Recompositions by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Webern

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MANY twentieth-century works absorb and modify compositions from earlier periods. The resulting "recompositions" are often works of surprising originality. They paradoxically reflect the characteristic elements of twentieth-century musical structure even as they appear most immersed in the past. The most interesting recompositions involve the imposition of a new, idiomatically post-tonal musical structure onto an intact tonal model. In pieces such as Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, Schoenberg's Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra, and Webern's orchestration of the Ricercare from Bach's *The Musical Offering*, composers create new works by recomposing older ones.

Recomposition is a genre with a long history. In the fifteenth century, the Renaissance concept of *imitatio* found musical expression in various kinds of pieces: arrangements of songs for instruments, the adding of voices to a preexistent piece, the revision of an earlier work, and the structural modeling of one piece upon another.[1] In the later Renaissance, this concept gave rise to the widespread use of parody, most obviously in Masses based upon preexistent polyphonic compositions.[2] More recent examples include, among many others, Bach's arrangements of Vivaldi, Liszt's settings of Beethoven, and Mahler's orchestrations of Schumann's Symphonies.[3] The desire to recompose the works of one's predecessors seems to be almost as old as Western music itself.

[1] Howard M. Brown, "Emulation, Competition, and Homage: Imitation and Theories of Imitation in the Renaissance," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (*JAMS*), XXXV/1 (1982), 1-48.

[2] For a discussion of the evolution of the term "parody" and the range of its application, see Lewis Lockwood, "On 'Parody' as Term and Concept in 16th-century Music," in *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese*, ed. Jan LaRue (New York, 1966), pp. 560-75.

[3] The Mahler works are the least well known of these. See Mosco Carner, "Mahler's Re-scoring of the Schumann Symphonies," in *Major and Minor* (New York, 1980).

In the twentieth century, composers have shown an unusually strong interest in recomposing the works of their predecessors, and their recompositions have taken on unprecedented forms. First, the historical distance between the recomposer and his model has become considerably longer in this century, spanning deep stylistic gulfs. Bach and Vivaldi and, to a lesser but still significant extent, Liszt and Beethoven had a common musical language. This was certainly less true of Stravinsky and Pergolesi or Schoenberg and Handel. As a result, twentieth-century recompositions project a particularly striking stylistic clash; the two layers of such works—the original material and the recomposed elements—remain distinct and easily distinguishable.

Second, a different artistic impulse gives rise to the twentieth-century recompositions. Bach arranged Vivaldi in order to make the older composer's music playable on the organ. In the process, he may have altered it somewhat, but his basically practical intentions limited the extent of the alterations. When Schoenberg arranged a Bach organ piece for large symphony orchestra, his intention was clearly not a practical one. Rather, he was attempting to create a new, autonomous piece with the same artistic integrity as the original. His recomposition did not so much serve the Bach work as transform it.

Third, the relationship between a composer and his predecessors has altered considerably since the eighteenth century.[4] Vivaldi did not play the same dominant role in Bach's musical milieu as Bach played and continues to play in the culture of the twentieth century. Bach had no sense of anxiety with respect to his predecessors; no intimidating godlike figure, enshrined in the canon, loomed over him as an eternal touchstone of artistic value. As the musical canon solidified in the nineteenth century, however, composers became more and more preoccupied with their towering predecessors. A sense of inadequacy and inferiority with respect to the masterworks of the past became a common theme in written accounts by composers of the late nineteenth century (Brahms is the most obvious example).[5]

By the early twentieth century, composers found themselves in a musical culture dominated by figures from the past. As a result, they felt the need,

[4] The theories of the literary critic Harold Bloom are extremely useful for discussing this evolving relationship between a composer and his predecessors. Their influence will be felt, implicitly and explicitly, throughout this essay. His theories are most completely set forth in a tetralogy of works: *The Anxiety of Influence* (Oxford, 1973); *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford, 1975); *Kaballah and Criticism* (New York, 1975); *Poetry and Repression* (New Haven, 1976).

[5] See, for example, Brahms's letter to Fritz Simrock dated Feb. 5, 1870: "Stop putting pressure on your composers; it might prove to be as dangerous as it is generally useless. After all, composing cannot be turned out like spinning or sewing. Some respected fellow workers (Bach, Mozart, Schubert) have pampered the world terribly. But if we can't imitate them in writing beautifully, we should certainly beware of matching their speed in writing. It would also be unjust to put all the blame on idleness alone. Many factors co-operate in making writing harder for my contemporaries, and especially for me." Cited in Karl Geiringer, *Brahms: His Life and Work* (New York, 1982), p. 360.

clearly expressed both in writings and compositions, to come to terms with a past still overwhelmingly alive. In their recompositions, they reinterpreted the past in order to avoid being crushed by it. They attempted to neutralize significant or characteristic works of the past by imposing upon them a new, distinctively twentieth-century musical structure.

This new musical structure is based on a rich network of complex motivic associations, a type of structure characteristic particularly of early twentieth-century music and epitomized by both the "free atonal" and twelve-tone music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. Motivic design was, of course, a rich part of musical construction before the twentieth century. Still, the coherence of common-practice music does not depend crucially upon motivic structure. Rather, it is assured by the relations among the structural levels and the ultimate primacy of the tonic triad; the composing-out is not obliged to follow a motivic path.[6]

Motivic association is thus only a secondary determinant of structure in tonal music. Furthermore, what motivic relations there are always have a tonal function to fulfill. They are dependent upon the tonal relations and constrained by what Milton Babbitt calls "the boundary conditions of tonality."[7] As long as such conditions remained in force, motivic relations remained a secondary and dependent determinant of musical structure. But when these boundary conditions were gradually weakened and removed, during the course of the late nineteenth century, musical structure was free to become more profoundly motivic. The decline of traditional tonal relations and the compensating rise in motivic relations culminated in the musical style of the early twentieth century, one uniquely rich in and dependent upon contextually defined motivic associations.[8]

In the "free atonal" music written by Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg during the second decade of the century, the last vestiges of tonal harmony fell away, leaving the structure resting entirely on a foundation of contextually established motivic associations. Schoenberg disliked the designation "atonal" for this music and preferred to call it "composing with the tones of the motif."[9] In analyses of his own work from this period, Schoenberg emphasizes motivic interconnections. His discussion of the

[6] See Charles Burkhart, "Schenker's 'Motivic Parallelisms,'" *Journal of Music Theory*, XXII/2 (1978), 145-76.

[7] "Review of *Polyphonie. Revue musicale trimestrielle*. Quatrième Cahier: *Le Système dodécaphonique*," *JAMS*, III/3 (Fall, 1950), 264.

[8] Contextuality is a concept most fully developed by Milton Babbitt. See, for example, *Milton Babbitt: Words About Music*, ed. Joseph N. Straus and Stephen Dembski, to be published by the University of Wisconsin Press.

[9] Jan Maegaard, "A Study in the Chronology of Op. 23-26 by Arnold Schoenberg," *Dansk Aarbog for Musikforskning*, 111; cited by Milton Babbitt, "Since Schoenberg," *Perspectives of New Music*, XII (1973-74), 3.

Four Orchestral Songs, Opus 22, traces the motivic minor second and major second and their use in conjunction to form a "fixed motivic unit" which is "varied and developed in manifold ways."[10] He states:

In these songs I am in the preliminary stages of a procedure which is essentially different both from the Italians and from Wagner. I am myself not yet quite able to say how far this may apply to my most recent works. At any rate, I am aware that it is mainly a concern with the art of variation, which allows for a motif to be a constant basis while, at the same time, doing justice to the subtlest nuance in the text.[11]

When Berg and Webern praise the early work of Schoenberg, they praise above all its coherence with respect to its themes and motives.

Like the consciousness of his sense of form, Schoenberg's art of thematic writing is immensely enhanced in Op. 7. It is marvellous to observe how Schoenberg creates an accompaniment figure from a motivic particle, how he introduces themes, how he brings about interconnections between the principal sections. And everything is thematic! There is, one can say, not a single note in this work that does not have a thematic basis. This is unparalleled.[12]

But these first ten bars and their varied repeats represent a very, very small fraction of the work [Schoenberg's Op. 7], which lasts about an hour. They can only give a hint of an idea of the harmonic, polyphonic and contrapuntal occurrences (in an excess unheard of since Bach) that flourish so luxuriantly in the thousands of bars of this music. One can assert this without being guilty of any exaggeration: Every smallest turn of phrase, even accompanimental figuration is significant for the melodic development of the four voices and their constantly changing rhythm—is, to put it in one word, thematic.[13]

Partially in deference to comments such as these, a number of theorists have begun to reject the negative label "atonal" for this music and instead refer to it as "motivic" music.[14] This designation also applies, although in a modified way, to twelve-tone music generally and to the most characteristic works by Stravinsky and Bartók as well.[15] Our best analytical tool

[10] "Analyses of the Four Orchestral Songs Opus 22," trans. Claudio Spies, *Perspectives of New Music*, III/2 (1965), 7.

[11] Schoenberg, "Analyses of Four Orchestral Songs," p. 17.

[12] Anton Webern, "Schoenberg's Musik," in *Arnold Schoenberg* (Munich, 1912). Portions reprinted in "Schoenberg, Berg, Webern: The String Quartets: Documentary Study," ed. Ursula v. Rauchhaupt, liner notes for DGG 2713 006, p. 16.

[13] Alban Berg, "Why is Schoenberg's Music So Difficult to Understand?," from the special issue of *Musikblätter des Anbruch* honoring Schoenberg on his fiftieth birthday, Sept. 13, 1924. Reprinted in Willi Reich, *Alban Berg*, trans. Cornelius Cardew (New York, 1963), p. 199.

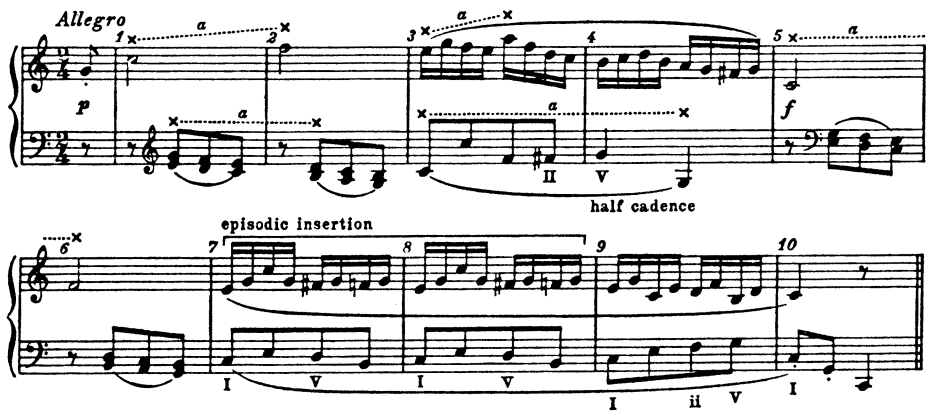
[14] See, for example, William Benjamin, "Ideas of Order in Motivic Music," *Music Theory Spectrum*, I (1979), 23-34; Benjamin Boretz, *Meta-Variations: Studies in the Foundations of Musical Thought* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1970).

[15] Most recent studies of Stravinsky and Bartók have understood this, particularly those which use set theory as a significant analytical tool. See, for example, Allen Forte, *The Harmonic Organization of the Rite of Spring* (New Haven, 1978).

for this entire repertory—pitch-class set theory—reflects a motivic orientation. Set theory was developed by Milton Babbitt, David Lewin, and, especially, Allen Forte precisely to deal with the dense associational web of this music. It offers a way of identifying and systematically relating structures regardless of their size and of the way in which they are presented in the music. It also involves generalizing and extending the traditional concept of motive. Set theory views an ordered, pitch-specific pattern (the traditional idea of a motive) as one of many possible representations of an unordered pitch-class set. In this more general sense, pitch-class set analysis *is* motivic analysis. A set-theory analysis shows that the coherence of a pitch structure derives from its use of a small number of closely related harmonic-melodic ideas.

A preoccupation with motivic relations in their own music has led many twentieth-century composers to emphasize that element in the music of their predecessors. In published studies, Schoenberg and Berg in particular looked in earlier music for the same kinds of complex motivic relations that they described and composed in their own works. Their analyses seem to assert that earlier composers are most interesting and valuable precisely where they anticipate the structural concerns of the twentieth century. Schoenberg's analysis of a Mozart Piano Sonata is typical of many (see Ex. 1).[16]

Ex. 1. Schoenberg's analysis of Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 279, third movement.



[16] *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* (New York, 1967), p. 38.

Schoenberg's analysis shows the passage to be saturated with a motivic fourth. In this way, he depicts Mozart an an essentially motivic composer whose music, like Schoenberg's own, is based upon the relations and associations arising from a *Grundgestalt*.

Similarly, Berg's analysis of Schumann's "Träumerei" attempts to demonstrate the beauty of the piece by showing its motivic richness and coherence.

> The beauty of this melody does not actually lie so much in the large number of motivic ideas, but in the three other characteristic features of beautiful melodies. Namely: the exceptional pregnancy of the individual motifs; their profuse relations with one another; and the manifold applications of the given motivic material.[17]

Schoenberg's statement about the relative weight of tonal and motivic relations in musical structure reflects a widely shared attitude among his contemporaries.

> I am rather inclined to believe that one may sooner sacrifice logic and unity in the harmony than in the thematic substance, in the motives, in the thought-content. . . . It is difficult to conceive that a piece of music has meaning unless there is meaning in the motive and thematic presentation of these ideas. On the other hand a piece whose harmony is not unified, but which develops its motive and thematic material logically, should, to a certain degree, have intelligent meaning.[18]

Inevitably, Schoenberg's ideas about musical coherence are strongly reflected in his recompositions of Bach, Handel, Brahms, and Monn. Like his analyses, Schoenberg's recompositions are his attempt to make his predecessors appear to be motivic composers like himself. In fact, all of the recompositions discussed in this essay involve, in some degree, the "motivicization" of an earlier composition. In this way, common-practice pieces are reshaped in the direction of post-tonal concerns. And while the idea of increasing motivic content by means of orchestration is not unique to the twentieth century—see, for example, Bach's transcriptions of Vivaldi —the intensity, variety, and pervasiveness of motivic transformations in the recompositions of Schoenberg, Webern, and Stravinsky discussed here distinguish them from earlier examples.

Schoenberg

Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra (First Movement: Introduction)

Schoenberg's Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra is an orchestration and recomposition of the Concerto Grosso, Opus 6, No. 7, by Handel.

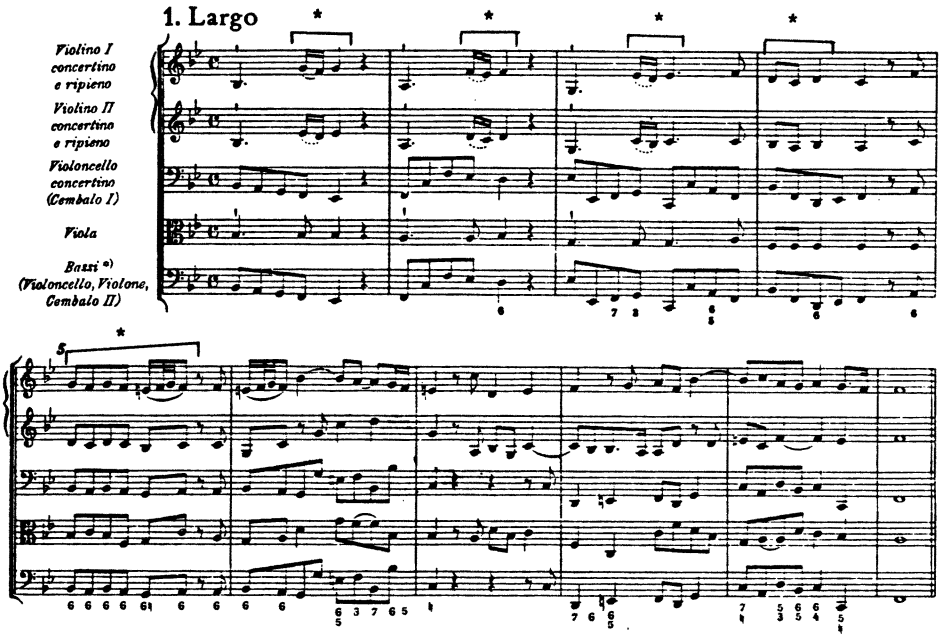
[17] "The Musical Impotence of Hans Pfitzner's 'New Aesthetic,'" *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, Vienna, second year, No. 11-12, June, 1920; reprinted in Willi Reich, *Alban Berg*, p. 210.

[18] "Problems of Harmony," trans. Adolph Weiss, in *Modern Music*, XI (1934); reprinted in *Perspectives of New Music*, XI (1973), 3-23.

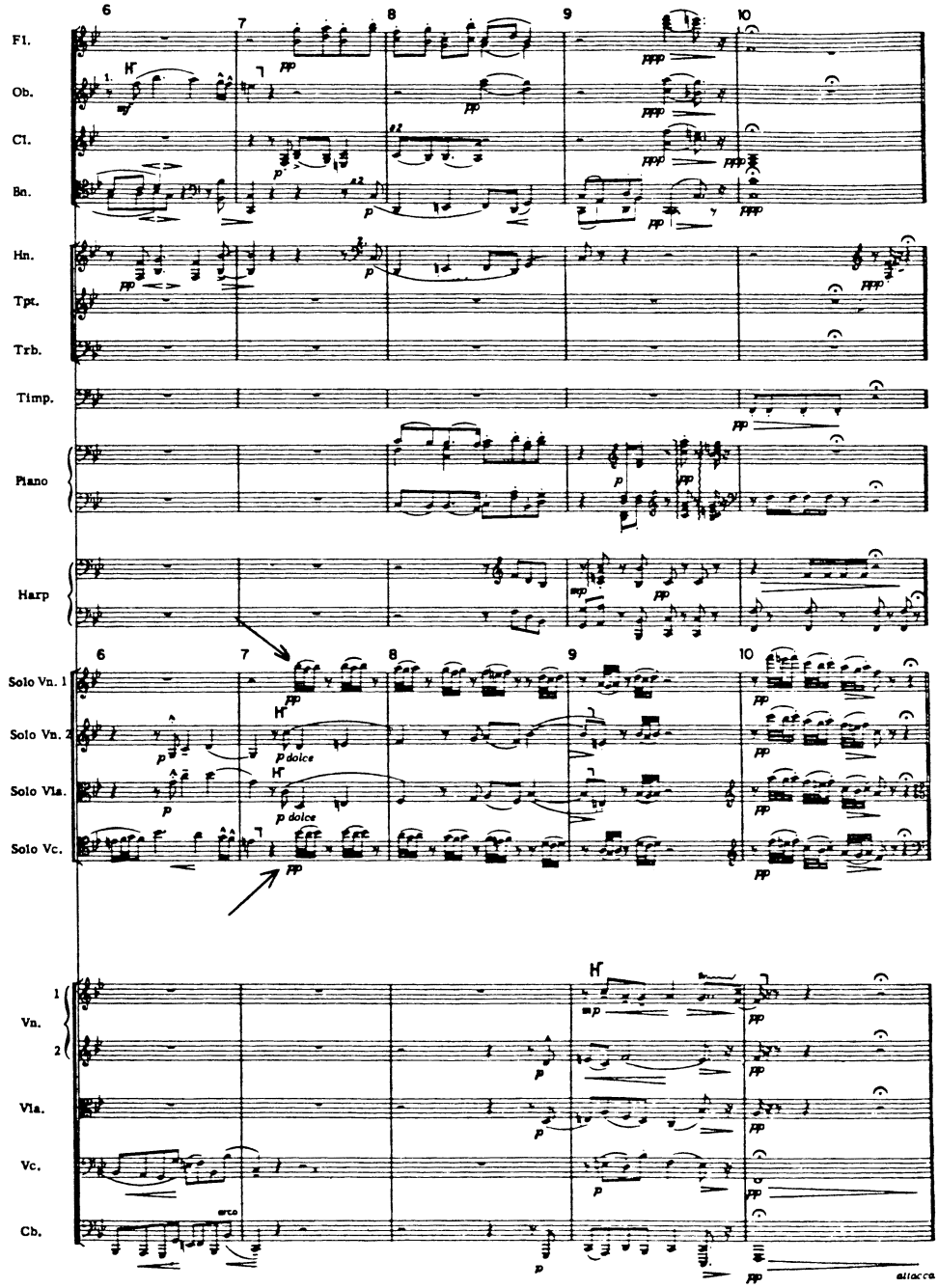
The last three movements are really fantasias on material derived from the Handel work, but the first movement is a recomposition and corresponds almost measure for measure with the Handel. Example 2 contains the slow introduction to the first movement both in Handel's original and Schoenberg's recomposition of measures 6-10.

Schoenberg has taken the relatively spare Handel composition and projected it onto the rich canvas of the modern symphony orchestra. The profusion of orchestral colors fragments the lines into small timbral units, undermining the forward propulsion of the harmonic progression. At the same time, however, Schoenberg's recomposition of this movement does more than simply display a rich array of orchestral colors: its primary purpose seems to be the enhancement of motivic structure. The recurring motive of the neighbor note in the Handel is indicated with asterisks in Example 2a. Schoenberg reflects this motive through striking orchestration in measure 3 (not shown in the example) where the motive is timbrally isolated. Even more important, Schoenberg actually adds neighbor figures of his own in the solo string quartet. His additions are marked with an arrow in Example 2b. The effect is to saturate these measures with this motive.

Ex. 2a. Handel, Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 7 (introduction to first movement).



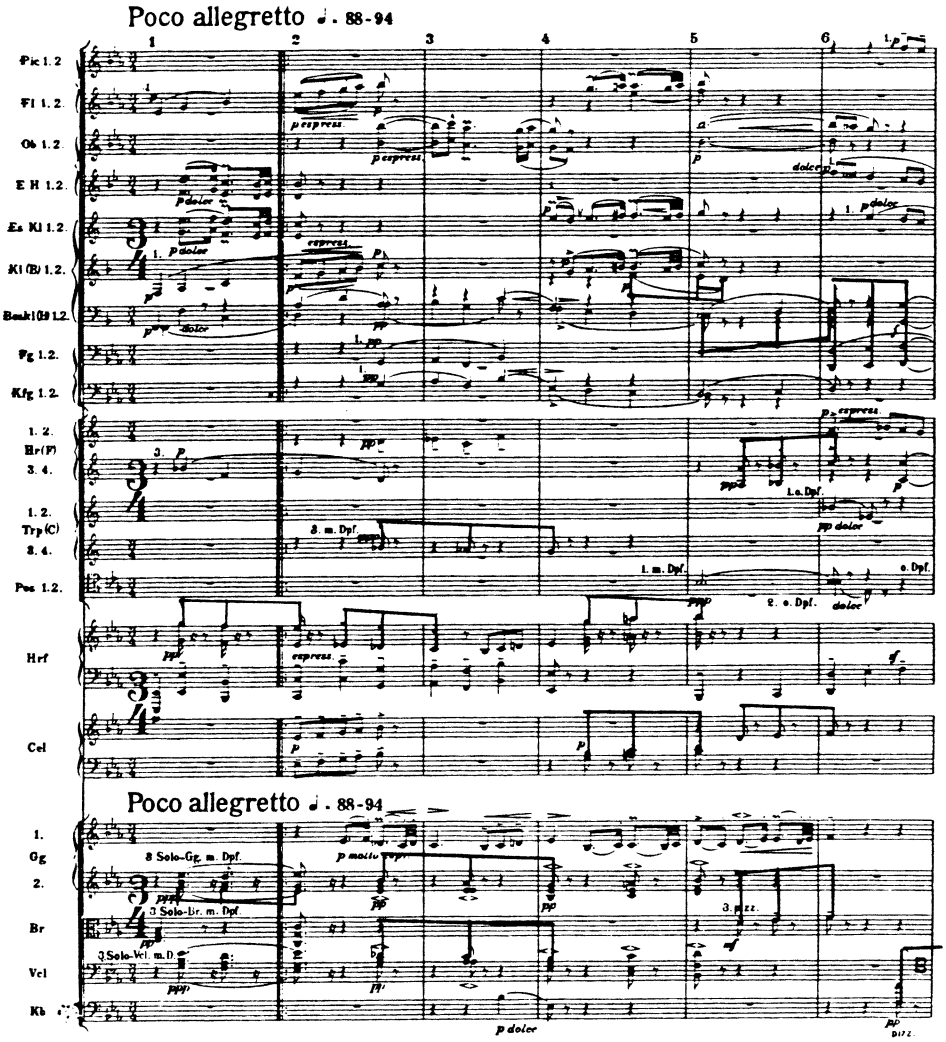
Ex. 2b. Schoenberg, Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra (introduction to first movement, mm. 6-10).



Orchestration of Bach, Chorale Prelude, "Schmücke dich"

Apparently motivic saturation was also Schoenberg's goal in his orchestration of the Bach Chorale Prelude, "Schmücke dich" (BWV 654). Here Schoenberg reveals in the Bach, and to some extent imposes upon it, a musical coherence based upon the motive of a third. The first six measures, for example, are rich in timbrally isolated third progressions, as Example 3 shows.

Ex. 3. Motivic thirds in Schoenberg's orchestration of Bach, Chorale Prelude (BWV 654), mm. 1-6.



Most of the thirds isolated by Schoenberg would be recognized by any traditional analysis of the Bach. In some instances, however, Schoenberg isolates a third which had no structural integrity in the Bach as, for example, in the first cello part in measures 2-4. In such cases, Schoenberg is not so much revealing the motivic structure of the Bach as imposing a motivic structure upon it, reflecting his own compositional interest in motivic richness. Perhaps the most extreme example of motivicization via instrumentation in "Schmücke dich" is Schoenberg's use of the glockenspiel. This instrument plays its only three notes of the entire piece in measures 78 and 79, where it states the structural descending third of the opening theme.

In addition to instrumentation, Schoenberg employs articulation, register, and even added notes to reinforce the motivic third. For the most part, he adds notes only for the sake of instrumental doubling or filling out the harmony. But the few melodic fragments he does add always have motivic significance. The lines played by the piccolo in measures 57-58 and 59-60 and by the horn in measure 65—none of which are contained in the Bach—all involve descending thirds. Frequently, Schoenberg uses phrasing marks to break up and articulate what was, in Bach, an undifferentiated flow of eighth notes. Often, as in measures 7-9 and 19-21, the articulation reflects the motivic third. Manipulation of register also plays a role in the projection of the motive: in the final measures of the piece, the flute and piccolo transfer what was originally an inner part into the highest register in order to present a concluding descent from B♭ to G.[19]

Through instrumentation, register transfer, articulation, and an occasional added melodic fragment, Schoenberg has made the Bach into a paradigm of the kind of motivic coherence so central to his own compositional process. Schoenberg claims that he learned motivic saturation from Bach: "From Bach I learned . . . the art of developing everything from one basic germ-motif and leading smoothly from one figure to another."[20] This remark, I believe, oversimplifies a complex situation. One would be equally justified in concluding that Schoenberg did not so much learn motivic structure from Bach as forcibly impose it onto Bach through analyses and recompositions. Bach the Motivic Composer is Schoenberg's useful fiction, his saving myth which permits him to see Bach as a reflection and justification of his own work rather than as a dominating,

[19] My discussion of articulation and register here is based on observations made by Claudio Spies in "The Organ Supplanted: A Case for Differentiations," *Perspectives of New Music*, XI/2 (1973), 24-55. This article also contains perceptive discussions of the other Schoenberg orchestrations of Bach: "Komm, Gott" and the Prelude and Fugue in E♭ major.

[20] "National Music," reprinted in Josef Rufer, *The Works of Arnold Schoenberg*, trans. Dika Newlin (New York, 1962), p. 147. For a slightly different translation of the passage, see Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (Berkeley, 1984), p. 173.

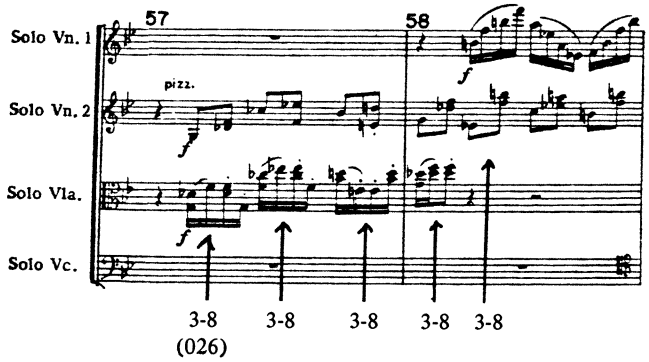
intimidating, and ultimately stultifying teacher. I do not mean to suggest that Schoenberg is in any way dishonest in doing this or that his conception of Bach is not a profoundly illuminating one. I simply wish to suggest that his analyses and recompositions of Bach serve his own artistic purposes.

All of Schoenberg's recompositions (and those of Webern and Stravinsky as well) involve the motivic enrichment of an earlier piece. The new network of motivic relations may, however, vary considerably in complexity. In "Schmücke dich" and the introduction to the first movement of the Concerto for String Quartet, the motivic structures are quite simple—a descending third and a neighbor note respectively. In other recompositions, however, the motivic structures are considerably more complex and require some rudimentary nomenclature from the set theory for clarification. The fugal section of the first movement of the Handel-Schoenberg Concerto for String Quartet is such a case.

Concerto for String Quartet (First Movement: Fugal Section)

In Schoenberg's Concerto for String Quartet, the contrast between Handel's original pitch structure and Schoenberg's additions to it is essential to the dramatic plan of the work. In general, as in the introduction to the first movement (discussed above), the solo string quartet introduces new elements. In the fugal portion of the movement, the quartet periodically interpolates material that is foreign both to Handel and the eighteenth century in general. As the fugue progresses, the solo parts and their more "advanced" writing gradually assert themselves. Example 4 contains one of Schoenberg's interpolations (mm. 57-58).

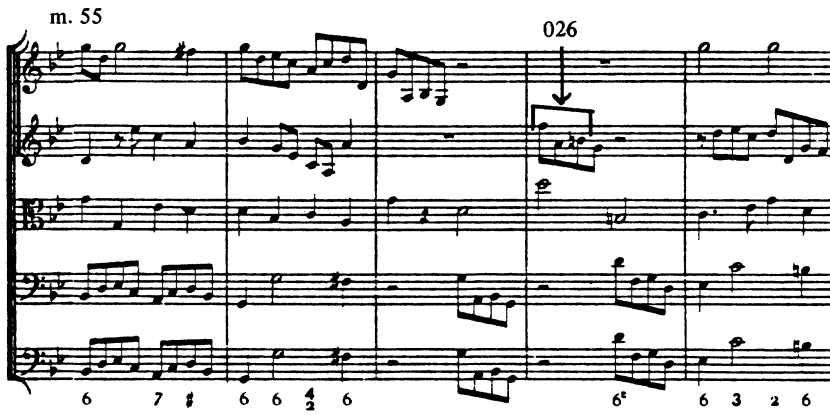
Ex. 4. One of Schoenberg's interpolations.



In this passage, the string parts make systematic use of a single trichord (026; Forte-name 3-8).[21] Clearly differentiated from the accompanying parts, the solo quartet music is made coherent by the motivic development of this small cell of notes.

But where did Schoenberg get the idea for this particular trichord? Is its selection arbitrary or does it have some explicit connection to the tonal context in which it occurs? As Example 5 shows, the same trichord is used by Handel in a melodic figure which pervades the fugal episodes.

Ex. 5. The trichord 026 in Handel, Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 7.



In traditional tonal theory, this figure would be an incomplete dominant seventh chord, not an 026. Schoenberg, however, evidently does hear it as an 026. This figure is sounding in the woodwinds at the moment when the strings state the interpolation shown in Example 5. That is, Handel's 026 sounds in the horns while Schoenberg's 026's are developed in the strings.

There are thus three types of pitch relations operating in this passage. First, there are the relationships of Handel's original relationships defined by functional harmony and tonal voice-leading. Second, there are the motivic relations within Schoenberg's interpolation, independent of traditional tonal procedures. Third, there is a profound connection between

[21] In this essay, I will refer to pitch-class sets by both their prime form and their Forte-name. The prime form of a set is, simply, a concise statement of its intervallic structure using semitonal integer notation. The set 026, for example, contains pitch-classes two and six semitones above or below a given pitch class. The Forte-name of a set refers to its location in Allen Forte's list of sets provided in *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven, 1973). Set 3-8 is the eighth set on Forte's list of three-note sets.

these two networks of relations springing from their mutual use of the trichord 026. Not only does Schoenberg introduce a new layer of musical relations based on motivic manipulation, but the source of these relations is to be found in the original work. The presence of the new motivic layer thus forces us to rehear the original layer a new way, in terms of the non-traditional motivic structures it contains.

Stravinsky

Pulcinella

The view of Stravinsky and Schoenberg as antithetical, so prevalent among commentators during the earlier part of this century, diminished rapidly after Stravinsky adopted the serial approach, and has diminished further as our understanding of his preserial music has deepened. Stravinsky's recompositions, which are generally considered the epitome of his neoclassicism and thus of his dissimilarity to the progressive Schoenberg, reveal a Schoenbergian concern with motivic structure. Like Schoenberg, Stravinsky motivicizes as he recomposes.

Most accounts of Stravinsky's recompositions, by the composer himself and others, have tended to emphasize his love for his source pieces. This emphasis, however, has obscured the more profound process whereby Stravinsky engages in an aggressive struggle with his source pieces. This struggle frequently involves the radical reinterpretation of the pitch structure of his model and reveals not admiration so much as self-aggrandizement.

This ambivalence is perfectly captured by Stravinsky's remarks about the music used for *Pulcinella* in which his claim of love for it is couched in metaphors of force, penetration, and possession:

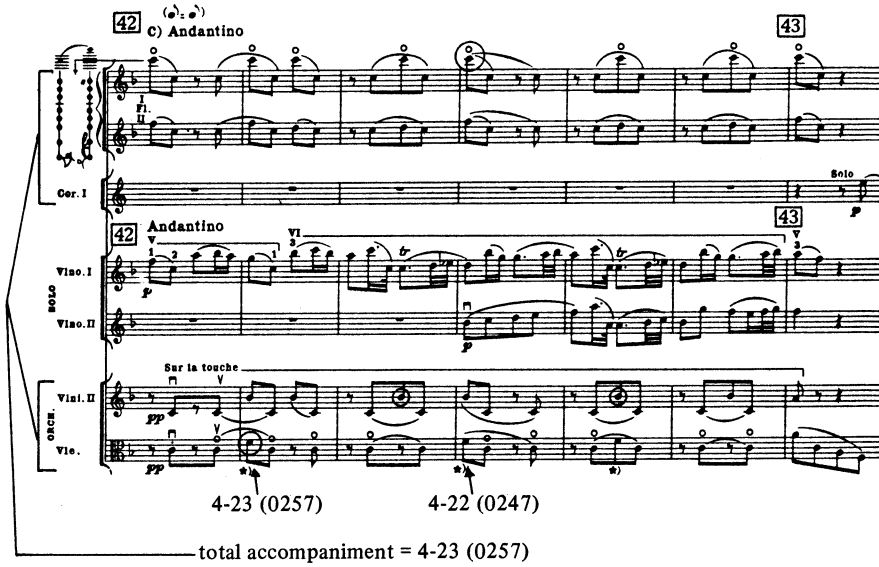
> Should my line of action with regard to Pergolesi be dominated by my love or by my respect for his music? Is it love or respect that urges us to possess a woman? Is it not by love alone that we succeed in penetrating to the very essence of a being? But, does love diminish respect? Respect alone remains barren, and can never be seen as a productive or creative factor. In order to create there must be a dynamic force, and what force is more potent than love?[22]

Stravinsky's love is thus not a generous one, but one which involves asserting his power over the love object. As with Schoenberg's treatment of Bach and Handel, Stravinsky's "possession" of the eighteenth-century source pieces of *Pulcinella* involves the radical revision of their pitch structure through motivicization. In much of *Pulcinella* the original scores (by Pergolesi and others) are either left substantially intact or are altered by

[22] *An Autobiography* (New York, 1962), p. 81.

rhythmic or timbral means. In certain movements, however, Stravinsky has added a significant number of "wrong notes." There are never so many of them as to obscure the underlying functional harmony; the original is always easy to discern beneath the surface. At the same time, the wrong notes are added in such a consistent fashion that a new source of unification emerges superimposed on the old one. By adding these wrong notes to the original, Stravinsky creates a small number of new, nontriadic harmonies which he uses throughout the entire suite. In the music of the Andantino section at rehearsal number 42, for example, Stravinsky adds a few pitches (circled in Ex. 6) which are neither in the original (the Trio Sonata No. 8 by Gallo) nor indicated by the figured bass.

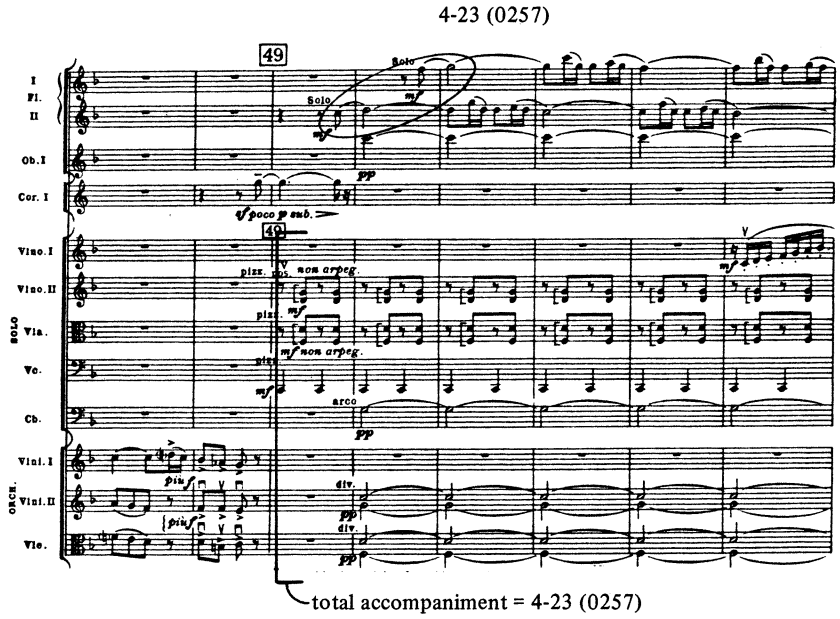
Ex. 6. Motivic tetrachords in *Pulcinella*.



The added pitches generally form either of two tetrachords (0247; Forte-name 4-22 or 0257; Forte-name 4-23) which would be unlikely to occur as verticalities in a normal tonal context. In addition, the accompaniment as a whole forms 0247 (Forte-name 4-22). These two sets are used systematically here and throughout the section to impart a new level of motivic association. In *Pulcinella* these sets are formed by taking away and/or adding notes to a triadic original, and it is easy enough to

hear these sets as deformed or altered triads. At the same time, however, these sets are absolutely characteristic of Stravinsky, virtual signature sonorities which occur in a rich variety of contexts throughout his oeuvre.[23] Their usage in the Andantino movement of *Pulcinella* culminates in the music at rehearsal number 49, shown in Example 7:

Ex. 7. A motivic tetrachord in *Pulcinella* (Andantino).



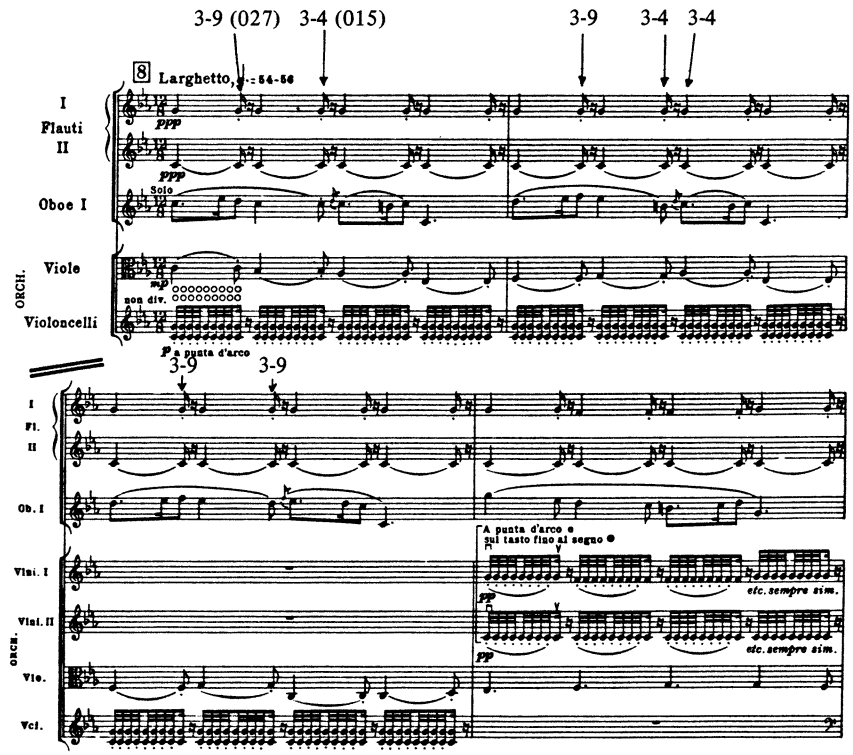
The entire accompaniment in this passage consists of four notes, forming set 0257 (Forte-name 4-23). Why did Stravinsky choose this particular set in this context? I believe the imitative entrances of the principal melody in the flutes hold the answer. As Example 7 shows, the first two notes of the melody and the first two notes of its imitation, taken together, form the same set type, 0257. Stravinsky takes elements of his source piece which would not normally be considered a separable musical idea and subjects them to motivic transformations. A typically nontonal pitch organization, derived from elements in the source piece, is thus imposed

[23] Some instances are: the motto for *Zvesdoliki*, throughout the first scene of *Orpheus*, the second of the *Three Shakespeare Songs*, *Anthem* (a twelve-tone work which has 4-22 as a linear subset of the row), and *Agon* (final chord of the "Pas de Quatre"). The most celebrated usage of 0257 is in the opening of the first tableau of *Petrouchka*.

upon the source piece. The result, achieved through the most economical means, is a radical transformation.

In the Serenata movement from *Pulcinella*, Stravinsky's alterations of his original (an aria from *Il flaminio* by Pergolesi) are subtle and not very numerous. Still, as in the Andantino, they have the effect of superimposing a new dimension of musical organization upon the old one. The traditional tonal relations remain intact, but they now operate side by side with an organization based on recurring pitch-class sets. The first phrase of the movement is shown in Example 8:

Ex. 8. Motivic trichords in *Pulcinella.*



In this passage, the oboe and violas duplicate the upper voice and bass line from Pergolesi's original. The remaining parts, Stravinsky's addition to the passage, consist simply of reiterated C's and G's. As a stylistic gesture, the addition of this ostinato already represents a significant transformation

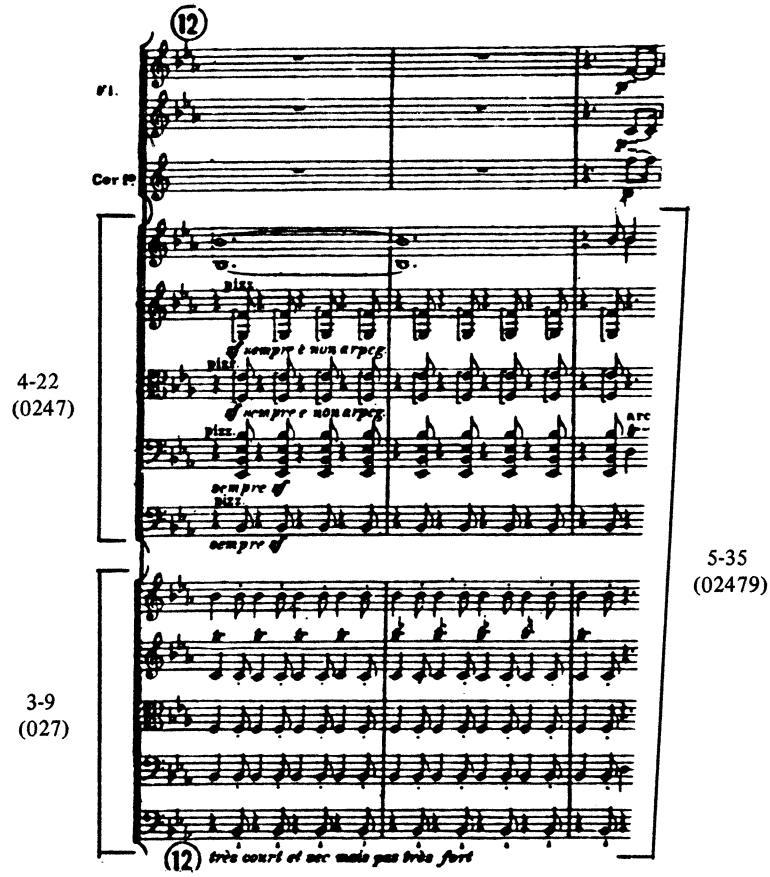
of the passage and a characteristic Stravinskyan touch. But the transformation of the passage has a more profound dimension as well. Specifically, the interaction of Stravinsky's ostinato with Pergolesi's melody and bass line creates nontriadic harmonies, and not in a random fashion, but in a way which lends consistency and coherence to the music. Consider, for example, the harmony formed on the third beat of the first measure: C, G, and A♭ (015; Forte-name 3-4). Needless to say, this is not a triad and was not part of the original music. Now consider the harmony formed at the end of the second beat of the second measure: C, G, and B. This is an inverted form of the trichord from the previous measure. In fact, it is followed, on beat three of the second measure, by a repeat of the original trichord. In this way Stravinsky has set up an aural link between the two measures, unifying them through the association of nontraditional motivic units.

A similar association is created through a second trichord (027; Forte-name 3-9). The occurrences of this trichord (both in its original and inverted forms) are also indicated in Example 8. Interestingly, the first occurrence of this chord (at the end of the first beat of the first measure) is found in the Pergolesi work, a by-product of an accented passing note within the tonic harmony. Stravinsky, however, exploits the sonority in a much more systematic way.

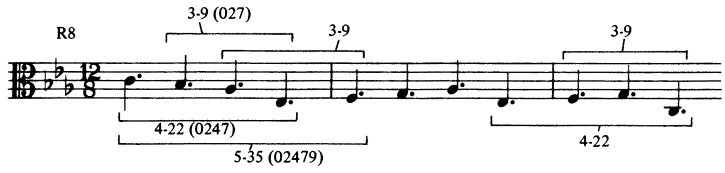
The most striking passage in this movement occurs in a cadence at its midpoint (see Ex. 9). In its timbre, rhythm, and feeling of stasis, these measures are the most overtly Stravinskyan of the movement. The five notes sounding here (C, E♭, F, G, and B♭) form a pentachord (02357; Forte-name 5-35) which is a superset of most of the other important nontonal harmonies of the movement. A closer look at this cadence shows that the total pentachord is partitioned into two smaller sets, clearly articulated by instrumentation and rhythm. The *concertino* parts have set 4-22 (a set used also in the Andantino movement; see Ex. 7) and the *ripieno* have a motivic trichord (027; Forte-name 3-9). Both of these sets play an important role in shaping this movement; the occurrences of 3-9 in the opening measures have already been discussed. This cadence thus represents a harmonic summary of some of the most important nontonal materials used up to this point.

As in the Andantino, the motivic sets used by Stravinsky are clearly derived from elements in Pergolesi's original. Example 10 contains Pergolesi's bass line for the first few measures. As the example shows, many of the sets we have been discussing, particularly those found in the cadence at rehearsal number 12 (see Ex. 9), are linear subsets of the bass line from the first few measures. The sets are thus stated horizontally at the beginning and vertically elsewhere, the kind of multidimensional presentation

Ex. 9. Motivic harmonies at a cadence point in *Pulcinella*.



Ex. 10. Stravinsky's motives as subsets of Pergolesi's bass line.



that is characteristic of post-tonal works. Obviously, Pergolesi and his contemporaries would not have conceived a musical line in these terms. Yet it seems that Stravinsky did conceive it in this way and, through his subsequent rewriting, leads us to conceive it that way also.

As Schoenberg depicted Bach and Handel as proto-Schoenbergs, Stravinsky has turned his eighteenth-century models into prototypical Stravinskys. Perhaps this is what he meant when he called *Pulcinella* "a look in the mirror."

> *Pulcinella* was my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible. It was a backward look, of course—the first of many love affairs in that direction—but it was a look in the mirror, too.[24]

Stravinsky thus chooses to see himself not only as the progeny of past masters but as the creator of himself and his past. When he looks at earlier composers, he insists upon seeing a reflection of himself.

Of course, all traces of the original work are not effaced by the procedures of recomposition. The struggle for priority between Schoenberg, Webern, Stravinsky and their predecessors is waged continually on the pages of their recompositions. Their procedure might be summarized as follows: (1) take a well-crafted piece of traditional music; (2) identify in this source piece certain sonorities or motivic structures that might lend themselves to subsequent transformation; (3) recompose the original piece in such a way as to produce these sonorities, or their transpositions or inversions, throughout the music.

This results in a composition with two layers of structure, one based on traditional tonal relations and one based on recurring motivic structures or pitch-class sets. The tonal layer influences the motivic layer by providing material for it. At the same time, the presence of the motivic layer results in a reinterpretation of the tonal layer, and traditional formations come to be heard in a novel way.

Orchestration of Bach, *Canonic Variations* on *Vom Himmel hoch*

Bach's *Canonic Variations* on *Vom Himmel hoch* ranks with *The Musical Offering* as a demonstration of his canonic craft. By contrast (and with some notable exceptions), Stravinsky did not generally make extensive use of contrapuntal devices. Yet, in his recomposition of the *Canonic Variations*, his most significant alterations involve the addition of contrapuntal

[24] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (New York, 1962), p. 113.

lines to an already rich fabric. Stravinsky undertook this recomposition during his last, serial period and, without question, his interest in Bach's canonic procedures is related to his serial concerns. He must certainly have recognized the affinity of Bach's contrapuntal procedures and Schoenberg's serial transformations. In Babbitt's words:

> His interruption of the composition of *Canticum Sacrum* to transcribe that cornerstone of canonic writing, Bach's *Chorale Variations*, can thus be understood in the light of his conception of the canon as a traditional manifestation of serialism.[25]

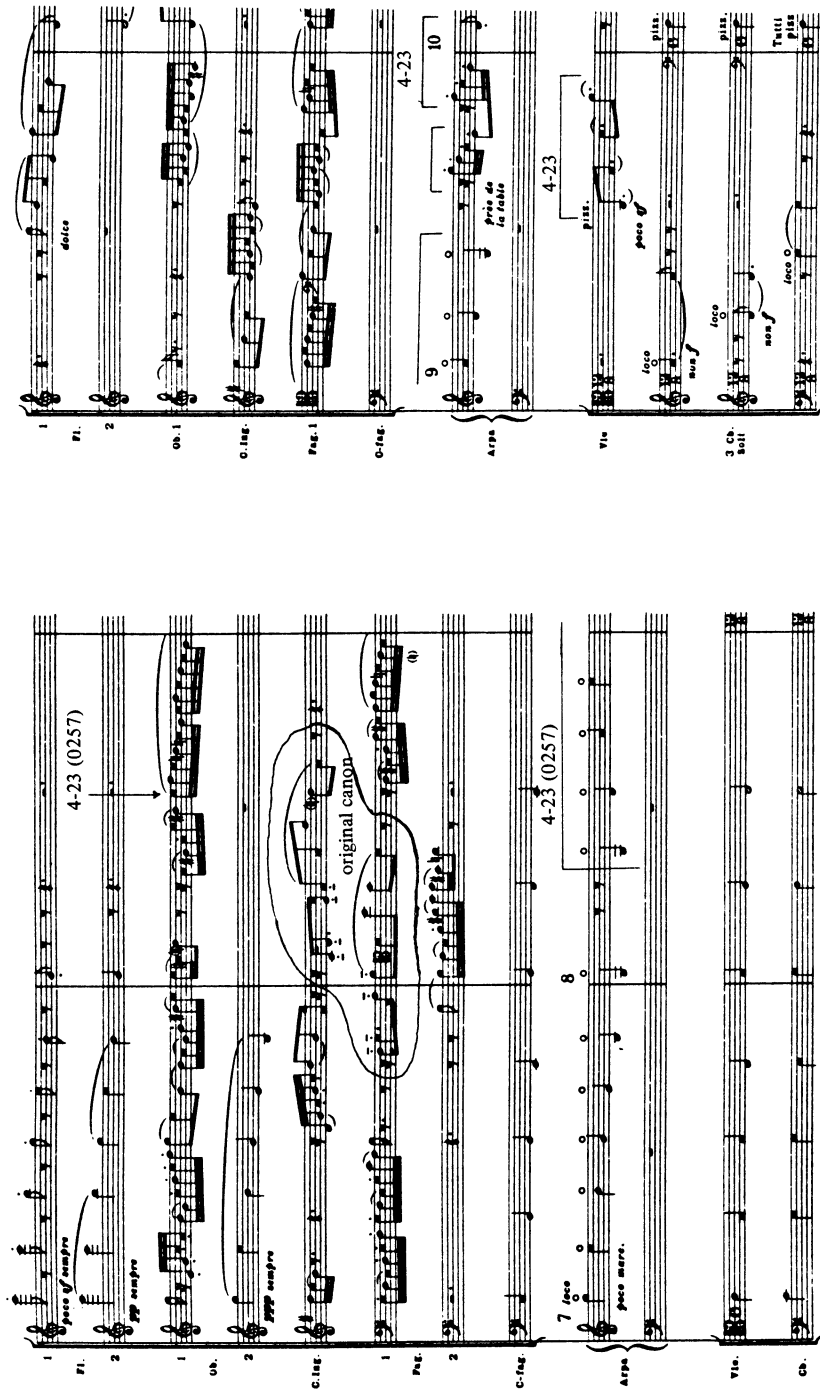
In addition to the implicit relationship of canon to serialism, Stravinsky's later works include many explicit contrapuntal and canonic devices. Stravinsky thus confronted in his later works not only the contrapuntal tradition epitomized by Bach but also the more recent generation of predecessors, the classical twelve-tone composers.

Example 11 shows measures 7-10 of the first variation with Stravinsky's most significant additions marked. His first substantive alteration is to impose, in the middle of the texture (bassoon and English horn), a brief original canon. This gives way to imitative development of a four-note figure, the pitch content of which is familiar as one of the tetrachords from *Pulcinella* (0257; Forte-name 4-23). Furthermore, the harmony formed vertically at the beginning of this passage (m. 8, beat 3) is the same set-type. Within Bach's contrapuntal structure, Stravinsky has thus embedded his own network of musical relations, using the norms of Bach's technique –inversion, augmentation, diminution–but based on a characteristically Stravinskyan four-note fragment.

Contrapuntal material added by Stravinsky is particularly prominent in the third variation. The passage from measures 10 to 14 is shown in Example 12. On the lowest staff is the canon at the seventh written by Bach to accompany the chorale melody, shown as the upper voice of the middle staff. The top voice of the upper staff contains a florid part also written by Bach. To these preexisting four parts, Stravinsky added two more. On the middle staff, he added a line in the trombone which imitates the chorale melody a seventh below. On the upper staff, he added a line which imitates the highest part a seventh below. Then, in the second half of measure 12, Bach's original melody moves to the oboe and, a ninth above it, the flutes imitate it in augmentation. The result is a triple canon with each of the *comes* a seventh or a ninth away from its respective *dux*.

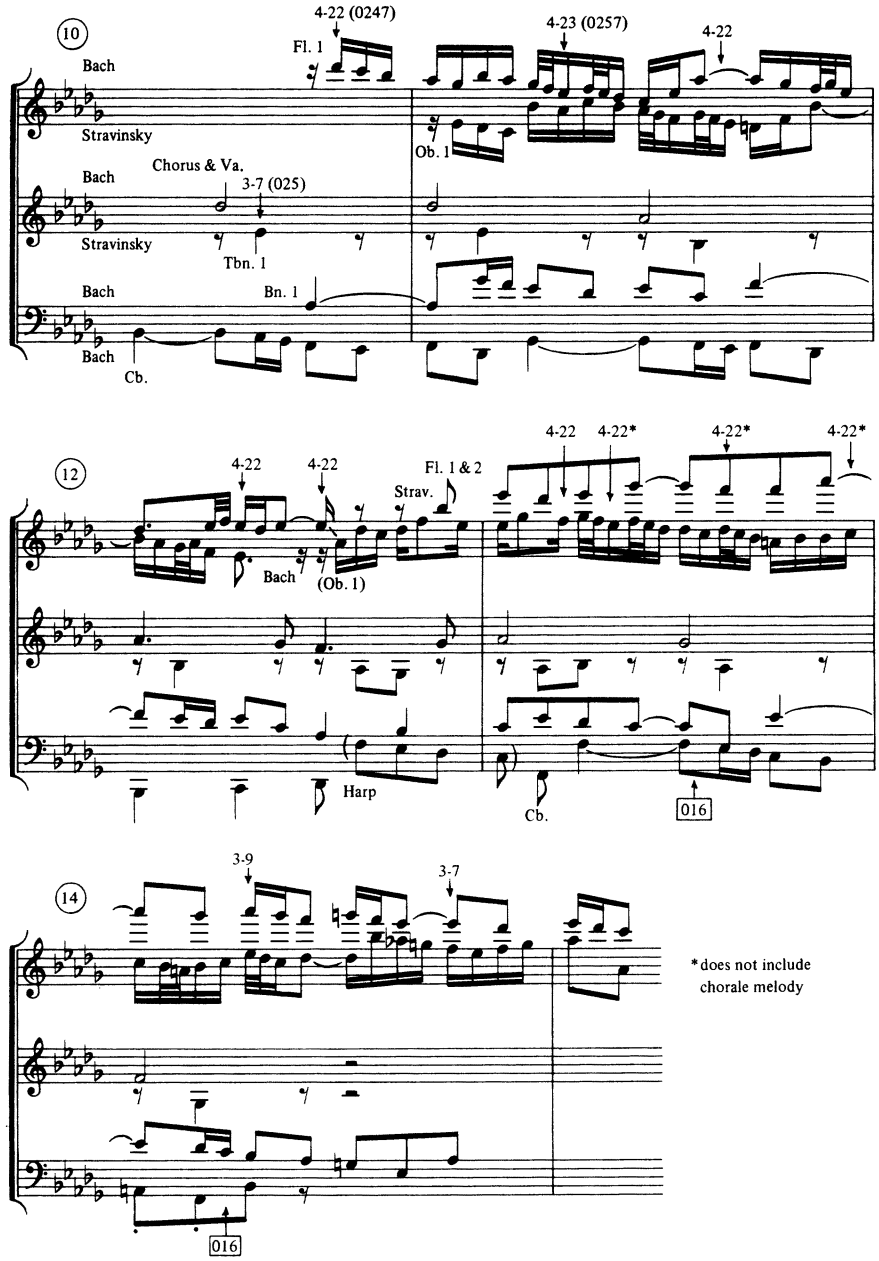
In a sense, Stravinsky has simply tried to surpass Bach's technical achievement with one even more ingenious. Of course, Stravinsky's added lines do not conform to the prevailing harmonic logic of Bach's original.

[25] "Remarks on the Recent Stravinsky," *Perspectives of New Music*, II/2 (1964), 49.



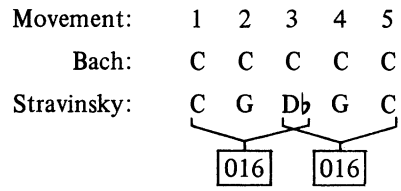
Ex. 11. Stravinsky's recomposition of Bach, *Canonic Variations* (Variation 1, mm. 7-10).

Ex. 12. Stravinsky's recomposition of Bach, *Canonic Variations* (Var. 3, mm. 10-14).



The departures from normal triadic harmony are striking and persistent. It would be trivial to add canonic lines to any contrapuntal piece or, indeed, to write any kind of canon, by disregarding the ways in which the lines interact. However, this is not what Stravinsky has done. The harmonies formed by the lines are no longer triadic, but instead consistently create a small number of nontriadic sets, particularly the tetrachords 4-22 (0247) and 4-23 (0257) and their subsets 3-7 (025) and 3-9 (027), which are the principal motives from *Pulcinella* as well. In this sense, the lines are regulated to each other, but on Stravinsky's terms, not Bach's. Even the final chord of this variation (not in the example) bears Stravinsky's stamp: it is also a form of 4-22.

In addition to adding contrapuntal lines to Bach, Stravinsky also transposes the middle movements away from the tonic, C. The key schemes of the Bach and Stravinsky versions compare as follows:



Stravinsky has created a symmetrical layout with D♭ at the center. The reason for this arrangement, as for so many of Stravinsky's alterations, has to do with increasing motivic content. Stravinsky's layout consists of two overlapping statements of 016. At the exact midpoint of the entire piece (mm. 13 and 14 of the middle movement), the point of the particularly intensive contrapuntal treatment discussed above, this motive occurs as a vertical sonority, as indicated in Example 12. The first of the occurrences (in m. 13) results from an event virtually unique in the piece—the alteration by Stravinsky of a note written by Bach. Here, the bassoon (bass clef, upper line) should have a B♭, not a tied C, on the third beat of measure 13. The changed note creates a vertical statement of 016, repeating at the midpoint of the piece its large-scale harmonic plan.

Stravinsky's recomposition of Bach's *Canonic Variations* is symptomatic of his increasing preoccupation, late in his life, with the mainstream of the German tradition in music. His last published piece was a recomposition of two songs by Hugo Wolf, and virtually the last piece he worked on was a setting of selected preludes and fugues from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Recomposition was for Stravinsky, as for Schoenberg, a way of coming to terms with his predecessors. For most of his life, however, Stravinsky avoided a direct confrontation with the German mainstream, preferring instead to focus on less important, more susceptible predecessors like Pergolesi

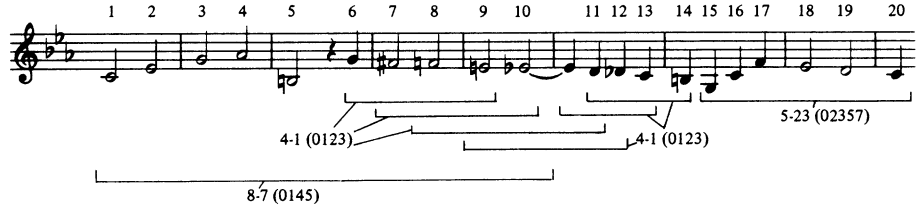
and Tchaikovsky. Through them, he could comment on common-practice styles without dealing directly with the true giants of those styles. His turn to serialism, however, marks a new willingness to enter into direct dialogue with the inheritors of the German tradition and, through them, with their great contrapuntal predecessors, especially Bach. Stravinsky's turn toward serialism and his late recompositions of Bach and Wolf thus have a common source. In both, he confronts the German mainstream and, in both, shows remarkable ability to remake his predecessors in his own image.

Webern

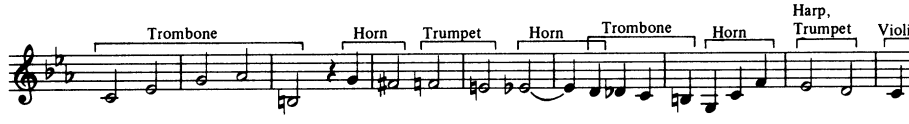
Orchestration of Bach's *The Musical Offering* (Ricercare)

Webern's orchestration of the Ricercare from Bach's *The Musical Offering* is at once the most radical and the most economical of recompositions. In discussions of his orchestration of the subject of the Ricercare, most commentators have contented themselves with observing that it radically fragments Bach's melody.[26] But why does Webern fragment it in this particular way? More specifically, why does he assign certain pitches to certain instruments? To answer these questions, let us begin by considering the subject as a kind of tone series. Example 13a shows the subject with an ordinal number assigned to each pitch based on its position in the series. In addition, a certain number of pitch-class sets, formed by adjacent elements in the series, have been identified.

Ex. 13a. Bach's melody.



Ex. 13b. Webern's instrumentation.



[26] One serious attempt to understand the motivic nature of Webern's orchestration is in Carl Dahlhaus, "Analytische Instrumentation: Bachs sechsstimmiges Ricercar in der Orchestrierung Anton Weberns," *Bach Interpretationen, für Walter Blankenburg 65th Geburtstag* (Göttingen, 1969).

Ex. 13c. The set structure of Bach's melody revealed by Webern's instrumentation.

Instrument	*Order Positions*	*Pitch Content*	*Set Name*	*Location of Same Set-Type Directly in Subject*
trumpet	8, 9, 18, 19	F, E, E♭, D	4-1 (0123)	6-9, 7-10, 8-11, 9-12, 10-13, 11-14
horn	10, 11, 15, 16, 17	E♭, D, G, C, F	5-23 (02357)	15-20
horn	6, 7, 10, 11	G, F♯, E♭, D	4-7 (0145)	1-10 (complement)

Let us carefully compare the instrumentation (shown in Ex. 13b) with the sets identified here. The trumpet, for example, is assigned four notes (F, E, E♭, and D) occupying order positions 8-9 and 18-19. These four notes constitute a chromatic tetrachord (0123; Forte-name 4-1) which is formed in many places by adjacent notes of the subject. For a less obvious example of the same procedure, consider the last five notes played by the horn (E♭, D, G, C, and F) occupying order positions 10-11 and 15-17. These five notes create a form of the same set type (02357; Forte-name 5-23) as that found in order positions 15-20. Finally, the first four notes assigned to the horn create a tetrachord (0145; Forte-name 4-7) which is the nonliteral complement of the set formed by the first eight pitches of the subject. These facts are summarized in Example 13c.

Webern has used timbre to associate noncontiguous pitches in the subject. He has fragmented the line not arbitrarily but in order to saturate the fugue subject with characteristically Webernian motivic structures and relations.[27] He has thus imposed a post-tonal set structure onto Bach's tonal pitch organization without, remarkably, altering a note of Bach.

Given this network of motivic associations, Webern's own comments on this piece seem understated if not actually misleading:

My instrumentation attempts to reveal the motivic coherence. This was not always easy. Beyond that, of course, it is supposed to indicate the character of the piece as I feel it. What music it is! To make it accessible at long last, by trying through my orchestration to express my view on it, was the ultimate object of my bold undertaking.[28]

[27] This means of organization is remarkably similar to that of Schoenberg in his twelve-tone pieces. There, as Martha Hyde has shown ("The Roots of Form in Schoenberg's Sketches," *Journal of Music Theory*, XXIV/1 [1980], 1-36), nonadjacent pitches of the row are frequently associated musically (by register, instrumentation, or other means) to create set-types which can also be found as segmented subsets of the row.

[28] Letter to Hermann Scherchen, Jan. 1, 1938, cited in Hans and Rosaleen Moldenhauer, *Anton von Webern: A Chronicle of His Life and Work* (New York, 1979), p. 442.

Like Schoenberg, Webern says that his orchestration merely "reveals" relationships already present in Bach. Instead, as we have seen, the process is not nearly as neutral and passive as this makes it sound. In one sense, of course, the relationships Webern "reveals" are present in Bach, if deeply latent, since Webern does not actually add or change any notes. At the same time, the relationships discussed above are much more characteristic of Webern's pitch organization than of Bach's. Webern thus attempts to define Bach as a prototypical Webern rather than seeing himself as the weak descendent of Bach.

Webern's remarks on his orchestration of dances by Schubert come much closer to capturing this attempted reversal of priority, even though his recomposition of Schubert is much less radical than his recomposition of Bach. As he says in a letter to Schoenberg:

> I took pains to remain on the solid ground of classical ideas of instrumentation, yet to place them into the service of *our* idea, i.e. as a means toward the greatest possible clarification of thought and context.[29]

This clearly describes the sense in which an earlier composer, Schubert or Bach, is made to serve "our idea" of motivic richness.

Despite the professed beliefs of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Webern, and others, the orchestration or recomposition of an earlier composer's work need not be exclusively or primarily an homage. Bach is the towering genius of the contrapuntal art and everyone who comes after him is his artistic child. The strongest of the children, however, may not be content with this subordinate relationship. By rehearing and recomposing Bach, his children create the illusion of having fathered their father. In listening to the *Canonic Variations*, "Schmücke dich," or the Ricercare from *The Musical Offering* in Bach's original, one still hears those 0247's, those motivic thirds, those timbrally defined associations. Bach now sounds to us as though he is imitating Stravinsky, Schoenberg, or Webern, and attempting to project the motivic richness so characteristic of them.[30]

Conclusion

Despite the obvious stylistic differences among the composers discussed here and despite the span of years involved—from *Pulcinella* in 1919, through the Bach recompositions by Schoenberg and Webern from the

[29] Letter to Arnold Schoenberg, June 17, 1931, cited in Moldenhauer, *Webern*, p. 440.

[30] Harold Bloom, in *Anxiety of Influence*, refers to this reversal as an "apophrades," which means "the return of the dead." In such situations, Bloom says "the uncanny effect is that the new poem's achievement makes it seem to us, not as though the precursor were writing it, but as though the later poet himself had written the precursor's characteristic work" (p. 15). The effect is that "the tyranny of time is almost overthrown, and one can believe, for startled moments, that [the later poets] are being imitated by their ancestors" (p. 141).

twenties and thirties, up to Stravinsky's *Canonic Variations* in 1956–there are striking and profound similarities among these recompositions. The similarities involve their treatment of the source piece, the type of musical organization each attempts to impose on it, and, in a more general sense, their evident relationships to their predecessors. First, each composer attempts to subvert his source piece by forcing the listener to rehear the original in a new way, a way dictated by the recomposer. Through shifts of timbre, Webern forces us to hear in Bach's melody motivic units that we never would have heard otherwise. In *Pulcinella*, Stravinsky makes a pre-Classical bass line sound like a repository of pitch-class sets. In these ways, recomposers prevent their models from speaking with their customary voices. In recomposition, a composer takes a familiar object from the shared world of our inherited musical culture and, by altering it and presenting it in a new context, forces us to hear it in a new way. In the process, the composer attacks our normal, customary ways of apprehending these familiar objects.

More precisely, the early twentieth-century recomposer forces us to rehear older pieces in a certain way: as a network of motivic associations. The motivic structures may be quite simple–a single interval in the case of Schoenberg's "Schmücke dich"–or quite complex, involving sets of four or more pitch classes and relatively complicated manipulations. Of course, the imposition of a new source of musical coherence does not eradicate the old one. Each recomposition is stratified into two distinct layers–one governed by traditional tonal relations and one by the logic of recurring motives (or pitch-class sets). In most cases, the motivic structures are derived from elements in the source piece. The sets which Stravinsky creates by adding notes in *Pulcinella*, or which Webern isolates by timbre, the interval which Schoenberg dramatizes through orchestration–all are to be found in the source piece, although often in unexpected places.

Regardless of the source of the new structures, however, these recompositions remain the scene of a struggle between styles, between types of pitch organization, and, ultimately, between composers. I have emphasized this sense of struggle in order to counteract the traditional view, fostered by the composers themselves, that these recompositions were undertaken in the spirit of homage, the generous recognition by one master of the greatness of an earlier master. The internal evidence of the pieces, on the contrary, suggests a vigorous and self-aggrandizing struggle on the part of the later composer to assert his priority over his predecessor, to prove himself the stronger.

The great works of the past continue to dominate the musical life of this century. In this situation, it is not surprising that composers should feel it necessary to struggle with their predecessors in order to clear creative

space for themselves. A large body of music in this century can be fruitfully understood in terms of its relationship to the musical canon of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[31] Recompositions by major modern composers are of particular interest since here the struggle with the past is an explicit, central issue. Nor do these recompositions achieve a resolution of the struggle. In each piece, the contrasting styles and structures are locked in conflict. The power of these pieces resides not so much in their integration of competing elements into an organic whole as in the very intensity of the conflict they embody.

[31] A recent and significant attempt to do just this is Peter Burkholder's "Museum Pieces," *Journal of Musicology*, II (1983), 115-34.