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CORRIGENDUM :—In the criticism of Martin Cooper's Schoenberg review on our last issue's p. 282, lines 11-13,
". . . . an ear which mistakes its anxiety about the loss of tonal unity for a perception of dissonances and of the highest possible tension . . . .," cut the " and " which slipped in by sub-editorial mistake.

On the Twelve-Note Road

BY LUIGI DALLAPICCOLA

FIRST, I must state my premises : what follows is not, nor does it set out to be, a study of the twelve-note system.

This will be sufficient justification, I hope, for the strongly and inevitably autobiographical character of my remarks ; inevitably, since my experience of twelve-note music began a long, long time before the publication of René Leibowitz's most useful books. I call them most useful, even if their usefulness has its unfortunate side : that of providing the most outstanding incompetents with the opportunity of passing themselves off as experts on a subject which is far from being strictly codified. It should be remembered that Arnold Schoenberg never gave lessons in the " twelve-note technique," and that as late as 1936 Ernst Krenek wrote : " Whoever speaks of, or deals with, questions arising out of the twelve-note technique, can even to this day only proceed on a basis of personal experience." (*Musica Viva*, Brussels-Zürich, No. 2).

As is well known, a single encounter can decide the orientation of a whole life. My orientation was decided on the night of April 1st, 1924, when I saw Arnold Schoenberg conduct a performance of his *Pierrot Lunaire*, in the Sala Bianca of the Palazzo Pitti. That night the students, with typical Latin gaiety, were indulging in the usual whistling before the performance began : the public for their part, caused an uproar, stamping their feet and laughing. But Giacomo Puccini did not laugh on that occasion. He listened to the performance with the utmost attention, following it with the score, and at the end of the concert asked to be introduced to Schoenberg.

Twenty-five years later, in a letter Schoenberg wrote to me on September 16th, 1949, the creator of the twelve-note system still remembered this gesture of our great popular composer, in these words : " Auf Puccini's Besuch der Pierrot-Aufführung war ich immer stolz. Es war sicherlich ein Zeichen menschlicher Grosse, dass er zu mir gekommen ist—und eine grosse Freundlichkeit."*

*" I have always been proud that Puccini came to see me after the performance of *Pierrot Lunaire*. His visit was truly a sign of human greatness—and showed great friendliness."

That he reproached me, in the same letter, for not having gone to shake his hand on that occasion, is another story. What qualifications had I, what fame of name or works, that I should dare present myself to the master ? Six years later, in Berlin, I still refrained from taking such a step. For at that time Fascism had not yet schooled people to presumption by means of that propaganda which one might define as *the artificial facilitation of life*, and which led to the consequences we all know.

In those days, to get one of our works performed, we had to wait in a long queue ; youths without works or fame did not hold positions in theatrical managements and concert societies ; to teach the most elementary matters of technique in a conservatoire, one had first to undergo examinations (stupid ones, it is true, but they demanded much hard work) ; and it was not the twenty-year-olds who dispensed judgment in daily press criticisms.

I, to be sure, like many others, wrote down my impressions of the outstanding musical events—but in my diary. In this way one could listen to music simply, *con amore :* free from the preoccupation of having to provide a considered judgment the following morning, as food for the public ; free from having to find at all costs a central idea on which to base a *piece* which would *read well ;* free from the fear of having to contradict tomorrow what one said yesterday ; free, finally, from the fear of offending with one's opinions some *employer* who might think differently from oneself. The " Littoriali della Cultura e dell' Arte "† had not yet been created; and everyone was convinced that the way of the artist was a very difficult one.

The night on which I saw Arnold Schoenberg, I felt I had to make a decision. It goes without saying that I did not consider whether I should become *atonal ;* for the time being, I decided to learn the trade.

In general, when people mention my name, they speak of me as a musician who has adopted the twelve-note technique ; and one authority has not hesitated to point out the singularity of my position. The singularity, that is, of having adopted the twelve-note technique at a time when I had no contact with the masters of the Viennese school (Schoenberg, Berg, Webern), nor with their disciples. Perhaps I am not the only composer of my generation to find myself in this position ; but I am ready to admit that it is a somewhat strange one.

†The " Littoriali della Cultura e dell' Arte " were a kind of cultural " games " held in Italy during the Fascist *régime ;* the best way to win a prize was to be a member of the Fascist Party. [Trans.]

" Etrange destin que celui de la musique atonale : voici qu'elle vient de devenir actuelle, elle, qui ne le fut pas, à l'époque de sa naissance. . . . "‡ Thus Gisèle Brelet begins her study *Chances de la musique atonale* (Alexandria, 1947). And she continues : " L'atonalisme est maintenant bien actuel : trop tôt venu, il lui fallait attendre que surgisse chez les musiciens la conscience des problèmes auxquelles il prétendait apporter une réponse."§

Now whether or not one agrees with Gisèle Brelet (it is obvious that Schoenberg, Berg and Webern were aware of the problems with which they were faced), it has to be admitted that the phrase " trop tôt venu " has an element of truth in it.

Truth, at least, in relation to other composers, to whom Schoenberg's boldness must have seemed frightening ; and also in relation to the public, even the most cultured and knowledgeable public.

The reason for this is that when the phenomenon of atonality gave its first signs of existence, the art of Debussy was still in full flower ; and Stravinsky, notwithstanding the noisy fiasco of *Le Sacre*, swiftly won over at least the ballet public which, listening to the music with its eyes, found justification for it that way.

The reasons for Ravel's favourable attitude towards the Viennese school must be sought elsewhere. Ravel had a natural distrust of giving too free a rein to fancy (a thing which can easily happen in the course of improvisation), and he loved to have problems to solve. (The Sonata for violin and cello is a typical example.) I shall never forget how warmly D. E. Ingelbrecht, who knew Ravel extremely well, agreed with me when I said that Ravel would have come to write a piano concerto for the left hand even if Paul Wittgenstein had not provided the occasion ; and precisely in order to limit to the utmost the danger of improvisation.

Years ago, a composer of tonal music who is a friend of mine declared, in the course of an interview, that when composing he followed his instinct ; that he was opposed on principle to any kind of system ; and that the word " *system* " itself appeared to him to be synonymous with " *trick*."

Now, although I am grateful to this musician for the friendship he has often shown me, and have frequent cause to admire his music, I must say that I have not the same admiration for his sense of logic.

‡" A strange fate, that of atonal music : it has only just become a living reality, which it certainly was not at the time of its birth. . . . "

§" Atonality is now a living reality : having arrived too early, it had to wait for musicians to become aware of the problems to which it claimed to provide an answer."

The word "*system*" is, according to him, synonymous with "*trick*." So far, so good ! By the very fact, however, that he writes tonal music, he himself makes use of a system codified from three centuries of experience, that is to say of a codified trick ; but this is used unconsciously because it has been learnt at school and because it forms part of us from the day of our birth. (It has been wittily said that God, who gave us the moral law, also took care, in His infinite bounty, to provide us with the tonal system). It seems likely, moreover, that when music passed from the modal system to the tonal system there was a critical period of uncertainty perhaps not very different from that which, according to many critics and listeners, is one of the most characteristic features of our time : a time of considerable confusion, but one which only superficial minds can reproach with lack of faith.

Atonality, " trop tôt venu," was for a time abandoned : at least in the sense that it was forgotten (hence the amazement of so many critics at seeing it reappear again after the war). In the ten years immediately preceding the last war in Europe, the only topic of conversation was *neo-classicism*. Around 1930, Italian and foreign magazines stated, without a flicker of the eyelid, that " Germany had only one great musician : Paul Hindemith." And performances of atonal or twelve-note music were made more and more difficult by political events. The advent of Adolf Hitler (a great connoisseur of art, like all self-respecting dictators) marked the end of public performances of such music in Germany. In Italy, performances were not forbidden, in the true sense of the word : but every day some *aesthetician* (a critic-composer, of course) publicly arraigned one or other of the composers belonging to the so-called vanguard of *internationalism*, which in the language of those days meant *anti-fascism* or, more precisely, *communism*. Exactly how much attitudes of this kind have to do with strict problems of aesthetics is not for me to say. It is enough to say for the moment that even criticism has its *systems*. So-called atonal music had very seldom been performed before the arrival of Fascism, and was very seldom performed during the reign of Fascism : so that no difference was to be perceived.

Just at the time when everyone had ceased to mention atonality or twelve-note music, I began to be passionately interested in such problems. (I am grateful to Guido M. Gatti for pointing out my *unrealistic* position in a criticism on the Venice Festival of 1937.) And already, in the first period of my activities as a composer (from

1934 to 1939, that is from the *Divertimento in quattro esercizi* to *Volo di notte*), series of twelve notes begin to make their, undeniably timid, appearance in my works ; in some cases they were used for purely colouristic purposes, in others with exclusively melodic intent.

At that time I had need of a helpful guide, or at least a confidant or a not too fanatical opponent ; but I could not find one.

Every first performance of a work by Stravinsky was the event of the musical year ; Hindemith was the fashion ; Bartok was to wait ten years, that is till after his death, to be tardily *discovered.* (They always come at the right moment, the discoverers !) Whenever I turned to anyone for light on the twelve-note technique, I always received the reply " It's finished." Someone advised me in a kindly way not to waste my time on such *unrealistic* matters. In Italy, at that time, baroque music was considered *realistic*, and an attempt was being made to write music equivalent to the architecture of Bernini. (Alas ! in too many cases it turned out to be merely an equivalent of the architecture of Piacentini . . .).

So I found myself practically alone. With the invasion of Austria by Hitler's troops, it became more and more difficult to obtain the works of the masters of the Viennese school : the few articles which had appeared around 1925 were no longer to be found, and those I did manage to track down were so schematic that they gave me no help at all.

From time to time, I tried my hand at analysing atonal works. I went wrong with many of them : with others I was more successful. I noticed that a system of analysis which held good for one work did not hold good for another. Far from being discouraged by the comparatively few results I obtained, I remembered a phrase of Ferruccio Busoni : " Avoid making art a routine. Let each work constitute a principle."

With the outbreak of war, the possibility of getting information became even more limited than in the years immediately preceding, and the solitude I mentioned above gradually became a necessity.

I am fully aware that what follows, an account of the way in which I arrived at an understanding of the twelve-note technique, will seem in these days very ingenuous ; in these days, I say, because everyone can now obtain the scores of the Viennese school, and René Leibowitz's books explain down to the smallest detail the system which attracted me, giving accurately prepared analyses with the notes numbered according to the development of the series. But in 1940 all this did not exist. Whoever wished to take the road

towards twelve-note music had to rely entirely on his own capabilities. At a distance of several years I can count myself lucky in having achieved so much on my own, notwithstanding many mistakes.

I have already pointed out, some time ago, that the difficulty of understanding twelve-note music is not due to the large number of *dissonances* it contains. I had realized this as early as 1935, when I heard in Prague, at the thirteenth Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music, Anton Webern's Concerto, Op. 24, a work I admired because it seemed to me to express the composer's highest *ideal*, not because I had understood it as *music*. It was already clear to me then that the difficulty of understanding such music was due to other factors, especially to the fact that it made use of a new dialectic.

At the same Festival, when I heard Schoenberg's Variations, Op. 31, for the first time, I noticed something I had never been taught at the Conservatoire : that one of the most marked differences between classical music (I speak of sonata form, which is perhaps the highest achievement of classical music) and music based on a note-series could be formulated as follows. In classical music, the theme is nearly always subjected to *melodic* transformation, while its rhythm remains unaltered ; in music based on a note-series, the task of transformation is concerned with the *arrangement* of the notes, independent of rhythmic considerations. My first acquaintance with two great writers, James Joyce and Marcel Proust, date from this time.

Lacking treatises on twelve-note music and being unable to obtain the scores I needed, I found in the works of these writers confirmation of what I had dimly felt after hearing the works of Schoenberg and Webern.

In the works of James Joyce, above all in *Ulysses*, I was immediately struck by certain *assonances*.

Once already, years ago, I have had occasion to speak of certain *musical allusions* in the works of Webern, and to compare them with certain passages in *Ulysses* (*Il Mondo*, Florence, No. 15, 3rd November, 1945). The way in which Joyce exploits the name of Lynch, the young friend of Stephen Daedalus, is far from being a mere play on words.

In the brothel scene (corresponding to the Circe episode in the *Odyssey*) I found the following passage :

STEPHEN : Hm. (*He strikes a match and proceeds to light the cigarette with enigmatic melancholy*).

LYNCH : (*Watching him*). You would have a better chance of lighting it if you held the match nearer.

STEPHEN : (*Brings the match nearer his eye*). Lynx eye.

Again, in the same scene, another example :

STEPHEN : . . . . Married.

ZOE : It was a commercial traveller married her and took her away with him.

FLORRY : (*Nods*). Mr. Lambe from London.

STEPHEN : Lamb of London, who takest away the sins of our world.

LYNCH : (*Embracing Kitty on the sofa, chants deeply*). *Dona nobis pacem.*

The love of the word in Joyce, so near to the love of the note (regained in the music of our time), could even be carried over, in this case, into the famous French translation, maintaining fidelity to the original text.

STEPHEN : . . . . Mariée.

ZOE : C'est un voyageur de commerce qui l'a épousée et qui l'a emmenée avec lui.

FLORA : (*Appuie*). C'est M. Lagneau, de Londres.

STEPHEN : Agneau de Londres, qui enlevez les pechés du pauvre monde.

LYNCH : (*Qui enlace Kitty sur le sopha, psalmodie*). *Dona nobis pacem.*

Elsewhere, however, owing to the impossibility of transferring an assonance faithfully, the translators (helped, as is known, by the author) were obliged to re-create a passage entirely, so as to keep intact the love of the word. And so we find ourselves faced with a case like this, taken from the music-room scene, which corresponds to the episode of the Sirens in the *Odyssey*.

He heard Joe Maas sing that one night. Ah, what M'Guckin ! Yes. In his way. Choirboy style. Maas was the boy Massboy.

Which, in the French translation, is re-created thus :

Il avait entendu Joe Coeur chanter ça un soir. Ah, oui, M'Guckin ! Oui. Dans sa manière. Style d'enfant de choeur. Mais Coeur c'était l'as. L'as de coeur.

From this, I believed I understood up to what point in music an identical succession of notes could take on a different meaning by being *arranged* in a different way.

And I was also struck by Joyce's occasional use of an identical word first in its usual form and afterwards in its reverse form, beginning with the last letter and ending with the first (*cancrizans*,

in music). At that time I did not know (Vladimir Vogel told me of it later) that, in some ancient languages, the roots of certain words of opposite meaning (*Dio—il Demonio ! la luce—l'oscurità*) are the same, and that certain words still have a meaning even if they are read *cancrizans.*

My observations on Joyce's prose encouraged me and showed me that, at bottom, the problems of all the arts are *a single problem.* The assonances I had noticed in Joyce had led me to realize that, in the use of a twelve-note series, the most careful and conscientious effort must be devoted to its *arrangement ;* contact with Marcel Proust gave me the opportunity of getting a definitive outlook on the new dialectic and new constructive method of the twelve-note system.

But, before proceeding, a parenthesis is necessary.

I had read somewhere (I do not know whether the writer was a competent person or a nonentity) that, in the twelve-note system, the twelve notes *have equal importance.*

It is obvious that, at the time when such a proposition could be formulated, many problems were far from being solved. It appeared evident to me that even if, from a *quantitative* point of view, the notes were equal in number, one factor of capital importance could not be overlooked : the moment, or the actual point of the bar, at which a given note makes itself heard. Hence we see *time* intervening, representing, as it were, the *fourth dimension* of music. It goes without saying that a note which falls on the weak beat of the bar will never have the same importance as the same note when it falls on the strong beat. The same may be said of notes which form part of a quick passage, compared with the same notes when they form part of a slow passage.

I know well that differences of this kind can also be found in classical music ; but how much more subtle and delicate are such relationships in twelve-note music !

Thus I came to the conclusion that if, in the twelve-note system, the tonic had disappeared, taking with it the tonic-dominant relationship, and if, in consequence, sonata form had completely disintegrated, there still existed, nevertheless, a power of attraction, which I will call *polarity* (I do not know whether such a definition has been used before, or whether there is another) : I mean by this term the extremely subtle relationships which exist between certain notes. These relationships are not always easily perceptible today, being much less obvious than that of tonic to dominant, but they are there, all the same.

The interesting point about this polarity is the fact that it can change (or be changed) from one work to another. One series can reveal to us the *polarity* that exists between the first and twelfth sounds ; another that which exists between the second and the ninth ; and so on. Here the *time* factor, which I mentioned just now, steps in, revealing its true importance : by this means we can establish the characteristic interval by impressing it on the memory more deeply than the others, and thus we have a chance of making our musical argument understood. (I do not speak of those who will not or cannot understand, nor of the innumerable heirs of Luigi Cherubini, who refused to go and hear the Fantastic Symphony of Berlioz, giving as his reason that " There is no need to go and hear how *not* to write music.")

And now I must give a brief account of my meditations on Proust.

Among the various characters in *La Recherche du temps perdu*, my choice fell on Albertine, but it will be readily understood that I could have taken as an example the Baron de Charlus or any other character.

Let us examine for the moment a passage taken from the first book of *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleur*, the particular passage in which this character's name is mentioned for the first time.

" C'est l'oncle d'une petite qui venait à mon cours, dans une classe bien au-dessous de moi, la fameuse *Albertine*. Elle sera sûrement très *fast* mais en attendant elle a une drôle de touche."

" Elle est étonnante ma fille, elle connaît tout le monde."

" Je ne la connais pas. Je la voyais seulement passer, on criait Albertine par-ci, Albertine par-là."*

It is true that, in the case of Swann or, shall we say, in the case of Odette, it was considered very *chic* to interlard the conversation from time to time with some English word or other. But here, the use of the English adjective *fast* must be interpreted in quite a different way. Gilberte does not use the English adjective because she considers it the thing to do ; it is Proust who, at the moment of introducing such an important character's name for the first time (it does not appear for the second time until about a hundred and five pages later) compels us, by using the English adjective, to pay particular attention to the name. It is by virtue of the English adjective that the name Albertine suddenly attracts our attention ;

* " He's the uncle of a little girl who used to come to my lessons, in a much lower class than mine, the famous *Albertine*. She'll certainly be very *fast* when she grows up, but just at the moment she's a bit of a sight."

" She's amazing, my daughter. She knows everybody."

" I don't know her. I only used to see her going about, and hear them calling ' Albertine ' here, and ' Albertine ' there."

and thus it remains inseparably linked with the adjective *fast*, an adjective which already seems to contain within itself a whole tragic fatality.

Albertine par-ci, Albertine par-là. This repetition of the name is a subtle technical device, an invitation to the memory.

When Albertine is mentioned for the second time, it is Mme Bontemps who introduces her name.

" Et ma nièce Albertine est comme moi. Vous ne savez pas ce qu'elle est effrontée, cette petite."†

Here we are informed of another trait of this character, which is fixed in our memory by the adjective *fast*, and which, though it still remains off-stage, has an undeniable existence for us.

In the second book of *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleur*, we find only one mention of Albertine's name. But this time it is attached to considerations of such importance to the protagonist that we are obliged to pay particular attention to it, even if the action still takes place out of sight, off-stage.

Here is the passage in question :—

" Il y eut une scène à la maison parce que je n'accompagnais mon père à un dîner officiel où il devait y avoir les Bontemps, avec leur nièce Albertine, petite jeune fille, presque encore enfant. Les différentes périodes de notre vie se chevauchent ainsi l'une l'autre. On refuse dédaigneusement, à cause de ce qu'on aime et qui vous sera un jour si égal, de voir ce qui vous est égal aujourd'hui, qu'on aimera demain."§

Lastly, in the third book of *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleur*, we find Albertine's name four times, before seeing her *as a real person* on the stage. First of all, together with the *petite bande*, on the beach at Balbec. Proust gives us there, as it were, a portrait of the heroine, still unknown to the protagonist. He, shortly afterwards, hearing the name " Simonet " (" C'est une amie de la petite Simonet ") has the feeling that the name belongs to one of the girls of the *petite bande :* he enquires at the hotel and finds, sure enough, the name *Simonet et famille* amongst the latest arrivals. He meets a young girl on a bicycle, but he is not certain that it is definitely Albertine.

†" And my niece Albertine is like me. You've no conception how impudent that girl is."

§" There was a scene in the house because I did not go with my father to an official dinner at which the Bontemps were to be present, with their niece Albertine, a young girl, almost still a child. Thus the different periods of our life jostle one against the other. We refuse disdainfully, on account of something we love but shall one day no longer care for, to see the thing which today we do not care for but shall one day come to love."

And so, at last, we come to the *lyrical* passage, the *rhythmic and melodic* definition : " Tout à coup y apparut, le suivant à pas rapides, la jeune cycliste de la petite bande avec sur ses cheveux noirs son polo abaissé vers ses grosses joues, ses yeux gaies et un peu insistants ; et dans ce sentier miraculeusement rempli de douces promesses, je la vis sous les arbres adresser à Elstir un salut souriant d'amie, arc-en-ciel qui unit pour moi notre monde terraquée à des régions que j'avais jugées jusque-là inaccessibles."‡

Notice how, not until the eighth time of meeting Albertine's name, may we say that we begin to know her.

Shall we now try a comparison between this particular technique of presenting a character and that of the classical novel ?

Let us consider, for a moment, Padre Cristoforo, letting this great example serve for all. We see how Manzoni, on the first appearance of the character, is immediately careful to inform the reader of all his traits. Even that is not considered sufficient, however ; and so he informs us even as to particulars regarding the character's family, particulars which have played a fundamental part in forming his religion.

In music, this procedure is used in sonata form.

Sonata form demands that already in its first section (called the *exposition*) the two principal themes shall be exposed, and shall contrast with one another. The characters must be clearly defined from the beginning. Who does not know the theme of the Eroica Symphony ? Is it Napoleon, or someone else ? A hero, in any case. A character defined with a clarity of outline, a precision of design, which will not change throughout the whole first movement. Or let us consider the first theme of Mozart's Symphony in G minor. The rhythmic organisation of this miraculous theme undergoes no change, notwithstanding its many sensational adventures of colouring and modulation.

It is sonata form which demands this : a form once supremely alive but now, for some time, completely worn out. A strange thought that, from those very quarters where there is such opposition to *formalism*, there should come so many compositions written in the most played-out of all musical forms. But I will add nothing further on this subject : I am not writing a polemic. It was at

‡" Suddenly there appeared (on the road), following it at a rapid pace, the young cyclist of the little band, with her polo cap pulled down over her black hair towards her fat cheeks, her eyes merry and almost importunate ; and on that auspicious path, miraculously filled with promises of delight, I saw her beneath the trees wave to Elstir a friendly greeting, a rainbow which, for me, linked our terraqueous world to regions I had hitherto considered inaccessible."

Weimar in 1923 that Busoni, in his crystal-clear way, spoke, on the subject of form, words that seemed to me definitive :

" Man kann auch heute Fugen schreiben mit den überlieferten oder mit den modernen und atonalen Mitteln . . . . doch wird einer solchen Fugen immer ein antiquirter Charakter anhaften. . . . Denn die Fuge ist eine ' Form.' Als solche ist sie zeitgebunden, ' vergänglich.' Dagegen ist die Polyphonie keine Form, sondern ein Prinzip und als solches zeitlos und, so lange Musik geschaffen wird, ' unvergänglich.' "**

Is it necessary to emphasize that *canon*, which occupies such an important place in the twelve-note dialectic, is not a *form*, but part of the *principle* of polyphony ? (Perhaps Busoni, when he made the above definition, had in mind the dictum of Paul Bekker, " the crisis of modern music is a crisis of form " ?)

All this occurred to me after I had realized the difference between classical music and music based on a series : a difference of dialectic.

In music based on a series, instead of finding ourselves faced with a character rhythmically and melodically defined at the outset, we have to wait a long time : exactly as we had to wait a long time for the rhythmic and melodic definition of Albertine, " a rainbow which, for me, linked our terraqueous world to regions I had hitherto considered inaccessible."

Before reaching this rhythmic and melodic definition of the series, we may find it compressed into a single chord of twelve notes, two chords of six notes, three of four notes, four of three notes, or even six two-note chords . . . . to speak only of the most elementary possibilities. It will be understood that, in every such combination, the sense of *polarity* must be alive and present, so as to enable the listener to follow the musical argument.

And here I must mention once more the name of Proust. I have said that I could have devoted my analysis to the Baron de Charlus instead of to Albertine : what I wish to point out now is that both these characters find their *rhythmic and melodic* definition at Balbec.

Balbec, then, is not merely a geographical entity : it is something far more important. In relation to the constructional method of the novel, it is something analagous to what I called *polarity* in music based on a series.

**" Even today it is still possible to write fugues, using traditional or even modern and atonal methods . . . . yet to every such fugue there will always cling an antiquated character. . . . For fugue is a ' form,' and as such, time-bound, ' mortal.' On the other hand, polyphony is not a form, but a principle; as such it is timeless and, as long as music continues to be created, ' immortal.' "

To turn to a question one hears very frequently : is the twelve-note system a language or a technique ? To my way of thinking, it is even a state of mind. In any case, it seems to me a natural development of music, and Schoenberg's recent definition *nuova logica* will perhaps one day be thought as satisfactory as the definition *seconda practica*, adopted by Monteverdi three centuries ago.

For a long time the tonal system showed signs of being inadequate to convey all that musicians felt an urgent need to express : we can go back as far as Wagner and Debussy to find great composers who sought a code of rules by which to realize their poetic world. This movement towards the disintegration of the tonal world moved more and more swiftly : there arose, in quick succession, poly-tonality, atonality, the most unusual scales, quarter- and sixth-tones, until the arrival of twelve-note music, which is the most complete answer to the problem of the *method of composition*, in that it offers a basis on which to build. Personally, I have adopted this method because it allows me to express what I feel I must express.

The note-series technique is only a means of helping a composer to achieve coherence of musical argument. If anyone says that a work based on a series is automatically guaranteed such coherence, he is making a great mistake, since no artificial technique has ever guaranteed anything, and the unity of such a work will be, together with its melody, rhythm and harmony, an inferior product. It is not irrelevant to recall that the Wagnerian *leitmotiv* technique was merely a means of facilitating the musical argument and that, whereas in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, this technique appears only sporadically, it reaches its fullest development in *Tristan*, the work in which the dominant-tonic relationship (once itself intended as a means of unifying musical argument) was weakened to the greatest extent.

Tonality still exists and will probably exist for a long time yet.

I am amazed when I am asked whether a given work is, or is not, strictly in the twelve-note system—as I was amazed when I heard that, during the Venice Festival of 1949, Schoenberg was accused of treachery for having presented a tonal work, his second Chamber Symphony. (Did not Dante continue to write in Latin, during the years he was engaged on the *Divina Commedia ?*)

We are once more at the *beginning of a period.* We see that each twelve-note work raises new problems and, if it is successful, finds new solutions. If it is successful, I say, because in art success is a very rare thing. (I dare say it will be admitted that, even in three centuries of tonal music, a few stupid works may have been written

and that some may even have come from the pens of living tonal composers, at least one apiece.)

We see, again, that in the last ten years practice has somewhat abated the rigour of certain theoretical rules laid down previously. And we also see how works which, up to a few years ago, were generally regarded as unperformable and incomprehensible no longer seem so problematic.

Whatever one may say, no system (or so-called system) produced in this century has had more power than the twelve-note system to set things moving. No other system has been so persistently and acrimoniously opposed ; other systems, having once fallen into disuse, have never reappeared, whereas this one *did* reappear, and during the war years at that, in isolation and in all countries independently. Today, several twelve-note works have been acclaimed by the public ; the success of *The Survivor from Warsaw* at the Venice Festival of 1950 was particularly significant, notwithstanding the somewhat grotesque attempts of certain sections of the press to minimize its importance.

(It is a strange thing : if the public boos a twelve-note work, it has good reason, and whoever boos does so calmly and in good faith : if he applauds, on the other hand, it is because he knows, for example, that the day of performance is the composer's birthday, and he is consequently influenced by sentimental reasons !)

And even if, today, we are too near to events to write a history of dodecaphony, it is certain that, within a decade or so, the twelve-note movement will find complete justification, even in the eyes of those who today oppose it.

It will find historical justification, because *total chromaticism* has tried many times in musical history to confine itself within a narrow space : Heinrich Jalowetz found in the finale of Mozart's Symphony in G minor a series of ten different notes (cf. *The Musical Quarterly*, October 1944, *Music Survey*, December, 1950) ; Hermann Scherchen found a passage of twelve different notes in the finale of Beethoven's Ninth (cf. *Vom Wesen der Musik*, Winterthur ; English edition, trans. William Mann, Dobson, 1950) ; and I myself found a series of nine different notes in a sonata of Domenico Scarlatti, and—what is more strange—in these notes we find the whole-tone scale (cf. *Polyphonie*, No. 4, Brussels ; *La Rassegna Musicale*, April 1950 ; *Music Survey*, December, 1950). It will find aesthetic justification, based on artistic success, the only basis which counts, and the only one by which such works can be judged in the future, when polemics and personal rancour are things of the past.

For when we come face to face with an artistic success, we find that it automatically falls into its place in music as a whole, which knows neither present nor future, nor what is fashionable, nor what is out of date. An artistic success takes its place in history by virtue of its own merits.

(Translated by DERYCK COOKE.)

Britten: Thematic Relations and The 'Mad' Interlude's 5th Motif

BY HANS KELLER

> I certainly think it necessary that the motivic web be clear to every hearer . . . One must get to know and understand a work by *thorough* study ; the deeper the music is, the more difficult one's study, and the longer does it take.
>
> Mahler to an unknown addressee (15.5.94).
>
> One thing I miss in your analysis of my 4th Symphony : did you overlook the thematic connections which are so extremely important for the idea of the work ? Or did you think you ought not to trouble the public with technical explanations ? In any case, please make a special search for these connections.
>
> Mahler to Georg Göhler (8.2.11).

THEMATIC relationships are (1) cyclic or/and (2) derivative or/and (3) leitmotivic ; only one kind altogether excludes one other : (4) the repetitional and consecutive relations whose function is immediately connective rather than recapitulatory and thus not sufficiently extended to become cyclic. The " Spring " Symphony's thematic links and derivations are a good example of (4) (and (2)). The finale's " Sumer is i-cumen in," on the other hand, occurring at the point where nowadays a cyclic recapitulation usually appears, may be regarded as an extra-operic, intertemporal, historical cyclicism : an extremely subtle build-up once one admits the unifying function of a quotation of something that has not previously been stated. In any case, every form of cyclicism applies one or the other modification of the psychologically indestructible principle that the end is the beginning and the middle isn't, or that where the middle is, there are other middles in between. Being a basic formal device, a cyclic connection is, other things being similar, the most conscious thematic relationship to composer and listener : say, the opening and closing chorus in " Grimes," or the title-figure's reminiscences at the end of " Grimes," " Lucretia," and " Herring." Somewhat surprisingly, more purely leitmotivic and derivative relations are not always as conscious to the composer as they should be to the listener : someone told me that the relation I had pointed out between Lady Billows's arias in "Herring's" Scene I (Ex. 1) had not