

In an ideal world the A and B series of the Schoenberg edition would be accompanied by a C series that presents complete facsimiles of all the sketch pages, thus allowing a reader to view a transcribed sketch in its original context. But in the absence of such a luxury, volumes 20 A and B constitute the model of a scholarly edition. Margaret Bent has recently argued that "making a good critical edition is an act of criticism that engages centrally with the musical material at all levels, large and small."⁹ It would be hard to envision a more successful fulfillment of these conditions than Schmidt's rigorous yet imaginative efforts on behalf the Schoenberg *Sämtliche Werke*. ■

Notes

1. The only published analytical discussion of the Scherzo is by Ulrich Thieme, *Studien zum Jugendwerk Arnold Schönbergs: Einflüsse und Wandlungen* (Regensburg: Bosse, 1979), pp. 122–27. Thieme points to the scherzo movement of Brahms's Third Quartet, op. 67, as a possible model for Schoenberg's.
2. Egon Wellesz, *Arnold Schoenberg: The Formative Years*, trans. W. H. Kerridge (London: Galliard, 1971), p. 18. (Original German edition, Leipzig, 1921.)
3. The two main themes were reproduced in Jan Maegaard, *Studien des dodekaphonen Satzes bei Arnold Schönberg* (Copenhagen: Hansen, 1972), I, 39.
4. See David Lewin, "Inversional Balance as an Organizing Force in Schoenberg's Thought and Work," *Perspectives of New Music* 6 (1968): 1–21. This kind of inversional balance of semitones is also found in *Verklärte Nacht*, as Schoenberg himself pointed out: the tonic D is approached from above, E-flat minor (mm. 225–29), then from below, D-flat major (mm. 335–43).
5. Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, ed. Leonard Stein (New York: St. Martin's, 1975), p. 61.
6. This interpretation and ordering of the sketches is expounded more fully in my article, "Thematic Form and the Genesis of Schoenberg's D-Minor Quartet, op. 7," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 41 (1988): 289–314.
7. This aspect of the sketches was previously noted by Maegaard, I, 55.
8. *Schoenberg, Berg, Webern: The String Quartets*, ed. Ursula von Rauchhaupt (Hamburg: Deutsche-Grammophon, 1971). See also the commentary reproduced in Fred Steiner, "A History of the First Complete Recording of the Schoenberg String Quartets," this journal 2 (1978): 132–37. Schmidt has written about Schoenberg's analyses of op. 7 in "Schönbergs analytische Bemerkungen zum Streichquartett Op. 7," *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 39 (1984): 296–300.
9. Margaret Bent, "Fact and Value in Contemporary Musical Scholarship," in *Fact and Value in Contemporary Musical Scholarship* (Boulder: College Music Society, 1986), p. 3.

Review

Arnold Schoenberg. Seven Early Songs for high voice and piano, 1894–1903. Edited by Leonard Stein.
Los Angeles: Faber Music Ltd., 1987.

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The past ten-odd years has seen growing interest in the earliest music of Arnold Schoenberg, and it is the young composer's comparatively large body of songs that has received the most attention. This is not surprising, for not only do these songs greatly exceed in number the instrumental works of the first period; many of them are indeed more significant for their intrinsic musical substance as well as the many indications they give of things to come. The recent studies of Ulrich Thieme, Walter Bailey and Walter Frisch have made that abundantly clear, but it was the 1975 recording of a group of early songs, performed by Marni Nixon and Leonard Stein, that had already alerted most of us to that as yet unpublished legacy.¹ Since then we have been waiting eagerly for it to come to light.

The seven songs which Stein has now selected for publication (of which all but one were heard on the recording) date from the period 1894 to 1903, and in themselves provide a kind of capsule history of Schoenberg's creative blossoming in all its extraordinary rapidity. Except for the setting of Goethe's "Deinem Blick mich zu bequemen," done in 1903, the songs are among some thirty-eight such compositions completed before 1900. Of those six, the three written between 1897 and 1899 to poems of Richard Dehmel are clearly the most advanced in idiom and expression.

Schoenberg himself, as is well known, testified to the crucial impact on his development of Dehmel's poetry: "they were what first made me try to find a new tone in the lyrical mood."² And indeed "Mädchenfrühling" of 1897, chronologically the very first Dehmel setting, stands out from all that preceded it in the subtlety of its contrasting and shifting rhythms (these matching the abrupt *haiku*-like construction of the poem), and the originality of the device by which the opening sonority, linked to the first word "Aprilwind," pulls into structural focus a multifaceted and richly variegated harmony. That sonority is a half-diminished chord, and its ongoing ambiguity of function vis-à-vis the tonic creates the effect of what

Schoenberg called "floating tonality," here a musical symbol for the poem's lightly expressed sexual longing and frustration. The same chord underlies another Dehmel song, "Mannesbängen," composed two years later. Here, however, sexual love is feared as well as desired, and the intensity of that mixed emotion, as in the composer's later stage works of 1909–1913, provokes bold musical experimentation. It is not only the profusion of vagrant harmonies (barely kept in check by a pervasively motivic stepwise third) that is so profoundly disturbing, but the intrusion, at specific points, of quite alien chords which, isolated by a piano *subito* or silence, threaten to subvert the sense of key altogether. Gestures like these are actually typical of Strauss's expressionism appearing a decade later, but by the time of *Elektra*, of course, Schoenberg was already looking for yet more radical means of expression.

The very first song in the collection, "Mein Herz das ist ein tiefer Schacht," and the two setting of poems by Paul Heyse, tread the more solid and familiar ground that had been shaped primarily by the influence of Brahms. Most telling in this regard is the irregular cut of the phrases and the full piano writing. Schoenberg's "Waldesnacht" shares with a song such as Brahms's "Die Mainacht" a quietly elegaic tone sustained by evenly paced harmonies and a relatively uncomplicated form. The most evident original feature is Schoenberg's melodic impulse, which is freer and more expansive than that of the older master. A contrasting (but for Schoenberg complementary) line of descent from Wagner is strikingly apparent in the setting of Goethe's "Deinem Blick mich zu bequemen." Together with that same half-diminished chord of the Dehmel songs, one finds in this song many traces of the post-*Tristan*, erotically tormented world of Hugo Wolf. But Schoenberg's web of restlessly moving melodic strands (three or four at any one time) makes for a proliferation of chromatically inflected dissonance that is quite unprecedented. Tonally speaking we are already at the brink, though not yet ready to take the plunge. Three years later the op. 9 Chamber Symphony, again using specific sonorities as a unifying device, will still attempt to make larger formal sense of the idea of *schwebende Tonalität*. As a general rule, in Schoenberg's development, it was the songs that broke new ground, and the instrumental works following them that aimed at consolidation.

We should be grateful to Stein for putting together a handsome performing edition. It is endowed with a cover reproduction of an early Kandinsky woodcut, a facsimile from an autograph page, an editor's foreword and English translations of the poems. There being two versions (some incomplete) for all of the songs but "Mädchenlied" (which survives in only one), these are compared in critical notes at the back. Editorial policy and procedure in adding phrase marks and dynamics where necessary are per-

fectly clear. The only cause for regret is the exclusion, from the volume, of what appear to the present writer to be two of the most interesting songs of the early period. One is "Die Beide," on a text of von Hofmannsthal, which with its boldly declamatory style anticipates a whole string of later compositions using *Sprechsgesang* in conjunction with melodrama. The other is "Im Reich der Liebe," the only completed Dehmel song before 1900 that remains unpublished. ■

Notes

1. Schoenberg. *The Cabaret Songs (Brettli-Lieder) and Nine Early Songs*. Marni Nixon, soprano and Leonard Stein, piano. RCA ARL 1-1231.
2. Letter to Dehmel of 13 December, 1912, in *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, ed. Erwin Stein (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 35. Between 1897 and 1907 Schoenberg turned to Dehmel's poetry for sixteen works, sketched or completed. For a detailed study see Walter Frisch, "Schoenberg and the Poetry of Richard Dehmel," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* IX/2 (1986), pp. 137–179.