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In Quest of the Sacred: Arvo Pärt and Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen

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Composer Arvo Pärt was born in 1935 in Paide, Estonia. Following its occupation by the Soviet Union at the conclusion of the Second World War, Estonia was incorporated as a Soviet Socialist Republic and subjected to the same strident anti-religious Marxism as the rest of the USSR. Furthermore, restrictions were placed on composers regarding the publication and performance of sacred music, and use of twentieth-century compositional techniques that were widely known in Western Europe and the United States. Labeled “formalism,” the use of serialism, aleatory and collage techniques was forbidden throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, just as Pärt was emerging as a composer. Though the latter part of the 1960s saw a loosening of these restrictions throughout the Soviet Union, Pärt’s 1968 Credo brought official condemnation and a ban on its performance by Soviet authorities.

During the eight years that followed, Arvo Pärt undertook a study of medieval and early Renaissance music that culminated in the development of his tintinnabuli style of composition. His conversion to Russian Orthodoxy during this period also impacted his approach to composition. Sometimes referred to as icons of sound, his tintinnabuli works are largely sacred in their conception and texts. The presence of a tonic triad throughout each composition is intended to reflect the bells used in Orthodox worship, and the frequent use of drones can be traced to the Ison that accompanies Orthodox chant. The slow and often minimal melodic and harmonic changes create a sense of stasis reflective of the hesychast tradition that seeks to create a state of contemplative union with the Divine.
While *tintinnabulation* involves the application of set compositional principles, the ways in which Pärt employs variations of these principles often defines the unique characteristics of his works. His *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen* provides a rich array of such variation, and the analysis of this important work provides an important contribution to understanding the composer’s compositional technique and the ways in which he seeks to convey a sense of the sacred in his works.
In Quest of the Sacred: Arvo Pärt and *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen*

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APPROVAL PAGE

Doctor of Musical Arts Dissertation

In Quest of the Sacred: Arvo Pärt and *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen*

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2013
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This dissertation is an important milestone in a lifelong quest to bring together those things most meaningful to me: the love of music, the desire to bring freedom and justice into this world, and an appreciation of the divine value of each human being. I would like to honor the memory of my parents, Allan H. and Frances S. Ballinger, for their love and patience as they sought to instill those values into their children.


Of course this milestone could not have been reached without the guidance of my Advisory Committee members and readers: Dr. Alain Frogley, Dr. Katie Schlaikjer, Prof. Julie Rosenfeld, Dr. Richard Bass, and Dr. Eric Rice. I would like to thank each of them for their investment of time and professional insight, and in particular I’d like to thank Dr. Schlaikjer for helping me attain a level of musical excellence as a cellist that I could only dream of just a few years ago. Others whose assistance, friendship, and support I would like to acknowledge are Maestro Harvey Felder, Dr. Kangho Lee, and Prof. Irma Vallecillo, for their musical guidance and inspiration; Rev. Kathy Faber and the members of the Enfield Congregational Church choirs, for accommodating my busy schedule and coming out to support my recitals and performances; and the many friends and classmates whose encouragement and support have made this journey so much more meaningful and enjoyable: Stan Renard, Guan Ting Liao, Dana Lyons, Paul McShee, Andrey Karpyuk, Haein Kim, Hyun Ju Jang, Lisabeth Miller Kettledon, the UCONN cellists and orchestra members, and all of my String Tech students. Thank you!
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“My music has emerged only after I have been silent for quite some time, literally silent. For me, ‘silent’ means the ‘nothing’ from which God created the world. Ideally, a silent pause is something sacred… If someone approaches silence with love, then this might give birth to music.”¹ This statement by Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (b. 1935) captures the essence of his approach to musical composition for over thirty years. Pärt grew up during a tumultuous period in his country’s history. The brief independence enjoyed by the Baltic state following the First World War was interrupted in 1939 by the Second World War, resulting in its incorporation as a Soviet Socialist Republic. Estonia was one of fifteen Soviet Republics governed by a stridently anti-religious Marxism-Leninism.² The ensuing persecution of religion and placement of restrictions on composers within the USSR provided the background for Pärt’s formative years and education, impacting his creative work and culminating in the development of his mature style of composition. The first compositions in this mature style appeared in 1976 based on what the composer calls the *tintinnabuli* technique, and among these are two of his most famous: *Für Alina* and *Fratres.*³

Pärt’s mature style was preceded by an eight-year period of relative creative silence, apparently in response to the Soviet authorities’ official condemnation of his *Credo* in 1968. *Credo* begins with an outspoken statement of Christian faith, “Credo in Jesum Christum,” and continues by setting two lines from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:38-39): “You have

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³ Ibid., 86-90.
heard it said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth… But I say to you: do not resist evil.”⁴ The Soviet authorities accused Pärt of political defiance and Credo was subsequently banned from performance in the USSR for the next decade. During the eight years after this incident Pärt made his living primarily by composing for movies, accompanied only by the publication of his Symphony No. 3 and the cantata Laul Armastatule, the latter of which he later withdrew.

My dissertation will explore three dimensions of the composer’s work and will include an analysis of one of his tintinnabuli compositions, the Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen. The first area examined will be the intersection of music, politics, and religion within the Soviet Union, exploring the restrictions placed on artists, and composers specifically, in the Baltic Republics during the 1960s and ‘70s. What impact did official Soviet policy, and particularly the public criticism of Credo, have on Pärt’s musical development? The second aspect of my dissertation will explore Pärt’s spiritual life during this period, in an attempt to discern the extent to which this influenced the development of his tintinnabuli style, as many of his tintinnabuli compositions are sacred and are often ascribed a spiritual or mystical dimension.⁵ Finally, I will undertake a detailed analysis of his Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen. While a few of Pärt’s compositions have undergone somewhat extensive analyses, such as Credo and Fratres, there is a great deal more to be learned about the tintinnabuli style by undertaking a detailed analysis of his mature works.

Of the existing research on Arvo Pärt and his tintinnabuli style of composition, perhaps the most extensive, both in scope and detail, is that undertaken by his longtime friend and associate, Paul Hillier. Hillier’s Arvo Pärt (1997) explores the composer’s life and early works,

⁴ Ibid., 58
and includes a detailed explanation of the principles of the *tintinnabuli* technique. Hillier devotes several pages each to a number of Pärt’s compositions up through the 1994 *Litany*, though discusses some in greater detail than others. The five pages on the *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen* devote a paragraph of analysis to each of the seven antiphons.

A more recent contribution to the literature on Pärt and his work can be found in *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt* (2012) edited by Andrew Shenton, a collection of essays covering a wide range of topics, including an approach to analyzing the composer’s work, a discussion of his spirituality, an elucidation of the essence of the *tintinnabuli* technique, and an examination of Pärt’s compositions in the context of minimalism.

Two recent doctoral dissertations incorporate analyses of Pärt’s *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen*: Joseph Frederick Davidson III, “Ancient Texts, New Voices” (2002), and Kimberly Anne Cargile, “An Analytical Conductor’s Guide to the SATB A Cappella Works of Arvo Pärt” (2008). Both Davidson and Cargile give an explanation of the *tintinnabuli* style of composition and correctly identify the melodic (M-voice) and harmonic (T or *tintinnabuli* voice) within the *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen*. Neither, however, addresses the variations of *tintinnabuli* technique within the Antiphons or possible reasons for the same; nor do they consider Pärt’s use of other compositional devices such as proportion canon or the significance of the Golden Section. Both, in fact, begin with a virtual restatement of the opening of Hillier’s analysis in *Arvo Pärt*. Thus an independent, detailed analysis of this important work in Pärt’s oeuvre will

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7 Shenton, *Cambridge Companion*.
8 Joseph Frederick Davidson III, “Ancient Texts, New Voices” (DMA diss., University of California, 2002).
contribute in a significant manner to a greater comprehension and appreciation for his distinct compositional style.
Chapter 2: The Intersection of Music, Politics, and Religion

In the Soviet Union and Estonia

In order to understand the impact of restrictions placed on composers in the Soviet Union during Arvo Pärt’s formative years as a composer, it is important to examine the ways in which music, politics, and religion intersected, both within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as a whole, and in particular within the Soviet Socialist Republic of Estonia. The specific policies regarding the fields of music and religion, adopted by the Russian Soviet Republic in 1918 and subsequently by the USSR in 1923, had a direct impact on post-World War II events. The effort to establish a culture imbued with socialist realism resulted in the campaigns against “formalism” in music, the persecution of Jews as a result of “anti-cosmopolitan” propaganda, the closure of churches and synagogues, persecution of clergy, and the co-opting of religious authority.

Shortly after the Bolsheviks had taken the reins of power from the Constituent Assembly in November 1917, the newly established Russian Soviet Republic nationalized all property, including that of churches and religious societies. Clergy were disfranchised, losing many of the rights accorded to ordinary citizens, such as the right to receive ration cards or be employed by State enterprises; in addition, their children were barred from education beyond elementary school. Religious instruction was forbidden in public schools, and in a decree issued 13 June 1921, even private religious instruction to anyone below the age of eighteen was forbidden.¹¹ Article 13 of the Russian Constitution, passed in 1918, guaranteed the right to both religious and anti-religious propaganda; however, the Soviet government undertook a concerted effort to undermine the churches and synagogues within society, while continuing to engage in a vigorous

campaign of anti-religious propaganda. The effort to confiscate church property led to the arrest of numerous clergy, resulting in imprisonment, deportation, and even execution as counter-revolutionaries. By 1923, over 1,000 Orthodox priests had died as a result of these confrontations. In the year 1929 alone, over 1,400 churches were closed, and nearly eighty percent of Moscow’s Orthodox churches had been shuttered by 1933.\textsuperscript{12}

Judaism was subjected to the same campaign of persecution as the Christian churches, with restrictions placed on the clergy, on religious education, and with a concerted effort to discourage the observance of Jewish Holy Days. While religious education was ostensibly permitted to those over the age of seventeen, the training of rabbis was forbidden, and the 1930s brought the closing of schools of religious instruction and a campaign to discredit religious Jews as Fascists and counter-revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{13} Among Protestant denominations, the Union of Evangelical Christians and the Baptists were initially treated as partners in the building of Socialism, in part because of their previous role as opponents of the Tsarist state and its ties to the Orthodox Church. Their numbers grew in the first decade after the Revolution, and they established a number of Christian communes to parallel those of the State. By 1929, however, the Evangelical Theological College had been closed, church leaders were deported, and throughout the 1930s their communes were replaced by Bolshevik collectives.\textsuperscript{14} The same decade saw the complete elimination of Lutheran churches and clergy within the USSR; it was only after the Soviet’s annexation of the Baltic states of Estonia and Latvia in 1940 that nearly a million Lutheran believers were added to the population of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 15-27.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 112-113.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 89-101.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 110.
Central to a discussion of religion in the USSR is the 8 April 1929 law entitled “Law on Religious Associations,” which required that all religious societies be registered with the State, forbade virtually any religious activity outside of worship, and prohibited the religious instruction of children by anyone other than their parents. Recognition of a community of worship required a committee of twenty adults, termed a dvadsatka, to register as a religious association and to acquire a registered building in which to meet. An amendment to the 1918 Constitution, passed the following month, also eliminated the previously guaranteed freedom to engage in religious propaganda, so that only the freedom of worship was permitted. These provisions would serve as the primary vehicles for the persecution and control of churches and synagogues in the post-Stalin Soviet Union.

The 1920s brought a conflict among various factions within the musical community as well. The Russian traditionalists at this time were represented primarily among conservatory faculty members; advocates of contemporary music were organized by the Association of Contemporary Music (ASM), and the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM) emerged as the primary advocate of proletarian music. The ASM, which advocated closer contact with the West in order to stay abreast of current trends in music, was bitterly attacked by the RAPM as “formalist” and “leftist,” and accused of promoting reactionary music in order to facilitate the restoration of capitalism within the Soviet Union. The RAPM’s ideological agenda included elevating the primacy of folk song as a genuine expression of proletarian

culture, while condemning light Western music, music considered to be erotic (such as jazz), modern dances (i.e., the Charleston and fox trot), and sacred music.\(^{19}\)

While the RAPM gained the upper hand in these public debates about the future of music in the USSR, the Soviet government sought to take greater control of the artistic realm and in 1932 abolished these private associations by a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The decree called for the creation of umbrella organizations to unify each of the areas of the arts, the first of these being the All-USSR Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. In the wake of the decree municipal composer’s unions were formed in various cultural centers of the USSR, first in Moscow and Leningrad, then subsequently in many of the Soviet Republics. An All-USSR Composer’s Union would not be formed until 1939. However, in 1936 the Soviet government established the Committee on Artistic Affairs, which became the mouthpiece for the Communist Party campaign against “formalism” in music, defined loosely as dissonant or atonal music and often associated with influence from the non-communist nations of Western Europe and the United States.\(^{20}\)

One of the most significant events in the Soviet campaign against formalism came with the 1936 attack in \textit{Pravda} on Dmitry Shostakovich’s opera \textit{Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk}. The opera was based on an 1865 sketch by Nikolai Leskov that was published by Fyodor Dostoyevsky and subsequently illustrated by a friend of Shostakovich, Boris Kustodiev. Many of the illustrations proved too erotic for publication, but it is very likely that Shostakovich had seen them at his friend’s home.\(^{21}\) While the opera garnered rave reviews in its Moscow and Leningrad premieres, other prominent figures in the Soviet musical establishment, as well as in the American press,

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 20-23.
\(^{20}\) Tomoff, \textit{Creative Union}, 18-23.
critiqued the opera as “pornographic music.”22 It was not until Stalin’s attendance at a performance of *Lady Macbeth* that *Pravda* attacked the opera in a 28 January 1936 editorial entitled “Muddle Instead of Music.” The music’s eroticism was attacked as “petit bourgeois formalistic contractions;” in fact Shostakovich confided to friends that he believed Stalin himself had written the editorial.23 Shostakovich was justifiably terrified, as the Great Terror begun in 1936 saw the execution of several prominent leaders of the musical community, among them musicologist Nikolai Zhiliaev and Nikolai Cheliapov, head of the Moscow composer’s union. Marshall Mikhail Tukhachevskii, the patron of a number of musicians including Shostakovich, was arrested and shot in 1937.24

A brief examination of the years of the Second World War will set the stage for the primary focus of our study. The Soviet annexation of the Baltic states brought an additional one million Lutherans into the Soviet populace; Estonians also figured among those Protestants affiliated with the Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptist denominations, and the Tallinn Conservatory of Music in Estonia served as a major center of musical training in the USSR. When Nazi Germany invaded the USSR on 22 June 1942, Estonian fighters initially looked to the Germans as liberators. However, the Nazis carried out their own brutal occupation of Estonia until the Soviets once again overran the small Baltic nation two years later.25 Restrictions on churches and synagogues were reduced during the war in a move by Stalin to rally patriotism throughout the country, and many composers rallied to the cause of defending the USSR against Nazi domination with songs and symphonies of patriotic fervor, most notable among them

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22 Ibid., 96.
23 Ibid., 106.
Shostakovich’s *Seventh Symphony* (“Leningrad”). On the very first day of the German invasion the Russian Orthodox Church issued a statement in support of the defense of the Motherland, and earned a favored relationship with the Soviet state as a result. The President of the Moscow Jewish Community gave voice to Jewish support for the Soviet war effort against “the cannibal Hitler.” The relaxation of anti-religious activity and propaganda allowed the rekindling of Protestantism, and a series of conferences in 1944 and 1945 led to the formation of the All Union Council of Evangelical Christian-Baptists (AUCECB), uniting the Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptist denominations across the USSR.

Throughout 1944 and early the next year, the Soviet Red Army drove Hitler’s troops out of Ukraine, Eastern Europe, and the Baltic States, and re-occupied the territory it had lost after the Nazi invasion. While the end of the war brought a period of relative stability to the officially recognized Orthodox and AUCECB churches (contingent on their public support of Soviet foreign policy positions), other faith communities faced renewed persecution at the hands of Soviet authorities. The Ukrainian Catholic Church (Uniates), which observed Orthodox practices while recognizing the authority of the Roman Catholic Pope, was forcibly incorporated into the Russian Orthodox Church between 1945 and 1946, a process that included the arrest of 740 clergy and its entire church hierarchy. The Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church was also forcibly incorporated into the Russian Orthodox Church in 1945. The Estonian church had gained its independence from Moscow in 1920 and had existed as an autonomous institution

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27 *Conquest, Religion in the USSR*, 34-37.
28 Ibid., 113.
29 Ibid., 102-103.
30 Ibid., 39-43, 103.
under the supervision of the Patriarch of Constantinople since that time. In Estonia the 1929 “Law on Religious Associations” was applied in full force during the five years following the Soviet re-occupation. The Lutheran Theological Seminary of Tartu was closed, churches were nationalized by the 1944 decree “On the Establishing of Prayer Houses of Religious Cults,” and the Council for Religious Affairs sought to control all aspects of religious life within the Soviet republic. Religious publications were banned and all religious activity outside of worship services was forbidden. People of faith were often prevented from entering institutions of higher education, or were expelled as a result of their religious associations. Arthur Vööbus, a published scholar of Christian history and former student of the Tartu Seminary, estimates that one-fifth of the Estonian populace - as many as 200,000 people - died during the Stalinist rule of Estonia, primarily as a result of their Christian faith. Lutheran church leaders were arrested, tortured and murdered in an effort to destroy the church. He reports that 80,000 people were arrested and deported over a period of ten days during the month of March, 1949.

Contemporaneous with these events in Estonia was a renewed effort throughout the USSR to bring the creative arts, which had experienced greater freedom during the war, back under the control of the Soviet government. The crackdown, orchestrated by Andrei Alexandrovich Zhdanov, the Central Committee spokesman on cultural affairs, apparently had its origins in Stalin’s reaction to the film Ivan the Terrible in 1945. Film director Sergei Eisenstein and composer Sergei Prokofiev had won acclaim for their previous collaboration in producing the popular patriotic film Alexander Nevsky in 1938 and were handpicked by Stalin to produce what he hoped would be another propaganda piece on the scale of the 1938 film.

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33 Ibid.
However, Stalin had undercut the director’s artistic vision for *Alexander Nevsky*, and when Eisenstein sought to depict an historically accurate account of the tyrant Ivan the Terrible and draw clear parallels to Stalin, the latter was furious, calling the film “a nightmare.” Eisenstein refused to alter his artistic vision; *Ivan* was banned and would not to be shown again in public until 1958. Stalin was further enraged by Shostakovich’s *Ninth Symphony*, which he believed failed to reflect the majesty and solemnity of the great victory over Nazism earlier that year. These events heightened Stalin’s awareness of the desire of the creative community for greater freedom from state control, and he determined to re-assert his authority over the arts as a result.

The first attack was the 14 August 1946 decision of the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party to denounce Soviet writers Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko. The Central Committee resolution was published in *Pravda*, labeling the former’s work as “alien to our people” and the latter as a “scoundrel of literature.” In the field of music the first attacks came early in 1948, ostensibly as a result of Stalin’s attendance at a performance of Vano Muradeli’s opera *The Great Fellowship* at the Bolshoi Theater. Immediately following the performance there was a confrontation between either Stalin or Zhdanov, who was also in attendance, and Leontiev, the Director of the Bolshoi Theatre, who reportedly suffered a heart attack and died as a result. Immediately, the works of modern Soviet composers began to be removed or omitted from concert programs; Zhdanov called for a meeting of composers and musicians in mid-January at the Central Committee

36 Ibid., 203-206.
37 Ibid., 207.
building in Moscow and the Central Committee subsequently published a Decree on Music on 10 February 1948.\textsuperscript{39}

The January meeting of composers began with a critique of Muradeli’s opera, followed by Zhdanov’s attack on Soviet symphonic music and that of Shostakovich in particular, for its failure to resonate with the mass populace of the USSR.\textsuperscript{40} Of greater significance was the Central Committee Decree, which singled out the “Big Four” - Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, and Miaskovsky - for “formalist perversions, anti-democratic tendencies…alien to the Soviet people and their artistic tastes.”\textsuperscript{41} The Decree went on to accuse the formalists of influencing the training of new musicians and attacked the Organizational Committee of the Union of Soviet Composers as “a weapon in the hands of the group of formalist composers and a source of formalist perversions.” The essence of the critique, describing what was expected of Soviet composers, is found in the following statement from the Decree:

The Soviet people expect from their composers works of high quality and high ideological content - whether they be operas, symphonies, songs, choral works, or dance music. In our country composers have unlimited creative possibilities, and all the conditions necessary for a glorious future of musical culture…..It would be unforgivable if they…did not turn their creative efforts along the right road of realism.\textsuperscript{42}

Author Alexander Werth (1949), writing around the same time as these events, describes the charge of formalism as primarily a political concept, in which the artist is “insufficiently wholehearted” in his attitude toward Soviet Communism.\textsuperscript{43} The Central Committee removed the leadership of the Composer’s Union and replaced it with more pro-Soviet composers, in

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 27-28.
\textsuperscript{40} Werth’s \textit{Musical Uproar in Moscow} includes a near complete transcript of the three day conference on pp. 47-86.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 33.
\textsuperscript{43} Werth, \textit{Musical Uproar in Moscow}, 87.
particular Marian Koval, Tikhon Krennikov, and Vladimir Zakharov; the latter two had outspokenly supported Zhdanov during the January Conference. These events in Moscow were paralleled in Estonia with a 1950 meeting in Tallinn outlining the new rules by which composers were to abide. Three composers were imprisoned and others were expelled from the Composer’s Union or lost their jobs. The attack on formalism, combined with leadership changes in the Composer’s Union, had an impact on music within the Soviet Union that would be felt for years. While performances of works by Shostakovich and Prokofiev were eventually restored, the restrictions placed on composers, and on their access to works of contemporary Western composers, remained in place well into the 1960s.

The next campaign against the creative community became known as “anti-cosmopolitanism,” portrayed as correcting a far more damaging trend than mere formalism because of its targets’ alleged praise of Western influences and tendency to downplay Russian pre-eminence. Behind this façade, however, lay a concerted campaign of anti-Semitism, one that led to the death of cultural icons, deportations of innocent civilians, and severe restrictions on the career opportunities of Jews within the Soviet Union. Moscow State Conservatory Professor Lev Mazel’ was accused by the Composer’s Union of being unpatriotic as a result of his positive reviews of works by Shostakovich that had since been discredited. He lost his positions at the Conservatory and the Gnesin Institute, though retaining his membership in the Union. In Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953 (2006), author Kiril Tomoff serves as somewhat of an apologist for the events in the musical sphere during the anti-cosmopolitan campaign. The Central Committee’s program of

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44 Tomoff, Creative Union, 123.
46 Ibid., 152-154.
47 Ibid., 165.
Russification could only be accomplished by reducing the number of Jews admitted to the conservatories or employed by them; Tomoff argues that while Jewish violinists were replaced by Russians at international competitions, at least Jewish faculty members such as David Oistrakh and Abram Iampol’skii did not have to worry about their jobs.\textsuperscript{48} Lev Mazel’ may not have been as forgiving.

A more personal account of the impact that the anti-cosmopolitan campaign had on Jewish musicians is found in Rostislav Dubinsky’s memoir, \textit{Stormy Applause: Making Music in a Worker’s State} (1989). Founder and first violinist of the Borodin Quartet in 1946, Dubinsky recounts the unfair manner in which Jewish violinists were excluded from international competitions beginning in 1945, in contrast to the many awards they had won during the pre-War years.\textsuperscript{49} He shares his own experience of auditioning for the International Quartet Competition in 1950. While members of the jury assured the Borodin members that their performance had been the best among all who auditioned, they were passed over for a quartet from the Republic of Georgia that did not even audition, as a result of political pressure “from above.”\textsuperscript{50} The slight was clearly a result of the Jewish ethnicity of the quartet members, and was understood by violinist David Oistrakh, who had refused an invitation to be a member of the jury. According to Dubinsky’s account, “he didn’t want to be mixed up in this dirty business.”\textsuperscript{51} Oistrakh instead insisted that the Borodin Quartet perform the Chausson Concerto for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet with him during his next public performance, in order to give them the public recognition he felt they deserved.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 167.  
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 14-23.  
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 22.
One of the most revealing stories recounted by Dubinsky concerns the death of Solomon Mikhoels, founder and director of the Moscow Jewish State Theater. Mikhoels became a People’s Actor of the Soviet Union, was the first Chairman of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee founded in 1942, and was awarded a Stalin Prize in 1946. It had first been reported that Mikhoels died of a stroke. However, a friend of one of Dubinsky’s female classmates who had spent time in the gulag with her, recounted to the violinist her eyewitness account of Mikhoels being intentionally crushed against the wall of a house by a truck. The woman was arrested the following day, when her entire neighborhood was rounded up and sent to labor camps, presumably to prevent eyewitness accounts that would contradict the official version of the murder. Dubinsky’s classmate Lisa had been arrested because she was a niece of Mikhoels. After his murder, Mikhoels was implicated by Soviet authorities in the infamous “Doctor’s Plot” as an intermediary for the Jewish doctors accused of murdering Soviet leaders, but was publicly exonerated in a Pravda article a month after Stalin’s death.

Throughout the Stalin years the Soviet Union sought to appropriate the great classics of Western culture as their own, and this process included the performance of sacred music. While contemporary Western influences were rejected as formalistic, Bach, Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven, among others, were idealized alongside great Russian composers such as Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky. In 1923 the Glavrepertkom (Chief Committee on Repertoire) sought an outright ban on all sacred music, but they were quickly convinced otherwise by Anatoly Lunacharsky, head of Narkompros (Commissariat for Public Education). The tradition

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53 Dubinsky, Stormy Applause, 5-6.
54 Kiseleva, “In memory of Solomon Mikhoels.”
that emerged from this tug of war resulted in the justification of performing only non-Russian sacred music, especially that with Latin texts that could remain untranslated for audiences. Russian language classics such as Tchaikovsky’s *Liturgy* and Rachmaninoff’s *All-Night Vigil* would remain banned until the mid-1960s, and performers would need to assure that their performance of a sacred work did not coincide with a church holiday. The performance of Western sacred music was justified with some astute ideological maneuvering, in which the religious texts were seen as superfluous to the humanistic and artistic qualities of the music itself. The conventional portrayal of Bach was “as a dramatist and humanist rather than a devout Christian.” A 1951 performance of Mozart’s *Requiem* was accompanied by this program note seeking to minimize any religious content within the work:

Religious mysticism, dogmatism, and scholasticism were alien to Mozart’s brilliant composition. Mozart’s Requiem is deeply humanitarian, a heartfelt lyric containing enormous dramatism. Man in all his suffering, his despair and hopes, his pain and torment—this is the fundamental basis for Mozart’s Requiem.

While a handful of sacred Western masterpieces thus escaped removal from the concert repertoire at the hands of the Soviet censors and remained essentially intact, many less monumental works, as well as those by Russian composers, were able to return to the repertoire after the Second World War only as a result of having their texts re-written to reflect either pro-Soviet or humanist ideals, a practice that continued well into the 1950s.

Following Stalin’s death in 1953 Soviet concert halls gradually began to feature more frequent performances of great sacred choral literature. The Leningrad Philharmonia presented the first performance since the 1930s of Bach’s *St. John’s Passion* in its 1954-55 season; the

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50 Ibid., 73-75.
57 Ibid., 101.
58 Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Literaturyi i Iskusstva (Russian State Archive of Literature and Art), RGALI fund 2922 (Moscow Philharmonia), inventory 3, file 310, p. 4, as cited in Fairclough, “Feast Day,” 104.
Latvian Philharmonia presented a Moscow performance of Handel’s *Messiah* in 1964 and the Estonian male voice choir and Armenian Cappella performed sacred works in the Soviet capital in 1967. By the mid-1960s the ban on performing Russian sacred music had been lifted and the influx of early music ensembles from the West resulted in the formation of Andrey Volkonsky’s group *Madrigal*, which subsequently recorded a number of Western and Russian sacred works from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. However, sacred works by contemporary Soviet composers still faced the possibility of censure by the Soviet authorities well into the 1960s, as evidenced by the ban on Pärt’s *Credo* in 1968. When Pärt returned to composition in 1976 after his self imposed silence, he published only instrumental pieces that he sought to imbue with religious and spiritual meaning.

The music of another Estonian musical figure, Cyrillus Kreek, further illustrates this dichotomy between the performance of classical sacred repertoire and that of contemporary Soviet composers. Kreek (1889-1962) arranged hundreds of Swedish and Estonian folk hymns, Lutheran chorales and Orthodox hymns, and composed several large scale religious choral works that were performed in Estonian churches prior to the Soviet re-occupation in 1945. Following his dismissal as a professor of Music Theory from Tallinn State Conservatory in 1950 after being labeled a bourgeois nationalist, his hymn and choral arrangements disappeared from church services until the 1980s, shortly before his sacred works began to be performed publicly. Yet at the same time arrangements of the sacred Russian hymn “Kol slaven nash gospod’ vo Sione” (How Glorious Is Our Lord in Zion), composed in 1822 by Dmitri Bortnyansky, continued to be

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59 Fairclough, “Feast Day,” 105-106.
performed in Estonian Orthodox and Protestant churches throughout the Soviet era, appearing in official hymnals of the Methodists and the AUCECB.\textsuperscript{62}

The death of Stalin initiated a period known as the “Thaw” throughout the Soviet Union. The earliest years of the Khrushchev “Thaw” brought a loosening of restrictions placed upon churches, including a 1955 amnesty for many of the political prisoners of the Stalin era that released a number of priests and believers of all faiths. This was accompanied, however, by a concerted effort to disseminate atheist propaganda throughout the USSR, from atheist lectures and publication of atheist literature, to a mandatory course in “The Bases of Scientific Atheism” for all university students.\textsuperscript{63} The thaw soon gave way to further repression: the years 1959 to 1964 saw the closure of 15,000 of the USSR’s 22,000 Orthodox churches; a reduction in Orthodox monasteries from 69 to 17; the loss of over three-quarters of the 30,000 clergy; and the closure of five of the eight Orthodox seminaries. The Orthodox and officially sanctioned All Union Council of Evangelical Christian-Baptist denominations were forced to issue their own Statutes and Letters of Instructions that codified the Soviet restrictions on religious activity, education of children, and baptisms.\textsuperscript{64} Within the AUCECB this led to a division in the denomination and the formation of an \textit{Initsiativnaia gruppa} (Action Group) of members who believed that the denomination had sacrificed its spiritual integrity by compromising with the Soviet authorities.\textsuperscript{65}

During this same time period, many Jewish synagogues were also closed down, and the government made it all but impossible to practice Judaism. The USSR forbade the training of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[62] Ibid., 19-28.
\item[63] Ibid., \textit{Religion in the USSR}, 46-51.
\item[64] Ibid. For a detailed discussion of this split within the AUCECB and the subsequent persecution of the Action Group, see Allan J. Ballinger, “Religious Dissidents of the Soviet Union From 1962 to 1985: Baptists and Catholics” (Master’s thesis, Central Connecticut State University, 1995), 27-82.
\end{footnotes}
rabbis or publication of literature in Hebrew, which was portrayed as the language of Jewish nationalism.\textsuperscript{66} The Soviet anti-religious propaganda campaign sought to discredit Jews and marginalize them within society. Rabbis were accused of being money-grabbing mercenaries; one synagogue was closed when the members of its dvadsatka were all sent to labor camps; openly anti-Semitic cartoons were published and hysterical accusations of “blood-libel,” or the use of Christian blood for making matzot, were aired in the Soviet press. By 1964 there were only 97 Jewish communities in the USSR, compared to 150 at the beginning of the decade.\textsuperscript{67}

Well into the 1960s there was great uncertainty about what would be permitted in the realm of music. In a November 1953 article in Sovetskaya muzika, composer Aram Khachaturian argued for greater openness in the interpretation of socialist realism. The following year Dmitry Shostakovich was awarded the title of People’s Artist of the USSR, and a 1958 declaration of the Central Committee of the Communist Party formally overturned the 1948 Decree issued under the watch of A.A. Zhdanov.\textsuperscript{68} Yet restrictive conditions continued within the Soviet conservatories throughout the decade of the 1950s. Pärt’s neo-classical piano composition, Partita, was singled out by the Composer’s Union of the USSR in 1958 as “formalist experimentation” and together with several other young composers he was warned of “deficiencies in ideological and creative development.”\textsuperscript{69} Moscow Conservatory students were occasionally subjected to searches of their rooms for scores of forbidden Western composers and had to receive special permission to view scores or listen to performances of music by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, or Mahler. Many of the young composers relied on the good will of

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{67} Conquest, Religion in the USSR, 112-117.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Peter John Schmelz, Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music During the Thaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 26-28.
\item \textsuperscript{69} as quoted in Mihkelson, “A Narrow Path,” 8.
\end{footnotes}
liberal professors to gain access to forbidden music. At the Moscow Conservatory, Vissarion Shebalin, who in 1951 was restored to the professorship he had lost in the 1948 uproar, was a key figure in exposing his students to contemporary Western music. Alfred Schnittke recounted that in 1956 Shebalin showed them scores of Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, and Pierre Boulez’s *Le Marteau Sans Maitre*.\(^{70}\) When the authorities came to investigate Shebalin, the conservatory students protected him, refusing to reveal any of his “transgressions.” Other liberal professors reportedly included Orest Yevlakov, Izrail Finkelstein, and Anatoly Dmitriyev of the Leningrad Conservatory; and in the other Republics, Arvo Pärt’s professor Heino Eller of the Tallinn Conservatory, and Lyatoshinsky in Kiev.\(^{71}\)

The 1958 Decree of the Central Committee led to official permission to study composers such as Hindemith, Bartók, Stravinsky, Britten, Honegger, Poulenc, Milhaud, and Orff, while the serial composers such as Boulez, Xenakis, Ligeti, Pousseur, Stockhausen, Webern, Berg, and Schoenberg continued to be officially banned well into the 1960s.\(^{72}\) Khrushchev publicly attacked serial music in a 1963 speech, yet increasing contact with the West brought composers the opportunity to be exposed to these works. In addition to sympathetic professors, visiting Western performers and composers such as Glenn Gould, Igor Stravinsky, Pierre Boulez, and the Italian communist Luigi Nono facilitated the young Soviet composers’ exposure to modern music outside of the USSR. Both Arvo Pärt at the Tallinn Conservatory and Alfred Schnittke in the Moscow Conservatory report having access to the serial treatises of Ernst Krenek and Herbert Eimert.\(^{73}\) Despite the official bans on serialism, the early 1960s saw the young Soviet composers experimenting with twelve tone composition. Pärt’s *Nekrolog* (Obituary) in 1960 was

\(^{70}\) Schmelz, *Such Freedom*, 32-33.
\(^{71}\) Ibid., 33-36.
\(^{72}\) Ibid., 44-48.
\(^{73}\) Ibid., 55-62.
one of the earliest serial works of this period; it faced official condemnation in the Soviet press. Yet by 1963 his serial compositions *Perpetuum Mobile* and *Symphony No. 1* received acclaim from both the Estonian Composer’s Union and the Soviet press; the *Symphony* received performances in Kiev and Moscow over the next two years. Alfred Schnittke applied strict serial techniques in his *Music for Chamber Orchestra*, and *Music for Piano and Chamber Orchestra* during the early 1960s, as did Sofia Gubaidalina in her *Five Etudes for Harp, Double Bass and Percussion*, premiered in 1965. Interestingly, the music that these young composers wrote for film scores was subjected to far less scrutiny than music written for concert halls, and thus they were able to experiment with serialism and other sound techniques without fearing the wrath of the Soviet censors.

The mid to late-'60s saw the new generation of Soviet composers experimenting with other compositional styles familiar in the West, such as aleatory (chance) technique and the use of collage, the latter becoming especially prevalent in the Soviet Union. Collage is literally a patchwork of distinct compositional styles, often incorporating traditional tonality with serialism and aleatory technique. Prime examples of the collage style are Pärt’s cello concerto, *Pro et Contra*, and the aforementioned *Credo*. Another example of blending serialism and aleatory technique is Schnittke’s Second Violin Concerto, composed in 1966 and performed to great acclaim at the Warsaw Autumn Festival. Yet unknown to the audience at the time or even the premiere’s violin soloist, Mark Lubotsky, was that the Concerto was conceived of as a narrative of the Gospel Passion of Christ. As Pärt would do when returning to composition in 1976, Schnittke had chosen to convey his spiritual and religious ideas in purely instrumental terms.

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74 Ibid., 234, 262.
75 Mihkelson, “A Narrow Path,” 11-12
76 for a comprehensive discussion of these stylistic transformations, see Schmelz, *Such Freedom*, Chapter Six: “From Abstraction to Mimesis, from Control to Freedom: Pärt, Schnittke, Silvestrov, and Gubaidulina,” 216-274.
With *Credo* Arvo Pärt reached the apex of what he felt could be expressed with serialism and collage technique, and following the official condemnation of his work he entered a period of reflection during which he undertook the study of medieval and Renaissance music that would culminate in his mature style of *tintinnabulation*. 
Chapter 3: Arvo Pärt’s Spiritual Journey

The Soviet takeover of the Baltic States in 1944 added one million Lutherans to the population of the Soviet Union, and the Stalinist anti-religious campaign over the remainder of the decade was designed to undermine the strength and influence of the Protestant faith throughout its newly acquired territories. Most Estonians were affected personally by this crusade, including Arvo Pärt, when his uncle’s entire family was arrested and deported in 1949, never to be seen again.\footnote{Mihkelson, “A Narrow Path,” 7.}

Arvo Pärt was raised in a Lutheran home, though he notes that his parents did not regularly attend church and were not particularly religious.\footnote{McClowry, “Song of the Convert,” 36.} The Soviet anti-religious campaign meant that Pärt’s generation grew up in a culture of atheist indoctrination in which religion was marginalized. While the Khrushchev “Thaw” saw continued efforts to undermine religious institutions throughout the USSR, by 1968 a lessening of restrictions led to public dialogue on issues of faith. To what extent this openness contributed to Pärt’s own religious thought has not been publicly discussed by the composer, but by the time of his composition of \textit{Credo}, conductor Neeme Jarvi considered Pärt to be a person of strong religious conviction.\footnote{Ibid., 40.}

\textit{Credo} was the composer’s first setting of a sacred text. He chose to adopt a dramatic approach; instead of setting the text of the liturgical Mass that begins “Credo in unum Deum” (“I believe in One God”), Pärt begins with a personal statement of Christian faith, “Credo in Jesum Christum” (“I believe in Jesus Christ”). He continues by setting two lines from the Sermon on the Mount that could certainly be interpreted as having political significance, though the composer denies having any such intention. “You have heard it said, an eye for an eye and a
tooth for a tooth…. But I say to you: do not resist evil.” Pärt’s work combined traditional tonality, serialism, and aleatoric techniques into a powerful musical statement. Perhaps the world political climate in 1968 - the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia, the civil rights movement in the US, the Mexico City Olympics, and the Vietnam War - made such a work untenable in the view of Soviet censors. Featured on the same concert program at Credo’s premiere was a performance of Stravinsky’s Symphony of Psalms, but it was Pärt’s personal statement of faith that generated hostility on the part of the Soviet authorities, leading to a ban on its performance for over a decade.

While Pärt claimed to have no political motivations for Credo, the 1968 ban was followed by several acts of protest by the composer. Paul Hillier recounts how, in 1972, Pärt anonymously submitted a musical score to a USSR competition for composers. The score “opened up like a star and consisted of various contrapuntal variations of the ‘Communist International.’” The officials from Ideological Control in Moscow investigated what they considered to be an insult to communist ideology, and further restrictions were placed on the composer, forbidding his works to be bought or sold, and restricting his travels. To this latter insult he responded several years later by addressing the Estonian Composer’s Union in a wig while protesting the restrictions placed upon him and his music.

Certainly the ban on Credo must have had a significant impact on Arvo Pärt’s musical development. He seemed to have reached the limits of what he felt that modernist compositional techniques could express, particularly in light of his evolving religious convictions and the restrictions placed on him by the Soviet authorities. While Credo is one of the composer’s last major works prior to the development of his mature style, that of the tintinnabulation, it is still a

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80 Hillier, Arvo Pärt, 58
81 Ibid., 118.
82 Ibid., 119-120.
powerful piece of music in its own right, and in my opinion deserves to be considered on an equal footing with other great sacred masterpieces of the twentieth century.

In 1972, Pärt’s wife Nora converted from Judaism to the Russian Orthodox Church, and the composer converted to the Orthodox faith shortly after. In a 2012 telephone interview with Princeton doctoral student Sean McClowry, the composer indicated that his conversion was accompanied by prayer, meditation, and readings of sacred literature, in particular the writings of the Desert Church Fathers of the second to fourth centuries C.E. These have remained an important source of inspiration for the composer up to the present day, along with the seventh-century treatise titled the *Great Canon of Repentance* by St. Andrew of Crete. One of the few Slavonic language compositions by Pärt is *Kanon Pokajanon*, a musical setting of that sacred text.  

It is worthwhile to consider the ways in which Pärt’s Orthodox faith influenced the development of his *tintinnabuli* technique, as well as his decision to use sacred texts in many of his compositions from the mid-1970s onwards. When asked about the influence of his Russian Orthodox faith on his music, the composer replied “Religion influences everything. Not just music, but everything.” In a 2000 interview with author Lewis Owens, Pärt’s wife Nora explained that “he learns everything from the Old Church Fathers.” To really understand his music, she asserted, it was essential to understand how the Eastern Orthodox religious traditions flow through him. The composer made it clear to Owens that “If anybody wishes to understand me they must listen to my music; if anybody wishes to know my ‘philosophy’ then they can read

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any of the Church Fathers; if anybody wishes to know about my life, then there are things that I wish to keep closed…”

What is it within Orthodox religious tradition that has shaped Pärt’s music? Paul Hillier makes the first, most obvious, connection in his discussion of the use of bells. The precise definition of *tintinnabulum* is “a small tinkling bell,” and it is the sound of a bell and its accompanying overtones that Pärt seeks to recreate with his *tintinnabuli* technique. Beginning in the sixth century there is a continuous tradition within the Orthodox church of the use of *semantron*, long, narrow wooden boards struck with a hammer, to call the faithful to church. These were eventually replaced by the *zvon*, the collection of bells used both prior to and during worship. In Orthodox tradition, the ringing of bells involves the use of predetermined rhythmic patterns, and this use of patterns and prototypes is an essential element of its theology. The smaller bells used during worship are very likely the prototype for Pärt’s compositional style: “The three notes of the triad are like bells. And that is why I call it tintinnabulation.”

A second connection to Orthodox musical tradition within Pärt’s music is the use of drones. In Eastern Orthodox tradition, sacred chant is monophonic, without polyphonic or chordal accompaniment. But this monophonic melody is accompanied by an *Ison*, a bass drone on the tonic of the chant’s mode that “enriches the chant by adding solemnity and power to it.” In his *Te Deum*, Pärt identifies the work’s drone as an *Ison*. Though he may not identify an *Ison*...

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86 Ibid.
87 Hillier, Arvo Pärt, 18-23.
89 Hillier, Arvo Pärt. 87.
by name in other works, his use of drones is prevalent in many compositions, including all but one of the *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen* discussed below in chapter four.

Hillier also equates Arvo Pärt’s music with the icons - painted images of Christ - that are such an integral part of the Eastern Orthodox religious faith. Icons are not simply representational images of Jesus, such as one might find on the wall of a church or at a local tag sale, but rather “(a) n icon asserts the interpenetration of God and the world.”92 Its authenticity is based upon adherence to a continuous tradition, and for Hillier it is Pärt’s integration of the spirit of Gregorian chant and early Renaissance polyphony that places his music in such a tradition. The year after *Credo*’s premiere, Pärt first began to study Gregorian Chant, medieval, and early Renaissance music.93 He claims that “Gregorian Chant…taught me what a cosmic secret is hidden in the art of combining two, three notes.”94 Referring to his study of the Notre Dame School and the works of Guillaume de Machaut, Jacob Obrecht, Johannes Ockeghem, and Josquin de Prez, Pärt emphasized the importance of appreciating the religious aspect of their music, and that the spirit of their works impacted him even more than his study of the mechanics of polyphony.95

A fourth aspect of Russian Orthodox theology that Paul Hillier connects to the music of Pärt is that of *hesychasm*, the contemplative tradition of Orthodox Christian spirituality. Rooted in the writings of the early Church fathers, the *hesychast* tradition emphasizes attaining a “state of inner peace and freedom from bodily or mental passion from which point one might proceed to actual contemplation.”96 Contemplation itself does not simply refer to thinking about things, be they religious or not, but rather of seeking to grasp their nature and dwell in that state of

92 Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, 1-5.
94 Ibid., 341.
comprehension. The ultimate goal is to attain a state of communion with God where “the Unknowable makes himself known…” Pärt’s emphasis on the importance of silence to the creative process, and the frequent use of silence in his works, can be understood as a manifestation of this central tenet of Orthodox theology. He explains that in his preparations for composing “…I am alone with silence. I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me. I work with very few elements - with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials - with the triad, with one specific tonality.” In her doctoral dissertation “Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in 1970s and 80s Eastern Europe,” Maria Cizmic discusses the importance of icons, chant, bell ringing, and even architecture to Orthodox theology; all are meant to serve as “symbolic conduits to the heavenly world - material intermediaries between the believer and the divine beyond.” Thus the sense of timelessness created by Pärt’s music, his uses of patterns and repetition, the representation of bells in his use of the triad, and the importance of silence all place his music squarely within this Orthodox tradition that seeks through music to draw the listener to an awareness of the Divine.

Yet while Pärt derives inspiration from his Orthodox faith, the appeal of his music is not limited to the Orthodox believer, nor simply to those of the Christian faith. Writing of the composer’s music in the *Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt*, Robert Sholl asserts that “the poetic of lamentation, desolation, and even pity for humanity is surely accessible to the agnostic, the atheist, the non-Christian as much as the Jew or the Buddhist.” Sholl believes that Pärt’s music is the internalization of sound, and that as such its spirituality is located within the body

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97 Ibid., 6-10.
98 Ibid., 87.
99 Cizmic, “Performing Pain,” 128.
itself, compelling us to reflect on our own state. “An embodied experience of Pärt’s music is of course possible for Christian and non-Christian alike, and may be one in which mindfulness is both somatic and transcendent, contingent and searching.”

Maria Cizmic quotes an article from Salon.com, still available online, in which author Patrick Giles describes his experience with Pärt’s music while caring for friends of his that were dying from AIDS.

I was a crisis worker at an AIDS organization in the mid-’80s, a time when that plague knocked down swaths of people I knew and the future didn’t seem to hold much hope…. In those despondent months, when even AZT was still an experimental drug, some of us discovered not a treatment, but at least a balm: a 1977 album of music by an Estonian classical composer with the peculiar name Arvo Pärt.

The most powerful cut on the record was the second movement of the title piece, “Tabula Rasa.”…. “It sounds like the motion of angels’ wings,” a client whom I had a secret crush on once said.

The music brought comfort to many of us after we’d given up on the very possibility of it. People played it at night, during meditation and, especially, when they were in the hospital and feared they were dying. We had learned that even patients in comas were still capable of hearing, and several people with AIDS requested Pärt on their death beds. “He keeps asking for ‘angel music,’” said the baffled mother of my crush on the phone one winter night.

Clearly Giles’s experience has no direct relationship to the Orthodox Church, or Christianity in general, but is rather a testament to the cathartic power of Pärt’s music.

Steven Wayne Gehring explores this same universality in his 2011 Ph.D. dissertation for Stony Brook University entitled “Religion and Spirituality in Late 20th Century Music: Arvo Pärt, Jonathan Harvey, and John Coltrane.” Gehring discusses the relationship between Pärt’s music and religious ritual. “By keeping melodic material simple and repeating it with minimal development, Pärt taps into a significant aspect of ritual, i.e., repetition as a way of accessing

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101 Ibid., 154-155.
Religious ritual is intended to allow the participant to recreate a sacred event or experience from the mythical past, allowing sacred time to intrude upon the present. In so doing, rituals “access the circular nature of sacred time,” that is, that time itself is reversible and recoverable. “By repeating the same basic material with only slight variations, as well as by the constant presence of a sustained Ison, Pärt suggests the unchanging circularity of time.” This can then lead the listener to a state where time seems to stand still, similar to the ideal of contemplation in which one is attuned to the perception of that which they hold to be sacred.

In the following chapters I will trace the way in which Pärt is able to convey this sense of sacred time through his compositional style of tintinnabulation, and how he applies these principles in his 1988 composition, *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen.*

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104 Ibid.
Chapter 4: The Tintinnabuli Technique

While the term *tintinnabuli* refers to the sound of bells, to which Pärt was drawn after his conversion to the Russian Orthodox Church, it also refers to a specific compositional technique, described by Paul Hillier in his study of the composer’s life and works. Hillier identifies what he refers to as the M-voice, a melody that is sung or played by one or more voices or instruments, and the T or *tintinnabuli* voices that provide a harmonic framework. The T-voices sound the tone of a tonic triad directly above or below the M-voice (1\textsuperscript{st} Superior or 1\textsuperscript{st} Inferior, respectively); or a tone of the tonic triad that is one triadic interval removed, directly above or below the M-voice (2\textsuperscript{nd} Superior or 2\textsuperscript{nd} Inferior, respectively). An additional alternative is for the T-voice to alternate between a note of the tonic triad above the M-voice, and one below the M-voice.\(^{105}\) It is also important to note that the tonic on which the T-voices are based may or may not be the same as the tonic of the M-voice.

In a personal conversation about his *tintinnabuli* technique, Pärt indicated to Hillier that the melody, or M-voice always signifies the subjective world, the daily egoistic life of sin and suffering; the T-voice, meanwhile, is the objective realm of forgiveness. The M-voice may appear to wander, but is always held firmly by the T-voice. This can be likened to the eternal dualism of body and spirit, earth and heaven, but the two voices are in reality one voice, a twofold single entity...he felt strongly that this...is fundamental to the music’s operation, and that it both precedes and dominates the actual process that underwrites each individual tintinnabuli composition.\(^{106}\)

The opening sonority of the sixth Antiphon of *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen*, “O König aller Völker,” clearly demonstrates the *tintinnabuli* voicing (Example 1).\(^{107}\) Both the 2\textsuperscript{nd} sopranos

\(^{106}\) Ibid.
and 2\textsuperscript{nd} tenors begin the M-voice on pitch class A, an octave apart. The 1\textsuperscript{st} sopranos sing the D\textsubscript{5} above A\textsubscript{4}, in the position of 1\textsuperscript{st} Superior according to Hillier’s explanation, as it is the tone of the D minor triad directly above the melody.\textsuperscript{108} The 1\textsuperscript{st} tenors sing F\textsubscript{4} above the A\textsubscript{3} sung by the 2\textsuperscript{nd} tenors. This can be labeled as 2\textsuperscript{nd} Superior, as it is not the next tone of the triad above the A, which would be D\textsubscript{4}, but rather the one above that. Meanwhile, the basses sing a D\textsubscript{3}, which would be classified as the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Inferior.\textsuperscript{109} Note that the opening sonority outlines a D minor triad; the key signature of one flat also gives an indication of the D minor tonality of the Antiphon.

- T-Voice: 1\textsuperscript{st} Superior
- M-Voice

- T-Voice: 2\textsuperscript{nd} Superior
- M-Voice

- T-Voice: 2\textsuperscript{nd} Inferior

Example 1: Opening sonority of “O König aller Völker”

\textsuperscript{108} For identifying specific pitches, as opposed to pitch classes, I will use the internationally accepted method of the American Acoustical Society, where middle C is designated as C\textsubscript{4}. This standard was first introduced by Robert W. Young in his article “Terminology for Logarithmic Frequency Units,” \textit{Journal of the Acoustical Society of America}, Vol. 11, Issue 1 (1939): 134 - 139.

\textsuperscript{109} Hillier, \textit{Arvo Pärt}, 93-97.
These positions are maintained throughout the entire movement, although the *tintinnabuli* voices of the basses and 1\textsuperscript{st} tenors must adjust when the 2\textsuperscript{nd} tenors sing the melody in an inverted form. Thus, while retaining their positions of being the second pitch of the triad below or above the M-voice, respectively, the actual pitch classes change as a result of the changing contour of the melody. This can be demonstrated by examining that phrase in which the melody achieves its highest and lowest points, respectively, (Examples 2 and 3) “der den Bau zusammenhält” (“that holds the building together”):

Example 2: *Tintinnabuli* voices in Prime Form in “O König aller Völker”

Example 3: *Tintinnabuli* voices in Inversion in “O König aller Völker”

A second dimension relating to the M-voice is found in separate discussions of the *tintinnabuli* technique of composition by Stephen Wright and Paul Hillier. In his chapter from *Music of the Twentieth Century Avant Garde* entitled “Arvo Pärt,” Stephen Wright explains how the melodic contour of Pärt’s vocal music is drawn entirely from the text. Either the first or last syllable of each word will be sung on the tonal center, with the melody moving stepwise, up or
down, either from the tonal center or towards it.\textsuperscript{110} The scales outlined by such stepwise motion, Wright notes, are primarily modal, with Aeolian predominating. Paul Hillier, in his article “Arvo Pärt: Magister Ludi” published in \textit{The Musical Times}, expands upon this explanation and provides specific musical examples to illustrate the technique.\textsuperscript{111} For example, the “Kyrie” of \textit{Missa Syllabica} demonstrates how the melodic voice either begins or ends on the tonal center (Examples 4 and 5). The first section of the “Kyrie” (tonal center D\textsubscript{5}) begins on the third note of the scale (F\textsubscript{5}) as the word “Kyrie” has three syllables: the next word “eleison” starts on the fourth note (G\textsubscript{5}) as it contains four syllables. In the second section – “Christe Eleison” – the same principle is applied, however by approaching the tonal center from below, first from C\textsubscript{5}, then from A\textsubscript{4}, requiring two and four syllables, respectively, to reach D\textsubscript{5}.\textsuperscript{112}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example4.png}
\caption{Example 4: “Kyrie Eleison” from “Kyrie” of \textit{Missa Syllabica}}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example5.png}
\caption{Example 5: “Christe Eleison” from “Kyrie” of \textit{Missa Syllabica}}
\end{figure}


\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 135.
Hillier goes on to explain that the alternative method, of beginning on the tonal center and then moving stepwise up or down in accordance with the number of syllables, can be found in the “Gloria” of Missa Syllabica. Other variants can occur by having a single voice alternate between the four possible types of movement to or from the tonic, and by having the tonal center itself alternate between the notes of the tonic triad. Hillier uses the example of Pärt’s Stabat Mater in which the melodic voices begin by moving to or from the tonic of pitch class A but progressively rise through the A minor triad. If we understand the tonal center to be that pitch from which the text begins, or alternatively that on which the text arrives, then the use of each pitch class of the triad in such a way can be explained as the use of temporary tonal centers, in much the same way as a composer in the period of common practice tonality might effect a modulation from one key to another. In this case, however, there is no modulation.

In his doctoral dissertation, “Analysis and Comparison of Three Major Vocal/Instrumental Works of Arvo Pärt,” Thomas Robert Holm states that the patterns of syllabic movement to and from a given tonic are not fixed, but rather “simply tools” to be utilized by the composer’s “skill and intuition.” In his analysis of Passio Holm distinguishes the Passion dialogue, in which the composer utilizes a fairly strict application of tintinnabuli technique, from the choruses that provide commentary on the passion. In the first of these choruses, “Exordium,” each word is sung on one pitch, with stepwise downward motion as the text is presented. “Conclusio” utilizes upward motion by step in the vocal parts, while the organ moves in contrary motion. Even within the Passion dialogue, when Jesus utters the phrase “Consummatum est” (“It is finished”), Pärt ignores the strict rules of tintinnabulation in order to

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113 Ibid., 137.
115 Ibid., 21.
conclude the downward motion begun from the tonic E\textsubscript{3} with an A\textsubscript{2} on the word \textit{est}, rather than returning to E\textsubscript{3} for this final word of the text.

The composer himself speaks to his deviations from the rules of \textit{tintinnabulation}. In his 1989 interview with Jamie McCarthy, Pärt suggested that the principles of construction formulated for the \textit{tintinnabuli} mode of composition “must not be the most important part of the music. They must be simple – they fall away and are only a skeleton. Life arises from other things.”\textsuperscript{116} In fact, the composer’s very first composition in the style, \textit{Für Alina}, provides an excellent example of how deviating from the established rules of \textit{tintinnabulation} produces a remarkable point in the music. The work begins with a B\textsubscript{2} - B\textsubscript{0} pedal, serving as a drone, held until the eleventh measure. After this has sounded, the right hand of the piano produces the M-voice while the left hand produces that of the T-voice in the position of 1\textsuperscript{st} Inferior, sounding the pitches of a B minor triad. This relationship is maintained throughout the work with one exception. In measure 11, as the pedal bass finally ends, the T-voice leaves its role for a moment as the left hand plays a C\#\textsubscript{5}. It is a remarkable moment, for just as the listener’s ear has become accustomed, even in such a short period of time, to expect the D\textsubscript{5} to sound with the F\#\textsubscript{5} of the right hand, instead the interval of a fourth at this point creates a dramatic gesture. In addition to the sonic impact, in Pärt’s handwritten score of the 1976 work, he drew a flower directly in the center of the interval, as if to underscore his conception that “Life arises from other things” (Example 6).

\textsuperscript{116} McCarthy, “An interview”, 133.
Example 6: *Für Alina*, measures 10-11

It is precisely these points at which Arvo Pärt deviates from the strict rules of *tintinnabulation* that will be examined in an analysis of his *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen* in the next chapter.

Before beginning my analysis, however, I would like to briefly address the suggestion put forth by Stefan Kostka and Arthur Graybill in their *Anthology of Music for Analysis: Instructor’s Guide and Workbook*, that the melody of the sixth antiphon, “O König Aller Völker” is based on an extant Gregorian chant melody. Following this suggestion, I cross-referenced the melodic contour of the M-voice in each antiphon with the “O” Antiphons in the *Liber Usualis*. Finding no similarities there, I then compared Pärt’s melodic lines with the listing of melodic codes in *An Index of Gregorian Chant*, compiled by John R. Bryden and David G. Hughes. In previous research I had uncovered a close resemblance in the step patterns of the sixth Antiphon, “O König,” and the chant melody “Kyrie Deus genitor alme.” By examining the melodic voices of the additional Antiphons I sought to determine if the relationship discerned in “O König” was pure coincidence, or if a pattern could be discerned of using chant melodies as the basis for their melodic content as well. While fragments of several of the M-voices in Pärt’s *Sieben Magnificat-

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117 Ibid.
*Antiphonen* do coincide with extant chant melodies, there is no correlation between texts or consistency in the sources from which these chants are drawn that would indicate that it was the composer’s intention to evoke such connections. In my judgment it is more likely that any similarities are a consequence of the stepwise motion predominant in both the vast collection of Gregorian chant melodies and that of Pärt’s *tintinnabuli* style of composition.
Chapter 5: Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen

Arvo Pärt’s Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen, composed in 1988, is a setting of the “O Antiphons” of the Magnificat drawn from the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. In Church liturgy the antiphons are sung one each day to frame the Magnificat, Mary’s song, over the course of the seven days leading up to Christmas Eve. It is noteworthy that Pärt quite often sets Latin texts coming out of the Roman Catholic tradition rather than the Church Slavonic associated with Orthodox worship. Paul Hillier has speculated that the composer is still influenced by the medieval and early Renaissance music of the Western church that he studied during his period of creative silence.¹²¹

More remarkable still is that his Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen sets these Latin texts in the German language. Pärt and his wife Nora, who is of Jewish descent, had settled in Germany in 1980 after the couple was granted permission to emigrate to Israel. Stopping first in Vienna, they were met by representatives of Universal Edition, thanks to arrangements made by Alfred Schnittke, and the Pärt’s took on Austrian citizenship. The composer received a scholarship from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service) in West Berlin the following year, and he and his wife have lived there since.¹²² Pärt’s first German language work was the result of a 1984 commission to set the German language poem Es sang vor langen Jahren, written by Clemens Brentano. The Sieben Magnificat-Antiphons were commissioned by the Radio Chamber Choir of Berlin, and he must have felt enough confidence by this time that he could effectively set the text in the vernacular language of his audience.¹²³

¹²¹ Hillier, Arvo Pärt, 164.
¹²² Ibid., 32-33.
¹²³ Ibid., 164-166.
Each Antiphon begins by addressing some characteristic of the Divine: “O Weisheit,” “O Adonai,” etc., and includes an appeal for mercy or intervention in human affairs: “O komm…”¹²⁴ Pärt composed all seven movements using his tintinnabuli style, yet each contains unique variations of the technique that give them a distinct character and provide variety for the listener when the Antiphons are performed consecutively.

“O Weisheit”

The first Antiphon, “O Weisheit” (“O Wisdom,”) presents the M-voices in parallel thirds in the 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ tenors, with tonal centers of E₄ and C♯₄ respectively. This is set against the homophonic texture of the other voices in tintinnabuli style, based upon an A major triad. Pärt has the melodic voices end each word of the text on their respective tonic, and alternates between beginning above and below the tonic, while single syllable words are sung on the tonic (Example 7).

However, two words of the text vary from this application of the technique. “Hervorgegangen” (“proceeds”) and “offenbare” (“reveal”) are the only words of this antiphon to exceed two

syllables, and the way in which they are set does not follow the prescribed rules of *tintinnabulation* (Example 8).

Example 8: Multi-syllabic text setting in “O Weisheit”

To do so, “hervorgegangen” would have to begin on the pitches $A_3$ and $F#_3$ in the 1st and 2nd tenors respectively, and arrive on their respective tonics only on the last syllable, “-en.” Likewise, “offenbare” should begin on $B_3$ and $G#_3$, respectively, reaching the tonic only on the syllable “-re.”

Several explanations are possible to account for these deviations. Musically, the melody never ventures beyond a step above or below tonic. As there are only two words of the text that exceed two syllables, keeping them within this framework requires a return to and repetition of the tonic, as seen above, rather than rising from the interval of a fourth or fifth. Thus it is possible that Pärt may have made a musical decision to allow only whole or half steps from the tonic in the M-voice.

Textually, both words are verbs that refer to powers of the Divine. Wisdom *proceeds* from the mouth of God, and is asked to *reveal* to humanity the way of wisdom and understanding. Pärt may have sought to emphasize their significance by deviating from his
system on these two words. Of the other verbs that refer to powers of the Divine, “umspannst” (“encirclest”) and “ordnest” (“orderest”), neither is more than two syllables, and thus do not offer the opportunity for such deviation. Davison also notes that it is the accented syllable of these words that is singled out for melodic movement, being further emphasized by the augmentation of rhythm on those syllables.\textsuperscript{125}

In “O Weisheit,” the altos take the role of the T-voices, with the 1\textsuperscript{st} alto in the position of 1\textsuperscript{st} Superior to the 1\textsuperscript{st} tenor, and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} alto as 1\textsuperscript{st} Superior to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} tenor. This remains consistent throughout the Antiphon, and because the melodic line only moves one step above or below tonic on words of the text with more than one syllable, the predominant sonority is that of the A major triad, with A\textsubscript{4} and E\textsubscript{4} sounding in the altos and E\textsubscript{4} and C#\textsubscript{4} in the tenors. This is reinforced by a type of drone sung by the sopranos and basses, the former singing E\textsubscript{5} and A\textsubscript{4}, and latter A\textsubscript{2} and E\textsubscript{2}, on every other word of the text. These relationships and sonorities can be seen in the first two measures of the Antiphon (Example 9).

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Example9}
\caption{Opening sonority of “O Weisheit”}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{125} Davidson, “Ancient Texts, Ancient Voices,” 30.
An important structural division to be considered in many of the Antiphons relates to proportional significance in the placement of the text “O komm…” (“O come…”). Each Antiphon begins with a salutation to one aspect of the Divine, such as “Wisdom,” “Lord,” “Morning Star,” “King,” or “Emmanuel” (“God with us”). Following this salutation is an appeal for the Divine to enter into the world of humankind and act on our behalf. In “O Weisheit” the appeal is “O come to us and reveal the way of wisdom and of understanding…” What is to be considered here is Pärt’s placement of this appeal at the Golden Mean of the Antiphons.

The Golden Mean, (also known as the Golden Ratio, Divine proportion, and Golden Section) in which the ratio of a smaller section (x) to its larger counterpart (y) is equal to the ratio of the larger section to the whole (x:y = y:x+y), can be traced back at least as far as Euclid, who in his *Elements* referred to this as the “division in extreme and mean ratio.” The 1509 publication of *De Divina Proportione* by Luca Pacioli, illustrated by Leonardo da Vinci, popularized the term “divine proportion”; it was not until the 1835 publication of *Die reine Elementar-Mathematik* by Martin Ohm that the term “goldener Schnitt” (“golden section”) came into use.\(^{126}\) Mathematically, the Golden Mean is approximately 61.8% of the way through a movement or piece of music, because the remaining 38.2%, when divided into 61.8, itself equals 61.8%. Thus 38.2/61.8 and 61.8/100 are equal, or

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x : y \ (61.8) = y : x+y \ (61.8).
\]

Directly related to the Golden Mean is the Fibonacci numerical series, where each number is the sum of the previous two: 0 1 1 2 3 5 8 13 21 34 55 89 144 233, etc. The ratio of any two consecutive numbers in this series approximates the Golden Mean, with the ratio getting closer

as the numbers get higher. Because the Golden Mean is an irrational number, however, since the early twentieth century it has been represented by the Greek symbol \( \phi \), equal to \( 0.61803398875… \).

Many claims have been made related to the use of the Golden Mean within the fields of architecture, sculpture, and painting for a long time. However, claims for its presence in music are a recent phenomenon, appearing only within the past century. Research into the works of Mozart and Beethoven, for example, has pointed to use of the Golden Mean as the formal basis for many sonata-allegro first movements in the piano sonatas and string quartets of these composers, and in the symphonies of both Beethoven and Brahms. Writing in 1950, author J. H. Douglas Webster describes the appearance of the Golden Mean in architecture, dating back to the ancient Egyptian pyramids, art, nature, poetry, even birdsong. He cites numerous examples of its appearance in music, going back as early as Bach’s 48 Preludes from the *Well-tempered Clavier*, to the works of many nineteenth- and twentieth-century composers including Schoenberg and Bartók. Yet he acknowledges that its appearance in other forms, particularly rondo, fugue, and variation, is extremely rare, and raises the question as to whether these composers intentionally incorporated such proportions. He concludes that “it seems more probable that the form has been expressed instinctively so far by all musicians.”

A similar question is raised in a 1977 article by Roy Howat, also published in *Music & Letters*, in which he analyzes one composition each of Ravel and Debussy with respect to the Golden Mean. He does so in order to evaluate the analysis of Hungarian musicologist Ernö Lendvai, who claimed its prevalence in the music of Bela Bartók, the latter often looking to his

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130 Ibid.
French predecessors as a source of inspiration. Howat’s analysis does indeed point to the importance of the Golden Mean in both Ravel and Debussy’s works, which leads him to question “whether such planning is conscious or the result of an exceptionally refined instinct. None of the three composers discussed here left any direct written evidence of his technical methods in this respect...”  

Skeptics have questioned the accuracy of many claims related to the Golden Mean in art, architecture, even in nature. George Markowsky, a professor at the University of Maine who earned his Ph.D. in Mathematics from Harvard University, sought to disprove claims of Golden Mean proportion about the Great Pyramids of Egypt, the Greek Parthenon, and the United Nations building in New York City, among others, in his “Misconceptions About the Golden Ratio” (1992) published in *The College Mathematics Journal*. Music theorist Stuart Woronecki extended many of Markowsky’s critiques to claims about the Golden Mean in music in his 2000 thesis “A Critical Study of the Use of Golden Ratio in the Analysis of Musical Form, With Recommendations for Effective Applications.”

Since the Golden Mean is itself an irrational number, central to the discussion of its presence in music is to determine what degree of deviation from \( \sqrt{5} \) is acceptable. Markowsky puts forth the argument that \( \pm 2\% \) is a generous range for deviation, and Woronecki adopts this standard for his analyses, resulting in a range of acceptable values between 0.602 and 0.632. Any value outside of this range, Woronecki asserts, eliminates the possibility of Golden Mean proportion. It is also important to remember that both the ratio of \( x:y \) and that of \( y:x+y \) must

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134 Ibid.
fall within this range. Many analysts have focused exclusively on the ratio of the larger section to the whole, that of \( y:x+y \). However, as John Putz points out in his article “The Golden Section and the Piano Sonatas of Mozart,” for any two numbers this ratio will always be closer to the Golden Mean than the ratio \( x:y \). Thus the latter ratio must be within the range of acceptable deviation in order for Golden Mean proportions to be present.\(^{135}\)

Conversely, Rudolf Arnheim of the University of Michigan (1981) argues that an artist may be visually drawn to the Golden Mean because of its pleasing proportions, whether or not it matches the mathematical proportions precisely.

It is necessary, first of all, to distinguish the arithmetical formula or the geometrical construction from its perceptual effect. To be sure, the Pythagorean ambition to find a mathematical prescription for perceptual beauty can hardly settle for anything less than an exact fit. But, if an artist welcomes any means of facilitating his quest for good form, he is in a different position. He has no stake in arithmetical exactness since he is interested in the judgment of the eye, not the meterstick. When it comes to ratios or proportions, the sense of sight is unlikely to try to measure the length of edges. In the case of a quadrilateral, the eye judges the 'dynamic' relation between the two dimensions by means of an intuitive sense of balance, whose physiological counterpart is still unknown. Visual equilibrium is qualitative, and, when it is tested by experiment, it yields results that cluster statistically around the node within a certain range. Any more mathematically precise result would be astonishing indeed. For this reason Fischler is probably correct when he observes that 'It is not possible to conclude by means of measurements that an artist used the Golden Ratio....' - which does not mean, however, that it was not guiding the artist's eye.\(^{136}\)

The same reasoning is valid for music, as well. John Putz, while calling into question the mathematical accuracy of Golden Mean proportion in Mozart's piano sonatas, still concludes that ‘(p)erhaps the golden section does, indeed, represent the most pleasing proportion, and


perhaps Mozart, through his consummate sense of form, gravitated to it as the perfect balance between extremes. It is a romantic thought.\textsuperscript{137}

When considering Golden Mean proportion in the music of Arvo Pärt, it is important to decide whether the unit of measurement should be the bar line or the beat. There is no fixed meter in the \textit{Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen}; each word receives its own measure. The absence of a regular meter could be a reason to argue for using the beat of each Antiphon as the basis of measurement. However, as each word of the text is equal to one measure, the use of measures as the basis for determining Golden Mean proportions is consistent with the importance that Pärt places on the text in M-voice construction. Therefore I will use measure numbers when calculating the possibility of Golden Mean proportion, wherever possible. When a ratio satisfies the standard for deviation outlined above, I will assert the presence of a Golden Mean proportion; when the deviation is greater, yet \( y:x+y \) has a \( \pm \ 3\% \) deviation, I will identify that point as approximating a Golden Mean proportion.

In “O Weisheit,” the salutation to the Divine (“O Wisdom…””) concludes in measure 27. After one measure of rest, the ensuing appeal to the Divine comprises the remainder of the Antiphon’s 44 measures. Thus the ratio of \( y:x+y \) (27:44) is .614, and \( x:y \) (17:27) is .629, indicating the presence of a Golden Mean proportion at exactly that point where the opening salutation is concluded. It is noteworthy that after the opening salutation “O Weisheit” Pärt also inserts a measure of rest. This pattern of inserting moments of silence is repeated in each of the Antiphons, and is consistent with his conviction of the sacred power of silence.

“O Adonai”

Adonai, a manner of addressing God that is translated as “Lord,” is used over three hundred times in the Hebrew Scriptures, often as a substitute for the sacred Tetragrammaton - YHWH - that those Scriptures forbid being spoken. Arvo Pärt’s “O Adonai,” the second Antiphon within the larger work, is composed around the tonal center of F#, with the M-voices following the contour of an F# minor scale. It features the tenor and bass voices, with the M-voice alternating between the 2nd tenors and 2nd basses, while the 1st tenors and 1st basses each present the T-voice from the position of 2nd Superior. While single syllable words remain on the tonic F#, words of more than one syllable alternately rise or fall to the tonic.

As in the first Antiphon, the M-voice deviates from the rules of tintinnabuli technique on words of three or four syllables, with two exceptions. However, rather than remaining no more than one step above or below the tonic, as in “O Weisheit,” here the deviation consists of reversing the direction of those pitches prior to the tonic. For example, the opening “Adonai,” sung as four syllables, rises from G#3 to A3 to B3 before falling to the tonic of F#3, whereas strictly following the rules of tintinnabuli would have the text begin on B3, then fall stepwise to A3 and G#3 before reaching the tonic F#3 (Example 10).

Example 10: M-voice in opening of “O Adonai”

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This deviation is applied for the words “erschienen” (“appeared”), “gegeben” (“gave”), and “befreie” (“free”), but not for the word “Israel.” As in the first Antiphon, the name for God, as well as verbs indicating powers of the Divine, are singled out to deviate from the rules of tintinnabuli, whereas the words “flammenden” (“flaming”), and Israel, referring to an earthly political division of the Hebrew people, are consistent with those same rules (Example 11).

Example 11: M-voice on text “Israel” in “O Adonai”

It should also be noted that it is the accented syllable of each multi-syllable word that is sung to the value of a whole note, and is placed at the lowest or highest point in relation to the tonic.

Unlike in the first Antiphon, it is the approximate midway point that marks the division between the Antiphon’s salutation to the Divine, and the appeal “O komm und befreie uns mit deinem starken Arm” (“O come and free us with Your strong arm”). “O Adonai” employs continuous sound, with no rests for either basses or tenors, once they have entered in measure 2. Yet at the completion of the fermata in measure 44 all four parts are given a breath mark, creating a brief moment of silence before entering again (Example 12). This comes at the conclusion of the second presentation of the appeal “O komm…,” which is then sung a third time. If we take these three presentations of the text as one section, it comprises 29 measures. The aforementioned breath mark falls between measures 18 and 19 of this section. Thus measures 27 to 44 comprise 18 measures, and measures 45 to 55 comprise 11 measures. When
we consider the ratio $y:x+y$ (18:29) we get .621. The ratio of $x:y$ (11:18) = .611, thus indicating the presence of a Golden Mean proportion within the second section of the Antiphon.

Example 12: Golden Mean within the second section of “O Adonai”

“O Sproß aus Isais Wurzel”

The title of the third Antiphon is translated “O stem from Jesse’s root;” it is important to mention here that *Isais* is drawn from the Hebrew word that has been translated as *Jesse* in Latin and English. Thus *Isais* refers to Jesse, the father of King David, and not Isaiah the prophet, although the Biblical text referred to in this Antiphon is drawn from the eleventh chapter of the book of Isaiah: “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him…In that day the Root of Jesse shall stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him…”

“O Sproß aus Isais Wurzel” is set for sopranos and altos. The $2^{nd}$ altos and $2^{nd}$ sopranos alternate the M-voice, following the contour of a C# Hungarian minor scale, with augmented seconds between scale degrees 3 – 4 and 6 - 7. The $1^{st}$ altos and $1^{st}$ sopranos present the T-voice in the position of $1^{st}$ Superior, outlining the pitches of a C# minor triad, and the key signature of

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four sharps is consistent with the tonality of C# minor. The tonal centers of the M-voices rise through the pitches of that triad, beginning with G#₃ in the 2nd altos, then G#₄ in the 2nd sopranos; moving to C#₄ and C#₅ in the 2nd altos and 2nd sopranos, respectively; then E₄ in the 2nd altos, E₅ in the 2nd sopranos, finally rising to the G#₄, sung by the 2nd altos, similar to the example from the Stabat Mater mentioned in Chapter 3. The 2nd altos begin each word on the tonal center, with words of more than one syllable rising stepwise along the pitches of the Hungarian minor scale; the 2nd sopranos also begin each word on the tonal center, but words of more than one syllable descend stepwise along the scale. There is no deviation from these patterns throughout the Antiphon, but the rising tonal centers provide an element of variation. Each pair of voices sustain their final sonority all the way to the final word of text sung by the next pair; combined with the T-voices being in the close position of 1st Superior, this creates some sharp dissonances. For example, the sopranos arrive at the semitone sonority of F₄ and G#₄ in measure 12 on the word “Völker,” and the altos enter in measure 14 with the minor third sonority C#₄ and E₄. As the M-voice rises to D#₄, there are simultaneously two sets of semitone sonorities sounded: these tonal clusters occur five more times throughout the Antiphon (Example 13).

Example 13: Simultaneous semitone clusters in “O Sproß aus Isais Wurzel”
The final sonority in this Antiphon is significant, because of the composer’s mark “attacca” at its conclusion, so that in performance the fourth Antiphon should follow immediately upon the end of the third; there is an “attacca” at the end of the fourth as well, indicating that the middle three antiphons are meant to be performed without stopping. The final measure of “O Sproß” begins with a C# minor triad in second inversion: the sopranos are holding the sonority of E₅ and G#₅, while the 2nd alto begins the text “länge” on the tonal center of G#₄, and the 1st alto sings the 1st Superior tintinnabuli pitch of C#₅. However, on the second syllable of “länger” the 2nd altos rise to A₄, producing an A₇ chord with the G#₅ as the highest pitch (Example 14).

Example 14: Closing sonority of “O Sproß aus Isais Wurzel”

This G#₅ serves as a leading tone to the A₅ of the 1st sopranos in the fourth Antiphon, “O Schlüssel David’s,” the highest pitch of an A minor chord in first inversion at its outset, the dissonance of the major seventh A₄ to G#₅ being resolved within a modal change from A major to a minor (Example 15).
Golden Mean proportion does not appear to play a role in “O Sproß aus Isais Wurzel,” as the conclusion of the salutation to the Divine occurs in measure 26 of the Antiphon’s 38 measures, such that $y:x+y (26:38) = .684$. However, when examining the seven Antiphons as a whole, the appeal of “O komm und errette uns, erhebe dich, säume nicht länger” (“O come and save us, rise up, delay no more”) begins in measure 127 of the work’s 342 measures, approximating Golden Mean proportion at a point sometimes referred to as the Lesser Mean. In this case the shorter section, $x$, precedes $y$. When we consider the ratio $y:x+y (216:342)$ we get .632. It should be noted, however, that this is based on counting the 29 measures sung by the sopranos in the sixth Antiphon. The 2:1 proportion canon upon which that Antiphon is based results in the tenors and basses singing 59 measures.\(^{140}\) If we use the latter number, then the total

\(^{140}\) For purposes of definition, proportion canons should be understood to occur when both voices enter simultaneously, and all note values are augmented or diminished according to a fixed ratio. This concept is sometimes conflated with the concept of a mensuration canon, but in the latter one or more note values are changed from ternary to binary, or vice versa. For a detailed explanation of the distinction between these two forms of canon, see Edward A. Melson, “Compositional Strategies in Mensuration and Proportion Canons, ca. 1400 to ca. 1600,” (Master’s thesis, McGill University, 2008), 5-10, and Virginia Ervin Newes, “Fuga and Related Contrapuntal Procedures In European Polyphony CA. 1350--CA. 1420,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1987), 327-377.
measures of the work would be 372, and the ensuing ratio of y:x+y (245:371) = .659. Thus, the existence of Golden Mean proportion within the third Antiphon is simply a matter of conjecture, and cannot be asserted definitively.

“O Schlüssel David’s”

In the fourth Antiphon, “O Schlüssel David’s,” Pärt uses a combination of Ionian and Aeolian modes, yet his system for relating the text and music differs from the previous Antiphons. Here the composer begins the M-voice on the pitch C\textsubscript{5} in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} alto and C\textsubscript{4} in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} bass. Words of more than one syllable descend diatonically by the pitches of the mode. The T-voice outlines an A minor triad throughout, and the Antiphon’s final melodic descent is to an A\textsubscript{3} and A\textsubscript{2} respectively. However, as shown below, there are also elements of the Ionian mode to the melodic voice, and thus both Ionian and Aeolian appear to have significance within the Antiphon.

Each new word of the text, instead of returning to the tonic C\textsubscript{5}, in the case of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} sopranos, begins on the last pitch sung on the previous syllable of text. Thus, “Schlüssel” descends from C\textsubscript{5} to B\textsubscript{4}, “Davids” begins on B\textsubscript{4} and descends to A\textsubscript{4}, “Zeppter” begins on A\textsubscript{4} and descends to G\textsubscript{4}, and so forth. (Example 16)

Example 16: M-voice in “O Schlüssel Davids”
If we understand the tonal center to be that pitch from which the text begins, or on which the text arrives, Pärt transforms the last pitch of the previous word of the text into the tonal center from which the next word of text begins. Once reaching the end of the phrase “Zepter des hauses Israel” (“scepter of the house of Israel”), the new phrase “du öffnest, und niemand kann schließen” (“That which thou openest, none can secure”) returns to the opening C₅, descending this time only to G₄ before returning a third time to C₅ for the following phrase, “du schließt, und keine Macht vermag zu öffnen” (“That which thou securest, no power may open”).

Even within this variant of Pärt’s system, there are additional instances of deviation. For example, on the text “vermag” both the 2nd alto and 2nd bass remain on the pitches B₄ and B₃ respectively. The following word of the text begins on the notes of the Aeolian scale below, A₄ and A₃, and continues the pattern to the end of the phrase. Had Pärt brought “vermag” down to the next pitch of the mode, A, on its second syllable, he would still have completed the phrase in line with the previous pattern.

When examining the form of “O Schlüssel Davids” it appears that proportional considerations once again play a role. The completion of the appeal to the Divine occurs in measure 26 of the Antiphon’s 68 measures. When considering the ratio of y:x+y (42:68), we get .617. The ratio of x:y (26:42) = .619, thus marking a Golden Mean division at the Lesser Mean.

The first statement of the text “”O komm und öffne den Kerker der Finsternis und die Fessel des Todes” (“O come and unlock the prison of darkness and the fetters of death”) brings an additional variant of the tintinnabuli system. First, while it begins with the same pattern established above, where each new word of the text begins on the last pitch of the previous word, once it reaches the three-syllable word “Fensternis” (“darkness”), the next word of text begins on the pitch of the Aeolian mode above, then re-commences the pattern until the conclusion of the
phrase. When repeated, rather than returning to the pitches of C₅ and C₄, the next statement of this text occurs on the next lower pitch of the C major triad, in this case G₃ and G₂, thus interjecting characteristics of the Ionian mode into the M-voice (Example 17). Though traditional tonal analysis is not suited to address the harmonic structure of tintinnabuli works, it is interesting to note the presence of the relative major key of C in this Antiphon that is largely centered in an A minor tonality.

Example 17: M-voice in “O Schlüssel Davids”

This second presentation of the appeal “O komm...” begins in measure 42, and also exhibits a Golden Mean proportion. Here the ratio y:x+y (41:68) = .603, however the ratio x:y (27:41) = .659, indicating that this approximates the Golden Mean for the Antiphon, though without strict mathematical certainty. The text is repeated once again, beginning on E₄ and E₃, until the melody arrives at the final pitches of A₃ and A₂ in the 2nd alto and 2nd bass, respectively.

The cadence implied by the “attacca” at the end of the fourth Antiphon can be seen as an inversion of sorts of the cadence leading into it. Whereas the latter contains the leading tone G#₅ as part of an Amaj⁷ chord that is resolved into an A minor chord with A₅ as the top pitch, here an Fmaj⁷ chord in first inversion resolves to an E major sonority at the outset of the fifth Antiphon, in
what could be described as a half cadence, with the E major functioning as the dominant to the preceding A minor tonality (Examples 18 and 19). It is unclear why Pärt chose to have the final syllable of “To-des” remain on the same pitch as the first syllable, when the manner in which the rules of tintinnabuli had been applied in the two previous statements of the same text would have the M-voices descend to E\textsuperscript{4} and G\textsuperscript{3} respectively. The corresponding movement of the T-voices to C\textsuperscript{4} and A\textsuperscript{2} would have created an Am\textsuperscript{7} sonority in third inversion. Even with a G\textsubscript{2} in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} basses, perhaps the composer sought to avoid the listener’s perception that the Antiphon had concluded in the tonic of A minor, and instead left it unresolved so that the half cadence leading into “O Morgenstern” would create a sense of continuity and motion rather than an arrival. In a kind of mirroring, the leading tone G\# resolving up to A from the third Antiphon into the fourth, and the F\textsuperscript{maj7} in first inversion resolving down to E major from the fourth to the fifth create this sense of continuity in harmonic terms, helping to justify the composer’s instructions of “attacca” that connect these three inner movements.

Example 18: Closing sonority of “O Schlüssel David’s”
Example 19: Opening sonority of “O Morgenstern”

“O Morgenstern”

The fifth Antiphon, “O Morgenstern,” is in many ways the most complicated with respect to the relationship of the M and T voices. The alto and 1st bass present the M-voice with B₄ and B₃ as tonal centers, respectively, moving in contrary motion and alternating between moving upward and downward from the tonal center (Example 20).

Example 20: M-voices in altos and 1st basses in “O Morgenstern”
The contour of the M-voices follows the plagal form of the B Locrian mode, while the T-voices are based on an E major triad. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} basses alternate between an E\textsuperscript{1} - B\textsuperscript{1} drone, and B\textsuperscript{1} presented as a single pitch. While the M-voices follow the basic rules of tintinnabuli technique by having each subsequent syllable sung on the next highest or lowest pitch of B Locrian, Pärt modifies this by having the accented syllable in each multi-syllable word slur upward or downward to the next pitch that will be sung for the following syllable. Thus, in measure 2 for example, the syllable “Mor-“ instead of remaining on B\textsubscript{4} in the alto, slurs downward to the A\textsubscript{4} that is re-articulated on the syllable of “-gen-“. The same is true in the 1\textsuperscript{st} bass, although the movement is upward from B\textsubscript{3} to C\textsubscript{4} on the syllable “Mor-“.

Of particular interest in this Antiphon is the movement of the T-voices. The tenor begins in the position of 1\textsuperscript{st} Superior to the 1\textsuperscript{st} bass, while the soprano begins in the position of 1\textsuperscript{st} Inferior to the alto. However, the T-voices switch from their respective positions above or below the M-voice on precisely those syllables that slur up or down to the pitch of the subsequent syllable. They switch again on the syllable that follows the slurred syllable. Thus, in the phrase “Glanz des unversehrten Lichtes” (“incandescence of pure light,”) the G\#\textsubscript{4} in the T-voice of the soprano remains in the position of 1\textsuperscript{st} Inferior until the accented syllable of “-sehr-,” which is slurred in the alto up from D\textsubscript{5} to E\textsubscript{5}. Here the soprano switches into the position of 1\textsuperscript{st} Superior, until the following syllable of “-ten,” at which point it returns to that of 1\textsuperscript{st} Inferior. This pattern for the T-voices is followed by both the soprano and tenor throughout the entire Antiphon.

In “O Morgenstern” the completion of the opening salutation to the Divine occurs in measure 12 of the Antiphon’s 32 measures. This marks a Golden Mean division at the Lesser Mean, where the ratio y:x+y (20:32) = .625, and that of x:y (12:20) = .600. According to Woronecki’s criteria, this should be considered a Golden Mean proportion for this Antiphon, as
no other placement of the text could achieve a ratio of less deviation.\textsuperscript{141} When viewing the entire collection of seven Antiphons, this point occurs in measure 217, closely approximating the Golden Mean for the entire composition. The ratio of $y:x+y (217:342) = .635$, however as with the third Antiphon this is based on using the 29 measures of the soprano in the sixth Antiphon to arrive at a total of 342 measures. Should the 59 measures of the tenors and basses be the basis for calculating the total, the ensuing ratio of $y:x+y (217:372)$ is equal to .583. Once again, the existence of Golden Mean proportion for the seven Antiphons taken as a whole is simply a matter of conjecture, and cannot be asserted definitively.

\begin{quote}
\textbf{“O König Aller Völker”}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{“O König aller Völker”} is in binary form, with the complete text sung twice through in the M-voice by the 2\textsuperscript{nd} tenors, separated by a four beat silence. The second statement of the text is a diatonic inversion of the first at $I_0$, with pitch class A providing the axis of symmetry between the two sections. The T-voices outline a D minor triad and the M-voices follow the contour of a D minor scale; thus the inversion of the melody is not literal, where a rising half step becomes a falling half step, but is tonal, restricted to the pitch classes in the scale, so that the rising interval A to Bb, when inverted, becomes the falling interval A to G, i.e.
\end{quote}

\begin{verbatim}
A    Bb    A    G    A    Bb    A
A    G    A    Bb    A    G    A
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{141} Woronecki, “A Critical Study,” 45-46.
In addition, there are several other notable characteristics to the melody of “O König”. The opening phrase, setting the text “O König aller Völker”, is a palindrome, as its retrograde is identical to its prime form. The pitch pattern is perfectly symmetrical,

\[
A \quad Bb \quad A \quad G \quad A \quad Bb \quad A \\
1 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 2 \quad 1 \quad 1
\]  
(Example 21).

This of course is also true of the inverted form beginning in System 4 sung by the 2nd tenors, with unordered pitch intervals \[2 \quad 2 \quad 1 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 2\].

Another compositional technique employed by Pärt in “O König aller Völker” is that of a 2:1 proportion canon. While the tenors and bass sing the text twice during the Antiphon, in prime form and inversion, the sopranos sing the text one time, but in a rhythmic augmentation. The quarter note of the tenors and bass is equivalent to the half note of the sopranos, and thus all the voices conclude together on the last quarter note beat of the Antiphon. The other voice involved in the Antiphon is the Alto, which sings a drone or pedal on D₄, in which each syllable receives one quarter note value. The alto presents the text twice, repeating the appeal “O komm und errette den Menschen” (“O come and save mankind”) two additional times.

Pärt inserts four beats of rest between the first and second presentations of the theme by the 2nd tenor. It is at this point that the sopranos sing “zusammen” (“together”), with the syllable “zu” sounding at the interval of a second between the M and T-voices in the sopranos at
precisely the center of the composition, beats 75 and 76. With 150 beats in the Antiphon, there are exactly 74 beats prior to this half note, and 74 after (Example 22). Thus the syllable “zu” sung over these two beats occupies the very center of the Antiphon and literally holds its two sections together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>beats</th>
<th>74</th>
<th>75</th>
<th>76</th>
<th>77</th>
</tr>
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Example 22: Sopranos sing “Zusammenhält” in “O König aller Völker”

There are several possible reasons for the insertion of these four beats of rest in between the repetition of the verse in the tenors and bass. One is the effect created by the fact that no other voice is sounding at the same time as the sopranos enter with the syllable “zu.” Another possibility may relate to the placement of these additional four beats in the soprano line, required in order for the proportion canon to be completed at the same time. These four beats are added in System 5, precisely when the altos sing “zusammenhält” and the tenors and bass sing “ihre Erwartung und Sehnsucht” (“their hope and their yearning”) (Example 23).
Example 23: Golden Mean of “O König aller Völker”

When considering proportional division in the Antiphon, the three different systems of barring measures make the counting of beats rather than measures a logical approach. The addition of four beats to the sopranos beginning at beat 91 is followed on beat 95 with their first presentation of the appeal to the Divine “O komm und errette den Menschen,” also stated in the altos a beat later. Thus the beats 91 to 95 correspond to that portion of the Antiphon that occupies the range of Golden Mean deviation from .607 to .633. They also align with measures 36 and 37 as counted for the tenors and bass. The center of this alignment falls on beat 93, or the completion of measure 36. Thus when considering the ratio of $y:x+y$ (36:59), we get .610, and when considering $x:y$ (23:36) we get .639.

This point marks a Golden Mean division, as there is no other measure that could produce a ratio with less deviation. The section under consideration here serves to bring together those portions of the text that are most central to its meaning. The incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ, as affirmed in Christian theology and referred to here as the king of all nations, is
the hope ("Erwartung"), the keystone or central person holding the Christian Church together ("zusammenthält"), and is called upon to save humanity ("O komm und errette den Menschen").

"O Immanuel"

The final Antiphon, "O Immanuel," is divided into two sections, measures 1-14, covering 49 beats, and measures 15-76, covering 135 beats, with the text presented three times. The unique treatment of the voices in these two distinct sections is of importance. In the first section, the 1st and 2nd altos and tenors present three M-voices, the 1st altos beginning on C#, 2nd altos on A3, and the tenors on E3. Each follows the stepwise pattern of an octatonic scale, the 1st altos following Oct (1,2), 2nd altos Oct (0,2), and tenors Oct (0,1). The sopranos present the T-voice in the position of 1st Superior to the 1st altos, a relationship that is followed strictly throughout this first section.

The alto and tenor voices, however, present the most complex patterns of movement in the entire *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen*. Pärt simultaneously presents the text in three different ascending octatonic scales, yet by varying the pattern of upward movement on words of two syllables or greater, he avoids any type of parallel motion or planing. One of the three M-voices always remains stable for multi-syllable words. For example, on “Immanuel” the 2nd altos remain on the pitch A3, while the 1st altos remain on D4 for “unser,” the tenors on G3 for “König,” and the 2nd altos on C4 for “Lehrer” (Example 24). This pattern of having two of the three M-voices ascend to the next pitch of its own particular octatonic scale, while the third remains on pitch, and rotating which voice plays the sustaining role continues throughout the entire first section of the Antiphon.
Example 24: M-voices in opening of “O Immanuel”

The 1\textsuperscript{st} altos appear to follow the pattern established in the fourth Antiphon, though inverted, so that the ending pitch of one phrase becomes the new tonal center from which the next phrase begins its upward movement; the 2\textsuperscript{nd} altos and tenors do not follow this pattern, however, most likely being driven by the principle outlined above.

In measure 15 the compositional devices change, with the M-voices reverting back to the model of the first Antiphon, which like this section of “O Immanuel” is completely diatonic, with a key signature of three sharps and a predominance of A major sonorities. The altos and tenors, with tonal centers of C\#\textsubscript{5} and E\textsubscript{4} respectively, present the text in parallel motion, alternately beginning a step above and below their respective tonal centers for two syllable words. The only word of the text that is more than two syllables, “Immanuel,” begins on the tonic, rises to the next step of the scale, and descends again to the tonic (Example 25).

Example 25: M-voices in second presentation of the text in “O Immanuel”
As we have understood the concept of a tintinnabuli voice and observed throughout the previous six Antiphons, the T-voice presents a pitch of a tonic triad that moves to the next highest or lowest pitch of that triad in response to the melodic movement of the M-voice. In the first section of “O Immanuel” this is the A major triad of pitch classes A, C#, and E. Yet in the second two presentations of the text, it is remarkable that for the first time in the entire composition there appears to be no T-voice. The sopranos divide into three parts to present the sonority of A₄ - E₅ - A₅, while the basses do the same two octaves below (A₂ - E₃ - A₃). These sonorities are consistent throughout the entire second presentation of the text, measures 15 to 44, and do not respond to the movement in the M-voices, instead presenting a drone both above and below them (Example 26).

![Example 26: Drone in sopranos and basses in second presentation of “O Immanuel”](image)

In the third presentation of the text, beginning in measure 46, these principles are basically unchanged, though the voicing is altered. The sopranos and basses do not begin in measure 46, but rather are silent on the first two words, “O Immanuel,” entering to sing the next
two words, “unser König,” in measure 49. This pattern of alternating between silences and singing every two words continues for the remainder of the Antiphon. The sopranos no longer present the highest pitch of $A_5$, while the basses lose their two highest pitches and sing the interval of a fourth from $E_2$ to $A_2$. A second voice is added to both the altos and tenors, yet in both instances they do not respond to the movement of the M-voice. For example, in measure 50 the 1st altos remain on $E_4$ instead of descending to $C#_4$ on the first syllable of “König,” and similarly the 1st tenors remain on $A_3$ instead of descending to $E_4$, as they would do to remain in the position of 1st Superior (Example 27).

Example 27: Altos and tenors in third presentation of the text in “O Immanuel”

The divisions of the three presentations of text are also important, though not as a result of Golden Mean proportion. The first section, presenting the entire text of the Antiphon for the first time, begins with a $p$ dynamic, with crescendos gradually rising to $ff$ on the text “du unser Herr und unser Gott” (“You our Lord and our God.”) A subsequent crescendo on the word “Gott” leads to a repetition of “unser Gott” that is presumably to be sung $fff$, though this marking is not in the score. The second presentation of text, beginning in measure 15, is to be sung $ff$ throughout, concluding in measure 44; the third presentation of text begins in measure 46, and is to be sung $pp$ to the conclusion of the Antiphon. While the $ff$ presentation of “O Immanuel” is
extremely dramatic, equally so is the final pp presentation. Perhaps as the final Antiphon to accompany the Magnificat before Christmas Eve, Pärt chose to leave the listener in a spirit of quiet anticipation for that sacred event.

An analysis of “O Immanuel” that uses the beat rather than measures for computation does produce implications for Golden Mean proportion, however it would be intellectually dishonest to pick and choose the method for computation based on the results it delivers. Throughout the seven Antiphons, the use of the beat rather than the measure would produce far fewer instances of Golden Mean proportion. Of course we do not know if Arvo Pärt calculated or is even aware of the Golden Mean divisions identified in this study. If so, it is possible that he chose different means of calculating its placement. It is also very possible that the instances of its appearance in the Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen are simply the result of the composer’s “consummate sense of form,” as he “gravitated to it as the perfect balance between extremes.”

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Chapter 6: Conclusion

Given the historical circumstances into which Arvo Pärt was born, it seems extraordinary that he has emerged as one of the most significant composers of sacred music of the last one hundred years. As we have seen, his formative years were marked by the upheaval of the Second World War and the ensuing occupation of his native Estonia by the Soviet Union. The stridently anti-religious Marxism of the Soviet era included restrictions on religious worship, the persecution of believers, and bans on the performance of most sacred music. Composers within the Soviet bloc were severely impacted by Marxist ideology as well, with access to the works of twentieth-century composers outside the Soviet bloc restricted throughout the 1950s and into the following decade. Like many of his contemporaries, Pärt experimented with serialism, aleatoric technique, and collage. His first sacred composition, Credo, incorporated all of these, and faced condemnation in the Soviet press and a ban on its performance for the next decade.

The eight-year period following Credo’s ban led the composer into a study of Gregorian chant, and medieval and early Renaissance polyphony. He and his wife Nora converted to the Russian Orthodox Church during this time, and Pärt was deeply impacted by his study of the early Church Fathers and Orthodox hesychast tradition. In 1976 his first compositions in the style that he named tintinnabulation were published. Though his texts are often drawn from western Christian liturgy, Pärt’s music has been influenced by Orthodox tradition in several ways. His use of the tonic triad, identified in this study as the T-voice, reflects the use of bells before and during Orthodox worship. Many of his works contain drones, recreating the Ison that is prevalent in much of Orthodox chant. Most importantly, his use of silence, of unmetered music that is linked to the syllables of his texts, and of repetitive patterns results in a perception of
stasis on the part of the listener that creates the state of contemplation identified within the hesychast tradition. Yet beyond the sacred texts or Orthodox influence, his music has been known to deeply affect the lives of listeners with no link to these traditions, exhibiting a universality that can lead to an apprehension of a sense of the sacred and the numinous that reaches beyond any specific religious orientation.

Despite the use of fairly strict principles in the relationship between the M-voice and T-voice, Pärt has indicated that in the face of his creativity these “fall away” and that “life emerges from other things.” This has been demonstrated in the analysis of his Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen undertaken in this study. This mature work manifests a wide variety of ways in which the tintinnabuli system can be applied. Words of three syllables or more are singled out for unique treatment in many of the Antiphons, whether by remaining within a step of the tonal center, as in the first and seventh Antiphons; by inverting the melodic direction of the intervals in order to emphasize the accented syllables of such words, as in the second; or by having accented syllables slur up or down to the pitch of the next syllable as in the fifth Antiphon. The tonal center from which or to which the M-voice moves may rotate among the pitches of the tonic triad, as in the third Antiphon, or stepwise along the pitches of the scale or mode of the Antiphon, as in the fourth and seventh. Each of the seven Antiphons has a distinct tonality not only by virtue of the combination of its tintinnabuli triad and the mode of the M-voice(s), but also by employing different variations of the tintinnabuli system resulting in its unique characteristics. Yet all are tied together by the common principles of the tintinnabuli system of composition.

The influence of Pärt’s Orthodox faith is evident throughout his Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen. With the exception of the ending of “O Immanuel,” the presence of tintinnabulum,
the sounding of bells through the medium of the tonic triad, is evoked by T-voices throughout the Antiphons. The composer’s use of an *Ison*, or drone, is evident in all but the fourth Antiphon, and the stepwise movement of melodic voices, always rooted in a tonal center that is tied to the tonic triad or mode of the Antiphon, creates the perception of sacred time, in which the listener is drawn into the ritual recreation of sacred events. This perception then allows for the possibility of stilling the mind and senses, and the attainment of a state of contemplative silence. The presence of Golden Mean proportion within a majority of the Antiphons, whether intended by the composer or not, is also noteworthy.

As mentioned above, many analyses of Pärt’s music restate the same elementary basics of his technique, without seeking to understand the ways in which the composer varies his system or the significance of its constituent parts. Though some scholars attempt to understand his works from the vantage point of traditional tonal analysis, his music also demands to be examined within the context of his spiritual worldview, and the system of composition that arises from it. This raises a number of questions. If indeed “life arises from other things,” then what is the significance of the variations to *tintinnabuli* technique? Are these simply based on musical and textual factors? Is it to ensure that the melody does not stray more than one step from the tonic, or that the accented syllables of multi-syllable words are emphasized? Or are the variations tied to the meaning of the texts themselves, such that words describing the nature and characteristics of the Divine are singled out for unique treatment? Is Golden Mean proportion found in other works of Pärt? If so, does this indicate an intentional effort by the composer to incorporate such proportion, or is he intuitively drawn to this ratio by his consummate sense of form?
Such questions must await further research, which this composer surely richly deserves. I have found Arvo Pärt’s music deeply compelling on a personal level. It is my hope that this study of his life and the analysis of his *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen* will inspire others to re-examine their approach to his music, and to consider the significance of his compositional devices and the ingenuity and imagination with which he applies them.
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