TGCS-84

レナード・バーンスタイン

答えのない質問

みすず書房

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION
LEONARD BERNSTEIN

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1 (p.21) [Disc Side1 band1]

Let's see if I can make you actually hear those overtones in that order.

The first overtone of the series, according to the laws of physics, has to be exactly an octave higher than the fundamental C we've been hearing [26]. In other words, it's going to be this C [27], an octave higher. Now if I silently press down the key of this higher C and hold it so that the string is free to vibrate, and then abruptly strike the fundamental C an octave lower, what do you hear? [28] You are clearly hearing the first overtone vibrating sympathetically an octave above its fundamental. I hope you heard it, did you? Listen again. Clear as a bell. So, obviously, this upper C [30] is an integral part of the C an octave below [31]. It' a built-in harmonic, sounded by the two halves of that lower string vibrating independently. Of the next overtone of this preordained order results from that same fundamental string vibrating in three parts: and this one will be the first *different* overtone——that is, the first one you'll hear other than a C. It's going to be a G. This G [33]. And now, let's repeat our experiment: I press this new one down silently, and then again strike the fundamental C [34]. What do we hear now? That G, right? A new tone, again clear as a bell. You want to hear it again? Now we've just reached a very significant point. Have you noticed that the fundmental tone [35] and its first overtone [36] are really the same note, C, but an octave apart? [37] But this new overtone, G [38] is a fifth away from C [39]. So we now have two *different* tones: and once they are established in our ears [40], we are in possession of the key to the whole tonal system——a system based on the concept of tonic and dominant. Tonic and dominant [41]. This C represents the idea of tonic, which has the function of establishing the tonal center* of any given key [42]. The function of the dominant is to aid and abet in the establishment of that tonality through a special relationship it enjoys with the tonic, owing to their proximity in the harmonic series [43]. *(basis)

But more of that later. Right now on to the next overtone, which is again a C [45], a fourth higher than the G we just heard [46]. Shall we repeat the experiment? I press it down

silently? Here it is. You heard? Do it again? Now the next one is again a new pitch, this time a third higher than its predecessor——(notice that the intervals are getting progressively smaller as we ascend the series——which began with an octave, and then a fifth, and then a fourth, and then now a third), and this new overtone will be this note E. Listen [48]. It's a bit fainter, but it's there for all to hear. Shall I try it again? Here it's right there. One last time. It's clear.

And there you have the first four overtones of the series: the fundamental, plus one, two, three, four [50], three of which are *different* pitches [51]. Those three. Now it must be obvious to you that these three notes, rearranged in scalar order [52], constitute what is known as the *major triad* [53], which is the very nucleus, the cornerstone of most of the music we hear from day to day, whether it's a symphony or a hymn or a blues. This triad——with its tonic-dominant relationship [54], plus the third sandwiched in between [55]——this triad is the foundation of Western tonal music as it has developed over the last three centuries or so, along with the development of our Western culture in general.

2 (p.27) [Disc Side1 band2]

Actually, if we approach it pianistically in our ascent of the harmonic series we find it somewhere around here [57], lying in the crack between this B flat and this A. It's one of those blue notes [58]. That blue note can be construed by the human ear as either the higher version of the note, B flat [59], or the lower version, A [60]. In either case, it requires a little push up or down to be accommodated on a piano.

But, whichever way we construe it, it becomes our newest overtone. So we are now equipped with four different overtones [61]: the C *plus* the G plus the E plus that blue note, that dubious A. Or, rearranged in scalar order [62], C, E, G, and sort-of-A. And here we hit a real musico-linguistic universal: because now we can understand and explain that famous worldwide teasing chant [63]. Because all it is, is a constellation of those first four different overtones [64] with the tonic omitted, or rather, implied. You see, this *tonic* C [65], which is

the same note as the *fundamental* C [66], is heard in the mind's ear ; and only the three *new* overtones are sung [67]. And so these three universal notes are handed to us by Nature on a silver platter [68]. But why are they in this different order ? Because that's the very order in which they appear in the harmonic series : G, E, and sort-of-A [69]. And Q. E. D.

3 (p.29) [Disc Side1 band3]

...the next new overtone is this one, D[70]. And so, we now have five different tones to play with [71], which we again put into scalar order [72], and presto, a new universal is given us——the five-note, or pentatonic scale. Now because of that dubious last note [73], the scale can take either of two forms, one culminating in B flat [74] and the other culminating in A [75]. Let's opt for the second of these, the lower one, which is by far the most common of the two [76]. This is humanity's favorite pentatonic scale, and by the way, this is the scale you can find so easily on your own piano by playing only the black notes [77]. In fact, the universality of this scale is so well known that I'm sure you could give *me* examples of it, from all corners of the earth, as from Scotland [78], pure pentatonic, or from China [79], or from Africa [80]...

4 (p.31) [Disc Side2 band1]

And there is always that "blue note" to be considered [85]. If the ear construes it as the upper B flat instead of the lower A, it would give us a whole other pentatonic scale [86], which produces some beautiful African music. And there are even more complex processes which we won't go into, but which account for the existence of the highly differentiated Japanese pentatonic scale [87], that one familiar ? ; or the unique pentatonic of Balinese music [88].

5 (p.35) [Disc Side2 band2]

Here we are, in our hominid hut, crooning [91]. Now maybe our wives, and maybe our

prepubescent sons, join in, and automatically we're singing not in unison but in octaves, since men's and women's voices are naturally an octave apart [92]. Now that octave interval——I wish I could sing that octave so clearly ; sure you heard me——but that octave interval [93] happens to be the first interval of the harmoic series [94], as you remember, right ?

OK. Now centuries pass, and the *next* interval of harmonic series is assimilated by humanity, namely the fifth [95]. And now we can be singing this : "By these festivtal rites from the Age that is past..."[96]. Now, of course, this little change brings us forward a mere ten million years, into the tenth century A. D., and into fairly sophisticated musical culture. But now we admit the next interval of the series——the fourth [97]——and now we can *mix* intervals of the octave and the fifth and the fourth [98]. That's beginning to sound like polyphony.

And again comes a great leap, as music absorbs the next overtone, the third. And just listen to the difference [99]. So whole new music, richer, mellower, with a new coloristic warmth. And as we know, this new interval of the third——because I like the older sound better ; anyway——as we know this new interval of the third introduces into music the phenomenon of the triad [100], so that now "Fair Harvard" can begin to sound more like its Victorian self [101]. And so there is born what we now call tonal music, a stable tonal language firmly rooted in the basic notes of the harmonic series, the fundamental [102] and its first different overtone, the fifth [103]——now and forevermore to be known as the tonic [104] and the dominant [105].

6 (p.37) [Disc Side2 band3]

This means that ultimately "Fair Harvard" can sound like this [110].

7 (p.63) [Disc Side2 band4]

For example, the Fate motive in Wager's Ring Operas, for I'm sure you are all familiar with this Fate motive[16]. Now those three melodic notes[17]are like three letters (or phonemes or morphemes, whichever you prefer) that make up a word which is a noun, a substantive,

a self-naming entity.(I don't mean that it names "Fate" either; it is a *musical noun* all by itself no matter what it stands for in the opera. That Wagner intended it to signify "Fate" is the sort of semantic consideration we will go into in our next lecture.)

Secondly, we can equate a chord, a harmonic entity [18], with a grammatical modifier, such as an adjective, because obviously the chord *modifies* by descriptive coloration the noun to which it is attached. So those three notes of Wagner's Fate motive [19] acquire a specific added meaning because of the chords that modify them; for instance: [20] Cruel Fate, or [21] Kind Fate, or [22] Tricky Fate. You get the point.

I think it follows that if we can identify musical analogues of nouns and adjectives, we can do the same with verbs, the analogue here being obviously with rhythm, with material which activates or motorizes the substantive just as a verb does. Here is, for example, the same Wagner motive activated by rhythm [23].

8 (p.72) [Disc Side2 band5]

On this basis, let's construct a musical equation that goes: *Jack loves Jill* [29]. Not exactly breath-taking music, nor is it even a musical sentence; but it serves our purpose by presenting three notes as deep-structure units linked together to form a triadic surface structure [30], which makes syntactic sense.

9 (p.73) [Disc Side2 band6]

How do we turn that triad into a question? One possible way would be to use our modifier principle, that is, chord equals adjective, remember?, which will provide the Jill-note with an adjectival chord that is questioning and unresolved. And that would give us: *Jack loves Jill, (maybe)* [33]. Or, *Jack loves Jill?* [34]. Or, *Jack loves Jill*: (I wonder) [35]. In any case that irresolute last chord functions as a question mark, changing a declarative sentence into an interrogative one [36]. *Does Jack love Jill? (Question mark)*.

OK. Now what about the negative transformation? That's easy: syntactic change of the

"love"-note [37] from the major third to the minor third [38], thus plunging the whole triadic structure into the minor mode, and yielding the sad sentence: *Jack doesn't love Jill* [39]. And to make the combined transformation of negative plus interrogative, we simply combine the two musical transformations, and it comes out: *Doesn't Jack love Jill? (Question mark)* [40].

10 (p.76) [Disc Side2 band7]

Jack does not love Jill or Mary or Gertrude, it would seem easy enough to make a further musical analogue by using our minor version of the negative transformation [42] and simply adding arbitrary new notes representing Mary and Gertrude [43]. (Remember, we are still using our convention of word equals note.) The next lovely phrase, and is, in fact, the famous fugue subject by Bach [44]. But the achieving of this phrase linguistically is not so simple. Consider the deep structure [45].

Isn't that a beauty*? Don't panic, I'm not going to analyze it. But to reproduce that deep structure musically, we would have to play something like this [46]: *Jack doesn't love Jill*, and *Jack doesn't love Mary*, and *Jack doesn't love Gertrude*——all of which is repetitious, and considerably less lovely than Bach's phrase. *(impressive)

11 (p.86) [Disc Side3 band1]

...this is the *surface structure* we are about to hear, the top of that ladder, the actual music Mozart wrote.

12 (p.93) [Disc Side3 band2]

...I could have made this musical deep structure even longer. But in any case, here it is, a perfect nightmare of symmetry [88].

13 (p.138) [Disc Side3 band3]

...are we feeling what Beethoven supposedly felt when he wrote these notes? [10] I know I am feeling; I'm feeling [11], and so on.

14 (p.149) [Disc Side3 band4]

...where is such alliteration to be found in music? What is the equivalent of "Wild west wind"? Well, we find it everywhere. In Beethoven's Eighth [18], in Schubert's *Rosamunde* [19], all alliteration, and in Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony [20], and in the César Franck Symphony [21], and even in *William Tell* [22].

15 (p.151) [Disc Side3 band5]

...lo, we find anaphora in Mahler's Fifth Symphony [23], anaphora; or in Beethoven's Second for that matter [24]...

16 (p.153) [Disc Side3 band6]

This chiasmus involves two whole different consecutive *tunes*, not just bars, tunes, one a chiastic version of the other. The first one goes: this is the *A*.....*B* [27], then it's the both repeated with *A* again.....*B*. And *then* the chiasmus breaks open, *B*.....*A* [28]. *B*.....*A*, and so on. A perfect reversal.

17 (p.199) [Disc Side3 band7]

It's exactly like a kids' teasing chant that we examined for its universality in our first lecture. You remember? [8]. Those two notes. And do you remember how we found that the tonic fundamental of those two overtones [9] is not sung but is present by implication only? That fundamental. Well, that omission, the absence of this tonic makes us only *possibly* aware of F major; because the two notes we hear [10] *could* turn out to be two-thirds of a whole other triad, namely this one, A minor [11]. Automatically we are

facing another ambiguity: which of these keys *are* we in this [12] or this [13]? And that ambiguity in itself lends a certain extra poignancy to the teasing tune of the kids, because it makes it even more hurtful, due to the implication of something else [14], something which could be nasty.

18 (p.201) [Disc Side3 band8]

Just take the scherzo from his *Hammerklavier* Sonata, which is based on the most innocent little diatonic tune [17]. But now just listen to how the movement ends [18]. Where are we? Far from home [19]. Are we home again? [20] Yes, we are; but it was nip and tuck there for a minute.

And what about this passage, later on, which bridges the slow movement into the Final Fugue? Let's listen to this unbelievable passage [21]. And we are suddenly in B-flat. That's ambiguity rampant.

19 (p.209) [Disc Side3 band9]

Like this passage from his *Etude in Thirds*——mind you, an Etude: imagine being sexy* in an Etude...[25]. You hear all those implied harmonic gorgeousnesses? And the implications all arise from ambiguities [26]. Are we in the major or minor? Is this tonal or modal? Are those ninth chords, or diminished sevenths? Is it the Phrygian mode?

*(seductive)

20 (p.209) [Disc Side4 band1]

This is one of Chopin's fifty-odd Mazurkas——and very odd they are, quirky little masterpieces, everyone. This one begins like this [27]. Now did that begin on a downbeat, or an upbeat, or where? And besides, what key is it in? We don't know: it's sort of in F; it could be the subdominant of C; it could be the submediant of A minor; it could be the Lydian mode; or there we go again, never mind, it's only the introduction. Now listen to

the tune [28]. Ah, E minor——there's a possibility. No——chromatic side-slipping; little dying falls; again F, F-*ish*; again E minor, chromatic... we're nowhere. Ah, at last a cadence in A minor. So it was in A minor all the time! Talk of subtlety, of elusiveness, seductiveness.··· And then, in the same little Mazurka, after contrasting sections, reprises, after it's all over, Chopin gives the final ambiguous twist in the very last bars where he again has arrived at A minor——we're absolutely sure it's A minor [29]. Is that convincingly A minor? Then come the very last four bars, which are exactly like the first bars. That's the end of the piece; what key are we in?

21 (p.241) [Disc Side4 band2]

What about that opening phrase of Pan's flute? The first thing that strikes us is the highly chromatic nature of this phrase as it languorously dips and rises between the two poles of G-natural and C-sharp [88]. Those two melodic poles tell us something crucially important to the whole piece: they define the interval of the augmented fourth [89], an interval known as the tritone, that is, it's a span of three whole-tone steps; one step, two step, three step [90].

22 (p.243) [Disc Side4 band3]

For example, do you remember when we were dreaming along with Debussy [93], how after these vague opening bars there came the first suggestion of a key [94]——E major? And how that briefly suggested tonality instantly slipped away in a wash of sound [95] that left us floating in distant waters [96], this dominant seventh chord? But now we can see *why* this of all chords was Debussy's choice: because the root of that chord is B-flat [97] and B-flat is exactly a tritone away from E [98], which is where we thought we were. There's B-flat; there's E. The tritone [99]. The devil. And then in the ensuing bar of silence we are left to float in blissful indecision between the two possibilities [100], B-flat and E. Silence.

23 (p.247) [Disc Side4 band4]

Here we are in our B-flat seventh chord, right? [102] tritonically alienated from the E-natural [103] that had been teasing us into tonality. And then back we go to our opening tune——the exact same notes [104], only now harmonized. But harmonized how? In *D* major; foiled again. The promise of E major has been broken; but wait, what's this? [105]——we *are* in E major, after all! But only for a flirtatious instant; back we go to our B-flat seventh chord [106], into it, and right out again. More chromatic side-slipping [107] leading us into——not again! Yes, the same B-flat seventh chord [108]. And yet again! [109] Why this insistence? Why does Debussy want to stamp that B-flatness so firmly in our ears? Because the promise of E major is now about to come true, and he doesn't want us to see it coming: he wants to prepare us for it as ambiguously as possible, as far away from it as possible, therefore——on the tritone, B-flat [110]. And when it finally does come, the happy arrival [111], the opening tune is heard for the third time, but now clearly and beyond all doubt in our long-promised and hungrily-wished-for E major. At last.

24 (p.249) [Disc Side4 band5]

For instance, hardly have we had time to rest in our classical dominant cadnce of B major [113], when a new contradiction breaks out [114]; that's all based on that original tritone of G-natural and C-sharp [115], only now elaborated into a new formation called the whole-tone scale [116]. Do you sense that new, special ambiguity? It's the sound of the whole-tone scale, a unique invention of Debussy's, directly derived from that original tritone. It's not difficult to see how this new scale came to exist, if you only recall that the interval of the tritone is actually a span embracing three whole tones. Let's say we start on C-sharp, right?, and proceed by whole-tone steps [117]; one, two, three, and we've landed on G-natural, the other pole of the tritone, right? Now watch: if we simply repeat the procedure, starting from this G-natural where we landed, and again go up three whole tones, one, two, three [118], lo and behold, we're back to C-sharp again, only an octave higher. In short, we've

got a scale, that whole-tone scale [119]. Here what's actually happened is this: the octave span, C-sharp to C-sharp, instead of being divided diatonically [120], usual way, or chromatically [121] (which would be twelve equal half-steps) is now divided into six equal whole-steps [122], you see them?——starting C-sharp, then one, two, three, four, five, six, back to C-sharp; you get six whole-tones, get it?——with that tritonic G-natural at the exact midpoint of the octave, between the two C-sharps.

25 (p.257) [Disc Side5 band1]

...and through this simple alteration you will clearly hear two Amens——plagal cadences, as they are known——just as they are heard in church at the end of hymns [131]. Amen, Amen. But of course Debussy's version does have the twist, the tritonic A-sharp, and so his Amens come out a bit mistier, more ambiguously, but Amens nevertheless, and perfectly consistent with the tritone principle that has been operative since the very first bar. So now they sound like this [132].

So ends our *Faun*.

26 (p.267) [Disc Side5 band2]

...by Opus 11, we are already breathing that new air. Listen [2]. You feel that new air?.....Breathing it?

27 (p.275) [Disc Side5 band3]

...like the first piece of this set which begins like this [6]. Now in the course of those two bars all twelve tones are indeed employed, but there's still a ghost of tonality hanging over them. The chromaticism is still, just barely, but still contained. Listen to the melody alone [7]. Perfectly tonal; in fact, it outlines a B-major triad [8], right?, with this one not very startling appoggiatura [9], which resolves as conventionally as in Mozart or Mahler. (In fact it sounds rather like *Till Eulenspiegel*, doesn't it? [10]) And as it continues [11],

the chromatic wandering is not very different from the Berlioz *Romeo and Juliet* music we heard last week; but it still suggests B major, right? Where the difference lies in the accompaniment, which has nothing at all* to do with B major [12]. Now listen to how it goes on [13]. What is resonating in that phrase? Do you remember *Tristan*? [14] And now listen to Schoenberg[13]. "Son of Tristan"; or is it "Tristan Rise Again"? I think maybe "Tristan's Revenge". And whichever it is, there is still no escaping the past. *(has very little)

28 (p.277) [Disc Side5 band4]

So here we have Opus 23, written in 1923, in which all twelve tones are presented in a pre-established order, or series, with no single tone repeated until all other eleven have been sounded; one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve [15].

29 (p.279) [Disc Side5 band5]

...a piece with the unexpectedly simple title of *Waltz*; and goes like this, as you know [17], and so on.

30 (p.281) [Disc Side5 band6]

It's as though we took the opening phrase of the "Blue Danube Waltz" [18], right?; and inverted it into this [19]. It's weak, though still acceptable. It's as just lousy. Maybe we could even call it a metaphor. And get away with it. But if we invert the *second* phrase [20], we're in chaos.

31 (p.335) [Disc Side5 band7]

You can feel it instantly with the first notes of *Petrouchka* [8]. This is not Stravinsky we are hearing, but an aspect of Russian life, you understand, recorded in Stravinsky's personal language. In other words, it is Stravinsky once removed——objective. And as the music goes on, with hurdy-gurdy [9], and calliopes, and the ballerina's toy waltz, and the

trained dancing bear, and the puppets' dance [10], and all the rest of them, object is added to object, and the music becomes correspondingly more and more objectified. Even in the most emotional moments, such as Petrouchka's sadness [11], even here that sense of objectivity is maintained. It's so touchingly mechanical, you see; and the more mechanically and pitilessly Stravinsky presents it, the more moving it is to us. Or take Petrouchka's despair [12]; same thing, objective as a bugle call; but for the despair. And the same is true of *Le Sacre,* The Rite of Spring: that marvelous opening [13] comes to us from a great distance; and Stravinsky brings it close to us, but he himself——the ego of Igor——remains at a respectful distance.

32 (p.339) [Disc Side6 band1]

It's this famous chord [15], which, again, is only two simple triads——pure triads, this time: C major and F-sharp major. Pure they may be, taken separately; but we know something about that C-F-sharp relationship, don't we?——something that instantly explains and clarifies the particular ambivalence of this chord——namely the tritone, that *diabolus in musica* interval [16] on which you're all experts by now. Because it's the same tritone we found in Debussy's *Faun,* you remember; and in fact, on which the whole piece was constructed; and we also found it last time, if you remember, to be a crucial element in Alban Berg's Violin Concerto. You remember those last four notes of the tone-row?——which then appeared in the quoted Bach Chorale? And here is that tritone again, serving a whole new purpose: now on these notes, to provide that unstable tritonic relationship between two absolutely pure triads, this and this, thus producing a marvelously distinct ambiguity [17]...

33 (p.341) [Disc Side6 band2]

For instance, what are those famous primitive boom-booms in *The Rite of Spring*? Here's the beginning [18]. Is that just arbitrary banging, letting the fingers fall where they may? On the contrary, that repeated chord is carefully devised and structured through bitonality.

Look at how clearly divisible it is into two separate but equal subsidiary chords, one [19] superimposed on the other [19a]. And each of them, mind you, is perfectly consonant in itself. The lower one spells out a pure E-major triad (or, in Stravinsky's orthography, F-flat, as you can see, which amounts to the same thing). And the upper chord is a plain old dominant seventh on E-flat. Now each one by itself couldn't be more clearly tonal, right?; but together [20]——wild dissonance. This is a wholly new way of looking at tonal harmony, a fresh Stravinskian way. He then plunges directly into a new bitonality, this time pitting notes of the E-flat seventh chord, the same one, against notes belonging to C major; and together, they sound like this [21]. But there's something else going on at the same time: the cellos are plucking notes that outline that old E-major triad, so that there are now *three* simultaneous harmonic entities sounding together. This is now the sound of polytonality [22] another fresh sound, you see, acerbic, needling, like a cold shower——but still and always tonal.

34 (p.343) [Disc Side6 band3]

Here's the first phrase of the march that opens *L'Histoire du Soldat* [23]. Now that's a bit more subtle, polytonally speaking. Because there are two instruments playing, as you can see: a cornet and a trombone. The cornet by itself is playing this [24] that seems to start in F major, right?, suddenly switches to F minor, and cadences abruptly in a totally unexpected E major. Now listen to the four phrases which by the way start at the silent downbeat, just ambiguifier so little further; one [24]. So, F major, followed by F minor, followed by E major, all in the space of four seconds. Now let's see what the trombone is doing, down below; one [25]——D-flat major, of all things, with its abrupt cadence in G major, without so much as a by-your-leave. So Stravinsky has presented us, take it or leave it, with four seconds of music that encompass five different keys. Talk about bigger and better ambiguities! [26]

Now what's going on? Something new. A new ambiguity, a new tonality-freshener; only

now it's a syntactic one: rhythmic displacement. Did you notice how syntactically broken up that marching tune is, how asymmetrical it is? [26]

35 (p.359) [Disc Side6 band4]

There is a hypnotically primeval feeling to the opening notes of *Les Noces*, for example. That's here [47]. That sounds like ancient Chinese music, doesn't it?; but it's even earlier than that, because it's not even a pentatonic scale; it's made of even more primitive three-note and four-note constellations.

36 (p.365) [Disc Side6 band5]

In the period of World War I, he was already writing his phenomenal *L'Histoire du Soldat*, in which that unique objectivity of his showed itself in dry, witty take-offs, of folk tunes and marches and cabaret dances. Listen to this march for *L'Histoire du Soldat* [53] .....follow this; now listen to this tango [54]; now listen to this ragtime for the same piece [55].....sweet?

37 (p.371) [Disc Side6 band6]

And here it is, that exquisite, dry, neo-Bachian Octet from 1923 [56]. It's chic, it's asymmetrical, it's just dissonant enough——a witty linguistic transformation of Bach into Stravinsky. But this neoclassic approach doesn't by any means have to be witty; it can be severely solemn, as in this Piano Concerto he wrote in the same year as the Octet [57].