including Junsang Bahk, Unsuik Chin, and Shinuh Lee (Babcock 1995). In particular, Lee noted that Kang's teaching, which emphasized the importance of balance and structure, was influential, and that she used total serialism as a tool to express herself (interview with Shinuh Lee, 22 December 2021).

Like Kang, Byung-Dong Paik was also influenced by his study with Yun to explore the combination of Asian philosophy with modern techniques. A SNU alumnus, he was also influenced by Sun-nam Kim's twelve-tone work. Paik noted too that Moroi's books on functional harmony and counterpoint were key texts for musicians in the 1950s (Lee 2017: 257). His serialism is closely intertwined with his sense of national identity, which is expressed primarily through the use of melody (Killick 1992; Kim 1990). His *Un/Rhythme* series (1970) uses rhythmic grouping and grouping of melodic flurries that reflect his national identity, as well as retrograde structure. Pitch-class sets are also used, replacing the strict use of tone rows (Lee 2017: 254–70). The score, which requires precise execution of the notation, often obscures a sense of pulse. Paik returned to South Korea in 1971 and spent his career almost exclusively in his homeland, partly because he considered his music best performed by Korean or Asian musicians. Another SNU alumna, Younghi Pagh-Paan, studied in Freiburg with Huber and Ferneyhough from 1974 to 1979, before establishing herself in Germany. Employing serial thinking, she adopted a more lyrical and ornamental treatment. In her well-received *Ma-Nam I* (1977), she devised a timeless flow, interleaving instruments which share a common lyrical thread. The instrumental timbres are supplemented by Korean ornamentation that creates a heterophonic texture within a monophonic structure (Howard 2006: 136).

The 1970s and 1980s saw modern music proliferate in Korea, as composers returned from their studies in Germany bringing a new 'rationalism' in the form of compositional technique and theory. Organisations such as Chang-ak-hoe (established in 1958) and the Korean division of the ISCM (established 1971), as well as the magazine *Monthly Music*, became important conduits for new music. In 1977, Chou Wen-chung gave a keynote speech at the Sixth International Arts Symposium, echoing Yun's notion of the tone as 'a musical entity in itself' (Lee 2017: 267–8). Across these decades, serialism was the most prominent approach.

The 1980s opened with one of the most violent civil uprisings in the modern history of Korea. With his assassination, President Park Chung-Hee's twelve-year-long dictatorial regime came to a sudden end, and protests for democratic civil rights emerged throughout the country. According to musicologist Jung-Min Mina Lee, the underlying attitude was a general distrust of authority and the West, which was considered suspect owing to its support for the previous ruling regime. The situation led to the rise of a 'Third Generation', led by Lee Geon-Yong, which began to question the reliance on Western modernist idioms. Composers sought

a fresh mode to express national identity, aiming at a creative transmission of traditional culture. Interests in serialism and Western modern idioms were replaced by newer aesthetics. Unsuik Chin, an alumna of SNU who also studied with Kang in the 1980s, received international attention before travelling to Hamburg to study with Ligeti. There, she would also abandon serialism, while further disavowing any nationalist intent or cultural connection to Korea, and instead embrace spectral and electronic techniques.

Conclusion

Asia had a long history of incorporating Western music into its society before dodecaphony was introduced. Conservatories and universities also had been established in the European music mould, with a strong focus on the German Classic-Romantic canon (Everett 2004: 1–21). Thus, Asian composers' foray into atonality and dodecaphony, which was considered an extension of the tradition, is unsurprising. Japan, as the first country in Asia to fully embrace Westernisation and itself a coloniser, played a major role in the initial dissemination of the concept. What might be considered separate introductions of dodecaphony in different countries were in fact connected to Japan through an active network of ideas, print media, and movement of people in the region, owing in no small part to Japan's colonising history. Japanese music critic Ōtaguro's prolific writings aided the circulation of the concept through translation into Chinese (Ōtaguro 1931), and the publication of several comprehensive series of music scores focused on European contemporary music in Japan also popularised early atonal music in the region. Schoenberg's portrait on a 1927 magazine cover in Beijing likely came via Japan. Moroi's pupils pioneered dodecaphony in both Japan and Korea (Un-Yung La). The impact of Irino's seminal texts such as the 1957 Japanese translation of Rufer's *Composition* reached beyond his group Shinseikai in Japan to inspire Korean composers such as Yun.

Despite their shared resources, however, colonial histories, civil wars, political reforms, and imperial agendas determined whether or not (and when) composers had the liberty to explore dodecaphony. In the early 1940s, China was very close to developing dodecaphonic compositions, given Shanghai's unique foreign territory and the refugee Second Viennese School musicians the cosmopolitan city attracted. Sang Tong's *Night Scene* stands witness to aspiring atonal expression, and Luo Zhongrong's success in 1980 could be deemed to have sprouted from an extraordinarily long

germinating period of creative seeds sowed in the 1940s. Chinese composers at large were prohibited from 'formalism' after the establishment of the PRC in 1949, and their adoption of twelve-tone technique and serialism thirty years later coincided with the earnest effort to 'catch up' and 'make up' for the prolonged vacuum of contemporary music. The post-Mao introduction of dodecaphony was a late arrival, which explains the outpouring of creativity and strong interest surrounding serialism for two decades at the end of the century, and the enduring commitment to set theory (as a well-developed technique for analysing dodecaphony) well into the early part of the twenty-first century. From this perspective, the imprint of serialism on Chinese contemporary music, though delayed, is significant.

In sharp contrast, despite Japanese composers' initial earnestness and enthusiasm for dodecaphony in the mid-century, both in composition and publication, it did not gain prominence, despite the continuing efforts of Matsudaira and Yuasa. Dodecaphony is now regarded as largely inconsequential to the history of Japanese contemporary music, where the so-called 'Cage Shock' cast a longer shadow and had significant influence. As a result, Japanese composers such as Hosokawa in the late 1970s learned serialism elsewhere, mainly from Yun in Germany, whose first exposure and breakthrough were, ironically, provided by Japanese composers (Wade 2014: 75–6). Moreover, although newly decolonised mid-century Korean composers felt the urgent need to 'catch up' with modern compositional technique by pursuing dodecaphony, South Korea could be said to have established the steadiest and most continuous development of serialism in Asia (Lee 2017: 6). Although encumbered by continuing warfare and political division, serialism in Korea has been pursued and employed thoughtfully to express traditional aesthetics by several generations of the country's most prominent composers throughout their creative output. It has also contributed to the development of serialism beyond the region of East Asia. Most significantly, as a prominent composer in Germany, Isang Yun, in Berlin, together with colleagues in Freiburg, educated generations of Asian composers in advanced serial thinking.

