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6-241 [0, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8]

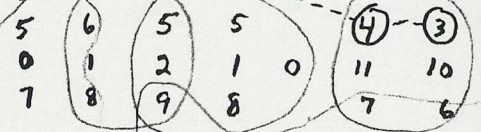
6-219: [3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11]

Var. II

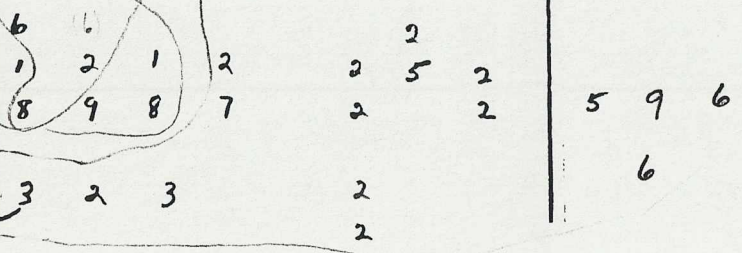
6-219: [1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9]

6-242: [5, 8, 9, 0, 1, 2]

6-219  
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6-210 [2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9]

Schoenberg's Relationship to the Organ as an Instrument, to its Literature,  
and His Original Compositions for the Organ: A Chronology

- 1904 (?) "Die Zukunft der Orgel" - an unfinished and unpublished essay.
- 1922 Orchestral transcription (recomposition?) of two Bach organ chorales:  
1. Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist  
2. Schmücke Dich, O Liebe Seele
- 1928 Orchestral transcription of J. S. Bach's Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Major from Clavierübung, III.
- 1930 Letter to conductor Fritz Stiedry outlining views on his orchestral transcriptions of organ works, and his views on the organ. (31 July)
- 1941 Commissioned to write a short organ work for H. W. Gray's Contemporary Organ Series, William Strickland, editor
- 1941 Work on Sonata for organ. Begun August 7, abandoned for work on Variations on a Recitative, Op. 40. Sonata never completed.
- 1941 Composition of Variations on a Recitative for organ, Op. 40  
Begun August 25, completed October 12.
- 1942 Schoenberg proposes to H. W. Gray the possibility of making two transcriptions of Op. 40: (1) for two pianos (begun by the composer and left unfinished), and (2) for orchestra.
- 1942-47 Various problems and delays in publication of Op. 40 for organ.
- 1947 Publication of Op. 40. H. W. Gray. Edited by Carl Weinrich
- 1949 Schoenberg expresses his disapproval of the Weinrich registration directions published in the score. Expresses the hope that another edition correcting this fault may be published.
- 1973 New edition published in Arnold Schönberg - Sämtliche Werke, Vol. II. Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne. The Op. 40 alone, new edition, available from Belmont Music Publishers, Los Angeles, as BEL 1028.

THE "PROBLEM" OF TONALITY IN SCHOENBERG'S OP. 40

Schoenberg in a letter to Leibowitz says of Op. 40:

. . .my "French and English Suites," or, if you wish, my Meistersinger-Quintet, my Tristan-duet, my fugue of Beethoven and Mozart (who were composers of homophonic melody); my "piece in olden style," similar to the Hungarian influence in Brahms. In other words, as I have already said so often: every composer of a new style has a feeling to return to the old style (as did Beethoven in the fugue). The harmonic language of the Organ-Variations fills in the space between my Chamber Symphony, op. 9, and the "dissonant" music. A great number of unutilized possibilities are to be found therein."

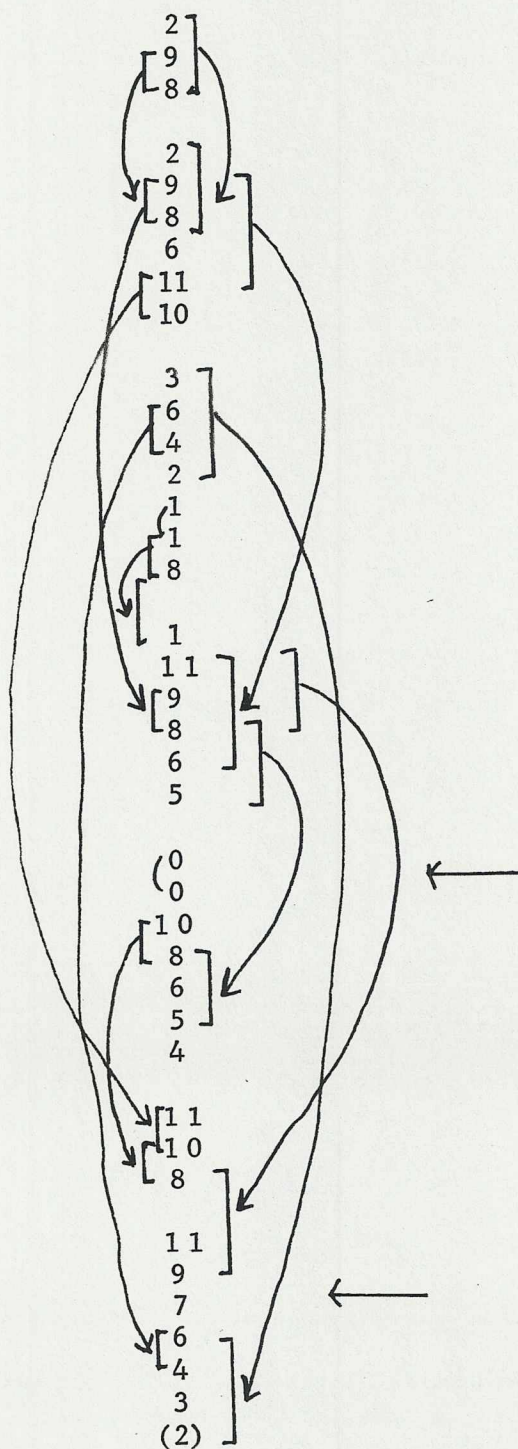
- I. Most of the articles in the bibliography dealing with this work tend to view the work in "tonal" terms. However, most of the analysis found in these articles is in emphasis based on motivic organization of the work. Some ideas from the literature:
  - a. Folts: Analysis of linear intervals in context of chromaticism and tonality. Some discussion of the influence of atonal and twelve-tone techniques.
  - b. Keller: "The exceedingly chromatic treatment of the tonal development yet always remembers the home key; there is no modulation, no progression, no chord which obscures---even where it contradicts---the primacy of D minor. . . The harmony is immeasurably more complex and difficult than are the vertical aspects of any of Schönberg's twelve-tone works."
  - c. Milner: "The variations are a splendid example of this reversion (to the tonal style) for, although there is no key signature in the score. . .the music is fairly anchored to the tonality of D (one cannot properly say major or minor), and the basic harmonies are fundamentally triadic, a fact which even the most extreme chromaticism fails to obscure."  
"The prevailing chromaticism of the Variations creates a first impression that the music is atonal: even when most dissonant, however, it is never music for the eye, but definitely music for the ear. Whatever criticism may be levelled against Schönberg, there can be little doubt that he really heard what he wrote; and, however far the music in this work wanders from its basic tonality, the effect is invariably satisfying to the listener."
  - d. Nelson: "The style of the Organ Variations remains typically complex and dissonant, marked as before by the elaborate development of thematic figures."
  - e. Schmidt: "The Variations on a Recitative for organ, Op. 40, one of the most significant examples of Schoenberg's later essays in tonality, constitutes a work of the greatest significance."

- f. Walker: "The tonally-oriented sound of op. 40 and 43 results from row construction exploiting the interval of the perfect fifth and fourth. This returning interest in tonality as a means of organization is curiously provocative, if Schoenberg had ever abandoned such interest."
- g. Watkins: ". . .the organ variations mark a return to a quasi-tonal basis (D minor). . ."
- h. Stuckenschmidt: "The work is in D minor, but a D minor which has lost its original nature through intense chromaticism."
- i. Rochberg: "It is not really important whether this is a "tonal" work or not. Nevertheless, since it is often assigned the key of D minor, let us examine this for a moment. If making constant reference to a given pitch locus, D in this case, makes a work "tonal", then Op. 40 is unquestionably tonal and in D. But if it takes more than constant reiteration of a pitch, melodically and harmonically, and more than chromatic motion to that pitch and away from it, then Op. 40 is not "tonal". What then, is it? The answer for the present must be: I do not know. Two essential internal conditions in the pitch organization and movement lead me to deny the attribution of D minor (and perhaps even just D, since even that description is lacking in meaning unless we are willing to grant Schoenberg his idea about pantonicity): First, there are no large-scale harmonic cadences, no broad patterns of harmonic motion that assert the minor mode (I am thinking of the "D minor" of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler); second, the saturation of the work by means of one local harmonic motion after another resolving from the nearest half steps available (forming mostly fourth chords) to major or minor triads is so complete metrically that no single beat, main or subdivided, escapes harmonic change. The musical result is a kind of chromatic perpetuum mobile. . . "
- j. Leibowitz: (Schoenberg and His School, pp. 126-127)  
 (Referring to Op. 40, 41, 42, 43, and 45)  
 "Schoenberg is primarily concerned with drawing the utmost consequences from the idea of a tonality expanded to its furthest limits. . . . During these last years, Schoenberg seems to have become increasingly aware of this idea (monotonicity). His attitude towards tonality is of a hitherto undreamed-of radicalism; therefore, his new tonal works appear to be much more daring than the preceding twelve-tone compositions. The most distant, unheard-of tonal relationships are established; there is a systematic effort not to let a single possibility of such tonal relationships go unused. Schoenberg himself considers these works as backward glances at the musical language of the past, which, before it is entirely surpassed, must undergo a final consolidation. Such a consolidation serves as a sort of bridge between his last tonal works before the suspension of tonality

(e.g. the two Kammersymphonien) and the works which followed that great leap into the unknown (e.g., the two dramatic works Op. 17 and 18). In addition, these works bind the tonal system to the twelve-tone technique, which enriches tonality with innumerable new elements. There is nothing new in this attitude on the part of a composer given to innovations."

II. Rationale for application of pitch-class set analysis to Op. 40:

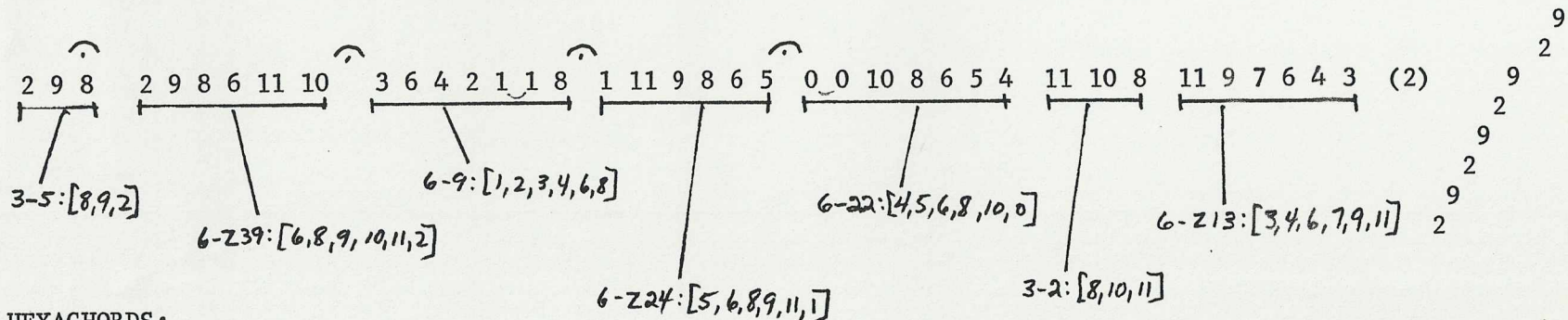
- a. Although a case can be made for "tonal" analysis, certain aspects of the composition suggest that the system of analysis is scarcely able to adequately explain Schoenberg's concept of "tonality".
- b. Schoenberg himself links the harmonic style of the work with his Op. 9, a work considered transitional between his tonal and atonal styles.
- c. Schoenberg's essay "Composition with Twelve Tones" in which the process and need for the atonal style, Schoenberg's "emancipation of the dissonance", is recounted was delivered on March 26, 1941 as a lecture at UCLA. The essay also explores the subject of "extended tonality". This is within six months of the composition of Op. 40.
- d. Rufer documents Schoenberg's direct involvement at this time in a work in his earlier style. This is the second Chamber Symphony, Op. 38. The chronology is as follows:
  - Op. 39 - Kol Nidre : written August 1, 1938 - September 8, 1938
  - Op. 38 - Second Chamber Symphony
    - Begun August, 1906
    - Worked: 1911 and 1916
    - Finished: 1939
  - Op. 40 - Variations on a Recitative
    - August 25, 1941 - October 12, 1941
- e. If one accepts Leibowitz's explanations of Schoenberg's turn to tonality:
  - a final consolidation of the tonal style, a bridge between his last tonal works before the suspension of tonality,
  - a binding of the tonal system to the twelve-tone system,
 then, it would seem reasonable the Op. 40 stands in the same relationship to "tonal" works as the "atonal" works to the twelve-tone compositions. It could, therefore, be instructive to look at the Op. 40 from an analytical point of view which has served to elucidate Schoenberg's atonal compositions.



Schoenberg: Variations on a Recitative for Organ, Op. 40  
 Theme: Cellular organization according to pitch

Schoenberg: Variations on a Recitative for organ, Op. 40

THEME:



HEXACHORDS:

- 6-9
- 6-Z13 / (42)
- 6-22
- 6-Z24 / (46)
- 6-Z39 / (10)
- (6-Z44) / (19)
- (6-Z12 / 41) Possible. Last trichord of recitative + first trichord of recitative is 6-Z12.

Motivic development of the work includes the following three prominent ideas:





