

Appendix 4: Interview with Dika Newlin

Dika Newlin was a student of Schoenberg during the years 1936 and 1938. Newlin is a pianist, critic, musicologist, composer, and rock/punk singer.¹ She is one of the few people who are still alive and were present in the rehearsals and test pressing sessions (discussed in Chapters 8) of the commercial recording of *Pierrot lunaire* in 1940 (discussed in Chapters 11). She was involved in choosing the takes for the recordings and she heard the broadcast of this composition that was made by Schoenberg at the same year (discussed in Chapter 10).

During 2005 I made several unsuccessful attempts to contact Dika Newlin by phone and by mail. Sabine Feisst, from Arizona State University, who is an expert for almost anything connected with Schoenberg in America, wrote to me that 'Dika is virtually blind, that is why she does not have e-mail. Also she broke her hip some months ago and barely gets around with a walker (that is why she does not answer the phone). The best way to get in touch with her is through film maker Michael D. Moore (not to be confused with the film maker of *Fahrenheit 9/11*).' Moore was very helpful with making the contact with Newlin. Here are the questions that I sent to him:

- 1) Could you tell me something about how Schoenberg worked with Erika Wagner-Stiedry? What kind of remarks did he give her? What was he concerned about? Do you think he was happy with her performance of *Sprechstimme*?
- 2) How was the atmosphere in the recording studio? Were you also at the rehearsals? Was the atmosphere different there?
- 3) How was the broadcast in September 1940? Was it different from the recording? How did people react to it?
- 4) Could you tell me any more information about the recording session that you were present in? Was Dr. Stiedry really interfering as Schoenberg wrote in one of his letters? How long was the session? Who decided how many times to record each piece? On what basis? How many people were there?

¹ For more information see http://www.schoenberg.at/1_as/schueler/usa/Newlin_e.htm and for her rock punk career see www.moorevideoandmusic.com

5) You wrote that you were active in choosing takes from the test pressings for the commercial recording. On what basis were the takes chosen? What people were speaking about when or after listening to the takes? Who was active in the choosing? Where people listening with or without scores?

6) What did Schoenberg think about the recording after it was made? Do you know what did he think about it when he heard it again when it was released to the public? Did he change his mind about these recordings at any time?

7) How was Schoenberg as a conductor? What was his relation to the score? How was his conducting of tempo? Did performers follow his conducting?

If there is anything else you can tell me concerning the recording, broadcast and rehearsals of *Pierrot lunaire*, please do not hesitate.

After 65 years the memories of people tends to change. In spite of the long period of time that had passed and the age of Dika Newlin, it seems that her mind is clear and that her answers are credible. This can be deduced from her detailed answers, and especially from her honesty in admitting that she does not remember certain issues. This interview is included here with the kind permission of Michael D. Moore.²

Michael D. Moore: Ladies and gentlemen welcome to today's episode of 'Dika's Mailbag – Ask Dika Newlin'. Today's letter is from Avior Byron and Dika will answer as many of these questions in as explicit a way as she can over the next hour. Avior, I hope you'll like the answers. Thank you very much. Thank you for joining us today Dr. Dika Newlin.

Dika Newlin: My pleasure.

MDM: Our first question from Avior is 'Could you tell me something about how Schoenberg worked with Erika Wagner-Stiedry? What kind of remarks did he give her? What was he concerned about? And do you think he was happy with her performance of *Sprechstimme*'?

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DN: Oh yes. I think he was very happy with her performance. They have been working together for a long time, in fact she was part of the Pierrot ensemble in Europe as where some of the other players and so there were people there, he knew what they could do, he knew what they could accomplish. The important thing about the recitation in *Pierrot* is, and some people don't realize, that the vocalist is not a solo vocalist. In other words, this is not a vocalist being accompanied by instruments, but this is a part of the ensemble. And in fact, sometimes the instruments are even more important than the voice. Often, this is not understood, but Mrs. Wagner-Stiedry, Stiedry-Wagner, had learned this over the years – and so indeed she did fulfill that very very well.

MDM: What was Schoenberg's...., what was his major concern in working with Erika?

DN: I think that the voice be placed properly, that it'd be placed in relation to the other instruments, that it'll not be too prominent or not prominent enough. Of course, the text has to be very clearly heard. And, it's interesting, you know, to realize that Schoenberg thought, in later times, *Pierrot lunaire* is always to be performed in the language of the country that it is being performed in, which is why earlier I had prepared a complete performable translation of the *Pierrot lunaire* text. Which I have performed myself later on, but that's another story. Obviously, in this case, since German was Erika's native language it would be performed in German and this she did. Certainly, her diction was very clear at all times. The text is important and she brought it out very well indeed.

MDM: Number 2, Mr. Byron asks: 'how was the atmosphere in the recording studio?'

DN: Rather tense at times. In the rehearsals too, of course there were tensions between players, tensions with Schoenberg, who obviously was very concerned that everything be just right. So it wasn't, shall we say, relaxed and chummy. It was tense, but not unbearably tense. See, we had two kinds of performers in this performance. Number one, were the people who had performed it for years. People like, for instance, Edward

Steuermann the pianist. And then there were people who were Hollywood musician, in other words, studio musicians, who are used to performing all kinds of music on very short notice and can play almost anything very well. They could get into this, but maybe it took them a little more time because maybe they have not performed something like this before. So there were tensions that happened at times. I recall one occasion when Mr. Stephan Auber, who was the cellist, and had an important cello solo in one of the pieces, he might have questioned something and Schoenberg immediately became furious and said: 'Sie sind ... [unintelligible]', in other words, 'you're being rude, this is bad, I'm not going to put up with this' and he stormed out of the rehearsal. Leonard Stein, Schoenberg's assistant at the time, had to go upstairs and smooth Schoenberg down and get him back to the rehearsal and then the rehearsal continued pleasantly enough.

MDM: Were you at all the rehearsals?

DN: I think at most of them. There might have been one or two when I wasn't present. As far as I remember, I attended certainly three or four rehearsals, which were usually about two hours long, sometimes a little bit longer. And, of course, this was very important to me, to be present; this was a statement of confidence in me, of interest in my opinion. This was in my third year of studying with Schoenberg, by this time I was, more or less, one of the family and I felt very very honored to be allowed to be present at this. I had never, of course, had the opportunity to hear a *Pierrot* before, because it hadn't been performed that often in this country, in places where I could hear it. So I was looking forward to getting acquainted with the work.

MDM: As a side note, he asks: 'Was the atmosphere different in the rehearsals than it was when they finally went into the recording studio?'

DN: No, I would say it was about the same. Maybe a little more relaxed in the recording studio because, by this time, a lot of the major problems have been discussed at the rehearsals so it wasn't necessary to bring it up again.

MDM: This is question number 3: 'How was the broadcast in September 1940?' Are you acquainted with that broadcast?

DN: Yes I am.

MDM: 'Was it different from the recording?'

DN: No, substantially no. I would say, of course, any two successful performances are not going to be exactly the same. There are always going to be little differences that happen, otherwise it would be so totally mechanical. So, they were not note for note identical. Not totally identical in expression. It would be always, each performance instead, should be recreated new, and I felt that happened.

MDM: Ok, and another question on that: 'How did people react to it?' On this you could elaborate how did the fellow musicians react to the broadcast and how did Schoenberg react to it?

DN: I think they were very happy with it, on the whole. They felt they had achieved what they had set out to achieve. Schoenberg was basically happy with it, as far as I remember now. And the musicians, well... I think they would say, 'we got through it, we did it, we made it'. So, musicians are always happy when that occurs.

MDM: How about the critics? Do you remember any critical comments at the time, one way or the other?

DN: No, I don't remember the reviews, I'm sure there were some, but I don't remember those at this time.

MDM: Number 4: 'Could you tell me any more information about the recording sessions that you were present in? And was Dr. Stiedry really interfering as Schoenberg wrote in one of his letters?'

DN: Ok, I don't remember that specifically, for Schoenberg said that in one of his letters. I'm sure that's what he felt, of course, Dr. Steidry, as Erika's husband was very concerned that she be well presented, that she be well heard, and perhaps he wanted her to be a little more prominent than Schoenberg thought should be the case. So, I don't remember that specifically, but that would be a reasonable supposition. I just don't remember that particular dialogue.

MDM: Ok, well perhaps you could elaborate on something that you just now mentioned. And, in addition, give us any more information about the recording sessions – it says 'session' here in the question, but also any additional sessions you were present in. Perhaps you should mention how Schoenberg felt the voice should act, react, in relation to the music? Maybe that's what caused her husband to question him?

DN: Yes, I think, as I mentioned before, the voice is really just one of the instruments. The voice is not an accompanying soloist. Of course, there's a lot about the performance practice which is misleading in Schoenberg's preface to *Pierrot lunaire*. For instance, he says that the printed notes, of course, are not printed as notes but are printed as x's in the score, and that you touch that pitch and then you slide your way from it. This is not what happens in a performance, this is not what's supposed to happen in performance. So, actually, what happens is, that one follows the line and you go up or go down as the placement of the notes on the staff suggests. And, of course, you keep the strict rhythm. But the pitches are not going to be the same as those you see on the printed page. And this particular notation has caused a lot of misunderstanding. Singers see this and see notes, and say: 'Ah, we want to sing'. This is not to be sung, except for when Schoenberg

specifically says so. And in fact, many of the first performances have not been by singers but have been by actors. The very first performance was by an actress. This type of misunderstanding I think was why in Schoenberg's later work with *Sprechstimme* he gave up using notes at all and simply used a horizontal line which represented middle pitch and shows pitches above or below that, shows us the exact rhythm but does not show pitches. I think that's much more realistic. So, I think he learned from some of the problems about *Pierrot*.

MDM: 'How long was the recording session?'

DN: I believe it was about three hours, as I recall. And of course that's because of a number of retakes. There were not too many retakes necessary at this point because people knew what they were doing.

MDM: 'Who decided how many times to record each piece?'

DN: Schoenberg.

MDM: 'On what basis?'

DN: On whether he felt that it has successfully achieved what he wanted to. In other words, the proper valves [?], the accuracy of notes, of course, had a lot of consideration because we knew that everybody was going to play the right notes. There were some questions of ensemble, which happened at times. I'll mention one of those a little bit later, which I think happened. I think most people would have discarded that particular take, Schoenberg didn't want to and I'll explain that a little bit later on.

MDM: Alright, 'how many people were there at these recordings?' Did they happen on one day or on the course of several days?

DN: As I recall, it was all done in one day.³ The people who be present were of course the technicians who had to be there, and I was present, and I believe Leonard Stein (Schoenberg's assistant) was present. There may have been a couple of others, but I don't recall them.

MDM: Ok, so four, five people maximum?

DN: Yes.

MDM: And that includes the engineers?

DN: Yes.

MDM: Alright, number 5: 'You wrote that you were active in choosing takes from the test pressings for the commercial recordings. On what basis were the takes chosen?' And please elaborate on that and then I'll ask some more.

DN: Alright. As I said, on basis of accuracy, on basis of following what Schoenberg had wanted to have happen, on the basis of balance, on basis of atmosphere. And here I want to mention one piece in particular where one might be surprised by the choice which was made. In the recitation called Madonna, there's a certain moment when three instruments are playing in three-part harmony. And ordinarily, one would expect a three part harmony to be played with the three instruments playing precisely at the same time, which was how Schoenberg wrote it. However, for whatever reason, they weren't quite precise in doing it together. So instead of hearing chord, chord, chord you heard ta-da-da, ta-da-da, ta-da-da. In other words, it was not quite together. I heard this and I thought: well, you know, we really don't want to have this, we shouldn't take that take. However, Schoenberg wanted that particular take. He wanted that insecurity, if you will, in the harmony. And so he chose. Finally, when I thought about it, I did agree with him that it,

³ As mentioned in chapter 7 the test-pressing sessions took three days. Newlin was probably only in one of those sessions (her diary records that she was present in the recording session of 25 of September) or her memory failed her here. Note that later in the interview she confirms that the sessions were 'probably done over a day or two'.

perhaps, reflected the tense atmosphere of that particular piece. So, the chords didn't need to be exactly together. So that was an unusual choice.

[Avior: Write here about Philip's observation on ensemble playing together and what Schoenberg wrote about this in 'Mechanical Musical instruments']

MDM: So they weren't rhythmically displayed in unison, that's what you're saying.

DN: That's right.

MDM: On what basis were the takes chosen? What were people talking about when or after listening to the takes?

DN: Again, the same considerations I've been mentioning. Does this take reflect the atmosphere of the piece? Is this take correct? Is the balance between instruments good? Did everybody do what we had agreed upon in performance? All of these things. In other words, had many rehearsals borne fruit? And I think we all would agree that they had.

MDM: Alright, 'Who was the most active in the choosing? Were people listening with or without scores?' Maybe you could elaborate on that.

DN: Yes. My recollection is we were listening without scores. We were listening in a way, in other words, the person who goes on and buys this recordings is not going to have a score. They're going to have a musical experience. Are they having this musical experience when they're listening to this recording? We tried to put ourselves, at least I've tried to put myself, in the place of a listener, somebody who has never heard the work before. What will they get out of this? Because, this recording should not be just for musicians to listen to, just for professionals to listen to. It should be something that a musical public can enjoy. And I think this recording is.

MDM: Very good. 'How many people were present when choosing from the press recordings?' I know you and Schoenberg were there, but who else was involved in this choice process?

DN: Again, Leonard Stein probably. And the performers. Certainly Erika was there. And sure Steidry was there. Steuermann. Probably, the group of the four of us as a whole. Maybe some of the studio musicians, the Hollywood musicians, were not. But the old-timers were present.

MDM: Ok, the old-timers, meaning the old-timers that were associated with the composer? The old-timers who were associates with the studio?

DN: The old-timers that were associated with the composer. Yes, and there would have been some studio people present also.

MDM: Yes, I'm sure there would've. Studio engineers playing and replaying the test pressings.

DN: Exactly.

MDM: Right. So you're talking about several other people, maybe somewhere between half a dozen and ten people, would you think?

DN: Yes. Something like that.

MDM: Ok. Very good. 'What did Schoenberg think about the recording after it was made?'

DN: He was very very happy about the recording. However, here I think I should tell the story about my translation because this has a bearing on how the recording was received or was not received by the public. Obviously, with a piece like this it is very very important that the listener knew exactly what is going on and not just in a general way. Schoenberg suggested sometime back that I make a translation of *Pierrot* and I made it,

in fact, in such a way that one could perform it in English, since that I had twice recorded one of those recordings.

Well, we wanted to have this printed, the translation printed, with the album, just like musicians print the lyrics of songs, for example. So we sent it along with the test pressings, a copy of my translation. And, in due course, we got a letter back from a Mr. Wagner Liberstein, who was, at that time, a rather minor figure at Columbia, later on he became a major person there you may know about. And, so, he basically said we can't use a translation from the German. Remember, this was at the time we were at war with Germany. There may be all kinds of copyright problems and so forth. He said that we should go back to the original French text, that the German text was a translation of, and adapt it from the French text, that we could use that. So, I told Schoenberg this and he said: 'I forbid this!' in his usual commanding voice. The problem being that the German was a very free translation of the French in the first place and in some places quite different. So a translation from the French would have absolutely been not proper. So we compromised that there was a brief summary with the album of what each of the songs was about. Of course, Schoenberg was not happy with that and needless to say, I was not happy with that.

MDM: Because you had spent a lot of time working on these translations and getting them accurate to Schoenberg's specifications.

DN: Yes, yes, exactly. Well. This is why I was happy – because at a later time, once at Northern Texas State University and once at Texas Tech I had the opportunity of performing my, in my English translation. And, by the way, Erika was a great inspiration to me, as trying to learn how to do the recitation. I remember, in California, my mother and I, we had sometimes used to go out to Palm Springs for a weekend and I would go into the desert and practice doing like Erika's vocals. So I consider, that in obsessive

[?], she was my vocal coach for what I do today. Now, what I do today is quite different, but the idea is the same.

MDM: This is a question from me personally, this work that you were doing in the desert, is that how you learned about projection of your voice, how to contrast between the softness and the strength that were necessary for the performance?

DN: Yes. That is part of it. The interesting thing is, and of course again this is in accordance with what I told you about the kind of person who usually performs or who usually should perform, this is not for singers. This is for actors. Actually, I've never had vocal training as an actress either. This is something I've learned on my own, by working with this, by seeing what other people did and projecting it. I didn't have voice lessons. I have never had any voice lessons and in light of what that score actually is, I'm glad that I didn't. I think round, pear-shaped tones are not what Schoenberg was looking for.

MDM: Do you think, do you know, 'what he had thought about it when he heard it again? When it was released to the public?' In other words, when he heard the test pressings and when he heard the final release? I think, perhaps, the question is more addressing the release to the public. And 'did he change his mind about these recordings at any time?'

DN: Number one, here I'll try to go into his mind, I know, I feel that I know, that he was happy with the recording as it went out. He was not happy that he could not have the translations. And, to my knowledge, later on, of course, I did not see Schoenberg very much after I graduated from UCLA, I was in New York, I was studying at Columbia.

MDM: What year did you last work with him at UCLA?

DN: 1941. And then I was at Columbia University working on my book, 'Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg', as my doctoral dissertation. By the way, that's an interesting story. That was the first time that a musicology dissertation had been accepted who's dealing with a still living person. That was something unusual. And I was very happy to be able

to do that. I was in touch by letter with Schoenberg during this time and I would see him during the summers. I went to California in the summers and visited with him on a number of occasions. He'll hear my latest work and so forth and so on. So we were in touch pretty much until his death.

MDM: And more on the aspect of 'did he ever change his mind about the recordings at any time?'

DN: That I didn't know because that wasn't something that came up after the business of recording, it was all over with. I've never discussed it with him, for instance, in the summers when I was visiting because we were discussing other things.

MDM: New things.

DN: New things. Like my new works.

MDM: That's right. And what did you tell me yesterday when we were speaking on the phone? That Schoenberg, when he made up his mind about something he liked or didn't like, and it wouldn't really change that much. Is that true?

DN: Yes. I think that was true. I believe that to be true. I remember, to my knowledge, my memory is that he didn't change on this. But again, you can't say he was completely rigid because sometimes he did change his mind. And wasn't it Emerson who said 'Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds'?

MDM: Correct. Number seven: 'how was Schoenberg as a conductor?'

DN: Ok. Not the virtuoso type of conductor, not the show off type of conductor as Bernstein, for instance, or Toscanini, or somebody like that. I think he was successful in putting across his own ideas of his music. I saw him conduct a number of times, specifically in a very interesting group that we had in Los Angeles at that time called *The rehearsal orchestra*, and this was for Hollywood musicians who got tired playing some of the stuff that they were playing in film and wanted to have more challenging material. So

they would invite, for instance, Stravinsky to come in and conduct them on Sunday or Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco or whoever was around, and they invited Schoenberg and so he conducted quite a few of the studio musicians in various works in one of these rehearsals. So he was effective, I think, in putting it across, his ideas. I don't know if he's the person I would want to hear conduct Beethoven's ninth. Well, he did do that. Not in my hearing. For the needs of what he was doing with conducting his own music, certainly he was the right man in the right place at the right time.

MDM: What was his relation to the score and how was his conducting of tempo?

DN: He had rather free ideas about tempo, and if you look to the scores one could see he never replaced one tempo heading at the beginning. It would be ca circa about say 51 to 65. He gives people a choice. So sometimes it might be done a little bit slower, sometimes it might be done a little bit faster. And that would depend, in some cases, in the nature of the hall in which it was being done. Is this a more resonant place? Is this a less resonant place? It might depend on the capacity of the performer, on the feeling of the performer. So, he was not rigid about tempo. Flexible about tempo.

MDM: 'Did the performers follow his conducting?'

DN: Yes..., they'd better [laughter]. He had a quick temper you know.

MDM: Avior Byron here, concludes his letter: 'If there is anything else that you could tell me considering the recording, broadcast and rehearsals of *Pierrot lunaire*, please do not hesitate to do that'. Now, you've got half an hour to tell us everything that you know about *Pierrot lunaire*.

DN: Everything I know. Ok. Well, are some of the things that I've mentioned already are the ones are they ones you'd like me to expand on a little bit more, that you'd like to hear more about?

MDM: Well, What I particularly would like to hear more about is the recording studio. Where it was located? The size of the studio? How many musicians were used and also I'd like to know more about the phraseology of the work itself. How Erika Wagner-Stiedry came up with the phrasing with Schoenberg. And I'd also like to know a little bit more about how it actually came to being there for the performance.

DN: Ok. Within the studio itself, and this was a fair sized studio, I don't recall which studio building was used, this was whatever space Columbia Records were using at that time. It wasn't a huge room. I'd say it was sort of a middle-sized performance space. And within that, of course, as I mentioned before, there were several listeners, there were several engineers. Of course this was very different from contemporary technology, obviously, so we had whoever we needed at that time.

As far as phrasing is concerned, this kind of thing, this particularly with the vocals, this depends on the character, the words, what words you want to emphasize, etc. And that, of course, was thoroughly discussed with Schoenberg. Let me mention this, I go back to the famous preface to *Pierrot*, which I think is misleading. He claims that he wasn't really going for tone-painting. What I mean by tone-painting, the idea that the music describes exactly what is going on in the text, or exactly what is going on in the text if it's a tone poem, for instance, the orchestra does, the music reflects that exactly. Schoenberg liked to think that he wasn't doing that much tone-painting. And, in fact, sometimes he did the opposite of tone painting in the piece. For instance, uses the solo cello when the text talks about a Bratsche, a viola [in German]. He would have had a viola at his disposal, because the thing is so orchestrated that at some place the violin turns into a viola. However, he deliberately didn't choose the viola, he used a cello. So that's exactly the opposite of tone-painting. However, about two or three years ago at my university, which is the Virginia Commonwealth University, I presented a special seminar on *Pierrot lunaire* and one of

the things we did at the class was to take the text word-by-word and see where the music specifically illustrates the words, does it or does it not? And we found out that there's much more tone-painting, there's much more illustration than Schoenberg probably wanted to admit to. And the class has been taught by other teachers ready to consider Schoenberg as a radical who wanted to go away totally from romanticism. That kind of thing. And as they worked through what we have realized together, which I already knew, of course, and I came to know even more – Schoenberg, to the end of his life, whatever medium he was using, whether he was using tonality, whether he was using extended tonality or going away from a tonal center, whether he was using twelve-tone-music, he was always a full-blown romantic. And a lot of people don't know that or don't admit that. But it is true. There are all kinds of tone-painting which are going on in his music.

MDM: May I ask you a question? How many musicians were present at each one, there are seven pieces, right? Twenty one pieces in all? Three times seven.

DN: Twenty one pieces, three parts. Ok. Well, all of the musicians are present throughout, there are more musicians playing in some of the pieces than there are in others. Some of the musicians double on instruments, for instance, the violinist played the viola, the clarinetist played the bass-clarinet, so forth. Those who had doubled, do double.

MDM: How many musicians are necessary, for say, the minimal requirement, similar to the requirement they set in the medium studio at Columbia in 1940? How many musicians do you suppose were in the room with you guys?

DN: Ok. Five.

MDM: Five musicians? And they would have been?

DN: Violinist, doubling on viola. Pianist, of course, on piano. Cello. And who else? Clarinet.

MDM: Yes, you mentioned clarinet.

DN: And bass-clarinet.

MDM: And would you have had someone playing a bass run? Or would that have been done on a cello?

DN: No. No percussion.

MDM: Ok. How about the..., another question that I had was, about the choosing of the thing. How many takes, cause I never did get, it was kind of included in the other questions, question number five from Avior Byron. How many takes would they have done on each piece and were they done in a row from beginning to end? For the whole piece? Or was each piece done separately? And you can also elaborate on the recording process. Did everyone play together in a large room and each one had their own microphone? No one came back in for over dubs or anything, did they?

DN: Well, no, not at that time. This was a direct recording. I don't recall whether the pieces were recorded in the order that they are in the score or not. Probably not, because there were certain pieces that required only certain people and those people would have to be present, otherwise, if all the people were needed we would have all the people there. That's my recollection of it but I don't remember that much detail. That would have been a logical way to do it.

MDM: So it was probably done over a day or two of recording sessions?

DN: Yes.

MDM: And, one? Two? Three? How many takes of each one?

DN: It depended on the problems which came up. I don't think we did anything in only one take. But maybe two or three, sometimes. I don't recall more than three.

MDM: Ok. Cause I know you were famous for doing your songs, that we've recorded in the productions, in either one or two takes. You're just famous for that. And so many of the songs that we have used on your albums have been one-take songs that you've

performed live. So it wasn't unheard of with these professional musicians and they were well-rehearsed to do this in one, two, three takes?

DN: That's right.

MDM: Ok, what else would you like to tell us about *Pierrot lunaire*, and something that could perhaps tie us, tie you, to this production and to the other two productions that you've done in Texas and here, and explain some of the variations that you've incorporated.

DN: Alright. As I've said, I was fascinated with what Erika was doing and I used to go out and do this, try this out and see how it worked. And I've always dreamed of being able to perform this with an ensemble. Well, the opportunity came when one of my students at North Texas State, this was the last year I believe that I was there – 1965, wanted to do the *Pierrot* as her senior project, to get players together to do that, Oh, my goodness, I've forgot to name the flute.

MDM: Yeah, that was what I was going to say, when we talked about the musicians incorporated. We forgot about the importance of the flute.

DN: The flute is very important and, of course, the flute has a wonderful piece alone with the voice – 'like this taken to death', and the flute plays this as 'The Sick moon'. And it's just for flute and voice. And at my time in North Texas we had a wonderful flute department, the flutists liked to play that piece and liked to have it recited with them. So that often showed up at flute recitals. But I really was anxious, at North Texas, to play... to do the voice part, as part of a whole performance. And, of course, when they were getting that together, they thought of me as the pianist. I said: 'Oh, no. you have other pianists, I would like to do the voice'. So that worked out and I was able to do that. And I did it in English and we recorded that at the time. I don't know if that recording had been kept or not. Did I give you my own copy of that recording?

MDM: I don't know if I had a copy of that recording. But I do have a copy of the recording you did recently in Texas, several years ago. And I would also like for you, at this time, we have enough time on our Question and Answer tape here. If you could elaborate on the person of the speaker, or the reciter, not the singer, since she is not singing. Can you talk about who that person is and what is that importance to the piece?

DN: Oh, yes, that's very important. In the very first performance that ever took place, in Berlin, the reciter appeared in a costume and that has happened in a number of performances. Not in my performances because Pierrot is not the narrator. The narrator is talking about Pierrot. So you have to be somebody else. In the performances that I did, in the first performance I did in Texas I believe I've used some kind of harlequin costume. In the second performance in Texas, I had another type of costume which the wife of the conductor had specially designed for me. A sort of futuristic costume, but it was not a Pierrot costume because we are talking about Pierrot, and, of course, in preparing for the recordings, there was not any costuming for these performances. Obviously.

MDM: Ok. What else would you like to tell us about, that will help Avior Byron in conducting this piece, in performing this piece. What else would you like to tell him and also what else would you like to discuss with our audience today about the piece before we wrap it up?

DN: How much time do I have?

MDM: You have 15 minutes.

DN: Oh. Very good. I would say, first of all, listen to the Schoenberg recording, listen to other recordings as well. There are a number of very interesting recordings. One with Bethany Beardslee⁴ who was trained as a singer but does a very good job as a reciter.

⁴ Bethany Beardslee, soprano; Columbia Chamber Ensemble (Murray Panitz, flute & piccolo; Ernest Bright, clarinet & bass clarinet; Isidore Cohen, violin & viola; Charles McCracken, violoncello; Robert Helps, piano) Robert Craft, conductor, various issues, among them CBS Sony SOCL 267/68 (pre 1978) LP.

One, very unusual, by the popular singer Cleo Laine, who does do it in English. And there are probably a number of others that don't cross my mind at the moment, but it's interesting to hear different recordings and hear how different they were. By the way, there was a study done on this by a writer in the 1920s, I forget the name of the writer, but this was in German, and this was in Austria or Germany. Someone who was very struck by the fact that performances of *Pierrot* differ greatly from one to another. In other words, there seems to be no unanimity about what should be done, in particularly with the voice. And I think this shows, this became rather a criticism of the way it was written down. In other words, Schoenberg wrote one thing and yet everyone does something different. Which I think is what convinced Schoenberg later to use a more flexible notation. As he does in *Ode to Napoleon*, for example, and in other works which used to speak so.

The questions of how notated this kind of music becomes important. But there's a lot of variety between performances and I think there should be, so long as the atmosphere of the work is portrayed. And the people I've mentioned, I think, all did that very successfully.

So, listen to a lot of recordings, look at the score from your own stand point – what do you get out of this? What personally, to you, is important in the score? Why do you devote yourself to this score? What is it that you would like the audience to hear in the score? And I think that is always of importance.

In presenting this to an audience in Texas, twice, I think that was rather unusual, because, certainly, you wouldn't think Schoenberg will be a household word in Texas. So, it was interesting to me to see what reaction was, especially in Texas Tech. We had fun with this. Those articles published about it in the local magazine, and they were talking about all the different aspects of this. And finally, I came up with jokes like 'Two gun Texas

piece' and I came on the scene with a couple of bottles of Texas Pea Hot Sauce, I did not do that in the performance.

MDM: That was more to put the musicians at ease.

DN: Yes, definitely. And I think we discussed this, in the magazine article, but there wasn't a picture. We had private pictures of that, so we wanted people to have fun with this concept and I think they did. Certainly the audience there was very enthusiastic, they were cheering for it. The thing is, I suggest again, keep in mind Schoenberg was a romanticist all the way. He was not this very turbidly intellectual person, that is often presented. People have this notion of him as a cerebral composer who always composed by system, who composed in a very strict manner, who was not interested in romanticism, who was not interested in expression and so forth. And that was not the case.

One bit of reading he might like to do, or several essays you might like to read out of his book titled *Style and Idea*, of which I made the initial translation, on the very first edition of it that came out in 1951 or 1952. Later on, a larger edition was made by Leonard Stein. And in this a number of interesting articles. One that I like is 'Heart and Brain in Music', where he deals with this very problem. There seems to be a feeling of a conflict there between heart and brain and Schoenberg felt the two should work together. If you didn't have any brain, you'd have a really poor heart. So, you use your mind, but also, you let your emotions take over. And another very good one is '*On Revient Toujours*, one always come back'. People had a huge tale of abandoning tonality, they had no interest in tonality anymore, they've thrown it out of the window. Not so, he came back in later years to tonal music. And even when he was writing non-tonally-centered works, this was because he wanted to expand the possibilities of music. He did not want to throw out tonality, and he never did, in fact. And then, of course, expanding it still more with his method of composition with twelve tones. But what he said in '*On Revient Toujours*', he said you

always come back to earlier things, there is nothing wrong in doing that. He said: 'I like all my works, because I liked them when I wrote them'. Which I tell my students. Sometimes they feel 'I've gone beyond this now, I mustn't do this anymore'. And I say: 'No. You do what is appropriate to what you are feeling at the time'. And I think this is important. So a conductor should not be doctrinaire about what he or she wants to conduct or how it should be conducted. Look at the past, see how you felt about it in the past, how you feel about it now, can you put those things together and come up with something which is valid for you? And I think that is extremely important to be able to do.

Another Schoenberg essay in *Style and Idea*, its title is 'This is my fault' and there he talks about people who write, who compose absolutely contrary to the text and he admits that he might sometimes had done this, but it was not his habit. What one really should do is, one should consider the text, one should relate well to the text. He has a whole argument about relations to the text, which should be studied as well by composers and, I think, conductors. Conducting text, one should realize what the relationship of the orchestra or small ensemble is to the text and direct the performance accordingly.

MDM: Would you like to make one final summation about this whole piece, now that you have thought about it and recorded it. We have enough time for you to make a summation paragraph before we wrap up our show today.

DN: Ok. In my life, I think Schoenberg, or I know Schoenberg in my life had a predominant influence that leads up to the present day. In my later years, I've had the opportunity to go back over the past, while doing this or other interviews and other situations as well, and pass on that heritage. And a very important part of my work has been to be able to teach all of these years. I've taught for fifty years, so I've had fifty years to be able to pass this on to students. Some people don't entirely appreciate this, I must

say, even within my own university, Virginia Commonwealth University at this time, as I have been teaching there. There were some people who didn't quite approve of this. Who felt whether I should be using this textbook or that textbook? Why I use Schoenberg's textbooks? And, by the way, Schoenberg's textbooks are terribly important, a marvelous resource for young students who want to learn more about the past, through a master of the present day. A wonderful counterpoint textbook, a wonderful harmony textbook. Got two wonderful harmony textbooks that everybody who is studying composition should have that exposure. I hope that will be true in many cases. I've made it, in my teaching here at the Virginia Commonwealth University, as true as I can. I'd like to be true to the tradition and I hope in things I am doing and saying now and in summing up my own life, what my relationship to Schoenberg has been, and summing up what my pupils have done, I feel that the heritage goes on and on and on. Maybe we have Vienna on the [unintelligible] now and I've had some wonderful students, I have some wonderful students now, who carry on the tradition and learn to be themselves. Schoenberg's students were not all just clones of each other, they learned a lot of basics, learned a lot of fundamentals, each one was his or her own person. They learned to become who they were like Berg and Webern who took it different. I think the latest example of two people who were certainly as different as they could be, and totally different than Berg and Webern, I think myself and John Cage, a very unlikely combination. Does that sum it up for you?

MDM: I think that sums it up well. I think we would certainly like to thank you – Dr. Dika Newlin, for elaborating on *Pierrot lunaire* today. And we'd like to thank Avior Byron for the letter here with all these wonderful questions about the performances. And we would also like to let anyone watching this know that for additional information you can go to moorevideoandmusic.tripod.com. You could also contact me, Michael D.

Moore, directly at MichaelDMoore@juno.com and of course, you can always call us and leave a message or a fax at 'Moore Video and Music' and that telephone number is 804-7459785. And also we're still operating our MDM Productions post office box, that is P.O. Box 5703, Richmond VA, for Virginia, 23220-0703.

Once again, this is Michael D. Moore and Dika Newlin and another episode of 'Dika Newlin's Mailbag', where Dika Newlin tells all about Arnold Schoenberg. Thanks again Dika. And we hope to see you again soon for another interview.

DN: My pleasure.

MDM: I'm gonna turn it off now.