

THE GUITAR IN ARNOLD SCHOENBERG'S SERENADE, OPUS 24:
ANTECEDENTS AND LEGACY

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Author's Note: Due to the (unforeseen) popularity of this paper on Academia.edu, I decided to revise it. I have found several errors and omissions, explicable—I suppose—by the haste of the original writing. I erroneously stated that the Serenade, Op. 24 was premiered in Salzburg at the 1924 ISCM World Music Days. It was first performed in Vienna on May 2nd, 1924, then on July 24th of that year in Donaueschingen. The following year, it was performed at the ISCM festival in Venice (between the 3rd and the 8th of September 1925, to be exact). Late one night, I must have conflated the 1924 performances with that of 1925, and gone searching for the location of the 1924 ISCM festival (indeed, held in Salzburg, and during which Schoenberg conducted *Erwartung*). All of this information is thanks to ISCM's wonderfully detailed website. I also suggested that the Serenade was the first work of the Second Viennese School to include mandolin and guitar. In so doing, I overlooked an important intermediary work between Mahler and Schoenberg, namely Webern's Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 10 from 1913. Thank you to Eric Singh for bringing this omission to my attention. Although I have otherwise opted to leave the bulk of the text unchanged, I did make some minor typographical corrections.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Whence the guitar in Arnold Schoenberg's Serenade, opus 24? The Serenade dates from 1923; it is neoclassical in style, and has seven movements lasting over a half an hour in all. It is scored for clarinet, bass clarinet, mandolin, guitar, violin, viola, and cello. In its central movement, a deep male voice intones the Sonnet, No. 217, of the medieval Italian poet Petrarch. The other movements evoke classical forms, fitting for movements of a serenade. The first movement is a march, the second a menuet, and the third a theme and variations. After the sonnet, there is a "dance scene," a brief *Lied ohne Worte*, and a finale that recapitulates material from other movements, especially the march, which returns to close the work. The inclusion of a substantial guitar part, unprecedented and unrepeated in Schoenberg's works, marks the entrance of this instrument into the music of the twentieth-century avant-garde. Yet what are we to make of this event? Schoenberg's selection of the guitar was not only realistic given the availability of competent guitarists in his milieu; the guitar provides important clues about the provenance of the Serenade, while this work served to establish the viability of the guitar in twentieth century chamber music, not least by setting a precedent for the music of Schoenberg's successors. The echoes of the Serenade may be traced through the chamber music of Schoenberg's disciples and followers, including the great Spanish composer Roberto Gerhard. The question of how much one piece or composer influences another can never be entirely clear. Asking this question is nonetheless essential to our understanding of the ways in which music affects us, and changes through us. How else are we to come to terms with the chamber music of the twentieth century, and what do

the Serenade and other works of its kind tell us about the age-old tradition of music making among small groups of people?

By the 1920s, the guitar was beginning to regain recognition in the classical music world after sinking into relative obscurity during late nineteenth century. Throughout the decade, Andres Segovia toured Europe and Latin America, even performing in Shanghai and Tokyo in 1929.¹ It was also in the 1920s that Segovia first succeeded in convincing non-guitarist composers of some stature to write solo works for the instrument. So the narrative goes: Segovia was singlehandedly reviving the guitar. Often excluded from these rather egocentric accounts are the other guitar virtuosos of the time, including Miguel Llobet and Louise Walker. The latter guitarist, an Austrian, points us in the direction of Vienna, where a guitar tradition had been, if not thriving, certainly continuing since the first six-string guitars began to appear around 1800. Guitar culture was also quite strong in Germany, where Hermann Hauser I and Richard Jacob were busy refining the local guitar making tradition, and Heinrich Albert was leading the Munich Guitar Quartet. In the early 1800s, Vienna had been the home of the virtuoso guitarist-composer Mauro Giuliani. Numerous others were working there as well, including Wenzeslaus Matiegka, who published arrangements of works by Mozart and Beethoven, and whose Notturmo, opus 26 (a trio for flute, viola, and guitar), with the addition of a cello part, had been turned into quartet by another sometime guitarist, Franz Schubert.

Segovia's fame highlighted the Spanish heritage of the guitar. Meanwhile, it is often acknowledged but rarely explicated that Segovia claimed--in a letter to Mexican icon Manuel Ponce--to be commissioning a guitar solo from Arnold Schoenberg. Since

¹ Graham Wade. *A Concise History of the Guitar*. (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay Publications, 2001), 110.

we know that Segovia was present at the festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Venice in 1932 (where he met Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco), it is tempting to imagine him at the Italian premiere of the Serenade, opus 24 during the 1925 ISCM festival. More likely, he would have met Hans Schlagradl during a tour of Austria. Schlagradl would have told him of Schoenberg's Serenade; Schlagradl himself had played in the premiere!

At the end of 1918, during the gestational phase that preceded the composition of the Serenade, Schoenberg (along with Anton Webern and Alban Berg) founded the Society for Private Musical Performances. The concerts that the group produced were unadvertised and unreported, and applause was prohibited. For the purposes of comprehension and accuracy, pieces were rehearsed exhaustively (according to Malcolm Macdonald, sometimes as much fifty hours), and the same work was often performed several times during the course of a season. The bulk of the music performed was contemporary, and ranged widely, including music by Stravinsky, Bartok, and Debussy.² On one occasion, in order to raise funds, the founders of the Society made arrangements of waltzes by Johann Strauss, and performed in the ensemble themselves.³ It was out of this ethos that the Serenade, an intricate, extended, and intimately humorous work involving eight musicians and a non-standard instrumentation, was made possible. Within the confines of the Society, moreover, contemporary chamber music was reformulated as the exclusive domain of a small group of devoted specialists. The group was to provide an early model for future New Music ensembles, such as Pierre Boulez's Ensemble

² Malcolm MacDonald, *Schoenberg* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 56.

³ Charles Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg*. (New York: Viking Press, 1975) 66.

InterContemporain, the Nieuw Ensemble, or the International Contemporary Ensemble, all of which--needless to say--include guitarists.

While each member of the Second Viennese School's "trinity" had written for the guitar (Webern's Opp. 10, 18, and 19; Berg's *Wozzeck*, completed in 1921), there was no shortage of music being written for the instrument by other Germanic composers. Alfred Uhl wrote an article on composing chamber music with guitar that appeared in 1929, following the completion of his own Trio for Violin, Viola, and Guitar; and *Viennese Pieces* (German: *weisen*) for the same ensemble. Ferdinand Rebay, formerly known only for piano reductions of music by Erich Korngold and others, has recently been re-discovered as a prolific composer of chamber music for the guitar. His Sonata in E minor for Oboe and Guitar received its premiere in 1925 at the hands of the Professor Alexander Wunderer (to whom the work was dedicated), and Hans Schlagradl, the very same guitarist who played in the premiere of the Serenade. Rebay's music, elegant and skillfully written, is nevertheless highly conservative, evoking the sound of Brahms, Bruckner, and Robert Fuchs well into the 1940s. Paul Hindemith's Triosatz for three guitars also dates from as early as 1925, although it was premiered in 1930.⁴

Little is known about Hans Schlagradl. He was born in 1897, studied with Jakob Ortner (who also taught Louise Walker) and was performing in the 1920s and 1930s, sometimes as a member of the Vienna Guitar Quartet.⁵ Nevertheless, what can be inferred from Schlagradl's performance under Schoenberg's baton is that in the 1920s, the level of musicianship of Viennese classical guitarists was exceptionally high. By

⁴ Stephen Luttman. *Hindemith: A Research and Information Guide*. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁵ Hackl, Stefan. Personal correspondence.

comparison, for the world premiere recording of the Serenade, which took place in 1948 in New York, no competent classical guitarist could be found. The great jazz guitarist Johnny Smith (listed as “John Smith” on the record sleeve) played the guitar part. For the recording, Smith gave a superlative performance that nevertheless--because of the sound of his steel-string archtop guitar--blends perhaps excessively. In the absence of the Viennese classical guitar tradition, Schoenberg might have gone the way of Milton Babbitt, who, intending to include a guitar part in the *Composition for Twelve Instruments* (1948), purportedly had to settle for the harp instead, failing to find a guitarist capable of playing the part.⁶

II. THE SERENADE, SERIALISM, IRONY, AND MAHLER

Schoenberg composed the Serenade between 1920 and 1923, writing most of the material in 1923. He was working simultaneously on two other landmark compositions: the Five Piano Pieces, opus 23, and the Suite for Piano, opus 25.⁷ As a group, these works mark a transition from the atonality exemplified by The Five Orchestral Pieces, opus 16, in *Erwartung*, opus 17, and *Pierrot lunaire*, opus 21; to the ‘twelve-tone style’ of works like the Wind Quintet, opus 26, the Third String Quartet, opus 30, and the Variations for Orchestra, opus 31.

Movements from the solo piano pieces, such as opus 23’s Walzer, are often cited as the first clear examples of twelve-tone writing, and justifiably so: the economy of solo music lends itself to this purpose. Meanwhile, the Serenade is less acknowledged. Leos

⁶ Maybe he should have called Johnny Smith!

⁷ Frisch, Walter. "The Ironic German: Schoenberg and the Serenade, Op. 24." In *Variations on the Canon: Essays on Music from Bach to Boulez in Honor of Charles Rosen on His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Robert Curry, David Gable, and Robert L. Marshall, 227-246. Eastman Studies in Music 58 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 231.

Janacek, upon hearing its performance in September 1925 in Venice, remarked that the Serenade was a piece of ‘Viennese strumming.’⁸ Charles Rosen puts it beautifully: "The ostensibly light character of the Serenade, opus 24, is still a stumbling block in appreciating its merits; its high gloss can awaken resentment."⁹

Coming after a long break in production, between the years 1916 and 1923, the Serenade marks a definite stylistic shift. Schoenberg was turning away from the expressionistic tone of his previous works, and moving towards a more elegant and controlled sound. Pierre Boulez, in his infamous article “Schoenberg is Dead,” saw the neoclassicism of these pieces as an undue recourse to tradition.¹⁰ In his view, the concept of serialism demanded a total rethinking of musical form. A similar criticism is implicit in music historian Richard Taruskin’s evaluation of Schoenberg's neoclassicism as essentially an ironic appropriation from the composers who were following the lead of “Little Modernsky.” However, Rosen proposes that serialism was, in effect, a conservative solution to the problems of atonality, and as such, an integral function of Schoenberg’s neoclassical style. He cites Schoenberg’s apparent dissatisfaction (in his later writings) with the lack of unity in works such as the Pieces for Orchestra and Erwartung. He writes: “The invention of serialism was specifically a move to resurrect an old classicism as well as to make a new one possible.”¹¹ In other words, Schoenberg was not retreating into tradition upon ‘discovering’ serial technique. Rather, he saw serialism as a key development in the renovation of “tonality” in a way that moved beyond

⁸ MacDonald, *Schoenberg*, 211.

⁹ Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg*, 78.

¹⁰ Pierre Boulez. "Schoenberg is Dead." In *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, trans. Herbert Weinstock. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 268.

¹¹ Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg*, 73

diatonicism. Roberto Gerhard affirms this idea in his essay “Tonality in Twelve-Tone Music, claiming that the series is a largely inaudible organizational aspect of the music, much as a diatonic scale is in other music¹². Thus, what happens when a composer uses the chromatic series is still “tonality,” or as Schoenberg put it “composing with tones.”

There is some disagreement about which movements in the Serenade use twelve-tone rows, and which do not. Gerhard argues that this shouldn't matter from the listener's point of view. Niall O'Loughlin, reviewing a publication of the Serenade's study score in *Musical Times*, claims that three movements--Variations, Sonnet, and Dance Scene--show inconsistencies in their treatment of tone rows.¹³ The author, unidentified, of the liner notes for the world premiere recording of the Serenade claims that only two movements are non-twelve-tone: the Variations (which use an eleven-note row), and the *Lied ohne Worte*. Whatever the case, it seems clear from a hearing of the Serenade that the instrumental movements draw on the proto-serialist techniques of transposition, inversion, and retrograding, but show a high degree of freely melodic and rhythmic motivicism. The Sonnet is the one movement in which a twelve-note row is clearly exposed.

As with so much of Schoenberg's music, it is fruitful to look for precedents in the music of other composers working in the Germanic tradition, in particular Gustav Mahler. One need only cite Schoenberg's appraisal of Mahler in his eponymous essay: “I believe firmly and steadfastly that Gustav Mahler was one of the greatest men and

¹² Roberto Gerhard. "Tonality in Twelve-Tone Music." Chap. 20 in *Gerhard on Music*. (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2000), 116.

¹³ O'Loughlin, Niall. "Legible Schoenberg." *The Musical Times* 115, no. 1578 (Aug. 1974), <http://www.jstor.org> (accessed Oct. 6, 2013).

artists.”¹⁴ In the case of the Serenade, we don’t have to look far. The fourth movement of Mahler’s Seventh Symphony (1905), ‘Nachtmusik II’ (‘Nachtmusik’ translating, of course, to ‘Serenade’) contains the same pairing of guitar and mandolin (We should certainly also note the presence of those two instruments in Webern’s 1913 Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op.10.). This is the sole instance of that instrumentation in Mahler’s output. In the aforementioned essay, Schoenberg continues:

...among the most beautiful sounds are the delicate, fragrant ones. Here, too, he brings unheard-of novelty, as, for example the middle movements of the Seventh Symphony, with their sonorities of guitar, harp, and solo instruments. This guitar in the Seventh is not introduced for a single effect, but the whole movement is based on this sonority. It belongs to it from the very beginning, it is a living organ of the composition: not the heart, but perhaps the eyes, whose glance is so characteristic of its aspect. This instance is very close--in a more modern way, naturally--to the method of classical composers, who built whole movements or pieces on the sonority of a specific instrumental group.¹⁵

The guitar in the Seventh Symphony is by no means prominent. If, as Schoenberg suggests, the sonority of the movement is evocative of the guitar, it certainly cannot be said to exploit the expressive capabilities of the instrument. Instead, Mahler treats the guitar almost as part of the percussion section, analogous, perhaps, to the sleigh bells of the Fourth Symphony. Characteristically of Mahler, the treatment is well calculated. An elaborate guitar part would have little chance of being audible through the sound of the orchestra, even in the reduced form that it assumes for the second “Nachtmusik” movement. What would definitely be audible, as Mahler knew, was the nearly un-pitched sound of plucked strings. Another advantage of a simple guitar part is that a non-professional guitarist could play the part- perhaps a member of the viola section.

¹⁴ Arnold Schoenberg. *Style and Idea*, Dika Newlin, ed. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 25.

Except when, at the end of the movement, the guitar helps to outline a D-flat major chord, the part consists solely of strummed chords, a few simple arpeggio patterns, and strings of repeated eighth notes. The section marked “solo” is just such a string of repeated notes on middle C. Meanwhile, a violin, horn, and clarinet take highly expressive, lyrical solos. The tempo marking is “Andante amoroso,” evoking the association of the nocturnal serenade- love songs accompanied with plucked string instruments. Surprisingly, Donald Mitchell notes that Mahler added the mandolin as an afterthought.¹⁶ This may explain Schoenberg’s focus on the guitar in his evaluation of the movement. It is ironic that the mandolin is far more audible than the guitar. Mitchell also draws attention to the march-like character of the movement. The first movement of the Serenade is entitled “March,” and in numerous passages, the guitar plays strings of repeated eighth notes, just as in Mahler’s work if faster and more irregular. Indeed, the rhythmically repeated single note becomes a kind of motif of the March, as seen in example one. Mahlerian *Ländler* figures are also on display in the Dance Scene (example. 2).



¹⁶ Donald Mitchell. "Mahler on The Move: His Seventh Symphony." In *Discovering Mahler: Writings on Mahler 1955-2005*. (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 2007), 404.

Example 1: Serenade, "March" mm. 49-52



Example 2: Serenade, "Dance Scene," clarinet, mm. 105-109.

In his article "The Ironic German: Schoenberg and his Serenade, Op. 24," Walter Frisch makes a number of important observations. First, as the title implies, he points out that the work is an ironic take on a classical genre, and that its brand of irony can also be observed in German cultural output that includes the novels of Thomas Mann, Mahler's Symphonies, and the operas of Richard Strauss. Frisch cites Erich Heller, who defines irony as a, "calculated and artistically mastered incongruity between the meaning of the story told, and the manner of telling it."¹⁷

Frisch draws surprising parallels to works by other composers. Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, he says, is similarly neoclassical. The music evokes the "elegant surface of the past."¹⁸ In its original conception, *Ariadne auf Naxos* is an "opera within a play" (Hofmannsthal's translation of Moliere's *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*). This "framing" creates a distance from the original material that is crucial to its irony. Schoenberg and Strauss, Frisch argues, are not so far apart. The Serenade, similarly, becomes "music about serenades," specifically "Deh, vieni alla finestra," from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, and "Den Tag seh' ich erscheinen" from Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* (in itself a parody of

¹⁷ Frisch, *The Ironic German: Arnold Schoenberg and his Serenade, Op. 24*, 227.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 228.

the Mozart scene). The last in this particular chain of references is the *Nachtmusik* from Mahler's Seventh Symphony. Frisch also compares Schoenberg's work to Stravinsky's *L'histoire du soldat* (Both pieces begin with marches, and have pared-down instrumentation.), and to the "Serenade" number from Schoenberg's own *Pierrot Lunaire*. In the latter, we may consider the idea of opus 24 as auto-exegesis.

Another crucial observation in Frisch's essay is that there have been, historically, at least two types of serenade: the informal, nocturnal guitar-mandolin-song, and the more public version to which Mozart's serenades for wind band belong. Frisch proposes that Schoenberg draws on both traditions in his work, using the occasion for ironic commentary on the serenade as such.

Richard Taruskin, writing in the *Oxford History of Western Music*¹⁹, is also interested in the ironic aspect of Schoenberg's Serenade. There are several levels of irony at play, he suggests: first, the appropriation of "old" forms for a "new" language (Charles Rosen proposes that Schoenberg was basically interested in three forms throughout his work: the variations, the sonata, and *da capo* form²⁰); second, the comedic use of the guitar and mandolin. Third, he identifies the Sonnet movement as the high point of the humor in the piece. Again, he concurs with Frisch, who notes that the low voice shares the range of the "serenades" from *Don Giovanni* and *Der Meistersinger*.

Taruskin points out a clever function of the poem. The eleven-syllable verses are out of phase with the row, causing it to "shift forward" each time the row cycles through. For instance, the first verse begins on the first note of the row, the second verse begins on

¹⁹ Richard Taruskin. *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*. Oxford History of Western Music, Volume 4. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 692.

²⁰ Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg*, 86.

the twelfth note, the third verse begins on the eleventh note, and so forth. Taruskin notes that this mirrors the dramatic action in the poem, in which a messenger arrives at the end. He suggests that the presentation of the row as an ostinato in the vocal part is a parody of Josef Hauer's *Nomos*, opus 19. Hauer and Schoenberg were both approaching serialism in their compositions, and Taruskin speculates that the Serenade could have provided an opportunity for Schoenberg to make light of his colleague's more self-conscious efforts. Meanwhile, Bryan Simms disagrees with the idea that the Sonnet is humoristic, suggesting that the austere treatment of the vocal part signals the moment of least parody, as Schoenberg earnestly presents one of the first fundamentally serial movements in his output.²¹

References to Viennese tradition abound in the Serenade, but the casual listener also notices the occasional appearance of Stravinsky-esque melodies, as in a scalar passage from mm. 68-69 of the March (example 3). Even the Landler theme from example two is unavoidably reminiscent of Stravinsky's woodwind writing. One thinks of the probability of Schoenberg conducting *L'histoire du Soldat* at a Society concert, following long hours of rehearsals.

²¹ Bryan R. Simms. *The Atonal Music of Arnold Schoenberg 1908-1923*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 214.

Example 3: Serenade, "March," mm. 68-69

The instrumentation of the Serenade, ironic references aside, is notable for its omissions. By eschewing a piano, and paring down the performing forces, Schoenberg evokes a pre-romantic music, which is of course reinforced by his choice of fourteenth-century poetry for the fourth movement. The sound was fresh enough to appeal to Boulez, who cites it as an influence on his consciously revolutionary work *Le marteau sans maitre*.²² Looking back to Schoenberg's description of Mahler's music, we see that he valued the "classical" sound of his older colleague's work. Certainly then, the guitar and mandolin are, if ironic, also integral to the overall conception of the sound.

The guitar, while still mainly in an obligato role in the Serenade, is nevertheless given a far more integrated part than in Mahler's Seventh Symphony. Like Mahler, Schoenberg make use of quasi-percussive chords and repeated single notes in order to create rhythmic textures. He seems to treat the mandolin and guitar combination as a kind of plucked keyboard instrument, writing two-voice counterpoint, and occasionally adding a playful hocket effect. In the guitar part of the Variations, he calls for natural harmonics (m. 16), and carefully writes out in 32nd notes an arpeggiated chord (m. 64). In the opening of the Song Without Words, he highlights the guitar in an idiomatic accompaniment texture that underpins the counterpoint of the violin and bass clarinet. The Sonnet ends with a delicate guitar solo that presents seven unique pitches. The skill

²² "Speaking, Playing, Singing: Pierrot lunaire and Le marteau sans maitre." Chap. 35 in *Orientations: Collected Writings*, Martin Cooper, trans. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), 343.

with which Schoenberg incorporated the guitar into each of the seven movements of the Serenade set the standard for future composers.

III. AFTER THE SERENADE, *CONCERT FOR 8*

In light of the Serenade's sonority, it would seem no accident that Anton von Webern, in his *Three Songs*, Op. 18²³, would forgo the traditional piano accompaniment in favor of a guitar and a clarinet. Several years later, another Schoenberg disciple, Sandor Jemnitz, composed a trio for violin, viola, and guitar, the first movement of which very much recalls the opening march in the Serenade. Johann Nepomuk David (a sometime devotee of Schoenberg, but nevertheless working safely within a tonal idiom) would write his first trio for flute, viola, and guitar in 1932.²⁴

Pierre Boulez proposes that Webern took the principle of unity implied by serialism even further than Schoenberg in the *Lieder* that he was composing at the time. In Schoenberg's music, the ordering of pitches was becoming increasingly important. This demanded an instrumentation that would clarify the ordering principle. Webern, in Boulez's view (and this is one reason why he speaks of the 'moral' quality of Webern's music), was striving towards a greater unity of the component parts of the musical work, in particular of instrumentation and form. In Op. 18, he writes, "one is no longer dealing with accompanied melody, but with an ensemble in which the voice organizes and 'supervises' the distribution."²⁵

Almost forty years after the premiere of the Serenade, Schoenberg's former student Roberto Gerhard composed the *Concert for 8*. By the 1960's, Gerhard, having

²³ The *Drei Lieder*, opus 18 date from 1927, three years after the premiere of the Serenade.

²⁴ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "David, Johann Nepomuk." By Josef Hausler. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (accessed Nov. 24, 2013).

²⁵ Boulez, *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, 381.

outlived both Alban Berg and Anton Webern, was perhaps the most prominent surviving exponent of the Second Viennese School. Like the Serenade, the *Concert for 8* includes guitar and mandolin parts. In a brief note included with the score, the composer writes: “My intention was to write a piece of chamber music in the nature of a Divertimento, almost in the spirit of the *commedia dell’arte*.”²⁶ Though not a tribute to the Serenade as such, the *Concert for 8* clearly recalls Schoenberg’s music of the first half of the twentieth century, not only in its instrumentation, but also in Gerhard’s evocation of the *commedia dell’arte*. *Pierrot lunaire* cannot have been far from Gerhard’s mind. It is worth noting that Gerhard moved to Vienna to study with Schoenberg in 1923, the same year in which the Serenade was completed. Gerhard would have been in attendance at the first private performances, and may have attended the first performance of the Serenade at the home of Dr. Norbert Schwartzmann in Vienna on May 2nd, 1924.

The Serenade and the *Concert for 8* differ markedly in style. The language of the latter is far more textural and gestural. Its frequently sparse texture evokes the music of Webern, and suggests the extent to which Schoenberg’s conservative adherence to traditional form and tonality had fallen out of favor with the postwar avant-garde. As Boulez’s mention of the Serenade’s influence on the sonority of *Le marteau sans maitre* demonstrates, references were often oblique at most.

Gerhard makes a unique choice of instrumentation for the *Concert for 8*: guitar, mandolin, piano, accordion, flute/piccolo, clarinet, double bass, and percussion. Immediately, one notices the absence of the voice, and the presence of the accordion and

²⁶ Roberto Gerhard. *Concerto for 8*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.

piano. The work is dedicated to the Gomis family. Ricard Gomis, a friend of Gerhard's, had suggested the instrument for a preceding work, the *Nonet*.

There appears to be a parallel between the mandolin-guitar pairing, and that of the accordion with the piano. This symmetry extends to the pairing of the two woodwinds, and perhaps to the percussion with the double bass (often producing percussive sounds). The inclusion of a diverse array of percussion sounds is, by the 1960s, nearly *de rigueur* for an ensemble of this size. The separation of sonorities is blurred by the frequent use of extended techniques (The guitar, in the opening section, is played with a cello bow; the piano strings are plucked sometimes, and so forth.). These "masking" effects provide--along with the "ex tempore" writing--the aforementioned link to *commedia dell'arte*. The guitar and mandolin parts are more soloistic in Gerhard's piece, a sign of the improving state of classical guitar technique. Program notes from the Roberto Gerhard archive in Cambridge show that the Australian virtuoso John Williams played the guitar part in the premiere of the work.²⁷

Does the appearance of the voice in the middle movement of the Serenade weaken the proposed link to the *Concert for 8*? The voice is, in a sense, extrinsic to the work as a whole. As it did in Schoenberg's Second String Quartet, the voice arrives to announce the "air from another planet." In the String Quartet No. 2, the voice ushered in atonality. In the Serenade, it proclaims the renewal of tonality: the ascendancy of the tonal aggregate through the twelve-tone method.

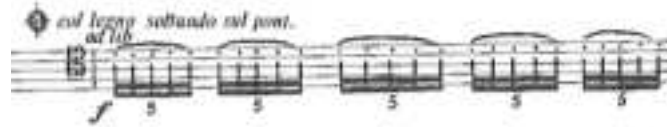
The proportions of the *Concert for 8* are greatly reduced compared to those of the Serenade. A typical performance of the Serenade lasts between thirty-two and thirty-eight

²⁷ Joaquim Homs. *Roberto Gerhard and his Music*. (Trowbridge, England: The Anglo-Catalan Society, 2000), 70. Williams also played on recordings of the Serenade and Webern's *Drei Lieder*, opus 18.

minutes (Mitropoulos' 1949 premiere recording and the 1962 recording by Bruno Maderna and the Melos Ensemble, respectively). The *Concert for 8* lasts about ten and a half minutes- a little under a third of the length of its predecessor. Schoenberg's work features seven discrete movements, presumably in order to allow for the centrality of the prophetic twelve-tone movement. Gerhard's has eight interlinked sections. Beyond the association with the eight instruments (and a concurrent one with the eight dedicatees of the work, the members of the Gomis family), the precise relationship of the movements to each other has yet to be determined. However, it seems worthwhile to point out that the multi-sectional single movement form is another aspect of the piece that distinguishes it from the music of its predecessors. This "integral" form places the *Concert for 8* with other chamber works from the time such as Elliott Carter's String Quartet No. 1, or Boulez's *Le marteau sans maitre*.²⁸

In spite of these differences, the echoes of the Serenade are unmistakable. The sonority of the plucked strings is a major factor here, as is the sound of the clarinet. Together, they are responsible for much of the "divertimento" character of the piece. The accordion, and its association with street music, adds to this as well. Long strings of repeated pitches, and the frequent use of *col legno* in the double bass, clearly evoke similar elements from the Serenade's March and Finale. The placement of these devices at either end of the *Concert for 8* (examples 4 and 5) reinforces this impression. Subtle melodic references also seem to appear throughout the work, as when, in measure 112, the Mandolin outlines a 014 trichord that figures prominently in the Variations of the Serenade.

²⁸ *Le marteau* was originally supposed to have been played without breaks.



Example 4: *Concert for 8*, double bass, m. 49



Example 5: *Concert for 8*, guitar, mm. 290-292

Gerhard's work demonstrates how the style and techniques of the Second Viennese School continued to evolve after Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg had died. The posthumous ascendancy of Webern is perhaps apparent in the sparse textures and emphasis on timbre (not to mention brevity) of the *Concert for 8*. However, by the 1960s, Gerhard can no longer be said to be emulating anybody. His music, while elegantly twelve-tone, at times Webern-esque, also features strong melodic and rhythmic references to Catalan and Spanish traditions. Notable as well is Gerhard's oft-cited dictum: "I stand by the sound of my music." Indeed, Gerhard's exploitation of timbre for its own sake verges on the impressionistic, and is immediately evident in the opening of *Concert for 8*. A quasi-oriental wood block strike focuses the listener's attention on the decay of a sustained compound minor third in the piano paired with the with the sound of a large cymbal.

IV. CONCLUSION

During the twentieth century, the guitar chamber music repertoire was greatly enlarged as non-guitarist composers began to write for the guitar. Composers such as Debussy (the scherzo of the String Quartet, for instance) and Albeniz had evoked the instrument's folk tradition in their writing for other instruments. Mahler and Schoenberg may still have been playing on a tradition (the nocturnal serenade) that was, strictly speaking, marginal to the world of 'serious music.' However, they crossed a significant line by incorporating the guitar into large-scale works. When, in 1921, Schoenberg told Josef Rufer--not without irony²⁹--that he was ensuring the supremacy of German music for the next hundred years (He was referring, of course, to the twelve tone-method.) he was already at work on the piece that would ensure the guitar's place in the chamber music of the succeeding century. With a composer of Schoenberg's immense skill, the guitar's presence no longer needed to come in the form of an oblique reference.

In order to carry the narrative to a conclusion, one more work from the generation that succeeded Schoenberg may be mentioned here: Ernst Krenek's *Suite for Mandolin and Guitar*, opus 242. It dates from 1989, and is the last work that Krenek completed before his death in 1991. In Mahler's *Nachtmusik*, the guitar and mandolin are enveloped in an orchestra, leaving hints of their sonorities. In the *Serenade*, the guitar and mandolin are, broadly speaking, still treated as obbligato instruments. The *Concert for 8* engages the pair in a masquerade on a crowded stage. Here, in Krenek's *Suite*, the rest of the ensemble is stripped away, bringing us full circle to what was being referenced in the first place: this humble pair of serenader's instruments. The relaxed humor and refinement of Krenek's twelve-tone writing is immediately evident in a hearing of the *Suite*, which is

²⁹ MacDonald, *Schoenberg*, 60.

only now receiving its first performances, following its publication in 2003. This work is indicative of the privileged position that the guitar now enjoys in the chamber music of the twenty-first century, at over a hundred years' remove from Mahler's Seventh Symphony.

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