

The String Quartets of Mieczysław Weinberg: A Critical Study

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	5
LIST OF MUSIC EXAMPLES	7
ABSTRACT	12
DECLARATION	13
COPYRIGHT STATEMENT	14
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	15
PERMISSIONS	16
A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND MUSIC EXAMPLES	21
1. INTRODUCTION	22
1.1. SHORT BIOGRAPHY	23
1.2. RECEPTION AND REVIVAL	28
1.3. WEINBERG’S QUARTET CYCLE: ‘AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE GENRE’	32
1.4. THESIS STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS	35
2. CONTEXTS	39
2.1. WEINBERG AND SHOSTAKOVICH	41
2.1.1. WEINBERG AND BARTÓK	54
2.1.2. OTHER NOTABLE INFLUENCES	58
2.2. THE SOVIET QUARTET	62
2.2.1. NIKOLAY MYASKOVSKY	64
2.2.2. VISSARION SHEBALIN	73
2.2.3. YURI LEVITIN	81
2.2.4. BORIS CHAYKOVSKY	86
2.3. RECEPTION	90
2.3.1. SOVIET RECEPTION	90
2.3.2. CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN RECEPTION	99
2.3.3. WESTERN SOURCES	102

2.4.	CONCLUSIONS	104
3.	NARRATIVE: TOPIC AND DISCOURSE	106
3.1.	FINGERPRINTS	109
3.2.	TOPIC	119
3.2.1.	INTONATSIA	121
3.2.2.	TOPIC AND QUOTATION	127
3.2.3.	ENNUI AND OBLOMOV	140
3.2.4.	SUPPRESSED FURY	150
3.3.	DISCOURSE	157
3.3.1.	DISCOURSE THEORY	158
3.3.2.	THE CRISIS OF THE BEGINNING	163
3.3.3.	ENDINGS	170
3.4.	CONCLUSIONS	180
4.	FORM	182
4.1.	THE CLASSICAL QUARTET MODEL	184
4.2.	MOVEMENT STRUCTURES IN WEINBERG'S QUARTETS	187
4.2.1.	WEINBERG AND THE 'CLASSICAL QUARTET'	189
4.2.2.	WEINBERG'S SINGLE-MOVEMENT QUARTETS	190
4.2.3.	QUARTETS WITH FIVE MOVEMENTS OR MORE	194
4.3.	RONDO FORM	197
4.4.	SONATA FORM	204
4.5.	VARIATION FORM	221
4.5.1.	QUARTET NO. 7, THIRD MOVEMENT	224
4.6.	CONCLUSION	240
5.	HARMONY	242
5.1.	SIDE-STEPPING HARMONIES	245
5.1.1.	HARMONIC EXTENSION	252
5.1.2.	SIDE-STEPPING IN A NEO-RIEMANNIAN CONTEXT	259
5.2.	MODALITY	266

5.2.1. HYPER-MINOR	267
5.2.2. MAJOR Vs. MINOR.....	271
5.3. TWELVE-NOTENESS: WEINBERG, KHOLOPOV, AND CHROMATICISM.....	278
5.4. CONCLUSION	291
6. CONCLUSION	293
BIBLIOGRAPHY	300
APPENDIX – FIRST QUARTET, COMMENTARY	318
APPENDIX – FIRST QUARTET, SCORE	327
APPENDIX – FIRST QUARTET, TRANSCRIPTION NOTES	371

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LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1-i, Weinberg's Quartet Cycle.....	33
Fig. 1-ii, Groupings with Weinberg's Quartets.	34
Fig. 2-i, Shostakovich and Weinberg Quartets	44
Fig. 2-ii, Quartets of Myaskovsky, Shebalin, Levitin, and Chaykovsky.....	63
Fig. 4-i, Classical Quartet Model, movement scheme.....	185
Fig. 4-ii, String Quartets and their respective no. of movements	188
Fig. 4-iii, Movement-number frequency tally.....	188
Fig. 4-iv, Weinberg's four-movement quartets.....	189
Fig. 4-v, Structural summaries of Quartets Nos. 8, 13, and 17.....	192
Fig. 4-vi, Quartets Nos. 5 and 6, movement structures.....	195
Fig. 4-vii, Quartets Nos. 14 & 15, movement structures.....	196
Fig. 4-viii, Op. 20, second movement, structural summary.....	199
Fig. 4-ix, Quartet No. 11, third movement, summary.....	202
Fig. 4-x, Quartet No. 3, first movement, structural summary.....	213
Fig. 4-xi, Quartet No. 6, first movement, structural summary.....	214
Fig. 4-xii, Quartet No. 17, structural summaries.	218
Fig. 4-xiii, Quartet No. 7, final movement, structural summary.	226
Fig. 4-xiv, Quartet No. 7, final movement, R44-R53, summary.....	235
Fig. 4-xv, Shostakovich, Quartet No. 2, final movement, summary.	237
Fig. 5-i, Quartet No. 1, first movement, opening, 'simplified' harmonic version.....	250
Fig. 5-ii, Quartet No. 13, structural/harmonic summary.....	258
Fig. 5-iii, Chordal transformations.....	261
Fig. 5-iv, Grid plottings of transformations.....	262
Fig. 5-v, Quartet No. 2, first movement, opening, bb. 4-7, <i>Terzschritt</i> relations.	263

Fig. 5-vi, Hyper-minor scale.....	268
Fig. 5-vii, Quartet No. 14, first movement, opening, reduction.	276

LIST OF MUSIC EXAMPLES

Where not otherwise stated, all examples are from Weinberg's String Quartets.

Ex. 2.1 a), Shostakovich, Quartet No. 2, first movement, opening, and b) Weinberg, Quartet No. 2, first movement, opening.	46
Ex. 2.2 a), Weinberg, Quartet No. 2, first movement, ⁵ R10, and b) Shostakovich, Quartet No. 2, first movement, R22.....	47
Ex. 2.3 a), Weinberg, Quartet No. 3, second movement, opening, b) Weinberg, Piano Quintet, fourth movement, opening.....	49
c) Shostakovich, Quartet No. 3, fourth movement, opening.	50
Ex. 2.4 a), Weinberg, Quartet No. 2, first movement, R28, and b), ending, and c) Shostakovich, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ending.....	51
Ex. 2.5 a), Weinberg, Quartet No. 12, third movement, opening and b) Britten, Quartet No. 3, second movement, opening.....	60
Ex. 2.6, Weinberg, Quartet No. 14, first movement, R11 ⁶	61
Ex. 2.7, Weinberg, Quartet No. 2 (original version), third movement, final bars.	67
Ex. 2.8, Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 4, fourth movement, ending.	68
Ex. 2.9, Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 2, fourth movement, ⁷ R27.	68
Ex. 2.10, Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 3, first movement, opening.....	70
Ex. 2.11, Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 3, first movement, R5.....	70
Ex. 2.12, Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 13, second movement, opening.	71
Ex. 2.13, Shebalin, Quartet No. 1, opening.	75
Ex. 2.14, Ravel, String Quartet, opening.	76
Ex. 2.15, Shebalin, Quartet No. 3, opening.	77
Ex. 2.16 a), Weinberg, Quartet No. 3, first movement, R27 ² , and b) Shebalin, Quartet No. 4, first movement, ² R25.	79

Ex. 2.17, Levitin, Quartet No. 9, third movement, R26 ³	83
Ex. 2.18, Levitin, Quartet No. 10, second movement, ⁴ R3.....	85
Ex. 2.19, Chaykovsky, Quartet No. 5, R36.....	88
Ex. 2.20 a), Weinberg, Quartet No. 15, sixth movement, opening, and b) Beethoven, Op. 18, No. 1, opening.....	97
Ex. 3.1, Quartet No. 16, second movement, opening.	110
Ex. 3.2, Quartet No. 15, fifth movement, ⁷ R27.	110
Ex. 3.3, Shostakovich, Quartet No. 11, third movement, opening.	111
Ex. 3.4 a), Quartet No. 6, fourth movement, ⁴ R56, and b) fifth movement, ¹ R73.....	113
Ex. 3.5 a), <i>The Passenger</i> , opening, and b) Symphony No. 12, first movement, R43.	114
Ex. 3.6, Britten, <i>War Requiem</i> , second movement, R49.	115
Ex. 3.7 a), Shostakovich, Quartet No. 3, second movement, opening.....	115
b) Shostakovich, Symphony No. 8, fourth movement, R118.	116
Ex. 3.8, Quartet No. 13, opening.	116
Ex. 3.9, Quartet No. 13, R13.....	117
Ex. 3.10, Quartet No. 15, fourth movement, opening.....	117
Ex. 3.11, Quartet No. 1, a), original version, bb. 194-6 and b) revised version, ² R15.	118
Ex. 3.12, Quartet No. 12, second movement, ³ R11.	119
Ex. 3.13, Quartet No. 4, second movement, ³ R38.	131
Ex. 3.14 a), Quartet No. 15, eighth movement, ¹ R42, and b) <i>Requiem</i> , fourth movement, ³ R35.	132
Ex. 3.15 a), Quartet No. 16, first movement, R2 ⁷ , and b) <i>Mazl Tov!</i> , Act two, scene one, R161 ³	133
Ex. 3.16, a) Quartet No. 16, second movement, ⁷ R21, and b) ‘Op. 10’ [pre-opus number], Mazurka, No. 2, opening.	134
Ex. 3.17, Quartet No. 17, R2.....	135

Ex. 3.18, a), Trio, R18, and b) <i>The Portrait</i> , Act Three, Scene 7, opening.....	136
Ex. 3.19, Quartet No. 8, ¹ R4.....	137
Ex. 3.20, <i>The Idiot</i> , Act Two, scene four, ⁴ R33.....	138
Ex. 3.21, Symphony No. 22, first movement, ² R11.....	139
Ex. 3.22, Quartet No. 2 (revised version), third movement, opening.....	144
Ex. 3.23, Quartet No. 2, (original version), opening bars.....	146
Ex. 3.24, Quartet No. 2 (revised version), third movement, R5 ²	146
Ex. 3.25, Musorgsky, <i>Sunless</i> , ‘Skúka’, opening.....	149
Ex. 3.26, Quartet No. 5, third movement, opening.....	153
Ex. 3.27, Quartet No. 15, fifth movement, opening.....	154
Ex. 3.28, Quartet No. 11, first movement, opening.....	163
Ex. 3.29, Quartet No. 11, first movement, R2.....	164
Ex. 3.30, Quartet No. 12, first movement, opening.....	168
Ex. 3.31, Bartók, Quartet No. 3, opening.....	168
Ex. 3.32, Weinberg, Quartet No. 12, first movement, R3.....	168
Ex. 3.33, Quartet No. 12, first movement, R9.....	169
Ex. 3.34, Quartet No. 2 (revised version), fourth movement, R19 ⁵	171
Ex. 3.35, Quartet No. 3, first movement, ⁸ R45.....	172
Ex. 3.36, Chamber Symphony No. 2, third movement, R8.....	173
Ex. 3.37, Quartet No. 5, fourth movement, ¹ R35.....	173
Ex. 3.38, <i>Children’s Songs [Jewish Songs]</i> , coda, bb. 4-11.....	174
Ex. 3.39, Quartet No. 6, third movement, R46.....	175
Ex. 3.40, Quartet No. 6, sixth movement, R99.....	175
Ex. 3.41, Quartet No. 15, sixth movement, opening.....	177
Ex. 3.42, Quartet No. 15, seventh movement, opening.....	178
Ex. 3.43, Quartet No. 15, eighth movement, opening.....	179

Ex. 4.1, Quartet No. 4, second movement, opening	200
Ex. 4.2, Bartók, Quartet No. 4, fifth movement, opening.....	201
Ex. 4.3, Quartet No. 11, third movement, opening	203
Ex. 4.4, Quartet No. 3, opening.	211
Ex. 4.5, Quartet No. 3, bb. 3-10, cello first theme.....	212
Ex. 4.6, Quartet No. 3, first movement, ¹ R12.....	212
Ex. 4.7, Quartet No. 6, first movement, opening.....	215
Ex. 4.8, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ⁴ R2.....	215
Ex. 4.9, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ¹ R4.....	216
Ex. 4.10, Quartet No. 6, first movement, R10.	217
Ex. 4.11, Quartet No. 7, third movement, opening.....	227
Ex. 4.12, Quartet No. 7, third movement, R31.	228
Ex. 4.13, Quartet No. 7, third movement, R35.....	229
Ex. 4.14, Quartet No. 7, third movement, R39.	229
Ex. 4.15, Quartet No. 7, third movement, ⁶ R41.....	231
Ex. 4.16, Quartet No. 7, third movement, R42 ⁵	232
Ex. 4.17, Quartet No. 7, third movement, R43 ³	232
Ex. 4.18, Quartet No. 7, third movement, a) R40, and b) R44.	234
Ex. 4.19, Shostakovich, Quartet No. 2, finale, opening.....	238
Ex. 5.1, Quartet No. 1 (original version), first movement, opening, and harmonic reduction.	249
Ex. 5.2, Quartet No. 2 (original version), first movement, opening, and reduction.	251
Ex. 5.3, Quartet No. 5, first movement, Opening.	253
Ex. 5.4, Quartet No. 9, first movement, opening.....	255
Ex. 5.5, Quartet No. 10, opening.	257
Ex. 5.6, Prokofiev, 'Juliet as a Young Girl', opening.....	259

Ex. 5.7, Quartet No. 17, opening, and <i>Terzschrift</i> graph.	265
Ex. 5.8, Quartet No. 3, first movement, R5 ³	269
Ex. 5.9, Quartet No. 3, first movement, ⁸ R45.....	270
Ex. 5.10, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ³ R1, and scale reduction.....	270
Ex. 5.11, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ¹⁴ R1.....	273
Ex. 5.12, Milhaud, Quartet No. 5, first movement, last four bars.	274
Ex. 5.13, Quartet No. 14, first movement, opening.....	275
Ex. 5.14 a), Quartet No. 12, first movement, opening, and b) R9.....	284
Ex. 5.15, Bartók, Quartet No. 3, first movement, opening.....	285
Ex. 5.16, Weinberg, Quartet No. 12, first movement, R3.	286
Ex. 5.17 a), Weinberg, Quartet No. 15, third movement, opening, and b) Bartók, Quartet No. 5, fourth movement, opening.	288

ABSTRACT

As attention on the music of Mieczysław Weinberg (1919-1996) has increased in the years after his death, so has the need for an analytical study of his musical style and language. This thesis surveys Weinberg's changing style through a genre that spans almost his entire output: the string quartet. His close friendship and artistic affinity with Shostakovich helps make his music accessible to a wider audience, though closer examination reveals Weinberg's individuality and a quite distinct language from that of his mentor. In support of this contention, a wide range of analytical approaches is deployed in this dissertation, along with a pragmatic methodology for presenting a holistic overview of Weinberg's quartets.

Weinberg's quartet cycle occupies an important place in twentieth-century music, with parallels to Shostakovich, Bartók, and other Soviet composers, including Myaskovsky, Shebalin, Levitin, and Boris Chaykovsky; correspondences and distinctiveness are explored in the second chapter. The third chapter surveys Weinberg's musical narratives, with recourse to theories from Kofi Agawu, Boris Asafiev, and Jacques Derrida. Form is the focus of the fourth chapter, where ideas from Mark Aranovsky, and James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy are deployed to highlight Weinberg's problematising of traditional forms in his music. Chapter five explores Weinberg's multi-faceted approach to harmony, with concepts expanded from Lev Mazel, Yury Kholopov, and the neo-Riemannian school of analysis.

The picture that emerges is of Weinberg's individuality and distinctive voice, manifested in a controlled experimentalism and a tendency towards extended lyricism. His affinity with better-known composers may prove an approachable entry-point for wider audiences, but many of the most striking elements in his quartet cycle are of his own invention. His quartets stand as an important contextual dimension for understanding Shostakovich's cycle, and also for appreciating the broader repertoire of Soviet chamber music. As his centenary approaches, engagement with Weinberg's music continues to increase: this thesis provides contexts and analysis-based conclusions to complement this ongoing revival.

DECLARATION

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PERMISSIONS

(where applicable)

WEINBERG

TWO MAZURKAS, 'Op. 10, 10a' [juvenile opus number]

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A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND MUSIC EXAMPLES

The system of transliteration adopted in this thesis follows that of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, London, Macmillan, 2001.

As in that source, common usage demands that certain exceptions be made to any systematic scheme – these include accepted standard forms such as Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky. ‘Chaykovsky’ is used for Weinberg’s contemporary Boris Chaykovsky, in order to differentiate him from his predecessor. Weinberg’s surname is a case in point; a strict transliteration from the Cyrillic would read ‘Vaynberg’. Debate continues about the accepted spelling, with variations including ‘Vainberg’ and ‘Wajnberg’, the latter being the composer’s preferred (but not unique) orthography before his move from Poland. This thesis opts for ‘Weinberg’, the spelling used by the *New Grove*. Strict transliteration is used in bibliographical contexts. All translations are the author’s own, unless otherwise credited.

When referring to music examples in the text of the thesis, the following system is used: ‘R1’ refers to the bar featuring the rehearsal mark ‘1’ at its outset; superscript numbers to the left refer to bars leading up to the rehearsal mark bar, and superscript numbers to the right refer to bars afterwards. For instance: ²R1 refers to two bars before rehearsal mark 1, and R1² refers to two bars after the bar containing rehearsal mark 1.

1. INTRODUCTION

A composer is someone who can illuminate with his own light – not like anyone else’s – what lies within each of us. ‘Traditionalism’, ‘avantgardism’, ‘modernism’ have no meaning. Only one thing is important: that which is yours alone [*tvoyo*]... But to be a composer isn’t a pastime, it’s an eternal conversation, an eternal search for harmony in people and nature. It’s a search for the meaning and duty of our short-lived existence on the earth.¹

With these words in a 1966 letter to his wife, Mieczysław Weinberg came closest to setting out his compositional ethos. ‘Eternal searching’ and the meaning of existence are concepts that he returned to throughout his career. This thesis sets out to explicate his life and works through a select group of compositions: his 17 string quartets. Weinberg is still a relatively unknown composer, but his rise to prominence since his death has been striking. The volume of scholarly work on his music is slowly increasing, and can potentially provide valuable insight into the wider culture of Soviet music. My reasons for selecting Weinberg’s string quartets are outlined below, but first a biographical sketch of this unfamiliar figure is necessary.

¹Anon., ‘Pis’ma o lyubvi’ [Love Letters], *Muzikal’naya zhizn’*, 2000/2, 18. The date of 1966 fits with Weinberg’s first post-war return to Poland to attend the Warsaw Autumn Festival, where he was apparently uninterested in the avant-garde trends practiced by his compatriots. See: David Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg: In Search of Freedom* (Hofheim: Wolke, 2010) 105.

1.1. BIOGRAPHY

Weinberg was born on 8 December 1919, the first child of Jewish parents.² His father, Samuil Weinberg, was born in Kishinev, Bessarabia, in 1882, and was a proficient violinist and conductor.³ From the age of 17, Samuil toured Eastern Europe with a Jewish theatre company, organising music for productions. Sometime during his travels, he met a Moldovan soprano named Sonya.⁴

The two married and settled in Warsaw in 1916, where Samuil landed employment as musical director of the Warsaw State Jewish theatre.⁵ Mieczysław was born three years later, and his sister, Ester, in 1921. In later life, Weinberg recalled a happy childhood filled with music – mostly from his father’s theatre orchestra. From the age of ten, Weinberg joined his father’s troupe playing the piano for productions.

After an initial period of private piano lessons, Weinberg joined the Warsaw Conservatoire in 1933, under the supervision of Josef Turczyński (an internationally celebrated pianist, and later editor of the Paderewski Chopin Edition). Weinberg quickly rose to such success that when the American virtuoso Josef Hoffmann visited the Warsaw Conservatoire, he offered the young man a visa to study with him at the Curtis

² For a copy of Weinberg’s revised birth certificate from 1982, see Danuta Gwizdalanka, ‘Unknown facts from Mieczysław Wajnberg’s biography’, available online at: <http://culture.pl/en/article/unknown-facts-from-mieczyslaw-wajnbergs-biography> [accessed 18/02/16].

³ See: Fanning, *In Search of Freedom*, 15; much of the biographical information here is from Fanning’s lucid introduction to Weinberg’s life and works.

⁴ Sources differ about Weinberg’s mother’s first name. Zalmen Zylbercweig lists her name as ‘Sonya’, while Weinberg’s certificate of enrollment from the Warsaw Conservatoire lists his mother’s name as ‘Sura Dwojra Stern’; in addition, he obtained a new birth certificate much later in life, which declared his mother’s name as ‘Sarra Kotlitskaya’. It is quite possible, of course, that one (or more) of these may have been a stage name during her singing career. See: Zalmen Zylbercweig ed., *Leksikon fun yidishn teater* [Encyclopaedia of Yiddish Theatre], in six vols. (Warsaw, Mexico City, and New York: unknown publisher, 1931-1969). Weinberg’s daughter, Victoria, refers to her Grandmother as ‘Sara Kotlitskaya’ in a 2016 interview with Elizavita Blumina. See: http://www.colta.ru/articles/music_classic/10232 [accessed 06/04/16].

⁵ Zylbercweig, *Leksikon fun yidishn teater*. Samuil Weinberg’s entry can be read, in English translation, at the following link: <http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/yt/lex/V/vaynberg-Samuil.htm> [accessed 13/01/16]; Sonya Weinberg’s can be found at: <http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/yt/lex/V/vaynberg-sonya-V5.htm> [accessed 13/01/16].

Institute of Music in Philadelphia. The Nazi invasion of September 1939 put paid to such plans.

It was obvious that the young Jewish family would not remain safe in Nazi-occupied Poland, so Weinberg and his sister made preparations to flee and head east to seek sanctuary in the Soviet Union. Ester gave up after a few hours, apparently since her shoes hurt her feet with walking and she returned home; Weinberg carried on alone.⁶ He would never see his family again. His parents and sister were sent to the Łódź ghetto, and from there to the Trawniki concentration camp. They were murdered, along with thousands of others, in November 1943.

After an arduous two-week journey through conflict-ridden territory, Weinberg reached the Belorussian border and waited with many others for the order to allow refugees entry. Once he was granted ingress, Weinberg's name was altered by an impatient border guard, who scoffed at the name 'Mieczysław' and opted for the more Jewish-sounding 'Moisey' instead.⁷ Weinberg was admitted to the Minsk Conservatoire to continue his music tuition, now focusing on composition. He studied with Vasily Zolotaryov, a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, in what was to be his only period of formal instruction in composition.⁸ His study was brief, as the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union came the day after his final examination on 21 June 1941.

Weinberg was faced with fleeing the Nazi war machine once more, and this time evacuated via train some 4000 miles to Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Weinberg ingratiated himself into the cultural milieu there, including the displaced Soviet-Jewish intellectual

⁶ For Weinberg's recollections of his early life and flight from Warsaw to Minsk, see: Lyudmila Nikitina, 'Pochti lyuboy mig zhizni – rabota' [Nearly every moment of my life is work] *Muzikal'naya akademiya*, 1994/5, 17-19. Also, see Elizavita Blumina's interview with Victoria Weinberg: http://www.colta.ru/articles/music_classic/10232 [accessed 06/04/16].

⁷ Nikitina, 'Pochti lyuboy mig zhizni – rabota', 18.

⁸ For an overview of Weinberg's time in Minsk, see: Inessa Dvuzhil'naya, 'Mechislav Vaynberg i Belorusskaya konservatoriya' [Mieczysław Weinberg and the Belorussian Conservatoire], *BDAM* (Journal of the Belorussian State Academy of Music) 16 (2010), 62-67, available at: <http://www.elib.grsu.by/doc/2666> [accessed 18/02/16].

elite. He made a name for himself working at the Tashkent opera house, and it was here that he met and married his first wife, Natalya Vovsi-Mikhoels.⁹ Her father, Solomon Mikhoels, was a prominent Jewish actor and head of a wartime organisation called the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, making him one of the most famous Jews in the Soviet Union.¹⁰ Mikhoels apparently sent the score of Weinberg's First Symphony to Moscow for Shostakovich's examination. Shostakovich was so impressed that he immediately arranged the travel documents for Weinberg and his new family to relocate to Moscow, beginning a lifelong friendship between the two composers (see 2.1 for a more detailed discussion of Weinberg and Shostakovich's friendship, p. 41). Shortly afterwards, rumours reached Weinberg about his family's fate back in Poland.

Once in Moscow, Weinberg might have been forgiven for believing that he had escaped the aggressive spectre of anti-Semitism. This would not last, however. After the war, a growing tide of state-sponsored prejudice initially peaked with the dissolution of the JAFC and the deaths of its most high-profile members, including Solomon Mikhoels in January 1948. Mikhoels's death was officially deemed the result of a 'car accident', but there were no markings on the body; the truth eventually emerged that he was murdered on orders from Stalin himself. In an act of cold cynicism, Mikhoels was given a state funeral in Moscow.¹¹ With the cultural climate of the Great Terror a not-too-distant memory in the Soviet Union, Weinberg and his family were in a perilous position. The secret police began to follow his movements and note his appointments. Such surveillance continued for five years.¹²

⁹ Fanning, *In Search of Freedom*, 33.

¹⁰ See: Arno Lustiger, *Stalin and the Jews, 'The Red Book': The Tragedy of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the Soviet Jews* (New York: Enigma, 2003) 78.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 191-4.

¹² Manashir Yakubov, 'Mechislav Vaynberg: "Vsyu zhizn' ya zhadno sochinyal muziku"' [Mieczysław Weinberg: "I have composed music all my life, greedily"], *Russkoye utro* 67/7, (16-22 February 1995) 13.

Mikhoels's death was just the beginning of a turbulent year in 1948, as an intervention took place that sent shockwaves through the Soviet music establishment. Official control over music had been relaxed during the war years; Stalin's inner circle decided it was time to tighten the grip once more. The Composers' Union was encouraged to spearhead investigations into accusations of 'formalism' in the music of the leading Soviet composers, including Shostakovich, Khachaturian, and Prokofiev. The culture minister, Andrey Zhdanov, led proceedings (hence the label for this turbulent period, the 'Zhdanovshchina' [Zhdanov business]), assisted by the new head of the Composers' Union, Tikhon Khrennikov. Shostakovich was subjected to humiliating questions about his Socialist Realist allegiances, and forced to apologise for his supposed formalist deviations. Weinberg's treatment was comparatively light, as his Jewish-tinted music was praised as indicative of 'the shining, free working life of the Jewish people in the land of Socialism'.¹³ However, he was still cautioned, such as when the critic Grigory Bernandt claimed that Weinberg's works for children 'inject pupils with a perverted idea of the piano's sonority'.¹⁴ The shockwave of the Zhdanovshchina was felt throughout Soviet musical life, and it was not until after Stalin's death that many composers fully regained their self-confidence. Weinberg's tribulations were not over, however, and his next ordeal was also a direct result of one of Stalin's own commands.

Mikhoels's cousin, Miron Vovsi, was one of Stalin's personal physicians imprisoned as part of a thinly-veiled anti-Semitic drive in 1953. Shortly afterwards, Weinberg himself was arrested, supposedly on grounds of 'Jewish bourgeois

¹³ Tikhon Khrennikov: 'Editorial', in *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1949/1, 28; quoted in Boris Schwarz, *Music and musical life in Soviet Russia, enlarged edition: 1917-1981* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983) 295.

¹⁴ Grigory Bernandt (writing as 'Re-mi') 'Notograficheskiye zametki' [Notes on Music], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1948/2, 157-158; quoted in Fanning, *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: In Search of Freedom*, 66. There is little in Weinberg's *Children's Notebooks* or *21 Easy Pieces* to warrant this description, and Bernandt's article can be read as seeking to tar Shostakovich's own *Children's Notebooks* by criticizing similar works.

cosmopolitanism', but almost certainly because of his links to the Vovsi-Mikhoels family.¹⁵ Only Stalin's death in March 1953 saved Weinberg from the Gulag (though, according to several sources, Shostakovich's influence may have helped also – see p. 41).

Weinberg was a changed man after such dramatic events. Having lost his close family in the Holocaust, he strove to commemorate them and depict the evil of fascism through his music. His heavy treatment at the hands of the Soviet authorities appeared not to have diminished his enthusiasm for the country; indeed, he was still emphatic that he owed them, and especially the Red Army, his life. Outwardly he held no grudge about his imprisonment and his attitude towards the ruling classes seems to have been one of casual indifference (albeit with a share of works devoted to the congratulatory praise of the Soviet nation, including *The Madonna and Soldier* and the cantata *The Banners of Peace*).¹⁶

The remainder of his life story was one of hard work and a quiet life in Moscow. He made a living chiefly through composing for film, and high-profile musicians performed his works, including David Oistrakh, Mstislav Rostropovich, and the Borodin Quartet. In the 1960s, Weinberg and Natalya Vovsi-Mikhoels divorced, and he married the younger Olga Rakhalskaya, whom he had met as his daughter's classmate.

Weinberg's later years were marked by illness, partly from traces of earlier tuberculosis, but increasingly through Crohn's disease, a degenerative condition of the digestive tract. He found solace through his work, and maintained a prolific output into

¹⁵ See: Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg: In Search of Freedom*, 86-7.

¹⁶ Weinberg kept his political beliefs almost entirely private, beyond statements of his gratitude to the Red Army.

the early 1990s. Barely a few months before his death, he underwent a quiet ceremony to convert to the orthodox Christian faith, and he passed away on 26 February 1996.¹⁷

1.2. RECEPTION AND REVIVAL

Weinberg enjoyed only limited success during his lifetime, owing to several factors. There was his status as an outsider in the Soviet Union (he retained his striking Polish accent throughout his life). His potentially incriminating family ties also affected his music's reception and any honours he might have received, including the highest award in Soviet culture, the Stalin Prize. Marina Frolova-Walker observes that Weinberg was 'one of the very few significant Soviet composers of the time who had not only failed to win a Stalin Prize, but had never even gone as far as the plenary ballot'.¹⁸ She concludes that 'Weinberg, politically compromised after the death of Mikhoels... was a special case – he alone was deliberately passed over for non-musical reasons'.¹⁹

Weinberg's works often referred to Jewish elements, which initially drew praise, but became deeply problematic with the rise of Soviet anti-Semitism after the war.²⁰ Laurel Fay has suggested that Shostakovich's turn to Jewish music stemmed from a desire to utilise folk influences, (arguably emulating Weinberg's early success, and also with influence from Shostakovich's pupil Veniamin Fleishman) though Shostakovich

¹⁷ Weinberg's second daughter, Anna Weinberg, has insisted that Weinberg's conversion was entirely his own decision. See: Ada Gorfinkel, 'Moisey (Mechislav) Vaynberg' http://world.lib.ru/g/gorfinkel_x_a/gorfinkelx22332.shtml [accessed 06/04/16]. Gorfinkel is Weinberg's first cousin once removed, and her brief memoir provides valuable biographical information. The composer's first daughter, Victoria, has suggested that her father was coerced into the Orthodox faith against his will, a claim made in an interview released on the 20th anniversary of his death. See: http://www.colta.ru/articles/music_classic/10232 [accessed 06/04/16]. Olga Rakhalskaya herself responded to these claims in her own article, denying many of Victoria's assertions as 'throwing mud', see: <http://muzobozrenie.ru/otzy-v-oproverzhenie-ol-gi-ralal-skoj-na-interv-yu-viktorii-vajnberg/> [accessed 20/05/16].

¹⁸ Marina Frolova-Walker, *Stalin's Music Prize: Soviet Culture and Politics* (London: Yale University Press, 2016) 124.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 279.

²⁰ See: Nelly Kravetz, "'From the Jewish folk poetry" of Shostakovich and "Jewish songs" of Weinberg: music and power', in Ernst Kuhn, Andreas Wehrmeyer & Günter Wolter, (eds.) *Dmitri Schostakowitsch und das Jüdische Musikalische Erbe* (Berlin: Verlag Ernst Kuhn, 2001) 282-3.

soon found that he had picked an ‘undesirable’ ethnic group.²¹ Following Stalin’s death, Jewish elements were still present in Weinberg’s music, but they often mirrored his desire to commemorate the suffering inflicted by fascism.

Once Weinberg had fully confirmed the fate of his parents and sister in the early 1960s, the desire to commemorate became one of his primary concerns for composition. Chief among these works is his opera *The Passenger*, which he considered to be his masterpiece (and which Shostakovich explicitly stated as such). *The Passenger*’s performance history (or lack thereof) is a prime example of the Soviet response to works of commemoration, including many of Weinberg’s own. The opera was given an official commission by the Bolshoi Theatre and rehearsals soon started, scheduled for performance in 1968. However, the production was quietly dropped, and *The Passenger* was never staged in Weinberg’s lifetime.²² It went on to be published in piano score in 1977, with a posthumous foreword by Shostakovich.²³

Official attitudes to commemoration rested on the contention that the Second World War (or The Great Patriotic War, as it is known in Russia) was a transnational human tragedy, and that focusing on the losses of one ethnic group (such as the Holocaust) neglected the suffering of others, no matter how great those losses were. Considering that the Soviet forces collectively lost some 8.7 million troops, and that total deaths including civilians were conservatively estimated at around 26 million, the Soviet authorities were, perhaps understandably, concerned about who should be commemorated and why.²⁴ Many of Weinberg’s commemorative works do not depict an exclusively Jewish experience, however. For instance, his *Requiem*, Op. 96, mourns

²¹ Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 169.

²² For a performance history of *The Passenger*, see: Sergei Yakovenko, ‘Mirovaya premiera – cherez desyatiletia’ [A new premiere – after decades], in *Muzikal’naya akademiya*, 2007/1, 60-5. Yakovenko details how production schedules were altered days before being finalised, one such event as a result of a phone-call from the authorities that any performance of the opera was ‘not recommended’. See: *Ibid.*, 62.

²³ See: M. Vaynberg, *Passazhirka* [The Passenger] (Moscow: Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1977).

²⁴ G.F. Krovisheev ed., *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century* (London: Greenhill Books, 1997) 83-90.

the international loss of human life in World War Two, and features texts from Spanish, Russian, American, and Japanese authors. Weinberg wrote his *Requiem* and *The Passenger* at almost the same time; despite their appeal and brilliance, neither received a performance during his lifetime. In the case of *The Passenger*, this is likely to have been in part a result of the Soviet authorities' indifference towards the Jewish losses of the Second World War.

Such casual disdain for the Jewish and commemorative aspects of Weinberg's music was only one thread in his comparative neglect. Another was his own sense of modesty. He once claimed that:

So long as I am writing, the work interests me. When the piece is finished, it doesn't exist any more. Its fate (whether ostracisation by the Philharmonic Societies, lack of performances, silence in the press, scorn from the music critics) is all the same to me.²⁵

As a result, the act of composing, rather than securing performances, became something of a *raison d'être*, especially in his later years.

Weinberg did, however, enjoy a measure of success during his lifetime. He referred to the 1960s as his 'starry years',²⁶ where his works were performed often and praise was frequent; the bulk of published articles on Weinberg date from this decade. However, as Weinberg's friend Yuri Levitin once suggested, Weinberg and his generation were caught in something of a cultural crossfire.²⁷ A younger generation of Soviet avant-gardists was emerging, including Alfred Schnittke, Edison Denisov, Sofia Gubaidulina, and the Estonian composer, Arvo Pärt. The response to this was to heap praise upon the slightly older generation who still emulated Shostakovich's style, including composers such as Boris Chaykovsky, Rodion Shchedrin, and Weinberg. It is impossible to say whether Weinberg suspected that such praise during the 1960s was part of a wider tactic to marginalise the avant-gardists.

²⁵ From a letter to Krzysztof Meyer, dated 25 November 1988, quoted in Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg: In Search of Freedom*, 143.

²⁶ Nikitina, 'Pochti lyuboy mig zhizni – rabota', 18.

²⁷ See: Yuri Levitin, 'Nasledniki bol'shikh talantov' [Heirs of great talents], in *Pravda*, 20 June 1965, 6.

In addition to international star performers playing his works, Weinberg also enjoyed official state honours, starting with Honoured Artist of the Russian Republic in 1971, then People's Artist of the Russian Republic in 1980, and finally, the State Prize of the USSR in 1990, which was presented to him in a live television broadcast at the Kremlin. Despite such honours, it was the gradual collapse of the Soviet Union and its cultural infrastructure that sealed Weinberg's fate to obscurity. The most prominent members of the younger generation emigrated to Europe, thanks to their friends and contacts there. Weinberg had no such connections, and was in any case too ill to travel such distances. The dissolution of the USSR effectively ended all funding for the Composers' Union, eliminating the reliable income that the organisation had previously guaranteed its members. As such, Weinberg found himself struggling for money, abandoned by many of his émigré friends, and, in his final years, entirely bed-bound.

In the years up to Weinberg's death, a number of new releases began to signal the turn of the tide towards a revival of his music. In 1994, the British record label Olympia released a series of archive recordings of Weinberg's works on CD, whose success was such as to promote the production of new recordings of his music. Weinberg survived just long enough to witness this early success, with several of the first new albums made and released. The series, running to some 17 volumes, made its mark. Several other labels began releasing new recordings, including Chandos and Naxos for Weinberg's symphonies, Toccata Classics for songs, violin sonatas, and orchestral works, and the Neos label also released a number of Weinberg 'editions'.

Several of Weinberg's friends continued to champion his music after his death. In particular, Valentin Berlinsky, cellist of the Borodin Quartet, promoted Weinberg to his pupils and colleagues, including the Quatuor Danel. The Danels would go on to become the main exponents of Weinberg's quartets in the 21st century, recording a complete cycle on the CPO label shortly after their appointment as quartet-in-residence

at the University of Manchester. They performed a complete cycle of the quartets in Manchester in November 2009, having given world premieres for several of the quartets previously.

The Danels' work ties Weinberg to the University of Manchester, and was aided by the efforts of David Fanning, who published the first full-length biography of Weinberg, *In Search of Freedom*, in 2010 (building on work by Per Skans). The major event that signalled the revival of Weinberg's music was the 2010 Bregenz festival, where *The Passenger* was given its stage premiere in an acclaimed production directed by David Pountney (a production that has had further performances in Warsaw, London, Houston, Chicago, and New York). More recently, the celebrated violinist Gidon Kremer has devoted concerts and recordings to Weinberg's music – all the more remarkable, perhaps, since Kremer's reputation had previously been for more avant-garde music. Of all these recent successes, none has been more revelatory than the rediscovery of Weinberg's quartets.

1.3. WEINBERG'S QUARTET CYCLE: 'AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE GENRE'²⁸

Weinberg's seventeen string quartets occupy a special place in his compositional output for several reasons. They span his career more than any other genre, including the symphony or the song cycle. The First Quartet is his Op. 2, written in 1937, at the age of seventeen, while his Seventeenth is Op. 146 (out of 154 opus-numbered works), completed in 1986. Almost every style from his compositional output can be found in the cycle. The quartets anticipate trends found in his symphonies and operas and their

²⁸ This quote comes from an interview with Valentin Berlinsky. See: Ilya Ovchinnikov, 'Yemu pomeshalo soshestvo s Shostakovichem: 85-let so dnya rozhdeniya Mechlava Vaynberga' [He was always in Shostakovich's shadow: 85 years since the birth of Mieczysław Weinberg] (interview with Valentin Berlinsky), *Gazeta*, 229, 8 December 2004, 13.

chronology fits around different events in Weinberg's life, Polish and Russian cultural life, as well as an occasional turn to focus on other genres. See Fig. 1-i below for a full chronology of Weinberg's quartets:

Fig. 1-i, Weinberg's Quartet Cycle²⁹

Date	Quartet No.	Opus number	Dedication
1937	1	Op. 2	
1940	2	Op. 3	Weinberg's mother and sister
1944	3	Op. 14	
March 1945	4	Op. 20	Bolshoy Theatre String Quartet
Late 1945	5	Op. 27	Beethoven String Quartet
1946	6	Op. 35	Georgy Sviridov
1957	7	Op. 59	Yuri Levitin
1959	8	Op. 66	Borodin Quartet
1963	9	Op. 80	
Jul-Aug 1965	10	Op. 85	Olga Rakhalskaya
Oct-Dec 1965	11	Op. 89	Victoria Weinberg
1969-70	12	Op. 103	Veniamin Basner
1977	13	Op. 118	Borodin Quartet
1978	14	Op. 122	Yuri Levitin
1979	15	Op. 124	Moscow String Quartet
1981	16	Op. 130	Ester Weinberg
1985	<i>No. 1 (rev.)</i>	<i>Op. 2/141</i>	
<i>Aug 1986</i>	<i>No. 2 (rev.)</i>	<i>Op. 3/145</i>	
Oct 1986	17	Op. 146	Borodin Quartet

Several large gaps between compositions reveal themselves in this table, and they can be explained in various respects. They also suggest different possible groupings of the quartets. I propose the following, with three main groups each containing a pair of subgroups:

²⁹ Despite Shostakovich's dedication of his Tenth Quartet to Weinberg, there is no reciprocal dedication from Weinberg in his own quartets. Across his output, Weinberg dedicated only three works to Shostakovich: the *Sonatina*, Op. 49, the song cycle *The Gypsy Bible*, Op. 57, and his Twelfth Symphony, Op. 114 (in memoriam). The apparent reluctance to dedicate works to his friend and mentor can be viewed as an act of modesty on Weinberg's part.

Fig. 1-ii, Groupings with Weinberg's Quartets.

Early Quartets	1&2
Young Mastery	3-6
In Shostakovich's shadow	7-9
Quartet competition	10-12
Post-Shostakovich	13-15
Late masterpieces	16&17

Within these three groups, there are two lengthy interludes where no quartets were composed. The first of these, between Quartets Six and Seven, featured some of the most dramatic events of Weinberg's life, including Mikhoels's murder, the 1948 'Zhdanovshchina' crackdowns, and Weinberg's imprisonment and release after the death of Stalin. The events of 1948 suggest one reason for avoiding chamber music during this period: the reassertion of the doctrine of Socialist Realism.³⁰ This valued music that was accessible, national in tone, and positive in outlook. Chamber music, traditionally associated with smaller audiences of connoisseurs was the antithesis of Socialist Realism, almost by definition.

The other lengthy interval here is between the Twelfth and Thirteenth Quartets, with an interval of seven years. There are more practical reasons to explain this break from the quartet since Weinberg focused his efforts during this period on his new-found enthusiasm for stage works. His first opera, *The Passenger*, was quickly followed by *The Madonna and Soldier*, *D'Artagnan in Love*, *Mazl Tov!* and *Lady Magnesia* during these years.

³⁰ Shostakovich continued to write quartets 'for the drawer' in the years after 1948, with his Fourth (1949) and Fifth Quartets (1952) completed but their premieres taking place later, both in 1953. Weinberg relied on film and circus scores to make a living during this time, since official concerts and commissions became steadily more infrequent.

Categories such as those above are always problematic. In Weinberg's case, any grouping is further complicated by his return to earlier works in later life, with revised versions of the first two quartets completed in between the Sixteenth and Seventeenth, and a return to material from the Second, Third, and Fifth Quartets in his first three Chamber Symphonies respectively. The Twenty-First Symphony also features a reworking of material from the Fourth Quartet. All of this points towards the fact that this earlier music was very much on Weinberg's mind in his later life. Perhaps he resurrected these previously unheard works primarily with an eye to new performances (the Chamber Symphonies were particularly widely celebrated – they were named as the principal works for his State Prize of the USSR in 1990).³¹

1.4. THESIS STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS

This thesis aims to place Weinberg's quartet cycle in its wider contexts and to explore Weinberg's musical language. There is no single overarching approach that unites the analytical chapters; rather, each deals with a broad topic of musical language. Chapters 3-5 each use various theorists and methods of analysis, weighing up the benefits or weakness of their application to Weinberg's music. Before that, chapter 2 contextualises Weinberg's quartets in several respects, in place of a literature review; firstly, it explores Weinberg's friendship with Shostakovich, including instances of mutual influence. Bartók, Berg, and Britten are then considered alongside Weinberg, with a view to placing his quartets within the wider twentieth-century canon. The second part of the chapter then discusses assorted important quartet composers from the Soviet era, all now sadly neglected. Nikolay Myaskovsky and Vissarion Shebalin are introduced as part of a generation of quartet composers who predate Shostakovich's cycle, and who

³¹ For a report of Weinberg's State Prize, see: Anon., 'O prizuzhdenii gosudarstvennykh premiy sssr 1990 god' [The awards of the state prize of the USSR in 1990] *Pravda*, 7 November 1990, 4.

were praised by their contemporaries as valid and successful models for string quartet composition. Two of Weinberg's contemporaries and closest friends are then introduced, Yuri Levitin and Boris Chaykovsky, who both composed string quartets. The final part of the chapter addresses Weinberg's contemporaneous reception in the Soviet Union, and introduces several key texts from modern-day criticism.

Chapter 3, Narrative: Topic and Discourse, addresses questions of style and meaning in Weinberg's quartet cycle. This chapter deals extensively with concepts from musical semiotics and long-standing debates about music and meaning. In the first section, topic theory, best exemplified by Kofi Agawu's usage, is explored along with historiographical concepts derived from Lawrence Kramer. The Russian perspective is provided with insights from Boris Asafiev, one of the most influential Soviet theorists. My own suggestions about topics and meanings in Weinberg's quartets are elucidated with comparisons to Russian literature, in order to illustrate complex emotions and circumstances with a holistic approach. Such interpretations are then complemented with concrete examples from Weinberg's self-quotations in and around his quartet cycle, including several key passages that quote from his operas. In the final part of this chapter, these ideas about topic are brought together in a conception of discourse that utilises writings from psychoanalysis, particularly drawing on Sarah Reichardt's work on Shostakovich's quartets. This variety of analytical techniques is deployed to demonstrate the complex and multi-faceted aspects of Weinberg's musical meanings.

Chapter 4 deals with form, beginning with Weinberg's use of multi-movement forms, including the 'classical' four-movement model established in Haydn and Mozart's quartets. Following this, three well-established forms are explored more fully, with examples of Weinberg's use of each; Rondo, Sonata, and Variations. The section on Sonata utilises aspects of Steven Vande Moortele's work on two-dimensional sonata

form³² and also elements from Slavoj Žižek's writings on musical unity. The final section features the largest case-study of the thesis, closely examining the last movement of Weinberg's Seventh Quartet through the lens of Schoenberg's writings on developing variation.

Chapter 5 addresses Harmony, a wide-reaching aspect of Weinberg's cycle. This chapter features the greatest variety of analytic theories, adopting a multi-faceted approach adapted to the varied nature of Weinberg's harmonic styles. I propose a model of harmonic 'avenues' of exploration, rather than a sense of evolution towards one style across the cycle. Accordingly, Weinberg's neo-tonal style is viewed through neo-Riemannian theories, whereas my discussion on mode draws on a large body of Russian work, including concepts of 'hyper-minor'. In the final section, Weinberg's most densely chromatic music is explored through a concept drawn from Yuri Kholopov, *dvenadtsatitonoost* [twelve-noteness], where quasi-serial procedures are utilised as part of a wider expressive palette (rather than as strict rules to be followed through a composition). These harmonies, featuring all 12 pitch classes, are shown to be quite different from Shostakovich's use of 12-note rows, and I conclude that Weinberg's use of twelve-noteness is a style entirely his own.

These chapters present a roughly logical progression, first establishing Weinberg's position within twentieth-century quartets and Soviet composers, before exploring different aspects of his style beginning with large-scale aspects before moving to smaller-scale ones. In this way, the reader is guided towards the conclusion that Weinberg's music presents an assimilation of many different influences, but remains strikingly original at its strongest points. We are left with a quartet cycle that is

³² 'Two-dimensional sonata' is Vande Moortele's term for what is traditionally dubbed 'double-function sonata'; the unfortunate associations with dismissive or critical language in the term 'two-dimensional' were apparently unnoticed by Vande Moortele.

illustrative of wider trends in Soviet chamber music, but that also offers a potentially illuminating comparison for Shostakovich's cycle.

In the letter quoted at the opening of this introduction, Weinberg wrote that 'to be a composer isn't a pastime, it's an eternal conversation, an eternal search for harmony in people and nature'.³³ Weinberg's search spanned all of his genres; manifestations of his humanistic outlook can be found in his symphonies, operas, sonatas, ballets, and his quartets. He drew heavily on self-quotation, explored in the third chapter of this thesis. This arguably reveals something about Weinberg's attitudes to writing in genres: that it did not matter what melodies suited which genre, so long as they expressed his 'eternal conversation' (hence why the same melodies reappear in stage works, orchestral, and in chamber music). Shostakovich's music also features a large amount of self-quotation, and a sizeable body of scholarship has questioned how this relates to programmatic content. Shostakovich's rich use of self-quotation may arguably have influenced Weinberg's own music; they had a deep friendship which also affected their respective musical styles. It is this musical friendship that I address initially in the following chapter, preceded by a few words on Socialist Realism.

³³ Anon., 'Pis'ma o lyubvi', 18.

2. CONTEXTS

The notion that the string quartet genre is primarily for subjectivity and private reflection, somehow reserved for connoisseurs, has been held for many years.³⁴ Take, for instance, the title of Sibelius's quartet *Intimate Voices*, relishing the association with profound expression and personal issues (or, for that matter, Janáček's Second Quartet, *Intimate Letters*).³⁵ Despite the challenges that confronted high-art music across the twentieth century, this small-scale genre nevertheless continued. In the Soviet Union, the concept of 'personal expression' and a specialist-directed genre did not sit well with official aesthetic doctrine. Yet here, too, the quartet flourished in terms of quantity, if not always quality, producing a corpus that Alan George, of the Fitzwilliam Quartet, has referred to as 'an unwieldy body of material of alarmingly variable quality'.³⁶ Katerina Clark has written how the quartet rose to prominence in Russia, despite initial opposition:

Though the quartet was far from a 'folk' genre or a genre for the masses and hence a genre that might meet the demand of the anti-formalist campaign for *narodnost* [i.e. popular, or for the people – D.E.], it was recovering from its pariah status and experiencing a resurgence in that unlikely seeming moment of the late 1930s.³⁷

³⁴ See: Christina Bashford, 'The String Quartet and Society', in Robin Stowell ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the String Quartet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 1-18, especially 17.

³⁵ See the collection of essays on twentieth-century string quartets, which uses Sibelius's work as its title: Evan Jones ed., *Intimate Voices: The Twentieth-Century String Quartet*, Two Vols. (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2009).

³⁶ Alan George, 'The Soviet and Russian Quartet', in Douglas Jarman ed., *The Twentieth-Century String Quartet* (Todmorden: RNCM with Arc Music, 2004) 71.

³⁷ Katerina Clark, 'Shostakovich's Turn to the String Quartet and the Debates about Socialist Realism in Music', *Slavic Review*, 72 (2013) 575.

This chapter aims to set Weinberg's quartets in context. Or rather, into several contexts. There is the extended dialogue with celebrated twentieth-century quartet cycles, most notably those of Shostakovich and Bartók. There are other figures whose influence on Weinberg's musical thinking is harder to pinpoint through written sources, but whose music provides revealing similitude and affinities with Weinberg's own. Those reflected upon here include Berg and Britten. Alongside these, several important Soviet cycles also deserve to be taken into consideration.

Certainly the closest and most profitable parallels are to be drawn with Shostakovich's cycle. Ranging from intriguing questions of mutual influence and friendly competition, to one composer's expansion of another's late style, the developments of Weinberg's and Shostakovich's respective quartet cycles provide one of the richest areas of comparison in all twentieth-century music.

Among Weinberg's contemporaries who were writing in the quartet genre, four are explored below: Nikolay Myaskovsky, Vissarion Shebalin, Yuri Levitin, and Boris Chaykovsky. All of their quartets have been neglected to some extent in concerts and recordings. However, they can offer potential insight into the practice of quartet-writing as carried out by Weinberg's colleagues and peers as he was producing his own cycle. Myaskovsky and Shebalin, in particular, were celebrated as examples of successful quartet writing, and thus held aloft as suitable models for composers.

After such contexts, the research background of Weinberg's quartets is explored, beginning with contemporaneous accounts and reviews of the works, including cursory analyses and critical reception. Almost all of these come from Soviet-Russian publications, as hardly any of the quartets were performed in the West until recent years. I then focus on the modern-day reception of Weinberg's cycle, with reviews and

analyses from Russian, German, and English sources. The first context examined here, and arguably the most crucial, is Weinberg's friendship with Shostakovich.

2.1. WEINBERG AND SHOSTAKOVICH

Weinberg described his first encounter with Dmitri Shostakovich's music in 1939 as 'like the discovery of a new continent'.³⁸ He detailed the story as follows:

At the Philharmonic Society there was a very good orchestra, though it did not have a celesta or harp. I was a student at the Belorussian Conservatoire and was earning a little bit extra by performing the parts of these instruments on the piano. At the next concert Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony was to be performed. And so this was the first time that I became acquainted with music by Dmitry Dmitriyevich... I remember how, sitting at the piano in the orchestra, I was staggered by every phrase, every musical idea, as if a thousand electrical charges were piercing me.³⁹

The two first met in late 1943, after a score of Weinberg's First Symphony had been sent to Shostakovich.⁴⁰ Suitably impressed, he arranged for Weinberg and his family to relocate to Moscow, a particularly difficult permit to obtain, especially in wartime.

Weinberg moved into an apartment around the corner from Shostakovich and the two quickly became friends. They shared their latest compositions with each other and played piano duets together, both in public and privately, perhaps the most famous example being a 1954 recording of Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony.⁴¹ The closeness of their friendship can be noted from Shostakovich's diaries, where Weinberg's name appears more than any other.⁴²

A display of Shostakovich's regard for his friend came when Weinberg was arrested in 1953. According to several accounts, Shostakovich wrote to the chief of

³⁸ Moisey Vaynberg, 'Pervaya vstrecha s muzikoy Dmitriya Shostakovicha' [My first encounter with the music of Dmitry Shostakovich] in Grigorii Ordzhonikidze ed., *Dmitriy Shostakovich*, (Moscow, Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1967) 84.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Accounts differ as to whether it was sent by Solomon Mikhoels, or Yuri Levitin.

⁴¹ Released on CD as: 'Shostakovich plays Shostakovich, Vol. 2', Revelation B000006BBL, 1997.

⁴² Ol'ga Dombrovskaya, 'Notes on Shostakovich's diary', in Pauline Fairclough, ed., *Shostakovich Studies 2* (Cambridge, 2010), 47.

security staff, Lavrentiy Beria, to vouch for Weinberg's innocence.⁴³ Shostakovich went even further in his efforts to protect Weinberg, reportedly signing documents to adopt his daughter, Victoria, in the event that Weinberg's wife should also be arrested. When Weinberg was eventually released, they reportedly burned the adoption papers at a family dinner.⁴⁴

Weinberg himself described the process through which he and Shostakovich showed each other their latest works: '[he would come over] whenever he simply wanted to sit for a while and have a chat. Always when he had finished a new work. Anything: a symphony or a quartet. Even when it still was just in manuscript. It could happen that I listened to the new work twice'.⁴⁵ Shostakovich often arranged performances and publications for Weinberg's works, providing forewords for the published scores of Weinberg's operas *The Passenger* and *The Madonna and Soldier*. Shostakovich also helped to secure the premiere of *The Madonna and Soldier* and, despite his own ill health, travelled to St. Petersburg to attend rehearsals. He reviewed the production in *Pravda*, writing: 'I greatly appreciate the work of the composer M. Weinberg. His works in different genres are as follows: eleven symphonies, three ballets, five instrumental concertos, a Requiem, four cantatas, quartets, songs, music for films and plays'.⁴⁶

The creative exchange between the two composers was immense.⁴⁷ While the influence of Shostakovich on Weinberg can often appear unmistakable, Weinberg retained a distinctive voice, owing to his focus on lyricism and his utilisation of elements from both Jewish culture and his Polish roots. Shostakovich himself

⁴³ See: Fanning, *In Search of Freedom*, 87.

⁴⁴ From an interview with Nataliya Vovsi-Mikhoels in: Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (London: Faber, 2006) 264.

⁴⁵ Sof'ya Khentova, *V mire Shostakovicha* [In Shostakovich's world] (Moscow: Kompozitor, 1996) 186, quoted in Fanning, *In Search of Freedom*, 43.

⁴⁶ Dmitri Shostakovich, 'V surovuyu poru' [In hard times], *Pravda* 1975/95, 5 April, 6.

⁴⁷ See: Michelle Assay, 'Chostakovitch et Weinberg: un dialogue musical à travers des idiomes juifs et des opéras', Mémoire [MPhil dissertation]: Université de Paris- Sorbonne, 2011.

sometimes claimed ancestry in Polish nobility, but he never tied his music to explicitly Polish themes.⁴⁸

It is intriguing that Shostakovich took up the quartet genre comparatively late (see Fig. 2.i, below). Weinberg's First Quartet actually precedes that of Shostakovich, despite his being thirteen years the latter's junior. Shostakovich wrote that 'the quartet is one of the most difficult musical genres... the first pages [of the First Quartet] I wrote as a kind of exercise in quartet writing, not thinking I would ever finish and publish it'.⁴⁹ For Weinberg, however, writing quartets seems to have come quite naturally. His First Quartet is his Op. 2, and, in addition to the seventeen numbered quartets, there are a number of small-scale works for the ensemble, including the *Aria*, Op. 9, the *Capriccio*, Op. 11, an *Improvisation* from 1950, and other works, now thought to be lost. Several of Weinberg's symphonic works reduce to a string quartet texture at key points, most notably in the Tenth Symphony.

For Shostakovich and Weinberg's respective cycles, three stages in their parallel development can be proposed. The first is that of initial mutual influence. This does not include the first quartet that Weinberg wrote before he was aware of Shostakovich's music, according to his own record of his first encounter with Shostakovich's works. From the Third Quartet up to the Sixth, a rapid expansion of means can be traced in Weinberg's quartets, just at the time that Shostakovich was writing his own first three quartets (see Fig. 2-i, below).

⁴⁸ For Shostakovich's Polish roots, see: Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 7.

⁴⁹ Kuhn, *Shostakovich in Dialogue*, 17.

Fig. 2-i, Shostakovich and Weinberg Quartets

	Shostakovich	Weinberg
	1937	Quartet No. 1, Op. 2 (Rev. 1985 as Op. 141)
	1938	Quartet No. 1, Op. 49
1	1939	Quartet No. 2, Op. 3 (Rev. 1986 as Op. 145)
	1944	Quartet No. 2, Op. 68 (Sept)
	1945	Quartet No. 4, Op. 20 (March) Quartet No. 5, Op. 27 (Oct-Nov)
	1946	Quartet No. 3, Op. 73 (Jan-Aug)
	1949	Quartet No. 4, Op. 84
	1952	Quartet No. 5, Op. 92
	1956	Quartet No. 6, Op. 101
2	1957	Quartet No. 7, Op. 59
	1959	Quartet No. 8, Op. 66
	1960	Quartet No. 7, Op. 108 Quartet No. 8, Op. 110
	1963	Quartet No. 9, Op. 80
	1964	Quartet No. 9, Op. 117 (May) Quartet No. 10, Op. 118 (July)
	1966	Quartet No. 11, Op. 122 (Jan)
	1968	Quartet No. 12, Op. 133
	1970	Quartet No. 13, Op. 138 (Aug)
3	1973	Quartet No. 14, Op. 142
	1974	Quartet No. 15, Op. 144
	1977	Quartet No. 13, Op. 118
	1978	Quartet No. 14, Op. 122
	1980	Quartet No. 15, Op. 124
	1981	Quartet No. 16, Op. 130
	1986	Quartet No. 17, Op. 146

The first group of mutual influence includes Weinberg’s Second Quartet, included here because of the impact that it appears to have had on Shostakovich’s quartets; in particular, several passages in Shostakovich’s Second and Third Quartets echo motifs and themes from Weinberg’s Second Quartet.⁵⁰

While the strong influence of Shostakovich on Weinberg is frequently audible, the reverse process is arguably no less significant. The early quartets of both composers offer several tantalising similarities, suggesting a reciprocal exchange of ideas. It is

⁵⁰ See: Daniel Elphick, ‘Weinberg, Shostakovich, and the Influence of *Anxiety*’, in *The Musical Times*, Vol. 155 (Winter 2014), 49-62. The material on pages 44-52 is adapted from this publication.

apparent from Fig. 2-i that several of these quartets were written more or less simultaneously in Moscow.

Influence is an extremely nebulous aspect of any criticism, but especially so in music. Without direct quotation or unequivocal documentation, we can only compare similarities and draw tentative conclusions about the creation of works. That said, I shall indulge in a few comparisons below. The documented close friendship and professional exchange between the two composers lends credence to parallels in their early quartets, more frequently originating from the younger man.

In the opening phrase of Shostakovich's Second Quartet, a dance-like theme in the first violin is paired with a drone-like chordal accompaniment in the other parts (see Ex. 2.1, below).

Ex. 2.1 a), Shostakovich, Quartet No. 2, first movement, opening, and b) Weinberg,

Quartet No. 2, first movement, opening.

a)

Moderato con moto $\text{♩} = 144$

b)

Allegro $\text{♩} = 120$

The distinctive opening motif bracketed in Ex. 2.1a – rising a tone, then falling a fifth, followed by semiquaver runs at b. 6 before the return of the motif – compares directly with the (admittedly milder) opening of Weinberg’s Second Quartet, composed in 1940, four years before Shostakovich’s. The similarities continue; Weinberg recasts his theme in a flattened mode at the start of the development section, exactly as Shostakovich

went on to do at the corresponding point, and with a comparable sense of continuing a journey in a darker direction (see Ex. 2.2, below).

Ex. 2.2, a) Weinberg, Quartet No. 2, first movement, ⁵R10, and b) Shostakovich, Quartet No. 2, first movement, R22.

The image displays two musical excerpts, labeled 'a)' and 'b)', from the first movements of Weinberg's and Shostakovich's Quartets No. 2. Excerpt 'a)' shows measures 10-14 of Weinberg's quartet. It features two violin staves (VI. 1 and VI. 2) and two lower string staves (Vla. and Vc.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music is marked with dynamics such as *pp* and *mf*. A circled number '10' is placed above the first measure of the violin part. Excerpt 'b)' shows measures 22-25 of Shostakovich's quartet, also in 3/4 time with one flat. It features the same instrumentation. A circled number '22' is placed above the first measure of the violin part.

Ian McDonald once claimed – with exaggeration, but a germ of truth – that Shostakovich’s Second Quartet ‘universalises the predicament of persecuted Jewry, mingling the voice of the cantor with that of the Bachian evangelist’.⁵¹ This observation applies particularly to the second movement. Judith Kuhn notes the similarity to the

⁵¹ Ian McDonald: *The New Shostakovich*, Raymond Clarke (rev.) (London: Pimlico, 2006) 195.

traditional 'doina' genre of Jewish folk music.⁵² Here, too, Weinberg's influence can be traced in terms of the Jewish-inflected melody accompanied by recitative chords.

The sense of 'Jewish-ness' in Weinberg's music contributed to his reception, particularly in the early post-war years. Reviewers praised Weinberg's use of 'the sources of Jewish folk music'⁵³; there are no identifiable quotes of folk music in the quartets (though there is at least one tantalising suggestion – see p.130). Instead, it would appear that Weinberg absorbed smaller elements that are associated with Jewish modes and assimilated them into his own style. When Weinberg's Jewish heritage was combined with the prominence of 'Jewish' sounding intervals, such as the minor second or raised fourth (especially in several works that were programmatically linked to Jewish life) this resulted in a late-1940s reception that sought to identify all of Weinberg's music as Jewish-influenced. These musical elements arguably came from the Yiddish tradition in the theatre melodies that Weinberg grew up with, rather than from religious music found in the synagogues (Weinberg was Jewish-secular throughout his life; that is, he was never an actively-practicing member of the Jewish faith).⁵⁴

Nelly Kravetz has written on Shostakovich's Jewish interests, with reference to Weinberg's Op. 13 and Op. 17 collections of Jewish Songs (dated 1943 and 1944, respectively). 'It is precisely at this period Shostakovich got seriously interested in Jewish subjects... These facts are meant to prove the following assertion: The interest Shostakovich showed in the Jewish subjects was highly aroused by his acquaintance with Weinberg.'⁵⁵ Whether either composer was conscious of this transference of

⁵² Judith Kuhn: *Shostakovich in Dialogue: Form, Imagery and Ideas in Quartets 1-7* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) 80.

⁵³ Tikhon Khrennikov, editorial in *Sovetskaya muzika* 1949/1, 28, quoted in Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1981*, 295.

⁵⁴ For more on Jewish elements in Weinberg's music, see: Yuliya Broydo, 'Yevreyskaya tema v tvorchestve M.S. Vaynberga' [The Jewish topic in the works of Weinberg], unpublished diploma dissertation, St Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatoire, 2001.

⁵⁵ Kravetz, "'From the Jewish Folk Poetry" of Shostakovich and "Jewish Songs" of Weinberg', 279-80.

Jewish material is unknown, but the case for similarity is strengthened when we consider that Weinberg and Shostakovich were regularly showing each other their completed works at this point. Though it is not necessary to claim that Shostakovich consciously ‘lifted’ these elements from Weinberg’s music, they certainly suggest at least an indirect effect on his decision-making.

Still more parallels can be found in the comparison of three works dating from 1944-6. Examples Ex. 2.3 a-c below are from Weinberg’s Third Quartet (1944) and Piano Quintet (1944), followed by an extract from Shostakovich’s Third Quartet (1946). In all three, similar textures are evident, as well as certain shared elements of pitch organisation.

Ex. 2.3, a) Weinberg, Quartet No. 3, Second movement, opening.

Andante sostenuto $\text{♩} = 52$

b) Weinberg, Piano Quintet, fourth movement, opening.

Largo $\text{♩} = 76$

Ex. 2.3 c) Shostakovich, Quartet No. 3, fourth movement, opening.

74 Adagio $\text{♩} = 80$

VI. 1
VI. 2
Vla.
Vc.

ff espress.

ff espress.

ff espress.

75 $\text{♩} = 96$ *p*

76 $\text{♩} = 80$

ff espress.

ff espress.

ff espress.

p

In all three cases, the texture is dominated by declamatory octave triplings, and in the case of Weinberg's Third Quartet, the violin line emphasises a dotted quaver-semiquaver motif in a manner remarkably similar to the opening of the Shostakovich example (bracketed in examples above). In Weinberg's Piano Quintet, the texture remains in octaves, incorporating a less pronounced version of the dotted motif.

In the Shostakovich, the opening idea is restated with alterations that transform it into a phrase covering all twelve pitch classes, from R76. The opening passage from the Weinberg Quintet is considerably longer, stretching to some eight bars, but also covers the chromatic gamut. The dense chromaticism of the Quintet as a whole is further grounds for arguing that Shostakovich picked up on suggestions and took influence from an earlier piece. More tantalizingly, close resemblances to Shostakovich's later works can be found in the first movement of Weinberg's Second

Quartet (1939), which concludes with a meandering cello line. It moves away from its G major tonality, only to return abruptly at the final cadence (Ex. 2.4a and b).

Ex. 2.4, a) Weinberg, Quartet No. 2, first movement, R28, and b), ending.

Ex. 2.4, a) Weinberg, Quartet No. 2, first movement, R28, and b), ending. The score shows two parts: a) measures 28-30 and b) the ending. Part a) features a tempo marking of quarter note = 120. Part b) features a tempo marking of quarter note = 112. The score includes parts for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello. Dynamics include *p*, *pizz.*, *pp*, and *pp arco*.

Ex. 2.4, c) Shostakovich, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ending.

Ex. 2.4, c) Shostakovich, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ending. The score shows parts for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello. The tempo marking is quarter note = 112. Dynamics include *p poco espress.* and *pp*. A verticalised DSCH signature is present in the upper staves.

Shostakovich’s Sixth Quartet features a similar recurring cadence (Ex. 2.4c). Several authors have seized upon Shostakovich’s repeated concluding gesture and its potential for a hermeneutic reading. Kuhn describes it as ‘the quartet’s most disturbing and enigmatic figure... a repeated and increasingly estranged “happy ending”’.⁵⁶ Noting the presence of a verticalised DSCH signature, Fanning writes: ‘The most tempting “explanation”... is that this cadence betokens Shostakovich’s shadowy presence’.⁵⁷ Perhaps the most complex reading comes from Sarah Reichardt, writing from the perspective of psychoanalysis and cultural theory:

By becoming marked [i.e., distinct and recurring] the cadential figure displays a crisis in the musical discourse... Through its lack of imagination, [it] exposes the arbitrariness of its conventional usage. Thus, as marked material, the cadence puts on display the emptiness behind the constructed musical system it represents, exposing the crisis of the end.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Kuhn, *Shostakovich in Dialogue*, 213.

⁵⁷ David Fanning: *Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 8* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004) 41. The verticalised DSCH chord is the only known example in Shostakovich’s music.

⁵⁸ Sarah Reichardt, *Composing the Modern Subject: Four String Quartets by Dmitri Shostakovich* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008) 21.

The possibility of Weinberg's influence on the creation of this deeply meaningful gesture has ramifications for the perception and contemporary reception of Weinberg himself. Such distinctive motifs have come to be understood as crucial aspects of Shostakovich's style. If we accept the link, this is one example of how Weinberg may effectively be removed from Shostakovich's shadow.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that Weinberg would have shown his earlier compositions to his friend and mentor, given that these must have been among the few possessions that Weinberg was able to take with him when he fled Warsaw and then Minsk. Shostakovich was even known to have taken Weinberg's advice on quartet writing (a very rare occurrence). Abram Ashkenazy recalled:

Whenever his work was concerned, he was very tough. He never made concessions. Shostakovich never corrected his compositions, never listened to advice. The single exception known to me concerns the Fourth Quartet. We listened to it at Sviridov's apartment after dinner. Dmitri Dmitrievich had the score and played through the complete quartet... Leafing through the score, I saw some clippings. So I asked Shostakovich what they were about: 'You see, Weinberg advised me to make some changes in the finale, and so I did'.⁵⁹

While several of Weinberg's middle-group quartets show a debt to Shostakovich's style, they are still highly original (though the first six quartets are arguably the most original, when explicitly compared to Shostakovich's cycle). However, with the banning of Weinberg's Sixth Quartet in the *Prikaz 17* of 1948,⁶⁰ Weinberg did not write in the genre for eleven years, allowing Shostakovich to pull level with his own quartet output.

⁵⁹ Sofia Khentova, 'Interview with Abram Abramovich Ashkenazy', trans. Victor Dvortsov, in *DSCH journal*, No. 20 (January 2004) 11.

⁶⁰ See: Irina Bobikina ed., *Dmitri Shostakovich v pis'makh i dokumentakh* [Dmitri Shostakovich through his letters and documents] (Moscow: Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture, 2000) 543-44. The document lists works that are 'not recommended' for performance, and is signed by one M. Dobrĭnin (presumably an administrative functionary at the Ministry of Culture).

Thus began a spate of compositions from both men, signalling the second main grouping for comparison between their cycles. Shostakovich wrote of a ‘friendly competition’ with Weinberg in a letter to Isaak Glikman.⁶¹ Shostakovich dedicated his Tenth Quartet to Weinberg when he had pulled ahead in the competition, though Weinberg was quick to draw level again. In Weinberg’s quartets 7-11, many parallels to Shostakovich are evident (for example, see p. 238 for a comparison between Weinberg’s Seventh Quartet and Shostakovich’s Second). This is not to disparage the works themselves, but merely to observe that the looming influence from the Soviet Union’s most respected composer can be noticed most clearly in these works. Shostakovich’s impact was of course far-reaching; it was arguably difficult to avoid his influence, given that the Shostakovich-style brand of Socialist Realism was the order of the day in the 1950s and early 60s. Nevertheless, Fanning has identified Weinberg along with Boris Chaykovsky and Boris Tishchenko as constituting a standout group whose ‘individuality is by no means entirely effaced by echoes of their master’s voice’.⁶²

With Shostakovich’s death in 1975, Weinberg struck out on his own path in the final grouping of comparison. Even so, Weinberg’s Thirteenth and Fourteenth Quartets still engage with Shostakovich’s late style, with particular motifs and textures sounding strongly reminiscent (see p. 278). Fanning writes, ‘it as though Weinberg entered into private dialogue with the enigmatic world of his mentor’s late quartets’.⁶³ The Shostakovich influence that, for some critics, threatened to stifle Weinberg’s creative voice was overcome by recourse to other influences (explored below). Of these later works, the Fifteenth Quartet is the most expansive, with nine movements that present a tableaux-like narrative of struggling to finish or even begin a ‘hidden’ story (see p. 170).

⁶¹ See: Isaak Glikman, *Story of a Friendship: The letters of Dmitry Shostakovich to Isaak Glikman with a commentary by Isaak Glikman*, trans. Anthony Phillips (London: Faber, 2001) 117.

⁶² Fanning, *Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 8*, 8.

⁶³ Fanning, *In Search of Freedom*, 140.

While Weinberg's Quartets are inevitably compared to those of Shostakovich, there are greater and lesser instances of correspondence between the two, with the younger composer sometimes in the lead chronologically. In this way, Weinberg's individuality stands out, more noticeably as the Weinberg revival has gained momentum. Even the respected musicologist and critic of Weinberg's music, Levon Hakobian, has revised his outlook, conceding that 'now, in retrospect, the differences between Weinberg and Shostakovich seem to be more significant than the similarities'.⁶⁴ As mentioned above, there are highly individual works in Weinberg's cycle, just as there are those that risk 'mirroring' Shostakovich's. However, the best of Weinberg's quartets hold their own in comparison to Shostakovich, and many of the analytical examples in this thesis take Shostakovich's quartets as a point of reference. Alongside Shostakovich, there is another key figure whose style reappears across Weinberg's cycle: Bartók.

2.1.1. WEINBERG AND BARTÓK

Bartók appears to have had a great impact on Weinberg's music, but this is problematic to pin down. Weinberg never mentioned him in any surviving document, and no Soviet critics seem to have noted any specific resemblance.⁶⁵ However, Bartók's quartets are a notable influence throughout Weinberg's cycle, particularly in the later works. Weinberg arguably sidestepped Shostakovich's influence by returning to this figure whose presence could also be noted quite keenly in several of his first few quartets.

Some of the earlier works mimic Bartókian passages almost exactly, such as the second movement of Weinberg's Fourth Quartet and the finale of Bartók's Fifth Quartet

⁶⁴ Levon Hakobian, 'Weinberg's Position in Russian Context: From an Insider's Viewpoint', *Die Tonkunst*, No. 10 (April 2016) 132.

⁶⁵ Nikitina does mention Bartók as an influence, but only with regard to his use of folk music. See: Nikitina, *Simfonii M. Vaynberga*, 10.

(see comparison in Ex. 4.1 and Ex. 4.2, p. 200). Similarly, a strong comparison can be drawn between the opening of Weinberg's Twelfth Quartet and Bartók's Third (see Ex. 3.31, p. 168), and another from Weinberg's Fifteenth Quartet alongside the fourth movement of Bartók's Fifth Quartet (see Ex. 5.17, p.288).

In several senses, Weinberg's own interest in Bartók historically echoes the reception of Bartók's works during the Soviet Union. While Bartók was never officially banned, his music was rarely performed after the founding of the Composers' Union in 1933⁶⁶ and scores were unobtainable for decades afterwards.⁶⁷ Shostakovich had heard Bartók's First, Third, and Fourth Quartets while visiting the United States in 1949, and mentioned them in his official report of the visit.⁶⁸ In the 1950s, Bartók was praised in the Soviet Union primarily as a folklore researcher, while his 'avant-garde' music was dismissed under Socialist Realism,⁶⁹ his combination of folk sources with elements of modernism and expanded tonality was unforgivable by the strictest Soviet standards. Eager composers could still access his scores through several channels, including the library of the Composers' Union.⁷⁰ As a Union member, Weinberg would have had similar access to these scores throughout the years following the Zhdanovshchina, though members' requests were monitored. In the 1960s, official views mellowed and Bartók was publicly lauded again;⁷¹ in 1963, Rodion Shchedrin gave a keynote speech to the Composers' Union, and stated that Bartók had 'not only entered the horizon of

⁶⁶ Before 1933, his works were quite frequently performed. Bartók himself visited the Soviet Union in 1929, performing his First Piano Concerto in Leningrad, see: Pauline Fairclough, *Classics for the Masses: Shaping Soviet Musical Identity under Lenin and Stalin* (London: Yale University Press, 2016) 62-4.

⁶⁷ Volkonsky's possession of Bartók scores was suggested as grounds for dismissal from the Moscow Conservatoire in 1954, see: Schmelz, *Such Freedom, if only Musical*, 73, fn. 30.

⁶⁸ Dmitri Shostakovich, 'Puteviye zametki' [Travel notes] in *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1949/5, 21. Shostakovich noted that he was unimpressed with the Fourth Quartet, but liked the Sixth. Other than this statement, Shostakovich made very few mentions of Bartók's music in public.

⁶⁹ Evgenia Tschigareva, 'Zur Bartók-Rezeption in Russland' in *Studia Musicologica*, 48/1-2, (2007) 225.

⁷⁰ Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical*, 41.

⁷¹ See: Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music Divided: Bartók's Legacy in Cold War Culture* (London: University of California Press, 2007) 153-4.

our composers but [had become] the object of creative absorption'.⁷² Bartók's official rehabilitation was sealed with the publication of his works in the Soviet Union, starting with the quartets in 1965.⁷³

Weinberg's interest may have originated from his time in Warsaw where Bartók's music was occasionally performed in years before 1939, including his quartets.⁷⁴ However, Bartók was not taught at the Warsaw conservatoire, as Weinberg's contemporary Andrzej Panufnik attests:

[On Eugeniusz Morawski, instrumentation tutor at the Warsaw Conservatoire] To my regret, his knowledge of the newer trends in Europe was limited... most of the scores were not yet published, let alone recorded, or performed in musically-provincial Warsaw... Bartók, Schoenberg and Webern were not played at all. Therefore, Morawski could perhaps be forgiven that, in his classes, composition seemed to have come to a halt with Scriabin, Ravel, Dukas, Falla, and Respighi.⁷⁵

When Weinberg entered the USSR in 1939, he encountered figures with much greater interest in Bartók's music. In particular, his Minsk composition tutor, Vasily Zolotaryov, utilised Bartók's works in his lessons. One of Weinberg's fellow pupils, Anatoliy Bogatirev, recalled Zolotaryov's teaching: 'from Mozart to Debussy, Prokofiev, Béla Bartók'.⁷⁶ It seems likely that Zolotaryov was Weinberg's principal introduction to Bartók's music (see p. 94 for Zolotaryov writing on Weinberg). Zolotaryov's tuition arguably resulted in echoes of Bartók found throughout Weinberg's Quartets 3-6, indicative of the atmosphere of relative 'permissiveness' during the war years. This wider climate of relaxation across Soviet culture indirectly led to the 1948 Zhdanovshchina, with the result that Weinberg's Sixth Quartet was officially not

⁷² Rodion Shchedrin, 'Plenary meeting of the Board of Soviet Composers, Keynote Address', in *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1963/6, 18, quoted in Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia, 1917-1981*, 421.

⁷³ Béla Bartók, *Kvartety* (in two vols.) (Moscow: Muzika, 1965).

⁷⁴ See: Roman Jasinski, *Koniec Epoki: Muzyka w Warszawie (1927-1939)* [The end of an era: Music in Warsaw, 1927-1939] (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986) 15-18, 176, and 395. Witold Lutosławski graduated from the conservatoire in 1936; he recalled Stravinsky, Debussy, and Ravel being his main focuses of study; see: Witold Lutosławski, *Lutosławski Profile* (London: Chester Music, 1976) 4.

⁷⁵ Andrzej Panufnik, *Composing Myself* (London: Methuen, 1987) 41.

⁷⁶ A. Bogatirev, 'Nash uchitel' [Our teacher], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1963/3, 32.

recommended for performance (though there is no evidence to suggest that Weinberg was aware of this fact at the time).

With the middle period of Weinberg's quartets, Shostakovich's influence took centre stage. But in Weinberg's later works, Bartók's influence figures highly once more – echoing official relaxations on the dissemination his music. This follows a period when Webern, Boulez, and Stockhausen were first introduced to Soviet composers and Bartók was at long last publicly celebrated.⁷⁷ Scores and recordings existed in private hands for many years previously; Weinberg's familiarity with Bartók's quartets certainly suggests awareness of scores.⁷⁸ The resemblances in Weinberg's earlier works show more than just recollections; instead, they indicate a serious engagement with the scores themselves.

While the observation that Weinberg built upon Shostakovich's later style is useful, the manner in which he achieved this is complex, creating an interesting synthesis in his later style. To all practical purposes, Weinberg may be considered to have created a fusion of his two most prominent influences, Shostakovich and Bartók. From the Twelfth Quartet onwards, the Bartókian influences become more prominent, though in a manner quite different from Weinberg's earlier works. In the late works, Bartók's influence stretches to minute elements of texture, clusters, and a particularly acerbic tone at climactic moments. Overall, Bartók remained a keen influence throughout his life. There were, in addition, other notable influences whose significance for Weinberg shifted over time.

⁷⁷ One notorious example is Grigori Shneerson's book, *O muzike zhivoi i mertvoi*, which condemns the 'unhealthy' practices of forbidden Western composers, while providing lengthy musical examples. The sheer quantity of extensive examples made the book sought after by young composers desperate to find out more about such forbidden music. The book's small print-run quickly sold out. See: Schmelz, *Such Freedom, if only Musical*, 41-2. For Shneerson's book, see: Grigori Shneerson, *O muzike zhivoi i mertvoi* [On music living and dead] (Moscow: Muzika, 1964).

⁷⁸ Weinberg may well have been aware of an expository 1965 article by Edison Denisov, which appeared in the same collection as a review by Zolotaryov of Weinberg's Sixth Symphony. See: E. Denisov, 'Strunnīe kvartetī Belī Bartoka' [The String Quartets of Béla Bartók] *Muzika i sovremennost'*, [Music and modernity] No. 3 (Moscow: Muzika, 1965) 186-214.

2.1.2. OTHER NOTABLE INFLUENCES

Two additional figures are included here, since they remain valuable comparisons that can help to place Weinberg's individuality. His familiarity with their works is again uncertain, and their wider reception in the Soviet Union is difficult to pinpoint, but they stand as important benchmarks for the string quartet in the twentieth century. The figures concerned are Berg and Britten. Berg is at least relatively easy to tie to Weinberg's biography. The influence of *Wozzeck* is notable in *The Passenger*, and his preserved record library in Moscow includes Karl Böhm's 1965 Deutsche Grammophon recording of Berg's opera. Several of Weinberg's chamber works also echo Berg's melody-driven approach to atonality including Weinberg's Sonata No. 1 for Violin solo and his Sonata for Two Violins. It can be argued that Weinberg drew influence chiefly from Berg's stage works, rather than chamber works like the *Lyric Suite* or Op. 3 Quartet; Weinberg's single largest debt to Berg is in his approach to large formal structures (for further parallels with Berg, see p. 223).⁷⁹ Berg's scores would have been easily accessible by the mid-1960s, but being in Shostakovich's close circle doubtless helped his familiarity with more recent composers, including Britten.

Britten's friendship with Shostakovich is well documented,⁸⁰ and David Nice has suggested that Weinberg knew Britten's scores.⁸¹ Weinberg certainly knew the *War Requiem*, since Shostakovich often recommended it to his friends and pupils (see p. 114 for a comparison between Weinberg's *The Passenger* and Britten's *War Requiem*).⁸² There is even the tantalizing possibility that Britten and Weinberg may have been

⁷⁹ For a discussion of Weinberg and Berg, see: Ian Pay, *Mieczysław Weinberg's 'The Passenger': Silent No More* (unpublished MMus dissertation), University of Manchester, 2011, 24-6, and 58-9.

⁸⁰ See: Cameron Pyke, 'Benjamin Britten's creative relationship with Russia', unpublished thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2011; also Eric Roseberry, 'A debt repaid? Some observations on Shostakovich and his late-period recognition of Britten', in David Fanning ed., *Shostakovich Studies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 229-253.

⁸¹ David Nice, 'Between two giants', programme essay for ENO's production of *The Passenger*, (London, 2011), 31.

⁸² Weinberg himself recalled Shostakovich's fondness for Britten's *War Requiem*: see Sofia Khentova, *V mire Shostakovicha* [In Shostakovich's world] (Moscow: Kompozitor, 1996) 187.

introduced on one of Britten's visits to Moscow. Weinberg almost certainly knew at least one of Britten's quartets; in a 1963 concert by the Borodin Quartet, Britten's First Quartet (1941) was programmed with Weinberg's Piano Quintet (1944), with Weinberg himself as pianist.⁸³

A strong parallel with Britten can be found in several of Weinberg's later quartets, where a juxtaposition of styles and influences results in a dichotomous discourse. Britten's Third Quartet (1975) exploits these contrasts especially. Weinberg's Twelfth Quartet (1969-70) is remarkably prescient of Britten's Quartet, and is arguably Weinberg's most experimental in terms of stylistic juxtapositions. The third movement presents an angular melody punctuated by double-stopped chords. Britten's second movement, titled 'Ostinato' is strikingly similar, especially from b. 4 onwards:

⁸³ G. Shantir, "'Borodintsi' igrayut sovremenuyu muziku' [The Borodins perform contemporary music], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1963/2, 95-6. Despite such evidence that Weinberg had heard Britten's First Quartet, there are no resemblances from it to be found in any of Weinberg's music.

Ex. 2.5 a), Weinberg, Quartet No. 12, third movement, opening and b) Britten, Quartet No. 3, second movement, opening.

a)

Presto ♩ = 208

b)

Very fast (♩ = c. 132)

Closer still is Weinberg's Fourteenth Quartet (1978), which presents a return to Bartókian gestures, but also presents a narrative of searching. Towards the end of the first movement, a series of punctuating chords interrupts the previously active semiquaver lines, in a manner recalling Britten's Quartet:

Ex. 2.6, Weinberg, Quartet No. 14, first movement, R11⁶.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system includes staves for VI. 1, VI. 2, Vla., and Vc. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 96. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 8/8. The second system continues the piece, with a key signature change to one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. Dynamics such as *sf* and *arco* are indicated. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Weinberg's passages do exploit contrasts to a similar level to that found in Britten's Quartet, but Weinberg arguably reaches a higher level of tension between traditional rhetoric and experimental effects. More striking in Britten's work is the sense of mourning and release achieved by its close, a discourse that Weinberg often deployed in other pieces, such as the Sixteenth Quartet or even in *The Passenger*.

Other notable quartet cycles from the twentieth century seem to have barely impinged on Weinberg's consciousness, if at all. These include such luminaries as Milhaud, Hindemith, Tippett, and many others. Nevertheless, Shostakovich, Bartók, Berg, and Britten can stand as valuable comparisons for Weinberg's quartet cycle. The second half of this chapter details the reception and critical literature on Weinberg's quartets, in order to put this thesis into its research context. Before his quartets can be fully introduced, however, there is another avenue of the twentieth-century string quartet that has been largely neglected by most histories of the genre: the status and reception of the string quartet within the Soviet Union.

2.2. THE SOVIET QUARTET

To modern commentators, writing string quartets may seem like a strange choice for a composer in the Soviet Union, since associations of intimate expression and bourgeois connoisseurship seemingly contradicted everything that Socialist Realism represented. The string quartet as a genre was of little apparent use to the State, typically being performed for small audiences, and usually with non-programmatic content. Katerina Clark has investigated the paradox of Shostakovich's turn to the string quartet genre in the late 1930s – paradoxical because he had already suffered at the hands of state censorship and because the doctrine of Socialist Realism was by then well established. In these circumstances, chamber music was not necessarily looked down upon, but it was never lionised to the same extent as song, opera, or symphonic works.⁸⁴ However, chamber music was still celebrated at some level. For instance, Shostakovich was awarded the Stalin Prize for his Piano Quintet in 1940.⁸⁵

Several commentators have claimed – surely over-enthusiastically – that writing quartets was somehow an act of protest.⁸⁶ There is little evidence of this in Weinberg's cycle (unless the element of general protest on behalf of universal cultural values is taken into account, arguably the antithesis of anything overtly oppositional). If the genre in itself is accepted by modern critics to have been subversive in some way, the sheer number of string quartets written in the Soviet Union would suggest a tidal wave of dissent, which was clearly not the case.

⁸⁴ As Katerina Clark writes, 'the symphony was not merely resurrected... essentially, it was promoted as *the* genre for socialist realist music' [emphasis original]. See: Katerina Clark, 'Shostakovich's Turn to the String Quartet', 577. For more on the early success of lyric songs, see: Philip Ross Bullock, 'The Pushkin Anniversary of 1937 and Russian art-song in the Soviet Union', *Slavonica*, 13 (2007) 39-56.

⁸⁵ String Quartets were not altogether absent from the Stalin Prizes. Those celebrated are as follows: Shebalin, Quartet No. 5 (1943, 1st class), Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 9 (1946a, 1st class), Nikolai Chemberdzhi, Quartet No. 3 (1946a, 2nd class), Kabalevsky, Quartet No. 2 (1946b, 1st class), Glière, Quartet No. 4 (1948, 1st class), Arkady Filippenko, Quartet No. 2 (1949, 2nd class), Sulkhan Tsintsadze, Quartet No. 2 (1950, 3rd class), Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 13 (1951, 1st class, awarded posthumously). See: Frolova-Walker, *Stalin's Music Prize*, appendix III, 316-28. Other chamber music genres appear more frequently in the prize lists, especially the song cycle.

⁸⁶ See for example: Ian MacDonald, *The New Shostakovich* (2nd edition, rev. Raymond Clarke) (London: Pimlico, 2006) 162.

While Weinberg's cycle of seventeen quartets represents one of the most challenging outputs by a Soviet composer, there were a number of other ambitious cycles. In the following subsections, the works of several of the leading Soviet quartet composers (other than Shostakovich) are surveyed (Fig. 2.ii). While Weinberg's quartets have been enjoying the benefits of the wider revival of interest in his music, most of the quartets mentioned here are less well known; indeed, some have never been published or recorded in the West, and many of Levitin's have never been recorded at all.

Fig. 2-ii, Quartets of Myaskovsky, Shebalin, Levitin, and Chaykovsky.

Year	Myaskovsky	Shebalin	Levitin	Chaykovsky
1923		No. 1		
1929	No. 1			
1930	Nos. 2* & 3*			
1934		No. 2		
1937	No. 4*			
1938		No. 3		
1939	No. 5			
1940	No. 6	No. 4	No. 1	
1941	No. 7			
1942	No. 8	No. 5	No. 2	
1943	No. 9	No. 6	No. 3	
1945	Nos. 10* & 11			
1946			No. 4	
1947	No. 12			
1948		No. 7	No. 5	
1950	No. 13			
1951			No. 6	
1952			No. 7	
1954				No. 1
1958			No. 8	
1960		No. 8		
1961				No. 2
1963		No. 9		
1967			No. 9	No. 3
1971			No. 10	
1972				No. 4
1974			No. 11	No. 5
1976			No. 12	No. 6
1980			No. 13	
1986			No. 14	
1987 (?)			No. 15	
1988-93 (?)			Nos. 16 & 17	

*N.B. * = revised versions of earlier unpublished works from 1907-10.*

2.2.1. NIKOLAY MYASKOVSKY

While some authors choose to label Weinberg as the ‘third great composer’ of Soviet music,⁸⁷ another serious contender for the title is Nikolay Myaskovsky (1881-1950). Older than Prokofiev and Shostakovich, he was raised in the Tsarist era. Myaskovsky is today celebrated principally for his 27 symphonies, despite having written a huge amount of music besides. His symphonic cycle displays considerable variety of means, including a symphony scored for brass band (No. 19), one depicting life on a *Kolkhoz* farm (No. 12), and one based on Russian folk songs (No. 9), but it is more widely known and respected for its remarkable consistency of style over a time span of some forty years. In his heyday, Myaskovsky was praised as the first great Soviet symphonist, producing what has been dubbed the ‘first’ Soviet symphony with his Fifth in 1918.⁸⁸ Besides his long list of symphonies, Myaskovsky was also prolific in other genres. He wrote thirteen string quartets, works that are on the fringes of repertoire (recent recordings include that by the Pacifica Quartet, with their ‘Soviet Experience’ set of Shostakovich’s quartets, which also features Myaskovsky’s Thirteenth Quartet and Weinberg’s Sixth). Lev Raaben concisely summed up Myaskovsky’s style:

The musicological literature has repeatedly pointed out that the composer is peculiar for his great unity of style, which is implemented through his evolution as a creator and thinker... Myaskovsky always sought not so much the diverse methods of novelty, but to look for opportunities to enrich and deepen his music’s content and expression.⁸⁹

None of Myaskovsky’s quartets was celebrated in quite the same way as Shostakovich’s. The Borodin Quartet often performed Myaskovsky’s quartets, but as Berlinsky observed: ‘Certainly, Myaskovsky was a genius, but can one call him a great

⁸⁷ See, for example: Lucy Gijsbers, ‘The Three Great Soviet Composers and Mstislav Rostropovich – Talent, Music and Politics in the Soviet Union’, (unpublished MMus dissertation), Massey University and Victoria University of Wellington, 2014.

⁸⁸ Gregor Tassie, *Nikolay Myaskovsky: The Conscience of Russian Music* (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 83.

⁸⁹ Lev Raaben, *Sovetskaya kamerno-instrumental’naya muzika* [Soviet chamber-instrumental music] (Leningrad: Muzgiz, 1963) 130.

composer?’⁹⁰ Although the Taneyev Quartet recorded a complete cycle in the early 1990s, Myaskovsky’s quartets await reassessment in contemporary concerts and recordings.

Weinberg and Myaskovsky were good friends,⁹¹ Weinberg having first met the older composer during his time studying in Minsk. He had travelled to Moscow in June 1940 for the ‘dekada’ festival celebrating Belorussian music, and he was introduced to the ‘grand old man’ of Soviet symphonism after one of the concerts.⁹² The nature of their friendship can be seen as broadly similar to that of Weinberg and Shostakovich, in that after Weinberg moved to Moscow in 1943, he showed many of his works to Myaskovsky, seeking advice and approval.⁹³ Weinberg recalled his amazement at the older composer’s generosity:

I remember being dumbfounded, and it left an impression for life, the first time I saw him – I was twenty years old, and he was nearly fifty, I think; he seemed to me an old man. When I was leaving, he suddenly picked up my coat and helped me put it on. I was completely stunned, my hands trembled: ‘What are you doing, what are you doing!’⁹⁴

Myaskovsky’s diaries contain several mentions praising Weinberg’s works,⁹⁵ and Myaskovsky was instrumental in the younger composer’s early attempts at publication. For instance, in 1946, Weinberg was trying to get the score of his Sixth Quartet published, which meant submitting to a panel’s approval. Myaskovsky happened to be on the panel, owing to his senior position in Soviet musical life. Weinberg phoned him to ask whether he had seen the Quartet yet; Myaskovsky replied that he had rushed it

⁹⁰ Ovchinnikov, ‘Yemu pomeshalo sosledstvo s Shostakovichem’, 13.

⁹¹ Nikitina remarks that the two were alike in character, and states that Weinberg’s ‘lyrical’ manner of speaking was a trait inherited from Myaskovsky rather than Shostakovich. See: Nikitina, ‘Pochti lyuboy mig zhizni – rabota’, 22.

⁹² Yakubov, ‘Mechislav Vaynberg: “Vsyu zhizn’ ya zhadno sochinyal muziku”’, 13.

⁹³ Myaskovsky noted in his diary, 9 October 1945: ‘Weinberg has shown me many interesting works’. See: Olga P. Lamm, *Stranitsi tvorcheskoy biografii Myaskovskogo* [Pages from the life and work of Myaskovsky] (Moscow: Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1989) 322.

⁹⁴ Nikitina, ‘Pochti lyuboy mig zhizni – rabota’, 21.

⁹⁵ Myaskovsky’s diaries are held in the RGALI library. For a translated extract from 3 October 1949, discussing Weinberg’s works, see: Tassie, *Nikolay Myaskovsky: The Conscience of Russian Music*, 302.

through the panel, with golden approval from all members.⁹⁶ His note of recommendation was glowing:

The Sixth Quartet of M. Weinberg is, for its emotional intensity and technical completeness, not inferior to his own excellent Fourth Quartet; even more clear are the inherent intonational features created by the young composer, which makes this quartet particularly valuable. The musical images and techniques of the quartet are complex, but clear and expressive. I think that this quartet must be recommended for performance.⁹⁷

Myaskovsky often spoke about his high opinion of Weinberg's music. When he was asked which of Weinberg's works was his favourite, he reportedly replied: 'When I listen to his First Symphony, it's the First. But when I hear the Second, it's the Second, and so on...'.⁹⁸ Myaskovsky's death in 1950 affected Weinberg deeply. He kept a photograph of Myaskovsky on his bedside table throughout his life.⁹⁹

It is difficult to pinpoint the influence of Myaskovsky's quartets on Weinberg though there are several points of overlap between their respective styles. A good example relates to the ending of one of Weinberg's earliest quartets and his subsequent decision to change it. His Second Quartet has already been compared to Shostakovich, but it is in its final bars that it demonstrates parallels with Myaskovsky (in its original version, at least). The ending features successive flurries around G, before chromatically-descending lines lead to three G major chords, one per bar. This is followed by a modally-inflected 'fanning out' gesture, before a series of final G chords (see Ex. 2.7, below).

⁹⁶ Nikitina, 'Pochti lyuboy mig zhizni – rabota', 21.

⁹⁷ N. Myaskovsky, 'The Sixth Quartet of M. Weinberg', 28 January 1947, held in Central State Archive of Literature and Art, St. Petersburg; quoted in Semyon Shlifshteyn ed., *N. Ya. Myaskovsky: Sobranie materialov* [N. Ya. Myaskovsky: Collected materials], vol. 2 (Moscow: Muzika, 1964) 266-7.

⁹⁸ As recalled by Shostakovich, in Naum Mar, *Lyudi, kotorikh ya uslishal* [People I heard], (Moscow: Sovetskaya rossiya, 1973) 227.

⁹⁹ Yakubov, 'Mechislav Vaynberg', 12.

Ex. 2.7, Weinberg, Quartet No. 2 (original version), third movement, final bars.

Musical score for Ex. 2.7, Weinberg, Quartet No. 2 (original version), third movement, final bars. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The first three staves have melodic lines with eighth-note patterns, while the fourth staff has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The piece ends with a final chord in the first three staves.

Musical score for Ex. 2.8, Myaskovsky's Fourth Quartet (1937), ending in F minor. The score is in F minor and 3/4 time. It consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The first three staves have melodic lines with eighth-note patterns, while the fourth staff has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The piece ends with a final chord in the first three staves, marked "pizz.".

Myaskovsky's Fourth Quartet (1937) ends with a similar gesture in F minor (Ex. 2.8).

Ex. 2.8, Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 4, fourth movement, ending.

The musical score for Ex. 2.8 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three flats. It features two staves for Violins (VI. 1 and VI. 2) and two staves for Violas and Cellos (Vla. and Vc.). The tempo is marked '(Allegro molto)' and the dynamics are 'ff'. The score includes triplets and a 'G.P.' (Grave) section. The ending is marked 'Vivacissimo' and 'ff'.

The passage just before the end of Myaskovsky's Second Quartet (1930) featured in Ex. 2.9 is even closer still.

Ex. 2.9, Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 2, fourth movement, ⁷R27.

The musical score for Ex. 2.9 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps. It features two staves for Violins (VI. 1 and VI. 2) and two staves for Violas and Cellos (Vla. and Vc.). The tempo is marked '(Vivace)' and the dynamics are 'ff'. The score includes complex rhythmic patterns and a circled measure number '27'.

Weinberg's Second Quartet was finished on the 13 March 1940 according to the manuscript, though there is evidence of substantial revisions in a different ink and later handwriting to this marking (possibly indicative of subsequent work on the revised version). According to his own account, Weinberg did not meet Myaskovsky until

summer 1940, but mentioned his pre-existing respect for his music at that point.¹⁰⁰ The parallels in the examples above hint at an awareness of Myaskovsky's quartets that pre-dates their first meeting.

Weinberg's revised version of his Second Quartet features a troubled series of dissonant chords in place of the straightforwardly G major of the original and ends with a puzzling C (see Ex. 3.34, p. 171). It is tempting to interpret the revised version as striving to move away from Myaskovsky's influence (just as the cadential ending of the first movement is an attempt to move *closer* to Shostakovich's Sixth Quartet – see p. 51); both claims remain speculative. Myaskovsky's wider influence, however, is not a point for speculation.

Myaskovsky's quartets were greatly respected in the Soviet Union, occasionally elevated to the level of his symphonic output. Alexei Ikonnikov writes:

[in his quartets] the composer gives full play to his outstanding talents, to his constant tendency to think in instrumental terms and his masterly symphonic technique. A firm grasp of form, a sense of style, a strong and unmistakable individuality and significance of content – these are the main features of Myaskovsky's chamber music.¹⁰¹

Ikonnikov's summary appears almost deliberately vague. By contrast, Raaben praised Myaskovsky's music in no less grandiose terms, but attempted to pinpoint his significance for Soviet chamber music in general:

The value of Myaskovsky's chamber music in Soviet music is extremely great. At certain stages of his development, Myaskovsky led the trend of all the works of Soviet composers. He was one of the outstanding artists who formed the 'realistic style' of Soviet music. Myaskovsky's most important merit is that during the formation of this style, he was able, through the example of his own creativity, to prove the fruitfulness of reliance on the traditions of the Russian realist-musical classics [i.e. the Russian nineteenth-century canon].¹⁰²

Despite Myaskovsky's reputation for intellectualism, humour can still be found in his works. For instance, his Third Quartet, from 1909-11, includes two musical


¹⁰⁰ See: Nikitina, 'Pochti lyuboy mig zhizni – rabota', 21.

¹⁰¹ Alexei A. Ikonnikov, *Myaskovsky: His Life and Work* (translator uncredited), (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969) 68.

¹⁰² Raaben, *Sovetskaya kamerno-instrumental'naya muzika*, 133.

cryptograms designed to poke fun at his composition tutor, Antoliy Lyadov. Lyadov was a stern critic and often disparaged Grieg’s music, a composer Myaskovsky much admired.¹⁰³ In response, Myaskovsky included the following theme in the first movement:

Ex. 2.10, Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 3, first movement, opening.

Cello 

E - d - f - - - a - r - d G - r - g

As labeled, the theme roughly spells out ‘Edvard Grieg’ (with D notes becoming ‘ré’ at appropriate points). Even more literally, the movement’s second theme is aimed at Lyadov directly, spelling ‘Beware Lyadov!’ (Ex. 2.11).

Ex. 2.11, Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 3, first movement, R5.

5 

espressivo

p

(Be - re - гись - Ля -до-фа, Ля-до-фа)
 (Be - re - gis - La -do-fa, La- do-fa)

The same work’s second movement presents a set of variations on a theme by Grieg.¹⁰⁴

Myaskovsky’s affection for Grieg’s music helps to account for the pastoral aspects of his own music. He could, however present a collage of styles and characteristics. For instance, Ikonnikov identified images in the opening of the Fifth Quartet: ‘the musical flow stirs familiar imagery in the imagination... Bright dreams, something joyful, something with a hint of sadness – a quickly careening picture of a

¹⁰³ Ikonnikov, *Myaskovsky: His Life and Work*, 69.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 69-70. The cryptograms were first identified by Ikonnikov.

semi-fantastic dance, then a mood of concentration, alternating with a rapid increase, a passionately excited rush – this is the approximate range of emotions caused by the music of this quartet’.¹⁰⁵

Such varied imagery is counterpoised by the often intense intellectualism in Myaskovsky’s polyphony. Despite a lack of international recognition, his quartets were held in comparable regard to his symphonies in the Soviet Union. One author explicitly linked Myaskovsky’s final quartet, the Thirteenth, to his last symphony:

In Myaskovsky’s Thirteenth Quartet there are many attractive features of the author’s later work. The main musical ideas are very similar to the theme of the Twenty-Seventh Symphony, and are close to the topic of the genre’s intonational structure (although not reaching the same prominence [vypuklost’]), and therefore we can assume that the quartet is one of the works [i.e., on the same level of esteem as the symphonies], as it served as a preparation for this last outstanding symphonic score of Myaskovsky’s.¹⁰⁶

For instance, see the second movement of Myaskovsky’s Thirteenth Quartet (Ex. 2.12).

Ex. 2.12, Myaskovsky, Quartet No. 13, second movement, opening.

Presto Fantastico ♩ = 120

This is a modally-inflected presto, with rapid variations on the theme. This sums up one tendency of Myaskovsky’s quartets: towards movements that present variations rather than any sustained development of an idea, or even a sense of a journey and return. The

¹⁰⁵ Alexei Ikonnikov, ‘Pyat’iy kvartet N. Myaskovskogo’ [The Fifth Quartet of N. Myaskovsky], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1939/12, 77.

¹⁰⁶ Yury Keldish ed., *Istoriya muziki narodov SSSR* [History of the music of the peoples of the USSR] Vol. 4 (Moscow: Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1973) 263-4.

focus is on thematic restatement, usually reset into related keys, with some textural variations. Such textural variations are offset by an emphasis on classical templates, with a kind of Glazunovian majesty enduring throughout Myaskovsky's works. His slower movements often evoke a pastoral-type mood, with exploitations of parallel-minor effects for expression, though he also portrays a dignified melancholy in his later works.

Myaskovsky's quartets portray a sense of stoicism and a kind of unfaltering nobility. For instance, there is little of the humour – be it whimsical, sardonic, boisterous, folk-like, or grotesque – that characterises Shostakovich's early quartets.¹⁰⁷ Myaskovsky's forms tend to be textbook-simple, fleshed out with extended polyphonic development from an initial melody; this emphasis on polyphony can be argued as being representative of his resistance to the 'accessibility' that was promoted from 1934 onwards.¹⁰⁸ Myaskovsky's quartets are strikingly uniform, with relatively little deviation or evolution across his cycle, typified by a near-academic obsession with development as principal motivation.

Despite a few identifiable parallels in Weinberg's music, it is safe to conclude that Myaskovsky's influence on Weinberg was more that of a general paternalistic friend, rather than a towering musical hero, such as Shostakovich. Weinberg's harmonies are consistently more chromatically inflected than Myaskovsky's. Consider, for example, the free-floating tonality and hyper-minor that characterise Weinberg's approach to functional harmony (see chapter 5, p. 242). Myaskovsky's music contains harmonic colourations (usually built around familiar modulations), but with only a modicum of modal alterations. It is this adherence to functional harmony within

¹⁰⁷ For an exploration of this aspect of Shostakovich's music, see: Esti Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody, and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich: A Theory of Musical Incongruities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) passim. For an overview discussion of Sheinberg's concepts, see p. 108 of this thesis.

¹⁰⁸ Perhaps best summed up by calls for a return to 'the path of clarity and realistic simplicity'. See: Tikhon Khrennikov, editorial in *Sovetskaya muzika*, (1948/2), 35, quoted in Solomon Volkov, *Shostakovich and Stalin*, trans. Antonina W. Blois (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004) 228.

traditional forms that makes Myaskovsky's thirteen quartets so remarkably consistent as a group: it is also what renders his musical language immediately distinct from Weinberg's.

Myaskovsky's quartets still stand as an important cycle, one that almost entirely predates Shostakovich's earliest explorations in the genre. Several commentators held Myaskovsky's music aloft as a fine example for younger composers; Ivan Rizhkin argued that 'the young should learn... [from this] composer-thinker [*kompozitor-mislitel'*]'.¹⁰⁹ During Myaskovsky's lifetime his cycle was held as the zenith of quartet writing in the Soviet Union, in much the same way that his symphonies were regarded as the pinnacle of their genre. As a result, new works were inevitably compared to Myaskovsky's. In this manner, Myaskovsky's works are vital for understanding the context of the string quartet in the Soviet Union. The influence that his early quartets exerted over Weinberg's own quartet writing is hinted at in the examples above. Myaskovsky's quartets can be understood as a benchmark against which Weinberg could measure his own individuality and serve as a model for departure of how to engage with and renew the classical tradition.

2.2.2. VISSARION SHEBALIN

Shebalin (1902-1963) was a key figure in Soviet musical pedagogy and also in the string quartet genre. Myaskovsky taught Shebalin composition, and his nine string quartets often betray Myaskovsky's close influence (of all the composers reviewed here, Shebalin's style is closest to that of Myaskovsky). Shebalin took up a teaching position at the Moscow Conservatoire, where his later illustrious pupils included Edison Denisov

¹⁰⁹ Ivan Rizhkin, 'Myaskovskiy i sovetskij simfonizm' [Myaskovsky and Soviet symphonism] in *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 1937 (No. 49) 23 October, 4.

and Sofia Gubaidulina.¹¹⁰ Shostakovich admired Shebalin (and dedicated his own Second Quartet to him), but the 1948 Zhdanovshchina crackdown brought Shebalin under critical attack, and his reputation never quite recovered. One author claimed that chamber music was Shebalin's favourite 'sphere of expression',¹¹¹ and Gerald Abraham introduced Shebalin to Western audiences guardedly as a composer 'who writes the sort of music one expects a Russian to write: lyrical, technically fluent, individual but not startlingly so'.¹¹²

Shebalin enjoyed a prestigious standing in Moscow and his quartets were respected by connoisseurs and enthusiasts, but the vitriolic attacks against him during the 1948 crackdowns seriously damaged his career and his health. Weinberg praised his works, including him in a series of affectionate imitations of Soviet composers' styles, the suite for piano solo *Portraits of Comrades* (a work that is currently unlocated). Shebalin, Shostakovich, and Weinberg were part of a group of friends who would meet to discuss their music and recent concerts, as well as for birthdays and similar celebrations.¹¹³ An overview of Shebalin's quartets can be fruitful, since they also demonstrable a level of overlap with Weinberg's early quartets and, like Myaskovsky's quartets, Shebalin's cycle also helps to provide vital background to the string quartet as a genre that continued to be viable in the pre-war Soviet Union.

Shebalin's earliest quartets often evoke French music, particularly Fauré and Ravel. This resemblance was missed by contemporary reviewers, one of whom instead

¹¹⁰ Inna Barsova, 'Vissarion Shebalin', in Grove Music Online, Oxford: Oxford University Press: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/25617> [accessed 30/10/15].

¹¹¹ V. Blok, 'Kamernie sochineniya V. Shebalina' [Chamber works of V. Shebalin], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1960/11, 53.

¹¹² Gerald Abraham, *Eight Soviet Composers* (London: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943) 61.

¹¹³ See: Khentova, *V mire Shostakovicha*, 189. Boris Chaykovsky's widow recounted how the group would sometimes meet at Shebalin's flat to play four-hand arrangements of new works at the piano. See: Yanina Iosifovna Moshinskaya-Chaykovskaya, October 2002, as told to Igor Prokhorov.

points to ‘broad serene Russian melodies’.¹¹⁴ Aspects of French style can be noted from the opening bars of his First Quartet (1923) (Ex. 2.13).

Ex. 2.13, Shebalin, Quartet No. 1, opening.

The A Dorian harmony in the first bar evokes imagery more relaxed than that of common practice era ‘functional harmony’, reinforced by the lush C-sharp based whole-tone chord in bar three. At ⁴R1 there is a bar of augmented triads, creating another whole-tone chord, with the same effect repeated three bars later. Such whole-tone sonorities have come to be closely associated with turn-of-the-century French music, though they can be found throughout Russian music of the nineteenth century (such as the opening of Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*), perhaps accounting for the ‘broad Russian melodies’ identified in the above quote.¹¹⁵ The overall effect is similar to the opening of Ravel’s String Quartet (see Ex. 2.14, below).

¹¹⁴ K. Kuznetsov, ‘Novoye i staroye i v kvartetakh V. Shebalina’ [The old and the new in the quartets of V. Shebalin], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1940/1, 65.

¹¹⁵ See: Gerald Abraham, ‘The Whole-Tone Scale in Russian Music’, *The Musical Times*, Vol. 74, No. 1085 (July 1933) 602-604.

Ex. 2.14, Ravel, String Quartet, opening.

The image displays the opening of Ravel's String Quartet, marked 'Allegro Moderato' with a tempo of quarter note = 120. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It features four staves: Violin 1 (VI. 1), Violin 2 (VI. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Vc.). The first violin part begins with a melodic line of eighth notes, starting on G4 and moving upwards. The cello part features a prominent fifth-fifth motion in block-like chords. The dynamic marking is *p* *très doux*, with a *pp* marking appearing later in the piece. The score is presented in two systems, with the first system covering measures 1-4 and the second system covering measures 5-8.

The Shebalin example shows an even stronger resemblance to Ravel from R1 (see Ex. 2.13), where the cello's fifths move in block-like motion (c.f. bar 9 in Ex. 2.14), and the first violin's melodic shape is strikingly similar to the opening of Ravel's quartet. The serenade-like quality of Shebalin's early works is telling, particularly since Weinberg was writing his own Second Quartet in Minsk in 1939-40, the same time as Shebalin's Third Quartet, and both show affinities with a tradition from Tchaikovsky and Grieg – possibly revealing a kind of shared response to the *Zeitgeist*.

Shebalin's earliest quartets also display a strong influence from his teacher, as is the case with his Third Quartet (1939), dedicated to Myaskovsky. The work opens with sinister triplet quavers in the cello, which become a central motif for the entire work (see Ex. 2.15, below).

Ex. 2.15, Shebalin, Quartet No. 3, opening.

The musical score for the opening of Shebalin's Quartet No. 3 is presented in two systems. The first system shows the Violin 1 (VI. 1) and Violin 2 (VI. 2) parts in the upper staves, and the Viola (Vla.) and Violoncello (Vc.) parts in the lower staves. The Vc. part features a prominent triplet pattern. The second system continues the Vc. part and shows the Violin 1 and Violin 2 parts with triplets and accents. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'p' and 'p'.

The example is similar to the Myaskovsky quartet illustrated above, (see Ex. 2.12), partly thanks to its driving rhythms – 6/8 in Myaskovsky, and triplet quavers in Shebalin – but also in their use of expanded Phrygian modality. One reviewer noted the similarities with Myaskovsky, and also the ingenuity with which the melodic development of each of Shebalin's movements sprang from motifs contained within its opening bars.¹¹⁶ In an article on 'the old and the new' in Shebalin's quartets, another contemporary found the Third Quartet an abrupt break from Shebalin's earlier style: 'in the Third Quartet, one can observe the crystallisation of the new harmony... older harmonies become a sturdy canvas on which to present a variety of twisted chromatically-coloured patterns'.¹¹⁷ Evidently responding to the title of that article, Gerald Abraham described the quartet as follows:

To Westerners, accustomed to more highly spiced fare, the old in the quartet will be more apparent than the new, though it should be added that Shebalin has the power of conceiving new and beautiful themes in the old idiom (particularly in the *andante* and finale of this quartet).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ See: Keldish, *Istoriia muzika narodov SSSR*, Vol. II, 188-190.

¹¹⁷ Kuznetsov, 'Novoye i staroye i v kvartetakh V. Shebalina' [The old and the new in the quartets of V. Shebalin], 67.

¹¹⁸ Gerald Abraham, *Eight Soviet Composers*, 64.

The attention paid to Shebalin's quartets in the context of his output testifies to how respected they were amongst critical circles (in the 1960s, at least).¹¹⁹

Some overlap with Weinberg's language can be detected in Weinberg's Third Quartet (1944), with several parallels to Shebalin's Fourth Quartet (1940). The opening movement of Weinberg's Third, in D minor, shifts to the rather unusual key of G-flat for its second subject (significant for its distinctly 'warm' intonation on string instruments). A comparable shift occurs in the first movement of Shebalin's Fourth, moving from G minor to B major (a key with similarly distinct intonations for string players). In an even closer parallel, both works recapitulate their opening theme with a striking textural resemblance (seen here in the bars leading from the development into the full recapitulation in the Shebalin example – see Ex. 2.16, below).

¹¹⁹ See Blok, 'Kamernie sochineniya V. Shebalina', and E. Alekseyev, 'Foreword to Shebalin's Quartets', in Vissarion Yakovlovich Shebalin, *Kvarteti Tom 1* (Moscow: State Music Publishers, 1963) 3-11.

Ex. 2.16, a), Weinberg, Quartet No. 3, first movement, R27², and

b) Shebalin, Quartet No. 4, first movement, ²R25.

a)

The musical score for Weinberg's Quartet No. 3, first movement, measures 1-16. It is in 3/4 time with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 72$. The score is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first two staves feature intricate melodic lines with trills and slurs. The lower staves provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns. Dynamics include *trm* (trill) and *sf* (sforzando).

b)

The musical score for Shebalin's Quartet No. 4, first movement, measures 25-32. It is in 3/4 time with a tempo marking of **(Allegro)**. The score is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 25 is circled. The score is characterized by dense, layered textures with many notes beamed together. Dynamics include *sf* (sforzando).

While Shebalin's opening movement is a densely-layered series of variations, Weinberg's Third Quartet is somewhat unbalanced overall (see p. 172) – perhaps resulting from attempts to absorb Shebalin's influence in this movement.

The reception of Shebalin's cycle peaked with his Fifth Quartet (1943), often referred to as the 'Slavic Quartet', owing to its prolific use of Russian and Slavic folk

song. The context of the Great Patriotic War no doubt contributed to its reception; one reviewer described it as ‘an event of great public significance... the music is not only great art, but also artistically documents the friendship and fraternity that is always associated with figures of Russian and west-Slavic culture’.¹²⁰ The Fifth Quartet represents the height of respect for his music: it won a Stalin Prize in 1943.

However, Shebalin was not always so esteemed; in the aftermath of the Zhdanov affair of 1948 he was fired from the Moscow Conservatoire, not being reinstated until 1951.¹²¹ These events had an immediate effect on his cycle. The Seventh (1948) features a noticeably stripped-back style in terms of harmonic adventurousness and even in difficulty for performers, as was noted by at least one contemporaneous critic in the West.¹²² Shebalin was perhaps the one composer affected most strongly by the events of 1948, since for nearly twelve years afterwards he only produced one major new work, the opera *The Taming of the Shrew* (1957). In this period, he wrote no quartets but revised several of his earlier works. His Eighth Quartet (1960) started a final burst of activity in the last three years of his life, which saw his last symphony (No. 5) and the final quartet. He finished the quartet just months before his death in 1963 which is remarkable, considering that a series of strokes had debilitated him so badly that he was left unable to speak. The Eighth and Ninth Quartets present a return to the Francophile explorations of the first four quartets, but tinged with a sombre melancholy that approaches mournfulness.

What separates Shebalin’s and Weinberg’s lyrical writing is their character and tone – Shebalin is wistful, sometimes hopeful, but nearly always playful. Weinberg’s lyrical movements, while also hopeful and wistful, are distinct in their often drawn-out

¹²⁰ I. Martīnov, ““Slavyanskiy kvartet” V. Shebalina’ [V. Shebalin’s ‘Slavic Quartet’], *Sovetskaya muzika* 1944/2, 33.

¹²¹ Barsova, ‘Vissarion Shebalin’.

¹²² Nicholas Slonimsky, ‘The Changing Style of Soviet Music’ in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 3 (1950) 253.

and yearning character, suggesting deeper associations of aspiration (see Chapter 3, p. 140). It could even be argued that Weinberg picked up Shebalin's interest in lyricism and emotive slow movements and made it into something entirely his own, an intricate landscape of self-reflection and quiet repose.

Shebalin's quartets are worth considering, as they represent an alternative to Myaskovsky's cycle and were also respected as a viable path for a Soviet composer of quartets.¹²³ Kabalevsky grouped them with Myaskovsky's as 'owning a prominent place in the genre',¹²⁴ and Raaben described Shebalin's earliest quartets as 'indicative of all of Soviet instrumental chamber music in the second half of the 1930s'.¹²⁵ As such, they stand as vital context for an understanding of the genre in the Soviet Union prior to and alongside the emergence of Shostakovich's quartet cycle.

Myaskovsky represents an older generation, while Shebalin was a conservative compared to Shostakovich, despite only being four years older. Their position as respected composers and teachers ensured the transfer of their values to the next generation, and, indeed, a group of younger composers continued their support for classical templates accordingly. Two of Weinberg's contemporaries and friends had close associations with Myaskovsky and Shebalin: Yuri Levitin and Boris Chaykovsky.

2.2.3. YURI LEVITIN

One of Shostakovich's students and subsequent close friends figures prominently in Weinberg's own biography: Yuri Levitin (1912-1993). Levitin's style is often similar to Shostakovich's, and his output parallels Weinberg's in several respects, particularly in the use of comparatively unusual genres, such as the Requiem mass, and a Sonata for

¹²³ See: E. Alekseyev, 'Zametki o kamernikh ansamblyakh Shebalina' [Notes on the chamber ensembles of Shebalin], in A. Shebalin ed., *V. Ya. Shebalin: Godi zhizni i tvorchestva* [V. Ya. Shebalin: Years of life and creativity] (Moscow: Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1990) 179-80.

¹²⁴ D. Kabalevsky, '9-y kvartet' [The 9th Quartet], *Literatura i iskusstvo*, 11 March 1944, reproduced in: S. Shlifsteyn ed., *N. Ya. Myaskovsky: Sobranie materialov*, Vol. 1, 146.

¹²⁵ Raaben, *Sovetskaya kamerno-instrumental'naya muzika*, 62.

Double Bass solo, but also in the number of quartets (and even similar periods of creativity in the genre – see Fig. 2-ii, above). Weinberg dedicated two of his quartets to Levitin, namely the Seventh (1957) and Fourteenth (1978), though Levitin had honoured Weinberg first with his Sixth Quartet (1951).

Levitin had studied with Shostakovich at the Leningrad Conservatoire and moved to Tashkent after the siege of Leningrad began in late 1941. In Tashkent, Levitin managed the affairs of the Tashkent theatre, a role which put him in direct contact with Weinberg.¹²⁶ Weinberg was heavily involved with the theatre's musical activities, producing instrumental music for stage productions and even collaborating on an opera, *The Sword of Uzbekistan*. Levitin returned to Moscow in 1942.

Levitin was a moderately successful composer in his own time and place (his quartets received mixed critical reactions¹²⁷) but in later years he was better known as a respected music critic. Levitin himself spoke positively about Weinberg's music in the Soviet press, including several mentions in the official state newspaper, *Pravda*¹²⁸ and reviews in the arts supplement, *Sovetskaya kul'tura*.¹²⁹

In a rare instance of Weinberg's own published writings, he congratulated Levitin on his sixtieth birthday (in 1972) and praised his quartets in particular, writing:

In the Ninth and Tenth Quartets played here, I perceived an unusual connection between the academic form of the cycle and the melodic, harmonic language, with the polyphonic structure, free from any kind of auditory associations. This is an original fusion, in which the music flows along familiar formal lines, where the embodiment of dramaturgy does not present difficulties, while the content is full of unexpected, unheard of beauties and turns of phrase that demand unfailing attention. These are quartets of a mature master, who has something to say and who speaks in an original, lapidary, accessible voice.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Fanning, *In Search of Freedom*, 33.

¹²⁷ See: Keldish, *Istoriya muzika narodov SSSR*, vol. 4, 264, where Levitin's Seventh Quartet, in memory of a Ukrainian girl executed by Nazis, is guardedly praised, but judged to be an 'insufficiently convincing incarnation of the heroic image'. Frolova-Walker details how the Stalin Prize Committee took the work's dedication as a declaration of programmatic content; as such, the musical material was found to be deeply unworthy of the subject matter. See: Frolova-Walker, *Stalin's Music Prize*, 124-6.

¹²⁸ See: Yuri Levitin 'Nasladniki bol'shikh talantov' [Successors of great talents], *Pravda*, 1965/171 (20 June), 6.

¹²⁹ See: Yuri Levitin, 'Geroi Sholom-Alekhema v opere' [Sholom Aleichem's heroes in an opera], *Sovetskaya kul'tura*, 1983/116 (27 September) 4.

¹³⁰ M. Vaynberg, 'Zrel'iy master' [A mature master], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1973/6, 136. Weinberg also wrote the liner notes for the Glinka Quartet's recording of Levitin's Ninth and Tenth Quartets. See: Melodiya, 33 C 10-07307-8 (1976).

Examining the scores of these works, it is possible to trace Weinberg's comments, particularly the observation of 'familiar formal lines', but also 'turns of phrase that demand unflinching attention'.

Levitin's Ninth Quartet (1967, Op. 66) is relatively experimental for Soviet music of the late 1960s. There are several elements that link it to Shostakovich's Quartet style, including twelve-note lines framed with tonal accompaniment. The middle movement is an extended fugue, recalling Shostakovich's Op. 87, though much more textbook-like than anything in Shostakovich's fugues. The final movement of Levitin's Ninth Quartet culminates with an exchange of extended playing techniques, which, though not unusual for the late 1960s, nonetheless remain striking because they are unanticipated: there is simply a climax of special techniques in the final pages (Ex. 2.17).

Ex. 2.17, Levitin, Quartet No. 9, third movement, R26³.

The musical score for Ex. 2.17 is for the third movement of Levitin's Quartet No. 9, measure R26³. It is written for Violin I (VI. 1), Violin II (VI. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Vc.). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 126. The first violin part begins with a rest and then plays a series of notes with a 'sul pontic. al' instruction. The second violin part plays a series of notes with a trill ('tr') instruction. The viola part plays a series of notes with a 'pp' marking. The cello part plays a series of notes with a 'pp' marking. The score is in 2/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

The notation in the second violin instructs the player to finger the pitches and slap the fingerboard; the first violin, viola, and cellist are instructed to 'play at random different

notes in the highest register'.¹³¹ The movement in general presents something of a pastiche of Bartók, complete with folk-like lines and rhythms. However, this comes to an abrupt head towards its conclusion. Meanwhile the notation strongly resembles that of Krzysztof Penderecki, whose aleatoric works were hugely popular among the younger generation of Soviet composers in the late 60s.¹³² In a manner remarkably similar to Weinberg, Levitin reserves the majority of his 'extended techniques' in the Ninth Quartet until the final bars of the work (Weinberg's Twelfth Quartet has a similar end-heavy deployment of 'extended techniques'). When the unexpected appearance of such techniques is combined with the unusually large fugue in the second movement (arguably the source of Weinberg's comment on 'familiar formal lines'), Levitin's Ninth Quartet can easily be considered an uneven work. However, its successor can lay reasonable claim to consistent mastery.

Levitin's Tenth Quartet (1973, Op. 73) is a much more self-assured work, even with some use of twelve-note rows. The highlight is the second movement, where a mechanistic pulsing line is transformed into a folk-like theme à la Stravinsky. This is particularly accented with uneven 5/8 bars, all the more manic given the dotted crotchet = 138 tempo (see Ex. 2.18, below).

¹³¹ Both instructions are given as footnotes in the score, in Russian and English. See: Yuri Levitin, *Ninth and Tenth Quartets* (Moscow: Soviet Composer, 1974), 30.

¹³² See: Schmelz, *Such Freedom, if only Musical*, 47.

Ex. 2.18, Levitin, Quartet No. 10, second movement, ⁴R3.

This movement presents a dramaturgy in contrast to the rest of the work, following from the twelve-note first movement. Such uneven pulsing in the example above recalls other toccata-like movements, such as the second movement of Weinberg's Piano Trio (from 1945, long pre-dating Levitin's Quartet). While this in itself is not innovatory, it shows the close affinities between Levitin and Weinberg's respective styles.

Weinberg and Levitin were often spoken of in the same breath in the Composers' Union plenums, particularly those in the late 1940s; speakers noted the close friendship and musical affinity between the two and grouped them together accordingly.¹³³ After Shostakovich's death, Levitin took up the role of a friend to whom Weinberg would play his compositions, and they remained close until Levitin's death in 1993. Of all the Soviet composers briefly surveyed here, Levitin is the most neglected in the present day and arguably the closest to Weinberg stylistically. Though it is

¹³³ See: Anon., 'Vistupleniya na plenum' [Speeches at the Plenary Meeting], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1946/10, 58.

beyond the scope of this thesis to argue the case for his music, the Tenth Quartet alone is well deserving of public performance.

2.2.4. BORIS CHAYKOVSKY

Boris Chaykovsky (1925-1996) was likewise a close friend of Weinberg's. Vladimir Barsky summarised Chaykovsky's style by focusing on his Russian roots:

The emphatically national character of his aesthetics is not an end in itself, but an inherent quality of a composer who avoids making vociferous declarations and never claims to be original in his world-outlook. For this reason his music carries natural conviction.¹³⁴

Chaykovsky was more experimental than this introduction would suggest, however. He was a Shostakovich pupil, studying under him at the Moscow conservatoire 1946-48. Chaykovsky composed six quartets, which can be seen to represent his style overall, beginning with a Shebalin-like lyrical style, before producing more experimental works, including forays into serialist approaches. He was an excellent pianist, and, together with Weinberg, performed several of Shostakovich's symphonic works in previews to friends and for the Composers' Union.¹³⁵

Shostakovich grouped Weinberg and Chaykovsky together in a 1969 letter to Isaak Glikman: 'If Barshai's orchestra [the Moscow Chamber Orchestra] makes a guest appearance in Leningrad playing Vainberg's Tenth Symphony and Boris Tchaikovsky's Sinfonietta, you really have to hear them'.¹³⁶ After Shostakovich's dismissal in 1948, Chaykovsky briefly studied with Myaskovsky, which perhaps accounts for the more pastoral element of his musical style.¹³⁷ Chaykovsky was one of the few pupils who refused to denounce his teachers during the Zhdanovshchina. His widow recalled seeing less of Weinberg in later years, owing to his health; Olga Rakhalskaya claimed that the

¹³⁴ Vladimir Barsky, 'The music that Boris Chaykovsky composed', in Valeria Tsenova ed., *Ex Oriente: Ten Composers from the former USSR*, trans. Carolyn Dunlop (Berlin: Verlag Ernst Kuhn, 2002) 119.

¹³⁵ See: Glikman, *Story of a Friendship*, 316; also: Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, 222-3.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹³⁷ Tassie, *Nikolay Myaskovsky: The Conscience of Russian Music*, 286.

pair fell out in later years ‘over some totally spurious ideological grounds’ (probably owing to Chaykovsky’s brief membership of a strongly conservative religious group in the early 90s).¹³⁸ The two died within a few weeks of each other in February 1996, Chaykovsky on the 7th, and Weinberg on the 26th.

Alan George remembered Chaykovsky as one of the composers who particularly interested the Fitzwilliam Quartet: ‘Boris Tchaikovsky... whom Shostakovich himself had warmly recommended to us as one of his most gifted pupils and whose Quartet no. 3 of 1967 proved to be a finely constructed work in six movements, beautifully constructed for the medium and truly haunting in its impact’.¹³⁹ Dorothea Redepenning suggested that Chaykovsky’s succession of six movements might have provided inspiration for Shostakovich’s Fifteenth Quartet.¹⁴⁰ However, Chaykovsky himself was sceptical of such a connection, particularly since his Third Quartet does not bear any slow tempo markings.¹⁴¹

Listening through to Chaykovsky’s quartets, there are resemblances to Weinberg’s cycle, but his occasionally conservative style (for instance, with relatively little chromatic colourings or modal alterations) puts him some distance away from Weinberg’s often modernist and experimental works. However, several of Chaykovsky’s quartets are arguably no less well-structured compared to Weinberg’s forms, in particular the Fifth Quartet (1974 – see Ex. 2.19, below).

¹³⁸ Broydo, ‘Yevreyskaya tema v tvorchestve M.S. Vaynberga’, appendix one (interview with Olga Rakhalskaya), ii.

¹³⁹ Alan George, ‘The Soviet and Russian Quartet’, 71.

¹⁴⁰ Dorothea Redepenning, ‘The Shostakovich String Quartets’, booklet essay to CD by the Brodsky Quartet, Teldec 9031-717-2 (1992), quoted in David Fanning, ‘Shostakovich and his Pupils’, in Laurel Fay ed., *Shostakovich and His World* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004) 302, fn. 82.

¹⁴¹ See: Fanning, ‘Shostakovich and his Pupils’, 296. The movements of Chaykovsky’s Third Quartet runs: Moderato, Andante marcato, Andante, Allegro moderato, Allegretto, and Andante.

Ex. 2.19, Chaykovsky, Quartet No. 5, R36.

The single-movement work relies heavily on triplet accompaniments, with chromatically-expanded modality in the melodic figures. Jarring cluster chords interrupt this flow, with an otherwise straightforward motion towards a climax around two thirds of the way through. In the example above, the overall tonal framework can be seen, with an obvious F major ending. Contemporary reviewers noted this approach also, suggesting that the final bars are anticipated across the work: ‘the Fifth Quartet immediately presents its main thematic idea and it works towards the conclusion; an intonation of “leading the way” is punctuated by other... episodes that it initiates’.¹⁴² This chromaticism within a tonal framework directly links Chaykovsky’s style to that of Weinberg. In addition, Chaykovsky’s use of 12-note rows and serial effects is directly parallel to Weinberg’s usage of ‘twelve-noteness’ (See Chapter 5, p. 278).

¹⁴² Andrei Golovin and Alla Grigor’eva, ‘O muzike Boris Chaykovskogo’ [On the music of Boris Tchaikovsky], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1985/10, 12.

Chaykovsky was Weinberg's almost exact contemporary, and received similar accolades, but his music has fallen from favour considerably since his death. In a round-up of a dozen Chaykovsky CDs, Martin Anderson wrote:

Tchaikovsky's music is uneven. At its best it has an apocalyptic power to rank alongside the more epic statements of his most important teacher, Dmitri Shostakovich; at its weakest, it dissolves into mere gesture – more of a danger in his later period, when he had pared down his musical language to the essential.¹⁴³

Weinberg praised Chaykovsky's works, however, writing in *Izvestiya* in 1981 that he is 'our contemporary, boldly seeking his way in music: the master who knows what his own expressive language can achieve, creatively drawing on great heritage'.¹⁴⁴

Weinberg produced a fitting tribute to his friend:

I should like to wish that Boris Alexandrovich's [Chaykovsky's] music should be more widely heard in the twenty-first century than it was in the twentieth. Since such masterpieces, not just in Russian music but in classical music worldwide, are seldom born... [works like] his Theme and Eight Variations, the violin, Cello and Piano concertos, and the *Lyrics on Pushkin*.¹⁴⁵

While there are many parallels between them, Chaykovsky's experimentalism never reached the acerbic and biting heights that Weinberg's most extreme passages attained (in pieces such as his Sonata for Two violins). They are united, however, by a common interest in classical forms and traditional discourse, though with different approaches for adapting these. Despite the admiration and respect of Weinberg and Shostakovich, both Chaykovsky and Levitin have little representation in contemporary programming.¹⁴⁶

By contrast, Weinberg's quartets have received a comparatively generous amount of attention in recent years, both in terms of recordings and in performances.

¹⁴³ Martin Anderson, 'Boris Tchaikovsky, CD reviews', *Tempo*, 62/246, 2008, 81.

¹⁴⁴ Mechislav Vaynberg, 'Radost otkritiya' [The joy of discovery], *Izvestiya*, 2 June 1981, 6.

¹⁴⁵ From an interview with Weinberg, quoted in K. T. Korganov, *Boris Chaykovsky: Lichnost' i tvorchestvo* [Boris Chaykovsky: Personality and creativity] (Moscow: Kompozitor, 2001) 103.

¹⁴⁶ This brief survey of Soviet quartets only takes a handful of composers into account. However, there is a large number of similarly neglected works and composers who display no lesser affinity with Weinberg's music and who are also deserving of more attention. Such contemporaries include Venyamin Basner, Boris Tishchenko, Alexander Raskatov, and many more.

While his cycle has enjoyed renewed interest on the part of performers, critical attention has not always been so engaged. For the remainder of this chapter, I present a survey of the cycle's reception, beginning with contemporaneous criticism and moving to more recent reactions, in order to detail the research contexts of Weinberg's quartets.

2.3. RECEPTION

While contemporaneous reviews of Weinberg's quartets amount to a mere handful, there are still several important sources that will have a bearing on approaches in this thesis. The small amount of reviews partly stems from the relatively low number of performances that Weinberg's quartets received, but can also be read as a reflection on the comparatively meager level of attention paid to chamber music in general (as opposed to the keen interest in symphonic or stage works). The following section presents summaries of nine different texts on Weinberg's quartets, all published during his lifetime, discussed in chronological order of publication. With the backgrounds of Soviet and twentieth-century quartets outlined above, a sense of the general context of critical discourse in which Weinberg was composing will emerge. I begin with contemporaneous Russian sources, before surveying modern-day texts from Russian, German, and English sources.

2.3.1. SOVIET RECEPTION

The first mention of Weinberg's quartets in the press dates from 1944, in the newspaper of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, *Eynigkeit*. This is a report titled 'On the Creativity of Moisey Vaynberg', by David Rabinovich.¹⁴⁷ The source is preserved in draft form only, with numerous pencil corrections on a typewritten manuscript; the four-

¹⁴⁷ David Rabinovich, 'Tvorcheskiy put' Moiseya Vaynberga' [The Creativity of Moisey Vaynberg] *Eynigkeit* (periodical of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee), 24 March, 1944. A manuscript photocopy is stored in the JAFC collection, State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), Fond 8114, Op. 1, File 155, 74-75. My thanks to Bret Werb for providing a copy of this text.

page article documents the 24-year-old composer's career, and outlines some of his forthcoming works. Rabinovich provides a few additional colourations to Weinberg's biography, with several probably inserted to assure readers of Weinberg's socialist credentials. Such additions include the notion that Weinberg had stayed in Warsaw to fight alongside the Polish resistance, and a story that Weinberg watched as an SS troop smashed an old man's head and made an onlooker eat some of the splattered brain matter (war propaganda at its finest).

Tucked amongst the biography and propaganda is a mention of Weinberg's activities in Minsk: 'among his works was a String Quartet that was lauded not only by the professors in Minsk, but also by renowned musicians from Moscow who sat on his State Academic Certification Committee. This took place toward the beginning of June 1941'. This is presumably referring to Weinberg's Second Quartet, written in Minsk in 1939/40 (the Third Quartet had only just been finished, in February 1944). Rabinovich goes on to detail Weinberg's reception in Tashkent, and his first meeting with Solomon Mikhoels. That Rabinovich should mention the Second Quartet as one of Weinberg's most successful works is suggestive of a wider awareness for the piece.

Two years later, the reviewer Aleksandr Ostretsov discussed a radio broadcast that featured Weinberg's Fourth Quartet, praising him as a 'very gifted young composer', but also warning that 'Weinberg's style is not crystallised enough; sometimes in his works there are clearly unresolved influences, hindering his growth as a creative composer'.¹⁴⁸ Such vaguely ominous language is typical of the post-war period, as a crackdown on the comparative freedom of war-time creativity was in the air, eventually culminating in the Zhdanovshchina of 1948. Ostretsov went on to praise the Fourth Quartet in a vaguely condescending tone, asserting that it is 'apparently the

¹⁴⁸ Aleksandr Ostretsov, [credited as 'Os.'] 'Novinki sovetzkoy muziki po radio' [New Soviet music on the radio], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1946/7, 97. The notion of 'unresolved influences' certainly applies to the second movement, which features a very strong influence from Bartok; see p.200.

result of the author's profound experiences'.¹⁴⁹ Ostretsov links the work to its wartime origins, particularly in the toccata-like second movement. In this manner, Ostretsov set a precedent for viewing the Fourth Quartet primarily as a war work in the vein of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony or Prokofiev's Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Piano Sonatas.

The next quartet review in the Soviet press comes only in 1960, from the critic and composer Aleksey Nikolayev.¹⁵⁰ In a *Sovetskaya muzika* feature, Nikolayev presents a summary of Weinberg's music written up to that point – including the Seventh Quartet. On his quartet style, Nikolayev writes:

'At a glance', this music is very similar to the beginning of the Third Quartet by Shostakovich; but precisely because of this it is easier to notice the traits of Weinberg's artistic individuality – especially a light melancholy and a shy 'smiling' in his lyrical statements.¹⁵¹

Nikolayev applauds Weinberg's quartet cycle in general, saying that 'the composer's skill in quartet writing can be detected – it is so perfect that, when listening to the music, one is not aware of the richness of texture, variety of techniques, relationships, voicings, etc'.¹⁵²

Nikolayev went on to provide a foreword for the score of Weinberg's Seventh Quartet, one of the first to be published, in 1961 (in both Russian and English).¹⁵³

Moysey Weinberg productively works in all musical genres... The best works of Weinberg are characterised by clear, expressive thematic material, precision of form, a turning to various national folklore sources, among them Russian, Polish, Moldavian, and Jewish. From this point probably comes the frequent use by the composer of scenes from life and especially dance elements... In this composition, as in the other quartets, Weinberg's high mastery and polyphonic inventiveness are revealed.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Aleksey Nikolayev 'O tvorchestve M. Vaynberga' [On the music of Weinberg], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1960/1, 40-47.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 45.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ M. Weinberg, *Quartet No. 7* (uncredited translator) (Moscow: State Music Publishers, 1961).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 5.

Nikolayev appears to have been particularly focused on the idea of structural balance, drawing attention to the final variations movement of the Seventh Quartet. Following Nikolayev's writings, Weinberg's name began to feature more frequently in the critical press, and with it, mentions of his quartet cycle.

An even more extensive article on Weinberg's music appeared in 1962, also in *Sovetskaya muzika*.¹⁵⁵ Liana Genina provides a summary similar to Nikolaev's effort, though far more extensive. Genina mentions three of Weinberg's quartets: the Fourth, Fifth, and Eighth. She praises the third movement of the Fourth Quartet for its 'courageous "funebre", an epic-tragic "standstill", and the magnificent theme, so sad and proud' – presumably referring to the climactic passage towards the end of the movement.¹⁵⁶ Genina summarises Weinberg's harmony as modal with tritonal colourings, as in the central theme of the Eighth Quartet, with Dorian subdominant particularly prominent (perhaps concerning the shift from A minor to F-sharp major via D major in the central section). She labels the mix of modality with tritones as 'simple and whimsical at the same time', and suggests that Weinberg 'speaks with a twelve-note diatonicism' – again, probably alluding to a highly chromatic language within tonal means.¹⁵⁷ Genina's comments on the quartets are part of a wider coverage of examples in her article; she mentions an extensive array of Weinberg's works. However, with such a profusion of references, she has little room to interpret any of her examples analytically.

The first sustained analytical engagement with any of Weinberg's quartets came with Lev Raaben's 1963 book *Sovetskaya kamerno-instrumental'naya muzika*.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Liana Genina, "'Vsy budet khorosho": (o tvorchestve M. Vaynberga) ['All will be well': (on the music of M. Weinberg)], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1962/8, 21-31.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 25. 'Twelve-note diatonicism' is a widely-used term in Soviet-era criticism, particularly expanded by theorist Yuri Kholopov; see p.273.

¹⁵⁸ See: Lev Raaben, *Sovetskaya kamerno-instrumental'naya muzika* [Soviet chamber-instrumental music] (Leningrad: Muzgiz, 1963).

Raaben was a respected musicologist, producing accomplished histories of Soviet music and ballet (he was also, incidentally, co-supervisor of Laurel Fay's PhD thesis). His 1963 book presents a survey of Soviet chamber music, including a discussion of Weinberg's Fourth Quartet. Raaben summarises Weinberg's music as 'temperamental, lively, no doubt with a romantic worldview – but at the same time, inclined to intellectualism' (a term with faint accusations of formalism).¹⁵⁹ He goes on to focus on the Fourth Quartet as an example of Weinberg's early output:

From the works of these years, I select the Fourth Quartet – the product of conflict, addressing the themes of war, but with some kind of programme. The quartet performs a dramatic twist in the first movement; the second is a Toccata – a picture of the enemy invasion; part 3 – requiem; part 4 – the image of a happy childhood. Weinberg's "turn" to the children's images in the finale departs from the conventional aspect of militaristic oppositions of themes. Instead, the ultimate victory is the finale's childhood. But childhood is always a symbol of life, and thus, it is the general idea of the work as it takes on the hidden meaning of contrasting pictures of misery, destruction and death: a picture of life in a violent flowering of the light and joy of its spring awakening.¹⁶⁰

Poetic interpretation of the Fourth Quartet is representative of a wider Soviet trend to focus on imagery in music, rather than in-depth musical analysis (see Chapter 3, p. 121). In particular, there was a tendency to read themes of war into works composed during the war years, and this can certainly be found in later criticism of the Fourth Quartet.

While Raaben's mention of the Fourth Quartet is the first published commentary on a Weinberg quartet, reviews continued to appear in the Soviet press. In 1967, the newspaper *Sovetskaya kul'tura* published a review of Weinberg's Eleventh Quartet, penned by his Minsk composition tutor Vasily Zolotaryov. Zolotaryov remained active as a critic throughout his long life and several of his reviews of Weinberg's works appeared in print. Zolotaryov described Weinberg's quartets as his 'musical

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 122.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 123.

laboratory'.¹⁶¹ He interpreted the Eleventh Quartet as a work of hidden meaning and suspense:

It has a lot of timbral and compositional discoveries [*nakhodok*]. The second movement of the work is especially rich in them, as if to convey a state of creative anticipation – it is a state of waiting. Premonitions of some new images are retained in the subsequent movements: full of slow and laconic thoughts in the third movement and in the finale. However, this creates a certain reticence. But for the lyrical heroism in the work, one has to listen to the development of the composer's thought.¹⁶²

Zolotaryov praised the playing of the Borodin Quartet, who premiered the work alongside quartets by Brahms and Schubert. While Zolotaryov's review presents general praise, the 1970s saw the rise of an author closely linked to Weinberg's works.

Lyudmila Nikitina has written more extensively on Weinberg's life and music than any other Russian scholar. This includes her 1972 monograph *Simfonii M. Vaynberga*, loosely based on her candidate dissertation (equivalent to PhD), completed at the Moscow Conservatoire.¹⁶³ Nikitina presents a survey of Weinberg's symphonies, up to and including the Tenth. In particular, she focuses on the text-based choral symphonies, but also presents an overview of Weinberg's output and a useful list of works in the appendices. She inherits Raaben's reading of the Fourth Quartet as a work rooted in the Great Patriotic War, as she writes:

Before proceeding to an analysis of the symphonies, a brief look at the Fourth Quartet, one of the first works, chamber or symphonic, to be closely connected to themes of militarism... Ostinati, tight harmonies, and a ringing tone were used by the composer to delineate images of evil forces. This is in the second movement of the Quartet – the scherzo. The image of the enemy invasion is indirectly placed in the opening by Weinberg – here, of course, influenced by Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony, written two years before the Fourth Quartet. But Weinberg managed to rethink the dramatic reception to give it a special flavour. The composer saturates almost the entirety of the second movement with minor seconds and intonations similar to Jewish folk music (e.g., raised IV in a minor key). The result is an eerie slow dance, calling up images of Nazi ghettos.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Vasily Zolotaryov, 'Chertī poiska' [Features of research], in *Sovetskaya kul'tura*, 1967/57, 16 May, 3.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Lyudmila. D. Nikitina, *Simfonii M. Vaynberga* [The Symphonies of M. Vaynberg] (Moscow: Muzika, 1972).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 100-101.

Nikitina's observation of a 'Jewish' intonation in the second movement is particularly revealing, especially when considered alongside the quotation of the same movement in Weinberg's Twenty-First Symphony, subtitled 'Kaddish' – the Jewish prayer of mourning (see Chapter 3, p. 127). Nikitina's reading can be differentiated from Raaben's by grounding her interpretation in actual musical elements, including her identification of specifically Jewish elements in the Quartet's second movement. A similar description of the Fourth Quartet is reproduced in a book chapter, titled 'The Programme Symphonies of Weinberg', where Nikitina links his programmatic symphonies to instrumental works, such as the Fourth Quartet.¹⁶⁵

For instance, Nikitina introduces the Fourth Quartet with the following: 'In the quartet, Weinberg used a rich experience of symphonic-heroism, especially like Beethoven... In the Fourth Quartet, Beethovenian features include a dramatically marked first movement and the third – a funeral march'.¹⁶⁶ Listeners may be hard-pushed to identify the influence of Beethoven in Weinberg's Fourth Quartet beyond the abstract concept of 'heroism', but this abstract idealism is exactly what Nikitina is trying to identify. This is in line with a particularly Soviet branch of analysis, identifying *Intonatsia* in music (see Chapter 3, p. 121).

Nikitina escalates her Beethoven comparisons to further heights in a concert review from 1980, featuring the following introduction to the Fifteenth Quartet:

Of key importance for this quartet's style and imagery are allusions and quotations from Beethoven. As is well known, the use of foreign elements may have different objectives: to impersonate a timeless aesthetic ideal, or to create a psychological atmosphere, or to add character to the overall concept. This is clearly the last effect. Quotes arise in the quartet as a natural consequence of the main thematic material, helping to dramatise, even like an incandescent effect.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Lyudmila Nikitina, 'Programmniye simfonii M. Vaynberga' [Vaynberg's Programme Symphonies], in Aleksey Kandinskiy ed., *Iz istorii russkoy i sovetskoy muziki* [From the history of Russian and Soviet music] (Moscow: Muzika, 1971) 110.

¹⁶⁶ Nikitina, *Simfonii M. Vaynberga*, 100.

¹⁶⁷ Lyudmila Nikitina, 'Na avtorskom kontserte' [At the concert hall], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1980/10, 33.

Perhaps the most obvious allusion to Beethoven in Weinberg's Fifteenth Quartet can be found in the sixth movement, which opens with a flourish strikingly similar to Beethoven's Op. 18, No. 1 (Ex. 2.20).¹⁶⁸

Ex. 2.20, a) Weinberg, Quartet No. 15, sixth movement, opening.

b), Beethoven, Op. 18, No. 1, opening.

It would appear that with this later review, Nikitina is elevating the Soviet trope of identifying imagery and evoking the influence of Beethoven not only to a level of allusion, but also to a simpler level. Nikitina ascribes certain qualities to the Fifteenth Quartet, through the Beethoven comparison. But to describe the Fifteenth Quartet as a 'heroic' work, similar to the Fourth, is misleading. The Fifteenth presents a narrative of struggle and ultimate failure, writ large across its nine movements (even the Fourth Quartet presents something akin to a narrative of defeat, most notably in its large scale tonal movement from major to minor). As such, Nikitina's writings on Weinberg's quartet tend to provide interpretations and analyses that are more confusing than they are helpful.

¹⁶⁸ My thanks go to Marc Danel for this observation; Danel has suggested further quotations in Weinberg's Fifteenth Quartet, but cited the above comparison as the most obvious example. From a conversation with the author, 19 November 2015.

In the same review, Nikitina discusses the Thirteenth Quartet, with an almost refreshing absence of *intonatsia*:

In the Thirteenth Quartet, a warm, trusting tone is coupled with sophisticated lyricism. Such intellectualised lyricism... has from the beginning been one of the most important areas shaping the music of Weinberg, but over the years it has acquired a variety of meaningful features. In the quartet, lyrical dialogue is based on the combination of contrasting stylistic elements: monologues (unduplicated series of colours) and romance.¹⁶⁹

In this manner, Nikitina effectively sums up the contrasts that structure the single movement form in Weinberg's Thirteenth Quartet (see Chapter 4, p. 190). The term 'intellectualised' throws up questions of formalism, which, while potentially apposite for this densely-structured work, did not have the same damning effect in 1980 as it did in the Zhdanovshchina. While her suggested label 'monologues' is an apt description, Nikitina has failed to mention the complex nature of the work's structure, which consists of several linked sections of contrasting moods.¹⁷⁰

In each of the above cases, Soviet reviewers tend to gloss over the surface of musical elements almost entirely, instead opting to discuss characters and moods, and their effect on the listener. This approach follows from Boris Asafiev's writings, which conclude that the most effective piece is one that can psychologically move the listener. Since this approach is so pervasive in Soviet-era reviews, I have explored it more fully in my third chapter, though I have utilised more familiar Western-style approaches (such as Topic theory).

The relative dearth of contemporaneous reviews of Weinberg's quartets is indicative of how infrequently they were played and also of the relatively low importance attached to chamber music performances in general (with the exception of

¹⁶⁹ Nikitina, 'Na avtorskom kontserte', 32.

¹⁷⁰ Many of Nikitina's vagaries are representative of wider Soviet music criticism, where language could be deliberately obfuscating in order to avoid commitment to any one concrete interpretation of a work. This was a hangover from the 1940s, when critics were themselves criticised for heaping too much praise on works that were subsequently judged to be 'formalist' or even 'poor quality' by higher officials; see Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, 256-7.

Shostakovich, whose quartets commanded an international audience). However, the inclusion of Weinberg's quartets in 'survey' articles indicates that authors considered them substantial enough to be necessary for an impression of the developing composer (eleven of the seventeen quartets were published in Weinberg's lifetime). With the selection above, I hope to have given a snapshot into the mind of Weinberg's Soviet-era reviewers – though the opinions of listeners and performers alike will have to be sought elsewhere.

A particularly interesting interview comes from 2004, with Valentin Berlinsky, discussing Weinberg's music on the 85th anniversary of his birth. Berlinsky claimed:

The creative works of Weinberg should take their rightful place in the string quartet repertoire – they are not only great music, but also an encyclopedia of the quartet art form. Literally everything is used there – possibilities of timbre, techniques and technologies of the quartet genre. Although he was not a string player, he felt these tools surprisingly well and understood their very soul.¹⁷¹

The concept of Weinberg's cycle as a 'quartet encyclopedia' is particularly evocative, and is expressive of the eclecticism and variety of the works themselves, the nature of which is explored extensively over the remainder of this thesis.

2.3.2. CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN RECEPTION

The inclusion of Ilya Ovchinnikov's interview with Berlinsky offers an important link to a crucial aspect of the literature on Weinberg's quartets – that of contemporary reception. In particular, the aspect of Russian-language reception will be explored here, including how these works have been perceived in the ex-Soviet states, and how the Western success of Weinberg's music has been received in Russian-speaking communities.

¹⁷¹ Ilya Ovchinnikov, 'Yemu pomeshalo sosedstvo s Shostakovichem', 13.

The phenomenon of Weinberg's Western revival has already been mentioned in Chapter 1 (p. 28). Several Russian commentators have seen this Western revival as strange.¹⁷² With the 2006 premiere of *The Passenger*, Western critics hailed Weinberg as a forgotten master,¹⁷³ but interest within Russia has not increased at the same rate. For contemporary reception of Weinberg, I draw on two academic sources.

The first is a chapter by Inessa Dvuzhil'naya, entitled 'Unheard Scores: The Holocaust in the music of Mieczysław Weinberg', in which she utilises the example of the Sixteenth Quartet as an instance of Holocaust memorialization in Weinberg's music.¹⁷⁴ Dvuzhil'naya is a Belorussian academic, whose work has focused on Weinberg's musical activities in Minsk.¹⁷⁵ The choice of the work is readily apparent, as the quartet is dedicated to the memory of Weinberg's sister, Ester. It was finished in 1981, the year that Ester would have turned sixty. A programme can be discerned across the work, with vague references to imagery of dancing and Jewish songs in particular.

Certain aspects of Dvuzhil'naya's interpretation of the Sixteenth Quartet can appear puzzling. She identifies 'folk-like' aspects in the first movement, which is actually more of an intricate study, with Bartókian contrasting subjects in a vague sonata form. Beyond this, Dvuzhil'naya demonstrates that the *Intonatsia* mode of critical discourse (see p. 121) is very much alive and well, as she identifies images of dancing and of Ester herself in the second movement (which is of a rather more violent and acerbic character than Dvuzhil'naya's reading might suggest). It is easier to hear outrage and indignation in these passages than any respectful memorial. For the final

¹⁷² See, for instance: Levon Hakobian, 'The Reception of Soviet Music in the West: A History of Sympathy and Misunderstandings', *Muzikologija*, 13 (2012), 134.

¹⁷³ See: Sergey Yakovenko, 'Mirovaya prem'era – cherez desyatiletija' [A world premiere – after decades], *Muzikal'naya akademiya*, 2007/1, 60-65.

¹⁷⁴ Inessa Dvuzhil'naya, 'Nezvuchashiye Partituri: Tema Kholokosta v tvorchestve Mechislava Vaynberga' [Unheard scores: The theme of the holocaust in the works of Mieczysław Weinberg] in E. Kuznetsova ed., *Proceedings of the 19th International Annual Conference of Jewish Studies*, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Centre for Jewish Studies, 2012) 105-121.

¹⁷⁵ See: Inessa Dvuzhil'naya, 'Mechislav Vaynberg i Belorusskaya konservatoriya'.

movement, Dvuzhil'naya writes: 'a pointed intonation recurs: "Why?" This question tries to reconstruct the delicate waltz theme, at least for a while'.¹⁷⁶

Her tying of the musical material to the work's dedication certainly makes for an attractive reading, but it glosses over several aspects of the music – particularly the Jewish-inflected melodies in the third and fourth movements. As a contrast, my other main Russian contemporary source is also on the Sixteenth Quartet, in this case, a PhD thesis by Natalia Sokol'vyak, 'The Memorial Quartet in Soviet Music'.¹⁷⁷

Interestingly, Sokol'vyak's thesis rests on the main assertion that Russian and Soviet composers managed to exploit the memorial aspects of the quartet genre chiefly through their choices of tempo, and she seeks to link works by their shared tempi (with a large variety of tempi surveyed – not just slow movements). While this may seem unconventional, it is perhaps a reaction to *intonatsia*-based readings, firmly attempting to relate to a 'concrete' aspect of the music. For instance, Sokol'vyak focuses on the slow section of the final movement, headed *Adagio*. Confusingly, Sokol'vyak avoids much discussion of the music, and instead chooses to discuss the tempi taken by the Quatuor Danel in their CPO recording. With this stated, Sokol'vyak then compares this speed to passages with the same tempo marking in other Russian and Soviet quartets, including Taneyev's Second, and Shostakovich's Fifteenth.

Where this leaves Sokol'vyak's actual viewpoint on Weinberg's Sixteenth Quartet is more puzzling, since she concludes that tempo markings link many different memorial quartets together, 'throughout the twentieth century'.¹⁷⁸ As such, Sokol'vyak's study does not unearth a great deal about Weinberg's Sixteenth Quartet at all. Such 'feature-spotting' of expressive tempi arguably reveals just as little as *Intonatsia*, in terms of musical content.

¹⁷⁶ Dvuzhil'naya, 'Nezvuchashiye Partituri', 112.

¹⁷⁷ Nataliya Leonidovna Sokol'vyak, 'Memorial'nyy kvartet v Russkoy muzike' [The memorial quartet in Russian music], unpublished dissertation, Magnitogorsk Conservatoire, 2014.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

Sokol'vyak's thesis and Dvuzhil'naya's article can be seen as representative of contemporary Russian scholarship on Weinberg's music; there are a handful of other sources, but they are not analytical in nature. However, there have been several sources published in Western countries recently, and these are outlined below.

2.3.3. WESTERN SOURCES

For contemporary sources, an excellent starting point is the collection of essays presented in an issue of *Osteuropa* magazine, entitled *Die Macht der Musik*.¹⁷⁹ The topics covered include a brief biography, surveys of particular works, historical issues, and reception history.¹⁸⁰ Amongst the various articles, there are useful contributions on Weinberg's Holocaust music, on his friendship with Shostakovich, and also a chapter by Friedrich Geiger on Weinberg's String Quartets, entitled 'Ideology and Autonomy: Mieczysław Weinberg's String Quartets'.¹⁸¹

Geiger's chapter is useful to an extent, as it provides a lucid introduction for the status of the quartet genre in the Soviet Union. He goes on to explain the doctrine of Socialist Realism, and explores several of Weinberg's quartets through this guise (he draws mainly from the Sixth and Fifteenth Quartets in his examples). In particular, Geiger attempts to weigh up the apparent conflicts between the explicit demands of Socialist Realism on the one hand, and the problematic nature of instrumental chamber music that is primarily 'abstract' on the other.

Geiger's chapter contains not only sweeping generalisations, but also occasional analytical errors. For instance, he draws attention to Weinberg's Twelfth Quartet, whose

¹⁷⁹ Manfred Sapper and Volker Weichsel (eds.), *Die Macht der Musik – Mieczysław Weinberg: Eine Chronik in Tönen, Osteuropa*, 60/7 (July 2010).

¹⁸⁰ Martin Anderson has suggested that the volume should be translated into English and published as *Weinberg Studies*. See: Martin Anderson, 'Bregenz: Festival "In der Fremde" – music of Mieczysław Weinberg', in *Tempo*, 65/255, 2011, 56.

¹⁸¹ Friedrich Geiger, 'Ideologie und Autonomie: Mieczysław Weinbergs Streichquartette' in *Die Macht der Musik*, 93-110.

opening recalls that of Bartók's Third Quartet (see p. 168). Geiger asserts that this is the first instance of dodecaphonic writing in Weinberg's output. However, this is incorrect for several reasons: Weinberg had used serial passages in several works that predate the Twelfth Quartet, and, more crucially, because the Twelfth Quartet does not actually employ dodecaphony. Simple errors such as this render Geiger's article slightly suspect. He provides a short chapter that can serve as a succinct introduction to Weinberg's quartets, but which actually generalises many important points across the cycle. For this reason, Geiger's presence in this study is relatively minimal, though his generalisations are included here as worthwhile starting points for wider discussion.

Another German-language article appeared recently in *Ensemble* magazine, a publication dedicated for chamber music performers. Manuel Rösler provided a short 'contemporary focus' piece on Weinberg's Fourteenth and Fifteenth Quartets.¹⁸² This concise article provides more of a review than an analysis, but Rösler's comments are still fruitful. More than half the article is concerned with narrating Weinberg's biography, and when it comes to the 'bulk' of the material, only two paragraphs are dedicated to the quartets themselves. Rösler details the musical 'stories' encountered in the works, providing a pictorial summary rather than any musically detailed overview. For instance, he describes the Fifteenth Quartet's nine movements as 'a series of aphoristic thoughts and images that seem to follow a secret programme', though with no explanation of how this occurs, or any suggestions of what this programme might be. He identifies elements of 'gypsy dances' in the Fourteenth Quartet, material that has gone unnoticed by all other commentators. As such, Rösler's article provides less of an analytical standpoint, but rather a vague critical viewpoint of these two quartets. With Rösler and Geiger's studies, we see the need for a more thorough study of Weinberg's quartets.

¹⁸² Manuel Rösler, 'Neue Werke Fokus: Mieczysław Weinberg, Streichquartette Nr. 14, Op. 122, und Nr. 15, Op. 124', *Ensemble*, 2012/3, 62-3.

2.4. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter has been to set Weinberg's quartets in context. However, owing to his relative obscurity and the paucity of sources, numerous wider contexts have had to have been introduced. Despite conceptions that the string quartet was a 'connoisseur's genre', the quartet flourished in the Soviet Union, partly due to its potential for lyricism and intimacy in the midst of a glut of *narodnost*-focused symphonic works (see p. 121). I have suggested that Weinberg drew from a wide range of influences, including Shostakovich and Bartók, and less obvious models from the likes of Berg and Britten.

The background of Weinberg's Soviet contemporaries offers useful insights, including some revealing trends such as Shebalin's early style, that mirrors several of Weinberg's earliest works, or Levitin's deployment of extended playing techniques, and his reserving them for a work's conclusion, much like Weinberg's practice. Such insights show not just wider influences, but move us closer to the immediate musical surroundings that Weinberg would have been familiar with. In the case of Shostakovich, Myaskovsky, and Shebalin, these were the quartets that were held aloft as exemplary of the genre and as success stories for composers to emulate. This makes them hugely important for an understanding of the environment surrounding the composition of string quartets in the Soviet Union from the 1940s onwards. However, what has been offered here is only a small sample of the rich context of the Soviet quartet; further study is certainly required.

The picture of influence that has emerged serves to confirm Weinberg's style as multi-faceted, with an unabashed eclecticism of sources and heritages. However, when these influences are identified and explored more fully, we are left with a substantial amount of stylistic material that is entirely Weinberg's own, such as a focus on lyricism as opposed to bombast, combined with a host of folk materials, including Jewish and

Moldovan sources. By exploring Weinberg's surroundings more fully, it becomes easier to separate Weinberg's style from that of those who worked alongside him and his individuality emerges more strongly than ever.

The other context that has been explored here has been the research background of Weinberg's quartets themselves, including reception history. These sources serve as an important foundation for the analytical chapters that follow, functioning as points to react to (whether that be to substantiate or refute). The remainder of this thesis builds a picture of Weinberg's quartet cycle through aspects of musical language. Since none of these sources makes note of structural functions of the music, or expressive features, for that matter, I turn to this subject in my next chapter: an overview of narrative and meaning in Weinberg's quartets.

3. NARRATIVE: TOPIC AND DISCOURSE

Weinberg's music often implies a sense of narrative across whole works, though the nature of such narratives can be elusive. Lyudmila Nikitina writes of the potency for multiple readings in Weinberg's music: 'his music has an absolute – even abstract – quality, with similar themes able to assume varied semantic hues in given environments'.¹⁸³ This chapter will unpack and develop Nikitina's observation. Aspects of Weinberg's style are examined, identifying features that contribute to a sense of narrative – an emotion expressed, or a journey undertaken across a work. Weinberg's quartets are investigated through the bodies of theory that have come to be known as 'musical narrativity', or 'musical meaning', with special reference to Lawrence Kramer and Kofi Agawu. These ideas are complemented with wider narrative theories, including concepts from Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan, taking Sarah Reichardt's study on Shostakovich quartets as a starting point.

Beginning with topic, Weinberg's musical devices are examined to see how they evoke moods and ideas, some of them unique to his style. Moving on to the larger scale of discourse, several of Weinberg's quartets are appraised through the prism of Reichardt's work, followed by an expansion of her ideas to encompass Weinberg's music. In particular, Reichardt's notion of the 'crisis of the end' will be explored, from

¹⁸³ Lyudmilla Dmitriyevna Nikitina, 'Weinberg, Moisey Samuilovich' *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29094> [accessed 03/03/15].

which basis a related phenomenon can be posited: the ‘crisis of the beginning’ (see p. 163).

Musical narratives are notoriously ambiguous, and problematic to examine in detail. In order to explicate more fully, several different theories are used to interpret examples from Weinberg’s quartet cycle. Some of these theories have been chosen for their relative familiarity, in order quickly to explain a concept, and others for their suitability to the multiple layers of meaning in this repertoire, which will require some initial clarification. Through their manipulation of implicit meanings, musical narratives lend themselves to psychoanalytic interpretation, and Weinberg’s complex emotional and psychological journeys are particularly suited to this approach. This is reinforced by his choice of texts in his opera settings¹⁸⁴ which, through the characters’ deep soul-searching, touch on fundamental issues of good and evil, justice and injustice, ideals and ambition. In using such texts for his operas, Weinberg also shows his strong beliefs in pacifism and the innate goodness of mankind. With these lofty ideals in mind, the implicit narratives in his String Quartets will be examined through their constitutive topics and discourses.

Many critics have sought to elucidate musical meaning with recourse to literary allusions. For instance, Leonard Meyer, in *Emotion and Music*, makes the point that while music cannot refer specifically in the same way as literature, the emotions that it does communicate can often best be compared to their literary counterpoints.¹⁸⁵ This may be contrasted to Jean-Jacques Nattiez’s approach in *Semiotics of Music*, writing how meaning is rooted in the smallest elements of music, which may give the illusion of narrative but not explicitly contain one.¹⁸⁶ For the purposes of this study, Meyer’s

¹⁸⁴ For instance, those on Gogol’s *The Portrait* and Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot*.

¹⁸⁵ Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (University of Chicago Press, 1956) 5.

¹⁸⁶ Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music* (Princeton University Press, 1990) 8.

approach is preferred, since he recognizes the attractions of combining narrative and analytical approaches, while Nattiez maintains his distance from ascribing meaning in music.¹⁸⁷

A semiological study more directly applicable to Weinberg may be found in Esti Sheinberg's, *Parody, Irony, Humor, and the Grotesque in the music of Shostakovich*, which makes comparisons to works of classical literature from both the Western and Russian traditions.¹⁸⁸ However, a cautionary note is raised by Richard Taruskin, who has criticised Sheinberg's approach on the grounds of the weak comparisons it draws:

Sheinberg's literary analogies can be naively literalistic. She seems to imply that Shostakovich learned his rhetorical strategies from the Russian Formalists and Bakhtin... At one point she even proposes that Shostakovich's topical allusiveness 'might be the result of an attempt to apply Bakhtin's ideas about literary plurivocality to music'. But it is critics, in this case Sheinberg, who 'apply' such things, not composers.¹⁸⁹

Taruskin's criticism of scholars who equate their interpretations with the composer's intentions warns against approaches that ascribe concrete narrative readings to music. In this chapter, literary comparisons parallel Leonard Meyer's usage, included in order to explain complex emotions and narratives in music. This is a purely heuristic consideration: an attempt to explain succinctly a very particular emotion or situation in Weinberg's music, trusting the reader's knowledge of literature to validate the comparison.

Lawrence Kramer has suggested that music's meaning lies in its power not to depict events, but to illustrate personal experience from the viewpoint of the subject:

One of the keystones of modern experience was the discovery that to find oneself entertained is to entertain a self, as one entertains a thought or, even better, a guest. At the same time, of course, much of the experience that modernity forced people to 'entertain' was profoundly ugly.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ For a summary of Nattiez's thought, see: Jean-Jacques Nattiez, 'Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?' in *The Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 1990/2, 240-57.

¹⁸⁸ Esti Sheinberg, *Parody, Irony, Humor, and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

¹⁸⁹ Richard Taruskin, *On Russian Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) 309-10.

¹⁹⁰ Lawrence Kramer, *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (University of California Press, 2001) 9.

This resonates with wider psychoanalytic concepts, as Kramer writes:

Musical affect, expression and association become pure forms of self-appreciation... identity seeks to become substance in music, even though music, being more event than substance, continually eludes this desire. This subjective nucleus, however, is attended by the same pressure that, as thinkers from Hegel to Bakhtin to Lacan have insisted, impels all subjectivity: the subject is meaningless in itself alone and necessarily seeks to enunciate itself in relation to others. It seeks connection, interrelationship, in order to be.¹⁹¹

Kramer's suggestion that absolute music can present a Lacanian-style subject will prove a key idea for this chapter. In this sense, the musical subject can only define itself in relation to the Other outside of itself. Music that presents contrasting materials can readily be interpreted as presenting numerous subjects and Others, leaving the listener to empathise with an agent's experiences and viewpoints. Before examining some of Weinberg's topics in detail, an overview of some of the general characteristics of his music is necessary, beginning with devices that are so frequent across his works that they can be considered his musical 'fingerprints'.

3.1. FINGERPRINTS

Seeking to identify 'fingerprints' that characterise Weinberg's musical style can be problematic. One motif that can be readily recognised, however, is a frequently recurring aspect of Weinberg's melodies. Indeed, it is so embedded in his works that it is practically part of his compositional DNA. This is a motif of alternating fourths, beginning from the lower interval. Here is an example from the second movement of the Sixteenth Quartet (see Ex. 3.1, below):

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 15.

Ex. 3.1, Quartet No. 16, second movement, opening.

The Sixteenth Quartet is the quartet most saturated with Weinberg's alternating fourths, a key aspect of his late musical style. This motif makes up the entire first theme of this movement, and it is referred to in the surrounding movements also. A similar permeation of alternating fourths can be found in the fifth movement of the Fifteenth Quartet (Ex. 3.2):

Ex. 3.2, Quartet No. 15, fifth movement, ⁷R27.

Other examples include the Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Seventeenth Quartets. The expressive function of these alternating fourths is a matter for speculation. They can be read as points of anchorage, moments of respite or contemplation, as the repeated iteration of the first tone provides a sense of stillness (in terms of harmonic movement, at least). For Western ears, they may admittedly bear the unfortunate association with Cowboy films, thanks to Ennio Morricone's score for *The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly* (1966), as ubiquitous to filmgoers as John Williams's alternating semitones for *Jaws*.

Of course, Weinberg did not reach this 'fingerprint' signature of alternating 4ths in isolation, as there is a strong practice of similar usages, including the following passage from Shostakovich's Eleventh Quartet (Ex. 3.3):

Ex. 3.3, Shostakovich, Quartet No. 11, third movement, opening.

19 Adagio $\text{♩} = 80$

Other instances of the ‘signature’ in Shostakovich’s music include the ‘Elmira’ theme in the third movement of the Tenth Symphony, and the opening theme of the Fourth Symphony’s second movement, amongst many others. On a very simple level, the alternating fourths are frequently tonally open-ended. Weinberg’s passages of alternating fourths usually couch the motif within the tonality of the first note; however, when its presentation is in solo lines (such as in the Sixteenth Quartet), its tonal function is deliberately blurred. Their expressive significance becomes a kind of calling card in Weinberg’s later works (the earliest appearance of the signature is in the Op. 13 *Jewish Songs*, in the first song and its reprise in the last; see Ex. 3.38, p. 174, featuring the last song) as melodically ubiquitous as Shostakovich’s anapest signature is in rhythmic terms.¹⁹² The prevalence of alternating fourths in Weinberg’s works suggest an artistic importance larger than a mere melodic predilection, however.

Weinberg’s quartets feature another important musical fingerprint that occurs principally in the later works. While the alternating fourths may function as a melodic signature, there is another motif that acts as a rhythmic trademark also: the use of quintuplets. The rhythmic language of Weinberg’s first few quartets is rather conservative; they are built of minims, crotchets, semiquavers, with only infrequent metre changes. These observations cover the first six quartets, though there are notable

¹⁹² See: Patrick McCreeless, ‘Dmitri Shostakovich: The String Quartets’, in Jones, *Intimate Voices*, (Vol. 2) 14.

exceptions to the rule, an immediate one being the First Quartet, whose opening is more fluid, owing to syncopated accompaniments and a lethargically looping melody line (see appendix for more on the First Quartet, p. 318). The other exception occurs towards the end of the Sixth Quartet, which will be explored below.

The later quartets are dominated by a new interest in rhythmic variety, which can be neatly encapsulated in one unit, starting from the Twelfth Quartet: the quintuplet. From the mid-1960s, quintuplets begin to take prominence in Weinberg's music, including in stage works, orchestral, and chamber music. The origins and influences of this rhythmic 'signature' are traced below, as well as the most prominent usage in the later quartets. Arguably the most important instance of quintuplets in any of his works is in the revised version of the First Quartet (see below), suggesting that the quintuplet itself became a significant part of Weinberg's musical language.

The very first occurrence of quintuplets in the quartet cycle is in the fourth movement of the Sixth Quartet, continuing as a motif into the fifth movement. In the fourth movement, it first comes as a variation on a quasi-passacaglia theme (Ex. 3.4a). In the fifth movement, it becomes yet more significant, as the lead-in motif for a defiant pizz. motion across the voices (see Ex. 3.4b, below).

Ex. 3.4 a) Quartet No. 6, fourth movement, ⁴R56, and b) fifth movement, ¹R73.

a)

b)

Quintuplets appear after the main ‘break’ in the large-scale structure of the Sixth Quartet, following the third movement, which presents a series of disjointed sections with suggestions of a narrative that is outside of the work’s wider discourse, or ‘extra-territorial’ (see p. 175). Following this contemplative movement, the quintuplets then provide a new impetus for the music to rally itself, first accruing energy in the fourth movement, and then reaching a peak in the fifth (finally leading to a finale that attempts to move beyond the previous material). The appearance of quintuplets in the Sixth Quartet is an interesting aspect of rhythm in the piece, but it can best be read as prescient of Weinberg’s later, more generative usage of the rhythmic unit.

Twenty years later, Weinberg had begun using quintuplets as major thematic devices in his large-scale works. For instance, *The Passenger* (1967-8) opens with a striking quintuplet theme played on timpani with brass interjections (Ex. 3.5a):

Ex. 3.5 a), *The Passenger*, opening.

Allegro Moderato ♩ = 108

f marcato
Brass.
Timp.
① *sempre*
②
Batt.

This recurs later in the opera, serving as a kind of ‘fate’ leitmotif.¹⁹³ An extremely dense texture of quintuplets can be found in the Twelfth Symphony, eight years after *The Passenger* (Ex. 3.5b).

Ex. 3.5 b), Symphony No. 12, first movement, R4³.

(Moderato ♩ = 80)

Trumpets
Strings and Brass
tutti ff (strings pizz.)

¹⁹³ See: Ian Pay, ‘Mieczysław Weinberg’s *The Passenger*: Silent No More’, unpublished MMus dissertation, University of Manchester, 2011, 18-19.

The above example represents one of the most rhythmically dense passages in all of Weinberg's music. The rest of the movement serves as a 'composing-out' of this clash of rhythmic groups. Influences for Weinberg's interest in quintuplets can be speculated upon. Closest to *The Passenger* leitmotif is the following extract from the second movement of Britten's *War Requiem*, which features quintuplets as a vital rhythmic element (Ex. 3.6).

Ex. 3.6, Britten, *War Requiem*, second movement, R49.

49 Very broad (molto largamente)

Baritone solo

f Be slowly lifted up, thou long black

Timp.

sf

Strings, horn, bassoon, and clar.

English Horn

Shostakovich's deep affection for the *War Requiem* (and Weinberg's subsequent familiarity with the work) has already been mentioned in the previous chapter (p. 58).

The following are a few examples of quintuplets in Shostakovich's music (though none of them exploit quintuplets to the same extent as Weinberg).

Ex. 3.7, a), Shostakovich, Quartet No. 3, second movement, opening

29 Moderato con moto ♩ = 138

VI. 1

f

Vla.

Ex. 3.7 b) Shostakovich, Symphony No. 8, fourth movement, R118.

Quintuplets can be found in Weinberg's quartets from the Twelfth onwards. In the Twelfth Quartet (1969), quintuplets take high prominence: the second theme of the first movement consists largely of alternating and contrasting sextuplet and quintuplet 'cells'. This contrasts with the first subject, in which the parts enter (and subsequently changes notes) on alternating crotchet beats (see Ex. 3.30, p. 168).

After a break of seven years, the Thirteenth Quartet continues the interest in quintuplets, which here become one of the thematic aspects of the entire work. Quintuplets serve as a flourish after a slow introduction (Ex. 3.8), and for the rest of this first section, the quintuplet motif acts as a 'stretto' version of the opening theme, itself presented as material for development.

Ex. 3.8, Quartet No. 13, opening.

The quintuplet's use as a theme is reinforced with the final section, where it returns in similar fashion to the opening, though augmented to quaver rhythms (see Ex. 3.9). With the work's coda, it returns in its original semiquaver guise.

Ex. 3.9, Quartet No. 13, R13.

13 Meno mosso

VI. 1
Vla.
Vc.
VI. 2

ff

The work most saturated with quintuplets is the Fifteenth Quartet, where they occupy a position remarkably similar to that in the Sixth Quartet; that is, they occur only after a break in style between different movements and larger sections of the work. They briefly appear in the first movement, as if to ‘plant the seed’ for later in the piece. It is in the fourth movement that the quintuplet takes centre stage, in a kind of macabre waltz. In this movement, rhythmic cells challenge each other, such as quaver quintuplets immediately followed by semiquaver quintuplets (Ex. 3.10).

Ex. 3.10, Quartet No. 15, fourth movement, opening.

♩ = 112

VI. 1
VI. 2
Vla.
Vc.

f

A clear expressive significance suggests itself, that the quintuplets become an important way to represent a dramatic break in large-scale material. Consequently, they act as a vital means to provide contrasting themes and sections, and feed into the wider sense of

‘freefloating’ that is key for Weinberg’s harmonies and form in his later style (see p. 245).

Quintuplets also feature in the Fourteenth and Sixteenth Quartets, though less prominently. One final usage reinforces the interpretation that they were a crucial part of Weinberg’s musical palette: in the revised version of the First Quartet. In the original, the texture is dense with near-constant weavings of syncopation. In the revised version, Weinberg simplified many of these textures but made the remaining rhythms themselves more complex (usually with triplets replacing straight quavers in accompaniments). In one key passage, Weinberg varies a previous transition by changing the whole bar to crotchet quintuplets (see Ex. 3.11, below).

Ex. 3.11, Quartet No. 1, a), original version, bb. 194-6 and b) revised version, ²R15.

a)

b)

This not only provides a variation on a previous passage, but also firmly places the stamp of his later style upon the revised First Quartet.¹⁹⁴ A similar bar can be found in

¹⁹⁴ For more on the First Quartet, and its subsequent revision, see appendix to this thesis, p. 318.

the second movement of the Twelfth Quartet, with crotchet quintuplets used as a variation in a melody (Ex. 3.12).

Ex. 3.12, Quartet No. 12, second movement, ³R11.

While this is a short example, it suggests that the quintuplet became a vital part of Weinberg’s musical language, a fleeting application in a passage of variation that speaks volumes about the importance of the motif itself as one of his key musical ‘fingerprints’. Alongside the alternating fourths, the use of quintuplets became a recognisable calling card of Weinberg’s musical style. These remain important features of the fabric of his music, though there are many aspects of his expressive style that require a more sophisticated approach. Of particular use here is the body of scholarship known as Topic theory.

3.2. TOPIC

Later chapters in this thesis will focus primarily on ‘purely’ musical properties. In contrast, this section is concerned with interpreting extra-musical elements to be found in Weinberg’s quartets. For clear and concise monikers, I will borrow terminology from Kofi Agawu’s *Playing with Signs*.¹⁹⁵ Agawu provides two helpful terms: ‘introversive semiosis’ and ‘extroversive semiosis’, that is, signs that refer to associative

¹⁹⁵ Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991).

relationships within and outside a musical text, respectively. In defining these labels, Agawu employs topic theory for extroversive semiosis and Schenkerian analysis for introversive. Agawu writes:

Topics are musical signs. They consist of a signifier (a certain disposition of musical dimensions) and a signified (a conventional stylistic unit, often but not always referential in quality) ... The identity of a topic is least dependent on the name of that topic. What matters, following the structuralist idea of relationality, is the difference between various topics... This means, following Barthes, that topics may be read or heard as at least second-order semiotic systems, since they take a musical sign (or set of musical signs), drain it of signification, and then refill it with meaning (i.e. such as a 'fanfare' taking on new significance when combined with a 'Turkish march').¹⁹⁶

He goes on to define introversive:

There is another class consisting of what we might call "pure" signs, signs that provide important clues to musical organization through conventional use, but not necessarily by referential or extramusical association... The most powerful framework for analyzing pure signs is one that gives pride of place to the dynamic quality of Classic music, to the sense of directed motion. Schenker's theory conveys this quality especially lucidly.¹⁹⁷

For this chapter, 'topic' refers to Agawu's conception of extroversive signs in a musical work; it follows that multiple topics in a work combine to create content that is ripe for narrative interpretation. Accordingly, discourse is the wider structural level at which topics combine to create long-standing narratives.

The attraction to 'extroversive' approaches for Weinberg analysis stems from the fact that details of his biography are far outside common knowledge in musicology (when compared to, for example, Beethoven's biography). As such, analysis that makes reference to contexts and backgrounds, as well as providing detailed insight, can prove especially effective when writing about Weinberg. Topics in Weinberg's quartets can be understood as several different musical elements that create a semblance of mood or feeling. In Soviet musicology, there is a long history of combining similar narrative imagery with Socialist-Realist ideals in order to explore musical meaning; this includes

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 49.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 51.

a theory and subsequent practice that revolved around identification of what Western readers may recognise as ‘topics’.

3.2.1. INTONATSIA

Alongside Topic theory, a complementary theory from Russian musicology needs to be properly introduced and explained. This is the concept of *Intonatsia*, first introduced by Boleslav Yavorsky (1877-1942), and further developed by Boris Asafiev (1884-1949). In a manner that might seem unusual to readers used to Western traditions of music analysis, *Intonatsia* became the predominant means for analysing music and its meaning(s). In addition to neutral scholarly value, it was developed as a means of interpreting music in politically ‘acceptable’ ways, enabling analysts to corroborate a piece’s Socialist-Realist credentials. Marina Frolova-Walker went so far as to claim that ‘the system of topics [i.e. – *Intonatsia* – D.E.] effectively saved instrumental music from marginalization or even extinction in Stalin’s Soviet Union’.¹⁹⁸ In a more general sense, the theory expanded to incorporate social meanings and music history to create a network of interconnections between musical tropes, imagery, social functions, and a work’s creative contexts.

In introducing Asafiev’s theory, Gordon McQuere states that the concept of *Intonatsia* is complicated to explain, partly because Asafiev does not produce a concise definition himself.¹⁹⁹ His works are replete with ‘neologisms’, which are usually defined only in their application to musical examples, rather than stating their meaning in the general sense.²⁰⁰ The following is a broad definition of the concept and its ideas:

¹⁹⁸ Marina Frolova-Walker, “Music is Obscure”: textless Soviet works and their phantom programmes’, in *Representation in Western Music*, Joshua S. Walden ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 47.

¹⁹⁹ Gordon D. McQuere, ‘Boris Asafiev and “Musical Form as a Process”’, in *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*, Gordon D. McQuere ed., (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2009) 218.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 223-4.

The term *Intonatsia* was first used by Boleslav Yavorsky in 1908, as part of work on the structure of musical speech that would go on to form the foundation of his theory of ‘modal rhythm’.²⁰¹ Yavorsky taught Asafiev, and his pupil seized upon the idea and developed it throughout his own body of work.²⁰² Asafiev was a prolific author and composer, leaving a considerable amount of published works, including music theory, music criticism, and his own compositions.

In Asafiev’s usage, *Intonatsia* does not refer exclusively to musical notes; nor does it refer in any way to aspects of pitch production and control (as the term is used regarding string players). Instead, it is easier to compare it with the verb ‘intoning’, with its suggestion of evocation or illustration. What is ‘intoned’ is various musical images, which are the results of thousands of years of evolution in musical thinking. For instance, the formulation of scales and rhythms was, according to Asafiev, originally according to a social function or requirement. However, in the modern era, collective memory has forgotten these functions, and scales and rhythms are regarded instead as ‘building blocks’ of music. In a more general manner, genres such as cradle songs or military marches evolved according to their function, but this process of evolution is now taken for granted, their meaning ‘fixed’. Different scales, melodies, rhythms, keys, and forms can all ‘intone’ a wide array of different extra-musical concepts (all of them now separated from their long-forgotten social functions). For Asafiev, the combination of these ideas combined to create a wider musical image across a work.

Intonatsia is a theory for simultaneously understanding not only musical meaning, but also the history of musical development and the role of music in society.

²⁰¹ See: Boleslav Yavorsky, *Stroenie muzikalnoy rechi: Materiali i zametki* [The Structure of Musical Speech: Notes and materials] (Moscow, 1908) available online at: <http://www.kholopov.ru/arc/yavor1908.pdf> [accessed 17/02/16]; see also: Gordon D. McQuere, ‘The Theories of Boleslav Yavorsky’, in *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*, 110.

²⁰² The best-known example being: Boris Asafiev, *Muzikal'naya forma kak protsess* [Musical form as process] (Leningrad: Muzgiz, 1963) – originally published in 1930. For a full English translation, see: James Robert Tull, ‘B. V. Asaf'ev's “Musical Form as a Process”: Translation and commentary’, unpublished PhD thesis in three vols., Ohio State University, 1977.

The wide-reaching applications of the theory for interpreting music were seized upon by Soviet musicologists; many of the sources surveyed in the previous chapter made extensive use of Asafiev's terminology. While the theory might seem frustratingly arbitrary to Western analytical audiences (even the most ardent fans of 'topic' theory apply it sparingly), *Intonatsia* helped to define a mode of discourse for Soviet musical commentary.²⁰³ Here was a theory for understanding music's significance for society that was widely thought to be truly 'scientific' in its scope (Asafiev was admitted to the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1943, the first musicologist to be honoured as such; he was also the only musicologist to be awarded a Stalin Prize²⁰⁴).

The theory is built on social constructions of music over time, tapping into long-held notions of *narodnost*, the 'people' as a term more abstract than just the general public. The ability to relate musical meaning to the traditions of the 'people' presented a quasi-scientific means of justifying music in terms of its accessibility, an essential trait of a successful Socialist-Realist work. In this manner, an analyst well versed in the concept of *Intonatsia* could justify any suspect work via recourse to the 'people's' musical imagery. This arguably contributed to the theory's success and widespread application.

The idea of timeless *narodnost* has roots in the romantic and nationalistic schools of the nineteenth century.²⁰⁵ Russian readers would be familiar with the wider concept from the works of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, especially. *Narodnost* evolved to become a central tenet of early Bolshevik thinking, rearranging the idea via Marxist philosophy to explain an inbuilt class consciousness that ultimately justified the October revolution. In this way, ideas of collective images and shared thoughts were entirely

²⁰³ See: Malcolm H. Brown, 'The Soviet concepts of "Intonazia" and "Musical Imagery"', in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 60, (1974) 567.

²⁰⁴ Frolova-Walker, *Stalin's Music Prize*, 314.

²⁰⁵ For a study of the term, see: Alexey Miller, 'Natsiia, Narod, Narodnost' in Russia in the 19th Century: Some Introductory Remarks to the History of Concepts', in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Bd. 56, H. 3 (2008) 379-390.

familiar to Russian audiences (whereas, to Western readers, the concept might seem distinctly Jungian, thus placing it in the murky territory of ‘esoteric’ psychology). Tying *Intonatsia* into *narodnost* ensured that the underlying principle could be understood by a lay audience. Questioning concepts of *narodnost* was practically unthinkable; not only was it a central tenet of Russian nationalist thinking, it was also constantly referred to by representatives of the government. As such, ideas including music’s ‘social function’ and historical evolution were readily accepted by Soviet audiences, and the introduction of musical terminology ratified the theory with its ‘scientific’ element.

Asafiev’s idea to relate musical meaning to ideas of *narodnost* was a stroke of brilliance, supplying an analytical theory whose underlying premise relied upon the foundations of Soviet philosophy. With the publication of his two books, *Musical Form as Process* and its later counterpart *Intonatsia*, the theory soon gained popularity and rose to become the most widely applied theory of musical analysis in the Soviet Union (Asafiev was widely taught and respected long after his death – a reputation only supplanted by that of Yuri Kholopov since the 1960s). *Intonatsia*’s continued application in some contemporary sources proves its relevance to musical commentators long after Asafiev’s death, and even after the end of the USSR.

Applications of Asafiev’s theories are pervasive. In fact, the concept of *Intonatsia* is so commonplace in Soviet (and Russian) analysis, that scholars rarely acknowledge Asafiev by name (see Myaskovsky’s use of the term in the previous chapter, p. 66). Students would have been familiar with Asafiev’s works, but the term *Intonatsia* entered the shared vocabulary of music criticism, employed by critics, composers and scholars alike.

The reasons behind the theory’s popularity are debatable; Soviet authors may have been convinced by the appeal to *narodnost* just as much as their audiences. There is, however, a more negative aspect, in that the worst examples of an *Intonatsia*-type

analysis do not require reference to the music itself; they often consist of just a smattering of musical images more or less arbitrarily identified and then related to their social origins and functions. For this reason, Asafiev-style analyses have often left Western analysts baffled, not least in terms of how readily Russian analysts will accept their conclusions. Yet, as Brown has suggested, the theory's significance in Russian circles cannot be underestimated, and, as such, closer understanding and inspection of it may yield interesting perspectives.²⁰⁶

While Asafiev worked hard to ground his theory in music history and social practice, the adoption of it usually resulted in very generalised criticism, i.e. 'the work's intonations sum up images of war' etc. In this sense, his theories are frequently referenced in scholarly work, but they are rarely matched with the kind of score-based analysis that Asafiev intended. Brown uses Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony as a case study for the theory, identifying military marches, patriotic fanfares, and the creeping 'invasion' theme as 'intoning' imagery of a safe homeland threatened by invasion.²⁰⁷ But Brown's exposition conceals a wider attitude; that the application of *Intonatsia* is suited to only the most dramatic music, which is, in itself, a crude assumption (it also does not reflect wider practice in Soviet musicology).²⁰⁸

For instance, several of the authors writing on Weinberg's Fourth Quartet identified very similar imagery to Brown's, though the work is quite different from Shostakovich's symphony. *Intonatsia* as a theory becomes most tiresome when it is combined with music criticism in the laziest sense, as in this passage from a review published in *Sovetskaya muzika* (on Khachaturian's Violin Concerto):

²⁰⁶ Malcolm H. Brown, 'The Soviet concepts of "Intonazia" and "Musical Imagery"', 567.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 562-6.

²⁰⁸ For instance, *Intonatsii* were evoked to project 'war programmes' onto some distinctly un-dramatic works. See: Marina Frolova-Walker, "'Music is Obscure': textless Soviet works and their phantom programmes', 54-5.

The life-affirming power and fullness, the full-blooded joy that literally overflows in this Concerto, and its wonderful optimism – don't these qualities constitute an essential element of our philosophy? Don't they express a truth about our times?²⁰⁹

Of course, without musical examples, such a passage only informs us of the general 'character' of the music, with deliberately vague language. This represents a misuse of Asafiev's theory, as lazy music criticism is masked by reference to a few of the theory's 'scientific' terms. Given how potentially wide-reaching Asafiev's concepts were, their employment in music criticism does them a disservice. Unfortunately, this has been the literature where one is most likely to find them, partly because their usage had entered the common musical vocabulary without authors necessarily studying Asafiev's ideas in musical training, but also because the approach served to cover a multitude of sins (such as amateurish criticism, or seeking to praise a work that might otherwise be considered dull – the circular logic that a work that communicated 'important' images *must* itself be important).

Asafiev's *intonatsia* is not too remote from Agawu's extroversive topic theory. I wish to emulate Asafiev's wider psychological understanding of musical meaning, through recourse to literary allusion and also through the application of several key terms from the critical theory school of psychoanalysis. Explanations of how musical topics combine to create a discourse across whole works will be paralleled with examples from literature, emulating the approaches of both Asafiev and Leonard Meyer.

In this way, smaller examples of topics will be seen to construct a wider discourse across a work, through comparison with more familiar narrative elements and structures. This is not to say that *storytelling* is occurring in this music, in the sense of the composer's intention to impart specific plots and events, but rather that the music

²⁰⁹ David Rabinovich, 'Tvorchestvo i kritika' [Creativity and criticism], in *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1941/2, 45.

appeals to wider interpretations, including allusions to familiar structures from the narrative realm.

According to this view, small-scale elements introduce a subject in the music, a thinking ‘character’. Through the combination and juxtaposition of different topics, including emotions and moods, numerous subjects and Others can be suggested, resulting in a discourse. My two examples of Weinberg’s musical topics will refer to characteristic feelings that recur across the quartets. Utilising Meyer and Asafiev’s separate approaches of explaining musical moods and emotions with text-based parallels, I will allude to literary examples for each of these. Initially, I will offer some instances of how topics can be ascribed meaning in Weinberg’s quartets through their status as quotations or allusions to previous works.

3.2.2. TOPIC AND QUOTATION

The struggle to label topics in instrumental music can be partly eased through identification of self-quotation, itself a vital aspect of Weinberg’s melodic constructions. Such quotations are pertinent to topic and discourse in that quotations in the quartet cycle often refer to texted works, suggesting a concrete semantic level.

Weinberg himself summed up his approach to melody and quotation:

There is not a single symphony in which I do not use parts of my vocal works, whether romances or from my operas. And it can work the other way round, when I place certain extracts from my symphonies or quartets in my operas. In general I have what I would call a ‘large cooking-pot’ in which all my themes live together, because I think that the most important thing in music- including instrumental music- is melody, which gives [the piece its] identity.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Nikitina, ‘Pochti lyuboy mig zhizni – rabota’, 23, quoted in Fanning, *In Search of Freedom*, 139. Weinberg’s statement echoes Prokofiev’s response to the 1948 decrees, when he wrote: ‘I have never doubted the importance of melody. I am very fond of it: I consider melody the most important element of music’. See: ‘Response of Sergei Prokofiev to the Resolution of February 10 1948’ in Jonathan Walker and Marina Frolova-Walker, *Newly Translated Source Documents*, programme booklet for the symposium ‘Music and Dictatorship: Russia under Stalin’, Carnegie Hall, New York City, 22 February, 2003, 20-22. Available online at: <http://www.sprkfv.net/journal/three16/response2.html> [accessed 10/08/16].

Before examining the instances of self-quotation in the quartets, a few words about the scholarly background to musical quotations are necessary. The author whose work has most closely focused on the practice is J. Peter Burkholder, with his book *All Made of Tunes*, which is on Charles Ives' practice of melodic quotation;²¹¹ Burkholder has also written the 'Quotation' article for *The New Grove*.²¹²

Burkholder differentiates between several terms that overlap when it comes to quotation. He defines it as 'the incorporation of a segment of existing music into another piece, akin to quotation in speech or literature'.²¹³ He asserts that quotation differs from allusion in that the music is presented exactly or near-intact, though it does not form the main substance of the work (as it would in a variations movement, for instance). Quotation also differs from collage, which presents a medley of different melodies to create a larger work. Burkholder observes that 'quotations are often prominent and brief, suggesting that the composer or improviser expects listeners familiar with the quoted piece to recognize it from a short excerpt'.²¹⁴ This point of a listener 'recognising' a melody is an important consideration for Weinberg's melodic quotations.

Shostakovich has been noted for his numerous quotations, both of his own music and of canonic musical works.²¹⁵ Weinberg, however, never reached the heights of Shostakovich's Eighth Quartet, which, as Reichardt observed, 'has few themes that were newly composed for the work itself'.²¹⁶ Weinberg's quartets do feature a large amount of self-quotation, but this perhaps reveals more about Weinberg's 'cooking pot'

²¹¹ J. Peter Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes* (London: Yale University Press, 1995).

²¹² J. Peter Burkholder, 'Quotation', article in *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, available at *Grove Music Online*: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2257170> [accessed: 16/12/15].

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ See: Lev Lebedinsky, 'Code, Quotation and Collage: Some Musical Allusions in the Works of Dmitry Shostakovich', trans. Tatjana M. Marovic and Ian MacDonald, in Allan B. Ho and Dmitry Feofanov, *Shostakovich Reconsidered* (London: Toccata Press, 1998) 472-482.

²¹⁶ Sarah Reichardt, *Composing the Modern Subject*, 71.

approach to melody itself. Several of his works do quote other composer's music, most notably in his Trumpet Concerto, Op. 94, whose final movement quotes Mendelssohn's wedding march from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. There is also Weinberg's 24 *Preludes for Solo Cello*, Op. 100, whose 21st prelude quotes Shostakovich's Cello Concerto and Cello Sonata, while the 5th prelude quotes from Cello Concerti by Schumann and Boris Chaykovsky. Perhaps the most dramatic quotation in all of Weinberg's music is in *The Passenger*, where Tadeusz, a Jewish violinist, is forced to perform a concentration camp Kommandant's favourite waltz; in protest, he plays the 'Chaconne' from Bach's D-minor Partita instead. The violin section of the orchestra joins him before he is seized by German guards, led off to his death, and his violin is smashed onstage.

Weinberg's quartet cycle does not feature such striking quotations, however. Instead, there is a network of melodies that unite different works, several of which have text-based or extra-musical meanings that can offer tantalising clues about the melodies' significance. There are a few instances of notable allusions, though they remain allusions since, under Burkholder's terminology, they only briefly refer to a work, rather than extensively presenting a passage for the listener's recognition.

The following presents a mini-catalogue of self-quotations and allusions in Weinberg's quartets (there are a few examples of quotations that are discussed later in this chapter – see p. 173 on the Fifth Quartet). In general, these are in later works (or are earlier works that were then revised or arranged as later works), though there is a small amount of quotation in some of the earlier quartets. To risk over-generalising, it would appear that Weinberg's attitude of a 'cooking pot' seems to have been formulated only rather late in life, since a number of the shared melodies that link works together stem from that point.

3.2.2.1. Quartet No. 4 and Symphony No. 21

Nikitina's words on the Fourth Quartet, featured in the previous chapter, are worth recalling here: 'the composer saturates almost the entirety of the second movement with minor seconds and intonation similar to Jewish folk music (e.g., raised IV in a minor key). The result is an eerie slow dance, calling up images of Nazi ghettos'.²¹⁷ This last sentence is remarkably prescient of Weinberg's use of the quartet in later life. He substantially reworked the movement for orchestra in his 21st Symphony, Op. 152 (1992). In this version, the tempo is slightly slowed, and it consequently loses some of its ferocity compared to its original incarnation. The 21st Symphony is subtitled 'Kaddish' (the Jewish prayer of mourning) in the composers' catalogue of works,²¹⁸ and is dedicated to the victims of the Warsaw ghetto. The final movement includes a part for wordless Soprano, a moving evocation of loss. While the opening of the second movement is Bartókian (see Chapter 4, p. 201), the second theme in the cello is tantalisingly folk-like (see Ex. 3.13, below), leading to speculation that this melody could be a Polish or Jewish folk-song (as yet unsourced).²¹⁹ Nikitina's reading of 'images of Nazi ghettos' was thus remarkably close to the mark in terms of later significance for the composer.

²¹⁷ Nikitina, *Simfonii M. Vaynberga*, 101.

²¹⁸ Fanning, *In Search of Freedom*, 163.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 45-6.

Ex. 3.13, Quartet No. 4, second movement, ³R38.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system has four staves: VI. I (Violin I), VI. II (Violin II), Vla. (Viola), and Vc. (Violoncello). The second system also has four staves, starting at measure 38. The music is in 4/8 time and features complex rhythmic patterns with accents and slurs. Performance markings include 'f', 'ff', 'lugubre', 'pizz.', and 'arco'.

3.2.2.2. Quartet No. 15

Weinberg's Fifteenth Quartet can lay reasonable claim to being one of his finest,²²⁰ and it features allusions and self-quotations in several of its movements (taking Burkholder's terminology into account). For an instance of allusion in this work, see the previous chapter, and Nikitina's identification of 'Beethovenesque' passages in the work, particularly from his Op. 18, No. 1 (see Chapter 2, p. 97). In particular, the eighth movement of Weinberg's Fifteenth Quartet is as direct as quotation can get: an actual

²²⁰ See: Manuel Rösler, 'Neue Werke Fokus: Mieczysław Weinberg, Streichquartette Nr. 14, Op. 122, und Nr. 15, Op. 124', *Ensemble*, 2012/3, 63.

transcription from Weinberg's own *Requiem* (which itself is part of a reworked passage from his earlier cantata *Hiroshima Pentameters*).²²¹ This example shows Weinberg's sustained usage of a particular melody across several works linked by their extra-musical associations.

Ex. 3.14, a) Quartet No. 15, eighth movement, ¹R42, and

b) *Requiem*, fourth movement, ³R35.

a)

b)

3.2.2.3. Quartet No. 16, 'Mazl Tov!', 'Two Mazurkas'

The process of quoting from earlier works continues in Weinberg's Sixteenth Quartet, though here, quotes take on extra significance, as they begin to reflect the work's dedication, to Weinberg's sister, Esther, who would have been 60 in the year of composition. As well as a pained sense of mourning and several Jewish-inflected dance

²²¹ Marc Danel has spoken of how the Fifteenth Quartet's eighth movement 'made more sense' after performing the first Weinberg cycle in 2009 before journeying to Liverpool that same day to hear the premiere of the *Requiem*. From a conversation with the author, 19 November 2015.

melodies, Weinberg draws on several quotations from his own works to reinforce the memorial to his younger sister. The first movement's second theme contains more than a passing resemblance to a song from the second act of *Mazl Tov!*, Weinberg's comic opera about a Jewish household (especially in the bracketed sections in Ex. 3.15).

Ex. 3.15, a), Quartet No. 16, first movement, R2⁷, and b) *Mazl Tov!*, Act two, scene one, R161³.

a)

b)

The song in question is titled ‘Ten Brothers’, and is a mock-cheerful wedding song about ten brothers who get married together and then die off one by one. The song’s appearance in this later Quartet about family dedications and memorials surely sets the tone for the work (though its implications in the Sixteenth Quartet are a world away from the bitter-sweet celebratory tone in *Mazl Tov!*).

The mood of nostalgia continues in an even clearer vein into the second movement, whose 7/8 second subject is a reworking of Weinberg's pre-opus number work, the *Mazurkas* (No. 2), written in 1933. The significance of including the work is clear: this is a piece written by Weinberg that Esther herself would have heard. The opus-number designation of the *Mazurka* pieces is perhaps unusual; Weinberg evidently did not consider them substantial enough to include in his opus numbers, yet they must have been amongst his possessions that he took from Warsaw. These juvenilia were evidently close enough to the composer's heart to be worth saving even at a time of tremendous personal danger.

Ex. 3.16, a) Quartet No. 16, second movement, ⁷R21, and b) 'Op. 10' [pre-opus number], Mazurka, No. 2, opening.

a)

Andantino ♩ = 152

b)

Beyond that, the Mazurka's significance is perhaps unclear, though it clearly meant a great deal to Weinberg, since he also returned to it in his song *Memorial*, Op. 132, and in his Twentieth Symphony. The significance of such works is problematic to speculate upon; however, the close family dedication of the Sixteenth Quartet provides some clues. There is even a tantalising possibility with the Sixteenth Quartet; the thematic material represents some of the strongest re-engagement with Jewish music in

Weinberg's later period, especially in the fourth movement. As such, it is quite possible that there are further quotations contained within the work that are, as yet, unidentified.

3.2.2.4. Quartet No. 17, 'The Portrait', Fourth Cello Sonata

Weinberg's last quartet continues the practice of self-quotation, but begins to span several of Burkholder's other terms, including allusion and collage. Some of these melodies can be viewed as generic material that was Weinberg's favoured method for expressing a particular sentiment. One such melody can be found in the second theme of his Seventeenth Quartet (Ex. 3.17).

Ex. 3.17, Quartet No. 17, R2.

② ♩ = 92

VI. 1
VI. 2

f sempre tenuto

Vc.
Vla.

Vc.
Vla.

Vc.
Vla.

In the spirit of Weinberg's multi-work quotations, this chorale-like theme is perhaps the most used of all of them. The following excerpts are from *The Portrait*, and the Trio for Flute, Viola and Harp (Ex. 3.18, below).

Ex. 3.18, a), Trio, second movement, R18, and

b) *The Portrait*, Act Three, Scene 7, opening.

a)

18) $\text{♩} = 42$

Harp

pp

b)

Adagietto $\text{♩} = 54$

Strings

pp

The significance of this short, lilting theme is perhaps multi-faceted, but its presence in so many works surely renders it as significant. In *The Portrait*, it is attached to the nobility of the artist and the integrity of artistic endeavour.

The central section of Weinberg's Seventeenth Quartet features more self-quotation, now from the second movement of his Fourth Cello Sonata. The chorale-like theme evolves into a linking passage to the central section, with several interludes that are bridged by solo cello, forming the basis for the majority of the central section. The significance of the Fourth Sonata material explains the cello's role as mediator between the different sections.

In this manner, the Seventeenth Quartet is not necessarily deploying self-quotations to create a rich tapestry of meaning (as in Shostakovich's Eighth Quartet). Instead, it is indicative of a wider trend in Weinberg's writing to have a shared 'pool' of melodies and expressive material from which to draw from.

3.2.2.5. Quartet No. 8, *The Idiot*, and Chamber Symphony No. 4

The last instance of self-quotation surveyed here is, again, a later work's treatment of an earlier string quartet; however, it is particularly important for this chapter, since the quartet in question bears a particular 'topic' that is quite particular to Weinberg's expressive palette (see below, p. 140). This is the passage in the Eighth Quartet:

Ex. 3.19, Quartet No. 8, ¹R4.

The musical score for Ex. 3.19, Quartet No. 8, ¹R4, is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves for Violins (VI.1 and VI.2) and two staves for Viola (Vla.) and Cello/Double Bass (Vc.). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 60. The key signature is G minor. The first system includes measures 1-4, with a circled '4' above the first measure. Chords G, C⁹, and Gm are indicated above the first system. Dynamics include *pp*, *mp*, and *dim.*. The second system includes measures 5-8, with dynamics *pp*, *cresc.*, and *f*. An 'E-flat' marking is present above the first measure of the second system. The score concludes with a final measure in the second system.

With sighing figures, and an open-ended tonal trajectory, this figure is evocative of listlessness or exploration. However, the same line resurfaces in Weinberg's last opera, *The Idiot*, in Act Two, scene four:

Ex. 3.20, *The Idiot*, Act Two, scene four, ⁴R33.

Adagio ♩ = 52 (33)

N. F. *pp* Chto ti

Strings *ppp*

pla - cheshi? Pla-cheshi gor - ko? A ti smey - sya, kak sme - yus' ya.

Vre - me - ni ver! Vsyo proy - det!

The text sung by Nastasya Filippovna is as follows:

*Why are you crying?
Why are you crying so terribly?
Laugh as I do.
Trust in time! All things must pass!*

The passage is introduced by a solo violin, and a sparse accompaniment. What is perhaps most suggestive here is that Weinberg's earlier use of the melody already seemed to evoke images of sadness and longing, but in *The Idiot*, it is ratified with text that expresses similar emotions. The fact that opera (traditionally such a public genre) should be quoted in his quartets (traditionally more intimate) calls Weinberg's attitudes to both into question – that the size of audience, or level of official scrutiny, could not affect the actual qualities that he associated with any given melody.

The quotation from Weinberg’s Eighth Quartet in *The Idiot* is particularly interesting, especially when compared to Shostakovich’s quotations from *Lady Macbeth* in his 8th or 14th Quartets. In Shostakovich’s quartets, these passages can be linked to the meaning of the text in the opera, with lines about longing and insomnia (or love for ‘Seryozha’, used in the Fourteenth Quartet as a tongue-in-cheek tribute to the Beethoven Quartet’s cellist, Sergei Shirinsky). But Weinberg’s use of this melody in *The Idiot* is a kind of reverse-engineering of the process; *The Idiot* passage clarifies what had previously been a non-specific musical topic from earlier in Weinberg’s output.

The same passage also resurfaces in his 22nd Symphony:

Ex. 3.21, Symphony No. 22, first movement, ²R11.

The 22nd Symphony was unorchestrated by the time of his death. It was released by the Toccata Classics label in 2015, in its orchestration by Kirill Umansky. The music itself is full of longing, an interpretation given credence by the quotation from *The Idiot*, which, in itself, can trace a lineage back to the Eighth Quartet, with its ‘sighing’ figures and ennui-like passages. The following section gives a topic-based analysis of this passage in the Eighth Quartet, strengthened by its usage in *The Idiot*.

3.2.3. ENNUI AND OBLOMOY

Musical topics consist of several discreet elements (such as harmony, gesture, motif, and themes) which combine to evoke wider tropes across a musical work. Some of Weinberg's quartets feature movement labels that ascribe explicit semantic associations to their function or character. For instance, the Fifth Quartet includes titles such as 'Melody' and 'Serenade' (the Tenth Quartet originally had similar titles, but these were removed before publication). In the later quartets, explicit titles and even traditional labels of tempo and character were dropped in favour of metronome marks at the head of every movement. However, even there, several clearly identifiable moods recur.

In particular, there is one mood that occurs only after Quartets 1-6 (although my main example to illustrate this is drawn from the Second Quartet's revised version, third movement, an entirely new movement, presumably inserted in 1986). In several passages, there appears to be little motivation for movement or even development. Typically, melodic figures rise and then fall, with no sense of goal-orientated direction. Such extracts are tonally rooted, but create almost no expectation of harmonic motion. They are often accompanied by a *pp* dynamic and a slow tempo. As such, these motions create a feeling of listlessness: a feeling that I dub Weinbergian 'ennui'.

For instance, see the already featured example from the Eighth Quartet (Ex. 3.19, above). The falling figure in the second violin at R4 is a decisive component. Marked 'tenuto' and in slurred pairs, this gesture is a variant on the classical 'sighing figure', suggesting both frustration and resignation (amongst other things). The cello answers with a rising motif, F-sharp-G-A. The classical syntax of V-falling to I is apparent at ¹R4, but with added ninth notes (in the case of R4, a flattened ninth – at R4¹ it is a ninth above the minor dominant). The procedure is then repeated immediately, with the first violin taking both phrases, now in 5/4. The repeated falling figure

anticipates its rising complement, but the addition of an extra beat confounds expectations arising from metrical patterns, further eliminating any goal for the falling figure. This pair of falling thirds recurs several times over the Eighth Quartet. The work opens with a similarly serene passage, in C major.

The presence of this tranquil mood, here turning into resignation, negates any process of energetic expansion or development. This small example is an instance of ‘Weinbergian ennui’. Rather than the literal translation (i.e., ‘boredom’), ennui is here deployed to connote its usage from the French-humanist school.²²² This is a feeling of blank resignation; a lack of desire, but still with feelings of regret and with little pressing need for immediate action. However, several features nuance the mood, including the hairpin swell dynamics, and the ‘sighing’ tenuto figures. The harmony accompanies these with an evocation of traditional syntax, in the form of a recurring V-I cadence across the first four bars of Ex. 3.19, though coloured by chromatic additions (such as the C⁹, C¹³ and G-minor chords).

Elements of the ennui topic can be found in Shostakovich’s quartets, particularly in the slow movements of the later works.²²³ Many of these open with a solo instrument (such as the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Quartets) with a slow tempo and soft dynamic. Their melodic shape is also similar to Weinberg’s, but in each case there is not the sense of harmonic repetition and inevitability. In this respect, the ennui topic is individual to Weinberg’s musical style. An interpretation that comes close to reading ‘ennui’ in Shostakovich’s music can be found in a negative review of the Fifth Symphony. Georgiy Khubov called the slow movement ‘slow and drawn-out’ and ‘a poem of

²²² Most pointedly expressed over the course of Sartre’s novel *La Nausée*. See: Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Penguin, 2000) passim.

²²³ Perhaps most strikingly in the Fifteenth Quartet, which features six slow movements consecutively, all in the minor key.

torpidity'.²²⁴ In contrast to the circular motions of Weinberg's ennui phrases, the Shostakovich movement is a profound centre of gravity for the symphony, indirectly anticipating the struggle and eventual triumph in the finale. In Khubov's reading, 'torpid' is a similar concept to Weinbergian ennui, but it does not entail the element of contentedness within Weinberg's topic.

Considering Asafiev's combination of intonatsia along with psychological interpretations, the Weinbergian topic of ennui is ripe for a psychoanalytic reading. French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan equated desire as 'a relation of being to lack... this lack is the lack of being properly speaking... it isn't the lack of this or that, but lack of being whereby the being exists'.²²⁵ An everyday example is the lack created by hunger, resulting in the desire for food. In a more complex social context, this could be the power of advertising, pointing to the consumer's lack of a commodity and so creating the desire for it. A fundamental aspect of this Lacanian view of desire is that the lack can never be satiated (similar to Nastasya Filippovna's expression of 'trust in time' in the version of the same melody in *The Idiot*). This in turn results in key modes of human existence, such as capitalism, where production is fuelled by continual demand. Lack and Desire in musical processes can be identified in several formal structures, stemming in tonal music from a harmonic resolution (or absence thereof).

In Ex. 3.19, above, the lack resides in an absence of goal-directed harmonic motion. The repetition of the two cells delays satisfaction, further obstructing any potential resolution by chromatic colourations in the harmony. The semblance of a desire is arguably suggested by this motion, but embedded within it is a confusion about

²²⁴ From Georgiy Khubov, '5-ya simfoniya D. Shostakovicha', *Sovetskaya muzika*, (1938/3) 14-28, quoted in Richard Taruskin, 'Interpreting Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony', in David Fanning ed., *Shostakovich Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 38-39.

²²⁵ Jacques Lacan, *Seminar II*, Jacques-Allain Miller ed., trans. John Forrester, (London: W.W. Norton, 1988) 223.

any eventual satisfaction. The subject encountered in Weinberg's ennui-like passages has a desire, but its goal is deliberately obscured.

The above represents a simplistic primer to Lacanian thought, but there are additional levels to his theory that reveal more about Weinbergian ennui. When something is bereft of a particular attribute (resulting in a desire), the lack itself can be conceived of in quasi-Platonic terms. Lacan wrote that when something lacks a particular quality, it immediately possesses another quality – the *objet petit 'a'*.²²⁶ This is the elusive quality that ensures that lack cannot be fully eliminated, and so perpetuates desire. Slavoj Žižek explains it as perpetual dissatisfaction, 'the nearer you get to it, the more it eludes your grasp (or, the more you possess it, the greater the lack)'.²²⁷ In tonal resolution, the *objet petit a* can be traced to an initial lack of harmonic closure, extended over a work by small-scale harmonic processes and cadences. The more that tonal syntax is delayed and expanded over the course of a work, the greater the desire for tonal closure.

There are several options for understanding the *objet petit 'a'* in Weinbergian ennui. One is that the lack of resolution only perpetuates the lack further, distancing it from any eventual closure. A more tempting reading is to conclude that the *objet petit 'a'* resides in the absence of desire itself, presenting a paradoxical 'absence of a lack'. In ennui passages, we encounter a subject in a dream-like setting, where the cause-and-effect logic of lack and desire has ceased to operate (reminiscent of Adorno's concept of 'extraterritorial' phrases in Beethoven's late quartets).²²⁸ With these ideas in mind, my next example (Ex. 3.22) is on a much larger scale – a whole movement.

²²⁶ The 'a' stands for 'autre' – translating as the 'object little-other'. See: Jacques Lacan, 'Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire' in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1977) 322.

²²⁷ Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute, or Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?*, (London: Verso, 2000) 24.

²²⁸ See: Theodor W. Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, Rolf Tiedemann ed., and Edmund Jephcott trans (London: Polity Press, 1998) 133.

Ex. 3.22, Quartet No. 2 (revised version), third movement, opening.

Weinberg's revised version of his second quartet, Op. 3/145, includes a new movement inserted between the original second and third movements. Here, a slow swooping figure dominates the main theme. With a broken series of phrases, the movement proceeds along a meandering course, with little direction and even less resolution. In Ex. 3.19 from the Eighth Quartet, classical harmonic syntax was evoked with a recurring V-I cadence, complicated by chromatic passing notes, resulting in a gradual erosion. In the case of Op. 3/145, a simple ABAC(A) structure ensures that the 'A' theme returns. The principle of 'directionless movement' is extended to the level of form, as the topic of the listless atmosphere encroaches on the whole movement's narrative discourse – a parable of recurring ennui.

The 'swooping' figures present the voices in pairs, combining rising and falling phrases within the same harmony. Immediately, this creates a paradoxical sense of motion without harmonic movement. There are a number of parallels with the passage seen in Ex. 3.19. In terms of time signature, both passages move between 5/4 and 4/4, away from 5/4 in the case of the Op. 3/145 example. They also both feature prominent tenuto markings, with descending slurred pairs. As such, they both evoke a 'sighing figure' that further suggests a subject in an ennui-like state. An even closer similarity is

their melodic range; in Ex. 3.22 the first violin can be seen to climb from A flat to C natural across bb. 3-5, and from A natural to C in bb. 7-9. A similar trajectory can be seen in the first violin in Ex. 3.19, starting from A-flat in R4³ climbing to C-natural in R4⁵. Such similarities suggest a specific set of musical circumstances to create this topic.

Although Weinberg omitted a key signature in the Op. 3/145 movement (as is often the case in his later works), Ex. 3.22 can be read as in C minor. This is reinforced by the rests in the passage – with a crotchet rest in bars 3 and 7, immediately after the F minor to C minor cadence. In this case, the first chord heard (and the signifier throughout for the return of the theme) is the sub-dominant, shadowing the ‘home-key’ in the opening bars. When combined with the slow pace and interweaving lines, the opening does not establish any firm sense of ‘home’ at all. This creates a shifting motion whose end is in its beginning and whose beginning is in its end, a seemingly never-ending circularity.

The episodes between the ‘A’ themes do not present contrasting thematic material, instead exploring some of the smaller threads from the opening. In each case, the ‘A’ material returns untouched, as if turning away from an unchanging centre before returning. It is tempting to view this movement as exemplary of the difference between Weinberg’s early and late styles. When Weinberg came to revise his Second Quartet, he edited out several of the more strikingly ‘modernist’ traits (even more so in the case of the First Quartet; see Appendix, p. 318). Despite his own recognisably ‘modernist’ later style (or, rather, a greater willingness to experiment with musical elements), Weinberg chose to sanitize the more complex elements of his earlier work, perhaps because they did not stand comparison with his later style. Comparing this new third movement to the opening theme of the quartet, the passing similarity in their opening melodic lines suggests a conscious commentary on Weinberg’s part on his much earlier theme, a

‘resetting’ of the original material with the new stylistic techniques at the time of revising (see Ex. 3.23).

Ex. 3.23, Quartet No. 2, (original version), opening bars.

Perhaps the closest hint at reconciliation in the Op.3/145 third movement comes in the second episode, at R4², where *ppp* rocking quavers enter in the two violins. The coda is even more intriguing for the modal alterations of keys (Ex. 3.24).

Ex. 3.24, Quartet No. 2 (revised version), third movement, R5².

After a slow exchange between the cello and viola, the cello plunges down, giving the semblance of E-flat minor, marked *ppp*. The upper parts give ghostly figures, echoing the rising and falling pairings at the start of the movement. With the final bars, no complicit tonal closure is achieved, with only a bare low C in the cello. As such, even

the tonality of the movement is left ambiguous towards the end. By combining harmonic listlessness with an almost inevitably repeating structure, Weinberg evokes the ‘ennui’ topic and manages to extend it over the course of a whole movement. If we accept that the ennui constitutes an abandonment of the usual lack-desire process, then what we encounter over this movement is the presentation of a fully aware, self-evaluating subject. This subject confronts the lack-desire loop and places itself outside of it, displacing the *objet petit ‘a’* altogether.

The ennui topic also features instances of ‘hyper-minor’, where modes are altered with lowered degrees other than the third and sixth (see Chapter 5, p. 267).²²⁹ The observation of classical harmonic syntax can be noted, but the functioning of certain chords is now discarded; what is left are husks of chords. Combined with the soft dynamic and the repetition of themes, a listlessness is evoked, a lack of movement away from somewhere, only movement around something. In the case of the Op. 3/145 example, the subject’s listlessness is paired with a downward harmonic trajectory. While this movement may seem quiet and peaceful, there is perhaps an inner frustration that can be noted, as if Weinberg’s subject is frustrated at its own self.

An apt literary comparison alongside Weinberg’s ‘ennui’ may be found in Ivan Goncharov’s 1859 novel *Oblomov*.²³⁰ The eponymous Oblomov is a nobleman in command of a large estate with a high social standing. However, he has found that nearly all of his affairs can be run from the comfort of his own bed. Accordingly, the first third of the novel depicts Oblomov running his estate from sloth-like squalor:

With Oblomov, lying in bed was neither a necessity (as in the case of an invalid or of a man who stands badly in need of sleep) nor an accident (as in the case of a man who is feeling worn out) nor a gratification (as in the case of a man who is purely lazy). Rather,

²²⁹ For a brief mention of hyper-minor in an English-language text, see: Levon Hakobian, *Music of the Soviet Age: 1917-1987* (Stockholm: Melos, 1998) 169, ff. 214.

²³⁰ Ivan Goncharov, *Oblomov*, trans. David Magarshack (London: Penguin, 2005). Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Chekhov were reportedly great fans of the book, leading to speculation about the similarities between the titular character and Anna Karenina’s brother, Oblonsky – see Galya Diment, ‘The Precocious talent of Ivan Goncharov’, in Galya Diment ed., *Goncharov’s ‘Oblomov’: A Critical Companion* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998) 4.

it represented his normal condition. Whenever he was at home – and almost always he was at home – he would spend his time lying on his back.²³¹

Oblomov only gets out of bed after much deliberation and great exertion, several chapters into the book. Following Goncharov's early death, *Oblomov* exerted a massive influence, particularly in its satirical swipe at the aristocracy, commonly perceived to be feckless and lazy.²³² Even Lenin referred to the innate torpidity of the old Russia as 'Oblomovshchina'.²³³ Of course, Weinberg's ennui does not bear the same parodistic connotations, but the comparison is nevertheless surely appropriate, particularly regarding Oblomov's apparent contentedness with his condition (Oblomov recognises his inherent laziness, attempts to remedy it, but embraces it by the novel's conclusion).

A musical depiction of lethargy dating from a few years later can be found in Musorgsky's 1874 song cycle 'Sunless', where the fourth song is titled 'boredom' [*skúka*] (see Ex. 3.25, below).

²³¹ Goncharov, *Oblomov*, 2.

²³² See: Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (London: Penguin, 2003) 410-11.

²³³ See: Julian Graffey, 'Literature and Film', in Evgeny Dobrenko and Marina Balina (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 247.

Ex. 3.25, Musorgsky, *Sunless*, 'Skúka', opening.

Andante comodo assai e poco lamentoso

Voice

p Sku-chay Tí soz-da-na dlya sku-ki! Bez

Piano

p

5

zhgu - chikh chvustv ot - ra - dí net, Kak net voz -

In this song, a series of minor chords unfold with a clear focus around B minor. The sequence starts from the second bar, culminating in F sharp major7 as dominant (though actually the movement in the fifth bar is up to C sharp major). With this minor chord sequence that revolves around standard harmonic syntax but only rarely obeys it, the Musorgsky example is prophetic musically of Weinbergian ennui, and its text further illustrates this mood:

Ennui! Your destiny appointed
No Joy where passion there was none,
No blest return where none were parted,
And where no strife, no victory won!

Ennui, ennui, no longed for lover's meeting
The cold and empty heart to fill;
And forced the smile and false the greeting
To one whose dreams are golden still...

Ennui, the fate overtakes you
Along life's road from start to goal;
As drop by drop your force forsakes you,
Until you die, God rest your soul!²³⁴

It seems, then, that the 'ennui' that came to encapsulate Weinberg's more meditative moments clearly had its roots in Russian culture and music of the past. It can be argued that Weinberg's 'ennui' topic was reflective of a much closer frame of experience: the Brezhnevian 'stagnation' period. Emotions of longing, frustration, and stifled desire would be familiar to any individuals who lived through Brezhnev's government. This reading certainly promotes the case for Weinberg's depiction of a thinking subject that Shostakovich never quite reached. Another of Weinberg's topics positions itself in direct reaction to Shostakovich, however.

3.2.4. SUPPRESSED FURY

Shostakovich's musical style is notable for the prevalence of scherzos, movements that contain passages of frenzied passion.²³⁵ In such instances, sheer anger threatens to break through the confines of form that keep it otherwise contained: the appearance of a violent outburst. Weinberg's music also contains a great number of passionate scherzo movements, where fury is represented. Where they differ from Shostakovich's scherzos, however, is in their comparative restraint; they present a subject brimming with anger but who never overtly loses his temper. For instance, there is the scherzo movement of the Fifth Quartet, in which, over the course of two-and-a-half minutes, three different themes are explored in an arch structure (see Ex. 3.26, below). In scherzo movements such as this, Weinberg presents an emotion of stifled anger and a violence that is restrained from full expression.

²³⁴ 'Ennui', text by A.A. Golenishtchev-Kutusov, trans. Humphrey Procter-Gregg, in 'Without Sun', cycle by Modest Musorgsky, (New York: International Music company, 1960).

²³⁵ For example: Tenth Symphony, second movement, Tenth Quartet, second movement (marked 'Allegretto Furioso'), Eighth Quartet, second movement – and many more.

This is ripe for several interpretations. Such repressed violence could actually be directed against the self. Alternatively, it could be anger against society or even the whole world. Another Lacanian term proves appropriate here. While the conscious mind constructs the subject in relation to perceptions of reality, it also defines itself by means of the concept of the Other.²³⁶ In a general sense, this is anything in the external world, something existing beyond the subject. For the infant child, this begins with the recognition of the mother as a separate being, but in the adult subject, this can be any grouping of individuals or any physical object. The subject's perception of Other-ness shapes his or her actions and judgments, as well as providing a position from which to present him or herself. Lacan also wrote of the Big Other, usually taking the form of wider societal pressures, such as systems of laws, or government.²³⁷ We implicitly obey the Big Other before we decide our actions – it is this pressure that restrains us from disobeying social niceties and keeps us from breaking the law. In Weinberg's passages of suppressed fury, the subject has encountered the Other and has reacted with an implicit violence that is kept in check, in accordance with the demands of the Big Other.

The hint of violence that is never given full expression contributes enormously to what can make Weinberg's musical topics so uncomfortable. Whereas fury in the quartets of Shostakovich and Bartók can function in the classical sense of 'catharsis', Weinberg's evocations of anger and passion are kept relatively restrained (this is not to suggest that Weinberg did not have the means to create such fury – indeed, the examples below can often seem relentless in their anger that hovers close to outright rage). The closest Shostakovich comes to this is his pattern of following fury movements with slow movements, thus presenting a large-scale dramaturgy across movements (in the Tenth Quartet, for instance). Weinberg's topic 'suppressed fury'

²³⁶ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977) 140.

²³⁷ See: *Ibid.*, 304-6.

leaves an uncomfortable shadow hanging over the rest of proceedings, especially when, as is often the case, he follows such movements with contemplative slow passages.

The label ‘anti-cathartic’ effectively summarises the effect of this topic. In Aristotle’s *Poetics*, catharsis is the release of emotions through witnessing drama.²³⁸ In this line of thinking, watching tragic or violent plays was beneficial to the overall health of spectators, since these emotions would be expelled from them through watching the violence onstage. This notion has persisted to the modern day, with several critics defending violence in cinema as cathartic in the Aristotelian sense. Weinberg’s style of ‘suppressed fury’, however, subverts the cathartic expectation of musical violence. While listeners familiar with Shostakovich and Bartók may expect a purging outburst of rage, Weinberg skirts around it.

The ‘reliving’ of an emotion is a familiar technique from psychoanalysis, dubbed by Freud as ‘abreaction’.²³⁹ In the case of Weinberg’s scherzi, the listener recognises the musical markers for a violent scherzo and anticipates the potential for undergoing an abreaction, expelling their previously suppressed emotions through catharsis. But this expectation is scuppered, and the anger remains unaddressed for the rest of the work. The onlooker’s anger is also unreleased since their abreaction is circumvented, resulting in sizable tension in the work’s discourse.

Weinbergian suppression can only make sense in the context of the rageful scherzi of Shostakovich and Bartók; when we are immersed in these composers’ musical languages, we presume a level of knowledge. When Weinberg’s scherzi begin, we assume that similar peaks of intensity will be reached. However, Weinberg’s topic does not run parallel to his predecessors. Instead, he alludes to their rageful scherzi through comparatively restrained means. In this way, when the listener expects a screaming torrent over a short period of time, Weinberg presents a stifled outcry, a short

²³⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. James Hutton (London: Norton, 1982) 25.

²³⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953) 38.

outburst of rage quickly suppressed. It is this act of suppression that acts as an anti-cathartic shadow over the course of a whole work.

My first example comes from Weinberg's Fifth Quartet, middle movement. Appropriately titled 'Scherzo', it is set in the major mode. While this may initially confound associations of 'fury' and 'anger' with the positive associations of the major scale, it still pre-empts several of Shostakovich's Scherzo movements in the major mode, often identified as 'Grotesque'.²⁴⁰ The ambitious metronome marking of crotchet=200 sets the tone for the movement, in effect, as fast and frenzied as possible. The key of G flat major, with a distinctively flattened tone colour and a particular challenge for string players, only adds to the sense of frenzy. In the context of the whole work, this middle movement serves as a loud and fast bridge between two pairs of slower movements. Some kind of 'apex' might be expected, then, around the middle of the movement, giving balance to the work as a whole. However, none is given. The opening theme consists of flurried activity in the major mode (Ex. 3.26).

Ex. 3.26, Quartet No. 5, third movement, opening.

The musical score shows the opening of the third movement of Weinberg's Quartet No. 5. It is written for Violin 1 (VI. 1), Violin 2 (VI. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature is three flats (G-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegro molto' with a metronome marking of a quarter note equal to 200. The dynamics are marked 'ff' (fortissimo). The music features rapid sixteenth-note passages in the violins and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the lower strings.

At no point is there a clear culmination. As such, the frenzied energy accrued over the course of the movement simply fizzles out – this is a whirling scherzo that reaches no peak. The promise of a climax to the fast-paced theme that accrues energy is cut short when no climax is forthcoming. With the repetition of the opening, the subject's

²⁴⁰ See: Sheinberg, *Irony Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*. 207-28.

cathartic release of anger is avoided. By merely restating the opening material, the promise of reliving an experience through abreaction is cut short, as built-up energy falls away in favour of a restatement of previous material.²⁴¹

Turning to a Weinberg scherzo in the minor key, this mood becomes much more pronounced. In the middle movement of the Fifteenth Quartet, an outburst of energy appears. But instead of presenting a violent eruption, the topic instead sides with a mechanical pulsation, full of alternating chromatic passages (Ex. 3.27).

Ex. 3.27, Quartet No. 15, fifth movement, opening.

The musical score shows two staves, VI. 1 and VI. 2, in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 192. The dynamic is *ff marcatisissimo*. The music is characterized by rapid, alternating chromatic passages, often in triplet groups. A circled number 21 is placed above the second staff.

The rapid alternation between entries separated by a semitone sets the course for the whole movement. Beginning *ff*, the movement avoids any crescendo, opting instead for a relentless exchange in this manner (similar to the opening movement of the Ninth Quartet, which is *ff* throughout). A topic of irritation is evoked with a relentless jarring that doesn't let up, but that also never reaches a pinnacle (a similar mood is also present in the second movement of the Sixteenth Quartet).

An appropriate literary example to illustrate this feeling is Dostoevsky's final novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. This classic, rich in both existentialist and nihilistic philosophy, presents a plethora of characters who all engage in soul-searching in one form or another. Of interest here is Dmitri (Mitya) Karamazov, the eldest of the three

²⁴¹ In the Third Chamber Symphony, Op. 151, Weinberg rearranged the Fifth Quartet. In this case, the original third movement was moved to the second, and the tempo marking revised to a more comfortable crotchet = 168.

brothers. Dmitri is prone to violent outbursts, having been in many bar fights in his past, and a history of beating his Father in arguments about inheritance. When Dmitri is wrongfully accused of murdering his Father, he realises that he must contain his anger. The narration that describes him sits on a knife-edge – alluding to his proneness to lapse into rage:

Mitya's wrath flared up. He looked intently at 'the boy' and smiled gloomily and malignantly. He was feeling more and more shamed at having told 'such people' the story of his jealousy... 'Ugh! Damn it all, gentlemen! There's positively no talking to you!' cried Mitya, exasperated beyond endurance, and turning to the secretary, crimson with anger, he said quickly, with a note of fury in his voice: 'Write down at once...at once...that I snatched up the pestle to go and kill my father... Fyodor Pavlovitch... by hitting him on the head with it! Well, now, are you satisfied, gentlemen? Are your minds relieved?' he said, glaring defiantly at the lawyers.²⁴²

Mitya's exasperated 'confession' belies his deeper desire to restrain his penchant for violence. In scenes of interrogation, Mitya sways between furious protestations of innocence on the one hand and incensed admission of 'guilt', such as that above, on the other.

This example is particularly pertinent alongside the Weinberg scherzi above: by evoking the recognisable musical language of other violent scherzi, Weinberg elicits the expectation of violence. Similarly, Mitya's aggravated temper is all the more powerful because the reader is aware of his history of violence, and how easily he can be sent 'over the edge'. In both situations, however, the threshold for 'snapping' into destruction is constantly shifting; Mitya sways almost manically between self-pity and fury, while Weinberg's scherzo movements hover on the cusp of descending into all-out fury.

How can all of this, then, be read in psychoanalytical terms? Mitya's anger is twofold. He is angry at the Other, in the form of the judicial court threatening him with imprisonment; he is also furious with himself and his own internalised Big Other. He is

²⁴² Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. David McDuff (London: Penguin Classics, 2003) 571.

angry at that part of his psyche that would give up and hand himself in. In Weinberg's passages of suppressed fury, a similar self-rage can be interpreted. The subject is reacting deferentially to an intrusion from the Other. This internalised anger and restraint can be read in the scherzi that never quite reach their violent potential in Weinberg's quartets.

Weinberg was by all accounts a very modest and humble person, never known to have a temper or to express any anger.²⁴³ As such, the notion of a 'suppressed anger' is a fitting interpretation, as his music exploits the listener's need for catharsis, rather than attempting to depict any violent emotions that were seemingly not a recognised part of his own disposition. Weinberg's operas support this interpretation; none of them features a truly evil or wrathful character. In each of them, the force of 'evil' is represented more subtly, as in *The Portrait*, where the artist's narcissism is his own undoing, or even in *The Passenger*, where the personality of Liese, the Nazi concentration camp guard, is explored to show her as a fully rounded – though deeply troubled – human being.

In the 'ennui' and 'suppressed fury' moods, examples of Weinberg's topics are presented. Each of them introduces a subject to the listener and each subject undergoes a particular emotion or state. These emotions are portrayed through small musical elements that can be seen to recur in examples with a similar character. 'Ennui' is arguably a vital topic for Weinberg's musical style, whereas 'suppressed fury' is closer to (and even a deliberate reaction to) Shostakovich. In each case, though, the presentation of a subject has been at the local level. With the combination or juxtaposition of different topics, a discourse can be interpreted across a work, where the subject undergoes several different emotions, events, or a journey. Through this

²⁴³ Boris Chaykovsky's widow summarised Weinberg's temperament: 'Metek was a very kind, very responsive man'; Yanina Iosifovna Moshinskaya-Chaykovskaya, October 2002, as told to Igor Prokhorov.

discourse, the listener can ascribe a narrative connecting the whole work together. As such, discourse is vital to understanding Weinberg's narratives.

3.3. DISCOURSE

So far, the two terms of topic and discourse have been kept separate, reserving 'discourse' for how a narrative is created across a whole work, and 'topic' as smaller elements that contribute to the fabric of that 'discourse'.²⁴⁴ Sarah Reichardt's work on four Shostakovich quartets (subtitled *Composing the Modern Subject*) takes the presentation of subjects as her starting point and echoes Kramer's conception of twentieth-century experience as 'profoundly ugly'.²⁴⁵ As such, Shostakovich's subjects undergo 'painful' episodes that relate them to the wider social experience of the subject in the twentieth-century.

Applying this concept to Weinberg's music is comparatively simple when viewed through the prism of topic and discourse. In Weinberg's quartets, his twentieth-century subjects are depicted by means of topics that root them in their contemporary discourse, perhaps echoing the reality of his own existence. These wider discourses invariably present some kind of narrative, ripe for interpretation. While Weinberg's quartets Nos. 3–6 accrue mastery and approach symphonic breadth, his later works take up the path begun by Shostakovich in his own later quartets. Weinberg expands upon Shostakovich's late style, exploring ever-darker recesses of the strains put upon the twentieth-century subject.

²⁴⁴ Though it can be noted that key examples span the gap between the two, most notably, the third movement of the Op. 3/145 quartet (see above).

²⁴⁵ Sarah Reichardt, *Composing the Modern Subject: Four String Quartets by Dmitri Shostakovich* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008).

3.3.1. DISCOURSE THEORY

Reichardt applies several aspects of cultural theory and linguistics to particular musical passages, arguing that they function symbolically at a broad structural level of discourse. The obvious example here is the significance of beginnings and endings. For instance, there is the question of whether codas are a necessary part of musical forms, or some sort of extra-territorial material instead. It might seem obvious that they ought to be there, as they often form a vital part of the music. For the formalist-analyst such questions are riddles, usually resulting in the complete disregard of the coda itself²⁴⁶ (unless the coda takes on special significance, as in the final movement of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, where the coda is a lengthy section, equal in importance to the development and recapitulation – Robert Simpson even goes so far as to call it a 'second development'²⁴⁷). Moreover, if a coda were to be removed from a work, the resulting discourse might appear to be uneven or fragmented. This raises further problems of a united discourse or deliberate fragmentation by the composer.

Questions of unification or fragmentation immediately present obstacles to the establishing of a subject. In fact, the relationship between a discourse and a subject is difficult to define, particularly concerning how a subject can be introduced to the listener. It is the power of music to suggest elusive experiences that separates it from the more explicitly 'representative' arts, such as spoken word and visual art. Of course, it also brings its own frustrations to the scholar, since such experiences are difficult to formulate into descriptive prose or to verify with reference to the score.

When it comes to an examination of musical discourse, the issue under discussion is now narrative structure (as opposed to musical structure). The potential overlap is obvious; for instance, the concepts of 'beginnings' and 'ends' are

²⁴⁶ See: James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 281-3.

²⁴⁷ Robert Simpson, *Beethoven Symphonies* (London: BBC Music Guides, 1970) 52.

narratological concerns, as well as musical ones. However, these terms are much more complex on a hermeneutic level. Numerous ideas from the wider field of musical narrativity prove essential for understanding some of these concepts, but my main concern here is building upon Reichardt's utilisation of critical theory.²⁴⁸

Reichardt's work uses concepts from both Foucault and Derrida. The combination may seem strange, since Foucault's work was about the philosophies of power and politics, while Derrida was an opponent of linguistics, expressed by his term 'deconstruction'. The term refers to the dismantling of ideas, including those raised by structuralism, placing Derrida as reactive to thinkers such as Barthes and Foucault. 'Deconstruction' can also be understood as a wider philosophical outlook, dismantling concepts, ideas and even disciplines, in order to understand the more fundamental motivations, ideologies, and struggles underneath the edifices of power and institutions.²⁴⁹

'Deconstruction' differs fundamentally from the Hegelian 'synthesis' method of philosophical discourse (in the Hegelian model, 'thesis' + 'antithesis' = 'synthesis').²⁵⁰ An equivalent formula of deconstruction would boil down to something along the lines that 'nothing is given', everything should be questioned, and everything can be stripped back to its ideological origins (hence the term 'deconstruction'). In the case of Derrida's reading of structure, what is at stake is the concept of 'closure' itself. What is an ending? In our conception of time, we have only our narrow grasp of the present with which to understand reality. Given our time-based perception of the present, explaining the nature of endings becomes problematic, leaving something like a dialectic of existence vs. non-existence. It may seem obvious to observe that the piece is over when the music stops, but it raises a deeper question: what does the end of a piece of music

²⁴⁸ For a lucid survey and overview of studies on musical narrative, see: Nicholas Reyland, 'Narrative', in Stephen Downes ed., *Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014) 203-223.

²⁴⁹ See Christopher Norris ed., *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2001) 10.

²⁵⁰ Peter Singer, *Hegel: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 20.

sound like?

To address this issue, I borrow a key term from Reichardt's work, 'the crisis of the end'.²⁵¹ A good understanding of this idea and its underlying concepts is a vital preliminary to my concept of 'the crisis of the beginning'. Such 'crises' are characteristic of much twentieth-century music and they are certainly crucial to an understanding of the large-scale discourses apparent in Weinberg's quartets.

The 'crisis of the end' stems from an unusual structural device that Reichardt identifies in Shostakovich's quartets, that of the presentation of classical syntax that is unbalanced or distorted through some means. Such unbalancing produces abnormal proportions when compared to the traditional syntax of common musical practice. As a result, the lop-sided nature gradually abandons expectations arising out of classical syntax. For example, the storytelling implied in classical forms seems almost obvious, but the gradual erosion of classical syntax creates an uncomfortable sense of distorted narrative. In this way, the evocation of classical syntax and its subsequent erosion presents narratives that might have completely different structures, with no clear beginning or end, or even embedded meta-narratives.

Alexander Ivashkin makes explicit use of the terms 'syntax' and 'erosion' when writing about Shostakovich's legacy in the music of Alfred Schnittke. In particular, Ivashkin uses the terms to explain the distortions of classical syntax that result in expressive structures.

The whole tradition of symphonic thinking of Shostakovich and Schnittke is seen to be directed along a single channel that erodes the traditional, classical supports of the symphony, and in the long run the whole idea of syntactic conformities of movements and sections. Syntax is more and more eroded by morphology, by withdrawal into the *depths of the material itself*, by the search for different points of view... the music of late Shostakovich and the works of Schnittke demand a mobile point of view from the listener which does not allow the sense of the whole to be seen except in its architectonics, or rather in the failure of the architectonics to conform with classical models.²⁵²

²⁵¹ Reichardt, *Composing the Modern Subject*, 21.

²⁵² Alexander Ivashkin, 'Shostakovich and Schnittke: The Erosion of Symphonic Syntax' in *Shostakovich Studies*, 265.

Ivashkin explains the erosion of syntax by ‘morphology’, the shift in focus onto the musical content itself, rather than on traditional teleological processes. He notes that ‘the finale ceases to be the finale in the classical and Romantic sense, and turns into a coda, into something which is morphological and symbolic in nature rather than syntactic, ““resultative”-structural’.²⁵³ In this sense, the notion of endings proves a vital consideration for the erosion of classical syntax.

Reichardt focuses on Shostakovich’s endings. Without any syntactical expectations for an ending, Shostakovich’s subject seems to try to find one. In the best examples from Shostakovich’s dramaturgy, such a search reaches a crisis point (perhaps best demonstrated in his Fifteenth quartet, with its six successive slow movements; Ivashkin claims that ‘the entire work becomes a coda’).²⁵⁴ Reichardt dubs this search the ‘crisis of the end’, a term that has its origins in the deconstructionism of Derrida.

This is where Weinberg’s engagement with classical syntax enters. Meyer’s ideal ‘competent listener’ knows that in practical terms, a piece ends when there is no more music to be heard, but is also aware of the many complex and subtle syntactical markers that anticipate the end.²⁵⁵ These markers create a sense of ‘closure’, bringing any teleological goal to its conclusion (or not, as the case might be). Such syntax presents a culminating structural unit of some sort.

In classical syntax, the ‘ending’ necessarily positioned itself in relation to what had preceded; comprising either a reprise or some other element of unity, or else a deliberate move away from the preceding elements. The ‘end’ of a musical discourse is not as simple as when the music stops. Conventionally, there is some kind of statement that signals a conclusion to the listener. In works where form, structure, and wider established dialogues are manipulated or eroded, such a clear-cut ending becomes

²⁵³ Ibid., 259.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 261.

²⁵⁵ See: Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (University of Chicago Press, 1956) 10.

problematic. Reichardt asserts that in Shostakovich's quartets, the problematised ending becomes a major expressive tool.²⁵⁶

This makes sense from the perspective of topic and discourse. After all, if twentieth-century music depicts Kerman's notion of an 'ugly experience', it would make sense for the stories themselves to be fragmented. In the more explicit narrative art forms, this was a cultural trope of the twentieth century, as in Eugène Ionesco's theatre of the absurd, where the on-stage narrative slowly dissolves over the course of a play, or James Joyce's bizarre prose, which blends storytelling with different languages and nonsense poetry. Composers such as Weinberg presented twentieth-century discourses with obvious indebtedness to conventional syntax, fundamentally observing the traditional techniques, while simultaneously calling them into question. Indeed, the pattern we see over the quartet cycle as a whole is an intensification of the questioning of traditional syntax. Syntax slowly becomes eroded through a focus on the content of the musical material.

Several of Weinberg's later quartets can be read as questioning the nature of endings. And yet the Seventeenth Quartet is something of a *volte-face*. It almost presents an argument against Edward Said's conception of late style.²⁵⁷ If anything, it is a clear and well-signposted work, startlingly similar to Weinberg's earliest essays in the quartet genre (see p. 218 for more on the Seventeenth Quartet). Syntactical erosion can even be interpreted as a paradoxical game that Weinberg was consciously playing all along. To survey such discourse erosion, an obvious access point presents itself: to begin at the beginning(s).

²⁵⁶ Reichardt, *Composing the Modern Subject*, 30.

²⁵⁷ See: Edward Said, *On Late Style* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006) 8-22. Said writes on the phenomenon of 'late style' in artist reception and its significance for how we perceive maturity and the aesthetics of aging and death.

3.3.2. THE CRISIS OF THE BEGINNING

Reichardt's approach can easily be expanded and applied to Weinberg's topics and discourses. Indeed, a striking element of Weinberg's later quartets is to be found at the opposite end of structure, not in the way the works themselves come to a close, but the way that they begin. As a result, the Weinbergian 'crisis of the beginning' is an appropriate place to start discussion of Reichardt's work, before then moving on to examine several of Weinberg's endings.

The Eleventh Quartet opens with a *p* staccato violin figure, jumping up on the last beat of each bar with a semiquaver third (this opening passage is strikingly similar to Respighi's tribute to Rameau, 'La Gallina' from *The Birds* – though the resemblance ends soon after this theme 'darkens': see Ex. 3.28).

Ex. 3.28, Quartet No. 11, first movement, opening.

The other voices join at b. 5, evoking the circle of fifths, with chords C-G, followed by

D at b. 11, setting an expectation for A at b. 12. However, what immediately follows is more of a disintegration of this syntax. The adherence to the circle of fifths dissolves, instead opting for a series of chromatically close dissonances. The staggered entry of the repeated quaver figure in each part creates a kind of ‘unfurling’ motion. This initial unfurling gesture is never stated with the same kind of tonal clarity as at the beginning.

The second theme is more reflective, though with a semiquaver motif that punctuates tied minim notes, first heard in the cello (Ex. 3.29).

Ex. 3.29, Quartet No. 11, first movement, R2.

What makes this movement so important for the establishing of a discourse of ‘crisis’ is the fact that the opening theme is almost immediately darkened. In the first few bars, a rapid liquidation of classical syntax is presented, already establishing a topic of failing to maintain unity; it begins unified, but quickly falls away. The frequent repetition of the unfolding theme over the development creates an incessant desire to address this liquidation. A recapitulation of sorts occurs at R22, though the unfurling theme is presented a semitone higher than before (a familiar procedure from the reprise in the first movement of Shostakovich’s Tenth Symphony). The first movement of Weinberg’s Eleventh Quartet comes to an end with a machine-like repetition of the

dotted quavers. Towards its close, the very pulse of the unfolding gesture has come to dominate the movement (there is an echo of the accompaniment figures in Weinberg's Second Quartet – see Ex. 3.23 above).

The discourse of the Eleventh Quartet's opening movement can be interpreted as dealing with issues including failure and discipline. To translate the above discussion into the techniques and terms of discourse, several of Reichardt's theoretical approaches should be expanded upon more fully. Derrida's mammoth *Of Grammatology* supplies many of these concepts; Derrida's brand of deconstruction was here applied to the fundamentals of language, but also to the basics of storytelling. The first concept to include here is that of the 'supplement'.²⁵⁸ In the Derridean sense, the supplement is anything added to a narrative, often appended during the process of the telling. In music, the obvious example of supplementation might be 'deviations' from the text during performance. In the first movement of Weinberg's Eleventh Quartet, such a supplement is compacted down into a rapid erosion of syntax, presenting a theme that disintegrates even during its own exposition. Treating the score as text, however, supplements can be identified as a Lacanian 'lack' between the need to communicate and a fundamental failure of understanding.

There is a much more important Derridean term that Reichardt applies to Shostakovich: that of 'grafting'.²⁵⁹ The term comes from plant cultivation, splicing one genome into another plant's tissue. In a literary narrative, this is the sense that what is being stated has actually been transplanted into the current discourse. For example, the ending from one story could be taken out of the text and put onto the end of another story, with the combination coarsely altered so as to fit. This idea of 'grafting' implies an uneasy combination of elements. Working this into Derrida's conceptions of small

²⁵⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1997) 149.

²⁵⁹ See: Reichardt, *Composing the Modern Subject*, 21-2.

blocks, narrative structures begin to be reduced to the level of individual topics.

The establishment of discourse is disrupted by the 'grafting' of seemingly alien cells into this wider structure. Hence, in Reichardt's chapter on Shostakovich's Sixth Quartet, the recurring cadence at the end of each movement is 'grafted' into each movement after the first, representing a close encounter with Lacan's conception of the 'Real'. This concept, similar to Kant's notion of the sublime, represents the encroachment of the totality of reality into the consciousness of the subject, a terrifying intrusion into their existence. It is this intrusion that must be dealt with in order for the entire work to end.

How all this combines to create a sense of collapse in the beginning of a work is through Ivashkin's idea of 'eroding syntax'. Reichardt dissects Shostakovich's eroding conclusions by identifying recurring cadential figures that echo Derrida's idea of 'grafting'. In the case of Weinberg's opening movements, however, the erosion is presented much more rapidly than across the span of a whole work.

In Weinberg's works that feature a rapid thematic 'darkening', it is introduced relatively soon into the movement: in this way, the syntax is shortened soon after the beginning, presenting a condensed version of Weinberg's previous discourses. In such initiating gestures, the Weinbergian tonal syntax is presented in microcosm; the work begins with a statement that rapidly disintegrates. The subsequent themes and repetitions of this opening theme go in search of a way to overcome this disintegration. This distortion of syntax through the presentation of an apparently complete discourse at the outset establishes a struggle and crisis for the subsequent discourse. The 'crisis of the beginning' arises from a previously established syntax that is presented all too quickly, and the subject must recover and move away from this introductory erosion.

The concept of presenting the discourse in microcosm is not such an alien idea, when thought of in the context of literature. Dante's *Inferno* famously begins with an

allusion to being in the middle: ‘Half-way along the road we have to go, I found myself obscured in a great forest, bewildered, and I knew I had lost the way’.²⁶⁰ Allusions continue through *The Divine Comedy*, referring to points in a narrative that are different from the actual position in the text.²⁶¹

The Dante example serves as an evocative illustration of the supplement and grafting principles that make up the ideas behind the crises of the beginning and the end. While the syntactical erosion in the Eleventh Quartet may appear quite subtle, it becomes complicated with subsequent quartets. Turning to the Twelfth Quartet, the erosion is far more complex, producing larger structural problems for the work’s whole discourse.

What makes this opening section so striking is the fact that it represents Weinberg’s first sustained engagement with free chromaticism in his quartet cycle. ‘Free-chromaticism’, as distinct from serialism and dodecaphony, refers to the combination of melodies and harmonies that run the entire chromatic gamut. This differs from Shostakovich’s use of actual dodecaphony as an expressive device (Shostakovich also features it for the first time in his cycle in his own Twelfth Quartet, where there are several twelve-note rows). The first movement of Weinberg’s Twelfth Quartet adopts a ternary structure; the A material consists of a slow exchange, beginning at a *ppp* dynamic (see Ex. 3.30, below).

²⁶⁰ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. C.H. Sisson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 47.

²⁶¹ See: Teodolinda Barolini, ‘Autocitation and Autobiography’, in Harold Bloom ed., *Dante Alighieri* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004) 103-4.

Ex. 3.30, Quartet No. 12, first movement, opening.

Largo ♩ = 72



For this section, none of the voices lead the texture with a semblance of a melody. We hear a topic without melody or perhaps merely with the ghost of a melody (the entry of parts is similar to the opening of Bartók's Third Quartet – see Ex. 3.31).


Ex. 3.31, Bartók, Quartet No. 3, opening.

Moderato ♩ = 88



In Weinberg's Twelfth Quartet, the 'B' material introduces an energetic descending figure, replete with sextuplets and, later, quintuplets (Ex. 3.32).

Ex. 3.32, Weinberg, Quartet No. 12, first movement, R3.



This material seems to embody the energy and direction that was absent from the

opening. After reaching violent *ff* heights, the ‘A’ material appears again at R8, almost entirely unaltered. At R9, there is a brief reprise of the ‘B’ material by way of a coda, but now altered in one vital aspect, as the three lower parts introduce a B major chord underneath the first violin’s chromatic figurations (see Ex. 3.33).

Ex. 3.33, Quartet No. 12, first movement, R9.

The Twelfth is in several respects Weinberg’s most experimental quartet, full of ethereal harmonies and textures hitherto unencountered in his cycle. The first movement establishes the erosion of traditional syntax, but the discourse it proposes instead is one of abandonment. The initial erosion can be found in the ‘A’ material. The absence of movement or even a clear teleological process evokes a ‘ghostly’ atmosphere.

Elevating this idea to Derridean lengths, we are presented with the ‘hauntology’ of a classical syntax. From Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*, ‘hauntology’ describes the ethereal memory of physical objects, their permanence in memory or in expectation.²⁶² In the first movement of Weinberg’s Twelfth Quartet, the ‘ghostly’ A material also bears an excision with the teleological conventional syntax that has been excised from this supplementary passage. What we are left with is the hauntology of an opening movement, the spectre of establishing goal and syntax. The ‘B’ material represents the

²⁶² Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 2006) 73.

first effort to move away from this, with its small-scale topic of ‘suppressed fury’. However, the reappearance of the ghostly A material then renders the B section’s energy obsolete; the violence of the ‘B’ motif is rendered impotent by its juxtaposition with a B major accompaniment in the coda passage. As such, the ‘crisis of the beginning’ in the Twelfth Quartet establishes a goal for the entire work - to overcome the ghost of a classical syntax.

3.3.3. ENDINGS

As seen in Weinberg’s Eleventh and Twelfth Quartets, Reichardt’s ideas of erosion and collapse that disrupt overall discourse can be even more potent when applied to the beginning of a discourse. However, it is worth noting the origins of this concept as a means to examine the endings of works. Accordingly, I now turn to the endings of several of Weinberg’s Quartets. In Weinberg’s later quartets, the concluding movements moves towards a struggle to achieve closure in a discourse – something akin to a ‘crisis of the end’.

Reichardt’s term comes from an examination of the recurring cadence from the end of each movement of Shostakovich’s Sixth Quartet. Reichardt writes that the cadence ‘exposes the crisis of the end and the rupture of the real’.²⁶³ In other words, the crisis of the end in Reichardt’s study is the question of how to overcome a repeated gesture in such a way that will ensure full expressive closure. Turning to how this might apply to Weinberg’s cycle, it is tempting to mention several of his earlier quartets which feature recurring cadential material towards their conclusion.

The similarity between a closing cadence in Weinberg’s Second Quartet to that of Shostakovich’s Sixth has already been noted (see p. 51). The revised version of

²⁶³ Reichardt, *Composing the Modern Subject*, 30.

Weinberg's Second Quartet ends in an even more curious manner. The finale is set in G major with an ABA structure. The development contains many chromatic colourations, but the underlying tonality of G is preserved throughout. In the final bars of the revised version, repeated flourishes on G confirm the traditional syntax of repeated tonic to emphasise that the piece is coming to an end. However, the music shifts down to a heavily chromatic chord, with G-sharp in the bass (bracketed 'X' below). A quick scale (Y) leads to an even more 'darkened' chord, before octave Cs close the work (see Ex. 3.34).

Ex. 3.34, Quartet No. 2 (revised version), fourth movement, R19⁵.

The musical score is presented in four staves: Violin 1 (VI. 1), Violin 2 (VI. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is indicated as quarter note = 176. The score begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The final section of the score is marked with *ff* and includes the instruction *pizz.* (pizzicato). The final chord is marked with *ff* and *pizz.*. The score is divided into two sections, X and Y, by brackets below the staves.

This ending is discomfiting, considering the relatively straightforward tonality of the preceding material. In the original, the movement ends with a repetition of G-major chords. The crisis of the end in the revised quartet could deal with the question of how

to conclude differently from the original. Reichardt's term of 'the crisis of the end' is closely linked to elements of revision and repetition, including cyclic thematic material.

In the Third Quartet, the first and third movements end with the same passage, as octave Ds in the three lower voices punctuate a rising line in the first violin (Ex. 3.35).

Ex. 3.35, Quartet No. 3, first movement, ⁸R45.

The musical score for Ex. 3.35 consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for VI. 1, VI. 2, Vla., and Vc. The second system includes staves for VI. 1 and Vc. The first violin part (VI. 1) has a rising melodic line with slurs and accents. The second violin part (VI. 2) has a similar line. The viola (Vla.) and cello (Vc.) parts provide harmonic support with octaves. Dynamics include *pp* and *pizz.* A measure number '45' is marked above the second system.

The repetition of this closing material in the final movement raises questions about the large-scale proportions of the work. The finale's thematic material undergoes relatively little development, instead being repeated in an episodic fashion. The restatement of the first movement's coda evokes a 'crisis of the end' of an altogether different sort - the practical issue of how to end the work. By repeating this closing material, Weinberg unites the work across its movements but risks leaving the third movement as an anti-climax. In this sense, the questions raised across the final movement are left unanswered by this graft of previous material.

Weinberg reworked the Third Quartet in his Chamber Symphony No. 2, Op. 147. The work is mostly an arrangement for string orchestra and timpani, though there

are several notable alterations. In particular, the cyclic repetition at the work's end is replaced by slower material, ruminating on D (finishing with pizz. octave Ds across the parts – see Ex. 3.36). While the cyclic repetition in the Op. 14 quartet highlighted a certain level of immaturity in the command of large-scale structures, the older composer saw fit to omit such repetition in the Op. 147 version.

Ex. 3.36, Chamber Symphony No. 2, third movement, R8.

8 (♩ = 52)
 (Cello solo) ppp
 (Double-bass solo) ppp
 Timp. ppp
 (Vcs. + Dbs.) pp pizz.
 ff (Strings) pizz.

With his Fifth Quartet, allusion and quotation are refined further, particularly in the following example, which features an allusion to an earlier work. This movement, titled ‘Improvisation’, focuses particularly on the first violin in the role of soloist.

The following example comes from the close of the movement (Ex. 3.37):

Ex. 3.37, Quartet No. 5, fourth movement, ¹R35.

35 (♩ = 63)
 VI. 1 mp
 VI. 2
 Vla. p
 Vc. p

This bears a striking resemblance to another work, one that precedes the quartet by two years. Weinberg’s *Jewish Songs*, Op. 13, was written in 1943, while still in Tashkent. In the opening song, a simple child-like motif is given in the vocal part, which also returns in the final song. The concluding passage in the fourth movement of the Fifth Quartet bears more than a passing resemblance (see Ex. 3.38, below).

Ex. 3.38, *Children's Songs [Jewish Songs],* coda, bb. 4-11.

(Andante)

Sop. *ЛЯ ЛЯ ЛЯ ЛЯ ЛЯ ЛЯ ЛЯ*
(la la la la la la la)

(simile) *rit.*

Pno. *sf* *pp* *8 basso*

The cycle was renamed *Children's Songs* in 1944/5, and it enjoyed popular success as the first of Weinberg's works to be published. It was clearly close to his heart, as several later works quote or refer to the cycle. The close resemblance in Op. 27 suggests that he could have alluded to the cycle in order to lend a singing feel to the first violin's improvisation. In this example of near-quotation, the spectre haunting the Fifth Quartet is that of an earlier work (the term 'hauntology' is particularly evocative here - since in the coda of the *Jewish Songs* the child is weeping for its lost mother). A similar spectre reappears in the Sixth Quartet.

With the Sixth Quartet, three of the six movements allude to a common ending passage, recurring across the work. It is first heard in the third movement, as a quasi-recitative/cadenza line in the first violin (see Ex. 3.39).

Ex. 3.39, Quartet No. 6, third movement, R46.

It is then alluded to in the Fourth movement, now notated in 4/4 time, abandoning the recitative-like arrangement. As can be noted from the example above, the quavers are all marked with tenuto, an articulation reminiscent of the ‘ennui’ topic (though in the *ennui* passages identified above, tenuto is partnered with slurred pairs of quavers). Finally, in the sixth and final movement, it recurs as a coda, now heard in the cello (Ex. 3.40).

Ex. 3.40, Quartet No. 6, sixth movement, R99.

While its repetition is similar to the structural function of the repetitions in the Third quartet, the recitative-like phrase in the Sixth Quartet becomes marked as significant in its initial statement in the third movement.

As a rest-point and moment of brief contemplation, it can be read as outside the narrative of the Sixth Quartet itself. Adorno used the term ‘extraterritorial’ to describe a similar technique in the first movement of Beethoven’s Quartet Op. 132:

The first entry of the main theme in the cello [bar 11] is ‘extraterritorial’, a ‘motto’; only then, on the first violin, is it ‘in’ the piece [bar 13], while at the same time being

concealed through appearing as a mere *continuation* of the recitative melody, not as an *entry*.²⁶⁴

Michael Spitzer defines ‘extraterritoriality’ as ‘passages [that] are only obliquely related to the quartet as a whole, being interventions from beyond its conceptual space’.²⁶⁵ This definition neatly applies to this third movement, in its function as a brief meditation from outside of the events preceding it. The concept is similar to William Kinderman’s notion of the ‘parenthetical’:

Beethoven’s complex use of thematic foreshadowing and reminiscence contributes a dimension to his music that transcends a linear temporal unfolding. And his special interest in techniques of parenthetical enclosure, whereby contrasting passages are heard as an interruption within the larger context, further enriches the temporality of his musical forms, helping to open up narrative possibilities.²⁶⁶

Spitzer neatly summarises Kinderman’s ‘parenthetical enclosure’ as ‘the formal isolation of a lyrical interlude by faster outer sections’.²⁶⁷ In this definition, the third movement of Weinberg’s Sixth Quartet is itself a parenthetical enclosure, with the two faster ‘A’ sections surrounding the meditative ‘B’ section, followed by a coda. Such experimentations with narrative structures almost inevitably lead towards a focus on endings.

Reichardt’s ‘Crisis of the end’ comes into its own when applied to Weinberg’s Fifteenth Quartet. While the opening of the Eleventh Quartet has been shown to feature ‘graftings’ and ‘supplements’ that betray an outside presence of the Real, it is in the endings that an altogether more sinister feel emerges. Weinberg’s Fifteenth Quartet features nine movements; the fifth acts as a fulcrum, as the first four movements present a discourse of meandering energy, a struggle to establish a beginning. In the latter four

²⁶⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, Rolf Tiedemann ed., trans. Edmund Jephcott (London: Polity Press) 133.

²⁶⁵ Michael Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven’s Late Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006) 20.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 72-3.

movements, a ‘crisis of the end’ is presented, a discourse of trying to conclude events. Fanning writes that ‘the last five movements may all be understood as attempts to discover a finale’.²⁶⁸

With so many alternatives, Fanning’s reading of the movements’ ‘attempts to discover’ is similar to my Reichardt-adapted reading, but overlooks the importance of the impulse to conclude, which is conspicuously absent from these movements. With so many movements, a sense of unity with surrounding movements is almost entirely absent; as a result, any conclusion that could unite or resolve the previous movements is impossible. The four movements in turn present alternative solutions to the question simply of how to end a work.

The sixth movement is perhaps the most incongruous movement so far; its predecessors have ranged in mood from melancholic and ennui-like to an acerbic and violent energy. For this initial solution of how to conclude the work, an almost anachronistic path is taken: ‘anachronistic’, because while the harmonic language to this point has been free-floating, the sixth movement is firmly in B major, see Ex. 3.41 (indeed, its tonal language could place it firmly amongst his very earliest quartets; see p. 97).

Ex. 3.41, Quartet No. 15, sixth movement, opening.

The image shows the opening of the sixth movement of Quartet No. 15, featuring Violin I and II, Viola, and Violoncello. The score is in 3/4 time, marked with a tempo of quarter note = 176. The key signature is B major. The first two staves are for Violin I and Violin II, and the last two are for Viola and Violoncello. The music begins with a forte (ff) dynamic. The opening phrase is a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, which is repeated in a rondo-like manner.

The opening phrase is repeated in a rondo-like manner, becoming virtually sterile in the act of its repetition. As a candidate for a concluding movement, however, it is deficient.

²⁶⁸ Fanning, *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: In Search of Freedom*, 140.

Indeed, it raises even more spectres from the past, like a kind of re-awakened cousin from the time of the Second and Third Quartets.

The seventh movement moves closer toward resolving problems that have so far been raised across the Fifteenth Quartet. Its opening gesture certainly fits in with the complex chromaticism present in the first five movements (Ex. 3.42).

Ex. 3.42, Quartet No. 15, seventh movement, opening.

The musical score is for the opening of the seventh movement of Quartet No. 15. It features four staves: Violin 2 (VI. 2), Viola (VIa.), Violin 1 (VI. 1), and Violoncello (Vc.). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 72. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The first two measures show the Violin 1 part with a forte (*ff*) dynamic, playing a chromatic triplet pattern. The Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello parts are silent. The third measure shows the Violin 1 part continuing with the triplet pattern, while the Violoncello part enters with a forte (*ff*) dynamic, playing a sustained note. The number '8' is written above the Violin 1 staff in the third measure, indicating the start of the eighth movement.

However, its sustained *ff* dynamic restrains it from actually shifting to a higher level of drama. Indeed, out of the four last movements of the work, it can be easily argued that the eighth succeeds best in drawing questions and riddles of discourse to some semblance of a conclusion. In the manuscript, and in the first performance, the seventh and eighth movements were linked, leaving only eight movements in the quartet as a whole.²⁶⁹ The decision to separate them is a mystery, especially since the *attacca* link renders them virtually joined anyway.

The eighth movement's opening suggests a violence though manic *ffff pizz.* notes, evocative of the 'suppressed-fury' topic and well-suited to countering the sense of angst accumulated over the work's discourse up to this point (see Ex. 3.43, below).

²⁶⁹ See: Nikitina, 'Na avtorskom kontserte' ['At a composer's concert'], *Sovetskaya muzika* (October 1980) 33.

Ex. 3.43, Quartet No. 15, eighth movement, opening.

♩ = 80

VI. 1 (Vla.)

pizz.

mf

pizz. secco (non arp.)

Vc.

mf

(arco) *sfff*

Vla.

VI. 1

41

dim.

With a topic of failure constantly being repeated over the Fifteenth Quartet, be it a failure to accumulate energy, or the anachronistic spectre of a previous quartet-style, it is this energetic and defiant eighth movement that is best suited to concluding the work. The extreme tempo and dynamic in the Fifteenth Quartet's treatment renders the quoted material (see p. 132) distorted and near grotesque.

With the Fifteenth Quartet's limping and aggressive eighth movement, there is still a need to achieve a climax of sorts, the 'crisis of the end' across the work. As the instruments switch to *arco*, the dynamic level actually decreases. By the eighth movement's close, the level has fallen to *ppp*. Even here, the promise of a climax to conclude the discourse is confounded by the spectre of the topic of failure. The last movement of the Fifteenth Quartet evokes a trudging funeral march. Arguably, the death being mourned is of the subject in the Fifteenth Quartet itself, a symbolic funeral for the slow and protracted death that we have witnessed across the narrative of the whole work. Overall, the Fifteenth Quartet presents not only a protracted struggle to deal with closure, but also a good example of Weinberg's blending of musical expression to affect multiple narrative interpretations, of which the above has been just

one of many potential avenues for exploration.

3.4. CONCLUSIONS

The featured examples from Weinberg's Quartet cycle illustrate small and large-scale elements of the narratives created over his works. Through small-scale passages of various topics, a subject is established in the music and, accordingly, a potential discourse suggested. The identification of a subject, and the discourse that it portrays, manipulates psychological responses in the listener, guided by the subjects in Weinberg's narratives. Such narratives have been interpreted through their constituent elements of topic and discourse, reading different works for their presentation of a subject to the listener, and the narrative created by the work's subsequent discourse. As has been shown above, small instances of topics can suggest a subject to the listener. The combination of contrasting topics, including moods and emotions, establishes a discourse across a work, as the subject can be perceived to be encountering obstacles or going on a journey.

However, Weinberg's dense and complex musical narratives often problematise fundamental concepts of discourse itself. In passages of crisis at the beginnings and endings of works, Weinberg begins to call into question the confines of narrative. By observing the traditional syntax of conventional forms, narratives, and structural framing devices, Weinberg presents a gradual erosion of syntax, reflecting the 'twentieth-century subject'. In contrast to Reichardt's examination of Shostakovich's twentieth-century subjects, Weinberg's narratives revolve around subjects who encounter the Other, then reel away, exploring different avenues in response (as opposed to Shostakovich's narratives, where the Other is confronted directly). In this sense, Weinberg's twentieth-century subject presents a central narrative of struggle, evasion, and self-reflection, while Shostakovich gives a narrative of confrontation and

self-destruction. It is this contrast between subjects and their depiction that marks Weinberg's music as wholly distinct from that of his mentor. It is in his musical narratives that Weinberg's highly individual voice as a composer speaks out, presenting thinking subjects entirely in line with the compositional ethos outlined in the introduction to this thesis (see p. 22). One question remains from this discussion of narrative: the relationship between discourse and form. While larger-scale structures have been shown to contribute to the establishment of expressive discourses, the nature and substance of these structures has been deliberately omitted, to be addressed in the following chapter.

4. FORM

Weinberg's forms have not garnered much critical attention, beyond the observation that they often draw on traditional structures.²⁷⁰ Friedrich Geiger, for instance, writes that 'Weinberg frequently used established models to balance the free organisation of his large-scale form.'²⁷¹ This supposed dependence on received procedures has occasionally been criticised, as by Krzysztof Meyer, one of few living composers who can claim direct knowledge of both the man and the music:

[Weinberg] mastered the craft of composition to a high degree, and he loved music passionately. But was he truly creative [*kreativ*] as a composer? (I'm not talking about his traditionalism, but about individual features!) ... He didn't even try to solve traditional compositional problems unconventionally.²⁷²

Such comments are not to be dismissed lightly. Meyer is a respected composer in his own right, and counted Shostakovich as a close personal friend. Moreover, Meyer has published academic studies of Shostakovich and Lutosławski.²⁷³ His dismissive attitude is comparable to other critics who have disparaged Weinberg's music from the point of

²⁷⁰ Lyudmila Dmitriyevna Nikitina, 'Mieczysław Weinberg' in *New Grove Online* [accessed 20/10/14], and *Simfonii M. Vaynberga* [The Symphonies of M. Weinberg] (Moscow: Muzika, 1972) 107.

²⁷¹ Friedrich Geiger, 'Ideologie und Autonomie: Mieczysław Weinbergs Streichquartette', in Manfred Sapper and Volker Weichsel (eds.) *Die Macht der Musik: Mieczysław Weinberg: Eine Chronik in Tönen Osteuropa* 60 (July 2010), 101.

²⁷² Krzysztof Meyer, letter to Per Skans, 22 April 2000.

²⁷³ See Krzysztof Meyer, *Schostakowitsch – Sein Leben, sein Werk, seine Zeit* (Bergisch Gladbach: Atlantis, 1998), and *Lutosławski: Wege zur Meisterschaft* (with Danuta Gwizdalanka) [Two vols.] (Krakow: Pfau, 2004).

view of style and language, including Alexander Ivashkin and Levon Hakobian.²⁷⁴

However, Meyer has also advocated and even performed Weinberg's music in the past.²⁷⁵ His point of view, albeit offered in private correspondence rather than in print, is therefore one worth engaging with.

In contrast to Meyer, Geiger views Weinberg's use of established forms through the lens of Socialist Realism:

The formal structure in Weinberg's quartets sufficiently meets the ideological demands of Soviet art, insofar as they feature intelligible canonical models such as the sonata or fugue. Liberties in the formal dramaturgy that ran counter to the aesthetic doctrine of the time were compensated in this way.²⁷⁶

Geiger promotes a more balanced view than Meyer's, interpreting Weinberg's forms in the context of the system of aesthetic guidelines that was in place for the near-entirety of his quartet cycle. Even so, one senses at best a backhanded compliment in his formulation, since neither the 'ideological demands of Soviet art' nor the 'canonical models [of] sonata or fugue' are likely to strike an academic readership as powerful validations for the string quartet in Weinberg's social and musical context.

Evidently there is a need for a closer examination of what Weinberg actually does, before such airy generalisations can be accepted or rejected. In particular, I am concerned with the expressive imperatives that drive Weinberg's forms. Accordingly, this chapter examines forms in Weinberg's quartets, both within and across their constituent movements, beginning with the Classical quartet 'model', contrasted with other multi-movement structures. After this, Weinberg's approaches to three pre-existing forms will be examined: rondo, sonata, and variation form. The diversity and at

²⁷⁴ See: Alexander Ivashkin, 'Shostakovich and Schnittke: the erosion of symphonic syntax', in David Fanning ed., *Shostakovich studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 255; also see: Levon Hakobian, 'The Reception of Soviet Music in the West: A History of Sympathy and Misunderstandings', *Muzikologija*, 13(2012), 134.

²⁷⁵ See: Henny van der Groep, "'Shostakovich and the "Sixteenth Quartet": An Interview with Krzysztof Meyer' in *DSCH Journal* (41: 2014) 58-9.

²⁷⁶ Geiger, *Ideologie und Autonomie*, 102.

times idiosyncrasy uncovered will constitute a refutation of Meyer's critique and a more helpful explanation than Geiger's rather half-hearted defence.

4.1. THE CLASSICAL QUARTET MODEL

The phrase 'classical model' is often used but rarely elucidated. Back in 1895, Ebenezer Prout defined it through its origins:

The four-movement form, the most important of all, is an extension of the typical three-movement form by the addition of a second middle movement. The older composers, Haydn, Mozart, and their contemporaries, restricted the use of this form almost entirely to orchestral music, or to chamber music of several instruments (quartets, etc.). Beethoven was the first who frequently used it for solo sonatas, which, since his time, are quite as often written with four movements as with three.²⁷⁷

Prout drew attention to the importance placed upon this scheme for movement-layout, while also providing a general history of its development. Writing a century later,

Timothy Jackson defines the model more fully:

Normative macro-symphonic form may be defined as the four-movement form generally employed in the later symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, and in those of Beethoven. The first movement, usually in a faster tempo, is in sonata form. The second movement is in a slower tempo, while the third movement is either a Minuet with Trio or a Scherzo. The Finale, usually in a fast tempo, can be in either rondo or sonata form.²⁷⁸

The 'Classical Quartet' is generally understood as being defined by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven (more than one third of Paul Griffiths' *The String Quartet: A History* is dedicated to these three composers alone²⁷⁹). Histories of the quartet genre treat these

²⁷⁷ Ebenezer Prout, *Applied Forms: A Sequel to 'Musical Forms'* (London: Augener, 1895), 249.

²⁷⁸ Timothy L. Jackson, *Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 26.

²⁷⁹ See: Paul Griffiths, *The String Quartet: A History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983). Griffiths utilises musical forms to frame his history, as he recounts the origins of the genre ('exposition'), before moving through Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven ('development and recapitulation'); interestingly, when he reaches the 20th century, he lists Stravinsky and Bartók as the 'theme', and other composers as the 'variations' upon them, including Schoenberg, Cage, Shostakovich, and Boulez.

composer's works as a foundation, and anyone writing quartets subsequently might be expected to be familiar with at least a representative sample of them.

The generalisations behind the 'Classical Quartet' prototype stem from close familiarity with this body of works and can be reduced to the following model:

Fig. 4-i, Classical Quartet Model, movement scheme.

Movement	Tempo	Form	Tonality	
			Major key work	Minor key work
I	Allegro	Sonata	Tonic	Tonic
II	Adagio	(ABA)	Subdominant	Relative major
III	Andante/Scherzo	Minuet or Scherzo	Tonic	Tonic
IV	Allegro	Rondo	Tonic	Tonic

As a referential prototype, the above model serves as an effective summary of a significant body of works.²⁸⁰ However, its accuracy begins to collapse upon closer examination. In particular, the plotting of a tonal scheme yields many exceptions to the rule. For instance, there is Mozart's Quartet No. 20 in D major, K499, whose second movement trio section is in D minor. Beethoven's Quartets after Op. 18 set disregard the prototype; for instance, Quartet No. 7, in F major, the first 'Razumovsky', also features a third movement adagio in the tonic minor. Beethoven's late Quartets, beginning with Op. 127, expand the expectations of the quartet genre itself (particularly in terms of the 'introspective' and expressive character of a quartet²⁸¹). Op. 131, with its seven *attacca*-linked movements, represents Beethoven's furthest deviation from the

²⁸⁰ The 2nd and 3rd movements' forms are interchangeable, and even the tempo indications of each movement are far from fixed. Those included here are intended as an initial guideline. There are, of course, many exceptions to this generalised prototype. Obvious examples include Haydn's Op. 1 Quartets, the majority of which are in *five* movements instead of four. Beethoven's late quartets stretched the boundaries of the quartet form and they are generally considered as outside of the 'Classical' Quartet period.

²⁸¹ V. Kofi Agawu, 'The First Movement of Beethoven's Opus 132 and Classical Style' in *College Music Symposium*, 27 (1987), 30.

classical layout for a string quartet. The ‘classical quartet’ presents a general solution to many of the traditional problems associated with the string quartet genre, including practical questions of texture and balance, as well as expressive characteristics including introspection, leading the genre to be viewed as suited to musical connoisseurs. Such traditional problems will be explored more fully below.

The ‘classical model’ often proves to be the exception rather than the rule in the classical repertoire, but its usefulness as a term persists. For the purposes of this study, the ‘classical model’ is used to refer to the above prototype, with its roots in a core group of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven quartets. Familiarity with these core works has served as a useful pedagogical tool, but is often extended to include matters of critical assessment. Even Shostakovich was known to make such judgements on occasion.

Valentin Berlinsky recalled Shostakovich’s reaction to his interest in Luigi Nono:

Usually Shostakovich preferred not to divulge his attitude towards avant-garde music... On this occasion, Dmitri Dmitriyevich suddenly went glum. Then he said, ‘Tell me, have you played all the Haydn Quartets?’ ‘No, Dmitri Dmitriyevich, of course not.’ ‘Well, please play all the Haydn Quartets, then all the Mozart Quartets, then all of Schubert’s Quartets. Only then should you play Luigi Nono’s music.’²⁸²

Shostakovich’s apparent distaste for Nono aside, his emphasis on familiarity with the classics proves revealing. In Shostakovich’s draconian conclusion, contemporary quartets ought to be played only by ensembles that are fully versed in the ‘canon’ of the classics. Berlinsky’s reply (‘of course not’) shows such an opinion to be impractical in the extreme, but this has not stopped the spread of such attitudes throughout the musical academy. While there are many reasons to suppose that Weinberg shared Shostakovich’s opinion (at least he never publicly expressed any disagreement), little is known of Weinberg’s musical training. However, some tentative speculations can be proposed. Witold Maliszewski (a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov) was a professor at the Warsaw Conservatory during Weinberg’s time there. Weinberg’s composition tutor in

²⁸² Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life* (London: Faber, 2006), 282.

Minsk, Vasily Zolotaryov, had also been a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov; Shostakovich himself was a grand-pupil, via his teacher Maximilian Steinberg. Although Weinberg developed his style and technique over many years, he never rejected his roots in the Rimsky-Korsakov school, one that readily embraced quartet composition (including Zolotaryov's six quartets).

4.2. MOVEMENT STRUCTURES IN WEINBERG'S QUARTETS

Weinberg's Quartets utilise a variety of movement structures, be they single-movement works, four movements according to the classical model, or those with more than four movements. Fig. 4-ii, below, lists Weinberg's quartets and their number of movements alongside those of Shostakovich, with a movement-count tally chart for both (Fig. 4-iii).

Fig. 4-ii, String Quartets and their respective no. of movements

		<u>Weinberg</u>																
Quartet		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Movements		3	3/4	3	4	5	6	3	1	4	4	4	4	1	5	9	4	1

		<u>Shostakovich</u>														
Quartet		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Movements		4	4	5	4	3	4	3	5	5	4	7	2	1	3	6

Fig. 4-iii, Movement-number frequency tally

WEINBERG		SHOSTAKOVICH	
Number of movements	Tally	Number	Tally
1	3	1	1
2	0	2	1
3	4	3	3
4	7	4	5
5	2	5	3
6	1	6	1
7	0	7	1
9	1	9	0

The importance of multi-movement organisation can be gleaned from these tables, particularly in Weinberg's Quartets 3-6, whose increasing number of movements is closely tied to an increasing ambition in large-scale structures. Weinberg's principal engagement with the 'four-movement model' can be found in a block, with Quartets 9-12, while his interest in single-movement works only dates from his third group of quartets, starting with the Eighth (see groupings of Weinberg's quartets on p. 34). I will begin with the four-movement works, and then move away from the classical archetype

to the three single-movement quartets, before some remarks on his quartets with more than four movements.

4.2.1. WEINBERG AND THE ‘CLASSICAL QUARTET’

In Fig. 4-iv, Weinberg’s four-movement quartets are outlined, giving each movement’s tempo indications, tonality and, where appropriate, traditional formal category.²⁸³ As will be noted, the structure of each movement sometimes fits neatly within concepts of traditional forms; more complex movements are left unlabelled.

Fig. 4-iv, Weinberg’s four-movement quartets.

Quartet No.	1st mvt.	2nd mvt.	3 rd mvt.	4 th mvt.
No. 2, Op. 3/145 [Revised version]	Allegro (Sonata) G	Andante b	Allegretto [In rev. only] (C)	Presto (Rondo) G
No. 4, Op. 20	Allegro (Sonata) E-flat	Moderato (Rondo) a	Largo (ternary) d	Allegro (Rondo) e-flat
No. 9, Op. 80	Allegro (Sonata) A/f-sharp	Allegretto (Rondo) B-flat	Andante (Rondo) (G)	Scherzo (F-sharp)
No. 10, Op. 85	Adagio – (Sonata- Rondo) (a)	Adagio (ABCD A) (a)	Adagio (Rondo) (a)	Allegretto (a)
No. 11, Op. 89	Allegro (Sonata) F	Allegretto (ternary) (b)	Adagio (Rondo) E	Allegro (ternary) (F)
No. 12, Op. 103	Largo (ABA+coda) (‘b’ as strong root)	Allegretto (Rondo) (C)	Presto (variations) (C-sharp)	Moderato (Rondo) (b)
No. 16, Op. 130	Allegro (Sonata) (e-flat)	Allegro (Scherzo & Trio) (c)	Lento (a)	Moderato (C-flat)

Several similarities to the ‘classical model’ are revealed by the table, and some will be expanded further with the case studies on traditional forms below. Nearly all of the

²⁸³ Tonalties are here labelled with upper-case for major key and lower-case for minor – F-sharp = major and f-sharp = minor. Where tonalties become less clear-cut, thanks to chromatic alterations, passages of ‘twelve-noteness’, or polytonality, notes that remain fundamental roots are included in brackets.

quartets listed begin with a movement using sonata principles. This conforms entirely to the classical model, as do those quartets with rondo finales. Rondo can also be found in some of the interior movements of these four-movement works. The trend for slow-tempo rondo forms can also be noted from Fig. 4-iv.

This heavily reductive table is useful in several other respects. It can be noted that nearly all of these works begin and end in the same key (or at least by referring to the same pitch-centre). Exceptions include the Fourth Quartet, which ends in the tonic minor, and the Sixteenth, which begins with e-flat as a point of reference, but concludes with a passage in an ambiguous C-flat major.

Quartets Nos. 9 to 12, written in close succession, all adhere closely to the four-movement classical model. At this point (second half of the 1960s), Weinberg and Shostakovich's friendly quartet-writing competition was at its height. However, Shostakovich's quartets from this time do not show a similar focus on the classical model, beyond his own Tenth Quartet (from Quartet 8 onwards, Shostakovich experimented with different movement numbers). While Weinberg's move towards his later style can be traced from the Tenth Quartet onwards, he continues to refer back to the established forms of the classical model. During this period, Weinberg began a dual dialogue through his music; not only was he constantly engaging with Shostakovich's work and the classical tradition, he also started referring back to his own past with extensive self-quotation, and revisions of earlier works (see Chapter 3, pp. 109-119). This retrospective activity would also inform his commemorative works, becoming something of a 'mission statement' for his late style.

4.2.2. WEINBERG'S SINGLE-MOVEMENT QUARTETS

Uniting seemingly separate components of a work into a single-movement structure carries its own problems and traditions for a composer. A 'single-movement' work

carries virtually no pre-conceptions about the substance of its form²⁸⁴ and Weinberg's three single-movement quartets (Nos. 8, 13, & 17) feature complex structures and cyclically repeated themes. The links between segments are usually blurred, perhaps the better to blend the material into a single movement rather than leaving distinct sections.

Both the Eighth and Seventeenth Quartets subdivide into three sections, with a cyclic return at the conclusion of each. In this manner, each flirts with the loose notion of being in a sonata form over the course of the piece, though this link is more explicit in the Seventeenth Quartet. The Thirteenth, meanwhile, subdivides into four sections, with an additional coda; see Fig. 4-v, below, with structural summaries of each work.

²⁸⁴ Notable examples that predate Weinberg include Schoenberg's two great single-movement early works, his Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, his Opp. 4 and 5, and his First String Quartet, Op. 7. The Quartet, in particular, represents an ever-unfurling dialogue, condensing the three or four movements of standard forms into one work (some analysts have also viewed it as a double-function sonata form – see 4.4, below).

Fig. 4-v, Structural summaries of Opp. 66, 118, and 146.

Eighth Quartet, Op. 66.

A1	B1	A2	C1	D1	C2	B2
Opening	⁵ R3	R9	⁸ R10	R16 ⁸	⁵ R30	R35
Adagio J=50	Andante J=60	Adagio J=50	Allegretto J=108	Allegro J. = 92	Allegretto J=108	Andante J=60

Thirteenth Quartet, Op. 118.

A Opening	B 2nd Section	C 3rd Section	D 4th Section	(A1) (Coda)
	R5	R13	R18	R24 ³
Introduction of main themes/motifs	Faster tempo, extended use of special playing techniques	Characterised by more sonoristic effects, including ‘smear’ gestures	An attempt to ‘round off’ the work, with reference to previous material, esp. the 2nd section	Brief return to opening material, final return to ‘smear’ gestures

Seventeenth Quartet, Op. 146.

A	B	C (A1)
Allegro (dotted crotchet = 92) (opening)	Andantino - Adagio - Lento R12	Allegro (dotted crotchet = 92) ⁷ R21
Exposition : Themes 1 & 2, 3rd theme introduced towards the end of section	Middle section’ - expanded development,	Initially, themes from A combined with textures from B, before a full recapitulation at R27 ¹³

Of the three works, the Seventeenth Quartet appears to fall into the simplest structure, with three brief sections – though this conceals several complicated subdivisions. The

Eighth features multiple sub-divisions within sections, while the Thirteenth comes closest to the notion of a 'through-composed' form.

With the Eighth Quartet, the two sections A and B form an introductory 'movement' (up to the *Allegretto* just before R10), giving the impression of a slow preface for the rest of the work to come. The *Andante* segment (labelled 'B1' in the above table) provides thematic material that is varied in the 'C' segments of the central section. In Weinberg's first foray into a single-movement quartet, distinctions between sections are blurred, as the 'D' thematic material mixes with the 'C' material from R29. As a Coda, the 'B' material is reprised, providing an effective conclusion to the central section.

Weinberg's next single-movement quartet contains an even more complex formal structure. The single movement of No. 13 outwardly parallels Shostakovich's Thirteenth, but the similarities end there; Weinberg's structure is distinct from Shostakovich's, featuring four discernible sections and coda, with 'blurring' linking passages. Shostakovich employs a Bartókian ABCBA arch form. In Weinberg's Thirteenth, the beginning of each section is not always clearly defined, as extended transitions link them together. The 'plotting' of the sections above is an attempt to pinpoint when the section has clearly begun, rather than a precise break from the previous section. There is relatively little 'sign-posting' between them; an opening quintuplet semiquaver motif and Weinberg's characteristic alternating fourths provide much of the material for variation across the work. The proliferation of these themes contributes to the 'blurring' effect; no sooner has a passage come into its own, with a different direction, then the opening themes recur in transformation.

With the Seventeenth Quartet, the three distinct sections of the single-movement work lend themselves to be read in relation to a single overall sonata form; indeed, several formal idiosyncrasies are revealed towards the work's conclusion. For this

reason, this work will also be discussed in relation to sonata form below. The opening section features two contrasting themes, while an extended transition links into the central section, in a manner similar to the Eighth and Thirteenth Quartets. In the case of the Seventeenth, linking material recurs, with the solo cello line featured prominently in each transition – transforming it into an important marker. The central section is more expansive than the exposition, with numerous tempo changes, and several unrelated themes. A ‘darkening’ leads into the repeated linking passage before a recapitulation of the expository themes, conforming to basic sonata-form tonality schema. In this way, the Seventeenth can be easily read as a single-movement Sonata form, albeit complicated by the thematic material present in its central section (see 4.4, p. 204 for more on the Seventeenth Quartet).

In addition to these three single-movement works, several of the multi-movement works link *attacca* between movements, namely nos. 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, and 15, effectively blurring them into single-movement works (though the links and breaks between sections are usually more distinct than is the case in the single-movement quartets). For example, the Tenth Quartet’s four movements are marked *attacca* in the manuscript score, and are also linked by tied notes. In the published score, released eight years later, the work is presented as a single movement with brief pauses between each ‘movement’. In addition, the manuscript’s movements were originally titled, reading ‘aria’, ‘night music’, ‘reprise’, and ‘night music’ again (revealing much about the role of thematic restatement in the work as a whole). With the edit to a single-movement work, the Tenth Quartet exemplifies the ambiguous distinction between *attacca*-linked works and those with single-movement layouts.

4.2.3. QUARTETS WITH FIVE MOVEMENTS OR MORE

There are four Weinberg Quartets that expand beyond four movements. Of these, the Fifth and Sixth continue the trajectory of the group formed with quartets Three and

Four, where the number of movements in each work increases according to the quartet number. In 1978-9, more than thirty years later, Weinberg wrote two quartets in quick succession, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth (standing as ‘sister works’ to each other). The Fourteenth has five movements, while the Fifteenth consists of an extraordinary nine movements. As such, the groupings of Weinberg’s quartets with five movements or more form two pairs.

All four works show a discernible large-scale organisation across their movements. For instance, the five movements of the Fifth Quartet each bear an expressive title and the central third movement proves an important marker for the overall structure (Fig. 4-vi).

Fig. 4-vi, Quartets Nos. 5 and 6, movement structures.

First movement	Second movement	Third movement	Fourth movement	Fifth movement
‘Melody’	‘Humoresque’	‘Scherzo’	‘Improvisation’	‘Serenade’
Ternary form	ABA-Coda	ABCA	Rondo - ABAB	ABCBA
B-flat	F	G-flat	(g/E-flat)	B-flat → D

First mvt.	Second mvt.	Third mvt.	Fourth mvt.	Fifth mvt.	Sixth mvt.
Sonata	ABACBA	ABABC	ABACD-Coda	(Sonata Rondo) ABACABA	(Sonata)
e	(f)	(F)	e	g → G	G# → E

Similarly, the Sixth Quartet has a structural fulcrum. In the case of the Sixth, the second and third movements link *attacca*, in the same tempo and with thematic material carried over. The third movement presents a parenthetical breakdown of the previous two, juxtaposing earlier themes with recitative linking-passages (see p. 176). In this manner, the mid-point of the work initiates a change of direction from the opening, as the following fourth movement has a slow-fugato texture.

The Fifth Quartet features a recurring passage at the end of the fourth and the fifth movements, with a rising-and-falling motif in the first violin. In another parallel between both works, the Sixth also features a cyclic ending passage, first heard at the end of the fourth movement, and then repeated at the close of the finale.

Parallels can also be identified between the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Quartets, though similarities are more general than those in the earlier pair. The five movements are mostly episodic in construction and there is little cyclic repetition across the work (see Fig. 4-vii, below).²⁸⁵ This is taken to its extreme in the Fifteenth Quartet, with its nine movements. The closest parallel to such a large number of movements in Shostakovich's cycle is his Eleventh Quartet, with seven movements (though these are more like character studies with descriptive markers; Weinberg's Fifteenth only features metronome markings at the head of each movement). Weinberg's Fifteenth opens with a slow tempo and the second movement shifts to an even slower tempo (echoing the six successive slow movements of Shostakovich's last quartet). By the third movement, some sort of aggression is found, and a rapid change in direction initiates several angrily-paced movements.

Fig. 4-vii, Quartets Nos. 14 & 15, movement structures.

First mvt.	Second mvt.	Third mvt.	Fourth mvt.	Fifth mvt.
ABACD	(Rondo)	(Scherzo) A - B	ABA	5-part Rondo (ABABA)
(C)	(G / D)	(A)	(F#)	(D)
♩. = 96	♩ = 63	♩ = 106	♩. = 54	♩ = 152

1st	2nd	3rd	4 th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
AB	(pointillist)	Rondo	(variations)	(Scherzo)	ABA	(recit.)	ABA	(coda)
G-flat	(G)	(G#)	(unst.)	(12-note)	B	(C)	(C)	(D-flat)
♩ = 69	♩ = 56	♩. = 84	♩ = 112	♩ = 192	♩ = 176	♩ = 72	♩ = 80	♩ = 60

²⁸⁵ Labelling of tonality in Quartets Nos. 14 & 15 is left deliberately vague, owing to the equivocal tonal rooting of Weinberg's chromaticism in these works.

The obvious comparison with a quartet containing more than four movements is that of Beethoven's Op.131, with its seven movements. But Weinberg goes even further than this number in his Fifteenth Quartet; while the movements are seemingly unrelated and episodic in construction, a musical collage is created through their juxtaposition. The nine movements fail to establish an expressive drive to be 'composed out' over the course of the work, resulting instead in an urgent search for a dramatic direction. Towards the final movements, the search is abandoned.

While the Fifth and Sixth Quartets can be held aloft as examples of Weinberg's early mastery of the genre, the later pair can be thought of as experimental movement-structures, seeking an entirely new dimension of expression. In the Fourteenth, this is briefly explored, but it is given full reign in the Fifteenth. Weinberg's innovations in form often consist of his organisation of movements within a piece. His experimentations with combinations of movement-lengths became an expressive tool for him, just as important as any other. These experiments occurred on a small-scale too, across forms in individual movements; perhaps the most immediately noticeable of these is Rondo.

4.3. RONDO FORM

The Soviet theorist Mark Aranovsky viewed Rondo in its wider context as the typical form for a symphonic finale.²⁸⁶ Aranovsky summarised that the finale rondo represented 'Homo communis', the entire human community and, furthermore, that the finale's semantics evoked 'life as a whole'.²⁸⁷ When the form is found in a second or third movement (as opposed to a finale), it would be reasonable to believe that some of these

²⁸⁶ See: Mark Aranovsky, *Simfonicheskiye iskaniya* [Symphonic explorations] (Leningrad: Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1979).

²⁸⁷ Aranovsky, *Simfonicheskiye iskaniya*, 27, and 33, quoted in David Fanning, 'Carl Nielsen and Theories of Symphonism' in *Carl Nielsen Studies* (2009) 13 & 17. Aranovsky's generalisations also reveal the wider 'affirmative' expectations for finale movements in the context of Soviet aesthetics.

affirmative characteristics would be carried over. In particular, the conception of ‘Homo communis’ is relevant to Weinberg’s rondo forms. Aranovsky describes a ‘relative balance of functional means’ in the finale-rondo, and it is this structural feature that can be read as compatible with ‘Homo communis’.²⁸⁸

With its familiar structure, best defined as ‘ABACA’ or some variant thereon, rondo structure is more thematically than tonally driven. The recurrence of ‘A’ themes establishes a sense of departure and return, an expressive trajectory that is embedded in the architecture of the form itself. There are many variations of rondo, including symmetrical rondo (ABACABA, sometimes expanded to ‘sonata rondo’), where tonal and thematic contrasts are exploited more extensively, especially in the developmental function of the ‘C’ section. Aranovsky’s reading that rondo’s balanced structure represents ‘life as a whole’, while clearly marked by Soviet aesthetic pre-conceptions, ascribes rich meaning to the form and provides an appealing expressive archetype.

Even though there are many movements across his quartets in some sort of rondo form, Weinberg never titled one as such.²⁸⁹ The two examples below come from his Fourth and Eleventh quartets.²⁹⁰ With twenty years separating the two works, they are hugely different in style. The rondo second movement of the Fourth Quartet wears its stylistic influences on its sleeve, with a clear indebtedness to the final movement of Bartok’s Fifth Quartet (see Ex. 4.1 and Ex. 4.2, below). The Eleventh Quartet represents Weinberg shifting into his most experimental phase of quartet writing, sometimes echoing Shostakovich’s late quartets through the years 1965-75, but more often than not producing highly original structures. In the Fourth, this takes place through the whirling

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Weinberg rarely titled movements at all; two exceptions in the quartets are the Fifth (titled ‘Melody’, ‘Humoresque’, ‘Scherzo’, ‘Improvisation’, and ‘Serenade’) and the Tenth (originally titled ‘Aria’, ‘Night-Music’, ‘Reprise’, and ‘Night-Music’ again). These titles describe musical character, rather than labels of musical form.

²⁹⁰ Aranovsky refers to finales when summarising rondo form, but also seeks to summarise the form’s expressive archetypes, regardless of which movement it is found in. As such, Aranovsky’s concepts are here applied to two non-finale movements, with a similar focus on archetypes.

character of the opening ‘A’ theme. In the Eleventh, the rondo form is counterposed with a much slower tempo – like a film screening in slow motion (see Ex. 4.3, below).

Using terms defined by William Caplin, I will refer to the two distinct elements of Rondo as ‘refrain’ and ‘couplet’.²⁹¹ Under these terms, ‘refrain’ refers to the principal theme that alternates with contrasting passages, the latter being referred to as ‘couplets’. These are lettered in Fig. 4.viii below, using ‘A’ for the refrain, and ‘B’ and ‘C’ for the couplets. For further detail, these letters are then numbered to show the frequency and ordering of the refrain and couplets (for instance, ‘A3’ refers to the refrain thematic material in its third statement).

Fig. 4-viii, Quartet No. 4, second movement, structural summary.

⁴ R37	R42	R45	² R47	⁴ R54	R56 ⁴	² R62
A1	B1	A2	C1	B2	A3	Coda (C2)
a	a → unst..	a	e → unst.	a/unst.	a	a

While the refrain theme is bitingly chromatic, the ‘B’ and ‘C’ couplets present more lyrical themes which are then subjected to chromatic ‘darkening’. Despite a high level of chromaticism, tonal roots provide strong reference points throughout; even passages with the densest chromaticism feature a pedal point. The tonal scheme focuses on the resetting of the ‘C’ material from the dominant minor to the tonic in the coda (see Fig. 4-viii, above). Apart from this transformation, the movement predominantly deploys shades around A minor as a modal point of departure. Ex. 4.1 shows the opening of the movement and the first presentation of the refrain:

²⁹¹ William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 231.

Ex. 4.1, Quartet No. 4, second movement, opening.

Moderato assai $\text{♩} = 152$

VI. 1
VI. 2

ff *ff* *simile*

37

Despite the high level of chromaticism between the two violin parts, the note A can be identified as a strong point of reference, often falling on stronger crotchet beats in the bar, as can be found in the first three bars. The indebtedness to Bartók can be observed with similar textures and identical metronome marks, see Ex. 4.2, below.

Ex. 4.2, Bartók, Quartet No. 4, fifth movement, opening.

Allegro molto ♩ = 152

VI. 1
VI. 2
Vla.
Vc.

ff *sf* *sf* *sf*
ff *sf* *sf* *sf*
ff *sf* *sf* *sf*
ff *sf* *sf* *sf*

ff *simile*

The above is one of the most explicit encroachment of Bartók's style in Weinberg's cycle, but it would be by no means the last (see p. 54). In Weinberg's movement, couplets 'B' and 'C' contrast the refrain with lyrical themes that are comparatively transparent in their tonalities. 'B' cements the key of A minor with a *lugubre* theme, continuing allusions to the refrain in its accompanying textures. 'C' hints at A minor, but shifts to E minor before 'darkening' – where the level of chromaticism increases (importantly, the tonal 'darkenings' are complemented by a range of timbral effects, including rapidly alternating pizz. and *arco*, numerous glissandi and a series of *col legno* chords, fragmenting the previously stable accompaniment textures).

An important point to note from Fig. 4-viii is the altered rondo-scheme towards the conclusion of the movement. While the 'C' couplet is recast into A minor in tonal closure, the ordering of 'B2' immediately after 'C1' confounds the usual refrain-

couplet-refrain ordering of the form. The reappearance of the refrain after ‘B2’ goes some way to address the imbalance, but is usurped further by the final iteration of the ‘C’ couplet, doubling as coda. In this case, the predictable alternation of refrain-couplet-refrain is problematised; the tonal ‘darkening’ of each thematic group infiltrates the structural layers of the movement. This reordering of materials sends the roles of ‘refrain’ and ‘couplet’ awry, concluding the movement’s rondo form with an unconventional solution that abandons thematic closure.

A highly contrasting rondo can be found in the Eleventh Quartet. This serves as a useful example because it takes the form of a slow rondo, like several of the movements listed in Fig. 4-iv (p. 189). The movement’s restrained character is initially suggested by the *Adagio sempre* tempo indication. In the ABABABA structure, the ‘B’ couplets take the form of solos - evoking ritornello form (Fig. 4-ix).

Fig. 4-ix, Quartet No. 11, third movement, summary.

A1	B1	A2	B2	A3	B3	A4
	R55	R56	R57	R58	R59	R60
Theme in 1st vl.	Viola solo	Shortened tutti, led by vla.	1st vl. solo	Tutti led by 2nd. vl.	Cello solo.	Cello leads tutti, vla. begins solo before attacca link

The refrain begins with a short motif given in the first violin, joined by the cello in imitation, with augmented rhythms (and with the motif itself a seventh lower - Ex. 4.3).

Ex. 4.3, Quartet No. 11, third movement, opening.

Adagio sempre

VI. 1
p
dim.

Vc.
pp

(55)

Vc.
pp

Vla.
p

Each restatement of the refrain follows this pattern of entry, though the voice that leads the refrain changes with each restatement. The motif of the refrain can be understood as a sort of ‘ground’, repeating between the sections. It does not necessarily start on E in each refrain, but bears a similar rhythmic relationship to the second voice that enters afterwards (in the case above, the cello). It can be noted from Fig. 4-ix that each voice takes it in turn to begin a refrain, but there is not a ‘B’ solo couplet for each of them. This might be interpreted as suggesting a kind of equality between the voices (though stopping short of full equality), but the effect in performance is of a slow and persistent dialogue.

The viola entry at ²R55 sets the tone for each of the ‘B’ sections, exploring the opening motif with modally altered scales, particularly in its suggestion of whole-tone ascendance (see Ex. 4.3, above). For each of these solo passages, the tonal frame of E major/C-sharp minor is often abandoned in a free exploration of each instrument’s higher register. With each refrain, however, a return to more straightforward tonality is established, particularly in the block-like opening melodic intervals of a fifth, a fourth, a second, and a fourth.

The most important section in the case of this movement is perhaps the final refrain. With the established pattern of ‘chorus’ leading to ‘soloist’, the viola begins to enunciate a solo (which by rights ought to have to gone to the second violin, to complete the balance, or ‘equality’, across the parts), but is cut short by settling on a *morendo* chord with the cello before an *attacca* into the final movement.

Rondo appears to have been a form with rich expressive potential for Weinberg. Aranovsky’s conception of rondo as illustration of a community’s richness can be understood as one viewpoint on the ‘affirmative’ archetypes of the form. However, in the case of Weinberg’s Fourth Quartet, rondo is combined with a high level of chromaticism that evokes something of Weinberg’s ‘suppressed fury’ topic. The opposite means to achieve a similar effect is through a slower tempo, implying expressive imperatives of nostalgia and loss, like in the Eleventh Quartet, where the refrain-couplet structure is paired with a ‘flawed’ cycle of solos. While the traditional model for rondo may be quite flexible (especially in terms of tonal structures), Weinberg made heavy use of one of the seemingly most sanctified and versatile models of all: sonata form.

4.4. SONATA FORM

The continued use of pre-existing forms in music post-1900 seemingly poses an anachronism for the music-historian. The expectations that would have been encountered by Brahms were undermined well before the time of the mid-twentieth century, owing to a multitude of changes in styles and aesthetic taste (particularly with regard to harmony and tonality – undermining the structural foundation of the sonata). Thomas Schmidt-Beste writes:

If Schumann found the sonata moribund in 1839, one might think that this would apply even more to the twentieth century. In a period in which all the formal and tonal norms of the Classical and Romantic traditions of instrumental composition were questioned or, indeed, jettisoned, composing sonatas, much less composing in sonata form, could have been considered an utter anachronism.²⁹²

However, the sonata form is by no means absent from music of the twentieth-century. Indeed, its prevalence continued, with sonata-form works by composers as diverse as Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Martinů, Hindemith, and Britten, to name a few. This was despite statements questioning the viability of traditional forms, such as the following from Stravinsky, writing about his Octet: ‘Form, in my music, derives from counterpoint. I consider counterpoint as the only means through which the attention of the composer is concentrated on purely musical questions. Its elements also lend themselves perfectly to an architectural construction’.²⁹³ Despite Stravinsky’s deliberately obscure proclamation, the Octet’s first movement features a clear sonata-form structure, while the remaining two adopt a variation form and rondo-form respectively. Evidently, despite composers’ protestations, some elements of sonata form continued to be appealing in the twentieth century.

Rigorous labelling of forms risks pressing an interpretation upon music, whether in the role of critical advocate or historiographer. It can sometimes imply that a composer may pick sonata, as if it were tucked amongst the other musical forms on a shelf in the composer’s study. The analyst’s identification of sonata forms may thus unintentionally thrust ideological baggage upon the work, consisting of both the form’s tradition and structural expectations. An attentive approach is required to discuss sonata form while trying to avoid such ideological implications where possible. Despite this, the ‘Formenlehre’ generalisation of ‘universal values’ in musical forms seems to have

²⁹² Thomas Schmidt-Beste, *The Sonata* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 157.

²⁹³ Igor Stravinsky, ‘Some Ideas about my Octuor’ (Reprinted from *The Arts*, January 1924), in Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works* (London: Faber, 1966), 577.

been a system that Weinberg himself subscribed to, despite its problems for contemporary thinking.

Building upon the considerations about the ‘classical model’, one recourse is to consider what is it that makes sonata-like forms attractive to a composer in general.

There are many questions of what makes it different from other forms, including:

- Its potential for self-sufficiency (there is no need for text, programme, or overt referentiality beyond themes and their interaction).²⁹⁴

- Its potential to move beyond simple structures of statement-contrast-restatement, such as in rondo, minuet & trio (i.e. sonata is more dynamic, open to expansion).

Schoenberg wrote: ‘Its greatest merit...is its extraordinary flexibility...the internal details may be subjected to almost any mutation without disturbing the validity of the structure as a whole’.²⁹⁵

- Its reputation as music reserved for connoisseurs (a particular ‘mode of listening’ - a listener has to ‘know’ the style and structural markers to recognise or even ‘understand’ a sonata movement).²⁹⁶

The notion of the ‘connoisseur’ is especially appealing when string quartets are taken into consideration, often said to be a connoisseurs’ genre par excellence.²⁹⁷ The genre drew criticism in the Soviet Union, where it was perceived as music for small audiences of specialist listeners as opposed to ‘accessible’ pieces for large audiences.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ With the notable exception of musical quotation, provoking extra-musical content/interpretation.

²⁹⁵ Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, Gerald Strang and Leonard Stein eds. (London: Faber, 1996), 200.

²⁹⁶ Similar to Leonard B. Meyer’s concept of the ‘competent listener’, see: Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (University of Chicago Press, 1956).

²⁹⁷ This idea can be traced at least as early as Beethoven, who wrote to George Smart in 1814 that his Op. 95 Quartet was ‘for a small circle of connoisseurs and is never to be performed in public’. See: Seow-Chin Ong, ‘On the String Quartet, Op. 95’, in *Beethoven Forum* (2006), 213.

²⁹⁸ See: Kiril Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers 1939-1953*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006) 209.

Another consideration for any composer invoking sonata principles is thematic recurrence. A number of salient choices present themselves:

- If themes return, what order are they given in?
- Are they in their original order?
- Are they heard in the same keys that they were first stated in?
- If the first theme sets up a 'home' key, does this reappear?
- In all the above, what is the dramatic and/or psychological effect?

The return to the 'home' key (or lack thereof) carries ripe potential for dramatic exploitation, established on a tonal basis.

Sonata cannot be said to be a template for composers to drop their music into, but is instead an ensemble of possibilities for dramatic structure through musical themes. This results in a form both highly rich in expression and also ripe for exploiting the expectations of 'competent listeners'. The underlying principles that evoke 'sonata' include an emphasis on the contrast or similarity between themes; when combined with tonal contrast and modulation, this provides the foundation of sonata's dramatic drive. The drama comes about from establishing the first key as a marked point of departure, something that an audience can remember and a goal for the music to return to. Any contrasts in subsequent themes serve to emphasise the departure from this tonal starting point. In this way, tonal centricity was traditionally the most powerful means for conveying a teleological movement across a work, a sense of travel and return that could be both quasi-physical and psychological.

While composers may not have extensively questioned the form in their musical practice, scholars certainly did. Adorno viewed the form with derision, as Robert Witkin paraphrases:

Beethoven's great symphonies are realisations of bourgeois ideology. The sonata-allegro represents the pinnacle of this development. It aims at the most complete appearance of reconciliation between freedom and constraint, 'individual' and 'society', part and whole;

but because the sonata is, in reality, a closed form, the appearance of spontaneity or genuine expressiveness becomes harder to achieve.²⁹⁹

It is tempting to trace the ‘demise’ of sonata-form in Adorno’s thought, but he chose to view it as a reflection of the downfall of bourgeois values themselves. He viewed the best examples of sonata forms as social criticism, highlighting the restrictions of the tonal-bound form as a reflection of the limits of bourgeois civilisation.

Writing nearly fifty years after Adorno, Susan McClary has read sonata form as the archetypal patriarchy:

The first theme establishes the tonic key... it is in essence the protagonist of the movement, and it used to be referred to quite commonly... as the ‘masculine’ theme... Midway through the exposition of the movement, it encounters another theme, the so-called feminine theme... Given that a tonal sonata-based movement is concerned with matters of maintaining identity, both thematic and tonal, the second area poses a threat to the opening materials...the secondary theme must now conform to the protagonist’s tonic key area. It is absorbed, its threat to the opening key’s identity neutralized.³⁰⁰

While the implied ‘formula’ for sonata-forms is something to be avoided, McClary’s contentious identification of narrative processes implied by the form is anachronistic. By adopting the terms of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ themes and applying them to describe romantic repertoire, she convolutedly sets the thematic struggle in the form as one of submission to the overall patriarchy. In turn, McClary extends the pre-classical conceptions of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ themes to an almost indefensible extreme.

Adorno and McClary’s differing stances are united by an underlying neglect of one important fact: that composers continued to use the form throughout the twentieth-century without necessarily questioning its procedures (though, as we have already seen, several dismissed it in word, if not in deed). Arguably, concerns such as Adorno’s and McClary’s exist solely in the mind of the scholar and historian, while many

²⁹⁹ Robert W. Witkin, *Adorno on Music* (London: Routledge, 1998) 49.

³⁰⁰ Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) 68-9.

composers instead continued to exploit sonata principles unreflectively and with full potency in their music.

Music analysts have renewed their interest in sonata over recent years. Of several authors, the most influential have been James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, with their book *Elements of Sonata Theory*.³⁰¹ Where Darcy and Hepokoski differ from the likes of Donald Tovey and Charles Rosen, is in moving away from a structural ‘form’ of sonata, resetting discussions of works into a more abstract notion of ‘principle’. Their concept of the ‘sonata principle’ is an attractive one, as distinct from the label of ‘sonata form’. In these terms, the ‘form’ is a somewhat turgid set of labels, a symptom of careless analysis. The sonata ‘principle’ is more useful as an analytical term, since it describes a basic creed without resorting to the structural rules of sonata form. Hepokoski and Darcy assert that the sonata principle is fundamentally about tonal relationships, not necessarily thematic relationships (eliminating potentially misleading labels such as ‘second theme’). This conflict established, the remainder of the piece is a ‘composing out’ of the principle of re-setting material into the tonic key.

As is the case with other definitions of form, the definition here of sonata ‘principle’ is also problematic, with many examples from the classical literature that contradict it. The sonata ‘principle’ opens the door to discussions of pieces containing ‘deformations’ of the traditional form that serve an expressive purpose, harking back to Hepokoski’s notion of ‘rotational forms’. This concept takes the sonata ‘principle’ reduction a step further to an open-ended conception of thematic restatement.³⁰² Much of my discussion of sonata forms is indebted to Hepokoski and Darcy’s work.

Importantly for Weinberg, the USSR was almost entirely insulated from modernist trends, including the denouncing of traditional forms. While there was a

³⁰¹ James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³⁰² See: James Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 23-6.

period of fascinating experimentation in music during the 1920s, Socialist Realism was fully operative as a dictum by the time Weinberg fled to Minsk. This directive of aesthetic values included ‘accessibility, tunefulness, stylistic traditionalism, and folk-inspired qualities’.³⁰³ Sonata and other classical forms were the order of the day, in terms of stylistic traditionalism. Instead of considering pre-existing forms as a twentieth-century anachronism, they entirely conformed with the leading Soviet aesthetic (see Geiger’s comments on p. 183).

It is the form’s expressive potential that helps to explain why sonata has continued to be so alluring, especially in cultures relatively insulated from modernist critiques. Shostakovich’s reaction to the semantics of sonata is summarised by Slavoj Žižek:

In [Shostakovich’s] key symphonies (Fifth, Eighth, and Tenth), the longest movement is always the first, whose inner logic follows something quite different than the sonata form: the movement begins with a strong Thesis, a proud Beethovenesque assertion of strength in pain, which is then gradually morphed into a withdrawal towards another spiritual/ethereal dimension – it is, paradoxically, this very withdrawal that generates an unbearable tension.³⁰⁴

It is this ‘unbearable tension’ that makes exploitation of sonata principles so attractive for a composer, particularly one wishing to position themselves within the wider classical tradition, while also producing highly expressive musical structures. In my examination of examples of Weinberg’s sonata structures, I will make occasional reference to Žižek’s ‘spiritual’ and ‘ethereal’ dimensions.

Weinberg’s first two quartets are both student pieces, and both utilise sonata procedures in their opening movements. They differ in that the First Quartet is couched in a tightly-drawn chromatic language, faintly reminiscent of late Szymanowski.³⁰⁵ Meanwhile, Weinberg’s Second Quartet is more akin to Tchaikovsky’s ballets in its

³⁰³ Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 89.

³⁰⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *Absolute Recoil: Towards a New Foundation of Dialectical Materialism* (London: Verso, 2014) 168.

³⁰⁵ Hardly surprising, given Szymanowski’s influential standing in Polish music at the time.

serenade-like euphony. Neither of Weinberg's first two quartets is adventurous in terms of their deployment of sonata form. I take my first case study from Weinberg's Third Quartet, since it combines elements from both predecessors while also pointing towards his mature language and mode of expression. It has a tonal scheme with altered and unexpected chromatic curves but also features clear signposting of thematic returns and sectional demarcation.

A strong case can be made that Weinberg's Third Quartet represents his first mature expression in the genre. The middle movement recalls the expressive mood of the work's immediate predecessor, the Op. 13 *Jewish Songs*. This early song cycle represents Weinberg's first truly lyrical statement in his chamber music, setting the tone for subsequent works. Although it builds on the foundations of the first two quartets, the Third Quartet's multi-movement structure arguably leaves unanswered questions and unsatisfied expectations.³⁰⁶ By the time of my second case study, the Sixth Quartet, such structural imbalances are rectified and achieved in the context of dramatic closure.

Cyclic repetition unites the Third Quartet, and thematic organisation blooms from a *grundgestalt* in the first movement. Schoenberg used this term for the basic idea which provides the seed for all thematic organisation in a work or movement.³⁰⁷ In this dual role of prefiguring and uniting themes, the opening flourish in the upper voices can be traced in both subsequent thematic groups (bracketed 'X' – see Ex. 4.4).

Ex. 4.4, Quartet No. 3, opening.

The musical score shows the opening of the first movement of Quartet No. 3. It is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Presto' with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The score is for Violin 1 (VI. 1), Violin 2 (VI. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). A bracket labeled 'X' spans the first two measures of the Violin 1 and Violin 2 parts, indicating a thematic motif. The motif consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes in the upper voices.

³⁰⁶ These factors were remedied and resolved in the later Chamber Symphony No. 2, which presents a heavily-revised version of the Third Quartet – see p. 173.

³⁰⁷ See: Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Composition*, 8-10.

Fig. 4-x, Quartet No. 3, first movement, structural summary.

	¹ R12	⁴ R18	R27 ⁴	³ R36	R43
<i>Exposition</i>	<i>2nd Subject</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Recapitulation</i>		<i>Coda</i>
1st theme	2nd theme	1st + 2nd	1st theme	2nd theme	
d - A	G \flat	unstable	D (e-flat min)	G - d	Dmin

Notwithstanding dangers of formal labelling mentioned above, the terms ‘exposition’ and ‘development’ are appropriate in this context. And there should be few qualms about the term ‘recapitulation’, since the return at R27⁴ is a solid reprise of the first thematic group. The move to G-flat for the second theme is unusual, leading to the interaction of both thematic groups in the development, combined with a rapid shift through keys, with little sense of modulation but instead a non-functional interchange of tonalities (see p. 79 for a comparison with Shebalin’s quartets). This rapid shift through keys heightens the imperative to return to the tonic, a highly potent expressive tool that reinforces the psychological drive towards the established ‘end-goal’ of the movement. An A-pedal heralds the return of D minor for the recapitulation at R27⁴.

After this straightforward recapitulation, a transition passage is now recast into E-flat minor (relative minor of the second theme’s original G-flat major). With this, the return to D minor is problematised, and it is usurped further still by the setting of the second theme restatement into G major (presaging a major-subdominant-to-tonic-minor cadence). The coda returns fully to D minor, featuring a rising and falling motif derived from the *grundgestalt*.

The tonal trajectory of this movement can be described as ‘sidestepping’, in that step-wise shifts in tonality are more structurally and perceptually significant than the traditional harmonic movement around the circle of fifths (see chapter 5, p. 245).

Overall, the tonal scheme of the movement therefore features several ‘unorthodox’ keys

with underlying sonata principles; their coherence can be made clear by tracing thematic trajectory across the movement. Returning to Žižek’s formulation of ‘unbearable tension’, such expressive procedures are easily resolved in Weinberg’s Third Quartet, and it arguably does not compare with the spiritual and ethereal dimensions that Žižek ascribes to Shostakovich’s symphonies.

Following from the Third Quartet, the Sixth Quartet’s opening movement is even further nuanced in its presentation of sonata-like structures (see Fig. 4-xi, below). Written three years later, it adopts a more complex sonata structure than that seen in the Third Quartet. The principal difference between the two is that the opening of the Sixth features an almost constant texture of melody and accompaniment, while the Third is more layered in its contrapuntal density. Sonata principles are clear in the opening movement of the Sixth Quartet - perhaps most obviously in that it features an exposition repeat.

Fig. 4-xi, Quartet No. 6, first movement, structural summary.

Exposition					Development	Recapitulation			(coda)
(opening)	R2	R4	R6	⁵ R7	⁴ R7	R20	R22	R25	R29
	Transition		(coda)						
1 st theme	2 nd theme	3rd theme		(repeat)		2 nd theme	1 st	2nd	
e	c#	d#	e			e	d#		e

The first theme begins simply enough, in the first violin from the opening bars (Ex. 4.7, below).

Ex. 4.7, Quartet No. 6, first movement, opening.

Allegro semplice ♩ = 132

VI. 1
VI. 2

p
pp
rit.

The exposition features three distinct themes – the second, in C-sharp minor, is heard from R2 in the viola (Ex. 4.8).

Ex. 4.8, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ⁴R2.

VI. 1
VI. 2
Vla.
Vc.

2

pp
pp
cresc.
p
mp
pizz. mp
pizz.
mp
pizz.
mp
p
mp
p
mp
pizz.
mp
pizz.

And the third in the cello at R4 (see Ex. 4.9, below).

Ex. 4.9, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ¹R4.

The third theme bears a resemblance to the first, particularly the dotted crotchet to semiquaver as a motif. However, despite such echoing, it remains distinct and the tonality is shifted to D-sharp minor, a sidestep down from the initial E-minor tonality. As such, the movement features a three-theme exposition.³⁰⁸ The material that follows functions as a coda, with a return to E minor and a reprise of the initial accompanying figuration in anticipation of the exposition repeat.

This interplay of thematic material, with three distinct tonal centres marks the thematic organization of the Sixth Quartet as significantly more adventurous than that of the Third. The development is signalled by a blank key-signature (precipitating a rapid alteration of chromatic changes, rather than a move to C major as a tonality). The development prominently features the semiquaver cell from the first theme extended into an ascending minor flurry (Ex. 4.10, below).

³⁰⁸ Three-theme expositions, sometimes confused with three-key expositions, can be found in Beethoven, but are more commonly associated with Schubert. The most famous example is in the first movement of his D minor quartet, D. 810, with three different themes in the keys of D minor, F major, and A minor. See: Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 171.

Ex. 4.10, Quartet No. 6, first movement, R10.

This level of complexity is extended into the recapitulation. The return to the opening thematic centres is signalled by a *fff* E minor chord at R20, but what is heard is a rhythmic-augmentation of the second theme instead. The first theme is not heard in full in the recapitulation at all, except for a handful of quaver passages in the first violin, an augmented version of the semiquaver cell from Ex. 4.10. At R25, the second theme is heard in its original rhythm, though now set in D-sharp minor, the key of the third theme (in another sidestepping alteration).

In this manner, the recapitulation avoids a blatant statement of the first theme, but also muddies the tonal scheme for the remaining themes. At R29, the first theme is recalled more extensively in the cello but still not stated in full. The movement's increasing level of complexity reaches its peak in the recapitulation with a failure to recall and restate themes. Sonata procedures are problematised for expressive content, manipulated to present a more refined drama of searching and struggle, reaching towards an expression akin Žižek's 'unbearable tension', but arguably still not attaining it fully.³⁰⁹

My last example is taken from much later in Weinberg's cycle, his very last quartet, the Seventeenth. The decision to focus on this final work is twofold. It ties in

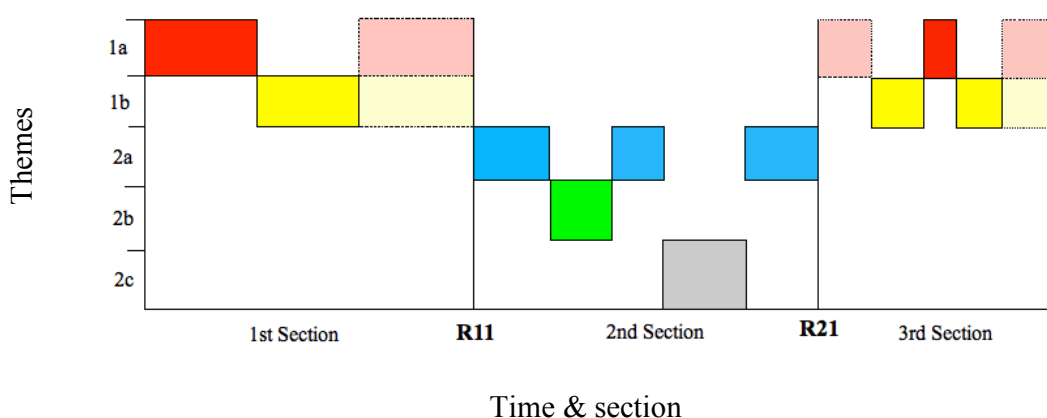
³⁰⁹ As Hepokoski and Darcy would call it, a 'Failed Exposition', see: Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 177-9.

with my discussion of single-movement works (see 4.2.1, above), and it continues an increasing level of complexity already established between the Third and Sixth Quartets, and takes that to its conclusion.

The sonata principles identified in the Sixth Quartet are also recognisable in the Seventeenth Quartet, but here there are structural issues that seriously undermine many of the form's traditional assumptions. Taking a large-scale view, the work falls into three sections. The first presents two separate themes, both of which return in the third section: the third section functions as a recapitulation and finale in one. The middle section, however, is an enigma. The different tempo indications in the score articulate several different themes, none of which is related to the outer sections (Fig. 4-xii).

Fig. 4-xii, Quartet No. 17, structural summaries.

First Section			Second Section					Third Section				coda
(opening)	R2	R8	R11	R12	³ R16	R16 ¹	R19	R21	R26	⁷ R28	R28	R29
1A	1B	(coda)	2A ¹	2B	2A ²	2C	2A ³	(1A)	1B	1A	1B	
D	A	A	(a)	(b-flat)	e	a	(C)		D-flat	D	D	D
Allegro ♩. = 92			Adagio ♩ = 50	Andantino ♩ = 88	♩ = 50	♩ = 60	Allegro ♩. = 92					



From this structural summary, I have elaborated a graph of themes over the course of the movement – where the Y axis is ‘themes’, and the X axis is ‘time’. With the two outer sections, the temptation is to analyse this structure through the prism of double-

function sonata/two-dimensional sonata form. However, this labelling does not successfully account for the second section, which itself introduces three separate thematic groups, removed from the statement and recapitulations to be found in sections 1 + 3. A more nuanced approach is evidently required.

The notion of a double-function sonatina is appealing, since the second section does not in any way represent a development. However, this interpretation suggests that the second section takes the function of a large-scale second thematic group instead; the graph of thematic organisation clearly illustrates the flaws in this labelling, since the first section alone features two distinct themes, 1A and 1B – with 1B in the dominant.

The relation between the first and third sections is more straightforward; the procedure of resetting thematic material into the tonic is observed in the third section, while considerable melodic elaboration on themes 1A and 1B gives it the pomp of a finale. It is the second section that resists categorisation. Drawing on Steven Vande Moortele's work on two-dimensional sonata form, the movement can be viewed as a problematisation of this large-scale structure.³¹⁰ Moortele defines a two-dimensional sonata as 'a composition in which a sonata form and a complete sonata cycle are projected onto each other thus [comprising] two dimensions: the complete hierarchy of the sonata cycle and the incomplete hierarchy of the overarching sonata form'.³¹¹ In his Seventeenth Quartet, Weinberg expanded the two-dimensional sonata form itself (Weinberg's familiarity with Liszt's Sonata in B minor, described by Vande Moortele as 'the *locus romanticus* of two-dimensional sonata form'³¹² is well-documented).³¹³

Theme 1B features a self-quotation (see Chapter 3, p. 135). Out of the case studies of sonata form included in this section, this self-quotation is the closest to

³¹⁰ Steven Vande Moortele, *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form: Form and Cycle in Single-Movement Instrumental Works by Liszt, Strauss, Schoenberg, and Zemlinsky* (Leuven University Press, 2009) 11-31.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 35.

³¹³ Manashir Yakubov, 'Mechislav Vaynberg: "Vsyu zhizn' ya zhadno sochinyal muziku"' [Mieczysław Weinberg: "I have composed music all my life, greedily"], *Russkoye utro*, (16-22 February 1995), 12.

achieving Žižek's 'spiritual' dimension, a withdrawal from the opening thesis of a sonata movement suggesting a more ethereal realm of expression, one that is fully explored in the development. Such symbolism is appropriate to Weinberg's last quartet, considering its position as the final work in the cycle, and Weinberg's return to his earliest quartets, perhaps resulting in the Seventeenth Quartet's optimistic character.

Expanding the deployment of sonata principles for expressive ends, the anomalous self-contained second section must be examined for its expressive content. It can perhaps serve Per Skans's assessment of the Seventeenth Quartet as a youthful work, writing that 'we recognise the knowing smile of the young conductor at the Jewish Theatre in Warsaw'.³¹⁴ Combined with aspects of self-quotation featured in this central section (see chapter 3, p. 135), it is tempting to extend Skans's poetic summing up and conjecture that the Seventeenth Quartet is some sort of retrospect on a life's work. However, such grandiose statements remain speculation. In any case, self-quotation was habitual for Weinberg, especially in the second half of his output.

Weinberg's deployment of a thematically self-contained central section distracts from the framing sonata-like processes of the outer sections. Theme 1A can certainly be found to be humorous, but the second section's themes present a darker contrast. Tonality is established, but they become juxtaposed in a non-functional way, though a solid tonal point of reference exists for each theme. This procedure is similar to that in the development sections of both Quartets 3 & 6.

Weinberg's nuancing and manipulation of sonata procedures in the earlier Third and Sixth Quartets is here extended deeper into the structural level of double-function (or two-dimensional) sonata. His deployment of sonata-like structures for expressive effect was extended into an organising principle for a work, moving from a strong thesis into an expressive imperative that recalls Žižek's conception of the 'spiritual'

³¹⁴ Per Skans, liner notes to 'Vainberg, String Quartets 1, 10 & 17' Olympia OCD 628, 1997, 7.

dimension. What makes Weinberg's use of sonata-principles distinctive is his problematising of the form. In the Third and Sixth quartets, this took place in sidestepping alterations to the tonal scheme, while in the Seventeenth the macro-structure of two-dimensional sonata was problematised. These problems were resolved through unconventional solutions, often raising further questions about the basic forms.

4.5. VARIATION FORM

Classic definitions state that variation form 'embodies a principle of strophic repetition: a theme with a particular structure is followed by a series of discrete pieces with the same or very similar structure'.³¹⁵ Schoenberg defines the principle of variation, as 'repetition in which some features are changed and the rest preserved'.³¹⁶ Such a definition risks over-simplifying those variations that are more elaborate than the theme ever was (such as Schoenberg's own *Variations for Orchestra*, Op. 31). Moving away from traditional definitions, a more nuanced approach is required.

A more helpful definition is provided by Nicholas Cook, when he writes that 'variation sets begin with something called the "theme" but that is rarely, if ever, what they actually vary... rather, they vary the basic melodic or harmonic structure that underlies the so-called theme'.³¹⁷ The implications of Cook's definition are that the true 'theme' of a variations form could be any element, providing that it has intrinsic melodic and/or harmonic motifs that can be elaborated upon in each variation. In this manner, it is not necessarily the theme itself that is alluded to in each variation, but aspects of it.

³¹⁵ Elaine Sisman, 'Variation', *New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, Don Randel ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986) 902.

³¹⁶ Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, 9.

³¹⁷ Nicholas Cook, *Analysis through Composition: Principles of the Classical Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 80.

In more traditional scholarship, analytical attention on variations has often focused on underlying structural procedures. Charles Rosen acknowledged the limitations of the form: ‘essentially static and decorative, almost always in one key so that the interplay between harmonic tension and general texture could only be on the level of small details, variations presented a problem to the dramatically conceived classical style.’³¹⁸ Turning to Schenkerian considerations, Forte and Gilbert’s chapter on Variation structures gives a heavily generalised starting point:

If we accept the basic notion that the theme, by definition, is the structural model for each of the ensuing variations, we can see that the variation process is essentially the reverse of the reductive process [i.e. the ‘filling-in’ of the foreground - D.E.] ... it is generally valid to let a background sketch of the theme stand for the entire piece or movement, and to presume that those factors that change from variation to variation will be at the middleground and foreground levels.³¹⁹

Schenker’s own analyses of variation movements tended to consider each variation in connection with the theme itself, an approach that Nicholas Marston critiques as considering ‘each variation as [an] autonomous composition’.³²⁰ In this manner, a movement in variation form can be considered a series of ‘mini-*Ursatzes*’. A more sophisticated approach would be to consider a variations movement as an overall *Ursatz*, though this would still yield a similar background structure.

Cook’s definition will provide the foundation for analysis below, which divides the theme of my Weinberg example into several motifs. In many instances, such dividing can relate seemingly disparate variations back to the opening material.

A rare example of variation form in Weinberg’s quartets is the final movement of the Seventh.³²¹ It features 23 variations, organised in an arch form, so that the

³¹⁸ Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, rev. edition (London: Faber, 1997) 437.

³¹⁹ Allen Forte and Steven E. Gilbert, *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis* (London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1982) 320.

³²⁰ Nicholas Marston, ‘Analysing Variations: The Finale of Beethoven’s String Quartet Op. 74’, *Music Analysis*, 3 (1989) 304.

³²¹ Other examples from Weinberg’s quartet cycle include the third movement of the Twelfth Quartet, and the fourth movement of the Fifteenth Quartet.

variations are repeated in varied guise in reverse order once the midpoint is reached – in a sense, ‘palindromic’, a term used throughout this section (‘palindrome’ is used to refer to the macro-structural level, as opposed to its use in counterpoint, most famously in Bach’s *Crab Canon* from *The Musical Offering*). Works such as Berg’s *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*, the *Lyric Suite* and the Chamber Concerto all contain multiple palindromic structures, both at micro and macro-structural levels.³²² Robert Morgan asserts: ‘the remarkably consistent appearance of such circular motions [i.e. palindromes - D.E.] in Berg, achieved through both “progressive” and “retrogressive” means, suggests that they formed an essential component of his basic compositional orientation’.³²³ Berg’s use of palindromes runs as a thread throughout his work, as the ‘retrograde’ principle extended to multiple levels.

Similar questions about sonata in the twentieth-century emerge when considering variation form. A structure as formalistic as variations creates challenges for a composer. While the historic function of the form may have been to demonstrate a composer’s ingenuity, variation form puts strains on a composer’s notions of expressive character.³²⁴ A rigid and segmented recurring structure places immediate restrictions on any sense of drama to be accrued over the course of the work, even if the principles for varying the theme are almost infinite. Following on from this, the composer’s next level of creativity is to demonstrate how to unify a variations movement at the level of expressive accumulation. The palindrome structure in Weinberg’s Seventh Quartet can be read as one solution to this conundrum.

³²² See: Douglas Jarman, *The Music of Alban Berg* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), and George Perle, *The Operas of Alban Berg: Volume One/Wozzeck* (London: University of California Press, 1980) and *Volume Two/Lulu* (London: University of California Press, 1985).

³²³ Robert Morgan, ‘The Eternal Return: Retrograde and Circular Form in Berg’ in *Alban Berg: Historical and Analytical Perspectives*, David Gable and Robert Morgan eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 112.

³²⁴ A good example of drama in a variations movement is the finale of Beethoven’s Third Symphony, where segments and themes are cut short and dramatically juxtaposed.

Evidently, variation form is somewhat loosely-defined, though it has a rich heritage across many different periods and styles. What unites the best examples, however, is a strong sense of large-scale drama that elevates them from the rigour of the form. The challenge of how to create dramaturgy in a segmented structure may partially explain why composers versed in Socialist Realism were wary of labelling their works ‘variations’ (this includes Prokofiev and Shostakovich, as well as Weinberg). The aesthetic imperative towards accessibility and dramatic expression as dictated under Socialist Realism comes to a crossroads where variation form is concerned. For accessibility, the form’s roots easily tie it to the classical tradition, and its repetitive structure is easily discernible for listeners. However, maintaining a clear musical drama (with teleological goals and expressive imperatives) is extremely difficult in variation form (relatively rare examples from Shostakovich’s oeuvre include his Second Piano Sonata, and his Second Quartet – see below, p. 238).

4.5.1. QUARTET No. 7, THIRD MOVEMENT

Each variation in Weinberg’s Seventh Quartet accumulates detail from its predecessor, presenting elaborations on the previous variation’s treatment of the theme, following what Schoenberg termed ‘developing variation’.³²⁵ This circumvents the potential structural pitfall of repeating the original theme; the overall result is a movement of highly expressive character that also has its roots in the movements that precede it, representing a culmination of the work as a whole.

For the following structural summary, the initial variations are compared alongside the theme, before moving to a comparison with the variations as heard after

³²⁵ See: Walter Frisch, ‘Brahms, Developing Variation, and the Schoenberg Critical Tradition’, *19th-Century Music* (1982) 215-232.

the mid-way point in reverse order, starting from B1 (R44 in Fig. 4-xiii). The movement falls into an overall ABCB'A' structure, as can be seen in Fig. 4-xiii, below.

Fig. 4-xiii, Op. 59, final movement, structural summary.³²⁶

Variation No.	Rehearsal Mark	Comments	No. of bars
A: Intro	Opening	<i>Adagio</i> ; Built on material from the previous two movements	23
B: Theme	R31	Solo viola, with cello pizz., joined by Vl. 1 in counterpoint	16
1	R32	Theme in Vl. 1, legato version, cello and viola accomp.	16
2	R33	Cello melody, syncopated accompaniment	16
3	R34	Vl. 1 melody, arpeggiated cello accomp.	16
4	R35	Melody lengthened in Vl. 1, scurrying accomp.	16
5	R36	Offbeat accomp. pierced by aggressive chords	16
6	R37	Chordal quaver accomp. emphasis on first beat	16
7	R38	Stretto theme, across parts, long held chords in accomp.	16
8	R39	Melody with grace note embellishment and variation on dotted rhythm, accomp. chords with semiquaver rhythmic variation.	16
9	R40	Forte, counterpoint between Vl. 1 and cello, chords in inner parts	16
C: 10	R41	Scurrying triplet quaver rhythms, passages emphasising thirds	16
11	R42	Vls. in thirds, viola semiquaver movement, cello theme	16
12	R43	CRISIS - Vl. 1 & vla. theme, vc. and Vl. 2 take semiquavers. (Symmetrical design, occurring exactly halfway through the duration)	16
B1: 13	R44	cf. No. 9	16
14	R45	cf. No. 8	16
15	R46	cf. No. 7	16
16	R47	cf. No. 6	16
17	R48	cf. No. 5	16
18	R49	cf. No. 4	16
19	R50	Stretto theme, across parts, arpeggiated accomp. cf. No. 3	16
20	R51	cf. No. 2	16
21	R52	cf. No. 1	16
A1: 22	R53	Liquidation of theme, accomp. cf. No. 1	16
23	R54	Further liquidation, free expansion of theme in solo va. - See the closing part of A1.	24
(Theme)	R55	See opening; expanded with quasi-cadenza passage for Vl. 1	22

³²⁶ Shaded segments indicate inter-related variations.

As will be explored below, the central ‘C’ section stands in isolation, with a peak of intensity leading directly to the reverse recapitulation of the variation sequence. To start the process, the finale opens with a modest character. The movement begins with a short ‘rumination’ on material lifted from the previous two movements, establishing some of the organic and cyclical links that become exploited to create drama over the finale (Ex. 4.11). The motif bracketed ‘A’ recalls the theme of the preceding movement (quoted explicitly at the end of bar 3 in the first violin), while the boxed ‘B’ motif recalls the accompanying rhythms present in both the first and second movements.

Ex. 4.11, Quartet No. 7, third movement, opening.

The musical score for the opening of the third movement of Quartet No. 7 is presented in three systems. The first system shows the initial entry of the first violin (VI. 1) and second violin (VI. 2) parts, marked *molto espressivo* and *tutti f*. The viola (Vla.) and cello/double bass (Vc.) parts provide sparse accompaniment. Motif A is bracketed in the first violin part, and Motif B is boxed in the second violin part. The second system begins at measure 28, marked with a circled '28', and continues the first violin part with Motif A and the second violin part with Motif B. The third system continues the second violin part with Motif B and the viola/cello part.

The theme is first presented by the viola with sparse accompaniment from the cello, setting out the beginnings of the variation form (see Ex. 4.12, below). The sprightly initial oscillation of a fifth will become a recurring feature. The expressive character resembles a meandering reflection, a thinker content to wander. The notion of reflection is seized upon for expressive variation, reaching a kind of realisation by the apogee of the variations structure (Ex. 4.12).

Ex. 4.12, Quartet No. 7, third movement, R31.



The four semiquavers-to-crotchets motif that can be seen at the end of Ex. 4.12 will be recalled later in the movement; in particular, the transformation of this motif suggests an ‘evolution’ over the course of the developing variations.

This sense of evolution provides unity from one segment to the next; without the developing variation, the segments could come across as a series of ‘vignettes’, with little sense of co-ordination. The developing variations gives an air of anticipation. With such ‘prefiguring’, Weinberg ties the theme and its subsequent variations together (in the reversed variations [B1 in Fig. 4-xiii], such parallels become a kind of ‘postfiguring’, reinforcing the inevitability of the palindromic structure).

The fourth variation brings a rapid change, not least with the tempo shift to ♩ = 138. Here, the semiquaver line that closed the initial theme is expanded to quavers, heard bubbling away in the cello and viola. The first violin punctuates above this with the falling fifth, and the theme’s original dotted rhythm serves as a distinct motif from this point on (see Ex. 4.13, below).

Ex. 4.13, Quartet No. 7, third movement, R35.

VI. 1
VI. 2
Vla.
Vc.

35 ♩ = 138

pp

p

The second violin and cello sustain a G pedal in the midst of this dialogue, but then complements a chromatic ascent beginning at R35⁴. The increase of pace is reinforced by the gradual increase of chromaticism in each variation - though still at a hushed dynamic. V8 at R39 is in itself a variation on V4, the three lower parts giving a dirge-like series of chords, prefaced by the semiquaver cell (Ex. 4.14). Above this, the first violin gives a dramatic version of the dotted figure from the theme, with added grace notes.

Ex. 4.14, Quartet No. 7, third movement, R39.

VI. 1
VI. 2
Vla.
Vc.

39 ♩ = 160

f

p

f

(VI. 2)

Following this gesture, the lower parts retain their chordal texture, while the first violin assumes the role of ‘cantor’ above, emphasising the dotted figure. V9 at R40 is characterised by its initial free play between the motifs that have been developed over the course of the previous variations, and then by the emergence of triplet quavers for the first time in the first violin at b. 180. The ‘free play’ takes place between the cello and first violin, as the violin gives the opening C minor triad of the theme before the

cello seizes upon the semiquaver cell and dotted figure from b. 169. This variation represents the highest level of chromaticism achieved so far, though still couched within the envelope of C. A triplet line provides the link into the tenth variation at R41, the beginning of the central 'C' section. This marks the initial climax in the movement, and the 'C' section represents a brief resting point from R41-R43 before the procedure is reversed, and the initial variations are repeated in reverse-order.

The 'mid-point' of the arch-form is of special importance. Here, the rate of energy achieves a steady state of tension. From R41 up to the end of R43, a high-paced dialogue ensues. The principle of each rehearsal number marking a self-contained variation continues, but the central section feels more like a developmental interlude, rather than more variations. Whereas the previous variations presented a slowly evolving stream-of-consciousness style evolution, this small central section presents a rapidly shifting dialogue, where all the previous elements are maximalised. This short section may present the 'mid-point' of the variations so far, but the textures do the opposite of 'rest', as they are more active than ever. The lead-in to V10 is signalled by the initial use of triplets from ⁴R41, and from R41 the dense texture abruptly gives way to rapid imitative counterpoint in the violins (Ex. 4.15).

Ex. 4.15, Quartet No. 7, third movement, ⁶R41.

Examining the initial violin counterpoint, the ascent of the triplet quavers consists of a chain of minor thirds, while the dotted quaver-semiquaver is a falling fifth. This rapid sequence creates a rich tonal trajectory, with the implications of diminished chords leading to a cadence of a sort. However, the juxtaposition of several of these layers with a sequence of falling fifth and rising second briefly conjures up the classical expectations of a circle of fifths (at R41, the entries are staggered, initially an octave apart, though the second violin's falling fifth begins a fourth lower than the first, i.e., falling E-A). It is this juxtaposition of tonally-rooted lines shifting to other directions that initially relates this variation to the preceding material, while also initiating the middle-section with its 'maximalised' sense of harmony.

Variation 11 presents another abrupt change, now with echoes of the semiquaver motif from R8 present in the three upper voices. Underneath, the cello has a more languid line, presenting a slowed version of the theme in its high register. From R42⁵, a 'spreading out' of chromaticism occurs, with the three upper lines presenting a 'writhing' quaver line that expands stepwise, while the cello takes the highest line

(Ex. 4.16) – a compact version of Weinberg’s characteristic sidestepping harmonic motions (see chapter 5, p. 245).

Ex. 4.16, Quartet No. 7, third movement, R42⁵.

For the final segment of the central section, the cello and second violin present hurried renditions of the viola’s R42 semiquaver line, while the viola and first violin partner one another, initially stating the cello’s slowed theme. From R43⁶, however, a rapid disintegration occurs, signalling the breakdown and perhaps the ultimate crisis of the central phase. It is as if such a sustained drama can only head towards collapse, and indeed, by R44 (variation 13), the reversed statement of the variation set begins. This disintegration is initiated at R43⁵ by the recurrence of the ‘fanning out’ gesture, here extended to double stops in the second violins, before a leaping version of the quaver pairs that dominated the violins in R42 (Ex. 4.17).

Ex. 4.17, Quartet No. 7, third movement, R43³.

The textures are recognisably those of the corresponding variation, but the high level of chromaticism and greatly expanded intervals suggest a vastly different evolution - indeed, such a rapid pace of alteration is perhaps more akin to a grotesque mutation than an evolution.

In Weinberg's manuscript for the Seventh Quartet a lengthy passage is crossed out and replaced with the present material beginning from R43. The original passage presented a repetition of the triplet-dominated texture from R41, meaning that the reversed recapitulation originally occurred earlier and rendered the movement even more strictly palindromic, as opposed to the palindromic arch form surrounding the brief central section as in the final version. Weinberg's reasons for editing the movement in this way will most likely never be known, but they are similar to Berg's treatment of palindromes, such as in his Chamber Concerto. Here, Berg adapts the mathematical precision demanded of a palindrome in favour of versatile restatements, with a strong focus on melodic variety.³²⁷ Weinberg's decision to avoid the strictest palindrome in favour of a high-tension central section is similar to Berg's.

After the close of this mid-point, the movement presents the initial variations in reverse-order, heading towards a ruminative conclusion. From here, I shall present a tabulated-summary of each variation (see Fig. 4-xiv, below), since in many of the cases, the second-time statement is altered. It is almost as if the material has been 'affected' by the high-drama of the central section; for the palindromic structure, avoiding literal repetition is perhaps a strength of Weinberg's structural design.³²⁸

Starting from R44, which harks back to the 9th variation (R40), a simple procedure of re-voicing can be discerned, while the cello line initially has its pitches reversed (Ex. 4.18).

³²⁷ For more on Berg's palindromic procedures, see: Robert Morgan, 'The Eternal Return', 112.

³²⁸ Rather than the literal restatement, it is the semblance of a repetition that matters, as if the variations themselves are going through a recapitulatory process of variation.

Ex. 4.18, Quartet No. 7, third movement, a) R40 & b) R44.

a)

Musical score for variation a) starting at rehearsal mark 40. It features two violin staves (Vln. 1 and Vln. 2) and two lower string staves (Vla. and Vc.). The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. A circled '40' is above the first measure. The first violin part begins with a fermata over a half note G4, followed by a melodic line. The second violin part has a similar melodic line. The viola and cello parts provide harmonic support with chords and moving lines. A dynamic marking 'f' is present in the first measure.

b)

Musical score for variation b) starting at rehearsal mark 44. It features two violin staves (Vln. 1 and Vln. 2) and two lower string staves (Vla. and Vc.). The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. A circled '44' is above the first measure. The first violin part begins with a fermata over a half note G4, followed by a melodic line. The second violin part has a similar melodic line. The viola and cello parts provide harmonic support with chords and moving lines. A dynamic marking 'ff' is present in the first measure.

Besides this, the actual content of the lines remains unchanged, aside from occasional further voice shifts around the parts (see Fig. 4-xiv below for a more in-depth explanation of the similarities/differences between the repeated variations). Indeed, this procedure holds good until R49 (equivalent to V. 4), where a further liquidation of material can be observed.

Fig. 4-xiv, Quartet No. 7, R44-R53, summary.

V. number + R.M.	Equivalent V. + RM	Comparative summary
V. 13, R44	V. 9, R40	1 st vl. Melody moved to the vla, 2 nd vl. And vla. accomp. In V. 9 melody shifted to the violins. Cello retains its line, predominantly semiquavers. Pitch content virtually unchanged. Triplet figuration that provided a segue into V. 10 avoided.
V. 14, R45	V. 8, R39	The three lower voices are unchanged - the 1 st vl. is initially the same, but halfway through the 8 th bar, it is transposed a fifth higher (starting with its dotted quaver-semiquaver figuration). The accompanying harmony remains unchanged.
V. 15, R46	V. 7, R38	1 st vl. line is unchanged up to the last three bars, where it is an octave lower than the original statement. The accompanying lines are sparser. After its initial gesture, the 2 nd vl. is silent, while the lower voices expand the original 2 nd vl. line that begins after the first two bars. Again, the pitch content of each line remains largely unchanged.
V. 16, R47	V. 6, R37	A few extra pitches inserted - 1 st vl. melody now in octaves, cello and viola with added fifths stacked on top. From bars 4-8, the lines in the accompaniment are shifted around, but pitch material remains intact. Aside from such shuffling, this variation is stated verbatim.
V. 17, R48	V. 5, R36	1 st vl. line split between the viola and cello; accompaniment remains unchanged, as the pitch content.
V. 18, R49	V. 4, R35	Voices shifted around further, harmony raised by a semitone; a sense of 'dissolving' can be heard, as repeated moves further and further from the original.
V. 19, R50	V. 3, R34	Threads of the original remain. The viola line from b. 2 is rhythmically doubled. The other lines are presented in a kind of 'free exploration', more like a brief development.
V. 20, R51	V. 2, R33	Further collapse of the lines; the syncopated chords are suggested in the 1 st vl., but the majority of the original accomp. is omitted. The cello gives a slightly expanded version of its legato line, with some of the original chromaticism left out.
V. 21, R52	V. 1, R32	Interestingly, the 1 st vl. gives a combination of both its original line and that of the viola, a 'summing-up' of a two-part counterpoint. The viola underneath gives a brief counterpoint to the cello. The sense of an 'echo' of the initial statement carries on in this line.
V. 22, R53	(Theme) R31	Cello remains unaltered. The theme in the viola is given verbatim, while the 1 st vl. line is shortened.

R54 harks back to the viola solo bridging passage that initially linked into the first statement of the theme (see R30), but now in a greatly extended version that continues the first violin's line of juxtaposing motifs already established over the course of the initial set of variations. With R55 comes the closing restatement of the initial 'Adagio' section, now with a much more prominent part for the first violin. Indeed, initially signalled by the viola at R55⁴, the first violin becomes cadenza-like from R56. The closing bars are reminiscent of the conclusion of the Sixth Quartet, with its alternations of accented chords, suggesting a quasi-cadenza flourish to finish the work.

In the Seventh Quartet finale, variation form is given expressive significance by a macro-structural palindrome, in a recapitulation of the preceding material, reversing the procedures that had led to a mid-point, as if rolling into an abyss and emerging out on the other side. The repetition also summarises the main themes that have been employed across the work as a whole, achieving a cyclic unity. A good comparison alongside Weinberg's Quartet is the finale of Shostakovich's Second Quartet, titled 'Theme and Variations' (a rare exception of a Soviet work bearing the 'variations' title). Looking at the broad structure of both movements, there is an immediate difference in their organisation; Shostakovich has 12 variations, concluding with a heightened version of the theme (see Fig. 4-xiii, p. 226, and Fig. 4.xv, below).

Fig. 4-xv, Shostakovich, Quartet No. 2, final movement, summary.

Variation Number	Rehearsal Mark	Tempo
(opening)	90	Crotchet = 72
Theme	92	Crotchet = 116
1	93	
2	95	
3	97	
4	101	Allegretto
5	103	Piu Mosso, Crotchet = 160
6	107	semiquaver textures
7	110	offbeat quavers
8	112	Piu Mosso, Crotchet = 168
9	115	triplet quavers
10	116	Allegro non troppo, minim = 76
11	119	
12	123	Allegro, dotted minim = 125
(Theme to conclude)	128	Adagio, crotchet = 72

The two works share characteristics, however, including melodic similarities, and in the variation procedures themselves. Shostakovich's theme contains many elements rich for variation, but its initial statement is preceded by an introductory reflection, given in octaves by the three lower voices, with the first violin leading (see Ex. 4.19, below).

Ex. 4.19, Shostakovich, Quartet No. 2, finale, opening.

This introduction meditates on material from the previous movements, as if drawing together strength before embarking. Following this, at R92, the solo viola gives the first statement of the theme. Features that mark the theme as distinct (and make it traceable through the variations) include the opening phrase, almost folk-like in its simplicity (with particular emphasis on intervals of thirds and fourths, and a keen resemblance to the opening of *Boris Godunov*). Utilising simple rhythms of crotchet and quaver cells, the opening interval of a fourth acts as an important marker for each statement of the theme. In general, Shostakovich's variations are geared towards an increase of energy and pace, achieved by tempo increases and ever-thickening textures.

Shostakovich's techniques for variation differ in their complexity. Perhaps the simplest is to alter the textures, to give the theme in a different voice. Such is the case at R101, where the chordal accompaniment is given in a shortened form in the three higher voices, while the cello intones the theme below. More complex textural alterations include increasing rhythmic density through triplet rhythms, starting from R115.

The structural and often textural resemblance to Shostakovich's 2nd Quartet in the finale of Weinberg's Seventh Quartet is striking, while the presence of Bergian

palindromic structures is also notable. However, the structure is not so rigid that Weinberg risks abandoning his love of melody in favour of pursuing the schema outlined for the finale. As opposed to, for example, Robert Simpson's 'Haydn Variations' quartet (no. 9), the palindromic design does not extend to the micro-level of pitch (it is merely the order of variations that is reversed to be palindromic, not their pitch content).

A recurring feature for the first few variations in Shostakovich's Second Quartet is a bar in 3/2 time signature before the rehearsal mark. While this is not strictly adhered to throughout the movement, it occurs at least four times as a rhythmic indicator between each variation. Weinberg used a similar procedure in the first movement of his Sonata for Two Violins, Op. 69 (1959 – less than two years after the Seventh Quartet). In this work, a 3/2 bar signals the end of each of the 29 variations, a marker that is strictly adhered to over the course of the movement.

The overall trajectory in Shostakovich's variations is towards an intense energy, which by R123, is kept to a *pp* dynamic, with a rapid 3/4 accompaniment. The recapitulation of the meditative material from the opening of the work provides a rough framing device, detracting from the variations theme. Any 'triumphant' sense is confounded by the end of the work, although expectations are established with an A major-to-D major chord sequence from ²R130, only to end firmly in the minor - making this the only one of Shostakovich's quartets to begin in the major mode and end in the minor (Weinberg echoed this procedure in his Fourth Quartet).

In Weinberg's Seventh, the notion of 'liquidation' introduced towards the final restatements deviates from the arch-form model, while the coda, with its quasi-cadenza that ruminates on the material from the whole work, returns to Weinberg's own highly melodic style, while also demonstrating his keen awareness for the dramaturgy of large-scale forms. In the context of his writing for string quartet, however, this movement

presents a new level of sophistication, and one that he was yet to achieve in his symphonic works up to this point.³²⁹

The significance of Weinberg's engagement with the pre-existing form of variations can be set alongside its use by composers such as Berg and Shostakovich, emphasising Weinberg's use for expressive purposes. The somewhat loose definitions of variation forms provided an excellent vehicle for a finale movement in the Seventh Quartet. The principle of 'problematizing' found in Weinberg's rondo and sonata forms is here combined with the influence of Berg, in creating a set of variations that blends elements of palindromic arch structures with Brahmsian principles of developing variation.

4.6. CONCLUSION

Returning to Krzysztof Meyer's comments at the head of this chapter, it is easy to trace Weinberg's traditionalism in his exploitation of pre-established forms. I have related Weinberg's string quartets to the 'classical quartet' model, with various traditions and expectations around the four-movement work. Outside of these, there are works with five movements or more, reaching a point of experimentation after the death of Shostakovich. In his later works, Weinberg effectively combined multi-movement and single-movement structures to create a deeper narrative thread, best demonstrated by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Quartets.

Weinberg's three single-movement quartets present complex structures, displaying multiple levels of dramaturgical unity. The Seventeenth Quartet is

³²⁹ Before the Seventh Quartet, Weinberg's most recent symphony had been his Third (1949), with textbook-like forms, themselves a hangover from his First Symphony (1942). Weinberg would begin work on his Fourth Symphony a few months later (1957-1961), a work with impressive structural proportions; it is also worthy of further study and perhaps application of Hepokoski's concept of 'rotational sonata'.

particularly important in terms of form, in that it questions the wider concept of the two-dimensional sonata. In my case-studies across rondo, sonata, and variation forms, I have highlighted how Weinberg addresses their ‘traditional problems’ in unusual ways, but a recurring thread has been how Weinberg ‘problematizes’ these forms.

The ‘problematizing’ label is not an idle method that ignores idiosyncrasies in the structures of these movements. Instead it elevates them to the highest level of formal importance. Such problems are arguably placed by the composer in order to confound what can be viewed as ‘traditional’ solutions to the ‘traditional’ problems of these forms; these ‘solutions’ can even be related back to Weinberg’s ‘eternal conversation’, from the opening quote of this thesis (p. 22). Instead, Weinberg posits new obstacles, and provides his own original solutions. As has been shown in several cases, such formal problems prove hard to surmount. In these situations, the ‘problematizations’ assume a deeper structural role, extended across the large-scale structure of an entire piece. It is arguably this method in particular that characterises Weinberg’s use of form.

In this way, Weinberg presents a highly personal approach to form, feeding into his wider musical style. The most important aspect of Weinberg’s forms is their high sense of drama. In this highly personal conception of musical expression, formal expectations are manipulated with various techniques in order to subvert ‘traditional problems’ into new avenues of psychological expression. Weinberg’s adoptions and adaptations embody existential contemporary issues, presented in Weinberg’s own conceptions of them. Existential issues such as the role of the artist, civil responsibility, and art under socialist realism are touched upon by Geiger, but they are only fully appreciated through examination of Weinberg’s expressive archetypes, with nods to the likes of Aranovsky and Žižek, as well as Shostakovich himself. Contrary to Meyer’s dismissal, Weinberg was a truly creative composer in this regard as in many others, with a distinct approach to musical form that was entirely his own.

5. HARMONY

So far in this thesis, the focus has mainly been on large-scale matters, such as narrative or form. For this final chapter of analysis, specific musical elements will be examined, including tonal organisation, harmonic styles, and more experimental approaches. Clearly it is not feasible entirely to bracket off these elements from one another, not least because they combine to achieve different expressive purposes in particular contexts: mode, for example, obviously concerns both harmony and melody and potentially tonal schemes also. Nevertheless, there is value in discussing each element in turn in an attempt to isolate distinctive characteristics of Weinberg's style.

Weinberg's quartet cycle does not inhabit the same territory as Schoenberg's or Bartók's, in that there are no comparably defined phases of stylistic evolution. Weinberg's course is more pragmatic, exploring one particular path and then branching off in a different direction, without necessarily abandoning his previous manner (reflective of his musical development as a whole). In some ways, it is tempting to focus on elements that point to a 'circular' narrative of development across the cycle. However, it is not the aim of this chapter to suggest a specific course of evolution for his harmonic language. Weinberg pursued a number of avenues of harmonic style, some of which recur, but all of these are associated with particular topics (see Chapter 3, p. 119). For this reason, different analytical lenses will be deployed, appropriate to the

stylistic language of the passage in question. How far each strategy can be seen to work will be addressed at the chapter's conclusion.

Despite the multiple harmonic strategies present across the cycle, there are a few very general elements that feature throughout. There is a persistent sense of 'free-floating' tonality; a tonic is almost always established, with a departure, and then an ultimate return, though this procedure may be obscured, and sometimes avoided altogether. Over the course of this chapter, Weinberg's numerous strategies for achieving this kind of motion are explored, particularly in contexts where the consistent harmonic elements are themselves problematised.

An important difference between Shostakovich's and Weinberg's quartet cycles is that of key-designation in work titles. For all their complexity, each of Shostakovich's quartets is 'in' a key, like 'Quartet No. 13 in B flat minor'. In addition, his cycle is ordered in a harmonic pattern, dictating which key the next work would be in. Towards the end of his life, Shostakovich stated that he would ideally like to write twenty-four quartets, one for every key.³³⁰ Their key designation follows a pattern, initially falling by a third, and then changing with the Seventh Quartet (in F sharp), towards a pattern of moving through the cycle of fifths with parallel major/minor successions.³³¹ The break in the harmonic pattern of the cycle is perplexing. Iain Strachan has offered an interesting explanation, pointing out that if the anticipated Sixteenth Quartet had been written, it would have been in C-flat major and that, as a result, the 'square numbers' for the cycle would take the following key signatures: 1: C, 4: D, 9: E flat, and 16: C flat, thus giving an anagram of 'DSCH'.³³² This large-scale

³³⁰ Dmitri Tsiganov in Sofia Khentova, *V mire Shostakovicha* [In Shostakovich's world] (Kompozitor: Moscow, 1996) 207, quoted in: Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 216. Darius Milhaud had a similar ambition to reach eighteen quartets (one more than Beethoven), which he did eventually do. See: Paul Collaer, *Darius Milhaud*, trans. Jane Hohfeld Galante (London: Macmillan, 1988)188.

³³¹ For a full table of Shostakovich's quartets and their key designations see: Michael Talbot, *The Finale in Western Instrumental Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 199.

³³² Iain Strachan, 'Shostakovich's "DSCH" signature in the string quartets', in *DSCH*, No. 10, Jan 1999, 48-9.

autobiographical ‘signature’ in the cycle would suggest an extraordinary degree of forethought and planning. Given that it is undocumented and apparently far-fetched, yet also hard to refute, comparatively few scholars have taken up Strachan’s suggestion. What is certain is that there is no such pattern in Weinberg’s cycle. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that he had any ‘target’ for quartet composition, beyond his general creative impulse.

A wider comparison is to consider Weinberg’s harmonic style alongside Shostakovich’s approach to various scales, modes and tonal systems, which has long posed a riddle for analysts. Shostakovich’s ability seemingly to flit between diatonic, modal, and atonal material presents numerous analytical problems, especially when it comes to identifying an all-encompassing style. However, all of his works do feature some measure of tonal framing. David Haas writes: ‘Are the traditional dissonances of Western European common practice truly emancipated [in Shostakovich’s harmony]? One suspects not, based merely on the fact of their consistent exclusion from final cadences’.³³³ Weinberg’s harmonic organisation could be summarised in a similar manner.

It is worth pointing out that Shostakovich received a much more thorough education in music theory than Weinberg seems to have done.³³⁴ Having studied composition at the Petrograd conservatoire for over seven years, Shostakovich would have been extremely well-versed in harmonic theory. Weinberg only studied composition for the two years he spent at the Minsk conservatoire; he had primarily been a performance student in pre-war Warsaw (a course that would have included only a basic grounding in theory).

³³³ David Haas, ‘The Rough Guide to Shostakovich’s Harmonic Language’, in Pauline Fairclough and David Fanning (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shostakovich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 308.

³³⁴ For more on Shostakovich’s education in Leningrad, see: Lyudmila Kovnatskaya, *Shostakovich v Leningradskoy konservatorii: 1919-1930* [Shostakovich at the Leningrad Conservatory: 1919-1930] three vols. (St. Petersburg: Kompozitor, 2013) passim.

Furthermore, while Weinberg was primarily instructed by the Rimsky-Korsakov pupil, Vasily Zolotaryov, Shostakovich had the opportunity in his own education to study and associate with some of the most respected and forward-looking Soviet analysts, including Boris Asafiev and Boleslav Yavorsky. Both of these figures elaborated theories utilised in this thesis and influenced some of the ideas on harmony and mode that are explored in the present chapter.

What separates Weinberg's harmonic style from Shostakovich's is first of all the less pervasive role of the tonic. In particular, there is a general trajectory over the cycle of changing the tonic's significance as a structural marker, in that the confirmation of the tonic becomes a lower priority across some of the later works – to the extent that one might suspect that it served as a point of orientation more for the composer than for the listener. By contrast, all of Shostakovich's quartets are solidly framed within definite statements of the tonic key. All of Weinberg's quartet movements nevertheless feature some sort of home key, however devalued it might be. In some of the quartets this is a loose 'tonic', though others take a more familiar approach within the confines of common practice harmony. Weinberg's retention of 'tonic' is a vital harmonic feature that will be explored below.

5.1. SIDE-STEPPING HARMONIES

Quintessentially, Weinberg's harmonies drift around a firm tonal rooting and then move away without a compelling sense of teleological movement. They generally do not follow common practice harmonic procedures around the circle of fifths. The emphasis comes across that movement away from the tonic is the main compositional concern across the cycle; however, the need to return or resolve back to the tonic is rarely a pressing issue in the short-term. When the language of functional harmony is deployed

over a work, it is often with an accompanying sense of nostalgia or even parody. When alternative tonal centres are established, goal-orientated motion is usually absent in terms of large-scale harmonic motion, and sometimes even on the level of phrasing.

The opposition of well-defined vs. undefined becomes a governing principle for conceiving Weinberg's often densely constructed harmonies. The stepwise motion of tonal centres can be termed as 'side-stepping', a potentially useful summary of Weinberg's harmonic approach, on the small-scale level of phrasing and voice leading, and even on the large-scale of movement structures. The expressive potential of this device is multi-faceted; it can provoke uncertainty or mystery, as well as a high level of energy or even agitation. The notion of 'sidestepping' bridges the gap between defined vs. undefined, towards a description of the actual procedures to move between them.

Schoenberg's extensive writings have already been referenced in the previous chapter; he remains a valuable theorist here also. In *Theory of Harmony*, Schoenberg uses two different terms that are reminiscent of Weinberg's free-floating tonalities. The first is 'fluctuating' tonality: 'a piece can also be intelligible to us when the relationship to the fundamental is not treated as basic; it can be intelligible even when the tonality is kept, so to speak, flexible, fluctuating [*schwebend*]'.³³⁵ He goes on with a poetic analogy: 'a fluctuating, so to speak, unending harmony... a harmony that does not always carry with it certificate of domicile and passport carefully indicating country of origin and destination'.³³⁶ Throughout his chapter on progressions, Schoenberg uses 'fluctuating' to direct listeners towards rapid tonal variation – rooting passages within the context of the tonic – but also highlights the ripe possibilities that come when the relation to the tonic is clouded. Weinberg's free-floating harmonies are examples of Schoenberg's theory of 'fluctuating' tonality. In addition to this, other alternatives from Schoenberg's writings present themselves as potentially useful.

³³⁵ Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, trans. Roy E. Carter (Faber: London, 1978) 128.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 129.

A particularly interesting concept is that of ‘suspended’ tonality. Schoenberg writes:

Tonality... depends, namely, on the composer, whether he creates tonality or not. For that one *can* create it, I consider possible. Only, whether one *must* still work for it... I doubt. For this reason I have called attention to the formal possibilities of fluctuating and suspended [*aufgehoben*] tonality; whereas these do admit the assumption of an effectual tonal center, they show how it is not necessary to help this center attain externally a power that it has, at most, internally.³³⁷

Initially, there appears to be an overlap between ‘fluctuating’ and ‘suspended’ harmonies; however, they differ according to their context. ‘Fluctuating’ refers to rapidly moving tonal centres, in a manner that may confuse perception of the tonic or ‘home key’. ‘Suspended’ refers to passages that disregard the tonic key altogether, by problematising it, effectively ignoring it. ‘Fluctuating’ and ‘suspended’ can both be applied to Weinberg’s free-floating harmonies, and several examples will be found through this chapter.

Perhaps more interesting in the passage above is Schoenberg’s terms of ‘external’ and ‘internal’ to describe the ‘power’ of a tonal centre. These labels may appear to echo Agawu’s concepts of ‘extroversive’ and ‘introversive’ (utilised in chapter 3, p. 119), but Schoenberg’s usage seems deliberately ambiguous. In Schoenberg’s terms, ‘internal’ refers to the logic of a tonal center in relation to the organisation of musical material and its structure. ‘External’ refers to the expressive significance that a tonal centre can have for a listener.

There is one more term from Schoenberg’s writings that is vital: ‘roving’ harmony. ‘Extended tonality may contain roving segments... various regions may occasionally be firmly established. Roving harmony need not contain extravagant chords. Even simple triads and dominant 7th chords may fail to express a tonality...

³³⁷ Ibid., 394-5, footnote **. Emphasis original.

Roving harmony is based on multiple meaning'.³³⁸ As such, roving harmonies come even closer to Weinberg's technique of rapidly shifting or free-floating tonality.

Schoenberg separates his definitions of 'fluctuating', 'suspended' and 'roving'; Weinberg uses each of these techniques to blur harmonic clarity at important points. Long passages may rove harmonically so that the tonality itself eventually becomes 'roving', since the harmony over an extended period is not framed in relation to the tonic at all.

The earliest works in the cycle show the 'starting point' for Weinberg's harmonic style. This is characterised by short phrase lengths, meaning that the movement away from well-defined harmony and back again usually happens on a relatively small scale. In later works (for example, the Thirteenth Quartet), such motions can occur over the course of a whole movement. The first two quartets are good case studies to observe this motion away from well-defined harmony and back again. The First is highly chromatic, with a tightly wrought density, while the Second is light and airy, with serenade-like accompanying figures. Beneath this apparently disparate surface, however, they are united by several important harmonic elements. They both observe the well-defined to undefined principle and they both do so on a small-scale, even at the level of their opening phrases.

For instance, the First Quartet begins in C minor and features a slow chromatic drift downwards, as the cello descends an octave (and then another octave below that), in parallel with the melody which descends in a harmonic progression of 6th intervals and cadences after a series of tritone intervals (see Ex. 5.1, below).

³³⁸ Arnold Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, Leonard Stein ed., 2nd edition (Faber: London, 1983) 164-5. An important question arises with the terms 'fluctuating' and 'roving', namely whether, through differences in translation, they could actually be synonymous. The former is an English translation from the German, while the latter is from Schoenberg's own English-language writings; with this in mind, 'fluctuating' and 'roving' could actually be the same concept in different renderings. With the definitions quoted above, I consider the two terms to be distinct (particularly with the 'multiple meanings' aspect of 'roving' harmony).

Ex. 5.1, Quartet No. 1 (original version), first movement, opening, and harmonic reduction.

Allegro

The score consists of four systems of music. The first system is marked *pp* and includes dynamics *mf* and *f*. The second system includes a triplet and a *f* dynamic. The third system includes triplets and a *pp* dynamic. The fourth system is a harmonic reduction, showing the underlying chord structure with boxed numbers 2, 5, and 8 indicating specific harmonic points. A tritone is also labeled in the reduction.

This immediate drift into increased chromaticism at the opening of the phrase is addressed towards its conclusion. This occurs through simple means, as the tonic is reestablished with a protracted perfect cadence after the chromatically descending bass line. Such motions are even more transparent when the melody line is considered without its accompaniment; nearly all of its harmonies could be substituted for I, IV,

and V in C minor without disrupting the flow, see the contrafactual version below (Fig. 5-i).³³⁹

Fig. 5-i, Quartet No. 1, first movement, opening, ‘simplified’ harmonic version.

With the chromatic drift, Weinberg further problematises the tonic before reaffirming it. This opening phrase encapsulates the harmonic trajectory of the whole movement; the development section in particular represents an elongated version of this chromatic drift consisting of multiple descending lines.³⁴⁰

The Second Quartet is very different stylistically. The light accompaniment is reminiscent of Tchaikovsky, or even Grieg, and there is a very clear rooting in G major (see Ex. 5.2, below).

³³⁹ ‘Contrafactual’ is a term lifted from Leonard Meyer, referring to a hypothetical simplistic solution to demonstrate a complex compositional procedure. See: Leonard B. Meyer, *The Spheres of Music* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 44.

³⁴⁰ For more on the First Quartet, see appendix to this thesis.

Ex. 5.2, Quartet No. 2 (original version), first movement, opening, and reduction.

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a tempo marking of *Allegro* and a metronome marking of 120. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score includes three staves: Violin 1 and 2 (top), Viola and Cello (middle), and a reduction (bottom). The reduction shows a descending line of notes with a dashed line indicating a voice exchange between the cello and first violin. Chord symbols G, Ab, Gb, D, and Bb are indicated below the reduction. A circled '1' marks a voice exchange between measures 6 and 9.

After a brief introduction, a short roving excursion begins where the harmonic progression temporarily abandons its ‘passport’, to recall Schoenberg’s poetic phrase (see p. 245). The harmony progresses stepwise in a fluctuating sense, using entirely triadic harmonies, though with chords that are substitute-functional within the context of G major. The descending line echoes the First Quartet, though here it does not involve chromatic drift to the same extent. The chords move in a sidestepping fashion, presenting consonant harmonies that are not bound by the circle of fifths, but are still related to the tonic, such as the brief Neapolitan colouring with A flat harmony in b. 7. Weinberg’s harmonies from b. 6 onwards shift towards the dominant, the passage’s overall target (the shift occurs via a voice exchange between the cello and first violin). In this way, functional harmony returns, along with the tonic. An answering phrase

follows with ascending sidestepping. The movement back to the tonic is more ambitious, clarified by the secondary dominant, A major, at b.15.

The Second Quartet represents the first sustained appearance in the cycle of a sidestepping harmony, where the music is almost entirely consonant, with little to no added chromaticism. However, teleological harmony and the circle of fifths is put on hold for certain passages. The composer most often associated with this technique is Prokofiev, though his harmonic jumps usually occur with a pattern of interval relations, rather than by descending or ascending through a scale (for instance, the opening of ‘Juliet as a Young Girl’, where harmonic motion descends by thirds, see Ex. 5.6, below).

Already, between these two quartets, different ideas have emerged that will be explored further over the next fifteen works; chromatic drifting and tonal sidestepping. The sidestepping presents itself as a fine candidate for a particular application of music analysis, neo-Riemannian theory (see p. 259). From these early works, Weinberg extends his harmonic motions through one simple technique: by expanding the lengths of phrases.

5.1.1. HARMONIC EXTENSION

The duration and manipulation of phrases has ramifications for both harmony and melody, and they will be discussed here in direct relation to harmony, hence the term ‘harmonic extension’. The tendency to use ever-longer phrases is a noticeable trend across Weinberg’s quartets; in the first two quartets, phrases rarely expand beyond eight bars. Their tonal course generally begins and ends with the tonic – local or global – providing normal expository material. With the later works, a much longer phrase-length becomes the standard. The increased length extends the harmonic processes accordingly.

There is a tradition of drawing attention to expanded or unusual phrase lengths; Berg had done so when analysing Schoenberg's First String Quartet, writing 'it is only too easy to see that a music which regards the asymmetrical and free construction of themes as just as available as the constructions with two, four and eight bar phrases... will not be understood'.³⁴¹ Schoenberg himself also praised Brahms's unusual phrase lengths and used them as justification for highlighting Brahms as 'progressive'.³⁴² Unusual phrase lengths can be seen from the opening of Weinberg's Fifth Quartet. It begins with the first violin playing an extended solo, one that is almost improvisatory in style (Ex. 5.3). The feeling of improvisation partly results from the extended length of Weinberg's phrases.

Ex. 5.3, Quartet No. 5, first movement, Opening.

Such semi-improvisatory passages are evocative of Haas's reading of Shostakovich's interest in longer phrases after a supposed encounter with Asafiev's writings. Haas speculates that 'the adjustment of all aspects of style allow[ed] the creation of lengthy non-periodic melodic lines'.³⁴³ In Haas's reading, Shostakovich embraced Asafiev's

³⁴¹ Alban Berg, 'Why is Schoenberg's music so difficult to understand?', in Willi Reich, *Alban Berg* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965) 192.

³⁴² See: Schoenberg, 'Brahms the Progressive', in *Style and Idea*, trans. Leo Black (London: Faber, 1975) 398-441; here 414-428.

³⁴³ David Haas, *Leningrad's Modernists: Studies in Composition and Musical Thought, 1917-1932* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1998) 179-80.

conception of music as form and adapted this into much longer exploratory phrases with irregular harmonies. As such, longer phrases for solo strings, such as those that open Weinberg's Fifth and Thirteenth Quartets, can be viewed as akin to improvisatory 'arias' (in that they present song-like melodies, which are subsequently extended in phrase-length).³⁴⁴

A consequence of such extensions is the augmentation of harmonic rhythm: the frequency with which chords change and how often the tonic is stated. In the initial quartets, regular and periodic phrasing is combined with the use of (or reference to) functional harmony operating in relation to the circle of fifths. As a result, these regular phrases lend a sense of inevitability to the tonic, and passages of undefined harmony do not dominate for long.

The later works are more complex, owing to their aria-like phrases and harmonic extensions. In some cases, their openings deliberately evade a clear establishment of a tonic. In the Fifth Quartet, the opening alludes to B flat and its relative minor, establishing a vague sense of ambiguity (see Ex. 5.3, above). But the extended phrases mean that periods of undefined harmony are much longer in duration. As such, the ratio of well defined to undefined is stretched, often in favour of the latter.

This extended opening solo is firmly centred around B flat, though it very briefly presents some shaded details, evoking 'roving harmony' (see bb. 5-7). Moving away from B flat with a melodic motif of rising and falling, this phrase serves as a good example of how Weinberg managed to imply extended harmonies with elongated phrases. Indeed, only with the cello's entry at R1 is the melody fully grounded harmonically, with a recurring low D.

In the earlier style, undefined harmonies were chiefly brought to the fore in development sections. With gradually evolving and longer phrases, undefined harmony

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 182.

can come to dominate a whole movement. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to pinpoint a reference to a single tonic. In some cases, passages are merely ‘framed’ by references to a tonic, in movements that are otherwise difficult to pin down harmonically speaking.

Longer phrases tend to present fluctuating harmony, with tonic sidesteps that alter the harmonic environment. For an example, see the opening of the Ninth Quartet (Ex. 5.4).

Ex. 5.4, Quartet No. 9, first movement, opening.

The musical score is for the opening of the first movement of the Ninth Quartet, marked 'Allegro molto' with a tempo of 176-184. It features four staves: Violin 1 (VI. 1), Violin 2 (VI. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Cello/Double Bass (Vc.). The key signature is F sharp minor (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The score begins in 4/4 time and includes a double bar line with repeat signs. The music is characterized by a driving, rhythmic pattern in the strings, with the first violin and second violin playing a similar melody in canon. The viola and cello/bass provide a harmonic and rhythmic foundation. The score shows a gradual fluctuation in harmony, with various time signatures and key changes indicated by the notes and rests.

The F sharp minor tonic is apparent from the beginning, but a gradual fluctuation encroaches, complicated by rhythmic displacement that sets entries of the theme in canon against each other. For instance, from R1, where a variation of the opening is presented, the theme is stated in transposed version with doubled octaves by the cello and viola, while the first violin enters a beat later in canon-like fashion. The first

violin's motif harks back to the opening, but the transposed version hints at a new harmonic direction, effectively blurring the harmonic environment.

This passage can be seen as an example of linear counterpoint in Weinberg's works. The term refers to an 'emphasis on the individual strands of the fabric rather than on their harmonic implications'.³⁴⁵ This calls attention to contrapuntal textures where the integrity of the horizontal lines is maintained at the expense of harmonic unity. In other words, the individual lines follow their own path regardless of the resulting vertical harmony. This emphasis on line, which can subsequently alter harmony, serves an expressive purpose in Weinberg's usage, considerably blurring the clarity of the tonic. While linear counterpoint is more commonly associated with Stravinsky or Hindemith, it is applicable to Weinberg here to describe the rapid alteration of textures that expands the harmonic environment.³⁴⁶

In Ex. 5.4, above, the blurring of the harmonic environment occurs through a rapidly changing variation on the opening theme. Small alterations begin to problematise the tonic, but it still recurs periodically. There are, however, even longer phrases in Weinberg's Quartets, where the span of undefined harmony takes up the body of the work, as for instance, in the Tenth Quartet (see Ex. 5.5, below).

³⁴⁵ 'Linear counterpoint' in Michael Kennedy ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford Music Online, Oxford: Oxford University Press) [accessed 20/08/15].

³⁴⁶ For a more detailed exploration of 'linear counterpoint' as a term, see: Arnold Schoenberg, 'Linear Counterpoint', in *Style and Idea*, 294.

Ex. 5.5, Quartet No. 10, opening.

The image shows the opening of the first movement of Quartet No. 10 by Dmitri Shostakovich. It consists of two systems of musical notation. The first system includes staves for Violin 1 (VI. 1), Violin 2 (VI. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The tempo is marked 'Adagio' with a metronome marking of quarter note = 63. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The music begins with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system continues the piece, with a first ending bracket (1) over the final measure of the system. The dynamics remain forte (f).

From the opening, there is a clear centre around a modally-inflected A minor. However, this is soon clouded. Over the course of the movement, the only punctuating gestures are short instances of harmony with clear triads (that is, unclouded by additional chromatic colourings such as starting from b. 6). These short gestures provide contrast in the form of well-defined harmonies but they do not win over from the more undefined harmonies. In this way, the impulse to return to the tonic is diminished, perhaps even eliminated. As a result, the tonic itself becomes gradually suspended. Each movement does present tonal closure, however (each ends with a differently voiced chord of A minor 7th). In this respect, the whole work can be conceived of as a ‘composing out’ of A minor. The first movement of the Tenth Quartet is titled ‘Aria’ in the manuscript score, supporting the observation that harmonic extensions such as opening solo passages are similar to improvisatory arias.³⁴⁷ Starting from the Tenth Quartet, Weinberg’s previous model of defined vs. undefined harmony begins to replace the traditional return to the tonic as the main expressive feature of his harmony (see

³⁴⁷ There is no evidence to reveal Weinberg’s reasons for removing the movement titles from the Tenth Quartet’s published score. Its publication does, however, date six years after the work’s manuscript version, and Weinberg had abandoned the practice in his works at that point, opting for metronome marks only.

below). The ‘tonic’ is still vital to understanding the music, but it is avoided or bypassed; its function as goal is suspended.

With the concepts of chromatic drift and tonal sidestepping established earlier, the ‘bypassing’ of the tonic can be more closely examined. Such sidestepping is often the result of stepwise voice leading, as the harmony begins to drift away from the tonic. With longer phrases, such sidesteps are elevated to the level of structural significance – as is the case with the Thirteenth Quartet (Fig. 5-ii).

Fig. 5-ii, Quartet No. 13, structural/harmonic summary

Opening	2nd Section	3rd Section	4th Section	(Coda)
	R5	R13	R18	R24 ³
Introduction of main themes/motifs	Faster tempo, extended use of special playing techniques	Characterised by more sonoristic effects, including ‘smear’ gestures	‘development’ of much of the previous material, esp. the 2nd section	Brief return to opening material, final return to ‘smear’ gestures
B flat - D flat	B flat - (A flat)	G	F _♯ - G - (A)	B flat

In the Thirteenth Quartet, sections are linked by brief passages of sidestepping harmony (i.e., from the second section, B flat moves to G via A flat, and then G returns to B flat via A major).

With the later works, a harmonic drift may occur over the course of a whole movement, rather than the relatively quick departures and returns seen in the short and regular phrases of earlier works. Despite this, the sense of a tonic and governing key is vital to Weinberg’s music; even in the works that approach chromatic over-saturation, a sense of tonal significance can still be discerned on the large scale. However, Weinberg’s sidestepping represents only one aspect of his fluctuating harmonies and how they move from well defined through to undefined territory. A more nuanced approach can reveal subtler techniques in some of the other movements.

5.1.2. SIDE-STEPPING IN A NEO-RIEMANNIAN CONTEXT

The first analytical ‘investigation’ of this chapter concerns these side-stepping harmonies, exploring them through the lens of neo-Riemannian theories. With an experimental attitude, several key examples can be shown to be highly revealing for Weinberg’s musical language. I have already noted the resemblance to Prokofiev’s harmonies, which are often organised by steps of intervallic patterns, descending or ascending. For an example, see the opening of ‘Juliet as a Young Girl’ from *Romeo and Juliet* (Ex. 5.6).

Ex. 5.6, Prokofiev, ‘Juliet as a Young Girl’, opening.

Vivace ♩ = 144

mf >

mf

C

A flat - E - C

Commentators have interpreted this progression in different ways. Deborah Rifkin sought to identify ‘pitch class motives’, combining two different schools of analysis on Prokofiev: those that utilise motif and gesture to explain his harmonic processes, and those that use Set theory. She writes that ‘despite the fact that the pitch-class motives in “Young Juliet” occur in different harmonic contexts, the melodic function of the motive never changes; in every recurrence, B acts as a dominant agent to C’.³⁴⁸ In other words, Rifkin highlights the importance of the leading note as a motif in the work. In Ex. 5.6, above, this can be seen in the second bar, as the C-B-C motif is reset within the context of A-flat – E – C.

³⁴⁸ Deborah Rifkin, ‘A Theory of Motives for Prokofiev’s Music’ in *Music Theory Spectrum* 26/2, 2004, 276.

Richard Bass takes a different approach, instead summarising Prokofiev's unusual harmonies as a kind of 'displacement'. He writes that 'although whole key systems and their component harmonies may be subjected to chromatic displacement, it is the displacement of individual notes within the system that is fundamental to the technique'.³⁴⁹ In Bass's terms, Rifkin's reading still makes sense, since the harmonies around the B-C motif are 'displaced' through chromatic alteration, but the motif itself still operates.

Both authors, however, fail to mention a strong feature of this example that exposes the differences between Prokofiev and Weinberg's harmonic styles. The first bar opens with a block-like harmony, and then an ascending scale, before three more block harmonies to return to the tonic; the harmony is very clearly structured. But while Weinberg's harmonic processes sometimes resemble Prokofiev, they very rarely *sound* like Prokofiev. This results from Weinberg's pursuit of linear counterpoint over vertical, block-like harmonies, and also from Weinberg's apparent lack of interest in following patterns in his music (whereas Prokofiev was extremely mathematically minded, enjoying number games and chess – the numerous harmonic patterns in his music arguably reflect this).³⁵⁰ For this reason, techniques for analysis of Prokofiev's music can be applicable to Weinberg, but only in select instances; Weinberg's harmonic style remains quite separate from that of Prokofiev.

Considering Weinberg's techniques of outlining non-functional harmonies and sections of roving harmony, one analytical technique that has proven fruitful for understanding Prokofiev's music becomes appropriate: neo-Riemannian analysis. This approach analyses motion where the harmonies themselves remain largely consonant,

³⁴⁹ Richard Bass, 'Prokofiev's Technique of Chromatic Displacement', in *Music Analysis*, 7/2, 1988, 199.

³⁵⁰ For a brief overview of Prokofiev's love of chess, see: David Nice, *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West, 1891-1935* (Yale University Press, 2003) 99-100.

but the relationship between one chord and the next does not follow recognisable patterns of common practice harmony.

Riemann suggested a system of ‘transformations’ linking disparate triads together.³⁵¹ For him, the most important transformations were those that maximized common notes between the chords but also minimized disruption through voice leading (a principle now known as parsimony). Such relationships and transformations could then be plotted on graphs where chords could resolve back to the tonic by a number of steps. The most ‘natural’ progressions would seek the path requiring the lowest number of steps back. Riemann’s theory was originally conceived in order to confirm the ‘natural-ness’ of functional harmony, in accordance with thinkers as far back as Pythagoras.³⁵² From Riemann’s body of thought has stemmed a much wider area of musical analysis, however, adapting his concept of ‘transformations’ in order to explain tonally consonant works that do not adhere to patterns of functional harmony.

Fig. 5-iii, chordal transformations.

a) b) c) d)
 D - f# D (d) Bflat D (b) G D G Aflat

Consider chords as in stepwise or semitonal movement (see Fig. 5-iii, above). To get from D major to F-sharp minor, only a small change is needed – a semitone down from D (Fig. 5-iii a). In Riemannian theory, this transformation is a *Leittonwechsel*, a leading tone transformation, or ‘L’ for short. If transformations with two shared pitches are prioritized, then the other two movements are ‘R’ for relative, and ‘P’ for parallel. To get from D major to B-flat major, a composite transformation of two movements is

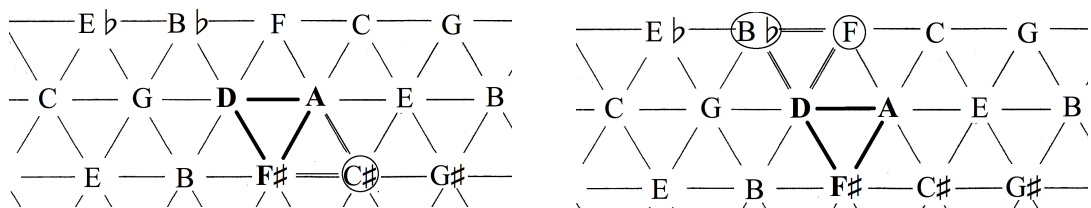
³⁵¹ For a summary of Riemann’s theories and their subsequent reception, see: Ludwig Holtmeier, ‘The Reception of Hugo Riemann’s Music Theory’, in Edward Gollin and Alexander Rehding (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Riemannian Music Theories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 3-54.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 66.

needed, resulting in a PL transformation (Fig. 5-iiib). Other chords need tonal steps (as opposed to semitonal ones), such as D major to G major (or PLL) (Fig. 5-iiic), whereas yet more distantly related chords need quite drastic transformations – such as A-flat major, which shares no common notes with D major at all (Fig. 5-iiid). The basic principle of neo-Riemannian theorists contends that harmonic motions often follow patterns of resolutions, accounting for both functional harmonies and more complex progressions.

The proximity of chords can be illustrated by plotting them on a graph, where the circled pitches are the targets of the next chord (see Fig. 5.iv, below).

Fig. 5-iv, grid plottings of transformations.

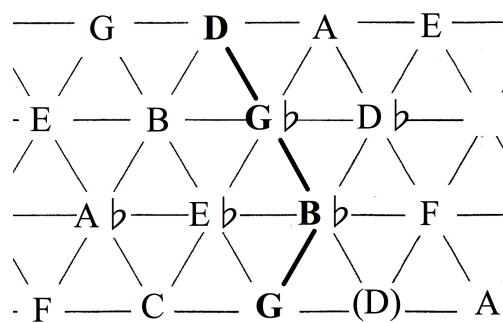


These simple yet effective diagrams illustrate that a movement of a semitone to the mediant minor moves along one nearby cell. Another can be found at a distance of two permutations, the required number of alterations to reach the chord. When progressions are mapped out on these grids, patterns can be observed and the underlying idea of ‘substitutions’ can be complemented with a more nuanced interpretation of resolution and trajectory instead.

For instance, the opening progression of Weinberg’s Second Quartet can be seen as a stepwise movement from the tonic towards the dominant (see bb. 5-9 in Ex. 5.2, above). Using the abbreviations mentioned above, the chords moving G – B flat – A flat – G flat – D, correspond to the transformations PR, PRLR, PRLR, and then LPLP. While such information offers very little information about the sounding harmonies, it provides a summary for the voice-leading and transformations in this passage.

The guiding principle seems to be one of organisation by thirds, or *Terzschrift* (LP) in Neo-Riemannian terms, (referring to chords related by an ascending or descending third in the tonic). The graph below shows the trajectory of the root of each chord, as they shift by third transformations, initially rising to B flat before falling by major thirds (taking the A flat as a passing harmony; see Fig. 5-v, below). A Neo-Riemannian analysis might propose that the *Terzschrift* progression is shifted to an implicit D major, starting with the B flat descent. The block-like vertical harmonies are reminiscent of the Prokofiev example above, though Weinberg's shifting of the sequence to the dominant is an ingenious feature (Fig. 5.v).

Fig. 5-v, Quartet No. 2, first movement, opening, bb. 4-7, *Terzschrift* relations.



This sort of analysis rests on an assumption that relegates the A flat in this progression to a level of less importance than the B flat and G flat, similar to the identification of voice exchange in the Schenkerian approach to Ex. 5.2, above. *Terzschrift* relationships form a focus of Richard Cohn's work, which traced hexatonic cycles of thirds: 'the contrary motion of major-third relations underlies both their central role in the syntax of pan-triadic progressions and their association with the semiotics of the supernatural'.³⁵³ Cohn highlights the fact that *Terzschrift* progressions can move purely by semitonal steps, thus making them highly significant in Neo-Riemannian terms.

With this neo-Riemannian reading of Weinberg's Second Quartet, a comparison can be made between analytical approaches. In Ex. 5.2 (p.251) there is a quasi-

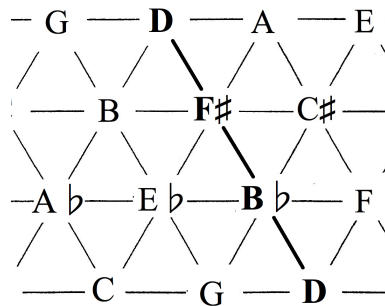
³⁵³ Richard Cohn, *Audacious Euphony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 19.

Schenkerian reduction of the phrase included. What that reduction showed was an overall prolongation of the fifth scale degree, also emphasising the essentially ‘tonal’ properties of this passage, including Neapolitan flavours. The neo-Riemannian reading is more nuanced, showing a similar prolongation of the dominant harmony, but here illuminated to be organised through falling third relations. In this instance, the neo-Riemannian approach seems more revealing than the quasi-Schenkerian reduction.

A similar pattern can be found in the opening of the Seventeenth Quartet, which uses transformations to problematise what would otherwise be a straightforward harmonic oscillation between tonic and dominant (see Ex. 5.7, below). From the fifth bar, the melody tantalisingly alludes to two different keys, F sharp and B flat. With knowledge of *Terzschritt* harmony, these are the two ‘stepping stones’ from D major. As such, they provide colouring to this otherwise simple passage (and contribute towards the similarity to the Second Quartet). Such an observation, however, is not to say that the listener *perceives* this passage as anything other than a somewhat adventurous colouration around D major. It is only with intricate analysis that these progressions can be identified.

Ex. 5.7, Quartet No. 17, opening, and *Terzschrift* graph.

Allegro ♩ = 92



In an earlier work, Weinberg extends similar principles into the level of form. The Third Quartet develops the *Terzschrift* transformations in the Second and employs them in a structural function in the first movement. The movement is firmly in D minor, but the second subject is written in G flat major: nothing uncommon in itself, though the unusual tonal colours of the key would make it appropriate as a striking departure from the opening theme, particularly when written for string instruments (the transitions which link to and from the second section are chiefly in B flat – completing the *terzschrift* transformation on the structural level).

All of this work with grids and plotting is not to say that Weinberg was necessarily aware of such transformations when writing, but they can be used to illustrate a system of logic that governs some of his ‘roving’ harmonic passages. In moments such as the

examples listed above, the absence of functional harmony can provide little harmonic context to the listener. With the underlying logic of resolution, transformations, and chord permutations, the rules governing such passages are illuminated. Many of these seemingly simple transformations are concealed behind more complex passages of linear counterpoint. The examples raised above represent some of Weinberg's most harmonically 'transparent' passages. As such, this approach cannot account for Weinberg's later harmonic style, which frequently frustrates and complicates triadic harmonies, eschewing clarity for chromatic density instead. One method for accessing the structures in Weinberg's later works is to address them through the lens of modality.

5.2. MODALITY

Modality has been a crucial focus in the analysis of Shostakovich's music in Soviet-Russian musicology.³⁵⁴ Indeed, in the theories of Yuri Kholopov, modality encompasses all aspects of music, including scales and harmony, form, and even expression and psychology (see p. 278).³⁵⁵ In this section, Weinberg's harmonies and usage of scales and modes are discussed with reference to some of the more common theories. Under Kholopov's conception of mode, every scale can be spoken of as a type of mode, even including the chromatic scale. In this respect, the chromatic scale can be thought of, paradoxically perhaps, as diatonic and functional within the context of modal language (see p. 278).

Weinberg's distinctive use of mode has several facets. An expressive side of Weinberg's use of modality echoes a similar technique identified in Shostakovich's music, with flattened minor modes that evoke a sense of 'hyper-minor', and there is also an expressive device of changing between parallel tonalities. Both of these will be

³⁵⁴ See: Ellon D. Carpenter, 'Russian theorists on modality in Shostakovich's music', in David Fanning ed., *Shostakovich Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 76-112.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

explored in turn, along with reference to Soviet theorists' conception of modality in harmony.

5.2.1. HYPER-MINOR

One aspect of Weinberg's approach to modality borrows equally from the Jewish folk traditions that his music was praised for, but also from the harmonic language of Shostakovich. This is a device that Levon Hakobian has referred to as 'hyper-minor', where certain passages contain modal alterations that accentuate their minor-key associations.³⁵⁶ Hakobian defines these effects as 'minor scales with lowered degrees other than the third and the sixth... many among them contain the intervals of augmented first [presumably minor second – D.E.] and diminished eighth [octave]'.³⁵⁷ These can sometimes be noted at the structural level of tonal centres, reminiscent of Weinberg's own side-stepping. Perhaps the most common instance of such structural flattening in Shostakovich's music is the restatement of thematic material at a raised semitone from the tonic, often 'darkening' the theme from the major into the minor mode as well (as in the first movement of his Second Quartet). Perhaps the best-known example of a raised-semitone restatement comes from Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony, first movement.³⁵⁸

Hakobian's term of 'hyper-minor' is a reference to the writings of Lev Mazel. Mazel was one of the first important analysts of Shostakovich's music, and he went on to teach a generation of subsequent analysts (including Manashir Yakubov).³⁵⁹ In particular, Mazel's early writings focused on Shostakovich's blending of modes to

³⁵⁶ Levon Hakobian, *Music of the Soviet Age: 1917-1987* (Stockholm: Melos, 1998) 166. Hakobian states that Weinberg inherited hyper-minor as one of several 'echoes of Shostakovich'. See: Hakobian, 'Weinberg's Position in Russian Context', 130.

³⁵⁷ Hakobian, *Music of the Soviet Age*, 169.

³⁵⁸ See: David Fanning, *The Breath of the Symphonist: Shostakovich's Tenth* (London: Royal Musical Association, 1988) 28-30.

³⁵⁹ See: Nelli Grigor'yevna Shakhnazarova, 'Lev Abramovich Mazel', *New Grove Online* [accessed 30/05/16].

create densely chromatic works.³⁶⁰ Describing the harmony of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, Mazel writes 'there are freely-enriched intonatsias with major and minor elements of various other modes'.³⁶¹ Taking Hakobian's example, Shostakovich's expanded minor modes combine to create a sense of going beyond the minor scale with modes that combine elements from different scales: hence the term 'hyper-minor'.

A typical hyper-minor scale might look like this:

Fig. 5-vi, hyper-minor scale.



In this instance, there is present the minor second, and flattened 4th, incorporating elements that come into play with major vs. minor ambiguities.³⁶² Of course, this example is only a suggestion; there are many possible combinations for hyper-minor modes. In the context of fluctuating and sidestepping harmonies, hyper-minor scales are an important element. The emphasis on the flattened second and seventh is particularly reminiscent of sidestepping, both on the short scale of vertical harmony, and also on the broader level of structural tonality.

The Third Quartet utilises elements of Mazel's 'hyper-minor'. In the example below, which shows a punctuating gesture at the end of the exposition, passages of G-flat mixolydian scales in the bass alternate with trenchant D minor chords (Ex. 5.8).

³⁶⁰ See: Judith Kuhn, *Shostakovich in Dialogue*, 64-5.

³⁶¹ Lev Mazel, 'Zametki o muzik'alnom yazike Shostakovicha' [Notes on the musical language of Shostakovich], in Grigorii Ordzhonikidze ed., *Dmitri Shostakovich* (Moscow: Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1967), 320.

³⁶² While this scale can be read as Dorian on the flattened supertonic, it is the C minor context and harmonic support that renders it as hyper-minor.

Ex. 5.8, Quartet No. 3, first movement, R5³.

The mixolydian scale (in G flat) is clearly spelled out by the ascending line in the two lower parts, while the upper parts punctuate with a C flat major-inflected line. Altogether, they can also be read as either a hyper-minor colouration or an E-flat Neapolitan shade to the overall D minor tonality. The effectiveness of this punctuating gesture anticipates a key structural feature of this first movement: the shift to G flat major for the second subject, a motion that has already been discussed above, in relation to neo-Riemannian theories (and even earlier, in comparison to Shebalin, on p. 79).

By the time of the coda, the Neapolitan or mixolydian feel has dissipated, and E flat is left as a final reminder.³⁶³ Here, a shortened version of this theme concludes the movement (see Ex. 5.9, below). The fact that the coda recurs at the end of the final movement has already been discussed in chapter 3, p. 170, but it can also be observed as a wider reflection of this sidestepping harmony with hyper-minor inflections.

³⁶³ The use of E flat as a structural and thematic unifier in the Third Quartet recalls Lionel Pike's identification of 'axial notes' in works by Beethoven and Sibelius; see Lionel Pike, *Beethoven, Sibelius and the 'Profound Logic'* (London: The Athlone Press, 1978) 88-92.

Ex. 5.9, Quartet No. 3, first movement, ⁸R45.

A further instance of a hyper-minor mode can be found near the opening of the Sixth Quartet (see Ex. 5.10).

Ex. 5.10, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ³R1, and cello-line scale reduction.

With the opening firmly in E minor, the cello's entry at R1 introduces E flat into the harmony, transporting the previously straightforward tonal scheme into an altered Aeolian mode (with raised fourth – see the reduction beneath Ex. 5.10). This transforms the theme into a darker hyper-minor section. Only with the start of a transition section at R1⁶ are we returned to the E minor scale and the tonic key.

As such, Weinberg's harmonic side steps and use of hyper-minor effects are multi-faceted. They incorporate oblique references to his Jewish musical heritage, and the more obvious influence of Shostakovich. Sidestepping is one of the principal ways that Weinberg achieves movement away from well-defined harmonies, but it comes as a result of a wider blend of techniques and influences. Similar movements include chromatic drifting, often occurring on the shorter scale in earlier works – such as the First Quartet (it can also be noted in the second movement of the First Piano Sonata). In Weinberg's harmonic language, alternatives to the tonic are simply presented, instead of being ranked by importance in their relation to the tonic. They can be understood as adjacent, as a passage will typically embrace a succession of keys, often with chromatic complications and side-steps to add colour.

5.2.2. MAJOR Vs. MINOR

One of Weinberg's strategies for complicating well-defined harmonies is to blur the boundaries between major and minor. Most typically this is done with the tonic, but it is also achieved in combination with tonal sidestepping. The notion of blurring the major and minor tonic has a long history, with its own associations of expression and character. In particular, it is most strongly associated with the music of Schubert, who had been praised by one Soviet author as 'the most democratic of composers', and was held aloft as a suitable model, even occasionally compared to Musorgsky.³⁶⁴ Schubert was a particular favourite of Weinberg's, who was known to particularly enjoy Schubert's late piano sonatas.³⁶⁵

The switch from the major to the tonic minor or vice versa has been noted as one of Schubert's favoured expressive devices, particularly in his song cycles. Indeed, the connotations are easily noted in his songs, often mirroring shifts in their texts. For

³⁶⁴ Fairclough, *Classics for the Masses*, 31-3.

³⁶⁵ Weinberg's daughter has recalled her father regularly playing Schubert's late piano sonatas for his own enjoyment. Email from Victoria Bishops (Neé Weinberg) to David Fanning, 26 August 2010.

instance, in the lied *Lachen und Weinen*, the tonic minor is introduced with the lines focusing on tears – ‘Und warum ich nun weine’. On a broader scale, such flirtations with the parallel minor occur in Schubert’s piano sonatas and in his symphonies, where their tragic expressive qualities take on monumental proportions.³⁶⁶

While seemingly only the difference between a semitone at the third interval, the contrast between the tonic major/minor has long been exploited for expressive effect. The minor triad is perceptually more dissonant than the major, containing as it does more complex mathematical relations between its intervals. To shift from the consonant tonic major to the dissonant minor is, accordingly, one of the simplest and most expressive harmonic motions possible. Suzannah Clark writes that ‘the expanded system of tonal relations in Schubert’s sonata forms stems from the composer’s assumption that major and minor may serve as equally valid representations of the tonic’.³⁶⁷ In practical terms, Schubert expands his range of chromaticisms by portraying two different ‘versions’ of the tonic.

In Schubert’s works, the switch between major and minor can reflect a difference in mood (as with *Lachen und Weinen* – the reverse motion happening most famously in ‘Ständchen’ from the *Schwanengesang* cycle). Schubert’s exploitation of major tonic within a minor key piece has been widely interpreted as nostalgic, wistful, and, somehow, even sadder than sad on an affective level.³⁶⁸ Accordingly, the critical reception of Schubert’s major-minor nuances has perceived the tonic major as the recollection or hope for happier times, only reinforcing the despondency of the current doleful situation when we are returned to the tonic minor again. It is easy to regard Weinberg’s major-minor blurring as a result of modally-driven scales.

³⁶⁶ See: Susan Wollenberg, “‘His Favourite Device’: Schubert’s Major-Minor Usage and its Nuances’, in *Schubert’s Fingerprints* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011) 15-46.

³⁶⁷ Suzannah Clark, *Analyzing Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 259.

³⁶⁸ See: Brian Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and The Man* (London: Gollancz, 1997) 152-3.

Considering wider Russian concepts of modality, the transition from tonic major to minor is not especially problematic – it only becomes so when prioritizing the initial tonic in the sense of common harmonic practice. As such, the blending between major and minor that seems so typical of Weinberg’s music is simply an extension of this approach to modality, harking back to Schubert’s use of the technique as an expressive device.

The blurring of the boundaries between major and minor on the shorter scale of phrasing and harmony is a much subtler effect than on a larger formal level. Weinberg’s boundary blurrings are often employed to extend phrases further and to move away from well-defined harmonies. With the introduction of the minor tonic, more dissonant harmonies and accompaniments are possible, and the phrase length becomes naturally extended as a result.

The Sixth Quartet also presents a good illustration of major-minor blurring. It opens firmly in E minor, though this starts to become eroded by R1, owing to the appearance of G-sharp – first in the second violin and then in the first (Ex. 5.11).

Ex. 5.11, Quartet No. 6, first movement, ¹⁴R1.

However, the cello answers with the raised Aeolian mode – already explored as an instance of hyper-minor, see above. Indeed, the parallel key here functions as a transition for the hyper-minor passage that follows. This short blurring passage provides an example of minor leading to the major within a wider modal context.

An example of the opposite can be found in the opening of the Fourth Quartet. The work opens in E flat major, though this is soon eroded – similarly by the viola alternating major and minor thirds. With this opening, it is easy to fit Weinberg’s

harmonic structures into Haas's reading of Shostakovich, in that the opening and cadential figures usually contain or refer to diatonic harmony. In the case of the Fourth Quartet, the work alternates between the major and minor mode (paralleling Schubert's expansion of the tonic). This dialogue is extended in the extreme to the work's overall structure, as the final movement ends in E flat minor. In this manner, phrases are still regular and shifting, though the relationship to the tonic becomes problematised; multiple modal expressions of the tonic are present, as either the major or the minor can be anticipated as the goal of this short introductory passage.

In the later works, blurring between major and minor keys becomes problematised. The erosion still occurs, though now often with both present at the same time. Similarly, the blurring is combined with elements of hyper-flattening to reach a harmonic language that almost resembles Milhaud's conceptions of polytonality, where stacks of intervallic chords (that is, side-steps from the tonic) with blurred major and minor tonalities create densely chromatic vertical harmonies, in a manner unseen in Weinberg's earlier works. However, Milhaud's polytonality is block-like and unrelenting, as can be seen in the last four bars of the first movement of his Fifth Quartet (Ex. 5.12).

Ex. 5.12, Milhaud, Quartet No. 5, first movement, last four bars.

For the entirety of the first movement of Milhaud's quartet, each part is set within its own key. This is most transparent at the movement's conclusion, as the voices present

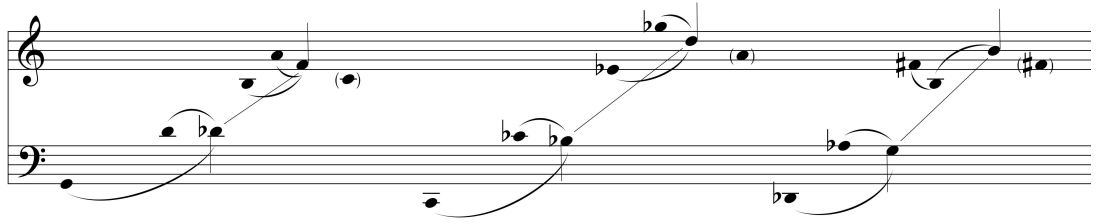
ascending arpeggios in B flat, C, D flat, and A, one of the most extreme expressions of Milhaud's polytonality. Needless to say, Weinberg's interest in similar effects is always combined with diatonic or modal expression, and is never given such transparent expression as the Milhaud example.

A good example of Weinberg's blending of tonalities can be found in the Fourteenth Quartet. In this opening, the parts enter with a chromatically dense motif (Ex. 5.13).

Ex. 5.13, Quartet No. 14, first movement, opening.

They present two contrasting phrases, with little harmonic material linking them. It can be noted that they come to rest on a dyad together (with the cello's held minims, and the violin's quaver cells – in the first instance, suggesting D flat and F held together). The pitches that they come to rest on betrays their organisation; they are built in major-third relations. The analytical reduction below illustrates the two lines, with their points of rest and how they come to form an interval of a major third between them. Beyond this, the stemmed bass notes can also be seen to descend by a third with each phrase (Fig. 5.vii).

Fig. 5-vii, Quartet No. 14, first movement, opening, reduction.



Despite the cello's initial minor-key gestures, the resulting harmonies evoke major-key chords with the cello's sustained notes. In this way, the opening of this work can be read as problematising of the major-minor parallel. Over the whole movement, the major key wins out (the work ends with an uneasy sense of C major). Weinberg establishes an underlying dominance of major intervals from the very opening, with this 'stacking' procedure.

An interesting example for the erosion and degradation of the major/minor binary can be found in the development section of the Seventeenth Quartet. In a work that has been comparatively straightforward up to this point (even evoking the quasi-simplistic sound world of the Second Quartet), the development presents a series of rapidly deteriorating vignettes, with the movement towards undefined harmonies most commonly triggered by a sense of unease around major or minor (see Chapter 4 for an extended discussion of the Seventeenth Quartet's structure, p. 218).

The parallel key is an example of Weinberg's wider technique of free-floating and roving tonality. By touching on two different iterations of the tonic, the opportunity for harmonic transformations becomes greatly expanded, incorporating chord relations and modulations from both major and minor scales. In addition to the expressive and nostalgic properties of the device, these practical considerations also boost its appeal to the composer.

The expression of nostalgia certainly fits in accordance with Weinberg's wider compositional credo of commemoration through creation. As such, these fluctuations

can often be found in his works that are dedicated to lost family members, such as the third movement of his Sixteenth Quartet. The work is dedicated to Weinberg's sister, Esther, who would have been sixty years old in the year of the piece's composition. The third movement presents a funeral march-like theme, a reminder of Weinberg's interest in Mahler (for contemporary Russian perspectives on this work, see p. 100).³⁶⁹ The main theme hovers between the major and minor and is continued into the final movement of the work, which presents a klezmer-like theme.

The major/minor distinction is one of the smaller elements that make up Weinberg's compositional signature; indeed, one could just as easily identify it as an element of his musical 'DNA'. It enriches the majority of his melodic writing, embedded into his very musical language. It can be asserted that this is a strongly individual move away from Shostakovich, a striking element that can stand as a defence against those detractors who would seek to tar Weinberg as a 'lesser Shostakovich'.

The blurring between major and minor also betrays influence from Klezmer and Yiddish music. The device is so widespread through Jewish melodies that their combination of sadness with joy has often been described as 'laughter through tears'.³⁷⁰ One particularly expressive device is the modulation to the minor subdominant via the tonic major – a modulation that results in an almost inevitable return to the tonic minor afterwards. The interplay between major and minor also betrays the influence from Weinberg's childhood, playing in the Warsaw Jewish Theatre Orchestra alongside his Father, performing music that he described as 'not very accomplished, but music from the soul, nevertheless'.³⁷¹ In his later style of writing, Weinberg sought to move beyond experiments with mode and to instead emulate one the most expressive harmonic styles of all: dodecaphony.

³⁶⁹ See: Yuliya Broydo, 'Yevreyskaya tema v tvorchestve M.S. Vaynberga', Appendix I, iii.

³⁷⁰ See: Judith Kuhn, "'Laughter through tears": Shostakovich and Jewish Music', in *DSCM*, 2010/33, 6.

³⁷¹ Lyudmila Nikitina, 'Pochti lyuboy mig zhizni – rabota', 17.

5.3. TWELVE-NOTENESS: WEINBERG, KHOLOPOV, AND CHROMATICISM

Among Weinberg's writings is the following short statement on dodecaphony as a trend in the late 60s: 'I don't understand how almost everyone today wants to write according to a formula established by Schoenberg. It was natural for him. But for others? Why be a monkey? This is an age of terrible depersonalization [*obezlichivaniya*]'.³⁷² However, in a parallel to the contradiction between Shostakovich's public statements on the technique and his own personal practice, Weinberg also occasionally ventured some way towards several of Schoenberg's ideas.

Friedrich Geiger writes of Weinberg's quartets from the post-thaw period that a 'tendency to integrate new techniques of composition can be distinguished, such as the dodecaphony in the Twelfth Quartet... it is, however, entirely grounded in tonal means, similar to Shostakovich'.³⁷³ Geiger is right to observe Weinberg's integration of new techniques, but dodecaphony at that point was not the new and exciting method in Soviet music that Geiger makes it out to be.³⁷⁴ Weinberg's twelve-note passages are indeed grounded in tonal means, but in the quartet cycle they differ greatly from Shostakovich's usage. More importantly, Weinberg's passages do not present any kind of row, or even any serial procedures. They simply contain all twelve pitch classes. An appropriate descriptive term can be found in Kholopov's writing. In an article on Andrey Volkonsky, the first Soviet serialist, Kholopov introduces a term that has since come to hold special meaning for Russian musicology: 'listeners do not need to

³⁷² Anon, 'Pis'ma o lyubvi', 18.

³⁷³ Geiger, 'Ideologie und Autonomie: Mieczysław Weinbergs Streichquartette', 106.

³⁷⁴ Geiger has since revised his reading of the Twelfth Quartet, observing how a semblance of dodecaphony betrays a deeper centre around B – see: Friedrich Geiger, 'Weinberg und die Avantgarde', *Die Tonkunst*, No. 10 (April 2016) 152.

distinguish the number of tones in a series, since they hear twelve-noteness⁷

[*dvenadtsatitonovost*].³⁷⁵

This concept of twelve-noteness refers to music that is written to evoke the sound of dodecaphonic music, but that does not adhere to the strict rules of serialism. Kholopov also conceived of a system of free association of all twelve pitches, which he dubbed a ‘twelve-step property’ [*dvenadtsatistupennost*].³⁷⁶ In this outlook, dissonances can be deployed as harmonious sounds, without need for resolution.³⁷⁷ For Kholopov and his followers, this has come to represent the wider Soviet applications of dodecaphony, but originally it was used in relation to the earlier experiments of the younger ‘avant-garde’ generation. Peter J. Schmelz writes that ‘the young Soviet composers adapted the basic techniques of serialism (or what they took to be the basic techniques) to fit their own changing aesthetic goals’.³⁷⁸ The relatively recent Soviet school of dodecaphony was born from a lack of information about Western techniques, hence the suitability of ‘twelve-noteness’, music that sought to imitate serial sounds, but that was originally conceived in ignorance of its underlying operations.

Weinberg’s later style is densely chromatic compared to his earlier works, with some passages that utilise the whole chromatic scale. He certainly employed serial techniques in other works, such as the Tenth Symphony, and in the *Twenty-Four Preludes for Solo Cello*. In this respect, Weinberg was experienced in utilising note-rows and serial procedures, arguably every bit as much as Shostakovich. However, upon

³⁷⁵ Yuri Kholopov, ‘Initiator: O zhizni i muzike Andrey Volkonskogo’ [The initiator: On the life and Music of Andrey Volkonsky] in *Muzika iz bivshego SSSR* [Music from the former USSR], Valeriya Tsenova ed., 2 vols (Moscow: Kompozitor, 1994) I: 10. Available online: <http://www.kholopov.ru/volkonsky/volkonsky.html> [accessed 03/06/15]. Also published in English translation as ‘Andrey Volkonsky’ in *Underground Music of the Former USSR*, Valeria Tsenova ed., trans. Romela Kohanovskaya (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1996) 2-22.

³⁷⁶ Yuri Kholopov, *Sovremenniy cherty garmonii Prokofieva* (Modern Traits in Prokofiev’s Harmony), (Moscow: Muzika, 1967) 229-237. Available online: <http://www.kholopov.ru/hol-prkfv.pdf> [accessed 22/09/15].

³⁷⁷ For a lucid introduction to Kholopov’s theories, see: Olga Sologub, ‘Sergei Prokofiev’s Piano Sonata No. 8, Op. 84 and Symphony No. 5, Op. 100: Neo-Riemannian and Kholopovian Perspectives’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2014, 18-33.

³⁷⁸ Peter J. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music During the Thaw* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 99.

closer inspection, actual serialism is never employed as a technique in his quartet cycle. The twelve-noteness label is particularly well adapted to particular movements that evoke dodecaphonic harmonies without strictly following the conventions of such music. It is as if Weinberg had sought to refer to the ongoing trend of serial music, but then explored other avenues at the same time.

Kholopov's concept of twelve-noteness will be particularly useful in the context of several of the later works, though the principles of free-floating tonality still operate, as will be explored below. While there may be a sense of twelve-noteness, because of the profusion of chromaticism, there is still an underlying fundamental tonic reference point, which may be fluctuating or not. As such, it becomes easier to make comparisons to Bartók rather than to Shostakovich's own usage of actual twelve note rows.

Weinberg's renewed interest in chromaticism in his quartets of the thaw era is certainly telling, though it may not be quite the 'new technique' that Geiger makes it out to be. The chromatic drift in the First Quartet has already been noted above. Owing to that device, the First Quartet is particularly dense chromatically speaking, with all twelve pitch classes present in a range of a few bars. Weinberg's later works differ in that they evoke the semantics of twelve-note works without adhering to their rules; accordingly, they can be presented below through the lens of Kholopov's conception of 'twelve-noteness'.

One aspect of the later works has already been elucidated – the phrase lengths. Weinberg's early experiments with dense chromaticism still utilised very short phrase lengths (around 8-12 bars). However, even a cursory glance at the Twelfth Quartet reveals that it is rather difficult to segment into phrases at all (see Ex. 5.14, below). The context for these later works is strikingly different, and requires some background explanation. Twelve-note and serialist music of the younger generation was becoming well known, and even fashionable.

When Stravinsky visited the USSR in 1962, he had made a prediction that even Tikhon Khrennikov would be using serialist techniques eventually (this did happen, in Khrennikov's Third Symphony in 1973).³⁷⁹ Writing in *Pravda* in 1965, Yuri Levitin placed Weinberg among a 'middle group that is trying to make a synthesis of old and new techniques'; for this, they were elevated and praised by the establishment, but were slowly eclipsed by the creeping popularity of the 'new composers'.³⁸⁰ The American critic Harold C. Schonberg, writing a report on the state of Soviet Music in 1974, spoke slightly of this 'middle group'.³⁸¹ Weinberg can be viewed as something of a late adopter of serial effects, compared to the rest of the Soviet musical world.

The role of serialism in Soviet music is still a relatively under-explored topic, at least in the English-language literature. One exception is Peter J. Schmelz's work, whose PhD thesis and subsequent book, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical*, provide an excellent context for the dissemination and awareness of Western avant-garde and serial composers and their works.³⁸² This might seem surprising given the cultural climate of the late 1950s and early 1960s, but it would appear that information about serial music was fine to release so long as the accompanying commentary was dismissive and critical of it as a mode of composition.³⁸³ Weinberg's first work with serial elements was *The Passenger*, 1967, where 12-note rows mark significant dramatic moments.³⁸⁴

Geiger suggests that Weinberg was consciously adopting polystylism, perhaps even betraying an influence from Schnittke. Hakobian even claims that had Weinberg's

³⁷⁹ Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, 352.

³⁸⁰ Yuri Levitin, writing in *Pravda*, 20 June 1965, quoted in Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, 449.

³⁸¹ Harold C. Schonberg, 'Is anyone writing serious music in Russia today?' in *The New York Times*, 29 September 1974.

³⁸² See: Peter J. Schmelz, 'Listening, Memory, and the Thaw: Unofficial Music and Society in the Soviet Union, 1956–1974', unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2005.

³⁸³ See: Grigori Shneyerson, *O Muzike zhivoi i mertvoi* – discussed in Chapter 2, p.57.

³⁸⁴ For an in-depth examination of the dramatic function of twelve-note rows in *The Passenger*, see: Ian Pay, 'Mieczysław Weinberg's *The Passenger*: Silent No More', unpublished Masters' dissertation, University of Manchester, 2011, 42-45.

music been more widely heard, he would be regarded as ‘one of the pioneers of the polystylistic [sic] approach’.³⁸⁵ While there is a small chance of a mutual influence between Schnittke and Weinberg (despite the latter’s noted lack of participation in concert life in the 70s and 80s), polystylism certainly had roots that predate Schnittke’s generation; for instance, in the manic juxtapositions present in Shostakovich’s earlier works, such as *The Nose* or the First Piano Concerto. Weinberg came close to polystylism in his own Trumpet Concerto, Op. 94, which features a succession of quotations from the trumpet repertoire, including Mendelssohn’s wedding march from *A Midsummer Nights’ Dream*. Such quotations are part of a wider trend to showcase a soloists’ repertoire (other examples include Boris Chaykovsky’s Second Symphony).³⁸⁶ Contrary to Geiger’s suggestion, it is easier to link Weinberg’s multiple appropriations of styles to contemporary trends or to Shostakovich’s early style, rather than the sound-world of Schnittke.³⁸⁷

There is a distinctive difference between the 12-note practices of Shostakovich and Weinberg in this respect: Shostakovich uses distinct rows that are couched in a supporting framework of tonal gestures, but Weinberg’s music does not follow such patterns. It also appears to not display the anxieties of early modernist atonal music; Weinberg is not shy about embracing consonant and clear tonal harmonies when they are particularly warranted. A good comparison from the later quartets is the middle movement of Weinberg’s Fifteenth alongside the second movement of Bartók’s Fourth Quartet. While Bartók utilises many more extended playing techniques, Weinberg’s texture of competing pairs in chromatic complement to each other clearly owes a nod to the Hungarian composer (see Ex. 5.17, below).

³⁸⁵ Levon Hakobian, ‘Weinberg’s Position in Russian Context: From an Insider’s Viewpoint’, in *Die Tonkunst*, No. 10 (April 2016) 132.

³⁸⁶ See: Yudina Yevdokimova, ‘Boris Chaykovsky i yevo vtoraya simfonia’ [Boris Chaykovsky and his second symphony], *Sovetskaya muzika*, 1970/2, 26-34.

³⁸⁷ See: Geiger, ‘Ideologie und Autonomie’, 108.

Weinberg's Quartets Nos. 11 to 15 become increasingly experimental, but perhaps paradoxically they also look back and increasingly show the influence of Bartók. As such, instances of well-defined harmony or tonality start to become the exception. The Twelfth Quartet's opening movement, for instance, evokes serial textures without observing any note rows. The movement does bear several tonal 'reference points' centering around B, however; there are several important moments that rest on either the note B or a chord built around it, functioning as a signal for a new section, such as at R9, where the first movement links into the second with an *attacca* link (Ex. 5.14).

Ex. 5.14 a), Quartet No. 12, first movement, opening, and b) R9.

a)

Largo ♩ = 72 (12-note aggregate)

VI. 1
VI. 2
Vla.
Vc.

ppp

VI. 2
VI. 1

① (re-entry [?])

Vc. p
Vla. dim.

ppp
cresc.

cresc. p

②

b)

⑨ punto d'arco

VI. 1
VI. 2
Vla.
Vc.

ppp

6 5 5 5 3

The presence of all 12-note pitch classes is clear from the first few bars of the Twelfth Quartet. The parts enter one after another, slowly building a texture that changes with every crotchet beat by one part moving to another interval. In the first two bars, a ‘row’ of sorts can be identified (or, to be more accurate, a 12-note aggregate). However, the texture immediately afterwards does not give any kind of transformation of the row at

all. Indeed, the texture of slowly changing harmonies would appear to be the principal force behind the music. The same sequence is repeated at R1⁴. It becomes apparent that the ‘serial’ sound functions as expressive twelve-noteness, a nod to the expressive potential of ‘serial’ music. For a Bartók comparison, see the opening of his Third Quartet (Ex. 5.15).

Ex. 5.15, Bartók, Quartet No. 3, first movement, opening.

Moderato ♩ = 88

The staggered entry of voices setting up a dissonant chord in Weinberg’s Twelfth Quartet is clearly evocative of Bartók’s work. However, Bartók staggers the entries as a held chord, to accompany the first violin; Weinberg continues to develop it as a contrapuntal texture.

Shortly after the ‘restatement’ of the opening of Weinberg’s Twelfth Quartet, a second theme is introduced (see Ex. 5.16, below). This descending sextuplet line deliberately sets up semitonal dissonances. Throughout this section, each part also maintains its pitch group, such as the first violin at R3², restating the E-A opening from R3. Several of the entries are grouped by shared pitches, however, such as the first and second violins’ F sharp at the start of R3¹. Clearly, the suggestion of a note-row cannot be maintained in this section. The theme continues in an ambling development of sorts, complete with pizzicato complications, before a restatement of the opening theme to conclude the movement.

Ex. 5.16, Weinberg, Quartet No. 12, first movement, R3.

Shostakovich's Twelfth (1968) is his first quartet to employ 12-note rows. They are, however, used entirely in conjunction with functional harmony.³⁸⁸ For instance, the opening row culminates with the pitches A-flat to D-flat, and this quasi-perfect cadence is highlighted by a D-flat major chord immediately afterwards. In a similar manner, each appearance of a 12-note row in Shostakovich's Twelfth is surrounded by an envelope of tonal harmony.³⁸⁹

Weinberg's incorporation of twelve-noteness as an expressive device can be found principally in his quartets 13, 14, and 15. In these three works, a sense of experimentation begins to enter into Weinberg's cycle. Notably, all three were written after Shostakovich's death, as Weinberg moved away from Shostakovich's influence into his own particular path of twelve-noteness. This path of experimentation had arguably begun even earlier; Weinberg's Twelfth Quartet is his most experimental of all, despite the initial resemblance to Shostakovich's Twelfth. This experimentation

³⁸⁸ See: Stephen C. Brown, 'Twelve-Tone Rows and Aggregate Melodies in the Music of Shostakovich', in *Journal of Music Theory*, 59/2, 2015, 191-234.

³⁸⁹ See: Laurel Fay, 'Harmony' in 'The Last Quartets of Dmitri Shostakovich: A Stylistic Investigation', PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1978, 92-105.

continued into Quartets 13-15, and can be identified in differing approaches to tonal expression, chiefly found in the sense of accruing chromaticism as an expressive device.

The Fifteenth Quartet presents an interesting display of Weinberg's later fluctuating harmonic style in microcosm. Its nine movements each present varying characters, and between them, they offer contrasting elements of Weinberg's harmonic style. The work opens innocently enough, with a slow chorale-like texture. This is followed by an even more introspective and mournful movement that roves around a minor tonal centre. The third movement presents the first deviation – a *pp* rapidly moving exchange between the cello and first violin answering each other in mirroring phrases (see Ex. 5.17, below). Geiger identifies the influence of the Polish 'sonoristic' avant-gardists in this movement, though does not offer comparisons (though there are perhaps mild hints of early Lutosławski).³⁹⁰

³⁹⁰ Geiger, 'Weinberg und die Avantgarde', 156.

Ex. 5.17 a), Weinberg, Quartet No. 15, third movement, opening, and b) Bartók,

Quartet No. 5, fourth movement, opening.

a)

b)

A much clearer resemblance can be found in the fourth movement of Bartók's Fifth Quartet, where similar mirroring phrases answer each other at low level dynamics (see above). Lendvai has written of complementary elements in Bartók's scales and melodies, and this example from Weinberg is a paraphrasing of Bartók's technique, applied to a character piece in this nine-movement work.³⁹¹

Weinberg's last two quartets are strikingly different, harmonically speaking. The Sixteenth develops several of the ideas from the Fifteenth, including the Bartók-like

³⁹¹ Ivan F. Waldbauer, 'Analytical Responses to Bartók's Music: Pitch Organization', in Amanda Bayley ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 219.

mirror-contrary lines, as well as a more caustic and mournful chorale-like episode. While the Seventeenth Quartet betrays the influence of the serenade-like Second Quartet, its maturity is betrayed by the sophistication of its development section – though with a telling absence of chromaticism.

While chromaticism had been ever-present in Weinberg's earlier style, it came to take on special significance in some of his later works. For instance, in several of his mid-period works, chromaticism takes on a biting expressivity, to be noted especially in the works for solo strings (and the Sonata for Two Violins, Op. 69). In the later works, however, Weinberg begins to ape Shostakovich's usage of 12-note elements. However, Weinberg's deployment of twelve-noteness is most striking when tracing its development beyond Shostakovich's death.

Fanning has written that Weinberg's later quartet style can be conceived as developing Shostakovich's own late style: 'it as though Weinberg entered into private dialogue with the enigmatic world of his mentor's late quartets'.³⁹² This is not an unreasonable suggestion, especially since Weinberg's quartets had paralleled Shostakovich's so closely (strongly noticeable from the Seventh Quartet onwards); to take this as a summary of Weinberg's Quartets 13 to 17 would not be giving them full justice, however. Weinberg found a distinct path away from Shostakovich's utilisation of twelve-note effects, and struck out in a different direction that explored pre-existing elements from his own expressive palette.

The renewed interest in Bartók can be best explained by Shostakovich's death. Without his close friend and mentor, Weinberg returned to the sources and composers who had inspired him initially (Bartók's influence can be found in the Third Quartet and in the Fourth especially). While Weinberg may have been searching for additional stimulation in his favourite influences, in these later works he achieves a new level of

³⁹² Fanning, *In Search of Freedom*, 140.

harmonic expression and mastery, one that occasionally extends into the realms of expression and even form.

Kholopov's conception of twelve-noteness is particularly useful for discussing Weinberg's later approach that includes densely chromatic harmonies that are still couched in a recognisably tonal framework. In order to explore this idea fully, a dose of context is required. 'Twelve-noteness' as a concept goes part of the way to encapsulate the manner in which full chromaticism became a part of Weinberg's palette of compositional expression. In several respects, however, it was not the 'new technique' that Geiger describes, and neither does Weinberg's usage in the quartet cycle match his contemporaries' use of serial effects.

As has been discussed, Weinberg did utilise serialist techniques in works of intense drama (most notably, in the operas *The Passenger*, *The Portrait*, and *The Idiot*). The fact that he chose not to utilise them in his quartets suggests a division between his own ideas of dramaturgy in this most intimate and 'philosophical' of genres. Indeed, this would place Weinberg's opinions parallel to those of Shostakovich, who (according to his son, Maxim) reserved the 'quartet genre for the deepest of his thoughts, for the expression of his most important philosophical conceptions'.³⁹³ In looking for models in his later style, Weinberg reestablished links with an influence from his youth in the form of Bartók. As such, while the younger generation experimented and enjoyed a measure of success, Weinberg began a journey of self-reflection and internalised influence that would continue for the rest of his life.

³⁹³ Maxim Shostakovich, speech at Bucknell University, 13 September 1981, reproduced in the programme for the Fitzwilliam Quartet's Shostakovich cycle at the Lincoln Centre, New York, April 1982; quoted in Alan George, 'The Soviet and Russian Quartet' in Douglas Jarman ed., *The Twentieth-Century String Quartet* (Todmorden: Arc Music, 2002) 88.

5.4. CONCLUSION

The numerous harmonic avenues taken by different works in Weinberg's string quartet cycle call for a variety of analytical approaches. Over the course of this chapter, several different analytic 'lenses' have been applied in a spirit of pragmatic experimentation. Where these multiple lenses have proven most fruitful is where they come together, to reveal qualities otherwise hidden from view. For instance, neo-Riemannian theories were referenced to reveal underlying progressions in Weinberg's earlier works, a finding that was complemented by a quasi-Schenkerian reading of the same passage (see p. 251). Similarly, ideas from Russian-language scholarship, including 'hyper-minor' and 'twelve-noteness' were deployed to explore Weinberg's appropriation of modal alterations and serial-like ideas for expressive effects.

Weinberg's use of harmony for expressive purposes has formed the main focus of this chapter. Different aspects have been examined for their function, though all are related to the general thread that unites Weinberg's quartets, that of 'fluctuating' tonal centres. Most of the strategies to achieve this expressive purpose involved contrasts between well-defined and undefined harmonies, via hyper-minor effects, chromatic sidestepping, or exploiting the modal properties of the parallel minor.

Weinberg himself wrote that he wished to explore the expressive content of 'modern' devices.³⁹⁴ To explore Weinberg's hyper-chromatic style, I have turned to the writings of Soviet theorists, including Yuri Kholopov and Lev Mazel. In a manner similar to Shostakovich, Weinberg draws on the expressive imagery of 12-note aggregates and collection (evoking non-physical or other-worldly experiences), without making strict use of dodecaphonic techniques in any of the quartets. I have placed this in the context of Kholopov's notion of twelve-noteness, where a principally tonal

³⁹⁴ See: Anon, 'Pis'ma o lyubvi', 18.

organisation oversees densely chromatic passages. Indeed, upon close examination, such works bear structural markers that correspond to traditional tonal signposts – perhaps not even intended for observation by the listener, but instead as a point of reference for the composer himself.

By means of this combination of analytical lenses, a number of Weinberg's harmonic avenues have been illuminated. Several methodologies proved to be of rather limited use – quasi-Schenkerian approaches, for instance, are of little relevance to almost all of the later works. At the same time, the variety of appropriate techniques points to the richness of Weinberg's harmonic expression, reinforcing the case for his eclecticism and fundamental independence from his influences, such as Bartók or Shostakovich.

6. CONCLUSION

Weinberg's efforts to write music that expressed his own world-view and commemorated the human losses of the twentieth century constituted a mission that lasted a lifetime. Over the course of his career, he produced 154 opus-numbered works, and a great many more that do not bear opus numbers, including some 64 film scores, themselves comprising feature films, a documentary, and various cartoons. Over his career, his music explores many different styles, occasionally with a sense of unashamed experimentation. These include hyper-chromaticism in his earliest works, a distinct brand of neo-classicism soon thereafter, experiments with twelve-note themes and extended playing techniques, and a contented sense of peace towards the end of his life. The period when his voice really came into its own can be dated to after his move to Moscow in 1943, when some of his most successful works were produced. It is probably inevitable that he will continue to be mentioned in the same breath as Shostakovich, but the comparison is more nuanced than appearances might suggest, as each chapter of this dissertation has attempted to indicate.

The first research question of this thesis was Weinberg's multiple contexts, which were explored in Chapter 2, starting with Shostakovich's relationship with Weinberg and how the latter's music fits into widely-known examples of twentieth-century chamber music. Weinberg and Shostakovich shared musical ideas, not all of which originated from the older composer. For instance, there is the cadence in

Weinberg's Second Quartet, which resurfaced obliquely in Shostakovich's own Sixth Quartet (see p. 51). Similarly, Weinberg's growing interest in twelve-note elements began at the same time as Shostakovich (specifically in 1967, with work on *The Passenger* and the Tenth Symphony; Shostakovich's first usage of twelve-note rows can be found in his 1967 *Seven Romances on Poems by Alexander Blok*, for whose premiere performance on 23 October 1967 Weinberg was pianist).³⁹⁵

Alexander Ivashkin wrote that Weinberg's music represented Shostakovich's style 'drawing its pension in the works of his imitators... [through works that] only served to kill off Shostakovich's music, to cover it over with a scab of numerous and bad copies'.³⁹⁶ However, casting Weinberg as some kind of 'also-ran' to Shostakovich does a serious injustice to their relationship, and also throws a shadow across this aspect of Shostakovich's creative process (Shostakovich considered himself and Weinberg as equals, according to Isaak Glikman).³⁹⁷ Weinberg's best works easily stand comparison with those of Shostakovich. Similarly, several of Shostakovich's less successful works may be seen in a different light when compared to parallel works by Weinberg.³⁹⁸ Their working relationship demonstrates some of the broader Soviet musical practices as they experienced them, but also shows just how productive a creative friendship can be. In this way, a knowledge of Weinberg's works can be considered as essential for a well-rounded understanding of Shostakovich's music and contexts.

For the remainder of chapter 2, Weinberg's quartets were considered in the light of other Soviet cycles, beginning with two older figures, Myaskovsky and Shebalin. These two represented accepted and viable paths for Soviet composers to follow, and

³⁹⁵ See: Peter J. Schmelz, 'Shostakovich's "Twelve-Tone" Compositions and the Politics and Practice of Soviet Serialism', in Laurel Fay ed., *Shostakovich and His World* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004) 303-54.

³⁹⁶ Ivashkin, 'Shostakovich and Schnittke: The Erosion of Symphonic Syntax', 255.

³⁹⁷ See: Glikman, *Story of a Friendship*, 286.

³⁹⁸ For instance, Shostakovich's more socialist-realist works, such as *Song of the Forests*, can be considered in a wider perspective for Western audiences when compared to those of Weinberg's, such as *In the Homeland*.

illustrate the climate of quartet composition at the time Weinberg was just embarking on his quartet cycle; they also offer several tantalising instances of Weinberg's influence from older Soviet composers. Two of Weinberg's contemporaries were then examined, both of whom showed a similar sense of moderate experimentation through trends and stylistic avenues; Yuri Levitin's cycle, in particular, closely parallels Weinberg's own, even down to the number of quartets and the dates of their composition.

Weinberg's lasting significance in a mid-to-late twentieth-century perspective places him firmly alongside Shostakovich and Britten, espousing a form of controlled modernism, with large doses of experimentation alongside. In particular, his quartet cycle stands comparison alongside Shostakovich extremely well, while Weinberg's works for solo cello deserve to be revered to the same extent as those of Britten. His operas are also significant, presenting a vital continuation of the Russian tradition from Shostakovich and Prokofiev, best seen in *The Passenger*.

The second research question of this thesis had a wider reach: what is Weinberg's musical language, and how does it change over the quartet cycle? With Chapters 3-5 organised by broad categories (rather than a chronological presentation), Weinberg's quartets can be seen to go against the stereotypical thread of 'evolution' often drawn across cycles. Instead, Weinberg explored many different avenues of expression. There are a multitude of styles and influences present over his seventeen quartets, and no single stylistic term can apply to them all. What does unite them, however, is an ever-present sense of pragmatism, with moments of restrained experimentation but a constant depth of feeling, often with protracted passages of lyricism. Weinberg's frequently shifting musical style belies a deeper intention below the music's surface: an 'ethos' featured at the start of Chapter One, that a composer 'illuminates with his own light... only one thing is important: that which is yours

alone'.³⁹⁹ In Weinberg's case, his lyricism was entirely his own, quite removed from anything found in the music of his contemporaries.

In an even wider sense, Weinberg's output is indicative of several aspects of Soviet musical culture as a whole, which leads to suggestions for further research. Weinberg's oeuvre stands as essential for several key reasons: a) he was considered part of a lost 'middle generation' of composers, squeezed between Shostakovich and Khachaturian's era and the succeeding group of 'avant-garde' composers (see below) and, b) his use of Jewish elements is hugely significant for assessing Jewish music in the Soviet Union, first for the praise he received, which almost immediately turned into a particularly ugly (if largely covert) anti-Semitism (a spectre that would dog his career – even if obliquely – well into the late 1960s). For these reasons, Weinberg stands as an extremely useful case study for Soviet music in general.

Wider research questions arising from this thesis centre around Weinberg's Russian and Soviet contexts. All four of the Soviet composers featured as case studies in Chapter 2 are severely neglected. Levitin described Weinberg and his contemporaries as a 'middle generation', who suffered in the wake of a hugely successful group that preceded them.⁴⁰⁰ The generation of Shostakovich, Kabalevsky, and Khachaturian somewhat overshadowed the later group of Weinberg, Chaykovsky, Levitin, and (to a lesser extent), Shchedrin.⁴⁰¹ When the establishment sought to marginalise the younger wave of avant-gardists (who included Denisov, Pärt, Schnittke, and Gubaidulina), they promoted the 'safe' compositions of these middle 'avant-gardists', often written in a manner similar to Shostakovich's music.

³⁹⁹ Anon, 'Poch'ti o lyubvi', 18.

⁴⁰⁰ Yuri Levitin, 'Nasledniki bol'shikh talantov' [Heirs of great talents], in *Pravda*, 20 June 1965, 6.

⁴⁰¹ While Shchedrin was considerably younger, born in 1932, he was firmly the establishment figure at this juncture, and the acceptable face of modernism in the 1960s.

As Boris Schwarz put it: ‘they are the standard-bearers of official Soviet-style modernism – a “third force”, as it were, standing between the stalwart conservatives and the rebellious avant-gardists’.⁴⁰² Whether or not any of them suspected this ulterior motive for their rise to success in the 1960s is unknown; Weinberg certainly never said so in print (indeed, he fondly recalled the successes of the 1960s, and referred to the decade as his ‘starry years’). As Weinberg is just one figure in this wider phenomenon, further research is appropriate, focusing on the isolation of a younger generation by promoting a previously neglected ‘middle’ group. Levitin and Chaykovsky are also included in this category, but there are numerous other figures too. Levitin names Andrei Eshpai and Arno Babajanian as also representative of this generation.⁴⁰³ The proposed practice of marginalizing the avant-gardists by instead promoting this ‘middle generation’ is difficult to substantiate without explicit documentation; ultimately, this may boil down to a question of perception rather than fact.

Appropriate work on this topic would include study of representations of this generation in Soviet sources, as well as any records of commissions and performances of their works, tracing any trends in what was judged to be desirable from this group of composers. The real crown of such study would be whether the archive of the Composers’ Union (a collection that Kiril Tomoff worked extensively with for his research on the period 1939-53)⁴⁰⁴ contains any relevant correspondence. This approach of softly discouraging the younger avant-garde generation backfired however; they simply went to other organisations (and even other countries) to secure performances of their works. Weinberg’s generation was caught in the cultural crossfire, and further study and archival research may reveal some of the actual processes and reactions from all sides in this interesting cultural directive.

⁴⁰² Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, 449.

⁴⁰³ Levitin, ‘Nasledniki bol’shikh talantov’, 6.

⁴⁰⁴ See: Tomoff, *Creative Union*.

Further work on Weinberg's wider catalogue is also necessary; Michelle Assay and David Fanning's full-length book with Toccata Press is due for release in the near future, providing a detailed study of Weinberg's life and works. Monograph-style books on aspects of his music are long overdue, in the same vein as this thesis examines his quartets. For such studies, I would propose Weinberg's operas, symphonies and his song cycles as prime candidates. Each genre provides huge scope for illumination on his wider style, and the promise of further contextualization for the processes of Soviet musical life in these genres. Though arguably not a subject for an entire book, the subject of self-quotation and intertextuality in Weinberg's music offers rich material for rewarding study also, as new quotations and references continue to be identified across his catalogue.

One further study suggests itself arising from Chapter 2: the topic of Soviet string quartets (or even Soviet chamber music). Of this huge body of work, it is Shostakovich's string quartets that are most familiar (at the expense of others). Several important questions raise themselves: what was considered successful chamber music before Shostakovich's forays into the genre? After mass music was promoted under Socialist Realism, how did chamber music fit in? And how did it come to be so accepted and even seen as the pride of Soviet music abroad? How did subsequent composers struggle to make their voice heard in these genres – and how did they adapt after the death of Shostakovich?

Such questions are large and nebulous, and they are certainly beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is clear that there is a large body of neglected repertoire that is deserving of reassessment and possibly also revival. As of 2016, the reception of Weinberg's Quartet Cycle is entering a new phase, as they are taken up by ensembles other than their recent pioneer-advocates, the Quatuor Danel. New recordings and occasional concert performances continue at a slow but steady pace. Perhaps the single

largest instance to date was the Philharmonie de Paris's 7th String Quartet Biennial in January 2016, where Quartets 4, 5, 6, and 7 were presented by different ensembles across three concerts, coinciding with a one-day conference on the cycle overall. Despite such promising indicators of robust health, the cycle's overall place in the repertoire remains to be seen.

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- *Requiem, Op. 96* (2007).
- *Trio, Op. 127* (2008).

Hans Sikorski (Hamburg) Weinberg editions:

- *Sonata No. 1 for violin solo, Op. 82* (2014).
- *Sonata No. 2 for violin solo, Op. 95* (2014).
- *24 Preludes for cello solo, Op. 100* (2014).
- *Three Palm-Trees, Op. 120* (2014).
- *String Quartet No. 14, Op. 122* (2014).
- *String Quartet No. 15, Op. 124* (2014).
- *The Idiot, Op. 144* (2007).

In addition to the Weinberg editions above, I have made extensive use of PeerMusic's high-resolution photographs of the contents of the Weinberg family archive. This collection includes manuscript scores for the majority of Weinberg's surviving works.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁵ My thanks go to David Fanning and to Arnt Nitschke for providing access to this invaluable documentation of the Weinberg family archive.

APPENDIX: First Quartet, Reconstruction commentary

Weinberg's First Quartet was written in 1937 and dedicated to Weinberg's piano teacher at the Warsaw Conservatoire, Józef Turczyński. Weinberg was receiving no tutoring in composition at the time. Nevertheless, the piece demonstrates some youthful ambition, perhaps influencing the decision to revise the work 48 years later, in 1985. The original manuscript score survives in the family archive, in several different inks and with plentiful evidence of second and third thoughts. The revised score, also held in the archive, demonstrates a new economy of means, while retaining the character of the original. Weinberg gave the revised version the opus number 2/141, as if to acknowledge the radical nature of the revisions. It is this version that is known today, as recorded by the Gothenburg Quartet and by the Quatuor Danel.

The original score is still mostly readable, and notwithstanding some conjectural passages, reconstruction for comparative purposes is possible. The original music is written in a distinctive blue ink. Several layers of corrections are overlaid in black and red ink and some in blue ballpoint pen; the various crossings and scratchings-out and the use of correction fluid suggest that the score itself became the working copy for subsequent revisions. The reconstruction that follows is a transcription of Weinberg's original score, which is readable circa 99% of the time, even underneath the faded correction fluid itself. In several cases, admittedly, the corrections and alterations on the score have rendered the original illegible. These instances are listed in a report following the reconstruction, where each alteration carried out in the transcription is listed, with particular attention to any passages where Weinberg overlaid the original with revisions. The commentary that follows serves as a written report of the reconstruction and as a comparative with the later revised version.

The opening movement of the 1985 Op. 2/141 is almost unchanged, thematically, and it is only in the textures and several key linking passages that Weinberg chooses to carry out revisions. The opening bars are identical up to b. 22 (where a bar of repetition is removed). The repeated-note motif featured in the second violin at b. 24 is treated in a way that illustrates Weinberg's experience in quartet writing; it swaps lines with the first violin in the following bar, maintaining the descending motif texturally but producing more technically manageable parts, evidence of knowledge of mellifluous part-writing accrued over the intervening years (see Ex. 1, and the score on p. 329, below, for comparison).

Ex. 1: Op. 2/141, first movement, bb. 24-5.

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The score is for measures 24 and 25 of the first movement of Op. 2/141. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The Violin I part starts with a descending eighth-note motif. The Violin II part features a repeated-note motif that swaps lines with the first violin in the following bar. The Viola and Cello parts provide harmonic support with sustained notes and some movement. Dynamics include *f* (forte) in several places.

Fig. 1 indicates some slight differences in the number of bars for defined sections when compared with the sections in Op. 2 (see Fig. 1a) and b), below). These can be attributed to cutting any repeated bars and to slight trimmings of linking passages, shaving off 25 bars altogether from the finished product. Bars 30 - 48 in Op. 2/141 correspond to bars 32 - 51 in Op. 2 (the missing bar, b. 37, is a repetition of b. 36). The linking passage of bb. 28-32 has had two bars removed, so that the unison statement across the voices comes on the beat, instead of half-way through the bar, the original

version having a less secure rhythmic feel (see Fig. 1b for a representation of similar and revised material in the first movement).

Fig. 1, a): Op. 2/141, first movement, structural and thematic organisation.

<u>Exposition</u> bb. 1 - 78	<u>Development</u> bb. 79 - 151	<u>Recapitulation</u> bb. 151 - 205	<u>Coda</u> bb. 205 - 220
Textures clarified, less dense chromaticism. 2nd sub. an octave lower.	Both themes explored. - b. 101 = 1st sub. stated by vl.1 and vc, a tone apart. - b. 120 = preparation for recap begins.	- b. 151, 1st sub. restated by vc. first, then vl.1. - 2nd sub. moved to C min.	- Shortened version of the original coda. - Rapidly ascending chromaticism gives way to a slower-paced texture before the final cadence.

b): Revisions in Op. 2/141, first movement, where sections in grey have direct parallels to the Op. 2 version

bb. 1 - 22	bb. 23 - 29	bb. 30 - 48	bb. 49 - 69	bb. 70 - 78
Identical thematically.	Repetitions removed; linking passage shortened	cf. bb. 32 - 51 in Op. 2	Cello line moved to viola. cf. 53-72 in Op. 2.	cf. bb. 73 - 83 in Op. 2. - bars of repetition removed.

bb. 79 - 99	bb. 100 - 111	bb. 112 - 119	bb. 120 - 136	bb. 137 - 148
Opening of development altered thematically and texturally.	cf. bb. 106 - 117 in Op. 2 (textures and rhythms simplified)	Linking passage shortened.	cf. bb. 128 - 143 in Op. 2. (Repetition removed) Linking passage of two bars.	cf. bb. 149-60 of Op. 2.

bb. 149 - 162	bb. 163 - 195	bb. 196 - 202	bb. 203 - 209	bb. 210 - 220
Simplified linking passage; recap. with 1st subject in the cello line	cf. bb. 174 - 206 in Op. 2.	Shortened linking passage.	cf. bb. 225 - 231 in Op. 2.	Entirely new ending, greatly shortened.

The first movement lends itself to this method of comparison, since so much of the material remains unchanged. Any alterations are in voicing, harmony and rhythms,

while the overall structure remains intact. By contrast, the next two movements present radical departures.

The pace in the second movement is increased from $\text{♩} = 100$ to $\text{♩} = 44$, though with the marking *Andante Tranquillo* (whereas the original is headed *Andante con moto*). The original is notated in E minor, but here the key signature is removed. The notes themselves, however, remain unchanged, though with some of the lines redistributed between the parts. Most notably, the viola at the top of the texture, so striking previously, is now replaced by the first violin. Together with the opening, only a handful of passages stand out as related to the original. Bars 1 - 8 quote the opening theme, but move towards the cello-dominated texture far more quickly than in the original version (Ex. 2 – cf. p. 346 for the original).

Ex. 2: Op. 2/141, second movement, bb. 1-9.

Andante tranquillo $\text{♩} = 44$

Violin I
pp con sord.

Violin II
pp con sord.

Viola
pp con sord.

Cello
pp

6
Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

The cello solo beginning from b. 8 makes reference to the melody in the 'Lento' section of the original, but a third higher (see p. 350 for the reconstruction). The only other

similarity is the reprise of the opening at b. 57, which we can compare with b. 139 in Op. 2. Otherwise, the movements are structurally different, even though they are both constructed from the same thematic elements (see Fig. 3, below, for a structural comparison of the two versions).

A new addition in the movement is the second theme, first heard at b. 33 in the viola, with an arpeggiated motion which animates an otherwise rhythmically sparse texture. This theme moves through the parts before the reprise at b. 52. With new themes, Weinberg creates more variety in the Op. 2/141 revision. The coda alludes to both themes, with the solo cello taking prominence once more. The movement ends on a high B on the viola, linking to the following movement without a sense of conclusion or resolution.

The finale of Op. 2/141 presents the longest passage in the entire work that can be directly compared to the original. Bb. 1 - 111 are almost identical to the corresponding passage in Op. 2. Several passages are moved down the octave and the four G major chords at b. 93 are pizzicato, not arco, with most of the tremolo bowings removed. Apart from these tweaks, the structure and thematic layout in this passage is identical. Beyond this point, however, the movement develops quite differently from the original. The quotations of earlier movements present in the original are largely abandoned, but there is a subtle hint of one remaining. At b. 188, the first violin plays a thematically shortened (but rhythmically augmented) version of the repeated-note motif from the opening movement (Ex. 3a and b).

Ex. 3 a): Op. 2/141, third movement, bb. 188-94.



Ex. 3 b): Op. 2/141, first movement, b. 25.



The altered development leads to a slower section at b. 212, where the harmony becomes markedly tonal (compared to the previous chromaticism), with sustained chords considerably slowing the texture. Looking ahead, we can see this as preparation for the lengthy repeat at b. 242 which heads back almost to the beginning of the movement, to b. 38. In this way, Weinberg condenses the movement's material considerably, but maintains the overall duration thanks to the repeated sections. At b. 243, the Coda begins in the second time bar, with hints of the opening theme in a sparse texture, fading to *ppp* and concluding with unison Cs across five octaves. Compared to the declamatory C major chord that concludes Op. 2, this is a more ambiguous conclusion. One might suggest that Weinberg replaced the youthful energy of the original with the contemplation and experience of age. Weinberg's Quartets preceding Op. 141 (i.e. Nos. 14, 15, & 16) all conclude with *ppp* chords across the parts. However, No. 17, Op. 146, written the year after Op. 141, ends with a *ff* D major chord as a declamatory conclusion to the cycle.

Fig. 4: Op. 2 and Op. 2/141, comparison of structure and tonality.

Op.2, Mvt. 1

Exposition	Development	Recapitulation	Coda
bb. 1 - 84	bb. 84 - 166	bb. 166 - 215	bb. 215 - 245
- 1st sub. in C min, 2nd sub. in G min, - Ascending Chromaticism used heavily throughout.	Both themes explored - b. 128 = complete break, preparation for recap begins.	1st sub. restated, 2nd sub. moved to C min.	Emphasis of V-I cadences, cloaked in rapidly ascending chromaticism.



Op.2/141, Mvt. 1

Exposition	Development	Recapitulation	Coda
bb. 1 - 74	bb. 79 - 151	bb. 151 - 205	bb. 205 - 220
Textures clarified, less dense chromaticism. 2nd sub. an octave lower.	Both themes explored. - b. 101 = 1st sub. stated by vl.1 and vc, a tone apart. - b. 120 = preparation for recap begins.	- b. 151, 1st sub. restated by vc. first, then vl.1. - 2nd sub. moved to C min.	- Shortened version of the original coda. - Rapidly ascending chromaticism gives way to a slower- paced texture before the final cadence.

(Tonal centres for Op. 2/141 mvt. 1 same as above)

Op. 2, Mvt. 2

A1 bb. 1 - 84	B bb. 84 - 166	A2 bb. 166 - 193
- 6/8, E minor - 1st theme at opening, 2nd theme at b. 64, in G# min.	- Lento, 3/4, A min/C maj - Slower section, solo cello leading. Build-up leads to Grandioso at b. 140, with accel. at b. 146.	- Short restatement of 1st theme. - Vc takes theme at b. 171, codetta at b. 185, with held chords conflicting over E maj/min.



Op. 2/141, Mvt. 2

A bb. 1 - 33	B bb. 33 - 52	A bb. 52 - 69	Coda bb. 69 - 88
- Speed increased, (♩. = 44) as opposed to (♩=100) in the original	- 2nd theme in Vla, in the form of arpeggiated movements against static accompaniment.	- Recap of 1st theme, with a hint of the 'Grandioso' from the original version at b. 57.	- Solo Vc once more, brief allusion to 1st and 2nd themes. - Ambiguous ending, without resolution.



Op. 2, Mvt. 3

A1	B	(A)
bb. 1 - 210	bb. 210 - 285	bb. 285 - 330
- Fast and intense - Conflict of C maj/min - 1st theme at b. 4, Va. - b. 93 - 4 unison G major chords, before unison 'folk'-inflected melody.	- Quotes from previous two movements.	- Reprisal of opening theme, increasing in chromatic and rhythmic density until a final finishing flurry, ending firmly in C major.



Op. 2/141 Mvt. 3

Opening (A1)	B	B1 (Repeat)	Coda
bb. 1 - 156	bb. 156 - 212	bb. 212 - 242	bb. 243 - 272
- Up until b. 140, almost identical to the original (aside from an altered transition between bb. 68-75) - From b. 140 onwards, comprising of entirely new material, derived from opening themes.	- Vc. uses contracted version of the 'Jewish' melody at b. 156. - b. 170, cf. b. 182 of original version.	- Drop in textural rhythm. Tonal chords give new clarity and a moment of respite before a repeat at b. 242, heading back to b. 38.	- 2nd time bar. - Allusions to opening theme, texture becomes ethereal and gentle. - Pizz. to hint at previous energy. - Ambiguous ending on open 'C' octaves.



String Quartet No. 1

Op. 2

M. Weinberg

I

Allegro

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello

pp
mf
pp
pp *Legato*

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

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13

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *pp*

16

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

pizz.

20

Vln. I

Vln. II *arco*

Vla.

Vc. *pizz.*

22

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

24

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

ff

ff

ff

26

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

28

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

sva

ff

ff

ff

ff

30

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

32

Vln. I *dim.*

Vln. II *dim.*

Vla. *dim.*

Vc. *dim.*

35

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

mf

p

39

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

43

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

57

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

58

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

59

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

cresc.

60

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

65

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

mf

69

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

73

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

75

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

80

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

81

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

82

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

83

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

95

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

98

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

100

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

102

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

cresc.

105

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

107

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

110

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

113

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

116

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

119

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mf

mf

mf

121

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

123

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

8va

125

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

127

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pizz.

arco

p

131

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

f

135

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mf

138

Vln. I *f* *cresc.* *ff*

Vln. II *f* *cresc.* *ff*

Vla. *f* *cresc.* *ff*

Vc. *f* *cresc.* *ff*

139

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

140

Vln. I

Vln. II *pp* *mf*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

141

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pizz.

154

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

p

158

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ppp

sf

ppp

161

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

165

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

pp

pp

169

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

171

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

176

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

180

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

cresc.

183

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

185

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

187

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

189

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

193

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 193 to 196. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are some dynamic markings like *mf* and *f* in the lower staves.

197

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 197 to 200. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature is three flats. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are some dynamic markings like *mf* and *f* in the lower staves.

201

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 201 to 204. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature is three flats. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are some dynamic markings like *mf* and *f* in the lower staves.

205

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 205 to 208. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature is three flats. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are some dynamic markings like *mf* and *f* in the lower staves.

209

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

dim.

dim.

dim.

dim.

213

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

214

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

216

8va

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

tr

dim.

236

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mf

mf

mf

238

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

f

f

f

241

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

f

f

f

243

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

ff

ff

ff

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

II

Andante con moto
M.M. ♩ = c. 100)

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

19

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pizz.

23

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

26

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

29

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

32

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

legato

arco

pizz.

35

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Legato

mf *espressivo*

mf

mf

arco

39

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Ghiss.

pizz. vibrato

44

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Ghiss.

49

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

53

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

58

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

poco crescendo

tr

62

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

fff

66

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

72

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

78

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pp

79

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ppp

pizz.

p cantabile

Lento

85

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

mf

90

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

f

f

arco

pizz.

95

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

pizz.

100

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

ppp

ppp

pp

arco

poco a poco più mosso e agitato

rit.

105

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

110

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

115

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

120

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

125

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

129

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

133

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

137

Grandioso

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

140

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

stretto

rit.

145

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff accel.

dim.

151

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pp

158

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

164 (Tempo I)

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 164 through 169. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked '(Tempo I)'. The music consists of rhythmic patterns with eighth and sixteenth notes, and some rests.

170

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 170 through 176. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The music includes dynamic markings such as *sf* (sforzando) and *f* (forte). The Violin I part has a melodic line with some rests, while the other instruments provide harmonic support.

177

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 177 through 184. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The music includes dynamic markings such as *sf* (sforzando) and *f* (forte). The Violin I part has a melodic line with some rests, while the other instruments provide harmonic support.

185

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

This system contains measures 185 through 189. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The music includes dynamic markings such as *ppp* (pianissimo) and *f* (forte). The Violin I part has a melodic line with some rests, while the other instruments provide harmonic support.

III

Molto Vivace
M.M. ♩ = c. 152)

The musical score consists of three systems of staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The first system (measures 17-20) shows the Viola and Violoncello playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with the Viola starting in measure 17 and the Violoncello in measure 18. The second system (measures 19-22) continues the Viola and Violoncello parts, with the Viola playing a more melodic line and the Violoncello providing a steady bass accompaniment. The third system (measures 21-24) features the Violin I and Violin II parts, with the Violin I playing a melodic line and the Violin II playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The Viola and Violoncello parts continue with a similar rhythmic pattern.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

36 *Gliss*

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

34

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

41

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

48

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

54

Vln. I *poco a poco crescendo*

Vln. II *poco a poco crescendo*

Vla. *poco a poco crescendo*

Vc. *poco a poco crescendo*

60

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

66

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

72

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

91

Vln. I *Gliss.*

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

98

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

99

Vln. I *Gliss.*

Vln. II *Gliss.*

Vla. *Gliss.*

Vc. *Gliss.*

104

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *sf* pizz

190

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

196

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

202

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

208

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Lento

210

Vln. I (grandioso) accel.

Vln. II accel.

Vla. accel.

Vc. accel.

Allegro

213

Vln. I rit. Agitato

Vln. II rit.

Vla. rit.

Vc. rit.

219

Vln. I dim. p

Vln. II dim. p

Vla. mf

Vc. dim. p

225

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

231

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pp

rit.

Andantino

238

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ppp

ppp

pp espressivo

240

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

sf

242

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

234

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pizz. arco

236

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pizz. arco

238

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

rit.

230

Largo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ppp

ppp

quasi recitativo

Allegro

253

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

m.
sf
pp

Detailed description: This system covers measures 253 to 255. Measures 253 and 254 are mostly rests for all instruments. In measure 255, the Violoncello (Vc.) plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *sf*. The Viola (Vla.) enters in measure 255 with a melodic line, marked *pp*. The Violins (Vln. I and II) have rests.

255

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 255 to 259. The Violoncello (Vc.) continues with a steady eighth-note pattern. The Viola (Vla.) plays a melodic line with some triplets. The Violins (Vln. I and II) have rests.

260

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

pizz.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 260 to 264. The Violins (Vln. I and II) enter in measure 260 with a melodic line. The Viola (Vla.) continues with a melodic line, marked *pizz.* (pizzicato). The Violoncello (Vc.) continues with its eighth-note pattern.

265

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 265 to 269. The Violins (Vln. I and II) continue with their melodic lines. The Viola (Vla.) continues with a melodic line, including triplets. The Violoncello (Vc.) continues with its eighth-note pattern.

369

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

371

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

377

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

379

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

281

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

(Tempo I)

285

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

Gliss.

292

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

300

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

309

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

311

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

317

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

322

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Quartet No. 1 reconstruction, notes on transcription.

Abbreviations:

- *b.* = *bar*
- *bb.* = *bars*
- *mm.* = *metronome marking*
- *MW* = *Mieczysław Weinberg*
- *OV* = *Original Version (i.e. original blue ink on the Op. 2 manuscript score)*
- *RV* = *Revised Version (i.e. Op. 2/141, 1985)*
- *Trem.* = *Tremolo*
- *va.* = *Viola*
- *vc.* = *Violoncello*
- *vl.* = *violino*

Sources

A

Manuscript score, '*String Quartet No. 1, Op. 2*' dated Warsaw, 1937. Located in the family archive in the Weinberg apartment, Moscow. Photographed by Peer Music for their archive of the composer's works. Contains an inserted obituary for Józef Turczyński, the work's dedicatee. Original blue pen and ink distinctly visible throughout. Several other inks used on the same pages indicate second and third thoughts, most likely the result of multiple sessions of work on the score over a long time period. Passages to be corrected are usually crossed out, but in some cases correction fluid is used. Over time, this fluid has faded, allowing us to see the original and the alteration in the majority of cases. Passages with correction fluid can be dated to the mid-1950s at the very earliest, owing to the invention of correction fluid itself. In

several cases the original is in no way discernible, and the correction has been used in order to maintain the musical texture. These select cases are detailed below (see plates 1, 2 & 3 below for illustrations of the original score).

Several whole pages are vigorously crossed out, but are still decipherable. These passages have been retained in the transcription, as the musical texture from the original blue pen and ink continues throughout; the eliminated pages perhaps represent editorial decisions later on from the time of writing (see Plates 1, 2 and 3 for examples).

B

Manuscript score - '*String Quartet No. 1, Op. 2/141*' dated 'Warsaw 1937 - Moscow 1985'. Also located in the family archive in the Weinberg apartment, and photographed by Peer Music for their archive of the composer's works. This neat score demonstrates MW's final intentions for the work following his revisions conducted in 1985. The score retains the dedication to Turczyński, and presents a drastically different version of the work. Features MW's handwriting typical of his years as a mature composer, and very few mistakes in the copy.

Plate 1: Op. 2 score, page 1, showing water damage.



Plate 2: Op. 2 score, bb. 41-6, page 4, showing different inks and crossings out.



Plate 3: Op. 2 score, bb. 53-7, page 4, showing different inks, correction fluid and faded correction fluid.



Transcription notes

Movement I

Bar number	Part	Comment
b. 1	Score	mm. blotted out with correcting fluid. Tempo marking 'Allegro' retained.
bb. 1 - 18	Score	Large water stain across page, but score still legible.
b. 6	Va.	Natural sign in different ink to the original blue: discarded.
b. 17	VI. 2	Triplet crotchets clearly edited to be a dotted crotchet followed by a quaver, then another crotchet. Original crotchet figuration used.
bb. 20 - 21	VI. 2	Third group of semiquavers edited to be a pair of quavers; original visible underneath correcting fluid.
b. 24	Score	Phrasing indications in each part in black ink, discarded.
b. 24	Va.	Trem. bowing for first four quavers of the bar.
b. 24	VI. 1	Trem. bowing for first four quavers of the bar.
b. 24	Va.	Very last semiquaver = D5, not A4.
b. 26	Va.	G natural was edited to be an octave lower; original visible underneath correcting fluid.
b. 27	VI. 1	E5's edited out from below the opening four C6 crotchets; originals visible.
b. 27	Va.	Second quaver pair = F4 & B ♭ 4.
b. 28	VI. 2	OV unreadable for last four notes, revision used.
bb. 28-9	Va.	Thirds visible beneath corrections, in some cases thirds were altered to be sixths.
b. 29	VI. 2	OV unreadable for the majority of the bar, revisions used.
b. 30	Va.	8ve basso passage inserted in biro; discarded.
b. 30	Va.	Second crotchet D4 in OV, changed to D5 in black ink.
b. 31	VI. 1	OV of first four notes unreadable, revisions used.
b. 32	Va.	First two crotchets E5 and B5, both flattened in OV, altered to natural signs in black ink.

Bar number	Part	Comment
37	Score	OV crossed out, presumably to avoid repetition.
38	VI. 1	8ve basso passage inserted in biro; discarded.
b. 40	VI. 2	Final G5 quaver moved down to G4 later.
b. 40	Va.	8ve basso passage inserted in biro; discarded.
b. 41	VI. 2	OV crossed out, RV inserted into the vl. 1 staff.
b. 43	Va.	OV crossed out, revision of a single G quaver, tied from the previous bar, rests for the rest of the bar.
b. 43	VI. 2	Quavers originally read as alternating C5/B ♭ 4.
b. 44	Va.	OV unreadable for the second half of the bar, revision used.
b. 49	Vc.	Crotchet G was moved down the octave later (perhaps to avoid repetition with the following bar?)
b. 50	Va.	8ve basso passage inserted in biro; discarded.
b. 52	VI. 2	8ve basso passage inserted in biro; discarded.
bb. 53 - 55	Va.	OV unreadable. Revision with the dotted triplet figure retained to maintain texture.
b. 60	Vc.	OV visible, G3 & F#3 minims (which maintains the descending chromatic line from the bars previous)
bb. 61-2	VI. 2	Thirds visible above minims in b. 61, beneath the first minim of b. 62, and the D4 with the final C5 is visible as D5.
bb. 61 - 64	Va.	OV visible. Revision with the dotted triplet figure = four quavers, the last being the middle pitch from the revised triplet figure.
b. 63	VI. 1	First crotchet D6 is E ♭ 6 in OV.
b. 64	VI. 2	OV unreadable. Revised triplet used to maintain texture.
b. 68	Va.	Second half of the bar = unreadable. Revision used.
bb. 69 - 73	Vc.	G semibreves visible.
b. 74	VI. 1	'Pizz' marking in black ink ignored.
b. 77	VI. 1	'Arco' marking in black ink ignored.
b. 93	Va.	Part was crossed out, replaced with a bar rest.

Bar number	Part	Comment
b. 95	Va.	Part was crossed out, replaced with a bar rest.
b. 97	VI. 1	OV for the first triplet quavers was originally scratched out, but corrected with the original blue ink - correction used.
b. 98	VI. 2	C pizz. quaver marked flat and natural - flat used.
b. 98	Vc.	'pizz' marking in black ink ignored.
b. 99	VI. 1	Original triplets visible.
b. 99	Va.	OV for the semiquavers on the third beat was originally scratched out, but corrected with the original blue ink - correction used.
bb. 99-102	VI. 2	Part was crossed out, replaced with a bar rest.
b. 100	VI. 1	OV for first two beats unreadable: revisions used.
b. 102	Vc.	Original second beat quaver was scratched out, but the A ♭ 2 was corrected with the original blue ink - correction used.
b. 102	Vc.	'arco' marking in black ink ignored.
b. 103	VI. 2	OV unreadable. Triplet retained to maintain texture.
bb. 103-4	Va.	Octave doubling of the minims visible in OV.
b. 108	Va.	Crossed out triplet quavers used.
b. 108	Vc.	Original
bb. 111-114	Vc.	circa 50% of the OV unreadable, corrections on top of the part used to maintain texture.
b. 112	VI. 1	OV figuration used, revised minims ignored.
bb. 112-114	VI. 2	Crossed out with revisions above stave; OV used.
b. 113	Va.	OV unreadable. Correction used to maintain texture.
b. 113	VI. 1	Revised dotted rhythms ignored.
bb. 115-120	Va.	Crossed out with revisions above stave; OV used.
bb. 116-121	VI. 2	circa 50% of the OV unreadable, corrections on top of the part used to maintain texture.
b. 121	VI. 2	Trem. bowing for first four quavers of the bar.
b. 121	Va.	8va passage inserted in black ink at a later date, OV used.

Bar number	Part	Comment
b. 122	VI. 2	In opening quavers C# above the A, not below.
bb. 122-3	Vc.	Crotchet to quaver figuration repeated for the second half of each bar in OV.
b. 124	Va.	Revised sixths visible as thirds above in OV.
b. 127	VI. 2	Trem. bowing for both sets of semiquavers.
b. 127	Va.	Thirds beneath triplet quavers visible in OV.
b. 128	Vc.	OV unreadable. Revision used.
bb. 128-9	VI. 2 & Va.	OV crossed out and replaced with rests; OV used.
b. 137	Va.	OV first two beats unreadable, revision used to maintain texture.
b. 138	VI. 2	Pitches that were edited out visible as A4, A#4 & C5.
b. 138	Va.	Pitches that were edited out visible as F4 & G3/G4
b. 139	Va.	Doubling of lower pitches an octave higher visible.
bb. 138-40	Vc.	Crossed out with revisions below stave; OV used.
b. 159	Vc.	OV accidentals visible as descending chromatically from E b 2 to C2.
b. 165	Vc.	G3 harmonic visible as originally an octave lower.
bb. 177-8	Vc.	Semitone F2 tied over the bar visible as E b 2.
bb. 177-83	VI. 2	Crossed out, replaced with rests; OV used.
b. 180	Va.	OV quavers changed to triplet figuration; OV used.
b. 183	VI. 1	OV crotchets in simple triplet rhythm' revised dotted rhythm ignored.
bb. 183-5	Vc.	OV unreadable for the majority of these three bars, revisions used.
bb. 184-6	Va.	OV crossed out, revision below stave; OV used.
b. 186	VI. 2	OV crossed out, revision above stave; OV used.
bb. 187-8	Score	Bars crossed out; OV used.
b. 189	VI. 2	First two beats of OV unreadable; revision used to maintain texture.

Bar number	Part	Comment
bb. 192-3	Vc.	OV visible an octave below
bb. 207-12	VI. 1	OV crossed out, revision above stave; OV used.
bb. 208-23	Vc.	OV crossed out, revision below stave; OV used.
b. 212	Score	Bar crossed out; OV used.
b. 215	VI. 2	Last two notes visible as repetition of G \sharp and A from previously.
bb. 216-21	Score	Bars crossed out; OV used.
b. 222	VI. 1	Black ink notes discarded.
b. 226	Score	OV appears to have been scratched out, but no correction in the original blue ink is visible. Barline and notes for the bar are in black ink, revisions used.
bb. 224-6	Vc.	OV unreadable. Correction used to maintain texture.
b. 227	Score	In each part, chord visible, but unreadable.
bb. 230-32	Va.	Notes a 4th above in the tremolo bowings visible.
bb. 234-35	Vc.	Black ink notes discarded.
bb. 238-9	VI. 2	Sixths visible as thirds in OV, combined with trem. bowing.
bb. 238-9	Va.	Sixths visible as thirds in OV.
b. 239	VI. 2	Notes G and A visible in higher and lower octaves respectively.
bb. 243-4	VI. 1	Last group of semiquavers of b. 243 tied to 244, OV unreadable. Revision used.

Movement II

Bar number	Part	Comment
bb. 9-10	Score	Bars crossed out; OV used.
bb. 10-21	Score	Written on a piece of paper pasted into the score, on top of the original manuscript. Written in the original blue ink, however, so understood to be carried out during the original work on the score.
b. 11	VI. 2	Correction in black ink discarded.

Bar number	Part	Comment
bb. 22-42	Score	Bars crossed out; OV used.
b. 22	Vc.	Pizz' marking presumably somewhere previously - with 'arco' marking at b. 33.
bb. 43-48	VI. 2	OV crossed out and replaced with rests; OV used.
b. 45	VI. 1	F5 first beat = G5 in OV.
bb. 49-50	Score	Bars crossed out; OV used.
bb. 54-5	Va.	Notes above and below visible, in b. 54 = F#3, b. 55=G4.
bb. 59-63	VI. 2	OV with tremolo bowings and trills visible.
b. 62	Vc.	Before first beat - something scratched out of the score, maybe a chord roll?
bb. 64-67	Va.	Octave D \flat visible on second beat of bars.
bb. 72-4	VI. 1	OV crossed out, revision above stave; OV used.
b. 75	Va. and VI. 2	8basso and pizz. corrections in black ink omitted.
bb. 77-82	Score	Bars crossed out; OV used.
b. 89	VI. 2	OV unreadable, revisions used.
bb. 90-1	VI. 1	OV unreadable, revisions used.
bb. 93-97	Va.	OV crossed out, but just visible.
bb. 93-97	VI. 2	OV crossed out, revision inserted into Va. stave; OV used.
bb. 98-9	VI. 1	OV unreadable, revisions used.
b. 99	Score	Bar inserted in Black ink at end of system; discarded.
bb. 100-101	Score	Bars crossed out; OV used.
b. 102	VI. 1 & VI. 2	Both crossed out, replaced with rests; OV used.
bb. 103-57	Score	All bars crossed out (whole pages in the score); OV used.
b. 112	VI. 2	Trem. bowing visible.
bb. 135-7	Vc.	Presumed chord rolls scratched out of the score.

Bar number	Part	Comment
bb. 158-61	Vc.	OV unreadable; revision used to maintain texture.
bb. 183-84	Score	Bars inserted with extended cello solo; discarded.

Movement III

Bar number	Part	Comment
b. 4	Va.	Original dynamic unreadable, revision used.
b. 18	Va.	Something unreadable, scratched out?
b. 21	Va.	Third visible in OV.
b. 29	Va.	Flattened accidental was removed.
b. 32	Va.	Flattened accidental was removed.
b. 47	Vc. & Va.	'pizz' marking in black ink ignored.
b. 50	Va.	Something unreadable, scratched out?
b. 58	Vc.	Octave E visible.
bb. 68-71	Vc.	G figuration visible underneath correction; OV used.
b. 72	VI. 2	B4 minim visible as an octave above.
bb. 72-4	VI. 1 & VI. 2	Trem. bowing visible.
b. 75	VI. 2	1st beat Octave E ♭ visible.
b. 88	Vc.	Something unreadable, scratched out?
b. 108	Vc.	Something unreadable, scratched out?
b. 139	Va.	First quaver altered to A ♭ 4; original G4 used.
bb. 147-9	Va.	OV crossed out, replaced with rests. Restored.
bb. 148-9	VI. 2	Trill visible, restored.
bb. 150-1	Va.	Trill visible, restored.
bb. 156-9	VI. 2	Trem. bowing visible.
bb. 156-9	Vc.	Sustained chord of G2 & D3 visible.

Bar number	Part	Comment
bb. 159-66	VI. 2	OV crossed out, some revision above stave. Restored.
bb. 166-73	VI. 1	OV crossed out, revision above stave. OV restored.
b. 171	Va.	Revision in black ink- OV bar's rest restored.
bb. 174-9	Vc.	Fifths and octaves visible above several of the notes. For bb. 174-5, the initial quaver pitches are repeated throughout the bars, and for bb. 176-9, octave doublings are visible.
bb. 182-87	VI. 1	OV crossed out, revision above stave. OV restored.
bb. 191-93	Va.	Black ink correction visible as a third above in OV, not a sixth below as in revision. OV restored.
bb. 194-97	Score	Bars crossed out. Restored.
b. 203	Va.	Change back to alto clef written in black ink. However, this is not visible anywhere previously in the original ink, and by the next system at b. 209 it is back to alto clef. As such, the revision is used.
b. 208	VI. 2	Second beat, tremolo crotchet B visible. Restored.
bb. 210-252	Score	Bars crossed out, across several pages. Restored.
b. 246	Va.	'Arco' written in black ink, but the revision is used, since it does not visibly appear anywhere else.
b. 251	Vc. & Va.	First crotchet not dotted.
b. 253	Va, VI. 1 & VI. 2	Amended tempo marking discarded; chord in the three parts as a linking device across the excised bars discarded.
bb. 253-68	Vc.	C minim below tremolo bowing crossed out; restored.
b. 268	VI. 1	Bar crossed out, replaced with rests. Restored.
bb. 269-84	Score	Bars crossed out, across several pages. Restored.
bb. 284-330	Score	Water damage, staining the pages and causing some of the ink to 'bleed' through the pages.
b. 285	VI. 1	First quaver C \natural , not C \sharp .
b. 285	Vc.	Semiquaver in black ink discarded, original B \flat restored.

Bar number	Part	Comment
bb. 297-302	Va.	Revised black ink crotchets discarded, crotchet rests used.
bb. 312-13	Va.	Black ink correction as a sixth below in OV, not a third above as in OV. OV restored.
b. 322	Vl. 1	Original unreadable. Revision used to maintain texture.
b. 324	Vl. 2	Original chord readable as A ^b , F [#] and D.
b. 326	All parts	OV accidentals visible underneath revisions.