

A Study in the Chronology of op. 23–26 by Arnold Schoenberg

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The titles of the works under consideration in this study are: *Fünf Klavierstücke*, op. 23; *Serenade für Klarinette, Bassklarinette, Gitarre, Geige, Bratsche, Violoncell und eine tiefe Männerstimme*, op. 24; *Suite für Klavier*, op. 25; and *Quintett für Flöte, Oboe, Klarinette, Horn und Fagott*, op. 26.

It is generally accepted that op. 26 displays a fully developed dodecaphonic technique and that op. 23 and 24 designate preliminary attempts towards the establishment of this technique. Op. 25 is often considered the first entirely dodecaphonic work by Schoenberg. As it will appear from the discussion later on, I doubt whether such a classification of op. 25 is advisable, but still it seems justified to regard the normal classification op. 23 and 24 and op. 26 as evident; therefore, considered as a sequence, these four compositions should give a fair image of Schoenberg's final steps towards the establishment of the dodecaphonic technique.

That different movements of op. 23–25 display different techniques, is well known, but as these techniques are not seen to be used consistently throughout any of the multipartite compositions and since the actual dates of composition do not appear with any kind of evidence, either from the published editions¹ or from any account available, all previous attempts at a detailed description of Schoenberg's progress to dodecaphony, have failed to evidence the desirable authenticity.

The final steps leading to dodecaphony have already been described technically by Erwin Stein², Olav Gurvin³, René Leibowitz⁴ and Josef Rufer.⁵ Special attention is deserved by Stein's article from 1924, in which, with a remarkable lucidity, he clarified the basic principles of serial technique, as they come to the fore in op. 23–25. During the whole of the transitional period Stein was

1. Op. 23 and 24 were published by Wilh. Hansen, Copenhagen, in 1923 and 1924 resp.; op. 25 and 26 by Universal Edition, Vienna, in 1925.

2. Erwin Stein, »Neue Formprinzipien«, *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, Sonderheft »Arnold Schönberg zum fünfzigsten Geburtstag« (13. Sept. 1924), 286–303.

3. Olav Gurvin, *Frå tonalitet til atonalitet* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1938) 84–99.

4. René Leibowitz, *Schoenberg et son école* (Paris: Janin, 1947) 108–115; and especially *Introduction à la musique de douze sons* (Paris: L'Arche, 1949) 53–68, 81–108.

5. Josef Rufer, *Die Komposition mit zwölf Tönen*, Stimmen des XX. Jahrhunderts Bd. 2 (Berlin: Hesse, 1952) 55–75.

particularly close to Schoenberg, and it is evident that his information at that time was first hand,⁶ but, unfortunately, in his article he did not reveal the chronology of the works under consideration.

The other authors mentioned seem to have taken for granted that the numerical order of the opus numbers depicts the chronology of the composition of the works, and they describe the technical development according to that assumption; however, in his letter to Slonimsky⁷, Schoenberg has clearly indicated that it is not so.

»As an example of such attempts [i. e. to base the structure consciously on a unifying idea] I may mention the piano pieces op. 23. Here I arrived at a technique which I called (for myself) »composition with tones«, a very vague term, but it meant something to me. . .

The fourth movement, »Sonett« [i. e. of the Serenade op. 24] is a real »composition with twelve tones«. The technique is here relatively primitive, because it was one of the first works written strictly in harmony with this method, though it was not the very first—there were some movements of the »Suite for Piano« which I composed in the fall of 1921. . .«

If one has not been suspicious before, this statement should, at any rate, arouse some suspicion with regard to the chronological order of these compositions.

Rufer considers the Suite op. 25 the first real composition with twelve tones,⁸ whereas Leibowitz prefers to credit this honour to op. 23 no. 5, the Waltz,⁹ both of these considerations conflicting with Schoenberg's account. Furthermore, one should like to know why, in his letter, Schoenberg did not mention the Waltz. Did he consider it not to be a twelve-tone composition—in spite of the fact that he did not hesitate to label the Sonnet as such?

Evidently, the only way out of all the confusion must be through a careful study of the source material belonging to the compositions under consideration. True, the final clarification of how, in the creative development of Arnold Schoenberg, the dodecaphonic texture actually came into being could not be furnished in such a way, for this would include a close examination of the whole bulk of sketches, manuscripts and papers of at least the last ten years prior to 1923; however, a study of this kind does represent a first, and inevitable, stage of such an investigation.

My studies in the Schoenberg Archive from the autumn of 1958 to the summer of 1959 revealed that quite a satisfactory amount of source material

6. An unpublished paper in the Schoenberg Archive in Los Angeles reads p. 3, »Als ich im Herbst 1921 die ersten Kompositionen auf Grund dieser neuen Methode fertig gestellt hatte, rief ich Erwin Stein . . . zu mir und verlangte von ihm, was ich ihm mitzuteilen gedachte, so lange als mein Geheimnis zu bewahren, als ich es für notwendig fand. Er gab mir dieses Versprechen und hat es in Treue gehalten.«

7. »Letter from Arnold Schoenberg on the Origin of the Twelve-Tone System,« in Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music since 1900* (New York: Norton, 1938) 574–575.

8. Rufer, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

9. Leibowitz, *Schoenberg*, p. 109.

is left. Few sketches and other papers seem to have been lost in the course of time. Schoenberg's hesitance to throw these things away, his care to date, at any rate, his finished drafts and the fact that eventually his handwriting changed recognizably all tend to facilitate the task of identifying the manuscripts and determining their approximate or precise date.¹⁰ On the other hand, Schoenberg's extraordinarily rapid musical thinking and the fact that he used the rubber diligently when working out a draft make it difficult to follow the development of his musical thought. The examination of the material did reveal a considerable amount of the evidence so badly needed, but it did not make the chronological problems of intermingling techniques less complex.

Op. 23

Sketches and drafts for the five movements and for two further fragments which were probably intended for this opus are found on six loose sheets, designated ls1, ls2 etc., and on six pages of a sketch book which, in accordance with Rufer's filing¹¹, is designated Sk.V. This sketch book was in use from January 1922 to 1926; however, only the first page, containing some undated sketches which do not reappear, could have been written in 1922, since p. 2 contains a draft of February 1923. Thus the first manuscripts of the pieces are found on the loose sheets.

The sheet containing the earliest date we shall call ls1. It was found with two undated sheets, to which I shall return later, in a group of hitherto unidentified sketches.¹² It contains a preliminary draft of op. 23 no. 2 and bears the date 8/7. 1920. The draft is finished in that the end is there, but incomplete in that it is not worked out in every detail. This version differs strongly from the final one which contains almost all of the same elements, yet these are organized in a much more concentrated way. A comparison of the beginning of the draft (ex. 1) with that of the printed version will make this point clear.

The final version is found on ls3, dated 26/VII. 1920 [sign.]. It is a fair copy with only two minor corrections, and there are only a few minor differences from the printed edition.

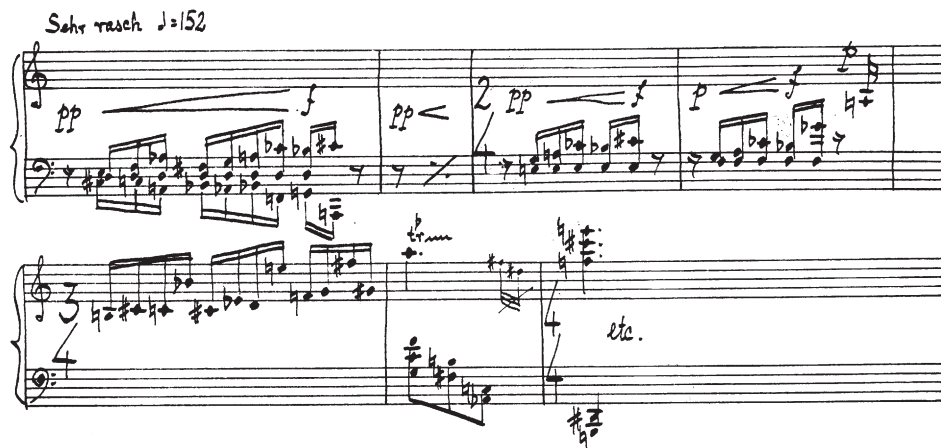
Ls2 is a double sheet, ls2a, with a smaller single sheet inside, ls2b. These contain op. 23 no. 1, and both bear the date of 9.VII 1920 at the end, i. e. one day after the first sketch of no. 2. At the top of ls2a is written *Preludium* and *Suite No. 1*; both indications are ruled out with a read pencil. The original

10. A preliminary arrangement of the many sheets according to the works to which they belong was carried out by Josef Rufer during the autumn of 1957. The results of this work are found in J. Rufer, *Das Werk Arnold Schoenbergs* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1959).

11. J. Rufer, *op. cit.*

12. Josef Rufer's amount of time in Los Angeles did not allow for a painstaking examination of all those manuscripts which are difficult to identify.

Ex. 1



tempo indication *Sehr mässige* ♩ (ca. 54) is substituted by *Sehr langsam* (♩ = 108). The whole piece is written in ink—22 bars in a draft-like fashion; the rest is evidently a fair copy. A pencil draft of this last part is found on ls2b. This is likely to indicate an interval between the 22 bars and the rest, so although there is no indication of when the composition was started, it may be assumed that it was before July 8, and that, consequently, this piece was the first to be written. It was certainly the first to be put into its final version, since ls2a shows only a few minor differences from the printed edition.

Ls4 contains op. 23 no. 4. Headline: *Serie I № 4*; date at the head: 26/7 1920; tempo: *Mässige* ♩, and, later, = ca 76 added. The handwriting of bar 1–14 differs from the rest. The first part is evidently a draft, while the rest looks more like a fair copy. The first part contains Schoenberg's own marks indicating a structural analysis of the piece. The first two bars contain the four tone-groups, which constitute the basic structures from which all the rest is derived (ex. 2). The numbers indicate the division of the groups into sub-sections, each of which may appear independently of the rest of the group, and the analysis gives a perfect illustration of what Schoenberg conceived as "composing with tones". The heading of the sheet tells us that by this time, July 1920, Schoen-

Ex. 2



berg planned to write at least two piano works in several movements; however, the dating at the end shows 13/II-1923 [*sign.*]. There are only few minor differences from the printed edition.

Part of the same piece, op. 23 no. 4, is found in the sketch book p. 4. This is a detailed draft of the last part from bar 14 to the end, and the indications at the top give clear information: 10/II-1923. *Fortsetzung des Klavierstücks Serie I N. 4 begonnen 26/7-1920*; at the end: 13/II-1923 [*sign.*], i. e., only 14 bars were written in 1920; the rest of the piece was composed Feb. 10–13, 1923. The draft of the remaining part was made in the sketch book, and a fair copy of it was added to the 14 bars on the original sheet, ls4. This gives the clue to certain particularities of that sheet. 1) the long interim indicated by the datings, 2) the change in handwriting at the transition from bar 14 to bar 15, 3) the fact that the first part is a draft and the second part a fair copy, and 4) the fact that Schoenberg's analytical marks stop at bar 14.

The two preceding pages of Sk.V, pp. 2–3, contain a finished draft of op. 23 no. 3. The dates indicate that it was composed just before the completion of no. 4: at the top, 6. Februar 1923, at the end, 9/II-1923 [*sign.*]. There are only a few minor differences from the printed edition.

On a few remaining staves of p. 4 and on the first couple of staves on p. 5, one finds preliminary sketches of the middle section and of the beginning resp. of the Waltz, op. 23 no. 5, the latter bearing the date 13/II. The whole of this piece is written in detailed and finished draft on pp. 5–7. The tempo indication reads ♩. = 72, and the dating at the end, 17/II 1923 [*sign.*].

In addition to this, two further sheets containing fragments which may well be regarded as belonging to op. 23, were found among the unidentified papers.

Ls5 contains nine bars of a piano piece (ex. 3). This sheet is of a particular

Ex. 3



kind, 34×24½ cm, very soft, uncalendered paper, with handdrawn lines in ink. Apart from being single, it is quite similar to the double sheet 1s2a, and this kind of sheet is not found elsewhere in Schoenberg's belongings. The handwriting is the same as that on 1s2a, and the musical style is close to op. 23 no. 1; especially, bars 4–5 are similar to bars 13–17 of the latter, so, although the sheet is not dated, there is ample reason for supposing that it originates at the same time, around 1920. We shall designate the fragment op. 23 A.

The other fragment, op. 23 B (ex. 4), is contained on a sheet of ordinary,

Ex. 4



calendered paper of normal size (35½×27 cm) with printed lines, 1s6. Although there is no indication of date and the type of sheet does not furnish pertinent information in this respect, it seems reasonable to put the fragment in connection with op. 23 since it shows musical relationship to both no. 1 and A and since the handwriting clearly corresponds to that on 1s2a and 1s5.

Thus, the following evidence has been acquired:

	started	resumed	finished	according to		
A B	not later than 1920			1s5 1s6		
No. 1			July 9.1920			1s2
No. 2	July 8.1920		July 26.1920	1s1		1s3
No. 3	Feb. 6.1923		Feb. 9.1923	Sk.V2		Sk.V3
No. 4	July 26.1920	Feb. 10.1923	Feb. 13.1923	1s4 Sk.V4	Sk.V4	1s4 Sk.V4
No. 5	Feb. 13.–17. 1923		Feb. 17.1923	Sk.V 4–5		Sk.V7

Op. 24

The source problems of this opus are bit more involved than those of op. 23. Its final version consists of seven movements. In addition, two further movements evidently intended for this work were started but left unfinished. We shall designate them op. 24 A and B resp. Thus, a total of nine movements is contained in the manuscripts.

The sketches are found 1) on 30 loose sheets (ls1–30), 2) on pp. 17–40 of Sk.V, and 3) on seven pages of a small sketch book not taken into consideration by Rufer.¹³ It was used for a short time during the first part of 1922, and will be designated Sk.22. Furthermore one must consider five sheets (ls31–35) which in the 1920's were donated to the then *Preussische Staatsbibliothek* (now *Deutsche Staatsbibliothek*). This makes a total of about 90 pages of sketches and drafts for op. 24; compared to the actual length of the work, this is a very large amount for Schoenberg and, so, signifies the crucial position of this opus in his compositorial development. Its uniqueness is due not only to the novelty of compositorial technique introduced but, also, to its gay, divertimento-like mood, which is seldom encountered in the music of this master.

The movement for which the earliest sketches are found is the Variations. Ls1–4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 26, and Sk.V p. 17 contain sketches and drafts, and ls27 and 28 parts of fair copies. Ls4, which shows the final version of the theme, except for the thirty-second rests of bar 5 which are not there, bears the date of 3. VIII 1920; however this is probably not the first of the sketches. Ls1 contains first the 14-tone series of the theme and its derivations in the inverted and retrograde forms in a rather primitive rhythmical shape that was later abandoned and then, the theme in a rhythm that clearly marks an approach to the final version (ex. 5).¹⁴

Ex. 5



This sketch must probably be dated prior to August 3. The rest of the loose sheets contains sketches and drafts for the variations. Some of them show the final version; others do not. None of them are dated, but since all of them use the 14-tone series consistently, they are probably later than ls1. Only the coda is not found in its final version. Ls9, containing sketches for the coda,

13. Rufer, *Das Werk* mentions p. 117 eleven small sketch books. It is not clear whether this is one of them.

14. The writing is sketchy and indistinct. The lack of accidentals and the fact that the 14th tone looks like G rather than F can be disregarded, since on the preceding staves the tones are written very carefully. Its sketchy character is also seen in the rhythmical inconsistencies.

displays more and more radical differences from bar 72 onwards. The final version of these last five bars is found only on p. 17 of Sk.V, dated *Mödling, 11/III-1923* [sign.]. This allows for the assumption that in all its essentials, the movement was completed in 1920 and that only the last few bars were altered when, in 1923, Schoenberg completed the whole work; however, since the sheets bear no definite indication of date, this assumption can not be proved.

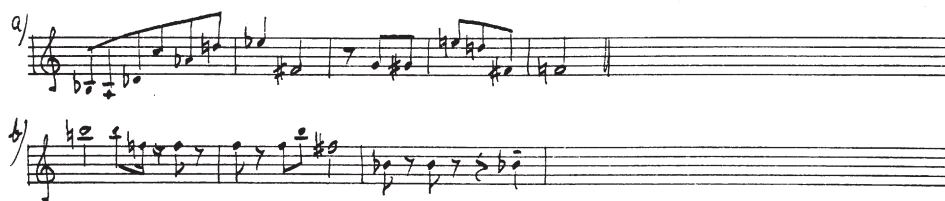
The date 3.8 1920 is also found on two sheets, ls17 and 20, which contain sketches and drafts for op. 24 A, one of the unfinished movements. Ls20 shows preliminary sketches of the main musical ideas which are then worked out in detailed draft on ls17, so one may wonder how the two sheets can bear the same date. In fact, on ls20, the date is written with a green pencil, probably afterwards, and possibly from memory, so the truth may be that the sheet is a bit older than ls17, on which the same pencil has been used throughout; however, this is conjectural.

A fair copy of the part of the piece which was completed, 39 bars, was made on ls22–23. This seems to be the first bit of the Serenade put into fair copy since on the first page the order of the instruments in the scoring is different from the rest of the score copies, namely, from top downwards: mandoline, violin, clarinet, viola, guitar, bass clarinet, 'cello; a footnote reads: *die Reihenfolge der Instrumente nicht wie hier, sondern wie auf der folgenden Seite*. On the next page, the order is adopted which is found in all the other copies and in the printed score. The transposing instruments are written as they sound, except for the guitar and the bass clarinet, which are intended to sound one octave deeper than the notation.

Op. 24 B was started about the same time: 6/VIII 1920. Sketches for this piece are found on ls7 and 14 with the date on the latter, which is doubtlessly the older of the two. The work on this movement does not seem to have proceeded as far as that on op. 24 A. Both sheets contain sketches for thematic material of a quite extended piece, but only one idea, presumably the beginning, has been worked out melodically. One must suppose that this movement was given up shortly after it was started.

Also the Dancescene was started on Aug. 6, 1920. This piece is found on pp. 26–27 and 30–36 of Sk.V, with some sketches for the *Ländler*-part on remaining staves of p. 29. At the head one finds the remark *angefangen 6/VIII 1920. Nur Bearbeitung angefangen 30/III-1923*. This information is not confirmed by any manuscript in the Schoenberg Archive, but ls31–32, two of the five sheets in the *Deutsche Staatsbibliothek*, do contain early drafts of the movement, with the date 6. VIII. 1920. Ls31 shows 18 bars of the beginning, the first nine bars being almost identical with the final version. Ls32 contains the secondary theme, bar 37–44, in the final version, and seven additional bars of continuation not found in later versions. Preliminary sketches for the main theme and what was, later, to become the *Ländler*-theme (ex. 6a,b) are found on ls19, unfortunately with no date.

Ex. 6



This sheet offers an interesting list of main ideas of four movements: *Marsch*, *Menuet*, *Sonet* and *Tanz*. In all these themes, except ex. 6b, the succession of tones is identical with that of the theme of the variations. Accordingly, the sheet tells us that at some time after the 14-tone series of the variation-theme was fixed, Schoenberg conceived the idea of constructing the thematic material of four further movements upon the same series. As we know, the idea was not carried out in the final version of the four movements. Although there is no clear evidence that the themes of the list were not conceived at a later time, it seems reasonable to assume the list as representing the original idea, which was eventually abandoned. The list, then, must probably originate at a time between the fixation of the tone series of the variation-theme, i. e. before Aug. 3, 1920, and the first indication of the final version of a theme of one of the four movements, i. e. Aug. 6, 1920 on ls31.

Ls29 contains a fair copy of 29 bars of the Dancescene in an early version, which is evidently based on the draft of ls31–32. This sheet might well have been Schoenberg's point of departure when, on March 30, 1923, he resumed the composition and remodelled the beginning. The remodelling is found on pp. 26–27 of Sk.V, which contains the first 41 bars of the final version. Then follows the finished draft of the Song, also bearing the date 30/III 1923 at the head as well as at the end. Remaining staves on p. 29 contain sketches for the melody of the *Ländler*-part of the Dancescene (bars 63–111 in the printed score); the rest of the movement, from bar 42 onwards, is written in finished draft on pp. 30–36, with the indication *beendet 7. IV. 1923 [sign.]* at the end.

The next date for one of the other movements listed on ls19 is 27/IX.1921 on ls21. This is a bundle of six sheets bound together with a thread. It contains the draft for a version of the March, which is very close to the final one but shows no trace of the original March-theme on ls19.

As for the Minuet, sketches and final draft for the last part of it, from bar 89 to the end, are contained on pp. 18–20 of Sk.V. The first 88 bars are lacking in the manuscripts of the Schoenberg Archive; sketches and draft for these are found on ls33–35, three of the five sheets in the *Deutsche Staatsbibliothek*. The starting point of the final draft on ls34 bears the date 8.10.1921; 88 bars of the composition follows, and then: *Fortsetzung siehe Skizzenbuch 1922/1923 Seite 18.*—It will be remembered that the Minuet is included

Ex. 7



in the list of *Is19*. Here, two themes are offered, a main theme based on the inversion of the series of the variation-theme (ex. 7a), and a trio-theme based on the original form. In addition to this, one of the pages of *Is21*, which otherwise contains March-sketches, is devoted to a number of progressive sketches for a melody, of which one version is shown in ex. 7b. This melody starts in the same rhythmical shape as the Minuet-theme in the list of *Is19*, but it is not built on the series of the variation-theme; however, it is evidently related to it by way of free inversion, and it is interesting to find that the final Minuet-melody is the exact inversion of this one.

The development from ex. 7a through ex. 7b to the final Minuet-melody suggests Schoenberg's reason for abandoning his original plan to derive all his themes from one tone-series: at some time before Aug. 6, 1920 the idea of an overall serial construction was already alive in his mind, but it seems that he did not yet feel able to carry it out in a strictly consistent way, at any rate, not on the basis of this particular tone-series. It should be noticed that neither did he venture to force his plan through, nor did he give up the idea of a strong thematic relationship between the two of the movements.

Sketches and drafts for the Sonnet are found on pp. 2 and 15–19 of *Sk. 22*, on *Is15*, 16 and 19, and on pp. 21–24 of *Sk.V*. At the head of the finished draft on p. 21 of *Sk.V*, Schoenberg wrote: *Petrarca Sonett 217 "O könnt ich je der Rach. . . 16. III. 1923 (skizziert 8/X 1922)*. Actually, *Is16*, containing some early sketches for the piece, bears that date, which is, also, found on p. 15 of *Sk.22* at the head of sketches of the same kind. Probably it is correct to consider this the starting date of the actual work on the movement; however, it is possible to trace the idea a little further back. Already p. 2 of *Sk.22* has: *Petrarca 217. O könnt ich je der Rach an ihr genesen*, together with a few loose sketches which, although faintly, show the basic idea of the music (ex. 8). It does not represent a twelve-tone series, but it does contain, even rather emphatically, the motif of major second down / minor second up and its inversion, which was to remain a chief characteristic of the music for

Ex. 8



this movement. The date of this initial sketch must be between May 31, 1922, the day this sketch book was first taken into use, and Oct. 8 of p. 15. In that pp. 3–14 are filled with other sketches, it is reasonable to consider the date closer to the former than to the latter.

Of course, the idea of setting music to this text, and of using it as movement of op. 24, is even earlier than that. As already mentioned, ls19, which played an important role in the discussion of the previous movements, and which is believed to have originated before Aug. 6, 1920, lists a theme for the Sonnet (ex. 9). It does not show much melodic connection with the final theme, as

Ex. 9



it is based on the tone-series of the variations, but it does exhibit the rhythmical shape of the instrumental prelude exactly as it is found in the final version.

The sketches show that Schoenberg devoted a considerable amount of attention to the work on this piece, which in his letter to Slonimsky, he mentioned as being one of the first examples of a “real composition with twelve tones”. The initial idea had to go through several metamorphoses until the final shape was reached. As is often seen in the work of Schoenberg, once the final conception of the basic idea was arrived at, the whole piece was written in one large breath. The first sketches on p. 21 of Sk.V, dated 16. III. 1923, show the final version of all the elements, except the tone-series; after that, one finds a few, barely legible sketches based on the new, and final, tone-series—it makes a decisive change in the music, although it differs only slightly from the previous one—and then the whole of the movement in a complete and finished draft on pp. 21–25. At the end: 29/IV 1923 [sign.].

The *Lied*, bearing the date of 30/III 1923 both at the head and at the end, is worked out on pp. 28–29 of SK.V. Since this piece was not included in the list of ls19, the idea of including this movement must have occurred at a later time, but it is not possible to say exactly when. True, three bars of the guitar accompaniment are found on a remaining stave of ls29, which contains the unfinished fair copy of the Dancescene, but this fact is not particularly conclusive. As it will be remembered, the *Lied* was written between the final shaping and the finishing of the Dancescene, which covers pp. 26–27 and 30–36 of Sk.V, so one can easily imagine ls29, with the previous version of that movement, being close at hand when Schoenberg wrote the *Lied* on pp. 28–29.

That the finale was evidently written at the last, is clear from the fact that it quotes material from several of the other movements. On p. 37 of Sk.V, Schoenberg wrote: VII Satz angefangen 11/IV. 1923. Marschtempo des ersten Satzes. Finale (Potpourri). His specific indication that it was started at that

date should be considered trustworthy, considering that in many other cases he did not fail to give information if an earlier date was, in fact, the starting point. The draft goes through pp. 38–40, and the date at the end reads, *beendet 14/IV. 1923* [sign.].

The chronological information gathered from the sketches of op. 24 can be shown in this way:

	started	resumed	finished	according to		
A	Aug. 3.1920			1s17,20		
B	Aug. 6.1920			1s14		
Marsch	Sept. 27.1921*)		Sept. 27.1921	1s21		1s21
Menuett	Oct. 8.1921*)		March 16.1923	1s34		Sk.V19, 20
Variat.	before A		March 11.1923	1s1,4		Sk.V17
Sonett	Oct. 8.1922*)	March 16.1923	March 29.1923	1s16 Sk.V21	Sk.V21	Sk.V25
Tranzsc.	Aug. 6.1920*)	March 30.1923	April 7.1923	Sk.V26	Sk.V26	Sk.V36
Lied	March 30.1923		March 30.1923	Sk.V28		Sk.V29
Finale	Apr. 11.1923		April 14.1923	Sk.V37		Sk.V40

*) A previous version before Aug. 6. 1920.

Op. 25

The chronology of the Suite is less envolved than that of the Serenade. The material is found on sex loose sheets and on pp. 8–16 of Sk.V.

Schoenberg's statement, "there were some movements of the "Suite for Piano" which I composed in the fall of 1921", is clearly evidenced by the manuscripts. These movements are Prelude and Intermezzo, the first being, also, completed in that year. A complete and finished draft of the Prelude is contained on 1s3, with dates at both the beginning and the end, *Traunkirchen 24 VII 1921* and *Traunkirchen 29. Juli 1921* [sign.], resp. It shows only a few minor differences from the printed edition.

Of the Intermezzo, only ten bars seem to originate at this time. The problems of this piece are somewhat similar to those of op. 23 no. 4.

The whole piece is contained on 1s4 with the date *25/7. 1921* at the beginning, and at the end: *Abgeschrieben 26/II. 1923* [sign.]. Although it is written quite neatly in ink, there are still some differences in writing to be noted. In the first ten bars there is a great number of erasures; in the remaining bars there is none. The handwriting in the two parts is not so strikingly different as that on op. 23 1s4, but apart from the fact that the first part gives the impression of a draft and the remaining part, that of a copy, one can notice that the cross bars are written in two slightly different ways in the two parts. While there is no pencil draft of the first ten bars to be found, a draft of the rest of the piece is contained on pp. 8–9 of Sk.V. At the

head of p. 8: *Fortsetzung des Klavierstücks II Serie 2; begonnen 25/VII 1921, fortgesetzt 19. II. 1923*, and on p. 9 at the end: *beendet 23/II [sign.]*. Therefore, after completing the piece in Sk.V, Schoenberg made a copy of the remainder in continuation of the ten bars on ls4; thus, the initial date on this sheet refers only to the ten bars, and the date and the statement at the end represent the remaining bars.

On ls4, in addition to the beginning date, one finds in black pencil *II Serie № 4* (originally 2), and in red pencil *Op. 25*. This emphasizes the assumption that from the very beginning, Schoenberg had two suites, or *Serien*, in mind. The *№ 4* would indicate that, also, in 1921 he planned to place two movements between the Prelude and the Intermezzo, but since no sketches for such movements originating in 1921 are found, and since, also, Sk.V reads *II Serie 2*, the change from 2 to 4 might well have taken place after the Intermezzo was completed in Feb. 1923.

Drafts for the rest of the Suite are without exception found in Sk.V, all of them carefully dated at the beginning, as well as at the end, so the chronology of this work does not offer any further specific problems. It is shown in the following scheme:

	started	resumed	finished	according to		
Präludium	July 24.1921		July 29.1921	1s3		1s3
Gavotte	Feb. 23.1923		Feb. 27.1923	Sk.V10		Sk.V10
Musette	Feb. 23.1923		March 2.1923	Sk.V11		Sk.V11
Intermezzo	July 25.1921	Feb. 19.1923	Feb. 23.1923	1s4	Sk.V8	Sk.V9
Menuett	Feb. 23.1923		March 3.1923	Sk.V12		Sk.V13
Trio	March 3.1923		March 3.1923	Sk.V13		Sk.V13
Gigue	March 2.1923		March 8.1923	Sk.V14		Sk.V16

An interesting and unexpected fact about these dates is the evidence that Schoenberg finished composition of the Suite (Sk. V 16) before he started to resume and complete the Serenade (Sk. V 17).

Op. 26

Sketches and draft for the Wood Wind Quintet are found in Sk.V, covering pp. 41–113, and on five loose sheets. The sheets, interesting as they are because they contain a great many serial manipulations, do not seem to interfere with the chronology evidenced by the dates in the sketch book. The drafts here give the impression that the four movements were composed almost simultaneously, as was the last part of the Suite.

On the very same day that the Serenade was finished, April 14, 1923, Schoenberg, on Sk.V 41, worked out sketches for the first movement of the quintet. On the next page, a detailed draft of the actual movement, headed by the date *21/IV 1923*, is started; however, it seems that only the first four

bars were written, as a sketch, on that day since at bar five one finds the indication: *am 1. Mai 1923 hier angefangen*, so on that day the composer decided to work out the idea sketched on April 21 and started the actual work on the continuation which, at first, goes as far as p. 45. P. 46 under the dating of 10/V lists the main ideas of each of the following movements, a listing which is not unlike that on ls19 of op. 24, discussed above. Pp. 47–49 continue the first movement; on p. 50 the scherzo starts, but no date is given; p. 51 has further sketches of the first movement, and on p. 52 the andante starts on 15/V 1923, but this is not the final version. The first movement continues through pp. 53–54, and on pp. 55–56 the first 35 bars of the finale are contained: The first movement is completed on pp. 57–63, and contains the date 30/V 1923 at the end. P. 63, then, brings the beginning of the final version of the andante,—and in such a way it continues throughout the work. A chart will better clarify the development:

Page		Date	
		head	end
41	Preliminary sketches for 1. mov.	Apr. 14.1923	
42– 45	1. mov. in draft, bar 1–47	Apr. 21. (May 1.)	
46	Prelim. sketches for 2., 3., 4. mov.s	May 10.1923	
47– 49	1. mov., bar 48–93		
50	2. mov. in draft, bar 1–35		
51	1. mov., bar 94–103		
52	3. mov. in prelim. draft, ca. 14 bars	May 15.1923	
53– 54	1. mov., bar 104–133		
55– 56	4. mov. in draft, bar 1–35		
57– 63	1. mov., bar 133–277 (end)		May 30.1923
64– 66	3. mov. in final draft, bar 1–33	June 1.1923	
67– 85	2. mov. bar 36–419 (end)		July 15.1923
86– 87	3. mov., sketches for bar 33 ff		
88	3. mov., bar 34–39		
89– 98	4. mov., bar 36–210		
99–105	3. mov., bar 40–142 (end)		Aug. 17.1924
106–113	4. mov., bar 211–359 (end)		Aug. 26.1924

The last date actually reads: *beendet 26/VII 1924*, but since the first diget of 1924 stands under the upper cross bar of VII, one may deduce that 26/VIII is the intended date. Errors like this are not uncommon in Schoenberg's manuscripts and letters. If the last date was earlier than the previous one, Aug. 17, 1924, it would be difficult to explain how Schoenberg could know that the third movement would end on p. 105, when he started the continuation of the finale on p. 106.

It is reasonable to think that the composition was stopped temporarily after July 15, 1923 (p. 85). P. 86 contains sketches and p. 87 a draft of the continuation of the third movement from bar 34 onwards. The draft is a preliminary version of bars 34–40, which has been ruled out, and only p. 88 con-

tains the final version of bars 34–39, i. e. the true continuation from p. 66. The obstacles in continuing a section already started, which is, otherwise, not characteristic of this work, may well indicate a lapse of time between p. 85 and p. 86. There are only few loose sketches on pp. 89–113, and one gets the impression that these pages were written continuously and, to judge from the handwriting, in some haste.

This assumption coincides with biographical evidence; in the summer of 1923, Schoenberg's first wife, Mathilde, grew seriously ill, and in the autumn of that year she died. On January 5, 1924, Schoenberg in a letter to Zemlinsky wrote, *Ich habe noch nicht angefangen zu komponieren . . .* Mrs. Gertrud Schoenberg remembers that in the late summer of 1924 Schoenberg was very busy finishing the work, in order that it might be ready for its first performance on his 50th birthday, September 13, 1924.¹⁵ On September 27 1924 Schoenberg wrote to Louis Fleury, the French flutist, . . . *mein Bläserquintett ist leider erst Ende August fertig worden. Die Uraufführung musste ich aus dringenden Gründen dem augenblicklich stattfindenden Musikfest der Stadt Wien überlassen.*

A comparison of the four schemes already presented will give a fair idea of when each movement was composed and of its chronological relationships within the work to which it belongs; however, as three of them were not composed in chronological order, a co-stellation of all points of information in a chronological chart is needed for presenting the development of Schoenberg's musical-textural thought during the last period of transition into the twelve-tone technique. See p. 108.

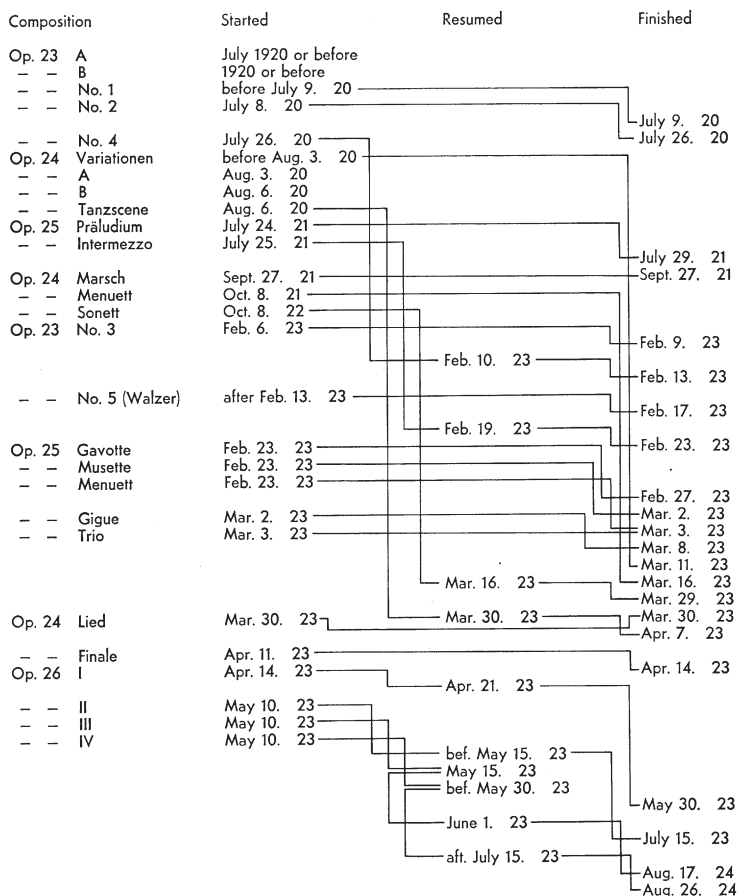
The danger of applying a chart like this is primarily that certain, as well as less certain, facts are pointed out in exactly the same manner, and this may lead to false conclusions if the value of each point is not rigorously kept in mind.

For the investigation of Schoenberg's development of thought, the starting dates are the most important ones, but even these should not be overestimated, for when is a composition actually started?—probably at the time when the idea of it is conceived in the composer's mind, which may not be identical with the date of the first sketches; furthermore, one can not tell the time, when an idea ceases to be an *abstract conception* and becomes a conception of an actual composition, a consideration which must be kept in mind when a method of composition is to be traced.

I shall mention two instances of obvious uncertainty with regard to the compositions under consideration here. From op. 23 Is1 we have reasonably clear evidence that in July 1920 the plan for writing two suites for piano was ripe in Schoenberg's mind, and sketches for op. 23 tell us that this work was one of the two. But we are not in possession of sketches for any part of op. 25

15. According to oral account to the present writer.

CHART OF CHRONOLOGY



earlier than July 1921. The question then is: did Schoenberg in July 1920 have any definite idea of the textural peculiarities of the Prelude or of the Intermezzo of op. 25?—If so, then this would signify that the composition of these movements was actually “started” at that time, an important point when we consider the specific technique applied there. Or did he simply have the idea that some suite of piano pieces other than op. 23 was going to be composed? Neither question can be answered from the material available.

The other instance: From op. 23 ls2 it was evidenced that no. 1 of this opus was finished on July 9, 1920, one day after the preliminary version of no. 2 was written, but it was not possible to determine any starting date either from indication or from deduction. Now, in an unpublished paper entitled “Composition with Twelve Tones”¹⁶ the following statement is found:

16. An article written in 1946 or later, in the Schoenberg Archive filed as no. 173 of *Artikel und Essays*.

"Before I wrote my first strict composition with twelve tones—in 1921—I had still to pass through several stages. This can be noticed in two works which I had partly written preceding the Piano Suite opus 25, partly even in 1919, the Five Piano Pieces opus 23 and the Serenade opus 24. In both these works there are parts composed in 1922 and 1923 which are strict twelve-tone compositions. But the rest represents the beforementioned stages."

Aside from not conforming exactly to the letter to Slonimsky, the most startling point of information here is the statement that parts of op. 23 and 24 were written as early as 1919. A whole series of questions arises. First: is the statement irrefutable—there is a lapse of at least 25 years between the paper and the time discussed. And if so, did the sections referred to only exist in Schoenberg's mind in that year, or were they actually written down? If this is true, could it be the sketches op. 23 A and B, or op. 23 no. 1—or perhaps the variation-theme of op. 24 (this we know occupied Schoenberg greatly) all of which we have no starting dates for. It may be that unknown sketches will emerge and answer these questions, and perhaps some future investigation of Schoenberg's letters will reveal more decisive information. At present only a question mark can be put to these points of uncertainty.

There are other limitations to the conclusions which can be drawn from the material presented here. The fact that this investigation is only partial, i. e. that, with a few exceptions, it is concerned only with sketches for works which were eventually finished and published, should not be forgotten. The reason for this lies in the state of the material at hand. Many unfinished works and sketches for works which are not even found in draft are among Schoenberg's papers. Although few of them are dated, it appears from the handwriting that a remarkably large part of them must originate between 1914 and 1925. The introduction of this extensive material, including identification of each item and determination of their chronological pattern, would by far exceed the proper limitations of a study of this kind.

The reason for presenting the study, in spite of the incompleteness inherent in it, is the fact that it does cast light upon a number of hitherto unsolved problems.

First of all, Schoenberg's statement in his letter to Slonimsky becomes clear. With reference to the method of composition with twelve tones, he mentions the Sonnet of op. 24 as *one of the first works written strictly in harmony with this method*; however, it was not the very first; *there were some movements of the "Suite for Piano" which I composed in the fall of 1921 . . .*, to be quite exact, the Prelude and the first ten bars of the Intermezzo were composed in the last part of July 1921. And one does not have to wonder why he did not mention the Waltz of op. 23; it was composed at least half a year later, and so there is no reason to suggest that he did not consider it a twelve-tone composition.

This, moreover, helps to give an idea of how Schoenberg interpreted his term "composition with twelve tones".

The technique applied in the Sonnet can roughly be described as follows: The whole piece is built on a twelve-tone series as a basic structure in such a way that the voice presenting the text displays continuous recapitulations of the series without transposition and without serial derivations of any kind. Ingeniously, Schoenberg has made use of the circumstance that each line of a sonnet contains eleven syllables, by setting one tone to each syllable, the result being a kind of "rotation" of the series as it proceeds through the fourteen lines—first line starting on the first tone, second line on the twelfth, third line on the eleventh and so forth, the last two lines being serially identical with the first two, but certainly not rhythmically and melodically identical. The instrumental accompaniment constantly fills out the twelve-tone space by, against small groups of tones in the vocal line, setting the remaining tones of the twelve-tone total in the accompaniment. The distribution of the remaining tones varies from a strictly serial arrangement to a rather free setting. Therefore, regarding the composition as a whole, the twelve-tone series has definitely structural rather than motivic significance.

Strikingly different, from a technical viewpoint, is the texture of the Prelude and of the Intermezzo of op. 25. Three basic sets of four tones each, add up to a total of twelve different tones. The three derivations of all sets—inversion, retrograde and retrograde inversion—are applied, all forms in the original pitch as well as in one transposition, namely that to the diminished fifth. Every detail of the music is made out of statements and combinations of the 24 four-tone sets thus obtained. Generally they are kept well apart so that, in fact, the music is based on three sets of four tones rather than on one series of twelve tones. This distinction, few-tone set contra twelve-tone series, is technically decisive since the order of the tones of a few-tone set is of little importance for the recognition of that set, whereas a twelve-tone series entirely loses its identity when the tones are arbitrarily rearranged.

In the Prelude and the Intermezzo of op. 25, the four-tone sets are motivic constituents of paramount importance. They are motivically obligatory since not only parts of the texture which are actually appreciated as such, but every detail, vertical and horizontal, strictly speaking, is made out of the three sets and their derivations in not more than two pitch positions. Of course, it is not accidental that the three sets add up to the total of twelve different tones (one understands that this is the reason that Schoenberg considered these movements as written strictly in harmony with the twelve-tone method); however, few interferences have yet been drawn from the fact that they do constitute a twelve-tone series. Such interferences were to be drawn only in movements originating in 1923; this will be commented upon below.

So far, it is obvious that Schoenberg's statement to Slonimsky is clear and correct. The other technique of "composing with tones"—which elsewhere he

has called “working with the tones of a motif”¹⁷—is clearly at work in compositions started in 1920. The mere name of the method implies that the tone groups are motivically obligatory. In some respects it is similar to the three-times-four-tones-set method of op. 25, but the application is far less strict and is closer to the methods of thematic development used by composers of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries—including Schoenberg, himself, in his earlier works. This technique, the essence of which can be described as the adherence to basic motivic and, especially, intervallic units of the main idea of which numerous aspects are shown throughout the whole piece, is an obvious and, I believe, essentially unconscious developmental outgrowth of the classic-romantic technique of instrumental writing. One finds it constantly at work from the beginning of Schoenberg’s career as a composer. It gains prominence almost in constant proportion to the loss of prominence of tonality as a structural means of form. Although unconsciously applied by the composer,¹⁸ it is fully developed, yet almost inaudible, in the orchestra-liered “Sera-phita”, op. 22 no. 1, and still it furnishes a musical-textural meaningfulness to the music, equal to the meaningfulness of declamation and mood-expression of the text on which it is based.

In the compositions started in 1920, the technique of “working with the tones of a motif” has become conscious to the composer and is, now, better described in terms of “composing with tones”. The fine distinction between the two ways of verbal expression can be utilized for analytical purposes. Schoenberg’s own analysis of the first fourteen bars of op. 23 no. 4 on *Is4* of that opus evidences the awareness with which the technique is now employed.

It is possible to interpret Schoenberg’s statement to Slonimsky as depicting a fairly steady evolution from an intensive development-technique, the “working with the tones of a motif”, through “composing with tones”, then through the technique of three four-tone sets, adding up to a total of twelve, which, together with their serial derivations, are both motivically obligatory and strictly fixed in pitch except for octave displacement, and finally leading to composition of a melodic line by means of a fixed and motivically non-obligatory twelve-tone series, which is continuously restated without derivations or transposition and which is set against an accompaniment which fills out the twelve-tone space, but is less strictly dependent on the series, namely the Sonnet. From here, one could then imagine a transition to the technique of the Wood Wind Quintet, which will presently be described.

The development, however, did not proceed so directly. From the manuscripts it is clear that the variation-theme played an important role in Schoenberg’s musical thinking around 1920 and that in that year he planned to base the

17. The article “Composition with Twelve Tones” already referred to. The Statement immediately follows the quotation on p. 109.

18. According to Schoenberg’s unpublished analysis of op. 22, broadcast by *Frankfurter Rundfunk*, Feb. 21, 1932.

thematic material of five—at that time possibly all—movements of op. 24 on the tone-series of that theme. It is a fourteen-tone series of eleven different tones, and in the theme of the variations it is stated in two forms, the original and the retrograde. It is used as a motivically highly obligatory series. All the many early sketches which are based on it display a remarkably well developed serial technique at an unexpectedly early time. It is significant that it seems to disregard any twelve-tone consideration—or is it that, in witty contradistinction to tonality, which expressly stresses one tone as the tonic center, this series just as expressly understates one tone by leaving it out? In the variations it is applied both horizontally, as is the twelve-tone series of the vocal line of the Sonnet, and according to a tone-group technique akin to “composing with tones” and to the technique of op. 25 as well; however, it is also applied in a motivically definitely non-obligatory way, namely according to a method of constant distribution of serial tones in different parts of the texture, similar to the serially strict parts of the instrumental accompaniment of the Sonnet. As distinct from the horizontal and the tone-group techniques, we shall call this the vertical technique. This technique is clearly seen at work in the fourth variation. Ex. 10 shows a three-part distribution of the series and its derivations as found on op. 24 ls 1, i. e. before the final rhythmical shaping of the theme (!). Schoenberg’s designations, T, TU, TUK and TK stand for original, inversion, retrograde inversion and retrograde, resp. From this distribution, the way in which the fourth variation is constructed becomes clear, i. e., the clarinet follows the retrograde upper voice, then the original middle voice, then the inversion bottom voice and, finally, the retrograde inversion middle voice. In the other parts a similar procedure can be observed.

This coexistence of untransposed series and vertical technique is found again in the accompaniment of the Sonnet, and then in the Waltz of op. 23, which is based exclusively on this technique, and even in a still more restricted way

Ex. 10

The image displays four staves of musical notation, labeled T, TU, TK, and TUK, representing different derivations of a series. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals, illustrating the distribution of the series and its derivations.

than in the variations since it is based almost exclusively on the original form of the series; only in the coda bar 104–109 is the retrograde form introduced. The variety obtained under these circumstances of utmost restraint stands among marvels in composition.

The change in the application of the four-tone sets of op. 25, to which I referred on p. 110, takes place at the transition from Minuet to Trio. What happens is that the three four-tone sets are transformed into two six-tone sets, which is technically significant since it presupposes the recognition of the four-tone sets as constituting a twelve-tone continuum. The chart of chronology tells us that this transition was made through the Gigue. In this movement, for the first time, the three sets of four tones are not kept apart, but plainly put beside each other. First, they are employed in the order in which they appear as a twelve-tone continuum; however, later—as early as bar 5 ff—the same freedom of rearranging the tones, which in previous movements has been applied to the four-tone groups, is now applied to the twelve-tone continuum, the result being that the relevance of connection with the structural basis is now little more than a purely academic matter. Here is a *demonstratio ad sensus* of the loss of identity which occurs in a twelve-tone structure, once the order of tones is confused.¹⁹

It has not been possible to determine how much of the Gigue was composed when Schoenberg started composition of the Trio; however, there is no doubt that in the Trio, the transformation of the three four-tone sets into a twelve-tone continuum has been utilized in a way more in harmony with the previous movements than it was the case of the Gigue. The development had been predicted in the later part of the Minuet where—especially around bar 25—the four-tone sets are not kept apart in the same careful manner as previously. Referring to the discussion on p. 105 it must be noted that there is no technical objection to the assumption that the idea of the Gavotte and the Musette was already conceived in the summer of 1921, i. e. at the same time as the Prelude and the Intermezzo, although the indications in Sk.V make such an assumption highly improbable. But even lacking the dates of the Trio and the Gigue, it would be possible from purely technical considerations to rule out the possibility of these movements having been conceived in 1921. Although they do not introduce any further transposition of the basic structure, a feature that distinguishes them from most of op. 23 and 24 and from op. 26, they still represent a development from the previous movements. Perhaps their technical peculiarities are partly due to some difficulty in applying so limited a basic material for so extended a work. In fact, this was the last time Schoenberg restrained himself from the possibilities of free transposition.

In the Wood Wind Quintet, Schoenberg, for the first time in this group of

19. By this statement nothing is said about the inner structural quality of the piece. In fact, combinations of perfect and diminished fifths make out the basic structural idea, and very consistently so, but this device comes from outside the series.

works, succeeded in applying one technique consistently throughout a whole work of several movements. Here he reached the goal for which he had strived, since his music had been doomed to aforistic shortness by the expressionistic style, viz. a method of constructing large forms without sacrificing either atonality or the possibility of considerable tightness of expression. The technique can be roughly described as the consistent and exclusive foundation of the texture on one specific twelve-tone series by way of horizontal and/or group-technical and/or vertical utilization of the rectograde as well as the retrograde courses of its original as well as inverted forms in any transposition and in any combination not involving coincidence of simultaneous octaves.

Since this technique became a model for later compositions in the twelve-tone idiom—although, of course, he developed the technique, Schoenberg never since introduced any material change to the method—and since each of the previous techniques briefly discussed above in one way or another contributed something to this final one, I hesitate to apply the term dodecaphonic technique to any of the earlier ones. Although Schoenberg, himself, considered all of op. 25 as well as the Sonnet and, doubtlessly, the Waltz to be “written strictly in harmony with this method”, I find theoretical reasons for reserving the term dodecaphony for op. 26 and subsequent works in the twelve-tone idiom.

Schoenberg’s road to the dodecaphonic technique—or rather its final steps—has thus been traced through the wilderness of intermingling techniques and dates of op. 23–25. A presentation of a detailed analysis of all of the 23 movements would have exceeded the scope of this study; however, the few aspects called to attention above, will suffice in throwing some light on the procedure.

The “composing with tones” occasionally using some transposition, and a more or less serial technique without transposition, both of them motivically obligatory, seem to represent the preliminary stage. The motivically non-obligatory application of serial structures is for the first time seen sporadically in the variations of op. 24, then in the Sonnet, especially in the vocal line, and technically immensely enriched it reappears in the Waltz.

It is of minor importance whether a series of the motivically obligatory kind with the possibility of transposition contains twelve tones or not, whereas a motivically non-obligatory series which is there in order to furnish a set order of fixed pitches and which, accordingly, can not be transposed, must necessarily contain all twelve tones, each of them only once, for the sake of atonality; therefore, the series of the Sonnet and of the Waltz are twelve-tone series, and therefore the series of the variation-theme and of the basic structures of op. 23 nos. 1–4 are not twelve-tone series—they might well have been, but there is no necessity for them to be twelve-tone series.

A third approach, a middle-way between the two main roads just described, is evidenced by the three four-tone sets of the Suite. The fact that they add

up to twelve, although they are motivically obligatory and closely connected with "composing with tones", allows the composer to eliminate the possibility of transposition, except the one to the diminished fifth which may have been introduced here, because the basic sets were to furnish the structural foundation of the whole of the multipartite work. The same circumstance, however, the adding up to the total of twelve, eventually allowed Schoenberg to change three times four into two times six, by regarding the tone-groups as a twelve-tone continuum.

By means of this, and with the accomplishments of the previous techniques kept in mind, the road was paved for the final technical formulation of composition with twelve tones: the dodecaphonic technique, which was then, for the first time, employed in the Wood Wind Quintet.