

What can be discerned is a flow of tone-color that is continually associative. For example, a plucked violin relates to the harp heard earlier. A horn can function as color conduit between a flute and a trumpet. This is in addition to tempos changing and recurring and many other basic, identifiable materials, such as register. With so much going on in a very brief period, the spirit of the movements harness a precariousness that might be the closest to the Expressionist oeuvre among Webern's instrumental works. The function of each musical signpost is always fluctuating, further abstracting the surface and underlying structure. A painstaking order is obviously at work in these movements. This music pushes the traditional limits of perception and yet exhibits strikingly lucid, even candid intentions. Webern's mastery of this language is palpable, but this is hardly a comfort. Webern was primarily concerned with the contours of natural phenomena, which follow a logic separate from the world humanity has created for itself.

The Six Bagatelles require about five minutes to perform. One difference between Op. 9 and Webern's previous quartet, Op. 5, is that the earlier work contains movements built from sections and contrasts -- in that sense, much in the spirit of Haydn. However, the movements of its successor are through-composed, not sectional, and there are no contrasts that require resolution. The level of musical tension is, nonetheless, very high; the work achieves this effect because the material in the first two measures provides ample opportunity to highlight and juxtapose individual musical gestures, and the dramatic envelope is controlled by the density of such activity.

*Berg: LYRIC SUITE*

*Webern: FIVE PIECES FOR STRING QUARTET, Op. 5*

*Webern: SIX BAGATELLES FOR STRING QUARTET, Op. 9*

## JULLIARD STRING QUARTET



Berg's Lyric Suite abounds in secret messages. In purely musical terms, Berg here for the first time employs Schoenberg's 12-tone system, basing some of the third and fifth movements on rows using all 12 notes of the chromatic scale. (And in one row, Berg proudly told Schoenberg, he used not only all available notes, but all available intervals.) Also, the fourth movement carries a quotation from the Lyric Symphony of Zemlinsky, to whom the suite is dedicated. In more personal terms, the music documents the course of Berg's extramarital affair with Hanna Fuchs-Robettin. Not only do the movement titles suggest an all-too-familiar sequence (from jovial through amorous and ecstatic to gloomy and sorrowful), but Berg incorporates his and Fuchs-Robettin's initials into the melodies and ties the metronome markings to numerological associations with their names. The sixth movement's quotation of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* is a clear reference to illicit love.

The first movement, though freely atonal, lives up to its designation of *Allegretto gioviale*; it's a short, perky piece. Things become quieter and more intimate with the sensuous *Andante amoroso*, although the mood is still sometimes rather capricious, despite an elegiac interlude at its center. Intensity builds with the *Allegro misterioso*, which opens with nocturnal insect music, liberally employing *pizzicato* and other effects. This is, effectively, the work's scherzo movement, and at its center is a *Trio estatico* -- still keeping a fairly quick tempo, but now using mostly conventional bowing for longer-lined phrases. The scherzo music reappears, running in reverse to the movement's end.

The fourth movement, *Adagio appassionato*, forms the quartet's emotional center, with something tense and foreboding about much of the music's passion. A thrashing, dissonant climax gives way to a long passage of relative, but not quite settled, repose. The ensuing *Presto delirando-Tenebroso* alternates frantic music with quiet, dark, tense passages. The concluding *Largo desolato* maintains these moods at a much slower tempo, the music gradually dying away.

Anton Webern's *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, Op. 10 require less than five minutes to perform. The movements are not thematically connected, nor do they include traditional formal plans or tonal relationships. What they do contain is probably the most convincing utilization of *Klangfarbenmelodie* (tone-color melody) ever and apply an aphoristic approach to composition for orchestra for the first time.

These pieces are the last orchestral works Webern published before his adoption of the 12-tone method. His Op. 1 *Passacaglia* for Orchestra was post-Brahmsian and his Op. 5 orchestral works were atonal, sectional, and hint at the initial implications of the new musical language. Op. 10 expresses only the raw components of musical sound: notes, intervals, scraps of *ostinato*, rhythms, attack, volume, and tone color. While the Op. 5 was written in brief enough sections and durations to be considered miniatures, Op. 10 does away with the conventions of a traditional orchestral narrative. The result is an aphoristic approach that condenses the sound into one, hyper-expressive text. The result is a spilling over of artistic idea that is undeniable, immediate, and difficult to articulate.

Berg: LYRIC SUITE

Webern: FIVE PIECES FOR STRING QUARTET, Op. 5

Webern: SIX BAGATELLES FOR STRING QUARTET, Op. 9

# JULLIARD STRING QUARTET

## Lyric Suite

1 Allegretto Gioviale 2:54

2 Andante Amoroso 6:00

3 Allegro Misterioso 3:02

4 Adagio Appassionato 6:15

5 Presto Delirando 4:42

6 Largo Desolato 6:13

7 Five Pieces For String Quartet, Op.5 12:48

8 Six Bagatelles For String Quartet, Op.9 4:29

Released by RCA 1961

Engineer - Edwin Begley    Producer - Peter Dellheim



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