

Atonal Focus through a Tonal Idea: Manipulations of the major third in Berg's op. 5/2

One of the most beautiful characteristics in music is that with all its complexity that at some underlying level lies an inherent simplicity. Some codifying principle(s) exist that is (are) unique to each composer and to each work.

Communication of awareness by the composer regarding the consistency of his or her style is cryptic, as they could be lying even when attempting to be transparent while concealing their 'tricks'. Just as likely (maybe more than likely) could be that their style is buried within the subconscious and the act of composition merely brings it to the surface. Whether conscious or not, there are traits which make every composer and piece unique.

I find this a bit general and unnecessary.

Alban Berg's style is unique in how he manipulates expectations of the listener. That "the interaction of tonal and atonal elements can be accepted as a legitimate compositional procedure" (Lewis 85) not only produces ambiguity to intent, but intended to produce ambiguity. The dichotomy of tonality/atonality through the lens of this movement can be put simply: tonal materials being employed using atonal techniques¹. Through employing the opening major third sonority (04), and its larger set class partner sc (014), Berg establishes large scale structure in conjunction with surface relationships using primarily atonal compositional techniques.

Please put a full citation of Lewis at the first mention in a note.

¹ The disclaimer must be put that the reverse of this analysis can also be true, that music analysis can compare to looking through a prism, this is only one angle of many.

thesis

Zooming in on Berg's Use of Tonal Signifiers in Opus 5/2

Joshua Harris

Alban Berg's opus 5/2 for clarinet and piano hovers on the border between tonal and atonal languages. A cursory glance at the score reveals tertian sonorities, but at the first note of the clarinet, the listener hears an atonal sound world. This paper will explore the interaction between tonality and atonality in this piece. *open*

Tertian harmonic constructs are fundamental to tonal harmony and tonal composition. These harmonies pervade the piano part from the very beginning. Major and minor triads (set class (037)), as well as dyads that imply these triads (thirds, for example), dot the surface, especially in the right hand of the piano part. The clarinet part, at the middle ground level, outlines major triads.

Christopher Lewis discusses the interaction of tonality and atonality in Berg's opus 5/3. He warns the analyst that "it will not be enough to find an occasional...tonal focus," and that "[this tonal focus] must be shown to be not simply a result of incidental surface relationships, but a complex of procedures so deeply imbedded in the musical fabric that it serves to articulate the structure of the piece" (Lewis, 85).¹ The clear tonal signifiers in opus 5/2 prompted me to look deeper for tonal direction at the background level. I found that although Berg uses tonality in transparent ways on the surface and middle ground of the music, it is ultimately subordinate to an atonal structure. He does this by abstracting tonal signifiers and

this does imply a structural, transpositional approach.

this is no criticism but at some point (maybe not even in this paper) you should be ready to unpack the language of this word.

¹ Christopher Lewis, "Tonal Focus in Atonal Music: Berg's op. 5/3," *Music Theory Spectrum*, vol. 3 (Spring, 1981), pp. 84-97.

Berg's piece for Clarinet and Piano Opus 5, no.2

MUTH 5370/Analysis Technique III

Instructor: Dr. David Schwarz

10/15/2010/ Sunim Kwag

The second of Berg's piece for Clarinet and Piano Opus 5 is an example of operation of tonal focus in an atonal work based on pitch-class sets. This is an implied tonal piece with its background tonal center of B flat, which is predominated by five-notes set in piano part.

According to Allen Forte's *The Structure of Atonal Music*, the equivalence of two pitch class sets is defined as follows: '....two pitch -class sets will be said to be equivalent if and only if they are reducible to the same prime form by transposition or by inversion followed by transposition'. This is not the same thing as saying that any two sets with the same total interval content will be regarded as equivalent. In Berg's piece for Clarinet and Piano Opus.5 no.2, some are arranged pitch - symmetrically, but most are not. However, these symmetry structures contribute to unification of the music. Therefore, in my paper, I will analyze this piece according to Forte-style pitch class theory and look for all possible symmetry structure in this music

This piece might divide the movement into four parts (mm. 1-3, 3-4, 5-7, 8-9) by tempo, texture, melodies gesture. Each of the four parts presents a single gesture by the clarinet.

→ it's not clear what approach you're taking

Berg's Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano Opus 5 were written in 1913. It was the beginning of the new, 20th century, the epoch of many cultural and political changes and cataclysms. In music, in particular, ^{the} beginning of ^a new century presented an explosion of artistic styles and movements such as Fauvism, Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, Minimalism, Primitivism, Neoclassicism, etc. Wars, revolutions, and total urbanization (came to a measured life of everyone pushing for an attempt of finding a new sense of the life.) That is one of the reasons in particular art had so many tendencies and styles. Great Romantic epoch ^{who} "said goodbye" ^{→ too colloquial} in late works of Wagner, Mahler, and Richard Strauss. Berg's Opus 5, though was written only a few years later than last monumental works of Wagner and Mahler, is so contrasting in many ways: a length, form, content, and principles of its musical language. However, Berg's Opus 5 has a strong connection to the tonal system of the previous century. It also brings an attempt to disorganize a tonal system in its goal of finding a new language to express the composer's unique musical ideas. The significance of Opus 5 no. 2 is in the coexistence of two principles of musical organization, which supplement and develop each other. Opus 5 no.2 is a "rewarding example of the operation of tonal focus in an atonal work".¹

this is not quite idiomatic

thesis

The following is an analytical view of op.5/2 which will explore Berg's innovations in terms of the coordination of tonal and atonal elements, beginning with a consideration of the form.

thesis

¹ Lewis, Christopher. "Tonal Focus in Atonal Music: Berg's op.5/3" in Music Theory Spectrum, University of California Press, Vol. 3 (Spring, 1981), p. 85.

#space (always a space after commas, periods, and semicolons and colons)
italics

always a full stop.

organization" (Lewis 84).

The music of Alban Berg has been described as more tonally oriented than his comrades Schoenberg and Webern. In a paper on Berg's Op. 5 No. 3, Christopher Lewis asserts that Berg's music "almost always represents an attempt at fusion of tonal and atonal principles of organization." (Lewis, 84) While Lewis does show this to be true of Op. 5 No. 3, he fails to indicate whether tonal and atonal procedures are subordinated to one or the other somehow in his analysis. In this paper I will discuss the juxtaposition of tonal and atonal elements in Op. 5 No. 2 and show that the tonal procedures used in this piece are subordinated to the atonal ones. *thesis*

yes, but he doesn't claim to want to do that.

The end of the piece gives many clues about the tonal processes at work. The last sonority that we hear is a Bb augmented chord. The best diatonic explanation for this harmony would be that it is the mediant harmony in the key of G minor. If Berg were thinking of a background of the key of G minor in this piece, it puts many of the preceding harmonies in a familiar context.

But an augmented chord can always be interpreted right? (good)

The piano part of the piece maintains almost entirely the same texture throughout. Diads appear in the left hand while trichords appear in the right hand. These sonorities frequently take the form of triads. From the start, Berg uses a familiar sonority to draw the listener's ear toward what might be heard as a tonal center. D and F# imply a D major harmony that is emphasized by its constant repetition. Could this D major harmony be a V chord in G minor? This harmony is maintained for the entire first three measures of the left hand piano part. In m.4 the next diad appears in the left hand, F and A. Along with the C that appears in the clarinet part, this forms an F major triad. This harmony would be a bVII if heard in the context of G minor. See Ex. 1 below. (Note: all examples show Clarinet transposed to concert pitch)

m. 4

Ex. 1: Berg Op. 5, No. 2: Reduction of Harmony (Piano l.h. + clarinet), mm. 1-4

Form and Center in Berg's Op. 5, No. 2

I hear a cyclical form in this piece, with a tonal focus on pitch class D, which is pointed out by various means including repetition, symmetrical framing, avoidance or delay, and aggregate completion. Trichord subsets also provide structural unity, but I hear the set organization as subordinate to and ultimately supportive of the tonal focus on D.

Thesis is very clear

I employ a broad understanding of the idea of "tonal focus," influenced by Christopher Lewis's argument that "one may understand as tonal any work in which any pitch or sonority is made the focus of harmonic or linear motion."¹ This can include the prolongation of a tone, which "may be effected by motion *between* two statements of the tonic sonority, or by motion either *from* or *towards* a single statement of that sonority" (Lewis, 84). I argue that the centricity of pitch class D can be emphasized through its absence as well as its presence; this might be understood as prolongation, or motion "between two statements of the tonic sonority," a motion away from and then back to D.² This paper will focus on the beginning and end of the piece, exploring the seeds of the structure contained in the opening and the ways those elements interact as the work concludes.

absence is a curious parameter to demonstrate

refined thesis: excellent

The first sound is a major third sonority (or interval class 4) composed of D³ and F#³ in the left hand (bass) of the piano, repeated in varying rhythms for three full bars before that hand plays anything else. This establishes an initial focus on these pitch

¹ Christopher Lewis, "Tonal Focus in Atonal Music: Berg's op. 5/3," *Music Theory Spectrum* 3 (Spring 1981): 84.

² In a sense, this is the essence of tonal music: movement away from the tonic and then back.

✓

MUTH 5370: Analytical Techniques III, Fall 2010

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 2:00-2:50

Instructor: Dr. David Schwarz

Kuo-Ying Lee

Symmetrical structure in Berg Pieces for Clarinet and Piano Opus.5, Nr.2

The main atonal characteristic in Alban Berg Pieces for Clarinet and Piano

Opus 5, no. 2 is the symmetrical cyclic pitch structure. As seen on music score

of the piece, it is divided into two sections. The initial part is mm1-4, in which

both clarinet and piano parts include voice line as well as repetitive

accompaniment pattern based on symmetrical setting of the interval 3rd. The

returning section is mm5-8 when the tempo mark changes, and the clarinet

has descending notes accompanied with a series of chromatic linear line as

well as varied triads.

Note that structurally these two sections present as a pair in a symmetrical way.

First of all, both sections contain 4 measures. The opening introduction and

the end of piece have mirror image. The 3rd interval D-F# was written in the

bass line of piano accompaniment at the beginning, while this set within exact

the same register ends up at the last two measures by right hand of piano

accompaniment.

In addition, the determinant pitch-class [7,8,0,1,3,4], set class (0,1,3,4,7,8) that

if paragraphs are flush left, quadruple space between para. show.

space # space

there's always a space after a full stop.

thesis

class? this is grammatically unclear.

I'd like to see this supported by an example

that belongs to

Major thirds and Semitones in Berg's Op.5 No.2

There are two impressive features in the second of Berg's Vier Stücke, op.5: the tonal sonority by the major thirds and the linear motion by a semitone. Berg clearly presents two features at the beginning and develops the piece by altering and combining two features with different pitches, creating the new sonority, augmented triads. The piece ends with the predestined sonority of the augmented triad approached via the linear motion by semitones. Considering that a certain harmony and/or the linear motion by a particular interval may easily achieve 'tonality',¹ in this piece, however, the linear motion by a semitone is not fully directed motion to establish certain tonalities, while the major thirds obviously functions as tonal focus. All the constituents, two distinct features, and the particular set class (048) as a product of their interaction, consolidate the structure of the piece into ABA': mm. 1-4, mm. 5-7, and mm. 8-9.

The piece begins with the repeating major third comprised of d and f[#] in the left hand piano part through mm. 1. It sounds like D major, but the following clarinet solo discloses two hexachords, (013478) and its complement (012569), blurring the tonality. This first horizontal phrase introduces the linear motion by a semitone for the first time, and this motion appears in a neighboring motion, d^{b2}-c²-d^{b2} in mm. 2. The major thirds by d and f[#] and the neighboring motion on c² and d^{b2} are continued in the top voice of the piano part through mm. 2-4 as seen in Example 1.

¹ Christopher Lewis, "Tonal Focus in Atonal Music," Music Theory Spectrum, Vol.3 (Spring, 1981): 84

Justin Condron

MUTH 5370

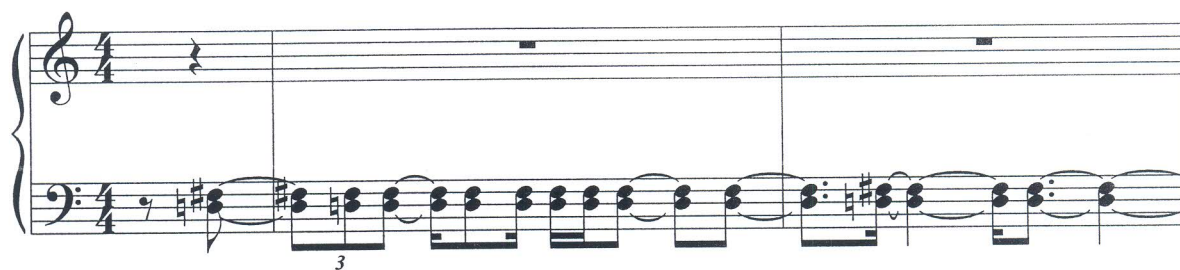
October 15, 2010

Alban Berg's *Piece for Clarinet and Piano Op. 5 no. 2* is, at first glance, a strictly atonal composition. While it is true that the pitch center certainly becomes lost, upon deeper inspection, the real tonal center is realized. Through the use of altered phrases, meaning a phrase raised or lowered purposefully, and the repetition of triads in the piano that also have been altered, we will see how the tonal structure of the piece is subordinated by the atonal elements.

*I think
the phrase
"altered
phrase"
is interesting.*

The first notes heard are only two pitches: D and F# (see Example 1):

Example 1: Berg, Op. 5 no. 2: the D major opening in left hand piano, m. 1



Wow! What a tonal beginning. Immediately I am drawn into D major. The purpose of these resounding D-F# dyads is for the listener's tonal center to be completely ripped away the moment the clarinet enters. Here is the first example of an altered phrase mentioned previously (see Example 2):

Ryan Kilgore

12-Note Aggregate completion in Berg's Op.5 No.2

"...If the beginning of the piece established directed motion, or tonal focus, the implications of which are developed as the music unfolds, and if at the same time significant set relations articulate and unify the structure, then the interaction of tonal and atonal elements can be accepted as a legitimate compositional procedure..."

Christopher Lewis¹

Berg's Piece for Clarinet and Piano, Op.5 No.2 is packed with implications of both tonal and atonal worlds. Even without rigorous set theory a listener with a score, thinking of Lewis' statement, would frame Berg's work around D with a golden section destination of D flat and a return to D at the conclusion. This would in no way be incorrect, however, after further score study it is clear that in addition to the tonal implications Berg is using the process of 12-note aggregate completion of pitch class sets (048) and (0369) as an underlying compositional framework to give the piece deeper structural value.

The most obvious organization of pitch class sets in Berg's Op.5 No.2 are members of set (048). However, the completion of the initial set, [26T] is fragmented and never completed until the second to last measure, when the piano sounds the triple octave B flats that competes pitch set [26T]. The left hand of the piano holds the primary roots to the organization of the tri-chord (048). See example 1

¹ Lewis, Christopher. "Tonal Focus in Atonal Music: Berg's 5/3." Music Theory Spectrum, Vol 3 (spring, 1981), pp. 84-97.

Abstractions of Tonality in Atonal Music: Berg's op. 5/2

Chris Lee

AT III

10/15/10

In his article about Alban Berg's pieces for clarinet and piano Opus 5 no.2, Christopher Lewis makes a case for using both atonal set theory and elements of tonal analysis in trying to understand the composer's intentions. Lewis qualifies the use of tonal analytical techniques by defining tonal music as "...any work in which any pitch or sonority is made the focus of harmonic or linear motion."¹ To simplify Lewis' findings: he presents strong evidence that one of the most important structural features of the op. 5/3 is the directed motion toward the pitch D. Using a simplified version of Lewis' concepts and methods, I will provide evidence that Berg's op. 5/2 also exhibits the "tonal" qualities of harmonic and linear motion, suggesting two possible polarities, D-flat and D, but that the directed motion of the piece has an ultimate goal of D, accompanied by its augmented triad.

There are two main sections to the op. 5/2. An obvious dividing point is seen by looking at the clarinet line. In the opening section (ms. 1-5) the clarinet ascends from e-flat¹ to e-flat³ (the highest note in the piece), and in the closing section (ms. 5-9) the clarinet descends from the same e-flat³ over a span of three octaves to d. To support the formal sections created by the clarinet line, the piano provides a pattern in the first section of two alternating trichords over a set of two pedal tones. The piano departs from the pedal tones on the first beat of measure 5, coinciding with the turning point in the clarinet. To complete the piece the clarinet arrives at an important pitch that was previously withheld (d). The piano also arrives at a previously withheld

¹ Christopher Lewis, "Tonal Focus in Atonal Music: Berg's op. 5/3 *Music Theory Spectrum* 3 (1981)

now I'm
unsure
about pitch
class/
pitch
designations

space

thesis
what
about
Berg's
2

Lisa Bost-Sandberg

Analytical Techniques III

Due 10.15.2010

Alban Berg's *Vier Stücke* for clarinet and piano, op. 5, movement II

I can write a lot
about this "it."
Can you
imagine
some of
(LOL "it")
😊

Alban Berg's *Vier Stücke* for clarinet and piano, op. 5, movement II, hints at tonality, but it is played out through symmetrical division of the octave within sets and in motion between sets in the piece. His use of interval class 4, a major third, is the primary factor that initially conveys a sense of tonality to the listener and later resolves in a clear sense of atonality in the form of the augmented triad, while use of octatonic, whole-tone, and chromatic collections contribute to this transformation and the development of the piece.

I hear the structure of movement II in three sections. Section I, measures 1-4, is comprised of simple repetitions of piano chords and a clarinet line based on octatonic collections of pitches. It features the strongest tonal implications due to the clarity of interval class 4 (major third) dyads in the piano part. Hints at tonality in section II, measures 5-7, are obscured by a development of overlapping usage of pitch collections that symmetrically divide the octave. Section III, measures 8-9, briefly recapitulates section I, with the sense of tonality displaced by an augmented triad.

As the piece opens, the pitches d and f-sharp in the left-hand of the piano clearly suggest D major. In measure 4 this interval is transposed up to pitches f and a, which can most strongly be heard as a shift to F major but also could suggest an oscillation or ambiguity between D major and D minor (see Example 1).

duig
band

Alban Berg's Stück op. 5 for Clarinet and Piano no. 2 is a piece filled with tranquility found in a multiple of means of compositional expression: the underlying harmonic material of the piano part (both hands), the contour melody of the clarinet part, in the dynamics within which both instruments move and remain throughout the piece, the interrelation between the two instruments, and last but not least, the timbre resulted from this correlation. I am going to focus on these elements and see how they came into being in terms of set theory. I will also try to see how they have been employed by the composer in order to achieve the stylistic result.

thesis

It seems to me that both the piano and the clarinet parts in Stück no. 2 are constructed on a series of dyads and trichords, which form the harmonic foundation in the piano part, which then serves as a palette of watercolors for the melodic silver lining of the clarinet line.

Let me first examine the left hand of the piano part, which employs solely dyads throughout this piece. It begins with a soft pedal chord of D and F#, a pitch class [2 6], which forms a set class (0 4). It remains in the left hand for 4 full bars of a 9-bar piece, though in the 4th bar, another pitch class [5 9] occurs, also forming a (0 4) set class dyad and adding color to the previous, namely: F A.

While the left hand employs dyads, the right hand of the piano only employs trichords until second to last measure of the piece. The first trichord of pitches C E-flat G forms a pitch class [0 3 7] and belongs to class set (0 3 7). The second trichord made of pitches A C D-flat forms a pitch class [9 0 1] and belongs to class set (0 3 4).

Both set classes (0 3 4), as well as (0 3 7) are commonly found in atonal music.

Bar third reiterates these trichords, as does bar four. We see therefore interplay of a

(034) isn't a set class; be careful; it's (014)

yes but the minor triads also belong to set class (037)

Tzu-ying Chan

10/15/2010

Berg piece for clarinet and piano Op.5 No.2

Op. 5 always have a space after full stop

This work by Berg can

This Berg's work could be divided into two parts: from measure 1 to the downbeat of

the measure 5, here we called it as section A, and from the second half of the first

beat of measure 5 to the end of piece, which we called as section B) In section A

there are two rising gestures in the clarinet part. From the beginning note of E flat

to the E nature, to the first note of measure 3, is the first gesture, then go back to E syntax

flat, the downbeat of measure 5, which is the second gesture. Note this three

notes E flat- E- E flat, we can treat the E nature as a neighbor tone, and each note is

one octave higher than the other, up to the third note E flat, the clarinet reach to the

highest note in this piece (see Example 1).

the two gestures should be clear

no sets here?

m.1 main (014) N (014) m.5 (036)

Example 1. The E-E^b relationship in clarinet part, section A

Many historians have considered Berg's pre-twelve-tone-method compositions to be written in his "free atonal" style, but this is somewhat of a misnomer. In this style, the composer and the listener are not free at all, but rather searching for unique ways in which music can have comprehensibility. Especially for Alban Berg, whole tone sonorities seem to provide a sense of respite and can thus lend comprehensibility for a work. Although Berg works in the world of full chromatic saturation, old techniques can also lend comprehensibility to a work. In Op. 5 No. 2, Alban Berg references an old compositional technique in the context of a new sense of resolution with whole tone sonorities. Berg's Op. 5 No. 2 for clarinet and piano centers around the large-scale resolution of Ab into a Bb-D-F# augmented triad.

Berg frames conflict between Ab and the D-F# dyad throughout the movement by prolonging Ab in the upper register, especially in the clarinet part, as an upper leading tone to Gb/F# and establishing D-F# as the progenitor for a succession of major thirds which ends in a Bb-D-F# augmented triad. See Example 1 for a reductive voice-leading graph.

Example 1: Berg Op. 5 No. 2, Prolongation and Resolution of Ab over Thirds Succession

I like this a lot; in addition to the logic of the large scale; there's an intriguing internal progression leading to m. 6.

5. Prolongation
Side!

thesis

I had to think about this for a moment; now I see!

Alban Berg's Piece for Clarinet and Piano Op. 5, no. 2 is an interesting part of atonal literature that exhibits both atonal and tonal qualities. Though these qualities are as different as two sides of a coin, they are not totally incompatible. As Christopher Lewis details in his article on Berg's Op. 5, no. 3, both tonal and atonal elements can coexist within a piece of music and function as valid methods of pitch organization¹. There must, however, be evidence that tonal traits play an intimate, structural role in the design of an atonal work so as to validate their presence as more than simple coincidence or lack control in the art of composition². Berg's Op. 5, no. 2 is built upon a structural neighbor motion that can be traced from the musical surface to the background of the piece's construction. To illustrate this point, I will show how the neighbor figure manifests in the background structure of the piece as well as how it replicates on a smaller scale near the musical surface. Additionally, I will show how this motion interacts with the pitch and set classes that co-inhabit the piece.

The piece, though short, is divided into two sections of un-equal length. Each section contains a portion of the background neighbor figure (as well as its manifestations near the surface level); to begin, we shall consider the first section (mm. 1-5). The first thing one hears in the piece is a pleasant although possibly unexpected major third in the left hand of the piano. From this very first sonority Berg seems to be suggesting a sense of tonality within the work. This sonority is the beginning of the first set class of the piece but, for now, let us consider its tonal application. The dyad is in fact the beginning of the structural neighbor motion upon which the piece is built. By examining the first three measure of the music, one notices that the D-F[#] sonority is the only sound in the left hand of the piano; only in m. 4 does Berg supply additional pitches. I believe

¹ Christopher Lewis, "Tonal Focus in Atonal Music: Berg's op. 5/3," *Music Theory Spectrum* 3 (1981): 84-97; see pg. 85.

² Lewis pg. 85.