

**Arnold Schoenberg** Serenade for Clarinet,  
Bass Clarinet, Mandolin, Guitar, Violin, Viola  
Cello and Bass Voice, Opus 24

Marsch  
Menuett  
Variationen  
Sonett No. 217 von Petrarca  
Tanzscene  
Lied (ohne Worte)  
Finale

Thomas Paul, basso  
Jaime Laredo, violin  
Samuel Rhodes, viola  
Madeline Foley, cello  
Harold Wright, B-flat clarinet  
Don Stewart, bass clarinet  
Stanley Silverman, guitar  
Jacob Glick, mandolin

Conducted by Leon Kirchner

NOTES BY FREDERICK DORIAN

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Marlboro Music Festival, Marlboro, Vermont

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TIMING: Side 1—4:09, 7:51, 4:38, 2:56, 5:59, 2:28; Side 2—5:03. Total—33:04

MRS-3

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# Serenade for Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Mandolin, Guitar, Violin, Viola, Cello and Bass Voice, Opus 24

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

Born in Vienna, September 13, 1874; died in Los Angeles, California, July 13, 1951

## Meaning of Term

The word *serenade* evokes romantic scenes: perhaps lighthearted singing and playing of an ensemble in the open air at night. Or it might be a solo performance of gallantry under the window of a fair lady. But *serenade* also connotes the music itself, i.e., a score well suited for such a lyrical performance after sunset. And the etymology serves us well by recalling the dual significance of the musical term. It implies both: a serene composition and a joyful performance after dark. At any rate, the Italian word *sera* (evening) is at the root of all these closely related meanings.

In classical times, the *serenade* appears as a composition of several movements. They are predominantly of serene character. The cast of the serenade is often for chamber orchestra or for wind instruments. The style is similar to that of the *divertimento* or the *cassation*, all composed for evening entertainment. Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert wrote serenades that contain movements set in sonata form as well as in dance form (such as the *minuet*). Thus Mozart's *serenades* usually contain two *minuets* and a varying number of sonata movements. Brahms, in his two orchestral *serenades*, was inspired by this sequence. (The Marlboro Recording Society has released a disc that includes the *Serenade in A Major, Opus 16*, set by Brahms for small orchestra.)

## Dodecaphonic Score

Schoenberg's *Serenade, Opus 24*, completed in 1924, shows certain affinities with these classical antecedents. At the same time, Schoen-

berg brings something entirely new to this historic form-type.

In keeping with the tradition of the serenade in classical and pre-classical times, the number of movements exceeds that employed in such cycles as the sonata or the symphony.

Schoenberg's score of seven movements calls for a septet of chamber instruments. It consists of violin, viola, cello; clarinet, bass clarinet; mandolin and guitar. The fourth movement introduces the human voice.

The first performance of the *Serenade* took place on May 2, 1924, privately, for an invited audience in the home of Dr. Norbert Schwarzmänn in Vienna. Schoenberg conducted the first public performance on July 20, 1924, at the Festival of Modern Music in Donaueschingen (Germany).

The original manuscript, presented by the composer as a gift to Dr. Schwarzmänn, has disappeared. But a shortened version of the full score is in the possession of the Library of Congress.

## I

The *Serenade* begins with a *March*. Its tempo (according to the score) is to be kept at an even pace (*gleichmässig*) throughout the movement. In the low register, the viola proposes *pianissimo* a brittle motive. Clarinets, supported by the violin, carry the principal voice. The other instruments provide the rhythmical accompaniment of the *alla breve* motion.

The evolving design of the *March* is ternary. As the music unfolds, we hear inversions of the clarinet melody as well as of the bass theme, and their restatement is in a concentrated manner.

The central section of the *March* functions as

an extensive thematic development. This part is repeated and leads to a free recapitulation.

The third section dovetails with the *coda* and reviews the main motives of the *March*. Toward the end, dense textures are woven by the entire septet. Mandolin and guitar say things of their own with new variants of the principal motive, until the music concludes *fortissimo*.

## II

The *serenades* of early times, as suggested before, usually contain a *minuet*. Schoenberg's *Serenade* accepts this tradition and assigns the *minuet* to the second movement of the cycle.

*Nicht schnell aber gesangsvoll* (not fast, but with singing quality) reads the characterization of the theme, first entrusted to the clarinet. Mandolin, guitar and bass clarinet contribute contrapuntal dialogue. The muted violin spins the melody further.

Just as the themes of many French court dances, so Schoenberg's *minuet* spans a symmetric period (of sixteen bars). But its fabric always has a tight compactness not found even in the dances of the classical masters. The repeat of the theme (with the cello leading) ingeniously employs rhythmic permutation.

The *trio* is marked *etwas lebhafter* (somewhat more lively). Muted viola and cello engage in lively counterpoint, until they yield the principal motive, *fortissimo*, to the two clarinets. This *trio* part of the movement is of considerable length and shows modifications of time and expression.

In traditional manner, the end of the *trio* connects with the initial *minuet*. This is repeated, and bridges to a *coda*. On this last page, the muted cello, the mandolin and two clarinets join for the delicate fade-out of the music.

## III

From the eighteenth century on, the form-type known as "theme and variations" has appeared as an independent movement within a cyclic composition. The third movement of Schoenberg's *Serenade* (like that of his *Septet*, *Opus 29*) brings a theme with variations. This form is particularly well suited to dodecaphonic

treatment. Twelve-tone music, in essence, represents continuous variation of a basic series (called the *Grundreihe*).

The theme of the third movement is an *andante* in 4/8. It consists of fourteen notes. Eleven of these are different from one another. Three of the eleven notes are repeated. (The note B is missing in this row). But the fourteen notes dominate the movement in their prefixed series and its variants.

We first hear the *andante* as an unaccompanied monologue of the clarinet. This theme is followed by five variations and a *coda*.

In the *First Variation*, the clarinet, violin and cello successively perform the principal voice. Inversion and retrograde inversion of the theme are employed.

In the *Second Variation*, the meter is extended to 6/8 (while the length of the beat remains identical). The clarinets, mandolin and guitar (and toward the end of the variation, also the violin) spin the principal voice through the delicate texture that frequently shows also the vertical aspects of the row.

The *Third Variation* restores the pace of the initial *andante*. The theme is shared by different instruments. Inversion and other contrapuntal devices assume renewed importance.

The *Fourth Variation* is much faster. The clarinet leads with an expressive version of the theme. The string trio provides the counterpoint in which inversion and retrograde motion prevail.

The *Fifth Variation*, the last, increases the initial tempo further. *Grazioso*, the string trio seizes the basic shape in dovetailing entrances. All fourteen notes of the theme pass by in complimentary fragments.

The extended *coda* is much slower. It reviews the motives heard in the preceding variations. And a brief *scherzando* juxtaposes direct and inverted versions of the basic row, first in the two clarinets, and finally in violin and viola.

## IV

From an historical point of view, the fourth movement is of specific interest. It represents one of the first pieces in which Schoenberg's

composition with twelve tones, related only to one another, has crystallized.

This movement is a composition of a *Sonnet* by Petrarch (1304–1374), the prince of humanists in the early Renaissance. The musical interpretation of the *Sonnet* is entrusted to a bass-baritone accompanied by the instrumental septet. Schoenberg had adopted a comparable procedure in an earlier work of chamber music. In his *Second String Quartet* in F-sharp minor, Opus 10 (completed in 1907), the third and fourth movements are based on poems by Stefan George; the music blends soprano solo with the four string instruments.

Setting the verses of Petrarch's *Sonnet* to tones, Schoenberg relies in the *Serenade* on the twelve-tone series that pertains to all movements of the score, and thus achieves, also in this vocal movement, a high degree of structural unity.

The movement begins *rasch* (quick). The principal voice rapidly shifts from bass clarinet to cello, viola, clarinet and violin. The mandolin and guitar provide chordal accompaniment. But the vocal solo emerges, throughout the entire sonnet, as its sovereign part.

In this *Sonnet*, the bass solo repeats the motives derived from the row. But in contrast to strophic formation (prevalent in numerous classical and romantic songs) the musical structure of the *Sonnet* continuously varies the shape of thematic statements (for which the pre-fixed tone now remains the source). This fact contributes to the individual, complex expression of this movement.

Schoenberg composed Petrarch's *Sonnet* in a German translation; it is given below with the English translation by Joseph Auslander (published by The Heritage Press, New York, 1966). It should be mentioned that several scholarly editions identify Petrarch's sonnet as the 218th, rather than the 217th sonnet (as stated in Schoenberg's score).

*O könnt' ich je der Rach' an ihr genesen,  
Die mich durch Blick und Rede gleich zerstöret,  
Und dann zu grösserm Leid sich von mir kehret,  
Die Augen bergend mir, die süssen, bösen!*

*So meiner Geister matt bekümmert Wesen  
Sauget mir aus allmählich und verzehret  
Und brüllend wie ein Leu, ans Herz mir fährt  
Die Nacht, die ich zur Ruhe mir erlesen!  
Die Seele, die sonst nur der Tod verdränget,  
Trennt sich von mir, und, ihrer Haft  
entkommen,  
Fliegt sie zu ihr die drohend sie empfänget  
Wohl hat es manchmal Wunder mich  
genommen,  
Wenn die nun spricht und weint und sie  
umfänget,  
Dass fort sie schläft, wenn solches sie  
vernommen.*

*If only time could some revenge obtain me  
From her whose every word and glance decried  
me,  
Who then, with sorrier tactics to deride me,  
Escapes and veils her eyes, the more to pain  
me—  
So cruel—and yet so sweet! Ah, she will drain  
me,  
Exhaust my spirit, tear the soul inside me,  
Rage like a lion in my heart to chide me  
From sleep and to the clamorous night  
constrain me!  
My soul, expelled from slumber's drowsy  
dwelling,  
Left its warm cell and rushed forth  
disencumbered  
To find her who glared menaces unnumbered;  
Yet through my soul approached, it baffles  
telling  
That while it talked to her, the blind tears  
welling,  
And clung about her, she lay still and  
slumbered.*

## V

The sentiment and humor of the fifth movement, called *Tanzscene* contributes notably to the *divertimento* character of the *Serenade*.

We hear again a dance in triple time. But in contrast to the *cantabile* of the *minuet* (the second movement), this *Dance Scene* begins very lively. The mandolin plucks the main motive and soon relinquishes the principal voice to clarinet and bass clarinet.

A design evolves in which faster and slower dances alternate. Some of them display the characteristics of the comfortable *Ländler*, that Austrian country dance stylized in music from Mozart, Schubert and Bruckner to Mahler and Berg.

Various devices typical of the twelve-tone workshop take hold of the opening motives and carry them through the movement. Thus the mandolin motive is augmented at the closing section, while the clarinet motive is set in diminution.

The central part of the *Tanzscene* is a *trio*. A delightful little tune is proposed by the clarinet. A bridge passage alters the rhythm from 3/8 to 4/8, and eventually returns to the initial music. The movement concludes with merry acceleration.

## VI

The sixth movement is a very quiet *adagio* in 2/4. Schoenberg called it *Lied (ohne Worte)*, i.e., "Song (without words)." The sentiment and poetry of the music recall Mendelssohn, who gave the title *Lieder ohne Worte* to eight books of short piano pieces.

Appropriately, Schoenberg designed his *Lied* in a pure ternary form. The muted violin intones the song *pianissimo*, accompanied by equal quarters of the bass clarinet and the chordal sixteenths of guitar. The violin sings its tune continuously until, at the point of recapitulation, the cello (likewise playing with mute) recalls the head motive.

## VII

The close of the cyclic *Serenade* recalls the manner in which it began: the finale first quotes the initial *March*. Other motives from the preceding movements are reviewed. But there is competition for such citation. The variations of the third movement are remembered. The guitar hearkens back to the *minuet*, adjusting its triple meter to double meter. Before long, the guitar plays mirror versions of the principal motive of the variation movement.

Still other motives come and go. Some of

these belong to the *Dance Scene*. An echo of the *Song (without words)* is heard. And at the *coda*, the *March* concludes the *Serenade* buoyantly.

Rarely in the history of music have serene thoughts been communicated within more complex textures. The close analysis of the score reveals Schoenberg's achievement as a veritable *tour de force*. The advanced state of his compositional technique during the early 1920's is readily assessed by musical chronology: if we project the time of the *Serenade*, *Opus 24*, against the musical background of that post-war era, the results reveal the striking priority and courage of Schoenberg's creative pursuit. What are some of the representative works that major composers wrote approximately at the time of Schoenberg's *Serenade*?

Richard Strauss had completed his operas *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Intermezzo*. Young Hindemith stimulated interest with his chamber music. In 1922 Stravinsky produced his opera *Mavra* and the ballet *Pulcinella*. His widely proclaimed neo-classical style became fashionable. In 1921 Prokofieff played his new *Third Piano Concerto* and completed *Love for Three Oranges*.

1922 is the year of *The Wooden Prince* by Bartók; his two violin sonatas were completed around this time.

*Les Six* indulged on the Paris scene in capricious experiments. And in 1920 Ravel wrote *La Valse*.

Only Berg and Webern, inspired by their teacher, followed Schoenberg's search along their individual creative roads. In short, Schoenberg was far ahead of his time when he composed the two chamber music works heard on the Marlboro Recording Series (the *Serenade*, *Opus 24*, and *Suite*, *Opus 29*).

With great vigor, Schoenberg attacked during the 1920's the formidable problem of twelve-tone music. The daring hypothesis that occupied the lonely master, then living in isolation in the small Lower Austrian village of Mödling, near Vienna, was in coming decades to emerge as an accepted theory the world over.

**Introduction and Variations in E Minor on a Theme  
("Ihr Blümlein alle") from the Song Cycle "Die Schöne Müllerin,"  
for Piano and Flute, Opus Posthumous 160, D. 802**

FRANZ SCHUBERT

*Born in Vienna, January 31, 1797; died in Vienna, November 19, 1828*

A Theme from "Die Schöne Müllerin"

Biographies identify the year 1823 as one of illness, sadness and even failure in Schubert's life. But there was great creative compensation. Between the months of May and November of that year, Schubert composed his song-cycle *Die Schöne Müllerin* (The Beautiful Maid of the Mill). The text of these *Lieder* stems from a collection of twenty-three poems written by Wilhelm Müller (1794–1827). Schubert omitted three of these poems, and left posterity a cycle of twenty songs.

*Trock'ne Blumen* (Withered Flowers) is the eighteenth song in the cycle. It tells of a miller who is dying of a broken heart. He holds withered flowers given to him by his beloved and requests that the flowers be buried with him in his grave. But in May, other flowers will blossom over the grave as a message of remembrance.

The song *Trock'ne Blumen* became the springboard of another work by Schubert, namely the *Introduction and Variations, Opus 160, for Piano and Flute or Violin*.

We do not have much information on the circumstances surrounding the composition. It seems that Schubert wrote the *Variations* in January, 1824, shortly after he had completed *Die Schöne Müllerin*.

On the 13th of February, 1824, Moritz von Schwind, the Austrian painter, wrote to the poet Franz von Schober (like Schwind, a member of Schubert's circle of friends): "Schubert now keeps a fortnight's fast and confinement. He looks much better and is very bright, very comically hungry, and writes quartets and Ger-

man dances and variations without number."

The last words of this quote refer to the *Variations Trock'ne Blumen* that we hear on this record.

"Hausmusik"

The *Variations* were written for the flautist Ferdinand Bogner, professor at the Vienna Conservatory. Schubert and Bogner met at the home of Otto Hatwig at Vienna's Schottenhof. In Hatwig's large drawing room, "Hausmusik" was frequently performed. Friends played there for the enjoyment of an informal audience. The programs were mostly improvised. They contained *Lieder* and instrumental chamber music, but also some orchestral works.

These performances originated in the home of Schubert's father, a school teacher of considerable musical competence. Later the private concerts took place at the house of Franz Frischling, an affluent merchant. Eventually Otto Hatwig took charge of these musical events. He was a member of the orchestra of the Burgtheater and a capable conductor who brought fresh impetus to the domestic concerts. Many of Schubert's scores were heard there for the first time.

Series of Variations

Schubert frequently applied the design of variation to his music. At times he re-used themes from his *Lieder* in a new instrumental environment. The second movement of the posthu-

mous *Quartet in D Minor*, based on the song *Death and the Maiden*, is a familiar example.

The title of the published version of the *Introduction and Variations, Opus 160*, offers an alternative for the solo instrument joining the piano: in the performance of this duo, either flute or violin may be played. But certain aspects of this part suggest preference for the flute.

Whatever the selection, the execution demands great technical skill on the part of both performers, for Schubert treated the song to a series of instrumental variations in a virtuoso style.

The variations on *Trock'ne Blumen* are prefaced by a tightly woven introduction, based on several motives. Only one of these has an obvious relationship to the theme of the song *Trock'ne Blumen*. But it suffices to establish the thematic link between the introduction and the *Lied*.

The *Introduction* (E minor, 4/4) is an *andante*. The music leads toward the dominant in continuous flow, and thus sets the stage for the statement of the principal theme.

The *Theme* of the variations (*andante*, 2/4) is announced in close proximity, both melodically and harmonically, to the theme of *Trock'ne Blumen*. There is a double presentation of the theme, first by the piano and next by the flute. As in the song, the key remains E minor in the first section and E major in the second. Yet there is a subtle rhythmic difference: unlike the song, the theme of the variations begins on the beat. An harmonic alteration between minor and major occurs in most of the oncoming seven variations.

*Variation I* digresses melodically, applying ornamental performance to the flute. The har-

monic structure of the variation is almost identical to that of the song. The second statement of the theme is slightly varied and uses some motivic inversion.

In *Variation II*, the initial section is melodically close to the thematic original. The piano quotes the *Lied* and yields some of its fragments to the flute. Again the basic key areas are close to the song. A delicate balance is maintained: when Schubert veils the melody, the harmony is left close to *Trock'ne Blumen*. On the other hand, close melodic quotation allows more freedom of harmonic expression.

*Variation III* transposes both sections of the theme to E major. The two instruments share the motivic quotation of the theme but alter its shape considerably.

The series becomes more complex: *Variation IV* modulates to G-sharp minor, the mediant. A thematic inversion (E minor) assumes importance. There are chromatic scale embellishments, both in the flute and the piano.

*Variation V* restores proximity to the original. The piano states the theme in chordal fashion. The flute performs rapid embellishments.

*Variation VI* digresses still further than *Variation IV*. The initial meter changes to 3/8. The mood lightens. The theme bounces along, accompanied by a *staccato* bass. The statements of flute and piano overlap. A *codetta*, using fragments of the theme, continues with some remote modulations; ending on the dominant seventh chord, it leads directly into the finale.

*Variation VII* recalls once again the theme in a somewhat march-like *allegro*, heard simultaneously in the flute and piano. The initial 4/4 time is restored. The key area is E major. As in *Variation VI*, there is a *coda*, using material of the first section. The final cadence is reached by descending, partly chromatic basses.

**Franz Schubert** Introduction and Variations  
in E Minor on a Theme ("Ihr Blümlein alle")  
from the Song Cycle "Die Schöne  
Müllerin," for Piano and Flute, Opus  
Posthumous 160, D. 802

Rudolf Serkin, piano  
Paula Robison Sylvester, flute

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