

NORTON DUDEQUE, *MUSIC THEORY AND ANALYSIS IN THE WRITINGS OF ARNOLD SCHOENBERG (1874–1951)* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), ISBN 0754641392, xv + 274 pp, £55.00/\$99.95.

In the current renaissance of Schoenberg scholarship, Norton Dudeque's *Music Theory and Analysis in the Writings of Arnold Schoenberg* represents one of the few studies focusing on the composer's theoretical writings. Indeed it is the sole English-language monograph on the topic, and, in that respect, is the counterpart of Andreas Jacob's *Grundbegriffe der Musiktheorie Arnold Schönbergs*, published in the same year.¹ Unlike Jacob, however, Dudeque casts his net more widely to include not just a detailed study of the writings but also a consideration of how they inform music analysis, and the inclusion of analytical applications in the context of an examination of the writings is particularly welcome given the continued loose invocation of Schoenbergian terms in analytical and theoretical discourse.

Jonathan Dunsby, in the preface to the book, comments on what he calls Schoenberg's 'unfinished theory': 'I had the feeling that Schoenberg did not think he had significantly excavated to the core of the logic, technique and art of a [*sic*] how a musical idea is presented. I even took the view, and still do, that Schoenberg came to believe he was not really asking all the right questions' (xii). This point is central to Dudeque's commentary. Because the writings are merely 'a torso of a great plan for a comprehensive theory and analysis of music' (1) combined with the fact that they are 'dispersed in a vast collection of texts, many unfinished' (4), he believes that 'a conclusive assessment of Schoenberg's career as music theorist is not completely feasible' (7). In spite, or perhaps because, of that, Dudeque's aim is 'to contribute to a clearer understanding of Schoenberg's work as music theorist' (237) by offering a systematization of the composer's music theory, something he claims, albeit inconsistently, to which Schoenberg aspired:

The annotations in [the so-called *Gedanke* manuscript] have various definitions in the form of question and answer—*Was ist:*—which suggest a concern for providing a more systematic approach to his theory. (2)

As can be seen from his vast literary legacy, Schoenberg was not concerned with laying down the foundations for a systematic theory of music. Nevertheless, the underlying argument throughout Schoenberg's career as a music theorist focuses on aspects of objective presentation of musical structure. This systematic approach to the presentation of the Musical Idea contemplates different aspects of the perception of the musical idea. (3)

¹ Andreas Jacob, *Grundbegriffe der Musiktheorie Arnold Schönbergs* (Folkwang Studien, 1; ed. Stefan Orgass and Horst Weber) (Hildesheim: Olms, 2005).

In an effort to formulate ‘a more consistent and positive assessment of this subject’ (237), Dudeque addresses Schoenberg’s music-theoretical project from multiple perspectives, considering his reception—and rejection—of aspects of nineteenth-century musical thought as well as his understanding of tonal harmony and motivic/thematic development, concluding with a study of analytical applications.

The opening chapter, ‘Some Aspects of Schoenberg’s Inheritance of Nineteenth-Century Music Theory’, begins with a brief and general disquisition on the nineteenth-century preoccupation with the motive as prerequisite for unity and the creation of an organic musical structure, arguing that these factors informed Schoenberg’s analytical approach (13–14). A similar lack of specificity is apparent in the survey of organic form: citing Goethe’s *Morphologie* and *Metamorphose der Pflanzen*, and referring to Marx’s notion of the motive as *Urgestalt* and the function of the *Grundgestalt* in Schoenberg’s *Formenlehre*, Dudeque concludes that ‘Marx’s influence on Schoenberg is reflected not only in such general notions as the growth of form from a motive, but also in the systematic presentation of a theory of form’ (17). He highlights some interesting parallels between Marx’s *Kompositionslehre* and Schoenberg’s *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, parallels which would be significantly enhanced by drawing on some of Schoenberg’s earlier texts on form, thus exploring some of the terminological similarities. The account of Schoenberg’s harmonic theory and the extent to which it is indebted to Simon Sechter is more convincing. Following a discussion of harmonic functions, the ‘intermediate fundamental’ (derived from Kirnberger via Sechter, this informs Schoenberg’s ‘superstrong progressions’), treatment of the minor tonality and the Schoenbergian concepts of neutralization and substitution, Dudeque asserts that ‘substitution, or the enrichment of tonality, is essential to Schoenberg’s notion of monotonicity’ (29). As the third constituent element of Schoenberg’s *Kompositionslehre*, counterpoint is mentioned towards the end of the chapter: Dudeque cites the work of Dunsby and Whittall, who note the relationships between Schoenberg’s *Preliminary Exercises in Counterpoint* and Bellermann’s *Der Contrapunkt*.

Whereas the first chapter outlines some of the influences of nineteenth-century musical thought on Schoenberg’s writings, the second (‘Speculative and Polemical Contents in Schoenberg’s Tonal Theory’) concerns his rejection of past theories. Dudeque rightly calls attention to Schoenberg’s distinction between art and science, and asserts that

Schoenberg refused past approaches to music theory. He campaigned primarily for a new systematic presentation in which aesthetic and stylistic issues should be avoided and music theory should be seen to be as practical and objective as possible. Schoenberg’s claim for a pragmatic system rests on his rejection of a scientific foundation for music theory. (35)

Although he states that the speculative aspects of the *Harmonielehre* and other writings are derived at least in part from Karl Kraus, he unfortunately offers no evidence to support this viewpoint. Following an overview in which he touches on Hanslick, Adler, Schenker, Riemann and Richter, Dudeque focuses on what he calls Schoenberg's 'theoretical disagreements' with both Schenker and Riemann (37). The chapter thus divides into two sections. In the first, Dudeque discusses Schoenberg's emancipation of dissonance, and, drawing on Berg's reduction of Schoenberg's First String Quartet (Op. 7), contrasts Schoenberg's understanding of non-harmonic tones with that of Schenker. In the second, he compares Schoenberg's writings on the following topics with those of Riemann and other theorists: counterpoint, which entails a discussion of Schoenberg's response to Kurth's 'linear counterpoint'; functional harmony theory, demonstrating correlations between Schoenberg's 'Chart of the Regions' as it appears in the *Gedanke* manuscript and Riemann's functional categories; and graphic representations of tonal space, wherein he examines Schoenberg's 'Chart of the Regions' from *Structural Functions*, suggesting how it may have been informed by Weber's *Versuch einer geordneten Theorie der Tonsetzkunst* (1817–21), Riemann's *Große Kompositionslehre* (1902), and Erpf's *Studien zur Harmonie- und Klangtechnik der neueren Musik* (1927). Finally, Dudeque emphasizes in this chapter Schoenberg's rejection of tonality as something that is necessary for the organization of musical form, a point that he interprets in anticipation of later chapters: 'Ultimately, Schoenberg's rejection for a natural basis for tonality justifies his compositional technique and provides a theoretical foundation for his analytical method, which offers a medium to express musical coherence and unity through thematic relationships' (38).

The third chapter ('A Contribution towards a Systematic Presentation of Tonal Harmony') 'addresses different aspects of tonal structure in Schoenberg's thought. The presentation of the various topics in the text is a contribution towards the pragmatic system of presentation that Schoenberg planned' (70). Dudeque provides detailed explanations for a large number of concepts including root function, substitution, transformed chords, vagrant chords, enriched cadences, progressions and successions, regions, monotonicity, fourth chords, and fluctuating and suspended tonality. *In nuce*, he proposes that Schoenberg conceived the tonal structure as a 'stratified organization' (129), where 'each forming element has its own importance, despite the fact that all are interrelated' (130). An accompanying 'table of stratification' lists each of the parameters (voice leading, root progressions, succession, progression, cadence background, intermediary regions, regions, monotonicity), providing a brief explanation of each (voice leading, for example, 'provides the connection of note to note [law of the shortest way, substitution either quasi-diatonic or chromatic]') (129–30). In using Schenker as a foil to explain Schoenberg's 'stratified organization' (129), Dudeque's

language betrays an understandable indebtedness to Schenkerian theory. Despite distinguishing his employment of ‘root prolongation’—as that which ‘signifies the extension of the specific function of a chord root’—from Schenkerian usage (93), the use of such terminology in a *Schoenbergian* context serves only to obfuscate: ‘Schenker understood monotonicity as an [*sic*] prolongation of the tonic triad, whereas, for Schoenberg[,] it represented the prolongation of the tonic region’ (116). Likewise, the use of the word ‘passing’ in the passage on ‘intermediary regions’ bring to mind the Schenkerian usage rather than Schoenberg’s definition of ‘emphasizing a contrast through their harmonic differences’ (103). In addition, Dudeque refers to Schoenberg’s ‘different levels for the function of chords’ (‘functional’ or ‘embellishing’ chords) (93) and to the cadence as an ‘ideal background, which may be enriched by chromatic or transformed chords functioning as embellishing chords, either as neighbouring or passing harmonies’ (130), descriptions which, in spite of the various caveats, seem only to obscure and detract from his interpretations.

Dudeque begins the fourth chapter (‘A Contribution towards a Systematic Presentation of the Technique of Thematic Development’) with an historical survey, remarking upon Schoenberg’s need for ‘new formal principles’ (an expression presumably borrowed from Erwin Stein’s 1924 essay, cited later in the same chapter) following the renunciation of tonality. He posits the motivic aspect as the most crucial of the formal principles, noting that ‘the coherence and comprehensibility that is so important for Schoenberg was dependent upon a principle of motivic resemblance and recognition’ (132). For him, ‘an objective presentation of thematic-development theory’ is premised on the ‘association’ and ‘interaction’ of *Grundgestalt* and developing variation (‘the latter is the means for the realization of the former’) (9–10, 132). In his detailed discussions of these concepts, Dudeque draws on Schoenberg’s writings as well as those of the circle (Stein, Rufer and Jalowetz) to trace the derivation and history of these terms. He offers some pertinent remarks on the nature of developing variation in particular, noting that it ‘implies the notion of “growth” related to an organic approach of motivic variation, distinct from the variation technique itself which does not imply an aesthetic and organic approach’ (163). However, the continued privileging of the technique does seem somewhat curious, given his acknowledgement that it represents the technique for homophonic music (142); though mentioned, the complementary principle of *unravelling* or *unfolding*, which characterizes contrapuntal music, receives little attention. Although *Grundgestalt* and developing variation are central to his systemization, Dudeque also provides a painstaking survey of a number of related concepts: motive, *Gestalt* and phrase, sentence and period, stable and loose formation, formal procedures and continuity, the extension of musical structures, connecting techniques, model and sequence, formal closures, condensation, intensification, reduction, and the tendency of the smallest

notes. In the conclusion to this chapter, the scope is expanded to include both theory and practice, seemingly in preparation for the following analytical applications:

Schoenberg's theorizing, although formalized in response to his compositional practice, is reflected in many of his compositions. The idea that developing variations would represent the technique for presenting modern music relates Schoenberg's compositional practice to tradition. (169)

The chapter closes advocating the following rather confused approach to thematic development:

Developing variation and extended tonality seem to be the perfect pair of concepts for encouraging a varied expression of the musical structure, either in its creation or in its critical evaluation. If, on one hand, *Grundgestalt* and developing variation attend the requisites for motivic/thematic unity and variation, on the other, extended tonality permits it in the tonal domain. (170)

Despite the range of topics in the preceding chapters, the analyses in the final chapter seem to be informed predominantly, if not exclusively in some cases, by the concepts of *Grundgestalt* and developing variation. In the analysis of the first movement of Mozart's String Quartet K465 ('Dissonance'), Dudeque is concerned with 'the reconstruction and reworking of Schoenberg's own analysis'. He thus consolidates and illuminates terminological issues from Schoenberg's 1917 *ZKIF* notebooks and the *Gedanke* manuscript, including what Schoenberg called the art of transition and the art of forming subsidiary ideas.² What is less convincing, however, is his reading of tonal ambiguity at the opening of the *Allegro* (this reading is especially undermined by significant inaccuracies in the musical example 5.4; see, in particular, the second violin part in bar 25), which vitiates his interpretation of the relationship between that passage and its return in the recapitulation (181–2). In the second essay, on Beethoven's Diabelli variations, Op. 120, Dudeque provides a highly detailed analysis. Taking Schoenberg's writings as cue, he focuses on the 'motive of the variation', something he believes 'coincides to a certain extent with the notion of the *Grundgestalt*, which guarantees the motivic unity for the whole work' (194). In addition to the *Grundgestalt*, Dudeque considers how variations cohere to create a teleological

² Arnold Schoenberg, *Zusammenhang, Kontrapunkt, Instrumentation, Formenlehre [ZKIF]* (*Coherence, Counterpoint, Instrumentation, Instruction in Form*), ed. Severine Neff, trans. Charlotte M. Cross and Severine Neff (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 38–43.

progression.³ The third and final analytical essay also considers the theme-and-variation form—the third movement from Schoenberg’s *Serenade*, Op. 24. Here Dudeque builds on Joel Lester’s analysis and presents a persuasive account of developing variation, which is founded on ‘intermediate stages’, the *sine qua non* of this technique: ‘new and contrasting thematic ideas are derived from intermediate stages in the development of the theme’ (232).

The insights of Dudeque’s analyses notwithstanding, it is unfortunate that he reads so much within these pieces through the conceptual lens of, and thus allows so much to be subsumed by, the *Grundgestalt* and developing variation (particularly at the expense of *unravelling* or *unfolding*); this is especially curious given the detailed accounts and definitions of equally important and interrelated concepts provided in the commentary and in the accompanying glossary (239–52). Such accounts are uneven: while the discussion of stable and loose formation (149–50), though having little impact on the analyses, is excellent, Dudeque fails to distinguish between ‘motivic’ and ‘thematic’, and offers only generalizations of the musical idea [*Gedanke*]. In that respect, the study would undoubtedly have been enriched by the inclusion of a greater number of German texts (or by considering the original German terms that have been translated into English) and by acknowledging to a greater extent the impact on Schoenberg’s theoretical writings of the move to the United States, a factor that forced him not only to write in another language but to collaborate in his writing with his teaching colleagues. Such shortcomings are inevitable in a study as ambitious as this one, and should not detract from the breadth, scope and details of the vast survey presented here, which is indispensable for anyone interested in Schoenberg’s musical thought and analytical approach.

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³ For another example of this technique in a variation set, see Eisler’s analysis of Beethoven’s 32 Variations in C minor, in Nathan Notowicz, *Wir reden hier nicht von Napoleon. Wir reden von Ihnen! Gespräche mit Hanns Eisler und Gerhart Eisler*, transcribed and ed. Jürgen Elsner (Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik, 1971), 61–117.