

Week 1

Piece: De Profundis

Composer: Arvo Pärt

Text: Psalm 130

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EFKCbMVLCC>

Arvo Pärt was born in Estonia under the Soviet regime. While considered one of Russia's premiere young talents, the performance of his "Credo" in 1968 was highly controversial as it openly used a religious text, and set it to music so powerful that the audience demanded a repetition of the work in concert.

Following this performance he began a period of exile which was characterized by his rejection of modern compositional techniques in an attempt to avoid the "unbearable atmosphere of barbed wire" he felt 20th century composition represented. This was a time of intense personal crisis as well. Of his years of crisis he later wrote "I didn't know at the time that I was going to be able to compose at all in the future."

As he turned away from the modern, he turned even more deeply toward old compositional styles steeped in Christianity like gregorian chant, and medieval monastic theories of dissonance and consonance. Emerging from this period, his music formed a new style (*tintinnabuli*) that, although belonging to no formal compositional school, has been one of the most influential styles of the 20th century and drives composers from across the spectrum of art music to pop.

The text *De Profundis* takes its name from the first lines of Psalm 130 "Out of the depths..." and is traditionally a penitential Psalm in Christian orthodoxy, and recited for the sick in Judaism.



Meditation:

Isolation is a spiritual discipline, not physical outcome. Remove the noise of the world, and one must face the deafening cacophony of the self. Overcome this however, and there is nothing left but the voice of God.

~ Anonymous