

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

“MUSICAL IDEA” AND MOTIVIC STRUCTURE IN SCHOENBERG’S OP. 11, NO. 1

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Arnold Schoenberg’s response to Rudolf Kolisch’s analysis of his Third String Quartet reveals something about the composer’s perspective on structure in his serial works. Kolisch had apparently sent Schoenberg a row-count of the piece, to which the composer replied:

But do you think one’s any better off for knowing it? ... The only sort of analysis there can be any question of for me is one that throws the idea into relief and shows how it is presented and worked out.²

“Musical idea” is a concept that preoccupied Schoenberg throughout his career, and it is safe to deduce from this that *all* of his music—tonal, atonal and twelve-tone—can and should be analyzed as presentations and workings-out of an idea, whatever form that idea may take. This paper will illustrate how certain motivic successions in the first of the *Drei Klavierstücke*, Op. 11, project one kind of musical idea, how the musical form makes this idea easier for the listener to perceive, and how local motivic successions enable parts of the form to fulfill their customary function. For brevity’s sake, it will not consider how the idea is expressed in the harmonic realm—Allen Forte and Gary Wittlich have already made significant suggestions on that topic (as does Bruce Quaglia in Chapter 12 of this book, in a different way).³ The paper will also refrain from discussing how the piece’s rhythm manifests the idea, though that would be a valuable study.

Before explaining how the motives of the first piano piece project one kind of musical idea, we need to make an attempt to define the term. Let

us start with a definition Schoenberg himself gave in the essay “New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea.”

In its most common meaning, the term idea is used as a synonym for theme, melody, phrase or motive. I myself consider the totality of a piece as the *idea*; the idea which its creator wanted to present. But because of the lack of better terms I am forced to define the term idea in the following manner: Every tone which is added to a beginning tone makes the meaning of that tone doubtful. If for instance, G follows after C, the ear may not be sure whether this expresses C major or G major, or even F major or E minor; and the addition of other tones may or may not clarify this problem. In this manner there is produced a state of unrest, of imbalance which grows throughout most of the piece, and is enforced further by similar functions of the rhythm. The method by which balance is restored seems to me the real *idea* of the composition.⁴

Schoenberg defines idea for a tonal piece and makes his illustration depend on tonal contexts; but underlying this definition is a three-step process that could be generalized for non-tonal contexts. The process works as follows. Step 1—the composer presents some musical element that is definite in context; in Schoenberg’s illustration, the listener has no doubt that C is the tonic of C major, so long as C is all he or she hears. Step 2—Another element appears, causing the listener to become uncertain about which of many contexts could unite the new element with the original; in Schoenberg’s illustration, C followed by G could be in at least four different keys. This uncertainty causes unrest. Step 3—The following music heightens the uncertainty about the proper context within which its initial elements relate to each other, then finally resolves that uncertainty. Schoenberg does not explain in his illustration what the method is by which balance is restored; probably because there are several possibilities. One method would be to state G then C harmonized by dominant and tonic, in some conclusive way; showing that while G and C may have had other roles within the piece, their main ones are fifth and first scale degrees in C major, the home key. Patricia Carpenter, Severine Neff and others have constructed analyses of tonal music that follow schemes similar to but much more complex than the one just outlined.⁵ Few scholars, however, have attempted to carry such a scheme over to the analysis of Schoenberg’s atonal or serial music. To do so, we would have to strip the process described above of its dependence on tonal contexts. We could do this in the following manner. Step 1 presents some sort of original material (for our purposes, a motive). Step 2 follows it with another motive that seems partially or almost completely unrelated to it, causing the listener to wonder what motivic context, what network of motivic relationships could explain how the second motive is derived from

the first. Step 3 heightens the unrest caused by the opposition of the two motives by continuing to vary the second so that it bears not even a remote relationship to the first. Step 3 then solves the problem by presenting the second motive in such a way that its derivation from the first is abundantly clear.

Now, it should be pointed out that this organizing process comprising statement, opposition and reconciliation is not an original conception of Schoenberg's, though he does take it in unique directions. It echoes a common procedure in philosophy from ancient times to Schoenberg's era--that is, dialectic. Schoenberg's biographers tell us that he was an ardent student of philosophy, particularly in his youth.⁶ He, like many others in his culture (including Schenker), attached great importance to German philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is at least possible that Schoenberg learned about dialectic as a means of contemplating metaphysical issues through reading Kant, or that he learned how to explain the progression of history, life or art dialectically from Hegel.

It was suggested several times above that there are other forms a Schoenbergian musical idea may take in addition to reconciled oppositions. Some of Schoenberg's early tonal songs ("Traumleben," Op. 6 for example) and atonal songs ("Angst und Hoffen" from Op. 15) present only part of a dialectic; that is, an opposition that remains unresolved throughout. And many of the recitations in *Pierrot Lunaire* organize themselves around a central image (like the swarm of giant, black butterflies in "Nacht" or the cross in "Die Kreuze") rather than a dialectical process. But Op. 11, no. 1 belongs to a good-sized portion of Schoenberg's vocal and instrumental music that does express a resolved opposition, as this presentation will show.

Let us now turn to the specific manifestation of the idea in the first piano piece. There are many statement-opposition-resolution processes existing side-by-side in this piece; all of them share the same original motive, but each has its own contrasting motive. One of these dialectical processes should be thought of as central, since it explains more of the piece's significant interval successions than any other. This process starts in ex. 13-1 with the statement of Schoenberg's original motive <-3,-1>, which appears at the head of the *Grundgestalt*. (Note that the original motive is described as an ordered pitch interval succession; the same will be true for all the other motive forms in the piece.)

original motive: <-3, -1>

Mäßige

p

Grundgestalt

Example 13-1, The original motive and *Grundgestalt* of Op. 11, no. 1

Example 13-2 shows the opposing motive in our central dialectical process making its initial appearance in the left hand at mm. 4-5; its intervals are <+4,+3,+1>. At this point, the contrasting motive is not all that different from the original—after all, it contains its inversion—but the opening <+4,+3> succession does begin to bring up questions about how this motive could derive from the original.

4

<+4, +3, +1>

Example 13-2, The opposing motive in the central dialectical process, left hand, mm. 4-5

However, more remote motive-forms begin to appear not long after. Two variants of the contrasting motive appear prominently in mm. 12-17, which is a section most commentators hear as an extreme contrast to the first part of the piece. Example 13-3 illustrates the first variant at the top of the run in m. 12; it has the intervals <+4,+4,+9>, seemingly completely unrelated to the original motive, which contributes to the feeling of contrast. Example 13-4 depicts the second variant, the chord formed by the piano harmonics in mm. 14-17, <+4,+4,+3>. Again, this seems fairly distant from the original motive. Now, the reason one can call both of these variants of the contrasting motive in ex. 13-2 is because they belong to the same set-class, 4-19 (0148); and therefore they can be derived from the form in ex. 13-2 by familiar transformations, such as reordering of pitches. As example 13-5 illustrates, example 13-4’s form derives from

that of ex. 13-2 by rotation. Example 13-5 also shows that *both* motive forms derive from another form by rotation; the rotation one step prior to ex. 13-2 would have been $\langle +3, +1, +4 \rangle$. This motive-form, which will be called the “prototypical” form of the motives belonging to set-class 4-19, explains that entire set class as arising from an overlap of the original motive’s inversion with an interval-expanded form of its retrograde.

Example 13-3, A remote variant of the opposing motive, m. 12

Example 13-4, Another remote variant of the opposing motive, m. 14

1. a prototypical version of SC 4-19 that links the inversion of the original motive with an interval-expanded form of its retrograde
2. SC 4-19 as it appears in Ex. 2 (transposed)
3. SC 4-19 as it appears in Ex. 4

Example 13-5, Derivation of the motive forms in Exs. 13-2 and 13-4 from the prototypical version of SC 4-19

What Schoenberg seems to be doing at the Piano Piece’s beginning is using rotation to produce increasingly remote contrasting motives. The prototype $\langle +3, +1, +4 \rangle$, which does not appear in the first part of the piece, overlaps two successions closely related to the original motive. By one rotation of it, Schoenberg obtains a form for mm. 4-5 that contains only one transformation of the original motive. By a second rotation, he acquires a form for mm. 14-17 that contains no transformations of the original motive. Not only is he bringing forth a contrasting motive in the first part of the piece, but also it becomes more contrasting as the music progresses--the motivic structure is heightening the opposition. (I want to make a brief aside at this point: In an article published in *Music Theory Spectrum* in 1992, I defined the “basic motive” of Schoenberg’s Opus 22 song “Seraphita” as any two-interval succession combining an ordered pitch interval ± 1 with an ordered pitch interval ± 3 [I called this Category A]. I then proposed three categories of motive transformations: by octave complementation of ordered pitch intervals [Category B], reordering of pitches [Category C], and expansion by half step of ordered pitch intervals [Category D] (illustrations of the four motivic categories are given as Example 13-6).

Category A:

$\langle +1, +3 \rangle$	$\langle +3, +1 \rangle$	$\langle -1, -3 \rangle$	$\langle -3, -1 \rangle$
$\langle -1, +3 \rangle$	$\langle -3, +1 \rangle$	$\langle +1, -3 \rangle$	$\langle +3, -1 \rangle$





Variations on Category A forms:

1. Octave complementation (produces Category B forms)

$\langle +1, +3 \rangle$	→	$\langle -11, +3 \rangle$
	→	$\langle +1, -9 \rangle$
	→	$\langle -11, -9 \rangle$

Example 13-6, The basic motive in “Seraphita,” Op. 22, no. 1 (also applicable to Op. 11, no. 1)

2. Pitch reordering (produces Category C forms)

$\langle +1, +3 \rangle$	→		→		→	$\langle -4, +1 \rangle$
						$\langle +3, -4 \rangle$
						$\langle +4, -3 \rangle$

3. Interval expansion (produces Category D forms)

$\langle +1, +3 \rangle$	→	$\langle +1, +4 \rangle$
	→	$\langle +2, +3 \rangle$
	→	$\langle +2, +4 \rangle$

Example 13-6, Continued

I further asserted that ordered pitch interval successions that contained members of Category A only were closest to the motivic source, successions combining A forms with B, C, or D forms were next closest, successions consisting of only the transformations next closest, and successions containing not even the transformations furthest from the source. That same ranking of types of ordered pitch interval succession, based on the same Category A motive, is what drives my assertions about “closeness” and “remoteness” in this paper).⁷

Much of the rest of the piece continues to present interval successions belonging to set class 4-19, many of them even more remote than the ones we have discussed, and others that seem to take steps back in the direction of the motivic source. In mm. 20-24, reproduced in example 13-7, two recurrences of the $\langle +4, +3, +1 \rangle$ motive of ex. 13-2 are followed by third and fourth successions that are no longer rotations of the prototype, but reorder pitches of the prototype and its retrograde inversion to present completely new interval combinations and more complex contours than the ascending-only contours we have been discussing.

19 *sehr langsam*

1. $\langle +4, +3, +1 \rangle$

2. $\langle +4, +3, +1 \rangle$

3. $\langle +8, -4, +7 \rangle$: reordering of $\langle +3, +1, +4 \rangle$ followed by octave complementation

4. $\langle +7, -4, -4 \rangle$: reordering of $\langle +4, +1, +3 \rangle$, R1 of the prototype, followed by octave complementation

rit. p

Example 13-7, Four occurrences of motives belonging to 4-19 in mm. 20-24

Schoenberg takes a step back toward the motivic source, but then progresses out from it one step further than the forms that had been most remote up to that point, those of m. 12 and mm. 14-17. The step back can be explained by referring to the piece’s musical form—mm. 20-23 are part of the A prime section in an ABA’ that spans the first 33 measures, and the motives therein contribute to this section’s reprise function. But Schoenberg, knowing that the musical idea calls for resolution at or near the end of the piece, does not want to answer the question of how 4-19 relates to the original motive quite yet—and so instead of taking one step further back to the prototype, he gives us two forms even more remote than before in m. 24.

The rest of the A prime section, mm. 25-38, also alternates remote forms with rotations that turn back toward the motivic source. One of the forms close to the source is illustrated in example 13-8a: the head motive of the stretto at mm. 25-27. As example 13-8b shows, this motive ensues from taking the rotation process of ex. 13-5 one step further, producing the succession $\langle +1, +4, +4 \rangle$, which is then retrograded. What makes the resulting succession, $\langle -4, -4, -1 \rangle$, a step back in the direction of the motivic source is the interval-expanded form of the original motive that it contains, $\langle -4, -1 \rangle$. The reason for stepping back seems again to be the location in the form—we are in a varied reprise, A prime.

Example 13-8a, A motive form closer to the source in mm. 25-27

Example 13-8b, Derivation of Ex. 13-8a's form through further rotation

The next part of the piece, mm. 34-52, constitutes a contrasting C section. Almost all of the motive forms belonging to 4-19 in the C section are remote not only from the original motive but also from the forms created by rotation. Example 13-9a presents the last four notes of both runs in m. 39, which project the interval succession $\langle +4, +4, +9 \rangle$, a form we encountered earlier at m. 12. As ex. 13-9b shows, this motive form results from a complicated transformation process involving reordering pitches and octave-complementing intervals in $\langle +4, +1, +3 \rangle$, the retrograde inversion of ex. 13-5's prototype.

Example 13-9a, Remote motive forms in m. 39

reordered: octave-complemented:

RI of ex. 5's prototype

Example 13-9b, Derivation of the motive form in Ex. 13-9a from the prototypical 4-19

Further examples of remote forms come not much later, in m. 41 (see example 13-10a). This measure presents non-rotational variants of the prototype as well as the retrograde inversion of the second rotation in ex. 13-5. On the second beat, the $\langle +3, +4, +4 \rangle$ vertical illustrating rotation 2's retrograde inversion overlaps with another vertical, $\langle +4, +4, +5 \rangle$, which depends on reordering and octave complementation to derive itself from the retrograde inversion of the prototype. On the fourth beat, both verticals appear again.

Example 13-10a, More remote motive forms in m. 41

1. $\langle +3, +4, +4 \rangle$	2. $\langle +4, +4, +5 \rangle$	$\langle +4, +1, +3 \rangle$	reordered: $\langle +4, -8, +5 \rangle$	octave-complemented: $\langle +4, +4, +5 \rangle$
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Example 13-10b, Derivation of the forms in Ex. 13-10a from the prototype

1. $\langle +19, +9, +4 \rangle$
(from bass to soprano)

2. $\langle +9, +4, +4 \rangle$

Example 13-11, More remote forms in mm. 47 and 49

As example 13-11 shows, other remote forms appear at m. 47 (both hands, second beat plus pickup to it) and m. 49 (the sonority on the downbeat of that measure). At this point, the opposition between motives belonging to 4-19 and the original motive is at its height. Finally (in example 13-12), the left hand of mm. 51-52 ends the C section with the intervals $\langle +4, +4, +9 \rangle$ appearing at the top of a pair of consecutive runs, in a way similar to m. 39. This time, however, since something similar to the opening motive is playing in the right hand, the remote motives are part of an “integrating” process (as Reinhold Brinkmann puts it).⁸ The thematic integration of mm. 50-52 prepares for a solution of the motivic problem involving 4-19 in the measures to follow.

Top voice: $\langle -4, -1, +1, -3, -1 \rangle$, similar to *Grundgestalt's* $\langle -3, -1, +2, -4, -1 \rangle$

$\langle +4, +4, +9 \rangle$ $\langle +4, +4, +9 \rangle$

Example 13-12, The remote motive $\langle +4, +4, +9 \rangle$ taking part in a “thematic integration,” mm. 50-52

The piece’s final section, mm. 53-64, which we will call A double prime, brings with it several forms of 4-19 that return back toward the motivic source. Example 13-13 illustrates the left hand of m. 54; which, following close behind the runs of mm. 51 and 52, and in a more relaxed rhythm, is meant to be heard as a less complex version of the preceding

measures. Not only is the rhythm less complex here. The middle of m. 54’s run is a restatement of $\langle +4, +3, +1 \rangle$, the first rotation of the prototype and the rotation most nearly like it, which had made its appearance originally at mm. 4-5. In addition, example 13-14 shows a form closely related to rotation 2 making its appearance on the downbeat of m. 58 in the right hand.

54

cresc.

$\langle +4, +3, +1 \rangle$

Example 13-13, Return to a closer motive form in the left hand of m. 54

58

p *sf dim*

$\langle +3, +4, +4 \rangle$
RI of rotation 2 in ex. 5

Example 13-14, Another close motive form in the right hand of m. 58

Schoenberg is clearly turning his motives back toward their source in preparation for the solution of his motivic problem, which would entail putting forward the prototypical form of 4-19 as the explanation of how all the motivic successions just described can relate to the original motive. And he does in fact present both the retrograde and the inversion of the prototype in the final measures, though in veiled ways. Examples 13-15 and 13-16 illustrate the retrograde and inversion respectively. The retrograde occurs at the beginning of m. 57 in the right hand, and it is obscured quite a bit by its partially-chordal presentation and the notes surrounding it. The prototype’s inversion appears in mm. 54-59 as a “middleground” motive. This solution is more convincing than the one put

forth at m. 57, since F and D get contextual emphasis as beginning and end of a chromatic motion (not to mention the alto line's reiteration of those pitch classes in that order in mm. 56-57). C# follows as the top voice of the right hand's pedal in m. 58, and A as the bottom voice of the left hand's pedal in m. 59 (the right hand also comes down to A on the second beat of 59, producing a rare octave and further emphasizing this pitch class). F-D-C#-A projects an octave-compounded version of $\langle -3, -1, -4 \rangle$, which is the only transformation of the prototype that begins with the original motive $\langle -3, -1 \rangle$. This interval succession reconciles set class 4-19 to the original motive by explaining 4-19 *and all the interval successions within it* as an overlapping of the original motive with an interval-expanded form of its retrograde inversion, $\langle -1, -4 \rangle$.

Example 13-15, The prototype beginning to “restore balance” in the inner voices of m. 57

The image displays a musical score for Example 13-16, consisting of two systems of piano and bass staves. The first system starts at measure 54 and ends at measure 56. The piano part features a melodic line with a circled note in measure 55, and dynamic markings of *p* and *f*. The bass part has a circled note in measure 56. The second system starts at measure 57 and ends at measure 59. The piano part has a circled note in measure 58, and dynamic markings of *p* and *sf dim*. The bass part has a circled note in measure 59. Below the score is a simplified version of the motif, represented by a single treble clef staff with the notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5, with the intervallic structure <-3, -1, -4> indicated below.

Example 13-16, The most definitive statement of the prototype, in the middleground of mm. 54-59

To summarize the ground just covered: the strand of the motivic structure involving members of set class 4-19 manifests the musical idea by presenting the original motive <-3,-1>, opposing to it a contrasting motive that gradually becomes more remote from the original, bringing in even more complex and remote variations of the contrasting motive, and finally offering the “prototypical” form of the contrasting motive—that form which most clearly explains its relation to the original.

As was suggested earlier, there are other motives that engage in dialectical processes with the original <-3,-1>. Example 13-17 traces the history of the “X” motive <-2,+1>, which makes its first salient appearance in the alto part of m. 4. (The label for this motive is borrowed from Jan Maegaard.)⁹ Example 13-18 traces the development of the Y motive <+3,+1,+1> that ends the tenor part in mm. 4-5. Variations of X and Y play substantial roles in the movement, and each motive goes through a process similar to the one we have traced for 4-19: simple variations followed by more complex variations, followed by a solution

that explains the contrasting motive's relation to the original. In this way, Schoenberg's musical idea is represented in the motivic realm by a number of different dialectical strands. Now, the X and Y strands cannot be described in detail in this presentation, but the reader is invited to work his or her way through them and draw his or her own conclusions.

Example 13-17a, X's first salient appearance as an opposition to $\langle -3, -1 \rangle$, mm. 4-8

Example 13-17b, X in retrograde, mm. 7-8

Example 13-17c, Inversions of X in the first contrasting section (B), mm. 13-14

$C^\#$ D $C^\#$ D^\flat
 $\langle +13, -14, +13 \rangle$:
 octave compounding of
 $\langle +1, -2, +1 \rangle$
 RI of X X

Example 13-17d, Remote transformation of X through octave compounding in the second contrasting section (C), mm. 34-35

$\langle -2, +1, -3 \rangle$
 X
 not a transformation of original motive but contains the same unordered pitch intervals
 $\langle -2, +1, -3 \rangle$
 SC 4-2 SC 4-2

Example 13-17e, X combined with a close relative of the original motive to form a member of set class 4-2, m. 38

$\langle +13, -14 \rangle$: octave compounding of $\langle +1, -2 \rangle$ (X's RI)
 $\langle +14, -13 \rangle$: octave compounding of $\langle +2, -1 \rangle$ (X's inversion)
 $\langle -14, +13 \rangle$: octave compounding of $\langle -2, +1 \rangle$ (X)

Example 13-17f, More remote motives created by compounding X and its transformations, m. 40

<+13, +10>: octave-complemented and compounded version of <+1, -2>, RI of X

<-2, +1, -3>
SC 4-2

<-2, +1, -3>
SC 4-2

<-2, +1, -4>

f *pp* *f* *pp*

<-2, +1, -3>: see 17e.

<-2, +1, -4>: same motive transformed by interval expansion

Example 13-17g, Compounded forms of X appear together with simple forms that are overlapped with close relatives of the original motive, mm. 42-44

<-2, +1, -4>
X

Example 13-17h, A form from Ex. 13-17g reappears that overlaps X with a close relative of the original, m. 48

<+2, -1, +2>

I of X R of X

f

Example 13-17i, X's inversion and retrograde overlapped as part of a simplification process in the A'' section, mm. 56-57

58

p sf dim *pp*

$\langle -1, +3, -4 \rangle$: SC 4-2

$\langle -1, +3, -4 \rangle$: SC 4-2

$\langle -1, +3, -4 \rangle$

same unordered pitch intervals as original motive (this is an inversion of the form in 17e)

reordering of the original motive $\langle -3, -1 \rangle$

Example 13-17j, A possible solution to the X “problem”—set class 4-2 (which had contained X in Exs. 13-17e and 13-17g) is shown to result from the overlapping of a close relative of the original with a reordering of it, mm. 59-62

4

$\langle +3, +1, +1 \rangle$: the ascending half-steps provide the opposition

Example 13-18a, Y’s first salient appearance as an opposition to the original motive, mm. 4-5

9

langsamer

p

$\langle +8, -11, +1 \rangle$: octave complementation of $\langle -4, +1, +1 \rangle$

Example 13-18b, A transformation of Y that expands and changes the direction of the first interval, while octave-complementing the first and second, mm. 10-11

12 *viel schneller*
ppp
mit Dämpfung bis 0
 <-3, -13, -13, -13, -13>: octave compounding of <-3, -1, -1, -1, -1>, Y's inversion extended

Example 13-18c, Y transformed by inversion and octave compounding (and repetition of the last interval, -1), mm. 12-13

p
ohne Ped
 <-1, -1, -4>: expanded form of <-1, -1, -3>, Y's retrograde

Example 13-18d, Y's retrograde transformed by expansion, mm. 15-17

17
 <+8, -11, -1>: octave complementation of <-4, +1, -1>, transformation of <-3, -1, -1>

Example 13-18e, A more remote form of Y attained through expanding the first interval and changing the direction of the second in Y's inversion, then octave-complementing first and second intervals, mm. 17-18 (A' section)

langsam

29 *f*

$\langle +5, -1, -1 \rangle$: transformation of $\langle -3, -1, -1 \rangle$ by expanding and changing direction of the first interval

$\langle +1, -6 \rangle$: first part of m. 29's reordering

$\langle +1, -6, +4 \rangle$: reordering of $E^\flat G G^\sharp A$

$\langle +4, +1, +1 \rangle$: interval expansion

Example 13-18f, A transformation of Y’s inversion achieved through interval expansion and change of direction, coupled with a more remote motive attained through expansion and reordering, mm. 29-30

34 *fließender* *pp*

ppp

37

$\langle +13, -11, +13, -11, +13, -11, +13 \rangle$ and $\langle +13, -11, +13, -11, +13, -11, +13, -11 \rangle$: derived from $\langle +1, +1, +1, +1, +1, +1, +1, +1 \rangle$

Example 13-18g, Remote transformations of the last part of Y through octave complementation and compounding in the C section, mm. 35-38

54

cresc.

<+3, +1, +1>

Example 13-18h, The original Y returns at specific pitch in preparation for a solution of the Y problem, m. 54 (A' section)

<-15, -1, -1, -1, -1, -1>: octave compounding and extension of <-3, -1, -1>

57

p *sf dim*

61

pp

<-3, -1, -1>

Example 13-18i, The solution for Y—it is inverted so that it becomes an extension through repetition of the original motive <-3,-1>, mm. 58-62

Rather than trace other strands of the motivic structure, we will now turn our attention to the musical form of Op. 11, no. 1. The form both derives from the musical idea and accounts for motivic successions that have not been explained as part of dialectical processes—in a sense, it connects the piece's “background” (that is, the idea) with its “foreground” (its motivic surface). This paper will depart slightly from earlier

descriptions of the form such as Forte’s, Wittlich’s, Brinkmann’s and Maegaard’s, and call it a hybrid between sonata-rondo and five-part rondo. See the form chart in ex. 13-19. Two comments about this diagram: first, notice that the C section is labeled “Development.” This label is found in most of the other form charts that scholars have constructed for this piece,¹⁰ and it is justified by the ornamented variations of the original motive and contrasting motives that occur after m. 34. The development section is what gives the movement its sonata-rondo quality; what makes it a hybrid is the length and character of the recapitulation, mm. 53-64. Here, instead of a full reprise of mm. 1-33, or even mm. 1-11, we have a brief section that combines and varies important motives from the exposition (and solves several motivic problems, as this paper has already suggested). A second comment: notice that the A, A prime, and C sections are tripartite themselves. This nesting of three-part forms has a significant impact on the motivic successions at the surface, as we shall soon see.

Exposition			Development			Recapitulation (abbreviated)		
A	B	A'	C			A'		
mm. 1-11	12-17	17-33	34-52			53-64		
a	b	a'	a	b	a'	a	b	a'
1-3	4-8	9-11	17-18	19-24	25-33	34-38	39-41	42-52

Example 13-19, Form chart for Op. 11, no. 1

It was mentioned earlier that the musical form derives from the musical idea, and this assertion needs to be explained and defended now. Since idea requires a statement, an opposition or oppositions, and reconciliation of the opposition to the statement, it must be projected by a musical form that involves reprise in some way. It is impossible to show how a foreign motive derives from the original without bringing back the original. This does not mean that *only* ABA, sonata, and rondo forms and their variants can express a musical idea, but those types are as well equipped as any to do so. Schoenberg’s notion of how music should cohere in general accounts for his choice of a musical form involving reprise in the specific case of Op. 11, No. 1.

At the same time, the hybrid rondo form is not the simplest way Schoenberg could have expressed his idea. One contrasting section and one reprise would have sufficed. Instead, it seems he wanted to flesh out his idea in a way that involved approaching the motivic solution in the middle of the piece (i.e., around m. 23), then moving away from it again before the final synthesis. In my hearing, the close motivic forms of mm.

20-23 and mm. 25-27, which are one step short of the solution, intensify the listener's desire to get to the motivic prototype just as much as if not more than the remote motive forms following m. 34. In this way, the central A prime section plays an important role in the idea's expression.

The assertion was also made that the musical form, motivated by the idea, in turn provides a framework for local motivic successions, and as such serves as a mediator between the idea in the background and the musical surface. What this means is that each section and subsection of a form has a function: it opens, develops prior material, makes a transition, reprises, etc. In Schoenberg's music, as I have already shown in my work on Op. 22, No. 1, the motivic successions in each section characterize that section in a way that enables it to fulfill its formal function.¹¹ The first 11 measures of the first piano piece of Op. 11 are also an excellent example. This three-part A section functions as the piece's opening; thus even though mm. 9-11 will have to reprise prior material in some way, the overall character of the section must involve relentlessly moving away from the original material. The motivic successions in mm. 1-11 fulfill this opening function admirably. As ex. 13-20 shows, mm. 4-8 introduce a close variation, a "reduction," of the original motive in the soprano as well as the contrasting motives X and Y and the contrasting succession belonging to 4-19. Because of the close variation, and because the X motive is prepared in mm. 2-3, mm. 4-8 can be heard as a step outward motivically from mm. 1-3 (not a huge leap). And even though mm. 9-11 reprise the rhythm and texture of 1-3, intervallically they are a further step outward. Measures 9-10 start off with an interval expansion on the original motive that affects *both* intervals (not just one like the expansion in mm. 2-3); and the motive forms that follow reach further out—a reordered and octave-complemented form of the original, that is, <+8,-11>, and an octave complementation of the last part of the Y motive <-11,+1>.¹²

Original motive ("A"): $\langle -3, -1 \rangle$

Interval expansion of A: $\langle -4, -1 \rangle$

A's initial interval, inverted: $\langle +3 \rangle$

Mäßige

$\langle -1, +2 \rangle$: foreshadowing X

$\langle -2, +1 \rangle$: X

4-19: $\langle +4, +3, +1 \rangle$

Y: $\langle +3, +1, +1 \rangle$

intersection of 4-19 + Y: $\langle +3, +1 \rangle$
-- A inverted

Expansion of both intervals of A: $\langle -4, -2 \rangle$

A reordered to $\langle -4, +1 \rangle$ then octave complemented to form $\langle +8, -11 \rangle$

$\langle -11, +1 \rangle$: octave complementation of $\langle +1, +1 \rangle$, last part of Y

7

rit.

langsamer

p

Example 13-20, Local motive succession in mm. 1-11 (the A section) that characterizes it as an opening

This presentation has suggested a way of understanding Schoenberg’s atonal music that incorporates his crucial notion of “musical idea” and has three stages: first, the idea motivates parallel and interrelated motivic (as well as harmonic and rhythmic) processes that work dialectically; second, the idea gives rise to a musical form that makes it easier for the listener to apprehend; third, the functions of individual sections within this form motivate specific kinds of motive successions on the surface of the music. If we understand and hear Schoenberg’s music this way, we will make a link between him and Viennese composers of another era, a link he himself was inclined to make. In Schoenberg’s thinking, Mozart’s music and especially Beethoven’s also stem from a similar musical idea in similar ways, but using different basic elements. (In this regard, see Schoenberg’s analyses of Beethoven piano sonatas in *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*,¹³ or the articles by Patricia Carpenter listed in footnote 5.) The analytic approach promoted here may show us more connections between the first and second Viennese schools than we ever thought existed.

Notes

¹ The author wishes to thank Jeanne Collins for her assistance with setting the musical examples.

² Arnold Schoenberg, *Letters*, selected and edited by Erwin Stein, translated from the original German by Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (London: Faber and Faber, 1964; reprinted, New York: St. Martins Press, 1965; reprinted, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 164-65.

³ Allen Forte, "The Magical Kaleidoscope: Schoenberg's First Atonal Masterwork, Opus 11, Number 1," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 5 (1981): 127-68; Gary Wittlich, "Interval Set Structure in Schoenberg's op. 11, no. 1," *Perspectives of New Music* 13 (Fall-Winter 1974): 41-55.

⁴ Arnold Schoenberg, "New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea," in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, revised paperback edition, ed. by Leonard Stein with translations by Leo Black (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 122-23.

⁵ A few representative examples: Patricia Carpenter, "Grundgestalt as Tonal Function," *Music Theory Spectrum* 5 (1983): 15-38; *idem*, "Musical Form and Musical Idea: Reflections on a Theme of Schoenberg, Hanslick and Kant," in *Music and Civilization: Essays In Honor of Paul Henry Lang*, ed. Edmond Strainchamps, Maria Rika Maniates, and Christopher Hatch (New York: Norton, 1984), pp. 394-427; *idem*, "A Problem in Organic Form: Schoenberg's Tonal Body," *Theory and Practice* 13 (1988): 31-63; Severine Neff, "Aspects of Grundgestalt in Schoenberg's First String Quartet, op. 7," *Theory and Practice* 9 (1984): 7-56; *idem*, "Schoenberg and Goethe: Organicism and Analysis," in *Music Theory and the Exploration of the Past*, ed. David Bernstein and Christopher Hatch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 409-33.

⁶ See, for example, H.H. Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg: His Life, World and Work*, trans. Humphrey Searle (New York: Schirmer Books, 1978), or Pamela C. White, "Schoenberg and Schopenhauer," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 8/1 (June 1984): 39-57.

⁷ Jack Boss, "Schoenberg's Op. 22 Radio Talk and Developing Variation in Atonal Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 14 (1992): 125-49.

⁸ Reinhold Brinkmann, *Arnold Schönberg: Drei Klavierstücke Op. 11: Studien zur frühen Atonalität bei Schönberg*, vol. 7 of *Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1969), pp. 90-91.

⁹ Jan Maegaard, *Studien zur Entwicklung des dodekaphonen Satzes bei Arnold Schönberg*, 2 vol. and supplement (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1972), II, p. 191.

¹⁰ See Maegaard, *Studien zur Entwicklung des dodekaphonen Satzes*, II, p. 190; Wittlich, "Interval Set Structure," pp. 49-51; Forte, "The Magical Kaleidoscope," p. 131.

¹¹ Boss, "Schoenberg's Op. 22 Radio Talk."

¹² In "Atonality, Analysis, and the Intentional Fallacy," *Music Theory Spectrum* 18/2 (Fall 1996): 167-99, Ethan Haimo presents a reading of the motivic process in the first 11 measures of Op. 11, No. 1 that parallels mine in many respects, though

it is far more detailed than mine. Haimo also recognizes interval expansion and inversion as two principal developmental tools in this passage (among others), and characterizes the first A section as gradually opening out motivically in a similar way. See Haimo, pp. 195-97. Haimo claims that “a complete analysis of the process of developing variation in this movement would demand inordinate space” (p. 197), and thus he does not attempt a complete motivic analysis of the movement, but it would have been interesting to see whether the general outlines of the continuation of his analysis would have been similar to or different from my assertions about how the piece continues.

¹³ Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, ed. Gerald Strang and Leonard Stein (London: Faber and Faber, 1970).