

“It is Sheer Nonsense to Call This Atonal”: Hugo Leichtentritt’s Recompositions of Schoenberg’s *Klavierstücke*, Op. 11 and Op. 19¹

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Hugo Leichtentritt was born in Poland in 1874. He emigrated to the United States as a teenager, settling in Somerville, Massachusetts. He entered Harvard University at age 16, and upon graduation moved to Berlin for further study. He spent several years in a conservatory before earning his doctorate in *Musikwissenschaft* at what is now the Humboldt University of Berlin in 1901. Leichtentritt taught at the now-defunct Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatory until he fled Germany in 1933. Returning to New England, he taught at Harvard until his retirement in 1940, and he remained in Cambridge until he passed away in 1951 at the age of 77.²

Leichtentritt was trained as a musicologist, and is perhaps best known for a music history textbook, and numerous studies in early music.³ He also had a strong interest in contemporary music as well, writing a brief monograph about his friend, the composer Ferruccio Busoni. Today, however, I would like to examine his music-theoretical work. Leichtentritt wrote in 1919 that he had left his conservatory training “with little enthusiasm for academic methods, and since, [I] have been my own teacher in practical musical composition.”⁴ His treatise *Musical Form (Musikalische Formenlehre)* seems to have partially been the

¹ This presentation is a work in progress, an extract from what will be the last chapter in my book manuscript, *Recomposition in Music Theory*. I am eager for any feedback related to Leichtentritt himself, recompositions of twentieth century music, or any further relevant examples!

² For biographical information on Leichtentritt, see his *Grove* article or *A Musical Life in Two Worlds: The Autobiography of Hugo Leichtentritt*, ed. Mark DeVoto (Boston: Harvard Musical Association, 2014).

³ See, *inter alia*, Hugo Leichtentritt, *Geschichte der Motette* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1908); *Music, History, and Ideas* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938); and “The Reform of Trent and its Effect on Music,” *The Musical Quarterly* 30/3 (1944): 319–328.

⁴ *Harvard University Alumni Association: Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Report, 1894-1919* (Norwood, Mass.: Plimpton Press, 1919), 286 - 287.

result of that self-training.⁵ The book was initially published in German in 1911, as a short guide to phrase structure, variation forms, the rondo, the sonata, and various dance, contrapuntal, and vocal forms. *Musical Form* was then revised in 1921 and 1927, before eventually being translated into English shortly before his death in 1951. Table 1 summarizes the book's revision history.

Table 1: Hugo Leichtentritt, *Musikalische Formenlehre/Musical Form*: Publication History

Edition	Notes
1911	Original edition; short manual of basic forms
1921	Adds second part, revisiting many forms with more advanced repertoire. Highlights include Wagner, <i>Tristan</i> Prelude; Franck, Violin Concerto; Schoenberg, String Quartet No. 2
1927	Adds opening and closing chapters on musical aesthetics to Part II. Adds analyses of Bruckner Symphony No. 8 and Schoenberg, Op. 11 to end of book
1951	English translation; incorporates analysis of Schoenberg, Op. 19 from article in <i>Modern Music</i> (1928)

The most important thing to understand from this table is that the later editions of the book incorporated several new analyses, including Arnold Schoenberg's Op. 11 and Op. 19 Piano Pieces, which will be our focus today. Leichtentritt argues that these famous piano collections can be heard as tonal compositions which have had their tonality obscured in various ways. Today I will explore Leichtentritt's arguments, and position his analyses within three successively larger contexts: Leichtentritt's own methods of instruction from earlier in the treatise; the critical and analytical tradition that surrounds Igor Stravinsky's neoclassical works (a repertoire for which recomposition has become a common mode of analysis); and recompositional approaches to post-tonal repertoire more broadly.

⁵ For more information, see Hugo Leichtentritt, *Musical Form* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), v-vi.

Leichtentritt's *Musical Form*

One of the central tenets of Leichtentritt's *Musical Form* is his conviction that composition cannot be taught directly, but must instead be learned through study and imitation. One of his most frequent pieces of advice is that students should study exceptional phrases of music and learn to reverse-engineer them into simpler, more syntactic forms. This becomes one of the primary methods of instruction in *Musical Form*: Leichtentritt proposes an extensive series of simplified prototypes for the music of famous composers. Through such prototypes he examines technical matters such as the symmetry of phrase rhythm, techniques of phrase expansion, and the relationship between harmony and meter. In doing so, Leichtentritt positions himself within a long and varied tradition that spans from Heinrich Christoph Koch's *Versuch* (1782-93) and Antoine Reicha's *Traité de melodie* (1814), to the writings of more modern theorists like Cooper & Meyer (1960) and William Rothstein (1989), and numerous contemporary theory pedagogues.⁶ All of these theorists rely on phrase recomposition in various ways, whether to simplify extra-syntactic examples, or to combinatorially tabulate alternate ways of elaborating a given phrase.


Leichtentritt also uses recomposition to meditate on aesthetic values, contrasting the compositions of famous composers with his own simplifications, which (in a trope common to music theoretical criticism) he inevitably declares to be a pale imitation of the aesthetically exceptional original.⁷ The page from

⁶ On the lineage of these metrical theories (and many more examples), see Danuta Mirka, *Metric Manipulations in Haydn and Mozart: Chamber Music for Strings, 1787 - 1791* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), ix. For recent pedagogical applications of recomposition, see *inter alia* Melissa Hoag, "Hearing 'What Might Have Been': Using Recomposition to Foster Music Appreciation in the Theory Classroom," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 27 (2013): 47-70; Shersten Johnson, "Recomposition as Low-Stakes Analysis," *Engaging Students* 2 (2014); Daniel Stevens, "Breaking (Musical) Stuff as an Act of (Music) Criticism," *Engaging Students* 3 (2015); Andrew Aziz, "Recomposition and the Sonata Theory Learning Laboratory," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy E-Journal* 5 (2015); and Eric Hogrefe, "Recomposing Phrase Structure," *Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy*, ed. Leigh van Handel (London: Routledge, 2020), 279-283.

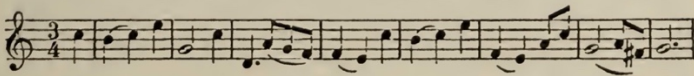
⁷ Here, Leichtentritt invokes what I have elsewhere termed the "Kleinmeister strawman": the tendency of music theorists to deride their own proposed simplifications or prototypes as showing "how a mediocre eighteenth-century composer would have constructed the ... passage," (as Hans Keller [1956, 51] puts it), thus arguing for the aesthetic superiority of the music at hand. For more on this technique, which arises in

Figure 1: Page 31 from Hugo Leichtentritt, *Musical Form*, showing the treatment of Haydn's "Emperor" Quartet (Op. 76, no. 3), iii. Original above, recomposed prototype below.

There are so many possibilities for both extensions and elisions that it is hardly possible to enumerate all of them. Whoever wishes to observe the elegant effect of these refinements in greater detail should turn to the minuets in the quartets and symphonies of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, which by deliberately striving for charm, finesse, and surprising curve of the melodic line, offer abundant and most interesting material for study. As but one instance, the minuet from Haydn's "Emperor" quartet (Op. 76, No. 3) may be cited here to illustrate the third kind of extension in the above list:



Here is an eight-measure phrase, extended to twelve. The brackets indicate the interpolations. If one omits these interpolations, one perceives the simple eight-bar melody. The structure is: 5 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 2, instead of 4 + 2 + 2 measures. The basic form of the melody is as follows:



How much finer an impression is produced by Haydn's irregular version is immediately made manifest. The first insertion humorously points up a

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Musical Form reproduced as Figure 1 provides a representative example. Leichtentritt cites the minuet from Haydn's "Emperor" Quartet as an example of phrase extension by interpolated material, and excavates a more conventional eight-measure periodic structure in the recomposition below. That prototypical phrase, however, is derided; by comparison, "how much finer an impression is produced by Haydn's irregular version is immediately made manifest."⁸ Finally, I

the work of Keller, William Rothstein, and many others, see O'Hara "The Art of Recomposition" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2017), 34-40 and 152-156.

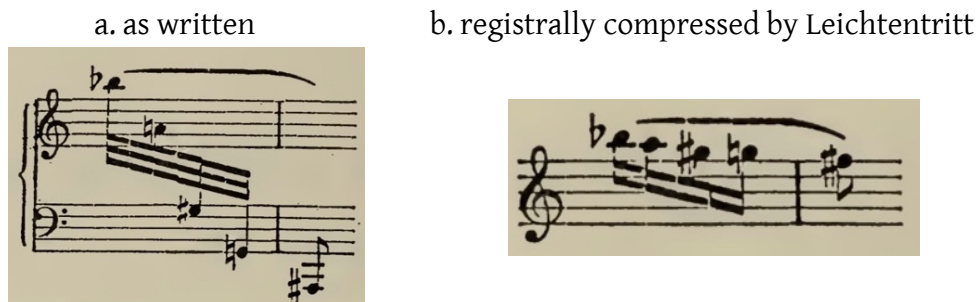
⁸ Leichtentritt, *Musical Form*, 31.

will note that Leichtentritt was also *heavily* invested in motivic analysis in his expositions of phrase construction, echoing historical treatises like Reicha's *Traité de melodie* (1814), and anticipating the method's twentieth-century surge of popularity in the writings of Hans Keller, Rudolph Reti, and even Schoenberg himself in his later writings.

Analyzing Schoenberg

In *Musical Form's* final chapter, Leichtentritt attempts to make two closely related but distinct arguments about Schoenberg's music. In some cases, he seems to argue that Schoenberg's music is tonal, and that listeners simply need to be taught how to hear it. In other arguments, he seems to say that Schoenberg's music is *based on* tonal models, and that those models have been intentionally obscured. These arguments are, as we will see later, two sides of the same coin—a focus on the listener's perception, and a focus on the work's structure and compositional process—and they form a useful heuristic for analyzing various approaches to twentieth-century music.

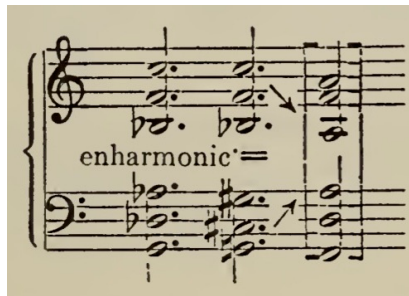
Figure 2: A chromatic run in Schoenberg's Op. 11, No. 1, measure 12 (cf. Leichtentritt, *Musical Form*, 426)



Echoing the method used throughout his treatise, Leichtentritt employs a variety of recompositional strategies in his analyses of Schoenberg's Opp. 11 and 19. First, he points out that Schoenberg often displaces stepwise motion—whether found in figuration or prominent melodies—into various octaves, creating dramatic contours that leap across the piano. Figure 2, for instance, demonstrates Leichtentritt's reduction (Fig. 2b) of a keyboard-spanning figure from measure 12 of Op. 11, No. 1 (Fig. 2a). Leichtentritt also describes many of Schoenberg's sonorities as intentional obfuscations of otherwise tonally comprehensible melodies and harmonies. Of those two elements, Leichtentritt

argues that melody is the more significant. Schoenberg's melodies are fundamentally tonal, he says, having been "constructed according to the best traditional maxims of the art," and merely broken up through complicated rhythms, unexpected leaps of register, and chromatic alterations. (We will see his best example of this in a moment).⁹ Their atonality is "falsely alleged" by the harmonies that surround them. "One should not allow oneself to be bluffed by these curious chords, apparently not belonging to any key at all; one should take pains rather to understand the 'tonality' of the main melody."¹⁰

Figure 3: Possible resolutions of B \flat -F-C and G-A \flat -D \flat trichords (*Musical Form*, p. 437)



Next, Leichtentritt speaks of chords that have been withheld or otherwise omitted. Schoenberg, he writes, is fond of cutting phrases off at the midpoint, leaving off their anticipated cadences. Again, we will see this argument in action momentarily. But perhaps the most striking theoretical contribution in Leichtentritt's analysis is a novel theory of polytonal relationships, based on the idea of absent resolutions. Leichtentritt's use of the word "polytonality" is an unusual one; rather than speaking of two keys existing simultaneously, he describes a way to relate two unrelated harmonies, by means of an unheard mediating resolution. He proposes a simple guideline, his "chief principle of polytonal harmony": "Two chords, consisting of any intervals whatsoever, which can be resolved into a common third chord, harmonize together."¹¹ In the example pictured in Figure 3 he proposes that the left hand's trichord G-A \flat -D \flat [016] and the right hand's B \flat -F-C [027] are heard as separate harmonies; while

⁹ One example, cut for time, can be found on *Musical Form*, p. 445, on which Leichtentritt respells numerous several of the moving notes in Op. 19, No. 2

¹⁰ Leichtentritt, *Musical Form*, 427.

¹¹ Leichtentritt, *Musical Form*, 437.

they are dissonant with each other, are related in Leichtentritt's analysis by a proposed mutual connection to an absent D minor triad.

Op. 19, No. 6: *Sehr langsam*

Having reviewed the analytical tools developed by Leichtentritt, let us examine his account of the final movement of Op. 19. This brief, *sehr langsam* movement unfolds as a series of widely spaced but often registrally overlapping chords. Leichtentritt's analysis centers on two arguments. First, he extracts a linear melody from those chords, which he exposes both through tonal normalization and by freely selecting notes from inner voices. Second, he applies his unusual theory of polytonality in order to discuss the movement's harmony.

Figure 4 reproduces Leichtentritt's proposed melodic line for the movement. He writes:

Putting [the melody] into one plane and making its logical coherence still clearer by a few enharmonic changes, one might present the following condensed version. Every musician will see at a glance that it is sheer nonsense to call this 'atonal.' It is written in pure and simple E major, and is not in the least startling or novel. In rhythm there is nothing at all remarkable in the entire little piece.¹²

Figure 4: Hugo Leichtentritt's recomposition of Schoenberg's Op. 19, No. 6, showing proposed E major tonal melody with conventionalized phrase structure and register, and enharmonic respelling (cf. *Musical Form*, p. 444)



Every note of Leichtentritt's recomposition can be traced back to the original piece. Figure 5 derives this condensed version from Schoenberg's original, tracking the changes Leichtentritt made to register, spelling, and even phrase

¹² Leichtentritt, *Musical Form*, 444.

structure. Leichtentritt's melodic reduction begins by selecting salient notes from the texture: his melody is often (but not always) constructed from the highest note being played in Schoenberg's lilting trichords. Sometimes, as in measure 3 and measures 5 through 7, he selects the moving lines. Next, he enharmonically respells notes so that they seem more at home in E major: E \flat becomes D \sharp in measure 7. More daringly, B \flat becomes A \sharp in measure 5; the descending B-A \sharp -G \sharp -F \sharp tetrachord in which it participates is perhaps the weakest point in Leichtentritt's case for an E major reading, sounding more like . Finally, he stops before the end, selecting B in the final measure for his melody's final pitch, and omitting Schoenberg's ending. The harmonization of that B seems to be the *most* compelling moment of Leichtentritt's tonal hearing of the piece—with A and F \sharp beneath, the chord may momentarily be heard as a V4/2 in E, before the left hand's intrusion. It is not difficult to imagine Schoenberg merely leaving the final tonic off, as in Robert Schumann's "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai," from *Dichterliebe*. In the absence of any harmony in this reduced melody, the B seems almost to stand simultaneously for dominant *and* tonic; were he to complete his recomposition with left-hand accompaniment, it is likely that Leichtentritt would provide the tonic that he so often argues is being intentionally withheld. As it stands, hearing the melody in isolation often seems to imply B major rather than E, when it implies a key at all.

Figure 5: Schoenberg, Op. 19, No. 6: Derivation of Leichtentritt's recomposition

metric contraction: 2 bars from 3

The image shows a musical score for Schoenberg's Op. 19, No. 6. It is in 4/4 time and marked "Sehr langsam (♩)". The score is in piano (pp) dynamics. The right hand part shows a sequence of chords and notes, with a red circle highlighting a specific note. The left hand part shows a sequence of chords and notes, with a red circle highlighting a specific note. The score is annotated with "metric contraction: 2 bars from 3" and "Sehr langsam (♩)".

(continues on next page...)

The image displays two musical staves from a piano score. The top staff is in the treble clef and the bottom staff is in the bass clef. Both staves feature piano (p) and pianissimo (ppp) dynamics. Several notes are circled in red. An arrow points from the text 'Re-spelled as A#' to a circled note in the treble staff. Another arrow points from 'Re-spelled as D#' to a circled note in the bass staff. Performance instructions include 'mit sehr zartem Ausdruck' and 'genau im Takt' in the bass staff, and 'wie ein Hauch' in the treble staff. A small asterisk is located at the bottom right of the first staff.

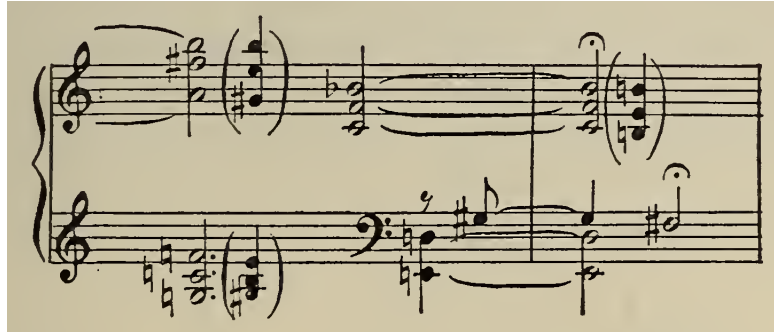
Along with his selections and re-spellings, Leichtentritt also standardized the melody so as to imply a stronger sense of 4/4 meter than is present in Schoenberg's original. By reducing the relative duration of the opening pitch, he compresses the phrase from nine measures to eight, implying a more regular structure. If we compress the timeframe in which the work unfolds, we might well find that this metric suppression requires us to de-emphasize the contrapuntal interplay between the hands.

Leichtentritt's other argument about Op. 19, No. 6 involves his theory polytonal harmony, invoked here to argue for an E major tonal center. In this case study, however, his application of his rule is more restricted: the harmonies he highlights in Figure 6 are all tied to a single absent "tonic." "Any two or three chords which can be resolved into the same chord," he restates his rule,

may be played together. ... Each one of these chords may be naturally resolved into E major. Schoenberg omits the resolution, but in spite of his dexterous manner, he cannot destroy the tonality of the piece, which remains E major to anyone who really understands what happens."¹³

¹³ Leichtentritt, *Musical Form*, 444–445.

Figure 6: Schoenberg, Op. 19, No. 6, mm. 5–6, with “missing resolutions” to E major supplied by Leichtentritt (1951, 444–445).



Recomposing the Twentieth Century

As I said in my introduction, Leichtentritt’s approach to Schoenberg’s free atonality treads the line between two different tonality-based approaches to post-tonal music: attempting to *hear* a work according to tonal tendencies, perhaps in a highly chromatic context; and searching for ways in which the music may have been *constructed* according to tonal models that were then intentionally obscured. (To borrow Jean-Jacques Nattiez’s terms, we might conceive of these as *esthesic* and *poietic* recompositions, respectively).¹⁴ While we encounter both approaches in the analysis of twentieth-century music writ large, these modes of analysis do not seem equally likely to be applied to any given subset of that repertoire. I would like to spend the last few moments of my talk surveying how and when these arguments tend to appear.

One argument for tonal listening comes from Steve Larson, who analyzed the second song of Schoenberg’s *Book of the Hanging Gardens* (Op. 15, 1909) by using Schenkerian analysis to provide an ever more-detailed series of tonal frames for the song. Working from a D minor background through successively more detailed and dissonant layers (often contextualized in terms of harmonic phenomena discussed by Schoenberg in his 1911 *Harmonielehre*), Larson ultimately derives the musical surface of the song. In his analysis, he is specifically interested in the listener’s perception of tonality in the song, bracketing off the question of Schoenberg’s compositional intentions. His examples, he writes, “provide a way of experiencing atonality and ambiguity

¹⁴ See Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 10–19.

within a framework of tonal function.¹⁵ ... The experience is more vivid if the examples proceed from background to foreground.”¹⁶

On the other side of the esthetic/poietic axis, the *locus classicus* for recompositional analyses of musical structure is Schoenberg's oft-cited historiographical opposite, Igor Stravinsky, whose works attracted its first tonal recomposition from a most unlikely source: Heinrich Schenker. Schenker briefly addressed Stravinsky's Piano Concerto in “Further Consideration of the Uralinie: II,” (in *Die Meisterwerk*, Vol. 2, 1926). Schenker's description drips with sarcasm: “these bars are written in succession, as is normal in music ... thus I must believe that this succession signified a cohesive whole to the composer.”¹⁷ Such cohesion, for Schenker, derives only from the linear progressions (*Züge*) that he represents in his diagrams, and he finds precious few in the Piano Concerto. Figure 7 shows Schenker's attempt to demonstrate the tonal prototype that Stravinsky, in familiar language, “may have had in mind.”¹⁸ Schenker's analysis leads to an uncompromising, if predictable, conclusion: “Stravinsky's way of writing is altogether bad, inartistic and unmusical. It is unnecessary to contemplate what connection the passage cited might have with what precedes and follows it; for no composer can possibly control the large dimension of a form unless he is able to express a convincing structure even of sixteen bars' length.”¹⁹

¹⁵ Steve Larson, “A Tonal Model of an ‘Atonal’ Piece: Schoenberg's Opus 15, Number 2.” *Perspectives of New Music* 25/1-2 (1987): 418.

¹⁶ Larson, “A Tonal Model of an ‘Atonal’ Piece,” 431n2. For different Schenker-derived approaches to the notion of prolongation in atonal music, see, *inter alia*, Robert Morgan, “Dissonant Prolongation: Theoretical and Compositional Precedents,” *Journal of Music Theory* 20 (1976): 46–91; Joseph N. Straus, “The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music,” *Journal of Music Theory* 31 (1987): 1–22; Fred Lerdahl, “Atonal Prolongational Structure,” *Contemporary Music Review* 4 (1989): 65–87; Lerdahl, “Spatial and Psychoacoustic Factors in Atonal Prolongation,” *Current Musicology* 63 (1997): 7–26. Morgan's essay in particular gives an overview of the early history of atonal adaptations of Schenkerian methodologies, beginning with Felix Salzer's *Structural Hearing* (1952).

¹⁷ Heinrich Schenker, “Further Consideration of the Uralinie: II,” in *The Masterwork in Music*, Vol. 2, ed. William Drabkin, trans. John Rothgeb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17.

¹⁸ Schenker, “Further Consideration II,” 17.

¹⁹ Schenker, “Further Considerations II,” 18.

Figure 7: Schenker's speculative analysis of Stravinsky, from "Further Considerations of the Urlinie (II)," trans. John Rothgeb. In *The Masterwork in Music, Vol. II*, ed. William Drabkin. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 17.

Fig. 31

(a) (Oktavzug) u.s.w.

A. IV^{#3} V I^{#3} IV^{#3} 7 I

(b) u.s.w.

But while Schenker may have intended mockery in his recomposition of Stravinsky, others have used the method to great effect. As Milton Babbitt has noted, Schenker was onto something: "It is a considerable irony that Schenker's analysis of only sixteen measures of the Piano Concerto ... provided the most revealing insight into the procedures of Stravinsky's composition."²⁰ More recently, such "reverse engineering" analyses have become an accepted standard for dealing with Stravinsky's music. Through her sketch studies of the Violin Concerto (1931) and *Dumbarton Oaks* (1937–38), Lynne Rogers has provided documentary evidence that Stravinsky worked in this way: the rhythmic and contrapuntal "dissociations" often identified in his music were sometimes constructed incrementally, proceeding from models that were "simpler, more harmonically integrated, and more regular structurally and rhythmically."²¹ More recent scholars have been inspired by Rogers to turn to recomposition as one of their primary working methods: studies by Joseph Straus, Donald Traut, and Sarah Iker have all argued that reconstructing hypothetical tonal models is one of the best ways to understand Stravinsky's neoclassicism.²² As Traut puts it:

²⁰ Milton Babbitt, "Remarks on the Recent Stravinsky," *Perspectives of New Music* 2/2 (1964): 36.

²¹ Lynne Rogers, "Stravinsky's Break with Contrapuntal Tradition: A Sketch Study," *Journal of Musicology* 13/4 (1995): 506.

²² See Joseph N. Straus, "Three Stravinsky Analyses," *Music Theory Online* 18/4 (December 2012); Donald G. Traut, *Stravinsky's "Great Passacaglia": Recurring Elements in the*

Much of Stravinsky's music—and especially the neoclassic material—sounds as if it was composed with a more syntactically normative model in mind. In this scenario, the composer's goal is to mask the hypothetical underlying model, while still preserving enough of its elements to conjure up familiarity in the listener's mind. Constructing a plausible underlying model can go a long way toward illustrating just how Stravinsky disguised it.²³

Comparing these two descriptions of Stravinsky helps us to contextualize Leichtentritt's approach to Schoenberg. In 1927 and 28—only a year or two after the passage from Schenker—there were aesthetic stakes to Leichtentritt's recompositions. In such a climate, arguing for the music's tonal grounding was arguing for its value and its validity in the face of Schoenberg's often polarized reception history. Leichtentritt's mission was to show that Op. 11 and Op. 19 were “constructed not only sensibly, but strictly, logically, and concisely.”²⁴ While proving such logic often remains a primary goal of music analysis, the aesthetic stakes have been rendered much less dramatic by the methodological developments of the past half-century.

Still, if hearing Stravinsky's neoclassical music recomposed to align with tonal models sounds intuitive, then perhaps Leichtentritt's recompositions feel unintuitive because they fly so baldly in the face of the most established tool that music theorists have devised for dealing with Schoenberg's atonality: pitch-class set theory. One of the most surprising findings of my research on post-tonal recomposition thus far is the fact that neither Allen Forte, nor any who have followed him, seem to have ever recomposed the music of the Second Viennese

Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2016); and Sarah Iker, “An Experience-Oriented Approach to Analyzing Stravinsky's Neoclassicism” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2017).

²³ Donald G. Traut, *Stravinsky's “Great Passacaglia”: Recurring Elements in the Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2016), 57. Joseph Straus says almost the same thing, writing: “Stravinsky's music often feels as though it is written in opposition to an implicit, syntactically normal tonal prototype, which the actual music appears to distort in various ways. It can be revealing, if necessarily speculative, to attempt to recapture that implicit underlying norm as a foil for Stravinsky's actual composition.” See “Three Stravinsky Analyses,” *Music Theory Online* 18/4 (December 2012): [9].

²⁴ Leichtentritt, *Musical Form*, 426.

School. No matter the temptation to show just how elegantly constructed a series of pitch-class sets might have been if only a few notes were different, I have yet to find an example of a theorist from the second half of the twentieth-century giving in and proposing a hypothetical correction. Even in twelve-tone music, where one might easily imagine completing a fragmentary row, there seem to be no analyses by recomposition.²⁵ The sole potential example I have located is in the appendix to a 1975 essay by Christopher Wintle, which deals with a short early work of Webern's: the third selection from the Op. 11 "Kleinstücke" (1914), shown in Figure 8.²⁶ Wintle argues that the piece closely emulates Milton Babbitt's notion of a *derived set*—a technique common in Webern's mature twelve-tone works, in which the set consists of four trichords of the same set-class, related to one another by inversion and retrograde.²⁷ Wintle points out traces of this practice in the piece, and proposes some twelve-tone sets that *could have arisen*, had Webern created a fully derived set for the piece.

Figure 8: Anton Webern, "Kleinstücke für Violoncello & Piano," Op. 11, No. 3 (1914)

III.

Äußerst ruhig (♩ = ca 50)
mit Dämpfer
am Steg.

²⁵ This is despite Kofi Agawu's assertion that such a practice was common within the pages of *Perspectives of New Music* in the 1960s and 70s; see "How We Got Out of Analysis, and How to Get Back In Again," *Music Analysis* 23/2-3 (2004): 278.

²⁶ Christopher Wintle, "An Early Version of Derivation: Webern's Op. 11/3" *Perspectives of New Music* 13/2 (1975): 166-177.

²⁷ See Babbitt, "Some Aspects of Twelve-Tone Composition," in *The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt* (2003), 38-47. For more on derived sets, see Kathryn Bailey, "Symmetry as Nemesis: Webern and the First Movement of the Concerto, Opus 24," *Journal of Music Theory* 40/2 (1996): 245-310.

At the end of the paper, Wintle offers a musical postlude, writing simply, “As an Appendix to this paper, I am offering my own ‘recomposition’ of the cello-piano piece.” His version is shown with annotations in Figure 9. I won’t say much about it, but I will note that while he incorporates numerous features from Webern’s original, one thing he does *not* include is a realization of the latent trichords and twelve-tone rows that he identified in his essay.²⁸ If anything, Wintle’s recomposition is a creative exercise: he has rearranged the materials that Webern actually used, rather than the hypothetical twelve-tone resources that are the essay’s primary topic.

In Leichtentritt’s account of Schoenberg, then, we find an important precursor to more recent recompositional analyses, as well as a potential explanation for the relative scarcity of recompositions based on perception. It would seem that contemporary scholars gladly employ poietic recomposition to analyze Stravinsky, thanks to abundant aural and historical evidence. But esthetic recompositions have fallen badly out of style, and it seems that with regards to the Second Viennese School, even poietic recompositions are taboo. Perhaps this is because, given the scientific and mathematical style of post-tonal discourse inaugurated by Forte and especially by Babbitt, such recomposition might be seen as tampering with the evidence. Perhaps there is a binary opposition involved, in that deciding to employ twelve-tone theory or pitch-class set theory leads to the occlusion of tonal implications. Or perhaps there is such reverence for the canon that in twenty-first century music theory, we shy away from tampering with our musical monuments. But as music theory seeks urgently to broaden its repertoire and rethink its relationship to the musical canon, I think we would do well to take one lesson from Leichtentritt, Larson, and others: to feel free to dive in, push some notes around, and see what new and unexpected things we can hear.

²⁸ In fact, Wintle’s recomposition even refers musically to various *non-pitch* parameters that he discusses, such as the diversity of durations, the distribution of attack points throughout the notated 2/4 meter, and the notion that the brief work is structured vaguely like a Schoenbergian sentence, with a presentational first-half and a marked increase of activity at the midpoint, where we might expect to find fragmentation

Figure 9: Christopher Wintle's Recomposition of Webern, Op. 11, No. 3

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system features a Violin (Vlc.) part with the instruction "Äusserst ruhig" and "Mit Dämpfer (II)", and a Piano (Pf.) part. The second system continues the Piano part with "pp subito" and "poco accel.". The third system features a Violin part with "Tempo I" and "Am Steg (III)", and a Piano part with "f" and "pp". Various dynamics and articulations are used throughout the score.

Legend:

- Red: Hauptstimme fragments carried over from original
- Blue: opening cello trill, transferred to piano
- Purple: F natural in piano, taken from cello note in original
- Green: Leaping piano motive from mm. 3 – 5 in original