
Arnold Schoenberg and the Intertextuality of Composing and Performance *

Jennifer Shaw

A composer's musical sketches can be fascinating objects, recording choices made and paths abandoned. Over the past century we have accumulated a substantial scholarly literature on sketch studies, much of it concerning the provenance, cataloguing, restoration, archiving and reproduction of sketches of great composers in the classical art-music tradition.¹ Yet can we treat sketches as more than historical documents? In my recent work on the music of Arnold Schoenberg I have argued that it is possible for a composer's sketches not only to record the stages in the compositional process but also to influence modern interpretations and performances of works.² As part of this ongoing project I have adopted an intertextual model that integrates aspects of cultural studies, sketch studies and music analysis. In this article, as an example of how this model can be employed, I will concentrate on one example taken from a sketch book that Schoenberg used in 1917 to record the main ideas for his oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter* (*Jacob's Ladder*). I argue that we can make sense of the sketch book's 'ungrammaticalities,' a term I have adopted from the work of literary theorist Michael Riffaterre,³ if we have an understanding of Schoenberg's sense of his own place not just in the 'great composer' narrative of Austro-German music history that dominated Western Europe through much of the late

* For their comments on earlier versions of this article I would like to thank Joseph Auner, Julie Brown, Nick Chadwick, Stefan Collini, Craig De Wilde, Sarah Fuller, Robert O. Gjerdingen, Amanda Glauert, Ethan Haimo, Peter Hoyt, Judith Lochhead and Nicholas Routley. I am also grateful to John Phillips and Simon Powis for preparing the illustrations and to the Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna, for permission to reproduce unpublished material.

¹ On Beethoven's sketches, for instance, see Paul Mies, *Die Bedeutung der Skizzen Beethovens zur Erkenntnis seines Stils* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1935); Douglas Johnson, 'Beethoven Scholars and Beethoven Sketches,' *19th-Century Music* 2 (1978–79): 3–17; Douglas Johnson, Alan Tyson and Robert Winter, *The Beethoven Sketchbooks: History, Reconstruction, Inventory* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1985). The collection of essays in *A Handbook to Twentieth-Century Musical Sketches*, ed. Patricia Hall and Friedemann Sallis (Cambridge: CUP, 2004) gives a useful overview of current issues in sketch studies within the Western art music tradition, including the use by composers of computer-assisted sketches and the digital preservation of sketch materials.

² Jennifer Shaw, 'New Performance Sources and Old Modernist Productions: *Die Jakobsleiter* in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' *Journal of Musicology* 19 (2002): 434–60.

³ Michael Riffaterre, 'Syllepsis,' *Critical Inquiry* 6.4 (1980): 625–26.

nineteenth century and the twentieth, but also of his place and role in the immediate context of the First World War.

Intertextuality and the Musical Text

The term 'intertextuality' was first coined by literary critic and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva to refer to ways in which an author's text absorbs and transforms elements of other texts.⁴ Although intertextuality is often broadly construed as a theory of reading relationships between texts, many intertextual readings in the visual arts and, more recently, intertextual readings of both literary and musical texts, focus on perceived instances of quotation, paraphrase, influence and allusion.⁵ Rather than considering a literary or musical work as a completed, autonomous product of a particular author, intertextuality focuses on the reader's interpretation of a specific text within a network—created by the reader—of other texts.⁶ It is a dynamic relationship, as Jonathan Culler explains:

The study of intertextuality is not the investigation of sources and influences, as traditionally conceived: ... It leads one to think of a text as a dialogue with other texts, an act of absorption, parody, and criticism, rather than as autonomous artefact which harmoniously reconciles the possible attitudes towards a given problem.⁷

Intertextuality has engaged the imagination of several scholars in recent studies of western art music.⁸ Yet the nebulous nature of the concept has meant that it has been accepted and practised in many guises, some of which, when applied to musical works, yield more convincing insights than others.⁹ Most well known are intertextual studies in music by Kevin Korsyn and Joseph Straus that have adapted Harold Bloom's intertextual theories to selected works in the western art music canon.¹⁰ Even these much-cited studies are not, however, without their

⁴ Kristeva introduced her concept of intertextuality in a series of publications, beginning with 'Problèmes de la structuration du texte,' *Théorie d'ensemble* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1968). Her theories have been modified and challenged by many writers, including Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Gérard Genette, Laurent Jenny and Michael Riffaterre. For a useful critique of the development of intertextual theories over the past thirty years, see Heinrich F. Plett, 'Intertextualities,' *Intertextuality*, ed. H.F. Plett (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991): 3–29.

⁵ See, for example, articles by Robert S. Hatten, Thaïs E. Morgan and Wendy Steiner in a special issue of the *American Journal of Semiotics* 3.4 (1985) devoted to intertextuality in literature, music and the visual arts and Ulrich Weisstein, 'Literature and the (Visual) Arts: Intertextuality and Mutual Illumination,' *Intertextuality: German Literature and Visual Art from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Ingeborg Hoesterey and Ulrich Weisstein (United States: Camden House, 1993) 1–17.

⁶ For further explanation of how readers create their own intertextual networks and what other texts a reader may legitimately connect with a positioned text, see Riffaterre, 'Syllepsis' 626.

⁷ Jonathan Culler, 'Presupposition and Intertextuality,' *Modern Language Notes* 91.6 (1976): 1383.

⁸ See, for instance, Kevin Korsyn, 'Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue,' *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford & New York: OUP, 1999) 55–72; Craig Ayrey, 'Introduction: Different Trains,' *Analytical Strategies and Musical Interpretation: Essays on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Craig Ayrey and Mark Everist (Cambridge: CUP, 1996) 1–32; Robert S. Hatten, *Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana U Press, 1994).

⁹ On the problems with defining the concept of intertextuality, see Owen Miller, 'Intertextual Identity,' *Intertextuality*, ed. H.F. Plett, 19–40; Plett, 'Intertextualities' 5–6.

¹⁰ Kevin Korsyn, 'Towards a New Poetics of Musical Influence,' *Music Analysis* 10 (1991): 3–72; Joseph N. Straus, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Cambridge, MA, & London: Harvard UP, 1990) 1–20. Harold Bloom first expounded his intertextual theories in *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford & New York: OUP, 1973) and *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford: OUP, 1975).

critics, and both Korsyn and Straus acknowledge the difficulty of matching Bloom's complex theory of literary influence to a wider range of musical works and styles.¹¹

Bloom's theory, although it represents just one manifestation of a theory of intertextuality, has been extremely influential—indeed dominant—in discussions of musical influence. His theory has proved especially attractive to music scholars, who, in Bloom's terms, see Schoenberg's recomposition of pieces for teaching and performance purposes as evidence of his engagement in strong 'misreadings' of works by Bach, Brahms, Mahler and others. Throughout his writings on intertextuality, Bloom argues that 'strong' (as opposed to 'weak') misreadings of specific works are essential for the creation of new poetry and of new 'great' poets.¹² Korsyn, for instance, appropriates Bloom's theory for his investigation of Brahms' (strong) and Reger's (weak) misreadings of Chopin,¹³ while Straus employs aspects of the same theory to examine strong misreadings of style by Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, Bartók and Stravinsky.

In contrast, the model I have adopted uses as its starting point an approach to intertextuality advocated by Michael Riffaterre.¹⁴ Riffaterre argues that intertextuality should not be elevated to a theory of reading, but that it should be used as a mode of perception. In other words, intertextuality should be practised as a way of reading literary texts or, I would suggest, of hearing musical ones, through which the reader-listener becomes sensitive to possible relationships between texts.¹⁵ In this context, it is important to recognise that a musical text is not restricted to the published score, but that the 'text' may, for instance, be sketches and incomplete drafts as well as live or recorded performances.¹⁶

In this model, emphasis is placed on the network of relationships among musical works and, in particular, on two types of clues that may appear in the musical texts. The first of these clues I have termed, after Riffaterre, 'structural invariants': these may, for instance, be repeated motifs or themes or pitch-class collections that, as the name suggests, stay the same.¹⁷ The second type of clues I have termed, again after Riffaterre, 'ungrammaticalities': these are moments that do not make sense within the framework of a given text.¹⁸ In this model, recognition of structural invariants and ungrammaticalities forces the reader to reread (and the listener to relisten) and to employ his/her linguistic and musical competence in order to understand the significance of these moments.¹⁹ Riffaterre suggests that, if we read (or listen to) texts in this way, the repetition of structural invariants often becomes increasingly more allusive, perhaps taking us out of the given text, while ungrammaticalities may result in textual

¹¹ For instance, the success of Straus's interpretation and application of Bloom's theories to musical style, rather than to specific works and specific composers, has been the subject of several articles: see the review of Straus's monograph by Ethan Haimo in the *Journal of Musicological Research* 12, Supplement (1992): 139S–146S, and the review by Richard Taruskin of Korsyn's article and Straus's book in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46.1 (1993): 114–38.

¹² Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence* 147.

¹³ Korsyn, 'Towards a New Poetics' 3–72.

¹⁴ See Michael Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1978); Riffaterre, 'Syllepsis' 625–38; Michael Riffaterre, *Fictional Truth* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996).

¹⁵ Riffaterre, 'Syllepsis' 625. Riffaterre refers to readers only: all references to reader-listener are mine.

¹⁶ On the textuality and intertextuality of theatrical performances, see Marco De Marinis, *The Semiotics of Performance*, transl. Áine O-Healy (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1993).

¹⁷ Riffaterre, 'Syllepsis' 625–26.

¹⁸ Riffaterre, 'Syllepsis' 625–26.

¹⁹ Riffaterre, 'Syllepsis' 626–27.

displacement and loss of narrativity.²⁰ Riffaterre explains that this mode of reading forces the hidden ‘intertext,’ that is, the text we are supposed to recognise as the source of the structural invariants and ungrammaticalities, to come to the surface.²¹

The importance of this model is that, in the context of Schoenberg’s works, the focus of study is on ways in which, as in the Bloomian model, the composer transforms elements of other musical and literary texts, but also (and perhaps more importantly) on the listeners’ and performers’ interpretations of those elements. The transformed elements may be the composer’s own, as in Schoenberg’s quotation of one of his songs in *Erwartung*, or they may be derived from other musical and literary sources, as in his parody of waltz genres in *Pierrot lunaire*, his recomposition for orchestra of organ chorale preludes by J.S. Bach, his transformation of Wagnerian opera quotes and jazz in his opera *Von heute auf morgen*, and his allusions to Bach and Haydn in his 1945 Prelude to the *Genesis* Suite. A Bloomian reading would take such quotations and arrangements as manifestations of Schoenberg’s subconscious desire to imitate, improve upon and thereby to replace—or ‘kill’—his compositional forefathers.²² Yet I am not convinced that Bloom’s theory provides an explanation for Schoenberg’s *conscious* motivations. Indeed, Richard Taruskin has argued that ‘[t]he nature of Bloom’s theory makes unconsciousness of influence an implicit certainty, virtually a requirement.’²³ Certainly, at least with respect to the composition of his *Jacob’s Ladder* oratorio, the evidence set out in the musical texts themselves suggests that Schoenberg was in fact far more aware of the influence of his musical forefathers than a Bloomian reading assumes.

Intertextualities of Composition and Performance

Figure 1 shows a facsimile of the opening leaf from a pocket-size sketch book that Schoenberg used in 1917. At the top of the page Schoenberg composed one of the main themes from his *Jacob’s Ladder* oratorio. This was a major undertaking that Schoenberg began in 1914. By the end of 1917 he had composed the full libretto and much of the music for the oratorio’s first half, but he never completed the musical setting.²⁴ In the oratorio the theme shown in Figure 1 is played two octaves higher by unaccompanied solo violin at the moment when the character of the Soul (die Seele), who had expected to be taken into heaven, begins its descent to earth to be reincarnated in human form. The full orchestral and choral texture, over which the Soul has sung a soaring vocalise melody, thins at this point to the solo violin melody, played extremely softly. Immediately following this ecstatic moment, Schoenberg reintroduces the full orchestra to represent the everyday world and human vices and follies. This is a key moment in the oratorio—the solo violin melody connecting the sublime to the mundane.

²⁰ Riffaterre, *Fictional Truth* 91.

²¹ Riffaterre, *Fictional Truth* 86.

²² Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* 9; Straus, *Remaking the Past* 14–15.

²³ Taruskin, review of Straus’s and Korsyn’s studies, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46.1 (1993): 117, emphasis added. This is a point that neither Straus nor Korsyn make explicit.

²⁴ See Jean Christensen, Arnold Schoenberg’s Oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter*, PhD thesis, U of California, Los Angeles, 1979; Jennifer Shaw, Schoenberg’s Choral Symphony, *Die Jakobsleiter*, and other Wartime Fragments, PhD thesis, Stony Brook University, 2002.

Figure 1. Sk781, Sketch book [19]17. Reproduced with permission of the Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna.



In the version shown in the Figure 1 sketch, however, Schoenberg strangely picks out, in octaves, a D-flat major arpeggio and, in the same key, a stepwise 5–4–3–2–1 descent. This is an obtrusive ungrammaticality in terms of what was, by 1917, Schoenberg's largely atonal compositional world. Within this world, as he explained in his *Theory of Harmony*:

I have noticed that tone doublings, octaves, seldom appear. The explanation for that is, perhaps, that the tone doubled would acquire a predominance over the others and would thereby turn into a kind of root, which it should scarcely be. There is also

perhaps an instinctive (possibly exaggerated) aversion to recalling even remotely the traditional chords. For the same reason, apparently, the simple chords of the earlier [tonal] harmony do not appear successful in this environment.²⁵

An even more blatant ungrammaticality occurs at the bottom of the Figure 1 sketch page, where Schoenberg wrote out a little tonal piece: a song in D major. This song is transcribed in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Transcription of Sk781, staves 7–11

The image shows a musical score consisting of four staves of handwritten notation. The notation is in common time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The vocal line starts with a crotchet 'c' followed by eighth-note pairs. The piano accompaniment consists of eighth-note patterns. The lyrics 'Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz' are written below the vocal line.

Underneath the song Schoenberg wrote the phrase, 'Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz' (At Strassburg on the battlement). This phrase he would have known as the title given by Gustav Mahler to his song setting, for solo voice and piano, of a poem in the collection of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.²⁶ In the *Wunderhorn* collection the poem is entitled 'Der Schweizer' (The Swiss Youth), so the title of 'Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz' is Mahler's own. The Arnold Schönberg Center in Vienna currently houses Schoenberg's copy of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*: the poem *Der Schweizer* is unannotated.²⁷ In the archive there are also fragmentary settings (all tonal and all incomplete) of several of the folk-poems from this collection but there is no extant setting by Schoenberg or his students of *Der Schweizer*.

Figure 3 shows the first page of the score of Mahler's song in which a simple vocal melody sounds over a quiet funeral march in the piano. The song was first published in volume three of Mahler's *Lieder und Gesänge aus der Jugendzeit* (1905), two copies of which are in Schoenberg's library. Like the poem, the song in both copies is unannotated. In Mahler's song, and in the

²⁵ Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, transl. Roy E. Carter (Berkeley & Los Angeles: U of California Press, 1978) 420. The passage appears in both the original 1911 version and the 1922 reprint that Schoenberg revised in 1917–18.

²⁶ Christensen makes the connection between the text reference on the sketch and Mahler's song: see Christensen, Arnold Schoenberg's Oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter*, vol. 1, 214.

²⁷ *Des Knaben Wunderhorn, Alte deutsche Lieder*, Collected by Ludwig Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, in A New Edition by Friedrich Bremer (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, [1878]), Book A26 in Schoenberg's library, Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna.

Figure 3. Mahler, 'Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz,' from *Lieder und Gesänge aus der Jugendzeit*, vol. 3 (Mainz: Schott's Söhne, 1905)

Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz?

Im Volkston (*ohne Sentimentalität, äußerst rhythmisich*).
(Als ein Volkslied, ohne sentimental und ohne charakteristisch)

Voice PIANO

(Bemüht die Sturm). (Wie eine Schallrei.) *p*

accel. *p p rit.*

Mit starkem Pedalgebrasch.
(Für die Pedale reicht)

In gemessenem Marschtempo. (In strict March tempo)

Strassburg auf der Schanz' da ging mein Trau-ern an! Das Alp - horn hört' ich
poco rit.

drü - ben wohl an - stim - men, in's Va - ter - land musst' ich hin - ü - ber schwim - men, das

ging ja nicht an, das ging ja nicht an!

* These low trills should immature with the help of Pedals the sound of morel drums.
** In allen diesen tiefen Trillern ist mit Hilfe des Pedals der Klänge gedämpfter Trommeln zu erkennen.

1233

version of the poem in the *Wunderhorn* collection, an imprisoned Swiss soldier, who has been fighting in the infantry of a foreign army, addresses his fellow soldiers on the eve of his court martial. The despairing youth faces certain execution for desertion. As he explains in verse 1:

Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz',
da ging mein Trauern an!
Das Alphorn hört' ich drüben wohl anstimmen,
in's Vaterland musst' ich hinüber schwimmen;
das ging nicht an!

*At Strassburg on the battlement,
there my sorrowing began!
I heard the alphorn sounding over there,
I had to swim to my fatherland,
that could not be!*²⁸

In Mahler's song the pianist embellishes the march with notated drum rolls and fanfares, as well as calls of a distant alphorn.

It is probably no coincidence that Schoenberg—who had always regarded himself as an Austrian citizen—had, in fact, from 15 December 1915 to 20 October 1916, been forced to serve in the military under Hungarian government control: although the composer had been born in Vienna, his father had been born in Szécsény, Hungary and Schoenberg found himself, at the outbreak of war, classed as a Hungarian citizen.²⁹ From Schoenberg's own accounts, Hungarian bureaucrats had little time for a man they judged to be yet another Austrian musician without official institutional affiliation, and only a petition signed by Béla Bartók and a number of other prominent Hungarians had ultimately prevented Schoenberg from being sent to the eastern front.³⁰

In this context, the jaunty, major-key *Strassburg* melody in Schoenberg's sketch book, defiantly flagged by its text inscription, would appear to stand as a deliberate contradiction of, and challenge to, Mahler's stark funeral march. Perhaps, in Bloomian terms, one might consider Schoenberg's 'misreading' of Mahler as an extraordinary instance of *apophrades*, or return from the dead, where the tonal 'Mahler' returns, ritualistically driving Schoenberg out of his own music.³¹ Bloom characterises this as a defensive action, and one that is often a balance between identification with the precursor and a 'casting out [of] the forbidden.' By holding open his own work to his precursor, Bloom argues that the later writer thus appears to have written his precursor's characteristic works or, as Bloom puts it, to have 'fathered one's own fathers.'³²

²⁸ Text and translation from Gustav Mahler, *Lieder und Gesänge aus der Jugendzeit/Twenty Four Songs for Voice and Piano*, vol. 3 (New York: International Music Company, 1950) 3. The poem and Mahler's setting of it are discussed by E. Mary Dargie, *Music and Poetry in the Songs of Gustav Mahler* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1981): 167–72, and by Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Mahler*, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1973) 764–5. The complete text is given in Schoenberg's copy of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, 99–100.

²⁹ See O.W. Neighbour, 'Schoenberg, Arnold,' *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 22, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Macmillan, 2000): 577.

³⁰ The petition is reproduced in Arnold Schönberg, 1874–1951: *Lebensgeschichte in Begegnungen*, ed. Nuria Nono-Schoenberg (Klagenfurt: Ritter Verlag, 1992) 147. Schoenberg later wrote a lengthy account in English of this episode (manuscript T40.11, Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna). The episode is discussed in several sources including Denis Dille, 'Die Beziehungen zwischen Bartók und Schoenberg,' *Dokumenta Bartókiana* vol. 2 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1965) 58–59.

³¹ Paraphrased from Harold Bloom, *Poetics of Influence* (New Haven: Henry R. Schwab, 1988) 135–36.

³² Bloom, *Poetics of Influence* 136.

These are not the only instances of tonal ungrammaticalities in Schoenberg's free-atonal and twelve-tone works, as Michael Cherlin has demonstrated.³³ Depending on the mode of interpretation adopted by the listener, as Michael Klein has discussed (with particular reference to Cherlin's approach to tonality in Schoenberg's atonal works), such moments can be interpreted as benign remnants of a past tradition or as instances where something (or someone) from the past asserts itself in the present and the uncanny is necessarily invoked:

For Cherlin, these gestures of tonality are 'evanescent,' mere specters of tonal music that have been emptied of meaning because they fail to gain middle ground status in the pitch structure of these works. For Bloom, though, these failures of repression make for a strangeness in the language that is more than a matter of syntax. To remember is to call forth a ghost, and to hear music or read a book is to confront the specters of another's memory.³⁴

Yet the Bloomian image of Schoenberg confronting the spectre of his compositional forefather Mahler is not one that I find completely convincing. For one thing, the melody written down by Schoenberg is not at all reminiscent of Mahler's *Zu Straßburg* setting, which has indeed been recomposed in an immediately identifiable orchestral version by Berio.³⁵ Yet Schoenberg's melody is almost identical to a melody that occurs, sung to verses from the same *Wunderhorn* poem, in an opera called *Der Kuhreigen* (*The Cowherd Rounds*) by one of Schoenberg's contemporaries, Austrian composer Wilhelm Kienzl (1847–1941).³⁶ Figure 4 shows the melody as it appears in one of its many incarnations in Kienzl's opera.

Although Kienzl is best remembered today as the composer of the national anthem melody that the newly formed Austrian republic adopted from 1918 (to words by Chancellor Karl Renner) to 1929 (when Haydn's Imperial Hymn melody was reinstated as Austria's national song), in the decade before the First World War Kienzl and his music were well known. *Der Kuhreigen*, like many of his operas and operettas, was extremely popular. The melodramatic plot of Kienzl's tragic opera was adapted by Richard Batka from the novella *Die kleine Blanchefleur* by Rudolf Hans Bartsch. According to Amanda Glauert, *Der Kuhreigen* 'centres on the nostalgic folksong that Swiss soldiers were not allowed to sing lest homesickness would make them desert.'³⁷ Although touted as an authentic Swiss folksong, Kienzl's *Strassburg* melody was newly composed for his opera and saturates the score of *Der Kuhreigen* in the guise of the opera's main vocal melody and as a subject of extended canonic treatment in both instruments and voices at key moments in the opera.

Schoenberg avoided the opera when it premiered in Vienna on 23 November 1911, but, at the insistence of his brother-in-law, Alexander von Zemlinsky, Schoenberg and his wife Mathilde

³³ Cherlin, 'Memory and Rhetorical Trope in Schoenberg's String Trio,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51.3 (1998): 559–602 and 'Schoenberg and *Das Unheimliche*: Spectres of Tonality,' *Journal of Musicology* 11.3 (1993): 357–73.

³⁴ Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2005) 96.

³⁵ Luciano Berio, *Mahler, zu strassburg auf der schanz (aus des knaben wunderhorn), fünf frühe lieder für männerstimme und orchester*, arranged by Berio for the Mahler-Festwochen (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1986).

³⁶ Wilhelm Kienzl, *Der Kuhreigen. Ein musikalisches Schauspiel in drei Aufzügen*, op. 85 (Leipzig: Josef Weinberger, 1911). I am grateful to Nick Chadwick, British Library, for bringing Kienzl's authorship of the melody to my attention.

³⁷ Amanda Glauert, 'Kienzl, Wilhelm,' *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, vol. 2, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992): 989.

Figure 4. Excerpt from Act 1, scene 5 of *Der Kuhreigen* by Wilhelm Kienzl (Leipzig: Josef Weinberger, 1911)



accompanied Zemlinsky to a performance at the Deutsches Landestheater in Prague of *Der Kuhreigen* on 22 February 1912 that was conducted by one of Zemlinsky's students, Istvan Strasser. Schoenberg recorded in his diary that, while he found the student conductor very competent, Kienzl's opera he dismissed as 'miserable stuff' (*ein elendes Zeug*).³⁸ Yet, at the time, Kienzl's opera made sufficient impression that, on Schoenberg's return to Berlin two weeks later (following a hectic schedule of lectures, rehearsals and concerts in Prague), Schoenberg remembered attending its performance—and he recalled his reaction to it in his diary.³⁹ Perhaps more surprising is that Schoenberg, five years later, recalled Kienzl's melody in his sketch book. Schoenberg did not own a score of Kienzl's opera, nor of Kienzl's *Symphonische Variationen über das Strassburglied aus der Oper 'Der Kuhreigen'*, op. 109a,⁴⁰ but rhythmic variations between

³⁸ Schoenberg, *Berliner Tagebuch*, ed. Josef Rufer (Frankfurt: Propyläen-Verlag, 1974) 29, transl. by Anita M. Luginbühl, 'Attempt at a Diary,' *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 9.1 (1986): 34.

³⁹ Schoenberg did not write in his diary from 18 February until 11 March 1912, after his return to Berlin from Prague.

⁴⁰ Schoenberg did, however, later acquire one other setting of the *Strassburg* text. An arrangement by Julius Röntgen of Friedrich Silcher's popular 1836 setting of the text (coincidentally, one of Goethe's favourite songs) is included in the *Volksliederbuch für die Jugend* (Leipzig: Peters, 1930), vol. 2: Schoenberg also contributed three folksong arrangements to the same volume of this state-commissioned project.

Kienzl's original version and the version represented in Schoenberg's 1917 sketch book suggest that Schoenberg in fact remembered the theme as a heard melody.

Notating in his sketch book a theme written by another—and, in particular, a theme by one of his contemporaries who had met with popular success—was not part of Schoenberg's usual compositional practice at this time. Nevertheless, I would argue that the fact that, rather than engaging in an unconscious 'rewriting' of Mahler's song in his 1917 sketch book, Schoenberg instead deliberately recalled a melody by a popular, contemporary composer, still has far more to do with Mahler than with Kienzl. With the exception of that single reference in his 1912 diary, Schoenberg makes no mention of Kienzl or his works in any of his writings. Kienzl, on the other hand, recalled in his autobiography meeting Schoenberg, Zemlinsky and Mahler at the assembly of composers after the premiere of Richard Strauss' *Salome* in Graz in 1906: Mahler, whom Kienzl already knew well, had conducted Kienzl's opera, *Der Evangelimann* in Hamburg in 1894.⁴¹ Kienzl and Schoenberg must also have crossed paths on other occasions. Kienzl was a member of Conrad Ansorge's Society, which hosted a Schoenberg evening in January 1910 that Schoenberg attended.⁴² He had also signed the financial appeal for Schoenberg that Alban Berg had placed in the September 1911 issue of *Pan*. Moreover, while dismissing Kienzl's opera in just a few, scathing words in his 1912 diary, Schoenberg, elsewhere in the same diary, reveals his intense preoccupation at this time with his performances of works by Mahler, with his ideas concerning his planned public lectures on Mahler, which were intended as tributes to the composer (who had died in May 1911) and which Schoenberg was to present in Prague, Berlin and Vienna, and with his worries that the Mahler Memorial Foundation would decide to build a monument to Mahler, rather than to fund Schoenberg's own work.⁴³ In fact, references to his 1912 Mahler Memorial Lecture, his planned performance of the Mahler-Bach Suite and his concerns about funding from the Mahler Foundation occur throughout his diary entries for February and March 1912. Schoenberg's reference in his diary to Kienzl's melody may therefore have much to do with his memories of his experiences in Prague in 1912 and, in particular, with his preoccupation at this time with Mahler's position in and legacy to Austro-German music and with Schoenberg's own role with respect to that position and legacy.

That, on the first page of sketch ideas in this sketch book for *Die Jakobsleiter*, Schoenberg would even write down a simple, folk-like tonal melody—almost ten years after he had moved beyond the tonal system—suggests that something in his earliest conception of his oratorio provoked thoughts to surface about Mahler. In fact, given the melody's proximity to one of his oratorio's most elevated themes—the theme shown in Figure 1 that, in the oratorio, encapsulates the Soul's attempted ascent to heaven and then its descent to earth—I would interpret the presence of Kienzl's melody in the oratorio sketches as evidence that Schoenberg's strongest reservations about Mahler's music emerged; that is, his reservations concerning Mahler's juxtaposition of banal melodies with passages written as if divinely inspired. Of course Schoenberg may well have been interested in the canonic potential of Kienzl's melody (a property that can not have escaped his attention during his experience

⁴¹ Wilhelm Kienzl, *Meine Lebenswanderung: Erlebtes und Erschautes* (Stuttgart: Engelhorns Nacht, 1926) 149.

⁴² Willi Reich, *Schoenberg: A Critical Biography*, transl. Leo Black (New York & Washington: Praeger, 1971) 48.

⁴³ Schoenberg, 'Attempt at a Diary.'

of hearing *Der Kuhreigen*). He may also have perceived a relationship between the oratorio sketch and the *Strassburg* melody: perhaps, in doubling selected pitches in his oratorio's theme to outline a D♭-major arpeggio, and therefore recontextualising the theme in tonal terms so that he heard the final D♭ [C♯] octaves as leading tones, Schoenberg then felt compelled to write a piece unambiguously and—for him—anachronistically in D major. Nevertheless, in the context of his composition of his *Jacob's Ladder* oratorio, there is no doubt that Schoenberg would have considered Kienzl's melody to be banal or, at the very least, as he described the melody of *Ach du lieber Augustin* in his *Theory of Harmony*, as an example of 'primitive folksong'.⁴⁴

Perhaps, as I have argued elsewhere, in his projects of 1914–1917—in his overtly Mahlerian choral symphony of 1914–1915 and in his *Jacob's Ladder* oratorio in particular—Schoenberg attempted to confront elements of Mahler's compositional style and aesthetic which he could not fully appreciate; that is, Mahler's technique of quotation and, in particular, his reuse of simple song material.⁴⁵ It was well known in Schoenberg's circle that, while staunch supporters, in public, of one another's compositions, Schoenberg and Mahler did not always see eye to eye about each other's artistic aims, or about each other's music.⁴⁶ Likewise, in public lectures written and presented after Mahler's death, Schoenberg's praise for Mahler's creative genius is circumscribed by his guarded criticism of Mahler's compositional aesthetic and techniques. Particularly in his Mahler Memorial Lecture, which Schoenberg first presented in Prague in conjunction with a performance of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, conducted by Zemlinsky on 25 March 1912 (a month after he heard *Die Kuhreigen*), Schoenberg appears torn between his instinct to censure and his desire to justify Mahler's use of borrowed themes; themes which, in his symphony movements, Mahler often borrowed from his own songs.⁴⁷ Take, for instance, these excerpts from his Mahler Memorial Lecture in which Schoenberg struggles to find a convincing counterargument to the claim he himself raises that, in Mahler's compositions, '[h]ere and there one has come across a passage which one does not like; a melody which one finds banal, which seems to be unoriginal':

In the first place, art does not depend upon the single component part alone, therefore music does not depend upon the theme ... But Mahler's themes are original in the highest sense, when one observes with what fantasy and art, with what wealth of variation there comes out of a few such tones an endless melody ... One must go even further: it is not at all necessary for a piece of music to have an original theme. Otherwise, Bach's choral preludes would not be works of art. But they certainly are works of art!⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony* 131.

⁴⁵ Shaw, Schoenberg's Choral Symphony 357–410.

⁴⁶ The relationship between Mahler and Schoenberg is discussed in a number of sources, including studies by Hermann Danuser, *Gustav Mahler und Seine Zeit* (Vienna: Laaber Verlag, 1991) 256–62; Julia Bess Hubbert, *Mahler and Schoenberg: Levels of Influence*, PhD thesis, Yale University, 1996.

⁴⁷ Schoenberg read versions of the same lecture later that year in Berlin and Vienna and in 1948 he revised the manuscript for publication. The lecture, in its revised form, was translated by Dika Newlin for inclusion in *Style and Idea* (1950) 7–36, and first appeared in English in the commemorative Schoenberg issue of *The Canon*, *Australian Journal of Music* 3.3 (September 1949): 60–82.

⁴⁸ Schoenberg, 'Gustav Mahler,' *Style and Idea*, 451 and 458. The passages occur in both the 1912 and 1948 drafts of Schoenberg's lecture text as well as in the version published in the *Canon*.

Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere, it is likely that Schoenberg intended both his choral symphony and his oratorio as tributes to Mahler on a grand scale.⁴⁹ Mahler's death had prompted two immediate tributes from Schoenberg; the composition of his piano piece op. 19, no. 6 and the dedication of the first edition of his *Theory of Harmony* to Mahler. From Schoenberg's earliest conception of his choral symphony in 1913–14 and, a few years later, with the composition of his *Jacob's Ladder* oratorio, Schoenberg attempted to create large-scale works that would, as he made clear in letters to Mahler's widow, Alma, reflect Mahler's legacy directly.⁵⁰ Schoenberg's failure to complete not only his oratorio but any of his wartime projects (including the choral symphony) in which he adopted Mahler's technique of recycling musical material, therefore may indicate his inability to resolve his ambivalent feelings toward Mahler and toward Mahler's music. Although Schoenberg believed that Mahler's symphonies were undeniably great works, worthy of their prominent place in the Austro-German symphonic tradition, what irked him was that, for him, their originality was tainted by Mahler's reliance on folksong and folksong-like references—yet he recognised that it was these 'unoriginal' elements that enhanced these works' broad and continuing popularity with concert-hall audiences. The appearance of Kienzl's melody in such a prominent position in his sketches—on the dated 'title page' of his wartime sketch book, in effect—reinforces this ambivalence. Although dismissing Kienzl's opera as rubbish, Schoenberg's ambition to write an oratorio or opera that, like Kienzl's, would attract wide popular appeal, was to intensify in the years after the war but would remain unfulfilled.

Intertextual Models and their Discontents

Riffaterre's approach seems most compatible with the kind of intertextual reading in which we engage when we listen to music, but which is rarely articulated in scholarly writings. Unlike Bloom's approach, for instance, such an approach does not rely on the existence of canonical texts or figures for its application and interpretation. Of course Riffaterre's approach is not without its critics: even those who, like Joseph Margolis, find Riffaterre's conception of intertextuality one of the most persuasive, comment on his failure to conceive the literary text as part of the 'cultural world'.⁵¹ Yet, given any model or mode of interpretation that is formed in disciplines outside music, the challenge is for us to appropriate features from those sources and to adapt them to the interpretation of music sketches, scores, works in progress, finished compositions, recorded performances and live performance events.

Perhaps I have adapted Riffaterre's intertextual model only to come to the same conclusion as a Bloomian reading, but the way to that conclusion, I would argue, is contextually much richer and more varied than the paradigm of Bloom's linear and homologous chronology of influence. In particular, it allows space for the inclusion of non-canonical musical figures, such as Kienzl, whose presence provides a different lens through which we can view the relationship between Mahler and Schoenberg and which may, in turn, influence the way in which we interpret and perform these composers' works.

⁴⁹ Shaw, Schoenberg's Choral Symphony 357–410.

⁵⁰ Schoenberg, unpublished letters to Alma Mahler of 1 April 1914 and 21 June 1917), held in the Alma Mahler Werfel Collection, University of Pennsylvania. I would like to thank Elizabeth Keathley for bringing these letters to my attention.

⁵¹ Joseph Margolis, *Interpretation Radical but not Unruly: The New Puzzle of the Arts and History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1995) 158 and 166.