

Communicating Atonal Music: Alban Berg as Lecturer and Dialogue Partner

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Abstract

As a result of the new aesthetics and compositional techniques of musical modernism around and after 1900, the expectations of a concert and opera audience and the actual musical production of the musical avant-garde increasingly drifted apart. Scandal concerts multiplied and heated debates were carried out in the feuilleton. Musicians reacted to this discourse not only by establishing their own communities of interest and presentation platforms for new music. In addition, there was an increased interest among composers to communicate their music to an audience in such a way that it was understood. Introductory lectures, essays, interviews, program notes, and conversations increasingly accompanied performances or new releases of new music. These composers' statements have been used by musicological research so far largely as sources of information about the respective works. Hardly has research reflected upon the fact that these utterances are (1) communicative acts that presuppose a real or imagined audience and are (2) embedded in a discursive framework to which they respond directly or indirectly.

In the article, I discuss these two aspects using examples from the composer Alban Berg. The first is his *Wozzeck* lecture, which he held for the first time in 1929 on the occasion of the Oldenburg premiere of the work and repeated several times in the following years at other performance venues. In the lecture, Berg uses more than fifty sound examples on the piano to refer primarily to recurring chords and harmonies. Clearly discernible here is the performative strategy of conveying to the audience a specific sonority of non-tonally bound chordal combinations through concrete, sensual auditory impressions. Berg also emphasizes the compositional regularities in *Wozzeck*, which can be read as a reaction to the repeated reproach of the press that modern music does not follow any regularities. Similar considerations are present in the radio dialogue "What is atonal?" which was broadcast on Radio Wien on April 23, 1930, as a fictitious dialogue between Berg and the journalist Julius Biströn. A detailed analysis of the dialogue script shows that Biströn acted as a representative of various audience segments throughout the lecture. The last section of the article suggests how theories of communication, media, and performance can be used for the examination of such lectures and dialogues and how this deepens our understanding of these communicative acts within the highly controversial field of new music in the twentieth century.

Introduction

The early twentieth century was characterized by increasing divides between the expectations of an opera and concert audience and the actual styles of avant-garde music. Concert performances were interrupted by tumultuous upheavals, and heated debates were carried out in the press.^[1] Composers reacted to these discourses not only by establishing their own communities and presentation platforms for new music, such as the Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen in Wien (Society for private musical performances in Vienna) or the International Society for Contemporary Music, but also by trying to communicate their music to an audience in ways that facilitated listening experiences and deepened its understanding. Performances or releases of avant-garde music were accompanied by introductory lectures, essays, interviews, program notes, and radio conversations.

Musicology has regarded these composers' statements mainly as sources that provide information about their respective works. Hardly ever has research reflected upon the fact that lectures, essays, or interviews are communicative acts between an artist and a real or imagined audience^[2] and that they are embedded in a discursive framework to which they respond directly or indirectly. Harold Lasswell's often cited model of communication ("Who says what to whom in what channel and with what effect?")^[3] can be used as a starting point of inquiry. It shifts the focus from the composer ("who") and his message ("what") to the audience ("whom"), the format and media used ("channel"), and audience reception ("effect"). Furthermore, communication theory invites us to consider "communicative situations and contexts"^[4] and to keep in mind that composers do not act in a vacuum. The following article argues that these aspects are crucial for understanding how avant-garde composers talked about their own music in the early twentieth century. Examples are taken mainly from Alban Berg's lectures, essays, and interviews. His various communicative acts are doubtlessly personal and individual and are regarded as such. At the same time, they can represent certain trends among avant-garde composers in the early twentieth century. In the last section of this article, the focus is therefore expanded to include broader historical tendencies and methodological issues beyond communication theory. This will hopefully encourage further research about how avant-garde music is communicated to an audience not only in the early twentieth century but to this day.

General Strategies of Communication: Berg as a Writer

Berg wrote about music long before he wrote about his own music (see table 1).

| Title | Year | Publication Date |
|---|---------|------------------|
| Der Lehrer Schönberg (The teacher Schoenberg) | 1911 | 1912 |
| Arnold Schönberg, Gurrelieder. Führer (Arnold Schoenberg, Gurrelieder. Guide) | 1912/13 | 1913 |
| Arnold Schönberg, Gurrelieder. Führer (Kleine Ausgabe) (Arnold Schoenberg, Gurrelieder. Guide [small edition]) | 1913/14 | 1914 |
| Arnold Schönberg, Kammer-symphonie op. 9. Thematische Analyse (Arnold Schoenberg, chamber symphony op. 9. Thematic analysis) | 1918 | 1918 |
| Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen in Wien, Prospekt (Society for private musical performances in Vienna, prospectus) | 1919 | 1919 |

| | | |
|--|---------|------|
| Pelleas und Melisande von Arnold Schönberg. Kurze thematische Analyse (Pelleas and Melisande by Arnold Schoenberg. Brief thematic analysis) | 1919/20 | 1920 |
| Die musikalische Impotenz der "Neuen Ästhetik" Hans Pfitzners (The musical impotence of Hans Pfitzner's "Neue Ästhetik") | 1920 | 1920 |
| Wiener Musikkritik (Vienna's music criticism) | 1920 | - |
| Notiz zur Klaviersonate op. 1 (Notes on the Piano Sonata op. 1) | 1921 | 1921 |
| Die musikalischen Formen meiner Oper "Wozzeck" (The musical forms of my opera "Wozzeck") | 1924 | 1924 |
| Alban Berg: Drei Bruchstücke aus der Oper "Wozzeck" (Alban Berg: Three fragments from the opera "Wozzeck") | 1924 | 1924 |
| Warum ist Schönbergs Musik so schwer verständlich? (Why is Schoenberg's music so difficult to understand?) | 1924 | 1924 |
| Alban Bergs Kammerkonzert für Geige und Klavier mit Begleitung von dreizehn Bläsern (Alban Berg's chamber concerto for violin and piano with accompaniment of thirteen wind instruments) | 1925 | 1925 |

Table 1: Chronological list of Berg's writings until early 1925^[5]

All of Berg's early endeavors to communicate about music to an audience use the channel of the written text and deal with Arnold Schoenberg. In 1911 (at the age of 26) he contributed a two-page hymn about his teacher to the volume *Arnold Schönberg*,^[6] a small book published by several Schoenberg pupils. The impulse for this book came from a review by Paul Strauber. After a concert in April 1911 in the Ehrbar-Saal with works by the Schoenberg pupils Berg, Karl Horwitz, and Anton Webern, Strauber wrote in the *Illustrierte Wiener Extrablatt* that Schoenberg was an "unscrupulous speculator" who pushed talented young musicians onto a path that led neither to art nor to culture.^[7] It was Schoenberg's own idea that his pupils should react to this degrading polemic by writing about how they really perceived him as a teacher.^[8]

Some of Berg's subsequent publications serve the purpose of communicating about Schoenberg's works more directly to a concert audience. His three thematic guides to Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* (1913/14), *Kammersymphonie* op. 9 (1918), and *Pelleas und Melisande* (1920) are explicitly meant to prepare the audience for the performance and guide them through the work while listening.^[9] They can be contextualized within a growing culture of publications for guided listening that was established more broadly about 1880.^[10] The surviving chapter of a never-finished book about Schoenberg explicates the complexity of Schoenberg's music and was later re-written into the article "Warum ist Schönbergs Musik so schwer verständlich?" (Why is Schoenberg's music so difficult to understand?). Other writings serve more general purposes regarding the Schoenberg circle, for example the prospectus for the Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen, co-written by Berg and communicating the ideas of the society, or the polemic articles against conservative attitudes of composers or music critics (Hans Pfitzner, Julius Korngold, Elsa Bienenfeld, and Walther Krug).^[11] Clearly, these writings of Berg are reactions to a public discourse that defamed Schoenberg and his circle. Writing and talking about avant-garde music is in this Schoenbergian context and beyond quite often driven by the need to rectify presumably wrong judgements and deal with refusal or a lack of understanding.

It was not before 1921 that Berg started to write about his own music. The formats and occasions for his texts could not be more diverse. For the program book of the 1921 Donaueschinger Musiktage (Donaueschingen music days), published in the journal *Neue Musik-Zeitung*, he was asked by the music director Heinrich Burkard to write an "analysis" of his piano sonata op. 1.^[12] Berg sent something that he first called "theme table" (Thementafel) but later complained that his "extensive analysis" (ausführliche Analyse) was not printed in the journal.^[13] Indeed, what appeared in the journal was simply a table of the four themes of the sonata. However, even if one

considers that a more extensive, now lost, version of the analysis existed, Berg's analysis clearly ties in with the widely practiced convention of thematic tables and analyses that he had already executed for the works of Schoenberg. He used a completely different approach for an introductory text to the first performance of his *Drei Bruchstücke aus der Oper "Wozzeck"* (Three fragments from the opera *Wozzeck*) at the music festival of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein (General German music association) in June 1924. Instead of introducing his music, he merely explained the situations of the scenes and cited the text of the pieces, arguing in his letter to the editor that he refrained from writing about his music because it was necessary for the audience to understand the dramatic situations of the three operatic fragments.^[14] Still another type of text was the open letter to Schoenberg about Berg's chamber concerto. It mainly explained the formal design of the concerto and the symbolism behind this homage to Schoenberg and his circle. From the very beginning, this text was intended to present the work to a broader audience and was used as an introductory text at several performances of the work.^[15] It is clear from these three examples that Berg did not have a simple recipe for introducing his works to the public but chose different approaches and text types for different compositions and occasions.

The more Berg's works became known, the more he did not simply write about his music but reacted to discourses that were initiated by others. This is obvious particularly for his first opera and most successful work to date, *Wozzeck*. Although the opera was not performed until 1925, *Wozzeck* received some attention in the years after the publication of the piano score in 1922. Berg himself decided to write about his opera in 1924 as a reply to an article by Emil Petschnig in the journal *Die Musik*. Petschnig had published an article about *Wozzeck* in the February issue of the journal with the title "Atonales Opernschaffen" (Atonal opera creation).^[16] Among his criticisms were that the musical forms in Berg's *Wozzeck* were not recognizable, the treatment of the voices a disgrace, the adaptation of the text a failure, and the score generally overloaded. Berg reacted in his reply mainly to the first point and exposed Petschnig as unable to recognize the simplest formal designs and relations. It was only in 1927 that Berg wrote about *Wozzeck* again, this time for the Russian journal *Zhizn' iskusstva* (Life of art) on the occasion of the Leningrad premiere of *Wozzeck*. Berg started this text with the statement that so many had already commented on *Wozzeck* that he could hardly add anything new. He then wrote that he just wished to clarify one thing (and this is the main argument of the whole article): that he did not use old musical forms with the intention to reform opera but that this was an organic process that served the purpose of enhancing drama and providing musical structure and variety. Although this article did not have an explicit introductory character and referred already to a certain discourse around Berg's opera, it was used as a standard text in program books for several later performances and was reprinted in Berg's lifetime at least eleven times.^[17]

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von

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Berg's *Wozzeck* Lecture

The twofold approach of introducing a work but at the same time reacting to an already existing discourse about the music is also explicit in Berg's *Wozzeck* lecture. Of all of Berg's public statements about his own works, it gives the most extensive insight into his communicative strategies.

Berg prepared the lecture for an introductory matinee on March 3, 1929, at the Landestheater Oldenburg. It took place two days before the Oldenburg premiere of the opera. The performative concept of the lecture included several contributors. Not only did Berg include over 50 musical examples in the lecture, which were played at the piano by Winfried Zillig,^[18] but he had the orchestra perform 14 musical excerpts from *Wozzeck* as well.^[19] Berg had moreover wished for some singers (at least those of the roles of *Wozzeck* and *Marie*) to participate. That, however, was only accomplished at later events where Berg held his lecture, for example in Essen in December 1929, where the singers Heinrich Blasel (*Wozzeck*), Dodie van Rhyn (*Marie*), and Paul Hochheim (*Tambourmajor*) participated.^[20] Berg gave the lecture at least seven times until April 1931, when it was broadcast on the day of the premiere in Frankfurt at Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk (SWR; Southwest German Broadcasting). At all other occasions, with the exception of the lecture in Vienna, it took place a couple of days before the premiere at the specific theatre the opera was performed in. The *Wozzeck* lecture therefore clearly had the purpose of introducing the audience to the work that they would then experience a couple of days later in the opera house.

At this point, it is important to emphasize that not only Berg but the theatres themselves made enormous efforts to stage this event with the participation of the complete orchestra. Unfortunately, in Vienna the lecture that was planned before the premiere was canceled because of problems with the payment of the orchestra.^[21] It then took place six weeks after the premiere at the invitation of the Österreichischer Kulturbund (Austrian cultural association) with piano accompaniment only (see figure 1).

The structure of Berg's lecture is actually very simple: He argues in the beginning that it was challenging to reach closure and unity in an "atonal" work of this scale and exemplifies this with the respective endings of the three acts. After explaining the overall organization and dramaturgy of the opera, he walks through each of the fifteen scenes. Occasionally Berg refers to the storyline of the opera but does not really clarify what the opera or each scene is about. Obviously, he assumed that the audience already knew the storyline and arrived at his lecture prepared. It must be left to speculation whether or not the theatre provided additional material for the audience before the lecture, for example a program book, a synopsis of the opera, or something similar. Interestingly, the objection that Berg's lecture was too difficult appeared on an occasion when Berg did not give the lecture himself. For the *Wozzeck* premiere in Cologne on October 11, 1930, Heinrich Jalowetz gave a lecture based on Berg's manuscript. On October 8, 1930, he wrote to Berg after receiving his original manuscript for preparation:

When I received your lecture, I was first determined, after an introductory justification of this procedure, to simply read it to the people. Not out of convenience, but rather out of a shyness that I have about such undertakings in general, but above all because I thought that after all, if an author has already expressed himself about his work, there is nothing better to say about it. | Hofmüller and Szenkar agreed with this in principle, but when I read your lecture to the latter, he said that it was much too difficult for the broader public and actually presupposed knowledge of the work. I could not disagree with him, and especially when I read it aloud for the first time, I had the feeling that it was so personal that someone other than yourself could not speak it well. So then—in a hurry—I wrote one myself after all.^[22]

Jalowetz's remarks are insightful in several ways. While the musical director of the production, Eugen Szenkar, objects that the lecture was too difficult for a broader audience, Jalowetz makes a clear distinction between the composer speaking about his own work and someone else speaking about the composer's work. The double negation that he, Jalowetz, could "not disagree" with Szenkar reveals a rather submissive tone towards Berg. It suggests that Jalowetz felt that only the composer himself could get away with speaking about one of his compositions in a way that was likely too difficult for an audience to understand. Berg, however, reacted to this critique by changing the lecture himself at later opportunities. A copy of the manuscript that he used about half a year later, on February 25, 1931, for the introductory lecture in Darmstadt reveals that he included the synopsis of his opera taken from Jalowetz's synopsis in the Cologne program book.^[23] This episode indicates that it was rather important for Berg to make his lecture appropriate for the audience.

Viewing Berg's lecture as an act of communication between him and an audience exposes the particular strategies Berg used to mediate his music. A symptomatic section appears right at the beginning of the lecture. Berg underpins the unity of his work by focusing on the endings of the three acts that use the same chord. He addresses an audience that is used to tonal music by drawing parallels between this chord and the tonic in tonal works. The pianist first plays the three chords one after the other (act I, II, III), then Berg argues that in act I and III the chord is similar and that in act II the chord dissolves "into its component parts" ("löst sich ... immer mehr in seine Bestandteile auf").^[24] Again, the pianist plays the chord, now in the sequence act I, III, II, making the similarities between act I and III more obvious. Then the orchestra plays the last section of each act (act I/bar 656–717, act II/bar 761–818, act III/bar 372–92) as well as the beginning of act II (bar 1–6), because Berg argues that it ties in with the ending of act I by using the same chord. After these orchestral examples, Berg uses the piano to demonstrate that the work is structured like a circle, as the "first measures of the opera might well easily link up harmonically with these final measures" ("würden die Anfangstakte der Oper an diese Endtakte harmonisch ohne weiteres anschliessen"),^[25] again playing the last bar and then the first three bars of the opera. Following Berg's original manuscript for the lecture in Oldenburg, at this point one has arrived at page 4 of his 25-page lecture manuscript. Reading it out loud in a moderate tempo and including the musical examples, one is about 18 minutes into the lecture and the audience has heard the same chord eleven times in various musical examples. Repetition seems to be the most obvious communicative strategy here. But what is more important, the audience—presumably the majority not used to listening to atonal music—is introduced to the sound of atonal harmonies. It is certainly no coincidence that Berg focuses for a quite long section at the beginning of his lecture on sound and harmony. It was the musical parameter that was most discussed and criticized in public and press with regard to the so-called atonal music of the Schoenberg circle.

The beginning of the lecture is not the only section where Berg explicitly focuses on harmony. The aspect runs like a thread through the lecture: he compares the three chords of scene I/2 to

the three functions tonic, subdominant, and dominant; he interprets the fifths associated with Marie against the background of her situation in scene I/3; he explains the harmonies of the dance scenes in act II, how the sounding crescendo upon the note B3 is built in the interlude between III/2 and 3, or how the last scene is actually in D minor, where a twelve-tone harmonic entity works as a dominant.

Likewise, the strategy of repetition is not only used in the beginning. It is most obvious in the section about scene II/1 in the lecture. Here, Berg first introduces the four themes of the sonata form used in this scene on the piano (main theme, transitional theme, subsidiary theme, coda). He then has the orchestra play not only the exposition but the complete sonata with exposition, first reprise, development, and second reprise. Between each of these four sections, he announces what is repeated, modified, or particular to the respective section. The audience has now heard the four themes separately and then all four sections in which these themes are used.

Altogether, the orchestral examples of the lecture span over about thirty minutes, which is one-third of the complete opera. If one adds the piano examples, it becomes clear that a large portion of the lecture aims at a listening and therefore sensual experience of Berg's opera, allowing the audience to get used to the sound of Berg's music. In this regard, Berg's comment at the end of the lecture that the audience should forget about all the theory when they experience the performance gains another interpretive dimension. On the surface, this seems to be a rather coquettish self-deprecating cliché phrase: forget about all that I said; just listen to the music. Of course, Berg knew that avant-garde music was not just something that a large part of the audience could simply listen to and understand. He and the theatres made the effort to introduce the work in a lecture lasting significantly longer than the actual opera performance itself. However, the lecture's focus on sound, harmony, and listening examples lends itself not only to rational understanding but also to sensual experience. Berg's last statement can also be interpreted against this background, and it calls to mind the guidelines of the Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen, which consider repeated performance of new works a tool for understanding new music.^[26]

On April 19, 1931, a shortened version of Berg's lecture was broadcast at SWR on the day of the Frankfurt premiere of the opera. Radio broadcast was a quite new medium in the early 1930s. The first radio stations, which operated from 1923/24 onwards, featured avant-garde music significantly less often than other repertoires. Just as in concert life, new music suffered from a niche existence, was played seldom and at unattractive broadcast times.^[27] However, avant-garde composers still perceived radio as a promising medium, and several radio stations provided platforms not only for the music itself but also for discussions and introductions to specific works.

SWR requested that Berg deliver a radio lecture on the day of the Frankfurt premiere of *Wozzeck*, on March 24, 1931. Interestingly, they first asked Berg what kind of presentation he had in mind for the radio, but then specified the following:

We would appreciate it if you would bring an analytical lecture with piano and vocal examples. The fee will be Mk. 200. Regarding the participation of artists we would contact the opera house.^[28]

The participation of the orchestra and singers was initially planned but could not be realized in the end, and the lecture was accompanied solely by a pianist. Berg could therefore rework the lecture with piano examples that he had already prepared for Vienna a year before. The

manuscript that Berg used both in Vienna and in Frankfurt shows that the orchestra examples were mostly simply cut and not substituted with piano examples.^[29] What this version of the lecture therefore lacks is a more extensive impression of what the opera actually sounded like. For the radio broadcast, Berg had to shorten the lecture once more, because the radio station only scheduled one hour for the lecture in the program. Berg's handwritten notes in the manuscript give detailed insights into how he adapted the lecture.^[30] His strategy was to keep the general outline of the lecture, meaning that he decided to say something about every scene of the opera and illustrate it with musical examples. Within these sections, however, he made several cuts, so the analytical depth is not as far-reaching as before. Moreover, he cut comments about staging details (for example the opening and closing of the curtain), the instrumental interludes between the scenes, the instrumentation, the sounds of nature, or the crescendo. Consequently, the lecture now has a much more conventional outline in the sense that it focuses more on the introduction of thematic material and less on sound or other topics. In several places in the manuscript, Berg also made suggestions for cuts in case time was already well advanced. On page 12, for example, he writes, "if '30 jump to p. 14" ("falls '30 Sprung bis S 14") or on page 24 "if over 50-55 jump to p. 26" ("falls über 50-55 Sprung bis S 26"). He obviously read his text out loud for preparation and timing but was not sure how long the lecture would be with the integration of the musical examples and tried to make sure that he would not run out of time.^[31] Giving a lecture for a radio broadcast was different from the usual lecture format, and Berg tried to prepare for the limited time frame available in a live broadcast. He was actually not unexperienced in talking on the radio, however. Before he delivered the *Wozzeck* lecture in March 1931, he had not only already participated in radio broadcasts of his own works—for example accompanying the singer Lisa Frank at the piano when performing his *Sieben frühe Lieder* (Seven early songs) in the Funkstunde (Radio hour) Berlin on February 27, 1929—but had also broadcast a radio dialogue with the journalist Julius Biströn on the topic "Was ist atonal?" (What is atonal?) in April 1930.

Komponist und Kritiker vor dem Mikrophon

* Das Programm der Wiener Sendestation wird jetzt durch eine interessante Neuerung bereichert: Künstlerische und wissenschaftliche Streitfragen werden von prominenten Repräsentanten ihres Faches vor dem Radio-Mikrophon besprochen.

Die erste öffentliche Debatte wird Mittwoch den 23. d. im Studio der Ravag stattfinden: Alban Berg, der Komponist der vielumstrittenen Oper „Wozzeck“, und der Kritiker Julius Biströn werden in Dialogform über das Thema „Was ist atonal“ vor dem Mikrophon sprechen.

Figure 2: Announcement of the radio dialogue in *Die Stunde*, April 16, 1930, 2; by courtesy of Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ANNO

The Radio Dialogue “Was ist atonal?”

Originally the dialogue “Was ist atonal?” was planned for March 31, 1930, the day of the Viennese *Wozzeck* premiere, but it was rescheduled for April 23, 1930. In a letter to Schoenberg, Berg referred to the broadcast as a “radio lecture ... in dialogue form” (“Radio-Vortrag ... in Dialogform”),^[32] thus emphasizing that it was not a dialogue with Biströn per se but rather a lecture. In fact, as Willi Reich later reported,^[33] Berg confronted the journalist with a ready-made manuscript in which Biströn acted mostly as a cue giver.^[34] Biströn’s role, however, cannot be reduced to this function, as his dialogue part is extremely insightful regarding communicative processes. Although the dialogue was referred to on the radio program under the title “Was ist atonal?” (see figure 2), it was exactly this question that Berg refused to answer in the 40-minute radio broadcast. He rather argues that the expression “atonal music” was invented by the press to disparage new music and insists that the avant-garde music of the Schoenberg circle ties in with the historical traditions of German music (citing Bach, Mozart, Schubert, and Brahms). Berg barely focuses on harmony but brings forth several examples about melody (illustrated by audio examples), and some more about rhythm, counterpoint, and form. In this “lecture” Biströn has three different functions, and in each of these functions he acts as a representative of a certain

audience segment. In some cases, he acts as a representative of a public that regarded “classical” music and “new” music as opposites. This gives Berg the chance throughout the dialogue to prove that this is not the case. In other cases, Biströn’s dialogue parts demonstrate a certain naiveté. As the lecture proceeds, he learns more and more from Berg and is in the end convinced that the term “atonal” is “misleading for this whole artistic direction” (“geradezu sinnstörend für die ganze Kunstrichtung”).^[35] In still other sections of the lecture, Biströn’s interjections convey expertise and a sense that he is on a par with Berg. Significantly, some of these passages were originally assigned to Berg in the typescript but then re-assigned to Biströn with handwritten additions. Hence, these passages were presumably also written by Berg but then later put into Biströn’s mouth to create the atmosphere of a dialogue. Although these functions make Biströn’s part in the dialogue very inconsistent, they work perfectly well to offer identification for different audience segments. Biströn acts as the “first listener” who is convinced by Berg’s arguments after the 40-minute lecture. Feedback by Berg’s pupil Otto Jokl makes it clear how persuasive the format of a fictitious dialogue was:

The radio dialogue with Jul. Biströn was immensely lively, entertaining, and instructive (only in about 2 places held in a somewhat too fast pace); especially convincing was how the fiction of a real, improvised dialogue was carried out.^[36]

The dialogue-lecture “Was ist atonal?” was not only a communication between Berg and a radio audience via the “first listener” Biströn; it was also a reaction to a public discourse about avant-garde music carried out in newspapers and music journals. One day after the radio broadcast, Berg wrote to Schoenberg that the radio lecture had been going very well and that he mainly “went after Korngold” (“ich habe mir hauptsächlich den Korngold ausgeliehen”).^[37] Similarly, but even more explicitly, he mentioned about a month later in a letter to Johannes Schüler that in the radio dialogue he “found the best opportunity to settle accounts with the old Korngold” (“schönste Gelegenheit fand, etwas mit dem alten Korngold abzurechnen”).^[38] The long-time music critic of the journal *Neue Freie Presse*, one of the most important Austrian newspapers, Korngold had written numerous negative reviews about music of Schoenberg and his circle. Berg had previously reacted to Korngold’s defaming comments, most explicitly in the article “Wiener Musikkritik” (Viennese music criticism), written in 1920 but never published during Berg’s lifetime. The repeated reference to—the never explicitly mentioned—Korngold in the radio dialogue “Was ist atonal?” was a direct reaction to Korngold’s feuilleton article about the Viennese *Wozzeck* premiere that was published in the journal *Neue Freie Presse* on April 1, 1930, about three weeks before the radio broadcast. Korngold described *Wozzeck* as “tone and sound anarchy” (“Ton- und Klang-Anarchie”) and “destructive and anti-musical atonal, amelodical, and arhythmic new-music” (“destruktive und musikwidrige, atonale, amelodische, a-rhythmische Neumusik”).^[39] Berg explicitly mentions these but also other terms from Korngold’s reviews but often uses them in a more generalized way, so Korngold is just one—here unnamed—opponent to avant-garde music among many:

I have already mentioned the words “arrhythmic,” “amelodic,” “asymmetric,” and I could cite a dozen more terms used to dismiss modern music, like cacophony or test-tube music, which have already partially faded from memory, or new ones like linearity, constructivism, New Objectivity, polytonality, machine music, etc. These may have relevance in certain specific cases, but they are all now brought together under a single umbrella in the phony notion of “atonal” music. The opponents of this music hold to it with great persistence so as to have a single term to dismiss all of new music by denying, as I said, the presence of what until now has made up music and thus to deny its justification for existing.^[40]

In other cases, references to a specific musical discourse are not that obvious and illustrate how complex the question of what composers say about their own music really is. This relates, for example, to Berg's insistence that the music of the Schoenberg circle belongs to a tradition of German music and moreover of German musical masterpieces (as opposed to Italian music of lesser quality). This statement appears in variants or even verbatim in several of Berg's public statements in 1929 and 1930: in a comparison of Bach and Schoenberg that he published in the journal *Die Musik* in November 1929,^[41] as a new insertion in the *Wozzeck* lecture he held in Essen in December 1929, in the radio dialogue in April 1930, and even more extensively in the Viennese *Wozzeck* lecture in Mai 1930. The insertion in the manuscript of the *Wozzeck* lecture is particularly interesting with regard to practices of underlining that mark emphases in the oral delivery. The beginning of the related sentence in the manuscript reads, with Berg's emphases: "However, only in this music, which is based on the great, the only tradition of German music" ("Allerdings nur in der Musik, die auf der großen, der einzigsten Tradition der deutschen Musik fußt"; see figure 3). The many underlines and the double underline at the words "German music" certainly hint at the emphatic impetus of this musico-political issue. The origin of these references to German music was an unwritten reply to an article of Alfredo Casella about his work *Scarlattiana*.^[42] Berg was asked by the editor of the journal *Anbruch*, Hans W. Heinsheimer, in October 1928 to write such a reply, because Casella's article was full of fascist and nationalist "back-to" rhetoric that defamed the Schoenberg circle, and the journal editors did not want to publish that without a comment. As is clear from Berg's sketches, he wanted to contradict Casella by emphasizing the continuity of Schoenberg's music within the German music tradition. In December 1928, Berg withdrew from the task and never wrote this reply. However, with the ideas of German music supremacy that appear in Berg's public statements in 1929/30, he indirectly reacted to Casella's Italian nationalism by playing the national card himself.

Tun mit der Teuffen Müßel eigentlich nichts zu tun hat.

23.)

Trotz alledem war hier nie und nimmer ein musikalischer Stil angestrebt, den man geneigt ist, von den Franzosen, etwa von Debussy her zu leiten. Den Impressionismus nämlich, den man hier und an anderen Stellen meiner Oper

(um wieder ein Schlagwort der letzten Jahrzehnte zu nennen)

vermeint konstatieren zu können, einen solchen Impressionismus findet man schon bei den Klassikern und Romantikern der Musik; von den unvergänglichen Naturimpressionen bei Wagner ganz zu schweigen. Tatsächlich ist alles, was hier in diesem Sinn impressionistisch anmutet, weit entfernt von

dem Vagen, fundamentlosen Klangspiel ^{genet} dieses Stils. Es ist vielmehr alles, ^{Musik} wie ich Ihnen ja erklärt habe, auf einer ganz strengen musikalischen Gesetzmäßigkeit ^{an Kühlen Saftwerk} aufgebaut: Hier auf der der thematischen 6Tongruppe, in der früher besprochenen zweiten Szene des ersten Akts; auf den einer ostinaten Drei-Akkord-Folge.

Sachse

Ich betone diese Gesetzmäßigkeiten so nachdrücklich, weil es mir ein Bedürfnis ist, Ihnen meine Dank und Herrn, darzulegen, daß es für in der gegenwärtigen ästhetischen Kritik, so wie wir, von der Wiener Schule nie verstanden, keine neut im ein Gesetz = u. Wahl = loos Dring los unpfeifen ferment! im se- pentist! von ist unig sol beurteilen seit mit unig Wagner Chromatik immer mehr erweitert ist u. physisch über die Ton- arten perplexen formal gegründet ist (- wie reuziert, als druf im mit Woll die 4 Korpus unerte verzeugt ist! (-) so ist alles Antore, was sol Wesen der musik and man ist in dieser gegen. atonale musik erhalten geblieben, in einer mit Aller ding mit in der musik, die auf der proprium, der einzigsten tra-

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ÖSTERR.
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Eintritt der Tonarten Wozzeck führt, im See - mit 24
 ihrer beweglichen Harmonik, mannigfaltigen Rhythmen, mit
 ihrer Polyphonie vor allem in ihrem inneren Reich-
 tum der Formen in Gestalten - ein ganzer Weg von
 Berg bis auf unsere Tage führt. Es

Dies von Siegmund ~~einige~~ Weg der Tonarten
~~führt in die neue in meine in, wenn ich an Musik~~
~~führt die einfache in der einfachen in der~~
~~führt die einfache in der einfachen in der~~
 Ich hoffe mir abgewandt würde: das
alle vor allen ist es, was ich mar weisen wollte, wenn
 ich in meiner Erörterungen, immer wieder in der tonati-
onalen Harmonik Gesetzmäßigkeit fordere!

Auch die letzte Szene dieses Aktes, die Ihnen bereits vorgesehene
 Kinderszene, mit ihrer, vom ersten bis zum letzten Takt durchgehenden Achtel-
 bewegung (ich konnte sie daher (der alten Formenlehre entsprechend) mit Recht
 als ein „perpetuum mobile“ bezeichnen).... auch diese Schluss-Szene der Oper
 folgt damit einer Gesetzmäßigkeit, ja einer jener Regel-Mässigkeit, deren
 Regel ich mir allerdings in so vielen Fällen erst „stellen musste, um sie
 dann zu befolgen“!

Der Schluss-Szene, die wir, wie gesagt, schon gehört haben, geht
 ein etwas längeres Orchesterstück voraus. Es ist vom dramatischen Stand-
 punkt aus: als der, dem Selbstmord Wozzecks folgende „Epilog“ aufzufassen,
 als ein/aus dem handlungsmässigen Geschehen des Theaters
 heraustretendes Bekenntnis des Autors, ja als ein Appell an das, gleichsam
 die Menschheit repräsentierende Publikum. Vom musikalischen Standpunkt aus,
 stellt dieses letzte Orchester-Zwischenspiel eine thematische Durchführung
aller wichtigen, in Beziehung zu Wozzeck getretenen musikalischen Gestalten, dar.

Seine Form ist dreiteilig, das seine Einheit bildende Prinzip - aus-
nahme weise die Form.
eine Tonart.

Figure 3: Excerpt from Berg's Wozzeck lecture; by courtesy of Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, F21.Berg.104/V, fol. 24 + 25

Composers do not talk about their music in a vacuum but embed it extensively in musical or sometimes even broader social and political discourses. Avant-garde composers in particular, often criticized and defamed in public, never write or speak solely about their music. Rather, they always communicate (sometimes more, sometimes less explicitly) with imagined public voices—more specifically, the voices raised in daily press, music journals, and other publication formats, or even the voices protesting against their music during concerts.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations for Further Research

My remarks about Berg's (dialogue-)lectures are intended as an invitation to understand the statements of avant-garde composers as communicative acts. This means drawing attention not only to the information that is delivered but to the way it is presented and can be contextualized. An additional useful methodological background is to understand oral statements in particular, such as lectures or dialogues, as performative acts. Theoretical perspectives from theatre studies and anthropological studies invite us to consider questions of (1) social interaction, (2) bodily co-presence, (3) temporality, rhythm, sound, and vocality, and (4) spatiality.^[43]

(1) Social interaction: Several scholars from different fields (Erving Goffman, Victor Turner, Milton Singer, Richard Schechner, and Judith Butler) have discussed theatrical qualities of social interactions and/or the relation between social and theatrical events and interactions. It is informative to contextualize lectures or dialogues of composers within these frameworks. A lecture certainly has theatrical qualities, the most obvious of which is the presence of an audience. The position of the composer, who—in most cases—reads a prepared script to this audience, is more ambivalent. At that moment, the composer is neither a private person nor a theatrical figure. It might be useful, though, to adapt the concept of “performance persona” in this context.^[44] The composer takes on a certain role, nurtured both by general images of how avant-garde composers act and by the individual delivery, that has certain ritualized or theatrical qualities. Hence, the interaction between composer and audience is constituted by social prerequisites regarding the position of avant-garde music in society. In the specific situation of the delivery of the lecture, the composer and the audience are furthermore constantly negotiating their relation to each other. A focus on social interaction additionally draws attention to other actors involved. Berg's *Wozzeck* lecture has shown that the complete orchestra, singers, and a piano player were involved in the lecture and played a large number of musical examples. Parts of the lecture—particularly those with complete scenes played—therefore had the quality of a musical performance. It is generally important to examine the role of additional actors in the interaction between composer and audience. A piano player or an orchestra were clearly serving a certain purpose regarding the mediating quality of the lecture. The role of the journalist Bistron in Berg's radio lecture, however, has proven to be quite indecisive, meandering between echoing Berg's viewpoint and that of an imagined audience. This role is particularly interesting when considering radio as a medium where the physical presence of composer and audience was missing during the transmission. Bistron therefore takes on elements of the physically absent audience's role.

(2) Bodily co-presence: Closely related to social interaction is the phenomenon of bodily co-presence. The bodily presence of actors and audience in a room has been a focus of theatre studies from the very beginning of the academic debate in the early twentieth century. One important aspect is the “autopoietic feedback loop.”^[45] In their co-presence, actors and audience permanently—sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously—influence each other, constituting a feedback loop. Performances are always contingent, and they cannot be fully planned or foreseen. This concept can be directly adapted to all communicative acts of composers that involve an audience, be they lectures, interviews, discussions, or the performances themselves. The scandalous concerts of the 1910s and 1920s are only one obvious example of strong audience reactions that influenced much of the following discourse about new music. Lectures or other communicative formats are a possibility to regain control over the

discourse. At the same time, they themselves underlie the principle of the “autopoietic feedback loop.” Although it is very difficult to fully comprehend this feedback loop in historical settings, where hardly any traces are left from the actual events or interactions, it is important to keep these principles in mind when analyzing lectures or other formats. The mediating quality of Berg’s *Wozzeck* lecture, with its orientation toward audience expectations, certainly anticipated negative reactions fed by prejudices against new music. At the same time, Berg could not fully control the event and depended on both the participating performers and the audience.

Another relevant aspect is the physical presence of the body. Whereas in theatre studies the difference between the phenomenological and the semiotic body constitutes the difference between actor and role, the body of the composer can, but does not necessarily have to, transmit semiotic qualities. That depends on the “theatrical” quality of the corresponding performance persona. More revealing for the audience is probably the difference between the composer’s ephemeral disembodied art and the composer’s physicality, which usually disappears behind the art. Newspaper reports about Schoenberg’s lectures, for example, provide interesting insights about how his physical appearance and performance were perceived. A report about his lecture at the Akademie der Künste (Academy of Fine Arts) in Berlin on February 5, 1927, gives detailed information about Schoenberg’s physical features, with a focus on his eyes:

The eyes are the strangest things about him. They continuously change their disposition. They gleam and then darken; there are flashes and flickers in them. And they observe, always examining the effect of each word and sentence.^[46]

This passage not only mythicizes Schoenberg’s appearance; it also refers again to the question of interaction and “feedback loop,” when the lecturer is described here as carefully observing the reaction of the audience.

It is obvious that the physical co-presence of composer and audience was an outstanding and remarkable quality of specific public events. And it is moreover important to ask about the consequences if this physical co-presence was missing, for example in radio broadcasts.

(3) Temporality, rhythm, sound, and vocality: Temporality, rhythm, sound, and vocality are significant elements of oral transmission. This has hardly been reflected on in research about composers’ lectures, dialogues, or interviews. Until now they have been primarily understood as texts, although contemporaries described them even in “musical” metaphors, for example in a report about Schoenberg’s lecture about his *Die glückliche Hand* (The hand of fate):

It was wonderful to see this genius groping around at first in his lecture till he found firm ground (and contact). He then continued, going higher and higher, until he lost himself finally in the distance in a spoken, but nevertheless almost musical fantasy on the obscure title of his work. These introductory words also were chamber music by one filled with and possessed by music.^[47]

A consideration of lectures, dialogues, or interviews as oral performances must start with the simple identification of the duration of the whole event and its particular elements. Berg’s *Wozzeck* lecture has shown that the relation between spoken text and musical examples and the strong emphasis on sound are crucial to the concept of the lecture. A particularly useful method for experiencing the temporality of such historical events is the method of re-enactment.^[48] Reading lectures or dialogues aloud and playing musical examples shifts the focus explicitly to the parameters of temporality, rhythm, sound, and vocality. The proportions between different

elements become clearer. Such studies can go into more or less detail depending on the quality of the sources available. The scripts Berg used for oral transmission, for example, include many remarks about rhythmic and vocal expression. He notated the emphasis on certain words, dynamics such as forte and piano, pauses, and other rhythmic elements. In general, Berg's reading style aims at the utmost clearness of his argument, as is visible in how he divides sentences into segments and stresses particular words.^[49] The meaning of such emphases has become visible in Berg's underlining of the references to German music in his *Wozzeck* lecture. Detailed studies of such elements are still a desideratum in musicological research, as is the examination of surviving radio recordings, where rhythm, sound, and vocality can be investigated directly. An interesting object of study is, for example, the radio lecture Schoenberg gave about his orchestral variations op. 31 on SWR on March 22, 1931.^[50] The surviving partial recording shows that Schoenberg was very concerned about a slow tempo and that he spontaneously extemporized at certain passages, deviating from his script when he saw a need to explain certain aspects of his music in a more extensive way than originally planned. Noticeable is also the partly poor coordination between the pianist, who played the musical examples and was provided by the radio station, and Schoenberg himself. They interrupt each other frequently. All of this has an impact on the character of the lecture and must be considered in the analysis.

(4) Spatiality: Referring again to models from theatre studies, the question of spatiality is important for communicative acts between composers and audience. This particularly concerns the difference between the architectural space and the spatiality of the performance that is constituted by the participants, objects, light, or sound. The architectural space in which a certain event takes place can be examined with regard to its symbolic or physical characteristics. It makes a huge difference whether Berg gave his *Wozzeck* lecture in Oldenburg directly on the stage of the opera house with the orchestra present or one year later in Vienna in a small room with piano accompaniment. The architectural space provided for events with avant-garde composers has a symbolically charged meaning for the position of new music in society in general. The spatiality of the performance concerns the relation between the composer, the audience, and other participants. Coming back again to the *Wozzeck* lecture, it is particularly interesting that Berg originally planned to play the musical examples on the piano himself. About two weeks before the lecture, he wrote to the musical director Schüller, "I imagine that I present sitting at an angle at the instrument" ("ich stelle mir vor, daß ich—so halb schräg am Instrument sitzend—vortrage").^[51] In the end, the musical examples were played at all lectures not by Berg himself but by a pianist. On the one hand, this new arrangement gave Berg the chance to act more freely, without being concealed by the piano or obliged to perform this quite challenging multitasking. On the other hand, it separated the delivery of the music completely from the composer himself. This created a different atmosphere and a different sound, as the spoken word and the music now came from different sources. Such examples show that spatiality has a significant influence on symbolic meaning and changes the experience of the event.

Theories of performance shift our attention from the written text to questions of communication and interaction. This is particularly useful in the highly charged discourse of avant-garde music in the early twentieth century. Who is speaking to whom? What is the relation between the composer, (a real or imagined) audience, and other participants? What is communicated, and how and what are the effects of this communication? It is important for research not only to discuss the content of what composers say about their music but also to consider theories of communication, media, and performance to broaden the understanding about the discourse of new music from the early twentieth century until today.

References

1. See, for example, *Die Befreiung des Augenblicks: Schönbergs Skandalkonzerte 1907 und 1908; eine Dokumentation*, ed. Martin Eybl, Wiener Veröffentlichungen zur Musikgeschichte 4 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004); and Martin Eybl, "Neue Musik sucht ein neues Publikum: Das Wiener Skandalkonzert vom März 1913," *Indes* 2, no. 2 (2013): 73–79. [↑](#)
2. J. Daniel Jenkins has emphasized this aspect in the introduction to his edition *Schoenberg's Program Notes and Musical Analyses*, Schoenberg in Words 5 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1–19. [↑](#)
3. Harold Lasswell, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," in *The Communication of Ideas: A Series of Addresses*, ed. Lymon Bryson, Religion and Civilization Series (New York: Institute for Religious and Social Studies, 1948), 37. [↑](#)
4. Paul Cobley and Peter J. Schulz, introduction to *Theories and Models of Communication*, ed. Paul Cobley and Peter J. Schulz, Handbook of Communication Science 1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 11. [↑](#)
5. The list is extracted from Alban Berg, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. III/2, *Aufsätze, Vorträge und andere Texte*, ed. Kordula Knaus (Vienna: Universal Edition, 2023), x–xi. [↑](#)
6. Berg wrote his article presumably in September 1911. The book was published in February 1912 by Piper, Munich. [↑](#)
7. Original wording: "Es zeigt sich, daß nicht bloß unbegabte, sondern auch talentierte junge Leute von gewissenlosen Spekulanten auf diesen Irrweg gedrängt werden, der weder zur Kunst noch zur Kultur führt." [Paul Strauber, "Musik?," *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, April 26, 1911, 9.](#) [↑](#)
8. Mentioned in a letter from Webern to Schoenberg, May 4, 1911, US-Wc, cited after the scan in A-Was ID 21856. [↑](#)
9. Werner Grünzweig, *Ahnung und Wissen, Geist und Form: Alban Berg als Musikschriftsteller und Analytiker der Musik Arnold Schönbergs*, Alban Berg Studien 5 (Vienna: Universal Edition 2000). [↑](#)
10. Christian Thorau, "Vom Programmzettel zur Listening-App: Eine kurze Geschichte des geführten Hörens," in *Das Konzert II: Beiträge zum Forschungsstand der Concert Studies*, ed. Martin Tröndle, Schriften zum Kultur- und Museumsmanagement (Bielefeld: transcript 2018), 165–96. For a discussion on how Berg's *Gurre-Lieder* guide was actually too complicated for this purpose, see Grünzweig, *Ahnung und Wissen*, 118. [↑](#)
11. In these polemical articles, Berg saw himself in the tradition of Karl Kraus, as mentioned in a letter to Hans W. Heinsheimer from December 1928, A-Wst UE-Archive, Alban Berg 154. For Berg's intensive Kraus reception, see Susanne Rode, *Alban Berg und Karl Kraus: Zur geistigen Biographie des Komponisten der "Lulu,"* Europäische Hochschulschriften 36/36 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988); and David P. Schroeder, "Opera, Apocalypse and the Dance of Death: Berg's Indebtedness to Kraus," *Mosaic* 25, no. 1 (2004), 91–105. [↑](#)
12. Telegram by Heinrich Burkard, June 7, 1921, A-Wn F21.Berg.101/VIII, fol. 14. [↑](#)
13. Letters to Heinrich Burkard from June 8, 1921 (D-DO 21-2/212) and September 9, 1921 (cited after the facsimile in the Stargart Catalogue 264, Nr. 556). [↑](#)
14. Berg drafted this reply on the back side of the request for the article from April 16, 1924, A-Wn F21.Berg.497. [↑](#)
15. Written in February 1925, it was already published in the February–March 1925 issue of the journal *Pult und Taktstock* (Lectern and baton). It was published again to accompany performances of the concert in the journals *Melos* and *Klíč* (Key). [↑](#)
16. [Emil Petschnig, "Atonales Operschaffen," *Die Musik* 16, no. 1 \(1924\): 340–45.](#) [↑](#)

17. Knaus, *Aufsätze, Vorträge und Texte*, 286–87. It is also obvious that Berg reacts to public discourses around his works in several interviews he gave around the *Wozzeck* performances in Prague, Leningrad, and Vienna. See *ibid.*, 169–85. [↑](#)
18. In a letter to the music director Johannes Schöler, Berg announced on February 23, 1929, that he himself would play the examples at the piano, A-Wst H.I.N.202.980. [↑](#)
19. There is a fifteenth example in the manuscript that is crossed out. See A-Wn F21.Berg.104/V. [↑](#)
20. Who participated in which lecture is deducible from the different acknowledgments at the end of Berg's lecture manuscripts (see A-Wn F21.Berg.104/V and 104/III). [↑](#)
21. Knaus, *Aufsätze, Vorträge und Texte*, 129. [↑](#)
22. Jalowetz to Berg, October 8, 1930, A-Wn F21.Berg.892/17. Original wording: "Als ich Deinen Vortrag bekam, war ich erst entschlossen, ihn nach einer einleitenden Begründung dieses Vorgehens den Leuten einfach vorzulesen. Nicht aus Bequemlichkeit, eher schon aus einer Scheu, die ich vor solchen Unternehmungen überhaupt habe, vor allem aber, weil ich mir dachte, dass man schliesslich, wenn ein Autor über sein Werk sich schon geäußert hat, nichts Besseres darüber sagen zu können. | Hofmüller und Szenkar waren damit im Prinzip vollkommen einverstanden, als ich aber dem letzteren Deinen Vortrag vorlas, meinte er, er wäre doch viel zu schwer für das breitere Publikum und setze eigentlich die Kenntnis des Werkes schon voraus. Ich konnte ihm nicht unrecht geben und hatte vor allem, als ich ihn zum ersten Mal laut las, das Gefühl, dass er so persönlich ist, dass ihn ein anderer als Du selbst nicht gut sprechen kann. Ich habe also dann—in aller Eile—doch noch selbst einen geschrieben." [↑](#)
23. Berg's manuscript for Darmstadt is located in A-Wn F21.Berg.104/III, a copy of Jalowetz's lecture in A-Wn F21.Berg.104/I. Interestingly, Jalowetz himself did not include a complete synopsis of *Wozzeck* in his Cologne lecture. However, he describes in considerable detail the situation of the three fragments that were played after the lecture. [↑](#)
24. The English translations of Berg's manuscripts are taken here and in the following from *Pro mundo—pro domo: The Writings of Alban Berg*, ed. Bryan R. Simms (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 231. The German originals are taken from Knaus, *Aufsätze, Vorträge und Texte*, 100. [↑](#)
25. Simms, *Pro mundo*, 232; and Knaus, *Aufsätze, Vorträge und Texte*, 101. [↑](#)
26. The prospectus of the society from 1919 states about repeated performance: "Only through ... of frequent repetition ... can a relationship be established that corresponds to the intention of the work, a settling in with its style and language, and finally a familiarity that otherwise can arise only through study and which for the concert public of today is attainable at most with the oft-performed *classical* music." Simms, *Pro mundo*, 379. Original wording: "Nur durch ... oftmalige Wiederholung ... kann sich ein den Absichten des Werkes entsprechendes Verhältnis einstellen, ein Sich-Einleben in dessen Stil und Sprache, schließlich eine Vertrautheit, die sonst nur durch Selbststudium erreichbar ist, und die dem Konzertpublikum von heute höchstens mit den oft aufgeführten *klassischen* Werken nachgerühmt werden könnte." Knaus, *Aufsätze, Vorträge und Texte*, 200. [↑](#)
27. Martin Thrun, "Neue Musik im Sende-Alltag des Rundfunks der Weimarer Republik," *Das Orchester* 44, no. 10 (1996): 2–10. [↑](#)
28. See the letters between SWR and Berg in A-Wn F21.Berg.1433/1–9. Original wording: "Wir würden es begrüßen, wenn Sie einen analytischen Vortrag mit Klavier- und Gesangsproben bringen würden. Als Honorar vergütet wird Mk. 200,-. Wegen der Mitwirkung von Künstlern würden wir uns mit dem Opernhaus in Verbindung setzen." [↑](#)
29. Manuscript in A-Wn-F21.Berg.104/II. [↑](#)
30. On the first page of the manuscript, Berg writes: "Frankfurt a M 19./4.31 a.m. on Westdeutscher Rundfunk with the cuts marked in red (55–60 min)." Original wording: "Frankfurt a M 19./4.31 vorm | im Westdeutschen Rundfunk | mit den rot angezeichneten | Kürzungen (55–60 Min)." [↑](#)

31. There are several ascending time indications throughout the manuscript, ending with the number 50 at the last line of the text. Obviously, Berg's text was already 50 min long, and he thought that he had to make further cuts because the musical examples would also take some time. In the agreement from April 13, 1931, between Berg and the SWR, the broadcast was scheduled for 45 minutes, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. See A-Wn F21.Berg.1433/7. [↑](#)
32. Berg to Schoenberg, April 21, 1930, cited in *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence: Selected Letters*, ed. Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey, and Donald Harris (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1987), 400; and *Briefwechsel der Wiener Schule*, vol. 3, *Briefwechsel Arnold Schönberg-Alban Berg: Teilband 2, 1918–1935*, ed. Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey, and Andreas Meyer (Mainz: Schott, 2007), 397. [↑](#)
33. Willi Reich, *Arnold Schönberg oder Der konservative Revolutionär*, Glanz und Elend der Meister (Vienna: Molden, 1968), 48. [↑](#)
34. Handwritten remarks and insertions in the original manuscript (A-Wn F21.Berg.105) show very well how Biströn's dialogue text was inserted into the text that Berg wanted to deliver. [↑](#)
35. Simms, *Pro mundo*, 227; and Knaus, *Aufsätze, Vorträge und Texte*, 192. [↑](#)
36. Jokl to Berg, May 8, 1930, A-Wn F21.Berg.901/25. Original wording: "Das Radiozweigespräch mit Jul. Biströn war ungemein lebendig, kurzweilig und lehrreich (nur an etwa 2 Stellen in etwas zu schnellem Tempo gehalten); besonders glücklich und täuschend war die Fiktion eines wirklichen, improvisierten Dialogs durchgeführt." [↑](#)
37. Berg to Schoenberg, April 24, 1930. Brand, Hailey, and Harris, *Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence*, 400; and Brand, Hailey, and Meyer, *Briefwechsel Schönberg-Berg*, 398. [↑](#)
38. Berg to Schüler, May 20, 1930, cited after the copy in A-Wst H.I.M.202.980. [↑](#)
39. Julius Korngold, "Operntheater: 'Wozzeck,' Oper nach Georg Büchners Drama von Alban Berg," *Neue Freie Presse*, April 1, 1930, 3. [↑](#)
40. Simms, *Pro mundo*, 221. Original wording: "Ich habe schon die Worte arhythmisch, amelodisch, asymmetrisch erwähnt und könnte sie um ein Dutzend weiterer, die moderne Musik herabsetzende Bezeichnungen wie Kakophonie, Retortenmusik, die ja teilweise schon in Vergessenheit geraten sind, oder wie solche neueren Datums, wie die der Linearität, des Konstruktivismus, der Neuen Sachlichkeit, der Polytonalität, der Maschinenmusik etc. vermehren. Alle diese in einzelnen speziellen Fällen vielleicht treffenden Bezeichnungen unter einen Hut gebracht, ergeben heute den Scheinbegriff der 'atonalen' Musik, an welchem von den Gegnern dieser Musik mit grosser Beharrlichkeit festgehalten wird und zwar mit dem Endzweck, auf diese Weise, mit einem Wort, der neuen Musik alles abzusprechen, was, wie gesagt, bisher Musik ausgemacht hat und damit ihre Existenzberechtigung überhaupt zu leugnen." Knaus, *Aufsätze, Vorträge und Texte*, 187. [↑](#)
41. Alban Berg, "Credo," *Die Musik* 22, no. 1 (1929): 264–65. [↑](#)
42. This case is extensively discussed in Kordula Knaus, "Eiertanz um 'ewige Wahrheiten': Alban Bergs ungeschriebene Replik auf Alfredo Casellas *Scarlattiana*-Artikel im Spannungsfeld national-international," in *Musik—Politik—Gesellschaft: Michael Walter zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Kordula Knaus and Susanne Kogler (Berlin: Springer, 2023), 197–216. [↑](#)
43. Summarized in Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Performativität: Eine Einführung*, Edition Kulturwissenschaft 10 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012), 37–72. The following, more detailed explanations draw partly on Fischer-Lichte's chapter. [↑](#)
44. Philip Auslander, "Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 14, no. 1 (2004): 1–13. [↑](#)
45. Fischer-Lichte, *Performativität*, 55. [↑](#)
46. Arno Huth, "Arnold Schönberg spricht... Vortrag in der Akademie der Künste in Berlin," *Allgemeine*

Zeitung Chemnitz, February 5, 1927, cited after *Schoenberg and his World*, ed. Walter Frisch, Bard Music Festival Series (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 267. ↑

47. Dr. O. G., "A. Schönberg, Die glückliche Hand: Deutsche Premiere in Breslau," *Königsberger Hartungsche Zeitung*, April 24, 1928, cited after Frisch, *Schoenberg and his World*, 274. ↑
48. *Theater als Zeitmaschine: Zur performativen Praxis des Reenactments; Theater- und kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven*, ed. Ulf Otto and Jens Roselt, Theater 45 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012). ↑
49. Such observations can be discussed within the broader context of reading styles, for example the question of Karl Kraus's influence on reading styles in the Schoenberg circle. Although Kraus's famous "Vorlesungen" were mostly readings of literary texts, dramas, or operettas—read in a rather theatrical style that would certainly be inappropriate for a music lecture—we might put Berg's remarks on expression in his manuscripts in the context of his experiences with Kraus's lectures. For Kraus's expressive style, see, for example, Jens Malte Fischer, "Die kristallene Stimme des Magiers: Karl Kraus," in *Stimmenzauber: Von Rezitatoren, Schauspielern, Dichtern und ihren Zuhörern*, ed. Lothar Müller, Valerio 10 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), 28–35; and Reinhart Meyer-Kalkus, *Geschichte der literarischen Vortragskunst* (Berlin: Metzler, 2020), 367–91. ↑
50. These recordings are available via the [Arnold Schönberg Center](#), accessed July 27, 2023. ↑
51. Berg to Schüler, February 23, 1929, cited after the copy in A-Wst H.I.N.202.980. ↑