PART IV

Schoenberg's American years

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15 Cadence after thirty-three years: Schoenberg's Second Chamber Symphony, Op. 38

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In 1939 Arnold Schoenberg resumed work on his Second Chamber Symphony, a composition he had first started thirty-three years earlier. Thus Schoenberg, that quintessential Modernist, was confronted directly with a prototypical issue of contemporary composition: what is the underlying sense of writing tonal music after the atonal and twelve-tone revolutions that he himself initiated and brought to fulfillment? Was the Second Chamber Symphony, far from being a retrogressive exercise in nostalgia as suggested by many Modernist scholars and composers, a step forward for him instead?[1] In what follows, I will discuss ways in which Schoenberg indeed employed hitherto unexplored tonal structures and even alluded to serial procedures. These features are evident in particular in the codas and cadences of each movement, which he composed in 1939, notably the same passages he failed to complete in 1906–08 when he first worked on the piece, or when he returned to it in 1911 and 1916.

Yet, paradoxically, the work's final triad is presented in a virtually identical fashion to that of "Litanei" (Litany), the third movement of the Second String Quartet, Op. 10, composed in 1908.[2] Both works end with an extremely low E flat minor triad swelling in crescendo, only to break off into abrupt silence. Stefan George's poem "Litanei" is a prayer for an end to earthly misery. In 1908 Schoenberg followed his setting of "Litanei" with his first major atonal work – the renowned interpretation of George's "Entrückung" (Transport), which describes the transport of the soul from earthly suffering to transcendent ecstasy.[3] In December 1939, at the onset of World War II, Schoenberg considered ending the Symphony with a third movement set to his own philosophical-religious text, *Wendepunkt* (Turning Point). Ultimately he rejected the idea, leaving only silence after the Symphony's final cadence. Thus its dark, E flat minor triad ushers in the last decade of Schoenberg's creative life – one in which works of a religious as well as political nature continued to preoccupy his psyche, including the Prelude for Orchestra and Mixed Chorus, Op. 44; *A Survivor from Warsaw*, Op. 46; *Dreimal tausend Jahre*, Op. 50a; *De Profundis*, Op. 50b; *Moderner Psalm, Nr. 1*, Op. 50c. As Reinhold Brinkmann writes: "For my understanding of Schoenberg's life and output, it is in these works of a religious-political engagement that his path reaches its goal and fulfillment."[4]

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My chapter begins with a brief summary of Schoenberg's thoughts on returning to tonality after writing non-tonal music. These comments set the stage for a discussion of the Second Chamber Symphony as a Janus-faced work – combining materials conceived intermittently between 1906 and 1939, including a final triad plainly recalling that of the third movement of the Second String Quartet written in July of 1908. Schoenberg would further refer to the quartet's large-scale schema by introducing the human voice into the Symphony's proposed third movement. He intended to set its philosophical-spiritual text, *Wendepunkt*, as a melodrama. Although Schoenberg ultimately rejected that plan for a third movement, I contend that *Wendepunkt* continued to be central to his thinking about the work as a private, *post festum* program – thus further underscoring my thesis that the Symphony approaches the ethos of Schoenberg's late religious-political works.

"Tonal oder atonal?"

Unlike many modernist composers of the postwar era, Schoenberg was never obsessed by a compositional dichotomy between tonal and non-tonal music; but rather held the belief that such matters were merely a stylistic concern. In a letter to composer Roger Sessions, he writes: "A Chinese poet speaks Chinese, but what is it he *says*?"[5] And, more specifically, in his essay "On Revient Toujours" (1948) he writes: "the older style was always vigorous in me; and from time to time I had to yield to that urge. This is how and why I sometimes write tonal music. To me *stylistic* differences of this nature are not of special importance."[6] To understand Schoenberg's statement fully, it is necessary to realize that he always uses the word *Styl* (style) in opposition to his philosophical notion of "musical idea," which, as a metaphysical concept basic to all of Schoenberg's thought, necessarily eludes definition.[7]

In practice, Schoenberg addressed only what he termed the material presentation (*Darstellung*) of the musical idea.[8] He saw style as an aspect of presentation, common to craftsmen and artists alike: "Every man has a fingerprint of his own, and every craftsman's hand has its personality . . . Style is the quality of a work and is based on natural conditions, expressing him who produced it."[9] For Schoenberg, a consummate Idealist, the purpose of style differed radically depending on whether craftsmen or artists were concerned. It was his view that while craftsmen often see a change in style opportunistically, as a sure method of acquiring critical attention, artists must not be concerned with such expedient matters. For them, style is a means of truthfully presenting a musical idea that

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First Movement:	
A Section (mm. 1–52)	E minor, "roving"
B Section (mm. 53–94)	A minor, "roving"
A' Section (mm. 95–140)	E minor, "roving"
Coda (141–65)	E minor, "roving"
Second Movement:	
Exposition:	
First Group (mm. 166–218)	G major "roving"
Second Group (mm. 219–63)	"roving"
Development: (mm. 263–82)	D major, "roving"
Recapitulation:	
Theme from First Group (mm. 282–337)	G major "roving"
Theme from Section B, Movement (mm. 338–90)	"roving"
Second Group (mm. 391–439)	"roving"
Coda (mm. 440–89)	E♭ minor, "roving"

Figure 15.1 The Symphony's form and tonality

transcends time and space: "[An artist] will never start from a preconceived image of a style; he will be ceaselessly occupied with doing justice to the idea (*Gedanke*). He is sure that, everything done which the idea demands, the external appearance will be adequate."[10] Hence the composer's task is to choose the appropriate method to present a musical idea, so that it can escape the boundaries of a given society or era and speak spiritually and philosophically to humanity as a whole:

> My personal feeling is that music conveys a prophetic message revealing a higher form of life towards which humanity evolves. And it is because of this message that music appeals to people of all races and cultures.[11]

Schoenberg maintained that if listeners are to comprehend a piece of music, its presentation must include a varied repetition of the materials, in order to ensure that they remain in the listener's memory to help foster understanding.[12] He writes: "Music is only understood when one goes away singing it and only loved when one falls asleep with it in one's head, and finds it still there on waking up the next morning."[13] And indeed, the layout of the Symphony is in particular dependent on the key and themes of the first movement returning in the coda of the second (Figure 15.1).[14] The slow pace and mournful character of Schoenberg's first movement, however, is highly unusual for a symphony – in mood, only the initial funeral march in Gustav Mahler's Fifth Symphony seems a possible precursor. Unlike Mahler, however, Schoenberg presents his movement not in a traditional sonata-allegro form, but in a subtle ternary design instead.[15] In the nineteenth century the ternary or *lied* forms were typical of the slow middle movements of symphonies or chamber works and character pieces for solo keyboard – or works that prefigured them such as the first movement of Beethoven's "Moonlight"

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Sonata. Thus in his first movement, Schoenberg paradoxically used a design associated with intimate performance in the most public of genres, the symphony.

The form of the Symphony's second movement, too, is refractory to a traditional schema, although a modified sonata-allegro model seems presumable. The opening follows a fairly traditional sonata structure; but from the middle of the movement onward, the formal complexity increases markedly. The movement begins in an unambiguous G major, the second group is mostly "roving" in tonality, although there are references to E flat minor, the tonic of the first movement. As a result, at the beginning of the development section, it is difficult to hear the D major emphasis as a dominant relating to a tonic. Further on, in the recapitulatory passages, Schoenberg avoids asserting the material in any of its original keys. All of this combines to lend a developmental character to this section, weakening the tonal weight of the thematic recapitulation and transferring any sense of balance to the extended coda, while it reiterates the materials of the first movement.[16]

Composing the Symphony, 1906–16

Schoenberg made his initial sketches for the Symphony on August 1 and 14, 1906 (Figure 15.2). He worked extensively on the piece during the summer of 1907; and by August 1908 he had completed a draft of the first movement up to the beginning of its coda (m. 143), and one of the second up to the end of the second group (m. 252).[17] At this point he abandoned the piece and turned to composing the Second String Quartet, Op. 10 and *The Book of the Hanging Gardens*, Op. 15, claiming in a later essay that his response to the poems of Stefan George led to an all-consuming, exclusive preoccupation with atonal works.[18]

He continued to write atonal works until 1910 when he returned to the tonal *Gurrelieder*, abandoned nine years earlier. Days after completing its orchestration on November 7, 1911, he became preoccupied with *Das Lied von der Erde*, the symphony composed by his supporter and benefactor Gustav Mahler. The premiere of Mahler's work took place posthumously, in Munich on November 20, 1911, seven months after the composer's death. Schoenberg's students Alban Berg, Anton Webern, and Paul Königer attended the performance; but, for financial reasons, Schoenberg could not accompany them. Two days after the premiere, in Schoenberg's presence, Webern played through Mahler's score at the piano. Both of them were deeply moved. In his diary Schoenberg wrote, "We couldn't speak."[19]

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Sketchbook III [MS 77, CASG86-C290]		
Pages	**Movement sketched/ drafted**	**Dates included**
32–5 [Sk210–3]	I, 20 sketches	August 1, 14, 1906
38–9 [Sk216–7]	I, 5 sketches, draft of mm. 1–57	
46 [Sk224]	I, 1 sketch	
76–81 [Sk254–9]	I, 5 sketches, draft of mm. 57–143; II, 1 sketch, drafts of mm. 3–10, 43–85	July 8, 1907
84–5 [Sk 262–3]	II, 4 sketches, drafts for mm. 43–55, 86–105	[July/August 1907]
87–88 [Sk 265–6]	II, 2 sketches	[July/August 1907]
Fair Copy 1907/8 [MS 42, 86CO]		
[1241–1269]	I, mm. 1–14	January 14, 1907
	II, mm. 166–252	August 29, 1908
Sketchbook III (continued from above)		
116 [Sk 300–2]	II, 1 sketch	November 23, 1911;
	II, drafts for mm. 251–92	[corrections from 1939]
117 [Sk 303]	II, 1 sketch, draft for mm. 293–308	
118 [Sk 304]	II, 1 sketch containing inventory of 22 themes	[1911], December 6, 1916
118a–b [Sk 305–6]	Text of *Wendepunkt* glued into sketchbook	[1911? 1916?]
118c [Sk 307]	1 sketch	[1911]
118d–e [Sk 308–9]	I & II, 21 sketches	
118f [Sk 310]	1 sketch	
119 [Sk 311]	II, 2 sketches	[1911, 1916]
120–7 [Sk 312–9]	II, 30 sketches	[1916]
130 [Sk 322]	II, 1 sketch	
Loose pages cut out of sketchbook III [MS 42, 86C5]		[1939]
1 [recto 1279]	I, 1 sketch	
2 [recto/verso 1280]	II, 4 sketches	
3–5 [recto 1282/3; recto U343/1298a; verso U344/1298b; recto U345, 1298c]	I, 19 sketches	
12 pages (recto/verso) in handmade sheaf [MS 42, 86C6]		October 12, 1939
1 [1270]	2 sketches, draft (mm. 309–15)	
2 [1271]	2 sketches, draft (mm. 316–27)	
3–6 [1272–78]	draft (mm. 316–489)	
Loose sheets containing drafts and sketches for a rejected third movement [MS 42, 86-C4, -C5, -C6]		November 5, 1939/ January 27, 1940
[1284–97]	13 sketches; fair copy of mm. 490–508; draft of mm. 490–618	
[U346–51/1298d–i]	30 sketches	
[U505–6]	4 sketches	
[U556–58]	10 sketches	
Aborted Fair Copy (mm. 1–25) [MS 42, 1281, 86C3]		
Fair Copy of the *Particell* (now lost)		October 21, 1939
Schoenberg's Personal Copy of the *Particell* [MS 42, 1207–40, 85C935, 85C937] (extant)		October 21, 1939
Parts hand-copied by Schoenberg [no number assigned]		[1939]

Figure 15.2 Chronology of sketches and drafts (1906–40)
(This chart summarizes information in Arnold Schönberg, *Sämtliche Werke*, Section IV: *Orchesterwerke*, Series B, Vol. 11, Part 2, *Kammersymphonien*, ed. C. M. Schmidt (Mainz and Vienna, 1979), 104–202; and W. Frisch, *The Early Works of Arnold Schoenberg, 1893–1908* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 250; Arnold Schönberg Center website, www.Schoenberg.at/archive/music/work/op/compositions op. 38 sources e.htm. Archive nos. and possible dates appear in brackets.)

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The very next day Schoenberg returned to his own Symphony, undoubtedly motivated and inspired by Mahler's work, though there is no direct structural influence. To refresh his memory of the Symphony's material, Schoenberg wrote out a list of all its major themes and their variants.[20] He also attempted several separate drafts of the second movement extending through the development and into the first group of the recapitulation – only to stop work on the piece once again, to turn to composing the atonal *Herzgewächse*, Op. 20 (started December 19, 1911) and *Pierrot lunaire*, Op. 21 (begun March 12, 1912).

Thoughts of the Symphony arose again in 1915, during World War I, when Schoenberg was anticipating his conscription into the Austrian army. He then drew up a new last will and testament and made a commitment to finish lingering projects. After being discharged from the military for medical reasons in 1916, he made numerous sketches for the second movement's recapitulation and the transition to its coda, significantly altering the instrumentation. In a letter dated December 12, 1916 to his friend, teacher, and brother-in-law, the composer Alexander von Zemlinsky, he explained:

> I've decided to finish my 2nd Chamber Symphony – the one I started in 1907 (!) and haven't touched since then.[21] Two movements have been written – one of them finished except for the final bars and the other completed up to the halfway point. I'm going to fuse them into *one* movement; that will be the first part. That's to say that I'm planning a 2nd part (my intention back then), but maybe I won't after all. But I'm *not* going to write the piece for solo instruments; I'm going to write a new score at once for (a mid-sized) *orchestra*. I think, after all, that it is a mistake to score for solo strings opposed to so many winds, because then one option is lacking; no single instrument, no single group could dominate in a loud *tutti* over all the rest – but the music needs it, the way it is conceived.[22]

Sometime between 1911 and 1916 Schoenberg had added a text for Part II called *Wendepunkt* (Turning Point) which, as noted above, was to be set as a melodrama.[23] *Wendepunkt* describes a soul's journey toward spiritual awareness: a general feeling of mourning, a turn toward happiness, a reversion to mourning, and a dismissal of it through the soul's acknowledgement of spiritual salvation (see Figure 15.3).[24] *Wendepunkt*'s subject matter distinctly recalls the libretto of the oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter* – both address earthly misery and salvation through prayer.[25] It is tantalizing to speculate what musical language Schoenberg might have intended for a setting of *Wendepunkt*. But, be that as it may, in the end, Schoenberg never sketched any music for the text, though he wrote on January 30, 1917 to the pianist and composer Ferruccio Busoni that he did wish to finish the Symphony.[26] By April 1917, however, Schoenberg had

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Auf diesem Weg weiterzugehen war nicht möglich.
It was impossible to continue along that path.
Ein Lichtstrahl hatte eine Trauer sowohl allgemeiner, als
A beam of light had shed its illumination on a grief of both a general
auch besonderer Natur erhellt. Abhängend [von der Laune] nicht
and special kind. Depending not only
nur von ihrer [seinen inneren] Konstitution, sondern auch von den
on its makeup, but also on
Launen äußerer Zu[Glücks]fälle, kann eine Seele gegen den
the moods of outward happenstance; a soul can no more
Glücksfall sich sowenig unempfindlich verhalten, vie vorher
react insensitively to the whim of fortunate happenstance
gegen das Unglück [und antwortet in/mit/einem zunächst]
than it could to prior misfortune.
In plötzlichem Umschlag antwortet sie mit [einer] fröhlichem [Beschwingtheit]
In a sudden sea change, it responds with cheerful contentment,
Behagen, erhebt sich dann mit mächtigen Aufschwung
arises then with a mighty
träumt von seligen Erfüllungen, sieht sich als Sieger,
about-face, dreams of blissful fulfillment, calling itself a victor,
stürmt weiter, fühlt ihre [seine] Kraft immer mehr wachsen, und sammelt,
storming further, feeling its power ever growing and growing, collecting together
im Wahn eine Welt besitzen [erobern] zu können, die sie schon
everything it can in its mad delusion that it could possess a world which it already
für die ihre hält, alles was in ihrer Fähigkeit liegt, um
thinks is its own,
in einem mächtigen Anlauf eine überirdische Höhe zu erreichen.
in order to attain an extraterrestrial height in a mighty surge.
Was notwendigerweise geschehen müßte, besorgt der Zufall:
Happenstance ensures that that which needs must happen does indeed occur;
wie die angesammelte Kraft ausbrechen soll, versagt sie;
just as the amassed power is to break out, it falters
ein kleines aber hinterlistiges Ereignis – ein Stäubchen im Uhrwerk – ist imstande, sie an ihrer
– something tiny yet insidious – a speck of dust in the clockwork – is able to prevent the soul from
Entfaltung zu hindern.
blossoming as it might.
Dem Zusammenbruch folgt Verweiflung, danach die Trauer. Sie ist erst [allgemeiner]
After the collapse comes despair, and then mourning. The grief is at first
[wieder allgemeiner und besondrer Natur. Dann auch besond]
besondrer, dann auch allgemeiner Natur. Vom äußeren
of a special, then of a general kind. Proceeding from the outward
Ereignis ausgehend glaubt die Seele [ihren Ab] den Grund zuerst
occurrence, the soul first believes it has found the reason therein,
in diesem zu finden, sucht ihn dann in ihrer Konstitution.
but then searches further within its makeup.
Das ist die eigentliche Vollendung dieses [des] Zusammenbruchs. Aber das be-
Thus is the actual completion of that collapse. But that
deutet kein Ende; ist im Gegenteil ein Anfang; ein neuer
does not signify an end; on the contrary it is a beginning;
Weg zum Heil zeigt sich, der einzige, der ewige. Ihn
a new path toward salvation is revealed, the only and eternal one
zu finden war der Zweck alles vorherigen Erlebens.
and the purpose of all foregoing experience was to find that path.

Figure 15.3 The text of *Wendepunkt* [Turning Point]
(Transcription by Christian Martin Schmidt. Passages crossed out in the original appear in brackets. Translation by Grant Chorley. Mr. Chorley and Severine Neff gratefully acknowledge the astute comments of Nuria Schoenberg Nono on the English text.)

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turned to writing a pedagogical/theoretical text titled *Coherence, Counterpoint, Instrumentation, Instruction in Form*,[27] and by June he had begun composing the score of *Die Jakobsleiter*.

Twenty-two years passed before the Symphony came to Schoenberg's mind again. In the summer of 1939 his friend, the conductor Fritz Stiedry, asked for an orchestral work for his ensemble called the New Friends of Music Orchestra, motivating the composer to return to the unfinished project he had begun thirty-three years earlier.[28] That occurred on the eve of an historical cataclysm: Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939; France and England declared war on September 3, and World War II began. It is striking that Schoenberg's other attempts to finish the Symphony coincided with grave turning points in his own life – Mahler's departure from Vienna for New York in 1907 and his death in 1911, and Schoenberg's military service in 1916–17, for example. Yet another turning point came to Schoenberg's life in the autumn of 1939: on November 5 Schoenberg filed the papers that would lead to his becoming an American citizen.[29] Once again, it was at just such a decisive moment that he returned to the Symphony.

Cadence after thirty-three years

> For the past month I have been working on the Second Chamber Symphony. I spend most of my time trying to find out: "What did the author mean here?"
>
> After all, in the meantime my style has become much more profound, and I have difficulty in making the ideas which I wrote down years ago without too much thought (rightly trusting my feeling for design) conform to my present demand for a high degree of "visible" logic. This is one of my greatest difficulties, for it affects the material of the piece.
>
> However, this material is very good; expressive, rich and interesting. But it is meant to be carried out in the manner that I was capable of at the time of the Second Quartet.[30]

That is Schoenberg's description of his work on the Symphony when he returned to it in 1939. He discovered "what the author meant" by copying out parts of the symphony and analyzing their contents.[31] Once he had become familiar with it again, he began altering earlier drafts and composing the codas of both movements. Interestingly, the movements' final cadences, though written in the language of extended tonality, are unlike any found in his early major tonal works, the Suite for String Orchestra (1934) or *Kol Nidre*, Op. 39 (1938), all of which end with variants of V-I. The movements of the Symphony conclude with #IV-I progressions, a cadence modified in the first movement by the use of

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Example 15.1 #IV at the cadence to both movements (in the two-piano reduction by Schoenberg)
(a) First movement (b) Second movement

fourth chords (see Example 15.1). Two years later, he used #IV–I to close the *Variations on a Recitative for Organ*, Op. 40, a work whose harmony, in his words, "fills out the gap between my *Kammersymphonien* and the 'dissonant music.'"[32] Thus Schoenberg understood such a unique cadence as a logical consequence of his earlier explorations of extended tonality.

#IV and I are built on scale degrees that have a very remote tonal relation. But for Schoenberg, any connection is possible, even if it lies at the boundaries of a given tonality.[33] Schoenberg chose #IV to I for a cadence by deducing the Symphony's contextual logic. #IV is highlighted as the second chord of the entire work after the tonic (spelled enharmonically [cf. m. 1]); meanwhile, the scale degree #4 consistently appears at major articulative junctures and in the oft-repeated main theme (see, for example, the appearance of #IV at mm. 48–51 and 439–47). By reiterating

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Example 15.2 Two sketches for the first movement's coda (a) Stopping on the dominant (b) The sketch beginning at m. 144

the scale degrees #4 and 1 at places where traditionally a dominant/tonic relation would appear, Schoenberg was able both to undermine the Symphony's sense of tonality and integrate its highly individualized thematic and harmonic materials.

Schoenberg's sketches from 1939 also document his notion of limiting the power of several traditional V^7-I cadences that he composed into the work in 1906.[34] In a sketch made in 1939 for the onset of the coda, he stops at the V^7 chord in m. 140 as if not knowing what to do with it (compare Example 15.2a). In the final version, the dominant-tonic resolution is immediately followed by an abridged version of the main theme and an abrupt shift of register. The ensuing viola-cello line in Example 15.2b highlights perfect fourths a tritone away from each other (first on a flat' and e flat' [mm. 144–5], and the d' and a' doubled in octaves [m. 145]). Such events severely weaken the effect of a traditional cadence.

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Example 15.3 Surface permutations of trichord X (a) Permuted forms of trichord X (b) Permutations of trichord X in the main theme, mm. 141–6, movement one

The only other surviving sketch for this same passage (compare Example 15.2b) shows that the viola-cello theme in mm. 144–9 was indeed central to Schoenberg's compositional thought. Its material centers on a trichord (that I call X) in the main theme, which he presents in transposition, inversion, retrograde, and retrograde inversion (compare Examples 15.3a and 15.3b). Thus this theme exhibits a surface logic associated with the twelve-tone method. Compare, for example, similar passagework in the Fourth String Quartet, Op. 37, the twelve-tone work composed prior to the Symphony: for example, mm. 602–9 in the second movement. This method of variation appears solely in portions of the first movement composed in 1939.

Such surface permutations return only in the coda to the second movement, also written in 1939. Here, however, we must also take seriously Schoenberg's admission to Stiedry that the Symphony was "meant to be carried out in the manner which I was capable of at the time of the Second Quartet." In voicing and register, the Symphony's final tonic triad recalls the last sonority of "Litanei" from the Second Quartet's third movement (compare Example 15.4). Both E flat minor triads are dark in timbre, growing ever louder, only to be cut off abruptly into utter silence. Both chords act as resolutions, yet they beg for continuation. The end of "Litanei" reflects George's text in which a despondent individual, weary of life's emotional battles, prays for release from misery: "Take from me love, Give me thy peace." Schoenberg's setting of these lines is astounding – in singing *Liebe* (love), the soprano covers an expanse of more than two octaves in a single beat (see Example 15.4a, mm. 65–6). Analogously, at the last climactic point of the Symphony, a tritone on 1–#4 instantaneously descends over two octaves from the first violin's e flat''' on the downbeat of m. 483 to the basses's a, on the second beat (see asterisk, Example 15.4b, m. 483). This stunning descent makes the depth of the subsequent cadence even more breathtaking, as if a dark abyss had suddenly opened up beneath our feet, giving release into a void.

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Example 15.4 The Symphony and "Litanei" (a) The final cadence of "Litanei" from the Second String Quartet, Op. 10 (b) The end of the coda and final cadence of the Symphony

(a)

accel.
frei
sehr zurückhaltend
(mit dem Gesang)
p (frei)
lie - be, gieb mir dein
(G)
I. Zeitmaß
70
glück!

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Example 15.4 (cont.)

(b)

allargando poco a poco

The rejected third movement

In November 1939 Schoenberg was not clear at first on how he wanted the Symphony to end. He drafted 127 measures of another movement, which he described to Stiedry:

> Whether I shall write a third movement (or even a fourth or fifth, which is also not out of the question) is not yet certain. I have not been able to find my old sketches – it is too hot to look for them. So I have no idea whether or not I

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Exampe 15.4b (cont.)

can resume with one of the *many plans*, *which exist* [emphasis added] for the completion. My preliminary idea is to have a slow third (final) movement, a heroic Maestoso.[35]

This quotation is telling – in the surviving manuscripts, at least, there are in fact no extended "plans" for the completion of the Symphony – only the text of *Wendepunkt*. Here I would like to speculate for a moment on the relation of that text to the final score, for it may suggest that an additional movement was in order. I contend that *Wendepunkt* turned from a text to be set as a melodrama to a *post festum* program for the work, outlining the soul's progress through mourning, jubilation, a reversion to mourning, and finally heavenly salvation through prayer. The emotional tone of the Symphony parallels this sequence of feelings (see Figure 15.4). The

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Auf diesem Weg weiterzugehen war nicht möglich. It was impossible to continue along that path. **Ein Lichtstrahl hatte eine Trauer sowohl allgemeiner, als** A beam of light had shed its illumination on a grief of both a general ***auch besonderer Natur erhellt. Abhängend [von der Laune] nicht*** and special kind.	**{Opening of first movement mm. 1–165}**
In plötzlichem Umschlag antwortet sie mit [einer] fröhlichem [Beschwingtheit] In a sudden sea change, it responds with cheerful ***Behagen, erhebt sich dann mit mächtigen Aufschwung*** contentment, arises then with a mighty ***träumt von seligen Erfüllungen, sieht sich als Sieger,*** about-face, dreams of blissful fulfillment, calling itself a victor,	**{Opening of second movement mm. 166–438}**
Dem Zusammenbruch folgt Verweiflung, danach die Trauer. Sie ist erst [allgemeiner] After the collapse comes despair, and then mourning. The grief is at first ***[wieder allgemeiner und besondrer Natur. Dann auch besond]*** ***besondrer, dann auch allgemeiner Natur.*** of a special, then of a general kind.	**{Beginning of final coda, mm. 439–78}**
Weg zum Heil zeigt sich, der einzige, der ewige. Ihn A new path toward salvation is revealed, the only and eternal one ***zu finden war der Zweck alles vorherigen Erlebens.*** and the purpose of all foregoing experience was to find that path.	**{Rejected third movement}**

Figure 15.4: *Wendepunkt* as a private program

opening movement establishes the mood of mourning, while the G major beginning of the second movement is quite clearly jubilant. The beginning of the second movement's coda signals the return to mourning and the E flat minor of the opening movement.[36] But what has become of the soul's new beginning, its turn down a new path towards heavenly salvation through prayer? This could hardly be represented by the final cadence, for the dark E flat-minor triad brings the Symphony to one of the most solemn and tragic endings in all of Schoenberg's works.

More likely, the "new" beginning was to be the unrealized third movement. Unsurprisingly, its first draft begins with the triads in an adagio chorale style resembling the coda of the second movement (see Example 15.5a).[37] After this, the general contour begins to progress upward toward a heavenly realm. At a dramatic shift toward high registers, Schoenberg literally writes the word "ascending" into his draft (see Example 15.5b). Ultimately, high violin lines soar into space (see Example 15.5c) like those representing the Soul in the oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter* (see Example 15.5d). The parallels between the works' texts are obvious. *Wendepunkt* describes the soul's acknowledgement of salvation through prayer, while the libretto

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Example 15.5 Parallels With *Die Jakobsleiter* (a) The opening of the third movement (b) Sketch of movement three with the word “ascending” (c) The high violin in the Symphony (d) The soul in *Die Jakobsleiter*

(a) ADAGIO (h= 42)

poco rit.

Cl 1 p

Fg 2 p

Ob 1 EH ppp

Cl 1. 2. ppp

con sord Hr 1. 2. con sord pp pp

Trp 1 2 con sord

poco rit.

Vl I

ECHO Vi 2 Soli ppp

Vcl. Soli 1.2 p

CBs 1. Solo p

(b) ascending

poco agitato

Vi I. II

Va

Vcl trem

(c)

(d) Langsam q.=36 (q=108)

Sehr ruhig und breit, doch ohne Dehnungen und ohne bedeutende Schwellungen

sehr kurze Fermate, die wirkliche Dauer nur unwesentlich vetängernd

H1* 1. Gg

ppp (vom Dirigenten aus gerechnet)

* Die Fernmusiken sind durch H_1 H_2 (aus der Höhe) F_1 F_2 (Ferne) bezeichnet (Vgl. Vorwort).

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of *Die Jakobsleiter* expounds on it, tracing the spirit's journey from an earthly condition to its heavenly meeting with God.

Schoenberg only set half the text of the oratorio, stopping at the soul's transformation through prayer and death. The Second Chamber Symphony stops at an analogous place – if my reading of the program is correct. It is well known that in many works Schoenberg sought to communicate the rise to a transcendental state, and that he repeatedly was unable to portray it musically.[38] *Die Jakobsleiter*, *Moses und Aron*, and the *Moderner Psalm Nr. 1*, Schoenberg's last work, all break off at that same point, "unfinished." I contend that the Second Chamber Symphony is part of this group of works to which Schoenberg constantly returned, and which embodied his most important philosophical and religious concerns and his greatest intellectual and spiritual preoccupations.

The Second Chamber Symphony is the only one of the four that Schoenberg ever considered "finished."[39] Writing to Stiedry in the spring of 1940, he said that the abandoned third movement was not "unconditionally necessary," and that it had merely appended certain "observations" on the "musical and psychic problems" already exhaustively presented in the two completed movements.[40] Could it be that only under the consecration of tonality, renewed and enriched by thirty-three years of unparalleled expansion of his musical vocabulary, Schoenberg could face the tragic reality that for him, as the darkness of World War II gathered, the prayerful return to mourning rather than the soul's transcendence was the ultimate cadence?

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