Octatonic Formations, Motivic Correspondences, and Symbolism in Alwa’s \textit{Hymne}:

The Conclusion of \textit{Lulu}, Act II

Master’s Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Brandeis University
Department of Musicology
Allan Keiler, Advisor

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for

Master’s of Fine Arts Degree

by
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May 2010
ABSTRACT

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In this study of the final number from Act II of Alban Berg’s Lulu, I examine Alwa’s Hymne from three different perspectives. First, I analyze the Hymne as if it were a free-standing composition. In this portion of the paper, I enumerate the tone-rows and motives out of which the Hymne is constructed and I discuss how these basic materials are related to each other. I place special emphasis on the multiple roles which the octatonic collection plays in this number: it functions as a subset of twelve-note formations, as a superset encompassing shorter motives, and as an agent of harmonic and melodic coherence in those sections of the Hymne that are not governed by twelve-tone sets. In this part of the paper, I also discuss the ways in which the text and the music of the Hymne may help to clarify the nature of Alwa’s relationship with Lulu.

In the second section of this study, I examine the Hymne’s relation to other parts of the Lulu. Specifically, I explicate its thematic/motivic, formal, and dramatic links to the Rondo of Act II, and to mm. 974-1006 of Act III. This portion of the paper also contains a discussion of the quotation, at m.1136, of the Musette from Act I’s Sonata, and of how this brief interpolation symbolizes the intimate ties between Alwa’s fate and that of Dr. Schön.
In the third and final section of this thesis, I suggest that several details of the *Hymne*’s text and music can be understood as numerological references Berg’s extramarital relationship with Hanna Fuchs-Robinet. In this section, I argue that the symbolism revolving around the numbers 23 and 10, which Berg indisputably utilized in the *Lyric Suite*, is also operative in *Lulu*. In support of this argument, I also discuss the possibility that Berg incorporated an oblique verbal reference to the *Lyric Suite* in his adaptation of Wedekind’s *Pandora’s Box*, the play which forms the basis of the second half of *Lulu*. 
Octatonic Formations, Motivic Correspondences, and Symbolism in Alwa’s *Hymne*: the Conclusion of *Lulu*, Act II

Alexander G. Lane

Anyone attempting to write a comprehensive analysis of Alban Berg’s *Lulu* will find it necessary to be extremely selective in choosing which aspects of the opera to discuss. The piece’s great length obliges the analyst to skip over countless fascinating and relevant details so as not to “lose sight of the forest for the trees.” Through the judicious exclusion of details, it becomes possible to create a lucid and accurate picture of the opera in its totality, as George Perle did in his 1985 study of *Lulu*. It naturally follows that a close reading of *Lulu* must confine itself to selected passages or aspects of the opera, even if this necessitates the creation of arbitrary limits. Unfortunately, matter how self-contained many of *Lulu*’s individual numbers may be, it is impossible to explain the full musical or dramatic significance of any part of the opera without examining its relationship to the whole. Although this statement probably holds true for all operas to some extent, there are at least two reasons why it is especially applicable to the present work. The first of these reasons is that *Lulu*’s libretto, which Berg adapted from two plays by Frank Wedekind, employs a number of artifices which impart a purely dramaturgical organicity to the opera: the singers who portray the protagonist’s three husbands in Acts I and II become her three clients in act III; the Prince, the Manservant,  

1 *The Operas of Alban Berg, Volume Two / Lulu*
and the Marquis are all played by the same singer; and the sequence of events in the central cinematic episode follows a palindromic structure. More importantly, *Lulu* is essentially a Wagnerian music drama, bound together by a tightly-woven network of leitmotivs and *Leitsektionen*; the individual numbers are merely subdivisions of larger and more complex musical structures.

Given these premises, I would suggest that an effective way to explicate any given part of *Lulu* is to treat the opera as a painter would treat a landscape. In a realistic painting, the relative sizes of objects are determined just as much by the artist’s perspective as by their natural proportions, so that a nearby shrub can occupy more space on canvas than the mountain range behind it. If we approach *Lulu* from the vantage point of a single number, we find that the rest of the opera falls into a kind of perspective roughly analogous to what we find in landscape art. If the selected number constitutes the foreground of our picture, the middle ground will consist of those passages in the opera that allude to, or are alluded to by, the selected number. The background of our analytical picture encompasses those parts of the opera that share generic materials (tone rows, basic cells, leitmotivs, etc.) with the selected number but are not connected to it in more specific ways. In other words, the amount of time we spending discussing any given passage will be proportionate to the quantity and significance of its connections with the number we have chosen as the focus of our analysis. In the present study, I will use this approach as the methodological basis for a discussion of Alwa’s so-called *Hymne* at the end of Act II (mm. 1097-1150).
Before we proceed to the analytical portion of this paper, a few words on the *Hymne’s* immediate dramatic context are in order. At this point in the opera, Lulu has just escaped from prison by contracting cholera and then walking out of the hospital disguised as Countess Geschwitz. Having returned to the mansion in which she and Dr. Schön lived before she murdered him, Lulu waits there with Alwa while Schigolch buys the railroad tickets that will allow her to flee to Paris and thereby avoid being caught by the police. Meanwhile, Countess Geschwitz returns to the hospital in order to deceive the authorities into believing that she is Lulu and that the real Lulu hadn’t escaped. Alwa, taking advantage of the fact that he and Lulu are alone together, continues his confession of love for Lulu, which he had begun in scene 1 of Act II before being interrupted by the chain of events which led to Dr. Schön’s murder and Lulu’s consequent arrest and imprisonment. Apparently unaffected by what Lulu did to his father, Alwa praises her in ever more lavish (and lascivious) terms, culminating in the *Hymne* itself.

**Section I – A Close Reading**

Alwa’s *Hymne* falls into five sections. It begins with a five-measure introduction (mm. 1097-1103) in which Alwa sings, “through this dress I feel your form as a musical form.” This passage’s steady, almost mechanical series of dissonant but widely-spaced eighth-note chords (played by piano and pizzicato strings) is perhaps a representation of Alwa’s roving hands. The following two sections, each of which consists of an antecedent-consequent pair, constitute the musical and poetical body (no pun intended) of
Alwa’s panegyric to Lulu. In section 2 (mm. 1102-11), Alwa sings, “these two ankles – grazioso. This enchanting roundness [Lulu’s calves?] – a cantabile. Then your knees – misterioso; and then the powerful andante of love’s desire.” The upward motion implicit in these words is reflected in the vocal line’s gradual ascent to m.1110’s C5, the melodic high point of the *Hymne*. As we shall eventually see, text-painting isn’t the only raison d’être for this seemingly premature climax. Section 3 (mm.1112-29) is concerned with the symmetry of Lulu’s legs: “How peaceable and calm the two shapely rivals! I feel them nestling, confidently knowing that neither can equal the other’s beauty till the wild and moody queen of both awakes and the two competing rivals shoot apart like two opposing magnets.” Musically, this symmetry is illustrated by the roughly inversional relationship between the antecedent and consequent phrases, both of which are predominantly octatonic (Ex.1). After a one-measure link based on Trope III, section 4 (mm. 1130-44/ii) commences. Here Alwa reaches the peroration of his *Hymne*: “I’ll sing in your praise only – until your senses grow faint,” whereupon Lulu asks him, “so then you’ll come [across the border] with me tonight? Are you coming?” Instead of answering Lulu’s question, Alwa proclaims, “You’ve robbed of all my power of thought,” and buries his head in her lap. The periodic phraseology of the preceding sections is absent from section IV, possibly a reflection of Alwa’s disoriented mental state. We shouldn’t allow prudishness to keep us from considering another possible interpretation of this passage: the phrase ‘Kommst Du?’ has the same double meaning in German as it has it

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2 For an explanation of Trope III, see Perle, 90.
has in English\(^3\), so, if we view such details as the paroxysmal orchestral writing of mm. 1138-44 and the vocal portamenti of mm. 1138 and 1143 in light of this fact, we will find it hard to dismiss the possibility that Section IV \textit{may} be a musical depiction of human coition. Section 6 (mm. 1144/ii-1150) is ushered in by a \textit{pianissimo} statement of Basic Cell IV\(^4\), the “doorbell chord,” in the piano and vibraphone; this section serves as a coda both to the \textit{Hymne} and to the whole of Act II. Here Lulu asks Alwa, “Isn’t this the sofa on which your father bled to death?” Alwa, who is by now completely beside himself, can only answer, “Quiet – quiet…” The music of this essentially static and athematic coda is based predominantly on Basic Cells I and III\(^5\).

Three twelve-tone rows appear in the \textit{Hymne}: Alwa’s row, the Basic row, and Lulu’s row. Both Alwa’s row and the Basic row are used to generate motives which appear independently at certain points in the \textit{Hymne}. The first of these motives, Alwa \(x\), occurs in the vocal line and first violins at m.1102 (Ex.2). It is produced by verticalizing the four trichords of Alwa’s row and then extracting the top line from the resultant series of chords; this is exactly the same process by which the first four notes of Lulu’s row are derived from the Pictures Chords, which are simply verticalizations of the Basic row’s trichords. Alwa \(x\) belongs to set class [0268], which makes it a subset of both the  

\(^3\) Credit for this observation is due to Dr. Eric Chafe  
\(^4\) See Perle, 91.  
\(^5\) See Perle, 87.
Example 1. the two phrases of Section 3.

Example 2. Alwa x.

Example 3. Alwa y.
octatonic and the whole-tone scale. In the *Hymne*, however, only its octatonic properties are exploited. We can see these properties at work in the first violin part of mm.1102-03: immediately after the initial statement of Alwa \( x \) on G, the motive is repeated a minor third higher, thereby producing a complete octatonic collection. Alwa \( x \) also features prominently in the extended octatonic lines of Section 3, where it sounds independently of the series from which it was derived.

Two other motives generated by Alwa’s row may be seen in their paradigmatic forms in Ex.3. Alwa \( y \) consists of order numbers 1, 2, 4, and 6 of Alwa’s row, whereas the other motive, a segment of Alwa’s chromatic trope, consists of order numbers 3, 5, 7, and 8. Both motives have their origins in the Rondo: Alwa \( y \) first occurs in the strings and piano at m.278 (Act II, scene 1), whilst Alwa’s chromatic trope makes its first appearance in m.262. In the *Hymne* itself, the four-note segment of Alwa’s chromatic trope is of minor importance, as it appears only twice (at mm.1119 and 1127) and is in both instances coupled with Alwa \( y \), with which it creates, respectively, the I-8 and P-11 forms Alwa’s row. The case of Alwa \( y \) is considerably more complicated. If we disregard this motive’s specific opi’s and simply define Alwa \( y \) as a leap of a sixth followed by a whole- or half-step, followed by another leap of a sixth in the opposite direction, we discover that the *Hymne* contains several variants of this motive which aren’t derived from Alwa’s row (i.e., in mm. 1132-33, 1134, 1135, 1139, and 1149.) With the exception of this motive’s the final occurrence in the *Hymne*’s penultimate measure, all the other forms of Alwa \( y \) are segments of the Basic row. As Ex.4 illustrates, two variants of the
motive, Alwa $y'$ and Alwa $y''$ can be extracted from, respectively, order numbers 1-4 and 6-9 of the Basic row; Alwa $y'$ belongs to the same pitch-class set $[0245]$ as Alwa $y$, and Alwa $y''$ has the same melodic contour as Alwa $y$. Interestingly, the presentation of the Basic row in mm.1134-36 omits order number 5, thus dividing the row into two statements of Alwa-$y$ variants, plus the three final notes of the row. This segmentation is highlighted by the change of harmony from minor triads to third-inversion major sevenths at the point where Alwa $y''$ begins. The whole-tone chords of m.317 also support a statement of Alwa $y''$, although here the motive is not treated as part of the Basic row. As for the final version of Alwa $y$ in m.1149, I have been unable to trace its origin to any tone-row. However, the second and third trichords of this motive are identical to the first two trichords of Alwa’s row, and, given the importance of Alwa’s row throughout the Hymne, I am inclined to believe that this correspondence is not a coincidence.

Example 4. two variants of Alwa $y$.

In addition to the motives discussed above, all of which are unique either to the Hymne or to music associated with Alwa, the Hymne is permeated with a number of other more generic motives, including all four of Lulu’s Basic Cells. The descending form of
Basic Cell I is treated as a cadential figure in Sections 1 and 2 (mm.1101, 1106, and 1111): at the end of every phrase, there occurs a series of descending four-note chords, each of which features Cell I in the uppermost part and the same motive transposed down a minor sixth in the second lowest part. It is worth noting that each of these three double-statements of Cell I shares one transposition of that motive with each of the other two statements. Thus, for example, the cadential figure in m.1101 has the <F# - F - C - B> transposition in common with m.1106 and the <B♭ - A - E - E♭> motive in common with m.1111.

Basic Cell II makes only one complete appearance in the Hymne. This happens in the second half of m.1134, where the motive is arpeggiated in the piano on the pitches <E – A – B – C – F>; all the notes of this chord except B, which functions as a passing note between A and C, are tied over to the next measure, forming a third-inversion major-seventh chord, the sonority which forms basis of the parallel voice-leading in mm.1135-36. Throughout the opera, this transposition of Cell II is usually associated with the revolver with which Lulu killed Dr Schön (cf. Act II, scene1, mm. 416-17, 553, and 606). The present occurrence of the “Revolver Chord” is open to multiple readings. One possible interpretation is that Alwa is here making a Freudian slip. The word he sings to accompaniment of Cell II, ‘vergehn’, is a contraction of the verb ‘vergehen’, which in this context means ‘to grow faint.’ However, ‘Vergehen’ can also be used as a noun, in which case it means ‘crime.’ Could it be that Alwa’s choice of words is indicative of a suppressed outrage at his father’s murder? This hypothesis is supported by Alwa’s
hysterical effort to silence Lulu in m.1148 after she reminds him that it was she who murdered his father. Alternatively, we might interpret this appearance of Cell II as a portent of Alwa’s own death. The F-major chord derived from the “Revolver Chord” returns in root position at the final cadence of Act II, where it is stated four times in the “fate rhythm.” As it is generally agreed that this cadence signifies Alwa’s impending doom, there is no need to expound the matter here. Before we leave the subject of Cell II, it should be remarked that in m.1140 the alto saxophone plays a figure consisting of \(<E_b – A – B – C – F>\). Although this is technically not the “Revolver Chord”, it is such a close approximation that its derivation is unmistakable.

Of all the generic motives in Lulu, none plays such an important role in the Hymne as the Picture Chords. Counting incomplete statements, the Picture Chords appear eleven times throughout the Hymne: seven times in inversion, three times in prime form, and once in retrograde. Six of these statements occur during the second climax (mm. 1140-43). The most noteworthy aspect of this passage is the low strings’ and woodwinds’ arpeggiation of the Pictures Chords, first at P-3 (1140-41), then at P-9 (1141-42), and finally at R-3. These broken chords effectively create a new tone-row, trichordally identical to, but distinct from, the Basic row. The symbolic meaning behind

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6 The musical and dramatic connections between this cadence and those that end Acts I and III are beyond the scope of this paper. For a brief, but cogent discussion of these cadences, see Perle 190-193.
7 See Perle, 109-111.
8 Retrograde forms of tone rows are relatively uncommon in Berg’s music, and are, as a rule, reserved for palindromes; this particular R form is an exception to that rule. It will be noted, however, that this is not a perfect twelve-tone row, as B/C is stated twice and G is absent. The transposition levels of these arpeggiated Picture Chords were determined by treating them as rotations of the Basic row.
the *Hymne’s* Picture Chords is neatly encapsulated in a statement which Alwa makes to Lulu near the end of the Rondo (mm.1077-85): “If it were not for your two childlike eyes, I should say you were the most designing of whores who ever inveigled a man to his doom.” In other words, Alwa is so taken in by Lulu’s outward beauty that he is able to deceive himself about her true nature. Hence, the profusion of Picture Chords at the words, “You’ve robbed me of all my power of thought.”

Although not a motive itself, the octatonic scale figures so prominently into the *Hymne* that it deserves special comment. Unlike other composers, such as Stravinsky and Bartók, who are known for their octatonicism, Berg rarely uses the octatonic scale in isolation. More often, he uses the octatonic collection’s inversional symmetry and its transpositional self-similarity as a means of imparting order to fully chromatic music. For instance, after the initial statement of Alwa’s row in m.1097, the orchestral accompaniment drifts into a passage of free atonality which culminates in the Cell-I cadential figure of m.1101. Between the tone row and the cadential figure, the music is unified primarily by the first violins’ exclusive use of one octatonic set. From the E♭5 of m.1098 until the E♭6 of m.1100, this octatonic collection remains divided into two interlocking diminished-seventh chords, one of which encompasses the octave from F♯4 to F♯5 and the other of which extends from E5 to E6. At the pickup to m.1100, the octatonic scale is registrally partitioned so as to suggest an E♭-major chord superimposed over an A-major chord. As we just saw here, and as we already observed in the first violin part of mm.1102-03, the octatonic scale can be divided into two tetrachords
belonging to the same pitch-class set. In fact, of the thirteen different octatonic tetrachords, eleven can be combined with themselves to form a complete octatonic collection9. When we consider that the top voice of the Picture Chords, Alwa x, and Basic Cells I and III all share this special property, it only seems natural that octatonic collections should occasionally crop up in Lulu. The one-measure link between Sections 3 and 4 (m.1130) demonstrates how an octatonic collection can be incorporated into a twelve-tone configuration, namely, Trope III. The octatonic collection is here formed by two transpositions of Cell I in the bassoons (incidentally, this is the same octatonic collection that appears throughout a large portion of Section 3 itself); the remaining pitches of the chromatic scale are filled in by the diminished-seventh chord (Basic Cell III) in the harp and strings. Another example of the Berg’s fusion of octatonicism with dodecaphony is furnished by the arpeggiated Picture Chords in mm. 1140-43. It will be observed that one note of every trichord has an accent placed over it; when these accented notes viewed in isolation from their surroundings, it will be seen that they produce a scalar octatonic ascent from A♭3 to G4 followed by a descent along the same octatonic scale from C#4 to F3.

Section II – The Hymne in Context

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9 These figures are derived from the list of 29 tetrachords from Appendix I (“Prime Forms and Vectors of Pitch-Class Sets”) of Allen Forte’s The Structure of Atonal Music. The only non-self-complementary octatonic tetrachords are the two all-interval chords, [0146] and [0137]. These, however, may be combined with each other to form an octatonic scale.
Like many of Lulu’s numbers, Alwa’s Hymne contains allusions to other parts of the opera. The most readily apparent of these references is the brief return, at m.1136, of the Musette from Act I. Before this two-measure interruption Lulu is completely silent, but now she asks Alwa if he will flee the country with her, even though it is, by this point, almost a foregone conclusion that he will do so. In its original context, the Musette functions as a kind of trio in the Tempo di Gavotta sections of the Sonata. These sections, which constitute the Sonata’s second theme group, are associated with Lulu’s increasing power over Dr. Schön. In the final scene of Act I, it is to this rather flippant music that Lulu, intent upon marrying Schön, compels him to write a letter to his then-fiancée calling off their ‘respectable’ engagement. At the point in this letter-duet where the Musette returns (m.1326), a gesture consisting of the pitches $<B^b-A-E-G-B-C#-D-E^b>$ appears in Lulu’s vocal line. When the Musette is quoted in the Hymne, this gesture reappears untransposed. The symbolic function of this reference to Act I is unambiguous. Just as Lulu achieves total domination over Dr. Schön in the Briefduett, so she reaches the same stage in her relationship with Alwa in the Hymne. Thus, the Musette comes to signify a point of no return for both father and son: the point at which their respective wills have become so enslaved to Lulu’s that they are completely at her mercy.

It should be noted that the transition from the Rondo to the Hymne (mm. 1087-96) is based on the Musette, and that this section’s first vocal phrase, sung by Lulu, is also

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10 The Sonata contains three complete gavotte-and-musette sections. The first two occur in Act I, scene 2, in mm. 587-614 (exposition) and mm. 649-665 (repeat of exposition). The third, and by far the longest, gavotte-and-musette is the Briefduett of scene 3 (mm.1304-55), which concludes the Sonata’s recapitulation.
based on the motive just described, although here it is transposed up a perfect fourth. The
textual relationship between this phrase, which sets the words “Komm mit mir heute über
die Grenze,” and the corresponding measures of the *Hymne*, is self-evident.

Nowhere in the first two acts of *Lulu* is the *Hymne* more clearly adumbrated than
in the codetta\(^{11}\) to the exposition of the Rondo (Act II, scene 1, mm. 323-337), which
immediately precedes the fatal confrontation between Lulu and Dr. Schön. At this point
in the libretto, Alwa is confessing his love for Lulu while a horrified Dr. Schön
eavesdrops on their conversation:

*Alwa* (holding *Lulu’s hand*): A soul, rubbing the sleep out of its eyes in the next
world … O, this hand…

*Lulu*: What do you find there…

*Alwa*: an arm…

*Lulu*: What do you find there…

*Alwa*: a body…

*Lulu* (*innocently*): What do you find there…

*Alwa* (*passionately*): Mignon! [this is how Dr. Schön addresses Lulu] (*leaps up*)

*Lulu*: Don’t look at me that way – for God’s sake!

*Alwa* (*kneeling before her*): Destroy me! Make an end of me…

*Lulu*: Do you love me then?

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\(^{11}\) Like the Sonata of Act I, the Rondo, which also exhibits features of sonata form, is distributed over two
scenes. The exposition takes place in Act II, scene 1, and the development and recapitulation both occur in
scene 2. For a more detailed discussion of the Rondo’s form, see Dave Headlam, *The Music of Alban Berg*,
pp. 333-342.
Alwa: Do you love me, Mignon?

Lulu: I don’t know…

Alwa: Mignon, I love you! (buries his head in her lap)

Lulu (with both hands in his hair): I poisoned your mother…

The parallels between this dialogue and the text of the Hymne are readily apparent. In both cases, Lulu’s body is the center of Alwa’s attention; they both contain stage directions for Alwa to bury his head in Lulu’s lap; and both passages end with Lulu reminding Alwa that she is responsible for the death of one of his parents.12 No less significant are the musical links between the codetta and the Hymne. Most of the music in mm. 323-337 is derived from the Basic row, Alwa’s row, Alwa_y, or the Picture Chords—all of which figure prominently in the Hymne. To be sure, none of these motives are by any means unique to the two sections under examination, but the fact that all of these motives are present in both sections elevates the relationship between codetta and Hymne above the merely incidental. This interrelatedness is most evident in the sudden outburst of Picture Chords in mm. 329-332, which closely parallels mm. 1140-43 of the Hymne. These two passages are characterized by rapid successions of prime-form Picture Chords in the lower voices pitted against inverted forms of the picture chords in the upper voices.

12 Whereas Lulu’s remark at the end of the Hymne (“Ist das noch der Diwan, auf dem sich Dein Vater verblutet hat?”) is tragically ironic, the effect of the corresponding line in m.337 (“Ich habe deine Mutter vergiftet.”) is one of farcical bathos. Not only do the timing of the remark and Alwa’s apparent indifference to it impart an aura of surrealism to the scene; the music itself joins in the burlesque: as Alwa sings, “Mignon ich liebe Dich,” the orchestral accompaniment, which is here based on the I-2 form of Alwa’s row, filters out and sustains the four pitches of the Tristan chord at the same transposition level as that of its first appearance in the Tristan Prelude. It is to this sonority, enriched by a second-inversion F#-minor triad in the bass, that Lulu credits herself with the demise of Alwa’s mother.
They are also related to each other at the textual level: the lines that Alwa sings at this point in the codetta (“Mignon! Richte mich zugrunde…) and at the corresponding point in the Hymne (Du hast mich um den Verstand gebracht) are both expressive of a lust that has degenerated into hysteria.

The relationship between the Hymne and mm. 974-1006 of Act III is much more straightforward: the orchestral accompaniment to the latter passage is an abbreviated repetition of the Hymne.13 At this point in the drama, Alwa has just nailed Lulu’s portrait, which had been salvaged by Countess Geschwitz, to the wall of Lulu’s London garret; all four of the surviving principals (Lulu, Geschwitz, Alwa, and Schigolch) are gathered around the painting. As they gaze upon this image of Lulu’s lost beauty, they sing a quartet accompanied by the Hymne. Whilst Geschwitz questions Lulu about her marriage with the Painter and Schigolch meditates upon Lulu’s decline, Alwa reminisces about her former appearance: “But that look of dew which was on her skin, and that fragrance of breath which her lips had, and that radiant light which would play around her forehead in its whiteness, and all that incomparable glow of young and ardent flesh on her throat and shoulders…”; to which Schigolch replies: “All that is gone with the garbage wagon.” The connection between the text of this passage and that of sections 2 and 3 of the Hymne is obvious. They both demonstrate that Alwa’s love for Lulu was really little more than an

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13 Section 3, the Musette interpolation, and the coda are all omitted in the Act-III version of the Hymne. It should also be observed that the Hymne’s note values are doubled and that its tempo is increased in this scene.
erotic fixation on her body, a fact which Alwa himself virtually admits shortly before the return of the *Hymne*, immediately after he lays eyes on the picture (mm. 920-943):

With this picture before me, I feel my self-respect is recovered. I understand the fate which compels me. Who stands before those lips with their promise of pleasure, before those eyes as innocent as eyes of children, before this white and rosy-ripening body, and still feels safe within the bourgeois code of rules, let such a man cast the first stone at us!

**Section III – Symbolism**

We now turn from our discussion of the observable aspects of Alwa’s *Hymne* to the more esoteric realm of extra-musical (and, more specifically, autobiographical) symbolism. It has already been demonstrated elsewhere that Berg’s *Lyric Suite* (1925-26) is imbued with crypto-musical references to the composer’s secret extramarital affair with Hanna Fuchs-Robettin. In this piece, the lengths, in measures, of individual sections and movements, as well as the metronome markings, are frequently multiples of 23 (the number which Berg used to symbolize himself) and/or 10 (Hanna Fuch’s Number). Could it be that this system of number symbolism extends into *Lulu*? Several details of the *Hymne* give us reason to believe that it does. As I have already mentioned in passing, the melodic peak of Alwa’s vocal line occurs closer to the beginning of the *Hymne* than to its end, to wit, at the C5 on the word “Andante” at bar 1110. Is it merely a

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14 See, for instance, Constantin Floros’s *Alban Berg and Hanna Fuchs: the Story of a Love in Letters.*
15 For a discussion of the mystical significance which Berg attributed to the number 23, see Geoffrey Poole’s “Alban Berg and the Fateful Number”
16 See Perle, 17-21.
coincidence that the measure number of this climax is equal to Hanna Fuchs’s number plus its square plus its cube? If this connection comes across as somewhat tenuous when taken in isolation, it begins to seem more plausible when viewed in light of certain alterations that Berg made to this section of Wedekind’s play as he transformed it into a libretto. The original passage from Act I of Pandora’s Box that corresponds to section 2 of the Hymne is as follows:

Through this dress I feel your body as a symphony.
These slender ankles: the Cantabile;
This charming swelling;
And these knees: the Capriccio
And the powerful Andante of voluptuousness. 17

Berg’s version of the same passage contains several modifications to the original:

Through this dress I feel your body as music.
These ankles: a Grazioso;
This enticing swelling: a Cantabile;
These knees: a Misterioso;
And the powerful Andante of voluptuousness.

When we recall that the first four movements of the Lyric Suite are marked, respectively, Allegretto giovale, Andante amoroso, Allegro misterioso, and Adagio appassionato, we discover that their ordering is vaguely akin to the Grazioso-Cantabile-Misterioso-Andante sequence of Alwa’s text. As Carner writes, “Berg’s reference to the first four movements of the Lyric Suite in the Hymn is not explicit but suggestive of their

respective characters.\textsuperscript{18} Given the facts that the \textit{Lyric Suite} is an encoded testament of Berg’s illicit love for Hanna Fuchs and that the \textit{Hymne} is an open statement of Alwa’s illicit love for Lulu, it seems reasonable to conclude that these veiled references to the \textit{Lyric Suite} and to Hanna Fuchs’s number are not merely the products of hermeneutical wishful thinking, but are in fact the results of conscious decisions on the part of the composer.\textsuperscript{19}

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that a full understanding of Alwa’s \textit{Hymne}, or of any other section of \textit{Lulu}, can only be gained by approaching it with varying degrees of focus. When we stand directly in front of the \textit{Hymne}, so to speak, we may observe many fascinating constructive features, such as its octatonicism, its derivation of motives from the tone rows, and its use of symmetrical phrase structures. By zooming out and viewing the \textit{Hymne} in the context of the entire opera, we discover that its basic motives are largely derived from the Rondo that immediately precedes it, and that it is intimately linked, both musically and dramatically, with several other passages from elsewhere in the opera. By expanding our focus beyond \textit{Lulu} so as to encompass Berg’s life and work in general, we find that certain idiosyncratic features of the \textit{Hymne}’s music and text may be related to the \textit{Lyric Suite} and to the ill-fated love affair which that piece commemorates.

\textsuperscript{18} Carner, 248.
\textsuperscript{19} Another example of symbolism based on the numbers 10 and 23 can be found in the fact that Act II comprises 1150 $= (2+3) \times 23 \times 10$ measures.
Bibliography


