

# Theory of Music – Jonathan Dimond

## Expressionism

(version September 2009)

### INTRODUCTION

Expressionism – the antithesis of impressionism – is the artistic movement which embraced the subconscious and its free outpourings, unfiltered or edited by the conscious mind. The classic painting “The Scream” by Edvard Munch sums up the artistic movement’s fascination with the outpouring of strong emotion, of darkness and night-time, of the subconscious, and how our actions effect the environment and our perception of it.



*Skrik*, 1893

Expressionism’s themes seem to be related to the inner feelings of conflict and tension with the outside world, brought on perhaps by the industrial revolution of the 1850’s and rapid changes in technology and social structure. Expressionistic art is characterized both by desperate intensity of feeling and revolutionary modes of utterance. (Grout, p.853)

### **Five Pieces for Orchestra (Fünf Orchesterstücke), Op. 16, 1909**

#### ***Background***

Arnold Schoenberg’s Free Atonal, expressionist period spans the six years from 1908-1914. It was a period filled with relentless painting and composing.

In this period, Schoenberg moved from the post-Romantic German chromatic idiom personified by Wagner, into a language of increased rhythmic and harmonic complexity, counterpoint and fragmentation of melodic line. At the same time he concentrated on smaller forms and small ensembles. Even when full orchestra was used (as in these Five Pieces), the instruments were treated more soloistically, with swift alternation of colours. This contrasts with the post-Romantic gigantism of Schoenberg’s *Gurre Lieder* (1901).

Schoenberg made the following comment about his creative urge at this time:

*"When composing, every chord corresponds to a compulsive urge, prompted by a need to express myself".* (1911)

(The BBC Symphony Orchestra (Boulez) liner notes by Susanne Rode-Breymann, p.4)

Furthermore, in a letter to Richard Strauss at the time, Schoenberg wrote *"I expect a colossal lot from them [the Five Pieces for Orchestra], especially tone and mood. That alone is what it is about – absolutely and not symphonic, exactly the opposite of it, no architecture, no structure. Simply a mixed, uninterrupted alternation of colours, rhythms and moods."*

(Liner notes from Hans Zender and Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Saarbrücken CD, Thomas Sick.)

## **Overall Structure**

1. "Vorgefühle", Sehr rasch. ("Premonitions", very fast.)
2. "Vergangenes", Mässig. ("The Past", moderate.)
3. "Farben", Mässig. ("Summer Morning by a Lake: Chord-Colors", moderate.)
4. "Peripetie", Sehr rasch. ("Peripetia", very fast.)
5. "Das obligate Rezitativ", Bewegen. ("The Obligatory Recitative", moving.)

The titles of the movements were added reluctantly by the composer after their completion, upon the request of his publisher in the revised version of 1922. Schoenberg said that *"titles give things away"* and that *"music says more than words"*. (<http://www.cso.org/main.taf?p=5,5,3,1,7>)

The chosen titles are fitting, however.

## **Movement 5 ("The Obligatory Recitative")**

In the 5th movement of 5 Pieces for Orchestra, Schoenberg achieves a seamless, asymmetrical style, with a non-tectonic form devoid of repetition. This concept was continued further a few weeks later in his next work "Erwartung" (1909).

### **Preliminary Observations**

On first listen without the score, the 5th movement's lilting metre suggests the 3/8 setting we discover, but its rich polyphony does not immediately reveal the facts: that a single melody is running from start to finish, passed through the various orchestral voices. That is, the variety of colours associated with the various instrument families are mixed. This is in contrast to the 4th movement's use of orchestral instrument choirs.

I found it useful to consider Schoenberg's orchestration in terms of perspective: i.e. whether the material in that moment is foreground, middle-ground or background. He explicitly indicated foreground melodic material by his *Hauptstimme* (literally "main part") markings in this movement - something he didn't require in the other four movements.

*Nebenstimme* (“subsidiary part”) markings are also occasionally used in this score. I will use the H and N abbreviations in my analysis, along with B for background material.

In his extraordinary use of polyphony, Schoenberg made very deliberate and careful choices in his orchestration in order to allow this principal of perspective to come through. Schoenberg considered all instruments capable of playing any of the roles in this polyphonic texture (Adler, p.599). He had to consider the instrument’s dynamic, range, and timbre in that register when making choices as to whether the notes that particular instrument played were to sound in the foreground, middle-ground or background.

A *Recitativo Obligato* is a term used to describe Operatic recitative in the 18th Century where the orchestra “has independent passages of a violent or pathetic character”. (New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians).

## **Opening**

### **PICKUP and BAR 1**

The first sonorities indicate the stratification and continuous development which we find throughout the movement.

- N: Clarinet II’s first attack is expected to be of primary importance, but turns out to be part of the background.
- B: Cello I and muted trumpet. Cellos are registrally high, where they sound more nasal and blend in with the adjacent trumpet, which sounds like it is using a metal straight mute. After the first unison the following 3 notes become indistinct from each other.
- B: Trombones III & IV, and Oboes I & II. Note that Cello II gives a pizzicato attack to the trombones.
- H: Viola I. Muted though, so soon is camouflaged by the other instruments.

### **BARS 2-3**

- H: Clarinet I. Note the unison G# bar 3 given by Violin 1 to add more timbre to the Clarinet crescendo.
- N: Trumpet I.
- B: Horns and Basses. Playing in unison at the octave.

### **BARS 4-6**

- H: Clarinet I. Follow-up to previous motive, again the highest held note is texturized by strings - this time the Viola I.
- N: Cello I.
- B: Bassoon II & III and Cello II and Horn I & II.

### **BARS 6-7**

- H: Violin I angular motive, featuring pairs of intervals that widen to the descending minor 9th (D-C#), which is an important interval. Note the first of each pair of notes is articulated pizz. by Violin II, ppp. [also note in bar 6 the notational error in the score!]

### **BARS 7-8**

- H: Cello I. “Zart” indication refers to coming forward in the orchestral texture while maintaining gentleness.

## Rehearsal Number 1

### BARS 1-2

- H: Clarinet I & II and English Horn. Note unison descending minor 9th interval (G# to G) in bar 2, English Horn swelling. These 2 or 3 eighth note swells are peppered all over the score!
- N: Viola swell on A, making a cluster.
- N: English Horn's bar 1 swell of a descending P.5th is an echo of the trombone III & IV opening ascending P.5th in the introduction.

### BARS 2-3

- N: Cello D-C-B-Bb eighth note motive originates from the opening cello motive. It is also echoed by Horns I & II in bars 3-4.

### BARS 3-4

- N: Horns I & II and Bass in unison with eighth note motive.
- H: Clarinet I & II end of phrase that commences section. Cello commences swell bar 4 {see next bar}.
- B: Bassoon I & II and Bass Clarinet contrary motion swell.

### BARS 4-5

- H: Cello swell B to C#. Very interesting "shimmer" created by this swell against the background string material:-
- B: Bass descending line to G (doubled by Horns I & II); Viola F#-D#-F#-D# "timed trill" to D; Violin II inversion and displacement of Viola "timed trill" A-C-A to B. Clarinet I & II displaces Violin II's "timed trill" AC-A to B. All parts incorporated staggered swells.

### BARS 6-7

- H: Horn I (muted) hits minor 6th leap D-Bb but upper note (Bb) swell is dominated by piccolo ppp E. Hence horn sounds like it's playing a minor 9th.
- N: Cello, Bassoon I & II and Bass Clarinet extend the "timed trill" idea in unison (A-G#-C-G-F#-A-G#-F#).

## Rehearsal Number 2

### BARS 1-2

- H: New theme by Bassoons, Cello joined by Clarinets.

### BARS 2-4

- H: Violin I and Oboes I & II take over theme (Descending minor 9th D#-D harks back to opening Viola motive in the Intro).
- N: Cellos play similar figure to bars 2-4 in the intro.

### BAR 5-6

- H: Clarinets take over theme, which is completed by Oboes, Violins and English Horn. The composite shows close resemblance to the opening theme in the Clarinet introduction (bars 2-3), with the characteristic falling minor 3rd at the end.

### BARS 7-8

- H: Clarinets high, angular line.
- B: Muted brass.

### BARS 9-11

- H: Violins 1. Descending minor 3rd motive and also minor 9th gliss. motive (from intro Violas bar 1). With the descent to the low E is a prompt thinning of texture.

- N: Descending minor 3rd motive in Cello, Bass, Horns II & IV, and Bassoon.

### **Rehearsal Number 3**

#### **BARS 1-2**

Note first 16th note is completely silent, and the following texture for this section is sparser, softer, less polyphonic, and lower in registration.

- H: Cellos descending minor 3rd motive and also minor 9th gliss.

#### **BARS 3-4**

- H: Bass trombone and Tuba theme, including descending minor 9th. (Their first solo!)

• N: Bassoon follow-through from theme which opened the section in the Bass clarinet. The Bassoon's registration is bright and carries the melody clearly, whereas the Clarinet I & II voicing of the same gesture is low and dull.

#### **BARS 4-5**

- H: Viola pizz. theme featuring minor and major 9ths. {See bar 6-7 Introduction.}

- H: Oboe 3-note motive.

#### **BARS 6-8**

- H: Cellos in high tenor register, after complete silence of one eighth note on the downbeat.

#### **BARS 8-9**

- H: Muted Trumpet I. Note the last E is completely inaudible!
- N: Cello, muted Trombone III & IV, Horn II, and English Horn. Note swells and varying articulations (staccato-legato etc.).

#### **BARS 10-12**

- H: Bass clarinet in medium-high register, very exposed. Echo and extension of muted Trumpet I motive in bars 8-9. Note minor third interval and quarter-tone sharpness on the last Ab in the recording!

### **Rehearsal Number 4**

More polyphonic texture; more layers and ambiguity than section 3.

#### **BARS 1-5**

- H: legato melody sounded by English Horn, Trombones I & II, and Cello all in unison. Note the starting note A (semitone down from Bass clarinet Bb ending previous section, making a smooth transition) and minor 9th interval (A# up to B).

- B: Flutes staccato with Violin II pizz, in unison, ppp.

- N: D Clarinet enters for the first time. G# very prominent starting the first two bars, despite being marked ppp.

- N: Solo violin I with mute, bars 3-4. Note falling minor 3rd interval.

- B: Basses and violas in unison bars 3-4 descending chromatic line.

#### **BARS 6-7**

- H: Clarinet I & II, Oboes I & II, and Trumpets I & II unison.

#### **BARS 8-10**

- H: Most of the winds (except Bassoons and Bass clarinet) in unison and f, for the first time. The upper winds line is completed by the strings bars 9-10. This is in turn answered by the upper winds in bar 10.

### BARS 11-13

Sudden softer dynamics (p), with swells.

- H: Oboe I melody.
- N: Strings, Trombones and Horns phrasing across the barline.

### BARS 13-14

• H: English Horn melody. Note minor 9th and similar rhythms to Oboe melody preceding it.

### BAR 14-next section BAR 1

Query: Where are the violin parts I hear (F#-E quarter notes from beat 2?) Is this just cellos alone with Trombone III & IV and Clarinet III? It sounds like when the violins come in they are an extension of this sonority. Very dovetailed.

## Rehearsal Number 5

### BARS 1-4

• H: Viola and Violins extend out of the melody initiated by the Cellos as mentioned above. Very reminiscent of opening clarinet theme, with rising gesture and falling minor 3rd at the end.

### BARS 5-10

A general building up of polyphony, with staggered and overlapping entries commencing with the D Clarinet and leading up to the first moment of tutti ff. Note high held A in Violins, D Clarinet and Oboes.

## Rehearsal Number 6

### BARS 1-5

Suddenly soft. New texture, featuring flutter tongue flute eighth-notes and pizz. and tremolo strings. Note gaps in rhythm, swells, and new appearance of Harp and Celeste.

### BARS 7-10

First eighth note silent.

- H: Oboe I, doubled by English Horn and Bassoons in unison.

## Rehearsal Number 7

### BARS 1-3

• H: Bass Clarinet expressive melody, which carries clearly over light strings and Trombone III. Note minor third (C#-Bb) at end.

### BARS 3-5

• H: Violin I dovetails out of Bass Clarinet. Note minor 9th interval. (A#-A).

### BARS 2-7

For the first time we have the building up of a fairly static pedal sonority, contributed to by the Trombones, Basses, Cellos, and Viola. By the time the Tuba and ContraBassoon enter (Bar 7) this chord descends downward.

## Rehearsal Number 8

This section soft (all p or pp)

### BARS 1-3

- H: Bassoon angular melody. Note gliss, reminiscent of Cello from beginning of Section 3 and the preceding Violin gliss.
- N: Harp.

#### BARS 4-6

- H: Clarinet I, followed by Horn II melody, overlapped by Trombone III (echo of Clarinet I).

#### **Rehearsal Number 9**

##### BARS 1-4

- H: Cello melody across barline, whose beginning grew out of Viola dolce melody.

Note the almost functional circle of 4ths (D-)Eb-Ab-Db(-G) in the Basses and Trombone II Bars 2-4.

- N: D Clarinet melody Bars 4-5

##### BARS 5-7

- H: Oboe I & III dolce melody.

Getting restless, and sounding more like the intro:

##### BARS 7-9

- H: Clarinets, linked to Oboes to create gesture similar to intro.

#### **Rehearsal Number 10**

Increasing polyphony, staggered entries and increasing dynamic.

#### **Rehearsal Number 11**

##### BARS 1-4

- H: Violins I & II top C# held (highest note so far). Doubled by violas and Oboes I & II from Bar 2 (8vb). f to fff

- N: Horn at top of its range, f.

First example of tutti orchestra in Bar 2, all f to fff.

##### BARS 5-7

One eighth note silence downbeat of bar 5. Made more dramatic by the fact that the preceding dominant sonority is the high strings semitone, and that the following tutti orchestral entry is fff.

- H: Violins doubled by Clarinets, Piccolo and Flutes in unison. Note all sound the descending minor 9th interval except Flutes and D Clarinet, who descend a semitone.

#### **Rehearsal Number 12**

One eighth note silence downbeat of bar 1.

- H: Violins highest note of piece so far with F#7, fff.

- N: Trombones I & II, Trumpet III, English Horn in unison. This theme more prominent due to its motion and stronger registration.

**TASK: Write out bars 447-451 (1 before Rehearsal 13 to bar 4 of 13) as a single cumulative melody line in concert pitch and comment on the instrumental, dynamic and other orchestration choices made. (Then Read Adler p.599)**

#### **Rehearsal Number 13**

##### BAR 1

- H: Oboes and Flutes complete line which links the preceding section. This section is therefore more smoothly connected and represents a Cooling-off of the polyphony and chaos.

p and pp dynamics and a thinner texture occur. Room for the Harp and Celeste is given.

BARS 1-4

- H: Violins melody.

BARS 4-8

- B: Celeste, Piccolo and Flute hits in unison, p.
- H: Muted Trombone lyrical melody, with swells.

#### **Rehearsal Number 14**

Further dispersing texture and dynamic. Tempo also cooling off. One eighth note silence downbeat of bar 1. Grouping ambiguity and silences dissolves the waltz-like feeling of the metre.

BARS 1-4

- H: Horns sporadic gestures.
- B: Bass Clarinet, Trombone I & III and Cello background chords.

BARS 5-8

- H: Cellos echo the Trombone melody from the end of Section 13.
- B: Chord hits by Flutes (Bars 4-5), Bass Clarinet, Clarinet, Contra Bassoon, Trombone and Tuba.

Increasingly a lower sonority remains.

#### **Rehearsal Number 15**

A final chord is held, with staggered entries commencing with the Cellos in the last bar of Section 14. Note swells and orchestrated swell!

G-F#-B-D#-G#-A-C

Sounds like G augmented triad with flat 9th, predominantly.

## Terms Relating to Schoenberg & Expressionism

### Tonal / Romantic

Functional Harmony  
Fin de siècle (French – “End of the Cycle”)  
Sehnsucht (German – “Nostalgic longing”)  
Weltschmerz (German – “world weariness”)  
Prolongation  
Melodic sentence  
Triad  
Cadence  
Gargantuan, indulgent  
Quantitative  
Impressionism  
Resolution of dissonance  
Tonic key  
Degree progression  
Motive  
Theme  
Tonic triad  
Sectional form

### Free-atonal / Expressionistic

Contextual Harmony  
New Music  
Klangfarbenmelodie (German)  
Sprechstimme (German)  
Compression  
Liquidation  
Trichord  
Vagrant chords  
Controlled resources  
Qualitative  
Expressionism  
Emancipation of the dissonance  
Pitch centre  
Structural half-step  
Motivic cell  
Gesture  
Source chord  
Psychological form

Let us examine the free-atonal terms in order:

#### Contextual Harmony.

Harmonic consideration on a moment-by-moment basis, rather than in terms of a conventional functional harmonic plan. Tonic keys are replaced by pitch centres.

#### New Music.

Generally the term ascribed to innovative Western classical music of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. *Fin de siècle* implies a feeling of anticipation, and musically speaking the end of the Romantic era saw an end to a period characterized by opulence, extravagance and decadence. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fin\\_de\\_si%C3%A8cle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fin_de_si%C3%A8cle))

#### Klangfarbenmelodie.

Literally “tone colour melody”. Represents the interest in timbre as an organizing force in music, as featured in Schoenberg’s “Five Pieces for Orchestra” (movt.3).

#### Sprechstimme. (Also Sprechgesang.)

Literally “spoken-song” or “spoken-voice”. Refers to a type of speech which is pitched, or a type singing which is spoken – i.e. the grey area that lies in between the two. Schoenberg specifically instructs the vocalist to follow his rhythms but to use an undulating pitch to their voice that rises and falls, and in-so-doing, minimizes the resemblance of vocal pitches to any kind of scale or conventional harmony.

#### Compression.

The compositional technique that creates fast-moving and ongoing motivic development without repetition, often resulting in a vertically-dense, polyphonic texture. Essential to this is the technique of *liquidation*.

### Liquidation.

Liquidation is the opposite of ongoing motivic development which uses extension and expansion to create musical sentences. In liquidation, characteristic features of the motive are gradually eliminated until only uncharacteristic ones remain, which no longer demand continuation. "Only residues remain, which have little in common with the basic motive."

(Schoenberg, 1967, p.58)

### Trichord.

A set of three pitch classes categorized by their close-position interval structure. There are 12 trichords representing all 1440 possible combinations of 3 notes.

### Vagrant chords.

Diatonic chords are replaced by non-diatonic chords because the key no longer requires fortification at places of structural importance. Gone are the chord sequences such as VI-II-V-I.

### Qualitative.

Expressionism turned its interest to the qualities of notes, timbres and gestures, demonstrated by the use of smaller ensembles or treating the instrumental forces as individual soloists rather than instrumental choirs. *Klangfarbenmelodie* and *Sprechstimme* are but two compositional examples of this qualitative approach.

### Expressionism.

The artistic movement which embraced the subconscious and its free outpourings, unfiltered or edited by the conscious mind. The artistic movement carries with it a fascination with the outpouring of strong emotion, of darkness and night-time, of the subconscious, and how our actions effect the environment and our perception of it. Expressionism's themes seem to be related to the inner feelings of conflict and tension with the outside world. Expressionistic art is characterized both by desperate intensity of feeling and revolutionary modes of utterance. (Grout, p.853)

### Emancipation of the dissonance

The increased role of polyphony, gesture, and timbre in expressionism were some of the reasons that conventional harmonic resolutions became less important. Prolongation taken to extremes meant that the ear became less attached to "natural" resolutions, and expected them less and less. "Non-harmonic" tensions became freed from their conventional functional need to resolve, and became sonorities that took on a life of their own as gestures, colours and lines.

### Pitch centre.

The centring of an idea or gesture on a particular pitch establishes some sort of hierarchy of importance, even if it is a momentary importance, and even if the idea itself lacks the quality of a prevailing major or minor key. A pitch centre therefore acts contextually in the harmonic scheme.

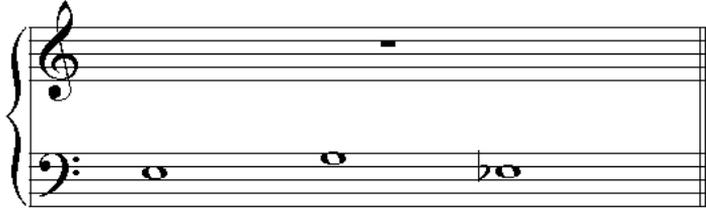
### Structural half-step.

Rather than the Schenkerian concept of a degree progression that underlies a passage of music (i.e. a structural background or guide-tone line which follows some particular ascending and/or descending scalar pattern), in free atonal music we have free chromatic modulation as a structural feature. E.g. cello's first motive in 5 Pieces for Orchestra Movt.II (score p.144). G#-F becomes G-E.

### Motivic cell.

A kernel of 3 to 5 notes that forms the basis of harmonic and melodic development. Despite the complexity of expressionistic music – or rather probably because of it – Schoenberg chose to reduce the material that generated his musical gestures to such a kernel, in order to assist in comprehensibility and also to maximize on the developmental options that such a refined motivic cell offers.

E.g. Pierrot Lunaire Movt.8 “Nacht” p.84 score:



### Gesture.

The role of gesture in music is universal. However, in free atonal music there is a significant importance placed upon gesture, to a point where it replaces the traditional role of theme. Gesture can be a pitch contour that possesses a particular expressive quality.

### Source chord.

A source chord is related to the idea of motivic cell. It is a vertical sonority which takes on the role of generating further harmonic and melodic material. E.g. the “Farben” chord (5 Pieces for Orchestra Movt.III, p.157 score).



### Psychological form.

Expressionism aims to uncover the workings of the subconscious and freely express these thoughts and feelings. In-so-doing, form tends to be created more by the emotional journey itself rather than some structure that is sectionalized by prescribed conventions.

*“If this is indeed an expression of his inner-most feelings, then let us all give him our deepest condolences.”* A music critic after first hearing Schoenberg’s Five Pieces for Orchestra. (Heiss)

# Pierrot Lunaire

## (Moonstruck Pierrot) Op. 21, 1912

### **Background**

Pierrot Lunaire is a 34-minute song cycle composed based upon a set of poems by the French poet Albert Giraud (translated to German by Otto Erich Hartleben). It was a commission by Viennese actress Albertine Zehme. The composition is historically important as it was responsible for the creation of the "Pierrot ensemble" – a New Music ensemble consisting of flute (doubling on a piccolo), clarinet (doubling on bass clarinet), violin (doubling on viola), cello, and piano. In-so-doing, Schoenberg codified in Pierrot Lunaire what he was experimenting with in the Second String Quartet.

Unlike the earlier monodrama *Erwartung* (Op.17, 1909), in which the solo soprano acts like a portal into the mind and soul of a psychotic woman in search of the corpse of a man she may have herself in fact killed, Pierrot Lunaire is more theatrical in a sense. It engages the audience in such a way that dramatic tools such as irony and humour place in the performer's physical space as participants, rather than allow them to witness the *Erwartung* soprano's dreamlike state. [Watch the video or see a live performance and you'll have a different experience to just listening to the CD.] Schoenberg's experience as a cabaret composer, conductor and orchestrator in Berlin in the early years of the century exposed him to popular Parisian cabaret, and earned him a living producing some six thousand pages of orchestration in total. (Shawm, 2002, p.36 & 95).

Pierrots were an archetype quite prevalent around the turn of the century in Europe, whose character represented the tormented artist, capable of violence and instilling fear.

[http://www.schoenberg.at/6\\_archiv/music/works/op/compositions\\_op21\\_analysis\\_e.htm#](http://www.schoenberg.at/6_archiv/music/works/op/compositions_op21_analysis_e.htm#)

Premiered in Berlin in 1912 after 40 rehearsals, and followed by premieres in other cities, the work confronted some initial hostility:

*"The loudest disturber of the concert was identified as the director of a Conservatoire... he could not refrain from exclaiming 'If there had been just one single honest triad in the whole piece!'"* (Schoenberg, 1975, p.97)

It is also been rumored that Stravinsky murmured in a premiere:

*"I wish that woman would shut up so we can hear the music..."* (Heiss)

### **Form / Structure**

Schoenberg selected 21 of the original poems for his opus 21. Schoenberg carefully grouped the 21 poems into three lots of seven poems, recognizing thematic affiliations between the different poems to create a new unity in his work. (Youens, p.30.) I recommend hearing the form in this tripartite structure, rather than 21 individual movements. Each poem has 3 stanzas, consisting of 4 lines followed by another 4 then 5 lines. This totals 13 lines, and the first line of each poem is sounded 3 times, being repeated at lines 7 and 13. This is the standard *rondeau* form. (Shawn, 2002, p.143.)

The number symbolism does not end there. There are 7-note motifs throughout the work, and including the conductor the Pierrot ensemble is 7

people strong. The 5 instrumentalists play a total of 8 instruments in ever-changing combinations. (They don't all play at once until the 21<sup>st</sup> movement.) The compositional process was begun by Schoenberg on March 12, 1912. (The retrograde of 21.) Pierrot is first mentioned in bar 21 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> song ("Der Dandy"), and it is not too far-fetched to suggest Schoenberg's apparent fear of the number 13 is perhaps responsible for his choice of placement for the 13<sup>th</sup> poem in his set – "Beheading". (Shawn, 2002, p.145.) (Triskaidekaphobia is common enough that we often see building floors skip from floor 12 to 14, and the superstition associated with Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> has persisted for some 700 years.)

Most importantly, the singer performs the recitation of the poems using Sprechstimme, a manner of vocalisation that lies between speech and song. (Occasionally "*gesungen*" passages are to be sung normally, and the crossed-out stems disappear on the manuscript.)

Following is the list of movements:

1. Mondestrunken (Moon-drunk)
2. Colombine
3. Der Dandy (The Dandy)
4. Eine blasse Wäscherin (A Faded Laundress)
5. Valse de Chopin
6. Madonna
7. Der kranke Mond (The Sick Moon)
8. Nacht (Passacaglia) (Night)
9. Gebet an Pierrot (Prayer to Pierrot)
10. Raub (Theft)
11. Rote Messe (Red Mass)
12. Galgenlied (Gallows Song)
13. Enthauptung (Beheading)
14. Die Kreuze (The Crosses)
15. Heimweh (Homesick)
16. Gemeinheit! (Mean Trick!)
17. Parodie (Parody)
18. Der Mondfleck (The Moonfleck)
19. Serenade
20. Heimfahrt (Barcarole) (Journey Home)
21. O Alter Duft (O Old Perfume)

These movements are grouped into three sets of seven poems with the following emotional themes:

- 1.-7. Impressionistic
- 8.-14. Anguished
- 15.-21. Reconciliation

Each instrument plays its own 'concerto' feature:

2. Vln/Vla
7. Flute
9. Cl./B.Cl.
14. Piano
19. Clo.

[Read English translation of 1<sup>st</sup> poem “Mondestrunken” – see Shawm p.144 – and play video]

Movt.17 “Parodie” (p.115 score)

- Vla & Vocal together sound a whole tone (plus 1 semitone) scale in the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 bars:
- Ab Bb C D (Eb) E
- There are a series of canons between voice, vla, clo. & fl./picc., while the piano plays freely.
- Canons occur at the unison and also in inversion, around the horizontal axis of G4 (G above middle C).

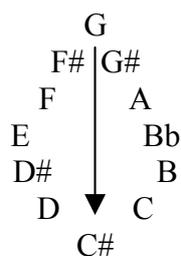
[See Diagram - Weytjens analysis.]

TASK: Write out pickup + 1<sup>st</sup> two bars Vla & Cl. in concert pitch treble clef. Identify two whole tone (plus 1 semitone) hexachords:

Vla: Ab Bb C D (Eb) E

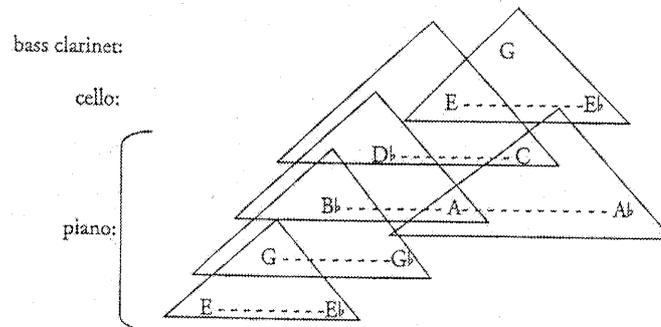
Cl: Bb (B) C D E F#

Check theme and canonic mirror against pitch axis diagram.



## 8. NACHT - Passacaglia

Gehende ♩ (ca 80)



### Movt.8 "Nacht" (p.84) score

The opening bars of this movement demonstrate careful note-choice, with layers of 3-note chords (trichords) of the same intervallic construction.

**TASK: Transcribe the Bass Clarinet (transpose to concert), Cello and Piano parts from bars 1-4 and analyse the 3-note motifs (trichords).**

# Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke (Six Little Piano Pieces) Op. 19, 1911

## **Background**

This set of piano miniatures fit on six pages and are only about 5 minutes in duration, but contain within them so much which is essentially expressionistic. This kind of writing was to have a huge influence on Schoenberg's student Anton Webern, who went on to be known for composing in this refined, brief manner. Composed on a day off while working on his major theory book "The Theory of Harmony" and orchestration for the gargantuan "Gurre Lieder", these pieces were premiered in Berlin in 1912 and have been enjoyed by pianists and audiences ever since.

[http://www.schoenberg.at/6\\_archiv/music/works/op/compositions\\_op19\\_notes\\_e.htm](http://www.schoenberg.at/6_archiv/music/works/op/compositions_op19_notes_e.htm)

The following letter from Schoenberg to the Italian composer Busoni in 1909 expresses his intentions and sentiment in this writing style:

*"My goal: complete liberation from form and symbols, context and logic.  
Away with motivic work!*

*Away with harmony as the cement of my architecture!*

*Harmony is expression and nothing more.*

*Away with pathos!*

*Away with 24 pound protracted scores!*

*My music must be short.*

*Lean! In two notes, not built, but "expressed".*

*And the result is, I hope, without stylized and sterilized drawn-out sentiment.*

*That is not how man feels; it is impossible to feel only one emotion.*

*Man has many feelings, thousands at a time, and these feelings add up no more than apples and pears add up. Each goes its own way.*

*This multicoloured, polymorphic, unlogical nature of our feelings, and their associations, a rush of blood, reactions in our senses, in our nerves; I must have this in my music.*

*It should be an expression of feeling, as if really were the feeling, full of unconscious connections, not some perception of "conscious logic".*

*Now I have said it, and they may burn me."*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sechs\\_Kleine\\_Klavierst%C3%BCcke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sechs_Kleine_Klavierst%C3%BCcke)

[Show Schoenberg's painting of Mahler's funeral in 1911, Shawm, p.71]

## **Form / Structure**

The six movements are as follows:

1. Leicht, zart (Light, delicate)
2. Langsam (Slow)
3. Sehr langsame (Very slow)
4. Rasch, aber leicht (Brisk, but light)
5. Etwas rasch (Somewhat brisk)
6. Sehr langsam (Very slow)

In these Six Pieces, we are asked to make new aural relationships.

### Movement II.

The G-B major-sounding dyad in the left hand forms an ostinato, and is presented like an artefact from conventional harmony, and which morphs in the final measures into something less familiar.

The other melodic and chordal material pivots around this middle-register material.

The form is very interesting – sonata form in miniature!

Intro (bar 1)

Theme 1 (bar 2-3)

Bridge (bar 4)

Development (bar 5-6)

Recapitulation (bar 7-8)

Coda (bar 9)

Note the “surprise” chord in the development, bar 6 – two diminished 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion triads on top of each other, a semitone apart (B<sup>o</sup> above C<sup>o</sup>). The final chord in the coda (bar 9) uses the same *structural half step* but applies it to different qualities – augmented (F#<sup>+</sup> above G<sup>+</sup>).

**Compare the notes of the last chord with the notes in bar 2 and bar 3 (beat 1).** Though the final chord still contains G and B, our homely G-B dyad now sounds more “dominant” in flavour, and is part of a chord that more than wanting to go somewhere wants to collapse on itself – an implosive kind of relaxation!

Milton Babbitt referred to the cross-fertilization of chords and melodic gestures as “the interpenetration of the horizontal and the vertical.”

This is also a piece that features a motivic cell as a compositional technique. The motivic cell of the third is featured, and major and minor thirds appear in opposition. The aforementioned G-B major-sounding dyad in the left hand is sounded as an ostinato three times before a minor third occurs a half step away (C-Eb in bar 4). Follow the left hand, and you will see that thirds continue to feature for the rest of the piece, and that the G-B dyad is taken over by the right hand from the recapitulation (bar 7). This demonstrates one of the logics of free atonality.

The form of this movement is palindromic, and if you look at the piece backwards from bar 8, a similar series of material occurs to the forward direction.

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