

Anton Webern, Variations for Piano, Op. 27 (1936)

The only solo piano work composed by Anton Webern. The three-movement piece was composed using the twelve-tone technique, based on the following row:

C	C#	A	B	Ab	Bb	E	F	F#	D	Eb	G
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The row includes many instances of semitone, major seventh, or augmented octave, such as C–C#, E–F, F–F#, D–Eb. This lends to the music a tinge of piquant dissonance, a musical quality that defines much of Webern’s music.

Webern makes use of traditional forms—such as sonata form, ternary form, and theme-and-variation form—in his twelve-tone works. The first movement of the piano variations is modelled on a ternary form design; the second movement follows a binary structure, while only the last movement is in theme-and-variation form.

Webern’s twelve-tone music often shows a high degree of **symmetry** 對稱: either *vertically* by using inversionally related row forms, or *horizontally* by pairing a row with its retrograde, which resembles a **palindrome** 回文.

The title “Variations” refers not to the formal structure of the entire piece, but to the twelve-tone method, by which every row statement is a variation of all the other rows in the piece.

	I ₀	I ₈	I ₇	I ₁₁	I ₁₀	I ₉	I ₃	I ₁	I ₄	I ₂	I ₆	I ₅
P ₀	E♭	B	B♭	D	C#	C	F#	E	G	F	A	A♭
P ₄	G	E♭	D	F#	F	E	B♭	A♭	B	A	C#	C
P ₅	A♭	E	E♭	G	F#	F	B	A	C	B♭	D	C#
P ₁	E	C	B	E♭	D	C#	G	F	A♭	F#	B♭	A
P ₂	F	C#	C	E	E♭	D	A♭	F#	A	G	B	B♭
P ₃	F#	D	C#	F	E	E♭	A	G	B♭	A♭	C	B
P ₉	C	A♭	G	B	B♭	A	E♭	C#	E	D	F#	F
P ₁₁	D	B♭	A	C#	C	B	F	E♭	F#	E	A♭	G
P ₈	B	G	F#	B♭	A	A♭	D	C	E♭	C#	F	E
P ₁₀	C#	A	A♭	C	B	B♭	E	D	F	E♭	G	F#
P ₆	A	F	E	A♭	G	F#	C	B♭	C#	B	E♭	D
P ₇	B♭	F#	F	A	A♭	G	C#	B	D	C	E	E♭

First Movement

Sehr mäßig ♩. = ca 40 Anton Webern, Op. 27

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

pp *p*

Second Movement

Sehr schnell ♩ = ca 160

1 2 3 4

f *p* *f* *p*

Third Movement

Ruhig fließend ♩ = ca 80

1 2 3 4 5 6

p *f* *p* *f*