

## **PART IV**

### **Postscript**



## 13 Berg and the twentieth century

*Arnold Whittall*

King's College, London

### The modern and the plural

As an 'Age of Extremes'<sup>1</sup> with a vigorously diverse mainstream, the twentieth century – in music as in other respects – does not lend itself to straightforward summarising, or the tracing of unambiguously consistent tendencies and trajectories, involving clear-cut lines of influence and dependency. What can be demonstrated, if the musical history of the century is surveyed, are networks of shared concerns which involve many different composers in many different ways, with many degrees of connection and divergence. To tell the story of twentieth-century music with Berg as a central character would require a particularly sensitive interpretation of such networks. The possibility that Berg could be an 'indispensable' figure has nevertheless been acknowledged for some time – for example, in a striking assessment by Pierre Boulez, first published in 1958, and all the more important for the ways in which it modifies Boulez's own earlier (1948) and much more hostile 'reception' of the composer.<sup>2</sup> Observing first that Berg's 'influence' was 'at present less decisive than that of Webern, despite the greater immediate range of his music', Boulez continued:

It is likely that when the question of modern style becomes more settled Berg's influence will be able to make itself felt more profitably. It would in any case be superficial to see in Berg no more than a heroic figure rent by contradictions or to think of him merely as the culmination of romanticism on whom it would now be pointless to model oneself. On the contrary, by detaching the contradictions that are the key to his work from the particular context which gave them birth, it is possible to learn from Berg an extremely valuable lesson in aesthetics. His work retains intact all its potential for influence; and it is this which makes him indispensable to the musical domain of our time.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most revealing aspects of these comments is Boulez's assumption that, at some time in the future, 'the question of modern style' will become 'more settled'. More than thirty years after those comments were written, it might be argued that the main thing to have been 'settled' about 'modern style' is that it remains richly and consistently *unsettled*: what is

settled about modern style is that it is, by definition, diverse. More than that, however; of all the earlier twentieth-century masters, Berg is especially prophetic of this plurality, and what Boulez described as Berg's 'diverse æsthetic cargo'<sup>4</sup> now seems an excellent model for a *fin de siècle* in which contrasts between composers who aspire to stylistic and technical synthesis and those who appear to resist such integration are increasingly significant. As will be considered a little more fully later on, Boulez's abiding reservations about Berg tell us much about his own impulses as a composer, centring on a search for synthesis which may appear ultimately more classic than expressionist, or modernist, in æsthetic essence. For Boulez, those 'contradictions' that are the 'key' to Berg's work, and which he appears to see as the source of that work's 'potential for influence', need to be thought of not as modernist fractures which escape ultimate integration, but as classical oppositions or polarities which imply and demand a final synthesis. In revealing comments about the *Lyrical Suite*, Boulez has written of 'its certainty and mastery of form, the polished perfection of its instrumental writing' which 'help towards the synthesis Berg was seeking when he wrote the work. He here achieves a rare equilibrium, which was not to be maintained in the works which followed.'<sup>5</sup> It is not mere playing with words to respond that 'synthesis' and 'equilibrium' need not be precisely the same thing. If both possibilities remain viable with respect to the *Lyrical Suite*, then this might represent exactly the kind of ambiguity which has helped to make Berg such a powerful presence in later twentieth-century music.

Concerns comparable to those of Boulez can be found in Stravinsky's various remarks on Berg. In his oracular later years, when his own music was achieving a new lease of life through the serial principle, Stravinsky offered this assessment:

If I were able to penetrate the barrier of style (Berg's radically alien emotional climate) I suspect he would appear to me as the most gifted constructor in form of the composers of this century. He transcends even his own most overt modelling. In fact, he is the only one to have achieved large-scale development-type forms without a suggestion of 'neo-classic' dissimulation. His legacy contains very little on which to build, however. He is at the end of a development (and form and style are not such independent growths that we can pretend to use the one and discard the other) whereas Webern, the Sphinx, has bequeathed a whole foundation, as well as a contemporary sensibility and style.<sup>6</sup>

Stravinsky, at one with Boulez over Berg's 'emotional climate', yet differing over his 'potential for influence', particularly disliked that 'direct expression of the composer's own feelings' evident in *Wozzeck's* 'D minor' Interlude, and in a characteristically lofty rebuke he declared that 'what dis-

turbs me about this great masterpiece and one that I love, is the level of its appeal to “ignorant” audiences’. For Stravinsky, ‘passionate emotion’ must be conveyed ‘within the most limiting conventions’, above all shunning ‘the *crescendo molto*’.<sup>7</sup> Stravinsky, of all composers – and he was after all three years Berg’s senior – could scarcely have been expected to welcome the prospect that a style so explicitly derived from a late-Romantic, Austro-German *espressivo* would, in the 1960s, continue to attract adherents and even outdo a style reflecting more Webernian sensibilities. But younger composers had more time to spot the trend, and Boulez’s partial recantation of his earlier hostility is emblematic of the post-war avant-garde’s ability to persuade itself that Berg’s was, after all, an authentically modern – that is, complex – voice. Stravinsky himself hinted at this judgement in his 1964 ‘programme note’ for *The Rake’s Progress*, describing his choice of an eighteenth-century number opera as model, ‘rather than ... musical forms symbolically expressive of the dramatic content (as in the Dædalian examples of Alban Berg)’.<sup>8</sup>

‘Dædalian’ – intricate, labyrinthine; such terms recur persistently in Berg criticism and analysis. As Boulez reported on his study of the Chamber Concerto:

I found that there was a lot more to Berg than his immediately accessible romanticism. ... what thrilled me ... was the complexity of his mind: the number of internal correspondences, the intricacy of his musical construction, the esoteric character of many of his references, the density of texture, that whole universe in perpetual motion revolving constantly around itself, all this is absolutely fascinating. It is a universe that is never completed, always in expansion – a world so profound, dense and rich and inexhaustible that one can, after thorough analysis, still come back to it a third or fourth time to find fleeting references that one had not noticed before.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, as noted earlier, Boulez remained resistant to the kind of ‘contradiction’ he perceived in Berg’s attempt to enforce some kind of ‘co-existence’ between tonal and non-tonal materials: ‘To my way of thinking, if one is to preserve certain aspects of the past and to integrate them into our present-day thought, it must be done in the most abstract terms.’<sup>10</sup> Given what might be defined as Boulez’s search for a ‘new organicism’, his reliance on cumulative repetitions and even elements of pitch-centricity in works like *Rituel* (1975) and *Répons* (1983–), it is scarcely surprising to find an implicit lack of sympathy with those aesthetic principles, sometimes termed post-modern, sometimes defined as representing a modernism newly radicalised and reinforced, that have come increasingly into favour in the later decades of the century. In this context, Berg’s appeal has been enhanced by the perception that even his most disruptively back-

ward-looking devices – quoting a Bach chorale harmonisation or a Viennese popular song – can set up the kind of irresolvable tensions with their serially-generated, atonal contexts which can now be regarded as the acme of modernist thinking. From this perspective, even an element of what Stravinsky wryly termed ‘neo-classic dissimulation’ can be invoked, provided it does not extend throughout an entire work, and may well appear a more acceptably modernist mode of expression than anything offered by the Sphinx-like Webern, who, in Boulez’s later characterisation, provides ‘a truly austere kind of perfection; but [as with Mondrian] when you see it again at a later date, it offers you nothing further’.<sup>11</sup>

### **Ambiguous laments**

The significance of Berg for twentieth-century music since about 1960 is closely bound up with the significance of expressionism, revived and reinvigorated as part of a widespread reaction against the more austere and idealistic initiatives of the immediate post-war years. Indeed, Berg’s impact on later composers might be most directly apparent in the way later twentieth-century expressionism tends to find its voice in that rich vein of lament and protest that is the correlative if not the explicit embodiment of sceptical or pessimistic sensibilities. Leo Treitler’s formulation – ‘One could easily get the impression ... that Berg’s well-known leaning to symmetrically closed forms and tight motivic networks is not a matter of musical inclination alone but a fatalism about life’<sup>12</sup> – is one manifestation of this idea. Douglas Jarman’s judgement of *Wozzeck*, whose ‘structure ... should be seen as ... an assertion of the nothingness which ... is the ultimate end of the transient individual human being in the face of the fatefully and endlessly revolving world’<sup>13</sup> is another. Yet to categorise as ‘Bergian’ all music that evokes dark thoughts, from Birtwistle’s melancholic processions and Lachenmann’s most evanescent gestures to Schnittke’s more melodramatic outbursts, is dangerously reductive, not least because the expressive context of Berg’s music is invariably more complex than the argument that it is essentially or even exclusively ‘fatalistic’ allows. As will be suggested later, there are usually other, quite different expressive elements present alongside assertions of ‘nothingness’. It also needs to be made clear at this stage that Berg’s continued appeal, and also his relative closeness to tradition, depend on the fact that he remained a vividly thematic composer: it is not only a matter of those ‘tight motivic networks’ to which Treitler referred, but also of an expansive melodiousness, and for this reason alone much of the later twentieth century’s more

abstract, essentially textural expressionism (as in Schnittke and Maxwell Davies) is at a considerable remove from Bergian practice, however close it may approach it in mood and tone. In these cases, indeed, one of Berg's essential concerns is *not* shared.

Simply because Bergian 'fatalism' is something to be offset, challenged, rather than merely established and indulged, Bergian 'ambiguity' seems to have penetrated more pervasively into contemporary musical consciousness. It is worth quoting Jarman at length on the ending of *Lulu*:

Unlike *Wozzeck*, *Lulu* allows us no easy emotional release. The great D minor interlude in *Wozzeck* ... acts as an emotional catharsis in which the listener responds directly to the power of the music. The end of *Lulu* is more ambiguous. The music of the final pages of the opera has an emotional intensity not unlike that of the *Wozzeck* interlude, but its effect is very different. The music that comes back at this point of the opera is music that brings with it a host of complex and conflicting associations [and the] difference between the luxuriant, elegiac music and the events on stage produces an emotional disorientation that is deeply disturbing; it can also, if we respond to the music and are prepared to give these characters the understanding and compassion that the humanity of Berg's score demands, be humanly restorative.<sup>14</sup>

Jarman is perfectly justified in proclaiming a kind of 'higher' ambiguity in which the unresolved opposition is between the possibility of 'emotional disorientation' and of feeling 'humanly' restored. Yet the possibility that such divergent feelings might be present at the same time suggests a focus on what Robin Holloway has described – again with reference to Act III of *Lulu* – as 'displacement of cause and effect, and sometimes a deliberate rift between them'.<sup>15</sup> That very specifically Bergian tension between the sordid (Lulu's murder) and the sublime (the Countess's brief but exalted declaration of love) at the end of the opera is paralleled at the end of the Violin Concerto by the more abstract but no less palpable combination of sensuality and spirituality, acknowledged by Berg is his simultaneous use of the markings 'religioso' and 'amoroso' (bar ii/222). Displacement, disorientation – these are disturbing experiences, and in Berg the ambivalence is not simply a matter of conflict between disorientation and a 'humanly restorative' experience, but of a tension between apprehensions of order and of chaos which affect structure and expression alike. As Adorno put the point, 'the organizational, rational principle does not eradicate chaos, if anything it heightens it by virtue of its own articulation. With that Berg realized one of Expressionism's most profound ideas; no other musician achieved that to the same degree.'<sup>16</sup> To which one might add, no other musician before a composer like Brian Ferneyhough, in whose work, as Richard Toop has observed, 'much of the forcefulness and richness ...

arises both from the conceptual obstacle courses that the composer sets himself in the realization of individual layers, and from the violent collisions between these layers'.<sup>17</sup> 'Violent collisions' are the acme of a revived expressionism, and composers who seek to shun them – like Boulez – are those who are most remote from Berg in style and aesthetic orientation. Yet it is no less true that the manner in which late twentieth-century 'complex' composers present their own 'violent collisions' is worlds away from the allusive, still essentially romantic idiom of Berg's most personal compositions.

### Memory – disintegration?

The paradigm of chaos heightened by rationality may offer a satisfying encapsulation of twentieth-century modernism that is instantly apprehensible in much twentieth-century art, but it leaves responsible criticism with an immensely complex task.

Max Paddison has correctly observed that Adorno's 'analyses of Berg's music are of particular interest because ... they take the composer as a paradigm case for the process of "integration through disintegration"'.<sup>18</sup> However, it is no less true that Adorno's analyses do not sustain the kind of deep technical exploration of the Bergian musical fabric through which a clear picture of 'integration through disintegration' might be achieved. Adorno remains most persuasive in his general perceptions, as when he observes that Berg's music 'accomplishes within itself a process of *permanent dissolution*, rather than achieving a "synthesis". ... So then, not only does Berg's music start out from the smallest component elements and then immediately further subject these to a kind of "splitting the atom", but the whole character of his music is that of a permanent self-retraction or self-cancelling. Its "Becoming", if I may term it thus – at all events, where it crystallizes-out its idea in its purest form – is *its own negation*'.<sup>19</sup>

As the final stages of this essay will seek to demonstrate, such formulas as these articulated by Adorno can be considered in relation to post-Adornian analytic/critical initiatives and post-Bergian compositional initiatives alike. Some influential writers on Berg appear to use a focus on relations between 'old' and 'new' as a substitute for Adorno's pairing of rationality and chaos, in order to strengthen claims for Berg's role as a continuer of well-established musical traditions. So, for example, Peter Burkholder links Berg's appeal to both connoisseur and lay audience with the kind of 'complete integration of surface rhetoric and inner structure'



found in Haydn and Mozart, by way of ‘a musical idiom that paralleled the earlier achievement of Haydn and Mozart in its richness of external allusion and internal integration, and wide and lasting appeal.’<sup>20</sup> As Burkholder sees it, ‘Berg revitalized the familiar, writing atonal music that preserves and intensifies the emotional expressivity of the common romantic heritage.’<sup>21</sup> Synthesis, it appears, could go no further, and for this very reason Burkholder’s reading will seem strained and unpersuasive to those who prefer to stress the tensions, the ‘chaos’, the particular personal qualities that give Berg’s music its unrepentantly expressionistic power.

One problem all critical commentators on Berg confront is the need to balance their perceptions concerning his stylistic and technical consistency (his own ‘Bergianism’) with acknowledgements of degrees of modernist *disintegration*. The semantic balancing-act that results is illustrated with exemplary clarity in Anthony Pople’s monograph on the Violin Concerto, which starts from the premise that ‘in the works of Berg’s maturity each musical element is simultaneously informed by several different ideologies. The result is not genuinely a synthesis, but gives the illusion of one – just as a mosaic or a pointillist painting may communicate a coherent image from a fine-grained approximation.’<sup>22</sup> Pople then proceeds by way of a narrative seeking to balance the work’s integrative and disruptive components, and ends with the characterisation of the concerto as ‘a work which simultaneously, and indeed similarly, celebrates both reconciliation and confrontation’, and which ‘might be said at the same time to have reconciled – and yet not reconciled – those two inseparable and eternal opposites’<sup>23</sup> – an eloquent and persuasive conclusion of which Adorno might well have approved. No less significant in this respect are two important studies by Craig Ayrey which consider the ‘peculiar multivalence’ of the early Mombert setting, Op. 2 No. 2,<sup>24</sup> and the ‘essential ambiguity’ of the ways in which serial and tonal elements interact in the second setting of ‘Schliesse mir die Augen beide.’<sup>25</sup> As Ayrey demonstrates, this short song provides ‘a more ambiguous, more closely integrated tonal-serial structure than the chorale variations of *Lulu*’, yet it is nevertheless a “‘complicated” structure, since it essentially opposes serial and triadic ... forms’.<sup>26</sup>

Such analytical explorations of the nature and scope of oppositions and interactions in Berg’s music can easily be linked with the composer’s own aspiration, as set out in his 1929 lecture on *Wozzeck*, ‘to have both a great variety and integration.’<sup>27</sup> With its implication of equilibrium between opposites rather than a notable imbalance, this might be regarded as the kind of ‘mainstream’ manifesto which all later twentieth-century composers who are neither thoroughgoing minimalists nor unremittingly ‘complex’ could endorse. Nevertheless, as argued earlier, there should be a sense

of shared concerns, some element of stylistic association as well as some such purely structural connection, before a composer can sensibly be considered 'Bergian' – some sense of those 'large-scale development-type forms' described by Stravinsky linked with a 'music of lament and protest', perhaps? Yet it cannot be denied that some composers have learned technical lessons from Berg without feeling impelled to echo the expressionistic aspects of his musical style. A particularly striking example of this is George Perle, whose authority as a Berg scholar developed out of a fascination with the kind of 'interval cycle' techniques Perle the composer had been working on in the late 1930s, before he found something similar in Berg's *Lyric Suite*.<sup>28</sup> Even so, Perle's own music has remained more neo-classical than neo-Bergian, setting up the kind of allusive rather than explicit associations with the Master that Robin Holloway has noted in referring to Oliver Knussen's debt to an 'unexpressionistic Berg, one comparable with Ravel (particularly *La Valse*) and (via *Der Wein* and *Lulu*) with American popular music'.<sup>29</sup>

Debts to the expressionistic Berg – however indirect – can be observed with even greater ease. An early example, Dallapiccola's short opera *Il Prigioniero*, completed in 1948, pursues the possibility of co-existence between diverse materials, and between tonal and serial techniques, with what now seems a rather over-heated insistence. The opera nevertheless has something of Berg's expansive melodiousness, and there are elements of ambiguity in the later stages – lament and affirmation, fatalism and faith – even a Bergian blend of sensual and spiritual in the macabre tenderness with which the prisoner is led to his death. What is missing in *Il Prigioniero* is the formal sophistication of *Lulu* and the Violin Concerto, and after 1950 contrasts could increasingly be drawn between Berg's ability to incorporate aspects of the traditionally 'symphonic' into his operas and instrumental works, in ways which enhanced the modernist expressionism of those works, and Schoenberg's more neo-classical approach, as revealed in his concertos for violin and piano. Where Schoenberg was seen as retreating into procedures closer to Brahms than to Mahler – with only the late String Trio and Violin Phantasy offering evidence of a revived expressionism – Berg could be hailed as having effected an imaginative transformation of Mahlerian *Angst* into an authentically twentieth-century language. Indeed, it is scarcely coincidental that the revived expressionism which affected composers as different in age and background as Elliott Carter (1908–) and Peter Maxwell Davies (1934–) coincided with the Mahler revival that began in the 1950s and has sustained an impetus ever since.

A line of development which stemmed from Mahler and Berg, and of-

ferred post-war composers a fruitful alternative to more obviously avant-garde or anti-expressionist tendencies deriving from Webern and Stravinsky, can be traced in many different contexts. It had an undoubted impact on the music of Hans Werner Henze, while widely-performed operas like Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten* (1957–64) and Aribert Reimann's *Lear* (1975–8) could be regarded as deriving in essence from the explicitly post-Mahlerian pages of *Wozzeck* or *Lulu*. Yet the validity of such associations should not obscure the fact that most later composers – even those who might be placed in the contemporary ‘mainstream’ – have tended to avoid Berg's very explicit thematism. What might be defined (after Stravinsky) as ‘large-scale development-type forms’ – Henze's symphonic works or the larger-scale designs of Carter or Maxwell Davies – unfold with far less evidence of explicit motivic recurrence, however powerful the emotions they create in the process. It is therefore composers who work most explicitly with aspects of musical memory, not so much for purposes of pastiche but rather to intensify the confrontation between something remembered and something contemporary, who have developed a Bergian ethos in the most creative way.

The third movement of Berio's *Sinfonia* (1968–9), which involves the literal quotation of the Scherzo from Mahler's second symphony, was a particular landmark in the establishment of a very twentieth-century, modernist kind of romanticism. It represents a style whose continuation can be heard with special refinement in one of Berio's very finest works, *Voci* (1984) for viola and chamber orchestra, which weaves references to Sicilian folk-music into a rich yet delicately-shaded harmonic tapestry. If, as Charles Rosen argues, Beethoven was ‘the first composer to represent the complex process of memory – not merely the sense of loss and regret that accompanies visions of the past, but the physical experience of calling up the past within the present’,<sup>30</sup> then Berg, and, after him, Berio, are surely within that Beethovenian tradition which, in essence, succeeds in intensifying an ‘old/new’ polarity. Associations on this level can create some unlikely connections: for example, we might attempt to link Tippett, by way of his very potent allusions to Beethoven in his Symphony No. 3 (1970–72), with Berg, whose recollections of Bach in the Violin Concerto no less powerfully ‘represent.. the sense of loss and regret that accompanies visions of the past’. Yet it is the quality of ‘loss and regret’ which is crucial, and Tippett's context is as different from Berg's as it is from Maxwell Davies's in the final section of his Clarinet Concerto (1990), when a Scottish folk-tune is recalled in a way that cannot quite succeed in eliminating all traces of the composer's own personal musical style. Coupled with a serial technique that demonstrates a specifically post-Bergian

flexibility about approaches to set-forms as rigidly ordered elements, this atmosphere promotes Maxwell Davies's cause as a composer whose shared concerns with Berg are strong and fruitful. Tippett's, by contrast, are not: in the Symphony No. 3, the impression is created that present-day doubts and ambiguities are challenges to be overcome, rather than feelings to be accepted as inevitable and inescapable.

Rosen also argues that 'the most signal triumphs of the Romantic portrayal of memory are not those which recall past happiness, but remembrances of those moments when future happiness still seemed possible, when hopes were not yet frustrated. ... Romantic memories are often those of absence, of that which never was.'<sup>31</sup> Considerations like these can certainly serve to distinguish between the kind of atmosphere created by such modern masters as Carter, Birtwistle or Boulez, and the works of Berio and Maxwell Davies described here. Among the present-day masters of a music of loss and regret which can also create a sense of disturbing disorientation through the sheer force of feeling or of the confrontations engendered, Kurtág, Henze and Schnittke all stand out. In Kurtág's case the laws of the network require acknowledgement of his capacity – in such compositions as *The Sayings of Peter Bornemisza* (1963–8) and *Messages of the Late Miss R. V. Trousova* (1976–80) – for an expressionism several degrees wilder than Berg's, as well as his particular debts to Webern. As for Henze and Schnittke, both are far more prolific than Berg, both far more uneven: yet both show that the power of memory in music extends well beyond the literal quotation of 'old' materials. Schnittke is at his most powerful and intensely post-Bergian in a brief composition like *Stille Nacht* (1978), an 'arrangement' of the carol which turns into a derangement, though a more complex and ambitious work like the Third String Quartet (1983), with its citations of Lassus, Beethoven and Shostakovich, has been described by one commentator in terms that make the Bergian associations irresistible: 'The network of reminiscences, often presenting the quoted material in its original forms, shows how far the music is from a true integration.'<sup>32</sup> Even so, with both Kurtág and Schnittke one may well conclude that the spirit of fatalism is a good deal purer and less ambiguous than is the case with Berg. With Henze, on the other hand, the contrasts between a sense of loss and a serene, even sublime acceptance of loss can seem too mutually accommodating, the tension and conflict diffused rather than positively polarised. In Henze's ten-movement instrumental *Requiem* (1990) the allusions to other composers are far less overt than in an earlier work like *Tristan* (1973), yet simply because there is little of the religious ritual about this music of loss, a degree of association with the spirit, if not the style of Berg's music can still be felt.

## The tensions at the centre

Berg is a figure of central importance in twentieth-century music to the extent that the pluralism he pioneered has remained a fundamental factor in its later evolution. Berg was above all a great original in a century as fascinated by, and fearful of, individuality as it has been suspicious of 'slovenly' – yet still potent – tradition. As the century has proceeded, expressionism has shed some of its more surreal overtones and grown ever closer to grim approximations of reality, while resisting the extremes of total decadence and absolute transcendence. The twentieth century may indeed be an 'age of extremes', but in music its preferred strategy of exploring the tensions which arise when advance confronts retreat gives new angles on old genres a special weight. Berg was more resistant of traditional schemes than Bartók, Stravinsky or Schoenberg, less radical in his reorientations than Webern or Varèse. Above all, in the Violin Concerto's use of Bach as a manifest echo of a past that dissonates, creating a tension between old and new, destabilising the sense of progression and leaving closure (goal-arrival) ambiguous, Berg created an image of alienation confronting acceptance whose resonance remains potent and reaches into musical realms far removed from his actual style.

One further composer within Berg's network remains to be mentioned. Like Janáček, Berg helped to legitimise a music which, while technically progressive, could embrace compassionate social 'comment': he helped to legitimise a music in which the 'sordid' and the 'sublime' converge and even fuse. Yet, simply in the sense that they match Adorno's model of 'chaos' heightened by 'rationality' with particular power, the endings of Berg's later works, in their difference from the less ambivalent affirmations of Mahler or Janáček, and in their concern to balance a powerful sense of loss with a spirit of acceptance, speak with a special directness to later, younger composers who also seek to temper their sense of loss with an element of humanistic understanding and engagement. Berg also helped to legitimise a music in which disparate techniques (and even styles) may aspire to integration, within genres (concerto, string quartet, opera) that are renewed by being reshaped. Unlike Janáček, Berg also legitimised a particular concern with the possibilities for symmetrical structuring, and a 'flexible' approach to serialism, in the brave new world of post-tonal composition.

I referred earlier to the remarkable tension between sacred and sensual apparent in the Violin Concerto, and the disconcerting confrontation between sordid and sublime at the end of *Lulu*. But there are other powerfully resonant oppositions, as between personal, private allusions and

generic, textural models in the *Lyric Suite* and the no less personal confrontation of raw emotion and constructivism in *Wozzeck* and the Chamber Concerto.<sup>33</sup> This is Berg's world, a world founded on the kind of contradictions to which Boulez, and later musicologists, have referred, and a world in which many other twentieth-century composers – as well as other kinds of musician – have felt, however uneasily, at home. Even if Berg can be held to offer a popularity-generating synthesis, as Burkholder has proposed, this co-exists with an open-ended series of possibilities and tendencies which has all the special fascination of something that is ultimately elusive. Berg may have been particularly progressive in his openness to such modern media as jazz and the cinema and his willingness to bring them within the orbit of his own kind of High Art. Yet it is the tendency of his music – in particular, of his harmony – to gravitate towards sonorities that still suggest the old, romantic world of consonance and dissonance that restrains his progressiveness and enriches his expressive vocabulary. Berg is the very model of the multi-faceted modern master, and the fact that there are a good many other important modern masters seems unlikely to reduce his significance, or even his 'influence', as the twentieth century gives way to the twenty-first.