Schoenberg's Private Program for the String Quartet in D Minor, Op. 7
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Schoenberg's Private Program for the String Quartet in D Minor, Op. 7

MARK BENSON

In the Preface to his 1943 textbook, *Models for Beginners in Composition,* Arnold Schoenberg gave the following advice to prospective composers.

> . . . a student should never write mere dry notes. At all times he should try to "express something." Marking tempo and character by such terms as *cantabile, agitato, con spirito, grazioso, playful, gay, vivace, grave,* etc., he may find that his imagination has been stimulated to make him produce pieces of a definite character such as a song, an agitated allegro, a witty scherzo, a graceful gavotte, or even a nocturne or a rhapsody of vague, unidentifiable mood. Very early a student can thus write with more spontaneity, which need not exclude conscious application of his technical knowledge.[1]

Although this passage was written to inspire students with little or no experience in composition, recent research has shown that Schoenberg followed his own advice throughout most of his career. Indeed, he often went beyond marking the tempo and character of his themes to the point of writing detailed programmatic scenarios, and even poetry. Programs of Schoenberg's device aided the genesis of works as diverse in style as the Second Chamber Symphony, Op. 38, the Suite, Op. 29, the Piano Concerto, Op. 42, and the String Trio, Op. 45.[2]

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[1] Arnold Schoenberg, *Models for Beginners in Composition,* revised ed. with corrections, ed. by Leonard Stein ([Los Angeles]: Belmont, 1972), p. 4.

[2] Walter B. Bailey has documented these and many more such examples drawn from every stage of Schoenberg's career in his *Programmatic Elements in the Works of Schoenberg,* Studies in Musicology, No. 74 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984).

The sheer number of programs for apparently "abstract" instrumental works is surprising, particularly because Schoenberg declared in 1949 that he had stopped writing explicit program music after the composition of the symphonic poem *Pelleas und Melisande* in 1903. Nevertheless, Schoenberg had formed his compositional technique in the 1890s and 1900s by writing Lieder and instrumental program music. His first six published works include the Lieder, Opp. 1–3 and Op. 6, *Verklärte Nacht,* Op. 4, and *Pelleas,* Op. 5. These works, and also most of the unfinished pieces up to the year 1903, all rely to some degree on verbal texts.

The String Quartet in D Minor, Op. 7, was the first instrumental work Schoenberg completed after *Pelleas und Melisande.* He began work on the quartet in March 1904, but did not finish it until 26 September 1905, over a year and a half later. This lengthy genesis is atypical for Schoenberg, who generally composed rapidly. But work on the quartet was interrupted many times, for Schoenberg was extremely busy with activities other than composition.

In the fall of 1904, he accepted his first group of private composition students, a group that included both Alban Berg and Anton von Webern. The Vereinigung Schaffender Tonkünstler (Society of Creative Musicians) was formed at the end of the same year, and although Gustav Mahler was its honorary president, Schoenberg and Alexander von Zemlinsky were the principal organizers of the Society's first (and only) concert season in 1904–05. In addition, Schoenberg's precarious financial situation at that time made it necessary for him to make keyboard arrangements for Universal Edition. Nevertheless, Schoenberg was able to compose a great deal of music in 1904 and 1905 despite these many demands on his time. In addition to the D Minor String Quartet, most of the *Orchesterlieder,* Op. 8, were composed in those years. Hence Schoenberg's difficulties with Opus 7 were not merely practical, but artistic as well.

In the "Notes on the Four String Quartets," written in 1949 as program notes, he explained the most significant reason for the quartet's long gestation.

> I abandoned program-music [after *Pelleas und Melisande*] and turned in a direction that was much more my own than all the preceding. It was the First String Quartet, Op. 7, in which I combined all the achievements of my time (including my own) such as: the construction of extremely large forms; greatly expanded melodies based on a richly moving harmony and new chord progressions; and a contrapuntal technique that solved problems offered by superimposed, individual parts which moved freely in more remote regions of a tonality and met frequently in vagrant harmonies.

> In accommodation to the faith of the time, this large form was to include all four characters of the sonata type in one, single, uninterrupted movement. Durchführungen (developments) should not be missing and there should be a degree of thematic unity between the contrasting sections.[3]

From the start, the quartet was to be Schoenberg's most ambitious composition, a compendium of advanced compositional practice in the first years of the twentieth century.

Schoenberg remained proud of his Opus 7 throughout his life, and he cited it frequently in the retrospective essays he wrote in the 1930s and 40s. Yet he also recognized its shortcomings, for in the essay "A Self-Analysis" (1948), Schoenberg admitted a defect in the structure of the quartet: ". . . my First String Quartet, Op. 7, which I dislike as little as any of my earlier works, is of an unusual length—a great obstacle to the recognition of whatever beauty may be found therein."[4] The D-Minor Quartet is, in fact, the longest instrumental composition Schoenberg ever wrote. It takes between forty-five and fifty minutes to play, making it slightly longer than *Pelleas und Melisande*.

Table 1 presents an analytical overview of the formal plan of the quartet. Its main headings are based on Schoenberg's 1949 program notes.[5] As Schoenberg explains, the quartet is in one movement, but it includes sections in the style of the four standard movement-types of the Classical instrumental sonata. These sections provide contrast on the local level, but they are integrated into a single, large sonata design. The themes of the component sections are related thematically by means of a sophisticated network of transformations.

Certainly, the elaborate formal and thematic ideas contribute much to the quartet's length. But in 1940, Schoenberg hinted at another, more intriguing reason for this length. Dika Newlin, then a student in Schoenberg's advanced composition class at UCLA, recorded the following exchange in her diary entry for 6 March 1940.

> He said some of the extravagances of the form were because the piece was really a sort of "symphonic poem," and when [Leonard] Stein pressed him as to whether there was a definite program to it or

[3] Quoted in Ursula v. Rauchhaupt, *Schoenberg-Berg-Webern: The String Quartets: A Documentary Study*, trans. by Eugene Hartzell (Hamburg: Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft, 1971), p. 36.

[4] Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, ed. by Leonard Stein, with translations by Leo Black (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), p. 78.

[5] Schoenberg also provided an analytical diagram in program notes written in 1906. The main outlines of the form are not significantly different from the 1949 notes. See Rauchhaupt, *The String Quartets*, pp. 11–33.

TABLE 1

Formal Synopsis of Schoenberg's Op. 7

Measure	Function	Key	Line number in program
	Exposition of Principal group (P)	d minor	1
1	Theme a		
14	Theme b		
24	Theme c		
65	Varied reprise of Theme a in d minor		
85	Liquidation and transition		
A-1	Transition (fugato)		
	Exposition of Second Group (S)	E-flat major	
A-56	Theme a		2
A-71	Theme b		3
A-82	Themes a + b in counterpoint		4
A-92	Theme a	E-flat, modulating	
B-1	First Development section		6
C-1	Brief reprise of themes from P and S		9
	Scherzo movement ("Neues Leben fühlend")		10
E-1	Scherzo	G-flat major	11
F-44	Trio		
G-34	Scherzo reprise, and	c♯ minor,	12
	Second development section	modulating	14
1–38	Recapitulation of principal group	d minor	15
1–71	Liquidation and Grand pause		16
	Slow movement		
K-1	Theme a	a minor	
K-52	Theme b	E major	
L-1	Themes a + b in counterpoint	f minor	
L-18	Theme b	E major, stable	
L-52	Recapitulation of Second Group	B-flat major	
	Rondo finale		
M-1	A	A major	
M-29	B	E major	
M-48	A′	A major	
N-1	C + development		
N-68	A + B (recapitulation)	A major	
N-81	Liquidation		
O-1	Coda	D major	21?

> not, he replied promptly, "Oh yes, very definite—but private!" After that he whispered a few words to Stein, and while I didn't catch all he said, I understood him to reproach Stein for having asked such a question, and to say, "One does not tell such things any more!"[6]

Schoenberg's abrupt termination of the discussion apparently discouraged any further questions on the matter, and despite many opportunities to reveal the nature of the program—such as the 1949 program notes cited above—Schoenberg maintained silence on the matter for the rest of his life.

It is little wonder then, that when Joseph Rufer and Jan Maegaard prepared their catalogs of Schoenberg's works, they both passed over a one-page text glued to the back cover of Schoenberg's 1904–05 Sketchbook.[7] This text is the program for Opus 7, written in Schoenberg's own hand. Christian Martin Schmidt was the first to identify this document, and he has published both a brief commentary on the program,[8] and a diplomatic transcription of the document in Volume 20B of Schoenberg's *Sämtliche Werke*.[9] My translation of the program is given in Table 2.

The program appears to be Schoenberg's own invention, but its subject—anxiety over a love relationship—is a common one in German literature of the early twentieth century. Indeed, poetry on similar subjects inspired *Verklärte Nacht* and many of Schoenberg's early Lieder. Before I discuss the content of the program further, I will review the reasons for assigning it to the D-Minor Quartet. I will then present evidence for dating the program and assess its role in the compositional process of Opus 7.

The simple fact that the program is located in Schoenberg's 1904–05 sketchbook is evidence for relating it to the quartet. This sketchbook, also known as Sketchbook I, contains the first ideas for the piece, and over half its pages, including twenty-three of the last

[6] Dika Newlin, *Arnold Schoenberg Remembered* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1980), p. 193.

[7] The sketchbook is called *Sk* 04-05 in Jan Maegaard, *Studien zur Entwicklung des dodekaphonen Satzes bei Arnold Schönberg*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1972), vol. 1, pp. 20–21; and Sketchbook I in Joseph Rufer, *The Works of Arnold Schoenberg*, trans. by Dika Newlin (New York: Free Press of Glencoe Press, 1963), p. 126. The pages of this sketchbook bear the archive numbers Sk1-Sk61 in the Arnold Schoenberg Institute.

[8] Christian Martin Schmidt, "Schönbergs *very definite—but private* Programm zum Streichquartette Opus 7," in *Bericht über den 2. Kongreß der Internationalen Schönberg-Gesellschaft: Die Wiener Schule in der Musikgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Publikationen der Internationalen Schönberg-Gesellschaft, Bd. 2, hrsg. von Rudolf Stefan und Sigrid Wiesmann (Wien: Elisabeth Lafite, 1986), pp. 233–34.

[9] Arnold Schoenberg, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 20B, ed Christian Martin Schmidt (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne; Vienna: Universal Edition, 1986), p. 110.

TABLE 2

The Program for Opus 7

Line			
1	I.1)	a)	Revolt, Defiance; b) Longing; c) Rapture.
2	2)	a)	Dejection, Despair; Fear of being engulfed; unaccustomed feelings of love, desire to be wholly *absorbed.*
3		b)	Comfort, Relief (She and He)
4		c)	New outbreak: Dejection, Despair; and
5		d	Transition to
6	3)		Struggle of all the motives with the determination to begin a new life
7			[lines 7–8 are blank in the document]
8			
9		e	Mild disagreement
10	II.1)		"Feeling new life"
11		a)	Aggressively joyful strength, fantasy development, animation.
12		b)	New love: tenderness, surrender, rapture, understanding, supreme sensual intoxication (Repeat part of II 1.a)
13	2.	a)	Disappointment, (hangover), (brief).
14	3.	a)	Return to dejected moods, despair, transition
15		to	b) The return of the first mood, I. 1/a
16			c Transition to gentler tones
17	III.1.	a)	Increasing yearning for abandoned loved ones, transition to despair over the pain it has caused them.
18		b)	Onset of sleep. A *dream image* shows the abandoned ones, each mourning in his own way for that distant one,
19			thinking of him, hoping for his return.
20		c)	Transition to the decision to return home; increasing yearning for peace and rest
21		d)	Homecoming; joyful reception, quiet joy and the entrance of rest and harmony

thirty, contain sketches and drafts for the quartet. More explicit evidence for the link can be found within the sketchbook. Above the first sketches for the scherzo theme on page 31 (Sk32) Schoenberg wrote: "Streichquartett, II. [Teil]/Neues Leben fühlend" (String Quartet, Part 2: "Feeling new life"). This heading corresponds exactly to the title of Part II of the program (Table 2, line 10).[10]

[10] The line numbers for the text are in the left-hand column. Schmidt's numbering continues through a space in the text after line 6. There is nothing in this gap in the

Additional evidence can be found in the text of the program. Most explicit are the indications for the two development sections, one before and one after the "Neues Leben fühlend" scherzo (lines 6 and 15 in Table 2). The locations of these development sections correspond to the ones indicated at measures B-1 and G-34 in Table 1. There can be no doubt, therefore, that this program refers to the Opus 7 quartet.

Schmidt has suggested that the program was one of the earliest ideas for the quartet.[11] But it can be considered "early" only in relation to the piece's nineteen-month gestation. The program was not part of the original inspiration for the quartet. The following chronology will show that the program was not written until at least four and a half months after Schoenberg began to compose the music. This is a crucial factor for understanding the role of the program in the compositional process.

Schoenberg constructed Sketchbook I, the first of his large sketchbooks, in early March 1904.[12] At that time, he was working on a different string quartet in D minor. This unfinished quartet is known as the "D-Minor Fragment."[13] Schoenberg had drafted sizable portions of both a fugue and a scherzo for this quartet, but had so far been unable to complete either movement. On the first page of his new sketchbook, he worked on several variations of the fugue theme for his quartet. On page 4 of the sketchbook, he wrote down his first ideas for the opening theme of Opus 7.

At the same time, Schoenberg was working on the *Orchesterlieder,* Op. 8, and sketches and drafts for these songs alternate with sketches for both the D-Minor Fragment and Opus 7 in the first forty-one pages of the sketchbook. A chronology for the early stages of Opus 7 can be established by collating the quartet sketches with the completion dates in the manuscripts for the songs of Opus 8 (see Table 3).[14]

Schoenberg completed the orchestral score of *Natur,* Op. 8, no. 1, on 7 March 1904, most likely before he began using the new sketchbook. Sketches for *Das Wappenschild,* the second song of the cycle, appear on pages 2–4 of the new sketchbook, and the first draft of this song was completed on 9 April 1904. Since the first sketches for Opus

document, but in size, the space is roughly equal to two lines of Schoenberg's handwriting. Thus the text resumes in line 9. I have corrected Schmidt's letter heading in this line to read e instead of c.

[11] Schmidt, "Schoenbergs *very definite—but private* Programm," p. 231.

[12] Page 1 (Sk 2) of the sketchbook bears this date in Schoenberg's hand.

[13] Identified as Str.qu.04Fr (fugue only) in Maegaard, *Studien,* I, p. 39; as "Fragment eines Streichquartetts d-Moll (1901–1904)" in Schoenberg, *Sämtliche Werke,* v. 20A. Sketches for the work are transcribed in v. 20B, pp. 279–305.

[14] The dates are collected in Schoenberg, *Sämtliche Werke,* v. 3B, p. ix.

TABLE 3

The 1904–05 Sketchbook, pp. 1–41 (Sk 2–42), collated with the completion dates for the *Orchesterlieder,* Op. 8

Date	*Page*	*Contents/Remarks*
7 Mar 04	—	Score of "Natur," op. 8, no. 1 completed
Mar 1904	1	Sketches for the D minor "fragment"
	2–4	Sketches for "Das Wappenschild," op. 8, no. 2
	4–8	**First sketches for Opus 7 (theme P-a, mm. 1–12)**
	9–12	Sketches for the D minor "fragment"
9 Apr 04	—	First draft of "Das Wappenschild" completed
	13–14	First sketches for "Nie ward ich, Herrin, müd," op. 8, no. 4
	15–17	**Drafts and sketches for Opus 7 (to D-minor reprise of P-a, m. 72)**
	18–20	Drafts for "Nie ward ich, Herrin, müd"
3 July 04	—	Score of "Nie ward ich, Herrin, müd" completed
	20–21	First sketches for "Voll jener Süße," op. 8, no. 5
13 Jul 04	—	**Letter to Oscar Posa, quartet "resting"**
	31	***"Neues Leben fühlend"* [Program Written]: Sketches for scherzo theme**
	32–37	**Sketches and drafts (to S-a, m. A-60) for op. 7**
	38–41	Sketches for "Voll jener Süße" (and other songs)
Nov 1904	—	Score of "Vol jener Süße" completed

7 also appear on page 4, we can be fairly certain that Schoenberg did, in fact, begin work on the quartet sometime in March 1904.

The score of *Nie ward ich, Herrin, müd,* Op. 8, no. 4 (the third song in order of composition), was completed on 3 July 1904.[15] Sketches for this song are found on pages 13–14, and pages 18–20. Since these pages enclose sketches and drafts for the continuation of Opus 7 to measure 72, which is eight bars into the D-minor return of the principal theme, we can assume that nearly all of the exposition of the principal thematic group for the quartet was also complete by the beginning of July.

It appears from the sketchbook that Schoenberg put the quartet aside at this point. There are no sketches for it on pages 18–30. He went on instead to the next song for Op. 8, *Voll jener Süße.* This state of affairs is confirmed in a letter of 13 July 1904, to Oscar Posa, who

[15] "Sehnsucht," op. 8, no. 3, was not begun until 1905, and is therefore not included in this chronology.

was chairman, and—along with Schoenberg and Zemlinsky—a founding member of the Vereinigung Schaffender Tonkünstler.

> I'm not working very much. I have begun a new song for orchestra (the 4th). I think it will be very good. I've set myself the task, this time, of uniting the instrumentation with the part-writing. . . . My quartet is resting.[16]

The quartet remained at rest for some time while Schoenberg continued to work on *Voll jener Süße*. He also sketched ideas for other songs intended for the cycle. The first new work on the quartet appears in the sketchbook on page 31—this is the first sketch for the scherzo, with its programmatic label "Neues Leben fühlend." The outer limits for the writing of the program are thus 13 July 1904, the date of the letter to Posa, and November 1904, when Schoenberg completed the score for *Voll jener Süße*, for which there are sketches both before and after the "Neues Leben fühlend" scherzo. The program was not written until at least four and a half months (and possibly eight months) after Schoenberg began composing the music for the quartet.

Further evidence for this dating is found in the form of the program itself. Returning to Table 2, there are thee sections in the first line, labelled a, b, and c. These are very likely Schoenberg's descriptions of the three thematic components of the completed principal group. They are concise, and, I believe, apt characterizations of the three themes. It is significant that the three descriptions are placed on a single line, for in the remainder of the program Schoenberg uses a separate line for each division of the outline, and he freely juxtaposes alternate descriptive words in many cases. This suggests that the first line of the program was intended to characterize music already written.

By establishing the program's position in the chronology of the compositional process for Opus 7, we can understand its first main function. Schoenberg wrote the program to spur his own imagination and awaken the quartet from its "rest." Apparently unable to invent a satisfactory musical continuation for his principal group, he

[16] "Ich arbeite nicht allzuviel. Ich habe ein neues Lied für Orchester (das 4te) angefangen. Ich glaube, das wird sehr gut werden. Ich habe mir diesmal die Aufgabe gestellt, mit allen Stimmführungskünsten auch die Instrumentationskünste zu vereinigen. . . . Mein Quartett ruht." *Arnold Schönberg: Gendenkaustellung 1974*, ed. by Ernst Hilmar (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1974), pp. 183–84.

assigned expressive labels to its three component themes, and invented a programmatic scenario to help him invent new themes.

The program also functioned as an outline of the formal plan for much of the quartet (compare Tables 1 and 2). In addition to the indications for the development sections already mentioned (Table 2, lines 6 and 15), the program specifies the recapitulation of the principal group in line 15 with the phrase "return of the first mood, I. 1/a." Smaller scale formal patterns are also indicated. The "dejection" and "despair" of line 2 return in line 4 after a contrasting mood, suggesting the A–B–A shape of the second thematic group. The repeat of a "part of II. 1.a" at the end of line 12 indicates the reprise of the scherzo. Finally, the "mild argument" specified in line 9 may indicate the condensed reprise of all the quartet's themes beginning in measure C-1.

Schoenberg, apparently "feeling new life" with his formal plan in place, returned to work and sketched out the scherzo theme on page 31 of the sketchbook. The incipit of its final form is given in Example 1a. On the next page, he created a chromatic version of the new theme to serve as the subject of the fugato transition passage (Example 1b). He then tested the contrapuntal possibilities of the motives of the fugato subject. One such combination, from page 33 of the sketchbook and with Schoenberg's own motive labels, is shown in Example 1c. This particular combination suggested the final form of the first theme of the second group, in which Schoenberg presents motives b and c in counterpoint (Example 1d). Hence these themes were composed in the reverse order of their appearance in the score. Yet because Schoenberg already had his formal plan, he composed them with their specific functions in mind. He was composing out the formal and thematic ideas embodied in the program.[17]

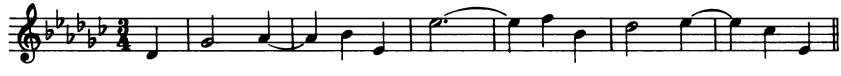
Schoenberg now had rough sketches for three new, closely-related themes. But before he refined them in any significant way, he returned to work on the end of the principal group.[18] Since the new material was not related to the principal themes, Schoenberg took the unusual step of writing what is, in effect, a "transition to the transition." The passage in question appears in measures 85–96 of the published score (Example 2).

[17] See Walter Frisch, "Thematic Form and the Genesis of Schoenberg's D-Minor Quartet, Opus 7," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XLI (1988), 297–303, for a description of the compositional process as seen on pages 31–33 of the sketchbook. His interpretation, with which I largely agree, is concerned with the section of the composition which encompasses the fugato transition to the scherzo.

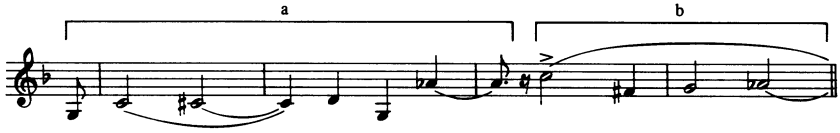
[18] Pages 32–33, and 35 (Sk 33–34, 36) in the sketchbook.

EXAMPLE 1. a. Scherzo theme (m. E-1). Used by permission of Belmont Music Publishers.
b. Fugato transition subject (m. A-3). Used by permission of Belmont Music Publishers.
c. Motivic combination from the 1904–05 Sketchbook, p. 33. Used by permission of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute.
d. Second group. Theme A (m. A-56). Used by permission of Belmont Music Publishers.

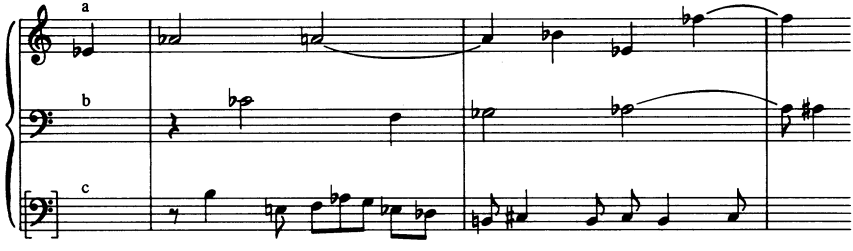
a. Scherzo theme (m. E-1).



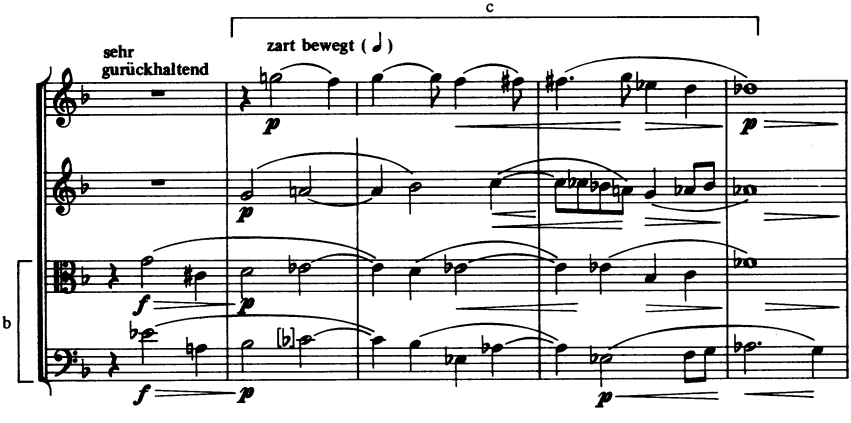
b. Fugato transition subject (m. A-3).



c. Motivic combination from the 1904-05 Sketchbook, p. 33.



d. Second group, Theme A (m. A-56).



The primary function of this first transitional passage is the gradual elimination of motives from the principal group, a process Schoenberg would later call liquidation. He considered liquidation a "neutralizing technique," which proceeds by "gradually depriving the motive-forms of their characteristic features and dissolving them into uncharacteristic forms, such as scales, broken chords, etc."[19] The liquidation passage in Example 2 begins with a greatly-condensed version of a motive from the first principal theme in the viola (motive x). After several imitations in the two violins, Schoenberg "dissolves" this motive into a rhythmically uncharacteristic broken chord (motive y, m. 88). A second motive from the first principal theme (motive z, violoncello, mm. 85–86) is also gradually dissolved in this passage. The most significant part of this process appears in measures 88–89, where motive z is syncopated and sequenced in rhythmic diminution.

Schoenberg also uses the passage in measures 85–96 to introduce an important motive from his new thematic complex. As motives from the first principal theme are "neutralized," a new, falling tritone motive comes to prominence. Heard first in the viola beginning on the last beat of measure 85, this tritone will soon become motive b of the fugato subject. Thus Schoenberg both cleans the slate of all traces of the principal thematic group, and prepares the way for the formal transition passage—the fugato—which begins at letter A.

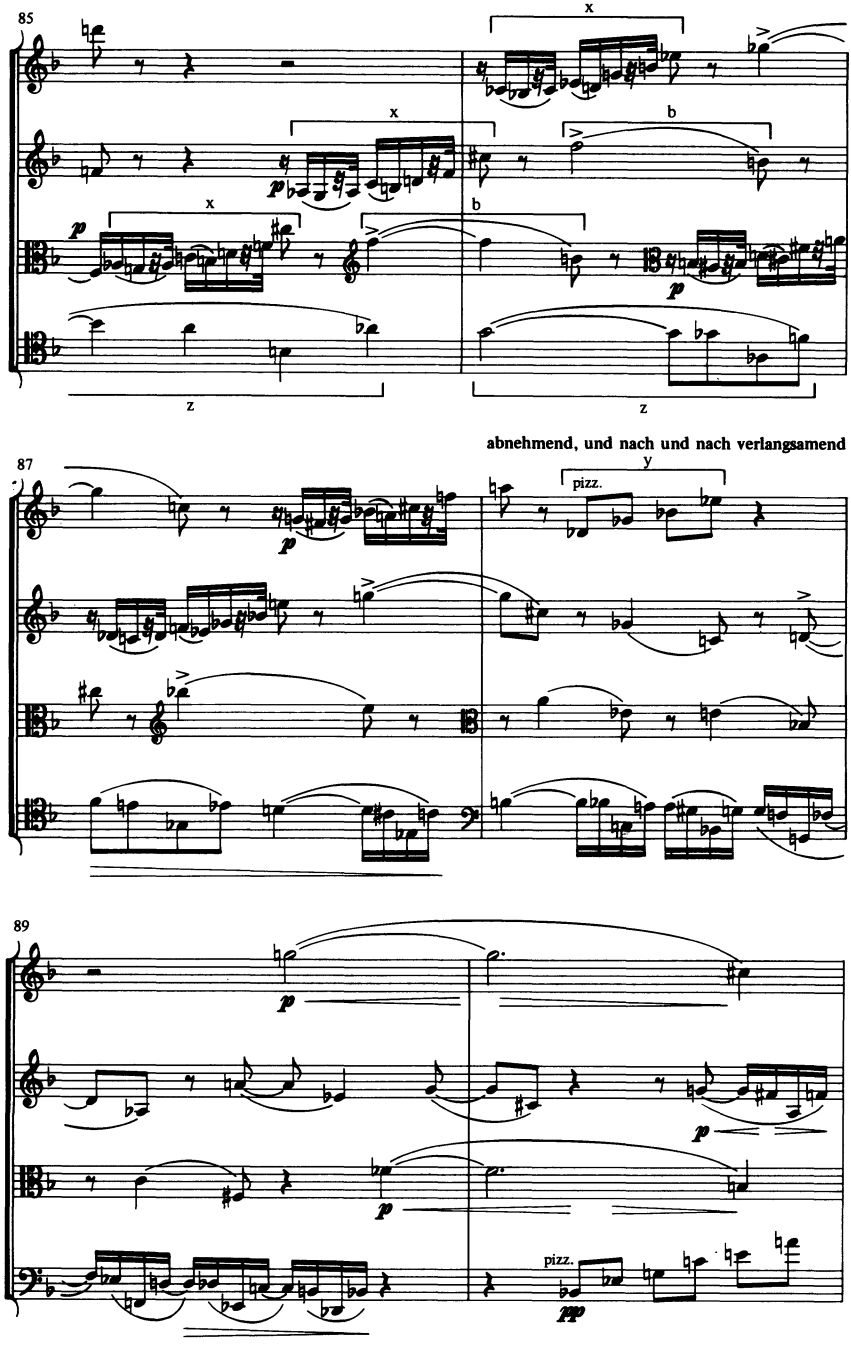
Motives from the new thematic complex dominate the quartet from this point until the recapitulation of the principal group in measure I-38. This large section, which takes up the entire first half of the quartet, is heard as a continuous process of transformation and development, yet all its essential formal and thematic features were planned at approximately the same time.

The program was the catalyst for this burst of creative energy. It provided Schoenberg with an expressive guide for creating themes, a novel formal plan in which to develop this musical material, and suggested the programmatic technique of thematic transformation to provide unity. Not surprisingly, evidence of further work on the "abstract" D-Minor Fragment disappears simultaneously with the newfound inspiration for Opus 7.

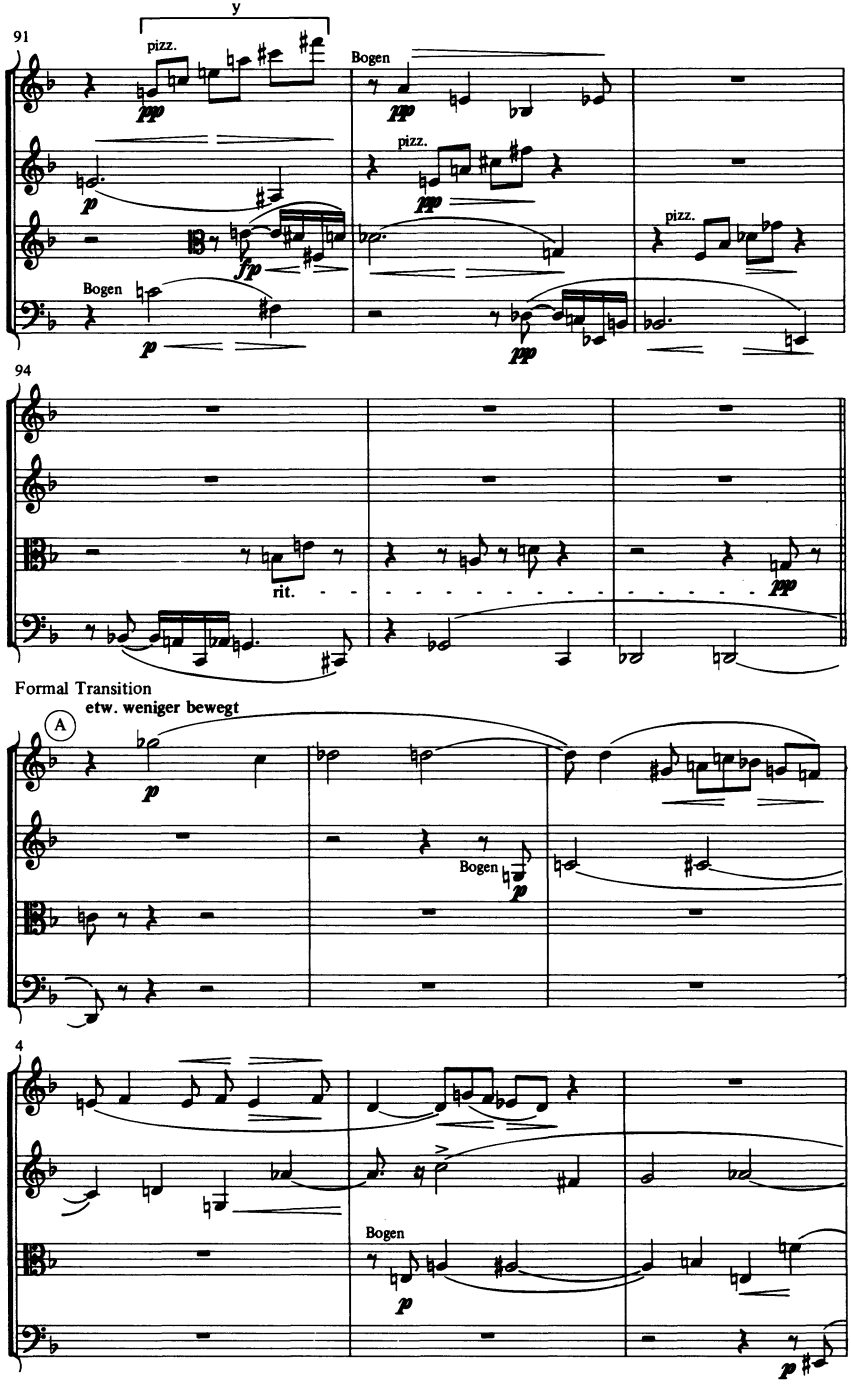
Except for the transition to the transition between the exposition of the principal group and the fugato—the point Schoenberg had reached before he put the quartet to rest for a while—the first half of the quartet is truly a seamless, single movement. Its internal segments, the second thematic group and the scherzo, are given shape by clear

[19] Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, ed. by Gerald Strang and Leonard Stein (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), p. 152.

EXAMPLE 2. Opus 7, mm. 85 to A-6. Used by permission of Belmont Music Publishers.



EXAMPLE 2. *(continued)*



thematic returns. Yet these returns are made dynamic by the use of unstable harmonies (see Table 1). When, for example, the A-theme of the second group returns in its original key, E-flat, at measure A-92, Schoenberg quickly destabilizes the tonality with modulatory sequences that lead directly into the first development section. At measure G-34, Schoenberg uses the return of the scherzo theme to initiate the second development section by beginning in the "wrong" key, C-sharp minor, and by quickly moving even further afield. Hence Schoenberg creates traditional formal shapes by thematic means, while providing forward motion by harmonic means. The recapitulation of the principal group in D minor at measure I-38 concludes this large structure. Here, thematic reprise is accompanied by tonal closure to halt the developmental process Schoenberg has sustained for nearly twenty-five minutes.

The first half of Opus 7 contains Schoenberg's most tightly organized formal structure to that time, and this structure is outlined in Parts I and II of the program. The structure of the second half of the quartet, however, is much looser. Nor is there any explicit evidence of formal planning for the second half of the quartet in Part III of the program. The "giving over to calmer sounds" in line 16 may imply plans for a slow movement. The "entrance of rest and harmony" in the last line of the program suggests the quiet coda that concludes the quartet. These are "moods," however, and no plan for their formal realization is given.

Schoenberg did not begin to plan the themes or the formal structure of the second half of the quartet until well into his work on the first draft of the scherzo movement. The first sketches for the slow movement appear in Sketchbook II, the first page of which is dated April 1905. This was at least five months after he devised the program. Schoenberg's first thought was to use motives exclusively from the first half of the quartet for the themes of the second half, but he soon decided to create two new themes, one to initiate the slow movement (Example 3, third system, letter K, solo violin), and one for its contrasting B-section.[20] These themes are also used, virtually unchanged except for tempo, as the A- and B-themes of the rondo finale. This gives the second half of the quartet a thematic integrity of its own, and binds together its two largest components.

It also removes the slow movement and the rondo from the discourse established in the first half of the quartet. Motives from the

[20] See Frisch, "Schoenberg's D-Minor Quartet," pp. 303–11, for an evaluation of the sketches for this part of the quartet.

first half are incorporated into the slow movement and the rondo, but their appearances in these sections often have the effect of a sentimental reminiscence, rather than a continuation of their development.

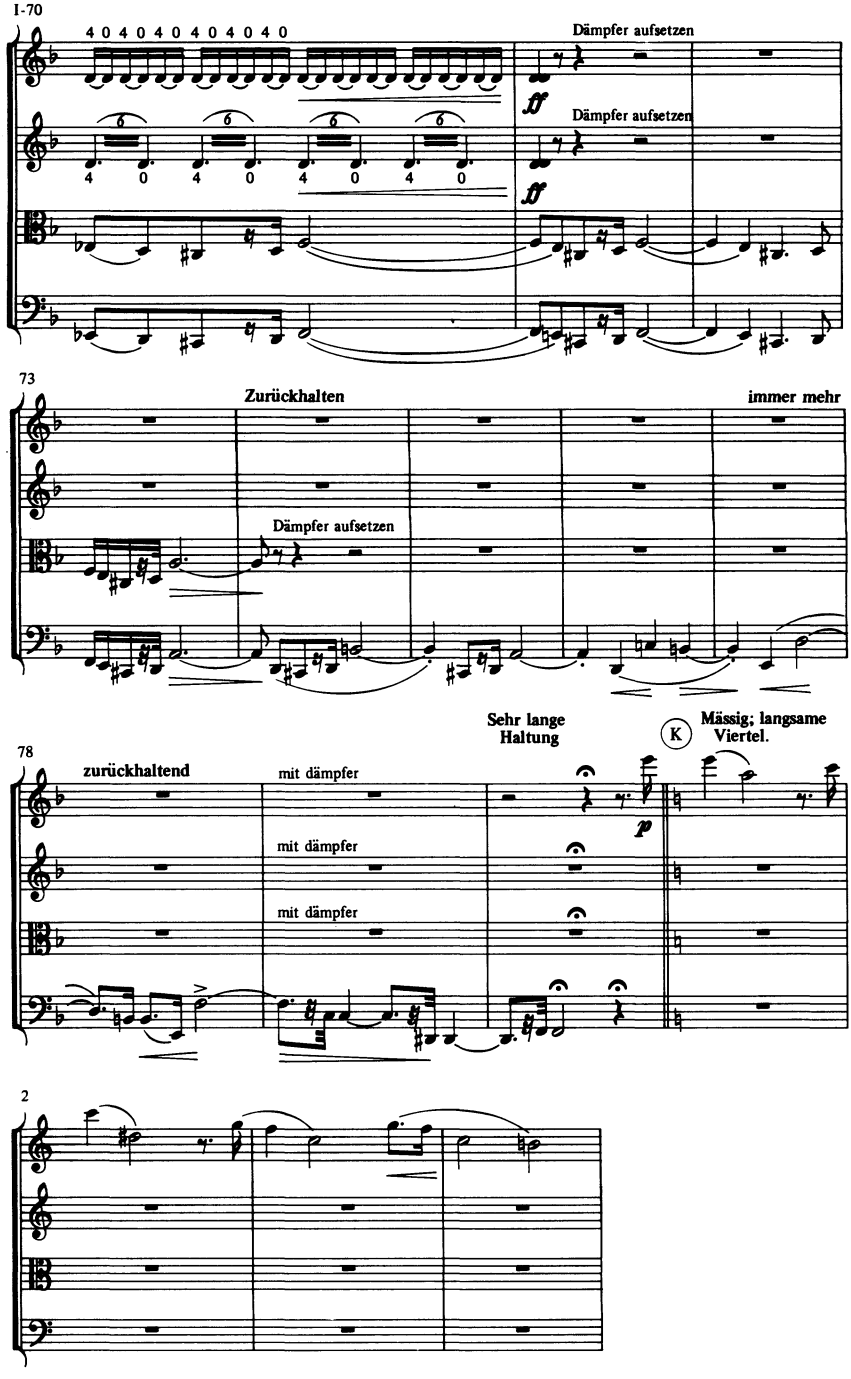
Yet it is not merely the character of the new themes that make the second half of the quartet sound like an independent piece. Their formal presentation is different as well (see Table 1). In the second half, closed harmonic forms replace the open-ended patterns of the first. The slow movement, which begins at letter K, shows a structure similar to that of the second group exposition, but its B-section returns at measure L-18 to close the movement in a static E major. This necessitates an independent transition to the recapitulation of the second group.

The finale recapitulates the slow movement in a textbook sonata rondo. Except for the C-section, its themes, its textures, and its tonic (A) are all derived from the earlier section. The B-theme that these sections share is ultimately resolved in the tonic in the contrapuntal recapitulation beginning at measure N-68. Schoenberg presents some new contrapuntal combinations in the rondo, but the form, the rhythms, and the key relationships are distinctly unadventurous, especially in the context of the first half of the quartet. It seems that the inspiration provided by the program in 1904 had worn off a year later.

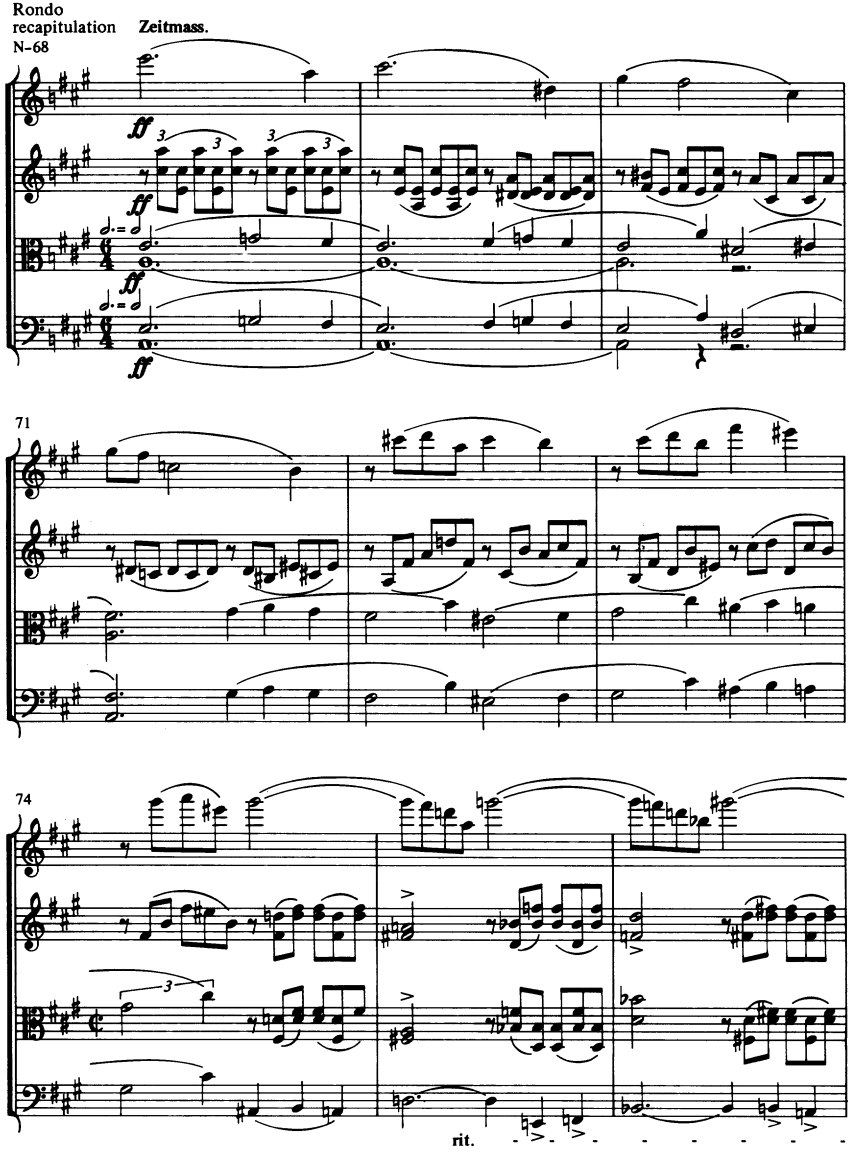
Schoenberg, of course, recognized the separate nature of the second half of the quartet. Once again he was compelled to compose liquidation passages—one before the slow movement, and another after the rondo. The liquidation preceding the slow movement can be seen in Example 3. The recapitulation of the principal group has just ended with *fortissimo,* unison D's in the violins (mm. I-70–71). In the following measures, the cello is left to neutralize its characteristic motivic material. The break between the first and second halves of the quartet is made explicit by the grand pause (*Sehr lange Haltung*) in measure 80.

Even more dramatic is the abrupt entry of the liquidation passage that separates the recapitulation of the rondo from the coda of the quartet (measure N-81, see Example 4). The contrapuntal recapitulation of the rondo begins in measure N-68 with the A-theme in the first violin and the B-theme in the upper voices of the viola and cello. The D-major coda begins at letter O, and brings back the scherzo theme and the first principal theme in transformed versions. These themes are unrelated to the rondo themes, but the key in measure N-68 is an emphatic A major, the tonic of the rondo, and also the dominant of D major. Schoenberg could certainly have used this

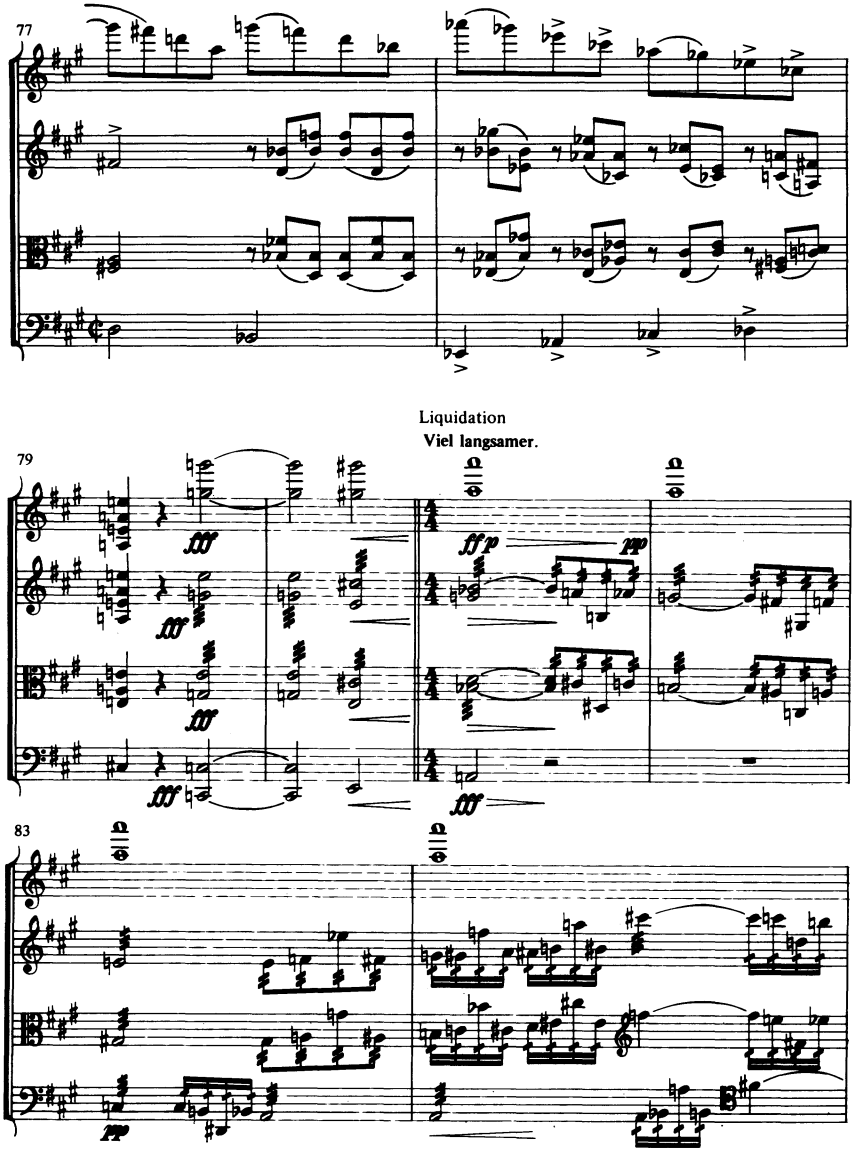
EXAMPLE 3. Opus 7, mm. I-70 to K-4. Used by permission of Belmont Music Publishers.



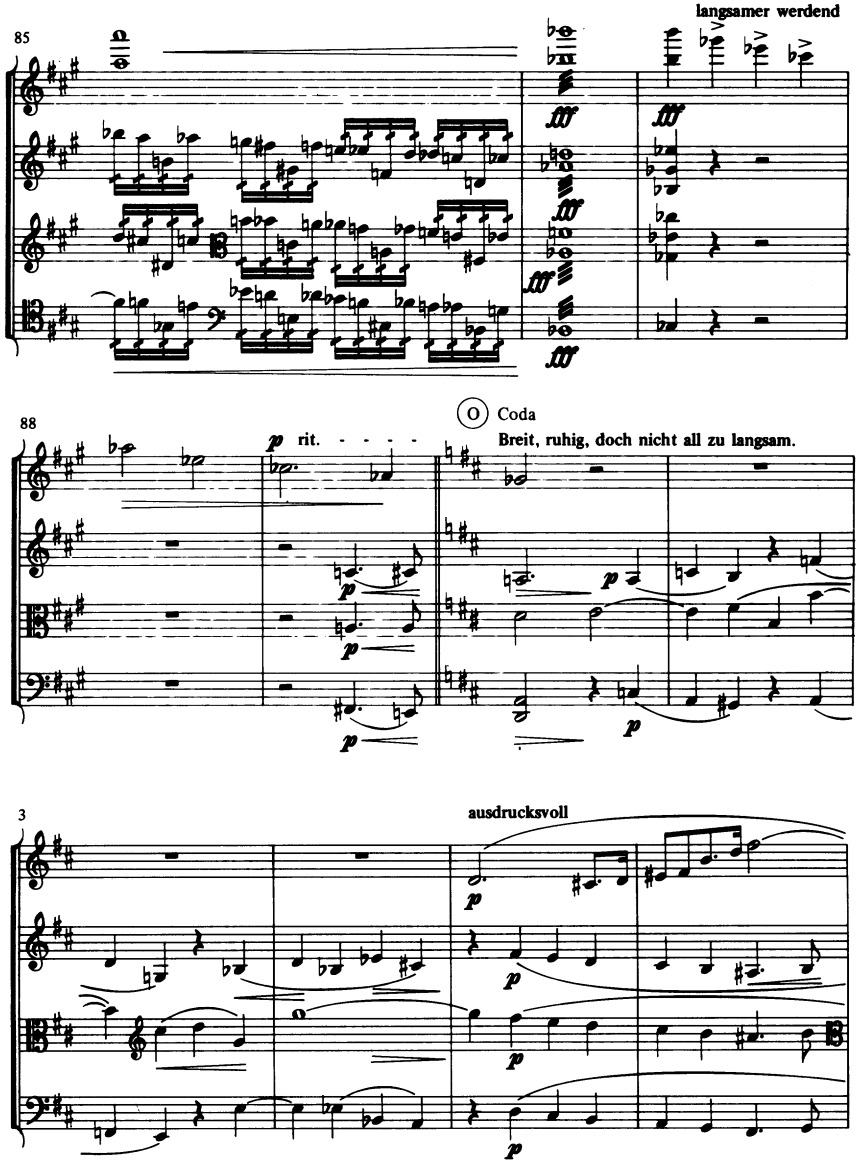
EXAMPLE 4. Opus 7, mm. N-68 to O-10. Used by permission of Belmont Music Publishers.



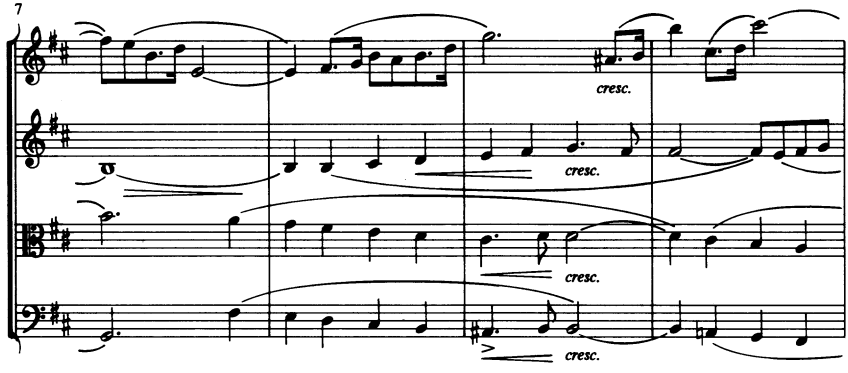
EXAMPLE 4. *(continued)*



EXAMPLE 4. *(continued)*



EXAMPLE 4. *(continued)*



functional property for a dominant preparation of the coda. Instead, he breaks off the final cadence of the rondo with a *fortississimo* liquidation passage in measure N-81. The disruptions in harmony, tempo, tone color (*am Steg*), playing technique (tremolo), and rhythmic figuration all but obliterate any relationship between the two sections.

The discovery of the "private program" does not automatically turn Schoenberg's Opus 7 into a tone poem for string quartet. However, it does shed light on its compositional process and helps explain the "double personality" of its two halves. Each half operates in its own thematic and formal world. Indeed, the characters of the two parts of the quartet are so different that they suggest a formal scheme very much like the paired sonata interpretation proposed by Richard Swift for *Verklärte Nacht,* rather than the single, unified structure proposed by Schoenberg for his quartet.[21] In this paired sonata reading, the recapitulation of the second group of the first part of the quartet at measure L-52 can be heard as a lyric episode between the exposition (the slow movement) and the recapitulation (the rondo) of a new, independent sonata structure.

Schoenberg in 1904 tried to write an ambitious, abstract composition to stand with the great quartets of Beethoven. In the 1949 program notes, he acknowledged his indebtedness to Beethoven for many of the technical procedures he employed in the quartet. This

[21] See Richard Swift, "1/XII/99: Tonal Relations in Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht,*" *19th Century Music* I (1977), 5–6.

was not enough, however. Schoenberg reached an impasse after composing the principal group of the quartet, and devised his program. For a composer who had learned his craft at the end of the nineteenth century, this was perhaps a more natural source of inspiration. Program in hand, Schoenberg created almost at once the themes and the impressive formal structure of the first half of the quartet. When the program lost its grip on his imagination, he fell back on schematic, textbook forms for the second half of the quartet. The slow movement and rondo sections were conceived well after the programmatically-inspired components of the first half of the quartet, and were never fully integrated with the earlier material.

The writing of "mere dry notes" was never easy for Schoenberg. His first mature attempt to write a large-scale, "abstract" instrumental cycle—the D-Minor Fragment—was abandoned as soon as a programmatic substitute was invented. Thus his 1943 advice to young composers—to try always to "express something," but not to exclude "conscious application of technical knowledge"—was not merely a pedagogical device to inspire novices, but a fruitful principle Schoenberg himself had followed for many years.

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