

## WEBERN'S "HEAVENLY JOURNEY" AND SCHOENBERG'S VAGRANT CHORDS\*

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The five *Dehmel Lieder* (1906–08) act as a bridge in Anton Webern's musical development. Along with the earliest of the fourteen *George Lieder* (1908–09), they represent an initial exploration of a new musical style, while still maintaining substantive ties with the Romantic Lied of Webern's predecessors. In addition, the five Dehmel settings are the only songs written by Webern under the direct tutelage of Arnold Schoenberg. In his landmark study of the Second Viennese School, Robert Schollum summarizes the importance of the *Dehmel Lieder* to the development of Webern's later style:

In [the *Dehmel Lieder*]—composed between 1906 and 1908—we confront an essentially mature Webern. Not only is the sound world of songs such as those by Richard Strauss set aside in one stroke, but tonality is also rejected: what is suggested in the first songs, namely a need for formal clarity, which derives from Brahms's strict sense of form—only here and there do the ghosts of Wagner's "endless melody" and chromaticism haunt these works—has already been transformed here into the most concentrated sort of motivic manipulation.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, these works constitute a musical essay on the fundamental and gradual shift in style of the Second Viennese School, an essay whose historical value is not reflected by the scant schol-

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<sup>1</sup> "In ihnen [Die *Dehmel Lieder*] zwischen 1906 und 1908 entstanden—steht nun bereits ein im Prinzip fertiger Webern vor uns. Nicht nur, dass mit einem Schlag die Klangwelt der Lieder etwa von Richard Strauss beiseitegeschoben, die Tonalität weitgehend negiert ist: was sich in den ersten Liedern andeutet, nämlich das Bedürfnis nach formaler Gestaltung, die von der Brahmschen Formstrenge herkommt—nur hie und da spukt Wagners 'unendliche Melodie' und Chromatic herein—, ist hier bereits in konzentrierteste thematische Arbeit verwandelt" (Robert Schollum, *Die Wiener Schule: Schönberg-Berg-Webern, Entwicklung und Ergebnis* [Vienna: Verlag Elisabeth Lafite, 1969], 95). All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.

arly consideration of these songs in the musicological literature since their discovery in 1961.<sup>2</sup>

One previous obstacle to the scholarly treatment of the *Dehmel Lieder* was the lack of critical editions for any of Webern's twenty-five complete or nearly complete songs written between 1899 and 1908.<sup>3</sup> Reinhard Gerlach, one of the few scholars to address these early works, expressed his frustration with this situation:

As long as no authoritative critical editions are published . . . the only reliable source for these highly unusual compositions is Webern's own autographs, which, unfortunately, are not readily available.<sup>4</sup>

The result has been a dearth of scholarly work on Webern's early development and studies with Schoenberg.<sup>5</sup> The final manuscripts for the *Dehmel Lieder*, with their many corrections and

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<sup>2</sup> Hans Moldenhauer discovered these songs in the Webern family's attic. For a complete list of the twenty-five songs discovered at the time, see Hans Moldenhauer, *Anton von Webern: A Chronicle of his Life and Work* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1978), 700–701. The few scholarly considerations of these songs include Allen Forte, "The Golden Thread: Octatonic Music in Anton Webern's Early Songs, with Certain Historical Reflections," in *Webern Studies*, ed. Kathryn Bailey (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 74–110; Forte, *The Atonal Music of Anton Webern* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1998), 21–28; Reinhard Gerlach, "Die Dehmel-Lieder von Anton Webern: Musik und Sprache im Übergang zur Atonalität," in *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz—1970* (Berlin, 1971), 45–100; Gerlach, "Die Handschriften der Dehmel-Lieder von Anton Webern," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 29/2 (1972): 93–113; Gerlach, *Musik und Jugendstil der Wiener Schule 1900–1908* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1985); Elizabeth Marvin and Robert Wason, "On Preparing Anton Webern's Early Songs for Performance: A Collaborators' Dialogue," *Theory and Practice* 20 (1995): 91–124; Garth Preston, "Tonal and Extratonal Functions of the Augmented Triad In the Harmonic Structure of Webern's 'Dehmel Songs'" (M.A. thesis, Univ. of British Columbia, 1989); Robert Wason, "The *Dehmel Lieder*: Signposts on Webern's Road to Atonality," in *Music Theory: Concept and Practice*, ed. James Baker, David Beach, and Jonathan Bernard (Rochester: Univ. of Rochester Press, 1997): 409–432; Matthew Shaftel, "Webern, Schoenberg, and the 'Himmelfahrt' Sketch," *Mitteilungen der Paul Sacher Stiftung* 12 (1999): 27–31; and Shaftel, *Anton Webern Collection: Early Songs 1899–1904: A Critical Edition with Introductory Essay* (New York: Carl Fischer, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> The present author published a critical edition of these songs in 2004 (see n. 2), but, as of yet, there has been no other scholarly consideration of these works.

<sup>4</sup> "Denn solange keine Ausgabe der Dehmel-Lieder publiziert ist, die an Autorität einem von Webern überwachten Druck ebenbürtig wäre, sind die Autographen Weberns die einzigen verlässlichen Quellen für diese höchst eigentümlichen Kompositionen; die Autographen aber sind nicht allgemein zugänglich" (Gerlach, *Musik und Jugendstil*, 176).

<sup>5</sup> The few exceptions to this include Gerlach, *Musik und Jugendstil*; Gareth Cox, "Anton Weberns Studienzeit" (Ph.D. dissertation, Freiburg Univ., 1991); and two studies by the present author, cited in n. 2. Forte, "The Golden Thread," addresses the slightly later *George Lieder*, including the possibility of an octatonic influence. The lack of attention to Webern's studies with Schoenberg stands in stark contrast with the interest in Berg's apprenticeship and early works, including the exhaustive study by Ulrich Krämer, *Alban Berg als Schüler Arnold Schönbergs* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1996).

pencil additions, have much to say about Webern's compositional choices. In particular, the sketches and a fair copy of the most extended of these songs, "Himmelfahrt," provide possible insight into Schoenberg's role as Webern's teacher at this moment of stylistic shift.

"Himmelfahrt" (the text of which is given in Figure 1) was written in 1908, at the culmination of three momentous years for Schoenberg and Webern.<sup>6</sup> In "Composition with Twelve Tones," Schoenberg writes about a new "style" of music that treats dissonances as stable entities and renounces a tonal center:

The first compositions in this new style were written by me around 1908 and, soon afterwards, by my pupils, Anton von Webern and Alban Berg.<sup>7</sup>

In *The Path to the New Music* Webern describes his introduction to the new style as follows:

In 1906 Schoenberg came back from a stay in the country, bringing the Chamber Symphony [op. 9]. It made a colossal impression. I'd been his pupil for three years and immediately felt "You must write something like that, too!" Under the influence of the work I wrote a sonata movement the very next day. In that movement I reached the farthest limits of tonality . . . Both of us sensed that in this sonata movement I'd broken through to a material for which the situation wasn't yet ripe. I finished the movement—it was still related to a key, but in a very remarkable way. Then I was supposed to write a variation movement, but I thought of a variation theme that wasn't really in a key at all . . . Now you have an idea how we wrestled with all this. It was unendurable. Indeed I did go on to write a quartet in C major—but only in passing. The key, the chosen keynote, is invisible, so to speak—"suspended tonality!" but it was all still related to a key, especially at the end, in order to produce the tonic. The tonic itself was not there—it was suspended in space, invisible, no longer needed. On the contrary, it would already have been disturbing if one had truly taken one's bearings by the tonic.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Both an initial fair copy and the final manuscript of "Himmelfahrt" bear the date 1908, written in pencil in Webern's own hand. In addition, a title page for the *Dehmel Lieder*, compiled by Webern several years later, lists "Himmelfahrt" as one of the "4 1908 Lieder." The fair copy is held by the Paul Sacher Stiftung, while the manuscript is in the Moldenhauer Collection at the Library of Congress.

<sup>7</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, "Composition with Twelve Tones [1941]," in *Style and Idea*, ed. Leonard Stein (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1975), 217.

<sup>8</sup> Anton von Webern, *Der Weg zur neuen Musik*, ed. Willi Reich (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1960); trans. Leo Black as *The Path to the New Music* (Bryn Mawr: Theodore Presser Co., 1963), 48. Note that the first published reference to "suspended tonality" is found in Arnold Schoenberg, *Harmonielehre* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1911); trans. Roy Carter as *Theory of Harmony* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978).

**FIGURE 1.** “Himmelfahrt” (Richard Dehmel) text and translation

<i>Himmelfahrt</i>	<i>Heavenly Journey</i>
Schwebst du nieder aus den Weiten, Nacht mit deinem Silberkranz? Hebt in deine Ewigkeiten mich des Dunkels milder Glanz?	Do you float down from the distance, night, with your silver wreath? Does the soft glow of darkness Lift me into your eternities?
Als ob Augen liebend winken: alle Liebe sei enthüllt! Als ob Arme sehrend sinken: alle Sehnsucht sei erfüllt—	It is as though eyes beckoned lovingly: let all love be revealed! It is as though arms drop in longing: let all longing be fulfilled—
Strahlt ein Stern mir aus den Weiten, alle Ängste fallen ab, seligste Versunkenheiten, strahlt und strahlt und will herab.	A star shines upon me from the distance, all fears fall away, most blessed contemplations, it shines and shines and wishes to descend.
Und es treiben mich Gewalten ihm entgegen, und er sinkt— und ein Quellen, ein Entfalten seines Scheines nimmt und bringt	And forces drive me towards it, and it sinks— and a flow, an unfolding of its brightness takes and transports
und erlöst mich in die Zeiten da noch keine Menschen sahn, wie durch Nächte Sterne gleiten, wie den Seelen Rätsel nahn.	and releases me into times, when no man yet saw, how stars glide through nights, how riddles draw near to souls.

Webern shows how the development of the “pantonal” or “atonal” style was neither sudden nor obvious. Instead, it evolved through several hardly distinguishable stages, maintaining long-established processes of motivic variation and formal demarcation, while using contrapuntal techniques to evade possible tonic arrivals. As René Leibowitz has noted:

Just as the first tonal music is very similar to the last modal music, even so the first works in which Schoenberg abandons tonality are hardly different from those in which he still maintained it.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> René Leibowitz, *Schoenberg et son école: l'étape contemporaine du langage musical* (Paris: J. B. Janin, 1947); trans. Dika Newlin as *Schoenberg and His School: The Contemporary Stage of the Language of Music* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 74–75.

The Second Viennese works of this period are a particular case in point. Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern simply extended the spans of time between tonal arrival points to create an interim state of “suspended tonality,” eventually eschewing the arrival points altogether.<sup>10</sup> Berg’s “Im Zimmer” (1907), for example, avoids a tonic until the final B $\flat$  triad. Many of Schoenberg’s *Gurrelieder* (1900–11) close with a “tonic” triad, while offering little sense of a tonal center throughout the body of the song. Finally, all but the last of Webern’s five *Dehmel Lieder* end with a consonant affirmation of a tonic triad, as implied by the key signature, despite having extensively avoided this tonal implication earlier in the songs.

“Himmelfahrt” falls directly into this style of “suspended tonality” and represents a critical milestone in Webern’s studies with Schoenberg. Several years after their composition (most likely around 1920), Webern returned to the *Dehmel Lieder* and, although he never ultimately pursued their publication, ordered them into a tentative cycle with “Himmelfahrt” as the third and middle song.<sup>11</sup> It seems likely, though, that it was the fourth song of the set to be composed, and indeed, it is second only to the final song, “Helle Nacht,” in its complexity and avoidance of tonal closure.<sup>12</sup> This ordering is supported by a compositional résumé that Webern wrote in 1913, where the song is listed fourth among the *Dehmel Songs*.<sup>13</sup> Webern may have seen the song’s

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<sup>10</sup> See Webern, *The Path to the New Music*, 48.

<sup>11</sup> Webern created a title page on what is most likely wartime paper. This paper type is relatively rare in the collection, appearing in only four other locations, including a 1920 arrangement of the Six Pieces for Orchestra, op. 6, for chamber orchestra, and a 1923 sketch of the *Trakl Lieder*, op. 14. For the former, see Felix Meyer, “Anton Webern’s Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6, Arrangement for Chamber Ensemble,” in *Music History from Primary Sources: A Guide to the Moldenhauer Archives*, ed. Jon Newsom and Alfred Mann (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2000), 447.

<sup>12</sup> Gerlach (“Die Handschriften der Dehmel-Lieder”) makes a similar claim, pointing exclusively to the degree of musical complexity.

<sup>13</sup> Gerlach (*Musik und Jugendstil*, 178) believes that Webern based his later reordering of the songs on several musical and poetic details. Preston (“Tonal and Extratonal Functions,” 9–11) cites six large-scale structural features of the cycle that support a central positioning of “Himmelfahrt.” Finally, Wason (“The *Dehmel Lieder*,” 431) suggests that Webern reordered the songs in order to create an inversional balance between the E minor of the song that precedes the E $\flat$ -major “Himmelfahrt,” and the very loosely D-minor song that follows it.

opening and closing E<sup>b</sup>-major triads as a structural necessity, but they certainly posed a compositional problem for the young composer: how to move quickly away from the tonic to a state of “suspended tonality,” while still retaining continuity. It would seem that Webern turned to his compositional mentor for ideas. Schoenberg’s solution was so successful that Webern was able to produce his most extended non-twelve-tone vocal work, “Himmelfahrt.”<sup>14</sup> Webern based his work on what Schoenberg would later call the “vagierende Akkord” or “vagrant chord.”<sup>15</sup>

Ulrich Krämer describes the vagrant chord most succinctly in his book, *Alban Berg als Schüler Arnold Schönbergs*:

The most important characteristic of the vagrant chords is their ambiguity, which on the one hand leads to an enrichment of expressive harmonic possibilities while, on the other hand, weakening the standard operations of tonality and thus contributing to its disintegration.<sup>16</sup>

Webern himself describes the role that the “wandering” or “vagrant” chords play in the dissolution of the “keynote” in *The Path to the New Music*:

As part and parcel of this urge to define the key exactly, the very end of a piece—the “cadence”—came to contain a number of chords that by their nature couldn’t be clearly related to one key. Wandering [vagrant], ambiguous chords appeared, and they were also introduced in the course of the piece, as well as being used in this way at the end. So the course of the piece became steadily more ambiguous, until a time had been reached when these wandering chords were the ones most used, and the moment came when the keynote could be given up altogether.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Berg appears to have approached the same compositional dilemma at approximately the same time in the composition of his Piano Sonata, op. 1 (1907–08). The resulting harmonic language is strikingly similar.

<sup>15</sup> Despite its inability to convey the full meaning of the German term, I will adopt the English “vagrant” as a translation of “vagierend,” following Roy Carter’s translation of *Harmonielehre* as *Theory of Harmony* (1978). This translation is the one most commonly found in the Anglophonic musicological literature, and is thus an important point of reference.

<sup>16</sup> “Das wichtigste Merkmal der vagierenden Akkorde ist ihre Vieldeutigkeit, die einerseits zu einer Bereicherung der harmonischen Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten führte, andererseits jedoch die vereinheitlichende Wirkung der Tonalität schwächte und so zu deren Zerfall beitrug” (Krämer, *Alban Berg als Schüler Arnold Schönbergs*, 74).

<sup>17</sup> Webern, *The Path to the New Music*, 28.

In Schoenberg's *Harmonielehre*, written within the two years following Webern's "Himmelfahrt," the former describes several "vagrant chords." Here he finds the greatest potential for ambiguity in symmetrically derived sonorities, such as the fully-diminished-seventh chord and various whole-tone constructions, whose multiple enharmonic interpretations could lead to a variety of resolutions. He also discusses the nature of the symmetrical chord most utilized in "Himmelfahrt," the augmented triad:

The augmented triad is by virtue of its constitution, as indicated by its belonging to three keys, a vagrant chord like the diminished seventh. Although it does not have as many resolutions as the diminished seventh chord, it is nevertheless like that chord in that it can be introduced, because of its ambiguity, after almost any chord.<sup>18</sup>

Webern echoes Schoenberg's description, noting that "with these wandering chords one could get to every possible region."<sup>19</sup>

The heightened potential of the vagrant chords allowed for the very kinds of tonal "suspension" sought by Webern in the *Dehmel Lieder* and other works of this time period. By converting ordinary triads into supercharged "vagrant sonorities" that, instead of moving to one of several potential resolutions, lead directly to other "vagrant sonorities" (frequently in sequence), he was able to avoid direct reference to a tonal center for substantial passages of music. The opening E $\flat$ -major triad of "Himmelfahrt" thus sees an immediate voice-leading transformation (Figure 2). The right hand starts a downward arpeggiation of the tonic triad, but instead of the expected E $\flat$ 4, the melody slips down to B $\sharp$ 3.<sup>20</sup> This opening melodic shift, B $\flat$  to G to B $\sharp$ , is motivic and appears throughout the work. By raising the fifth of the chord from B $\flat$  to

<sup>18</sup> Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, 243.

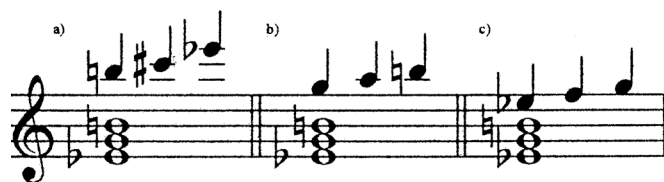
<sup>19</sup> Webern, *The Path to the New Music*, 38.

<sup>20</sup> I have adopted the American Acoustical Society's octave designations, wherein middle C is C4. I avoid using octave designations except where necessary for sake of clarity.

FIGURE 2. "Himmelfahrt," mm. 1-7, final manuscript with linear analysis

The image displays a musical score for the first seven measures of the piece "Himmelfahrt". The score is written in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It consists of five systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line starting at measure 1 with the tempo marking "Sehr ruhig" and the dynamic "pp". The lyrics "Schwebst du nie - der aus den Wei - ten," are written below the vocal line. The second system shows the piano accompaniment with dynamics "ppp" and "pp". The third system contains a detailed linear analysis of the piano accompaniment, with various lines and annotations such as "4-24", "5", "6", and "3". The fourth system shows the piano accompaniment with dynamics "3-ppp" and "pp". The fifth system shows the piano accompaniment with dynamics "pp".



FIGURE 3. Schoenberg, *Harmonielehre*, Ex. 318

B $\flat$ , Webern transforms the stable opening sonority into a “vagrant” chord, with the potential to move to “almost any chord.”<sup>21</sup>

Webern continues to expand the possibilities of the opening triad by moving melodically to another pitch foreign to the key of E $\flat$  major: C $\sharp$  (m. 2). This highlighting of the whole-tone/augmented-chord relationship mirrors Example 318a from Schoenberg’s *Harmonielehre* (Figure 3). Here, Schoenberg demonstrates how the whole-tone scale and its subset sonorities can be derived from simple melodic passing tones added to the members of the augmented chord.<sup>22</sup>

Over an augmented triad the melody steps from chord tone to chord tone, using a passing tone that produces two whole steps, thus dividing the major third into two equal parts. This progression can of course start from each of the chord tones, and the result is the whole-tone scale.<sup>23</sup>

The tetrachordal sonorities described—an augmented chord plus a whole tone added to any of its members (all members of set class 4-24 [0248])—join the augmented triad as essential harmonies of the song; all are cited by Schoenberg as related vagrant chords.<sup>24</sup> These dissonant

<sup>21</sup> For an exhaustive typology of augmented triads in the *Dehmel Lieder* see Preston, “Tonal and Extratonal Functions.” He describes six “types” of augmented chords that fall into four different groups, based on potential scale-degree function. Because Preston focuses on the vertical dimension, ascribing a traditional chordal “root” and “function” to each augmented chord, his analyses differ greatly from my own, which attempt to reconcile linear and harmonic elements (as has become common practice with traditional tonal works as well as with the “free atonal” works of the Second Viennese composers).

<sup>22</sup> While this may seem rudimentary from a contemporary perspective, its historical significance to the extension and subsequent departure from tonality is worthy of exploration.

<sup>23</sup> Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, 391.

<sup>24</sup> Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, 397.

harmonies function as stable supports for foreground and middleground contrapuntal expansions, acting in a similar manner to consonant prolongations in the more strongly diatonic repertoire.<sup>25</sup> Webern generates one additional sonority from the augmented chord by adding a semitone to any of its members. The resulting tetrachord (4-19 [0148]) appears to be relegated to surface-level events, although its restatement each time a major triad is transformed into an augmented triad by raising its fifth (see the opening  $E^b-G-B^b-B^{\sharp}$ ) imbues the harmony with motivic salience.<sup>26</sup> As noted by Webern in the earlier quotation, he reserves unmodified major and minor triads for points of significant structural weight, notably the openings and cadences of sections A (mm. 1–14) and A' (mm. 32–end) within this ternary-form song.

The voice-leading graph shown underneath Figure 2 illustrates the prolongational properties of the augmented and whole-tone chords in the song's introduction. Here,  $B^{\sharp}$  acts as an octave-transferred passing tone between  $B^b$  and C, creating the first augmented triad.  $B^b$  returns over a D-augmented chord (m. 3), which substitutes for the dominant and initiates a third-progression, each note of which is supported by one of the four augmented or related whole-tone chords through a technique similar to chordal planing (with the important distinction that these chords are actually structural supports, at least in the foreground). Although the unusual linear pattern is characterized by motion in parallel major thirds and minor sixths, I have chosen to represent all augmented-to-augmented patterns as a third and augmented fifth, reflect-

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<sup>25</sup> I am using the terms “background” and “middleground” to refer to a hierarchy of harmonic relationships that govern important structural entities, following the convention set out in Patrick McCreless, *Wagner's “Siegfried”: Its Drama, History and Music* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1982), 89. It is *not* my intent to suggest that this music follows traditional Schenkerian paradigms.

<sup>26</sup> The major/augmented tetrachord (4-19 [0148]) is common in both Schoenberg and Webern. Allen Forte has suggested that it was derived as a shortened version of Schoenberg's musical signature,  $Es-C-H-B-E-G$  ( $E^b-C-B^{\sharp}-B^b-E-G$ ). The opening phrase of “Himmelfahrt” could thus be seen as a pitch-specific reference to Schoenberg:  $E^b, B^{\sharp}, B^b, G$ . For more on musical signatures, see Forte, “Schoenberg's Creative Evolution,” *Musical Quarterly* 64/2 (1978), 137–138.

ing the initial derivation of the augmented chord from the opening melodic motive. Incidentally, in using each of the four species of augmented chord, Webern completes the first aggregate of the song just as the voice enters with a repetition of the head motive. While the topic of aggregate completion lies outside the focus of this study, it does appear to carry some structural weight in these early songs and it certainly remains a suggestive point for further exploration.<sup>27</sup>

The left hand's imitation of the compound registers in the right hand (starting in m. 3) obscures the linear descent in the bass, as seen in the foreground graph underneath Figure 2. The second graph, a deeper-foreground level, normalizes the register and better demonstrates the parallel motions between the bass and the melody as they each descend a major third. The third progression ends the introduction in m. 5 with a return to the  $E^b$ -major triad. The tonic supports the restatement of the voice's primary tone (*Kopftön*),  $B^b$ , which initiates a verbatim repeat of the introduction's melodic material. Webern appropriately sets  $B^{\sharp}3$ , the voice's nadir pitch, on the word: "nieder" (down), while setting the word "Weiten" (distance) at the opposite end of the pitch spectrum ( $B^b4$ ).

Figure 4 shows the A section, whose background constitutes a large-scale chromatic double neighbor in the melody, traveling "full circle" from  $B^b4$  to  $A^{\sharp}4$  to  $B^{\sharp}4$  back to  $B^b4$ , appropriately setting the word "Silberkranz" (silver *wreath*). The structural neighbors are prolonged by augmented triads on F and  $E^b$ , each of which is itself prolonged through the  $\frac{6}{3}$  linear patterns familiar from the piano introduction. These two augmented triads combine to create the entire whole-tone scale, recalling Schoenberg's derivation of the whole-tone collection seen in

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<sup>27</sup> For an introduction to the topic of aggregates in Webern's pre-serial songs, see Anne Shreffler, "'Mein Weg geht jetzt vorüber': The Vocal Origins of Webern's Twelve-Tone Composition," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 47/2 (1994): 275–339.

FIGURE 4. "Himmelfahrt," mm. 5–14 (A section), final manuscript with linear analysis

The figure displays a musical score for the A section of "Himmelfahrt" (mm. 5–14). It features three systems of notation: vocal line, piano accompaniment, and a linear analysis. The vocal line is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time, with lyrics in German. The piano accompaniment is in the same key and time, with dynamic markings of *pp* and *p*. The linear analysis at the bottom uses numbers 3, 6, and 9 to represent intervals or chords, with vertical lines and arrows connecting them to the notes in the piano accompaniment. Measure numbers 5, 9, and 12 are indicated above the vocal line. Performance instructions such as *pp*, *p*, *rit.*, and *contra* are also present.

Schwebst du nie - der aus den Wei - ten, Nacht - mit deinem Sil - ber kranz? Hebt in dei - ne E - wig - kei - ten mich des Dun - kels mil - der Glanz?

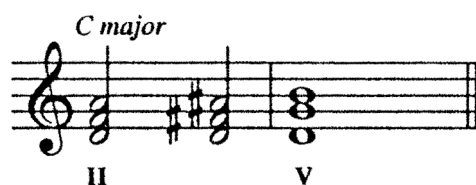
FIGURE 5. Schoenberg, *Harmonielehre*, Ex. 177a

Figure 3. Webern further exploits the whole-tone realm, placing five-note whole-tone harmonies (5-33 [02468]) on the final beats of mm. 9 and 10.

Instead of continuing this passage with an endless succession of “vagrant” sonorities, Webern brings the A section to a weak but functional cadential close, with a motion from dominant to tonic in  $E\flat$ . In order to exit from the prolongational “wandering,” he employs one of Schoenberg’s standard resolutions for the augmented chord (Figure 5), replicating the voicing exactly, with the third and fifth of the triad ascending chromatically. The third and fifth of the F-augmented chord, unfolded between mm. 11 and 13, move by semitone to the  $B\flat$  second-inversion dominant in m. 13 ( $C\sharp_4$ – $D_4$  in the bass,  $C\sharp_5$ – $D_5$  in the right hand, and  $A_4$ – $B\flat_4$  in the voice). Again, Webern obscures the middleground voice leading and overall harmonic structure through canonic imitation in the piano parts, so the motion can best be seen in the graph underneath Figure 4. The voice’s opening  $B\flat$  returns in m. 13, approached through a registrally exact retrograde of the opening  $B\flat_4$ – $B\flat_3$ – $C\sharp_4$  motive (mm. 12–13), and falling over yet another four-note whole-tone chord (4-21 [0246]) in m. 13. The C–E minor sixth in the bass, however, waits until the final eighth note of m. 13 to move upward to D–F, completing the dominant chord. The unobscured but modally altered  $E\flat$  tonic, on the downbeat of the following measure (m. 14), resolves the dominant chord, thus completing a tonally closed A section.

The “ambiguous” nature of the vagrant chords is best demonstrated at the end of “Himmelfahrt” (Figure 6). Although the piece ends on an unadorned  $E\flat$ -major triad, a fifth

FIGURE 6. "Himmelfahrt," mm. 39–end, final manuscript with linear analysis

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Himmelfahrt," measures 39 through the end. The score is presented in three systems. The top system shows the vocal line with lyrics: "Wie durch Näch - te Ster - ne glei - ten, wie den See - len Rät - sel - nahn." The middle system shows the piano accompaniment with dynamic markings of *pp* and *ppp*. The bottom system shows a linear analysis of the piano accompaniment, with chord symbols and figured bass notation. The chord symbols are: Eb: Dom. Substitute, E:, (V), i, (bii), i, V, i, i. The figured bass notation includes: 4-24, 4-24, 4-24, 4-24 (18), 4-24 (14), 4-24. A reference "6-35 (Baire WT collection)" is also present. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

progression (shown in the alto voice) from B $\natural$ 4 in m. 39 to E $\natural$ 4 in m. 43 suggests a linear descent from dominant to tonic in E minor. The two seemingly contrary harmonic objectives (E $\flat$  major and E minor) constitute the "riddle" identified by the penultimate word of the song, "Rätsel." Both the B $\natural$ 4 and B $\flat$ 4 that initiate the final phrase (m. 39) are supported by whole-tone or augmented harmonies. The whole-tone harmony that includes the E $\flat$ -augmented triad over an F bass (4-24 [0248]) continues to support B $\natural$  in m. 40, and is immediately followed by the same harmony transposed up a semitone (also in m. 40). This augmented triad with added F $\sharp$  supports an A $\flat$  structural neighbor in the voice. The left hand's F $\sharp$ 3 initiates an unfolding of the B $\flat$ -augmented chord through mm. 40 and 41, recalling this harmony's employment as a dominant substitution in the song's opening (e.g., in m. 3). As in the initial A section, Webern completes the entire whole-tone collection by combining a series of augmented chords with added whole steps. The voice and piano's A $\flat$  is prolonged until the last beat of m. 41, where the arrival of the fourth augmented chord completes another aggregate and supports a shift to A $\natural$  in the voice.

The F $\sharp$ 5 (doubled at F $\sharp$ 6) in m. 42 serves a dual function. It can be interpreted enharmonically as G $\flat$  of an E $\flat$ -minor triad, and also as the fifth of a first-inversion dominant chord to E minor, with the bass's E $\flat$  enharmonically interpreted as the leading tone. This functional ambiguity is facilitated by the delay of B $\flat$ 2's arrival in the left hand, as well as its brief eighth-note duration. The harmony in beat 2 of m. 42 is the opening E $\flat$ -augmented chord, which can evoke the keys of E $\flat$  major *and* E minor. Webern is able to support this ambiguity because the E $\flat$ -G-B $\natural$  augmented chord can also be read as a B $\natural$ -D $\sharp$ -F $\times$  augmented chord. Ultimately, the chord is only one voice-leading semitone away from both E $\flat$ -major and B-major triads: a true "vagrant chord."

An E-minor reading of this passage is further supported by the arrival of an E-minor triad, which is arpeggiated on the final beat of m. 42. The following measure confirms an E-minor hearing, obscuring the left hand's brief B $\flat$ 2 with simultaneous and rearticulated B $\sharp$ s in the right hand. It is only in m. 44 that the fantastic journey described by Dehmel's poem carries the listener back to its starting point, as the E and B $\sharp$  of the E-minor triad slip down by semitone to return to an E $\flat$ -major triad. While a fifth descent in E minor is certainly audible, one could read an almost equally plausible descent from B $\flat$  in the same measures.<sup>28</sup> What Webern has achieved here is a dual-tonic status wherein two tonics, related by a semitone, are supported simultaneously through the auspices of the vagrant chord.<sup>29</sup>

Christopher Lewis discusses a strikingly similar moment in Schoenberg's "Traumleben" (op. 6/1), written only a few years before "Himmelfahrt."<sup>30</sup> In "Traumleben," the keys of both F and E major are implied at the beginning, but it is not until the end that the simultaneous unfolding of F and E occurs, only to have F resolve to the final E-major triad. This is precisely what occurs in "Himmelfahrt." Here, the opening hints at an E-minor reading by highlighting the pitches B $\sharp$ , F $\sharp$ , C $\sharp$ , and A $\sharp$ . In fact, when the first arpeggiation of the song does not fall to E $\flat$  but to B $\sharp$ , the dominant chord of E minor is suggested by an enharmonic interpretation of E $\flat$  as D $\sharp$ . It is not until the song's conclusion, however, that the E-minor potential is actually realized, with the return of the B $\flat$ 4–G4–B $\sharp$ 3 head motive in mm. 44–45 signaling the chromatic return to E $\flat$

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<sup>28</sup> Note that the lack of a strong scale-degree 2 in E $\flat$  makes a fifth descent unlikely. A B $\flat$ –G third descent, on the other hand, seems quite possible. In my graph, I still favor the full fifth descent in E minor. I believe a most convincing background reading, however, would show no fundamental descent at all, but instead would show a large-scale neighbor motion between B $\sharp$  and B $\flat$ . This better evokes the departure and return suggested in the text.

<sup>29</sup> Although Robert Bailey's notion of a "double-tonic" complex seems quite intriguing in light of my claims here, his overall methodology is quite different than mine, as is the repertoire with which he is working. (See Bailey, "An Analytical Study of the Sketches and Drafts," in Richard Wagner, *Prelude and Transfiguration from Tristan und Isolde*, ed. Bailey [New York: Norton, 1985]: 117–124.)

<sup>30</sup> For a thorough discussion of this song, see Christopher Lewis, "Mirrors and Metaphors: Reflections on Schoenberg and Nineteenth-Century Tonality," *19th-Century Music* 11/1 (1987): 26–42.



major. This particular harmonic ambiguity might be a direct borrowing from Schoenberg or it might simply be an indication of his influence.

Schoenberg also might have had a hand in the B section's sentential liquidation (mm. 14–31). The structure of the text that starts the B section clearly lends itself to a two-part parallel musical setting:

Als ob Augen liebend winken:  
 alle Liebe sei enthüllt!  
 Als ob Arme sehrend sinken:  
 alle Sehnsucht sei erfüllt!<sup>31</sup>

Dehmel starts alternate lines with identical syllables, but also pairs thematic elements: eyes and arms (“Augen,” “Arme”), as well as love and longing, and their adverbial counterparts (“liebend,” “sehrend” and “Liebe,” “Sehnsucht”). Webern follows Dehmel's lead by opening with a three-measure phrase unit (mm. 14–17), which I have broken into two subphrases, *t* and *u* (Figure 7). The *t+u* phrase is immediately repeated a whole step higher (mm. 18–21), in the formal “presentation” section of what could be a sixteen-bar sentence, as described by Schoenberg in his *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*.<sup>32</sup> Webern ties these two phrases (mm. 14–21) together with a chromatic expansion that ascends by step on each of the keywords discussed above. The first syllable of “Augen” is set with D $\sharp$ 5, “liebend” falls on D $\sharp$ 5 and E $b$ 5, then “Liebe” completes the expansion on E $\sharp$ 5. This expansion is simply continued in the sequential repetition, starting with E $\sharp$ 5 on “Arme” and finishing with the apex pitch of the entire song, F $\sharp$ 5, which appropriately sets “Sehnsucht” (longing). The only diversion from the sequential

<sup>31</sup> The exclamation points appear in one of Webern's own manuscripts, but not in the original poem.

<sup>32</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* [1948], ed. Gerald Strang and Leonard Stein (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 23. This type of liquidated formal structure is also discussed in Webern, *The Path to the New Music*, 27, 30–31.

FIGURE 7. "Himmelfahrt," mm. 14–31 (B section), final manuscript

14 Als ob Au - gen lie - bend win - ken: al - le Lie - be sei ent - hüllt! Als ob Ar - me seh - nend sin - ken: al - le Sehn - sucht sei er - füllt Strahlt ein

18 *X*

22 Stern mir aus den Wei - ten, al - le Äng - ste fal - len ab, se - - - lig - ste Ver - sunk - ken - hei - ten, strahlt

26 *u fragments:*

30 und strahlt und will he - rab, Und es trei - ben mich Ge - wal - ten ihm ent - ge - gen, und er sinkt

*rit.* *sehr breit*

*ff* *rit.* *fff*

repetition in the voice is an ironic semitone *ascent* on the word “*sincken*” (to *descend*). The accompaniment of mm. 14–21 essentially dictates the pitch material of the voice, although the rhythmic intervals of imitation vary. The accompaniment briefly strays from an exact sequential repetition in mm. 17–18 (while staying within a whole step of the original), but then returns to an exact transposition in m. 19.

Webern begins a liquidation of the *t+u* theme in m. 21. The liquidation starts with the *u* section of the theme (mm. 21–23), transposed by tritone (T6) from its original occurrence in mm. 16–17. This particular transposition is reminiscent of the song’s head motive, B $\flat$ 4–G4–B $\sharp$ 3, but here it is retrograded with a semitone alteration (B $\sharp$ 3–G4–B $\sharp$ 4). Webern sets the word “Stern” (star) with the highest pitch, but it arrives on B $\sharp$ 4 rather than on the expected B $\flat$ 4. In order to clarify further the motivic origins of *u*, Webern accompanies the B $\sharp$ 3 with an E $\flat$ -augmented triad in the piano. When the altered B $\sharp$ 4 appears on “Stern,” it is accompanied by D $\sharp$  and F $\sharp$  in the right hand, pairing it in a way that foreshadows the key of E minor, which appears in the final measures of the song.

In the final manuscript of “Himmelfahrt,” an editorial X in a script and color that does not appear to be Webern’s own is inscribed right before the T6 appearance of *u* (m. 21). The X is accompanied by several deletions and a rewriting of the original quarter notes of the left hand in eighths (only the final version is shown in Figure 7). It is possible that the corrector objected to the blatant reference to the song’s opening and the stasis created by the quarter-note thirds. The revised eighth notes outline the same major thirds that originally accompanied *u*, while avoiding an early sense of recapitulation and creating more momentum for the liquidation.

Two other points corroborate this view. First, Webern adds a decrescendo and changes the dynamic to *piano* just before the word “Stern,” lessening the sense of arrival on the upper B $\sharp$

**FIGURE 8.** Liquidation in the B section, mm. 14–31

<u>Measures</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Transposition</u>
14–17	t + u	T0
18–21	t' + u	T2
21–23	u'	T6
23–25	u''	T9
25–26	u-shortened	T10
26–27	u-shortened	T0
27–28	M3 from u	T0
28	M3 from u	T2
28–29	u-shortened	T1
29–31	fragmentation in thirds and sixths	

in m. 22. Second, he rewrites the left-hand part in m. 22, replacing what was originally a direct imitation of the voice's  $B\sharp_3-G_4-B\sharp_4$  with eighth notes and ending instead on  $G_4$  ( $B\sharp_2-G_3-G_4$ ). Thus, Webern obscures the canonic relationship in favor of a more developmental independence of lines. The next instance of direct imitation is not until the beginning of the recapitulation.

Webern uses increasingly shorter snippets of the B section's opening phrase, eventually reducing it to the descending major third of "Liebe"; this is summarized in Figure 8. The shortening of *u* (mm. 25–27) allows Webern to emphasize the strong syllables in the text "seligste versunkenheiten" on contour peaks, with durations of three eighth notes (mm. 25–26 and 26–27). Thus, when the composer places an *accelerando* over the further fragmented four-eighth-note grouping of "strahlt und strahlt" (M3 from *u*, mm. 27–28), the effect is a hastened drive to the recapitulation. Webern reaffirms this with yet another stepwise expansion of register, starting with the  $B\sharp_4$  of "Stern" (m. 22); moving to  $D\flat_5$  on "Ängste" (m. 24);  $D\sharp_5$  on "seligste" (m. 25);  $E\sharp_5$  on "Versunkenheiten" (m. 26), "strahlt" (m. 27), and "treiben" (m. 29);  $F\sharp_5$  on "gegen" (m. 30); and culminating on  $F\sharp_5$  (m. 31), which—as noted earlier—sets the word "sinkt" in an ironic fashion. Indeed the listener has lost all sense of direction in the liquidated frenzy, as the ever-shining star "transports" the poet to distant "times."

The recapitulation of the A section opens with imitative treatment of the head motive between the voice and left hand of the piano, recalling the unrevised version of mm. 21–22.<sup>33</sup> Here, however, Webern omits the unaltered E $\flat$ -major chord of the opening, avoiding a clear reactivation of E $\flat$  major (Figure 9). An examination of an earlier fair copy of the song presents a different strategy for ending the B section (Figure 10).<sup>34</sup> This version shows a number of pencil additions, including an entire staff devoted to the final version's left-hand triplets, which were originally conceived as eighth notes throughout the B section (not shown in example).

The most substantial deviations from the final manuscript appear at the end of the B section (mm. 14–31 in the final manuscript, mm. 14–34 in the earlier one), leading into the first measure of the recapitulation. Here, instead of the liquidation, the final phrase of Webern's B section opens with yet another altered version of the head motive (B $\flat$ 4–G $\flat$ 4–B $\natural$ 3) over an unaltered tonic triad of a full measure's length, which is held in the right hand and arpeggiated in the left. This chord is followed by an unaltered B $\flat$ -dominant chord in the right hand (m. 32), accompanied by an eighth-note rest in the left. Although the manuscript is written in ink with pencil additions, the tonic chord has been circled with red-pencil (the same pencil used for the X in the B section), suggesting a significant editorial deletion. In addition, the entrance of the recapitulation is marked with a large red X.

Although there is no definitive answer as to who made the markings in red, the empty staff line that Webern left between staves of music suggests that his first draft was written with the intention of showing it to Schoenberg for corrections. Another red circle appears in "Kunfttag I," from the four posthumously published *George Lieder*, also from this period; but no red

<sup>33</sup> Note that I have deliberately chosen the term "recapitulation" rather than "reprise" here, as I believe it better captures the dramatic reinterpretation of the original materials in the A' section.

<sup>34</sup> The earlier version is held by the Paul Sacher Stiftung.

FIGURE 9. "Himmelfahrt," mm. 29–33 (end of B section into recapitulation), final manuscript

29 *rit.* 31 *sehr breit* *p* 1. Zeitmaß

(Herab), Und es trei-ben mich Ge-wal-ten ihm ent-ge-gen, und er sinkt und ein Quel-len, ein Ent(falten)

*ff* *fff* *f* *p*

FIGURE 10. "Himmelfahrt," mm. 30–36 (end of B section into recapitulation), original fair copy

30 34 *p* *pp* X

Und es trei-ben mich Ge-wal-ten ihm ent-ge-gen, und er sinkt und ein Quel-len, ein Ent(falten)

marks appear in any of the songs written *before* Webern's studies with Schoenberg. In addition, similar markings appear in a passage from the contemporaneous *Gurrelieder*, as copied into the Berg–Schoenberg correspondence.<sup>35</sup> It is not unreasonable to speculate that it was Schoenberg who made the marks in Webern's score. Perhaps Schoenberg wished to call Webern's attention to these measures, suggesting that he remove the clear tonal reference while leaving the “required” tonic chords at the opening and closing, as Schoenberg had done in his own *Gurrelieder* at the request of his publisher.<sup>36</sup> Regardless of whether or not it was Schoenberg who made the corrections, the result is clear from the final sketch: a radically revised and destabilized middle section.

There are several possible reasons for this revision. The most obvious possibility—that the clear tonic followed by its dominant seemed out of context in the middle of this highly chromatic work—may have played a role. There is also another, perhaps more compelling reason: in the revision, the modified head motive, from the final phrase of the B section (mm. 30–31 of Figure 10), is also removed, suggesting that the corrector wished to clarify the formal structure of the song (compare Figures 9 and 10). Perhaps he deemed that the modified head motive, accompanied by the unaltered tonic, created a false sense of return, reducing the impact of the actual recapitulation that would appear four measures later (m. 35). This would explain the second marking at the point of recapitulation. In this way, the modification actually increases the song's comprehensibility, in the Schoenbergian sense of the term, while “suspending” the E<sup>b</sup>-major tonality.

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<sup>35</sup> Julianne Brand, Christopher Hailey, and Donald Harris (eds.), *The Berg–Schoenberg Correspondence* (New York: Norton, 1987), 197. Schoenberg had sent the scores to Berg in order for him to furnish tonal cadences. A manuscript of Berg's tonal cadences for the *Gurrelieder* is held at the Library of Congress.

<sup>36</sup> Brand (et al.), *The Berg–Schoenberg Correspondence*, 197.

The liquidation in the revision would also have been seen by Schoenberg as a more appropriate way to introduce a recapitulation. Schoenberg describes liquidation technique in his essay, “Connection of Musical Ideas”:

By producing at least a preliminary end to a section it [the liquidation] makes the appearance of a new idea a reasonable, if not necessary, event. A liquidation is often carried out unto the entire elimination of all features. No wonder that in such a case the entrance of a terrifically strong contrast does not violate the feeling of balance. It is as if everything began anew.<sup>37</sup>

Schoenberg’s description applies to the situation in “Himmelfahrt” quite well. The more extended themes of the development (based on the augmented chord) are first reduced to a steady triplet arpeggiation of alternating augmented chords, and finally “liquidated,” leaving only the major thirds. This prepares the beginning “anew” of the A section.

The formal clarification of the song, through the addition of a liquidation section and the removal of the modified head motive, is also supported by significant changes in the performance markings. The *decrescendo* from *forte* to *piano* during the final phrase of the B section in the original version (Figure 10) is simply continued to *pianissimo* through the entrance of the actual recapitulation, further obscuring the formal division. In the final manuscript, however, Webern writes an uncharacteristic climactic *crescendo* to *fortissimo* and a *ritardando* to the final measure of the B section (m. 31). He also marks “sehr breit” over the F#5 and the modified head motive in the top voice of the piano in order to heighten the contrast between it and the much softer entrance of the voice in the “*erste Zeitmaß*,” or original tempo (m. 32). The performance markings thus emphasize the culmination of the liquidation process and heighten the contrast between the end of the B section and the recapitulation of the A.

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<sup>37</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, “Connection of Musical Ideas [c. 1948],” in *Style and Idea*, ed. Leonard Stein (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1975), 288.



Another possible reason for the *X* under the first complete measure of the recapitulation (m. 35 in Figure 10) is suggested by the counterpoint. Exploiting the symmetrical structure of the augmented triad and the contrapuntal techniques of Heinrich Isaac (the subject of Webern's doctoral dissertation), the composer uses double and triple invertible counterpoint throughout the song. The piano introduces the recapitulation (m. 34 of Figure 10) by playing augmented chords built on  $B\flat$ ,  $F\sharp$ , and  $B\sharp$  in the right hand, with the bottom pitches doubled an octave above, while the left hand plays  $E-G-A\flat-F\sharp-E\flat$ . In the following measure (m. 35) the hands are reversed, so the right plays  $E-G-A\flat-F\sharp-E\flat$ , while the left plays the three augmented triads. The second of the three triads, however, has been changed to start on  $G\sharp$ —an apparent mistake in counterpoint, which is indicated with a red *X*. Webern's reason for the alteration, however, is sound, because what appears as an altered form of the head motive in the right hand in m. 34 ( $B\flat 5/6-F\sharp 5/6-B\sharp 4/5$ ) returns in its original form in the left hand of m. 35 ( $B\flat 4/3-G 4/3-B\sharp 3/2$ ), followed immediately by its imitation in the voice. Webern's alteration of the second chord allows for major-third support of the head motive, and thus the pitch material of this measure reappears essentially unchanged in the final manuscript.

Nearly all five of Webern's *Dehmel Lieder* written between 1906 and 1908 include passages of vagrant chord prolongation. "Am Ufer," for example, opens with an  $A\flat$ -augmented chord, which is unfolded and prolonged (with an added semitone) throughout the opening phrase (Figure 11). By contrast, the settings of Dehmel texts written before Webern's studies with Schoenberg contain little if any prolongation of (or through) the augmented triad, or any of the other vagrant chords. A strikingly simple example can be seen in "Nachtgebet der Braut," written at the end of 1903 (Figure 12). Here we find a short passage wherein an augmented chord is

FIGURE 11. "Am Ufer," song 2 of the *Dehmel Lieder*, mm. 1–5, final manuscript

Musical score for "Am Ufer," song 2 of the *Dehmel Lieder*, mm. 1–5, final manuscript. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The vocal line is marked "Sehr ruhig und langsam" and "ppp". The lyrics are: "Die Welt ver - stummt, dein Blut er - klingt,". The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes, marked "ppp". The piece concludes with a "pp äusserst zart" marking and triplet figures.

FIGURE 12. "Nachtgebet der Braut," from *Drei Gedichte*, mm. 31–37, final manuscript

Musical score for "Nachtgebet der Braut," from *Drei Gedichte*, mm. 31–37, final manuscript. The score is in 3/4 time and A major. The vocal line begins at measure 31 with the lyrics: "Son - nen - kuss em - pfahn, und sei - ne Flam - men - kräf - te trin - ken, ihm Flam - men, Flam - men wie - der - sprühn,". The piano accompaniment features a series of chords, marked "crescendo ..." and "stringendo ...". The piece concludes with a "sfz" marking and a final chord.

FIGURE 13. "Kunfttag I," from *Vier Lieder nach Gedichten von Stefan George*, mm. 13–end, fair copy

sequenced up by semitone until all four augmented triads have been exhausted. However, these augmented triads are not truly structural prolongational supports. Instead, they simply act to interrupt the tonal cadential progression suggested by the first measure of the excerpt.

The suspension of tonality through the use of “vagrant chords” is found in many other works contemporaneous with “Himmelfahrt.” Berg’s Piano Sonata, and his songs of op. 2, make significant use of the augmented triad in large-scale prolongations. Webern’s own “Kunfttag I” ends with a progression that is quite similar to those in “Himmelfahrt,” moving from a sonority that is bounded by B $\flat$  in the left hand and F $\sharp$  in the voice to an E $\flat$ -augmented triad with a superimposed E $\flat$  (Figure 13). This chord, too, received a red circle, after which a double bar and fermata were moved to the previous chord. Perhaps Schoenberg thought this song too far advanced to end with a tonally suggestive cadence. It seems likely that “Kunfttag I” was written in close proximity to “Himmelfahrt,” because of the similarities suggested above, and also because they are both written on paper with twenty-two lines, making them two of only three Webern songs to be written on such paper. The original version of a later work, Webern’s *Vier Stücke*, op. 7, also ended with an E $\flat$ -augmented triad; but it was changed to a major chord in the

final version.<sup>38</sup> The title page for op. 7 is on the same unusual paper as the title page for the five *Dehmel Lieder*—a cheap paper that contains no watermark and includes an *ossia* staff. This paper type is found in only four other locations in the entire Webern collection. Perhaps the similarity between the two works was not happenstance, but a reference to Webern’s own earlier style. Happenstance or not, it is clear that Schoenberg’s “vagrant chords” played an important role in the works composed shortly before and shortly after the writing of his *Harmonielehre*.

Webern’s *Dehmel Lieder* have much to tell us about their composer. They mark the end of an important stage in Webern’s career, lending insight as to how Webern coped with the “unendurable” transition to the later style for which he is well known.<sup>39</sup> In addition, these songs represent a unique record of Webern’s studies with Schoenberg, demonstrating how Schoenberg’s interests in specific harmonic and formal issues were reflected in Webern’s own highly contrapuntal style. Perhaps Webern felt that these songs relied too much on Schoenberg’s ideas, and this is why he never published them—although he went so far as to create a title page for the collection. Because Webern never prepared the songs for final publication, they did not receive the significant revision that the *George Lieder*, opp. 3 and 4, did for Universal’s 1921 edition, and thus they remain an unadulterated testament to Webern’s compositional evolution.

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<sup>38</sup> Felix Meyer and Anne Shreffler, “Performance and Revision: The Early History of Webern’s Four Pieces for Violin and Piano, Op. 7,” in *Webern Studies*, ed. Kathryn Bailey (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 152.

<sup>39</sup> Webern, *The Path to the New Music*, 48.

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## ABSTRACT

The five *Dehmel Lieder* (1906–08) act as a bridge in Anton Webern's musical development. Along with the earliest of the fourteen *George Lieder*, they represent an initial exploration of a new musical style, while still maintaining substantive ties with the Romantic Lied of Webern's predecessors. Because the five Dehmel settings are the only songs written by Webern under the direct tutelage of Arnold Schoenberg, they also provide unique insight into Schoenberg's role as Webern's teacher at this moment of stylistic shift. This article focuses particularly on the fair copy and sketches of the most extended of the Dehmel songs, "Himmelfahrt," using linear analysis to show how Webern employed "vagrant" harmonies (in Schoenberg's terms) and contrapuntal delays of tonal arrivals to arrive at a state of "suspended tonality." In addition, it engages several markings in the sketches to speculate about Schoenberg's influence on these songs.

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Matthew Shaftel is an Associate Professor of Music at Florida State University and holds a Ph.D. from Yale University. He recently completed a four-year term as editor of *Music Theory Online*, a journal of the Society for Music Theory. His many publications and presentations reflect an interest in opera, as well as in texted music from 1845–1945, and include articles on Schubert, Schoenberg, Webern, Stephen Foster, and Cole Porter. His book-length publications include a critical edition of Anton Webern's early music and a coauthored aural-skills textbook, to be published by Oxford University Press. He is also coauthoring a book on Cole Porter with Allen Forte. He serves on the publications committee of the College Music Society, where he recently rotated off the board of directors. At home, he is the director of FSU's Music Living Learning Center, director of music at Good Shepherd Church, president of the Tallahassee Youth Orchestras, and, most importantly, dad to three creative and (mostly) well-behaved children.

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