

Schoenberg, Pierrot Lunaire, Op. 21/8  
Nacht (Passacaglia)

Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter  
Töteten der Sonne Glanz.  
Ein geschlossnes Zauberbuch,  
Ruht der Horizont--verschwiegen.

Aus dem Qualm verlornen Tiefen  
Steigt ein Duft, Erinnerung mordend!  
Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter  
Töteten der Sonne Glanz.

Und vom Himmel erdenwärts  
Senken sich mit schweren Schwingen  
Unsichtbar die Ungetüme  
Auf die Menschenherzen nieder . . .  
Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter.

Sinister, black enormous moths  
Were killing the sun's radiance.  
A locked magic book,  
The horizon rests, concealed.

From the smoke of forgotten depths  
Arises an aroma, murdering memory!  
Sinister, black enormous moths  
Were killing the sun's radiance.

And from heaven earthward,  
With heavy wings, fall,  
Invisibly, the monstrosities,  
Upon human hearts.  
Sinister, black enormous moths.

Translation by A.F.

Conclusion: relation of this music to the dodecaphonic

Pierrot VIII (Die Nacht)  
Literature and Sources

1. Reinhold Brinkmann. „What the Sources Tell Us . . . .“, JASI X/1 (1987)
2. Gesamtausgabe: Pierrot Lunaire, Kritischer Bericht (1995) pp. 195-196 (transcription of earlier draft) and p. IX (facsimile of that draft)

Op. 15/14  
Literature and Sources

1. Harald Krebs. „Three Versions of Schoenberg's Op. 15 No. 14: Obvious Differences and Hidden Similarities.“ JASI VIII/2 (1984)
2. Gesamtausgabe: Lieder mit Klavierbegleitung, Kritischer Bericht (1990) pp. 85-86 (two drafts of beginning of the song)

## Opus 21/8 Comments

1. Pictorial aspects (esp. register)
2. Joseph Straus on influence of older works upon modernist works. J. Straus, *Remaking the Past*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
3. Bar 17, upper staff: 6-z44 = T7I of EsCHBEG. Trichords are T5 related, lower is permuted.
4. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ numerical symbolism.
5. Role of the octatonic? All of Coll. III in opening, plus ab (AS). Can the passacaglia subject be read octatonically? E.g.,  
$$e\ g\ e^b\ (d)\ d^b\ c\ (c^b)\ b^b\ a\ g^b$$
6. A writing question: Can we speak of the left hand of the piano?
7. Why the passacaglia idea with this particular text?  
The sketch page may be suggestive in this regard.

Sprechstimme

May 21, 1912

4 part canon

E

II. Teil.

8. Nacht.

(Passacaglia)

Passacaglia them

Intro

Gehende  $\text{♩}$  (ca ss)

Baß-Klarinette in B.

Violoncell.

Resitation.

Gehende  $\text{♩}$  (ca ss)

Finsterschwärze tiefsenfter tötetender

Klavier.

8-28

67, 9, 10, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Musical score for the first system, including parts for Bass Clarinet, Violoncell, and Piano. The piano part features a circled chord and the number 5. Handwritten notes include '8-28: [0, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10]' and 'B.C.'.

Musical score for the second system, including parts for Bass Clarinet, Violoncell, and Piano. The piano part features a circled chord and the number 8. Handwritten notes include '6-8' and '8-28: [0, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10]'.

Musical score for the third system, including parts for Bass Clarinet, Violoncell, and Piano. The piano part features a circled chord and the number 10. Handwritten notes include '9-11', 'am Steg', 'Flag.', 'gesungen (womöglich die tieferen Noten)', 'Etwas rascher.', 'gesprochen', 'Aus dem Qualm verlorner', 'Etwas rascher.', 'Conceded', 'U. R. 5324. 5325', and '6-27 CIII'.

U. R. 5324. 5325

Flatteraunge

am Steg *pp* *pp* *cresc.*

Viol. *pp* *cresc.*

4-3

12-14

Tie - fen steigt ein Duft, Erinnerung mordend! Fin - stre, schwar - ze

*pp dim.* *ppp* *f*

*stacc.* *ohne Ped.* *cresc.*

7-31: [10, 0, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7] CII pn

CII 6-27

B-Kl (B)

8-28 C-I

I. Tempo Part 3

am Griffbrett *pp* *dim.*

15-17

Rie - senfal - ter tö - te - ten der Sonne Glanz.

*fff* *pp dim.*

Es - C - H - A - R - D - E 6-244 [0, 3, 4, 7, 9]

7-31 CII

B-Kl (B)

*espress.*

Flag. °

18-19

Und vom Him - mel er - denwärts sen - ken sich mit schwe - ren Schwin - gen

*pp* *molto legato*

6-223: [6, 8, 9, 11, 12] CII

6-222 CII

6-221 CII

4-577 CII

5 4 8 7 8 7 4 2 5 1 5 1 2 1 1 1 8 1 5 1 2

(5-10) Parallel 4-275 CII

"generator" of RI pattern

⊗ sum to 8-28

20-21

B-Kl (B)  
Vol.

un- - sichtbar die Un- - ge- tü- me auf die Men- - schen.

dim. dim. dim.

20 20

6-242: [4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11] comp. 16-213 CII  
6-242 CII  
6-213 CI  
CANTON ON - ATTITUDE  
6-242 [I - melodi 3-35]

III dim. II I  
CANTON bass

22-23

B-Kl (B)  
Vol.

her. - - sen nie - - der... fin. - - stre, schwar. - - se

mf

9-3  
CII

I3 dim.

24-26

B-Kl (B)  
Vol.

Rie - - sen - fal - - ter.

nimmt Klarinette in A

BREAK PATTERN

25 25

3-9: [4, 6, 11]  
3-3  
CII  
pp

D  
A

sehr große Pause, aber quasi im Takt, dann folgt: Gebet an Pierrot. Klavier, Klarinette in A.

U. E. 5324. 5326.

6-213: [3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11] CIII

6-321: [2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11]

Scheubing, Pilot 09.21/8 Nacht

Rz3.

Vc

4	7	3	2	2	1	0	11	10	9	6	4	2	1	0	11	8	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	---	---

Ruo

			4	7	3	2	2	1	0	11	10	9	6	4	2	1	0	11	10	7
--	--	--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	---

B.d.

4	7	3	2	2	1	0	11	10	9	6	8	2	1	0	11	8	6	4	7	2	7	10	6	2	6	2
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	---	---	---	---

cIII

Vc 7 6

2	4	7	2
2	1	0	0

Ruo 1

0	0	11	10						
4	7	2	7	10	6	11	8	6	2

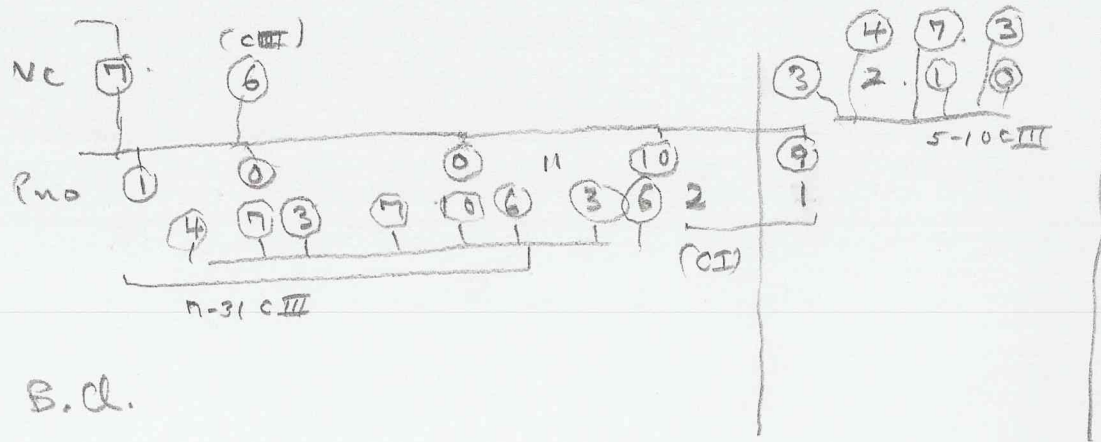
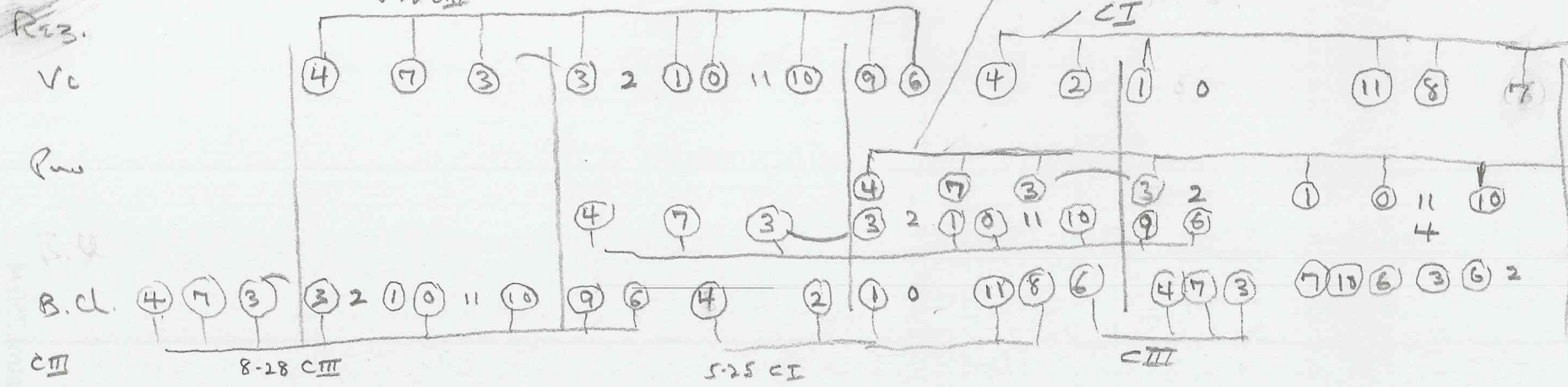
9	1
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B.d.



Schaumburg, Pierrat 01.21/8 Stadt

1 2 4 5 7 8 10 11  
 2 3 5 6 8 9 11 0  
 3 4 6 7 9 10 11



## Opus 21/8: Nacht (Passacaglia)

The eighth movement of Schoenberg's masterwork, Pierrot Lunaire, was composed on May 21, 1912, which must have been an auspicious day for Schoenberg, since it coincides with the opus number of the work. Moreover, the movement occupies a special position within the 21 movements of Opus 21 as the first piece in the second set of 7, a number replete with numerological significance, as are other numbers associated with the individual poems. Each of these is organized into three stanzas, the first two of which consist of four lines each, the last of five, yielding a total of 13 lines, a very meaningful number for the composer, who was born on September 13. Each line, in turn, contains seven or eight syllables. Note: In general, the individual poems do not, however, exhibit this regularity.

*"in drei Teilen" →*  
*on tillis page -*  
*"Dreimal Sieben bedichtet"*

Schoenberg augmented Hartleben's title, Nacht, to include the term „Passacaglia,“ the only such <sup>parenthetical</sup> technical amplification in the entire work (~~check this~~). The traditional idea of passacaglia, which involves a bass pattern of some kind that is repeated throughout the work, was not among Schoenberg's original conceptions for the movement, as is evident in the early sketch-draft reproduced in Ex. sch21.1. It will become evident to the reader who is familiar with the final version of Nacht that this earlier idea differs radically from it. Nevertheless, it is more than a tentative sketch, since it includes the opening portion of the text. Although this incomplete sketch-draft deserves more attention, I will proceed to a consideration of the final version of the movement, pausing only to point out that the chordal-harmonic and textural features of the sketch-draft share virtually nothing with the final version—particularly as they pertain to pitch-class set content with which this discussion is concerned: the octatonic. (MORE ON THE SKETCH?)

At the very outset the octatonic orientation of the movement is set forth unequivocally. For greater visual as well as aural accessibility Ex. sch21.2 notates the opening music an octave higher. Here we have the complete octatonic collection, 8-28, in its Collection III form, excluding the final Ab, which is dissonant with respect to CIII and may be interpreted as an instance of the autobiographical signature A S, from the German letter-name for Ab, As. Note on other signatures and Schoenberg's evolution article.

Schoenberg's use of the extreme lower registers of the instruments in this opening music, a striking original feature of Nacht, is intended to evoke the idea of black night and the sinister black moths of the poem by exploiting the lower depths of the three instruments, bass clarinet, violoncello, and piano. The full text of the poem is given below, including my translation of Hartleben's translation of the original Giraud source!

TEXT HERE

Unlike most of the other texts of Pierrot Lunaire, the text of Nacht does not include the classic commedia dell'arte (check spelling) characters Columbine, Cassandra, etc. but concentrates upon projecting the image of horror summarized in the thrice-repeated line „Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter.“ Note on fixed form of the poems. As the musical mechanism that corresponds to this image the composer has constructed the passacaglia theme, which is first intoned by the bass clarinet in its low register, then in imitation (canon) by cello, piano left-hand, and piano right-hand, in that order. Ex. sch21.3 provides an analytical reading of the passacaglia theme as it emerges from the CIII form of the octatonic in the opening music. Particularly salient in this line is the initial trichord e-g-eb or 3-3, the basic motivic significance of which is dramatized in bar 10 when the Rezitation (voice) sings those pitches on the three-syllable text „verschwiegen“ (concealed), one of the very rare instances in Pierrot Lunaire where the voice is required to sing specific notes, thus breaking the Sprechstimme (speech-song intonation) specified by the notation. Note on Sprechstimme performance.

Ex. sch21.3 here

The octatonic reading of the passacaglia theme in Ex. sch21.3 engages the axiom of chromatic reduction, sorting out the passing tones to reveal the underlying octatonic configuration. In the subsequent complex music the descending passacaglia idea—not the specific notes of the passacaglia theme—undergoes a remarkable contrapuntal development. A sample passage, the piano part of bars 19-20, is displayed in Ex. sch21.4, where each slurred three-note figure replicates the 3-3 motive mentioned above, forming two strings. While the trichordal components are related as retrograde inversions, this reflexive association occurs within a more complex pattern of larger scale/scope, namely the double canon shown in Example sch21.5, the systematic chromatic reduction of which reveals four underlying forms of hexachord 6-z23, one of the two ordered hexachordal classes in the octatonic scale. To sort out these octatonic lines from the total chromatic I have applied a systematic heuristic, similar to those developed in my theoretical article on Schoenberg's Opus 15. (reference)

Other passages:

Ending—autobiographical (the painting!) The period. Blaue Reiter, etc.  
Reproduce the painting?

Bar 21—6-z42 near octa

Bar 26 Music of opening abbreviated to 6-z13