



MONAURAL—M2L 291



The Music of
ARNOLD
SCHOENBERG

VOLUME TWO

with a Booklet of Notes and Photographs

ROBERT
CRAFT

CONDUCTING

Verklaerte Nacht
1899

Pelleas and Melisande
1903

Three Little Orchestra Pieces
(FIRST RECORDING) **1910**

Variations for Orchestra
1928

Prelude to the Genesis Suite
1945

The CBC Symphony Orchestra



To: Mr. Robert Craft
Arnold Schoenberg

November 7, 1950

Für sehr niedeländische Trübsal kann dem
Engstgehorner nur mit nachgeahnten Danken *Arnold Schoenberg*

A S C G

und sein. Ich der die vor mich hin, nicht

on. erst G. immer! so das he hoch und

lang! hoch und lang! Adieu

Dear Mr. Craft, news of your performances
are very enjoyable. I possess one
copy of this canon. I want you to
check, whether the bar voice fits also
to two parts. I cannot remember whether
I planned it so. It seems to me it should
only be added where all the three
sing. With cordial greetings
yours Arnold Schoenberg

**THE MUSIC OF
ARNOLD SCHOENBERG**

Vol. 2

ROBERT CRAFT

Conducting

PELLEAS AND MELISANDE

Op. 5

PRELUDE TO THE GENESIS SUITE

Op. 44

THREE LITTLE ORCHESTRA PIECES

(1910)

VARIATIONS FOR ORCHESTRA

Op. 31

VERKLAERTE NACHT

Op. 4

*The Canadian
Broadcasting Corporation
Symphony Orchestra,
Geoffrey Waddington,
Music Director*

Produced by John McClure



After a self portrait/The Bettmann Archive

FOREWORD
TO
A
BROADCAST
RECORDING
OF
PELLEAS
AND
MELISANDE

It was around 1900 when Maurice Maeterlinck fascinated composers, stimulating them to create music to his dramatic poems. What attracted all was his art of dramatizing eternal problems of humanity in the form of fairy-tales, lending them timelessness without adhering to imitation of ancient styles.

I had first planned to convert *Pelleas and Melisande* into an opera, but I gave up this plan, though I did not know that Debussy was working on his opera at the same time.* I still regret that I did not carry out my initial intention. It would have differed from Debussy's. I might have missed the wonderful perfume of the poem; but I might have made my characters more singing.

On the other hand, the symphonic poem helped me, in that it taught me to express moods and characters in precisely formulated units, a technique which an opera would perhaps not have promoted so well.

Thus my fate evidently guided me with great foresight.

Arnold Schoenberg / February 17, 1950

*Schoenberg's symphonic poem was written between July 4, 1902 and February 28, 1903. The first performance—under the composer's direction—took place in Vienna, January 26, 1905. Debussy's lyrical drama was composed during the years 1892-1902 and received its first performance in 1902. (Ed.)

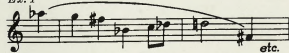
**PELLEAS
AND
MELISANDE**

*Notes
by
Arnold
Schoenberg*

I composed the symphonic poem *Pelleas and Melisande* in 1902. It is inspired entirely by Maurice Maeterlinck's wonderful drama. I tried to mirror every detail of it, with only a few omissions and slight changes of the order of the scenes. Perhaps, as frequently happens in music, there is more space devoted to the love scenes.

The three main characters are presented by themes, in the manner of Wagnerian leitmotifs, except that they are not as short. Melisande, in her helplessness, is pictured by

Ex. 1



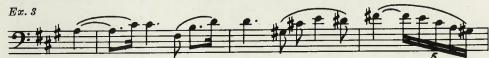
which undergoes many changes in response to various moods. Golaud is pictured by a theme which first appears in the horns.

Ex. 2



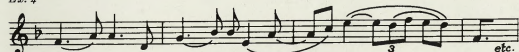
Later this is often transformed, for instance

Ex. 3



or

Ex. 4



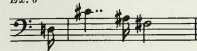
Pelleas is contrasted distinctly by the youthful and knightly character of his motif:

Ex. 5



The two harmonies at x—x in Ex. 5 and a short motif, which first appears in the beginning

Ex. 6

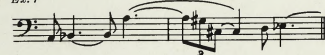


are designed to represent "destiny." This motif appears in many transformations.

Melisande's playing with the ring which falls to the bottom of the fountain is expressed in a scherzo section.

Golaud's jealousy is pictured by

Ex. 7



The scene where Melisande lets her hair hang out of the window is richly illustrated. The section begins with flutes and clarinets, closely imitating one another. Later, harps participate, solo violins play Melisande's

motif and a solo cello plays Pelleas' theme. Divided high strings and harps continue.

When Golaud leads Pelleas to the frightening subterranean tombs, a musical sound is produced which is remarkable in many respects; especially, because here, for the first time in musical literature, is used a hitherto unknown effect: a glissando of the trombones.

Ex. 8

Fl. fluttertongue

Tr. con sordino

Tr. con sordino

gliss.

Cel.

Tam Tam

The love scene begins with a long melody.

Ex. 9

A new motif appears in the death scene.

Ex. 10

The entrance of the servants as a premonition of the death of Melisande is mirrored by a chorale-like theme in the trumpet and trombone, combined with a counter-melody in the flutes and piccolos.

Ex. 11

The first performance, 1905 in Vienna, under my own direction, provoked great riots among the audience and even the critics. Reviews were unusually violent and one of the critics suggested putting me in an asylum and keeping music paper out of my reach. Only six years later, under Oscar Fried's direction, it became a great success, and since that time has not caused the anger of the audience.

December, 1949

© 1963 by Mrs. Gertrud Schoenberg

**PRELUDE
TO
THE
GENESIS
SUITE**

*Notes
by
Eric
Salzman*

Schoenberg's little-known *Genesis* Prelude has a curious history. In 1944, the popular composer, conductor and arranger, Nat Shilkret, commissioned Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud, Ernst Toch, Alexandre Tansman and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco to provide music for the book of Genesis. Shilkret, once a well-known radio conductor of light music and the author of the ever-popular "Lonesome Road," today lives in semi-retirement near New York. In the Forties, however, while active in Hollywood as an arranger and conductor, he originated a grand scheme "to put the Bible on records," an ambitious project that began and ended with Genesis. The music was to accompany a spoken text arranged from the Old Testament by Shilkret himself who also took on the assignment of setting "Creation." The other sections were commissioned as follows: "Adam and Eve"—Tansman; "Cain and Abel"—Milhaud; "Noah's Ark"—Castelnuovo-Tedesco; "The Covenant"—Toch; "Babel"—Stravinsky. Schoenberg's contribution was a textless prelude for chorus and orchestra. The cycle received its first performance in 1945 by the Werner Janssen Symphony Orchestra under Janssen's direction with Edward Arnold as the narrator. The same forces repeated the suite at a second concert a short while thereafter and then recorded it on film track—all at Shilkret's expense. Shilkret estimates that he put nearly \$30,000 into the venture (including the commissioning fees—\$1,500 each for Schoenberg and Stravinsky) and he got very little of it back. The whole, of course, suffers from the diversity of its contents and a massiveness which, combined with the brevity of the individual sections, makes the pieces hard to program separately. One must muster a considerable orchestra—piccolo, 2 flutes, 3 oboes, E-flat clarinet, 2 clarinets in A, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, celesta, glockenspiel, xylophone, tam-tam, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, timpani, harp and strings—to play 83 measures of music, as well as a mixed chorus to sing in exactly 14 of those bars. Another factor that has inhibited the knowledge and diffusion of this music has been the lack of availability of the score. But this extraordinary, concentrated work from the composer's last period could hardly remain indefinitely in obscurity.

The work was completed on September 30, 1945 and it is said to have been composed in a week—not necessarily a short span of time for Schoenberg. A prelude to Creation is traditionally supposed to represent Chaos but the basic conception underlying Schoenberg's version might be described as creative, complex, resolved order. The main section of the piece is an elaborate and highly articulated double fugue and the entire work is thoroughly twelve-tone. The row itself is formed and used in a special way; it is divided into two six-note segments (or "hexachords") which, when combined with the corresponding segments of the inversion (transposed to the right level), form new twelve-tone groupings. Here is the original version of the row and its inversion as derived from the first

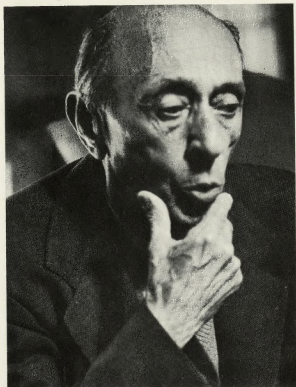
few measures of the work:



These forms, their retrogrades (read from right to left) and their transpositions a fifth above and a fifth below generate every note of the piece. The groups of sixes also govern melodic and harmonic patterns as well as larger phrasings and articulations. The six-note segments are often presented harmonically by twos, giving the thirds and sixths that provide the characteristic sound of the work. Sometimes they are divided up to form a pair of melodic lines, thus forming the basis for some of the elaborate double counterpoint. In some cases the original order of the hexachords is broken up, but the fundamental groupings in complementary six-note family patterns is always retained. The principle is always Schoenberg's basic one of maximum complexity and diversity within maximum unity.

The piece has two main sections. The first twenty-four bars can be described as introduction; the function here is not thematic but to define space. The opening comes literally "out of the depths": out of the indeterminate resonance of the tam-tam, out of the sound of the divided double-basses playing tremolo, *sul ponticello*, and of the tuba starting from the very bottom of its range. Harmonics, flutter-tonguing, tremolos and trills follow and dominate the opening two dozen bars. The first entry of the first violin section at measure 12 is remarkable for, among other things, Schoenberg's playing instructions which, in the manuscript, read as follows: "Always without Hollywood style of vibrato and portamento; even larger intervals must not be connected by gliding but, if necessary, by stretching (sic). This gliding is of detestable sentimentality."

The introduction reaches its climax with a brief pile-up of the characteristic thirds and sixths in which the muted trumpets and trombones predominate. The fugue follows immediately with the double subject stated by the English horn and bassoon, answered by the first violins and piccolo in inversion; these second entries are accompanied by a pair of prominent and important countersubjects, stated by the two double reeds. These subjects along with several related, derived and accompanying figures are subsequently worked out in a rich, dense counterpoint characterized by a whole range of traditional and twelve-tone devices. The chorus enters at bar 66 as a part of a kind of elaborate stretto. Its few phrases (almost always in two-part counterpoint and always conspicuously doubled by orchestral instruments) form part of the general contrapuntal web until the final moment with its big culminating octave C's—a high, clear, tonal finish for a piece that began in murky instrumental depths. One can hardly imagine what this Prelude could serve as a prelude for; in its brief span of time, its rich and intense conception and realization are complete.



Photograph © Richard Fish, 1953

**ARNOLD
SCHOENBERG
ON
HIS
VARIATIONS
FOR
ORCHESTRA,
Op. 31**

*A
Dialogue
with
his
pupil,
Erwin
Stein,
originally
published
in
"Pult
und
Taktstock"*

E.S. How is it that you have not written for the orchestra for such a long time?

A.S. To tell the truth, my last work using the orchestra is the *Lieder for Orchestra*, Op. 22, but *Jakobsleiter* (*Jacob's Ladder*), which is half finished, is also for orchestra, although I have not yet written the orchestral score.

This halt in my production for orchestra can be accounted for above all by the fact—as you know—that I have been occupied since the summer of 1921 with my *Composition With Twelve Tones*, whose laws I have first had to explore with an ensemble of restricted size because, for the moment at least, doubling in octaves seems to me inadmissible.

E.S. Have you been able to avoid octave doublings completely?

A.S. Save for carelessness on my part or a slip of the pen, there are only a few rare places where octaves are doubled in passing. I am sometimes a little more tolerant in handling percussion instruments. But believe me, this is not a question of imperfection but because of the first results of new developments in this technique, which I would prefer not to explain for the moment.

You know that my goal has for some time been to find for my orchestral structures a form such that the fullness and saturation of sound shall be obtained only through the use of relatively few voices. For some time, and more and more firmly, I have avoided creating orchestral sonority by a *post facto* laying on of instruments, and have achieved it spontaneously through the movement and reciprocal rapport of the individual voices. Take for example *Erwartung*. You will find in that score a great number of *forte* nuances when, without octave doublings, only a portion of the orchestra is being employed.

You will recall that for more than twenty years I have been advising my pupils always to consider, whenever they are analyzing a passage marked *forte*, whether they could conceive it sounding better if marked *piano*.

E.S. Since you have, in Op. 16 and still more in Op. 22, dissociated the orchestra and, ignoring the similarities between groups and families, simply chosen exactly the instruments necessary, I am amazed that your new work should be written for a practically normal orchestra.

A.S. If it were not for America, we in Europe would be composing only for reduced orchestras, chamber orchestras. But in countries with younger cultures, less refined nerves require the monumental: when the sense of hearing is incapable of compelling the imagination, one must add the sense of sight.

In radio broadcasting, a small number of sonic entities suffice for the expression of all artistic thoughts; the gramophone and the various mechanical instruments are evolving such clear sonorities that one will be able to write much less heavily instrumented pieces for them. Even the

"agitators" in the musical world hardly ever attempt to yell their ideas anymore, and true artists never at all. The public is beginning to understand without one's having to resort to shouting into their ears.

But disarmament is as slow here as it is in other areas; so long as there continue to be nations which, in art, have not yet won their place in the sun, so long will America demand large orchestras and Europe maintain them; Europeans will remain incapable of acquiring that finesse of the ear that artists long to see more generally acquired as long as they continue to maintain large orchestras.

From this point of view, I place great hope in jazz. As late as 1918 they were crowding brass instruments into rooms of the smallest dimensions. Now we are beginning to find that a piano and four or five instruments suffice in a large garden, so great has been the transformation in the auditory sense of one part of the public.

Nonetheless, art music has reaped no decisive profit from this progress. Before that can happen, it is necessary for the wind instruments that are found in symphony orchestras to adapt themselves to the needs of chamber music. They have grown too accustomed, through the symphonic repertory, to taking shelter within great masses of orchestral sound, and are not always able to rise to a level of execution that would give greater relief to musical intensities.

Thus I have often had troublesome experiences with the different instrumental groups of the traditional orchestra, from which have arisen great material difficulties in the diffusion of my musical thought. Now I would like, for once, to avoid them, and so I have decided, for all these reasons, to compose for the traditional orchestra.

E.S. But how were you able to write all the parts that are required even in your most stripped orchestral compositions? How, in particular, were you able to keep all the instruments of a large orchestra busy in a way that would justify their use from the viewpoint of a just economy of the means of artistic expression?

A.S. Notice that the works of my middle period contained already several elements of the technique which is perfected in these Variations, notably in what has been called "open work." But this method of promoting the musical thought by variations in color and not by dynamism results in an economy different from the old one, one which cannot be imitated without danger. It is intimately tied, in effect, to the make-up of the musical phrase. In general, orchestral works are constructed today on the principle of gradation, and different effects of contrast are employed in the same way, whether in order to unite or in order to separate. This method, be it said in passing, is extremely primitive, like the symmetry which Bach was already able to dispense with. In contrast, I have for a long time been occupied with the technique of intensity, with the dynamism characteristic of

Mozart, which is different from that of Beethoven. With Mozart, the alterations of intensity generally underline limited oppositions only, oppositions born of a need for variation and for characteristic expression, so that the relations of intensity constitute less a means of construction than of expression and, consequently, change more frequently.

Musical color plays exactly the same role in my work. Coloristic changes serve, while animating the expression, to clarify the musical idea. That is their principal function; it is even possible to annul, as it were, the colors and to reduce the dynamic intensity of my works, to make (in a word) transcriptions of them for piano; and if one day we arrive at an age of musical intelligence alert enough to do without the props of a complete materialization, great pleasure will be taken in transcriptions.

One might imagine that in my orchestral style there is not to be found in any given work a passage that requires five trombones, because there is no *forte* that would correspond to their use. And nevertheless they are found indispensable in many places for reasons of clarity, which is more difficult to recognize.

The influence of chamber music on the totality of my conceptions was equally decisive in forming the character of my musical composition. This comes out not only in my chamber music, in *Pierrot lunaire* and in my Chamber Symphony, but long predates those productions. The proof is found in a song which I wrote in 1901 and which was performed at the "Buntes Theater" of Wolzogen to the audience's enormous indifference. The accompaniment comprised piano, piccolo, trumpet (mostly muted) and side drum. This was perhaps the first specimen of orchestral chamber music and a forerunner of jazz.

E.S. Why is it that in your later years you have so often written in so-called traditional forms?

A.S. I am grateful that you speak of "so-called" traditional forms. I hope that in time it will be realized that the form of these variations represents something new and I will be happy if I am still around when it is realized. The only old thing about traditional forms is their names, and these names are convenient, because we no longer hold to inventing poetic names, as in the time when they said *fugue* (at least, so it is asserted, but I have proved otherwise) because the voices were "fugitive"; *rondo* because one danced a round and *toccata* because one "struck" the organ (which merited such treatment less than the musicologists). What good is it to explain that the organ is not being mistreated as punishment for its wickedness, that the German word for "playing the organ" (*orgelschlagen*) has essentially the same origin as other German words designating bird songs (*Finkenschlag*, *Wachtelschlag*, *Nachtigallenschlag*, terms which designate the song of the finch, the quail, the nightingale); and we discover the same innocent character in such words as *Schlagschatten* (cast shadow) and *Menschenschlag* (human race).

Who then would claim to fix the forms of a *fugue*, a *rondo*, or a *toccata*? The conservatories, with their pervading influence, have long furnished—and in assembly line quantities—compositional diagrams which they take to be the forms of art; and their students, when they arrive at the age of production, model their compositions after these diagrams (or at least suppose they are doing so, for some of them have a guardian angel: talent). The estheticians are happy because they have inspired these products, which are thus put on the market, but in reality all this has no existence in art, where every content produces its own form; and only a robot, a tool of the conservatory, as it were, could deliberately check the expansion of form which every work of art tends to produce. To stop the creative process like this is to systematize ugliness itself, and mediocrity, and banality.

E.S. Why have you interrupted your work so long?

A.S. I am going to do myself a great deal of injustice in answering your question. This interruption merely confirms a truth that everyone already knows: that is, that I am a constructor.

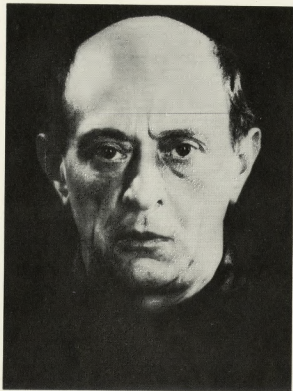
Here is what happened:

I began these Variations in May, 1926, and I made such progress that a few weeks later I thought I would be finished in several weeks. A trip interrupted my work. When, after a number of weeks, I tried to take it up again, I was unable to rediscover the idea of the variation I had already begun. I found an irregular number of voices at irregular intervals, beginning motifs of different lengths and breaking the principal line of the composition. About half the work was composed and it was impossible for me to rediscover the principle for the completion of the remainder, of which I had nothing but that sketchy outline. After searching in vain for a long time, I abandoned the work. Yet I kept on returning to it in the hope of finding what had escaped me, and last summer I determined to finish it at no matter what cost. I spent a week in the same fruitless search, working in the meantime on other sections. But I felt that I had to succeed in fixing permanently that variation, with all its relationships of weight and size. I set myself to the task one time more, and after a new effort and a new defeat, I resolved to renounce it and to adopt another principle for my variation.

I had arrived at a stage where it was not difficult to decide.

Just at the moment when I set to work, I found a sheet of paper which I had seen a hundred times without paying any attention to it, and on it was ... the solution that I had searched for so long, a solution that agreed perfectly with the one I had just invented anew!

This is a fate reserved for none save constructors: to have a plan of construction, to lose it and, what is worse, to find it again.



Photograph by Man Ray

**VARIATIONS
FOR
ORCHESTRA**

*Notes
by
Roberto
Gerhard*

Variations for Orchestra, Op. 31, dated Roquebrune, September 20, 1928, is the first composition for orchestra employing the twelve-note technique which Schoenberg had been evolving since the early Twenties in the eight works preceding Op. 31. The datum is of historical rather than aesthetic interest. The ordinary listener may ignore it—indeed, he should, and so should the professional musician *qua* listener. On more than one occasion Schoenberg expressed himself emphatically against undue concern with his method of composition with tone rows. *Method* is exactly all it amounts to, no more, no less. It constitutes a *modus operandi* of which the composer alone needs to be in control. Evidently, since no one can be credited with the ability to check aurally the row-derivation operations as carried out by the composer in the act of composing, it follows that these cannot logically have been intended or expected to carry “information” that could be of relevance to the listener. They are not. Schoenberg has been insistent but, alas, unheeded on this point. Let us for argument’s sake assume a hypothetical listener endowed *par impossible* with such a freak ability. There can be no doubt that, in such a case, an exact parallel to the condition of indeterminacy, as understood in physics, would be bound to arise: more and more information about what the row *does* would inexorably entail less and less awareness of what the music *is*. The belief, still obstinately adhered to in certain quarters, that the musical message will be more readily intelligible—completely intelligible only in the view of system-extremists—if the listener has real insight into the serial organization of the music, must be denounced as a total fallacy. To confuse method with the product of its application is an amazing *quid pro quo*. If I may be forgiven for putting it tritely: listening to music is not an analytical process. I offer no definition of what *in summa* it could positively be said to be. Yet, inversely, there is no substitute for analysis, for slow, painstaking analysis, as often as not quite as taxing as cipher-decoding, if what is wanted is knowledge of serial organization, insight into the compositional-technical relevance of row derivation. It would be plainly absurd to expect to gain it from actual audition. On the other hand, to bother the listener with anything that is not identifiable in audition, through *actual* listening, is not only plainly useless, it is bound to prove distracting and frustrating.

As used by Schoenberg in Op. 31, serial order affects interval organization only. It is a molecular order which—unlike the DNA molecule—

carries but a limited amount of *genetic* information. This affects motivic-thematic development and harmonic structure, i.e. pitch data, exclusively, and even these only in a general, as yet inchoate way, since rhythm and, ultimately, form are not affected but remain, in Schoenberg, entirely independent of any serial control. Rhythm, though far less somatic and more subtly combinatorial than anything before him, is handled by Schoenberg as instinctively as it was by classical composers. The classical constructive schemes, too, still remain valid for him. This is the reason why compositionally Op. 31 can be said to be tributary of the classical tradition and in direct line of descent from the Beethoven-Brahms variation concept. No doubt, Op. 31 is a far tougher proposition than Brahms' "Haydn Variations" to come to grips with aurally. A first audition is likely to result in a partly distorted, possibly even bewildering image. But then it is a difficult work, requiring many auditions; this should not be underestimated. The listener should also realize that the density of aural events is at most times such that a satisfying clarity of texture and correctness of balance cannot be achieved except on almost miraculous terms of precision on the part of the players, and of judgment on the part of the conductor. Finally, it should be admitted, too, that the phenomenon familiar in "communication"—a message swamped by its own energy—is not always strictly avoidable in Schoenberg.

The first over-all characteristic of Op. 31's total shape to seize upon in audition, is the striking, almost colonnade-like effect produced by the regular alternation of episodes of chamber-music texture and those that employ the full resources of a very large orchestra. Another important formal relationship is the happy correspondence between Finale and Introduction. Both start in the same fairly quiet tempo ($\text{♩} = 120$) and in similar atmospheric ambiance. The opening of the Finale, with *pp* tremolo strings and flutter-tonguing flutes is, in fact, an explicit cross-reference to measure 24 of the Introduction: the trombone's first statement of the B A C H motive (German note-spelling for B-flat, A, C, B), the work's motto. Bach is the spiritual dedicatee.

INTRODUCTION. Short but melodically significant phrases gradually emerge, at various levels, from the gentle wave-motion of the first eight measures. Soon, the first large orchestral wave arrives, leaving behind, exposed, the softly gleaming B A C H motive. The movement then slowly flutters out with

faint echoes of the beginning. A pause precedes the presentation of the **THEME**. The theme is very simply stated by the cellos (the end taken over by the first violins): a long drawn-out lyrical line resting on leisurely spaced-out chords. It is, of course, indispensable to remember the theme as circumstantially as possible in order later to find one's way about in the variations. Chiefly to be noted are the melodic profile and the rhythmical patterning (particularly the former) of the well spaced-out phrases. Another key feature is the theme's over-all shape: two twelve-measure periods, both subdividing into 5 + 7, the fives and the sevens again variously subdivided. This twice 5 + 7 metrical arrangement is the structural key factor: every variation, except the last one, will be based on this division.

VARIATION I brings a radical change in the picture, and the listener is likely to encounter here his first serious difficulties. The tempo becomes fairly brisk. The eventuation spreads over the entire auditory field, which takes the aspect of a vast mosaic made up of short, nervous motives flashing by like Morse signals, partly overlapping. This is an exciting, beautifully "aerated" texture that imposes on the ear a constant, pretty nimble shift of focus. Growing familiarity will discover the fabric to be woven of three distinct intertwining strands. The theme runs in the basses, its speed considerably increased but ductus and rhythmical configuration exactly preserved. A subsidiary strand runs in wood-wind pairs, inserting equally brief *legato* phrases. The third strand, dovetailing rhythmically with the second, is made up of light *staccato* motives in strings and horns. To begin with, the score-reading listener might find it helpful to follow Schoenberg's use of letters H and N (for principal and subsidiary parts) as a guide, but this should not be made a habit; scoreless listening will be found to be the more rewarding in the end.

VARIATION II falls deceptively easy on the ear; the quiet pace, the placid character, the small group of solo instruments employed, the closeness of the phrases' imitations—reminding one of shadows cast by tangible objects: all help. In reality this is a highly complex contrapuntal piece illustrating to perfection the rare art of "hiding art." On analysis it will reveal itself as a concourse of canons, the principal one taking place between solo violin and oboe. Occasional deviations from strictness mark the difference between the pedant and the master.

While thematically this variation initiates a "moving away from the theme," being wholly concerned with reflections of mirror-images of the original, **VARIATION III** returns to the original image, which now appears in the solo horn, except for the last phrase, taken over by the trumpet. Still a main thread, yet no longer the principal one, it serves here to support the more prominent second strand of a lusty climber that coils round it, made up of alternating string and wood-wind phrases in dotted eighth-note

rhythm. The two strands are enclosed in a striking net-pattern of brittle (reiterated sixteenth notes) string and wood-wind motives, the whole achieving a quality of sheer lace-work texture.

VARIATION IV once again distances itself from the original image of the theme in order to intercalate at this point—in accordance with classical usage—a relatively self-contained, “character-piece,” here in *Waltzer-tempo*. It is a case of second generation, so to speak, traits inherited from the parent theme still clearly showing, but adding up now to an entirely new individual physiognomy.

VARIATION V sharply increases the distancing process, the traits of the progenitor being hardly discernible in the offspring. Kinship is no longer overtly manifest; it has to be looked for in the “constitution”—only the blood-group reveals it, so to speak. In effect, at the beginning of the variation the basses spell the notes of the theme in what promises to be a *passacaglia* design, but this peters out after twelve measures and is no longer aurally identifiable when it gets absorbed in neighboring tissue. Again, on the classical model, the variation achieves instead a powerful unity of its own by concentrating on one single inherited trait (the semitone, deriving from the second half of the row) that effectively supplants all other traits. Webern is here anticipated—the variation could be described as a “study in semitones.” How this distantiation is effected without relaxation or severing of links with the basic row is of interest to the analyst alone; suffice it to mention here that the “constitution” shows the tone-row fibres no longer spreading horizontally, but vertically folding and twisting upon themselves, as tightly bundled together as chromosome packages. Variation V occupies seventh place in the entire set and stands out, on musical grounds alone and for orchestral splendor, as a central peak. It looks as if Schoenberg had made the inversion 7 + 5 of the original arrangement the structural basis of the set itself, i.e., of the entire work’s design. His well-known interest in numerology would seem to lend this conjecture credibility.

VARIATION VI, scored again for a small group of solo instruments, constitutes in many respects a *pendant* to the “character-variation” IV, and this enhances once more the place-significance of the central variation V.

VARIATION VII, too, matches in some ways variation III, above all in that it reverses the trend “away from the theme” which has prevailed so far, and brings the theme back, foreshadowed in the tenuous hues of soft piccolo, celesta, glockenspiel and solo violin hovering above the local proceedings. The function of this thematic top-line is thus inversely matching that of the solo horn in variation III, which initiated the shift of the theme onto a subsidiary plane.

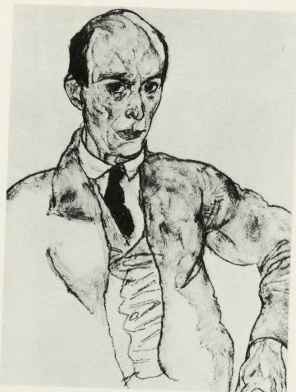
VARIATION VIII is overtly back on thematic ground and links also with variation II in that a canon, here by inversion, plays the leading part. This takes place between oboes and bassoons in triple unison each. Much of the piece's exciting quality is due to the exhilarating sound of that woodwind triplication. But more is added by the bustling string accompaniment and the unexpected shift of accents, due to inserted *pizzicato* or *col legno* double and triple stops, and to the uneven subdivision of the steady eighth-note run into groups of twos and threes. The over-all figuration uniformity produced by the continuous eighth-note run is another favorite with the classical composers.

VARIATION IX is the only one that departs from the basic metrical scheme and divides, instead, into 5+5 and 7+7. Why this scanning should feel heavier, almost like stalling, I could not say, but it does feel like that, I think. Also, the two fives slow down on the last measure and immediately regain speed, back again to tempo; the first seven starts *Poco sostenuto*, slows down, resumes tempo and ends once more *Poco sostenuto*, starting *a tempo* with the second seven. All this undoubtedly serves to emphasize the new metrical division which, in consequence, appears to have been quite deliberate. The procedure was to be remembered by Webern, who favored this device for emphasizing formal articulation. Here the strikingly halting kinetic behavior helps, above all, to make us aware that the variations have run their course.

The **FINALE** is a free, extended epilogue whose sprawling, almost miscellaneous, formal compound seems to be the outcome of struggling opposite feelings: a wish to linger reminiscently, and the mounting urge to conclude. It divides into five variously extended sections, each in turn giving way to one of the alternatives. The BACH motive, not heard since variation II and, significantly, at the climax of the central variation, reappears here at the very opening in shimmering registration, and asserts itself with increasing power during the course of the Finale. The piece might be described as a free *ricercar* or invention on the name of Bach, where the reminiscing episodes (recalling the spirit rather than the actual context of the "character-variations") fulfill the function of *divertimenti*. The BACH motive, in straight, retrograde and mirrored spellings, dominates the driving episodes, fresh offshoots from the theme crowding round it, as in homage, while the pace quickens by fits and starts. Then suddenly the music relaxes into the broadest, most intimate *adagio* in the whole work, preceding the final leap onto the breathtaking *Presto* that brings us to the end.

**VERKLAERTE
NACHT**

*Notes
by
Arnold
Schoenberg*



Portrait by Egon Schiele, 1917/The Bettmann Archive

At the end of the 19th century, the foremost representatives of the "Zeitgeist" in poetry were Detlev von Liliencron, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Dehmel. But in music, after Brahms' death, many young composers followed the model of Richard Strauss, by composing program music. This explains the origin of *Verklaerte Nacht*: it is program music, illustrating and expressing the poem of Richard Dehmel.

My composition was, perhaps, somewhat different from other illustrative compositions, firstly, by not being for orchestra but for a chamber group and secondly, because it does not illustrate any action or drama, but was restricted to portray nature and to express human feelings. It seems that, due to this attitude, my composition has gained qualities which can also satisfy if one does not know what it illustrates, or in other words, it offers the possibility to be appreciated as "pure" music. Thus it can perhaps make you forget the poem which many a person today might call rather repulsive.

Nevertheless, much of the poem deserves appreciation because of its highly poetic presentation of the emotions provoked by the beauty of nature, and for the distinguished moral attitude in dealing with a staggeringly difficult problem.

Promenading in a park,

Ex. 1



in a clear, cold moonlight night,

Ex. 2



Ex. 3



the woman confesses a tragedy to the man in a dramatic outburst.

Ex. 4



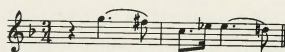
She had married a man whom she did not love. She was unhappy and lonely in this marriage,

Ex. 5



but forced herself to remain faithful,

Ex. 6



and finally obeying the maternal instinct, she is now with child from a man she does not love. She had even considered herself praiseworthy for fulfilling her duty toward the demands of nature.

Ex. 7



A climactic ascension, elaborating the motif, expresses her self-accusation of her great sin.

Ex. 8



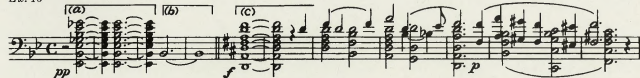
In desperation she now walks beside the man with whom she has fallen in love, fearing his verdict will destroy her.

Ex. 9



But "the voice of a man speaks, a man whose generosity is as sublime as his love."

Ex. 10



The preceding first half of the composition ends in E-flat minor (a), of which, as a transition, only the B-flat (b) remains, in order to connect with the extreme contrast of D major (c).

Harmonies (a), adorned by muted runs (b), express the beauty of the moonlight

Ex. 11



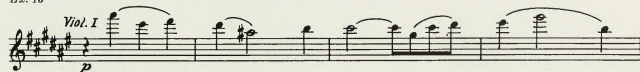
and, above a glittering accompaniment,

Ex. 12



a secondary theme is introduced,

Ex. 13



which soon changes into a duet between violin and cello.

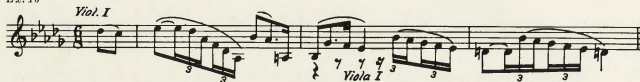
Ex. 14



This section reflects the mood of a man whose love, in harmony with the splendor and radiance of nature, is capable of ignoring the tragic situation: "the child you bear must not be a burden to your soul."

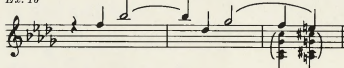
Having reached a climax, this duet is connected by a transition with a new theme.

Ex. 15



Its melody, expressing the "warmth that flows from one of us into the other," the warmth of love, is followed by repetitions and elaborations of previous themes. It leads, finally, to another new theme, which corresponds to the man's dignified resolution: this warmth "will transfigure your child," so as to become "my own."

Ex. 16



An ascension leads to the climax, a repetition of the man's theme (Ex. 10c) at the beginning of the second part.

A long coda section concludes the work. Its material consists of themes of the preceding parts, all of them modified anew, so as to glorify the miracles of nature that have changed this night of tragedy into a transfigured night.

It shall not be forgotten that this work, at its first performance in Vienna,* was hissed and caused riots and fist fights. But very soon it became very successful.

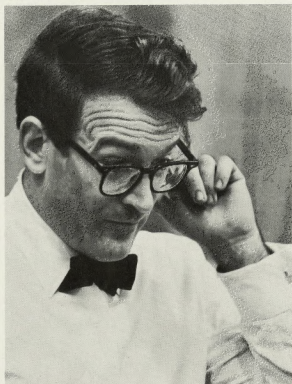
August 26, 1950

© 1963 by Mrs. Gertrud Schoenberg

*Tuesday, March 18, 1902 by the Rosé Quartet and members of the Imperial and Royal Court Opera Orchestra. (Ed.)

MARGINALIA

by
Robert
Craft



Robert Craft, photograph by Leigh Wiener

Verklaerte Nacht. Texts. The string sextet *Verklaerte Nacht*, Op. 4, was completed in Vienna, December 1, 1899. The string orchestra arrangement dates from 1917, and the revised version from 1943. The 1943 revisions are extensive, and not merely in the bass part, as claimed by the English edition of the Rufer catalogue of Schoenberg's works. Instrumental dispositions are re-aligned: a solo quartet replaces the double quartet near the beginning, solo violins are used instead of the divided violin section at measure 221, and a great number of performance directions are appended—so many that the 1943 edition can be said to supersede the 1917, and it is a better guide to performers of the solo Sextet than the original Sextet score. It adds metronome marks; adds or deletes or changes the positions of ritards and accelerandos; adds or clarifies marks of articulation, accentuation, phrasing.

String orchestra vs. solo Sextet. A case can be made against the multiple string version on grounds that the natural balance of the solo Sextet is irreproducible in normally constituted string orchestras. But though well-balanced performances of the arrangement have been rare, the advantages of the large string body are considerable. The multiple strings offer greater contrasts of volume and dynamics, as, for example, when they unmute, section by section, between measures 296 and 304—a comparatively pale effect in the solo Sextet; and greater contrasts and varieties of texture, by the use of solo and concertante combinations, and even, in a few places, by relieving the massed string sound with the original solo Sextet. The music is more powerful in the string orchestra version, I think, and, at the same time, because of the greater luxury of sound, lighter listening.

Verklaerte Nacht and *Pelleas and Melisande* have enjoyed successes as ballets, and *Verklaerte Nacht* is perhaps better known in the United States by its ballet title, *Pillar of Fire*. This is due to the fact that the composer furnished both tone poems with explicit literary programs, as well as to the fact that the expressive content and physical movement of both pieces are suited ideally to the so-called psychological ballet. Schoenberg identified the form of his music and the words of Dehmel's *Verklaerte Nacht* poem in step-by-step correspondences, as he did, later, his *Pelleas* music and the plot of Maeterlinck's play. The choice of *Verklaerte Nacht* as subject matter should be remarked too, for the fact that its setting, the night and the moon, foreshadows *Erwartung* and *Pierrot lunaire*; and *Verklaerte Nacht* is a direct anticipation of *Erwartung* in that both are dramatic narratives using the device of a woman's confession—though of course the substance of what is confessed (in *Verklaerte Nacht* it is unplanned parenthood) differs.

Pelleas and Melisande. Texts. A note in the English edition of the Rufer catalogue informs the reader that the plates of the second (1920) edition of the score were used for the study score as well, but the note does not mention a few later corrections in the study score because of which it is the most accurate text. *Pelleas* was the only one of his orchestral works that Schoenberg had an opportunity to conduct a number of times himself

—and in such unlikely places as St. Petersburg, Russia, and Los Angeles. His own conductor's score contains some valuable comment, therefore. For example, after a performance in Paris, December 8, 1927, Schoenberg added the following metronomes: ♩ = 116 – 120 at the beginning, which he advised conductors to beat in four instead of in twelve; ♩ = 76 – 80 at number [5]; ♩ = 152 – 160 at number [9]. These tempi seem fast to us, but Schoenberg's metronomes usually do, and so do all recordings of his own performances, the *Pierrot lunaire* for instance, which sounds precipitate, at times, in the slow movements; and the recorded première performance of the *Kol Nidre* which is even faster than the metronomes; and Schoenberg's own timing of the *Orchestra Variations*, Op. 31, as calculated on the manuscript, is sixteen-and-a-half minutes, or two minutes shorter than the not overly slow performance in this album. Not surprisingly, the turgid German recording of *Pelleas* (1949) irritated Schoenberg exceedingly (as did other aspects of its performance style, and especially the delaying of the beat, for emphasis, at climaxes). One other remark in Schoenberg's own score must be mentioned, though it remains a puzzle. The composer advised himself to conduct the third measure of number [30] as though it were 6/8, but whether this meant four beats for four sixteenths, and an additional beat for each group of six, I cannot say.

Why has *Pelleas and Melisande* remained almost unknown these sixty years? It has some of the attractions of popular music—the Liz Taylor theme in the strings, the Burton theme in the trumpet—and one may predict that when the Kapellmeisters get around to learning it (from these records) it is destined to become a warhorse. When that happens, by reason of its superior construction and unexampled wealth, *Pelleas* should prove the most durable of symphonic poems. The neglect is explained, I think, by the fact that few people can have heard the piece in the properly balanced performance without which music of such complex polyphonic design and harmonic density makes no sense at all. Consider this progression:



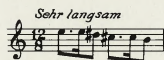
The upper strings and woodwinds play the quarter notes while the other wind instruments play the two chords, and if one or the other should dominate, the harmonic tension is dissipated.

The composer's own program notes to the *Chamber Symphony*, Op. 9 refer to general stylistic similarities between *Pelleas* and *Verklärte Nacht*—the fact that both works are large-scale forms in single movements, and that both begin and end quietly and in the same tonalities. But more specific examples may be noted, like the following melodic figurations:



and a study of Schoenberg's growth as it will appear by close comparison of these two works is worth more than any tracing of influences from other composers (for example of Strauss—*Don Quixote*—at number 32 in *Pelleas*).

No student of *Pelleas*, not even Alban Berg whose music owes so much to it (compare the first trumpet part four measures after number 29 in *Pelleas*, and the trumpet in Berg's *Marsch* from the Three Pieces for Orchestra), has drawn attention to its subtlest interlockings of thematic materials. But the composer who twenty years later was to discover the tone row could already display unique powers of transforming basic musical cells. Thus, the English horn pasturale, two measures before 51:



becomes, at number 56, the *agitato*,



a rhythmic nexus that must have appealed to the inventor of the Haupt-rhythmus, Alban Berg.

The Three Pieces for Twelve Instruments (1910)—in fact, two pieces and an unfinished third—may all have been written on February 8, 1910, the date on the autographs of the completed two. The manuscript is untitled, however, and Schoenberg may have intended to compose a greater number of pieces than three. The music was found in the composer's papers five years after his death, and the first performance took place in Berlin, October 10, 1957.

The three pieces are a major discovery in that they are stylistically different from Schoenberg's other music of the time. This is to say that they are not etudes for another opus, though they show Schoenberg's attraction to the possibilities of tiny forms directly after *Erwartung* and a full year before the six short pieces for piano, Op. 19; and his development of a solo instrument style far earlier than heretofore believed (which is to admit that, to my mind, most of the Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, of 1907, is orches-

tral rather than solo-instrumental in substance).

Instrumentally, as well as in other ways, the three pieces are remarkably similar to the five pieces composed some years later by Webern as his Op. 10. One may assume, I think, that Webern had seen Schoenberg's manuscript, even though Webern had already composed several cycles of short pieces and in a personal and mature idiom, and though, according to chronology, Webern's experiments in brevity must have influenced Schoenberg. (Otherwise the relationship of teacher and pupil is always the other way around, and even long after Webern's student period; his Trakl songs are unimaginable without *Pierrot lunaire*, and the second of his Op. 19 choruses is an outright steal from Schoenberg's "Chinese" chorus, Op. 27, No. 4.) The combination of solo string quintet, celeste, harmonium, and solo wind instruments does occur first in Schoenberg's Three Pieces, however, and only later in Webern's Op. 10, and so does the use of *ostinato* (in Schoenberg's third piece), of rapid changes of tempo and mood (in Schoenberg's first piece), and of so-called *klangfarben* textures.

The first piece, an octet for oboe, clarinet, muted horn, strings, is marked "rapid quarters" in the first measure, *ritard* in the second measure, "moderato quarters" in the third measure, *accelerando* in the sixth measure, *Langsamer* in the eighth measure. And the whole piece encompassing these six changes of tempo and mood is but twelve measures long. I will not attempt to analyze the musical logic with which this is effected, but will content myself with a single clue. Non-score-readers might be advised to listen for the three-note oboe figure in the first measure. It is a germ motive of the whole piece, and of the second piece as well.

This second piece, marked "moderato quarters," is scored for the solo wind and string quintets. It consists of four short phrases separated by pauses. The first phrase begins with a flute melody, the last three notes of which will be recognized as the oboe germ motive of the first piece; but the remainder of this flute line is also derived from the first piece. In the final phrase, flute and bass play the germ motive simultaneously, but in different intervallic orders.

The third piece, marked "quickly moving quarters," adds celeste and harmonium (or organ) to the ensemble of the second piece. The harmonium sustains a six-tone chord throughout, an aggregate of three perfect fourths and two augmented fourths; or by another nomenclature, the same three-tone chord sounded simultaneously in two pitch locations and joined by a perfect fourth. Most of the opusculum is an *ostinato*, as I have said, in which the repeated-note patterns are fragments of a motive stated at the beginning by the celesta and flute, a motive derived from a flute and bassoon figure in the second piece. The music breaks off at the end of the eighth measure, but one feels that Schoenberg did not abandon it there, that it was not unfinished, but that the next and probably final page of the score has been lost.

CREDITS



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Booklet cover:

A letter sent by Schoenberg to Robert Craft, together with a canon designed to be sung, with tonal result, in four different keys simultaneously (A, E-flat, C, and G—the initials of Schoenberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam). To further complicate matters, the canon is provided with an accompaniment line for an unspecified instrument.

"To:

Mr. Robert Craft
Arnold Schoenberg
November 4, 1950

The Concertgebouw can be thanked adequately only by imitating the true Dutch art

A S C G

Arnold Schönberg beglückwünscht herrlichst
Concert Gebouw: es lebe hoch und lang!

(Arnold Schoenberg warmly congratulates
Concertgebouw: long may it live!)

Berlin, March 1928

Dear Mr. Craft, news of your performances are very enjoyable.

—I possess one copy of this canon. I want you to check, whether the bass voice fits also to two parts. I cannot remember whether I planned it so. It seems to me it should only be added when all the three sing.

*With cordial greetings
yours Arnold Schoenberg"*

Booklet & Album Cover Designed by Jerry Smokler

Library of Congress catalog number R62-1365 applies to M2L 294; R62-1366 applies to M2S 694

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SIDE I	PELLEAS AND MELIANDE (Beginning)—Theodore Presser Co. (ASCAP)	19:00
SIDE II	PELLEAS AND MELIANDE (Conclusion)	21:10
SIDE III	PRELUDE TO THE GENESIS SUITE—Nathaniel Shilkret Music Co., Inc. (ASCAP)	5:30
	THREE LITTLE ORCHESTRA PIECES, 1910—Mrs. Arnold Schoenberg (BMI)	1:50
	VARIATIONS FOR ORCHESTRA, Op. 31—Mrs. Arnold Schoenberg (ASCAP)	18:30
		26:00
SIDE IV	VERKLAERTE NACHT (Transfigured Night) Associated Music Pub., Inc. (BMI) (revised edition)	25:00

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ROBERT CRAFT conducting
THE CBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PELLEAS AND MELISANDE
(Beginning)

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ROBERT CRAFT conducting
THE CBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PELLEAS AND MELISANDE
(Conclusion)

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1. PRELUDE TO THE GENESIS SUITE
with the Festival Singers of Toronto
Elmer Iseler, Director
2. THREE LITTLE ORCHESTRA PIECES, 1910
I - Rosche
II - Massage
III - Gehende
3. VARIATIONS FOR
ORCHESTRA, Op. 31



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STEREO



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ROBERT CRAFT conducting
THE CBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

VERKLAERTE NACHT
(Transfigured Night)

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