

divisio spiralis

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Since I was a child I have possessed a kind of synesthesia with numbers. Rather than light/color phenomena association, this has generally regarded forms, shapes, and structures. When I first began to count, I imagined a long thread extending upwards and when looking up, at some point I began to see a curve forming in the line until eventually the line transformed into an infinite spiral, with my foot planted at the number one. The first time I discovered Erv Wilson's 1965 organization of the overtone series as a logarithmic spiral, the image immediately resonated with me as a lucid means to describe harmonic space as numbers in repetition and interaction, generating/blooming outwards with each new prime and composite. I absorbed this image while working on the piece for JACK, and after applying a 29-limit reductionist/palindromic omission to the tonal palette (29x1, 23x2, 19x3, 17x5, 13x7, 11x11) and situating the four string instruments inside it as distinct resonating chambers, I utilized this image as an inspiration for the total piece.

There are various entries into form recognition generating from each of our individualized perceptual frames. Tenney distinguished four categories of *element*, *clang*, *sequence*, and *piece* when describing form, each being a unit within the gestalt experience of the one receiving the phenomena in a given moment. Where might the entry and the exit occur in the recognition of, and where is the point of getting lost and succumbing to? Where lies the blurred zone between melodic movement in a forward direction and clearly interacting/expanding harmonic space? Each tone can function as both active and passive relation/movement towards an expressivity that lies entirely beyond the sum of shapes. In the case of a string quartet, those shapes have the potential to resonate quite clearly together, containing similarly spiraling spectralities to one another. Therefore the piece contains a long sequence of color shifts, (perceptual shifts), foraging through and opening up the harmonic field as it moves. The durability of duration becomes dependent on all of our individual perceptions listening inwards.

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