SOME NOTES ON THE UNKNOWN
ALTENBERG LIEDER
MARK DEVOTO

WHAT WE KNOW of the history of Alban Berg's Fünf Orche-
terlieder nach Ansichtskartenreisen von Peter Altenberg, Opus 4,
much usually known as the Altenberg Lieder, can be summed up in a
page. Berg was working on the cycle in the summer of 1912, as we
learn from two excerpts of letters to Webern quoted by Redlich1 and
Reich.2 This was at a time when Berg (no longer a formal student of
Schönberg, who had moved to Berlin) was last, after almost two years,
found himself freed from his arbous but dedicated labors of prepar-
ing piano reductions of Schönberg’s Gurrelieder, the vocal move-
ments of the Opus 10 Quartet, and Franz Schreker’s opera Der jüng
Klang, and also an index for Schönberg’s Harmonielehre, for Uni-
versal Edition. The Altenberg Lieder were evidently finished by the
fall of 1912 and were brought to incomplete performance3 on March
31, 1913, under Schönberg’s direction; the ensuing disturbance
became history. Berg, deeply hurt by the public’s reaction to his first
 orchestral work,4 never again tried to get the songs performed, though
he did publish his own piano-vocal score of the fifth song in 1921,5
and we have it on Erwin Stein’s authority that Berg considered pre-
paring another version with a smaller orchestra.6

Nothing further happened to the Altenberg Lieder until 1937, two
years after Berg’s death, when the Berg Gesamtausgabe edited by
Willi Reich7 included a short description of the cycle by Ernst Krenek.

3 Apparently the second and fourth songs. Two eyewitness reports (“Touche im
Grosein Musikverkehrszeitung”), from a Vienna newspaper, April 1913, reported
in the original Schönberg number of Musikblätter des Ausflugs, September 1912, pp.
334-35; and Der Pianoforte, the magazine of Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1917), quoted in
considerably in their descriptions of the work performed.

4 Willi Reich, op.cit., p. 37, for a brief extract from a letter from Berg to Webern
(no date given).

5 *In a new definitive Dresden periodical, Munchen. This score is explained in
Laudon’s long article (see note 8).
pp. 3-4.

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In 1945, Berg's widow gave the draft orchestral score of the fourth and fifth songs to an officer of the liberating British Army; this manuscript is now in the Bodelian Library. (See n. 6.) In 1948, René Leibowitz, in a lengthy and admiring but not analytically profound article in the Musical Quarterly, became the first person to declare that Berg, which he despised about the abortive 1915 performance, was wrong to have put the Altenberg Lieder aside. It was five more years before Leibowitz was heeded; finally, in the winter of 1952-1953, seventeen years after Berg's death, the abortive 1915 performance was reprinted in Leibowitz's Musical Quarterly article; this score contains the important extra staff at mm. 11-15, omitted in the Universal score. 10 Some structural features of the A death, Joachim Horrenstein conducted performances of the complete cycle for the first time, in Paris and Rome. These performances were from the manuscript; Universal Edition, shortly thereafter, engaged H. E. Apostel to prepare a fair copy of the orchestral score and is the fall of 1953 published a piano-vocal score. 11 Since that time there have been a few performances—1959 in New York (Bethany Beardslee and Robert Craft) and Los Angeles (Evastavon and Ingoli Dahl), 1960 at the Venice Biennale (Craft and Magda Luana), 1964 in Paris (Pierre Boulez conducting), and perhaps a few more. The New York performance inspired at least one eminent writer, Igor Stravinsky, to publish his profound admiration for the Altenberg Lieder (in Memories and Commentaries, 1960), 12 and a recording by Craft and Beardslee, with interesting notes by Craft, appeared in the same year. 13 Only one other major writer, H. F. Redlich, has ever discussed the Altenberg Lieder in analytical terms, 14 and his conclusions about the work overlook a great many of its most important features.

The rarity of performances of the Altenberg Lieder is attributable to a single cause: the unavoidability of the orchestral score has severely discouraged widespread curiosity and understanding for the work. One can take the piano-vocal score and listen to the recording; in the case of the second, third, and fourth songs one may rightly guess, without having much idea of the exact scoring, that most of the notes are in the published score. In the highly complex reduction of the last song (copied, with some deletions, from the 1921 version made by Berg) one feels to a greater or lesser degree at sea. But no ear or eye is willing to extrapolate beyond the pitifully sparse reduction of the opening bars of the first song to guess at what is going on. This article, by one who has patiently pored over a privately owned and utterly rare copy of the full score, is among other things an attempt to

11 No. 1219. 10 Cadenza City, New York, p. 116.
12 Columbia ML-4428. MS-6103.
13 Redlich, op. cit., pp. 78-84.
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fill in some holes; not many of us will want to rent the score at performance rates merely in order to study the piece.

The reader is hereby urged to do the best he can with the available PV score, correlating it closely with the examples given here in order to fill in the crucial gaps. He should also take a look at the Menschen score of the fifth song, which is reprinted in Leibowitz's Musical Quarterly article; this score contains the important extra staff at mm. 11-15, omitted in the Universal score. 10 Certain structural features of the A death, Joachim Horrenstein conducted performances of the complete cycle for the first time, in Paris and Rome. These performances were from the manuscript; Universal Edition, shortly thereafter, engaged H. E. Apostel to prepare a fair copy of the orchestral score and is the fall of 1953 published a piano-vocal score. 11 Since that time there have been a few performances—1959 in New York (Bethany Beardslee and Robert Craft) and Los Angeles (Evastavon and Ingoli Dahl), 1960 at the Venice Biennale (Craft and Magda Luana), 1964 in Paris (Pierre Boulez conducting), and perhaps a few more. The New York performance inspired at least one eminent writer, Igor Stravinsky, to publish his profound admiration for the Altenberg Lieder (in Memories and Commentaries, 1960), 12 and a recording by Craft and Beardslee, with interesting notes by Craft, appeared in the same year. 13 Only one other major writer, H. F. Redlich, has ever discussed the Altenberg Lieder in analytical terms, 14 and his conclusions about the work overlook a great many of its most important features.

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The three principal motives all appear in the first song and one of them also appears in the second; another in the fourth; one of the two subsidiary motives is found in the third song as well.

A table of motives in the Altenberg Lieder is an aid to understanding the above paragraph. Greek-lettered motives, except ζ, appear in more than one song. Roman-numbered motives appear only in the first song. (Order numbers in this discussion are consecutive from I.) Some relationships between the motives are obvious, others not so obvious; their significance for the cycle will shortly be made clear. (See Ex. 1.)

Ex. 1 (cont.)

The first song

The opening bars present a wonderfully complex tapestry of motives I–VI, all in the middle-to-high register, scored as follows: I, piccolo (sounding 8va); II, clarinet 1, glockenspiel (8va); xylophone (each note delayed 1) and half the first violins sul tasto ("ghost"), all marked ppp; II, alternating trumpets 2 and 3, muted, marked pppp; III, utes 1 and 2 and second violins pizzicato, arranged as in Ex. 2.)
IV, celesta with imitating harp, as in Ex. 3.

V, piano, with \( \frac{3}{4} \) rhythm, twice each measure, pp, una corda and damper pedal depressed; and VI, alternating clarinets 2 and 3 and half the violas (Ex. 4).

The net result, for the first statement of I, looks in short score like Ex. 5.

Parenthetically, we may observe here some likely instances of influences on Berg, most probably resulting from his Dissertation for Universal Edition. For example, the opening bars of the orchestral prelude have more than just the static, minutely filigreed orchestral texture in common with the beginning of Geistreiche. Specifically, one is moved to compare the piccolo parts of m. 3 of Geistreiche with motive I and its rhythmic follower (glockenspiel, xylophone), and the

violins in the same measure have their counterpart in the violin "ghost" of I (Ex. 6).

In m. 4 of Geistreiche, over the same melody as before, there is a concealed diminution, reflected in the I-VI diminution of Berg's song (Ex. 7).
Another instance has been pointed out by Redlich, who notes that Berg’s IV is very like the opening melody of the Einrückung in Schoenberg’s Opus 10 Quartet (Ex. 8).

(Berg was working on the reduction of this quartet as late as July 5, 1913, for a letter to Schoenberg of that date mentions the great difficulties he had been having with the transcription.) Another possible source for IV is the prominent celesta passage, repeated several times, which occurs in the second of Schoenberg’s Five Pieces for Orchestra, Opus 16, which had been published in full score in the same year (Ex. 9).

The overlapping texture of the prelude in Song 1 continues for five measures (it would begin identically again only after 157½ measures), or four complete statements of I, which, having the most orchestral tone-weight and being placed highest, carries the pulse of the music. At m. 6 the entire section begins to move upwards through a remarkable series of transformations. The first motive to move is VI, which shifts upward by whole-tone transpositions. I ascends by a process nearly as regular as VI’s, underlying alterations on the way (see mm. 6-11 of the PV score), until the two intersect at m. 12 (VI dividing) and settle down on four pitches, E, C♯, A♯, and G♯, at m. 14 (Ex. 10).

Motive III also begins to ascend at m. 6, in one-measure steps, by an expanding-interval transition sequence a semitone larger each time (here shown reduced) (Ex. 11).

Motive II in the trumpets ascends chromatically, beginning just before m. 6, but not by any regular metrical pattern; this can be seen by the number of times II is stated at each transposition level from the beginning of the song: 13, 8, 5, 2, 1, 1, 2 (A, B♭, A♭), settling on B♭ and A♭ in another rhythmic acceleration (Ex. 12). (The graduated rhythmic accelerations are applied everywhere among the motives at this point, so as to create the thickest imaginable rhythmic texture, as if the entire orchestra were performing, every man for himself, an increasingly rapid trill. A better-known example of this in Berg’s music is found at the end of Reigen, the second of the Three Pieces for Orchestra, Opus 9.)
The progression of V, in the piano, is not strict but does maintain certain regularities; its most important change is to an "inverted" form, where the simple procedure of lowering the middle voice produces no exact inversion of the intervallic content (Ex. 13).

Ex. 13

The most elaborate transformation in these initial measures is that exhibited by IV, as in Ex. 14.

Beginning in m. 6, the harp anticipates the celesta, reversing the previous "bx-comes" relationship, by starting on a chromatic ascent. The chromatic transposition of IV continues literally until m. 8, when various internal alterations begin to take place, culminating in a new IV at m. 9. This new IV is immediately recognizable as a transposition of the motive α which pervades Song 5 and also occurs as a little flourish in Song 2. From m. 9 onwards the upward progression of α is strictly chromatic until measure 73, when α undergoes further transformation to the climactic chord in the second half of m. 14.

OF NECESSITY WE HAVE TILTED IGNORED THE MOTION 8 WHICH BEGINS IN M. 9 (COINCIDENT WITH THE EMERGENCE OF A FROM THE IV-TRANSFORMATIONS) AND TO WHICH THE MOTIVIC STAPLE JUST DISCUSSED IS AN ACCOMPANIMENT. (SEE EX. 15.)

EX. 15

THE SUCCESSIVE PITCHES IN B ENCOMPASS ALL TWELVE TONES OF THE CHROMATIC SCALE. (IN THIS FORM, 8 IS NOT IMMEDIATELY SO RECOGNIZABLE AS HAVING THIS PROPERTY AS IN ITS “G#” FORM AS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL MOTIVES OF SONG 5. IT IS THE FIRST OVERLY DODECAPHONIC MOTION WRITTEN BY ANY OF THE THREE GREAT VIENNEN, UNDIRECTING THE MUCH MORE SERIALLY EMPLOYED TWELVE-TONE MOTION IN WAGNER, ACT I, SCENE 4, AND ALSO AS A YET INVISIBLE TWELVE-TONE MOTION IN Schoenberg's unfinished JAKOBSTÖLZER.) AT ITS CLIMAX, THE NEW MOTION INTERSECTS WITH I (8, 8 = 8, 8).


EX. 16

THE NEW CHORD γ IS STATED IN THE FORM OF DOWNWARD ARPEGGIATIONS BY TRUMPETS 2 AND 3, GLOCKENSPIEL, XYLOPHONE, AND PIATTACO SECOND VIOLINS (EX. 17).

EX. 17

AND BY THE CELLOTA (EX. 14). THE γ-ARPEGGIATION IS ACCOMPANIED BY VARIOUS DOWNWARD PROCESSES ALIKE TO THE EARLIER ASSENT, INCLUDING A CHROMATIC SCALE (PICCOLO; FLUTES; BASSOON; IN TRIPLET 3), BOTH SPECIES OF WHOLE-TONE SCALE (CLARINET, IN 8); (SEE MM. 15 OF THE PV SCORE), VIOLIN GLISSANDI (ALTERNATING BETWEEN B AND F IN VIOLINS 1 AND 2), A HARP GLISSANDO ON THE DIMINISHED-SEVENTH CHORD F-A-C-Œ, AND A PIANO PASSAGE WHICH EXCEPT FOR ITS γ-OVERLAPPING INITIAL CHORD DOES NOT FIT ANY OF THE ABOVE. (SEE EX. 18.)

EX. 18

THE WHOLE OF THIS ORCHESTRAL AVENUE SERVES AS ACCOMPANIMENT TO ΙS, IS, IS, IS PLAYED NOTE BY NOTE IN THE VIOLINS AND CELLOS, AND ALSO BY BRASS (TRUMPET 1, HORN 3 AND 4, HORN 2, AND HORN 1 RESPECTIVELY) WHICH HOLD THE NOTES THROUGH THE LENGTH OF THE MEASURE AFTER EACH ENTRANCE. (SEE EX. 15.) IT IS INTERESTING THAT SAVANT FOR THE "SUSPENDED" E EVERY NOTE ON THE DOWNBEAT OF M. 15 IS A CHORD TONE OF γ, REGARDLESS OF WHERE THE VARIOUS DOWNBEAT SCALES ARRIVE AT LATER POINTS IN THE MEASURE. THAT THE HARP CHORD, WHICH DOES NOT ENCOMPASS THE β-γ, DOES NOT ENTER UNTIL ONE SIXTY-FOURTH NOTE AFTER THE DOWNBEAT (THE ENTIRE GLISSANDO IS WRITTEN OUT IN THE SCORE, IN REGULAR SIXTY-FOURTH NOTES), IS ALSO EVIDENCE OF BERG’S INTENTION TO DEFINE THE β-γ PROGRESSION CLEARLY. AFTER M. 15 THE ESTABLISHED PATTERN OF DESCENT DINITRATE RAPIDLY.
but in all cases with a view to establishing new pitch-relations which become important for preparing a second, lesser climax at m. 18. A harmonic outline is provided in Ex. 19.

Ex. 19

It is evident that the tritone-sixth relationship of motive V is involved, but more important is the B-F tritone itself. It serves as a supporting harmony for all of m. 16 and half of m. 17, thereby becoming the starting point for a "wedge" of two chromatic lines in contrary motion, a basic feature of Berg's technique in nearly all of his music. The structural importance of the B-F tritone in these measures makes some of the seeming chaos of m. 15 a little more understandable.

That the B-F tritone divides two kinds of scale (a whole-tone scale and a chromatic scale) into symmetrical halves is emphasized in the content of these measures, whose scalar foundation is recapitulated in the double-bass canon. (See Ex. 20.)

As rapidly as the patterns in the treble register disintegrate, they are replaced by alternating thirds, rhythmically accelerating to a trill on C-E and D-F (cellestas and trumpets 2 and 3; first violins and flute 1; oboes 1 and 2; clarinets 2 and 3), with the xylophone and glockenspiel maintaining a constant sixteenth-note pulse. The trill continues in a crescendo until m. 18, where it quickly falls off in volume and becomes slower and orchestrally lighter.

The smaller climax here marks the first appearance in the Altenberg Lieder of harmony so sparse as to permit total recognition and association with basically tridimensional functions, including a strong C major; and the measures following, thus far the most unhurried and orchestrally sparse measures in the work, give strong if fleeting "tonal" impressions. The emergence from the motivic jungle is preparation for the first appearance of the voice, which makes a striking entrance into a rather Scriabin-like harmony (see mm. 18-24 in the PV score). The chromatic lines in contrary motion which form the lowermost voices must of necessity form vertical relationships which are equal in
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pitch-class content to other verticals in the progression. It is noteworthy, then, that Berg singled out two such relationships for emphasis, thereby adding new support to the design. The A and G emphasized in the second climax (m. 18) are duplicated when the voice first actually enters (mouth closed, m. 20); the important F and B emphasized in the descent from the first climax (mm. 15-16) are duplicated with the first full entrance of the voice (“Seele,” m. 22). Furthermore, the last point reached by the chromatic lines, at the fourth beat of m. 24, when new departures commence, is the octave D (harp; not shown in PV score, but see Ex. 23), which pitch-class then becomes a memonial motivic entity for the remainder of the song.

The musical foreground appears to fall into two layers, one a strictly linear procedure of two chromatic lines, and the other a “harmonic thickening” of triadic construction superposed upon the linear procedure, the whole being adjusted to obtain or preserve certain verticals of prominence. In mm. 23-24, the orchestral accompaniment falls into two chromatically diverging parts, a descending bass line and an ascending chord pattern of notes from the whole-tone scale, the upper three voices forming an augmented triad. Naturally no strict tonal sense is preserved here, but rather an implication of various keys.

From the middle of m. 24, Berg starts building another enormous climax, culminating at m. 39; to do this he sets in motion further motivic processes, some of which are new and others of which have appeared previously. These motivic processes form the total source material for the remainder of the song. The initiating factor of this new section is the long D pedal beginning in the timpani (last quarter of m. 24, marked “gleichmässiges cresc.—bis f”) and coincident with the octave D which the diverging chromatic lines have reached.

As the D is introduced, a new motive, VII, appears as a long countermelody beginning in the English horn (doubling “sitarine” in the voice) and continuing, adding more instruments (Ex. 21). This seemingly haphazard collection of pitches is actually quite rigidly organized, in accordance with the following interrelated succession: minor seventh, semitone, minor third, semitone. Whether the melodic interval is up or down in this scheme seems to be at least partially governed by the registers (octave equivalence is assumed) in which the instruments are most powerful (crescendo through ff). Berg splits the melody before the climax, presumably for more tonal weight, while nonetheless conserving the pattern; the scheme is strict throughout.

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Ex. 21

The next new motive to appear is a chromatic line of parallel fourths chords, terminating in an augmented triad by an upward skip (VIII) (Ex. 22).

Ex. 22

IX, the third new motive, merely adds a semitone and a whole tone to the linearized notes of V, and proceeds as in Ex. 23.

Ex. 23
The “old” motives employed in the new section may now be examined. In m. 25, IV (the celesta motive of the prelude) makes its reappearance in the basses. Immediately following, in the cellos in m. 26, is the exact retrograde of IV, but with the original melodic contour preserved. The violas then take up IV, this time altering it further by reversing the notes of the original IV in successive dyads (2, 1, 4, 3, 6, 5, 8, 7), not preserving the contour. Finally, just before the explosion at m. 29, IV appears in the first violins, with the second note missing, and the remaining notes haphazardly arranged but bearing some resemblance to the retrograde IV (9, 7, 6, 4, 5, 3, 1). The final note of this statement intersects with the third note of IX and completes the latter motive’s descent. Meanwhile the upbeat to the explosion (first half of m. 29) has a massive statement of IV and its diminution, both in an identically altered form, and so placed that both terminate simultaneously. It is interesting that IV, VIII and IX are all located so as to intersect (Bb) on their climactic notes (Ex. 24).

Following the climax at the middle of m. 29, in which the fullest orchestral resources are deployed, is the “oda” of the song, in which a great variety of instrument is used but in continually varying small combinations. The motives are identical with those used in the preceding measures but are constantly tossed about the orchestra in short epigrammatic bunches, emphasizing upbeat and downbeats and fighting the prominent melody-notes of the vocal part. As we try to dissect the motivic texture of these final measures, it becomes apparent that two motives have existed before which we may have overlooked. The more obvious of these is V, an “old” motive, which appeared as a pedal chord played by the harp/fornam in m. 26. The other is the pedal D, which in the oda achieves fully significant motivic status (X). Here it is quoted in full from its first appearance, together with the indeterminately pitched notes (percussion, strings) which are best associated with the D because the bass drum-, tamborine-, and cymbal-rolls in mm. 30-32 seem like a continuation of the timpani roll. (See Ex. 25.)
As for the orchestral aggregate, a short score (do not rely on the piano score for this!) is helpful in pointing out some of the intermotivic relationships (Ex. 26).

Example 27 shows the motives in isolation, except for V and X. It is to be noted that the motives show progressive shortening, in many cases with each statement so arranged that a harmonic or melodic relationship with other statements is present. It is evident from the short score that associations between different motives exist in great enough number to indicate that their placement has struc-
tural significance. It might be said that their arrangement is directed toward the establishment of a feeling of A minor in the midst of the highly complex and pointillistic texture of these measures. As the song progresses toward its final measures, the tonal-modal feeling of A minor—E minor (themselves not far away from the C-orientation earlier in the song) becomes more pronounced, because the texture departs from its established procedure of ejaculating all the motives at once, and now states them singly, each in its unshortened entirety, until only B remains; underneath all this, the V-motive harmonium chord sounds continuously.

Two motives constitute the vocal part from m. 25 to the end. I appears with two intrusions, B and C♯, with a duplicate E (1st). B is unfolded note by note, each alternating with the first note, a process that is a common one with this motive in Song 5; the violin and celesta doubling continues past the last note of the voice with two extra notes, A and Eb (thus giving a clue to the origin of the B motive itself, that is, an altered expanding-interval sequence), and the whole collection is sounded again in a celesta arpeggio in m. 56.

The song defines a Bogenform, in an abstract sense, in that the A and A' are made up of motivic tissue and the B (mm. 18-24) lacks any of the motives found elsewhere. The form is also defined by the existence of titanic orchestral climaxes, and the crescendo of the A has its polar opposite in the decrescendo of the A'. To the ear, however, the A' sounds more like a continuation of B, and hence the part of the song following the frenzied pulsation before m. 18 seems more like Part Two of a bipartite construction.
One way to diagram the song would be this:

![Diagram of the song structure]

The 5th song

This song not only summarizes the cyclic structure of the Altenberg Lieder but gives a superlative demonstration of the capacity of Berg's intellect and imagination working within a strict form and with limited motivic material, for this passacaglia is one of the most spectacular works ever composed in this form. It uses five themes, of which three, α, β, and δ (see Ex. 1), are of primary structural significance. The other two are ε, from the third song, and ζ (the Greek letter zeta) is used here to preserve unisonity of notation, although the motive it represents is not found in any of the other songs). There is also an extract (mm. 37–38) of chords lifted bodily from the third song, and another single quotation, γ, of the first song. It should be noted that ε and ζ are both distinctive in that they contain the interval of either a major or minor sixth, both of which interval-classes were conspicuously absent from the motives of the first song. One might also contend that the two species of ζ are outgrowths of ζ from the first song; the contours are similar and several of the intervals are the same though ordered differently.

Berg departed from his usual procedure by numbering the fifth song in regular five-bar groups, beginning with No. 1 at m. 6. These numbers only roughly coincide with the variations of the passacaglia, of which there are nine (after the initial statements of α, β, and δ), with fifty-five measures in all. Since the variations often overlap one onto the next, they are referred to here by a more or less arbitrary numbering, though this numbering should be readily understood.

The total note-content of the passacaglia, unlike much of Song 1, is by no means restricted to motives alone, the extent to which motives are used is great. Numerous instances of motive-overlapping and motive variation occur, all with a view to greater structural plasticity for the whole without loss of coherence. It will be seen that the various elements introduced by Berg in combination

with the motives for enriching the harmony themselves show a certain organization. Moreover, the motives are variously utilized for the establishment of a true harmonic bass, and serve in combination to delineate strong harmonies.

The texture of this song, indeed, seems much more truly harmonic than that of most of Berg's first songs, despite the fact that there exists no system of vertical or bass-ic organizing principles. It seems, rather, that Berg arranged his motives with at least a partial intention of producing prominent vertical relationships of a type common to music before his own time (dominant-seventh chords, for example, or chords built of superposed fourths, whose extensive application in Schoenberg's First Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, had its seeds in Beckmesser's Serenade), without attempting to produce an organized succession of harmonies linked through classical procedures. That some motives are arranged in non-normal fashion (for instance, the appearance of δ, mm. 12–14, a minor third higher and in a rhythmically altered form) suggests only that Berg composed some passages as all composers have at one time or another composed canons and other strictly polyphonic procedures, simply by setting together by trial and error various motives in various forms and transpositions, until the desired, agreeable, or acceptable vertical structure appears.

The result of all this manipulation is rather a "common-practice" harmony of a degree so complex that ordinary analytical methods must be stretched to the point of absurdity, nor a harmony totally devoid of strong classical functions as was much of Schoenberg's music of the time; rather, the harmonic impression perceived is perhaps a few steps beyond that of the works of Schoenberg's "crisis" period (the Opus 7 Quartet, the First Chamber Symphony, Felice and Melisande), or of Berg's own Opus 2 songs. The disturbing feature, or perhaps the repeating feature, is that while by removal from context the juxtaposition of a simple chord and a quite complex one (mm. 55–56, for instance) may seem absurd, this whole song gives the impression of great coherence.

The first five measures are a clear statement of β, in a register in which it forer foreroccurred (bass clarinet, plucked and bowed cellos in unison). 6. θ enters on the second beat of m. 5, and α on the downbeat of m. 7 (taking up the F, where β left off; this is at the transposition interval a tritone higher than in its original appearance at m. 9 of the first song, but as the transposition as its last statement in mm. 12–13 of that song). θ thus preserves the identical pitch-class content of β in the first song, but with completely changed rhythm.
By the second beat of m. 10 (the start of the first variation) all three of the motives, except \( \sigma \), have been introduced in their entirety. In m. 10 \( \delta \) begins again from the middle register (violas and first horn) doubled a major third below for its first four notes. This doubling voce (cellos and second horn) soon digresses, however, and becomes an elaborated form of \( \beta \) which simultaneously enriches the harmony (Ex. 28).

The accents so placed, and the short notes on the stopped third horn (see the Menschen score), emphasize \( \beta \). Coincident with the beginning of \( \delta \) in m. 10 is \( \iota \) in the oboe, starting on \( F (b_3) \); resulting from the octave transfer of the end of \( \delta \) turned back on itself. This \( \iota \) is a whole tone higher than the \( \iota \) in the third song. The downward leap of \( D \) to \( F \) in m. 12 (all \( \iota \)'s in the fifth song have final minor-sixth downward skips, whereas the \( \iota \) in the third song had a final major sixth) is immediately echoed by the new motive \( \zeta \) in the third trombone (partial doubling by bassoon in m. 15) and then by \( \zeta \) in the first violins and first trumpeter (m. 14). Neatly overlapping the end of \( \iota \) (m. 12, third beat) is \( \beta \) moving in \( \frac{5}{4} \) in the second violins (partially doubled by celesta). As if this already complicated texture were not enough, Beeg adds a fragment of \( \delta \) (6, 7, 8, 9, 10) in the tuba, to form a bass line, beginning in m. 15; the line continues in the bassoon (m. 15), following a 4th intersection, in such a way as to overlap a new statement of \( \delta \) a fourth higher. A short score of these transformes may help to clarify all these relationships somewhat (Ex. 29).

It is remarkable how many strong tonal associations result from the complex linear organization of the first variation. The \( D_{5} \) in m. 11 sounds as a tonic strong enough to centralize the harmony momentarily. However, a strong \( D \) major is heard soon afterwards, the result of three \( D-F \) downskips.

In the second variation (mm. 16-20) the operating motives are \( \delta \) (in the bass, a fourth higher, as noted before), \( \beta \) in the harp and bass clarinet (unfolding like "und über bilden..." in the first song), and, most important, the first appearance of the voice (\( \zeta \), "Hier ist
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Frieze, a melody of mm. 14-15. This entrance is followed (m. 20) by the beginning of a new variation, but this beginning shows most clearly the identity

\[ \delta = \delta_5 \times \delta \]

The \( \delta \) in the bass is elaborated in other instruments in various ways that do not constitute strict Klangfarbenmelodie, though that feature is elsewhere present (Ex. 30).

[Diagram of musical notation]

Two other features of the second variation are the doubling parts (piano; glockenspiele and celesta) which emphasize various important tones in the vocal part, and the pattern of chromatic descent, beginning in m. 15 with a new figure whose rhythm is clearly derived from \( \varepsilon \) (Ex. 31).

[Diagram of musical notation]

This new figure gives rise to many triads, and its pattern of oscillating thirds is like that at m. 18 of the first song. The chromatic descents appear first as attachments to \( \varepsilon \) and \( \delta \), and may therefore be regarded as continuations of these motives.

In the third variation the featured motive is the first nine notes of \( \delta \) in the voice (doubled by trumpet 1), accompanied by various transpositions of \( \beta \) in new rhythmic forms. The various dispositions of \( \beta \) are shown in Ex. 32.

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In addition to these short \( \beta \)'s is a \( \beta \) bass at the normal pitch (contrabassoon, horn 4, piano, harp, tuba). The arrangement of attacks and dynamics here (Ex. 33) is interesting.

[Diagram of musical notation]

It is curious that Berg should have made such a complicated affair, including staggered breathing (probably not physically necessary) and a dynamic canon, out of what is really only a simple unison texture (horn 4 plays an octave above).

In m. 24, \( \beta \) appears in the low strings and trombones in modified form, answered similarly by second violins and violas; these modifications are pointed up by the resumption of the slower rhythmic pattern which began the succession of short \( \beta \)'s. The original contour is scarcely preserved intact in these modified \( \beta \)'s, but its progressions are interesting: in m. 35, myriad Klangfarben doublings of the dis-integrating \( \beta \) line occur, producing new "lines" in which the glockenspiel melody (mm. 23-26, up-stems in top staff of Ex. 34) may be regarded as a mixed-up retrograde fragment of \( \delta \), in fact the retrograde of the "ideal" \( \beta \), a perfect "chromatic wedge."

The descending chromatic lines first seen in the second variation are more extensively employed to \( \varepsilon \) and \( \delta \), and in m. 35 forming a female cadence which slides neatly onto the beginning of the next variation; the intersections of the altered \( \beta \)'s with the most prominent chromatic lines suggest that the \( \beta \)'s may have been specifically altered to accomplish these intersections. (See Ex. 35.)
Also in m. 25, which is fairly clearly an overlap between the third variation and the fourth variation, is the reappearance of α (harp, trombone 4, bass clarinet, clarinet 1), repeated immediately two octaves higher by the solo violin (m. 36). This second α is placed so as to intersect in its first note with the final note of the gleicoper Spielmelod a referred to above; it also intersects in its fourth note with B♭, forming a very felicitous harmonic texture with the voice and the descending flute 1 (see Exx. 34 and 35). The voice melody in this variation is β produced by the following process of unrolling: [1, in flute 1 and second violins] 2, 1; 3, 3, 1; 4, 5, 1; 5, 4, 3.

The descending semitone which concludes α is reflected in all these trills, but especially in the C♯5 alterations in the upper strings, which prepare the new β in the next variation at m. 29 (α1 = β1).

The fifth variation (mm. 50–54) brings all these principal motives together again, in a rhythm that keeps them all moving at the same pace throughout, without compression or overlapping, and prepares the largest climax in the song at m. 53. β leads off in the upbeat to m. 50 (tremolando violins, trumpet 1, trombone 1). Simultaneously...
a descending-major-sixth bass leads into α in m. 31; the sixteenth-
relationship to ζ is probably intentional, for Berg placed a footnote in
the contrabass part saying "in no case is the upper D♭ to be
played." (See Ex. 38.)

Ex. 38

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The choice of notes in this bass melody seems to be dictated by
harmonic considerations (compare the duplication, m. 30, of F in the
voice and third trombone). The same is probably true of the harmonic
thickening of β which begins in m. 30 and is carried on in three
different registers, with rhythmic-canonic devices complicated by the
bassoons playing α in the c rhythm (Ex. 39).

Ex. 39

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The voice F is the strongest F in these measures. The alternation
F-E-F in mm. 31-32 reflects the same alternation in the δ melody in
mm. 9-10. The last five notes of δ are placed an octave to secure
brilliance for the preparation of the climactic A major chord in m.
35, which in part results from the intersection of α, (C♯), β, (E),
and δ of (E) with the fullest resources of the orchestra; this chord
initiates the sixth variation.

The A major chord on the upbeat of the sixth variation becomes
minor on the third quarter of the measure when a completes itself
(α, (C♯), β, (C)). Aside from a chordal statement of β (harp, m.
36) coincident with the suspended E from δ, the remainder of
the variation is occupied with the presentation of the two subsidiary
motives, ζ and α (the latter also intersecting with δ). The β chord
initiates the upper, leading voice of a three-part canon of (C the first
two parts consisting the F, C, δ) with the rhythmic pattern of
placed a beat later than that of the original, so that E becomes the
prolonged note; the canonic parts are 1) voice and violin 1; 2) horn 1;
3) cellos. At m. 37 the divided violas quote the exact chords found at
mm. 9-10 of the third song (flutes, horns); descending a major
sixth; these chords are echoed by the violins (doubling violas)
in m. 38, playing the ζ motive. The chords thus stated go over
well with the underlying δ canonic process. The ζ in the trombones is
echoed further by C in the voice ("Hier ist Friedel!") and violins in
octaves in the final measure of the variation.

The seventh variation (mm. 40-44) treats ζ-δ in the voice like
the similar occurrence of these motives in the second and third
variations (mm. 13-24), except that where the identity ζ, δ, δ occurs,
the melodies are elided rather than the notes duplicated. The
vocal line is interrupted briefly between phrases, but the piano sup-
plies the missing notes (see Ex. 40). The parts underneath (trom-
bones, strings) move chromatically with the lowest voice, terminating
on an E (m. 42) coincident with the beginning of α (harp, bass
clarinet). α and the chromatic ending of δ are the only materials
used at all in this variation, which, incidentally, is the only variation
in the song in which β is not present (Ex. 40).

At the beginning of the eighth variation (mm. 45-49) δ continues
downward chromatically (compare mm. 13-24) while α completes
itself. The two lines coincide in their last two notes but the δ line
continues downward further, without the voice, two more semitones to B♭
(m. 47). The motivic arrangement of this and the final variation is
of the greatest interest. A pedal point on G, introduced in m. 45
(basses and tam-tams) is the focal point for a remarkable series of

\[\text{\textit{\textbf{68}}}\]

\[\text{\textit{\textbf{69}}}\]
evolutions and transformations of β. The melody in the first violas and first horn beginning just before m. 47 is another “unfolding” of β without the terminal E. The accompaniment to this melody is a well-ordered chromatic harmony (see Ex. 40) which features β (without

$$D\beta = \beta_4$$ as a chord on the downbeat of m. 47. The individual voices of the two lower moving parts form groupings of three-note periodicity, and the third viola (third horn) has a succession of falling fifths. The next voice comes to rest on the downbeat chord of the ninth variation (m. 50) which the reader may remember as γ to the first song (the downbeat of m. 15). This chord (emphasized by the shift to the bass-tuba cutoff) then transforms, note by note, into β, by the trombones and first trumpet, which singly arpeggiate γ downwards and come to rest at the appropriate β note.

The G pedal has simultaneously been climbing upward by octaves until it skips to the high G in the solo violin, coincident with the first β note in the fourth trombone; therupon β appears, note by note, in harmonic inversion, the solo strings spelling it downwards in a sort of “register palindrome”: first solo violin up two octaves, second solo violin up one octave, first solo viola neither up nor down, zero octaves, second solo viola down one octave, cello solo down two
octaves. The trombone-trumpet β is in the middle register, whereas the upside-down solo-string β is so spread out as to surround the former. The solo-string β is sustained to the end, but the brass β engages in a bit of Klangfarbenmelodie (shoes and bassoons; flutes and clarinets; piano; harp) in a rhythm often heard in the song, that of the initial repeated notes of the e melody. This rhythm, so often abstracted from ε and superposed on something entirely different, forecasts Berg’s later and abundant use of inharmony, a twentieth-century reincarnation of a technique nearly five hundred years extinct (compare Wozzeck, Act III, Scene 3: the last movement of the Chamber Concerto, the third movement of the Lyric Suite).

The general Bogengform of this song may be schematically expressed thus (the numbers in the squares refer to the variations):

In general, where they occur, β begins on the first measure of each variation, δ on the upbeat to each variation.

The Bogengform is not confined to the song itself. In the remarkable ending, one can see the motivic relationship which makes of the entire cycle a huge Bogengform—the γ-β transformation, which is an exact reflection of the β-γ transformation in mm. 14-15 of the first song.

Thus the motivic nature of the Altenberg Lieder is in the cycle’s most powerfully cohesive structural force. It shows Berg’s rapid advance from the lesser but still substantial motivic technique of the Opus 3 Quartet. Even in the huge Altenberg Lieder, however, the density of motives seems small compared with the Three Pieces for Orchester, Opus 6, whose almost preposterously intricate motivic substance has

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never been fully probed. Yet even such few of Berg’s constructive powers as have been illuminated in recent years caused Stravinsky to suggest that Berg is the "most gifted constructor in form of the composers of this century."

One hopes the foregoing analysis will be useful to those interested in seeing how closely related were the parallel evolutions of Schoenberg and Berg during the "contemporary" years, before Schoenberg invented the twelve-tone method and Berg adopted it. Further studies, of course, are needed, particularly of Berg’s Three Pieces for Orchester and of Schoenberg’s as yet unpublished Jakobstätten. Certain portions of the passacaglia in Wozzeck (Act I, Scene 4) come so remarkably close to Schoenberg’s invention that one almost wonders why Berg did not stumble on the idea himself; the Altenberg Lieder have now yielded some secrets about what led up to Berg’s own variety of polyphonic serialism.

Postscript

Space precludes any discussion here of the second, third, and fourth songs. The reader will be able, however, to approach them in full detail on his own, since the PV scores are in the main complete (except for the omnipresent and striking subtleties of Berg’s scoring, which could be the subject of many pages). A few brief notes should be given here:

Song 2. The third beat of the left hand in m. 6 would be more accurately rendered as shown in Ex. 41, which shows how α makes its appearance in this song.

Ex. 41

Song 3. The Klangfarben chord at the beginning of this piece has been referred to by several writers. Here is a list of the successive scannings of the chord for the benefit of those who may not see the full score for many years. (Lines indicate phrasings.)

14 Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, Conversations with Igor Stravinsky, Garden City, New York, 1959, p. 79.

PITCHES: INSTRUMENTS:

B  |  E♭ Cl.  |  Fl.  |  Oboe  |  Trp.  |  B♭ Cl.
F  |  B♭ Cl.  |  E♭ Cl. |  Trp.  |  Oboe  |  Fl.
E  |  Fl.     |  Oboe  |  E♭ Cl. |  B♭ Cl. |  Trp.
C  |  Oboe    |  Trp.  |  Fl.   |  E♭ Cl. |  E. horn
A  |  Trp.    |  Fg.   |  B♭ Cl. |  Fl.   |  Horn
F↓ |  E. Horn  |  B♭ Cl. |  Fg.   |  Bass Cl. |  E♭ Cl.
D↓ |  Bass Cl. |  E. Horn |  Trb.  |  Horn   |  Oboe
A↓ |  Horn    |  Trb.  |  E. horn |  Tuba  |  Bass Cl.
G  |  Fg.     |  Tuba  |  Bass Cl. |  E. horn |  Trb.
G↓ |  Tuba    |  Bass Cl. |  Horn  |  Cfg.  |  Cfg.
C↓ |  Cfg.    |  Horn  |  Tuba  |  Trb.  |  Fg.

Song of, Measure 26, last two beats of the right hand should read thus:

Ex. 42