

8

Arnold Schoenberg Suite for two Clarinets, Bass Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Cello and Piano, Opus 29

Overture
Tanzschritte
Thema mit Variationen
Gigue

Ruth Laredo, piano
Jaime Laredo, violin
Samuel Rhodes, viola
Madeline Foley, cello
Harold Wright, B-flat clarinet
James Corwin, E-flat clarinet
Don Stewart, bass clarinet

Conducted by Leon Kirchner

NOTES BY FREDERICK DORIAN

MARLBORO RECORDING SOCIETY

Mischa Schneider, *Artistic Director*
Marlboro Music Festival, Marlboro, Vermont

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Producer: Marc J. Aubort
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TIMING: Side 1—10:34, 8:43, 6:42; Side 2—8:39. Total—34:38

MRS-2

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Suite for two Clarinets, Bass Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Cello and Piano, Opus 29

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

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

Septet for Clarinets, Strings and Piano

In 1925, Arnold Schoenberg was appointed to a professorship succeeding Ferruccio Busoni at the Prussian Academy of Arts. In Berlin Schoenberg taught a master class in composition until 1933, when the Nazi Ministry terminated his tenure at the Academy.

In spite of his extensive activities as a teacher, Schoenberg completed in 1926 and 1927 two important chamber music scores, the *Suite, Opus 29*, and the *Third String Quartet*.

The *Suite, Opus 29* (which we hear on this record) is cast for an unusual ensemble. It consists of small clarinet, clarinet, bass clarinet, violin, viola, violoncello and piano. Thus the medium is a septet, blending keyboard sonorities with three members of the clarinet family and three string instruments. The piano part (just as the other parts) is conceived in the spirit of chamber music.

In the preface to his score, Schoenberg gives the woodwind players the choice of the specific clarinets. The part for the small clarinet (piccolo) may be performed on the E-flat or D clarinet; the middle clarinet may be played on A, B-flat, or C clarinet; the part of the bass clarinet is suitable either for the A or B-flat clarinet.

Schoenberg dedicated the *Suite* to his second wife, Gertrude, whom he married in 1924. She was the sister of Rudolf Kolisch, the distinguished interpreter of Schoenberg's music.

The composer conducted the première of the *Suite* on December 15, 1927, in Paris.

Twelve-Tone Work

The overall structure of the *Suite, Opus 29* must be appreciated in terms of Schoenberg's "method of composing with twelve tones." The method takes its name from a procedure em-

ploying all twelve tones of the chromatic scale in a pre-set order. This dodecapronic series, arranging the twelve notes in a particular sequence but without rhythmic differentiation, is called the basic row (*Grundreihe*). The row yields the tone material for the themes of the entire composition. Its unifying idea is called the basic shape (*Grundgestalt*).

In the pre-fixed chromatic row, each of its twelve tones is potentially equal; none predominates over the rest. The series may be used complete or in segments. It may be transposed, and employed in a number of variants.

In essence, the row takes the place of the key, of the scale, and of tonality in older music. The row may be inverted (turned upside down). It may be heard in retrograde (reversed) motion and played backwards. The inverted and retrograde versions may be combined. Thus four aspects of the row prevail: the original set and its three variants. As a result, there is coordination and interaction of all the parts within the entire twelve-tone work. Complete integration of materials is an essential factor in Schoenberg's music. Its form achieves unity.

The Four Movements

The musical architecture of the *Suite, Opus 29* is conceived with ample, almost classical proportions. In general, we face in this score an application of twelve-tone technique to extended form-types that we also find in certain scores of baroque and classical masters.

The textures of the four movements in Schoenberg's *Suite* show varying densities. But the entire composition is through-organized in a tight, rational manner. Even within traditionally conceived form types (such as the *Overture* or *Gigue*), we feel the somber weight of Schoenberg's extremely complex mind.

I

The first movement of Opus 29 is called *Overture*, as in certain suites of the Baroque. The blueprint of Schoenberg's *Overture*, however, reveals the unmistakable features of a "sonata," i.e., of the standard form of classical music. This implies a duality and development of themes: their contrast as well as their correlation. Schoenberg employs these features in the service of his dodecaphonic tone play.

The twelve-tone row of the *Suite, Opus 29*, reads as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6
E-flat	G	F-sharp	B-flat	D	B
7	8	9	10	11	12
C	A	G-sharp	E	F	D-flat

This basic series is continuously repeated, both vertically and horizontally, throughout the four movements of the *Suite*. Yet the rhythmic substructure of the row frequently changes.

The *Overture* begins *Allegretto, Sehr flott* (very quick). It unfolds in two sections that have almost exactly the same number of measures. In the initial bars, the clarinets and strings perform the first six notes of the row in vertical fashion:

3	F-sharp
6	B
5	D
2	G
4	B-flat
1	E-flat

Still in the very first bar, the piano plays the second group of six notes. We hear four tones horizontally, and two tones vertically. The results reads as follows:

7	8	9	10	11
				12
				F
C	A	G-sharp	E	D-flat

The first theme of the *Overture* is heard *grazioso* in the violin. The motive is immediately developed and shifted to the clarinets.

The second subject, marked *etwas breiter* (somewhat broader), differs from the first in its singing quality. The violin (on the G string) leads

and engages, before long, other instruments (clarinet, cello, and small clarinet) into an intensely contrapuntal game.

In the development section, elements of both themes confront each other polyphonically, and new elements are introduced. After several modifications of time, the development restores the initial tempo.

The recapitulation ingeniously fuses motivic and rhythmic features of the first and second themes. In the *coda*, the new elements (heard in the development) reappear. And the combined tone play of the septet brings the *Overture* to a fast close.

II

Continuing a baroque plan, Schoenberg assigns the second place of the *Suite* to a movement of dance character. Its title *Tanzschritte* (Dance Steps) emphasizes the metric element of the music.

Unlike more popular historic dance types, Schoenberg's movement (*moderato*, 2/4) is again highly complex. The rich melodic development is paralleled by vertical writing of comparable significance. To a certain extent, the movement resembles a *scherzo* of rhythmic intricacies. It presents the theme in many guises.

The principal motive is first heard in the piano. It shifts to the strings, next to the clarinets (without bass clarinet).

In its structure, the movement is a sequence of dances, cast in changing pace. A slow central section suggests a *trio*. In spite of the different rhythmic features inherent in these dance steps, stylistic unity results. It is due to the dominant role of the motives that are derived from the pre-fixed dodecaphonic row.

The movement has its subtle humorous episodes. With a roguish prank, the piano performs in diminution (bar 187ff) the fanfare of an old Austrian military march. The score reader will discover other sly musical games with which the composer amuses himself and his listeners.

III

In the *adagio*, a theme, stated *langsam* (slow), is treated to four variations.

The bass clarinet, entrusted with the principal motive, freely quotes "Aennchen von Tharau," a seventeenth-century poem set to music by Friedrich Silcher (1789–1860). But this innocent folkloristic song (known to every child in Schoenberg's native Austria and in Germany) is depersonalized in this slow movement. We hear the song *dolce*, yet without its indigenous expression. Its dislocation from the human voice to the low woodwind register creates a somewhat surrealistic effect. In counterpoint to this principal motive, the twelve-tone row is stated artfully by the piano in chordal fashion.

Variation I completely changes the slow tempo to *allegro molto*. The *legato* motive of the clarinets, played *pianissimo*, competes with the light *spiccato* of the string trio.

Variation II juxtaposes bass clarinet and piano. Other instruments join only at the distant bridge to the next variation.

Variation III restores the slow tempo. Now the penetrating sound of the small clarinet carries the principal voice. Frequent changes of meter (2/4, 5/8, 4/8, 3/4) characterize the flexible metric scheme.

Variation IV (*moderato*, 6/8) is linked with an extended *coda*. It brings a last phase of relaxation prior to the fireworks of the finale.

IV

The baroque sequence of form types guides also the choice of a *gigue* for the finale of Schoenberg's *Suite*. We already know the main subject of the *gigue*, first played by the clarinet. It rises, like all other materials, from the basic twelve-tone row. But now this series is promoted to the stature of a full-grown fugal theme, and exposes the twelve notes of the row in their original horizontal order:

1	2	3	4	5	6
E-flat	G	F-sharp	B-flat	D	B
7	8	9	10	11	12
C	A	G-sharp	E	F	D-flat

In a more elaborate form, the baroque *gigue* usually appeared in fugal imitation. During the eighteenth century, it became a tradition to in-

vert the fugal subject at the second section of the *gigue*. Schoenberg further elaborates these devices. Thus the principal subject shifts in the second bar to the bass clarinet with an inverted and contrary motion of the row.

The *gigue* continues and concludes in a highly contrapuntal manner, always reflecting the exigencies and variants of the twelve-tone game.

More than half a century has passed since Schoenberg sketched, during World War I, a never-completed symphony. Its *scherzo* (as the composer related) was based on a dodecaphonic theme. This was the beginning of Schoenberg's "method of composition with twelve notes related only to one another."

Today, this method has encompassed the world. Twelve-tone music has become a household word in modern art. It has become part of literature. Thomas Mann, in his novel *Dr. Faustus*, created the figure of Adrian Leverkühn, a German composer of twelve-tone music. And the Nobel-prizewinning author acknowledged his indebtedness to Schoenberg; Thomas Mann's novel is another manifestation of the tremendous influence Schoenberg exerted on the culture of our century.

In his *Memoirs* Darius Milhaud tells of a visit to Schoenberg in California. Milhaud hoped to give the aged master joy by reporting that many young French composers had become uncompromising adherents of the twelve-tone method. Schoenberg answered Milhaud with this eloquent question: "Uncompromising adherents? . . . Well, but do they also put some music into their twelve-tone scores?"

The student of the *Suite*, *Opus 29* will realize the amount of important "music" that Schoenberg has put into his twelve-tone score. At initial hearings, many details of the sophisticated structure will obviously escape the listener. Only the systematic study of the score itself will convey the remarkable architecture of the *Suite*. It reveals Schoenberg's nostalgia for the clarity of the classical world and his imaginative forecast of things to come.

Quintet in F Minor for two Violins, Viola and two Cellos, Opus 42, No. 1

LUIGI BOCCHERINI

Born in Lucca, February 19, 1743; died in Madrid, May 28, 1805

A Master Reassessed

A re-evaluation of Boccherini's art has long been overdue. Here is a master whose enormous lifework is grossly neglected by the general repertory. The average music lover knows Boccherini's gracious *Cello Concerto* and perhaps a symphony or a chamber music work. And he is certainly familiar with Boccherini's famous *minuet* (from the *Quintet for Strings in E, Opus 11*).

But Boccherini wrote more than five hundred scores and many of them have the earmark of excellence. He composed both sacred and secular, vocal and instrumental works. It was in chamber music, however, where he showed his strongest gifts: his ingenious, even pioneering, treatment of string instruments, and a flair for truly intimate sonorities. There are no less than ninety-one string quartets, one hundred twenty-five string quintets (some with two cellos), and fifty-four string trios. The list is still considered incomplete; additional works are being uncovered. A new Thematic and Bibliographical Catalogue of the Collected Works of Boccherini has been prepared to establish authenticity.

From the *Style Galant* to Classicism

If we listen to Boccherini's beautiful *Quintet in F Minor* (heard on this Marlboro record) we know that his music has retained its youth. It is a delightful work.

To be sure, this score reveals a different kind of perfection from that communicated by the more complex chamber music of the Vienna Classical School. A Mediterranean sentiment permeates the music of Boccherini, an Italian master who perfected his *métier* in France, and found creative fulfillment in Spain.

Boccherini has been viewed as an exponent of the so-called *style galant*, i.e., the primarily homophonic, highly embellished manner of composition that overlapped with the High Baroque. The *style galant* in music generally corresponds to the style period defined in the history of art as Rococo.

Boccherini, more accurately defined, was a link from the *style galant* to Vienna Classicism. He had a vision of graceful gallantry. But his finest works belong to the maelstrom of music in the eighteenth century. They are more than examples of a limited era. They point to the eternal stream of music throughout the ages.

Musical Life in Lucca

Boccherini was born and raised in Lucca. In the eighteenth century this Italian community was the capital of a small but independent republic, and of the archepiscopal see of Tuscany. The traces of an ancient theater are still visible in Lucca. Since the Middle Ages, music had been the art most favored by the citizens of the picturesque town. In 1640 the Academy of the Accesi was founded, and devoted itself exclusively to musical and dramatic performances.

Music as a profession became an honored tradition in certain families of Lucca, and a few live on in history through the names of their prodigious sons.

There were the Puccinis of Lucca: Giacomo (1712–1781), his son Antonio (1747–1832), his grandson Domenico (1771–1815). They all contributed to a musical festival known as *Le Tasche*, held in the Tuscan town since the Middle Ages. Another Giacomo (1858–1924) crowned the Puccini genealogy as Italy's greatest opera composer at the turn of our century.

And there were the Boccherinis who likewise made notable contributions, particularly

to the history of instrumental music. Today the Musical Institute of Lucca, named in honor of Boccherini, guards in its library revealing musicological documents. Among them are the manuscript sources of Giacomo Puccini, the patriarch, who recorded in 1756 that the thirteen-year-old lad Luigi Boccherini served with distinction as solo cellist of the Palatine Chapel, and played at Mass and Vespers for the edification of the praying community.

Luigi's father was Leopoldo Boccherini, a virtuoso of the double bass. Leopoldo was one of the first musicians to play solo on this lowest string instrument. But he played the cello equally well, and the child Luigi was fascinated with his father's performance on that instrument. Before long, Luigi managed to hold the cello and to play scales and tunes. His ear was remarkable; he displayed feats reminiscent of the child Mozart. Having learned in his native town what Lucca's best musicians could teach him, Luigi was sent to Rome. Maestro Costanzi, director of music at St. Peter's, became his mentor.

The professional career of Luigi Boccherini began in 1757 in Vienna, where both he and his father were engaged as cellist and double bass player, respectively, at the Court orchestra of Empress Maria Theresa.

In 1758 father and son returned to Lucca, and both now served in the orchestra of the Cathedral and the theater. The next year found Luigi in Milan. A string quartet, which at that time gave public performances, probably owes its stimulus to Boccherini.

From 1760 to 1768, Boccherini lived in France. His reputation as a composer rapidly matched that of the cello virtuoso. Some of his music was published in Paris by Venier. At a *Concert spirituel*, the audience gave Boccherini a standing ovation. It was a fateful event. The Spanish Ambassador to the Court of France, greatly impressed, invited the composer-cellist to Madrid.

The Spanish Years

The beginning in Madrid was difficult. King Charles III was not musical. Intrigues, always

rampant among the artists competing for patronage at European courts, upset Boccherini and he almost decided to return to Italy.

In 1769, a meeting with Infante Don Luis, brother of the King of Spain, proved to be a turning point of Boccherini's fate. He was chosen to be Royal Composer in Residence and Chamber Musician at Aranjuez, the royal residence. For fifteen years Boccherini composed for this princely employer. These were Boccherini's most fortunate years. He enjoyed temporarily a position comparable to that of Haydn in Esterháza: he had security and could concentrate on his creative work. He could experiment and study the medium in which he excelled—chamber music.

The year 1785 was a tragic one in Boccherini's life. His wife died, leaving him with five children. His faithful patron, Infante Don Luis, passed away in the same year. Boccherini returned to Madrid. With his great reputation, he found new sponsors at royal and aristocratic courts. Between 1787 and 1796, however, important details of Boccherini's life are lost. We do know that his temporary service to the Prussian court was terminated. It appears that Napoleon's younger brother Lucien became Boccherini's last important patron. From 1799 to 1802, Lucien was ambassador to Spain and gave concerts organized by Boccherini.

The master's decline coincides with the departure of Lucien from Madrid. Boccherini had become a sick old man. The once celebrated composer made a miserable living by arranging pieces for the guitar, the folk instrument of Spain. Boccherini died in 1805 at the age of 62. In 1927 his remains were transferred to Lucca and interred in the Basilica of San Francesco.

Quintet in Four Movements

I

The *Quintet in F minor, Opus 42, No. 1* is cast for two violins, one viola and two cellos. The opening movement, an *allegro moderato assai*, allows for a great deal of modification within its pace and expression. The principal theme

(F minor, 4/4) lends itself ideally to the development of five-part writing. This eighteenth-century work, in fact, leads to the core of chamber music. Its "democratic" ideal is represented here. Each player is important. Each has the opportunity to express himself, individually as well as collectively, within this five-part string ensemble.

The first of the two cellos contributes to the density of the textures. We note its sentiment in the tenoral register, and its frequent dialogue with the violins. The second cello provides for the continuity of the bass line; it functions as the harmonic fundament of the *Quintet*.

The exposition of the *allegro* reflects a certain melancholy in its initial pronouncements. This changes to a more assertive tone with the advent of new motives.

The development is brief. The subsidiary subject never rises to independent stature. The recapitulation concludes with a tender fade-out.

II

There follows a *minuet*, (F major, 3/4). The voices enter with the chief motive in a quasi contrapuntal manner. But the development does not lack humor, and is replete with original effects. The metric units, imaginatively combined, increase the vivacity of this stylized court dance.

The central part of the *minuet*, following eighteenth century tradition, is a *trio*. It has a more meditative quality than the surrounding sections of the *minuet*, which is repeated following the performance of the *trio*.

III

The next movement is an *adagio cantabile* (B-flat major, 4/4). Its inherent loveliness is disarming. The music gives free reign to the can-

tilena of the strings. But there are also moments of tension and dissonance.

At the beginning, the solo of the first violin alternates with that of the first cello. As the *adagio* unfolds, the other instruments, too, become eloquent. Thus the viola part is replete with double stops, embellishments and suave counter-melody.

The design of this *adagio cantabile* is simple and ternary.

IV

The *Quintet* closes with a cheerful *rondo*. The *allegro giusto* (F major, 2/4) is built from a sequence of small repeated motives, heard *pianissimo* at the beginning.

This light-hearted *rondo* is replete with capricious, whimsical episodes. On the surface, this music might strike us as naïve. Yet the tone play is controlled with great finesse and has a special fragrance. There is, of course, more grace than depth, perhaps more pleasantry than formal logic. But Boccherini's craftsmanship is impeccable, and his humor is sophisticated.

The estimate of an art work cannot remain independent from the circumstances of its origin. Boccherini's art is court art. His music entertained aristocrats at their residences. It was enjoyed by kings and princes at such places as the lovely Spanish palace of Aranjuez or at Sans Souci, the Potsdam castle of Frederick the Great.

The style of the *Quintet in F minor* also reveals the era of its composition. Boccherini was eleven years younger than Haydn and thirteen years older than Mozart, whom he outlived by fourteen years. But Boccherini wrote his "own" music. And as the *Quintet* irrefutably proves, he was, decidedly, an original.

Luigi Boccherini Quintet in F Minor
for two Violins, Viola and two Cellos,
Opus 42, No.1

Allegro moderato assai
Minuetto
Adagio cantabile
Rondeau: Allegro Giusto

Pina Carmirelli, violin
Jon Toth, violin
Philipp Naegele, viola
Fortunato Arico, cello
Dorothy Reichenberger, cello

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