Dahlhaus, Schoenberg, and the New Music

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*Schoenberg and the New Music* is a collection of twenty-eight essays by the late German *Musikwissenschaftler* Carl Dahlhaus (1928–88), translated from the German by Derek Puffett and Alfred Clayton (Stephen Hinton has translated one of the essays). This particular collection was chosen by Dahlhaus himself; it consists of twenty-two essays selected from thirty-nine that were originally collected together in *Schoenberg und andere* (Dahlhaus 1978), plus six others that have appeared in various journals and conference proceedings since 1978.

As Puffett and Clayton point out, the essays in this volume span a period of more than twenty years: the earliest is from 1964, and the latest appeared in 1984 ("Tonality: Structure or Process?" is the exception, listed as forthcoming). These essays also address a wider range of topics than the title suggests. In addition to a number of essays on Schoenberg, Dahlhaus also discusses Webern, Schreker, and Scriabin; under the general rubric of "new music," one finds discussions of genre, structure,

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the avant-garde, sociology, form, and improvisation. This volume, then, not only provides the reader with a good cross section of Dahlhaus's writing in terms of the development of his ideas, but it also allows one to appreciate the tremendous breadth of Dahlhaus's thought.

The table of contents merely lists the twenty-eight essays in succession, without any grouping. One can, however, parse the contents into four sections. The first six essays might be categorized under the heading of "issues in new music"; the next twelve under "Schoenberg"; the next four under "other twentieth-century composers"; and the last six under "more issues in new music." It is unclear why the editors would not have wanted to make their organization (or some other organization) of the essays a little more obvious to the reader. One may note from the above division, however, that the twelve Schoenberg essays are outnumbered by the sixteen essays on other composers and topics in twentieth-century music. This fact underscores the very broad perspective that Dahlhaus brings to his Schoenberg scholarship; with this collection of essays one not only enters the world of Schoenberg and his music, but also encounters major issues in the "new music" (Adorno's term), and the problems that these issues have posed for composers, listeners, and scholars. The essays themselves are challenging and thought provoking. As always, Dahlhaus seems to expect his readers to be familiar with German philosophy since Kant, German literature since Goethe, and current trends in literary criticism, in addition to assuming a close familiarity with the history of Western art music since Leonin. The essays are written in a very condensed style; in fact, each essay almost seems as if it could serve as the outline or précis for a much larger one. This combination of condensed exposition with rapid-fire references to diverse repertoires of ideas and music can create a mode of discourse that many readers will find difficult (or at least time consuming) to penetrate; but Dahlhaus's writing repays patient study. Every essay in this collection is rich with acute insights, as well as with suggestions for the further pursuit of the issues that it raises. This review will take up a number of those issues for examination and discussion. Due to limitations of space, the following discussion will deal only with a selection of ideas from Dahlhaus's book. Indeed, a commentary on all of Schoenberg and the New Music would run at least the length of the book itself, if not exceed its length by one or two times.
In his 1969 essay "New Music and the Problem of Musical Genre," Dahlhaus asserts that the twentieth century has witnessed the disintegration of musical genres. He sees this evinced even in the genre-neutral, quasi-scientific titles given to some recent music (he cites titles such as "Constellations," "Figures," and "Prisms"). For Dahlhaus, such titles are indicative of the predicament in which composers find themselves with regard to conventional genres. While Schoenberg remained faithful to the genres he believed he inherited from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and for Schoenberg the distinction between inheriting a genre and reclaiming it is a crucial aesthetic point), the first signs of the demise of traditional genres were already apparent in 1911 with Webern's Op. 9 Bagatelles for String Quartet. By identifying an early symptom of the post-1945 genre problem in Webern's music and by setting Webern in opposition to Schoenberg in this regard, Dahlhaus develops an intellectual motif stated by René Leibowitz [1947] and made infamous by Pierre Boulez in his essay "Schoenberg is Dead" (Boulez 1952).

In discussing the notion of genre in music generally, Dahlhaus isolates five basic features that he believes have historically determined genre in music: function, scoring, form, texture, and text. Admitting that genre studies are beset from the start with certain problems, he generalizes that genre in music before 1700 is determined by function, texture, and text, while genre in music after that time is determined principally by scoring and form. Dahlhaus then goes on to trace how these later genre identifiers came to displace the earlier ones.

In the twentieth century, composers have of course inherited the genres of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (symphony, string quartet, sonata, etc.). But, according to Dahlhaus, things in this century are significantly different than

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1In Leibowitz [1947], Schoenberg is characterized as the originator of the modern music and its central figure, with Berg looking to the past, and Webern looking to the future. An important early instance of viewing Berg and Webern as historical figures in relation to Schoenberg is Adorno (1931), as is noted by Moldenhauer (1979, 360-61). For discussion of Leibowitz's decisive influence on young composers in the period immediately following World War II, see Griffiths (1981, 20-22; 47), Watkins (1988, 510-511) views Boulez's essay as constituting his final break with Leibowitz, and Peyser (1976, 51) interprets Boulez's essay as an attempt to "crush" Leibowitz.
they were in Haydn's day: in the eighteenth century, genres and the tradition of genre existed, in a certain sense, outside the existence of any particular work. That is, idiosyncratic features of individual works — even masterworks — tended not to challenge the general features of the genre; a symphony was a piece in four movements for orchestra, the first movement being in sonata form, and so on. But since the nineteenth century, a tendency for composers to experiment with the genres themselves has arisen, and as a result, new genres have evolved (Dahlhaus briefly discusses the tone poem, for example). By the early twentieth century, Dahlhaus believes, the consensus with regard to genre being determined by scoring and form had all but disappeared. Here is Dahlhaus's portrayal of Webern's situation:

In Webern's music there is no typical connection between form and scoring which corresponds to a genre norm, but a special, individual nexus rooted in the unrepeatable character of the single piece. Both the forms and the scoring pursue a path towards individualization, the extreme consequence of which is the abolition of musical genres. (40-41)

This is Dahlhaus's argument in a nutshell: it is precisely the twentieth-century composer's concern for creating a unique work of art that makes every piece he produces unrepeatable. Each work constitutes a unique solution and therefore destroys the possibility of its participating in a genre, which is some thing that is defined by a certain amount of repetition from piece to piece; for Dahlhaus, this generic repetition is essential in order to establish a normative scheme independent of any particular work.

Dahlhaus goes on to assert that concert programming in this century, relying as it has on dead composers' musical masterpieces, tends to further the disintegration of genres: for Dahlhaus, masterpieces must be understood as exceptional instances within a genre. Every masterpiece emerges from a large body of mediocre works, and it is this larger group of pieces, taken as a whole, that defines the genre. But modern concert programming has tended to remove the exceptional instance from its original context. As Dahlhaus explains, when we consider the evolution of the mass in the nineteenth century in terms of masterpieces by Beethoven, Liszt, and Bruckner, for example,
we allow them to "stand side by side without being linked by a
genre tradition elaborated in lesser works. But a history of
exceptions is no longer a history of a genre" (43). For Dahlhaus,
the modern concert repertoire provides only the illusion of a genre
tradition.

For Dahlhaus, then, we are currently faced with a situation
in which the modern composer's drive toward the individual and
unrepeatable compositional solution destroys any common
practice with regard to genres. The establishment of selected
masterworks in the concert hall, though it would seem to
reinforce the notion of genre (after all, we all know what a
concerto is and what to expect), further distances the music from
any context of a living genre by ignoring the lesser pieces that
constitute the context in which the exceptional instance must be
heard. According to Dahlhaus, what might be termed "living"
genres no longer exist in the twentieth century.

Dahlhaus surely makes a valuable point in distinguishing
between a living genre and one created by historical selection
(though Dahlhaus does not employ the term "living genre" for the
former, and might also argue that the latter is not really a genre
at all). But can one really be convinced that the notion of genre
is dead in twentieth-century composition? Perhaps there is no
longer a common practice with regard to the genres inherited
from the nineteenth century; each composer seems to have to
come to her own terms with the genre traditions. But the
traditional genres still play a significant role in the music of this
century — the role is, however, different from the one that they
played in earlier music. In Western art music, the notion of genre
has been transformed from a living, common-practice one to a
historicist one: genre exists as a historical entity and is operative
to the extent to which the composer chooses to interact with it.

This alternative view of the role of genre in twentieth-
century music is based on J. Peter Burkholder's "museum piece"
model (Burkholder 1983). Burkholder asserts that composers in
the twentieth century have become historicist. Composers write
music for inclusion in the museum that the modern concert hall
has become. These composers self-consciously compose their
music to be heard by an audience that knows the classic works
from the canon. Some attempt to extend and build upon the past
(progressivism: Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, and in a different
way, Bartok), while others interact with the past in a way that

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accentuates certain properties of past music (neoclassicism: Stravinsky); progressivism and neoclassicism are seen as two aspects of the same mainstream historicist current, with most composers (including Schoenberg and Stravinsky) combining these two aspects into a personal stylistic blend. Whatever the mixture, however, Burkholder asserts that the music accepted into the canon will meet the following conditions:

1) it must visibly participate in the tradition of serious art music; 2) it must have lasting value, rewarding hearings, study and analysis, becoming loved as it becomes familiar; and 3) it must proclaim a distinctive personality, different enough from other works in the collection to justify its inclusion while not so radically different as to exclude it entirely. (77)

Burkholder cites Brahms as the first historicist composer (1984).

Recently, Joseph Straus has followed up this historicist notion analytically, combining Burkholder's position with an approach that makes use of Harold Bloom's theory of influence in literature (Straus 1990). Charles Rosen has also demonstrated a number of instances in which Brahms appears to have modeled earlier composers' music fairly closely (Rosen 1981).

There are two important points to be made about the historicist position: first, the historicist composers interact with the past in a very conscious way; and second, these composers expect the listener to have the competency to recognize this interaction. These two points reinforce and inform the position on a historicist approach to genre in twentieth-century composition: a modern composition in a particular genre will tend to interact with the standard requirements of that genre; the listener brings a certain set of expectations to the listening experience based on the tradition of the genre, and holds them in mind as the piece goes by, noting the congruities and incongruities between the piece and the traditional genre model. But this model is not one that is held in common between a number of works contemporary with the work at hand; instead, the model exists historically. The modern piece is therefore not so much a piece in the genre (in the old sense), as much as it is a commentary on the genre: Schoenberg's Violin Concerto is, among other things, Schoenberg's personal commentary on the violin concerto as an inherited genre. As such, following Dahlhaus, it is basically unrepeatable; Schoenberg could have written another violin concerto only if he had had more to "say."
Burkholder also acknowledges three types of musical repertoire that do not fit into the “historicism mainstream”: pop, jazz, and light classical; modern religious music, movie music, and state propaganda music; and the avant-garde. His argument is based on the exclusion of these works from the concert hall program. According to the role of genre proposed above, however, there is no reason why the interaction with genre should not play a role in these various types of music. Historicism has certainly played a role within both jazz and popular music. Perhaps more significant for the question of living genres in the twentieth century, though, is the fact that one could also build a case for the existence of living genres in both jazz and rock.

But to return to where Dahlhaus begins, musical works from the post-1950 avant-garde may have genre-neutral titles; but by seeking alternatives to the traditional genres and the names that go with them, the composer is also interacting (albeit negatively) with those genres. In fact, without the historical models to react against, there is really no sense in which these pieces can be understood as revolutionary. One could assert, on the other hand, that Paul McCartney and John Lennon did not interact with the genre of the art song because they were not really aware of its existence in any significant way, and that their Beatles songs were therefore created, and exist, independently of it. In fact, a large number of Beatles songs participate in the living genre of what might be termed the rock-combo pop song, defined by scoring, form, text, and function. There are also a number of Beatles songs that interact with pop genres in a historicist manner.

But could the traditionally-trained composers who comprised the 1950s avant-garde in Europe and America have ever fully supported the claim that their music contained no historicist component? Boulez’s 1952 rallying cry was already laced with historicism. These composers would seem to have been bound to interact with their musical heritage, if only to set it on its head. And to the extent that these and other modern composers interact with specific genre traditions, these genres exist and play a role in the understanding of twentieth-century music.\(^2\)

\(^2\)The position taken here on musical genre, that it can be operative in a negative sense, is similar to an argument made by the literary theorist Tzvetan Todorov (1978). In reworking an argument made in his seminal study The Fantastic (1970), Todorov responds to Maurice Blanchot’s contention that modern literature no longer respects the notion of genre: for Blanchot “a book no longer belongs to a genre” (Todorov [1978], 13). But Todorov counters that “the fact that a work ‘disobeys’ its genre does not mean that the genre does not exist” (14).
The question of interacting with the past comes again to the fore in Dahlhaus's discussion of Schoenberg's late work: it is particularly the late tonal pieces (Variations for Wind Band, Suite for String Orchestra, Second Chamber Symphony, Köl Nidre, and others) that motivate a lengthy discussion.

In order to understand the context of Dahlhaus's discussion, one must recall that Schoenberg himself remarked on his return to tonality, on the lure of the past. In "On Revient Toujours" (Schoenberg [1950]), Schoenberg asserts that the great Classic- and Romantic-era composers must have felt a longing to return to the art of their predecessors, the great contrapuntists from Palestrina to J. S. Bach, and that this longing accounts for the many passages of strict composition that one finds in the music of these later composers (108-9). Schoenberg is careful to point out that the later practice differs "from Bach's counterpoint only by such features as the progress in music had brought about; that is, a more elaborated development through variations of the motive" (109). From his discussion it is clear that Schoenberg believed that the forward movement of history precludes the possibility of a later composer ever truly returning to an earlier style: the later composer can only interpolate the earlier style. In a real sense, then, the past as it was is gone forever, and all that remains is the possibility of interacting with it historically.

The issues that emerge from Schoenberg's discussion of his "vigorous" longing to return to tonality are the topic of Dahlhaus's essay "Schoenberg's Late Works." Dahlhaus first considers the problems that the concert public encounters in any attempt to view Schoenberg's output as a unified whole. For many listeners it seems almost impossible to reconcile aesthetically the early music (which they may know) with the descriptions of the twelve-tone system (since the twelve-tone music is virtually unknown to listeners). Dahlhaus believes that this difficulty arises in part from a misunderstanding of the earlier works: a connection with the later works can be established when one realizes that Schoenberg's concern for the musical idea, presentation of the idea, developing variation, and musical prose form a common basis for the interpretation of all of his music.

Dahlhaus's desire to uncover the common properties that unify Schoenberg's musical output leads him to examine the problem that inheres in the presence of both tonal and atonal
works in the late music — a problem that is really two problems: the first is that any late tonal music exists at all; and the second is that it exists alongside twelve-tone works (the presence of twelve-tone music taken alone has never been a problem for teleologically minded critics). Dahlhaus surveys a number of the views that have been advanced by critics dealing with the late tonal works.

Proceeding chronologically, Dahlhaus begins this discussion with a consideration of Adorno’s commentary, in Philosophy of Modern Music [1949], on Schoenberg’s late music. Dahlhaus suggests that Adorno’s analysis of late Schoenberg both furthers and hinders an appreciation of this music. In the first place, Dahlhaus disagrees with Adorno’s claim that late in life Schoenberg had an unconscious distrust of the possibility of completing major works, and that this feeling accounts for Schoenberg’s inability to finish Moses und Aron and Die Jakobs Lette. Dahlhaus labels Adorno’s claim as “pure conjecture” (158) and notes that in any case Schoenberg never gave up trying to complete either work. Secondly, Dahlhaus objects to Adorno’s tendency to marginalize the late nondodecaphonic works by considering them as minor, as parerga. Dahlhaus believes that even the presence or absence of an opus number is still no good way of separating out the major from the minor works, and compares the Variations for Wind Band, Op. 43A with the Suite for String Orchestra, which was not assigned an opus number. For Dahlhaus, no “profound categorical difference” exists between these two works (159).

Dahlhaus’s third objection to Adorno’s position is that he believes that Adorno was conflicted both in his approach to the late tonal works, and in his view of the twelve-tone system. According to Dahlhaus, on the one hand Adorno finds the late tonal works anachronistic (and therefore aesthetically untenable), but on the other hand sees in Schoenberg’s return to tonality a renunciation of dodecaphony that amounts to an act of liberation.

Within Adorno criticism it is often noted that Adorno was ambivalent with regard to the twelve-tone system. He saw the development of twelve-tone music as a historical necessity, and praised the ability of the system to organize the total chromatic; at the same time, however, he viewed the twelve-tone system as a set of constraints that force certain decisions upon composers, therefore limiting their ability to respond spontaneously under
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certain compositional circumstances. Dahlhaus offers an interesting interpretation of Adorno's view of the twelve-tone system. He posits that Adorno's model, in which the twelve-tone system is understood as a body of rules and constraints, is like the prima prattica in Monteverdi's music. Dahlhaus believes that this can be gleaned from Adorno's contributions to Thomas Mann's Doktor Faustus and from his remarks about Ernst Krenek.

The notion that one can view strict twelve-tone composition as an analogue to counterpoint in the style of Palestrina is only slightly (if at all) below the surface in Philosophy of Modern Music. As is well known, there is a long tradition associated with the school of teaching tonal composition that holds that the young composer must first master the strict discipline of contrapuntal composition before moving on to "free composition." In discussing the future of modern music, Adorno takes a corresponding position:

In other words, the survival of music can be anticipated only if it is able to emancipate itself from twelve-tone technique as well. This is not to be accomplished, however, by a retrogression to the irrationality which preceded twelve-tone technique and which would have to be denied today by the postulates of strict composition — by those who have been responsible for the formulation of the twelve-tone technique. It is rather to be achieved through the amalgamation and absorption of twelve-tone technique by free composition — by the assumption of its rules by the spontaneity of the critical ear. (Adorno [1949], 115)

For Adorno, the composer must internalize the twelve-tone technique only to free himself from it; but the emancipated composer finds herself fundamentally transformed by the twelve-tone experience.

Dahlhaus's interpretation of Adorno's remarks can be summarized as follows: if the twelve-tone system represents a kind of prima prattica, perhaps Schoenberg's return to tonality represents a kind of seconda prattica; if so, Schoenberg's tonal music can be seen as an escape back to free composition — composition enriched by the twelve-tone experience — and as a

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3See Jameson (1971, 34) and Jay (1984, 151) for similar characterizations of Adorno's position.
triumph over the tyranny of the twelve-tone system. In this light, the late tonal music can be seen to be a step forward. But, as Dahlhaus is careful to point out, this view is only implicit in Adorno's remarks, and Adorno leaves the whole problem of distinguishing the expressive content of the twelve-tone works from the nondodecaphonic ones "suspended in mid-air" (161).  

Dahlhaus's discussion of Adorno suggests an important musicological question: Do Schoenberg's late tonal works somehow bear the stamp of his "serial odyssey" (to use Ethan Haimo's term [1989])? Dahlhaus provides a survey of views that have arisen around this question. For example, Dieter Schnebel has suggested that Schoenberg's late tonal pieces are best described as "re-tonal," because Schoenberg thought in terms of "voices" (i.e., contrapuntally), and the concept of voice and voice leading in music belongs to tonal music; therefore, according to Schnebel. Schoenberg was obliged to return to tonality (Schnebel [1956-57]). While Dahlhaus dismisses this approach, it is perhaps interesting to note that Schnebel concludes from Schoenberg's return to tonality that history need not always progress forward, but may also "progress" backward; this places history itself at the disposal of the composer. 

Dahlhaus goes on to outline Heinz-Klaus Metzger's further development of the re-tonal notion. Metzger believes that the rhythmic-syntactic dimension of Schoenberg's music is firmly rooted in the practice of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries — this in contrast to its modern atonal-dodecaphonic pitch structure (Metzger 1980). By separating out these two dimensions

4In his Studies in Counterpoint Krenek makes the following remarks:

It is the belief of the author [Krenek] that, at a later stage of development, atonal music may not need the strict regulations of the twelve-tone technique. He anticipates that the essentials of this technique will grow into a sort of second nature. This consummation, however, will materialize only if the twelve-tone technique is constantly used as a training in the atonal idiom, just as the theory of classical harmony is taught as an introduction to "free" tonal composition.

As the twelve-tone technique is approached here from the viewpoint of counterpoint, strict (Palestrina) counterpoint is recommended as prerequisite, though not indispensable. (1940, id)

Here we meet the notion of "twelve-tone technique as atonal education" explicitly, and that of "twelve-tone technique as prima pratica" implicitly.
In this way, Metzger can assert that Schoenberg's late tonal music constitutes a working out of the implications of the rhythmic dimension in his music. In addition, Metzger claims that the harmonic dimension of Schoenberg's late tonality maintains the essential quality of atonality, namely the lack of a tonal hierarchy. Dahlhaus rejects Metzger's re-tonality, but suggests the affinity of certain of Metzger's ideas with those of René Leibowitz. Leibowitz's attempt to reconcile tonality and the twelve-tone method in Schoenberg's late work is cited by Dahlhaus:

> Here we may find many of the tone-row principles incorporated into a freely handled tonality. All possible aggregations of the tonal resources of chromaticism are tried. The most distant, unheard-of tonal relationships are established; there is a systematic effort not to let a single possibility of such tonal relationships go unused. (Dahlhaus 1987, 163)\(^5\)

But Dahlhaus holds a different interpretation of the situation; his tendency is to view Schoenberg's musical output as a whole. Rather than attempting to explain and justify the return to tonality and the coexistence of tonal and atonal works by looking for connections only among the divergent late works, Dahlhaus takes a step back and tries to show how both the late tonal and the twelve-tone works participate in concerns that are present across the entire body of Schoenberg's work. Commenting on the remarks of Leibowitz, Dahlhaus asserts the following:

> Actually, however, it is not the row principle that returns in a tonal transformation, but a tendency which always dominated Schoenberg's musical thought and which therefore left its mark on dodecaphony in a number of essential ways: the tendency to make the most of the full chromatic stock of notes or chords within the narrowest space and — in a tonal composition — to delay repeating a chord for as long as was possible without breaking the musical thread. (163)

\(^5\)The ellipsis is Dahlhaus's. This quote is assembled from two passages within the same chapter, but nonetheless accurately reflects an argument that Leibowitz (1947) presents in some detail.
Dahlhaus views the late tonal and twelve-tone music not in direct relation to each other, but each in relation to a third element, which he terms Schoenberg’s “poetics of music.” He therefore does not ask the question of whether the twelve-tone experience had some effect on the late tonal works, but instead views both the twelve-tone and tonal works as participating in a number of shared musical concerns. That Schoenberg returns to tonality is not as important as what he does with it compositionally.

While he is concerned with attenuating what he considers to be an overemphasis on the historical implications of the Tonal oder Atonal issue in Schoenberg’s late works, Dahlhaus does allow himself to identify one important way in which he believes Schoenberg’s late music, viewed as a whole, can be seen to differ from the earlier music. Schoenberg’s late music, according to Dahlhaus, represents a move away from the Schopenhauerian aesthetics of absolute music that dominated Schoenberg’s view in the earlier works. Schopenhauer believed that music alone revealed the innermost essence of the world, and that the use of words, as a text or as a program, was always a secondary consideration.8 Schoenberg [1950] expresses a similar view in his 1912 essay “The Relationship to the Text.” Dahlhaus also explores Schoenberg’s understanding of the language versus music issue in “Schoenberg and Program Music.” But the texts of Schoenberg’s later works,

which are invariably burdened with philosophy or biography . . . force us to come to an interpretation other than the one suggested by Schopenhauer’s metaphysical world view. (Dahlhaus 1987, 167)

In short, the texts of the later works seem to play a fundamental role in the motivation of those works; the text is not an accessory that aids in the presentation of a fundamentally musical idea, but is now an element of the basic idea of the work. Dahlhaus sums up his position as follows:

In Schoenberg’s late works, the significance of the content has grown in proportion to the degree that the distinction between the musical means has become irrelevant. (167)

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8Schopenhauer’s aesthetics of music are discussed in Dahlhaus ([1967], 42-46). Schopenhauer’s notion of absolute music is central to Dahlhaus’s later [1978] tracing of the history of that idea.
As was mentioned above, Dahlhaus identifies the unifying element in Schoenberg's music as his "poetics of music." Dahlhaus's remarks on this subject appear in a number of the essays, including "Schoenberg's Poetics of Music," "Schoenberg's Aesthetic Theology," "Schoenberg and Program Music," "Musical Prose," and "What is Developing Variation?" In his discussion of the late works, Dahlhaus cites four "categories" that form a common basis for the interpretation of Schoenberg's music generally: the musical idea, presentation of the idea, developing variation, and musical prose.

These categories are extremely interdependent, and are not always exclusive of one another. By musical prose, according to Dahlhaus, Schoenberg "is thinking of a language which can express an idea directly, without repetitions or circumlocutions" (106), and Dahlhaus cites Schoenberg's remark that

this is what musical prose should be — a direct and straightforward presentation of ideas, without any patchwork, without mere padding and empty repetitions.

(Dahlhaus 1987, 106)

According to Schoenberg, then, musical prose operates within a more general category: that of the presentation of musical ideas.

It is particularly interesting that Dahlhaus views musical prose as the

phenomenon which performs a similar function in the areas of rhythm and melody similar to that performed by the emancipation of the dissonance in the area of harmony. Melodic ideas should be self-sufficient and meaningful without the support of symmetries and correspondences as are dissonances without their resolution onto consonances.

(105)

Due to limitations of space, it will not be possible to explore in any detail either Schoenberg's "poetics" or Dahlhaus's interpretation of them; in what follows I will summarize some of the important points that arise in those essays, and I plan to take these issues up in greater depth in a future article.
Already one may note that when certain underlying ideas are not clearly set apart from one another, these correspondences between language and music, or between rhythm or melody and harmony, can become tangled. One issue that Dahlhaus isolates in his discussions is the relationship between language and music in Schoenberg's poetics. According to Dahlhaus, Schoenberg tended to view music as a tonal thought process: music is thinking in tones. As such, music does not imitate language but constitutes a kind of independent language of tones, with its own logic and coherence. Thus musical prose arises not in imitation of literary prose, but rather as a response to specifically musical concerns. Driven by a desire to express a musical idea directly, the composer disregards the symmetry of the musical phrase, omitting repetitions that would arise only for the sake of rounding off and balancing a phrase. Schoenberg's unremitting sense of musical economy—a sense that motivates the "directness" of musical prose—may be seen as analogous to his friend Adolf Loos's fight against the ornament in architecture and design, or Karl Kraus's crusade against the empty phrase in language. The correspondence between musical prose and the emancipation of the dissonance can also be attributed to this severe drive for musical economy: no obligatory repetitions or resolutions are allowed.

The idea that musical thought is thinking in tones, and that this thinking observes a kind of musical logic, serves as the basis for Dahlhaus's discussion of the musical idea, its presentation, and developing variation. Musical prose and, correspondingly, the emancipation of the dissonance, are technical concerns reflecting a compositional drive toward the economy of musical materials—a drive that also interacts in a crucial way with the "tonal thought process."

Dahlhaus begins a discussion of the musical idea by noting that Schoenberg's attempts to define this term suffer from two kinds of problems: sometimes he used different terms to express the same thing, and at other times he used the same term to express different things (128–29). For Dahlhaus, these problems cannot be solved by assigning clear definitions to the terms Schoenberg used. In fact, Dahlhaus believes that Schoenberg ran into these kinds of linguistic problems as a result of an ambiguity residing within the concept itself.
For the relationship between idea and presentation, theme and developing variation, basic shape and abundance of shapes, is in a strict sense dialectical, and the exaggerated assertion that the substance of a movement is already implicit in the theme should be avoided just as much as the opposing one-sided view, that the idea of a work is nothing but the sum of the relations between shapes through which it makes its mark, without any priority given to the material stated at the beginning. (129)

In other words, for Dahlhaus the idea of a work resides in the dialectic that occurs between the opening measures and the total structure of the work, between the latent and the manifest, between the dynamic moment and the static whole. Confusion arises from a one-sided characterization of some aspect of the idea of a work.

According to Dahlhaus, Schoenberg considered developing variation to be "the process of spinning-out a network of relationships from the musical idea" (78) (here Dahlhaus uses the term "idea" to designate the first component in the dialectic asserted above). But Dahlhaus's interpretation allows a considerable level of flexibility in determining the type of musical material that participates in such a spinning out. The accepted American view is that specific intervallic and rhythmic relationships can be spun out (Epstein 1979, Carpenter 1983, and Frisch 1984). But Dahlhaus also states that an expressive gesture, perhaps defined only by contour and thus intervallically nonspecific, can serve as the starting point of a work, citing the Five Orchestral Pieces, Op. 16 (131). Dahlhaus also believes that developing variation should be distinguished from thematic-motivic work generally; developing variation can spin out intervallic relationships (as opposed to themes or motives) or gestures (which may have no set intervallic profile). This interpretation contrasts greatly with the narrower interpretation of developing variation forwarded by Walter Frisch (1984).³

³Frisch discusses Dahlhaus's interpretation of developing variation as it appears in the latter's analysis of Brahms's Piano Concerto, Op. 15 (1965), and in Dahlhaus [1974] (Frisch 1984, 25-28). Frisch's chapter 1, "Prologue: Brahms and the Schoenberg Critical Tradition," is a valuable and well-researched survey of motivic-thematic analysis since Schoenberg and up to Epstein, Carpenter, and Frisch himself.
Dahlhaus also identifies the role played by "logic" in Schoenberg's notion of developing variation. In identifying how certain moments in a musical work can be viewed as variants of some model, analysts are frequently given to stressing how events are related; they tend to focus on the ways in which variants are the same. But for Dahlhaus, it is also essential to note how variants differ from the model and from each other. Only then can one determine why this and not some other variant appears in a particular spot; in short, Dahlhaus raises the question of what constitutes a logical succession. In fact, assuming that a piece will exhibit a logical succession of variants may not be warranted at all:

... the technique of introducing motifs or themes without any initial substantive connection between them and then drawing them closer together cannot be understood in terms of the concept of development and has therefore been neglected in analytical practice. (133)

Though Dahlhaus identifies a number of problems that may arise in motivic analysis, his positive contribution is perhaps his most provocative as well. Simply stated, Dahlhaus views tonality and the twelve-tone system as alternative tonal contexts; as a tonal context each provides a basis for the logical arrangement of variants, and either may be employed in the presentation of the idea of a work:

Dodecaphony is not to be compared with tonality as regards to its substance, but rather, if at all, as regards its function.... If in tonal works the harmonic logic—next to the formal functions and the directional tendencies of the melodic and rhythmic process—formed one of the means of determining the reason why at a certain point of development a certain variant and no other is appropriate, then under the conditions of atonality dodecaphony serves a similar end. (80)

The interpretation of Schoenberg's poetics of music that emerges from Dahlhaus's remarks is a poetics that is equally well-suited to tonal, atonal, and twelve-tone music, and as such, it provides as perspective for viewing Schoenberg's musical output as a unified whole. The specific kind of tonal context employed in any composition is a matter of the presentation of
the idea, not the idea itself; it can establish a framework for the logic of the developing variation but is not the unfolding itself.9

Having surveyed Dahlhaus's reading of Schoenberg's poetics, we are now in a better position to understand Dahlhaus's remarks about Schoenberg's late works. These late tonal and twelve-tone works are unified by the poetics (though the poetics itself has shifted away from Schopenhauer's aesthetics of absolute music). Schoenberg's return to tonality is not as puzzling from the perspective of historical teleology as it might at first appear. In fact, Schoenberg in his late tonal practice seems to pick up more or less where he left off in his earlier tonal music, both figuratively and literally (the latter in terms of his completion of the Second Chamber Concerto). And the late tonal music is not really informed by the twelve-tone experience, though both the twelve-tone music and the tonal music are affected by the shifting poetics. It is the poetics that is historicist, and this is borne out by Schoenberg's lifelong fascination with the works of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, and Brahms. This perhaps also explains why Schoenberg felt that the study of great tonal masterworks was essential for the young composer; for Schoenberg this was not so much a matter of mastering tonality (though that was certainly a consideration), but more of soaking up the poetics of the great masters. This may be the most fundamental sense in which Schoenberg felt himself to be the student of these great masters (see Schoenberg [1950], 173-74).

9In a recent article Andrew Mead (1987) discusses the issue of form in Schoenberg's twelve-tone works. In a thorough examination of two movements from Schoenberg's Woodwind Quintet, Op. 26, Mead asserts that form in these pieces results not from a mere filling in of tonal models with twelve-tone content, but rather from the composer's exploitation of structural properties that are available within the twelve-tone system itself. For Mead,

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\text{tonality provides a system of measurement and differentiation along with a hierarchy of relationships that allows one to create a variety of different strategies for making music . . . . Properly understood, the twelve-tone system can also provide a system of measurement and differentiation along with a hierarchy of relationships that allows one to project a variety of different strategies for making music. (91)}
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Mead does not suggest that the twelve-tone system is a replacement for tonality: in fact, he seems to agree with Dahlhaus that the two are alternative tonal contexts — but contexts capable of projecting similar formal designs.

For more on form in Schoenberg's twelve-tone music, see Hyde (1980 and 1985). Mead (1987), due to both its recent appearance and an abundance of citations, provides a valuable introduction to the North American discourse on form in Schoenberg's twelve-tone music.
If Schoenberg’s later poetics was less a poetics of absolute music and began to reflect his increased concern for ideas based in language, one might wonder how such ideas could play some role in the idea of a musical work. Dahlhaus’s essay, “The Fugue as Prelude: Schoenberg’s Genesis Composition, Op. 44,” provides a valuable insight into how such extramusical ideas can play an important role at the most fundamental level of a musical work.

Dahlhaus sets the stage for his discussion by pointing out that Schoenberg (see [1950], 248–49) believed that fugal composition in the twelve-tone method was “a little too easy,” and should be undertaken only for “some special reason.” Dahlhaus views the main section of the Prelude as a fugue or fugato and asserts that Schoenberg intended the listener to understand this as a reference to Bach. But since the piece was to form the prelude to a series of works (commissioned by Nathaniel Shilkret) based on the Book of Genesis, there is some confusion over why a fugue would serve as a prelude. In addition to these problems, Dahlhaus’s analysis of the piece leads him to conclude that Schoenberg does not develop the implications of the initial measures in any way. Thus we are faced with a twelve-tone fugue — something that requires some special justification — that makes a musical reference to Bach; it is a fugue operating as prelude, and violates one of Schoenberg’s basic tenets of composition, developing variation.

Dahlhaus’s solution to this paradoxical composition is the following: Schoenberg’s Prelude is a response to a well-known remark that Goethe made about Bach’s fugues. Goethe, describing an experience of hearing certain Bach fugues played for him, wrote to Zelter in a letter of 21 June 1827:

I said to myself: it was as if eternal harmony were communing with itself, just as may have happened in God’s bosom shortly before the world’s creation. (Dahlhaus 1987, 172)

According to Dahlhaus, this is

probably the most famous remark about Bach as a fugue composer, a remark which every German musician, no matter how well-read or ignorant he may be, knows and treasures in his consciousness as a literary relic. (171)
Understanding this implied reference in the Schoenberg work unravels the apparent paradoxes that Dahlhaus enumerated: the fugue is not a musical prelude, but rather a “cosmic” one (and Dahlhaus takes Goethe’s meaning in the sense of the mystical contemplation of an artwork, a world in itself, and not of the actual physical cosmos); the initial material does not develop because the piece is meant to portray a kind of “Pre-Condition” in which nothing is yet decided” (170); and of course, all of this taken together constitutes Schoenberg’s “special reason” for using the fugue in a twelve-tone work.

Considering Dahlhaus’s identification of a literary reference in Schoenberg’s Prelude, it is not surprising that modern literary criticism offers a model for just such an occurrence. Following the semiotic notion of “intertextuality” as it is developed by Michael Riffaterre (1978), the reference to “Bach the great fugue composer” could be thought of as the primary intertext (though Schoenberg makes no reference to a specific Bach fugue). In this instance the listener understands that Schoenberg is referencing Bach, and this enriches the intertextual experience. The Goethe text can then be thought of as an “implied intertext” — that is, as a second intertext that explains or clarifies the first. For Riffaterre, the presence of an implied intertext increases the richness of the intertextuality in a literary work; it is exactly Dahlhaus’s contention that understanding the relationship of the implied intertext — one which he takes great pains to identify — increases the richness of the “reading” of the Prelude. In this instance, one may also note that the intertextuality encompasses both literature and music.10

With regard to the discussion of Schoenberg’s poetics and the shift in those poetics in the late music, it is interesting to note how a literary quotation about music can play so fundamental a role in the structure of a musical work; the quotation not only suggests the fugue structure, but it also suggests the suppression of developing variation. The Goethe remark would thus seem to figure into the idea of the Prelude in a fundamental way. Indeed, as Dahlhaus concludes, “Schoenberg’s Prelude is music about a remark about music” (173).

10For an application of Riffaterre’s implied intertext notion to musical analysis, see Covach (1990).

It is worth noting that Bach himself sometimes used fugal techniques in his preludes. Here, however, Dahlhaus relies (and, he contends, so does Schoenberg) on the general notion that a fugue follows a prelude.
Dahlhaus's essays offer a refreshingly broad perspective on music in the twentieth century. Perhaps his approach differs from the traditional American approach to twentieth-century music by its thoroughgoing, interdisciplinary character; Dahlhaus's command of a number of intellectual traditions, and his use of that mastery in dealing with problems of musical scholarship, has made him a major figure in *Musikwissenschaftern.* As more translations of his writings have become available in recent years, Dahlhaus's work has had a significant impact in British and American scholarly circles.

Considering the breadth of his work, it is puzzling that Dahlhaus rarely cites an English-language source in this volume (a fact somewhat obscured by the translators' reference-note procedure, as discussed below). It is hard to believe, for example, that in twelve essays on Schoenberg, the important contributions to Schoenberg studies from Milton Babbitt, Allen Forte, David Lewin, and George Perle — though Babbitt and Perle are each cited once in passing — could be ignored. That Dahlhaus's work was, until recently at least, ignored by most American Schoenberg scholars, and that Dahlhaus essentially ignored American theory and analysis, especially with regard to Schoenberg's twelve-tone music — all of this points to an unfortunate communication breakdown between Berlin and the American Northeast.

But these two approaches seem to me complementary: if Dahlhaus can be faulted for a lack of rigorous analysis in his writing (meaning not that he never used it, but rather that he infrequently used close analyses to support his arguments), and if American theorists can be faulted for infrequently confronting issues outside the specific piece and its structural relationships (meaning not that these theorists, who are often composers as well, have not grappled with aesthetic or critical questions, but rather that they tend not to do so in print), then perhaps a synthesis is possible that avoids both types of lacunae. Dahlhaus's writing provides many suggestions both for ways in which a specific analysis can be viewed in a larger context (the role of the

11For a listing of the important books and articles by these four musicians, as well as many others, see Vander Weg (1979) and the bibliography included in Rahn (1980), Hyde (1989) and Mead (1989) supplement these, bringing the atonal and twelve-tone listings up to date.
twelve-tone system in Schoenberg's poetics, for example), and for ways in which a larger context can direct analytical concerns (for instance, the intertextuality of the Genesis Prelude accounts for certain structural anomalies).

Puffett and Clayton have done English-speaking scholars of twentieth-century music a tremendous service by making these essays available in excellent translations. My enthusiasm is dampened slightly by some editorial problems. For example, when Dahlhaus cites a source, the translators have decided to give the English translation of the work cited and the corresponding page number (and this only where there exists a "standard translations"). It would have been more helpful to know both the original German citation and its location in English translation. But, having explained their chosen procedure in the "Translator's Introduction" (vii), they proceed nevertheless to mix German-plus-English-translation citations with English-translation ones, and also to use original German ones where a standard translation exists. One need look no further than the notes to "Progress and the Avant Garde" (288–89) to observe this. Note 2 is a citation of Ernst Bloch's *Philosophie der Musik* both in the original German and in Peter Palmer's 1985 translation. In note 26 the translators cite Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* in German only, though there are two translations that are usually considered standard, Kant 1911 and 1914. In note 30 Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music* is cited in Mitchell and Blomster's translation only.

While one might expect that any source originally written in German would have been read by Dahlhaus in some German edition, it is important to note those instances when he may have referred to a translation of a work that appeared originally in another language. The procedure followed in this volume sometimes obscures such an occurrence. For example, while Dahlhaus originally cited Northrup Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* in its 1964 German translation (Dahlhaus [1978], 46), the original English version of 1957 is cited by Puffett and Clayton (Dahlhaus 1987, 289).

Given the strong history-of-ideas component in Dahlhaus's writing, it would also have been very helpful if the index included more than just name entries (though musical works are listed under the entry for their respective composers). For example, if one attempts to consult this volume in order to discover what Dahlhaus has to say about developing variation, or the emancipation of the dissonance, or even Schoenberg's *Harmonielehre*, the index is of little help.
These editorial problems are slight compared with the very high quality of the translations. Though no translation that is accurate could ever make Dahlhaus's dense prose style over into easy-to-read English, Puffett and Clayton have provided a translation that is very faithful to the original. One must appreciate the great service that they have rendered to English-reading students of twentieth-century music by making this rich and powerful collection of essays available for convenient reference and study.

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