Schoenberg's Handel Concerto and the Ruins of Tradition
Author(s): Joseph H. Auner
Reviewed work(s):
Published by: University of California Press on behalf of the American Musicological Society
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/831991
Accessed: 02/12/2012 18:01

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.
Schoenberg’s Handel Concerto and the Ruins of Tradition

BY JOSEPH H. AUNER

Arnold Schoenberg made no secret of his antipathy toward Handel’s music. He would reportedly become furious “if one mentioned Handel in the same breath as Bach or even Haydn and Mozart.”¹ In his essay “New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea,” he set up Handel as a foil to illustrate the greatness of Bach, whose sophisticated counterpoint made Handel’s seem “bare and simple . . . really inferior” by contrast.² Schoenberg described what he called “the defects of the Handelian style” in a 1932 letter to Pablo Casals concerning the Cello Concerto, a recomposition of a keyboard concerto by Handel’s contemporary Georg Matthias Monn:

Just as Mozart did with Handel’s “Messiah,” I have got rid of whole handfuls of sequences (rosalias, “Schusterflecke”), replacing them with real substance. Then I also did my best to deal with the other main defect of Handelian style, which is that the theme is always best when it first appears and grows steadily more insignificant and trivial in the course of the piece.³

Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the Sixtieth Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, Minneapolis, October 1994, and in conferences and colloquia at the Musikhochschule des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken, Princeton University, and The State University of New York at Stony Brook. Parts of this material have been published in “Schoenberg and Handel in 1933,” The Newsletter of the American Handel Society 10 (1995): 1–7; and “Schönbergs Handel Konzert: Eine Konfrontation mit der Tradition gegen Ende der Weimarer Republik,” trans. Stefan Eckert, in Schriftenreihe der Musikhochschule des Saarlandes (Saarbrücken: Paar, 1995), 34–53. I would like to thank in particular Robert Morgan, Richard Kramer, Judy Lochhead, John Winemiller, Matthew Beitz, and Stefan Eckert for their assistance and commentary. The project was completed with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

It is surprising in light of such criticisms that Schoenberg devoted nearly six months of 1933, which was a difficult period in his life, to the composition of the Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra, “freely transcribed” from Handel’s Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, no. 7.4 The concerto is one of a series of adaptations from the 1920s and 1930s that includes the Bach and Brahms arrangements and the Cello Concerto.5 Yet to a far greater extent than these works, the Concerto for String Quartet alters—sometimes dramatically—the melodic and harmonic structure of the original, starkly exposing the nearly two hundred years that separate it from Schoenberg’s reworking. Writing to Berg in the summer of 1933, he described his efforts to complete the String Quartet Concerto as “very tedious work . . . in the end it will be a very good piece and that won’t be Handel’s doing, if I do say

---


5 Throughout this essay I will use the term recomposition for the Monn and Handel concertos to distinguish them from the less fundamentally reworked Bach and Brahms arrangements, which include J. S. Bach, Chorale Prelude, “Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, heiliger Geist,” BWV 631 (1922); Chorale Prelude, “Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele,” BWV 654 (1922); Prelude and Fugue in E♭, BWV 552 (1928); and Johannes Brahms, Piano Quartet in G minor, Op. 25 (1937). See also the Three Folksongs (1929; reworked in 1948 as Op. 49). The Cello Concerto (November 1932–January 1933) is based on Monn’s 1746 Concerto per Clavicembalo in D major, one of the works for which Schoenberg prepared a basso continuo realization for the Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, 19 Jahrgang, pt. 2, vol. 39, Wiener Instrumentalmusik im XVIII Jahrhundert II, ed. Wilhelm Fischer (Vienna: Artaria, 1912), 92–106. For more on the Bach and Brahms arrangements, see Klaus Velten, Schönberg: Instrumentation Bachscher und Brahmscher Werke als Dokumente seines Traditions-verständnisses (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1976); Claudio Spies, “The Organ Supplanted: A Case for Differentiations,” Perspectives of New Music 11 (Spring–Summer 1973): 24–55.

---

so. I liked the piece better in the beginning. This confrontational attitude is apparent in Schoenberg’s copy of Op. 6, no. 7, which he assiduously marked as a teacher would correct a composition exercise (see Plate 1 below).

The vehemence of Schoenberg’s reactions toward Handel both in his writings and in the String Quartet Concerto go far beyond the ambivalent relationship to tradition we might expect of the “conservative revolutionary.” Schoenberg always focused his criticisms of Handel on stylistic features, but broader political and cultural factors can help explain his hostility as well as his preoccupation with Handel during the early 1930s. Recent studies have explored many aspects of Schoenberg’s works and thought during his final years in Germany, including the recompositions and arrangements as signs of his ambivalent relationship to the past, the formation of his Jewish identity, and his stance toward Neoclassicism. Yet the special position of the String Quartet Concerto as a focal point for all of these concerns has received little attention. I will argue that the work and its sketches document the extraordinary challenges Schoenberg faced in reconciling the complex and contradictory strands in his own identity while negotiating the shifting cultural and political currents at the end of the Weimar Republic. A study of the sketches for the third movement will chart a transformation from Schoenberg’s initial attempt to mediate inherent conflicts in the movement to his eventual decision to make stylistic opposition the subject of the work. The tension between respect and rebellion manifest in the creative process and in the completed score can thus offer new critical windows into Schoenberg’s ideas of history and tradition, his position in respect to artistic trends in the 1920s and 1930s, and the eclecticism of his late style.

6 Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey, and Donald Harris, eds., The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence: Selected Letters (New York: Norton, 1987), 444.

7 In a marginal note in the sketches for the fourth movement, Schoenberg referred to his reworking as a Verbesserung, a term whose meaning encompasses improvement as well as correction. See Claudio Spies, “Two Leaves of Sketches for Schoenberg’s Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra,” in The Rosaleen Moldenbauer Memorial: Music History from Primary Sources, A Guide to the Moldenbauer Archives (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, forthcoming).


Schoenberg and Handel in 1933

In the years leading up to the composition of the Handel Concerto, Schoenberg achieved his greatest professional success and, in practical terms, his first official recognition. In January 1926, he moved from Vienna to Berlin to take over Busoni’s chair as director of one of the three master classes in composition at the Prussian Academy of Arts. He responded to the favorable conditions of his contract, which required only six months residence in Berlin, with a period of considerable compositional productivity—including the Third String Quartet, Op. 30; The Variations for Orchestra, Op. 31; *Von heute auf morgen*, Op. 32; the first two acts of *Moses und Aron*; and the choral works, Opp. 27, 28, and 35—a very large number of writings, and many important performances throughout Europe. His position on the faculty gave him not only professional recognition as a member of the senate of the academy, in which he became an active participant, but also granted him “permanent” Prussian nationality.

The peculiar convergence of Schoenberg and Handel at the end of the Weimar Republic was strikingly prefigured in a 1925 article in which the musicologist Alfred Heuß described Schoenberg’s appointment to the Prussian Academy as “a blow against the cause of German music that is so provocative in nature that it would be difficult to imagine anything worse in the present situation.” Heuß, who had


contributed an article to the first volume of the *Händel Jahrbuch* in 1928, characterizes Schoenberg, in his new position of power, as the quintessential “rootless Jew” whose fanatical rejection of tradition threatened not only to “muddy the sources” of German music, but also to mislead other “rooted” Jews who were capable of making a contribution by aligning themselves with the dominant culture. Heuß concludes his attack by interpreting the appointment as a sign of the decadence and approaching collapse of the Republic:

Hence, there can be no question about one thing: the days of the current musical regime in Prussia are numbered. Thus, one way or another, Schönberg, the musician and the teacher, can no longer do damage to German music but at most to a Jewish music without roots in the above-mentioned sense. And if so, why shouldn’t we intone a Handelian *Halleluja*?

Schoenberg’s situation became more precarious in the early 1930s as the worldwide financial crisis and the rising power of the National Socialists increasingly destabilized the Republic. He spent as much time as possible away from Berlin, traveling in particular to Spain as a result of his chronic asthma but also, as he wrote to a friend in May 1932, to avoid the “swastika-swaggerers and pogromists.” He wrote to Berg in September 1932:

There’s also a sort of depression, which is undoubtedly connected with having to be in Berlin, that takes away all my pleasure in work. For here I’m constantly obliged to consider the question whether and, if so, to what extent I am doing the right thing in regarding myself as belonging here or there, and whether it is forced upon me. Even without the nationalistic hints one has been getting in recent years, naturally I know where I belong. Only such a change of milieu isn’t as easy as one might think. . . . Of course I know perfectly well where I belong. I’ve had it hammered into me so loudly and so long that only by being deaf to begin with could I have failed to understand it. And it’s a long time now since it wrung any regrets from me. Today I’m proud to call myself a Jew; but I know the difficulties of really being one.

---

14 *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, 164.
Following Hitler’s election as chancellor in January 1933, and the March parliamentary elections in which the National Socialists won a sizable majority, Jewish and left-wing intellectuals in the Prussian Academy were targeted for removal. At a March meeting of the academy’s senate—which Schoenberg attended—the president of the academy, composer Max von Schillings, officially denounced the Jewish element. With the passage in April of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufbeamentums), it became legally possible to void the contracts of those who could not prove Aryan descent.16

Schoenberg completed the first two movements of the String Quartet Concerto on 10 and 12 May 1933; five days later he hastily left Berlin for Paris with his wife and one-year-old daughter.17 They remained in France throughout the summer. It was only when his contract with the academy was finally terminated in September that he gave up the idea that he might return to Berlin. In response to an offer of a teaching position at the Longy School in Boston, Schoenberg, along with his family, boarded ship for the United States on 25 October.

Although Schoenberg’s renewed interest in Judaism substantially predates this time, as evidenced in such works as the drama Der biblische Weg from 1926 and the opera Moses und Aron from 1930–32, he did not formally reconvert from Lutheranism (adopted in 1898) until 24 July 1933.18 Almost immediately upon his arrival in France,
Schoenberg became actively involved with efforts to establish a Jewish state. He wrote to Webern in August of his desire to sacrifice his art and "to do nothing in the future but work for the Jewish national cause." He outlined a plan, which would occupy him intensively over the next months, through which he would travel the world speaking and producing recordings and films to organize assistance for the German Jews. For Schoenberg his renewed Jewish identity had broad implications. To the Jewish philosopher Jacob Klatzkin he wrote in June, "We are Asians and nothing of real substance connects us with the West . . . our essence is not Occidental; that is merely an exterior appearance." He used even stronger terms in his letter to Webern: "I have definitely separated myself from whatever binds me to the Occident." Extremely troubled by Schoenberg's renunciation of both the West and his art, Webern wrote to Berg:

He has shaken me deeply. Even if I regard his departure from the Occident humanly as possible (I don't believe it, or at least I don't regard his turning to the Orient as possible) there remains for me the unshakable fact of his musical works, for which there is only one description: German.

The contradiction Webern identified between Schoenberg's "departure from the Occident" and the unshakably Germanic nature of his works came to a head in the Handel Concerto. Schoenberg's only substantial compositional work between his departure from Germany...
and his emigration was the completion of the final two movements of the concerto in August and September. The prospect of earning some desperately needed money through the publication and planned performances of the String Quartet Concerto may partly account for his intense involvement with the work during the summer of 1933. Yet pragmatic concerns alone explain neither the significant choice of a work by Handel nor the peculiar form the recomposition took.

When Alfred Heuß called for his readers to “intone a Handelian Halleluja” over the inevitable demise of Schoenberg and the Republic, he was foreshadowing an important role for Handel in the coming years as an antidote to the “degenerate” trends of new music. The “Handel Renaissance” in Germany originated with the Göttingen performances of Rodelinda in 1920 under the direction of Oskar Hagen, which inspired numerous other performances and festivals throughout Germany in the following years. Handel’s operas found adherents early on from all sides of the political spectrum, including composers such as Krenek, Weill, and Hindemith who were seeking formal and expressive alternatives to the music drama. Yet there is

---

23 While the overall compositional chronology is fairly clear, there are some ambiguities. See Nikos Kokkinis, Arnold Schönberg Sämtliche Werke, Abteilung 7: Reihe B, XVI–XVII. The conclusions of the first and second movements bear the dates 10 May 1933 and 12 May 1933 respectively. The fourth movement is dated “Arcachon August 16, 1933.” There is a small discrepancy with the date at the beginning of the manuscript, “angefangen etwa 20. V. 1933,” which is after the dates for the first two movements. More significant is the question of the date of completion. Kokkinis points out that there is convincing evidence from letters that Schoenberg completed the piece on 16 September, not 16 August. For example, Schoenberg wrote to Webern on 16 September 1933: “Ich habe schliesslich nun auch heute endlich das Streichquartett-Konzert mit Orchester, nach einem Concerto grosso von Händel fertiggebracht” (ibid., XVI). Kokkinis attributes the earlier date at the end of the fourth movement to an error stemming from the time Schoenberg replaced the final two measures when the fair copy was damaged. Another possibility Kokkinis does not consider is that the 16 August date applies only to completion of the fourth movement, and that the third movement, which is undated, was completed later. While the main theme of the third movement is quoted in the fourth movement, there is nothing in the movement that would preclude it being completed before the third was finished.


clear evidence that the figure of Handel was also increasingly appropriated as a conservative and nationalistic symbol.

The number of performances of Handel’s music began to decline in Germany in the late 1920s until a new wave of interest manifested itself in 1933.\(^{27}\) In striking contrast to Schoenberg’s contemporary “freier Umgestaltung” of Handel, the reorganization of the Händel-Gesellschaft in Göttingen in that year coincided with a shift away from Hagen’s imaginative adaptations influenced by the music drama and expressionist theater, to more “authentic” performances featuring uncut works, historical instruments, and naturalistic staging.\(^{28}\) In the following years Handel emerged as one of the primary models of the German composer for the National Socialists. His most popular compositions were the oratorios, though the works with Old Testament texts and titles required alteration; thus *Judas Maccabæus* became *William of Nassau* (also known as *The General*), while *Israel in Egypt* was reworked as *Mongol Fury* (*Mongolsturm*).\(^{29}\) An article from the *Deutsche Mitte* of February 1935 accompanying the festivities for the 250th anniversary of his birth praised Handel especially for his choruses, which allowed the “individual personality to sink away before the fate of the ‘Volkes.’” The article described the “Handel-Renaissance” as “a protest against the form-dissolving tendencies of impressionistic and atonal music,” which in their form and content are utterly contrary to the “steadfast architecture” of Handel’s works:

The clarity and simplicity of his musical language, which raises itself to heroic sublimity, is so much an expression of the German people that one must let its rejoicing song of triumph ring forth as the echo of the awakening Germany in order to let the whole people take part in this expression of the German spirit.\(^{30}\)


Plate 1 (continued)
Plate 3. Facsimile of sketch page 2097. First draft, mm. 1–48. Reproduced by permission of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute.
The Halle Handel Festival in the same month included a speech by Alfred Rosenberg and culminated with a midnight torchlit ceremony at which Hitler was to appear, though he reportedly slept through the event.31

Schoenberg obviously could not have foreseen the significance that Handel would have for the National Socialists, but there is little doubt that by the time of the composition of the String Quartet Concerto the figure of Handel had already acquired ideological implications. In 1932, for example, Adorno commented on what he called the “ludicrous coupling” of Bach and Handel. Like Schoenberg, Adorno disparaged the musical qualities of the majority of Handel’s works, but in addition to criticizing them according to “technical criteria” he added: “Behind the official pharisaically emphatic admiration for Handel’s expressive power, simplicity and objectivity what lies concealed is resentment and the inability to judge the music as composition.”32 Richard Eichenauer’s influential Musik und Rasse, published in 1932, championed Handel as one of the “purest representatives of the Nordic race,” while vilifying Schoenberg as the incarnation of the Jewish obsession to “destroy harmonic polyphony, which is totally foreign to them.”33

National Music, New Music, Tonality, and Tradition

The dialectic of the conservative and the revolutionary apparent in the Handel Concerto and in many of Schoenberg’s writings and works from the 1920s and 1930s must be understood in light of the complexity and ambivalence of his personal, professional, and aesthetic position. Not only was he forced to defend himself from

conservative critics who continued to view him as a dangerous radical, and to answer composers of the younger generation such as Krenek, Hindemith, and Weill who viewed him as an outmoded romantic, but at the same time he faced challenges in terms of race, national identity, and politics. In a fragmentary outline for an essay entitled “My Enemies” (“Meine Gegner”) dated 5 October 1932, Schoenberg described his sense of being attacked from all sides:

I. a) Nationalistic musicians regard me as international
   b) but abroad my music is regarded as too German
II. a) National Socialists regard me as a cultural-Bolshevik
     b) but the communists reject me as bourgeois.
III. a) Anti-Semites personify me as a Jew, my direction as Jewish
      b) but almost no Jews have followed my direction.

His difficult balancing act in which he sought to represent both a “truly new music” and a “properly understood good old tradition” is especially clear in two lectures from February 1933: “Brahms the Progressive” and “New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea.” The essays simultaneously rehabilitate Bach and Brahms as the true progressives—thus demonstrating the shortsightedness of their contemporary critics who dismissed them as old-fashioned—and attack contemporary developments like Gebrauchsmusik. Similarly, in essays


I. a) Nationalen Musikern gelte ich als international
     b) Im Ausland aber gilt meine Musik als zu deutsch
II. a) Nationalsozialisten gelte ich als Kulturbolschewik
      b) die Kommunisten aber lehnen mich als bürgerlich ab.
III. a) Antisemiten personifizieren mich als Juden, meine Richtung als jüdisch
      b) Aber in meine Richtung sind mir fast keine Juden gefolgt.

36 The lecture that became “New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea” was originally given in Prague in 1930 and was revised several times in the next years. See Schoenberg, Style and Idea, 113–24. The 1933 version is given in an appendix in Arnold Schönberg, Stil und Gedanke: Aufsätze zur Musik, Gesammelte Schriften 1, ed. Ivan Vojtěch (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1976), 466–77. For a translation and discussion of the 1933 Brahms lecture—which differs in several respects from the later version published in Style and Idea—see Thomas McGearay, “Schoenberg’s Brahms Lecture of 1933” and “Vortrag, zu halten in Frankfurt am Main am 12. II. 1933,” Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute 15 (1992): 5–90. See also Albrecht Dümling, ed., Verteidigung des Musikalischen Fortschritts Brahms und Schönberg (Hamburg: Argument Verlag, 1990). The phrase “properly understood, good old tradition” is from a letter to Werner Reinhart dated 9 July 1923, Arnold Schoenberg Letters, 100.
such as “National Music” from 1931 he traced his lineage from Bach and Mozart, through Beethoven, Wagner, and Brahms, writing, “I venture to credit myself with having written truly new music, which being based on tradition, is destined to become tradition.”

He describes his works explicitly in national and even militaristic terms as “the living example of an art . . . produced on German soil, without foreign influences . . . able most effectively to oppose Latin and Slav hopes of hegemony and derived through and through from the traditions of German music.”

Schoenberg’s desire to cement his national affiliations is clear in his choice of exclusively German sources for his arrangements and recompositions. This is in contrast to the geographical and historical eclecticism of Stravinsky’s borrowings and allusions, which in addition to Bach, draw upon Tchaikovsky, Pergolesi, Gesualdo, Russian folk music, jazz, and the music of a stylized Orient.

In his 1923 essay on Krenek’s Sprung über den Schatten, Schoenberg explicitly linked the issue of stylistic borrowings to the preservation of a national identity. While not condemning outright Krenek’s references to fox-trots and jazz, he writes:

> It is not a thing I shall do. . . . is one not going about in a mask one’s whole life long; if one has got involved with foreign folk songs even once? Perhaps not! Anyway, I do not feel inclined to disguise myself, even once. I do not want to gain any advantage from looking like someone else; but I do not like being mistaken for anyone else, either.

At the same time, Schoenberg argued that loyalty to tradition did not imply an attitude of pious veneration; rather it meant extending past achievements to a higher, more fully realized stage of development. It was accordingly the obligation of each generation to build

---


38 Schoenberg, “National Music,” 173. “. . . es ist also merkwürdig, daß noch niemand beachtet hat, daß in meiner Musik, die vom Ausland unbeeinflußt auf deutschem Boden entstanden ist, eine Kunst vorliegt, die, wie sie den Hegemoniebestrebungen der Romanen und Slawen aufs wirksamste entgegennimmt, durchaus den Traditionen der deutschen Musik entsprungen ist” (Schönberg, Stil und Gedanke, 253). For more on the “national question in music history” in Germany after World War I, see Potter, “Trends in German Musicology,” 96–144.

39 Schoenberg’s original plan to use a Bach work as the basis for the composition that became the Cello Concerto is described in a letter to Pablo Casals from the end of 1932, published in Arnold Schoenberg Correspondence, 159–61.

40 Schoenberg, “Krenek’s Sprung über den Schatten,” in Style and Idea, 480.
upon the best of its inheritance while improving upon any characteristics that were deficient, with the goal being—in the formulation from the 1933 “New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea”—“to take advantage of the musical space in all its dimensions so that the greatest and richest content is accommodated in the smallest space.”41 In a sketch for a lecture from around 1930 titled “Neue Musik/Meine Musik,” Schoenberg argued that to express the truly timely, “One must also have past epochs ‘in one,’ not only for the sake of culture, but . . . one must continue the ideas. They have not yet been thought out to the end.”42 He thus distanced himself from those who would be “modern at any cost” (“Modern um jeden Preis”), as well as from what he viewed as a reactionary Neoclassicism with its imposition of timeless aesthetic principles and calls for a return “back to Bach.” In his Three Satires, Op. 28 of 1925 Schoenberg made clear his highly publicized disdain for those he considered to be retreating to a comfortable past. Stravinsky—“der kleine Modernsky”—is mocked as having adopted an old-fashioned hairstyle, “like real false hair” (“Wie echt falsches Haar!”), in order to look like “papa Bach.”43

The relegation of the recompositions and arrangements to the margins of scholarship and performance similarly reflects Schoenberg’s historical narrative defining the twelve-tone method as the central evolutionary path. He implicitly acknowledged their secondary status by withholding opus numbers from the Handel and Monn recompositions as well as from the Bach and Brahms arrangements.

41 Schoenberg, “Neue und veraltete Musik, oder Stil und Gedanke,” in Stil und Gedanke, 467. “... den musikalischen Raum in allen seinen Dimensionen dermaßen auszunutzen, daß im kleinsten Raum der größte und reichste Inhalt untergebracht wird.” The English version of this passage from the revised 1946 text reads, “It would be most annoying if ‘music’ did not aim to say the most important things in the most concentrated manner in every fraction of this time. This is why, when composers have acquired the technique of filling one direction with content to the utmost capacity, they must do the same in the next direction, and finally in all the directions in which music expands” (Style and Idea, 116).


He apologetically described the late tonal works, such as the Suite for String Orchestra in G major from 1934, as the product of a nostalgic "longing to return to the older style," comparable to the pleasure one obtains from occasionally riding in a carriage rather than a fast automobile.\footnote{Schoenberg, "On Revient Toujours," in \textit{Style and Idea}, 108–9. "Es ist ein Gefühl ähnlich jenem, das dem langsamen, gemächlichen Fiaker den Vorzug vor dem schnellen Auto gibt; das sich gelegentlich danach sehnt, in den alten, ziemlich primitiven Verhältnissen unserer Vorgänger zu leben. ... Aber eine Sehnsucht, zu dem älteren Stil zurückzukehren, war immer mächtig in mir; und von Zeit zu Zeit mußte ich diesem Drang nachgeben" (Schönberg, \textit{Stil und Gedanke}, 147).}

Yet answering the question of "tonal oder atonal?" that Schoenberg posed in the first movement of the \textit{Three Satires} is surprisingly difficult during the period of the Handel Concerto. Indeed, the ambiguous relationship of the tonal works to the bitter debates surrounding Neoclassicism in the 1920s and 1930s, which pitted Schoenberg and the twelve-tone method against Stravinsky’s return to tonality and ironic manipulation of traditional stylistic idioms, must account to a large extent for their marginalization. Adorno’s uncharacteristically muted commentary in the \textit{Philosophy of Modern Music} on these “secondary works” and their “more conciliatory attitude towards the public” is only one example of their awkward historical status in terms of the Schoenberg-Stravinsky polarity.\footnote{Theodor Adorno, \textit{Philosophy of Modern Music}, trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 120–22.}

Schoenberg was, of course, intimately associated with what he described as the “battle” of tonality and dissonance that he had been fighting vigorously in the preceding years against those who advocated a return to tonality.\footnote{See, for example, Schoenberg, “Problems of Harmony,” in \textit{Style and Idea}, 270.} The broader social and political significance of this battle also did not escape him. In the 1926 essay “Opinion or Insight?” he criticized his “ quasi-tonalist” contemporaries who “use accidentals and key signature to fit the key that would like to hold sway, as if putting on a Christian-German mantle for loving their neighbor (something they rarely used to wear), to cloak their secret, sinful converse with dissonance.”\footnote{Schoenberg, “Opinion or Insight?” in \textit{Style and Idea}, 259. “Beide handeln wie Gläubige, die sich einen Ablaßzettel kaufen: sie verraten ihren Gott, ohne sich jedoch mit denen zu verfeinden, die sich seine Sachwalter nennen; über ihren heimlichen, sündigen Umgang mit Dissonanzen breiten sie einen noch wenig getragenen Mantel christlich-germanischer Nächstenliebe” (Schönberg, \textit{Stil und Gedanke}, 209–10).} While in the essay on \textit{Sprung über den Schatten} he criticized Krenek for his “superstititious belief in tonality,” he acknowledges the risks of the alternative, characterizing
“the essence of composition with twelve-tones” as “what is uncertain, untested, problematic, dangerous.”48 By April 1933, the month before Schoenberg began the concerto, the tonal/atonal issue was even more obviously politicized, as is clear in Webern’s defense of the historical inevitability of the dissolution of tonality against the claim that it was “something foreign and repellent to the German soul.”49

And yet even as Webern was lecturing on the forces that had made tonality obsolete, and commenting that “we are not far off a state when you land in prison, simply because you are a serious artist,”50 Schoenberg was becoming increasingly involved in tonal composition. The reworkings of the Handel and Monn concertos follow on the heels of the 1928 orchestration of Bach’s Prelude and Fugue in Eb, BWV 552, and the 1929 Three Folksongs. Still more striking is the existence of several newly composed tonal fragments from these years, including a piece for violin and piano in D major from 1930, a piano piece in C major from 1931, and an unfinished piano concerto in D major from March 1933, all apparently based on original material.51 His first work composed in America was the tonal Suite for String Orchestra. Taken as a whole, the non-twelve-tone works clearly occupied a central role in his output during his last years in Germany. With the exception of the Three Songs, Op. 48, written early in 1933 (and not published until 1948), the arrangements and tonal works were his only compositions between the unfinished Moses und Aron from 1930–32, and the Violin Concerto, Op. 36 and the Fourth String Quartet, Op. 37, both from 1935–36. In 1934 Schoenberg commented explicitly on the over three months of active work he devoted to the Handel Concerto in contrast to the six weeks required for Von heute auf morgen or the Third String Quartet.52

The growing importance of tonality in Schoenberg’s works of the early 1930s, along with the issues he addressed in his contemporary

48 Schoenberg, “Krenek’s Sprung über den Schatten,” 479.
50 Ibid., 20.
writings, must be seen at least in part as an attempt to assuage his critics from all camps and to reassert his position within the mainstream. But at the same time, he apparently felt a pressing need to differentiate himself from others who had returned to tonality and to locate these works in his evolutionary historical framework. He justified his recompositions not as an attempt to make the present adhere to obsolete stylistic norms, but rather as an effort to bring an artifact from the past up to the current level of development to enable it to function in the contemporary world. In a 1935 program note for the String Quartet Concerto, Schoenberg compared his recomposition to the arrangements of Handel by Brahms and Mozart, though he acknowledges that he had gone further than his distinguished predecessors:

I have not limited myself, as they did, to expunging sequences and uninteresting figure-work and to enriching the texture; instead, especially in the third and fourth movements, whose insufficiency with respect to thematic invention and development could satisfy no sincere contemporary of ours, I have acted quite freely and independently, and, while employing what was workable, undertaken an entirely new structure.53

Robert Morgan has argued that this historical stance evident in works such as the Cello Concerto depends on a well-defined sense of the aesthetic demands of the present and the conviction that the past is a vital part of a living, continuous tradition.54 In this context, Schoenberg’s recompositions and arrangements can be viewed as part of a blatantly inauthentic performance practice tradition that includes, to name only two composers in his immediate circle, Mahler’s arrangements of Bach and his revision of Beethoven’s Ninth—both of which Schoenberg performed—and Busoni’s transcriptions of Bach, Schoenberg, and many others. The idea of the present as the culmination of an inexorable progression toward the future finds a striking expression in the previously cited 1932 letter to Casals. In a


54 He views authentic performance practice conversely as evidence that “we no longer ‘bring it up to date,’ for we have no clear idea of what ‘up to date means.’ ” Morgan, “Tradition, Anxiety, and the Current Musical Scene,” 66–69.
remarkable historical retrograde of the evolutionary progression from Bach to his own compositions that he described in "National Music," Schoenberg portrays the recomposition as a process of drawing Monn’s piece forward through time almost, but not quite, into the present.

I think I’ve succeeded in making the whole thing approximate, say, to Haydn’s style. In harmony I have sometimes gone a little (and sometimes rather more) beyond the limits of that style. But nowhere does it go much further than Brahms, anyway there are no dissonances other than those understood by the older theory of harmony; and: it is nowhere atonal!55

Schoenberg’s sincerity in such statements—his conviction that this process of what might be called “refamiliarization” was possible—is made manifest in his recomposition of the Monn concerto, which succeeds remarkably, and apparently without irony, in updating the eighteenth-century original to a style that would be at home at the end of the nineteenth century. Although in its harmony, as well as its innovative and diverse orchestration, the recomposition clearly travels “beyond the limits” of the original style, Monn’s thematic material is never exposed as old-fashioned or trivial. Unlike the String Quartet Concerto, which starkly emphasizes the passage of time between Handel and Schoenberg, the Cello Concerto has the effect of making Monn’s work sound modern, especially in the eerie second movement, which might be mistaken for a funeral march by Mahler. It was, in fact, the peculiar earnestness of the work that seems to have most puzzled a reviewer of the London premiere in November 1935:

This turned out to be Schöenberg’s “Pulcinella,” or perhaps his “Rhapsody in Blue.” A quaint production. What can Schöenberg be thinking of? He, as keen an intelligence as there is in the whole contemporary world of art, was surely not born to be funny. He jests with de-ficulty. Rude noises on the trumpet surely date from the day before yesterday. Many a lesser man would have made a merrier rag.

But perhaps the concerto was not meant to be funny. What is the

The Fragmentation of the Past

The need for "psychological criticism" becomes even more pressing when attempting to come to terms with the String Quartet Concerto. Schoenberg approached the task of reworking Handel’s concerto grosso in the summer of 1933 as a composer who regarded himself as both the embodiment of the German musical tradition and an exiled alien; Handel appeared to him simultaneously as a hallowed representative of that heritage and a suspect symbol of historical misunderstanding. That Schoenberg would have experienced uncertainties about the nature of the recomposition is hardly surprising. As I shall discuss below, the sketch evidence shows that in many respects the work seems to have taken shape as a continuation of the tradition-affirming and -extending project carried out in the Cello Concerto, a work he had completed only two months before taking up the Handel. Yet in contrast to the Cello Concerto, which modernized the original to bring it up to current expectations, the final form of the Handel Concerto emphasizes the rifts between the material and its development, thus seeming to call into question the possibility of connecting with the past.

A crucial distinction between the concerto and Schoenberg’s other recompositions and arrangements is its stylistic heterogeneity, not only within individual movements but also in regard to the four movements as a whole. The Largo e piano second movement is the least transformed from Handel’s original; besides changing the orchestration and enriching the harmony with additional inner voices, Schoenberg altered only the final cadence to lead to the new key of the transposed third movement. (A sketch for this modulatory passage can be seen at the end of the second movement in Pl. 1.) The modifica-

56 The first performance of the work was given by Emanuel Feuermann with Sir Thomas Beecham conducting the B.B.C. orchestra. This review appeared in the Daily Telegraph (London), 8 November 1935, and is quoted in Arnold Schönberg Sämtliche Werke, Abteilung 7: Reihe B, XXI. See also Arnold Schoenberg Correspondence, 187–213.

57 The kinship between the two pieces is suggested by Schoenberg’s jotting down the main theme from the first movement of the Monn on an early sketch for the beginning of the String Quartet Concerto (see ASI Mfl. 2095).

58 Schoenberg reads the work as a four-movement symphony by interpreting the initial Largo as a slow introduction to the first fugal movement, and by the transposition of the third movement to D major, thus resulting in the sequence of keys Bb–g–D–Bb.
tions are more substantial in the last movement, which consists of a measure-by-measure reworking of Handel’s themes, combined with material from the third movement. In the opening Largo-Allegro Schoenberg deviates from the original still further, with numerous reharmonizations, added contrapuntal parts, and several new sections that depart polemically from Handel’s style—most notably the remarkable cadenza, with its chromatic harmony and novel timbral effects. These new passages, however, preserve the character of interpolations, for they do not affect the surrounding music. This segmentation of old and new is due in large part to the concentration of the added material in the solo string quartet, which is limited, after an initial statement of the fugue subject, to episodic material and marginal commentary.

The third movement involves the most radical reinterpretation of Handel’s work. Unlike the rest of the concerto, in which the source material predominates and retains some measure of its integrity and identity, the third movement enacts a clear stylistic confrontation between the past and present, with Handel’s original becoming increasingly fragmentary and indistinct. Schoenberg’s recomposition exaggerates an internal contrast between the two sections that make up the movement, which he identified as A (mm. 1–4) and B (mm. 5–16) on Handel’s score given in Plate 1.Thematically and tonally stable, the A sections with one exception present a single, well-defined key. In all but one appearance, A consists of a six-beat melodic phrase that is repeated virtually unchanged or with a cadential extension as in measures 3–4. In contrast to the diatonic stability and melodic consistency of the main theme, the B sections are motivically diverse, with dissonant harmonies and chromatic voice leading. The sketch

59 Kropfinger argues that such cyclic connections between the movements bring the work closer to the large, single-movement forms like the Chamber Symphony, Op. 9 (Kropfinger, “Bemerkungen zu Schönbergs Händel-Bearbeitung,” 62).
60 The virtuosic solo string quartet parts were written for and premiered by the Kolisch Quartet. The lack of clearly differentiated concertino and ripieno groups in Handel’s work may have recommended this particular concerto by allowing greater freedom in working out the solo parts. Schoenberg justified the work as a kind of training piece to prepare performers for the difficulties of modern music: “It fulfills a part of my intention to set new technical tasks for individual instruments, which I propose to carry out further in a piano and a violin concerto. It was not my concern here to win new colors or sounds from the instruments, though the piece is scarcely lacking in that. But I wanted to apply certain unutilized possibilities, fingerings, ways of playing, which should enable instrumentalists who contend with them to play modern themes and melodies with accomplishment” (Arnold Schönberg Sämtliche Werke, Abteilung 7: Reihe B, XXI [my translation]).
evidence suggests that the working out of the interaction between these two sections posed Schoenberg’s central compositional problem in the concerto.

Over the course of Handel’s Andante (diagrammed in Ex. 1 and labeled according to Schoenberg’s analytical indications), A and B move through several tonal areas before returning to the tonic. The regular succession of the two sections is disturbed only following the mediant statement of the theme in A5, where the tonic recurs in A6 without an intervening B—a formal point Schoenberg later marked with the addition of a cadenza. Schoenberg’s recomposition, diagrammed in Example 2, transposes the movement to D major, changes the meter to 4/8, and increases the tempo to allegretto grazioso. He preserves the overall formal structure but considerably transforms every section by adding contrapuntal voices, altering the harmonic organization, and expanding or compressing the thematic material. Some of the changes can be attributed to Schoenberg’s imposition of the more “highly evolved” sonata form onto Handel’s score. This updating consists of modifications to the initial statements of A and B, a developmental reworking of the central sections, the addition of a cadenza, and the replacement of Handel’s conclusion by a modified return of A1 and B1 to serve as a recapitulation. In addition, Schoenberg adds many tempo changes throughout to demarcate the main formal units.

But Schoenberg’s recomposition in the third movement far exceeds the thematic and harmonic changes necessary to articulate a sonata form. It differs substantially both from his alterations to the other movements and from his procedures in the other arrangements or recompositions. The range and extent of these transformations, as well as the resulting stylistic dissonances, can be best illustrated by examining the fragmentary restatement of the main theme in A5 and the passages that frame it. The development builds to an enormous climax in section B4. Schoenberg bases these measures (mm. 72–77) on a formulaic dotted cadential figure that concludes several of the B sections. This formulaic material becomes disruptive and destabilizing both harmonically and metrically, as the initial one-measure

61 Despite the lack of a separate concertino, Hübner describes this as a “typical concerto movement” with measures 1–4 as the ritornello and measures 5–16 as the “solo” sections, differentiated by the emphasis on the first violin, sequential structure, and modulation (Hübner, “Schönberg und Händel,” 796).

62 It is noteworthy that the cadential figure does not occur at the end of B4 in Handel’s score, appearing instead—and for the only time— appended to the following A5. This blurring of thematic identity is developed more explicitly in the cadenza.
Example 1
Formal overview of Handel's Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, no. 7, third movement, labeled according to Schoenberg's annotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Andante</th>
<th>Adagio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2
Formal overview of Schoenberg's Concerto for String Quartet, third movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allegro grazioso</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Recapitulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1</th>
<th>B1</th>
<th>A2</th>
<th>B2</th>
<th>A3</th>
<th>(B3)</th>
<th>A4</th>
<th>B4</th>
<th>A5</th>
<th>Cadenza</th>
<th>A1'</th>
<th>B1'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm. 1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| D:1 | V | VI | VII | IV | III# | I | I |
sections fragment into overlapping statements that cross the bar line to pile up on each other and the additional contrapuntal parts. As if in response to the violence and confusion of this passage, the A theme returns transformed from the original minor mode to the major mediant F♯ (Ex. 3, mm. 78–79). Shorn of the chromatic counterpoints it had accumulated, the theme appears in a version more like the original than any other passage in the movement. In the context of the conspicuously modern development that precedes it, the tonal clarity, restrained scoring, slow tempo, and dolce expression marking of this statement of the theme create an air of isolation and distance. That the theme breaks off after a single measure, giving way to the coda for the string quartet (mm. 80–85), only accentuates how tenuous it has become.

Drawing on motives from the A and B sections but breaking down any thematic identity, the coda begins by pivoting tonally between F♯ major and the D major of the recapitulation. But the sense of tonality evaporates as quartal sonorities moving in parallel motion displace the triadic functional harmonies and tonal voice leading. This process takes place gradually starting in measure 83 as each group of three chords shifts from triads to harmonies built on fourths. By the beginning of measure 85, the second-inversion D-minor triad is treated as a passing dissonance between the two (0257) tetrachords that surround it. The end of the coda in measure 85 attempts to restore normal tonal functioning by transforming the final quartal sonority on B♭ into a minor triad (thus the enharmonic mediant of the preceding F♯), but this too dissolves into an ambiguous half-diminished seventh, which only on the last thirty-second note becomes a first inversion dominant ninth of V in D major to prepare, with considerable diffidence, the recapitulation.

If Schoenberg’s additions to the first movement function as slightly bizarre parenthetical insertions defined in reference to the prevailing Handelian style, here, in contrast, the antiquity of Handel’s music is exposed. Interposed unsteadily between the coda, with its thematic and tonal dissolution, and the turbulent development section, the statement of the main thematic material of the movement in A♭ sounds alien and anachronistic. This passage thus reverses the symbolism of the progression from tonality to atonality in the Second

63 The three-note ascending and descending motives in measures 83–85 initially derive from the figure in the preceding measure but recall also the beginning of A—as in the statement of A♭ (m. 78)—as well as the descending figure that begins B in measure 23 and measure 45.
Example 3

Example 3 (continued)

1.Fl
2.Fl
1.Ob
2.Ob
1.Kl
2.Kl
1.2.Fg
1.Hr
1.Trp
Hrf
1.S-Gg
2.S-Gg
S-Br
S-Vcl
II.Gg
Br
Vcl

poco adagio

This content downloaded by the authorized user from 192.168.72.223 on Sun, 2 Dec 2012 18:01:22 PM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions
Example 3 (continued)

quasi cadenza
colla parte
(meno lento)

I.S-Gg

2.S-Gg

S-Br

S-Vcl

poco rit.
molto rit.
String Quartet, so that Handel’s unadorned diatonic theme, and not Schoenberg’s tonally ambiguous reworking of the surrounding measures, evokes the “Luft von anderen Planeten.” With this deliberate estrangement Schoenberg departs from his practice in the Cello Concerto and the other arrangements. Unlike these compositions in which he endeavors to make the original work sound up-to-date and fully realized, the third movement of the String Quartet Concerto forces the listener to recognize how foreign Handel’s music is. This process of defamiliarization in the Handel Concerto might be compared to Stravinsky’s reworkings of eighteenth-century style in Pulcinella. But when Stravinsky evokes “a distanced, ironized past—betokening a stance of highly self-conscious contemporaneity”—it is as an outsider from his vantage point at an “angle to the German stem.”64 With Schoenberg’s concerto, on the contrary, it is as if the

“German stem” itself has splintered. Rather than remaking Handel in his own image, the String Quartet Concerto offers evidence of how problematic and contested Schoenberg’s own identity had become.65

Reconstructing the Third Movement

The most striking evidence for Schoenberg’s uncertain relationship to tradition is the very different character of his original conception of the work as manifested in his treatment of the A and B sections in the third-movement sketches.66 Whereas the final version exaggerates the inherent character of conflict in the piece, the sketches show that Schoenberg initially planned to minimize the contrasting features. The String Quartet Concerto was thus initially more closely linked with his earlier recompositions and arrangements, as well as with writings such as “National Music,” all defensive gestures against the forces that sought to brand him as an outside agitator.67 Something of this comes through in his comments about the concerto at the conclusion of a draft for his 1934 Princeton lecture—one of his

65 Joseph Straus has provided a useful framework with which to begin to understand the sharp historical and stylistic disjunctions in the Handel Concerto. Adapting Harold Bloom’s notion of an “anxiety of influence,” Straus characterizes Schoenberg’s relationship to tradition as an Oedipal struggle marked by anxiety, anger, and repression. See Straus, Remaking the Past, 11–16. Straus’s formulations provide a foundation for many aspects of the following commentary, but to come to terms with the peculiar characteristics of the String Quartet Concerto and its connection to Schoenberg’s contemporary writings these general historical considerations must be placed within the specific context of the early 1930s. The conflict that concerns Straus is that between modernist composers and the tonal tradition in its broadest sense, a phenomenon he calls “the anxiety of style.” Yet the String Concerto marks a very specific confrontation between Handel and Schoenberg at a time when the struggles to define tradition and lay claim to both the past and the future moved beyond Bloom’s “psychic battlefield” to an actual fight for survival. For a pointed criticism of Straus’s historical framework as well as his reading of Bloom, see Richard Taruskin, “Revising Revision,” this Journal 46 (1993): 128–34.


67 Anthony Pople has suggested that in the 1930s the concerto itself had become strongly marked ideologically as a conservative genre (Pople, Berg: Violin Concerto, Cambridge Music Handbooks [Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 1–8).
earliest in America and the first on twelve-tone composition—in which he offers the work as evidence against the frequent charge that he was some sort of musical mathematician:68

It is a very free transcription, and in a number of places you will hear very little Handel in it, nor will you always recognize his style, although it is tonal throughout. I am quite sure that musical people of all persuasions will like it very much and will find that it is spontaneous, and not cerebral, and I myself am quite pleased with this piece of work.69

The compositional materials include the annotated copy of Handel’s score, numerous individual sketches for all but the second movement, and drafts for the last two movements.70 Significantly, sketches for the third movement appear together with those for the first and fourth, indicating that Schoenberg was involved with it at every stage of the compositional process. The lack of specific dates on the sketches prevents a firm determination of the compositional chronology. Yet the mixing of preliminary notations for the first and third movements in a single bifolio makes it very likely that the early third movement sketches originated at the same time that he composed the first movement in May 1933, while the revisions probably date from the summer months in France when he was completing the work.

From the earliest stages of the sketching, Schoenberg focused on the interaction between the theme and the contrasting section in the third movement. Schoenberg’s annotations to Handel’s score, given in

68 A Berlin critic, for example, described the Variations for Orchestra, Op. 31, as “calculated and excogitated musical mathematics dictated by intellect alone to one obsessed with a single eccentric idea” (Fritz Ohrmann, Signale [Berlin], 12 December 1928, quoted in Nicolas Slonimsky, ed., Lexicon of Musical Invective: Critical Assaults on Composers since Beethoven’s Time [Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1965], 161).


70 The sketches are transcribed in Arnold Schönberg Sämtliche Werke, Abteilung 7: Reihe B, Band 27, Teil 2, 146–99. Two additional leaves with sketches for the third and fourth movements found among Alma Mahler’s papers in the Library of Congress are discussed in Claudio Spies, “Two Leaves of Sketches.” I will refer to the sketch pages by the Arnold Schoenberg Institute microfilm number; individual sketches will be identified by the labels assigned them in the Arnold Schönberg Sämtliche Werke (hereafter SW’ B41–73).
Plate 1, suggest that he found the character and dimensions of the B sections particularly problematic. With the exception of A2, where the repetition of the theme is omitted (mm. 18–19), all the annotations concentrate on the statements of the B material. He subdivided the first B into four parts of varying lengths, which consist of the subsections he labeled 1–3 and a passage he planned to omit (indicated by the “X,” mm. 10–14). Schoenberg’s initial approach to the contrasting sections was to reduce their overall dimensions and minimize their contrasting features. On the score he indicated the excision of the substantial “X” passage from measures 10–14, crossed out the characteristic sequential repetitions in measure 7 and measures 9–10, and by means of the arrows on the second page suggested a substantial reordering, moving A3 in measure 24 directly following A2 in measure 18. In addition to these large-scale alterations, he made a number of comments about details that needed to be changed, such as “andere Bässe” in measures 5 and 27.

He continued this process of reconstructing the relationship between the two sections on sketch pages ASI Mfl. 2093 (SW B41–42) and ASI Mfl. 2096, given in Plate 2. The diagram attached to the top right corner (transcribed in SW B40) maps out Handel’s entire third movement, showing the location, length, and key of each section. Schoenberg addressed the imbalance between the total of twenty-three measures for A and thirty-seven for B, noted in a tabulation at the bottom of the diagram, in the sketches below. Carrying forward with the alterations indicated on the score, he further expanded the theme while drastically reducing the contrasting material. The sketch on the top system (SW B26) presents the original melodic line of A, transposed to D major, notated in 4/8 rather than the original common time, and with the second phrase shifted up an octave. To this eight-measure unit he added a new middle section on the third stave that begins as a free inversion of the theme (and which also refers to a variant of A that appears in Handel’s A4, mm. 30–32). The seven-measure passage moves through the submediant and supertonic leading to the dominant to prepare the restatement of the opening melody, indicated on the sketch by the dotted upbeat figure.

With the new section and the repetition of the first part, the initial thematic statement has been expanded to twenty-two measures. The contrasting section, on the other hand, is dramatically compressed. Beginning on the seventh stave, Schoenberg sketched a version of B that retains aspects of the three subsections he identified on the score, but is greatly curtailed and without the sequential repetitions. Example 4, indicating the Handel passages taken over into the new B
Example 4

(a) Handel’s first violin, mm. 5–16, labeled after Schoenberg’s annotations. 
section, shows Schoenberg’s interest in presenting Handel’s material more concisely, particularly with his combination of the defining melodic features of the first two subsections in measure 2. The revision eliminates over two-thirds of the original music, reducing what would have lasted twenty-four measures in this meter to seven.\footnote{The verbal and musical indications at the end of ASI Mfl. 2096 refer to the annotations on the score and concern the continuation of the passage. This plan differs from the first draft, as I discuss below, in that it includes a B2 section between A2 and A3. There are also other early sketches for the B section that remain closer to Handel’s original; see SW B49–50.}

Schoenberg preserved the new version of the theme and an even more simplified contrasting section in his first draft for the movement (ASI Mfl. 2097; Pl. 3, mm. 23–33). The twenty-two measures of A1—already very close to their final form—span the first three systems, with B1 beginning at the crossed out passage at measure 23. The compressed B section (transcribed in Ex. 5) does retain aspects of its original melodic and harmonic character, especially with the new chromatic bass line responding to the call for “andere Bässe” in the score. But the reduction in length and thematic diversity essentially demotes the contrasting material to little more than a transitional passage between statements of the theme. Schoenberg suppressed B still further in the draft by completely eliminating its second appearance in B2, so that the statement of A2 on the dominant in measures 30–32 leads directly to A3 on the submediant in measure 33. The remaining B section in the draft (Pl. 3, mm. 39–41) maintains the low profile and abbreviated dimensions of the reworked B1.\footnote{See the transcription in SW B54, 168–69. It is not clear what Schoenberg intended to put in the empty three measures of the draft (mm. 42–44), though it is likely that it would have been a continuation of the B material.} There is thus every indication that Schoenberg intended to carry out this strategy of deemphasizing the contrasting section for the remainder of the movement.

That Schoenberg would go to such lengths to downplay the contrasting section seems peculiar considering that its chromatic motion, dissonance, irregularity, and formal fluidity would seem much closer to his own musical aesthetics than the somewhat static and repetitive theme. Not that he leaves A altogether untouched. In addition to the new, more developmental middle section, he introduces a chromatic counterpoint—sketched at the bottom of the first draft (Pl. 3, and see SW B58, B55, B56)—that becomes very important in the finished work (see, for example, mm. 16–17). But both additions serve more to set off the stolidity of the theme than to alter its
character fundamentally. His treatment of A and B in the early sketches and drafts seems, in fact, to be less a matter of “removing the defects of the Handelian style” than of suppressing elements closer to a Schoenbergian aesthetic that may have existed in the original.\textsuperscript{73}

That Schoenberg felt that there was something uncharacteristic in his initial treatment of the musical opposition of A and B is evident in his extensive revision of the first draft (Pl. 3). While the precise chronology cannot be determined, it is likely that he made these changes in the summer of 1933 when he undertook the greater part of the work on the third movement. He began by heavily crossing out the

\textsuperscript{73} Claudio Spies discusses a similar example of Schoenberg’s curious blindness to what might seem most congenial to him in Handel’s music. In an extensive annotation on a draft for the opening of the fourth movement, Schoenberg claims to be “at a loss” as to how to “make sense of the piece” with its “obvious peculiarity, where a ‘theme’ is stated in the first 4–5 or six measures and never reappears; yet the first part (as well as the second) is supposed to be repeated.” He further observes that the structure of the theme relies less on the theme as such than on the motivic and rhythmic development of its “smallest motivic components.” Spies argues rightly that Schoenberg’s comments are perplexing, since the features of the movement he singles out as problematic are precisely those that might be expected to attract him. Spies, “Two Leaves of Sketches.”
compressed B section and the remainder of the first draft through measure 48. Then on another page (ASI Mfl. 2098) he began a new draft starting at measure 23 with a very different reworking of B1. This revised version of the contrasting material contains nearly all the essential features of the passage as it appears in the final score, measures 23–42. The revision restores most of Handel’s original B1 in some form, thus preserving the basic character of all three parts he had identified as well as the long omitted passage “X,” resulting in a section of twenty measures, rather than the seven of the first draft. Moreover, instead of smoothing out its differences, the defining characteristics of each subsection are emphasized, and in places distorted, to create an extreme contrast with the theme.

Rather than resolving the imbalance and tension he evidently sensed between A and B, and reconciling this precompositionally as in the first draft, he seems to have decided to make their opposition the focus of the work. While he began the composition by seeming to suppress the Schoenbergian aspects of Handel’s work, he now forcibly thrusts them to the musical forefront. If Schoenberg conceived the String Quartet Concerto as a demonstration both of the continuity of tradition and of his place in its unfolding, this conceptual framework was no longer tenable by the time he completed the work. Instead of correcting “the defects of the Handelian style,” he exposes how little of the past he felt there was left to salvage. After his initial uncertainties, Schoenberg continued the draft through the recapitulation with apparent ease. Even where the sketches become more extensive at the end of the movement, they do not depart significantly from the finished work.

Following the tripartite statement of the theme, the beginning of B1 now functions as a jarring disruption (Ex. 6). Schoenberg exaggerated the dissonant harmony and chromatic voice leading of these measures in Handel’s original by superimposing the component motives, transforming the repetitive neighbor-note figure into an angular minor ninth in the solo strings, and harmonizing each sixteenth with widely spaced diminished seventh chords (Ex. 6, mm. 23–24; and compare to Pl. 1, mm. 5–8).\footnote{The concentration of Schoenberg’s motivic work in the score is evident in his presentation of the diminished seventh harmony in the strings in measure 23. Instead of Handel’s repeated chords, the cello and bass present a slightly varied inversion of the opening figure of B, while the first violins anticipate the half-step neighbor note figure of the next measure. Unlike the early draft, which omitted the sequential}
inflections to Handel’s harmonic style, a norm that is firmly restored in the second movement. The contrasting section in measures 23–42, with its much higher level of both harmonic and stylistic dissonance, and its extreme discontinuities in rhythm, texture, and dynamics, thus marks a transformation in the character of the work as a whole.

In the first version of B, Schoenberg attempted to meld the subsections into a single homogeneous statement; now, however, he emphasizes the diversity of the component segments. Contrasting with the disruptive opening, the brief second part (mm. 28–29), with its shimmering orchestration and dolce melodic lines, is diatonic and tonally stable. Although the following measures begin in the same serene manner, Schoenberg modifies the harmony and phrase structure to subvert the tonal clarity and the thematic identity. Thus the leisurely descending figure from Handel’s measures 11–13 (Ex. 7a) becomes a jagged descending figure (Ex. 7b).

The remainder of the movement further complicates the relationship between the A and B sections with the contrasting material emerging as the dominant force, while the main theme becomes increasingly tentative. The beginning of the development (mm. 43–63) seemingly returns to Schoenberg’s original strategy of emphasizing A and suppressing B. While the contrasting sections themselves are compressed (see B2 in mm. 45–47 and B3 in m. 54), the defining characteristics of B increasingly pervade the statements of the theme, to the point where chromatic accompanimental material and variants of the theme itself soon overwhelm the remnants of the original.

The balance between A and B shifts at the end of the development, as discussed above, with the extended and climactic B4 (mm. 64–77), the partial, alienated statement of the theme in A5, and the collapse of thematic and tonal identity in the cadenza. The recapitulation further destabilizes Handel’s theme, emphasizing the stylistic heterogeneity of the movement. In keeping with the sonata-form model, Schoenberg bases the recapitulation on his reworked A1 and B1 from the exposition, rather than on the last two sections of Handel’s concerto.

repetitions of the first part of B, here he preserves the threefold statement, as can be traced in the woodwind Hauptstimmen, though the third appearance is compressed into a single measure (m. 27).

75 In B2, for example, the oboe and first solo violin in measures 45–46 present a drastically condensed version of the first violin from Handel’s measures 20–21. Along with this temporal compression, Schoenberg intensifies the motivic content by adding imitative entries in the clarinet, flute, and oboe that simultaneously echo both the initial oboe figure and the ascending motion in the strings. B3 is truncated to only a single measure.
Example 6
Example 6 (continued)

1.Fl
1.Ob
1.Kl
1.2.Fg
1.2.Hr
1.2.Trp
Pos
1.S-Gg
2.S-Gg
S-Br
S-Vcl
I.Gg
II.Gg
Br
Vcl

This content downloaded by the authorized user from 192.168.72.223 on Sun, 2 Dec 2012 18:01:22 PM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions
Example 6 (continued)

1. Fl
2. Fl
1. Ob
2. Ob
1.2. Kl
1.2. Fg
1.2. Hr
1.2. Trp
Pos
Glckspl
Trgl
Klav
Hrf
1.S-Gg
2.S-Gg
S-Br
S-Vcl
1.Gg
2.Gg
Br
Vcl
Kbs
Example 7
(a) Handel, Concerto Grosso, mm. 11-13, melody and bass only

(b) Schoenberg, String Quartet Concerto, mm. 31-36, melody and bass only

grosso. Although the recapitulation corresponds fairly closely in overall content to the exposition, the properties of both the theme and the contrasting material are significantly altered. The recapitulation begins in an unambiguous D major with the theme encrusted with garlands of trills and triadic ornamentation, in stark contrast to the cadenza’s melodic austerity and tonal ambiguity. But during the inversionsal middle part, the theme begins to fracture timbrally and registrally while simultaneously modulating until it dissolves in measure 103 back into the idiom of the cadenza (Ex. 8). The return to the opening of the theme in measure 104, unlike the comparable passage in the exposition (mm. 16-22), is hesitant and incomplete. Only shards of the theme remain, appearing first on the flat sub-mediant—notably Handel’s original key for the movement: Bb—and then on the flat supertonic, as if unable to locate the tonic.

The concluding B section, on the other hand, is reworked to be more stable and continuous. The initial dissonant passages remain,
Example 8
Example 8 (continued)

but the spiky string interjections are now subsidiary to the cello Hauptstimme (mm. 110–14). From this point on, the recapitulation diverges substantially from the exposition with the addition of a new passage based on “X” (mm. 115–16). Further underscoring the distance Schoenberg had come from his first conception of the movement, this material that had originally seemed the most expendable part of Handel’s work now appears in a lush Brahmsian trans-
formation. Moreover, in a final breakdown of thematic identity, "X" usurps a variant of the long cadential figure from A1 in the exposition (compare mm. 117–24 to mm. 18–22), while other material based on A appears in the solo viola and cello as a counterpoint. Even the extraordinary serenity of the concluding measures—extraordinary in terms of the rest of the movement and in the context of Schoenberg’s output as a whole—does not permit an unproblematic appearance of A. Against pianissimo tonic and submediant triads (mm. 124–29), the solo strings attempt a final statement of A, but the four voices disintegrate into separate variants of the component motives without being able to restore the theme.

The Ruins of Tradition

On 17 September 1933, the day after completing the Handel Concerto, Schoenberg wrote to Berg:

Until yesterday I was working on the String Quartet Concerto. And as soon as I begin working again . . . I’ll take up the revision of my drama Der biblische Weg. I won’t be able to think of Moses und Aron until after that, if I get to it at all. It is strange that all my larger works (beginning with Gurrelieder) have been in danger of remaining torsos: Jakobsleiter, Der biblische Weg, Moses und Aron, the counterpoint book, and the other theoretical works. Will I finish it? At the moment the requisite interest is devoted elsewhere.76

In a larger sense, the representation in the Handel Concerto of a past recapturable only in fragments might be seen to signify his realization on some level that the tradition that had sustained him and his work had itself become a torso. Schoenberg’s revolutionary impulse, manifested most strongly in the period of the break with tonality (1908–10), had always been rooted in a deep conviction in the historical necessity and inevitability of his development.77 Secure in his continuity with the past, he pushed forward with little doubt about the correctness of his path.78 Schoenberg vividly described this sense of tradition in some notes he made about Mahler, probably in 1911:

76 Brand, Hailey, and Harris, The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence: Selected Letters, 445.
78 Morgan uses the image of a corridor to describe Schoenberg's historical consciousness during this period: “The walker—the musician—always faces forward; and since he never looks back, what he knows of the past, of what lies behind him, is
Let us found a new aesthetic. Or at least let us send the old one to the devil. Because here there are works for which the old one no longer fits. But the new one will also fit the old works. All by itself, without our trying. Not looking at it, not looking backwards, and it will work.79

By the summer of 1933, however, he had lost this assurance. The increasingly retrospective turn in Schoenberg’s thinking, the need to look back and demonstrate both to himself and to others the validity of his path, is clear in the writings and works discussed above. In a letter to Webern from the spring of 1932 he described the project of cataloguing the huge corpus of his unpublished writings: “I am intensely busy sifting, sorting, and filing the ‘little manuscripts’ I’ve been piling up for some 15 years.” He explicitly attributed this concern for the past to the uncertainties of the present: “There are often several days at a time when I don’t feel like sitting down at my desk to do anything that requires concentration. The times aren’t such that one can always keep one’s mind on one’s work and let one’s thoughts run freely.”80

With the destabilization of his sense of tradition it became increasingly difficult for Schoenberg to define a single path forward. Morgan has argued that the stylistic pluralism and eclectic borrowings in recent music are signs of a new stage of musical evolution resulting from the lack composers feel of a native language or compositional mainstream. 81 Schoenberg certainly did not ever reach this new stage, although his need to affirm a continuous German tradition in his later writings, such as “My Evolution” or “Composition with Twelve-Tones,” suggests that he felt his allegiance to this idea was no longer self-evident. Yet as with the features of the Handel Concerto traced

limited to what he picks up on the way, to what has ‘come down’ to him (or rather with him) as part of an enduring tradition” (Morgan, “Tradition, Anxiety, and the Current Musical Scene,” 58).


80 Christensen, From Arnold Schoenberg’s Literary Legacy, 4.

above, the eclecticism of the works of his American years anticipates the broad availability of historical styles and self-conscious manipulation of earlier music in the output of composers we do not normally associate with Schoenberg, such as Crumb, Foss, Berio, and Rochberg.\textsuperscript{82} Thus interspersed with the “mainstream” twelve-tone works (such as the Fourth String Quartet, Op. 37; the \textit{Ode to Napoleon}, Op. 41; and the Piano Concerto, Op. 42—all markedly heterogeneous themselves) are several tonal compositions (for example, the Second Chamber Symphony, Op. 38; the \textit{Variations on a Recitative} for Organ in D minor, Op. 40; the Theme and Variations for Wind Band in G minor, Op. 43 [a and b]; the \textit{Kol Nidre}, Op. 39; the arrangement of the Brahms G-minor Piano Quartet; and the Three Folk Songs for Chorus, Op. 49). Significantly, Schoenberg now assigned opus numbers to all but the Brahms.\textsuperscript{83} The reemergence, at the end of Schoenberg’s life, of aspects of his pre–World War I “expressionism” in the String Trio, Op. 45 and the Phantasy, Op. 47 is still another sign of this stylistic permeability.\textsuperscript{84}

This is not to deny the significant eclecticism evident in earlier stages of Schoenberg’s career in works such as the \textit{Suite}, Op. 29, which juxtaposes baroque and classical forms with folk tunes and contemporary dance rhythms. But in the earlier periods it is much easier to define a set of compositional concerns that makes it possible to differentiate primary from secondary stylistic attributes or mainstream from marginal works. Such a single, overarching aesthetic project is lacking for the American years. Any simple explanatory model would come up against the diversity of a repertory Adorno characterized as

\textsuperscript{82} Indeed, Carl Dahlhaus wrote in 1983—though not without considerable exaggeration—“all the impulses that emerged in the last decade were already present (albeit under different historical conditions) in Schoenberg’s late works” (Dahlhaus, “Schoenberg’s Late Works,” in his \textit{Schoenberg and the New Music}, trans. Derrick Puffett and Alfred Clayton [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 168).

\textsuperscript{83} A remarkable document related to the Brahms arrangement, thus dating from 1937 or after, provides a poignant representation of the uncertainty of Schoenberg’s identity. On the autograph–fan of Johann Strauss’s step-daughter, Brahms wrote out the opening phrase of the \textit{Blue Danube} with the note, “leider nicht von Johannes Brahms.” Paraphrasing this famous inscription, Schoenberg first attempted to copy Brahms’s handwriting and signature. He then copied down the beginning measures of the G-minor Piano Quartet, adding—now in his own handwriting—“Leider von Johannes Brahms,” finally continuing in English: “only orchestrated by Arnold Schoenberg.” The document is reproduced and discussed in Walter Frisch, \textit{Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation} (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 76.

not works, but paradigms of a possible music. The idea of music itself grows all the more transparent as the works insist less and less on their appearance. They begin to acquire the character of the fragment, the shadow of which followed Schoenberg’s art through his life. His last pieces give a fragmentary impression, not merely in their brevity but in their shrivelled diction. The dignity of the great works devolves on splinters.85

It could be argued that by focusing so much attention on the third movement one risks overlooking the exuberant and affirmative Hornpipe that follows. Seemingly shaking off the tensions and doubts of the third movement, the Hornpipe abandons the striking timbral effects and unusual harmonies of earlier sections of the work. But the sense of high spirits and self-assurance begins to disintegrate as references to the third movement start to surface in measure 67. Although the conclusion of the Hornpipe builds to a triumphant and virtuosic climax, the final cadence suddenly dissolves to a hushed, static recall of the beginning of the third movement theme. Again in Handel’s original key of Bb major, the first half of the opening phrase of the theme disintegrates as it passes between the low strings, horns, and trombones. The concerto thus ends with something like an admission that despite Schoenberg’s best efforts to forge “an entirely new structure,” only the ruins of the past remain.

State University of New York at Stony Brook

ABSTRACT

Arnold Schoenberg began his Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra “freely transcribed” from Handel’s Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, no. 7 in May 1933 as a professor at the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin. When he completed the work in September he was an exile in Paris, recently reconverted to Judaism and preparing to travel to the United States where he would spend the rest of his life. The tensions and discontinuities manifest in the creative process and in the completed score can offer new critical windows onto Schoenberg’s ideas of history and tradition, his position with respect to artistic trends in the 1920s and 1930s, and the eclecticism of his late style.