

Webern's Five Pieces, Opus 10, are, by contrast, miniatures, like practically all that composer's mature scores. Most movements take less than a minute to play; Number 4 is only one beat longer than six bars, say twenty seconds in all.

Schoenberg wrote of his own works and those of Webern and Berg of this period:

"From the very beginning, such compositions (i.e., in which the dissonance was "emancipated") differed from all preceding music, not only harmonically, but also melodically, thematically, and motivically. But the foremost characteristics of these pieces in statu nascendi were their extreme expressiveness and their extraordinary brevity ... Later, I discovered that our sense of form was right when it forced us to counterbalance extreme emotionality with extraordinary shortness. Thus ... consequences were drawn from an innovation which, like every innovation, destroys while it produces ..."

Webern's Five Pieces owe much to Schoenberg's Six Piano Pieces, Opus 19, but in their instrumental handling, they are entirely Webernian. The orchestra is small: flute, oboe, clarinets in B-flat and E-flat, horn, trumpet, trombone, harmonium, celesta, mandolin, guitar, harp, percussion, and four solo strings. The parceling-out of melodic lines to an assortment of instruments in succession derives from Mahler but is pursued in Webern to an extreme. The five Pieces are a way-station on the road to the Symphony and the Concerto for Nine Instruments, in which more than two or three successive notes are seldom given to the same instrument. The result is not necessarily as disjunct as the description suggests: applied to the Bach Ricercar (Webern's transcription), it does not interfere with the musical continuity of the work, to which it imparts a kaleidoscope colouring. Here, in the Five Pieces, it is an essential part of the conception.

The succession is one of the contrasts. The tenuous wispiqueness of the opening movement is followed by the wide-ranging but tender melody of the second. In its twelve bars, the third piece is a rounded three-part form of minuscule proportions. Number 4, the briefest, is perhaps the most imaginative, with its division of melodic function among the mandolin, the muted trumpet and trombone, and the muted violin, with the faintest hint of support in viola, clarinet and celesta. In the last piece, there are, for the first time, violent juxtapositions of pianissimo and fortissimo, but in the suggestion of recapitulation, the close is hushed.

Working closely together, exploiting the same discoveries at the same time, the Viennese triumvirate nevertheless maintained their individualities. The dissimilarities of these three works are more striking than their resemblances, and it is safe to say that each represents the best musical thinking of its respective composer.

VIENNA 1908-1914

SCHOENBERG
FIVE PIECES FOR
ORCHESTRA, OP.16

WEBERN
FIVE PIECES FOR
ORCHESTRA, OP.10

BERG
THREE PIECES FOR
ORCHESTRA, OP.6

ANTAL DORATI LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



"In music," Schoenberg wrote, "there is no form without logic; there is no logic without unity." The logic and the unity of these three works, comprising thirteen pieces, posed such problems that music listeners have only recently accepted them. Yet they were all written a half-century ago: Schoenberg's in 1909, Webern's in 1913, and Berg's in 1913-1915, shortly after Schoenberg's earliest exploration of what he called "emancipation of the dissonance."

By "emancipation," Schoenberg had reference to the comprehensibility of the dissonance. "A style based in this premise treats dissonances like consonances and renounces a tonal centre." It is not yet a question of "composition with twelve tones" but of abandoning traditional considerations of key, chord, and modulation. Eventually, the binding force of non-tonal music becomes the twelve-tone row, out of which all its melodic, harmonic, and polyphonic materials are to be drawn. But in the meantime, unity remains dependent upon thematic and motivic logic, which largely depends upon rhythmic considerations.

These are preponderantly rhythmic pieces. Of Schoenberg's five, only the third lacks sharply defined rhythmic motives; Berg's three and Webern's five rely upon strong rhythmic devices for much of their effectiveness. From the formal stand point, there is little dependence upon tradition: these are all programmatic, free-form, genre pieces, but free from the shame that nowadays attaches to such an imputation.

Schoenberg's pieces bear the titles: Premonitions, Yesteryears, Summer Morning by a Lake (Colours), Peripetia, and The Obligato Recitative. Berg's is called Prelude, Round Dance, and March. Webern's, too, was to have had descriptive titles, but these were suppressed in the publication.

Schoenberg returned to his Five Pieces after forty years and rescored them to facilitate performance; the original version called for a vastly augmented orchestra - woodwinds in fours, There are six horns, and four trombones, while the 1949 revision requires only the normal large orchestra. There is a relatively little doubling of instruments: this is an orchestra of soloists, and the composer is concerned with individual instrumental colour rather than massive sound.

After a brief introductory section, Premonitions is based upon a steady ostinato motive in eighth notes, overlapping as it moves from section to section of the strings. Above it, the wind instruments have dramatic rhythmic figures, leading to a climatic movement with the ostinato high in violins and violas, *fff*. Yester Years is lyrical and even tender; the imaginative use of celesta, flutes, and bassoon in the central episode is a rare stroke of genius.

In the third movement, Schoenberg arrives at what he was to call Klangfarbenmelodie (tone-color melody) in his

treatise on harmony (1911): there is no real melodic motion, but the one chord out of which the movement is built is in a state of constant flux through its continuous instrumental regeneration. The gentle pulsation of this movement is said to represent dawn on the Traunsee in the Salzkammergut. Schoenberg provides a note on the interpretation:

"It is not the conductor's task . . . to bring into prominence certain parts that seem to him of thematic importance, nor to subdue any apparent inequalities in the combinations of sound. Wherever one part is to be more prominent than the others, it is so orchestrated, and the tone is not to be reduced. On the other hand, (the conductor) must see that each instrument is played with exactly the intensity prescribed - in its own proportion, and not in subordination to the sound as a whole."

Peripetia - which may be translated as "the turning point of dramatic action" - is brilliant and impetuous; its short, vigorous motives have a wide sweep. The Obligato Recitative, lyrical again, is rather like a polyphonic laendler, its melodies unrolling without ever returning to their earlier stages, developing through addition rather than repetition or variation.

Schoenberg dedicated the revised version of his Five Pieces "to the memory of Henri Hinrichsen, a music publisher who was a grand seigneur." Alban Berg's Three Pieces are dedicated to Schoenberg himself as a gesture of appreciation and friendship. They were intended for Schoenberg's fortieth birthday in September 1914, but the second movement was not finished until the following summer. Two movements were performed by Webern in Berlin: in 1923, the first complete performance did not take place until 1930, at Oldenburg, for which occasion Berg made some minor modifications, chiefly in the first trombone part.

The orchestration of Berg's work calls for woodwinds in fours (plus bass clarinet), six horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, numerous percussion instruments, two harps, celesta, and strings; it is thus comparable to the original scoring of Schoenberg's Opus 16. But the sound of the orchestra is peculiarly Belgian; anyone familiar with *Wozzeck* could never mistake it. Berg doubles instruments rather than Schoenberg. He is partial to low sonorities, and it is rare to find his instruments playing in their upper reaches.

The Prelude begins and ends with the percussion ensemble, building to one main climax and subsiding. The Round Dance, like Schoenberg's finale, has the spirit of a laendler in all but its outer sections. The March is in a large sonatina-like form, contrasting with the relatively uncomplicated forms of the first two movements. This is a large-scale work, comparable in some ways to a symphony but lacking symphonic involvement.

Vienna 1908-1914

Antal Dorati - London Symphony Orchestra

Five Pieces For Orchestra, Op. 16

Composed By – Schoenberg

- 1 Vorgefuhle (Premonitions) 1:58
- 2 Vergangenes (Yesteryears) 5:38
- 3 Sommermorgen an einem see
(Summer Morning by a Lake) 3:35
- 4 Peripetie (Peripetia) 2:29
- 5 Das Obligate Rezitativ
(The Obligatory Recitative) 3:20

An Original 35 mm Magnetic Film Recording

Recorded July, 14-22 1962 by Mercury

Recorded At – Watford Town Hall

Engineer [Associate] – Robert Eberenz

Engineer [Chief] – Robert Fine

Recording Supervisor, Producer – Wilma Cozart

Supervised By [Musical Supervisor] – Harold Lawrence

Five Pieces For Orchestra, Op. 10

Composed By – Webern

- 6 Sehr ruhig und zart :35
- 7 Lebhaft und zart beweg! :27
- 8 Sehr Langsam und Ausserst Ruhig 1:35
- 9 Fliegend ausserst zart :27
- 10 Sehr fliegend :51

Three Pieces For Orchestra, Opus 6

Composed By – Berg

- 11 Praeludium (Preludio) 4:22
- 12 Reigen (Round Dance) 5:01
- 13 Marsch (March) 8:51



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