

POETRY IN POST-TONALITY:  
AN ANALYSIS OF TEXT-PAINTING MECHANISMS IN ATONAL CHORAL MUSIC

By

MARTIN SEDEK

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Poetry in Post-Tonality:

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Dissertation Director:  
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The 20<sup>th</sup> century's movement away from tonality launched new genres of post-tonal compositional styles and aesthetics including free atonality, atonal expressionism, and serialism, first pioneered by Schoenberg and his pupils and later adopted by Stravinsky. By removing the psycho-emotional associations with traditional harmonic schema, atonal texted music challenged the centuries-long model of texted music, whose fundamental idiomatic basis has been the perceptible agreement or likeness between the qualities of the music and the qualities of the text.

To that end, this dissertation examines Schönberg's *Friede auf Erden*, *Four Songs for Chorus and Ensemble*, and *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*, Webern's *Entflieht auf Leichten Kähnen*, and Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* and *Threni* with an original methodology for examining text-painting mechanisms, referred to as the Layered Communicative Analog Methodology (LCAM), in an effort to identify and codify the communicative mechanisms of expressivity present in these works. Building on concepts of such expressivity by theorists like Stecker, Ridley, Levinson, Lewin, and others, in addition to examinations of cultural associations with consonance and dissonance by Guernsey and Cazden, this study demonstrates a spectrum of expressivity present in texted music between the theoretical and the experiential, and the unique ways that atonal texted music occupies this spectrum.

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## CHAPTER 1

### SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The 20<sup>th</sup> century's abandonment of tonality in key genres such as free atonality, atonal expressionism, and serialism spawned new implications for the texted music of these genres. Analysis of the atonal choral works by Schoenberg and Stravinsky reveals a spectrum of perceptible expressivity by which the text is musically 'painted'. This creates a possible dilemma: whether atonal texted music belongs to the same idiom as other texted music, or whether it needs to necessarily be set aside as something fundamentally (theoretically and aesthetically) different; and, how analysts, performers, conductors, and composers of atonal choral works might be able to determine and codify any expressive qualities present.

A discussion of the ideas surrounding texted music's *identity* is necessary here. There is of course no shortage of scholarship on the subject of text-music relationships, and what one discovers in this large body of scholarship is an underlying agreement that poetry, music, and poetry-set-to-music are three distinct art forms – that the relationship and connective tissue between the poetry and the music gives rise to a tertiary identity that allows a heightened experience of the poetry through musical painting and a heightened experience of the music through semantic and/or narrative connection.<sup>1</sup> This model of *amplification via interrelation* has housed the texted music idiom for centuries and provided its distinction from the rest of program music.

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<sup>1</sup> See: Kofi Agawu, "Theory and Practice in the Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Lied," *Music Analysis*, vol. 11, no. 1 (March 1992): 3-36; Arnold Fettes, "Poetry and Modern Choralism," *The Musical Times*, vol. 64, no. 959 (Jan. 1923): 35-36; Marcel Françon, "Music and Poetry in the French Renaissance," *The French*



There exists a sequence of phenomenological experience in texted music involving the interrelation between these two media that are each able to communicate emotional substance. An example of a typical experiential sequence involves:

- 1.) A semantic understanding of the text being discerned  
*"The poem is talking about loneliness."*
- 2.) A phenomenologically affectual experience of the music being heard  
*"The music sounds hollow, dark, and slow."*
- 3.) A psycho-emotional reaction to the quality of sound in conjunction with the text being discerned  
*"The hollowness and darkness that I perceive from the music feels like an expression of loneliness."*

The first two points of this sequence involve matters of interrelation, and will result in either cognitive consonance or cognitive dissonance, depending on whether the two elements of no. 3 are in agreement or disagreement. Agreement provides amplification of the psycho-emotional substance of each constituent component. As David Lewin puts it, the text and the music "enact each other" – there is a symbiotic relationship that is born out of the paired and concurrent existence of each that is considered to be different than either constituent medium.<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Kramer describes this concept as *convergence*, the view that "music and poetry are arts that are deeply

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*Review*, vol. 12, no. 5 (March 1939): 365-73; Peter Kivy, *Reflections on Musical Expression* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry* (University of California Press, 1984); Aaron Ridley, *Music, Value, and the Passions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Robert Stecker, "Expressiveness and Expression in Music and Poetry," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 59, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 85-96; Robert Welleck, "The Relationship between Music and Poetry," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Winter 1962): 149-56; James Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations between Poetry and Music* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> David Lewin, *Studies in Music with Text* (New York: Oxford Studies in Music Theory, Oxford University Press, 2006).

interrelated, endowed with common sources and common ends.”<sup>3</sup> This concept of convergence results in the phenomenal arrival at sequence point no. 3. Compositionally, this involves the utilization of such mechanisms as harmony, rhythm, melody, timbre, dynamic, and texture as vehicles with which one can confirm and amplify the psycho-emotional properties of the text being set, resulting in this consequent, tertiary identity.

One of the prominent writers seeking this identity is Kofi Agawu, who coalesces the writings of Susanne Langer and Lawrence Kramer into a series of models for what he refers to collectively as ‘song.’<sup>4</sup> The first model is based on his study of the work of Langer, who says that when text is set to music, the music “absorbs the words.”<sup>5</sup> Langer states, “Song is not a compromise between music and poetry, as the text taken by itself is a poem; *song is music*.”<sup>6</sup> She thus implies that the poem is ‘lost’ and that poetic considerations are not necessary where musical analysis is concerned. A second model retains the independence of the two: Lawrence Kramer describes the principle of the second model, stating: “A poem is never really *assimilated* into a musical composition, but rather *incorporated*, and it retains its own life, its own body, within the body of music.”<sup>7</sup> Kramer implies an identity that is overall *music*, but a distinct type of music which includes poetry and occurs concurrently with this secondary medium. Thirdly, Agawu himself describes the interpretation of texted music being a “compound structure,” wherein the poetry and music are equal partners in conveyance; the words are necessary to communicate semantic and narrative content and the music “colors and

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<sup>3</sup> Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (University of California Press, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> Agawu, *Theory and Practice*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> In Agawu. See: Kramer, *Music and Poetry*, 127.

enhances” whatever the words signify, combining into some tertiary art form, thus preserving a functional model of ‘song’ where each element continues to ‘enact the other,’ as Lewin puts it.<sup>8</sup>

This enacting, or the connection between these ontological elements inherent to poetry and music is built upon further by Lawrence Zbikowski in *Conceptualizing Music*, wherein he applies his “Conceptual Integration Network” (fig. 1 below) to Klein’s art song *Trochne Blumen*.<sup>9</sup> He adds specificity to Agawu’s concept of the ‘compound structure’ by delineating ‘text space’ and ‘music space’ and describing elements within each that relate to one another, and via concurrence create a ‘generic space’ and a ‘blended space’ as collective tertiary results. It is within this ‘blended space’ that a listener makes an association, be it conscious or subconscious, between what they are hearing and various psycho-emotional qualities. Zbikowski explains:

“The theory of conceptual blending assumes that there are structural invariances between the input spaces (text and music) of a blend: these invariances (consistencies), encapsulated in the elements and relations of the generic space, are what make conceptual blends possible. The fact that combinations of text and music can give rise to conceptual blends suggests that there are syntactic correspondences between linguistic and musical discourse.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 6

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence Zbikowski, *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 254.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., parentheses added for clarity.

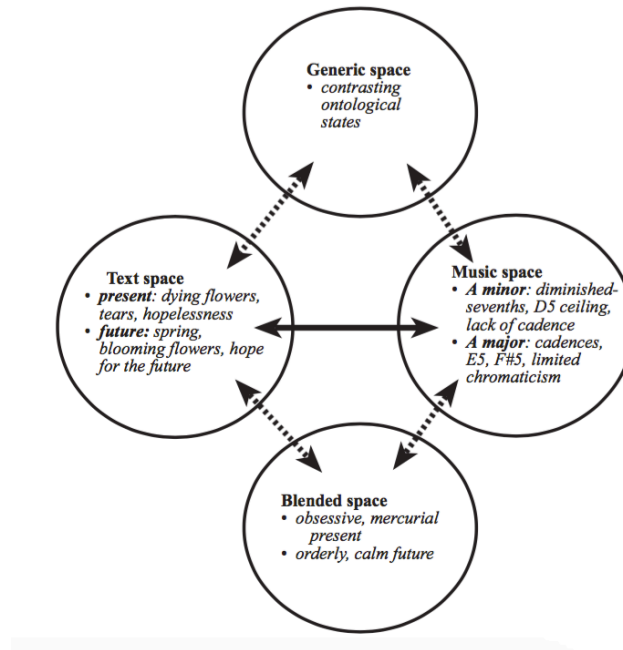


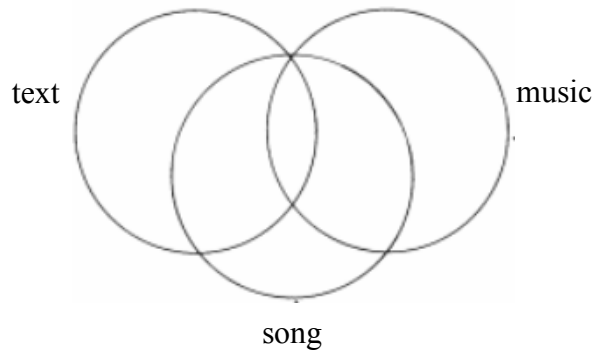
Fig. 1 – from “Conceptualizing Music” – Zbikowski’s “Conceptual Integration Network” applied to Klein’s art song “Trochne Blumen”<sup>11</sup>

The horizontal axis of Zbikowski’s network represents events in the poetry and in the music, which occur simultaneously and relate to one another. The vertical axis represents what amounts to Ridley’s differentiation between the ‘cognitive vs. the affective,’ the cognitive occupying the generic space – the ontological qualities that one might perceive, and the affective occupying the blended space, wherein one makes psycho-emotional determinations about the blend of those cognitive elements.<sup>12</sup> One will notice a similarity to Agawu’s conception of the relationship between words and music:<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., reprinted with permission.

<sup>12</sup> Ridley, *Music, Value, and the Passions*.

<sup>13</sup> Agawu, *Theory and Practice*, 8.



*Fig. 2 – Conceptualization of text-music relations into compound art form, ‘song’.*

Agawu arrives at this model because it allows that “song retains an ultimate identity that is not reducible to word influence or musical influence, but that acknowledges the sphere of influence exercised by both domains.”<sup>14</sup> It is this concept of a ‘blended space’ and Agawu’s concept of a ‘compound structure’ that has come to be the standard of text-music relation in choral music even before the Common Practice Period and into modern day compositions, a distinct entity in the realm of program music which as early as Monteverdi came to carry a sense of responsibility to evoke properties of the text.

Now, a crucial point must be made about the experience of western music involving the intersection between these two media from an experiential perspective, one involving an inherent cultural bias: The body of writing on text-music relations too seldom explicitly acknowledges that the centuries-long confluence of musical practice into triadic harmony and the dual pillars of major and minor tonality during the Common Practice Period resulted in harmonic usage that became systemically associated with particular human emotions and/or psychological states. This resulting phenomenon of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

cultural conditioning meant that particular tonal harmonic schema became inexorably tied to corresponding psycho-emotional reactions. Thus, point no. 3 in the aforementioned experiential sequence of texted music has, for centuries now, been reliant upon concretely established harmonic consistencies: these include using major keys or major-oriented modes, general consonance, and harmonic stability to convey positive psycho-emotional material and minor or minor-oriented modes, heightened dissonance, and general instability for negative psycho-emotional material. Evidence of this can be found in something as simple as the fundamental cornerstone of dominant-to-tonic resolution, which became so instinctual and expected that the deceptive cadence emerged as an effective mechanism to bring focus to a particular word or phrase, with its natural sense of surprise and subsequent poignancy. Ideas of tension in the subject matter translated to gestures of musical tension in the form of suspensions or other instabilities such as dissonances, inversions, modulations, et al. Such consistencies over centuries came to offer a sense of confirmation in the form of the quality of sound being experienced being in agreement with the emotional content being discerned by the semantic properties of the text.

Though psychoacoustics and music cognition are outside the scope of this study, it behooves the interests of this predication on cultural conditioning to provide a brief glimpse into what psychologists have determined about the western ear. In one of the most recent comprehensive psychological studies on the subject, University of Graz professor of systematic musicology Richard Parncutt's 2014 study identifies the key factors that contribute to western psycho-emotional associations with major vs. minor

tonalities, and consonance and dissonance in general.<sup>15</sup> They include, among others, the naturally perceived amount of dissonances in minor keys as opposed to major ones, the “markedness” of commonality of major keys in general, a psychological connection to speech in which the lowered tones of the minor scale relative to the major scale are subconsciously associated with the lowered speech patterns of anger and sadness, and additional societal factors.

The issue at hand is the contention that Zbikowski’s ‘blended space’ and Agawu’s ‘song’ have been contingent upon tonality and habituated associations with harmonic consistencies and with consonance and dissonance – as evidenced by such studies as Hair’s and Parncutt’s – in order to convey a sense of the musical-poetic elements relating, or agreeing. Thus, it appears to be a logical question whether or not atonal texted music *disallows* a ‘blended space.’

The present study therefore seeks to focus with a music theory-oriented perspective on considerations of texted music in atonality. Given this long-standing model of perceptible agreement, atonal choral works by Schoenberg (1874-1951), Webern (1883-1945), and Stravinsky (1882-1971) challenge the notion of a ‘blended space’ that strives to musically convey the psycho-emotional properties of their texts. This study aims to reconcile this lack of a harmonic emotional compass with the traditional model of texted music, and gauge the necessity of separating works such as these from the aesthetic realm that the rest of the choral repertoire occupies. In atonal

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<sup>15</sup> Parncutt, *Consonance and Dissonance in Music Theory and Psychology*. Parncutt’s factors include: *dissonance*, more half steps and complex tonal structures within types of minor constructs; *alterity and markedness*, major scales are more common than minor, major and positive valence are the ‘norm’, and minor the ‘other’; *uncertainty*, minor scales have more ambiguous and variable form, and uncertainty is associated with anger, distress, grief; *speech*, minor contains a general lowering of pitches, in the way that speech is subconsciously lowered when one is distressed in some way; *salience*, factoring in the naturally occurring major intervals of the harmonic series; *familiarity*, emotional reactions to major vs. minor were “reinforced in a historical process of cultural differentiation.

music that may have little or none of the traditional vehicles of emotional connection, what then becomes the role of the relationship between the music and the text? Is the text present only so that the choir has something to sing? Do theorists and musicologists cash out atonality in choral music as a re-separation of text and music back to wholly independent constructs that are merely incidentally presented side-by-side, as Langer would suggest? If this is the case, what happens to Agawu's and so many others' idea of a byproduct art form in the post-tonal landscape? As Winn notes, "Poets [...] could expect their readers to know the dictionary definitions of words, but composers, once they ventured beyond the understood, culturally conditioned meanings of major and minor, consonant and dissonant, could not communicate so precisely."<sup>16</sup>

The difficulty in discussing texted music within the paradigm of its own identity is also considered by Agawu, who notes that the study and the pedagogy of poetry and prose offers a multitude of frameworks of terminologies and concepts for discussing it; the same of course applies to music.<sup>17</sup> Despite texted music's substantial role in the repertory of every time period, and despite this common idea that poetry-set-to-music is its own distinct art form, Agawu laments the lack of a concrete mode of existence for this tertiary identity: "To say that it has an independent existence which is neither as words [...] nor as music is still to leave open the difficult question of a concrete identity for song."<sup>18</sup> Consequently, nor does there exist a framework of concepts and terminologies for discussing it independently from its constituent poetic and musical components.

The goal of this analysis being the identification of text-painting mechanisms in such atonal compositions, an analytical methodology to codify the analogous

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<sup>16</sup> Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*.

<sup>17</sup> Agawu, *Theory and Practice*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



communicative mechanisms in poetry and in music and their interrelation is proposed here. Building on Agawu's and Zbikowski's concepts of interrelation between related poetic and musical properties, this methodology specifically outlines what these analogous properties are within their respective components, and how they relate to one another in text-painting applications. These mechanisms for text painting are summarized in the chart below (fig. 3) in a three-dimensional topography of foreground, middleground, and background layers called the Layered Communicative Analog Methodology (hereafter, LCAM). As with any three-dimensional construct, an LCAM does not represent strict and separate delineations, but is rather reflective of conceptual 'areas' within the compositional process. Forthcoming analyses will demonstrate that it is possible for LCAM layers to mix or to be closely related to one another. Any of these layers may exist in any combination with another, and any piece (tonal or atonal) might incorporate only certain layers.

Layered mechanisms	Foreground	Middleground	Background
Poetic	Semantics	Narrative	Tone/Subtext
Musical	Gestures	Motion elements	Soundscape

*Fig. 3: Chart of LCAM: Layered Communicative Analog Methodology for codifying text-painting application.*

What this analytical methodology offers is a way of discussing text-painting mechanisms with functional specificity, within an empirical framework of application. The foreground layer is concerned with the *semantics* of the poetry, the immediate definitions of and associations with particular words, phrases, or ideas. These are enacted musically by *gestures*, which are musical affectations of particular words, phrases,

actions, or ideas that mimic the physical associative properties of those words.<sup>19</sup> This foreground layer, concerned with the most surface level features of poetic-musical connection, also includes considerations of prosody and the communicability of the text in its musical setting.

The middleground layer is concerned with properties of change over the course of a work. Since even in an atonal landscape, a listener can still readily perceive elements of change in the music, how compositional *motion elements* such as changes to rhythm, meter, timbre, texture, et. al, correlate to the *narrative* properties in the poetry are crucial factors to the interrelation between the two components. This layer is predicated on the subject of musical expressivity as theorized by writers like Stecker, Ridley, Levinson, and Robinson, and how the connection of these musical properties to human action and behavior garners the expressive potential to communicate psycho-emotional information.

The background layer involves a broader look into the overall quality of sound in a musical work, and how a composer's choices of sonority, texture, timbre, etc. contribute to the overall *soundscape* of a work.<sup>20</sup> Such properties would correlate to the *tone* of a poem, or its overall subject matter. Atonality presents unique considerations for the background layer, and implications for the modern nature of consonance and dissonance in general. Not to be disregarded, the *form* of a poem is an important background element in text-music relation as well, in terms of the transfer of the poetic form onto the musical form. The term *transitive form* shall be used herein to refer to ways in which the form of the poetry is translated into the form of the music. So, a poem would

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<sup>19</sup> Following recent study in musical gesture in connection with human gesture. See: Elaine King, *Musical Gestures*, ed. Anthony Gritten (Routledge Press, 2006); Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> Though its own term in the field of electroacoustic music, *soundscape* is differentiated in this context, referring only to its combination of the words 'sonic landscape.'

be called *directly translated* if the musical structure mirrored the poetic structure in some discernable way, such as a strophic poem set to music that was also in a verse structure. A text would be *indirectly translated* when words or phrases are taken out of order, are repeated, removed, or otherwise effected in such a way that disregards the poem in its original form.

Via the application of LCAM onto these forthcoming analyses of atonal choral works, one can take Agawu's and Zbikowski's concepts a step further, examining the constituent communicative elements involved in both music and in poetry, and apply an analysis of their interrelation and resulting expressivity, gauging the possibility of reconciling the abandonment of tonality and conditioned consistencies of both tonality and consonance/dissonance with the concept of a 'blended space' or 'song.' Rather than placing such works aside as belonging to an 'experiment,' or at least to a different aesthetic idiom, or even assuming their inaccessibility, study of theoretical concepts that provide such 'convergence' into a 'blended space' may provide a new way of approaching atonality for both singers and conductors of these composers' choral works, as well as for composers seeking to create their own atonal choral compositions.

## CHAPTER 2

## BACKGROUND MECHANISMS: POETIC TONE &amp; MUSICAL SYMBOLISM

The background layer of the LCAM system involves *Tone*, the primary mechanism for communicating the true psycho-emotional substance of the text out of its semantic and narrative content – its overall quality of subject matter. Tone has a musical analog that can be referred to as *soundscape* – the sonic construction and language choices made by the composer that might reflect the overall tone of a poem, and paradigmatically create a sonic world to provide context for a listener’s psycho-emotional associations. This background layer of text painting is at its core concerned with this very basic question: what does the piece *sound* like? Such a question can be answered by theorists and laypeople alike, and may result in answers like “energetic,” “atmospheric,” “hollow,” “joyful” – these adjectives are important communicators of the tone of the poem that the music is “coloring and enhancing,” as Agawu puts it.<sup>21</sup> In analytical terms, this is of course the harmonic, timbral, intervallic, and textural choices made on the part of the composer to reflect the overall mood or tone of a poem or as Walton notes, the musical statement the composer’s ‘appropriation’ of the text intends.<sup>22</sup>

In reference to atonality, this layer elicits discussion on the very nature of consonance and dissonance and their evolved perceptions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, since the abandonment of tonal, tertian harmony and traditional harmonic syntax in these genres

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<sup>21</sup> Agawu, *Theory and Practice*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Kendall Walton, “Thoughtwriting—in Poetry and Music,” *New Literary History*, vol. 42, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 467-76 — Walton describes two types of appropriation in text setting: the first, interpreting a poem as endorsing or supporting the composer’s own personal views, ignoring what the poet likely actually meant by some reasonable standard; the second being not a matter of what the words are taken to mean, but rather “who it is who means something by them”, or a composer taking the meaning of the words to be his own, not creating a representation of someone else’s.

did not remove perceptions of consonance and dissonance. As Schoenberg himself describes it, he is seeking a methodology in which “the comprehensibility of the dissonance is considered as important as the comprehensibility of the consonance.”<sup>23</sup>

Though the overarching concept of atonality is the abolishment of the ideas of consonance and dissonance altogether, the aural result is nevertheless wholly dissonant to an ear that is calibrated only to the western tonal system, and it is these tonal calibrations that have been the basis for perception of text-music agreement.

In 1928, directly amid the burgeoning and spreading of non-tonal music, Martha Guernsey’s article “The Role of Consonance and Dissonance in Modern Music” called the growing practice of atonality an “aesthetic enigma,” and asked on behalf of society, presumably facetiously, “is the modern composer a freak of perverted tastes?” and “is the audience at a Stravinsky program having its – to anticipate the Helmholtz theory – ‘physiological apparatus’ violated by the amazing sequences of seconds and sevenths perpetrated under the sacred name of Symphony?”<sup>24</sup> One must acknowledge that dissonance became more mainstream and less jarring to wider audiences as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, and thus begs for an examination of how this plays into the centuries-long-conditioned idea of consonance as *positivity* (happiness, peacefulness, etc.) and dissonance as *negativity* (sadness, anger, anguish, etc.). The present musical culture has made great strides towards appreciation of dissonance. The dissonant clusters of Eric Whitacre and the polychords and added tones of Pandiatonicism used by today’s most popular choral composers like Morten Lauridsen demonstrate the increasing perception of dissonances and clusters as beautiful and desirable. However, it must be noted that the

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<sup>23</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, “My Evolution,” *The Musical Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 144-57.

<sup>24</sup> Martha Guernsey, “The Role of Consonance and Dissonance in Music,” *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. 40, no. 2 (April 1928): 173-204.

word ‘Pandiatonic’ has the word ‘diatonic’ in it for a reason; it is easy to be distracted by the vibrant, shimmering tone clusters and assume a post-modern design, but these composers are working these dissonances into an overall landscape that is largely traditionally tonal and often includes traditional harmonic syntax which includes the familiar relativity of consonance and dissonance – a far cry from true atonality.

Writers like Guernsey and Cazden attempted to justify the perceived positivity of consonance by invoking Helmholtz’s studies of the physiology of the ear and its theorized reactions to the number of beats in a wavelength, and Cazden even goes as far back as the ancient Greeks and their derivation of the consonances from the naturally-occurring harmonic series, all in an effort to posit the question of whether there are scientific, natural bases for such reactions to consonance and dissonance. Guernsey, however, had already acknowledged studies of her own which suggested greater acceptability of dissonance in those with musical training as compared to the lay ear.<sup>25</sup>

Cazden does allow for the subjectivity of perceived consonance when he says that “certain objective wave-forms transmitted through the ear produce the subjective response called consonance, [...] resulting in a postulated ‘consonance sense’ based on subjective (but consistent) qualities like smoothness, purity, and blend.”<sup>26</sup> Cazden proposes entirely changing the meaning of ‘dissonant,’ arguing that cultural conditioning (as far as the western ear is concerned) results in our perception of dissonance not as a level of ‘goodness’ or agreeability on a local level, but rather dissonance necessitates further motion to resolve itself in a broader sense. He posits that the perception of

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<sup>25</sup> Guernsey, *Role of Consonance and Dissonance in Music*, 184; University of Michigan study of 56 subjects of varying degrees of musical training.

<sup>26</sup> Norman Cazden, “Musical Consonance and Dissonance: A Cultural Criterion,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 4, No. 1 (Sept 1945): 3-11.

consonance and dissonance involves whether what we are hearing is “an interval or chord that requires movement, or one that is the final result of movement.”<sup>27</sup> This is perhaps too broad a cashing-out, as by this logic a I<sup>64</sup> chord would be labeled as dissonant, simply because it (according to tonal theory) necessitates movement to the dominant, and is not considered stable or consonant on its own.

Schoenberg says in *Style and Idea* that “in all music composed to poetry, the exactitude of the reproduction of the events is as irrelevant to the artistic value as is the resemblance of a portrait to its model.”<sup>28</sup> This is a curious declaration, as most would presumably agree that *resemblance* is the qualifying aesthetic element in the realm of portrait. However, it demonstrates Schoenberg’s attitude towards the text – he does not feel that painting elements of the text musically is necessary at all.

Schoenberg was well known to be a devoted fan and good friend to the painter Kandinsky, and one deduces that Schoenberg was attempting to do with music what Expressionists did with painting. After all, the term “atonal expressionism” was directly borrowed from the idiomatic painting of the same name. A parallel of tonal texted music to atonal texted music would be a still-life by Rembrandt and a painting by Kandinsky. In a Rembrandt, like a Mozart sonata, the subject is clearly visible and discernable, the form and the distinction between foreground and background clearly perceptible, and the aesthetic value largely found in the accuracy with which the subject is portrayed. This is in stark contrast to a work by Kandinsky, in which one generally has no idea what it ‘is’ that one is looking at it, the aesthetic value lying in the experience of the visual as a whole. The question remains, would the choral music of composers like Schoenberg and

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>28</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950): 5.

Stravinsky be able to communicate psycho-emotional content and remain in the realm of Agawu's 'song,' or must one adopt Langer's model and simply accept that the portrait no longer resembles its subject? After all, Picasso's portraits certainly don't resemble their subjects, yet his colorful, barely human cubes are celebrated wildly — but Picasso's portraits and DaVinci's do not occupy the same idiom. They are both in the realm of 'portraits,' but one idiom is predicated upon the accuracy with which a subject is depicted in the art form; the other is decidedly *not* — this serves as an effective analogy to the issue at hand.

In tonal music, the background mechanisms of a poem's overall tone would be conveyed musically by the composer's choice of soundscape materials: the tonality or modality used, the overall characters of tempi, timbre, textural construction — even the key signature was a factor, as composers generally considered keys with more flats to be warmer and smoother, and keys with more sharps to be brighter, more emphatic. Indeed, whereas key and modality as sonic architecture are not factors in atonal music, the atonality itself effectively becomes the soundscape.

Symbolism is an important factor in musical composition, utilized in some capacity by most composers in every genre: the perpetual winding sixteenth notes that symbolize Gretchen's spinning wheel, Debussy's constantly-morphing wind textures in *Nuages* — even Bach's incorporation of his own name as motives in his fugues represent conscious decisions about a work's structure or architecture in order to symbolize some concept they find inherent to the work. Thus, Schoenberg's and Stravinsky's choral works demonstrate the capacity for architectural elements that have symbolic connections to the subject matter they are setting. This represents an important distinction between



tonal and atonal texted music, wherein the background layer of atonal texted music will rely far more heavily on such symbolic connection. While Schoenberg claimed to be unconcerned with any literal representation of the text in his music, this is not to say that none exists in his or Stravinsky's or any other atonal composer's texted music. So, while the soundscape of the background layer may be 'spoken for' by the atonal language, the analyst is invited to delve deeper into symbolic meaning to discover connections to the text.

Perhaps there exists an analog to the tonal composer's choice of mode in the serial composer's choice or design and/or implementation of row material. Shifting focus to analysis of one of Schoenberg's works, one finds in his Op. 27, *Four Songs for Chorus and Ensemble* (1925), some highly emotional and evocative poetry. The fourth and final movement of the work sets a poem by Chinese poet Hung-So Fan, available for reference in the appendix, poem no. 1.

A curious element of the background structure of *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers* is Schoenberg's design of the prime row: two pentachords separated by ic:11 with identical intervallic patterns (ic: 2542), separated by an interior fifth. This symmetrical structure is certainly not random, and in his own writings on this work, he described the mandolin, which almost always plays two notes at once, as a representation of the two lovers in the poem. While Schoenberg does not explicitly describe any intentionality regarding the row construction, his *modus operandi* is elucidated by Joseph Straus: "Schoenberg virtually always constructed his series with inversionally combinatorial hexachords."<sup>29</sup> As Chester Alwes claims in his book on the subject of serialism in the choral canon, many composers who wrote with this method produced more accessible adaptations of dodecaphony to be

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<sup>29</sup> Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Analysis* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2005): 223.

more easily performable, especially when it came to *a cappella* compositions that did not benefit from instrumental support.<sup>30</sup> Straus notes that similar processes are involved in the instrumental compositions of Schoenberg and his contemporaries and followers, which placed emphasis on the concept of *partitioning*, or employing subsets of rows, in order to help guide the ear. Straus explains:

“As listeners, most of us find it hard to grasp a series as a whole and pretty much impossible to recognize when a series is being turned upside down or backwards [...]. Luckily for us, most twelve-tone music does not require us to be able to hear things like that. Instead, all we have to listen for are the smaller collections, the intervals and subsets embedded within a series.”<sup>31</sup>

Though Schoenberg indeed regularly employs hexachordal combinatoriality in his mature serialism, it is worth examining how any such manipulations of set material may be musically reflective, or symbolic, of tone or subject matter properties of the poetry at hand.

Examining *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers*, one discovers that there is a prime row of twelve pitches, but the row is divided into its two outer pentachords that are identical to one another in their interval pattern, and leave the two interior pitches of a perfect fifth as an independent unit.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Chester Alwes, “Serialism and Choral Music of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” in *A History of Western Choral Music*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Straus, *Post-Tonal Analysis*, 192.

<sup>32</sup> The numbers between the pitch names here refer to the ordered interval class between them.

Prime Row (P <sub>1</sub> )		
Pentachord 1 (p) <sub>1</sub>	Interior 5 <sup>th</sup>	Pentachord 2 (p) <sub>2</sub>
D <sup>b</sup> <sup>2</sup> E <sup>b</sup> <sup>5</sup> B <sup>b</sup> <sup>6</sup> G <sup>b</sup> <sup>2</sup> A <sup>b</sup>	E B	C <sup>2</sup> D <sup>5</sup> A <sup>6</sup> F <sup>2</sup> G

Fig. 5: Schoenberg, *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers*, prime row featuring p-combinatorial pentachords

The prime row P<sub>1</sub> is presented in order and in full by the instruments in the introduction, but then the transfer of this row onto the choral texture is quite literal: the outer voices take the outer pentachords and the middle voices take the middle fifth, doubling the mandolin whose constant dyadic material Schoenberg has stated functions as a representation of the two lovers and permeates throughout the piece as a quasi-ostinato figure:

(p)<sub>2</sub> of P<sub>1</sub> in soprano: C <sup>2</sup> D <sup>5</sup> A <sup>6</sup> F <sup>2</sup> G  
 Interior fifth in alto/tenor: E B  
 (p)<sub>1</sub> of P<sub>1</sub> in bass: D<sup>b</sup> <sup>2</sup> E<sup>b</sup> <sup>5</sup> B<sup>b</sup> <sup>6</sup> G<sup>b</sup> <sup>2</sup> A<sup>b</sup>

Fig. 6: Schoenberg, *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers*, opening phrase A, with distribution of row into choir

What is germane to the issue at hand is the serial application of this work given the subject matter of the poetry. The separation of the interior fifth as its own independent unit throughout the texture, functioning as a quasi-ostinato figure, leaves the melodic

substance to fall upon the two remaining pentachords on either side, which are identical in terms of unordered interval class. This means that the pentachords in the prime row are not I-combinatorial as Straus claims should be expected, but P-combinatorial as they are transposed iterations of each other at  $T_1$ .<sup>33</sup> Jack Boss' approach might herein constitute an *anti-combinatoriality*, described as the usage of hexachords that share pitch-class content, rather than combining to create an aggregate.<sup>34</sup> Because the pentachord is the primary functioning melodic unit throughout this work, this could be viewed as *pentachordal* combinatoriality rather than the more typically seen hexachordal variety that results in such row aggregates. Thus, whereas hexachords would usually be designated as  $H_1$  or  $H_2$ , for the purposes herein these respective pentachords will be referred to as  $(p)_1$  and  $(p)_2$ .

Schoenberg continues various combinatorial processes throughout the movement with these pentachords, employing axial row shifts based on either identical pentachords or re-ordered pentachords, containing the same pitches but in different orders, and at times moving in retrograde through the second pentachord to complete the row shift.<sup>35</sup> Examples of such types of axial movement is shown below:

Identical pentachords between rows:

$P_1$ :  $D\flat E\flat B\flat G\flat A\flat$  |  $E B$  |  $C D A F G$   
 $P_0$ :  $C D A F G$  |  $E\flat B\flat$  |  $B D\flat A\flat E G\flat$

<sup>33</sup> Straus, *Post-Tonal Analysis*, 192.

<sup>34</sup> Jack Boss, *Schoenberg's Twelve-Tone Music: Symmetry and the Musical Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Hereafter, *Symmetry*.

<sup>35</sup> Consistent with Boss' analysis of *anti-combinatoriality* in Schoenberg's instrumental works. See: Boss, *Symmetry*.

Re-ordered pentachords between rows:

RI<sub>7</sub>: D $\flat$  E $\flat$  B G $\flat$  A $\flat$  | A E | C D B $\flat$  F G  
 P<sub>5</sub>: F G D B $\flat$  C | A $\flat$  E $\flat$  | E G $\flat$  D $\flat$  A B

No entire row is ever presented in full in any one voice, the combinatorial and axial processes pervading the piece, always in a duet between two voices, and always accompanied by the interior 5<sup>th</sup> (or 4<sup>th</sup> if a retrograde row is in use) ostinato figure.

When one considers the overall subject matter of the text, a speaker who is lamenting his lover's absence because she has gone off to sleep and yearns for the morning when she will return to him, the row design and the textural design appear to be quite overtly related: The constituent identical pentachords function as symbolic representations of each of the lovers, perpetually 'meeting' upon these axial shifts and re-separating upon newly established row forms. The perpetual ostinato of ic:5 which occupies the middle two pitches of each row appears reflective of their separation, as it disallows any row from ever being 'joined' or complete. In each iteration of any row form, though the constituent elements move between voice parts, this construction remains intact.

Thus, upon closer examination of such a work, one finds symbolic modes of connection to the text in the treatment of the row or partitioned set material. In addition to the example seen in *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers*, another background element can be found in Schoenberg's *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*, op. 50A (1949). In *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*, referenced in the index of poems, no. 4 and pictured below in figure 7, Schoenberg again employs hexachordal emphasis that serves a role in the subject matter of the text. The poem deals with the return of the Jewish people to their home, the poet Runes

inspired by the recent creation of the state of Israel. The poem has a clear central theme of return, describing both the return of the people and also the return of God, which constitutes the celebratory third stanza of the poem.

What Schoenberg does structurally to musically symbolize this theme of return is utilize palindromic presentations of these hexachords; he rolls the hexachord back in retrograde to return to the starting pitch. While it is certainly not unusual to find retrograde presentation of rows (as he does in *Unentrinnbar* of op. 27), and *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers* demonstrates Schoenberg's propensity for retrograde motion in combinatorial hexachords.<sup>36</sup> Here Schoenberg opts for palindromic presentation of the same hexachord, a technique not uncommon to his compositions (it features prominently in the segmentation processes in the *Suite for Piano*, op.25).<sup>37</sup> This technique is seen throughout the piece's bookending A sections, and is first observed at the very onset as the first phrase includes such palindromic hexachord presentations in the soprano, alto, and tenor voices, shown below. The insistence on palindromic hexachordal presentation and its consistency within the writing makes it a fundamental structural element to the work, and would appear to be clearly connected to the subject matter at hand, a perceptible musical representation of the poem's subject matter of leaving and returning.

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<sup>36</sup> See: in *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers*, movement of (p)<sub>1</sub> of RI<sub>5</sub> to retrograde motion of (p)<sub>2</sub> of P<sub>1</sub> in the bass line, mm. 4-7.

<sup>37</sup> Jack Boss, *Symmetry*.

The image shows a musical score for Schoenberg's 'Dreimal Tausend Jahre'. It consists of four staves, each with a line of German lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'Drei - mal taus-end Jah - re, seit ich dich ge-sehen' (top staff), 'Drei - mal taus-end Jah - re, seit ich dich ge- sehen' (second staff), 'Drei - mal taus - end Jah - re, seit ich dich ge - sehen' (third staff), and 'Drei-mal tau - send Jah - re, seit ich dich ge - sehen' (bottom staff). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines, with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature.

Fig. 7: Schoenberg, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*, mm. 1-2. Palindromic hexachords.

Webern was Schoenberg's first private pupil in Vienna, and worked with the composer on several of his early compositions, the last of which being the atonal choral canon *Entflieht auf leichten Kähnen* (1908; rev. 1914), setting a text by Stefan George. The text can be found in the appendix, poem no. 3. Its creation under Schoenberg's tutelage offers substantial context for its compositional features, and its connection of musical events to the text. This work is not serial, but simply atonal. The canon is harmonized in thirds in the S/A and inverted as sixths in the T/B. The individually consonant thirds are strung together into wholly atonal phrases, and the displacement of the canon yields vertical results far more ambiguous: either non-tertian pitch groups like G#, A, F, D $\flat$ , or tertian pitch groups whose constituent thirds are altered, yielding complex seventh chords like dim<sup>7#5</sup>. From a syntactical perspective, there is no functional syntax present, the canonic form itself serving this role.

In terms of the background text-painting mechanisms, it is the use of a canon form itself that finds a connective element to the text. The poem is quite abstract and

somewhat vague, but presents an overall description of ‘unfolding dreams’ as a central vehicle for describing an abstract psycho-emotional state which seems to imply some inherent sorrow. Webern’s choice of a canon structure for this work is indicative of such “unfolding,” and follows this idea of symbolic background connection. Furthermore, how Webern actually evolves the canonic structure throughout the piece is very closely connected to the poem, and so the subsequent middleground examination of this piece should offer sufficient evidence of Webern’s intention to use this canonic structure as an evocation device.

Prokofiev, anecdotally and famously, referred to Stravinsky as Bach, just playing the wrong notes. Schoenberg wrote of Stravinsky:

“Stravinsky was never reticent about his belief that music is primarily form and logic. His anti-Romanticism extended to fierce attacks on performers and conductors who misinterpreted his music. . . . His main interest continued to be in structure, in texture, in balance, in rhythm. His music is the work of one of the supreme logicians.”<sup>38</sup>

Most tellingly perhaps, Stravinsky said of himself, “music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express *anything*.”<sup>39</sup>

His struggles with his own compositional identity well-documented, Stravinsky’s choral output essentially boils down to two periods. The early period in which he delved into a nationalistic mindset and examined Russian folk traditions, which included small-scale part songs in simple style. The first large-scale work *Les Noces* (1914), was predicated on his discovery that “The accents of the spoken verse [in Russian popular verse] are ignored when the verse is sung. The recognition of the musical possibilities

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<sup>38</sup> Schoenberg, *My Evolution*, 156.

<sup>39</sup> Stravinsky, *Autobiography*, 53-4.



inherent in this fact was one of the most rejoicing discoveries of my life.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, the distinct character of these early works like *Les Noces* and the concurrently composed *Four Peasant Songs* is an idiomatic absence of counterpoint and a syllabic, rhythmicized presentation. The choir is treated very instrumentally, and rhythmic and accentual emphasis abounded. His reliance on form and architecture resulted in baldly repetitive verbal phrases typical to these works, but also foreshadowed the harmonic adventurousness to come. The *Four Peasant Songs* feature tonal centrality, but modal ambiguity: the first of the songs, “On Saints’ Day in Chigisakh” uses a hexachord of G through E, omitting any 7<sup>th</sup> scale degree. In “Ovsen,” he constantly alternates E with E# in the C#-centered tonality, and mixes Dorian and Mixolydian modes. This is a feature that remained in his smaller scale choral works, as 1934’s *Ave Maria* continued this practice, the perpetually alternating F# and F $\natural$  allowing him to move freely between G Mixolydian and G major, though the regular ending of phrases on e-minor chords further blurs a relative tonal relation as well.

His later period was borne of his re-entry into the Russian Orthodox Church which stimulated output of more choral music for practical religious purposes, but also allowed him the ground to transfer some of the harmonic modernism of his ballets into his choral music, eventually weaving into his adoption of serialism. First, however, came *Symphony of Psalms* (1930), his first large-scale religious work and what theorists label his most consistently octatonic work. Employing bitonality and polytonality within the realm of a traditional formal scheme, the work solidified Stravinsky’s pre-serial neoclassical sound – what van den Toorn describes as “octatonic-diatonic interaction”

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

wherein octatonic (or otherwise bi-or-poly-tonal) material is often superimposed over diatonic or modal material.<sup>41</sup> Examples such as the two below in figure 9 from *Symphony of Psalms* illustrate Stravinsky's use of poly-tonal material, combining an F Dorian modal scale in the piano with octatonic material and arpeggiations of E<sup>7</sup> in the winds as in the first example from movement I, or polytonality like the F major chord sustaining in the horns with an F# major chord arpeggiated below in the second example from movement III. The fact that in this work specifically Stravinsky mixes in passages of relative diatonicism (though not traditional tertian construction or progressive syntax) is distinctly reflective of the subject matter of the psalms he is setting.

The figure contains two musical excerpts. The left excerpt is titled 'Symphony of Psalms, Mov't I, mm. 12-13' and shows a piano part. It features an 'octatonic' scale in the right hand and an 'f dorian' scale in the left hand. An 'E7' chord is indicated in the right hand. The right excerpt is titled 'Symphony of Psalms, Mov't III; Rehearsal 20' and shows a polytonal passage. The 'horns' play a sustained F major chord, while the 'harp, piano' play an arpeggiated F# major chord.

Fig. 9: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*: examples of mode and scale mixture and polytonality.

Always a champion of form and architecture, the work as a whole is structured in a traditional baroque concerto style, with a toccata-prelude, a fugal movement, and an energetic finale. While such adherence to traditional forms has contributed to Stravinsky's labeling as form-driven and unemotional, his choral writing in this work

<sup>41</sup> Pieter Van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky* (Yale University Press, 1983): 96.

demonstrates an evolution out of the relative banality of his earlier choral works and he manages to be quite programmatic in this work despite the fact that pitch-wise, it is anything but traditional.

The background elements at work in *Symphony of Psalms* involve the text's descriptions of various interactions between God and Man. The tone of the text varies between the three psalms being set in the three respective movements, from pleading prayerfulness in the first movement, accounts of God's acts towards Man in the second, and energetic praise and gratitude in the third. Stravinsky chooses biblical passages that seem to depict the nature of the relationship between God and Man. Conceptually, therefore, Stravinsky creates a sonic world of perpetual ambiguity between C and E $\flat$  tonal areas. Wilfred Mellers posits the notion that the E $\flat$  tonalities represent Man and the 'white-note' tonality of C major, the 'purest' of tonalities, represents God – the work as a whole functioning as an evocation of the polarity between the two.<sup>42</sup> The choir, naturally representing Man, generally presents E $\flat$  material whereas the orchestra, representing God, most often possesses the C major material. (There are however some points of mixture in the score). Nowhere is this more clear than in the opening of the third movement, when this dichotomy is presented in the most obvious of terms: The choir proclaims "Laudete!" (we praise thee) in E $\flat$  major, and "Dominum" (God) on C major chords – consistently and perpetually alternating between God and Man, E $\flat$  and C. The substance of the first movement involves conflicts and alternations between the dominants of these two key areas (the plentiful arpeggios of G<sup>7</sup> and B $\flat$ <sup>7</sup> chords) as well as areas that imply these tonal centers themselves. But each movement of *Symphony of*

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<sup>42</sup> Wilfred Mellers, "Symphony of Psalms," *Tempo*, no. 97 (1971): 20.

*Psalms* offers examples of background structural and soundscape elements that are chosen directly for their expression of the text.

In Movement I, interactions between the tonal areas of  $E\flat$  and C, and their respective dominants, make up the primary sonic palate. As already mentioned, the score indicates quite a clear connection between  $E\flat$ -oriented material associated with Man elements of the text, and C-oriented material associated with God elements of the text. Examples of this connection can be found throughout the work, in each movement. The very opening of the work presents a dominant arpeggiation motive of  $B\flat^7$  and  $G^7$  chords, the respective dominants of the  $E\flat$  and C tonal areas, such as pictured below:



Fig. 10: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*: dominant arpeggiation motive.

The choral material begins with the plea ‘hear my prayer,’ with this dominant arpeggiation motive developing until it is interrupted by a short interlude in the winds at Rehearsal 6, which is in purely C major, with no accidentals whatsoever. The purity of this section dissipates as Stravinsky gradually reintroduces accidentals before returning to further development of the dominant arpeggiation motive. A return to the purity of C major occurs upon the words “be not silent” at Rehearsal 9 before once again gradually

re-introducing B $\flat$  and A $\flat$  until the dominant arpeggiation motive is restored, as the text moves back towards Man elements. Middleground examination will elucidate the exact connections of these shifts to the respective descriptions of God and Man in the text.

In the second movement, Stravinsky presents a double fugue, which by Mellers' logic continues this concept with an initial fugue in C (minor) and a secondary fugue in E $\flat$  minor; God's and Man's, respectively. The first fugue in the orchestra is in c minor (the dominant presentation from tonal practice intact via g-minor) and the chorus enters on its fugal subject, unsurprisingly, in E $\flat$ . These respective fugal entries are pictured below in figure 11:

Fugue 1 subject in orchestra, c minor



Fugue 2 subject in choir, e $\flat$  minor

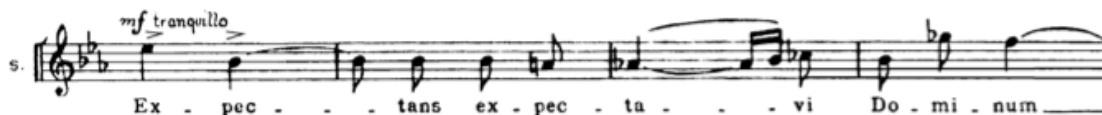


Fig. 11: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, Mov't 2: fugal subjects representing key areas of God and Man.

The opening of the third movement reinforces this tonal area connection, as the choir proclaims "Laudete!" (we praise thee) on the primary notes of E $\flat$  major, (the root, dominant, and leading tone) and "Dominum" (God) on C major chords – consistently and

perpetually alternating between God and Man, E $\flat$  and C, before launching into an extended instrumental section.



Fig. 12: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, Mov't 3: representations of key areas for God and Man.

In another example, the initial entry of the choir in the first movement on the plea 'hear my prayer' is in a unique mode: E Phrygian, with the alternation of major thirds and major sixths. This unique mode has a liturgical function: it is the *Ahavah Rabbah*, the altered Phrygian scale that is used in Jewish services as a prayer mode.

The image shows a complex musical score for Movement 1 of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*. It includes parts for Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl.), Bassoon (Fag.), and a vocal soloist (A.). The vocal part has the lyrics 'Au-ri-bus per-ci-pe lac-ris'. The instrumental parts are marked with 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'p' (piano). The score is in a key with one flat (E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 13: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, Mov't 1: Polytonality; *Ahavah Rabbah* prayer mode combined with dominant arpeggiation motive.

At rehearsal 7, pictured above, the choir is alternating scale degrees  $\hat{1}$  and  $\hat{2}$ , the characteristic pitches of the E Phrygian scale, while the celli and bassi alternate between F - A $\flat$  (G $\sharp$ ) and E - G, which represents  $\hat{2} - \sharp\hat{3}$  and  $\hat{1} - \natural\hat{3}$ , this major third alteration of the *Ahavah Rabbah*. It is also found in the clarinet, which alternates between A $\natural$  and A $\flat$ ,  $\hat{4} - \sharp\hat{3}$ . The other alteration, the major sixth (C $\sharp$ ), can be found in the second and fourth oboes. Note that the bassoons continue to develop the dominant arpeggiation motive (B $\flat$  and G $^7$ ). The fact that the text of this work begins on a prayer is certainly not a coincidence, but rather this example perfectly illustrates Stravinsky's background approach to this work: the assignment of specific sonic paradigms to specific elements of the subject matter, and creating a soundscape out of their alternations and combinations, a conscious application of sonic material to the background construction of this work in an effort to musically evoke what the text is depicting.

In *Threni* (1958), Stravinsky offers his first fully realized large scale work to the choral canon that employs a wholly serial architecture. With a wholly atonal, serial landscape, background elements for *Threni* involve direct translation of the lamentation passages onto the music form, the structural element of having the choir 'announce' the Hebrew letters that begin each passage in a likely homage to the Lamentations settings of Lassus and Tallis — and the handling of much of the choral material in a very particular way, utilizing a *parlando*, chant-like setting. This is a fundamental soundscape element of the work, appearing in both the chorus and solo parts, using long strings of groupings of twos and threes in such passages, invoking this design of medieval chant to draw instinctual parallels to the biblical nature of the text.

While formal structure has no affectual bearing on psycho-emotional expressivity, relationship between the musical form and the poetic form is a unifying, connective element which can communicate a relationship or a correspondence between the two media in the background layer. This is significant more from a philosophical perspective in terms of relation, but it is put forth that if syntactical correspondences which are the realm of the middleground and foreground are vehicles for attaining a blended space, then a background element such as transitive form should belong to this concept and support a work's place in a 'blended space.'

Schoenberg was well known for his adherence to Classical forms within his serial landscape, and his choral music is no exception. *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers* would be described as being directly translated to the music, as Schoenberg neatly corresponds the structural passages of the poem with distinct musical sections, separated by short instrumental interludes. Though the poem is structured as a whole in two stanzas, there are six clearly distinct statements that are made in the poem, and six distinct corresponding formal sections in the music. Likewise, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre* is poetically structured with three stanzas, with an interior contrasting stanza, a form that is directly translated onto an A B A' musical form. Direct translation of the poem is discovered in the form of *Mond und Menschen* from op. 27 as well. Four stanzas in the poem are translated into four distinct phrases in this A A' A'' B musical form. Each phrase is separated by a caesura via fermata and begun with the same 2/4 pickup figure into the next phrase, which includes similar row distribution (each includes the distinctive major-7<sup>th</sup> interval) as pictured below:



The image displays a musical score for four vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 7 to 8, and the second system covers measures 14 to 15. The Soprano part begins with a *ppp* dynamic and the lyrics "So wie das". The Alto part has a *molto p* dynamic and the lyrics "So wie". The Tenor part has a *ppp* dynamic and the lyrics "So". The Bass part has a *ppp* dynamic and the lyrics "So wie das". The second system shows the Soprano part with a *ppp* dynamic and the lyrics "Nie". The Alto part has a *ppp* dynamic and the lyrics "Nie". The Tenor part has a *ppp* dynamic and the lyrics "Nie". The Bass part has a *ppp* dynamic and the lyrics "Nie". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 8: Formal phrase structure in *Mond und Menschen*

In summation, elements of tone, subtext, and subject matter can still be affected musically in an atonal landscape, though it relies far more heavily on symbolism. This pulls such aspects of text connection far enough into the background to make it beyond the reach of experiential observation. They are often not things readily noticeable upon hearing the work, and this is a crucial distinction between the expressive potential in tonal and atonal texted music.

## CHAPTER 3

## MIDDLEGROUND MECHANISMS: NARRATIVE &amp; MOTION MECHANISMS

The middleground layer of the LCAM system involves *narrative* in poetry and *motion elements* in music. *Narrative* poetic elements deal with the events and evolutions within the scope of a poetic work; namely, the actions or plot involved, the pacing, speakers, settings, et. al. The narrative elements of poetry are reflected in *motion elements* in music, mechanisms by which the narrative content of a text's evolution is communicated musically in order to guide the listener's experience of these narrative contents. This can be likened to LaRue's growth element from the SHMRG spectrum.<sup>43</sup> It is crucial to note that even in an atonal landscape, wherein the listener is not offered a traditional harmonic-emotional compass, one can still readily perceive elements of *change* in a work. How a piece, even an atonal one, alters the compositional elements as it progresses contributes to its overall 'growth' or evolution, and this can be – and often is – directly connected to the narrative progressions within the text.

To say that harmony served the role of the primary expresser of emotional information in tonal music is one side of a philosophical coin; to say that harmony is only a socially conditioned construct and not fundamentally necessary in expressing psycho-emotional information is the other. The coin itself is this overarching idea of *expression* or *expressivity* that dominates so much of the discussion related to music's connection to

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<sup>43</sup> Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Harmonie Park Press, 1992). "Growth refers to the way in which a piece develops over time. This includes form at all levels, from motives and phrase structure to the shape of the whole piece."

psycho-emotion.<sup>44</sup> In order to gauge the efficacy of the text painting in a given work, there must first be a discussion of expressivity in a general sense, and some bases established for how music can express; then, one might apply such concepts to non-tonal analysis.

In his *Harmonie Universelle*, Marin Mersenne states:

“Music is just as much an imitation or representation as poetry, tragedy, or painting, [...] because it makes with sounds, or with the articulate voice, what the poet makes with verse, the actor with gestures, and the painter with light, shadow, and colors.”<sup>45</sup>

This concept of ‘imitation’ in music is overwhelmingly present in the writings of theorists and aestheticians on the subject of musical expressivity. Robert Stecker offers a useful survey of the prominent theories surrounding this idea,<sup>46</sup> the core of these theories succinctly summarized by Edward Cone, who states:

“Each art in its own way projects the illusion of the existence of a personal subject through whose consciousness [a certain kind of experience] is made known to the rest of us. That is the role of the character in a play, of the narrator in a novel, of the persona in a lyric.”<sup>47</sup>

Such is the nature of the distinction between *expression* and *expressiveness* utilized by Stecker in this analysis of contending theories of musical evocation, who argues the validity of statements such as “the music *is* sad” – can music *be* any particular

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<sup>44</sup> To employ the terms used by the primary writers on this subject: Stecker, Ridley, Levinson, and Robinson.

<sup>45</sup> Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, ed. Chapman (Springer Publishing, 1957).

<sup>46</sup> Robert Stecker, “Expressiveness and Expression in Music and Poetry,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 59, no. 1 (2001): 85-96.

<sup>47</sup> In Stecker. See: Edward T. Cone, *The Composer’s Voice* (University of California Press, 1982): 3.

thing? – or can music only cause a listener to infer an *expression of* sadness? Stecker certainly argues the latter, that a listener makes inferences about the emotion or psychological state associated with what is being heard based on some characteristic of the music reminding the listener of (being expressive of) a particular action or behavior: “We hear emotion in music when the music presents an emotion characteristic in appearance to us, i.e., when we hear the music as possessing [likeness] to either the human expression of emotion or the experience of an emotion.”<sup>48</sup> What such an ‘emotional characteristic’ might be is of crucial importance to the present study. Stecker goes on:

“Just as hearing motion or dynamic qualities in music is hearing a phenomenal quality or presented appearance of music, so is hearing emotion. The hearing of the former (motion) is intimately related to the hearing of the latter (emotion). To a considerable extent we hear emotion in music because we hear motion and dynamic qualities in it [because of] a perceptible likeness between the movement and dynamic quality of the music and the pace and posture of a person in a certain emotional state.”<sup>49</sup>

Kendall Walton echoes this idea in *Thoughtwriting* when he notes that “music, (lacking any semantic or narrative information) represents itself as someone’s expression of feelings, in the way that a story or poem represents itself as someone’s reports of a series of events.”<sup>50</sup> What Cone and Walton are pointing out here is that it is the nature of poetry that we infer a human speaker, because only human beings create words. Therefore, in conjunction with music, a listener will apply any inferred psycho-emotional states as those of Stecker’s ‘imaginary utterer,’ or Levinson’s ‘persona.’

Levinson, in addition to Robinson and Ridley, focus ample discussion on the

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<sup>48</sup> Stecker, *Expressiveness and Expression*, 86.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Walton, *Thoughtwriting*, 459.

difference between recognizing an emotion and feeling that emotion (and whether or not this distinction matters).<sup>51</sup> Ridley builds his theory on the idea that music is “expressive” when it presents emotion characteristics “in appearance” but stipulates that the definition of garnering expression from music involves a sympathetic (or empathetic) emotional response much in the same way that one can make inferences about a person’s emotional state based on such things as facial expression, posture, or movement. While Ridley’s theory is predicated on the notion that one must have their own personal experience of a given psycho-emotional state in order to recognize it in a source object, Stecker rejects this idea, invoking the human imagination and offering the theory that a piece of music must be “readily and aptly heard as someone’s expression of that state.”<sup>52</sup> Levinson suggests explaining hearing expressiveness in music as the recognition of an imagined persona in music, in the same way in which one imagines the speaker of a poem, and the listener sympathizes or empathizes with this persona. Robinson bases her discussion of expressivity on the idea that music possesses its expressive powers due to listeners’ ability, recognizing the absence of a persona, to apply *themselves* as this persona, which claims to account for music’s ability to make a listener *actually experience* a particular emotion.

The fundamental common denominator of all of these theorists’ writing is that music has the ability to mimic human actions and behaviors, and what one extracts from their body of work is that music garners much of its expressive potential by creating sonic representations of human actions and behaviors, which a listener can perceive and

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<sup>51</sup> see: Jenefer Robinson, “Expression and Arousal of Emotion in Music,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 52, no. 1 (Jan. 1994).

<sup>52</sup> Stecker, *Expressiveness and Expression*, 88.

(consciously or subconsciously) make psycho-emotional associations based on the imagining of a person exhibiting exactly such behaviors.

Written in 1907, Schoenberg's motet-like *Friede Auf Erden*, referenced in the appended list of poems, no. 2, contains plentiful examples of Schoenberg's strong connection to the narrative elements of the text and his willingness to make dramatic musical changes to evoke them. The shifts of musical character throughout the work are directly and quite clearly connected to the narrative elements of the poem.

A reading of the poem demonstrates its essential narrative content: that peace, though promised, is often absent, often taken in turn with violence. The final stanza describes a religious notion that peace will be the ultimate end for believers, but the poem tends to sway back and forth between designs of peace (angels' words, heavenly singing, holy nights, softly singing) and violence (bloody acts, armor-clad horses, murder-gestures, flaming swords). The poem keeps the two closely at each others' sides, much like it is in the world, and analysis of some of the formal and textural designs of the music demonstrate Schoenberg's willingness to turn on a dime in an effort to fully evoke these shifts in the poetry.

Schoenberg's variation of middleground motion elements throughout the work demonstrate an apparent lack of concern with subtlety, as each narrative transition is met with an overt confirming musical treatment that is readily perceivable despite the atonal language largely due to the musical motion elements of rhythm, dynamic, texture, tessitura, and perceived dissonance.<sup>53</sup> This may be explained by the work's placement in his oeuvre, being an earlier work of his and well before serialism. In any case, what one

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<sup>53</sup> A blend, or direct interaction, of layers is acknowledged here, as the alternation between relative consonance and dissonance is strictly speaking a background element as defined herein, though it also functions as a primary vehicle for middleground motion in this particular work.

finds in *Friede* is something quite madrigalian in design. This modern form of madrigalism becomes a highly effective method of communicating poetic elements within a non-tonal landscape.

The pastoral description of the opening is treated musically with diatonic interaction between F-major and d-minor which gives way to atonal progression through the phrase *led the heavenly followers away to sing in the starry sky*. Schoenberg dramatically adjusts the tessitura and the dynamic through this second section, keeping the voice parts in low dynamic and low vocal registers in the opening measures when describing the field and the ‘low gate’ and raising the dynamic and tessituras of the voices considerably when describing the motion towards the heavens in the following phrase. Fig. 14 below shows the elevation of pitches in the soprano and tenor in these respective sections, where this change in tessitura is most acute:

mm. 1-4  
*pp*

S  
T

There the shepherds left their herds....through the low gate...

mm. 15-20  
*mf* *f*

S  
T

Led the heavenly followers away to the starry sky to sing in the Heavens

Fig. 14: Schoenberg, *Friede Auf Erde*: motion element of tessitura change across sections

The foreground gestural treatment of the ‘many bloody acts’ passage discussed in the following chapter triggers a middleground transition into a new section of the poem, which describes violence in the world: *O like many bloody acts had the struggle on wild horses, the armor-clad accomplished!* Following the *peace, peace on the earth* section at Rehearsal 2, which Schoenberg actually ends with a diatonic imperfect authentic cadence (IAC) in the key of D major, he immediately begins to move away with a bass line that implies g-minor into far more dissonant material. This paves the way for the distinct change in character found at the ‘*bloody acts*’ portion.

D: V<sup>7</sup> I  
[IAC] with chromatic neighbor and ret. in alto

Fig. 15: Schoenberg, *Friede Auf Erde*: instances of tonal function, IAC in D major

Closer examination of this moment in the score can elucidate the specific motion elements Schoenberg is utilizing to illustrate this narrative shift.



Fig. 16: Schoenberg, *Friede auf Erde*: intensity of dissonance and rhythmic doubling used as motion mechanism.

Though much of the piece thus far has employed dissonance, it is often in the form of suspensions or polychords that result in primarily whole-step dissonances. Before this ‘*bloody acts*’ moment, there are not many direct (concurrent) half-step dissonances, which are quantifiably more dissonant than the former. Thus it must be noted that in addition to the dramatic doubling of rhythm from all quarter-note material to eighth-note material and dynamic, now *ff*; and articulation, now largely accented, there is also a sonic shift that occurs as one senses a change in intensity in this passage that results from the combination of rhythmic doubling and conflicting half-step dissonances that appear. Schoenberg’s usage of non-functioning structures in this passage aides in creating the more overt dissonance being utilized to convey the text.<sup>54</sup> Note that in chord 1 labeled in the above score excerpt, the tenors’ G# directly conflicts with the altos’ G, in chord 2 the F# in the men directly conflicts with the F in the alto line; likewise for the Ab vs. A in chord 3 and the E vs. F in chord 4. This is also a point of textural change, as musical

<sup>54</sup> A collection pitches that is not tertian or other regular interval, and does not create any functional harmonic construct; i.e., chord 1 in fig. 16 – Db, G, G#, B.

material which has been largely homophonic now creates a sense of chaos by having two motives in concurrent staggered entrances: the motor eighth note figure first seen in the bass, overlapped by alto, and a quarter note figure first seen in soprano and overlapped by bass.

The music maintains this aggressive characterization throughout this description of the bloody acts and armor-clad war horses, but when the text returns to the more gentle notion of holy nights with angels softly singing, at Rehearsal 5 pictured below, Schoenberg adjusts the tempo, becoming slower; the rhythm, returning to homophony; the dynamic, *ff* to *pp*; the consonance level, using tertian structures; and texture, resting the men and leaving only the soprano and alto. In essence, everything about the piece has changed suddenly in accordance with the poem's narrative, which re-invokes the image of the angels in heaven as a symbol of peace.

8

5 Etwas langsamer (ruhiger).

(geteilt) *pp*

bracht! In wie man cher heil' - gen Nacht

(geteilt) *ff* *pp*

In wie man - cher heil'-gen Nacht

- nisch - te vollbracht!

*p*

harnisch - te vollbracht!

*pp*

In

Fig. 17: Schoenberg, *Friede auf Erde*: instance of change in compositional elements as motion mechanism

The final stanza of the poem is qualifiedly different in tone and narrative elements than the previous three. It possesses qualities of stateliness and assuredness, and is the narrative ‘arrival’ of the psycho-emotional content of the poem. At this point in the music, Schoenberg makes an overt shift back into pure tonality, ending a section of harmonic ambiguity with an elided half-cadence (HC) progression of [D: vi – V<sup>7</sup>/V – V] as means of arriving on the final stanza, (fig. 18 below) which moves forward in purely diatonic D major for four measures, cadencing with an IAC on D major upon the repeat of the first line of this stanza, before wandering off harmonically again. The narrative content of this musical event, God’s ‘holy reign taking shape’ is painted musically with stable and traditional harmony, which against the backdrop of dissonance and ambiguity that is paradigmatic of this work, is immediately recognizable and associated with this narrative property:

1 sucht der Er - de.

Er - de. Mäh - lich wird es sich ge -

der Er - de. Mäh.lich wird es sich ge -

der Er - de. Mäh - lich wird es

den! Mäh - lich

A: ii V<sup>7</sup>

D: vi V<sup>7</sup>/V V V<sup>42</sup> IV vi V

Fig. 18: Schoenberg, *Friede auf Erde*: usage of tonality to evoke ‘stability’ within an atonal texture.

Schoenberg, as seen in his op. 27, demonstrates connection between the implementation of set material in conjunction with elements of the text. Similar manipulation of set material is found in *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*, which Schoenberg's manuscript sketches, shown below in figure 19, show the prime row as divided into its two constituent hexachords: The prominent hexachord of the piece is [G A F# E F B], which is I-combinatorial with the second hexachord [C Bb Db Eb D Ab] to form the aggregate.<sup>55</sup> This pitch set is first seen in the initial opening material of the soprano line. Importantly, this hexachord will return in a quasi-ostinato form via partitioning in measures 17-21.

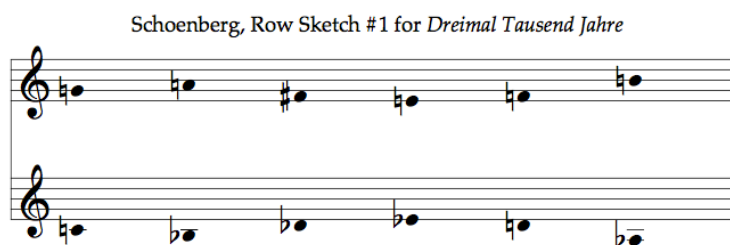


Fig. 19: Schoenberg, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*: Manuscript sketch of inversive hexachordal combinatoriality

Analysis of the row use in the piece demonstrates that Schoenberg is largely utilizing four inversionally combinatorial hexachords throughout, taken from two different rows,  $P_0$  and  $I_5$ , shown below in figure 20, and subsequent analysis will demonstrate a connection of these choices of hexachord to the music's depiction of the text:

<sup>55</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, *Complete Works, Series B*, vol. 19 (archive.schoenberg.at/compositions/allewerke): 96-97.

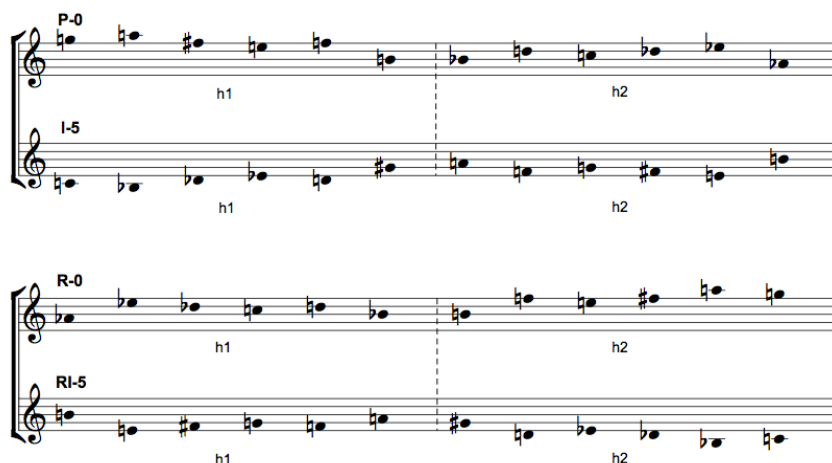


Fig.20: Schoenberg, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*: primary hexachords used for melodic material.

There are three stanzas in this poem, each with its own fairly distinct tone, and Schoenberg, often clear in his formal designs, delineates each stanza with treatment of the hexachordal material in addition to other motion elements like texture and rhythm. The first stanza, comprising the first four measures of the piece, features the aforementioned architectural design of palindromic hexachordal presentations. In the first two measures, the soprano, alto, and tenor voices present such palindromic statements; In the second two measures, the soprano, tenor, and bass. In each phrase, the conflicting voice includes pitches from the hexachords  $[h_2 \text{ of } P_0]$  and  $[h_2 \text{ of } I_5]$ , respectively, though now utilizing unordered forms of the hexachords. As previously mentioned, insistence on palindromic presentations of hexachords throughout the piece are almost certainly used to depict the poem's theme of *return*, as each line returns to its starting place just the way it came. But this architectural feature serves a more perceivable aural result in comparison with the section that follows.

The second stanza and corresponding section of the piece, which includes reference to the travel to the promised land, a fiery desert becoming green, now utilizes complete iterations of aggregate rows, specifically  $R_0$ ,  $I_5$ , and  $RI_5$ . At the onset of the second stanza, comprised of measures 5-12 pictured below in figure 21, the soprano line presents a complete iteration of  $R_0$  followed by a complete iteration of  $I_5$ . The alto concurrently presents  $RI_5$  in full. Furthermore, the tenor and bass line have the unique feature of sharing  $R_0$  and creating consequent dyadic structures. There is now a sense of division of melody and harmony, as the sopranos and altos present rows and the tenors and basses present an accompaniment comprised of the constituent pitches of one of those rows. The overall aural result in this section is now one of forward motion, contrasting the previous opening section which possesses an inherent sense of stasis, and this directly parallels the narrative content of the poem as it features depictions of the long journey.

5 Stanza 2

$R_0$

$RI_5$

$R_0$  divided between T/B

etc.

Und ihr Jor - dan - wel - len, sil - bern Wü - sten - band,...

Und ihr Jor - dan - wel - len, sil - bern Wü - sten - band,...

Und ihr Jor - dan - wel - len, sil - bern Wü - sten - band,

Und ihr Jor - dan - wel - len, sil - bern Wü - sten - band,

$R_0$ :  
Ab - Eb - Db - C - D - Bb - B - F - E - F# - A

Fig.21: Schoenberg, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*: manipulation of row implementation as motion mechanism

The following measures, mm. 8-10, which describe the verdant nature of the promised land after the fire of the desert, employ a discernable shift from relative dissonance to consonance to help paint musically this narrative element. Schoenberg's usage of  $P_0$  and  $I_5$  allows measure 8 to begin with a striking tritone C-F# spread widely between the soprano and bass, which moves immediately to a second tritone Eb-A before adding yet another tritone of Ab-D in the interior voices.

Fig. 22: Schoenberg, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*, motion element of relative dissonance to relative consonance in conjunction with narrative content of the poem.

This layering of tritones begins to find relief through measure 9 as more consonant intervals in the respective rows are employed, beginning with an f-minor chord on the downbeat of measure 9 ending up on a relatively consonant  $E^{7sus2}$  chord at the end of the bar.

In the third stanza, Schoenberg makes a dramatic shift in texture and articulation that coincides with the narrative shift which becomes celebratory, describing once again hearing 'long-lost songs' and the return of God. Architecturally, this section features a return of hexachords from  $P_0$  and  $I_5$  at the onset of this third section, in addition to the

reinstatement of their palindromic presentations which can be found in the tenor and bass lines of mm. 13 and 14, reaffirming this idea of return in the music.

Another interesting feature of this third section is the repetition of the original hexachord material from the melody of the first section, found again in the soprano part between mm. 17-20, wherein Schoenberg employs tetrachordal partitioning in the soprano, which repeats the [ G-A-F#-E ] pitch set three times, which serves to emphasize it. This repetition occurs, surely not coincidentally, on the phrase “announcing God’s return.”

Rather overt patterns of pitch emphasis are also used to help delineate the form. Three of the four combinatorial hexachords include constituent pitches that make rather diatonic melodic patterns, and would thereby be far more identifiable aurally. For example, as shown in figure 23 below, the first four notes of the first hexachord of  $P_0$  represents  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}$  in the key of G major. The second hexachord of this prime row, when in retrograde suggests  $\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$  in the key of A $\flat$  major. The retrograde of the  $I_5$  row also has this feature in its final four pitches, hinting at e-minor with  $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\hat{5}$ . These diatonic fragments are illustrated below:



Fig. 23: Schoenberg, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*, diatonic fragments within hexachords.



Since the first section featured the hexachords with these G-major-esque pitches, the second section the hexachords with A $\flat$ -major-esque pitches, and the third section returned to the focus on the first G-major-esque hexachords, one can observe Schoenberg's apparent consideration of the narrative elements of the poem when employing his hexachordal combinatoriality processes in the formal construction of this piece.

Study of even a few of Schoenberg's choral works elucidates a fairly wide spectrum of sensitivity to the text. In *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers*, Hung So-Fan's poem includes many evocative words and phrases that lend themselves naturally to text painting: *sleep, dreams, seized, weep, quickly hurrying, tossed* – reflecting both Stecker and Malin's commentaries<sup>56</sup> on the musical potential of words that involve movement and motion, which many of these are. The choral materials of *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers* are comprised of three distinct elements: a melody which presents one of the pentachords on longer notes with a fairly regular ♩ ♪ ♪ ♪ rhythm, a counter-melody consisting of a dotted-8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> figure on the other pentachord, with the remaining two voices having highly rhythmic, syncopated, and metrically blurred activity that doubles the mandolin part. There is very little variation to the texture or to the lines throughout the piece and between sections, generally only passing these constituent pentachords around the different voices. With each section containing the same construction, the form of the piece is essentially a rondo in arch form, A | A' | B | B' | A' | A, with two-measure instrumental interludes between each phrase. From a narrative standpoint, however, there is a distinct psycho-emotional turn in the poetry. The beginning of the poem describes a

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<sup>56</sup> See: Yonatin Malin, "Metric Displacement Dissonance and Romantic Longing in the German Lied," *Music Analysis*, vol. 25, no. 3 (Oct 2006); Stecker, *Expressiveness and Expression*.

man's intense love for a woman and his plea for his lover to have sweet dreams of him. Then, at the end of this first stanza there is a distinct change of tone as the speaker laments her inability to reach him in these dreams and her subsequent longing and weeping. It is a common tenet of text setting practice that qualifying conjunctions such as "but," "however," "instead," or "therefore," often referred to in text-setting pedagogy as 'contrast words,' carry semantically inherent meanings of contrast and trigger new narrative and/or psycho-emotional content, and should be painted musically with some contrasting musical feature which parallels this narrative shift. However, no such change is made to this section of the piece. The second stanza ushers in a tone of hopefulness and positivity, as the speaker declares that whether she has these dreams of him or not, the morning will eventually come and she will hurry back to him. Thus, the narrative elements of the poetry offer plentiful opportunity for motion elements in the music within the middleground layer of the text painting. Were this work set by any Common Practice composer, there would surely be a dramatic change of modality, texture, dynamic, and color to represent musically this interior area of despair.

Schoenberg, however, is not as intent on depicting elements of the text in this work as he was in *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*. The fact that the piece is neatly and clearly structured and that the pentachordal combinatoriality functions effectively as a theme, re-entering at each new section raises an important consideration of centricity. Centricity (use of a tonal or non-tonal 'center') tends to be associated with consonance, though something like a Bartók string quartet may be very tonally centric, but dissonant. Conversely, works by Debussy or Britten, while often using completely consonant tertian constructs, move between them in such irregular, seemingly random ways as to

contribute to an overall sense of dissonance or ambiguity. In this particular piece, a theorist like Jack Boss would note the distinct lack of *developing variation* in the voices, with such processes observable only in the instruments.<sup>57</sup> The primary middleground mechanism at play in this work that can be found to address the narrative is the shift to the inversion of the pentachords in the middle two sections, labeled as B and B' for clarity of their differentiation. The point of the poem's narrative shift – *But, she will not be able to reach me [...] she will weep...* – coincides with the B section of the music, wherein the pentachords are now presented in their inverted forms in the tenor and alto, shown in figure 24 below:

31 *pp* 32

S. Doch sie wird mich nicht er-reichen können, doch sie wird

A. *p dolce, legato* Doch sie wird mich nicht er-rei - - - chen

T. *pp dolce, legato* Doch sie wird mich nicht er-rei - - chen, nicht er-rei - -

B. *pp* Doch sie wird mich nicht er-rei - - chen können, doch sie wird

Fig. 24: Schoenberg, *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers*, inversion of pentachords in B section as motion mechanism.

Here, the middleground of the text painting creates an interesting situation: The structure of the narrative and the psycho-emotional content of the poem is a negative sandwiched between two positives. If these B and B' sections consisted of the part of the poem that turns toward the negative, then one could say that Schoenberg neatly and

<sup>57</sup> For examples of developing variation in Schoenberg's music, see: Jack Boss, "Schoenberg's op. 22 Radio Talk and Variation in Atonal Music," *Music Theory Spectrum*, vol. 14, no. 2 (Autumn, 1992): 125-49.

intentionally structured the piece this way, using the motion element of inversion to depict the narrative changes in the poetry. Unfortunately, the poem reverts back to the positivity of the ‘hopefulness of tomorrow’ (the second stanza) still within this middle section. In fact, it coincides with the B’ section. The return of the A’ section coincides with the middle of the second stanza, between two phrases of related content that belong to the same narrative idea, thus neglecting a vital element of the music’s relationship to the poetry.

Malin describes rhythm in music as perceived evolutions of four main components: Introduction, Intensification, Complication, and Refraction.<sup>58</sup> This nomenclature is rather useful, as theorists should recognize this sort of structure has parallels in both large-scale (background) and small-scale (foreground) musical applications. If one considers that Introduction involves the presentation of something, Intensification involves either its repetition or variation, Complication involves change or tension, and Refraction involves return or resolution, then one finds these qualities of progressive elements in everything from form (sonata; AABA), tonal progression schema (tonic – pre-dominant – dominant – tonic) to melodic construction (motive, motive, variation, melodic cadence, *a la* sentence form). Thus, Malin offers a useful tool in the examination of middleground correspondences, as how a piece progresses via these ‘perceived components’ would logically be directly related to the narrative content of the poem.

In Schoenberg’s *Mond und Menschen*, there is a clear phrase structure in place that directly translates the phrase structure of the poem, which includes four main narrative points: 1. People have always looked at the moon; 2. The moon dutifully

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<sup>58</sup> Malin, *Metric Displacement Dissonance*, 251.

follows its course night after night; 3. The moon has never wavered from this course and; 4. Humans are conversely unstable and lost. The fact that Schoenberg elects to move through this piece with rondo-like repetition between phrases now appears clearly related to the narrative content of the text. He is using the common ‘starting figure’ (from fig. 8) to trigger each new phrase to mirror the dependable, consistent path of the moon. Malin’s Intensification component comes into play when each new phrase begins with this starting figure, but is adjusted rhythmically, falling on a different part of the bar, skewing the rhythm of the subsequent sections. So even though the melodic figures are present in each voice in each phrase, they are in a different part of the measure each time. Where middleground motive elements truly come into play is the fourth phrase of the poem and the piece. This is the point of Complication. Narratively, the first three phrases were about the moon, but now the real narrative ‘twist’ of the poem is revealed: the fourth phrase contrasts the dependability and surety of the Moon with the fickleness of Man, beginning with the contrast phrase *Dagegen* (on the other hand...). As previously observed, contrast words like these are important literary elements and always invite musical contrast to support them. And indeed, Schoenberg starts this fourth phrase *completely* differently than the previous three, as shown in figure 25 below,

The image shows a musical score for Schoenberg's 'Mond und Menschen'. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff has a 'rit.' marking and measure numbers 21 and 22. The lyrics are 'kehrt. Dage - - - gen wir'. The second staff has a 'f' marking and the lyrics 'kehrt. Dage - - - gen'. The third staff has a 'f' marking and the lyrics 'Da - ge - - gen'. The fourth staff has the lyrics 'ärts kehrt Dagegen wir verwirrte'. The music features various rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings.

Fig. 25: Schoenberg, *Mond und Menschen*, fourth contrasting phrase as middleground motion mechanism

using the motion elements of rhythm and texture to create completely new material: cascading syncopated entrances and a running dotted figure that has not been seen up to this point. This new musical material, readily noticeably different after three verses of repetition, paints the contrast of Man to the Moon that the narrative is describing in this fourth phrase. Lest Malin not be satisfied, his Refraction appears at measure 28, with a return of the starting motive from the first three phrases, though it is altered this time to be in a 3/4 bar.

Schoenberg includes a very similar middleground treatment in *Unentrinnbar*, whose poem (Schoenberg's own) has a similar narrative structure of talking about one thing, and having a 'twist' at the end. The poem celebrates those who perform deeds when they believe they lack the courage to do them, and laments that God does not give him knowledge of his own bravery and thus he is not to be envied – but he turns this sentiment in the very last line by declaring that it is exactly for this reason that they are

envied. In a work that consists of very neat row presentation of  $P_0$  followed by  $R_0$  and  $I_5$  followed by  $RI_5$  in a double canon, the work is quite ‘busy’ throughout, a cumulative eighth note motor rhythm established by the 7<sup>th</sup> measure and maintained until the transition to this moment of change in the narrative. Most notably, between measures 18-24 Schoenberg liquidates the texture, removing one voice at a time until a grand pause is reached:

The musical score for Schoenberg's *Unentrinnbar* (Fig. 26) shows four staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). Measures 22-24 are marked 'rit.' (ritardando). Measures 25-26 show a contrasting phrase with dynamic markings *p*, *f*, and *pp*. The lyrics are: 'dann sind sie nicht zu be - nei - den.' and 'Und da - rum, da - rum'.

Fig. 26: Schoenberg, *Unentrinnbar*, final contrasting phrase as middleground motion mechanism

The gradual shift away from polyphony into monody and finally silence establishes the end of one section/idea and sets the stage for a new musical event. Reflecting this vital narrative element of the poem, Schoenberg adjusts the music, again on this contrast word “therefore” to homophonic presentation, and ends this final phrase with a more chorale-like texture.

In Webern’s *Entflieht auf leichten Kähnen*, the middleground of this piece’s expression of the text is connected directly to its formal progression. As previously

mentioned, the A section of this piece features a more straight-forward canonic presentation, though the canon is harmonized in thirds in the first iteration (soprano and alto) and with sixths in the tenors and basses, which then immediately begins to shift. When the A section comes to an end along with the first stanza of the poem at measure 9, the B section, which sets the second stanza, is launched with a change to the canonic construction. Four-part canon is now employed, with the melody being passed in staggered entrances in all four voices. Considering that this second poetic stanza is evoking images of dizziness, drunkenness, dream states, and ecstasy, this architectural and textural evolution is now seen to be evoking these psycho-emotional states. The relative stability (two part canon, harmonized in pairs) of the first section is now lost amid the cacophony of the second section, resulting from the intensification of the independence of the voices. The layering of the melody into four parts and onto fewer measures, coupled with what Malin would call *complication* of the rhythm all serve the narrative evolution of the poem. This intensification of the canonic structure's relation to the narrative content can be easily observed when represented graphically, wherein the M refers to the motivic presentation:

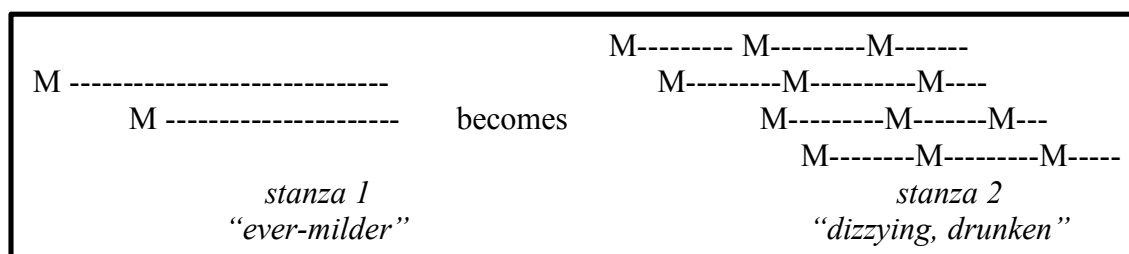


Fig. 27: Webern, *Entflieht*, canonic presentation between stanzas



Malin's concept of *refraction* is neatly applied here via the structured return of the A section in measure 18. The two-part harmonized canonic structure is also restored, as the narrative elements of the poem shift also towards a return to the sentiments of the first stanza.

Middleground examination of *Symphony of Psalms* illustrates careful attention to the representative scalar or key area material associated with different narrative elements of the text. The first phrase of the text in Movement I is the initial plea for God to hear the prayer, cast as previously mentioned against the combinations of the Phrygian prayer mode and the dominant arpeggiation motive. Once this phrase is over, Stravinsky casts the next phrase, "be not silent, be not silent" at Rehearsal 9 with an immediate transition to purely C major material.



Fig. 28: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, complexity of tonality as motion mechanism

As can be readily observed in the reduction of these sections above, the sonic contrast at this transition is a stark one, leaving the sinewy, chromatic material of the previous section and arriving at something relatively more consonant and accessible on this second phrase. The narrative movement of this passage involves a transition from pleading to hopeful, the implication of God not being silent meaning that he is answering:

thus this is God's element in the text, represented with Stravinsky's God key area. Stravinsky continues to follow the narrative content of the text very closely. In the following passage, beginning at rehearsal 10, the text describes the speaker as being a stranger, and a traveler. This narrative return to Man is painted musically by Stravinsky via a gradual reintroduction of accidentals to shift the music back towards the materials of the first section. Rehearsal 10 begins within the same sonic paradigm as the preceding God material, but only for three bars. At that point, immediately after the word 'stranger' (*advena*) is sung, an F# makes a surreptitious appearance in the clarinet, then appearing in the horns, and eventually A# (B $\flat$ ) also comes into play, as the music gradually returns to the key area paradigm of the first section.

The second movement, which features a double fugue, sees a structural element of the double fugue aligned with the narrative content of the text. In the first phrase of this text, the speaker declares that because he has waited patiently, God has heard his calling. The choir enters on its fugal subject in its key area (E $\flat$ ), but one notices that the first fugal subject, the God material, now occurs alongside the Man material, in its key. Note that the celli and bassi present the God theme in E $\flat$ m as counterpoint to the launch of the Man theme above.



Fig. 29: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, God fugal subject and Man fugal subject presented concurrently

A distinct textural and structural change occurs in the music at an important narrative point in the text at Rehearsal 10. Often cited as an example of polytonality in *Symphony of Psalms*, the canonic stretto that occurs in this *a cappella* passage is directly evocative of what the text is describing. In this section, the speaker says, “God has set my foot upon a rock, and directed my goings.” This shift of sentiment in the text from being desperate for help to being firmly grounded (confident, faithful) is served musically by this change in texture to *a cappella*, as the orchestra, which has largely served as representing God elements, now absent, reaffirms this idea of Man being on his own. Furthermore, the stretto presentation of the Man theme also supports this idea, while notably accentuating Man’s independence by employing polytonality, presenting each theme in a different key area: the sopranos in F minor, the altos in B♭ minor, the tenors in E♭ minor, and the basses in A♭ minor:

Fig. 30: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, polytonality in fugal stretto

At Rehearsal 14, pictured below, one finds another clear musical treatment of a narrative element of the text with a rhythmic change between sections. At the point of the text that describes the new song that God has given to Man, Stravinsky clears the

momentum with a grand pause and explodes on the following downbeat a new *ff* section that is based on the God theme (present in the low winds and strings) but now with a completely new rhythmic scheme previously unseen in this work, that of a long string of dotted rhythms. Furthermore, the choir sings brand new material in counterpoint with the re-rhythmicized God theme, effectively creating an entirely new section in accommodation of the text.



Fig. 31: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, presentation of all-new material as motion mechanism

There are middleground treatments observable in Stravinsky's *Threni* (no. 6 in list of poems) as the work progresses through its parts. Stravinsky breaks from Schoenberg's serial practices in quite distinct ways, which are explained by Straus and by van den Toorn: Straus describes Stravinsky's compositional tendency of 'composing out' via the usage of 'rotational arrays,' systems by which smaller sets which share common starting tones are employed instead of aggregates.<sup>59</sup> He explains: "His twelve-tone music, very unlike the Schoenbergian variety, is not generally based on the aggregate. Stravinsky's

<sup>59</sup> Straus, *Post-Tonal Analysis*, 231.

late music often traces melodic pathways through his rotational arrays.”<sup>60</sup> The second is van den Toorn’s articulation of another facet of Stravinsky’s style, what he describes as ‘doubling back’: repeating portions of a row before continuing on.<sup>61</sup>

While Straus notes in *Post-Tonal Analysis* Stravinsky’s tendency to utilize these rotational arrays in his late serial works, best exemplified in his final *Requiem Canticles* that are wholly based on such rotational arrays, it’s interesting to note that in *Threni*, his first fully serial work for chorus, he more regularly employs complete rows from the work’s 12-tone matrix. The opening duet in the soprano and alto are full presentations of rows  $P_0$  and  $I_0$ , yet feature van den Toorn’s ‘doubling back’ principle wherein Stravinsky will repeat small segments of pitches, most often only two or three, before continuing onward through the row, a vestige of the Second Viennese practice of partitioning. This makes the middleground motion elements at play all the more perceptibly connected to the narrative properties of the text.

In the second part of the work, the *Elegia Tertia*, which begins with the *Querimonia* (Complaint) section of the text, the narrative shifts to decidedly darker material which describes Man’s perception of God being against him, detailing the ways God has made him suffer. With the text prominently featuring words dealing with fracture – ‘broken,’ ‘removed,’ ‘against,’ ‘shattered’ – Stravinsky noticeably shifts the construction of the work as compared to the previous *Elegia Prima*. Most notably, the rows are not easily identifiable, neatly presented in relative order of construction. For example, the choral announcements of the letters in this section are not the hexachords pared out by different voices as in Part I, but are now homophonic and *a cappella*. The

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>61</sup> van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*.

constituent notes of these hexachords are not readily identifiable as belonging to any particular row, and subsequent iterations of the letter announcements are dissipated in voicing, ending up in only the soprano and alto. In effect, the row material has been fractured and thrown into ambiguity – just as the text is describing. The bass solo employs the second rotation of  $RI_6$  followed by the third rotation of  $P_0$  – this is very significant, not only as a precursor to later rotational arrays, but because  $P_0$  and  $RI_6$  are foundational rows throughout this work. Stravinsky has used them plentifully, but there has been no rotation of rows present in the work until this point.<sup>62</sup> Beginning at measure 174, Stravinsky also adopts another such disjunctive element to coincide with the text, and that is the appearance of canon. Canon first appears in the tenor part at measure 174, pictured below, where in addition to the disjunctive nature of the row material, it is a fitting motion element to employ considering the narrative content of the text which is uniformly describing elements of a fractured, disjunctive nature.



Fig. 32: Stravinsky, *Threni* – motion element of canonic separation

<sup>62</sup> Herein lies an interesting example of blurring of layers. As an architectural element that would not be readily noticed from an experiential perspective, it falls more into the realm of symbolism; however, as it is being utilized specifically to help convey a narrative element that has changed over the course of the text, its primary function is still that of a middleground motion element.

A few passages later, the text makes further mention of things that have been broken, “He hath also broken my teeth...” At this point, the canon is uniformly broken again, now into three part canon:

Fig. 33: Stravinsky, *Threni* – motion element of further canonic separation

At the end of this *Querimonia* section, the speaker remarks at the end of the VAU passage that his memories of God’s help and peace are still within him, and it is these memories that grant him hope and allow him to survive this turmoil. The narrative shift is a dramatic one. From three stanzas of vivid descriptions of suffering and turmoil, a singular declaration of faith and hope is made. The choir’s announcement of the letter of this passage, ZAIN, is distinctly more consonant, creating effectively an E $\flat$  to a B $\flat$ <sup>7</sup>; this is in stark contrast to the previous letters which feature far more dissonant constructs. The figure below charts the progression of increasing consonance through the four letters of this *Querimonia* section and its progressively positive and stable narrative:

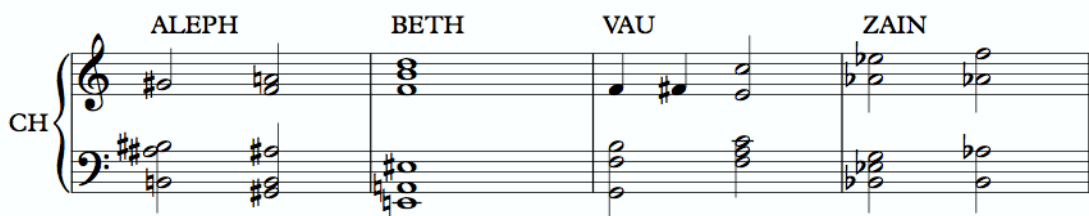


Fig. 34: Stravinsky, *Threni* – progression of perceived consonance in the chorus' letter announcements

Analysis of this progression shows movement from non-functioning chordal structures to quite tonal, just as the text evolves from graphic depictions to physical and emotional anguish towards hope and faith.

In this final ZAIN section, which depicts trust in God and an ultimate arrival at hope, there is another motion element at play in the form of a return to the original, non-rotational and ordered presentations of the rows, and it is the  $P_0$ ,  $RI_6$ , and  $I_0$  foundational rows that make appearances again. Stravinsky's propensity for "doubling back" on his row material and making small-scale motives out of portions of the row, examined in detail in the forthcoming foreground discussion, aids in the recognition of such motives and of these rows having returned. The canonic material that 'fractured' the choral texture throughout this section is slowly dissipated down to one line in the second bass, a utilization of the motion element of texture to end this narrative journey on a singular note to reinforce the speaker's ultimate return to *sperabo* (hope).



The musical score is for the end of the Querimonia section of Stravinsky's Threni. It features four vocal parts: Tenor I, Tenor II, Bass I, and Bass II. The lyrics are: "de me-o, i-de-o spe-ra-bo. in cor-de me-o, i-de-o spe-ra-bo." The music is in 3/4 time and one flat. Tenor I has a triplet of eighth notes. Tenor II has a half note. Bass I has a half note. Bass II has a triplet of eighth notes. The score is written on five staves with various musical notations including slurs, triplets, and a key signature of one flat.

Fig. 35: Stravinsky, *Threni*, end of *Querimonia* section

In a final example, there are two distinctive places in the narrative of these lamentations that describe a ‘returning’, and these places in the text are both set with returns to the foundational rows. The first such instance is in measure 231, where the text begins a new section and states: “Let us return again to the Lord”. At this very point, the chorus sopranos and altos are given  $R_0$ , the tenors  $I_0$ , and the harp and strings are in  $P_0$  and  $RI_6$ , a blatant return to the foundational rows to depict this narrative element.

Likewise, the work ends with a similar middleground treatment. In the final passage, the text states: “Turn us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned. Renew for us our days of old.” As Stravinsky had created a dense structure with employment of  $RI_2$ ,  $RI_3$ ,  $RI_8$ , and  $I_6$ , in the section preceding this, it’s important to note the way that he gradually rebuilds the original prime row coming into this ending: via segmentation, he distributes the original prime row between voices: initially, the soprano has the ordered succession of pc:  $\langle 1\ 11\ 3\ 4\ 8\ 6\ 7\ 9 \rangle$  and the tenor has  $\langle 12\ 2\ 9\ 6\ 5\ 7 \rangle$ , and these row segments permeate through the voices before finally ending with the chorus and the

orchestra sustaining the first and last pitches of  $P_0$  and  $P_1$ , pc: 3,6 and 4,7, respectively. Returning to the original presentation for this ending via the prime row is clearly connected to this narrative property of returning in the text, and it is also worth noting that whereas Stravinsky began the work with concurrent presentations of  $P_0$  and  $I_0$ , the end of the work features two iterations of the prime row,  $P_0$  and  $P_1$ , offering an added sense of finality to the finality depicted in the text.

## CHAPTER 4

## FOREGROUND MECHANISMS: POETIC SEMANTICS &amp; MUSICAL GESTURES

The foreground layer of the LCAM involves *semantics* in poetry and *gesture* in music. Regarding semantics: A vital component in analysis of text-music relations is the acknowledgement that text does indeed carry semantic content that does not allow for any interpretation. Winn describes this issue most succinctly:

“The materials of music [...] are more plastic than those of poetry; they can acquire their meaning entirely from musical context, while poetic materials, though greatly affected by the poetic context, bring their dictionary meanings with them into the poem.”<sup>63</sup>

Kendall Walton’s description of text-setting in music as a “behavior indicator” is crucial to the study of any atonal music.<sup>64</sup> What Stecker, Ridley, Levinson, Walton, and Robinson’s studies demonstrate is the fundamental common denominator that by recreating human physical and verbal gestures, music is able to assume a recognizable persona, a transitive speaking role that can communicate, as such gestural elements of music can create a recognition of a human-like behavioral quality, and subsequently, that quality’s corresponding emotion. Therein do the semantic elements of a poem have their musical analog. ‘Gesture’ has become a broad catch-all term to describe a multitude of musical phenomena. For the purposes of the present study, the term gesture shall be applied in its most recent connotations is a specific musical mechanism by which a word, action, or particular idea in a poem is communicated with a compositional treatment

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<sup>63</sup> Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, 49.

<sup>64</sup> Walton, *Thoughtwriting*, 465.

(harmony, rhythm, texture, melody, dynamic, articulation, etc.) that evokes in a listener an imagining of a person exhibiting an associated behavior, and subsequently the emotion most readily associated with that behavior; as Stecker describes it, music as “mimicking a human state.”<sup>65</sup> Both Stecker and Malin discuss the concept of parallelism between musical gesture and human gesture, between the *motive* and the *emotive*.<sup>66</sup> It is these motive and emotive gestures that are able to carry and communicate emotional information because the listener is able to connect them to psycho-emotional states, and thus make assumptions about the intended psychology, based on the imagining of a person exhibiting such physical actions or behaviors. Forthcoming analyses will demonstrate that even in atonal music, one can find a particular, novel gesture used to bring focus to individual words or clauses, and such gestures of an overt change in either harmonic structure, articulation, or dynamic can draw focus to a particular word, clause, or idea.

It is also important to note how the text of a poem is presented verbo-musically, or what is referred to as prosody. Within the foreground of a musically painted text will be the presence (*or absence*) of prosodic elements that allow the text to be clearly communicable by the singers performing it. Such standards of prosody include matching strong syllables to strong beats and weak syllables to weak beats, appropriately setting long syllables to longer notes, and the like. Employing recent study of expressivity and grammar in vocal performance by Tyler Bickford and others, it is vital to note choral and vocal music’s tradition of idealizing text-setting that mirrored oratory in order to evoke clarity of what is being said. If musical texture, tessitura, or other element of construction

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<sup>65</sup> Stecker, *Expression and Expressiveness*, 89; also: King, *Musical Gestures*; Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes*.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 86; and Malin, *Metric Displacement*.

obscures the words beyond the point of intelligibility, then the balance within the blended space is disrupted, and the words themselves can become a non-element. However, if in a serial or atonal work the composer is still actively engaged in the effective setting of the text, then the ideals of ‘song’ and ‘blended space’ can be considered maintained.

An important facet of the LCAM system is that the musical mechanisms of middleground and foreground layers are essentially the same – they involve the usage of harmony, rhythm, texture, contour, etc. – but their difference lies in musical context. Middleground elements utilize these musical mechanisms over the long-term to contribute to growth and evolution in a piece, which is connected to its narrative. However, these same mechanisms, used as behavior indicators, can be applied at a local level, as isolated incidents, in order to bring focus to a semantic property, and such gestures constitute the most surface-level, foreground layer of a musical text painting. Therefore, the terminology applied is derived from the parallel functions of human motion: we would refer to one’s long term characteristics as *behavior*, and one’s specific actions as *gestures*, thus middleground and foreground, respectively.

Schoenberg’s *Friede Auf Erden* offers some effective examples of foreground gestures within his atonal landscape that quite readily convey a psycho-emotional quality of semantic properties in the text. The first of such examples can be found at the placement of a discernable change in the quality of sound that occurs between measures 9-11, excerpted below:

Fig. 36: Schoenberg, *Friede auf Erden*, gestural treatment of the word 'kind'

What one observes here is a clear point of arrival at Rehearsal 1 which follows four measures of heavily ambiguous and dissonant movement. The piece opens with diatonic interplay between F major and d minor, which then departs towards an atonal passage via a secondary dominant ( $D^7$ ) and an  $it^{+6}$  on  $E\flat$  in reversed order, towards the event pictured above, where, confirmed by a *ritardando*, a change of key coincides with a return to diatonic and more traditional harmony: a cleanly voiced progression of  $[D: V^{43} - I^6 - IV^6]$ . This point of musical arrival coincides with the end of the first major phrase, which refers to the mother and the child (*kind*), which is the word being painted musically here with this shift out of atonality into a brief section of tonality. There is a readily perceivable lightening, a perceptible sense of relief, to the tension built up between measures 6-10, a reference to the innocence and the magnitude of who this child is. Schoenberg confirms this gestural treatment by setting the two occurrences of *kind*

before this point on pure major triads, the first on the downbeat of measure 9 (F major) and the second on beat three of measure 10 (E $\flat$  major), which stand out among the intervallically and syntactically dissonant harmonies that surround. The result is that a perceptively consonant, stable chord is heard each time the word *kind* is heard. A musical construct such as this, dissonant and/or syntactically incoherent constructs arriving at a point of more traditional harmony is gesturally indicative of tension and release. Even though the harmonic motion from E $\flat$  to A $^7$ , separated by a tritone, is not representative of the dominant-to-tonic construct of cadential resolution of tension from tonal practice, the effect is the same, and it is readily perceivable as something analogous to a human experience, thus qualifying it as a gesture and allowing it to communicate a psycho-emotional sentiment.

Both Stecker and Malin describe motion elements in music as primary sources for communication of intended character, as these musical elements have the strongest associations to human behavior. One moves quickly when one is energized by either positive or negative excitement – happiness or thrill, or fury; slowly when one is sad, bereaved, lonely, et.al. Likewise, articulation in music can directly mimic human action: slow, smooth articulations are readily associated with gentle touches; hard, fast articulations with more aggressive gestures, like those associated with anger, frustration, etc. Thus, when the poem mentions the “many bloody acts” (*O, wie viele blut’ge Taten*) in the world after rehearsal mark 3 (figure 37) as an antagonist to the overarching plea for peace, Schoenberg invokes a dramatic change in rhythm and dynamic to paint these

words specifically:

The image shows a musical score for Schoenberg's 'Friede Auf Erden'. It consists of four staves, likely representing different vocal parts. The lyrics are written below the staves. The first staff has the lyrics 'ten, o wie'. The second staff has 'so ge-ra-ten, o wie vie-le blut'-ge Ta-ten, o wie'. The third staff has 'vie-le blut'-ge Ta-ten, o wie vie-le'. The fourth staff has 'blut'-ge Ta-ten, o wie vie-le blut'-ge Ta-ten,'. The score is written in a complex, atonal style with many accidentals and dynamic markings. The lyrics are in German, and the word 'many bloody acts' is highlighted in the original text.

Fig. 37: Schoenberg, *Friede Auf Erden*, gestural treatment of the word ‘many bloody acts’

Up to this point, the rhythmic material of the piece constituted only quarter notes and longer, without any subdivisions of the beat. Applying Malin’s concept of perception of rhythm, this would constitute the introduction and intensification. The introduction of moving eighth notes (complication) is reserved for this moment to musically depict these “bloody acts” – the sudden doubling in pace of the melodic motion, coupled with a *ff* dynamic shift and more aggressive articulation match, or confirm from a gestural perspective, what the text is describing. It is readily perceivable as mimicking a human action, and is applied to a specific word, phrase, or idea, and thus fits the classification of a gesture.

The second section and corresponding stanza of *Dreimal Tausend Jahre* offers an example of this concept in a foreground gesture in measure 10. Upon the first utterance of the word *neues* (new), there is a stopping of motion as the ATB voices sustain a quintal



structure on half notes ( E-B-F $\sharp$  ), pictured below in fig. 38. Up to this point in the piece, there has been a cumulative eighth note rhythm, resulting in a sense of perpetual motion. The fact that this is the first instance of sustained homophony in the piece draws focus to it. Then coupled with the fact that the open fifths create a momentary oasis of consonance, confirmed by the delayed entrance of the soprano's G $\sharp$  which solidifies the triadic structure of E-major (with an added 9), the painting of the word 'new' becomes an effective and perceptible gesture. Schoenberg confirms the intention of this gesture by repeating it to an even larger degree at the end of measure 12, (figure 39) where via a fermata the music comes to a complete stop; a sustained point of rest on the word 'shoreland' is gesturally indicative of activity coming to rest, a depiction of the arrival and stability that the shoreland represents.

The image shows a musical score for Schoenberg's 'Dreimal Tausend Jahre'. It consists of four staves, likely representing different vocal parts. The lyrics are in German: 'Gär - ten und Ge - län - de grü - nen, neu - es U - fer -'. A dotted box is drawn around the word 'neu' in the third measure of each staff, indicating a specific gestural treatment of the word. The notation includes various note values, rests, and accidentals, with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Fig. 38: Schoenberg, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre* – gestural treatment of the word 'new', the first instance of stasis/homophony indicated by the dotted box.

Fig. 39: Schoenberg, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*, m. 12 – foreground gesture of stasis to represent the arrival on the shoreland.

In the third stanza, Schoenberg makes a dramatic shift in texture and articulation, having the sopranos and altos in a brand new, eighth-note motor rhythm with staccato articulation and *ppp* dynamic on the text “and one hears it softly from the mountains.”

Fig. 40: Schoenberg, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*, verse 3. Foreground gesture example.

This musical treatment of this clause is, as Stecker or Levinson would say, mimicking the hushed quality of a person who is calling attention to something heard in the distance. This is a rather universal human gesture and thus is readily recognizable in the music, making it an effective communicative mechanism in spite of the dissonant string of major and minor seconds and tritones.

As previously discussed, *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers* represents a lesser degree of concern on Schoenberg's part with communicating elements of the text. One is hard-pressed to find many middleground motive elements or overt foreground gestures dealing with individual semantics. There is a notable gesture in measure 51, shown below. The primary melody consists of a syncopation fragment of three quarter notes superimposed onto the 6/8 bar, pictured below in figure 41. Each time this melody has been presented, in any voice, it has been as pictured below. In another example of the focus brought to an event that is executed differently than it has been, here Schoenberg not only extends the soprano range for the first time up to this pitch level, having only ascended to F# up to this point, but he also adds an anticipation onto this high A. An anticipation is gesturally indicative of impatience and, as Malin notes in his study of metric dissonance in Romantic *lied*, of longing. Malin states: "moments of longing often arise [in music] from an awareness of separation." Thus, he explains that weak-beat accents, and similar syncopation events which he calls 'displacement dissonances,' have long been used in text setting as indicative of unrest, instability, longing, and reaching.

Because Schoenberg extends the soprano up to her highest level, he is effectively creating a melodic climax, and he does this on the word *leibhaftig*, which in context refers to his love interest's "giving of herself." In the context of the poem, this refers to

their eventual reunion, and thus can be considered an emotional climax as well. Thus, the sudden leap up to such a high pitch at this word is almost certainly intentional.

The image displays two musical excerpts from Schoenberg's *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers*. The top excerpt, labeled '8' and 'mp', shows a single melodic line with the lyrics 'schenk mei - - - nem'. The bottom excerpt, labeled '51' and '52', shows a four-part vocal setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with the lyrics 'that she gives herself to me' in English and 'daß sie mich leib-haf - - - tig' in German. The German lyrics are split across the four parts: Soprano has 'daß sie mich leib-haf - - - tig', Alto has 'daß sie mich leib-haf - - - tig', Tenor has 'daß sie mich leib-haf - - - tig in die Ar - - me, in die Ar-me, in die', and Bass has 'daß sie mich leibhaf-tig in - - - die Ar - - me, in die Ar-me,'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 41: Schoenberg, *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers*, m. 8, original hemiola fragment compared to m. 52, gestural anticipation and range expansion gesture

Regarding Webern's *Entflieht auf leichten Kähnen*, it would be wise to acknowledge that canonic construction largely prevents harmonic connection to any specific words, since the nature of canon is such that on any given vertical structure, different words are being sung at once. Therefore, one must be prepared to analyze the writing from more of a horizontal perspective than other pieces. Consequently, foreground examination of specific gestures involved in this piece will need to be more horizontally-minded. The first of such musical gestures that paint the semantic properties of the text is in the melodic construction of the first phrase, which makes two mentions of describing a 'taking flight' or 'gliding,' and with no pretense of subtlety dramatically ascends in pitch by more than an octave:



Fig. 42: Webern, *Entflicht*, m. 8, gestural treatment of the word 'flight'.

Another foreground gesture can be identified which echoes a popular cliché in tonal text-painting, referring to the plethora of references in the literature to Bach's weeping motive – a descending half-step or other descending chromatic line that mimics weeping or the falling of a tear. The melody of the A section includes a descending melodic fragment of three half steps, and each time the words *tränen* (tears), or *trauer* (sorrow) appear, they are set to this exact figure. Examples of this gesture appearing throughout the work are illustrated below:

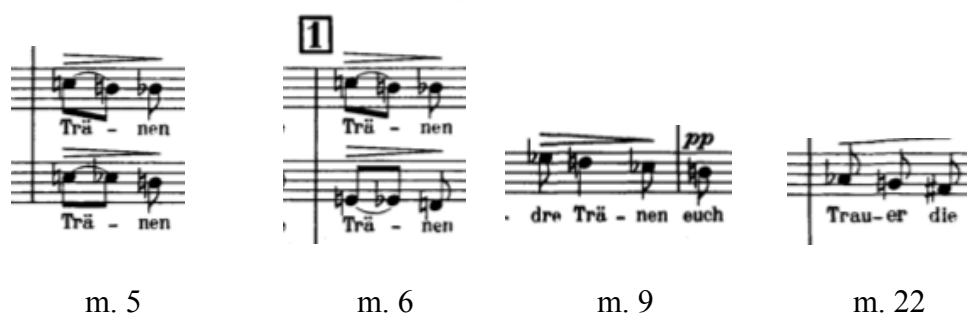


Fig. 43: Webern, *Entflicht*, instances of the 'weeping' gesture.

In another example of a combination of Stecker's principles of expression and Malin's principles of rhythm's connection to observation, Webern employs rhythm and motion to paint musically three specific and related words: dizzying, drunken, and

dreaming. In setting such words, Webern employs a doubling of rhythm combined with a pattern of ascent and descent, as exemplified by the alto line at measure 11, pictured below, which features the appearance of this motive before being passed around the other voices:



Fig. 44: Webern, *Entflicht*, gestural treatment of the words ‘dizzying’ and ‘drunken’.

Theorists like Ridley and Levinson would point to this gesture with great enthusiasm, a distinct musical caricature that Levinson would say results in the recognition of something that sounds like an expression of a person exhibiting dizziness, or intoxication, as such a person would stagger from side to side and be unbalanced.<sup>67</sup> This is exactly what Walton means when he refers to musical events as “behavior indicators,” or as Peter Kivy states, it “involves a contour similar to a human behavior, and is therefore heard as being expressive of that behavior.”<sup>68</sup> The very definition of ‘dizzy’ is to feel a lack of balance, as is the case with drunkenness, and having a line that is triggered off the beat and ascends and descends so quickly, in a faster rhythmic

<sup>67</sup> Another example of the phenomenon of layers blurring: the overt gestural depiction of these words qualify it as a gesture very much in the foreground, despite it *not* being an isolated incident in this case; rather, it is part of the construction of this B section and the evolution of the piece, thus putting it also in the realm of the middleground, since these specific words also happen to constitute the narrative content of the second stanza.

<sup>68</sup> Peter Kivy, *The Corded Shell: Reflections on Musical Expression* (Princeton University Press, 1980).

paradigm, would be consequently indicative of, and thus expressive of, such a psycho-emotional state.

There is a similar gesture in the fourth phrase of *Mond und Menschen*, which contrasts Man by describing him as “unsteady” and “lost.” In the excerpt below, one can recognize what Schoenberg has done on these words:

The image shows a musical score excerpt from Schoenberg's *Mond und Menschen*, measures 24 and 25. It features four staves of music with German lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "en: un - stet ist und ruh-los al - - les, al - -", "Menschen: un - stet — ist — und ruh - - los alles, al-", "schen: un-stet ist und ruh-los al - - - les, al-les,", and "hen: un - stet ist und ruh - - los al -". The music is characterized by complex, syncopated rhythms and large intervals, particularly in the soprano and alto parts, which contribute to a destabilizing effect. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present in the third staff.

Fig. 45: Schoenberg, *Mond und Menschen*, gestural treatment of the words ‘unsteady’ and ‘lost’.

Here, Schoenberg creates a compound gesture on the word *unstet* (unsteady) and *ruhlos* (restless or lost) involving different ways to de-stabilize the rhythm and the text setting. In row implementation that has been mostly devoid of large leaps, the soprano and alto now leap a sixth within a very quick rhythmic figure, with further destabilizing melismatic and prosodic syncopation in the alto line. The tenors perpetuate the running dotted figure that is a main feature of this distinct fourth phrase, and the basses present a fully syncopated line to accentuate the off-beats. The consummate result is a destabilizing musical event used to paint the words that mean destabilized.

Analysis of Stravinsky's choral music demonstrates much greater sensitivity to the text in the background and middleground realms, and far less attention paid to gestural elements of the foreground. *Symphony of Psalms* presents only a few gestural events in its foreground layer:



Fig. 46: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, gestural treatment of 'longing' motif.

Man's fugal subject that appears in the second movement, re-shown above, includes a tonic-dominant outline to establish the key area of Man, but then features very tight, chromatic and conjunct motion. A very wide leap of a minor sixth then occurs on the word God, a gesture one recognizes as a rather traditional, perhaps even clichéd, musical evocation of longing, fitting for a line that states "I have waited patiently for my God."

At rehearsal 12 pictured below, Stravinsky paints the desperate plea "Spare me!" with the gestural elements of dynamic and articulation: he uses accent marks for the first time on these words and sets them *ff*, immediately followed by a repeat of these words *meno f*.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> A note on performance practice: the majority of recordings and performances of *Symphony of Psalms* treat this *meno f* marking as a *subito p*, to reinforce this effect.



Rehearsal 12, *ff* and accented

next measure, *sub. p*

Fig. 47: Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, gestural treatment of 'Spare me'

Michael Tomasello, in his book *Origins of Human Communication*, reflects on the cross-cultural commonality of human gestures and describes an example of one such gesture commonly employed to make a point or demand in an effort to get what one wants: he notes that across many cultures, it is common to raise one's voice to make a plea or demand, but then to repeat it at a quieter level. According to Tomasello, this gesture of pairing aggression with calm evokes a far greater sense of poignancy than employing only one or the other.<sup>70</sup> This gesture is often paralleled in musical text-painting situations, and serves as an excellent example of employing a recognizable and understandable human gesture that is readily associated with the gestural qualities of a person making a desperate plea.

In the same vein, when Schoenberg arrives at the end of *Du Sollst Nicht, Du Musst* (op. 27, no. 2) there is a similar gesture borrowed from verbal communication upon the final directive 'you *must*.' What one finds in the excerpt below is that Schoenberg makes two distinct gestural motions on this word.

<sup>70</sup> Michael Tomasello, *Origins of Human Communication* (MIT Press, 2010), 376.





Fig. 49: Schoenberg, *Unentrinnbar*, gestural treatment of 'therefore'

An example of a foreground gesture can be found in *Threni*, measure 62, where a tenor duet sets the text *plorans ploravit in nocte* (she weepeth sorely in the night), excerpted below:

Diphona I  
Mesto  $\text{♩} = 46$

Tenore I  
SOLI  
66  
Tenore II

Plo - rans plo - ra - vit, plo - ra - vit, plo - ra - vit in noc - te,

Plo - rans plo - ra - vit, plo - ra - - vit, - plo - ra - vit in noc - te,

Fig. 50: Stravinsky, *Threni*, gestural treatment of 'weeping'.

There are two important things to note here from a text-painting perspective. The first is the aforementioned reference to Bach's "weeping motive" or "sighing motive" of a descending half-step or other descending chromatic event seen in the Webern canon; The second is that upon a glance of the serial matrix for *Threni*, one observes that each

retrograde row begins with a descending half step, and *only* the retrogrades have this property (the RI rows will ascend chromatically). In a similar way to his taking advantage of the ic5 that begins each prime row to guide the ear to hear anacrusic movement (*a la* V-I), it is unimaginable that Stravinsky was not aware of these two items when setting this section, utilizing a retrograde row and the consequent half step descent in this rather traditional painting of the word ‘weeping’ or other such reference to tears or sighs. The second tenor, operating on row  $I_0$ , is also set as  $i -5$ , complementing this descent in the partnered voice.

An important element of the foreground of any text-painting is the prosodic considerations that support the communicability and discernibility of the text within the context of the music. Prosodic elements are a major factor in the successful existence of a compound model of texted music sought herein, and by Agawu and Zbikowski. If poor musical treatment of the text obscures its communicability, then it stands to reason that it diminishes its role within the blended realm and relegates it to an incidental position. As Agawu observed regarding Langer’s model of song, it is not enough that the text merely inspire the music and then forget it, for it is presenting the words alongside the music in the final product.

Researchers like Tyler Bickford, though applying his research to Bob Dylan’s music rather than atonal composers’, offer important insight into considerations of text, and his principles are readily transferable from Dylan to Schoenberg. He notes that it is “patterns of sound and gesture that structure acts of speaking or singing as intelligible and interpretable utterances,” and it is the application of these patterns of sound onto patterns

of music that is the very nature of prosody. He goes on:

“Elements of phonology such as stress, phrasing, and syllable structure, to name a few, have real bearing on singing, and their functional (i.e., grammatical) presence in the linguistic context of a song’s lyrics plays an important role in the expressive forms of singing. My aim is not so much to view the sounds of poetry as themselves musical as it is to view the sounds of language *in* music as a site of expressive interaction between systems of aural meaning and form.”<sup>71</sup>

Bruce Hayes, another prominent writer on the subject, describes an “Optimality Theory” which identifies the role rhythm has in text setting, and establishes constraints, effectively offering a summation of the established ideals of prosody:

- 1.) not associating strong syllables with weak beats, or vice versa
- 2.) not having pauses between syllables or mid-word
- 3.) allowing the phonetic length of syllables to coincide with length of relative rhythmic durations
- 4.) allowing prosodic phrase edges to coincide with musical phrase edges (such as the end of a stanza being a cadential point)<sup>72</sup>

Hayes also points out that some composers may elect to purposefully break one of these ‘rules’ because their violations would be “striking and unexpected” and this effect is intentionally sought.

Schoenberg, who like Stravinsky was intent on maintaining sound musical architecture in terms of his forms, likely regarded prosody in the same manner. Though he stated – with relative voracity – his lack of interest in musically expressing *meaning* in his texts, examination of his text-setting seems to demonstrate a desire to at least express its *intelligibility*, as he generally adheres to Hayes’ principles outlined above. Another

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<sup>71</sup> Tyler Bickford, “Music of Poetry and Poetry of Song: Expressivity and Grammar in Vocal Performance,” *Ethnomusicology*, vol. 51, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 440.

<sup>72</sup> Bruce Hayes, “Text Setting as Constraint Conflict,” in *Towards a Typography of Poetic Forms*, ed. Jean-Louis Aroui and Andy Arleo (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996): 49.

look at figure 21 illustrates an example of quite ideal prosodic setting of this phrase. The figure below shows the scansion of this line and its application onto the alto line on parts of the measure that have corresponding stress or unstress:



Fig. 51: scansion and prosody in *Dreimal Tausend Jahre*

As has been shown throughout this study, there are varying degrees of sensitivity to the text at play in the work of these two composers. Whereas it can be said that Schoenberg *generally* adheres to prosodic considerations when setting his texts, there are certainly exceptions, a prominent example of which can be found in Figure 6. Note in this example that while the voices presenting the pentachords are well set, the alto and tenor, who in this passage present the ‘interior fifth’ have a syncopated and metrically blurred line, wherein many unaccented syllables end up on strong beats, and vice-versa. Since this line is doubling the mandolin part, one wonders whether Schoenberg copied the part into the vocal line and placed the syllables onto notes in a way to make them fit, not bothering to adjust for prosody. It was mentioned early that homophony is better suited for text discernibility than is polyphony, but there is a spectrum of polyphonic clarity as well. Multiple lines that are each prosodically accurate will be more readily discernible than prosodically inaccurate. This combination of the two in Figure 6 results in a slightly muddled texture, wherein the text will not be as readily understood. Though,

explication of this work herein demonstrates an *overall* lesser level of concern with text painting.

In *Threni*, the first appearance of the choir, announcing the Hebrew letter *Aleph*, shares the notes of row RI<sub>6</sub> with the orchestra in a declamatory, horn-like setting. What immediately follows is a pitchless chant by the chorus on the text from the *Aleph* passage. Though pitchless, the text setting is not arbitrary, as the bar lines and rhythms are adjusted to accommodate the prosodic ideal of the text. Stravinsky employs a ‘twos and threes’ construction from medieval chant in order to allow strong syllables to be naturally accented on strong beats. Figure 52 below shows the beginning of this chant section:



Fig. 52: Stravinsky, *Threni*, m. 2, prosody in the choral chant

The stress pattern for this phrase when spoken is as follows: *Quomódo sedet sóla civitas*. Stravinsky’s alterations of the measure patterns and eighth note groupings is in direct relation to these text stresses, and this is valuable information in terms of his level of effort to communicate the text. Note that in figure 54, when Stravinsky sets these same words now on pitches, he slightly relaxes the prosody. The first *quomodo* is set with the accent on the first syllable, which is actually unaccented. He corrects this setting on the next utterance of that word. Likewise, the first time *sedet* is sung it is correctly situated, but the second time falls onto the second beat of a group of three.

RJ Zatorre offers results of a neurological study of prosodic communication between musical and verbal realms.<sup>73</sup> One of the primary associations that he makes between music and speech is that both often utilize the process of ‘segmentation’ to discern meaning. Segmentation is described by Zatorre as a combination of stress patterns and pauses between clauses that help the brain compartmentalize meaning into smaller chunks. Similar to the way in which when one reads, one identifies words as a whole, not by individually identifying each letter in that word, the brain is most adept at segmenting and grouping, and this has been a fundamental element of verbal communication.

This prosodic phenomenon of segmentation can be seen in Stravinsky’s treatment of the text in *Threni*. The aforementioned habit of “doubling back,” or repeating portions of a row before continuing on, herein turns out to be closely related to the communication of the text. One need only observe the first choral entry of sung text in *Threni* to see an elucidatory example of effective prosody via segmentation. For reference, the row being presented, RI<sub>0</sub>, is illustrated below in Fig. 53.

Straus notes that in much of Stravinsky’s writing, “the result is an intensive melodic focus, with a relatively small group of notes in circulation. This is typical of Stravinsky's melodies throughout his career.”<sup>74</sup> What Stravinsky has done with this initial presentation of this row is assign groups of pitches to particular words in the phrase, marked as *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*:

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<sup>73</sup> RJ Zatorre, “Musical Melody and Speech Intonation: Singing a Different Tune,” *PLOS Biology*, vol. 10, no 7 (July 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.1001372>.

<sup>74</sup> Straus, *Post-Tonal Analysis*, 233.



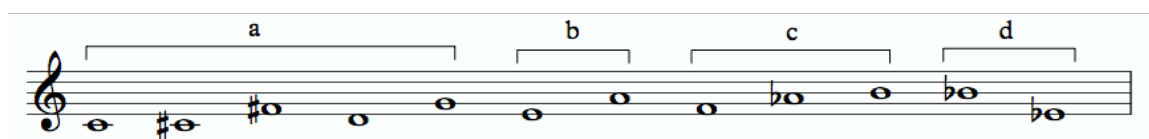


Fig. 53: Stravinsky, *Threni*, Row  $RI_0$  showing constituent melodic components associated with words.

The text-setting consideration observed here is that constituent segments within  $RI_0$  are repeated before continuing on, which parallels very traditional methods of text setting, wherein important words that appear are given some type of treatment to make them stand out. Stravinsky sets up this pattern of melodo-verbal ‘segmentation’ presentation within this row. Stravinsky presents a segment of the row and then repeats it to reinforce it, which then allows a new fragment to stand out in a way that is readily discernable. Figure 54 below shows this staggered presentation of the row, with the melodic components of the row labeled.

m. 42  
first sung choral material

The image shows two staves of music in treble clef, 3/8 time. The first staff is labeled 'S' and 'A'. It contains the following notes and lyrics: G4 (Quo-mo-do), A4 (sed-et), B4 (sits), C5 (quo-mo-do), B4 (sed-et), A4 (so-la), G4 (se-det), F#4 (so-la), E4 (ci-vi-tas). The second staff contains: D4 (ple-na), C4 (ple-na), B4 (once full), A4 (po-pu-lo!), G4 (Fac-ta), F#4 (est), E4 (qua-si), D4 (vi-du-a). Brackets above the staves group the notes into segments: 'a' (G4-A4-B4), 'b' (C5-B4-A4), 'c' (G4-F#4-E4), and 'd' (D4-C4-B4). The lyrics are: 'How doth sits how doth sits solitary sits solitary the city once full, once full of people How she has become like a widow'.

Fig. 54: Stravinsky, *Threni*, text-setting of row  $RI_0$  showing constituent melodic components associated with words.

In this example we see this process of segmentation at play, as constituent clausal segments within the text are pared out musically and presented in the same way. The added benefit to this process is that the most important word of the phrase – *solitary* – is the first word to be treated as a ‘new’ iteration of the row, or the re-starting of it following a repeat of pitches. The other important words – *city* and *people* – also receive this same treatment. Furthermore, the phrase ends with extended stasis on E $\flat$ , which is the final pitch of the row. E $\flat$  is used by Stravinsky as a Bartókian, quasi-tonal center throughout *Threni*, in a function similar to the common starting pitches of his more typical rotational arrays.<sup>75</sup> One may notice the similarity of this gesture to a common occurrence in tonal music, what Caplin refers to as a prolongation of tonic to dissipate the tension built up leading into the cadence. Of course, there is no dominant-tonic relationship to speak of here, but with E $\flat$  being the final (read: goal) note of the row, this prolongation of it in the choir does seem to imply an arrival of sorts. This notion is supported by the text which describes the nature of the ‘becoming’ of the city as desolate. Thus one can observe Stravinsky’s level of attention to the text, and his willingness to manipulate his row or segments to suit its communication.

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<sup>75</sup> See: David H. Smythe, “Stravinsky as Serialist,” *Music Theory Spectrum*, vol. 22, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 205-24.

## CONCLUSION

There is something to be said about what atonality offers: a *tabula rasa* of sound design, a reset button for preconceived notions of musical constructs and of consonance and dissonance themselves, provided that a listener is willing and able to suspend their preconceived associations of consonance as positivity and dissonance as negativity. Philosophically, however, the question raised herein is what role such atonal texted music can or should play within an idiom whose fundamental cornerstone is the aforementioned model of *amplification via interrelation* of psycho-emotional qualities in both text and music.

The crucial distinction between the ‘blended space’ of tonality and that of atonality lies in the spectrum between the theoretical and the experiential. The theoretical realm involves connective tissue that is concretely present, though not perceptible; it is discoverable only upon theoretical analysis. The experiential realm that occupies the other end of this spectrum involves the elements of the middleground and foreground layers which are readily perceptible regardless of harmonic/non-harmonic schema. A telling feature of atonality’s connective potential lies in its heightened reliance on symbolism, since in tonal music the psycho-emotional scope of what one is hearing is largely dictated by traditional tonal consistencies that are culturally conditioned, and quite difficult to escape. Of course, traditionally tonal works may also possess such purely symbolic background features in their construction, but the presence of tonal harmonic consistencies steers the western ear in the desired psycho-emotional directions, allowing tonal works to occupy wide portions of this spectrum at once.

A crucial question: Is the aesthetic value of any piece of music, tonal or atonal, predicated on its emotional communication? Put another way, is music's sole purpose to evoke an emotion? Those who lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Romantic aesthetic would likely say yes; but a modern listener has likely been impressed by, entertained by, or appreciative of a musical work without having been affected by it in emotional ways.

But herein lies the fundamental distinction between texted music and other program music or absolute music: the text has not simply inspired the creation of the music, it is physically and concretely present alongside it, and as Winn describes, words will always carry their dictionary definitions with them. This is the 'cognitive' factor of Aaron Ridley's evocation theory.<sup>76</sup> Though Ridley espouses a model of reactionary empathy (music is expressive *if* it makes a listener feel a particular emotion themselves), placing more weight onto his 'affective' factor, texted music's concurrent presentation of poetry or prose that carries semantic information must rely on Ridley's cognitive recognition, and Zbikowski's 'generic space'. One will always be able to readily surmise the psycho-emotional substance of the words they are hearing; such is the nature of language. So mustn't one also be able to somehow gauge the psycho-emotional substance of the *music* they are hearing? How else does a perception of connection between the two occur? And as far as atonality is concerned, how is this accomplished in such a *tabula rasa* of sonic landscape?

Perhaps a fair gauge of effectiveness could be the positing of this question: in a piece of texted music, were the words removed and replaced with a poem of entirely different psycho-emotional content, would the music remain equally effective? One deduces that if such interrelation need not be present, then indeed such atonal texted

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<sup>76</sup> Ridley, *Music, Value, and the Passions*.

music is fundamentally different from texted music that creates a blended space, and perhaps even warrants its own distinct idiom.

Both Schoenberg and Stravinsky move along this spectrum of the theoretical and the experiential in their own choral oeuvre. Schoenberg's *Der Wunsch des Liebhabers* from op. 27 represents the far end of the theoretical spectrum, with no discernable foreground or middleground layer, and scant evidence of a background layer thanks to mostly direct translation of the poem and likely symbolism in the connection of its pentachordal combinatoriality and row design to the subjects in the poem. Contrast this with *Friede auf Erden*, which is unabashedly madrigalian, and is placed much further towards the experiential end of the spectrum. Likewise, Stravinsky takes a similar path along the spectrum, with *Symphony of Psalms* occupying the middleground and foreground layers quite perceptibly before incorporating serialism twenty years later in *Threni*, which has some discernable middleground features, but scant background and foreground mechanisms.

The current, growing body of work in the field of psychoacoustics, music cognition, and musical neuroscience makes great strides in scientific discussion of the whys and hows of music's ability to make one *feel* something, and perhaps this will be the next evolutionary platform by which the issue at hand is approached.<sup>77</sup> For now, this entire study may come down to the question of what threshold for layer inclusion is to be applied to texted music. How much experiential material (i.e. foreground and middleground mechanisms that would be readily perceivable by a listener) must there be in an atonal work for it to be labeled as occupying a blended space? One might posit that

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<sup>77</sup> a few sources for further research: [musicperception.org](http://musicperception.org), the journal *Frontiers of Psychology*, or the research by Henkjan Honing and William Forde Thompson.

music itself is inherently experiential, being that the ultimate goal of any musical work is to be brought into existence – to be performed and to be experienced. Thus, atonal texted music that foregoes the experiential in favor for exclusively theoretical background connective tissue (or none at all) would appear to require either: judgment as an ineffective, unsuccessful piece of texted music, or placement in its own separate idiom.

The exploration of empirical rubrics by which one might gauge text-painting in atonality is of no small consequence to the life of such works within the choral canon. As this application of analytical methods of layered communicative mechanisms hopefully demonstrates, one may be surprised at the amount of psycho-emotional expressivity present even in works whose reputations of modern idiomatic attitudes against traditional expressivity precede them.

What this study also indicates is that harmony is largely overrated in modern music through the lens of its Common Practice role as the primary vehicle for psycho-emotional conveyance. If music is inherently imitative, as Mersenne claimed, motion elements and gestures can suffice to evoke a perceptible sense of interrelation. However, study of the atonal choral canon shows that there are works which incorporate motion elements and gestures as modes of connection, and those that largely dispense with them. But, singing is the original, primordial form of music, and no matter what evolutions happen to music, there will always be music that is sung, and what is sung will always be words. Speech is our very nature, and our defining characteristic as a species. Human beings both convey and garner meaning in a wide variety of ways, and music's communicative capacity is not *necessarily* abated by even sea changes in sonic product. This study provides a novel and relatively simple, but thorough methodology for

discussing texted music in specific terms of what its interrelated components might be expressive of, and to what degree. Choral conductors, always cognizant of text relations, should find this especially useful as they seek to connect their singers to these crucial relationships, especially in this realm of the choral canon where these relationships are not always so obvious. Armed with a methodology of discussing the nature and applications of the various elements of the text-music relationship, and how to go about finding them in this important portion of the choral canon, conductors and singers can discover a higher level of psycho-emotional connection – or at the very least, understanding – of the expressive qualities of this music. This is of equal importance to students, performers, composers, and analysts of this repertoire as the scholarship continues to seek ways of placing modern evolutions in compositional practice in the context of not only the wider repertoire, but of musical expressivity itself.

**APPENDIX:**  
**LIST OF POEMS & TEXTS**

1. Schoenberg, Four Songs for Chorus and Ensemble, op. 27

I. *Unnentrinnbar*

*Inescapable* | Schoenberg

<p>Tapfere sind solche, die Taten vollbringen, an die ihr Mut nicht heranreicht. Sie besitzen nur die Kraft, den Auftrag zu konzipieren, und den Charakter, ihn nicht abweisen zu kommen. War ein Gott noch so ungnädig, ihnen Erkenntnis ihrer Lage zu gewähren, dann sind sie nicht zu beneiden. Und darum werden sie beneidet.</p>	<p>Brave are those who perform deeds That their courage does not reach. They have only the power to conceive the task, And the character to Not be able to reject it. If a God is so ungrateful as to deny them Knowledge of their position, Then they are not to be envied. And that is why they are envied.</p>
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II. *Du sollst nicht, du mußt*

*You should not, you must* | Schoenberg

<p>Du sollst dir kein Bild machen, Denn ein Bild schränkt ein, begrenzt, faßt, was unbegrenzt und vorstellbar bleiben soll. Ein bild will Namen haben: Du kannst ihn nur vom Kleinen nehmen; du sollst das Kleine nicht verehren! Du mußt an den Geist glauben! Unmittelbar, gefühllos, und selbstlos. Du mußt, Auserwählter, willst du's bleiben!</p>	<p>Thou ought not make a picture, For a picture limits That which is unlimited And should remain imaginable. A picture wants to have names: You can only take it of the humble; Thou ought not revere the humble! You must believe in the spirit! Immediately, unfeelingly, and selflessly, You must, Chosen One, in order to remain!</p>
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III. *Mond und Menschen*

*Moon and Men* | Tschan-Jo-Su

<p>So lang wir auf der Erde sind, erblicken wir den Mond in seinem Märchenglanz, der nie vergeht. So wie das Wasser still des Flusses Laufe folgt, so wandert er in jeder Nacht die sichre Bahn. Nie sehen wir, daß er auf seiner Wandlung stockt, noch daß er einen kleinen Schritt sich rückwärts kehrt. Dagegen wir verwirrte Menschen: unstet ist und ruhlos alles was wir denken, was wir tun.</p>	<p>So long as we are upon the Earth, We look up at the moon in its never ending fairytale. Just as the water follows the river's course, So he walks every single night his path. We never see him stopping in his path, nor taking the smallest step backwards. On the other hand, we confused people: always unsteady and lost, in everything we think, everything we do.</p>
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## IV. Der Wunsch des Liebhabers

*The Lover's Wish* | Hung-So Fan

<p>Süßes Mondlicht auf den Pflaumenbäumen  In der lauen Nacht, schenk meinem Mädchen  Holde Liebesträume in den Schlaf,  Mach, daß sie von mir träumt, daß von heißer  Sehnsucht sie nach mir ergriffen wird,  Daß sie mich von ferne sieht und lauten  Herzens auf mich zueilt, mich zu küssen.  Doch sie wird mich nicht erreichen können,  Immer ferner werd' ich ihr entschwinden,  Und so wird sie weinen, und noch wildre,  Heißre Sehnsucht wird ihr Herz durchziehn.</p>	<p><i>Sweet moonlight on the plum trees,  In the warm night, give my girl  Loving dreams for her sleep.  Make her dream of me, that with intense  longing She is seized for me,  That she can see me from afar and  Call her heart toward me to kiss me.  But, she will not be able to reach me.  I will always disappear,  And so she will weep, and wild longing  Will move through her heart.</i></p>
<p>Morgen in der Frühe aber wird sie  Schnell wie eine Hindin zu mir eilen,  Daß sie mich leibhaftig in die Arme  Nehmen kann. Ich werd' es an dem Feuer  Ihrer Küsse wohl erkennen können,  Ob du ihr die Träume, die ich wünsche,  Wirklich in den Schlaf geschüttelt hast, -  Süßes Mondlicht auf den Pflaumenbäumen!</p>	<p><i>Tomorrow in the morning, however, she  will quickly hurry to me,  And can give herself into my arms.  I will be the fire that her kisses can  recognize,  Whether or not you give her the dreams I  wish for her, And made her toss in her  sleep, Sweet moonlight on the plum trees!</i></p>

2. Schoenberg, *Friede auf Erden* | Conrad Ferdinand Meyer

<p>Da die Hirten ihre Herde  Ließen und des Engles Worte  Trugen durch die niedre Pforte  Zu der Mutter mit dem Kind,  Fuhr das himmlische Gesind  Fort im Sternenraum zu singen,  Fuhr der Himmel fort zu klingen:  "Friede, Friede! auf der Erde!"</p>	<p>There the shepherds left their herds  and the angel's words  carried through the lowly gate  to the mother with the child,  led the heavenly followers  away to sing in the starry sky,  led to the heavens to continue sounding:  "Peace, peace! on the earth!"</p>
<p>Seit die Engel so geraten,  O wie viele blut'ge Taten  Hat der Streit auf wildem Pferde,  Der geharnischte vollbracht!  In wie mancher heiligen Nacht  Sang der Chor der Geister zägend,  Dringlich flehend, leis verklagend: "Friede,  Friede... auf der Erde!"</p>	<p>Since the angels so have been,  O like many bloody acts  had the struggle on wild horses,  the armor-clad accomplished!  In how many a holy night  sang the Choir of Spirits fearing,  urgently imploring, softly accusing:  "peace, peace... on the earth!"</p>

<p>Doch es ist ein ewiger Glaube,  Dass der Schwache nicht zum Raube  Jeder frechen Mordgebärde  Werde fallen allezeit:  Etwas wie Gerechtigkeit  Webt und wirkt in Mord und Grauen  Und ein Reich will sich erbauen,  Das den Frieden sucht der Erde.</p>	<p>But it is an eternal faith  that the weak not to the robbers  each shameless murder-gesture  will always fall:  Something like justice  wove and developed in murder and dread  and a Kingdom shall build itself up,  that the peace seeks the earth.</p>
<p>Mählich wird es sich gestalten,  Seines heiligen Amtes walten,  Waffen schmieden ohne Fährde,  Flammenschwerter für das Recht,  Und ein königlich Geschlecht  Wird erblühen mit starken Söhnen,  Dessen helle Tuben dröhnen:  Friede, Friede auf der Erde!</p>	<p>Gradually will it take shape,  His holy reign,  weapons forged without danger,  flaming swords for the right,  and a royal race  begins to blossom with strong sons,  whose bright pipes roar:  Peace, peace on the earth!</p>

### 3. Webern, *Entflieht auf leichten Kähnen* | Stefan George

<p>Entflieht auf leichten Kähnen  berauschten Sonnenwelten  daß immer mildre Tränen  euch eure Flucht entgelten.</p>	<p>Take flight on light vessels,  To tipsy, sunny worlds  That ever-milder tears  Reward you for your flight</p>
<p>Seht diesen Taumel blonder  lichtblauer Traumgewalten  und trunkner Wonnen sonder  Verzückung sich entfalten.</p>	<p>Watch these dizzying blonde,  Light-blue intense dreams,  And drunkenness won without  Ecstasy, unfolding themselves</p>
<p>Daß nicht der süße Schauer  in neues Leid euch hülle -  es sei die stille Trauer  die diesen Frühling fülle.</p>	<p>That the sweet shudder does not  Envelop you in new sorrow –  It is the silent sorrow  That fills this Spring.</p>

4. Schoenberg, *Dreimal Tausend Jahre* | Dagobert D. Runes

Dreimal tausend Jahre seit ich dich gesehn, Tempel in Jerusalem, Tempel meiner Wehn!	Three thousand years since I saw you, Temple of Jerusalem, Temple of my woe!
Und ihr Jordanwellen, silbern Wüstenband, Gärten und Gelände grünen, neues Uferland.	And her Jordan winds, silver desert fire, Gardens and lands of green, a new shoreland.
Und man hört es klingen leise von den Bergen her, Deine allverschollnen Lieder künden Gottes Wiederkehr.	And one hears it softly from the mountains, Your long-lost songs which proclaim God's return.

5. Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms* | Psalms 38, 39, 150

I. Exaudi orationem meam, Domine, et deprecationem meam. Auribus percipe lacrimas meas. Ne sileas, ne sileas. Quoniam advena ego sum apud te et peregrinus, sicut omnes patres mei. Remitte mihi, prius quam abeam et amplius non ero.	Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with Thine ears consider my calling. Be not silent, be not silent. For I am a stranger with Thee: and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me a little that I may recover my strength: before I go hence and be no more seen.
II. Expectans expectavi Dominum, et intendit mihi. Et exaudivit preces meas; et exudit me de lacu miseriae, et de lato faecis. Et statuit super petram pedes meos: et direxis gressus meos. Et immisit in os meum canticum novum, carmen Deo nostro. Videbunt multi, videbunt et timabunt: et aperabunt in Domino.	I waited patiently for the Lord: and He inclined unto me, and heard my calling. He brought me also out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and clay: and set my feet upon the rock, and ordered my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth: even a thanksgiving unto our God. Many shall see it and fear: and shall put their trust in the Lord.
III. Alleluia. Laudate Dominum in sanctis Ejus. Laudate Eum firmamentis virtutis Ejus.	Alleluia. O praise God in His holiness: praise Him in the firmament of His power.

<p>Laudate Dominum.          Laudate Eum in virtutibus Ejus          Laudate Eum secundum multitudinem          magnitudinis Ejus.          Laudate Eum in sono tubae.          Laudate Eum in timpano et choro,          Laudate Eum in cordis et organo;          Laudate Eum in cymbalis bene          jubilationibus.          Laudate Eum, omnis spiritus laudate          Dominum.          Alleluia.</p>	<p>Praise God.          Praise Him in His noble acts:          praise Him according to His excellent          greatness.          Praise Him in the sound of the trumpet:          Praise Him upon the lute and harp.          Praise Him upon the strings and pipe.          Praise Him upon the well-tuned cymbals.          Let everything that hath breath praise the          Lord.          Alleluia.</p>
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## 6. Stravinsky, *Threni* | Book of Lamentations

### De Elegia Prima

Incipit	Incipit lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetae.	The beginning of the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah.
1:1 ALEPH	Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo! facta est quasi vidua domina gentium: princeps provinciarum facta est sub tributo.	How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!
1:2a BETH	Plorans ploravit in nocte, et lacrimae ejus in maxillis ejus	She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks:
1:5a HE	Facti sunt hostes ejus in capite, inimici illius [ejus] locupletati sunt Quia Dominus locutus est super eam propter multitudinem iniquitatum ejus.	Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions.
1:11b CAPH	Vide, Domine, [et] considera, quoniam facta sum vilis.	See, O Lord, and consider; for I am become vile.
1:20 RES(H)	Vide, Domine, quoniam tribulor, venter meus conturbatus est, subversum est cor meum in memet ipsa quoniam amaritudine plena sum. Foris interfecit gladius, et domi mors similis est.	Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death.

## De Elegia Tertia: Querimonia

3:1-3 ALEPH	Ego vir videns paupertatem meam in virga indignationis ejus. Me menavit; et adduxit in tenebris [tenebras], et non in lucem. Tantum in me vertit, et convertit manum suam tota die.	I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day.
3:4-6 BETH	Vetustam fecit pellem meam et carnem meum, contrivit ossa mea. Aedificavit in gyro meo et circumdedit me felle et labore. In tenebrosis collocavit me, quasi mortuos sempiternos.	My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail. He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old.
3:16-18 VAU	Et fregit ad numerum dentes meos, cibavit me cinere. Et repulsa est a pace anima mea, oblitus sum bonorum. Et dixi: Periit finis meus, et spes mea a Domino.	He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes. And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace; I forgot prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord.
3:19-21 ZAIN	Recordare paupertatis, et transgressionis meae, absinthii et fellis. Memoria memor ero, et tabescet in me anima mea. Haec recolens in corde meo, ideo sperabo.	Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

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