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Wagnerian Aesthetics as Expressionist Foundations of Alban Berg's Music and the Russian Silver Age

Vanja Ljubibratić

When looking at the structures of ideas that span different epochs, it is necessary to recognize how cultural aesthetics evolve and yield new paradigms that are in small or large parts indebted to preceding trends and tenets. Indeed, cultural movements do not spring fully formed and conscious like Minerva from the skull of Jupiter, but manifest over a generally indeterminate duration of time which is often necessitated by a desire to dismantle and create anew. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine a specific type of change that shared many conceptual underpinnings, but that was manipulated and adapted to reflect the contemporary morals of the cultural ideologies in which the relevant, older structures were used as inspiration for creating and exploring that which was unprecedented. In its most rudimentary essence, the type of change to be investigated will be one that moves from an external cultural and social representation of motives and actions to one that focuses on the inner psychology of the individual artist and the multitude of emotions that are associated with a different perception of reality; one that is abstract and distorted.

The study will explore how Richard Wagner and his aesthetic theories were the basis on which Alban Berg and Russian artists and historians of the Silver Age interpreted and appropriated the Wagnerian paradigm to express what they felt were the most authentic representations of their inner truths. The details of Wagner's own theoretical adaptations will be observed to establish an awareness of the moral conflicts that he endured in order to reach a state of being that was to remain his indisputable personal belief for the rest of his life. The Russian cultural scene at the end of the nineteenth century will then be presented in order to discern how and why Wagnerian ideologies had become the catalyst that the Russians needed to break with old and no longer viable aesthetic paradigms. An appraisal will be made of the two major cultural factions in Russia at this time – the aesthetes and the symbolists – who adapted Wagner to forge their new path towards inner enlightenment.

The present article argues that like the Russians, Alban Berg also looked to Wagner as the ideological foundation on which he built both his socio-aesthetic beliefs and personal morality. Berg's Wagnerian adaptations were achieved in his opera *Wozzeck*, and his personal ethicality was seen most profoundly in his second opera *Lulu*. *Wozzeck* was portrayed through the dark, psychological distortions of reality that found their conceptual voice in the cultural movement of Expressionism. The main essence of this study is

organized around the tenets of Expressionism; however, it is necessary to first present a depiction of the importance that Berg and the Russians placed on Wagner in order to establish a context for how they then turned his ideologies into Expressionist representations. Therefore, an analysis will be presented that demonstrates why Wagner was seen as a forerunner of the Expressionist movement in his capacity for conveying emotional realities that reflect inner psyches, which are often steeped in anguish and conflict.

The following section will illustrate the strong Expressionist tendencies and the direct or indirect allusions to Wagner that the Silver Age Russians Wassily Kandinsky and Viacheslav Ivanov expressed characterizing the extent to which the composer had permeated their aesthetic perceptions towards their own art and moral ideology. The most important section, which then follows, shows the nature of Berg's Expressionist stage directions in *Wozzeck*. Then Russian theories on *Wozzeck* will be analysed, based on the writings of early Soviet musicologists; they were brought up on the Silver Age aesthetics derived from Wagner and saw very clearly in *Wozzeck* the Expressionist essence of inner turmoil which they all associated with Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. Finally, a detailed account of events leading up to and including the Leningrad *Wozzeck* premiere emphasizes the significance with which Berg's opera penetrated Russian society. This overall argument that started with Wagner's desire to instigate social change will seek to demonstrate how the ideals, inherent in what would be known as Expressionism, were, in various forms, evident in the collective consciousness of Wagner, Berg, and the Russians associated with the Silver Age, and how it was all derived from and indebted to Wagnerian ideologies.

Russian Wagnerism

For the first half of his life, Wagner was a left-wing revolutionary who led a popular revolt in Dresden in 1849 against the political establishment to bring social reforms so as to better establish art in people's everyday life. He did that by attempting to destroy every vestige of the unfavourable social perceptions towards art and every institution associated with those principles. Europe had encountered a sweep of socialist ideologies that had manifested itself in several mini-revolutions that engulfed the Continent in 1848. By 1849, the revolutionary zeal had not dissipated, and Wagner had strategically allied himself with Europe's leading anarchist, Mikhail Bakunin – taking up arms alongside him in the Dresden uprising that he had orchestrated that year. These revolutionary ideas that Wagner held maintained that society as a unified entity was both evil and corrupt and that the primary example of this is the marketability of art to satisfy capitalistic desires. This act would subsequently degenerate the essence of art just as had ultimately happened to the people of ancient Greece which was Wagner's ideal society.

Following the repercussions of his failed uprising, Wagner had experienced a profound existential crisis in the form of socio-political disenchantment which led to a complete personal self-reassessment. Wagner had come to the realization that he could

not change society the way he had envisioned with his present set of morals pertaining to humanity and art. Since he saw that there was no possibility for a revolutionary change in society and politics, there was no hope for his art achieving the future he had intended. This event was the personal catalyst that allowed Wagner to be particularly receptive to the philosophy of Schopenhauer. Following his first introduction to the philosopher's texts in 1854, Wagner would famously shift his entire morality from that of a left-wing revolutionary to a metaphysical spiritualist. The appeal of Schopenhauer was particularly strong because the philosopher crystallized ideals that Wagner knew that he himself possessed, but which were nebulous constructions to him. Schopenhauer granted him full clarity, and Wagner never again deviated from this ideological paradigm.

Similarly, the artistic and intellectual circles in Russia did the same with Wagner in that they adapted the composer's theories and aesthetics to bring clarity and direction to their own ideological archetypes. Once Russia had reached the same existential crossroads that Wagner had faced decades earlier – fomented in a similar crucible of moral unrest – they needed to determine a new and authentic doctrine that reflected the tides of change that were washing over the collective psyche.

Within the cultural framework of the Russian Silver Age, from 1890 to 1917, Wagner's ideology was essentially partitioned in two halves: his left-wing theories that centred on revolution, culture, and *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which were adapted by Russian aesthetes, and his post-revolutionary Schopenhauerian ideals of abstract mysticism, renunciation, and metaphorical religiosity that were adapted by the symbolists. Russian artists and intellectuals at this time were looking to find meaning in profound abstractions of the empirical world through psychology and spirituality. Wagner was particularly relevant because Russians saw within his art and ideology the dichotomy between the empirical and the metaphysical, and it reflected their own desires to understand the divisions that exist within the human psyche.¹ In their view, 'they admired Wagner's aesthetic treatment of internal conflict and moral dilemmas and marveled at his ability to express emotional states, to appeal to all the senses, to transport his audience to other worlds.'²

The Revolution of 1905 ushered in the need for new aesthetics; old and traditional cultural paradigms were seen as being outdated in the collective fervour that had gripped the nation's perspective against ideologies that no longer seemed viable under a climate of social and moral change. The Ballets Russes were a central institution in Russia that instigated the 'Russification of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*'.³ The company had embraced the Wagnerian penchant for appropriating Germanic mythology to propel narrative designs. The ballet endeavoured to do the same, but with a markedly Russian

1 David C. Large and William Weber (eds.), *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 198–202.

2 Ibid. 202.

3 Ibid. 209.

emphasis. In Wagner's literal concept of artistic unification, the ballet had sought to 'Russify' and embolden all levels of production, including dance, staging, and costumes, beyond just the musical and narrative aspects.

Concurrently, the symbolists were more focused on the figurative qualities of Wagner's music, and how they heard in it 'cosmic harmonies, the sounds of nature, the soul's inner depths, the divine in all creation'.⁴ They came to view Wagner as a proponent of mystical religiosity, and used his musical imagery to derive their own aesthetic theories of death and what may lie beyond.⁵ It is of vital importance to also note that following the 1905 Revolution, Wagner's prose texts were all translated into Russian within a short time, and voraciously read by his devotees, stimulating a literary outpouring of articles and analyses that saturated into the Russian consciousness as an addendum to the music of concert and stage performances. Ultimately, both the aesthetes and symbolists endorsed Wagner directly and indirectly because they identified with his position to rebel against constricting social structures that were centred on bourgeois capitalism. This became the principle tenet from which all subsequent ideologies were derived by the Russians. After all, as Wagner and Marx agree, society needs to be built on a self-serving communal bedrock on which new humanistic ideas can be projected upon.

Berg's Wagnerian Affinities

The desire to forge a new aesthetic path that would reflect a fundamental social paradigm shift in Russia was seen as being attempted by Wagner in the past. Alban Berg represented a further step in the evolution of aesthetic innovation, this time through Expressionist representation and reaction to the moral sensibilities that many artists felt were destroyed up to and during World War I, resulting in an abstraction of a dark and desolate realism. Therefore, it stands to reason that the metaphorical conception of the Bergian aesthetic was warmly received in the Soviet Union, because the Russians were already receptive to the use of music, and in particular German opera, as a catalyst for depicting reactionary ideals that they identified with.

Throughout his formative years and career, Berg was always acutely aware of his musical influences and from where his inspirations originated. It has been widely noted that Berg's music is an autobiographical representation primarily acting as an expressive impetus for his identity. Berg's lifelong devotion to Wagner manifested itself through not only musical quotations and allusions but also through romanticized idealizing, through which he had arguably chosen to tailor his personal (amorous) life choices in similar ways that Wagner had during his period of composing *Tristan und Isolde*. As Silvio J. dos Santos and many others have noted, one of Berg's most challenging points of reconciliation in his career was to balance the ideals of his contemporary compositional

⁴ Ibid. 213.

⁵ Ibid.

style with his instinctive compulsion to appropriate past musical aesthetics into his own musical constructs.⁶ Nicholas Baragwanath concurs how ‘few would deny that Alban Berg’s music owes much to Wagner. In particular, his work from around 1907 onward employs techniques that seem to correspond in significant detail to Wagner’s later practice. His use of symmetry, cyclical patterns, and cellular motives may well derive from an understanding and emulation of designs...’⁷ Berg’s musical borrowings throughout his career are well documented; however, the role of Wagner’s music and aesthetics was a central factor to Berg’s impulses. In addition, it is precisely due to this profound ability to bridge musical epochs through an avant-garde voice that made Berg’s music instantly accessible and appreciated. In an abstract notion, he had the supreme gift of instilling a sense of musical déjà vu in his listeners, where his musical structures that possessed these tenets of the past had instilled the perception that something simultaneously familiar yet entirely new was being experienced. Such an intuitive, subconscious awareness was the pivot on which Berg’s entire career and legacy ultimately turned.

Tristan was the one Wagnerian drama that burned brightest within Berg’s psyche. There is a popular anecdote that exists stating that if Berg entered a room that had a piano in it, he would always approach it and play the mythical *Tristan* chord. Indeed, Berg would strategically embed direct or indirect quotations of *Tristan* in two of the most personally reflective compositions of his later years: the *Lyric Suite* and *Lulu*. Although this essay would ultimately be an exposition on *Wozzeck*’s reception and representation of Berg’s Expressionist tendencies, Berg’s Wagnerian idealism pre-dates the composition of the *Lyric Suite* and *Lulu*. They are, nevertheless, applicable here as symbolic representations of the Wagnerian appropriations that have been an indelible facet of Berg’s psychology for far longer. To be sure, as Santos states, *Tristan* ‘provides the necessary elements in Berg’s constructions of narratives related to his personal experiences but also a mirror in which to express a sense of self-identity ... Wagner provided a vehicle through which Berg asserted his self-knowledge and identity.’⁸

Of all the Wagnerian principles that Berg was privy to, the notion of *Erlösung durch Liebe*, or salvation through love, was likely the most autobiographically personal ethos of Berg’s final decade of life that accompanied the idealized projection of his love for a woman. From 1925 until his death in 1935, Berg engaged in an affair with Hanna Fuchs-Robettin. Berg was keenly aware of the similarities between Wagner, the composition of *Tristan*, and Wagner’s love of Mathilde Wesendonck during the composition of his drama. Wagner had fallen in love with Wesendonck while living on her and her husband’s property in Switzerland and had elevated her to the role of muse. Wagner set

6 Silvio J. dos Santos, *Narratives of Identity in Alban Berg’s Lulu* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 3.

7 Nicholas Baragwanath, ‘Alban Berg, Richard Wagner, and Leitmotifs of Symmetry’, *19th-Century Music*, 23/1 (1999), 77.

8 Santos, *Narratives of Identity*, 3–4.

her poetry to music, resulting in the *Wesendonck Lieder*, which was viewed as a study for *Tristan*. Berg had used his love for Hanna Fuchs in equal measure as his own muse, first in his *Lyric Suite*, followed by the concert aria for soprano *Der Wein* (Berg's version of the *Wesendonck Lieder*), as it functioned as his own study for *Lulu*, which was replete with imagery of Hanna. Little is known of Hanna Fuchs, and it is uncertain to what extent she reciprocated Berg's love, but it would appear that neither of them intended to leave their respective spouses for the other. It has been proposed, therefore, that Berg subconsciously was not necessarily in love with Hanna as much as he was in love with being in love.⁹ Regardless of what the truth may be, his art reaped the benefits of his state of mind, and his sense of self as a result was introspectively superimposed onto his operatic characters. This notion was most profoundly manifested in his autobiographical depiction of the character Alwa in the opera *Lulu*. Berg also related Alwa to the Wagnerian character Tristan (thereby also equating himself with Tristan) and, as Santos claims, 'refashioned the relationship between Alwa and Lulu as a mirror of the one between Tristan and Isolde. Underlying the relationship between Alwa and Lulu is the Wagnerian notion that an ideal form of love cannot be fulfilled in life.'¹⁰ Musical quotations from *Tristan* abound to express these sentiments in crucial moments within the narrative of *Lulu*.

As previously mentioned, the Russian symbolists had appropriated Wagner's Schopenhauerian ideals of mysticism, renunciation, and metaphysics. These ideas were harnessed in order to shift the aesthetic focus inward to emphasize a deeper understanding of self, as well as of what lies beyond our understanding of empirical existence. Wagner was so adept at representing idealized notions of renouncing the Schopenhauerian empirical will that the young Berg was instantly attracted to the metaphysical transcendence of love that Wagner portrayed in *Tristan*. It is interesting to note that Schopenhauer did not elevate love as a tenet of metaphysical transcendence. Indeed, he saw death as the ultimate release of the empirical enslavement. Wagner, however, in his romanticized capacity as love-struck composer, portrayed love as the ultimate tool of denying the will in order to exist in a realm above space and time. Even while courting his future wife in early adulthood and then later when mesmerized by Hanna Fuchs, Berg expressed his intoxication with Wagner's ideal of salvation (and redemption) through love.¹¹ Santos further accentuates the degree with which Berg appropriated the Wagnerian aesthetic in general, and those of *Tristan* in particular, as the driving force for both his creative inspiration and sentimentalizing of his emotional affair with Hanna Fuchs, all of which were central in forming and consolidating the totality of his identity in particularly the last decade of his life.¹²

9 Nick Chadwick put forth this notion in his review of the English translation of *Alban Berg and Hanna Fuchs: A Story of a Love in Letters* by Constantin Floros in *Music & Letters*, 90/3 (2009), 504.

10 Santos, *Narratives of Identity*, 7.

11 Ibid. 21.

12 Ibid. 24.

Berg's own concept of Wagnerian metaphysics through love can best be elucidated through Santos's assessment of a letter that Berg wrote to Fuchs in 1931, where Santos writes that Berg

understood his existence in the real world as mere representation of himself: his real self lies in a metaphysical world where his true love can manifest itself. Such a view is bound to expose a conflict between ideal and reality, which could be resolved, as many artists have done, only through art. According to the Wagnerian discourse on metaphysics, only music would allow this resolution because it is directly related to universal concepts. Only through this concept of metaphysics would it be possible for Berg to project his love for Hanna Fuchs through his music, as he had done in the *Lyric Suite*.¹³

As previously mentioned, Berg created the character Alwa in *Lulu* as an autobiographical representation and aesthetic projection of his identity. This is the concept of musical metaphysics, where Berg in the most authentic way can concentrate his Wagnerian idealizations into creating the parameters that depict his truest self: one that is not inhibited by the empirical limitation of reality. Santos quotes Bergian scholar Patricia Hall and elaborates by noting how

Hall has rightly argued, 'many sketches for the Rondo [in *Lulu*] suggest that on some level Berg associated the character of Alwa with Tristan from Wagner's opera.' This conflation of Alwa and Tristan completely changes the dramatic plot in the opera and also affects Berg's musical choices, particularly the formal plan for the exposition of the rondo in the final scene of act 2. Although a prototype of a Wagnerian relationship between Alwa and Lulu is latent in Wedekind's *Erdgeist*, Berg created a narrative of love that, despite the grotesque aspects of the plot, is intensified through different stages of love evolving from sensual and spiritual to an attempt at a synthesis of the two. Ultimately, Berg sought to represent Wagner's notion of *Erlösung durch Liebe*, or salvation through love, as an autobiographical statement that compliments the narrative of his affair with Hanna Fuchs.¹⁴

In keeping with his tradition of using musical quotations at important moments within his narrative structures, it is interesting to note that Berg used the Tristan chord – the most idiomatic sound in all of *Tristan* – precisely twice, as Santos credits Bergian scholar Mark DeVoto for detecting. The first one appears at the end of the love scene between Alwa and Lulu in act two and the second right before Jack the Ripper kills Lulu in act three. The crux of this observation is that the Wagnerian chord is played in the love

¹³ Ibid. 31.

¹⁴ Ibid. 43.

and death scenes, implying the love-death or *Liebestod* of *Tristan*.¹⁵ These were not the sole motific borrowings from *Tristan*, but they were the only instances of that particular chord which underscored significant meaning to both Berg's identity and Wagnerian influence. The two sets of dying lovers in both operas, however, have vastly differing outcomes. Whereas *Tristan* and *Isolde* are bound by mutual love, thereby achieving presumed transcendence, *Alwa* and *Lulu* do not share reciprocal love. *Alwa*, as the abstract personification of Berg, desires the metaphysical salvation through love, but is incapable of achieving it due to *Lulu's* inability to love him. Since there is no love-death, all that remains is death. Perhaps this is a portrayal of Berg's conception of how his connection to *Hanna Fuchs* is destined to resolve, or perhaps it is meant to depict an absurdist/nihilistic irony in its deviation from the Wagnerian model. However, it is a Wagnerian model through and through, which is more significant when endeavouring to assign the constituent facets that comprise Berg's identity.

Aspects of Wagnerian Expressionism

Following an appraisal of Wagner's fundamental, overarching centrality to Berg's musical and personal essence, it is now imperative to turn to the cultural milieu in which Berg lived and composed his opera *Wozzeck*. The Wagnerian paradigm is innate within Berg, yet his compositions – particularly his operas – act as narrative reflections of the cultural values of the time. The aesthetic movement known as Expressionism was particularly popular and well represented through a variety of art forms, particularly in the German-speaking regions. Therefore, in order to place Berg and *Wozzeck* in their proper Expressionist context, it is necessary to first present an overview of the movement and to recognize how Wagner came to be seen as a forerunner of it. Expressionism itself can be seen as an aesthetic manifestation of emotions. It has been described as 'the expressive distortions of reality, the extent to which the external objective world is filtered through the internal subjective world of the artist's emotions in an attempt to express an inner reality – the psychological reality behind appearances.'¹⁶ In addition, 'it is an explosive, subjective awareness of anxiety, sordidness, and disorder beneath surface order, well-being, and beauty.'¹⁷ Furthermore, 'Expressionists were united only in their German and North European origins, their rejection of the classical ideals of beauty, their youthful passion, and their belief in an art that would break the bounds of aestheticism in its pursuit of emotional and psychological intensity.'¹⁸ This desire to

¹⁵ Ibid. 46.

¹⁶ Shulamith Behr, David Fanning, and Douglas Jarman (eds.), *Expressionism Reassessed* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 1.

¹⁷ John C. Crawford and Dorothy L. Crawford, *Expressionism in Twentieth-Century Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 1.

¹⁸ Behr et al., *Expressionism Reassessed*, 3.

reject was equally potent to the desire to create – namely an idealized paradise of ‘emotional expression’ that would yield the perfect collective society.¹⁹ The movement was also preoccupied with exemplifying an artist’s reflection of ‘society and the individual, rather than to the art itself.’²⁰

The Wagnerian tenets that foreshadow Expressionism are noticeable and distinct. Wagner strove to express the emotional realities of his operatic characters rather than their motives. Representations of the inner psyche were the dramatic nuclei of his operatic narratives. In the literary treatise *The Art-Work of the Future*, Wagner expressed the importance of distinguishing between inner and outer states of existence and how these bare influence over man’s psyche. He went on to say how:

Man’s nature is twofold, an *outer* and an *inner*. The senses to which he offers himself as a subject for Art, and those of *Vision* and of *Hearing*: to the eye appeals the outer man, the inner to the ear. But the inner man can only find *direct* communication through the ear, and that by means of his *voice’s* Tone. Tone is the immediate utterance of feeling and has its physical seat within the heart, whence start and whither flow the waves of life-blood. Through the sense of hearing, tone urges forth from the feeling of one heart to the feeling of its fellow: the grief and joy of the emotional-man impart themselves directly to his counterpart through the manifold expression of vocal tone; and where the outer corporeal-man finds his limits of expressing to the eye the qualities of those inner feelings of the heart he fain would utter and convey, there steps in to his aid the sought-for envoy, and takes his message through the voice to hearing, through hearing to the feelings of the heart.²¹

Here, Wagner elucidates how hearing one’s voice is the direct pathway to the inner psyche due to the tone of the voice, which in turn transmits the emotional turmoil of the heart thereby creating conscious awareness of those emotions. The future Expressionist ideal of aesthetically channelling anguished emotions is on full display in this passage. Wagner placed great importance on the recognition of emotional states as an aesthetic paradigm even before his discovery of Schopenhauer. Although his ideals shifted following his Schopenhauerian epiphanies, his Expressionist tendencies never faltered.

The philosophical evolution of those sentiments gained wider proportion in the ensuing years after Wagner’s turn to Schopenhauerian philosophy. Indeed, upon reflecting on some of the philosopher’s meditations, Wagner concurred that ‘after well weighing these extracts from Schopenhauer’s principal work it must be obvious to us that musical conception, as it has nothing in common with the seizure of an Idea (for the latter is

19 Ibid. 4.

20 Crawford and Crawford, *Expressionism in Twentieth-Century Music*, 1.

21 Richard Wagner, *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, tr. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 91–92.

absolutely bound to physical perception of the world), can have its origin nowhere but upon that side of consciousness which Schopenhauer defines as facing inwards.²² By this time in his life, Wagner has completely rejected the tenets of *Gesamtkunstwerk* which were still deeply ingrained within him when he wrote *The Art-Work of the Future*. The inward-looking focus is now more profoundly associated with music than with any other art, yet the humanistic psychology of emotions still remains central. However, when accepting Schopenhauer there comes an acceptance of abstract spirituality as well, which for Wagner laid out profound Expressionist symbolism, among other things. Elements of the subconscious were never too far removed from these introspections, and Wagner would later also write about dreams. One insight expressed how ‘from the most terrifying of such dreams we wake with a *scream*, the immediate expression of the anguished will, which thus makes definite entrance into the Sound-world first of all, to manifest itself without...This cry is answered in the most positive manner by *Music*. Here the world outside us speaks to us in terms intelligible beyond compare, since its sounding message to our ear is of the selfsame nature as the cry sent forth to it from the depths of our own inner heart.’²³ The Expressionist sentiments in this passage are myriad, emphatic again of the inner subconscious, reflecting natural tendencies that transcend exterior limitations expressed in a scream, which is the most authentic, and above all, primal manifestation of this inherent inner turmoil. Later Expressionists would glean tremendous influence from the most famous aesthetic *Scream*, namely, Edvard Munch’s *The Scream*, which was seen as one of the earliest examples of Expressionist painting.

Wagner’s various musings on utopian societies based on artistic equality, as expounded in his theory of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, were decisive in influencing future Expressionism, as were his ‘experiments in musical prose, rapid texture change, extreme dissonance, and new vocal techniques in order to be directly responsive to the ever-changing emotions of the human psyche.’²⁴ Once more, these are the same ideals that the Russian symbolists came to value in Wagner, as they dealt with inner emotional and psychological states at the expense of moving beyond external and materialistic elements. As we will see, Russian historians were very much aware of these Wagnerian traits in Expressionism, and in turn, within the psychological fabric of *Wozzeck*.

Expressionist Tendencies in the Aesthetic Prose of Russian Silver Age Artists

Having identified the nature of how Wagner acted as a precursor to Expressionism (and perceiving fundamental tenets of the aesthetic movement), it is now necessary to contextualize how some of Russia’s leading intellectuals internalized these tenets and

22 Richard Wagner, *Actors and Singers*, tr. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 67.

23 Ibid. 69–71.

24 Ibid. 30.

appropriated them to reflect their own morality. Wassily Kandinsky was a central figure in Expressionist painting, but he also contributed aesthetic theories that eloquently captured the values of Expressionist art. Indeed, Kandinsky's interests went beyond the spheres of his own art and included ruminations on music and artists that piqued his appeal, such as Wagner and Schoenberg. Kandinsky even maintained a long-standing friendship with the latter, which is preserved in their published correspondence. But what is of primary interest is the recognition that his aesthetic ideologies stem from 'his Russian heritage, [from which] the artist began producing major Expressionist landscape paintings.'²⁵ Peter Selz concurs on this aspect of hereditary solidarity by noting how Kandinsky agreed 'with earlier writers such as the symbolists, [and] felt that art must express the spirit but that in order to accomplish this task it must be dematerialized. Of necessity, this meant creating a new art form.'²⁶ This emphasizes a direct association between Kandinsky's aesthetic and the symbolist values of tearing down and recreating ideological paradigms that gained conceptual structure via Wagnerian ideals. For Kandinsky, these sentiments evolved beyond just applying them to his own art but extended to the circles of artistic acolytes that he formed, always insisting that they produce works of an inner and emotional representation. Kandinsky maintained that 'I value only those artists who really are artists, that is, who consciously or unconsciously, in an entirely original form, embody the expression of their inner life; who work only for this end and cannot work otherwise.'²⁷ This singular principle additionally motivated Kandinsky to write his aesthetic treatise on these theories that aimed to capture 'the departure of art from the objective world, and the discovery of a new subject matter based only on the artist's "inner need".'²⁸

Kandinsky went on to say that

if the emotional power of the artist can overwhelm the 'how?' and can give free scope to his finer feelings, then art is on the crest of the road by which she will not fail later on to find the 'what' she has lost, the 'what' which will show the way to the spiritual food of the newly awakened spiritual life. This 'what?' will no longer be the material, objective 'what' of the former period, but the internal truth of art, the soul without which the body (i.e. the 'how') can never be healthy, whether in an individual or in a whole people. *This 'what' is the internal truth which only art can divine, which only art can express by those means of expression which are hers alone.*²⁹

25 Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, tr. M.T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977), vii.

26 Peter Selz, 'The Aesthetic Theories of Wassily Kandinsky and Their Relationship to the Origin of Non-Objective Painting', *The Art Bulletin*, 39/2 (1957), 129.

27 Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual*, vii.

28 Ibid. viii.

29 Ibid. 9.

This sentiment fully captures Kandinsky's faith in the tenets of Expressionism as an ideal to live by as much as to harness for artistic motivation. Quite so, his frequent discussion of the material as something both inherently constricting and also confined to the past, demonstrates his spirituality which is inherently Schopenhauerian in scope. The materialistic (empirical) enslavement of the will is a motivic abstraction that Kandinsky expresses in various ways. Yet, the underlying idea is always the same: it must be transcended in favour of this 'internal truth,' which will 'awaken spiritual life.' Selz contributes to this notion, agreeing that Kandinsky believed that 'the artist is involved in a constant struggle against materialism,'³⁰ and cites the artist who himself says that 'it is the spirit that rules over matter, and not the other way around.'³¹ And in regards to Kandinsky's inner truth and spiritual life, Selz maintains in equal measure the painter's view that 'the formal and representational aspects of art, have no importance by themselves and are meaningful only insofar as they express the artist's innermost feelings. Only through the expression of the artist's inner emotion can he transmit understanding of true spiritual reality itself.' Kandinsky spoke of the 'principle of internal necessity,' which Selz, furthermore, posits as 'the core and basis of Kandinsky's aesthetic theory and becomes a highly significant element in Expressionist criticism in general.'³²

Kandinsky's treatise often portrays music as the conduit of this spiritual awakening. He goes on to describe the distinction of hearing and reading as a phenomenon that influences one's spiritual reception of an experience. He continues explaining that '[t]he word may express an inner harmony. This inner harmony springs partly, perhaps principally, from the object which it names. But if the object is not itself seen, but only its name heard, the *mind* of the hearer receives an abstract impression only, that is to say as of the object dematerialized, and a corresponding vibration is immediately set up in the *heart*.'³³ The imagery of the hearer internalizing this experience through the heart is reminiscent of Wagner's theory of vision and hearing, where vision is a representation of the outer being, and hearing as one of the inner psyche, which is transmitted through the Expressionist anguish of the heart, thereby, as stated earlier, creating a conscious awareness of emotions. Like Wagner before him, Kandinsky draws this insightful parallel between the exterior and the interior as exemplified by the exterior vision and interior hearing, respectively. Kandinsky subsequently and coincidentally happens to name Wagner directly when discussing his operatic character portrayals via the *Leitmotiv* device. Kandinsky notes how Wagner's 'method of using a definitive *motiv* is a purely musical method. It creates a spiritual atmosphere by means of a musical phrase which precedes the hero, which he seems to radiate forth from any distance.'³⁴ An acknowledgement is

30 Selz, 'Aesthetic Theories', 130.

31 Ibid. 131.

32 Ibid. 132.

33 Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual*, 15.

34 Ibid. 16.

made towards Wagner's ability to create states of spirituality, thereby attributing Kandinsky's indebtedness, of sorts, to his Expressionist predecessor.

Upon this vein, Kandinsky also acknowledges other composers whom he felt were attuned to their inner spirituality, noting in particular Arnold Schoenberg, and discussing his desire to 'make complete use of his freedom [by which he] has already discovered gold mines of new beauty in his search for spiritual harmony. His music leads us into a realm where musical experience is a matter not of the ear but of the soul alone and from this point begins the music of the future.'³⁵ The Expressionist associations are replete in this statement, and an inference can perhaps be made to associate Berg to this sentiment by proxy of his profound and public association with Schoenberg, as well as due to the recognition that *Wozzeck* has garnered along these same lines that Kandinsky has expressed towards Schoenberg. A more directly abstract, yet unintended connection to Berg's Expressionist tendencies, can be seen via Kandinsky's belief that 'a red sky suggests to us sunset, or fire, and has a consequent effect upon us – either of splendor or menace.'³⁶ This statement is in direct accordance to Berg's Expressionist imagery of the moon in *Wozzeck* – precisely as it both foreshadows and signifies menace, or more appropriately doom, in its depictions as being red. Kandinsky, however, was certainly familiar with Berg for many years by the time *Wozzeck* was premiered. In the same year that he published his treatise *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, he also edited and published the *Blaue Reiter Almanac* which was a collection of essays (to which Kandinsky contributed) that expounded upon the various Expressionist representations in contemporary art. Schoenberg himself contributed an article, and the score of one of Berg's songs for voice and piano was also published in the almanac. Theodor Adorno later wrote how these songs by Berg were his earliest attempts at 'breaking away and freeing themselves from neoromantic ornamentation, leading to Expressionism in the strict sense: the last of the songs was published in the radical Expressionist manifesto *Der blaue Reiter*.'³⁷ The significance of this inclusion, as well as Berg's profound association with Schoenberg, would have most assuredly made Kandinsky acutely aware of Berg's later, more sophisticated compositions. In the end, Selz concurs that to Kandinsky, music 'was most effective in inspiring spiritual emotion in the listener.'³⁸ Selz, furthermore, agrees with Kandinsky's personal identification with Schoenberg's musical innovations in that they have guided [Schoenberg] 'to the most uncompromising self-expression.'³⁹

A summation of Kandinsky's underlying Expressionist theory of art can be concentrated in his declaration that

35 Ibid. 17.

36 Ibid. 48.

37 Theodor W. Adorno, *Alban Berg: Master of the Smallest Link*, tr. with introd. by Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 48.

38 Selz, 'Aesthetic Theories', 133.

39 Ibid. 132.

[e]very artist chooses, from the forms which reflect his own time, those which are sympathetic to him, and expresses himself through them. So the subjective element is the definite and external expression of the inner, objective element. The inevitable desire for outward expression of the *objective* element is the impulse here defined as the ‘inner need.’ It is clear, therefore, that the inner spirit of art only uses the outer form of any particular period as a stepping-stone to further expression. In short, the working of the inner need and the development of art is an ever-advancing expression of the eternal and objective in the terms of the periodic and subjective. The close relationship of art throughout the ages, is not a relationship in outward form but in inner meaning.⁴⁰

The Russian poet and symbolist theorist, Viacheslav Ivanov, was a central figure in the cultural milieu of the Russian Silver Age and, indeed, had written numerous theoretical essays that expound upon the aesthetic theories of his time which he thoroughly embraced and endorsed. Ivanov, like Kandinsky – albeit less directly than his contemporary fellow citizen – signified tenets that exemplified undertones of Expressionist theory in his writings. For example, he described his own symbolist movement with imagery that can just as easily be ascribed to Expressionism: ‘we hasten to explain that by “Symbolism” we mean not only art in and of itself but, more broadly, the contemporary soul that has given rise to this art, [which is] the general orientation of its emotional landscape and the characteristics of the inner and half-subconscious tendency of its creative energies.’⁴¹ Once more, we see references made to emotions, the soul, and inner, subconscious tendencies.

Unlike Kandinsky, who only looks to convey present and future aesthetic trends with light references to the past, Ivanov is more willing to define the past in order to express why he believes an aesthetic evolution is required. He goes on to say that ‘romanticism, if it is *only* romanticism, is only a lack of faith; it lacks faith because its faith’s center of gravity is not only outside of it, but even outside of the world, and it does not find within itself the strength to follow mysticism *ab exterioribus ad interior* [from exterior things to interior ones], into itself away from everything external, in order that creative will might achieve self-awareness in the depths of inner experience and define itself as the dynamic principle of life.’⁴² Ivanov here essentially assimilates Expressionist-like values which he sees as the next stage of aesthetic evolution.

Ivanov goes on to speak about Wagner’s contributions to the aesthetic evolution of theatre, but only in reference to the earlier *Gesamtkunstwerk* theory, although he does describe the Wagnerian theatrical orchestra as a depiction of ‘the metaphysical

40 Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual*, 34–35.

41 Viacheslav Ivanov, *Selected Essays*, tr. Robert Bird (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 95.

42 *Ibid.* 96.

chorus of universal Will,' and that 'even as a mystical throng, [it] would still be the voice of merely human consciousness.'⁴³ Despite using Wagner to invoke Schopenhauerian imagery here, Ivanov is contradicting Schopenhauer's belief of music as being the greatest metaphysical art form by saying that it would merely voice a human (or empirical) consciousness. Unlike Wagner and Schopenhauer, Ivanov expresses the need for text to be present in order to convey an aesthetic whole, citing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (with its interwoven quality of music and text) as an example.⁴⁴ Indeed, Bernice Rosenthal also isolated this point: 'Wishing to improve on Wagner's concept of the theater-temple, Ivanov focused on the chorus rather than the orchestra, and on the theurgical aspects of myth.'⁴⁵ Ivanov once again acknowledges the Wagnerian paradigm in so much as it is a precursor of symbolist ideals via the *Gesamtkunstwerk* theory. In spite of this, however, Ivanov still alludes to, as mentioned earlier, the need for art to reflect an inner representation which is less focal in *Gesamtkunstwerk* and more indicative of Wagnerian and Schopenhauerian metaphysics. It may seem somewhat tenuous to ascribe Expressionist paradigms to Ivanov's views, yet he consistently courts imagery of that movement, not least by acknowledging how 'modern drama wants to become inner drama.'⁴⁶

Ivanov's Expressionist leanings are further emphasized by noting that 'theaters of choral tragedies, comedies, and mysteria must become the hearths of the nation's creative or prophetic self-determination. The problem of fusing the actors and spectators into a single orgiastic body [a *Gesamtkunstwerk* fusion of the arts] will only be resolved when, with the vital and creative mediation of the chorus [written/sung text], the drama becomes not a spectacle offered from outside, but the inner work of the national *community* that has chosen this particular *orchēstra* as its focus.'⁴⁷ To this idea, Ivanov acknowledges the indebtedness to Wagner by saying that 'Richard Wagner's art has initiated the restoration of primordial *myth* as one of the determining factors of universal consciousness.'⁴⁸ This is not a form of Expressionism that focuses on distorted and chaotic inner anguish in the Germanic representation, but rather an awareness of a general inner psychology that is more mystical in nature than anything else. This awareness, however, made the Russians particularly sensitive to Expressionist symbols and representations, precisely because it too sought to overcome the exterior decadence in order to delve into the inner psyche.

43 Ibid. 106.

44 Ibid. 107.

45 Large and Weber, *Wagnerism in European Culture*, 215.

46 Ivanov, *Selected Essays*, 109.

47 Ibid. 110. Text in square brackets is what I believe Ivanov alludes to.

48 Ibid. 124.

Berg's Expressionist Stage Directions in Wozzeck

Opera as theatre was a perception that was as paramount to Berg as it was to Wagner before him. Both composers were acutely aware of the stage, and how integral it was to the whole opera that the element of theatricality be properly and effectively executed. Berg was very vocal on this matter, and when speaking of *Wozzeck*, noted how

apart from the wish to make good music, to fulfill musically the intellectual content of Büchner's immortal drama, and to translate his poetic language musically, from the moment when I decided to write the opera I had nothing in mind about a technique of composition, nothing in mind at all except to give the theater what belongs to the theater, that is, to create music that *at every moment* fulfills its duty to serve the drama. Furthermore, to create music that provides everything that is needed to bring this drama to reality on stage...⁴⁹

John and Dorothy Crawford concur that Berg's theatrical instincts were so closely aligned with Wagner, that in *Wozzeck* 'Berg was able to draw on his strong theatrical and visual talents to create a total work of art, in which all the elements of the stage are pressed into the service of the drama.'⁵⁰ Furthermore, Berg's student, friend, and first biographer, Willi Reich, adds to the Wagnerian association by noting that *Wozzeck* 'can be considered throughout as a "music-drama" in the Wagnerian sense – clear evidence of Berg's endeavor to "guarantee" his compositional method from several points of view: by reinterpreting the scenic process in terms of musical architecture, and by the leitmotivic structure of the thematic action.'⁵¹ On the other hand, however, George Perle perceives the Leitmotiv device as being diametrically opposed between Wagner and Berg, claiming that

the *Leitmotiv* in Wagner's operas serves two essential *musical* purposes that it is not required to serve in *Wozzeck*: the recurrence of the same salient musical details throughout a work plays a significant role in its overall unity and coherence; contrapuntal elaboration of *Leitmotiv* is the compositional technique on which the extensive through-composed sections are based. In freeing the *Leitmotiv* from the *necessity* of performing these musical tasks, Berg enhanced, rather than lessened, its usefulness as a dramatic device.⁵²

49 Bryan R. Simms (ed.), *Pro Mundo – Pro Domo: The Writings of Alban Berg* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 216.

50 Crawford and Crawford, *Expressionism in Twentieth-Century Music*, 143.

51 Willi Reich, *Alban Berg* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), 227.

52 George Perle, *The Operas of Alban Berg: Wozzeck* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 94.

Perle does mention, however, a musically theoretical similarity that occurs in the music of both *Wozzeck* and Wagner's *Tristan*, thereby acknowledging a resemblance between the two composers even if it is of marginal consequence that does not warrant further consideration. Yet, in regard to the specific nature of these composers' use of Leitmotifs as musical and even narrative devices, it becomes negligible when considering that the fundamental point of departure for both Wagner and Berg (as is evident from Berg's statement above) was the inherent dramaturgy: the theatrical coefficient that allows the narrative to function as an opera. In this sense, the device of the Leitmotiv served the same purpose for both composers, regardless of how they may have incorporated them differently. In addition, Berg's student and friend, the philosopher Theodor Adorno, advanced the Wagnerian element in *Wozzeck* by noting how '*Wozzeck* fulfills Wagner's demand that the orchestra follow the drama's every last ramification and thus become a symphony, and in so doing finally eliminates the illusion of formlessness in music drama.'⁵³ Yet another drama-related implication that allies Berg and Wagner within a critical analysis.

Despite the musical and conceptual similarities and derivations between Wagner and Berg, there were, however, fundamental differences between them as well. Wagner stated that 'music can never, regardless of what it is combined with, cease being the highest, the redemptive art.'⁵⁴ All of Wagner's operatic narratives dealt with a resolution based on redemption which is the fundamental difference between Wagner and Berg's operas: Redemption does not fit into Berg's Expressionist paradigm of chaos and misery. Wagner's operas are also largely allegorical, abounding with metaphorical meaning derived from gods, monsters, sorcerers, etc. that personify humanistic ideals. Berg's operas dispense with such subtleties, because the composer of *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* sought to project the grotesqueries of reality in a more literal sense that would have been obscured if viewed through an idealized lens. Indeed, one can ostensibly observe Berg's operas as a testament to his disgust of social and moral decadence, stemming from his involvement in World War I and acquiescence of the Expressionist ethos. On the other hand, Wagner strove to exemplify transformative, transcendent, and ultimately redemptive notions that idealized humanity's potential for something greater. These divergent attitudes are what inherently separate the operas of the two composers and must nevertheless be kept in mind when investigating their similarities.

Another of Berg's most enduring Wagnerian tendencies was to provide detailed and frequent stage directions which were not merely directions on movement but rather on emotional states that were often complimentary to the libretto and the music. However, Berg only set *Wozzeck* to music after having seen the play *Woyzeck* (which was

53 Adorno, *Alban Berg: Master of the Smallest Link*, 87.

54 Quot. in Bryan Magee, *The Tristan Chord: Wagner and Philosophy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), 187.

the original spelling)⁵⁵ and having been mesmerized by the Expressionistically-relative nature of the play. Indeed, like Wagner, the playwright Georg Büchner foreshadowed Expressionism in his play, which predates Berg's opera by almost a century. Despite being left incomplete at the time of Büchner's death, the play exemplified all the future hallmarks that would make it a monumental success in the German-speaking countries in the early twentieth-century: A hideous distortion of psychological temperaments, dehumanizing immorality, and a blurring of lucid and hallucinatory states. To this effect, as Adorno suggests, 'the composition of *Wozzeck* outlines an exceedingly rich, multi-faceted curve of the inner plot: Expressionistic in that it takes place entirely in an inner realm of the soul. It registers every dramatic impulse to the point of self-forgetfulness.'⁵⁶

Once Berg was exposed to these stylistic and psychological features of the narrative, he was able to give it the dramaturgical shape necessary to make it relevant to the operatic stage. Certainly, Berg's stage directions were his own characterizations and representations that acted as a bridge between his music and the libretto which he appropriated and adapted. Yet the stage directions are purely his and represent the most profound subconscious imagery that was additionally abstracted by the music. Perle concurs by noting how the stage directions 'are Berg's own invention and must be strictly adhered to in performance, since such visual recapitulations are interrelated with musical recapitulations whose significance is obscured or even destroyed without them.'⁵⁷ Berg himself stated in an Expressionist vein that 'the music follows the man *Wozzeck* into the abyss which he sees opening before him,' with the purpose 'of the music as representation and illumination of the unconscious'; the opera is 'naked inwardness, made transparent by the interpretive power of the music.'⁵⁸

A chronological assessment of the directions in the opera's three acts, along with some motific elements throughout, will demonstrate these Expressionistically-stylized characteristics. Act I opens with *Wozzeck* shaving the Captain. Berg injects a series of descriptive staging adjectives for the Captain, such as 'mysteriously, artfully, sympathetically, striking up an attitude, very dignified, very grand, somewhat nonplussed, pacifying, exaggerating, and anxiously',⁵⁹ as some psychological signifiers of his character in the opening scene to compliment the general condescending absurdity of his text with

55 Douglas Jarman, *Alban Berg: Wozzeck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 8; decades after Büchner's death, the novelist Karl Emil Franzos engaged in editing the play for a complete edition of Büchner's works. Jarman states that Büchner's handwriting was 'microscopically small', virtually illegible, and had almost completely faded away, thus prompting Franzos to misread and ultimately publish the play's title as *Wozzeck*. Berg had used the Franzos version for his libretto.

56 Adorno, *Alban Berg: Master of the Smallest Link*, 87.

57 Perle, *Operas of Alban Berg*, 41.

58 Reich, *Berg*, 117–18. Reich notes that these are Berg's remarks that he (Reich) adapted under Berg's supervision.

59 Alban Berg, *Wozzeck* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1955), 6–36; present author's translation.

Wozzeck. The subsequent scenes of interest in the act portray Wozzeck's various interactions with Marie, the Doctor, and the Drum Major. The stage directions in this act depict immediate, diametric changes in behaviour that would imply a lack of balance, continuity, and predictability, in an effort to exemplify perpetual disjointedness. These diametric behavioural changes represent the dark inner subjectivity of the character's true nature – the stage direction – and then the calming deception of niceties – the text – when one character interacts with another in reality. There is this persistent interplay of interior monologue and exterior dialogue, which emphasizes the duality of inner Expressionist turmoil with the false illusion of admiration towards the other. Scene two of Act I goes further into the darkness of the psyche by presenting the directions 'in mounting fear' and 'stares into the distance'.⁶⁰ The expression of fear is to become a motific reaction when characters are jarred out of near-hallucinatory reveries that are accompanied by the consciously absent quality of staring into the distance. The subsequent direction of 'feigning calmness'⁶¹ acts as an opposite of the previous 'mounting fear.' Yet, it is not an authentic calmness and is therefore just another distortion of reality. The third scene with Marie continues these trends where the directions depict, at one point, how she is 'sunk in thought'.⁶² The following ten bars of music have no libretto or directions but represent this detached reverie again, albeit with short and jolting injections of the music associated with the military band's entrance, to remind the audience, perhaps as a warning not to forget reality entirely. Marie ultimately 'starts with fright'⁶³ out of her reverie, thereby again associating fear with reality and the dark Expressionist realism therein. At the end of the scene, Marie 'anxiously'⁶⁴ looks at her child and then 'breaks out in sudden anguish'⁶⁵ after reflecting on the darkness outside. This moment is full of Expressionist imagery.

The fourth scene with the Doctor is a testament to the sordid, dehumanizing mercilessness inherent of Expressionism. The directions that accompany the Doctor include 'groaning, flaring up, flaring up again, with sudden anger, vigorously, and waxing ecstatic'.⁶⁶ In another display of a disjointed, diametric behavioural change, the direction reads 'at the height of ecstasy' immediately followed by being 'suddenly quite calm'.⁶⁷ The fifth and final scene of Act I involves Marie and the Drum Major. Both display immediate and opposing behavioural traits but in an inverse to each other. Marie goes from a negative to a positive characterization (i.e. from 'mockingly' to 'admiringly')⁶⁸

60 Ibid. 59, 61.

61 Ibid. 64.

62 Ibid. 87.

63 Ibid. 90.

64 Ibid. 98.

65 Ibid. 103.

66 Ibid. 111–45.

67 Ibid. 150–51.

68 Ibid. 162.

while the Drum Major goes from a positive to a negative characterization (i.e. ‘ingratiatingly’ to ‘menacing determination’)⁶⁹ in order to maintain a lack of predictability and to ensure that the act closes with an image of foreboding.

Act II delves deeper into abstraction of the subconscious. Berg here builds emotional and inner climaxes in his directions that mimic the flow of the music and narrative. The inner tension always builds in displays of negative agitation that are always diffused in a return to ‘calmness’ which is ultimately the real illusion because it negates the authentic, visceral displays of the character’s truest selves. In the fascinating first scene with Marie and her child, Marie uses a small, broken shard of a mirror to great suggestive effect. She subsequently addresses her child ‘with a feigned eeriness of expression, but roguish and almost wanton.’⁷⁰ She then ‘looks at herself again in the mirror’⁷¹ representing inner reflection which leads to an outburst of ‘sudden intensity’⁷² and further illusory projections. Interactions with the child continue to be ‘very calm’, and then she reacts ‘crossly’ and ultimately ‘flickers the mirror’⁷³ in order to instil a paranoid, illusory obedience in her restless child, thereby attributing the symbolism of the mirror to both her fantasies and her child’s fears, both of which are born from idealized distortions of reality. Wozzeck enters at the end of the scene, displaying behavioural disjointedness as his directions go from ‘looking at [Marie’s] earring’s questioningly’, escalating to ‘somewhat menacing’, further still to ‘flaring up suddenly’, and then back to ‘calming her.’⁷⁴ The Captain and the Doctor enter into the fold in the next scene where the Doctor exemplifies the essence of an inner dark reflection of negative agitation and hostility that is eased by a diametric opposite of outer deception; here his direction indicates how he ‘observes the Captain cold-bloodedly’ but then addresses him ‘in a pleasant tone of voice.’⁷⁵

The third and final act of the opera acutely capitalizes on one of Berg’s most skillful theatrical devices: the use of nature to foreshadow anxiety and ultimate doom. He does this in equal merit through his music and the imagery of his stage directions. Indeed, every single scene in the entire opera, without fail, describes the time of day. The scene descriptions at the start of Act III also emphasize threatening undertones. Boris Asafiev (who will be introduced in the next section) draws attention to this natural phenomenon by citing an example from Act I, scene two where ‘Andres, a friend of Wozzeck, finds himself face to face with nature, and sings a song not as a natural manifestation of romantic feeling, but to drive out fear and horror. [The scene] is set in an atmosphere

69 Ibid. 168–69.

70 Ibid. 180.

71 Ibid. 183.

72 Ibid. 184.

73 Ibid. 186.

74 Ibid. 192–93.

75 Ibid. 218.

of gloomy foreboding and a nightmare.⁷⁶ The scenes pass in chronology of time, both in relation to subsequent scenes within each act as well as in relation to corresponding numbered scenes in subsequent acts. However, in context of the climactic final act, it is necessary to focus all attention on the symbolic value of the moon, which rises in strength, and significance as the sun of the previous acts gradually weakens into twilight and eventual darkness. This will ultimately come to symbolize the inevitable disintegration of all remaining illusions of positivity in order to make way for the Expressionist damnation of the moon which yields absolutely no prospect of salvation. Indeed, the first indication of this steadfast decay was illustrated in the first act with the stage direction reading ‘The sun is just setting, the last rays are colouring the horizon... in glaring sunlight, then suddenly (with the effect of deepest darkness)... twilight sets in to which the eye gets gradually accustomed.’⁷⁷ The dichotomy of light and dark is a play on diametric opposites again, but in this case it can also be seen as a natural foreshadowing for pending darkness that will give way to the destructive forces of the moon. Douglas Jarman classifies this dichotomy as a ‘symmetry of this overall [formal] design [which is] underlined by the correspondence between the two most striking visual effects in the opera – the setting of the red sun in Act I scene 2 and the rising of the blood-red moon in Act III scene 2.’⁷⁸ Jarman further acknowledges the adverse effect on Wozzeck by noting how ‘the appearance of the moon precipitates a further development in Wozzeck’s increasing madness...’⁷⁹ As mentioned previously, Wozzeck even displayed anguish in the form of his reflective reverie at the growing darkness outside. He is symbolically the only character that is so affected by the darkness for which his awareness can clearly be seen as mounting anxiety towards the ensuing deadly climax of Act III.

The stage directions of the third act evolve from suggestively negative signifiers to downright murderous indications. In the scene of Marie’s murder, the staging says that Wozzeck ‘bends over her in deadly earnest’ and then ‘kisses her.’⁸⁰ This is followed by ‘a long silence’⁸¹ which is obviously subtext for inner machinations and reflections and then the climactic death knell: ‘the moon rises.’⁸² Wozzeck then stabs Marie in the throat once, killing her. Berg somewhat curiously next writes that ‘Marie sinks down’⁸³ possibly providing a foreshadowing to water and Wozzeck’s later drowning, where the image of sinking may reference this phenomenon, or possibly as another diametric opposite to

76 Igor Glebov [Boris Asafiev], ‘Muzyka *Wotstseka*’ (The Music of *Wozzeck*), *Novaia Muzyka*, 1/4 (1927), 31; translation by present author.

77 Berg, *Wozzeck*, 61–64.

78 Jarman, *Alban Berg: Wozzeck*, 60.

79 *Ibid.* 55.

80 Berg, *Wozzeck*, 405.

81 *Ibid.* 410.

82 *Ibid.*

83 *Ibid.* 414.

the rising of the moon. The fourth scene is described as a ‘moonlit night as before’⁸⁴ where the ‘as before’ implies that another pending death will result as it did earlier when the moon was also out. This foreboding suggestion is again confirmed, now with Wozzeck’s death knell being precipitated by the direction which reads ‘the moon comes up blood-red through the clouds.’⁸⁵ It bares noticing that Wozzeck’s drowning was symbolized in the music by a rising chromatic figuration from the lowest to highest orchestral tessitura, once more abstractly portraying the deadliness of nature in this opera. The final moments of the opera reinforce the utter Expressionist bleakness and destitution of reality as Marie and Wozzeck’s now fully orphaned child – the definition of innocence and purity – naively marches to discover his own mother’s murdered corpse, bringing to an emphatic close the unrepentant mercilessness of the Expressionist paradigm within Berg’s narrative. Jarman surmised that the abrupt termination of sound – without any sort of decline in tempo or dynamic – that signifies the end of the opera ‘suggests that the whole tragedy could start again with the child taking his father’s place.’⁸⁶

Russian Theories on Wozzeck

Following an overview of the Expressionist symbolism in *Wozzeck*, Berg’s stylistic connection to Wagner and how Wagner came to be associated with Expressionism, attention will now be turned to how in Russia Berg and Wagner coalesced in context of the Leningrad premiere of *Wozzeck*. Bringing Berg’s opera to Russia was an endeavour that was entirely spearheaded by Boris Asafiev. His contribution was imperative in establishing an association between the two composers on Russian soil.

Asafiev was a Russian musicologist, whose aesthetic sentiments reached maturity during the Russian Silver Age. Asafiev was both privy of and eager to contribute to the ideologies that would usher in social and moral change. Certainly, he was active in a variety of musical spheres and took on the role of composer, teacher, and writer beyond his musicological endeavours. His musical studies allowed him to recognize the value of contemporary music which helped motivate him to instigate the Leningrad Association for Contemporary Music in 1925.⁸⁷ The timing of this inception was fortuitous, as Berg’s *Wozzeck* had its famous world premiere at the end of 1925. Asafiev was undoubtedly aware of *Wozzeck* at this time and, upon his initiative, would lobby for the opera’s Russian premiere which took place in the presence of the composer in Leningrad in 1927. Asafiev prepared numerous texts on *Wozzeck* in conjunction with the premiere, including a booklet that he wrote under his pseudonym, Igor Glebov. Berg himself keenly

84 Ibid. 436.

85 Ibid. 449.

86 Alban Berg, *Drei Bruchstücke aus der Oper “Wozzeck”* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1924), xiii; translation by present author.

87 Boris Schwarz, ‘Schoenberg in Soviet Russia’, *Perspectives of New Music*, 4/1 (1965), 88.

observed the Russian awareness of the aesthetic movement that gave rise to *Wozzeck* by noting to Adorno how the Leningrad *Wozzeck* production was ‘a very Expressionistic constructive directorial production,’⁸⁸ among other praise lavished upon the entire staging of his opera, as well as the abundant publicity that the premiere received.

Asafiev’s essay on *Wozzeck* contained the general insights pertaining to music, narrative, staging, and acting; however, he was particularly to draw various parallels to Wagner throughout. Asafiev emphasized the aesthetic ideals of both Expressionists and Russian symbolists by speaking of the psychology and spirituality that was appropriated from Wagner as abstractions of the empirical world. The internal conflict of the human psyche in *Wozzeck* was described by Asafiev as ‘the revival of mental naturalism in which the action unfolds as a process of transformations into music of our consciousness’s reactions to the external world.’⁸⁹ Asafiev draws a parallel of this process between Berg and Wagner’s *Tristan*, and it becomes apparent that he is projecting the Russified Wagnerian ideal of introspection that is ultimately meant to convey a spiritual oneness with nature that was vital to the symbolists. Asafiev saw that *Wozzeck* possessed the same dichotomy of the empirical and metaphysical which the Russians first saw in Wagner’s art. He further compared Berg with Wagner by emphasizing how each musical moment in *Wozzeck* exudes a reaction ‘as in any organic phenomenon of the material world. In this respect, I do not know of any other modern opera more bound with Wagner, where there is no more passionate, emotionally truthful, and deeply impressive music drama than *Wozzeck*.’⁹⁰ The philosophical imagery that Asafiev attributes to the material world is once more a Wagnerian ideal that he derived from the values of his Russian society and which he saw as equally viable to Berg, cementing the correlation between Wagner, Russian aesthetics, and Berg.

Asafiev’s direct contemporary, the critic and lecturer Ivan Sollertinsky, came to the same aesthetic conclusions as his countryman when he described the Schoenbergian paradigm from which Berg was fundamentally derived, where ‘its starting point is not the outer world, but the creative activity of the mind. The essence of the Expressionist metaphysics represented by Schoenberg is not surprising, and begins in music as a typical subjective ideal. He [Schoenberg] grew up in the atmosphere of Wagnerism, and like the great master of Bayreuth, was a staunch supporter of Schopenhauer’s aesthetic. He enthusiastically proclaimed Schopenhauer’s definition of music and held to it exhaustively.’⁹¹ Once more, we see the same metaphysical introspection derived from Wagnerian ideologies that were appropriated by the Russian symbolists and used

88 Henri Lonitz (ed.), *Theodor W. Adorno and Alban Berg: Correspondence 1925–1935* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 105.

89 Glebov, ‘Muzyka *Wotstseka*’, 34; translation by present author.

90 *Ibid.* 35.

91 Iwan Sollertinski, *Von Mozart bis Schostakowitsch* (Leipzig: Verlag Philipp Reclam, 1979), 194; translation by present author.

by Sollertinsky to quantify Schoenberg's aesthetic. Later on, Sollertinsky bridges the gap to Berg by noting how *Wozzeck* fits into this paradigm and is naturally derived from *Tristan*.⁹² His logic teems with Wagnerian sentiments as he superimposes Schoenberg, and in turn Berg, over this specific ideology of psychology and spirituality. Like Asafiev, Sollertinsky is theorizing from the foundation of his Russian aesthetic, which demonstrates its indebtedness once more to the Wagnerian outlook.

In similar fashion to how Asafiev drew an evolutionary line between Wagner and *Wozzeck*, Soviet musicologist Yuri Keldysh concurs how 'Expressionists themselves recognized romantics in some respects as their spiritual ancestors.'⁹³ Keldysh represents the generation of musicologists succeeding Asafiev and Sollertinsky, yet he was old enough to have been aware of both Expressionist theories circulating in Russia and the *Wozzeck* premiere in Leningrad in 1927. He goes on to say that *Wozzeck* 'is one of the most typical and more significant examples of post-war Expressionism.'⁹⁴ And just like Asafiev, who described the dark and dreadful Expressionist atmosphere of a particular scene in the opera, Keldysh applies the same symbolism when he explains how 'in Berg, dramatic contrasts are largely muted due to the impenetrable, gloomy delirium enveloping the whole action. Events flow like a dream; they are distorted, as in a heavy nightmare.'⁹⁵

Asafiev's essay on *Wozzeck* – with its explicit comparisons to Wagner – was certainly internalized by his Russian readers, since he had 'decisively influenced Leningrad musical life in the first third of the twentieth century.'⁹⁶ Therefore, an awareness of this foundational conception within the minds of Russians that links Wagner and Berg is necessary when recounting the Leningrad premiere of *Wozzeck* in more detail, and pinpointing the cultural impact that the opera had on the Russian people. Even before he examined the Wagnerian and Expressionist elements of *Wozzeck*, Asafiev and his allies were initially eager to import music of Europe's leading contemporaries in a desire to stimulate the Soviet public and, more importantly, to expose young Soviet composers to progressive compositional trends. The Leningrad Association for Contemporary Music believed that the new aesthetic paths that the country was seeking to establish were to be found in the music of such composers as Schoenberg, Berg, Krenek, and Schreker.⁹⁷

In this context, *Wozzeck* was seen as the perfect example to stand as a model of future Soviet opera, as it merged a new compositional language with the relatable psychological tenets of Expressionism. Through his musicological connections, Asafiev was aware of

92 Ibid. 213.

93 Yuri Keldysh, 'Wotstsek i muzykal'nyy ekspressionizm' (*Wozzeck* and Musical Expressionism), *Sovietskaya Muzyka* (March 1965), 105.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Isolde Matkey, 'Alban Bergs *Wozzeck* in Leningrad', in Horst Seeger and Mathias Rank (eds.), *Oper heute: Ein Almanach der Musikbühne* (Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1985), vol. 8, 217; translation by present author.

97 Ibid. 216–18.

Wozzeck's popularity in Europe and had reached out to Berg in order to procure the music and performance rights.⁹⁸ Once the opera had been accepted for production, and well before its premiere, various periodicals earnestly began publishing analyses on Berg's music to edify the Russian populace. Vladimir Dranischnikov, the production's conductor, wrote about Berg's path to creating a new type of opera, and noted how 'in *Wozzeck*, there are trends of Wagner's *Tristan* propped up through the filter of the Schoenberg doctrine. But for the listener in the old days, the road from *Lohengrin* to Act III in *Tristan* was further than from *Tristan* to *Wozzeck*.⁹⁹ Simeon Ginsburg discussed the opera's harmonic language and Berg's musical ideas in the context of a contemporary Russian framework; Sergei Radlov provided biographical information on Georg Büchner; all in addition to Asafiev's above-mentioned analyses.¹⁰⁰ Through the assorted efforts of these Russian scholars and musicians, the cultural implications of *Wozzeck*, even before its premiere, can be seen as a pervasive force within Russian aesthetic perceptions.

The premiere itself on 11 June 1927 was 'a great artistic event. Eyewitnesses report that broad circles of the population enthusiastically took up the opera and staging. Of course, the premiere was of particular interest to the musicians and artists. The second performance of *Wozzeck* on 13 June also marked the end of the theatre season before the summer break. In the next season, the opera was performed again on 14 October, 1927. While the first performance of the new season attracted 944 concertgoers, attendance was less than 50 percent of the theatre's capacity which was c. 2,000 seats. The attendance increased to 1,275 patrons on 19 November and to 1,451 on 29 March, 1928. The public's interest was prompted through the reviews published in many journals and newspapers about the *Wozzeck* staging at the Great Academic Opera Theatre.¹⁰¹ This passage confirms once again the influence of analytical texts on the public and the implication that they were aware of the Wagnerian associations within Berg's opera. Asafiev summarizes *Wozzeck*'s inherent value to Soviet culture saying that

Wozzeck in particular causes traditionalists to become angry. The work becomes that much more necessary and important for us! It creates opportunities for our new music, and not just through new relationships and revolutionary texts! In terms of music, the restitutive post-war period has not yet ended, and new requirements in musical life are emerging. The mutual social relationship has changed between the creative musical production and the masses affected by it.

98 Ibid. 218.

99 Vladimir Dranischnikov, 'Wotstsek' (*Wozzeck*), *Novaia Muzyka*, 1/4 (1927), 21; translation by present author.

100 Matkey, 'Alban Bergs *Wozzeck* in Leningrad', 218–19; the quotations in the following discussion are from Matkey and translations by present author.

101 Ibid. 219.

The theatres, under the influence of revolutionary zeal, were given new tasks: to attract to music those social circles that had no access to music before the revolution. Therefore, emotions and ideas must now penetrate into the music to inspire Soviet society. That is the task of a socialist cultural construction! The seeds of the new culture must be carefully sown.

What is needed is the popularization of our musical-creative and artistic-ideological achievements among the broad masses, as well as the struggle to improve the quality of our artistic sensibilities. This includes the propaganda of the musical-creative and interpretational-technical achievements of the West. Soviet music will be strong and realistic when it combines its revolutionary content with contemporary compositional mastery. The familiarization of the masses with the musical art of the West creates the criteria for the evaluation of Soviet musical creation. If one emphasizes the ideological and artistic value of these premieres, one must also ensure that the works impact the consciousness of the audience and are absorbed by them.¹⁰²

In addition to scholarly reception, Russian journalists also felt the cultural impact of *Wozzeck*. In the magazine *Rabotschi i teatr* (Workers and Theatre, no. 25, 1927), Julian Weinkop wrote: 'With the performance of this opera, the strongest and most daring operatic work of the twentieth-century is introduced into our everyday musical life. The day of the first performance is a historical date for us.'¹⁰³ Another critic, Stefan Mokulski, explains that '[t]he premiere of *Wozzeck* is a significant event not only in the musical, but also in the theatrical life of Leningrad. With this performance, we were not only introduced to a brilliant work, but experienced its implementation on stage in an unusually effective, theatrically impressive form. It corresponded fully to the spirit of the music of Alban Berg and the fiery, Expressionist pathos of the tragedy of Georg Büchner.'¹⁰⁴ Finally, in the anthology *Musyka i Revoljuzija*, pianist Maria Grünberg wrote that '[t]he premiere of *Wozzeck* is a significant event in the operatic life of the city.'¹⁰⁵ All accounts, both critical and public, emphasize that Berg's opera was of particular importance to Leningrad – to Russia. Russian society was acutely receptive to the multi-faceted dimensions of *Wozzeck* and saw within its Wagnerian and Expressionistic underpinnings, among other things, a model for which they believed their own cultural paradigms should strive.

102 Ibid. 220–21.

103 Ibid. 222.

104 Ibid. 223.

105 Ibid. 224.

Conclusion

Change as evolution and metamorphosis has been the macro hallmarks of this study. Change in terms of evolution takes place within the arts as they expand upon that which had initially motivated and inspired them but which was no longer viable under the present set of values. Change as metamorphosis takes place when the need for massive paradigm shifts becomes apparent. In this study, the latter change was exemplified in the shift from external elements of experience and awareness to inner emotions which governed perceptions that were far more abstract and devoid of realism.

Richard Wagner, Alban Berg, and intellectuals of the Russian Silver Age were compared and contrasted in ways that drew specific examples of how Wagner's theories and aesthetics were integral in forming the morals and perceptions of Berg and the Russians, both for their personal truths as well as for that of their art. The concept of Expressionism was the cement that fused all these ideals and individuals across the aesthetic changes that took place between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In his capacity as the central figure, Wagner was shown to be a forerunner of Expressionism due to his early ideas on the role of culture in society as well as his later, more important preoccupation with inner states of consciousness and being which were recognized and valued by Expressionists from a variety of art forms. The important distinction being, however, that recognition of these traits within Wagner's output was only the beginning. Indeed, both Berg and the Russians would then appropriate these Wagnerian ideals for their own purposes, thereby both evolving and morphing the foundation that Wagner established for them in order to enact the changes they felt to be natural and necessary.

The Russian aesthetes and symbolists of the Silver Age had come to see the opposing and distinct Wagnerian features of *Gesamtkunstwerk* and Schopenhauerian philosophy as warranting Russification for new trends and innovations that would lead the Russian consciousness forward. At the turn of the twentieth century, all Russian art had come to bare these Wagnerian influences in some form, even if they were merely reactionary views. The cultural permeation was so extensive, though, that regardless of the nature of the reaction the overarching narrative of virtually all Russian intellectual culture had taken on a Wagnerian tone that had not existed in such a capacity before.

On the other hand, the psychological worldview of Alban Berg was as much tied to Wagner the man as to Wagner the philosopher-composer. Berg had derived an autobiographical representation of his life within his operas in ways that Wagner had done nearly identically before him. Berg had been seduced and perpetually thereafter intoxicated with Wagner's metaphysics of love and transcendence which was also seductive to the Russians for their mystical properties that they viewed as the tool of liberation from empirical limitations. There was a truth to this philosophy for both Berg and the Russians, yet they harnessed them for different purposes. Berg saw himself in the adaptation of Wagner's late philosophy, and the Russians saw their overall moral salvation in it.

Berg was, nevertheless, a conceptual child of the Expressionist movement, and therefore needed to reconcile his Wagnerian outlook with the aesthetic trends of his time which were just as absorbing for him.

Berg's opera *Wozzeck* came to be seen as the operatic crowning achievement of the Expressionist movement, and yet its potency and subsequent legacy is entirely indebted to its composer's Wagnerian leanings. Berg's staging of the opera is as much Wagnerian as it is Expressionistic, which is precisely what makes it as thoroughly captivating a theatre piece as a musical work. However, the opera would not be a vessel of Expressionist drama had it not been for the play by Georg Büchner on which it was based. Certainly, Büchner's narrative was profoundly Expressionistic decades before similarly expressive elements and ploys would find voice in the arts again. Büchner's play, *Woyzeck*, was so realistic for the poet that it was, in actuality, a parody of his own experiences. Specifically, he had created a character parody of the real-life doctor that treated Woyzeck when his sanity was to be determined in the aftermath of the murder of his wife.¹⁰⁶ Berg had done the exact same thing in his opera with his doctor, citing the appalling way his own barracks doctor treated patients in World War I.¹⁰⁷ These personalized adaptations demonstrate the autobiographical and realistic depictions that both Berg and Büchner, respectively, weave into their separate narratives of *Wozzeck* in order to represent a distorted grotesquery of something that was real, thereby once again illustrating inherent Expressionist tendencies.

In regard to Büchner's Expressionist foreshadowing, the symbolic imagery of the moon, especially in the murder scene, is an integral representation in both the literary and operatic narratives. Berg's moon imagery in his stage directions have been thoroughly analysed, but it is worth noting that Büchner himself used the moon to anticipate the murder when Marie utters: 'Moon's coming up as red as red,' to which Wozzeck replies, 'like a bloody knife.'¹⁰⁸ Büchner has Wozzeck refer to the moon one final time, yet with differing results between the narratives. When Wozzeck subsequently says that 'the moon's like a bloody knife,'¹⁰⁹ this anticipates his death in Berg's opera; however, it only signifies the apex of the character's madness – but without death – in the play. This moment may therefore act as a distinction between Expressionist foreshadowing and proper Expressionism which must yield the bleakest outcome possible.

It may be worth speculating how Wagner would have handled this scene had he composed his own operatic version of the story. *Wozzeck's* death would only have had meaning for him if it had resulted from some kind of transcendence over the empirical bondage that he had experienced throughout. For Wagner, the pessimism and torment of existence ceased once one experienced a metaphysical transcendence. There was hope

106 Nicholas John (ed.), *Wozzeck Opera Guide* (Overture Publishing, 2011), 16.

107 Jarman, *Wozzeck*, 66.

108 Georg Büchner, *Complete Plays, Lenz and Other Writings* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 134.

109 Ibid. 137.

for salvation. For Berg's character, there is no salvation. Death is simply the final injustice on the inevitable path towards complete oblivion. For these reasons, Wagner was never an authentic Expressionist composer. He was merely the foundation on which Expressionist metamorphosis occurred.

The Russian musicologists and artists of the Silver Age, discussed in the present article, knew of Wagner's central influence upon their moral and aesthetic views, and virtually all of them recognized the inherent Wagnerism found within Berg's music and especially within *Wozzeck*. The Russians saw within *Wozzeck* the same evolution and metamorphosis that they were striving to achieve, yet with a different positioning of Wagner as a catalyst, of sorts, for all parties. Elements of this awareness was made evident in the acclaimed reception of *Wozzeck's* Leningrad premiere. The future tenets of Expressionism, as it came to be known after Wagner's life, were central to Wagner, Berg, and the Silver Age Russians in their capacity to go beyond that which was viewed on the surface. Looking inwards can never be anything but an abstraction due to its profound subjectivity. The only way that Wagner's posterity could universalize such subjective abstractions would be to give it a nebulous form where the only consistent detail would be a total lack of realism, as they had known it up to that point. Perhaps the ultimate desire was to make no reality the new reality. Whatever the reasons may be, these creative artists and thinkers stood united in their quest to incite a change to take everything they had known further in order to achieve even greater humanistic enlightenment.

Abstract

Richard Wagner, Alban Berg, and intellectuals of the Russian Silver Age are compared and contrasted in ways that draw up specific examples of how Wagner's theories and aesthetics were integral in forming the morals and perceptions of Berg and the Russians, both for their personal truths as well as for that of their art. The concept of Expressionism is the cement that fuses all these ideals and individuals across the aesthetic landscape between the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Wagner is shown to be a forerunner of Expressionism due to his early ideas about the role of culture in society. The article also reveals that his later, more important preoccupation with inner states of consciousness and being were recognized and valued by Expressionists from a variety of art forms. The important distinction being, however, that recognition of these traits within Wagner's output was only the beginning. Indeed, both Berg and the Russians would appropriate Wagnerian ideals for their own purposes, thereby simultaneously evolving and morphing the foundation that Wagner established for them in order to enact the changes they felt to be natural and necessary.

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