

**Portrait of the Artist as a Young Clown:  
Narrative Structure and Purpose in Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire***  
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## **Introduction**

In September of 1912, a 37-year-old Arnold Schoenberg sat in a Berlin concert hall awaiting the premier of his 21st opus, *Pierrot Lunaire*. A frail man, as rash in his temperament as he was docile when listening to his music, Schoenberg watched as the lights dimmed and a fully costumed Pierrot took to the stage, a spotlight illuminating him against a semitransparent black screen through which a small instrumental ensemble could be seen. But as Pierrot began singing, the audience quickly grew uneasy, noting that Pierrot was in fact a woman singing in the most awkward of styles against a backdrop of pointillist atonal brilliance. Certainly this was not Beethoven. In a review of the concert, music critic James Huneker wrote:

The very ecstasy of the hideous!...Schoenberg is...the cruelest of all composers, for he mingles with his music sharp daggers at white heat, with which he pares away tiny slices of his victim's flesh. Anon he twists the knife in the fresh wound and you receive another thrill.... There is no melodic or harmonic line, only a series of points, dots, dashes or phrases that sob and scream, despair, explode, exalt and blaspheme.<sup>1</sup>

Schoenberg was no stranger to criticism of this nature. He had grown increasingly contemptuous of critics, many of whom dismissed his music outright, even in his early years. When Schoenberg entered his atonal period after 1908, the criticism became far more outrageous, and audiences were noted to have rioted and left the theater in the middle of pieces. In response, Schoenberg writes:

The Viennese music critics, with very few exceptions, are so incompetent and ignorant that one can judge them only by the degree of harm they do.... All this adversity has left me with rather a thick skin. I had, moreover, to worry about

losing the respect of those few whom, to some degree, I do respect. Certainly, I could stay alive even without their respect. I am so little respected, and am forced to rely so much on my own good opinion of myself, that it would not be easy. And I am, indeed, conscious—of my talent, and of being absolutely clean.<sup>2</sup>

Schoenberg, exasperated with the unwelcoming and inert musical culture of Vienna, moved to Berlin in 1901 hoping to improve his economic standing. But upon returning to Vienna in 1904 he found the same philistine climate he had left behind.<sup>3</sup> Angry that such ignorance had infiltrated Vienna, the once-flourishing musical capital of the world, he set out with various friends and fellow composers to reverse public opinion about contemporary arts. In 1904 Schoenberg helped found the Society of Creative Musicians, an organization which “aims to create such a direct relationship between itself and the public; to give modern music a permanent home in Vienna, where it will be fostered; and to keep the public constantly informed about the current state of musical composition.”<sup>4</sup> Though the Society existed for only one year, it gave several concerts with Gustav Mahler conducting (the Society had convinced Mahler to become Honorary President).

With the artistic world in a state of *fin-de-siècle* turmoil, Schoenberg took this opportunity to advance his own musical language. In 1908 he abandoned traditional tonal structures, opting for what he called “the emancipation of the dissonance.” This major turning point is occasionally referred to as “Schoenberg’s musical crisis.” In 1908, Mathilde, Schoenberg’s wife, left Arnold and their daughter to live with Richard Gerstl, a Viennese painter who gave lessons to both of them. After an impassioned plea from Anton Webern, Mathilde moved back, and Schoenberg dedicated his String Quartet no. 2 “To My Wife.” Gerstl committed suicide shortly after.<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Dunsby, the renowned Schoenberg scholar, attributes Schoenberg’s crisis to the turbulence in his personal life:

Why, in delving into Schoenberg's musical development, is this tragic story recounted without fail, usually embroidered with as many details as each author can deem plausible? It is just an assumption—that matters of life, death and love can be traced in and must somehow inform a person's creative work.<sup>6</sup>

Walter B. Bailey, however, contends that “it is also possible that the musical changes and the sudden interest in painting, as reflections of general aesthetic trends that were in the air, would have happened anyway.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed Schoenberg was not the first person to abandon traditional harmony. Debussy, Mahler, Brahms—all had experimented with dissonant textures and expanded tonal language. By the time Schoenberg and Stravinsky arrived, “the emancipation of dissonance” was ready and waiting.

After 1908, Schoenberg's output was enormous. Free from the confines of musical rules that he found stifling, Schoenberg found a new level of expression, a musical language in which he could directly deal with low-level emotion. Music was no longer a looking glass: indeed the mediator between the composer and audience had been banished in favor of direct sensory stimulation.

Schoenberg soon grew weary of free atonality. After a few years, his disdain for his own music had taken its toll on him. In 1911 he wrote to his pupil Alban Berg:

I've lost all interest in my works. I'm not satisfied with anything any more. I see mistakes and inadequacies in everything. Enough of that: I can't begin to tell you how I feel at such times.

His desperate search for an explanation of atonality led him to rethink classical forms and techniques. His music became increasingly structured, with special attention given to counterpoint. Though he felt that he was nearing the answer, it would not be until 1922 that he would develop his twelve-tone system.

It was at this time, early in the twentieth century, that the *commedia dell'arte*, a nearly extinct improvisatory theater style dating back as early as 16th century Italy, was taking the imaginations of the literati. Dunsby states that the craze centered around Diaghilev (indeed Stravinsky's *Petrushka* is a seminal *commedia*-inspired work). "But Diaghilev alone could not have imposed the *commedia* cult so pervasively in all the arts," Dunsby wrote, "on Picasso, T.S. Eliot, Nijinsky, Chaplin... half the artists of Europe, and the United States."<sup>8</sup> The list of composers who took cues from the *commedia* is equally long, including Busoni (*Arlecchino*), Debussy (*Suite Bergamasque*), Puccini (*Turandot*), de Falla (*El retablo de maese Pedro*), and Walton (*Scapino Overture*), alongside the landmark composers of *commedia*-inspired music, Stravinsky (*Petrushka* and *Pulcinella*), Leoncavallo (*I Pagliacci*), and Schumann (*Carnaval*). Even Mozart's Figaro has ties to *commedia's* stock characters.

It is not surprising, then, that when the Viennese actress Albertine Zehme approached Schoenberg in 1912 about writing a cycle of melodramas based on the *commedia* character Pierrot, he jumped at the opportunity. Zehme suggested Albert Giraud's masterwork *Pierrot Lunaire* for the text. Schoenberg wrote in his diary, dated January 28, 1912, "read the foreword, looked at the poems, am enthusiastic." Bryan Simms purports that Schoenberg likely read the foreword to the 1911 Otto Erich Hartleben translation, written by Franz Blei. Blei calls Pierrot a "moonstruck cynic who wears a black veil over his red heart, the last grandchild of romantic irony, the supplicant with the most fragile modesty, the most chaste of lechers."<sup>9</sup> Schoenberg latched onto Pierrot immediately.

It is clear from our understanding of Schoenberg's life, his struggles as an artist, his continuing battle for musical freedom, and his endless search for a unifying theory to explain his own music, that the character Pierrot, a misunderstood clown searching for meaning in love, life, and art, resonated with him at a base level. Using new techniques, ageless forms, and a newfound harmonic language, Schoenberg was able to turn the anecdotal poetry of Giraud into a gruesome, festering tale of an artist falling into madness, sacrificing himself to his art, and finally settling in a state of melancholic nostalgia: indeed it is Schoenberg's own autobiography.

### **Avoiding the Ineffable: Meaning, Narrative, and Semiotics**

The fundamental theories of musical meaning have always centered around the existence of order. As order disappears, the psychological and phenomenological aspects of music cognition, and consequently narrative understanding, grow unclear. In the 20th century, composers struggled with this concept to its logical and illogical ends. Stravinsky, in what stands as one of the most startling treatises on music, declared that music had no inherent meaning. Although Stravinsky's statement is paradoxical given the breadth and depth of his program music, ballets, and other narrative works, the idea of music lacking meaning is a testament to the modern aesthetic. Full of nihilism, anxiety, and deeply rooted emptiness, modernism appears as a shell in which the artist may encase his feelings, safe from the prying eyes of the world.

Schoenberg, however, felt quite differently. The musical idea, he proposed, did not "arise from the motive as germ of the whole."<sup>10</sup> Instead, the idea *is* the whole,

supported by its individual constituents. Therefore, if the idea is to be defined by the building blocks at its core, music must have meaning, even if the meaning is veiled by a modernist shell.

In order to accomplish meaning, it is necessary to arrange the elements of a musical idea in an order such that they achieve coherence through structure. Schoenberg proposed that “The presentation of the musical idea is contingent upon: 1. the laws of logic, of coherence, and of comprehensibility 2. the aesthetic demands of diversity, change, richness and profundity, beauty 3. the ‘human’ requirements of ethics, (beauty), feeling, suggestibility (persuasiveness), unusualness and novelty (originality).”<sup>11</sup> These are the governing principles that guide *Pierrot Lunaire*. With this in mind it is possible to see the piece not only as a series of anecdotal songs, but as a complete narrative, bound by structural integrity and set free through the creative spirit. It is not merely synecdoche that explains *Pierrot’s* meaning, but rather a thorough plunge into both analytical and hermeneutic semiotics of text, instrumentation, and form.

## **Pieces of a Puzzle**

Formal analysis of *Pierrot Lunaire* is omnipresent in Schoenbergian literature. The question has been raised innumerable times: how much ink needs to be spilled in order that we might fully grasp this work? Kofi Agawu, a leading semiotician, writes

The suspicion that analysis facilitates close involvement with the music *as an end in itself* is not so easily dismissed. Unlike, say, archival study, analysis does not always proceed cumulatively. The author of the 50th analytical essay on the 'Eroica' symphony is not obliged to demonstrate full acquaintance with the previous 49 essays... It may be, then, that certain analyses are better evaluated as we would evaluate a performance, not as contributions to a discursive,

constructed field of knowledge but as events which make an immediate or delayed impact, or none at all...<sup>12</sup>

Indeed it is not the problem that *Pierrot* has been overanalyzed, but that the analysis is in dire need of synthesis. This section deals with the already available analyses of *Pierrot's* text, instrumentation, and form, and offers a critical synthesis of these elements as the foundation for *Pierrot's* musical narrative.

There has been much dispute among *Pierrot* scholars as to the fundamental changes made to the original Albert Giraud text by German translator Otto Erich Hartleben. Susan Youens conjectures that the translated version “utterly transcends its source,” and despite the fact that Hartleben “had most often not translated the poems but had instead taken a motif or two from the original and written his own poem,” the brilliant vivacity that is put into Giraud’s “flat recitation” gives new life to an otherwise dull set of poems.<sup>13</sup> Indeed the poems are quite different. A new translation of the French into English by Gregory C. Richter presents a trilingual version of *Pierrot*. When viewed alongside Andrew Porter’s translation of the German into English (the most common translation found in recording liner notes), the dissimilarities become startlingly apparent (Figure 1). In “Nacht”, Hartleben injects a mystical presence, transforming the titular black butterflies into night itself, and invoking the presence of a sorcerer who wields the magical book of spells. Memory is not only obscured, but murdered! “Nacht” is but one example of Hartleben’s morbid sensuality; further examples are found throughout *Pierrot*. Richter is quick to point out, however, that

Giraud’s poems have their own merits, and they deserve appreciation in their own right. *Pierrot* awaits the willing reader. Ranging from the hilarious to the ironic, from the grotesque to the poignant, a universe is to be found within the

brief confines of these fifty poems. With its Baroque intensity of detail and its fin de siècle aura, *Pierrot Lunaire* is a work not to be forgotten.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 1

<i>Original French (Giraud)</i>	<i>German (Hartleben)</i>
<p><b>Papillons Noirs</b>            De sinistres pipillons noirs            Du soleil ont éteint la gloire,            Et l'horizon semble un grimoire            Barbouillé d'encre tous les soirs.</p> <p>Il sort d'occultes encensoirs            Un parfum troublant la mémoire:            De sinistres papillons noirs            Du soleil ont éteint la gloire.</p> <p>Des monstres aux gluants suçoirs            Recherchent du sang pour le boire,            Et du ciel, en poussière noire,            Descendent sur nos désespoirs            De sinistres papillons noirs.</p>	<p><b>Nacht</b>            Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter            Töteten der Sonne Glanz.            Ein geschlossnes Zauberbuch,            Ruht der Horizont—verschwiegen.</p> <p>Aus dem Qualm verlornen Tiefen            Steigt ein Duft, Erinnerung mordend!            Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter            Töteten der Sonne Glanz.</p> <p>Und vom Himmel erdenwärts            Senken sich mit schweren Schwingen            Unsichtbar die Ungetümer            Auf die Menschenherzen nieder...            Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter.</p>
<i>English from French (Gregory Richter)</i>	<i>English from German (Andrew Porter)</i>
<p><b>Black Butterflies</b>            Sinister black butterflies            Extinguish the light of the sun.            The horizon seems, each evening,            Like an ink-bespattered book of spells.</p> <p>A perfume obscuring the memory            Exudes from hidden censers:            Sinister black butterflies            Extinguish the light of the sun.</p> <p>Monsters with slick suckers            Seek blood to quash their thirst,            And from the sky, like murky dust,            Descend on our despair            Sinister black butterflies.</p>	<p><b>Night</b>            Black gigantic butterflies            have blotted out the shining sun.            Like a sorcerer's sealed book,            The horizon sleeps in silence.</p> <p>From the murky depths forgotten            vapors rise, to murder memory!            Black gigantic butterflies            Have blotted out the shining sun.</p> <p>And from heaven toward the earth,            Sinking down on heavy pinions,            All unseen descend the monsters            To the hearts of men below here...            Black gigantic butterflies</p>

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While Hartleben's translation gives *Pierrot* the visceral, violent, and grotesque qualities it deserves, it is Schoenberg's masterful arrangement of his songs that gives Op. 21 its narrative structure. When Zehme gave Schoenberg the text and a few recommendations on song choice, he immediately began composing. He chose the songs seemingly at random from among the 50 poems in Hartleben's translation, and only composing all of them did he put them into order. Figure 2 shows the genesis of the cycle. While mostly a random affair, it does seem at a glance that most of the final songs in the cycle were in fact written in the middle of the composition process.

Figure 2

<i>Order Composed</i>	<i>Order in Giraud</i>	<i>Poem</i>	<i>Order in Schoenberg</i>
1	31	Gebet an Pierrot	9
2	3	Der Dandy	3
3	16	Mondestrunken	1
4	21	Der kranke Monde	17
5	5	Eine blasse Wascherin	4
6	10	Columbine	2
7	29	Rote Messe	11
8	6	Serenade	19
9	45	Gemeinheit	16
10	30	Die Kreuze	14
11	42	Parodie	17
12	34	Heimweh	15
13	26	Valse de Chopin	5
14	28	Madonna	6
15	14	Raub	10
16	36	Heimfahrt	20
17	19	Nacht	8

<i>Order Composed</i>	<i>Order in Giraud</i>	<i>Poem</i>	<i>Order in Schoenberg</i>
18	17	Galgenlied	12
19	24	Enthauptung	13
20	38	Der Mondfleck	18
21	35	O alter Duft	21

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The order in which Schoenberg sets the pieces is critical to the narrative as a whole. Set into 3 sections of 7 poems each (Schoenberg, a devout numerologist and superstitionist, found significance in this organization, as well as in the 21 songs, composed in 1912, for his 21st opus), *Pierrot* takes the reader on a tour of the clown's psyche through a series of scenes. Alan Philip Lessem breaks it down as follows:

In the first part, Pierrot is shown as the poet of sick despair (5) and suffering martyrdom (6), enthralled by an overripe moon inducing an illusory intoxication (1 and 3) and evoking tantalizing erotic phantasmagoria (2 and 4), inevitably self-defeating (7). The second part again presents Pierrot as a martyr (14), now the victim of paranoid fantasies (8 and 10), of visions of a horrible punishment (11) and a grotesque end (12 and 13). A necessary escape from this self-created nightmare is granted Pierrot in the third part, in which he gives himself over to slapstick buffoonery (16, 18 and 19), sentimentality (15 and 17) and a healing nostalgia (20 and 21) for the happier times of old.<sup>17</sup>

This interpretation, as a symbolic manifestation of Schoenberg's own life, is discussed later.

As Schoenberg wrote, he sparked the idea of using varying instrumentation in order that each piece would have a different character. *Pierrot Lunaire*, as its full title states, is composed for soprano (*Sprechstimme*), piano, violin doubling viola, clarinet doubling bass clarinet, flute doubling piccolo, and cello. Jonathan Dunsby points out that in general, the instrumentation becomes fuller as the piece progresses, until the final sections where all five players are playing, sometimes on multiple instruments in one

song; still, Schoenberg is able to design a system so that no two pieces have exactly the same instrumentation (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

Short title		Instruments							
		Player 1		Player 2		Player 3		Player 4	
		Pf.	Fl.	Pic.	Cl.*	BCl.	Vn.	Va.	Vc.
1	Mondestrunken	X	X				X		X
2	Colombine	X	X		X		X		
3	Dandy	X		X	X				
4	Wascherin		X		X		X		
5	Valse	X	X		X	X			
6	Madonna	#	#			#	#		#
7	Mond		X						
8	Nacht	X				X			X
9	Gebet	X			X				
10	Raub		X		X		X		X
-	[Transition]	X							
11	Messe	#		#		#		#	#
12	Galgenlied			X				X	X
13	Enthauptung	X				X		X	X
-	[Transition]		X			X		X	X
14	Kreuze	#	#		#		#		#
15	Heimweh	X			X		X		
16	Gemeinheit	#		#	#		#		#
17	Parodie	X		X	X			X	
-	[Transition]	X							
18	Mondfleck	#		#	#		#		#
19	Serenade	X							#
-	[Transition]	#	#		#		#		#

20	Heimfahrt	#	#		#		#		#
21	Duft	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
X	instrument is used								
#	instrument is used and all five instrumentalists are playing								
*	clarinet is in A except in 'Der Mondfleck', which calls for clarinet in Bb								

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This ensemble has replaced the string quartet as the standard chamber ensemble of the 20th century. Countless works have been composed for “Pierrot ensemble,” with and without voice, and often in modifications (many composers prefer to use an oboe instead of a violin or clarinet, and percussion is also often added). In some writings, the flute is referred to as “Pierrot’s instrument.” Throughout, whenever Pierrot laments, the flute is eager to follow (for example, the beautiful solo flute and vocal movement, “Mond,” or the nervous “Der Mondfleck”). The flute is also used occasionally for special effects with flutter tonguing and rapid, jagged arpeggiation: the flute dances with the light-footed agility of a clown.

The most stunning instrument in *Pierrot Lunaire* is without a doubt the female singing voice. Albertine Zehme proposed that Schoenberg write *Pierrot* as a melodrama with spoken text, but Schoenberg, more familiar with the traditional song form, combined speaking and singing voices into Sprechstimme. It is through this half-recitation-half-song that Pierrot’s story is told, not through the metaphorical motions of the instruments, but through the poetry itself. The foreword to Schoenberg’s score reads:

The melody given in notation in the vocal part (with a few specially indicated exceptions) is *not* intended to be sung. The performer has the task of transforming it into a *speech melody* [*Sprechmelodie*], taking the prescribed pitches well into account. He accomplishes this by:

- I. adhering to the rhythm as precisely as if he were singing; that is, with no more freedom than he would allow himself if it were a sung melody;
- II. being precisely aware of the difference between a *sung tone* and a *spoken tone*: the sung tone maintains the pitch unaltered; the spoken tone does indicate it, but immediately abandons it again by falling or rising.<sup>19</sup>

This vocal quality lends itself exceedingly well to the portrayal of an anguished and frustrated character: the sliding between notes bears close resemblance to the sound of a person crying.

A complete discussion of *Pierrot Lunaire's* musical form is out of the scope of this paper, and therefore an analysis of a single piece, "Nacht," is used here to show how Schoenberg utilizes well known forms with a 20th Century bent to create cohesion and clarity. "Nacht,"

the first song of part II, is the only song in the cycle that bears a subtitle: Passacaglia. The passacaglia form dates back to the Renaissance, and is built traditionally upon

**Figure 4**

Gehende ♩ (ca 80)

Bass Clarinet in Bb

Cello

Piano

bass clarinet:  
cello:  
piano:

G  
E - - - - - Eb  
Db - - - - - C  
Bb - - - - - A - - - - - Ab  
G - - - - - Gb  
E - - - - - Eb

a descending ground bass pattern. In "Nacht" we first see the ground bass motif in bar 4

of the bass clarinet. This line is repeated in staggered entrances then in the cello, piano left hand, and piano right hand. However this is the only time this pattern happens. Therefore most analysts argue that the 8 note descending pattern is not the motif here, but only the first three notes: a rising minor third followed by a descending major third. Indeed this pattern occurs throughout, at some points inverted, retrograded, or both. But the most perversely genius use of this motive comes in the first three measures of piano. We see in Figure 4<sup>20</sup> that the piano line is built on this very same minor-major third pattern, with each new note entrance corresponding with a new transposed motif, creating several thick layers using nearly every note of the chromatic scale in a sustained chord. While not, strictly speaking, a passacaglia, the form is in fact recognizable, even to a poorly trained listener. This type of experimentation had put Schoenberg at the vanguard of the music world and the avant garde; it had also pushed Schoenberg to despair. Pierrot, the tortured clown, ridiculed by his peers, a lonely everyman, was esteemed by Schoenberg: two clowns allied to tell their tale, one of shame, madness, irony, hate and love, and all the other fates of a moonstruck dreamer.

### **Schoenberg's Artistic Comedy**

Pierrot is a stock character from the *commedia dell'arte*. Pierrot is a hopeless romantic, pining for his beloved Columbine, daughter of his master Cassander and the lover of his rival, Harlequin. As Gregory Richter writes, "he is the eternal victim of the other characters' pranks. A dreamer, he lives in the realm of his own fantasies, but never finds his place in the real world."<sup>21</sup> Pierrot resonated strongly with artists of the early 20th

century. “Pierrots were endemic,” Youens writes, “everywhere in late nineteenth/early twentieth century Europe as an archetype of the self-dramatizing artist, whose stylized mask both symbolizes and veils artistic ferment.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed many artists found themselves in Pierrot: “Giraud speaks of Pierrot as his lifelong shadow, an alter ego whose first ‘moonstruck’ poems are the poetic record of Giraud’s rebellion against and return to Parnassian poetic ideals.” But none so keenly identifies with Pierrot as Schoenberg. The eternal whipping boy of music critics worldwide, Schoenberg writes,

It is banal to say that we [artists] are all moonstruck fools; what the poet means is that we are trying our best to wipe off the imaginary moon spots from our clothing at the same time that we worship our crosses. [In Hartleben’s “Die Kreuze” poems are said to be the crosses on which the poet is hung to receive the derision of society.] Let us be thankful that we have our wounds [from the cross]: With them we have something that helps us to place a low value on matter. From the scorn for our wounds comes our scorn for our enemies and our power to sacrifice our lives to a moonbeam. One could easily get emotional by thinking about the Pierrot poetry. But for the cuckoo is anything more important than the price of grain?<sup>23</sup>

There are, however, unresolved problems with the autobiographical narrative as it relates to performance practice of the piece. In performance the *female* lead is presented onstage in full Pierrot garb complete with makeup (although Schoenberg did not support this and did not ask for it anywhere in his score). Given Albertine Zehme’s commission this makes some sense, but as a narrative there is some confusion. Certainly Schoenberg is not a woman, nor is Pierrot. Pierrot does not speak some of the text; several of the poems are spoken by an outside narrator. Staging the work then is fallible, since creation of an onstage persona is contradicted by monologues not intended to be spoken by that persona. It should also be noted that Schoenberg deliberately left out the final poem of

*Pierrot Lunaire*, "Böhmischer Kristall", in which Pierrot takes off his mask:

A Moonbeam in a bottle  
Of fine Bohemian crystal:  
Such is the magical poem  
I've rhymed in roundelays.

I'm costumed as Pierrot  
To offer the one I love  
A Moonbeam in a bottle  
Of fine Bohemian crystal.

In this symbol I express,  
O dear one, all of myself:  
Like Pierrot with his pale visage,  
I feel, through my mask of paint,  
A Moonbeam in a bottle.<sup>24</sup>

Schoenberg never did take off his mask. Even after his discovery of serialism his work would be eschewed and mocked by many critics (indeed serialism was controversial enough to provoke swarms of angry critics). And while composers like Stravinsky would often espouse the wonders of Schoenberg's music, many of his other contemporaries would say otherwise. In 1914 Schoenberg wrote this letter to the organizer of Richard Strauss' 50th birthday gala:

Dear Sir,  
I regret that I am unable to accept your invitation to write something for Richard Strauss's fiftieth birthday. In a letter to Frau Mahler (in connection with Mahler Memorial Fund) Herr Strauss wrote about me as follows:  
"The only person who can help poor Schoenberg now is a psychiatrist ...".  
"I think he'd do better to shovel snow instead of scribbling on music-paper..."<sup>25</sup>

Schoenberg was and is a singular celebrity. No composer until Cage would be as hated or as important. But for all the criticism it has received, his work stands on its own. Revolutionary in its modern conception of sound, *Pierrot Lunaire* stands as at the

pinnacle of early 20th century music, rivaled only by Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*. And while his music remains as challenging today as it was nearly 100 years ago, Schoenberg summarizes it best: "My music is not modern, it is only badly played."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lessem, Alan Philip, *Music and Text in the Works of Arnold Schoenberg* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Reich, Willi, trans. Leo Black, *Schoenberg: A Critical Biography*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Reich, pp. 11-14.

<sup>4</sup> From an anonymous circular of 1904, probably written by Schoenberg, and distributed by Society of Creative Musicians. Quoted in Reich, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Bailey, Walter B. ed., *The Arnold Schoenberg Companion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), pp. 19-20.

<sup>6</sup> Dunsby, Jonathan, *Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Bailey, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Dunsby, pp. 6-7.

<sup>9</sup> Simms, Bryan, *The Atonal Music of Arnold Schoenberg* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 123.

<sup>10</sup> Schoenberg, Arnold, Ed. Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff, *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique, and Art of Its Presentation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 109.

<sup>11</sup> Schoenberg, p. 103.

<sup>12</sup> Agawu, Kofi, "Musical Analysis Versus Musical Hermeneutics," *American Journal of Semiotics* 13 (1-4), 1998, p. 15, quoted in Echard, William, "Musical Semiotics in the 1990s: The state of the art," *The Semiotic Review of Books* Volume 10(3), 1999, <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/epc/srb/srb/articles.html>

<sup>13</sup> Youens, Susan, "The Text of *Pierrot Lunaire*: An Allegory of Art and the Mind," *From Pierrot to Marteu*, proceedings from the conference and concert of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute at University of Southern California School of Music, March 14-16 1987, pp. 30-31.

<sup>14</sup> Richter, Gregory C., *Albert Giraud's Pierrot Lunaire* (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2001), p. xxix-xxx.

<sup>15</sup> French, German, and English-from-French translations from Richter, pp. 38-39. English-from-German translation by Andrew Porter, [http://www.cmnw.org/notes\\_2001\\_textof\\_PierrotLunaire.pdf](http://www.cmnw.org/notes_2001_textof_PierrotLunaire.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Lessem, pp. 127-128. With additional data from Richter, pp. vii-xii.

<sup>17</sup> Lessem, pp. 128-129

<sup>18</sup> Dunsby, p. 23.

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<sup>19</sup> Schoenberg, Arnold, *Pierrot Lunaire* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1994), p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> Simms, p. 137.

<sup>21</sup> Richter, p. xviii.

<sup>22</sup> Youens, p. 31

<sup>23</sup> Simms, p. 126.

<sup>24</sup> Richter, p. 101

<sup>25</sup> Letter from Schoenberg dated 22 April 1914.

<http://www.geocities.com/ilian73/composers/schoenberg.html>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.geocities.com/ilian73/composers/schoenberg.html>