

The Cyclical Genealogy of Schoenberg's Second Chamber Symphony

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So it is a matter re-inserting into the concept of Creation Revelation itself with its bond and origin that connects it to the firm hope in the coming of the ethical kingdom of the ultimate Redemption.— Franz Rosenzweig¹

The fact that both the music and writings of Arnold Schoenberg share similar intellectual and spiritual values as the German theologian and translator, Franz Rosenzweig, has been firmly established.² The manner in which the two artists structure their textual material – composition or translation – is that they follow a certain doctrinal order of things. In addition to the specificities of vocabulary and orthography, the creative object as presented by the artists for public consumption shares the same principle, which is that its appreciation is grounded on the intentions behind its creation. By creation, I mean mainly the permutations of contents for the reader or interpreter of the text. Their construction of episodic materials naturally gives rise to the relation between the materials themselves, yet the rationale behind the arrangements can also differ drastically. For Rosenzweig as well as Schoenberg, the notion of cyclical repetition however appears to be one of the directives for their creations, and such an impetus, I suggest in this article, stems from an adherence to their Jewish belief and practice.

Take the calendrical and liturgical rituals of the Jewish people for instance, these communal negations of linearity, as having been identified by Rosenzweig in *The Star of Redemption*, embody a form of cyclical repetitive temporality.³ By repeating the speeches and deeds every week and every year, the religious devotee is assured of spiritual continuity or, in Rosenzweig's own words, eternal life. Subsequently, in his translation and edition of Yehuda Halevi's poetry collection, Rosenzweig established a deliberated method of cyclical reading by placing his commentaries to the poems at the end of the book. Meant to be recited in the synagogues within the cycle of a year, the poems when subjected to the linear form of the literary object thwarted the temporal reality of their ritualistic agency. Rosenzweig practiced as he had preached in order to maintain consistency and connection with Jewish cyclical repetition. As has been argued formally, "the insertion of [Rosenzweig's] notes and the interruptions of [Halevi's] text dislocate the reader from the present and reconnect him or her to the Jewish calendar".⁴

Here lies Rosenzweig's structural strategy in re-inserting the revelation in each and every transcreation of Halevi's poems with his exegetic commentaries, thereby preserving the Jewish praxis of cyclical repetitions. In a similar vein, Schoenberg in 1939 was facing the challenge to complete his Second Chamber Symphony, which was started 33 years earlier. I am proposing here that, through a harmonic study of his sketches, Schoenberg made an implicit application of Jewish cyclical repetitions as a creative concept to overcome the long compositional block.

1 Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. Barbara E. Galli (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press), 2004 [1921], 113.

2 Cf. Steven Joel Cahn, *Variations in Manifold Time: Historical Consciousness in the Music and Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, PhD Dissertation (State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1996); Elliott Gyger and Alexander Rehding, "Idea and Image in Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*," *The Opera Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2007): 369–372.

3 Gilad Sharvit, *Dynamic Repetition: History and Messianism in Modern Jewish Thought* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2022), 68.

4 *Ibid.*, 112. The book in question is *Sixty Hymns and Poems of Judah Halevi*, translated by Franz Rosenzweig, (Konstanz: Wöhrle Verlag, 1924).

This article is divided into two parts. I begin with a discussion on the use of cyclical form in the modern history of Western classical music before laying out some of Schoenberg's ideas on repetition. Thereafter, harmonic analyses of the two complete movements of the Second Chamber Symphony as well as fragments from the third movement are used to support the argument that an extended cyclic form could have been adopted by Schoenberg as a method of musical organization during the first few years after his conversion back to Judaism.

The Cyclic Form in the Nineteenth Century

For our purpose, Benedict Taylor has developed a useful definition of the cyclical form that describes how “the same or very similar thematic material is used in at least two different movements” via development and metamorphosis.⁵ Evident from the works of many nineteenth-century composers ranging from the times of Mendelssohn and Zemlinsky, the cyclic form has been associated with the epitome of musical romanticism.⁶ Earlier occurrences of the cyclic form have been discovered in at least twenty of Beethoven's most popular output, including the “Appassionata” and “Hammerklavier” piano sonatas, the Fifth and Ninth symphonies as well as the Op. 130, 131, and 132 string quartets from the late period.⁷ Given the frequent adoption of the cyclical form throughout Beethoven's thirty-odd-year career, what could be the reason for its relative decline in popularity among Germanic composers in the long nineteenth century?⁸ Why was the form on the other hand favored by many composers of Jewish faith?

Since Mendelssohn, Mahler and Zemlinsky have all employed cyclical forms in their *early* output, how does the nineteenth-century stereotyping of the Semitic or Semiticate as innately repetitive and cyclical come to haunt the music historiography of these and other composers?⁹ In the same vein of thought, I would also pose a conjecture that there is an inclination for Judeo-Christian musical aesthetic toward a cyclical construct as opposed to the through-composed liberties of music made under more secular conditions. Through the musical aesthetics of Mendelssohn and Mahler, to name but two foremost composers of Jewish ancestry in current musicological limelight, I contend for an association of the Semiticate with the cyclical form before applying to the case of Schoenberg's symphonic music.

In his monograph entitled *Mendelssohn, Time, and Memory*, Taylor persuasively exposes the cyclical architecture found in the composer's chamber music from the 1820s as well as the Third Symphony from his mature period. Enlisting the tropes of memory, history and trauma, Taylor associates the recurrence and recollection of musical material in Mendelssohn's music with affective meanings. Where Taylor might have stopped short with his analyses is the alignment of Mendelssohn's reliance on the cyclical with the religious, or specifically, the Semitic.¹⁰ Correspondingly, two lines of plausible interpretations intersect, and that is where teleological and

5 Benedict Taylor, “Cyclic Form, Time, and Memory in Mendelssohn's A-Minor Quartet, Op. 13,” *Musical Quarterly* 93, no. 1 (2010): 45–89.

6 Steven Vande Moortele, *Two-dimensional Sonata Form: Form and Cycle in Single-movement Instrumental Works by Liszt, Strauss, Schoenberg and Zemlinsky* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009); Benedict Taylor, *Mendelssohn, Time and Memory: The Romantic Conception of Cyclic Form* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Gianmario Borio, “‘Free forms’ in German Music Theory and the Romantic Conception of Time”, in *Musical Improvisation and Open Forms in the Age of Beethoven*, eds. Gianmario Borio and Angela Carone (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 62–84.

7 Bathia Churgin, *Transcendent Mastery: Studies in the Music of Beethoven* (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2008), 390–392.

8 Apart from those mentioned, the primary proponents of the cyclic form were Berlioz, Franck, Schumann and Tchaikovsky. See Julian Horton, “Cyclical Thematic Processes in the Nineteenth-Century Symphony,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Symphony*, ed. by Julian Horton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 190–231.

9 Cf. Alys Eve Weinbaum, *Wayward Reproductions: Genealogies of Race and Nation in Transatlantic Modern Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), esp. 167–186.

10 One other reason for the inability to square the circle between form and faith could have been Taylor's comparison of Mendelssohn with Bergson, Freud, Proust and their literary representations of time and memory that may seem historically and socio-culturally incongruent.

originary elements merely show up as reactionary swerves or deviations from the Semitic. In the opening pages, Taylor directs the cosmological seasons and prospective return of Christ as cyclical divinity for the agrarian European population.¹¹ These phenomena are equally pertinent to the case of the Mendelssohns, whose banking background stipulated a consistency in liquidity within financial cycles. When, for instance, their business in Hamburg was subsequently affected by French colonization, the family relocated to Berlin and did indeed return to monetary and societal circulation. Cyclical modes of living, spiritual or otherwise, would have remained intrinsic to their daily activities and most probably have some sort of influences on the early compositions. The specter of the Semitic cycle has always been present albeit tangential.

Secondly, as far as the quasi-new material at the end of the Third Symphony is concerned, Taylor's argument appears to have overlooked the implications of anti-Semitism, internalized or otherwise, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A secular reading oversimplifies the prophetic appearance and emphasis of the majestic theme.¹² Given that the Third Symphony was composed *after* the revival of Bach's St. Matthew's Passion as well as Mendelssohn's own conception of both the St. Paul and Elijah oratorios and the *Lobgesang* cantata, among other sacred music, Mendelssohn is most certainly adept at the creative practice of musical rhetoric.¹³ While there may be differing opinions on Mendelssohn's religious ambivalence for his topical selections for sacred settings, it is precisely within larger and more public spheres—having the Third Symphony premiered at the Leipzig Gewandhaus—where Mendelssohn could assert his moral inclinations.¹⁴ It is therefore not difficult for one to decipher a direct metaphor for Semitic redemption in the *Allegro maestoso*, where the “newness” of an ending in the majestic style parallels the inclusion of the New Testament as now being a coherent part of the Bible, with its own repetitions and variations, such as the case of the four canonical gospels.

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Gustav Mahler is another of the more controversial composer to be entangled in the Jewish socio-cultural construction. Throughout twentieth-century scholarship, the interpretations of his works and words, especially those of his first three symphonies, have triggered intense ethnomusicological debates. On the one hand, there is Adorno's secular historicism of Mahler's “aesthetic negation,” and on the other hand, there are ambivalent critics who frame Mahler as a German-Jewish “assimilationist” and pinpoint certain ethnocentric musical techniques in his music.¹⁵ Despite these epistemological differences, several musical observations can immediately connect Mahler's creative processes with those of Mendelssohn and Schoenberg. Firstly, when Adorno writes that, “with obsolete means, [Mahler] anticipates what is to come,” he affirms the Jewish reconfiguration of the past in the present.¹⁶ Yet, Mahler's music, in particularly his Eighth Symphony, has been thought as dualist, that is, giving body (and form) to an erstwhile imagined artwork.¹⁷ However, such Cartesian-Adornian reading readily deviates from the notion that all biographies are non-anticipatory. The stalemate between the two thinkers or two schools of thought can only be verified from musical analyses, and this is where Adorno proves his coeval relevance in suggesting that Mahler “disguises” thematic material in the course of his sym-

11 Benedict Taylor, *Mendelssohn, Time and Memory*, 20: “The notion of indefinite cyclical recurrence was, however, inimical to Christianity, which introduced from Jewish millennialism the important idea of a single, linear progression to a finite end, the divine *eschaton*.”

12 *Ibid.*, 274.

13 Cf. Jeffrey S. Sposato, *The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

14 Leon Botstein, “Mendelssohn as Jew: Revisiting Controversy on the Occasion of the Composer's 200th Birthday,” *The Musical Quarterly* 92, no. 1–2 (2009): 1–8.

15 Jeremy Barham, “Juvenilia and early works: from the first song fragments to *Das klagende Lied*” and Christoph Metzger, “Issues in Mahler reception: historicism and misreadings after 1960,” both in *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 57 and 212ff.

16 Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (University of Chicago Press, 1992), 20.

phonies so that the music appears *like new material*. This observation resonates uncannily with how Taylor has uncovered Mendelssohn's cyclical technique in the finale of the Third Symphony discussed above.¹⁸

Further, Mahler's consistent coupling of the funeral march alongside dance music has been deemed historically as part of the Jewish tradition.¹⁹ There is thus no discrepancy with the presence of funeral marches in the first three symphonies (not discounting the uncanniness that the opening of the Second is also marked *Allegro maestoso*). These consistencies could not have resisted Semitic associations. Otherwise, an argument from the negative is derived from how historian Oskar Bie calls Mahler's Eighth Symphony as revealing a "feeling of control", which surely implies the composer's restraint from stereotypical Semitic musical characterizations.²⁰ It also cannot be epistemologically accidental for Adorno to deem Mahler's music as a "veille" on the one hand or as "confessional art" by Riemann and an anti-Semitic cultural diplomat.²¹ These interpretations of Mahler's music also align acutely with the semantic functions of the Jewish shofar, as argued in Lacan's symbolic analysis in so far as the music, like the instrument, give and receive socio-cultural form to an exclusive group of people.²² Riding on the same traditions as Mendelssohn and Schoenberg, Adorno also admits that Mahler's music is "the first to substantiate the recognition that the fate of the world is no longer dependent on the individual; and at the same time it substantiates this individual recognition and in the emotional categories of the individual human being".²³ Specifically for Mahler, the funeral march that is meant for a collective moving in lugubrious solidarity is simultaneously received from the perspective of an alienated individual.

Finally, unlike the teleological funeral marches in Beethoven's Third Symphony and Wagner's *Siegfried*, Mahler's music is both collective and individual, both cyclical and plastic. In contrast to how Mahler's music has been posited as being defended by an "epistemological frame that incubates the *refusal* of meaning," I would read the semantics of Mahler's music as embodying multiple significations that exceed the threefold essentialisms of the Austrian national, the German cultural and the Jewish racial.²⁴ This is in line with Adorno's acknowledgement that Mahler's extra-musical "characterizing phrases" are as crucial as his intra-musical articulations, both "intended to ensure the plasticity and comprehensibility of [the] performance".²⁵ Otherwise, a figurative relation between Mahler and Beethoven could be established via, what one of his Jewish contemporaries Aron Liebeck has self-identified as, the personification of a "soft hero".²⁶ As much as this figure can be representative of Mahlerian aesthetics, it is arguably analogous to many of Schoenberg's later works, such as the "Triumphal March for Palestine" that closes his Violin Concerto, Op. 36, and the String Trio, Op. 45. According to Hans Keller, the dance-like finale

17 Ian Biddle, "Song of the Body: Mahler, Kafka and the Male Jewish Body at the Habsburg fin de siècle," in *Music, Masculinity and the Claims of History: The Austro-German Tradition from Hegel to Freud*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 157ff. See also Emil Gutmann, "Gustav Mahler als Organisator," *Die Musik* 19, no. 8 (1911): 364–65, quoted in Karen Painter, "From Zionism to Assimilation: Theodor Herzl, Gustav Mahler, and the Aesthetics of Redemption," in *The Total Work of Art: Mahler's Eighth Symphony in Context*, ed. by Elisabeth Kappel (Vienna: Universal Edition, 2011), 86.

18 Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, 71.

19 Julian Johnson, *Mahler's Voices: Expression and Irony in the Songs and Symphonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 257.

20 Quoted in Karen Painter, "From Zionism to Assimilation," 87.

21 Theodor W. Adorno, "Marginalia on Mahler," in *Essays in Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 617, and Christoph Metzger, "Issues in Mahler reception: historicism and misreadings after 1960," in *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 205.

22 Jacques Lacan, *Anxiety: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book 10*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2014).

23 Theodor W. Adorno, "Marginalia on Mahler," 616.

24 Ian Biddle, *Music, Masculinity, and the Claims of History*, 192.

25 Theodor W. Adorno, "Mahler Today," in *Essays in Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 607.

26 Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, "A Soft Hero: Male Jewish Identity in Imperial Germany through the Autobiography of Aron Liebeck," in *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender, and History*, eds. Benjamin Maria Baader, Sharon Gillerman and Paul Lerner, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 90–113.

of the former work “unfolds a rondo structure which eventually rounds off the entire work in cyclic fashion.”²⁷

As much as positivist skeptics might protest, factual history informs this thesis that the Palestine Orchestra had in the late 1930s programmed Mendelssohn’s symphonies, Schoenberg’s *Verklärte Nacht* and Handel’s oratorios all as part of the Jewish canon.²⁸ Likewise, Jewish music of the long nineteenth-century foreshadows how historian Jarrod Tanny has described twentieth-century literature as “not preclud[ing] lamentations on carnage, loss, and obliteration in a more traditional Jewish key, a mode of writing framed by [what Harriet Murav in her *Music from a Speeding Train* has identified as] ‘a backward-glancing Jewish temporality’, a lens of Jewish trauma... seemingly endless and cyclical”.²⁹ With the buttress of these biographical and historical revelations, it becomes a misstep for Julie Brown to project Schoenberg as a Christian and for Michael Marissen to deem Handel as anti-Semitic.³⁰ While it is easier to absolve Handel of the charge because he was merely setting the libretto of *Messiah* to music, it is difficult and daring to tease out Schoenberg’s messianic leanings in his life and music. Weaving in and out of selected texts by Richard Wagner, Stefan George and Otto Weininger, Brown poses a conjectural trajectory of Schoenberg adhering to Wagner’s *Deutschtum* or Jewish self-overcoming, George’s anti-bourgeois naturalism as well as Weininger’s seeker-and-priest deontology.³¹ However, it is on Brown’s suggestion that “Schoenberg’s early prescience was as human as his later need to return to and reprocess the symbols of his earliest developments in composition”. This is exactly the moment when the Second Chamber Symphony comes to adopt a historical and biographical embodiment of the traumatic return-of-the-repressed after the Holocaust.³²

Neither is the narrative of Mahler’s symphonies nor Schoenberg’s Second Chamber Symphony itself spared from being agonistic with Adorno’s theory of the cultural industry. Andreas Huyssen claims that the concept coined in the 1940s is equally representative of the situation in the nineteenth century, with particular reference to the Wagnerian enterprises. As I have contended elsewhere, the applicability of these theories on the popular music of the early twenty-first century inevitably signals the cyclical nature of the Jewish philosopher’s aesthetics.³³ Paraphrasing an argument from Adorno’s *Philosophy of New Music*, Huyssen states that the way Schoenberg seeks autonomy from commodification and reification is by embracing atonality as a reactionary and defensive strategy.³⁴ Despite overlooking the religious nature—both outwards and inwards—of Schoenberg’s music from the 1930s onwards, the impetus of music’s autonomous urge, for Huyssen, is to eschew powers of the market and return to the “church and state”.³⁵ In the hands of Schoenberg, this act becomes a Fichtean *schwebende* or swerve, and for the born-again Jewish composer, this is a return to Judaism and Zionism. Whether conscious or uncon-

27 Hans Keller, *Sleevenotes to Schoenberg: Piano Concerto Op. 42 and Violin Concerto Op. 36* by Alfred Brendel, Wolfgang Marschner, Michael Gielen and the Symphony Orchestra of Southwest German Radio, Baden Baden (New York and London: Vox, PL10.530).

28 Philip V. Bohlman, *The World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine, 1936-1940: Jewish Musical Life on the Eve of World War II* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 167–8. Having settled in the United States of America, Schoenberg kept a professional distance from the center, preferring to maintain his German musical lineage. Alexander Ringer, *Arnold Schoenberg: The Composer as Jew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 194.

29 Jarrod Tanny, Review of Harriet Murav, “Music from a Speeding Train: Jewish Literature in Post-Revolution Russia,” H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews, published March 2012, <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=33981>.

30 Michael Marissen, “Rejoicing against Judaism in Handel’s *Messiah*,” *Journal of Musicology* 24, no. 2 (2007): 167–194.

31 Julie Brown, “Understanding Schoenberg as Christ,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the New Cultural History of Music*, ed. Jane F. Fulcher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 117–162.

32 *Ibid.* 119 and 137.

33 Jun Zubillaga-Pow, “Adorno and Jameson on the Dancefloor: Minimal Techno against the Charge of the Cultural Industry,” *The Musicology Review* 8 (2013): 1-19.

34 Andreas Huyssen, “Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner,” *New German Critique* 29 (1983): 28 and 36.

35 *Ibid.* 9 and 20–21: “...in Adorno and Horkheimer, [nature] is understood as both outer and inner nature in a way that calls their very separation into question.”

scious, Schoenberg's incorporation of religious elements is his way of rescuing new music from a modernism that, as Huyssen claims, has been "held hostage by the culture industry".³⁶ Despite its conventional structures, the Second Chamber Symphony as we will come to realize cannot be displaced from this utopian strategy.

Schoenberg in His Own Words

Apart from calling his own *Pierrot Lunaire* and *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* as song cycles, Schoenberg curiously did not seem to have discussed the cyclic form in any of his writings or correspondences.³⁷ The slightest indication that signals toward the sense of recurring musical material can be found in a text related to thematic repetition and the rondo form. Schoenberg was still serving as the Director of Composition at the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin when he made comparisons about the significance of repetition and the rondo between music and poetry. In the short text, he differentiates the relative purposes of the principle and the functional musical material. While the principal theme serves to convey effective, unifying and relatable meanings, the functional sections play the roles of "digression, linking, introduction, transition, preparation, interruption".³⁸ The point of arranging these musical materials together is intended toward comprehensible communication.

One statement within this short treatise on composition from 1931 signals this idea succinctly. With popularity as an end goal, Schoenberg in his usual didactic guise deems that, "widely-ranging development is digression, which makes comprehensibility harder".³⁹ In other words, more variations of the principle theme will make it more difficult to understand the piece, thereby negatively affecting the work's popularity. The adjective "comprehensible" despite being repeated several times throughout the text also receives a more nuanced calibration, i.e. easier or harder. To make clear, the key objective however for the composer himself or herself is popularity, and not comprehensibility or repetition. Schoenberg believed that repetition (and variation) on the larger scheme of things is necessary so as to ensure the "constant re-stimulation of the listener's interest".⁴⁰ This positioning of musical repetition and re-stimulation thereby renders Schoenberg a listeners' composer. His music is constructed in a cyclical manner not only to create coherence through the work, but also to garner popularity through structural repetition and development.

An example analogous to the incomplete Second Chamber Symphony is the fragmentary Waltzes for String Orchestra. It is evident from archival sources that Schoenberg had the intention to compose more than eleven waltzes, and the tenth waltz returning to the starting key of the first waltz is more likely to be a harmonic coincidence than a cyclical integration.⁴¹ As it will become clearer later, the creative process of the Second Chamber Symphony is on the other hand

36 Ibid. 37.

37 Except for a single instance in the final citation, the words "cyclic" and "cyclical" were not mentioned in the following eight volumes: Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984); Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, eds. Gerald Strang and Leonard Stein (London: Faber & Faber, 1999); Arnold Schoenberg, *Arnold Schoenberg Letters* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); Arnold Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique, and Art of its Presentation*, eds. Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006); *A Schoenberg Reader*, eds. Joseph Auner (Connecticut, NC: Yale University Press, 2008); Arnold Schoenberg, *Schoenberg's Early Correspondence*, eds. and trans. Ethan Haimo and Sabine Feisst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Arnold Schoenberg, *Schoenberg's Models for Beginners in Composition*, eds. Gordon Root (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); *Schoenberg's Program Notes and Musical Analyses*, eds. J. Daniel Jenkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

38 Schoenberg, "For a Treatise on Composition," *Style and Idea*, 266.

39 Ibid. 267.

40 Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, 167.

41 Schoenberg might have Brahms's 16 Waltzes, Op. 39, as his compositional model; my position differs from that made by Daniel Guberman in "Cyclic Coherence in Schoenberg's Early Waltzes for String Orchestra," *Tempo* 67, no. 165 (2013): 57–68.

intensively thought through with an appended textual program, tertiary structure and even symbolic gestures.⁴² In the next part of the essay, I will analyze the schematic presentation of the entire chamber symphony with its seven main sections.

Harmonic Analysis of the Second Chamber Symphony

Figure 1: Tonal schema of Schoenberg's Second Chamber Symphony Op. 38

<u>First movement</u>		<u>Second movement</u>	
<i>Section A</i> (mm. 1–52)	E ♭ minor	<i>Exposition:</i> First Subject Group (mm. 161–218)	G major
<i>Section B</i> (mm. 53–94)	A ♭ minor	Second Subject Group (mm. 219–63)	
<i>Section A'</i> (mm. 95–140)	E ♭ minor	<i>Development</i> (mm. 263–82)	D major
<i>Coda</i> (mm. 141–65)	E ♭ minor	<i>Recapitulation:</i> First Subject Group (mm. 282–337) Theme from <i>Section B</i> (mm. 338–90) Second Subject Group (mm. 391–439)	G major
		<i>Coda</i> (mm. 440–89)	E ♭ minor

In the first instance, Schoenberg's thematic organization appears to be modelled after the historical conventions of the nineteenth-century romantic symphony. There are a couple of formal oddities, such as the two Adagio movements—the first and the uncompleted third—both set in duple meter and a Brahmsian ternary structure coming before the standard classical sonata form. One interpretation could be that a first-movement Allegro is missing, thus rendering the chamber symphony as incomplete at both the head and tail ends. Posthumous scholarship recently revealed sketches for a prospective third movement as well as an accompanying text entitled *Wendepunkt* or *Turning Point* penned by Schoenberg himself.⁴³ The notoriety of the work is also not spared from what Catherine Dale has called a “checkered history” of revisions and continuations in four periods between 1906 and 1940.⁴⁴ Intrigued by its marginal position in twen-

42 Steven Cahn, “Schoenberg, the Viennese-Jewish experience and its aftermath,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schoenberg*, eds. Jennifer Shaw and Joseph Auner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 191–206.

43 Severine Neff, “Cadence after thirty-three years: Schoenberg's Second Chamber Symphony, Op. 38,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schoenberg*, eds. Jennifer Shaw and Joseph Auner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 209–225.

tieth-century concert repertory, my fundamental aim in this essay is to put forth an argument for the formal coherence and comprehensibility not only of this tonal piece of work, but also of Schoenberg's creative juxtaposition of the musical and the religious. In tandem with a Lacanian hermeneutic method, I attempt a chronological tracing of Schoenberg's creative process against the temporal and affective aspects of Jewish practices and habits.

As a preamble, numerous scholars, especially those part of the "Jewish Studies and Music" study group of the American Musicological Society, have maintained the non-essentialist ontologies of Jewish music and Jewish musicians.⁴⁵ I must however clarify foremost that there is no universal but only accidental application of ethnocentric entities onto musical aesthetics and affects. By accidental, I mean the Aristotelian non-essential property of a substance, which refers here to the music. That is, a Semitic reading of Schoenberg's musical composition is accidental to the musical object itself. The ontology of the accidental, for the French philosopher Catherine Malabou, is on the one hand not anticipatory and on the other hand simultaneously logical and biological.⁴⁶ In this sense, it is the persistence of Jewish history and biography that anchors the accidental within which it reveals itself through the music and other forms of expression.

In order to relieve the repressed feelings of creative anxiety and desire requires a return to our protagonist's life story and music history of the opening decade of the twentieth century. As revealed from his sketches, Schoenberg had already completed a full orchestration of the Chamber Symphony's first movement and exposition of the second movement by August 1908. His feelings of guilt for causing his wife's suicide and having also to borrow money from Mahler were eventually resolved after moving from Vienna to Berlin in 1911.⁴⁷ The development section, along with another work, *Herzgewächse (Heart's Foliage)*, Op. 20, were composed between Thanksgiving and Christmas of that year.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, work on the Chamber Symphony was interrupted by the onerous technical challenge of ensuring motivic unity without any reliance on harmonic gravity as well as the traumatic military conscriptions during the First World War.⁴⁹ Subsequently by December of 1916, Schoenberg had stuck a page of metaphysical text on the fate, fortune and salvation of an affected soul onto the book, which contained sketches for his Second String Quartet and Second Chamber Symphony. The completion of the recapitulation and coda for the second movement would only come 33 years later in October 1939. This was no less an Audenian "age of anxiety" given that neither his plans for the Jewish United Party as a government in exile nor the promotion of his serial compositions in the United States had crystallized.⁵⁰ Judging from the biographical and musico-historical points of view in tandem, I venture a hypothesis for the completion of Second Chamber Symphony attributing it to Schoenberg's renewed belief in Jewish eschatology in general and the Semitic ordering of time in particular.

On both the micro- and macro-levels of measuring time, Sylvie Anne Goldberg has stated that modern Judaism has "invented a form of temporality that replays itself permanently by the re-implanting of the past in the present".⁵¹ There is now a cyclical recurrence of events as the

44 Catherine Dale, *Schoenberg's Chamber Symphonies: The Crystallization and Rediscovery of a Style* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

45 See, for instance, Philip V. Bohlman, "Ontologies of Jewish Music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walkden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 11–26 and David Conway, "A New Song: Jewish Musicians in European music, 1730-1850," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walkden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 156–166.

46 Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity* (London: Polity, 2012), 30.

47 Dale, *Schoenberg's Chamber Symphonies*, 148.

48 Ibid. 110.

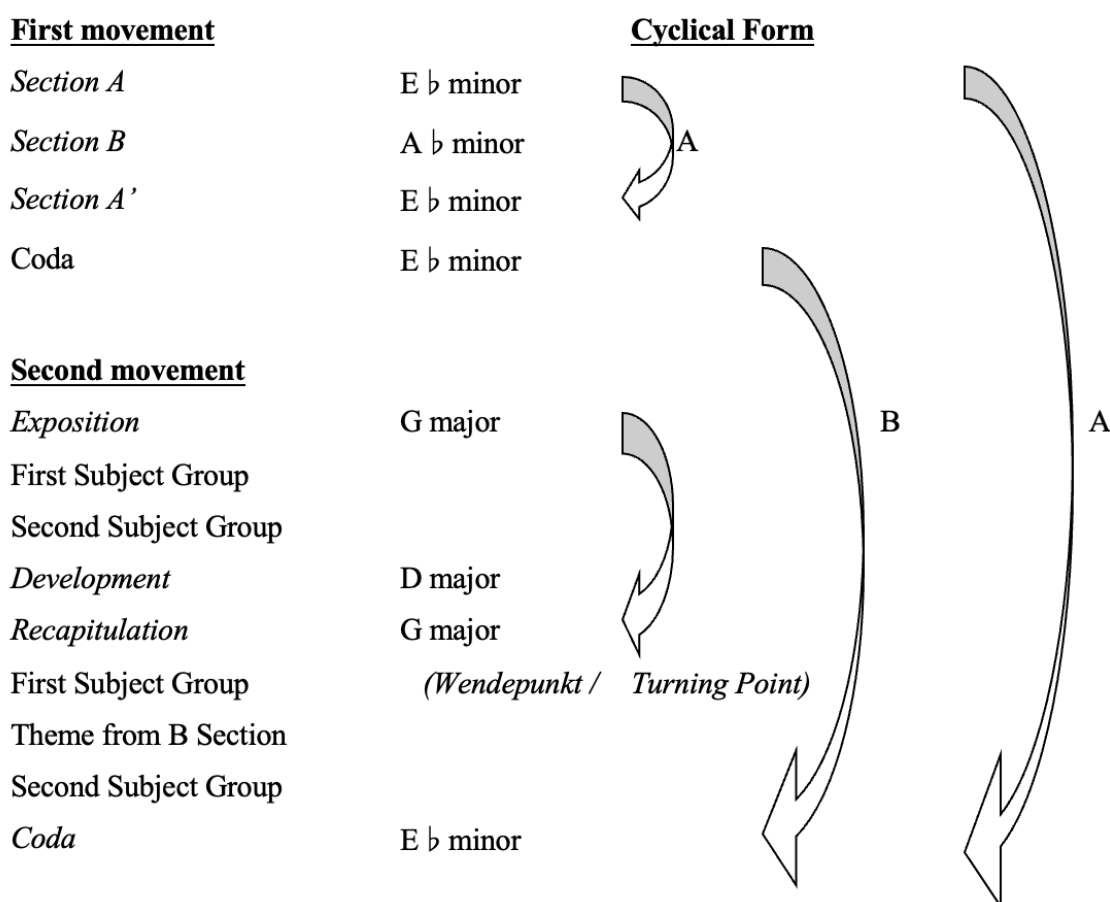
49 Ibid. 149.

50 Klara Moricz, *Jewish Identities: Nationalism, Racism and Utopianism in Twentieth-Century Music* (Palo Alto: University of California Press, 2008), 255–299.

51 Sylvie Anne Goldberg, "Accounts and Counts of Jewish Time," *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem*, no. 7 (2000): 96.

“guardians of [Jewish] memory and history”. These include the obedience to the Sabbath within every seven-day week and the Semitic calendar, which fulfils what Goldberg believes to be “a function of harmonization between human life, the rhythm of Nature, and divine time”.⁵² The derivation of a cyclical temporality from the Semitic calendar is significant not only for Schoenberg’s music, but also for his creative processes. For one, it is after the reconversion to Judaism that Schoenberg manages to fulfil his wish from 1916 to “fuse the [two movements] into *one* movement”, which is by extracting musical material from the earlier parts as the recapitulation and coda of the second movement.⁵³ The recycling of Section B is inserted in between the first and second subject groups, while the material and tonality from Section A return in the seventh part as the final coda (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Cyclical schema of Schoenberg’s Second Chamber Symphony Op. 38



The division of a single movement into seven parts looks back into Schoenberg’s own biographical past in his First String Quartet in D minor – which unfolds accidentally via a 3+3+1 narrative – as well as the historical past in Beethoven’s String Quartet in C-sharp minor, Op. 131. One immediate musical association between Schoenberg’s output is the significance of the number seven. The number seven, *shiv’a*, remains highly essential to Jewish theology with concepts like the seven commandments, the seven blessings and the seven days of mourning for only seven specific relatives. For someone who is equally obsessed with numerology, Schoenberg would not

⁵² Ibid. 106.

⁵³ Arnold Schoenberg, Letter to Alexander von Zemlinsky (December 12, 1916). Quoted in Neff, “Cadence after thirty-three years: Schoenberg’s Second Chamber Symphony, Op. 38,” 214.

have overlooked the presence of seven semitones in between the interval of a fifth produced by the Jewish shofar horn call. In addition to several instances (such as in the Piano and Violin Concerti) of using the interval of a perfect fifth as a part of a *Grundgestalt* or basic motif, there are a few other examples of how the number has dictated the form of his music. His 1921 song cycle, *Pierrot Lunaire*, is a vocal setting that organizes three sets of seven poems out of a collection of fifty by the Belgian Albert Giraud, his pre-planned seven-movement suite from 1926 is written for an instrumental force of seven–three clarinets, three strings and a piano—and the seven variations that have been developed for the wind band in 1943.⁵⁴ While the reliance on a seven-part structure may not be prevalent throughout his output, it can be suggested that certain narratological and affective aspects of Judaism is inherent whenever such a schema is used, and Schoenberg's Second Chamber Symphony is one such work.

Further, to understand the harmonic congruence, it cannot be a genealogical accident that the tonal center of the first movement of the Second Chamber Symphony is exactly the same as that of the Litany from the Second String Quartet, in that both are set in the key of E \flat minor. Otherwise for another Semitic-related reason, it is of no surprise that Schoenberg had himself arrived at such a resolution when he resumed composition on October 12, 1939, which is the twenty-ninth day of Tishrei, the first month in the Jewish New Year. It is critical to extrapolate from how Goldberg has considered “the solemn festivals in the Autumn [sic] which start the year [as setting Jewish history] within the eternal return of a sanctified temporality”.⁵⁵ That is, the customary rituals performed every new year would definitely assert a spiritual influence on Schoenberg's devotion to creation and redemption in the form of musical objects.

Cyclical Repetition in the Third Movement

Having then received a commission from Fritz Stiedry, a fellow Viennese-Jewish exile in New York, Schoenberg proceeded to complete the short score of the two movements and even began sketching for a third movement in November 1939 and January the following year. Certain clues from the sketches of this rejected movement gave evidence to the cyclical nature of Schoenberg's aesthetics. Other than the earlier facsimiles published in Dale's monograph, it can be induced from the three excerpts made available in print by Severine Neff that the key to the final “heroic Maestoso” movement is geared toward E minor.⁵⁶

While the movement begins on the dominant harmonies from bar 489, there is an ascending sequence from measures 533 to 535 that ends on two Es an octave apart. Later on in measures 560 and 561, an E minor triad is sounded melodically with subsequent eighth-note-value increments (See Figure 3).

On the one hand, this coheres with the historical trajectory of leading up chromatically from C-sharp to E. On the other hand, the cyclical reprisal of the (First) Chamber Symphony's tonal center on E is accidentally integrated by Schoenberg thirty-three years later. We can even account for the unfinished business of the Second Chamber Symphony with a hypothesis that the First Chamber Symphony, a single-movement work, could well be an imaginary opening movement of a conventional and integrated symphonic form.

54 Matthias Schmidt, *Schoenberg und Mozart: Aspekte einer Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Wien: Lafite, 2004): 222.

55 Goldberg, “Accounts and Counts of Jewish Time,” 105.

56 Neff, “Cadence after thirty-three years: Schoenberg's Second Chamber Symphony, Op. 38,” 224.

Figure 3: Sketches for the third movement of the Second Chamber Symphony⁵⁷

The figure displays three sections of musical sketches for the third movement of the Second Chamber Symphony. The top section (a) covers measures 490 to 497, featuring parts for Clarinet 1 (Cl 1), Bassoon 2 (Fg 2), Horns (Hr), Violins (Vi 1, Vi 2 Soli), and Violas (Va). Performance instructions include *p*, *ppp*, *poco rit.*, and *con sord.*. The middle section (b) covers measures 533 to 536, with an *ascending* line and *poco agitato* marking. The bottom section (c) covers measures 560 to 562, showing a melodic line with triplets.

57 Ibid. Rights of reproduction obtained from the Arnold Schönberg Center.

Conclusion

To buttress my argument by applying Lacanian psychoanalysis into the final analysis, the cyclical nature of Jewish rituals such as the aforementioned shofar call—a three-times-three set of notes—becomes an obsessive call of anxiety. A sonic imitation of the shofar can be discerned from the chromatic sequences found in one of the sketches of the third movement (see Figure 3(b)). In his analysis of the Jewish horn call, Lacan considers the interval of a fifth that is produced by the shofar as a substitute for the Word. In all of its customary harmonies, the sound is one that models after the locus of human anxiety.⁵⁸ While the performer asserts an imperative over the listeners, the sounds of a distant horn is a “clamor of guilt” and anxiety for those who hear them. To be sure, this very same guilt and anxiety stem all the way back to the Jewish refusal to recognize Christ as the Messiah. As history is used to proving, these are the affects that become associated with the destruction of the Second Temple and dispersal of the Judaic believers. On a subsequent order, Lacan deems the horn call as a resolution of these affects, a pardon that changes the meaning of the “primordial fault... by giving it a context in the articulation” of the horn call as a desire for salvation and transcendence.⁵⁹

As is apparent from Lacan's seminar on anxiety and elsewhere, music can act as effective mediator of feelings, whether in evoking sentimentality or resolving neural instability.⁶⁰ As interactions between musical objects and human subjects, these transcendental changes in emotional states thereby ascertain congruently Malabou's notion of the accidental that pervades the ontology of music and feelings. After Lacan, Schoenberg's music bears the potential to give and receive form to a Semitic reading, one that is both affective and metaphysical. While Julian Johnson has deliberated upon Schoenberg's secular metaphysics during his Expressionist period before the advent of dodecaphony, my objective in this article is to evince a Semitic metaphysics, aspects of which I contend to have prevailed throughout Schoenberg's later decades of living in political exile.⁶¹

As shown in my analysis, the symphony's tonal incoherence of E \flat minor and G major work is redeemed via the revelation of a large-scale cyclical form that allows, what Michael Graubart calls “a beautiful and deeply expressive but commonly undervalued work”, to transcend beyond musical incomprehensibility.⁶² Within the cyclical genealogy of Semitic temporality, how the German-Jewish theologian Franz Rozenzweig has deemed the redistribution of the three temporalities has again proved its veracity, where “the proportion of universal and singular is reversed: creation and redemption are universal, whereas the revelation addresses itself to Jews alone.”⁶³ The cyclical formation of Schoenberg's Second Chamber Symphony could critically be part of an unconscious and anxious process that reveals itself as part of the Semitic musical genealogy from Mendelssohn to Mahler.

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58 Lacan, *Anxiety*, 2014, 256–257.

59 Ibid. The function of the Jewish horn call as an emblem of making music in the Jewish consciousness certainly deserves a more central position than its current status among scholarly writings on Jewish musicians and their music.

60 Cf. Michael Spitzer, ed., Special Issue on Music and Emotion, *Music Analysis* 29, nos. 1-2-3 (2010).

61 Julian Johnson, “Schoenberg, Modernism, Metaphysics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schoenberg*, eds. Jennifer Shaw and Joseph Auner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 108–119.

62 Michael Graubart, “Review of Catherine Dale, *Schoenberg's Chamber Symphonies: The Crystallization and Rediscovery of a Style*” in *Tempo* 216 (2001): 43–44.

63 Sylvie Anne Goldberg, “Accounts and Counts of Jewish Time,” 107.

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