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PART TWO

THE CYCLES

During a rehearsal in the Tonhalle. Ernst Haefliger sings Richard Strauss's song 'Traum durch die Dämmerung', in its orchestral version. Schoeck maintains: 'The song doesn't lend itself well to orchestral accompaniment; it is too short. The orchestra presupposes larger forms. Only the song cycle can grow into a large-scale vocal form. That is really why I write cycles. The cycle is my large-scale form.'

(G p. 20)

INTRODUCTION

We come now to our discussion of Schoeck's cycles - fifteen works in all, covering a period of more than thirty years. There are separate chapters on each work, presented chronologically, and each follows the same general pattern. After noting the history of the work, we discuss its theme, comparing it with other works on the same subject. Then we consider the work as a cycle, relating it to the models discussed above. The next section - usually the longest - is the technical one, where songs are analysed in order to make points about Schoeck's development. The conclusions that follow generally focus on the specific work; but in the third part of the book they are taken up again to cast light on Schoeck's aesthetics, his technical and stylistic development, and his use of the cycle as a genre.

In writing these chapters - and here I must drop into the first person - I have not thought it necessary to attach myself to any particular school of analytical thought. One should be free to borrow any procedure that may be useful, without having to commit oneself to a party line: in the mere act of writing one constantly borrows whether one admits it to oneself or not, and to confess dependence on others is simply to acknowledge the common nature of scholarly pursuit. Nevertheless I think it only proper to say that I have been most influenced by Tovey, Schoenberg and Charles Rosen.[1]

In general, the kind of analysis to be presented is best

1) Schenkerian methods are not used, simply because I was not familiar with them at the time of writing; but they could be applied to Schoeck's music, particularly to songs using the 'series' technique, with profit. In the central three verses of 'Trauer', from Der Sänger, the rhythmic variations produce different middleground structures each time, even though the harmonic content remains essentially the same. The theoretical implications of this are intriguing. [1981]

understood as a form of description. The statement is not meant to be paradoxical: the idea that analysis offers an objective, scientific account of music, as opposed to 'mere' subjective description, is now sufficiently discredited for the word 'description' to be used in a more positive sense. In the following chapters I 'describe', among other things, the transformations of a melody (Wandersprüche), the relation of harmony and rhythm (Gaselen) and the characteristics of a style (Wandsbecker Liederbuch). These examples show description being used in a quasi-analytical way, or rather they show the impossibility of analysis without description; but there are places where description is used in a more conventional way, too, simply because it seems the most sensitive response to the music in question.

This flexibility of approach is necessary because the critic of Schoeck's music is, methodologically speaking, treading a thin line. One can paraphrase a song, noting changes of texture, felicities of word-setting etc., but in doing so one is likely to miss important musical points. One can go to the other extreme and analyse it almost as a piece of instrumental music, but that is to commit an even worse kind of distortion. If there is a bias to one side or the other - and I cannot hope to have kept the right balance throughout - it has probably been to the second, since I felt, rightly or wrongly, that I owed most responsibility to the technical side of Schoeck's talent. Nevertheless the technical discussion has generally been related to the poetic concept, and I hope that in some chapters the right balance has been found.

One further matter requires explanation. Many of the literary works on which Schoeck based his cycles are no longer well known; some indeed are almost forgotten. Where appropriate, therefore, the discussion is enlarged with a brief biographical sketch of the poet, together with remarks indicating the particular nature of Schoeck's interest in him. It may be wondered why so much space is being given to literary themes. Surely our points could be made without all these references? Interesting they may be, but how do they assist in an understanding of the music?

They do so because Schoeck's music is not like most other music, which can be analysed without reference to external things.

It is authobiographical through and through. Each piece is an expression, and at the same time an artistic solution, of some problem in his affairs. His poets supplied the means by which these problems were articulated; not only the choice of texts, but also the musical form as well, was dictated by the poetic theme; and at least one structural idea, the Aufhellung, is explicable only by reference to his psychology. Our discussion will involve a good deal of biographical as well as literary explanation; and this is surely as it should be. To try to deal with the music in isolation would be to separate it from the forces which gave it life, and this to Schoeck would have seemed tantamount to a betrayal.

*

Schoeck's first song cycle was the Elegie. Prior to that, however, he had already published 144 songs; and the point has been made that his turning to the cycle in the twenties, and his subsequent adherence to it, fulfilled inclinations which had been present in his work from the beginning. His predilection for the vocal genres; his fascination with early romanticism; his idea of the work as confession; his maturing musical style - all these lay behind his commitment to the cycle. Much of the Elegie's special power comes from its having been so thoroughly prepared.

This is also true in the more particular sense of Schoeck's treatment of the cycle as a genre. Except for the very first set of all, the Drei Schilflieder, Op. 2 (1905), based on the Lenau cycle mentioned above, all the early collections consist of miscellaneous pieces brought together for publication. Many include material going back several years, and first performance dates imply that Schoeck was not concerned to have the songs presented as a sequence. Nevertheless, over the fifteen years spanned by the Schilflieder and the Hafez set, two tendencies emerge which show him working towards the cycle: the number of songs in the volume increases, and a progressive desire for unity manifests itself. Before discussing the cycles let us briefly survey these early sets, noting incipient cyclic usages as they arise.

CHAPTER 1

EARLY COLLECTIONS

Schoeck's early songs[1] were published in three batches. First there were the many small collections, like the Schilflieder, which with the Violin Sonata, Op. 16 (1908), made up his Opp. 2-17 (Op. 1 was the student Serenade). These were themselves published in three groups, Opp. 2-11 in 1907, Opp. 12-15 in 1908 and Op. 17 in 1909. The publisher was Hug of Leipzig. The second batch comprised the five 1917 collections, namely the two to poems by Goethe, Opp. 19a/b, the collection to poems by Uhland and Eichendorff, Op. 20, and the two miscellaneous sets, Opp. 24a/b. Here the publishers were Breitkopf & Härtel. The third batch, also published by Breitkopf, consisted of the Eichendorff-Lieder, Op. 30, the Fünf Lieder, Op. 31, the Hafis-Lieder, Op. 33, and Der Gott und die Bajadere, Op. 34, a setting of Goethe's ballad. These works appeared in 1921. Schoeck's Op. 35, the Drei Lieder nach Gedichten von Keller, Storm und Eichendorff, belongs to a later period, being written in 1928 and published in 1931. With Op. 36 we reach the Elegie.

As is the convention when a descriptive title is lacking, these early collections are named after the poet. When more than

1) See OS pp. 17-31, 43-55, 110-16; V pp. 13-100; G pp. 126-8, 130, 145-6, 149; W passim; Corrodi, 'Othmar Schoeck's Songs', pp. 131-3; 'Othmar Schoeck: Ein Rückblick auf sein Schaffen', p. 243; 'Othmar Schoeck und Hugo Wolf', pp. 344-5; Ernst Isler, 'Othmar Schoecks Frühlied', in Festgabe; René Lévy, 'La Musique en Suisse et Othmar Schoeck', La Revue Musicale 11 (1930); Schuh, 'Zur Harmonik der neuesten Werke von Othmar Schoeck'; 'Gestaltungsprinzipien im Schoeckschen Lied'; Vogel, 'Wesenszuge Schoeckscher Lyrik', SMZ 86 (1946); 'Othmar Schoeck: Ein Schweizer Eichendorff-Komponist', pp. 57-62. A chronology of Schoeck's early songs appears as Appendix A. For recordings see Discography.

one poet is represented, songs with a common author are placed together. In the very earliest sets - those of 1907-9 - the order of songs was decided by the publisher, and there is no attempt at musical unity. Actually the Schilflieder, Schoeck's first set, are more of a 'cycle' than most. In the first two of his three surviving settings (two others were never written down)[1] the worsening of the weather is reflected in a change from E♭ major to E♭ minor; in the third,[2] the return to a quiet evening setting brings a melodic reference to the opening song. Despite these connections, however, the Schilflieder were first performed separately.

The emphasis placed on certain songs in the 1907-9 sets through their ordering in the group suggests that here Schoeck may indeed have had a hand in the arrangement. The Vier Lieder, Op. 14 (1907), begin with 'An meine Mutter', inscribed with a suitable dedication; the four Hesse songs, Op. 8 (1906) - otherwise slow, dreamy pieces - end with the fiery 'Jahrestag'. The last of these 1907-9 sets, Op. 17, concludes with three Eichendorff poems. The first two are none other than 'Auf einer Burg' and the second 'In der Fremde' (the latter with its title changed to 'Erinnerung') from the Schumann Liederkreis. The third is 'Der frohe Wandersmann', perhaps the most popular of Eichendorff's Wanderlieder - Schumann also made a setting - and Schoeck may well have put it at the end of the set as a kind of motto.

Eichendorff is in fact the representative poet of these early sets, and Schoeck's Wanderlieder settings best exemplify his interest in Eichendorff at this time. They display an aspect of the poet quite different from the melancholy dreamer of the Liederkreis, and one which might be thought more typical of that writer whose lyrics have become part of German folk tradition. Josef von Eichendorff (1788-1857)[3] was one of the earliest romantic 'wanderers'. His childhood in Silesia was an idyll which he later recalled with nostalgia. He studied at Heidelberg, where he met

1) G p. 58.
2) Poem also set by Berg (No. 2 of his Sieben frühe Lieder).
3) Gesammelte Werke, ed. H.J. Meinerts (Künzelsau, 1959).

Arnim and Brentano, whose Des Knaben Wunderhorn became a major influence on his style. Later he travelled in Austria, where, hearing of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, he joined the regiment known as the Lützower Jäger, serving for a while under Gneisenau. His first novel, Ahnung und Gegenwart, appeared in 1815. The following year he entered the Prussian civil service, rising at length to the office of Privy Councillor. Meanwhile he had published his Venus novella, Das Marmorbild, and the euphoric Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts (both 1826). His collected verse, Gedichte, appeared in 1837. He retired from public life seven years later, devoting himself to a history of German literature which was published in 1857, the year of his death.

For Schumann, Eichendorff is a poet of loneliness and regrets; for Wolf, the author of waggish character-studies. Schoeck gives us a whole variety of new facets, perhaps because he knew more of the poet's work, and attached a more personal significance to it, than either of his predecessors. He delighted in the novels no less than in the poems, deriving extra pleasure from their carefree construction,[1] while Eichendorff's descriptions of nature reminded him of his own happy childhood. In conversation with Vogel, Schoeck praised Eichendorff's simple piety (the poet was a devout Catholic), his purity of feeling and his straightforwardness of language, qualities he had also discovered in Claudius, Mörike and Hesse. 'He is timeless and cannot he pigeonholed. His poetry offers something not only to different ages, but also to different phases in one and the same person's life.'[2]

Throughout his life, indeed, Schoeck was drawn repeatedly to Eichendorff, and the texts he chose form an index of his interests and preoccupations. According to Corrodi,[3] Schoeck's favourite Eichendorff in his early years was the Taugenichts, the story of the lazy miller's son and his wanderlust:

> I sat up, and for the first time in a long while I looked out into the far distance, to where the boats were wending their way down the river past the vineyards, and where the country

1) G pp. 79-80. 2) Ibid., p. 131.
3) OS p. 28.

> roads, still deserted, stretched out like bridges over the shimmering countryside, past distant mountains and valleys.
>
> I know not how it happened, but suddenly I felt seized by my old wanderlust, my old feeling of mingled melancholy and joyous expectation. Yet at the same time my thoughts turned to the lovely lady slumbering peacefully between silken coverlets and surrounded by bright flowers up there in the palace, an angel sitting by her bedside in the stillness of the dawn.
>
> 'But no!' I cried aloud. 'I must get away from here and travel onwards and onwards, as far as the sky is blue! (1)

For anyone living in Switzerland at the turn of the century, the world evoked in this extract was not poetic fancy but really existed; and Schoeck's travels with Hesse show him reliving the wanderings of his romantic heroes. This is the world of the Wanderlieder, a world which the First World War shattered beyond recall and the loss of which he lamented for the rest of his days. Already in the Eichendorff songs of Op. 20 the landscapes are overshadowed with thoughts of death, and the next Eichendorff settings, Op. 30, are sombre, wintry pieces, with the poet seeking refuge in God. In Venus, partly based on Das Marmorbild, Eichendorff's setting of castle and moonlit park lends mystery to Merimée's rather flimsy tale. Later, Wandersprüche looks back to the youthful wanderings; the Kantate, Op. 49 (contemporary with the Notturno), revives the mood of Schumann's 'Zwielicht'; and Das Schloss Dürande uses Eichendorff's story to protest against fascism. Finally Befreite Sehnsucht shows a different Eichendorff again - the dedicated Dichter, sunk in the glorification of his art. Schoeck's works on Eichendorff texts are discussed by Vogel in an article which had the composer's approval.[2]

With Op. 17 the number of songs in a set has risen from three or four to eight. The trend continues in the 1917 volumes. There are eight Lieder nach Gedichten von Goethe; thirteen Lieder aus dem Westöstlichen Divan von Goethe; fourteen Lieder nach Gedichten von Uhland und Eichendorff; and ten songs in each of the

1) Memoirs of a Good-for-Nothing [Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts], trans. Ronald Taylor (London, 1966), pp. 37-8.

2) 'Othmar Schoeck: Ein Schweizer Eichendorff-Komponist'. See also Schuh, 'Othmar Schoecks "Wandersprüche"', SMZ 69 (1929), and G pp. 130-1.

two miscellaneous books. The idea of dividing the Goethe and the miscellaneous sets was evidently an afterthought - the first editions number the songs consecutively throughout - so the sets must originally have contained twenty-one and twenty pieces respectively. The 'unity' of Op. 24 can be demonstrated merely by listing the poets:

Op. 24a		Op. 24b
Lenau (4 songs)		
Hebbel (1)		
Dehmel (1)		
Spitteler (4)	⟶	Spitteler (1)
		Gamper (2)
		Hesse (6)
		Keller (1)

As before, the songs in the 1917 collections are designed for separate performance, and require a variety of different voice-ranges, sometimes specified, sometimes not. Yet the songs have a surer sense of belonging together than hitherto, probably because now the composer and not the publisher is responsible for the groupings.[1] This growing feeling for the collection as something more than the sum of its parts coincides with Schoeck's first extended instrumental compositions - the Violin Concerto and the First String Quartet - and his attempt to fix a body of songs within a dramatic framework in Erwin und Elmire.

The two Goethe sets are organised on the same general principle as Wolf's Goethe songbook, the poems being arranged according to the Goethe volumes in which they appear. All the Westöstlicher Divan settings are in the second volume, at the end of which Schoeck adds the Fünf venezianische Epigramme, composed 1906-7 but considered too daring to be published at that time.[2] The companion volume contains songs to poems from other sources.

From the point of view of formal organisation the Op. 20 set constitutes an impressive advance. The basic layout of the poems - six Uhland followed by eight Eichendorff - is conventional, but through the details of the arrangement (there are no musical links)

1) OS p. 45. 2) See G p. 146.

Schoeck gives continuity to the set as a whole. The work begins in springlike freshness: 'Auf ein Kind', with its references to 'this innocence, this morning brightness, this unsullied spring of God' (see above, p. 24). As the work progresses, however, this mood is overtaken by thoughts of death. The death theme appears in the fourth song, 'Frühlingsruhe' (1905), and in the sixth, 'Abendwolken' (1910), where it is joined by a new theme, presented in the form of evening clouds which make the traveller long for rest. Death and evening themes are also present in 'Abschied' (1909), the first Eichendorff setting, which thus forms a bridge between the two groups.

In the second half of the volume - one is tempted to say 'cycle' - the death theme predominates. It appears in 'Auf meines Kindes Tod' (1914), which might be heard as a sequel to No. 1; 'Der Kranke' (1913), concerning a dying man; and 'Umkehr' (1914), in which the poet greets the light of heaven. The final song, 'Nachruf' (1910), brings an apparent change of theme with its lines in praise of art. It is only as the poem proceeds that we realise it has other themes too, themes which have occupied us all along, so that we have a kind of synthesis of all the preceding songs. The singer addresses his lute:

> Wir wollen dennoch singen!
> So still ist's auf der Welt;
> wer weiss, die Lieder dringen
> vielleicht zum Sternenzelt.
>
> Wer weiss, die da gestorben,
> sie hören droben mich
> und öffnen leis die Pforten
> und nehmen uns zu sich.

(Only the last two verses are quoted.) The reference to 'those who are dead' recalls the child in earlier poems; the reference to the gates of heaven recalls 'Umkehr'; and the reference to the stars takes the evening theme and resolves it into night - an ending which anticipates many later works. This is Schoeck's boldest experiment in linking poems so far.

Reminiscence is also the theme of 'Jugendgedenken' (1914), the finale of Op. 24. Keller's poem apostrophises the security of his youth, a security to which he attributes his present success. Op. 24 is much the most diversified of the 1917 sets, and the sheer

authority of 'Jugendgedenken' - easily Schoeck's longest and most ambitious song to date - demands its positioning at the end. But if the set were performed as a whole, the words would seem to reflect back on the preceding songs; and the page-long piano postlude, recalling the song's principal motif, closes the set in the same way as the Meyer and Mörike postludes are to do nearly forty years later.

If there is a new sense of 'belonging together' in the songs of these collections, it is due more to the texts than to the music, which, as we have seen, covers a wide range of styles. Within the general ethos of Schoeckian subject-matter each poet approaches his material differently - Goethe philosophical and worldly-wise, Eichendorff seemingly innocent and naive, Lenau sorrowfully resigned - and these attitudes are carried into the music. Thus the Goethe settings tend to be sonorously magisterial or cryptically dissonant, the Eichendorff lyrical and diatonic, the Lenau lyrical but chromatically disturbed. But it is going too far to credit Schoeck, as Corrodi does,[1] with finding a different 'tone' for each poet. The stylistic diversity makes it impossible to identify a particular set of characteristics with any one author, and since the songs were not written in the printed order but willy-nilly, jumping from one poet to another, this is what we should expect. The significant differences arise between types of subject-matter, not between poets.

From this general unity it is only a step to the idea that the collection should embody a theme; and the Eichendorff-Lieder, published in 1921, almost take this step. Of the contemporary volumes, the Fünf Lieder are a miscellaneous set, dating from 1914-17 except for a sixth Venetian Epigram which like some of the later Sprüche is placed last; Der Gott und die Bajadere (1921) is a cantata-like piece; and the Hafis-Lieder are discussed below.

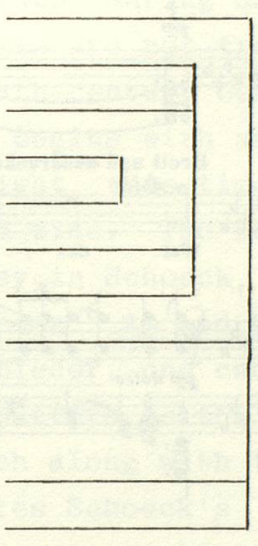
The background to the Eichendorff-Lieder was given in Part I (p. 33ff.) Though the songs were composed in two groups, the style of the later numbers, settings of Eichendorff's Geistliche

1) OS pp. 45, 48.

Lieder, is anticipated so strongly in the earlier that one can speak of the 'Geistliche tone' as something common to the whole set. Musical links between the two groups abound, and there are signs that the set was written to a plan. (Schoeck's remark, however, that the songs 'can' be performed as a cycle suggests this was not his original intention.)[1] As for the texts, much of the typical Geistliche imagery - wintry landscapes, chill night wind, tolling bells - is already present in 'Der verspätete Wanderer', while 'Nachklang', 'Nacht' and 'An die Lützowschen Jäger' have the Geistliche themes of night and death. It is as if the collection were built around the six poems that were the last to be set.

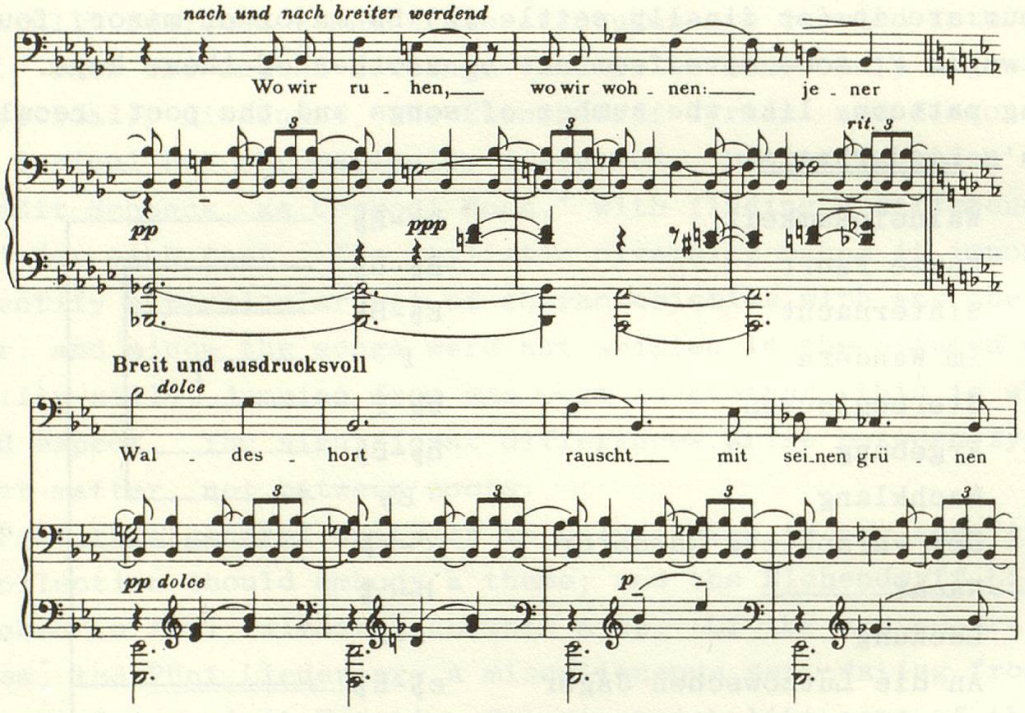
On the musical level, the Geistliche tone asserts itself mainly through the use of a limited number of keys. Of the twelve songs four are in (or finally settle in) B♭ major or minor, four in E♭ and two in F; some move from one to another of these keys. The resulting pattern, like the number of songs and the poet, recalls Schumann's Liederkreis:

1.	Waldeinsamkeit	b♭-E♭
2.	Kurze Fahrt	B♭-b♭
3.	Winternacht	E♭-B♭
4.	Im Wandern	F
5.	Sterbeglocken	b♭-F
6.	Ergebung	b♭-B♭
7.	Nachklang	B♭
8.	Der verspätete Wanderer	c-E♭
9.	Nacht	b-c♯
10.	Lockung	d-D
11.	An die Lützowschen Jäger	e♭-E♭
12.	Auf dem Rhein	E♭



Because most of the texts are variations on a single mood, this scheme, with its dominant ascent and descent over the first eight songs, cannot be said to 'function' in the same way as Schumann's. Its effect is first formal and only then expressive.

1) G p. 130.

The return to E♭ in 'Auf dem Rhein', for instance, can have only a purely musical significance, the poem not being related to any of the others in the set (the inclusion of this song, so different from its fellows, seems odd). Occasionally, however, a tonal reference does have expressive significance, as in 'An die Lützowschen Jäger'. The song is a lament for Eichendorff's dead comrades of 1813, and Schoeck turns it into an extraordinary brooding elegy. Just before the end there is a move to E♭ which clearly refers to the opening song of the set, 'Waldeinsamkeit' (cf. pp. 34-5 above). The tonal reference is supported by a melodic one:

The intention seems to be to link the ideas of forest rest in the two songs.

There are other thematic cross-references - the use of similar ostinato figures in 'Sterbeglocken' and 'Ergebung', for example - but usually the connection is of types of music rather

than of specific themes. Thus mention of the forest evokes a dreamy, rocking movement of the kind associated with 'pastoral' Brahms or Wagner; 'Ergebung' and 'Nachklang', with their common mood of resignation, employ minor and major versions of the same harmonic formula. Another idea, to be developed much later in Unter Sternen, is the use of a standard chord or cadence on which to finish. Thus the final E♭ triad of 'Waldeinsamkeit', with its major third at the top, returns in 'Der verspätete Wanderer' as if in answer to the question 'Wo?' ('Where shall I be in the coming spring?' - 'At peace in your forest grave'). The same chord occurs yet again, with similar connotations, in 'An die Lützowschen Jäger' (see example above).

Naturally such relationships are perceptible only when the songs are performed as a sequence. Schoeck was not concerned to insist on this - he even notates the voice part in different clefs, though the range is consistent - and the result is, of course, that the work is never given complete.

The twelve Hafis-Lieder were written in 1920, during an interval in the composition of Venus. The texts are not translations, but free paraphrases, by the nineteenth-century German poet Daumer. Like some of the cycles the set begins with an invocation to night - not a German romantic night, this time, but the night of the orient, give over to love and wine. The key of this opening song is B♭ - not the commonest key in Schoeck, but one which is to recur four times in the songs to come. A♭ and G♭ also figure prominently. As with the Eichendorff-Lieder, one cannot ascribe precise meanings to these keys; what matters is the establishment of a mood - a mode, almost, which along with the rhythmic experiments described below constitutes Schoeck's individual response to Hafez's verse. There are no explicit thematic links, and indeed Schoeck appears to have been as little concerned as he was with the Eichendorff-Lieder to have the songs performed as a group.

What is interesting about these last two collections is that, whether or not they were meant to be performed as sequences, their layout suggests a common conception which is denied by the facts (the origin of the Elegie is even more paradoxical). It is

as if by this time Schoeck had acquired an instinct for arranging poems which obtained even when he did not consciously think of them as a unity. The change in the size and character of the collection supports this view. With the Eichendorff- and Hafis-Lieder we have two sets of twelve songs, each to words by a single poet and each designed for a single voice-range; there are tonal and other links; and there is a tendency to unify the work around a particular mood or theme. Schoeck is ready for the cycle proper.

*

Discussion of Schoeck's compositional technique can begin with a quotation from an interview he gave in 1955. Congratulated on his success in marrying vocal and instrumental elements in his songs, Schoeck replied:

> Yes, without this marriage a good song is inconceivable; it determines its nature. There is unfortunately an enormous number of songs in which the music seems to be spread over the poor, defenceless poem like a pale watercolour, and usually a long way over the edge! [cf. the remark quoted on p. 4] And it is just this kind of song that has brought this glorious art-form into such grave disrepute. But so far as the marriage you mentioned is concerned, this can take place in a whole host of different ways. First and foremost, of course, in such a way that the vocal line - song is, after all, the most basic form of musical expression - is intimately bound up with the instrumental part, so that the vocal line itself grows out of the harmony entrusted to the instrument. With me, melody and harmony always originate at the same time; they are mutually dependent on one another. It seems to me imperative that the first bar or group of bars should already form as it were the 'basic cell' [Urzelle] of the song, that it should contain the real 'essence' - which is more than a mere indication of the fundamental character and mood. The melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and colouristic elements of the form must be clearly defined at once, just as is the case with a symphony movement - I'm thinking, for example, of Beethoven's Fifth. Every musical event is the result of the musical forces contained in the opening kernel-motif [Kernmotiv]. (1)

Schoeck is here describing, two years before his death, a type of composition which had preoccupied him for almost fifty years.

1) 'Aus einem Zwiegespräch mit Willi Schuh', Musik der Zeit X (1955), p. 5.

What he does, if we may amplify his remarks, is to find a musical formula or basic cell - sometimes one bar, sometimes two bars in length, rarely more - which expresses the mood of the poem in concentrated form ('auf eine Formel bringen' was Schoeck's phrase for this).[1] This basic cell is usually stated at the beginning of the song. It is then repeated, transposed, varied etc. according to the changing imagery of the poem, until it disintegrates or gives way to a new idea. As we shall see, this type of form presupposes a close relationship between voice and piano.

Three quotations come to mind in this regard. The first is Hesse's remark about Schoeck's ability to put his finger on the point where the poet's experience has become crystallised 'in a word or in the vibrations between two words' (see above, p. 30). The second is Adorno's description of the concept of 'Einfall' in Schoenberg:

> The concept of 'Einfall' was defined in order to distinguish the theme as a matter of organic essence from its creative transformation in the work as a matter of abstract, hypothetical ordering. 'Einfall' is not just a psychological category, a matter of 'inspiration', but a moment in the dialectical process manifest in musical form. This moment marks the irreducibly subjective element in this process and, by means of its inexplicability, further designates this aspect of music as its essence, while the 'working out' represents the process of objectivity and the process of becoming, which, to be sure, contains this subjective moment as a driving force.

(The translators add helpfully: 'The German word "Einfall" with which Adorno here works is impossible to translate; it involves the idea of a decisive inspirational occurrence bordering upon revelation which becomes the basis for a work of art.')[2] The third quotation, which gives relevance to the second, is Schoeck's own remark that 'the Einfall always comes first. The Einfall provides the form, not the other way round'[3] - 'Einfall' referring at once to the stroke of inspiration and to the actual musical idea. In

1) See G p. 142.

2) Theodor W. Adorno, Philosophy of Modern Music, trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Bloomster (London, 1973), p. 74n.

3) Quoted in Fischer, Schöpferische Leistung, p. 165. 'Einfall' was also an important concept in Pfitzner's writings.

Schoeck literature the word is often used to refer to the basic cell which encapsulates the emotional content of the poem and from which much of the thematic material derives.

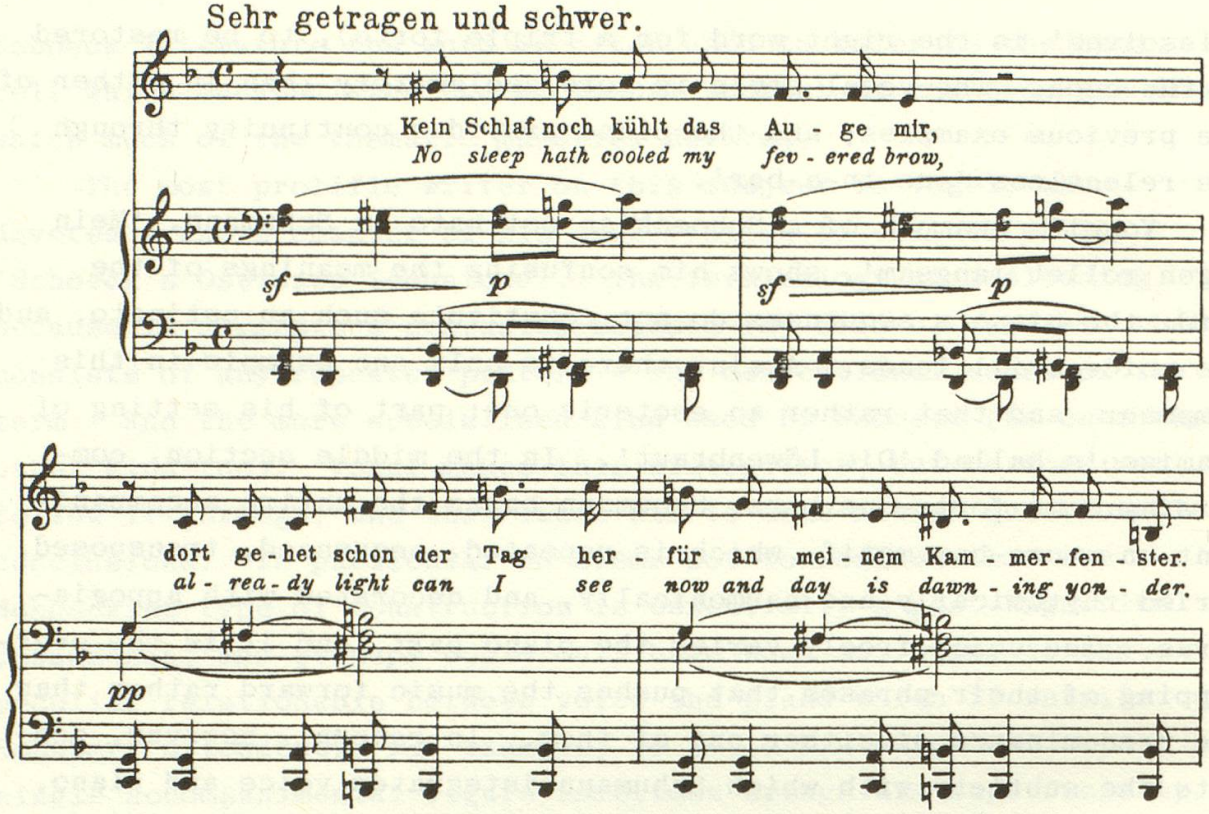
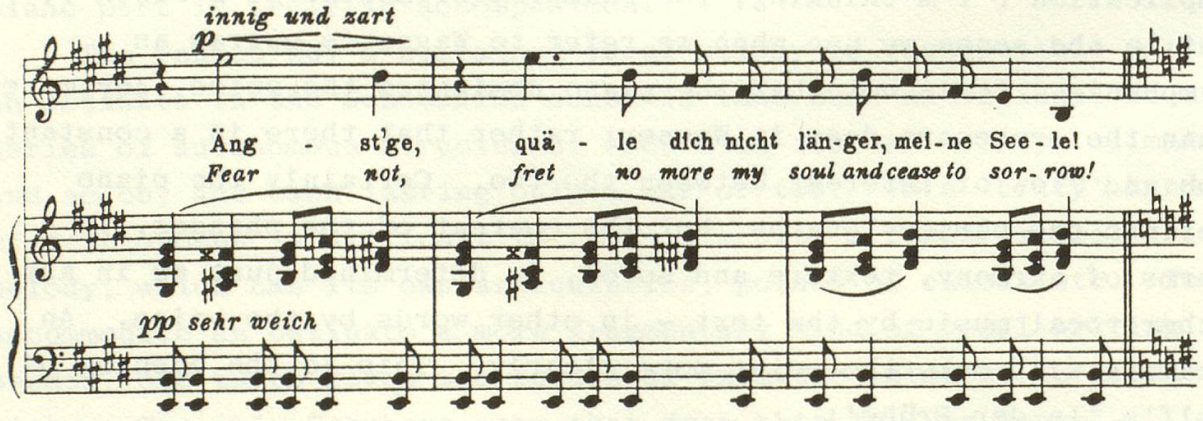
The most prolific writer on this subject is Vogel, who devotes a whole chapter of his dissertation to what he calls 'Schoeck's Ostinato Technique'. The terminology is misleading, because it suggests a confusion between the kind of ostinato that consists of any repeated pattern - the conventional sense of the term - and the more specialised kind used by Schoeck (he uses the other kind too). Vogel makes this distinction, but he does not follow it through, and this leads him to some rather questionable conclusions. In particular he seems not to realise that the Schoeckian type of construction is essentially a post-Wagnerian phenomenon, and perhaps could only have been so, owing to the peculiar relationship between voice and piano which it entails. Schubert's tendency, for example, to build his songs out of a single accompanimental figure sometimes brings him superficially close to the Schoeckian idea. 'Im Dorfe', from Die Winterreise, bases its piano part largely on repetitions of one motif, each repetition separated by rests but given a place in the whole by virtue of the wonderful sustained melodic line. 'Der zürnenden Diana' is another example. In both songs, however, the voice has much greater independence than it has in Schoeck - indeed Schubert relies on the vocal melody to carry the music along; the piano part is truly an accompaniment.

The reason why a sustained vocal melody is incompatible with an ostinato in the Schoeckian sense is that such an ostinato is a series of autonomous structures, each with its own melody, climax and so on, and each lasting only a bar or two. This 'bitty' kind of development is difficult to reconcile with a larger-scale melody, which has its own articulation, points of climax etc. To accommodate an ostinato a more fragmentary kind of vocal writing is needed, one which gives the burden of thematic interest to the piano. The only Schubert song that does this is 'Der Doppelgänger'. Each of the first four verses (half-verses in Heine) begins with the same four-bar phrase; each time it is given a different continuation; and at the song's climax it dissolves (if

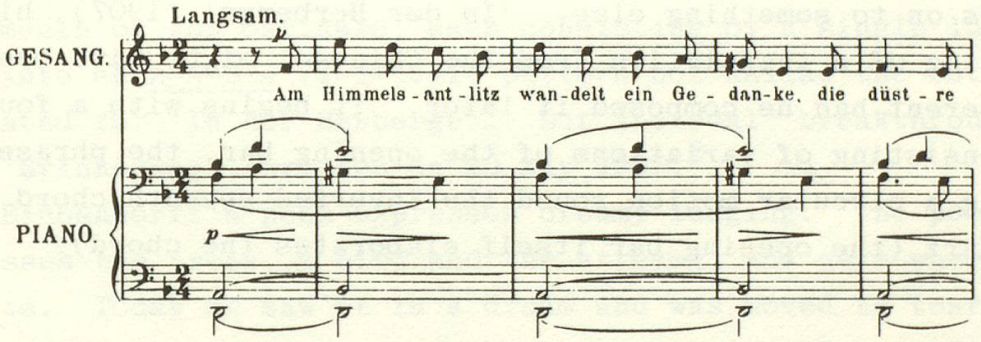
'dissolves' is the right word for a triple forte), to be restored in the coda. The vocal style is more declamatory than in either of the previous examples, and the piano provides continuity through its relentless 'one-in-a-bar'.

Vogel's example of a Schoeckian ostinato in Schumann, 'Mein Wagen rollet langsam', shows him confusing the meanings of the word: the piano's sequences do not constitute such an ostinato, and the voice still leads. Again, there is only one example in this composer, and that rather an esoteric one: part of his setting of Chamisso's ballad 'Die Löwenbraut'. In the middle section, comprising some forty-one bars, Schumann bases the entire accompaniment on a one-bar motif, which is repeated, sequenced, transposed, varied rhythmically and harmonically, and decorated with appogiaturas. The voice freely varies the piano part, and it is the overlapping of their phrases that pushes the music forward rather than the predominance of either one of them. In general, however, despite the subtlety with which Schumann integrates voice and piano, his textures are too melody-dominated to admit of the kind of structure in question. In Brahms, too, despite exceptions - the opening of 'Lerchengesang', for example - the vocal line usually dominates, and there is no room for an ostinato.

The composer who does use this technique, of course, is Wolf[1] - and to say so is immediately to recognise its symphonic nature, 'symphonic' not in the literal sense, though there is that implication ('I'm thinking, for example, of Beethoven's Fifth'), but in the sense we use when we refer to Wagner's operas as symphonic. It is not that the piano dominates the voice, any more than the orchestra does in Wagner; rather that there is a constant ebb and flow of interest between the two. Certainly the piano defines the phrase-lengths, but the content of the phrases, in terms of harmony, texture and so on, is determined just as in any other vocal music by the text - in other words by the voice. An example will make the point more clearly. This is the opening of Wolf's 'In der Frühe':

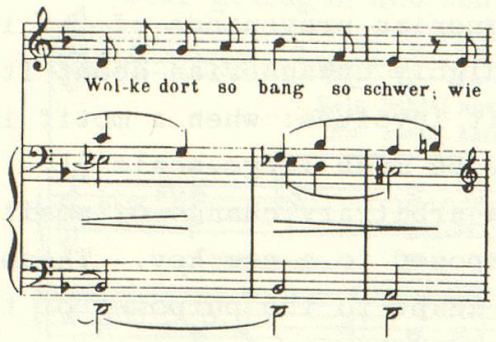
1) The only example I can find in Strauss - another 'melody-dominated' composer - is 'Sehnsucht', Op. 32, No. 2.

And this is its major-key transformation:

Wolf composed many settings of this type, and it is interesting that three of them - 'In der Frühe', 'Auf ein altes Bild' and 'Ständchen' - are among the songs listed by Corrodi as

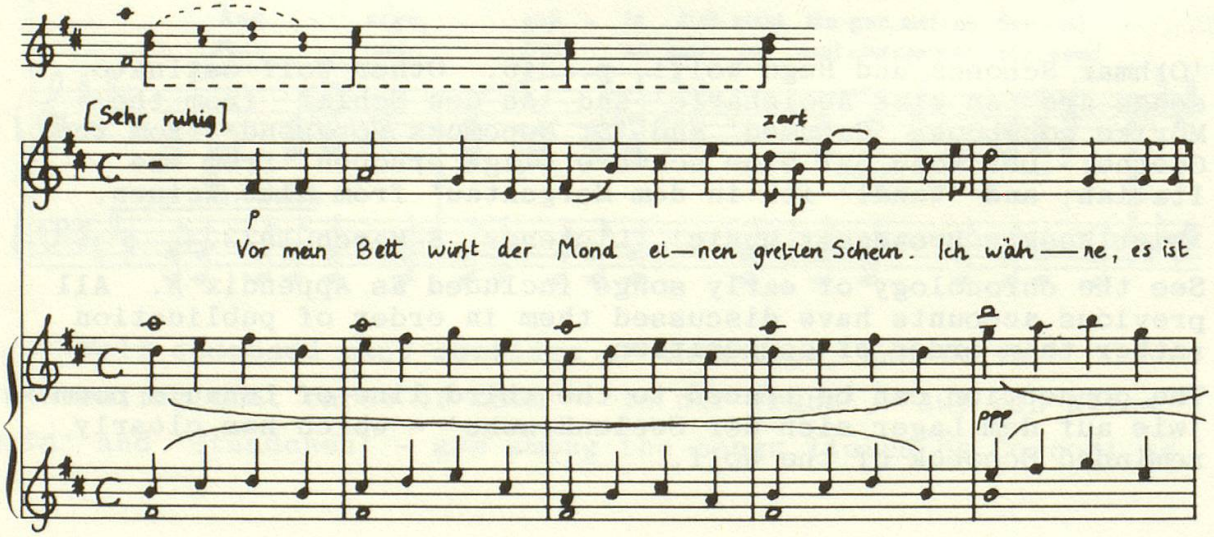
among Schoeck's favourites.[1] The Wagnerian provenance of the idea is therefore not in doubt. What is highly unWagnerian about it is the static concept of harmony which it involves: when a motif is repeated in this way there can hardly be much large-scale movement, except for the more or less arbitrary change of position which results when the motif is transposed to a new key. These remarks are not meant adversely. To adapt to the purposes of the miniature a harmonic style conceived in relation to music drama requires a mastery all its own, as Edmund Rubbra pointed out when, reviewing a Wolf recital, he wrote of the 'art of compression' demanded by a successful song.[2]

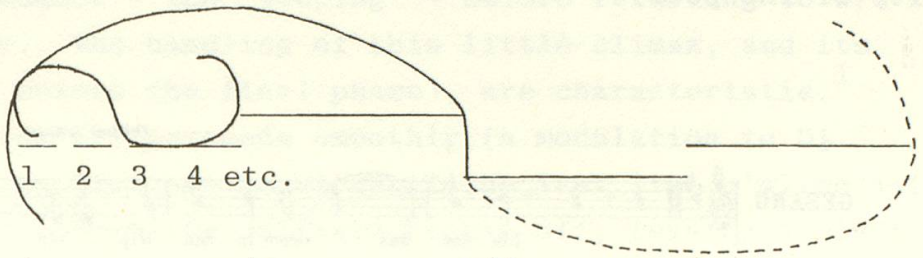
Schoeck did not hit on the ostinato all at once. His very earliest songs, such as 'Ruhetal' (1903), are as simple as the simplest Schumann or Brahms, with a melody-dominated texture and a form to match - in a sense the melody is the form. It was only in 1905, with the first of the songs influenced by Wolf, that the ostinato appeared.[3] 'Himmelstrauer' starts with repetitions of a two-bar motif obviously derived from 'In der Frühe':[4]

1) 'Othmar Schoeck und Hugo Wolf', p. 346. Other Wolf ostinato songs are 'An eine Aeolsharfe' and 'An den Schlaf' from the Mörike songbook; 'Ganymed' and 'St Nepomuks Vorabend' from the Goethe; 'Der Mond hat eine schwere Klag' erhoben' from the Italian; and 'Wandl' ich in dem Morgentau' from Alte Weisen.

2) 'Last Week's Broadcast Music', Listener, 8 March 1973.

3) See the chronology of early songs included as Appendix A. All previous accounts have discussed them in order of publication rather than order of composition.

4) The connection can be traced to the third line of Lenau's poem - 'wie auf dem Lager sich der Seelenkranke' - which has clearly reminded Schoeck of the Wolf.

The similarity extends beyond the music examples, for both composers proceed to transpose their openings into A minor. After that, however, Schoeck abandons his ostinato and builds the rest of his song out of fresh material. (Wolf, as we have seen, produces a beautiful new transformation.)

This is a simple enough use of the technique, and for some time Schoeck is not concerned to take it further. He seems unwilling to 'follow through' with the ostinato after its initial statements: he uses it to set the mood, then loses interest in it and passes on to something else. 'In der Herberge' (1907), his only setting of a translation from the Chinese, might have been very different had he composed it later. It begins with a four-bar phrase consisting of variations of the opening bar, the phrase describing a circular motion round the inverted seventh chord heard at the start (the opening bar itself elaborates the chord):

The second phrase transposes the first phrase a fourth higher. Now, if Schoeck had written the song at the time of the Elegie, he might have made the third phrase a further transposition still (perhaps on the flattened leading note) and the fourth a repetition of the first. The sixteen-bar period would thus have mirrored the circular motion of the phrase:



Instead of doing this, however, Schoeck introduces a new motif in bar 9, and the ostinato is not heard again.[1]

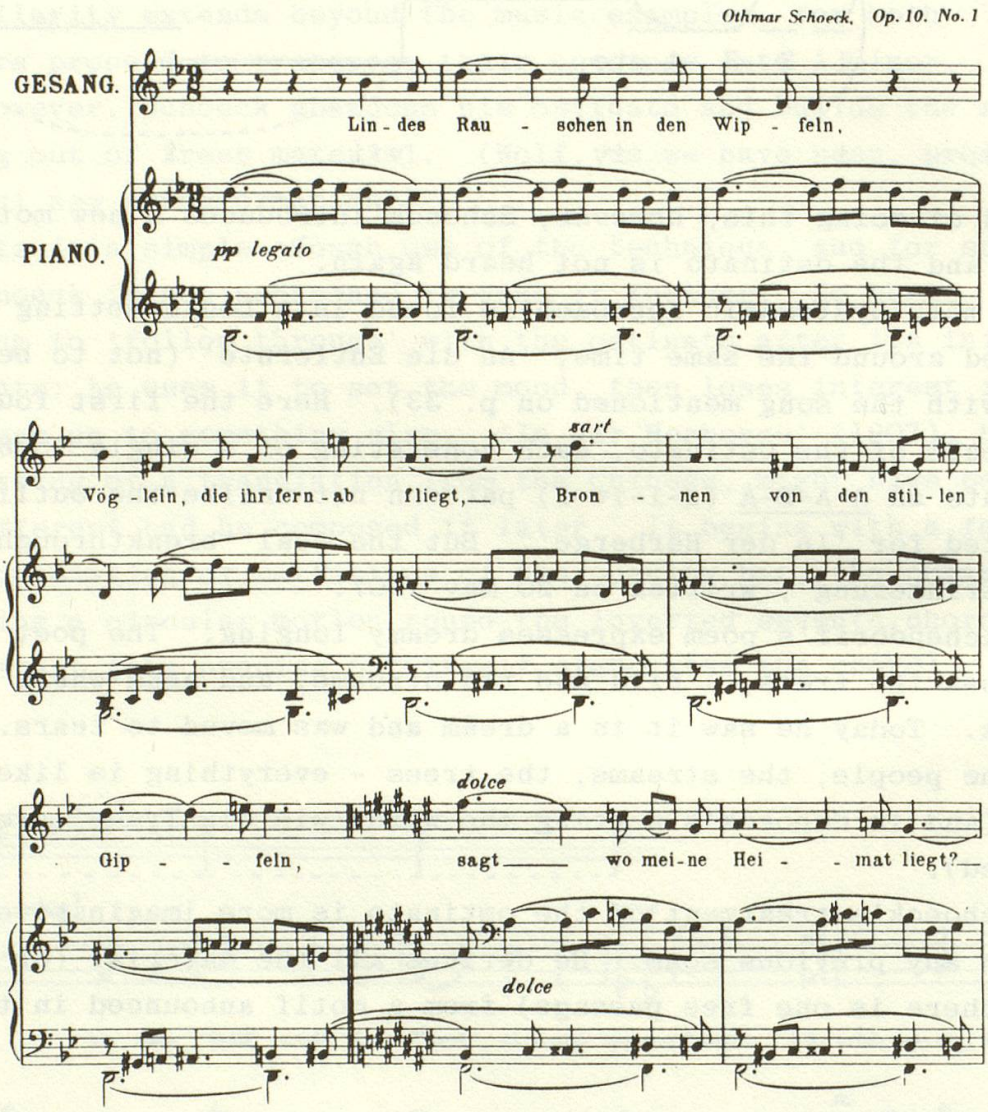
A more systematic approach is found in a Lenau setting composed around the same time, 'An die Entfernte' (not to be confused with the song mentioned on p. 33). Here the first four statements of the ostinato, each consisting of a single 15/8 bar, fall into an A-A-B-A (i-i-iv-i) pattern not unlike the outline suggested for 'In der Herberge'. But the real 'breakthrough' comes with 'Erinnerung', written on 20 May 1907.[2]

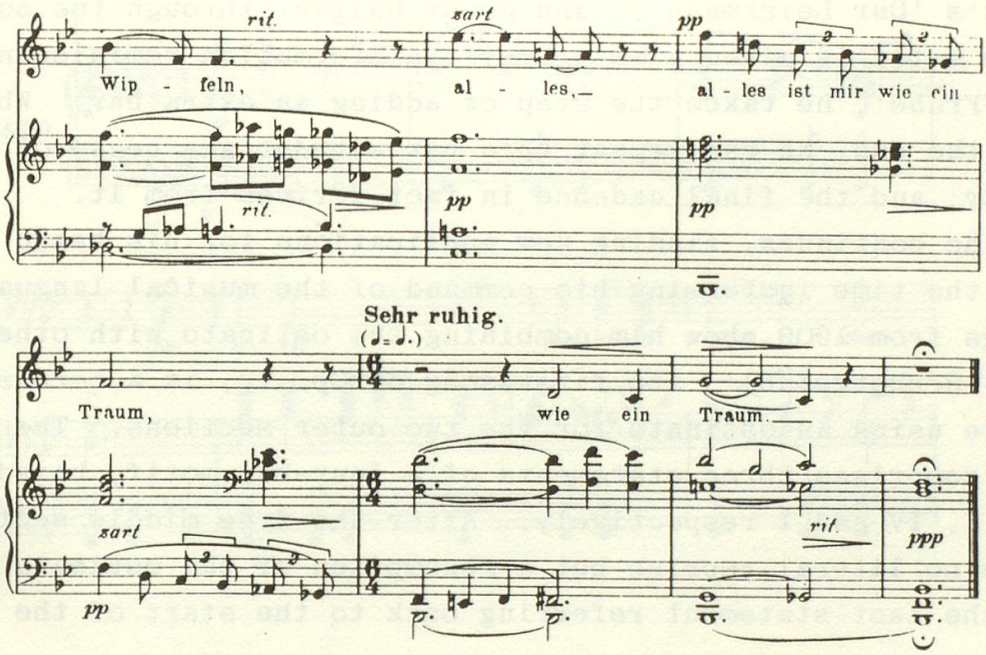
Eichendorff's poem expresses dreamy longing. The poet addresses the trees, a bird and the streams, and asks where his home is. Today he saw it in a dream and was moved to tears. But here the people, the streams, the trees - everything is like a dream (and in Schoeck's setting the word 'wie ein Traum' are repeated).

Schoeck's treatment of the ostinato is more imaginative here than in any previous song. He derives all the material (or almost all - there is one free passage) from a motif announced in the

1) For more about this song see below, p. 210n.

2) Brahms had set the same words, plus a verse which Schoeck omitted, under the title of 'Lied', Op. 3, No. 6. On Schoeck's setting see W pp. 150, 174, 186, 192.

opening bar. The motif itself is well integrated, with the quaver figure incorporating its own inversion and the inner part turning enharmonically back upon itself; but more important is the value of these details for the song as a whole. The quaver figure runs through almost every bar, and the chromatic inner part, by creating augmented fifths with the bass, prepares a series of mediant modulations whose desultory effect perfectly matches the dreamlike quality of the poem:

Note the transformation of the quaver figure in bar 5, with its tone compressed to a semitone and its falling third expanded to a fourth; later it is the rising third that is expanded, but to an octave, so that the other notes have to run down the scale in time for the next bar (11-12). After the line about weeping, the piano has a bar on its own, in which for the only time in the song the metre changes from 9/8 to 12/8. Schoeck uses this extra beat for a poignant dissonance - the 'weeping' - before returning to 9/8 for the last verse. The handling of this little climax, and its placing (just before the final phase), are characteristic.[1]

From now on all proceeds smoothly (a modulation to D♭ replacing the earlier one to D) until the last line, 'alles ist mir wie ein Traum'. Here the ostinato breaks off, leaving a blunt series of chords (this is the 'free passage' mentioned above):

1) Cf. 'Nachtlied' (1914), with its passionate piano outburst before the final verse; 'Mittag im September' from the Hesse-Lieder, at the words 'Wenn auf dies Bild ein Schatten fällt!'; and 'Die Sternseherin' from the Wandsbecker Liederbuch, at the words 'Es gibt was Bessers in der Welt'. The best example, however, occurs in the Elegie (see below pp. 146-7).

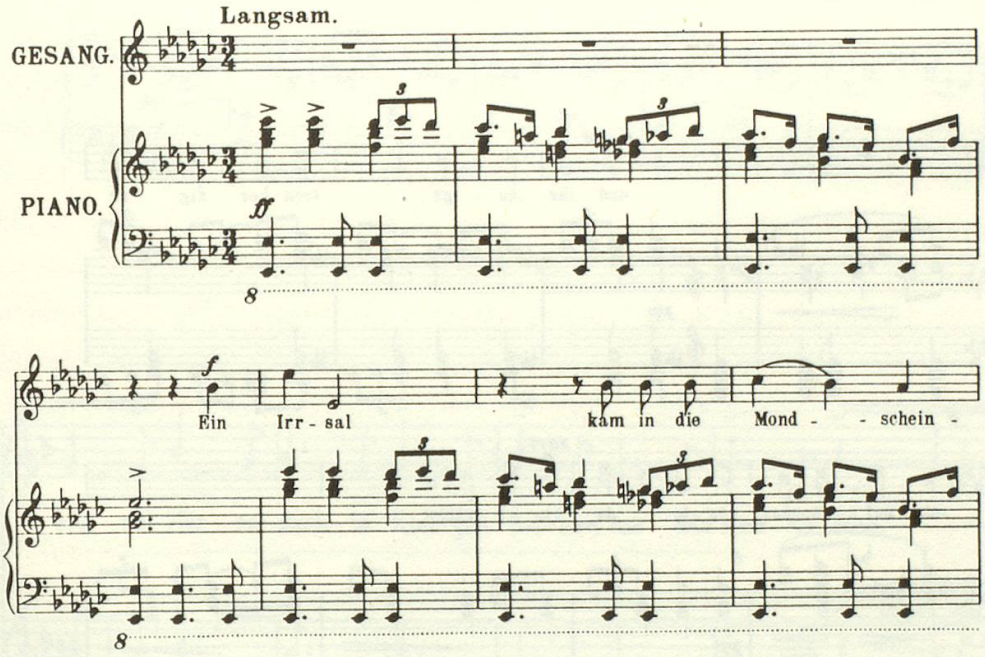
The result is a sudden loss of momentum which seems to destroy much of the atmosphere it is meant to enhance; and this, I think, is a weakness. The song ends with an augmentation of the opening motif.

The problem of 'getting out' of an ostinato, once it had done its work - one thinks of Tovey on the problem of ending a set of variations - was one that was to preoccupy Schoeck over the next few years. When he mastered it, it provided the means for some fine effects; but first he had to experiment. In 'Frühlingsblick', written two days after 'Erinnerung', he merely repeated the motif more and more loudly until the song died of its own longwindedness. 'Auf meines Kindes Tod', from Op. 20, is more successful. After a page and a half during which the music proceeds hesitantly by one-bar units, Schoeck introduces a new, chorale-like theme whose broader phrases give a sense of amplitude to the song as a whole.[1] 'Die Einsame' (1907) is another song that ends with an impression of breadth. Here Schoeck works with a two-bar motif (derived from Schubert's 'Der Leiermann'); and about halfway through the song, when the motif is given a major-key transformation reminiscent of 'In der Frühe', he takes the step of adding an extra bar. When he gets to the end, he can repeat this bar without any sense of prolixity; and the final cadence in fact derives from it.

So he continues, finding new applications for his basic idea and all the time increasing his command of the musical language. Two songs from 1909 show him combining the ostinato with other forms. 'Herbstgefühl', the first song of Op. 19, is a ternary structure using an ostinato for the two outer sections. The first section comprises three statements of a four-bar motif, based on chords I, IV and I respectively. After the free middle section there is no literal reprise but a resumption of the ostinato on vi and I, the last statement referring back to the start of the song.[2]

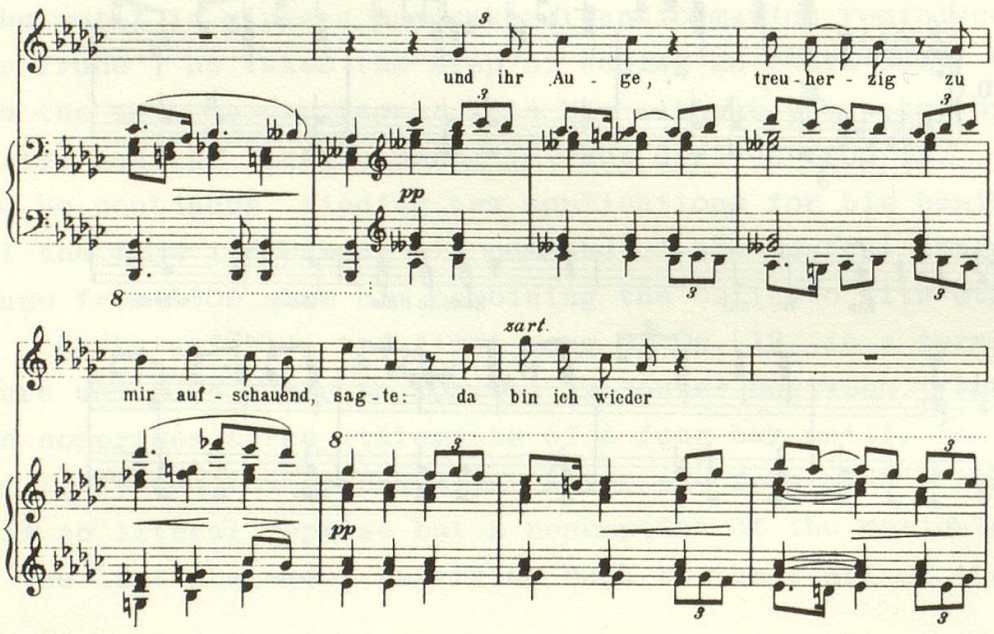
1) See the analysis in Rosenthal, 'Untersuchungen zum Klavierlied von Othmar Schoeck', pp. 19-22.

2) See W pp. 63-4, 105-6. 'Herbstgefühl' also demonstrates the difficulty of combining an ostinato with lyrical vocal writing. Forced to cope with a range of nearly two octaves, the singer can hardly avoid shouting. The same problem is present to a lesser extent in 'Peregrina II'.

The second of these 1909 pieces is one of Schoeck's loveliest songs: his setting of Mörike's third Peregrina poem, published as 'Peregrina II' (another Peregrina setting had been written the previous year). The ostinato here is as long as the one in 'Herbstgefühl' and similar in general style (it has also been compared to the funeral march in Brahms's German Requiem).[1] What makes it more interesting is Schoeck's ability to vary its expressive character, by reharmonising it, changing the texture and so on, so that it can sustain a six-page ballad - for the song, as well as being an ostinato, is also through-composed. The E♭ minor opening establishes the motif's main features: its descending 6/3s, its mixture of triplets and dotted rhythms, and its tonic pedal:

After two further statements, on v and i, the words 'und mit weinendem Blick' evoke a chromatic version, which moves to the

1) BBC programme notes.

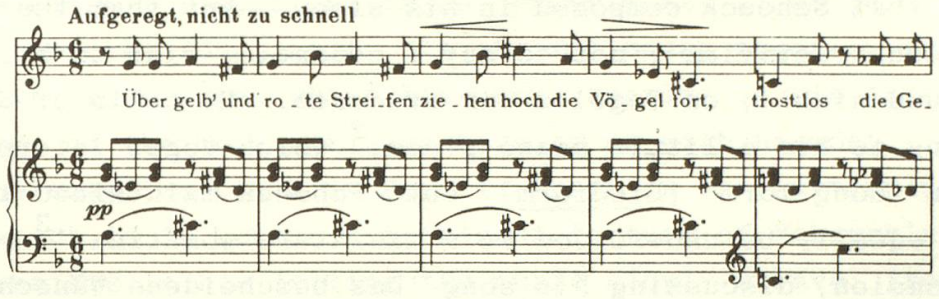
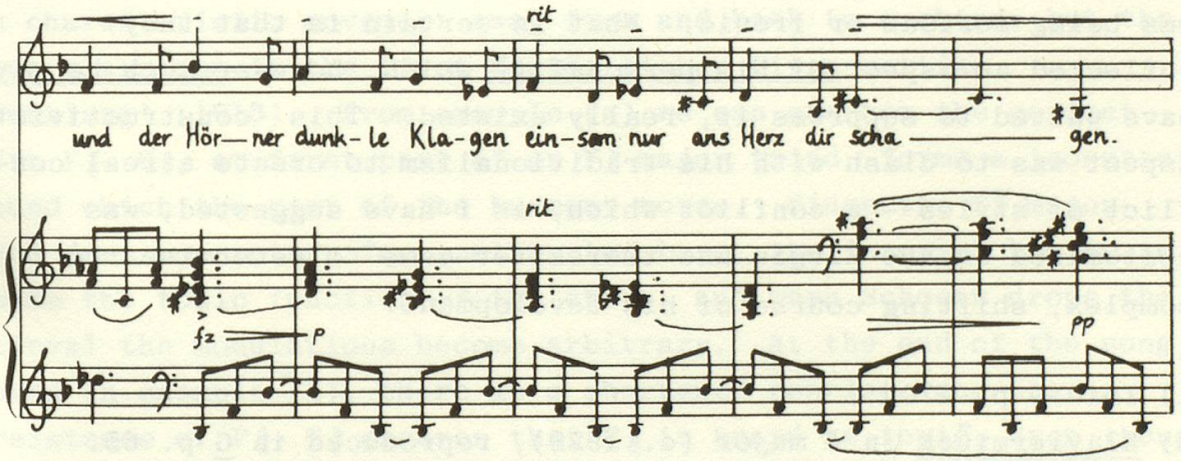
distant keys of D (♯VII) and C (♯VI) as the poet tells Peregrina, whom he thinks has been unfaithful, to go. Even when the motif as such is not present, Schoeck maintains its crotchet rhythm, so that its resumption in B♭ minor at the end of the first section seems like part of a continuous process. There are two lines of semi-recitative, and then the motif returns for a development section, passing through new keys (evidently to illustrate the poet's sense of loss) before pausing on V of G♭. This is the key of the final section, in which the poet imagines that the girl returns. There are three further statements of the motif, in which Schoeck omits the fourth bar - the opposite of his procedure in 'Die Einsame' - so that the music can flow more easily; and then he gives us the most beautiful transformation of all - a kind of Tristan version, with the melody presented canonically between the hands:



It is this version, repeated as postlude, that closes the song.

There are several ostinato numbers in later collections,

but they are not more beautiful than this; and little would be gained by describing every one. In general one could say that, as Schoeck became more experienced in this type of construction, he opted for shorter and simpler themes, particularly ones with quasi-cadential implications; and that, besides exploring the harmonic and textural possibilities of his material, he began to vary the rhythm. Vogel quotes an example of harmonic variation from 'Lockung', one of the Eichendorff-Lieder, without noting Schoeck's greater originality in reversing the stresses and transferring a note (the C♯) from one chord to another:[1]

(a)

(b)

Oversights of this kind make one suspect that Vogel slightly

1) W pp. 170-1.

overdoes the traditionalist angle in discussing Schoeck's use of the ostinato. Of course the technique stems directly from tradition, but there is also a constructivist aspect, a desire systematically to explore a given procedure, which is Schoeck's alone and which in terms of results constitutes one of his chief contributions to that tradition: he was not after all solely derivative. This suggestion would probably have been anathema to Schoeck. As Vogel remarks in connection with his 'Lockung' example, 'Schoeck distrusted every consciously constructional compositional technique. He once made the joke that if the object of musical constructivists [Schoenberg?] was to make a machine, none of the little wheels would go round.'[1] This is tantamount to suggesting that Schoeck composed in his sleep. But that there was indeed a 'constructivist', not to say a pedantic, side to his nature is undeniable, on Vogel's own evidence. He tells of Schoeck once playing to him a little piano piece,[2] which Vogel interpreted as being in 'song form' [Liedform]; but 'Schoeck maintained that [it] could equally be understood as a miniature sonatina.'[3] On another occasion, discussing his song 'Das bescheidene Wünschlein' (1910), Schoeck offered the following piece of explanation, almost worthy of Berg: 'The music . . . is really a monothematic sonata movement, with exposition, development and reprise.'[4]

It is impossible to tell from such remarks whether Schoeck was being serious or ironic. What is certain is that they reflected an aspect of his personality which, however much he may have wanted to suppress it, really existed. This 'constructivist' aspect was to clash with his traditionalism to create a real conflict of styles - a conflict which, as I have suggested, was epitomised in the Elegie and thereafter came to determine the complex, shifting course of his development.

1) Ibid., p. 170n.

2) Klavierstück in A major (c. 1928), reproduced in G p. 65.

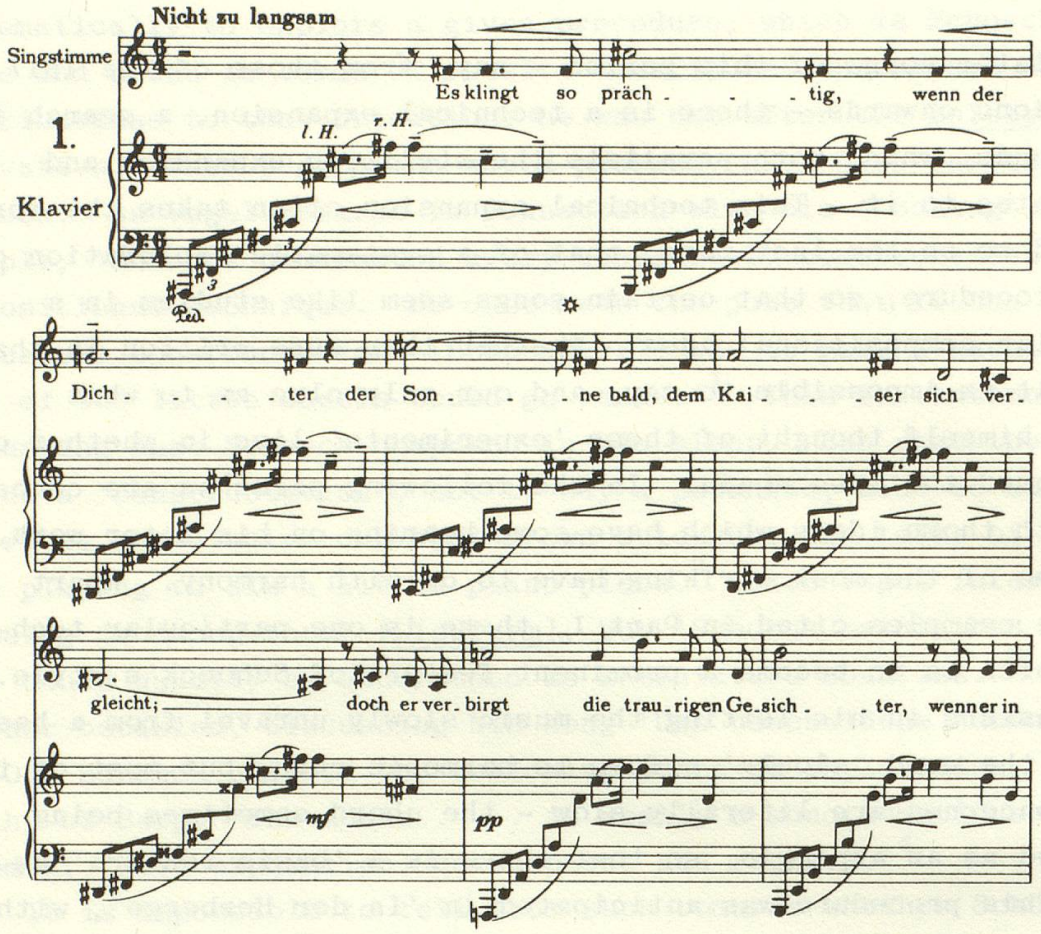
3) Ibid., p. 67.

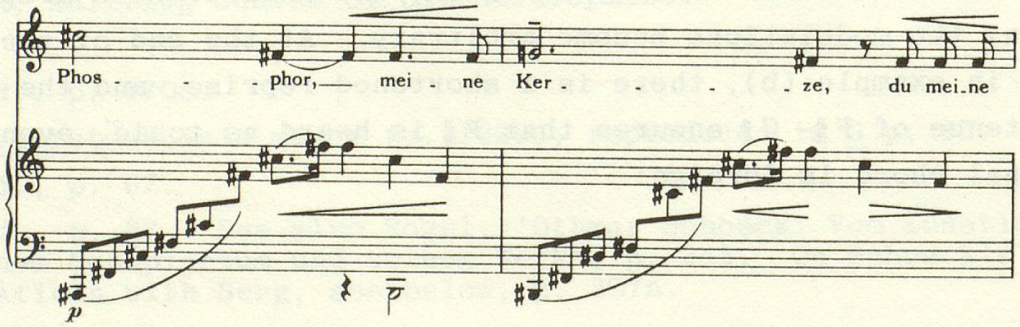
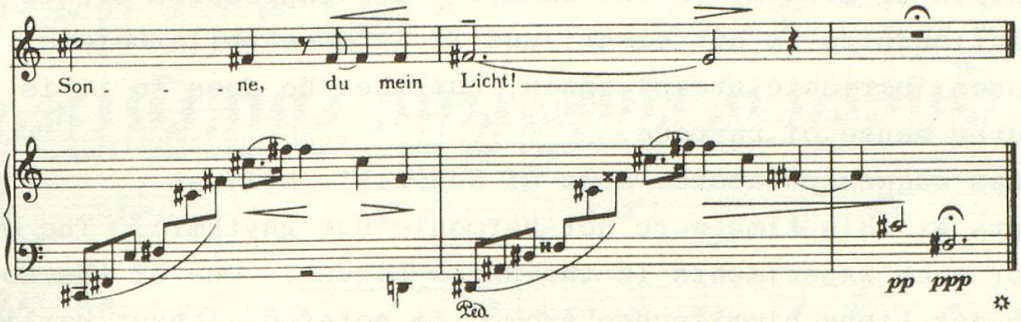
4) Ibid., p. 87. See also Vogel, 'Othmar Schoeck: Vom Künstler, seinem Schöpfertum und seinem Werk', p. 343. On Schoeck's relations with Berg, see below, p. 207n.

*

In the later songs of this period - say, from those of the 1917 collections onwards - there is a technical expansion, a search for new methods, which both parallels the stylistic expansion and contributes to it. This technical expansion often takes the form referred to on the last page, that of a systematic exploration of a given procedure, so that certain songs seem like studies in a particular compositional idea. Whether they were written in that spirit it is impossible to say, and our only clue as to what Schoeck himself thought of these 'experiments' lies in whether or not he used the idea again. In the following pages we are concerned only with those ideas which have some bearing on his later work.

Some of the most striking have to do with harmony. Apart from the examples cited in Part I, there is one particular technique which is to become a prominent feature of Schoeck's style. This consists in his letting the music slowly unravel from a basic chord - the word 'slowly' refers to harmonic rate, but most of the songs concerned are literally slow - the chord sometimes being expressed as an arpeggio, so that there is a 'basic texture' as well. This procedure was anticipated in 'In der Herberge', with its characteristic movement away from and back to a chord; but the locus classicus is the first Westöstlicher Divan setting, 'Nachklang' (1915). From example (a) we can see how the perfect fifth F♯- C♯, at first part of an F♯ major triad, forms a 'constant' around which the rest of the harmony moves. Since the F♯ major triad does not return for another ten bars, the interval begins to assume the tonic function of the chord; and when Schoeck drops the interval the modulations become arbitrary. At the end of the song, quoted in example (b), there is a shortened reprise, and the persistence of F♯- C♯ ensures that F♯ is heard as tonic, even though the final chord is foreign:

(a)

Nicht zu langsam
Singstimme
Es klingt so präch - - - tig, wenn der
1.
Klavier
l. H.
r. H.
Ped.
Dich - - - - ter der Son - - - ne bald, dem Kai - - - ser sich ver -
gleicht; doch er ver - birgt die trau - rigen Ge - sich - - ter, wenn er in
mf
pp

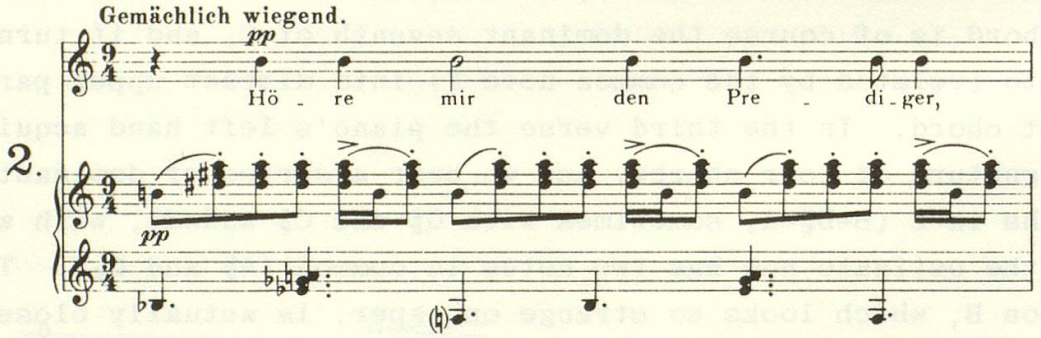
(b)

Phos - - - phor, mei - ne Ker - - - - ze, du mei - ne
p
p

The middle section of 'Ravenna', referred to on p. 33, is constructed similarly.

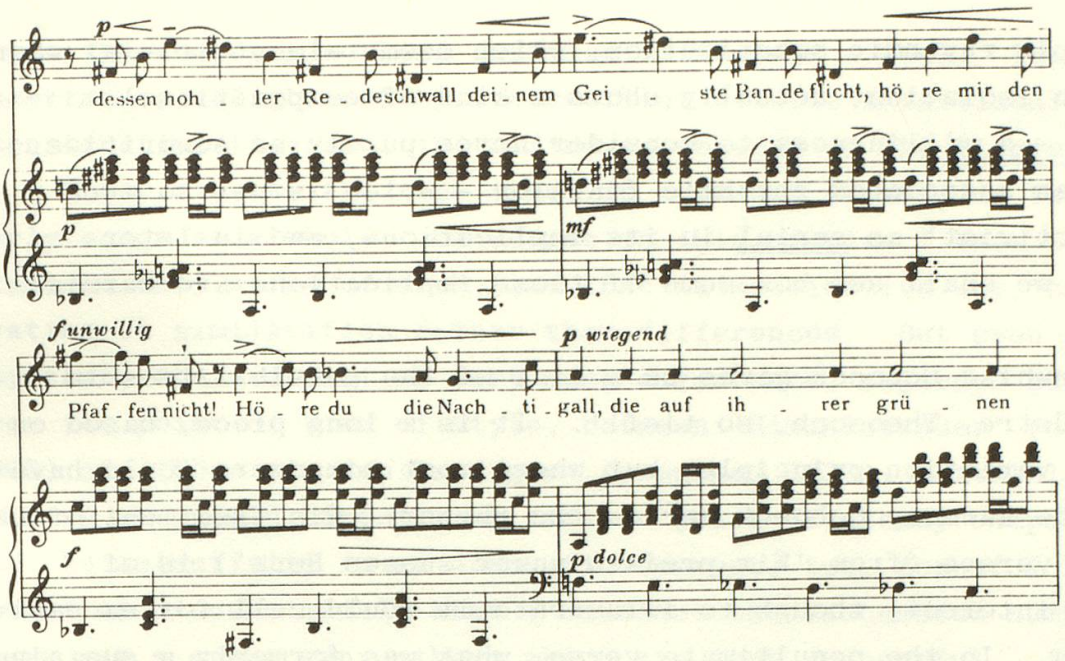
Another harmonic technique, impossible to illustrate without quoting the entire song, is found in 'An die Entfernte', also referred to on p. 33. There it was described as bitonal, but it would be truer to say that Schoeck sets up a number of harmonic areas, apparently discrete but actually related by common notes and intervals. The 'basic' area, established at the beginning, is a B♭ minor triad with added A♭, and these notes keep up an ostinato (in the conventional sense) throughout the song. For the second verse Schoeck does away with the key signature in the piano's left hand and writes in a chord of G-B-F, with the G doubled in the bass. This chord is of course the dominant seventh of C, and it turns the ostinato (related by the common note F) into distant upper partials of that chord. In the third verse the piano's left hand acquires a key signature of four sharps, and we hear a series of dominant sevenths in E (B-D♯-A, sometimes with G♯ and C♯ added), with which chord the ostinato now has two notes in common (A♭ and D♭). This chord on B, which looks so strange on paper, is actually closer to the original triad (as its Neapolitan relation) than was the seventh on G, so we are not surprised when it resolves enharmonically on a chord of A♭ minor. The way home is now reasonably direct, though even in the postlude the piano still reiterates the chords on G and B; and the latter note, expressed as C♭, is actually left hanging at the end (again, only on paper - the note

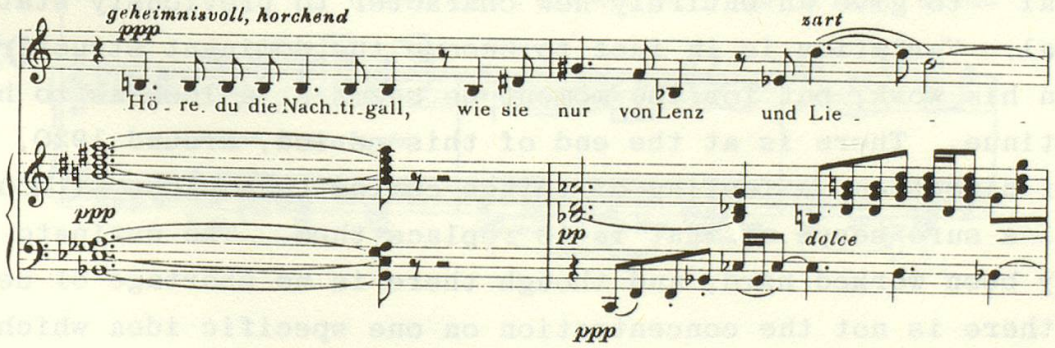
of resolution is already in the bass).[1] The expressive effect of these relationships is not clear, and it is some while before Schoeck uses 'harmonic areas' again; but when he does so it is with a much surer sense of purpose.

As was suggested above, some of Schoeck's boldest experiments at this time were not harmonic but rhythmic. The great source for such experiments is the Hafis-Lieder. One of the songs, 'Ich roch der Liebe himmlisches Arom', is notated without barlines, an idea which anticipates the recitative-like numbers of Lebendig begraben. Other songs explore the possibilities of cross-rhythm. 'Lieblich in der Rosenzeit' has the voice in a broad 9/4, against which the piano competes in 9/8 (the poem is a conceit about pedantry); halfway through, the voice goes into '18/8' while the piano tries to reassert 9/4. 'Ich habe mich dem Heil entschworen' combines 6/8 (sometimes interpreted as 3/4) with a concealed 2/4.

More complex is 'Höre mir den Prediger'. Here the cross-rhythms depict the preacher's 'empty torrent of words', an effect rendered tonally by the opposition of E minor and E♭ minor (B-D♯-F♯-A = C♭-E♭-G♭-A, ♭VIø in E♭ minor):



1) This dissonance is echoed at the end of 'Vesper', from the Elegie.

(When the nightingale is mentioned, the harmony resolves into a soothing F major, though the metrical contradictions persist.) Such polyrhythms, usually in the form of 3/4 versus 6/8, are to become an important element of Schoeck's style.

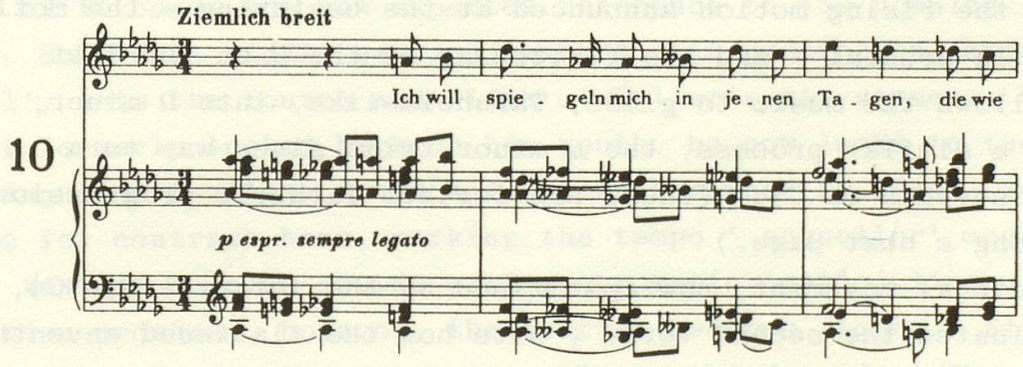
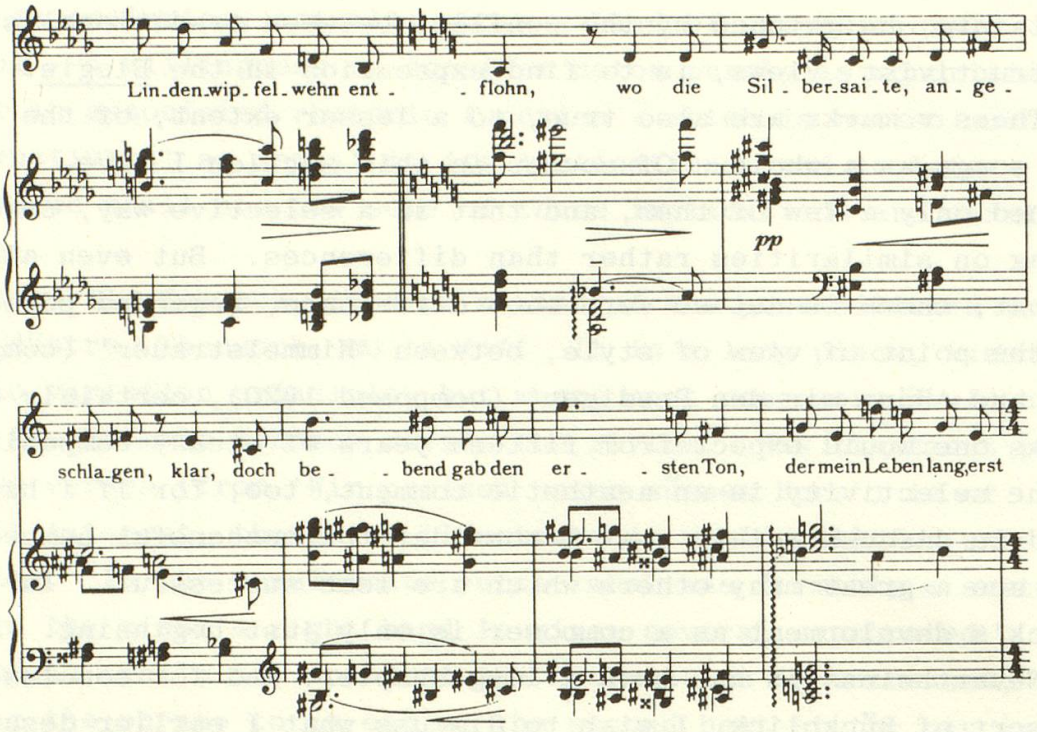
But there is another kind of rhythmic effect in this song which is going to be important. Just before the end, there is a compressed recapitulation of the opening in which the sonority originally expressed in cross-rhythms is replaced by a single chord:

This simple rhythmic substitution, which seems almost trivial when quoted in isolation, actually shows a kind of compositional thinking - a willingness to consider notes purely as sonorities, without an associated rhythmic function - which is not so much 'constructivist' as serial in its implications; and in later chapters we shall see how some of these implications are carried through.

Meanwhile Schoeck gives us a hint of the possibilities in 'Nicht düstre, Theosoph, so tief!'. It is a long piece, based on a strophic variation principle, but where most composers would have varied the harmony Schoeck varies the rhythm. His treatment of the last two verses (from 'Wir preisen unser süsses Herz') is of especial interest, though to illustrate it would call for excessive quotation. In the penultimate verse, what was formerly a sustained chord in the piano's right hand is given several syncopated repetitions, while the speed of the declamation is increased, bringing the phrase to an end on the second beat of the bar instead of on the fifth. Then the G minor seventh chord is transformed into a quaver motif, perhaps to illustrate the word 'Gasel', and the A major triad is decorated chromatically. Finally the rate of harmonic progression is accelerated (though the chords keep their original stresses), so that the verse as a whole takes up six and two-thirds instead of nine bars. In the last verse the harmony as well as the rhythm is changed, and the rhythmic and textural transformations at the words 'Wir schütteln unsre Bürden ab', with the chords stamped out like fanfares, have a violence anticipating Penthesilea.

Here, as in his later ostinato structures, Schoeck uses all the available kinds of variation - melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and textural - to give an entirely new character to previously stated material. Variation is in fact to become the dominant structural idea in his work, but for the moment he seems at a loss as to how to continue. There is at the end of this period, around 1920, a lack of direction, a feeling of things coming to a close without, as yet, a sure sense of what is to replace them. The ostinato has already been worked hard, and though there is no shortage of new ideas there is not the concentration on one specific idea which

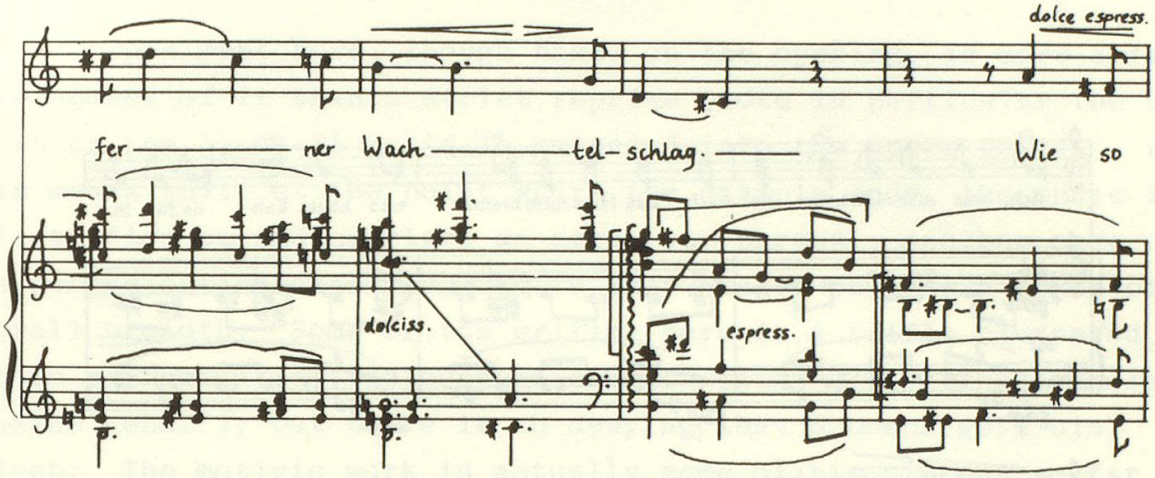
shows the composer working confidently towards a goal. This uncertainty, heightened by the conflict between traditionalist and 'constructivist' views, is to find expression in the Elegie.

These remarks are also true, to a lesser extent, of the early songs as a whole. Of course in this section I have examined only a few of them, and that in a selective way, concentrating on similarities rather than differences. But even allowing for that, there is not so very much difference, regarded purely from the point of view of style, between 'Himmelstrauer' (composed 1905) and 'Höre mir den Prediger' (composed 1920), certainly not as much as one would expect from fifteen years of steady composition. And the selectivity is an aesthetic comment, too, for if I have tended to discuss mainly what I consider the successful numbers, there are a great many others which are less successful. In 1920 Schoeck's development as a composer is only just beginning.

Nevertheless it has been a long chapter, and for conclusion, as a sort of Rückblick, I wish to discuss what I earlier described as 'easily Schoeck's longest and most ambitious song to date', namely 'Jugendgedenken'. The song is apt for this purpose, not only because its theme is reminiscence but because it presents in concentrated form many of the techniques previously discussed. The very opening, for instance, shows the harmony of gradual chordal change epitomised in 'Nachklang':

Indeed the idea of semitonal movement is central to the song. As the example shows, there is no ostinato but rather a chromatic two-bar phrase, which floats in and out of the texture like a refrain (the first return occurs three bars before the end of the quotation). To see the importance of semitonal movement, consider the progressions in bars 4-6. The 'striving' 6/4s in bar 4 continue the rising motion announced at the beginning - the motif A♭-A♮-B♭ is crucial - and the flattening of the D on the last quaver allows the music to glide, Tarnhelm-like, into D minor; then, by a similar process, the D minor triad gives way to a dominant seventh on C♯. (There are further Tarnhelm progressions on the song's next page.)

Semitonal movement, now epitomised by the interval B♭- C♭, also dominates the second verse (note how the flattened seventh chord on 'Sünde', one of Schoeck's favourite harmonies, turns the music towards F). The way in which the first four bars of the

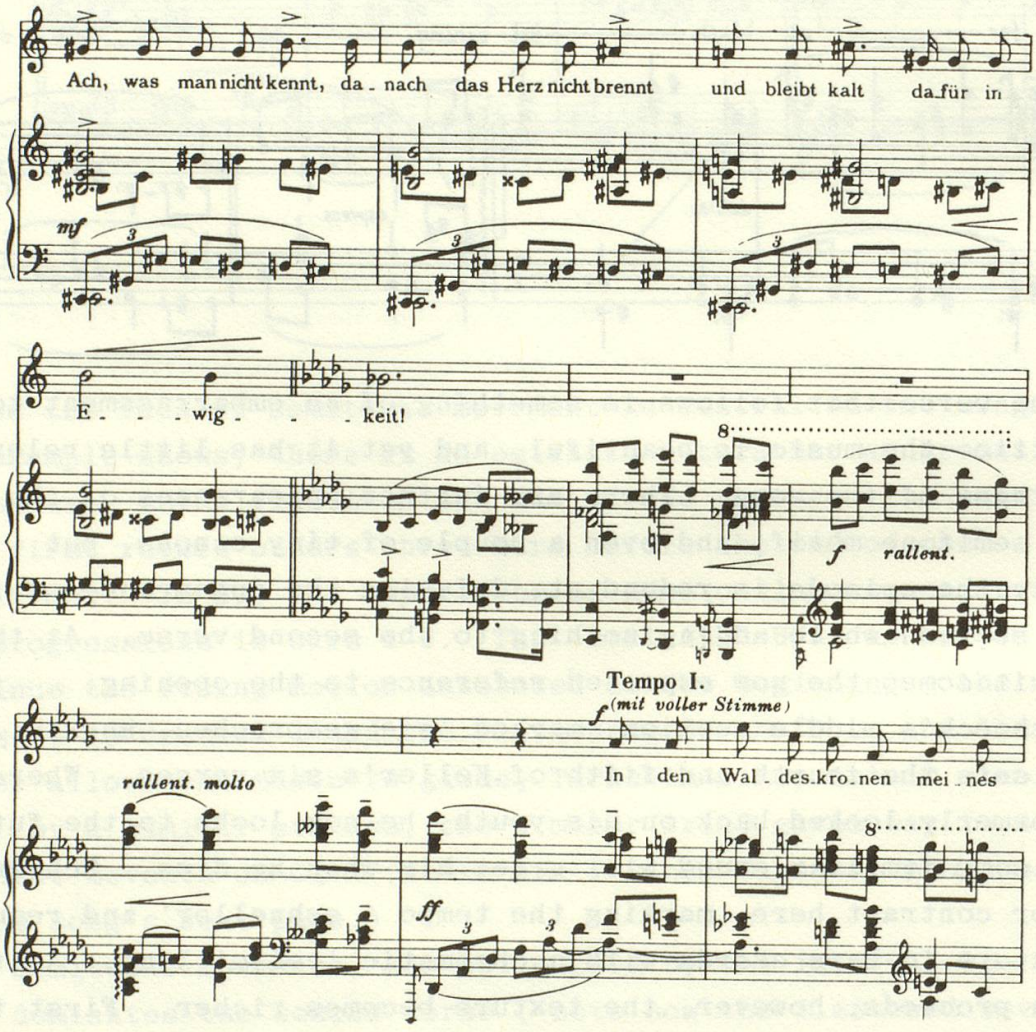
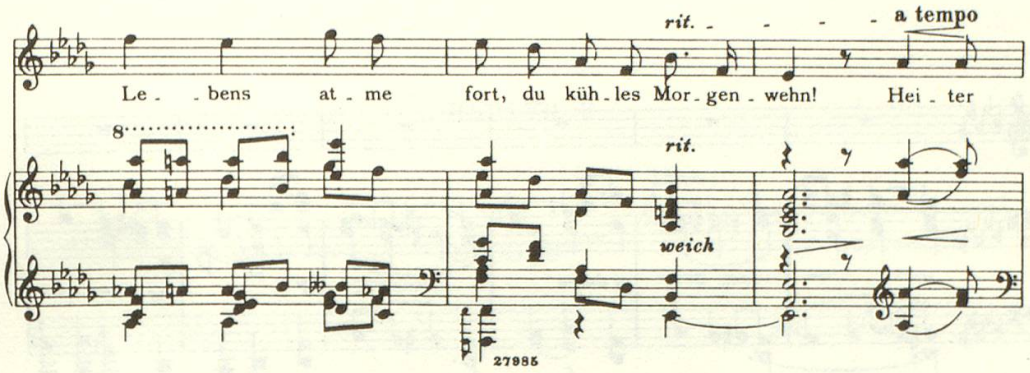
verse are repeated, a tone higher and with rhythmic modifications, recalls the ostinato. When we come round for the third repetition - the music has moved up sequentially to G - we get another return of the opening phrase, which Schoeck relates to the 'ostinato' by means of the rising semitone D-D♯; and now this motif goes through a development of its own, the dominant seventh in the first bar resolving up into a sequence. At the end of this section Schoeck introduces a typical curving phrase (derived from the music to the words 'mich in jenen Tagen', in bars 2-3), one which will have important consequences later:



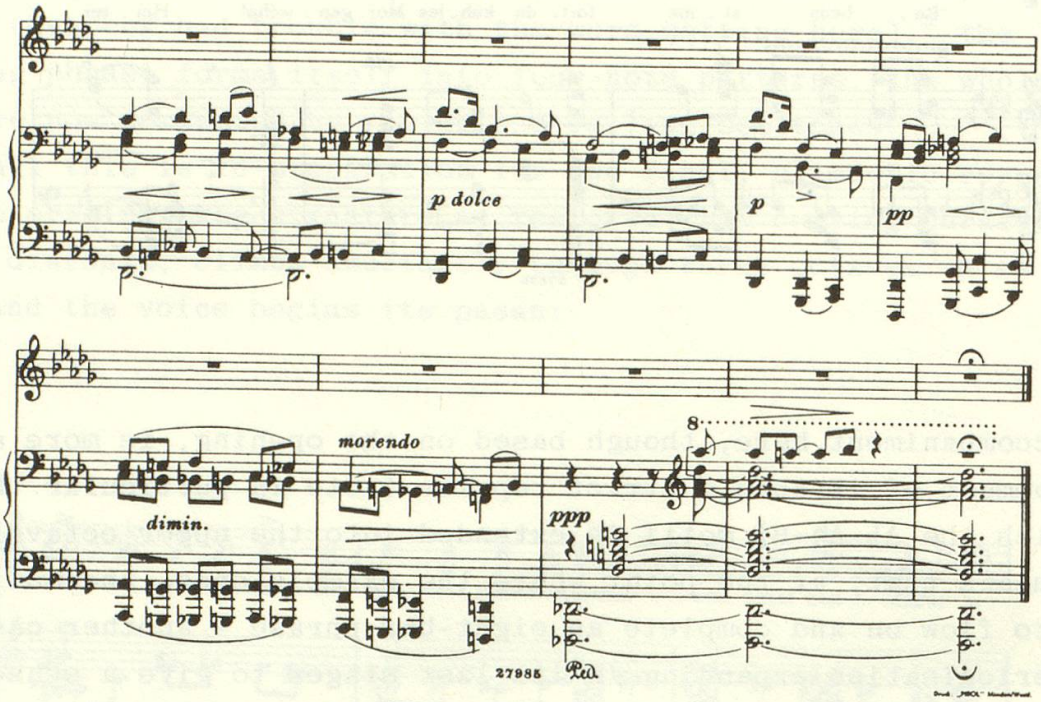
The verse that follows is something of an embarrassment to the critic: the music is beautiful, and yet it has little relevance to the rest of the song. There are further appearances of the rising semitone motif, and even a couple of tiny canons, but formally the episode is redundant, delaying the appearance of the middle section while adding nothing to the second verse. At the end of it comes the now expected reference to the opening.

Schoeck's middle section, marked 'wie gesprochen, angst-voll', sets the fourth and fifth of Keller's six verses. Where the poet formerly looked back on his youth, he now looks to the future, hoping some familiar sound will greet him when he dies. Schoeck aims for contrast here, marking the tempo ' schneller' and reducing the texture to bare chords with a chromatic 'cello' line. As the section proceeds, however, the texture becomes richer. First the cello line is doubled intermittently in thirds and sixths; then, at the words 'ob nicht die Jugendzeit', the line doing the doubling

begins to turn back on itself like a semitonal version of the curving phrase; and finally, during the second half of the fifth verse (Schoeck had trouble with the word-setting here),[1] the curving phrase forms itself into four-note patterns, the whole texture now dominated by rising and falling semitones.

All this is in preparation for the final, climactic verse. As the original key signature is restored, the curving phrase, once again diatonic, climbs exultantly through three octaves in as many bars and the voice begins its paean:

1) OS p. 54.

The accompaniment here, though based on the opening, is more a free development of it than a strict reprise (note in particular the way in which the A♭-A♮-B♭ motif is extended into the upper octave), and this means that, at the point where the example ends, the music is able to flow on and complete an eight-bar phrase - another case of the periodisation expanding in its last stages to give a sense of overall breadth. Some of the writing here is a trifle cluttered, not to say pedantic (the suspensions at '[lass mich] treu in deinem Scheine gehn!'); but there is no denying that Schoeck gets his effect. The motivic work is actually some of his closest so far.[1]

And then the postlude, Schoeck's lyrical leavetaking of Keller's poem, and, as I have suggested, of the other poems in Op. 24 also. As the voice repeats its final words - 'nur noch einmal [will ich rückwärts sehn]' - Schoeck is already quoting a phrase from the climax, not an important phrase but one we remember vaguely, like a half-forgotten memory from childhood (the rhythmic variations are interesting here). Then a new, elegiac version of the curving figure ushers in a last series of phrases, in which the A♭-A♮-B♭ motif appears, first hesitantly, then more assertively, and finally sounding distantly over a combination of D♭ major and dominant seventh on G (a combination arrived at by a process analogous to that of the opening):

1) Cf. A♭-A♮-B♭at the page turn; A♮-B♭-A♭ on the word 'immergrün'; A♭+A♮-B♭, and then A♮-A♭+B♭, on 'Stab umblühn'; A♭+B♭-B♭♭ in the following bar; A♭+B♭-A♮ at the first 'will ich'; and all sorts of permutations, including enharmonic ones, on the last page.

'Jugendgedenken', apart from being something of a technical resumé, is one of the finest of those songs in which Schoeck, writing at a time of distress (1914, in this case), metaphorically remembers the world of his childhood. 'Nur noch einmal', says the poet; but Schoeck is to look back again not just once but many times.

CHAPTER 2

ELEGIE

In the eleventh song of the Elegie,[1] 'Vesper', the poet, after telling us his beloved is dead, says he wishes he too lay buried, with the linden trees whispering above to remind him of the 'old, beautiful time'.[2] As we hear these last words - 'alten, schönen Zeit' - the orchestra quotes a melody from Venus (it appears in the music example on p. 40, just before the singer's last words).[3] This quotation is a remarkable piece of self-revelation on the composer's part, to understand which we must know the history of the work.

In 1918, according to Corrodi,[4] Schoeck fell in love with a pianist from Geneva. As a result he spent the summer of 1919 in that city, where he composed the first act of Venus. After

1) See OS pp. 103-4, 135-45; V pp. 103-9; G pp. 130-2; D pp. 152-5; S pp. 29-33; Corrodi, 'Othmar Schoecks "Elegie"', Schweizerische Monatshefte für Politik und Kultur (May, 1924); 'Othmar Schoeck's Songs', pp. 133-4; Peter Heyworth, 'New Light on a Late Romantic', Observer, 2 December 1962; Lévy, 'La Musique en Suisse et Othmar Schoeck', p. 366; Bayan Northcott, 'Radio', Music and Musicians 19 (1971); Schuh, '"Elegie"', in Von neuer Musik; Vogel, 'Othmar Schoeck: Ein Schweizer Eichendorff-Komponist'; Rudolf Wittelsbach, 'Wiederbegegnung mit der "Elegie"', SMZ 101 (1961). Miniature and vocal scores by Breitkopf (1924); recordings listed in Discography. A manuscript by Charles Cattin, 'Textwahl und -Zusammenstellung der Lenau-Gedichte in den Liederzyklen Elegie-Notturno-Nachhall als Othmar Schoecks künstlerische Tat' (Neuchâtel , 1973), was unfortunately not available for study.

2) See below, p. 434.

3) Schoeck used the melody again in the piano Consolation (1919), dedicated to the Genevan pianist.

4) OS pp. 99-103. See also K.H. David, 'Geheilte Liebesnot'; D p. 133ff.

returning to Zurich he started work on Act II, but owing to depression was unable to continue. In 1920 he went again to Geneva, and there he completed the opera. At this point the affair seems to have subsided, and Schoeck lapsed into another depression, composing nothing for almost a year.

At length, in May 1921, he came across an Eichendorff setting, 'Angedenken', which he had sketched six years earlier. He now revised it, no doubt with a rueful sense of the relevance that the text, about lost love, had since acquired. This song was to be the nucleus of a new work, completed more than a year later - an unusually long period for Schoeck, and one fraught with hesitations. Two further Eichendorff settings, 'Nachklang' and 'Vesper' (the latter with its Venus quotation), date from November, but the winter was spent orchestrating the opera for its premiere the following May. It was not until July 1922, when his habit of working at night had become ingrained, that Schoeck began to compose fluently again, and his first song of this new phase, a setting of Eichendorff's poem beginning 'Komm, Trost der Welt, du stille Nacht',[1] takes on in retrospect a cathartic quality, as if releasing all the songs to come. After writing this setting Schoeck turned to the poems of Lenau, as always selecting those which seemed to match his own experience. By the end of August he had set no fewer than seventeen; an eighteenth, 'Warnung und Wunsch', would be added later for contrast.[2] It was at this point, according to Corrodi, when most of the songs had been written, that Schoeck had the idea of making them into a cycle with chamber orchestra. By the autumn he had arranged them in sequence; the orchestration occupied the winter. As the work progressed, Schoeck gradually freed himself from his depression until he finally found himself, as he later expressed it, in the mood of the closing song.[3] Felix Loeffel, who premiered the work with an ensemble conducted by the composer on 19 March 1923, says

1) Called 'Der Einsiedler' in Eichendorff, 'Der Einsame' in Schoeck.

2) G p. 131.

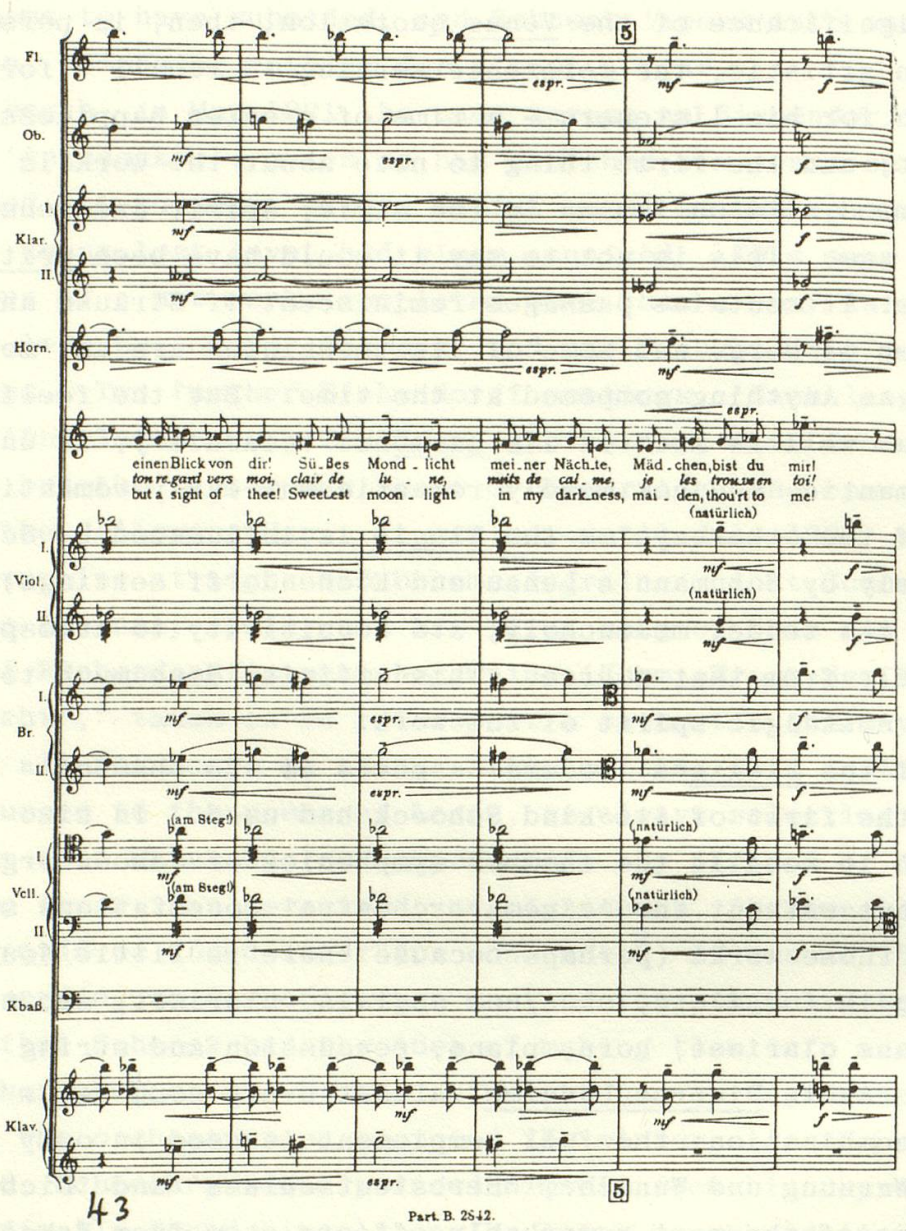
3) Ibid., p. 130.

that Schoeck originally intended to call it Nachhall,[1] a title which he was to remember thirty years later for his last cycle; but at Paul Schoeck's suggestion the title was changed to Elegie.[2]

The significance of the Venus quotation, then, is personal rather than artistic, the reference serving to recall - for Schoeck rather than for his listeners - a time of greater happiness than the present; and the first thing to note about the work is its nostalgic mood, its suffusion in the style, spirit and sensibility of another age. This is not to say it could have been written in another age: it contains passages reminiscent of Strauss and Mahler, even of Berg, and some of its techniques are as 'modern' in conception as anything composed at the time. But the feeling of the work, as well as much of its harmonic vocabulary, is unequivocally romantic, and not merely romantic but early romantic. More than any of the other cycles the Elegie is influenced by Schumann (particularly by Schumann's Lenau and Eichendorff settings): its Innigkeit, its tender melancholy, its sensitivity to atmosphere, stem directly from that source. This affinity does much to convey the nostalgic spirit of the work.

One of the Elegie's 'modern' aspects is its chamber ensemble, the first of its kind Schoeck had used. In size and composition it recalls the chamber symphonies of Schoenberg and Schreker, but without the 'cinema orchestra' connotations sometimes aroused by those works (perhaps because there is little doubling). The scoring is for flute, oboe/cor anglais, clarinet, second clarinet/bass clarinet, horn, piano, percussion and string septet (2-2-2-1). As in Pierrot Lunaire, almost every song calls for a different combination; the full complement is used in only three numbers ('Warnung und Wunsch', 'Herbstentschluss' and 'Dichterlos'). Some of the most remarkable effects stem from Schoeck's treatment of solo strings: an example is discussed later. But when a fuller texture is required he draws an extraordinary dark radiance from his forces, as in this passage from 'Das Mondlicht',

1) 'Erinnerungen an Othmar Schoeck' (Berne, 1963), p. 4.
2) G p. 130.

with its evocation of a river rushing through the landscape at night:

The Elegie was Schoeck's first Lenau cycle, and as such it complements the Eichendorff-Lieder as one of the twin peaks in his early song-writing (other points of contact were suggested on p. 41). We might even say that for Schoeck the poets themselves were complementary - or rather that the poems he chose reveal

complementary attitudes. The common theme is nature; but whereas Eichendorff sees it as a projection of God, Lenau sees it as a projection of himself (the 'pathetic fallacy'). The difference is epitomised in their treatment of the wandering theme. Eichendorff wanders partly out of restlessness, partly out of fascination for what he will meet on the way; but Lenau's wanderings are impelled by deep spiritual disorientation:

> Herz, du hast dir selber oft
> wehgetan, und hast es andern,
> weil du hast geliebt, gehofft;
> nun ist's aus, wir müssen wandern!
>
> ('Herbstentschluss')

Wandering in Lenau is no less a poetic convention than it is in Eichendorff, Müller and the rest, but because it is rooted in real psychological disorder such expressions achieve a poignancy lacking in the others.[1]

All his life Lenau[2] (Nikolaus Niembsch von Strehlenau: he took the last five letters as a pseudonym) suffered from feelings of homelessness. Born in 1802, he was divided from his mother as a child, living with his grandparents in a German-speaking province of Hungary. He abandoned his studies at Vienna for literature, and in 1831 travelled to Stuttgart to meet the Swabian circle of poets, which included Uhland and Justinus Kerner. A third member of the group, Gustav Schwab, became his patron; Lenau's love for Schwab's cousin, Lotte Gmelin, was commemorated in the Schilflieder, written in 1832 after their separation. Lenau travelled to Heidelberg to resume his studies, but, still unable to settle, then embarked on the most ambitious of all his wanderings. He went to America, hoping to make a fortune through land speculation; but the materialism of the country appalled him, and only the Ohio forests and the Niagara Falls inspired him to verse. Disillusioned, he returned to Vienna in 1833, only to find himself famous (his Gedichte had been published the previous year).

1) On the wandering theme see below, p. 238ff.

2) Sämtliche Werke und Briefe, ed. Eduard Castle (Leipzig, 1910-23). This was probably the edition used by Schoeck. For a more modern edition see Werke, ed. Egbert Hoehl (Hamburg, 1966).

Over the next decade Lenau wrote his four longest poems: Faust, Savonarola, Die Albigenser and Don Juan. This was the period of his love for Sophie Löwenthal, a married women whose refusal to leave her family caused him further unhappiness. In 1838, the year of his Neuere Gedichte, syphilis brought on a depression movingly expressed in the double sonnet 'Einsamkeit' (see below, p. 422). Complete mental breakdown followed in 1844, and on 15 October of that year - the day Nietzsche was born - he entered an asylum, where six years later he died.

With Heine, Lenau forms a transition between the early romanticism of Uhland and Eichendorff and the generation of Keller and Meyer. To dwell on the Weltschmerz may be to oversimplify, but it is indeed the short, pessimistic poems that have attracted composers, whether Schumann, Mendelssohn or Wolf, whose early Lenau settings include several poems later set by Schoeck (see Appendix B). The typical Lenau landscape, with its dark forests and lowering skies - one is reminded of Ruisdael - provides a wealth of forceful imagery, while the light, musical rhythms cry out for a melodic line. To Schoeck, Lenau seemed to combine Keller's richness of thought with Leuthold's melodiousness of language: 'Lenau plays his lines on the violin.' Sometimes his delight in sound could be a little too indulgent, narcissistic even: 'I think of him as a sister to Kleist and Byron.'[1]

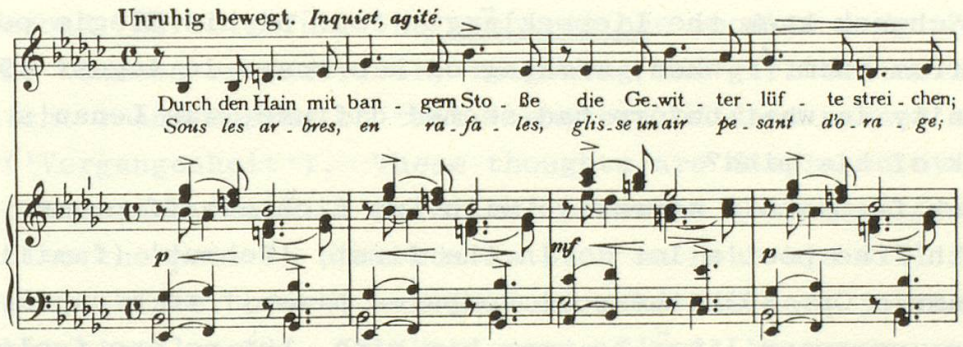
But apart from the question of musicality, what made Schoeck return again and again to Lenau's verse (sixty settings exist) was surely the characteristic subject-matter - the expression of human unhappiness - and this he was perhaps less likely to confess to others. Whereas settings of Eichendorff and Keller are scattered throughout his work, his Lenau settings are largely confined to three periods, each coinciding with an episode of personal crisis. The Elegie sublimates an unhappy love affair; the Notturno reflects his growing sense of isolation: and Nachhall is an attempt to confront approaching death. All these works have an intensity which leaves no doubt as

1) G pp. 152, 166. See also pp. 24, 29, 84, 99-100, 150, 157, 160, 180. Schoeck's relation to Lenau is discussed in W pp. 105-8.

to their significance for the composer; and when, as in the first two cases, this intensity combines with great musical distinction, a major work results. For this reason Lenau has a particular importance among Schoeck's poets.

'In the Elegie,' Schoeck remarked, 'the curve of spiritual agitation always follows the events of nature.'[1] How the pathetic fallacy works itself out in music can be seen in the seventh song of the cycle, 'Waldlied'. Lenau's poem (from the Waldlieder, 1843)[2] begins by describing a storm:

Durch den Hain mit bangem Stosse
die Gewitterlüfte streichen;
Tropfen sinken, schwere, grosse,
auf die Blätter dieser Eichen.

The poet compares the movement of the trees to anxious heartbeats, the raindrops to his beloved's tears - hot, bitter tears which he will see until he dies. Schoeck's music for this is a turbulent, surging motif in lower strings and a swaying, plunging motif in violins and wind, the two motifs locked together in syncopation:

A third motif, involving string tremolandi, appears in bar 9. All these ideas have literal connotations in the poem: the surging

1) G p. 131.

2) Another of the Waldlieder became song 18 of the Elegie; a third appears in the Notturno.

motif, we might say, 'is' the storm, the swaying motif the wind, the tremolandi the rain. But they are also conventional musical symbols for a state of distress - cf. the 'flight' music in Die Walküre - so that the climax, when it comes, is both the climax of the storm and the climax of the lover's anguish.

As we have seen, the Elegie is not a setting of a pre-existing cycle; the poems were selected and arranged by Schoeck himself. The text thus has an interest independent of the music and requires consideration in its own right. Schoeck again: 'The Elegie - in contrast to, for instance, Schumann's [Eichendorff] Liederkreis - has an action throughout; it is really a novella.'[1] The form of this action, with its characteristic 'downward spiral', recalls the Schubert cycles, and as interior drama the work is clearly related to Dichterliebe. An even closer analogy, in terms of events portrayed, could be drawn with Schumann's Heine Liederkreis. But there is another source which must have contributed to the Elegie's design, though I have never seen the debt acknowledged: Lenau's Liebesklänge, a cycle of sixteen poems written between 1834 and 1840. In it Lenau recalls his affair with Sophie Löwenthal, describes their decision to part, and ends by reaffirming his love for her. Schoeck knew the Liebesklänge: four of his Elegie poems are taken from them.[2] When, working on his songs in August 1922, he saw a unity in what before had seemed diffuse, was Lenau's cycle at the back of his mind?

Schoeck frames his narrative with two Eichendorff poems dealing with 'the poet's lot'. In the first, 'Wehmut' (familiar from Schumann's Op. 39), the poet compares himself to a captive nightingale: everyone likes to hear him sing, but no one feels the

1) G pp. 130-1.

2) 'Liebesfrühling', 'Frage nicht', 'An den Wind' and 'Kommen und Scheiden'. A fifth poem, 'An die Entfernte', had been set in Op. 24, and a sixth, 'Der schwere Abend', was to be used in the Notturno. In Schoeck's arrangement 'Liebesfrühling', 'Frage nicht' and 'Kommen und Scheiden', all of which are presented as reminiscences in Lenau, take their place in the chronological scheme, i.e. as statements made during the affair rather than after it.

underlying pain. Then, with the first Lenau poem, the narrative begins. Against a background of spring the poet describes his love for a woman whose vitality leaves him exhilarated but afraid ('Liebesfrühling'). In the woods, with only a distant bell to disturb their solitude, he tells her of his love ('Stille Sicherheit'), as he does again in 'Frage nicht'. In 'Warnung und Wunsch' he begs her to live more moderately: the rose withers and returns, but will she be here next year?

Gradually the images of spring give way to darker ones. A storm reminds the poet of his beloved's tears ('Waldlied'); in 'Waldgang' both feel the inevitability of separation. Finally he leaves for a foreign land ('An den Wind'); when she waves goodbye it is as if the last dream of youth has disappeared ('Kommen und Scheiden'). In the next poem, 'Vesper, time has passed, and the poet is back in the valley where he used to meet the girl; bells are tolling her death. Spring is gone, and he prepares to face the autumn ('Herbstklage).

Three songs establish the new mood. In the first of two called 'Herbstgefühl', the wanderer's path is obliterated by leaves; in 'Nachklang' he hears birds and imagines it is spring; and in the second 'Herbstgefühl' he compares the wood to a dying man. Then he wanders by the river, imagining the girl beside him ('Das Mondlicht') and musing on that 'cemetery of days passed away', the past ('Vergangenheit'). These thoughts are displaced by images of violence and death. 'Waldlied' presents another storm-scene. This time the poet is unmoved: in such an hour his will finds new strength. Winter nears, and he must make his last journey alone ('Herbstentschluss'). In 'Verlorenes Glück' he comes upon the place where he used to meet the girl. Everything in nature has changed; only his memories survive, and these he has folded away into his heart, fending off death - 'but, coveting all, does not the predator finally break even the last cask?'

Suddenly everything clears: it is spring again. The poet hears a huntsman singing in the woods, and tears come to his eyes as he realises it is a song the girl once taught him ('Angedenken', the first song to be written). For the next song, 'Welke Rose', we are to imagine that many years have passed. Leafing through a

book, the poet finds a withered rose; but he has forgotten who gave it to him, and he knows he will soon be dead. The final two poems, both by Eichendorff, are the work's epilogue. 'Dichterlos' complements 'Wehmut' in lamenting the poet's fate - to rejoice and suffer for others, but to die unrecognised; and 'Der Einsame' is the invocation to night.

Such is the 'action' of the Elegie, and most writers give a synopsis similar to the above without comment. What is surprising is that no one has pointed out how well integrated, in the circumstances, the action is, for it does have exceptional coherence for something that was apparently an afterthought. Not only does it have 'a beginning, a middle and an end', but it progresses evenly throughout the twenty-four poems as if they had been designed as a unity from the start. Within its Eichendorff frame the narrative divides into three phases, defined by the changing seasons of the year. The first phase, extending from 'Liebesfrühling' to 'Herbstklage', is set in spring. Already in 'Liebesfrühling' the flowering of love is linked with the flowering of the land:

> Ich sah den Lenz einmal,
> erwacht im schönsten Tal.
> Ich sah der Liebe Licht
> im schönsten Angesicht.

The first hint that things may be wrong comes in 'Frage nicht', where the poet shrinks from asking himself how much he loves the girl, fearing there may come a time when she ceases to love him [beim Tode deiner Liebe - which is also the first mention of death]. In 'Warnung und Wunsch' he contrasts the exuberance of spring, which is self-renewing, with her exuberant mortality. After their separation he compares her again to spring ('Kommen und Scheiden'), and her death prompts a verbal reminiscence of 'Liebesfrühling' - 'Holder Lenz, du bist dahin!' ('Herbstklage').

In the poems of the second, autumnal phase (from 'Herbstgefühl' to 'Verlorenes Glück') death itself becomes the dominating theme, first in a general, metaphorical sense (the two songs called 'Herbstgefühl', 'Das Mondlicht'm 'Vergangenheit'), then more specifically ('Herbstentschluss'). Just as spring ended with the girl's death, the poet thinks, so autumn seems about to end with his own ('Verlorenes Glück'). But spring returns - the third

phase - and his wounds begin to heal; and in 'Welke Rose' all he feels is indifference. The poems of the 'epilogue' continue and resolve the theme of death.

The progression from spring to death recalls the Op. 20 collection, and perhaps the Elegie originated as an elaboration of the same scheme. But then the narrative intervened, and Schoeck found himself with a more complex plan. The action broke down into two halves, the first dealing with the poet and the girl in spring, the second with the solitary poet in autumn; the first would end with her death, the second would show his response to it before culminating in his own; but since his response must include recovery, there had to be a second spring, a catharsis before the final transfiguration. A series of climaxes emerged: the first 'Waldlied', with its violent depiction of storm; 'Herbstklage', an obvious halfway-point; the second 'Waldlied', leading to the emotional crisis of 'Herbstentschluss' and 'Verlorenes Glück'; and 'Der Einsame', a long-drawn-out, lyrical finale.

This was the foundation for the musical structure; but when we look at the poems in detail we find a deeper unity. Many of them have a woodland setting, and words like 'Wald', 'Hain' and their compounds occur repeatedly throughout. Other recurring images are the bells in 'Stille Sicherheit' and 'Vesper', the birds in 'Nachklang' and the second 'Waldlied', and the wind, which snatches away the girl's farewell ('An den Wind') and returns in the autumnal songs as a sort of leitmotif of death. These connections are simple enough, and merely help to huild up the general atmosphere. Others, however, seem to exist expressly for the purpose of establishing a formal link. 'Stille Sicherheit', for example, concludes:

> Sagen darf ich dir, wir sind allein,
> dass mein Herz ist ewig, ewig dein!

The following poem, 'Frage nicht', takes up the thought:

> Wie sehr ich dein, soll ich dir sagen?

(The model here was probably Die schöne Müllerin - 'War es also gemeint', etc.) Similarly, a phrase in 'An den Wind' -

> [Ich] sah, wie sie den Mund erregt,
> und wie gewinket ihre Hand

- is echoed in 'Kommen und Scheiden':

Und als Lebwohl sie winkte mit der Hand . . .

This last is an example of a third kind of connection, whereby objects or incidents repeatedly referred to assume the status of themes - things which in Lenau connote nothing beyond their immediate context, but in Schoeck become so many hints, allusions, anticipations and reminiscences. There are several references to a rose, for example, each with a different significance. In 'Warnung und Wunsch' it is a symbol of self-renewing spring ('Welkt die Rose, kehrt sie wieder'), as opposed to the mortality of the girl; when she is dead the phrase 'welkt die Rose' comes to seem prophetic, as if anticipating her loss. Thereafter the rose is associated with death: in the second 'Herbstgefühl', roses are Lenau's image for the flush on the cheeks of a dying man, and in 'Vergangenheit' the clouds make wreaths out of roses for the dying day. Finally the discovery of a dead rose tells the poet that his love is a thing of the past ('Welke Rose'). Or take the adjective 'welk' itself. In 'Warnung und Wunsch', as we have seen, the phrase 'welkt die Rose' foreshadows the girl's death; in 'Herbstklage', after the event, the word seems to spread decay throughout the whole world:

Sterbeseufzer der Natur
schauern durch die welken Haine.
. . . . . .
Treulich bringt ein jedes Jahr
welkes Laub und welkes Hoffen.

Themes like this naturally ramify by association. In 'Waldgang' the lovers are walking together; both are oppressed by the idea of separation, yet they know they will not forget one another. This incident is recalled when the poet walks by the river, wishing they could be looking at the moon together ('Das Mondlicht'). And in 'Verlorenes Glück' he remembers an occasion when she walked with him in the moonlight, promising to love him for ever. This poem is in fact a recapitulation or synthesis of verbal themes, for in addition to those mentioned it contains references to 'that summer night' (a form of wording which postulates a situation already discussed - perhaps in 'Stille Sicherheit'), the 'raw wind' which has made off with the poet's happiness (cf. 'An den Wind'), and the girl's death. The themes

are underlined below:

Die Bäume rauschen hier noch immer,
doch sind's dieselben Blätter nimmer,
wie einst in jener Sommernacht.
Wohin, du rauhes Erdenwetter,
hast du die damals grünen Blätter,
wohin hast du mein Glück gebracht?

Sie schritt mit mir durch diese Bäume,
ihr gleicht kein Bild beglückter Träume,
so schön und doch so treu und klar;
das Mondlicht ruht' auf ihren Wangen,
und ihre süssen Worte klangen:
'Dich werd' ich lieben immerdar'.

Je tiefer mit den Räuberkrallen
der Tod in's Leben mir gefallen,
je tiefer schloss in's Herz ich ein
den Schatz der Lieb', dem Tode wehrend;
doch bricht der Räuber, allbegehrend,
zuletzt nicht auch den letzten Schrein?

This is the work's crisis and turning-point; after it, the atmosphere lightens and all the themes except death disappear.

The Elegie having originated as it did, connections of this third, 'thematic' kind must be largely adventitious. But the arrangement of the poems was a deliberate act; and it is to Schoeck's credit that the themes, such as they are, develop without hindrance or contradiction, and that the poem in which they meet is also the emotional climax of the work (the concept of 'Nachruf' in Op. 20 carried onto a higher plane). Adding all this to the solid narrative structure outlined above, we see an unusual talent at work: what might almost be called a 'genius for arrangement'.

*

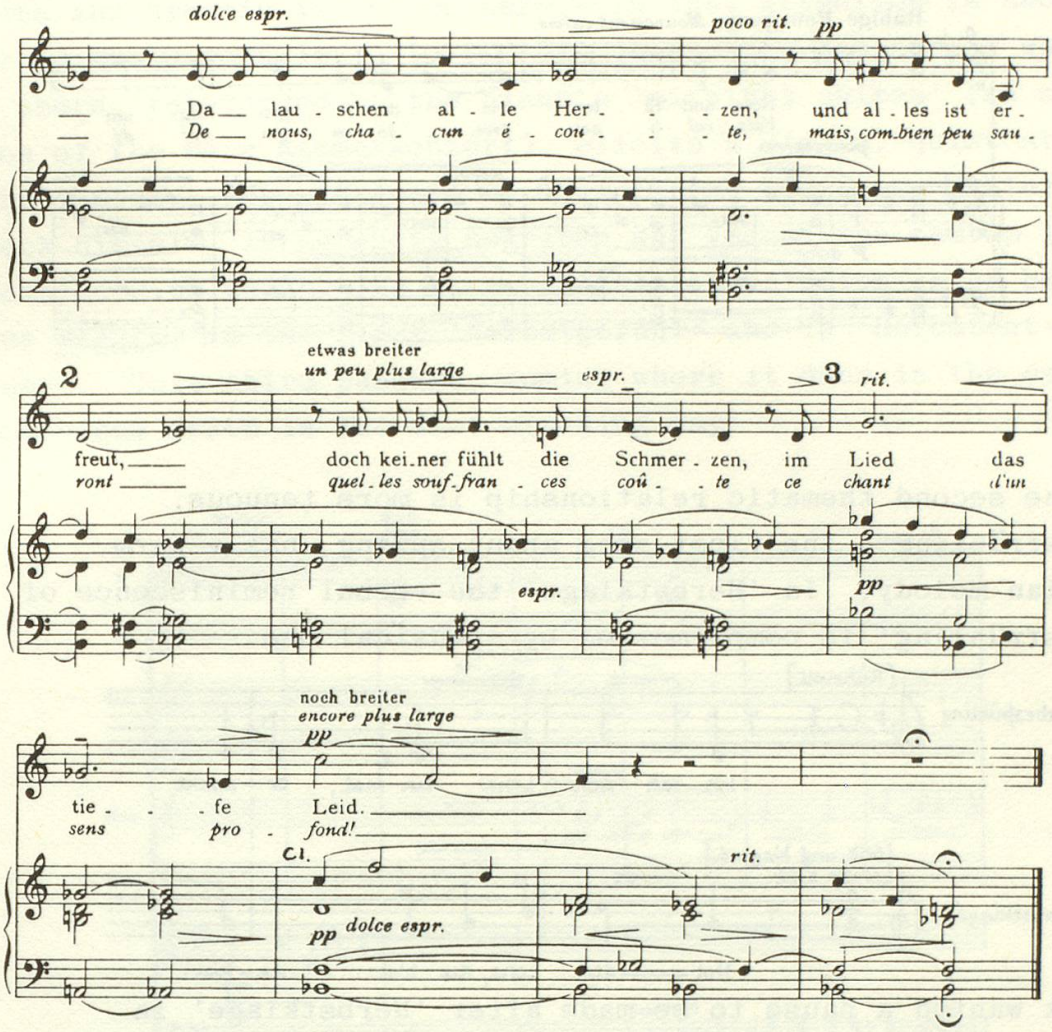
When we turn to the music, by contrast, we may be surprised by the lack of external unifying devices until we realise that the history of the work largely precludes them. Since most of the songs were written before the idea of a cycle came to mind, it is hard to see how thematic relationships between the songs could exist, unless superimposed afterwards in the form of quotations; and with three exceptions even these are lacking. The Elegie, like Die Winterreise, is a work whose unity seems to derive almost entirely from features of style.

In songs with a woodland setting, for example, it was simple convention for Schoeck, as it would have been for Schubert, to illustrate the rustling of the trees in the music. When there is a series of such songs, an accumulation of similar textures results (cf. the brook in Die schöne Müllerin).[1] The same applies to the music associated with the wind, the birds and the bell. Again, Ernst Mohr, in an article on Schoeck's cycles, has noted the prevalence of ostinato structures in the Elegie - 'ostinato' being used in the conventional sense here - and has observed that over a third of the songs are built on pedal points (in fact no fewer than seventeen use pedals or ostinati in some form). Mohr suggests that, although both devices occur in other works by Schoeck, 'the concentration on certain constructional principles and the continual return of the same formal characteristics create the typical sound-world [Klangatmosphäre] of the Elegie.'[2]

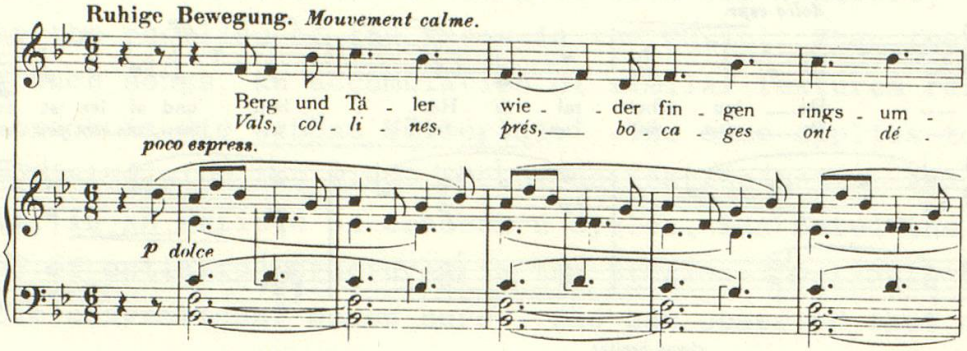
These principles and characteristics are discussed below; but first we must consider the thematic relationships between the songs. The first is as much tonal as thematic. The opening song, 'Wehmut', vacillates between B minor and B♭ minor to express the emotional ambiguity of the poem. The very first chord is a B minor triad, expressed enharmonically as a minor Neapolitan of B♭; and from then on the music hovers between the two keys until the last verse. Here, on the words 'Da lauschen alle Herzen, / und alles ist erfreut', the music seems about to settle in B minor. But then - 'doch keiner fühlt die Schmerzen, / im Lied das tiefe Leid' - there is a sudden change of direction (the shift of texture on 'Lied', with high strings replacing low wind, is striking) and the music cadences in B♭. Note the warm new theme on the clarinet:[3]

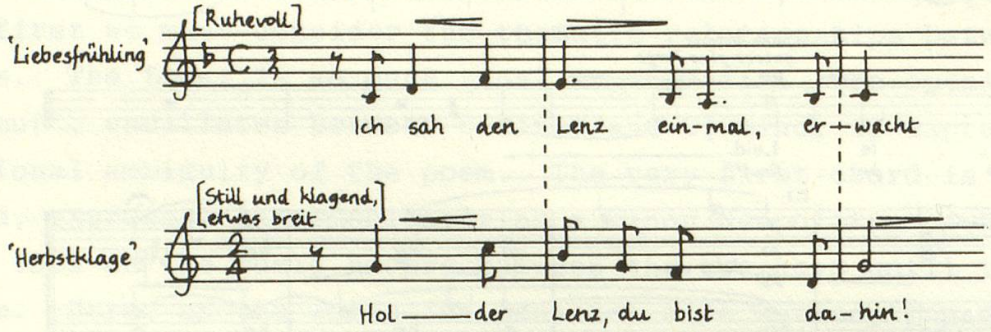
1) See the relevant passages in the first 'Waldlied', 'Waldgang', 'Vesper', 'Herbstklage', the first 'Herbstgefühl', 'Verlorenes Glück', 'Angedenken' and 'Der Einsame'.

2) 'Das Problem der Form in Schoecks Liederzyklen', SMZ 83 (1943), p. 86.

3) The reversal of expected harmonies is interesting: one would normally associate the major key with pleasure and the minor with pain. Here Schoeck seems to hug his sorrow to him like a warm major triad.

This passage is recalled in 'Angedenken' (also in B♭), where the clarinet has a melody identical to the one just quoted, though now presented as a kind of Ranz des vaches. The return to spring is thus accompanied by a musical quotation:[1]

1) Since 'Angedenken' was written before 'Wehmut', it must be the 'Wehmut' passage that is the quotation, implanted just to prepare this recapitulatory effect.



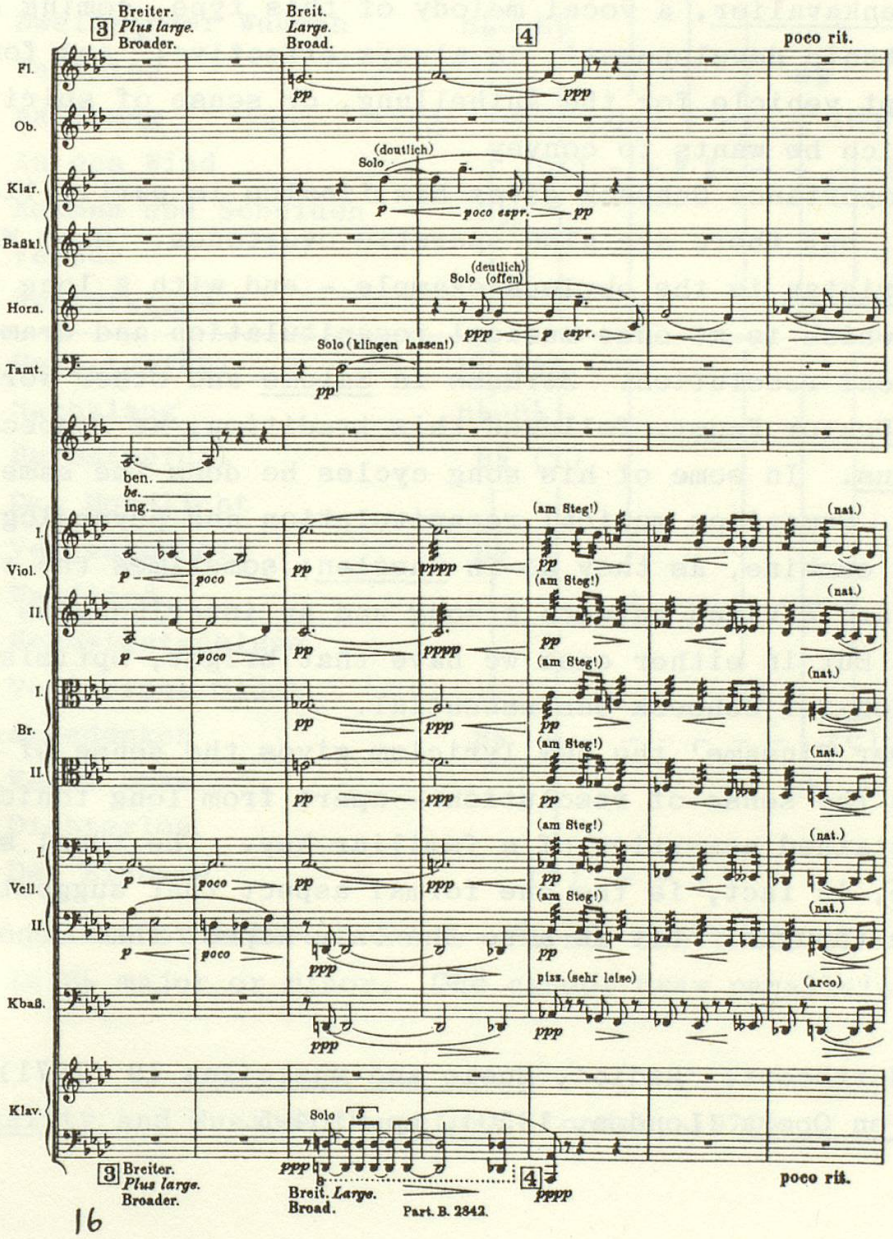
The second thematic relationship is more tenuous. 'Liebesfrühling', the first song about spring, has a warm, Brahmsian melody. In 'Herbstklage' the verbal reminiscence of 'Liebesfrühling' is complemented by a musical one:

Schoeck wanted a pause to be made after 'Herbstklage' in performance.[1]

The third relationship links the last two songs of the cycle, 'Dichterlos' and 'Der Einsame' - indeed they are literally linked, by a short orchestral interlude (apparently an afterthought).[2] This interlude is interesting in a number of ways, not least for its beautiful chromatic harmony. It is perhaps the most remarkable of those little 'climaxes of expression' which Schoeck likes to insert before the final phase of a song or larger work. The word 'inserts' is appropriate because these episodes always have the character of interpolations: it is in their nature that

1) G p. 131.

2) See V p. 109.

they should differ from anything else in the work - a change of texture and dynamic is common here - so that attention is secured prior to the peroration. In the Elegie example the hushed whole-tone chord, reinforced by the piano's 'midnight chimes' (an anticipation of the Berg Kammerkonzert), elicits a single, quiet stroke on the tamtam. Now, in music of this period (Strauss; Mahler; Schoeck himself, in Lebendig begraben and Venus) the tamtam is associated with death. We have had this association twice before in the Elegie: in the first 'Herbstgefühl' and in 'Herbstentschluss'. This third passage, coming where it does in the cycle, acknowledges death in the most striking way:



After this climax a dialogue of clarinet and horn takes us momentarily into the world of Wandersprüche; then the strings slide away in tenths, and a chorale-like theme on the woodwind leads to the thematic link - a three-bar cadential figure which is used in 'Der Einsame' as a refrain.

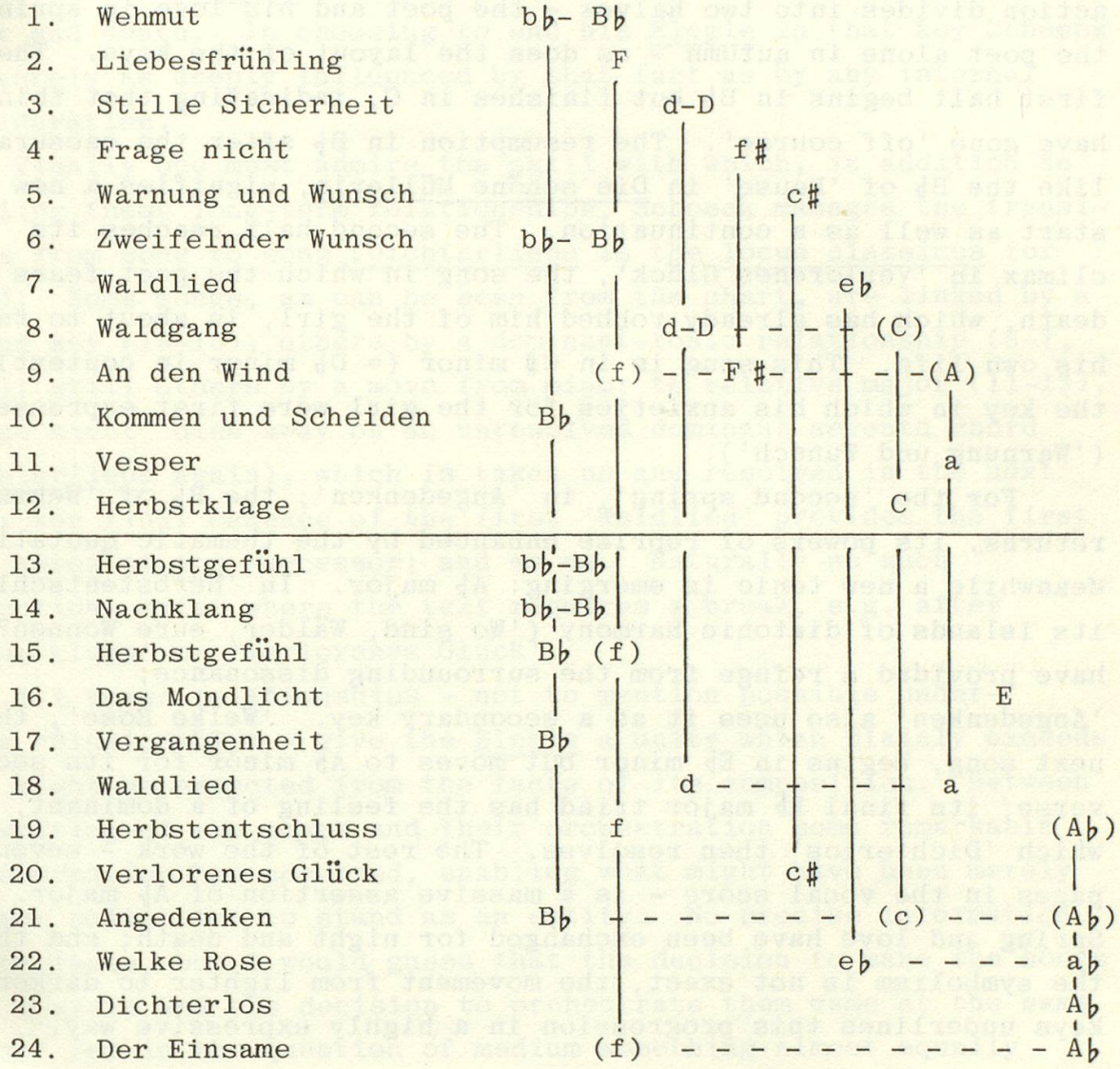
This final number - 'a Brahmsian cradle song in genre, but . . . [conveying] a far more complex feeling than mere repose'[1] - is the only one in the cycle where melody is given its head. Until now we have had declamation and arioso, but nothing very lyrical; now the voice comes into its own, with a strong rhythm, regular phrases and a straightforward singing line (see the example on p. 18). As Egon Wellesz has pointed out apropos of the final duet in Der Rosenkavalier, a vocal melody of this type, coming after so much 'symphonic development', is always effective;[2] and for Schoeck it is an apt vehicle for the Aufhellung, or sense of spiritual uplift, which he wants to convey.

The importance Schoeck gives his finales is partly lieder convention, but there are also operatic overtones. Many Wagner operas - Tristan is the obvious example - end with a long solo monologue which is at once musical recapitulation and dramatic/psychological resolution. Strauss in Salome and other works, and Busoni in Doktor Faust, followed this tradition, as Schoeck himself did in Venus. In some of his song cycles he does the same thing in miniature. Sometimes musical recapitulation and psychological resolution combine, as they do in Gaselen; sometimes the two functions are divided between a song and an interlude, as in the Notturno. But in either case we have that bright, optimistic ending which for Schoeck was essential.

In 'Der Einsame' the new lyricism gives the sense of uplift; what gives the sense of resolution - apart from long tonic pedals - is the sustained assertion of a familiar key. The tonal scheme of the Elegie, in fact, is the one formal aspect that suggests deliberate thought. (It is also the only aspect that Schoeck could

1) Bayan Northcott, 'Radio', Music and Musicians 19 (1971), p. 54.
2) Essays on Opera (London, 1950), pp. 104-5.

have influenced after the composition. Though he could hardly have rewritten his songs after deciding to make them into a cycle, he could certainly have transposed them.) In the following chart, modelled on those of Graham George,[1] keys are arranged across the page in order of first significant appearance, with important subsidiary keys in parentheses (thus 'An den Wind' begins and ends in F♯ major but includes passages in A major and F minor):



Three points of interest here. First, one third of the songs are in B♭ major or minor. One cannot draw parallels between

1) See Tonality and Musical Structure (London, 1970).

all the poems concerned; what matters is that the key is felt as a norm, or tonic, to which the work periodically returns. Secondly, every key (with one exception) is heard at least twice, its appearances being divided between the two halves of the cycle. Thirdly, from the nineteenth song onwards there is an increasing presence of A♭ major, in which key the cycle ends.

All this is consistent with the pattern of the text. The action divides into two halves - the poet and his love in spring, the poet alone in autumn - as does the layout of the keys. The first half begins in B♭ but finishes in C, indicating that things have gone 'off course'. The resumption in B♭ after the caesura, like the B♭ of 'Pause' in Die schöne Müllerin, signifies a new start as well as a continuation. The second half reaches its climax in 'Verlorenes Glück', the song in which the poet fears that death, which has already robbed him of the girl, is about to take his own life. This song is in C♯ minor (= D♭ minor in context), the key in which his anxieties for the girl were first expressed ('Warnung und Wunsch').

For the 'second spring', in 'Angedenken', the B♭ of 'Wehmut' returns, its powers of reprise enhanced by the thematic quotation. Meanwhile a new tonic is emerging: A♭ major. In 'Herbstentschluss' its islands of diatonic harmony ('Wo sind, Wälder, eure Wonnen?')[1] have provided a refuge from the surrounding dissonance; 'Angedenken' also uses it as a secondary key. 'Welke Rose', the next song, begins in E♭ minor but moves to A♭ minor for its second verse; its final E♭ major triad has the feeling of a dominant, which 'Dichterlos' then resolves. The rest of the work - seven pages in the vocal score - is a massive assertion of A♭ major. Spring and love have been exchanged for night and death; and though the symbolism is not exact, the movement from lighter to darker keys underlines this progression in a highly expressive way.

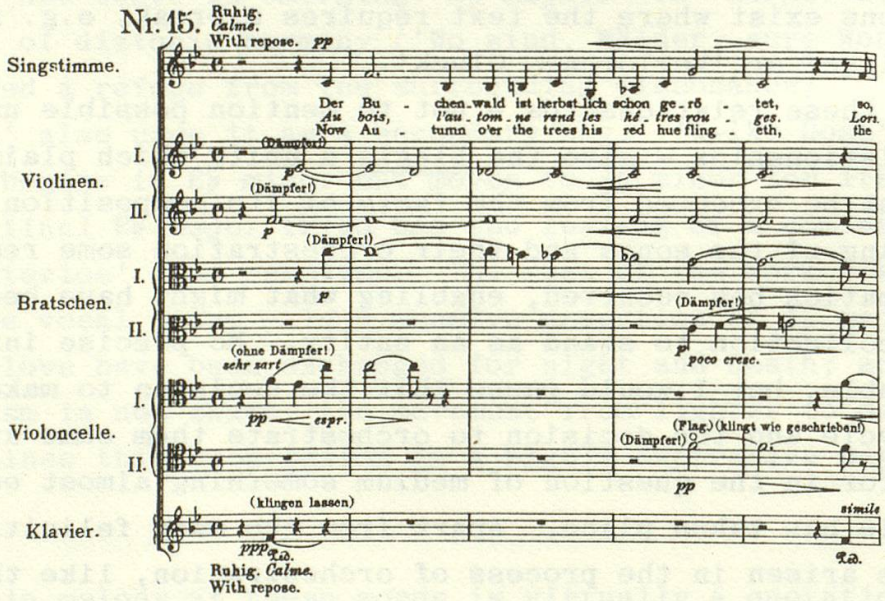
1) The violin melody at these words is virtually a quotation from 'Die Kapelle', the early song discussed on pp. 19-20. (In both songs the melody forms a kind of second subject.) In this inadvertent reference to an earlier work, prompted by these particular words, Schoeck's nostalgia is given almost embarrassingly direct expression.

There is another aspect to the symbolism, too. Some keys, during the nineteenth century, became so strongly associated with certain works that they could scarcely be used without evoking them. Thus, for anyone writing around 1880, D minor 'meant' Beethoven's Ninth (with Don Giovanni in the background), E♭ major the Eroica, E major Schubert's valedictory mood, and so on: compare any works by Brahms or Bruckner in those keys. A♭ major, similarly, meant the Tristan love duet, with its associations of love, night and death. In choosing to end his Elegie in that key Schoeck was surely as deeply influenced by that fact as by any internal consideration.[1]

Finally one must admire the skill with which, in addition to handling these long-term relationships, Schoeck manages the transitions from song to song (Dichterliebe is the locus classicus for this). Some songs, as can be seen from the chart, are linked by a common key (13-15); others by a dominant-tonic relationship (6-7, 21-3); still others by a move from minor to relative major (11-12). 'Frage nicht' dies away on an unresolved dominant seventh chord (Dichterliebe again), which is taken up and resolved in the next song; the final cadence of the first 'Waldlied' provides the first four notes of its successor; and so on. Naturally no such connections exist where the text requires a break, e.g. after 'Herbstklage' or 'Verlorenes Glück'.

All these relationships - not to mention possible underlying relationships - give the Elegie a unity which plainly exceeds what might be expected from the facts of its composition. Between the writing of the songs and their orchestration some remarkable transformation has occurred, enabling what might have been merely another collection to stand as an entity. No precise information is available, but I would guess that the decision to make the songs into a cycle and the decision to orchestrate them came at the same moment; for in the question of medium something almost equally remarkable has taken place. Apart from the many felicities that must have arisen in the process of orchestration, like the

1) See below, p. 346 n., on the use of A♭ major in Unter Sternen.

Klangfarben effect in 'An den Wind', where the arpeggio is 'wafted' from one instrument to another, there are many songs which sound orchestrally conceived, not because they call on special instrumental techniques but because they seem to live only in their orchestral setting. Consider 'Wehmut' and the second 'Herbstgefühl', quoted on pp. 145 and 164 respectively. In their piano version they sound lacklustre and dull (other songs lie awkwardly under the hands). Now turn to the orchestral score and see how, though the notes are the same, the music has come alive.[1] 'Wehmut', given to flute, cor anglais and clarinets, all in their lowest registers, takes on a sickly, breathy quality, like a Schoenberg harmonium. 'Herbstgefühl', by contrast, uses string sextet and piano, the piano part - more like Webern than Schoenberg - being confined to one pitch. Schoeck draws out all the latent polyphony in the texture by distributing the lines between the players, the most expressive going to high cello. He gives an edge to the chromaticism by putting the first viola above the violins, while introducing the second viola at the cadence so that the darker instruments dominate the sound. Even the pedal-point is made interesting by having its articulation varied:

1) There are many discrepancies between vocal and orchestral scores. Most concern dynamics and expression marks; occasionally there are differences in the vocal rhythm, and here the V.S. is probably to be taken as definitive. The depiction

Proust writes movingly of the moment when Balzac, having already written some of the novels in his series, suddenly became aware of a unifying theme running through them and conceived the idea of La comédie humaine.[1] If the facts we have are correct, Schoeck must have experienced some similar revelation during the composition of the Elegie, perceiving the unity of the poems he had selected and the orchestral possibilities of music he had been composing on orchestral lines. In which case his experience was essentially one of recognition, making clear to him the true nature of ideas he was already familiar with - ideas which his instincts had understood better than his conscious mind.

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It has been said (p. 41) that the Elegie looks two ways: back to the early songs for its style and spirit, and forward to later ones in its use of certain musical techniques. It would be easy to go through the work, pointing out this or that reminiscence or anticipation, and when such connections are significant they are indeed noted. What is more interesting is to consider the ideas - mainly technical ideas, but also ideas of theme and character - that the Elegie has in common with other works, and what these ideas tell us about Schoeck's development. In that development, I have suggested, the work occupies a special place: it comes half-way through his list of opus numbers, it is his first song cycle, and it epitomises the conflict between his traditionalist and 'constructivist' views.

The Janus-faced quality of the Elegie is most immediately apparent in its wide range of styles. Some of the songs, as we know from examples already quoted (pp. 18, 28-9. 146), are as diatonic as anything in Schumann or Brahms, and might have sounded

of thunder in 'Warnung und Wunsch' is omitted in the V.S., and 'echo effects' at the end of songs - where the orchestra quits a chord leaving it suspended in the piano - are eliminated throughout.

1) By Way of Sainte-Beuve [Contre Sainte-Beuve], trans. Sylvia Townsend Warner (London, 1958), p. 136.

conservative in 1860, let alone 1920. The 'progressive' side, on the other hand, emerges in such songs as 'Herbstentschluss' and 'Verlorenes Glück'. 'Herbstentschluss', often cited for its bitonal passages, in fact epitomises the stylistic uncertainty of the whole work. Its opening recalls a Brahms song, 'Ach, wende diesen Blick', Op. 57, No. 4 (also in F minor), and indeed the song is riddled with Brahmsian reminiscences (e.g. that of the Alto Rhapsody at the words 'Es ist worden kühl und spät' - as always, a verbal echo prompts the musical one). The 'bitonal' passages are genuinely radical: if the basic harmony is a French sixth, the upper chords stubbornly refuse to resolve. But the final cadence borrows from Schumann's 'Auf einer Burg' - 'weinen' being the common word here.

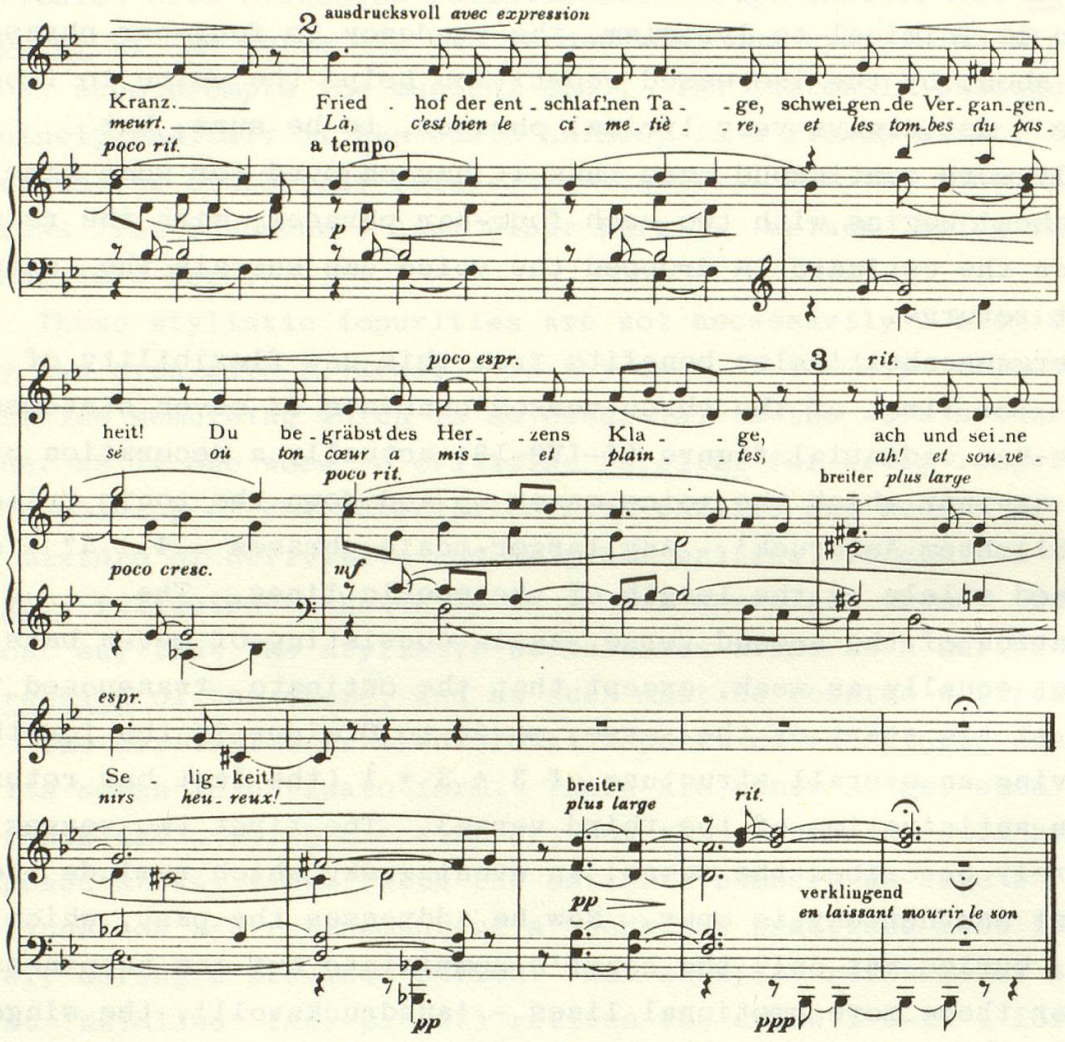
These stylistic impurities are not necessarily a blemish; they can even give pleasure. In any case it seems pointless to criticise something which is so essential to the work's character - rather as if one were to criticise Parsifal for being longwinded. The combining of characteristics from earlier and modern periods, the mixture of derivative and original writing, is central to the Elegie, reflected technically as in its nostalgic theme. One might almost say that the stylistic differences arose as a deliberate expression of the theme, and as such must be counted a virtue.

The derivative or traditional aspects of the Elegie centre on its songs in ostinato form. There are other songs, such as 'Herbstklage', which are simpler, but these Schoeck could have composed at any time. With the ostinato numbers we have a continuation and refinement of a technique practised most intensively during a previous period. Not always a refinement: the first 'Waldlied' (see p. 137) revives the crude i-i-iv-i formula of the 1907 'An die Entfernte', here given some point by the subdominant modulations heard later. 'Angedenken', too, adds little to the possibilities of the technique, except in its manner of dropping the ostinato for contrasted episodes and then resuming it again, the song as a whole forming a kind of rondo. One must be careful, however, not to confuse artistic quality with ideas of 'progress': these songs are extremely beautiful.

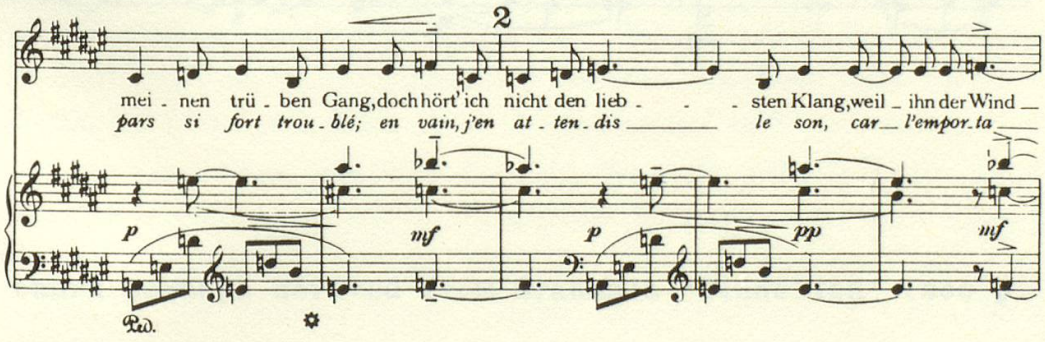
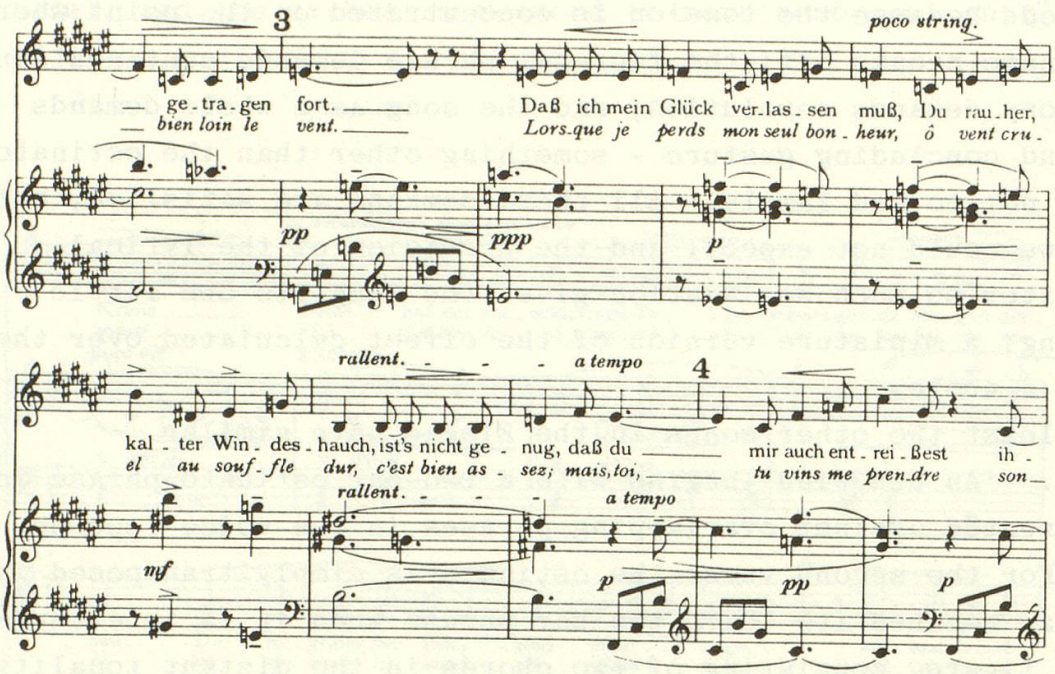
The opening of 'Angedenken', quoted on p. 146, exemplifies

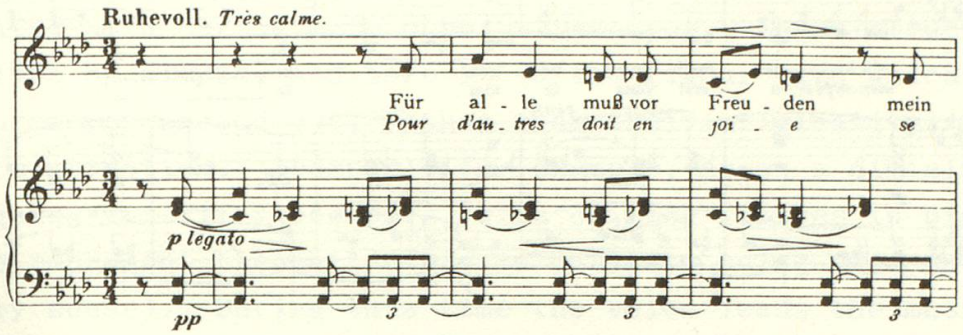
the cadential type of ostinato figure mentioned in the last chapter. The effect of such figures is to close off each statement from the ones surrounding it, while paradoxically increasing the need for repetition: the ostinato becomes a sort of chaconne (the connection with actual chaconnes, such as the penultimate song of Lebendig begraben, now becomes clear). The effect on the vocal line is also paradoxical, for though the self-sufficiency of the ostinato is inimical to lyricism, the tendency to four-bar phrases brought about by the increased repetition helps the voice to float a phrase - not always very lyrical phrases, to be sure, but certainly more continuous ones than it has enjoyed for some time. 'Angedenken' begins with two such four-bar phrases, with the result that when the ostinato is dropped the voice can sustain the texture until it returns.

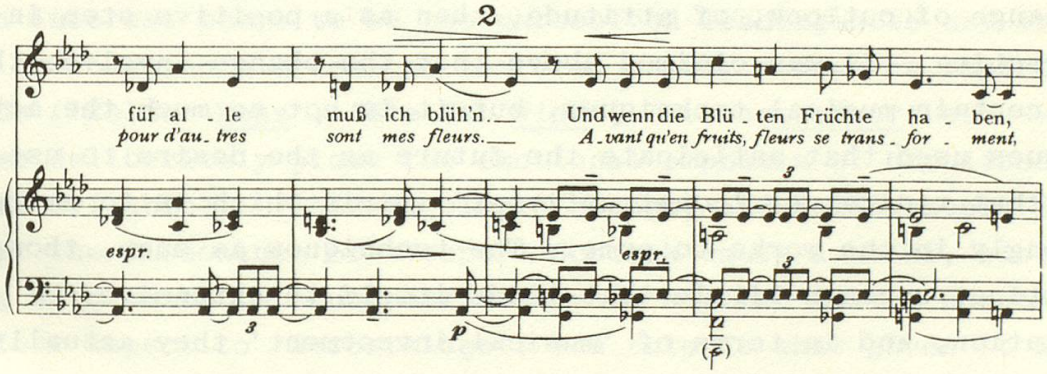
'Vergangenheit' also benefits from this new flexibility of phrase. The first of the three verses consists of seven statements of a one-bar cadential figure (I-IV9-I9: actually a decoration of I in B♭), against which the voice muses up and down the tonic triad 'mit schlichtem Ausdruck'. Any larger-scale phrases - 4 + 3? - are determined solely by the length of the poetic lines. The articulation of the second verse, again consisting of seven bars, is almost equally as weak, except that the ostinato, transposed to G minor at the start of the verse, moves to D minor in the fourth bar, giving an overall structure of 3 + 3 + 1 (the last bar returns to B♭ in anticipation of the third verse). The first two verses have merely described the scene: an evening sky which reminds the poet that another day is over. Now he addresses the past, which, he says, buries not only the heart's complaints but its happiness too. For these more emotional lines - 'ausdrucksvoll', the singer is instructed - there is a tightening of the phrase-structure. After two bars of ostinato in B♭ the figure is repeated once in G minor and once in E♭, the harmonic acceleration giving definition to the four-bar phrase as a whole. Then, just as it looks as if the sequence is going to drop into C minor, the harmony is diverted by the sudden prominence of the voice, which comes forward with a completely unexpected lyrical continuation of the four-bar phrase. The rest of the third verse - eight bars in all - is devoted to the

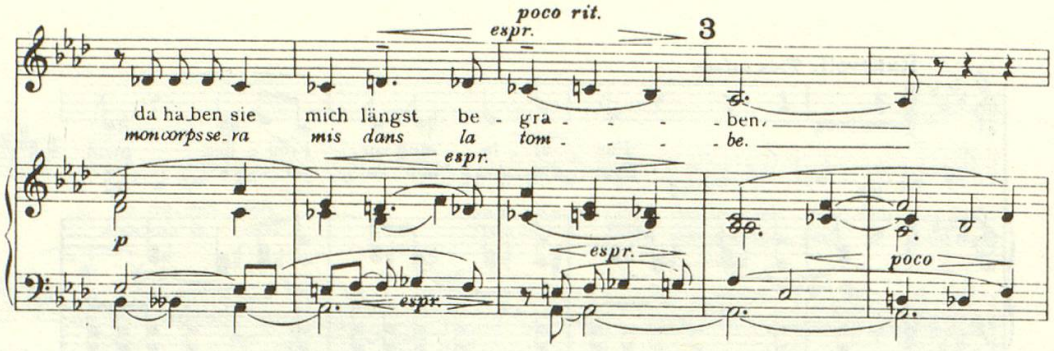
climax and disintegration of this snatch of vocal melody, the only one in the song; the ostinato is forgotten (to be recalled in the postlude), and the orchestra reduced to mere accompaniment:[1]

1) It is interesting how at the end of this song Schoeck resists the temptation to indulge in word-painting at the expense of meaning: he refuses to write happy music for the word 'Seligkeit', remembering that the poet's happiness is to be buried - hence the chromaticism and the G minor.

This sudden emphasis on the voice is one of Schoeck's devices for breaking out of the ostinato once it has done its work. It succeeds because the tension is concentrated on the point where the ostinato breaks off: the four-bar phrase demands continuation, the harmony demands resolution, and the song as a whole demands some grand concluding gesture - something other than the ostinato - if it is not to end lamely. All these demands are satisfied, but in ways we could not expect; and the provision of the lyrical phrase after so much declamation gives the song its own little Aufhellung, a miniature version of the effect calculated over the cycle as a whole.

At least two other songs in the Elegie have similar climaxes. 'An den Wind' begins with a two-bar ostinato phrase in F♯ , presented against overlapping phrases in the voice (see pp. 28-9). For the second verse the ostinato is simply transposed into A. It has reached its third two-bar phrase when it is interrupted by a new figure, consisting of two chords in the distant tonality of F minor. The idea of the poem is that the wind carries away the girl's parting words, and now, as the ostinato starts up again, it is repeatedly cut off by the F minor figure, which grows from six quavers to eight and finally produces its own continuation. By this time, since the F minor figure consists merely of chords, the voice has come to dominate the texture; and so all our attention is upon it as the poet utters his last words, a bitter question to the wind. At this point, halfway through the bar, Schoeck reintroduces the ostinato, and the dissonance that results when the voice descends from F♯ to E♯ over the tonic pedal is the expressive climax of the song:

It is not a question, here, of breaking up the ostinato by giving prominence to the voice, as was done in 'Vergangenheit', but of giving the voice temporary prominence so that the ostinato can later return with great effect. Since this reprise consists of only a couple of statements, there is no problem about ending the piece.

'Dichterlos', our last example, is also the shortest (the voice sings for only sixteen bars). The ostinato figure is a decorated cadence which takes its rhythm from the declamation:

After nine bars of this, the semitone inflections move into the bass (an anticipation of the interlude to come), the harmony sinks onto V of ii[1] and the voice rises a sixth - its largest interval so far - for a new phrase. The climax is over almost immediately, but the voice has broken the domination of the ostinato; and when the latter returns all it can do is circle wearily, its rhythm distorted (note the reversal of stresses between the first two chords) and its harmony chromatically undermined:



1) A chord perhaps derived from Brahms's 'Minnelied' (see p. 28).

These examples, and others like them, constitute the apogee of Schoeck's ostinato technique, showing how varied its structural and expressive possibilities can be. Or rather, could be, for it clearly depended on a type of harmony which around 1920 was becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. That Schoeck, for all his ability to find power in a seemingly exhausted language, was conscious of this difficulty is proved by the variety of styles in the 1917 collections. And indeed, though he continued to use the ostinato from time to time, he never again made such extensive use of it as he did in his early period. This is one reason why the Elegie is a culmination as well as a new beginning.

This 'new beginning', it must be said, expresses itself more as a change of outlook, of attitude, than as a positive step in a new direction. It was claimed above that the change involves the use of certain musical techniques, but it is not so much the actual techniques used that anticipate the future as the desire to use them - that radical or 'constructivist' spirit which is to emerge so strongly in the works to come. The techniques as such, though interesting, contain little that lends itself to extensive exploitation, and in terms of 'musical investment' they actually promise less than some of the early songs. One can imagine Schoeck's comment: 'The teaching of form concerns itself only with exceptions.'[1] Perhaps; but the exceptions are fascinating.

1) G p. 67.

Some of the songs in question merely apply the procedures associated with ostinato to other structures. These structures may themselves be simple, and here it is the rigour with which the procedures are carried out, rather than their originality, that attracts attention. 'Vesper', for example, keeps a diminished chord going for fifty-one bars, with chiming figures in piano and wind to represent the bell (this is ostinato being used in its ordinary sense). During this time the voice leads the music enharmonically through many keys: a questionable D major at the beginning, F minor at bar 8, B♭ minor at bar 16, G minor at bar 23, B minor at bar 31, A♭ minor at bar 33, F minor at bar 37, D minor at bar 41. There are also places where the tonality is ambiguous or even totally suspended, as at bar 52, where Schoeck breaks out of the ostinato by bringing the diminished chord down in semitones over a rising bass. (It is just after this that he introduces the Venus quotation.) This emphasis on the dissonance, coupled with its refusal to resolve in any of the listed keys, gives it something of the stability of a tonic, with the result that the resolution into A minor at the end seems rather forced and arbitrary.

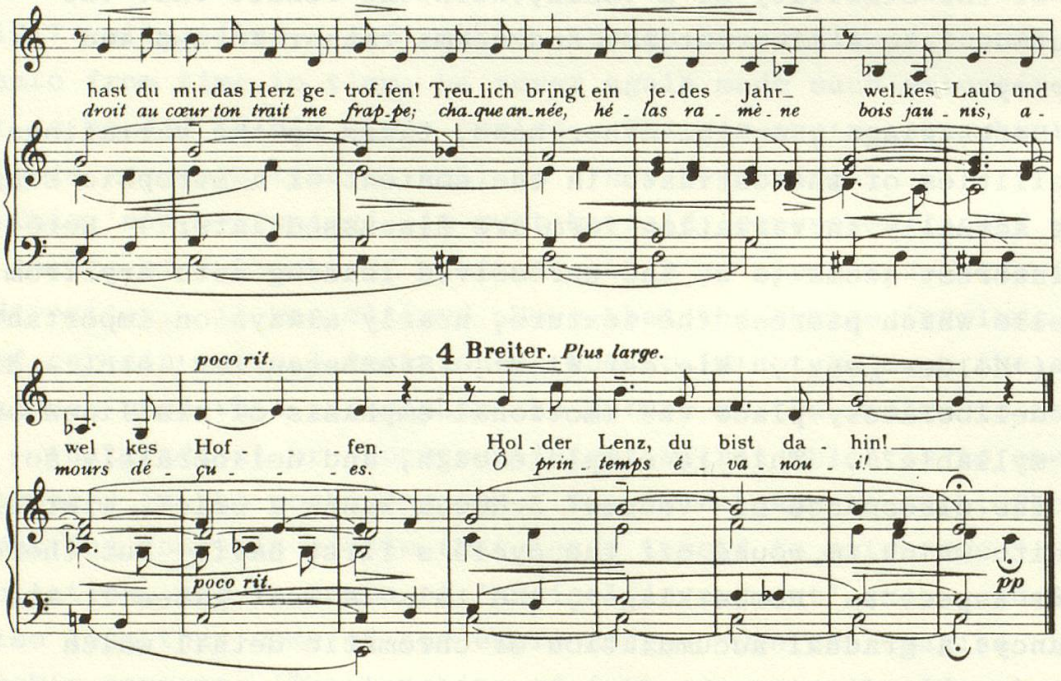
'Herbstklage', on the other hand, takes up the variational possibilities of the ostinato in the context of a strophic song. (Songs actually in variation form are discussed later.) Here the main interest seems to be the unresolved leading-note cry from oboe and cello which pierces the texture, nearly always on important words ('Holder Lenz', 'Wie der Wind', 'Sterbeseufzer' etc. - did Lenau deliberately place the emotional emphasis of his lines on the third syllable?). This is simple enough, and deliberately so: after the dissonance of 'Vesper' Schoeck wants a brief, wistful song with which to round off the cycle's first half. But there is another aspect to 'Herbstklage', and this is what gives it its piognancy: a gradual accumulation of chromatic detail which threatens to undermine the diatonic foundation.

The first verse (bars 1-11) is harmonically straightforward, even recalling the New World Symphony in bars 7-8, but already in bar 6 the leading note B has fallen to B♭ in preparation for the next chord. The second verse (bars 12-23) adds a C♯ to the B♭ so

as to reach the subdominant of A minor (bar 14), and when the song's opening is repeated in that key G♯ is the leading note. As we return to C major the same pitch-class is heard again twice, expressed as A♭. The third verse (bars 24-35) is a counterpart to the second, moving to D major where the latter went to A minor; C♯ is now the leading-note. Once again the return to C necessitates a good deal of chromatic alteration. The last verse (bars 36-49) is the longest of the four and may be heard as a synthesis. It begins similarly to the others, but with string tremolandi for the word 'Waldesrauschen' (the singer is here asked to sing 'mit gesteigertem Ausdruck'). When we reach the final couplet,

Treulich bringt ein jedes Jahr
welkes Laub und welkes Hoffen,

the phrases expand in a rich chromatic progression in which the three main chromatic notes - B♭, C♯ and A♭ - all figure prominently (the nostalgic reference to the opening words is Schoeck's idea):[1]

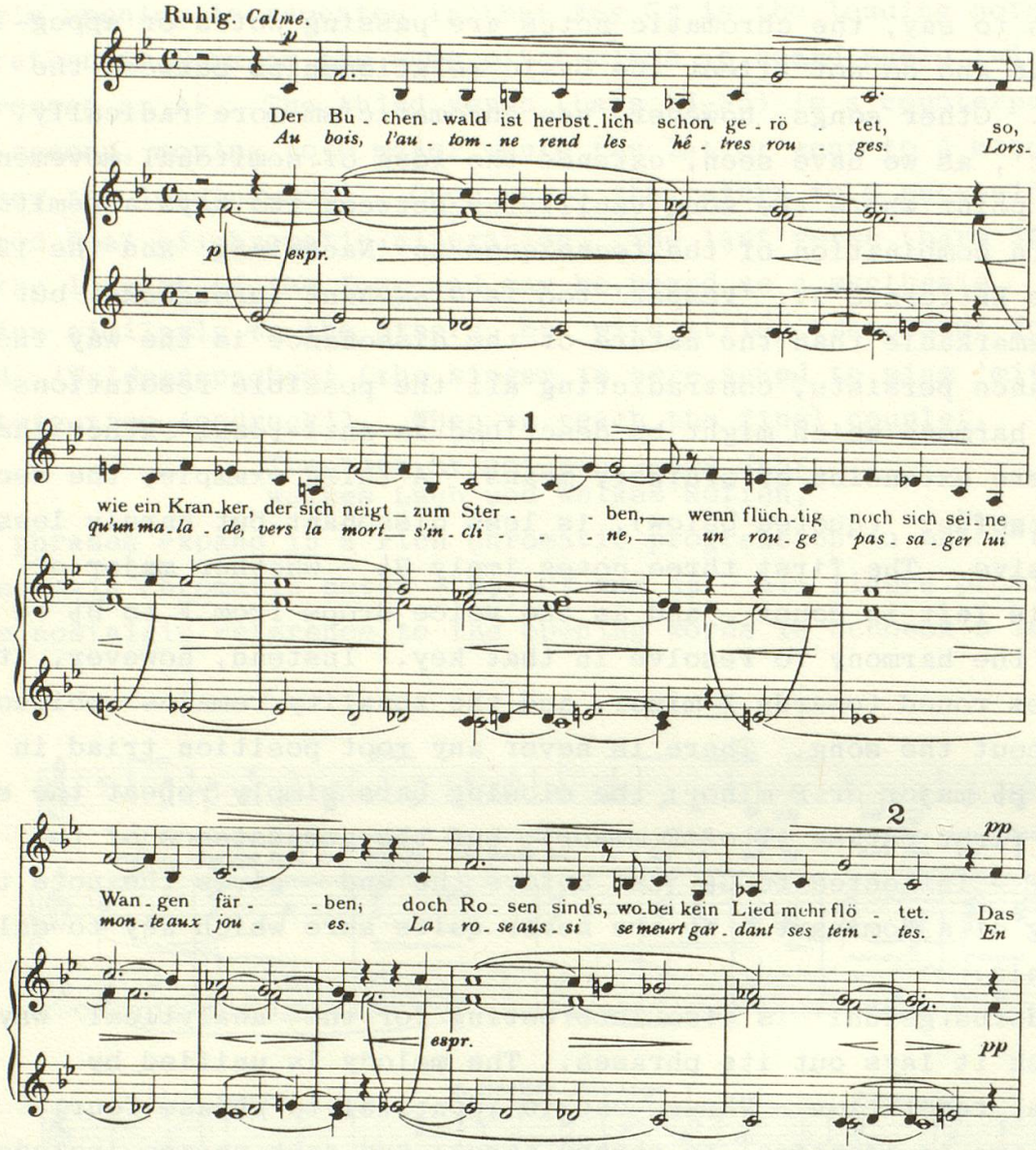


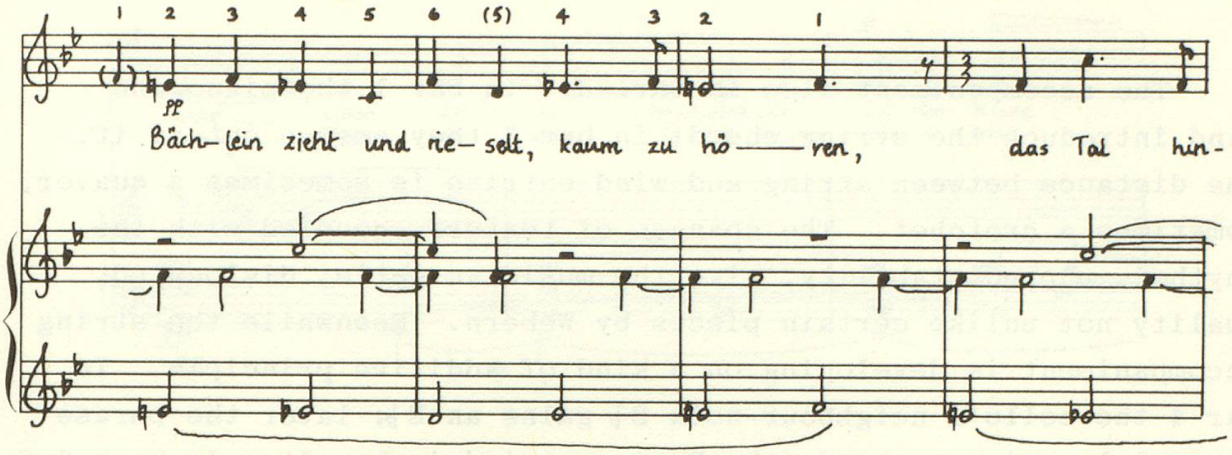
1) An effect repeated in 'Vesper' and 'Der Einsame'.

The chromaticism here is decorative rather than functional: that is to say, the chromatic notes are passing notes or appoggiaturas and do not affect the basic relationships between the chords. Other songs, however, use chromaticism more radically. 'Wehmut', as we have seen, extends the idea of semitonal movement to the point where the song vacillates between two keys a semitone apart (a combination of the techniques in 'Nachklang' and the 1914 'An die Entfernte'). 'Vesper' too is dissonant throughout, but more remarkable than the nature of the dissonance is the way the dissonance persists, contradicting all the possible resolutions - a use of harmony which might be described as anti-tonal rather than as a mere extension of ordinary means. A third example, the second 'Herbstgefühl' (quoted below), is less dissonant but hardly less subversive. The first three notes imply B♭ - whether major or minor is left in doubt - and as the voice drops from F to B♭ we expect the harmony to resolve in that key. Instead, however, it switches round towards F minor, and the tonality remains ambiguous throughout the song. There is never any root position triad in either B♭ major or F minor; the closing bars simply repeat the end of the first phrase (V of F minor); but the persistence of the pedal F - inflected to G♭ just before the end - gives the note the feeling of a dominant. We are never quite sure which key to call the tonic.

'Herbstgefühl' is also interesting for the 'analytical' way in which it lays out its phrases. The melody is unified by internal repetition. Phrase one is identical to phrase four; phrase two is identical to phrase three; and each phrase includes a falling fifth (F-B♭) and a rising fifth (C-G):[1]

1) The opening of 'Herbstgefühl' bears a striking (but almost certainly accidental) resemblance to Berg's early song 'Schilflied'.



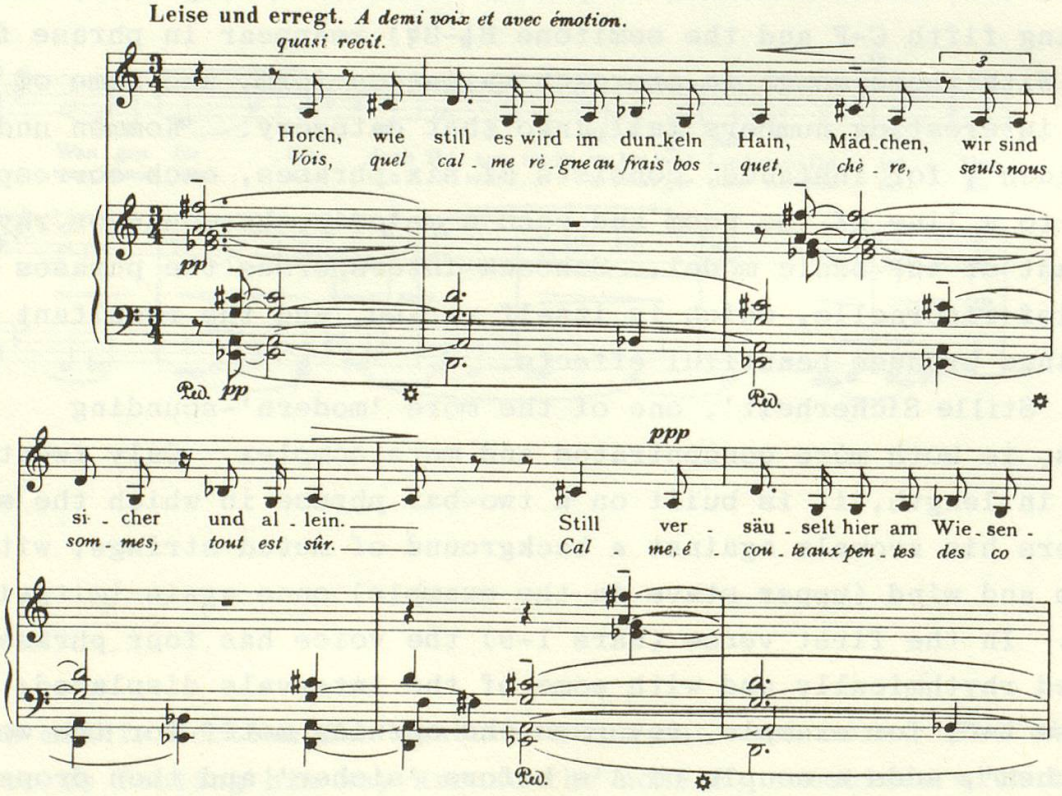
For the middle section the texture thins out even more. The singer seems to be feeling his way around the note F, sometimes with the effect of a palindrome:

This music is of course very similar to that of the opening, a relationship confirmed by the falling fifth in the first violin.

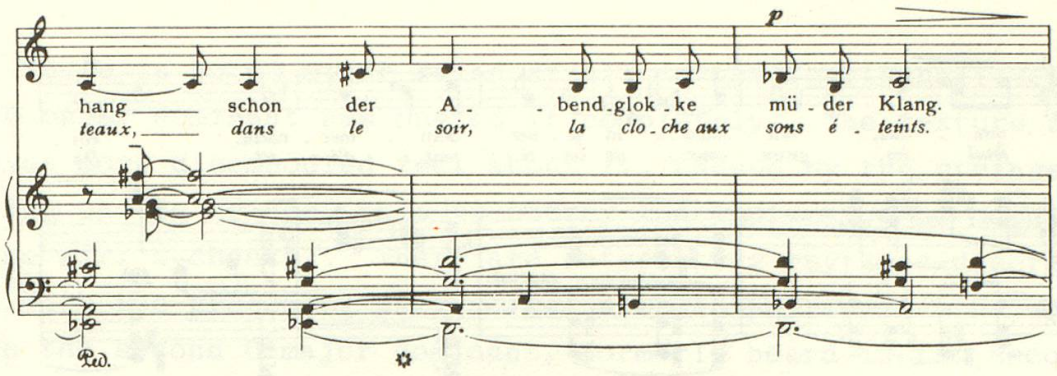
The same 'analytical' treatment is found in the other 'Herbstgefühl', but here the melody has eight phrases, related as follows: 1 = 7, 2 = 8, 3 = 5, 4 = 6 (the phrases are put forward one beat the second time round). There are also internal relationships: thus notes 3-7 of phrase one become notes 1-5 of phrase two, while elements of phrase three (A moving to F, the falling fifth C-F and the semitone B♭-B♮) reappear in phrase four.

With these songs we approach variation form, and some of the most interesting numbers fall into that category. 'Kommen und Scheiden', for instance, consists of six phrases, each corresponding to a line of the poem and each a melodic, harmonic or rhythmic variant of the basic model. Schoeck intersperses the phrases with a brief ritornello, which is itself varied, and the resultant overlappings produce beautiful effects.

'Stille Sicherheit', one of the more 'modern'-sounding songs, is both more concentrated and more complex. Only twenty-two bars in length, it is built on a two-bar phrase in which the singer mutters his avowals against a background of muted strings, with piano and wind (upper stave in the example) once again imitating a bell. In the first verse (bars 1-9) the voice has four phrases, varied rhythmically and with some of the intervals displaced: phrase two, for example, reverses the opening motif for the word 'Mädchen', adds a couple of A's before 'sicher' and then drops one before 'allein'. Because of the declamation the phrases are uneven in length, giving a structure of $2 + 2\frac{1}{3} + 1\frac{2}{3} + 3$ bars.

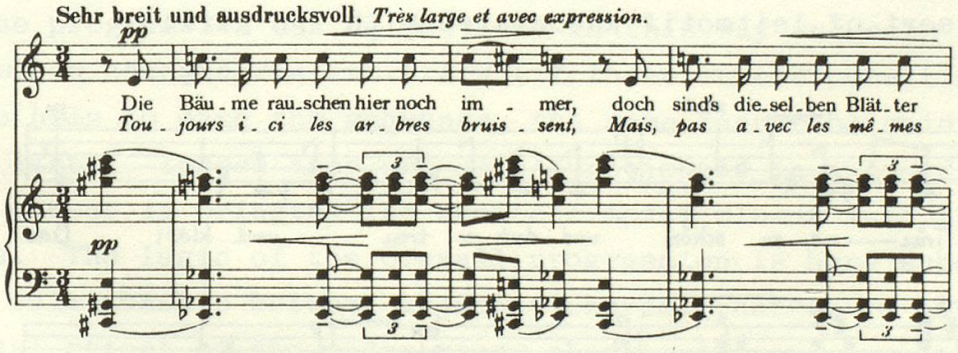
The accompaniment also is varied. In bar 1 the piano and wind introduce the string chord; in bar 3 they emerge out of it. The distance between string and wind entries is sometimes a quaver, sometimes a crotchet. The changes of texture, coupled with the rhythmic unpredictability, give the music an eerie, dislocated quality not unlike certain pieces by Webern. Meanwhile the string accompaniment is developing on a kind of additive principle. In bar 4 the cello's neighbour-note B♭ gains an E♭; later the phrase as a whole gains a chord (the D minor triad in bar 5). In bars 8-9 the ornamental movement increases. The effect of all these little variations, together with the tonal ambiguity - D minor? G minor? D major? - is to create a feeling of uncertainty and suspense which belies the lover's assurances to his sweetheart that they are 'sicher und allein':

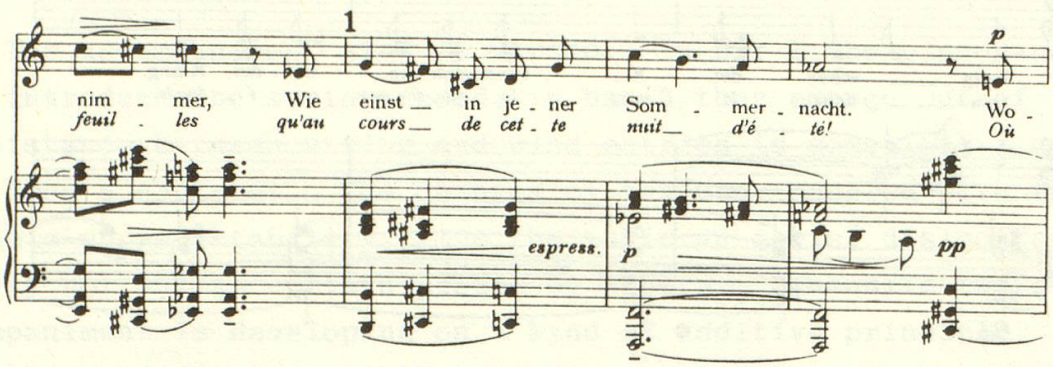




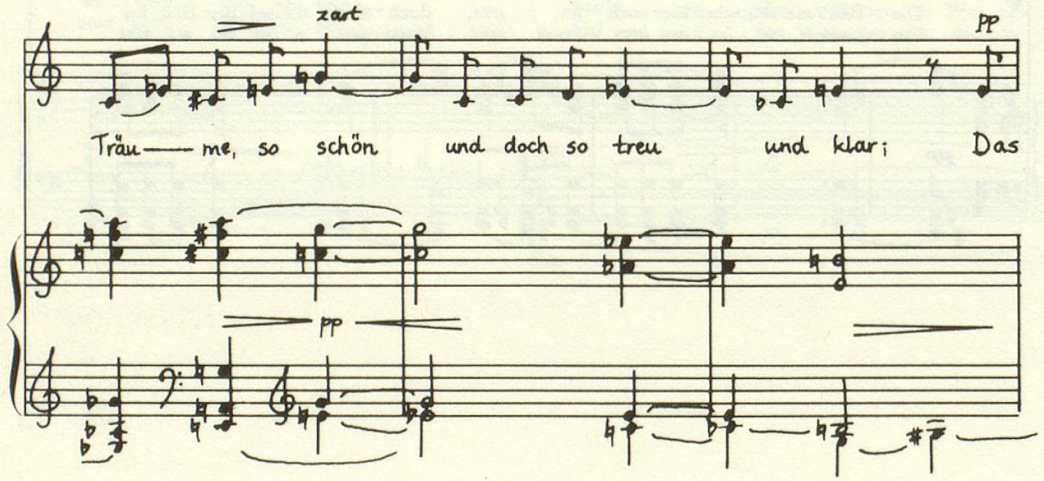
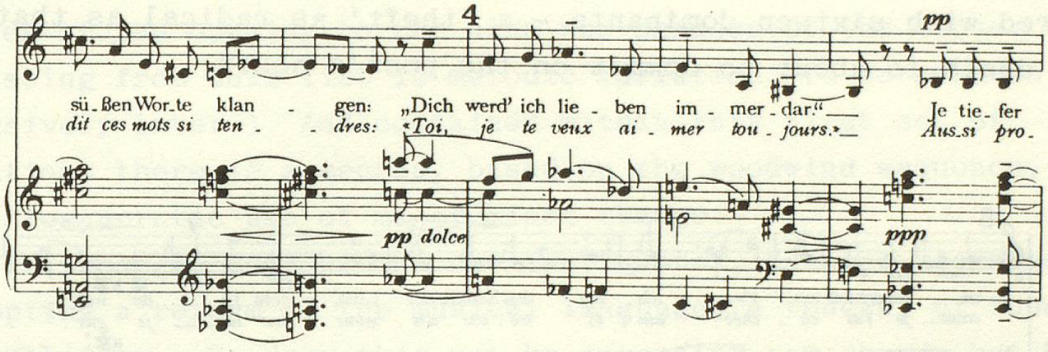
All this material is further exploited in the second verse, and here the wind chord resolves into an unequivocal D major. This verse given a sense of amplification to the overall structure by increasing the phrase-lengths: if the first and second pair of phrases in the first verse are each taken as a single phrase, the proportions become $4\frac{1}{3} + 4\frac{2}{3} + 5 + 6$ bars.

The most extraordinary example of variation form, however - in some ways the most extraordinary song in the cycle - is 'Verlorenes Glück'. The song is in three verses, with a general ternary shape, but each verse is divided into two half-verses, the material of which constantly develops. As in 'Stille Sicherheit' the last sections are the longest: here the proportions are $7 + 7 + 6\frac{1}{3} + 6\frac{1}{3} + 9 + 9\frac{2}{3}$ bars. This is the first half-verse:

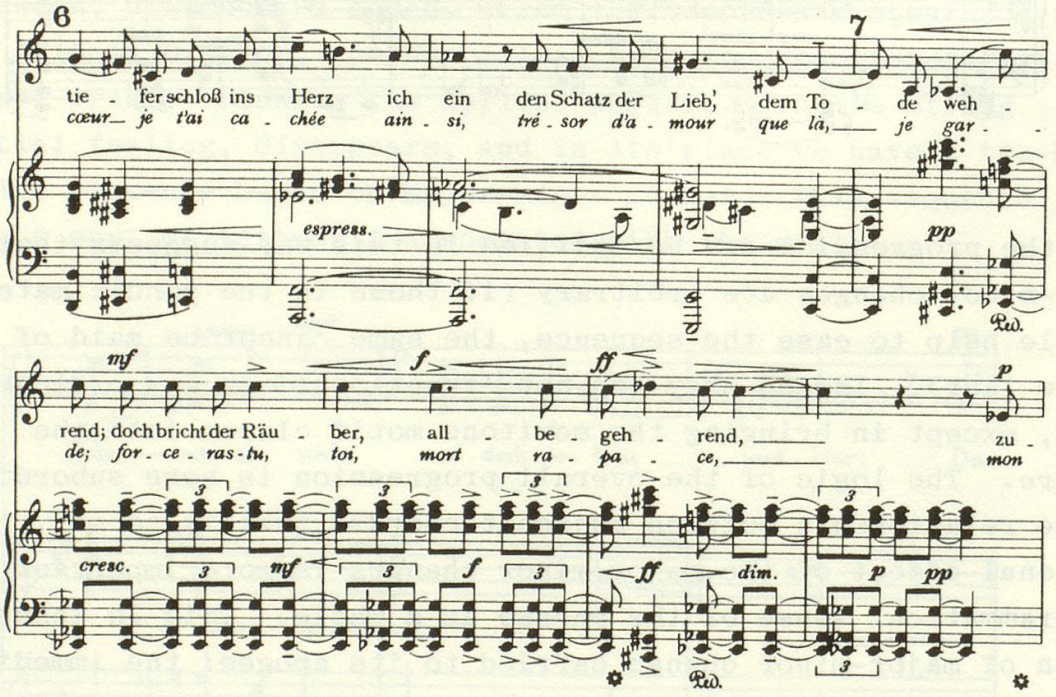
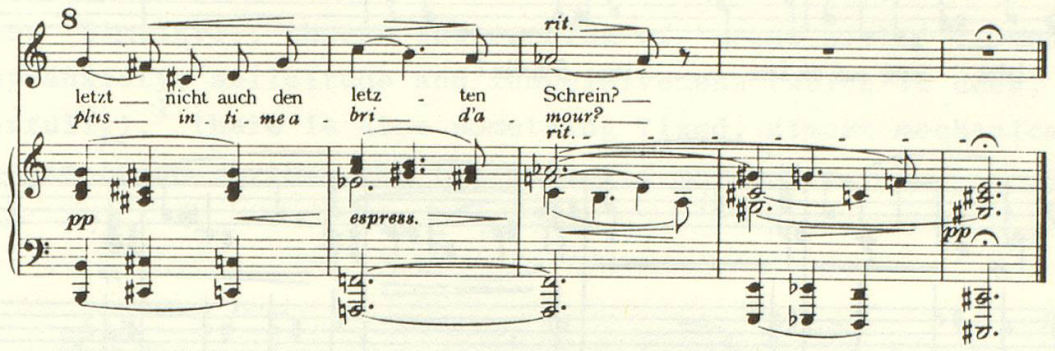




The basic elements are the semitonal movement in the voice; the first two chords of the accompaniment (i and V13 in C♯ minor: the latter chord is notated confusingly); and the lyrical phrase in the last three bars, of which more will be said later. The orchestral part sounds even stranger than it looks, as the violin lines continually cross one another and are doubled an octave lower by the wind; the repeated triplets are in fact confined to the piano, the strings having syncopated notes.

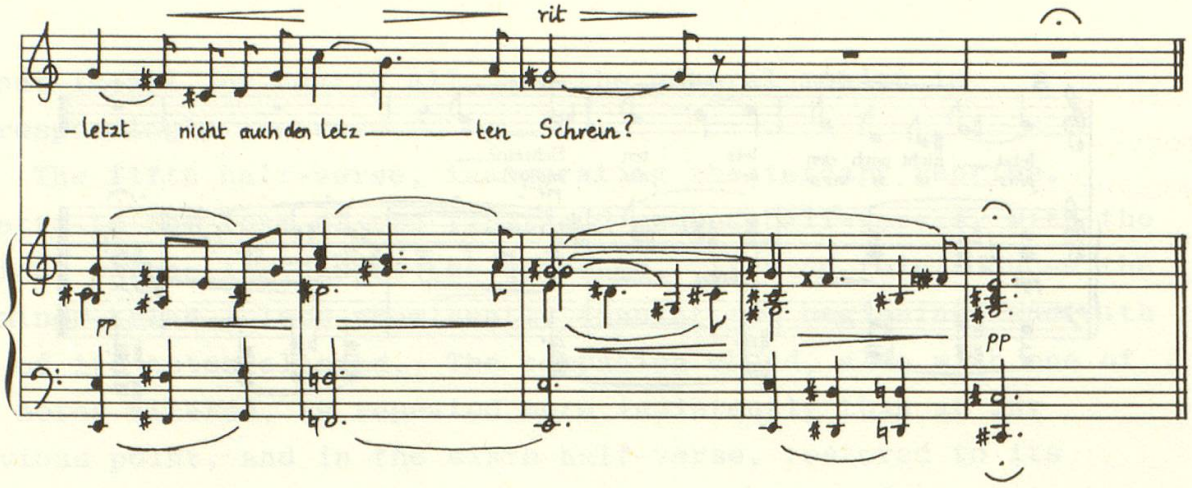
The first two half-verses are identical apart from some minor differences of scoring and articulation. In the third half-verse, however - here the orchestra is reduced to strings - the lower notes of the second chord are transposed up an octave, giving a strained, disembodied sound. From the second bar onwards a new chord (V13 in D major, the Neapolitan key) is substituted for the C♯ minor triad. Finally the lyrical phrase, with its strong cadential feeling, disappears, and in its place we have a two-bar woodwind sequence based on major-minor change. This sequence is to become a sort of leitmotif associated with the girl:

There is no C♯ minor triad at all in the fourth half-verse; the D major dominant has ousted it completely. The texture now has an even more disembodied feel about it, caused by the strings playing on the bridge (this to convey the impression of moonlight on the girl's cheeks). There are interesting rhythmic discrepancies with the preceding half-verse: note in particular the way in which the second D major dominant, formerly heard in the second bar, is now withheld until the third, so that the words 'süssen Worte' may be accompanied by the sharper-sounding chord. The most fascinating aspect of this section, however, is the variation of the sequence at the words 'Dich werd' ich lieben immerdar', spoken to the poet by the girl. Though the length of the phrase has hardly altered, there are now four steps in the sequence instead of three; and whereas the chords previously changed from major to minor, major to minor and minor to major respectively, now all the changes are from minor to major:

That the progression can be modified in this way suggests that the major-minor changes are arbitrary (if those in the penultimate example help to ease the sequence, the same cannot be said of those in the last). Indeed they are not 'functional' in any ordinary sense, except in bringing the semitone motif closer into the texture. The logic of the overall progression is here subordinated to the relationship between adjacent chords: that is to say, the emotional effect of the major-minor changes is more important than the grammatical sense of the phrase as a whole. This is Schubert's notion of major-minor change carried to its apogee: the immediate

effect is all, or nearly all, and the general motion is correspondingly weakened.

The fifth half-verse, inaugurating the ternary reprise, reverts to the form of the first and second half-verses, with the lyrical phrase instead of the sequence. It also reintroduces the C♯ minor triad - less prominently than at the beginning, and with one of its notes altered. The companion chord, also with one of its notes altered, is repeated more insistently than at any previous point, and in the sixth half-verse, restored to its original form, it is to crash out with almost Bartókian power. Before this final section, however, there is a reminiscence of the sequence, now transferred to lower strings and sounding like the second orchestral interlude in Wozzeck. This time we get only the 'bare bones' of the progression, without the major-minor changes ('Schatz der Lieb' are the words that prompt the reference). Then comes the climax. In terms of notes the chords are identical to those heard at the beginning; but whereas there they alternated more or less regularly, here we have only two C♯ minor triads as compared with sixteen dominants - a 'theft' as radical as that which death is about to commit on the poet's heart:



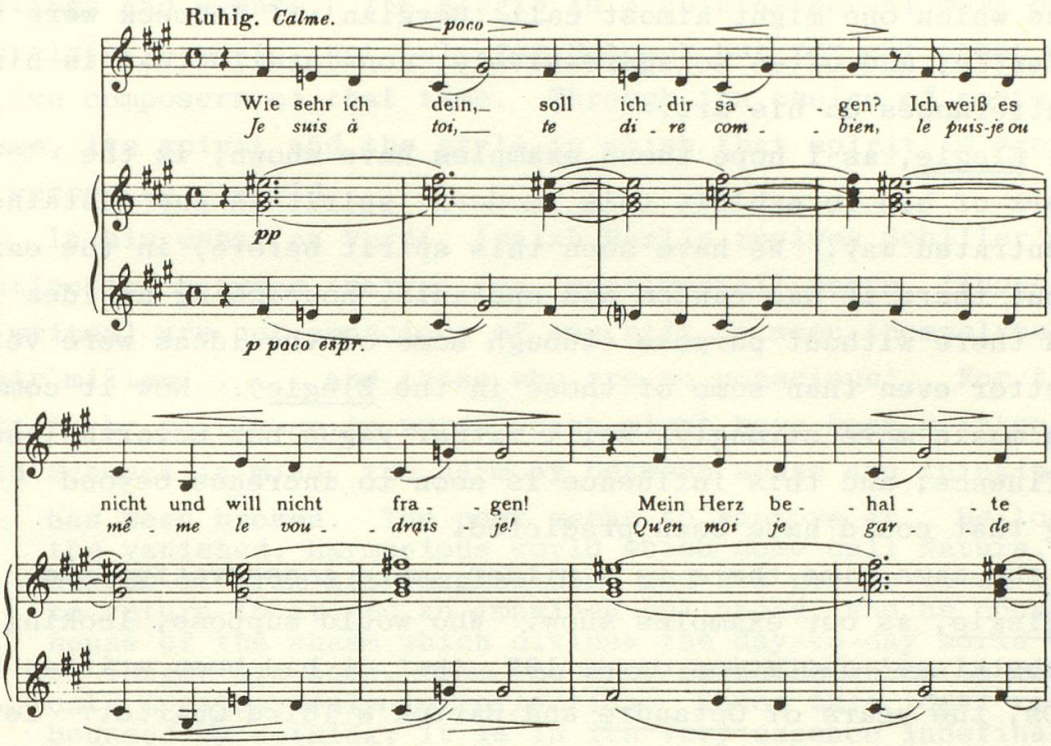
In addition to the ternary structure, then, there are at least four kinds of variation present in 'Verlorenes Glück'. Variation of harmony, from the octave transposition of notes in a chord, through the chromatic alteration of notes, to the substitution of one chord for another; variation of rhythm, from minor adjustments for the sake of declamation to the wholesale rewriting of extended passages; variation of scoring and articulation, from orchestral tutti through normal string tone to strings sul ponticello; and variation of phrase-structure, from the seven-bar phrases of the opening to the nine-bar phrases of the close. (What is missing from this list is melodic variation, to be used so extensively later.) And contained within this first set of variations there is a second, based on the woodwind sequence, with its idiosyncratic use of major-minor change.

In passages such as the one last quoted, Schoeck seems to be attempting a reform of the musical language, a renewal of tonal possibilities. He does this not by inventing new chords but by using the old ones in new ways - by placing common triads in unusual juxtapositions, finding novel resolutions for dissonances, and above all giving fresh life to conventional relationships by rhythmic means. To define what was 'usual' in the style would require another book as long as the present one, but fortunately the point can be made more briefly. This is what a lesser composer might have made of the last five bars of 'Verlorenes Glück', a final extension of the lyrical phrase:



(To produce this travesty it was necessary to alter the A♭ in the third bar to G♯; and Schoeck would not have allowed the consecutive fifths.) In the first bar we miss the startling effect of Schoeck's common triads (apparently unrelated, but actually quite closely linked, the first pair by a Neapolitan relationship, the second by the chromatic movement of the parts): note especially the audacious 'passing' 6/4. In the next two bars a stale augmented sixth progression replaces Schoeck's treatment of that dissonance, one of his most amazing examples of 'novel resolution'; we also lack the false relations caused by his insistence on exact imitation. In the fourth bar, finally, the same timid thinking produces an F♯ on the last quaver in place of Schoeck's F♮ - a note which can only be explained by a preference for contrapuntal rigour over harmonic smoothness. The whole passage is a model of what can be done with an 'exhausted language', even though its suppression of normal relationships is itself contributing to the eventual breakdown.

The absense of clichés in Schoeck's version does not mean it is without rules; rather, that Schoeck is making his own rules. In particular there is a tendency for the musical elements - melody, harmony and so on - to be treated as separate objects, not in the sense that they could exist independently of each other, but in the sense that each seems to follow its own logic, sometimes at the expense of the whole. In the final bars of this song the melodic element predominates, and the harmony is correspondingly rough; earlier we saw how a harmonic effect - namely, a major-minor change - seemed to take precedence over the larger movement of the

phrase. Similarly, though the opening of 'Frage nicht' is meant to convey anxiety, solicitude and indecisiveness (which it does, wonderfully),[1] there is also something fixed, almost mechanical, about the cross-rhythms and the harmonic movement:

It is passages of this kind that allow us to describe the Elegie as containing music that is 'as "modern" in conception as anything composed at the time'. 'In conception': those are the crucial words. Of course there are passages that sound more 'modern' than the opening of 'Frage nicht' - the start of 'Stille Sicherheit', for example - and there are places where the actual techniques used seem to correspond to those in other composers. Thus the parallel common chords in 'Das Mondlicht' suggest Debussy, the 'rhythmic counterpoint' between piano and timpani at

1) See the remarks on this song in Wittelsbach, op.cit., pp. 221-2.

the end of 'Warnung und Wunsch' recalls Bartók, etc. (Even when the theoretical affinity is strong, however, Schoeck's music sounds quite unlike these composers: his techniques are self-taught.) But mainly it is his attitude that places Schoeck so firmly in his time: a wish to explore every aspect of an idea, a delight in the technical problems of composition, indeed a preoccupation with technique which one might almost call 'Bergian' if Schoeck were not so manifestly, and often so aggressively, non-intellectual in his verbal utterances on his art.

The Elegie, as I hope these examples have shown, is the first work of his to exhibit this 'modern' spirit in any sustained or concentrated way. We have seen this spirit before, in the early songs, but there it was random and sporadic, nourishing an idea here and there without purpose (though some of the ideas were very good, better even than some of those in the Elegie). Now it comes into the music more strongly, still rather vague but nevertheless a real influence; and this influence is soon to increase beyond anything that could have been predicted.

At the same time there is a milder, more conservative side to the Elegie, as our examples show. Who would suppose, looking at the 'Herbstklage' quotation on p. 162, that it had been written in the 1920s, the years of Octandre and Bartók's Third Quartet? Yet even that is not the simplest passage in the work; and there are others, as we have seen, which echo Schumann and Brahms. If the last songs discussed have characteristics we may call modern, those in ostinato form look firmly back to the past.

Yet it would be a mistake to exaggerate the 'divided' aspect of the Elegie. One's first impression of hearing the work is one of elegance and poise: despite the 'impurities' the style coheres remarkably well. One's second impression is surprise that Schoeck has been able to recapture this style in the 1920s, and not only the style but the whole early romantic sensibility - for this sensibility was not a continuing historical presence, but something which had to be sought, like some precious memory, in a particular period of the past.

This was something Schoeck was especially well suited to do. For him the sensibility, like the style, had never ceased to exist:

he had kept it within him, along with his other childhood recollections, waiting for the moment when he could bring it forth in his works. He detested the materialism of modern life, citing Lenau's experience of nineteenth-century America as evidence against it;[1] and his compositions are as much an attempt to provide an imaginative alternative as they are a record of specific feelings and events. The Elegie is a quintessential work of nostalgia in music, not only for Schoeck but for all other conservative composers of that time. Through its choice of poets, its theme, its spirit and the style in which that spirit is expressed, it recreates a world.

In his essay on Verdi, Isaiah Berlin revives Schiller's distinction between 'naive' and 'sentimental' poets, 'those who [so he writes] are not conscious of any rift between themselves and their milieu, . . . and those who are so conscious'. For the latter, he continues in words which might have been written with Schoeck in mind, the harmony between sense and thinking

> has been broken. The poet seeks to restore it. He looks for the vanished, harmonious world which some call Nature, and builds it from his imagination, and his poetry is an attempt to return to it, to an imagined childhood, and he conveys his sense of the chasm which divides the day-to-day world which is no longer his home, from the lost paradise which is conceived only ideally, only in reflection. Hence this ideal realm is bounded by nothing; it is in its very essence indefinable, unattainable, incapable of being embraced by means of any finite medium, no matter how great the poet's capacity for finding, moulding, transforming his material.

(Schoeck would have had an answer ready for this: '[Certainly] the absolute is unattainable. The important thing is the longing, the striving for this goal.')[2] Berlin then writes:

> The characteristic poetry of the 'sentimental' is satire, that is, negation, an attack on that which calls itself real life but is in fact a degradation of it . . . , artificial, ugly and unnatural; or it is elegy - the affirmation of the lost world, the unrealizable ideal. (3)

1) G p. 89. See also pp. 24, 131 et passim.

2) Ibid., p. 45.

3) 'The "Naiveté" of Verdi', in Against the Current (London, 1979).

Schoeck had not yet written his works of satire, but the Elegie - the repetition is unavoidable - is his affirmation of the 'lost world'. It is a real elegy - not only for an unhappy love affair but for a style, a language, a whole attitude to life which the First World War and its consequences had made untenable. Of all his cycles it was Hermann Hesse's favourite.[1]

1) 'Othmar Schoeck zum siebzigsten Geburtstag', Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2 September 1956.

CHAPTER 3

GASELEN

In 1923 Schoeck completed the Elegie; and he wrote Gaselen.[1] Between those events he made two visits which brought him into contact with some of the more progressive musicians of his day and forced him to define his attitude to the musical avant garde. In June he went to Paris, where Honegger introduced him to the members of Les Six. Their cheerful destructiveness - this was the period of Dada - bewildered and repelled him, and he said he had never felt more of a German composer than in the great cosmopolitan city.[2] Two months later he was in Salzburg, accompanying some of his songs at the first festival of the ISCM. Of this visit he later remarked: 'The atmosphere was already verschönbergt. I had the audience more than the clique on my side.'[3] A reaction against romanticism had set in: what Schoeck condemned as frivolous on one hand - Paris, Les Six, Stravinsky - and as aridly abstract on the other - Vienna, Schoenberg - were part of a movement away from fin-de-siècle excesses, partly artistic in origin, partly enforced by the economic consequences of the war.

Schoeck, however, saw the situation differently. To him Schoenberg and Stravinsky were decadents, bent on destroying the tradition he wanted to preserve. Schoenberg in particular he loathed, in spite of knowing very little of his music (Vogel told me he may have heard Verklärte Nacht once).[4] The mention of

1) See OS pp. 104-6, 148-52; V pp. 110-15; Corrodi, 'Othmar Schoeck's Songs', p. 134; Mohr, op.cit.; Schuh, 'Zur Harmonik der neuesten Werke von Othmar Schoeck', pp. 88, 100-1; 'Gestaltungsprinzipien im Schoeckschen Lied', p. 65 (analyses of songs V and VIII). Vocal score by Breitkopf (1925/53).

2) OS p. 104.

3) G p. 129.

4) Conversation, 31 Octoher 1971.

Schoenberg's name in the Salzburg quotation is actually unique in his conversations, as if he could not bring himself to utter the word; usually he referred to him obliquely, aiming his invective at concepts such as atonality and athematicism. 'The destruction of tonality,' he once said, 'is comparable to an act of Ghengis Khan. Harmony is demolished; it lies around, as it were, in fragments. The destroyer hurls not only one glass to the ground, but . . . another and yet another!' Again: 'Athematic music is the playground for amateurs and dilettantes', a 'cloak for a lack of melodic ideas'.[1] On another occasion, perhaps thinking of Hindemith rather than of Schoenberg, he played his song 'Nachruf', harmonising it in fourths, while his daughter added a counterpoint in the relevant style[2] - a kind of parody which is apt to backfire upon the perpetrator (see below, pp. 379-80).

Schoeck's attitude to Stravinsky was less severely expressed, partly, as he once explained with unconscious humour, because Stravinsky respected the achievements of others, partly because he had some liking for Stravinsky the man. He enjoyed the early ballets (but not the Rite) and even conducted a few of Stravinsky's works at St. Gall (see above, p. 32n). But some remarks he made to Vogel about a visit to Werner Reinhart's, when Stravinsky had been present, reveal envy and resentment:

> I had to turn the pages for him in a performance of a work for violin and piano [?]. During the playthrough Stravinsky constantly drew my attention to the thematic work, which I, however, could hardly recognise as such. He was elegantly dressed, spoke German and affected a suave, worldly-wise manner [gab sich gewandt und weltmännisch]. Very clever! He has after all spent his entire life dwelling in the most profane places of the earth!

Schoeck disliked what he knew of Stravinsky's operas, chamber music and symphonic works, no doubt for their apparent lack of expressiveness, and described the Symphony in C as 'deeply alien' to him.[3]

Gaselen was his creative expression of these antipathies. It is a setting for baritone and chamber ensemble of ten Keller

1) G pp. 113, 140, 106. 2) Ibid., p. 66.
3) Ibid., pp. 102-3, 112.

poems, brief, satirical pieces in which fanaticism is denounced and tradition defended for the time when 'the vehicle of poetry may escape from the realm of horrible Lestrygonians' (in the Odyssey, the Lestrygonians were a race of giants who fed on human flesh). The work was written in October 1923, and the first performance given on 23 February the following year with Loeffel as soloist.

In style and character Gaselen stands in sharp contrast to the Elegie: short (fifteen minutes), aggressive and sometimes deliberately grotesque. Much of the writing is uncompromisingly linear, and the rich ensemble of the earlier cycle gives way to a consort of flute/piccolo, oboe, bass clarinet, trumpet, piano and percussion. (The choice of instruments seems to parody the 'top and bottom' scoring of L'Histoire du Soldat, a work which Schoeck described as 'cockeyed' [schief] and reminiscent of Picasso's cubist faces.)[1] Schoeck's intention, then, was clearly to caricature and deride. But Keller's cycle includes some love poems; and so powerful are Schoeck's settings of them that they, and not the satirical ones, make the most lasting impression. When the splenetic final song erupts into an expansive, lyrical climax, the emotion we are left with is not bitterness but - once again - nostalgia. The work that set out to decry the fashionably up-to-date has ended by warmly embracing the past.

Schoeck lived so much later than Lenau and Eichendorff that his interest in them must be seen as something personal and idiosyncratic, rooted in special aspects of his psychology. His affection for Keller[2] was more straightforward. As a Swiss he was bound to be drawn to that author whose work was a lifelong celebration of the Swiss people and their landscapes. The Zurich known to Schoeck was larger than in Keller's day, but it still retained its quiet, rural outlook; and as late as the 1940s a custom such as that described in Keller's poem 'Sommernacht', whereby farmers gather at night to harvest a widow's corn, was

1) Ibid., p. 112.

2) Sämtliche Werke, ed. Jonas Fränkel and Carl Helbling (Berne, 1926-54). Biographical facts from J.M. Lindsay, Gottfried Keller: Life and Works (London, 1968).

still sufficiently familiar to be made the subject of a string orchestral piece (Op. 58). There were personal connections, too, through Schoeck's mother, through Robert Freund and through the cafe where both artists entertained their friends.[1]

Keller was born in Zurich in 1819. His first enthusiasm was painting; but when he went to Munich to study art he completed few pictures, sold even fewer and inundated his mother with demands. His novel Der grüne Heinrich was later to describe his experiences and, in some measure, to expiate them by having the hero die of grief - a notion which shows that morbidity, inherited perhaps from Heine, which sometimes affects his work. In the 1840s Keller began writing poetry. His first collection, published in 1846, included an early version of Lebendig begraben and many other poems later set by Schoeck, and such was its success that Keller was given a grant to study in Germany. There he met the philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, who encouraged him to abandon his religious beliefs. The publication of the first version of Der grüne Heinrich (1853) established him as his country's leading novelist.

In 1855 Keller returned to Zurich, and for a time he was a member of the Wagner circle. Despite his success his income was still small, and in 1861 he obtained the post of Cantonal Secretary. He fulfilled his duties conscientiously for fifteen years, but during this time published little, and he retired with a sense of having neglected his true gift. His last decade, by contrast, was prolific, in spite of declining health and growing misanthropy: the Züricher Novellen (1878), the revised Der grüne Heinrich (1879) and the Gesammelte Gedichte (1883), among other works, all date from these years. He died in 1890.

Most of Keller's poetry is early work, written before he came under Feuerbach's influence, and many of the poems set by Schoeck have a mystical, pantheistic quality which the later Keller might have rejected. In 'Unter Sternen' (the poem from which Schoeck's cycle takes its name) the poet declares a feeling of oneness with the universe; in 'Stille der Nacht' the reverence for

1) G pp. 122, 126-7.

night recalls Eichendorff. The last song of Schoeck's Unter Sternen has the poet being comforted by a star:

> Tröste dich nur, dein Lied ist fern,
> fern bei uns und nicht verloren!

Schoeck stressed the significance for him of these words: they represented a kind of faith which, like the piety of Eichendorff or Claudius, corresponded to his own religious position.[1] Keller's love of country, his moral toughness and his sense of humour were qualities greatly sympathetic to Schoeck, who felt a strong personal affinity for the writer. Once he passed the house in which Keller spent the last year of his life, and took off his hat with the words: 'No one knows what he suffered up there. One cannot take one's hat off to him deeply enough.'[2] For the sake of this affinity, he felt, deficiencies in the poems could be overlooked. 'His language is not so [finely] "heard" as Lenau's; that is because it is heavily loaded down with ideas. One really has the feeling one is pushing a heavy barrow uphill!'[3]

The relative unmusicality of Keller's verse may explain why it has so rarely been set to music. There are collections of Alte Weisen by Wolf and Pfitzner, and three settings each by Brahms and Schoenberg; but to musicians Keller is perhaps best known as the author of the story on which Delius's opera A Village Romeo and Juliet (1900-1) is based. Schoeck himself had difficulties with Keller's language, not only in 'Jugendgedenken' but also in Lebendig begraben, with its discursive narrative style. Of his other Keller settings, Unter Sternen, 'Heerwagen' from the Notturno and the choral Vision (1949) represent the 'metaphysical' Keller; Sommernacht the pastoral writer; and Wegelied, a choral and orchestral piece dating from 1913, the nationalist. The quantity and variety of these pieces show the author as a continuing presence and inspiration in Schoeck's music.

In his Gaselen Keller subscribed to that fashion for the

1) Ibid., p. 46. See also pp. 116, 131.
2) OS p. 285.
3) G p. 166. See also pp. 51, 77, 110, 115-16, 131, 176-7.

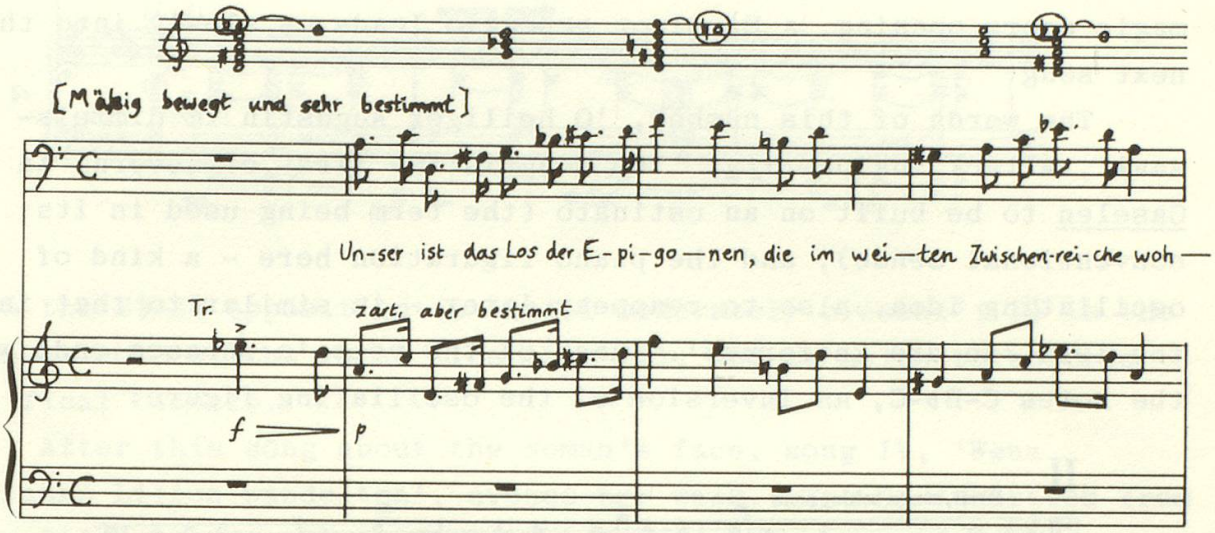
oriental which had started with Goethe's Westöstlicher Divan. The ghazal (Arabic: web, cocoon) was a thirteenth-century verse form, used by Persian poets and adapted to German by Platen and Rückert. Its chief characteristic is its rhyme scheme. According to this, the rhyme appears in the first two lines and then every alternate line, thus: AA-BA-CA-DA etc. Eighteen Gaselen were among Keller's Neuere Gedichte (1851); in the 1883 edition this number was reduced to ten; and these ten were set by Schoeck without change.

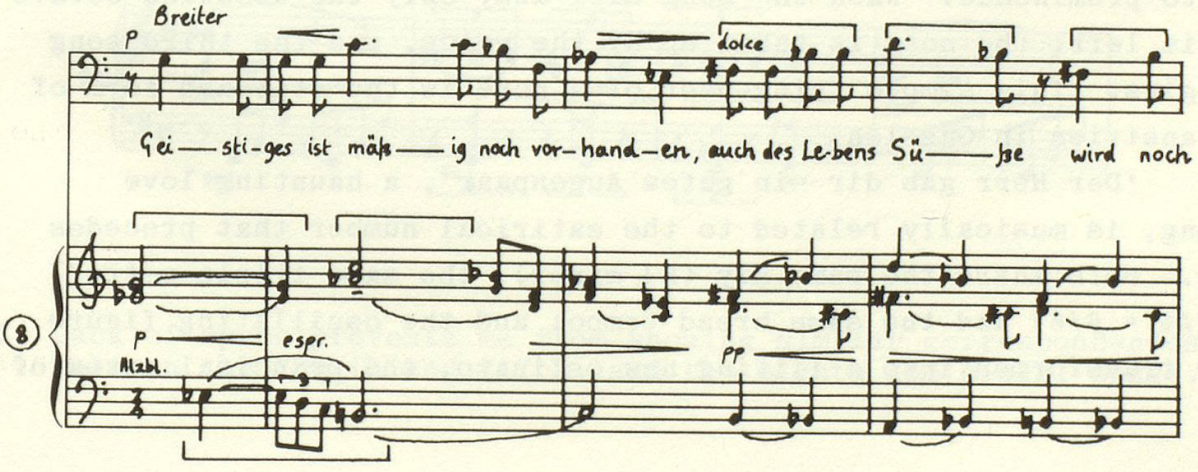
The poems were discussed briefly in the biographical chapter (p. 48). The first two are satirical. The following six are love poems as extravagant as the Hafez they emulate. The ninth poem acts as a bridge between the two genres, with the poet rebuked by the fanatic for lying in a woman's arms when he should be fighting. The tenth and last poem, the one about the hat, is also satirical, but it ends with an unexpected amorous flourish:

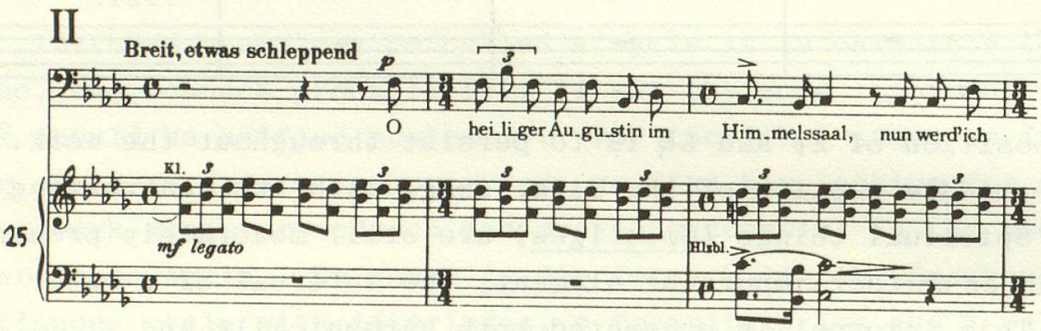
> In seinem [the hat's] Schatten neige dich, Schlusston von allem meinem Singen,
> mein treues Lieb, und tröste mich mit deiner Lippen süsser Glut!

If these poems can be called a cycle it is only in a loose sense, and Schoeck probably felt it all the more important that the work should be unified musically. For the first time, so far as song cycle structure is concerned, we find him looking for a model - for a work whose procedures had proved successful in the past and might do so again. He chose An die ferne Geliebte, Beethoven's continuous cycle with interludes, a recapitulation and a well-balanced tonal scheme. All these devices he incorporated into Gaselen, almost as if he were afraid that the work would not stand up without them; and to be doubly sure he added a system of recurring motifs. To see how these devices fit together we have to go through the work in detail.

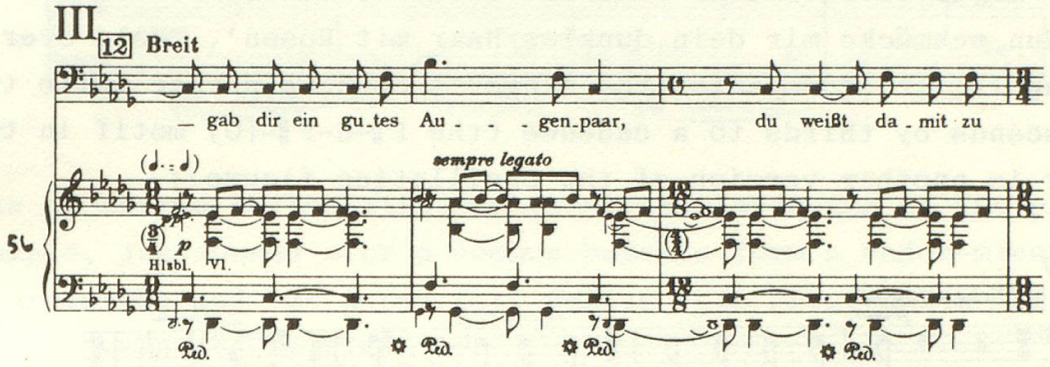
The cycle begins with a jaunty, angular theme in dotted rhythm. 'Unser ist das Los der Epigonen' (Ours is the fate of the decadents), sings the soloist, and a unison trumpet adds its circusy comment. This theme is discussed in detail below, but besides noting its vulgar scoring we should also not a certain blankness of expressive character, stemming partly from the fact that it is unaccompanied, partly from its tonal ambiguity - G minor

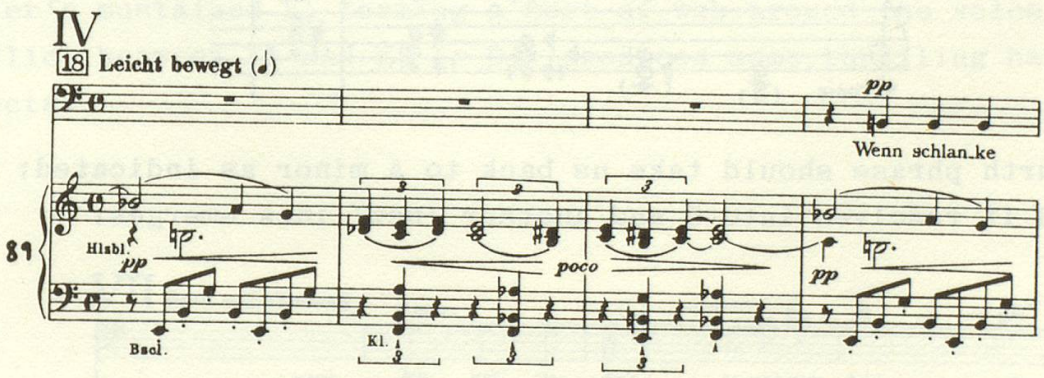
or G major? The means of effecting this ambiguity are crucial for the rest of the piece. The first note to be heard is E♭, a pitch which helps to define the G minor of bar 2. In bar 3 the minor mode is undercut by E♮, used as dominant of an A minor triad - a triad which is foreign to G minor but diatonic to G major. Before G major can be established, however, another E♭ restores the minor and initiates a varied repeat of the phrase:

This opposition of E♭ and E♮ is to persist throughout the work.

The middle section of the first song, with its contrasting text - 'Spiritual things [Geistiges] are still moderately present' - introduces another important element, the interval of a major third. This interval is presented both harmonically and melodically, with the voice outlining an augmented triad:

(The dissonance on 'mässig' is actually less daring than it looks: the basic chord is a diminished seventh, with A♭ and C acting as heightened appoggiaturas to F and A♭, notes which are reached only as the harmony changes. There is a precedent for this usage in Die Zauberflöte, at Sarastro's words: 'doch geb' ich dir die Freiheit nicht'.) The dotted theme returns for the poem's closing lines; then, while the woodwind sustain an octave F♯, there is a stroke on the tamtam and a low B♭ on the piano (its first entry), and like magic doors opening, a B♭ minor arpeggio leads us slowly into the next song.

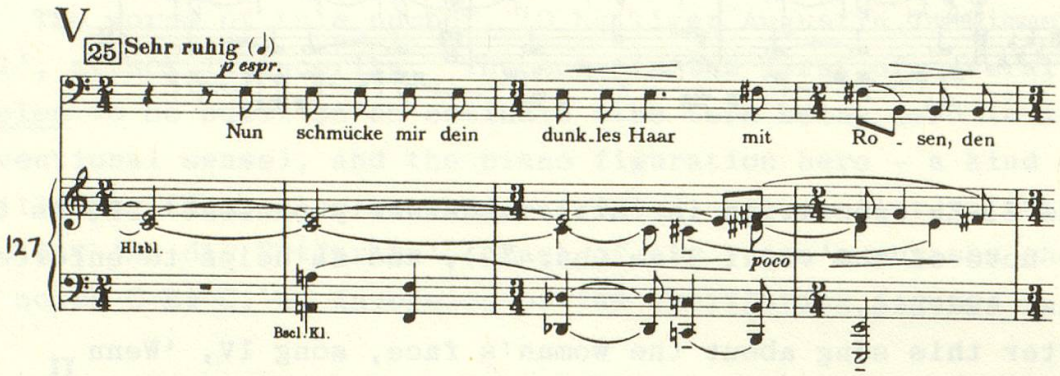
The words of this number, 'O heiliger Augustin im Himmelssaal', attack insincerity. The song is the first of several in Gaselen to be built on an ostinato (the term being used in its conventional sense), and the piano figuration here - a kind of oscillating idea, also to reappear later - is similar to that in the 1914 'An die Entfernte'. Each of the voice's phrases ends with the notes C-B♭-C, an inversion of the oscillating figure:

As the music intensifies, the voice rises twice to a high E♭, and at the climax it rises to E♮ - again the same two notes brought into prominence. When the song dies away only the woodwind octave C is left; the note is taken up by the voice, and the third song begins. This simple tying-over of a note is the standard form of transition in Gaselen.

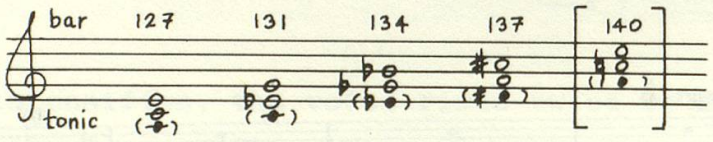
'Der Herr gab dir ein gutes Augenpaar', a haunting love song, is musically related to the satirical number that precedes it. Both share the same key (B♭ minor), the same triple metre (3/4 = 9/8) and the same broad tempo; and the oscillating figure is transformed into a lilting new ostinato, the principal notes of

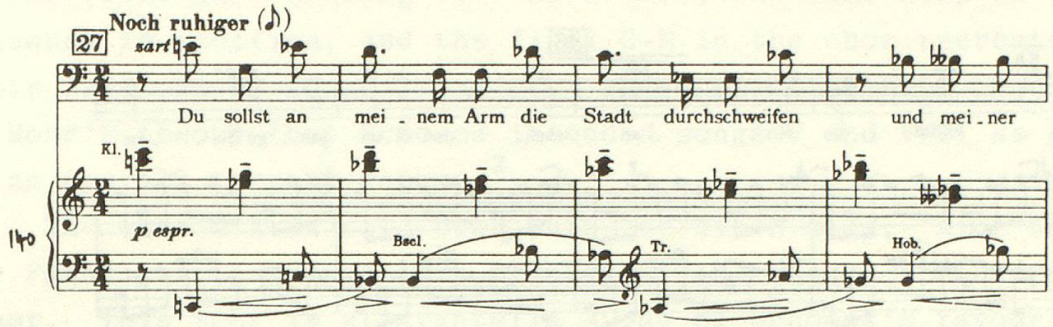
which (E♭-F) have been raucously anticipated in song II (bars 36 and 38). Moreover the two vocal lines show a striking similarity of range and contour, at least in their first four phrases:[1]

Even the E♭-E♮ opposition is 'still moderately present': E♭ is the highest note of the vocal line (bar 72), and E♮ helps to enforce the final cadence.

After this song about the woman's face, song IV, 'Wenn schlanke Lilien wandelten', evokes her walk. The B♭ inherited from song III descends over a staccato, Stravinskian bass to a new, swaying triplet theme in flute and oboe. Though the theme is new, its elements are familiar: not only the triplets, but the major thirds, the oscillating movement and the alternation between D♯ (=E♭) and E♮:

1) Lack of space prevents me from showing similar correspondences between the fourth and fifth, and the eighth and ninth, songs.

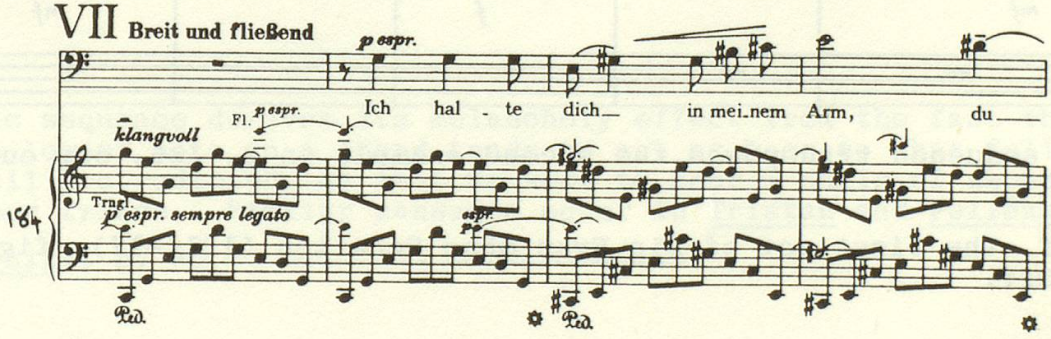
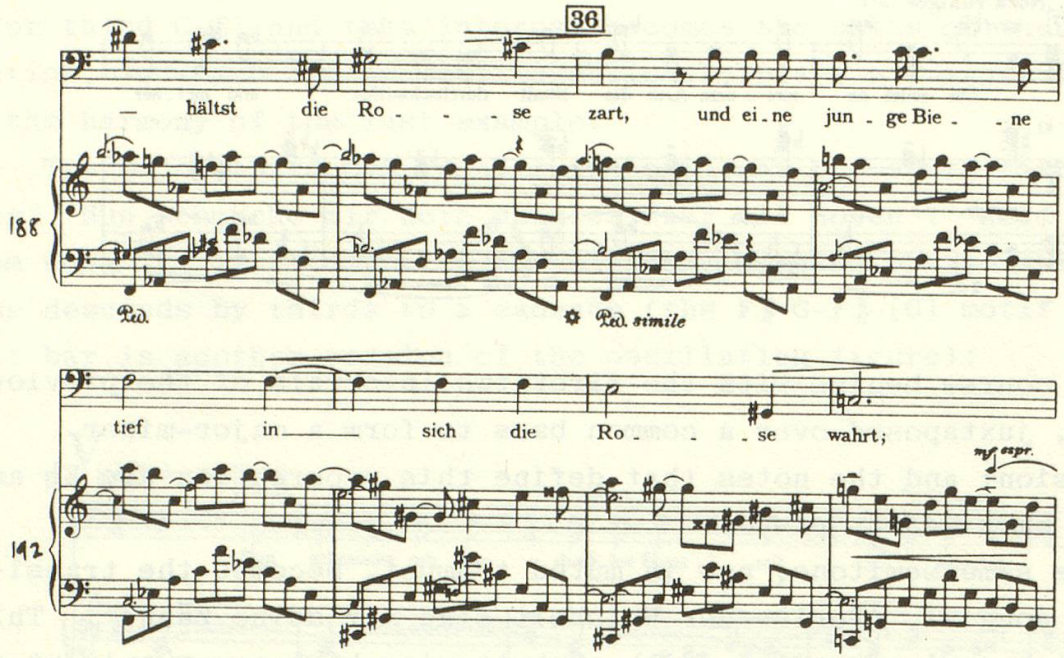
Several varied restatements follow, each coming to rest on the major third C-E; and this interval becomes the basis of the final section, in which the trumpet lugubriously plays a C major fanfare to the harmony of the last example.

The major third C-E is also the basis of the short fifth song, 'Nun schmücke mir dein dunkles Haar mit Rosen'. Held over from song IV, it accompanies the singer's opening phrase while the bass descends by thirds to a cadence (the F♯-G-F♯-[G] motif in the last bar is another version of the oscillating figure):

This pattern is repeated three times in symmetrically higher transpositions. Now, if we take the first inverval of each phrase, we get the following scheme:

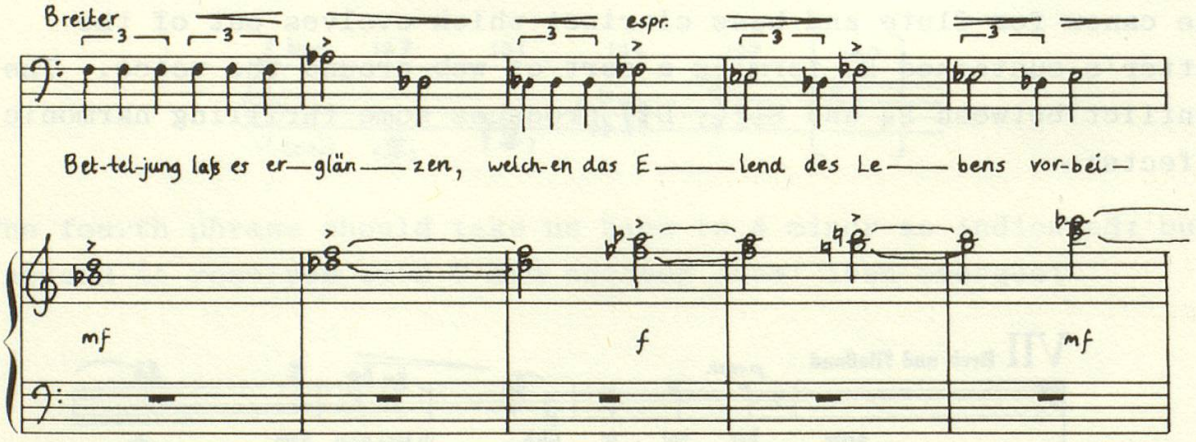


The fourth phrase should take us back to A minor as indicated; but instead it resolves into C and another 'new' idea emerges:

This of course begins with the first two intervals of the previous example, juxtaposed over a common bass to form a major-minor progression; and the notes that define this progression are E♮ and E♭ (cf. bars 145-6, piano).

The same semitone, now in muted trumpet, becomes the transition to song VI, 'Perlen der Weisheit sind mir deine Zähne'. This is a quick parlando piece, with a chattering high accompaniment in oboe, muted trumpet and piano. Clashes of E♭ and E♮ abound; the rhythmic groupings - combinations of triplets and ordinary quavers - look back to song II. The song is over in twenty-six bars; then a regular triplet rhythm emerges, and the bass clarinet climbs to the E above middle C in preparation for the next song.

This number, 'Ich halte dich in meinem Arm', is longer than many of the others and the most lyrical before the final climax. It is a strophic love song, and one of its loveliest features is the canon for flute and bass clarinet which evolves out of the latter's sustained E, forming a sort of web around the voice. The conflict between E♮ and E♭ (= D♯) produces some thrilling harmonic effects:

An expansive Straussian postlude[1] muses over these elements.

Again the note E provides the link. Left suspended in the oboe, it falls expressively to E♭; then the voice begins the minuscule eighth song, 'Berge dein Haupt'. For the first nine bars - over half its length - voice and oboe share the material; then the piano enters with a familiar sequence of thirds (note the F♭-E♭ semitones in the voice on the words 'Elend des Lebens'):



This sequence transposes the second example on p. 186, our outline

1) Cf. the first act of Die Frau ohne Schatten (1911-17), fig. 90ff.

of the first part of song V.[1] As before, the last step in the sequence is modified, and the final C-E in the oboe recreates the basic interval of songs IV and V. These relationships lend weight to Mohr's theory that Schoeck intended songs V and VIII as pivots in an overall ternary scheme.[2]

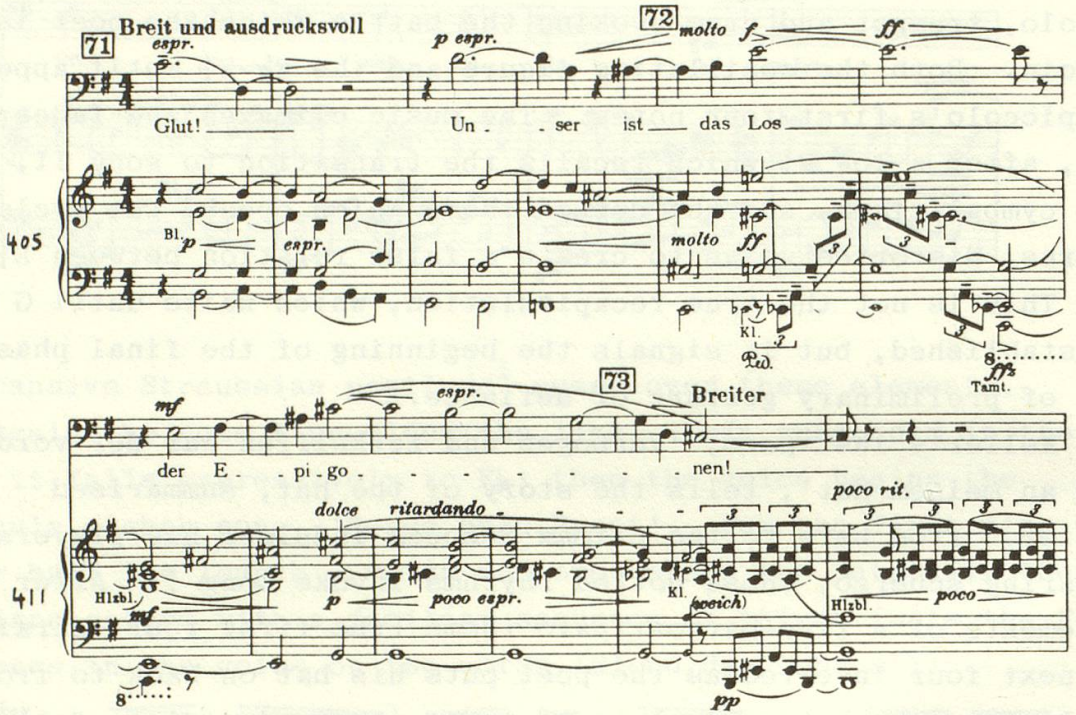
The oboe's E is tied over into the ninth song, 'Mich tadelt der Fanatiker', and persists throughout it, though the key is B♭ minor. This song is a tarantella - one of Schoeck's favourite dance-rhythms (cf. the contemporaneous Second Quartet) - with piccolo, trumpet and drum evoking the battle which the poet is loth to join. Both the oscillating figure and the E♮-E♭ motif appear in the piccolo's first four notes. The music climaxes and fades; then, after a low B♭ which recalls the transition to song II, there is a cymbal clash, and the dotted theme which opened the cycle returns, distorted so as to create a false relation between E♭ and E♮. This is not the true recapitulation, which waits until G major is established, but it signals the beginning of the final phase - a sort of preliminary gesture of defiance.

Keller's last poem, 'Verbogen und zerkniffen war der vordre Rand an meinem Hut', tells the story of the hat, summarised earlier. From here to the climax Schoeck indulges his players with a tearing scherzo, whose dotted rhythms invoke song I. After ten statements of a five-bar ostinato theme (the first four 'straight', the next four inverted as the poet puts his hat on back to front, the last two back to normal as he turns it round again), followed by a few bars of transition, the music emerges onto a lyrical plateau for Keller's amorous concluding lines; and now the recapitulation proper begins. Freed of its singsong dotted rhythm and its brazen trumpet sonority, the opening melody pours forth against a rich, 'orchestral' background, topped by the oscillating figure, now expanded to a third. For twenty-six bars of G major it

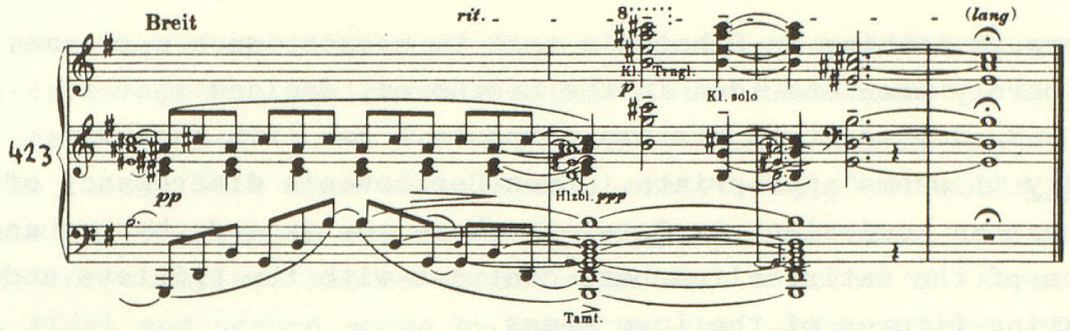
1) This sequence derives its melancholy effect from the fact that the lowest note in a chord tends to act as bass to what follows until contradicted, so that we seem to hear a chain of ascending minor triads. Similar passages occur in Tristan and Pelléas.

2) Op.cit., p. 86.

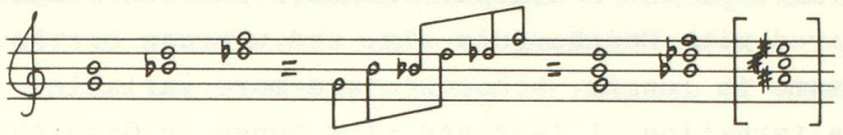
soars - Schoeck marks two notes 'espressivo', E♭ and E - until the background movement subsides and a series of wind chords ushers in the coda. To a new, melismatic phrase the voice recalls the words of the first poem - 'Unser ist das Los der Epigonen' - rising on 'Los' to a climactic E against an E♭ bass (Schoeck seems to have experimented with every possible combination of these notes):



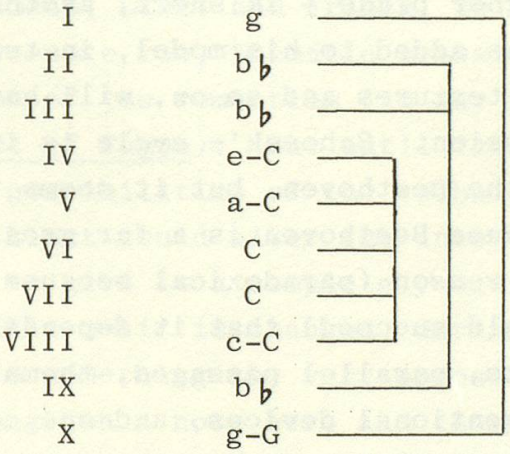
There is a last wistful reminiscence of the dotted theme, broken up Webern-like between the instruments; and then the music resolves on a combination of G major and A♯ minor:



The harmony here compresses the sequences in songs V and VIII:



Schoeck's dependence on An die ferne Geliebte for the formal ideas in Gaselen has already been noted, both in this chapter and in Part I. What needs to be stressed, now we have looked at the work, is the extent of this dependence; some ideas, indeed, are not easily explicable without it. From the point of view of the text, there is no reason why the opening theme should return at the end (or why the songs should be presented continuously, for that matter). In Beethoven there are verbal correspondences to justify this; Schoeck does it because it feels right musically - and the basis for this feeling is provided by the Beethoven. Again, Schoeck's tonal scheme, with its central subdominant area flanked by remoter keys, is clearly modelled on Beethoven:



Yet there is nothing in Schoeck's text to suggest such a scheme; he has merely seen the idea in the Beethoven, decided that it works, and adapted it to his own purposes - and this because musically it seems appropriate. Even Beethoven's discrepancy of styles has an equivalent in Gaselen, where the jagged rhythms and contours of the satirical numbers contrast with the triplets and oscillating figures of the love songs.

But if the similarities between the two works are striking, the differences are even more so. The most obvious concerns the length and balance of the sections. Schoeck has ten songs in his cycle as compared with Beethoven's six, and whereas Beethoven's are all much the same in length, Schoeck's are more variable. In addition the alternation of fast and slow songs in Gaselen means that there is no opportunity for the kind of gradual intensification that we find in Beethoven. This is merely a result of the way the poems are arranged, but it seems characteristic of the difference between the two works (and between the two composers) that the Beethoven presses dynamically forward while the Schoeck is continually breaking down into lyrical slow movements.

This difference in character may explain some of the other differences. For the 'remoter' area between his tonic and subdominant zones, Beethoven chooses the bright mediant and submediant major keys; Schoeck goes to the mediant minor, with correspondingly darker effect. Again, Beethoven makes his recapitulation the basis of an exciting stretto; Schoeck's recapitulation follows upon an agitated section, providing a lyrical resolution which also carries the music onto a higher plane - in short, another Aufhellung.

What Schoeck has added to his model, in terms of recurring intervals, rhythms, textures and so on, will have emerged in the course of the discussion. Schoeck's cycle is in some ways more sophisticated than the Beethoven, but it seems to me less successful, not merely because Beethoven is a far greater composer, but for the paradoxical reason (paradoxical because this was why Schoeck hoped it would succeed) that it depends so heavily on its model. Motivic links, parallel passages, thematic recapitulations - all these are conventional devices, and one composer is as free to use them as another. But to take over a whole formal concept,

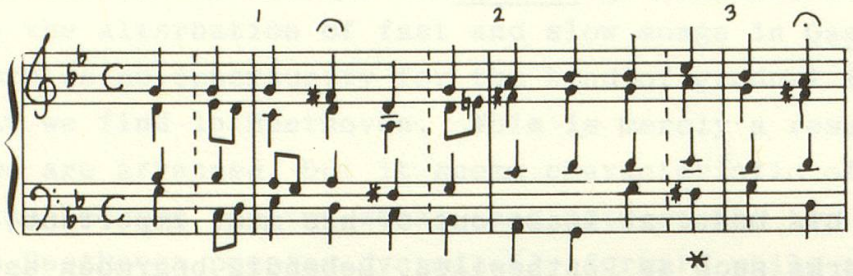
without regard for the conditions which created that concept - Jeitteles' poems, Beethoven's own artistic development - is to risk incoherence; and though Schoeck's cycle contains some beautiful music (along with much that is deliberately ugly) it would be claiming too much to say he wholly escapes that risk. It seems odd, for example, that he should make such a point of 'separating' his first and second songs by means of the tamtam stroke (cf. the semi-tone drop at the start of Beethoven's second song), and then of linking his second and third, when the real break should surely come between the latter pair; and then five songs in the sub-dominant at the middle are one - or perhaps three - too many. But there are other reasons why Gaselen is not one of Schoeck's best works.

*

If not one of his best, at least one of his most important; for without it, works such as Penthesilea, Lebendig begraben and the Notturno - works which really are among his finest - could hardly have come into existence. This is because it was the first to explore as a leading principle what was soon to become the dominating technical idea in his music: thematic transformation, or, more specifically, thematic transformation by rhythm.

There was nothing new about thematic transformation as such in the 1920s. From the late Beethoven sonatas and quartets, through the Wanderer Fantasy of Schubert and the cyclic compositions of Schumann, Liszt and Franck, to the endless metamorphoses of a twelve-note row, thematic transformation had been a central preoccupation of the romantics (to say nothing of earlier works such as The Art of Fugue). But until fairly late in the period the rhythmic possibilities of the technique had been largely neglected. Liszt could alter the intervals in a theme, or Wagner its harmony, to give it a completely different character, as when the noble Valhalla motif is changed, during the course of Götterdämmerung, into something the very opposite of noble; but though they might lengthen a note here and there, or even change the time signature, they rarely tampered with the basic

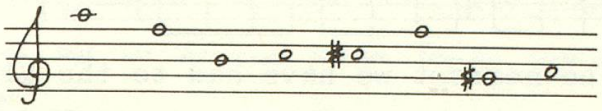
rhythmic framework. That is to say, the durations might be altered, but the allocation of stresses was left unchanged.

This was because these composers worked within a closed harmonic system. To alter the stresses in a melody would have meant altering the rhythmic relationship of the accompanying harmonies, so that consonances took the place of dissonances and vice versa. The resulting reversal of harmonic tensions would have made nonsense of the expressive effect these tensions were calculated to produce, and by implication would have subverted the whole tonal system. The point can be made by reversing the stresses in a Bach chorale (original barring indicated in broken lines):

Those pairs of chords which stand like pillars on Bach's third and fourth beats (dominant harmony in bar 1, tonic in bar 2) now move to second and third beats, with devastating effect - the first chord in each pair becomes a deadening anticipation of the second. Similarly Bach's dissonances, emphasised by their strong rhythmic position (especially the diminished seventh at *), lose much of their power by being relegated to the weak beats, while the passing diminished chord in bar 2 is given undue prominence.

Naturally, only a style characterised by a certain degree of tension could be weakened in this way. One could, in theory, write music in which the dissonance level was so low that the rhythm could be varied without loss, but this the nineteenth century would have found too bland. (The alternative - total chromaticism - was impossible for other reasons, and in any case it is doubtful that all sense of consonance and dissonance could be removed by this means.) Rhythmic variation, then, was something composers tended to avoid. When Beethoven used it in the finale of his Piano Sonata, Op. 109 (Variation I), he did so only by slowing the

harmonic rate from two chords in a bar to one; and even then the rhythmic changes were only sporadic.

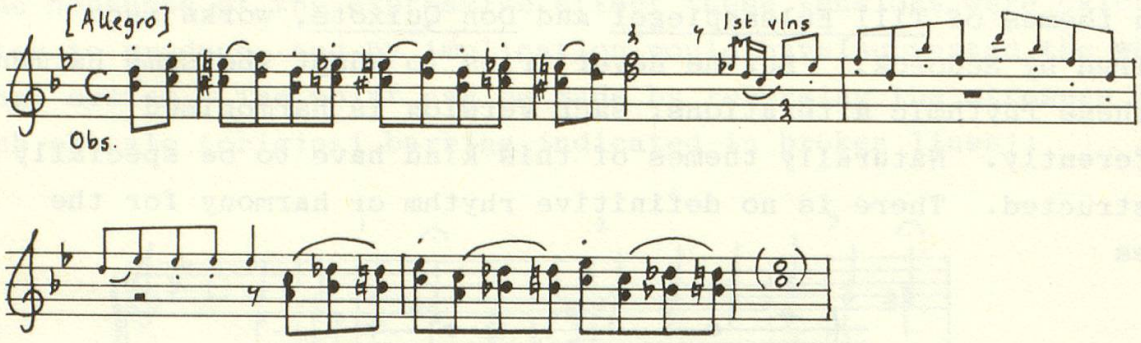
Even much later, when tonal relationships had become more flexible, the consonance-dissonance relation was still respected. (Two exceptional passages are discussed in the next chapter.) Strauss in his tone poems uses themes which appear over and over again in different guises, sometimes with altered stresses: see the main themes of Till Eulenspiegel and Don Quixote, works much admired by Schoeck.[1] But he never tries to adapt the same harmony to these rhythmic alterations: each version is harmonised differently. Naturally themes of this kind have to be specially constructed. There is no definitive rhythm or harmony for the notes



- what matters is the third and the tritone and the semitone, which with all the other intervals can be formed into any rhythmic relationship and many different harmonisations (certain harmonisations are implied). It is almost a matter of definition that a theme reduced to its 'bare bones' like this, devoid of harmony and rhythm, must also be devoid of expressive character; and this is what makes it so apt for transformation. As it is harmonised, reharmonised and given a variety of rhythmic patterns, it can take on any character the composer wishes; and Strauss exploits these possibilities with supreme resource.

In his conversations Schoeck shows himself especially sensitive to composers' use of variation, whether Bach's many harmonisations of the same chorale ('for me that is the real art of variation'), Brahms's motivic work in the Second Symphony, or Reger's compositions in variation form.[2] He once played to Vogel the last eight bars of 'O Isis und Osiris', comparing the change of harmony to a verbal effect in Goethe's poem 'Erster Verlust'.[3] His

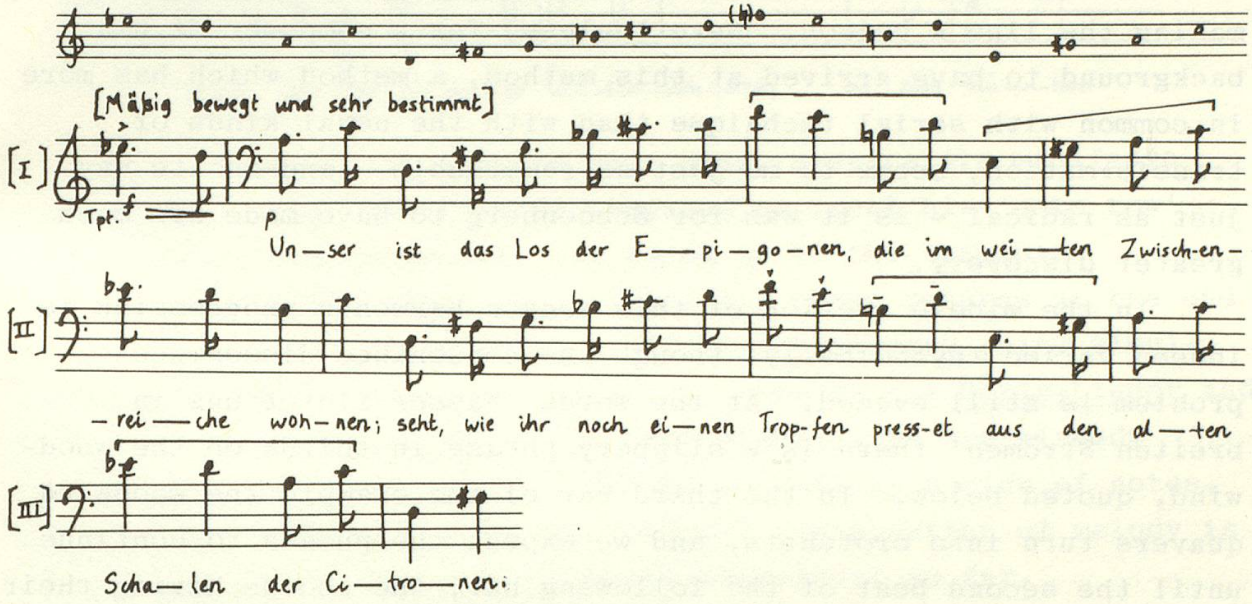
1) G p. 57. 2) Ibid., pp. 45, 22, 95.
3) Ibid., p. 136.

most interesting comments, however, have to do with rhythm. Referring to the Blue Danube Waltz, with its famous triadic upbeat, he once pointed out the subtlety of the second phrase, where Strauss extends the upbeat back into the previous bar by adding an extra crotchet.[1] On another occasion he played the opening of Mozart's Piano Concerto in B♭, K.450, showing how a simple rhythmic alteration can take the music 'into another world':[2]

This example is the nearest we have had to the kind of variation discussed above, whereby the stresses in a melody, rather than the mere durations, are altered. Mozart can do this here because the harmonic rate is slow and because the chords are simple tonic and dominant; but the effect is highly exceptional, and if Schoeck had a model for his transformation technique it was more likely to be Strauss. Schoeck himself pointed out the resemblance between the Till theme and a melody from Tristan, calling Strauss's tune the 'Tristanspiegel'.[3] His delight in Strauss's operas and tone poems was noted in Part I, and their influence on his work, especially where thematic transformation is concerned, is perhaps its most solid technical connection with other music of the age.

Gaselen was not the first work of Schoeck's to use rhythmic variation - see the remarks on the Hafis-Lieder above - but it is the first in which it asserts itself as a principle. It does this in the most aggressive possible way, at the beginning of the first song (which as well as being a gibe at the moderns thus becomes a manifesto for Schoeck's own future development): hence the 'brazen'

1) Ibid., p. 101. 2) Ibid., pp. 175-6.
3) Ibid., p. 66. See also p. 57.

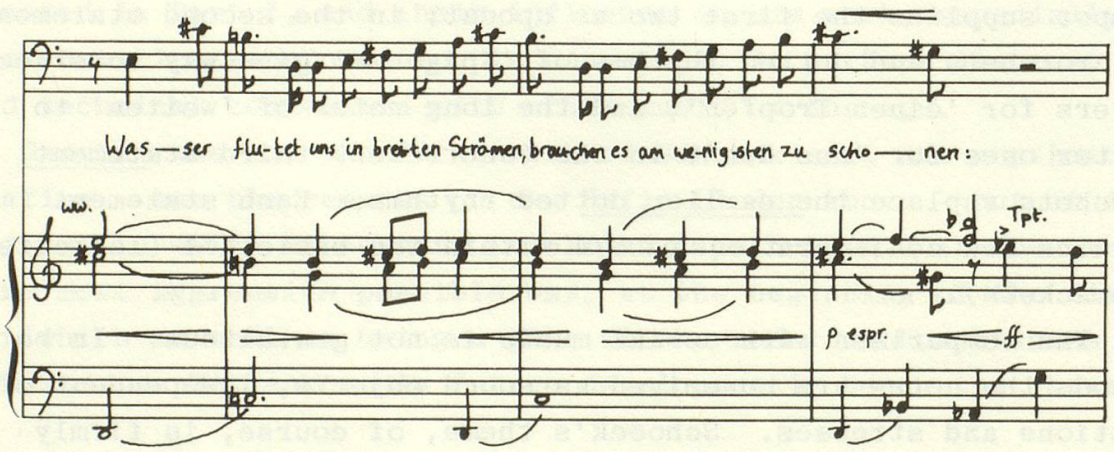
trumpet scoring, the unaccompanied nature of the line, and the blankness of expressive character - the theme must be blank, in order to allow for its transformations. If we write out the notes of the theme in the manner of our Till example, together with the first three statements (or rather two and a half - the third breaks off after six notes), we can see the rhythmic changes:



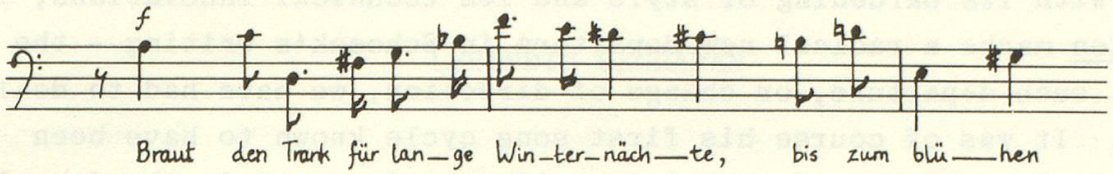
Schoeck is here using his theme as a kind of note row, going through the notes until he comes to the end and then starting again, the rhythm being varied according to the declamation (the statements of the theme do not coincide with the lines of the poem). It suits the words to begin on the third note, so the trumpet supplies the first two as upbeat; in the second statement the crotchets and dotted rhythms of 'Epigonen' give way to staccato quavers for 'einen Tropfen', and the long notes of 'weiten' to shorter ones for 'aus den'; in the (shortened) third statement crotchets replace the earlier dotted rhythms. Each statement contains new configurations of 3/4 within the basic 4/4 (indicated by brackets).

The comparison with serial music is not gratuitous. In both methods the notes are conceived as sound objects, independent of durations and stresses. Schoeck's theme, of course, is firmly tonal in its implications, deriving its circular quality from being built on a perpetual sequence, namely V of ii-ii-V-i. (It would be easy to rewrite the theme so that each step of the sequence began a

tone higher.) But if the theme has tonal implications, the implications of the method seem to me to be anti-tonal, in that the substitutions of consonance for dissonance and vice versa which would result if the variations were applied harmonically as well as melodically, would threaten to subvert the tonal system; and it is interesting that Schoeck fights shy of these latter implications by making the line a unison. Nevertheless, for a composer of his background to have arrived at this method, a method which has more in common with serial technique than with the usual kinds of transformation, seems to me just as remarkable - and in its way just as radical - as it was for Schoenberg to have made his much greater discovery.

In the middle section of this song a harmonic progression is indeed varied rhythmically, though the consonance-dissonance problem is still evaded. At the words 'Wasser flutet uns in breiten Strömen' there is a slippery phrase in thirds on the woodwind, quoted below. In the third bar of the example the woodwind quavers turn into crotchets, and we expect the phrase to continue until the second beat of the following bar, the chords having their stresses reversed and their cadential feeling destroyed (meanwhile the voice is asserting the basic 4/4). When we reach the fourth bar, however, the phrase continues upwards - the 'evasion' - and the trumpet bursts in with the reprise:

The most interesting aspect of the reprise is Schoeck's removal of two notes from and addition of two notes to his 'row',

probably for the sake of the declamation (he wants the stress to fall on 'Winter' rather than '-nächte', as would have been the case had the notes been C♯-D-F-E instead of F-E-D♯-C♯). Once again the line is unaccompanied:



It is significant that in this song, despite its manifesto-like quality, Schoeck is still prepared to treat his 'note row' quite freely; and he has not yet faced up to the harmonic implications of his technique. (When the theme returns at the end of the cycle he has full tonic and dominant harmony going simultaneously.) This is surprising since, both in the Hafis-Lieder and in a song to be discussed in the next chapter, he had already started to organise series of chords, as well as series of notes, in this way. But so far as the 'serial' organisation of melody is concerned, this is his most rigorous experiment so far.

The other significant technical development in Gaselen is the increased use of ostinato (ostinato in the conventional sense). There are no ostinati of the kind found in the Elegie, where a motif is varied, transposed etc., but in several songs a phrase is repeated obsessively without change - song IX, for example, or the first part of X. It is as if the Schoeckian ostinato, so pliant and expressive in the early years, is stiffening into something tougher to match the more militant mood of the twenties.

Two further songs require comment. 'Wenn schlanke Lilien wandelten', quoted on p. 185, continues the tendency towards textural fragmentation noted earlier, with a series of sharply contrasted elements - the suave woodwind theme, the staccato bass, the piano's offbeat chords - juxtaposed in different ways but always preserving their separate identities. In 'Berge dein Haupt', on the other hand, a major-minor change - the oboe's E♮-E♭ motif - is repeated so many times, unrelieved by any contrasting harmonic function, that it becomes a kind of disembodied acoustical effect - like the major-minor changes in 'Verlorenes Glück', but

more detached and enigmatic. Both songs represent a further step towards the 'expressionism' of Penthesilea and Lebendig begraben, works in which for long stretches conventional textures dissolve in favour of a 'free association' of motivic ideas.

With its hardening of style and its technical innovations, Gaselen marks a radical new departure in Schoeck's writing - the first such departure, or change of direction, we have had to deal with. It was of course his first song cycle known to have been conceived as such, and a certain self-consciousness in the formal treatment, with its motifs, tonal scheme and so on, is unmistakable. The way in which the thematic transformation technique, Schoeck's other principal 'discovery', is presented - with the help of a trumpet! - is also a trifle brash, though for the song concerned a certain degree of brashness is appropriate.

More serious reservations attach to the actual quality of the thematic material. It is all very well to argue, as one can of the ninth song, that Schoeck's intentions are ironic, and that the piffling tune is given mordancy by the syncopated bass just as Mahler's melodies are by their complex harmonies and phrase-structures. In Schoeck's case one's main impression is not of mordancy but of triviality, and triviality of a kind which debases the composer more than it does the enemies he wishes to satirise. One feels this problem is connected with the larger one mentioned earlier: that of an inherent confusion of genres, as if Schoeck has not really made up his mind what sort of work he wants to write, whether satirical or sentimental. The love songs, for example, are deeply felt, yet in a satirical work this very depth of feeling detracts: the satire loses its edge. The satirical songs, on the other hand, are not greatly distinguished musically. Because of this confusion, coupled with a too ready acceptance of a given form, one may be forgiven for finding Gaselen a less satisfactory work than some of Schoeck's other cycles.

CHAPTER 4

LEBENDIG BEGRABEN

In 1844 Keller, still relatively unknown, received a strange request. The director of the Zurich hospital suffered from fears of being entombed while in a state of suspended animation, and to allay these fears he asked Keller to write a poem on the subject (he later rewarded him with a hundred bottles of Tokay). The result of this commission was Gedanken eines Lebendig-Begrabenen ('Thoughts of One Buried Alive'), a cycle of nineteen poems published in 1846. It takes the form of a narrative, whose hero, after an illness the nature of which is not explained, finds himself buried alive. He rages at his predicament, then resigns himself to it, and finally expires in an ecstatic farewell to life. For the Gesammelte Gedichte, forty years later, Keller reduced the number of poems to fourteen, revised and shortened many of them, and retitled the work Lebendig begraben; and this was the version set by Schoeck.

The cycle constitutes something of an aberration for Keller. He was never to write another poem of such length, and its macabre intensity, influenced by Heine, is worlds removed from the spirit of the novels. However, though the intensity is exceptional, neither the theme nor the manner is unique in Keller. The work represents an early explosion of that morbidity which is also seen in his original ideas for Der grüne Heinrich, with its 'cypress-dark' ending in which he planned to 'bury everyone'.[1] Though these ideas were soon suppressed, the morbidity was often to return. The burial theme recurs in such poems as 'Winternacht' (1851), where the poet discovers a fairy trapped beneath the ice of a frozen

1) See Lindsay, op.cit. p. 23.

lake, and in that episode of Kleider machen Leute (1874) in which Strapinski is lost in the snow. Schoeck compared what he called Keller's 'sadistic trait' to the visions of Breughel and Hieronymus Bosch.[1]

The work is not wholly morbid, however. The descriptions of pine woods and village life towards the end have a lyrical beauty which reminds us that Keller's first interest was painting, not literature; while in portraying the oncoming of death the final poem goes beyond anything else I know of in his work. It takes the 'mystical, pantheistic' element in poems like 'Unter Sternen' and makes it cosmic and impressionistic:

> Schon seh ich schimmernd fliessen Zeit in Zeiten,
> verlieren sich in unbegrenzte Weiten
> Gefilde, Bergeshöhen, Wolkenflug:
> die Ewigkeit in einem Atemzug!
>
> Der letzte Hauch ein wallend Meer von Leben,
> wo fliehend die Gedanken mir entschweben!
> Fahr hin, o Selbst! Vergängliches Idol,
> wer du auch bist, leb wohl du, fahre wohl!

- all this fifteen years before Tristan. The only similar ending in contemporary literature is that of Les Fleurs du Mal (1857), where the poet tells Death, his 'Old Captain', to raise anchor and plunge with him

> Au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel, qu'importe?
> Au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du nouveau!

But even this is rhetorical rather than 'actual', an echo of Poe's drowned sailors. For a better comparison we must turn to two twentieth-century novellas. In Mann's Der Tod in Venedig (1913) the hero's death is conveyed metaphorically by the wonderful description of Tadzio walking out to sea; and in Hesse's Klein und Wagner (1920) the hero actually drowns. In both passages there is an impressionistic attempt to convey the feelings and sensations associated with death, this attempt also being the work's apotheosis; and Keller's ending, with its 'surging sea of life' from which the poet now longs to escape, has a similar spirit. (Schoeck brings in a chorus to represent the sea; soloist and chorus try to drown each other; he wins.)

1) G p. 110.

In the year in which Keller first drafted his cycle, Poe's short story The Premature Burial appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper - a treatment of the theme even more horrific than Keller's, in that there is no idealisation of death at the end. Poe's tale is not of course the only parallel. A small but significant corner of romantic literature is filled by stories of treasure-seekers who inadvertently dig their own graves, jealous husbands who wall up their rivals in cellars, and people who are buried alive in retribution for a crime (cf. Aida). The theme is still popular in the cinema. What is its fascination? Certainly the idea of death by burial has a special horror which calls upon deep unconscious fears. Not only is the manner of death particularly horrible in itself, but several of the things that make it so - the silence and darkness of the coffin, the helplessness of the victim - are common to something more familiar, the condition of sleep. There is also the irony in the situation whereby the act of putting the supposed corpse to rest brings about his real demise: an inversion of the Christian burial service. And part of the horror comes from our knowledge that 'living burial' has a basis in historical fact: in mediaeval times it was the traditional punishment for nuns who became pregnant. When the practice ceased it passed into folk legend, and only with the 'gothic renaissance' was the theme revived. We find it in Scott and Eichendorff,[1] and later in Heine, whose coffin-obsessions are reflected in Schumann's cycles on his poetry. From here the way to Keller is direct.

In the image of the man buried alive the romantic contrast between the individual who alone sees reality and the crowd rushing blindly by is given brutally concrete form. Since the victim cannot escape his vision cannot be communicated; and the physical separation suggests both the artist's aloofness from his public and the public's indifference to him. (There is a parallel in those stories of imprisonment and escape which became one of the century's most popular fictional genres: witness Poe again, Dumas, Dostoevsky, Les Misérables and of course Fidelio.) Keller, who in

1) See 'Der Schatzgräber', set by Schumann as Op. 45, No. 1 (1840).

1844 felt his talent being stifled by public indifference, is known to have attached a symbolic importance to his theme.

Schoeck had contemplated an orchestral setting of Lebendig begraben[1] as early as September 1923. He put it aside, however, to write Gaselen, and it was not until after the completion of Penthesilea that he turned to it again. The work occupied him from January to November 1926, and was premiered on 2 March 1927 by the Dutch bass Thomas Denijs and an orchestra under Schoeck's direction.

In the early 1920s Schoeck, like Keller before him, was undergoing a spiritual crisis. The experience of the war, the banality of the postwar period, his confrontation with modern music, an unhappy love affair - all combined to produce in him a deep depression, coupled with almost obsessive feelings of loneliness and neglect. It was at this time that he came upon Keller's cycle. What it was that first attracted him to it, whether its opportunities for pictorial description, its evocation of the Swiss landscape or the symbolic value of the theme, can no longer be established: Schoeck himself insisted later that the pictorial writing so often discussed[2] was purely secondary and had hardly figured in the work's conception. What is certain is that he was aware of the symbolism from the start, and that it later became so important to him that he even considered adding the subtitle 'Ein Symbol' in order to prevent misunderstanding.[3]

Schoeck's explicit intention in Lebendig begraben was, then, to protest against the 'world of materialism and machines' from which he felt artistically and emotionally estranged. In this

1) See OS pp. 106-10, 183-94; V pp. 118-25; S pp. 33-6; Mohr, op.cit., pp. 87-8; Schuh, 'Zur Harmonik der neuesten Werke von Othmar Schoeck', SMZ 68 (1928), p. 87; '"Lebendig begraben"', in Von neuer Musik, pp. 70-2; 'Othmar Schoecks "Lebendig begraben"', Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 12 April 1962, reprinted in Umgang mit Musik: Hans Vogt, 'Othmar Schoecks "Lebendig begraben"', SMZ 106 (1966); Rold Urs Ringger, 'Lebendig begraben: Othmar Schoeck und seine Nachwelt', Die Weltwoche, 18 August 1967. Vocal score by Karl Krebs, Breitkopf 1928/56; recording by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra under Fritz Rieger, DGG LPM 18821.

2) E.g. W p. 23.

3) G p. 115.

respect the work is an analogue of The Waste Land, the act of burial standing for man's retreat from the spiritual impoverishment of his age. The isolation which this attitude cost him gives the work a second meaning, one on which I am inclined to lay even more stress. If the burial is interpreted as an expulsion rather than as a withdrawal, the work offers a parable of the conservative artist in a radical environment, one who is condemned, in Keller's phrase, to 'glow in secret, buried for all eternity' ('geheim zu leuchten, ewiglich versenkt'). From the end of the First World War to his death Schoeck suffered bitterly from the feeling that his music was not sufficiently performed. This feeling may not always have been justified, but its objective validity is not the point. The feeling itself was real, and Lebendig begraben provided an effective outlet.

In later life Schoeck tended to generalise the inspiration of this and his other 'confessional' works, referring to them in semi-religious terms. 'In my opinion Lebendig begraben deals with the theme: What is man? What is our life? Where do we come from, where are we going? The cycle gives artistic expression to the following experience of life and the world: In our existence we are isolated, in both the physical and the spiritual sense. The coffin and the grave represent existence and what it realises in its longings, doubts and hopes.' And again: 'Lebendig begraben must be perceived and understood in a cosmic sense.'[1]

Vogel relates these rather nebulous remarks to the 'existentialism' of such works as Kafka's The Castle, adding: 'It must, however, be stressed that existence is not meaningless for Schoeck, as it is for the existentialists; also that he has never called existence into question, nor the rule of a creator in the Christian sense.'[2] Existentialism is also mentioned in an article on Lebendig begraben by Hans Vogt. The main achievement of the work, according to Vogt, is its depiction of 'an absolute void' [ein absolutes Null], corresponding to the nullity and disillusionment of modern times. Only in his final short paragraphs does he suggest the possibility of interpreting the work as Schoeck's

1) G pp. 116, 177. 2) Ibid., p. 177.

personal confession', before dismissing it with the words: 'But do we serve his intention, [or] his work, by investigating his torments?'[1]

With respect to Vogt and to the composer's memory, I think the answer must be yes. All Schoeck's music is autobiographical both in origin and in content, and the first step towards understanding any of his works is to trace the events that brought it to life. Of course the connections with Kafka et al. hold good, but they should follow from, not replace, a discussion of the confessional aspects; whereas the establishing of historical background, even though it concerns biographical rather than critical questions, is a preliminary without which the critical questions cannot properly be asked at all.

The socio-political element in Lebendig begraben, then, is only part of the story. More important, Keller's cycle provided Schoeck with a metaphor for the artistic isolation into which his aesthetic convictions increasingly forced him. (I say nothing of his personal loneliness: one thinks of the nightlife by which, like Proust, he was only able to write - 'geheim zu leuchten . . .'). The work seems to say: When a voice gently committed to asserting the old order finds itself in a culture set on overthrowing the former gods, it is doomed to extinction. This interpretation is confirmed by the more introspective Notturno; but Schoeck was never to find another text which expressed his position so well. For this reason Lebendig begraben became the central work of his career; and later I shall try to extend its symbolism to the point of providing critical as well as biographical insights.

*

The orchestra in Lebendig begraben is the largest Schoeck used in a cycle. Besides the usual wind, strings and percussion there are parts for piano, organ and celesta, and a distant chorus of mezzo-sopranos and baritones is added for the finale. The work plays continuously for about three quarters of an hour.

1) Op.cit., p. 146

All these features - the length, the continuity and the general massiveness - give the work an operatic character, and it was of course conceived at the same time as Penthesilea. The comparison is worth pursuing, as both works arose in response to deep-rooted problems and share the same dissonant style (more dissonant than Gaselen, and sustained at much greater length). The model for this style, as for the 'expressionistic' character of both works, was Strauss's Elektra, discussed in relation to Penthesilea in Part I. The type of harmony that consists in the piling up of seemingly unrelated triads and seventh-chords (what Strauss referred to as bitonality, but writers on Schoeck call Kombinationsharmonik) is Straussian, and so is the loose, improvisatory nature of the musical development, with its recitative-like treatment of the voice and the reduction of the orchestra to mere background. The texture is pictorial almost to the point of obsessiveness, and for long stretches the music proceeds by contrasts, flaring up in sudden outbursts and then subsiding for a moment before flaring up again.

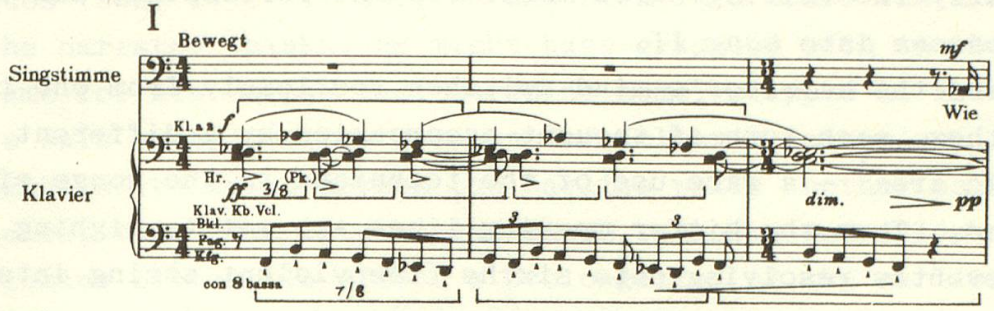
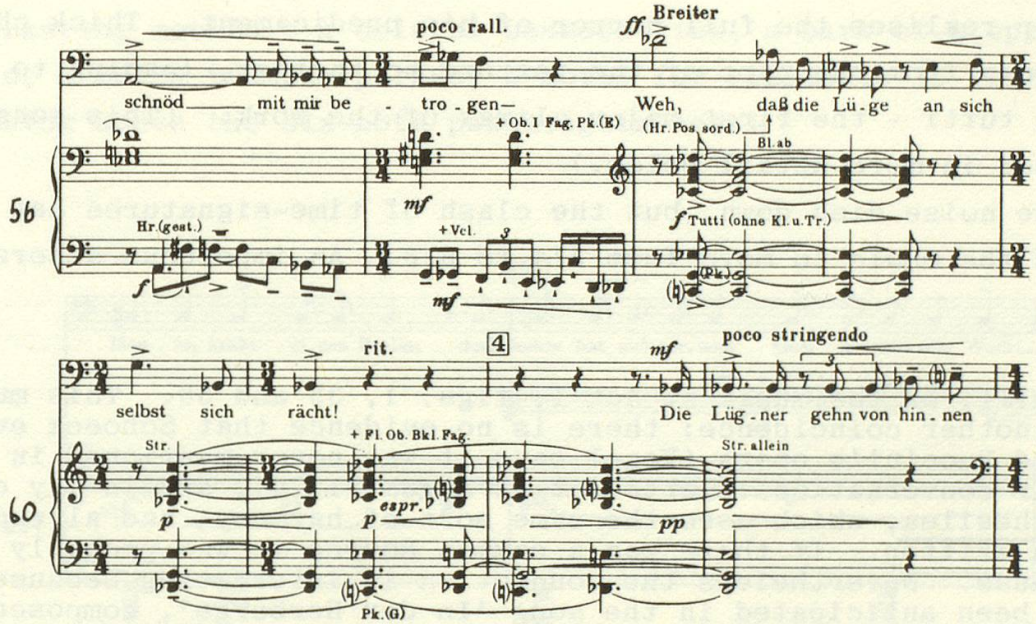
Not all the music is like this, however. As in Strauss, again, the 'expressionistic' element is offset by lyrical passages, especially towards the end. There is also what is usually lacking in Strauss, an attempt to unify the individual sections by means of devices borrowed from instrumental music - a method which recalls Berg's Wozzeck, premiered in 1925 but not heard in Zurich until 1931.[1] As in Gaselen and the Elegie there is liberal use of

1) Schoeck later criticised Wozzeck as lacking in beauty, and he thought that the children's scene at the end of the opera smacked of kitsch. He also disliked the treatment of the Bach chorale in Berg's Violin Concerto (G pp. 168, 45). Nevertheless Schoeck's relation to Berg is more interesting than these remarks suggest. At several points his music sounds astonishingly like Berg's (a 'reminiscence' of Berg's Sieben frühe Lieder has already been noted), nor are these resemblances confined to one period; and at times the two composers arrived independently at similar structural ideas (see below, p. 210n.). The word 'independently' can be used without qualification, as Schoeck's dislike of Berg - as a Schoenberg pupil, he was one of the 'enemy' - would have prevented him from using Berg's techniques even if he had understood them. According to Frau Schoeck, the two composers met only once, and then there was no artistic discussion. Letter from Werner Vogel, 6 November 1971.

ostinato, and in two songs the device is extended into a passacaglia. Thematic transformation is another important unifying factor, though not yet as important as it is to become in Wandersprüche.

In form Lebendig begraben is a hybrid. Its continuous texture, following upon Gaselen, derives ultimately from An die ferne Geliebte, but as an emotional and psychological progression it stands closer to the Schubert cycles. The operatic affinities go back beyond Strauss to Wagner - not to the 'lyrical apotheosis' of the Liebestod, this time, but to the terraced monologues of the Ring: Loge's and Siegfried's narrations, and (a better comparison in view of its sombre scoring) Wotan's 'Als junger Liebe'. The progression in Schoeck's cycle from a mood of almost intolerable constraint to the rhetorical abandon of the conclusion, its accumulation of short sections differentiated by a perpetual shifting among the darker timbres, its unerring sense of climax - all these may well have been influenced by Wotan's speech. The work has also been compared to the Schoenbergian monodrama: for Ringger it 'stands on a line between Mahler's Lied von der Erde and Berg's Wein aria'.[1] This is a good comparison, provided it is remembered that Schoeck hardly knew these works. Like the 'modern' aspects of the Elegie, the 'modernity' of Lebendig begraben is largely apparent, a by-product of Schoeck's own experimentation rather than a real link with contemporary activity. In conception the work is as firmly rooted in the nineteenth century as his other cycles.

The first song begins with a brief prelude, suggesting the clatter of earth on the coffin. To achieve this effect Schoeck superimposes three different metres, bringing in his instruments in ascending order of power (first clarinets and horns, then lower strings, then timpani). In addition the triplets in the bass line seem to create their own cross-rhythms, as does the phrasing of the (melodically similar) upper line:

1) Op.cit.

In a series of broken phrases the narrator expresses bewilderment; then, as he calls on imagination to 'let its eagles fly', the texture fills with tremolando figures and soaring violins, all dying away over a pedal F. After a few moments' uncertainty, in which piano and organ act as a kind of continuo - throughout the work the organ is associated with the quietness and remoteness of the grave - the narrator gives vent to his anger in a Penthesilea-like outburst of brassy dissonance:[1]

1) A similar type of dissonance - triads grinding against seventh-chords in 'bitonal' combinations - is found in a work contemporary with Lebendig begraben, namely Puccini's Turandot (first performed 25 April 1926 in Milan): compare the beginning of

Eventually the falling-earth motif returns fortissimo, and the music passes into song II.

Here the narrator's mind switches restlessly from one theme to another, each turn of thought accompanied by a different harmonic area[1] - a rare use of the technique in the songs of the twenties. Thus the bitter opening lines are set to sighing woodwind sevenths resolving onto sixths (the violent string interjections recall Berlioz); the more resigned second verse has parallel 6/4 chords in muted strings and brass; as the narrator longs for an 'eternal thought' on which to exercise his mind, an F major ostinato starts up, also in muted colours; the reference to the dew on the ground overhead evokes a passage in whole tones; and at the idea that these thoughts might be the torments of the damned, the sevenths and sixths of the first verse creep back in the bass. Schoeck's orchestration in this number is of quite remarkable subtlety.

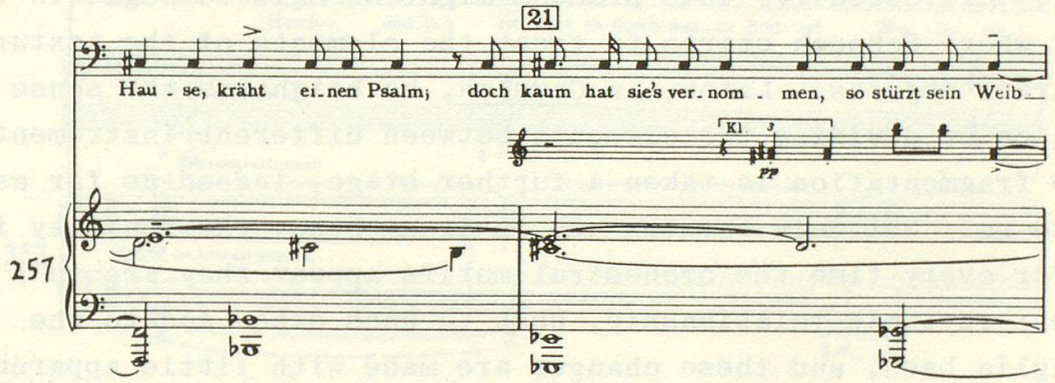
In the third song a more aggressive manner returns as the narrator realises the full horror of his predicament. Thick chords are thrown from one part of the texture to another, leading to a massive tutti - the first major climax of the work. (This song is discussed in more detail below.)

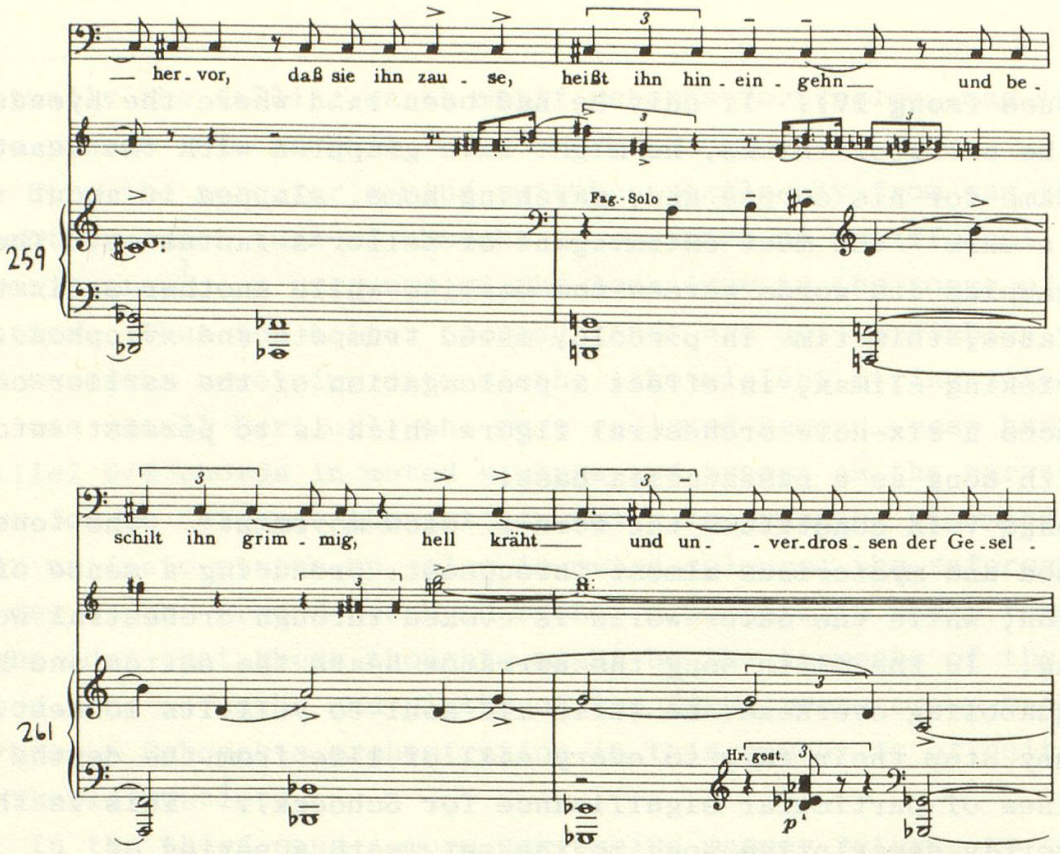
The noise dies down, but the clash of time-signatures has enabled the music to move from 3/4 to 6/8. An impetuous scherzo

Act III, or the music at Act I, figs. 1, 35 and 38. This must be another coincidence: there is no evidence that Schoeck ever heard Puccini's opera (Vogel says it was never mentioned in their conversations: letter of 12 August 1974), and in any case Penthesilea, which uses the same sort of harmony, had already been written. If there was a common source it was probably Strauss. Nevertheless the connection is interesting because it had been anticipated in the song 'In der Herberge', composed nearly twenty years earlier (see above, pp. 110-11). At the end of the song, when the poet speaks of his homeland - the song is a setting of Chinese words - there is a pseudo-oriental melody in the piano which might almost be a quotation from Turandot, though given an individual colouring by Schoeck's harmony. There is a 'quotation' from Tosca, an opera Schoeck must have known, in Act I of Venus (V.S., p. 201). See also above, p. 43.

1) Cf. Berg, who sought in Wozzeck to express the inconsequential nature of a conversation through the form of a suite.

now ensues (song IV). If only he had been laid where the hyenas live, the narrator thinks, he might have grappled with the beast which came for his corpse and, marching home, slapped it about the doctor's ears - the most extravagant of Keller's fantasies. The voice gabbles its words across the barline while another ostinato accumulates, this time in piccolo, muted trumpets and xylophone. The shrieking climax, in effect a prolongation of the earlier one, introduces a six-note orchestral figure which is to persist into the fifth song as a passacaglia bass.

Songs V-IX constitute the work's 'slow movement'. The tone is hushed and mysterious almost throughout, producing a sense of isolation, while the outer world is evoked through orchestral word-painting. In the fifth song the narrator hears the sexton and his wife squabbling overhead; he tells his soul to yell its loudest, but 'they stop their ears to every call of life from the depths' (two lines of particular significance for Schoeck).[1] This is the most overtly descriptive song in the set, with a series of contrasting motifs - a doleful bassoon line, a bark of stopped horns, a muted trumpet phrase, a motif for clarinets in thirds - rotating above the six-note passacaglia bass:

1) G p. 164.



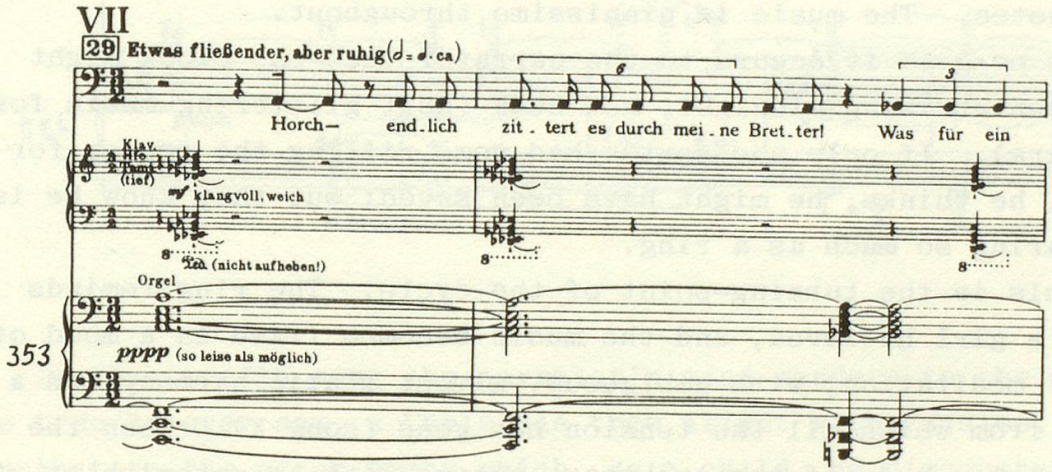
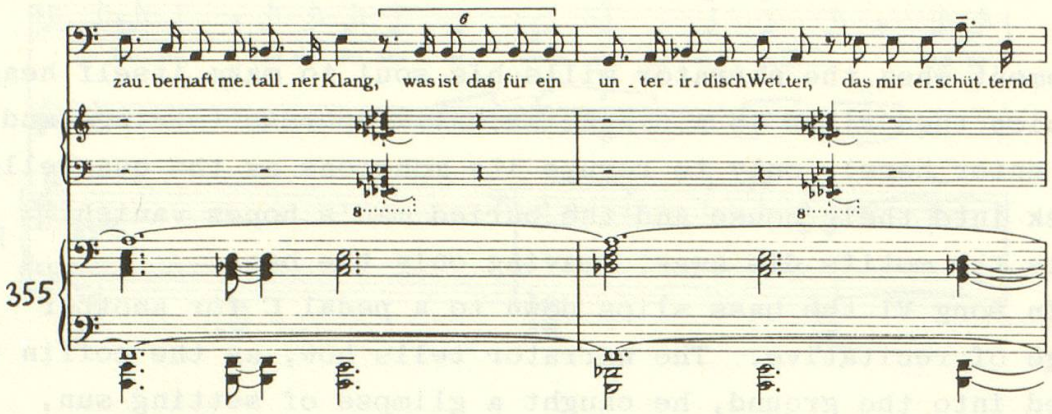
This song is the most extreme example of the 'expressionistic' style mentioned above. In it the tendency towards abrupt contrast and obsessive word-painting results in an almost complete fragmentation of the texture (some of the writing here is like Webern). Historically, this process might be said to begin in the Elegie, where Schoeck starts to treat the elements of the texture as separate objects. Later, in Gaselen, he heightens the sense of separation by dividing the elements between different instruments. Now the fragmentation is taken a further stage, indeed as far as it is to go. Not only the texture is fragmented; the tonality is also, for every time the orchestral motifs appear they are in a different rhythmic relationship, both to each other and to the passacaglia bass, and these changes are made with little apparent regard for harmonic effect. As in 'Verlorenes Glück' from the Elegie, the linear aspect has taken precedence over the vertical.

There are two unifying elements, however: the passacaglia bass itself, and the repeated C♯s in the voice. For nearly four verses - three full pages of vocal score - Schoeck keeps his soloist on this note, saving the expressive qualities of the voice for

the moment when the narrator wills his soul to make itself heard. The voice then rises in a single arch-like phrase (strings and organ enter here), only to resume its monotone as the quarrellers go back into their house and the buried man's hopes vanish. Finally the motifs die away, leaving only the bass.

In song VI the bass slips down to a pedal C for another passage of recitative. The narrator tells how, as the coffin was lowered into the ground, he caught a glimpse of setting sun, familiar faces, church spires - glinting piano chords on the various expressive words - before the lid was finally closed. To a new, pulsating ostinato (the pizzicato bass notes are explained retrospectively as heartbeats), he stretches his body like a blade of grass seeking the light: surely they can hear his heart beating? (This song is discussed further below.)

Then, after a while (song VII), he feels the boards vibrate to a mysterious, metallic sound which he recognises as the church clock striking twelve:

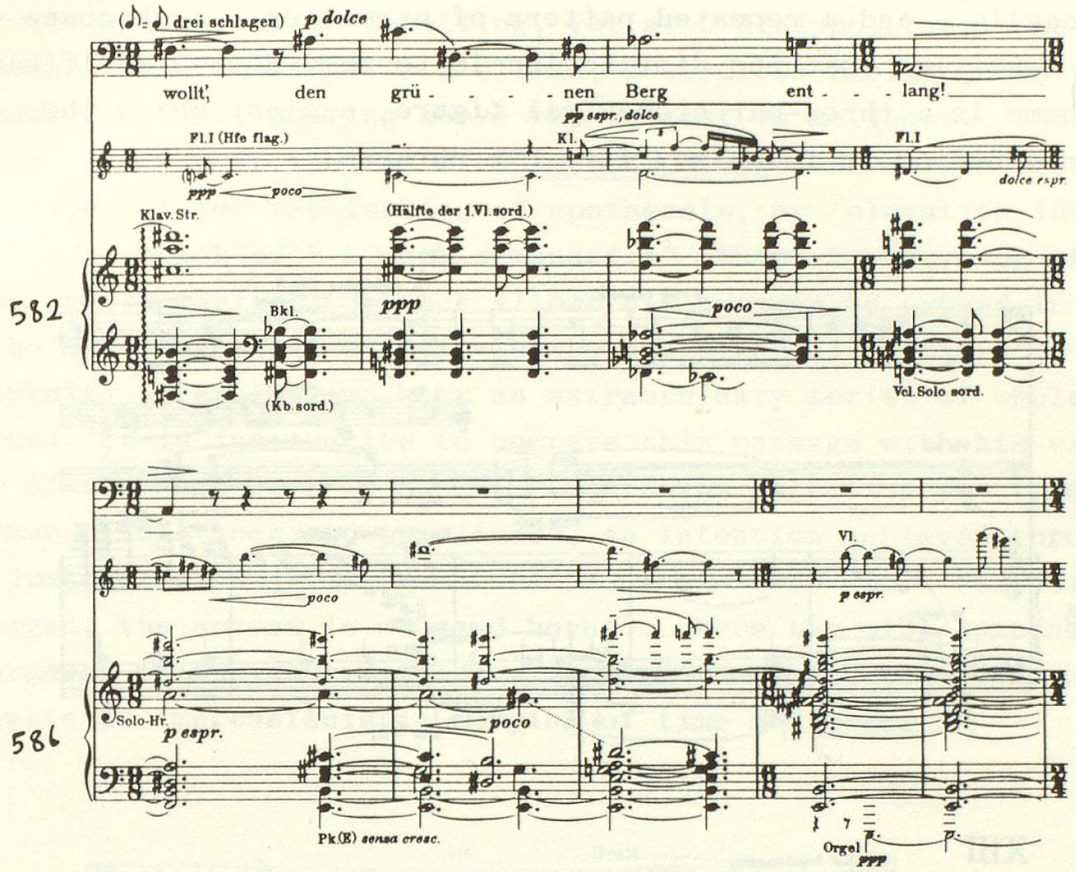


Here the bitonality - black notes for the bell, F major for the organ - vividly underlines the separation of upper and lower worlds.

The bell reminds the narrator of Mass - an echo of Parsifal at bar 393 - and presently he finds he has eaten the rose which had been placed in his hands ('Give us this day our daily bread', he comments). This, the eighth song, with its exquisite prelude for solo cello, represents the nadir of his desolation. It is like a faded reminiscence of folk song, its regular phrases stretched into irregular rhythms and its basically simple harmony obscured by added notes. The music is pianissimo throughout.

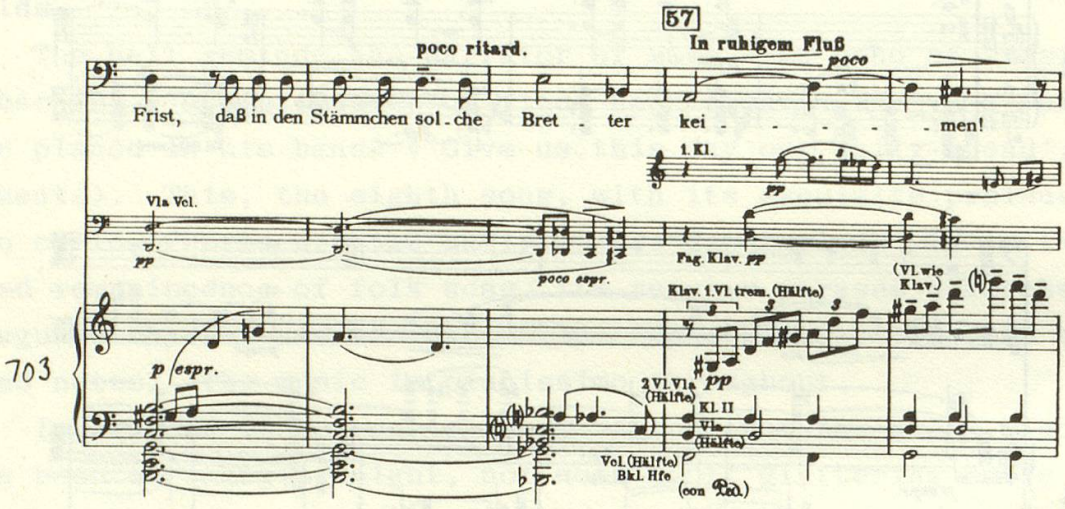
In song IX it occurs to the narrator that the clock might have been striking midnight, not noon (soft glittering music for the stars). If only the sexton had come rifling the graves for jewels, he thinks, he might have been saved; but they know he is not wearing so much as a ring.

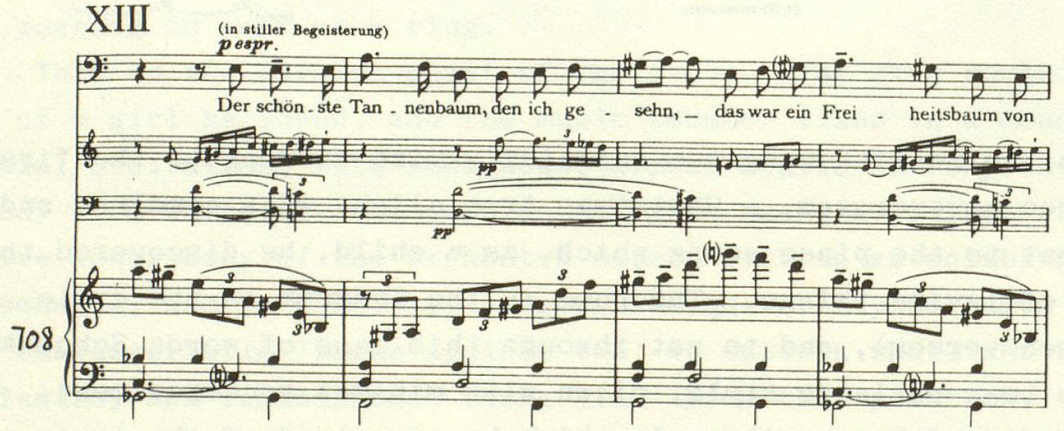
This is the turning-point of the cycle. The ring reminds him of a girl he loved, and the music becomes fixed in a mood of wistful meditation, with ambiguous, almost static harmony and a melody from which all the tension has gone (song X). Then the entire lower body of the orchestra enters with an astonishing rich dissonance, and to a quietly surging semiquaver rhythm based on the now characteristic 'three against two' we enter a whole new world of fantasy and reminiscence (song XI). From this point on, the orchestral writing has an almost Straussian bloom, with divided strings, a wealth of contrapuntal detail in the wind, and imaginative use of celesta and harp. The music settles in F major

as the narrator muses on the wood of his coffin, imagining it to be a ship's mast; the thought of a shipwreck evokes a reminiscence of Strauss's Don Juan; but F major returns for the final verse. On the closing phrase the harmony slides down to E major in a rich chromatic progression (Ringger is rightly reminded of Schreker):

In the twelfth song the narrator's mind wanders to the first pine tree he ever saw, a Christmas tree alight with candles, and from that to the pines among which, as a child, he discovered the beauty of living things. The poem is the longest in the cycle (fourteen verses), and to get through this mass of words Schoeck resorts to a parlando style, often with minimal accompaniment. One is reminded of Penthesilea, in which he conceived of the music as a 'counterpoint to the melody of Kleist's lines' (see above, p. 49) - the romantic 'sovereignty of the text' carried to its apogee. Even

this cannot save the song from prolixity. The orchestration, however, is of ravishing delicacy, with particular prominence given to solo strings. In the final verse the harmony moves back to F major, and a circling pattern is established which leads to the next song (XIII).

This song is a chaconne (I follow the Harvard Dictionary in distinguishing between a repeated pattern of bass notes - a passacaglia - and a repeated pattern of harmonies - a chaconne - while realising that the distinction is to some degree artificial). The theme is a three-bar orchestral figure, against which the singer contends in four- and five-bar phrases:

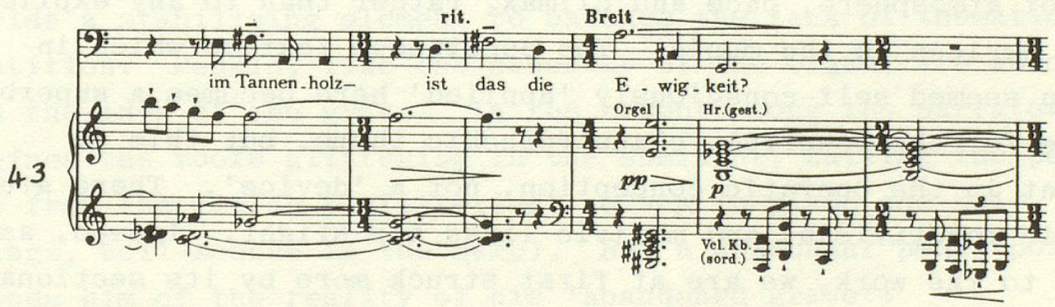




The narrator recalls a tree at a village festival, gaily decorated and with wine pouring from its trunk, and a peasant girl who stirred him into glowing feelings for the fatherland (another Straussian climax). The girl evokes a stylised sort of pastoral writing, with flutes in thirds, tonic and dominant pedals in the bass and a vocal parlando centred on the dominant. At last the chaconne theme returns, to continue into the final song.

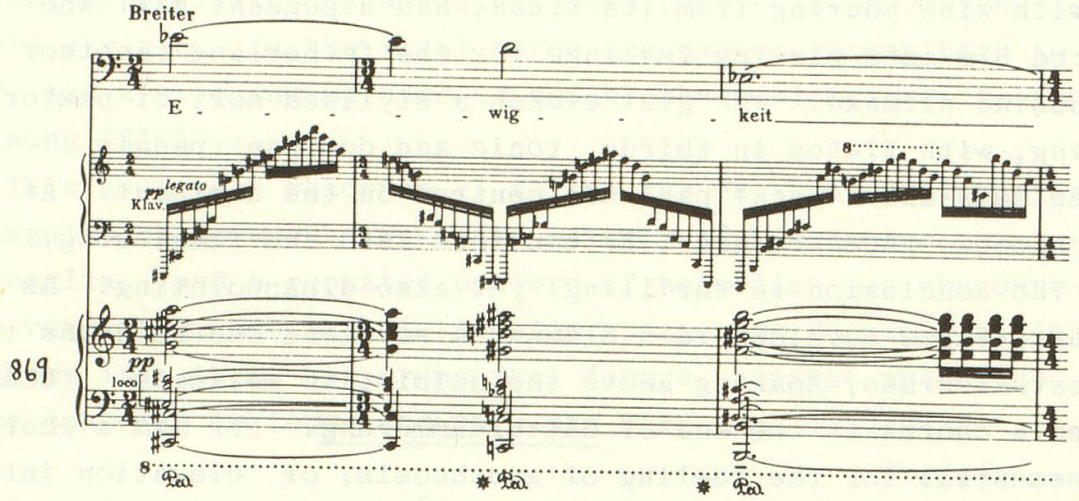
The conclusion is thrilling, yet also disappointing. As the chaconne theme develops to a climax, a wordless chorus joins the orchestral brass, soaring above the soloist in melismas. (Schoeck wanted a chorus at the end of Götterdämmerung. For him a chorus was essential for the feeling of apotheosis, or 'elevation into the mystical', which such a work demanded.)[1] Then, as we reach the lines quoted earlier, Schoeck allows his harmony to expand in one of the most beautiful effects in the cycle, until on the word 'Ewigkeit' (eternity) we hear an extraordinary series of whole-tone chords. It is instructive to compare this passage with his treatment of the same word in song I. There the intention was to create a sense of distance and loneliness, an intention achieved through the juxtaposition of two minor triads a semitone apart (the first in organ, the second in stopped horns). Here the wide spacing, the divergence of the contrapuntal parts and the whole-tone harmony suggests an impressionistic merging of time and space:

(a)



1) G p. 117.

(b)



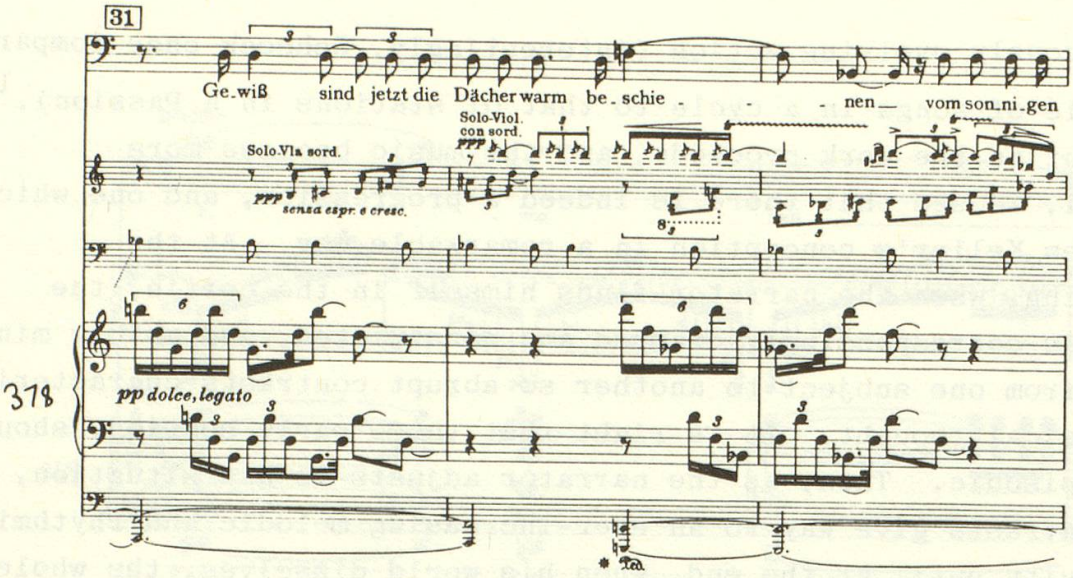
Almost immediately, however, the music breaks off, and a more aggressive style returns for the closing lines. In performance the sheer excitement of the ending usually carries one's reservations before it; but just occasionally the rhetoric seems hollow, and one has the feeling that, if only Schoeck could have found it in him, a Mahlerian evanescence might have proved more successful. But of course for Schoeck a mood of defiance was the only one possible in which to finish; any other would have signified a submission to the forces against which he was taking a stand.

The 'improvisatory' nature of the work should now be clear. If the work succeeds, it is surely due to Schoeck's instinctive sense of atmosphere, pace and climax, rather than to any explicit formal devices in the music. The continuous texture which in Gaselen seemed self-consciously 'applied' here becomes a superb vehicle for the powerful, claustrophobic theme, but this is inherent in the operatic conception, not a 'device'. There are few thematic repetitions, and motivic links are slight. Indeed, as we listen to the work, we are at first struck more by its sectional, episodic quality than by its continuity. The songs are sharply contrasted in theme and texture, and the transitions provide musical links without modulating between the different moods. Our impression is of a series of separate tableaux rather than of a

continuously evolving action (interestingly, Schoeck once compared the role of songs in a cycle to that of stations in a Passion).[1]

But as the work proceeds, and the music becomes more lyrical, we see that there is indeed a progression, and one which realises Keller's conception in a remarkable way. At the beginning, when the narrator finds himself in the coffin, the music is correspondingly cramped and constricted, and as his mind jumps from one subject to another so abrupt contrasts characterise the musical thought. It is right that these early sections should seem episodic. Then, as the narrator adjusts to his situation, the contrasts give way to an ever-increasing melodic and rhythmic continuity until at the end, when his world dissolves, the whole texture is overflowing with song. The start of this process might be traced to the introduction of a regularly moving bass in the passacaglia song V. Other landmarks are the ostinato in song VI, the regular phrases of VIII and the static, almost rhythmless X. The final sections (songs XII-XIV actually overlap) are a perpetual assertion of rhythm and melody, even including that most continuous of forms, the chaconne. It is the familiar romantic progress from darkness to light (from fragmentariness to continuity, from themelessness to lyricism), and its meaning is the traditional one: the triumph of life over death, of the spirit over the body.

In such a scheme Schoeck's characteristic pedals and ostinati take on a unique expressive force. Ostinati are used throughout as an image of frustration (as in the sixth song), and provide a stabilising element to balance the lack of thematic repetition. Pedals, like the sonority of the organ, are associated with the idea of the grave. In the seventh song the narrator imagines the roofs glittering in the sunlight, calling the people home from the fields ('glittering' noises in piano and solo strings, bell-sounds in the harp). But a dissonant pedal point reminds him of the reality of his 'abandoned grave':

1) G p. 20.

The pedals also have a tonal function. Among the many pedal points Schoeck establishes a specific series of pedals on F; and the mere recurrence of F major gives the key (like the B♭ of the Elegie) a certain tonic status, even though tonal direction in the classical sense is lacking. (Of the work's 904 bars well over 100 are in this key.) The first cadence is in F major (bar 12); the appeal to imagination and the ostinato about the 'eternal thought' are in the same key; the sixth song ends in F, a tonality which persists through most of the seventh; song XI is in the same key, and so is XIII, whose chaconne theme is a perpetual F major cadence (vi6-V of V-♭II3). But now comes a new development. After the first chaconne section Schoeck modulates sharply to D major, a key heard very little previously; and whenever F major returns, as it does three times in the final song, it always gives way to this new key (the work ends in it).[1] Whether or not this process is meant to symbolise the overcoming of the grave, the large-scale movement from 'keylessness' to longer and longer stretches in a key is another factor in the progress towards continuity.

There are a few recurring motifs - not very emphatic, and possibly even unconscious. Sometimes merely an interval is

1) Bars 807-14, 825-49, 890-900 (F minor-D major).

concerned, like the E♭-G third which rises in the cello halfway through song VI, recalling a similar moment at the end of I. Or it may be a chord, like the C♯ minor triad which sounds when the door slams (bar 276), the coffin-lid closes (299) and the bell rumbles (366), as if to associate all three events with the world above. There is only one recurring melodic idea: the little woodwind phrase which evolves at the word 'Tannenwald' in song XI (bar 571), returns twice later in the same song (bars 574 and 584 - see p. 215 above) and reappears twice again during the finale (bars 864-6 and 881-2). This phrase is identical - in the example cited, identical even in pitch - with the theme of 'Angedenken', from the Elegie (see above, p. 146), and it is to return many times, often with pastoral connotations, in works to come (Wandersprüche; the penultimate song of Unter Sternen; 'Der römische Brunnen', from Das stille Leuchten). It is the most memorable of all those little clichés which wind their way through Schoeck's music.

*

Lebendig begraben, like Gaselen, makes extensive use of thematic transformation. Unlike those in the other work, however, the transformations here do not centre on a particular theme; and there is no 'note row'. Rather, the transformations play a more decorative role. The musical texture, especially in the early part of the work, is made up of dozens of tiny scraps of melody. Often they occur only once, but if they are repeated they are always varied in some way, whether rhythmically, intervallically, texturally or orchestrally (or any combination of these). On the second page of the vocal score, for example, the bassoon has a six-note phrase in staccato quavers and semiquavers, to which a seventh note is added by trumpet and pizzicato violins. A few bars later the same phrase returns an octave lower on double basses, with the first five notes presented as legato triplets and the last two glissando (trombone replacing trumpet). In addition the intervals are modified. These changes give the phrase a quite different expressive character: formerly it was almost jovial, reflecting the light-hearted indifference of those who had just gone off, having

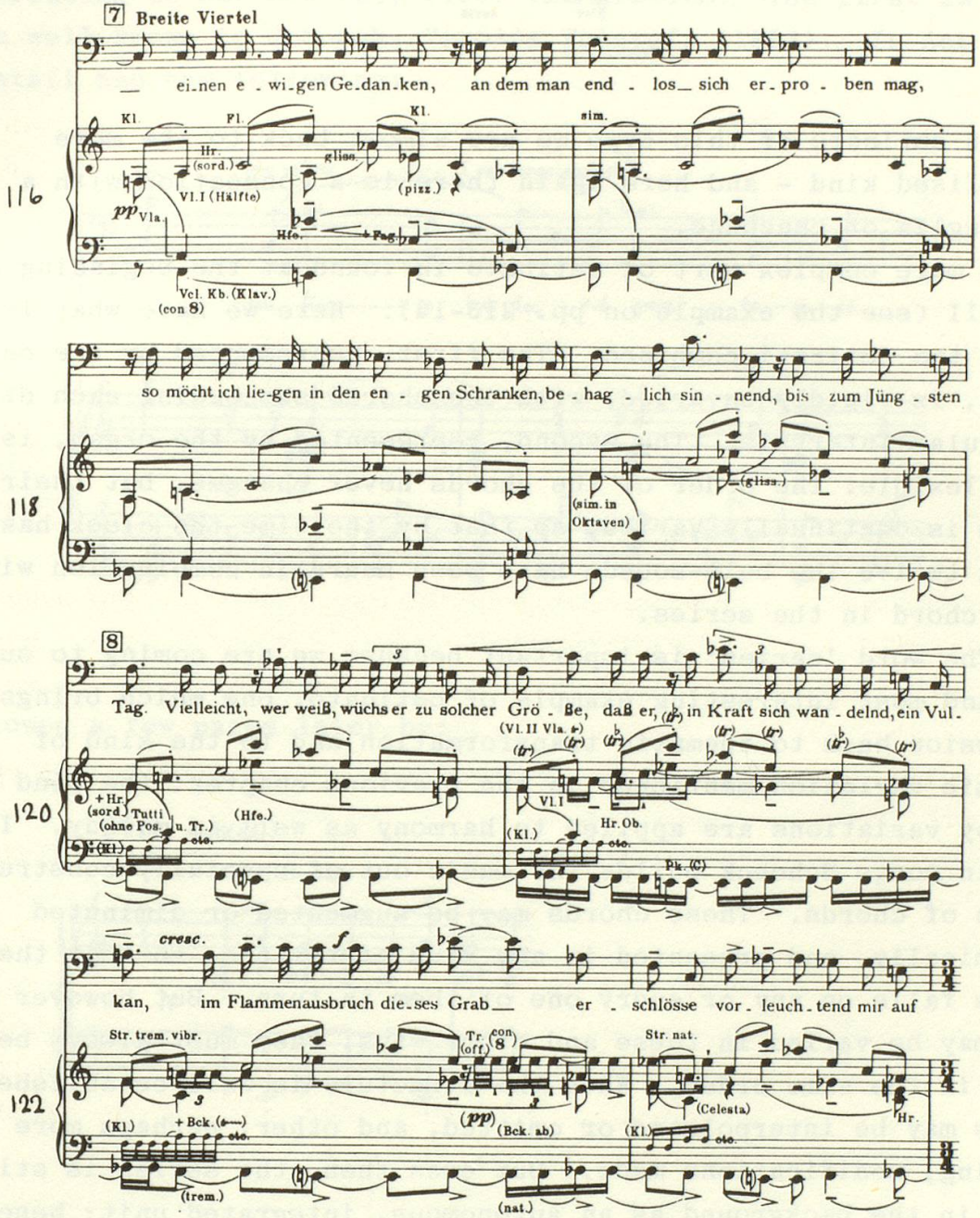
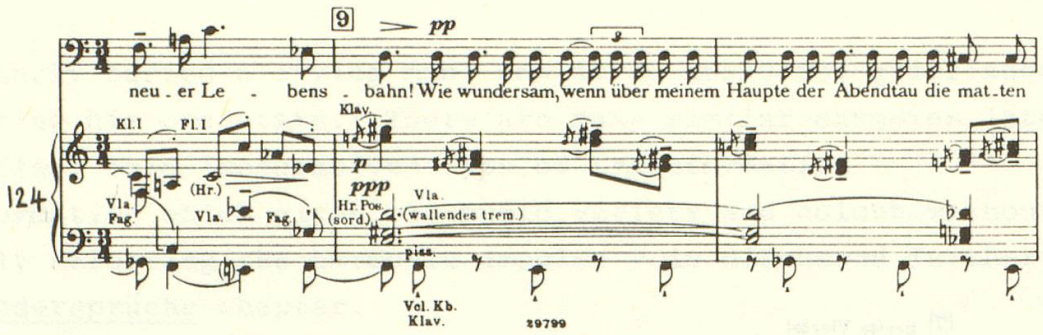
unwittingly buried a living man; now it is heavy and griefladen, reflecting his own state. There are many similar examples later in the cycle. This 'decorative' type of transformation - transformation which gives the music variety and colour without actually affecting the harmonic impulse - is discussed further in the Wandersprüche chapter.

A very definite source of impulse are the ostinato structures which pepper the score - and here the word can be released of its specialised, 'Schoeckian' meaning. Already, in Gaselen, subtle variation has given way to obsessive repetition; now, in common with many other composers of the 1920s, Schoeck uses the insistent repetition of a motif to build up whole sections, sometimes with an almost Schoenbergian sense of repressed tension.[1] These ostinato structures are worth examining in detail.

A simple type of ostinato arises from the repetition of a single note, such as the B♭ in the example on p. 220. Here the note is really more of a pedal than an ostinato, but it derives an ostinato-like quality from its rhythm: regular 6/8 as opposed to the 3/4 of the other parts, the clash of metres drawing our attention to the bell which obtrudes on the narrator's solitude. Similar pedal-type ostinati can be found in song XII, where Schoeck tries to unify Keller's sprawling verses by building up whole sections in this way. Schoeck's practice here comes close to passacaglia, reminding us that the two passacaglia songs (V and XIII) are themselves based on a form of ostinato.

In song IV, the one about the hyenas, the repetition of the shrill eight-note motif in the piano (later reinforced by flute and piccolo), against the changing harmony in the other parts, whips the music into a frenzy; and in song II an ostinato symbolises the 'eternal thought' on which the narrator longs to exercise his mind. Perhaps, he thinks, if he kept musing on it, it might eventually grow so big (trills, flutterings and repeated notes added here) that it burst open his grave like a volcano:

1) See Charles Rosen, Schoenberg (Glasgow, 1976), p. 55.

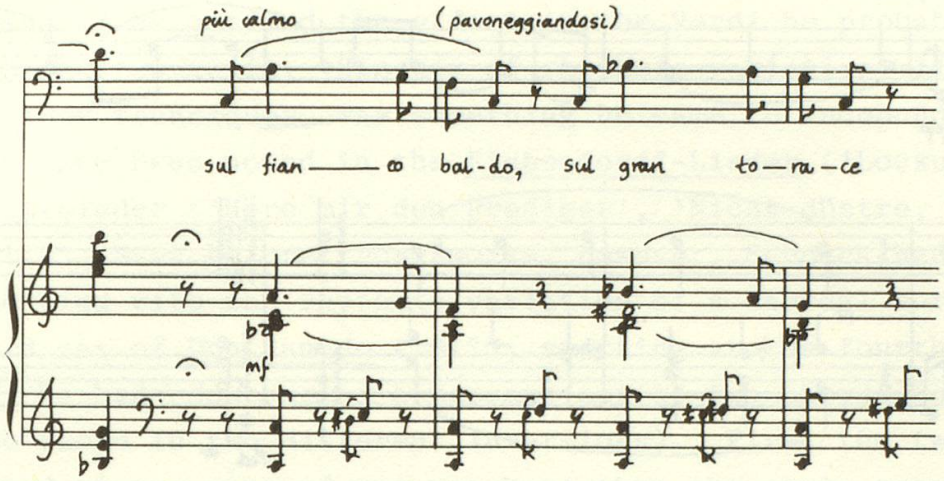

7 Breite Viertel
— ei-nen e-wi-gen Ge-dan-ken, an dem man end-los— sich er-pro-ben mag,
116
Kl.
Fl.
Kl.
sim.
Hr. (sord.)
gliss.
(pizz.)
Vl.I (Hälfte)
pp Vla.
Hfe.
Fag.
Vcl. Kb. (Klav.)
(con 8)
so möcht ich lie-gen in den en-gen Schranken, be-hag-lich sin-nend, bis zum Jüng-sten
118
(gliss.)
(sim. in Oktaven)
8
Tag. Vielleicht, wer weiß, wüchs er zu solcher Grö-ße, daß er, in Kraft sich wan-delnd, ein Vul-
120
(Vl.II Vla.)
+ Hr. (sord.) Tutti (ohne Pos. u. Tr.)
(Hfe.)
Vl.I
Hr. Ob.
(Kl.)
Pk. (C)
cresc.
kan, im Flammenausbruch die-ses Grab— er-schlösse vor-leuch-tend mir auf
122
Str. trem. vibr.
Tr. (off)
con 8
Str. nat.
(Celesta)
Hr.
(Kl.)
+ Bck. (sim.)
(pp)
(Bck. ab)
(trem.)
(nat.)

With an ostinato of this type we are almost back to the more specialised kind - and here again there is a connection with a passacaglia or chaconne.

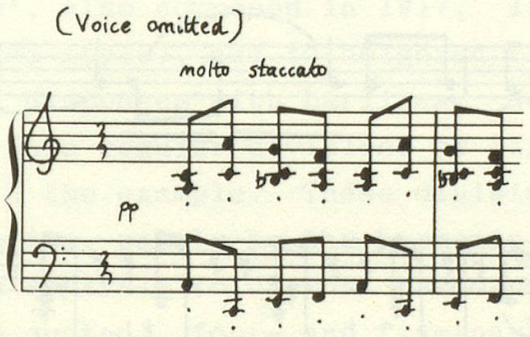
A more complex sort of ostinato is found at the beginning of song VII (see the example on pp. 213-14). Here we have what is in effect two ostinati combined. The first, represented by the bell-sounds, is rigidly unvaried, with the chords succeeding each other at regular intervals. The second, represented by the organ, is more flexible: the order of the chords never changes, but their rhythm is continually varied, so that by the time the clock has struck twelve the bell-sounds have been heard in combination with every chord in the series.

The word 'series' is important because we are coming to our last and most interesting example of ostinato, one which brings the discussion back to thematic transformation and to the kind of rhythmic variation mentioned in the previous chapter: the kind whereby variations are applied to harmony as well as melody. In certain songs Schoeck builds the music out of specially constructed series of chords. These chords may be augmented or diminuted rhythmically, and presented in any kind of texture, so that the stress falls on any or every one of them in turn. But however much they may be varied in these and other ways, they must always be heard in the same order. When the structure is well established, chords may be interpolated or omitted, and other, perhaps more far-reaching, modifications made. But even then, the series is still there in the background as an autonomous, integrated unit: hence the connection with ostinato.

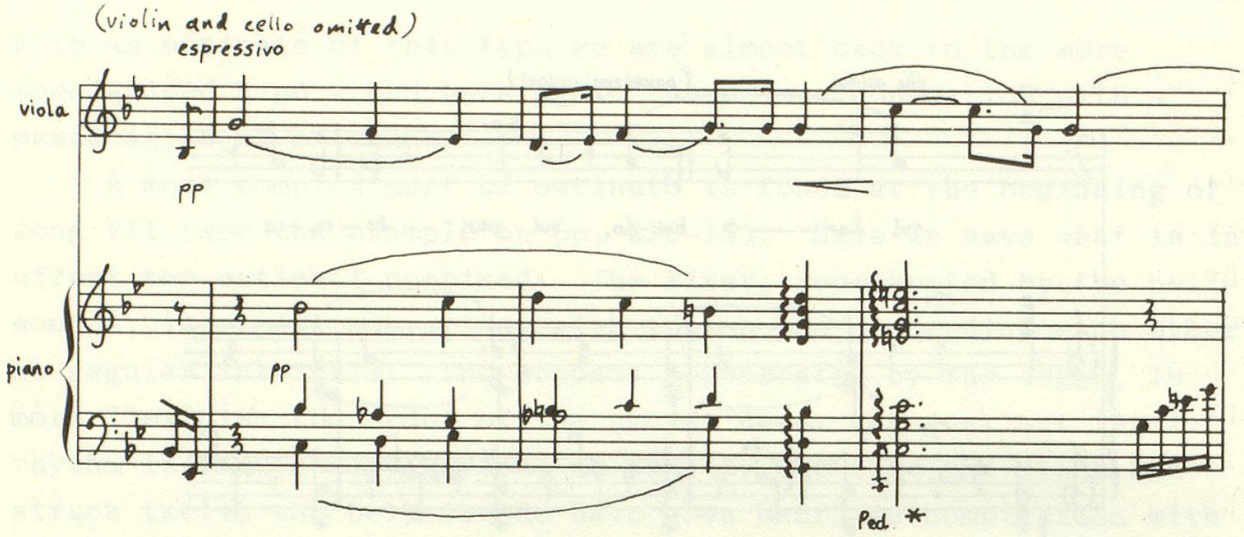
The implications of this technique lead back to the

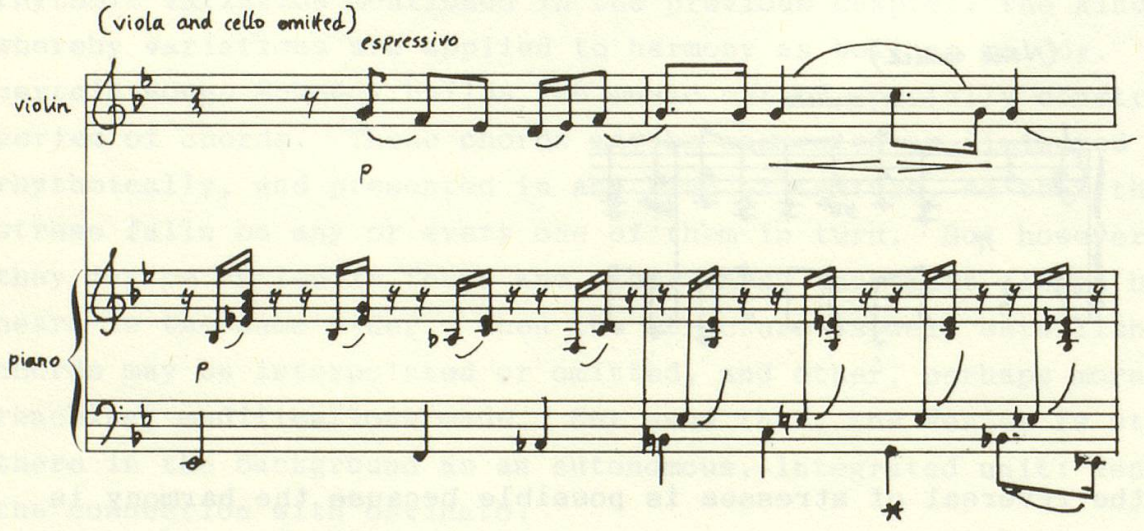
consonance-dissonance problem. In the previous chapter it was stated that nineteenth-century composers tended to avoid altering the basic rhythmic framework of a theme, as the resulting reversal of harmonic stresses would have threatened to subvert the tonal system. There are, however, two exceptional passages, and it is interesting to see how they evade the problem. The first is from a work well known to Schoeck, Verdi's Falstaff (1893). In Act I Falstaff has the following:



followed a few pages later by:

Here the reversal of stresses is possible because the harmony is simple tonic and dominant: neither chord is particularly dissonant (though the dominant is more dissonant than the tonic), so neither

demands the stronger rhythmic position. Even so, Verdi significantly avoids completing the chord on his second and sixth quavers with an E, as faithful reproduction would require.

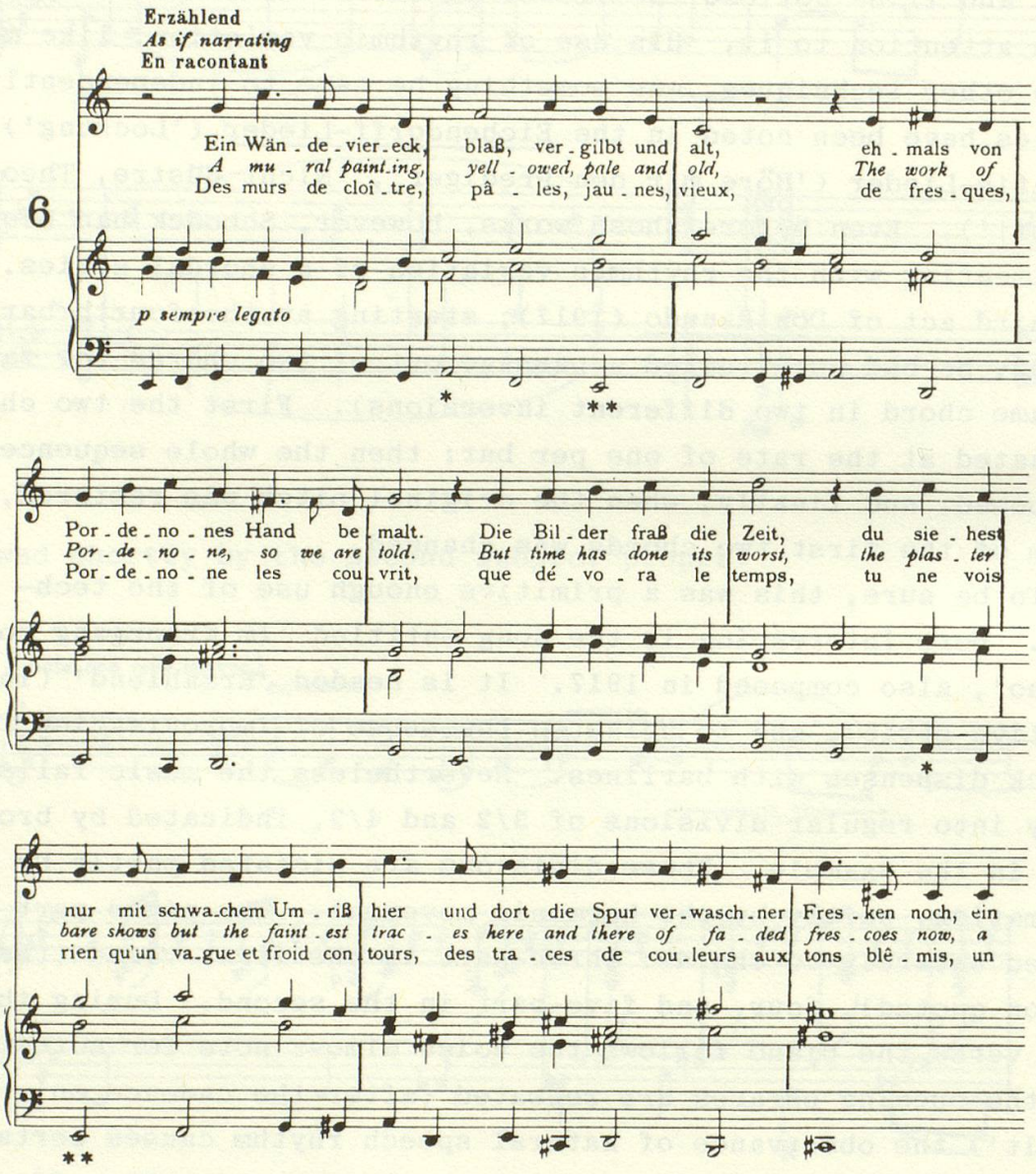
The second passage is from a work almost certainly not known to Schoeck, namely Fauré's Piano Quartet in G minor (1886). Just before the first movement second subject, the viola has the following theme:

followed shortly by the second subject proper:



It is a moot point here whether Fauré has really altered the stresses, and of course he makes no attempt to transfer the harmony wholesale (in fact the repetition derives its effect from the contrast of harmony at the points marked *). But it is interesting how the rhythmic compression in the last example has the effect of emphasising the seventh-chord on D which was formerly only implied, thus increasing our expectations of a G in the bass - and it is these expectations that Fauré then proceeds to thwart.

As was said, it is doubtful that Schoeck knew the Fauré piece, and if he noticed the effect in the Verdi he probably paid little attention to it. His use of rhythmic variation, like most of his other techniques, was something he came to independently. Examples have been noted in the Eichendorff-Lieder ('Lockung') and the Hafis-Lieder ('Höre mir den Prediger', 'Nicht düstre, Theosoph, so tief!'). Even before those works, however, Schoeck had been experimenting with the rhythmic variation of a chordal series. In the third act of Don Ranudo (1917), starting at the fourth bar after fig. 32, he had constructed a passage out of two chords (or rather the same chord in two different inversions). First the two chords alternated at the rate of one per bar; then the whole sequence was transposed; and finally, when the original pitch was restored, the rhythm of the first two chords was changed.

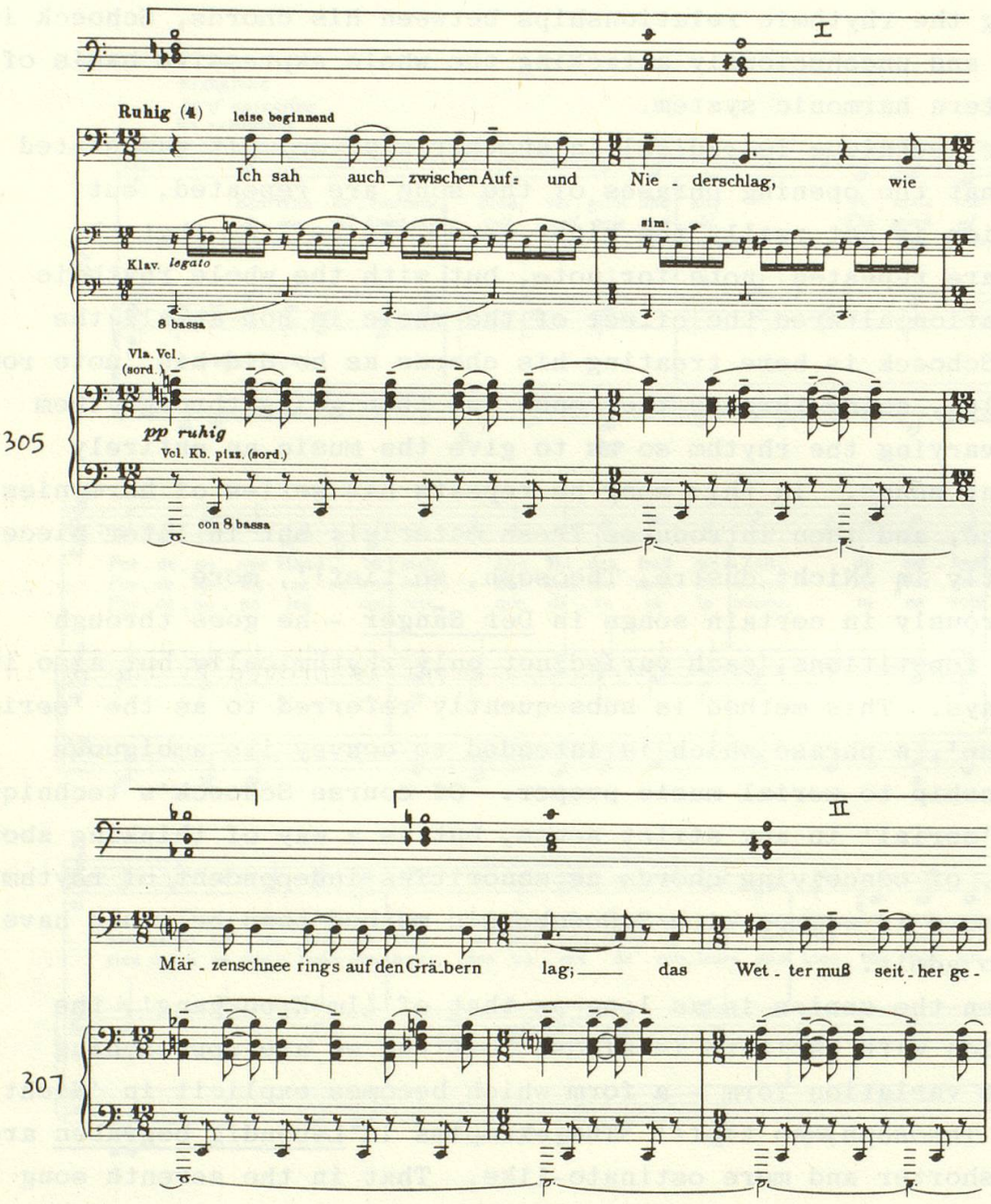
To be sure, this was a primitive enough use of the technique. More interesting is the song entitled 'Im Kreuzgang von St. Stefano', also composed in 1917. It is headed 'Erzählend' (in narrative style), and to heighten the sense of improvisation Schoeck dispenses with barlines. Nevertheless the music falls neatly into regular divisions of 3/2 and 4/2, indicated by broken lines in the example. These divisions are dictated partly by the declamation, partly by the harmonic movement. The piano part is limited entirely to chords: three-part in the first verse (the portion quoted), four- and five-part in the second. During the first verse the piano follows the voice almost note for note, and when the opening phrases are repeated (after the cadence on 'bemalt') the observance of natural speech rhythm causes certain chords to be shortened and others to be lengthened. The effect is that all usual notions of harmonic progression disappear; all the

emphasis is on the relation of a chord to its immediate neighbour. In addition some of the stresses are altered: for example, the F major 6/3 (*), which formerly fell on an implied first beat, is now relegated to the third, though it still retains its 'strong' position in relation to the following seventh-chord; and the previously 'weak' E minor triad (**) is now made 'strong':

Despite these alterations the tonal system does not lie shattered. Why? Because Schoeck is using the simplest form of harmony: common triads (with one seventh-chord thrown in for 'contrast'). Since the dissonance level is so low, the chords can exchange their rhythmic values without less of tension. It is difficult to decide whether the result is evocatively archaic, as Schoeck must have intended, or merely pallid; but in either case the implications of the technique are full-bloodedly radical. In altering the rhythmic relationships between his chords, Schoeck is quietly and unconsciously attacking the whole expressive basis of our Western harmonic system.

The technique is radical in another way too. It was stated above that the opening phrases of the song are repeated, but repetition is not really the right word. It is true that the chords are repeated, note for note, but with the whole rhythmic articulation altered the effect of the music is not at all the same. Schoeck is here treating his chords as he did his 'note row' in Gaselen, going through them once and then going through them again, varying the rhythm so as to give the music an entirely different sense. In this song he repeats his series of harmonies only once, and then introduces fresh material; but in later pieces - modestly in 'Nicht düstre, Theosoph, so tief!', more adventurously in certain songs in Der Sänger - he goes through several repetitions, each varied not only rhythmically but also in other ways. This method is subsequently referred to as the 'series technique', a phrase which is intended to convey its ambiguous relationship to serial music proper. Of course Schoeck's technique is not 'serial' in any strict sence, but as a way of thinking about harmony, of conceiving chords as sonorities independent of rhythm, it has more in common with Schoenberg's method than he would have liked to admit.

When the series is as long as that of 'Im Kreuzgang', the connection with ostinato is almost lost and we are approaching strophic variation form - a form which becomes explicit in 'Nicht düstre, Theosoph, so tief!' The examples in Lebendig begraben are mostly shorter and more ostinato-like. That in the seventh song has already been discussed: the rhythmic alterations in the organ

part are not particularly striking, first because the harmony is so unvigorous in itself, secondly because it is muffled by the bell-sounds. There is a more powerful example in song VI. Here Schoeck uses a series of four chords, swaying unevenly over a pedal:



None of these chords is associated with any particular duration, nor even with a 'strong' or 'weak' rhythmic position (though the singer's phrases usually begin on one of the odd-numbered chords). The fact that the second pair of chords is a free transposition of the first means that the series can be halved and used as a sequence, and this is how the music develops. The statements of the series, like those of the 'note row' in Gaselen, do not coincide with the singer's phrases: indeed the two are deliberately overlapped, and since when listening to the music it is hard to keep track of our place in the series - it is easier on the printed page - we are never quite sure whether what we hear is the second half of the original version or the first step in a new transposition. This is the main sequence of events:

bar 305 (fig. 25): Statement I (see example above);

307^4: Statement II. Note the overlapping with the singer's phrases: chords 1 and 2 are used as a cadence for one phrase, 3 and 4 to initiate the next;

310^3: Statement III, chords 1 and 2;

311^4: Statement IV. Here the second pair of chords in statement III, i.e. a lower transposition of the preceding pair, is replaced by an upper transposition, which becomes the first pair in a new statement. The second pair in this new statement transposes downwards according to the original series, and thus reproduces the notes of the first pair in statement I. That this is in fact the second pair of statement IV and not the first pair of another new statement is proved by the B in bar 313^4: the two pairs are not, after all, identical;

314: Statement V: a literal transposition of statement IV (with rhythmic modifications), i.e. the statement is a tone higher than statements I-III;

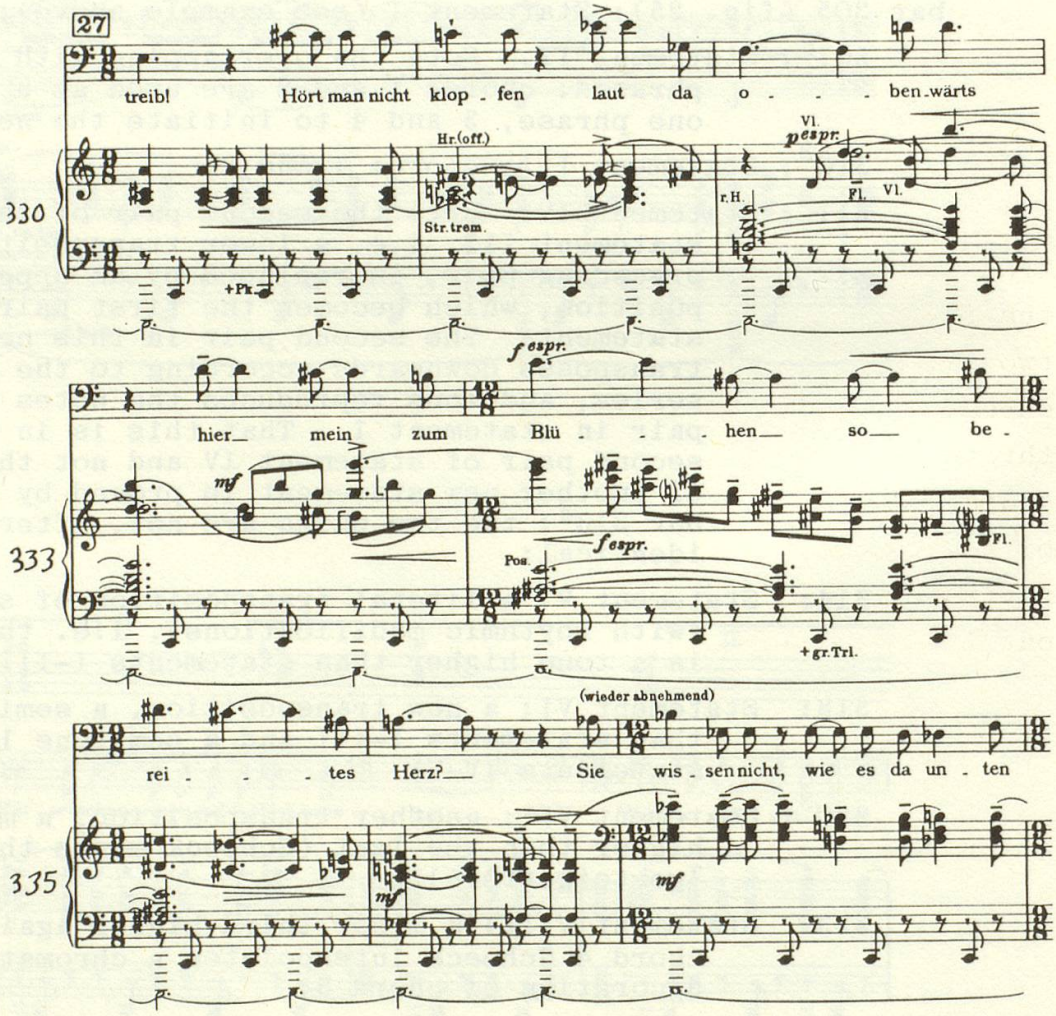
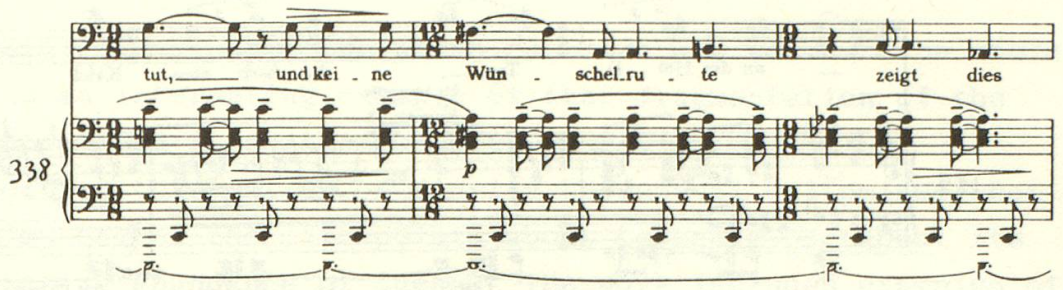
318: Statement VI: a new transposition, a semitone higher than statements I-III and a semitone lower than statements IV-V;

320^3: Statement VII: another transposition, a minor third higher than the last (Schoeck marks the music 'gesteigerter');

323: Statement VIII: a minor third higher again. Before chord 4 Schoeck interpolates a chromatic decoration of chord 3;

326: Statement IX: the first pair of chords repeats that of statement VIII; but the second is replaced by the first of

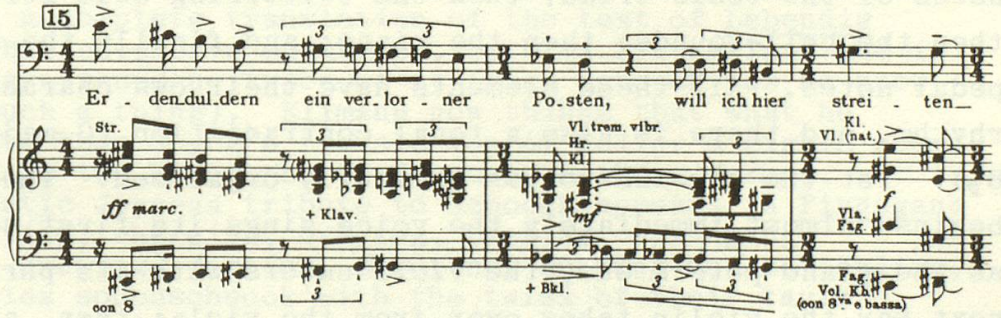
328: Statement X, which begins a tone higher, thus reproducing the process represented by statements III and IV. The first chord is decorated chromatically, like the third of statement VIII, and here, for the only time in the section, the bass moves from its pedal. By now the rhythmic augmentations are greater than ever before, and each chord is sustained for a full bar as the music approaches its climax (this is the moment when the narrator urges those up above to hear the beating of his heart). At this point, chords 3 and 4 of this statement are replaced by chords 1 and 2 of

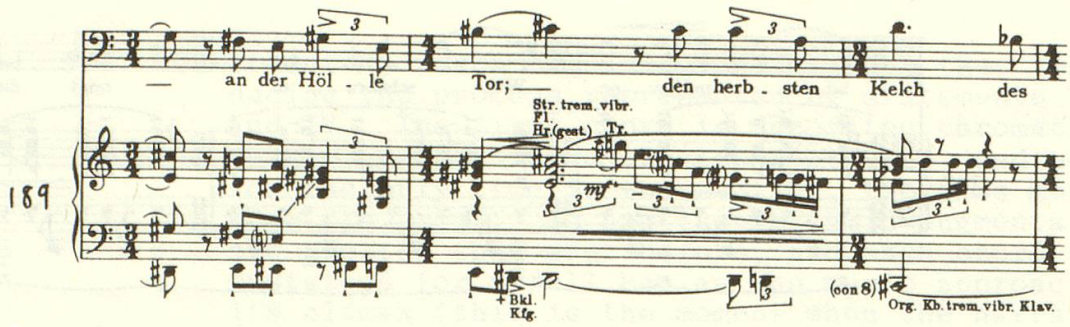
331: Statement XI. Here chords 2 and 3 are each sustained for <u>two</u> bars. Chord 3 (bar 334) marks the climax: the singer reaches the highest note of his line, and the violins plunge down in two-part harmony. The music now begins to subside:

336[3]: Statement XII. This continues the downward sequence. The series starts to disintegrate. A triad is interpolated between chords 2 and 3 (the G minor triad in bar 337); chord 3 itself becomes 1 of

337[4]: Statement XIII. We are now back to the original pitch. Another triad is substituted for chord 4;

341: Statement XIV, chord 1. From this point on it is almost impossible to relate the music directly to the series, though there are traces of it in the use of sequence. At bar 350 the pedal C becomes the root of a dominant seventh, which resolves into F major in time for the next song.

Our third and final example of series technique is taken from song III (see above). This song is in four sections, of which the first and third frame the second in ternary fashion. For these two complementary sections, too long to quote, Schoeck uses an extended series, presented first spasmodically, with the chords thrown from one register to another, then in the form of repeated chords. The fourth section, quoted below, begins with an outburst of new chords, which are themselves repeated almost immediately in rhythmic variation. Finally the melody of this new series is given out in a splintered version by the trumpet:





These three songs, with their radical use of harmony, represent a climax in Schoeck's technical development. In them, that 'constructivist' spirit which was present only intermittently in the early songs, then more strongly in the Elegie, and then more strongly still in Gaselen, finally reaches a quasi-serial method of using chords - another reorganisation of the language as striking as that found in the Elegie. It is perhaps typical of the composer that, having discovered this method - his most significant and personal discovery to date - he does not consolidate it, but draws back, to alight on its full possibilities only much later.

A final point about Lebendig begraben concerns its density of musical texture. In several places Schoeck seems to have conceived of the music in terms of a number of layers, any one of which might come into prominence for a moment before receding back into the general sound. In the example on p. 220, for instance, there are no fewer than five layers, each corresponding to a printed stave (the layers are more than contrapuntal lines, however: the piano part is a fully integrated block of sound, both harmonically and melodically - note the canon between the hands). First there is the vocal line, hovering indecisively on various notes of the tonic triad; then the twittering solo string lines; then the bell-sounds; then the piano; and finally the dissonant pedal notes. All these elements have their own character and rhythm, and there is also a tonal contradiction (G major against B♭). Yet the combination is skilfully organised. The piano begins; almost immediately the voice sings its first notes; then, as the piano peters out, the viola enters with its phrase. In the next bar the violin takes over from the viola; then, as the

voice sustains its note, the piano returns; and so on. The whole passage is an interesting example of that fragmentation of the texture discussed in connection with song V.

I mention this matter of density because it epitomises what seems to me one of the main points about Lebendig begraben: its almost Ivesian abundance of ideas. The work includes examples of every technique discussed so far: ostinati, polyrhythms (the very opening), gradual harmonic movement (song XI), thematic transformation (I et passim), the chordal series. Even more remarkable, however, is the sheer number of musical ideas, many of them strikingly imaginative; Schoeck's invention was rarely so rich. One is reminded of a couplet he set in 'Abendlied', from Unter Sternen:

> Trinkt, o Augen, was die Wimper hält,
> von dem goldnen Überfluss der Welt!

This 'golden overflowing' of ideas is one reason why Lebendig begraben might have been expected to survive. Schoeck called it his symphony,[1] perhaps using the word in the Mahlerian sense of a work that 'contains everything'. Yet the piece has been neglected. It had some performances in the 1930s;[2] Fischer-Dieskau

1) OS p. 353. See also Schuh, 'Othmar Schoecks "Lebendig begraben"', in Umgang mit Musik, p. 269.

2) One of these performances was attended by James Joyce, occasioning the letter quoted on p. 1. According to Joyce's biographer Richard Ellmann, Joyce 'made a point of meeting Schoeck, the only modern composer besides Antheil for whom he had any taste', and 'congratulated Schoeck on composing for the singing voice, unlike Stravinsky, whose works, he said, "not even a canary could sing".' Later Joyce tried to persuade Schoeck to write an opera on Byron's Cain! (James Joyce, London, 1966, p. 681) In the same source Ellmann maintains that Joyce made a complete translation of the text of Lebendig begraben, but extensive enquiries, both in Switzerland and in America, have found no trace of it (Frau Schoeck has no knowledge of such a thing). Ellmann now thinks that what he saw may have been Joyce's translation of Keller's eighth poem, reproduced in the biography of Joyce by Herbert Gorman. A characteristic Joycean tribute to Schoeck appears in Finnegans Wake: 'Butting, charging, bracing, backing, springing, shrinking, swaying, darting, shooting, bucking and sprinkling, their dossies sodouscheock with the twinx of their taylz' (524.22-24 - significance uncertain). Schoeck was among those whose support enabled Joyce to reside in Zurich in 1940.

sang it in 1954 and later recorded it; and it opened the 1972 concerts of the EBU. Otherwise it has hardly been played. Schoeck attributed this particular neglect to the lack of a published full score, commenting: 'Every effusion by other contemporaries gets printed, but not even all my principal works.'[1] His complaints were never more justified. The neglect is all the more surprising in that, if here he was writing from the heart, none of his music addresses itself more positively outwards, or concerns itself less with the unassuming homeliness which he was later to pursue. These songs of loneliness and death are in fact his most profound affirmation of life.

1) G p. 120.

CHAPTER 5

WANDERSPRÜCHE

The success of Penthesilea brought a period of prestige and relative security for Schoeck. In 1928 he began work on another stage piece, the 'dramatic cantata' Vom Fischer un syner Fru, based on the tale of the fisherman and his wife. The musical ideas came quickly, and Schoeck soon felt he could let the composition proceed at leisure. He took a holiday on the Murtensee, did some painting,[1] and almost as a diversion wrote a little song cycle, or 'Zyklussli' as he called it, to poems from Eichendorff's Wanderlieder. To this he gave the title of Wandersprüche[2] (literally, aphorisms about wandering). The work was completed in September, and the first performance given on 16 March 1929 by Felicie Hüni-Mihacsek and an ensemble under his own direction.

The work is one of his most cheerful, though not without its shadows, and with its brevity (ten minutes), clear harmony and concertante scoring it forms a scherzo among his cycles. The ensemble consists of clarinet, horn, piano and percussion - a softer collection of timbres than in Gaselen. There are eight poems, all short and all linked by the notion of travel (some were used by Pfitzner in his cantata Von deutscher Seele, 1921).[3] Their philosophy has been summarised by Vogel as follows: 'Man stands

1) See the 'Oelskizze von Murtnersee, 1928', reproduced in Hesse, 'Othmar Schoeck', p. 60.

2) See OS pp. 176-7, 196-9; V pp. 126-9; G p. 131; Mohr, op.cit., p. 88; Schuh, 'Othmar Schoecks "Wandersprüche"', SMZ 69 (1929); Vogel, 'Othmar Schoeck: Ein Schweizer Eichendorff-Komponist', p. 64. Score by Breitkopf (1930).

3) Nos. I-IV and VI-VIII are Eichendorff's seven Wandersprüche (1833-7); V is from his novel Die Glücksritter.

alone in life, above all in time of need. He can rely only on his Creator. Since we never know when our time is running out, we must constantly be ready for departure.'[1]

The wandering theme is one of the oldest in world literature, but with the romantics it became an obsession (its great expression in music is Die Winterreise). The traveller, impelled by inner restlessness, comes upon a village, an inn, some manifestation of communal life which he feels excluded (the destination of his wanderings is rarely stated, but is always understood to be death): the theme is common in Lenau, Hölderlin and others, and we find it as late as Nietzsche. Schubert's wanderer, in the song of that title, is typical:

Ich wandle still, bin wenig froh,
und immer fragt der Seufzer: wo?
immer wo?

This receives the response:

'Dort, wo du nicht bist, dort ist das Glück!'

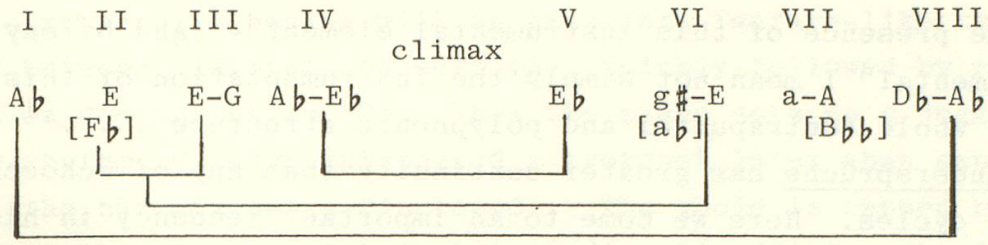
There is little of this morbidity in Eichendorff's poems, which are a pious counterpart to the wanderlust of Taugenichts; but the final poem, in which the traveller sees in the still night 'things he has not thought of', is an invocation to death as explicit as the last song of the Elegie. When Schoeck wrote his cycle he may have been thinking of his own travels, but more probably he intended it as a tribute to Eichendorff and to early romanticism in general - and perhaps to Schubert as well.

As in the two previous cycles, the songs run continuously, the continuity here serving to underline the restless theme. Triple metre predominates. The overall form may be viewed as a Lisztian sonata in one movement:

I-III	Allegro
IV-V	Andante
VI-VII	Scherzo
VIII	Adagio plus Coda/reprise

or as a tonal palindrome hingeing on a climax in the dominant:

1) Op.cit., p. 64.



Four of the songs - five if we count the seventh - end in keys different from those in which they started, and this continual pressing forward is another image of compulsive wandering. There is also a motto-theme, announced in the first song to the words 'Es geht wohl anders als man meint' (things often turn out differently from what one expects). The return of this theme at the end of the work provides a ternary element or frame.

Schoeck's model for his cycle, as in Gaselen, was An die ferne Geliebte, but this time he adds something new: a current of instrumental development which runs over and above the songs and supplies much of their thematic material. At this time, we may remember, he was experimenting with the use of cyclic techniques in instrumental works (see the contemporary sonatas for violin and bass clarinet), and it may have been his renewed interest in Bach that led to this new economy of means. In the Fischer, as he later explained, he interspersed the scenes of the action with a set of variations, each variation reflecting the character of the previous scene; the variations thus had a dramatic as well as a formal value. In Wandersprüche, similarly, 'The brevity of the individual Eichendorff Sprüche suggested the use of a ritornello, which doesn't produce a schematic rondo form, to be sure, but leads a half-hidden life, in that it is partly woven into the vocal movements.'[1] What he does, in effect, is to create an instrumental structure which develops as it were alongside the text, dependent on it for expressive details but from the thematic point of view almost self-sufficient. Even here, however, his intentions are as much expressive as structural, for the ritornello, with its post-horn-like fanfares of repeated notes, its jogging triplets and its distant sleighbells, is yet another expression of the wandering theme (Schoeck's wanderer likes to travel in comfort).

1) 'Aus einem Zwiegespräch mit Willi Schuh', p. 5.

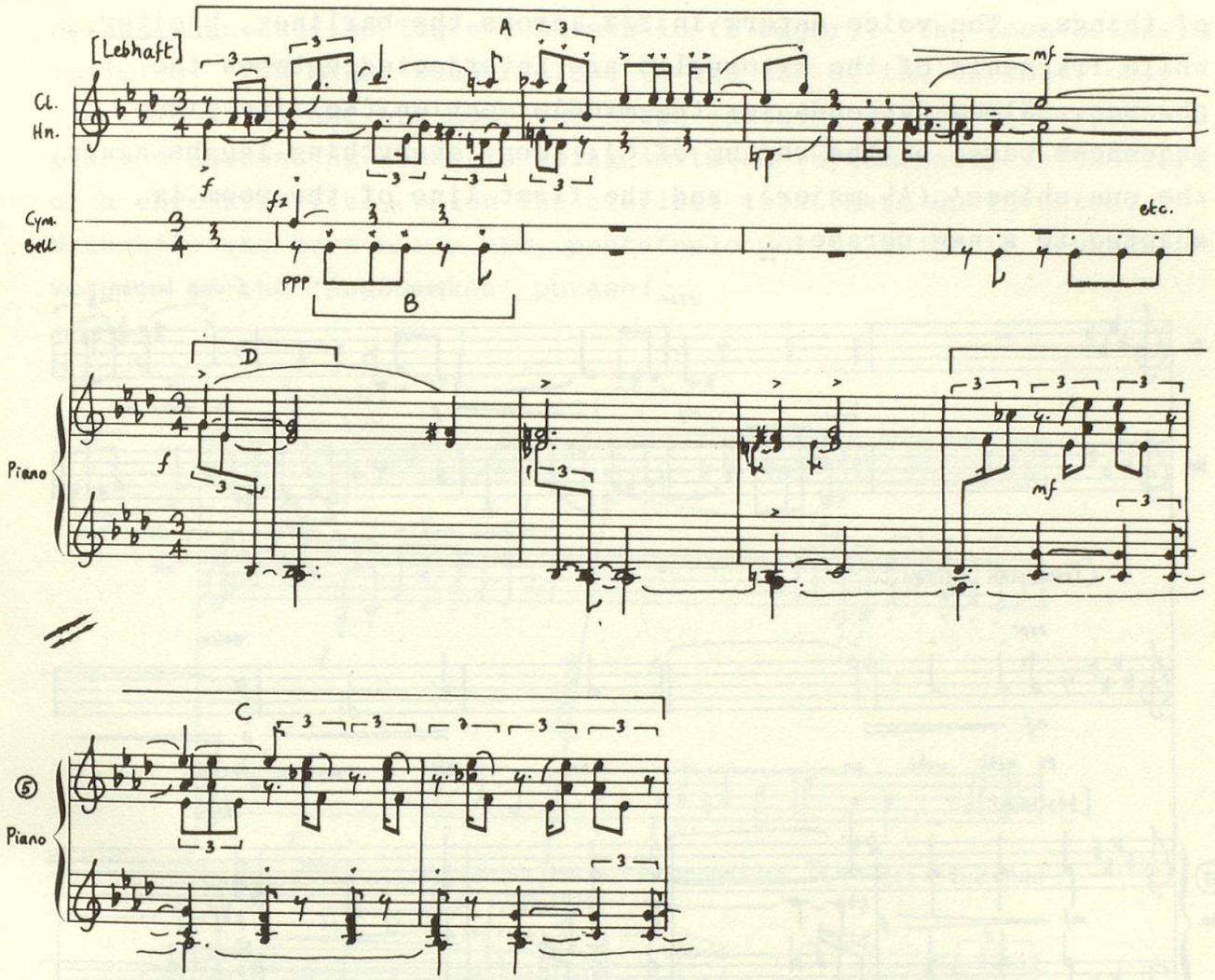
The presence of this instrumental element - 'and by saying "instrumental" I mean not simply the instrumentation of this music but the whole contrapuntal and polyphonic structure . . .'[1] - means that Wandersprüche has greater continuity than any of Schoeck's earlier cycles. Here we come to an important tendency in his treatment of the genre: the tendency to reduce one's sense of it as a series of individual songs and to increase one's sense of it as a single movement.

This tendency establishes itself as follows. The Elegie consists entirely of separate songs except for its last two numbers, which are joined by an interlude. Gaselen is a series of separate songs rather perfunctorily linked by transitions. Lebendig begraben is like a series of tableaux gradually getting more and more continuous. In Wandersprüche the songs form a continuous instrumental structure, while still retaining their individual character. Later, in Wanderung im Gebirge, this individuality is almost completely lost, and in the Notturno (subtitled 'Five Movements for String Quartet and Voice') the songs are interspersed with pure instrumental music. After this no further integration is possible, and the cycle dissolves into the looser form of the Liederbuch. In the previous chapter this interplay of vocal and instrumental was connected with Berg, and the connection persists, though still accidental.

Most of the instrumental development in Wandersprüche takes place in the transitions between the songs, and it is these that provide the rondo framework. The material is introduced in the opening ritornello (to retain Schoeck's terminology - no analogy with baroque ritornello form is intended) and reappears in various transformations throughout the work, changing its character according to the text. How this material is varied forms the basis of the technical discussion below; but first we shall go through the work in a more general way, seeing how it coheres as a whole.

1) Stravinsky on Pierrot Lunaire, in Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, Conversations with Igor Stravinsky (London, 1962), p. 63.

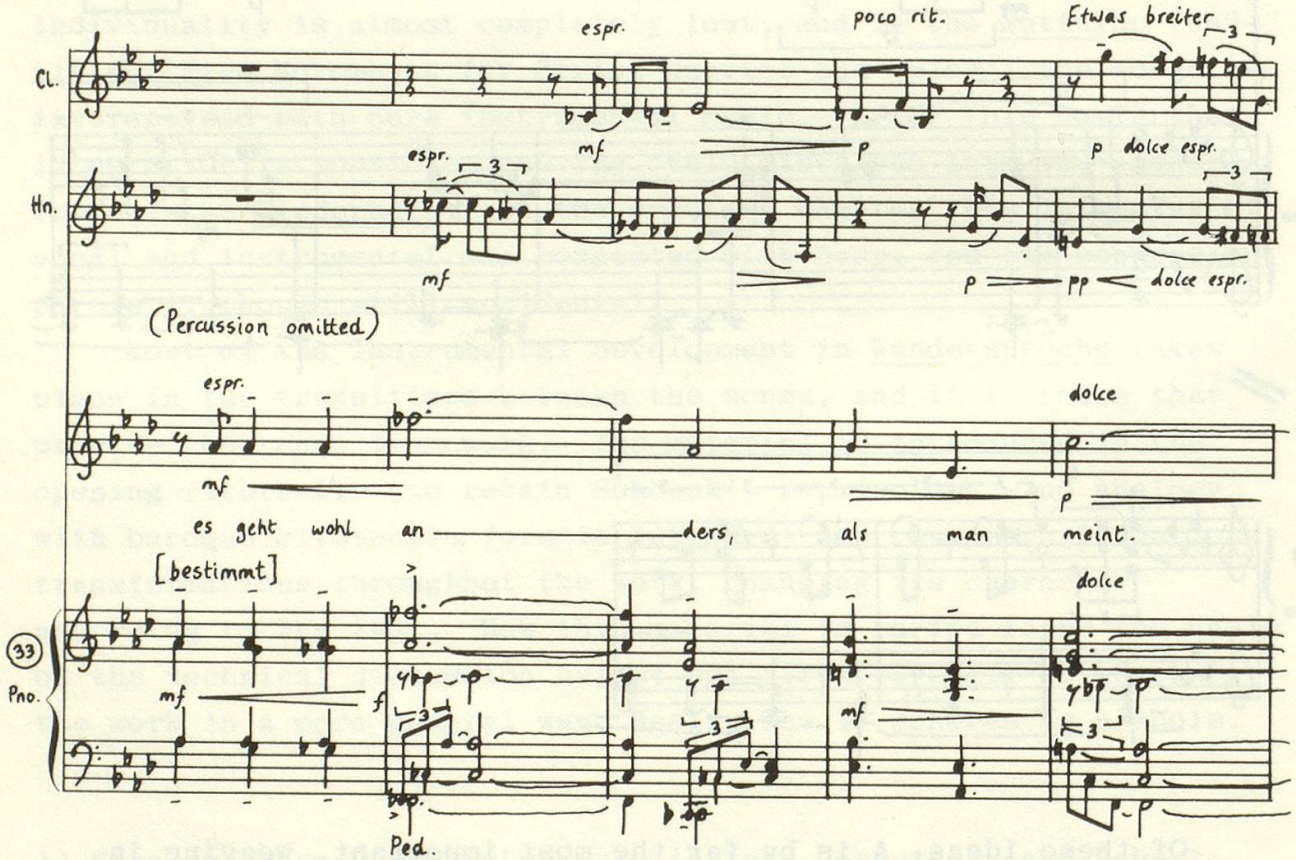
The ritornello begins with an exuberant fanfare-like theme divided between clarinet and horn (A), quickly followed by repeated quavers on distant bells (B). Then the piano sets up a jogging triplet rhythm (C, here introduced a crotchet later than expected, so that the harmony seems displaced). The whole is capped by a soft E♭ on the glockenspiel (not quoted). In addition the first two crotchets of the piano part (D) yield a basic harmonic shape (a characteristic mixture of I and V) and a basic texture (the descending arpeggio):



Of these ideas, A is by far the most important, weaving in and out of the texture in over thirty different transformations (it is this theme that is discussed later). B and C, by contrast, are

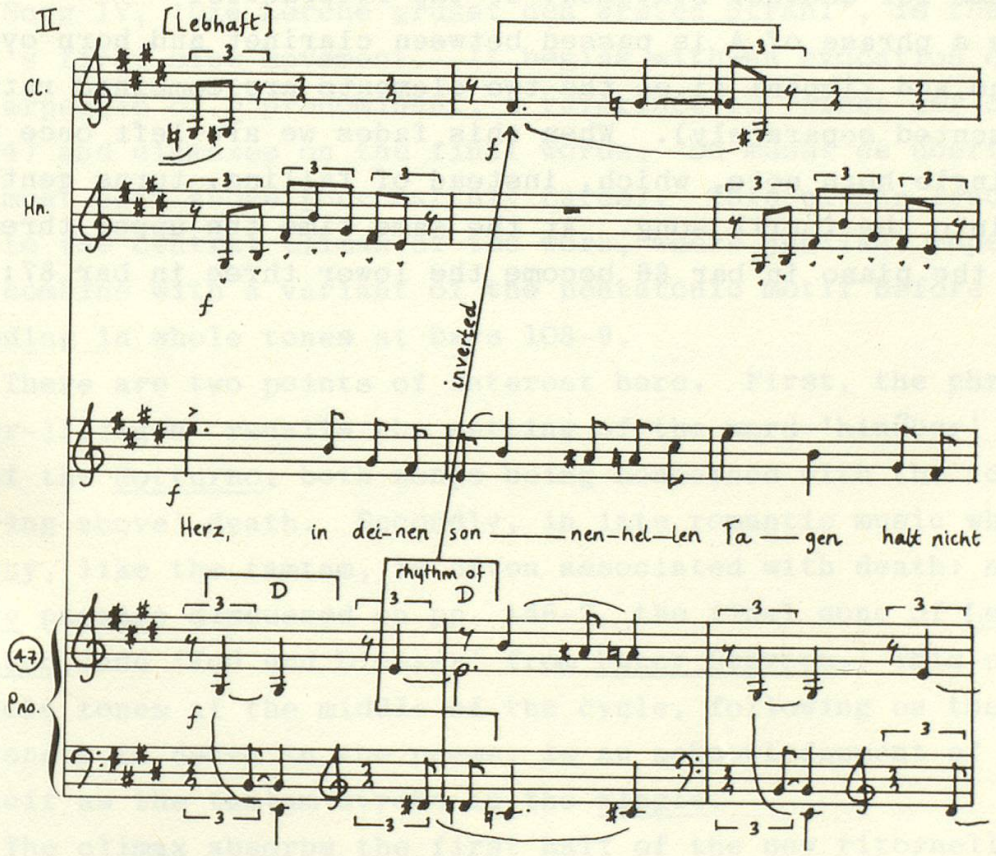
'immutables', like the bell sound in 'Vesper', deriving their effect from their unchanging quality rather than from their capacity to develop (though the harmony of C does alter slightly on reappearance). The glockenspiel E♭ falls into the same category. The two aspects of D are like A inasmuch as they constantly appear in new guises; but unlike A they are textural ideas, not melodic ones, and are confined almost entirely to the accompaniment (piano and percussion, as opposed to the clarinet and horn of A).[1]

The ritornello concluded, a cool A♭ minor ushers in song I, 'Es geht wohl anders als du meinst', concerning the changeability of things. The voice enters in 3/2 across the barlines, Breiter, while fragments of the ritornello are interjected between the phrases. Gloom descends for the middle section (Wolfian piano sequences based on the rhythm of C); then 'everything laughs again, the sun shines' (A♭ major), and the first line of the poem is adapted to a new phrase:

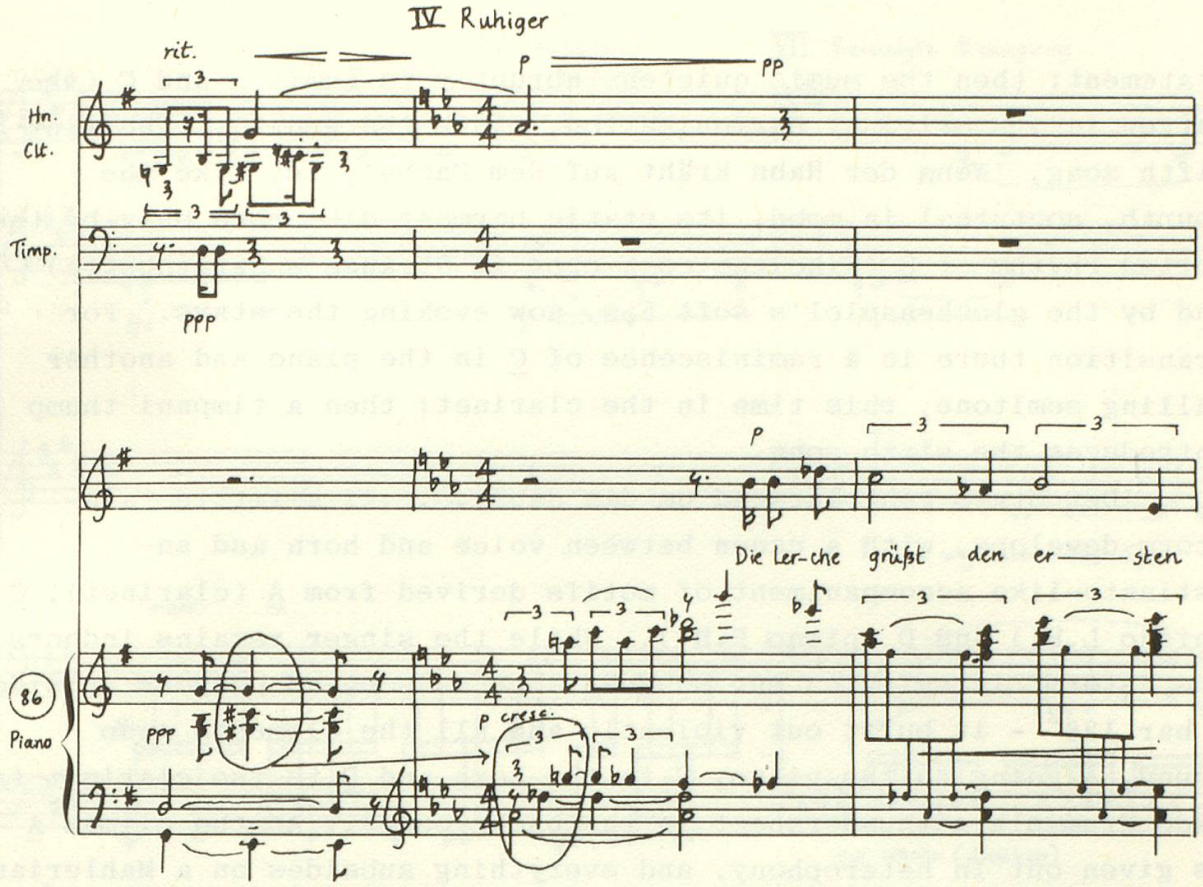


1) See songs I and III passim (especially bar 34ff), bar 47ff., 55-6, 58, 67-8, 87-8, 100-7 (especially 104), 130, 152 and song VIII passim.

This is the version recalled at the end of the cycle. Its deceptive cadence bears out the meaning of the words; the horn's reference to A sparks off tiny pieces of imitation (the richness of decoration is typical); and the piano has the harmony and texture of D. The fuller recollection of A in the last bar of the example brings back the ritornello; then, after A has faded away, B and C start up again Lebhaft. This time the changes of harmony coincide with the barlines but the chords are inverted (compare especially bar 44 with bars 7-8).

When even these phrases have died away, song II, 'Herz, in deinen sonnenhellen Tagen', bursts in (E major). The poem counsels optimism: 'You might wander alone to the end of the earth if only you rely on no one but God, who keeps faith.' All is linear, the piano's descending arpeggio being imitated rhythmically in the form of a chromatic line, which the clarinet then takes up inverted. Meanwhile the horn has a new, pentatonic motif, which is another version of the 'Angedenken' phrase:

At the phrase to the words 'Sinkt der Stern', with its dark augmented harmony, there is a premonition of the Hesse song 'Nachtgefühl' (cf. examples on pp. 258, 278-9 below). Then the rhythm of C, heard in timpani and piano, begins the build-up to the climax. The final cadence refers to the example on p. 242; but instead of dying away as before the music intensifies, with a clarinet whoop of A, a fortissimo dissonance derived from C (note the tamtam, following the reference to God) and a loud falling semitone in the horn.

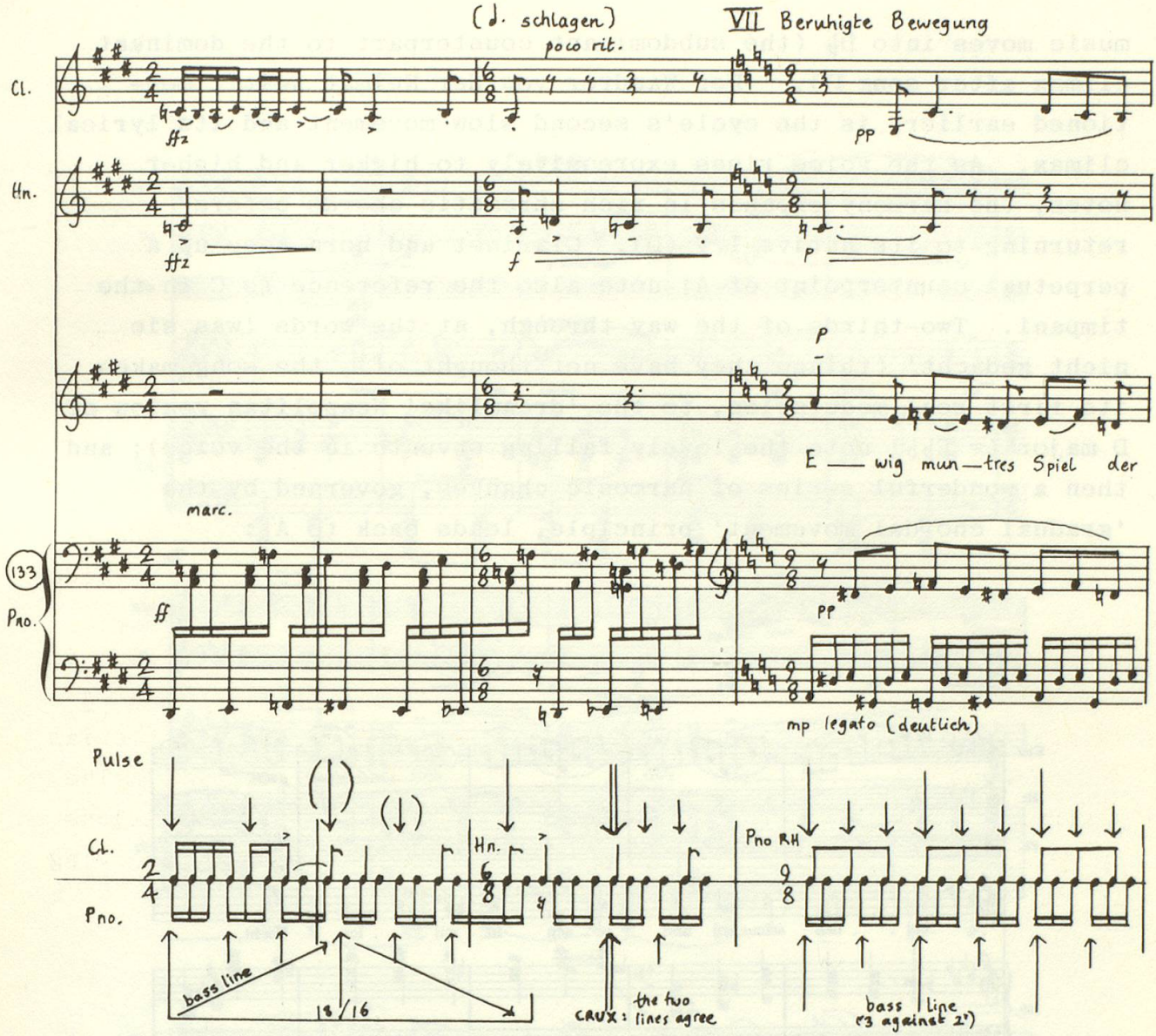
This semitone is the only transition to song III, 'Was willst auf dieser Station'; there is no ritornello. Here Eichendorff declares the futility of settling down, 'for soon the postilion blows and you must leave everything'. The song is a compressed variation of the previous number, beginning in E major before moving into flat keys. As before, C and D dominate, with ever wilder proliferations of A in the clarinet. 'Hairpin' crescendos in the wind evoke the posthorn. For the final line of the poem, however - 'du musst doch alles lassen' - the harmony moves unexpectedly but appropriately into a new key (G), and the music calms for another statement of the ritornello.

Here a phrase of A is passed between clarinet and horn over C in piano and timpani (i.e. the two elements are combined rather than presented separately). When this fades we are left once again with a single horn note, which, instead of falling, turns gently upwards into the fourth song. At the same time the upper three notes of the piano in bar 86 become the lower three in bar 87:

Song IV, 'Die Lerche grüsst den ersten Strahl', is the cycle's first slow movement. It begins with an evocation of night (the arpeggio of D predominant, a reference to 'Sinkt der Stern' at bar 94) and climaxes on the final words, 'Du musst es überfliegen' (you must soar above your earthly cares). This climax leads in turn to the central climax of the work, where jubilant repetitions of A combine with a variant of the pentatonic motif before exploding in whole tones at bars 108-9.

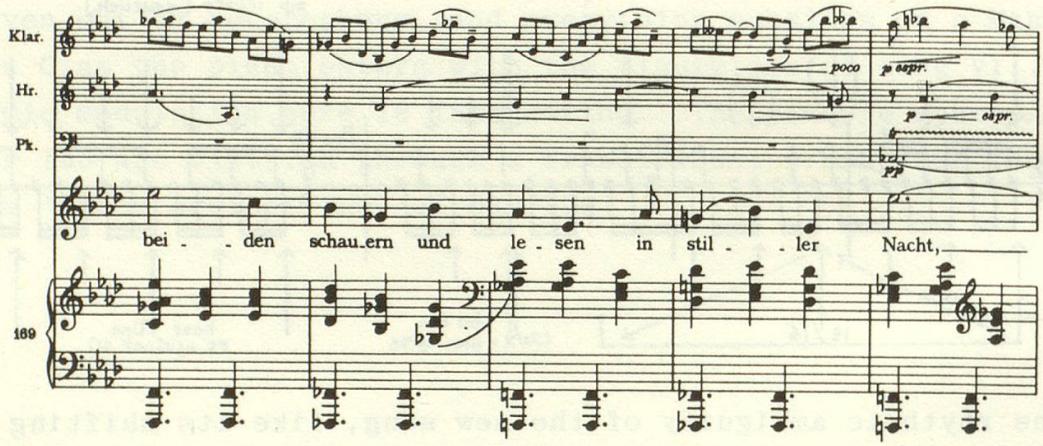
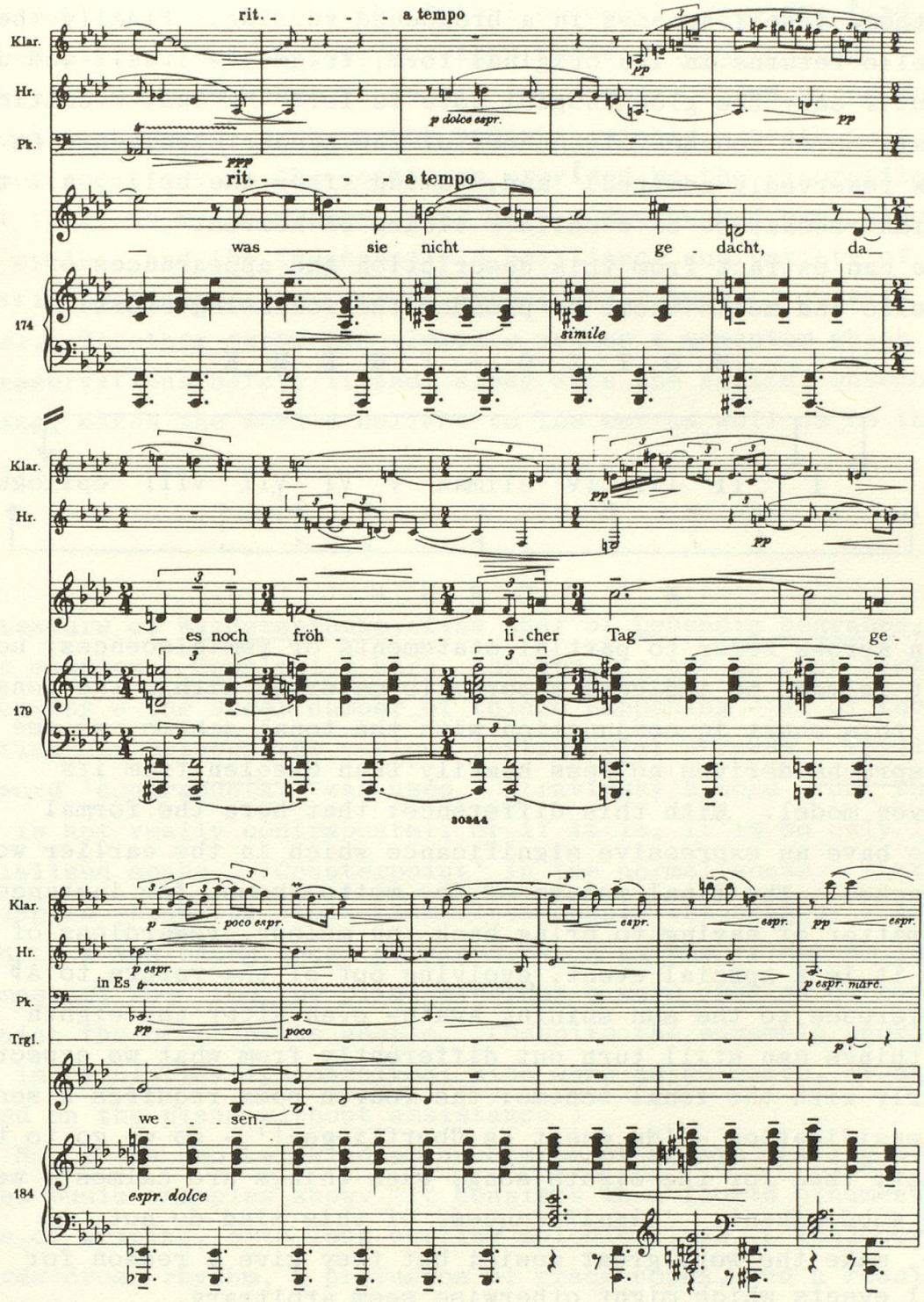
There are two points of interest here. First, the phrase on '[über-]fliegen' recalls the setting of the word 'hinüber' at the end of the Notturno, both songs being concerned with the idea of 'soaring above' death. Secondly, in late romantic music whole-tone harmony, like the tamtam, is often associated with death: see the Elegie passage discussed on pp. 146-7, the final song of Lebendig begraben, and 'Tod und Dichter' from Unter Sternen. This outburst in whole tones at the middle of the cycle, following on the references to death in the poems, is an acknowledgement of death as explicit as the tamtam stroke in the Elegie.

The climax absorbs the first half of the new ritornello

statement; then the music quietens abruptly to admit B and C (the latter in its original harmonisation, minus the pedal). The tiny fifth song, 'Wenn der Hahn kräht auf dem Dache', is, like the fourth, nocturnal in mood, its static harmony disturbed only by the dotted rhythm of C (like the cock-crow in Strauss's Zarathustra) and by the glockenspiel's soft E♭s, now evoking the stars. For transition there is a reminiscence of C in the piano and another falling semitone, this time in the clarinet; then a timpani thump introduces the sixth song.

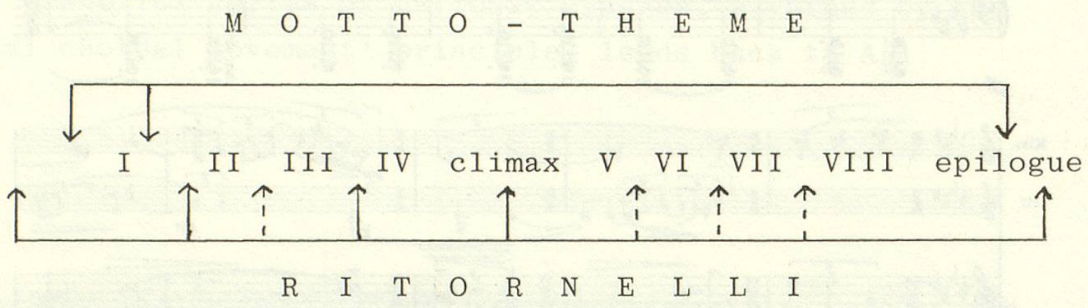
'Der Sturm geht lärmend um das Haus . . .': a little rain-storm develops, with a canon between voice and horn and an ostinato-like accompaniment of motifs derived from A (clarinet), C (piano L.H.) and D (piano R.H.). While the singer remains indoors the 'storm' is agitated but subdued; but as soon as he goes outside - bar 128^2 - it burst out violently and all the elements swap round, A going to the piano, C to the horn and D to the clarinet (a side drum plays thundersheet in the background). At the climax A is given out in heterophony, and everything subsides on a Mahlerian unison C as the piano enters with the figuration of song VII. The rhythmic modulation here is interesting. The piano's syncopations in bar 133 are filtered through a transitional 6/8 before resolving in the 'three against two' of bar 136:

The rhythmic ambiguity of the new song, like its shifting semitones, suggests the 'Ewig muntres Spiel der Wogen', which, as the poet says, conceals well-known dangers. The material here is freer than in any other part of the cycle, and in my opinion less distinguished. Moreover the vocal writing seems forced, as if the words were added after composition (though the flow onto the word 'doch' is sensitively done).

There is a reference to A before the final song, but no ritornello. The quavers become triplets in a slow 3/4 (the cross-rhythms are characteristic), a tamtam stroke heralds a deeper seriousness, and in one of the work's most beautiful passages the

music moves into D♭ (the subdominant counterpart to the dominant climax after song IV). 'Der Wandrer von der Heimat weit', mentioned earlier, is the cycle's second slow movement and its lyrical climax. As the voice rises expressively to higher and higher notes, the harmony expands in rich chromatic chords before returning to its native I/V (D). Clarinet and horn keep up a perpetual counterpoint of A; note also the reference to C in the timpani. Two-thirds of the way through, at the words 'was sie nicht gedacht' (things they have not thought of), the song makes its first real modulation, to the 'dreamlike' Neapolitan region of D major (= E♭♭: note the lovely falling seventh in the voice); and then a wonderful series of harmonic changes, governed by the 'gradual chordal movement' principle, leads back to A♭:

rit. - - - - a tempo
Klar.
Hr.
Pk.
ppp
p dolce espr.
pp
rit. - - - - a tempo
— was — sie nicht — ge - dacht, da —
174
simile
Klar.
Hr.
pp
pp
— es noch fröh - - - - li - cher Tag — ge -
179
30344
Klar.
Hr.
Pk.
Trgl.
p poco espr.
espr.
espr.
pp espr.
p espr.
in Es
p espr. marc.
pp
poco
p
we - - - sen. —
184
espr. dolce

The rest of the work has the character of an epilogue. A♭ major regained, the horn invokes a melody from the first song, that to the words 'lacht alles wieder, die Sonne scheint'; then the motto-theme itself appears in a broadened version. Finally the ritornello returns in its original form, fragments itself and dies away until only the glockenspiel note is left - a last evocation of the stars which touches off echoes of the Kindertotenlieder (a work Schoeck reservedly admired)[1] and, coming after the bells, all the Mahlerian resonances of a child's vision of heaven.

We can extract from this description the appearances of ritornello and motto-theme to produce the following chart:



(Broken arrows refer to partial statements or reminiscences; no attempt is made to indicate ritornello material within the songs.) Taking this chart in conjunction with the tonal scheme, we see that Wandersprüche derives no less heavily than Gaselen from its Beethoven model. With this difference: that here the formal devices have an expressive significance which in the earlier work they lacked. The final return of the motto-theme, for instance, is not a matter of having to bring back the melody, regardless of the words; it is a special event, evolving out of the return to A♭ and the reference to the sun shining again- even after the eighth song, things can still turn out differently from what we expect. Similarly with the tonal scheme: the fourth poem requires a sense of intensification - 'du musst es überfliegen!' - so we go to the dominant; then for the eighth song, when things are calmest, we go to the subdominant. 'Significances' of this kind do not, of course, make the work great music; but they give a reason for musical events which might otherwise seem arbitrary.

1) See G p. 143.

Not that Wandersprüche is faultless. If we could separate the transitions from the ritornelli (but we cannot - their inseparability is part of the formal concept), we might find some of them hardly less perfunctory than those in Gaselen: the transition between songs V and VI, for example. And there are more serious weaknesses, such as the undistinguished seventh song. What rescues the piece is the continuum provided by the ritornello - the first time, to my knowledge, that such a device had been used in a song cycle - and the inexhaustible brilliance and variety of the thematic transformation (strong words, but I hope to justify them later). Together these two elements set up a momentum which sweeps all reservations before it and, along with the skilful ensemble writing, makes the work a delight to the ear as well as to the mind.

*

The texture of Wandersprüche, like that of Lebendig begraben, is often complex. Complexity here, however, is not so much a matter of density - the sheer number of things happening - as of the relationship between the various instrumental strands. Earlier the word 'contrapuntal' was used - Stravinsky's word - but the texture is not really contrapuntal, or if it is, it is so only in a specialised sense. 'Counterpoint' in the normal sense - that is, writing in which the lines themselves supply the harmony - is confined to a few exceptional passages, such as the rainstorm in song VI; most of the time the piano provides a warm cushion of harmony in which the other parts nestle. (Despite the ensemble scoring the work is pianistically conceived; with some adjustments, it can be played on the piano without assistance.)

No, it is another kind of counterpoint we are dealing with, as the music examples show. It consists in a florid ornamental style of writing, with long curling melodic lines, a tendency towards cross-rhythm, a profusion of grace notes, and a readiness to let the lines evolve out of the harmony rather than supply it - see the very first upbeat, where the music branches out of the

horn's sustained G, the clarinet taking it up into the ritornello theme, the piano taking it down into a chord. The model for this style seems to be the Meistersinger prelude, where the 'false counterpoint' so despised by Brahms actually generates a style of its own - not a contrapuntal style in the strict sense but a decorative one. This style develops through the later parts of the Ring to Mahler, where every line, every interval almost, becomes 'thematic', an object of interest in the local sense if not in the long term. In the Wandersprüche example on p. 242, similarly, the clarinet's dotted motif, of little importance in itself (though it reappears in bars 66, 95 and 99), is imitated a fourth higher in the horn; then its first two notes lengthen to accompany the next entry of A, which is itself imitated, etc. It is unlikely that Schoeck took this technique from Mahler; it is, rather, another symptom of that textural fragmentation noted in Lebendig begraben, though here presented in a less dissonant context.

It is a precious style, almost a decadent one[1] (it also makes the music difficult to perform); and in order to save the texture from disintegration some element of continuity is needed. This Schoeck supplies through thematic transformation. One theme, one basic shape going through the work in a multiplicity of guises - this is enough to keep the music together, to keep our minds fixed on more than the merely local event. Wandersprüche, more than any of Schoeck's other cycles, is a work of transformation: transformation of melody, transformation of harmony, transformation of rhythm - transformation is, indeed, almost the only technical idea, and the obsessional way it is used does as much to concentrate the music, to give it its virtuoso character, as does its brevity and its difficulty for the players.

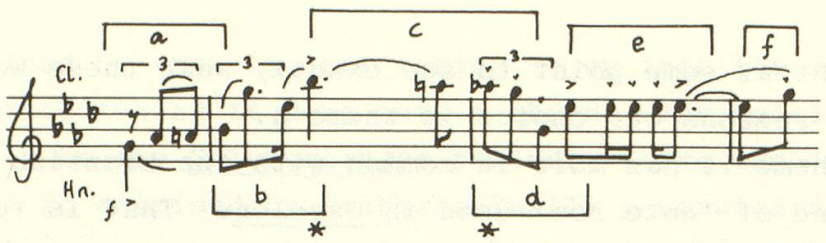
Some of the obvious transformation, not only of A but of other, 'textural' ideas, have already been mentioned, and it would be tedious to analyse every one. But I think it necessary that we should go through all the transformation of one theme; there is so much talk in this book of 'variation', 'transformation' and so on

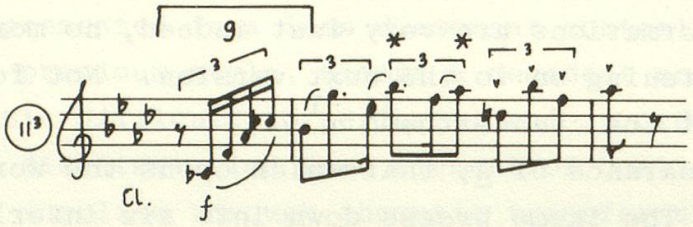
1) See below, p. 405.

that we ought at some point to see exactly what these words mean. For obvious reasons our choice is theme A.

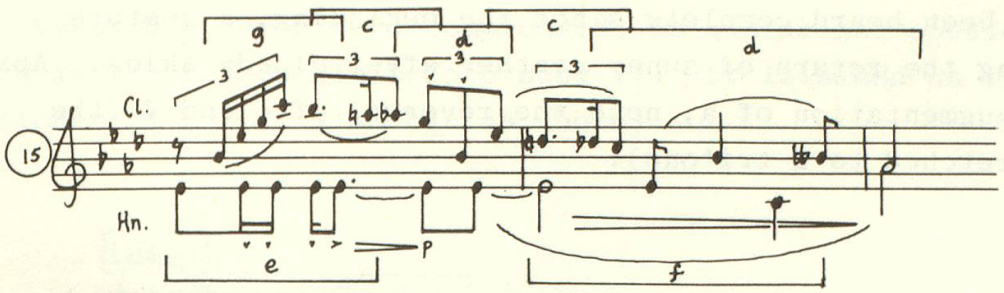
As a theme it has more in common with the Lisztian type than with the kind of 'note row' used in Gaselen. That is to say, it has a rhythmic shape as well as a melodic one from the outset, and its subsequent modifications are apprehended in terms of their closeness to or difference from this shape. Not only the rhythm is changed: sometimes the notes are altered too, and as for the harmony, the theme is sufficiently flexible (or 'blank') to be able to call up new harmony every time it appears - or rather, not to demand the exchange of consonance and dissonance that a theme with more rigid harmonic implications (like the Gaselen theme) would require. There is no use of the series technique in Wandersprüche - no time for it, we might say; the theme travels over the surface of the music, sometimes not even stopping for harmonisation (and some of its transformations are very fast indeed, no more than skirls) before hastening on to the next version. Not for nothing did Schoeck call it the 'Wanderthema'.[1]

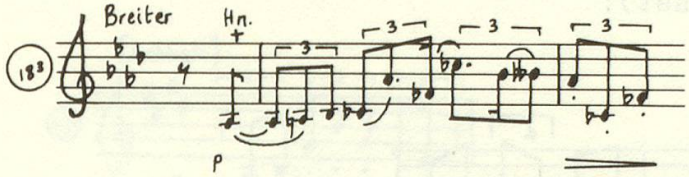
The first appearance of A, that which opens the work, was quoted on p. 241. The theme breaks down into six interlocking motifs, labelled a-f in the following example. Motif a, here divided between horn and clarinet, consists of three ascending semitones; b is an arpeggio figure in dotted rhythm; c inverts a in different note values; d uses the last two notes of c and three of b; e is a fanfare of repeated E♭s; and f is a rising third (here acting as an anacrusis to another statement of e, this time on A♭). Motif e differs from the others, in that it consists of a rhythm rather than an interval or series of intervals; and sometimes it appears independently (see bars 15, 41 and 56). This statement will be referred to as version i:

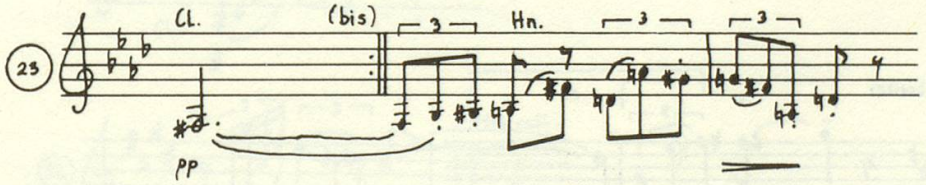
1) G p. 131.

Version ii is the first of the interjections between the phrases of song I. It is a compressed version, consisting essentially of motif b, still in its original rhythm, with two of the notes of c (indicated by *) incorporated into a fresh continuation. The phrase is prefaced by a new upbeat, comprising a four-note arpeggio figure (g). Diatonically transformed, this figure later replaces a and b as the standard prefix to c:



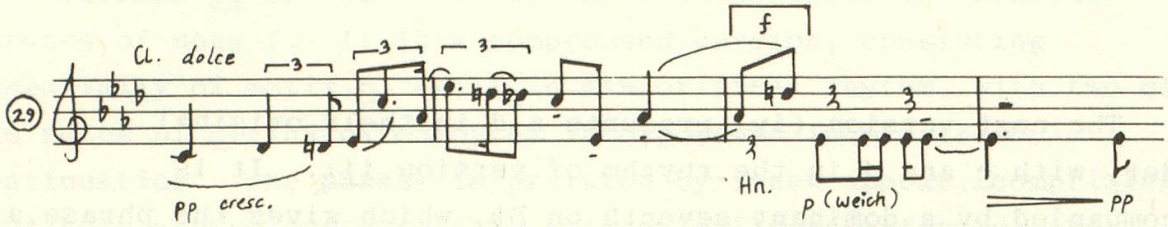
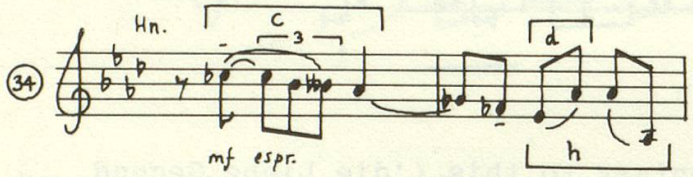
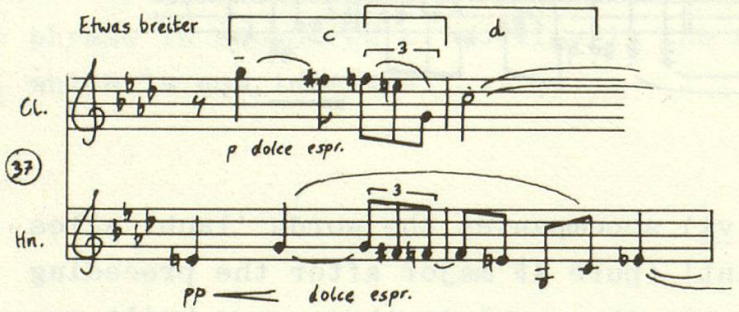
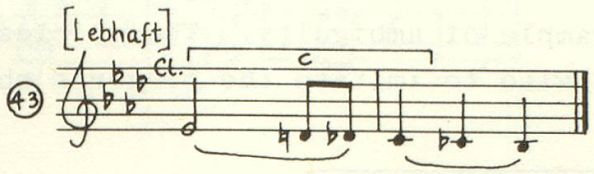
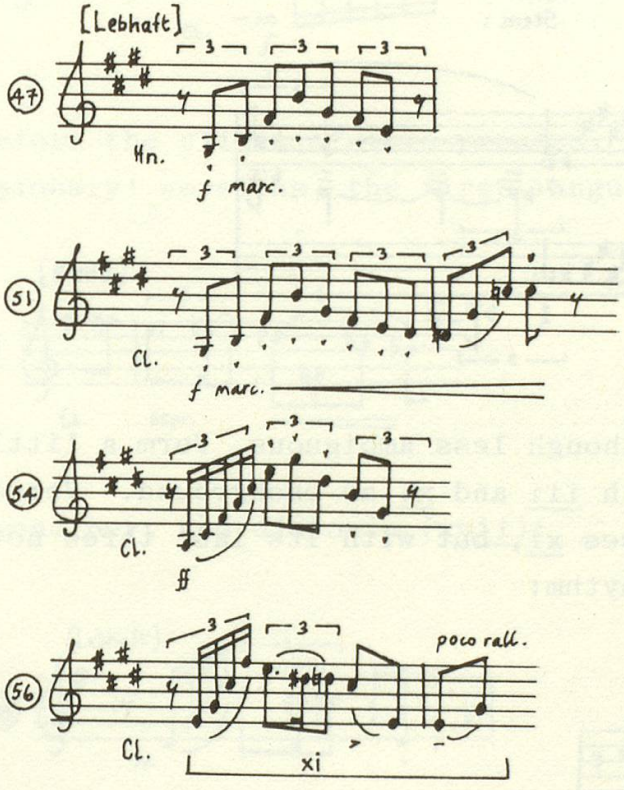
Version iii, the second interjection, establishes the main subsidiary form of the theme, at least where notes are concerned (cf. versions xiii, xvii and xxix). First we hear g, in a diatonic version which relates it back to b; then c and d, the former in the rhythm of b, the latter moved forward a quaver so that the stress falls on G, not A♭. In this statement, c and d are immediately repeated in sequence, with c now moved forward a quaver and d decorated by two expressive neighbour notes (B♭ and B♭♭). The whole phrase is supported by motif e in the horn, leading as before to f, which is now inverted:



The next version (iv) presents a-d in their original order, with c and d in the rhythm of version iii. It is accompanied by a dominant seventh on B♭, which gives the phrase a dark, Neapolitan flavour (it follows the words 'ist Lenz und Sonnenschein verflogen'):

Version v is complementary to this ('die Liebe Gegend schwarz umzogen'). It takes the same notes, transposes them down a tone, alters the rhythm so that d is in its original form, and divides the phrase between clarinet and horn. The harmony now is a dominant seventh on G♯:

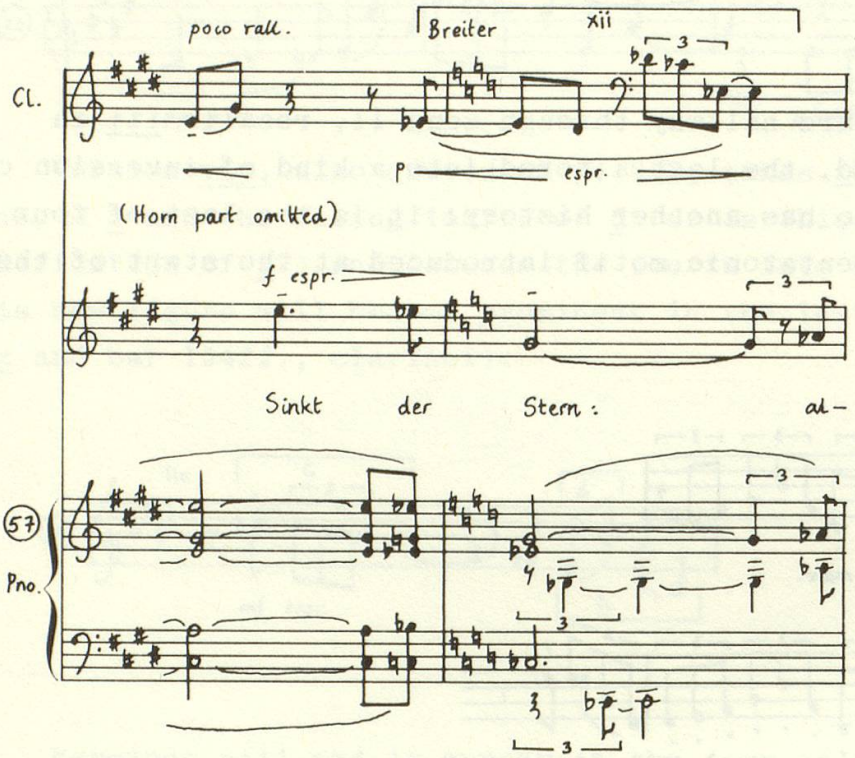


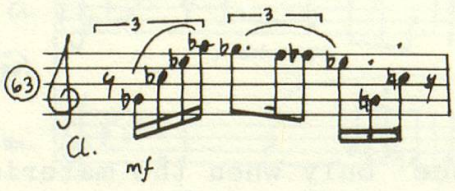
The next version (vi) accompanies the words 'lacht alles wieder, die Sonne scheint' (pure A♭ major after the preceding chromaticism). It presents the complete theme, now built around the tonic and not the dominant triad. This is the first time the

theme has been heard complete since the beginning, a gesture symbolising the return of sunny weather after cloudy skies. Apart from the augmentation of a, note the reversal of e and f (the latter stretched to a tritone):

Version vii, also quoted on p. 242, takes the falling semitones of c and the rising fourth of d (or is this fourth another modification of f?) and extends the fourth into a new figure, h. This new figure will become prominent in the last song (cf. version xxx and bar 154ff., clarinet):

Versions viii and ix appear in the form of a canon. Once again these are compressed versions, using c and d in their original rhythms, then displaced (the harmony combines I and V in F major):

Version x, even more compressed, is a clarinet counterpoint heard in the ritornello before song II. It is based on the falling semitones of c (cf. also bar 39, horn):

Version xi, heard halfway through song II, recalls iii in combining g, c and d, the last altered into a kind of inversion of h. However, xi also has another history: it is the last of four variations on the pentatonic motif introduced at the start of the song (see p. 243):

A motif can have this 'double provenance' only when the material itself is ambiguous. Already we have seen intervals (such as the rising fourth in version vii) which might have come from either of

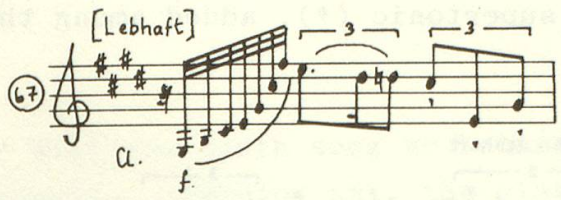
two possible sources; now the same is happening with larger units. As we proceed we shall find other fragments which can be interpreted in more than one way; and this ambiguity, far from weakening the structure, seems actually to strengthen it, by helping to build up a network of interrelated material.

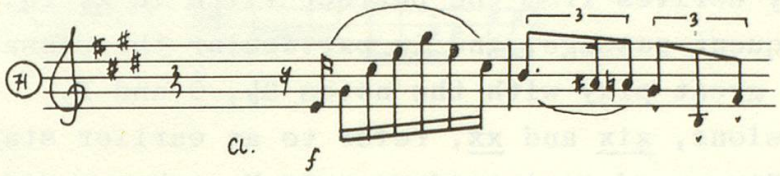
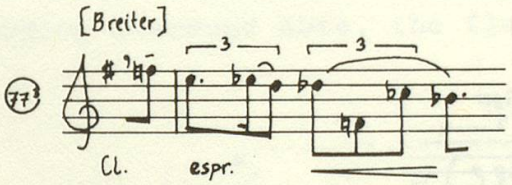
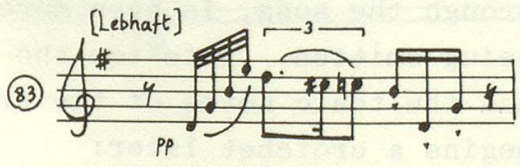
Version xii is another example of ambiguity. Though clearly derived from c and d, it seems also to imitate the singer's phrase:

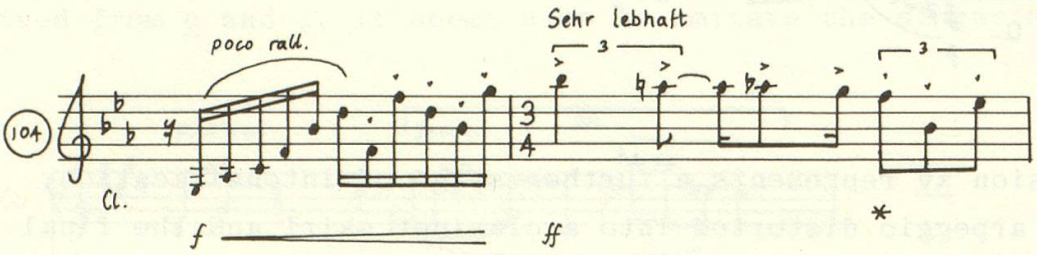


Versions xiii-xviii, though less ambiguous, form a little sub-class of their own, with iii and xi as background. Version xiii indeed almost transposes xi, but with its last three notes squeezed into semiquaver rhythm:

Version xiv restores the pitch and tonality of xi (it comes

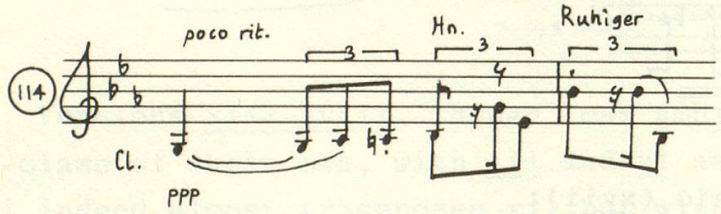
at the end of song II). But now the arpeggio has seven notes instead of four:

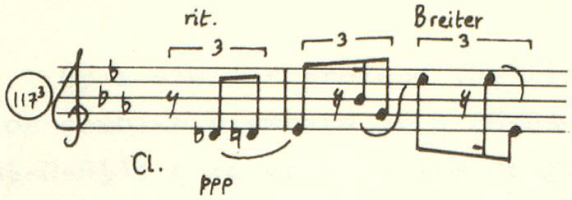


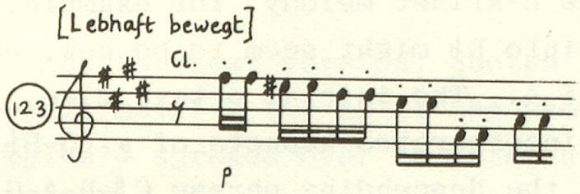
Version xv represents a further stage of intensification, with the arpeggio distorted into a clarinet skirl and the final interval changed to a perfect fifth:

Before the climax of this process, however, there are two 'diversionary' versions, the first languid and chromatic (xvi):

the second pert and diatonic (xvii):

Nothing is heard of A during the fourth song, except for some descending semitones in bars 93-4 and 97. But at the climax,

leading to the central climax of the work, we have the final intensification of this little sub-class, with the arpeggio upbeat expanded to eleven notes and - even more significantly, in view of what is to come - a new note, the supertonic (*), added among the notes of motif d (xviii):

This new note probably derives from the perfect fifth in xv (q.v.). In any case the subsequent passage, and in particular the passage in whole tones, makes great play with the notes B♭, G and F.

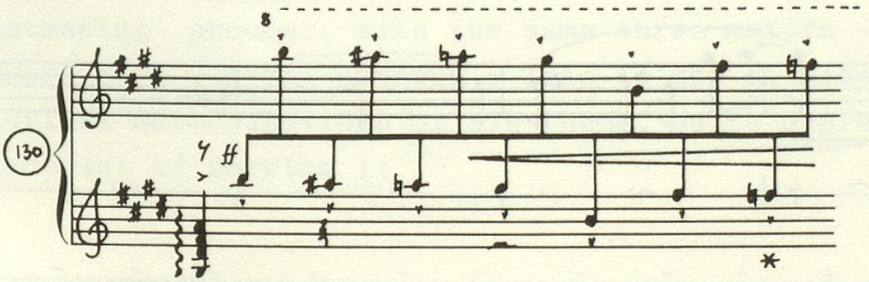
The next two versions, xix and xx, refer to an earlier stage in A's development. Xix, used to introduce song V, takes a and b (at their original pitch but in a different key: i was built on the dominant of A♭; this is built on the tonic of E♭), divides them between clarinet and horn, and finishes with a falling octave which is all that is left of c and d:

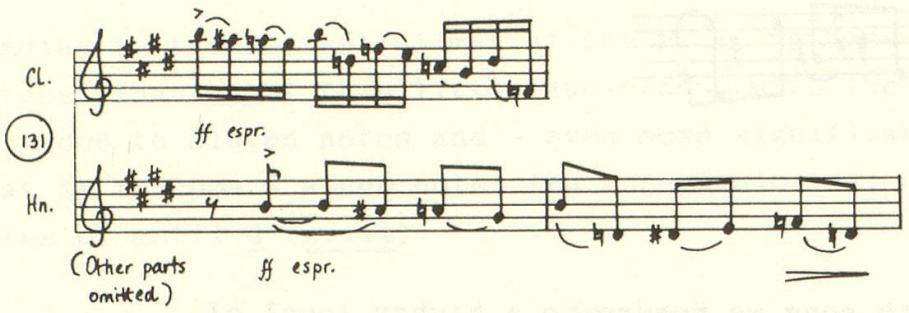
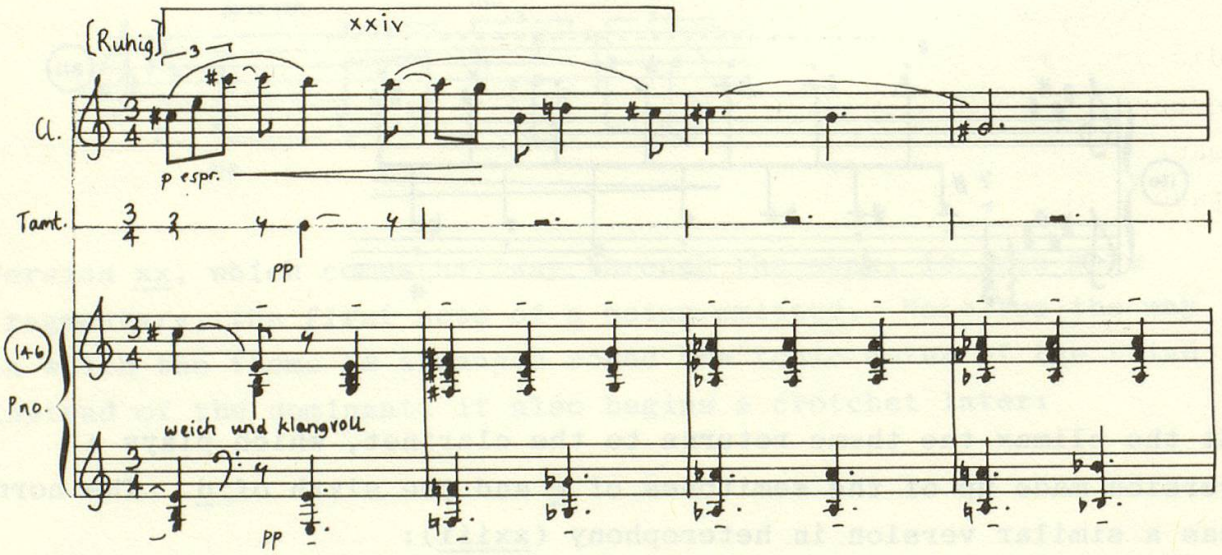
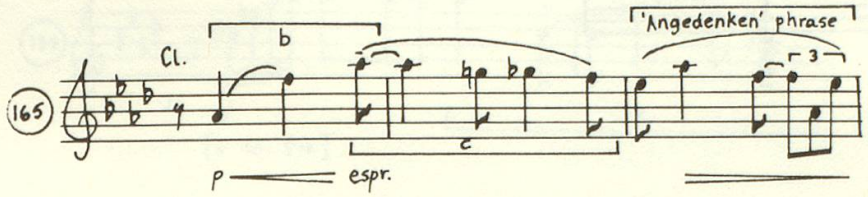
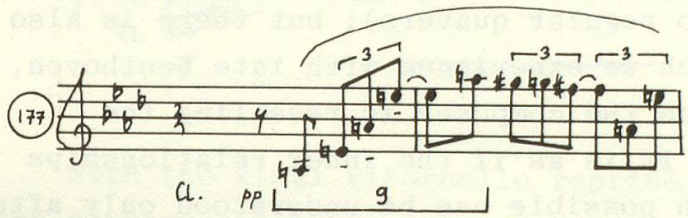
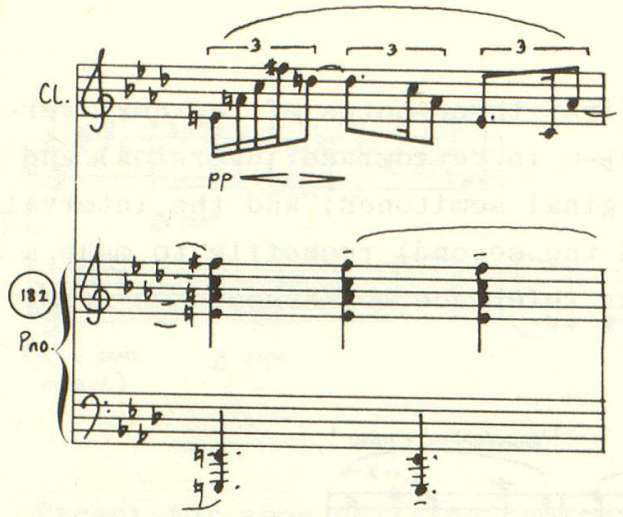


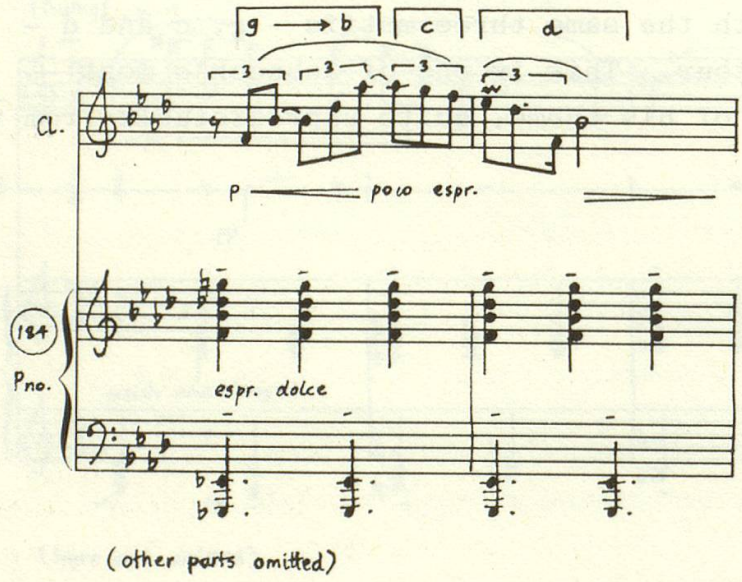
Version xx, which comes halfway through the song, is even more fragmentary, the first note of a being omitted. Note too the way in which the theme is arranged round the tonic notes of the triad instead of the dominant; it also begins a crotchet later:

With the sixth song we return to a higher level of complexity. Version xxi, the clarinet's ostinato theme (it is repeated three times, always with a different extension), is a diatonic variation of c and d, with the small intervals expanded and the large intervals contracted. It also uses repeated notes:



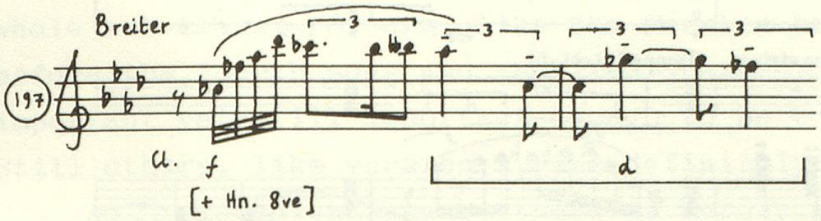
The piano imitates this version when the elements swap round. Then it presents its own (xxii). Besides preserving the repeated-note pattern (notated incorrectly in the score), this new version extends the process begun in xviii, which added the supertonic note, by adding a second note, the flattened supertonic (indicated by *):



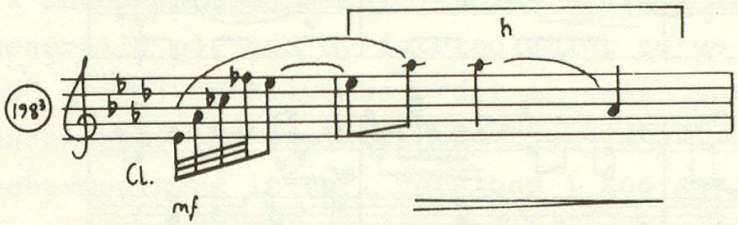
At the climax the theme returns to the clarinet, which plays a version made up of the semitones of c and the sixth of d. The horn has a similar version in heterophony (xxiii):

Except for some shifting semitones (notably in bars 144-5, horn), A is absent from song VII. But it returns in the final number. Here Schoeck's transformation technique reaches an unprecedented level of complexity. The clarinet melody, for example, which accompanies the modulation into D♭ might seem to be new, but it is in fact another variation of A. The initial octave rise, bridged by the minor third C♯-E, incorporates aspects of a (G-B♭, going to top G), b (B♭-B♭) and g; the descending phrase C♯-B-A-G is a diatonicised c; and the last five notes elaborate d, with reference to iii and xxviii. These motifs relate to each other by different transpositions, i.e. the octave C♯ is a tritone or minor third higher than the original octave G or B♭, whereas the last five notes are only a semitone higher than the original d. It is the invervals within each motif that count (xxiv):

By a similar process the first three notes of the next version combine elements of a (G-B♭-G in retrograde inversion) and b (B♭-G-B♭); c reverts to its original semitones; and the intervals of d (the sixth, the fourth and the second) reshuffle to make a new motif which might be yet another reference to 'Angedenken' (xxv):

For the next version, quoted in context on p. 249, the arpeggio motif g (or is it the same octave as in the last two examples?) spreads over an interval of a fifteenth, and the last two bars of version xxv compress into a single bar (xxvi):

Version xxvii, also quoted in p. 249, continues the 'distancing' process, with the same three motifs - g, c and d - reduced to a general contour. This is one of Schoeck's most beautiful harmonisations of his theme, quite unpredictable from the standpoint of version i:

Version xxviii is a further compression, with g taking on the motivic quality of a or b (the ambiguity is now pervasive) through the progression B♭-D♭-A♭. It is wonderful how, the farther these variations travel from their model - and Schoeck is now pushing his transformations as far as they will go - the more we have a sense of simplification. It is partly a matter of harmony (chromatic writing giving way to diatonic), partly one of rhythm (dotted rhythms giving way to regular quavers); but there is also a feeling, similar to that which we experience with late Beethoven, that in these final variations the composer is revealing the essence of his theme to us. It is as if the inner relationships which make such a compression possible can be understood only after the theme has been pushed outwards in every possible direction:

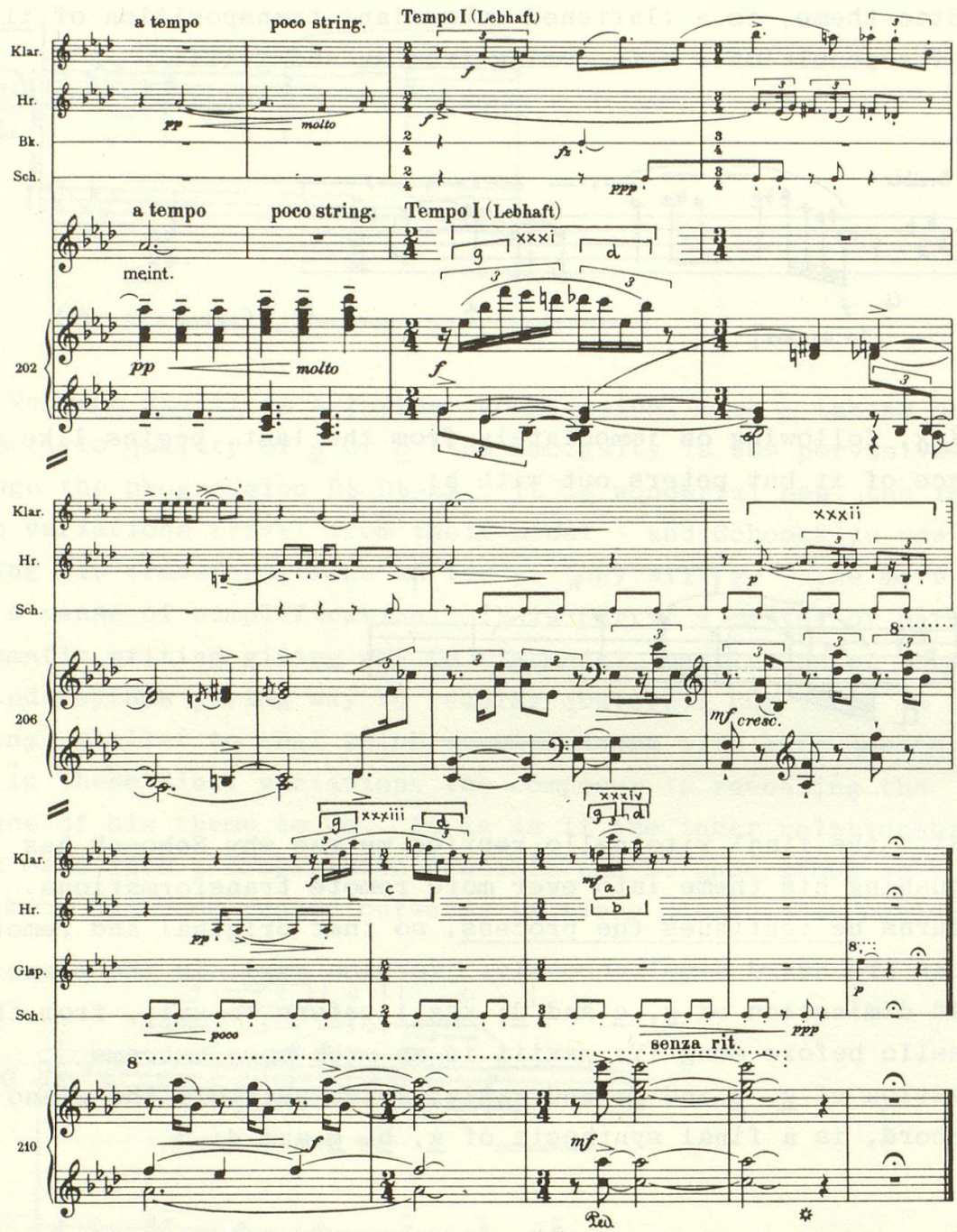


The remaining transformations are quickly described. Xxix, played by clarinet and horn in octaves during the reminiscence of the motto-theme, is a flattened submediant transposition of iii and xvii, its penultimate note coming from xv and xviii:



Xxx, following on immediately from the last, begins like a sequence of it but peters out with h:



With the final ritornello reprise we see why Schoeck has been pushing his theme into ever more remote transformations. As Ai returns he continues the process, so that original and remote versions are heard simultaneously. Version xxxi, in the piano, is a rapid diminution of g, c and d; xxxii refers to xvii, from the ritornello before song IV; xxxiii is an even more extreme compression of g, c and d; and xxxiv, which sets off the piano's last chord, is a final synthesis of a, b, g and d:

a tempo
poco string.
Tempo I (Lebhaft)
Klar.
Hr.
Bk.
Sch.
pp
molto
f
fz
ppp
meint.
202
xxxi
xxxii
xxxiii
xxxiv
206
mf cresc.
Glsp.
poco
senza rit.
210
Ped.

These variants have been discussed in strict 'chronological' order, without any attempt to classify them according to importance or technical usage. (Except for a few fragments of imitation, all the transformations have been listed.) Some versions, such as iii, are obviously 'major', inasmuch as they establish a pattern for later versions and even, as in this case, become the model for a whole sub-class. Others, like the version heard in the ritornello before the fourth song and recalled just before the end, are less important yet still important enough to be considered a 'type'. Still others, like version x, are definitely 'minor'.

As for technical usage, there is hardly an area of possible treatment that Schoeck leaves untouched. He varies the theme by altering its intervals (e.g. motif d's perfect fourth, which becomes a third in version xi, a fifth in xv and a sixth in xxvii), by adding motifs (the arpeggio upbeat in iii), by removing motifs (a and b in almost any version where g is present, and more generally e), and by interpolating notes within the motif (xviii and xxix); usually the order in which the motifs appear remains unchanged. He explores the theme's harmonic implications by reharmonising it (cf. versions i and xxvii) and by rewriting it around a different degree of the scale (cf. i and vi, where the key is identical but the pitch is different, and i and xix, where the pitch is identical but the key is different). Most spectacularly, he varies the rhythm - and here description seems most inadequate, and inevitably so, since it would require many words to explain what happens in every transformation. Notes are lengthened, shortened and repeated, stresses redistributed, barlines rewritten; and the result is that, of all the thirty-four variants discussed, no two are rhythmically the same. To make the point in more detail, the rhythms are listed at the end of the chapter.

These transformation techniques - melodic, harmonic and rhythmic - appear in every combination during the course of the work. Though there is nothing schematic about their use - a complex example, version iii, occurs relatively early on, and the idea of adding notes within motifs is not really developed - they create a strong sense of progression, a sense of moving away from the clear-cut variations at the start of the more ambiguous ones

later; and this, needless to say, is yet another musical expression of the wandering theme.[1]

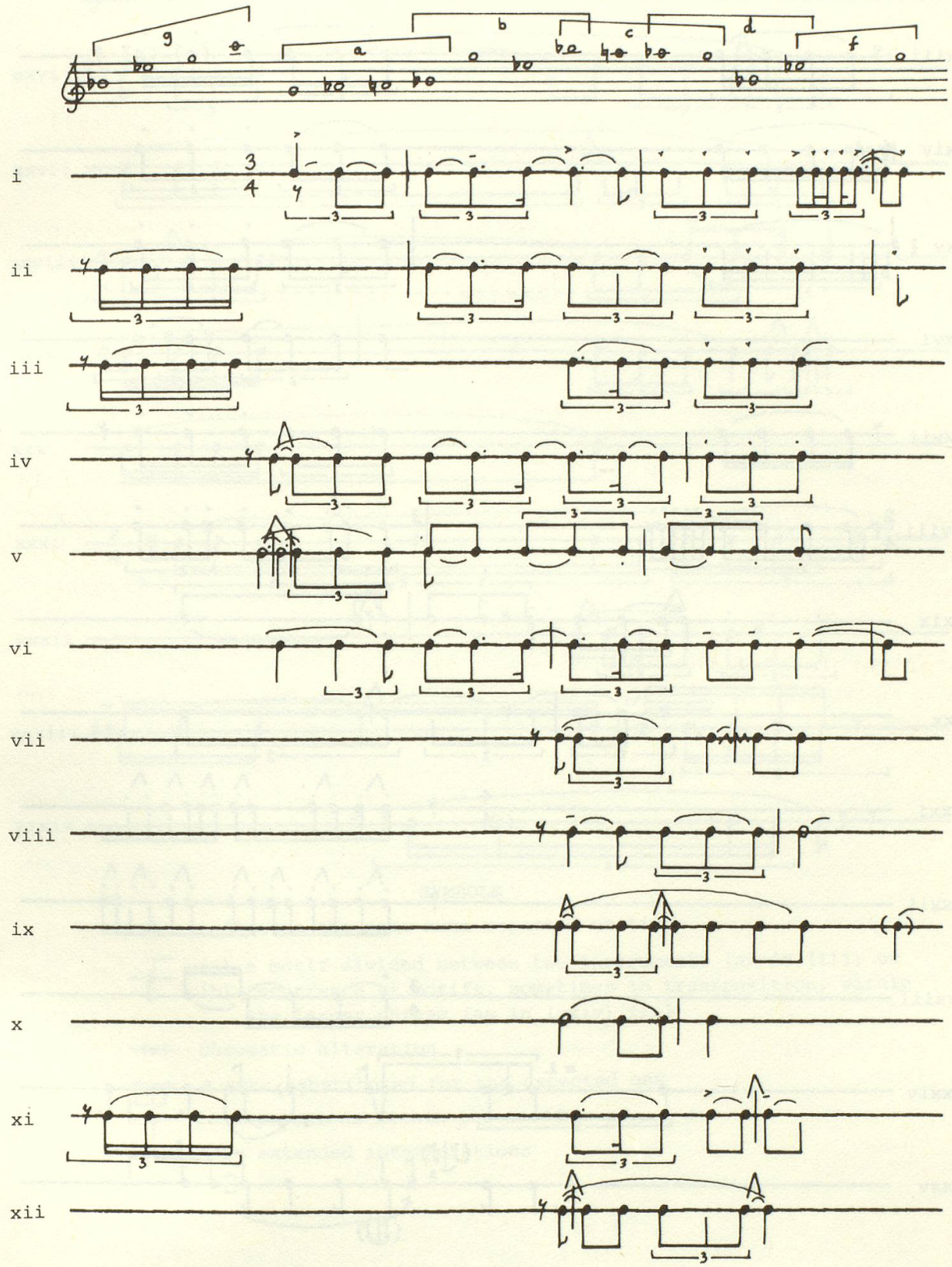
Despite the complexity of the technique, it remains superficial inasmuch as the transformations rarely govern the course of the music beyond the immediate phrase. Much of the time, as in song II, they perform a merely decorative function, adding detail to a self-sufficient structure (here the clarinet part could be omitted, with loss of colour, it is true, but without loss of coherence). To repeat the phrase used earlier, the theme travels over the surface of the music; it is left to later works, notably Notturno and Der Sänger, to bring the transformations more deeply into the structure - the first contrapuntally, the second by the use of the chordal series.

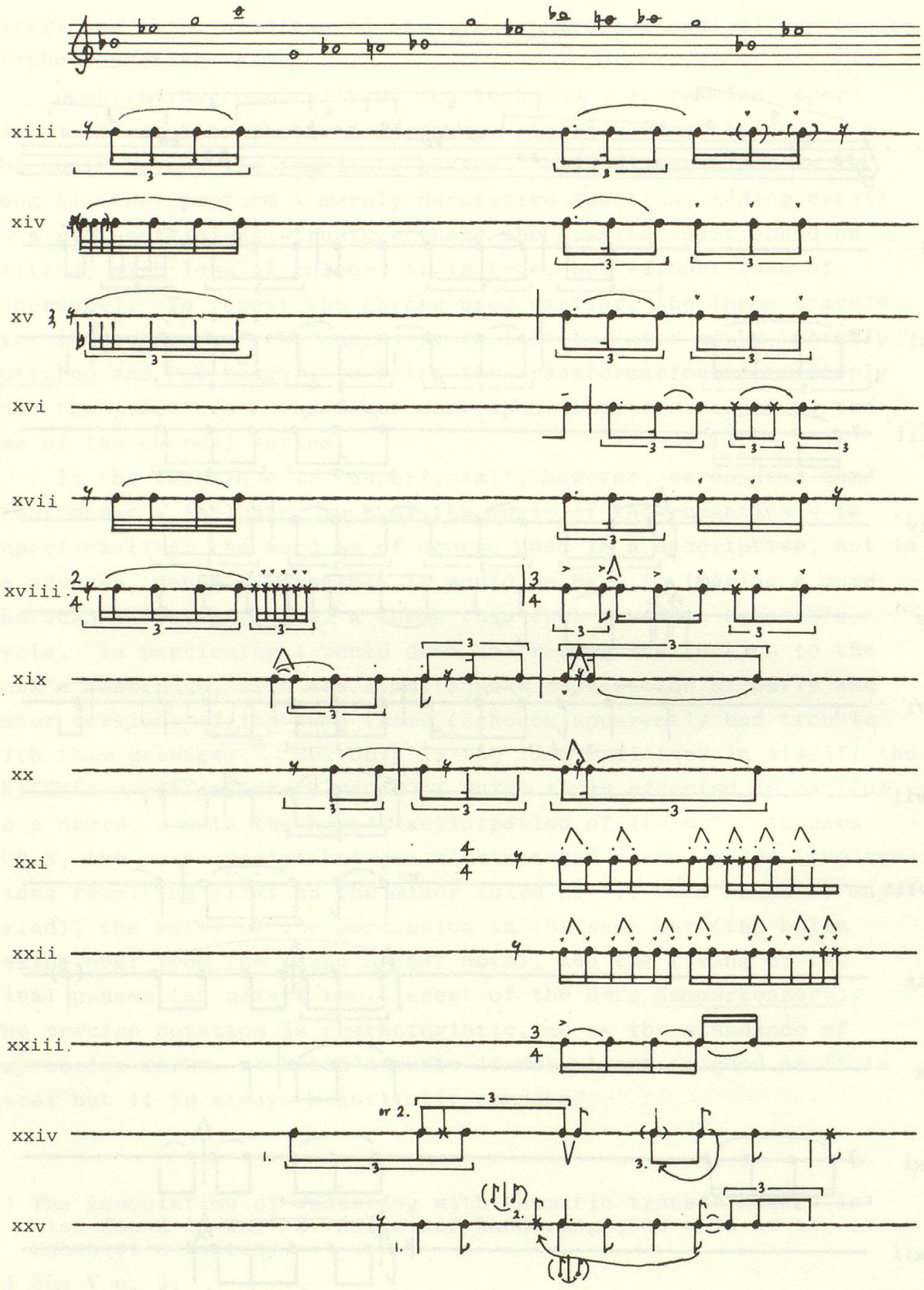
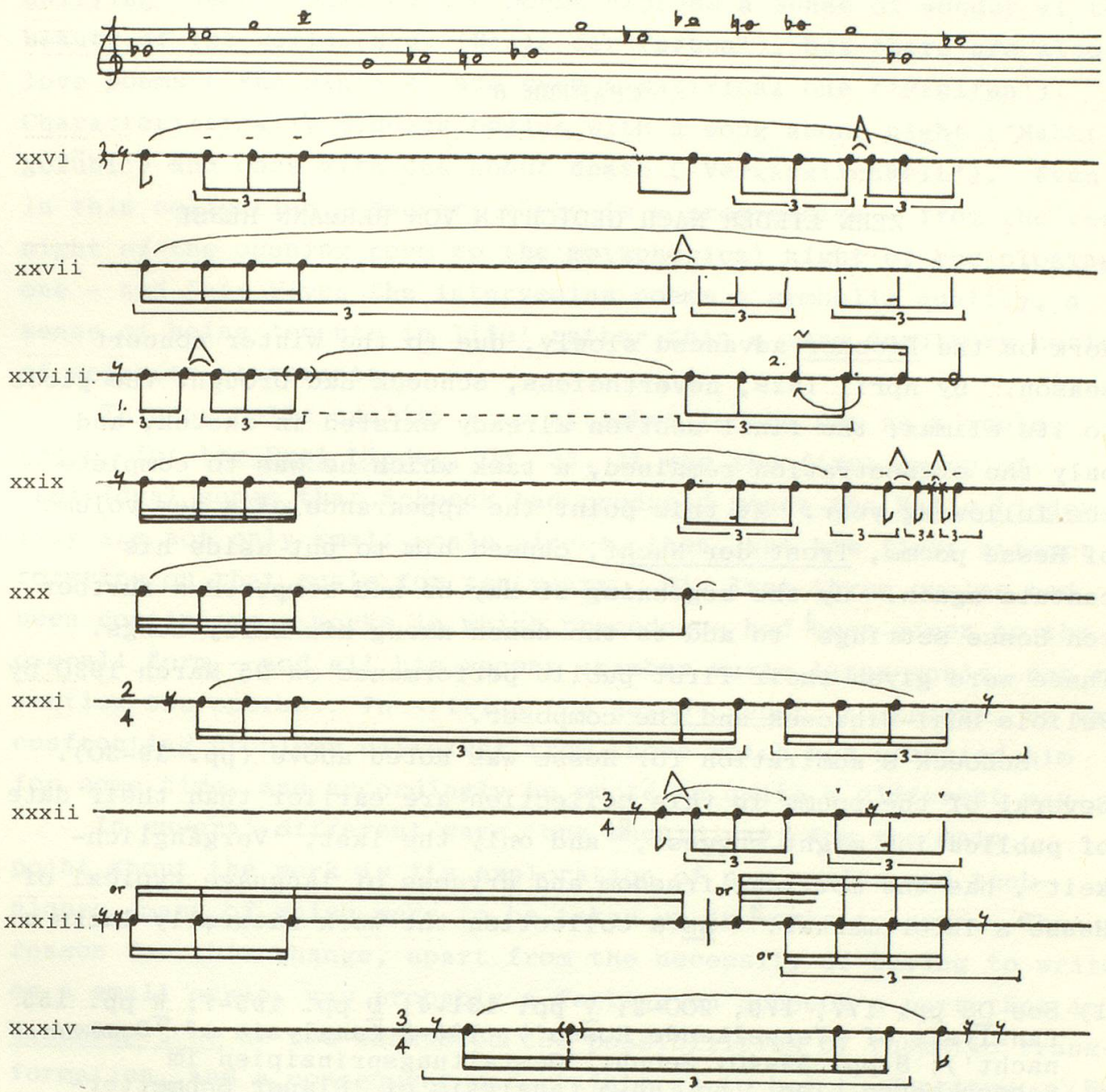
If the technique is 'superficial', however, we condemn some great music - including much of the music of the romantics - to superficiality; the word is of course used in a descriptive, not in an adverse, sense. Certainly it would be hard to imagine a more thorough investigation of a theme than that found in Schoeck's cycle. In particular I would draw the reader's attention to the work's last page, with its simultaneous combination of early and later versions of the same theme (Schoeck apparently had trouble with this passage).[2] Not only is the idea brilliant in itself; the rhythmic organisation by means of which it is effected is skilful to a degree - note the horn's anticipation of its motif in bars 202-3, the counterpoint between clarinet and piano in 204 (the two lines resolving first on the minor third B♭-D♭, then on an E♭ major triad), the entry of the percussion in the same bar (the bells taking over from the piano's last note), and the timing of the final pauses (an effect reminiscent of the Berg Kammerkonzert). The precise notation is characteristic, as is the abundance of expression marks. Schoeck's music is not always as good as it is here; but it is always beautifully composed.

1) The association of wandering with thematic transformation is also found in Wolf's 'Auf einer Wanderung', as well as in Schubert's Fantasy.

2) See V p. 9.

VARIANTS OF A




xiii
xiv
xv
xvi
xvii
xviii
xix
xx
xxi
xxii
xxiii
xxiv
xxv
or 2.
1.
2.
3.

SYMBOLS

∧ indicates the same note repeated or tied

(a) a motif divided between two instruments [as in (i)], or
(b) recurrence of motifs, sometimes in transposition, within the larger phrase [as in (xxiv) ff.]

chromatic alteration

a note substituted for the expected one

interpolations within the motif

more extended interpolations

CHAPTER 6

ZEHN LIEDER NACH GEDICHTEN VON HERMANN HESSE

Work on the Fischer advanced slowly, due to the winter concert season. By April 1929, nevertheless, Schoeck had brought the piece to its climax; the final section already existed in sketch, and only the orchestration remained, a task which he was to complete the following year. At this point the appearance of a new volume of Hesse poems, Trost der Nacht, caused him to put aside his cantata again. By the beginning of May he had composed a further ten Hesse settings[1] to add to the dozen among his early songs. These were given their first public performance on 25 March 1930 by Felicie Hüni-Mihacsek and the composer.

Schoeck's admiration for Hesse was noted above (pp. 29-30). Several of the poems in this collection are earlier than their date of publication might suggest,[2] and only the last, 'Vergänglichkeit', has the metrical freedom and dryness of language typical of Hesse's later manner.[3] As a collection the work naturally lacks a

1) See OS pp. 177, 179, 200-2; V pp. 131-4; D pp. 195-7; W pp. 155 (analysis of 'Verwelkende Rosen'), 195-9 (analysis of 'Sommernacht'); S pp. 39-40; Schuh, 'Gestaltungsprinzipien im Schoeckschen Lied', pp. 64-5 (analysis of 'Blauer Schmetterling'). Score by Breitkopf (1931/59); recorded by Fischer-Dieskau on DGG 2530 877.

2) In the Gesammelte Dichtungen V (Frankfurt, 1952), 'Nachtgefühl' and 'Mittag im September' are ascribed to 1903-10, 'Abends' and 'Sommernacht' to 1911-18, 'Magie der Farben', 'Pfeifen' and 'Vergänglichkeit' to 1919-28, and 'Verwelkende Rosen', 'Blauer Schmetterling' and 'Für Ninon' to 1929-41 ('Verwelkende Rosen' being rather mysteriously ascribed to 1930). According to G.W. Field, the Hesse collector Reinhold Pfau compiled in 1966 a catalogue listing 832 published settings of 274 poems by 305 composers, the poems being mainly those of Hesse's early period (this is certainly the case with Schoeck). See Hermann Hesse (New York, 1970), p. 128.

3) See the analysis in Field, op.cit., pp. 124-5. The poem also appears in Hesse's novel Klingsors letzter Sommer (1920).

unifying theme. Some of the poems express a sense of wonder at the beauty of the world (e.g. 'Magie der Farben'), but there are also love poems ('Für Ninon')[1] and even a satirical one ('Pfeifen'). Characteristically Schoeck begins with a song about night ('Nachtgefühl') and ends with one about death ('Vergänglichkeit'). Even in this collection, however, there is a progression - from the real night of the opening poem to the metaphorical night of the closing one - and this gives the intervening poems a symbolic quality, a sense of being 'events in life' rather than a mere desultory series of separate statements.

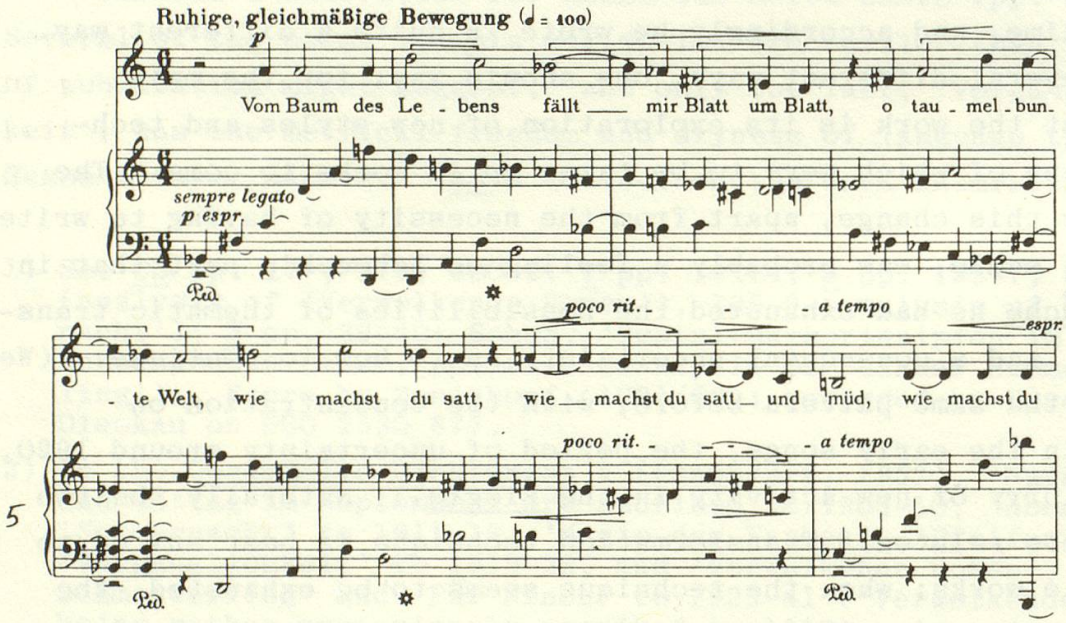
This symbolic quality also attaches to the set as a whole. Except for the Drei Lieder, Op. 35, it was the first group of individual songs that Schoeck had produced since the Hafis-Lieder. They are not only small-scale pieces, then, but his first attempt to write on that scale for ten years. His last three cycles had been continuous - works in which precedence had been given to the overall form - and all his recent chamber music large-scale, not to mention the operas. In writing the Hesse-Lieder, therefore, he was confronting problems different from those which had occupied him for some time, and accordingly he wrote in quite a different way.

In several different ways, one should say; for the main point about the work is its exploration of new styles and techniques, many of which were to be taken up in works to come. The reason for this change, apart from the necessity of having to write on a small scale, was probably a feeling on Schoeck's part that in Wandersprüche he had exhausted the possibilities of thematic transformation, and a consequent uncertainty as to how to continue. (We have seen the same pattern before, with the concentration on ostinato in the early songs, the period of uncertainty around 1920, and the flurry of new activity in the Elegie.) Naturally the two reasons were related. Transformation technique is best suited to large-scale works; when the technique seems to be exhausted, the composer turns to smaller forms; but it may seem exhausted merely because no new large-scale projects suggest themselves. Two years

1) Ninon Dolbin, who became Hesse's third wife in 1931.

later Schoeck was to write his Second Violin Sonata, using the techniques of Wandersprüche; and then there was to be the Notturno.

Of course none of these styles is 'new' in a literal sense; even the most important, the 'Bachian' style discussed in connection with 'Magie der Farben' (see above, pp. 52-3), has precedents in works such as the Hafis-Lieder. What is new is the way in which it suddenly becomes an important part of Schoeck's language, not something to be used once or twice and then dropped but a concept of texture adaptable to music in any style. We find it in Wanderung im Gebirge, the Wandsbecker Liederbuch (the typical three parts thinned down to two) and some of the later songbooks.

Again, there are precedents in earlier works for a recitative-like treatment of the voice, but to find it moving, Stravinsky-like, in irregular rhythms over a regular background, as in 'Vergänglichkeit', is both new and unexpected. The way in which the piano marks out its crotchets, sometimes in two-part canon, has a ghostly feel about it:

Schoeck never succeeded in recapturing the atmosphere of this extraordinary music, but its freedom of declamation influences the prose-like settings of Der Sänger.

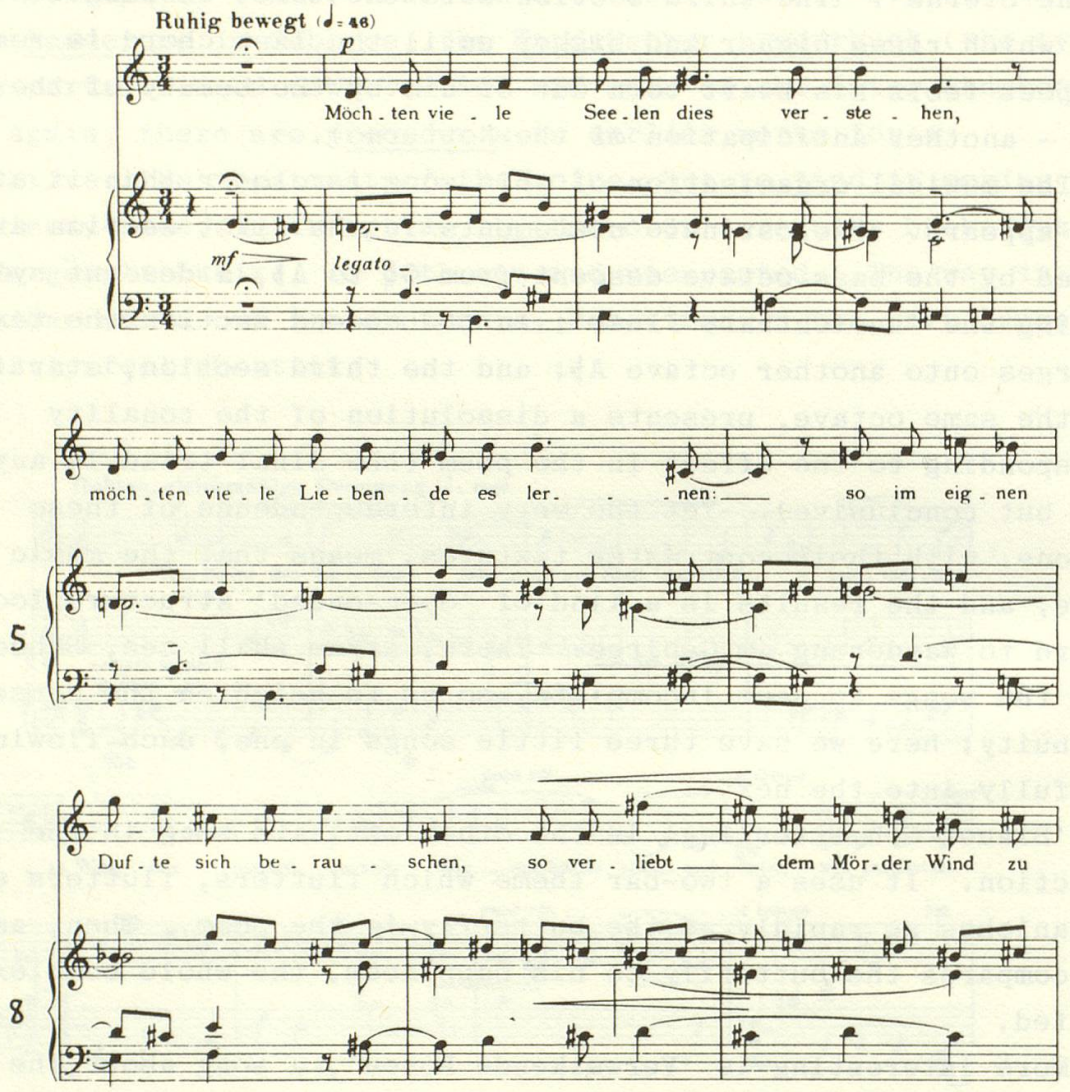
Another song with a free, almost improvisatory element is 'Sommernacht', a description of a beautiful summer night. The song is in three sections, together comprising only seventeen bars. The first section, corresponding to the first five lines of the poem, uses an ostinato figure to evoke the scene (one of the two examples of the technique in this collection - 'exploration' evidently includes looking back as well as forwards). The second section is a rapt chordal setting of the line 'O Sommernacht und halbverhangene Sterne'. The third section sets the three closing lines to music which rises higher and higher until the last chord is reached (the poet feels his heart torn out of him by the beauty of the night - another anticipation of the Notturno).

The musical organisation of this song is closer than it at first appears. The ostinato statements in the first section are unified by the bass octave descent from G♯ to A♭, a descent symbolising the 'unsichtbare Fluss'; in the second section the texture converges onto another octave A♭; and the third section, starting from the same octave, presents a dissolution of the tonality corresponding to the effect in the poem (the final triad is anything but conclusive). Yet the very interdependence of these sections, with their contrasted textures, means that the music must evolve; and the results is a kind of 'open-ended' structure looking forward to Wanderung im Gebirge. There, as we shall see, Schoeck wants the songs to seem incomplete, so as to heighten the sense of continuity; here we have three little songs in one, each flowing gracefully into the next.

'Blauer Schmetterling' is the other ostinato song in the collection. It uses a two-bar theme which flutters, flutters again and vanishes as rapidly as the butterfly in the poem. Then, as the poet compares the butterfly to his happiness, the whole complex is repeated.

More interesting is 'Verwelkende Rosen', a song about the destructive powers of love. As in 'Magie der Farben' the texture is contrapuntal, but now with four parts instead of three; indeed the whole song, except for one passage, could be played by a string quartet. This is to become a typical style in Unter Sternen (it originated in certain songs by Wolf). The other innovation in

'Verwelkende Rosen' is the use of thematic transformation within a single song - a natural development after Wandersprüche, and also another kind of ostinato. Just as Hesse's poem takes the form of a list, so each line except the fourth presents a different melodic variation of the basic model (in the sixth, the theme appears in the bass). The variations are usually rhythmic, following the declamation, and a curious heterophony develops between the voice and the piano's right hand:[1]



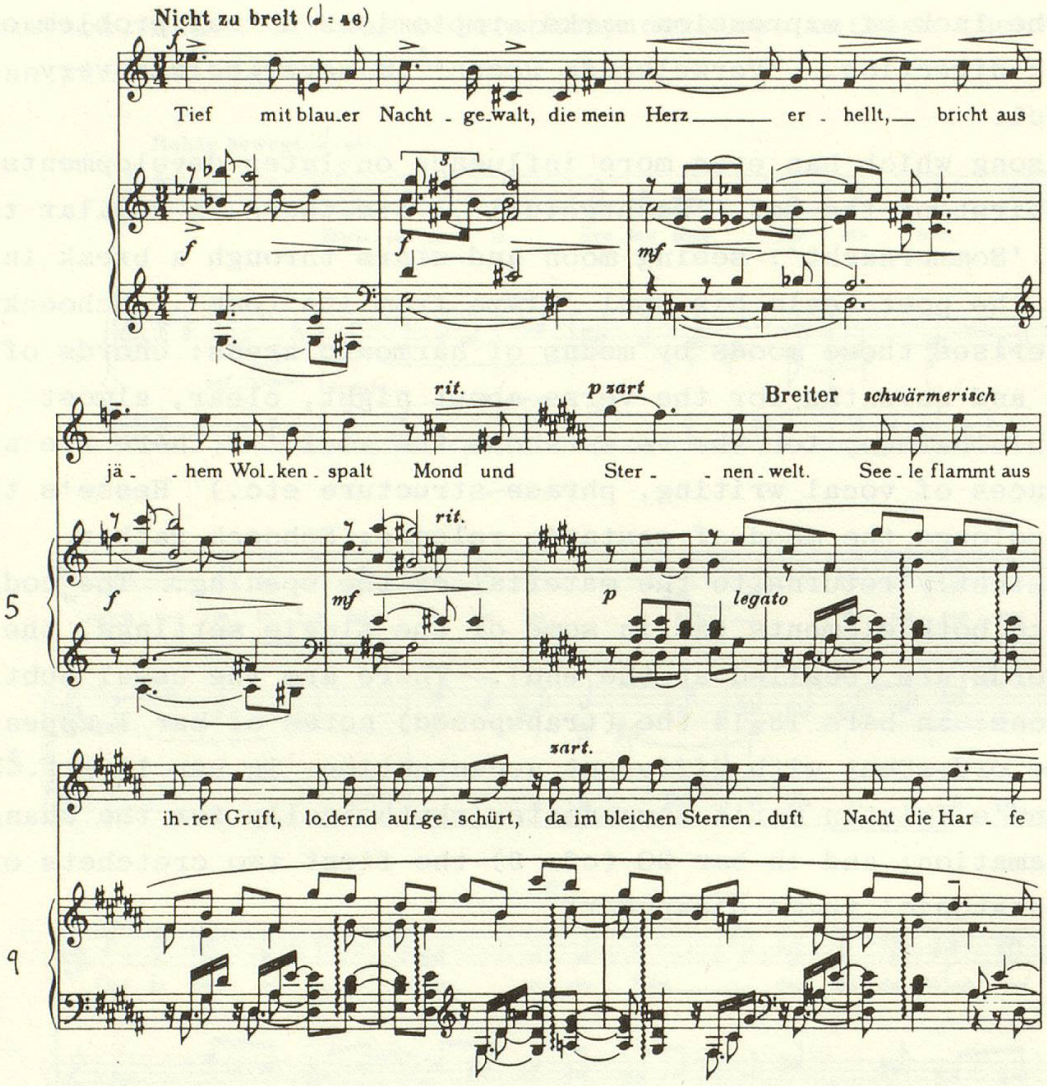
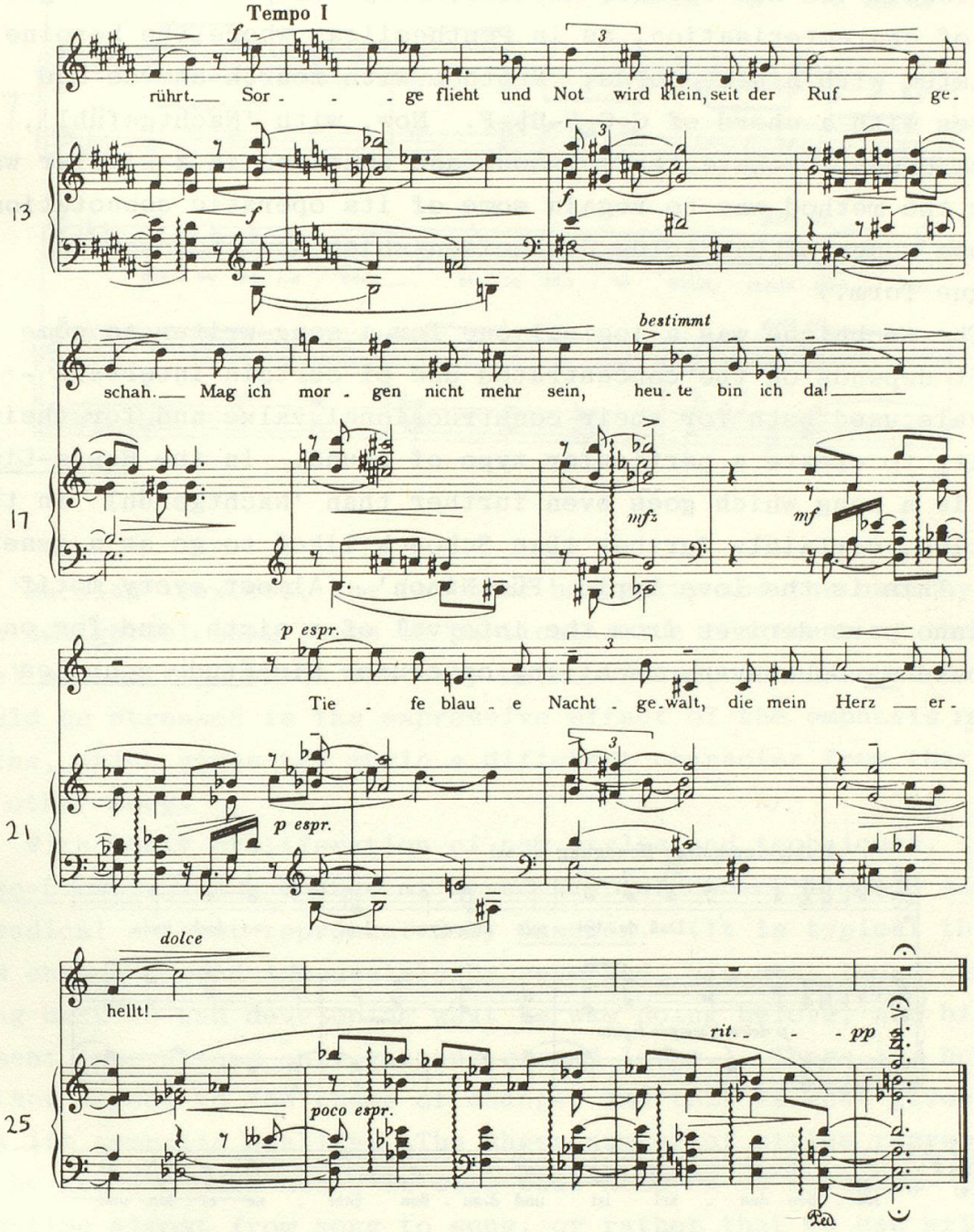
1) Note the disguised version of the theme, beginning on the third note, in the piano postlude (last quaver of bar 25, 'viola' line). The upbeat to the opening phrase, anticipating bars 4 and 22, may have been an afterthought.

The piano part of this song, like that of 'Magie der Farben', is not phrased, a surprising omission after Wandersprüche (the legato direction cannot possibly convey all the subtleties Schoeck must have had in mind). The connection is of course with Bach, but there is also a link with the Ritornelle und Fughetten of Schoeck's last years - another 'Bachian' work, to be sure, but also one in which the lack of expression marks symptomises a real problem of harmonic direction. 'Verwelkende Rosen' is nevertheless very beautiful.

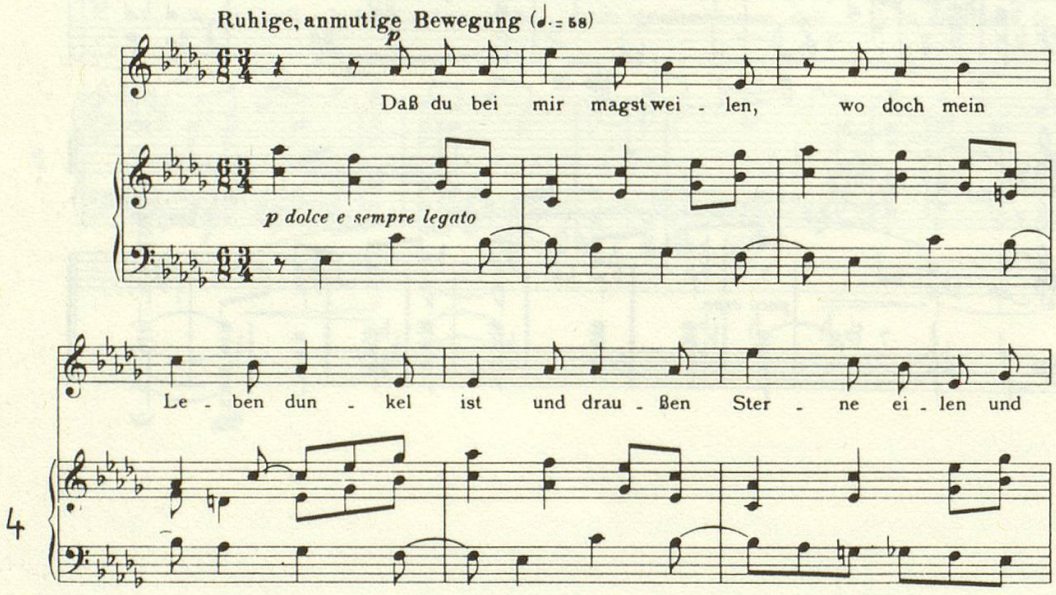
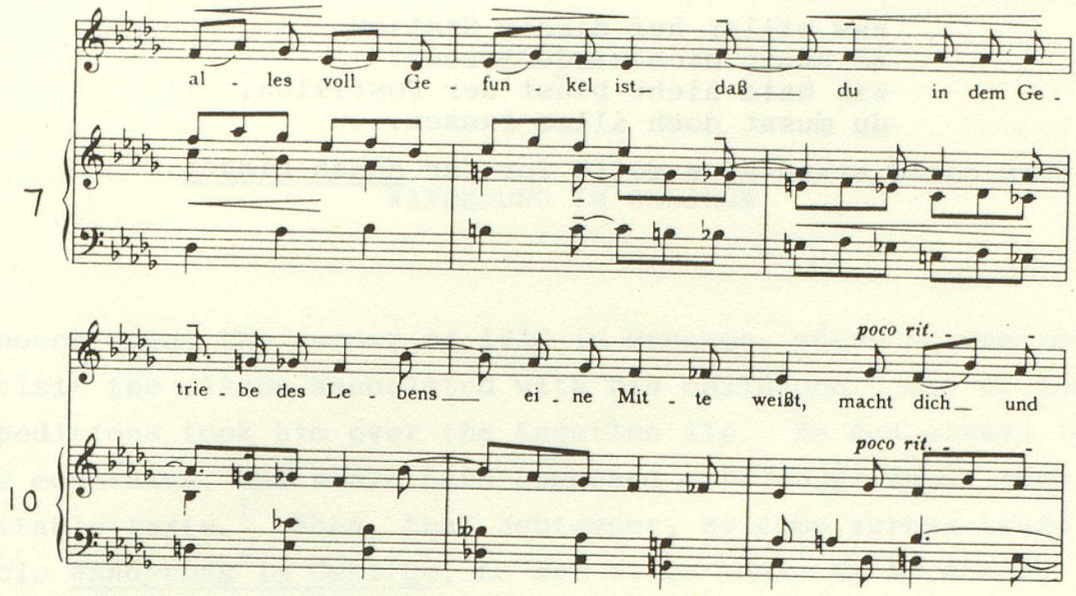
A song which has even more influence on later developments is the first of the set, 'Nachtgefühl'. Its theme is similar to that of 'Sommernacht': seeing moon and stars through a break in the clouds, the poet feels his soul 'blaze from its tomb'. Schoeck characterises these moods by means of harmonic areas: chords of fourths and sevenths for the verse about night, clear, almost pentatonic harmony for the verse about the soul.[1] (There are also differences of vocal writing, phrase-structure etc.) Hesse's third verse prolongs the mood of ecstatic release; Schoeck rather inconsistently returns to the material of the opening. The coda refers to both elements (as in some of the Elegie settings, the first words are recalled at the end). There are the usual subtle variations: in bars 13-14 the (transposed) notes of bar 1 appear in the same order but with different accentuation; in bar 18 (cf. 5) the piano's Tristan motif compensates rhythmically for the change in declamation; and in bar 20 (cf. 8) the first two crotchets of the 'pentatonic' theme disappear:[2]

1) The 'pentatonic' theme is anticipated in the first act of Don Ranudo, fig. 42.

2) The final chord, a combination of I♭7 and V of V in F major, recalls the closing cadence of 'Liebesfrühling' from the Elegie (also in F) and perhaps the end of 'Jugendgedenken'. Here it derives from the rising ninth in the 'pentatonic' theme (cf. bar 8).


Nicht zu breit (♩ = 48)
Tief mit blau_er Nacht _ ge_walt, die mein Herz _____ er _ hellt, bricht aus
rit.
p zart
Breiter schwärmerisch
jä _ _ hem Wol_ken _ spalt Mond und Ster _ _ nen _ welt. See _ le flammt aus
5
legato
zart.
ih _ rer Gruft, lo_dernd auf_ge _ schürt, da im bleichen Sternen _ duft Nacht die Har _ fe
9

Tempo I
rührt. Sor - - - ge flieht und Not wird klein, seit der Ruf ge-
schah. Mag ich mor - gen nicht mehr sein, heu - te bin ich da!
Tie - fe blau - e Nacht - ge - walt, die mein Herz er -
hellt!
13
17
21
25
f
bestimmt
mfz
mf
p espr.
dolce
rit.
pp
poco espr.

Schoeck had first used harmonic areas in his 1914 Lenau setting 'An die Entfernte'. Since then their use in his songs had been sporadic, a song such as the second of Lebendig begraben being exceptional. In his operas, however, they had provided a regular means of characterisation, as in Penthesilea, where the heroine is associated with ninth-chords, Prothoe with fourth-chords and Achilles with a chord of C-G-E-B♭-F. Now, with 'Nachtgefühl', Schoeck began to characterise moods and emotions in a similar way. (Later the method was to regain some of its operatic connotations in those songs of Das holde Bescheiden which are composed in dialogue form.)

The technique was a logical one for a song-writer to come to. It depends on the concentrated use of certain intervals - intervals used both for their constructional value and for their capacity to create a particular type of sound. In the Hesse-Lieder there is a song which goes even further than 'Nachtgefühl' in this direction, certainly further than Schoeck liked to go as a general rule. This is the love lyric 'Für Ninon'. Almost every motif in the piano part derives from the interval of a sixth, and for once the sound is Debussyan, recalling of course his Etude pour les sixtes:



The 'Bachian' texture, the rhythmic ambiguity and the harmony of this delightful song (note in particular the treatment of the bass line) are matters which can only be mentioned, not discussed. What should be stressed is the expressive effect of the emphasis on sixths, which gives the music a different character from that of any other song.

With their proliferation of new styles and techniques, the Hesse-Lieder mark a change of direction in Schoeck's music almost as radical as that represented by Gaselen. (It is typical that this change should immediately by reversed, his next two cycles going back to and developing what he was doing before, and his present innovations only gaining ground later.) There is, however, another aspect to the theme of change, and this is what gives the work its symbolic quality. The sheer number of styles represented in the Hesse-Lieder makes it seem that Schoeck is changing direction almost from song to song, or rather that he can write in virtually any manner he chooses. No doubt the main reason for this variety is the shift from the large- to the small-scale. But there is also what was noted concerning the differences between groups of works: an element of compulsiveness, of impersonality almost, as if

Schoeck were condemned, like the poet in Wandersprüche, to wander restlessly from one style to another:

> Was willst auf dieser Station
> so breit dich niederlassen?
> Wie bald nicht bläst der Postillon,
> du musst doch alles lassen.

These lines could stand as a motto for the Hesse-Lieder.

CHAPTER 7

WANDERUNG IM GEBIRGE

Schoeck spent the summer of 1930 in Brunnen, where he was able to revisit the places associated with his childhood. One of these expeditions took him over the Engstlen Alp. He had always loved the mountains, and would have composed more songs about them, given suitable texts.[1] When, that September, he came across Lenau's cycle Wanderung im Gebirge, he set it to music as it stood, dedicating the work[2] to his brother Ralph in memory of their childhood adventures. The first performance was given on 7 February 1931 by Willy Rössel and the composer.

In his journal Vogel describes an Alpine holiday which he took with the Schoecks in 1949. On their excursions Schoeck constantly interprets his impressions in terms of the visual arts, and he shows a painter's sensitivity to the scenery. This feeling for the mountains is evident in Das stille Leuchten.

In Wanderung im Gebirge (1830, published 1832) Lenau enters briefly the world of Eichendorff's Taugenichts. Uhland was among the first to write a sequence of poems around the stages of a journey: in his Wanderlieder (1811)[3] we see the poet taking leave of his sweetheart, strolling through a wood, stopping at a village and finally returning home. Lenau's traveller, similarly, sets out at dawn, passes through a wood and meets cattle on the slopes; is

1) See W p. 102.

2) See OS pp. 180-1, 210-14; V pp. 134-6; S pp. 40-1; Mohr, op.cit., pp. 88-9; Schuh, 'Gestaltungsprinzipien im Schoeckschen Lied', pp. 66-70. Score by Hug & Co. (1934); recorded by Arthur Loosli and Karl Grenacher, Col. SHZC 4004.

3) Two of the poems in this cycle, 'Lebewohl' and 'Scheiden und Meiden', were set by Schoeck in 1905 and 1908 respectively.

overawed by the heights, then enraptured by the sight of the plains below; starts down again, but is caught by a storm and takes shelter in a peasant's hut; sleeps until evening, when the storm has passed, and finally sets off into the twilight. The poems are an allegory of life and death, an allegory made explicit when the rain tapping on the hut where the poet sleeps reminds him of tears falling on a coffin (a typical Lenau image). Not surprisingly it is this section that arouses the composer's deepest response.

The theme of the work suggests comparison with Strauss's Alpine Symphony (1915), which spins out a similar programme at much greater length. The Strauss has no text, of course, and the only musical similarity concerns the treatment of the descent, for which both composers - Strauss more systematically than Schoeck - bring back earlier themes in reverse order. A more fruitful comparison might be with those long, multisectional ballads by Schubert and Loewe (Schoeck himself had contributed to the genre in Der Gott und die Bajadere), or with a song like Schubert's 'Viola', with its rondo-like repetitions of the main theme.

As these comparisons indicate, Wanderung is another continuous cycle. There are ten songs in all, and this time the music stays in 3/4 throughout. As in Gaselen and Wandersprüche, a frame is provided by the use of a motto-theme, and the opening and closing songs share the same key (E major). There are also cross-references between other songs. The general texture of the work, however, is closer to Schoeck's other continuous narrative cycle, Lebendig begraben, that is, pictorial and rhapsodic rather than motivic and sectionalised, and this is obviously appropriate to the theme.

Formally, Wanderung continues the tendency whereby the cycle becomes more and more of an entity, a single movement rather than a series of individual songs. Here the sense of a single movement is particularly strong, partly because of the constant time signature, partly because of Schoeck's economy in getting the narrative across. Interludes are all but eliminated, so that the songs can flow into each other without a break; and the vocal style is briskly matter-of-fact (significantly, the work is subtitled Gedichtfolge rather than Liederfolge). Above all, Schoeck is

careful not to let any song except the first, with its all-important motto-theme, stand out from the rest. He avoids characterising the songs by themes, letting the music develop in an improvisatory fashion according to the text, and the identity of the song is subsumed in the continuity of the work as a whole (the songs are not numbered in the score).

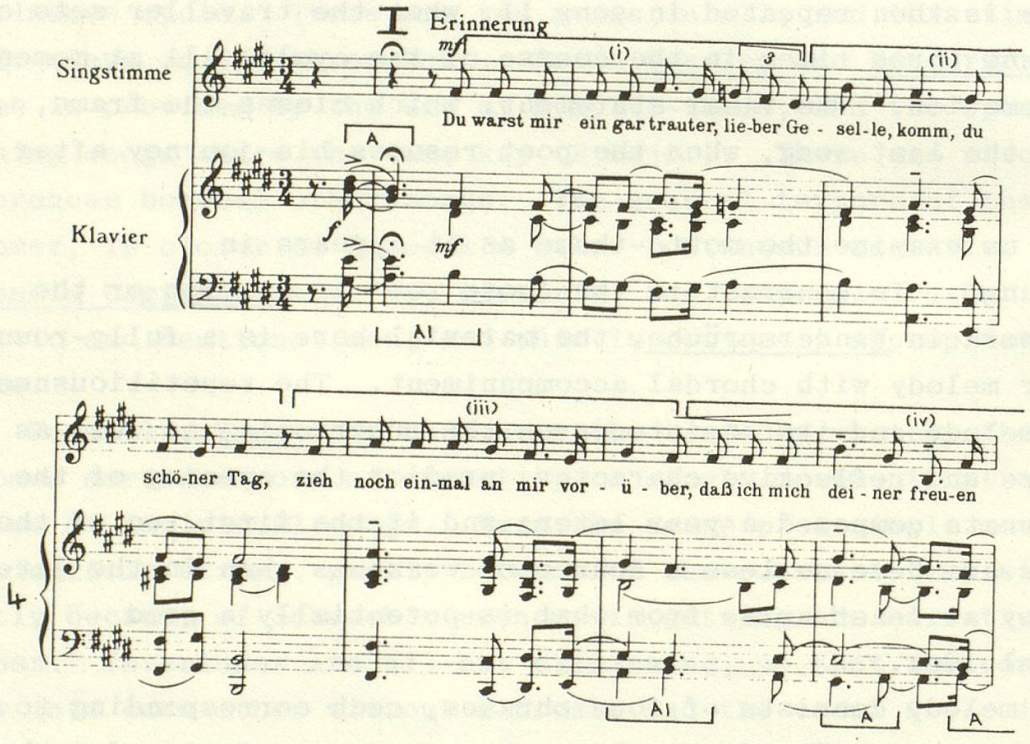
The most interesting feature of the work, from both the cyclic and the technical point of view, is its treatment of the motto-theme; indeed part of its interest lies in the fact that the technical usages, which previously we have been able to consider separately from the cyclic ones, are now drawn into the organisation of the work as a whole. Our discussion of the cycle, therefore, is also our discussion of the techniques; devices that serve only a local purpose are dealt with briefly at the end.

The motto-theme is introduced in the first two songs, which together form the first part of the frame. Song I, 'Erinnerung', is a tiny prologue (the poem has only four lines). The poet looks back on his day in the mountains so that he can enjoy it again in his mind. This comprises the first statement of the motto-theme. The theme is then repeated in song II, when the traveller sets off, and returns three times in the course of the cycle, all at moments of high emotion. The final statement, which closes the frame, comes in the last song, when the poet resumes his journey after the storm.

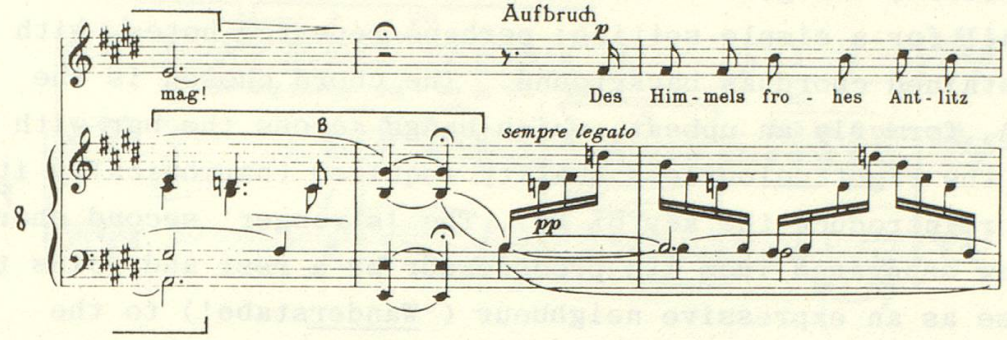
Let us examine the motto-theme as it appears in 'Erinnerung'. In contrast to the 'note row' in Gaselen or the motivic work in Wandersprüche, the material here is a fully-rounded eight-bar melody with chordal accompaniment. The repetitiousness of this melody and its insistence on the supertonic, as well as its key, metre and reflective character, predict the opening of the Violin Sonata composed a year later; and if the first two of these qualities are here no less a source of weakness than in the later work, they at least arise from what is potentially a good structural idea.

The melody consists of four phrases, each corresponding to a line of the text. The first three phrases are variants of each other; the fourth is different. More important than the melody,

however, is the harmony that accompanies it. After a fanfare-like motif in the piano, to be referred to as A (Corrodi hears it as a wordless setting of the cry 'Juchhee!'),[1] the bass falls to the supertonic, then rises through the subdominant to chord V (phrase i). Phrase ii compresses and reharmonises phrase i, emphasising the final dominant - the theme's halfway mark - through a V of V progression. Phrase iii takes the vocal line of ii, pushes it forward a beat and reharmonises it again so as to include both the ii-IV-V motion of i and the two chords (the second of A and the first of i, a progression now to be referred to as A1) that ushered in the opening phrase. Phrase iv, after a fresh beginning, takes up this same progression and prefaces it with the first chord of A, thus recapitulating in a different rhythm the first three chords of the piece (the dotted rhythm at the end of the bar is another reference to A). The theme concludes with a cadential figure (B) in the piano, underlining the subdominant element in the preceding phrases with a V of IV progression which also complements the V of V progression at the halfway mark:



1) OS p. 211.



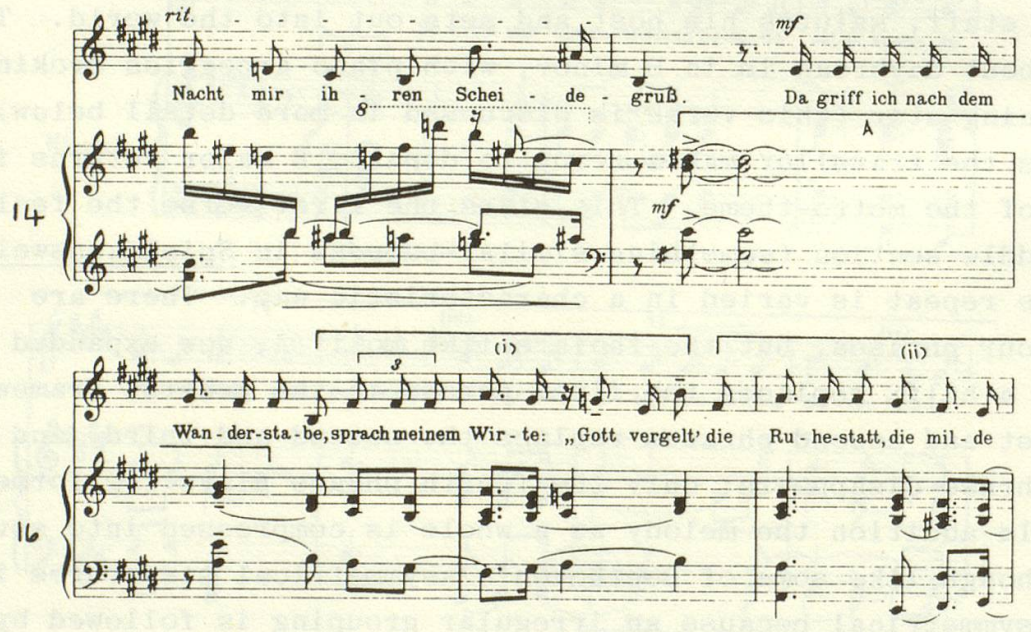
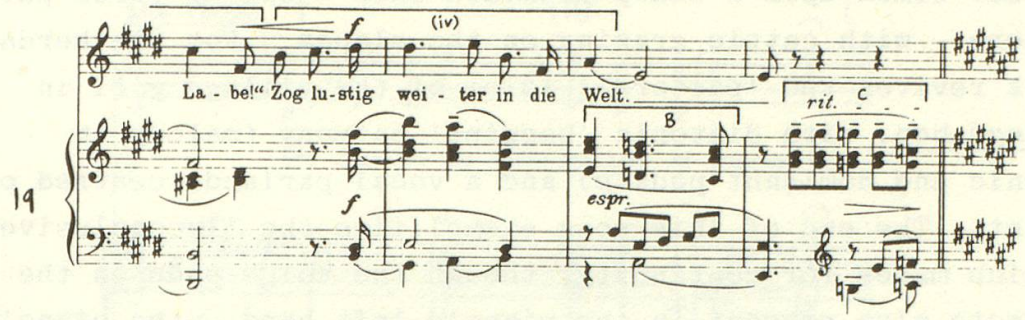
The advantage of integrating the material in this way is that any one of the phrases can stand for the whole. When Schoeck wishes to recall the motto-theme, he does not have to repeat the entire melody but only as many phrases as happen to fit the periodisation of the passage involved. This is enough to convey the gist of the melody, while avoiding disruption of phrase-lengths in the new passage. For the final reprise, however, Schoeck supplies what is virtually another full statement; and it is the return to the complete melody as much as the return to the tonic key that gives the reprise its force.

A pause marks the end of the prologue; then with the second song, 'Aufbruch', the narrative begins. At dawn the poet reaches for his staff, salutes his host and sets out into the world. The verse about daybreak is in B minor, with piano arpeggios evoking the morning star (this verse is discussed in more detail below); then, as the traveller makes ready to depart, E major returns for a repeat of the motto-theme. This gives the first verse the feeling of a middle section (something similar happens in Spielmannsweisen).

The repeat is varied in a characteristic way. There are still four phrases, but the fanfare-like motif A, now expanded to a bar and a half, replaces the first phrase in the general framework, the first and second phrases replace the second and third, and the third phrase disappears; only the fourth phrase plays its former role. In addition the melody as a whole is compressed into seven bars, though like some of Beethoven's asymmetrical structures it sounds symmetrical because an irregular grouping is followed by a regular one (3 + 4).

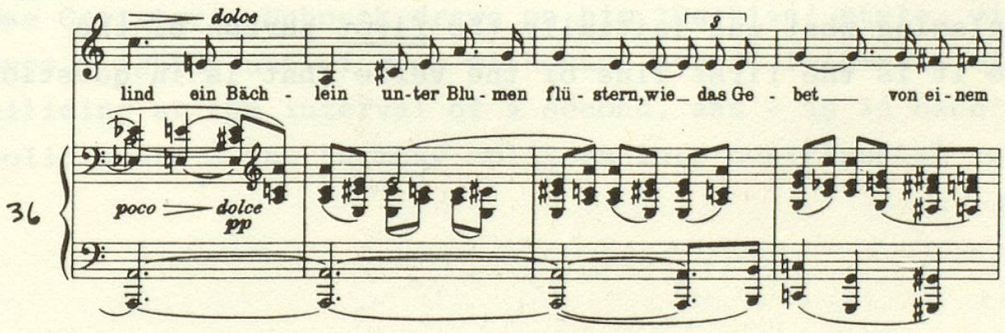
The reason for these displacements lies in the opening words

of this section, 'Da griff ich nach dem Wanderstabe'. These words seem to call for a simple setting: perhaps repeated notes, with a single sustained chord as background. The chord chosen is the first of A, formerly an upbeat, which hangs across the bar with precisely the right colourless quality required (harmonically it serves to reintroduce the key of E). The 'stronger' second chord of A is now separated from its predecessor by a rest and joins the next phrase as an expressive neighbour ('Wanderstabe') to the pivotal dominant triad. The former first and second phrases follow as stated, but brought forward a crotchet so that the new phrase iii, though harmonically equivalent to the old phrase ii, rhythmically matches the old phrase iii - which last, as if to compensate for the expansion of A, is dropped. The fourth phrase is a simple reharmonisation of its counterpart in song I, replacing the second chord of A with the subdominant triad. After cadence B we hear a new, transitional motif (C), whose repeated quavers, chordal spacing and harmonic rhythm (3 + 2 + 1) are to recur later:



This new motif completes the material of the frame.

With song III, 'Die Lerche', another arpeggio figure sets in, this time to suggest the bee and lark which accompany the traveller on his way. The rhythmic formations here - semiquaver sextuplets in groups of 5 + 5 + 4 + 4 - are interesting; the harmony alternates between F♯ major and A major. The song is over in seven bars.

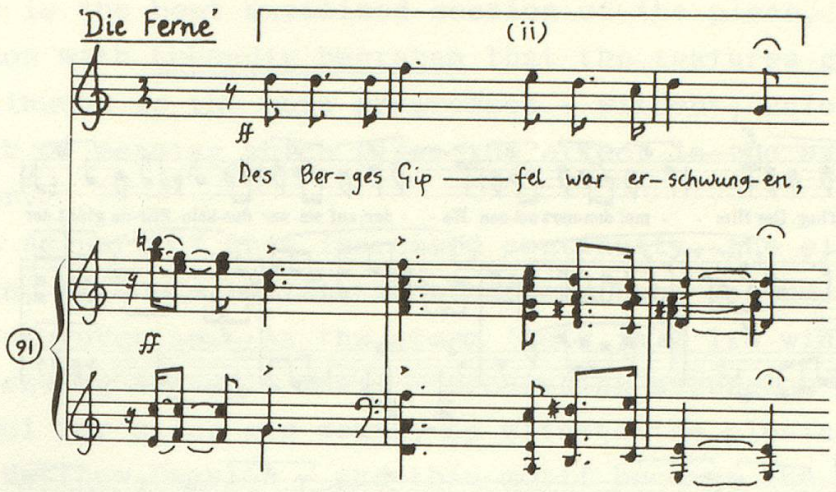
For transition a motif from the vocal line is combined with a quartal version of C, now sounding like the Hesse song 'Nachtgefühl'. To a chromatic sequence closer to the first song of Wandersprüche ('ist Lenz und Sonnenschein verflogen' - both passages evoke darkness) the poet enters a wood, where the rustling trees suggest the proximity of God ('Der Eichwald'). The music here uses the quaver movement and chordal spacing - perhaps also the harmonic rhythm - of C (note too the characteristic major-minor changes):

In the fifth song, 'Der Hirte', the wood is left behind and

the traveller comes upon a sharp mountain face - sparse three-part textures here - with cattle grazing on the slopes. For the herdsman Schoeck revives the 'pastoral' idiom of the village girl in Lebendig begraben, with diatonic 'bagpipe' harmony (melody in thirds, tonic and dominant pedals) and a vocal parlando centred on the dominant. The end of this song exemplifies the 'inconclusive' quality which makes for continuity: though the voice ends on the tonic - a note also present in the piano's left hand - the piano's right hand has an imperfect cadence, and this is left hanging as the next song begins.

As the path gets steeper the harmony becomes more dissonant. Much of the sixth song, 'Einsamkeit', is built on a four-note bass figure jammed against chords in false relation (the bass notes are appoggiaturas which resolve only after the rest of the harmony has moved on).[1] This dissonance seems to draw from Schoeck some uncharacteristically harsh piano writing; it is typical of his less inspired music that it is also awkwardly laid out. Towards the climax of the song the intervals of C appear, first as textural 'padding' (bar 87), then to reinforce the four-note figure in a crescendo to what is the narrative centre of the work.

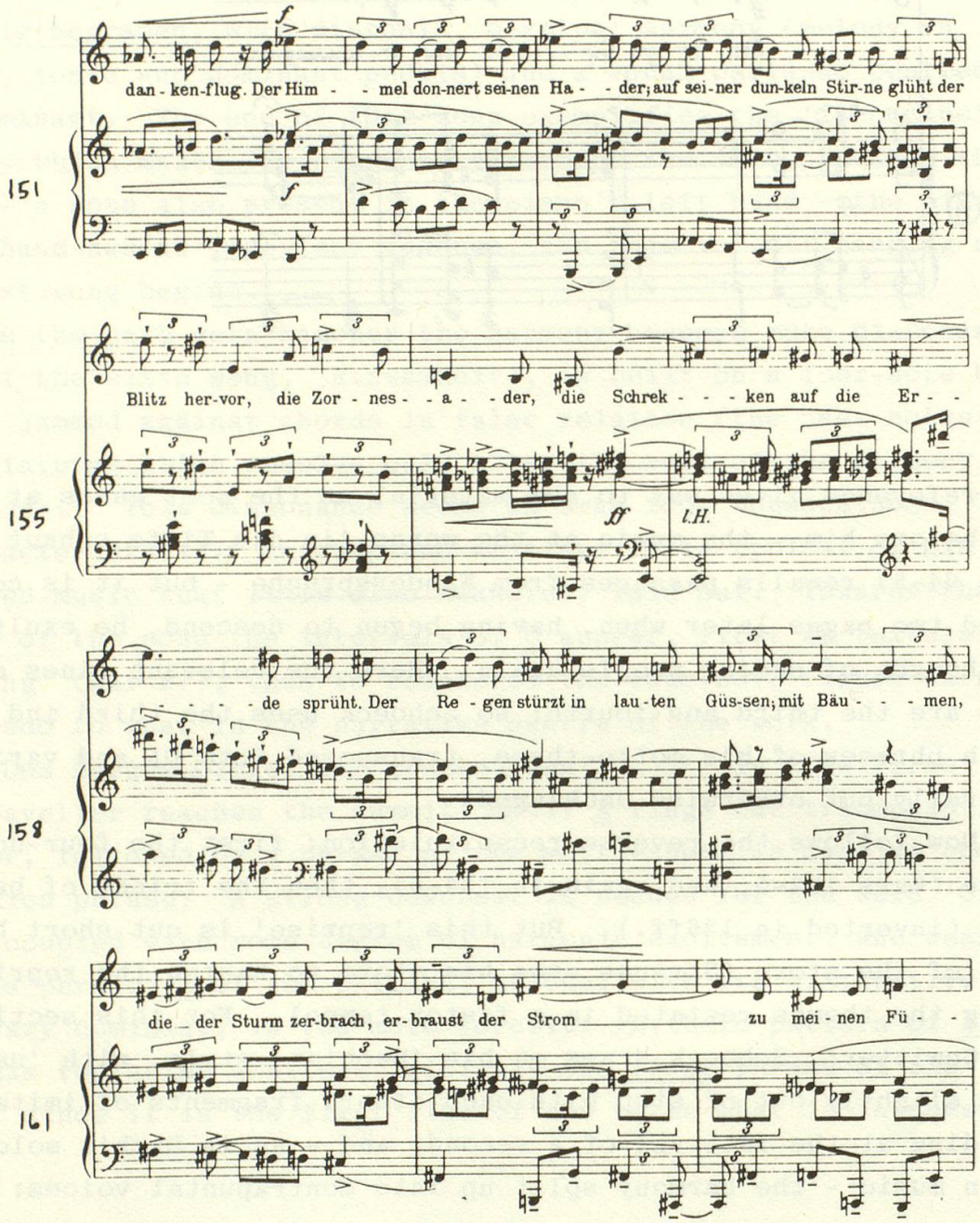
'Des Berges Gipfel war erschwungen . . .' In 'Die Ferne' the traveller reaches the summit: motif A rings out triumphantly in C major, followed by a phrase of the motto-theme in massive chords. But which phrase? A strong downbeat is needed for the word 'Gipfel', coupled with some degree of harmonic excitement; and what we hear is phrase ii of the original melody, with its distinctive secondary dominant, in the more forceful rhythmic pattern of iii - all this replacing what was initially the first phrase of the theme, since it is the first line of the verse that is in question:

1) Cf. the Gaselen passage discussed on p. 184. See also Schuh, 'Gestaltungsprinzipien', pp. 66-8. The bass line in bar 63ff. virtually quotes the cello recitative from Lebendig begraben (bar 406ff.).



This reference gives way to new material as the poet gazes at the view before him - the music at the words 'in die Tiefe schaut' (bars 94-5) recalls passages from Wandersprüche - but it is completed two pages later when, having begun to descend, he exults at the thought of seeing people again. Here the relevant lines of the verse are the third and fourth; so Schoeck uses the third and fourth phrases of his motto-theme, transposed into D♭ and varied texturally but otherwise unchanged.

Now follows the reverse recapitulation: first the four-note figure (bars 122-5, and again in 134-6), then the triads of bar 99ff. (inverted in 126ff.). But this 'reprise' is cut short by the onset of the storm (Strauss uses his storm to hasten the reprise by having the themes restated in a faster tempo). For this section, 'Das Gewitter', Schoeck draws on his 'Bachian' style, with 'unison' lines slightly out of step with each other, fragments of imitation colliding at the interval of a second, and - as in Bach's solo violin music - the harmony split up into contrapuntal voices:

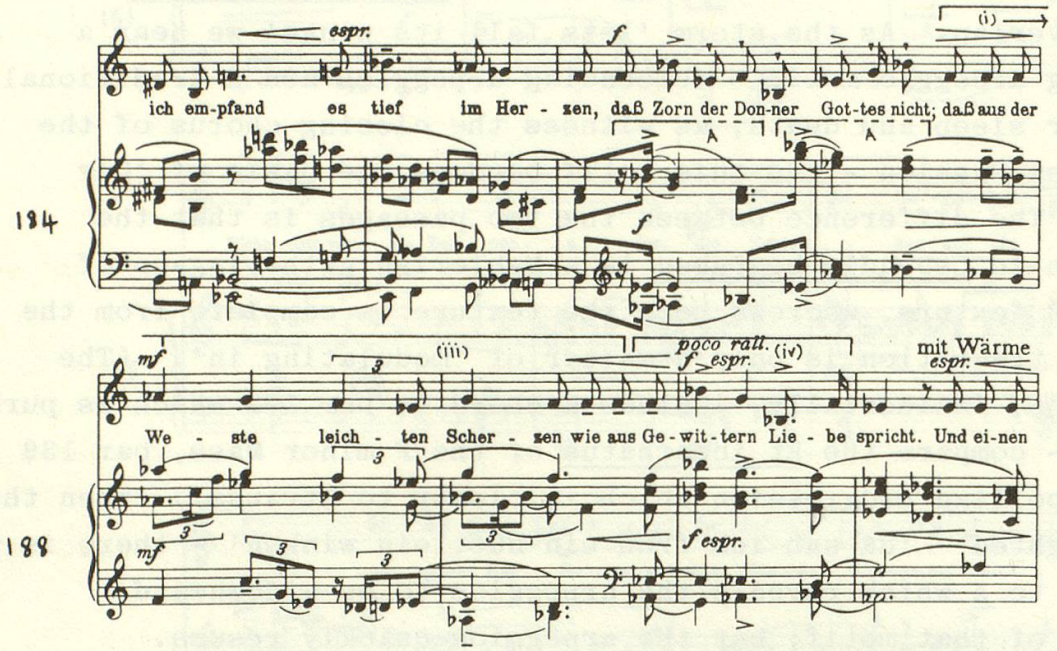

151
dan - ken-flug. Der Him - - mel don-nert sei-nen Ha - - der; auf sei-ner dun-keln Stir-ne glüht der
155
Blitz her-vor, die Zor - nes - - a - - der, die Schrek - - - ken auf die Er - -
l.H.
158
- - - - de sprüht. Der Re - gen stürzt in lau-ten Güs-sen; mit Bäu - - - men,
161
die _ der Sturm zer-brach, er-braust der Strom _____ zu mei - nen Fü - -

This is the best sustained section of the piece, which has it in common with Lebendig begraben that the textures grow more and more continuous as the work progresses - without, unfortunately, the depth of meaning which gives the effect in the earlier work its power.

As part of this increased continuity, the eighth and ninth songs, like the twelfth and thirteenth of Lebendig begraben, are made to overlap. As the storm 'lets fall its wings' we hear a descending arpeggio motif - descending arpeggios are a traditional symbol for sleep and death, as witness the closing chorus of the St. Matthew Passion - and this motif becomes the basis of 'Der Schlaf'. The difference between the two passages is that the transition in Lebendig begraben is a Mahlerian gathering-up of themes and texture, whereas here the texture is complete from the start and transition is only a matter of 'modulating in'. (The modulations, incidentally, include a chord in bar 172 which is pure Bruckner - compare the Et incarnatus of the F minor Mass, bar 139 - and a Neapolitan progression which is closer to Strauss.) When the hut is sighted - 'da sah ich froh ein Hüttlein winken' - there is a reference to A which reveals the arpeggios to be a downward extension of that motif; but the arpeggios quickly resume.

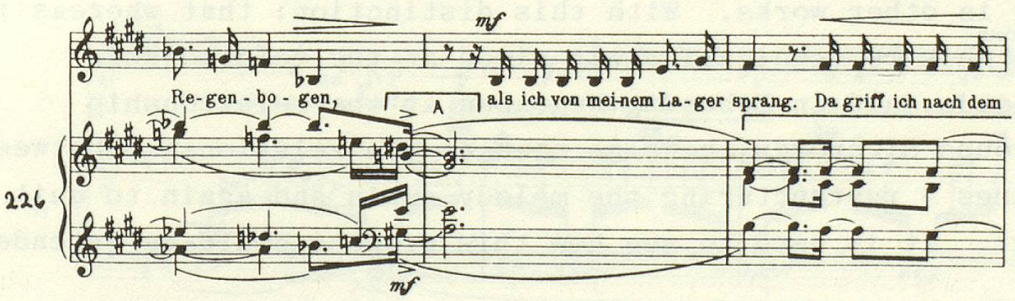
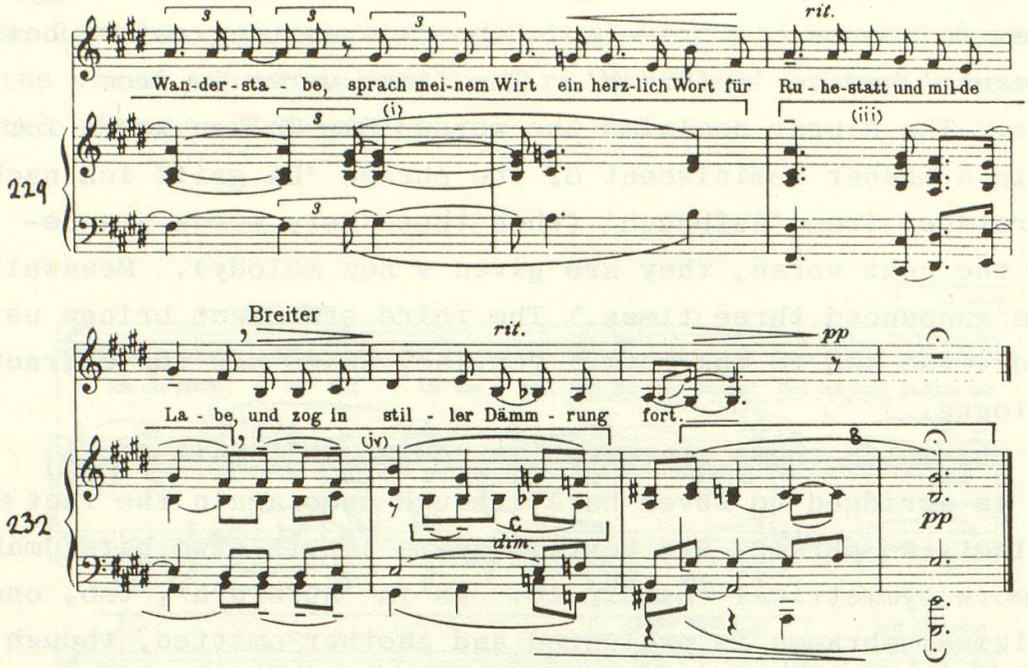
'Der Schlaf', with its ceaseless diatonic ostinato (ostinato in the conventional sense), forms a link between the penultimate song of Lebendig begraben and the last of the Notturno - all are songs about sleep and/or death - and in it Schoeck seems suddenly to warm to his subject. After the matter-of-fact, almost frigid treatment of some of the earlier songs - poems about mountaineering, even by Lenau, could hardly be expected to draw the best from Schoeck - the harmony here is sweet and full, with an almost Debussyan progression at the words 'müde sank ich / hier in des Heues Duft und schlief' (bars 196-8).

Just before this last passage the song is interrupted by another recollection of the motto-theme, this time highlighting the poet's realisation that the storm was not a sign of God's anger, but that 'aus der Weste leichten Scherzen / wie aus Gewittern Liebe spricht'. In this version, motif A is stated twice in E♭ major as an upbeat (the G♭ in bar 186 must be a misprint); then phrases i

and iii elide into a single phrase, followed by phrase iv complete, these last two phrases corresponding to the third and fourth lines of the verse (the triplets in bars 188-9 are Schoeck's equivalent of the 'leichte Scherze'):

After the cadence the ostinato resumes, and it persists for the rest of the song. The last verse is especially beautiful. As the traveller dreams, the arpeggio motif combines with its inversion in two different keys (C major and E♭ major, so that their dominant sevenths have two notes in common), and the 3/4 metre, for the only time in the song, becomes overlaid with phrases in 4/4. This simultaneous blurring of the tonality and of the metre, combined with the smoothing out of the intervals in the voice, produces a sense of timelessness. On the very last phrase the music moves almost imperceptibly into E major for the concluding part of the frame.

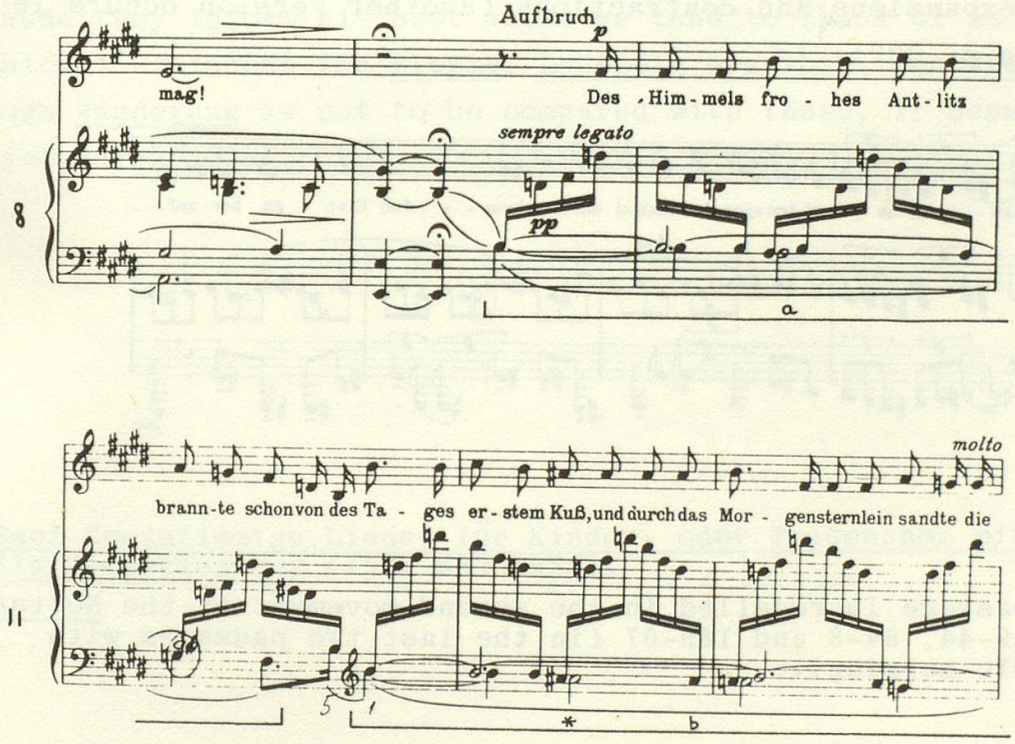
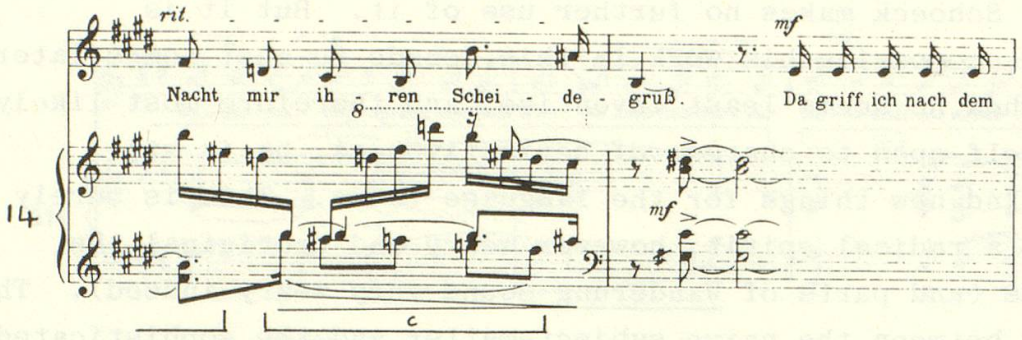
The tenth and final poem, 'Der Abend', consists of two verses. In the first, the poet describes the calm evening; in the

second, a variation of the corresponding verse in the second poem, he prepares to resume his travels. Schoeck's setting refers both to 'Erinnerung' and to 'Aufbruch'. The first verse is free recitative. The singer declaims the words 'Die Wolken waren fort gezogen' in a manner reminiscent of the phrase 'Da griff ich nach dem Wanderstabe' from 'Aufbruch' (when these very words are recalled in the next verse, they are given a new melody). Meanwhile motif A is announced three times. The third statement brings us to the second verse and to the formal reprise, which has the character of an epilogue.

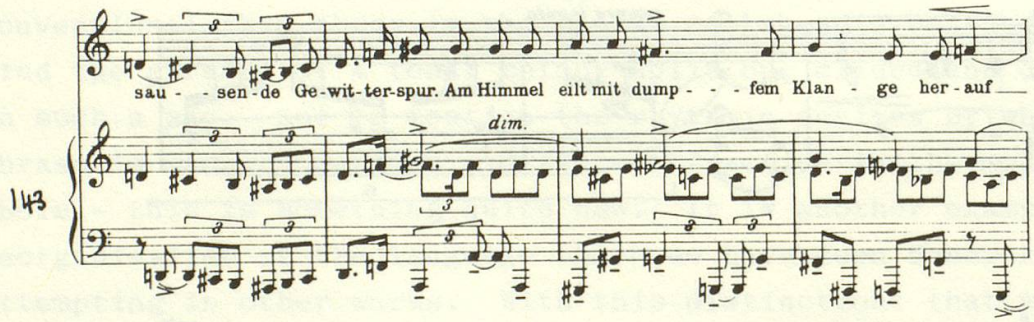
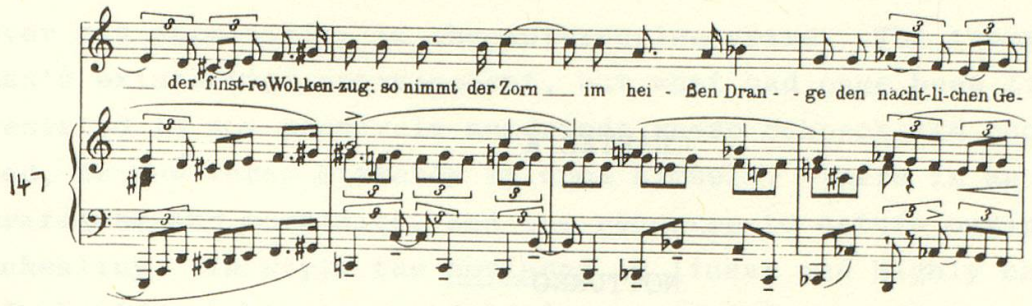
Like the motto-theme statement in 'Aufbruch', this final statement is abridged to seven bars, though once again the fact that its last two phrases are both the same length (two bars) makes it sound more symmetrical than it is. As in 'Aufbruch', too, one of the original phrases is prolonged and another omitted, though not the same ones. Now it is the first phrase that expands to the length of two, no doubt in order to recall the parallel passage in 'Aufbruch' (compare bars 228-30 with 16-17). The third phrase, however, refers to 'Erinnerung' rather than to 'Aufbruch', that is, the third phrase really is phrase iii; and just as the latter phrase was dropped in 'Aufbruch', so phrase ii now disappears (Schoeck wants to avoid the strong V of V progression at this late stage, especially after the dominant emphasis of bars 222 and 224). Phrase iv, finally, makes as if to follow its counterpart in 'Erinnerung', but on the word 'Dämmrung' veers off into a Neapolitan progression (note the presence of C in an inner part) which pushes the phrase even further to the flat side than its former subdominant chords had taken it. At last the harmony resolves into E major with a variation of cadence B:

Thus all the material of the frame is brought together on the last page.

Perhaps it is not superfluous to remark the novelty of this kind of construction. Almost any of the chords, and many of the chordal progressions, in Schoeck's motto-theme could occur in Schumann or Brahms, and the harmonic relationships are in fact more conventional than those in the Elegie or Lebendig begraben. But to find the phrases of a tonal melody split up, elided and displaced in such a way - not to mention the rhythmic devices by which a phrase is made to perform a different function in the melody as a whole - this is something quite new. It is another example of that reorganisation of the language which we have seen Schoeck attempting in other works. With this distinction: that whereas in the Elegie this reorganisation was aimed at the relationship between chords, and in Lebendig begraben at the relationship between groups of chords, here he changes the relationship between whole phrases - restructuring the melody again and again to suit the context. It is hard to see how this process could be extended,

and in fact Schoeck makes no further use of it. But it is interesting, comparing his work in this decade to what comes later, that even when he seems least inventive, and therefore most likely to lay himself open to charges of derivativeness, he is still trying to find new things for the language to do. This is surely the mark of a radical spirit, however weary and unoriginal the music sounds (and parts of Wanderung sound very weary indeed). The discrepancy between the naive subject-matter and the sophisticated technique is, of course, another characteristic Schoeckian 'paradox'.

The remaining technical usages can be dealt with more briefly. (There is actually little to discuss: the 'open-ended' construction seems inimical to subtle rhythmic or motivic work. A song like 'Für Ninon', with its concentration on one interval and one texture, would be impossible in this style.) The first verse of 'Aufbruch' is built upon three statements of a descending motif (a, b and c in the following example). This motif is presented first in minims and crotchets, then in minims an octave higher and with a note added (* in the example), and finally in quavers an octave higher still. The last version is part of a cadence which resolves onto the first chord of A:



Here we have a mixture of rhythmic and additive variation which probably derives from 'Stille Sicherheit', from the Elegie. The rhythmic irregularity of the bass descent seems to inhibit the harmonic movement, and the technique could only perhaps be used in songs that require this kind of weak, wavering motion around a single chord (some of those in Unter Sternen, for instance).

There are other examples of rhythmic variation, most not interesting enough for comment. One, however, must be mentioned, because it represents a usage which is to become prominent later, notably in Das holde Bescheiden. It concerns the rhythmic variation of a sequence, usually consisting of only two chords and usually descending. The chords shuttle backwards and forwards, sometimes on the beat and sometimes off it, in all sorts of rhythmic expansions and contractions (another version occurs in the example on p. 292):[1]

1) This passage is recalled in the second movement of the Notturno, bars 39-44, 84-8 and 189-97 (in the last two passages with variable barring).

The idea derives of course from the series technique, but the proximity and insistence of the repetitions (there being only two chords involved) gives the sequence a mechanical, disembodied character which is as disruptive of tonal stability as the actual modulations. The effect is similar to that of some of his major-minor changes - those in 'Berge dein Haupt' from Gaselen, for example - but arising now from changes of chords rather than from changes of notes.

The element of naiveté in Schoeck's personality, though the works it produced are sometimes to be regretted, is too important to be ignored. It returns in the Claudius and Mörike cycles, in the children's choruses, Op. 69,[1] and in the operas, and is the necessary counterpart to that seriousness and intensity which, because they inform his best work, we tend to think of as 'typical' - witness the Elegie, Lebendig begraben, Penthesilea. Though Wanderung is not to be compared with these, it deserves an occasional hearing.

1) Zwei Zweistimmige Lieder für Kinder- oder Frauenchor mit Klavierbegleitung (1941 and 1955).

CHAPTER 8

NOTTURNO

Despite the lighter mood of much of Schoeck's recent music, his pessimism had never really left him. His fame in Switzerland was little consolation for the lack of wider acknowledgement, and he viewed the political situation with alarm. After the death of his parents his depression was such that he was hardly able to compose.

Just after Christmas 1931 he told Corrodi he was working on some new Lenau songs. He would publish them under the title 'Lieder eines unbekannten Dichters', he said, for merely the appearance of Lenau's name would be enough to make people turn them away smiling. The Notturno[1] was to occupy him, with many interruptions, until early in 1933. One of the songs[2] had been sketched at the time of the Elegie; when the others were finished he wove them into the fabric of a string quartet. The first performance was given on 18 May 1933 by Loeffel and the Tonhalle players.

The Notturno was Schoeck's longest work since Lebendig begraben (it lasts forty minutes), and it addresses itself largely to the same questions. In the composer's words, 'The basic idea is this, that man is always alone and must remain alone; that everything that seems to reduce this loneliness is only illusion.'[3] The despairing tone of these phrases indicates the change that had come

1) See OS pp. 181-3, 218-20, 233-41; V pp. 138-41; G pp. 72-7; D pp. 208-10; S pp. 41-4; Mohr, op.cit., p. 89; Schuh, 'Die Schlussgesänge in Othmar Schoecks "Notturno" und "Nachhall"', SMZ 107 (1967), pp. 73-7, reprinted in Umgang mit Musik. Miniature score by U.E. (1933); recorded by Fischer-Dieskau and the Juilliard Quartet, CBS 72687.

2) Movement IV. See G p. 72. Vogel told me that he had not seen the early setting and did not know of the existence of a manuscript (conversation, 31 October 1971).

3) OS p. 234.

over his personality in the intervening years. The theme again is man's existential estrangement, but what had once been fiercely resisted is now passively accepted; where Schoeck had once protested, he now turns bitterly in upon himself. There is an element of weariness and morbidity, and the recourse to nature begins to seem unhealthy. In style the Notturno is linear and highly chromatic. 'I should not be surprised if [parts of it] were explained as twelve-tone music,' he commented. 'But I chose this style for the representation of a sick state.'[1]

The nine Lenau poems present an atmosphere of solitude and darkness. The landscapes of the Elegie have become wasted and grey, as if symbolising the illusory nature of happiness - the idea of illusion is central - and night is now a time to dread. The recurring images of brook, wind, clouds and birds give the texts a more specific unity.

The first two poems are complementary. In a pair of sonnets entitled 'Liebe und Vermählung' - Schoeck omits the titles as too explicit[2] - Lenau paints two pictures of romantic love, one blissful, one ironic. In the former, the mountain longs for the cloud and is rewarded: 'a true picture of love and marriage!' In the latter, the brook seeks the wild rose, desiring 'the fickle, illusory fate of love and marriage', but as soon as it reaches her she withers 'and the magic is gone'. In the third poem, 'Der schwere Abend', the poet walks with his beloved in the garden; when he has to leave he wishes they both were dead. In the fourth poem, 'Blick in den Strom' - the last written by Lenau before his collapse - the poet looks in the stream and sees his soul overflowing with grief. In the fifth poem, 'Traumgewalten', the poet awakes after a horrible dream, remembering the guests who invaded his house while he slept.

The sixth poem, 'Ein Herbstabend', develops the theme of illusion. The poet watches the wild geese begin their flight to the south, and wonders: 'Is life an illusion? But why then does life become afraid before it goes out, if it is only an illusion?

1) G p. 72. 2) Ibid., p. 72.

Are these fears also an illusion?' In the seventh poem, 'Waldlied', 'The time of love has faded, and . . . in the murmuring of this forest, death and perishing seem merely a furtively quiet, happy exchange'. These words are Lenau's only hint of a solution. (In conversation Schoeck compared him with Hesse, remarking that 'Lenau's concept of death as an exchange, or substitution, of condition has a more positive complexion than Hesse's going over into Nirvana.')[1] In the eighth poem, 'Der einsame Trinker', the poet says he likes to drink alone, inviting his guests from other worlds. Loneliness is also the subject of the ninth poem, 'Impromptu' (it is only a couplet):

O Einsamkeit, wie trink ich gerne
aus deiner frischen Waldzisterne!

But this is not the last word. 'I have never been able to finish with Lenau, neither in the Elegie nor in the Notturno nor in Nachhall, and I have always concluded my Lenau cycles with a poem by another writer. I wanted to lead myself and my listeners out of depression . . .' While Schoeck was looking for a suitable ending, a friend drew his attention to Keller's last prose sketch, 'Heerwagen, mächtig Sternbild der Germanen'. The poet asks to be taken up among the stars and allowed to travel with them; and the cycle moves into 'a quite different, lighter sphere'.[2]

Schoeck arranges these settings in the form of a five-movement string quartet. The first four are presented continuously, with an interlude in sonata form at the centre; the fifth becomes a scherzo; the sixth is treated as a rondo; the seventh as a brief adagio; and the last three, linked by interludes, form a continuous finale. The total scheme is as follows:

1) Ibid., pp. 99-100. See also p. 150.
2) Ibid., pp. 165, 76-7.

I	a	'Liebe und Vermählung I' (Ruhig)
	b	'Liebe und Vermählung II' (Ruhig)
	c	Interlude: Andante appassionato
	d	'Der schwere Abend' (Etwas breiter)
	e	'Blick in den Strom' (Sehr ruhig)
II	a	Presto
	b	'Traumgewalten' (Trio)
	[c]	Reprise of Presto
III		'Ein Herbstabend' (Unruhig bewegt)
IV		'Waldlied' (Ruhig und leise)
V	a	'Der einsame Trinker' (Rasch und kräftig: quasi Recit.)
	b	Interlude: Allegretto
	c	'Impromptu' (Breiter)
	d	Interlude contd.: Allegretto tranquillo
	e	'Heerwagen' (Ruhige stete Bewegung)

(Schoeck's original numbering is retained. Interestingly, he gives German tempo directions for the vocal movements, Italian ones for the instrumental - a distinction which neatly epitomises the work's dual character.)

Song cycles with string quartet, or string quartet and piano, are not rare in this century: an Englishman thinks of Vaughan Williams's On Wenlock Edge. But there can be few works which actually enclose a cycle within a full-length string quartet, complete with sonata movements, scherzo and adagio. The obvious precedent is Schoenberg's Second Quartet (1907-8), whose last two movements incorporate vocal settings within their respective variation and sonata structures. It is doubtful, however, that Schoeck ever heard this work (he may of course have heard about it), and his idea may therefore be regarded as an independent discovery.

This discovery was less remarkable than it sounds. For some time his vocal music had tended to become more and more instrumental in concept: consider Wandersprüche. He wished now 'to contrast the songs for once with pure, autonomous string quartet movements - not exclusively, however, for that would have been too deliberate.'[1] At the same time his instrumental works had always

1) 'Aus einem Zwiegespräch mit Willi Schuh', pp. 5-6.

tended towards a vocal or pictorial style, and if his earlier quartets are sometimes overtly descriptive - the Lento of the Second, for example, is an evocation of the Föhn[1] - there are passages in the Notturno (e.g. bars 63-7 of the finale) which seem like vocalisations of texts later suppressed. And of course all the movements are first and foremost settings of words.

Both the song forms and the instrumental forms are basically simple, but each movement relates them in a different way. The first movement consists of four ternary songs, with an interlude in sonata form. After an instrumental scherzo, the voice enters for the Trio and then accompanies the scherzo reprise. The third movement is a rondo with vocal obbligato. The fourth movement is another ternary song. The finale comprises a through-composed, declamatory number, another sonata-interlude (interrupted by the tiny 'Impromptu') and a song which combines vocal arioso and instrumental chaconne.

Some indication of Schoeck's intentions in the first movement is offered by a remark he made to Vogel: 'I regret that I did not write the line "der immer naht, ihr immer doch zu fehlen" at the top, for this line guided me during the composition.'[2] (In the thematic catalogue it is affixed to the interlude as a motto.) The line in question occurs in the second of the two sonnets, where it describes the brook pursuing the rose, 'coming ever nearer but never quite reaching her'. It encapsulates the idea of illusion which for Lenau is inherent in marriage and for Schoeck underlies any attempt to evade loneliness (see the quotations above). If I understand him correctly, Schoeck takes the line and applies it as a principle affecting every level of the composition.

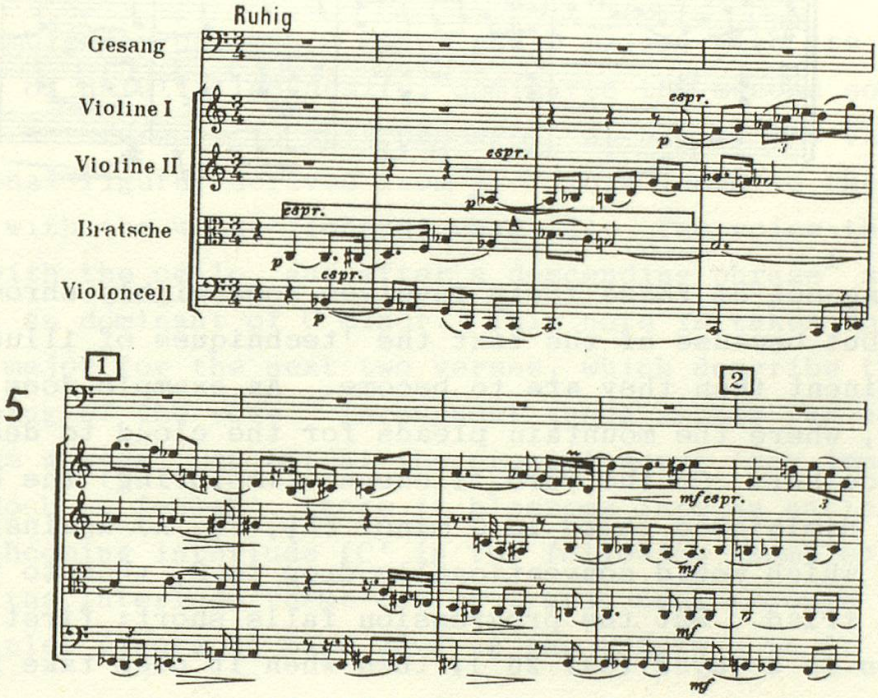
The notion of vain pursuit can be interpreted in several ways. It implies something following something else, but always lagging behind; something imitating something else, but not quite exactly; things that normally happen together being staggered or kept apart; something being deflected from its course, frustrated or forestalled. These ideas can be conveyed in music by techniques

1) G p. 45.

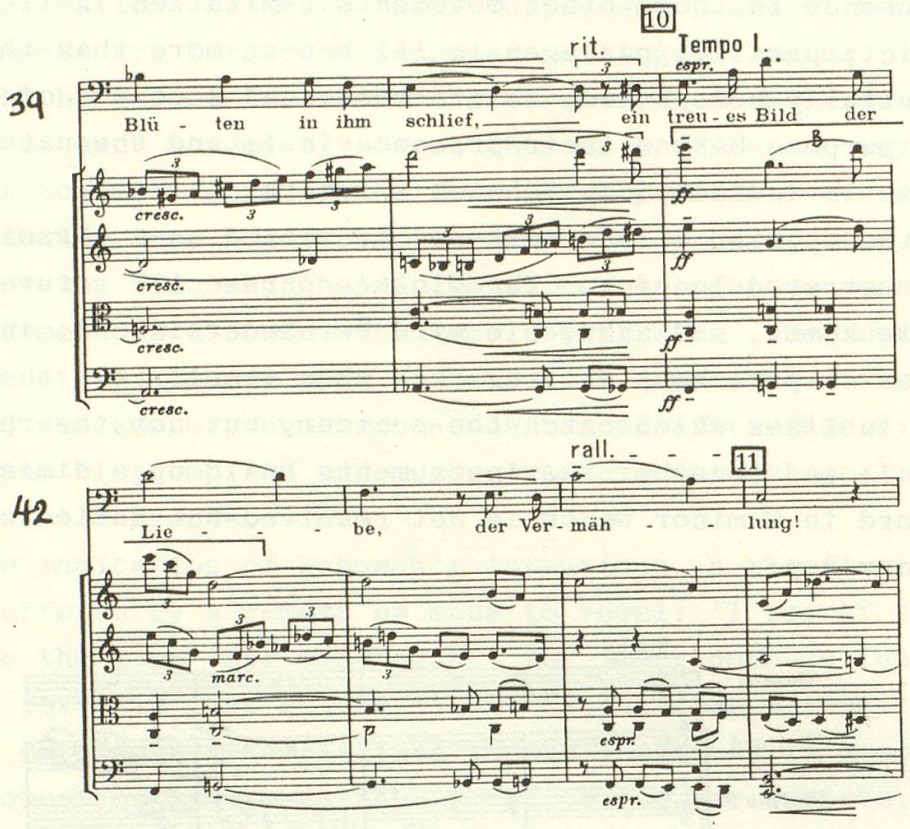
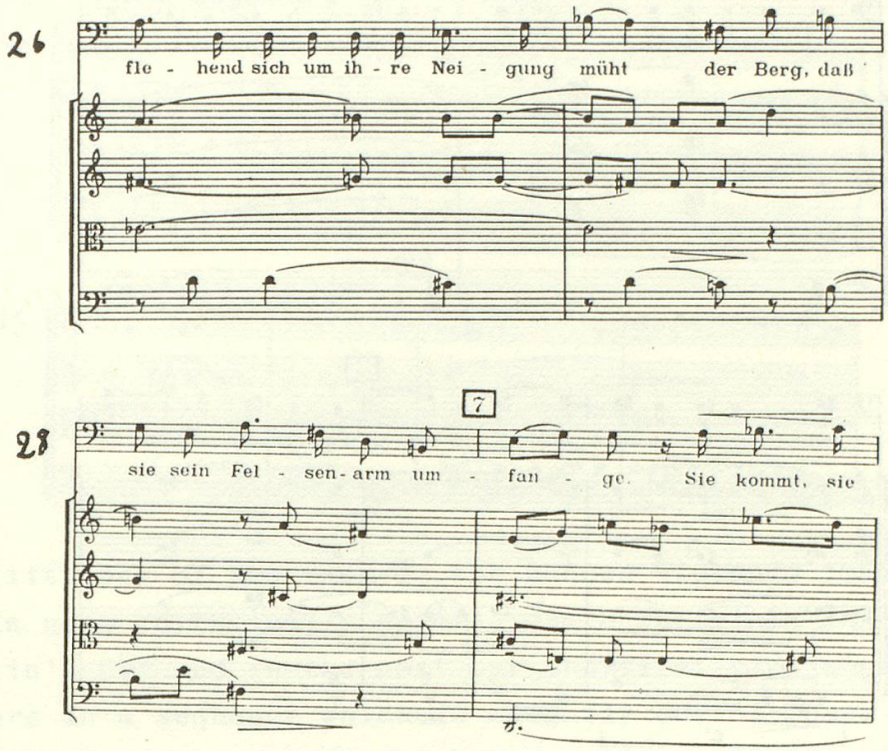
2) Ibid., p. 43.

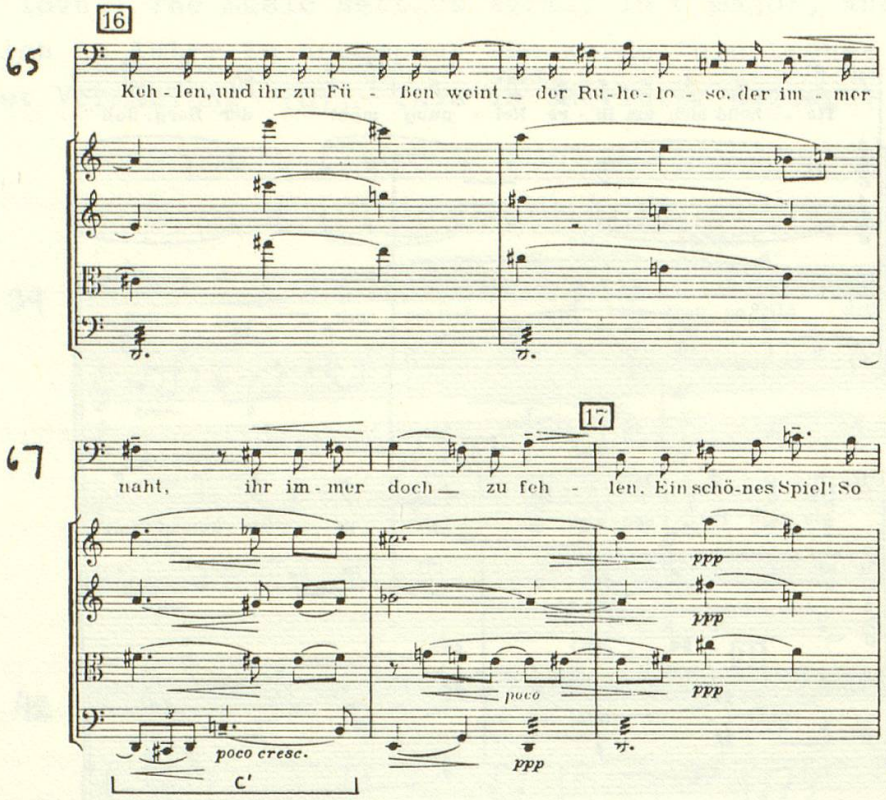
of counterpoint, variation and interruption, and Schoeck's first movement makes full use of such techniques. It is not unique in this: similar usages may be found in almost any work of his maturity, even in the other movements of the Notturno. But their relative absence in those other movements (imitation in II is mostly strict; parallel passages in III repeat more than they vary; IV is essentially homophonic, as are the vocal sections of V) suggests a purpose behind their presence in I; and the nature of this purpose is indicated by Schoeck's remark.

Thus the opening of the work can be viewed as a threefold image of frustrated longing. The viola's phrase (it returns at the hopeful 'Sie kommt, sie naht, sie wird herniedersinken', in bars 29-31) rises only to keep falling back upon itself (A); the violins imitate it in lines which catch the contour, but not the rhythm, of the original; and together the instruments build up a diminished seventh chord in C minor which is not resolved but deflected towards a new key:

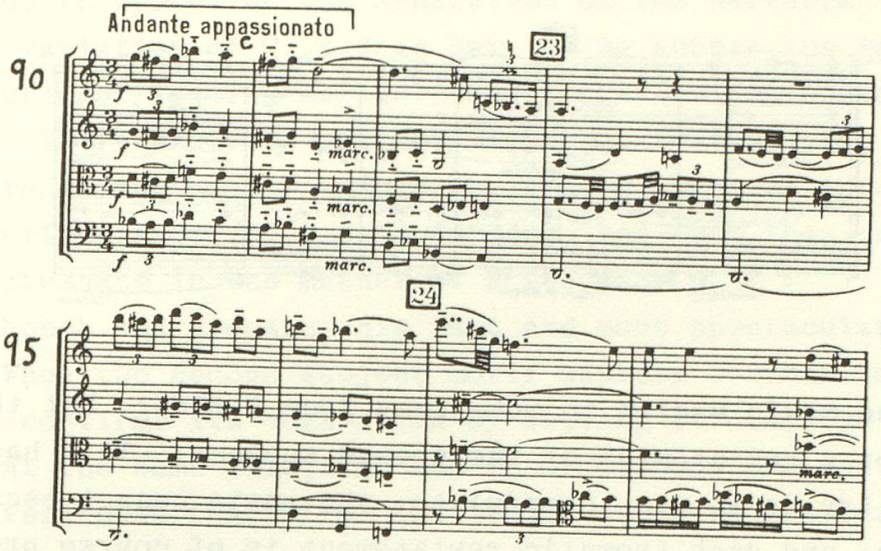


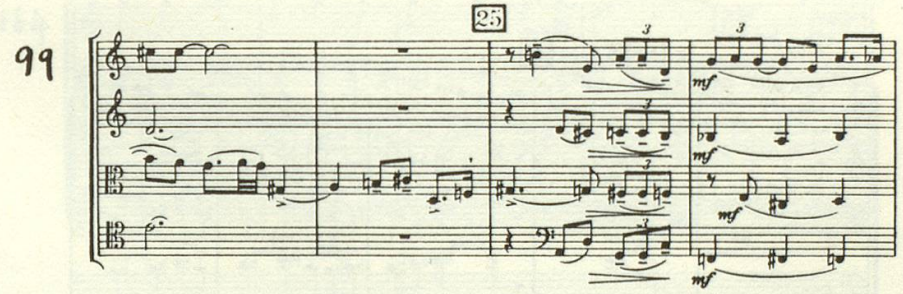
Within a few bars, however, these preliminaries are revealed as yet another kind of deception, for the first song is actually about

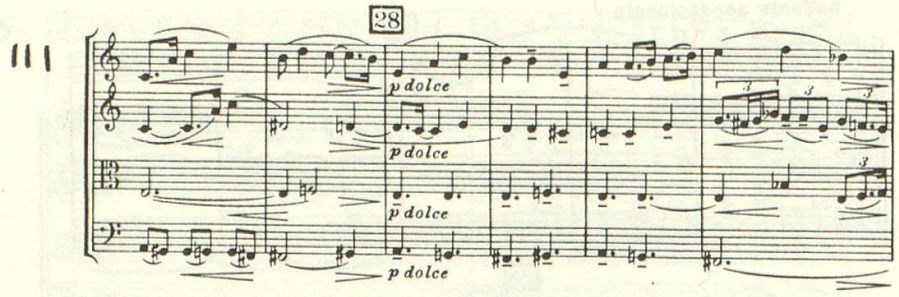
requited love. The music settles warmly in C major, and we hear a theme which is later to accompany the words 'ein treues Bild der Liebe, der Vermählung' (B). This is the later passage:

The working-out of these ideas involves some highly chromatic writing, but because of the text the 'techniques of illusion' are less prominent than they are to become. An example does occur in bars 26-9, where the mountain pleads for the cloud to descend so it may embrace her. On the word 'flehend' (imploring) the harmony strikes a diminished chord in G minor (E♭, F♯, A) against a cello D, a note which would conventionally drop to C, then to the B♭ of the tonic triad. But the progression falls short: first the resolution is delayed (bar 26^3); then when it does take place it leads not to G minor but to D major (27-8):

This ambiguity between G minor and D major, with its connotation of unfulfilled desire, dominates the second song, which begins with a reference to this passage. At bar 48 the viola plays a transitional figure, derived from A. This leads to the chord associated with the word 'flehend' (bar 51). The voice then enters in unison with the cello, and after a descending phrase[1] settles on the note D, as dominant of G minor. This note is taken up as the tonic of D major for the next two verses, which describe the brook's wooing of the rose. Throughout these verses the note D is sustained as a pedal, except at the crucial words 'der immer naht, ihr immer doch zu fehlen', where it blossoms into an anticipation of the forthcoming interlude (C' in the following example). The origins of the interlude theme can be traced back through the cello's triplet figure in bars 23-5 to the triplets in 5:

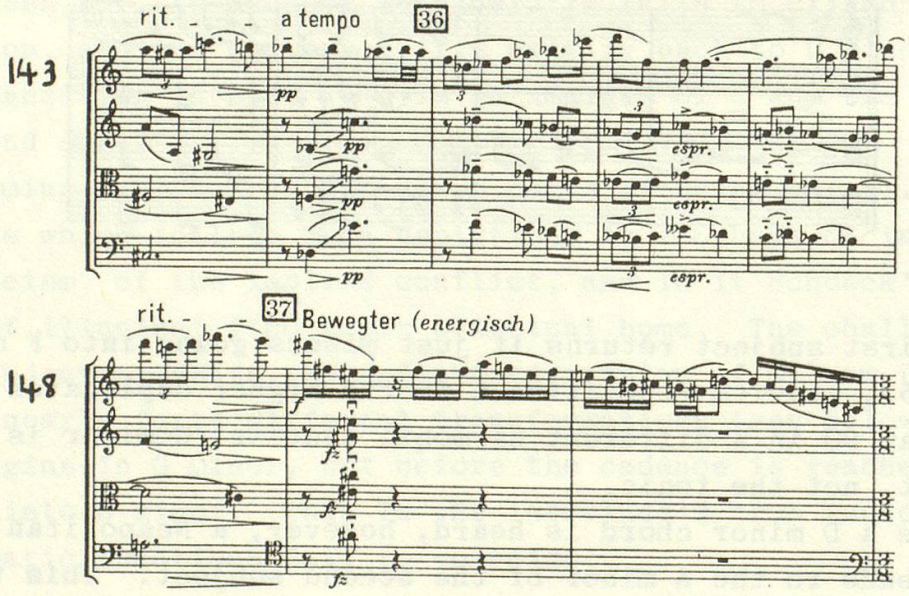
1) Another reference to the cello recitative in Lebendig begraben here.

The tonality here wavers between G minor, D minor and D major, D major being re-established with the pedal. G minor returns for the song's last verse; but just as the rose withers before the brook can possess her, so Schoeck meaningfully fails to clinch the modulation, and the harmony drifts wearily back to D minor. The cello transition in bars 86-9 is an amalgam of C and the melody of the second song.

'Coming ever nearer but never quite reaching her . . .' The interlude which follows is a depiction, in 110 bars of intense chromaticism, of the implied conflict, and in it Schoeck's 'techniques of illusion' find their principal home. The challenging first subject presents the definitive version of C, now to be put through nearly forty different transformations (see below). The theme begins in G minor, but before the cadence is reached it swerves into D minor. This is the interlude's true tonic: tonal and thematic functions fail to coincide:



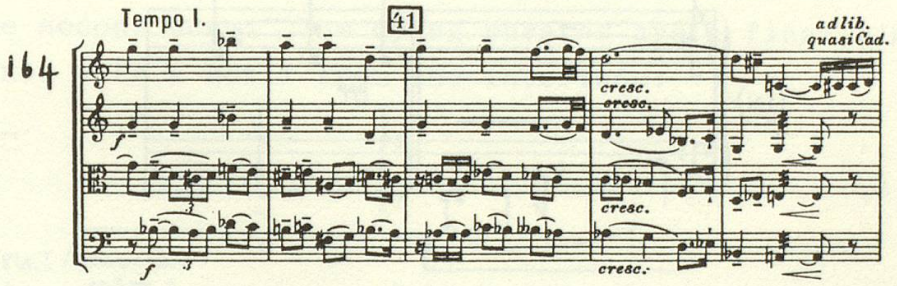
In the fifth bar of the example the second violin's imitation of the viola goes rhythmically adrift, while the viola fails to match the violin's C♮; and in the next bar the first violin tumbles after the others in a sequence which is slightly out of phase. A little later there is a passage in which the cello seems to enter too soon for the rest of the harmony, so that the other players have to hurry into triplets to catch up:

When the first subject returns it just misses going into F major (bars 104-5), and its repetition a fourth higher duplicates the notes of bar 90 in a different harmonic context: G minor is now the subdominant, not the tonic.

Before a D minor chord is heard, however, a Neapolitan progression leads to the A minor of the second subject. This theme refers to the falling fifths of the last example, at the same time preparing the cross-rhythms of the next song:

In bar 116 the music begins to move away from A minor, but then it slips back for a restatement of the second subject. This happens three times: try as it can to modulate, the music cannot escape the dominant area, and each thematic restatement is of course progressively less exact. In bar 126, during the second of these 'failed attempts', the second violin imitates the rising sixth in the preceding bar, though to different harmony; and when the interval is taken up again, a clash of C♯ and C♮ pulls the music between two different keys. Even in bars 136-40, A minor is still so strongly felt that D minor, which is what the written notes suggest, cannot be heard as a tonic. At last, after further modulation, we catch sight of D minor again (bar 148) - only to have it revealed as another mirage:

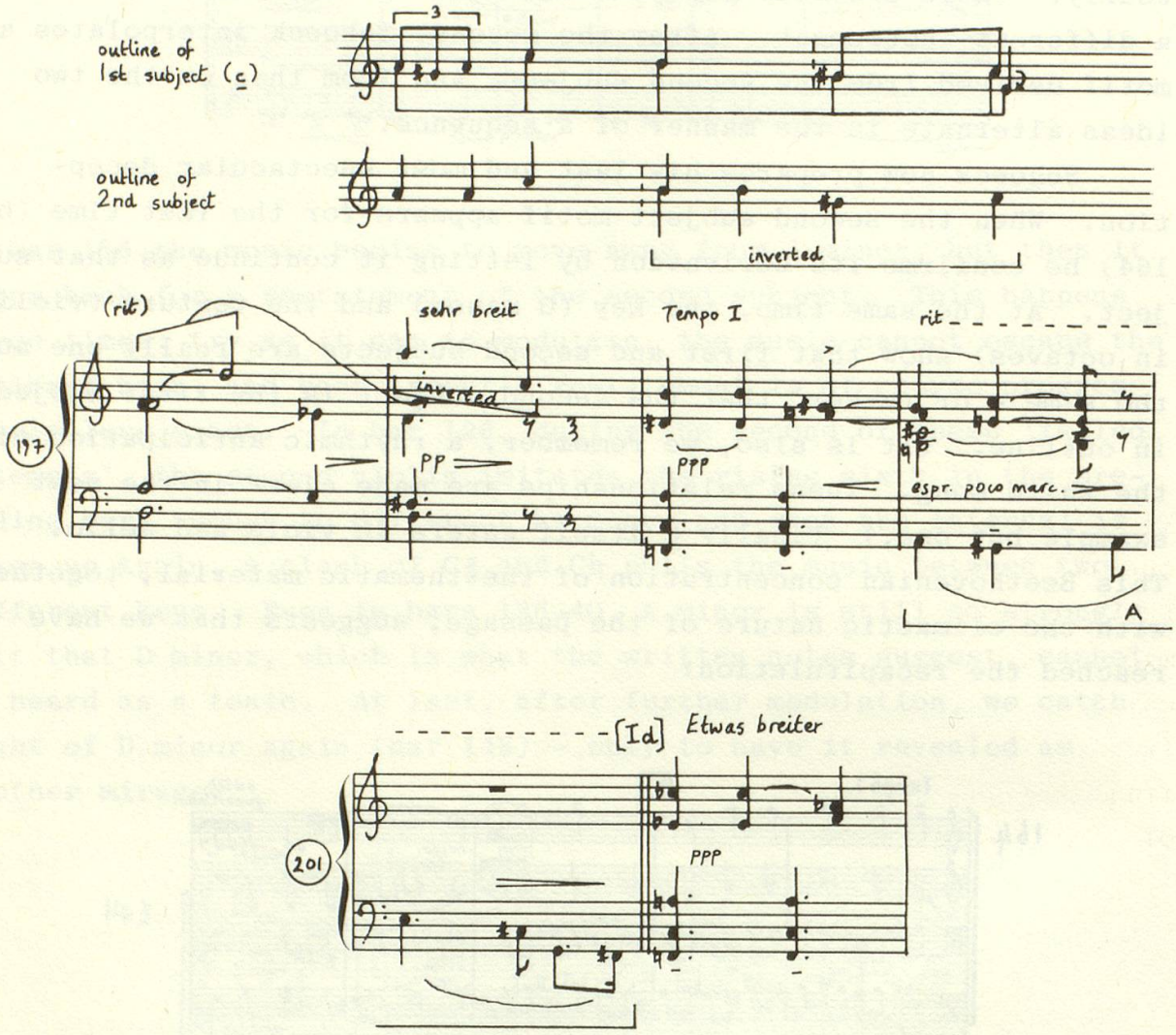
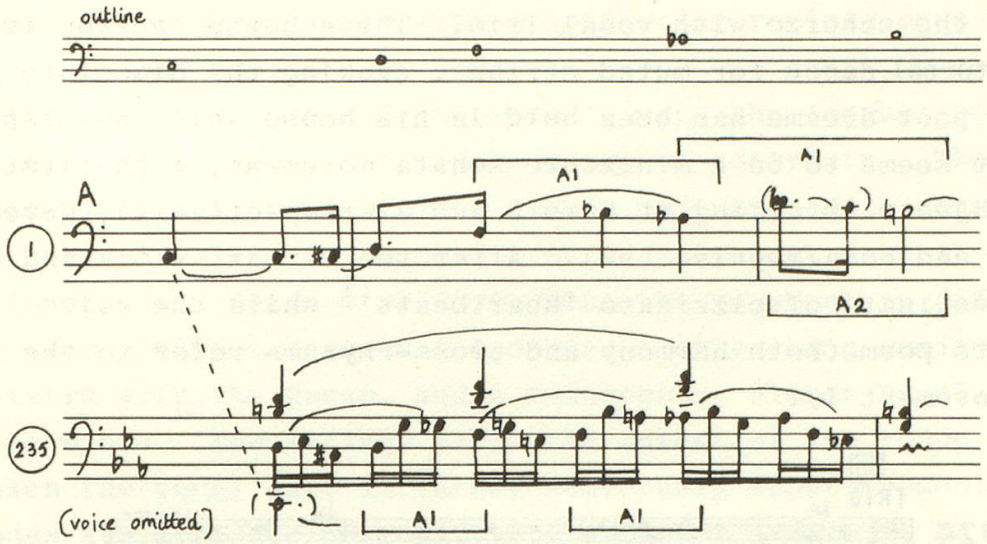


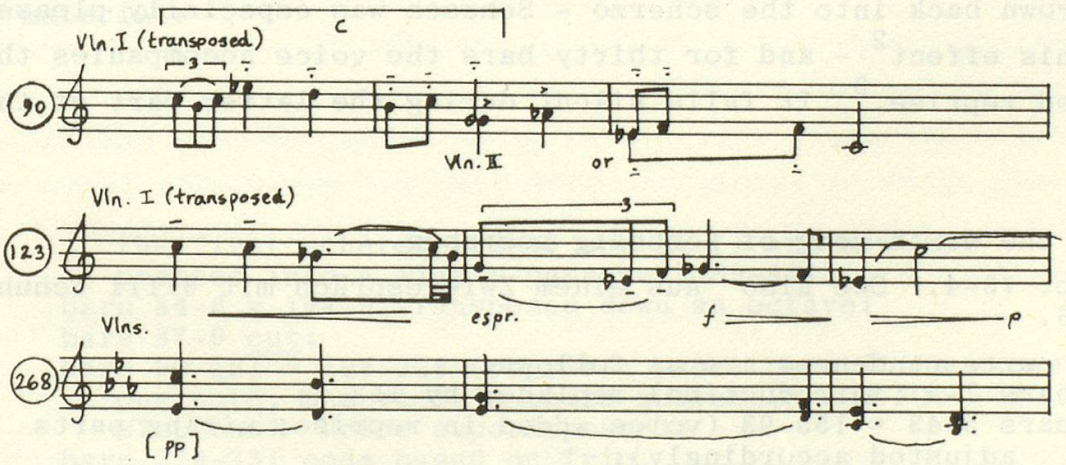
The agitated 'new' theme presented in bar 149 - for Schoeck

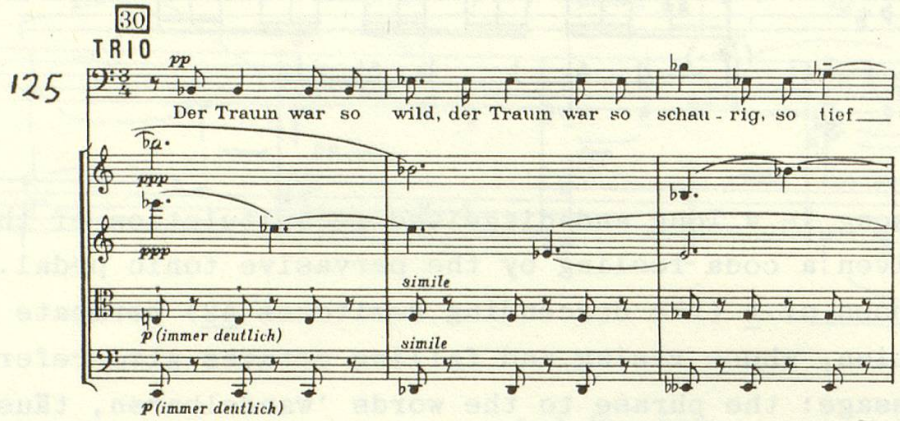
it seemed to symbolise the separation of the partners[1] - is in fact another variation of C, and in bar 152 he adopts the Wandersprüche-like tactic of letting earlier and later versions appear simultaneously. There are four statements of this theme, each entrusted to a different instrument. After the second, Schoeck interpolates a motif derived from the second subject, and from then on the two ideas alternate in the manner of a sequence.

Schoeck now prepares his last and most spectacular deception. When the second subject motif appears for the last time (bar 164) he confirms its derivation by letting it continue as that subject. At the same time, the key (G minor) and the texture (violins in octaves) show that first and second subjects are really one and the same - or rather, that the second subject is the first subject in outline. (It is also, we remember, a rhythmic anticipation of the third song. These relationships are made clear in the next example but one.) Finally C itself enters in viola and cello. This Beethovenian concentration of the thematic material, together with the climactic nature of the passage, suggests that we have reached the recapitulation:

In fact Schoeck is simply repeating his trick of bars 90-3 with more ceremony, for after a few bars the music breaks off with a cadenz-like flourish and the true recapitulation, in D minor, begins. This ostensibly regular reprise, with its second subject

1) G p. 72.

in the tonic, actually includes a good deal of material from the development. The final cadence combines references to both subjects with the basic chord of the third song:

Now that the main conflict is over, the movement continues in a more homophonic style. 'Der schwere Abend', in which the lovers part, is built on repetitions of a chord whose harmonic obscurity (F major + A♭ minor) powerfully evokes the atmosphere of opression. Only once does the mood lighten: when the poet wishes them both dead. A wan reminiscence of the interlude leads to the even darker fourth song, 'Blick in den Strom'. The poet's tears mix with the stream in a chromatic Wiegenlied whose viola figurations, C minor tonality and diminished seventh harmony recall the very first phrases of the work:

The whole song is a long and disguised recapitulation of the opening, given a coda feeling by the pervasive tonic pedal. Further echoes of A (the descending semitones A2) permeate the middle section, whose rising and falling octaves also refer to an earlier passage: the phrase to the words 'wandelbaren, täuschungs-[vollen Lose]' (the fickle, illusory fate of love and marriage) from the second song. The dying phrases are a final simplification of C mixed with a motif from the interlude:



The remaining movements can be dealt with more briefly. The second is the scherzo with vocal Trio. The scherzo section is a weird nocturnal dance for muted strings, evoking the dissolute party which the poet dreams has been held in his house while he slept. In form it seems to be a miniature sonata movement, with first and second subjects (starting at bars 5 and 27 respectively), development (34) and coda/reprise (92). After the climax, viola and cello begin an ostinato of pizzicato 'heartbeats'[1] while the voice recites its poem (both harmony and cross-rhythms refer to the third song of movement I):

We are not told about the party at first, only about the poet's anxiety, and the lack of harmonic direction contributes to the sense of unexplained alarm. Then, with the words 'Doch waren sie da, die schlimmen Gäste' (yet they were there, the evil guests), we are thrown back into the scherzo - Schoeck was especially pleased with this effect[2] - and for thirty bars the voice accompanies the abridged reprise.[3] It falls silent during the latter part of the

1) Cf. the sixth song of Lebendig begraben.

2) G pp. 73-4. See also 'Aus einem Zwiegespräch mit Willi Schuh', p. 6.

3) The correspondences are as follows:
bars 1-4 (introduction) replaced by 153-4;
bars 5-43 = 155-93 (voice added in reprise; string parts adjusted accordingly);
bars 44-83 cut (i.e. the development almost in its entirety; the two sequences which had enclosed the development in

exposition, but returns for the recapitulation ('Now they are gone'). The movement ends with a shuddering reminiscence of the Trio.

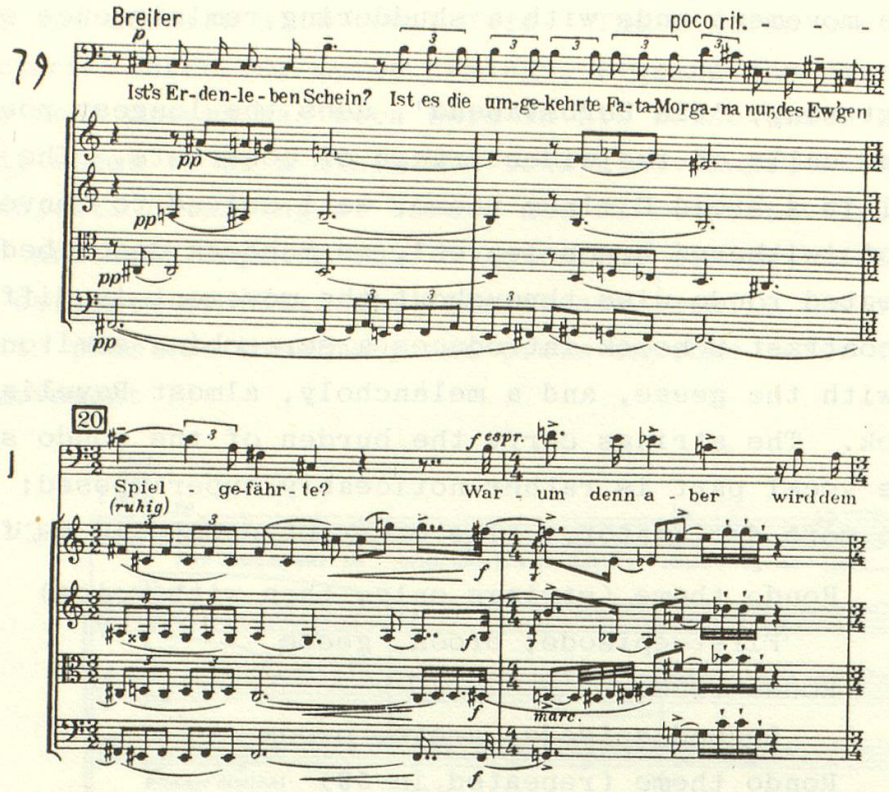
The next song, 'Ein Herbstabend', uses the longest poem in the cycle and calls on the widest range of contrasts. The principal material is a broad D minor theme, well suited to conveying the atmosphere of 'withered beech leaves', as Schoeck described it.[1] This is repeated rondo-wise throughout the movement in different keys. For contrast Schoeck introduces a screeching semitone idea, associated with the geese, and a melancholy, almost Ravelian theme for the brook. The strings carry the burden of the rondo sections, on which the vocal part is rather noticeably superimposed; the episodes are more declamatory. The order of events is as follows:

bar 1	Rondo theme (strings only, then with voice)
18	First episode; brook, geese
37	Rondo theme
45	Second episode: geese, brook
53	Rondo theme (repeated in 59)
63	Third episode: geese, brook
79	Fourth episode (interpolation, leading to climax)
94	Rondo theme (with voice, then fragmented in strings alone)

After the third episode, when geese and brook have virtually died away, the poet's doubts 'begin their nocturnal song', and a fourth episode is interpolated in which the brook figures as background to new material:

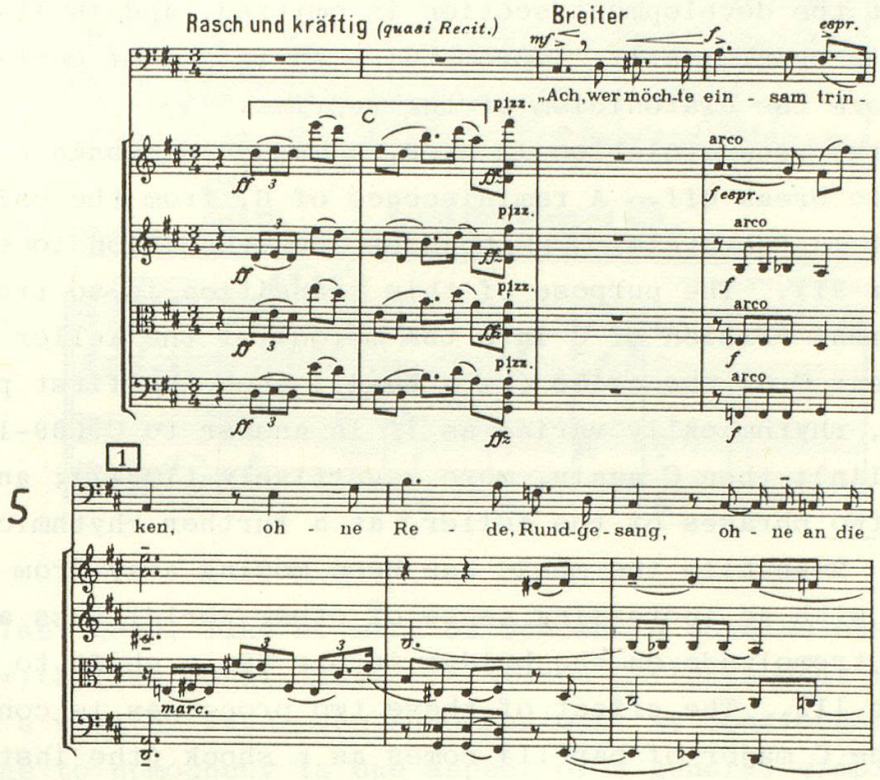
the first scherzo [39-43 and 84-7] are now compressed into a single passage [189-96];
bars 84-6 = 194-6 transposed down an octave;
bars 87-9 cut;
bars 90-121 = 197-228 (reprise: exact repetition except for one note, the viola's third quaver in 100/207 - a misprint? Voice superimposed);
bars 229-33: coda based on Trio.

1) OS p. 238.



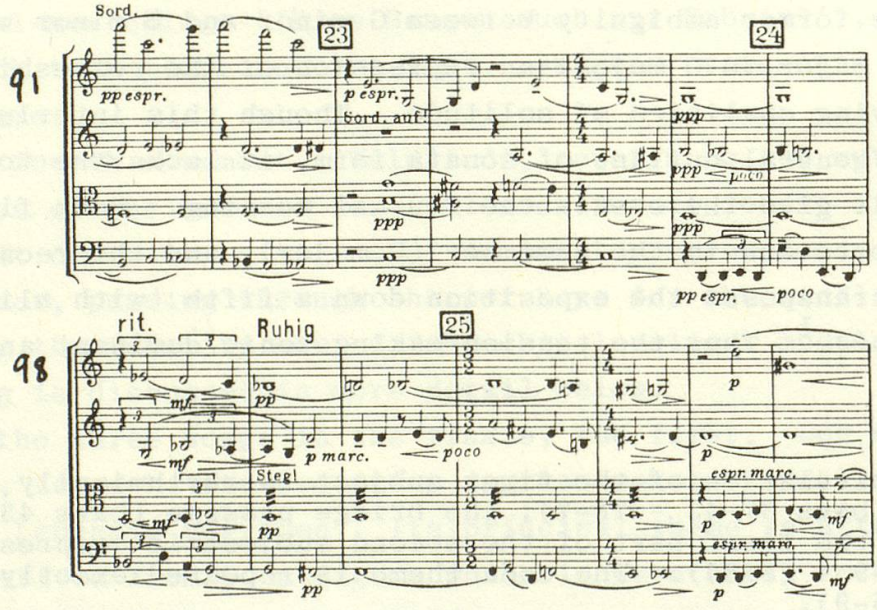
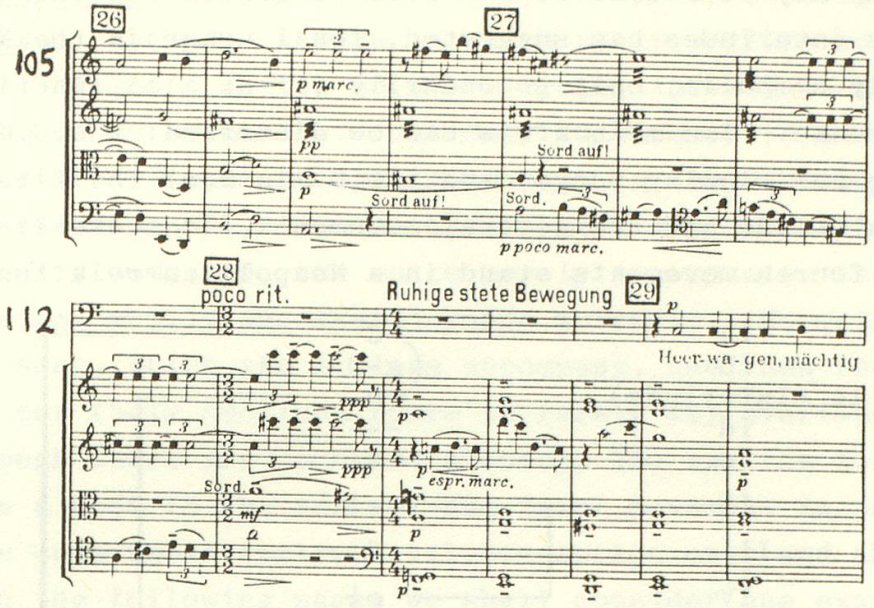
For the first time in the movement Schoeck gives us a lyrical vocal melody in a major key; but both are deposed as the poet's self-questionings intensify. Finally, as he queries the value even of these soul-searchings ('Dies Bangen auch nur Schein?'), the music moves back to D minor for the last, resigned statements of the rondo theme.

The fourth movement, 'Waldlied', reverts to the muted sonorities of the scherzo for its evocation of forest stillness. Tonally it describes a series of dominant progressions, beginning in E minor, passing through sharper keys for the middle verses and regaining the tonic by one of Schoeck's loveliest modulations. This song is discussed in more detail below.

Of the three songs in the finale, the first, 'Der einsame Trinker', is weak, its hectoring aggressiveness recalling the last pages of Lebendig begraben. Its principal theme is a ten-note figure derived from C, a figure which is eventually to become the first subject of the new interlude:

This interlude is the counterpart of the one in the first movement, with which it is plainly intended to contrast. Tranquil and diatonic where the other was anguished and chromatic, it balances the former ambiguity between G minor and D minor with a move from D major to G major: an expression of the refreshing, strength-giving qualities of solitude. Though this interlude, too, follows the general outline of sonata form, it lacks the tonal tensions that give the events their usual meaning. Both first and second subjects are in the same key (D major), and the recapitulation merely transposes the exposition down a fifth (with slight modifications).[1] Thus the tension-making tonic/dominant antithesis

1) The recapitulation of the first subject is rhythmically compressed (bars 37-43 = 73-7); the bridge passage (bars 43-52) is cut; and the first part of the second subject is compressed (bars 53-9 = 78-84). The coda theme is repeated exactly (bars 60-3 = 85-9).

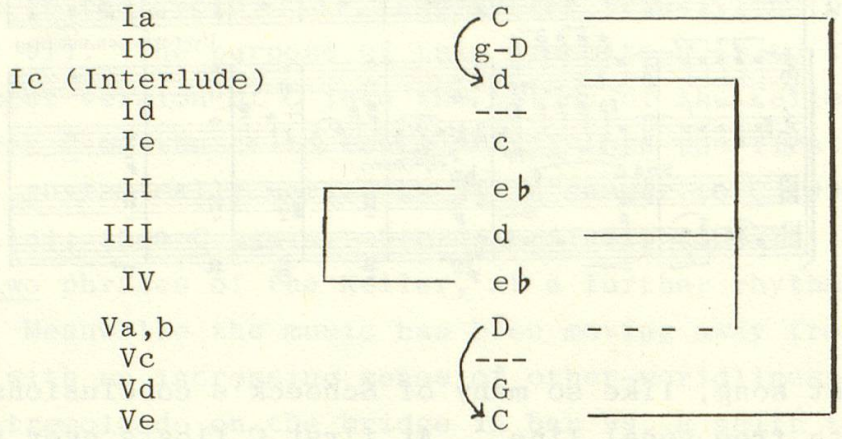
is eliminated, while the complementary process of relaxation is extended over the recapitulation as a whole. To remove all vestiges of conflict the development section is omitted, and in its place we have Lenau's epigrammatic 'Impromptu' - an island of gentle chromaticism before the diatonicism of the reprise.

When the recapitulation is over, a sudden dissonance causes the music to break off. A reminiscence of B, from the only optimistic song in the cycle (Ia), begins the transition to the final number (bar 91). The purpose of this transition is to transform the fifth-movement version of C into the melody of the Keller setting. First we hear C on the cello (bars 96-8); then the first phrase of the Keller, rhythmically varied as if in answer to C (99-102, second violin); then C again, more assertively (103-7); and finally the first two phrases of the Keller, at a further rhythmic remove (107-113). Meanwhile the music has been moving away from G major towards A, with an increasing sense of other-worldliness about the textures - tremolando on the bridge in bar 99, a shift to a higher register in 113. The effect of these two processes is contradictory: the C major of bar 114 comes as a shock (the instruments sound almost like brass here), but the resumption of C in the second violin ensures continuity with what has gone before:

The last song, like so many of Schoeck's conclusions, is a chaconne with free vocal line.[1] At first C floats over the texture like a wraith; later the accompaniment is confined to chords. This change to homophony is one aspect of a general simplification of style - others are the extreme diatonicism and the use of a self-repeating form - which, together with the sound of the muted strings, gives the ending its peculiar austerity. Some of Schoeck's spacings here recall Stravinsky.[2]

1) See Schuh, 'Die Schlussgesänge in Othmar Schoecks "Notturno" und "Nachhall"'.

2) In the recording bars 162-5 are omitted. This is only the most notable of a whole series of discrepancies between record, score and parts, not all of which are easily resolved:
I, 221: violin 1 C♮ in parts; score C♭ (C♭ obviously correct);
II, 100, 207: possible misprint in viola (see p. 314n.);
V, 73: first two quavers of viola's triplet E and D, not C and B (the parts share this error with the score, but the record puts it right);
V, 92 (see example above): the most problematical discrepancy at all. For its second minim, violin 1 has F in the score, making the phrase an exact reminiscence of B as it appears in the first movement. But the parts have D, and this is what is played on the record. Schoeck was quite capable of varying a reminiscence (cf. Wandersprüche!), but this is usually happened as

And the key of course is a 'white' C major. As the treatment of the interludes has suggested, tonal usage in the Notturno is primarily symbolic, only secondarily (if at all) functional in a classical sense. Two main areas can be discerned: the C major of the opening and closing songs, and the D minor of the first-movement interlude and the central movement. To these last the second and fourth movements stand in a Neapolitan relationship:



After the first song, C major gives way to what might be called the keys of loneliness, G minor and D minor, and the C minor of the fourth song is felt more as a further darkening than as a return to the spirit of the opening, despite the cross-references. D minor is resumed in the third movement (loneliness at its most introspective) and converted to D major in the fifth (loneliness at its most serene). Only at the very end is C major restored, the progression C-G-D now being reversed. In these terms the poet's loneliness might almost be defined as a loss of C major, which tonality he spends the rest of the work trying to recover - a last, and perhaps not altogether tendentious, interpretation of the line 'der immer naht, ihr immer doch zu fehlen'.

*

part of a gradual progression away from the original form. Here the (varied?) reminiscence is followed by an exact reminiscence in C major, suggesting that F is, after all, the right note. However, the D sounds more characteristic in the context than F.

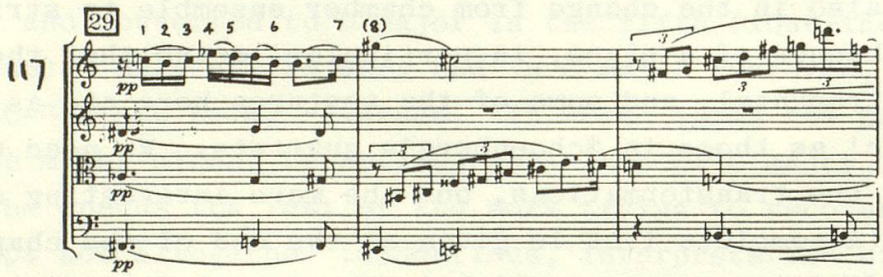
The Notturno, it has been stated, is one of Schoeck's 'instrumental' cycles - a work in which he reconciles vocal and instrumental forms - and in no other cycle, indeed, is the instrumental element so prominent. But only twice does this reconciliation take place within a single movement: in the scherzo, where the vocal and instrumental sections are largely kept separate (when they are eventually combined, the voice merely accompanies the strings), and in the not wholly successful rondo movement. Normally the voice sings its song, which the strings accompany, and then the strings take over for their section; there is rarely any overlapping of forms, though there are cross-references. The way the fourth song is used as a coda to the rest of the first movement is perhaps the closest we come to an instrumental conception over and above the vocal. In the following pages we shall consider one example of each type.

For our 'instrumental' example we return to the first movement interlude, already discussed at length. Schoeck's method here is essentially the same as that used in Wandersprüche - namely, thematic transformation - only much more vigorous and concentrated (there are more than forty appearances of the theme within 110 bars, as compared to thirty-odd in almost twice that number). The reason for the difference lies of course in the difference of character between the works, but also in the change from chamber ensemble to string quartet. The absence of a piano, in particular, means that the writing is more contrapuntal, and some of the textures here are as rigorously 'thematic' as those in Schoenberg's quartets. We need not go through all the transformations, but the more interesting should be examined. (A complete list is given at the end of the chapter.)

The definitive version, which is the interlude's first subject, appears in bars 90-1 (see p. 309). It is shorter then the Wandersprüche theme - eight notes as opposed to thirteen - and the predominance of semitones means it can be absorbed into the texture more easily than a theme built on triads (semitones make for lots of passing notes). The doubling in thirds and sixths is important: much of the texture is based on such doublings, which in combination with the semitones give the music its anguished, melancholy character (cf. bars 106-7, 126-7, 141-2 and 144ff.).

In bars 95-6 (quoted on p. 309) the diminution of the theme in violin 1 causes the stress to fall on the penultimate note instead of the last, reversing the cadence from imperfect to perfect. The impetus set up by the descending lines, however, produces a sequence, and the effect of the cadence is cancelled out.

In bar 104 the first five notes of the theme, now augmented, are doubled in diminished chords rather than in 6/3s, a dominant pedal adding to the tension. Then in bars 107-8 - the 'subdominant' version mentioned on p. 308 - the same five notes are developed in what might be another quotation of the Venus theme.

In bars 109 and 110, the theme is absorbed into an inner part, with the accent falling on the fourth note and the fifth and sixth notes treated as passing. When a little later the theme is taken up by the second violin (bar 116, quoted on p. 310), the accent is on the fifth note, which presses dissonantly against the rest of the harmony. The version which follows in the first violin, by contrast, is one of the mildest so far, the first, third, fourth and seventh notes being consonant with the accompanying chord and the others being treated as neighbours:

In this example the theme's final interval - the descending fourth C-G - is converted into a rising sixth (G♯ = A♭). Three bars later (bar 120) the rising third between the third and fourth notes is replaced by the same interval, and in bar 125 the interval

expands to a ninth - a modification which anticipates the fifth movement (cf. p. 317). In bar 125, as in the fifth movement, the theme gravitates around the interval of an octave, this interval usually obtaining between the first and fifth notes (in bar 125 it lies between the third and fifth, the others acting as neighbours). This octave version lends itself naturally to canon, as the finale shows.

Some versions from the interlude's development section are quoted on p. 310. That presented in bar 149 is the most immediately striking, with its bold reversal of stresses (emphasised by the dissonance on the second quaver) and its new first note. But just as interesting is the version in the previous bar. Here the original intervals are retained, but the phrase begins on the mediant instead of the tonic, giving the music a 'bluesy' flavour which the agitated version quickly stamps out.

The version, or double version, which introduces the recapitulation has already been discussed, and suffice it to note the fragment now accompanying the D minor theme. In bar 174 the 'subdominant' version appears with its texture inverted, and in 177ff. another version based on the interval of a ninth. The remaining statements follow their counterparts in the exposition with slight modification. The fragmentary final statements have already been quoted.

The theme undergoes far fewer transformations in the finale. The example on p. 317 shows the essential changes, the first three notes inflecting upwards rather than downwards and the theme as a whole gravitating around an octave as described. The two added notes are the sixth and seventh, the lower echo of the previous pair. This version goes through the first song virtually unaltered, at first interjecting itself between phrases like the Wandersprüche theme, and then harmonising itself in chords (bar 20ff.). During the subsequent interlude Schoeck more or less takes the theme apart, first reducing it to octaves and tones (bars 43-4), then destroying it rhythmically (bar 47ff.), and finally reducing it to a single tone (bar 52). After that he puts it back together again, starting with the tone, then adding a sixth (bar 53), and finally reverting to the original ninth (bar 57). Thus restored, the theme stays

virtually intact for the rest of the movement, though we have seen how Schoeck tries to relate it to the melody of the final song.

Schoeck's thematic technique in the Notturno is not more ingenious than that in Wandersprüche, and a good deal less thoroughgoing. There are few of the more remote transformations such as we find in that work - transformations which derive from a variety of sources - and the rhythmic treatment is mostly straightforward. These differences, like the difference in text-ture, have to do with the work's character: obviously a vigorous, driving quality is needed in the first movement, and the outlines must be firm, if only to mislead. What gives the transformation a significance lacking in the earlier cycle - and, in my view, puts the work on a higher level - is the way in which they permeate the texture and, indeed, provide the chief source of impulse. In the first movement interlude, for example, they supply almost all the material (even the second subject), govern the direction of nearly every phrase and, ultimately, control the total structure as well. The climactic concentration of themes by means of which Schoeck is able to effect his false reprise is made possible through the medium of thematic transformation. Only in the first song of the finale are the transformations merely decorative, interrupting the phrases but not themselves determining where the phrases go.

This is of course because the song uses words. As soon as a text is added - at least, in music where the text counts for as much as it does in Schoeck - the purely musical development, however important, takes second place to the expression of words. Perhaps no real synthesis of vocal and instrumental forms is possible: one or the other is bound to dominate. In our vocal example, at any rate - the song which constitutes Schoeck's miniature fourth movement - the emphasis is firmly on the words. By this I mean that, though the music has a logic which could conceivably be described without reference to the text, all the finer points of construction arise from the word-setting. The whole style, in fact, is quite different from that of the instrumental sections - subtle, ambiguous, and full of 'arbitrary' little evasions and variations.

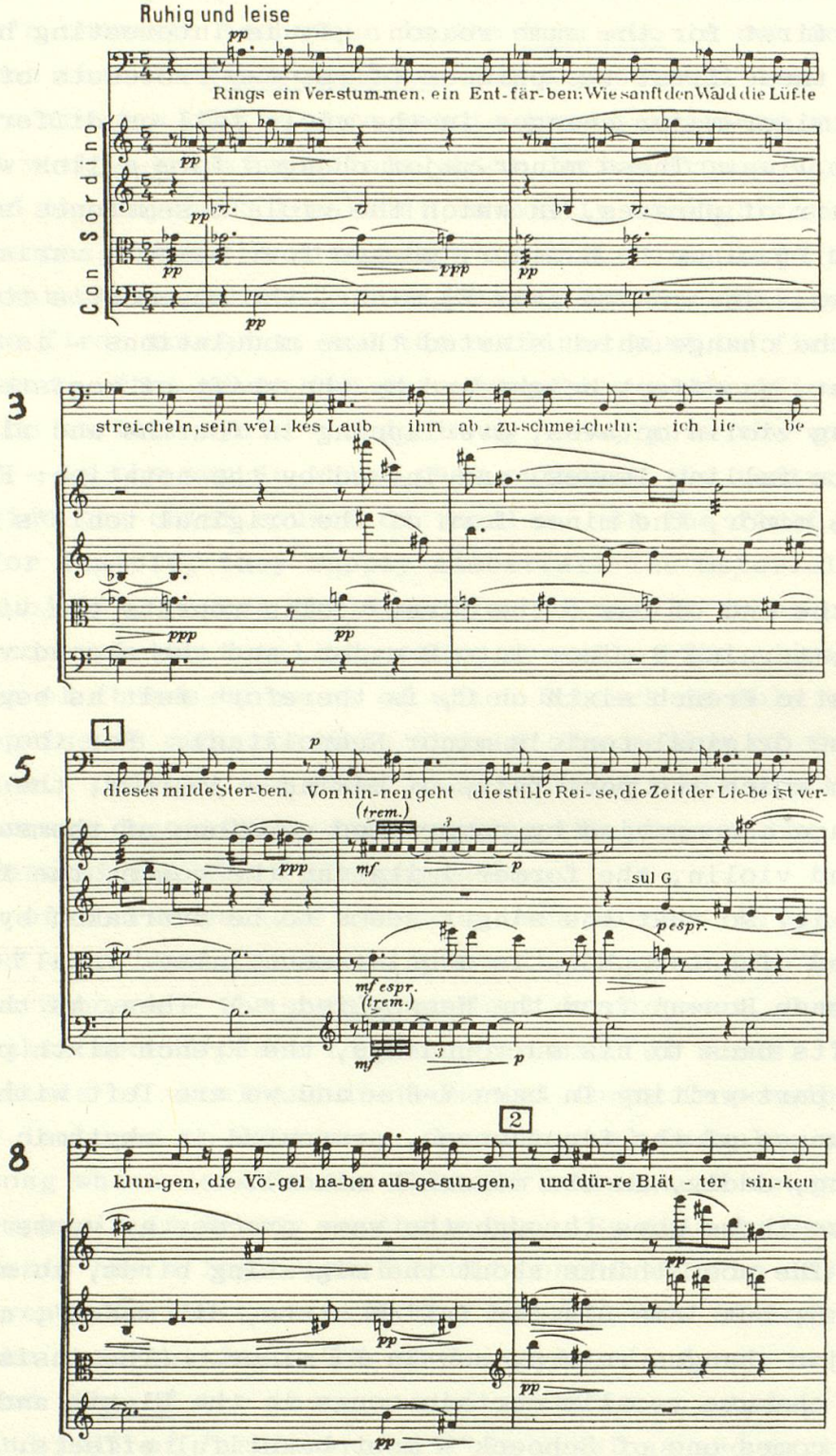
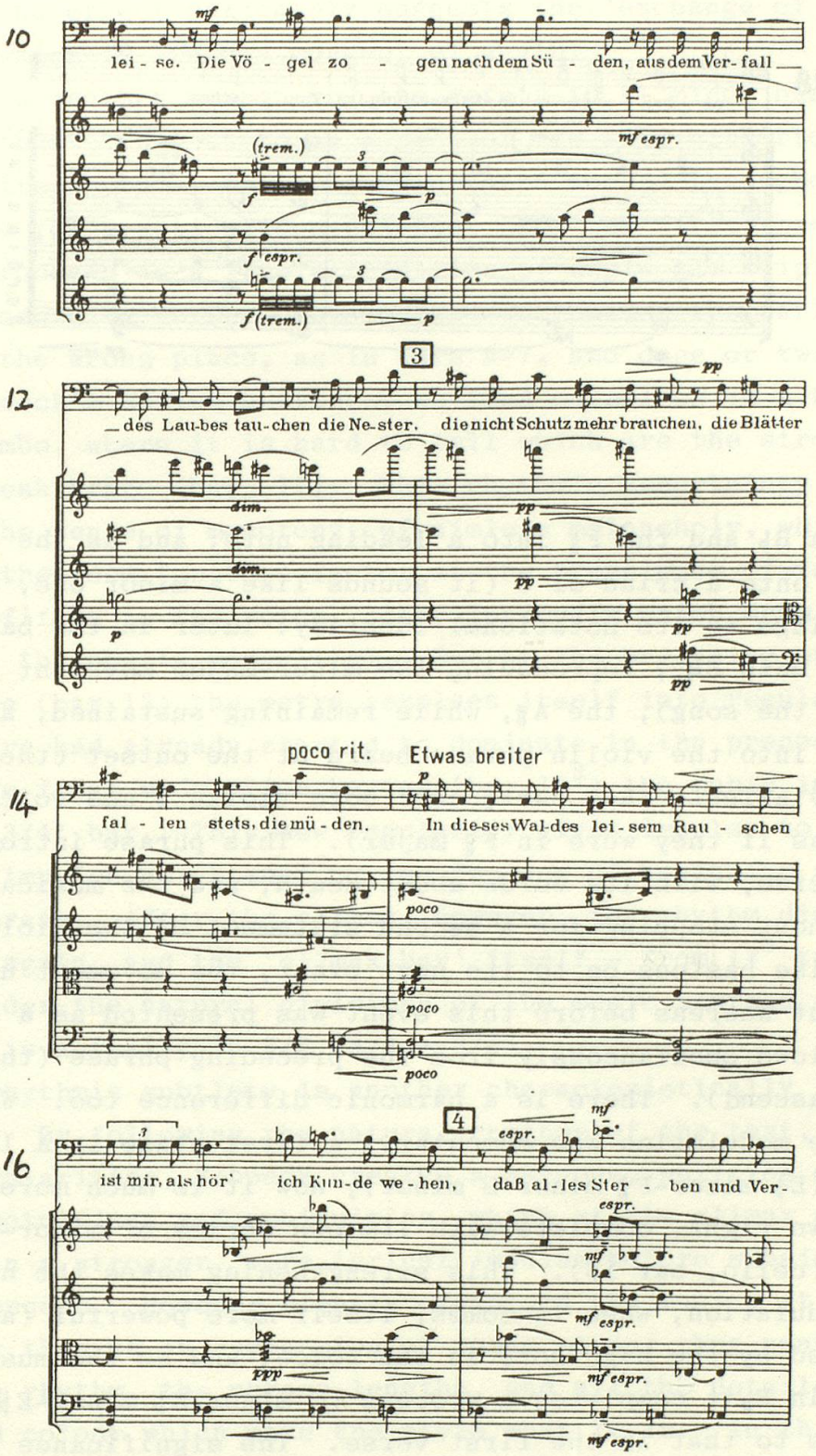
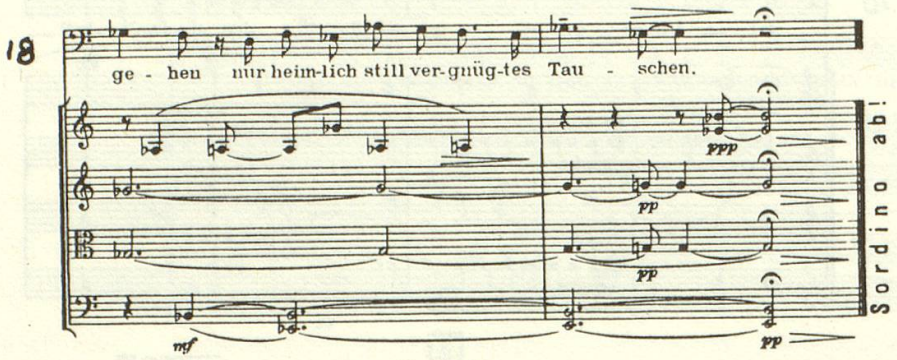
In the first verse, for example - Lenau's description of a wood in autumn - there is no reason why the violin should repeat part of

its opening phrase in longer note values, except to accommodate the extra syllables in the voice. The second E♭ major chord is longer than the first for the same reason. It is interesting how Schoeck overlaps these first two phrases (first two crotchets of bar 2), so that the minor-major changes in the viola fall on different parts of the vocal line. These minor-major changes form a link with the second pair of phrases, in which the viola's semitones support a move from F♯ minor to B minor, phrase four being a variation of phrase two. The change from E♭ minor, the movement's tonic, to F♯ minor - the change which started these modulations - is presented as a contrast, an effect heightened by the shift of register (the descending violin octaves, overlapping in fourths and fifths, illustrate falling leaves) and indeed by the notation: F♯ minor is really G♭ minor, the minor form of the original tonic's relative major.

At the end of bar 5 the first violin repeats the viola's rising semitone, turning B minor into B major, and the second verse, with its emphatic French sixth on C, is therefore felt as beginning in E minor (the original tonic's minor Neapolitan). For the first two lines, in which the poet talks of making a journey, the singer's phrases are accompanied by compressed versions of themselves in viola and second violin, the former imitating the voice, the latter anticipating it, so that the singer seems to be overtaken by the strings. (This kind of heterophony is a quintessentially 'vocal' effect - cf. 'Verwelkende Rosen' from the Hesse-Lieder.) Then, as the poet's mind drifts back to his surroundings, the French sixth peters out - note the part-writing in bars 7-8 - and we are left with the minor-major changes of the first verse, presented in rhythmic variation and ending, oddly, in the minor (B minor).

Verse three goes through the same process as verse two a fifth higher. The poet thinks about the migrating birds, to a French sixth on G; but 'die Blätter fallen stets, die müden', and the minor-major changes return, now in F♯ minor. (The insistent nature of these changes recalls certain songs in the Elegie and Gaselen.)

Now comes one of Schoeck's most beautiful effects. As the voice cadences on F♯, the minor-major alternation having settled in the major, the harmony is undercut by a cello D. This turns the


Ruhig und leise
Rings ein Ver-stum-men, ein Ent-fär-ben: Wie sanft den Wald die Lüf-te
Con Sordino
3
strei-cheln, sein wel-kes Laub ihm ab-zu-schmei-cheln; ich lie-be
5
1
dieses milde Ster-ben. Von hin-nen geht die stil-le Rei-se, die Zeit der Lie-be ist ver-
(trem.)
sul G
mf espr.
(trem.)
8
2
klun-gen, die Vö-gel ha-ben aus-ge-sun-gen, und dür-re Blät-ter sin-ken

10
mf
lei - se. Die Vö - gel zo - gen nach dem Sü - den, aus dem Ver- fall
(trem.)
f
p
mf espr.
f espr.
f (trem.)
p
3
12
pp
des Lau-bes tau-chen die Ne-ster. die nicht Schutz mehr brauchen, die Blät-ter
dim.
pp
p
poco rit.
Etwas breiter
14
p
fal - len stets, die mü - den. In die-ses Wal-des lei-sem Rau - schen
poco
4
16
espr.
mf
ist mir, als hör' ich Kun-de we - hen, daß al - les Ster - ben und Ver -
ppp
mf espr.

A♯ into a B♭ and the F♯ into a leading note; and as the chord resolves onto a triad of G (it sounds like a minor one, but the A♯ still clings to its notational identity: later in the bar the note resolves onto B♮, reproducing the minor-major movement which has pervaded the song), the A♯, while remaining sustained, also resolves into the violin phrase heard at the outset (the notational ambiguity affects this part, too: both violin 1 and voice are notated as if they were in F♯ major). This phrase introduces the fourth verse, with its words about death, and the musical reprise.

Without stopping for a second statement of the violin phrase, the reprise hastens on to its next event, the movement up a minor third; but whereas before this event was presented as a contrast, now it flows spontaneously from the preceding phrase (this time the violins ascend). There is a harmonic difference too. Whereas in bar 3 the modulation was momentary, a first stage in a larger process (E♭ minor-F♯ minor-B minor), now it is much more an event in its own right, complete with its own series of minor-major changes (cello, bar 16). This strengthening makes the next and final modulation, when it comes, itself more powerful (an effect heightened by the high note in the voice; and as the music cadences quietly in E♭it completes a process (G minor-B♭ minor-E♭ minor) analogous to that in the first verse. The significance of the minor-major changes is revealed in the last bar: as a setting of

the word 'Tauschen' (and doubled in octaves, for the only time in the song), the effect delicately suggests the 'exchange of condition' which is Lenau's concept of death.

There is another reason why the return to E♭ minor has such power, and this brings us to an aspect of the song hitherto undiscussed: its rhythm. The song is notated in 5/4 throughout, but this must be for practical convenience. For the first three verses the music proceeds in a free alternation of duple and triple patterns, according to the declamation. Sometimes the barlines seem to fall in the wrong place, as in bars 6-7, and once or twice, as in some of Schoeck's series settings, we find ourselves in a kind of rhythmic limbo, where it is hard to tell which are the strong and which the weak beats (bar 11). This rhythmic uncertainty helps to establish the sense of monotony, of aimless melancholy, which is so crucial to the poem (another factor is the prevalence of falling thirds and fifths in the voice, heavy intervals which seem to measure out the poet's mortality). But at the beginning of the fourth verse (bar 15) the metre resolves itself into regular threes - triplet metre had already started to dominate in the preceding bars - and when the final modulation begins (bar 17^3) the music is entering its fifth '3/4' bar. This new regularity gives impulse to the climax, an impulse heightened by the feeling of beginning a second four-bar phrase. After the climax, however, the rhythm disintegrates again, and the 'climax bar' itself - from 17^3 to 18^2, if we consider the natural divisions of the music instead of the barlines - is actually in 5/4 (3/4 + 2/4).

This rhythmic subtlety is another characteristically 'vocal' phenomenon. By following the natural rhythms of the text, with all their irregularities, Schoeck creates a nervous, shifting style, full of fluctuations and ambiguities, which at the climax gathers itself up in a stronger, more lyrical impulse before subsiding back into nervousness. However tightly organised the music, it makes no sense other than as an expression of these words; they control the melody, the rhythm, the phrase-lengths, and all the details of harmony and colour which make the style what it is. In this the song is typical of its composer, as it is in its mood. If one had to choose one song, out of all his output, which epitomised those

qualities mentioned in the introduction to this book as being central to his art, it would probably be this.

Schoeck considered the Notturno one of his most important works.[1] It is easy to agree with him. He valued it as a statement of his philosophy, an expression of the loneliness which oppressed him during the 1930s and after. We are more likely to value it for its musical qualities - its vigour of invention, its finely sustained contrapuntal writing and its vivid evocation of mood. It is a curious fact with Schoeck, but a fact nevertheless, that the more personal a meaning a work had for him, the more impressive the artistic results - witness the Elegie, Lebendig begraben and Penthesilea. This is not to say that feelings are a guarantee of quality, or that Schoeck was not always equally sincere. It is rather that the intensity of the emotion involved in certain works was somehow reflected in an extra sharpness of musical material - a sharpness which made all the difference between his distinctive, individual writing and his derivative, routine stuff, as the following chapters will show.

For there is a definite sense of culmination about the Notturno. It is of course Schoeck's last 'instrumental' cycle, and the last to use thematic transformation as a leading principle. But is is also the last of the works belonging to the 'brilliant' period 1920-33, and though Schoeck still had many good songs in him, he was never again to write such an impressive work on the large scale. And it is highly impressive: it won the admiration of Alban Berg.[2]

1) G p. 75.
2) Ibid., p. 76.

VARIANTS OF C

First movement

bar

Preparations:

5	cello
23-5	cello (preparing 26)
48-50	cello Ds
62-6	pedal D
67	cello
73	cello
86	cello

Definitive Statement:

90	violins

Subsequent Statements:

95	violin 1
97	cello
98	cello
102	violin 1 (inverted)
104	violin 1
107	violin 1
109	viola
110	viola
116	violin 2
117	violin 1
120	violin 2
123	violin 1
125	viola
130	viola
132	cello
134	cello
136	viola
138	cello
140	violin 2
141	violin 2
143	violin 1 (cf. 124)
144	violin 1
146	violin 2
148	violin 1
149	violin 1
152	violin 2
"	viola and cello
155	violins (cf. 128-9, 133)
159	cello
161	violin 1 and cello
162	viola
164	all strings
171	cello
174	viola and cello
177	violins (cf. 125, 155)
180	cello
183	cello
186	violin 1
187	viola
190	viola
195	violin 2
198	violin 1 (outline)
200	cello
229	violin 2
233	violin 1
235ff.	viola
268	violin 1 (outline)

Fifth movement

1	all strings	37	viola
5	viola	40	cello
9	violin 1	41ff.	all strings
13	violin 2	67	cello
14	violin 1	73ff.	all strings
16	cello	88	violin 2
18	violins (chords)	96	cello
21	" "	99	violin 2 (= melody of final song)
22	" "	103	viola and cello
23	" "	114ff.	violin 2
32	violin 1		

CHAPTER 9

WANDSBECKER LIEDERBUCH

After the Notturno Schoeck composed virtually no songs for three years, during which time he wrote his most lyrical opera, Massimilla Doni. When the song cycle attracted him again it was in the form of the Wolfian Liederbuch, the more or less miscellaneous songbook on texts by a single poet. Of his eight remaining cycles five are in this genre. (The exceptions are Spielmannsweisen and Befreite Sehnsucht, both short continuous cycles, and Nachhall, a small collection on the lines of the Hesse-Lieder.)

The change is not without significance. It indicates a more objective attitude on the composer's part towards his music, which is not to say that it ceases to express his feelings - it could never do that - but that his themes tend to be of a rather less personal kind (Schoeck was now fifty). His concern is more than ever with the permanent things of life - art, nature, religious belief - and there is a shift of emphasis from the composer's personality to that of his poets, as if, having previously used them to draw attention to himself, he wished now to repay them by disinterested tribute. The form of this tribute is the songbook, a musical anthology designed to cover every important aspect of the poet's work. Self-expression is achieved through the arrangement of the poems and through the individual setting rather than through a single grand theme.

According to Corrodi it was Schoeck's experience of family life, and in particular the birth of his daughter, that saw him through his depression in the 1930s. Where he had once railed against marriage, he now recommended it for everyone, saying,

'He who has never had a child has not fully lived.'[1] In the 'blind, uninhibited trust which a little child puts in its parents' he saw a symbol of man's faith in his Creator, a kind of faith which adults all too often lack. Childlike faith and a gratitude for the good things in life - these, for Schoeck, were the true basis of religious belief.[2] Some of these feelings are present in his songbook to poems by Matthias Claudius, the Wandsbecker Liederbuch,[3] completed in 1937.

Claudius (1740-1815),[4] perhaps best known to musicians as the author of 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' and other poems set by Schubert, was born in Schleswig Holstein and regarded himself as the 'German Dane' among his contemporaries. The village newspaper which he founded in 1771, the Wandsbecker Bote, attracted contributors of the stature of Goethe, and Claudius himself wrote for it countless poems, articles and reviews. His characteristic style is a mixture of cheerfulness, simplicity and piety, and Schoeck, who had admired such qualities in other poets, responded to it with enthusiasm.[5] There are seventeen settings in his songbook - not a large number, but the size of the songbook, like that of the early collections, increases. The songs may be divided between two singers for performance, and it was in this form that on 25 November 1938 the work had its first public hearing. The singers were Ria Ginster and Hermann Schey; Schoeck accompanied.

The quintessential Claudius is found in the poem entitled 'Motett' (Schoeck uses only the first stanza and calls it 'Spruch'):

Der Mensch lebt und bestehet
nur eine kleine Zeit,
und alle Welt vergehet
mit ihrer Herrlichkeit.
Es ist nur Einer ewig und an allen Enden,
und wir in seinen Händen.

1) OS p. 222.

2) G pp. 94, 149, 168.

3) See OS pp. 279-80, 290-6; V pp. 154-9; G p. 154; S pp. 44-5; Mohr, op.cit., pp. 90-1. Score by U.E. (1937/65).

4) Sämtliche Werke, ed. W. Pfeffer-Belli and H. Platschek (Munich, 1968).

5) See G p. 151.

The confidence of tone and the simplicity of language chime in naturally with the idea that 'we are in His hands'. Claudius's writing always verges on this strain. His famous 'Abendlied' ends with a prayer, and 'Die Sternseherin Lise' ('Die Sternseherin' in Schoeck) invokes the majesty of the stars as an ideal to which nothing on earth can compare. The remaining poems in Schoeck's selection present a contrast between the world of love and nature and the world of men. 'Die Natur' (original title 'Im Mai') is a tribute to nature's beauties; 'Ein Wiegenlied, bei Mondschein zu singen' is a lullaby. 'Die Römer', on the other hand, satirically reviews the history of the human race, and 'Der Krieg' (original title 'Kriegslied') paints the terrors of war.

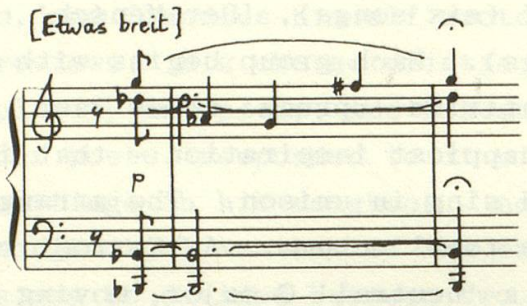
Schoeck arranges his songs in four groups: 'Die Liebe' (four songs), 'Die Natur' (six songs), 'Der Mensch' (five songs) and 'Der Tod' (two songs). Each group begins with a song of the same title. The song entitled 'Spruch' comes last, and here Schoeck directs - not his happiest inspiration - that if two singers are present they should sing in unison. The arrangement of the poems is supported by the tonal scheme. As Corrodi remarks, the work begins and ends in a 'neutral' C major, moving to the brighter sharp keys for the group about nature and to the darker flat keys for the group about man[1] - an interpretation which is confirmed by the fact that all but two of the songs were originally in a different key and only later transposed to their present pitch.[2]

The idea of ending a cycle with a Spruch, or aphorism, is also found in the Sechs Lieder nach Gedichten von Eichendorff und Mörike, Op. 51, published in 1946. There the aphorism is about art and the connoisseur, and the song was in fact a homage to Schoeck's former patron, Werner Reinhart. There is another Spruch in Der Sänger, this time placed two songs before the end, though the final song also has an aphoristic quality. The idea is the opposite of that found in such works as the Notturno - a brusque rounding-off instead of a slow dying away - and it

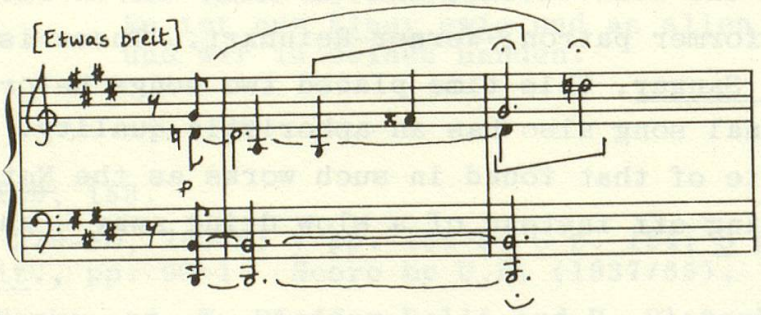
1) OS p. 291.
2) See G p. 154. The original keys are given in V.

exemplifies the difference in character between the songbooks and the cycles.

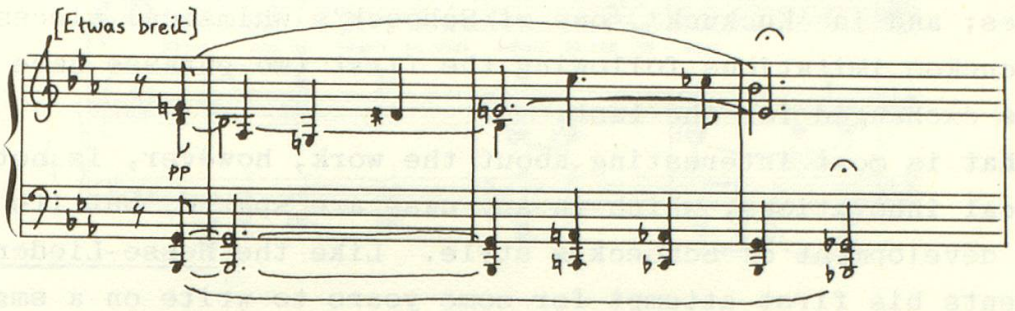
There are no thematic connections in the Wandsbecker Liederbuch, but after the first song in each group we find an enigmatic little interlude which serves to modulate to the key of the next number. Schoeck's treatment of these interludes is a minor example of his variation technique - variation of the 'additive' kind, as described in connection with 'Stille Sicherheit' from the Elegie, or the second song of Wanderung im Gebirge. The first interlude presents a five-note figure - essentially an elaboration of the note G - over a double pedal:



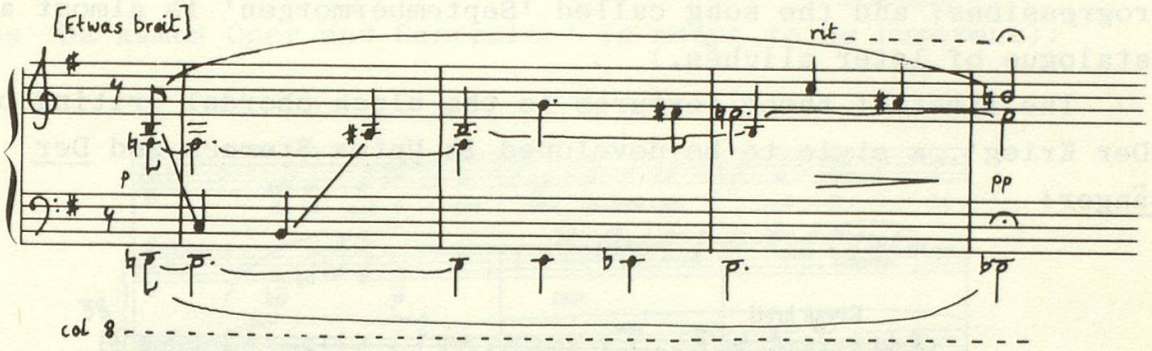
The second interlude, transposition aside, extends this figure by taking the inner part up an octave in the last bar (there is also a suggestion of canon):



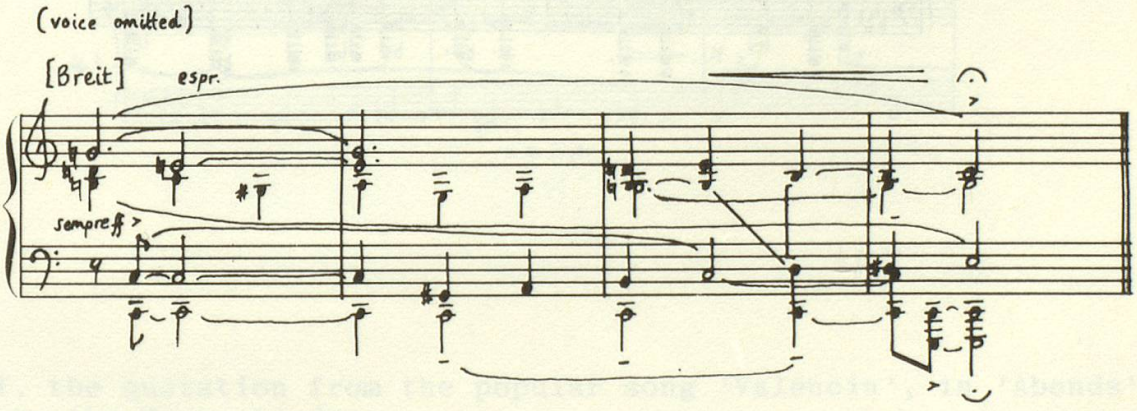
The third interlude adds another two notes to the inner part and decorates the bass, thus extending the figure to three bars:



The fourth interlude extends the figure to four bars by decorating the top part. By now the original five notes have grown to eleven:

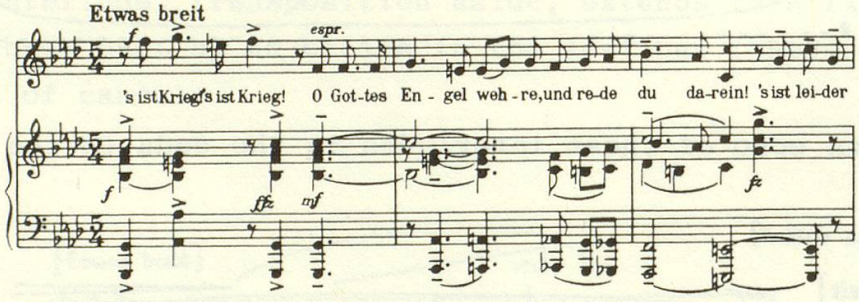
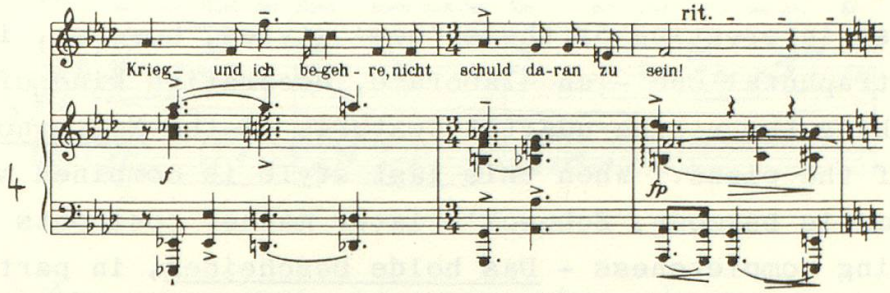
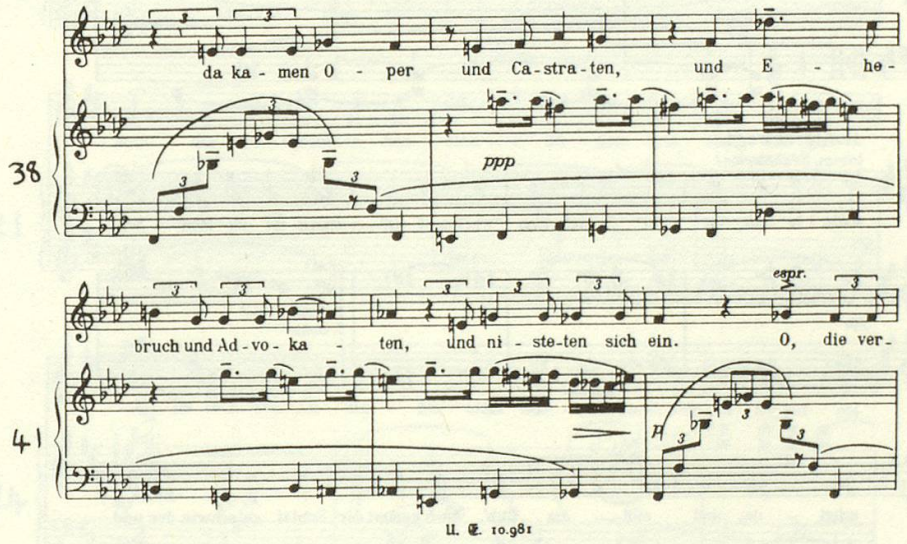


There is an echo of these interludes in the coda to the final song:



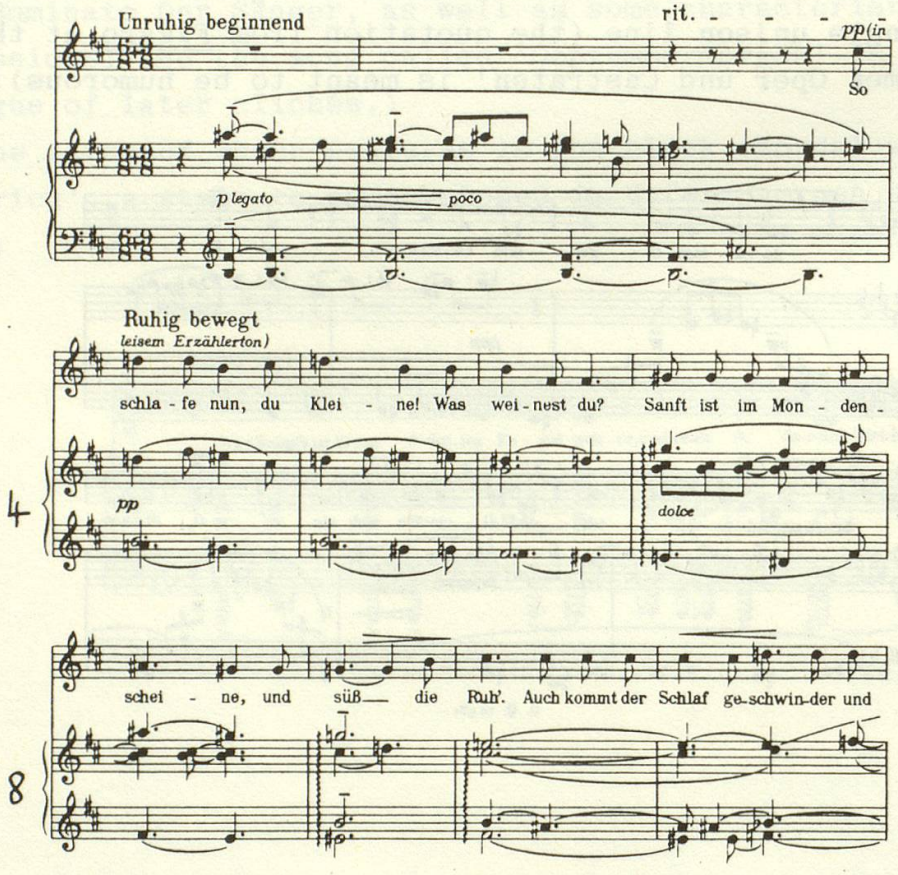
Several songs hint at a rehabilitation of the series technique. In 'Phidile' the changes in texture which accompany each appearance of the theme lead to curious octave displacements (cf. bars 1 and 13); in 'Die Natur' the first phrase is repeated with different stresses; and in 'Kuckuck', one of Schoeck's whimsical pieces, the naive cuckoo imitations following the first two phrases have their rhythms exchanged for the last.

What is most interesting about the work, however, is not its technical innovations, which in any case are sparse, but its place in the development of Schoeck's style. Like the Hesse-Lieder, it represents his first attempt for some years to write on a small scale, and several types of texture which are to become important later are introduced or revived. (Here again we must refer to the Sechs Lieder, in some ways a companion volume. The Spruch already mentioned establishes, or reaffirms, the recitative-like style which is to dominate Der Sänger, as well as some characteristic Neapolitan progressions; and the song called 'Septembermorgen' is almost a catalogue of later clichés.)

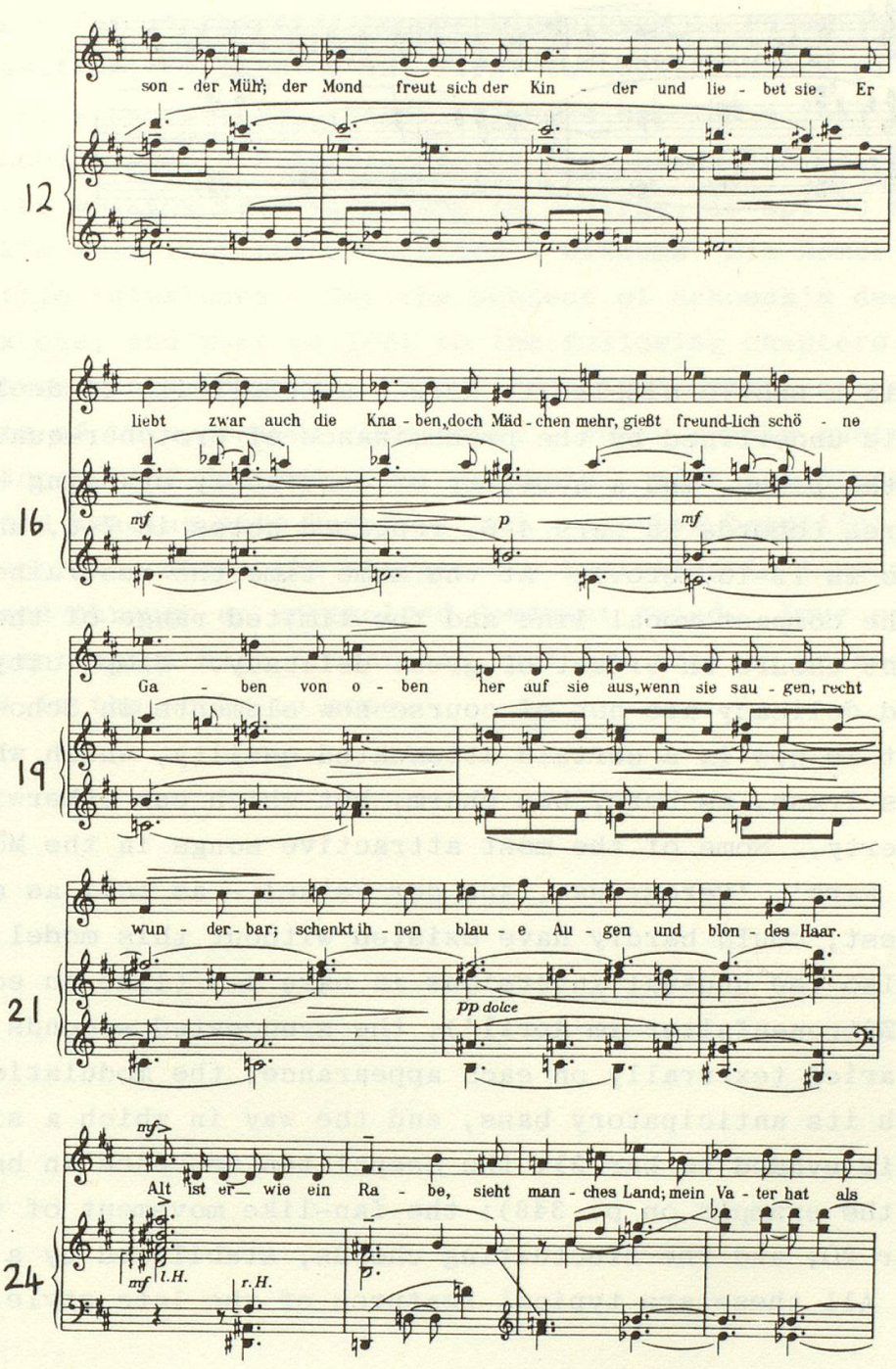
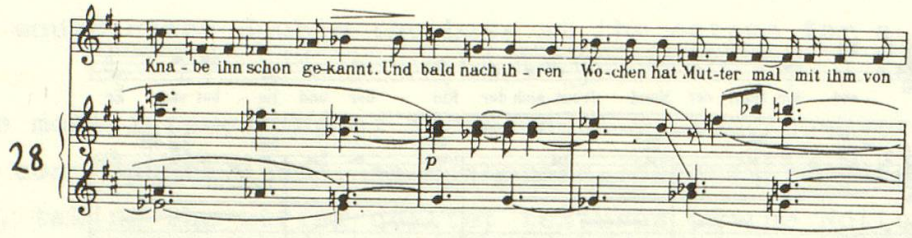
The first of these textures is the block chordal writing of 'Der Krieg', a style to be developed in Unter Sternen and Der Sänger:

At the other extreme, there is the spare linear writing of 'Die Römer', the usual three parts now reduced to two and sometimes even to a single unison line (the quotation from Figaro at the words 'Da kamen Oper und Castraten' is meant to be humorous):[1]

1) cf. the quotation from the popular song 'Valencia', in 'Abends' from the Hesse-Lieder.

Again it is Der Sänger, as well as certain things in the later songbooks, that is suggested here. In performing such passages Schoeck would often double the bass at the octave for a fuller sound.[1]

The most interesting of these 'new' styles, however, is another contrapuntal one - an elaborate, decorative kind of part-writing, taking the string quartet textures of the Notturno into the realm of the piano. When this last style is combined with a mild chromatic harmony, Schoeck's later manner confronts us in astonishing completeness - Das holde Bescheiden, in particular, is anticipated again and again. And just as many of his mature characteristics are found in the early 'Waldeinsamkeit', so there is one song in particular which seems like a microcosm of all the music to come - 'Ein Wiegenlied, bei Mondschein zu singen':



1) G p. 19.


12
son - der Müh; der Mond freut sich der Kin - der und lie - bet sie. Er
16
liebt zwar auch die Kna - ben, doch Mäd - chen mehr, gießt freund-lich schö - ne
mf
p
mf
19
Ga - ben von o - ben her auf sie aus, wenn sie sau - gen, recht
21
wun - der - bar; schenkt ih - nen blau - e Au - gen und blon - des Haar.
pp dolce
24
mf
Alt ist er wie ein Ra - be, sieht man - ches Land; mein Va - ter hat als
mf l.H.
r.H.

There is a subtle simplicity here - a simplicity of declamation which is underlined by the predominance of crotcher-quaver rhythms in the piano, and a subtlety of constantly changing keyboard textures (chords in bars 4-6, repeated notes in 7-8, undulating quavers in 12-15, etc.). At the same time the restrained dynamics, the compact vocal line and the limited range of the accompaniment ensure an effect of great delicacy. Simplicity, subtlety and delicacy are not of course new elements in Schoeck's music. What is new is a certain attenuated quality, which when the invention is fresh, as here, has charm, but which can otherwise lead to poverty. Some of the most attractive songs in the Mörike cycle - 'Im Park', 'Peregrina', Aus der Ferne' - as well as some of the poorest, could hardly have existed without this model.

Note also the unusual inversions in bars 4-5 (like an echo of Wolf's 'Zitronenfalter im April'); the syncopated seconds in bars 7-8, varied texturally on each appearance; the modulation in bar 11, with its anticipatory bass, and the way in which a similar modulation is evaded in bar 21; the Neapolitan sequence in bars 16-17 (cf. the example on p. 348); the fan-like movement of the parts in bar 20; and the fluctuating chords, stabilised by a pedal, in bar 22. All these are typical features of the late style.[1]

1) Anticipations in other songs of the collection: the 6/3 harmony of 'Die Natur'; the sequence at bar 14ff. of 'Die Sternseherin'; the rapidly changing textures of 'Kuckuck'; and the progression in bars 3-4 and the final cadence of 'Ein Lied, hinterm Ofen zu singen'.

The creation of this style is perhaps the strongest achievement of a work which contains a good deal of rather undistinguished writing - for if the Wandsbecker Liederbuch is essentially a work of transition, it is also the first to show evidence of a decline. In too many songs the textural thinness becomes a real thinness of substance, a thinness reinforced by that harshness of piano writing which, as we know from Wanderung im Gebirge, is apt to accompany Schoeck's less inspired utterances - witness 'Die Romer', or any of the little interludes. But the subject of Schoeck's decline is a complex one, and must be left to the following chapters.

Three songs, however, 'Ein Wiegenlied' apart, are as fine as anything of this period: 'Der Krieg', which really sustains its dissonance; 'Auf den Tod einer Kaiserin', with its beautiful flattened leading note harmony; and - another beautiful song - 'Die Sternseherin', where the stargazer's unattainable longing is finally expressed through an unresolved dominant triad. Four songs out of seventeen: not a high proportion, but one that is to become typical in the works to come.

CHAPTER 10

UNTER STERNEN

With the Second World War, Schoeck's life began to move towards a crisis. Outwardly things continued much as before. He had been discharged from military service twenty years earlier, and so was able to go on conducting; and when he could, he worked at Das Schloss Dürande. In fact his depression had never been more acute. The interest shown in his music in Germany had not been sustained, and he knew now that the kind of popularity he had hoped for was no longer possible. At the same time, his unwillingness to sever his German connections was being criticised at home. And of course there was the war, which made composition itself seem futile.

In the midst of all these troubles, Schoeck's last Keller cycle, Unter Sternen,[1] was both a cry of despair and an affirmation of certain things he had always believed in - nature, poetry, individual courage. He wrote it between November 1941 and January 1943, dedicating it to Zurich City Council 'in memoriam Gottfried Keller'. The work had its premiere, with Loeffel singing, on 8 October 1943; but Schoeck had already been overtaken by events. In June the Zurich production of Das Schloss Dürande had been fiercely attacked, and the autumn revival was dropped after only three performances. From these blows Schoeck was never fully to recover, for there is little doubt they contributed to his breakdown the following year.

The themes of Unter Sternen - night, the stars, eternity and death - are largely those of the Notturno, except that with the change from Lenau to Keller (Unter Sternen beginning, as it were,

1) See OS pp. 281-8, 314-20; V pp. 164-72; G pp. 19, 157; D pp. 260-2; S pp. 45-50. Score by U.E. (1945).

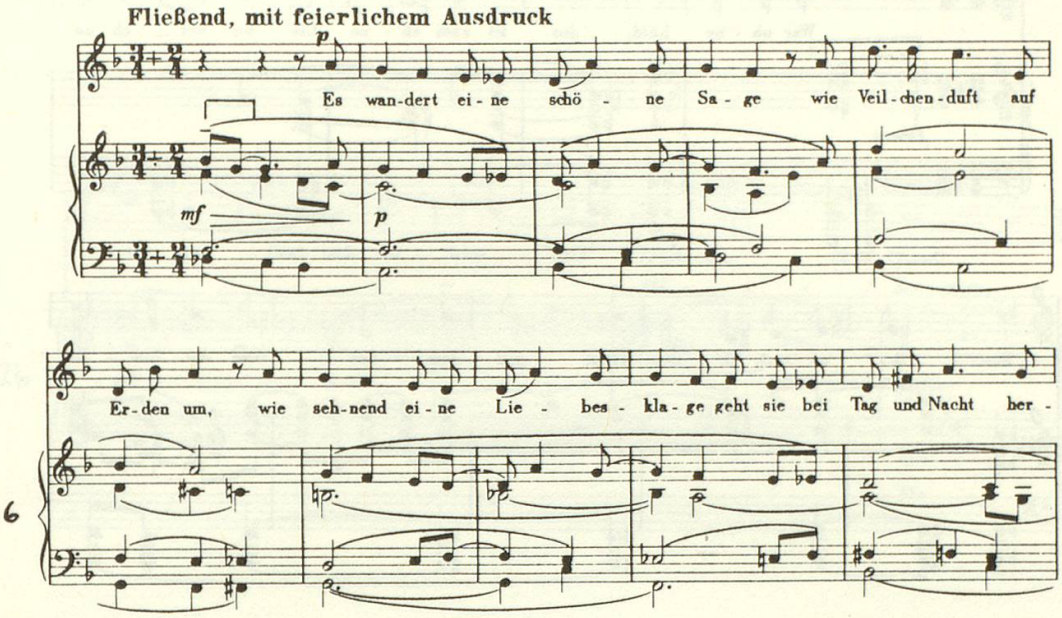
where the earlier work leaves off) a preoccupation with loneliness gives way to a stoical determination to see things through - the phrase 'battle with fate', from 'Trübes Wetter', seems characteristic. The twenty-five songs - when the cycle is performed complete, it lasts seventy minutes - call on nearly all the familiar aspects of Keller's genius and some unfamiliar ones; only the satirist is excluded. There are the finely-observed descriptions of Rhineland scenes ('Stilleben'), and the peaceful landscape-pictures into which something wild and elemental intrudes ('Waldlied I'). There is the precise, almost parometric sensitivity to weather ('Trübes Wetter' again) and the mystical, almost apocalyptic treatment of natural events ('Sonnenuntergang'). There are the haunting invocations to night and the stars, such as the introductory 'Trost der Kreatur' (see above, p. 87), and 'Unruhe der Nacht', in which night is portrayed as an old sibyl brooding on her youth. And there are the human qualities which Schoeck so admired - the generosity of feeling ('An das Herz'), the gratitude to nature ('Abendlied'), and the trust in a higher power which does not preclude doubts ('Den Zweifellosen'). Although most of the poems are early, the impression we get is of a mature experience of life and a readiness to face its problems; but this may be an effect of the song cycle's late date.

Certainly our sense of the composer's identification with his poet is strong. More than any other of these big collections, Unter Sternen springs from a deep personal impulse (perhaps this is why the music is of a consistently higher quality). Its emotions are those of the early Eichendorff-Lieder - also written in time of war - expressed through the same artistic medium and similar poetic themes. And, as in the early work again, the music suggested by these emotions has added an element not directly present in the poems: a deep nostalgia, a longing for old and better times.

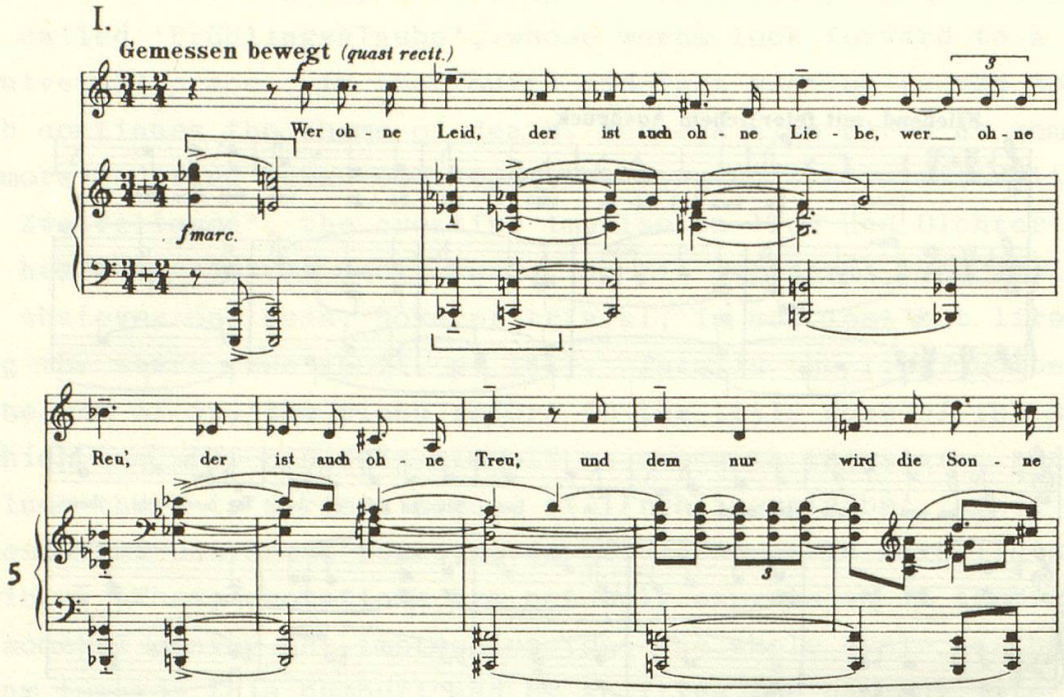
The songs are once again divided into four (untitled) groups. The first group, consisting of five songs, deals with night and the stars, and closes with the song from which the cycle takes its name. The second group consists of seven songs about nature, from the enphoric Waldlieder to the muted Rheinbilder mentioned above. The first song of this section, 'Abendlied an die Natur',

has already introduced the theme of death;[1] and death becomes the theme of the third group (six songs). This group concludes with the song called 'Frühlingsglaube', whose words look forward to a time of universal peace. In the fourth and last section (seven songs), which continues the theme of death, Schoeck also gives us some of the more enduring human emotions: the longing for an after-life in 'Den Zweifellosen', the creative impulse in 'Tod und Dichter', an open heart in 'An das Herz', and, in 'Ein Tagewerk', the feeling that whatever one does, however trivial, is not lost but lives on among the stars (see above, p. 181). This is the final number. At the end of it, the piano refers to the title song of the set, in which the poet had felt himself at one with the stars; and for postlude there is a reminiscence of 'Frühlingsglaube', as if to suggest that universal peace, even after two world wars, is still possible. These quotations are not only expressive in themselves, but somehow convey the impression that the whole cycle has been moving towards this number; and by shifting the harmony into the treble Schoeck even achieves a little Aufhellung on the lines of some of his earlier works.

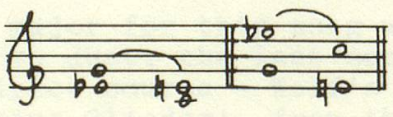
In style the songs show a greater general consistency than those of the Wandsbecker Liederbuch, but even within this consistency there is still quite a wide range. One notable new element (incipient, of course, in earlier works) is a gentle lyricism, the counterpart of Keller's homely language, and its inevitable string-quartet-like accompaniment:

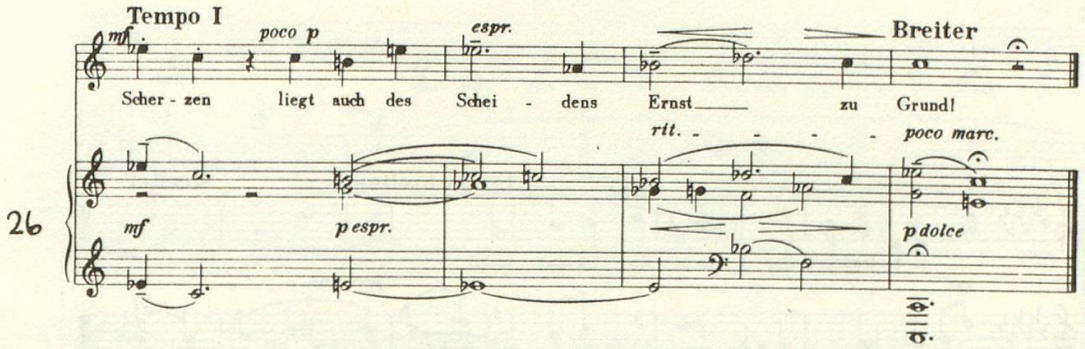
1) The choice of A♭ major for this song was probably influenced by the Tristan love duet, the last song of the Elegie and - perhaps a more direct source - Wolf's beautiful 'Sterb'ich, so hüllt in Blumen meine Glieder', from the Italienisches Liederbuch.

(The part-writing in this cycle, though straightforward enough here, is sometimes of a rococo elegance, with each voice separately phrased and articulated, as in 'Trost der Kreatur').

Another important innovation is what may be called the 'narrative arioso' style, a style which is later to provide some of the best music in the Meyer and Mörike sets. This style is mainly found in the more extended songs. It is almost a kind of recitative: the voice is treated in a declamatory fashion, while the piano changes its texture according to the words. 'Sonnenuntergang' is the longest and most impressive example of this genre, but 'Den Zweifellosen' gives a better impression of the style within a short space:

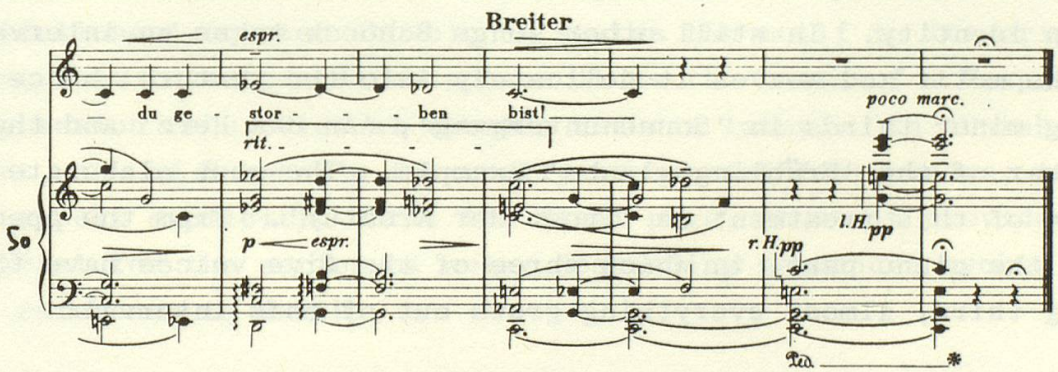


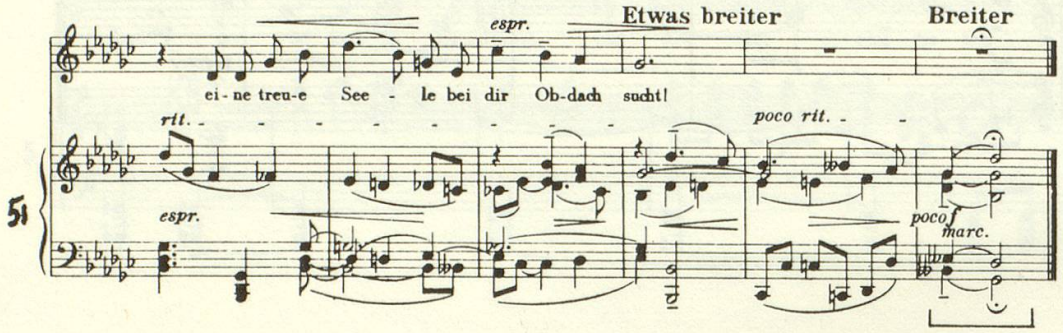
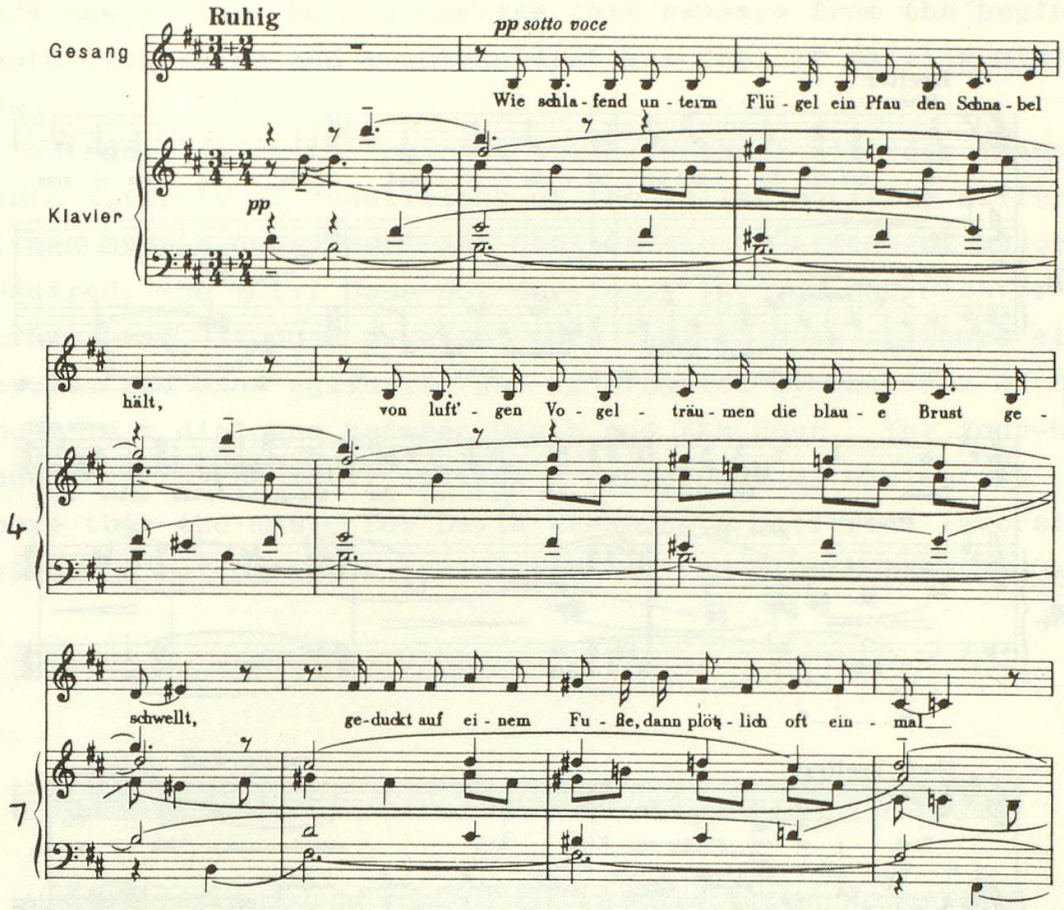
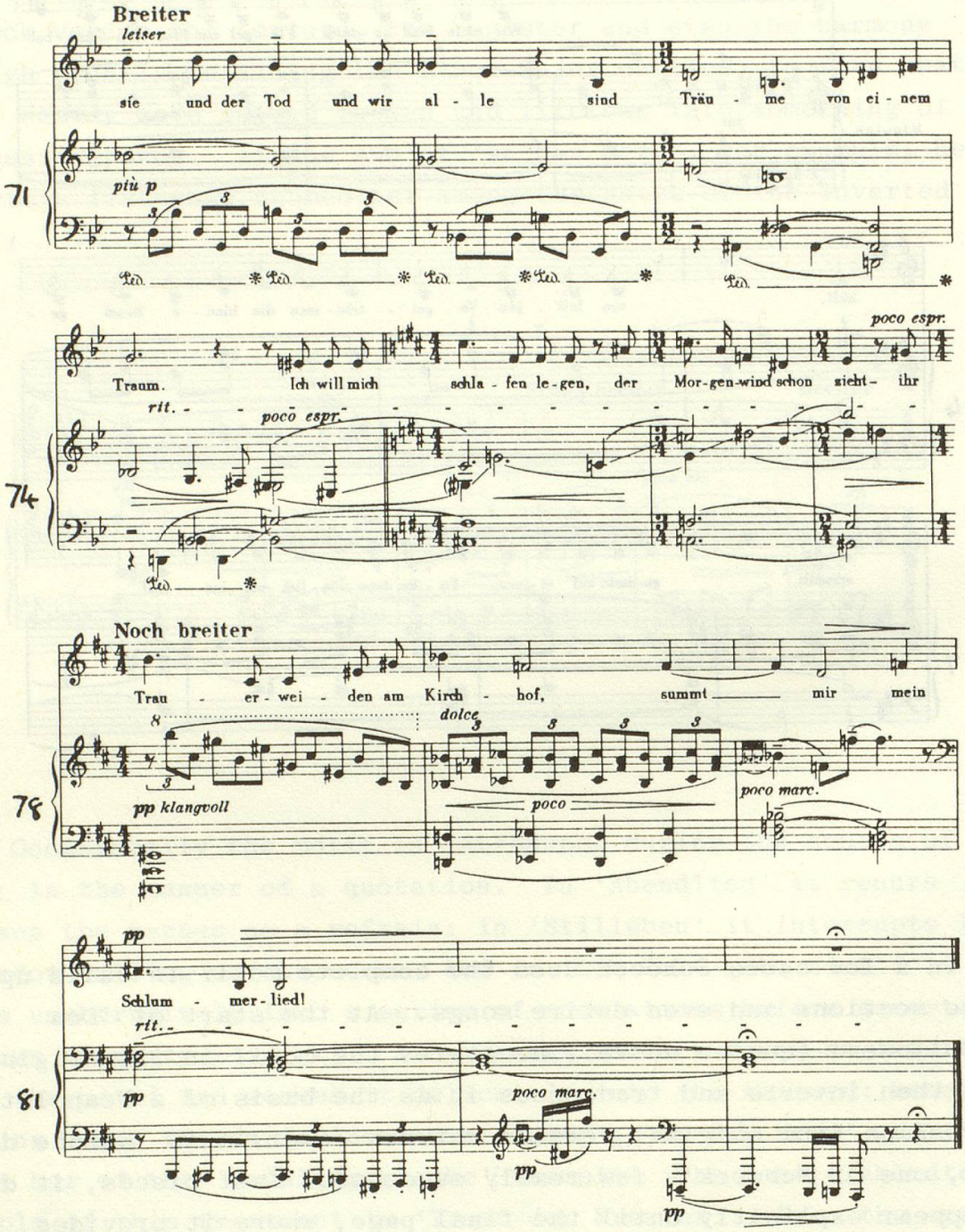
This is also the place to mention Schoeck's individual use of strophic variation in such songs as 'Abendlied' and 'Abendlied an die Natur', where he retains the same piano part throughout and varies the vocal line, rather than seeking different harmonisations for the same melody (the more usual method). But these and other contrasts are contained within a general unity of mood which gives the work its distinctive character.

Not the least part of this unity - Schoeck explicitly disavows a tonal scheme (see his note to the score) - derives from a kind of recurring cadence or leitmotif (Corrodi calls it the 'Keller motif') which appears on almost every page. It consists of a pair of falling thirds or sixths, connected by the interval of a minor third and placed as to give an effect of a minor-major change (Walton uses a similar motif in his 1929 Viola Concerto):

The definitive statement occurs in 'Wir wähnten lange recht zu leben', the first song in the group about death, where the falling minor thirds which dominate the texture finally evolve into the full motif:

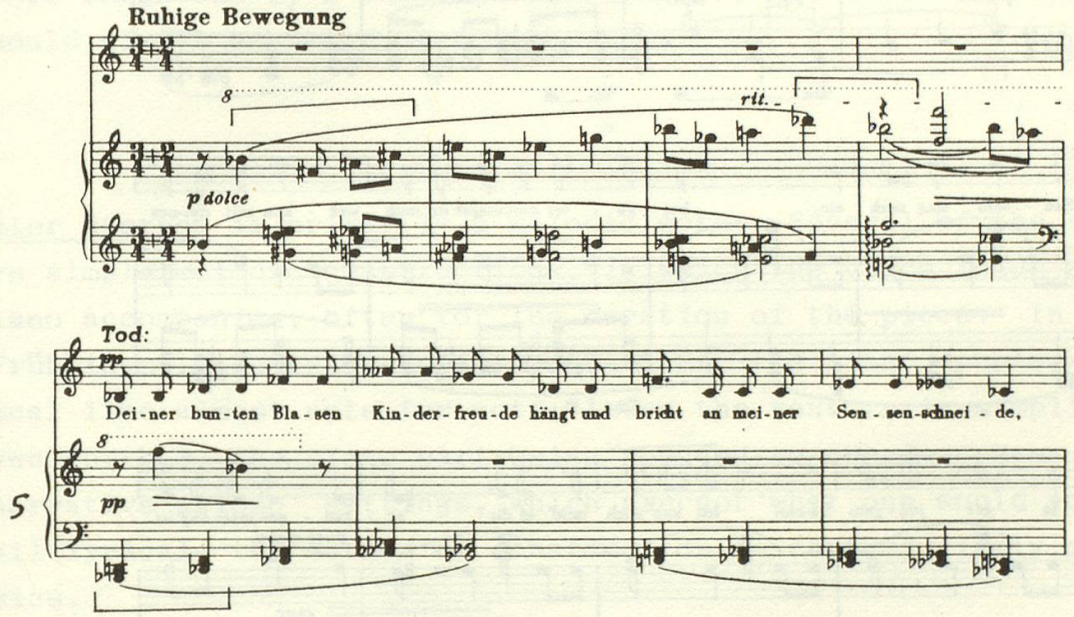


According to Corrodi, this was the second song in the series to be composed; in the first ('Siehst du den Stern'), he maintains, the motif is absent. In fact it is there, admittedly in a disguised form, but at its original pitch and again linked with the idea of death:



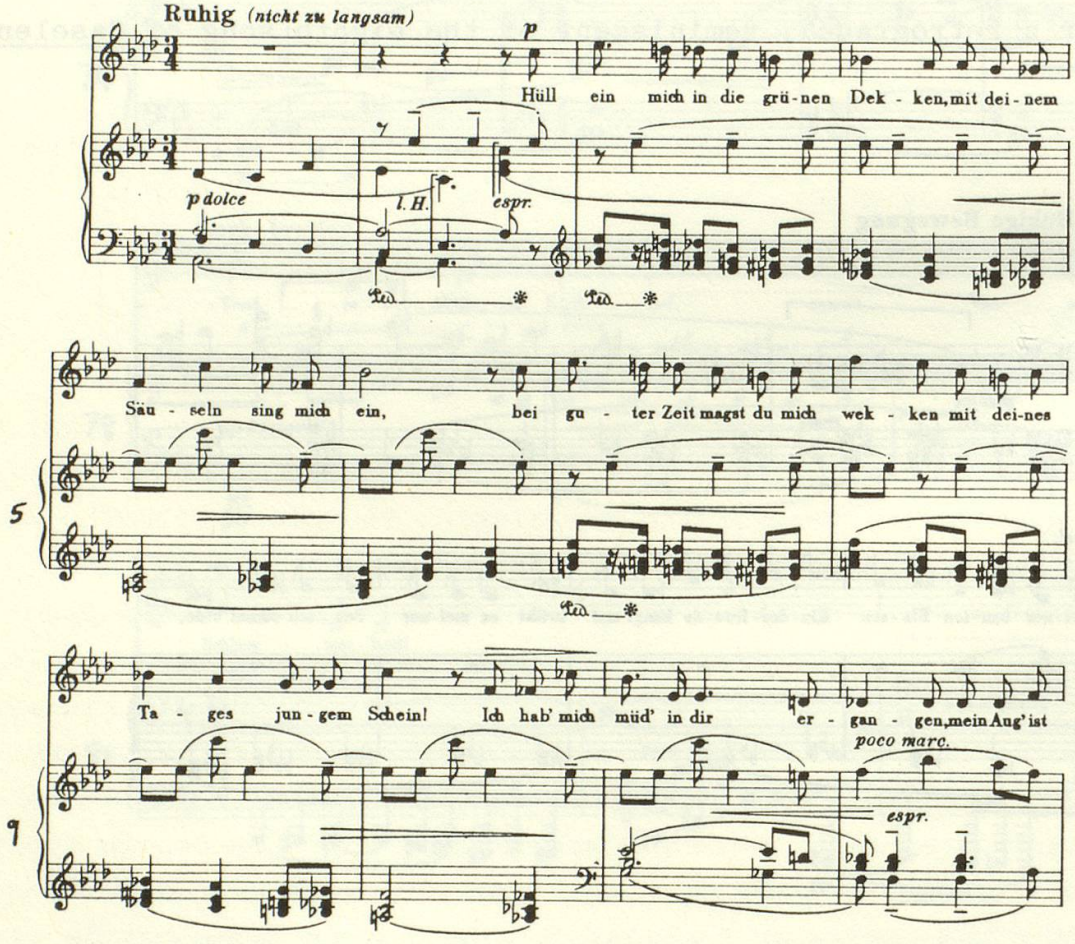
The conventional place for this motif is at the final cadence. Only rarely is it stated as plainly as in 'Wir wähnten'; more often Schoeck varies the texture, the register and even the harmony (though usually retaining the minor-major outline) to turn what might easily have seemed wooden and lifeless into something of great expressive power. At the end of 'An das Herz', for example, he inserts a flattened submediant among the notes of the inverted motif:

Occasionally the motif is introduced during the course of a song in the manner of a quotation. In 'Abendlied' it recurs between the verses as a refrain; in 'Stilleben' it interrupts like a shadow falling on the scene; and in 'Die Zeit geht nicht' it slips unobtrusively into a series of modulations before asserting its own identity. In still other songs Schoeck takes an interval from the motif and weaves it delicately into the texture: hence the falling minor thirds in 'Sonnenuntergang', 'An das Herz' and the first bar of the 'Frühlingsglaube' example. The most elaborate example of this treatment is 'Trost der Kreatur'. From the opening bar of the piano part, in which three of the five voices have the falling third, almost everything grows out of this interval:

In a few cases Schoeck uses the complete motif to build up entire sections and even entire songs. At the start of 'Den Zweifellosen' (quoted above), he states the motif in its original form, then inverts and transposes it as the basis of a Neapolitan progression (the original version returns later). In 'Unruhe der Nacht, one of Schoeck's few really successful fast pieces, it does not appear explicitly until the final page, where it provides material for the series of weary descending sequences evoked by the reference to death:

Breiter
leiser
sie und der Tod und wir al - le sind Träu - me von ei - nem
più p
71
Traum. Ich will mich schla - fen le - gen, der Mor - gen - wind schon sieht - ihr
poco espr.
rit. -
poco espr.
74
Noch breiter
Trau - er - wei - den am Kirch - hof, summt mir mein
dolce
pp klangvoll
poco
poco marc.
78
pp
Schlum - mer - lied!
rit. -
pp
poco marc.
pp
pp
81

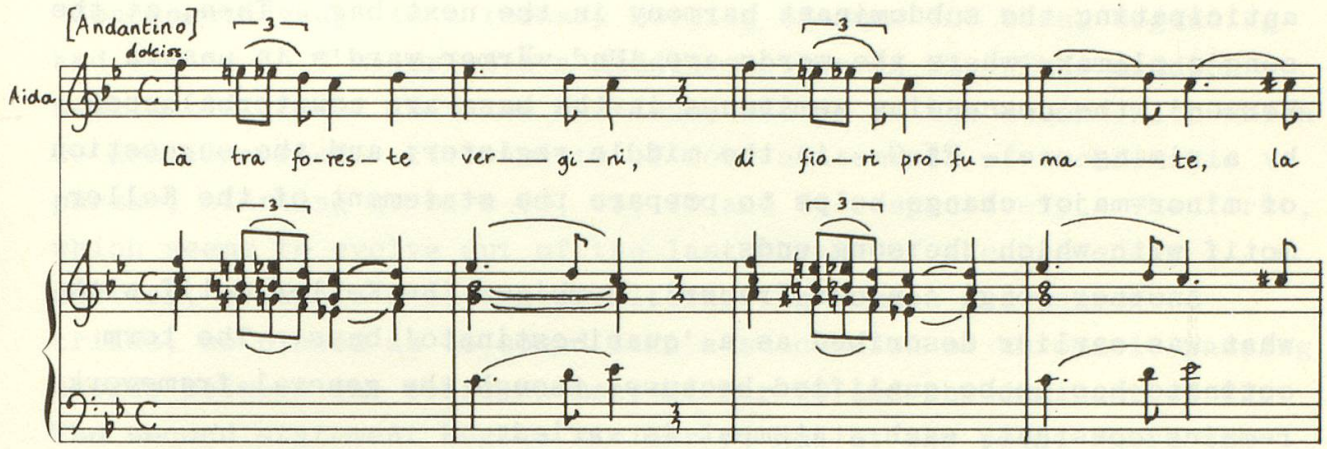
Schoeck has in fact been preparing this passage from the beginning, for both vocal line and accompaniment are full of falling minor thirds.

Two songs carry the process still further. 'In der Trauer' consists entirely of repetitions of the Keller motif in different positions over a quasi-ostinato bass; since an effect of monotony is required, the motif does not develop. In 'Tod und Dichter', on the other hand, it does develop, more than it does anywhere else in the cycle; and once again its use is prompted by the idea of death. The poem is a dialogue between Death and the Poet. The four-bar prelude inverts the motif against a background of whole-tone harmony; then the music for Death presents a different inversion (or rather a retrograde), reminiscent of the eighth song of Gaselen:

The Poet has separate material. Death addresses him twice more, each time to the prelude theme, and it is this that eventually concludes the song.

The Keller motif, more than anything else, provides the

characteristic sound-quality of Unter Sternen, and this sound-quality goes right through the work. Even where the motif itself is not present, there is a preponderance of thirds and sixths, as in 'Abendlied an die Natur', with its chains of parallel 6/3s reminiscent of Aida:

(a) Schoeck

(b) Verdi



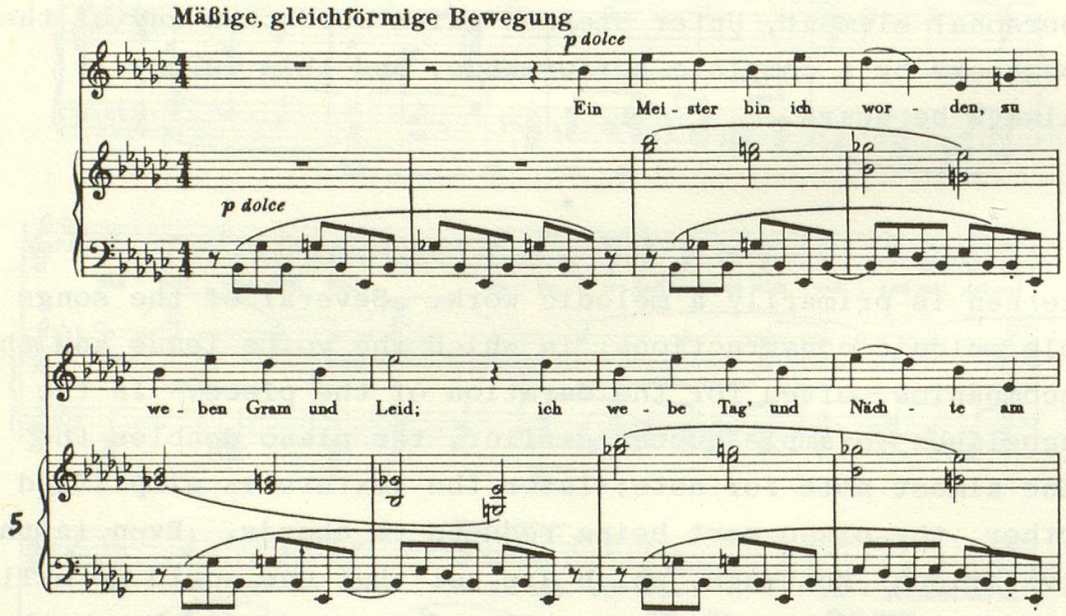
Because of this general unity, the sense of progression and the strong personal element, Unter Sternen gains more than any of the other songbooks by a complete performance, and this is how it should always be heard.

*

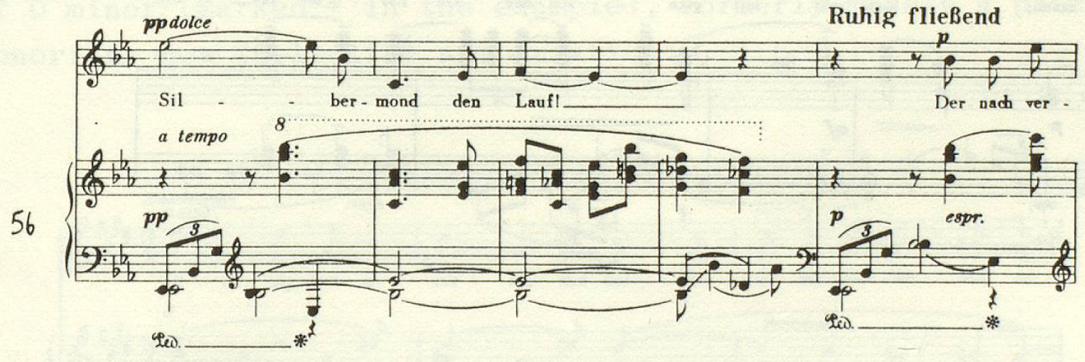
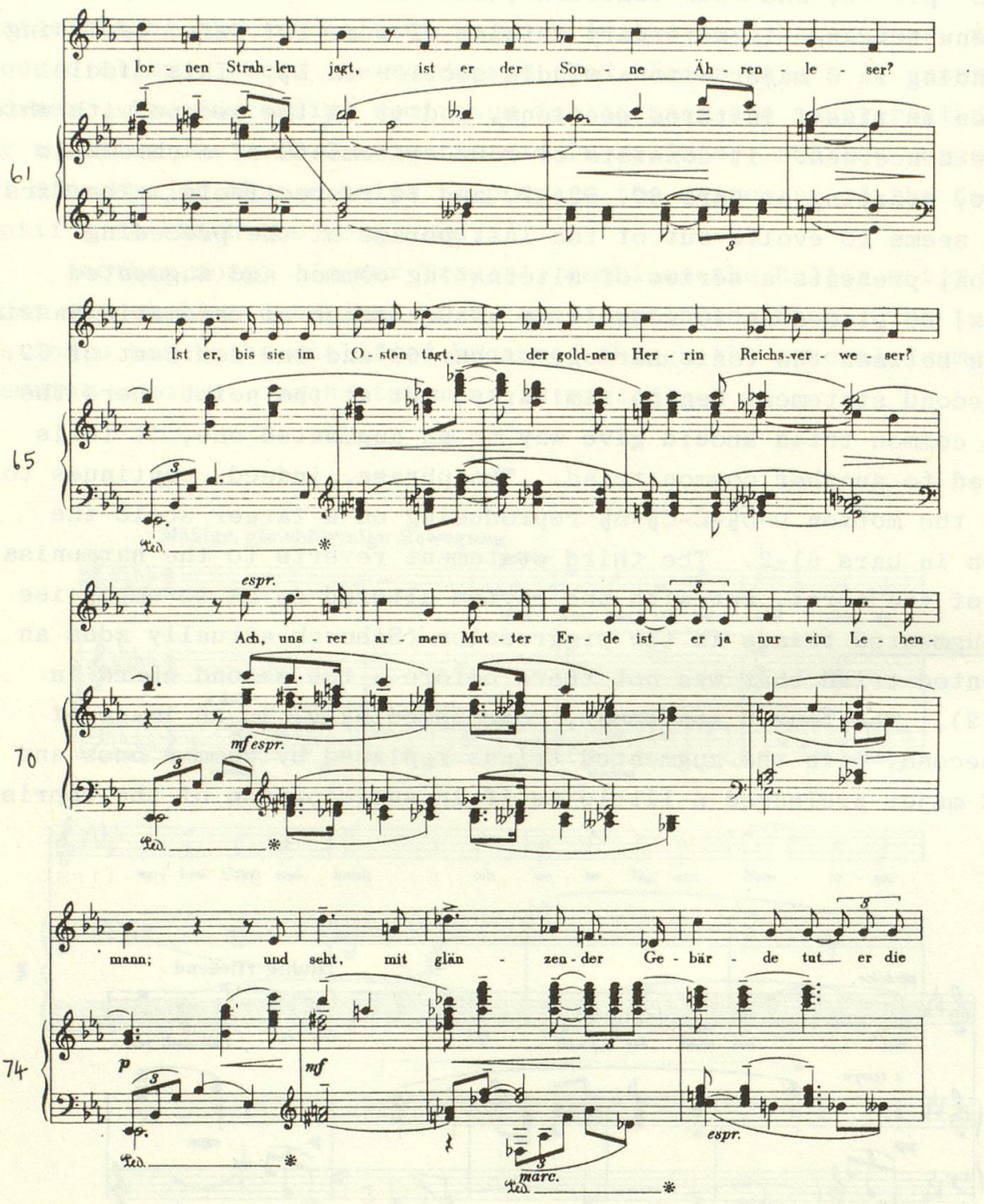
Unter Sternen is primarily a melodic work. Several of the songs are simple melodic constructions, in which the voice leads and the piano accompanies, often for the duration of the piece. In the 'Frühlingsglaube' example quoted earlier, the piano doubles the vocal line almost note for note; later the texture is simplified even further, the piano part being reduced to chords. Even in the 'narrative arioso' settings, which are not what one would normally call lyrical, the method of construction is centred firmly on the voice.

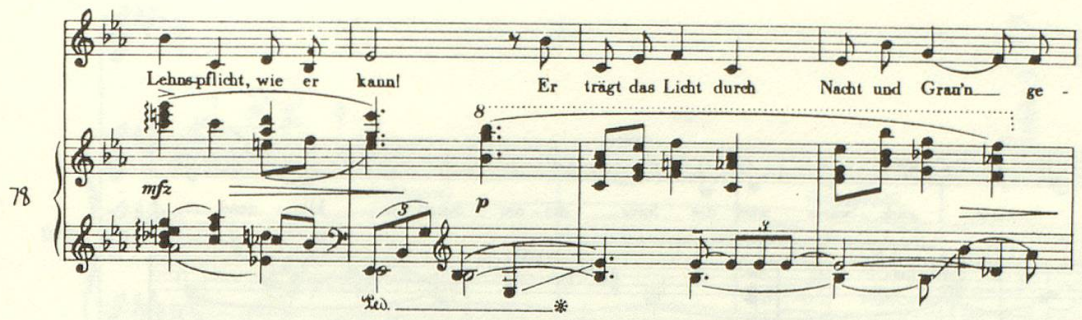
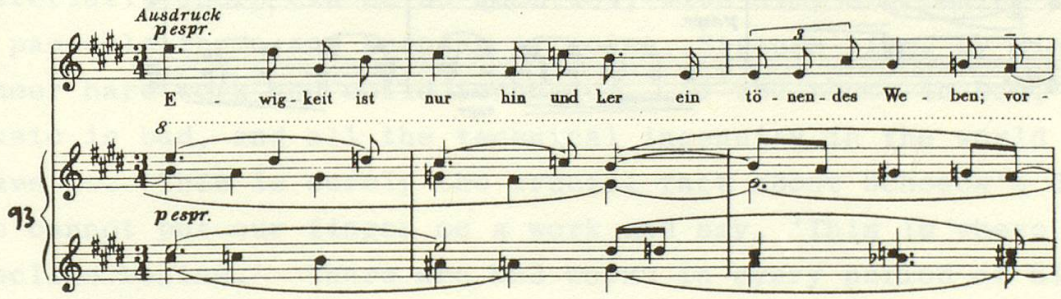
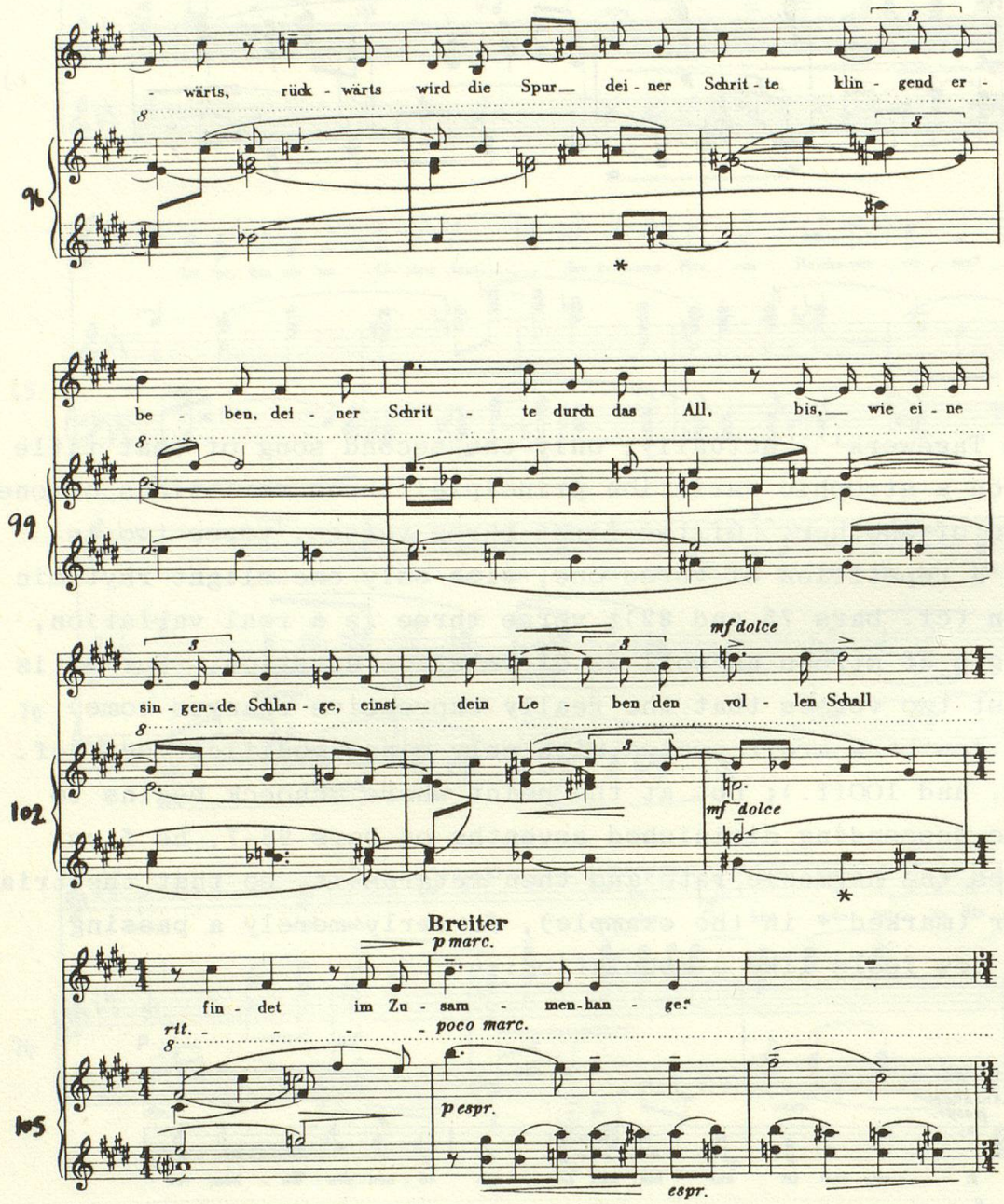
In certain songs, however, Schoeck seems to be returning to a more complex form of construction. 'Wir wähnten lange recht zu leben', though still as melody-oriented as some of the more overtly lyrical numbers, develops by means of a series of chromatic side-slippings, with the harmony frequently at odds with the bass. Thus, in bars 5-6, the piano's right hand has a progression of iv (or possibly VI)-V-i in C minor, a progression emphasised by the vocal

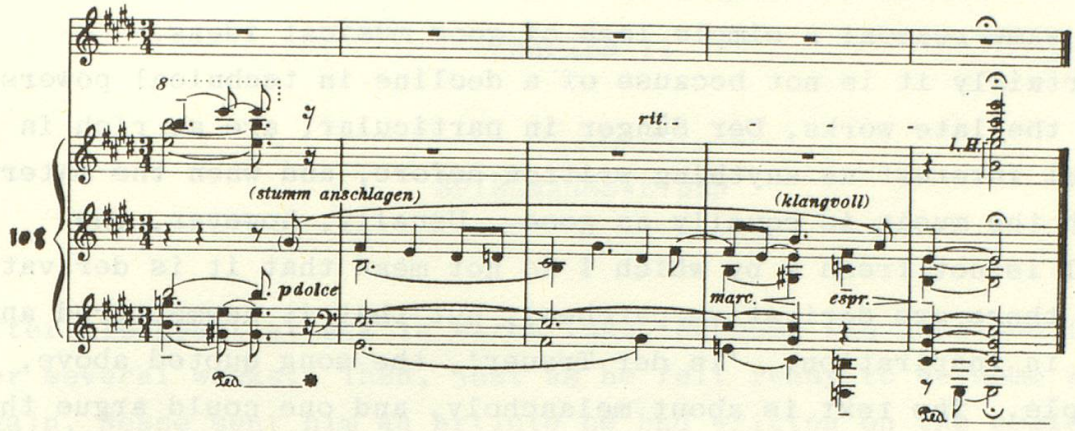
line; but the bass is a chord ahead of this progression, with an E♭ where we expect a G and an A♭ where we expect a C, the A anticipating the subdominant harmony in the next bar. Then, at the song's climax, where the words are 'Und wärmer ward's in unsern Herzen', the descending semitones in the bass are counterbalanced by a rising one - F♯-G - in the middle register; and the suggestion of minor-major change helps to prepare the statement of the Keller motif with which the song ends.

Another song, 'In der Trauer', combines the Keller motif with what was earlier described as a 'quasi-ostinato' bass. The term ostinato has to be qualified because, though the general framework remains constant, each statement is varied:

The most interesting songs, however, are those which continue the tendency (noted in the previous chapter) towards a rehabilitation of the series. There are only two of them, and neither continues the tendency very far, but both are songs of special

significance: 'Sonnenuntergang', the longest of the 'narrative arioso' pieces, and 'Ein Tagewerk', the last song in the cycle. 'Sonnenuntergang' is a ternary setting of some 107 bars, beginning and ending in C major with a middle section in E♭. This middle section is itself in three sections, and it is the second with which we are concerned. It consists of four statements of a chromatic phrase, starting at bars 60, 65, 70 and 74 respectively. The first, which seems to evolve out of the last phrase of the preceding section, presents a series of alternating common and augmented triads, so placed as to sound like a succession of chromatic passing chords between the tonic harmony of bar 60 and the dominant of 62. The second statement begins similarly, but at the point where the first common triad should give way to an augmented one, it falls instead to another common triad. The phrase, indeed, continues to fall, the motion D-D♭-C-C♭-B♭ reproducing on a larger scale the motion in bars 61-2. The third statement reverts to the harmonisation of the first, but with the rhythm altered so as to emphasise the augmented triads in the progression (Schoeck actually adds an augmented triad that was not there before - the second chord in bar 72). The fourth statement, correspondingly, is an image of the second, with the augmented triads replaced by common ones and the C major prolonged a little as if in anticipation of the reprise:



61
lor - nen Strah - len jagt, ist er der Son - ne Äh - ren - le - ser?
65
Ist er, bis sie im O - sten tagt, der gold-nen Her - rin Reichs-ver - we - ser?
Ped.
70
espr.
Ach, uns - rer ar - men Mut - ter Er - de ist er ja nur ein Le - hen -
mf espr.
Ped.
74
mann; und seht, mit glän - zen - der Ge - bär - de tut er die
p
mf
espr.
Ped.
marc.
Ped.

'Ein Tagewerk' - actually, only the second song of that title - is built on a strophic variation principle: three variations of one verse, two of another. Of the first three verses, verse two is virtually a repetition of verse one, with only one slight rhythmic alteration (cf. bars 75 and 82); verse three is a real variation, with changes of stress as well as of relative duration. But it is in the last two verses that the really expressive changes come. The first few bars are repeated with only minor modifications (cf. bars 93ff. and 100ff.); but at the point where Schoeck begins to repeat the descending diminished sevenths of bars 96-7, he first accelerates the harmonic rate and then retards it, so that the triad of D minor (marked * in the example), formerly merely a passing sonority, now feels like a modulation:


- wärts, rück - wärts wird die Spur dei - ner Schrit - te klin - gend er -
96
be - ben, dei - ner Schrit - te durch das All, bis, wie ei - ne
99
mf dolce
sin - gen - de Schlan - ge, einst dein Le - ben den vol - len Schall
102
mf dolce
Breiter
p marc.
fin - det im Zu - sam - men - han - ge:
rit. - - - - poco marc.
105
p espr.
espr.



This intensification of the D minor sonority has a heightening effect on the verse as a whole, an effect which in turn contributes to the sense of uplift with which Schoeck wants the cycle to end.

Despite the beauty of these and other passages, one cannot listen to Unter Sternen without a certain disappointment. Perhaps the tone is too consistent, the writing almost too fluent: though the music has range, one misses the sense of climax which so distinguishes the earlier cycles - the feeling that at such and such a moment Schoeck is transcending himself, giving us better music than we have a right to expect from him.

For like all artists who place a high value on inspiration, Schoeck is completely dependent on the quality of his 'given' material. There can be no question, with him, of 'making do' with a passable theme and keeping it going, Strauss-like, by dint of sheer hard work and solid technique. If the theme is bad, then the music is bad, and all the technical ingenuity in the world cannot save it. This is surely the crucial fact about Schoeck's decline. We cannot put our finger on a work and say, 'This is where the decline begins.' There are bad works in every period of his output - frequently in the early years, occasionally in the

'brilliant' twenties (Wanderung im Gebirge), and frequently, again, in the last two decades; and when the works are bad it is always for the same reason: a simple lack of good musical ideas.

Certainly it is not because of a decline in technical powers. Some of the late works, Der Sänger in particular, are as rich in technical interest as anything written before, and when the material is fresh the music is equally as good. Usually, however, the material is not fresh - by which I do not mean that it is derivative (though there are derivative patches), but that it seems tired and lacking in inspiration. 'In der Trauer', the song quoted above, is an example. The text is about melancholy, and one could argue that the music is meant to sound depressed; but it would not be a convincing argument.

In some of his late works, notably Spielmannsweisen and Befreite Sehnsucht, Schoeck seems almost to be willing his own decline, by deliberately suppressing some of his music's most interesting features. Here we come back to the 'constructivist/traditionalist' opposition discussed in earlier chapters, since both works make a statement about contemporary art and culture, a statement which the composer seeks to emphasise by writing in an extremely simple style. The questions raised by this principle are discussed in the following chapter.

For the moment, however, we can take pleasure in the positive aspects of Unter Sternen. Even when the material is not first-rate, it is always distinctive: that characteristic tone of melancholy, epitomised by the Keller motif, goes right through the cycle. In addition there are passages of great lyrical beauty. That Unter Sternen is almost the last work in which these qualities appear is a reason for valuing it all the more.

CHAPTER 11

SPIELMANNSWEISEN

After his heart attack in March 1944, Schoeck was confined to bed for several weeks. Then, just as he felt ready to do some work again, Hesse sent him an article he had written on the neglected poet Heinrich Leuthold. This article included the text of Leuthold's Spielmannsweisen, a cycle of poems about a mediaeval minstrel, and Hesse was clearly hoping that Schoeck would set it to music. Almost simultaneously, Schoeck received a request from the conductor Hermann Scherchen that he should write a work for voice and harp for the summer music festival at Gstaad. The combination of circumstances was enough to start Schoeck composing again, and his setting of Spielmannsweisen[1] was completed in June. The first performance was given on 6 August by Willi Frey and Emmy Hürlimann.

Leuthold[2] is probably the least well known of all Schoeck's poets. He was born in 1827 near Zurich, studied in Berne and Basle, and later travelled in France and Italy (one of his Riviera poems was quoted in Part I). In 1857 he settled in Munich and joined that literary group which had gathered there earlier in the decade (two of its members, Paul Heyse and Emanuel Geibel, are familiar to musicians through the songs of Schumann and Wolf). Leuthold made many translations from contemporary French writers, and in his original work the French influence, together with his interest in unusual verse forms, enlivens what might otherwise seem insipid. In 1877 the poet suffered a mental collapse and Keller arranged to

1) See OS pp. 322-3, 341-4; V pp. 172-4; G p. 20; D pp. 269-71; W pp. 35-6; S pp. 50-1. Score by U.E. (1946).

2) Gesammelte Dichtungen, ed. G. Bohnenblust (Frauenfeld, 1914). This was the edition used by Schoeck for the composition of Der Sänger.

have him admitted to an asylum in Zurich. He died two years later.

Leuthold's Spielmannsweisen cycle dates from 1870. It consists of five poems, but Schoeck increased this number to six by dividing Leuthold's third poem in two. In the first poem, the minstrel sings of his delight in spring:

> O Frühlingshauch, o Liederlust,
> wie liegt ihr mir im Gemüte!
> Kaum prangen Busch und Baum im Blust,
> steht auch mein Herz in Blüte.

If only he were a bird [he continues], he would follow the river down to the sea; but instead he has learnt how to pipe and sing (II). Whatever moves the spirit of man, he can express it (III). What profit the favour of critics? A true artist is able to please the common people; and if ever they should fail to understand him, he would hang up his harp for the wind (IV). In the fifth poem he compares his heart to his harp: both are less at home in a palace than under a linden tree, and neither has ever sold itself for gain. The final poem laments the passing of youth, life's springtime, whose memory

> ist eines Glöckleins Silberton,
> der über einer Walstatt schwebt.

What was it that interested Schoeck about Leuthold's poetry, whose weaknesses he freely acknowledged?[1] Partly its musical qualities,[2] partly its themes. Schoeck left only a few recorded comments about Spielmannsweisen, but he must have seen it as a defence of his art, reaffirming his closeness to nature and to the Volk - it was less than a year since the critics had rejected his last opera - and reasserting his independence of modern trends, not by satirising them, as in Gaselen, but by showing in a quiet and unassuming way that traditional values still held good. There was also the characteristic lament for a bygone age.

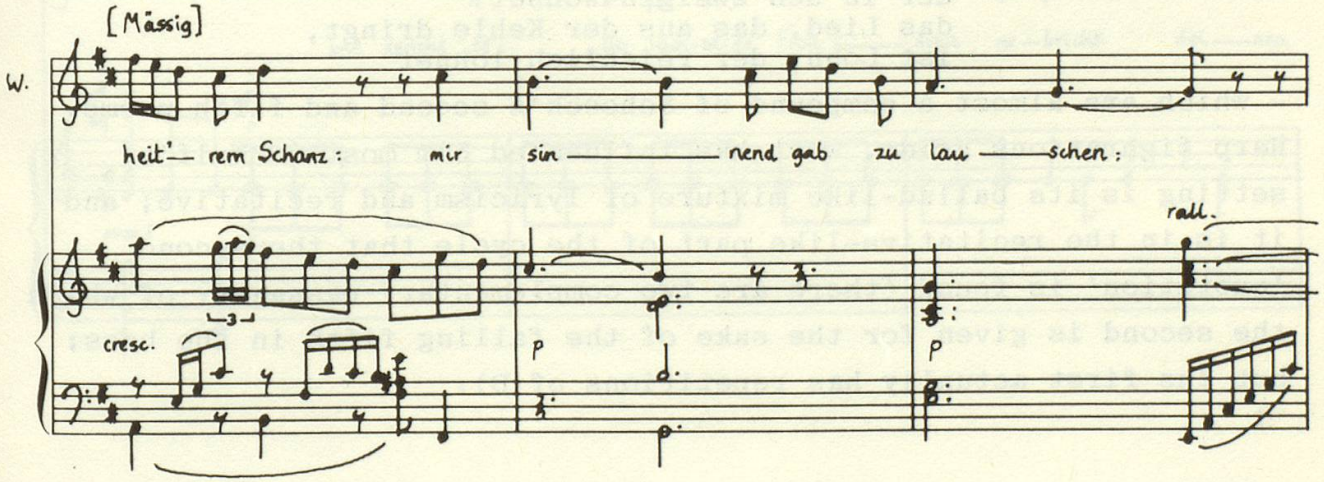
These 'traditional values' - inevitable, perhaps, when writing for the harp - are expressed through an extreme simplicity of style

1) G p. 148.
2) See Fischer, Schöpferische Leistung, p. 166.

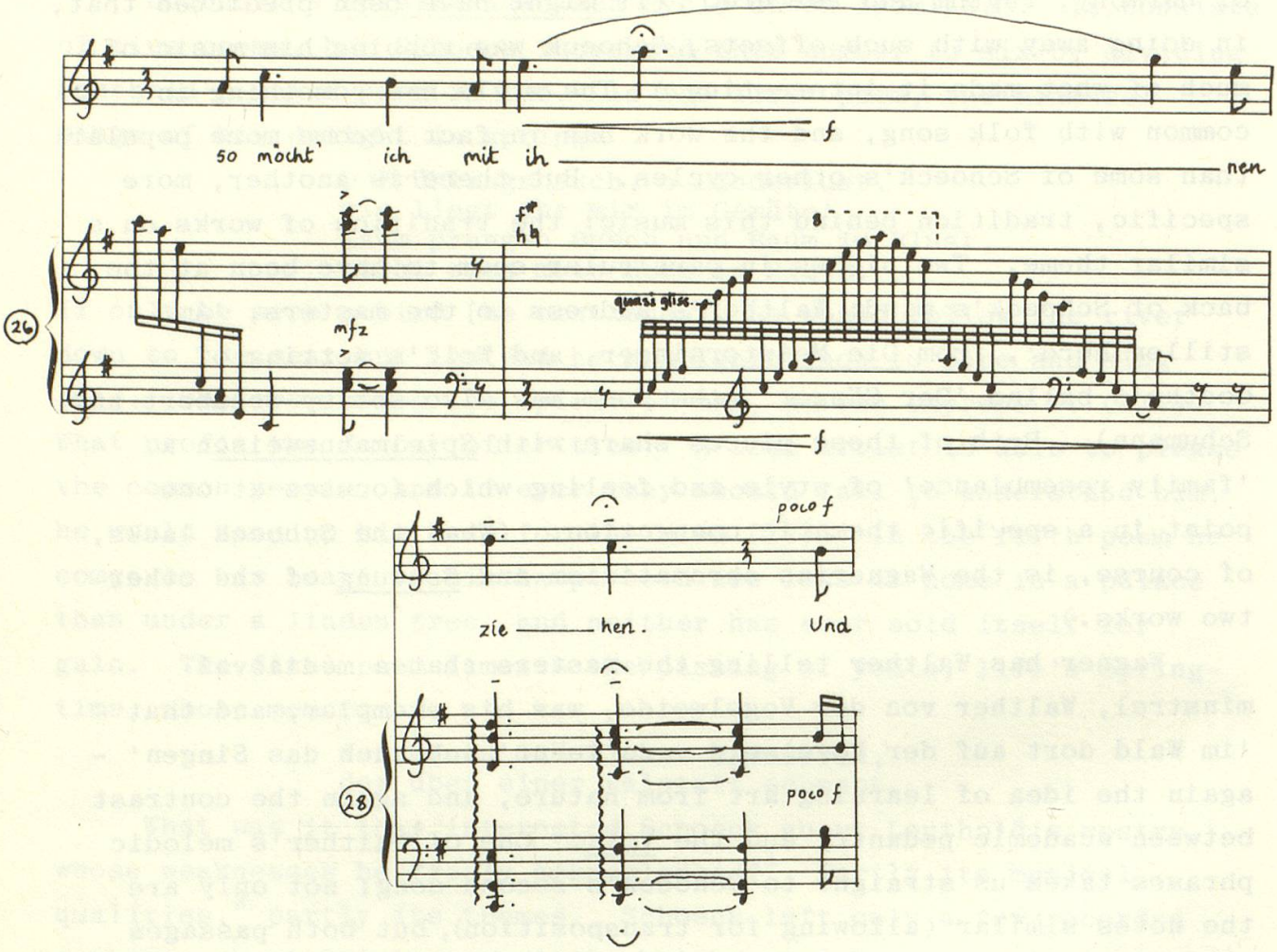
with an emphasis on melody and an avoidance of all complex effects of harmony, rhythm and texture. (It might have been predicted that, in doing away with such effects, Schoeck was robbing his music of much of what made it interesting.) The style has something in common with folk song, and the work has in fact become more popular than some of Schoeck's other cycles. But there is another, more specific, tradition behind this music: the tradition of works on a similar theme. Two pieces in particular seem to have been at the back of Schoeck's mind: Walther's address to the masters, 'Am stillen Herd', from Die Meistersinger, and Wolf's setting of Goethe's ballad 'Der Sänger' (the poem was also set by Schubert and Schumann). Both of these pieces share with Spielmannsweisen a 'family resemblance' of style and feeling which focuses at one point in a specific thematic connection. (What the Schoeck lacks, of course, is the Wagnerian chromaticism and Schwung of the other two works.)

Wagner has Walther telling the masters that a mediaeval minstrel, Walther von der Vogelweide, was his exemplar, and that 'im Wald dort auf der Vogelweid / da lernt' ich auch das Singen' - again the idea of learning art from nature, and again the contrast between academic pedantry and the Volk. One of Walther's melodic phrases takes us straight to Schoeck's second song; not only are the notes similar (allowing for transposition), but both passages occur at the join of middle section and reprise:

(a) Wagner:



(b) Schoeck

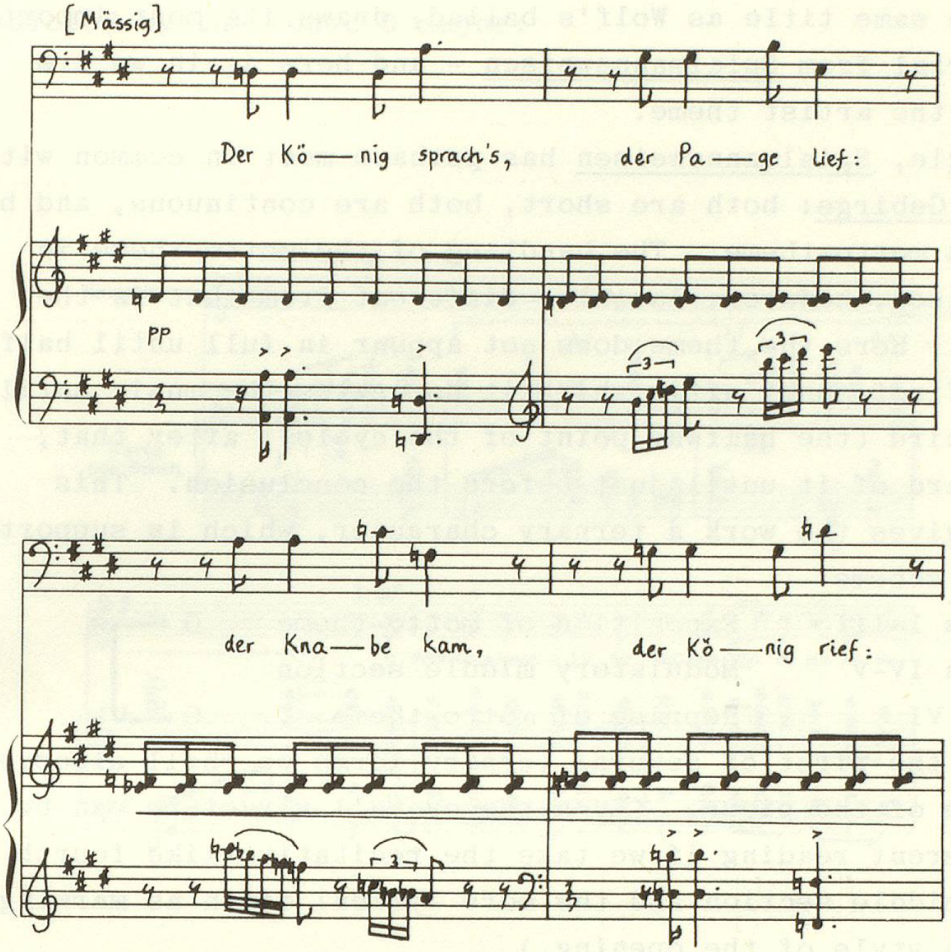


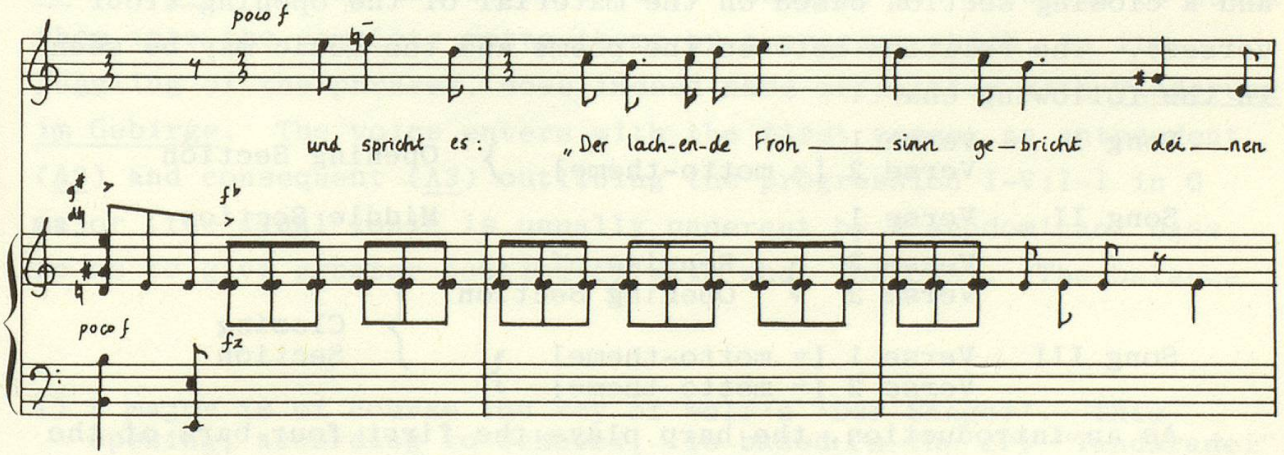
In 'Der Sänger', on the other hand, the minstrel is summoned into the king's palace to sing to the knights and ladies. Offered a golden chain in reward, he refuses with the words:

> Ich singe, wie der Vogel singt,
> der in den Zweigen wohnet:
> das Lied, das aus der Kehle dringt,
> ist Lohn, der reichlich lohnet

- which are almost a compound of Schoeck's second and fifth poems. Harp figurations aside, what has influenced him most in Wolf's setting is its ballad-like mixture of lyricism and recitative; and it is in the recitative-like part of the cycle that the second 'quotation' is found (there are two complementary passages, of which the second is given for the sake of the falling fifth in the bass; but the first actually has repetitions of D):

(a) Wolf



(b) Schoeck

It should also be mentioned that Schoeck's other Leuthold cycle, which has the same title as Wolf's ballad, draws its most important musical material from Spielmannsweisen - and here again we are dealing with the artist theme.

As a cycle, Spielmannsweisen has perhaps most in common with Wanderung im Gebirge: both are short, both are continuous, and both make use of a motto-theme. The handling of the motto-theme in Spielmannsweisen, however, is quite different from that in the earlier work. Here the theme does not appear in full until halfway through the first song, after which it dominates the music until the end of the third (the halfway point of the cycle); after that, little is heard of it until just before the conclusion. This arrangement gives the work a ternary character, which is supported by the tonal scheme:

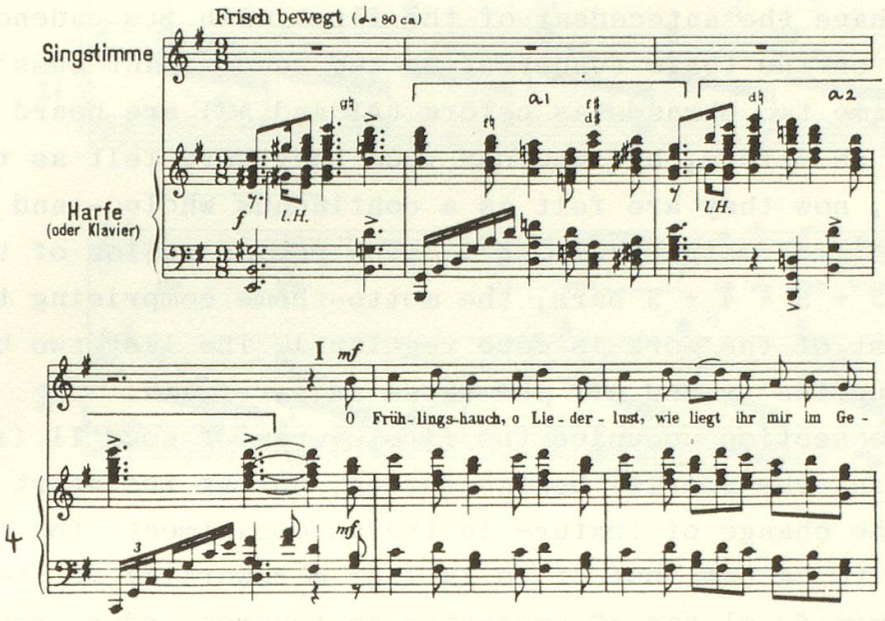
Songs I-III	Exposition of motto-theme	G
Songs IV-V	Modulatory middle section	
Song VI	Reprise of motto-theme	G

This is only the first of several ternary forms we shall discover in the course of the piece. (Even the overall structure can be given a different reading if we take the recitative-like fourth song as the middle section and the more lyrical fifth as marking a return to the style of the opening.)

Ternary form on a smaller scale governs the layout of the first three songs. These are cast in the form of a single large song, with an opening section (two verses), a middle section (one verse), and a closing section based on the material of the opening (four verses). The relation between the poems and the music may be seen in the following chart:

Song I	Verse 1		
	Verse 2 [= motto-theme]	}	Opening Section
Song II	Verse 1		Middle Section
	Verse 2	} Reprise of	
	Verse 3	} Opening Section	} Closing
Song III	Verse 1 [= motto-theme]	}	} Section
	Verse 2 [= motto-theme]		

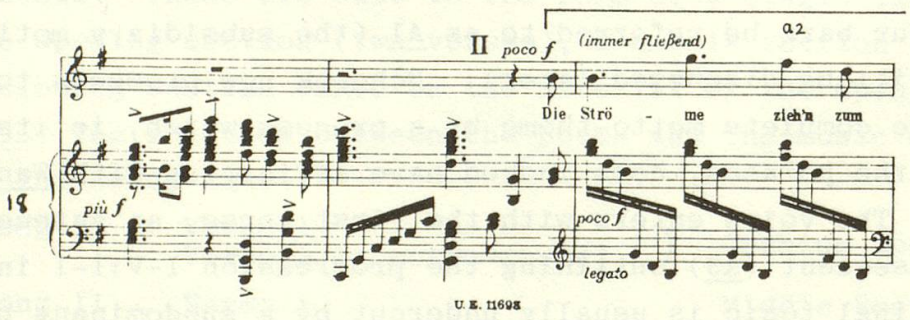
As an introduction, the harp plays the first four bars of the

motto-theme, with its exuberant E major arpeggio,[1] immediately contradicted by the tonic G major:

Let these four bars be referred to as A1 (the subsidiary motifs, a1 and a2, will be discussed later). Schoeck now proceeds to build them into the complete motto-theme by a process which, in its juggling of the phrases, does indeed have affinities with Wanderung im Gebirge. The voice enters with the first verse, an antecedent (A2) and consequent (A3) outlining the progression I-V:I-I in G major (the final tonic is usually undercut by a subdominant bass, so as to give greater continuity with what follows). The balance

1) E major is of course the key of Wolf's 'Der Sänger'. This opening, according to Schoeck, 'is based on the cry "Tandaradei". It is meant to suggest the musician striking up.' G p. 20. Vogel explains (W p. 35) that 'Tandaradei' is the refrain of a poem by Walther von der Vogelweide (!), from which he quotes the

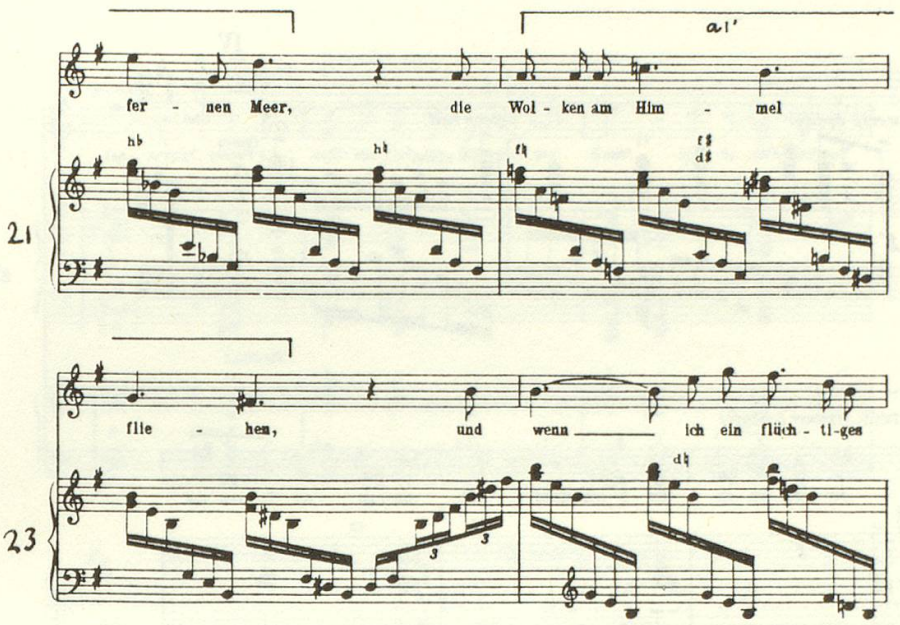
of these phrases, together with the contrast with the preceding material (small intervals after larger ones, crotchets and quavers after dotted rhythms), gives the verse the character of a closed section, set off from the introduction. After the cadence the harp swings into a repeat of the opening, and this time words are added. This new statement forms the antecedent of the second verse; for consequent we have the antecedent of the first with its cadence changed to end on the tonic (undercut by the subdominant bass). That is, the same two phrases as before (A1 and A2) are heard in the same order as before, but whereas then they were felt as two separate units, now they are felt as a continuous whole - and this constitutes the full motto-theme (A). (The periodisation of these two verses is 3 + 3 + 4 + 3 bars, the motto-theme comprising the 4 + 3. The rest of the work is more regular.) The last two bars of the 'introduction' round off the verse as a refrain.

The middle section occupies the first verse of song II (as in Wanderung, again, the reprise begins during, not at the start of, a poem). With the change of texture in the accompaniment, the melody itself appears to be new, but it is in fact a reworking of the opening, with motifs a1 and a2 presented in reverse order, reharmonised and altered rhythmically:

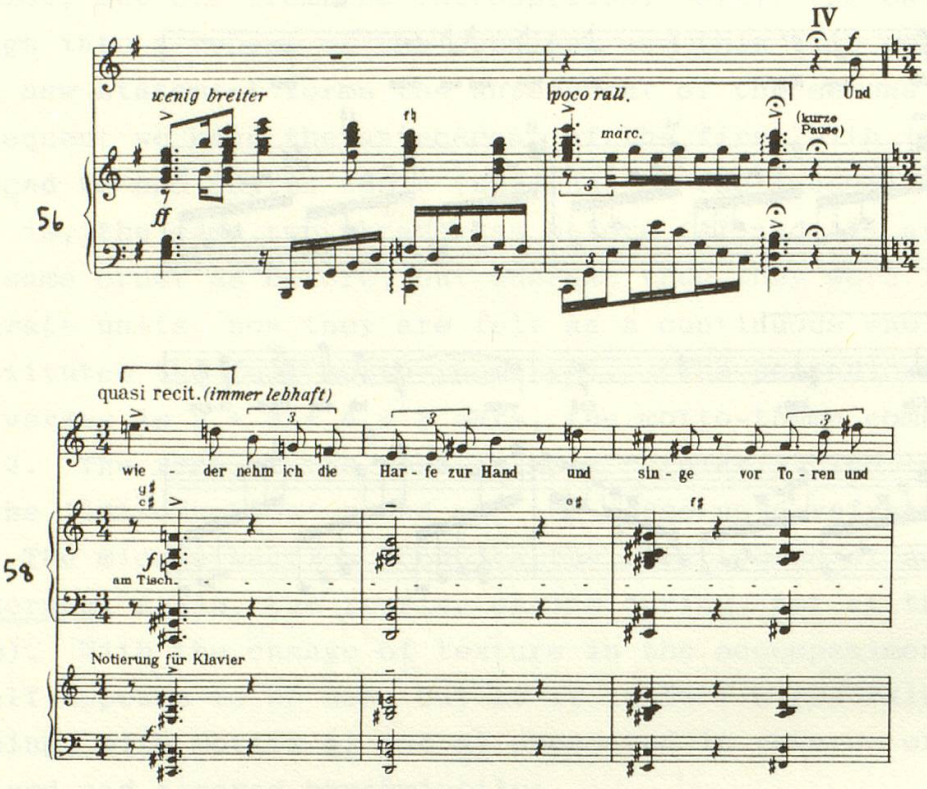


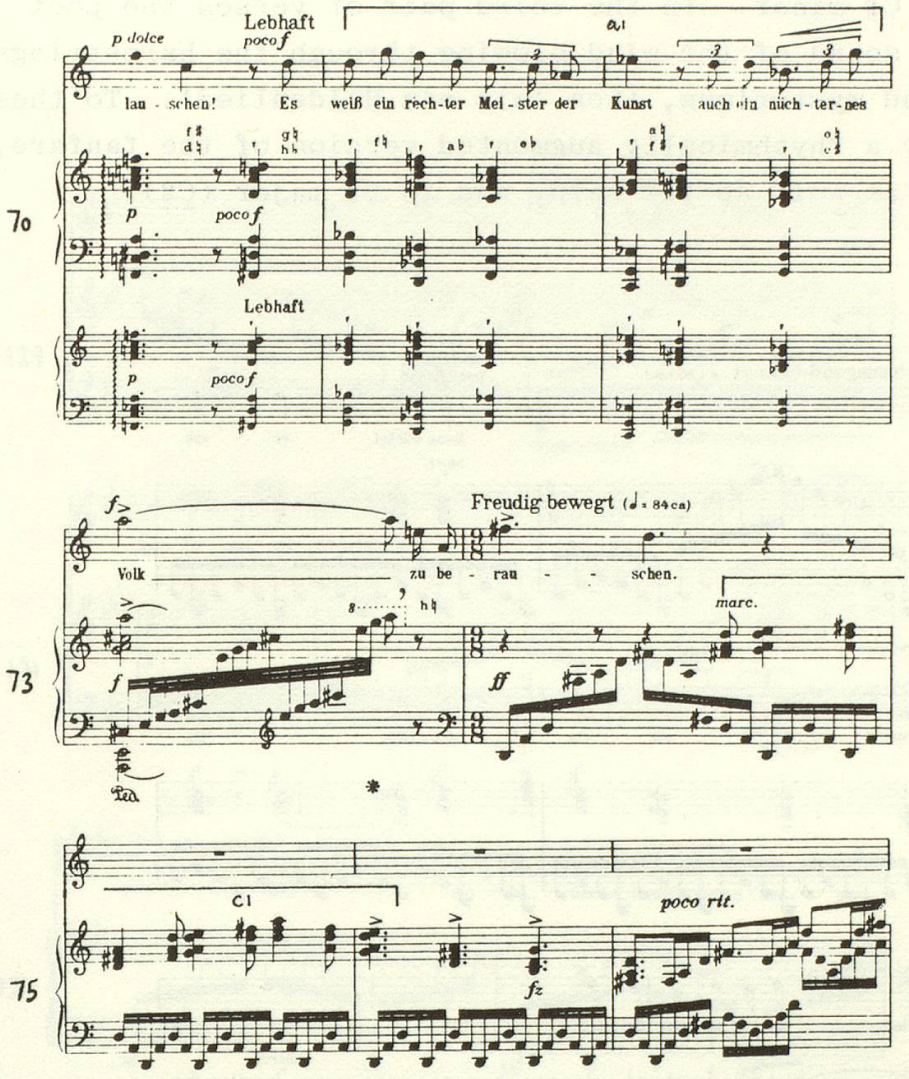
following lines:

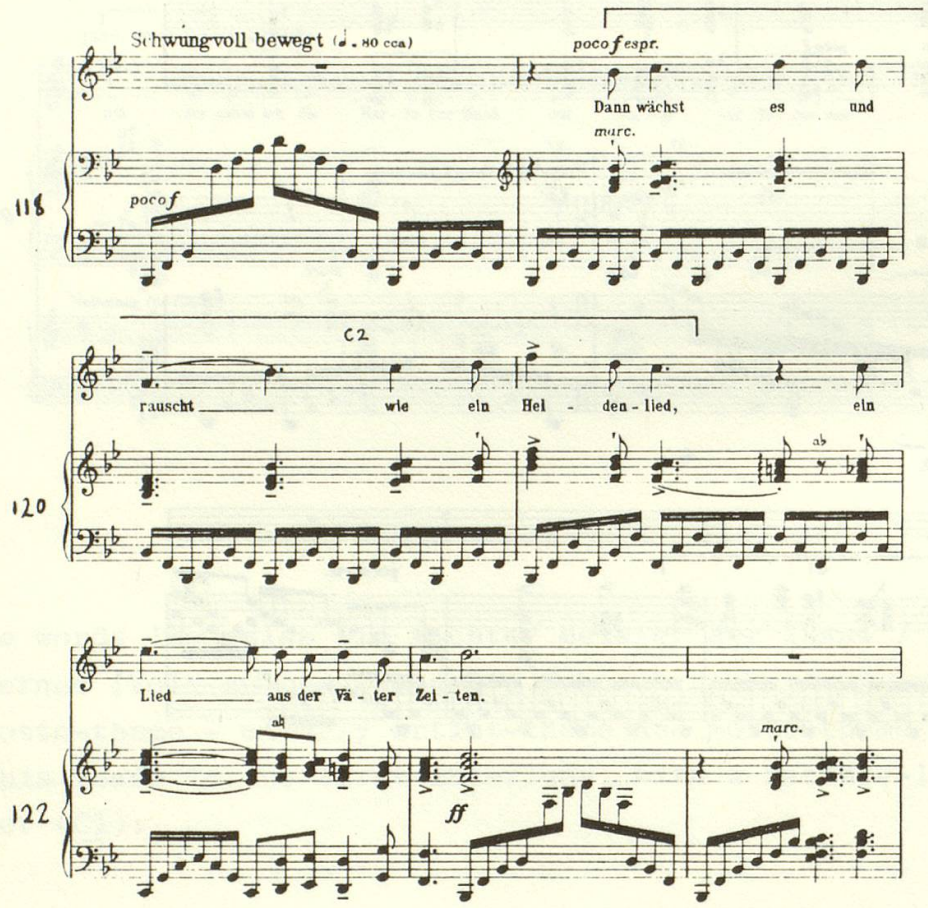
vor dem walde in einem tal,
tandaradei!
schone sanc diu nahtegal.

('Under der linden')

After the Wagner 'quotation', verses 2 and 3 of song II present a varied restatement of song I; then song III brings two further repetitions of the motto-theme, the first varied in the manner of song II (note the expressive rallentando at the words 'Mein Leben ist Singen und Wandern'), the second reverting to the original harmonisation. So in addition to the obvious ternary design, there is a movement from statement to variation and back to statement again. The two-bar refrain brings the song to an end, and with it the first part of the overall tripartite scheme.

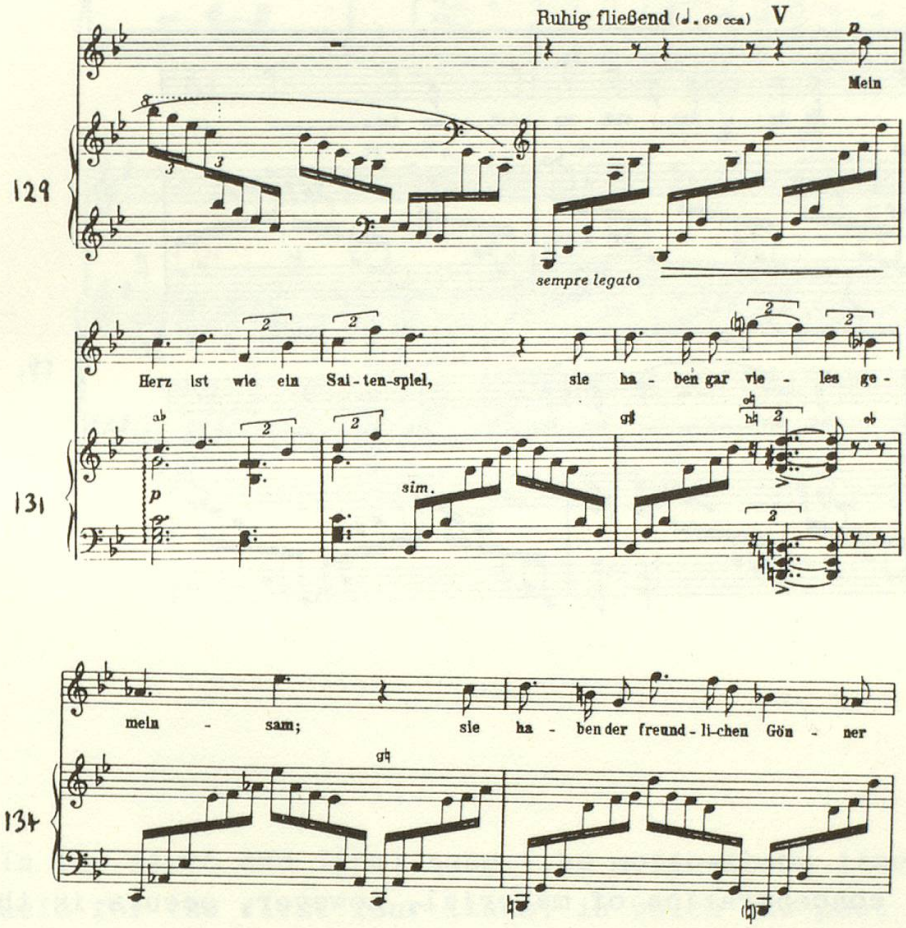
Songs IV and V form the cycle's middle section. Schoeck treats the long fourth poem - the one about the artist's closeness to the people - in ballad style, with lyrical passages and passages of semi-recitative, each pair of verses being separated by little interludes on the harp. We begin with a theme (B) which takes up

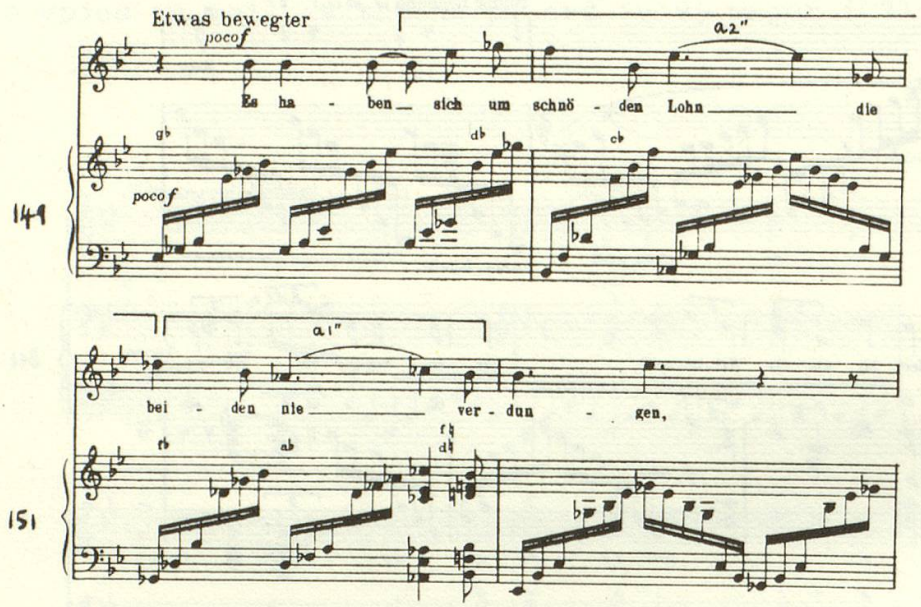
the descending E-D motif of the refrain over a characteristic false relation (F♮ = E♯):

At the words 'Es weiss ein rechter Meister der Kunst / auch ein nüchternes [Volk zu berauschen]', Schoeck works in a reference to the motto-theme - clearly artist-theme and motto-theme are related - and this leads to the first interlude, with a fanfare-like motif in D major (Cl):

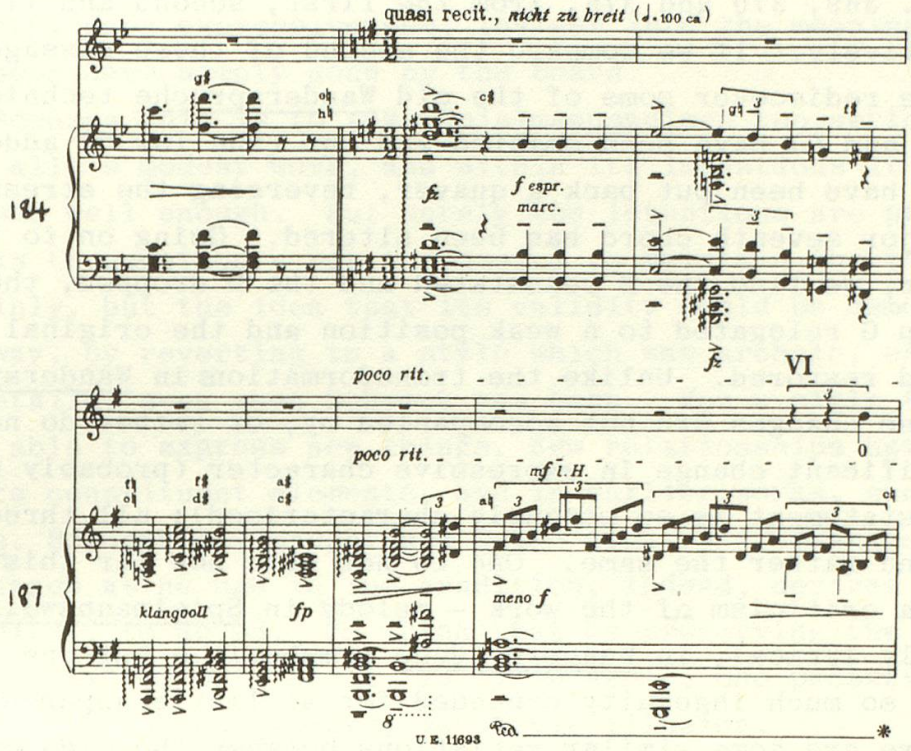

Lebhaft
p dolce
poco f
lau - schen! Es weiß ein rech-ter Mei-ster der Kunst auch ein nüch-ter-nes
70
p
poco f
Lebhaft
p
poco f
Freudig bewegt (♩= 84 ca)
f
Volk zu be - rau - - schen.
marc.
73
f
ff
C1
poco rit.
fz
75

This pattern is then repeated, but without the reference to the motto-theme: first, two verses of semi-recitative, in which the poet speaks of being rejected by the people (this is the passage modelled on Wolf's 'Der Sänger'), then the fanfare-like motif again, this time in C♯ minor. In the third pair of verses the poet imagines the sound of the wind blowing through the harpstrings, first soft and mysterious, then 'wie ein Heldenlied'. To these words we hear a rhythmically augmented version of the fanfare, now in the voice as well as the harp, and in B♭ major (C2):

This sets the key and style of the next song.

This fifth number, which is another example of ternary form,

is more lyrical than anything heard since the motto-theme, and Schoeck uses it to concentrate his thematic material. The first two phrases contain references to the fanfare and to B (when B is repeated, it is given a different, more conventional harmonisation):

The middle section, on the other hand, refers to the start of the second song (cf. the example on p. 370), and thus indirectly to the motto-theme:



The real concentration of material, however, occurs in the interlude before the final song. As in some of the other cycles, the interlude focuses on a quotation from an earlier song - in this case, theme B from song IV - but now the quotation is followed by other, less sharply defined reminiscences, as if to convey an impression of passing time (cf. the last page of 'Jugendgedenken'). The E minor cadence recalls the second bar of the motto-theme; the cadence on B, with its rising fourth, recalls the middle section of song V (cf. bars 151-2 in the previous example); and the inner part in the last bar recalls B:

In the sixth and final song, the motto-theme itself returns. The music for the first four lines, in which the poet remembers his youth ('O Lebensfruhling, Blutendrang', etc.), is new and transitional in feeling; but on the word 'Jugendklang' we begin to move back to G major (another reference to song II here), and thence to the material of the opening. The setting of the motto-theme which follows, in slow tempo and with the first word uttered hesitatingly across the beat ('Und . . . die Erinnerung davon'), is heavy with nostalgia; the theme is repeated again as postlude; and the last thing we hear is the two-bar refrain from songs I-III, spread languorously over five slow bars.

The technical aspects of Spielmannsweisen may be dealt with briefly. The most interesting is Schoeck's treatment of motif a2 in the three passages in which it appears prominently - those quoted on pp. 369, 370 and 376, from the first, second and fifth songs respectively. If we compare the second of these passages with the first, we rediscover some of the old Wandersprüche techniques: two notes (E and B) have been omitted and one (the low G) added; the F♯ and the D have been put back a quaver, reversing the stresses; and the C major seventh chord has been altered. Going on to the third passage, we find the B reinstated and the D dropped, the climactic top G relegated to a weak position and the original seventh chord restored. Unlike the transformations in Wandersprüche, however, these changes are not accompanied by, or rather do not lead to, any significant change in expressive character (probably because the initial statement is so strongly characterised): all three versions sound rather the same. One is not sure how far this constitutes a criticism of the work - melody in Spielmannsweisen is essentially lyrical, in Wandersprüche symphonic - but one is sorry to see so much ingenuity expended for so little apparent result. There are some similar variations between the middle two verses of song V, and the transformations of theme B are not without interest.

For the rest, the work is as predictable as anything the author of the music example on p. 172 might have concocted. Harmonic and rhythmic subtleties of the kind found in Unter Sternen, which made the music interesting even when it was not good, are here vigorously suppressed, and of the series technique there is little sign (the rhythmic variations noted earlier are the nearest we get). Within these limits Schoeck's handling of the language is characteristically sure, though there are some weak passages (e.g., the one quoted on p. 371, with its chain of descending 6/3s) and one that might even be called inept (the dangling 6/4 in bar 25). One's main criticism, however, is not weakness, nor even ineptitude, but dullness; which is to say, lack of personality. I know of no other work of Schoeck's into which he has put so little of what he does best. There is lyricism (but lyricism is a quality he usually

keeps in reserve), there is ingenuity (but ingenuity of a curiously self-defeating kind), there is even, in the final pages, great beauty - and here one can have no reservations. But as for subtlety, deep expressiveness, insight into the meaning of words - all these have simply gone by the board.

Perhaps this is to take Spielmannsweisen too seriously: it is after all, a modest work, and within its intentions it probably succeeds well enough. But surely the intentions are precisely what one has to question - not the desire to maintain the tradition, certainly, but the idea that its validity could be demonstrated in this way, by reverting to a style which was archaic, except for a few details, even when Schoeck was born. For a style to continue to be able to express new things, new relationships have to be found for its constituent elements, and in earlier works, such as the Elegie, Schoeck had sought and found such relationships - such importance as he has in the tradition, indeed, derives partly from his ability to do so. To think that by preserving the external characteristics of a style, as if in aspic, one preserves also its powers to move and express, is simple illusion.

It is also self-destructive. In renouncing all stylistic complexities for this work, Schoeck was suppressing not only specific techniques but a whole side of his personality - that inquisitive, 'constructivist' side which had formerly saved his music from being merely derivative and had indeed provided some of his most individual effects. Sudden changes of direction are, as we know, extremely common in his work, but here we have the uncomfortable feeling that, in anathematising general modernity, Schoeck has also anathematised his own inventiveness. Certainly no other song cycle of his (there are worse compositions in other genres) contains music of such bland impersonality.

There is a song in Das holde Bescheiden called 'Restauration'. In the poem, Mörike tells of his revulsion on reading through a manuscript of verses, sickly things 'reeking of faded roses and camomile blossom', and of the relief he felt when he went out into the garden and ate a fresh, sturdy root. Schoeck's music for the first part, marked 'ärgerlich, parodierend' and 'troppo espressivo', is obviously meant as a parody of his hated moderns, with parallel

seventh-chords and a quasi-serial inversion of the texture. But this 'sickly' music, precisely because of these devices, is much more vigorous than the would-be 'healthy' music which follows; and though it sounds little like Debussy or Schoenberg, it sounds remarkably like earlier Schoeck. Heard in this light, the parody turns into self-parody; the joke misfires. Schoeck was often at his best when being the sort of composer he wanted not to be.

CHAPTER 12

DER SÄNGER

Schoeck's discovery of Leuthold continued throughout the summer of 1944. The more he read, the more he found that seemed to echo his own concerns, especially with regard to artistic matters. In his bitter, ironic attacks on the Philistines of his day, Leuthold, we are told, came to appear to him like a 'Swiss Heine'.[1] In September he started composing again, and by the following February he had completed the twenty-six songs of Der Sänger.[2] The first performance was given on 17 May 1945 by Ernst Haefliger and the composer.

Like Spielmannsweisen, the new cycle deals with the artist in relation to his times, and from Corrodi's description one might think it a satirical complement to the earlier work, full of sardonic epigrams and sharp, spiky music - another Gaselen. In fact it is both more and less than this. The satirical element is only one aspect of Der Sänger, which covers a wide range of subject-matter and indeed provides what may be taken as a representative view of Leuthold's work. There are poems about nature, poems which express a longing for the south, poems about the fascination of antiquity, poems about parting, homesickness and return - all these in addition to the satirical pieces. At the same time, this very richness of material makes it difficult to speak of a single definitive theme. Even in Gaselen Schoeck's lyricism had blunted the satirical edge; in a songbook of nearly thirty numbers, only a fifth of which are satirical anyway, any sense of a harsh, accusatory work is almost entirely lost - especially since the music is some of the warmest Schoeck ever wrote.

1) OS p. 324.

2) See OS pp. 324-6, 344-50; V pp. 174-83; G pp. 27-9, 148, 157; D pp. 273-4; S pp. 51-6. Score by U.E. (1951).

As in the earlier songbooks, the songs are divided into four groups, these corresponding to the various poetic themes. In a note to the score, Schoeck explains that the cyclical ordering of the poems is his, and that he considers the main ideas to be as follows: Begeisterung (passion, enthusiasm, inspiration - the word is hard to translate), Ernüchterung (disillusionment), Flucht in den Süden und in die Schönheit der Antike (flight to the south and to the beauty of antiquity), Heimweh (homesickness), Rückkehr (return), Vereinsamung und Trost in Humor (isolation and consolation in humour), Sarkasmus (sarcasm) and Erinnerung (recollection). We can see from this scheme that Schoeck has done with Leuthold's poems something similar to what he did with those of the Elegie: to give form and coherence to a series of separate numbers by making them into a narrative.

As in the Elegie, this is done by juxtaposing the poems with common themes and implanting verbal links. Some of the latter are quite ingenious. Thus in the fourth poem, 'Waldeinsamkeit', the poet says that he loves to lie down in the woods and listen to the woodland sounds. The next poem, 'Vorwurf', begins: 'Pleasant though it is to lie . . . in the grass, it is pleasanter still to soar with the eagle high above land and ocean.' A little later, in the poem called 'Abkehr', the poet bids farewell to his native valleys before embarking on his 'flight to the south', and his last words (addressed to himself) are: 'May migrant birds go with you across the mountains to distant lands.' The next poem, predictably, is about a bird flying to the south ('Waldvögelein'). Our last example concerns the final poem, 'Trost', in which, after all his unhappy experiences, the poet seeks consolation in memories. Here the connection is not so much verbal as one of the kind found at the end of Unter Sternen, or even in Op. 24, where a poem seems to reflect back on experiences described in previous numbers. The attempt at optimism is another characteristically Schoeckian Aufhellung - a curiously muted one, this time.

These connections are, of course, neither as detailed nor as specific as those in the Elegie; one might almost add, not as interesting. The Leuthold cycle lacks the single, unifying

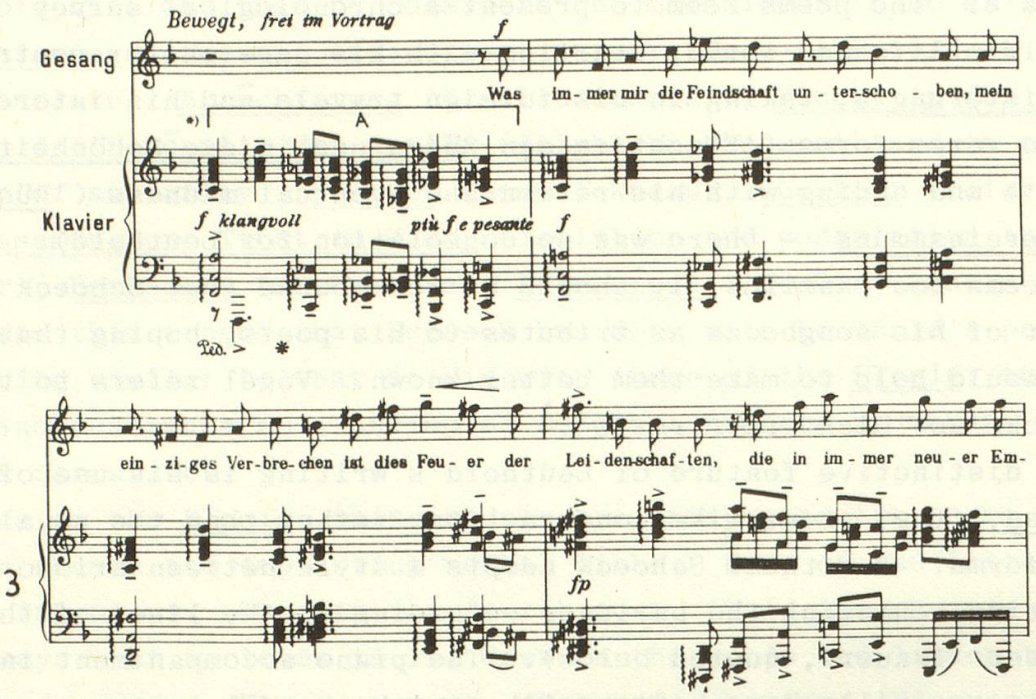
experience which transcends the individual interest of the Elegie poems and makes them appear parts of a whole. Or rather, it does have a single, unifying experience, but this experience is not Schoeck's. The poems seem to present a chronological survey of Leuthold's life and works, starting with his passion for poetry ('Begeisterung'), taking in his foreign travels and his interest in archaic verse forms ('Flucht in den Süden und in die Schönheit der Antike') and ending with his return and eventual madness ('Rückkehr' and 'Vereinsamung' - there was no consolation for Leuthold). If this seems too fanciful, it should be remembered that Schoeck thought of his songbooks as tributes to his poets, hoping that his music would help to make them better known. Vogel refers to these songbooks as 'Dichterportraits'.[1]

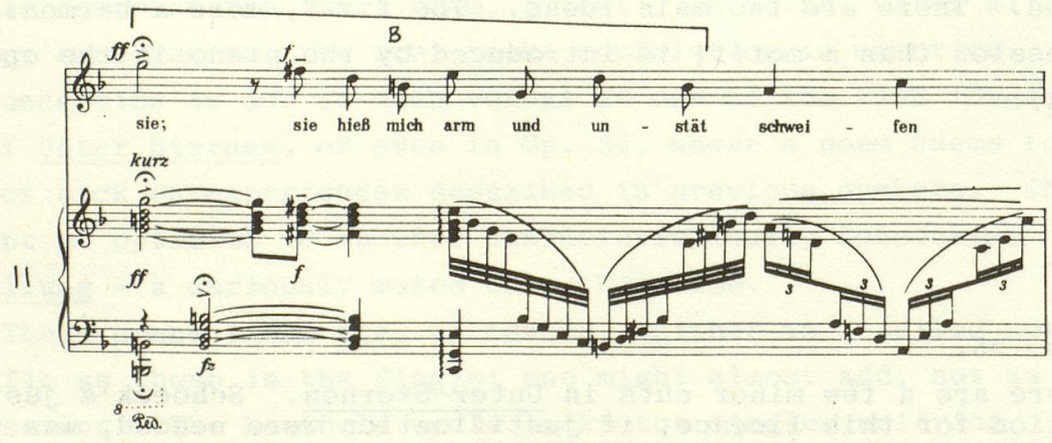
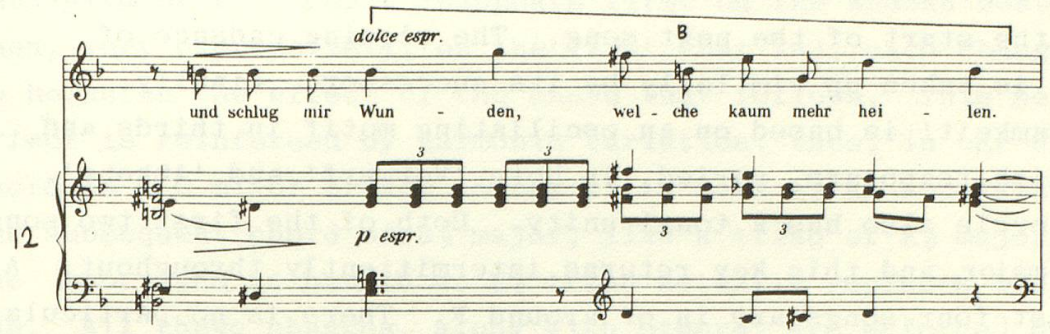
A distinctive feature of Leuthold's writing is his use of Strophen, free, prose-like constructions rather than the usual verse forms. For these Schoeck adopts a style between arioso and recitative, changing the barlines according to the lines of the text (see 'Trauer', quoted below). The piano accompaniment in such cases is generally homophonic, with a rich chordal texture, sometimes doubled in octaves between the hands - hence the 'warmth' of this music. Schoeck makes cuts in several poems, deleting whatever seems to him too topical, too political or too overtly patriotic in tone; he also changes some of the titles. Leuthold was the only poet whom he allowed himself to tamper with in this way.[2]

The most important musical material is found in the opening song, 'Leidenschaft', in which the poet speaks of his driving passion. There are two main ideas. The first, more a harmonic progression than a motif, is introduced by the piano in the opening bar (A):

1) W p. 95.

2) There are a few minor cuts in Unter Sternen. Schoeck's justification for this licence, if justification were needed, was that no definitive edition of Leuthold's verse appeared in the poet's lifetime. OS p. 345n.



The second idea is melodic. It occurs in the voice in bar 11 and is immediately repeated in varied form (B):

These ideas are related to the motto-theme in Spielmannsweisen (cf. the example on p. 369): motif A is a variant of the earlier work's a1, a motif which also appears in Das Schloss Dürande (Corrodi calls it the 'Heimatmotiv');[1] and B is a variant of a2, filtered through the version of that motif in Spielmannsweisen's second song. Both works are of course concerned with the artist theme.

These motifs work their way into many of the songs in the cycle, though there are no explicit quotations. Vogel feels sure these connections are unconscious,[2] and it is true that both motifs appear in many of Schoeck's late works apart from Der Sänger. Motif B, in particular, is to become a cliché even more pervasive than the 'Angedenken' theme. Nevertheless, the repeated appearances of these motifs is a strong unifying factor. Echoes of A are heard in the songs called 'Rechtfertigung', 'Waldvögelein', 'An meine Grossmutter' and 'Der Waldsee', while B reappears in 'Liederfrühling' (piano postlude), 'Rechtfertigung' and 'An meine Grossmutter'. Both motifs come together again in the interlude before the final song.

1) Ibid., pp. 302, 342.
2) Conversation, 31 October 1971.

There are also a number of motivic connections between adjacent songs, and these must surely have been intentional. 'Leidenschaft' ends with a strong falling fifth in the voice which is echoed by the piano at the start of the next song. The closing cadence of 'Riviera' is taken up similarly by its successor. Finally, 'Waldeinsamkeit' is based on an oscillating motif in thirds and sixths which reappears, varied, in both 'Vorwurf' and 'Abkehr'.

The cycle also has a tonal unity. Both of the first two songs are in F major, and this key returns intermittently throughout. All of the last four songs are in or around F. There is no particular significance about the use of this key; it simply confirms that Schoeck thought of the work as a unity.

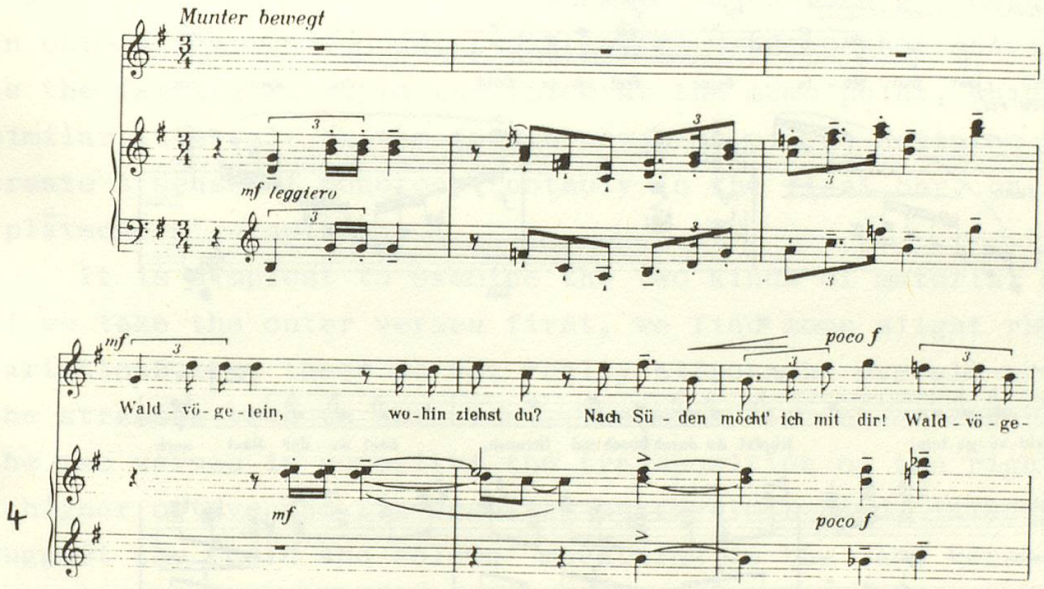
*

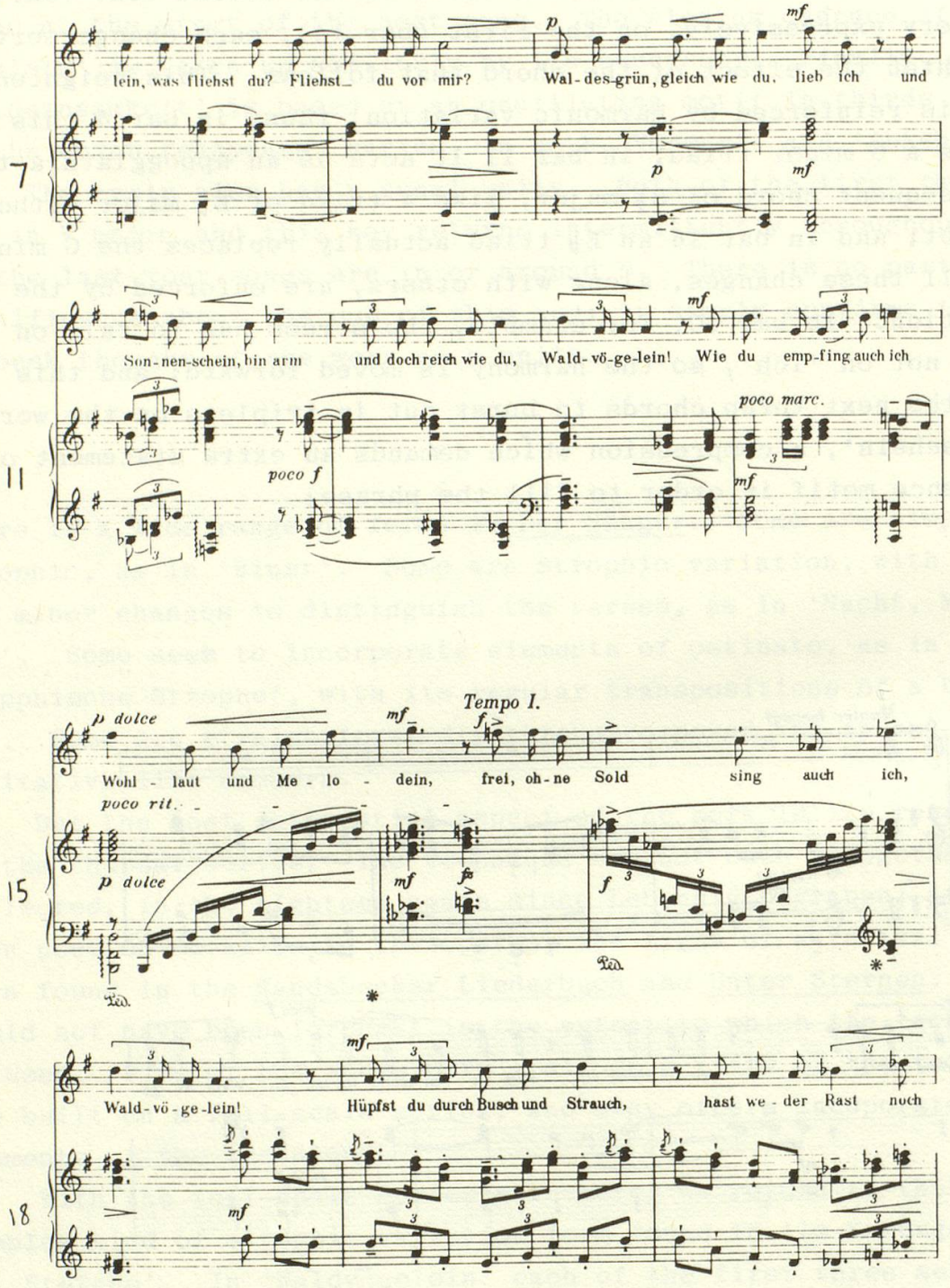
There is a wide range of forms in Der Sänger. Some are simple strophic, as in 'Einst'. Some are strophic variation, with only a few minor changes to distinguish the verses, as in 'Nacht, Muse und Tod'. Some seem to incorporate elements of ostinato, as in 'Sapphische Strophe', with its regular transpositions of a basic bar. Some are straightforwardly throughcomposed, as in any of the recitative-like numbers.

But the most interesting aspect of the work is its resurrection of the chordal series. The technique had not been altogether neglected, in the eighteen years since Lebendig begraben; it had been used on occasion in the operas, and signs of a revival have been found in the Wandsbecker Liederbuch and Unter Sternen. What could not have been forecast is the extent to which the technique is used. Five of the songs here - almost a fifth of the total - are built on a full-scale series, and many others incoporate elements of the technique.

With the full-scale series structures we return to the more complex kind of strophic variation form found in 'Im Kreuzgang von St. Stefano'. In 'Waldvögelein' each of the first three series is a rhythmic variation of the same harmonic pattern, but here the whole texture is varied, so that each chord becomes a separate 'event'. The chirping figure in bar 4 (piano right hand), for

example, is turned into a sustained chord in bar 9 and reduced to the status of a passing note in bar 14. Also, the B minor triad on the third beat of bar 5 reappears first on the second beat (bar 10), then, very expressively, on the first (bar 14), each change serving to heighten the effect of the chord that follows. This heightening effect is reinforced by harmonic variation: thus, in bar 6 this chord is a G minor triad; in bar 11 it acts as an appoggiatura to the subsequent chord of B♭ major, like a triad of E♭ major without the root; and in bar 16 an E♭ triad actually replaces the G minor one. All these changes, along with others, are enforced by the declamation. In bar 10, for example, the stress has to fall on 'lieb', not on 'ich', so the harmony is moved forward; and this allows the next three chords to burst out in triplets on the word 'Sonnenschein', a compression which demands an extra statement of the cadence motif in order to fill the phrase:

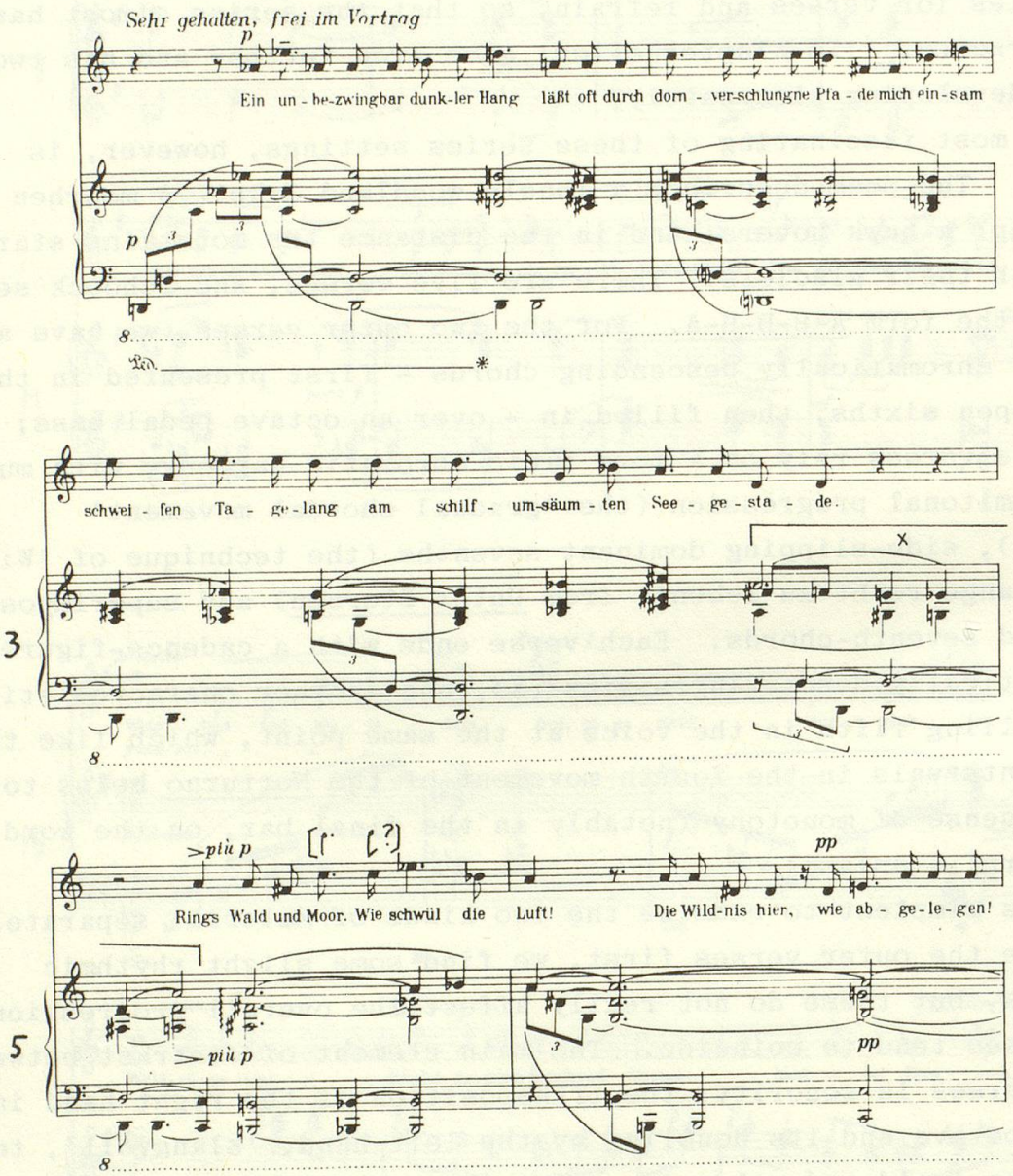


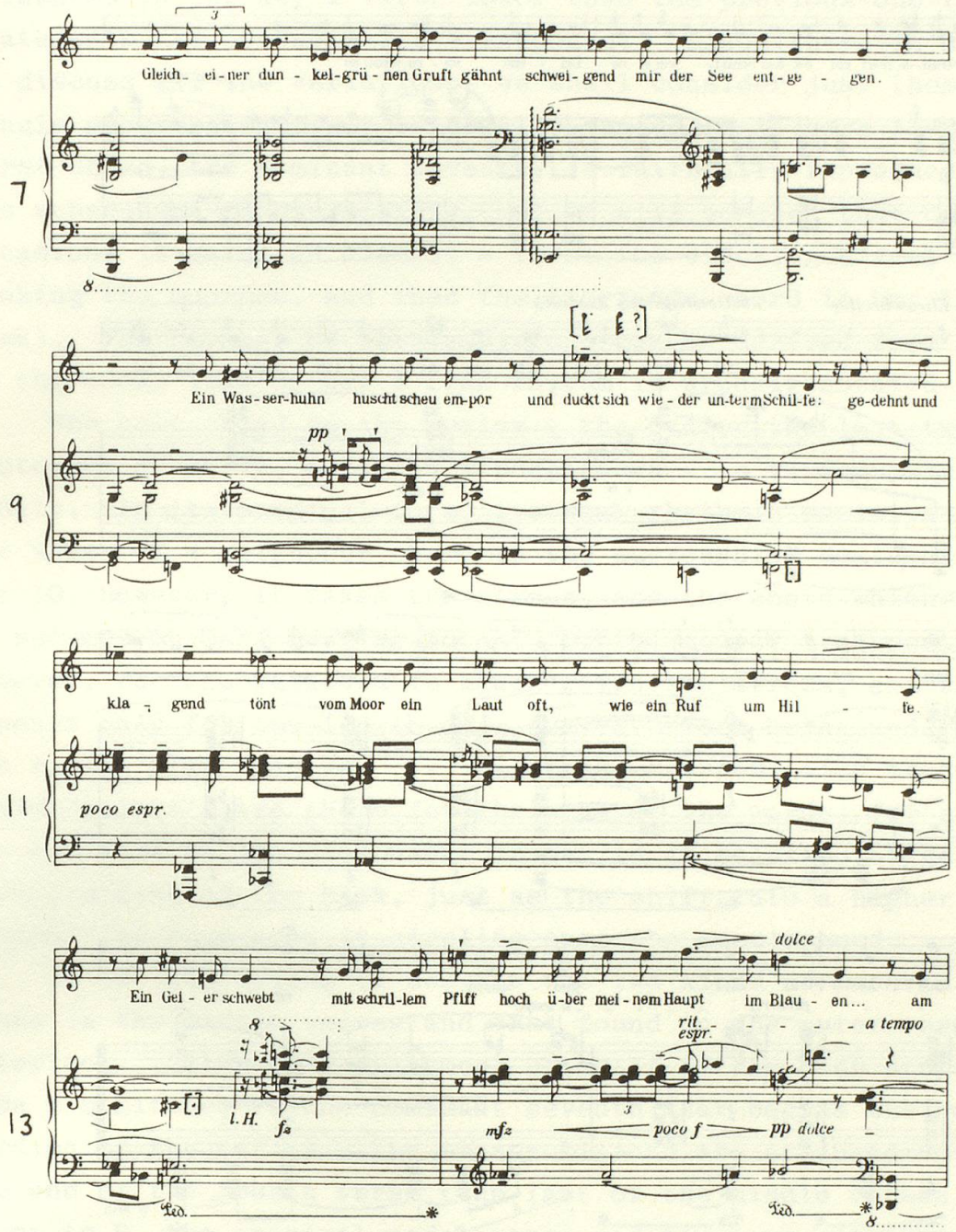

lein, was fliehst du? Fliehst_ du vor mir?
Wal-des-grün, gleich wie du, lieb ich und
Son-nen-schein, bin arm und doch reich wie du,
Wald-vö-ge-lein! Wie du emp-fing auch ich
poco marc.
poco f
Tempo I.
Wohl-laut und Me-lo-dein, frei, oh-ne Sold sing auch ich,
poco rit.
Wald-vö-ge-lein! Hüpfst du durch Busch und Strauch, hast we-der Rast noch

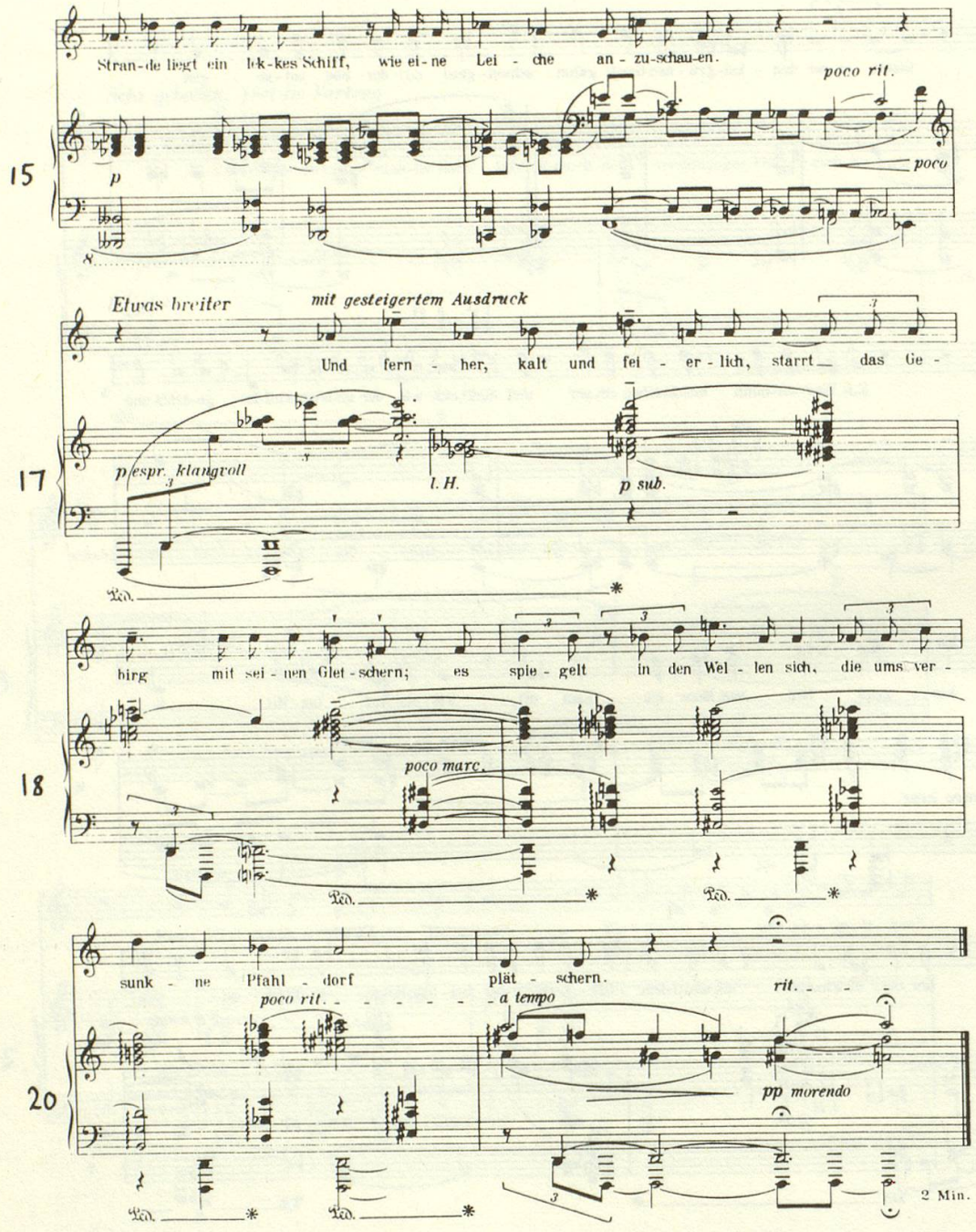
The fourth verse is based on the material of the introduction, no further development presumably being possible.

Each song finds a different application for the technique. 'Muttersprache' is simple strophic - simpler than 'Waldvögelein' - with a one-bar refrain separating the verses. 'Trinklied' uses the same series for verses and refrain, so that the series almost has a dual character. 'Im Klosterkeller' goes even further and has two series, developing alternately.

The most fascinating of these series settings, however, is 'Trauer'. The poem describes a lonely woodland lake. A moorhen flashes up; a hawk hovers; and in the distance the mountains stare forth with their glaciers. There are five verses, and Schoeck sets these in the form A-B-B-B-A. For the two outer verses, we have a series of chromatically descending chords - first presented in the form of open sixths, then filled in - over an octave pedal bass; the middle verses rely on a more fluid chromatic harmony, with much use of semitonal progression (the 'gradual chordal movement' principle), side-slipping dominant sevenths (the technique of 'Wir wahnten lange recht zu leben', from Unter Sternen) and superimposed triads and seventh-chords. Each verse ends with a cadence-figure in chromatically descending sixths (X), and another characteristic is the falling fifth in the voice at the same point, which like the similar intervals in the fourth movement of the Notturno helps to create a sense of monotony (notably in the final bar, on the word 'plätschern' - splash).

It is simplest to examine the two kinds of material separately. If we take the outer verses first, we find some slight rhythmic variations, but these do not really affect the overall progression: the stresses tend to coincide. The main element of contrast between the two verses is sonority: the transposition of the right hand into a higher octave and its doubling by the left hand, 'klangvoll', to suggest the 'cold and solemn' mountains in the last verse, as compared with the thinner scoring of the first (and note the addition of an A♭ on the first crotchet of bar 18).

Sehr gehalten, frei im Vortrag
p
Ein un - be-zwingbar dunk-ler Hang läßt oft durch dorn - ver-schlungne Pfa - de mich ein-sam
schwei - fen Ta - ge-lang am schilf - um-säum - ten See - ge - sta - de.
X
3
più p
Rings Wald und Moor. Wie schwül die Luft!
pp
Die Wild-nis hier, wie ab - ge-le-gen!
più p
pp
5


Gleich ei - ner dun - kel-grü - nen Gruft gähnt schwei - gend mir der See ent-ge - gen.
Ein Was-ser-huhn huscht scheu em-por und duckt sich wie - der un-term Schil-fe: ge-dehnt und
pp
kla - gend tönt vom Moor ein Laut oft, wie ein Ruf um Hil - fe.
poco espr.
dolce
Ein Gei - er schwebt mit schril-lem Pfiff hoch ü-ber mei-nem Haupt im Blau - en... am
rit. espr.
a tempo
l. H.
fz
mfz
poco f
pp dolce
Ped.
Ped.


15
Stran-de liegt ein lek-kes Schiff, wie ei-ne Lei - che an - zu-schau-en.
poco rit.
poco
p
Etwas breiter
mit gesteigertem Ausdruck
Und fern - her, kalt und fei - er - lich, starrt das Ge -
17
p espr. klangvoll
l. H.
p sub.
Ped.
hirg mit sei - nen Glet - schern; es spie - gelt in den Wel - len sich, die ums ver -
18
poco marc.
Ped.
Ped.
sunk - ne Pfahl - dorf plät - schern.
poco rit.
a tempo
rit.
20
pp morendo
Ped.
Ped.
2 Min.

The material of the middle verses is varied more radically, and therefore has more of the character of a series. There are three statements, each corresponding to a verse of the poem and each presented in the key a fifth lower than the previous one (the statements are not actually transposed). Since there is not space to discuss all the variations, we shall consider just those of a single progression: that originally announced in bars 5^4-6^4. The first chord, the dominant seventh, is faithfully reproduced on both its subsequent transpositions, but it will be seen that on both occasions it gains an element - first the clucking effect in bar 9, evoking the moorhen, and then the sforzando chord in bar 13 (the hawk). The harmony of both additions can be derived from the note C in the vocal line of bar 5 (the rhythm is wrongly notated here).

The next chord in the series - the 6/4 on the last two crotchets of bar 5, with its appoggiatura - is varied more interestingly. In its original form, its weak rhythmic position gives it the sense of a neighbour chord to the surrounding dominants. In bar 10, however, it takes the stress, and the chord which follows it becomes so many passing notes. On the second transposition, however, the appoggiatura is again given the stress, and the 6/4 appears only for the length of a quaver before being undermined by the rising bass (bar 14^{1-5}). All these changes, like those in 'Waldvögelein', are there for the sake of the words: for example, the emphasis on the dissonance in bar 14 is meant to suggest the shrill piping of the hawk, just as the shift into a higher register is meant to represent it circling over the poet's head.

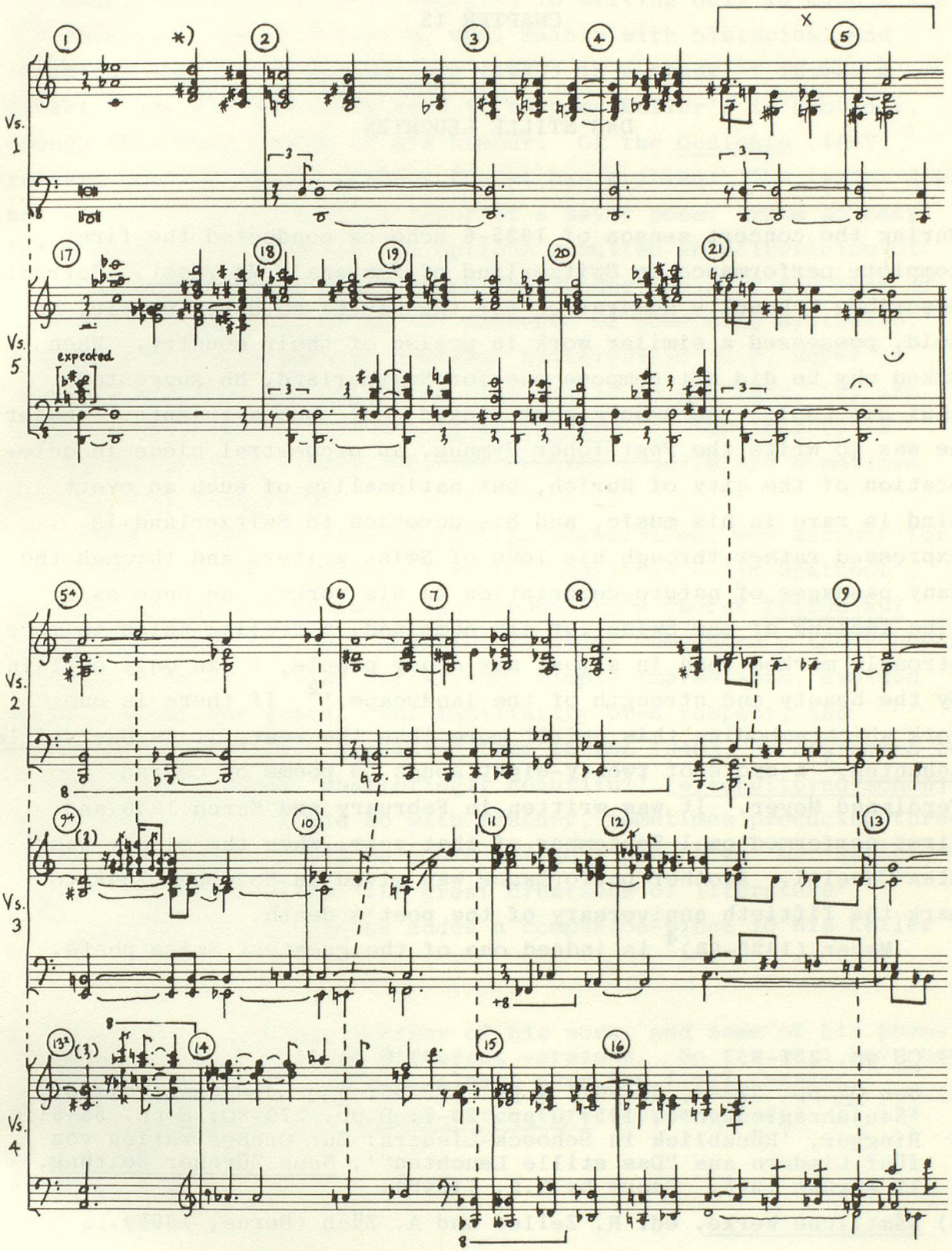
It is interesting to see how the two kinds of material - that found in the middle verses and that found in the outer verses - interlock. After each statement of motif X, the bass drops a tone, then a semitone, to the dominant seventh that begins the next version of the series. The transpositions are arranged so that at the end of the fourth verse (the last of the middle verses) the bass drops to D, the original pedal note; and since we are expecting a dominant seventh, Schoeck gives us one, enharmonically integrated into a repetition of the opening chord. The relation between the various sections is made clear in a chart given at the end of this chapter.

The overall progression of the poem is reflected in an increase and subsidence of rhythmic activity: thus, verse one is fairly static, with pedals, parallel harmony and a few triplets; verse two sees a disappearance of the triplets in favour of a slow, regular minim movement; verse three increases the harmonic rate from minims to crotchets, adds a couple of acciaccaturas and introduces the notion of repeated chords; verse four has syncopation and agitated repeated triplets; and verse five represents a gradual slowing down into the static style of the opening. The barlines merely mark the change of lines in the poem, without implying a scale of 'strong' and 'weak' rhythmic positions - a situation which is the logical corollary of the series technique, though we have seen anticipations of it in such movements as the fourth of the Notturno.

In 'Trauer' Schoeck seems to be combining the series not only with strophic variation but with harmonic areas - for the two kinds of material we have been discussing, though obviously not meant to contrast with one another in the same way as those in 'Nachtgefühl', nevertheless have to be different. The harmonic area technique also reappears in the song called 'Der Waldsee'.

Technically, Der Sänger is Schoeck's richest work since the Notturno. It is almost as if, having gone to extremes of simplicity in Spielmannsweisen, he saw the dangers of this and veered sharply in the opposite direction - 'an almost desperate mobilisation of compositional means' was the phrase used in Part I. Certainly such a course would be characteristic. At the same time, Der Sänger shows that Schoeck's decline is not a question of declining technique. There are several songs, such as 'Trauer', which are both technically complex and finely imagined, and these can rank with Schoeck's best. But there are many more in which the technical complexity stands in alarming discrepancy with the poverty-stricken quality of the material - witness 'Warnung' and 'Aus dem Süden'. For this reason Der Sänger, for all its accomlishment, cannot be counted among Schoeck's best works. But it is certainly one of his most interesting.

Harmonic Symmetries in 'Trauer'



CHAPTER 13

DAS STILLE LEUCHTEN

During the concert season of 1935-6 Schoeck conducted the first complete performance in Switzerland of Smetana's Ma Vlast. Corrodi describes Schoeck's admiration for the piece: no other people, he said, possessed a similar work in praise of their country. When asked why he did not compose one for Switzerland, he suggested that his whole life's work constituted just such a tribute.[1] Later he was to write the Festlicher Hymnus, an orchestral piece in celebration of the city of Zurich, but nationalism of such an overt kind is rare in his music, and his devotion to Switzerland is expressed rather through his love of Swiss writers and through the many passages of nature-description in his works. He once said: 'The feeling of the Swiss for his homeland, a feeling which is more strongly marked than in almost any other people, I can only explain by the beauty and strength of the landscape.'[2] If there is one work which embodies this spirit more than the rest, it is Das stille Leuchten,[3] a cycle of twenty-eight songs to poems by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. It was written in February and March 1946 and first performed on 1 September of that year, when the singer was Elsa Cavelti. Another performance was given in November 1948 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the poet's death.

Meyer (1825-98)[4] is indeed one of the greatest Swiss poets.

1) OS pp. 227-8.

2) G p. 44.

3) See OS pp. 328-9, 356-61; V pp. 186-95; W pp. 41-6 (analysis of 'Neujahrsglocken'), 145; G pp. 25-7; D pp. 279-80; S pp. 56-61; Ringger, 'Rückblick in Schoeck-Liedern: Zur Orchestration von fünf Liedern aus "Das stille Leuchten"', Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 12 August 1975. Score by U.E. (1949).

4) Sämtliche Werke, ed. H. Zeller and A. Zäch (Berne, 1963).

He came of a patrician family in Zurich, studied painting and theology, and gave his full energies to writing only in middle age. His novellas, unlike Keller's, deal mainly with historical and religious subjects - Der Heilige (1879) is a study of Thomas à Becket - and are generally held to surpass Keller's in subtlety, though they have little of his humour. Of the Gedichte (1882; revised edition 1892)[1] Norbert Fuerst has written: 'The reader does not easily find the central tenor of a Meyer poem. From so many influences, possibilities and options resulted an eclecticism of attitudes, themes and tones which the reader feels as the lack of something compelling, or as the presence of something synthetic.'[2] Schoeck states the problem somewhat differently: 'C.F. Meyer is angular, polished and chiselled like marble on one hand, shy and aloof on the other - always noli me tangere!'[3] The imagery is bright and sharply visualised, the emotion elusive and sometimes deliberately disguised.

This reserve, or lack of straightforwardness, may account for the relatively small number of musical settings - 'Im Spätboot', the song by Richard Strauss, and Schoenberg's chorus Friede auf Erden are almost the only examples by major composers - and Schoeck himself, with his liking for strong, simple impressions, avoided Meyer's poems for years. But familiarity bred respect, and ultimately affection. Rereading them in the 1940s, he confessed to finding some of them 'shatteringly beautiful' [erschütternd schön];[4] when he set them, he did so with fluency, sometimes producing three songs a day; and in 1952 he could defend a poem like 'Der Reisebecher' as belonging to 'the great creations of literature'.[5] With Das stille Leuchten he added a companion-piece to his Keller

1) Meyer was a tireless reviser of his work, and some of his poems exist in three or four different versions. So far as I have been able to determine, Schoeck always uses the final version.

2) The Victorian Age of German Literature (London, 1966), p. 112.

3) G p. 166.

4) OS p. 328.

5) G p. 89.

and Leuthold songbooks, so completing what he was later to call his 'Schweizer-Lyriker-Triptychon', his trilogy of works on Swiss poets[1] - as substantial a tribute to his country as any he could have imagined when he conducted the Smetana piece ten years earlier.

The 'gentle radiance' of Schoeck's title is the light from the snow-capped mountains which greets the returning traveller in Meyer's patriotic poem 'Firnelicht' (song 23 in Schoeck's collection). Wherever he goes, the traveller takes this radiance with him - it is part of his very being; and he hopes that before he dies he will be able to give something to his homeland in return - 'perhaps a word, perhaps a song: a small, still light!' More generally, the phrase refers to the mildness of emotion, the spirit of quiet acceptance which is common to many of the poems in Schoeck's selection, and which for Corrodi is the dominating mood of his music at the time.[2] Arising from these meanings, two kinds of subject-matter can be distinguished: the celebration of the Swiss landscape, and the artist's experience of life and the world, the latter sometimes being expressed in mystical or religious terms.

The songs are divided into two groups. The first, entitled 'Geheimnis und Gleichnis' (Mystery and Symbol), comprises eighteen songs, and includes all the mystical and religious pieces; the second, 'Berg und See' (Mountain and Lake), consists of ten songs about nature - this is the 'Swiss' part of the cycle. These groups are further divided into three and two subsections respectively, partly to allow the singer a break, partly to give prominence to certain songs. Within each subsection there is a happy mixture of similarity and contrast, related texts being placed together.

As a musical design the work is more of a collection, and less of a cycle, than any of the other songbooks. There are neither the interludes of the Wandsbecker Liederbuch, the recurring cadences of Unter Sternen nor the more general connections of Der Sänger; and Schoeck explicitly disavows a tonal scheme (see his note to the score). Our review of the overall form is therefore concerned more with the poems than with the music.

1) W p. 95.

2) OS p. 356.

As always, the first and last songs in a group seem to have special significance. The first song of all, 'Das heilige Feuer', has art as its theme, and could stand as a motto for the whole cycle. The same theme is found in the second song, 'Liederseelen', with its band of 'sweet apparitions' which the poet discovers in his garden at night. Each spirit identifies itself thus:

'Ich bin ein Wölkchen, gespiegelt im See.'
'Ich bin eine Reihe von Stapfen im Schnee.'
'Ich bin ein Seufzer gen Himmel empor.'
'Ich bin ein Geheimnis, geflüstert ins Ohr.'
'Ich bin ein frommes, gestorbenes Kind.'
'Ich bin ein üppiges Blumengewind -'
'Und die du wählst, und der's beschied
die Gunst der Stunde, die wird ein Lied.'

There is also a connection between this song and the following one, 'Reisephantasie', but it is a tonal one, not one of subject-matter. In 'Reisephantasie', one of Schoeck's long, 'narrative arioso' pieces, all the most beautiful things that the traveller has ever known become linked with the idea of a sleeping girl. Both it and 'Liederseelen' end in F major, and to seal the connection Schoeck spaces the final chords similarly. (This song is discussed further below.) After another three songs, the first subsection concludes with a religious setting.

The second subsection opens with two songs about spring. Then, after a third poem, a fourth, 'Was treibst du, Wind?', throws out the following question and answer:

Senken sie ein
den Totenschrein?
'Nein, nein! Sie halten Hochzeit heut!'

And appropriately, the next poem is called 'Hochzeitslied'. The third and final subsection of this group covers a variety of subjects, ending with a vision of the Last Supper in 'Alle'.

The second, 'Swiss' group begins with 'Der Reisebecher'. Clearing out an old drawer, the poet finds his first travelling mug. As he cleans it, he feels himself transported back to the springs and meadows of his childhood (here Schoeck quotes his 'Reiselied' of 1908). This introduces a series of songs about nature which become more and more fervent in emotion as they become more and more Swiss in tone. In 'Das weisse Spitzchen' a little white peak beckons to the poet, calling him away from his work; in 'Göttermahl'

he stands on the mountainside, drinking in draughts of cool air; and in 'Ich würd' es hören' (quoted in the Festlicher Hymnus) he imagines himself lying buried in an Alpine pasture. The climax of this subsection comes in 'Firnelicht' (see above).

The songs of the last subsection are also about nature, but less specifically Swiss. In the final number, 'Jetzt rede du!', Schoeck brings together some of the cycle's more important themes. In his youth, the poet writes, he loved to wander in the wood, confiding to it so many of his feelings; now he seeks it out again, saying: 'Now you speak - Jetzt rede du! - I want to listen.' And speak, after a fashion, it does, though what we hear are more the traveller's thoughts (or the composer's) than the woods. In one of his characteristic piano postludes, Schoeck quotes from two earlier numbers, and in doing so provides a key to the meaning of the work. First he quotes the climax of 'Firnelicht', with its ecstatic 'allüberall ist Firnelicht', and then, after reminding us of the melody of the present song, the passage about the sleeping girl from 'Reisephantasie'. Next there is a second quotation from 'Firnelicht' - this time, of the music to the words 'Was kann ich für die Heimet tun . . . ?' - answered, like the first, by the melody of 'Jetzt rede du!' These quotations can be paraphrased as follows: 'All around me there is this gentle radiance, the symbol of the beauty of my country and all it means to me, which is to say all the most beautiful things I have ever known. What can I do for my country in return? Listen to nature, and translate what I hear into song. This work which I have written, it is my small, still light.'[1]

*

One's first impression of the music is that the songs have a more

1) According to Schoeck's friend Josef von Vintschger, this postlude was an afterthought, having been added after a visit to Hesse. 'One can read on the pencil sketch, between the last magnificent chords: "Das kann ich für die Heimat tun". It is Schoeck's personal answer to Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's question in "Firnelicht".' Quoted in D p. 280.

conventional 'look' on paper than those of Schoeck's previous cycle, Der Sänger. The recitative-like style which characterised the most adventurous numbers in that collection has disappeared along with Leuthold's rambling lines, and Meyer's more tightly-knit structures find expression in music of a correspondingly narrower range. There is still a great variety of forms: simple strophic ('Lenzfahrt'), ternary ('Das Ende des Festes'), Schoeckian ostinato ('Unruhige Nacht'), narrative arioso ('Reisephantasie') and throughcomposed ('Der Reisebecher'). But the style has narrowed: it has lost the toughness that it had in Der Sänger, and consequently seems rather inhibited, almost subdued.

It is also self-derivative. Das stille Leuchten, we feel, must surely have been the work Ringger had in mind when he wrote of the last cycles as being mere 'reminiscences' of the early songs (see above, p. 6). And the work most frequently recalled is the Elegie. As in the string orchestral piece Sommernacht, composed the previous year, Schoeck invokes his early cycle again and again, possibly hoping it would bring as many new ideas with it as it did before. The A♭ major second subject of 'Herbstentschluss', itself a recollection of the early 'Die Kapelle', turns up again, also in A♭, in the song 'In einer Sturmnacht', while 'Angedenken' is reworked yet again in 'Der römische Brunnen'. There are the old major-minor changes, only lacking their former poignancy, in 'Lenzfahrt'; and in 'Am Himmelstor' the final cadence of 'Verlorenes Glück' returns, not in its powerful, individual version but exactly as our anonymous hack might have penned it. The whole work is indeed another elegy, but this time an elegy for Schoeck's own lost creative powers.

Not that it is completely without new ideas. In particular, Schoeck makes notable attempts to extend the series technique. The first, introductory section of 'Reisephantasie' - altogether a most beautiful song - is built on a six-chord series, consisting of a threefold sequence (bars 1-4 in the example below), to which a cadence-motif is sometimes added (X). In all, eight kinds of variation take place:

(a) displacement of the series over the phrase: e.g. the second verse begins with chord 3, not with chord 1 (bar 9);

(b) rhythmic expansion and contraction of individual chords, plus rhythmic embellishment (arpeggios in bars 9 and 12);

(c) melodic and harmonic embellishment, whether by
  (i) appoggiaturas (the F in bar 5^2) or other decorative figures (bar 10),
  (ii) chromatic passing notes (the E in bar 7^3), or
  (iii) major-minor alterations within a chord (bar 6);

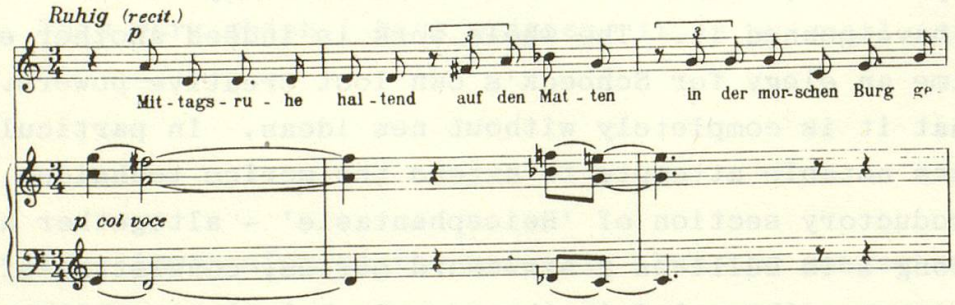
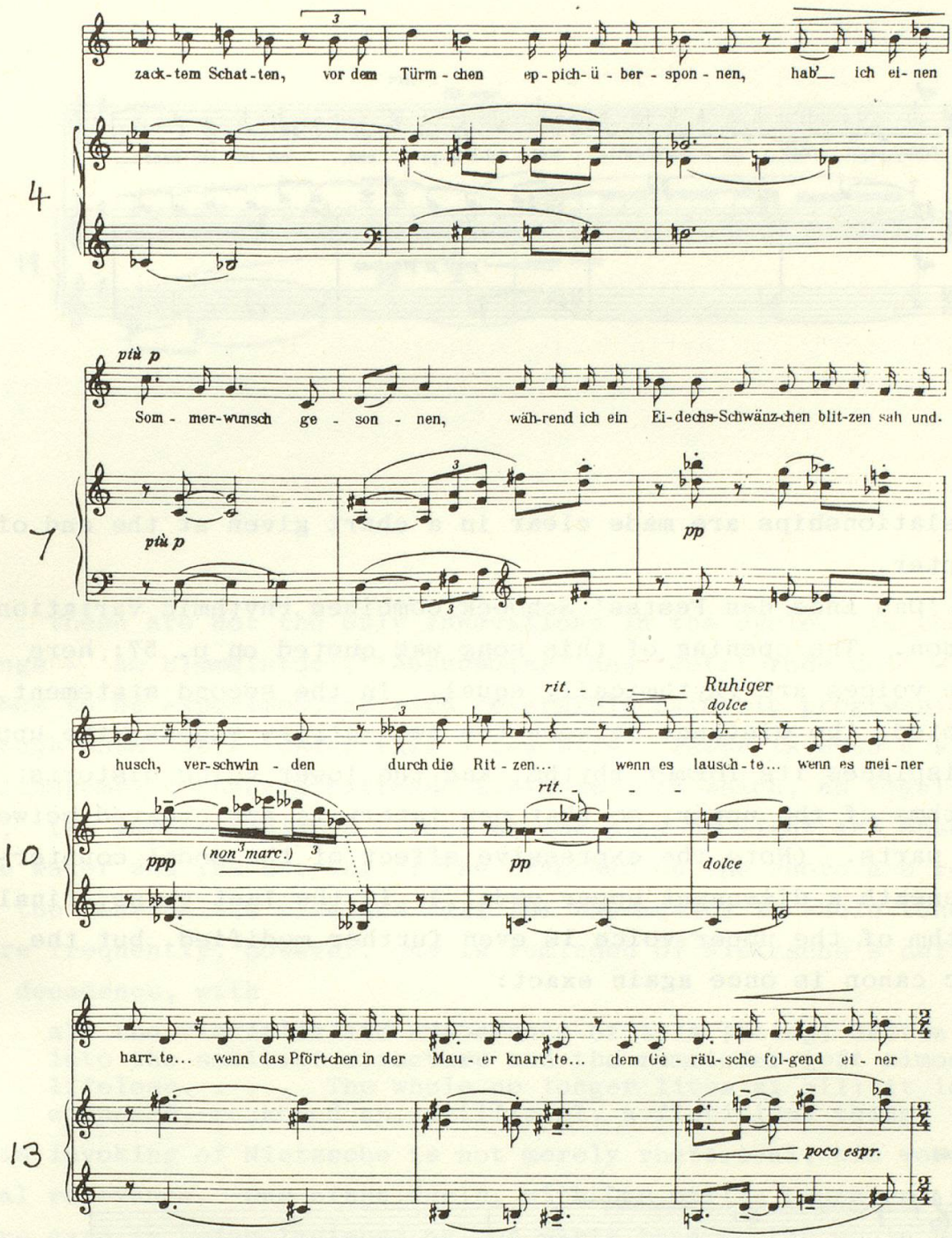
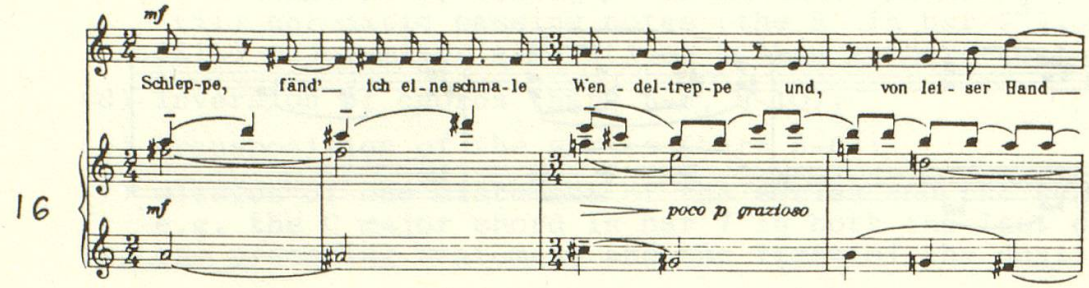
(d) inversion of chords (bars 5-6, 9-10);

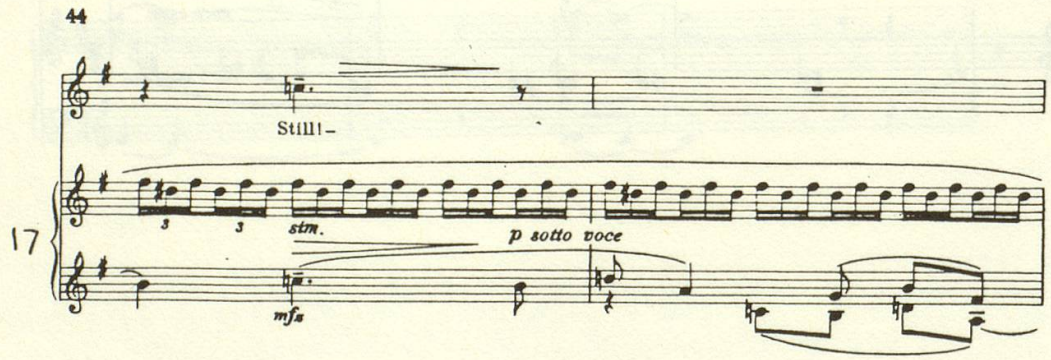
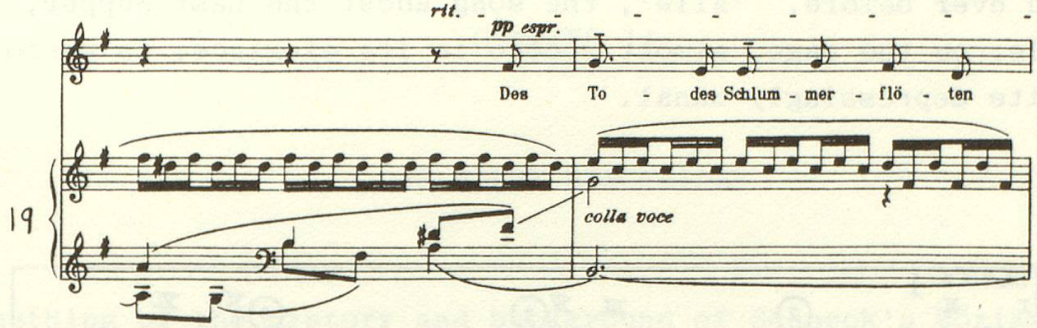
(e) transposition of the series (bars 5-6);

(f) elision of one statement of the series and the next: e.g. the C major chord in bar 7 is both the last chord of the preceding statement and the first of the next;

(g) variation of articulation, especially in bars 9-11;

(h) extension of the series: bars 10-11 continue the sequence downwards.

In addition the joints between statements should be noted. The last chord of the first statement resolves onto a 6/4 by means of a common note (cadence X). This 6/4 starts the second, inverted statement. When the final chord of the third statement is reached, it too is followed by a 6/4 - but not the same one: the G♭ minor triad merely continues the sequence for another two bars. Cadence X, not used here, returns instead, transposed, in bar 13, where it breaks up the new statement after its second chord; the rest of that statement is then transposed. Cadence X also appears, now inverted, in bars 16-17:


4
zack-tem Schat-ten, vor dem Türm-chen ep-pich-ü-ber-spon-nen, hab' ich ei-nen
7
più p
Som-mer-wunsch ge-son-nen, wäh-rend ich ein Ei-dechs-Schwänz-chen blit-zen sah und.
più p
pp
10
husch, ver-schwin-den durch die Rit-zen... wenn es lausch-te... wenn es mei-ner
rit.
Ruhiger
dolce
ppp
(non marc.)
pp
rit.
dolce
13
harr-te... wenn das Pförtchen in der Mau-er knarr-te... dem Gè-räu-sche fol-gend ei-ner
poco espr.

These relationships are made clear in a chart given at the end of the chapter.

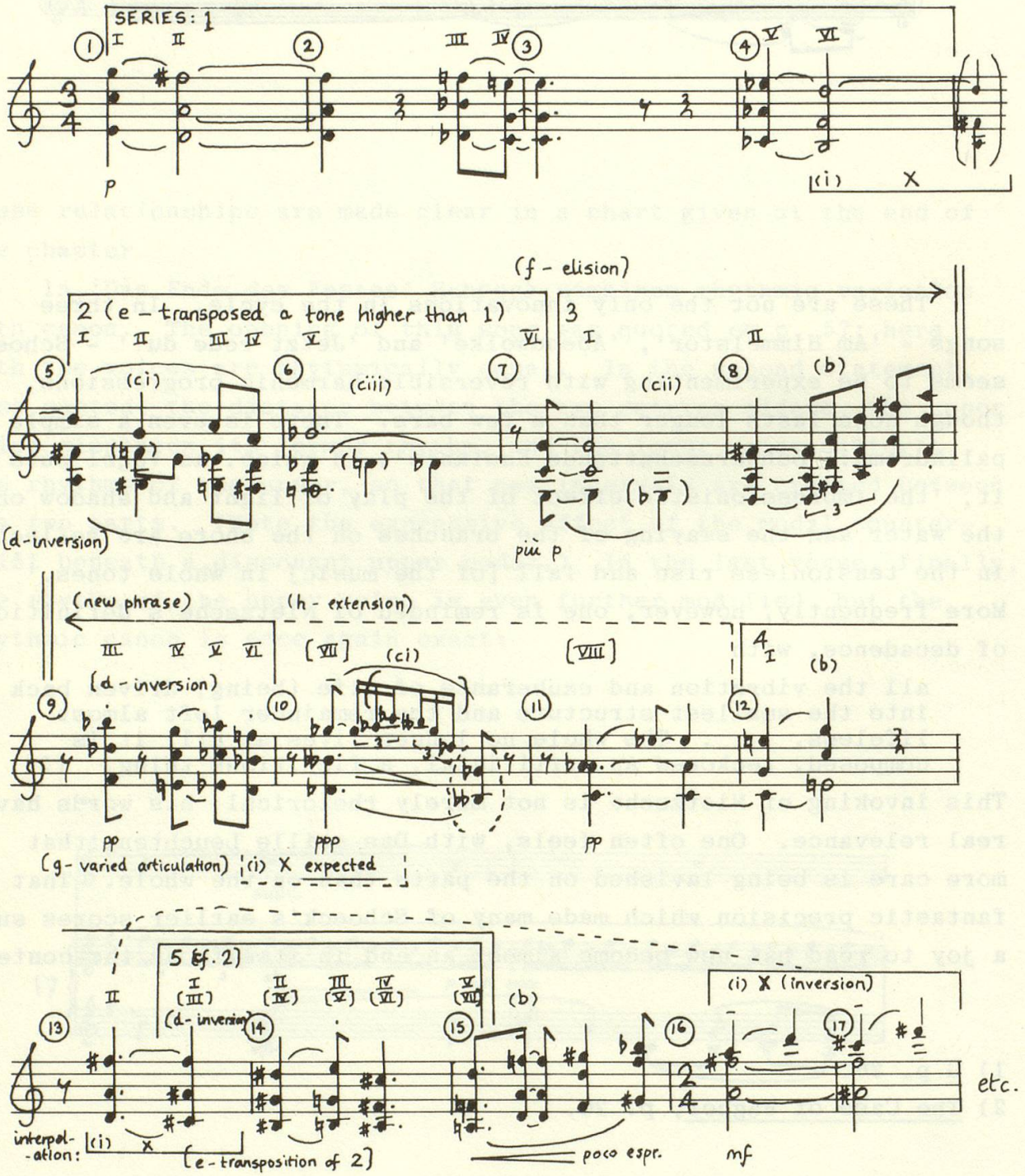
In 'Das Ende des Festes' Schoeck combines rhythmic variation with canon. The opening of this song was quoted on p. 57; here both the voices are rhythmically equal. In the second statement, also quoted, the distance between the two entries widens, the upper voice displaces its former rhythm, and the lower voice distorts the rhythms of the upper, so that new intervals are created between the two parts. (Note the expressive effect of the modal counterpoint beneath a dissonant upper pedal.) In the last verse, finally, the rhythm of the upper voice is even further modified, but the rhythmic canon is once again exact:

These are not the only innovations in the cycle. In three songs - 'Am Himmelstor', 'Abendwolke' and 'Jetzt rede du!' - Schoeck seems to be experimenting with reversible harmonic progressions, though none lasts longer than a few bars. There is even a simple palindrome: 'Schwarzschattende Kastanie', in which, as Vogel puts it, 'the impressionistic effect of the play of light and shadow on the water and the swaying of the branches on the shore are reflected in the tensionless rise and fall [of the music] in whole tones.'[1] More frequently, however, one is reminded of Nietzsche's definition of decadence, with

> all the vibration and exuberance of life [being] driven back into the smallest structure and the remainder left almost lifeless. . . . The whole no longer lives at all: it is composed, reckoned up, artificial, a fictitious thing. (2)

This invoking of Nietzsche is not merely rhetorical; his words have real relevance. One often feels, with Das stille Leuchten, that more care is being lavished on the parts than on the whole. That fantastic precision which made many of Schoeck's earlier scores such a joy to read has now become almost an end in itself: as the content

1) G p. 26.
2) The Case of Wagner, p. 20.

becomes thinner, so the writing, the notation, becomes more meticulous than ever before. 'Alle', the song about the Last Supper, is an example: on the page, almost rococo in its elegance; in performance, quite depressingly banal.



CHAPTER 14

DAS HOLDE BESCHEIDEN

Something of the history and background of Schoeck's Mörike cycle[1] was given in Part I (p. 59). It was written in 1947-9, partly as a belated response to Mörike's poetry (which Schoeck, as a devoted follower of Wolf, had formerly tended to avoid), partly as a performing vehicle for his wife. It was, in fact, Hilde Schoeck who premiered the two sequences of songs that comprise the work on 25 April 1949 and 30 November 1950 respectively. After the 1949 performance Schoeck and his wife toured the places in Swabia associated with Mörike, as he had done with Rüeger in 1913.[2]

Eduard Mörike (1804-75),[3] like Meyer, was only secondarily a writer. He underwent theological training in Urach and in 1834 settled as a pastor in Cleversulzbach. His meeting with the mysterious Maria Meyer had already been celebrated in his Peregrina poems, which appeared with his other verse in Gedichte (1838). Mörike was also a novelist, and his last substantial work, Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag (1856), is an important document in romantic musical aesthetics. The characteristics of Mörike's verse have been ably summarised by Eric Sams:

> . . . his best poems have a quiet, seemingly passive, quality which is easy to perceive but hard to describe. Imagination, religious devotion, realism and humour in the content of the poems, folk-song and the classic tradition in their form, are

1) See OS p. 332ff., 369-78; V pp. 197-212; G pp. 29, 164; D pp. 287-9; Schuh, 'Othmar Schoeck: "Das holde Bescheiden I und II"', in Von neuer Musik; Vogel, 'Othmar Schoecks zweite Mörike-Liederbuch', SMZ 90/12 (1950). Score by U.E. (1956).

2) See Hesse, 'Drei Briefe an Othmar Schoeck', SMZ 106/5 (1966), p. 266n.

3) Sämtliche Werke, ed. H.G. Göpfert (Munich, 1964).

> some of the component parts of this quality. But its precise definition has been the despair of students and examiners for years. . . . There is indeed a quiet radiance about Mörike's poetry, as if it were in a state of grace. (1)

This 'quiet radiance', so similar to the spirit of Das stille Leuchten, was undoubtedly one of the qualities that attracted Schoeck to Mörike. Even his title reflects it: Das holde Bescheiden, 'sweet acceptance'. In the work, that spirit of serene resignation which is supposed to have characterised his later years, even though every one of his recorded comments contradicts it, finds expression in music which is indeed more cheerful than much of what had gone before. Many of the songs are in warm major keys, and there is even a strain of whimsical humour - anticipated in the Wandsbecker Liederbuch - which one has to welcome, even if the music is not especially distinguished.

There are forty songs, more than in any of Schoeck's other cycles, and for the purpose of performance Schoeck divides them into two programmes or sequences, either of which would fill an evening. In the score, the songs are presented in five groups, preceded by an initial 'Widmung' or dedication. The groups are entitled 'Natur' (eight songs), 'Liebe' (nine songs), 'Betrachtung' (fourteen songs), 'Glaube' (seven songs), and 'Rückblick', this last consisting of a single long setting, 'Besuch in Urach'. There is no particular order to the arrangement, other than that the most important songs should come at the beginning or the end of a group, the most important of all being saved until last. Thus the group about nature begins with an enormous setting of Mörike's description of sunrise, 'An einem Wintermorgen, vor Sonnenaufgang', and the group about faith begins with the song that contains the cycle's title phrase, 'Gebet'. 'Besuch in Urach', which Schoeck was later to orchestrate, can be called the 'most important' song not merely because of its length - it covers over twenty pages in the score - but because of its autobiographical significance for the composer. The poem describes a visit Mörike paid to the valleys where he spent his childhood, and the emotion which this visit aroused in him.

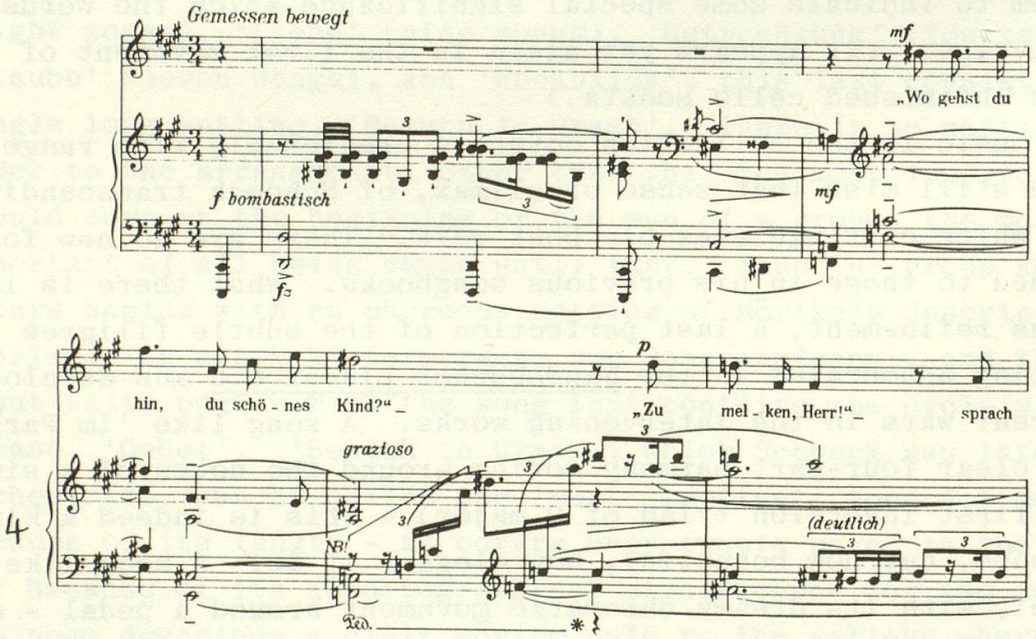
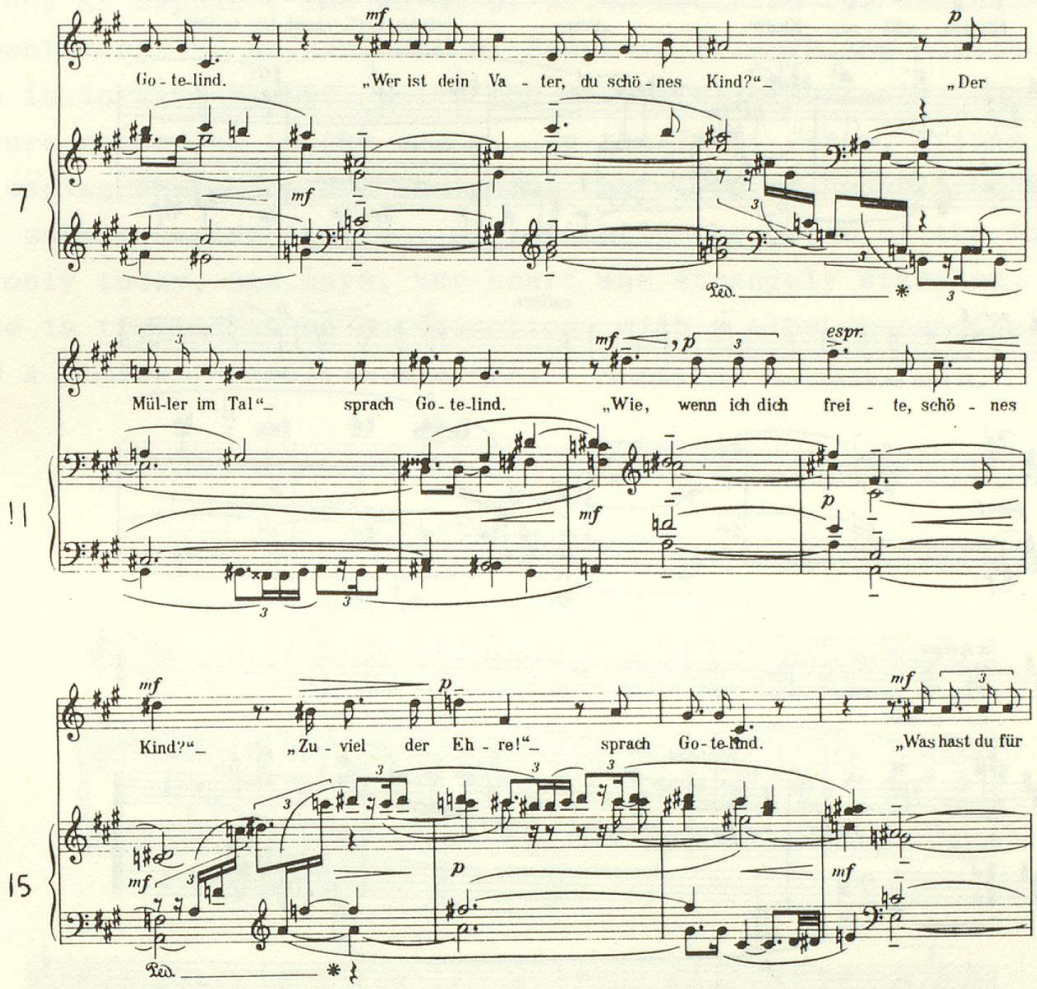
1) The Songs of Hugo Wolf (London, 1961), p. 35.

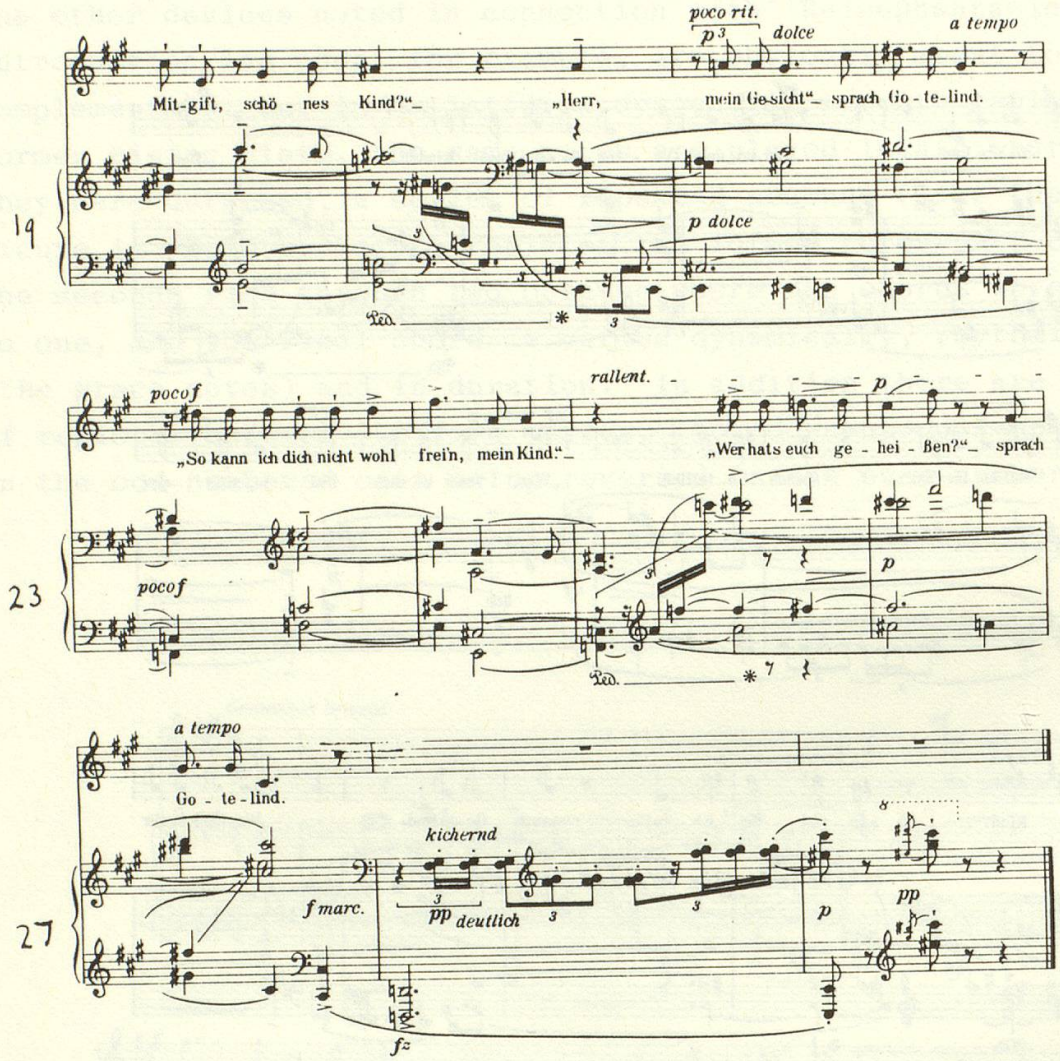
Schoeck's setting, then, is another act of nostalgia, joining that tradition of long, retrospective conclusions begun in 'Jugendgedenken' more than thirty years earlier.

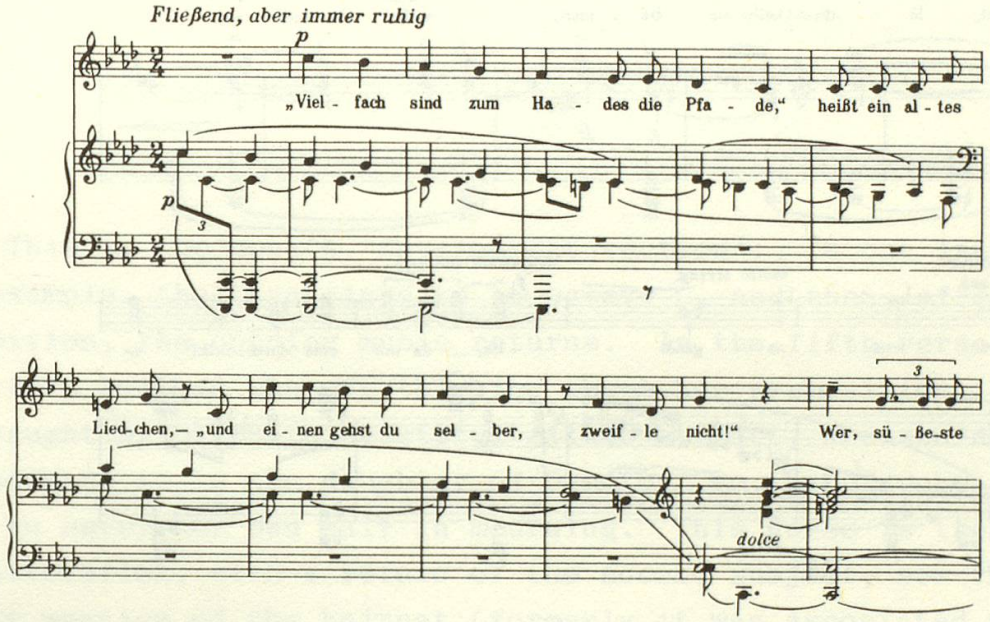
Despite the fact that a complete performance in one session would be impracticable, Schoeck attempts to unify his cycle by means of tonal and motivic links - fewer than those in Der Sänger, and even more tenuous. The binding tonality this time is D, which appears in the first song of the nature group ('An einem Wintermorgen') in its minor mode, changes to major at the end of the song, and thereafter returns no fewer than nine times in the following thirty-seven numbers. The last song, 'Besuch in Urach', is a massive assertion of D major. The only obvious motivic link is the seven-note motif that was called B in connection with Der Sänger, having originally formulated itself in Spielmannsweisen. It is first heard, very prominently, in the postlude to 'An einem Wintermorgen'; it rings out again in the final song of the group about love; and it reappears nostalgically in the coda of 'Besuch in Urach'. The appearance of the motif at these climactic moments would seem to indicate some special significance which the words do not divulge. (It appears yet again in the first movement of Schoeck's unfinished cello sonata.)

The music in the collection covers a predictably wide range, though we still miss that sense of climax, of Schoeck transcending himself, which distinguishes his best work. There are no new forms to be added to those in his previous songbooks. What there is is a tremendous refinement, a last perfection of the subtle filigree part-writing adumbrated in the Wandsbecker Liederbuch and developed in different ways in the intervening works. A song like 'Im Park', with its clear four-part harmony moving around the notes of a single chord (a first inversion triad of D major) - this is indeed a kind of decadence, but how beautiful, how elegant it is! A song like 'Am Walde', with its dreamy chromatic movement around a pedal - of course it is self-derivative, but it also possesses a kind of purity that things normally have only when they are being said for the first time. And in the long, wistful numbers in dialogue form, such as the lovely 'Gesang zu zweien in der Nacht', Schoeck's harmonic area technique finds its last and most suitable home.

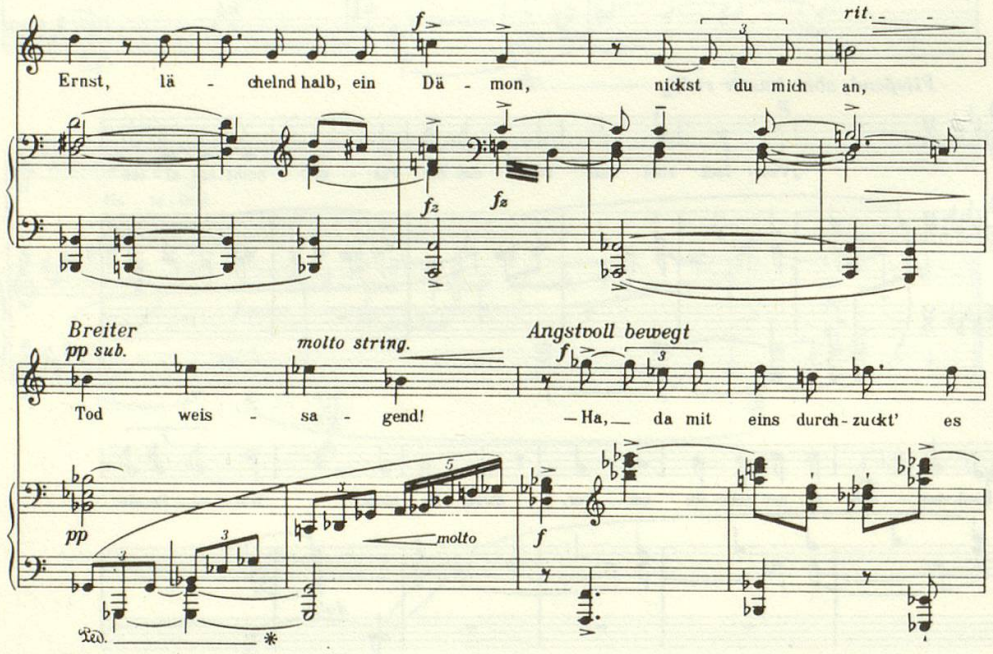
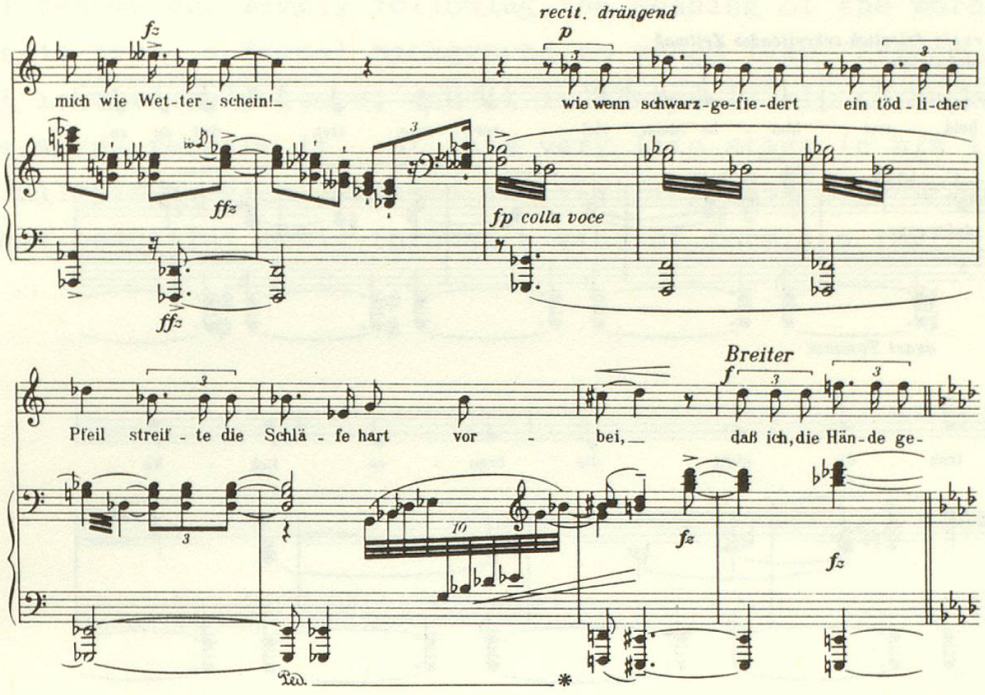
There are no series settings in Das holde Bescheiden; but the interest in variation which first stimulated the technique is constantly present. In 'Ritterliche Werbung' we find octave transposition, chordal inversion, variation of articulation and many of the other devices noted in connection with 'Reisephantasie'. The introduction and coda, for example, are obviously meant to be complementary; but in the latter a descending seventh replaces the former rising ninth, the same notes are played legato where before they were detached, a series of repeated seconds (like the chirping figure in 'Waldvögelein') replaces the former three-part chords, the seconds rise through two octaves where the chords were confined to one, and the final chord is varied dynamically, rhythmically (the grace notes) and in duration. In addition there are contrasts of register between the five verses, the 'down-up-down-up' motion in the odd-numbered ones being reversed in the even-numbered ones:

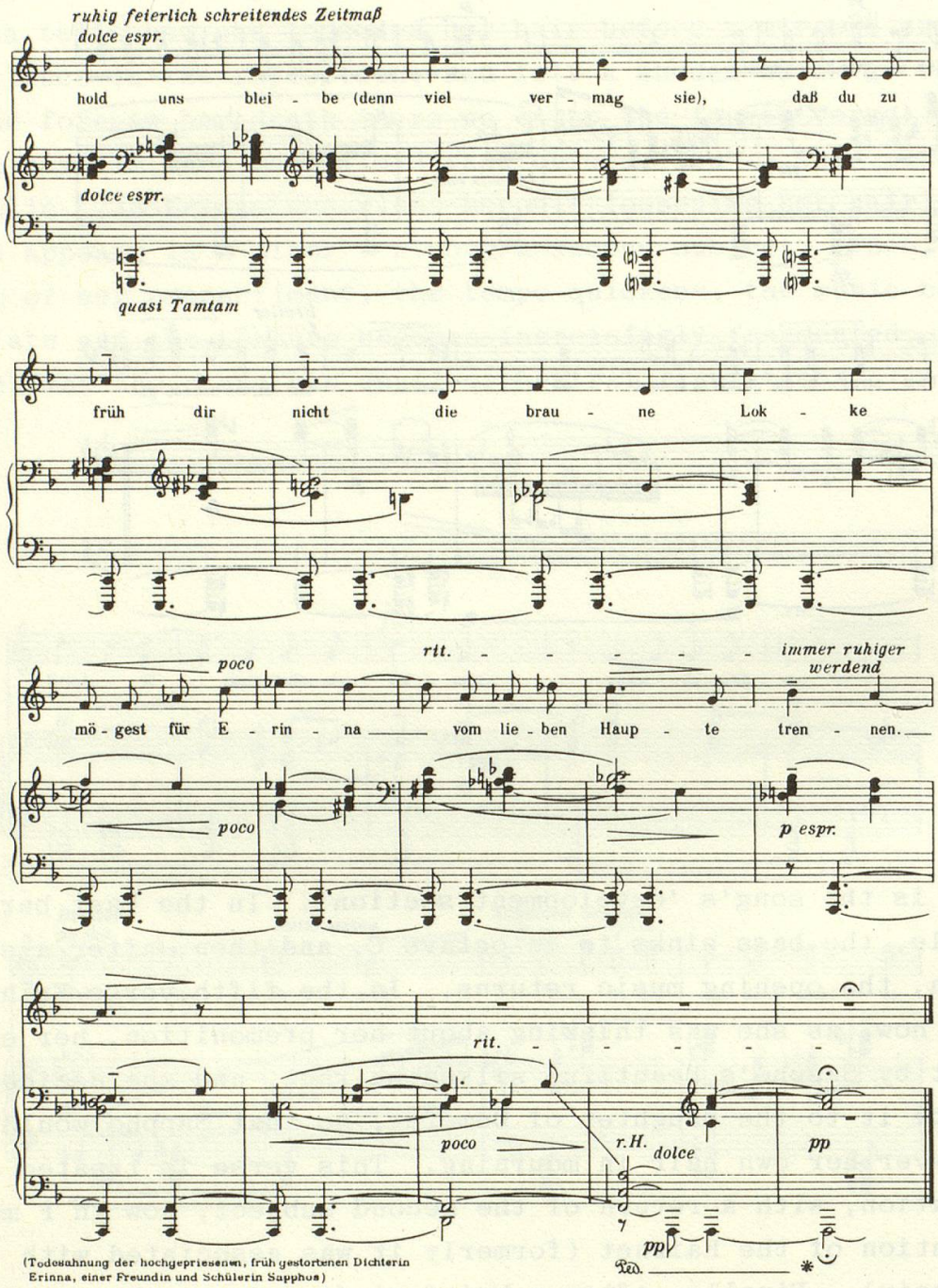


7
Go - te-lind.
„Wer ist dein Va - ter, du schö - nes Kind?"
„Der
Mül-ler im Tal"
sprach Go - te-lind.
„Wie, wenn ich dich frei - te, schö - nes
11
Kind?"
„Zu - viel der Eh - re!"
sprach Go-te-lind.
„Was hast du für
15

poco rit.
dolce
a tempo
Mit-gift, schö - nes Kind?"_ „Herr, mein Ge-sicht"_ sprach Go - te-lind.
19
p dolce
pocof
rallent.
p
„So kann ich dich nicht wohl frei'n, mein Kind:"_ „Wer hats euch ge - hei - ßen?"_ sprach
23
pocof
p
a tempo
Go - te - lind.
kichernd
f marc.
pp deutlich
p
pp
27
fz

The most impressive songs, however, are not the closely-organised ones but the long, rhapsodic numbers in the 'narrative arioso' genre. There are several of them: 'An einem Wintermorgen' and 'Besuch in Urach' have been mentioned, and we must also add a beautiful third 'Peregrina' setting. Another beautiful one is 'Erinna an Sappho', the words of which describe the death-presentiments of Erinna, one of Sappho's friends and pupils. The poem is in five verses, which the music follows freely, changing its texture according to the words. In the first verse, Erinna quotes the saying that many are the roads that lead to Hades, remarking that such a saying 'touches only lightly the bosom of the living'. Yet only today, she says, her heart was strangely startled. This verse is treated as an introduction, with a slow descending melody over a dominant pedal in F minor:

As Erinna asks her friend to listen, the pedal drops to B and the music modulates to A major.

In the second verse, Erinna describes how the morning sunlight tempted her from her bed. The music here is transitional, without any particularly significant themes. Then, in the third verse, Erinna tells how she loosened her hair before a mirror, caught her own glance in the reflection, and felt a sudden shock go through her as she foresaw her death (here we enter the fourth verse). The music here is much more fluid than before, and in some places almost operatic. As Erinna describes herself loosening her hair, a new theme appears in A minor - almost a second subject. Then, as she tells of her presentiment, the tempo quickens, the music begins to modulate and the texture becomes increasingly fragmented, until at the climax the piano has quasi-orchestral figurations:



This is the song's 'development section'. In the last bar of the example, the bass sinks to an octave C, and then, after a short transition, the opening music returns. In the fifth verse Erinna describes how, as she was thinking about her premonition, her eye was caught by Sappho's beautiful silken hairnet, and she decided to dedicate it to the daughter of Demeter, so that Sappho would not have to sever her own hair in mourning. This verse is treated as a recapitulation, with a return of the second subject, now in F major, at the mention of the hairnet (formerly it was associated with Erinna's hair). Finally, after a brief winding-down, the same theme is repeated in varied form for the coda, with the dominant pedals of the opening sounding heavily in the bass, 'quasi tamtam' - the funereal implications are clear:

ruhig feierlich schreitendes Zeitmaß
dolce espr.
hold uns blei - be (denn viel ver - mag sie), daß du zu
dolce espr.
quasi Tamtam
früh dir nicht die brau - ne Lok - ke
poco
rit. - - - - - -
immer ruhiger werdend
mö - gest für E - rin - na vom lie - ben Haup - te tren - nen.
poco
p espr.
rit. - - - - - -
poco
r.H.
dolce
pp
pp
Ped.
(Todesahnung der hochgepriesenen, früh gestorbenen Dichterin Erinna, einer Freundin und Schülerin Sapphos)

It is interesting how, in Das holde Bescheiden, Schoeck seems to be most impressive when he is not tying himself down to any formal scheme but simply following the meaning of the words. There is, it is true, a formal background to songs like 'Erinna an Sappho', but it is extremely loose, and it is always likely to be modified if the words require it. At this very late stage in his life, after all his previous changes and vacillations, Schoeck is writing his most beautiful music through a kind of formless improvisation.

CHAPTER 15

BEFREITE SEHNSUCHT

Befreite Sehnsucht[1] was composed as a tribute to the memory of Werner Reinhart. Reinhart had assisted Schoeck greatly, as he had done many other artists, in the days before the composer became well known, and Schoeck had rewarded him with the dedication of several works, notably Gaselen and Penthesilea. When Reinhart died in 1951 Schoeck looked around for material for a suitable tribute, and his choice fell on four Eichendorff sonnets, which he had thought of setting for some time.[2] He took the title from a phrase in the third poem. The work was originally conceived for soprano and piano, and in this form it was given a private performance on 1 September 1952 by the composer and his wife. Later, however, he scored it for small orchestra, and this version had its premiere on 9 December 1953, when the soloist was Annelies Kupper.

The subject of the poems is the sacred spring that is the source of artistic inspiration. The first poem, 'So viele Quellen von den Bergen rauschen', describes the streams rushing down from the mountains, changing their course and losing their way but in the end coming together to form one great river. The second poem, 'So eitel künstlich haben sie verwoben', tells of those 'vain artificers' who have entwined art with their 'arrogant striving and plotting', leaving it to others to foster the sacred flame. The third poem, 'Ein Wunderland ist oben aufgeschlagen', describes

1) See OS pp. 383ff., V pp. 216-17; G pp. 78, 80, 115; D p. 306; Schuh, 'Befreite Sehnsucht', in Von neuer Musik; Vogel, 'Othmar Schoeck: Ein Schweizer Eichendorff-Komponist'. Vocal and orchestral scores by Symphonia-Verlag AG (1954) [now published by Hug & Co.].

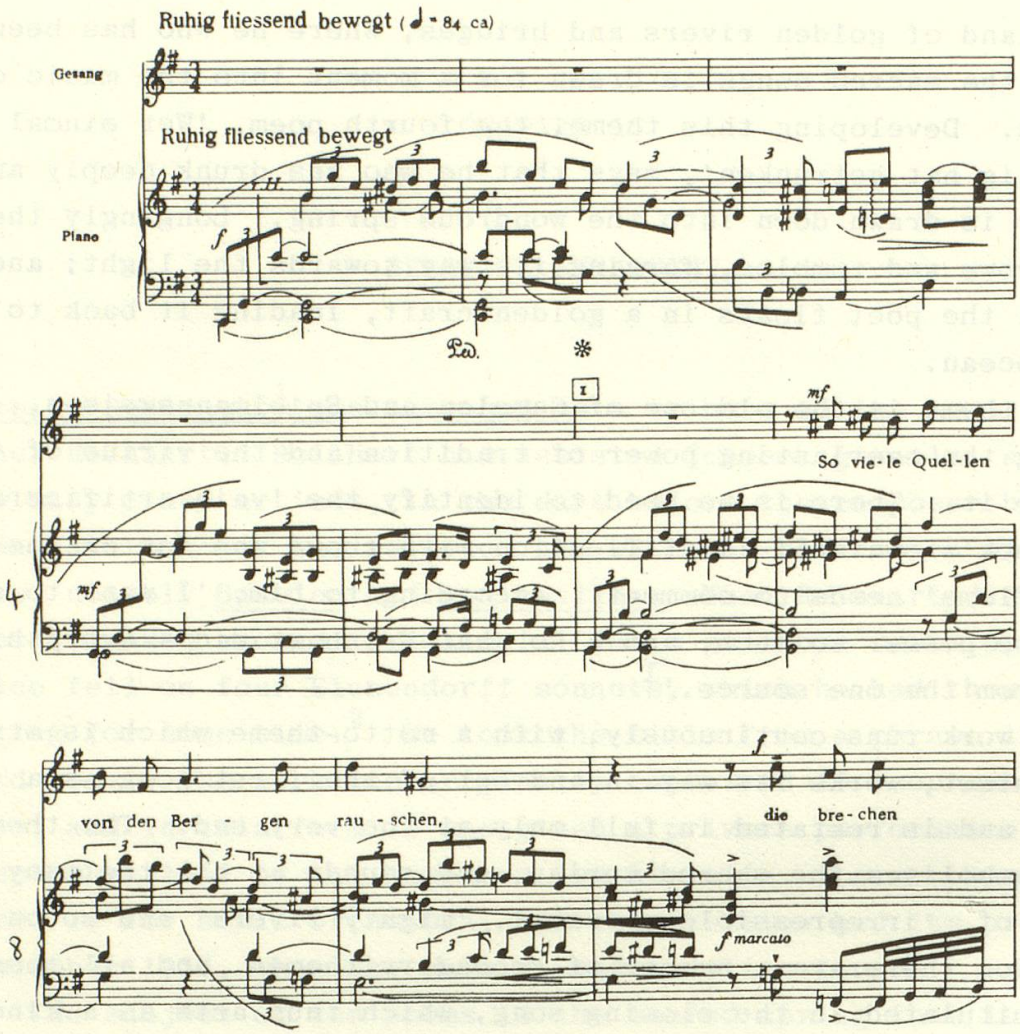
2) G p. 78.

a wonderland of golden rivers and bridges, where he who has been moved by the sacred songs is drawn for a moment into the music of the stars. Developing this theme, the fourth poem, 'Wer einmal tief und durstig hat getrunken', says that he who has drunk deeply and thirstily is drawn down into the wondrous spring. Longingly the spring grows and tumbles, forcing its way towards the light; and on its crest the poet floats in a golden craft, leading it back to the eternal ocean.

The theme is the old one of Gaselen and Spielmannsweisen, extolling the everlasting power of tradition and the virtue of those who serve it. There is no need to identify the 'vain artificers', and Schoeck's own self-identification with those who foster the 'sacred flame' needs no comment. According to him, 'I want to say with these poems: so much, and also what Reinhart did - everything sprang from the one source.'[1]

The work runs continuously, with a motto-theme which is stated at the outset, works its way in and out of the first song as a refrain, and is restated in full only at the very end. The theme of course symbolises the sacred spring, and sounds at all the many mentions of 'irrepressible streams', 'mighty rivers' and so on. In addition there are a number of secondary themes, and all these are recapitulated in the closing song, which thus acts as a kind of reprise (much as some of Schoeck's instrumental interludes recapitulate previously-stated material).

The motto-theme is introduced at the beginning of the first song (A):

1) Ibid., p. 80.

During this number it is transposed, broken up into its constituent elements and otherwise modified, so that we hear only phrases of it, not the complete theme (the treatment recalls Wanderung im Gebirge). The tonal progression is interesting. After the initial statement of the motto-theme, it returns in E♭, E and F among other keys, this sequence later being reversed. At the end of the song the motto-theme is given what is virtually another full statement, this time in D major, so that the song ends in the dominant, like a classical sonata exposition.

The second song begins with a dissonant (but rather feeble) fugue, parodying the 'vain artificers' who have entwined art with

all their wicked neoclassical devices. Then, at the reference to those who foster the sacred flame, Schoeck introduces the first of his secondary themes (already adumbrated in bar 58). This is virtually a quotation from Das stille Leuchten - 'allüberall ist Firnelicht' - and the reference emphasises Schoeck's self-identification with his subject (B, bars 80-3).

The third song, like the second, is based on new material, with a sequential theme at the mention of golden bridges (C, bar 115ff.). There is also an important new cadence-motif (D, bars 120-1), which is first heard transitionally but later bursts out in a passage which Schoeck considered the central one of the cycle (it is quoted on p. 60 above).[1]

The impulse generated by this climax is enough to start the fourth song on a fairly exalted level, and the music now flows quickly towards its goal. Here Schoeck incorporates references to his previous themes: A in bar 154 (following the word 'Welle'), B in bars 168-9, C in bar 173ff., and D in bars 179-80 (where the words are: 'related songs [!] already send greetings from beyond'). Finally, at the mention of the 'eternal ocean', the motto-theme itself streams forth, and this carries the music to its conclusion.

It is difficult to know what attitude to take with Befreite Sehnsucht. It seems that Schoeck is once again deliberately simplifying his music, excluding any effect which might tend to put him among the 'vain artificers' and relying on the basic integrity of the language to carry him through. The result, as before, is suave, competent, even at times rather beautiful - and utterly impersonal.

1) Ibid., p. 78.

CHAPTER 16

NACHHALL

In October 1954 Schoeck invited Vogel to look at two new songs he had written. They were settings of Lenau's double sonnet 'Einsamkeit', one of the most desolating expressions of loneliness by that poet. In the following months Schoeck continued to build up a little collection of Lenau settings, to which he eventually gave the title of Nachhall (taken from the poem that opens the set).[1] In subsequent conversations Schoeck explained how the last Lenau setting in the series is followed by one of Claudius, resolving the music into a lighter sphere. Vogel noticed that Schoeck seemed preoccupied with thoughts of death.[2]

The work is, in fact, the most pessimistic of all the late cycles - 'pessimistic' in general emotional effect rather than in specific textual reference - and in my opinion it reflects more accurately than the others the spirit of Schoeck's last years. (It is significant that 'Einsamkeit' was the first poem to be set.) Schoeck thought it an 'objective' work,[3] but he was surely underestimating the power of his own involvement. For the music of Nachhall, even when it is not distinguished, has the intensity we associate with his most deeply 'confessional' works; and it may be remembered that Schoeck called the last song his requiem (see above, p. 60). As with Befreite Sehnsucht, Schoeck orchestrated the work

1) See OS pp. 389, 392, 402-7; V pp. 223-7; G pp. 142-3, 150-1, 155-7, 164-5; D pp. 312-14; Schuh, 'Othmar Schoecks "Nachhall"', SMZ 96 (1956); 'Die Schlussgesänge in Othmar Schoecks "Notturno" und "Nachhall"', SMZ 107 (1967), reprinted in Umgang mit Musik. Piano score by U.E. (1956); recording by Arthur Loosli and the Chamber Ensemble of Radio Berne, cond. Theo Loosli, Disco 535.

2) G pp. 142, 151.

3) Ibid., p. 155.

almost immediately, and this new version was given its first performance on 6 December 1955, with Elsa Cavelti as soloist.

Nachhall is too much of a miscellaneous collection to be credited with a specific theme, but there is a certain progression in the ordering of the poems which is reinforced, so far as it goes, by the musical links. There are twelve songs (Schoeck wished the double sonnet 'Einsamkeit' to be counted as a single setting, apparently in order to avoid the number thirteen).[1] Songs 1-3 present a situation of loneliness and nostalgia, ending with the possibility of religious hope. In 'Nachhall' the poet overhears a wanderer singing, and feels sad when the echo of his song dies away. In the biographical chapter this number was described as being reminiscent of the Elegie, but it also harks back to a much more distant period. With his horn sixths and open string harmony, the wanderer might be said to represent the whole early romantic tradition of Weber, Schumann et al. - no wonder Schoeck is sad to hear the echoes of his song vanish. Then, in 'Einsamkeit', the poet, himself become a wanderer, is discovered in desolation upon a heath, and in 'Mein Herz', his nocturnal apprehensions are partly resolved in an invocation to God. These three songs have the tonal scheme F-A-F, and as if to heighten the symmetry, numbers 1 and 3 end with the same chord identically spaced.

In contrast to the almost too personal tone of the opening group, song 4, 'Veränderte Welt', is a robust affirmation of life. The scenes depicted in the next five songs might be said to represent the poet's wanderings. We first see the folk returning home, among them the poet with his 'load of immortal ideas' ('Abendheimkehr'); then a sleepy Dutch landscape ('Auf eine holländische Landschaft'); then a country scene, interrupted by the voice of the wind ('Stimme des Windes'). Finally, after a misanthropic fourth poem ('Der falsche Freund'), we come to an evocation of Niagara. Hearing the waterfall in the distance, the poet approaches, only to find the noise of the fall drowned by the crashing of the waves. In such a way, he comments, a prophet may be aware of death in the distance but not able to foresee his

1) Ibid., pp. 156-7.

own fate. The tonalities here are miscellaneous, though the A minor of 'Stimme des Windes' has been foreshadowed in 'Einsamkeit'.

The mood of premonition-of-death with which 'Niagara' ends is a link with the third and final group (songs 10-12). 'Heimatklang' introduces the idea of a melody which sounds when a soul leaves paradise, and of the 'tremulous longing' for paradise which seizes anyone who has heard it. In 'Der Kranich' the poet compares his heart with the migrant crane, who joyously senses 'the land where spring awaits her'. Finally 'O du Land', the only Claudius setting, repeats the longing for a land of truth and essence, completing the cycle from introspection to spiritual release in another characteristically Schoeckian Aufhellung. The three songs are linked by interludes, the first of which develops a motif from 'Heimatklang' in a vigorous fugato; the second is much shorter.

Tonally 'Heimatklang' marks a return to the F of 'Nachhall' - this time minor instead of major, but still strong enough to convey a sense of reprise (the tonality sinks a semitone lower for the final song). The reason for this 'reprise' is explained by the text of 'Heimatklang'. At the words 'an echo [Nachhall] of this song [the song that sounds when a soul leaves paradise] has been reborn in the sweet poetry of the East' (bar 23ff.), there is what seems to be a reference to the opening song of the set, 'Nachhall'. This reference cannot be traced to a single passage in the earlier song, but derives from elements in bars 13, 19 and 28. (Perhaps the vagueness is meant to suggest that the 'song' is only an echo.) The effect is to link the mysterious melody of the soul with the song whose echo so moved the poet in song 1.

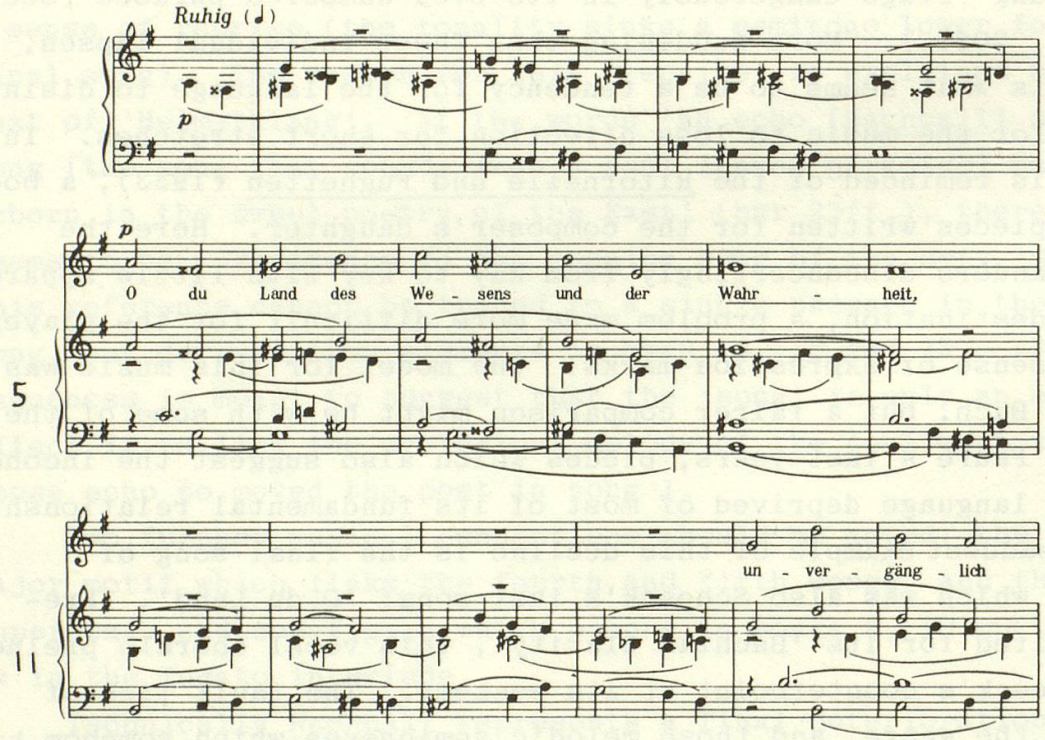
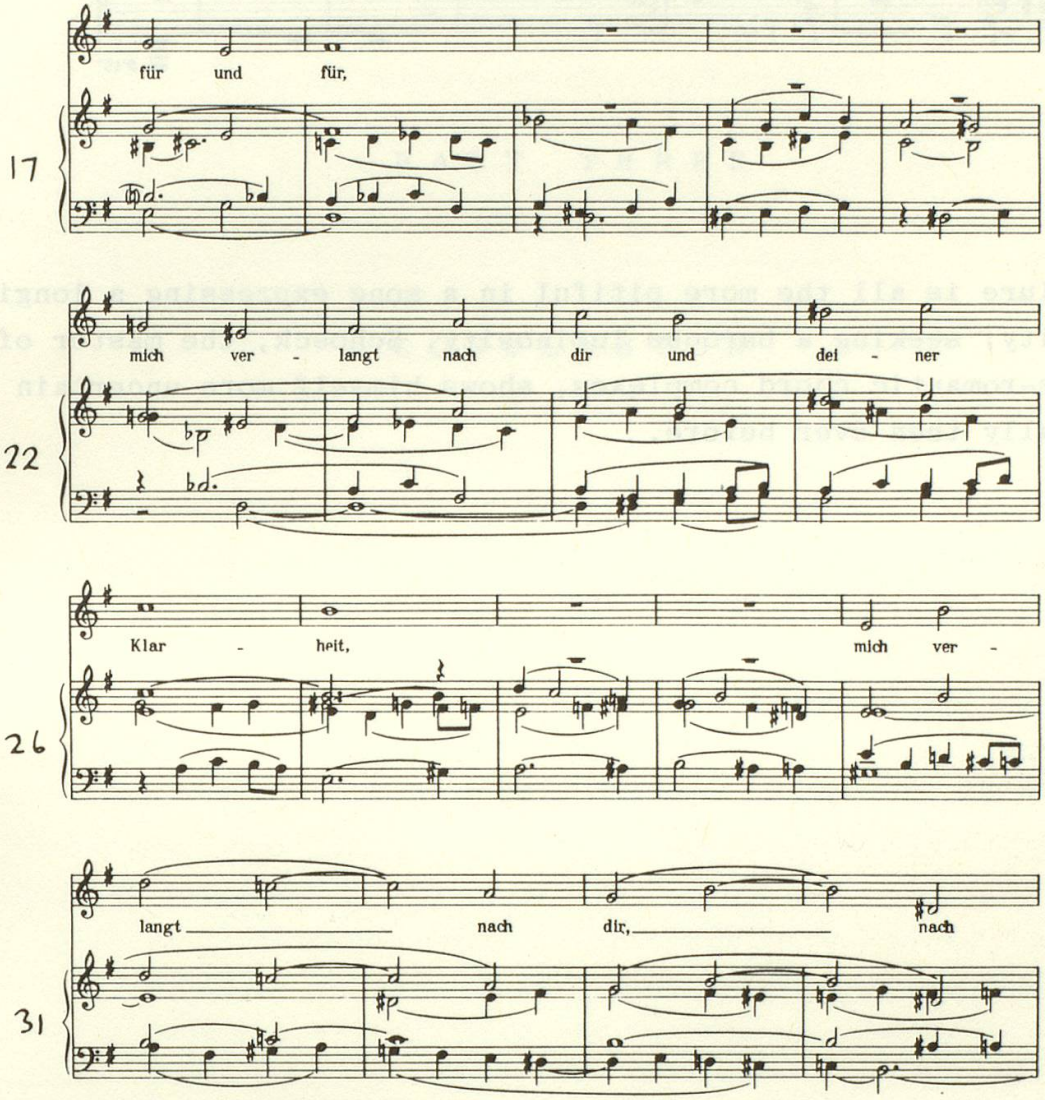
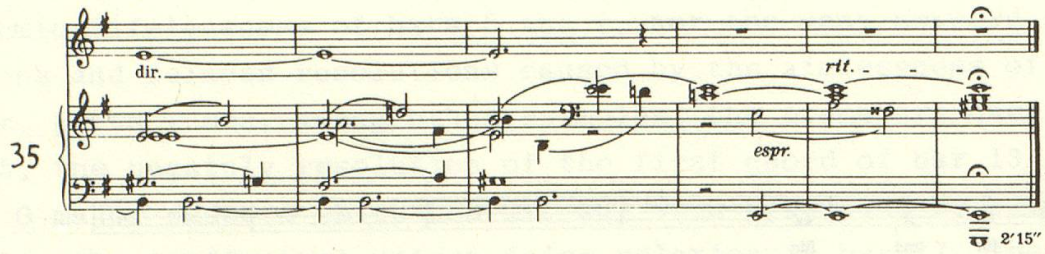
Two further musical connections should be noted: the little G major motif which links the fourth and fifth songs, and the flattened supertonic cadence-figure which occurs in songs 8, 10 and 12, as well as in the fugato interlude.

Technically Nachhall represents a final deterioration of Schoeck's powers. In keeping with the sombre mood of the texts, the music is more chromatic than it has been for some time, and there is imaginative use of variation. Two songs in par ticular are impressive: 'Niagara', which sustains its harmony of subtle chordal change over six pages, and the grimly Mussorgskian 'Der Kranich'.

On the other hand, much of the material is distressingly pale and undistinguished. 'Auf eine holländische Landschaft' and 'Stimme des Windes' are both based on ideas which are handled more imaginatively in the Notturno (cf. movements IV and Id respectively); 'Veränderte Welt' evokes the more interesting use of quartal harmony in 'Nachtegefühl'. Many of Schoeck's characteristic techniques have disappeared, or else become mechanical (e.g., the ostinato that forms the second part of 'Einsamkeit'). In their place we are left with an excessive dependence on sequence ('Mein Herz', bar 27ff.) and an unvaried melody-dominated texture.

There are miscalculations, too (and though Schoeck's music was occasionally self-derivative before, it was rarely maladroit). The open 'horn' harmony of 'Nachhall' simply goes on revolving for too long (see bars 6-7, 15ff., etc.); 'Der falsche Freund', after a promising beginning, proceeds to make nothing out of something; and 'Heimatklang' flags dangerously in its even-numbered phrases (see bars 9ff., 20ff.). More saddening than these individual lapses, however, is what seems to be a tendency for the language to disintegrate, for the music to lose direction for short stretches. In this one is reminded of the Ritornelle und Fughetten (1953), a book of piano pieces written for the composer's daughter. Here the harmony wanders disconcertingly from key to key with little apparent sense of destination, a problem made more difficult for the player by the absense of expression marks. The model for this music was obviously Bach, but a fairer comparison might be with some of the pieces of Fauré's last years, pieces which also suggest the incoherence of a language deprived of most of its fundamental relationships.

The saddest example of this decline is the final song of Nachhall, which was also Schoeck's last song: 'O du Land'. Frequently cited for its 'Bachian clarity', this vocal chorale prelude shows Schoeck's counterpoint at its weakest. The fault lies of course in the genre, and those melodic semibreves which somehow have to be filled in. Schoeck's interludes between the phrases - derived from the vocal material in true Bachian fashion - are successful enough, but the way the lines go round in circles, and sometimes drop out of sight altogether (bar 6), during the vocal sections is

anything but Bachian. Bach, too, would never have permitted the rhythmic lifelessness of bars 5 and 7, nor the many awkward anticipations and delayed resolutions caused by the aimlessness of the inner parts - see, among other examples, the premature bass E in bar 5, the ungainly resolution of the first chord of bar 13 (leading to a G major cadence which has already been preempted by bars 10-11), the ineffectual unison false relation in bar 17, the harmonic padding in bars 18-19, the excessive use of the pedal D in bars 18-24, and the rather pointless withholding of the bass E in bars 27-30 and 35ff. (on both occasions it has just been heard as a root):

17
für und für,
22
mich ver - langt nach dir und dei - ner
26
Klar - heit, mich ver -
31
langt nach dir, nach

This failure is all the more pitiful in a song expressing a longing for clarity; seeking a baroque luminosity, Schoeck, the master of rich late-romantic chord complexes, shows himself more uncertain harmonically then ever before.