

An Analysis of Toru Takemitsu's *Piano Distance*: Structural Aspects, Indeterminacy, and the Influence of John Cage

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This paper considers the piano solo work *Piano Distance* composed by the Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu in 1961. The previous studies tried to explain the associations within this piece by using musical set theory. In Section 1, I overview the previous studies and show the necessity of focusing on other factors than the pitch. In Section 2.1, I clarify the structural aspects by analyzing the note groups connected by beams and the measures. Concerning these two factors, a numerical operation consisting in a periodic decrease, such as “3, 2, 1” or “12, 6, 3”, can be noticed. A closer observation of this operation brings out the technique of inserting into a larger division (such as the measure) having a certain period smaller divisions (such as note groups connected by a beam). After the measure 51st, a symmetric division of the measures can also be observed. In Section 2.2, I analyze the indeterminable or improvisational factors such as the vague value, or grass note that provide the experimental nature to this piece. In this work, these factors are more in the first part (measures 1-50), and less in the second part (measures 51-79). I show that this contrasting placement of these factors corresponds with the degree of coherence or regularity of the construction made by the measures analyzed in Section 2.1. Finally, in Section 3, I examine the critical works about John Cage written in the period before Takemitsu composed *Piano Distance*. By doing so, it is revealed that the influence of Cage over this work can be recognized not only in the introduction of indeterminacy, but also in the technique of “the rhythmic structure”.