

Mauricio Kagel's Analysis of Schoenberg's *Phantasy for Violin with Piano Accompaniment op. 47*

by Gianmario Borio*

Among the early sources preserved in the Mauricio Kagel Collection is a dossier dedicated to Schoenberg's *Phantasy* op. 47, containing an annotated copy of the score, a series of notes on various aspects of its compositional technique, some annotated samples, and a rough draft of a text most likely intended for publication. This material can only be dated hypothetically on the basis of historical evidence. On August 7, 1953, the *Phantasy* was performed at a concert organized by the Agrupación Nueva Música, in which Kagel participated as a pianist; a fleeting reference to the first book by Allen Forte, seen at the bottom of the table of transpositions, allows us to define the dossier's *terminus post quem*; lastly, the language used in the notes, considered along with their underlying topics, seems to rule out the possibility that they were written during his early years in Germany.¹ Kagel's analysis reveals much about the set of problems with which he was dealing during the composition of *Sexteto de cuerdas* and the first version of *Anagrama*.² It also sheds light on the origin of some of the more durable premises of his thought and, on a more general level, represents a significant episode in the reception of the *Phantasy* itself.

* This article originated as part of the project *Composers Analysing Other Composers*, on which I have been working for a number of years. The first results of the project were published in "L'analyse musicale comme processus d'appropriation historique: Webern à Darmstadt," in *Circuit: Musiques contemporaines*, 15 (2005), no. 3, pp. 87–122, and "La réception de l'œuvre de Debussy par les compositeurs sériels: discours analytique et construction collective d'une image du passé," in *L'analyse musicale, une pratique et son histoire*, ed. Rémy Campos and Nicolas Donin (Geneva: Droz, 2009), pp. 197–222.

- 1 The program of the 1953 concert is reproduced in Christina Richter-Ibáñez, *Mauricio Kagel's Buenos Aires (1948–1957): Kulturpolitik – Künstlernetzwerk – Kompositionen* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014), p. 122; reading the program, it is impossible to say whether Kagel was one of the *Phantasy*'s performers. Allen Forte's analysis is found on pp. 110–27 of his *Contemporary Tone-Structures* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1955); the tables appear on pp. 175–86.
- 2 See Knut Holtsträter, *Mauricio Kagel's musikalisches Werk: Der Komponist als Erzähler, Medienarrangeur und Sammler* (Cologne etc.: Böhlau, 2010), pp. 147–200.

Kagel approached the issues involved in dodecaphonic composition at a time of fervid interest for the Viennese School within his own country, promoted above all by Juan Carlos Paz and Michael Gielen.³ Schoenberg's complete works for piano were performed by Gielen himself in 1949, during an event celebrating the composer's seventy-fifth birthday. This concert also featured Webern's *Variations* op. 27, which were becoming a reference point for serial thought in Europe, but as to which no sources are found in the Kagel Collection; a less detailed but complete analysis of Schoenberg's *Klavierstück* op. 33a most likely dates from this same period. One conclusion can be drawn from this set of facts: in his approach to the twelve-tone technique, Kagel's attention went to a specific segment of Schoenberg's output; the two works analyzed – to which one might add the *String Trio* op. 45 – lean less heavily on traditional formal models and stand out with their detailed elaboration of the series' subsets.

The *Phantasy* was written in March 1949 and publicly performed for the first time on September 13 of the same year by the dedicatee, violinist Adolph Koldosky, with Leonard Stein at the piano. The score on which Kagel based his analysis is the first edition, published by Peters in 1952.⁴ Schoenberg initially composed only the violin part, adding the piano part during a subsequent phase. This procedure seems at odds with the "organic" approach of twelve-tone composition, but is actually revealing of both the particular treatment of the series and the wording of the title, which assigns an "accompaniment" function to the piano. Kagel's analysis is centered on precisely these two issues. First and foremost, he rules out any possibility of a nineteenth-century type of subordination between the two instruments:

The *accompaniment* might be an homage paid by Schö[n]berg] to his Brahmsian spirit, an *a priori* organization of the two instruments' respective importance. But the sense of this accompaniment is weakened and is incompatible with the exposition and treatment of a series, which always appears divided into two groups that tend to confront one another.⁵

3 See the entry "Arnold Schönberg: *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte* op. 41, Druckausgabe mit Annotationen von Mauricio Kagel," in *On revient toujours": Dokumente zur Schönberg-Rezeption aus der Paul Sacher Stiftung*, ed. Paul Sacher Stiftung (Mainz: Schott Music, 2016), pp. 92–95.

4 For a complete and detailed reconstruction of the genesis, first performance, and source problems of the *Phantasy*, see Arnold Schoenberg, *Sämtliche Werke: Kammermusik II: Kritischer Bericht, Skizzen, Entstehungs- und Werkgeschichte, Dokumente, Anhang, Entwürfe und Fragmente* (part 2: *Suite* op. 29, *Phantasy* op. 47), ed. Ulrich Krämer and Martina Scharadt (Mainz: Schott and Vienna: Universal Edition, 2016), pp. 369–437.

5 "El *acompañamiento* puede ser un tributo de Schö[n]berg] a su espíritu brahmsiano, a un *ordinamiento* apriorístico de la importancia relativa de los dos instrumentos. Pero el sentido de este *acompañamiento* se desvirtúa y no es compatible con la exposición y el tratamiento de una serie que aparece siempre dividida en dos grupos que tienden a enfrentarse." Mauricio Kagel, analysis of Schoenberg's *Phantasy* op. 47, draft text, p. 1, original underlining reproduced in italics (Mauricio Kagel Collection, PSS).

From the fact that Schoenberg overlaps two complementary hexachords during a large part of this work, distributing them among the two instruments, Kagel concludes that the idea of “mutual accompaniment” (*acompañamiento mutuo*) is determinant for many aspects. This premise shifts the focus of his observation to the ways in which the two parts are “fused” together and, consequentially, to the overall sonority that is produced at every step of the piece’s unfolding. This allows Kagel to situate the *Phantasy* within a theoretical context that is far removed from the framework shared by the musicians of Schoenberg’s entourage, such as Josef Rufer, René Leibowitz, Leonard Stein, Rudolf Kolisch, and Theodor W. Adorno.⁶ Kagel writes:

Among the many histories of music that remain to be written – whether macro- or micro-histories – the one dealing with the evolution of the “sense of sonority,” analyzed as a structuring element of form, will no doubt provide significant clarifications in understanding a phenomenon we might call the “vertical perspective” of musical expression.⁷

Schoenberg’s students and supporters shared the conviction that the *Phantasy* is a significant work both within his personal trajectory and more generally for the history of compositional technique. They knew that, for Schoenberg, composing a *fantasia* implied measuring himself against the most noble of those that he himself had defined as “free forms.”⁸ The *fantasia* is neither a genre nor a form, but a particular way of conceiving musical logic. This awareness, however, did not easily translate into a shift in analytical perspective comparable to the one introduced by Kagel’s analysis. In Leibowitz, Rufer, and Adorno, one continues to note a tendency to identify formal structures that can somehow be traced back to tradition. In the issue of the periodical *Stimmen* dedicated to the composer’s seventy-fifth birthday, Leibowitz spoke far-sightedly of

a completely new kind of variation that abolishes all earlier principles of development, which are based on material common to *all* voices; or rather, it expands them in such

6 See Josef Rufer, *Die Komposition mit zwölf Tönen* (Berlin: Max Hesse, 1952), pp. 143–47 and 157–59; Theodor W. Adorno, “Phantasie für Geige mit Klavierbegleitung op. 47” [1963], in idem, *Der getreue Korrepetitor, Gesammelte Schriften* 15, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, pp. 313–37; the notes sheet of Rudolf Kolisch [1965] reproduced in Regina Busch, “Thematisch oder athematisch?,” *Internationale Schönberg-Gesellschaft: Mitteilungen*, 3–4 (1989), p. 8; and René Leibowitz, *Schoenberg* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), pp. 154–58.

7 “Entre las muchas historias de la música que quedan por escribir – las macro o micro historias – aquella que trate de la evolución del ‘sentido de la sonoridad’ analizada como elemento estructurador de la forma, aportará sin duda un apreciable esclarecimiento en la comprensión de un fenómeno que podríamos llamar la ‘perspectiva vertical’ de la expresión musical.” Kagel, analysis of Schoenberg’s *Phantasy* (see note 5), draft text, p. 3.

8 See Arnold Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, rev. ed., ed. Leonard Stein (New York: Norton, 1969; London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1983), pp. 180–87.

a way that the development of contrasting *Gestalten* takes place not only in succession but also in simultaneous *superposition*.⁹

However, in his unpublished *Traité de la composition avec douze sons*, Leibowitz dwelled on various sections of the *Phantasy* in an attempt to identify their role within a multifunctional form, a hypothesis that he refined almost two decades later in his Schoenberg monograph.¹⁰ The queries raised by Rufer's analysis are much the same, even though they lead to a different hypothesis as to the form; he, too, is interested in collocating the work within the parameters of traditional form, identifying the themes and their structures, the transitions and the developments.¹¹

Kagel also employs the term "development" (*desarrollo*), but extracts a different meaning from it, relating it to the various ways in which a basic sonority can unfold over time. His reading of Forte's analysis is most likely at the root of his incorrect identification of the series, an error which however turns out to be fruitful; in fact, it leads Kagel to engage in a detailed reflection on the dialectics between instances in which the hexachord is set out in a linear fashion and those in which it is treated as a "group." These premises lead to a new confirmation of the hypothesis of an opposition-fusion of two principles, which also appear or are "exposed" in the first two bars:

A→	B→
violin: B _♭ A C _♯ B F G	E _♭ E C D A _♭ G _♭
piano: D _♯ C D A _♭ G _♭	A B
	E
	D _♭ F
	B _♭ G
(B)→	(A)→

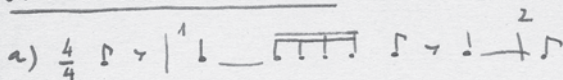
The circles around the symbols for the hexachords indicate a kind of writing that proceeds by groups, that is, uses variable criteria in distributing their components.

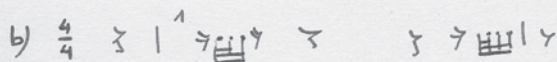
9 "Wir stehen hier vor einer völlig neuen Art der Variation, sie hebt alle früheren Entwicklungsprinzipien – die eben auf dem *allen* Stimmen gemeinsamen Material beruhen – auf, besser gesagt: sie erweitert sie dahin, daß die Entwicklung der kontrastierenden Gestalten nicht nur im Nacheinander, sondern auch im gleichzeitigen *Übereinander* erfolgt." Rene Leibowitz, "Stufen zur Vollendung," *Stimmen*, 16 (1949), pp. 457–59, esp. p. 459.

10 *Traité de la composition avec douze sons* exists in two versions (manuscript and typescript) in the Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel. Almost two decades later, Leibowitz illustrated his hypothesis of a fusion between sonata form and a four-movement cycle, providing a reference table (Leibowitz, *Schoenberg*, see note 6, p. 158).

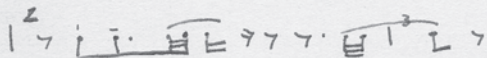
11 On the analyses of Leibowitz and Rufer see Gianmario Borio, "Zwölfontechnik und Formenlehre: Zu den Abhandlungen von René Leibowitz und Josef Rufer," in *Autorschaft als historische Konstruktion: Arnold Schönberg – Vorgänger, Zeitgenossen, Nachfolger und Interpreten*, ed. Andreas Meyer and Ullrich Scheideler (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2001), pp. 287–321.

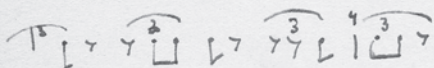
Los elementos contrastantes :

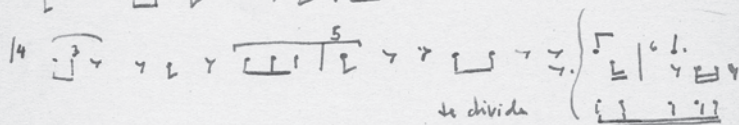
a) $\frac{4}{4}$ 

b) $\frac{4}{4}$ 

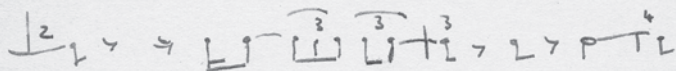
el elemento b \Rightarrow varía constantemente en su elaboración :

$\frac{2}{4}$ 

$\frac{3}{4}$ 

$\frac{1}{4}$  se divide $\left(\begin{array}{l} \frac{1}{4} \\ \frac{1}{4} \\ \frac{1}{4} \end{array} \right)$

el elemento a de figuración más característica
se desarrolla más estáticamente :

$\frac{2}{4}$ 

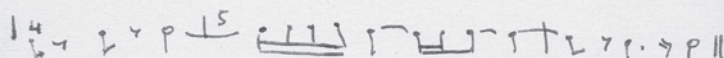
$\frac{1}{4}$ 

Plate: Mauricio Kagel, analysis of Schoenberg's *Phantasy op. 47*, sketch (Mauricio Kagel Collection, PSS).

Considering the *Phantasy* with an eye to the “sense of sonority,” the habitual proportions between formal sections, as regulated by the principles of *Formenlehre*, lose their normative effectiveness. What Kagel glimpses here is in fact an organization of temporal relations whose basic unit consists in the single bar understood as a *tactus*, thus anticipating the idea of “*Phasendauer*” that would be formulated a few years later by Karlheinz Stockhausen.¹² Kagel observed that the duration of each structural unit, as defined by the two overlapping hexachords, corresponds to one bar (as can be seen in an exemplary way at the beginning) or to a variant of the bar taken as a basic model. This allows him to define a peculiar conception of form:

The fantasy as a form is based on the sum of various parts, each preferably imbued with a character distinct from the others. When choosing such an indeterminate structure, Schö[nberg] treats formal development as a succession of short periods conceived as a development of one or two specific elements.¹³

The guiding criterion is not an alternation between thematic structures and elaborative sections, but “a constant liquidation of the elements” (*una constante liquidación de elementos*). Kagel pays particular attention to the internal permutations of the two hexachords and the system of transpositions which, well before David Lewin’s interpretation appeared, comes across here as one of the most important markers of formal articulation.¹⁴ The way in which Kagel describes the two levels of what Leibowitz calls the “main theme” and Rufer the “six-bar first idea” (mm. 1–6) is paradigmatic (see *Plate*).¹⁵ The sonorous unfolding is defined by way of an unequal, but complementary, treatment of two strata: while the model used for the piano part “constantly changes without elaboration” (*varía constantemente sin su elaboración*), the violin part “develops more statically” (*se desarrolla más estáticamente*), meaning that the rhythmic figure is restated with progressive ornamentation of its components, ultimately reaching a point of “saturation” (m. 16). Kagel’s analysis is coherent on this matter as well: rhythm takes on an autonomous role, abandoning its fixed function within a *Gestalt*.

Translation: Brent Waterhouse

12 See Karlheinz Stockhausen, “... wie die Zeit vergeht...,” in idem, *Texte zur elektronischen und instrumentalen Musik*, Texte 1, ed. Dieter Schnebel (Cologne: DuMont, 1963), pp. 99–139, esp. p. 99.

13 “La fantasía como forma se organiza en base a la suma de diversas partes, imbuidas preferentemente de distinto carácter una de las otras. Al escojer una estructura tan indeterminada, Schö[nberg] aborda el desarrollo formal como la sucesión de periodos cortos concebidos a manera de desarrollo de uno o dos elementos determinados.” Kagel, analysis of Schoenberg’s *Phantasy* (see note 5), draft text, p. 2.

14 See David Lewin, “A Study of Hexachord Levels in Schoenberg’s Violin Fantasy,” *Perspectives of New Music*, 6 (1967), no. 1, pp. 18–32.

15 René Leibowitz, *Schoenberg* (see note 6), p. 156; Josef Rufer, *Die Komposition* (see note 6), p. 144, and example XVIII A in the appendix.