

Stravinsky: the Progress of a Method

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Central question that Cone addresses: What is Stravinsky's "personal style?" What is the key factor that makes his music successful?

Cone begins by identifying the most common characteristic throughout all of Stravinsky's work, a feature that is present at all times in his career (Dramatic Russian Period (1906-1917), Neo-Classic Period (1917-1951), Serial Period (1951-1957)¹). "Stravinsky's textures have been subject to sudden breaks affecting almost every musical dimension: instrumental and registral, rhythmic and dynamic, harmonic and modal, linear and motivic" (pg. 18). Cone names these moments, "**points of interruption.**"

Point of Interruption

1. Stratification → Interlock → Synthesis

- a. **Stratification:** "The separation in musical space of ideas/musical areas juxtaposed in time." Always at least one element of unification between the different ideas/areas.
- b. **Interlock:** the suspended and independent tension of these ideas/areas and their drive towards resolution.
- c. **Synthesis:** the resolution of these independent ideas/areas which "almost invariably involves the reduction and transformation of one or more components, and often the assimilation by one of all the others... The material first presented on levels and separated by register and instrumentation, moves gradually into a *tutti* in which all strata are simultaneously stated." (Note! "This process is by no means confined to the end of a movement; sometimes it is at work from the beginning." e.g. rhythmic, contrapuntal, harmonic.)
- d. Two additional devices "used for mitigating the starkness of the opposition between strata." (1) **Bridge**, which links statements, and (2) **Divergence**, which is "the division of an original single layer into two or more."

Stravinsky's style of stratification was inspired by the Brandenburg concertos.²

¹ Dimond, *Theory of Music: Introduction to Stravinsky*.

http://www.jonathandimond.com/downloadables/Theory_of_Music-Introduction_to_Stravinsky-Dimond.pdf

² Kerman, Joseph. *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology*.

https://books.google.com/books?id=3I5_RnxYzlkC&pg=PA92&lpg=PA92&dq=stratification+stravinsky&source

Reading Cone's analysis:

1. Capital letters represent thematic material and correspond to rehearsal numbers.
2. Read these cells straight across (e.g. from "A" to "A," not "A" to "X"). This diagram is NOT a linear or harmonic analysis. Its purpose is to show the strata of the musical areas/ideas.
3. Dashed lines are used to show connections and transitions between areas, divergence, and elements of unification.
4. Full lines mark unusual voice-leading.