

***SPRECHSTIMME IN ARNOLD SCHOENBERG'S
PIERROT LUNAIRE***

A STUDY OF VOCAL PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

AIDAN SODER

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Aidan Soder

With a Preface by
Walter B. Bailey

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For Joyce and Caitlin

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Preface

Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, Op. 21 (1912) is one of the most distinctive works ever written. It is also one of the most performed and frequently recorded of Schoenberg's compositions, and nearly every music student has studied it in some fashion. As a result, most musicians and many more casual listeners have vivid memories of the first time that they heard it. If nothing else, they retain a visceral connection to its emotional impact.

For the majority of listeners, the most striking and therefore most memorable aspect of the work is the peculiar technique that Schoenberg specified for the vocalist, commonly referred to as *Sprechstimme*. Situated in the netherworld between speech and song, this technique captures the slightly disturbed (and disturbing) flavor of the texts and complements Schoenberg's avant-garde musical settings. Although Schoenberg did not invent *Sprechstimme*, and although *Pierrot* is not the only work in which he used it, *Pierrot lunaire* represents its most famous deployment. In performance, all aspects of the work hinge on the effective interpretation and delivery of the vocal part. Unfortunately, Schoenberg's instructions as to how to perform *Sprechstimme* are ambiguous at best, and a singer preparing the work has to make many personal choices regarding how to interpret them.

Who better, then, to examine the performance practice of *Sprechstimme* in *Pierrot lunaire* than a singer who has performed it? Aidan Soder brings that performance experience and more to this valuable project: having grappled with certain issues in the process of preparing her own performance, Soder later collected a variety of evidence to create the informed approach that she presents here. Beginning with a study of the history of *Sprechstimme*, Soder continues

with an examination of Schoenberg's written comments on the technique, evidence from the musical score, and information gleaned from the recordings of *Pierrot* with which Schoenberg was involved. In addition, Soder draws on many other recordings of *Pierrot* made during the past half century. With an insightful analysis of selected recorded performances, Soder explores the full spectrum of singers' interpretations. From the extremes of "spoken" and "sung" to the many gradations in between, Soder elucidates the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to *Sprechstimme* in *Pierrot*. She also employs her significant knowledge of vocal technique to explain how and why certain effects are created.

Working with the evidence that she has assembled, Soder conjectures about what Schoenberg's ideal, but never realized, performance of *Sprechstimme* in *Pierrot* would have been like, contrasting what he described and notated with what he actually heard singers perform. Finally, she offers a brief list of recommendations for an effective interpretation of the vocal part in *Pierrot* that allows ample latitude for individual interpretation yet respects Schoenberg's ideal. Ultimately, Soder's work makes possible a more informed performance practice for *Pierrot lunaire*.

In this book, Soder formulates a thoughtful and practical approach to *Pierrot lunaire* that will guide singers, instrumentalists, and conductors who are interested in performance; it will also guide scholars who are interested in gaining insight into the vocal aspects of the work. Although much has been written about *Pierrot lunaire*, the refinements of the performance of *Sprechstimme* have been explored only infrequently. The importance of Soder's approach lies in the complete context in which she presents the technique and performance of *Sprechstimme*, in her insight into the musical ramification of various interpretations of *Sprechstimme* in an array of recorded performances of

Pierrot, in her ability to summarize and convey what Schoenberg wanted regarding *Sprechstimme* in this work, and, especially, in her ability to explain how to achieve it.

Walter B. Bailey, Ph.D.
Chair of Musicology
Shepherd School of Music
Rice University

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I am immensely grateful for my two months of study in Vienna, Austria at the Arnold Schönberg Center. Particular thanks go to Eike Fess and Therese Muxeneder, archivists at the Center, who allowed me full access to the *Pierrot lunaire* discography as well as other historical documents. The time spent in Austria would not have been possible were it not for the P.E.O. Scholar Award I received for the 2004-2005 academic year. I am thankful for the nomination by Chapter HH in Houston, and the subsequent awarding by the International Chapter P.E.O. Sisterhood.

I also wish to thank several colleagues and friends who have read this document in its various stages and provided valuable suggestions, including James Hall, Paul Busselberg, Avior Byron, Lucy Shelton, and Michael Rosewall. Additionally, tremendous thanks go to Nancy Bailey for her tireless assistance and encouragement, her tremendous organizational skills, and for being my “first run” person for every idea; and, of course, all of my family—especially my parents, Dar and LaRonda Soder—for their continuous love and support.

Lastly, my love and fascination with Schoenberg and this work began several years ago when I first performed *Pierrot lunaire* as a masters student. I was privileged to work with an excellent ensemble, but perhaps more importantly, we were coached by an exceptional musician and human being, Norman Fischer.

My continued interest in *Pierrot* is due, in no small part, to the unbridled enthusiasm and zeal he expressed during that semester's work.

Additional thanks are also due to my dear friend, Christopher Green, for his excellent translations of the Friedrich Cerha article and the conversation between Boulez and Adorno.

All Schoenberg's music, unless otherwise noted, is reproduced by permission of Belmont Music Publishers, Los Angeles, California.

CHAPTER ONE

Sprechstimme in *Pierrot lunaire*: Schoenberg's New Voice

Arnold Schoenberg's famous chamber work of 1912, *Pierrot lunaire*, opus 21, has generated more scholarly attention than perhaps any other work of the modern era. It has been programmed on countless concerts, commercially recorded over forty times, and has precipitated a deluge of historical, theoretical, and performance practice-related articles, lectures, and books. Schoenberg's use of *Sprechstimme*, a unique combination of speaking and singing, has been one of the most frequently addressed topics and has been approached from a variety of perspectives: how exactly to perform it; its genesis, evolution, and execution; its notation and how that translates to performance; and whether Schoenberg's intentions and desires were ever truly realized in performance.

While many of these issues have been addressed in some depth, little has been written about the range of interpretations and scope of performance styles heard in the extant recordings and how they might affect and influence subsequent interpretations. The discography helps to identify and define many of the more abstract components of *Sprechstimme*, providing insight into the wide spectrum of performance and interpretational possibilities. The recordings also draw attention to the appreciable absence of a vocal performance practice tradition. *Pierrot lunaire*'s iconoclastic reputation alone practically defies the establishment of such a tradition, leaving the novice interpreter with few incontrovertible resources to aid her in her interpretation. Through intense scrutiny of the recordings, detailed analysis and study of the score, and a thorough examination of the available written resources, we can develop a better understanding of what *Sprechstimme* is and what Schoenberg may have desired from it. This better understanding can

lead to the establishment of an accepted performance practice tradition without compromising the performer's artistic autonomy.

Since the first commercial recording of *Pierrot lunaire* in 1940 (with Schoenberg conducting), the interpretation of the *Sprechstimme* has varied widely. No two *Speakers* or *Reciters*, titles Schoenberg applied to the vocalist, interpret the work exactly alike; in fact, significant deviations can be observed in multiple recordings of the same performer.¹ Because of the challenges and ambiguities inherent in the notation and interpretation of *Sprechstimme*, *Pierrot lunaire* continues to be as challenging today to scholars and performers alike as it was ninety years ago. Schoenberg's writings, the score itself, and sixty-seven years of recordings aid us considerably in understanding and interpreting one of the twentieth century's greatest works.

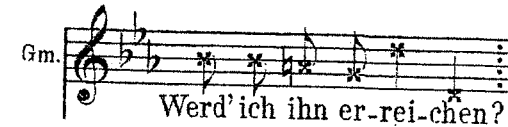
The Origins of *Sprechstimme*

Sprechstimme first appeared on the musical scene in 1897 in Engelbert Humperdinck's melodrama *Königskinder*; a few years later, Max von Schilling employed it in his melodrama, *Das Hexenlied* (1902). Humperdinck used the term "bound melodrama" (*gebundenes Melodram*) to describe the style of *Sprechnoten* (Humperdinck's term) in *Königskinder*: a passage of text declaimed in a precise rhythm against a musical background.² Humperdinck replaced traditional oval noteheads with "x"s, but still notated them on a full staff with a clear melodic contour.

¹ Several artists have recorded *Pierrot lunaire* more than once: Mary Thomas, Jane Manning, Lina Åkerlund, Alice Howland, and Phyllis Bryn-Julson.

² Edward F. Kravitt, "The Joining of Words and Music in Late Romantic Melodrama," *The Musical Quarterly* 62 (October 1976): 575.

Example 1. 1: Humperdinck, *Königskinder*, Act I



Melodrama—a genre or technique in which text was declaimed against a musical background or was spoken between musical interludes—became a popular art form during the mid-eighteenth century. Early examples from this period include Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Pygmalion* (set to music by Coignet in 1770, and then again by Georg Benda in 1779), and Benda's *Ariadne* (1775). Melodrama fell out of popularity during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, but experienced a resurgence in the late nineteenth century with Humperdinck's *Königskinder*, Richard Strauss' *Enoch Arden* (1897), and Max von Schillings' *Das Hexenlied* (1902). *Königskinder* is of particular interest in that it was the first time speech-like declamation was given precise rhythms and intervals.³

Early performances of *Königskinder* in Europe created quite a stir. In spite of the immensely lyrical, highly Romantic, post-Wagnerian music, the public simply would not endorse this new method of text declamation.⁴ Critics complained that only a highly educated actor-musician could possibly execute the new technique. The composer ceded that this was, indeed, the case and eventually removed the *Sprechnoten*, replacing it with traditional notation, thus transforming the melodrama into an opera. In 1910 when *Königskinder*, the opera, made its way to America and the Metropolitan Opera, the *Sprechstimme* passages no longer existed—and *Königskinder* was extremely well-received.

³ Jonathan Dunsby, *Schoenberg: Pierrot lunaire*, Cambridge Music Handbooks, ed. Julian Rushton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2-6. See also Kravitt, 571-78; *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, s.v. "melodrama."

⁴ See Edward Kravitt's "The Joining of Words" for a more detailed description of *fin-de-siècle* melodrama.

Despite the fact that *Sprechstimme* had already been used, there is some disagreement as to whether Schoenberg had heard Humperdinck's work or even knew of its existence. Most scholars insist, however, that he must have heard it or at least known about it.⁵ First, when *Königskinder* received its premiere in 1897 in Munich, the calamity that ensued found its voice in two very important music periodicals—the *Neue musikalische Rundschau* of Prague and the *Allgemeine Musikzeitung* of Berlin. Edward Kravitt suggests that because Schoenberg was always interested in a good musical controversy, he must have been aware of the “war of words” that was ensuing.⁶ Additionally, *Königskinder* was performed in Vienna, where Schoenberg was living, only a few months after the Munich debacle. Finally, during Schoenberg's tenure with Ernst von Wolzogen's famous Berlin *Überbrettel* in the early 1900s, Schoenberg worked alongside Waldemar Wendland, a musician and former composition student of Humperdinck.⁷ Wendland worked as one of Wolzogen's conductors, therefore, it is not difficult to imagine that Humperdinck's relatively recent notational experiment in *Königskinder* could have been a topic of conversation between Wendland and Schoenberg.

The voice of opposition to this theory came from Schoenberg's close friend and frequent collaborator, Edward Steuermann, who insisted that Schoenberg had never attended or even heard of Humperdinck's opera. In an interview with Gunther Schuller, Steuermann addressed the question as to the origin of *Sprechstimme* for Schoenberg. “It originated in Schoenberg's mind. It

⁵ Though there is no direct evidence that Schoenberg knew of Humperdinck's work, most scholars—including Reinhold Brinkmann and Edward Kravitt—concur that it is highly unlikely Schoenberg was unaware of Humperdinck's *Sprechnoten*.

⁶ Kravitt, 576.

⁷ H. H. Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg: His Life, World and Work*, trans. Humphrey Searle (London: John Calder Publishers Ltd., 1977), 51.

was—if you will—an inspiration.”⁸ When asked if Schoenberg knew of Humperdinck's and von Schilling's works, Steuermann replied:

I don't think he did. Since Schoenberg lived, so to speak, in a completely different world, it is very unlikely that he heard any Humperdinck except perhaps *Hänsel und Gretel* . . . The idea of the “melodrama,” as it was called, was certainly generally known . . . but the way Schoenberg used it was certainly quite new . . . The explanation Schoenberg gave in his preface to *Pierrot* unfortunately solves only part of this problem.⁹

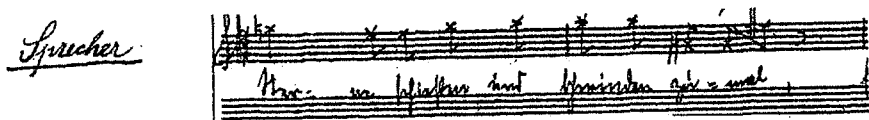
Regardless of Schoenberg's knowledge or familiarity with Humperdinck's use of the technique, certainly the way in which he used *Sprechstimme* in *Pierrot lunaire* was different than any use of it before or after.

Pierrot lunaire was not the first work in which Schoenberg tried this new device. *Sprechstimme* first appeared in Schoenberg's massive cantata/oratorio hybrid, the *Gurre-Lieder*. Primarily composed in 1900-01, it was then shelved and left unfinished for almost ten years; its publication in early 1912 predates *Pierrot*'s premiere by little more than six months. Schoenberg's notation of the *Sprecher* in the 1912 autograph study score of the *Gurre-Lieder*, as well as the 1920 published full score, is identical to Humperdinck's notation in *Königskinder*—“x” used in place of noteheads (Example 1.2). A differently notated *Sprechstimme*—open, diamond-shaped noteheads (similar to the notation of harmonics)—was used for brief, isolated portions of writing for the *Bauer* and *Männerchor*. In Alban Berg's 1913 piano reduction, however, the *Sprecher*'s notation was changed so that all of the *Sprechstimme* was notated as open diamond-shaped noteheads (Example 1.3).

⁸ Gunther Schuller, “A Conversation with Steuermann,” *Perspectives of New Music* 3 (1964-65): 25. This conversation was also later reprinted in Steuermann's book *The Not Quite Innocent Bystander* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1989), 169-85.

⁹ *Ibid.*

Example 1. 2: Schoenberg, *Gurre-Lieder*, Part III. 1912 autograph study score.



Example 1. 3: Schoenberg, *Gurre-Lieder*, Part III. 1913 Piano/Vocal Score, transcribed by Alban Berg.



Schoenberg's use of *Sprechstimme* in the *Gurre-Lieder* is neither as specifically-notated nor as pervasive as in *Pierrot lunaire* (and his later works which also utilize *Sprechstimme*), but then his intent for *Pierrot*'s recitation was different than for that of the *Gurre-Lieder*:

Regarding the melodramas in the *Gurre-Lieder*: the pitch notation is certainly not to be taken as seriously as in the *Pierrot* melodramas. The result here should by no means be such a songlike *Sprechmelodie* as in the latter . . . [There is] no [need to keep the] . . . interval proportions!¹⁰

One could infer from this letter that, at the time, Schoenberg viewed the recitation in *Pierrot lunaire* as having characteristics more closely aligned with sung melody than with speech.

Very little is definitively known about the genesis of Schoenberg's *Sprechstimme* and the process he went through to arrive at the final published version. Scholars have offered two possibilities as to the inspiration for Schoenberg's "new" vocal technique: the previously mentioned late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century melodrama, and the *fin-de-siècle* French and German

¹⁰ Arnold Schoenberg to Alban Berg, 14 January 1913. Juliane Brand, Donald Harris, and Christopher Hailey, eds. and trans., *The Berg – Schoenberg Correspondence: Selected Letters* (New York: Norton, 1987), 143.

cabarets.¹¹ Unfortunately, Schoenberg never addressed the genesis and evolution of *Sprechstimme* in the intervening years between the *Gurre-Lieder* and *Pierrot lunaire*, nor did he discuss it when he incorporated a revised *Sprechstimme* notation (less pitch-specific) in later works, such as *Ode to Napoleon*, op. 41 (1942), and *A Survivor from Warsaw*, op. 46 (1947). And so we are left to surmise. We do know that the notation of the *Sprechstimme* as it exists in its published form did not exist in the early *Pierrot* manuscripts. The first complete manuscript and the subsequent Fair Copy contain a *Sprechstimme* notation that is identical to that of the *Sprecher* in the *Gurre-Lieder* full score, as well as Humperdinck's *Königskinder*—"x" as the notehead instead of on the stem (Example 1.4). Additionally, the positioning of the vocal line in these two early manuscripts also differs from the final printed version: the recitation line is notated at the top, above the instrumental ensemble. By the first printed edition of the score, the notation had changed, as had the placement of the recitation line: the "x"s were moved to the stem, and the recitation line was placed within the ensemble, directly above the piano but under the other instrumental parts (Example 1.5).¹²

¹¹ Pierre Boulez offers in his book *Orientations*, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, trans. Martin Cooper (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 331-32, that the likely influence was the Parisian literary cabaret, *Chat Noir*, as well as Schoenberg's own time spent working in Berlin's literary cabaret, Ernst von Wolzogen's *Überbrettel*. Additional references to the influence of the French and German literary cabarets can be found in: Dunsby, 2-6; Kravitt, 571-90; Michael Rosewall, "Schoenberg's Enigma: The Performance of *Sprechstimme*," *Journal of Singing* 59, no. 1 (Sept./Oct. 2002): 34; and Bryan Simms, *The Atonal Music of Arnold Schoenberg, 1908-1923*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 135.

¹² Reinhold Brinkmann, "What the Sources Tell Us . . . A Chapter of *Pierrot* Philology," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 10 (June 1987): 24. Brinkmann presents a thorough examination of Schoenberg's compositional process, identifying and explaining the numerous *Pierrot* sources. The first complete autograph score is held at the Library of Congress, and the fair copy is housed at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City.

Example 1. 4: Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, "Mondestrunken," mm. 23-25. Fair Copy. Used by permission, The Robert Owen Lehman Collection, on deposit at The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

Handwritten musical score for Example 1.4, showing a vocal line on a staff with lyrics: "den Wein, den man mit Augen trinkt gießt nachts der Mond in Augen". The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 3/4. The lyrics are written in German.

Example 1. 5: Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, "Mondestrunken," mm. 23-25. Published score.

Published musical score for Example 1.5, showing a vocal line on a staff with lyrics: "Den Wein, den man mit Augen trinkt, gießt nachts der Mond in Augen". The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 3/4. The lyrics are written in German.

One can only speculate as to the reason for the change in notation and placement of the vocal line. In regard to notation, the movement of the "x" to the stem allowed for greater specificity and clarity of pitch and rhythm. It was difficult to notate the duration of half notes and whole notes with the "x" as the notehead. In the early manuscripts, Schoenberg notated these longer rhythms in one of three ways: placing two "x"s side by side to represent the half note; using the diamond-shaped note to represent the half or whole note; or less frequently, using the traditional half or whole note, but with an "x" drawn through the notehead (Example 1.6). Any of these notational methods makes it significantly more difficult to visually discern the different rhythms. Therefore, it would appear to be for practical purposes, in part, that the notation was altered. Additionally, though Schoenberg spoke little about his desires regarding the degree of adherence to pitch (only that it was to be taken "more seriously" in *Pierrot* than in the *Gurre-Lieder*) or the reason for the change in notation, it is

plausible that the more specific notation emphasizes some sort of pitch prominence.

Example 1. 6: Schoenberg *Pierrot lunaire*, "Nacht," m. 6-8. Used by permission, The Robert Owen Lehman Collection, on deposit at The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

Handwritten musical score for Example 1.6, showing a vocal line on a staff with lyrics: "Im. na. Genk. kein ge. schloes. Leu. ... ha. Sied". The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 3/4. The lyrics are written in German.

As to the change in placement of the vocal line, one could argue that it was due to Schoenberg's desire for the vocalist to be better integrated into the ensemble. The position of the vocal line in the original score resembles that of any other traditional solo or vocal chamber work: the voice is shown as the primary instrument (therefore, placed on top) being *accompanied* by piano or chamber ensemble, all of which were visually set apart from, and below, the voice. But this traditional arrangement was not at all what Schoenberg envisioned. He believed that the instrumental ensemble was not subsidiary to the voice but that the voice and the ensemble were on equal footing, each taking turns in the presentation of important musical material. Even in performance, Schoenberg preferred for the vocalist to be closer to the ensemble as opposed to completely set apart from it.¹³ Integration and unity being the goal, it seems a rather strategic change to place the vocal line within the ensemble in the layout of the score.

¹³ Josef Rufer, *The Works of Arnold Schoenberg: A Catalogue of his Compositions, Writings, and Paintings*, trans. Dika Newlin (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 40; Joan Allen Smith, "Schoenberg's Way," *Perspectives of New Music* 18 (Spring/Summer 1980): 277. In Schoenberg's 1949 letter to Hans Rosbaud (quoted in Rufer), he acknowledged that balance had been an issue in the recording and that the ideal presentation was to have the Speaker somewhat separated from the ensemble, making the vocal line distinct as well as giving the instruments their due credit. In Smith's article, in which she interviewed Erika Stiedry-Wagner (the Reciter on Schoenberg's 1940 recording) and Rudolf Kolisch (Austrian violinist—and Schoenberg's brother-in-law—who participated in numerous Schoenberg premieres), Kolisch and Stiedry-Wagner both acknowledged that she stood in the midst of the ensemble. Kolisch commented that Schoenberg believed "the speaking voice was equivalent to any other instrument," and that it "ought to be one of the voices and not a solo with accompaniment" (277-78).

What Did Schoenberg Want?

Why has *Sprechstimme* continued to be a hotbed of controversy since *Pierrot*'s premiere over ninety years ago? Before that can be addressed, one must first examine what is known and can be inferred about *Sprechstimme* based on the primary sources available: Schoenberg's Preface to *Pierrot lunaire*; his letters, essays, and interviews; and his two recordings from 1940.¹⁴

Though scholars and performers have spent decades debating what Schoenberg truly intended and actually wanted, his general concerns and desires are well-presented in the Preface to the first printed edition from 1914 and should not be easily dismissed:

The melody given in the *Sprechstimme* by means of notes is not intended for singing (except for specially marked isolated exceptions). The task of the performer is to transform it into a speech-melody, taking into account the given pitch. This is achieved by:

I. Maintaining the rhythm as accurately as if one were singing, i.e. with no more freedom than would be allowed with a singing melody;

II. Becoming acutely aware of the difference between **singing tone** and **speaking tone**: singing tone unalterably stays on pitch, whereas speaking tone gives the pitch but immediately leaves it again by falling and rising. However, the performer must be very careful not to adopt a *singsong* speech pattern. That is not intended at all. Nor should one strive for realistic, natural speech. On the contrary, the difference between ordinary speaking and speaking

¹⁴ The Columbia recording from September 1940 with Schoenberg conducting is well-known. There is, however, a partial recording—not commercially released—but recorded later that same year. It was found in the Rodgers & Hammerstein Archive of Recorded Sound in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The incomplete performance took place in the New York Town Hall on November 17, 1940, and was sponsored by the New Friends of Music. The concert was then radio broadcast in New York. See Avior Byron, "Schoenberg as Performer: an Aesthetic in Practice," (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 2006) and "The Test Pressings of Schoenberg Conducting *Pierrot lunaire: Sprechstimme* Reconsidered," *Music Theory Online* 12, no. 1 (February 2006).

that contributes to a musical form should become quite obvious. But it must never be reminiscent of singing.

Moreover, I stress the following concerning performances:

It is never the task of performers to recreate the mood and character of the individual pieces on the basis of the meaning of the words, but rather solely on the basis of the music. The extent to which the tone-painting-like rendering of the events and emotions of the text was important to the author is already found in the music. Where the performer finds it lacking, he should abstain from presenting something that was not intended by the author. He would not be adding, but rather detracting.¹⁵

Within the first sentence Schoenberg unequivocally states that the notes in the vocal line are not to be sung. Yet if they are not to be sung, why does he specifically notate pitches, and how can the performer avoid reproducing them exactly? Likewise, how are the pitches to be "taken well into account" if they are merely to be suggestive of pitch?¹⁶ Peter Stadlen's famous *Sprechstimme* article from 1981 suggests that Schoenberg anticipated a certain amount of confusion in regard to his Preface and that he, himself, was struggling with the representation and execution of *Sprechstimme*: there was "a conflict, from the very beginning, in Schoenberg's mind between a desire for speech character and another, seemingly incompatible desire for an exact rendering of the notes."¹⁷

Based on this preface, one may infer that the goal of the Reciter is to create a melodic speech which acknowledges the pitches ("taking into account")

¹⁵ Arnold Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, op. 21 (Los Angeles: Belmont Music Publishers, 1990), Preface.

¹⁶ In Schoenberg's first draft of *Pierrot*, though he wrote no official preface, he did make some comments on the first page of the score (which happened to be "Gebet an Pierrot," no. 9 in the published score): "The recitation should hint at the pitch"; and later, ". . . it is the duty of the performer to perform the rhythm absolutely precisely, and to transform the notated melody into a *Sprechmelodie* by always keeping the relationship between the pitches." Is there a significant difference in meaning between these early notes and the published preface? If anything, the later language seems slightly stronger in its recommendation of attention to pitch. For another reading, see Byron, "The Test Pressings of Schoenberg," [2.5-2.7].

¹⁷ Peter Stadlen, "Schoenberg's Speech-Song," *Music & Letters* 62 (January 1981): 4.

but does not steadfastly maintain them. This can be accomplished primarily two ways. First, the Reciter is to adhere to the rhythm as written without taking any more liberties than one might assume in any piece of sung music. Second—and this is the grey area which leads performers down an uncertain and murky path—one must know one's own voice well enough to be able to clearly distinguish between speech and song and then find the correct balance between the two. Schoenberg must have understood that here lies the crux of the matter and the conflict that has plagued singers for almost a century. Up until the early 1900s, singers had lived in a world of shimmering vibrato, the omnipotence of fixed pitch, and a literal interpretation and application of pitches and their rhythms. In Schoenberg's newly-created paradigm, however, the performer must be willing and able to divorce herself from the exact duration of the initial notated pitch; that is, if a certain *Sprechstimme* pitch is written as a dotted quarter note, she must acknowledge that the majority of that duration is spent falling—or less frequently, rising—toward the next pitch. It is, perhaps, no wonder that many of the early interpreters of *Pierrot* were actresses—women who were more accustomed to using a wider range and inflectional palette of speech than singers, and could better understand the flexibility of tone required for the work.

The charge put to the performer is, in fact, to find a way to declaim the text so that one develops neither a “sing-song” tone nor a natural (albeit heightened) form of speech. This is no small task. The vocal range of regular, present-day speech encompasses only a major second to a minor third; the recitation of lyrical poetry spans a fourth; comedy approximately a fifth to a sixth; and classical verse performances (Shakespeare) all the way up to a seventh.¹⁸ Recordings of early twentieth century poetic recitations actually have reciters whose spoken range during performance reaches an octave and a half. Schoenberg's score actually encompasses two and a half octaves, a range which once prompted Pierre Boulez (a frequent conductor of the work) to remark that

¹⁸ Friedrich Cerha, “Zur Interpretation der Sprechstimme in Schönbergs *Pierrot lunaire*,” *Musik-Konzepte* 112/113 (July 2001): 66.

the range is both too high and too low.¹⁹ Schoenberg continues in the Preface that there should be an appreciable difference between ordinary speaking and that which contributes to a larger musical form. But again, it should never resemble singing. A clear line of demarcation between singing and *Sprechstimme* becomes even more important because of the handful of instances in the score where Schoenberg *does* instruct the Reciter to *sing*. These occurrences are clearly notated in the score so that there can be no confusion as to what is to be sung (no “x” plus the written instruction “gesungen”) and what is to be performed as *Sprechstimme* (“x” on the stem, as well as the word “gesprochen” when following a sung passage).

Example 1. 7: Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, “Rote Messe,” mm. 24-25.



It is Schoenberg's final instruction in the Preface that is the most enigmatic: do not add that which is not already present in the score. This sounds simple enough, but it is unclear what the intended parameters were and what kinds of additions would be considered inappropriate. It is, perhaps, an exaggeration when he stresses that it is not the task of the performer to recreate the mood or the character based on the text alone, but rather solely on the music; it is the marriage of the text and the music that makes this work effective. If the music alone were able to communicate everything necessary and even everything Schoenberg intended, there would be no need for the text. One can only assume that he does not mean to imply that the performance should be rigid and without expression, but that the more theatrical devices should be avoided. Many

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

performers have added various vocal characterizations which were not instructed by the composer (e.g. sounding “sickly” in no. 7, “Der kranke Mond”²⁰), as well as exaggerated articulations and dynamics, and instances of overt tone painting not indicated in the score. Schoenberg’s instructions could be understood as this: where the performer feels that she is aiding the listener in the interpretation and understanding of the piece—that she is adding more emotion and clarity to the piece through her dramatic characterizations—the composer insists such embellishment does just the opposite. All of the emotions and intentions of the character already exist in the music.

By extension, Schoenberg was adamant that the Reciter should not dress in costume for *Pierrot lunaire*, including traditional Pierrot garb: white and black flowing pants, tunic, ruffled collar, and painted white face. He believed this only trivialized the event and again, detracted instead of added to the music.²¹

²⁰ Arnold Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, Op. 21, Jane Manning, soprano; The Nash Ensemble, cond. Simon Rattle. Analog Disc. Chandos CHAN 6534 (London: 1977, released on CD 1991).

²¹ Albertine Zehme, the first Reciter, most likely dressed as Pierrot for the October 16th Berlin premiere. There is some dispute as to whether she dressed as Pierrot or Colombine, Pierrot’s love interest. Most authors—Steuermann, Boulez, the interview between Stiedry-Wagner and Joan Smith, as well as a 1912 *New York Review*—agree that she was dressed as Pierrot, much to Schoenberg’s chagrin. There is one source, *Arnold Schoenberg* by H. H. Stuckenschmidt (London: Calder, 1959) 60, which says that Zehme dressed as Colombine. This is most certainly erroneous, and has unfortunately been cited by several other authors (Jonathan Dunsby, John Crawford, Sharon Mabry). Given Zehme’s flair for the dramatic, her performances of Otto Vrieslander’s *Pierrot lunaire* melodrama in 1911 in which she dressed as Pierrot, as well as the corroboration of the aforementioned reliable authors, it is likely that she was dressed as Pierrot. Steuermann and Stiedry-Wagner both say that Schoenberg disapproved of her costuming; as Colombine’s traditional dress (a dress, perhaps an apron, and a hat) would hardly be that different from a woman’s everyday attire, it is unlikely that Schoenberg would have protested to something that insignificant. Schoenberg’s opposition might also be due to the fact that he organized a cycle of songs in which the narrator frequently changes, therefore it is likely that he wouldn’t want the Reciter to dress as a character that is clearly not always the narrator (see Reinhold Brinkmann’s article “The Fool as Paradigm: Schönberg’s *Pierrot lunaire* and the Modern Artist” published in Konrad Boehmer’s book, *Schönberg and Kandinsky: An Historic Encounter* (Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), 158). Also, as Zehme was paying the fee of 1500 Marks for the commission (see the contract between Schoenberg and Zehme as shown in Arnold Schoenberg’s *Sämtliche Werke*, “*Pierrot lunaire*” *Kritischer Bericht*, ed. Reinhold Brinkmann, section 6, series B, vol. 24, part 1 (Mainz: Schott; Vienna: Universal Edition, 1995), 227), it is not unlikely that she determined that the premiere would run according to her liking. Frau Zehme performed in front of a screen while Schoenberg and the instrumentalists were concealed behind it. This was an arrangement that Schoenberg did not endorse and never used again. In fact, in later

Though the Preface is frequently viewed as ambiguous and incomplete, there are several other sources that emphasize what Schoenberg may have wanted for the Reciter in *Pierrot lunaire*. As was previously mentioned, many of the early interpreters of *Pierrot* were actresses, including Albertine Zehme, the woman who commissioned and premiered the work. Schoenberg could have employed a singer for subsequent performances, but he did not. In fact, the Reciter most “approved” of and sanctioned by Schoenberg was another actress, Erika Stiedry-Wagner. While it is true that many of these actresses had some musical training (as was not uncommon at the time), they were first and foremost actresses, many of whom would emphasize that fact, including Stiedry-Wagner.²² In the early 1920s, several years after the premiere, the singers Marie Gutheil-Schoder and Marya Freund were brought to Schoenberg to “audition” for a European tour of *Pierrot*, but after several rehearsals, it became evident that neither would be able to do it; Gutheil-Schoder because of insufficient rehearsal time, and Freund because her interpretation was not at all what Schoenberg had envisioned. Schoenberg wrote in a letter to Frau Freund:

There are a number of things regarding the performance of my works which I would like to talk over with you. I am anxious to explain to you why I cannot allow any will but mine to prevail in realizing the musical thoughts which I have recorded on paper, and why realizing them must be done in such deadly earnest, with such inexorable severity, because the composing was done in just that way.²³

correspondence Schoenberg expressed that the voice should be part of the fabric of the ensemble, not set apart, and not more important than the instruments. If anything, he considered the voice subsidiary to the instruments (see letter to Hans Rosbaud in Josef Rufer’s book *The Works of Arnold Schoenberg: A Catalogue of His Compositions, Writings, and Paintings*, trans. Dika Newlin (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), 40). The stage arrangements at the premiere have led several authors to presumptuously and erroneously assume that Schoenberg approved of the theatrical presentation (see John Crawford, “The Relationship of Text and Music in the Vocal Works of Arnold Schoenberg, 1908-1924” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1983), 232; and Sharon Mabry, “Vocal Problems in the Performance of Schoenberg’s *Pierrot lunaire*, op. 21” (D.M.A. diss., George Peabody College for Teachers, 1977), 169-71). These added effects were not endorsed by the composer and would therefore detract from his concept of the work.

²² Joan Allen Smith, *Schoenberg and His Circle: A Viennese Portrait* (New York: Macmillan, Inc., 1986), 99; Smith, *Perspectives of New Music*, 278.

²³ Stuckenschmidt, 283.

She was then replaced by Stiedry-Wagner. Frau Wagner not only toured the Continent with Schoenberg, performing *Pierrot* in Prague, Amsterdam, Italy, Greece, France, and Spain, but she was also Schoenberg's Reciter of choice for the first *Pierrot* recording.

Though the musical complexity of the score did prove to be exceptionally difficult for these early interpreters, it is clear by Schoenberg's choice of performers that he preferred a rendering that was more influenced by heightened speech than singing. In 1922, two versions of *Pierrot* were performed in the home of Alma Mahler-Werfel, the first with Erika Stiedry-Wagner reciting and Schoenberg conducting, and the second with the French-Polish singer Marya Freund, and Darius Milhaud conducting. Not only was the second performance *sung*, but it was sung in French (not Giraud's original poetry, but a re-worked translation by Freund).²⁴ Upon hearing the second version, Alma Mahler reported in her diary that "Schoenberg scarcely recognized his work—but the majority of those present were for Milhaud's interpretation. Doubtless, it was more original in Schoenberg's more rhythmical style of accented speaking than in the sung, where one noticed rather the similarity with Debussy. The authentic interpretation was naturally the one by Schoenberg-Stein."²⁵ Anton Webern, Schoenberg's pupil who also was in attendance, remarked in a letter to Heinrich Jalowetz that "they [Milhaud and Freund] did not grasp the thing correctly. Freund kept to the written pitches with painstaking care. It became singing, etc.,

²⁴ Darius Milhaud, "Of Arnold Schoenberg on His Seventieth Birthday: Personal Recollections," *The Musical Quarterly* 30 (1944): 382, quoted in Lorraine Gorrell, "Performing the *Sprechstimme* in Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, op. 21," *Journal of Singing* 55, no. 2 (November/December 1998): 10.

²⁵ Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Mein Leben* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996), 151, as quoted in Smith, 88. Mahler-Werfel's accounting of the day is slightly different than Milhaud's (and also as mentioned in Stuckenschmidt, 279)—she reports that it was Schoenberg's pupil, Erwin Stein, who conducted the Stiedry-Wagner performance, not Schoenberg.

somehow it did not work."²⁶ For *Pierrot* to suddenly sound like Debussy, great liberties must have been taken with the execution of the vocal line.

Stiedry-Wagner expressed that one must be a *Sprecher*—one must know how to speak, not how to sing—and that Schoenberg frequently told her how wrong it was to sing it.²⁷ In a frequently cited letter to the Hungarian composer Alexander Jemnitz dated April 15, 1931, Schoenberg wrote:

Pierrot lunaire is not to be sung! Song melodies must be balanced and shaped in quite a different way from spoken melodies [*Sprechmelodien*]. You would entirely distort the work if you had it sung, and everyone who said "That's no way of writing for singing!" would be right. I must tell you that I was for a long time angry with Frau Freund for making the same mistake, and I am convinced that this hint will suffice to keep you from any such infringement . . .²⁸

In August of 1940, after Schoenberg had immigrated to America, he wrote a letter to Frau Wagner and her husband, the conductor Fritz Stiedry, shortly before they were to record *Pierrot*, "We must thoroughly freshen up the speaking part, too . . . I intend to catch perfectly that light, ironical, satirical tone in which the piece was actually conceived. Then, too, times and ideas have changed a lot . . ."²⁹ And in a letter from 1949, Schoenberg wrote to a composer who was planning on engaging Marya Freund as the Reciter, "I should merely like to emphasize that none of these poems is meant to be sung, but must be spoken without fixed pitch."³⁰ And in that same year, a letter to the conductor Hans Rosbaud (who recorded *Pierrot*

²⁶ Ernst Lichtenhahn, ed. *Anton Webern: Briefe an Heinrich Jalowetz* (Mainz: Schott, 1999), 503, as cited in Avior Byron's "Sprechstimme Reconsidered Once Again: '... though Mrs. Stiedry is never in pitch'," *Music Theory Online* 13, no. 2 (June 2007): [12].

²⁷ Smith, 100.

²⁸ Erwin Stein, ed., *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, trans. Eithne Wilkens and Ernst Kaiser (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 149.

²⁹ Rufer, 40.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

in 1957 with Jeanne Héricard³¹) in reference to Schoenberg's own recording, "In some respects—tempo, presentation of mood, and above all the playing of the instrumentalists—they are really good, even very good. They are not so good with respect to the balance of instruments and recitation . . . who [the recitation], after all, never *sings* [my italics] the theme, but, at most, speaks against it . . ."³²

Finally, inasmuch as primary sources are concerned, there is the first recording of *Pierrot* from 1940. In the previously cited letter that Schoenberg wrote to Frau Wagner and her husband, Schoenberg went on to say that he was aware that two weeks of rehearsal was not a sufficient amount of time to prepare a work that would be "worthy of being immortalized on records as the authentic performance."³³ Based on this letter, one could assume that the final product on Schoenberg's recording is perhaps not how he heard it in his ear;³⁴ nevertheless, he was, in general, pleased with Frau Wagner's interpretation and continued to use her for additional performances. Just as there are recordings in which the vocal line is almost entirely sung,³⁵ in Schoenberg's recording, Frau Wagner seems to go out of her way to avoid the prescribed pitches (with the exception of the pitches that are marked *gesungen*, which she executes with relative accuracy). Not only are most of the *Sprechstimme* pitches completely ignored, but she frequently shapes the line differently, going against the direction of Schoenberg's notated melody. Wagner's performances of *Pierrot* received both praise and censure from Schoenberg's close circle of friends and colleagues. In a letter to Schoenberg, Stein stated that Wagner was "quite good" rhythmically but that "... whether she will really be completely good, I can't say, but she will be reasonable

³¹ Interestingly enough, this recording is one of the more *spoken* recordings in the entire discography.

³² Rufer, 40.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ For an alternate reading see Byron, "*Sprechstimme* Reconsidered Once Again."

³⁵ See the recordings of Ilona Steingruber-Wildgans (1961), Yvonne Minton (1977), and Leslie Boucher (1993), to name but a few.

anyway." In 1921, after hearing Wagner twice, Steuermann wrote to Schoenberg: "She is musical enough to learn it, has a nice *Sprechstimme* . . . It seems to me that artistically she is able to follow everything."³⁶ Berg and Webern were also infamous for their harsh criticism of Wagner's abilities as a singer and musician.³⁷

Beyond studying Schoenberg's writings pertaining to the performance of *Sprechstimme* (as well as the recordings he conducted), there is simply no substitute for spending time in the score itself. A fountain of information on the notated page should—in conjunction with Schoenberg's written statements—provide many of the tools necessary for an effective rendering of the vocal line.

Performing *Sprechstimme*

In order to master a vocal technique which seems to have endless performance possibilities, the performer must establish a rubric of how she intends to render the *Sprechstimme*—which vocal qualities transform the line into *Sprechstimme*, and just as importantly, which vocal qualities do not. The first place to look for guidance is, again, Schoenberg's Preface to the score. From there we know the vocal line is not to be sung; pitch is to be taken into account; rhythm is to be maintained; pitch should be attained and then immediately left by rising or falling away from it. As far as describing the technical means required to perform the *Sprechstimme*, however, the Preface is lacking. One technical issue not addressed in the Preface, but which is crucial in distinguishing *Sprechstimme* passages from non-*Sprechstimme* passages, is vibrato. The impression, or perception, of singing results from the presence of vibrato;³⁸ ergo, the absence or minimizing of vibrato will lend itself more favorably to producing

³⁶ Erwin Stein to Arnold Schoenberg, 13 January 1921; Edward Steuermann to Arnold Schoenberg, 10 February 1921. Byron, "*Sprechstimme* Reconsidered Once Again," [9-10].

³⁷ Byron, "*Sprechstimme* Reconsidered Once Again," [11].

³⁸ Stadlen, 10.

Sprechstimme.³⁹ This is especially important in the perception and reception of the sung versus the not-sung pitches. If every pitch has substantial vibrato, then it is almost impossible to distinguish the few sung pitches from the rest of the score which is not to be sung. The absence of vibrato, however, does not exclusively mean that the sound produced will be *Sprechstimme*. In Vladimir Golschmann's recording of *Pierrot*, the Reciter, Ilona Steingruber-Wildgans, sings almost the entire score—with almost no vibrato, but also without the required speech-like qualities. Steingruber-Wildgans sings practically every note in that she fails to leave each pitch immediately after producing it, as instructed in Schoenberg's Preface. Conversely, rising and falling from the pitch also does not exclusively render the declamation as *Sprechstimme*. Mary Thomas' 1973 recording (with David Atherton, conductor) delivers a vocal line with much rising and falling, but also with an excessive amount of vibrato. The vibrato between the pitches is exaggerated, and again, it becomes difficult to discern which pitches are to be sung and which are not. It is the combination of a minimized, practically imperceptible vibrato and the immediate abandonment of the original pitch that produces the desired speech-like declamation necessary for performing *Sprechstimme*.

Schoenberg tells the performer in the Preface that there is to be a rising and falling away from the pitch; he does not, however, address exactly *how* that is to be done, or if it is to be done on every pitch. In general, there are two primary means of leaving pitch as heard on the recordings: *portamento* and sliding. Both should be done subtly and tastefully so that the focus remains on the text and not

³⁹ Vibrato may be defined as "the *audible* [my italics], regular pulsation, oscillation, or fluctuation of a single pitch that varies no more than a semitone . . ." (Clifton Ware, *Basics of Vocal Pedagogy* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 180.) Dr. Ware continues: "Such a variation in pitch is normally perceived by the ear as a quality characteristic of the tone rather than a pitch deviation." The frequency of a normal, classical vibrato is 5-7 cycles per second and involves a fluctuation in pitch. As vibrato is lessened, the number of cycles (or oscillations) per second is reduced, and the fluctuation in pitch is also narrowed. Therefore what is perceived as a "straight tone" is a tone that still has oscillation, but perhaps to an inaudible or imperceptible extent. Vibrato, as used in this paper, is referring to the *audible* fluctuation in pitch which is a desirable quality in most classical singing.

the technique. A vocal *portamento* is the legato movement between two pitches in which discrete, intermediary pitches are discernable (as is prevalent in much late nineteenth-century operatic literature—Puccini, Mascagni, Verdi). Sliding, in contrast, is the continuous, legato movement between two pitches where individual pitches are not aurally discernable at any given point.⁴⁰ This is an important distinction; the majority of the *Sprechstimme* in *Pierrot* should be rendered with subtle *sliding* between the notes, particularly notes of long duration. This can be inferred from the style of the *Sprechstimme* heard on Schoenberg's recordings, as well as from the score itself. In places where Schoenberg specifically wants a *portamento* (or according to the score, *glissando*⁴¹), it is indicated by a wavy or dotted line between two notes (Examples 1.8 and 1.9).

⁴⁰ The primary vocal difference between a *portamento* and a slide is the perceptible presence or absence of vibrato, respectively, as well as the length of time spent on the initial pitch. A slide is, essentially, a *portamento* with minimal to no vibrato. A slide reinforces no particular discrete pitch or tonal center because audible vibration is practically eliminated; we are no longer able to perceive the natural oscillations that occur during vibrato, therefore no specific pitch center is emphasized. Sliding also abandons the initial pitch immediately, often in the direction of the next pitch. In the case of *Pierrot*, however, the performer will slide away from a pitch regardless of whether or not another pitch follows. The slide, therefore, is neither dependent upon nor in search of the next pitch as a discrete goal. Vibrato, however, does emphasize a center of pitch—regardless of the width of the vibrato, there is a central pitch around which the vibration occurs (thus why one can refer to something as vibrating under, above, or in the center of the pitch). Because discrete pitches are heard in a vocal *portamento*, it is logical to assume that some kind of pitch centrality is present; therefore, vibrato must be present. *Portamento* is also characterized by when it occurs. *Portamento* does not occur until after a pitch has been sounded and clearly established. It then has a specific trajectory toward the next pitch. A *portamento* will not occur at the end of a phrase or line; a *portamento* will always have another note as its goal. *Portamento* in *Pierrot*, when overused, tends to make the piece sound parodistic of late nineteenth-century opera—certainly an undesirable effect in this atonal piece. The pervasive, more intrusive *portamento*, if not specifically notated in the score should be considered an extra-musical addition that detracts from the intended effect.

⁴¹ Schoenberg notates this exaggerated, pronounced motion between two pitches as a *glissando* (Example 1.9). This brings up a critical disagreement that exists in verbiage. At least two other sources frequently refer to the general execution of *Sprechstimme* in terms of *glissando* (Sharon Mabry's dissertation, 1977; Erwin Stein's *Orpheus in New Guises*, 87); as this is primarily an instrumental term, it holds little association for vocalists and is, therefore, an inappropriately-used term. Because there is no real agreement or definition of how a *glissando* would be executed by the voice, Schoenberg's notation of such movement is vague and only suggestive at best. Where Schoenberg notates a *glissando* in the vocal part, the vocalist should perform it as a *portamento*.

Example 1. 8: Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, "Rote Messe," mm. 11-12.

musical score for Example 1.8, showing a vocal line with lyrics and performance markings. The tempo markings are *molto rit.*, *fff.*, and *Tempo*. The lyrics are: *- die gott - geweihte, zer - reißt die Prie*

Example 1. 9: Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, "Enthauptung," m. 20.

musical score for Example 1.9, showing piano accompaniment for B-Kl. (B), Br., and Viol. with lyrics. The tempo marking is *gliss.*. The lyrics are: *nie - der der Mond, das blau - ke*

Because a *portamento* presents discrete pitches (with the smallest interval being the semi-tone), it would be almost impossible to perform a true *portamento* between two notes that are intervallically close together (a tone or semi-tone) but are separated by a relatively long duration.

Example 1. 10: Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, "O alter Duft," mm. 1-3.

musical score for Example 1.10, showing a vocal line with lyrics and tempo marking. The tempo marking is *Bewegt (♩ = ca 60)*. The lyrics are: *O al - ter Duft aus Mür - chenzeit,*

In sliding, however, microtones—intervals smaller than the semitone—are present. Sliding allows the performer to easily move between notes that outline a small intervallic distance but are of a long rhythmic duration. This can also be achieved more subtly and with a great deal more nuance than the generally more conspicuous *portamento* which, by its very nature, is more dramatic within the context of this work. Erwin Stein cautions performers about this very issue and frequently talks of *gliding* between notes: a *portamento* should not be used to link the intervals except for the few places where Schoenberg notates such a movement.⁴²

In contrast with the more difficult-to-render pitches of long duration, shorter rhythms (which are more closely related to speech) do not require the same intentional rising or falling from the pitch, neither do they require the same careful attention to non-vibrato that sustained notes do. As shown in Example 1.11, the movement between notes of a shorter duration will naturally sound more like highly inflected speech, exhibiting characteristics of the melodrama, and sounding more like heightened declamation and even less like singing.

Example 1. 11: Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, "Raub," mm. 6-7.

musical score for Example 1.11, showing a vocal line with lyrics. The lyrics are: *schlummern in den To - tenschreinen, drunten in den Grabgewölben.*

Tempo is also a crucial factor in the successful execution of *Pierrot's* *Sprechstimme* and so must be given careful consideration. Metronome markings are pervasive throughout, not only at the start of each song but often within individual songs as well. Schoenberg also indicates expressive markings alongside the tempi to aid the performers even further: song no. 2, "Colombine," is marked *Fließende* with the $\text{♩} = 42-48$; at m. 33, it is marked *viel langsamer* with

⁴² Erwin Stein, *Orpheus in New Guises* (Westport: Hyperion Press Inc., 1979), 87.

the $\text{♩} = 100$.⁴³ Schoenberg gives copious tempo and expressive suggestions to all the performers throughout the score; these can only improve one's interpretation and successful rendering of the *Sprechstimme*. The Reciter will experience more difficulty with the *Sprechstimme* if the given tempi are set aside in favor of slower tempi. For example, in one of René Leibowitz's recordings,⁴⁴ made in 1954 with soprano Ethel Semser, several of the tempi are well below that which Schoenberg notated. What flows in Schoenberg's recording (and other recordings which more strictly adhere to Schoenberg's tempi) becomes lugubrious and interminable—almost unperformable, actually—in Leibowitz's. In Leibowitz's recording, song no. 1, "Mondestrunken," is recorded at the $\text{♩} = 50$; this is well below the published *Bewegt*, $\text{♩} = 66-76$. An even more drastic change is no. 16, "Gemeinheit," where Schoenberg indicates that it should be performed *Ziemlich rasch* ("quite fast") with the $\text{♩} = \text{ca.} 126$; Leibowitz's comes in at a comparatively sluggish $\text{♩} = 76$! Tempi which are light and flowing with Schoenberg's markings become heavy and lethargic in Leibowitz's recording; those which should be fast and driving, become dirge-like and oppressive. English composer Alexander Goehr said, "generally, if the tempo is right the detail will come out right. Most wrong performances come about because the tempo is wrong."⁴⁵

One might argue, however, that a performer should be able to exercise a considerable amount of freedom in regard to tempo. Do a composer's wishes carry an equal amount of weight, if not more, when determining tempo and other defining musical issues? In a work like *Pierrot lunaire* where the tempo affects not only the overall shape of the piece but also the ability to successfully execute

⁴³ In Schoenberg's personal conducting score, he crossed out *viel*—"much"—and replaced it with *etwas*—"somewhat"—a more accurate description according to that metronome marking.

⁴⁴ Leibowitz was a former student of Schoenberg and Webern and an occasional collaborator with Schoenberg.

⁴⁵ Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 179.

the *Sprechstimme*, shouldn't Schoenberg's meticulously marked score be given priority?

Schoenberg briefly addressed the issue of composer authority in his 1926 essay "About Metronome Markings." The essay begins:

Conductors hold forth about metronome markings as if, whether successful or misguided, these offended their most sacred right—the right to make of the work what they succeed in getting out of it, and no more . . . Interpreter's rights; are there not also author's rights? Does not the author, too, have a claim to make clear his opinion about the realization of his work, even though no conductor of genius will neglect to override the author's opinion when the performance comes? Has not the author at least the right to indicate, in the copies of the work *he himself* publishes, how he imagines his ideas should be realized?⁴⁶

Schoenberg continued that it is, perhaps, the composer who best knows how his own piece should go and that those who feel the need to drastically alter the tempo do so because they are not capable of being musically successful with the author's indications.⁴⁷

Where are the boundary lines between speech and song? When is it no longer *Sprechstimme* but rather ordinary singing or simply highly inflected speech? Perhaps Schoenberg's recording with Erika Stiedry-Wagner errs on the side of melodrama-like, highly stylized speech; but Boulez's recording from 1977 with Yvonne Minton—as well as Staffan Larson's recording from 1993 with Ingrid Isaković—*is* nothing short of a sung *Lieder* cycle with chamber

⁴⁶ Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1975; reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 342.

⁴⁷ Schoenberg further elucidates, referring to the Adagio of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: . . . Beethoven writes M.M. $\text{♩} = 60$. That's awkward. But fortunately people have already discovered that all Beethoven's metronome-markings are wrong. So nobody plays it at 60 quarter-notes a minute, but, at the most, at 30. Obviously Beethoven's marking is correct, though. And only bunglers with no inkling of what is involved . . . are forced to take a slower tempo; and even so they are unable, when the tempo later quickens, to avoid an allegretto character. (*Ibid.*, 343)

Schoenberg is simply expressing a sentiment that was not unlike those of other well-known composers of his day (Ravel, Stravinsky, Britten) who were of the mindset that if one was not going to play their pieces as composed, then they ought not be played at all.

ensemble. Surely in the relatively large *Pierrot lunaire* discography and the numerous performances that continue to be presented every year there must be a happy medium that can be reached: a true synthesis between speech and song where one cannot say “oh, that’s clearly speaking” or “that’s most definitely just singing,” but rather the only label possibly available is that which Schoenberg intended, *Sprechstimme*.

Questions of Intentions and Ideals

Despite the substantial evidence indicating what Schoenberg wanted of and may have intended from the *Sprechstimme*, it is virtually impossible to know his every desire and intention and be able to realize them. In spite of all that can be explained, there is still much ambiguity as to how to vocally execute the *Sprechstimme*.

If we are to go by Schoenberg’s recordings, letters, essays, conversations, and performances, he clearly endorsed a *Sprechstimme* that erred on the side of speech. When giving instruction to various interpreters, his single admonition was always the same: it must never be sung! He never said, “Careful that you don’t speak it too much,” or “Above all else, take care and observe all the pitches.” Schoenberg rarely even addressed the Reciter’s pitches, even the ones that are actually to be sung.

But if he did not want to hear all of the precise pitches then why notate them so specifically and on a full staff just as though it were a melody to be sung? And what are we to make of the instances in the score where the voice is in direct correlation to the instruments? First, it is important to remember that this was Schoenberg’s first attempt at *Sprechstimme* on such a grand scale. The *Sprechstimme* of the *Gurre-Lieder* was not intended to be more than dramatic speech, and if we are to believe Edward Steuermann, *Sprechstimme* was Schoenberg’s innovation; if we believe that Schoenberg was aware of

Humperdinck’s and von Schilling’s works, then we must at least concede that Schoenberg’s pervasive use of *Sprechstimme* was entirely new, and that the gamut of its performance possibilities was largely untapped.

There are those *Sprechstimme* skeptics who believe that *Pierrot* should be more sung than spoken, citing as their support that had he not wanted it sung, he would not have precisely notated all of the pitches. This is a faulty conclusion drawn by those who are unable to allow for a technique and notation that was still in its evolutionary stages. Though Schoenberg did state that the *Sprechstimme* pitches in *Pierrot* are to be taken “more seriously” than those in the *Gurre-Lieder*, this does not mean that *Pierrot* should be sung. The *Sprechstimme* in the *Gurre-Lieder* has more intervallic freedom than that in *Pierrot*, and although Schoenberg did not want *Pierrot*’s vocal line sung, he did want the intervallic proportions maintained. That Schoenberg later changed his notation in *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, op. 41, and *A Survivor from Warsaw*, op. 46, shows that not only was Schoenberg likely not satisfied with *Pierrot*’s *Sprechstimme* notation because of the performance ambiguities that plagued this work during his lifetime, but also, as it was essentially his first attempt at it, his preferences for what and how *Sprechstimme* should be notated and performed could also change and evolve.⁴⁸ The *Sprechstimme* in *Pierrot lunaire* might indicate a notational deficit, but that does not necessarily indicate composer error in regard to what he envisioned.

Wanting to notate a recitation that was an integral part of the musical texture (and not just overlay as in melodrama or cabaret) was the difficult task with which Schoenberg was faced. The question arose then “whether it is actually possible to *speak* according to a notation devised for singing.”⁴⁹ Here is the crux of the matter! Is it simply that *Sprechstimme* is psychologically difficult because

⁴⁸ Both of these pieces were composed in the 1940s after Schoenberg had already recorded *Pierrot lunaire* and heard the success—or lack thereof—of what had been immortalized on a recording.

⁴⁹ Pierre Boulez, *Orientations*, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, trans. Martin Cooper (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 332.

the performer has trouble getting beyond that which has for over 400 years represented singing?

For example, the argument exists that if one does not sing the correct pitches in song no. 17, "Parodie," the sophisticated canonic writing (in which the voice is profoundly and motivically bound with the instruments) is totally lost and then therefore exists only on paper.⁵⁰ Nowhere in that particular song does Schoenberg write any special remarks instructing the Reciter to sing this song more than the others. A crucial point that is often forgotten when responding to this argument is that even if the pitches are not being performed accurately, the rhythmic contour of this song is so unique and meticulously crafted that as long as the vocalist is performing the correct rhythms, it would be almost impossible *not* to hear the correlation between the voice and the instruments. For a work without a preponderance of fixed vocal pitch, why should this one song suddenly be different? The highly organized, classical technique (the canon) is still aurally identifiable, and as long as the vocalist attempts to stay within the notated tessitura and accurately execute the rhythms, the effect should be realized.

Schoenberg endorsed a Reciter who was an actress by profession; this should speak volumes about how Schoenberg envisioned the final product. Stiedry-Wagner rarely performed any of the notated pitches; she also seldom conformed to the intervals specified, and occasionally did not even follow Schoenberg's contour. This could very easily set a precarious precedent for a *carte-blanche* execution of *Sprechstimme*. A free-for-all performance of *Pierrot* hardly seems ideal, but it is clear that Schoenberg adamantly refused a sung version and that he was more likely "prepared to accept any pitches whatsoever, with the sole exception of those which he had actually composed."⁵¹ In fact, the

⁵⁰ References to this can be found in the writings of William W. Austin, *Music in the 20th Century* (New York: W. W. & Norton Co., 1966), 209-10; Cerha, 69; and Crawford, 246.

⁵¹ Stadlen, 8.

preferred end result seems to be that it is better to have *unsung incorrect* pitches than sung *correct* ones.

Acknowledging the ambiguity as to what Schoenberg wanted is only half the battle. We then must move on to perhaps an even larger problem: how *do we* actually perform what is on the page? Is Schoenberg's recording of *Pierrot lunaire* the definitive answer? Stiedry-Wagner's rendering of the *Sprechstimme* only generally resembles Schoenberg's score, but because it is Schoenberg's recording should it be considered the authoritative performance? A composer's recording of a work is obviously a good place to start when trying to learn the intricacies of a new vocal technique, especially when the composer's explanatory notes do not fill in all the gaps.⁵² It is not, however, the *only* way to perform a piece, nor should it necessarily even be considered the definitive performance. The performer certainly has much to bring to the interpretation of a work; the goal is to provide a performance that is not only an accurate and faithful representation of the composer's desires and instructions (insofar as they are known), but also to provide an effective and artistic performance based on one's own interpretation and understanding of the score.

The modern interpreter of *Pierrot* certainly has more resources at her disposal than having to rely solely on Schoenberg's recording. We know, in essence, what *Sprechstimme* should and should not be, how it is notated and what that notation means theoretically, and even the fundamentals of how to perform it. But how does our modern understanding of it relate to what Schoenberg wanted from it, and were those ideals ever realized during his lifetime? Some would argue that because Erika Stiedry-Wagner was Schoenberg's Reciter of choice, he must have been happy with, and approving of, her interpretation and performance.

⁵² For example, Luciano Berio's *Circles* (for voice, percussion, and harp), 1960, presents a score full of symbols indicating "extended" vocal techniques, some of which are briefly explained in a glossary, others of which have no written explanation anywhere. Were it not for Cathy Berberian's recordings of *Circles* (and indeed, other works by Berio), the modern performer would have few, if any, clues as to how to perform all of the signs and symbols in Berio's scores.

If he was not, he surely would not have continued to utilize her talents. Even supposing that Schoenberg was wholly content with Stiedry-Wagner's performances, it is also possible that Schoenberg's desires and opinions could change over time, and that which pleased him in the 1920s may not have in the 1940s. Assuming that Schoenberg's recordings are the final and authoritative commentary on *Pierrot* would negate and essentially exclude any other interpretation that is not his own. Composer authority (or supremacy) suggests the beginning of a very slippery slope; it should not be taken as a piece's sole legitimate opinion.

One of the challenges in writing about *Sprechstimme* and *Pierrot lunaire*, specifically, is that it is difficult to explain something as specific and idiosyncratic as how one executes the technical demands of *Sprechstimme*. Other authors have attempted to do so, some with slightly more success than others.⁵³ Sharon Mabry's dissertation attempts to provide the necessary vocal requirements for *Sprechstimme*, but her suggestions add up to little more than the ingredients to a recipe without the instructions as to how they go together. Two other articles—by Stadlen and Stein—explain the technical requirements of *Sprechstimme* more by what *not* to do. Indeed that does seem to be the easier, less abstract route to take—defining *Sprechstimme* by explaining what it is *not* and how *not* to do it. Stadlen and Stein are also at a deficit because they are not vocal performers of the work. Performance experience lends a tremendous amount of credence and insight to performance practice-related issues. *Sprechstimme* is better taught and explained via oral tradition than by anything else. It is the combination of all the available resources—Schoenberg's Preface and score; letters, essays, and interviews; his sound recordings; and the last sixty-five years of sound recording history—that best provides the clues for a modern and authentic performance of *Pierrot lunaire*.

⁵³ See Mabry's dissertation "Vocal Problems in the Performance of Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, op. 21"; Peter Stadlen's article "Schoenberg's Speech-Song"; and Erwin Stein's *Orpheus in New Guises*.

There is simply no way to explain in print every nuance of something as complex as *Sprechstimme*. It cannot all exist in the notation or the Preface or anything else that Schoenberg could have done, short of recording the role of the Reciter himself.⁵⁴ Even then, how often are we as performers not capable of rendering something as perfectly and clearly as we hear it in our minds? In *Performing Music in the Age of Recording*, Robert Philip remarks:

The unnotated levels of freedom and nuance [in performance] . . . are like the gait of a walker, or the inflections of a person's speech. The question is not "Why is it absent from the notation?" but "How could notation ever be expected to convey all that?" Nobody imagines that the words on a page of a play include all the instructions needed to give a performance. . . .

. . . even in the work of a composer who notates things very precisely, the relationship between notation and performance is not straightforward.⁵⁵

In the end, we can only adhere as faithfully as possible to the score, Preface, and other instructions left to us by Schoenberg, as well as use the numerous sound recordings to help us further define and understand that which Schoenberg has attempted to explain. The value of the *Pierrot lunaire* sound recordings is not to be underestimated. They should not be viewed as a performance "how-to" shortcut so that we might imitate what we hear;⁵⁶ rather, they are guideposts that assist us in our own performance practice decision-making process.

⁵⁴ In a conversation between Pierre Boulez and Theodor Adorno, Boulez provides an anecdote told to him by Leonard Stein (former director of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute in Los Angeles, CA): once, while rehearsing *Ode to Napoleon* in LA, Schoenberg demonstrated a few passages of the *Sprechstimme*. It was completely different than notated. Schoenberg said that in the end, it was the expression that was more important than the notation (Theodor W. Adorno and Pierre Boulez, "Gespräche über den *Pierrot lunaire*," Interview recorded and transcribed by Rainer Riehn, *Musik-Konzepte* 112/113 (July 2001): 84-86).

⁵⁵ Philip, 180-81.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 182.

CHAPTER TWO

Pierrot Performances: Early Interpreters and the First Recording

Albertine Zehme was not only the first Reciter of *Pierrot*, but she was also the only Reciter for the first several years of its performances. Frau Zehme had commissioned the work and spent a considerable amount of her own money in seeing it performed; it is not unusual then that she would have exclusive performance rights for a time after its Berlin premiere in 1912.¹ Prior to the 1912 Schoenberg commission, however, Zehme became interested in the *Pierrot lunaire* poetry through a set of songs composed by Otto Vrieslander in 1904.² Vrieslander's songs were originally intended to be sung; Zehme, however, converted the songs into recitations and performed twenty-two of them, arranged in three groups, as a melodrama. This performance took place on March 4, 1911, in Berlin. Zehme wrote an essay, which she attached to the program, entitled "Why I Must Speak These Songs" to explain her alteration of the settings from song to recitation:

The words that we speak should not solely lead to mental concepts, but instead their sounds should allow us to partake of their inner experience. To make this possible we must have an unconstrained freedom of tone. None of the thousand vibrations

¹ Brinkmann, *Kritischer Bericht*, 227. According to the signed contract between Schoenberg and Zehme, Zehme was given exclusive performance rights in all countries until April 30, 1915.

² The original cycle of *Pierrot lunaire* poetry, from which Schoenberg chose his twenty-one, was written by the Belgian poet Albert Giraud and published in 1884. It was translated into German by Otto Erich Hartleben in 1892. Vrieslander's and Schoenberg's settings are of Hartleben's German translation. For more information on other *Pierrot* settings (poetry and music), see Reinhold Brinkmann's essay "The Fool as Paradigm: Schönberg's *Pierrot lunaire* and the Modern Artist," as it appears in Konrad Boehmer's book *Schönberg and Kandinsky: An Historic Encounter* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), 139-68; and Susan Youens' article "Excavating an Allegory: The Texts of *Pierrot lunaire*," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 8 (November 1984): 95-115.

should be denied to the expression of feeling. I demand tonal freedom, not thoughts!

The singing voice, that supernatural, chastely controlled instrument . . . is not suited to strong eruptions of feeling . . . Life cannot be exhausted by the beautiful sound alone . . . For our poets and composers to communicate, we need both the tones of song as well as those of speech . . .³

Zehme originally thought that Schoenberg would write a new set of recitations for her using twenty Giraud/Hartleben poems of her choosing. She arranged them into three groups and then framed the entire set with two additional poems, one functioning as an introduction and the other as a conclusion (a structure similar to her Vrieslander recitations).⁴ Schoenberg and Zehme signed a contract on March 10, 1912, in which the fee and performance rights were agreed upon. The content of the cycle (which poems would be set) and the instrumentation, however, were not specified—only that there would be at least twenty melodramas, and that the accompaniment would be piano, with the option of adding two more instruments.⁵ Though Zehme prepared a specific grouping of poems to be set, Schoenberg was not required by contract to strictly adhere to her suggestions. In the end, Schoenberg retained many of Zehme's preferred poems, but he also chose several additional poems from the Giraud/Hartleben cycle, ultimately changing the narrative she had intended.

Motivated by the implications of this commission, he composed the first setting, "Gebet an Pierrot," on March 12, and completed the cycle (with the setting of "Die Kreuze") on July 9.⁶ Edward Steuermann, who was to be the

³ Simms, 120-21.

⁴ Ibid., 123.

⁵ Ibid., 126.

⁶ "Gebet an Pierrot" eventually became the ninth song in Schoenberg's complete cycle of twenty-one; "Die Kreuze" became the fourteenth. The order of songs and dates of composition are well-documented in Brinkmann's article on the philology of *Pierrot*, "On Pierrot's Trail," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* (June 1987), 11-27.

pianist for the premiere, became Zehme's coach for these songs. Steuermann said that he would anxiously await the delivery of Schoenberg's manuscripts during the months of composition. Steuermann would play through them on the piano and then rush to Frau Zehme's studio to begin work with her. He described it as a rather difficult task—she was an intelligent woman, but being an actress, she was only as musical as was typical of the well-bred German women of the time.⁷

Twenty-five rehearsals between the instrumental ensemble, Zehme, and Schoenberg took place during the summer of 1912. Steuermann and Anton Webern (Schoenberg's pupil) declared that the October 16th premiere in Berlin was a success, though there was occasional hissing and laughing by audience members during the first and third parts.⁸ An American music critic, Arthur M. Abell, from *The Musical Courier* in New York, confirmed this report but offered a much different personal assessment:

Schoenberg may be either crazy as a loon . . . or he may be a very clever trickster who is apparently determined [to write music] . . . that in its hideousness and illogical, ear splitting ugliness defies description . . . Melody he eschews in every form; tonality he knows not and such a word as harmony is not in his vocabulary . . . The remarkable part of this whole farce is that Schoenberg is taken seriously. A musically cultured audience sits through this atrocity with hardly a protest . . . He even has adherents who rally round his standard and swear by his muse, declaring that this is the muse of the future. Otto Taubmann, the critic of the *Boston Courier*, expressed the feelings of all sane musicians when he wrote, "If this is music of the future, then I pray my Creator not to let me live to hear it again."⁹

The next performance took place in Hamburg on October 19. Other cities that followed on this premiere tour were Dresden, Breslau, Vienna, Munich,

⁷ Edward Steuermann, "Pierrot lunaire in Retrospect," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 2 (October 1977): 50. Beginning in 1891, Zehme studied voice with Cosima Wagner for two years in Bayreuth. She studied the parts of Venus in *Tannhäuser*, as well as all three Brünnhilde parts in *The Ring*. Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg: His Life, World and Work*, 196.

⁸ Stuckenschmidt, 205.

⁹ Brinkmann, *Kritischer Bericht*, 259-60.

Stuttgart, Mannheim, and Frankfurt.¹⁰ Stuckenschmidt reported that Zehme wrote seven letters in which she described the performances and the reactions of the public and the press. In several of the cities, she wrote, the reception was favorable but the crowds were small. There were extremely positive reviews from Dresden and Breslau, but at the Munich performance, *Pierrot* was criticized for being "too strongly Viennese."¹¹ In Mannheim and Stuttgart, Schoenberg received good reviews, but Zehme's performance was described as "'crass Dilettantism'." This, in fact, became the review from many cities: Schoenberg's music was intriguing, brilliant, and new; the recitation and Zehme's performance were questionable. In 1920, Scherchen wanted to perform *Pierrot* with another reciter and asked Schoenberg if Zehme had the copyright on the work; if she did, the performance would not take place because, as far as he was concerned, she had ruined the effect of it.¹²

The performance in Prague in February 1913 saw the most scandalous response yet. People hissed and shouted from the audience, creating such a disruption that Schoenberg and Zehme each individually stopped the program more than once until order was restored.

Schoenberg and Zehme developed a rather close friendship during these months, frequently vacationing in the country with each other's families. Zehme was a tireless and loyal promoter of Schoenberg's music, scheduling and financing concerts, and often asking Schoenberg to allow her to be a part of them.¹³ However by June 1914, Schoenberg's attitude towards Zehme had begun

¹⁰ Stuckenschmidt, 204-05. Beginning in Munich and continuing through the last three cities, Hermann Scherchen took over as conductor as Schoenberg had previous concert engagements scheduled in Holland.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 206-07.

¹³ Ibid., 205-07. Zehme had been studying the role of the *Sprecher* in *Gurre-Lieder* and had hoped to perform it at its premiere in Vienna in 1913 (the day before the Prague *Pierrot* scandal). She did not, and though this role was conceived for a male voice, Zehme continued to ask Schoenberg

to change. The conductor of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Alexander Siloti, wrote Schoenberg a letter asking him to guest conduct his *Chamber Symphony* and *Pierrot* with Zehme. Schoenberg was thrilled at the request but asked that the performances be postponed until 1915 or 1916. He stated that he could not put his reasons in writing, but that he would soon call Siloti with the details. Schoenberg did write, however, "For the moment I can only say this: it is at least as much in your interest as in mine, that you don't do it this year. You can certainly write to Frau Zehme that unfortunately it is not possible this year. *Pierrot* would be a mistake this year, and it might spoil the success of the *Chamber Symphony*."¹⁴ Stuckenschmidt believed that this was a clear indication that Schoenberg had misgivings about Zehme's performances, and that Schoenberg was requesting that Siloti wait until Zehme's contracted performance rights had expired.

Zehme and Schoenberg had a somewhat difficult relationship in the months and years following her *Gurre-Lieder* performance.¹⁵ Stuckenschmidt chronicles the story in which Zehme attempted to correspond frequently with Schoenberg during the following ten years. In January 1918, Schoenberg wrote a letter to Zehme asking her to return the score and parts to *Pierrot*. She reacted violently, wrote him a letter in which she called him a "satan" and a "sadist," and refused to return the materials to Schoenberg. By March she had calmed down and attempted to restore her once amicable relationship with Schoenberg. The damage had been done, however, and Schoenberg never corresponded with her again, except for one brief letter in July 1924.¹⁶

to cast her in the part. In March 1914, *Gurre-Lieder*'s first performance in Germany took place—financed entirely by Zehme's husband—and Zehme spoke the role of the *Sprecher*.

¹⁴ Ibid., 211-12; Stein, *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, 51-52.

¹⁵ For a more detailed accounting of Albertine Zehme's history and her dealings with Schoenberg, see the chapter "Three times seven recitations" in Stuckenschmidt's book, *Schoenberg: His Life, World and Work*, 195-217.

¹⁶ Stuckenschmidt, 212, 216.

Pierrot's Other Interpreters

In addition to Zehme, three other women frequently performed the role of the Reciter during Schoenberg's lifetime: Erika Stiedry-Wagner, Marie Gutheil-Schoder, and Marya Freund. Stiedry-Wagner is perhaps most well-known due to the number of concerts she performed with Schoenberg for over two decades, and her 1940 recording of *Pierrot*. As previously mentioned, Schoenberg apparently approved of her interpretation more than any other, and while it errs on the side of being more spoken, Schoenberg preferred this over a more sung interpretation.¹⁷ Gutheil-Schoder and Freund were both well-established, successful sopranos who had major careers in the European opera houses, as well as in concert and recital. As Schoenberg showed preference for a more spoken rendering of *Pierrot*, it is understandable that he would not react as enthusiastically to the interpretations by two well-trained classical singers who tended to sing the *Pierrot* settings more than speak them.

It was during Schoenberg's post-World War I years in Mödling that his friendship began with Erika Stiedry-Wagner and her husband, Dr. Fritz Stiedry. Having met in 1920, they remained friends until Schoenberg's death in 1951. An actress by profession, Stiedry-Wagner had some musical training and was asked in early 1921 by Erwin Stein—an Austrian critic and writer who also had studied with Schoenberg—to perform *Pierrot lunaire* on a concert of the *Verein für Musikalische Privataufführungen* (Society for Private Musical Performances). Developed by Schoenberg and his followers, this organization was formed in 1918 to promote and encourage the performance of contemporary musical works—"Mahler to the present." The goal was to give clear, well-prepared concerts of modern music for which there would be ample rehearsal time.¹⁸

¹⁷ Rufer, 40; Smith, *Perspectives of New Music*, 275-78; Smith, *Schoenberg and His Circle*, 99-100; Stein, *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, 149.

¹⁸ Smith, *Schoenberg and His Circle*, 81-82.

And so, during the spring of 1921, Stiedry-Wagner began rehearsals of *Pierrot* with Stein, and later, with Schoenberg himself. She performed *Pierrot* four times in Vienna in the late spring of 1921, and twice in Prague during the 1921-22 season.¹⁹ Stiedry-Wagner later recalled that not only was the *Sprechstimme* difficult to master, but also that the rhythm itself was extremely complex, thus requiring numerous hours of rehearsal. Just as Steuermann had coached Zehme in the role, so did Stein rehearse it with Stiedry-Wagner until she was comfortable with her part. She emphasized that in her rehearsals with Schoenberg, he frequently told her that it was very wrong to sing it. She continued, "He always said that to me. And he was satisfied because I was—I mean I am not a musician, but I was quite musical and I could speak and I could give expression."²⁰

Stein conducted *Pierrot* on tour with Stiedry-Wagner in 1923, and though she had already rehearsed and performed it, Schoenberg scheduled thirty rehearsals with the ensemble before an Italian tour during the spring of 1924. This tour proved to be most successful for Schoenberg and Stiedry-Wagner. Giacomo Puccini traveled six hours to the performance in Florence and had asked the Italian composer, Alfredo Casella, to introduce him to Schoenberg.²¹

Erika and Fritz Stiedry remained close friends with Schoenberg and continued to perform together frequently. Stiedry-Wagner performed *Pierrot* numerous times throughout Europe and America, and was chosen to record it with Schoenberg in September 1940. Even up until his death, Schoenberg admired

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 87. These rehearsals and performances came about after Stiedry-Wagner replaced Marie Gutheil-Schoder who had been rehearsing with Stein since November 1920. See also Bryan Simms, "The Society for Private Musical Performances: Resources and Documents," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 3 (October 1979): 136-42.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

²¹ Stuckenschmidt, 294.

Stiedry-Wagner's abilities and frequently recommended her to colleagues.²² Shortly before his death in 1951, in a letter written to Fritz Stiedry, Schoenberg included a postscript to Frau Stiedry-Wagner in which he expressed his happiness for her and congratulated her on her many *Pierrot* successes.²³

German soprano Marie Gutheil-Schoder, a friend of Gustav Mahler and a frequent performer under his direction at the Vienna Hofoper, was also a great proponent of modern music and sang the premiere of Schoenberg's Second String Quartet in December 1908, as well as the premiere of the monodrama, *Erwartung*, in Prague in 1924. Mahler likely introduced Gutheil-Schoder to Schoenberg sometime after 1903 when Schoenberg had returned to Vienna after living in Berlin since 1901. Schoenberg greatly admired Gutheil-Schoder's abilities as a singer and musician, and actually composed *Erwartung* during the summer of 1909 with her voice in mind. In a letter to Gutheil-Schoder from Berlin in August 1913, Schoenberg wrote:

You will remember that I have repeatedly spoken to you of a dramatic work in which there is a part for you. It is a monodrama, with only one part, a real part, conceived as a Gutheil-part . . . Please be so kind as to read the enclosed libretto (I have not got the piano reduction with me at the moment) . . . There remains . . . whether it suits your voice. But that you can answer only when I send you the reduction. The thing is musically very difficult. But then, after all, you did manage my 2nd Quartet!!!²⁴

²² Stein, *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, 282. In July of 1950, Thor Johnson of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra was looking for performers for upcoming performances of the *Gurre-Lieder*. Schoenberg whole-heartedly recommended Erika Stiedry-Wagner for the role of the *Sprecher* in spite of it having been written for a high male speaking voice.

²³ Stuckenschmidt, 515.

²⁴ Stein, *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, 40.

Gutheil-Schoder eagerly accepted Schoenberg's request and learned the part; because of the outbreak of World War I, however, the premiere was delayed until 1924.²⁵

During the fall of 1920, Gutheil-Schoder had begun rehearsals for the Reciter in *Pierrot* with Erwin Stein. According to Smith and Simms, difficulties arose, and although Schoenberg vehemently disapproved, Stein replaced her with Stiedry-Wagner.²⁶ Stuckenschmidt, however, merely speaks of Gutheil-Schoder during this period as not having enough time for rehearsals and was therefore replaced.²⁷ In a letter written during the summer of 1922, Schoenberg expressed to Gutheil-Schoder his most sincere apologies for offending or hurting her feelings. He wanted her to know that he held her in the highest regard, and hoped that he had not done irreparable damage to their friendship. In a footnote to this letter, Stein recounts that Gutheil-Schoder had been studying the *Sprechstimme* part in *Pierrot* with him that autumn, but as she did not have enough time to rehearse, Frau Stiedry-Wagner was engaged for the performances.²⁸ Having already rehearsed it with Stein and Karl Rankl, another Austrian composer and conductor, Gutheil-Schoder wrote to Schoenberg in October 1921 that she would be performing it in Copenhagen in November. She had worked with a speech trainer during the summer, she said, who helped her interpretation greatly. Feeling confident in her ability to execute the *Sprechstimme* accurately, her chief concerns, at that juncture, were with mood and expression.²⁹

²⁵ Helga Pilarczyk, a well-known German soprano, was also a greatly admired (and one of the most famous) interpreter of the Woman in *Erwartung*. She also performed the leading roles in Berg's *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, in addition to several other operas by modern composers. She was also a well-known interpreter of *Pierrot lunaire*, and recorded it in 1961 with Pierre Boulez. Her interpretation is one of the most spoken in the *Pierrot* discography.

²⁶ Simms, "Society for Private Musical Performances," 137-38; Smith, *Schoenberg and His Circle*, 87.

²⁷ Stuckenschmidt, 283.

²⁸ Stein, 73.

²⁹ Stuckenschmidt, 277.

The most successful performance of *Pierrot* from the public's perspective, according to Stuckenschmidt, took place at the Berlin Singakademie on January 5, 1924. In a hall filled to capacity, Gutheil-Schoder performed the role of the Speaker, and Fritz Stiedry conducted.³⁰

Polish-born French soprano, Marya Freund, was not deterred by Schoenberg's objections to the manner in which she performed the *Sprechstimme*. *Pierrot lunaire*, in fact, remained a staple in her repertoire throughout much of her life, and she continued to perform it even into the 1950s. She corresponded with Schoenberg throughout much of her life, and wrote a final letter to him in 1949 to describe how well-received her performances had been in London, Brussels, and Paris.³¹ Unlike Gutheil-Schoder, who had primarily made her living as an opera singer (first in Weimar and then in Vienna), Freund's career was defined by her concert work and recitals, frequently performing the works of contemporary composers such as Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Ravel, Bloch, and Milhaud. She and Schoenberg developed a close friendship—in spite of their disagreements about *Pierrot* interpretation—and the two corresponded from 1912-1949.³² By Schoenberg's request she sang Tove in the premiere of the *Gurre-Lieder*, and also frequently performed the Opus 15 Stefan George songs, *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*.

In November 1920, Freund wrote to Schoenberg on behalf of Maurice Ravel to request permission for a performance in Paris with Ravel conducting. The plan did not come to fruition that year, but did at a later date with Darius Milhaud conducting.³³ After the Paris performances in 1921, Milhaud and Freund traveled to Vienna to appear in a series of French chamber music concerts.

³⁰ Ibid., 217.

³¹ Ibid., 507.

³² Ibid., 100.

³³ Ibid., 270-72, 283; Smith, *Schoenberg and His Circle*, 87.

Milhaud paid a visit to Schoenberg to tell him of the Paris success (which had already been reported to him in a letter from Egon Wellesz), during which, he said, Schoenberg suggested the gathering at Alma Mahler-Werfel's home, which served as the locale for the juxtaposed interpretations: Stiedry-Wagner's in German, more *gesprochen*, and with Schoenberg conducting, and Freund's in French, more *gesungen*, and with Milhaud conducting.³⁴ Because of German anti-sentiment in France, Freund initially attempted to learn *Pierrot* with Albert Giraud's original French text, but she found that it was not a poetic text suitable for singing. She re-translated the entire cycle and used the new translation for this occasion, as well as for several performances in France and Belgium.³⁵ Schoenberg scarcely recognized his own work when performed by Freund, although Mahler-Werfel said it was the preferred rendition.³⁶

In August 1922, a month after the "dueling" *Pierrots*, Schoenberg wrote a letter to Freund, attempting to explain to her the errors in her interpretation:

There are a number of things regarding the performance of my works that I should like to talk over with you. I am anxious to explain to you why I cannot allow any will but mine to prevail in realising [*sic*] the musical thoughts that I have recorded on paper, . . . I should very much like to do some thorough rehearsing with you . . . I am quite convinced that you will soon feel at home with them: you would only have to hear it once directly from me . . .³⁷

³⁴ Stuckenschmidt reports that Alma Mahler-Werfel suggested the get-together; Smith says that Milhaud did.

³⁵ Smith, *Schoenberg and His Circle*, 87.

³⁶ Mahler-Werfel, 128, as quoted in Smith, 88.

³⁷ Stein, *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, 74; Stuckenschmidt, 283. Also quoted partially in Chapter One, footnote 23.

The First Recording

The first recording of *Pierrot* with Schoenberg conducting and Erika Stiedry-Wagner reciting took place early in the fall of 1940. With little time to rehearse (though the entire ensemble had performed it together many times over the years), Schoenberg sent a letter to Fritz and Erika Stiedry in which he expressed some trepidation at trying to prepare the score for recording with only two weeks of rehearsal time. He felt that the speaking part should be freshened up by returning to the "light, ironical, satirical tone in which the piece was actually conceived."³⁸ After almost two decades of performances, Schoenberg may have felt that the recitation had become staid, predictable, and quite literally, too serious.³⁹ His reference to returning to the manner in which the piece was originally conceived—with a lightness, and emphasis on the ironic, satirical tone—suggests a return to the composition's origins, not necessarily an anticipation of the future of *Sprechstimme*.

The entire cycle of songs was recorded on September 25 and 26 in Los Angeles, California. Dika Newlin, a young composition student of Schoenberg's, was allowed to be at the recording sessions as well as a few of the rehearsals. In her published diaries, she details the nerve-wracking experience for the performers and listeners. Schoenberg shook and trembled, and Stiedry-Wagner had practically lost her voice by the end of the recording session.⁴⁰

Years later, when speaking of the recording sessions, Stiedry-Wagner mused to Joan Smith about her argument with Schoenberg during these two days. Schoenberg was annoyed at the overemphasis put on the Reciter. He was adamant that the Speaker was merely another instrument in the ensemble and

³⁸ Rufer, 40.

³⁹ For a different reading see Byron, "The Test Pressings of Schoenberg Conducting *Pierrot lunaire*," [2.10].

⁴⁰ Dika Newlin, *Schoenberg Remembered: Diaries and Recollections (1938-76)* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1980), 256.

should therefore not be given any more consideration than any of the other instruments. Because of this, he was afraid that if Stiedry-Wagner were too close to the microphone in the recording session, her voice would be heard well above the rest of the ensemble, thus making it a piece for Speaker with instrumental accompaniment, as opposed to all the forces truly acting as an ensemble.⁴¹

Stiedry-Wagner's recounting of the story continues:

And he [Schoenberg] said to me, "Go away, go away from the microphone." I said, "No, Mr. Schoenberg. That is no good. I know. I did a lot of things at the radio and I know how my voice sounds." . . . And so, I really had a temper with him, and I said, "No, you won't hear me." And he said, "No, I know it's better." And so on, so on. And we nearly didn't finish it. And, later on, he said, "Oh, you were right. I was stubborn." So my voice on the recording is too soft—much, much, sometimes much too soft.⁴²

Schoenberg's previously-cited letter to Hans Rosbaud in 1949 explains Schoenberg's position, and his subsequent regrets:

I do not know whether you are familiar with the records that I made of it. In some respects . . . they are really good, even very good. They are not so good with respect to the balance of instruments and recitation. I was a little annoyed by the overemphasis of the speaker—who, after all, never sings the theme, but, at most, speaks against it, while the themes (and everything else of musical importance) happen in the instruments. Perhaps, because I was annoyed, I reacted a little too violently, out of contrariness, and forgot that one must, after all, be able to hear the speaker. So now she is really drowned out in several places. That should not be.⁴³

The Schoenberg/Stiedry-Wagner recording was well-received and, incidentally, was the only commercial recording of the work made during Schoenberg's lifetime. In the five years following Schoenberg's death, no fewer than six commercial recordings were made, most of which included key participants who had been friends and/or colleagues of Schoenberg (Edward

⁴¹ Smith, *Perspectives of New Music*, 277.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Rufer, 40.

Steuermann, Hans Rosbaud, René Leibowitz, Peter Stadlen, to name a few). Perhaps these and other conductors were unwilling to make a permanent contribution to the *Pierrot* discography while Schoenberg was still alive.

The noticeable absence of other recordings during Schoenberg's lifetime again brings to the forefront the question of composer authority. Did other conductors and performers feel a certain amount of trepidation at the prospect of immortalizing an alternative interpretation (that is, one without Schoenberg's endorsement) by recording it? Though Schoenberg was well-known for being rather controlling, surely he could allow for other interpretations of the work and the *Sprechstimme*, in particular. This technique was not, after all, an exact science that could easily be replicated by any vocalist.

Schoenberg himself expressed continued dissatisfaction with the role of the Reciter. His letter to Hans Rosbaud not only addresses the issue of balance between the Speaker and the instruments on the recording, but it also lists the numerous aspects about the recording which are very good—tempo, presentation of mood, and the playing by the instrumentalists. The omission of the vocals from this list of virtues is, perhaps, an attempt by Schoenberg to insinuate his continued frustration with the role of the Reciter without directly calling attention to or insulting Stiedry-Wagner's rendering. In a letter written to Stein on December 25, 1941, Schoenberg was much more direct: "They [the Columbia records] are to a great part quite good, though Mrs. Stiedry is never in pitch and several pieces are not very well recorded."⁴⁴ Schoenberg's comments suggest dissatisfaction with Stiedry-Wagner's inaccuracy of pitch and seem to indicate that he would have liked for her to be more accurate with the prescribed pitches, not less. This quote further supports several of the arguments presented herein: pitch *was* of consequence to Schoenberg; the recording likely emphasized the discrepancy between how Schoenberg heard the *Sprechstimme* in his mind's ear and the actual renderings that he heard performed; and because that ideal

⁴⁴ Arnold Schoenberg to Erwin Stein, 25 December 1941; Online Archive of Correspondence, Arnold Schönberg Center.

interpretation did not come to fruition, Schoenberg decided to change his notation to fit reality; *or* his aesthetic preference changed—perhaps because of the recording—to prefer the less pitch-specific execution.

CHAPTER THREE

Sprechstimme Performance Styles: an Overview

The vocal interpretations of *Pierrot lunaire* on the thirty-six recordings reviewed and evaluated for this document are as varied as one can imagine.¹ No two recordings are exactly alike and even separate recordings made by the same vocalist or conductor often bear little resemblance to each other.²

Differences in interpretations should be celebrated and embraced. An interpretation, however, which deviates from the score so drastically that it is no longer a faithful representation of Schoenberg's composition, is emblematic of a greater problem: where does one draw the line between score compliance and artistic license? This has become the difficult task of the interpreter and perhaps to a lesser extent, the listener. Several of the recordings from the last fifty years offer interpretations which are decidedly not what Schoenberg intended: they are too sung; they ignore register and tessitura; they do not present the rhythm accurately. Additional elements, which Schoenberg never expressly addressed, are also important to the execution of *Sprechstimme*: vibrato, characterization, and voice type (*fach*), to name a few. Because Schoenberg did not address these issues, are we to assume that they are not important or necessary or even that he did not intend for them to be a part of the *Sprechstimme* equation? Just because Schoenberg did not address them does not mean that they do not or should not exist. The objective here is to present the interpretational possibilities as heard on the recordings, determine what works and what does not work and why, and then

¹ See Appendix for a full chronological listing of the *Pierrot lunaire* discography.

² Pierre Boulez's three recordings are an exceptionally good example of this; all of Boulez's recordings are discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

attempt to construct guidelines to aid future interpreters in the translation of Schoenberg's rich, complex score.

Scope of Performance Styles

These recordings represent a wide array of *Sprechstimme* performance styles that include:

- *Sprechstimme* which is more sung or more spoken;
- Vibrato or straight tone;
- *Portamento* or sliding/gliding between the notes;
- Strictly adhering to the exact pitches that are written; attempting to maintain correct intervals; or simply following the contour of the line; *-or-* a completely free interpretation in which Schoenberg's pitches and intervals are not maintained, nor is the contour strictly observed.³

Other factors which are somewhat less directly related to the *Sprechstimme* itself, but rather to the overall form and presentation of the work, include:

- Tempo;
- Use of different "character" voices by the singer;
- Language of the recitation;
- The singer's *fach* (voice type) and training; and
- Whether or not a conductor is used.

³ These four approaches to *Sprechstimme* execution might correspond to the manner in which *Pierrot* is initially studied and learned. Which comes first: pitch or rhythm? Should the Reciter learn the precise pitches first or should she begin by tackling the words and their complex rhythms? It is the opinion of this author that one should first address rhythm and text. Though the concept of pitch is relatively fluid in *Pierrot*, rhythm is not. Rhythm must be taken very literally and learned without the approximation that is acceptable with *Pierrot's* pitches. If the Speaker learns the exact pitches first, she will find it nearly impossible to divorce herself from them later. The end result is an interpretation that is far too sung. It is much less difficult to apply pitch *after* the words and rhythms are learned than to attempt the reverse. Once solid with the rhythm and text, the Reciter can add pitch, working to keep it flexible and non-specific while still maintaining contour and intervallic integrity except for the pitches expressly marked *gesungen*, which should, obviously, be sung and exact.

Many of the recordings from the last twenty to thirty years tend to drift toward the more sung end of the spectrum. Since *Pierrot lunaire* has become the regular domain of singers and not actresses, it is to be expected that the singer's interpretation would gravitate towards singing and away from speaking. And yet within the discography, there are numerous examples of "incorrectly" sung interpretations—performances in which pitches are sung, but not the ones Schoenberg actually wrote.⁴ Even "perfectly" sung performances are rarely flawless. Pitch errors would not be acceptable in Schubert or Mozart, but because of the extremely challenging vocal line in *Pierrot*, mistakes are forgiven and even to be expected. While the recordings that fall into the "sung" category may sound slightly more accessible to the lay listener, these performances lack a certain depth of character and atmosphere that is present in the more speech-like recordings.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are interpretations—much like the early ones by Zehme and Stiedry-Wagner—which are more spoken. Performances with little to no pitch or register accuracy of any kind (even the *gesungen* pitches) have a certain flatness of color, and do not engage the listener. Schoenberg's score, as notated pitch-wise for the vocalist, spans two and a half octaves. Performers who present *Pierrot* with a more spoken delivery (in terms of range) generally do not access the high and low extremes of the voice, thus presenting a very one-dimensional, monochromatic recitation. Speech patterns tend to lie within a very limited range and usually do not include the higher tones or "head voice"; because the more spoken performances tend to lie within the speech part of the voice, the performer rarely attempts notes above what can be executed in "chest voice."

Singing versus speaking also brings to the forefront the issue of *how* one first approaches the score during the learning process: pitch or rhythm/text. By

⁴ For example, Patricia Rideout/no conductor (1974); Leslie Boucher/Lewis Nielson (1993); Ilona Steingruber-Wildgans/Vladimir Golschmann (1961). For full recording information, please see the Appendix.

learning the text and rhythm first, the performer can work towards, and achieve, a more speech-like delivery. This will serve her better as she then works for melodic contour, intervallic integrity, and exact sung pitch where it is required (*gesungen* pitches).

The next category, briefly discussed in Chapter One, includes the use of vibrato versus straight tone in the delivery of the vocal line. Vibrato is a crucial element in distinguishing sung passages from *Sprechstimme* passages because the “impression of singing in fact results from the minute fluctuations of pitch that comprise vibrato. A voice production avoiding vibrato . . . [can convey] the prescribed pitches without violating the taboo on singing.”⁵ We perceive singing and speaking based largely on the presence or absence of vibrato, respectively. Perhaps Schoenberg had this in mind when he wrote these passages: the *gesungen* notes would be sung with vibrato, whereas the *gesprochen* portions (that is, anything notated as *Sprechstimme*—the majority of the score, in fact) would be rendered without vibrato. This provides little difficulty for most performers on the short note-values. It is much easier to assume a more speech-like quality on words with shorter note-values: there is little time for purposeful vibrato; vowel extension becomes a non-issue; and the need to slide or *portamento* between the notes is all but eliminated. The challenge exists when the note values are much longer than normal speech. Duration becomes a problematic issue, forcing one to choose a vibrato or *non-vibrato* sustaining of the vowel, or simply cut short the prescribed duration by closing down the vowel in anticipation of the next consonant. This final option is clearly prohibited by Schoenberg’s Preface as it would alter his precise rhythmic notation. The performer really only has two options then: vibrato or non-vibrato while sustaining the full duration of the note. If the piece is performed with vibrato on every tone, it would not be possible to differentiate between *gesungen* and *gesprochen*. If the performer never vibrates and sings straight-tone on every note, again, there is no perceptible difference in

⁵ Stadlen, 10.

performance styles. It is likely, then, that a vocal production utilizing two distinctly separate techniques is ideal: vibrato on the pitches that are to be sung (*gesungen*), and a straighter tone for the pitches marked as *Sprechstimme*.

Also briefly addressed in Chapter One, there are essentially two ways to “fill in” the space between the notes of the vocal line: *portamento* and sliding. The next question, then, becomes determining the direction of the *portamento* or slide. It is usually assumed that one should follow the contour of the line which would then require many slides up and down. Most performers, however, slide down much more frequently than up. Erwin Stein even acknowledged that this should be the case; inasmuch as one is supposed to connect the notes one to the next, the upward glide (or slide) will be rarer than the descending glide (as is common with natural speech). This means that there are instances when the performer will not slide/glide between every note.

Every note must be touched and at once abandoned by gliding down (if no other direction is given) as far as is natural in elevated speech . . .

The rarer instances of raising the voice within a syllable will best be realized if the sound of, say, a surprised “Oh?” is remembered. The upward glide usually serves to render an intensely emotional or comical expression, for instance on the italicized syllables in “Steig, o Mutter aller Schmerzen” (*Madonna*, m. 11) or “behaglich” (*Gemeinheit*, m. 20).⁶

Schoenberg did not address this, and so there do not seem to be any standardized guidelines in regard to the up-glide/slide. It is not, however, effective to slide between *every* note throughout the work. The majority of the recorded interpretations tend to support Stein’s comments, and the recordings which do make a point of sliding between almost every note are an exception and not among the most effective, compelling recordings.⁷ Stein continues:

The dropping and raising of the voice should not link the intervals in the way of a *portamento* except in those *rare* [my italics] places

⁶ Stein, *Orpheus in New Guises*, 87.

⁷ Erika Sziklay/András Mihály (1970)

where such an effect is specially indicated, e.g. in *Rote Messe*, bars 11 and 12, on the word “zerreißt”: Otherwise, the glide off the initial note should pay as little regard to the pitch of the succeeding note as does a glide in ordinary speech.⁸

Numerous interpreters also utilize the *portamento* too frequently, and in some cases, use it as their only method of travel between pitches.⁹ Other performers erratically volley back and forth between *portamento* and sliding so that there is little consistency in the interpretation.¹⁰

Regarding the exact versus free interpretation of pitch, it would be logical to assume that a performer either executes the pitches as written, or she does not. Yet the majority of the recordings fall into a category somewhere between the two: first, a performer may not reproduce any of the pitches correctly but still accurately follow the rise and fall of the line, thus maintaining the basic contour of the vocal line; second, she may not duplicate all of the correct pitches, but still attempt to maintain the intervallic integrity of the line by pitching the line in a range more comfortable for her individual voice. Then there are the two “extremes”: a basic free-for-all where the interpreter is not guided by anything on the page—an interpretation where the correct notes are rarely attained and the contour is a design of her choosing; and the strict, “textbook” interpretation of the recitation line where the performer accurately reproduces every pitch exactly as notated by Schoenberg, and immediately leaves it in anticipation of the next pitch.¹¹ Surprisingly, within any of these styles of pitch delivery, the *gesungen* passages are correct (or very close to) more often than not.

⁸ Stein, 87. See Chapter One, Example 1.8, p. 22.

⁹ Mary Thomas/David Atherton (1973); Alice Howland/Arthur Winograd (1955) and Herbert Zipper (1962)—all demonstrate an intrusive and excessive use of *portamento* and vibrato.

¹⁰ Phyllis Bryn-Julson/Peter Eötvös (1991) and Robert Black (1992); Sophie Boulin/Paul Méfano (1996).

¹¹ The two extremes are rarely represented in the recordings; most recordings fall into the first two categories. Recordings that fall into the first category are generally some of the earlier examples: Jeanne Héricard/Hans Rosbaud (1957); Alice Howland/Arthur Winograd (1955) and Herbert Zipper (1962); Ellen Adler/René Leibowitz (1951). Within the second category, there are several

The Preface also does not specifically address the issue of intervallic integrity; rather, it simply says that the written pitch is to be taken into account. Stein interprets this (and perhaps based on his rehearsals with Schoenberg) as intervallic integrity (my term). He wrote:

Though shown in absolute pitch notation, the intervals are only meant to be relative. The initial note is so short that it is of no harmonic consequence. The reciter is therefore free not only to transpose his part according to the type of his speaking voice and regardless of the other instruments, but also to narrow down his intervals so as to accommodate them within his individual (speaking) compass and tessitura . . . What is essential is that the proportions of the melodic line be retained: a high note has to be relatively high, a low note relatively low; a fourth must be a wider leap than a third, and a minor second a smaller step than a major second.¹²

Song number six, “Madonna,” is an example which seems to support Stein’s supposition. Schoenberg writes above the vocal line in m.10 “very high, but extremely sweet.”¹³ The *Sprechstimme* pitch as written is E₅. Schoenberg’s note clearly indicates that whatever pitch the Reciter chooses to “sing,” it must be a very high pitch, but not necessarily E₅.

It is difficult to separate these style characteristics into individual categories as there is considerable overlap between groupings, and very rarely is one trait independent of the others. The issues of sung/spoken, vibrato/straight-tone, *portamento*/sliding, and exact pitch/free pitch are all inextricably woven together. A performance that is more sung will generally have more vibrato and *portamento*, but it may not be at all accurate in regard to pitch. Likewise, a more spoken rendering will usually have less vibrato and more sliding (or perhaps there

recordings in which the performer does accurately reproduce many of the correct pitches, but not all, and therefore at least attempts to maintain the intervallic integrity of the line. Two prominent recordings are indicative of this style: Jan DeGaetani/Arthur Weisberg (1970) and Lucy Shelton/no conductor (1990).

¹² Stein, *Orpheus*, 88

¹³ “sehr hoch, aber äußerst zart”

will be very little to no motion between the notes), but still attempt to maintain the intervallic integrity of the original line.

Other aspects of delivery and execution—tempo and characterization—were also briefly discussed in Chapter One. Regarding presentational issues not previously discussed, a brief mention of language of recitation, voice *fach*/training, and use of a conductor should be mentioned here. Though *Pierrot lunaire* was occasionally performed in French (using Marya Freund's translation) during Schoenberg's lifetime, the "original" German has remained the standard performance language. Three recordings have been made in alternate languages: an incomplete performance in Czech recorded in 1987 by Renée Nachtigallová and conducted by Jiri Malát, and full performances in English by jazz singer Cleo Laine and the Nash Ensemble (conducted by Elgar Howarth), as well as Lucy Shelton's commercially successful 1990 recording with the Da Capo Chamber Players.¹⁴

It is well-known that Schoenberg whole-heartedly approved of the translation of his works into English for the better enjoyment of English-speaking audiences. In 1940, during the rehearsals for the Columbia recording with Stiedry-Wagner, Schoenberg asked his student, Dika Newlin, to begin work on a translation into English from the German. Newlin completed the entire work overnight and reported that Schoenberg was extremely pleased with it. Schoenberg asked if it were possible to recite it with the music; Newlin responded that she had worked to maintain the original meter except where it absolutely had to be changed so that the English verse would sound natural.¹⁵ Schoenberg and

¹⁴ I have not had the privilege of hearing the Czech recording. This recording only includes the 4th, 7th, 9th, and 19th-21st songs. Lucy Shelton's English recording is readily available—it follows the German performance of *Pierrot lunaire* on the same disc. Shelton's is also one of only four recorded performances which does not use a conductor. The other three are Patricia Rideout's recording of 1974 with Glenn Gould at the piano (this is also not a complete recording—only songs 1-7 are recorded), Gerda Hartman's 1987 recording with the Ensemble Kaleidocollage, and Anne-Marie Donovan's 1995 recording with the Blue Rider Ensemble.

¹⁵ Newlin, 254-55.

his wife, Gertrude, made several corrections to Newlin's translation in hopes that it would eventually fit the music well enough to be used in performance as well as be published in an English edition.¹⁶ He also hoped that Newlin's translation would be included when the *Pierrot* recording was released. It was not, nor was any other translation. In letters written to Moses Smith and Goddard Lieberman, both of Columbia Recording, Schoenberg strongly advised that they use Newlin's translation which he said had been revised by several people and was an excellent translation.¹⁷ In August 1941, Schoenberg wrote a letter to Mrs. Claire Reis of the *League of Composers* in New York City stating that he had submitted a "very good translation" (Newlin's translation) to Columbia Records which was not accepted. He continued, ". . . that they add no text at all is a complete surprise to me and a great damage to the effect these records cou[ld] produce."¹⁸

In the years following the Columbia release of *Pierrot lunaire*, numerous other translations were made.¹⁹ In March 1941, Erwin Stein wrote to Schoenberg that he had begun work on a *Pierrot* translation; Schoenberg responded in April, explaining that he could not even look at Stein's translations as he had already submitted Newlin's for the recording.²⁰ Though he approved of Newlin's translations, Schoenberg later expressed that there were better translations

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 258. Though Newlin's translation was not published, she performed it herself in November 1999 as part of a week-long residency at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX.

¹⁷ Arnold Schoenberg to Mr. Moses Smith, Director, Columbia Recording Corporation, 30 September 1940; Arnold Schoenberg to Mr. Goddard Lieberman, Columbia Recording Corporation, 13 February 1941. Online Archive of Correspondence, Arnold Schönberg Center.

¹⁸ Arnold Schoenberg to Mrs. Claire Reis, 24 August 1941. Online Archive of Correspondence, Arnold Schönberg Center.

¹⁹ In the Schoenberg correspondence, there are references to a possible translation by Nicholas Slonimsky, as well as translations from at least four other sources, including Erwin Stein, and Ingolf Dahl in cooperation with a co-translator, Carl Beier.

²⁰ Arnold Schoenberg to Erwin Stein, 12 April 1941. Online Archive of Correspondence, Arnold Schönberg Center.

available, including Stein's (though Schoenberg had apparently not seen it at the time), as well as one by Jean Jackson and Felix Khuner.²¹

As to the singability of Newlin's translation, it is likely that Schoenberg did consider it singable, with the text well-suited to the music. In several letters, Schoenberg expressed his frustration that the Columbia recording was made in German and not in English. In a 1942 letter to Stein, Schoenberg wrote: "Now I want to make the suggestion, that you record your performance. [Mine] is unfortunately in spite of my protest, in German, which is much in the way to a full success . . ." ²² And in a much later letter from 1949 to Hugo Winter of Associated Music Publishers:

I am very much in favor however, to record an English version of *Pierrot Lunaire*. It was only the stubbornness [*sic*] of Columbia that the first recording was not made in English. On my advice a performance in Los Angeles has been given in English, and the translation is seemingly so good that I would prefer to use this.²³

Schoenberg also sanctioned the performance of an English translation of another frequently-performed work during this time, the *Gurre-Lieder*. In his July 1950 letter to Thor Johnson of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Schoenberg wrote:

One thing,

ONE THING IS VERY IMPORTANT:

Make the performance in *ENGLISH* not in German. People do not understand German, neither here, nor in Australia, England, Canada and

²¹ Arnold Schoenberg to Erwin Stein, 25 December 1941; Arnold Schoenberg to Felix Greissle, G. Schirmer, Symphonic Orchestra Department, 21 August 1944. Online Archive of Correspondence, Arnold Schönberg Center.

²² Arnold Schoenberg to Erwin Stein, 1 October 1942. Online Archive of Correspondence, Arnold Schönberg Center.

²³ Arnold Schoenberg to Hugo Winter, 1 July 1949. Online Archive of Correspondence, Arnold Schönberg Center. The Los Angeles performance likely used the Dahl-Beier translation. Translations by Dahl and Beier were also used in later recordings of *Pierrot lunaire* (not performed in English but included in the liner notes), including Phyllis Bryn-Julson's 1991 recording with Peter Eötvös, and Anja Silja's 2000 recording with Robert Craft.

in many other places . . . There is no reason why it should be given in German.²⁴

If Schoenberg felt so strongly that a German work should be performed in English in English-speaking countries, it is not too much of a stretch to suggest that he would not object to a work being translated into other languages so that the text could be understood as long as the translation remained singable. Though René Leibowitz's recordings (with Ellen Adler in 1951 and Ethel Semser in 1954) were both recorded in German, Schoenberg wrote to Hugo Winter in 1949 that he assumed it would be in French. There is no indication in the letter that Schoenberg had any objection to this.²⁵

In regard to voice *fach* and vocal training, *Pierrot* requires a very special voice—not just musician—to be able to perform it. Certainly the technical and musical demands on the singer are great, but these are challenges that could be met by anyone with the desire and ability to do so. But for which voice type is *Pierrot* truly best-suited? More recordings have been made by sopranos than mezzo sopranos; however, in regard to range and tessitura, it is perhaps better suited for the mezzo soprano instrument. Though Stein and Boulez both have said that *Pierrot* is not well-suited for any one specific voice type,²⁶ it is likely that a mezzo soprano would have greater control and color possibilities throughout the whole of the range required.

The pitches as notated encompass a wide range—from E-flat₃ (below Middle C) to A-flat₅. Paradoxically, the difficulty here is not in the high writing (any mezzo or soprano should have A-flat at her disposal), but rather in the middle and low writing. The three sung notes in m. 10 of "Nacht" are perhaps the

²⁴ Stein, *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, 282-83.

²⁵ Arnold Schoenberg to Hugo Winter, 1 July 1949. Online Archive of Correspondence, Arnold Schönberg Center.

²⁶ Stein, *Orpheus in New Guises*, 88, said that there will hardly be a voice capable of executing the full range of the part; and Boulez, *Orientalisms*, 333, said that the speaking voice in *Pierrot* is both too high and too low for any one singer.

most famous example. The voice sings, instead of speaks, the important three-note cell upon which this passacaglia is based:

Example 3. 1: Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, "Nacht," m. 10.

⑩ gesungen (womöglich die tieferen Noten)

ppp

⑩ verschwie - gen.

Schoenberg instructs the Reciter to sing "where possible, the lowest notes";²⁷ he included an *ossia* version notated an octave higher, but clearly preferred the originally-written octave. Not every singer has these notes at her disposal—including some mezzo sopranos—and even when she does, they are not always rendered effectively. Approximately half of the thirty-six recordings listened to for this analysis execute m. 10 relatively accurately and in the original register. The majority of the other half are made up of attempts to sing the right notes, although sometimes missing the mark rather significantly, and then there are four recordings which sing the *ossia* notes.²⁸

"Nacht" is not the only song that requires the prolonged use of the low register in *Pierrot*. "Rote Messe," "Enthauptung," and "Die Kreuze" are all examples of songs that have a significant amount of writing for the lower-middle register ($A_3 - C_5$) accompanied by denser writing (instrumentation and texture) and at louder dynamic levels.²⁹ These portions of the score require a tremendous amount of low register, or "chest voice," in order to be heard and to be effective.

²⁷ "womöglich die tieferen Noten"

²⁸ Lucy Shelton, Sophie Boulin, Edith Urbanczyk, and Ethel Semser.

²⁹ See mm. 10-15 of "Rote Messe," mm. 15-20 of "Enthauptung," and mm. 1-2, 6-7, & 9 of "Die Kreuze."

Sopranos usually struggle most in these sections. They frequently cannot sustain the "chestier," heavy mechanism necessary and therefore have to "flip" into a lighter mechanism that utilizes more high register, or "head voice." This adjustment is easily heard on the recordings and renders these portions of the score somewhat awkward. Singers who are more successful in these passages tend to pitch the entire section lower so that they can stay in their chest voice longer. The tendency is to over-brighten the low register so that it better cuts through the heavier instrumental texture, or take one's chest voice all the way up to the higher notes.³⁰

Lastly, a few words about the role of the conductor in these songs. As is evidenced by the small number of recordings which do not employ a conductor, the uncondacted *Pierrot lunaire* is certainly an accomplishment for all the musicians involved. Without a conductor, the rest of the ensemble (singer and instrumentalists) must take considerably more responsibility in leading and guiding each other through the 21 extremely diverse songs. The uncondacted *Pierrot* is certainly an exception to the rule, and one that can usually only be accomplished when the performers have had the luxury of numerous rehearsals with each other. While a conductor is more of a necessity in performances and recordings for which there have been only a few brief hours of rehearsal, the presence of a conductor does remove an element of spontaneity from the process. Ensembles without a conductor frequently enjoy a better-rehearsed and, paradoxically, a more organic performance in which the musicians more actively listen and respond to each other. There is a greater sense of flexibility and freedom; they are better able to anticipate one another and can react

³⁰ Bethany Beardslee, Salome Kammer, and Ilona Steingruber-Wildgans are excellent examples of these technical choices. Lucy Shelton's recording is actually indicative of both issues. There are instances of over-brightening the low so that it can be heard above the ensemble, and other instances in which she stays in chest voice as long as possible but then makes a sudden and dramatic shift into head voice to access the higher portions.

instantaneously to the demands of the music rather than the demands of a conductor.³¹

³¹ Having had the privilege of performing *Pierrot lunaire* without a conductor, I can attest to the fact that it was possible, in no small part, due to the luxury of having countless hours of rehearsal, excellent coaching during the learning process, and an outstanding ensemble. The conductor-less *Pierrot* can be successful in spite of Erwin Stein's last sentence in his chapter on *Pierrot* in his book *Orpheus in New Guises*, 89: "Above all, a conductor is needed for the reciter who, however musical, easily loses his grip on the rhythm."

CHAPTER FOUR

Discography Overview

The *Pierrot lunaire* discography spans over sixty years, beginning with Schoenberg's Columbia recording in the fall of 1940. There are forty-six recordings listed in Wayne Shoaf's official discography, some of which are partial recordings, recordings never released, and recordings in which the performers are unknown. Singers and actresses both have undertaken the role of the Reciter, representing every niche of the singer's repertory: contemporary music specialists; singers of opera, jazz, oratorio, and art song; and actresses. Several singers and conductors have recorded the work more than once. Stravinsky expert, Robert Craft, recorded it in 1963 with Bethany Beardslee and in 2000 with Anja Silja. René Leibowitz, a friend and colleague of Schoenberg's, recorded it with Ellen Adler in 1951 and with Ethel Semser in 1954. Pierre Boulez, one of the great composers and conductors of the modern era, has recorded the work three times spanning four decades: in 1961 with dramatic soprano Helga Pilarczyk; in 1977 with mezzo soprano Yvonne Minton; and in 1997 with German lyric soprano Christine Schäfer. Five singers have recorded *Pierrot* twice during their careers: Alice Howland, Mary Thomas, Jane Manning, Lina Åkerlund, and Phyllis Bryn-Julson.

This chapter provides a survey of the *Pierrot* discography¹ and highlights specific recordings and their distinguishing characteristics, including the relationship between the recitation and the score, the range of stylistic traits, and to what degree the performance, as a whole, is successful. The next chapter presents a detailed review and analysis (based on the Chapter Three criteria) of

¹ Many thanks to Eike Fess at the Arnold Schönberg Center for allowing me access to all of the *Pierrot lunaire* recordings in the ASC archive.

four songs from five separate recordings. Several benchmark recordings are not included in the next chapter, in part, because they *are* the popular recordings that are available to everyone, but also because they are either relatively unextraordinary in many aspects of the performance criteria. There is one exception to this: Jan DeGaetani's 1970 recording with Arthur Weisberg. DeGaetani's performance is effective and paradigmatic, as far as the evolution of *Pierrot lunaire* performance is concerned; she was *the* contemporary music specialist of her generation and was considered one of the foremost interpreters of *Pierrot lunaire*. Her performance is highly communicative, innovative, and engaging. Though DeGaetani's execution is not always pitch-perfect, she generally follows the contour of Schoenberg's melody and is very attentive to Schoenberg's musical markings (articulations, dynamics, and tempi), particularly in the distinction between the *gesungen* and *gesprochen* pitches. DeGaetani executes the *Sprechstimme* with subtle and effective gliding between the pitches; the listener is drawn in by her excellent articulation of the text without being made keenly aware of the technique used to travel between the notes. In regard to the *gesungen* pitches, vibrato is clearly added so that those specific pitches are purposefully set apart. It is a difficult task for a singer to remove vibrato from every phonated pitch, particularly in the upper register, at loud dynamic levels, and during notes of long duration. The less speech-like the vocal writing, the more difficult it is to execute it in manner akin to speech. Vibrato is occasionally present on some *Sprechstimme* pitches in DeGaetani's rendering, but overall, her interpretation is essentially without vibrato.

Another appealing trait of the DeGaetani recording is her controlled characterization. Her interpretation is devoid of histrionics and affectations. Exaggerated articulations and "character" voices are not used to portray a specific persona; rather, she uses her voice to portray the atmosphere of the text as it is already represented in the music. DeGaetani's text declamation and delivery are superb; one can grasp the connotation of the poetry without necessarily

understanding every word of the German. Meaning and expression can be understood by the sound of the interpretation alone.²

Though DeGaetani is generally quite faithful to the contour of the vocal line, delivering many of the pitches accurately, her declamation in the middle and lower registers is frequently not true to the score. In measures 12-15 of "Rote Messe," DeGaetani opts for a delivery that is all chest register, pitched substantially lower than written. Because the orchestration is dense and loud (scored for bass clarinet, viola, cello, and piano, and at a *fff* dynamic, with heavy accents, trills, and articulations), her choice to perform those measures with more low partial guarantees a sound that will better cut through the ensemble. The lower register pitch ambiguity continues throughout the rest of the song, following the general contour of the vocal line, but only approximating the notated intervals, particularly at mm. 18-20. Other songs which have the same low register pitch issues include no. 7, "Der kranke Mond," no. 16, "Gemeinheit," and no. 20, "Heimfahrt." Pitches in the higher register are usually more accurate: the G-sharp in m. 11 of "Rote Messe"; the G-sharp and F-sharp in mm. 18 and 21, respectively, in "Madonna"; and the F-natural in m. 20 of "Enthauptung."

Similar to DeGaetani's recording in many aspects, Lucy Shelton's performance with the Da Capo Chamber Players is an extremely popular *Pierrot*

² DeGaetani's clarity and precision of interpretation call to mind Schoenberg's essay, "The Relationship to the Text," as published in his collection of essays, *Style and Idea*, pp. 141-45. In this frequently quoted essay from 1912, Schoenberg writes, "There are relatively few people who are capable of understanding, purely in terms of music, what music has to say." He continues:

A few years ago I was deeply ashamed when I discovered in several Schubert songs, well-known to me, that I had absolutely no idea what was going on in the poems on which they were based. But when I read the poems, it became clear that I had gained absolutely nothing for the understanding of the songs . . . On the contrary, it appeared that, without knowing the poem, I had grasped the content, the real content, perhaps even more profoundly than if I had clung to the surface of the mere thoughts expressed in words.

Schoenberg goes on to say that he had never been more faithful to the poet's intent than when he allowed himself to be guided by the sound of the verse alone. Likewise, in Jan DeGaetani's thoughtful interpretation of *Pierrot lunaire*, one can divine the meaning of the verse by the sound (her rendering of the vocal line) alone.

recording from the recent past. A former student of Jan DeGaetani at the Aspen Music School, Shelton is now an internationally-acclaimed soprano who has built an impressive career as a contemporary music specialist. Her 1990 *Pierrot* recording continues to be one of the most popular and readily available, and can claim two additional distinctions: it is performed without a conductor, and immediately following the recording of the original German, there is a second presentation of the entire cycle, “spoken” in an effective English translation by esteemed *New Yorker* music critic, Andrew Porter.

Like DeGaetani, Lucy Shelton is an excellent musician and an exciting performer. Though her pitch accuracy is generally quite good, Shelton’s real strength lies in her declamation and commitment to the text. Her rendering of the *Sprechstimme* is practically conversational, her inflection sounding almost, at times, *too* natural and speech-like. It is this conversational style that makes her exceptional diction all the more apparent, however, and allows the listener to truly focus on the text and its meaning. Shelton’s characterizations are highly stylized and dramatic, although occasionally bordering on melodramatic. Each song seems to adopt a new “voice,” employing added characterizations and articulations that are not indicated in the score: in song no. 1, “Mondestrunken,” she adds staccato and marcato articulations; in song no. 8, “Nacht,” she growls through mm. 14-16 and mm. 23-25 when declaiming the words “finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter.” In fact, for almost every song, her voice takes on a new character: sick and weak in “Der kranke Mond”; overly maudlin in “Heimweh”; coy and petulant in “Gemeinheit.” Her inflectional abilities are impressive, of course, and the end result is not without its communicative interest, but the added dramatic elements clearly disregard Schoenberg’s explicit instructions in the Preface. Schoenberg’s writing is comprehensive. Shelton’s exaggerated characterizations—though highly expressive and even effective—present an “over the top” version of *Pierrot* that detracts from Schoenberg’s already extensively notated score.

Phyllis Bryn-Julson’s two recordings (with conductors Peter Eötvös in 1991 and Robert Black in 1992) are also not among the Chapter Five recordings, nor is Anja Silja’s 2000 recording (with Robert Craft, conductor). These recordings, though popular and commercially successful, demonstrate several “weaknesses” in each artist’s delivery, and while their interpretations are not without interest, they are less accurate representations of Schoenberg’s score.

Phyllis Bryn-Julson’s performances surge well past melodramatic and actually have a tendency toward campiness. The real shortcoming in her interpretations, however, is in the execution of the *Sprechstimme*; she is extremely inconsistent in her use of vibrato. Her *Sprechstimme* is very effective when performed non-vibrato, however, there is substantial vibrato in numerous passages which are not marked as *gesungen*, making it difficult to distinguish between notes which are *gesprochen* and those which are *gesungen*. Her vibrato also affects the technique of moving between the pitches. When vibrato is absent, she glides between the pitches; vibrato in the tone, however, makes for a pronounced *portamento*, often in passages in which it is not indicated. The overall effect is one of inconsistency as she vacillates between vibrato and straight tone, *portamento* and sliding.

Another anomalous and slightly distracting practice is Bryn-Julson’s tendency to scoop into accented syllables. She is, in fact, falling prey to the very practice Stein admonished in his chapter from *Orpheus in New Guises*: she is using the upward glide (raising the voice within a syllable) much more frequently than indicated or than is common. The end product is affected, contrived, and somewhat sing-songy—exactly what Schoenberg cautioned against.³

Anja Silja, a legendary dramatic soprano from the sixties and seventies, has added *Pierrot*, among other lower-pitched roles, to her repertoire in the latter years of her career. Silja made her mark on the operatic stage in the sixties and seventies, singing all the major roles in the dramatic soprano *fach*: The Woman in

³ All of these characteristics—scooping, vibrato, *portamento*—are present in Bryn-Julson’s recording of “Die Kreuze” with Peter Eötvös.

Erwartung, Senta in *Der fliegende Holländer*, as well as numerous other Wagner roles (Isolde, Elisabeth, Venus, Elsa, Freia, and Brünnhilde), and the title roles in Berg's *Lulu* and Strauss' *Elektra* and *Salome*. Within the last fifteen years, however, she has taken on lower roles: Herodias in *Salome*, Klytämnestra in *Elektra*, Countess Geschwitz in *Lulu*, as well as *Pierrot lunaire*. Though she had a formidable, ringing upper register at the height of her career, she now has experienced some expected vocal decline. Recorded in 2000 (at the age of 70), her *Pierrot* performance emphasizes some vocal difficulties: her upper register lacks strength, the middle register is slightly fuzzy and husky, and there is a significantly wide vibrato throughout. Silja's recording brings to the forefront how important vocal timbre is to a successful rendering of *Pierrot lunaire*. It requires an agile and flexible voice, not necessarily the agility required for *bel canto fioratura*, but rather a lithe instrument which has endless color and weight possibilities. Due in no small part to Silja's age, she no longer has those possibilities at her disposal. Her *Pierrot* lacks a brilliance and pointedness of tone that is crucial to an effective performance. Her vibrato is very present, even overwhelming at times, and the vocal line is quite sung. *Pierrot* requires a silvery tone that is bright, resonant and focused, qualities which Silja no longer displays.

Remaining Recordings

Of the remaining recordings in the discography, several are worthy of brief mention. A 1997 recording with Luisa Castellani and Giuseppe Sinopoli is particularly interesting. Castellani's declamation is good; she subtly glides between pitches, and the *gesungen* pitches are accurate. Longer note values, however, frequently have a significant amount of vibrato, and she occasionally does not follow the contour of Schoenberg's melody. One of the most intriguing aspects of the recording, however, is the balance between the Speaker and the ensemble. The instruments consistently overpower the voice. Not unlike Schoenberg's recording (which had its limitations due to the infancy of sound

recording technology) in which Stiedry-Wagner's vocal line is, at times, almost inaudible due to balance issues, Castellani's vocal line seems subordinate. In Sinopoli's recording, the instrumental forces are of primary importance, while the voice takes on a secondary role.

Another recording with balance issues is Patricia Rideout's 1974 recording. This is also one of the few recordings (albeit a partial one) that does not have a conductor; however, the pianist for the recording, Glenn Gould, is clearly dictating tempi and other musical aspects of the songs. Recorded for CBC Studios in Toronto (with whom Gould worked on numerous occasions), the balance is skewed towards the piano and the other instruments. Not only is the piano generally louder than any other instrument, it often drowns out the singer as well. In regard to tempo, this recording is also exceptional. At least five of the seven songs recorded have tempi that are well below the printed markings. Song no. 1, "Mondestrunken," for example, is marked *Bewegt*, with the $\downarrow = \text{ca. } 66-76$. The Rideout/Gould recording is a slightly lethargic $\downarrow = 58$. Song nos. 2 and 5, "Columbine" and "Valse de Chopin," respectively, have even more drastic tempo discrepancies. Both have a time signature of $\frac{3}{4}$, with the dotted half note (the full measure) as the beat. "Columbine" has a metronome marking of the $\downarrow = 42-48$; "Valse de Chopin" is marked $\downarrow = 46-50$ (Schoenberg calls it a *Langsamer Walzer*). This Rideout/Gould recording has the $\downarrow = 80$ in both songs—a tempo that is almost half of what it should be. The tempi are often so slow that the *Sprechstimme* feels and sounds tedious and wearisome. Tempo fluctuations are also more pronounced in Gould's recording. There are performed *ritardandi* and *fermati* that are not marked in the score, as well as a highly romantic sense of *rubato* in much of the phrasing—a stylistic characteristic which might be appropriate in "Valse de Chopin," but which, unfortunately, occurs in all the wrong places.⁴

⁴ For examples of this, listen to song no. 2, mm. 20-21; and song no. 3, mm. 25-26.

In regard to Rideout's *Sprechstimme*, it is difficult to say how many of the problems are merely a by-product of bad tempi; nevertheless, there are several elements of her presentation which make this recording less than ideal. First, though she does attempt to follow the contour of the vocal line, she tends to pitch everything quite high. While this is to be expected to a certain degree (Stein, for one, indicates that the Reciter is free to transpose the vocal line to fit her type of voice⁵), when pitched too high, many of the intended qualities of the work are entirely lost.

Additionally, Rideout's technique employed between the notes vacillates between sliding and *portamento*. Her use of *portamento*, particularly in the high register and at loud dynamics, is extremely intrusive and disruptive to the line and character of the songs. In connection with the overused *portamento*, those same sections have too much vibrato in them and therefore sound very sung. Parenthetically, Patricia Rideout's recording also demonstrates some of the worst German diction in the discography. Some words are simply incorrect because she reverses letters within words—in m. 5 of song no. 6, "Madonna," she sings the word *magren* instead of *magern*—and other words are just horribly mispronounced. She almost always accents the unstressed *-er* endings of words: *nieder*, *Dichter*, *Wunder*, *bronzener*, *blasser*, *Mutter*, to name a few.⁶ Though there are quality moments within this performance, the negative aspects far outweigh the positive.

Most of the remaining recordings can easily be placed into two groups: those who use *portamento* between notes and those who slide/glide. Directly connected to both of these issues, then, is also the distinction between the Reciters who use vibrato on the *Sprechstimme* pitches and those who do not. Of particular note in the *portamento* category are the recordings of Bethany Beardslee/Robert Craft (1963), and the two recordings of Alice Howland with Arthur Winograd

⁵ Stein, *Orpheus in New Guises*, 88.

⁶ The resulting pronunciation on these final *-er* syllables is [er] instead of [ər] or [ɐ].

(1955) and Herbert Zipper (1962). A few of the more effective recordings in the sliding category are Ellen Adler/René Leibowitz (1951); Gerda Hartman/no conductor (1987); Maria Höglind/Jan Risberg (1991); and Salome Kammer/Hans Zender (1994). And then there are those—like the Phyllis Bryn-Julson/Peter Eötvös recording—which seem to haphazardly combine the two: Sophie Boulin/Paul Méfano (1996); Mary Thomas/David Atherton (1973); Karin Ott/Pietro Antonini (1990-94); and both of Jane Manning's recordings with Simon Rattle (1977) and Karl Aage Rasmussen (1983).

Several of these recordings are also worthy of mention for other miscellaneous characteristics. Gerda Hartman, for example, makes good use of range and register, glides subtly between notes, makes an excellent attempt at the written pitches, and generally follows the contour of the vocal line; however, though most of her *Sprechstimme* is without vibrato, the *gesungen* portions also have absolutely *no* vibrato. Incongruously, she calls attention to these passages by singing them louder and straighter than the pitches on either side.⁷

Mary Thomas' 1973 recording with conductor David Atherton sounds like a precursor to Lucy Shelton's recording of seventeen years later. The quality of voice is very similar, as are many of the articulations and characterizations that one hears in the later Shelton recording. Unlike Shelton, however, there is a tremendous amount of overdone vibrato and the ensuing *portamento* sounds

⁷ In Jane Manning's article of *Pierrot* reminiscences ("A Sixties 'Pierrot': A Personal Memoir," *Tempo* 59 (July 2005): 21), she makes a point of discussing the difference between the *gesungen* and *gesprochen* pitches. She says, ". . . the special fragments marked 'gesungen' have to be clearly differentiated from the *Sprechgesang*. It seems advisable to sing them in a clear, *quasi non-vibrato* tone so there can be no mistake." This interpretation is very peculiar, indeed, as it suggests then that every other tone in the work is to be performed *with* vibrato. And yet, throughout the rest of her article, she acknowledges that this is not to be the case (except for "some of the more impassioned and violent sections"—p. 18). Her article is replete with contradictions. Elsewhere she states, "It remains my firm belief that the expressive impact of this music does not depend on external theatrics, but comes from a scrupulous adherence to the minutiae of the score." (p. 22-23). However, on page 18 she remarks that she "made a rough chart of moods, characters, timbres, and possible small hand gestures . . ."; and again on pp. 24-25, she recalls the first time she performed it from memory in a "staged" performance with *Pierrot* costume and white make-up. These practices seem to go against her stated belief that the music "does not depend on external theatrics."

almost ghost-like. Her performance borders on the absurd due to the exaggerated “shivering” between pitches.⁸ Her characterizations cross the line into the outlandish and overdone. While her ability to produce a different sound and “voice” for every song is impressive, the overall effect is far from convincing. Recalling Schoenberg’s letter to Fritz and Erika Stiedry just before their 1940 recording sessions, Schoenberg expressed that he thought it was important that they strive to perfectly catch “that light, ironical, satirical tone in which the piece was actually conceived.”⁹ Mary Thomas’ interpretation is more akin to an *Erwartung*-like hysteria or psychosis and less so with irony and satire.

The recordings of Ellen Adler and Jeanne Héricard represent the more spoken end of the spectrum. These effective performances are without pretense, and are honest, simple and straight-forward. Pitches are occasionally wrong, the range is without extremes, and the contour is not always correct, but they are extremely accessible to the listener. There is little affectation or bravado in these interpretations which seems to allow for better intelligibility of the text. A downside to the more spoken delivery is that because of the narrower range, the interpretation often becomes one-dimensional and monochromatic.

Of the numerous recordings that tend to be more sung, one characteristic is common throughout: they generally are not as interesting. *Pierrot* is not made remarkable by the straightforward presentation of pitches; it is what happens in between the pitches that makes this piece unique. It is the controversy surrounding the “how” and “why” of *Sprechstimme* that continues to make this piece as fascinating today as it was almost a century ago. Removing the *Sprechstimme*—and that is essentially what a performer is doing when she chooses to *sing* every pitch—irrevocably alters the piece. It is no longer a faithful representation of Schoenberg’s composition. The performers who tend toward a more sung rendering—Ing-Britt Ibsen, Edith Urbanczyk, and Leslie

⁸ Alice Howland also renders the *Sprechstimme* in much the same way.

⁹ Rufer, 40.

Boucher, among others—present a very refined, respectable, and thoroughly unoriginal interpretation.

French soprano Sophie Boulin has recorded one of the more atypical versions of *Pierrot*. Her rendering of the vocal line fits into almost every category of performance criteria. It is frequently too sung and occasionally too spoken, but perhaps most interesting are the many occasions of shouting and growling, barking, snarling, and shrieking. For example, “Rote Messe,” “Enthauptung,” and “Gemeinheit” (Song nos. 11, 13, and 16, respectively) sound angry, abusive, rough, and aggressive. She yells large portions of these songs, uses more heavy mechanism, and carries chest voice higher than almost any other singer. “Die Kreuze,” “Heimweh,” and “Parodie” (song nos. 14, 15, and 17, respectively), in contrast, sound like operatic arias: voluminous amounts of vibrato; a more agile, silvery tone; and much more use of head voice and a more “legitimate” singing tone.

Boulin’s characterizations are bold; the lack of inhibition and total abandon with which she performs *Pierrot* make for an incredibly intriguing, compelling, and convincing performance. It is not refined and occasionally not well-coordinated in places—not all the right notes happen at the right time and there is more than a touch of the overly theatrical about it—but she has a connection to the text that is honest, committed, and unapologetic.

Though not every recording has been specifically discussed in this chapter, the goal has been to introduce the reader to the wide variations in *Sprechstimme* performance practice. No two recordings are alike, and while there are certainly similar characteristics between performers’ interpretations, there is not an agreed upon standard of *Sprechstimme* delivery. Much continues to be left to the discretion of the interpreter. With every new recording that is released, the range of criteria will likely continue to expand, confirming that there are still new ways to interpret the score and technically execute the *Sprechstimme*.

CHAPTER FIVE

Five Unique *Pierrots*

To better understand the stylistic traits and techniques involved in the performance of *Sprechstimme*, a detailed comparison and contrast of four songs from five specific recordings are presented in this chapter. These recordings were chosen, in part, to display the gamut of possible interpretations, but also because they span a significant number of years (fifty-seven) and come from five very different performers. The five recordings are:

- Erika Stiedry-Wagner, Reciter; Arnold Schoenberg, conductor. Columbia Records; Los Angeles, California; 1940.
- Helga Pilarczyk, Reciter; Pierre Boulez, conductor. Wergo Records; Paris, France; 1961.
- Yvonne Minton, Reciter; Pierre Boulez, conductor. CBS Records; Paris, France; 1977.
- Christine Schäfer, Reciter; Pierre Boulez, conductor. Deutsche Grammophon; Paris, France; 1997.
- Barbara Sukowa, Reciter; Reinbert de Leeuw, conductor. Koch Schwann; Utrecht, Holland; 1989.¹

It is likely that almost every woman (and conductor) who has studied *Pierrot lunaire* has at least cursorily reviewed Schoenberg's Columbia recording with Erika Stiedry-Wagner. We frequently turn to the composer's recording in hopes of discovering clues as to how the piece should be definitively performed; Schoenberg's recording is, therefore, the standard against which subsequent recordings and performances are initially measured.

¹ Complete recording information, including which specific release was used for this document, can be found in the Appendix.

The second through fourth recordings represent the two extremes, as well as the “middle” ground, of *Sprechstimme* execution: one which is very spoken (Helga Pilarczyk); one which is very sung (Yvonne Minton); and one which might be considered a “textbook” representation (Christine Schäfer). These three recordings also happen to be with the same conductor, Pierre Boulez, and span four decades of his career. These disparate performances seem to further emphasize the enigmatic nature of the technique and the lack of an accepted performance practice tradition.

The final recording with Barbara Sukowa is not unlike the Sophie Boulin performance discussed in Chapter Four. Her audacious, vocally reckless performance is one of the most exciting in the discography. Sukowa, a well-known German actress of stage and film who now has added several concert works to her repertoire including the *Gurre-Lieder* and *Pierrot lunaire*,² presents a very dramatic performance that is surprisingly refreshing. As *Pierrot* has primarily been the domain of singers for the last fifty years, Sukowa’s recording marks an interesting return to the Actress as Reciter. Though it may be considered “over-the-top” at times, it is, nevertheless, exciting, immediately engaging, and highly entertaining.

Helga Pilarczyk, Yvonne Minton, and Christine Schäfer have had significant careers in opera, concert, and recital. German dramatic soprano Helga Pilarczyk is perhaps best known for her performances in modern opera, including Berg’s *Lulu* and *Wozzeck*, Strauss’ *Salome*, and Schoenberg’s *Erwartung*. Australian mezzo soprano, Yvonne Minton, has had a long and diverse career, singing for several seasons at Covent Garden, as well as guest appearances at major opera houses around the world. Her repertory includes Oktavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Sextus in *La Clemenza di Tito*, as well as roles in *Die Walküre*, *Parsifal*, and *Lohengrin*. Her concert appearances include Verdi’s *Requiem*,

² Barbara Sukowa was born in Germany, now lives in New York, and continues to make a living by performing on the German stage, in German and American movies, and in a very select repertoire of concert work: *Gurre-Lieder*, *Pierrot lunaire*, and Weill’s *Dreigroschenoper*.

Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde*, and Elgar’s *Sea Pictures*. German soprano Christine Schäfer has built a solid reputation on the concert and opera stage with roles including the heroines of Mozart, as well as Strauss’ *Zerbinetta* and Berg’s *Lulu*. Her concert repertoire is equally diverse with performances ranging from Bach to Boulez.

These five recordings represent a diversity of musical backgrounds and professional experiences, each providing an interpretation that is vastly different and unique. Much can be divined about Schoenberg’s work through these recordings, as well as the evolution of *Sprechstimme* performance practice.

Stylistic Overview of the Recordings

Schoenberg expressed his general satisfaction with his own recording, specifically in regard to the instrumentalists and musical elements such as tempo, phrasing, expression, and balance within the instrumental ensemble. Balance between the instruments and the voice was a concern to Schoenberg;³ he wanted the voice to be better integrated into the ensemble and so asked Stiedry-Wagner to step away from the microphone. An argument ensued; Schoenberg’s will prevailed, and Stiedry-Wagner’s performance is almost inaudible at times.

Regardless of the recording quality, however, Stiedry-Wagner’s rendering of the *Sprechstimme* is still discernable and though not pitch-perfect, she is generally faithful in following the rise and fall of the line, and the *gesungen* pitches are also relatively accurate.⁴ Though Stiedry-Wagner had musical training and frequently participated in *Liederabende*, *Pierrot* would have been an extraordinary accomplishment for a woman whose primary training was in the theatre. With the exception of an occasional flutter or tremolo in her voice, her rendering is largely without vibrato. The infrequent misplaced *portamento* is

³ Chapter Two, footnotes 41 – 43.

⁴ The recording quality is much better on the recently discovered partial recording of *Pierrot lunaire*. See Chapter One, footnote 14.

present in those passages where she has difficulty controlling her vibrato, usually occurring on the longer held notes. Her text declamation is very speech-like, not overly affected (an excellent point of emulation for other interpreters), and the *gesungen* pitches have vibrato making them generally discernable from the *gesprochen* pitches. It is a credible interpretation, and while some may be tempted to dismiss it based solely on cosmetic reasons (recording quality, unrefined vocalism and balance), much can be learned from it; Stiedry-Wagner *was*, after all, Schoenberg's endorsed Reciter. Though he knew there were elements which needed to be addressed in the recitation, this recording is still one of the only primary sources available to us.

Helga Pilarczyk's recording from 1961 with Pierre Boulez is one of the more spoken recordings in the discography. Part of what makes this performance sound exceptionally spoken is her infrequent use of head voice. She maintains a very low, speaking-range tessitura for the entire performance. Because of this, one never hears the extremes of range that Schoenberg's notation demands. She rarely ventures out of her chest voice, and while this does lend an exceptionally speech-like quality to the songs, it is the pitch extremes of *Pierrot* that make the vocal line so exciting. Frequent *Pierrot* interpreter Jane Manning recalls speaking with Pilarczyk about this work. Manning says that Pilarczyk was "forthright in her assertion that it was 'quite impossible' at the written tessitura, and that one should simply pitch it much lower."⁵ Though Stein said that every performer should pitch the *Sprechstimme* according to the individual's spoken voice, it is logical to assume Schoenberg must have had something slightly more advanced in mind. Clearly no one's speaking voice encompasses a range of two and a half octaves; therefore, it is only natural to assume that the performer must venture outside her natural speaking range. It is this precise practice that makes the rendering of these texts so exciting—the performer is attempting to keep a

⁵ Manning, 20. It is peculiar that Pilarczyk would have thought so; she was, after all, a great dramatic soprano, who, during the apex of her career, easily had all *Pierrot*'s pitches (and more) at her disposal.

speech-like quality in areas of the voice where one does not generally speak. Pilarczyk's vocal delivery rarely goes above C₅—and usually stays between A₃ and A₄—even though the vocal line is written much higher. Regardless of the very limited range, there are several successful elements to the recording. Her delivery is so speech-like that one is rarely aware of the *Sprechstimme* as a separate, distinct vocal technique. To her credit, because of its speech-like character, the *gesungen* pitches are quite obvious. In fact, the line of demarcation between speaking and singing is perhaps more pronounced on Pilarczyk's recording than on any other.

An oddity about her performance that seems to be related to the low tessitura is her tendency to shorten the vowel (and duration of the note) by closing to the next consonant, thus cutting short the slide and written duration of the pitch, as well as anticipating the next syllable or word. This happens more frequently when the following consonant is /l/, /m/, /n/, or a trilled /r/.⁶ Because her delivery is so speech-like, it lacks some of the more pronounced sliding as heard on other recordings. This is due, in no small part, to the fact that because the pitch range has been narrowed significantly, she often does not have as great a distance to travel between notes. Jeanne Héricard's 1957 recording with Hans Rosbaud is the only other recording which demonstrates, to this extent, this same vocal aberration of shortening the rhythmic duration and the vowel by closing to the next consonant.⁷

A published conversation between Boulez and Theodor Adorno in 1966 addresses, among other things, Pilarczyk's extremely spoken recitation. Adorno brought to Boulez's attention that Pilarczyk's realization is much more spoken than even Stiedry-Wagner's. How did he reconcile this? Boulez explained:

⁶ Stein warned against this exact practice in *Orpheus in New Guises*, 88.

⁷ Héricard's recording is also the only other performance that is as spoken as Pilarczyk's.

. . . *Sprechstimme* is, so to speak, an impure medium . . . in the sense that it violates a purely musical will . . . Webern never utilized *Sprechstimme* in his works, because it injured the purity of the music.⁸

Adorno explained that the intended goal of the *Sprechstimme* should be one of *Verfremdungseffekt* (alienation effect). The foreignness of the music is intensified by the addition of this thoroughly foreign, “unnatural” and alienating vocal technique. Adorno commented that Boulez held himself more strictly to the spoken nature of the delivery with Frau Pilarczyk than Schoenberg himself had.⁹ Boulez agreed, at which point Adorno suggested he was “more papal than the pope” in this respect. Boulez remarked that he thought that Frau Pilarczyk had performed the *Sprechstimme* wonderfully.¹⁰

Yvonne Minton’s recording from 1977 marks a complete turn-around in the interpretation of *Pierrot* for the Boulez discography. Impressive because of its pitch accuracy, Minton’s rendering is almost completely sung, occasionally with straight tone but often with vibrato. There appears to be no predetermined plan as to when she performs the *Sprechstimme* with or without vibrato. In general, notes that are higher in pitch and longer in duration tend to have more vibrato, but there are plenty of examples of writing for the lower register in which she also uses vibrato (no. 11, “Rote Messe”). Conversely, she minimizes her use of vibrato in song no. 4, “Eine blasse Wäscherin,” and no. 6, “Madonna.” Regardless of the presence or absence of vibrato, Minton does not slide or *portamento* between the pitches. She sings the songs as though they were any other classical art song. Though other recordings exist that at first hearing *sound* more sung (because of a more present vibrato), Minton’s performance is actually more pitch accurate. Her vibrato is generally very even and not overdone, making

⁸ Adorno and Boulez, 85.

⁹ Ibid. Boulez agreed with Adorno and it was at this point in the conversation that Boulez told the anecdote (as told to him by Leonard Stein) of Schoenberg’s demonstration of the *Sprechstimme* in *Ode to Napoleon* and how it was at complete odds with how it was actually notated (as previously cited in Chapter One, footnote 54).

¹⁰ Ibid., 86.

it much easier to aurally discern individual pitches. It is one of the “cleanest” recordings available, and if one wants to hear the relationship between the instrumental ensemble and the written pitches, there is no better recording. This interpretation not only seems completely at odds with Boulez’s earlier endorsement of Pilarczyk’s interpretation, but also appears to go against that which Schoenberg suggested.

Although this may not be considered an “accurate” performance of *Sprechstimme*, Minton’s interpretation is still extremely effective. Because of the self-imposed limitations inherent in the more sung interpretation, there is less risk for exaggerated characterization and over-acting. Her performance is not boring or uninteresting in the least; this is further evidence, perhaps, of the genius of the writing. Even though the vocal line is not performed according to Schoenberg’s instructions (and, in fact, in exact opposition to what he wished), Minton still is able to deliver a creditable performance.

Boulez’s final recording of *Pierrot* with German soprano Christine Schäfer offers a more balanced performance than either of his previous *Pierrot* recordings. Recorded in 1997—twenty years after the Minton recording—Schäfer’s Speaker presents a great depth of understanding of the music, text, and *Sprechstimme*. The instrumental ensemble in this recording, the Ensemble InterContemporain, is also exceptional. As is true of most Boulez performances, the caliber of players is unparalleled; the outstanding ensemble, coupled with Schäfer’s performance, makes this one of the most consistent, accurate, and engaging recordings available.

Schäfer’s *Sprechstimme* is meticulously crafted. Her pitch is quite accurate; that is, every pitch is clear and precise at its onset, but then immediately abandoned by subtly sliding away from it. There are passages where her pitch is not perfect (that is, she is not performing the exact pitches written), but even in those few places, she maintains the intervallic integrity so that the contour and intervals of Schoenberg’s line is well-preserved. Schäfer’s technique of moving

between the pitches is outstanding; again, the focus remains on the text and the music, not on the technique. Even in places where the pitch does not trail off as it should (and those places are few), her delivery still does not give the impression of *singing*.

Portamento is used only in those places where it is expressly called for in the score, and there is never an overly theatrical delivery of the text. Though Schäfer's vibrato is occasionally present, the vast majority of the notes—high and low alike—do not have vibrato. This shows an incredible amount of control and makes the *Sprechstimme*, as well as the *gesungen* notes, all the more effective. It is the consistency of her interpretation that makes this performance so successful.

If there are negative aspects to this recording, it is that her interpretation is occasionally a little too "safe." This cycle is vocally demanding, particularly if one performs the *Sprechstimme* pitch-accurate and without vibrato. The purposeful withholding of vibrato can be incredibly taxing in a work of this intensity. Schäfer is protective of her voice in the lower-middle register, particularly in "Die Kreuze," and the middle portion of "Rote Messe." She occasionally pitches entire sections higher than written to avoid "overloading" the lower-middle register. In places where that alteration would drastically change the character of the piece (for example, in "Die Kreuze"), she compensates by using a "headier" tone; the resulting effect is a carefully-placed, sensible tone in which vocal—and similarly, musical—risk is minimized.¹¹ The problem with this vocal conservatism is that it can drastically change the character and atmosphere of the piece. "Die Kreuze" should *not* sound careful or vocally apprehensive; it should be intrepid, forthright, and self-assured. Schäfer's recording is outstanding in almost every regard. These minor shortcomings are not disparaging of Schäfer's vocal ability or her performance of this work; they are the result of the

¹¹ When a singer "overloads" a particular area of the voice, it generally means that one is adding too much weight (heavy mechanism or "chest" voice) to the sound. A "headier" tone refers to the use of more high than low register. Schäfer uses a sound that has more "head voice" (i.e., a lighter mechanism in which the higher overtones are emphasized) than "chest voice" (i.e., a heavier mechanism in which the low overtones are emphasized).

unavoidable registrational issues inherent in the differences between the soprano and mezzo soprano instrument.

Lastly, Barbara Sukowa's 1988 recording is unlike any other in the discography; it is visceral, magnetic, exciting, and emotionally rousing. There is no apparent concern for vocal health or preservation; the abandon with which every note is executed is incongruously appealing and stimulating.

The range of vocal abuses is startling: howling, barking, screaming, growling, and shouting. She does not seem to have any regard for registration and there is no careful planning of when to use head voice, chest voice, or a mix of the two. She uses whatever sound will be most effective to vividly and candidly depict the text. In the midst of these abuses, however, she is also capable of the most gentle, supple, sensuous tones. Her rendering of "Eine blasse Wäscherin" is intensely arousing and full of yearning; conversely, "Die Kreuze" is angry, accusatory, and gruesome in the beginning, but immediately resigned and desperate at the third stanza: "Tot das Haupt—erstarrt die Locken—Fern, verweht der Lärm des Pöbels. Langsam sinkt die Sonne nieder, Eine rote Königskrone."¹²

Sukowa's interpretation is, perhaps, not quite aligned with the score; she does, however, follow the contour of the vocal line and the *gesungen* pitches are generally accurate.¹³ Sukowa uses every possible extreme of her voice, singing much higher, lower, louder, softer, sweeter, and bawdier than any other recording.

¹² "Dead, the head—stiffen the curled locks—Far away blows the noise of the mob. Slowly, the sun sinks, A red king's crown."

¹³ Though she does follow the contour of the line, strict intervallic integrity is not maintained. If one goes according to Stein's suggestions, however—that is, a major third needs to be larger than a minor third, etc.—she does so accordingly.

The Songs

Choosing only a few songs to compare and contrast is an almost impossible task. Every song has interesting aspects, however, the same song on each recording does not always demonstrate each performer's uniqueness. For example, Sukowa's recording of "Eine blasse Wäscherin" is one of the most beautiful. The remaining recordings, however, present a relatively generic performance, therefore, it may not be the best song for comparison. The goal was to choose songs which have five very different, very individualist interpretations. "Rote Messe," "Die Kreuze," and "Parodie" were chosen because all three songs have been cited previously for their specific vocal challenges or techniques: "Rote Messe" for its use of the notated *portamento*, as well as the lower register issues; "Die Kreuze" for the balance and registration problems between the voice and piano; and "Parodie" for its highly imitative writing between the instruments and the voice.¹⁴ "O alter Duft" will be discussed briefly for its tonal implications and the close relationship between the voice and piano. These songs also show qualities that are distinctly characteristic of each performer.¹⁵ Lastly, they are representative of the wide vocal range required, and also present several different styles of vocal and instrumental writing.

It is not possible to address every nuance of every note of all four songs, therefore, each song will not necessarily be dealt with in its entirety; rather, the most exceptional passages among them will be examined.

The discussion of these four songs will primarily be limited to the *Sprechstimme* and other issues directly related to the vocal line. Several aspects of the vocal delivery, however, are influenced by what happens in the instrumental ensemble and at the podium. There are obvious and disturbing

¹⁴ "Rote Messe": see Chapter One, p. 21 - 22, and Chapter Three, pp. 53 - 54, 60 - 61; "Die Kreuze": Chapter Three, p. 60 - 61; and "Parodie": Chapter One, p. 28.

¹⁵ For example, "Die Kreuze" shows Pilarczyk's tendency to shorten the vowel and close to the next consonant; it also shows the challenges inherent in the soprano versus mezzo soprano argument.

balance issues in the Schoenberg/Stiedry-Wagner recording; Stiedry-Wagner knew it, Schoenberg acknowledged it, and we are certainly aware of it. Fortunately, in modern recordings, most balance issues are "fixed" in the recording studio during editing. Our task, then, is to listen past the problems of the façade (this includes balance and even some ensemble coordination issues) and examine what the vocal line does: how the *Sprechstimme* is executed; what is successful in each performer's rendering of the vocal line, and just as importantly, what is not; and perhaps most important of all, what is particularly unique to each vocalist's interpretation of these songs.

"Rote Messe"

Delivery of the *Sprechstimme* aside, of the five recordings, Schoenberg's is the least refined and polished according to modern recording standards and capabilities. Because of the balance problems between the instruments and the voice, any nuance in Stiedry-Wagner's interpretation is virtually non-existent. Nevertheless, Schoenberg's recording with Stiedry-Wagner obviously offers the unique perspective of how Schoenberg may have envisioned the *Sprechstimme* at that time, a feature which no other recording can claim.

The first five measures of "Rote Messe" are delivered in very much the same way in all five recordings. The vocal range in these measures is quite low (the majority of it lies below the staff), so there is little variation between the recordings. Otherwise, these are five very different interpretations. While Pilarczyk's recording is, in general, the most spoken of the five, Sukowa and Schäfer are actually the most *speech-like* at the beginning of "Rote Messe" (though Schäfer pitches it slightly higher); that is, Schäfer's inflection and Sukowa's rhythm are most like speech. Of course, Schoenberg was adamant that the rhythm should be followed precisely with no more liberties taken than one

would in any other piece of music. Sukowa's rhythmic liberties are not excessive; she simply molds the line to better fit her speech patterns.

An immediate change in character and dynamics occurs at mm. 10-15, as well as in vocal register, at m. 10. The voice is now in the upper register, and there is a *molto ritardando* at m. 11, followed by one of the two notated *portamenti* in the cycle (mm. 11-12). Written at *fff*, at the broadest point of the *ritardando* and on the word *zerreißt* ("he tears his priestly garments"), the *portamento* should be the climax of the song. Only in Sukowa's recording, however, is the full drama realized, due not only to her vocal delivery but also because of the *molto ritardando* in the measure before. The brutality of the word *zerreißt* is not felt to the degree necessary if the *ritardando* is not substantial. There is a hostility in her voice that depicts the violence of the priest ripping and tearing the vestments from his body.

Pilarczyk's rendering of the same measures is, in comparison, rather anti-climactic because of the lack of register extremes. Notated in the score as G-sharp₅ descending to D₄, Pilarczyk somewhat matter-of-factly performs these notes as an octave descent from B₄ to B₃. Her arrival on the syllable "- reißt" is less than remarkable. Another problem in these measures—as is encountered throughout her recording—is her shortening of the vowels in anticipation of the next consonant. She does this on the word *Hand* in m. 10, as well as shortening the duration of the first syllable of *gottgeweihte* in m. 11. This not only changes the rhythm of the line, but also truncates it in such a way that the intended climactic build is completely lost.

These same measures in the recordings of Stiedry-Wagner, Schäfer, and Minton are unremarkable. They are relatively well-executed, to be sure (especially by Schäfer and Minton), but none emphasizes the *ritardando* to the extent necessary. This, in conjunction with their laudable pitch accuracy (or at least register) and lack of a substantial *portamento*, renders this word somewhat too refined and anti-climactic.

Continuing on in "Rote Messe," Pilarczyk's performance highlights one of her most commendable qualities: she projects easily over the ensemble in mm. 12-15 due to the spoken character of her *Sprechstimme* as well as the strength in her low register. As has been discussed in regard to several other performers—including Schäfer—this is a rarity. Though Pilarczyk seldom performs the pitches as notated, she follows the contour remarkably well and maintains some semblance of intervallic integrity. In general, when the vocal line, as written, goes higher than A₄ (and continues to ascend), Pilarczyk transposes the rest of the line down. For example, in mm. 14-15, Pilarczyk transposes the phrase, "Zu grausem Abendmahle," down approximately a major 2nd. Likewise, in m. 25, her *gesungen* pitches are beautifully sung, albeit down a minor 3rd from what is written.

Incidentally, Stiedry-Wagner's *gesungen* pitches are also too low but are the correct intervals. Minton and Schäfer sing the correct pitches in m. 25, though Minton chooses to perform these *gesungen* pitches with absolutely no vibrato. She uses vibrato through the majority of the rest of the song, but then sings with straight tone on the only three *gesungen* pitches of "Rote Messe." It is this inconsistency that makes it difficult to distinguish between *Sprechstimme* and non-*Sprechstimme* passages. Were she to vibrate consistently on every note in the song and then remove the vibrato on the *gesungen* pitches, one would likely think that was an aesthetic choice; odd, to be sure, but it would at least be consistent.

Sukowa's rendering of these *gesungen* pitches is perhaps most surprising among the five recordings; they are completely accurate, albeit without vibrato.

One final item of interest concerning m. 16 of "Rote Messe" is Schoenberg's dynamic markings on the first two syllables. He meticulously marks these syllables as *ff* followed by a *subito pp* on the words "beim Blendeglanz." With the exception of Schäfer, there is almost no dynamic contrast in any of the other recordings. There is, however, incredible registrational contrast in Sukowa's recording. The pitches in the score are C₅ on "beim" and D₅ on the

syllable “*Blen-*”; Sukowa leaps from F_4 all the way up to C_6 . It is as though Sukowa chose to use registration in place of dynamics to create the desired contrast on these two pitches.

“Die Kreuze”

The last song to be composed in the cycle, “Die Kreuze” occupies a unique and strategic place in the final ordering of *Pierrot lunaire*. It is a dramatic and violent end to the darker, more macabre second tableau, which is in great contrast to the nostalgic, lighter character of the third tableau. It also immediately follows the longest interlude in the cycle which was, according to Steuermann, the very last music to be composed.¹⁶ Though the song is written for all the players in the ensemble, the first verse begins as a duet—or competition, perhaps more accurately—between the voice and piano. The complex piano line, written on three staves for seven of the first nine measures, is extremely dense and often very loud and accented. The first verse delivers some of the most demanding and vocally challenging music for the Reciter in the entire cycle. It requires an enormous amount of breath, a tremendous amount of sound, and a voice that can cut through the thick, bombastic piano part.

There are two critical issues at play in this song: tempo and *fach*. In these recordings, an incorrect tempo usually errs on the slow side, an error that can prove treacherous for the vocalist. The five recordings of “Die Kreuze” are no exception. Schoenberg marks “Die Kreuze” as *Langsame* with the $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 56$. Schoenberg’s recording with Stiedry-Wagner is exactly at that metronomic marking, as is Sukowa’s. Pilarczyk’s performance has the $\text{♩} = 44$; Minton’s is $\text{♩} = 42$, and Schäfer’s comes in at a lethargic $\text{♩} = 40$! “Die Kreuze” is already a tremendous vocal challenge due to register, dynamics, breath, and accompaniment; performing it at a tempo that much slower than Schoenberg’s

¹⁶ Steuermann, 50.

marking renders the vocal line almost inexecutable. There is always room for a respectable margin of difference on either side of a notated tempo, however, when that margin not only grossly changes the character of the work but also creates significant vocal difficulty for the singer, one is forced to question the tempo’s validity. Christine Schäfer’s voice sounds taxed, tired, and uncomfortable. She is forced to breathe in the middle of words and phrases, frequently after having only sung a single beat. Schäfer breathes in the following places in the first verse:

Heilge Kreuze ✓ sind die Verse,
 dran ✓ die Dichter stumm ✓ verbluten, ✓
 blind- ✓ geschlagen von der Geier ✓
 flatterndem Gespensterschwarme.

No singer wants to breathe in an awkward place, but because of the musico-poetic phrasing of this verse, there will rarely be a breath that is not awkward. A radically slow tempo only exacerbates the clumsiness and difficulty already inherent in this song.

Schäfer certainly is not the only performer who takes an ill-timed breath or two. Stiedry-Wagner and Sukowa both do, as well, even with their quicker tempi, but then some allowance should be made for them as they were not exclusively trained as singers. Pilarczyk also breathes in the middle of the first phrase, but then breathes in more reasonable places throughout the rest of the verse.

Yvonne Minton is the only performer who does not break up the first phrase with a breath, nor does she take additional breaths in awkward places. Minton’s ability to sing through a phrase is directly related to how she delivers the vocal line; she is singing with vibrato. Removing the vibrato—though necessary for the performance of *Sprechstimme*—can keep the breath from working efficiently, thus requiring extra breaths from the performer.¹⁷

¹⁷ Straight tone involves the combination of a tremendous amount of pressure—at, above, and below the vocal folds, as well as at the lower abdominals—plus the damming of the air so that it is not allowed to move through the folds at an even and consistent rate. The tremendous sub-glottal pressure (pressure beneath the vocal folds) coupled with abdominal tension makes it feel like one

The difficulty Schäfer experiences in these opening nine measures contrasted with Minton's relative ease in the same material is not only an issue of straight tone versus vibrato, but also of *fach*. Schäfer, a high, relatively light soprano, has considerably more difficulty projecting in the lower-middle part of her range, especially when asked to do so against a loud, forceful piano background. Minton, on the other hand, a mezzo soprano, has made a career of singing in the lower-middle register with most of what she sings laying between A₃ and E₅; she is expected to project and "cut" through an orchestra *differently* than a soprano in a comparable range. These two singers perfectly demonstrate that the issue at hand is not one solely of range but also of timbre and strength of register.

At the start of the second verse, the other instruments enter and the mood of the piece immediately changes. Sukowa's declamation at mm. 11-13 is particularly effective. Her portrayal of the first verse is, of course, very dramatic; at m. 11, however, she makes a significant change. Her portrayal sounds eerily resigned and defeated, and continues on in the same manner through m. 16. Measures 17 and 18 mark a return to the vocal character of the beginning; aggressive and demanding, she yells these final words. Produced almost entirely in chest voice, she remarkably reproduces the pitches with considerable accuracy.

Minton also makes an interesting choice in the same measures. She purposefully removes all vibrato to depict the images in the text: death, the matting of the hair, and the sinking of the sun. She allows the vibrato to return for the last phrase of the song, "*Heilige Kreuze sind die Verse.*"

Stiedry-Wagner and Pilarczyk, on the other hand, have the least amount of contrast in the B section. For Pilarczyk, everything is so speech-like that she greatly limits the palette of colors available to her. Stiedry-Wagner's declamation at mm. 11-13 sounds overly anxious. Though her delivery of the final phrase has

is working harder and using more air. In reality, the singer simply is not using the entire mechanism optimally. The technical difficulty inherent in the use of straight tone is only intensified in "Die Kreuze," an already demanding, breath-challenged song.

potential—it is aggressive and demanding—the full effect is lost due to balance issues. As in the Schäfer recording, mm. 17 and 18 work best when the ensemble follows what the score indicates: the crescendo is gradual; it begins at a *ffp*; and the loudest moment is saved for *after* the vocal release.

"Parodie"

An frequently-cited argument with the vocal line in "Parodie" is that if one does not perform the notes as written, the complex, highly imitative nature of the song is completely lost; that is, the canonic structure will be rendered inaudible if the vocalist does not perform the "right" notes. As previously discussed, however, the exact duplication of pitch is not required to be aware of the imitative relationships.¹⁸ Performing the pitches as written is not necessary to understand the song, nor is it necessary to be aurally aware of the canonic techniques at work. The rhythmic contour of "Parodie" is quite sophisticated; it is distinct from everything that has come before. It is almost impossible *not* to hear the imitative relationship between the voice and the rest of the ensemble based solely on the rhythmic elements. Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to admit that every imitative aspect of the piece could be immediately heard: viola and voice begin the song in canon at the unison; the clarinet's entrance intervenes in an inverted canon at the ninth; at m. 16, the unison canon is now between the piccolo and voice while the viola and clarinet begin another inverted canon at the tritone using new material; and later still (m. 22), there is a new canonic relationship between viola and flute, and clarinet and voice, respectively. Again, the aural sophistication required to perceive all of the preceding relationships is certainly beyond that of the average listener. The larger picture should be the focus here, and that is having the ability to perceive that this song is built on imitative relationships between pitch and rhythm.

¹⁸ See Chapter One, p. 28.

These five disparate recordings aptly illustrate this point. With the wide range of interpretations presented and the hugely varying degrees of pitch accuracy, the imitative relationships are still blatantly clear. The rhythm is, for the most part, strict in every recording, therefore, the relationship is immediately apparent. It is the very distinct rhythm of the opening vocal phrase—made even more so by the words attached to them—which shows that it is directly related to the rhythm of the viola. The percussive /k/ in the opening phrase (on the words “*stricknadeln*,” “*blank*,” and “*blinkend*”) helps establish the tone and character of the piece in a way that only the voice can do. The text, “knitting needles, brightly gleaming,” is clearly depicted in the vocal line, as well as within the instruments.

The opening five measures in all of the recordings are quite similar. The rhythms are accurately presented by all, with the exception of Sukowa, whose rhythmic energy is a bit more relaxed and not as clearly articulated. Four of the five recordings are also relatively accurate in regard to pitch; they are, at least, all in the right register (Schäfer and Minton actually performing the correct notes). Pilarczyk’s recording, of course, is pitched too low; it begins a minor seventh lower than notated. In spite of the discrepancy in pitch and register which muddy the canon at the unison, it is still quite obvious that she is the Follower to the viola’s Leader in the canon.

Schäfer’s articulation in these opening measures is particularly clean and precise. Pilarczyk and Minton—an odd pairing as they represent the most spoken and the most sung, respectively, in these recordings—excessively use the aspirate /h/ during any melismatic passage regardless of how short it may be. Any time the vocal line moves from one note to the next while remaining on the same vowel, neither Pilarczyk nor Minton does so in a legato fashion; there is a “hiccup” in the line. While this may be an attempt at text painting or emphasizing the rhythm, it is more disruptive and distracting than it is effective, and unfortunately, continues throughout the remainder of the song.

Sukowa’s recording, in addition to being more relaxed, has more variation in pitch in mm. 1-10. Just as we saw the huge registrational contrast in “Rote Messe,” Sukowa continues to be freer with pitch in “Parodie.” The opening begins on the correct pitch, and in the following measures she does follow the contour of the line and maintains some semblance of intervallic continuity. At mm. 7 and 8, however, on the syllables *-en* and *-na* (on the word “*Duenna*”) the first sixteenth note is at least a fifth too high; the second sixteenth note, conversely, is too low. Particularly entertaining is her rendering of the word “*murmeln*.” Her throaty “murmuring” starts a fifth too low and spans the interval of a minor third, as opposed to the minor second that it should be.

Though there are slight rhythmic inconsistencies in mm. 9-10, the more intriguing discrepancies occur in mm. 11-15, particularly in Stiedry-Wagner’s recording. For example, she leaves out the third note of the triplet (F-natural in the score) on the word “*liebt*,” thus clearly altering the rhythm. The same note is barely sounded on the next iteration of the pattern in the word “*Pierrot*,” and she drastically changes the contour and leaves out yet another pitch in the next phrase, “*mit Schmerzen*.” She omits the second note of “*Schmerzen*”—G-sharp—thus lingering on the first note of the word. She also does not descend for the first two notes of “*Schmerzen*”; rather she starts on D-natural for “*mit*,” sings the same pitch for the first note of “*Schmer-*,” and then ascends to G₅. The remainder of the word cascades down, ending approximately on F₄.

Though the timbre of Pilarczyk’s voice is awkward—she attempts to move in and out of her upper register without much success—her rhythm is accurate, and she follows the contour of the line very well.

Minton’s rendering of these measures is representative of her work in this song as a whole; everything is right on the mark (with the exception of the aspirate /h/) according to “traditional” practices. As usual, it remains very sung, pitch-perfect, and rhythmically accurate. There is a sense of breathlessness and anticipation in her voice on the words “*liebt*,” “*Pierrot*,” and “*Schmerzen*.” She

effectively depicts the text: "She waits under the foliage; she loves Pierrot with aching."¹⁹

Schäfer and Sukowa both provide excellent interpretations of these measures. Schäfer's is very accurate, clean, and careful. Sukowa's is relatively conventional, for her, in mm. 11-12 and the first part of m. 13. However, on the words "*mit Schmerzen*," she returns to her more characteristic sound, using a timbre not unlike that used at m. 8 ("*murmelnd*"). It is also pitched almost an octave too low so that the majority of the melisma occurs below the staff.

Measures 16-19 are essentially the same as in the beginning, and there is little that is different from the first iteration of this text in the recordings. The small exception is Stiedry-Wagner; she clearly sings the word "*blink*" instead of "*blank*" in m. 17. Her performance of this same text, which was so clear and accurate at the beginning of the song, is now somewhat muddled as she stumbles over the text and sings the wrong word. She is likely anticipating the last phrase of the song in which the order of these two words is reversed (m. 29—"blink und blank").

Just as tempo has proven crucial to the declamation of the text and the rendering of the *Sprechstimme* in other songs, "Parodie" is no exception. Though all five recordings take approximately the same brisk tempo at the start of the song, only Schoenberg's recording successfully navigates through the *ritardando* at m. 21 and into the new tempo at m. 22. This "somewhat slower" tempo (marked *etwas langsamer* in the score) at m. 22 is crucial to the portrayal of the text in mm. 22-26: "Then suddenly—hear—a whisper! A breath of wind titters lightly: the moon, that wicked mocker . . ."²⁰ The *ritardando* must be significant enough to set up the new tempo at m. 22. The eeriness and mystery of the vocal line, as well as the depiction of the rustling wind in the flute and viola, is

¹⁹ "Sie wartet in der Laube, sie liebt Pierrot mit Schmerzen."

²⁰ "Da plötzlich – horch – ein Wispern! ein Windhauch kichert leise: Der Mond, der böse Spötter . . ."

completely absent without the correct setting of the tempo in mm. 21-22. In addition to the tempo change, Schoenberg also wanted an even crisper, lighter vocal sound. In his conducting score, he marked *staccati* over every vocal pitch in mm. 22-23. Though Minton, Schäfer, and Sukowa wonderfully depict the text in these measures, particularly on the words, "*der böse Spötter*," they would be better still if the tempo was less hurried. Incidentally, not only is the *ritardando* missing in Pilarczyk's recording but her declamation also leaves much to be desired. There is virtually *no* change in her declamation, dynamics, articulation, or mood.²¹

The overt change in tempo at m. 22 also allows for a better *a tempo* marked over the second half of m. 26. Of no small significance are the two additional markings Schoenberg made to these measures in his conducting score. In green, he marked a return to **Tempo I** (indicating that there was, perhaps, another intervening tempo?) in the latter half of m. 26 followed by an *accelerando* in m. 27.²² The *accelerando* is extremely effective, and for the singer, it is quite instinctive. Though not as noticeable with Stiedry-Wagner, there is a slight *accelerando* in Schäfer's recording as well.

²¹ Jan DeGaetani and Lucy Shelton also do an excellent *ritardando* followed by a slower *langsamer* than most other recordings.

²² Tempo I clearly refers to the tempo at the beginning of the song, but this also indicates that perhaps there was another tempo change elsewhere in the song. Performers frequently insert a slight *ritardando* in mm. 11-14; this *ritardando* would be almost imperceptible were it not for the clear return to *Tempo* at the pick-up to m. 15. Though this additional tempo change is not marked in the score, nor did Schoenberg make any additional markings in his conducting score, there is a change in tempo in his recording at these precise measures, as well.

“O alter Duft”

Frequently cited as an example of Schoenberg’s return to tonality—hinted at not only in the harmonic language (E major/minor) but also in the text which indicates a longing for the past—“O alter Duft” can present a temptation to the vocalist. Some performers argue that if this is Schoenberg’s return to the old ways, the song should be more sung than the other songs in the cycle. Indeed, it is difficult *not* to sing it; after all, almost the entirety of the vocal line’s first six measures is simultaneously presented in the top voice of the piano. Still, Schoenberg gave no new instructions for this piece. Just as in “Parodie” the vocalist was not instructed to sing those pitches more so than any other, so also in “O alter Duft” the vocalist should continue on as she has in every other song: *gesprochen* unless otherwise indicated (and as it turns out, the entire song is *gesprochen*).

Though the opening measures sound beautifully traditional when sung—and Yvonne Minton does so very well—there is an even more intriguing, satisfying effect when performed as written. The text in “O alter Duft” is meant to *suggest* nostalgia, yearning, long-neglected pleasure, lovely things of the past, dreams; it is not meant to assault the listener with these images. Brilliantly depicted—as only Schoenberg can do—these ideas take on a new identity when expressed through *Pierrot*’s “new” vocal technique. *Sprechstimme* hints and suggests at pitches without stating them outright; it evokes a contour, not a fixed, immovable object.

The interpretation of “O alter Duft” should be no more or less sung than any of the other songs in the cycle. Stiedry-Wagner, Pilarczyk, and Sukowa come nowhere close to performing the notated pitches though they do follow the contour of the line. Schäfer, on the other hand, once again wonderfully hints at the pitches that are there; she does so in this song by accurately performing the written pitches but then immediately leaves them in search of the next.

CHAPTER SIX

The Creation of a Tradition

Over ninety years after its premiere, *Pierrot lunaire* continues to incite controversy and debate among scholars and performers. From the performer’s perspective, specifically the Reciter, we are faced with the challenge of presenting an accurate and faithful, as well as an autonomously artistic interpretation of Schoenberg’s enigmatic *Sprechstimme*. Based on the last sixty years of *Pierrot* recordings, it is apparent that “accurate” and “faithful” are elusive and imprecise concepts that are continuing to be redefined with every new performance and recording. The disparity among recordings in the rendering of the *Sprechstimme* is evidence that traditions in performance practice have yet to be established or agreed upon. Traditions are absent, in part, because there are still numerous “unknowable” elements which have been left open to a wide variety of interpretations. In the case of *Pierrot*, Schoenberg’s instructions are not comprehensive, nor were his intentions and desires expressly conveyed. Even if they were, it is certainly possible that what might have been an ideal interpretation to Schoenberg in 1912 could be something vastly different in 1945. Schoenberg’s inconclusive instructions, in conjunction with the interpreter’s artistic prerogative, have allowed for a wide spectrum of possible interpretations.

The lack of tradition or consensus in performance practice places the *Pierrot* interpreter in a precarious situation. Is she forced to discover yet a new way of realizing the *Sprechstimme*? Where does she go for guidance? What are the reliable sources and how should they be weighted in helping to determine what comprises an appropriate and effective interpretation? How one decides to prepare the *Spechstimme* is determined by a number of factors: length of time spent studying the score, how many recordings have been listened to, how many secondary sources have been consulted, as well as how much we take into account

the opinions and perceptions of those around us. This book serves to assist the performer in her understanding and interpretation of *Pierrot lunaire* by organizing the relevant information into an accessible and comprehensive format, thereby allowing her to make better-informed decisions regarding *Pierrot's* interpretation.

The substantial discography has done little to clarify the parameters of *Sprechstimme* interpretation; there are few traceable trends and essentially no consensus among interpreters. It is the revelatory nature of the work (that is, it continues to reveal itself through its vastly different interpretations) that allows it to remain “contemporary,” still placed under the umbrella of “new music.” That there is little agreement as to how the *Sprechstimme* should be rendered is proof that not only do we not know with certainty what Schoenberg wanted from it but also that different interpretations may still be presented. *Sprechstimme* is such a sophisticated, and yet, somewhat ambiguous and undefined, technique, that it has resisted the formation of a complete, all-inclusive, and objective definition of what it is and how to perform it. Some methods and techniques are certainly less appropriate and less successful than others (i.e. “singing” the entire work, pervasive use of vibrato, inserting *portamenti* between all the notes), making a performance or recording less than ideal, but there are also a multitude of qualities which make for a successful and effective performance. It is, therefore, difficult to make a judgment that says any one interpretation is all right or all wrong. There are no absolutes in *Pierrot*; there are shades and degrees of right and wrong, successful and unsuccessful, appropriate and inappropriate.

Each generation of *Pierrot* interpreters has likely listened to the interpretations of the previous generation. In doing so, a singer often discovers certain stylistic traits which she finds appealing, and may choose to incorporate into her own performance. Though there are shared traits among the performances—*portamento* or sliding; vibrato or straight tone; exact pitches or a freely-interpreted melodic line—there is virtually no traceable element—no

common thread—linking one interpretation to the next. While it is refreshing to think that this ninety-five year old work can be performed an infinite number of ways, this also creates a problem for the establishment of performance practice traditions. Clifford Curzon (former student of concert pianist Arthur Schnabel) was once asked what he thought about the influence of the sound recording. He responded, “ ‘Well, it’s good and it’s bad. It’s a bad influence on young artists, because they all listen to records day and night. And anybody can copy anything, really. You don’t have to be really gifted. And I find that records are becoming a copy of a copy of a copy.’ ”¹

Though recordings have done little to establish clear performance practice traditions, they are extremely beneficial to the performer, aurally elucidating which characteristics and techniques do and do not work. Since Schoenberg did not address some of the most general elements of *Sprechstimme*—his thoughts about vibrato, the degree of pitch accuracy wanted—it has become the interpreter’s responsibility to make those decisions. Through close scrutiny of the recordings, we can separate the *Sprechstimme* into its individual components, determine how those components affect the interpretation, and can then make more informed and specific decisions about how to render the *Sprechstimme*.

How does one put together a list of characteristics that would make for an effective interpretation of *Pierrot*? Though it is the deviations from the norm that often make an interpretation interesting (Barbara Sukowa’s recording is evidence of that), one should start by creating a list of what is ideal; that is, what would make for a “textbook” interpretation of *Pierrot*? Based on my research of the work, examination of the recordings, and my personal experiences performing *Pierrot*, I would offer the following basic outline:

¹ Philip, 244-45.

- The vocal line should be performed without vibrato, with the exception of the *gesungen* pitches.
- Schoenberg's pitches, as written, should be attained and then immediately abandoned by allowing the voice to fall off, generally in a downward direction by sliding. The *portamento* should be reserved only for those places specifically marked as a *glissando* by Schoenberg.
- Rhythm should be maintained exactly as if one were singing; on notes of longer duration, the vocalist remains on the vowel, allowing the voice to fall off in a downward glide, unless an upward direction is otherwise indicated.
- Every musical marking should be followed as literally as possible; it is not the performer's responsibility to interpret any additional affectations into the performance: exaggerated vocal characterizations and articulations, costuming and make-up, gestures, etc.

A performance that follows guidelines such as these would certainly constitute a stricter interpretation than perhaps even Schoenberg envisioned, but for the novice *Sprechstimme* performer, adhering to a more literal and methodical approach is probably in the singer's best pedagogical interest. Regardless of how one chooses to vocally interpret the *Sprechstimme*, approaching *Pierrot* with a concrete set of guidelines such as these can only aid the performer in her study and understanding of this enigmatic technique. This does not mean, of course, that any interpretation which deviates from the list is wrong or even less than ideal. Within the parameters of these guidelines exists a relatively wide margin of

what can be appropriate and effective. For example, with regard to several of these performance issues, very few, if any, interpreters on the recordings actually perform every pitch as written. Since Schoenberg spoke very little about pitch, one could infer that he was not terribly concerned with it. In fact, with the exception of the 1941 letter to Erwin Stein in which he expressed frustration with Erika Stiedry-Wagner's inaccuracy of pitch, Schoenberg never made an issue of "correct" or "incorrect" pitches.² He only insisted that the work not be *sung*, which is a separate issue altogether.

Nevertheless, Schoenberg did arrive at a final notation of *Sprechstimme* in which pitch is exact. He notated precise pitches; therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that pitch was of some consequence to him, regardless of whether or not he spoke about it. Stein believed that the intervals are only meant to be relative. He also allowed for the fact that the performer can not only transpose the part according to her individual speaking voice, but she can also narrow the overall range in which she performs the notes.³ This cannot be what Schoenberg intended. Helga Pilarczyk's recording is a perfect example of the ineffectiveness that occurs when one narrows the range so much so that it truly *can* all be performed in a normal speech register. Schoenberg did not write the piece to accommodate such a narrow range. Though Stein and Boulez have both said that the piece seems both too high and too low for any one interpreter (a presumptuous assumption), this is precisely what Schoenberg intended by his use of *Sprechstimme*; he wanted a speech-like quality in a range of the voice which is not used for normal speech. It is therefore a heightened and altered speech sound, one which does not resemble "realistic, natural speech."⁴ Perhaps it is not necessary to perform all of the pitches precisely as written—there are very effective recordings which do not—but range and tessitura are of considerable

² Schoenberg to Stein, 25 December 1941, as previously cited in Chapter Two, footnote 44.

³ Stein, *Orpheus in New Guises*, 88.

⁴ Taken from the Preface to *Pierrot lunaire*, Belmont Music Publishers, 1990.

importance. When Schoenberg composed at the top of the staff or above, I do not believe he intended those passages to be transposed down a fifth, for example, to accommodate an individual's speaking voice. Doing so completely changes the intended effect.

Likewise, vibrato is another element which drastically affects the overall character of the *Sprechstimme*. Though Schoenberg did not address this issue, it is probable that a non-vibrato interpretation is likely what was desired. There must be a clear and audible way for the listener to differentiate between *gesungen* and *gesprochen* passages; the most logical way to do so is to perform the *gesungen* passages with vibrato and the *gesprochen* passages without vibrato. While it would also be possible to perform the reverse—all of the *Sprechstimme* notes with vibrato and the *gesungen* ones without—that aesthetic decision seems to go against the very translation of the technique: *speech-voice*. It does not translate to *sung-voice*. Speech, for the most part, does not have audible vibrato. It is true that our speech patterns do not usually imitate most of the rhythmic durations that Schoenberg notates, but again, that is part of the uniqueness—and the challenge, incidentally—inherent in the work and the technique. The responsibility of the Reciter is to find a way to perform the words, notes, and rhythms in a manner that *resembles* speech. It is determining that fine line between speech and song that has perplexed performers for almost a century, and will likely continue to do so well into the next.

Sprechstimme can be rendered in a variety of ways while still remaining faithful to the score, but at what point does one boldly assert that Interpretation “X” is no longer a legitimate, valid representation of Schoenberg's score? That question cannot be answered unless a tradition of performance practice is established. Schoenberg's instructions and notation leave much room for ambiguity, but at what point is an interpretation no longer the piece that he wrote? How sung must it be before it is no longer considered *Sprechstimme*, and does that make it a “wrong” performance? Yvonne Minton's sung but highly

expressive interpretation could be viewed as an argument against that. What she presents is certainly not ideal, nor is it at all representative of what Schoenberg wrote, *but* that does not mean that her performance is ineffective or without artistic merit.

One must make decisions regarding how to perform the notes: exactly as written, maintain some semblance of intervallic integrity, follow the contour of the line, or perform a more open and free interpretation of the melody? If the ratio of correct notes to incorrect notes is skewed on the side of incorrect, is that performance no longer legitimate? The recordings of Barbara Sukowa and Sophie Boulin could be compelling arguments against that. Though one does not have to perform every note exactly as written, a certain degree of integrity between the score and its realization (i.e., the performance) should be apparent. Barbara Sukowa, however, rarely performs what is on the page, and yet her recording is, perhaps, one of the most exciting in the discography. She reveals a visceral connection to the text, displaying a wide range of feelings, and a willingness to take risks, vocally and emotionally. Though some of these recordings that present such gross deviations from the score may exhibit significant aesthetic power and emotional intensity, they are not ideal representations of that which Schoenberg composed.

Based on the aforementioned guidelines, as well as the balance and recording difficulties, Schoenberg's recording with Stiedry-Wagner would not likely be considered one of the most effective in the discography. Stiedry-Wagner's recording does not display the depth of understanding and emotion, nor comfort level with the *Sprechstimme*, that is heard in later recordings. Her performance is admirable, however, especially when one takes into account the absence of performance history and tradition of Schoenberg's enigmatic technique. With the exception of the instruction she received from Schoenberg and Stein, Stiedry-Wagner had little else to guide her through the *Pierrot* learning process. Unlike modern performers who have had the previous generation's

recordings to assist in their interpretations, Stiedry-Wagner had to rely solely on the instruction she was given and her instincts as an actress. This recording marks the beginning of the important oral tradition of *Pierrot lunaire*.

Christine Schäfer's recording is the likely candidate for the "textbook" interpretation. There is very little audible vibrato on almost all *Sprechstimme* pitches, but a clear, even vibrato on *gesungen* pitches. Schäfer subtly slides between most pitches, and performs *portamenti* only where specifically notated. She performs most of the pitches as written, and in places where her pitch is not exact, she adheres to the contour of the melody, usually keeping the intervallic integrity in tact. Schäfer presents thoughtful, well-crafted interpretations and portrays the character of each song with veracity and honest simplicity. If there is a weakness in her performance it is one that is beyond her control: her instrument is, perhaps, not ideally suited for this work. Schäfer's light soprano voice has difficulty in the lower-middle register, particularly in loud, densely orchestrated passages. A more dramatic voice—soprano or mezzo soprano—would better be able to negotiate the entire range and tessitura of the work.

Because there are relatively few undisputed directives regarding the performance of the *Sprechstimme* in Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, the vocalist is challenged to discover, on her own, how best to interpret the technique. She has a variety of resources at her disposal: Schoenberg's writings, the score, his recordings, and the substantial discography. Perhaps the most valuable of these resources is the discography. Schoenberg's remarks are, of course, critical to the understanding of *Pierrot*, but they do not suffice when learning how to interpret a technique that is as ambiguously explained and notated as *Sprechstimme*. Oral tradition, in the form of the sound recordings, can help fill in the gaps.

There will always be endless interpretational possibilities for *Pierrot lunaire* because of the unique character of the declamation suggested. Just as no

two people have the same speaking voice, neither will any two interpreters have exactly the same delivery of *Pierrot's Sprechstimme*. Though *Pierrot lunaire* has resisted the establishment of a tradition of performance practice, perhaps times have now changed. Performance practice does not eliminate individuality and uniqueness from a piece of music, nor should it be seen as limiting or confining the performer's aesthetic autonomy; it simply attempts to remove some of the less stylistically appropriate practices from the rhetoric, thereby lending some degree of standardization to a piece that has previously excluded it. The inscrutability which has surrounded *Pierrot lunaire* for almost a century is not going to vanish because of the formation of a few well-chosen performance guidelines. These guiding principles can only ensure that one of Schoenberg's greatest works will become even more accessible to a larger audience of students, performers, and listeners.

APPENDIX

Pierrot lunaire Discography

The following *Pierrot lunaire* discography has been excerpted from Wayne Shoaf's official discography, with his kind permission. Recordings are presented chronologically with the following information included:

- Reciter and voice designation;
- *Ensemble* (if a named group) and Conductor;
- Place and date of recording sessions (if known);
- Recording identification information: identification number, mono or stereo, CD or LP, date released. Since many of these recordings have been reissued numerous times, this information indicates the specific recording listened to for this document.

For more detailed information, including all performers and all reissues of a particular recording, please see R. Wayne Shoaf's official Schoenberg discography available in book form, *The Schoenberg Discography*, 2nd Edition, revised and expanded (Berkeley: Fallen Leaf Press) 1994; or a more recently updated version online at:

http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/schoenberg/as_disco/shoaf.htm

- Recording available and listened to by the author
- ❖ Indicates recording not available to the author

1940

- Erika Stiedry-Wagner, voice. Arnold Schoenberg, conductor. Recorded Los Angeles, CA; September 24, 1940. CBS MPK 45695 mono CD (1989).
- Erika Stiedry-Wagner, voice. Arnold Schoenberg, conductor. Recorded New York Town Hall, November 17, 1940. This recently discovered recording is a partial performance which was later radio broadcast in New York. See Chapter One, footnote 14.

1951

- Ellen Adler, voice. *Paris Chamber Ensemble*; René Leibowitz, conductor. Dial DLP 16 mono LP (ca. 1951).

1952

- ❖ Hedli Anderson, voice. *London Symphony Orchestra Chamber Ensemble*; Peter Stadlen, conductor. (Master tapes were destroyed by fire before a disc master was cut—there is no extant recording.) This recording is included for two reasons. First, Hedli Anderson had been performing *Pierrot* for quite some time. Stuckenschmidt reported that Stein had heard a performance in London in 1942 in which Anderson performed the Speaker. She was described as having achieved “almost perfect intonation” (Stuckenschmidt, *Arnold Schoenberg*, 455). Second, the conductor for this recording, Peter Stadlen, is also the author of the oft-cited 1981 article from *Music & Letters*, “Schoenberg’s Speech-Song.”

1954

- Ethel Semser, soprano. *Virtuoso Chamber Ensemble*; René Leibowitz, conductor. Recorded ca. 1954. Westminster WN 18143 mono LP (ca. 1955).

1955

- Alice Howland, voice. Arthur Winograd, conductor. MGM E 3202 mono LP (ca. 1955).

1957

- Jeanne Héricard, voice. Hans Rosbaud, conductor. Recorded Baden-Baden, West Germany; April 4-5, 1957. Wergo WER 6403-2 (286 403-2) mono CD (1993).

1961

- Helga Pilarczyk, soprano. *Domaine Musical Ensemble*; Pierre Boulez, conductor. Recorded Paris, France; 1961. Adès 202912 stereo CD (ca. 1985).

- Ilona Steingruber-Wildgans, soprano. Vladimir Golschmann, conductor. Recorded Vienna, Austria; 1961. Vanguard SVC 145 HD stereo CD (2001).

1962

- Alice Howland, mezzo soprano. Herbert Zipper, conductor. Concert Disc M-1232 mono LP (1962).

1963

- Bethany Beardslee, soprano. *Columbia Chamber Ensemble*; Robert Craft, conductor. Recorded 1963. CBS S 72120 stereo LP (ca. 1965).

1968

- ❖ Maria Thérèsia Escribano, soprano. *Ensemble “Die Reihe”*; Friedrich Cerha, conductor. Recorded 1968. Turnabout TVS 34315 stereo LP (1969).

1970

- Erika Sziklay, soprano. *Budapest Chamber Ensemble*; András Mihály, conductor. Recorded 1970. Hungaroton HCD 11385-2 stereo CD (1987).
- Jan DeGaetani, mezzo soprano. *Contemporary Chamber Ensemble*; Arthur Weisberg, conductor. Recorded New York, New York; May 1970. Nonesuch 9 79237-2 stereo CD (1990).

1973

- ❖ Mary Thomas, soprano. *Fires of London*; Peter Maxwell Davies, conductor. Recorded London, England; July 1973. Unicorn RHS 319 stereo LP (ca. 1973).
- Mary Thomas, soprano. *London Sinfonietta*; David Atherton, conductor. Recorded Petersham, England; October-December 1973. London 425 626-2 stereo CD (1990).

1974

- Patricia Rideout, soprano. No conductor; Glenn Gould, piano. Recorded Toronto, Canada; 1974. Partial recording—1st- 7th songs. Sony Classical SM2K 52664 mono CD (1994).
- Cleo Laine, voice. *Nash Ensemble*; Elgar Howarth, conductor. Recorded CBS Studio 1, England; June 10-11, 1974. Sung in English. RCA Red Seal LRL1 5058 stereo LP (1974).

1976

- ❖ Marie-Claude Vallin, soprano. Détlef Kieffer, conductor. Recorded Alsace, France; June 1976. L'Apostrophe AS 375 117 stereo LP (1976).

1977

- Jane Manning, soprano. *Nash Ensemble*; Simon Rattle, conductor. Recorded London, England; 1977. Chandos CHAN 6534 stereo CD (1991).
- Yvonne Minton, alto. Pierre Boulez, conductor. Recorded Paris, France; June 20-21, 1977. Sony Classical SMK 48466 stereo CD (1993).

1981

- Maureen McNalley, voice. *Orchestra of Our Time*; Joel Thome, conductor. Recorded 1981. Vox Box CDX 5144 stereo CD (1995).

1983

- Jane Manning, soprano. *Elsinore Players*; Karl Aage Rasmussen, conductor. Recorded Kollemorten, Denmark; September 1983. Paula 29 stereo LP (1983).

1985

- ❖ Lina Åkerlund, soprano. *Ensemble der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Neue Musik*; Jürg Wyttenbach, conductor. Recorded Basel, Switzerland; May 4-5, 1985. Ex Libris EL 16 982 stereo LP (1986).

1987

- Gerda Hartman, soprano. *Ensemble Kaleidocollage*; no conductor. Recorded Paris, France; 1987. Chant du Monde LDC 278806 stereo CD (1991).
- ❖ Renée Nachtigallová, voice. *Studiovy Ochestra*; Jiri Malát, conductor. Recorded May and December 1987. Supraphon 11 0240-1 (612 G) stereo LP (1989). Sung in Czech; 4th, 7th, 9th, and 19th-21st songs only.

1988

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1989

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1990

- Karin Ott, soprano. *Gruppo Musica Insieme di Cremona*; Pietro Antonini, conductor. Recorded Lugano, Switzerland; February 12, 1990. Nuova Era 7242 stereo CD (1995).
- Maria Höglind, mezzo soprano. *Sonanza*; Jan Risberg, conductor. Recorded Stockholm, Sweden; December 1990. Caprice CAP 21382 stereo CD (1991).
- Lucy Shelton, soprano. *Da Capo Chamber Players*; no conductor. Recorded Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; December 17-18 & 20-21, 1990. Bridge BCD 9032 stereo CD (1992).

1991

- ❖ Marianne Poussuer, voice. *Ensemble Musique Oblique*; Philippe Herreweghe, conductor. Recorded Châtelet, France; July 1991. Harmonia Mundi France HMC 901390 stereo CD (1992).

- Phyllis Bryn-Julson, soprano. *Ensemble Modern*; Peter Eötvös, conductor. Recorded Frankfurt, Germany; December 9-15, 1991. RCA Victor Red Seal 09026-61179-2 stereo CD (1993).

1992

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- Phyllis Bryn-Julson, soprano. *New York New Music Ensemble*; Robert Black, conductor. Recorded Purchase, NY; September 20-21 & 23, 1992. GM Recordings GM2030CD stereo CD (1992).

1993

- Leslie Boucher, voice. *University of Georgia Contemporary Chamber Ensemble*; Lewis Nielson, conductor. Recorded Roswell, GA; July 30, August 2, and September 16, 1993. ACA CM20027 stereo CD (1994).
- Anne-Lise Berntsen, soprano. *Borealis Ensemble*; Christian Eggen, conductor. Recorded Oslo, Norway; November 1993. Victoria VCD 19088 stereo CD (1994).

1994

- Salome Kammer, soprano. *Ensemble Avantgarde*; Hans Zender, conductor. Recorded Arolsen, Germany; August and November 1994. Musikproduktion Dabringhaus und Grimm MD G 613 0579-2 stereo CD (1995).

1995

- ❖ Anne-Marie Donovan, mezzo soprano. *Blue Rider Ensemble*; no conductor. Recorded Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; December 1995. Electra ECCD-2045 stereo CD (2000).

1996

- Sophie Boulou, soprano. *Ensemble 2e2m*; Paul Méfano, conductor. Recorded Paris, France; November 1996. 2e2m 1011 stereo CD (1996).

1997

- ❖ Sonia Bergamasco, voice. *Contempoartensemble*; Mauro Ceccanti, conductor. Recorded Prato, Italy; May 20, 1997. Arts 47389-2 stereo CD (1998).
- Luisa Castellani, voice. *Staatskapelle Dresden* members; Giuseppe Sinopoli, conductor. Recorded Dresden, Germany; June 1997. Teldec 3984-22901-2 stereo CD (1999).
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1999

- Edith Urbanczyk, voice. *Ensemble « Das neue Werk » Hamburg*; Dieter Cichewicz, conductor. Recorded Hamburg/Lübeck, Germany; February 15-19, 1999. Musicaphon M 56837 stereo CD (2001).
- Ing-Britt Ibbá Andersson, soprano. *Ma*; Staffan Larson, conductor. Recorded Stockholm, Sweden; November 1-3, 1999. Nytorp Musik 0001 stereo CD (2001).

2000

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Dr. Aidan Soder is Assistant Professor of Voice at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music. She earned her Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice Performance from Rice University, Houston, Texas.

Edmund Miller