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GENRE, INFLUENCE, AND FORM IN SCHOENBERG'S SUITE FOR PIANO, OP. 25.

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Introduction

Arnold Schoenberg's Suite for Piano, Op. 25, completed in 1923, was the first completely twelve-tone work, though his twelve-tone system would change and develop over the next several years.[1] According to Peter Burkholder, "Arnold Schoenberg was acutely aware of his historical position at the end of a long line of composers from Bach through Brahms...[2]" Schoenberg was also determined that serialism would continue the tradition of German preeminence in Western music; in his own words: "Today I have discovered something that will assure the supremacy of German music for the next hundred years.[3]" In Op. 25, we can see first, the start of his twelve-tone agenda, and second, the historical connection between Schoenberg and his predecessors, Bach and Brahms. The Suite comprises seven movements: Praeludium, Gavotte, Musette, Intermezzo, Menuett-Trio, and Gigue. This paper will discuss the Praeludium, Musette, and Intermezzo; and the genres, compositional techniques and forms they share with the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and Johannes Brahms.

Schoenberg viewed his twelve-tone music as a continuation of past Germanic music tradition. According to Burkholder:

> Schoenberg aspired to match or exceed the achievements of the best German composers, so he did what he believed they had done: seek to say something new, while preserving and extending what was of highest value in the music of his predecessors. By emulating their music while seeking to move beyond it, Schoenberg sought for his music the same immortal status as the classics he chose as his models.[4]

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[1] Marilyn McCoy, "A Schoenberg Chronology," *Schoenberg and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 7.
[2] J. Peter Burkholder, "Schoenberg the Reactionary," *Schoenberg and His World*, 162
[3] Josef Rufer, *The Works of Arnold Schoenberg*, trans. Dika Newlin (London, 1962), 45
[4] Burkholder, *Schoenberg and His World*, 163.

Schoenberg himself noted the direct relationship between the music of Bach and his own twelve-tone music:

> I will show that counterpoint is based on the laws of contrapuntal composition which correctly presented, reveal the Bach family's secrets of the art of the fugue and appropriately expanded will pave the way theoretically for composition with twelve tones.[5]

That Schoenberg conceived his twelve-tone music as a continuation of past tradition is readily apparent in his Suite for Piano, Op. 25. Charles Rosen elegantly summarizes this work:

> The dances are those of the standard Baroque suite, except for a central intermezzo—a romantic meditation of almost Brahmsian character... and once again the commanding reference to the past is not fortuitous. If serialism was to be not a break with tradition but a bridge from the incontrovertible accomplishments of the great atonal period into the center of history once again, it was important in this first completely serial work to demonstrate how it could deal with the basic classical forms.[6]

This paper will investigate references to the past, and the handling of basic classical forms, in Schoenberg's Suite for Piano, Op. 25. I will argue that common compositional techniques, forms, and melodic references to the music of J.S. Bach and Brahms suggest that Schoenberg used their works as models for his Op. 25. More specifically, I will show that the Op. 25 Prelude is a twelve-tone reference to J.S. Bach's preludes by comparing the former to the Prelude from the English Suite No. 2; that the Op. 25 Musette is a reference to J.S. Bach's dances as seen by a comparison to Gavotte II (*ou la musette*) from the English Suite No. 3; and that the Op. 25 Intermezzo is a reference to Brahms intermezzi and other character pieces, illustrated by a discussion of

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[5] Arnold Schoenberg, "The Musical Idea: its Presentation and Development," (translation by Charlotte M. Cross), 137.

[6] Charles Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg* (New York: Viking Press, 1975), 79.

the sonata form of Schoenberg's Intermezzo, and a comparison to Brahms's Intermezzo, Op. 116 No. 4.

The history of the composition of Op. 25 sheds great insight regarding the contrasting characteristics of the Praeludium, Intermezzo, and Musette. These three movements were each written at different stages of the composition of the suite. They each have different characteristics owing to Schoenberg's shifting conception of the suite. The Praeludium and Intermezzo were written before Schoenberg saw the set as a neo-Baroque suite.[7] The Praeludium was written first, in July 1921, and has some of the most obvious references to contrapuntal techniques used by J.S. Bach: imitation, invertible counterpoint, and compound melody. The Intermezzo, begun in 1920 and completed in 1923, was next, also before Schoenberg decided to use Baroque dance models. The Intermezzo is definitely not in the character of a Baroque dance; rather, it is as Rosen states, "almost Brahmsian in character." This description is not trivial. The designation "Intermezzo" is very suggestive of Brahms whose late piano works consisted largely of Intermezzi.[8] The covertly polyphonic texture, rather than the overtly polyphonic texture seen in the music of J.S. Bach, and (as I will argue) sonata form are also more akin to Brahms's character pieces than to J.S. Bach's contrapuntal works. Finally, Schoenberg conceived the neo-Baroque dance suite as the genre of his Op. 25, and completed the Musette, along with the Gavotte and Menuett, in March 1923. The Musette exhibits obvious dance qualities, especially regarding rhythm.

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[7] Ethan Haimo, *Schoenberg's Serial Odyssey: the Evolution of his Twelve-tone Method, 1914-1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) 84-85, 99.

[8] In Op. 116, *Fantasien,* four of the seven movements are Intermezzi; in Op. 117, *Drise Intermezzi*, all three are Intermezzi; in Op. 118, *Klavierstücke*, four of the six movements are Intermezzi; in Op. 119, *Klavierstücke*, three of the four movements are Intermezzi.

The analyses to follow are based on an understanding of the twelve-tone construction of the suite. In the Op. 25 Suite, Schoenberg uses a limited number of row forms, P-4, P-10, I-4 and I-10, which he continuously recycles. Ethan Haimo describes the row in Op. 25 as "not a linear ordering of all 12-pitch classes, but rather a polyphonic tetrachordal, aggregate forming complex."[9] His labeling of the tetrachords is as follows (see Fig. 1):

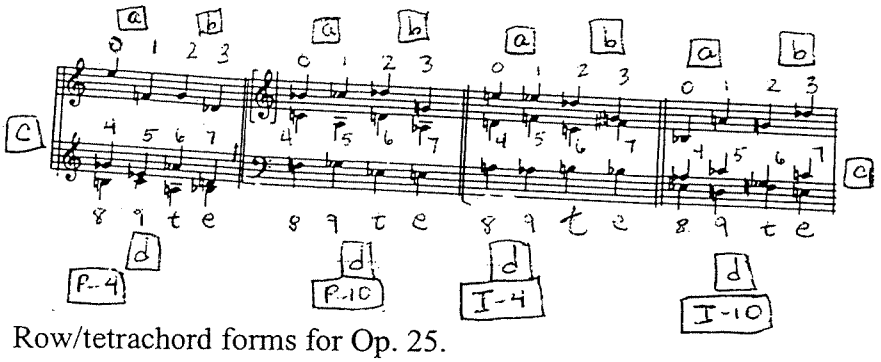

Fig. 1. Row/tetrachord forms for Op. 25.

The first tetrachord consists of a semitone dyad and the G-D-flat tritone. For the purposes of this paper, this tetrachord will be divided into motives *a* (semitone dyad) and motive *b* (G-D-flat), since G-D-flat, which is common to the first tetrachord in all of the row forms in Op. 25, often has its own motivic importance, especially in the Musette. The second tetrachord, which will be referred to as motive *c*, consists of a minor third and a tritone (or a major sixth [inversion of a minor third] and a tritone). The third tetrachord, or motive *d*, consists of pitch class set (0,1,2,3). In P-4, this set, B-A-C-B-flat, spells out "Bach" in the German spelling. The static recycling of row forms and the polyphonic tetrachordal conception of the row are techniques Schoenberg later abandoned in his twelve-tone works.[10]

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[9] Haimo, *Schoenberg's Serial Odyssey,* 85-86.
[10] Haimo, *Schoenberg's Serial Odyssey,* 85.

Praeludium

Schoenberg's Op. 25 Praeludium and the Prelude to Bach's English Suite No. 2 have several compositional techniques in common: imitation, compound melody, and invertible counterpoint. The two also have basically the same ternary form, though Schoenberg varies the reprise in order to maintain the twelve-tone method's stricture against literal repetition. Moreover, there are melodic references to Bach's Prelude that further suggest that Schoenberg used the composition as a model.

Both Bach's and Schoenberg's Preludes begin with a two-voice canon (see Figs. 2a and 2b):

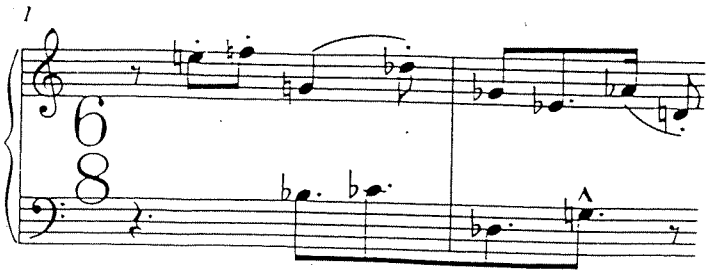

Fig. 2a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Praeludium mm. 1-2.

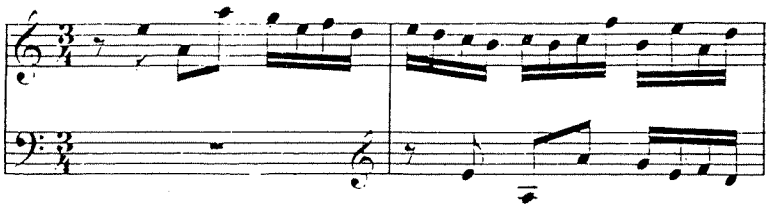

Fig. 2b. Bach English Suite No. 2 Prelude mm. 1-2.

In Schoenberg's Praeludium, the imitation in the left hand, B-C-flat-D-flat-G, is an exact transposition of the tetrachord in the treble clef, E-F-G-D-flat. The two voices thus have the same melodic contour. There are examples of imitation in the Op. 25 Praeludium, for instance m. 7, in which this is not the case. In m. 7, there is a three-voice canon of row forms P-10, P-4, and I-4. Here the three voices do not have the same contour, but they

are imitative statements of melodies built from the same ordering of the twelve-tone motives. (see Fig. 3)

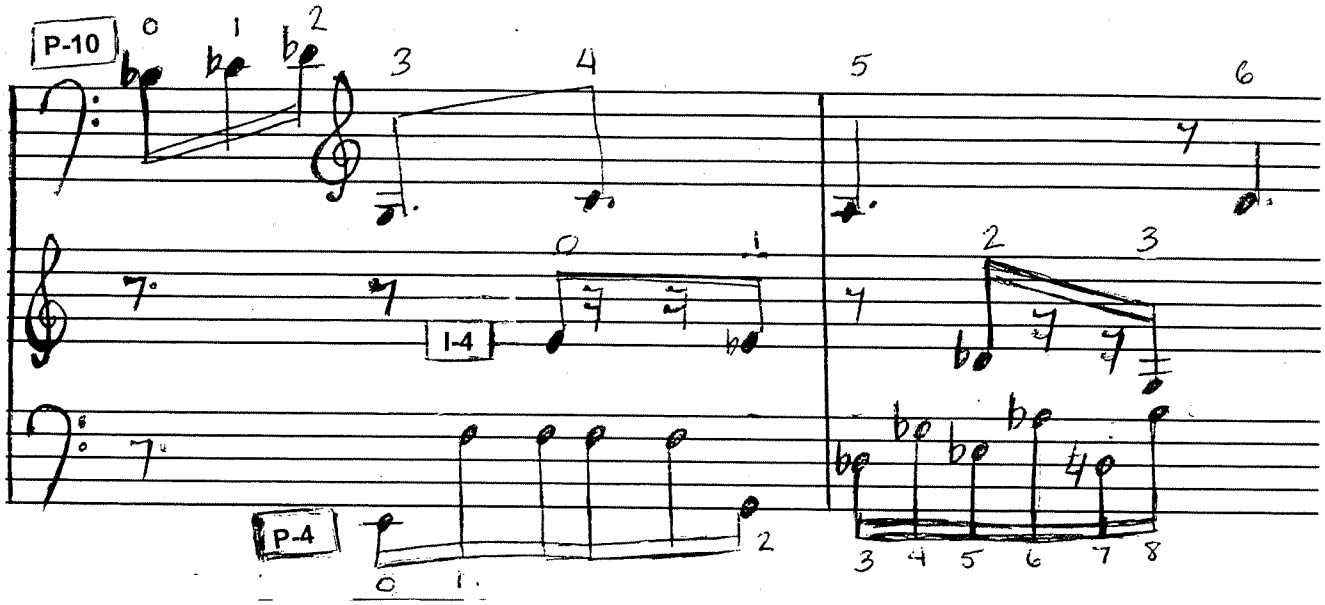

Fig. 3. Schoenberg Op. 25 Praeludium mm. 7-9.

Compound melodies abound in the music of J.S. Bach, for instance in mm. 20-21 of Bach's Prelude (see fig. 4a):

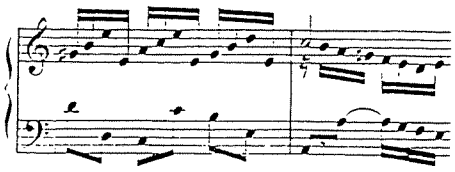

Fig. 4a. Bach English Suite No. 2 Prelude mm. 20-21.

Here the bass line can be seen as two individual melodies (see Fig. 4b):

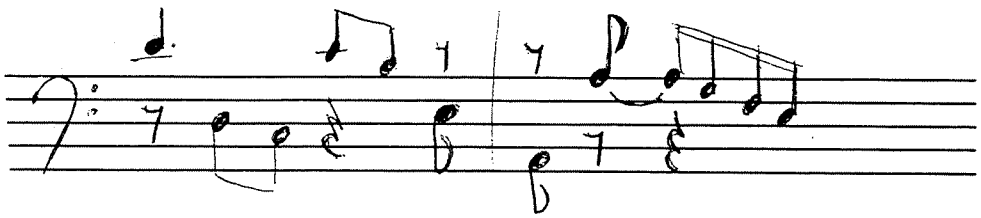

Fig. 4b. Bach English Suite No. 2 Prelude mm. 20-21.

The right-hand melody can be seen as three independent voices (see Fig. 4c):

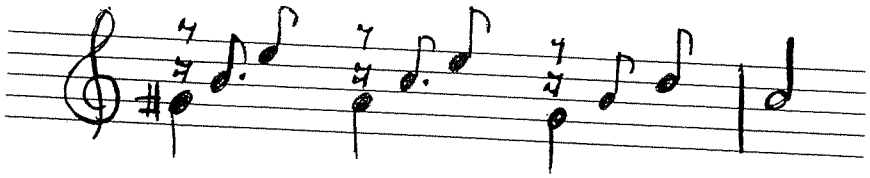

Fig. 4c. Bach English suite No. 2 Prelude mm. 20-21.

In his Op. 25 Praeludium, Schoenberg constructs melodies by combining two or more of the twelve-tone motives. In mm. 9-10, Schoenberg combines motives *c* and *d* of I-10 (see fig. 5a):

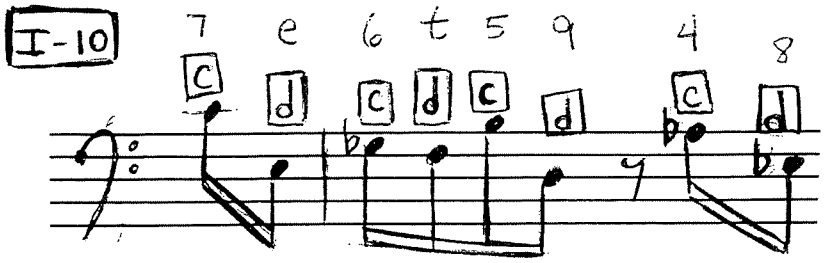

Fig. 5a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Praeludium mm. 9-10.

The alternation between notes from motives *c* and *d* creates a compound melody (see Fig. 5b):

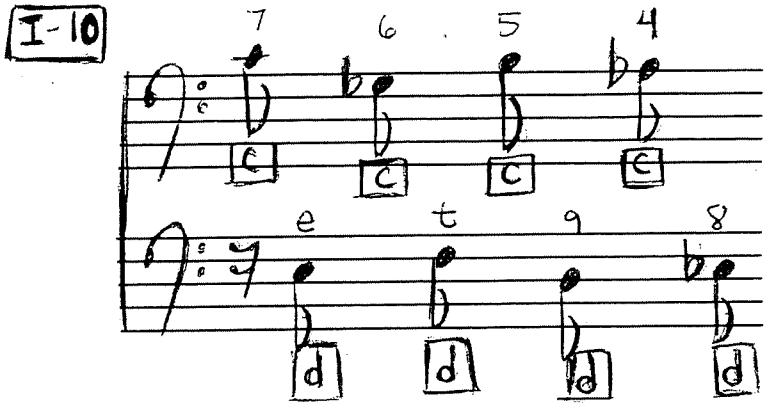

Fig. 5b. Schoenberg Op. 25 Praeludium mm. 9-10.

Another example is the bass line in mm. 10-11 (see fig. 6a):

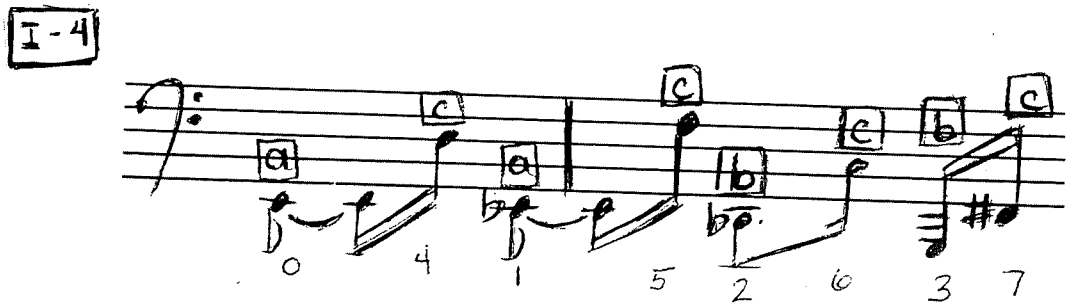

Fig. 6a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Prelude mm. 10-11.

Again, the alternation between notes from motives *a* and *b*, and notes from motive *c*, here in distinct registers suggests a compound melody (see Fig. 6b):

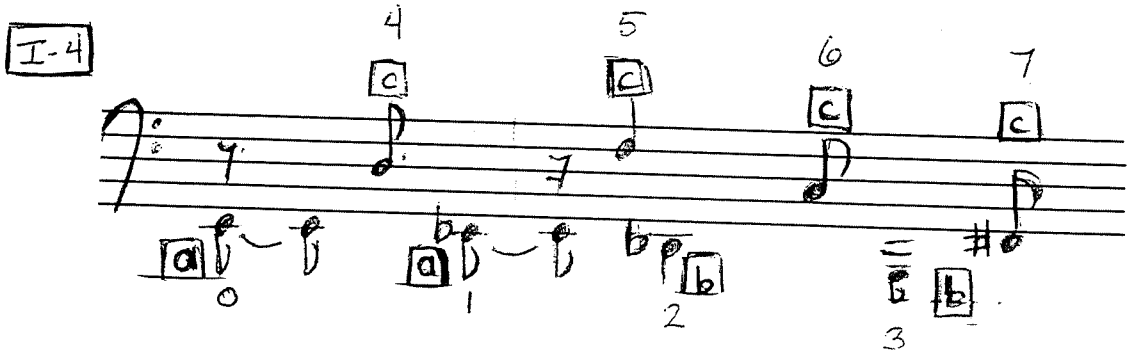

Fig. 6b. Schoenberg Op. 25 Praeludium mm. 10-11.

Invertible counterpoint is another technique that abounds in Bach's music. For example, in the Prelude from the English Suite no. 2, the melody in the right hand in m. 3 is restated in the left hand in m. 5; the left hand melody in m. 3 is restated in the right hand in m. 5 (See Fig. 7a).

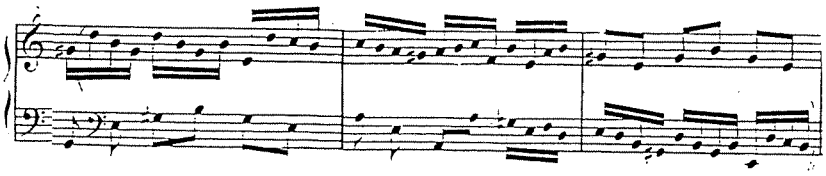

Fig. 7a. Bach English Suite No. 2 Prelude mm. 3-5.

Schoenberg follows suit in mm. 20-21 of his Op. 25 Praeludium: In m. 20, the highest voice states a melody built from motives *a* and *b*; and the lowest voice states a melody built from motive *d*. In m. 21, the lowest voice states the melody built from motives *a* and *b*, and the highest voice states the melody built from motive *d* (see Fig. 7b).

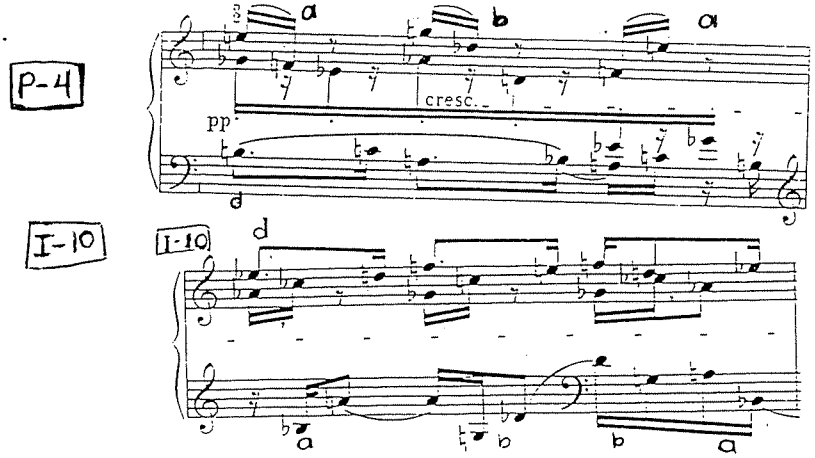

Fig. 7b. Schoenberg Op. 25 Praeludium mm. 20-21.

In Bach's Prelude, the B section begins in m. 55 and the reprise of the A section, an exact repetition of mm. 1-54, begins in m. 120. In Schoenberg's Praeludium, the beginning of the B section in m. 9 is marked by a sudden drop in dynamic from *f* to *p*;

and the *etwas ruhiger, dolce* marking. The end of the B section is marked with a *ritard* from m. 14 to m. 16 where the A section begins at the *a tempo*. For Schoenberg, "variation almost completely takes the place of repetition."[11] Therefore, we cannot expect him to repeat the A section as Bach did in his Prelude. Instead, Schoenberg indicates a reprise by stating a variation of the material found in the opening bars.

At the *a tempo* in m. 16, we have, just as in the opening measures, two-voice imitation of melodies constructed from P-4 and P-10. The reprise is very different from the opening, however. In the reprise, the right-hand voice states P-10, and P-4 imitates it in the left-hand voice. In the opening P-4 in the right hand is imitated by P-10 in the left-hand voice. While the contour of the P-10 melody is retained from the opening, the contour of the P-4 melodic line is not. This is another example of imitation in which the voices state the same twelve-tone motives, but have different melodic contours (see Fig. 8).

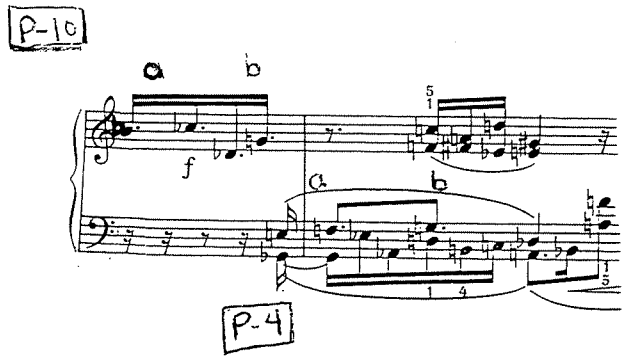

Fig. 8. Schoenberg Op. 25 Praeludium mm. 16-17.

I will conclude this discussion of the Praeludium by noting passages in Schoenberg's Praeludium that are possible melodic references to Bach's. The contour of the subjects used in the openings of the two Preludes are similar in general ways.

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[11] Burkholder, *Schoenberg and His World*, 164.

Fig. 9a. Bach English Suite No. 2 Prelude m. 1.

Fig. 9b. Schoenberg Op. 25 Praeludium m. 1.

Both subjects contain two figures: the contour of the first figure consists of a large leap down followed by a large leap up; the contour of the second figure consists of a motion down, followed by a motion up, followed by a motion down, all by relatively small intervals (see fig. 9b).

The repeated notes B-flat, A, G in m. 2 of Schoenberg's Praeludium are very similar in contour to the repeated notes C, B, E in the inner voice in mm. 62-64 in Bach's Prelude. Both descend by a semitone and ascend by a large leap (see Fig. 10a; cf. 10b).

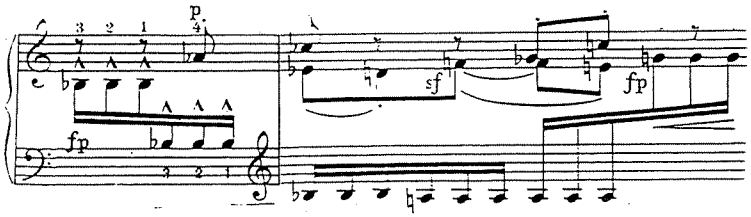


Fig. 10a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Praeludium mm. 2-3.

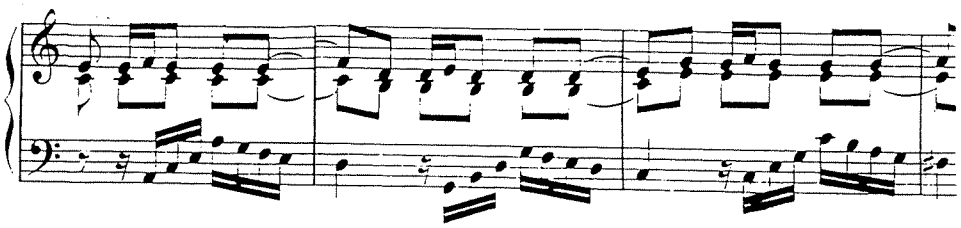


Fig. 10b. Bach English Suite No. 2 Prelude mm. 62-64.

The compound melody in mm. 13-14 of Schoenberg's Praeludium is remarkably similar to the compound melody in mm. 30-31 of Bach's Prelude. In particular, both passages begin with D, F, C, F. In Bach's Prelude, the compound melody is an alternation of F and the notes of the countersubject in the right hand in m. 2 (see Fig. 11a). In Schoenberg's Praeludium, the compound melody is an alternation between notes from motives *c* and *d* (see Fig. 11b). In both examples, the intervals between the individual melodies steadily expand from the minor third between D and F.

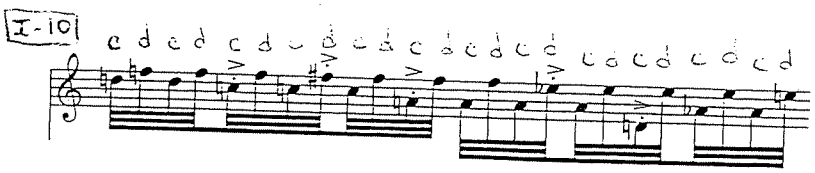


Fig. 11a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Praeludium mm. 14.

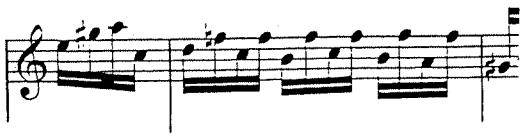


Fig. 11b. Bach English Suite No. 2 mm. 30-31.

Musette

A musette is a dance-like piece whose style is suggestive of the sound of the musette or bagpipe; the bass part generally has a drone on the tonic. Schoenberg's Op. 25 Musette and Bach's Gavotte II (*ou la musette*) from English Suite No. 3 both fit this description. They both contain drones and dance-like rhythms. They also have rounded binary forms and similar methods for generating material in the B section. This again suggests that Bach's music likely served as a model for Schoenberg's Op. 25.

Bach's Gavotte II has a G drone throughout (see Fig. 12a).

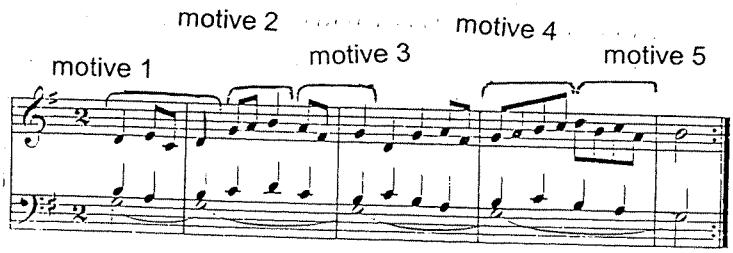


Fig. 12a. Bach English Suite No. 3 Gavotte II mm. 1-4.

The Op. 25 Musette also has a G drone, however in order to avoid any sense of a G tonal area, Schoenberg uses the tonally ambiguous G-D-flat tritone (motive *b*). In fact, as shown above, all the row forms Schoenberg uses in Op. 25 have this G-D-flat tritone in common. Excluding the first two measures, the G-D-flat tritone acts as a drone or repeating bass line throughout the entire movement. In the first two measures, the G acts as a drone, while the D-flat is part of the melody. The G-D-flat drone is seen clearly in the left-hand accompaniment in m. 9 (see Fig. 12b).

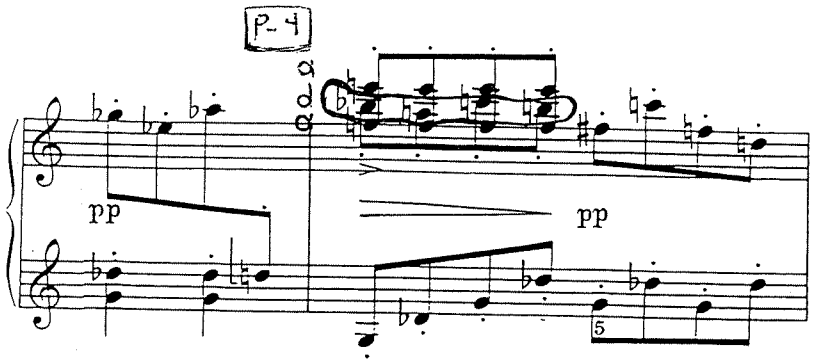


Fig. 12b. Schoenberg Op. 25 Musette m. 9.

Another element that characterizes musettes, and dances in general, is their rhythm. Unlike the Prelude or Intermezzo, the Musette was written after Schoenberg had decided to cast his Op. 25 as a Baroque suite. It therefore makes sense that he gave the Musette a particular dance quality, namely a regular metric pulse. This is not the case for the Intermezzo or Praeludium, which have dynamic, irregular metric patterns. The regular metric pulse in the Musette results from Schoenberg's exclusive use of sixteenth and eighth notes, underscored with regular dynamic and agogic accents. This is in contrast to the Intermezzo or Praeludium, which have a variety of dotted and triplet rhythms and irregular accents.

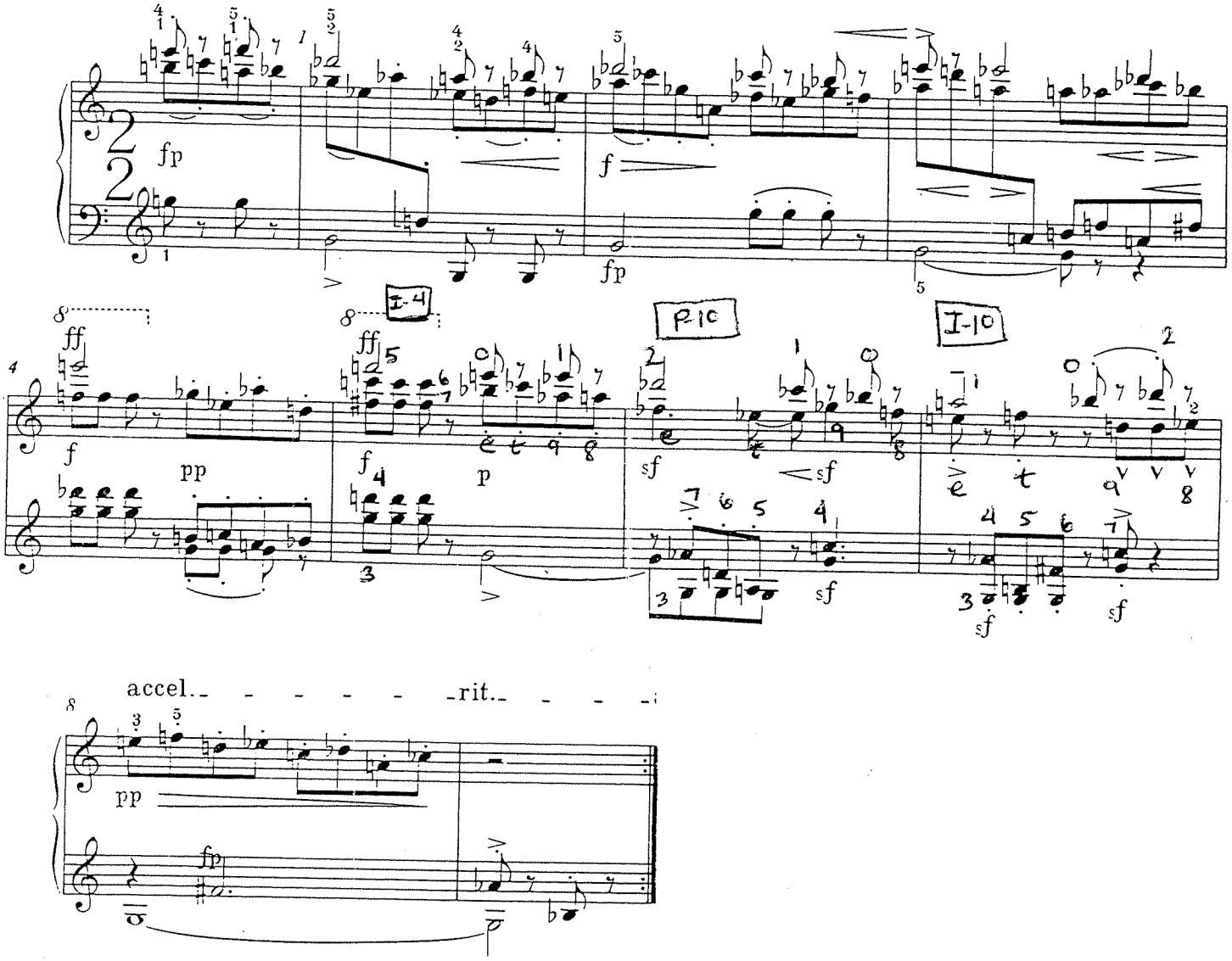


Fig. 13a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Musette mm. 1-8.

In the opening bars of the Musette, the highest voice creates a rhythmic pattern of two short notes and one long note, more specifically, two quarter notes and a half-note (see fig. 13a and 13b):

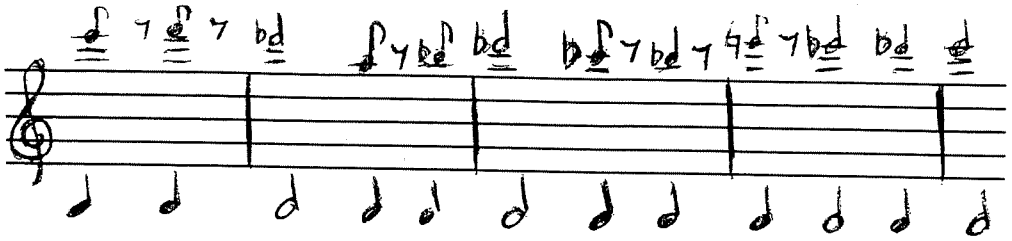


Fig. 13b. Rhythmic pulse of Schoenberg's Op. 25 Musette mm. 1-4.

The melody in the opening two bars of Bach's Gavotte II also alternates between short and long notes, in this case, two eighth notes and a quarter note. (see Fig. 12a).

The forms of Schoenberg's Musette and Bach's Gavotte II are very similar. Both are rounded binary (see formal analysis of Schoenberg's Musette below) and their two sections, partitioned by a repeat sign, are nearly identical in proportion. In Schoenberg's Musette, the first section is eight measures long, and the second section is twenty-three measures long. In Bach's Musette, the first section is four measures long and the second section is twelve measures long. In both cases, the ratio of the lengths of the sections is 1:3.

Schoenberg's Musette and Bach's Gavotte II also have similar patterns of slowing and acceleration of the rhythmic pulse. Midway through the first section in Bach's Gavotte II (beginning in m. 3), the two quarter notes, G and D, create a slower pulse than the faster quarter-eighth-eighth-note pattern that preceded it (see fig. 12a). In a similar vein, midway through the first section of Schoenberg's Musette (m. 4), the E-F in the top voice is marked *ff* and is heard as two half notes separated by a half rest. This creates a slower rhythmic pulse than the quarter-quarter-half-note pattern in the top voice in mm. 1-3 (see Fig. 13a and 13b).

In the penultimate measure of the first section in Bach's Gavotte II (m. 4), the string of eighth-notes creates a faster pulse than the preceding quarter-eighth-eighth pattern (see fig. 12b). Likewise, in the penultimate measure of Schoenberg's Musette (m. 8), the eighth-notes in the right hand part create a faster rhythmic pulse than the half-quarter-quarter pulse that preceded it (see Fig. 13a); furthermore, Schoenberg indicates an *accelerando* at this measure.

Bach's and Schoenberg's Musettes are also similar in the way material from the first section is used to derive the material for the second section. The opening melody states several motives which are subsequently emphasized individually for an extended period of time. In the first four measures of Bach's Gavotte II, we can identify five motives (see Fig. 12a). Three of these motives are of particular importance: Motive 1 consists of a quarter note and its upper and lower neighbor notes; motive 4 is characterized by stepwise motion; and motive 5 is characterized by a downward sequence of thirds. The second section (see fig. 14) can be divided into three phrases: the first phrase begins after the repeat sign in the middle of m. 4 and lasts until the first half of m. 6; the second phrase lasts from the second half of m. 6 throughout the first half of m. 8; the third phrase lasts from the second half of m. 8 to the first half of m. 12. In the first phrase, motive 5 is emphasized as descending thirds abound. The second phrase highlights a rhythmically diminished inversion of motive 1: E-D-G-D. The first one-and-a-half bars of the third phrase features descending thirds (motive 5); The remainder of the phrase is marked with the stepwise motion that characterized motive 4.

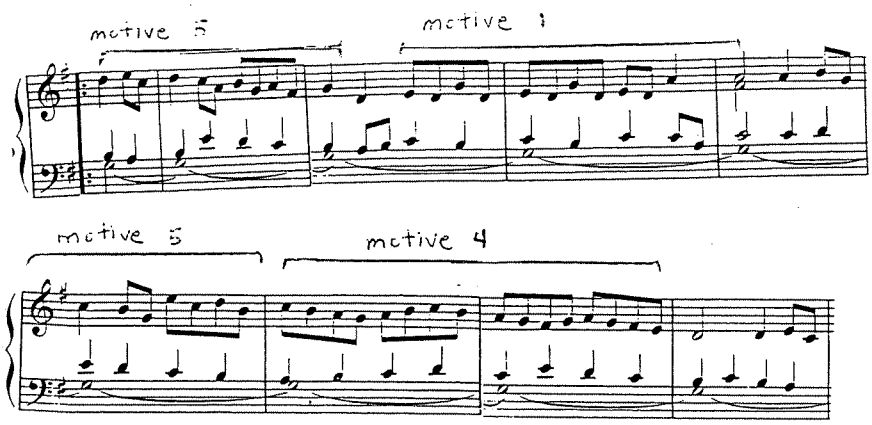


Fig. 14. Bach English Suite No. 3 Gavotte II mm. 5-13.

Schoenberg follows the same procedure in his Musette using the constituent twelve-tone motives. Schoenberg creates form in the Musette by emphasizing a particular motive or motives for an extended period of time. He emphasizes a motive registrally by stating it as the highest voice, or rhythmically by giving the motive a metric pattern that contrasts with those of other voices. Additionally, he de-emphasizes subordinate motives by stating them in lower voices, by obscuring their melodic ordering, or by "burying" them in the polyphonic texture.

In the first section, there is a registral and rhythmic emphasis on motive *a* (see Fig. 13a). The highest melodic line in mm. 1-7 is built from various forms of motive *a* (the semitone diad) and D-flat (part of motive *b*). The high register gives this line prominence over the other lines; also, it consists of quarter-notes and half-notes, which makes is rhythmically very distinct from the constant eighth-note pulse in the other voices.

The second section first emphasizes motive *c*. After the repeat sign in m. 9, Schoenberg states motive *c*, followed by motives *d* and *a* (see fig. 12b). The latter are difficult to hear as separate motives because they are played simultaneously. In particular, motive *d* is obscured since it is "buried" inside the Es and Fs.

Schoenberg further indicates the subordinate role of motives *d* and *a* by marking them with a *diminuendo*. In mm. 11-14, the highest notes consist exclusively of motive *c* stated either melodically or harmonically. The lower parts consist of motive *b* and motives *a* and *d*. Again, the latter two motives are obscured because they are played simultaneously, and motive *d* is difficult to hear since it is stated in a polyphonically blurred way.

Measures 14-16 are transitional as no single motive appears to have prominent role. The highest melodic line is a combination of motives *a* and *d*, which cannot be heard as separate motives, since Schoenberg combines both into a single figure. For instance, in the highest melody in the second half of m. 14, E-F is motive *a*, and A-B-flat is part of motive *d*. In the second half of m. 15, the highest melodic line consists of G-flat (from motive *a*), E-flat-D (from motive *d*), A (from motive *a*), and F-E (from motive *d*) [see fig. 15].

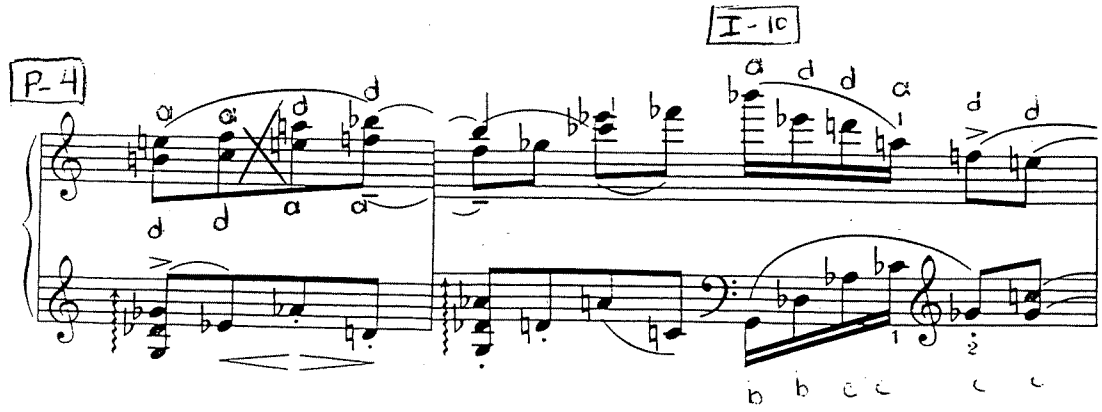


Fig. 15. Schoenberg Op. 25 Musette mm. 14-15.

The left-hand notes in mm. 16-20 consist of motives *b* and *c*. The right-hand part consists of two voices: a slowly descending chromatic line, and a melody comprised of motive *d*. The dotted-eighth-sixteenth makes motive *d* rhythmically conspicuous. This, along with its high register, makes motive *d* the most noticeable one (see Fig. 16).

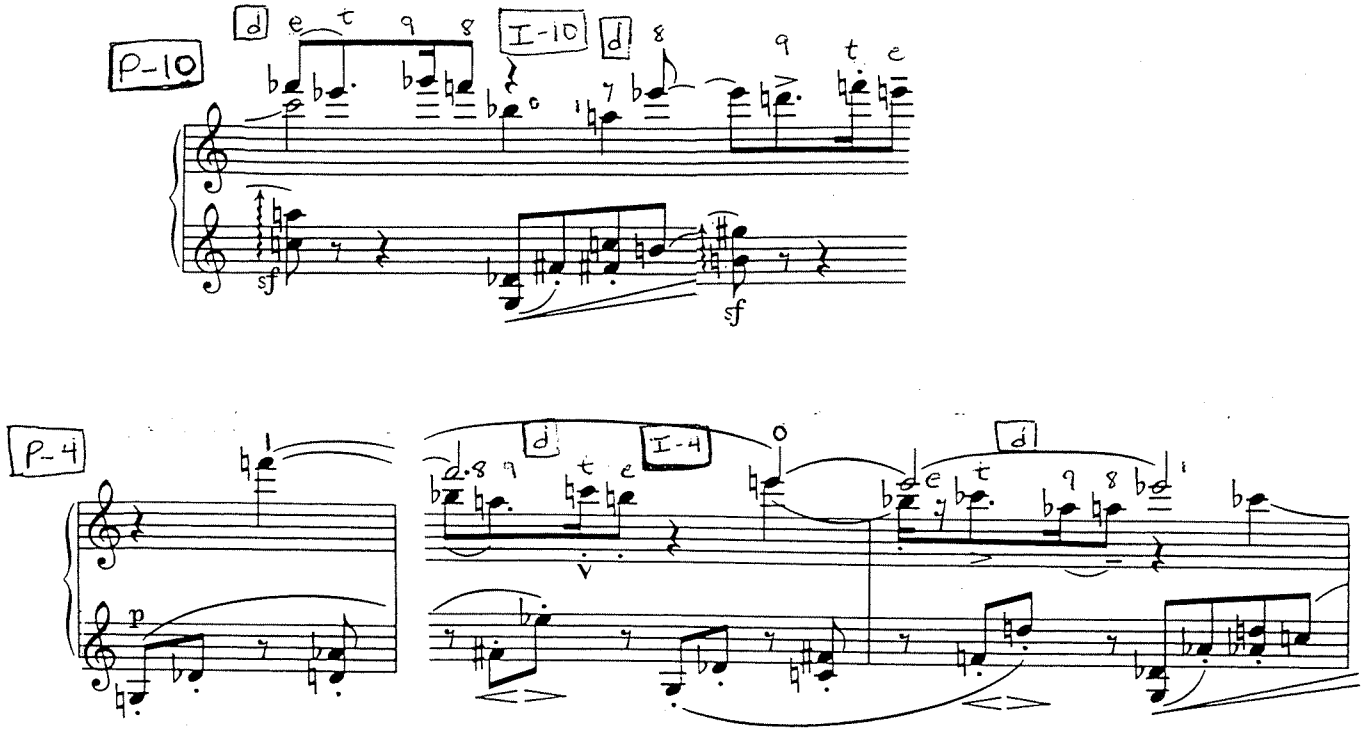


Fig. 16. Schoenberg Op. 25 Musette m. 16-20.

It is clear that m. 27-30 recall the opening since they contain the exact same notes, voicing, and octave placements as mm. 6-9 (see Fig. 17a; cf. Fig. 13a); in fact, the reprise begins in m. 20. There are other melodic references to the opening in the reprise: in m. 24, the E on the first beat and F on the second beat are in the same register and rhythm as in m. 4. In the second half of m. 24 and following, mm. 24-25, the A-flat-G-flat-E-flat-D

collection is taken from m. 4. In m. 26, the C-F corresponds to the two highest notes at the beginning of m. 5 (See Fig 17b).

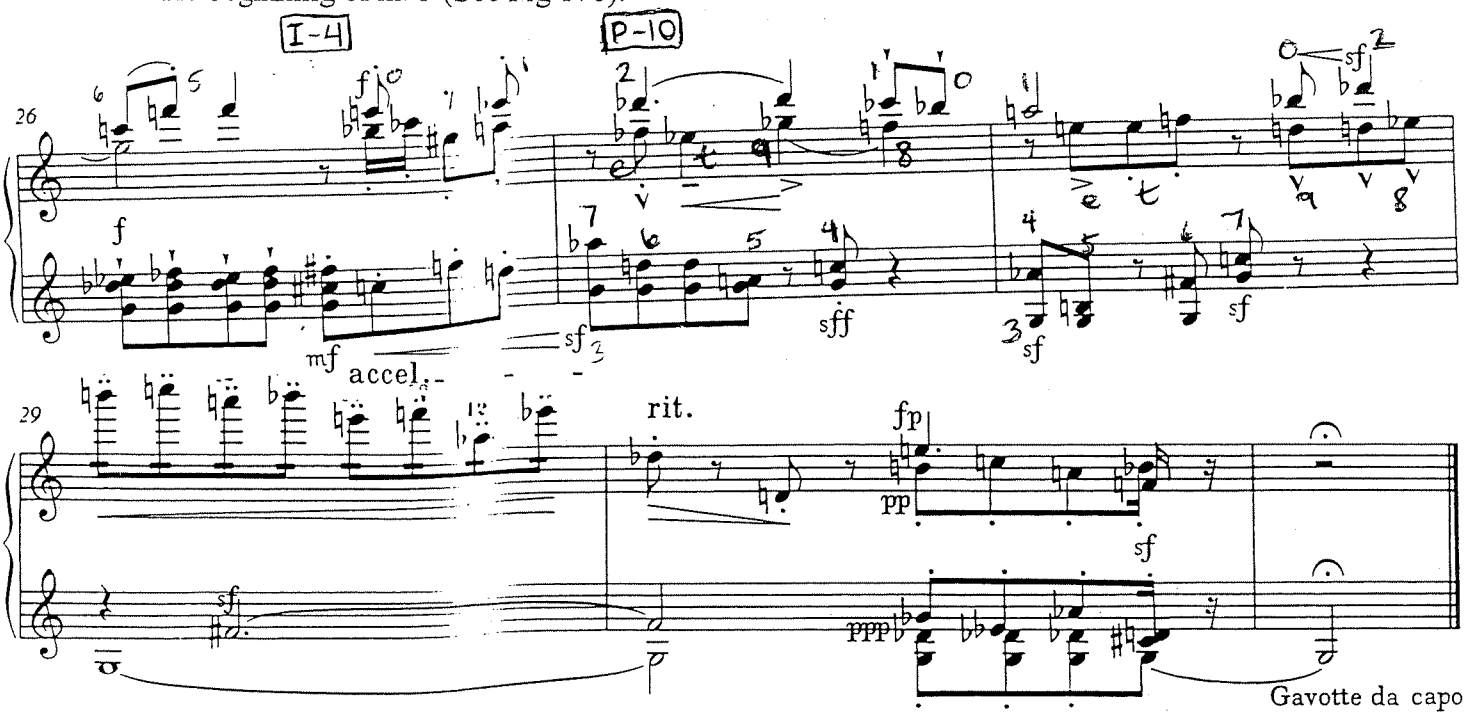


Fig. 17a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo mm. 26-30.

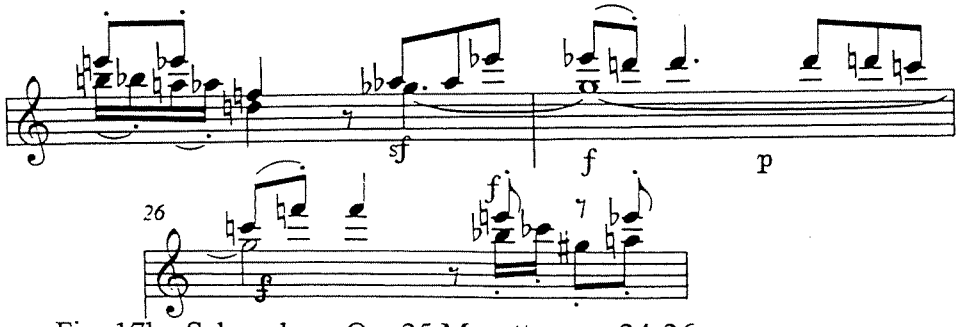


Fig. 17b. Schoenberg Op. 25 Musette mm. 24-26.

That the reprise begins with mm. 20-26 is also seen in the rhythmic stresses of the highest voice which are nearly identical to those of the beginning of the movement, namely, a quarter-quarter-half-note pattern (see fig. 13b; cf. fig. 18).

In the opening, the stressed beats are the ones on which the notes of the highest voice are struck. In the reprise, the stressed beats are determined by the rhythm of the highest melody and by the accents indicated by Schoenberg; more explicitly, in m. 21,

the accent on the second quarter; in m. 22, the accent on the second quarter; and the *sf*s on the third and fourth quarters; and in m. 23, the *sf*s on the first, second, and fourth quarters. A slight rhythmic variation from the opening occurs in m. 21: the stress on the second quarter was absent in m. 2. This is merely an embellishment that adds to the increasing rhythmic intensity of the reprise resulting from the sixteenth note flurries.

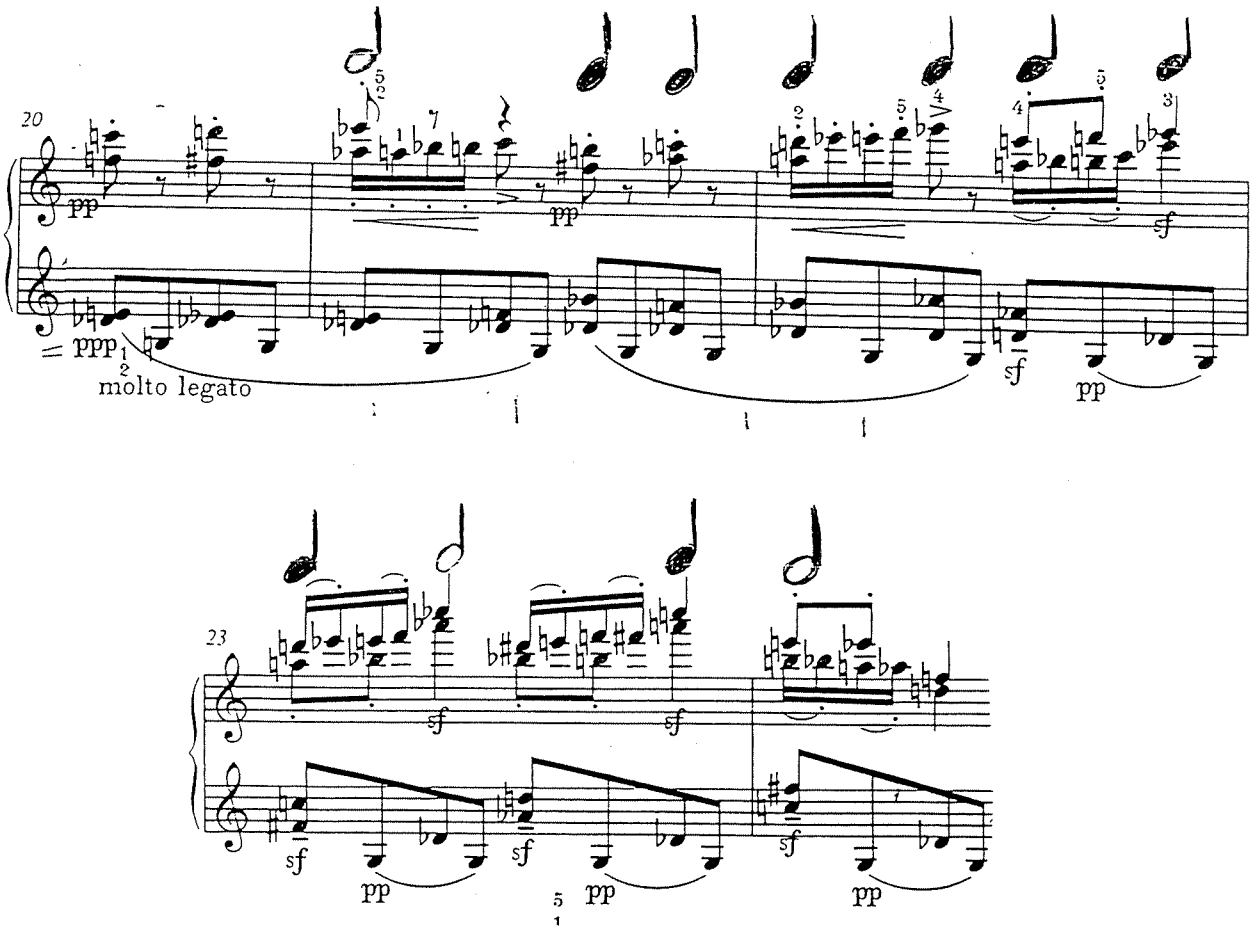


Fig 18. Schoenberg Op. 25 Musette mm. 20-24.

To conclude the discussion of the Musette, refer to m. 13 of Schoenberg's Musette (see Fig. 19a), in which the right-hand part is nearly an literal inversion of m. 14 in Bach's Gavotte II (see Fig. 19b). this is another possible reference that suggests that Bach's music served as a model for Schoenberg's Op. 25.

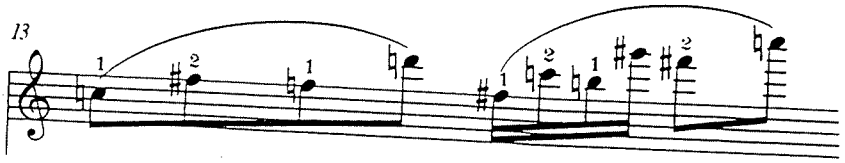


Fig. 19a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Musette mm. 13.

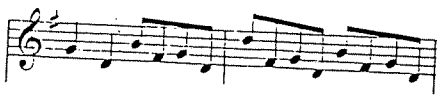


Fig. 19b. Bach English Suite No. 3 Gavotte m. 1.

Intermezzo

The Intermezzo is the one movement in Op. 25 that was not a dance form found in Baroque suites. That Schoenberg began work on the Intermezzo before conceiving Op. 25 as a dance suite corroborates the notion that his Intermezzo is not a reference to J.S. Bach's dance suites. Rather, it is more likely a reference to Johannes Brahms's character pieces. Brahms's later piano compositions were mostly Rhapsodies, Capriccios, and Intermezzi; the most numerous of these were the Intermezzi, which comprise eighteen of the thirty works in his Opp. 76, 79, 116, 117, 118, and 119.

I will compare Schoenberg's Op. 25 Intermezzo with Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 116, No. 4 to suggest that Schoenberg used Brahms's Intermezzi as models for his first twelve-tone work. The two have several musical elements in common: texture, similar melodic figures, and use of contrasting accompaniment rhythms to differentiate formal sections. I will also describe Schoenberg's Intermezzo as a sonata form, more reminiscent again of Brahms than of Bach.

The Intermezzo is unique in the Op. 25 suite in that it is in a covertly polyphonic, rather than overtly polyphonic, texture; that is, the music is constructed of polyphonic lines, however, they are not heard as independently as the polyphonic lines in, say, the fugues or canons of J.S. Bach. Instead, some of the lines form accompaniment figures that persist while a melody or melodies are stated with it. Schoenberg's Intermezzo begins with an accompaniment figure in the right hand; the melody begins on the last eighth (see Fig. 20a).

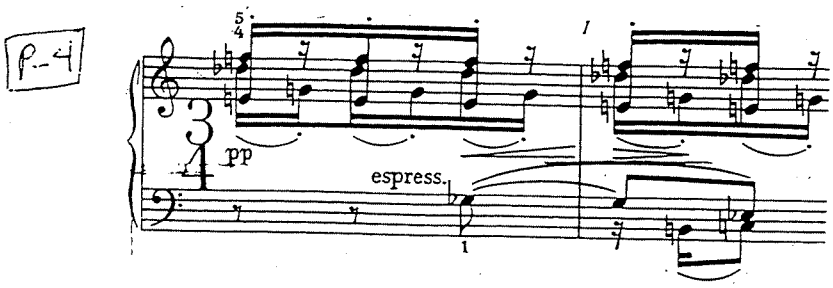


Fig. 20a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo m. 1.

Brahms took a similar approach to begin his intermezzo Op. 116, No. 4. An accompaniment figure in the left hand opens the piece; the melody enters on the fourth quarter beat of the piece (see Fig. 20b).

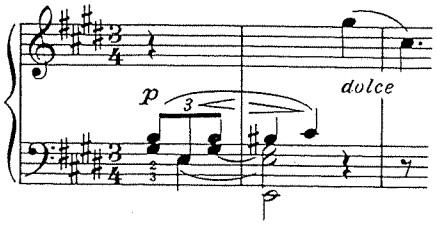


Fig. 20b. Brahms Intermezzo Op. 116, No. 4 m. 1.

The melodic gestures in the opening of Schoenberg's Intermezzo and in the second statement of the opening phrase in Brahms's Intermezzo (m. 15) are very similar. Both consist of two melodic lines; the top line has two notes, the first of which is held while the lower voice enters. The gesture ends with both voices sounding together as a harmonic third. Also worthy of note is the use in each piece of the same tie/slur figure in the top voice (see fig. 21a; cf. 21b).

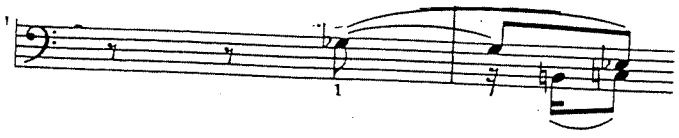


Fig. 21a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo m. 1.

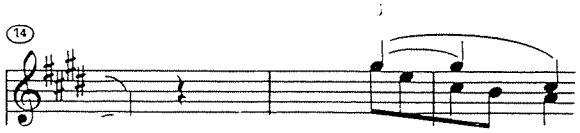


Fig. 21b. Brahms Intermezzo op. 116, No. 4 m. 15.

In both Brahms's Intermezzo and Schoenberg's, contrasting rhythms in the accompaniment figures demarcate formal sections. In mm. 1-36, the left hand accompaniment is in triplet eighth notes. Many times, the melody is in duple eighth notes, creating a characteristic "two-against-three" rhythm, as in m. 8 (see Fig. 22a).

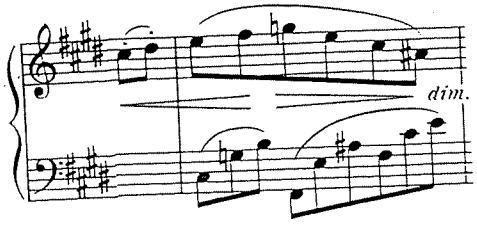


Fig. 22a. Brahms Intermezzo Op. 116, No. 4 m. 8.

In contrast, in mm. 37-47, the accompaniment is in sixteenth notes (see Fig. 22b).

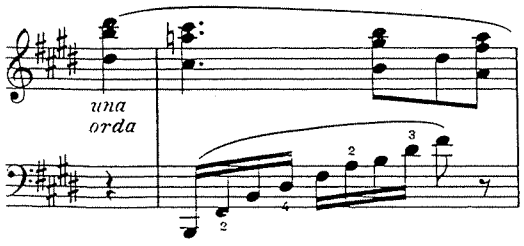


Fig. 22b. Brahms Intermezzo Op. 116, No. 4 m. 37.

Likewise in Schoenberg's Intermezzo, the accompaniment rhythm in mm. 1-4, which I will call the first group (see discussion of sonata form below), contrasts with that of mm. 5-10, which I will call the second group. In the first group, the accompaniment is in sixteenth-notes (see Fig. 20a). In the second group, the accompaniment is in triplet

sixteenths, and the melodic lines form the characteristic "two-against-three" rhythmic relationship with the accompaniment (see fig. 22c):

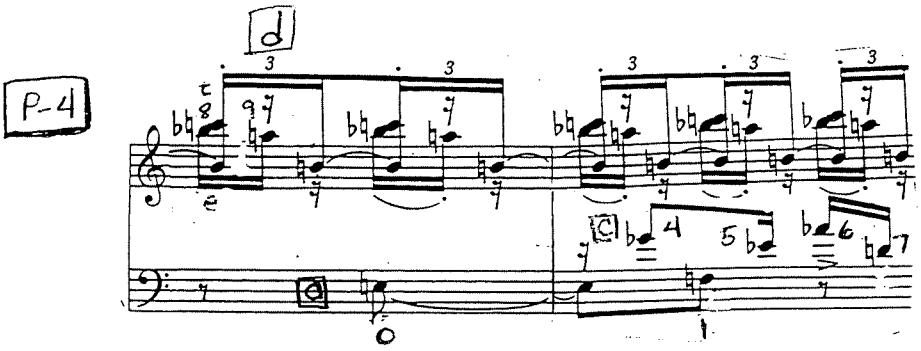


Fig. 22c. Schoenberg Intermezzo mm. 5-6.

I will argue that the form of Schoenberg's Op. 25 Intermezzo is a twelve-tone analogy to a sonata form. Classical sonata form is delineated by shifts in tonal center or key, and by recurrence of themes. In Schoenberg's Op. 25 Intermezzo, the tonal areas find their analogy in the motivic construction of accompaniment and melody. The form is also demarcated by thematic and especially rhythmic recurrences. I will first discuss the exposition (mm. 1-10) and the recapitulation (mm. 20-33) in order to identify the recurrences of themes and rhythms that make this movement a sonata form. Then I will discuss the development (mm. 11-20), which builds on material found in the exposition.

Exposition

The "tonic" first group is signaled by an accompaniment figure that is constructed of motives *a* and *b*, and melodic lines constructed of *c* and *d* (see Fig. 23).

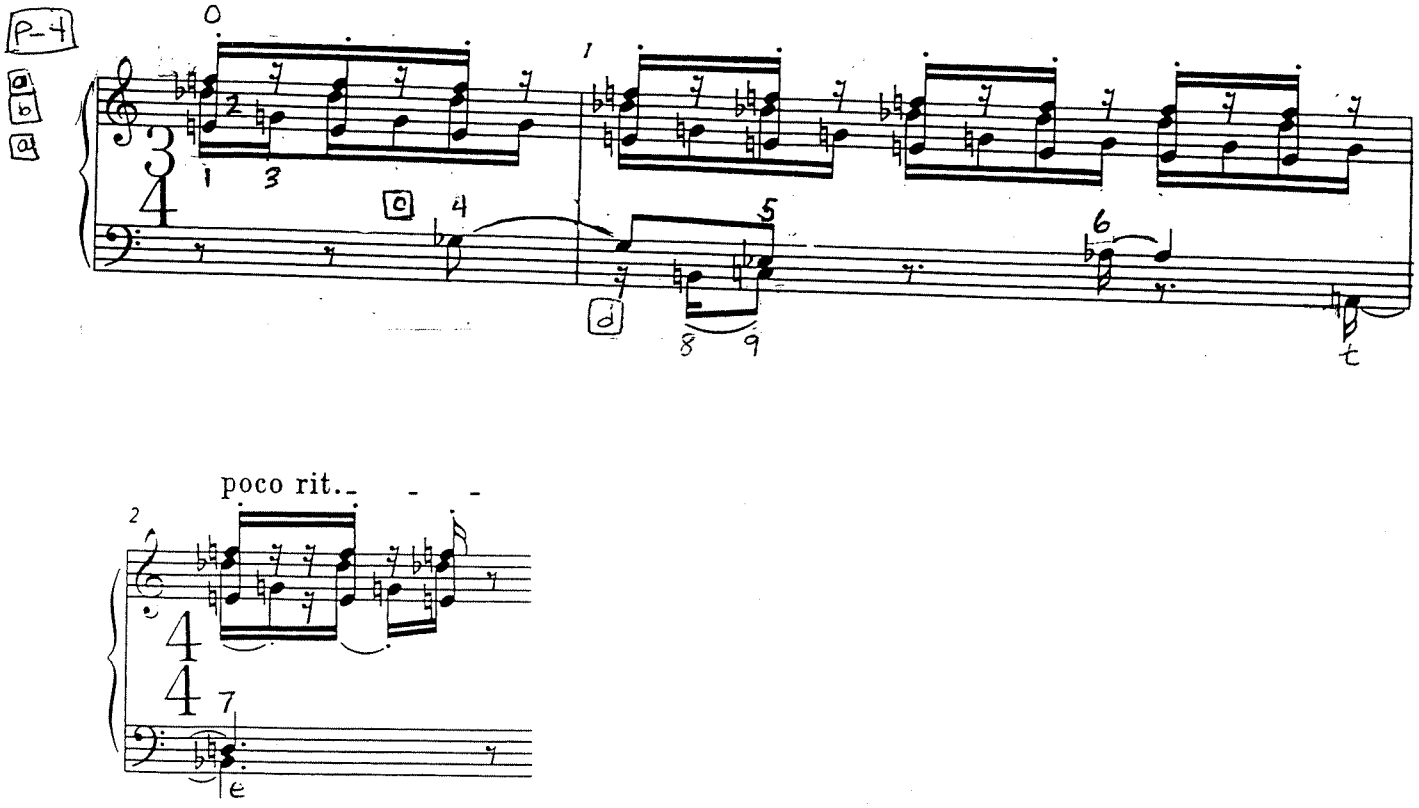


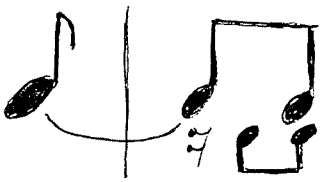
Fig. 23. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo mm. 1-2.

Other arrangements of the motives are analogous to different "keys." The second-group has an accompaniment figure constructed of motive *d*, and melodies constructed of motives *a* and *c* (see Fig. 22c).

The rhythm of the accompaniment figures also contributes to the sense of different "key" areas in the sonata form. As described above, the first-group accompaniment is in groups of four sixteenth-notes (see Fig. 23). The second group accompaniment is in groups of triplet sixteenth-notes (see Fig. 22c).

Just as the first and second groups in tonal sonata form are associated with contrasting themes, so too the first and second groups in the Op. 25 Intermezzo are associated with contrasting melodic structures. In the first group, the left hand plays two

contrapuntal voices, one formed by motive *c* and the other by motive *d*. The rhythmic relationship between the two voices is as follows:



In the second group (mm. 5-6), the left hand plays two contrapuntal voices, one constructed of motive *a*, and the other of motive *c*. The voices have a characteristic rhythmic relationship: the notes of each motive are stated in alternation, and the two lines together form a two-against-three rhythmic relationship with the accompaniment (see Fig. 22c).

Recapitulation

The development, which will be discussed below, begins in mm. 11, and extends to m. 20 where the reprise of the first group begins. Measures 21-24 are a contrapuntal inversion of mm. 1-4; what was in the right hand in the exposition is now in the left hand, and vice versa. In mm. 20-22, as in mm. 1-4, the first-group accompaniment is constructed of motives *a* and *b*, and the melodic lines are constructed of motives *c* and *d*. The rhythmic pattern of the accompaniment is a group of four sixteenth-notes. The melodic lines in mm. 20-22 have the same rhythmic relationship as in the exposition (see Fig. 24; cf. Fig 23).

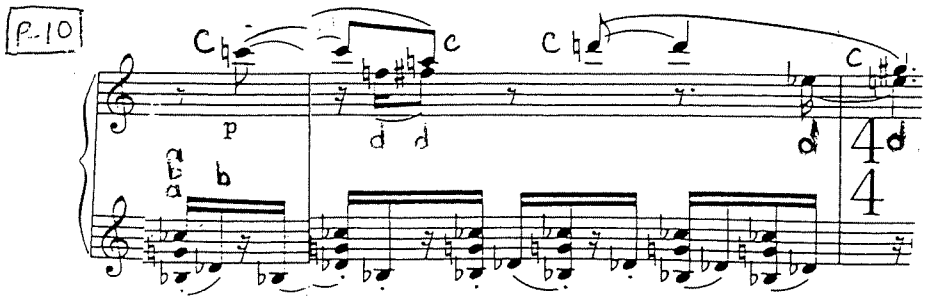


Fig. 24. Schoenberg op. 25 Intermezzo mm. 20-23.

Measures 25-30 serve the same function as the transition in tonal sonata form, that is, preparing the restatement of the second group in the tonic "key." The transition prepares the restatement of the second group with the motivic construction of the first group in the exposition, namely, the accompaniment figure constructed of motives *a* and *b,* and melodic lines constructed of motive *c* and *d.*

In mm. 25-26, Schoenberg develops the constituent motives in ways not heard previously in the movement, but the sweeping arpeggio-like figure is constructed of motives *a* and *b*; and the melodic lines are constructed of motives *d* and *c* (see Fig. 25).

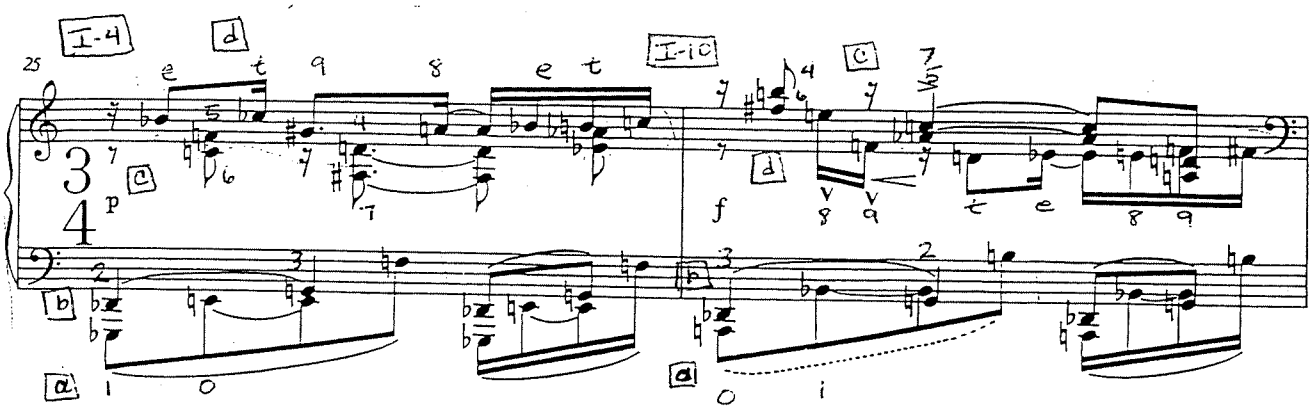


Fig. 25. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo mm. 25-26.

Schoenberg then re-emphasizes an intervallic element found in the first group in the exposition, namely a major third in the accompaniment figure. The highest two notes in mm. 1-2 are D-flat and F, a major third (see Fig. 23). In mm. 2-3, the highest notes of the accompaniment figure are A-flat and C, another major third. In contrast, the highest pair of notes of the accompaniment figures in the second group do not form major thirds:

m. 5 has a major second (see Fig. 22c); m. 7 has a minor third; and mm. 8 and 9 have a minor second. In mm. 27-30, Schoenberg re-establishes the major third (see Fig. 26). First stated are a series of minor and major thirds: in m. 27 the right hand states E-G, a minor third; then the left hand states D-flat-F, a major third; finally the right hand states E-flat-G-flat, another minor third. In m. 28, the right hand states the major third E-flat-G, the left hand states the minor third C-sharp-E, and the right hand states the minor third D-F.

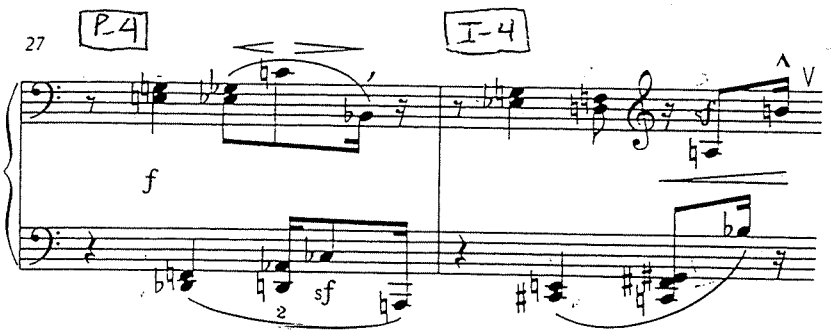


Fig. 26. Schoenberg op. 25 Intermezzo mm. 27-28.

Secondly, in m. 28, G-B-flat, a minor third, becomes C-A-flat, a major third. This is emphasized rhythmically as a triplet eighth-note group, which contrasts with the sixteenth notes on the first two beats. The same thing happens in m. 30.

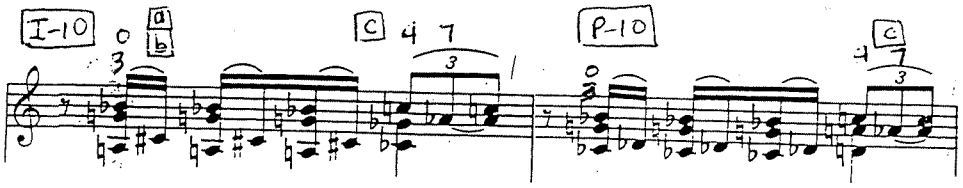


Fig. 27. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo mm. 29-30.

The second group returns in m. 31 (see Fig. 28). The accompaniment figure is in triplet sixteenth-notes, just as in the second-group of the exposition; however, it is constructed of motives *a* and *b*, the analogous "tonic key" of the first-group of the

exposition. The rhythmic relationship of the melodic lines at this part of the recapitulation is another reference to the first group. The second group's characteristic rhythm occurs in m. 31 with the A-flat. Once again, the accompaniment figure is constructed of *a* and *b*; and the melodic lines are constructed of *c* and *d*.

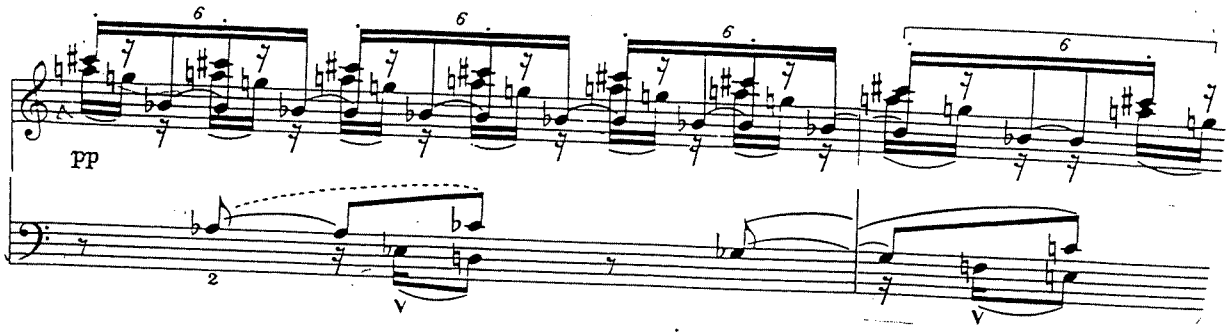


Fig. 28. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo mm. 31-32.

Development

The development in Schoenberg's Op. 25 Intermezzo expands ideas found in the exposition, just as in tonal sonata form. In mm. 5-6, Schoenberg makes use of the combinatoriality of the row. Motive *a* combined with the minor third in motive *c* forms pitch-class set (0,1,2,3), the same set as motive *d*. In mm. 5-6, the right hand plays motive *d* and the left hand plays motives *a* and *c*: E, G-flat, F, E-flat. Schoenberg uses this same motivic combination in m. 12. The right hand plays motive *d*, while the left hand plays motives *a* and *c*: B-flat, C, C-flat, A (see fig. 29):

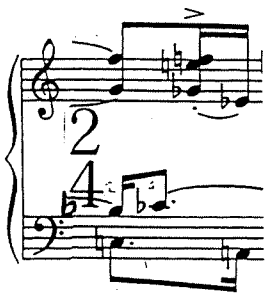


Fig. 29. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo m. 12.

In m. 13, the bottom voice (B-flat, A, G, D-flat) is a rhythmic diminution of the same melody stated in mm. 2-3 (see Fig. 30a; cf. Fig 30b)

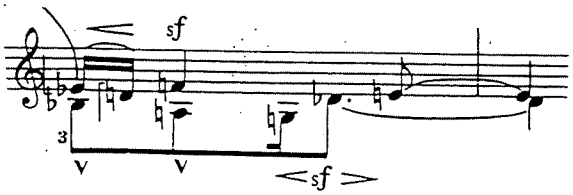


Fig. 30a. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo m. 13.

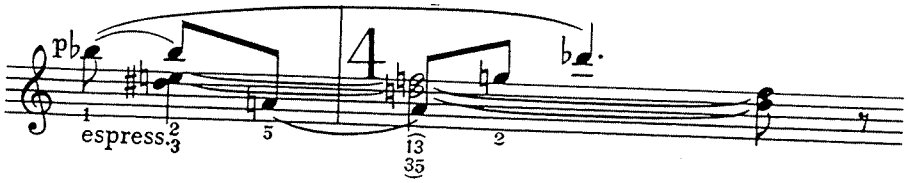


Fig. 30b. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo m. 2-3.

At the *a Tempo* in mm. 15-16, the notes of P-4 are in the exact octave placements as in the opening two bars, but are stated in different order and with different notes values (see Fig. 31; cf. Fig. 23).

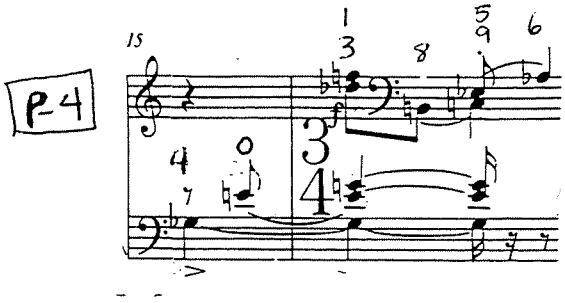


Fig. 31. Schoenberg Op. 25 Intermezzo mm. 15-16.

Conclusion

In Schoenberg's Suite for Piano Op. 25, we see a composer who is still dependent on the musical paradigms of his predecessors. In his Op. 25, Schoenberg uses incipient twelve-tone techniques to emulate tonal genres and forms, rather than to create organic, fully serial ones. He treats the twelve-tone motives/tetrachords in the same way that motives were used in tonal music, for example as subjects for imitation and counterpoint, as dance-like tunes, or as melodies in homophonic textures. These compositional techniques give rise to music that makes continual generic references to tonal music, for example in the use of contrapuntal preludes, dances, and character pieces. Also, not only does Schoenberg borrow tonal forms, e.g. ternary and sonata, he uses neither the structure of the twelve-tone row nor the choice of row form to determine the shape and content of the form[12]; rather, like composers of tonal music, he uses rhythmic and melodic recurrences to characterize formal subdivisions.

It is in these respects that Schoenberg's twelve-tone music, especially his early twelve-tone works, is most transparently a continuation of past Germanic music tradition. While he had broken free of tonality by the time he wrote Op. 25, Schoenberg had not completely broken free of tonal compositional techniques, genres, and forms, but rather continued to embrace them.

[12] Haimo, *Schoenberg's Twelve-tone Odyssey*, 108, 113-114.