

Ramsay - Symmetry an Expression of Duality

IMAGE

THE GREEK MODES AND DUALITY

BY THE EDITOR

The Greeks most probably constructed their musical [tetrachords](#) in a symmetrical order in analogy with their sculpture, and showed the [ear](#) identical with the [eye](#) in its [love](#) of [symmetry](#). With them, therefore, the [Dorian mode](#) would have a certain pre-eminence. Beginning this [mode](#) on D, without knowing the [musical mystery](#) that resides in D, they had two [tetrachords](#) with the [semitones](#) *symmetrically in the middle* in one [mode](#); it was next possible for them to arrange in *pairs, symmetrically*, the other [tetrachords](#).

D8 E5 F9 G8 A9 B5 C9 D
E5 F9 G8 A9 B5 C9 D8 E — C9 D8 E5 F9 G8 A9 B5 C
F9 G8 A9 B5 C9 D8 F5 F — B5 C9 D8 E5 F9 G8 A9 B
C9 D8 E5 F9 G8 A9 B5 C — E5 F9 G8 A9 B5 C9 D8 E
B5 C9 D8 E5 F9 G8 A9 B — F9 G8 A9 B5 C9 D8 E5 F
A9 B5 C9 D8 E5 F9 G8 A — G8 A9 B5 C9 D8 E5 F9 G
G8 A9 B5 C9 D8 E5 F9 G — A9 B5 C8 D9 E5 F9 G8 A

Here, then, we have an order of *modes* entirely symmetrical in pairs placed thus; the only [mode](#) that can stand alone being the [Dorian](#), built on [D](#), [whose duality](#) has been discovered to reside in itself. All this build of [symmetry](#), which was the watchword of Greek art, as it is also one of the watchwords of [Nature](#), presupposes that the tones of the [scale](#), with lesser and larger [intervals](#) lying between them, were resting in their ears exactly as they are in ours,¹ and as they are in all humanity, save where it has sunk down into the [savage condition](#), benighted in the [evil](#) that is in the world. It is not to be concluded that the [Dorian mode](#) is Nature's primitive [scale](#), although it might have a certain pre-eminence

1 Pole's researches led him to conclude that *the [Diatonic Scale](#) has remained essentially unchanged*; as the series of notes was when [Euclid](#) described it, *so it is now*; and as it formed the basis of the melodies of the Greeks 2,000 years ago, so it forms the basis of the tunes of the present day." - *Philosophy of Music*. [[Scientific Basis and Build of Music, page 45](#)]

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