

four half-steps represent CII and CIII, and one (B $\flat$ -B) represents CI. Thus, the texturally and rhythmically thin cadential bar is thick in terms of dissonant relations among the components of the octatonic fundament.

### *Opus 10/IV*

If there were an entry in the *Guinness Book of Records* for the world's shortest orchestral composition, Webern's *Opus 10/IV*—all six bars of it—would doubtless be a strong candidate. This movement has also been the subject of substantial analytical work.<sup>21</sup> Having said this, I must state that the analytical discussion below does not include an extended critique of any of those studies. Because the present analysis is based upon the octatonic premise, it differs so radically from them that any discussion would become bogged down in detailed and fruitless argumentation. Accordingly, I beg the indulgence of the authors and, especially, of the reader for this omission. Nevertheless, I will have a few words to say about one harmonic feature later on.

#### FORM

Like that of the other movements of *Opus 10*, the form of *IV* may be described as tripartite:

Section A: to the end of the Mandoline figure bar 1 (ex. 9.7a)

Section B: from Viola b $\flat^2$  bar 1 through Trombone g bar 4 (ex. 9.7a)

Section A': from Harp f $\sharp$  bar 4 to the end, with a subdivision at the entrance of the Mandoline on b $\flat$  bar 5 (ex. 9.7b)[mc]

With respect to its octatonic design, however, the movement is continuous, although the single-note join effected by Trombone's g in bar 4 functions as a caesura.

#### OCTATONIC DESIGN

By rhythm and contour, the opening melodic theme in Mandoline divides into two trichords, the first of which, 3-8 from CII, joins the upper note of the Harp, g $\flat^1$ , to form symmetric tetrachord 4-25 (ex. 9.7c). At the end of the movement, the first four notes of the Violin solo replicate this tetrachord, transposed and retrograded; that is, RT $_2$  of C-D-A $\flat$ -G $\flat$  produces A $\flat$ -B $\flat$ -E-D. It is this transformed repetition that justifies the rubric A' in the outline of form above. Below, in the discussion of the compositional sketch material for this movement, we will see that this correspondence was not Webern's original idea.

Through the agency of the Harp's d $\flat^1$ -g $\flat^1$  on the downbeat of bar 1, Collec-

Fließend, äußerst zart ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 60$ )

a) 1 3

b) 5

c)

**ex. 9.7. Opus 10/IV**

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*First Blast  
4-25 T2*

tion III supersedes Collection II, completing 7-31 with the arrival on  $a^1$ , the headnote of the pitch-monadic Clarinet figure that extends to the end of bar 3 and which is labeled A. Beginning on tailnote  $e^1$  of the theme (ex. 9.7a), the two tritones  $e^1-b^{\flat 2}$  and  $b^{\flat 1}-f^1$  project tetrachord 4-9 from CI. This completes the octatonic cycle but leaves both CII and CI represented only by tetrachords. This situation is changed beginning on Clarinet's  $a^1$  in bar 2, which, as shown in ex. 9.7c, is the headnote of a very extended form of ultra-octatonic hexachord 6-30. As this form of 6-30 begins to unfold, Viola's harmonic  $b^{\flat 2}$  hovers above it and in bar 3 connects downward to Trombone's  $g^{\sharp 1}$ . When the Trombone line leaps down to complete its two-note figure  $g^{\sharp 1}-g$ , replicating the intervallic half-step motive in this piece (Mandoline bar 1), the arrival on  $g$  completes linear hexachord 6-213 from CI, as indicated in ex. 9.7c. Thus, at the end of the B section CII has been completely exhausted, while CIII lacks only some representative of note class C to satisfy 8-28, and hexachord 6-213 represents CI.

At this juncture (bar 4) the delicate Harp  $f^{\sharp 1}$  harmonics enter, recalling Harp's  $g^{\flat 1}$  in bar 1, yet another signal that this is the reprise (ex. 9.7b). Clarinet enters

almost immediately, playing the  $c^1$ - $db^1$  trill, which completes 4-9 from CIII, as indicated by the beam in ex. 9.7c.

The music at the beginning of bar 5 (ex. 9.7b) is complicated by the intertwining of elements of CII and CI (ex. 9.7c). First, tetrachord 4-9 from CII pivots on Harp's  $f\sharp^1$  and Clarinet's  $c^1$ , the latter representing the headnote of Mandoline's theme at the very beginning of the movement, another tiny token of the reprise. Hardly has the Clarinet trill begun when the Celesta  $e^1$ - $f^1$  dyad intrudes, a pungent dissonance in the traditional as well as the octatonic sense, for it conflicts with the barely established elements of CII. As the long upstem in ex. 9.7c shows graphically, this  $e^1$ - $f^1$  dyad begins the unfolding of 6-30 from CI, which ends on  $d^2$ , the penultimate note of the Violin melody in bars 5-6 (ex. 9.7b).

This Violin melody, which is the culmination of the movement, thus emerges against considerable resistance from the accompanying parts, especially from the Clarinet's  $c^1$ , which, combined with the Harp's  $f\sharp^1$  and the Mandoline's  $b^1$ , creates a persistent trichord from CIII (not shown in ex. 9.7c). Indeed, it is precisely this part of the movement that Webern toiled over, as indicated in the surviving compositional sketch discussed briefly below. The Mandoline's  $b^1$  introduces the headnote of the Violin solo,  $ab^3$ , the apex of this short movement, and with the ensuing 4-25 tetrachord the music is unequivocally and momentarily within CI. However, the final gesture of the Violin solo,  $d^2$ - $eb^3$ , disturbs the tranquil octatonic scene, for this dyad refers to CII and, as indicated by the hanging beam at the bottom of ex. 9.7c, completes a form of linear hexachord 6-z13 that began with tetrachord 4-9 at the outset of the final section. Thus, the movement ends within the octatonic collection in which it began, CII, providing another instance of a tonic form. Moreover, the Violin's final ascending leap from  $d^2$  to  $eb^3$  derives from the Trumpet's  $eb^1$ - $d^2$ , at the end of its melodic figure in bar 2, by retrogression and double-octave transferral of  $eb^1$ , while  $d^2$  remains fixed in both gestures.

#### SPECIAL NOTES

In a piece with as few notes as this, one might say that all the notes are special. For various reasons, however, some of them are *more* special than others. Two of the three notes that comprise Webern's A-E-B *signum*,  $bb^2$  in Viola bars 1-3 and Clarinet's  $a^1$  in bars 2-3, occupy pivotal and long-range positions in the octatonic design, as described above. Clarinet's  $a^1$  is also one of the monadic repeated-note motives, each with its own rhythmic shape, that are so prominent in this movement. With the other monads, Harp's  $f\sharp^1$  in bars 4-5 and Mandoline's  $b^1$  in bars 5-6, it forms a trichord from CII that stands out as a distinct fragment.

Apex  $ab^3$  is of course especially special. Curiously, in the many variants on this final melody on the sketch page, described below,  $d^3$ , not  $ab^3$ , is by far the most frequent headnote of this melody, even when the other notes vary strikingly. But both notes relate to the opening Mandoline theme in its final form.

Finally, in this section, nadir pitch  $f$  in the opening Harp chord is special because I do not fully understand its presence in the octatonic design. Although it carries forward to become part of the Celesta's obtrusive  $e^1-f^1$  dyad in bar 5, it does not fit into the local pitch environment but remains analytically dissonant.<sup>22</sup>

#### INTERVALLIC MOTIVES

Lucid intervallic motives include, perhaps most prominently, the major seventh. At the surface level, within the Mandoline's theme, the first two of these, concatenated, form the ubiquitous secondary tetrachord 4-7. Tritones abound, and the unison, which after all is an interval, is amply represented by the repeated-note motives listed above.

#### RHYTHMIC MOTIVES

Although the five-note figure in the final Violin solo melody incorporates a 3+2 or 2+3 sesquialtera pattern, it is not literally repeated elsewhere in the music. Quintuple groupings, however, occur in strategic positions several times. For example, the opening Mandoline theme presents 2+3+1. The following Viola-Trumpet combination is a quintuple grouping, and the Clarinet's repeated  $a^1$  may be construed as a succession of five longs (quarter notes) followed by a short (eighth note), thus imitating in a general way the rhythmic contour of the Mandoline theme. Harp  $f^\sharp$  in bars 4-5 consists of a series of five pulses and the Mandoline's  $b^1$  in bars 5-6 presents a 5+2=7 pattern. Thus, the final quintuple grouping in the Violin solo melody is the last of a series.<sup>23</sup>

#### COMPOSITIONAL SKETCHES

A large page of sketches for Opus 10/IV, including a draft of the ending in full-score format, is among the Webern materials held by the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel. All have to do with the same part of the movement, namely, the ending, and most of them are related to the closing melodic gesture of the movement, with its characteristic five-note figure. Indeed, this five-note grouping and its general contour seem to have been part of the original idea, for they are preserved over some dozen variants as the composer seeks the final form that appears in the published score.

The page is divided into three sections: a lower section consisting of twelve staves on which are inscribed in pencil single- and double-line fragmentary

A:

a)

b)

5

Tr

4-z29 CI

4-3 CIII

**ex. 9.8.** Opus 10/IV  
Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel, Switzerland

sketches of the final gesture, some with an accompanying single note,  $c^{\sharp 2}$ . Above this section is another twelve-staff section notated in ink and pencil, which is laid out in orchestral format, with a single staff for  $B\flat$  Clarinet at the top, followed by a three-staff system comprising two Horns (F) and a  $B\flat$  Trumpet. Below this is another three-staff system for Mandoline, Harp, and Celesta, and at the very bottom a single staff for Solo Violin. At the top of the page, occupying two staves, is the ink sketch reproduced as ex. 9.8, to which I shall return in a moment. The drawing medium is of significance not only to the interpretation of chronology but also concerning the degree of decisiveness, with the pencil sketches indicating an earlier and/or more tentative stage of composition.

Although space limitations preclude a full exegesis of this sketch material, a few general comments may shed light on Webern's work procedures, at least as operative perhaps in his orchestral pieces in general, and very likely in Opus 10/IV in particular. First, there seems to be no *particell*, the traditional short score used by most nineteenth- and early twentieth-century composers for the orchestra—for example, Mahler, Strauss, and Debussy. This is a score, usually

notated on three or four staves, often with instrumentation sketched in, that represented the penultimate stage toward the finished and fully orchestrated composition. Here, however, Webern composes directly on the orchestral score, using auxiliary sketches where required, as on the lower portion of the sketch page described above. Thus, the music notated in orchestral format is a sketch itself, and that is very clear in the present instance, where the notes differ significantly from those in the final version.

Example 9.8a reproduces in diplomatic transcription the sketch of the final Violin solo mentioned above.<sup>24</sup> This version is quite close to the final form, since it includes the five-eighth-note notation and the repeated  $b^1$  motive, which, however, changes to  $c^2$  at the end. The meter is  $2/4$ , not the final  $3/4$ . On the lower staff the notated  $d^1$  probably is for the  $B\flat$  Clarinet, since Webern is referring to his full-score sketch here, hence transposes to  $c^1$ , as in the final version. “Tr” of course calls for the trill of the final version.

Example 9.8b segments the sketch measure in accord with an octatonic reading of the solo melody. This produces two adjacent tetrachords, 4-z29 from CI and linear tetrachord 4-3 from CIII, a juxtaposition that differs greatly from the final version, as it relates to the octatonic design of the entire movement.

### *Opus 10/V*

Opus 10/V, dated October 6, 1913, corresponds to IV of “Opus 6,” the four pieces for orchestra, including the orchestral song “O sanftes Glühn der Berge.”<sup>25</sup> It is the longest movement of Opus 10, extending to a loquacious thirty-two bars. The instrumentation includes percussion—typical of Webern’s orchestral pieces—and the composer added Xylophone, which plays seven notes, all doubling Glockenspiel.

In form, the work is not complex, consisting of a succession of discrete sections:

- 1–4: “Introduction”
- 5–10: “Exposition”
- 10–17: “Development”
- 17–32: “Reprise”

The quotation marks that surround the traditional terms in the outline above are intended to convey their problematic nature. In particular, the Reprise, although Webern certainly intended it as such, is difficult to understand.

The movement is extremely varied with respect to orchestral texture. The