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## An Evaluation of Traditional and Innovatory Approaches in Arnold Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and 'Nacht' from *Pierrot Lunaire*<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study analyzes Arnold Schoenberg's particular perspective on tradition and innovation. *Verklärte Nacht* (1899), which he composed in his tonal period and which thus has a more traditional character, and *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), from his 'free' atonal period, are discussed to illustrate the composer's different approaches. This article aims to show that these approaches do not represent two separate periods but rather create a single style and can be understood as mutually related within the composer's output. Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*, *Op. 4* and *Pierrot Lunaire*, *Op. 21*, *No. 8* will be interpreted in the context of tradition-innovation relations by means of descriptive analysis and literature review, and in the context of wider tradition and innovation relations in his other works. It is observed that the composer still adhered to 19<sup>th</sup>-century traditions at some points; however, as he himself argued, it is unrealistic to force Schoenberg into a specific mould. When examining the different compositional periods of the composer, it is possible to discern diverse features. It should be noted that the traditionalist and innovative tendencies in the composer's works are not distinguished as easily as may be thought, and that the composer should not be evaluated in terms of degrees of complexity. Results show that Schoenberg was not a composer who adhered to any one theory or technique, but rather a versatile composer. Describing him as a traditionalist on one hand or a radical innovator on the other does him a disservice.

### KEYWORDS

Arnold Schoenberg

*Op. 4 Verklärte Nacht*

*Op. 21 Pierrot Lunaire Nacht*

Twentieth Century Music

Tradition and Innovation

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## Introduction

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) was a 20<sup>th</sup>-century Viennese composer who paved the way for atonality or as he preferred to call it “pantonality”. He extended the limits of tonal understanding and influenced 20<sup>th</sup>-century music by developing a very particular system of composition (Erdem Çöloğlu, personal communication, 12 February, 2019). The radical innovations that Schoenberg brought in the context of sound material and harmony obscured the composer’s innovations in other musical parameters such as design, structure, rhythm, and form. Hence, this led to the criticism that the composer behaved rather conservatively in other areas. He could not break fully with tradition, despite the twelve-tone revolution, when “Schoenberg applied the new language and development in old forms, expressed old feelings and repeated old behaviors” (Mimaroglu, 1990: 147). Although the composer maintains the ‘old’ discourses in some of his works, it would be inadequate to define the composer simply as a traditionalist (Erdem Çöloğlu, personal communication, 12 February, 2019). In terms of his musical inheritance, he thought of many great Austrian and German composers as his primary models. He was most influenced by major composers such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, and Wagner. “Even Mahler and Schoenberg showed signs of ambivalence about their modernism. They were identified strongly with the distinguished tradition of German music in all its aspects, the Wagnerian one emphatically included. They consider themselves as its heirs and rightful continuers” (Taruskin, 2009: 3). In many of his writings, Schoenberg clearly stated that he internalized these composers as his role models. It is possible to get an idea about Schoenberg’s view of tradition from the following lines in his text entitled *National Music*, which he wrote in 1931:

Surprisingly, no one noticed how I resisted the Roman and Slavic hegemony with my music, which emerged from German lands without any external influence, and how I benefited only from German musical traditions. My teachers were, above all, Bach and Mozart. They are followed by Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner. (Aktüze, 2003: 2041)

He regarded himself as a composer who had decided to carry forward the mission, approach, and aesthetic world of this tradition, as well as developing his own musical personality. However, he had never been fanatical about this heritage and about tradition more generally. Therefore, the past was a beneficial source from which the future might

be recreated, rather than a model to be repeated.

In the context of this study, I have tried to observe the relationship between tradition and innovation in Schoenberg's works. The composer, who sometimes used atonality and sometimes 12-tone technique in his works, mostly continued to use traditional forms. In other ways too, it is possible to see references to tradition or to the great composers before him and their techniques. The synthesis of these two approaches is one of the important features of Schoenberg's art.

This study aims to reveal that although Schoenberg was committed to continuing a tradition, he was also an important innovator in the history of music. As part of the research process, a comprehensive literature review is conducted with descriptive analysis as the chosen methodology. The descriptive analysis method is used to examine the form, theme, and sentence structures of the works, while the literature review is used to analyze existing approaches to the composer's selected works.

### **Approaches of Tradition and Innovation on Schoenberg's Selected Works**

"Schoenberg, divided into three periods of his works towards his end of life: 1899-1908 tonal period, 1908-1920 the free atonal period and after 1920 the twelve-tone period" (Pamir, 1998: 325). Periods of compositions are not exclusive; he composed tonal works even in his last period when he was working with the twelve-tone technique. The composer's process of composing and the periods are transformed into different styles, are examined, and richness of the composer's output is affirmed. In his tonal period, the effects of late romanticism are observed due to its historical placement. Schoenberg's relationship with tradition is a desire to perpetuate rather than an attempt to reject or transcend. "Horwitz, one of Schoenberg's famous students, quotes the composer's following on the subject: Instead of looking at what I have done, learn from Beethoven and Brahms" (Pamir, 1998: 325). Schoenberg never concealed that he was influenced by these composers, and by the tradition they represented. In his atonal works, he kept traditional forms as a basis for his work. Using tradition as the basis for a new syntax without tonality also ensured the integrity and coherence of the work. Schoenberg lived in Vienna in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and at that time Vienna was ruled by a monarchy. The empire was oppressive, resulting therefore in ruptures in many areas of art. Marginal personalities emerged, as is often seen in societies that are under political pressure

(Erdem Çöloğlu, personal communication, 12 February, 2019). An intelligentsia, such as Stefan Zweig and Karl Kraus in literature, Gustav Klimt, Oskar Kokoschka, Wassily Kandinsky, Egon Schiele in painting, Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung in psychoanalysis, Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern and Alban Berg in music, all wanted to create a new discourse on the basis of an existing *mentalité*. They are often associated with expressionism, which is a cultural movement that emerged in Germany and Austria in the early twentieth century (Bassie, 2008: 7). Owing to their work, the subjects of art began to evolve into unusual, darker and 'ugly' regions, invoking fear, nightmare, mystery, night, forest, darkness, sexuality, and the subconscious. Alienation, anxiety, and rebellion against tradition and power are important elements of expressionism. As with other expressionists, Schoenberg used the symbols and methods of psychoanalysis, establishing links between cultural forms and Freud's theories of psychoanalysis. Concerns about gender relationships and about women's psychology and sexuality were examined, and these were then included in artworks (Özkişi, 2017: 154). The wider public, on the other hand, were very conservative because they were under oppression and closed to innovation. Therefore, artists and thinkers of this radical bent often received a negative initial response. In Larry Weinstein's documentary *My War Years* (1992), which is about Schoenberg, Alban Berg is quoted as follows: "Why is Schoenberg's music so difficult to understand? I think today's listeners are so used to the harmonies of the past that they don't have the ability to understand any other kind of music. One different technique is enough to provoke them." "Arnold Schoenberg, who was excluded from society due to his intellectuality, destructiveness, abstraction, and esotericism, encounters resistance with each new work" (Adorno, 2018: 55).

The inner conflict of the composer arises on one hand from being tied to tradition and on the other hand from thinking that a new musical language should be formed. Schoenberg's development is paradoxical because while he wanted to break with tradition, he did not avoid using the same tradition (Gustafson, 1989: 3). In this case, the following question may come to mind: What could have motivated Schoenberg's desire to stick to tradition? Was it a desire to gain ground in the conservative Viennese music scene, or did he refer to tradition as a homage to the master composers? The composer stated that he composed instinctively in one of his writings, so traditional aspects and references to tradition in his works can be seen as a natural result of this attitude.

A composer cannot produce good music unless he writes from the heart and soul. Never in my life have I been stuck in a theory. I write whatever comes into my mind, don't think that when I write tonal, polytonal, or polyplanal music, I do it consciously. I put my feelings on paper, that's all... Besides, a successful piece of art is one that doesn't imply what kind of composition it was composed, especially since it doesn't give the impression that it is the result of mental work. He did not write tonal music to please the listeners who were not accustomed to the twelve-note order, nor did he make the twelve-note order to satisfy the disappointment of those who took his side. (Mimaroglu, 1990: 147)

Therefore, Schoenberg and his companions who redesigned the compositional systems of Western music did not care about the audience forming the mainstream (Goodall, 2018: 246). Schoenberg explained his "returning" to tonality from time to time with the following words in his article titled "On Revient Toujours" in *Style and Idea* (1950):

When I finished the *Op. 9 Kammer-symphonie*, I told my friends: Now I have determined my style. Now I know how to compose. However, my later work deviated greatly from this style, it was the first step towards my current style. My destiny forced me to go in this direction. I was not destined to continue in the line of *Verklärte Nacht*, *Gurrelieder*, or even *Pelleas und Melisande*. The commander<sup>2</sup> ordered me to proceed on a more difficult road. But the longing to return to the old ways has always been a resistance for me, and at times I had to give in to the urge. Therefore, I sometimes write tonal music. To me, such stylistic differences are of no particular importance. I don't know which song is better. I love them all because I loved them when I wrote them. (Newlin, 1950: 230)

Schoenberg was a citizen of Jewish origin who lived in a period when two world wars ravaged Europe and European culture and was influenced by anti-semitism before World War II. The ideological and political pressure was also great, so he and his wife moved from Vienna to Berlin three times. They had to return to Vienna every time because they had financial difficulties on their way to Berlin. He converted to Christianity, probably to protect himself from the anti-semitism that was affecting Europe at that time. However, this was not a permanent or practical solution to enabling him to compose and to increase his standard of living. With the rise of Nazi Germany in Berlin (1933), Schoenberg also moved to France with his family and converted to Judaism on July 24, 1933, in a synagogue in Paris, both as a protest against the Nazis and for religious reasons (Rubsamen, 1951: 486). He emigrated to America in 1934 and became an American

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<sup>2</sup> In the context of the sentence, the word 'Commander' refers to God.

citizen in 1941 (Marcus, 2016: 188). Schoenberg had to make a constant change in his life because of the political pressures he experienced. He moved to different countries many times and eventually emigrated to America and felt the need to change his religion while living in Vienna. At this point, the following questions may come to mind: Did this situation make him feel isolated, belonging nowhere? Did he refer to tradition in order to feel that he belonged to society and to prove his commitment to society? Did he want to show and prove that he remained true to the German tradition because of the difficulties he faced due to his Jewish origin while living in Vienna and Berlin? It was mentioned above that the composer created works instinctively, so references to tradition may have been made with this instinctive impulse. However, could the identity-origin confusion experienced by the composer have strengthened his approach to tradition? On account of their complex processes, the conditions of the era, and the geography of his motherland, his subtle works proved difficult to comprehend and listen to for some audiences, and can be evaluated as traces of the traumatic period in which the composer lived. Moreover, his music was sometimes not grasped and welcomed by other great composers. Composed by Schoenberg in 1909, the *Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16* were greeted with scepticism by the leading composers of the time.

Richard Strauss has said, “Although his pieces were boldly experimented with, both for their content and their sonority, I would not dare present them to the conservative Berlin public for the time being”. A similar reservation is felt in Max Reger. In 1910, Reger wrote a letter to pianist August Stradal: I was introduced to Schoenberg’s *3 Piano Pieces*. I have no idea if this kind of thing is still called music. My brain is too old for such things. (Dahlhaus, 1989: 336)

Inevitably, not only *Pierrot Lunaire* but also all other atonal works of the composer should be mentioned in this context. In atonal music, pitches do not have a specific hierarchical function. The fact that pitches are not defined through their function within a system has the effect of elevating timbre and timbre-related features such as articulation, dynamics, and instrumentation to a new structural importance. The distinction between primary parameters (pitch and rhythm) and secondary parameters (dynamics, articulation, timbre) becomes more blurred, and the latter parameters evolve to become a fundamental designer of the composition. Factors such as tonally-based phrasing are crucial for the evolution of form. And since these parameters are absent in atonal music, there are no tonal cadences or modulations to guide us in terms of sentences and

sections: *Pierrot Lunaire* is a case in point. However, in the move to atonality, it is a chamber music aesthetic that allows the basic procedures of tonality, harmonic schemes, and scale patterns of a standard structure such as sonata form to disappear, since in chamber works, thematic and motivic working are more prominent than the harmonic environment and structure. Furthermore, chamber works are the best environment to liberate sound material while using motifs. In other words, while moving towards atonality, Schoenberg engaged directly with the aesthetics of chamber music (Dahlhaus, 1989: 338). While evaluating the relationship of the music of the period with tonality and meter, Dahlhaus makes the following determination: The main factor in the death of tonality and the disintegration of the solid four-measure phrasing into musical prose was to give a concrete meaning to the ‘developing variation’ associated with motivic working (Dahlhaus, 1989: 338). *Verklärte Nacht* and *Pierrot Lunaire*, which are the basis of this research, are works of chamber music and have a structure that relies on motivic working. Apart from *Pierrot Lunaire*, references to tradition are also seen in the second- and third-period works of the composer. Examples are the following works: In the second period: *Book of Hanging Gardens, Op.15* (1908-1909) (*Das Buch der Hängenden Garten*) and *Five Orchestral Pieces, Op. 16* (1909), (*Fünf Orchesterstücke*), and in the third period: *Piano Suite, Op. 25* (1921-1923), *Variations for Orchestra, Op. 31* (1926-1928), *String Quartet No 4, Op. 37* (1936). For instance, the *Piano Suite*, a twelve-tone work, includes some dances of the *Baroque Suite* such as prelude, gavotte, musette, intermezzo, menuet, and gigue (Pamir, 1998: 354). Schoenberg integrated these old forms into a new sound world. The last 4 pitches of the Gigue are B flat-A-C-B (Figure 1). These notes, which correspond to the letters BACH with their German literal translation, symbolize Schoenberg’s reference to the great composer in this suite (or, more romantically, a respectful salute) (Pamir, 1998: 354). However, this is treated as an abstraction because the letters are not sequential. By not using the letters B-A-C-H here, Schoenberg abstracted the Bach figure. Thus, Bach is both present and absent. Bach is one of the composers that Schoenberg took as a role model. So, in this respect Bach could be his teacher, for when Bach speaks of the baroque dances in the suite, we refer to them as ‘stylized dances’. What Bach does here is also a type of abstraction. What Schoenberg does is the abstraction of Bach’s coding, similar to the way dances are stylized rather than their original use.

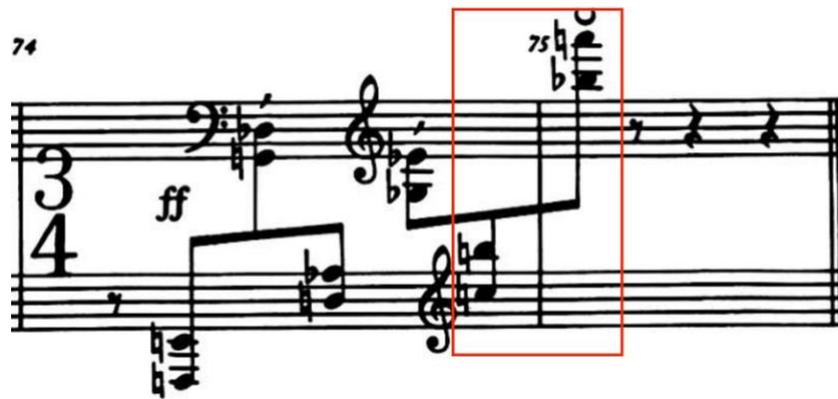


Figure 1. Schoenberg, *Op. 25 Piano Suite*, the last two bars of gigue. (Schoenberg, 1925)

This reference is also seen in his *Variations for Orchestra* (1926-28), and especially the final part of the work, which is a kind of *Hommage à Bach* (homage to Bach). The B-A-C-H pitches and letters are used clearly and respectively at the beginning of the movement (figure 2).

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**FINALE**

Mäßig schnell (♩ = 120) rit....etwas frei a tempo

Figure 2. Schoenberg, *Op. 31 Variations for Orchestra*, Finale, Bars: 310-318. (Schoenberg, 1929)

*The Fourth String Quartet* (1936) was also composed in the twelve-tone system, but there are references to the past in terms of form. A melody-accompaniment texture dominates the piece. The first movement, *Allegro Molto Energico*, is in sonata form. The second movement is an intermezzo in the form of a ternary A-B-A. The third movement, largo, is in a two-part (ABAB) form. The last part, allegro, is in the form of rondo. As can be seen, the composer used familiar and traditional forms in all movements. Thematic repetitions

are also frequently used in the work, which is essentially a traditional gesture. It is necessary here to open a parenthesis about the *String Quartet No 2, Op.10* (1908). Like the *Fourth Quartet, Op. 10* makes clear reference to tradition. However, it is also necessary to explain this string quartet in a context of innovation. The fourth and final movement of this work, *Entrückung* (Ecstasy, Rapture) is the composer's first atonal music. In this quartet, unlike traditional chamber music, a soprano was added to the third and last movements. Consider also the second piece of *Five Pieces for Orchestra (Fünf Orchesterstücke* 1909), another 'free' atonal piece composed in Schoenberg's second period, and one that carries traces of the past as if confirming its name. Even though these traces do not appear directly in the notation (for example, using a key signature), they do appear in a musical dimension. An impressionist timbre and soundscape are felt in this piece, but it is much more striking and innovative in terms of musical language than Debussy's *Images for Orchestra (Images pour Orchestra, 1905-1912)*, which was composed at the same time. "It should not be forgotten that impressionism helps to enable expressionism in terms of tonal inconsistency as pointed out in Schoenberg's *Style and Idea*, and facilitates the freeing of dissonance, which is a characteristic feature of expressionism" (Özkişi and Dündar, 2015: 4).

*The Book of Hanging Gardens, Op. 15* is a work composed for solo piano and soprano based on Stefan George's 15 poems of the same name. The work consists of 15 songs based on the poem. The subject is a man and a woman who have a passionate love affair in a garden. Later on, the woman leaves this garden, which is then destroyed dramatically. According to Carl Emil Schorske, the garden here becomes a metaphor, its destruction mirroring the destruction of traditional tonal music (Eren, 2014: 187). This can be extended to embrace the dilemma faced by the composer himself, referencing his interpretation of tradition, and the emotional longing he felt on abandoning it. On the grounds that the garden is a metaphor and represents tonality in the work, we might argue that the destruction of the garden is also related to the composer's own sense (although he never completely broke away from the tradition) that a new breath should come to the sound world of music because tonality has reached its limits. Therefore, there is a tonal ambience in this work as well. For example, in No. 11 "As We Behind the Flowered Gates (*Als Wir Hinter dem Beblümtten*), the pitch class set (0347) is strongly evocative of tonality. The notes (0347) shown in Figure 3 form the pitch class set, to use a term from the analysis of atonal music

and post-tonal theory.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Schoenberg's Op. 15 No. 11. The first system is marked 'Sehr ruhig (♩ = 48)' and 'pp'. The second system is marked 'poco rit.' and 'ppp'. Red boxes highlight specific melodic phrases in both systems.

**Figure 3.** Schoenberg, *Op. 15 No.11 Als Wir Hinter dem Beblühten*, Bars: 1-7. (Schoenberg, 1914)

Schoenberg composed his works based primarily on expression, without any intention of establishing a technique or popularizing a new technique. Compare this with Alois Haba, who composed sixteen string quartets to establish the quarter-tone system. Every composer wants his works to be liked and accepted. Schoenberg's urge to be admired may have been instinctively reflected in his works. For instance, upon examining Schoenberg's opera *Moses and Aaron*, one can observe the manifestation of this impulse. Although not entirely based on this idea, the conflict between Moses and Aaron in the composition reflects an internal conflict that the composer experienced throughout his life.

In the opera *Moses and Aaron*, Schoenberg reflected on his dilemma, his internal struggles, sacrifices, and the sum of his life full of long struggles for his art. Expressing his artistic dilemma during these struggles, Schoenberg aims for abstract, 'non-fake expressions' that integrate with 12-tone music, while he is also aware of the lack of communication of this music. Naturally, he is also an artist, he wants to be understood and communicate. There are both Moses and Aaron in his inner world. However, he doesn't limit his music to mere emotional or sensory appeal, nor does he allow it to be easily understood, cheapened, or commodified. Just like Moses's idea of God, which

cannot be faked, Schoenberg aims for abstract greatness with the 'unimaginable', non-transparent quality of his music. (Pamir, 1998: 358)

## **Findings**

This section evaluates the new and controversial approaches in *Verklärte Nacht* compared to its period and the traditional elements in 'Nacht' from *Pierrot Lunaire*.

### ***Verklärte Nacht (Transfigured Night)***

*Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4 (Transfigured Night)* is a string sextet composed in 1899. It consists of two violins, two violas, and two cellos. While composing this work, Schoenberg was inspired by the German poet Richard Dehmel's poem of the same name. The original of the poem and its English translation are below:

### ***Verklärte Nacht***

*Zwei Menschen gehn durch kahlen, kalten Hain;  
der Mond läuft mit, sie schaun hinein.  
Der Mond läuft über hohe Eichen,  
kein Wölkchen trübt das Himmelslicht, in  
das die schwarzen Zacken reichen.  
Die Stimme eines Weibes spricht:*

*Ich trag ein Kind, und nit von Dir,  
ich geh in Sünde neben Dir.  
Ich hab mich schwer an mir vergangen.  
Ich glaubte nicht mehr an ein Glück  
und hatte doch ein schwer Verlangen nach  
Lebensinhalt, nach Mutterglück  
und Pflicht; da hab ich mich erfrecht,  
da liess ich schaudernd mein Geschlecht  
von einem fremden Mann umfassen,  
und hab mich noch dafür gesegnet.  
Nun hat das leben [sic] sich gerächt:  
nun bin ich Dir, o Dir begegnet.  
Sie geht mit ungelenkem Schritt.  
Sie schaut empor; der Mond läuft mit.  
Ihr dunkler Blick ertrinkt in Licht.  
Die Stimme eines Mannes spricht:*

*Das Kind, das Du empfangen  
hast, sei Deiner Seele keine Last,  
o sieh, wie klar das Weltall schimmert!  
Es ist ein Glanz um Alles her,  
Du treibst mit mir auf kaltem Meer,  
doch eine eigne Wärme flimmert  
von Dir in mich, von mir in Dich.*

*Die wird das fremde Kind verklären,  
Du wirst es mir, von mir gebären;  
Du hast den Glanz in mich gebracht,  
Du hast mich selbst zum Kind gemacht.*

*Er fasst sie um die starken Hüften.  
Ihr Atem küsst sich in den Lüften.  
Zwei Menschen gehn durch hohe, helle Nacht.*

### ***Transfigured Night***<sup>3</sup>

Two people are walking through a bare, cold wood;  
the moon keeps pace with them and draws their gaze.  
The moon moves along above tall oak trees,  
there is no wisp of cloud to obscure the radiance  
to which the black, jagged tips reach up.  
A woman's voice speaks:

“I am carrying a child, and not by you.  
I am walking here with you in a state of sin.  
I have offended grievously against myself.  
I despaired of happiness,  
and yet I still felt a grievous longing  
for life's fullness, for a mother's joys  
and duties; and so I sinned,  
and so I yielded, shuddering, my sex  
to the embrace of a stranger,  
and even thought myself blessed.  
Now life has taken its revenge,  
and I have met you, met you.”

She walks on, stumbling.  
She looks up; the moon keeps pace.  
Her dark gaze drowns in light.  
A man's voice speaks:

“Do not let the child you have conceived  
be a burden on your soul.  
Look, how brightly the universe shines!  
Splendour falls on everything around,  
you are voyaging with me on a cold sea,  
but there is the glow of an inner warmth  
from you in me, from me in you.  
That warmth will transfigure the stranger's child,  
and you bear it me, begot by me.  
You have transfused me with splendor,  
you have made a child of me.”

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<sup>3</sup> Dover Publications, 1994, New York; published with Stanley Appelbaum's English translation.

He puts an arm about her strong hips.  
Their breath embraces in the air.  
Two people walk on through the high, bright night.

It was first performed by the *Rosé Quartet* on 18 March 1902 at the Wiener Musikverein. Mahler's remarks were very germane in this premiere of the *Rosé Quartet*. "A tone poem scored, unusually, not for orchestra but for string sextet, as if Schoenberg were deliberately casting himself as heir to both the 'New German' tradition of programmatic composition in the spirit of Liszt, Wagner, and Strauss, and the 'Classical' chamber-music tradition of Brahms" (Taruskin, 2009: 377).

The form of *Verklärte Nacht* is a rondo, but the sectional distinctions are not as clear as in traditional rondos.

In more schematic terms, what Wellesz proposes as the larger musical form of *Verklärte Nacht* is something corresponding to the five poetic stanzas as ABA'CA". A, A', and A" represent the more 'epic' or narrative segments, B and C, the direct speeches of the protagonists. Wellesz's plan is persuasive, although the actual unfolding of the sextet is, of course, considerably more complex than the rondo-like scheme implied by the letter designations. As Carl Dahlhaus has suggested, "the rondoground-plan, which gives the work formal support, is as it were covered with a web of thematic and motivic relationships, a web which becomes tighter and thicker as the work proceeds" (Dahlhaus, 1987: 97). In other words, the different segments of *Verklärte Nacht* are closely related by motivic variation, and toward the end of the work, earlier themes are recalled. The Wellesz-Dahlhaus analytical stance toward *Verklärte Nacht* is, I believe, the most reasonable one to assume since it grants to the sextet a form that is musically coherent and yet at the same time reflective of the broader structure of the poem. Several commentators, however, including Wilhelm Pfannkuch and Richard Swift, have gone further in according to *Verklärte Nacht* a more purely musical shape, that of sonata form. In this respect, the sextet is seen implicitly as the successor of the forms of the *D-Major Quartet* and explicitly as the direct precursor of the large one-movement instrumental works Schoenberg composed in 1902-6, including *Pelleas und Melisande*, op. 5; the *First Quartet*, op. 7; and the *First Chamber Symphony*, op. 9. (Frisch, 1993: 113)

As seen in the expressions quoted from Frisch's article, although the rondo form is mentioned schematically, the division distinctions are not as clear as in the traditional rondo form. The work is more complex than the rondo form we are used to from classical

models. Frisch also made the following determinations on the thematic style and structure of the work:

It can be said that *Verklärte Nacht* is shaped by thematic processes and large-scale harmonic procedures that are largely outside the sonata tradition. The thematic material in *Verklärte Nacht* emerges in continuous transformations that are softer and more subtle than anything we have seen in Schoenberg's previous works. (Frisch, 1993: 117)

The poem consists of five stanzas. Based on this, it is thought that the piece consists of five sections. In 1917 Schoenberg adapted this work for string orchestra and revised this version in 1943. "Wagner's atmosphere is dominant in the work because of the programmed concept, leitmotifs, and intense chromatism" (Morgan, 1991: 63). For this reason, the work is related to the style of post-Wagnerian romanticism. In addition, although the work is tonal, it stretches the tonal feeling immensely. In the episode of *Dancing on a Volcano*, the first DVD of the documentary series *Leaving Home: Orchestral Music in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, which was released in 2005 with Simon Rattle as narrator (it includes 7 DVDs), it was mentioned that the work gradually stretched traditional tonal boundaries.

When Schoenberg sent the piece to the Vienna Musicians Club (*Wiener Tonkünstlerverein*) for performance, it was well received, but because the chord in the 42nd bar was considered a compositional error, it was rejected. This chord (Figure 4), which might arguably be analyzed as a dominant-ninth chord in 'fourth inversion' (with the ninth in the bass), is—like the 'color chord' in the song *Erwartung*—better justified as a product of voice-leading by semitones in all voices in contrary motion (Taruskin, 2009: 377).



Figure 4. *Verklärte Nacht* chords in bar: 41-42. (Taruskin, 2009: 377)

The chord is not resolved in the rest of the work resulting in a feeling of floating freely in

the air. In Figure 5, the chords between the 41st and 45th bars of the piece are given respectively.

The figure shows a musical score for seven chords. The top staff is the treble clef and the bottom staff is the bass clef. Above the staff, the chords are numbered 1 through 7. Below the staff, the first and last chords are labeled with Roman numerals:  $i6/4$  and  $V7$ . The chords are: 1.  $i6/4$  (B-flat major 9th), 2.  $B^{\flat}7^{\flat}$  (B-flat minor 7th), 3.  $C9^{\flat}$  (C minor 9th), 4.  $D^{\flat}7$  (D-flat 7th), 5.  $Dm7^{\flat}$  (D minor 7th with flat 5th), 6.  $A^{\flat}7$  (A-flat 7th), and 7.  $i6/4$  (B-flat major 9th).

**Figure 5.** *Verklärte Nacht*, chords between 41 and 45th bars.

The 1st chord in Figure 5 (42nd bar of the piece) may be considered an A-flat Major 9th chord built on B-flat. While we might expect this chord to be resolved on a downbeat, the cadence starting from the 41st bar is not resolved, and the tonic chord does not sound at the expected place but rather on a weak beat. The 2nd chord that follows is employed as a passing chord. This chord is a semi-diminished seventh chord built on B natural. The 3rd chord in the first three times of the 43rd bar is a flat 9th chord based on C. While it is expected to resolve onto F, it is directed to the 3rd chord, a D-flat 7th. In the first part of the 44th bar, a D minor 7th chord with a flat 5th is used. The 7th of the chord is slurred to the previous chord, and the 6th in the next bar can be thought of as a flattened 7th. The A-flat, which was created by translating the 6th chord into the 7th chord, is enharmonically converted to G-sharp and taken to the bass part, with the entire elaborate chord progression delaying the cadence, which began in the 41st bar, to the 44th bar. It is an innovative progression for the period that the harmony is constantly in motion and does not give any real sense of resolution. And because of the discomfort experienced by ears that are accustomed to resolution, people were inclined to resist this music at first.

### ***Pierrot Lunaire Op. 21 No. 8 'Nacht' (Night)***

*Pierrot Lunaire* is an ensemble melodrama composed in 1912. It is based on the 21-part poem of the Belgian poet Albert Giraud. The German translation of the poem belongs to the German poet Otto Erich Hartleben. The place of this work in the history of modern music is crucial. Together with works such as Bela Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro*, and Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, it represents the high point of modernism in the music of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Axionov, 2010: 66).

*Pierrot Lunaire* is divided into three parts, each consisting of seven poems. 'Nacht' is the

eighth movement, thus opening the second part (Teil II). This movement consists of piano, bass clarinet, cello, and voice. The poems in the second part of *Pierrot Lunaire* are about darker subjects such as violence, crime, and night, with the text of ‘Nacht’ describing giant black butterflies extinguishing the brightness of the sun. “It is one of the poems that does not explicitly mention the moon or moonlight, and the central image of the poem is the fearful flapping of wings of dark, black moths” (Cherlin, 2012: 192). As in Cherlin’s article, and in many other articles, it is common to refer to ‘moths’, but a more accurate translation is butterflies. In Giraud’s original, the title of the chapter is *Papillon Noirs*, and Hartleben translated this text into German as ‘Nacht’, and the words *Papillons Noirs* in the text as *Reisenfalter*.

Using the word moth instead of butterfly can lead to a loss of meaning. The word *Falter* can mean both butterfly (*Tagfalter*) and moth (*Nachtfalter*) in German. But its translation as black butterflies is more connected with Giraud’s original text. In some cultures, the black butterfly is a symbol of bad luck or death. For example, in some parts of Mexico, people believe that a black butterfly landing on the door symbolizes the death of someone from that house. (Boss, 2009: 249)

The original language of the poem in French and its German and English translations are given below:

| <i>Nacht</i>  | <i>Papillons noirs</i>   | <i>Night</i>  |
|---|--|---|
| Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter<br>Töteten der Sonne Glanz.<br>Ein geschlossnes Zauberbuch,<br>Ruht der Horizont—verschwiegen.                                     | De sinistres papillons noirs<br>Du soleil ont éteint la gloire,<br>Et l’horizon semble un grimoire<br>Barbouillé d’encre tous les soirs.                                   | Sinister black moths<br>Blot out the shining sun,<br>And the horizon is a magic book<br>Smeared with ink every night.                             |
| Aus dem Qualm verlornen Tiefen<br>Steigt ein Duft, Erinnerung mordend!<br>Finstre, schwarze Reisenfalter<br>Töteten der Sonne Glanz.                              | Il sort d’occultes encensoirs<br>Un parfum troublant la mémoire;<br>De sinistres papillons noirs<br>Du soleil ont éteint la gloire.  | From mystical censers<br>A scent rises, blurring memory;<br>Sinister black moths<br>Blot out the sun’s glory,                                     |
| Und vom Himmel erdenwärts<br>Senken sich mit schweren Schwingen<br>Unsichtbar die Ungetume<br>Auf die Menschenherzen nieder...<br>Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter. | Des monstres aux gants suçoirs<br>Recherchent du sang pour le boire,<br>Et du ciel, en poussière noire,<br>Descendent sur nos désespoirs.<br>De sinistres papillons noirs. | Monsters with slimy suckers<br>Seek blood to drink,<br>And from the sky, in a cloud of inky dust,<br>Descend upon our despair.<br>Sinister moths. |

**Table 1.** Schoenberg, *Pierrot Lunaire*, No. 8, 'Nacht' sentences and motives.

| BAR   | STANZA | MOTIF   | TIME SIGNATURE | TEMPO                |
|-------|--------|---------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1-3   | Intro. | a, b    | 3/2            | <i>Gehende</i>       |
| 4-10  | A      | b, c, d |                | -                    |
| 11-16 | B      | b, c, d |                | <i>Etwas rascher</i> |
| 17-23 | A      | b, c, d |                | <i>I. Tempo</i>      |
| 24-26 | Coda   | a       |                | -                    |

The subtitle of the 'Nacht' movement is passacaglia. "Passacaglia is a variation common in the Baroque period. In this genre, the bass theme is heard alone first. Then, along with the theme, the variations and counterpointal tunes in the upper party are announced" (Feridunoğlu, 2004: 122). "Counterpoint and concurrency are considered as features of expressionism. Contrapuntal compositions offer the possibility of expressing many levels of consciousness within the same composition. Contrapuntal stratification in the works of Schoenberg and Berg often represents psychological stratification" (Özkişi, 2017: 155). The passacaglia form was widely used by Handel and Bach, and also by Netherlands composers of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. The principal motif of 'Nacht' is the bass ground seen in the form of a passacaglia and is a structure composed of nine intertwined notes. They consist of minor and major third intervals (figure 6).

Schoenberg's later idea of developing a work based on a twelve-tone series is already foreshadowed in this passacaglia, except that its starting point does not consist of 12 tones, but only of 3. The manner of elaboration of the musical discourse based on this single cell demonstrates that Schoenberg's later compositional technique is not a theoretical or speculative invention, but rather an outgrowth of his earlier works, being ultimately the result of an organic evolutionary process. (Türk, 2015: 100)



**Figure 6.** *Pierrot Lunaire* 'Nacht', motif a, bars: 1-3. (Schoenberg, 1914)

It is possible to see that the b motif undergoes various changes in the bass line throughout the section (Figure 7). The b motif, within the A sentence, followed a canonic structure starting from the bass clarinet part in the 4th bar until the 11th bar and ended with a *gesungen* (sung) notes in the vocal part in the 10th bar (Figure 8). The significant innovation in the voice part is the *Sprechstimme* technique. *Sprechstimme* is like a subfield of speech close to singing. *Sprechstimme* technique was first seen as a special vocal technique in the German composer Engelbelt Humperdinck's *Royal Children* (*Königskinder*), 1897 (Dallin, 1974: 226). With this technique, the voice is half-sung, and half-spoken, and the notes are indicated by placing a small x on the note's stem (figure 9). Schoenberg specifies *gesungen* in the 10th bar, as he wants a traditional singing technique at this point. It is possible to argue that Schoenberg acted traditionally here by using the b motif both with a canonic structure and as the basis of many variants within the movement. However, this traditionalist attitude is at the level of motifs, and the composer continued his innovative approach as he created a completely new environment in the world of sound. Here tradition and innovation combine rather than conflict with each other. The use of the passacaglia and continuous variants provided unity, while a 'free' atonal technique based on pitches created synthesis.

The image shows a musical score for the 'Nacht' movement of Pierrot Lunaire. It consists of four systems of staves. The top system is the piano accompaniment, with the bass line circled in red to highlight a specific motif. The second system shows the vocal parts for Bass Clarinet (B-Kl.), Bass (B), and Voice (Vcl.). The vocal part includes the lyrics 'Rie - senfal - ter tö - te - ten der Sonne Glanz.' The score is marked with 'I. Tempo' and includes performance instructions such as 'stacc.', 'pp', 'cresc.', 'ohne Ped.', 'am Griffbrett', 'ff', and 'fff'. Red boxes highlight specific musical phrases in the piano and vocal parts.

Figure 7. *Pierrot Lunaire* 'Nacht', motif b, bars: 12-17. (Schoenberg, 1914)



Figure 8. *Pierrot Lunaire* 'Nacht', motif b, vocal line, bars: 9-10. (Schoenberg, 1914)



Figure 9. *Pierrot Lunaire*, *Mondestrunken*, vocal line, bars: 2-4. (Schoenberg, 1914)

'Nacht' itself gives the impression of a great gliding movement (Nemutlu, 2008: 102), since the instruments follow a progression towards the bass by constantly getting lower. Although the vocal part becomes shrill from time to time, it mainly involves the 'upside-down' gliding of the instruments. In both parts, the passacaglia, which is a common device of the Baroque period, is used continuously. This passacaglia is the darkest moment in *Pierrot Lunaire* (Stuckenschmidt, 2011: 198). Instead of brighter-toned instruments like flute and violin, bass instruments such as cello and bass clarinet are used to express the darkness of the night. While the piano usually plays in the low octaves, the vocal line constantly follows the bass in the range (*tessitura*) it can sing. In the instruments, techniques such as *flutterzunge*, *sul ponticello*, and *pedal tremolo* are used to create an effect (Dunsby, 1992: 47). These techniques may have been used to depict the giant black butterflies in the text beating their wings and gliding through the air, closing out the sun. 'Nacht' ends with a coda or codetta after reaching its climax with a rhythmic acceleration with the changes of these melodies.

## Conclusion and Discussions

People found 'comfort' and preferred comfort. Modern man aims to live an effortless life. In other words, a less active, less wearisome life. That's why people are superficial. It does not research, does not examine, it is content with what exists. 'Comfort' is synonymous with mental laziness. This also applies to music... Traditional music is static. It doesn't go out of the tonal system; it just keeps wandering. Although romantic composers pushed the limits of order (tone) with jumbled voices and chords, this is not enough. After all, they act within the order (tone). There is no complete break. Just as we are fighting against the corrupt and conservative moral values in society, we must also

fight against the established rules of music and break these rules... Boundaries dissolved in music are symbols of human nature, spirit, and world, moral and social rules. (Schoenberg, 1911: 1-2)

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above quotation in Schoenberg's *Book of Harmony* (*Harmonielehre*-1911) may be that the composer was a very radical innovator and made a complete break from tradition. However, this is not the case. Although Schoenberg brought groundbreaking innovations in the sound world of music, as mentioned in the introduction section, he is a composer who based these innovations on tradition and synthesized two approaches. In general, the atonal works keep their formal design traditional as they lack a tonal center, which means a radical change in harmonic language. Schoenberg was also fed by German traditions, which he respected greatly. This traditional approach appeared in his works alongside his new techniques. He used the traditional approach not as a direct goal, but as a tool on the way to innovation to ensure that the work remains consistent and has a fulcrum. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that Schoenberg is a composer who uses tradition as a tool in pursuit of innovation. According to him, a composer does not have to belong within a single camp or follow a single discourse. He refers to instinct as something he deems perhaps even more valuable than education. A composer should compose based on his instincts, whether the music is tonal or atonal. The composing technique (twelve-tone) that Schoenberg discovered is not just a theoretical invention, but an organic development from his previous works. Therefore, to understand the innovations brought by the composer, it is necessary to look at and understand his previous works. The letter he wrote to Werner Reinhart<sup>4</sup>, in which he also touched upon this issue, is as follows:

I may say that for the present it matters more to me if people understand my older works, such as this chorus *Peace on Earth*. They are the natural forerunners of my later works, and only those who understand and comprehend them will be able to hear the latter with any understanding beyond the fashionable minimum. And only such people will realize that the melodic character of these later works is the natural consequence of my earlier experiments. So, I am truly delighted by your friendly words. I do not attach so much importance to being a musical bogymen as to being a natural continuer of properly understood good old tradition! (Schoenberg, 1965: 100)

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<sup>4</sup> Werner Reinhart was a Swiss merchant, philanthropist, and amateur clarinetist. He was a supporter of composers and writers (such as Igor Stravinsky and Rainer Maria Rilke). He was a well-known artmagnate of his time.

As can be implied from this quotation, Schoenberg believed that he reached this point already with his earliest works, and that his journey to atonality developed naturally from tradition. The transition to atonal writing emerged from tradition and developed as a natural process because Schoenberg fully understood the tradition and aimed to carry it further. He also wanted to expand and 'stretch' tonality in his works during the tonal period. For this reason, although it drew criticism even in the tonal period, the music encountered greater resistance, especially in the free atonal and twelve-tone periods (after 1908). Compared to his contemporaries, he made greater leaps and more radical changes in the transition from tonal music to atonality. Webern quoted a memory with Schoenberg as follows: "I remember a quote by Schoenberg, a colleague who was more prominent than him, was it a coincidence that you were a composer as you are now? When she asked him, yes, he didn't want to be anyone, so I had to ask him, said Schoenberg" (Webern, 1998: 20). Another reason for the adverse criticism and the absence of other contemporary composers in this field is the sheer magnetic presence and dominance of Schoenberg, making it difficult for others to present new works and perspectives. Since his death, it has been widely recognized just how important Schoenberg was as an innovator. As a result, many of his works are now heard at least occasionally. However, in general, although his music is no longer alien, it is more difficult to accept than the works of his distinguished students and contemporaries (Neighbour et al., 1980: 67). Although his works are performed more today than in the past, most listeners cannot comprehend their essential qualities because they are unfamiliar with them. They are confused and even uncomfortable with these works, and have little inclination to hear them again. After all, a masterpiece is in no hurry; it transcends time, and even if it is misunderstood or overlooked, the time will come when its beauty will be revealed without any outside help.

We know what Schoenberg's work means, the noble task it fulfills. We compared the musical situation created by this genius with the situation created by Bach's genius. Like Bach, Schoenberg achieved great renewal; because, just as the death of the modalsystem brought to life the tonal system created in Bach's work, the classical tone system, which has been dead since Wagner, has also turned into the system we are trying to describe in Schoenberg's work (...) His whole life is love and respect for his true musical values. These people, who are utter sacrifice and rejection of mediocrity, are a shining example of those who care more about absolute truth than merely the

satisfaction of their personal and popular demands. (Leibowitz, 1949: 339-341)

Schoenberg's works were less well received than those of his contemporaries. Yet, despite this, he never considered composing to be accepted or appreciated by only a certain group of people. According to Schoenberg, tonal music now had nowhere to go. Thus, he did not give up thinking, researching, and leaving his 'comfort zone' to develop a new discourse, no matter how much criticism he received. Although his atonal music is considered alien by some, these are works that need to be studied and performed more. To understand his atonal works, it is crucial to understand the works of his tonal period because it can be seen that he pushes the tonality to its limits in these earlier works. He took this challenge one step further and started composing with atonality. The audience can encounter the pioneer steps of the twelve-tone technique in his 'free' atonal works, so it is no surprise that later, he returned to tonality in some of the works of his atonal period. Each composing period may be divided into three and has developed by carrying traces of the previous one and taking it a step further. As time went by, the composer's search and desire for innovation in his works was as natural as all desires for change and innovation from the early history of humanity to the present. Therefore, instead of resisting this change, trying to understand and get out of our 'comfort zone' and being open to innovations should be the main objectives. Progress can only be achieved through this path. In conclusion, Schoenberg was a versatile composer who did not adhere to any single theory or technique. His music incorporates diverse techniques, including tonal, free atonal, and twelve-tone, as well as traditional and innovative approaches.

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