



Analysis Today

Edward T. Cone

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ANALYSIS TODAY

By EDWARD T. CONE

THE analysis of music—especially of traditional music—is one of the most respected of theoretical disciplines, but the respect in which it is held would do it a disservice if it prevented the periodic re-evaluation of the subject. What is analysis, or what ought it to be? What are its purposes? To what extent are traditional concepts and methods applicable to new music? What are the relations of analysis to performance and to criticism? My title refers to a discussion, from the point of view of today, of these questions; it is in no way meant to imply that I have a new system to promulgate, or that I have made startling discoveries about new music.

I

Rather than presenting at the outset a naked definition of the term under consideration, let us begin by looking at a familiar example. The first few measures of *Tristan* have performed many services other than their original one of opening a music-drama; let them serve yet another and open the argument here.

Ex. 1



This chordal sequence can be accurately enough described as a minor triad on A, a French sixth on F, and a p.ri.m.a.r.y seventh on E; but such a description, revealing nothing of the relationships among the three chords, involves no analysis whatsoever. If, however, one refers to the passage as $I_3^5 - II_4^{\#6} - V_3^7$, he has performed an elementary

analytical act: he has related each of the chords to a tonic, and hence to one another. He has made a discovery, or at least a preliminary hypothesis to be tested by its fruitfulness in leading to further discovery. But the analysis as such ceases with the choice of the tonic; once this has been made, the assignment of degree numbers to the chords is pure description. If, on the other hand, one points out that the second chord stands in a quasi-dominant relation to the third, he is doing more than simply assigning names or numbers: he is again discovering and explaining relationships.

Ex. 2



Turning now to the actual score, the analyst might begin a program note thus: "The rising leap of the 'cellos from A to F is succeeded by a chromatic descent, followed in turn by . . ." He need not continue; this is pure description. But when he points out that Example 1 represents the chordal skeleton of Example 2, he is once more on the right track. He can go still further by showing that all the appoggiaturas have half-step resolutions, and that the motif so created is augmented in the motion of the bass, and paralleled in the alto, in such a way that the chordal progression of measures 2-3 becomes an amplification of the melodic half-step of measure 1.

Ex. 3



The fact that in the above diagram no such analogy has been pointed out in the half-steps E-D# and A-A# is in itself an important though negative part of the analysis, since it implies by omission that these progressions, if relevant at all, are incidental and subordinate.

Going one step further, one might claim that, from a serial point of view, the opening sixth is imitated in the third E-G# (see Ex. 4). This is the point at which analysis proper passes over into what I call

Ex. 4



prescription: the insistence upon the validity of relationships not supported by the text. In the above case, for example, the orchestration implies the wrong-headedness of the suggestion, since the opening interval, played by the 'cellos alone, is heard as a unit, whereas the E-G# is divided disparately between 'cellos and oboe.

Analysis, then, exists precariously between description and prescription, and it is reason for concern that the latter two are not always easy to recognize. Description is current today in the form of twelve-tone counting—necessary, no doubt, as preliminary to further investigation, but involving no musical discrimination whatsoever. Prescription, on the other hand, is obvious in the absurd irrelevancies of Werker's analyses of Bach but is equally inherent in some of Schenker's more dogmatic pronouncements and in those of his followers.

It should be clear at this point that true analysis works through and for the ear. The greatest analysts (like Schenker at his best) are those with the keenest ears; their insights reveal how a piece of music should be heard, which in turn implies how it should be played. An analysis is a direction for a performance.

In order to explain how a given musical event should be heard, one must show why it occurs: what preceding events have made it necessary or appropriate, towards what later events its function is to lead. The composition must be revealed as an organic temporal unity, to be sure, but as a unity perceptible only gradually as one moment flows to the next, each contributing both to the forward motion and to the total effect. What is often referred to as musical logic comprises just these relationships of each event to its predecessors and to its successors, as well as to the whole. The job of analysis is to uncover them explicitly, but they are implicitly revealed in every good performance. Description, restricted to detailing what happens, fails to explain why. Prescription offers its own explanation, referring to an externally imposed scheme rather than to the actual course of the music.

One more familiar example may clarify this view of logical — or, as I prefer to call them, teleological — relationships.

The recapitulation of the Prestissimo from Beethoven's Sonata Op. 109 bursts in upon the development in such a way that the II \sharp (V of V) is followed immediately by I. From a narrowly descriptive point of view one could call this an ellipsis, pointing out that the normally expected V

Ex. 5

has been omitted. Looking ahead, however, one will find that the first phrase of the recapitulation ends on V, and its consequent on I. The puzzling II \sharp , then, only temporarily and apparently resolved by what immediately follows it, actually points ahead in such a way that the whole passage is bound together in a cadential II-V-I. The propulsion thus generated is given an extra spurt by the compressed II-V-I at the end of the consequent, and the forward motion is renewed with fresh energy by the elision that sets the next period going.

Ex. 6

I need hardly mention the obvious effects of such an analysis on the performance of this passage. Whatever doubts one had as to the proper placing of the main accent in these phrases when they first appeared can now be resolved; the exposition can be reinterpreted, if need be, in the new light of the recapitulation.

II

It should be apparent at this point that analysis — and hence per-

formance as it has been discussed above — cannot apply to certain types of composition in vogue today. When chance plays the major role in the writing of a work, as in Cage's *Music for Piano 21-52*, logic as defined above can take only an accidental part. The same is true of music written according to a strictly predetermined constructivistic scheme, such as Boulez's *Structures*. In neither case can any musical event be linked organically with those that precede and those that follow; it can be explained only by referring to an external structure — in the one case the laws of chance and in the other the predetermined plan. The connections are mechanistic rather than teleological: no event has any purpose — each is there only because it has to be there. In a word, this music is composed prescriptively, and the only possible or appropriate analytic method is to determine the original prescriptive plan. This is not analysis but cryptanalysis — the discovery of the key according to which a cipher or code was constructed. (If we are lucky, the composer or one of his initiates will spare us a lot of hard work by supplying us with the key.)

A third category that does not permit analysis is represented by Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI*, where improvisation is given such free rein that it actually creates the form of the work anew at each performance. Thus *Klavierstück XI* does not exist as a single composition and cannot fruitfully be treated as one. Each new rendition can be discussed on its own merits, to be sure; but the relationship of all such versions to the abstract idea of the piece as a whole, and the decision as to the esthetic value of such an experiment — these problems can be argued endlessly. At any rate they are far afield from the practical considerations that are our concern here. (It need hardly be pointed out that improvisation as traditionally applied to the framework of a Baroque concerto, for example, had purposes quite different. A cadenza served not only to show off the soloist's virtuosity but also to punctuate an important cadence; the soloist's elaboration of a previously stated orchestral melody clarified the dualism inherent in the form. The quality of a given realization depended on its appropriateness to the compositional situation; the performance did not, as in many present-day examples, create the situation.)

III

The analysis of music of the periods closely preceding our own — the 18th and 19th centuries — has almost always assumed the applicability of certain familiar norms: tonally conditioned melody and harmony, periodic rhythmic structure on a regular metrical basis. Naturally

such standards cannot be applied uncritically to the music of our own century, but on the other hand they should not be dismissed without examination. I contend that, in a more generalized form, they are still useful. Regardless of vocabulary, linear and chordal progressions still show striking analogies to older tonal procedures, analogies that are in turn reinforced by rhythmic structure. Only in those rare cases where the music tries to deny the principle of progression (as in the examples cited in the immediately preceding section) are such analogies completely lacking.

This point of view is more generally accepted with regard to harmony than to melody, perhaps because harmonic analysis is the more firmly entrenched discipline. After all, for many musicians theory is synonymous with harmony, melody being supposedly a free creative element, neither in its composition nor in its perception subjected to rule. (They forget, of course, that the object of the study of counterpoint is primarily the construction, and only secondarily the combination, of melodies.) Whereas Hindemith's enlargement of traditional harmony to encompass present-day vocabularies is generally known and often applauded, his attempt to find a melodic framework, actually a much less questionable procedure, is often ignored.

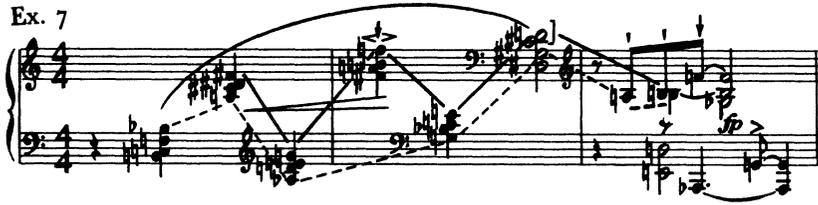
Another reason for shunning melodic analysis is that it is not always easy or even advisable to abstract the purely linear element from a progression. Wagner, in such motifs as the *Wanderer* and the *Magic Sleep*, is writing passages in which the melodic aspect is an incidental result of the chordal motion. A little later, Debussy offers examples (like the opening of *Reflets dans l'eau*) in which a linear phrase is dissolved into an atmospherically dispersed harmony that implies without actually stating the expected melodic resolution. Hyper-impressionistic pages, like parts of the *Night-Sounds* from Bartók's *Out-of-Doors* Suite, fragmentize the melody to such an extent that the progressive element is heard to be the increase and decrease of density as the motifs follow one upon the other, rather than the specifically linear aspect, which is here reduced to a minimum. Nevertheless, wherever there are successive differentiations in pitch there is melody of some kind, and wherever there is melody the ear will try to hear it in the simplest possible way.

This is not meant to imply that we must expect to find behind contemporary melodic lines the simple stepwise diatonic framework that Schenker has pointed out in Classical examples. But the ear will naturally connect each tone with those nearest it in pitch. The adjacent pitches may be diatonic or they may be chromatic; they may be actually adja-

cent or displaced by one or more octaves; they may be present by implication only. In some cases motivic associations or peculiar scale-formations may enforce the acceptance of a larger module — as in the simple case of bugle-calls, the adjacent tones of which are a third or a fourth apart. (In the case of microtonal music, smaller modules may be in effect, although it is doubtful to what extent even present-day ears can accept them.) In every case the ear will do the best it can with the available intervals. It is the duty of the analyst to show the pattern of connections by which an educated ear — his own — makes sense of the total melodic flow.

Even less than in traditional melodies must one assume that there is one uniquely correct way of hearing. Rather, the best analysis is the one that recognizes various levels functioning simultaneously, as when a tone resolves once in the immediate context but turns out to have a different goal in the long run. Two very brief examples may help to clarify this point of view.

Ex. 7



The first is the opening of Schoenberg's *Klavierstück* Op. 33a. Chordal rather than melodic in conception, its linear structure is nevertheless clear. Despite the octave displacements, a line can be traced in the uppermost voice from the F# in the first measure to the B in the third. (Notice, however, that at one point two adjacent tones are presented simultaneously instead of successively.) At the same time, the original Bb leads, through various voices but always at the original octave-level, to the same tone of resolution. At this point the entrance of the F, repeating the climactic F of the second measure, begins a new motion that is carried forward through the succeeding phrase.

Ex. 8





The second passage is from the second of Sessions's piano pieces *From My Diary*.¹ Here both the F in the first measure and the G \flat in the third are associated with upper and lower chromatic neighboring tones. But what of the cadential motif? Why is the pattern altered? And why is the linear descent from the C \flat in the second measure broken at this point? There are several possible answers, all of which are probably relevant. First of all, the most prominent bass-note in each of the four measures — as indicated by its repetition and by its quarter-stem — is an F, which can be heard as a resolution, at another level, of the hanging G \flat — a resolution confirmed by a direct G \flat -F in the bass. But at the same time, there seems to be an implied E filling the space between the G \flat and the D in its own voice — a tone suggested by the original association of E with G \flat , and by the prominent whole-step motion in the melodic descent. In this case the line gradually increases its pace as it descends.



But if it seems far-fetched to introduce an unstated, understood element, one can hear the skip G \flat -D as a way of emphasizing the cadence, and point out that the motif of neighboring tones aims each time more directly towards its resolution: the first time the neighbors follow the principal; the second time they precede it; and the last time the principal takes the place of one of its own neighbors. Finally, it should be noted that the next phrase takes off from the dangling G \flat in a subtle motivic reference to the beginning.

Ex. 10



It is of course impossible to do justice here to the role of such details in the total melodic structure, but on examination one will find

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the same kind of connection at work in the large. Note, for example, how much of the first theme of the Schoenberg piano piece is controlled by the high F already mentioned — whether in its original octave or in another — and by its association with the adjacent E. It is again this F, in its highest register, that prepares for the recapitulation; and it is the E that, returning first with the tranquil second theme, later closes the motion in a lower octave in the final measure. In sum, modern melody can not get rid of stepwise motion, because that is the way we hear melody; but it can and does expand (or on occasion contract) the distance, both temporal and spatial, between successive steps. From this point of view even Webern is found to be no pointillist, but a draughtsman of subtle and fragile lines.

The role of harmony in the music of our century, although more extensively explored, is perhaps more difficult, complicated as it is by many factors, such as the frequent exploitation of the static, sensuous effect of the chord in addition to or even at the expense of its progressive functions. As a result, one can no longer assume the easily defined functionality of obviously tonal music. Chords can no longer be precisely named, nor can their identity be maintained in differing contexts. But it is important to realize that, even in stubbornly non-triadic music, the concept of the chord remains, by analogy at least. The composer can set up arbitrary simultaneities that, by their commanding position or by repetition, are accepted as the controlling sonorities — the chords — against which other tones can function in the manner of traditional non-harmonic tones. Bartók's *Improvisations* Op. 20 show how by such a technique quite complicated sonorities can be used to harmonize simple modal folk-tunes. In the following example from the last of Sessions's *Diary* pieces the metrical position and the half-step resolutions suggest that the first chord is an appoggiatura to the second; this supposition is confirmed by the appearance of the root-like D in the bass, and by the clinching repetitions that ensue.

Ex. 11

In fact, only where the contrapuntal aspect becomes so strong that every element of each sonority is heard primarily as a point in a moving

line, or at the other extreme, where the texture is completely pointillistic, is the chordal concept seriously challenged. In such cases one further assumption of traditional harmony that must then be questioned is the primacy of the bass. Contrapuntally or coloristically, of course, it will have gained in importance, but at the expense of its role in defining the harmony. A beautiful example of this process already at work over a century ago is shown in the opening of Liszt's *Vallée d'Obermann*, where the melodic action of the bass clouds the harmony. Not until the return of the theme adds a new bass underneath the original one is the situation made clear. A further step in this direction is taken by Mahler, who by his polyphonically opposed chords points the way towards polytonality in the magical cowbell passage in the first movement of his Sixth Symphony. A more thoroughgoing example is Stravinsky's *Symphonies pour instruments à vent*, a more truly polytonal work than any of Milhaud's often-cited *Saudades*, which in fact present only extended and elaborated harmonies over a single real bass.

There are other forces at work undermining the primacy of the lowest voice. Impressionistic parallelism, which reduces its role to that of coloristic doubling, is too well known to require citation. Less frequent, but possibly more important in the light of later developments, is the masking of the true harmonic bass by a decorative voice below it, a technique seen clearly in the repetition of the opening of *La Fille aux cheveux de lin*. Another device, common to the Impressionists and Mahler, is the *ostinato*. From one point of view the persistent voice is emphasized, but at the same time it is removed from the sphere of action. In Debussy, as later in Stravinsky, the *ostinato* results in harmonic stasis; in Mahler there is a constant tension between the harmony implied by the motionless bass and those outlined by the moving voices and chords above it. In both cases the functional role of the bass is called into question.

So far no specific reference has been made to the problem of tonality. Except in comparatively rare cases, such as passages in *Le Sacre du printemps*, where an almost completely static tone or chord of reference is set up, tonality is created not by harmony alone, nor even by harmony and melody, but by their relationship with the rhythmic structure: in a word, by the phenomenon of the cadence. A discussion of certain rhythmic aspects, then, can no longer be postponed.

IV

Much of the vitality of the music of the Classical period derives from the constant interplay of meter and rhythm, the former determined

by regular beats and measures and the latter by constantly varying motifs and phrases. This tension between the abstract and the concrete begins to break down during the 19th century, when phrase articulation is often either slavishly tied to the meter or else so completely liberated that the sense of the meter is almost lost. The retention of the measure in much Impressionistic music is purely conventional, and it is no wonder that later composers have abandoned the effort to keep an abstract pattern when it would conflict with the actual rhythm. For this reason the regularity of the meter in such composers as Webern must be carefully examined. Is it to be felt as a constantly present control? Is it a pure convention? Is it, as some would have us believe, an evidence of the composer's numerological superstitions?

The answers to such questions must always be given with specific reference to the text involved. When, as in the case of Example 11, the motif sets up a clear cross-rhythm, the explanation is relatively easy. Webern's Piano Variations, on the other hand, present the problem in an acute form. What has happened here, I think, is that the composer has called on a complex set of interrelationships of rhythmic, metric, dynamic, and textural factors to compensate for the tenuity of melodic and harmonic interest. In the first twelve measures of the last movement, for example, I find at least seven different time-divisions simultaneously functioning. These are set up by the meter ($3/2$), a possible cross-meter ($5/4$), the rhythm of the two-note motifs, the rhythm of the phrases, the tone-row, the dynamic alternations, and the linear pattern (Ex. 12).²

The really important question to ask in all such cases — and even in cases where the composer has deliberately tried to get rid of all traditional metrical measurement — is, can we locate the structural downbeat? If we can, then we can proceed with analytic concepts in some way analogous to those of the traditional rhythm and meter, phrase and cadence. If not, some completely new rhythmic theory must be devised. Some musicians, like Stockhausen, are trying to do this, but I have as yet seen no satisfactory one emerge.

By structural downbeat, of course, I do not mean the arbitrary accentuation of the first beat of every measure; I mean rather phenomena like the articulation by which the cadential chord of a phrase is identified, the weight by which the second phrase of a period is felt as resolving the first, the release of tension with which the tonic of a recapitula-

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Ex. 12

Ruhig fließend $d = ca\ 80$

The musical score consists of four systems of piano music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The piece is marked 'Ruhig fließend' with a tempo of approximately 80 beats per minute. The score is divided into measures 1 through 12. Measure 1 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 2 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 3 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 4 has a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 5 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 6 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 7 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 8 has a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 9 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 10 has a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 11 has a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 12 has a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

tion enters. (In the Webern example, I hear the downbeat as the E_b at the beginning of measure 12; and I consider it no accident that it occurs at the beginning of a measure, preceded by a *ritardando*.)

It is just here that the importance of rhythm to the establishment of tonality emerges, for the cadence is the point in the phrase at which rhythmic emphasis and harmonic function coincide. It would be partly true to say that the cadence creates tonality, but it would be equally true to say that tonality creates the cadence. Where the cadence exists, it is impossible to hear music as completely atonal, even though one may be unable to define the key in conventional terms.

We know the signs by which a cadence can be recognized in traditionally tonal music: its position at the end of a phrase, the melodic resolution, the change of harmony. The actual downbeat may not always exactly coincide with the cadential point, but such unusual cases arise most often when the phrase is rhythmically prolonged (the feminine ending) or when it points ahead so clearly that the next phrase acts as a huge cadence to the first (as when an introductory section is followed by a main theme). In any case, keys are defined by the appearances of strong, cadential downbeats — whether clearly on the tonic as in most Classical examples, or on deceptive resolutions, as notably in the Prelude to *Tristan*.

The extent to which analogous principles govern the structure of contemporary music is surprising. A few examples will show them at work.

The opening of the second movement of Bartók's Fifth Quartet may prove puzzling until it is heard as an upbeat. The first downbeat comes on the D in measure 5, clinched by an even stronger cadence on the same tone (now supported by its fifth) in measure 10. The digression that follows suggests the key of C, but this tonality is not confirmed by the cadence, which, when it arrives in measure 20, is again clearly on D.

The first page of Sessions's Second Sonata for Piano is much less triadic; yet when the downbeat comes in measure 11, the harmony of B \flat is clearly established. Not only the V-I implied by the progression of fifths in the bass, but the melodic resolution to D, accented by the downward leap, points towards this tonal center, which is confirmed by what follows. In the second movement, no such clear downbeat is presented, but the two important feminine cadences of measures 177 and 190 both suggest an unstated resolution to E. The important downbeat of measure 191, coming as it then does on F, is in the nature of a neighboring harmony; and not until much later, at measure 213, does the expected E occur, its extension as a pedal for ten measures compensating for its long postponement. The last few measures of the Lento act as an upbeat released in the return of B \flat in the opening of the finale. But this in turn, after a long battle with conflicting elements, gives way at the last to the key of C, on which a downbeat is firmly established in the final chord.

Stravinsky is sometimes referred to as a "downbeat composer," by which I suppose is meant that he often emphasizes the beginnings rather than the endings of his phrases. This results in a weakening of the cadential sense, it is true, the phrases so accented being as it were huge

feminine endings to their own opening chords. A typical example is the opening of the *Sérénade en la*. The harmonic progression would

be described in traditional terms as $VI \frac{6}{3} - I \frac{5}{3}$ in A minor; actually the

F of the first chord is heard as hardly more than an appoggiatura resolving to the E of the second. This would appear to be no progression at all, in which case the phrase should be a huge *diminuendo*. Yet we cannot be too sure: in a similar situation at the beginning of the third movement of the *Symphony of Psalms*, the composer, by changing the mode and the orchestration at the cadential word *Dominum*, creates a clear accent even though the chord has remained essentially the same (C) throughout the phrase.

In any event, whatever we may decide about the reading of his phrase-accent in detail, Stravinsky is perfectly capable of producing a big structural downbeat at precisely the point where it is required. I need only point to the huge deceptive cadence that opens the *Symphony in Three Movements*, the dominant G of the introduction resolving finally upward to the A of the *ostinato* theme (rehearsal number 7); or to the way in which the Interlude acts as an upbeat to the C major of the finale.

More controversial is the attempt to find traces of tonal form in avowedly atonal compositions; yet I do not see how music like Schoenberg's, with its usually clear cadential structure, can fail to arouse certain traditional associations and responses. The previously cited *Klavierstück* Op. 33a begins with six chords, of which the second through the fifth are very easily—although not necessarily—heard as forming a progression referring to E minor. This in itself is nothing, but when the opening phrase is heard as an upbeat resolved in the third measure, and when the resolving sonority is recognized as a seventh on E, a tonal analogy is set up. The first section of the piece concludes even more unmistakably on E, with the added emphasis of a *ritardando*; and the theme that follows in measure 14 gives the effect of a sudden shift of key. In the recapitulation, the *ritardando* of measure 34 again calls attention to the following downbeat, where the E appears in the upper voice, but supported in the bass by A—in the manner of a deceptive cadence on IV. It remains for the final cadence to confirm the E, which is so strong that it is not dislodged by the dissonant tones with which it is here surrounded.

Several objections can be made to the above account: that it picks

out isolated points without reference to the movement between them, that the "cadences" on E are a result of the fact that the row ends on that note, that such analysis is irrelevant to music in this style.

To the first count I plead guilty. I have indeed picked out isolated points, because these seemed to me to be the important "full-cadences" of the piece. (Important "half-cadences" occur at measures 9, 24, and 32.) The movement between them cannot, I grant, be explained in simple tonal terms. At some points, linear or contrapuntal motion dominates—in which case the melodic principles suggested above will indicate the logic of the chosen cadences. At other points the sonorities themselves dominate—and these can of course be shown as derived from the opening chords. As a result the entire piece can be heard as a development of its original cadential progression—that is, as analogous to a traditional structure.

I agree that the cadences are partially due to the use of the row. Depending on one's point of view, this effect is a virtue or a vice of Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique. It may even have been one of the points persuading him to turn towards the system, away from freer atonal methods. In no case can the argument invalidate the actual musical result.

To the charge of irrelevancy, I answer that one who cannot indeed hear such cadential phenomena in this music must judge the analysis to be prescriptive and inapplicable. But one who does hear them must admit to that extent the validity of the approach. He may counter that one ought not to hear the music in this way; but he is then criticizing the music, not the analytical method. Unwanted cadential effects would be as great a flaw in atonal music as the chance appearance of a human figure in a non-representational painting.

V

The last point suggests that there is a relation between analysis and criticism. It is not a simple one. Analysis can often reveal flaws in a work, it is true — often but not always. If it were dependable in this regard, we should be able to decide definitively between the disputed C# and C \times in the last movement of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 109 (measure 55) or whether the famous A \sharp in Schoenberg's Op. 33a is indeed an A \flat (measure 22). But unfortunately such cases all too often work both ways: the C \times that from one point of view prepares for the advent of D two measures later might have been avoided in order not to anticipate

it; by the same token, although the A_b seems more logical in the row-structure (in spite of the A_b lacking in the left-hand), it may somewhat spoil the freshness of the A_b - E_b fifth that comes soon after. The ear must be the ultimate judge of such subtleties, but insofar as analysis trains and sharpens the ear it makes its contribution to the final decision.

It would be tempting to go further and state that analysis can demonstrate the quality of a work, but this requires a faith in rationality that I am unable to summon. Judgment of final excellence must be fundamentally intuitive. If analysis leads one to condemn a work he nevertheless continues to hear as good, he must conclude that there is something wrong either with his ear or with his method. Since he cannot dispense with the only pair of ears he has, upon whose evidence the examination should have been based in the first place, he must blame his method. He must then find a new one based on his own hearing, one that will substantiate, not contradict, his musical judgment. He may then claim that analysis has established the excellence of the work in question, but he will be wrong; his own judgment will have established the analysis.

One positive point emerges here, and it is a crucial one. The good composition will always reveal, on close study, the methods of analysis needed for its own comprehension. This means that a good composition manifests its own structural principles, but it means more than that. In a wider context, it is an example of the proposition that a work of art ought to imply the standards by which it demands to be judged. Most criticism today tacitly accepts the truth of this statement and sets about discovering the standards implied by a given work and testing how well it lives up to them. For investigation of this kind, analysis is naturally of primary importance.

Criticism should take a further step, however, and the best criticism does. It should question the value of the standards. A work that sets no clear standard denies or defies the possibility of evaluation; one that does set its standard fails or succeeds insofar as it measures up to it; one that measures up completely is at least flawless — but its value cannot exceed the value of its own standard. It is this final step that is completely beyond the confines of analysis.

The music of Webern is a prominent case in point. No serious critic denies the perfection of his forms and the complete consistency of his style. Its paucity of normal melodic and harmonic interests has been mentioned above, but in connection with other values that, replacing

these, uniquely characterize his manner. What is seldom questioned is the significance of the style itself — of the restrictive standard (for it is a restrictive one) that Webern set for his own music. Are the limits too narrow to permit accomplishment at the very highest level? Only a decision of this point can determine one's final evaluation of the composer. It is a decision that depends on one's beliefs about the limits and aims of art in general and is thus not exclusively musical, although it must at the same time be peculiarly musical. It must be made on faith, and it must be accepted or rejected in the same spirit.