ARNOLD SCHOENBERG
Complete Works for Piano Solo

DANAË KILLIAN piano
## Complete Works for Piano Solo

### Drei Klavierstücke, Op. 11 (1909)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Time (min:sec)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I Mäßige Viertel</td>
<td>3'45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>II Mäßige Achtel</td>
<td>6'44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>III Bewegte Achtel</td>
<td>2'23</td>
</tr>
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### Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke, Op. 19 (1911)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I Leicht, zart</td>
<td>1'26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>II Langsam</td>
<td>0'49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>III Sehr langsame Viertel</td>
<td>0'43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>IV Rasch, aber leicht</td>
<td>0'27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>V Etwas rasch</td>
<td>0'27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>VI Sehr langsam</td>
<td>1'20</td>
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### Fünf Klavierstücke, Op. 23 (1923)

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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I Sehr langsam</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>II Sehr rasch</td>
<td>1'14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>III Langsam</td>
<td>2'37</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>IV Schwungvoll. Mäßige Viertel</td>
<td>1'47</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>V Walzer</td>
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### Suite, Op. 25 (1923)

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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I Präludium</td>
<td>1'06</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>II Gavotte – Musette – Gavotte (da capo)</td>
<td>4'17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>III Intermezzo</td>
<td>3'55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>IV Menuett – Trio – Menuett (da capo)</td>
<td>3'44</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>V Gigue</td>
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### Klavierstück, Op. 33a (1929)

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<tr>
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### Klavierstück, Op. 33b (1931)

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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mäßig langsam</td>
<td>3'33</td>
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**DANAË KILLIAN, piano**
Danaë Killian is an Australian pianist whose performances have found regard internationally for their intense originality and rare communicative power. Her repertoire ranges across the complete solo piano music of the Second Viennese School, major polyphonic works by JS Bach, and a wealth of Australian compositions. A passionate champion of contemporary art music, Danaë Killian has delivered over thirty world premieres, performing in the USA, Holland, France, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, China, Australia and New Zealand. She has been the recipient of prestigious awards for her musical and academic prowess, including the Australian Alumni (W G Walker) Fulbright Postgraduate Scholarship, the Helen Macpherson Smith Scholarship, and an Australia Award Endeavour Research Fellowship, and she is Victorian Fulbright Alumna Ambassador. Danaë Killian is an Honorary Fellow in the VCA’s Centre for Ideas at the University of Melbourne, where she earned her PhD in 2010. Danaë’s creative initiatives find ongoing idealistic expression in the activities of the non-profit association Kithara, which Danaë founded together in 2013 with her lifetime artist-collaborator Gotthard Killian. Kithara is dedicated to the musical and social practice of Aristotle’s philosophy of happiness, or eudaimonia.

Danaë Killian has studied Schoenberg’s music and thinking all her adult life, first performing his complete published solo piano works in recital in Basel in 2001. Schoenberg’s philosophy of the relationship between musical ideas and their presentation ubiquitously informs Danaë’s own categorical thinking on the fundamental questions of being and of ways of knowing. It is her destiny, it seems, to need to think the structures of existence ‘through’ Schoenberg. Consequently, this recording is accompanied by an extended essay, which is not so much about Schoenberg as an outline of how one might think toward this notoriously difficult modernist composer.

See: www.vca.unimelb.edu.au

Recording by Vaughan McAlley at Move Records studio, 2012–14

Editing by Vaughan McAlley

Mastering by Martin Wright

Design by Martin Wright

Front cover Image Danaë Killian, 2011, Angus O’Callaghan
Back cover Image Danaë Killian – Shadow Self, 2011, Angus O’Callaghan

Many mentors and colleagues have witnessed the evolution of my interpretive relationship with Arnold Schoenberg, in various stages, over the years. I am particularly grateful to pianists Michael Kieran Harvey, Donna Coleman, Jean-Jacques Duenki, Herbert Henck, and Peter Serkin for their kind interest and expert contributions along the way. DK

The creative activity disseminated in this recording is a Kithara initiative. www.kithara.org.au

Artist contact: secretary@kithara.org.au

Recording published by Move Records, 2014

www.move.com.au
For Grasping Schoenberg: An Epistemology of Sense and Meaning in Word, Music, and the Moving of a Pianist’s Arms

Danaë Killian

My brow is rutted in serious, difficult thoughts of Schoenberg. The more solid and ponderous these thoughts become, the more elusively, lightly, they fly from the grasp of my language. It is a strange and frustrating (though familiar) phenomenon—this flickering, slippery alternation between gravity and levity, between the earth and the fire in my mind.

Then, while I struggle to stick words to significance, as I pace my room like a prisoner, desperate for the perfect phrase that will open the lock, I catch sight of my arms moving free. My arms know; my arms are speaking. My arms—the arms of a pianist who plays Schoenberg—can describe exactly and with ease thought-processes that otherwise, in my head, turn into tangles of half-finished phrases. This—the easeful certainty of a gesture which, knowing, speaks—seems epistemologically significant, although my arms signal nothing.

My arms, moving, are not concerned with making sense of things. Speaking, they refer to no thing but the fluid continuity of their own moving on. They are all verb. They live in the in-between of thoughts, where meanings emerge, merge or diverge, associatively. Meaning is always a relationship. My arms moving muse the in-between of meaning. Meaning is not identical with sense, although these two attributes of word as bearer of thought are twin siblings, rarely if ever to be found apart.

To make sense of things is to put back, into the field of the perceptually given, the fruit of a cognitive act. Into the field of the given we speak, aloud or not, words that embody, in sounding forms of sense, concepts. Our words put forth have sense in the sphere where things are sensed. Their sense is the sounding of the conceptual within the perceptual. Not one concept does an individual grasp, nor one consonant let sound, but the concept and the sound dwell in the world of things themselves already, as essence or as constitutional frame. To make sense of things is simply to speak things as they are; not echoingly, though, but in sentences with the structure of categorical exposure. In exposing what a thing is, the sentence articulates what is to be understood—the substance. The sense-making sentence speaks things as they are, but not just as they are given. The concept or idea that the spoken word embodies in its consonantal frame will not have been given with the original perpect of the thing. The concept is just ‘that part of a thing that we do not receive from without, but from within.'

Though belonging to things as their inmost nature and essence, concepts are not given with the things. This is due not to the structure of the things themselves, but to the way human beings are organized:

Our whole being functions in such a way that for everything in reality, the elements flow to us from two sides—from the side of perceiving and from the side of thinking. … The divide between perceiving and thinking comes into being only at the instant that I, the observer, come over and against things.

Knowledge is the fruit of the human activity that (re-)unites the thing, originally given to the cognizor perceptually, with its conceptual counterpart—with its own being. The thing was never separated from its own being but for the observing human being, separated from what it observed, the percept and the concept of the thing arose from opposite directions. Appearance and essence were separate; now in knowledge they combine. When human knowledge takes its place in world reality, becomes surveyable in the phenomenological ‘light of day,’ the thing with the knowledge of the thing, encompassing the thing, united with the thing, together make perceptible sense. Cognition sounds its cadence. Knowledge enters the field of percepts where it appears to the (not material) sense, similarly to how a musical process (which the unfamiliar listener has—nevertheless intimately—pursued if through a darkness, trustingely) becomes formally and perceptually explicit—exposed—when it cadences, the cadence throwing behind it a light which recalls to the listener the whole in an instantaneous intuition of its (spiritual) sense. Once I have learned to know a thing familiarly, I will encounter, together with the percept of that thing, its idea.
in reality; so will I apprehend its sense, which paradoxically is not the transient, bits-and-pieces reality that the material bodily sensory organization perceives, but is something whole and enduring—the idea shining, within the given light of day, its own light, which is the self-illumination of the thing itself in its essence.

Only in this light-filled moment of encounter will I apprehend a phenomenon in the Heideggerian, ontological sense of the word, phenomena being distinct from appearances (Erscheinungen) and from pure ‘perceptible things’ (aistheta), though they shine (phaino), showing themselves as themselves in the light of day:

In the phenomenological conception of ‘phenomenon’ what one has in mind as that which shows itself is the Being of entities, its sense, its modifications and derivatives. And this showing-itself is not just any showing-itself, nor is it some such thing as appearing. Least of all can the Being of entities ever be anything such that ‘behind it’ stands something else ‘which does not appear.’

‘Behind’ the phenomena of phenomenology there is essentially nothing else; on the other hand, what is to become a phenomenon can be hidden. And just because the phenomena are proximally and for the most part not given, there is need for phenomenology.

Though the moving of my arms is perceptible as sense and as coherent as sense that has been made, the moving arms are unconcerned with making sense of things. Their movement forms no sentence articulating whatness. Their gesture points to no ‘thing,’ as a sense-making sentence must when it names, when it makes its categorical accusations. The indicating of things verbally-conceptually by name and with accusation, we should call signification, were it not for Ferdinand de Saussure’s insistence on the ‘arbitrariness’ of the links between sound-image and concept, sound-image and thing, and ultimately—because thought, for Saussure, is ‘chaotic by nature, … a shapeless and indistinct mass,’ which does not exist without (an arbitrarily sounding) language (‘there are no pre-existing ideas’)—on the ‘unmotivatedness’ of the connection between words and the things themselves. Therefore, says Saussure, ‘the linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image.’

However, as soon as we experience that our concepts belong to the entities we perceive, even before we should speak them (signify them), and that the sound-images we speak (signifiers) belong equally to the entities we perceive, to their forms and their textures and their bearings and their gestures, we cannot do otherwise than regard a signification a speaker makes with reference to a thing, with the intention of indicating a real thing, as a naming (as well as an accusation). The speaker has recognized, in an entity’s showing of itself as itself, its distinctive signature.

This signature is the tracing of a name. When we name a thing, we honour its signature: we return our knowledge of the thing to reality in the form of a signification. I believe it Saussure’s misfortune that, despite his intensive analytic phonology, he did not experience (or did not know how to value) the liveliness of our speech sounds in all their variety of articulation and resonance, and how this liveliness relates concretely to the liveliness of the phenomenal world. Saussure is by no means alone in such misfortune:

How few of us experience the soft, rounded surface of certain objects, the thrusting hammering nature of others, their angular or undulating, their velvety or prickly qualities, as these are expressed by the different consonants. And yet all these things are contained in speech.

Saussure’s observation of the arbitrariness of the sign is of course valid in the field of conventional usage, where habit prevails, where human thinking lacks independence from the semiological ‘system’ and would apparently cease were it not for the ‘form’ of language; and conversely, where human perception of the liveliness of words’ sounds is so dulled that words seem to be made only to convey so-called concepts but not essences—which unessential concepts in turn are dead, dictated by convention, dependent on a system of signs. Hence our significations are disconnected from the things we believe ourselves to be making sense of. They are radically disembodied; they are spectres of consciousness, bloodless. Nevertheless, when we speak sentences articulating whatness, we find ourselves, lame as we might be, at least trying to point to things.
My arms, though, as they move their Schoenbergian thought-tropes, are unconcerned with pointing to things, signifying them; their movement is involved in meaning. To signify is not, indeed, as Saussure himself points out, to mean; at most—and most importantly—a signification will indicate the presence of meaning—elsewhere and in-between.

In the lively language of poetry, the passive element of conventional signification, the bloodless ‘signified,’ is yielded up to a texture of self-actualizing activity, in which the being of a thing, reclaimed from any bracketing as object-referent, lives in the (‘signifying’) sound itself, and shows itself as itself as it creates its own image naming itself in sound; which sounding image in turn moves through figures weaving meaning between the imaginal horizon of possibility and a centre of presence, of actualization—between places of directional signification for and of the moving of meaning. A signification of meaning cannot be a meaning, however deeply it inheres with (not in) the meaning in a pure, integral and indissoluble reciprocal relation (viz the meaning of the signification x the signification of the meaning = 1). Signification and meaning are distinct from each other, even as they intertwine; but neither one is arbitrary.

In plain discourse with the aim of making sense of things, a signification indicates where and in particular wherefrom I am to look if I am to perceive what is being talked about. Signification belongs to a categorical statement’s articulating the directional space of its sense. The Indo-Germanic root of ‘signify’ is sêk– ‘to cut’ or ‘to segment’; whence the Latin signum ‘sign’ in the concrete sense of a sign carved in grooves or notches on a log of wood. Articulation is the joining of segments by that which segments, the signifying cut. Now, such a cut, which joins as it divides, cannot really be a physically visible thing; its line is ideal, extending no width, extending infinitely in length—all the line has that is its own, when it seems to appear in the realm of the physically sense-perceptible, is its direction. I will recognize the precise sense of a sentence when its signifying words correctly orient my perception—my sense—of the speaker’s thoughts, of the speaker’s conceptual ‘wherefrom’ informing the statement, even when the ‘whereat’ of the signification should remain beyond my own spatio-temporally limited purview. If the speaker’s knowledge of the thing spoken about shines in the self-illumining light of the thing itself in its essence, my oriented perception of the conceptual ‘wherefrom’ will in any case be sufficient to allow me to ‘see’ the sense of the thing for myself. Signification as orientation approaches the Indo-Germanic root of ‘sense,’ sent– ‘to go, to ride, to travel,’ the ‘original meaning of which was presumably “to take a direction, to seek a path.”’ In its authentic meaning Sinn [sense] is identical with Richtung [direction] (still conserved in the concept of Uhrzeigersinn [clockwise]); in Old High German Sinn meant “walk, journey, road.” The verb sinnan in Old High German meant, besides ‘to walk,’ also ‘to direct the thoughts to something,’ and—more sensuously—to strive, to desire or covet. What links the three ‘different’ meanings—walking, thinking, lusting—is their directionality. The Old English sinnan meant further ‘to have attention for something, to care for something’—again an example of sentient orientation. Signification, as the indication of direction, belongs primordially with sense.

Our lives have sense when they have direction. The sense of a life is its mission (Ger. Sendung). A life that has a task to fulfil has a sense. The task is something given (although whence it is given might not be perceived till the end) as a direction. We are sent out into our lives, as it were on a journey, to strive for fulfilment. We seek a path, an orientation, that has sense and significance. Everyone is a hero who, sent out, chooses a path and fulfils a task, accomplishes a mission. Every biography that has found its sense and significance coheres as a story. We are the epic heroes of our own lives. So, too, the fictional narrative must have just such a sense of directional coherence if it is to be perceptible as a story. A story, like the idea that shines in reality, is something put back into the field of the given, where it is readable, experienceable for the reader as perceptible reality, as sense. Narrative invention is fruit of a synthetic cognitive activity. All stories are realist in that they expose the substance of biography-in-general, to which substance the author has given, during a conceptual-imaginative thinking (plotting), a specific narrative or characterological perspective or set of perspectives (significations); and which universal substance, now characterized, plotted, directed, particularized, the author has embodied in readable sounding forms of sense cohering in sentences.

The conventional realist novel uses words to signify materially sense-perceptible things, to ‘represent’ things as they are. However, this kind of sense making is not the deeper sense of destiny that is found at the heart of a significant story. The indicating of things by their conventionally given and recognizable
names is only the locally signifying functionality of words in a narrative text; the true signification of a story is the directional sense, or telos, of the story itself. The story—even if not any single word in the story—is essentially self-signifying, just as a word that truly embodies the essence of the thing itself is self-signifying insofar as the divisions between concept (the signified) and object (the referent) and signifier (the sound image) and subject (she who speaks) have been overcome in an act of intuitive cognition.

Still, the sense of a statement about things is given with cognitive perspective, with a particular orientation (signification) and not another. Sense is cognitive fruit in the sphere of perceptual, directional, spatially divided reality. The ‘wherefrom’ of a sense-making statement, insofar as a point-of-view is one point-of-view, would appear to pre-impose a limit on the knowledge that a speaker’s words put forth. The cognitive cadence, it would seem, must be in a tonality, its sense determined and indeed made exclusive by the directionality of the cadence. To make sense is to establish tonality, which has the function of allowing substance (musical or other) to hold itself, to cohere: ‘Sense’—like a key—is that wherein the intelligibility of something—such as the musical melodic process—’maintains itself.’ Hence Schoenberg’s acknowledgement of the formidable articulating power of functional harmony, which had allowed earlier composers to sleepwalk their musical forms through a field of forces pre-compositionally determined (that is, culturally given) and closely related to the (naturally given) physical harmonic organization of sound. The directionality of functional harmony provides musical processes with the sense of a centre—a centre in space, a centre of gravity—one centre—to which even the most distant modulations will refer. Every harmony that is not in this centre will be heard in aspect to this centre, gaining a particular colour in appearance, so that we can say: tonality functions as a prism. Although the sense of key—whether in a piece of music or in the cognitive performance of cadence—is one of exclusivity, there is nothing absolute about the centrality of its sense; the cadence throws its light at a particular angle, revealing particular colours. The sense of functional tonality, as of functional cognition, is predicated on spatial limitation. One might well draw the conclusion that she who experiences fulfilment, closure, through the carrying through of cognitive acts (thence to the inscription of the metaphysical ‘metanarrative’), labours under a grand delusion inspired by egocentric (tonic-centric) and false claims of dominion over the perceptual world. One might well infer that the ‘wholeness’ she experiences in the sense of cognitive resolution is anything but whole, as that sense of resolution is dependent on the establishment of boundaries, on purposeful exclusion of those alternative perspectives that would, were they acknowledged, undermine the sense of cadence in a key.

The perspectival determination of sense imposes no limit, however, on the life of thinking itself, nor on the life of a musical motive rhythmically developing in melody. We encounter in Schoenberg the conviction that the musical motive can, and henceforth shall, develop coherent forms self-sufficiently, that is, without the ‘somnambulistic’ dependence on functional harmony, but purely ‘through the unity of configurations, the unity of ideas.’ Schoenberg asserts that while ‘it is difficult to conceive that a piece has meaning unless there is a meaning in the thematic presentation of ideas, … a piece whose harmony is not unified, but which develops its motive and thematic material logically, should, to a certain degree, have intelligent meaning.’ The assertion is not intended to suggest that ‘to build a structure, … artistic in its motive forms, but on a foundation harmonically senseless’ would produce anything other than ‘the greatest nonsense.’ Rather, Schoenberg is emphasizing the artistic priority of the ‘thought-content’ of the motive, over the referential functionality of chords, for creating a musical whole. This whole is a harmony, the true harmony of any composition whether it is formulated in a key or not. This whole is unlimited in its ideal substance by the particularities of perspective, for perspective is not something a motive has intrinsically; perspective belongs to the forms of its presentations, to its articulation, to the directions in which it is sent out and from which it is signified. What a musical motive has as its own is a potential for meaning. Articulatory signification of the motivic meaning is a making sense not of the motive, which is no ‘thing’ and which requires of sense no explanation, but with the motive. A musical theme or subject makes sense—beautiful sense or powerful sense, symmetrical or asymmetrical sense, and in any case, coherent sense, like a sentence in words—not of its motives, but with its motives. The motive itself calls for its various significations, seeks the rays that will reveal its meaning in the light of day, that is, as art; one cannot regard formal articulation as a limit on the possibilities of the motive, as if the perspective from which it appeared were as accidental as the incomplete and transient view one might receive of someone passing in the street. The signification of the motive’s meaning x the meaning of the articulatory signification = 1. In music, the articulation, the perspectival limit on sense of the presentation (not on the idea itself), is intentional and aesthetic, motivated by that which has no perspective or limit but which seeks the signification that nevertheless belongs with its musical meaning and—
within the prevailing musical context—within it alone. The motive’s own inherent possibilities of movement, development, metamorphosis, and, especially, its potential to draw itself into relation with new elements, other ideas, are inexhaustible. Its potential for meaning is as limitless as the sphere of thought itself. How it does mean as it unfolds in a particular musical composition will be determined not outwardly, quantitatively by an accidental standpoint, but by human characterful individuality (the composer’s, the performer’s, the listener’s) weaving living threads of soul into and through and out of the universal realm of thought.

The universality of the realm of thought is sometimes misapprehended as ‘shapeless mass’ (see Saussure above), or the Unconscious, neither of which are characteristic of the life in clear light of thinking activity. On the other hand, we can miss the universal character of thinking precisely when we focus our attention on thought as a manifestation or determiner of clear self-consciousness (‘I think, therefore I am’). But think of a triangle: ‘There is only one concept “triangle.” It makes no difference to the content of this concept whether it is grasped by A or B—by this or that bearer of human consciousness, [although] each bearer of consciousness will grasp it in an individual way.23 The concept is universal. Individual bearers of consciousness think it, but ‘the single, unitary concept of the triangle does not become many by being thought by many thinkers. For the thinking of many thinkers is itself a unity.’24

The motive—the musical idea—is an intuition. I invest this word, ‘intuition,’ with a meaning somewhat at odds with its everyday one, to characterize the spiritual immediacy of the musical idea—an idea that ‘is not taken from nature by abstracting, but has a content flowing out of itself and only out of itself.’ I do not mean that the musical idea is an irrational vibration of instinctual feeling, which somehow or other emerges into the composer’s mental awareness, mysteriously with all the clarity of an insight. True, the musical idea may enter a composer’s consciousness in ways of which she is not conscious; but the composer’s experience subsequently of the musical idea as an idea will be one of ‘a spiritual essence that sustains itself.’26 Intuitive cognition of musical ideas involves the conscious experience, within what is purely spiritual, of a purely spiritual content.27

In cognition of the things of the world, percept precedes concept or intuition; observation of the given precedes the thinking that will reunite, in knowledge, appearance and essence. In that order do we make sense of the things of the world. Within musical experience, there is no such separation into a cognitive before and after. The idea, the motive, the intuition, is present in-the-beginning as an essence that is given. Tone, non-representational musical tone, objectless yet entirely transparent—uncloakedly ‘objective’—to inner essence, constitutes the only adequate vehicle for the unmitigated giving, in the sphere where physical things are perceptible, of spiritual being, or essence. The musically toning motive is not given back to perceptual reality as the fruit of a knowing that has been done; its presence carries the power of pure revelation. The distinction between percepts and concepts no longer holds for the musical motive, which transcends the past-determined order of our making sense of things. The musical motive intuition takes not the form of a concept, although concepts are intuitions. It is as if the motive intuition in toning forth burned away the conceptual form it would take, were it pushed through the thinking human head in any ordinary cognizing response to the perceived.28 With no separation between a cognitive before and after within the musical element, there is no possibility and also no need for us to produce concepts embracing perceived musical events while we live in music. The musical intuition, the motive, is already there, present in-the-beginning as the intuition of itself—not of some object out in the world, of which, presented with its concept, I have now to construct a mental picture, or which I have now to go out and find, so as to test the evidence for the concept presented me. The musical motive exists self-referentially, self-sufficiently, giving us generously all we need for experiencing its toning forth as true. Yet the circular self-referring does not fix its truth to a point in the circle’s centre, imprisoning meaning. Rather, the needle-eye looping zero of difference between terms in the relation 1 : 1 opens to a limitless semantic ocean. Immersed in that ocean opening out of the motive intuition present as though in-the-beginning, I am not, when I musically perform (insofar as I am wholly engaged in that activity), thinking new thoughts into awareness; I am weaving meaning between and through the intuitions already in my awareness. I am musing, not conceptualizing, as I move all verb (or all interval) like my musing arms, without thinking, in the realm of thought.

A musical motive is impossible to spot in its originary or prime form. The motive is perpetually in movement, even as its articulatory significations arrest the motion, holding the motive in perspectival space as if it were a constellation of fixed stars. Whenever a motive is to appear ‘somewhere,’ articulated, it will be
moving into the appearance in one manner or another, in one mode of manifestation, which is a manifesting of meaning. The one way (or another) will yet be several possible ways for the experiential intentionality of each individual listener and interpreter, as if every appearing were a billowing and subsiding of many veils: each disturbance of the motive’s many veils will always be at least minutely different from any other. In my practice as a pianist I personally will not or cannot play a melody (disturb its veils) twice in the same way: ‘One cannot step twice into the same river. … As they step into the same rivers, other and still other waters flow upon them. … [The stream] forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs.’ Every moving-into-appearance of a motive will absorb the influence of new semantic currents into a context already saturated with relational meaning, with meaning that is at once specifically characterful (already and always attuned to some tension, involved in some chemistry—never a tabula rasa) and open to interpretation (unveiling).

Only an artist poor in inspiration will regard a prime motive as something readily spottable (whether on the page or in the mind as the outcome of analytic reduction to some common denominator) as those notes, that rhythm: as a cell (or, without any pretence to organic thought, as a building block) with a definite material content (such as two pitches in succession). The motive motivates the moving of the music from within a condition of essential hiddenness. The potential for meaning whiles in the darkness of the future and unborn. A prime motive resists being spotted as matter in the realm of appearance where matter decays, passes away—dies—in the light of day, in the sphere of sense. Only through the relational changes of musing, of inner movement, on the invisible winds of the perpetual change that alone endures in the phenomenal world, will the motive move into appearance. Yet neither is the motive standing behind its modes of appearance. It lives through them and along them, which are the veins of its own potential meaning, or the veils of its meaning moving, like the air disturbed by the musical tones, in manifold waves; the ways of moving-into-appearance are to the motive as blood circulation and breathing are to the human heart. The motive is inseparable from, reciprocal with, the motion that muses its meaning. The movement inspires (breathes into) the motive-intuition, which in turn permeates the movement (the circulation) like gold running in the blood.

An originary motive resists being spotted both within and apart from its moving-into-appearance; its life endures within a multiplicity of change, in the in-between of appearances rising and falling, passing and following. Its life endures in the limitless potential for meaning that is the offering of the undetermined future, of the hidden, of the night—which is an offering to appearance and to death, to a dying beautiful world of daylight. Its life endures.

So the motive shimmers in waves of inner movement, self-referential movement—in waves of possibilities for unfolding, disclosure—all its possibilities, which are limitless and yet belong essentially to one motive, to one idea. This oneness of the motive as self-referential intuition, which like the Heraclitean Logos lies not behind the phenomena but lives them through, you will discover not through contraction—not by sifting for common material elements, not by reducing to atoms—but through your cognitive expansion toward embrace of the whole musical circulation: ‘Out of all one, and out of one all’; or, as Heidegger paraphrases this, ‘the unifying of the one becomes visible in the totality from out of the totality.’

If the musical motive were spottable as a cell or building block with definite material content—as the smallest entity in a musical composition rather than the largest, into which the muser, moving, expands—it would be meaningless. Spottable things—categorically identifiable things—though they have sense, do not mean. The opening sentence of Virginia Woolf’s solar-cyclical novel The Waves is ‘the sun had not yet risen’; as a categorical statement about a thing in the world ‘the sun had not yet risen’ certainly makes sense, but who can tell what it means for and in The Waves, what it means as a motive, without moving, expanding into the whole? Without apprehending its relation with the whole, and with the limitless out-of-all-one universal realm of thought, in the characterful way that belongs to The Waves and only to The Waves, making The Waves a whole, making it one—one cannot tell the sentence’s motivic meaning. As a small sentence that makes sense, ‘the sun had not yet risen’ does not mean.

If I do experience meaning (as distinct from my acknowledging sense) immediately in the very first sentence of Woolf’s The Waves (and I will experience meaning—here I encounter the non-contradictory contrary-stretch of the strings of understanding), this will be my meaning I experience, my way of relating with a sun not yet risen. Nevertheless, my way of relating with that sun—which is already a true manifestation of the sentence’s semantic potential,
as a motive—will also be my way out of myself and into The Waves: that I experience meaning at all is an expression of my personal relation with a universal limitless semantic ocean—in which The Waves’s words must also move weaving their meaning. My way of meaning, though absolutely mine, reaches inevitably beyond the merely mine to the universally thinkable and utterable—to the Herelikean Logos, which is ‘common’ and which is also the innermost and ‘deep’ possession of the individual psyche, ‘augmenting[ing]’ the soul so that ‘you would not, going into [it], find the boundaries of the soul, though you should march down every path.’ Though the search for meaning is the ‘quest after [one’s] own self,’ says Heraclitus, ‘having hearkened not to me but to the logos, wise it is to acknowledge that all is one.’ The experience and interpretation of meaning is a hearkening in me to the common, which holds the not-mine (others’ meaning—Woolf’s meaning—yet undisclosed), as mine—augmenting me.

How ‘the sun had not yet risen’ means for The Waves, for Woolf, I cannot tell yet (though I am already immersed, with my way of meaning reaching beyond the merely mine, in that meaning—for its Logos is not merely mine, it is ‘ours’) when I open the book for the very first time: the door to an interpretation stands absolutely open, with the generosity of the Logos, to my hearkening; while the sense of the sentence from the outset is perfectly defined, finished, given to the exact and reaccountable measure, or tally, of the Logos. Satisfied with the telling, with the narrative account of perfectly balanced sense, I should not even bother myself to enquire of the book its meaning, except that I be aware of having entered a non-natural world, an art realm: I have opened the book and entered, found entered there, the transfixingly irreducible, unfixable configurations of a creative human being. Therefore do I enquire, do I quest after the deep Logos augmenting the psyche in art. Therefore do I wonder after meaning; therefore do these opening words of finished and closed perfect sense hold for me a mystery. They are already saturated with human intention, with a potential yet to be disclosed and unfolded, so that I experience in an ending—the sense-making statement telling of what has been—the motivic power of the future (of a telos) in-the-beginning.

The kind of knowing that has as its task the making of sense is specifically categorical. This cognitive method of handling substance, when perfected, does reach the essence of things as they are in themselves. For a perfect knowledge of what things are, nothing is needed but a systematic bringing together of thinking, the question of meaning would never arise for us: we would live in pleasure and pain just as they arose, stimulated by and responding to sensation, moving instinctively, impulsively, desirously, never pregnant with motive intuition; we would not enquire after the relation between pure impressions, sensations,
involvement in universal world existence, our ‘concepts … gain concrete capacities for feeling. In the experience of meaning, of truth, through the harmony that arises in our human being when we offer our personal feeling to an think, that belong to the universe. I experience

I feel these thought-forms and processes will be my personal way of feeling, which yet reaches beyond myself to feel between thoughts that anyone could

full metamorphosis of the first-entwined: That is to live and dwell in the musical element, which the Pythagoreans called the harmony of the spheres. How

thought, which fructification yields yet a further thought, which thought-child reveals itself—as still another thought throws through it its light ray—as the intuitional composition, and how one idea entwines itself round another, turning the other outside-in, opening it to interpenetration with yet another capacities for feeling. In the experience of meaning, of truth, through the harmony that arises in our human being when we offer our personal feeling to an involvement in universal world existence, our ‘concepts … gain concrete life—they breathe meaning; they sing truth. This is the truth—always mine (jemeinig), never a humanly disconnected correctness of correspondence; truth drawn from living experience of the universal Logos, lifted in an individually characterful way from the waves of a limitless ocean of possibility— This is the truth that will set you free in your will. This is the life that enthuses the musical idea. Hence we call the musical idea, saturated as it is with the potential for meaning, for the experience of truth toning forth, a motive. The motive has meaning for our willing; it calls for our moving, our dancing—in our own ways, in our individually free ways. We can characterize such movement as intentional: meaning, as the jemeinige experience of truth in the realm of thought, carries over into the sphere of human willing as intention. The whole human psychical constitution (with its somatic and spiritual involvements and ramifications) of thinking, feeling, and willing, partakes in the living of meaning. Yet the realm of feeling—itself a realm of rhythmical in-betweenness, breathing and pulsing between head-thinking and limb-willing—is meaning’s centre and home. Uniting meaningfully with the beyond-its-personal-self-perception-through-pleasure-and-pain, human feeling becomes pure (or chaste) through its devotion to wisdom, and strong (or brave, courageous) through its devotion to love’s deed. Hence the Middle High German understanding of Minne as chaste love, mindful rather than sensual love (compare with sinnan, ‘to desire or covet’), bold and chivalrous love—and moreover as a love which, carried inwardly and purely in a heart fully permeated by the thought of the beloved, is love set free—the ‘freie Minne, … the highest in human being.’ The knight, and later the wandering minstrel, carried his freie Minne as enduring motive in his thinking heart, as, sent out into the world, he sought the path that would have sense and significance for the meaning, the Minne, the true and free love, of his (jemeinigen) life.

Minne has by nature the character of music, of song. All true song is Minnesang. In spoken language, the experience of meaning sings through the inwardly character-filled and personally expressive vowel element, toward consonantal signification. Human being involves itself in itself; has meaning for and toward itself, when it utters itself in vowels. The vocal element in language is never object-referential; nor does it carry concepts. In the vowel live our crying and
our laughter, our pleasure and disgust and fear and wonder, our efforts at defiance, our exhaustion and our rage. It is we ourselves as self-feeling beings who are uttered immediately—never symbolically—in our vowels. Vowels have a relational referentiality of sorts, not to external objects, but to experiences. They express the agony of an experience, or the rapture of an experience, and so on. However, we could just as well reverse the order of reference to say that vowels express the experience of agony, or the experience of rapture. The experience is not outside the vowel that utters it. Experience is not an object. However objectively experience might be elicited, the relation here, the referentiality, is non-objective. Imagination loves to fill feeling experience with metaphor, carrying the immediate expressivity of the quality that lives in the vowel element toward a pictorial form of conceptual signification. In this way, feeling enters thought, gathers meaning as it weaves through ideas which feeling saturates in colour and in shades of warmth, in qualities of movement and attitude. By itself, the vowel cannot refer relationally to anything beyond its self-feeling experience. Hence ‘the feeling of the dog-bite’ will not logically invert to ‘the dog-bite of the feeling.’ (Aristotle posits invertibility of the terms of a relation as the condition of referential relation.) Yet the musing of imagination loves to perform just such inversions of relation against the terms of the ordinary conscious relation human subject: external object—When Rhoda in The Waves says ‘the tiger leaps’ she does mean ‘the tiger’s leap of my feeling.’ Her feeling has found its signification of meaning in an image. Metaphor presents the concept as if it were a given percep, as if inner were outer; nevertheless, imagery is a form of conceptual signification. Beneath the imaginative signification—the idea the metaphor images—is a feeling, which, if Rhoda were only to express that feeling, would be voiced as pure vowel. Now, if you were to erase from your inner perception the image, yet retain for your experience the gesture of the figure, which carries the feeling into the sphere of thought and toward articulation, signification, you would be entering a purely musical element: all that would be needed to turn the musing gesture to what we might call ‘actual’ music would be its filling out with physically audible tone. If you were to perform the gesture with your voice, you would carry your vowel toward the selfless universal realm of thought, beyond your self-feeling, as you sang the vowel—that is, as you offered yourself along an elongated breath-stream that demanded for its sustaining all your mindful, unwavering yet rhythmically waving love; as you offered your vowel to a pitched articulation that was like light to the self-involved inwardness of your vowel’s mood; as you offered your inner life (without thinking) to the weaving of meaning between thoughts. Song is the self-offering free deed of Minne. And if you were to perform this gesture with your arms, your arms would (inaudibly) sing toward signification through the vowel element indwelling these most potentially expressive limbs, just as my arms have been singing Schoenberg’s thoughts.

By itself—without signification of any kind—the vowel is unthinking and also unconcerned with thought. The larynx is a fifth limb; the voice is instrument of the human will for the expressing, for the making actual and effectual—emotive—in the environment, of feeling. Correlatively, the consonant by itself—that is, insofar as it is unvoiced—is unimpassioned. In the forming of the unvoiced consonant, the human will, unmitigated by feeling, strikes directly with the voluntarily movable tools of the lower jaw against the passivity of the objectively perceiving upper head, which, at rest, contemplates the world in thought. (Here Saussure’s conceptual formulation of the word as signifier/signified—as the striking of the active against the passive—has its exact counterpart in physical reality.) Through their willed sculptural articulations of the air that passes through the headspace, the unvoiced consonants, with their definite and lively formative impulses, strive to give back imaginatively the sense of things and processes found in the light-filled space of the outer world.

For example, in fleeing, escaping gestures as of fire, whether fearful or free, we sense the gesture to which we give sound in off. off flies your breath like a flicker of flame when ‘off!’ you say. In speaking r, we enact the trembling, trilling, shivering thrills and the racing and roaring of processes of arousal. Now, an unvoiced r, a really rolling unvoiced r, sounds as a pure, mechanical whirring in the air. Unvoiced, the r’s whirring is humanly unimpassioned. The arousal r enacts is in the first instance an objective process, a pure whirring that is independent of the human affections. But the voice always involves itself in the speaking of whole words and sentences. When we involve our voices with the objectively formative forces of the consonants—in-between by way of the vowels, or by voicing the consonants—the external process, for example the whirring arousal of r, is imaginatively appropriated for the signification of the human passions, just as we appropriate images for the metaphoric signification of feeling. The consonants connect the life of feeling, via the willed sounding of an objective image-form, with the conceptually objective. The word ‘horror,’ if only we listen to how its vowel-sound shakes and trembles (not quiveringly or fleeingly, but with o’s native ponderousness, with a certain held dignity) between the appropriated whirrings of the highly aroused r, and to how the word is initiated by a sound that in other contexts might convey surprised delight, the b (which is just as much unvoiced vowel as unsculpted consonant—a virtually
inaudible, surprised outbreak of the breath), but which here is just surprise—or shock, a spellbinding shock that enchants the voice into speechlessness— If we listen carefully to the word ‘horror,’ we can discover how the word is imaginatively and conceptually far richer than both the bald scream and the word when it is not really listened to, but instead received as an abstract, information-conveying token. With the help of the consonants we make richly imaginative sense with our passions as they rise through the voice.

In the first instance, though, the consonants embody objectively the sense of things and processes as they are given from the without, so that when one imaginatively embodies a lively concept of a thing in the consonantal frame that belongs to the thing, one (ideally) speaks the thing just as it is. One can speak a thing ‘just as it is’ from various aspects, just as a sculptor works from all sides—Saussure’s reasonable objection to onomatopoeic theories of language, namely that different languages have quite different sounding words for the same entities, and that therefore words’ sounds (signifiers) have but an ‘arbitrary’ connection to concepts (signifieds), not to mention to the things themselves, need not be raised. The various languages speak into the world from various perspectives. The concrete relationship between human head, which in itself is a sculptural form, the space of which is articulable in various ways, and perceptual reality, which is likewise articulable from various perspectives, is universal. That our current conventional usages of language—compounded by the concessions the body of language itself, which individual speakers inherit, has made to convention—fail for the most part to engage with the consonants’ inherent plasticity cannot alter the consonants’ basic characteristic to be sculptural forms, which can be found both outside in the world, and inside the human head which thinks the concepts of the things in the world. Whereas the vowel issues entirely from within the human being, the consonantal element joins inner to outer in a sculpturally resonant relation of resolve in correspondence. In the word most consciously spoken, inner and outer resonate as one, in spite of particularities of perspective. The human head is round; the skull encompasses a whole sphere, just as the world in which we find ourselves forms round us a whole sphere. So it is that the perspectival limit on sense should never fool us. For we know that the sphere encompassing us as reality is not one-sided or even four-cornered but round. We should know that to speak whole and perfect sense we shall need to perceive things in all their aspects; we shall need to be flexible in our judgements and mobile in our viewpoints. Yet nor should we, not being fooled by the single perspective into believing we know all from that one perspective, cynically declare wholeness of knowledge an impossibility. To be aware of the limitations of one perspective is to be aware of the existence of others, equally accessible to us if we so will it, if we send ourselves out seeking new directions and new vistas of sense for our thinking:

Everything needed to explain a given world phenomenon must lie within this world. … Our cognition involves questions that emerge for us because a conceptual sphere, pointing to the totality of the world, confronts a perceptual sphere conditioned by place, time, and subjective organization. Our task is to balance the two spheres, both of which we know well. This has nothing to do with a limit to cognition. At a particular time, this or that might remain unexplained because … our vantage point … prevents us from perceiving the things in question. But what is not found today may be found tomorrow: The limits determined in this way are only temporary, and they can be overcome by progress in perception and thinking.

Of course, one can only put one foot after the other in making such ‘progress.’ No human being knows everything absolutely at once. But imagine you could perceive in all its aspects at once the whole of given reality, perceive in an instant everything that ‘is’ in the light-of-day by virtue of its ‘having been.’ The vehicle of your perceiving would not be your little head located at a point in the centre of your observation field; the vehicle would be a great sphere encompassing the world. The macrocosmic sphere would still be head, although no longer ‘your’ head. There dwell within this great sphere all beings in all their constitutional frames; and although your perceiving would encompass all possible viewpoints, cancelling out your own sense of linear perspective, the space that your consciousness enfolded would retain a directionally articulated architectural differentiation of its own. So is the sphere your macrocosmic head would encompass. With your head expanded into the periphery you would no longer perceive yourself standing outside objects; the beings would be within your head. You would distinguish neither between percep and concept, nor between their forms and your word. Everything in reality of a sculptural, pictorial, or architectonic character would be identical with the sum of plastic forms, which, in your ordinary little head, you articulate as consonants. Everything in reality of the nature of substance, of essence, of quantity, relation, quality, and so on, would be identical with the content of your thoughts.
Your ordinary little head is in fact nothing but a crystallized, compacted image of the universe—of the greater head inside which you stand, bearing your little head.

So small your head is, within rather than encompassing the world, because you are destined to walk your sinnan in an individually feeling, jemeinigen way. You are destined to enlarge your purview by putting one foot after another, intentionally, walking your life’s particular story. If you were all head, you would be as big as the universe; but you would have no biography, no story to tell. You are small because you have been sent out from the periphery into a body with limbs that reach for things, with flesh permeated by desire, with lungs that breathe in and out, so that your relation with existence is filled with tension. The tension manifests in your longing for knowledge.

The wholeness of an absolute head-existence is tensionless; would we possess such a consciousness we would not experience in its absoluteness the resolution of a knowledge cadence. True wholeness experienced through the performance of cognitive acts can in no way be dependent on a limitlessness of perception. If we perceived absolutely, all-at-once, the perceived would be identical with our thought-content—thought would be light, and light thought—but the desire to know would never arise in us; we would ask no questions; we would be less than wholly human. To experience wholeness in knowledge it is enough—truly enough—to reintegrate personal experience, in all its concreteness and specificity, into the world-whole through the universal element of thinking. It is enough that in our thinking we do move in the sphere of the limitless. The tension of our wanting-to-know from within a condition of smallness, separateness, resolves into the universal in a way that sustains tension musically in our feeling for the relationships between beings revealed in thought. In knowledge, the desiring (sinnan) of knowledge becomes musical love (Minne). What we give back to the world as knowledge is fruit ripened in the warmth of love. Were we all head, we would be wise, but we would not love. As wholly human knowers we offer with each cognitive act something wholly new to the wizened world: the metamorphosed fruit of that desire which originates in our separation from the world wisdom, into love.

The experience of cognitive cadence is, after all, not just one of satisfaction with perfect sense. The cadence belongs to the breath, not to the brain. The cadence gives breath to the rhythmic experience of discovering truth through harmony, harmony through truth. The harmony need not be ‘in a key’ of the kind articulated prismatically by functional chord progressions. Schoenberg’s serial compositions never cadence ‘in a key.’ No such cadence is possible in serial music, for the single perspective has been given up in favour of an indication, from out of the spatial, circular, tensionless totality of the referentially equalized twelve equidistant tones, of all possible perspectives. Absolute spatiality neutralizes the power of harmony to indicate cadentially a directional sense for the musical melodic process; sense is preserved, not in the form of functional tonality, but in the form of the architecturally differentiated total sphere we might recognize as ‘great head.’ Extremely articulate, almost consonantal in its plasticity, Schoenberg’s music sounds as if it conceptualized and talked, as though it wanted to tell something explicit in structures of categorical exposure. Hence it would be easy to hear a twelve-tone piece as head-music, cerebral music—as ‘unmusical’ music, in fact, which made at the same time only a ‘nonsensical’ discourse, frustrating comprehension by seeming to talk sense without ever actually conveying the sense of any thing. It would be easy to hear Schoenberg’s serial music as frustrated speech for a loveless and abstract cerebration—except that its melos breathes. There lives in Schoenberg’s rhythmically unfolding, ideally self-sufficient melos, the cadence of the breath, the rhythmic fall (Latin cadere = to fall)—which sings forth truly the feeling for resolution, wholeness, while sustaining the full harmonic tension of a melodic process continued, with all its critical turns, into vertical simultaneity.

So it is that my arms—free from my head where I struggle to find words that do not tangle in Schoenberg’s weaving and knotting high-density tropes as I try to make sense of them—perform in their moving-feeling a cadence of knowing, speaking in feeling and in breathed meaning between the thoughts that I cannot embody in English words. Moving their cadence, free and unfrustrated, my arms—the arms of a pianist who plays Schoenberg—know. Their moving reveals the rhythm of knowing’s breathing. Therein lies epistemological significance, though my arms signal nothing.

Beijing, 2014.

2 Ibid., 81–82.


4 Ibid., 60. (I have modified the translation slightly to render Sinn as ‘sense’ rather than ‘meaning’.)


6 Ibid., 66.

7 See ibid., 32–61.


9 Saussure, op. cit., 111.

10 Ibid., 114–17.


13 Ibid., 675.


15 Duden, op. cit., 675.

16 Ibid.

17 Heidegger, op.cit.,192. (Translation modified to render Sinn as ‘sense.’)


22 Ibid., 280.

23 Steiner, Intuitive Thinking, op.cit., 83.

24 Ibid., 84.


26 Steiner, Intuitive Thinking, op.cit., 136.

27 Ibid., 136–37.

28 This transcendence of the usual temporal order—percepts preceding concepts—within current musical experience—that is, as we are living in the musical element—is to be distinguished from the reflective pondering, the analysis, or our feelings upon listening. For the latter activity of research, such as I am conducting here, musical experience—experience bad—is given as, and treated as, a percept—as a ‘something existent’ which is to be understood, to be made sense of.

29 I choose the word ‘semantic’ a little reluctantly, aware as I am of its etymological root in the Greek soma, sign. However, there is no other English word conveying ‘meaningfulness’ in such a general, open way, without denoting connotation, or connoting denotation, or purporting significance or intention, and so on, which are all very particular. So I ask the reader, please, to ignore the word’s etymology in conceiving of a universal reservoir from which all those different qualities of meaning are drawn.


34 See Heraclitus qtd. in Guerrière, op. cit., 92: ‘Bringing itself apart [diapheromenon] [it] comes together with itself [homologe]: a contrary-stretching [palintropoi] connection [harmonia] as with bow and lyre.’
36 Ibid. (My emphasis.)
37 Heidegger, op. cit., 67. (My emphasis.)
38 Ibid., 68.
39 Ibid. (Italics in original.)
40 Ibid., 67. (My emphasis.)
42 Woolf, op. cit., 93.
43 Steiner, *Intuitive Thinking*, op. cit., 103. (Steiner’s emphasis.)
46 Woolf, op. cit., 93.
48 Ibid., 126.
49 See Steiner, ibid., 255–56.
50 Saussure, op. cit., 67–69.