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# THE MUSIC OF FREDERICK SCHUMANN

VOL. VII

THEME AND VARIATIONS OP. 43B

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA/EUGENE ORMANDY

ODE TO NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE OP. 41

THE JUILLIARD QUARTET/GLENN GOULD, PIANO/JOHN HORTON, SPEAKER

VARIATIONS ON A RECITATIVE OP. 40

MARILYN MASON, ORGAN

TRIO FOR VIOLIN, VIOLA AND CELLO OP. 45

MEMBERS OF THE JUILLIARD QUARTET

FANTASY FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO OP. 47

ISRAEL BAKER, VIOLIN/GLENN GOULD, PIANO







THE MUSIC OF ARNOLD SCHOENBERG, VOL. VII

Side 1  
TRIO FOR VIOLIN,  
VIOLA AND CELLO, Op. 45 (ASCAP—21:33)  
MEMBERS OF THE JUILLIARD QUARTET  
Robert Mann, Violin  
Raphael Hillyer, Viola  
Claus Adam, Cello

Side 2  
ODE TO  
NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, Op. 41 (ASCAP—15:32)  
Poem by Lord Byron  
THE JUILLIARD QUARTET  
GLENN GOULD, Piano  
JOHN HORTON, Speaker

Side 3  
VARIATIONS  
ON A RECITATIVE, Op. 40 (ASCAP—13:57)  
MARILYN MASON, Organ

Side 4  
FANTASY FOR VIOLIN  
AND PIANO, Op. 47 (BMI—8:35)  
ISRAEL BAKER, Violin  
GLENN GOULD, Piano

THEME AND VARIATIONS, Op. 43B (ASCAP—11:42)  
THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA  
EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor

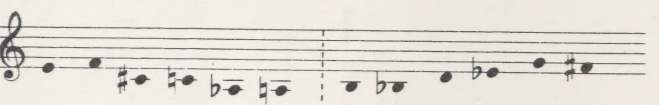
Until the end of his life, Arnold Schoenberg upheld the leisurely production pace—approximately one work per year—that he had established in the early 1920's. The *Ode to Napoleon* was his project for 1943 and one of three major works (the others were *Kol Nidrei* and *A Survivor of Warsaw*) prompted by World War II and its prefatory events. The Napoleon of this opus is Adolf Hitler, and, in this musical protest, Schoenberg, settled in America, depicts the horror of war and the colossal vanity of the individual who often brings it about.

Perhaps, like the reflections of his fellow expatriate Thomas Mann, who did his bit for the war effort (thereby obscuring his appalling pro-Wilhelmian stance, circa 1914) with his "Listen, Germany" broadcasts, Schoenberg's thoughts on war are those of an "unpolitical man." At the best of times, statecraft does not offer an easy target for music drama, and in times of war rarely does it deserve or get an analytical response. The prevailing tone of the *Ode to Napoleon* is far from war hysterical, but this is a mercurial work in which conventional developmental rhetoric is bypassed and rapid cinema-style dissolves are employed to link its diverse scenes.

The composer's commitment to the metaphorical pertinence of Byron's verse is underscored by the modified *sprechgesang*

delivery entrusted to the male narrator. In contrast to his earlier, more celebrated exercise in speech-song, *Pierrot Lunaire*, in which a female reciter swoops about a regular musical stave, the declamatory indulgences of the present work are restricted by ledger lines set immediately above and below a horizontal graph. The result: a more realistic deployment of the voice than in *Pierrot* that in no way inhibits the quasi-instrumental attitude of the recitation. Actually, Schoenberg enhances Byron's occasionally posturing poesy through his customary rhythmic dexterity and newly acquired sensitivity to the English language. He also decorates the narrator's graph with some enharmonically derived accidentals that are all but impossible to realize in performance, but that provide, in their subtle allusion to the gravitational force of tonality, an important clue to the musical purpose of this work. For the *Ode to Napoleon* is Schoenberg's most urgent plea on behalf of that cause for which he campaigned with increasing fervor in his American years—the coexistence of tonality and twelve-tone technique. Several works from that period, notably *Theme and Variations*, Op. 43A, *Kol Nidrei*, Op. 39, and *Variations on a Recitative*, Op. 40, for organ, are, in fact, almost conventionally tonal—only a certain disruptive impatience with the obligatory niceties of chromatic voice leading sets them apart from those heady essays in post-Romantic tonality which Schoenberg composed at the turn of the century. This impatience stems directly from his experience in twelve-tone writing, for, in these works he is, in fact, asserting a priority of triadic rather than tonal forms, or of what I have referred to in previous notes for this series of Schoenberg recordings as "low-yield dissonant combinations."

Other works from this period, such as the Piano Concerto, Op. 42, and Violin Fantasy, Op. 47, utilize a fairly conventional twelve-tone discipline. Even in these pieces, however, Schoenberg is careful to select tone rows notable for motivic symmetry rather than for diversity of outline. In such works it is the rule rather than the exception for the composer to exploit invertible siblings of his primary row forms and to minimize that transpositional promiscuity which twelve-tone writing theoretically favors. The row drawn upon for the *Ode to Napoleon* possesses an almost unlimited triadic potential.



Both of this example's six-tone units offer half a dozen triad combinations—the first half of the row quoted above, for instance, yields the primary chords of A major, A minor, C-sharp major, C-sharp minor, F major and F minor, while the row itself, because of the peculiar balance of its harmonic composites, permits only one genuine transposition, that which begins a semi-tone higher than the above quotation. As a result, the triadic properties of this row are exhaustively researched, though, due to that almost unrelenting stereophonic duel in which Schoenberg allows the piano and string quartet to engage, the textural significance of the superimposed triads is continually diffused. And, if the effect of these interlocking

chords in one part alone is not tonal, the result of their superposition is decidedly not polytonal. The harmonic totality is a weird, arbitrary and resoundingly successful manipulation of low-yield dissonant combinations, relentlessly shadowed by their obverse.

At a few climactic moments, Schoenberg restricts the accompaniment to a portion of the row material and relaxes his censorship of its triadic impact. The words, "earthquake voice of Victory," for instance, are set to a dominant-tonic cadence of C minor and a rhythmic projection of the opening motive from Beethoven's Fifth as well. The salute to Washington, which Byron apparently appended in the final stanza as an afterthought, but with which Schoenberg undoubtedly identified Franklin D. Roosevelt, is supported primarily by the seventh through twelfth tones of the original row. Among other triads, that of E-flat major is prominent within this sequence, and upon that chord and its historic connotations of heroic struggle the work ends.

In fact, Schoenberg's dramatic flair is particularly evident when he manipulates this antecedent-consequent division of his row to create the remarkable cameos in which the work abounds. In the eighth verse ("The Spaniard, when the lust of sway had lost its quickening spell, cast crowns for rosaries away, an Empire for a cell"), the first violinist discovers a suave *cantabile* solo in one half of the row while his colleagues doggedly invent an *ostinato* from the remaining six tones. Thus, the ambivalence of the allegiance of Church and State is ingeniously evoked.

The *Ode to Napoleon* has not yet acquired a reputation as one of the pivotal compositions in Schoenberg's canon. It is one of those works that, for better or worse, has changed the course of music in the twentieth century. But in relation to the special preoccupations of his later years, it is, I think, the crucial work. And its evaluation of the tone-row possibilities for triadic data is accomplished not only in vigorously didactic terms (Schoenberg never gave up lecturing, no matter how distracting his subject matter) but with a psychological subtlety that makes the work unique.

The full title of Schoenberg's Op. 47, *Fantasy for Violin With Piano Accompaniment*, describes its operational method as well as its instrumental priority. For the *Fantasy* started life as a fiddler's dream, a long, rhapsodic statement for solo violin, and, almost as an afterthought, Schoenberg attached an accompaniment that was barred from any competitive function. The piano introduces no theme and recapitulates none. Melodically and rhythmically subservient to the violin, it interjects its understandably cranky comments at which offbeat moments will least impede the fiddle's self-indulgent monologue.

There is, indeed, something incipiently aleatoric about this work. Although a recapitulative relationship exists between the outermost of its episodes, one feels that the intervening segments might be juggled *ad libitum* without compromising any structural objectivity.

Each episode, in its own way, contributes fine moments. Midway, a waltz scene recalls those lantern-lit, nocturnal diver-

sions that graced Schoenberg's earliest twelve-tone works. A solemn chorale-like statement follows and, almost but not quite, confirms a tonal impression with B flat as the unembarrassed root. This, in turn, resolves into one of those sardonic *stretti* which once typified Schoenberg's expressionist credo.

But, over all, one has the impression of an advocate willing to rest his case solely upon that most tangential of motives—the twelve-tone row—and a row which, in this case, is neither particularly interesting in itself nor manipulated with an invention sufficient to link the revelation of its motivic secrets with the spontaneous growth and unification of the structure.

—Glenn Gould

Very possibly, because the core repertoire of twentieth-century musical life is drawn from the near past and expanded backwards into the far past, and because this astonishing accumulation of often first-class works of every style and variety constantly fills the air, our minds and our ears, contemporary composers have had a particularly hard time of it. No major composer has been able to escape the pressure of this paradoxical cultural phenomenon, nor has he been able to withstand its power to draw him into its orbit at some point in his musical career.

Even though Schoenberg is rightly credited with making the greatest single advance in music in this century, primarily as regards pitch organization, he never lost sight of the traditions on which he based his art. True, he was unable to escape the pressure of an acute historical awareness and all the problems it raised for a composer wishing to break new ground, but, on all available evidence, it is fair to say that he actually embraced the past with its richness of musical thought, considering it completely consistent with his activity as a creative musician to compose works in an older style. It seems quite clear that in a 1948 essay entitled *On revient toujours* he had Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms in mind: "But a longing to return to the older style was always vigorous in me, and from time to time I had to yield to that urge. This is how and why I sometimes write tonal music. To me, stylistic differences of this nature are not of special importance."

In approaching the *Variations on a Recitative*, Op. 40, for organ, and the *Theme and Variations*, Op. 43B, for orchestra, one would do well to keep these remarks by Schoenberg in mind. They provide us with more than a clue to the seemingly inconsistent pattern of his compositional attitude. They go far toward helping us understand a great nature and a great mind. Schoenberg faced the past with the same courage with which he faced the present. (There is a secret to this that only men like Schoenberg know.) Whether he composed "tonal" or "twelve-tone" music, his signature remained the same. Only the approach to one spectrum or another of pitch combination changed. Still, we can discern certain freedoms both in thought and gesture in the twelve-tone works that do not always inform the "tonal" works of his American period, a period which we date from his arrival in the United States in 1933. If we compare a twelve-tone work like the *String Trio*, Op. 45, to the two "tonal" works mentioned earlier, we are led to

an inescapable conclusion that Schoenberg was bolder and more daring, i.e., essentially more creative, in his twelve-tone works than in his "tonal" works. We can account for this partially on the grounds of the relative position of his musical consciousness to a closeness or to a remoteness from past traditions. While even in such twelve-tone works as the Fourth Quartet, the Violin Concerto and the Piano Concerto, traditional precedents of formal design and articulation, phrase structure, melodic extension and continuation and metrics can be asserted, the *String Trio* is singularly free of them. The logic of a continuous through-composed music (of which Schoenberg was one of the last masters) is abandoned in favor of another kind of logic: a discontinuity of aborted gestures, some purely timbral, some powerfully visceral, some unbelievably lyric. What is being projected is an aural mosaic of astonishingly vivid, sharply differentiated musical images that follow each other in a totally unpredictable pattern of succession. The wonder of this work after all these years is that the repetitions in Part 3 of events heard earlier still come to the expectant ear with new vigor and freshness, still produce the magic of joy in their recognition. I do not know why Schoenberg chose to designate the sections of the work as: First Episode (following on the first fifty-one measures which obviously comprise Part 1 but which is not so marked); Part 2, Second Episode; and Part 3 (which compresses the strongest, most characteristic images of Part 1 and the First Episode into what?—a "recapitulation," thus turning Part 2 and the Second Episode into a "development" section?). There is an inner "program," a deeply personal one, in this work that I am convinced provided Schoenberg with the scenario for these psycho-dramatic musical events which unfold very much like the images of certain contemporary theater and film. The *String Trio* is, in this sense, Schoenberg's most contemporary work, for in it he expresses musically what is the most painful aspect of contemporary consciousness—its alienation and disorientation, its disaffection with purpose and direction. Extremes of psychological tension and exhaustion mixed with violent outbursts and the most painful tenderness characterize the emotional life of the gestures of the *Trio*. Its sensuous impact on our nervous system is cruel in the way the sensuous impact of modern theater can be cruel in breaking through our urbane, sophisticated poses and spiritual hypocrisies and in revealing the human heart in all its desperate nakedness.

One of Schoenberg's favorite forms of composition was the variation, an archetypal structure of music itself which belongs to no special mode of pitch organization and to no particular historical tradition. To make a statement—verbal, visual, musical—and to vary it is a property of the human mind that relishes invention, disguise, transformation, in fact is incapable, except on the primitive or childish level, of simple reiteration, mere repetition. Variation provides the composer with the security of a given—the statement in whatever form it comes. This, in turn, permits him the freedom to allow his imagination its fullest spread, to invent change on the unchanging to the fullest capacity of his craft and expressive power. In the *Variations on a Recitative*, for organ, Schoenberg created a solo keyboard work of gigantic dimensions and implications in the great line of Beethoven's "*Eroica*" *Varia-*

tions and Brahms' *Handel Variations*—both for piano solo—both supreme instances of unflagging formal invention, and both polyphonic *tours de force*. These works may not have been specific models for the *Organ Variations* of Schoenberg, but they hover over them like protecting, guiding spirits. On the purposely open-ended, inconclusive motivic cells which form the opening "recitative," Schoenberg erects a Gothic structure monumental in size. It is not really important whether this is a "tonal" work or not. Nevertheless, since it is often assigned the key of D minor, let us examine this for a moment. If making constant reference to a given pitch locus, D in this case, makes a work "tonal," then Op. 40 is unquestionably tonal and in D. But if it takes more than constant reiteration of a pitch, melodically and harmonically, and more than chromatic motion to that pitch and away from it, then Op. 40 is not "tonal." What, then, is it? The answer for the present must be: I do not know. Two essential internal conditions in the pitch organization and movement lead me to deny the attribution of D minor (and perhaps even just D, since even that designation is lacking in meaning unless we are willing to grant Schoenberg his idea about *pantonicity*): First, there are no large-scale harmonic cadences, no broad patterns of harmonic motion that assert the minor mode (I am thinking of the "D minor" of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler); second, the saturation of the work by means of one local harmonic motion after another resolving from the nearest half steps available (forming mostly fourth chords) to major or minor triads is so complete metrically that no single beat, main or subdivided, escapes harmonic change. The musical result is a kind of chromatic *perpetuum mobile*; the acoustic result is an opaque harmonic noise of an often intolerable density (even when played on the piano). The *organ sound* of the work reinforces my feeling of a Gothic, daemonic force that rides the torrent of harmonic restlessness like one of Hieronymus Bosch's devils. There is a tormented, distorted, gargoyle face to this music that can be beautiful or ugly, depending on how one responds to images, musical or otherwise, of great pain and to expressions of human suffering. However this music is taken, it is undeniably a work by Arnold Schoenberg—and like the *String Trio* it is music of "cruelty."

The *Theme and Variations*, Op. 43B, for orchestra, need not occupy too much of our attention here. Where the musical impulses of Op. 40 and Op. 45 appear to be deeply personal, the same does not appear to be true of Op. 43B. In fact, there is a curious awkwardness to the work, suggestive of a strong degree of self-consciousness in the building of theme itself and in the carrying out of the variation plan. Perhaps this was the result of a limited personal commitment to the writing of a work intended, as was the original version of Op. 43B, for the ubiquitous American school band. The electric charge which crackles in the best Schoenberg is missing here. Still, Schoenberg the craftsman is at work; and one is witness again to the power of his contrapuntal skill in keeping alive a skein of melodic lines that never sags and to his indomitable energy that drives the work through seven variations to a brilliant finale.

—George Rochberg

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**MEMBERS OF THE JUILLIARD QUARTET**

**ROBERT MANN, Violin; RAPHAEL HILLYER, Viola;**

**CLAUS ADAM, Cello**

Bomart Music Publ. (ASCAP)

## SIDE 4

**1. FANTASY FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, Op. 47 ..... 8:35**

**ISRAEL BAKER, Violin**

**GLENN GOULD, Piano**

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**2. THEME AND VARIATIONS, Op. 43B ..... 11:42**

**THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA**

**EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor**

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**ODE TO NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, Op. 41 ..... 15:32**

**Poem by Lord Byron**

**THE JUILLIARD QUARTET**

**GLENN GOULD, Piano**

**JOHN HORTON, Speaker**

G. Schirmer, Inc. (ASCAP)

**SIDE 3**

**VARIATIONS ON A RECITATIVE, Op. 40 ..... 13:57**

**MARILYN MASON, Organ**

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ARNOLD SCHOENBERG, VOL. 7



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TRIO FOR VIOLIN, VIOLA AND CELLO, Op. 45  
MEMBERS OF THE JUILLIARD QUARTET  
ROBERT MANN, Violin; RAPHAEL HILLYER, Viola;  
CLAUS ADAM, Cello

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ODE TO NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, Op. 41  
Poem by Lord Byron  
THE JUILLIARD QUARTET  
GLENN GOULD, Piano  
JOHN HORTON, Speaker

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VARIATIONS ON A RECITATIVE, Op. 40  
MARILYN MASON, Organ  
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SIDE 4  
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1. FANTASY FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, Op. 47  
ISRAEL BAKER, Violin  
GLENN GOULD, Piano  
2. THEME AND VARIATIONS, Op. 43B  
THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA  
EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor

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