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Beautiful Passages (*Schöne Stellen*)

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For Dieter Schnebel

Conceived as something more humane than the mere business of information, musical understanding and musical cultivation [*Bildung*] amount to the capacity to perceive musical relationships—and ideally, elaborated and articulated music—as a meaningful whole. This is what is intended by the notion of structural listening, which is emphatically called for these days in critical opposition to listening that merely grasps at the present moment, which is naive in the bad sense. Atomistic listening that loses itself effortlessly and passively in the charm of the moment, the pleasant individual sound, the melody that is easily grasped and retained, is pre-artistic. Because the subjective

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capacity for synthesis eludes such listening, it also fails when it comes to the objective synthesis that all more highly organized music brings about. An atomistic orientation, still the most common and certainly also the one that so-called light music relies on and cultivates, passes over into the naturalistic-sensuous pleasure of delectation, taking the art out of art. Art certainly had enough trouble distinguishing itself from this orientation over the course of centuries, always with the possibility of its autonomy being revoked. Given that music cannot be grasped by concepts, a person who listens atomistically is not capable of perceiving something sensory as a matter of spirit. This is the *modus operandi* of dilettantes, who snatch really or allegedly beautiful melodies, perhaps second themes from Schubert, out of long movements with their complex architecture, and rather than following the impulse of the music and moving forward with that impulse make infantile demands that they be repeated and repeated, like the aesthetically inclined Austrian gentleman who admitted that he had played the Torero March from *Carmen* repeatedly for a whole evening without ever getting tired of hearing it. This form of response is tailored in advance to the hits of popular music, even though listeners of this type consider themselves especially musical for seeking out what they consider to be special pearls. The history of the music of the nineteenth century met them halfway. In the later Romantic period and with the folkloristic school's interest shifted increasingly to what started out with Schubert as the subjectively lyrical melody [*Einzelmelodie*]. It became established as this music's trademark, to the detriment of the objective, constructive nexus [*Zusammenhang*] of the musical whole. A music history that is not merely content with the distinction between the high and the low but understands that the lower is a function of the higher would need to trace the path that leads from Tchaikovsky's most drastic formulations, such as the second theme from *Romeo and Juliet*, through the harmonically spiced favorite melodies from Rachmaninoff's piano concertos to Gershwin and from there down into the bad infinity of entertainment music. In view of the latter's overwhelming quantitative predominance, musical cultivation must work against all of this. I have certainly been trying to do so for a long time, even introducing the concept of atomistic listening.

But if musical insight and experience do not want to merely dumb themselves down to take pride in their own sophistication, they cannot stop at that critique. For in the highly organized music that such insight is concerned with—indeed, all the more so, the more highly organized the music is—the whole is something in the process of becoming, not something thought out beforehand in the abstract, not a template to be simply filled in part by part. Rather, the musical whole is one essentially through the meaningful succession of its parts. Only thereby is it a whole. The parts are determined in this

way by the constraints of any possible grasp of music itself, that is of the whole as something extended in time of which one can only become aware in its successive sections. The whole is articulated through relationships extending forward and backward, through anticipation and recollection, contrast and proximity. Without being articulated and divided into parts, the whole would disintegrate in its mere self-sameness. Grasping music appropriately requires hearing what is appearing here and now in relation to what has come before and, through anticipation, to what will come afterwards. In this process the moment of pure presence, the here and now always retains a certain immediacy without which the relation to the whole, the mediated, can no less be brought about than the other way around.

To be able to withstand the entertainment music that is drummed into us by the culture industry and loudly applauded by compliant teenagers, musical education has been forced to one-sidedly emphasize listening to the whole at the expense of its articulation through details. The anti-Romantic developmental tendencies of serious music pushed in the same direction. Today, however, given the neoclassical and historicist ideal of mechanistic objectivity, things have reversed themselves. The focus on the whole has become one-sided and threatens to let the individual moments, without which no whole can live, atrophy. From this perspective the interpretations of the so-called youth music movement[2] can be regarded as repressive measures favoring the whole against the details. The latter are equated, not wholly without reason, with the role of the subject in music, and the fact that no musical objectivity can be successfully produced, except through the subject, is not recognized. A whole perceived without regard to its partial moments and the relationships among its divisions is not whole but rather abstract, schematic, and static. Corresponding to this reactive mode of perception, which is not receptive to spontaneous musical impulses but rather immediately subjects them to discipline, is a great body of undifferentiated, schematic music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which is not improved by the historically informed stance of pundits who explain that the category of individual style is not appropriate for it. The reactionary cultural ideology of the musical youth movement of yesteryear took up this orientation. Today, now that this ideology has been exposed and has crumbled, it is urgent to look long and hard at the individual musical moment as the complement of structural listening and its concretion.

This turn is required by the truth content of the historical movement that music has made since the Baroque period. It can be regarded, with unavoidable oversimplification, as the dialectic of the musical general [*Allgemeine*]

2 Translators' note: the *Jugendmusikbewegung* was an early 20th-century German movement emphasizing the choral singing of folk songs.

and particular: as the by no means conscious effort of the objective spirit to overcome the divergence between form and specific musical content, which more or less corresponds to the divergence between society and the individual, and to reconcile them. One does not need powerful interpretive skills to understand the detail as representing the individual in this dialectic, and the whole as the general, that is, what is socially approved, no matter how much, at the height of Viennese classicism and before that with Bach, the forms themselves may have seemed to arise from a free subject. It took a very long time for the subject to take part, to speak in Hegelian terms, in the constitution and architecture of the whole. Only in the modern era did the ideal of a music in which the two extremes would be fused with one another become delineated. One may well ask, however, whether this truly is an ideal; whether, instead, both moments might not be obliterated in this complete integration without, as the idea had been, at the same time being transformed into something higher. Contemporary music is not lacking in constructions, or programs—and in many cases the constructions have become their own programs—in which impulses no longer have any place in a structure that is preorganized in dictatorial fashion, the structure itself being merely something posited, lacking in the objectivity of a musical language that would extend beyond the individual work as did the language of tonal forms in their day. Integration, the longed-for reconciliation of the general and the particular in aesthetic form, is probably impossible so long as the reality outside the work of art remains unreconciled. That which in works of art rises above society is immediately overtaken by the poverty of reality; as long as reconciliation is only reconciliation within an image, it retains something powerless and unconvincing, even as image. It follows that the tension in great works of art must not only be balanced out in their course—and even Schoenberg wanted to limit it to that—but must equally be sustained in their course. This means nothing less than that it is precisely in legitimate works that the whole and the parts cannot dissolve into one another, as an aesthetic idea that is by no means limited to classicism would have it. Spontaneous awareness of the non-identity of whole and parts is as much a part of true music-listening as the synthesis that unites them. Even with Beethoven, balancing out that tension—something no one succeeded in doing as he did because the tension was greater in him than in anyone—required a compositional tour de force [*Veranstaltung*]. It is only because with him the parts are already tailored to the whole, pre-formed by it, that identity, balance, is achieved. The cost of this is on the one hand the decorative pathos with which identity is invested, and on the other hand the carefully planned insignificance of the individual idea [*Einzelerfindung*], which drives the individual moment beyond itself from the outset so that it can become something, awaiting the whole that the individ-

ual moment will become and that will annihilate it. The medium that made this tour de force possible was tonality, that form of the general whose typical manifestations in Beethoven already match the particular, the themes. With the irreversible decline of tonality this possibility no longer exists; nor, once its principle became transparent, was it any longer to be desired.

Thoughts like these inspire me to heresy against what I have otherwise championed, although I tell myself that I made the dialectical relationship between the totality and the detail a central focus of structural analyses like those in the *Der Getreue Korrepetitor*. If I now, again one-sidedly and not without irony, draw attention to particulars, I know myself to be in accord with the unmistakable dissociative tendencies in great music since late Mahler. Dieter Schnebel pointed out to me convincingly that they are also at work in the most progressive modern music. If something that is a genuinely musical whole does not exercise a blind dominance by means of so-called form but is instead result and process at the same time—closely resembling, by the way, the metaphysical conceptions of great philosophy—, then one would think that the way to an understanding of the whole would have to proceed upward from the individual moment as well as downward from the whole. And musical experience is impelled in this direction even more, given that all-encompassing forms to which listening could blindly surrender no longer exist. The means to this kind of experience is exact imagination [*exakte Phantasie*]. It lingers on the individual moment and opens its riches instead of hurrying past it to the whole with the anxious impatience to which the good musician has been trained and which spoils so many interpretations today. Because, however, the whole and the moment do not merge to become one, the individual moment also gains a standing of its own that transcends the whole. So much of substance is brought together in it, just as music, in its very idea, is more than culture, order, synthesis. There is color to much musical detail that does not evaporate within the whole—and it is not only since the Romantic period, as historicism would have it, that this has been true. At times one is tempted to look to such details for what is best. Details of this dignity are the seals that attest to what is authentic in a text; one can liken them to its name. The extent to which music is indebted to them becomes apparent where they are absent, as for instance in the musical flow of the ingenious Max Reger, in which the unremitting chromatic gliding essentially tolerates no details. With them what is inextinguishable and unrepeatable disappears.

In presenting you with a series of beautiful passages, commenting on them, and trying to explain on what basis they can be called beautiful, I am not merely trying to rescue them from the vulgar notion of the beautiful passage, which does need to be critiqued. I also want to refute clichés, to carve a path

through to the heart of the matter, to break through the wall of conventional musicological formulations. In Walter Benjamin's *One-Way Street*, we find this aphorism; "The quotations in my work are like highwaymen who spring forth fully armed and rob the idler of his convictions." Musical quotations too have some of this polemical force; this is why Alban Berg once thought up a musical journal that would cite passages from compositions in the punitive way Karl Kraus dealt with the press in [his journal] *Die Fackel*. The correlate of the punitive force of the musical stupidities he quoted is the radiant power of the musical Name being cited. Once perceived, the light of the beauty of particular details wipes away the illusion with which culture has cloaked music, and which is all too complicit with its dubious aspect: the notion that music already constitutes the happy totality of which humanity has been hitherto deprived. That image is better captured by the detail in a single measure on its own than by the triumphant totality.

The selection I have made has the incidental character of biographical fate. It depends on the beautiful passages that have especially remained with me since my very earliest musical memories. Others may well love quite different passages, and there is no arguing over their rank. I would propose that, from an impersonal standpoint, in music that is itself beautiful in the emphatic sense, purified of schematic padding, there are in fact innumerable beautiful passages. But in order to be sure of such beauty, it is necessary to immerse oneself without reservation in the particular, in that for which there is no substitute. It is of these particulars that I wish to speak.

I will begin with Bach. There is something provocative about the notion of the beautiful passage in Bach. The idea of a musical cosmos that is tightly closed and averse to any momentary impulse has become associated with him and has almost made any different view taboo, despite serious concern about the interpretation of Bach in theological terms that Friedrich Blume has recently voiced within established musicology. It is wise to remember that the time span between Bach's death in 1750 and Schumann's publications that gave birth to the musical miniature, the "little piece," is about the same as that between the present and the symphonic poems of Richard Strauss, in other words, quite small. To be sure, one must take into consideration that the tempo of musical development has greatly accelerated during the last two hundred years. In fact, there are pieces by Bach that have the appealing quality of genre pieces, much like those of his French contemporaries, without their status as great music being put into question in the slightest. Here is such a passage, which is not only beautiful but also pretty, the aristocratic forebear of innumerable gavottes in the elevated entertainment music of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. It is from one of the suites called "French" in accordance with the taste fashionable at the time.

Example: the first 8 measures, including the upbeat, starting with the third beat of the first measure from the Gavotte of the fifth French Suite in G Major.

Technical analysis could show that, despite their entertainment value, figures of this kind in Bach can nevertheless claim excellence. With their strong sense of *basso continuo*, they do sound thoroughly harmonic-homophonic like their Romantic descendants. Nevertheless, the discreetly backgrounded accompanying voices are composed as independent melodies rather than just filling in a figured bass, thus tightly structuring the piece's *galante* quality. Listen now to the middle and bass voices of those same eight measures:

Example: first the middle voice and then the bass voice of the passage, alone.

Now listen to the whole passage again attentively and you will not fail to notice how perfectly playful melodic grace and completely worked out contrapuntal structure are connected in this eight-bar phrase:

Example: repeat example 1.

Bach, however, by no means reserved such beautiful passages for peripheral secondary creations. In a highly charged work like the so-called *French Overture*, a suite printed at Easter in 1735—thus from the period of Bach's maturity—there is a passepied that combines an almost Romantic mordent and an easily graspable, song-like instrumental texture with a highly organized, often four-part texture.

Example: Passepied from the *French Overture*; either complete, or, in the case of insufficient time, up to the double bar; if possible also the Passepied II (trio) that goes with it.

One of the legends of historicism is that the attainment of full songlike quality in instrumental music first arises in the post-Bach era, and especially with Mozart. As proof that it is a legend I will adduce another passage, which seems to me among the most beautiful in Bach's instrumental work: the close of the Fugue in E Major from Book 2 of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Its theme does not even stem from Bach but rather from Johann Caspar Fischer, an older contemporary of Bach. But Bach turned it into a work of a consoling power that has been irrevocably lost to music. The theme of the fugue, with its slight evocation of the archaic, goes:

Example: The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2, Fugue in E Major, measures 1 and 2, finish with E.

At the entry of the response the first voice continues on with a countersubject:

Example: the same fugue, from the entrance of the B in the second measure to the theme's concluding B in the fourth measure.

This countersubject now becomes, after a deadly serious descent in the middle section, a melody in the upper voice that is inspired and eloquent beyond all concepts. Hearing it, one completely forgets that it is accompanied by a *stretto* of the main theme.

Example: the same fugue, measure 35 from the B-natural in the alto voice to the end of the fugue.

The moving quality of the end of this fugue refutes better than anything else the objectivistic conception of Bach as hostile to expression. The concluding passage frees itself from the objective structure [*Gefüge*] and outshines it. Bach handles the fugue form—the form he himself had brought to its authentic nature—with inimitable freedom, precisely because it had passed so completely through his own subjectivity.

One last example of this, from the Fugue in F# Major from Book I *of The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Here is its theme:

Example: *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I, Fugue in F# Major, from the beginning of measure 1 up to the A-sharp in the third measure.

This theme is answered in an orthodox manner, tonally, and then developed. In the subsequent episode Bach avails himself of the one option that academic rules provide for such sections: he uses the theme's characteristic leap of a fourth but invents a new motif to add on to it.

Example: The same fugue, measures 7 to 9, finishing with the chord formed on D-sharp.

But this new motif has so much driving force and at the same time, in its dance-like nature, corresponds so exactly to the fundamental character of the piece, that Bach does not, as the rules would have it, restrict himself to bringing it out in the episodes. Instead, it carries over into the development sections and appears immediately in the second one.

Example: The same fugue, measure 11 with the return of the main theme (beginning with the upbeat to the last quarter-note) and ending with measure 13 with the return to the tonic triad on the third beat.

The whole form is moved by this impulse. In terms of the academic schema, this would be something intermediate between a single-themed and a double fugue. But these categories themselves are abstracted from the living composition and have no authority over it as long as, with Bach, it remains alive. In a work like this, and with Bach by no means only in such a work, the need for expression that gives the work its character shapes its form and dissolves the architecture that Bach himself erected. This refutes the Bach legend that has become so ingrained today. It is only at the end of the fugue that Bach takes what came together in its process of becoming and lets it come apart again. The last repetition of the theme does without this counterpoint, but with the irresistibility of the trickster it returns in the coda and ends the piece.

Example: The same fugue, measure 31, the entrance of the theme in C-sharp, from the upbeat to the last beat through the end of the fugue.

I am resisting the temptation to go into Haydn, one of the greatest composers, but I will mention in passing one passage that has remained unforgettable to me since childhood, from an aria from *The Seasons*, where, without any cheap illustration, the curve of the voice follows what the text describes, the long furrows in the field, doing this with the discretion to which Haydn owes his most extreme effects, and also with a barely visible smile:

Example: Haydn, beginning of the aria "Schon eilet froh der Ackersmann" from *The Seasons*, from the line "in langen Furchen schreitet er dem Pfluge flötend nach" with all its repetitions, ending with the C major chord before the turn to minor.

In Mozart, the beautiful passages are obvious in the famous melodies of his operas, such as "Voi che sapete" or the rose aria from *The Marriage of Figaro*, and all of the song-like pieces in *The Magic Flute*. Instead, I will draw on his instrumental music. In the rondo of the famous "Dissonant Quartet," after the actual second theme has already dissolved into a virtuoso cadence-like part, there follows, completely unexpectedly, in E-flat major—a key quite remote from the main key—an interpolation, something apparently new, a songlike theme in octaves, with that indescribably

diaphanous quality that gives some works of the mature Mozart their seraphic tone. Immediately afterward the figured cadential part is taken up again. One can do justice to this inspired passage only if one hears it in context, that is, with the preceding and subsequent measures of sixteenth notes.

Example: Mozart, "Dissonant Quartet" (C Major), K. 465, Peters edition p. 31, third system, first measure, beginning with the C-sharp-to-D figure through p. 33, fourth measure, ending with the D in the first violin.

The interpolation is characteristic not only of the fact that in the great instrumental music of Viennese classicism beautiful passages become such only within their context. For this beauty also transcends that context, becomes as it were autonomous—an artistic means most decidedly employed later by Beethoven. Finally, in this type of beautiful passage, as something surprising, we can almost always observe an affinity with the main material, however loose and indirect it may be: in this instance a sort of turning of the lead motif within the new theme, with a completely altered rhythm.

Example: From the same passage in the "Dissonant Quartet" play only the upper voice from its beginning on page 29, concluding in the third measure on the E, and then the new theme on p. 32.

We can see that Mozart's much-acclaimed richness by no means consists only in melodic invention but equally in transformations of form, which then enhance the beautiful passages. The Piano Trio in E Major, Mozart's masterpiece in this genre, already contains a wonderfully devised and melodic song-like theme, first in the violin and then twelve measures later in the piano. In the twelfth measure of this melody, as though a measure too early because of impatience, the cello comes in with the same theme, and at the same time an energetic modulation to the subdominant region ensues. After two measures the instrumental entries become condensed, as in a *stretto*. At the first entry of the theme, it seemed self-contained, like a song. Only in this section does the theme unfold its expansive force. The delight it produces lies in the feeling that can hardly be expressed in any other way than, "Now we're really beginning to make music." What had been merely present now becomes freed for the living effects of its force. Listen to the whole second theme group from the first movement of this trio, paying attention to the suddenly released music-making.

Example: Mozart, Piano Trio in E Major, Peters edition, first movement, p. 62, from the B major entrance in the third measure after the grand pause to p. 64, the ending on the B of the third measure.

It often seems to me as though in every genre of instrumental music, as here with piano trios, Mozart deliberately produced an unsurpassable masterpiece as a paradigm. Among the sonatas for violin and piano it is the one in A major, Köchel 526. It has become a cliché to attribute to Mozart divine playfulness. In this sonata a theme appears that rescues this attribute from its cliché status and really sounds as though, with its unexpected improvisatory expansion, music had abandoned all controls, the ignominy of all bonds, and floated off the earth with cherubic bliss.

Example: Mozart, Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano, Peters edition p. 193, with the violin upbeat from the letter C to the final E at letter E.

Perhaps through these examples from Mozart's instrumental works you have become receptive to some of the beautiful passages from Mozart's operas that would otherwise easily remain overshadowed by the well-known showpieces, especially when the performance glides over them. I want to point out at least one of them to you. In the finale of *Figaro*, the Count asks his wife for forgiveness, it is granted to him, and there follows a short ensemble number of that simultaneously mundane and sacred nature that only Mozart, at a point between and beyond mysticism and Enlightenment, had at his disposal. But I want to draw your attention in particular to three purely instrumental measures that lead from the pathos-free festive section to the joyful resolution. Mozart's sense of form tells him that that section has to sing itself out and cannot end abruptly; it is as if it is feeling its way into open space. He accomplishes this with a motif that, lightly evoking the style of church music, unites the sublime and the completely inconspicuous in a way that no music since Mozart has been able to do.

Example: Mozart, *The Marriage of Figaro*, from the beginning of the Count's "Contessa, perdono" up to the close with the dominant seventh chord in C major, at the beginning of the Allegro assai.

You will remember that I talked to you about the preformed quality of many of Beethoven's musical inspirations [*Einfall*] and their relatively subordinate character, which Paul Bekker has commented on. That idea needs to be made more precise by taking into account that Beethoven always had access to what is called a melodic inspiration whenever he had need of one. Much of what his

strict discrimination did not tolerate because he wanted to keep his distance from emerging Romanticism for the sake of objectivity is nevertheless retained as an element in his work. Thus, one could conceive of the first movement of his Op. 27, popularly known as the *Moonlight Sonata*, as the prototype of the nocturnes that Chopin would come to write. But there are also passages in Beethoven characterized by the beauty of the inspiration as is later the case with Schubert. I will cite one from the slow movement of Beethoven's third *Razumovsky Quartet* from 1806, written when Schubert was still a child.

Example: Beethoven, op. 59, no. 3, Eulenburg edition p. 15, second system from the bottom, starting after the double bar, with the second ending, up to the bottom system, measure 2, ending with the A minor chord.

The most extreme opposite to this type, and characteristic of Beethoven, are those beautiful passages—if one wants to call them that—whose beauty is produced by relationship. I will give you two extreme examples of this type. The theme of the variation moment of the *Appassionata* sonata begins:

Example: Beethoven, Piano Sonata op. 57, Andante con moto, the first eight measures.

But this theme only really speaks when one hears it directly after the coda of the first movement, a fully composed catastrophe.

Example: Beethoven, the same sonata, the end of the first movement, from "piu allegro" on, and then the theme of the variation movement.

After that explosion and collapse, the theme of the variation's movement sounds as though it were bent over under a giant shadow, an oppressive burden. The muffled character of the sound seems to musically elaborate [*auskomponieren*] this sense of burden.

The Piano Trio in D Major, op. 70, no. 1 is usually known as the *Ghost Trio* on account of the *Largo assai ed espressivo*, one of Beethoven's conceptions in which he came closest to the Romantic imago. Now feel the effect of the beginning of the *presto* last movement following immediately upon the end of this movement:

Example: Beethoven, Piano Trio in D Major, op. 70, no. 1, Peters edition p. 170, last system, from the letter S to the fermata over the fourth measure of the Presto.

In isolation this *presto* beginning might not sound very substantial. After the end of the *Largo*, which is darker than classical restraint would allow, the beginning has something of the weakly consoling dawn of a day that promises to make up for all past misfortune: the sound of morning bird calls, without Beethoven imitating birdsong in any way.

The consoling passages in Beethoven are those in which something arises, soars above, and distances itself from the thickly woven and apparently inescapable musical nexus of immanence, doing so with a power that makes it hard to believe that what such passages say could not be the truth and could be subject to the relativity of art as something made by human beings. These are the passages that correspond to the sentence from Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, "Like a star hope descended earthward from the heavens," perhaps the most exalted gift that has been granted to the language of music—not even to its individual works. Beethoven was writing such passages early on. After a few introductory bars, the Piano Sonata in D minor, Op. 31, no. 2, expounds a theme of this nature:

Example: Beethoven, Piano Sonata op. 31, no. 2, Adagio, measures 27–38, ending quietly with the F major chord.

I would also like to call your attention to the fact that, upon its repetition, a variant is introduced into this theme:

Example: from the same passage play first measures 31 and 32, then 35 and 36 directly after one another, the upper voice alone.

Through the addition of the almost vocal eloquence of the second descending from C to B♭, the virtually ethereal theme is humanized, answered by the tears of one whom the earth has reclaimed.

Beethoven's music most perfectly bears the character of rising hope in the transition to the reprise of the adagio of the first *Razumovsky Quartet*, one of the greatest chamber music works in the entire literature. Since this passage, for which language simply provides no other concept than that of the sublime, is equal in its sublimeness as in its simplicity, it is necessary to follow along with the preceding development in order to feel it fully. I will play you the passage without commenting on it:

Example: Beethoven, String Quartet op. 59, no. 1, Adagio, Eulenberg score p. 36, 3rd system, last measure (46) to page 40, measure 84, ending with the entrance of F minor.

The counterpart of the character of hope in Beethoven is that of deadly seriousness [*Ernstfall*], where music seems to throw off the last trace of play. I will show you two models of this. One is the truly remorseless conclusion of the short intermezzo-like Andante of the G major piano concerto:

Example: Beethoven, Piano Concerto in G Major, the last 11 measures of the Andante, beginning with the arpeggio chord of the "a tempo."

This passage speaks for itself, although the characteristic motif in the basses articulates the sense of the whole piece. But the following example once again is one that requires context. It comes from the first movement of the *Kreutzer Sonata*, and, like the one from Op. 59, no. 1, starts with the measures leading up to the recapitulation. Perhaps one might say that since in Beethoven the recapitulation is the most schematic part of the sonata form and thus the part that in each case has to be justified by the autonomous nature of composition, the transition to the recapitulation is often the most concentrated locus of his compositional craft. As though the schematic remainder of the composition requires recompense, Beethoven engages his productive imagination to the utmost. After the development has transitioned to a kind of cadence and aroused the belief that now we could go right ahead and start from the beginning again, Beethoven, with a chord containing a very menacing bass sound on the fourth scale degree of the key of the subdominant, tears open for one second the abyss of passion that the sonata had earlier unleashed. The transition to the recapitulation, then the moment of crisis, and then the beginning of the recapitulation goes like this:

Example: Beethoven, *Kreutzer Sonata* op. 47, Peters edition of the violin and piano sonatas, p. 189, seven measures after letter I (starting with E in the violin in the left hand of the piano part, up to the fermata preceding letter M on page 190).

Schubert is so famous for his flights of inspiration in a way that is divorced from everything contained in his work other than abundance of song melody, that I will content myself with two passages whose qualities at least the musical layperson would hardly associate with the name of Schubert. If we understand the idea of the symphonic in its fullest Beethovenian sense, the capacity to concentrate whole developments in short, extremely striking and clear stretches, then this conception is valid for Schubert to the highest degree. It is connected with harmonic perspective, with a shifting of points of view that gives rise to a feeling of almost

spatial depth. But in Schubert, a symphonic spirit of this kind reigns not only in instrumental compositions but also in his songs. The following lines from the composition of Goethe's poem "An Schwager Kronos" are symphonic in this way.

Example: Schubert, "An Schwager Kronos," from the words "Weit, hoch, herrlich..." to "ahndevoll."

By contrast, in his instrumental works, there are passages that are like songs without him using thematic material from his songs. But in these cases, there is an immediate movement from the sphere of the song into that of objectified chamber music. Simply in terms of its melodic form, the trio in the scherzo of the String Quartet in G Major is certainly among Schubert's most beautiful inspirations.

Example: Schubert, String Quartet in G Major, op. 161, the whole trio, pp. 34 and 35 in the Philharmonie score.

But I have chosen this passage for you not for the sake of the melody but rather because of the harmonic shift in the second part of the trio, where, by using the so-called relationship of a third, B major surprisingly follows G major and puts the fabric of voices onto another more brightly illuminated plane. Schubert comments, as it were, on the idea behind such shifts: he writes precisely the same thing in his composition of Goethe's "Musensohn":

Example: Schubert, "Musensohn," from the first instrumental interlude up to "Blüten am Baum."

What is intended is the element of something distancing itself from mere existence and enchanting the spirit, the element that in Goethe's poem defines art itself. The effect of the B major is then also repeated where the poet's song by the linden trees, as he says, stirs the young folk. In that spirit listen once again to the shift in the G major quartet:

Example: Schubert, the last measures of the String Quartet in G Major, op. 161, before the double bar, perhaps from the upbeat to measure 165 on, up to the upbeat before the first violin's D# in measure 170.

I will give you only one example from High Romanticism, one that should not be too familiar, from a little song by Mendelssohn, "An die Entfernte," after a poem by Lenau. The first and second verses, with the second identical

to the first, are quite regular, and, if the whole remained so, would scarcely be more than pretty.

Example: Mendelssohn, "An die Entfernte," op. 71, no. 3, first and second verses.

The third and fourth verses, however, in contrast to the circumscribed structure of the first two are taken up into a great swinging melodic arc, which the harmony molds itself to by omitting to form a break. At the end, in the last four measures, on the words "oder als ihr süßer Schall," a two-measure unit is extended into three measures, an artful irregularity very characteristic of Mendelssohn's relation to meter. It carries the song way beyond the limited region in which it begins.

Example: Mendelssohn, the same song, from "Nie soll weiter sich ins Land" to the end.

In contrast, I want to present you with several examples from Brahms, in fact from his earlier works. The originality and compositional power of the young Brahms is even today hardly seen correctly in its own right and to its full extent. My late friend Eduard Steuermann pointed this out very emphatically. First the coda from the slow movement of Brahms's Op. 1, the Piano Sonata in C Major, a few measures of an enchanting sonority and harmonic complexity that in 1853 anticipated all the achievements of impressionism. It is a complex that one would not normally think of in relation to Brahms. We can learn from this how, even in the case of very important figures, musical nuclei emerge and remain on the margins, only to return and move to a central place at a completely different time with completely different composers.

Example: Brahms, the last 14 measures of the Andante from the Piano Sonata op. 1.

Moreover, one also sees in the young Brahms measures that could be from Wagner in his maturity, such as the following ones from the slow movement of the Piano Quintet, a transition developed from a motif of the main theme.

Example: Brahms, Piano Quintet, Andante un poco adagio, Eulenburg score p.29, the last two measures before the entrance of E major and then the E major transition. End with the chord one, in the next to last measure of the page.

In such details, that store up musical feeling in themselves like cells, composers who by and large stand as diametrically opposed to one another as Brahms and Wagner nevertheless come into contact**.** Compare this with the summer night motif from the second act of *Die Meistersinger*.

Example: Wagner, *Die Meistersinger*, the first entrance of the summer night motif, following the horn call of the night watchman, to "mäßig," three measures before the words "Geliebter, spare den Zorn," ending with the measure before Walter's question "Du fliehst?"

As different from the almost painful sweetness of Wagner's motif as Brahms's is, only modestly hinting at itself and immediately vanishing, so related are they nevertheless in the voice-leading especially of the chromatic middle voices. What is specifically Wagnerian, however, is the fate of Wagner's motif, the way in which at the end of the act, after the night watchman's last horn call, it pales and yet returns once more with a gesture of unbelieving melancholy remembrance.

Example: Wagner, *Die Meistersinger*, close of the second act, once again from the horn call at "sehr ruhig im Zeitmaß" to the end.

In contrast to Wagner, the young Brahms compels one with the fullness of musical forms that are always fresh and renew themselves out of themselves, often with a metrical freedom that makes the kind I showed you in Mendelssohn into the principle of a manner of composition thoroughly unconventional in its very fiber. Listen to another such melody of the young Brahms, from the intermezzo of the Piano Quartet in G Minor, Op. 25.

Example: Brahms, Piano Quartet in G Minor, op. 25, Eulenburg score, p. 28, second to last system, first measure, beginning with the C major, top. 29, 3rd measure, ending with the F minor chord.

I have juxtaposed passages of special luster from Brahms and Wagner. Now let me present one more from Wagner. It sheds a completely different light on one of the most famous themes in Tristan. It is a question of the motif that goes by the name "Parting Song" that in the second act's great love scene, to the words "so stürben wir, um ungetrennt," anticipates Isolde's *Liebestod*, although with a modified rhythm. Here there appears a counterpoint to the motif in eighth notes that lends it the character of surging rapture that, if I am not mistaken, is not attained again in the opera's closing. Please direct your attention first to this counterpoint.

Example: Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II, the middle voice in eighth notes of "So stürben wir," first in the alto, later in the tenor, to be played on the piano.

And now the passage with all its voices as it is shaped by this counterpoint.

Example: Wagner, Tristan, Act II, now with *all* of the voices, from an orchestral recording of "So stürben wir […] in Liebe umfangen."

Perhaps this is the place, after Wagner, to present a couple of passages from Bruckner. First the F-sharp Major middle section of the funeral march from the Seventh Symphony:

Example: Bruckner, Symphony No. 7, E Major, Eulenburg score p.63, from letter D (moderato) to the return of the 4/4 measure in C-sharp minor at letter G, p. 67.

The question arises, what gives this field, whose form idea, a melody in ¾ time elaborated as a contrast to a symphonic adagio, is obviously taken from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, its particular beauty. Only a detailed analysis of the construction of the melody, the harmony, and the formal structure could fully answer that question. For now, we might say that this passage, with unusual harmonic force and its own inner impulse, resists the trap provided by the roots of the chords, pulling away from them even while the bass line adheres to them. The melody's upward drive, with its blessedly unrelenting quality, is no doubt what gives it this character. Here music is brushed against the grain and is yet not in the least violent or artificial; it is as though its own impulse has sprung free of the spell of the banal, untouched by the composer's hand. In the coda the passage acquires some of the quality of a backward glance at distant villages, a glance that knows that complete happiness must lie there, even if it is never to be found when one gets there.

The second passage from Bruckner that I want to take you to is no less beautiful, even though less obviously so. It is a beauty not of saying but of keeping silent. In its second strophe, the main theme of the first movement of the same Seventh Symphony rises up powerfully to the most complete fulfillment. Then as though the music itself, from modesty, could scarcely bear the word it speaks, or as though it fears that, if it were to insist on it, it would not measure up to what is granted only in a flash, the symphony abandons those heights in a speedy diminuendo and recedes to measures of murmuring tremolo before the second theme enters.

Example: Bruckner, Symphony No. 7, Eulenburg score, first movement p. 4, from letter A to page 7, letter B, ending with the B major chord.

The Bruckner passages suggest some from Mahler. Once again, I will select two. One of them Mahler wrote in his youth: the second middle section from "Der Schildwache Nachtlied," after a text from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.

Example: Mahler, *Wunderhornlieder*, Philharmonie score, vol. I, p. 5, from "LiebeKnab...", p. 7, measure 30, ending before the entrance of the drums and basses.

In this strophe the metrical irregularity of the old folk song, as we know it for example in "Prinz Eugen,"[3] that is from the era prior to the establishment of the eight-measure period, is fused with the modern tendency toward the most differentiated asymmetry in the colorful alternation of three- and four-beat measures, which is itself linked to the strengthening of dissonance. The large blocks of intervals in the vocal part correspond in the syllables "Garten" to a chord consisting of five different notes, with a double collision of minor sevenths arising involuntarily from the voice-leading and harmonic progression, and yet already, 75 years ago, a sound used in the new music, with a penetratingly endearing expression.

Similarly progressive, and with the same luster, now markedly colored with melancholy, are a couple of measures from Mahler's mature period, from the serenade-like second *Nachtmusik* of his Symphony No. 7.:

Example: Mahler, revised edition of the score of the Symphony No. 7, Bote und Bock, p. 181, the last measure, beginning with the upbeat in the solo violin p. 192, ending with the F major chord at the beginning of the fourth measure, after the number 218.

This is how close the generation that is called the Neo-Romantic and impressionistic came in its boldest moments to the new music. Another piece of evidence for this, from a sphere of music quite distant from that of Mahler, is the beginning of the *Forlane* from Ravel's *Tombeau de Couperin*, nine measures that, with the most clear and transparent harmonic progression in E minor, contain not a single unclouded triad until the cadence. This is accomplished through a technique of layering suspensions and neighboring tones. The measures consist solely of dissonances, but these are not, as is so often the case in so-called moderate modern music, arbitrary additions to

3 Translators' note: a German folk song from the early 18th century.

the bass line but rather most carefully and thoroughly heard. The passage captivates with a fragrance of falling withered petals.

Example: Ravel, *Forlane* from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, the beginning, ending with the E minor chord at the beginning of the ninth measure.

The dominant bias about genuine new music in its radical form, as it comes from the Second Viennese School of Schoenberg, is that it excludes the notion of the beautiful passage. The primacy of the dissonance, or rather the abolition of the distinction between consonance and dissonance and the construction of melodies that give preference to wide intervals thought to be unsingable, are considered ugly by ears that react to music on culinary grounds. On the other hand, the constructive principles—the primacy of form as a whole and its impetus over the individual moments—seem to forbid any kind of extraction of detail, particularly in correct listening. But since by now dissonances have lost their terror, it is possible to recognize how much the force of the whole structure communicates itself to the individual events, and conversely, in Schoenberg's own words, how much that force is shaped in turn by individual events and inspirations. So today particular moments stand out from the Viennese school's compositions, even though they are constructed with equal thoroughness in all their layers. In art even the notion of sensuous beauty is a function of something spiritual, and it grows with the meaning that accrues to the individual phenomena from their context.

Beautiful passages are immediately evident with Alban Berg, who unashamedly worked a connection with traditional music into his compositional process and in whose work a large role is played by what is currently called "suavity," mellifluous sound, as it characterizes the passage from Ravel that you just heard, and which Berg no doubt learned from the French. For Berg suavity is not an end in itself. It justifies itself spiritually at the constructive level as well as through expression. Berg rescues the expressive values of tonality but arouses them to a second life, as it were, through extraordinarily complex layering, which is constantly rupturing the old tonal colors. This is not dissimilar to Ravel's way of proceeding in the *Forlane*. Such a passage, whose beauty is admittedly first and foremost that of a melodic inspiration, one that is free and not at all twelve-tone, is presented as the beginning and the main theme of the second movement of the *Lyric Suite* for string quartet, a rondo:

Example: Alban Berg, *Lyric Suite*, Andante amoroso, Philharmonie score, p. 11, measures 1 through 4.

The gentle luster of this theme is fully manifested only when it returns in the first reprise of the rondo after the exposition of some uncommonly rich thematic material. When it returns, the theme, which was originally in two voices, is given counterpoint through imitations by the cello and by the second violin that draw into themselves the motivic content of the second main theme of the movement, which has been presented in the meantime. The ornamentation provided by the surrounding voices has the function of giving a sharper profile to the main theme through contrast.

Example: Alban Berg, *Lyric Suite*, the same movement, p. 19 measures 81 to 86, ending with the a in the first violin.

The same movement contains in its third main theme an utterly inspired model of Berg's use of a tonality that is neither conjured up as autonomous nor plopped into the atonal fabric but rather fully connected with that fabric.

Example: Berg, the same movement, p. 17, measures 56 through 61 inclusive.

Shortly before his death Berg excerpted a symphonic suite from the opera *Lulu*, which he had not yet finished composing. It is in the beginning of this suite that you can see how his suavity is married to his expressive intention and how colorfully the accompanying harmonic complexes are overlaid in the process. Here the alluring and the painful are mingled to become the image of the heroine, of the beauty that brings ill. The literally stupefying measures of the introduction need to be redeemed through the beginning of the following rondo, a fervent violin theme that rises up out of the introduction. As you now listen to the introduction and the beginning of the rondo theme, I ask you to pay attention to how the theme finally allows the preceding introduction to fully blossom.

Example: Alban Berg, *Lulu Suite*, study score, Rondo, measures 1 through 15 (p.4) inclusive.

Many of you will ascribe such passages to the ostensibly moderate character of Berg's modernity. Be that as it may, passages of the same beauty are found in the ascetic Webern as well, someone who has always been accompanied by the reputation of intransigence. His song cycle Op. 4, after poems by Stefan George, altogether a work of a dreamlike dark tone, starts with a motto-like thematic form that proves how much Webern, too, was capable of what is called inspiration on the model of song melody.

Example: Webern, Op. 4, I, up to the first eighth note of the second measure, ending with the fermata.

Here too, by the way, and not so differently from Berg as one might like to think, it is a matter of tonal chords in the accompaniment with alienating additions.

Webern's purely instrumental work also has an abundance of such inspirations. Among the short forms that he preferred up until his late phase are whole pieces that correspond to the idea of the beautiful passage. Please listen to the second of the *Five Movements for String Quartet* Op. 5, which lasts for only thirteen measures, music characterized by the utmost immersion in its own silence.

Example: Webern, the entire second movement from the *Five Movements for String Quartet* Op. 5.

Today some people would like to write off Schoenberg, the teacher of Berg and Webern, as a half-baked theoretician or even as the inventor of the twelve-tone technique, to the detriment of what he composed but which has not yet been truly received. Schoenberg would not have been the great composer that he was if he had not possessed the capacity to concentrate his vision into short moments. For it was he who first crystallized out the extremely short form. There is a truly inexhaustible richness of such moments, however, contained in the pieces of his youth, which, as we know, still operate with the means of tonality, and share many stylistic features with the Neo–German Wagnerian school. Not the least of the ways in which those pieces differ from the other products of that school is their human, empathic warmth. Perhaps this was the force with which Schoenberg recast what had become formulaic and rigid into a new idiom. A theme from the later part of the string sextet *Verklärte Nacht* will show the way this warmth inspires melodic invention.

Example: Schoenberg, *Verklärte Nacht*, op. 4, small score, p. 32, from the upbeat before "im Zeitmaß" ("sehr innig und warm"), up to p. 34, last system, the entrance of the 4/4 measure.

Schoenberg remained faithful throughout his entire *oeuvre* to this kind of invention through warmth. Even the revolutionary works, the first ones in free atonality, radiate it. Thus, the beginning of the fifth George song from the *Buch der Hängenden Gärten*, Op. 15.

Example: Schoenberg, *Fünfzehn Gedichte aus dem Buch der Hängenden Gärten*, "Sagt mir auf welchem pfade," from the beginning to "vorüberschreitet," measure 4, ending before the upbeat.

For more than one reason it seems to me appropriate to select as a final example the introduction and the vocal entry from the finale of Schoenberg's String Quartet #2, Op. 10. The breakthrough from tonality to free atonality takes place entirely within this quartet. With the words in the text "Ich fühle Luft von anderem Planeten," it is something like a manifesto of all new music, which in its history up to now has scarcely done justice to this manifesto and surely not gone beyond it. The passage is of an originality and a power of vision in view of which the phrase "unheard of" finds its true place: nothing like this had never been heard before. Today the introduction has retained a force that in art characterizes only what opens up wholly untrodden ground and with its own realization sets before our eyes the possibility of what is still to be realized. Let me point to moments like the completely foreign flitting sound of the muted strings, woven into the lightest lines; to a birdlike motif in the viola that no one who has ever heard it will forget; and also to the stiff, almost ritual duet of the viola and cello, in the lowest range, which renounces their usual mellowness; but above all to the composition of the first words of the vocal part. When the great C-sharp of the cello adds itself to the final syllable of "Planeten," the speculative ear has an almost physical feeling of having crossed over abysses and reached a ground that is light-years away and yet offers the most secure reception.

Example: Schoenberg, String Quartet no. 2, op. 10, fourth movement, "Entrückung," from the beginning up to and including measure 26.

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