

For ecologists interested in patterns of species distribution and the "deterministic vs. the stochastic approach" (the assembly of species into communities as a function of interspecific competition vs. a random process), the *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America's* Spring issue (March 1981) contains a tongue in cheek piece by Peter Feinsinger, Robert J. Whelan and Richard A. Kiltie, (University of Florida) titled "Some Notes on Community Composition: Assembly by Rules or by Dartboards?" Using J.S. Bach's Prelude to the first Suite for Unaccompanied Violoncello (Malkin 1918) the authors attempt to determine whether the 12 tones distributed over an archipelago of 42 insular measures were distributed by a structured act of composition or by some such random process as Bach's blindfolded children throwing darts at a board full of musical notes. Using the simplest null hypothesis and the chi-square test for independence, the authors conclude that "the effects of composition are not demonstrated for the Prelude at this stage. Frankly we suspect that musecologists have been overeager to implicate composition for other such data sets. We recommend re-examination of species lists for larger archipelagos such as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony . . ." They concede however that "there is alternative evidence that composition does in fact affect music" and pose a final question: "Does our result tell us more about an absence of organizing forces, or about the inappropriateness of certain null hypotheses?"