

Secret Sounds: Berg, Mysticism, and the Chamber Concerto

John Covach (University of Rochester/Eastman School of Music)

Example 1: Berg's note on the Film Music from *Lulu*, as transcribed by George Perle.

FILM					
Bar	End of Scene 1		Beginning of Scene 2		Bar
651					722
	Curtain				
654/5	falls			rises	719/21
	Beginning	Interlude	End		
ARREST	656	Alwa	Alwa	En route to final	718
		(the 3 participants) Geschwitz	Geschwitz	liberation (the	713
		Schoolboy	Acrobat	3 participants)	
	661	in chains	at liberty (as Countess G.)		712
DETENTION	663				711
	664	In nervous expectation	In nervous expectation		707
	668	Dwindling hope	Growing hope		705
TRIAL	670	(the 5 witnesses)	(5 helpers)		704
	672-677	The offense—revolver	Illness (instrument)		696-700
		Judge, jury	Doctors and students		
	677	The sentence	[Conspiracy for her] rescue		696
	678/9	Collapse	To the doctor (in hospital)		
		Police van	Ambulance (stretcher)		695/6
IN PRISON	680	The door shuts	The door opens		694
	683	Resignation	Awakening will to live		690/1
	685/6	Her shadow on the wall	Her image in the dustpan		688/9
		(like the picture)	(which the warder brings)		
	687		One year's imprisonment		687

The sequence of the filmed events corresponding to the symmetrical course of the music is likewise to run in a quasi-forward and retrograde progression, wherein corresponding occurrences and associated phenomena are to be matched with one another as closely as possible. In addition to the above congruencies (placed side by side) of this sort (in the large: trial—medical consultation, detention— isolation ward, etc.), also those of a lesser and the least sort: for instance, revolver—stethoscope (hypodermic syringe), bullets—phials, generally legal—medical parallels, § and caduceus, chains—bandages, prison clothes—hospital clothes, prison corridors—hospital corridors. Likewise personal congruencies: judge and jury, medical staff and students, police—nurses.

For more information and for full citations of the sources referred to in this presentation, consult my article, "Balzacian Mysticism, Palindromic Design, and Heavenly Time in Alban Berg's Music," which can be found online at <http://www.ibiblio.org/johncovach/bergttime.htm> or in *Encrypted Messages in Alban Berg's Music*, ed. Siglind Bruhn (New York: Garland, 1998), 5-29.

Example 2: Berg's formal chart ("tabular survey") from his "Open Letter" to Schoenberg, as transcribed by Hans Redlich.

Tabular Survey

I Thema scherzoso con variazioni	Thema	Var. I	II	III	IV	V	number of bars
	in the basic shape (Exposition)	(1st Reprise)	retrograde	inversion (Development)	retrograde inversion	basic shape (2nd Reprise)	
	bars: 30	30	60	30	30	60	240
II Adagio	Ternary			Retrograde			240
	A ₁	B	A ₂ (inversion of A ₁)	A ₂	B (Mirror form of preceding B)	A ₁	
	bars: 30 12	36 12	30	30 12	36 12	30	240
	19 11 12	39 9	19 11	11 19 9	39 12	11 19	
	A ¹ A ² B ¹	B ² B ³	A ¹ A ²	A ² A ¹ B ³	B ² B ¹	A ² A ¹	960
III (= I plus II) Rondo ritmico con introduzione	Introduction (Cadenza for violin and piano)	Exposition		Development		2nd Reprise or Coda	305
	bars: 54	96		79		76	
	(da capo)						175
	Repeat: 175						

Example 3: The opening motto of the Chamber Concerto, as annotated by Dave Headlam.

Arnold SCHÖNBERG Anton WEBERn AIBAn BERG

The musical score shows the opening motto for the Chamber Concerto. It consists of three staves: Violin, Horn, and Piano. The Violin part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting with a forte (f) dynamic, then a piano (p) dynamic, and a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The Horn part also begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting with a piano (p) dynamic, with the instruction 'mit Dpf' (with double pedal) written below. The Piano part begins with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic, followed by a melodic line starting with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The score is annotated with various dynamics and performance instructions, including 'f', 'fp', 'p', 'mf', and 'mit Dpf'.

