

Arnold Schoenberg

(1874-1951)

Pierrot Lunaire, Op. 21

(German)

Part I

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------|
| 1 | 1 Mondestrunken | (1:37) |
| 2 | 2 Colombine | (1:37) |
| 3 | 3 Der Dandy | (1:30) |
| 4 | 4 Eine blasse Wäscherin | (1:15) |
| 5 | 5 Valse de Chopin | (1:17) |
| 6 | 6 Madonna | 2:25) |
| 7 | 7 Der kranke Monde | (2:35) |

Part II

- | | | |
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| 8 | 8 Die Nacht | (2:09) |
| 9 | 9 Gebet an Pierrot | (1:07) |
| 10 | 10 Raub | (1:12) |
| 11 | 11 Rote Messe | (1:59) |
| 12 | 12 Galgenlied | (0:15) |
| 13 | 13 Enthauptung | (2:02) |
| 14 | 14 Die Kreuze | (2:10) |

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- | | | |
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| 16 | 16 Gemeinheit | (1:17) |
| 17 | 17 Parodie | (1:14) |
| 18 | 18 Der Mondfleck | (0:51) |
| 19 | 19 Serenade | (2:30) |
| 20 | 20 Heimfahrt | (1:53) |
| 21 | 21 O alter Duft | (1:50) |

Lucy Shelton, soprano
Da Capo Chamber Players
Patricia Spencer, flute • Laura Flax, clarinet
Joel Lester, violin • Andre Emelianoff, cello
Sarah Rothenberg, piano

(35:32)

(12:16)

(1:37)

(1:37)

(1:30)

(1:15)

(1:17)

2:25)

(2:35)

(10:54)

(2:09)

(1:07)

(1:12)

(1:59)

(0:15)

(2:02)

(2:10)

(12:06)

(2:22)

(1:17)

(1:14)

(0:51)

(2:30)

(1:53)

(1:50)

22 Herzgewächse, Op. 20

(3:35)

Lucy Shelton, soprano
Sarah Rothenberg, celeste • James David Christie, harmonium
Susan Jolles, harp
Oliver Knussen, conductor

Pierrot Lunaire, Op. 21

(English translation by Andrew Porter)

Part I

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|--------|
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| 26 | 4 A Pallid Laundrymaid | (1:16) |
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Part II

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Part III

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Lucy Shelton, soprano
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Notes by Leon Botstein

This recording of *Pierrot Lunaire* is unique because by providing an English and German version it allows English and American listeners to engage Schoenberg's theories on the relationship of music and text directly. When one listens to any vocal music in a foreign language, inevitably one can avoid being self-critical about the relationship between one's perception of words and one's perception of music. A foreign language sounds exclusively like a form of music. Because of the need for translation, one lacks immediate subconscious association, memory, and the culturally and autobiographically loaded response to specific linguistic elements. The gauntlet that Schoenberg threw down to his audiences in Berlin and Vienna is made apparent when one hears *Pierrot Lunaire* in Andrew Porter's fine translation. Listening to *Pierrot* in English is actually a necessity if members of the audience are going to follow Schoenberg's experiments with language as music. What happens to linguistic connection and meaning in Schoenberg's

setting? How does language communicate or not communicate, especially given the limited poetic power of these poems? What happens to one's perception of music when one can understand the words, given Schoenberg's idea that language might be merely the beginning point of the musical experience? In that context, what influence does Schoenberg's startling technique of *Sprechstimme* exert in one's own language?

Arnold Schoenberg's short article "The Relationship to the Text" was published in 1912 in the famous "Blaue Reiter" Almanac, edited by the painters Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc. In that same volume a manuscript of the composer's *Herzgewächse* (text by Maeterlinck), written in December 1911, was reproduced, along with Kandinsky's "Yellow Sound", two small works by Berg and Webern, and an article on Scriabin. The publication of a reflection on the essential differences between ordinary language and music along with a setting of a Maeterlinck poem by an already notorious modernist composer in a volume edited by two leading

contemporary painters was an apt reflection of the direction the career of Arnold Schoenberg had taken by the end of 1911.

Arnold Schoenberg was one of the few genuine autodidacts in the history of Western music. There was a correlation between Schoenberg's initial uncertain aesthetic, his restless and fanatical will to innovate, and his self-image as an outsider. He was determined to supplant conventional wisdom and to achieve ethical progress through art. He was neither the product of established institutions nor the beneficiary of conventional patterns of career advancement. Despite this, by 1907 Schoenberg had earned himself a considerable reputation as a composer in German-speaking Europe, particularly in his native Vienna. This reputation was double-edged. On the one hand, his talent was recognized widely, but so too was his intense wish to shock and be modern. Parallel to the success of performances of *Verklärte Nacht* (1902) and the *String Quartet No. 1* (1907), there were the widely discussed and debated "scandal" concerts in Vienna, which included the *Second*

Quartet (1908) and the *Chamber Symphony, Op. 9* (1907). (See back cover for caricature from *Die Zeit*, April 6, 1913.)

By 1908 Schoenberg had become uncertain about the aesthetic direction he needed to take. Influenced perhaps by a post-Wagnerian, fin-de-siècle fascination with the concept of totality, of the integrated aesthetic experience in which the spiritual in art was a mirror of the interrelationships of language, sound, and the visual, each exerting its own particular role, Schoenberg turned to painting. Most of his well-known paintings were done between 1908 and 1911. In 1909 he wrote music, particularly the Op. 16 orchestra pieces, that explored analogies between color, the visual, and music.

Furthermore, beginning in 1909, Schoenberg developed ambitions to become a writer. He was infuriated by the slovenly character of music criticism, and fascinated by Mahler's vocal *oeuvre* and the relationship between language and music. He was overwhelmed by the magnetism of Karl Kraus's ethical crusade on behalf of the redemption of language.

As a result, Schoenberg began to write seriously. Few composers have matched the intellectual and literary power of his essays or his textbooks.

The year 1911 was to prove pivotal for the composer. In May his greatest patron and supporter, Gustav Mahler, died. Schoenberg would pay homage to Mahler with two works, indirectly with the Op. 19 piano pieces and directly with the dedication of the *Harmonielehre*, which Schoenberg finished in the summer of 1911. In the spring and early summer of 1912 Schoenberg would write all of *Pierrot Lunaire*. The rapid completion of *Pierrot* would mark the beginnings of Schoenberg's return to a single-minded focus on musical composition.

While *Herzgewächse* would remain a work of secondary importance, *Pierrot Lunaire* rapidly became Schoenberg's most famous and widely celebrated work. More than a decade after Schoenberg's death Igor Stravinsky would describe *Pierrot Lunaire* aptly as "the solar plexus, as well as the mind, of early twentieth century music."

The work received numerous performances after its premiere in Berlin on October 16, 1912. The vocal

part was taken by Albertine Zehme, an actress with a particular gift for music, who commissioned the work from Schoenberg. Among her specialties were Ibsen and the performance of melodrama. Frau Zehme had the fortune of being married to a wealthy lawyer and sought a work for herself from Schoenberg, specifically using the poems by Giraud in the German translation by Hartleben.

The commission was welcome. *Pierrot Lunaire* offered Schoenberg a new vehicle through which to pursue the relationship of music to the other two forms of expression and communication that had come to occupy him: painting and writing. *Pierrot* would mark Schoenberg's turn away from the conventions and expectations of Expressionism. In 1909 Schoenberg had written the monodrama *Erwartung*. This operatic drama for voice and orchestra was Schoenberg's attempt to use the voice as a singing dramatic vehicle. Its form was determined by the literary narrative and demands made by the need to portray textual meanings (e.g. psychological transformation) through words, music, scenery, and dramatic performance.



The composer with the first performers of *Pierrot Lunaire*: L. to R. C. Essberger, clarinet; Jakob Malinjak, violin and viola; Arnold Schoenberg; Albertine Zehme, reciter; Eduard Steuermann, piano; Hans Kindler, 'cello; H. W. de Vries, flute

Like Op. 18, *Die Glückliche Hand*, in Schoenberg's conception the voice and orchestra—the musical elements—possessed visual analogues in light and color. In these two expressionist works Schoenberg experimented with the idea of representation with music. Reality and unreality were evoked through the musical medium of the protagonist whose subjective sensibilities were mirrored. A relatively compact one-act form was exploited using the mutations of language and gesture and the interpolation of discontinuity in space and time to create an explosive intensity. Music, with words, generated images beyond those of the stage.

Herzgewächse was similar to *Erwartung* in that it is not musically organized by a strict development of an evident theme. It experiments with instrumental color and range. But perhaps most interesting about *Herzgewächse*, particularly in connection with *Pierrot Lunaire*, is the relationship of music to text, a relationship made even more curious by the fact that at the time he was writing *Herzgewächse*, Schoenberg was beginning the text for what would become the unfinished

project *Die Jakobsleiter* (Jacob's Ladder). Schoenberg was beginning to explore more deeply the possibilities of expressing in a mixture of language and music the theological and the philosophical. He began to search for a link between music and words that would relinquish a dependency on visual props or the creation of mental pictures. But in *Herzgewächse* and to a lesser extent *Pierrot Lunaire*, the notion of the poetic still reigned as the dominant connecting link between music and language. *Herzgewächse* was not performed immediately after its composition. It was first performed many years later, in the 1927-1928 season. Among the reasons for the delay in the first performance were the unusual ensemble employed and the demands made on the vocalist.

In the article "The Relationship to the Text", Schoenberg argued, following Schopenhauer, that music, because of its power and character, must never attempt to illustrate text or depict that which texts represent linguistically. Rather, as in the case of a Schubert song or Schoenberg's own songs, Op. 2 and 3, "the direct contact with the sound of the first

words" ought to be sufficient to permit the development of a musical statement by the composer without any reference to the literal meaning or "poetical context" of the poetry being set. The sounds of words rather than the mental pictures they generated, or their grammatical or sense content, triggered a so-called "direct comparison". The "real" essence of the poems—not the illustration of content—was unlocked by music, an essence unreachable and imperceptible without the aid of music. As Schoenberg concluded, music and text relate to each other—that is to say they complement each other—on an extremely high, spiritual level, evident only in retrospect as a result of the integration of the two media at the hands of the composer. But in the ordinary sense, in terms of "declamation" or "tempo" or "loudness"; or in terms of narrative description, music and text had to diverge if, in fact, music was to retain its autonomy and power and if the higher realm of connectedness between music and language was to be achieved.

In this tantalizing but somewhat inconsistent theoretical exposition,

Schoenberg embraced the idea that language needs to be purified if it is to be, as Kraus suggested, the "mother of ideas" in the arts. If language performs its ethical imperative—to speak its truths in the broadest sense—a spiritual unity that can be revealed by art and music will emerge. However, the kind of ordinary language we hear in daily life or read in newspapers was an insufficient model. What the painter (i.e. Schoenberg himself and Kandinsky) and the composer must do is to take off from language and generate works in whose expression and through whose perception a higher realm of human experience is created and revealed. Language in a given text provides the hint of the aesthetic idea. That hint is often hidden from the view of the composer who approaches the text in the ordinary way.

It is in this framework that one should listen to the connection between the Maeterlinck poem and the music of *Herzgewächse*, particularly where the poet describes moods and the evolution of sentiment (e.g. sinking to rest, listless melancholy, and so forth). It is neither the metaphoric

meaning nor the literal meaning of Maeterlinck's poem that connects to the music or justifies its presence. The text has become transformed into an integral element of the musical discourse. It is not surprising, then, that in the preface to *Pierrot Lunaire* Schoenberg wrote, using the language of painting as well as of music: "Never should the performers see it as their duty to create the atmosphere and character of the individual pieces out of the meaning of the words, but always only out of the music. So far as the tone-painterly representation of the events and the emotions given by the texts was important to the author (i.e. composer [ed]), in any event it can be found in the music. Where the performer finds it lacking, he should refrain from giving something the author did not want. He would not give but rather take." When one takes this admonition into account in approaching *Pierrot Lunaire*, one realizes that in the recitation in the now famous innovation of *Sprechstimme* the voice is a purely musical element in its words, sounds, and all.

There are twenty-one poetic set-

tings in *Pierrot*. The texts have an obsessive structural pattern of lines, making repetition an extremely important parallel element in the musical dimension of the text. The work is in three parts, and there are seven poems in each. Each poem has the same poetic structure. Given Schoenberg's thoughts on text and music, it becomes quite clear that the overt meaning of these poems was probably of little interest. It was rather the formal structure and therefore the musical possibilities inherent in the texts that interested him. The work is filled with explorations in counterpoint and the use of pitch and instrumental color. The tremendous expressive range that he permits the piano is a case in point.

In the use of the famous *Sprechstimme* technique, while Schoenberg is explicit that the speaking voice not sustain pitch, the notation is pitched, placing the singer-reciter in the uncomfortable position of having to fulfill a musical function that is pitch-sensitive and yet fulfill the composer's intentions, which are to create a new kind of speaking that is absolutely distinct from singing. In the ordinary

musical sense, the creation of pitch is what separates singing from speaking. In *Pierrot*, Schoenberg forged a new kind of musical instrument out of the speaking voice.

Despite Schoenberg's protestations, some observers have speculated that there is actually something autobiographical in the texts and in the cycle. Is there a mirror of the fine line between the extreme emotional states of the artist—the madness of creativity and the symbol of the moon—on the one hand and the satirical, comical, and satanic possibilities of the figure of the clown on the other? Does the relationship of text to music suggest less expressionist pathos and more of the humorous and ironic? Has not the subjective protagonist of expressionism been replaced by the significance of seemingly objective musical ideas, overriding text and image?

Pierrot Lunaire is unquestionably one of the greatest of Schoenberg's works. It has remained one of his most successful. This is in part the result of its unique combination of several alluring qualities. First, it has the economy and riveting surface associated with the best of expressionist art.

It never lets the listener go, and its density is the consequence of its tautness. A dramatic whole is fashioned by Schoenberg's skills as a miniaturist (e.g. the orchestral and piano pieces Op. 16 and 19) and muralist (e.g. *Peleas and Gurrelieder*). Second, its innovations are so striking, particularly through its use of sonorities, that it never loses its sense of newness. Third, *Pierrot* is relatively comprehensible, despite its modernism, because Schoenberg found a way to re-utilize traditional forms such as the waltz, passacaglia, and fugue. For all his hostility to the listener, he offered an evident link between modernist innovation and conventional expectations by integrating classical gestures into the work. The fact that Schoenberg both fulfills and alters the forms and expectations has lent the work its persistent edge. Fourth, in *Pierrot* Schoenberg evoked, perhaps unintentionally, the sentiment, gesture, sensibilities, and visual mood of the ferment of his own time: the pre World War I mixture of rebellion, pessimism, courage, sensuality, alienation, humor, obsession, and decadent self-pity, which has

continued to fascinate subsequent generations.

When listening to *Pierrot Lunaire* one needs to remember that Schoenberg's early twentieth-century experiments with language and music and his struggle against the conventions of musical writing and journalism were part of a much larger movement. Schoenberg's critique of language ran parallel with the work of Kraus, Wittgenstein, and Freud. The exploration of linguistic functioning from epistemological, psychological, and political points of view was crucial to the evolution of twentieth-century culture and particularly its modernist movements. Schoenberg's work and innovation are at the core of twentieth-century modernism. Few works are as expressive as *Pierrot Lunaire* of the lure and significance of the issues surrounding the links between language, life, and art, which in turn spoke directly to the sense of the individual and the destiny of the collective human community in Europe before World War I.

Thrice seven poems from Albert Giraud's *Pierrot Lunaire*

German translation by Otto Erich Hartleben

English translation (from German) by Andrew Porter

Part I

1. Mondestrunken

Den Wein, den man mit Augen trinkt,
Giesst Nachts der Mond in Wogen nieder,
Und eine Springflut überschwemmt
Den stillen Horizont.

Gelüste, schauerlich und süß,
Durchschwimmen ohne Zahl die Fluten!
Den Wein, den man mit Augen trinkt,
Giesst Nachts der Mond in Wogen nieder.

Der Dichter, den die Andacht treibt,
Berauscht sich an dem heiligen Tranke,
Gen Himmel wendet er verzückt
Das Haupt und taumelnd saugt und schlürft er
Den Wein, den man mit Augen trinkt.

2. Colombine

Des Mondlichts bleiche Blüten,
Die weissen Wunderrosen,
Blühn in den Julinächten —
O bräch ich eine nur!

Mein banges Leid zu lindern,
Such ich am dunklen Strome
Des Mondlichts bleiche Blüten,
Die weissen Wunderrosen.

1. Moondrunk

The wine that through the eyes is drunk
at night the moon pours down in torrents,
until a spring-flood overflows
the silent far horizon.

Desires, shuddering and sweet,
are swimming through the flood unnumbered!
The wine that through the eyes is drunk
at night the moon pours down in torrents.

The poet, whom devotion drives,
grows tipsy on the sacred liquor,
to heaven turning his enraptured gaze
and reeling, sucks and slurps up
the wine that through the eyes is drunk.

2. Colombine

The moonlight's pallid blossoms,
the white and wondrous roses,
bloom in July's nights—
oh, could I pluck but one!

My heavy load to lighten
in darkling streams I search for
the moonlight's pallid blossoms,
the white and wondrous roses.

Gestillt wär all mein Sehnen,
Dürft ich so märchenheimlich,
So selig leis—entblättern
Auf deine braunen Haare
Des Mondlichts bleiche Blüten!

3. Der Dandy

Mit einem phantastischen Lichtstrahl
Erleuchtet der Mond die krystallinen Flacons
Auf dem schwarzen, hochheiligen Waschtisch
Des schweigenden Dandys von Bergamo.

In tönender, bronzener Schale
Lacht hell die Fontäne, metallischen Klangs.
Mit einem phantastischen Lichtstrahl
Erleuchtet der Mond die krystallinen Flacons.

Pierrot mit dem wächsernen Antlitz
Steht sinnend und denkt:
wie er heute sich schminkt?
Fort schiebt er des Rot und des Orients Grün
Und bemalt sein Gesicht in erhabenem Stil
Mit einem phantastischen Mondstrahl.

4. Eine blasse Wäscherin

Eine blasse Wäscherin
Wäscht zur Nachtzeit bleiche Tücher,
Nackte, silberweiße Arme
Streckt sie nieder in die Flut.

Durch die Lichtung schleichen Winde,
Leis bewegen sie den Strom.
Eine blasse Wäscherin
Wäscht zur Nachtzeit bleiche Tücher.

Then stilled were all my yearning,
could I, as in a fable, so tenderly
but scatter upon your brown tresses
the moonlight's pallid blossoms!

3. The Dandy

And with a fantastical light-beam
the moon sheds a light on the crystalline flask
on the ebon, highly sacred washstand
of the taciturn dandy from Bergamo.

In sonorous, bronzen basin
laughs brightly the fountain's metallical cry.
And with a fastastical light-beam
the moon sheds a light on the crystalline flask.

Pierrot with waxen complexion
stands musing and thinks:
what makeup for today?
Rejecting the red and the orient green,
he bedizens his face in a high noble style
and with a fantastical moonbeam.

4. A Pallid Laundrymaid

See a pallid laundrymaid
washing nightly faded linen;
naked, silver-whitish arms
stretching downward in the flood.

Through the clearing gentle breezes
lightly ruffle up the stream.
See a pallid laundrymaid
washing nightly faded linen.

Und die sanfte Magd des Himmels,
Von den Zweigen zart umschmeichelt,
Breitet auf die dunklen Wiesen
Ihre lichtgewobenen Linnen—
Eine blasse Wäscherin.

5. Valse de Chopin

Wie ein blasser Tropfen Bluts
Färbt die Lippen einer Kranken,
Also ruht auf diesen Tönen
Ein vernichtungssüchtiger Reiz.

Wilder Lust Accorde stören
Der Verzweiflung eisgen Traum—
Wie ein blasser Tropfen Bluts
Färbt die Lippen einer Kranken.

Heiss und jauchzend, süß und schmachkend,
Melancholisch düstrer Walzer,
Kommst mir nimmer aus den Sinnen!
Haftest mir an den Gedanken,
Wie ein blasser Tropfen Bluts!

6. Madonna

Steig, o Mutter aller Schmerzen,
Auf den Altar meiner Verse!
Blut aus deinen magren Brüsten
Hat des Schwertes Wut vergossen.

Deine ewig frischen Wunden
Gleichen Augen, rot und offen.
Steig, o Mutter aller Schmerzen,
Auf den Altar meiner Verse!

And the tender maid of heaven,
by the branches softly fondled,
lays out on the darkling meadows
all her linen woven of moonbeams—
see a pallid laundrymaid.

5. Valse de Chopin

As a pallid drop of blood
stains the lips of a consumptive,
so there lurks within this music
morbid soul-destructive charm:

wild accords of passion
breaking desperation's icy dream
as a pallid drop of blood
stains the lips of a consumptive.

Fierce, triumphant, sweet and yearning,
melancholy somber waltzing
you will never leave my senses,
cling to each thought as I think it,
as a pallid drop of blood!

6. Madonna

Rise, O Mother of all Sorrows,
on the altar of my verses!
Blood pours forth from withered bosom
where the cruel sword has pierced it.

And thine ever-bleeding wounds
seem like eyes, red and open,
Rise, O Mother of all Sorrows,
on the altar of my verses!

In den abgezehrten Händen
Hältst du deines Sohnes Leiche,
Ihn zu zeigen aller Menschheit—
Doch der Blick der Menschen meidet
Dich, o Mutter aller Schmerzen!

7. Der kranke Mond

Du nächtig todeskranker Mond
Dort auf des Himmels schwarzem Pfühl,
Dein Blick, so fiebernd übergross,
Bannt mich wie fremde Melodie.

An unstillbarem Liebesleid
Stirbst du, an Sehnsucht, tief erstickt,
Du nächtig todeskranker Mond
Dort auf des Himmels schwarzem Pfühl.

Den Liebsten, der im Sinnenrausch
Gedankenlos zur Liebsten schleicht,
Belustigt deiner Strahlen Spiel—
Dein bleiches, qualgebornes Blut,
Du nächtig todeskranker Mond.

8. Nacht

Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter
Töteten der Sonne Glanz.
Ein geschlossnes Zauberbuch,
Ruht der Horizont—verschwiegen.

Aus dem Qualm verlornen Tiefen
Steigt ein Duft, Erinnerung mordend!
Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter
Töteten der Sonne Glanz.

In thy torn and wasted hands
holding thy Son's holy body,
thou revealest Him to all mankind—
but the eyes of men are turned away
O Mother of all Sorrows!

7. The Sick Moon

O somber deathly-stricken moon
lying on heaven's dusky pillow,
your gaze, so wide-eyed, feverish,
charms me, like far-off melody.

Of unappeasable pain of love
you die, of yearning, choked to death.
O somber deathly-stricken moon
lying on heaven's dusky pillow.

The lover, with his heart aflame,
who heedless goes to meet his love,
rejoices in your play of light,
your pallid, pain-begotten blood,
O somber deathly-stricken moon.

Part II

8. Night

Black gigantic butterflies
have blotted out the shining sun.
Like a sorcerer's sealed book,
the horizon sleeps in silence.

From the murky depths forgotten
vapors rise to murder memory!
Black gigantic butterflies
have blotted out the shining sun.

Und vom Himmel erdenwärts
Senken sich mit schweren Schwingen
Unsichtbar die Ungetüme
Auf die Menschenherzen nieder...
Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter.

9. Gebet an Pierrot

Pierrot! Mein Lachen
Hab ich verlernt!
Das Bild des Glanzes
Zerfloss—Zerfloss!

Schwarz weht die Flagge
Mir nun vom Mast.
Pierrot! Mein Lachen
Hab ich verlernt!

O gib mir wieder,
Rossarzt der Seele,
Schneemann der Lyrik,
Durchlaucht vom Monde,
Pierrot—mein Lachen!

10. Raub

Rote, fürstliche Rubine,
Blutge Tropfen alten Ruhmes,
Schlummern in den Totenschreinen,
Drunten in den Grabgewölben.

Nachts, mit seinen Zechkumpanen,
Steigt Pierrot hinab—zu rauben
Rote, fürstliche Rubine,
Blutge Tropfen alten Ruhmes.

And from heaven toward the earth,
sinking down on heavy pinions,
all unseen descend the monsters
to the hearts of men below here...
Black gigantic butterflies.

9. Prayer to Pierrot

Pierrot! My laughter
have I unlearned!
The dream of radiance
dispersed, dispersed!

Black waves the banner
upon the mast.
Pierrot! My laughter
have I unlearned!

O now return me,
soul's veterinarian,
Snowman of Lyric,
Your Lunar Highness,
Pierrot! My laughter!

10. Theft

Redly gleaming princely rubies,
bleeding drops of ancient glory,
slumber in the dead men's coffins,
buried in the vaults below us.

Nights, alone with his companions,
Pierrot descends to plunder
redly gleaming princely rubies,
bleeding drops of ancient glory.

Doch da—sträuben sich die Haare,
Bleiche Furcht bannt sie am Platze:
Durch die Finsternis—wie Augen!—
Stieren aus den Totenschreinen
Rote, fürstliche Rubine.

11. Rote Messe

Zu grauem Abendmahle,
Beim Blendeglanz des Goldes,
Beim Flackerschein der Kerzen,
Naht dem Altar—Pierrot!

Die Hand, die gottgeweihte,
Zerreisst die Priesterkleider
Zu grauem Abendmahle
Beim Blendeglanz des Goldes.

Mit segnender Geberde
Zeigt er den bangen Seelen
Die triefend rote Hostie:
Sein Herz—in blutgen Fingern—
Zu grauem Abendmahle!

12. Galgenlied

Die dürre Dirne
Mit langem Halse
Wird seine letzte
Geliebte sein.

In seinem Hirne
Steckt wie ein Nagel
Die dürre Dirne
Mit langem Halse.

But then suddenly they're rooted,
scared to death, hair standing straight up:
through the darkness, like eyes
staring from the dead men's coffins—
redly gleaming princely rubies.

11. Red Mass

To gruesome grim communion,
by blinding golden glitter,
by flickering shine of candles,
comes to the altar—Pierrot!

His hand, to God devoted,
tears wide the priestly vestment.
At gruesome grim communion,
by blinding golden glitter.

He makes the sign of the cross
blessing the trembling, trembling people,
with trickling crimson wafer:
his heart in bloody fingers
at gruesome grim communion.

12. Gallows Song

The haggard harlot
whose neck is scrawny
will be the last
of his mistresses.

And in his skull
she'll stick like a needle,
the haggard harlot
whose neck is scrawny.

Schlank wie die Pinie
Am Hals ein Zöpfchen—
Wollüstig wird sie
Den Schelm umhalsen,
Die dürre Dirne!

13. Enthauptung

Der Mond, ein blankes Türkenschwert
Auf einem schwarzen Seidenkissen,
Gespenstisch gross—dräut er hinab
Durch schmerzendsunkle Nacht.

Pierrot irrt ohne Rast umher
Und starrt empor in Todesängsten
Zum Mond, dem blanken Türkenschwert
Auf einem schwarzen Seidenkissen.

Es schlottern unter ihm die Knie,
Ohnmächtig bricht er jäh zusammen.
Er wähnt: es sause strafend schon
Auf seinen Sünderhals hernieder
Der Mond, das blanke Türkenschwert.

14. Die Kreuze

Heilige Kreuze sind die Verse,
Dran die Dichter stumm verbluten,
Blindgeschlagen von der Geier
Flatterndem Gespensterschwarm!

In den Leibern schwelgten Schwerter,
Prunkend in des Blutes Scharlach!
Heilige Kreuze sind die Verse,
Dran die Dichter stumm verbluten.

Slim as a pinetree,
she has a pigtail,
gaily she'll bind it
around his neck,
the haggard harlot!

13. Beheading

The moon, a shining Turkish sword
upon a black and silken cushion,
and spectral vast hangs like a threat
in sorrow-darkened night!

Pierrot restlessly roams about
and stares on high in deathly fear
at the moon, a shining Turkish sword
upon a black and silken cushion.

And shaking, quaking at the knees
oh, suddenly he faints, collapses,
convinced that there comes whistling down
upon his sinful guilty neck
the moon, a shining Turkish sword.

14. The Crosses

Holy crosses are the verses
whereon poets bleed in silence,
blinded by a flock of vultures
fluttering round in spectral swarms.

In their bodies swords have feasted,
glorying in their robes of scarlet!
Holy crosses are the verses
whereon poets bleed in silence.

Tot das Haupt—erstarrt die Locken—
Fern, verweht der Lärm des Pöbels.
Langsam sinkt die Sonne nieder,
Eine rote Königskrone.—
Heilige Kreuze sind die Verse!

Part III

15. Heimweh

Lieulich klagend – ein kristallnes Seufzen
Aus Italiens alter Pantomime,
Klings herüber: wie Pierrot so hölzern,
So modern sentimental geworden.

Und es tönt durch seines Herzens Wüste,
Tönt gedämpft durch alle Sinne wieder,
Lieulich klagend—ein kristallnes Seufzen
Aus Italiens alter Pantomime.

Da vergisst Pierrot die Trauermienen!
Durch den bleichen Feuerschein des Mondes,
Durch des Lichtmeers Fluten—
schweift die Sehnsucht
Kühn hinauf, empor zum Heimathimmel,
Lieulich klagend—ein krystallnes Seufzen!

16. Gemeinheit!

In den blanken Kopf Cassanders,
Dessen Schrein die Luft durchzertert,
Bohrt Pierrot mit Heuchlermienen,
Zärtlich—einen Schädelbohrer!

Dead the head, matted the tresses—
far and faint the noisy people
Slowly sinks the sun in splendor,
like a crimson kingly crown.
Holy crosses are the verses.

15. Nostalgia

Sweet lamenting, like a crystal sighing,
rises from the old Italian comedy,
sadly asking: Why's Pierrot so wooden,
in the sentimental modern manner?

And it echoes through his heart's desert,
echoes mutedly through all his senses—
sweet lamenting, like a crystal sighing
rising from the old Italian comedy.

Then Pierrot forgets his tragic manner!
Through the silver fiery glow of moon-light,
through a flood of radiance
swells his yearning,
boldly soars on high to skies of homeland—
sweet lamenting, like a crystal sighing.

16. Mean Trick!

In the gleaming skull of Cassander,
as he shrieks and cries blue murder,
bores Pierrot with hypocritic kindness—
and a cranium-borer.

Darauf stopft er mit dem Daumen
Seinen echten türkschen Taback
In den blanken Kopf Cassanders,
Dessen Schrein die Luft durchzertert!

Dann dreht er ein Rohr von Weichsel
Hinten in die glatte Glatze
Und behäbig schmaucht und pafft er
Seinen echten türkschen Taback
Aus dem blanken Kopf Cassanders!

17. Parodie

Stricknadeln, blank und blinkend,
In ihrem grauen Haar,
Sitzt die Duenna murrend,
Im roten Röckchen da.

Sie wartet in der Laube,
Sie liebt Pierrot mit Schmerzen,
Stricknadeln, blank und blinkend,
In ihrem grauen Haar.

Da plötzlich—horch!—ein Wispern!
Ein Windhauch kichert leise:
Der Mond, der böse Spötter,
Äfft nach mit seinen Strahlen—
Stricknadeln, blink und blank.

18. Der Mondfleck

Einen weissen Fleck des hellen Mondes
Auf dem Rücken seines schwarzen Rockes,
So spaziert Pierrot im lauen Abend,
Aufzusuchen Glück und Abenteuer.

And then presses with his finger
very genuine Turkish tobacco
in the gleaming skull of Cassander,
as he shrieks and cries blue murder!

Then screwing a cherry pipstem
firmly in the polished surface,
at his ease he puffs away,
puffs on his genuine Turkish tobacco
in the gleaming skull of Cassander!

17. Parody

Knitting needles, brightly twinkling,
stuck in her graying hair,
sits the Duenna mumbling,
wearing her short red dress.

She's waiting in the arbor,
she loves Pierrot with anguish.
Knitting needles, brightly twinkling,
stuck in her graying hair.

But sudden—hark—a whisper!
a wind-puff titters softly:
the moon, that cruel mocker,
is mimicking with moonbeams
knitting needles twinkling bright.

18. The Moonfleck

With a snowy fleck of shining moonlight
on the back side of his smart new frockcoat,
so sets forth Pierrot one balmy evening,
in pursuit of fortune and adventure.

Plötzlich stört ihn was an seinem Anzug,
Er beschaut sich rings und findet richtig—
Einen weissen Fleck des hellen Mondes
Auf dem Rücken seines schwarzen Rockes.

Warte! denkt er: das ist so ein Gipsfleck!
Wischt und wischt, doch—
bringt ihn nicht herunter!
Und so geht er, giftgeschwollen, weiter,
reibt und reibt bis an den frühen Morgen—
Einen weissen Fleck des hellen Mondes.

19. Serenade

Mit groteskem Riesenbogen
Kratzt Pierrot auf seiner Bratsche,
Wie der Storch auf einem Beine,
Knipst er trüb ein Pizzicato.

Plötzlich naht Cassander—wütend
ob des nächstgen Virtuosen—
Mit groteskem Riesenbogen
Kratzt Pierrot auf seiner Bratsche.

Von sich wirst er jetzt die Bratsche:
Mit der delikaten Linken
Fasst den Kahlkopf er am Kragen—
Träumend spielt er auf der Glatze
Mit groteskem Riesenbogen.

20. Heimfahrt

Der Mondstrahl ist das Ruder,
Seerose dient als Boot:
Drauf fährt Pierrot gen Süden
Mit gutem Reisewind.

Sudden—something's wrong with his appearance,
he looks round and round and then he finds it—
there's a snowy fleck of shining moonlight
on the back side of his smart new frockcoat.

Hang it! Thinks he: a speckle of plaster!
Wipes and wipes,
but he can't make it vanish!
On he goes, his pleasure has been ruined,
rubs and rubs until it's almost morning
at a snowy fleck of shining moonlight.

19. Serenade

With a bow grotesquely monstrous
scrapes Pierrot on his viola.
Like a stork on one leg standing,
sadly plucks a pizzicato.

Sudden! Here's Cassander,
raging at the nighttime virtuoso.
With a bow grotesquely monstrous
scrapes Pierrot on his viola.

Then he throws aside viola:
with a delicate use of left hand
seizes Cassander by the collar—
dreaming plays upon his bald head
with a bow grotesquely monstrous.

20. Journey Homeward (Barcarolle)

A moonbeam is the rudder,
waterlily serves as boat,
and so Pierrot goes southward
with a friendly following wind.

Der Strom summt tiefe Skalen
Und wiegt den leichten Kahn.
Der Mondstrahl ist das Ruder,
Seerose dient als Boot.

Nach Bergamo, zur Heimat,
Kehrt nun Pierrot zurück;
Schwach dämmert schon im Osten
Der grüne Horizont.
—Der Mondstrahl ist das Ruder.

21. O alter Duft

O alter Duft aus Märchenzeit,
Berauschest wieder meine Sinne!
Ein närrisch Heer von Schelmerlein
Durchschwirrt die leichte Luft.

Ein glücklich Wünschen macht mich froh
Nach Freuden, die ich lang verachtet:
O alter Duft aus Märchenzeit,
Berauschest wieder mich!

All meinen Unmut geb ich preis;
Aus meinem sonnumrahmten Fenster
Beschau ich frei die liebe Welt
Und träum hinaus in selge Weiten...
O alter Duft—aus Märchenzeit!

The stream hums scales beneath him
and rocks the fragile craft.
A moonbeam is the rudder,
waterlily serves as boat.

To Bergamo, his homeland,
at last Pierrot returns;
soft glimmers rise to eastward,
the green of the horizon.
A moonbeam is the rudder.

21. O Ancient Scent

O ancient scent from fabled times,
once more you captivate my senses!
A merry troupe of roguish pranks
pervades the gentle air.

With cheerful yearning I return
to pleasures I too long neglected.
O ancient scent from fabled times,
once more you captivate me.

All of my gloom I've cast aside;
and from my sun-encircled window
I gladly view the lovely world,
and dreams go forth to greet the distance...
O ancient scent from fabled times!

English translation ©1984 by Andrew Porter

Herzgewächse

Text by Maurice Maeterlinck
(German translation by
Ammer Oppeln-Bornikowski)

Meiner müden Sehnsucht blaues Glas
deckt den alten unbestimmten Kummer,
dessen ich genas,
und der nun erstarrt in seinem Schlummer.

Sinnbildhaft ist seiner Blumen Zier:
Mancher Freuden düstre Wasser-Rose,
Palmen der Begier,
weiche Schlinggewächse, kühle Moose,

eine Lilie nur in all dem Flor,
bleich und starr in ihrer Kränklichkeit,
richtet sich empor
über all dem Blattgeword'nen Leid,

licht sind ihre Blätter anzuschauen,
weissen Mondesglanz sie um sich sät,
zum Krystall dem blauen
sendet sie ihr mystisches Gebet.

Foliage of the Heart

(English verse by
by Bernard Miall, 1915)

Neath the azure crystal bell
Of my listless melancholy
All my formless sorrows slowly
Sink to rest, and all is well;

Symbols all, the plants entwine:
Waterlilies, flowers of pleasure,
Palms desirous, slow with leisure,
Frigid mosses, pliant vine.

Mid them all a lily only,
Pale and fragile and unbending,
Imperceptibly ascending
In that place of leafage lonely

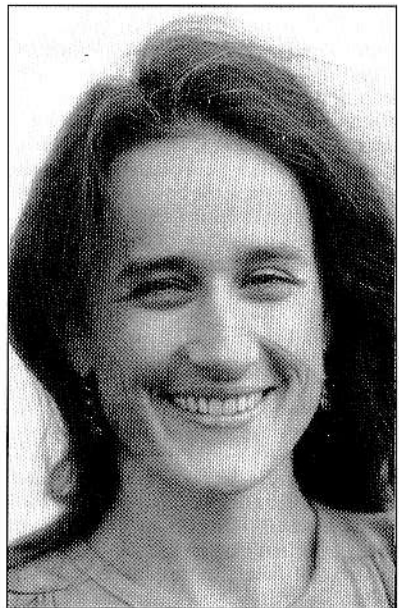
Like a moon the prisoned air
Fills with glimmering light wherethro'
Rises to the crystal blue,
White and mystical, its prayer.

A Note from Lucy Shelton

While attempting to formulate something that could shed some light on my approach to the vexed issue of precisely how to execute the *Pierrot sprechstimme* (there are as many angles as there are performers) I came across the following remarks in a commemorative Schoenberg essay by Alexander Goehr which could not express my thoughts more exactly: "Alban Berg describes the vocal styles to be found in *Pierrot Lunaire*, *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten* and *Erwartung* as a new kind of *bel canto*. Italian *bel canto* is described as being 'with its roulades, vocalisms, trills and effects'. The bases of Schoenberg's vocal writing lie in the expressive manner of Wagner and later *lieder* styles. The physical range of the voice is extended to its most remarkable in the setting of Maeterlinck's *Herzgewächse*. This huge vocal range is not written for freaks. For Schoenberg was not looking for a singing machine which produced equal notes throughout a huge compass. His intention was to extend the artist's *expressive* range. This is analogous to the well-known

belief in the emancipation of the dissonance. As he proposed to see in harmony an expressive continuum from consonance to so-called dissonance (negating the linguistic opposition of these very words), so he extended the conventional dualities of aesthetic expression; fast and slow, joyous and sad, ugly and beautiful. He dwells in the twilight between these concepts and in the over bright and sombre of their extreme extensions. His singer, like a well-trained actor, must be ready to change his vocal production from moment to moment. He must learn not only to move between tessituras but to move between strong notes and weak notes to be expressed according to their intrinsic positions in the voice and not adjusted to a mean average of good quality sound. Further, and taking as his model the French *diseuse*, he must speak on pitch levels and connect each consonant attack on a fixed pitch to the next by extending the vowel sound. In this way he expresses new dimensions. It is not enough for him to learn the vocal line as if it were by an earlier composer with more awkward intervals.

His task is to seek the quality of the note in his own voice. In this way only may he approach the remarkably highly coloured and plastically imagined Schoenbergian *bel canto*."



Lucy Shelton

Da Capo Chamber Players

Since their founding in New York in 1970, the Da Capo Chamber Players have been known for their virtuosity in music new and old. They have received the prestigious Naumburg Chamber Music Award, and their provocative programming brought them the first ASCAP-CMA Award for Adventurous Programming. Their advocacy of new music is perhaps best demonstrated by the more than sixty works they have commissioned from a wide range of composers, including in recent years George Perle, Gunther Schuller, Joan Tower, Shulamit Ran, Bruce Adolphe and Nicholas Maw. The Mellon Foundation has sponsored Da Capo's three-year series of innovative residencies across the United States with guest composers. In addition to numerous recordings on CRI and New World Records, recent CD's include early and late works by Elliott Carter and George Perle on the GM label. In residence at Bard College, the Da Capo Chamber Players continue to tour extensively throughout North America, and present an annual concert series in New York.



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Laura Flax, clarinet; Joel Lester, violin; Andre Emelianoff, cello; Sarah Rothenberg, piano; Patricia Spencer, flute

Pierrot Lunaire

Produced by: David Starobin and Michael Calvert

Engineer: Paul Zinman

Recorded in the Olin Auditorium, Bard College, December 17, 18, 20, and 21, 1990

Edited by Michael Calvert and Eric Delente at GLC Productions

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Herzgewächse

Producer: David Starobin

Engineer: Paul Zinman

Recorded at Houghton Chapel, Wellesley College in July 1991

Edited by Oliver Knussen and Marian Freeman at Modus Music

The harmonium in this recording is by Mustel (1933), and is the property of S. Lee Eiseman of Charleston, MA, who made it available for this recording.

The celeste is also by Mustel and was made available by its owner, the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Assistants to James David Christie at the harmonium: John Finney and Angela Vaustory

Mastered by Paul Zinman and Michael Calvert

The scores of both works are published in the United States by Belmont Music Publishing

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