

Chapter 9: On interpreting Schoenberg

The aim of this final chapter is to evaluate Schoenberg's performance aesthetics and practice from a broad perspective. This study reveals new evidence such as unpublished writings, letters and unknown recordings. It discusses much of this evidence in detail and conducts for the first time a full review of all of the previously published evidence. I summarize here some of the problems and challenges that this evidence creates, and write what can be concluded from it. Schoenberg was affected by several important cultural factors: for example, the different societies in which he lived, two World Wars that changed the way people thought and created in Western art, economic circumstances, technological advances, and religious as well as identity struggles. I suggest that Schoenberg's history and personality beg for narratives which take into consideration these factors, which occasionally manifest themselves in the form of conceptual contradictions and changes.

Problems with interpreting Schoenberg

Steuermann wrote: 'You may ask, what was so beautiful?... In Schoenberg's "Musizieren" [performing] it was primarily the character of his tempos, especially his ability to make the music move and stay still at the same time, which I will never forget'.¹ Is it possible to reconstruct or at least partly understand Steuermann's experience, or are past experiences, as Richard Taruskin claims (in a discussion on the concept of 'authenticity'), lost forever?² I will present here some of the obstacles that stand before anyone who wishes to interpret Schoenberg. Some of the problems concern research on

¹ Steuermann, quoted in Schuller, 'A Conversation with Steuermann', in Steuermann, *The Not Quite Innocent Bystander*, 174.

² Richard Taruskin, 'The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past', in Richard Taruskin, *Text & Act* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 90-97.

recordings in general, and some further difficulties are unique to Schoenberg's performance in particular.

When one compares different performances several issues arise. First, there is the familiar problem that a scholarly comparison is an experience somewhat 'detached' from musical, and especially concert life. The vast majority of listeners (most scholars included) do not experience music in this way. Whenever various recordings (often small parts of recordings) are compared to one another and listened to in a relatively short period of time, important issues may be revealed. Yet one's own observations are highly conditioned by such directed and specifically focused listening. One of the ways to partly overcome this problem is to analyze historical reviews of people who heard such performances. A similar issue that might cloud the findings of any research on recordings is the discrepancy between the experiences of listening to recordings and of live performance. Much has been written on the short- and long-term influence of recordings on listening.³ The gap becomes even greater when one takes into account the time that passed since the historical events. The basis for comparing recordings of different performers is far from self evident.⁴ Putting all performances on a single level assumes that a comparison can and should be made. It assumes that a single value system is appropriate for the various performative contexts, or at least that two (or more) value systems can be reduced to a third one which will be the basis for judgment. In practice, however, this should not always be carried out. The problem of local context sharpens when comparing a large number of recordings for the sake of style analysis (as in the work of Robert Philip and others). There is a concern that something sensitive and delicate about each interpretation is lost in a comparison of this type. Cook writes that 'an essentially inductive approach of this kind does not easily provide the kind of insight into

³ See Philips, *Performing Music*; Day, *A Century of Recorded Music*; and Chanan, *Repeated Takes*.

⁴ I would like to thank Jonathan Dunsby sharing his thoughts on this issue with me in a conversation.

the specific qualities of specific interpretations that score-based analysis characteristically offers'.⁵ This is why I believe that one should discuss recorded elements with reference to cultural and social issues which grant them a specific identity and significance.

Apart from these general problems with recording analysis there are problems that are specific to Schoenberg. The evidence of his performance writings is fragmentary – often momentary reactions to certain contemporary performance phenomenon. In several cases, there is little information about the context of the writings. Also the status of some of the recordings is problematic. The purpose of recording *Verklärte Nacht* and the Suite, Op. 29 is unknown.⁶ Many recordings are fragmentary (see appendix 5). Also the conducting scores do not always have a clear status: it is not always certain whether they were present in the performances of the recordings. The number of pieces that were recorded and the number of recordings of each composition are small. Since the evidence is incomplete and occasionally uncertain, the danger of building a too coherent and possibly distorted interpretation is great. Not always is there enough data to confirm one's conclusions. Schoenberg's thoughts on performance cannot be regarded as a systematic and fully mature theory of performance. The contradictions in some of his writings, contributes to this notion. In several cases we are aware of a serious gap between his aesthetics and his practice.

Authors such as Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty and Jean François Lyotard argue that reality is not solely rational but also occasionally contradictory and incoherent.⁷ This is why they negate the possibility of one rational meta-narrative which once and for all

⁵ Nicholas Cook, 'Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance, *Music Theory Online*, 7/2 (April 2001), <http://societymusictheory.org/mto/issues/mto.01.7.2/toc.7.2.html> , [22].

⁶ Although recordings of premières for the use of the composer (such as in the case of the Suite) where by no means uncommon.

⁷ .46-52, (2005), הקיבוץ המאוחד, רמת גן: הירושלים ורמת גן: הקיבוץ המאוחד, 2005. See also Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical Papers*, 3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Jean François Lyotard, 'What is Postmodernism?', in Jean François Lyotard, trans. Geoff Benington and Brian Massumi, *The Post Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 71-82.

explains reality. In an article on the role of the performer and the concept of authenticity, Gary Tomlinson emphasizes the need to acknowledge the gap between our present culture and that of the composers (even recent ones such as Schoenberg) that the historian writes about. 'Authentic meaning', he claims, 'is only authentic in so far as the historian is able to construct a coherent context that he imagines to have been available to his subjects and relevant to their modes of thought'.⁸ Tomlinson argues against both the attempt to construct a single objective understanding of the past (as sought by the original Early Music movement), and the discouragement from any attempt to argue that one can really communicate with the past (as done by Richard Taruskin). Instead he suggests a pluralistic situation where there can be several coherent interpretations of the past. Each interpretation is true in itself (i.e. if it has an internal consistency of argument) although none are single truths (in the sense that they do not exclude other truths). He admits the positioning of various contradictory interpretations living side by side.

Dika Newlin seems to suggest a single meta-narrative for Schoenberg's musical activities: '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' (see appendix 4). I follow the practice of authors such as Foucault⁹ and Lyotard who argue against a linear understanding of history and offer an alternative: an understanding of history where different approaches, attitudes and understandings are simultaneously present. The struggle between competing approaches does not exist only between various

⁸ Gary Tomlinson, 'The historian, the performer, and authentic meaning in music', in Nicholas Kenyon (ed.), *Authenticity and Early Music* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press: 2002), 120.

⁹ 'I wonder whether we may not envisage modernity rather as an attitude than as a period of history. And by "attitude", I mean a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task. A bit, no doubt, like what the Greeks called an ethos. And consequently, rather than seeking to distinguish the "modern era" from the "premodern" or "postmodern", I think it would be more useful to try to find out how the attitude of modernity, ever since its formation, has found itself struggling with attitudes of "countermodernity".' Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 32-50.

people, but sometimes also within a single person. Schoenberg's late performance aesthetics, for example, was a blend of several contradictory attitudes concerning tempo: momentary fluctuations (which were dominant in his early practice), an attempt to project the structure as he understood it by avoiding 'exaggerated' tempo fluctuations (something which was his major concern between the World Wars), and an attempt to express the performer's will. This approach is therefore not purely a 'Romantic' one (as Newlin and Ronald Jackson¹⁰ argue), but a blend of 'Romantic', 'Modernistic', and even 'Post-modernistic' (which argues for greater freedom to performers, as propagated by Taruskin and Cook, although not as radically as they put it). Schoenberg does not belong to any single historical category,¹¹ and his performance aesthetics and practice contain constant tensions between different and occasionally contradictory value systems.

Apart from the mentioned above authors, there are others who attempt to find a meta-narrative or kernel to Schoenberg's performance aesthetics. I will mention two further cases. In 1997, Alfred Cramer claims that 'the music's [early atonal] ... elusiveness is an inherent part of ... [its] purpose'. He writes: 'most of my theses might apply to twelve-tone along with atonal music',¹² Cramer claims that the Viennese School's 'performances were guided ... by the imperative to realize as much as possible of the score's sonic potential... the ideology held that performance was an act of realizing

¹⁰ In his article 'Schoenberg as performer of his own music', Jackson studies many of the recordings, conducting scores and writings also examined in the present study. He insists that 'despite his [Schoenberg's] significant foreshadowing of future developments in twentieth-century music – his interpretations owe more to late-nineteenth-century traditions of performance than to those of the unfolding twentieth century.' (Ronald Jackson, 'Schoenberg as performer of his own music', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 21/1 (January-March 2005), 49-69.) Jackson seems to overlook the changing aspects in Schoenberg's performance aesthetics and practice, as well as their debt to the shifting cultural environments in which Schoenberg lived.

¹¹ A different view is argued by Cramer: the 'metaphysics governing the 1920's performance practice was little changed from Schoenberg's beliefs of 1909' (Alfred Cramer, 'Music for the Future: Sounds of Early Twentieth-Century Psychology and Language in Works of Schoenberg, Webern and Berg – 1908 to the First World War' (PhD dissertation, Pennsylvania, 1997), 125). Although there were similarities between the performance aesthetics of the two periods, it seems imprudent to ignore the differences between the cultural climates and their effect on Schoenberg's thought (see chapter 3). More about Cramer's views will be presented in the following.

¹² *Ibid.*, 12.

something that could not (yet) be fully realized'.¹³ He argues that Schoenberg's 'performance practice appears to have been a full realization of ideas already stated in 1909 in a series of letter's from Schoenberg to Busoni'.¹⁴ The 1909 correspondence between Schoenberg and Busoni cannot stand as representative of the whole of Schoenberg's performance aesthetics. Cramer ignores most of Schoenberg's writings on performance. Another example is Martina Sichardt's 'Transparenz und Ausdruck: Arnold Schönbergs Ideal der musikalischen Reproduktion'¹⁵ (Transparency and expression: Arnold Schoenberg's ideal of musical reproduction), which argues that the 'kernel' of Schoenberg's performance aesthetic is the delicate combination of 'polyphonic presentation, espressivo playing, rubato, and the balance of tempo proportions'.¹⁶ An important issue that is missing from Sichardt's 'kernel' is the relation between composer and performer (see chapter 3). Also Sichardt does not seem to attach weight to the historical changes in Schoenberg's aesthetics or to identify contradictions therein.

Botstein,¹⁷ Cook,¹⁸ Cramer (see chapter 2) and Danuser,¹⁹ who emphasize Schoenberg's negative writings on performers and/or accord great weight to his 1920s

¹³ Ibid., vii.

¹⁴ Ibid., 122-4.

¹⁵ Martina Sichardt. 'Transparenz und Ausdruck. Arnold Schönbergs Ideal der musikalischen Reproduktion', in *AWS*, 31-44.

¹⁶ Ibid., 44. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁷ Leon Botstein interviewed by Adena Portowitz, 'An Interview with Professor Leon Botstein, Newly Appointed Conductor of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra', in *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*, 3 (2004), 2, <http://www.biu.ac.il/hu/mu/> Botstein says: 'And of course we were taught by a generation of teachers in the composer and analysis world who were extremely hostile to performers. This generation was trained in its attitude to players by Schoenberg and Stravinsky, who were extremely negative about performers'. Saying this in interview has, of course, a different status than in writing.

¹⁸ Cook argued that Schoenberg wrote: 'The performer, for all his intolerable arrogance, is totally unnecessary except as his interpretations make the music understandable to an audience unfortunate enough not to be able to read it in print.' (in Nicholas Cook, 'Product or Process? Music as Performance' in Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton (eds.), *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003), 204-14). Said by Dika Newlin (and not written by Schoenberg), this quotation is likely to be inauthentic – see the full entry in the diary of Newlin in Dika Newlin, *Schoenberg Remembered: Diaries and Recollections 1938-76* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1980), 164; For a different opinion see Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 81; and Nicholas Cook, 'Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance', *Music Theory Online* 7/2 (April 2002), [1] at <http://mto.societymusictheory.org/issues/mto.01.7.2/mto.01.7.2.cook.html> ; and Nicholas Cook, *Music, Imagination & Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 227.

demand for faithfulness to the score, contribute to a meta-narrative that puts him in the position of a composer, which insists on cultural hegemony of composers over performers, manifested in the passivity of performers in a process of communication between composer to listener. This study challenges this meta-narrative by demonstrating that Schoenberg held various views on performers and performance (while score-focused writings are frequent in the 1920s, they are almost completely absent from the American period).²⁰ The alternative that I offer is fragmentary, multifaceted and at certain points even contradictory by nature. Such a state, I argue, is desirable when analyzing Schoenberg, due to both the shifting cultural and social contexts that he lived in, and his multifarious personality. A situation where one belongs to various cultural communities²¹ that have incommensurable value systems (sets of values that are not comparable since they do not have a similar basis) is not uncommon in our time.

If one admits that forcing a single, rational meta-narrative on reality may hamper a desirable pluralistic situation, then one should be cautious not to use rationality as an excuse for suppressing irrational aspects in a single interpretation. Since Schoenberg belonged to various cultural communities that have incommensurable value systems, it is plausible that certain inner clashes between these value systems inevitably created contradictions.²² In the following I refrain from suggesting a binding kernel to

¹⁹ In 1986 Hermann Danuser argued: 'The formation of a performance tradition ... should be protected from the will of the interpreter; this is the most important motivation for ... [Schoenberg's] theory of performance'; Danuser, 'Zu Schoenberg's "Vortragslehre"', 257.

²⁰ For example, Schoenberg recommended the Kolisch Quartet to perform without scores, and I suggested in chapter 3 that this might have been a way of seeing these performers as mutual creators. The 'well-balanced' performance practice also propagates such a notion.

²¹ גילי זיוון, *תלל אשליה*, 77-78.

²² In a 1998 article Leonard Stein identified 'Some Problems of Tempo in Schoenberg's Music' (in *Der Grad der Bewegung. Tempovorstellungen und -konzepte in Komposition und Interpretation 1900-1950*, Basler Studien zur Musik in Theorie und Praxis, Jean-Jacques Dunki, Anton Haefeli and Regula Rapp (eds.) (Bern: Peter Lang Bern, 1998), 27-45.) In 2002, in another article entitled 'Playing in Time for Schoenberg' (in *AWS*, 61-9), Stein gave further important insights into some of Schoenberg's performance practice problems with regard to time and tempo. He pointed to contradictions that appear in Schoenberg's thought in this respect: 'Frequent references to tempo are made in the writings of Schoenberg, sometimes in seeming contradiction to one another' (Stein, 'Some Problems of Tempo in Schoenberg's Music', 27).

Schoenberg's aesthetics and practice. Instead, I point to some conflicts, contradictions and tendencies in his legacy.

Conflicts and contradictions

This study shows that large-scale social and cultural contexts had an undeniable influence on Schoenberg. There were also other, more local contexts which were dominant. For example, performance conditions in the studio and in broadcasts (see chapter 6), the influence of listening to recordings (see chapter 7), the situation of a première (see chapter 5), a presence of a text (see chapters 4, 6 and 7) and the ability of performers in each occasion (see chapters 5 and 6). Some of the things that he said and wrote were influenced by his own loves and hates (see his writings on Mahler as opposed to those on Toscanini). Unfortunately, Schoenberg's performance practice and aesthetics were often understood out of context, and reading these writings this way can be misleading (I will mention below some instances where this has been done).

In spite of the vast social and cultural changes in Schoenberg's life there are issues which are more or less consistent in his aesthetics and practice. Schoenberg never ceased to hold a belief that a composer is actually expressing a musical idea that was conceived (at least partly) during the composition of the piece. This came into expression in many of his writings on performance and in his attempts to conduct authentic versions of *Pierrot lunaire* and *Verklärte Nacht* in performance. I showed in chapter 2 that the ideal performer, according to Schoenberg, would always have an image in his mind to which the performance reality must relate. Although his definition of the musical idea was far from clear in his writings on performance, it cannot pass unnoticed that he was bound to this concept during most of his mature life. Another example of a stable aspect,

Although these articles are insightful, Stein did not attempt to explain the reasons for these changes and contradictions.

this time in Schoenberg's performance practice, is the existence of what I defined as two types of notation in *Pierrot lunaire* (see chapter 7). This does not negate the influence of social factors on Schoenberg, yet one should not overlook the fact that certain things were less influenced, or even not influenced at all by the vast changes in Schoenberg's social environment. These issues have their importance and place in the interpretation of Schoenberg.

Schoenberg's writings often contain a tension between the value of adhering to the score and that of giving credit to the performer's creativity (see chapter 3). The value of adhering to the score was reported by Schoenberg to be something that Mahler strived for and it was a widespread philosophy between the two World Wars.²³ Even in the midst of the 1920s Schoenberg refuses to replace the performer with mechanical instruments. Crediting the performer's creativity became acute after Schoenberg's emigration to America due to reasons mentioned in chapter 3. Nevertheless, the tension between contradictory value systems (pre- and post-First-World-War aesthetics) is present in his writings in general and those of the 1940s in particular.

Another contradiction is revealed in Dika Newlin's interview (see appendix 4) where she claims: the 'important thing about the recitation in *Pierrot* is ... that the vocalist is not a solo vocalist... this is not a vocalist being accompanied by instruments, but ... part of the ensemble'. Nuria Schoenberg, the daughter of the composer, who was eight years old when he recorded *Pierrot lunaire*, wrote: 'It is true that I have very vivid memories of the rehearsals and I think I also was present at one of the recording sessions... Erika Stiedry-Wagner was told to "be a part of the ensemble, like another instrument; [t]he voice should weave in and out of the others and she should not sound

²³ One should note that Schoenberg is using Mahler as a puppet for his own opinions. Mahler probably had a far less stable notion of 'the work' than did Schoenberg. I would like to thank Paul Banks for his comment on this issue.

like a soloist".²⁴ Newlin, in a later part of the interview, said: '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'. Yet she immediately continued: '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'. On the one hand, Schoenberg wanted the voice to blend with the other instruments so that it will 'weave in and out of the others'; on the other hand, he was concerned that the text should be understood – something that surely would make the singer distinct from the instruments. Schoenberg was struggling here between his desire that the text of the song would be grasped and communicated, and with his Schopenhauerian belief in the superiority of instrumental music.²⁵

There is a further interesting contradiction between Schoenberg's practice of taking slower tempos in *Verklärte Nacht* in the 1940s (see the annotations in the second arrangement compared to those in the 1928 recording, in chapter 4) and his claim from the mid 1920s of playing faster in later performances. Schoenberg's statement that his musical ideas were too complicated to understand at first listening might be an attempt to address the fact that his music often met reactions of misunderstanding and even hostility in early performances. He and his students suggested that people missed the logic behind the musical ideas.²⁶ It was assumed that after repeated performances the understanding of the musical logic would be enhanced. Yet this explanation does not solve the contradiction concerning his practice of taking slower tempos in late performances. This is evidence of another gap between Schoenberg's performance aesthetics and practice. He expressed his opinion that musical progress would create a situation where people

²⁴ Email to Avior Byron from 8 July 2005.

²⁵ The clash between these distinct value systems is present as early as 1908 when he composed the Second String Quartet, Op. 10. I would like to thank Eitan Haimo for pointing out this to me in a conversation.

²⁶ See Alban Berg, 'Why is Schoenberg's Music so Difficult to Understand?', in Willi Reich, *Life and Work of Alban Berg*, trans. Cornelius Cardew (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963), 189-204.

become more and more accustomed to his music. In practice, however, he found himself at the last stage of his life in a cultural climate where the audience and performers were even less familiar with his music. Schoenberg did not stay indifferent to the new and unexpected situation in America, and he adjusted his performance practice and aesthetics accordingly.

Another inconsistency can be seen in Schoenberg's encouragement of memorized performances by the Kolisch Quartet.²⁷ Schoenberg himself performed (i.e. conducted) with a score and he required other performers in his circle (for example, Steuermann) to do the same. Schoenberg advised this to Kolisch on a certain occasion and the latter, perhaps, adapted this as a general philosophy due to his own aesthetic priorities (which were not identical to those of Schoenberg – see chapter 2).

A striking inconsistency can be found in his sudden advocating of a reproduction of the notated pitch in *Sprechstimme*. I explained this contradiction in chapter 7 as being a result of the influence of recordings.

Dika Newlin said the following in the mentioned above interview (in appendix 4):

In ... 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... I heard this and I thought: ... we shouldn't take that take. However, Schoenberg wanted that particular take. He wanted that insecurity ... in the harmony... I did agree with him that it, perhaps, reflected the tense atmosphere of that particular piece.

However, in 'Mechanische Musikinstrumente' of 1926 he wrote that 'one should not indulge a taste for playing things successively when they should be simultaneously, since flexibility can be more perfectly achieved by dynamics and colour. (I have in mind the

²⁷ Tully Potter, 'Twelve-tone memories: a history of the Kolisch Quartet'. in the Booklet of the CD: *In Honor of Rudolf Kolisch*. Music & Arts. CD-1045. Berkeley (2003), 14. See A. Pasztor, 'Playing Schoenberg to Schoenberg: Jenő Lehner of the Kolisch String Quartet remembers', *New Hungarian Quarterly*, 33/127 (Fall 1992), 171.

kind of piano-playing in which the hands are not together)'.²⁸ Although in the case of *Pierrot lunaire* the decision was made with regard to an ensemble, and in the previous quotation Schoenberg had a pianist in mind, it is interesting to see how the composer himself made local decisions which were in conflict with what could be understood as his performance aesthetics. This might have happened due to different contexts, or he simply changed his mind. Anyhow, as Newlin suggests, one is evident here of a gap between what the composer wrote in the score and how he wanted it to sound in performance. Schoenberg was inspired by that 'inaccurate' performance and this was more important for him than faithfulness to the score. This is another example of how Schoenberg was flexible in his performance practice.

²⁸ *SI*, 329.

Conclusion

In addition to the contradictions mentioned above, and in spite of the fragmentary nature of Schoenberg's performance *Nachlaß*, it is possible to point out several important tendencies. In his aesthetics of the 1920s he gave great importance to faithfulness to the score, while in the American period the emphasis moves more towards the expression of the performer. In Schoenberg's practice one can find flexibility and a diversity of approaches to interpretation, which change according to context (see the different approaches in the recordings from the 1920s in chapters 4 and 5, as well as his interpretations of *Pierrot lunaire* as described in chapter 6). There is a great gap between his performance aesthetics and practice, especially in the 1920s. Yet also in the 1940s, when performing *Pierrot lunaire* for example, Schoenberg allowed his performers to be active and add to what is notated in the score, and by this he contradicted his own preface to the score. Moreover, Philips mentions the Kolisch Quartet for employing more vibrato than the Rosé Quartet and he identifies this as part of the aforementioned shift in performance practice in the first half of the twentieth century.²⁹ He argues that Schoenberg's 'condemnations of both excessive portamento and excessive vibrato are interesting in the context of his acceptance of changing string fashions in the quartets that he worked with'. Philips explains this by claiming that Schoenberg was reacting to performances that were fresh in his mind while writing.³⁰ This shows that in spite of the fact that one can find several anti-performer writings, in practice he often granted himself and others great freedom in interpreting the score. The gap between his performance aesthetics and practice reveals that they were both affected by specific contexts. His practice is not a manifestation of a clear and well-formed performance theory, just as his theory is not pure a reflection of his performance practice. It would be incautious to

²⁹ Philips, *Performing Music*, 176.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

assume that his performance aesthetics lead to his performance practice (and vice versa). There is no reason to grant preference to some of his harsh writings against performers, and ignore the more kind and flexible Schoenberg that is revealed from his late writings and performance practice. I can only hope that this study, which shows a larger and more contextualized picture than formerly known, will assist scholars, performers and other readers, to see the previously unknown sides of Schoenberg the interpreter.

Schoenberg's performance aesthetics and practice are multifaceted, influenced but also critical of the cultural environment he lived in, and occasionally contradictory. Schoenberg did not leave a single performance legacy that one may wish to follow. His performance writings almost suggest that Schoenberg before 1933 was not the same person as the one living in America. His performance practice, too, reveals a flexible attitude to performance that changed according to context. One who wishes to find conservative elements in his performance will find a fruitful ground; yet also liberal conceptions concerning interpretation and interpreters are undeniably present in his performance aesthetics and practice. The nature of Schoenberg's performance *Nachlaß* demands that interpreters will be active in their choices. Awareness of Schoenberg's multifaceted performance history has the potential to lead to refined and contextualized interpretation of his music.

Does this study suggest that one may listen and study the recordings of Schoenberg the conductor as a source of authority as one may do with those of Rachmaninoff the pianist? I have argued in chapter 1 that Schoenberg had a sufficient baton technique in order to convey his interpretations and that I have no need to demonstrate that he was a great conductor in a way that, for example, Mahler was. However, if Schoenberg was not distorting the truth when he argued that Mengelberg considered using his services as a conductor (see chapter 1) then he probably was more

than a conductor with sufficient technique. It is well known that Schoenberg's method of preparing performers inspired interpreters within and outside of his circle. Yet he was not only a good coach. I argued in chapter 5 that the recording of *Suite, Op. 29* demonstrates that he was able to achieve a very high standard of performance while conducting the première with new performers. There are two further virtues that Schoenberg had as a conductor, which may entitle him as a 'good conductor': flexibility and sensitivity. The fact that Schoenberg changed his conducting with relation to the pieces he conducted (I have in mind here the way he conducted with relation to the text of *Verklärte Nacht*), the genre of the piece and the context of the performance (as argued above), shows flexibility in interpretation. He was a sensitive conductor in the sense that he carefully chose tempos with regard to the level of performers, the performance occasion (broadcast, studio, and première), the text (whether sung as in *Pierrot lunaire*, or programmatic as in *Verklärte Nacht*) and the way he understood the structure of the piece (see, for example, the discussion of metrical dissonance in chapter 8). This shows that Schoenberg was both carefully acquainted with the score and pragmatic with respect to factors that were special to certain performance conditions. The ability to make the best out of a performance occasion within prevailing limitations and with regard to the ideal that one has in his mind, and the ability to reconcile these two things as well as draw inspiration from the tension between them, are indeed the hallmark of a good conductor. If one adds to this the fact that his general thinking about music (one of the most significant bodies of such thought in the twentieth century)³¹ was tightly connected to his performance aesthetics and practice, then Schoenberg's performance can indeed be regarded as a significant source of authority.

³¹ For a recent study see Norton Dudeque, *Music Theory and Analysis in the Writings of Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).