

Apparitions in Alfred Schnittke's *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

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A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of Washington

2016

Reading Committee:

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Music

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Abstract

Apparitions in Alfred Schnittke's *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

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This dissertation explores the apparitions present in Alfred Schnittke's (1934-1998) *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)* (1968). These apparitions, in the form of quotation, allusion and musical monograms, will be examined and defined. *The Glass Harmonica* (1968), an animated film by Andrei Khrzhanovsky, features a film score by Alfred Schnittke that preceded *Sonata No. 2* and uses similar material, both musically and conceptually. Exploring the apparitions present in Schnittke's *Sonata* will reveal both the meaning behind them as well as the larger reasons for their inclusion.

Even without making a direct quotation, a composer often plans a polystylistic effect in advance, whether it be the shock effect of a clashing collage of music from different times, a flexible glide through the phases of musical history, or the use of allusions so subtle that they seem accidental.

-Alfred Schnittke¹

Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998) developed his distinct compositional voice through his characteristic use of quotations, allusions, and contrasting musical elements. Schnittke's distinct style, which he named Polystylism, seeks to manipulate various musical objects to create something new. In 1968, Schnittke composed his *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)* for violin and piano by adapting elements of the film score he wrote for the animation film *The Glass Harmonica*.² *The Glass Harmonica*, directed by Andrei Khrzhanovsky, uses a combination of visual quotations as well as allusions to famous works of art throughout history.³ The *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)* is credited as one of the first polystylistic works by Schnittke.⁴

Polystylism, according to Alfred Schnittke, contains two main components: quotation and allusion. Schnittke describes quotation as including the entire range of "micro elements...belonging to another age...to exact or reworked quotations."⁵ In his essay *Polystylistic Tendencies of Modern Music*, Schnittke makes three distinct sub-categories of quotation: quotation, adaptation and alien technique. He offers several

¹ Alfred Schnittke, "Polystylistic Tendencies in Modern Music." In *A Schnittke Reader*. Ed. Alexander Ivashkin, Trans. John Goodliffe. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002: 89.

² Ivashkin, Alexander. *Alfred Schnittke*. London, England: Phaidon Press Limited, 1996: 110-111.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Alfred Schnittke, "Chronology." In *A Schnittke Reader*. Ed. Alexander Ivashkin, Trans. John Goodliffe. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002: xxi.

⁵ Alfred Schnittke, "Polystylistic Tendencies in Modern Music." In *A Schnittke Reader*, 87.

examples for each sub-category. In the sub-category for quotation, Schnittke cites Alban Berg's *Violin Concerto* (see Example 1).

The image shows a musical score for measures 135-139 of Alban Berg's *Violin Concerto*. The tempo is marked ADAGIO with a quarter note equal to approximately 54 beats per minute. The score includes a violin line and a vocal line with German lyrics. The lyrics are: "[Es ist ge-nug! Herr, wenn es Dir ge-fällt, so]". The score includes performance instructions such as "mp, ma deciso", "sul G", "doloroso", and "mp dolce".

Example 1 Alban Berg *Violin Concerto*

Berg introduces this quotation from J.S. Bach's *Cantata BMV 50* in the second movement of the *Violin Concerto*.⁶ Schnittke cites the "direct quotation of a Bach Chorale, which has thematic links with the musical material of the work."⁷ Anthony Pople, in his book entitled *Berg Violin Concerto*, describes the direct quotation as "a contrast between Berg and Bach, rather than between tonality and atonality."⁸ This quote resonates strongly with Schnittke and polystylism. Quotation becomes less about the functional harmony (or lack thereof), but rather the implications of the quoted material as well as the context in which the quoted material appears. The quoted material represents both the historical influences on Schnittke and the desire to document these historical influences.

⁶ Anthony Pople, *Berg Violin Concerto*. Cambridge University Press, 1991: 58. Alban Berg, *Violin Concerto*. Vienna: Universal Edition, 1996: 67.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

The quotation sub-category of adaptation is described as a “retelling of an alien musical text in one’s own musical language.”⁹ Schnittke offers Igor Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella* as an example of adaptation.¹⁰ When Igor Stravinsky composed the music for the ballet *Pulcinella* in 1919, it was only after Manuel de Falla had previously passed on the project.¹¹ *Pulcinella*, which was written in the form of a concerto grosso, was a collaborative effort between Stravinsky, Massine, Diaghilev and Picasso.¹² The work also included a fifth collaborator: 18th Century composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, featured in the form of musical quotation. Stravinsky claimed that, “I told you a few months ago that I was preparing a work ‘in collaboration’ with Pergolesi- it’s *Pulcinella*! In the libraries of Italy, especially Naples, I found previously unpublished pieces by Giambattisti Pergolesi, and those are the themes which have served as the framework of the music for my ballet.”¹³ Stravinsky’s approach was to compose around Pergolesi’s melodies, adding his own material but leaving much of the source material intact (see Example 2).¹⁴

⁹ Alfred Schnittke, “Polystylistic Tendencies in Modern Music.” In *A Schnittke Reader*, 87.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Maureen A. Carr, ed. *Stravinsky’s Pulcinella: A Facsimile of the Sources and Sketches*. Middleton, Wisconsin: A-R Editions, Inc, 2010: 4.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴ Igor Stravinsky, *Pulcinella*. London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1966: 3.

Allegro moderato, ♩ = 80

Violino I

Violino II

SOLO Viola

Violoncello

Contrabasso

Example 2 Igor Stravinsky *Pulcinella*

The top line of Example 2 contains the melody from Pergolesi in the opening of the Overture. It was later correctly attributed to Domenico Gallo.¹⁵ Although it was later discovered that not all melodies were attributed to Pergolesi,¹⁶ *Pulcinella* creates a remarkable musical effect by juxtaposing the 18th century melodies around his own distinct style and sound. Schnittke adds that this effect allows the listener to “be able to decide mentally, ‘This is a genuine melody by Pergolesi, whereas this is Stravinsky’s contradictory harmonization.’”¹⁷

The final sub-category belonging to quotation is coined *alien technique*. Schnittke regards alien technique as, “the reproduction of the form, rhythm, and texture of music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and earlier periods, by the neoclassicists (Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Orff, Penderecki) or devices taken from choral polyphony of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries (isorhythm, hocket, antiphony)

¹⁵ Ibid., 7-13. Joseph N. Straus in *Remaking the Past* explains, “in much of *Pulcinella* the original scores are either left substantially intact or are altered only by rhythmic or timbral means.” Joseph N. Straus. *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990: 58.

¹⁶ Maureen Carr, ed., *Stravinsky’s Pulcinella*, 7-13.

in serial and postserial music.”¹⁸ Examples of alien technique provided by Schnittke include Stockhausen’s *Gruppen* and *Momente*, as well as Webern, starting with Opus 21.

The second main component of polystylism, allusion, is far more elusive. Schnittke defines allusion as the “use of subtle hints and unfulfilled promises that hover on the brink of quotation but do not actually cross it.”¹⁹ Schnittke again cites Stravinsky, expressing that his “paradoxical quality wholly derives from the way he plays with associations and deliberately mixes musical times and spaces.”²⁰ The allusions in the work of Schnittke provide an excellent model for the subtle, the unfulfilled, and the “scents and shadows of other times in music.”²¹ Identifying and interpreting these allusions presents a considerable challenge in the polystylistic works of Alfred Schnittke.

Schnittke’s *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)* for violin and piano features a multitude of polystylistic elements. It is dedicated to Mark (Lubotsky) and Ludya (Edlina); the first performance was given on February 24, 1969.²² The work was later arranged in 1987 for violin and chamber orchestra and premiered in this version by Gidon Kremer.²³ Elements of Schnittke’s film score for *The Glass Harmonica* are combined with a series of direct and reworked quotations and allusions to form the piece. These musical apparitions create unusually daunting challenges when interpreting the work of Alfred Schnittke. Isolating and identifying the quotations and

¹⁷ Alfred Schnittke, “Paradox as a Feature of Stravinsky’s Musical Logic.” In *A Schnittke Reader*. Ed. Alexander Ivashkin, Trans. John Goodliffe. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002: 154.

¹⁸ Alfred Schnittke, “Polystylistic Tendencies in Modern Music.” In *A Schnittke Reader*, 88.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Alfred Schnittke. *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*. Ed. by Alexander Ivashkin. Saint Petersburg: Compozitor Publishing House, 2010: 8.

allusions will help form solutions to the challenges presented in the work. The role that musical monograms play in all of these apparitions will be explored. Finally, the function of these polystylistic devices and the larger meaning behind them will be examined. Confronting the performance and analytical problems present in Schnittke's Sonata will illuminate the interpretative issues inherent in Schnittke's polystylistic music as well as present solutions to them.

The Glass Harmonica

In 1968, Schnittke composed the film score to the animated film *The Glass Harmonica* by Andrei Khrzhanovsky.²⁴ The film highlights the effects that a mysterious glass harmonica has on a town. The film uses a variety of visual allusions and quotations, both of historical paintings and scenes painted in the style of another era.²⁵ The score Schnittke set to this film features a quotation of its own: the musical monogram containing pitches to represent B-A-C-H (B \flat , A, C, B).²⁶ This monogram references the name "J.S. Bach" in parallel to the visual quotations from art history present in *The Glass Harmonica*. Schnittke, also in 1968, would use elements of this film score to form the basis for his *Sonata No. 2*.²⁷

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Alfred Schnittke, "Chronology." In *A Schnittke Reader*, xxi.

²⁵ Linda Pontieri. "Animation as a Means for Political Criticism: The Glass Harmonica." In *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960's: Not Only For Children*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012: 147-167.

²⁶ Peter Schmelz. *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009: 255.

²⁷ Ibid.

In the film, the workers of the town are mesmerized by the arrival and sound of the glass harmonica. The sound of the glass harmonica is signified in the film score by the BACH monogram. Upon the arrival of the glass harmonica, a rose is produced by its sound. After a dictator referred to only as the Yellow Devil destroys the glass harmonica, havoc ensues. The Yellow Devil entices the townspeople with golden coins. The townspeople destroy the clocktower, destroying the clock's numerals in the process. The golden coins, provided by the Yellow Devil, have a negative transforming effect on the townspeople. Many turn into animals and their features become exaggerated.²⁸ Linda Pontieri, in her book *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960s: Not Only For Children*, points out that the “use of the grotesque has been historically perceived as a stance in opposition to rules and authorities, even more so in the Soviet realm, in which grotesque stands in contraposition with the mandated optimism of Soviet socialist realism.”²⁹

In the scenes featuring the grotesque imagery, the accompanying film music features dissonant sounds. This is in stark contrast to the angelic-like BACH sounds signifying the glass harmonica. As the film progresses, the glass harmonica begins to summon visual quotations from the history of art, further distancing itself from the dissonant sounds associated with the grotesque imagery. Peter Schmelz, discussing the film in his book *Such Freedom, If Only Musical*, ascertains that the “difficult, ‘modern’ music represents the greed of the populace and their enslaved orgiastic rapture in the face of the upraised golden coin. The clarity of J.S. Bach—indicated by

²⁸ Andrei Khrzhanovsky. “The Glass Harmonica.” On *Masters of Russian Animation, Volume 1*. Chatsworth, CA: Films By Jove, 1997.

²⁹ Linda Pontieri, “Animation as a Means for Political Criticism: The Glass Harmonica.” In *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960's: Not Only For Children*, 155.

the B-A-C-H motive--on the other hand signifies tonality and, by extension, the saving grace of tradition, the restoration of time and the past."³⁰

The film ends exactly this way. The glass harmonica returns to the town, bringing with it the sounds of the musical monogram BACH. This transforms the townspeople and the town visually to various allusions and quotations from art history, freeing them from their grotesque state. The Yellow Devil makes one final attempt to destroy the glass harmonica and entice the people once more with the yellow coins. It is unsuccessful, as the rose from the beginning of the film multiplies and is distributed amongst the townspeople. This vanquishes the Yellow Devil. As the clock tower is rebuilt, the numbers now reappear, keeping the villagers in their state of historical transformation.³¹

Looking closely at an example of visual quotation in *The Glass Harmonica* can help foreshadow some of similar ways quotation is treated sonically in Schnittke's Sonata. The following images from *The Glass Harmonica* reveal one way visual quotation is unveiled by the musical monogram BACH.³² The direct visual quotation is a painting entitled *Portrait of a Young Lady* (ca. 1465-1470) by Petrus Christus.³³ An egg initially obscures the *Portrait of a Young Lady* (see Example 3).

³⁰ Peter Schmelz. *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw*, 255.

³¹ Andrei Khrzhanovsky, *The Glass Harmonica*.

³² Andrei Khrzhanovsky, *The Glass Harmonica*, 13:40-13:54.

³³ Peter Schabacker. *Petrus Christus*. Utrecht, 1974: 47.



Example 3 The Glass Harmonica



Example 4 *The Glass Harmonica*

When the sound of the Glass Harmonica is heard (which includes the harmonized BACH musical monogram), the egg obscuring the quotation hatches, revealing the *Portrait of a Young Lady* quotation (see example 4).³⁴

The use of visual quotation in Khrzhanovsky's *The Glass Harmonica* is similar to the ways Schnittke would later use quotation in his sonata. Both evoke the past as a key to discovering something new. In the context of *The Glass Harmonica*, this evocation offers clarity and direction to a townspeople lost in the greed of money, and

³⁴ Laura Pontieri correctly points out the egg hatching from the sound of the Glass Harmonica as well as the face revealed underneath, but identifies it as an allusion titled "Beautiful Renaissance face" rather than as a direct quotation from Petrus Christus. Linda Pontieri, "Animation as a Means for Political

more covertly, oppressed by a government that has denied their people a past. The recreation of the past becomes a central idea in Schnittke's Sonata.

Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)

Schnittke would later go on to use some of the musical material present in the film score for *The Glass Harmonica* in his *Sonata No. 2*.³⁵ The *Sonata No. 2*, along with the *Serenade*, would become two of the first polystylistic works written by Schnittke.³⁶ In his sonata, Schnittke claims, "the sonata idea itself is called into question...Quasi Una Sonata is a report of the impossibility of sonata form in the context of the sonata. It is like Fellini's *8½*, which is essentially a film about the difficulty and even impossibility of making a film."³⁷

This "impossible" nature of the Sonata as well as the subtitle are both hinted at in Schnittke's essay *Paradox As A Feature of Stravinsky's Musical Logic*. While discussing Stravinsky's *Symphony in C*, Schnittke states, "(t)he irony of both the formal conception ('Symphony') and the tonal conception ('in C') is obvious: this is only the shell of a symphony, filled with surrogate thematic and tonal development. A quasi-symphony. A quasi-tonality."³⁸ Peter Schmelz originally cites this quotation as having a connection to both Schnittke's Sonata and the *First Symphony*, adding, "(w)hen

Criticism: The Glass Harmonica." In *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960's: Not Only For Children*: 152.

³⁵ Alfred Schnittke, *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*, 7-8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁸ Alfred Schnittke, "Paradox as a Feature of Stravinsky's Musical Logic." In *A Schnittke Reader*, 169.

Schnittke describes the Symphony in C, there is no question that he is thinking of his own quasi-sonata.”³⁹

Schnittke, in describing the climate and circumstances in his sonata’s creation, explains that:

It seems to me that our current situation is the exact opposite to that of Beethoven. He was composing at a time when the formal organisation of music was increasing (for example with the sonata allegro form, which was just starting to emerge in the Fantasies of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach). We are now at...a point where the opposite tendencies, towards disintegration, have reached such a degree that even the concept of the sonata is treated with a suspicion of insincerity...where a work can only be considered alive if its form is continually called into question...where an element of structural risk is always apparent...where form must be gradually established from moment to moment, and where an improvisatory character becomes the only possible means of confirming its originality.⁴⁰

The structural uncertainty is hinted right away by the subtitle of the piece: (*quasi una Sonata*). As Alexander Ivashkin points out in the preface of the published score, “the subtitle *quasi una Sonata* is a conscious reference to Beethoven’s two piano sonatas Op. 27 (*quasi una Fantasia*).”⁴¹ Paul Westwood, in his article “Schnittke’s Violin Sonata No. 2 as an Open Commentary on the Composition of Modern Music,” describes the “work’s self-doubting subtitle...which conveys a serious ambiguity yet at the same time a humorous apology.”⁴² Westwood goes on to offer Theodor Adorno as a possible

³⁹ Peter J. Schmelz, review of *A Schnittke Reader* by Alfred Schnittke: Alexander Ivashkin: John Goodlife. *Notes* 59, No. 4 (June 2003): 899.

⁴⁰ Alfred Schnittke, *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*, 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Paul Westwood. “Schnittke’s Violin Sonata No. 2 as an Open Commentary on The Composition of Modern Music.” In *Seeking the Soul: The Music of Alfred Schnittke*. Ed. by George Odum. London: The Guildhall School of Music & Drama, 2002: 46.

influence on not only the title but the conceptual concept, citing Adorno's comment that the "spirit of the sonata, has been exhausted."⁴³

The connection to Beethoven's *Piano Sonatas*, Op. 27, goes deeper than just a reference in the subtitle. Beethoven's *Piano Sonata* Op. 27, No. 1 and Schnittke's Sonata are both played continuously without breaks between movements.⁴⁴ The connection also highlights the contrasting dualism between sonata and fantasia. As Westwood explains, "In comparison with the Beethoven sonata that claims itself to be 'quasi una fantasia', the Schnittke sonata, because of its free development of ideas, could be termed a fantasia which is 'quasi una sonata.'"⁴⁵

For Schnittke and Beethoven, both pieces represent compositional turning points. Timothy Jones, in his book *Beethoven: The Moonlight and other Sonatas Op. 27 and Op. 31*, writes that for Beethoven, "it is possible to view the innovative aspects of Op. 27 and Op. 31 as an unprecedented focusing of several features of Beethoven's style that had been emerging gradually during the 1790s."⁴⁶ The focusing of styles is similar to the lead up to *Sonata No. 2* and Alfred Schnittke. Peter Schmelz writes about the struggle Schnittke had experimenting with serialism which led to the formation of polystylism, and that "(h)is Violin Sonata 2 (Quasi Una Sonata..confronts head-on the stylistic impasses in which Schnittke found himself."⁴⁷ Schnittke hints at this impasse by not only alluding to Beethoven's *Piano Sonatas* Opus 27 in the subtitle, but by his inclusion of the "short fragment from Beethoven's Fifteen Variations for piano, Op. 35

⁴³ Ibid. 47.

⁴⁴ Ludwig van Beethoven. *Piano Sonatas Op. 27, No. 1 and 2*. Kassel, Bärenreiter, 2015.

⁴⁵ Paul Westwood. "Schnittke's Violin Sonata No. 2 as an Open Commentary on The Composition of Modern Music." In *Seeking the Soul: The Music of Alfred Schnittke*, 55.

⁴⁶ Timothy Jones. *Beethoven: The Moonlight and other Sonatas Op. 27 and Op. 31*. Cambridge University Press, 1999: 15.

(this motif is also heard in the ballet *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* [The Creatures of Prometheus] and in the finale of the Third Symphony).⁴⁸ The inclusion of these works in his sonata expresses Schnittke's historical awareness and connection to Beethoven's stylistic change. The desire to include them lies at the heart of Schnittke's desire to connect to the past. The historical connection becomes stronger by looking closer at the apparitions present in Schnittke's Sonata.

Opening

The opening of Alfred Schnittke's Sonata contains a series of loud explosive chords juxtaposed with silence (see Example 5).

Alfred SCHNITTKE
(1934–1998)

Senza tempo

The musical score for the opening of Alfred Schnittke's Sonata No. 2 is presented in two staves: Violino (Violin) and Piano. The tempo is marked 'Senza tempo'. The score consists of five measures. The first measure is a whole rest for both instruments, with a duration of approximately 6 seconds. The second measure features a fortissimo (fff) chord in the piano and a fortissimo (ff) chord in the violin, with a duration of approximately 10 seconds. The third measure is another whole rest for both instruments, with a duration of approximately 6 seconds. The fourth measure features a fortissimo (fff) chord in the piano and a fortissimo (ff) chord in the violin, with a duration of approximately 10 seconds. The fifth measure is a whole rest for both instruments, with a duration of 3 seconds. A circled number 1 is placed above the final measure.

Example 5 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

The silence is specified by Schnittke in seconds and introduces the idea of duality right from the beginning. In fact, Schnittke describes the opening as “a secco recitative,

⁴⁷ Peter Schmelz. *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw*: 245, 253.

imported from opera.”⁴⁹ These “sudden pauses with a gradual increase in the overall tension,” as Schnittke states, were inspired by a production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Peter Schmelz writes that, “Schnittke was thinking in terms of the theater, introducing pauses throughout the sonata based on a version of *Macbeth* he knew of (but never saw) at Moscow's Mikhoels Theater.”⁵⁰ Mark Lubotsky, the violinist who premiered the sonata, describes the “actual atmosphere of the music, permeated by a flow of high tension, in which the pauses (“freeze frames”), held to the absolute limit, raise the temperature of what is already white hot.”⁵¹ Valentina Kholopova, in her article, “Alfred Schnittke's Works: A New Theory of Musical Content,” writes that, “Schnittke also told me that in the opening of the Sonata he saw the violinist and pianist as the still figures of Solomon Mikhoels's theater...hence the manner in which the sonata should be played. After the first chord, the pianist should stay still with his or her hands tense over the keyboard for six seconds. The violinist, after the sharply dissonant opening chord, is to hold the bow in the air for ten seconds, without putting it down.”⁵² These theatrical elements introduced in the opening are the first apparitions. They change the manner in which the sonata is interpreted and adds additional non-musical elements that must be considered.

Aside from the theatricality, the opening line also introduces many recurring musical elements. The opening chord is a g-minor chord that Schnittke describes as,

⁴⁸ Alfred Schnittke, *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*, 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁰ Peter Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw*: 255.

⁵¹ Mark Lubotsky, “Schnittke As Remembered By Mark Lubotsky.” In *A Schnittke Reader*. Ed. Alexander Ivashkin, Trans. John Goodliffe. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002: 255.

⁵² Valentina Kholopova. “Alfred Schnittke's Works: A New Theory of Musical Content.” In *Seeking the Soul: The Music of Alfred Schnittke*. Ed. by George Odum. London: The Guildhall School of Music & Drama, 2002: 42.

“something new after a prolonged period of writing exclusively serial music.”⁵³ The second chord introducing the violin contains a series of stacked 7th chords (see Example 5). The stacking of the two 7th chords causes the note to sound very dissonant, as it stacks a major 7th (G to F♯) with a minor 7th (D♯ to C♯) on top of each other. There is no tonal function to these chords; in many respects, the g-minor chord functions as a tonal apparition. Paul Westwood describes these two chords as “the first an establishment of tonality, the second a rejection of it,” and cites this idea “as the two poles in the work.”⁵⁴ Alternatively, these chords introduce the idea of corrosion, such that the second chord becomes a ‘corroded’ version of the first (see Example 5). This gives the effect of the second chord acting as the g-minor chord’s distorted reflection.

Following the second piano chord, we come to a series of dissonant chords that form a (0123) pitch-class set (see Example 5). This dissonant collection will be featured for the remainder of the piece, as its pitch-class set identity is the same as that of the BACH (B ♭ , A, C, B) monogram. Schnittke alludes to this possibility, explaining that the, “B-A-C-H monogram is heard, at first transposed but later more clearly on the original notes.”⁵⁵ By introducing this idea so soon, Schnittke is foreshadowing the BACH monogram right from the opening of the piece. It is not until later, as Schnittke says, that the actual notes are revealed and the monogram’s function begins to change.

In the opening line of the sonata, Schnittke has introduced theatrical apparitions, the apparition of tonality and the concept of corrosion. He is also able to reveal one of the key apparitions of the piece and an element of great importance to the sonic

⁵³ Alfred Schnittke, *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*, 8.

⁵⁴ Paul Westwood, “Schnittke’s Violin Sonata No. 2 as an Open Commentary on The Composition of Modern Music.” In *Seeking the Soul: The Music of Alfred Schnittke*, 50.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

makeup of *The Glass Harmonica*: The BACH monogram. These elements will be instrumental in Schnittke's ability to form and introduce new apparitions in the piece.

Wagner

At Rehearsal 9, Schnittke introduces an allusion to the Destiny motive from Richard Wagner's Ring Cycle (see Example 6).

Example 6 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

Dmitri Smirnov and Guy Stockton, in their article "Marginalia quasi una Fantasia: On the Second Violin Sonata by Alfred Schnittke," reveal this allusion in their analysis of the piece.⁵⁶ Example 7 shows the Wagner Destiny motive as it appears in Robert Donington's book *Wagner's 'Ring' and its Symbols*.⁵⁷ The similarities are expressed in

⁵⁶ Dmitri Smirnov and Guy Stockton, "Marginalia quasi una Fantasia: On the Second Violin Sonata by Alfred Schnittke," In *Tempo*, New Series 220 (April 2002): 9.

⁵⁷ Robert Donington, *Wagner's 'Ring' and its Symbols*. London: Faber and Faber, 1974: 303.

both the three consecutive chords as well as the similar melodic content in the top line of both the Destiny motive as well as Schnittke's allusion. Schnittke infects the allusion with



Example 7 Richard Wagner Destiny Motive

corrosion, bringing back a technique hinted earlier in the Sonata. Consequently, each chord becomes progressively more corroded. The first chord is strongly in d minor and the upper voice maintains the melodic contour of the fate motive. Each successive chord corrodes the allusion more, starting with 3 notes in the first chord (D, F, A), 5 notes in the second (D, F, E, G, B \flat) ending with 7 notes (D, F, A, E, G, B, C \sharp) in the last chord. The entire measure omits only A \flat and C from the 12-tone chromatic scale.

The use of corrosion continues. Following the arrival of the Destiny motive, there is a succession of (0123) configurations that are played by the violin until all 12-tone chromatic pitches are fully sounded (see Example 8).

A tempo

ff

3

Example 8 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

The configurations of (0123) have been circled in Example 8. This virtuosic flourish foreshadows the 12-tone scale completion that will continue to develop in the following section. The concept is an extension of the corroded Wagner Destiny motive. At the *Moderato*, the violin holds a double stop B^{\sharp} and B^{\flat} creating a dissonant drone (see Example 9).

Moderato

ord. vibr.

ff

f p

f p

Rea

***Rea**

***Rea**

Example 9 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

The piano plays a series of eighth notes that gradually become more corroded by progressively adding more pitches (see Example 9). The first configuration contains 5

pitches (C#, D#, E, F#, G) then adds 2 notes (B# and A) to equal 7. Following a brief episode from the violin, the chord stays intact but adds 2 additional pitches (A# and B#) before adding 2 more pitches (A and B) the next measure (see example 10).

The musical score for Example 10 shows a violin part and a piano accompaniment. The violin part begins with a long note marked "sul pont. non vibrato" and "ppp". It then moves to a vibrato section marked "vibr." and "ff" to "ppp". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves with dense chords and chromatic movement, marked "f" and "p".

Example 10 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

After yet another episode from the violin and a brief cadenza that contains the BACH monogram, all 12-tone chromatic pitches are sounded in the piano, rendering the chord's full corrosion complete (see Example 11).

The musical score for Example 11 shows a violin part and a piano accompaniment. The violin part starts with a measure marked "11" and "[Ped. simile]". It then moves to a section marked "f" and "mp > p". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves with dense chords and chromatic movement, marked "f" and "p".

Example 11 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

By combining tonal elements with a corrosive 12-tone effect, Schnittke is able to fuse these two elements in an effective manner. Regarding this fusion, Schnittke said, “the contrast between the triad and the atonality remains, with the two elements in a state of parity.”⁵⁸ This state of parity continues as the BACH monogram begins to become more present.

Franck/Liszt

Following the appearance of the Wagner allusion, Schnittke introduces the first of two Franck/Liszt allusions at Rehearsal 13 (see Example 12).

⁵⁸ Alfred Schnittke, *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*, 8.

13

Andante

Example 12 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

Schnittke describes these allusions as “not Liszt, not Franck, but only imitations of them.”⁵⁹ The Franck/Liszt allusion contains a chorale-like harmonization of the BACH monogram, now appearing in its true form (B \flat , A, C, B). The monogram is of great historical importance, having first appeared in J.S. Bach’s *Art of the Fugue*. The use of monograms becomes an increasingly key element in Schnittke’s music. Christopher Segall, in his article, “Principles of Alfred Schnittke’s Monogram Technique,” writes that “(m)any classical composers have incorporated monograms into their music. Surely the

most famous is J.S. Bach's B-A-C-H eponym (B ♭ -A-C-B[♯]), first used in the *Art of Fugue*, but perhaps better known through its appropriation in countless works of later centuries."⁶⁰

The incorporation of the monogram into the Franck/Liszt apparition is significant for a number of reasons. The BACH monogram, first introduced in the form of transpositions, is now in its true form and featured more prominently. The monogram will have a substantial role for the remainder of the piece. The Franck/Liszt apparition also has a formal function. Schnittke's Sonata consists of several movements played without intervening pauses. This apparition acts as the beginning of a "second" movement, one that will be bookended with the second occurrence of the Franck/Liszt apparition.

The second occurrence comes at the end of the second movement (see Example 13).

⁵⁹ Peter Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw*: 254.

28 Andante

Moderato

Example 13 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

At Rehearsal 28, a similar Franck/Liszt apparition returns. The BACH monogram is harmonized in a similar way to Rehearsal 13, but it is extended to include interplay with the violin. The passage is very similar to one in the César Franck *Violin Sonata in A Major* (see Example 14).⁶¹

⁶⁰ Christopher Segall, "Principles of Alfred Schnittke's Monogram Technique." In *The Journal of Musicology* 30, No. 2 (Spring 2013): 254.

⁶¹ César Franck, *Violin Sonata in A Major*. Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1993: 15.

79

quasi lento

rall.

pp

rall.

Example 14 César Franck *Violin Sonata*

Both passages contain chorale-like passages and feature the violin growing out of the piano texture.

By evoking the style of Franck/Liszt, Schnittke is referencing the specific style inherent in both their music. More important, it connects his music with the past by recalling the BACH Musical Monogram and embedding it anachronistically in a late-Romantic texture. This apparition gives some indication of the way that Schnittke will use the BACH monogram for the remainder of *Sonata No. 2*.

Brahms

At the Adagio between Rehearsals 33 and 34, Schnittke introduces a Johannes Brahms apparition (see Example 15).

Adagio **B (r)** **A** **H (m)** **rit.** **S**

Example 15 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

Brahms, another romantic composer, is identified by the musical monogram representing his name.⁶² The spelling of the monogram is BrAHmS (B \flat -A-B \sharp -E \flat) (see Example 15). Schnittke introduces the monogram in the stylistic texture of Brahms's music. This example from Brahms's *Violin Sonata* No. 1 shows the stylistic similarities (see Example 16).⁶³

⁶² Alfred Schnittke, *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*, 8.

⁶³ Johannes Brahms, *Sonata in G Major for violin and piano*. Munich: Henle, 1967: 6.

The image shows a musical score for Johannes Brahms' Violin Sonata No. 1, Example 16. The score is written for violin and piano. It consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff for the violin, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for the piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score begins at measure 25. The violin part features a melodic line with slurs and accents, starting with a forte (f) dynamic. The piano accompaniment includes chords and moving lines in both hands, with dynamics ranging from forte (f) to piano (p). The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 16 Johannes Brahms *Violin Sonata No. 1*

The Brahms apparition also embeds the BACH monogram, somewhat hidden in the piano texture, as well.

Beethoven

At Rehearsal 32, Schnittke combines a stylistic allusion and quotation to form a multi-layered polystylistic device (see Example 17).

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Alfred Schnittke's Sonata No. 2. The first system, labeled '32', is marked 'Moderato' and 'p'. It features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system, labeled '33', is marked 'Allegro', 'Adagio', and 'rit.'. It includes dynamic markings 'ff', 'mp', 'mf', and 'pp'. The notation shows a change in tempo and dynamics, with a prominent melodic line in the treble clef and a complex accompaniment in the grand staff.

Example 17 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

The direct quotations are from Beethoven's *Fifteen Variations* in E-flat Major, Opus 35 (1802).⁶⁴ This work shares the same key (E-flat Major) as Beethoven's *Piano Sonata (quasi una fantasia)* Op. 27, No. 1 (1800-1801) that Schnittke references in the title of *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*. The theme of the *Fifteen Variations* is used in several of Beethoven's compositions, which could be why Schnittke chose to reference it here. In the preface to Schnittke's Sonata, Alexander Ivashkin explains that this

⁶⁴ Ibid.

theme is, “also heard in his ballet *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* [The Creatures of Prometheus] and the finale of the Third Symphony.”⁶⁵

Schnittke quotes the second half of the introduction to the *Fifteen Variations* (see Example 18).⁶⁶

Example 18 Ludwig van Beethoven, *Fifteen Variations*, Op. 35

The Beethoven contains both the rhythmic quotation of the eighth notes as well as the fermata that follows. Following the fermata, Schnittke quotes the upper line from Beethoven exactly and places it in the violin (see Example 17). The piano part, by contrast, is transformed entirely. A closer look at the rhythmic eighth-note quotation reveals the return of another apparition: the BACH monogram.

Embedded in the eighth notes at Rehearsal 32 in the Schnittke is the pitch content made up entirely of the BACH monogram (see Example 17). The eighth notes in the right hand form a B-flat octave. The rest of the monogram (A-C-B) is present in the left hand. B-flat is also present in the quoted section of the Beethoven as a single note. In the *Fifteen Variations*, the left hand plays a B-flat octave that forms a B-flat unison between both hands (see Example 18). Schnittke transforms this to include

⁶⁵ Alfred Schnittke, *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*, 8.

⁶⁶ Ludwig van Beethoven, *Variations For the Piano*. New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1926: 13.

octaves of C-A-B and complete the BACH monogram. All notes are sounded again following the measure of rest, creating a fully sounded (0123) chord that is held with a fermata. This follows the Beethoven as well, as the series of B-flat eighth notes are followed by a B-flat held by a fermata (see Example 18).

Following this fermata, Schnittke keeps the literal quotation from Beethoven in the violin line while composing a stylistic allusion to accompany the violin in the piano (see Example 17). This allusion is composed in the style of Beethoven and uses a literal quotation from the *Fifteen Variations* (see Example 18). Following this allusion and quotation, the rhythmic quotation intertwined with the BACH monogram returns as well as the fermata (see Example 17). This material, featuring the aggressive eighth-note outbursts and fermatas, surrounds the literal quotation present in the violin.

At Rehearsal 34, following the Brahms apparition, the BACH eighth notes return, along with the rests of silence (see Example 19).

34 Allegro

Example 19 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

These eight bars contain nothing but the BACH monogram in this configuration. The only discernible difference between them individually is in the dynamics: the first one is marked *FFF* while the rest contain *FF*. The main points of interest are when these eighth notes are being played. The entrances alternate between the piano and violin. The space between these entrances gradually shrinks, first by 2 bars and then by 1 bar. When the meter changes to 3/4, a quasi-hocket is played between the violin and piano, starting with the piano. This is an example of what Schnittke described as the use of alien technique, appropriating the hocket technique from “choral polyphony of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries.”⁶⁷

The return of Beethoven in Schnittke’s Sonata creates a fused apparition with the BACH monogram. By using a combination of monograms, literal quotations, stylistic allusions and alien technique, Schnittke is able to create a distinctly polystylistic effect. Looking deeper at the previous passage with an eye to Schnittke’s future will unlock an additional hidden meaning.

Shostakovich

The previously mentioned eighth-note BACH configuration alludes to more than Beethoven. Dmitri Shostakovich and the opening of the fourth movement of the *Eighth String Quartet* are also hinted at in this allusion (see Example 20).⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Alfred Schnittke, “Polystylistic Tendencies in Modern Music.” In *A Schnittke Reader*, 88.

⁶⁸ Dmitri Shostakovich. *String Quartet 8*, Opus 110. London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1961: 28.

53 Largo $\text{♩} = 138$

The musical score shows four staves. Violino I has a melodic line with eighth notes and a dynamic marking of *pp sempre*. Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello play rhythmic patterns of eighth notes with accents (>>>) and dynamic markings including *ff pesante*, *pp cresc.*, and *ff*. The tempo is marked *Largo* with a quarter note equal to 138 beats per minute.

Example 20 Dmitri Shostakovich *Eighth String Quartet*

These eighth note Outbursts have received multiple explanations since the *String Quartet* was premiered in 1960.⁶⁹ David Fanning, in his book *Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 8*, explains that “(i)n the early days these were read at the crudest level of programme music...the *FF pesante* chords denoted the explosion of bombs or anti-aircraft fire...Latterly, however, the more favoured interpretation is once again crudely onomatopoeic, except that the repeated-note chords are now said to represent the NKVD’s early morning knocks on the door.”⁷⁰ Fanning favors a deeper reading of this passage, citing a connection to Shostakovich’s film score to *The Young Guard*, an allusion to Ravel’s *Gaspard de la nuit*, and the finale of Beethoven’s last String Quartet,

⁶⁹ David Fanning, *Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 8*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2004: 103-105.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 103.

Op. 135.⁷¹ Fanning lists the Beethoven as a “particularly suggestive resonance,” and that this is the “famous instance of Beethoven inscribing his score with a motto: ‘Muss es sein?’ (Must it be?) (see Example 21).”⁷²

DER SCHWER GEFASSTE ENTSCHLUSS.

Example 21 Ludwig van Beethoven *String Quartet* Opus 135

Example 21 shows the opening of the 4th movement of Beethoven’s *String Quartet* Opus 135.⁷³ Written above the Grave ma non troppo tratto is the “Muss es sein?” inscription. The melodic contour of this figure resembles the *PP* figure in the Shostakovich beginning at measure 4 (see Example 20). The *F* figure that is introduced in measure 5 of the Beethoven (Example 21) looks very similar to the eighth note Outbursts that open the 4th movement of Shostakovich’s *Eighth String Quartet* (see Example 20).

Looking at the Beethoven example closer extends the meaning of the allusion present in Schnittke’s *Sonata* (see Examples 17 and 19). Lawrence Kramer, in his book

⁷¹ Ibid., 108

⁷² Ibid., 109.

⁷³ Ludwig van Beethoven. *Complete String Quartets and Grosse Fuge from the Breitkopf & Härtel Complete Works Edition*. New York: Dover Publications, 1970: 201.

Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History, also cites the connection of this figure of to the Beethoven ‘Muss es sein?’ and adds that “(l)ike Beethoven’s, Shostakovich’s answer, repeated over and over, is as clear as it is brutal. But decidedly unlike Beethoven’s, it is final and unalterable--the more so because a hint dropped elsewhere by Shostakovich suggest that the hammerblows also form a mock-heroic allusion to Siegfried’s funeral music in Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung*.”⁷⁴ This “hint” that Kramer refers to is a quote from Shostakovich where he describes this Wagner quotation present in the *Eighth String Quartet*.⁷⁵

The eighth-note figure Kramer refers to as the hammerblows now contains an additional element of meaning to its use in Schnittke’s Sonata. Sarah Reichardt, in her book *Composing the Modern Subject: Four String Quartets by Dmitri Shostakovich*, refers to the eighth-note figure as the “Deathblow” motive and claims that:

In addition to the ambiguous references to the “Deathblow” motive, the minor triad arpeggiations that follow the two sets of repeated chords in the Eighth [String Quartet] have the same melodic contour as that of the “Fate” [Destiny] motive in *Götterdämmerung*...The ghost of *Götterdämmerung* is truly spectral; its highly veiled presentation has an uncanny aspect, as we can never truly be convinced of its presence.⁷⁶

This revelation leads us back to Schnittke’s use of Wagner’s Destiny motive in his Sonata (see Examples 6 and 20).

⁷⁴ Lawrence Kramer, *Musical Meaning: Toward A Critical History*. University of California Press, 2002: 238.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994: 340.

⁷⁶ Sarah Reichardt, “Musical Hauntings: The Ritual of Conjunction in Shostakovich’s Eighth String Quartet, Op. 110 (1960).” In *Composing the Modern Subject: Four String Quartets by Dmitri Shostakovich*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008: 87.

Alfred Schnittke reveals the influence that Shostakovich had on him, specifically the *Eighth String Quartet*, when he states:

The Eighth and Fourteenth Quartets...are highly original landmarks in [the artistic manipulation] of Time, where the past enters into new relations with the present, invades musical reality, like the ghost of Hamlet's father, and shapes it. When in Shostakovich the images of his own musical past meet up in collages with images from the history of music, an astonishing effect of objectivization occurs, of joining the individual to the universal.⁷⁷

This quote confirms that the link between Schnittke and Shostakovich goes far beyond the choices of composers to allude or quote, but speaks to the great influence Shostakovich had on Schnittke's creation of both *Sonata No. 2* as well as polystylism in general. It also shows the possible motivations behind Schnittke's choice in allusions and quotations that are present in his Sonata. By referencing Shostakovich, Schnittke was able to connect other influential composers of the past (Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, Franck/Liszt) with Shostakovich. Although clear connections have been made between Shostakovich's *Eighth String Quartet* and Schnittke's *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*, an additional connection remains. Both pieces make heavy use of monograms. Exploring the musical monograms in both pieces will help clarify their relationship to the borrowed musical material as well as strengthen the connection between the two pieces.

Monogram Function

⁷⁷ David Fanning, *Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 8*, 159.

Schnittke's use of the BACH monogram in *Sonata No. 2* is first seen in transpositions before revealing itself in its true form (B \flat -A-C-B). The BACH monogram, once introduced properly, overtakes the piece by intertwining itself within various allusions and quotations from the past. This has the effect of a virus (or antidote?) that transforms the material until there is nothing left. In fact, the final two measures of Schnittke's Sonata contain nothing else but the BACH monogram itself (see Example 22).

Grave
arco

The musical score for Example 22 is presented in two systems. The first system features a single staff with a treble clef. Above the staff, the letters B, A, C, and H are placed above notes. Below the staff, the letters H, C, A, and B are placed below notes. The notes are: B (quarter), A (quarter), C (quarter), and H (quarter). Above the H note is a circled number 21. Dynamics are indicated as *f* under the first note, *fff* under the second and third notes, and *ppp* under the fourth note. The second system shows a grand staff with piano accompaniment, consisting of two staves with various markings and dynamics.

*

Example 22 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

Paul Westwood explains that these last four chords “place the B-A-C-H motif against its retrograde, creating the final ambiguity.”⁷⁸ Perhaps these last two measures leave no ambiguity at all and solidify the musical monogram’s role as virus or antidote in *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*.

The musical monogram presented in Shostakovich’s *Eighth String Quartet* is introduced right from the beginning of the piece in both the cello and second violin (see Example 23).

I Dmitri Shostakovich
Op. 110

Largo $\text{♩} = 63$ **(3 4 1 0)**

Violino I

Violino II **DSCH**

Viola **(3 4 1 0)** solo

Violoncello **DSCH** poco espr.

Example 23 Dmitri Shostakovich *Eighth String Quartet*

The monogram of DSCH (D-E \flat -C-B) represents the name of Dmitri Shostakovich.⁷⁹ In addition, transposed versions of the monogram <2,3,0,11> are placed in the viola and first violin part. This monogram is one of the key elements of the *Eighth String Quartet*. In fact, Reichardt claims that aside from the quoted material, the “majority of the

⁷⁸ Paul Westwood, “Schnittke’s Violin Sonata No. 2 as an Open Commentary on the Composition of Modern Music,” 52.

remaining material, including almost all of the fifth and final movement, is composed out of the DSCH motive, permeating the music with the composer's musical moniker."⁸⁰

That the *Eighth String Quartet* has such a strong connection to a single monogram is strikingly similar to Schnittke's *Sonata No. 2*.

The connection between the two pieces goes further than the use of a monogram. The monograms function similarly in their respective pieces. In both pieces, the musical monograms frame musical quotation and allusion. Reichardt, speaking about the use of the monogram in Shostakovich's *Eighth String Quartet*, explains that:

In reality, the motive's function in the piece goes far beyond the literal statement of the monogram and its participation in the expanded opening phrase. In the larger musical context, the motive interacts with the quotations in various ways: as an introductory and/or conclusory framing device, eliding into the quote so that a seamless transition leads the motive into the quotation and at other times the quote seems to literally come out of, or be created by, the motive. Throughout the work, the motive is manipulated via transposition, alteration, and truncation; it is subject to change in both its presentation and role within the signifying context.⁸¹

This use of the monogram as a base for both introducing and interacting with various quotations and allusions is done similarly in both Shostakovich's *Eighth String Quartet* and Schnittke's *Sonata No. 2*. The monograms call upon the apparitions to appear by either framing the quotation or transforming itself to become the allusion or quotation.

⁷⁹ Sarah Reichardt, "Musical Hauntings: The Ritual of Conjunction in Shostakovich's *Eighth String Quartet*, Op. 110 (1960)." In *Composing the Modern Subject: Four String Quartets by Dmitri Shostakovich*, 72.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 69.

⁸¹ Ibid., 73.

Looking again at a previous section in Schnittke's Sonata rife with both quotation and allusion can help solidify this point. From Rehearsal 32 to 34, quotations and allusions from Beethoven, Brahms and Shostakovich are presented (see Examples 15 and 17). What remains constant through these sections is the repeated return of the BACH monogram. Starting from Rehearsal 32, the Beethoven/Shostakovich quasi-quotation is already entangled with the BACH monogram. The whole line exists as a quasi-quotation of the *Fifteen Variations*, but the literal quotation is introduced at the Moderato after the BACH monogram has been established (see Example 24).

The image shows a musical score for Alfred Schnittke's Sonata No. 2. It features a piano part with a treble and bass clef. Rehearsal 32 is marked with a box. The score shows a BACH monogram in the piano part, with the letters 'B' and 'A' above the notes. A 'Literal Quotation' is indicated by a shaded area starting at rehearsal 39, marked 'Moderato' and 'p'. The piano part has dynamics of *ff*, *mp*, and *p*. The right hand has a dynamic of *p*. The score is numbered 32 and 39.

Example 24 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

The same is true following the literal quotation, as the BACH monogram immediately returns. This is a bridge to the Brahms. The Brahms allusion is also framed by the BACH monogram, as well as containing elements of the monogram in the piano.

Another example of the monogram summoning an allusion occurs at Rehearsal 26 (see Example 25).

26 Senza tempo

B **A** **C** **H** (0) 1 2 3

mf *f* *mf* *ff*

(*Ad. sempre*)

Example 25 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

Here, the BACH monogram is played in its true form by the solo violin: <B \flat , A, C, B>.

A transposed version of the monogram is then sounded: <A \flat , G, B \flat , A>. At the

Andantino, the solo violin plays an allusion to a waltz (see Example 26).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Alfred Schnittke's Sonata No. 2. The first system is marked "Andantino" and "p", with notes labeled "2", "3", "0", "1", and "B". The second system is marked "Senza tempo" and "fff", with notes labeled "A", "C", "H", "A", "B" and durations of approximately 6 and 10 seconds. Both systems include "(ped. sempre)" markings.

Example 26 Alfred Schnittke *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*

The first pitch configuration present at the waltz allusion is a transposed retrograde version of the BACH monogram: <D, E \flat , C, D \flat >. Following this, the BACH monogram is sounded in its true form: <B \flat , A, C, B) and in retrograde: <B, C, A, B \flat >. This configuration of the monogram over its retrograde foreshadows the final two bars of the piece.

The connection between these two composers and the possible influence Shostakovich had on Schnittke regarding the use of the monograms is strengthened by

looking at a piece Schnittke would write later on. Following Shostakovich's death in 1975, Schnittke wrote *Prelude In Memoriam Dmitri Shostakovich*. The piece, which is written for either two violins or violin and tape, uses both the DSCH and BACH monograms together. This was the first time that Schnittke used the DSCH monogram.

The most striking feature of the piece is the way the two monograms become entangled at the end. Schmelz describes the passage as follows:

The most significant moment in Schnittke's memorial Prelude is its conclusion, where shortly after the second violin (or tape) enters at rehearsal 7, the DSCH motive is closely followed...by BACH (B-flat-A-C-B)...Subsequently the two mottoes share material and gradually intertwine until...they are superimposed.⁸²

Looking more closely at the last line of the *Prelude In Memoriam Dmitri Shostakovich*, we find the superimposition that he describes (see Example 27).⁸³

Example 27 Alfred Schnittke *Prelude In Memoriam Dmitri Shostakovich*

⁸² Peter Schmelz, "What Was "Shostakovich," and What Came Next?" In *The Journal of Musicology* 24, No. 3 (Summer 2007): 320.

⁸³ Alfred Schnittke. *Praeludium in Memorium D. Shostakovich*. Hamburg: Sikorski, 1978: 5.

The two melded monograms slowly die away. In the second to the last measure, right before silence, only the two shared pitches of the Monogram remain (C-B). This gradual merging of the two monograms symbolize the influence that both Shostakovich and Bach had on Schnittke and recalls the quote from Schnittke about “joining the individual to the universal.”⁸⁴

Looking at the function of the musical monograms in Shostakovich's *Eighth String Quartet* and Schnittke's *Sonata No. 2* and *Prelude In Memoriam Dmitri Shostakovich* has shown the great influence that Shostakovich had on Schnittke. It has also revealed the similarities in how the two composers used monograms. While the role of the monogram has been revealed, the apparitions themselves remain to be discussed. A closer examination of the reasons for using these apparitions, as well as a return to *The Glass Harmonica*, will help define their role in polystylism and Schnittke's music in general.

The Documentary Feel

Alfred Schnittke has gone to great lengths to define polystylism and the techniques that are associated with it. The two techniques, quotation and allusion, are derived from a relationship to the past and how the past can be summoned and drawn into the present. In *Sonata No. 2*, Schnittke was able to use polystylistic techniques to weave the past into the work to create something new. Why was the past so important to Schnittke and polystylism? These questions can be answered by examining the larger issues facing all Russian composers.

⁸⁴ David Fanning, *Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 8*, 159

Margarita Mazo, in her article “The Present and the Unpredictable Past: Music and Musical Life in St. Petersburg and Moscow Since the 1960s,” writes that:

Perhaps the most powerful trend of musical life in post-Stalin times was the normalization of the historical axis, past-present-future. In previous years, the official culture set its eyes on “the radiant future of the whole of mankind,” as the political doctrine demanded. The past existed, but only to the extent it could serve the official line. The past existed as myths made up of remote facts and episodes, tailored to fit official policies, but not as an unbroken historical continuum that lived through human experience and culture.⁸⁵

This normalization of the historical axis resonates strongly with the way Schnittke uses polystylistic techniques in *Sonata No. 2*. In many ways, Schnittke’s desire to use both quotation and allusion is less about a new way to use the past, but more as a way to create a past that has been taken away. Mazo goes on to state that:

Any information that was undesirable for the regime was withdrawn from the libraries and archives and became inaccessible for scholars and the public, as though by destroying the documents and taking away the information one can erase history and change the past itself... (u)nderstanding historical and political underpinnings of anti-documentalism of Soviet arts can help us to grasp why artistic means that evoke an aura of authenticity and real documentation, or, in Alfred Schnittke’s expression, “a documentary feeling” became so important to Russian musicians since the late 1960’s.”⁸⁶

Polystylistic techniques allowed Schnittke to document and display elements of the musical past. This desire to create the past grew from the political climate that for so long had defined whether or not this past had even existed.

⁸⁵ Margarita Mazo, “The Present and the Unpredictable Past: Music and Musical Life of St. Petersburg and Moscow Since the 1960s,” In *International Journal of Musicology* 5 (1996): 375.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 375.

Looking again at Rehearsal 32 to 34 shows the multiple time periods that Schnittke uses in *Sonata No. 2* (see Examples 15 and 17). The quotations and allusions in this setting have the effect of, as Mazo suggests, normalizing the historical axis. The multiple associations present are tied together to build what has been taken away: a connection to the past. By linking Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and Shostakovich together, Schnittke is able both to communicate a debt to the past and to create and document its existence.

Maria Cizmic, in her book *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe*, defines these historical breaks as a manifestation of trauma, stating, “(r)ather than an abstract conception of ‘postmodernism’ causing the linear nature of history to collapse, it may make sense to consider such a condition arising from the erasure, rewriting, and rediscovery of memory in response to terror and trauma that shaped the Soviet era.”⁸⁷ It is the fundamental denial of history that led to Schnittke’s desire for historical documentation. Cizmic also claims that:

Although Schnittke’s particular quotations may very well be meaningful, polystylism’s significance also lies in its strategy of integrating such a range of historical references. Imagining music history--and by metaphoric extension all of history—as a field in which one has access to any piece of information, to any musical style, seems like an act of reclamation.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Maria Cizmic, “*Music of Disruption: Collage and Fragmentation as an Expression of Trauma in Alfred Schnittke’s Concerto for Piano and Strings.*” In *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012: 40.

⁸⁸ Maria Cizmic, “*Music of Disruption: Collage and Fragmentation as an Expression of Trauma in Alfred Schnittke’s Concerto for Piano and Strings.*” In *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe*: 62.

This act of reclamation of the past by Schnittke may explain the reasons for using the polystylistic devices present in *Sonata No. 2*. The BACH monogram as well as the various quotations and allusions in Schnittke's Sonata function as a link to the past and signify its importance.

The *Glass Harmonica* also contains similar themes of the redeeming and reconnecting power of historicism. Peter Schmelz describes:

The clarity of J.S. Bach—indicated by the B-A-C-H motive—...signifies tonality and, by extension, the saving grace of tradition, the restoration of time and the past (a restoration of time symbolized by the rebuilding of the land's central timepiece at the cartoon's end). Bach also, perhaps, ultimately promises freedom.⁸⁹

This same freedom is also expressed in Schnittke's Sonata. By using the same BACH monogram as well as a combination of musical quotation and allusion, Schnittke is able to showcase a past that is uncensored and not tailored to fit the Soviet model of the past.

Performance Considerations

The primary difficulty in playing a piece like Alfred Schnittke's *Sonata No. 2* goes beyond the regular technical difficulties normally associated with playing a violin sonata. An understanding of the various polystylistic elements must be reached in order to provide an evocative interpretation. Only then can certain performance considerations be made concerning how these historical references are interpreted.

⁸⁹ Peter Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw*, 273.

Alexander Ivashkin, in the biography *Alfred Schnittke*, states:

Biologists tell us that “philogenesis” (development over many centuries) repeats itself in microcosm in the development of an individual - the “ontogenesis” of each particular organism. Similarly, compositions by Schnittke condense important steps in cultural history, using them as a sort of genetic code. This helps to explain why there is a multi-dimensional “velvet” feeling to his works.⁹⁰

This genetic code that is mentioned by Ivashkin is an excellent way to describe polystylistic elements. The historical fibers embedded in these Polystylistic elements must be interpreted with those connections in mind.

Many small pieces of genetic code exist in *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*. After Rehearsal 33, Schnittke sets the BrAHmS monogram in a quasi-Brahmsian texture (see Example 15). In order to effectively interpret this piece of genetic code, the questions about how one evokes Brahms would have to be answered and then applied to this section. One strategy could be finding a similarly scored passage in Brahms, such as the previously mentioned example of Brahms’s *Violin Sonata No. 1* (see Example 16). Since both passages contain similar textures, playing the Brahms example and then transferring those same interpretative ideas to the Brahms genetic code in Schnittke’s *Sonata* could be an effective strategy in conjuring this apparition.

Maria Lettberg, in her essay “Alfred Schnittke’s Piano Trio: Learning and Performing,” describes the process she used in deciphering many of the polystylistic elements present in Schnittke’s *Piano Trio*. Regarding these unique considerations, she states:

⁹⁰ Alexander Ivashkin, *Alfred Schnittke*. London, England: Phaidon Press Limited, 1996: 138.

Schnittke's polystylistic music challenges musicians in a most unexpected way. The interpretations of his multifaceted quotations and hidden allusions calls forth particular subjectivities, inseparable from the orientation of each musician's individual historical and cultural background and his or her unique musical memories and associations.⁹¹

It is in these subjectivities that make interpreting Schnittke's music difficult. His music requires an interpretation that considers the genetic code's origin. Locating the sources for these pieces of genetic code, as in the Brahms example, allows the performer to find an interpretative approach to Brahms first. Applying those same interpretative choices to the genetic code will assist in interpreting the polystylistic elements present in *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)*.

Conclusion

Alfred Schnittke's *Sonata No. 2 (quasi una Sonata)* marked a turning point compositionally for Schnittke. The development of polystylism inserted new elements into Schnittke's music. What became particularly distinctive was Schnittke's desire to invoke the past. Using the Polystylistic methods of quotation and allusion, Schnittke was able to meld signifiers from the past into his work to create apparitions.

His film score for *The Glass Harmonica* contained many philosophical parallels to *Sonata No. 2*. Containing similarities in both musical materials as well as using the past as a resource, both *The Glass Harmonica* and *Sonata No. 2* looked to retrace a connection to historicism that had been erased. In *The Glass Harmonica*, this included

⁹¹ Maria Lettberg, "Alfred Schnittke's Piano Trio: Learning and Performing," In *The*

the many references to historical paintings, as well as the BACH monogram present in the film score. For Schnittke's *Sonata No. 2*, this same BACH monogram was intertwined with quotations and allusions to Franck/Liszt, Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner and Shostakovich as well as elements of theatricality.

The way the BACH monogram is used in *Sonata No. 2* is similar to the way the DCSH Monogram is used in Shostakovich's *Eighth String Quartet*. Both pieces use their respective monograms to assist in conjuring up these historical apparitions. The use of the musical monogram in *Sonata No. 2* foreshadows the way Schnittke would continue to develop his use of monograms, using the DCSH and BACH together in his *Prelude in Memoriam to Dmitri Shostakovich*.

The use of these apparitions reveals a desire to restore a fundamental element that had been removed from Soviet life. The past affects everyone, from individual memories to large historical events. By removing and rewriting history as a way to serve the good of the country, the Soviet government's denial of this fundamental element transformed the way every aspect of life, including music, was perceived and therefore existed. Restoring a sense of the past with what Alfred Schnittke describes as a "documentary feeling"⁹² allowed a connection to the long-denied and dormant element of historicism. This connection, in turn, helps create the multilayered musical world present in polystylism and the work of Alfred Schnittke.

Practice of Practicing. Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2004: 85.

⁹² Claire Polin, "Interviews with Soviet Composers," In *Tempo* 151 (Dec. 1984): 12.

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